

ARISTOPHANES *VESPAE* 530:
THE MYSTERIOUS VOICE AND PERSON

by

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ABSTRACT: A conjecture is proposed in order to cure grammatical problems with the form φανεῖ in Ar. *V.* 530.

- Χο. νῦν δὲ τὸν ἐκ θήμετέρου
γυμνασίου δεῖ τι λέγειν
καινόν, ὅπως φανήσει...
- Βδ. ἐνεγκάτω μοι δεῦρο τὴν κίστην τις ὡς τάχιστα¹.
ἀτὰρ φανεῖ ποῖός τις ὢν, ἦν ταῦτα παρακελεύη;² 530
- Χο. μὴ κατὰ τὸν νεανίαν
τουδι λέγων.

The function of v. 530 seems clear. Bdelycleon wants the Chorus to finish the sentence he interrupted in v. 529, and the question is intended to prompt the wasps-jurymen to say what Philocleon will prove to be. The expected sense of the line should be therefore: “But what kind of a man will he prove to be according to your advice?” The difficulty lies in the fact that Greek for “I prove to be” or “it is manifest that I am” is φαίνομαι ὢν³. This would mean that φανεῖ is second person singular of middle future, addressed to the Chorus. So it is rendered by HICKIE 1902: “(*To the Chorus.*) But what sort of a person will you appear to be if you instigate him to this?”. The question, however, is irrelevant. Bdelycleon wants just to hear the end of the sentence pertaining to his father.

¹ GIL FERNÁNDEZ (2010: 260–261) transfers this line after v. 530, adding v. 537 (καὶ μὴν ὄσ’ ἂν λέξη γ’ ἀπλῶς μνήμοσυνα γράψομαι ἴγώ) immediately after it. This noteworthy idea of the late Spanish scholar has, however, no practical relevance to the question discussed here.

² SREBRNY (1959–1960: 47–48) emends ἦν to εἰ since there seems no need for a “vivid future” condition (*modus eventualis*) when the advice has been already given (in vv. 526–528). SOMMERSTEIN (1977: 265–266) and WILSON (2007) agree with this approach. BILES, OLSON (2015: 253) defend the reading ἦν assuming that the phrase really means “if he takes the advice you offer”.

³ According to LSJ s.v. φαίνω B.II, φαίνομαι in this meaning is passive. In reality one finds it both in passive future, as here in v. 528, and in middle future, as e.g. in Soph. *Ant.* 662: φανεῖται [...] δίκαιος ὢν and Dem. 14, 69: τρίς, οὐχ ἅπαξ τεθνάναι δίκαιος ὢν φανεῖται.

Theoretically, to defend this second person, one could assume that the question is directed to Philocleon⁴. Then παρακελεύη would not be a form of the deponent verb παρακελεύομαι, but of παρακελεύω, and would mean “you are exhorted”⁵. But this would seem very artificial. Bdelycleon should speak to the Chorus since he wants it to finish the sentence.

A solution of this dilemma is proposed by STARKIE (1897) who regards φανεί as third person singular of active future, adducing Soph. *Tr.* 1157–1158 (Hercules addressing his son Hyllus):

ἐξήκεις ἴνα
φανεῖς ὅποῖος ὦν ἀνὴρ ἐμός καλῆ.

The analogy is, however, false, since in Sophocles the participle is not a predicate to φανεῖς. The sentence means literally: “you will show being what kind of man you are called mine”.

A recourse to a conjecture seems necessary. In my opinion we should print: ἀτὰρ φανεῖται ποῖος ὦν... Possibly the ending -ται vanished at some point, and τις was inserted to patch up the metre; but, as has been suggested to me by Jan KWAPISZ, it is also probable that in the beginning τις was added after ποῖος (ποῖός τις appears four times elsewhere in Aristophanes) and after that φανεῖται was curtailed to suit the metre. The corruption must have occurred rather early, for the *scholia vetera* explain φανῆ by ὀφθήση.

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⁴ Thus RODGERS 1930: “I’ll quickly show you what you’re like”.

⁵ See LSJ s.v. παρακελεύομαι III with the example from Philostr. *VA* V 27: χαίρειν παρεκελεύοντο.

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