

Φείπατέ μοι τάδε φύλα βροτήσια

This little fragment does not seem to have ever aroused much interest in scholars. And yet it poses several problems and is quite instructive. For instance, in spite of its short scope, it is enough to refute Rudolf Pfeiffer's dictum<sup>1</sup>) that φύλον accompanied by an adjective (γυναικείον φύλον etc.) as equivalent to φύλον accompanied by a genitive noun is a relatively late 'Attic' idiom. However, the present note's business is with the grammatical construction of the fragment. In what way are we to interpret τάδε? Should we take it with the following phrase (φύλα βροτήσια) and if so are the three words (1) vocative or (2) accusative? If accusative, who is being addressed? If (3) τάδε does not belong with the following phrase, the issue of who is being addressed is easier, but still not simple. What follows is merely an attempt to rank these possibilities in order of priority.

(1) τάδε φύλα βροτήσια as vocative, with comma after μοι ('tell me, you mortal races here') can surely be dismissed as impossible Greek. What parallel is there for such a vocative ὄδε? Who would the addressee be? (2)(i) The same phrase as object of Φείπατε ('tell me these mortal races') seems to be the solution advocated by Calame in his recent edition and commentary<sup>2</sup>). At least he prints the fragment as above, with no punctuation, and observes "les Muses, au plur. ... représenteraient alors le sujet de εἶπατε et la formule d'invocation constituée par ce vers serait analogue à celle qui ouvre Od. 1,1, l'h. Ven. 1, les h. Hom. 14,1 et 19,1 etc., et surtout le catalogue homérique des vaisseaux (Il. 2,484)". Well, yes; but the *Odyssey* does not begin ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε τόνδε nor do any of the other epic passages cited by Calame provide a parallel for the pronoun<sup>3</sup>). We know from fr. 148 that Alcman in one of his compositions produced a catalogue of races (τοιαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα ἔθνη καταλέγει κτλ.), and one of our sources for this information is precisely the same author who cites fr. 106 in precisely the same context: Aelius Aristides. But this is hardly a strong argument in favour of taking τάδε φύλα βροτήσια as direct object of an imperative verb addressed to the Muses at the start of some sub-section of this catalogue, for Aristides introduces our fragment by telling us it occurred 'elsewhere' (ἀλλαχῆ) from fr. 148. Another possibility in this

1) Hermes 87 (1959) 3, in the course of his famous exposition of Alcman fr. 89.

2) Rome (1983) pp. 113 (text) and 468 f. (comment). Note too his translation (p. 278): 'dites-moi ces races de mortels'.

3) Calame adds "sur un emploi éventuel de τάδε dans un contexte analogue d'explication des sources d'inspiration du chant, cf. fr. [39.1] (supra p. 480)". This is doubly baffling, since p. 480 is not supra p. 469 and in both commentary and text Calame rejects Bergk's conjecture ἔπη τάδε ("le démonstratif τάδε est peu compatible avec une formule qui est censée terminer un poème"), and prefers Diehl's ἔπη δέ γε. The MS (of Athenaeus) has ἔπη γε δέ.

context (ii) is that an indirect question may originally have followed: 'tell me Muses, as regards these mortal races: what is their x, y, and z?'

(3) 'Tell me these things, you mortal races.' This would seem to be the most popular interpretation of our fragment. The vast majority of editors print the fragment with a comma after τάδε<sup>4</sup>); and this is how Campbell, for instance, translates it<sup>5</sup>). M. L. West presupposes this rendering when he says<sup>6</sup>) of the phrase βροτήσια ἔργα at Hes. Op. 773 "It gives the sentence an oracular tone, as if a god were speaking", and compares our fragment, Parmenides B 6.4 f. DK, ἀπό τῆς (scil. ὁδοῦ), ἦν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν / πλάττονται, δίκρανοι· ἀμχανῆ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῶν / στήθεσιν ἰθύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φοροῦνται / κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, τεθηπότες, ἀκριτα φύλα / κτλ., and Ar. Av. 685 ff. ἄγε δὴ φύσιν ἄνδρες ἀμανρόβιοι, φύλλον γενεᾷ προσόμοιοι, / ὀλιγοδρανέες, πλάσματα πηλοῦ, σκιοειδέα φύλ' ἀμενηνά, / ἀπτῆνες ἐφημέριοι, ταλαοὶ βροτοὶ, ἀνέρες εἰκελόνηροιοι κτλ. Perhaps one might further adduce the words of Silenus to Midas at Pind. fr. 157 Sn. ὦ τάλας ἐφάμερε, νήπια βάζεις / χρῆματά μοι διακομπέων and Aristotle fr. 44 Rose δαίμονος ἐπιπόνου καὶ τύχης χαλεπῆς ἐφήμερον σπέρμα κτλ. Note too the tone of Socrates' τί με καλεῖς, ὠφήμερε; (Nub. 223). In favour of this interpretation it must be said that Aristides himself introduces our fragment as an instance of what Alcman says when he has passed beyond mere divine inspiration (ἐνθεος) and speaks ὡσπερ θεὸς τῶν ἀπὸ μηχανῆς. It really sounds as if he should be doing more than invoking a plurality of Muses. All that remains to decide under this heading is whether τόδε rather than τάδε<sup>7</sup>) would be not only more idiomatic ('tell me this, you mortal races') but what Alcman originally intended<sup>8</sup>).

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4) E.g. Bergk and Diehl. It is Page (PMG p. 67) who omits any punctuation (as a caution against over-hasty preference for option (3)?).

5) Greek Lyric 2 (1988) p. 467. So too Behrs in his two-volume translation of Aelius Aristides (2. 118).

6) In his note on the relevant passage of Hesiod's *Works and Days*. The fragment as interpreted by its quoter sounds as if it came from a monodic poem, an eventuality not lightly to be discounted (cf. Gnomon 58 [1986] 387).

7) An emendation that has independently suggested itself to several colleagues. This is not to say that τάδε is impossible (compare side by side with the epic formula ἄλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπέ such passages as h. Herm. 199: ταῦτά μοι εἰπέ), merely less plausible.

8) The corruption envisaged (assimilation to adjacent endings of words) would be easy enough at the best of times. When Alcman's verses had been whittled down to the five that Aristides happens to quote it would be almost inescapable.