Words about wisdom bring me both profit and delight. But you who speak only of money and business enjoy an empty facade of success; you cause me pain and provoke my pity."

In these terms roughly, Apollodorus, narrator of Plato's *Symposium*, attacks his nameless companions, near the beginning of the dialogue (173c 2-d 3). The attack is abrupt and apparently unwarranted, for his companions have shown an interest in philosophy. These unnamed money-making enthusiasts have urged Apollodorus to narrate for them—and hence for us—the lengthy account of Agathon's banquet; and they will prove an ideal audience, for, as the narration proceeds, we shall not hear another word from them; we shall perhaps feel that we have taken their place—that Apollodorus speaks directly to us. It is puzzling that such fleeting figures should be so attacked.

Equally puzzling is one anonymous companion's reply (173d 4-10):

"You're always the same, Apollodorus; you attack yourself and others, and you seem to me simply to consider that all men are miserable except for Socrates—beginning with yourself. And where exactly you got that nickname, 'Softy' I don't know. In your conversation you are always so; at yourself and at others, you rage—except for Socrates'"

Apollodorus now asks whether it is obvious from his judgments that he is mad (μαλακός καὶ παρασιτεία; 173e 1-3), but he is urged to tell his tale, and this curious incident is forgotten.

In place of μαλακός, at 173d 8, T² W² read μακρυός. The manuscript confusion reflects an ancient uncertainty: the reading μαλακός is supported in *Socratic epistle 21* (Hercher, *Epist. Gr.* p. 642) while
Plutarch (Cato min. 46) uses the word μανικωστέρος with reference to our narrator. The second reading ('madman') has been adopted by e.g. Hug, Bury, and Sykoutris; and supported by Wilamowitz (Platon II, 357) and Pohlenz (Aus Platons Werdezeit, 2, n. 1). But both Burnet and Robin have excluded it from their texts; and recently Paul Friedländer (Platon IIIa [1960], 431 n. 5) and G. J. de Vries (Mnemosyne IV 19 [1966], 147) have argued in support of μαλακός 1). None of these latter scholars mention Plutarch.

An examination of the context will reveal that μαλακός is unsuitable in terms of both grammar and sense. It has crept into our texts as a result of unusual syntax and a learned scribe's knowledge of Apollodorus' quite different behaviour in the Phaedo (59 a-b, 117d). The syntactical difficulty stems from a specialized use of the word γάρ—those who prefer 'softy' understand it as a simple explicative of the preceding οὐκ οίδα ἔγωγε. De Vries, for example, writes: "The ἐπιχείρος wonders how Apollodorus got his nickname 'Softy', ... for this nickname might seem not to be appropriate, since in discussions Apollodorus is far from showing any softness, but always is harsh". (This interpretation also requires that τοιωτῶς [in line 9] refer proleptically to what follows—and not, as is far more natural, to the three preceding phrases: ἄξι ὁμοίος εἶ ... ἄξι γὰρ σαυτὸν τε κακήγορεῖς ... , and ταύτην τὴν ἐπινομίαν, and to their specific culmination in the word μαλακός) 2).

But the key to the problem is the expression μὲν γάρ, a combination used sparingly elsewhere by Plato not as an explicative of a brief preceding phrase such as οὐκ οίδα ἔγωγε but as a restrictive formula which emphasizes a single instance out of two or more possibilities. μὲν gives special emphasis to the words which precede or surround it, and γάρ refers that particular instance to the broad context which precedes. My explanation of γάρ here differs some-

1) De Vries' note contains in the third paragraph a misleading typographical error: in place of "Both (Wilamowitz and Pasquali) ... defend the reading μαλακός...", read "Both ... defend the reading μαλακός".

2) De Vries cites Riddell, Digest of idioms, section 53, for the proleptic use of τοιωτῶς, but, as Riddell makes clear, τοιωτῶς in such instances prepares the listener for an explanation of something "not yet explained"; here the hetairos repeats almost verbatim the explanation given immediately above (173d 4-6). More likely here is the use of τοιωτῶς noted in Riddell, section 54: "As a mere substitute or symbol of a particular word preceding".