ON THE TEXT OF THE PERIPLUS MARIS ERYTHRAEI

The *Periplus Maris Erythrae* is notoriously very difficult, consisting as it does of a mixture of literary and vulgar Greek. The latest editor, H. Frisk 1), has made a substantial contribution to the understanding of this work by bringing into relief many features pertaining to vulgar Greek which have been employed by the author, although a great number of them are still to be recognized. For instance, the present participle *diaperóntes* (§ 42) should not be changed to *diaperó*, as Frisk does, because this kind of participle is, as Frisk himself knows (op. cit., 88; add now Mandilaras, *The Verb in the Greek Non-Literary Papyri*, Athens 1973, § 920 2)), a typical trait of vulgar Greek. In the same way, ην δε *kúth̄ς* (§ 48) and *kévenmon* (§ 60) should not be changed into ην δε *kut̄h* and *kévenmon*, as certain critics have suggested, because *kut̄h* and *kéven* are patent cases of "*genitif remplaçant le datif*" (Frisk, op. cit., 57), a phenomenon very common in vulgar Greek. The neuter *πολύ* (§ 51), arbitrarily corrected into *πολυ* by editors, is another vulgarism which should be preserved (cf. Jannaris, *Hist. Gramm*. § 402, for the type of neuter *γλυκόν*).

I should like now to throw light on four passages of the work under discussion which have been hitherto misunderstood. First of all, we shall examine § 16: *Méghysoi δε ξειμασιν περι ταύτην την χώραν ἄνθρωποι ὀρατοὶ διακούσαν καὶ κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἐχαστος ὁμοιός τιθέμενοι τυράννοι. Νέμεται δε *kut̄h* κατὰ τι δίκαιον ἄρχοντων ὑποπίπτουσαν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῆς πρώτης γυνομένης Ἀραβίας ἢ Μοχρίτης τύραννος.*

The word *ὀρατοί* was originally written without a breathing; a rough breathing was added by a later hand. There is no doubt that *ὀρατοί* is corrupt: the substantive *ἄνθρωποι* is already provided with an epithet (μέγιστοι), and, moreover, ὀρατοί ‘visible’ is contextually meaningless. Müller proposed *πειράται*; his conjecture is palaeographically violent, and contextually incongruous, because the *ἄνθρωποι* in question are not pirates, but law-abiding citizens, as is made abundantly clear by the words *νέμεται... τύραννος* already quoted and by the rest of § 16, where it is stated that the area is ὑπόφορος and that its natives are so peaceful as to intermarry with their legal rulers’ representatives.

*Mnemosyne*, Vol. XXVIII, Fasc. 3
How can we solve the textual problem? We need a substantive in apposition to ἀνθρωποι: the mot juste is ἀρόται. In ἀνθρωποι ἄρόται, the noun ἄρόται is used in apposition to ἀνθρωποι (type ἄρόται ἄνδρες, Arat. ΠΠ3, βῴην ἄροτην Ἅρ. Ρ mógł 1217). The ἄρόται are opposed to the νομάδες in Herodotus IV 2,2 (cf. also VII 50,4 ἄροτήρας, οὗ νομάδες ἄνδρας). Our emendation is confirmed by two factors. First of all, the context: small-holders are traditionally proud of their independence, and the independence of the ἀνθρωποι ἄρόται is explicitly emphasized by the words κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἔκκεντος ὁμοίως τιθεμένη τυράννως (literally: "suo singuli loco modoque tyrannorum res suas agentes"; cf. Müller, ad loc.). Unlike nomads, who possess no plots, the ἄρόται own each his respective parcel of land, and each of them is the absolute ruler (ὁμοίως τυράννως) over his piece of territory. The second factor which confirms our emendation is represented by the author's constant habit of indicating whether the inhabitants of a given region are agricultural settlers (= ἄρόται) or nomads: cf. e.g. § 20, νομαδίας . . . νομαδικών. At § 41 we read of fertile agricultural land (τολυφάρμος δὲ ὡρὰ σίτου καὶ ὁδύξει καὶ ἐλαίῳ στρατικοῦ κ.τ.λ.) where there are βουκάλια . . . καὶ ἄνδρες ὑπεριµεγέθεις τῷ σώματι: this neatly tallies with μέγιστοι ἐν σώμασιν ἀνθρωποι ἄρόται at § 16, because ἄρόται are regularly associated with βουκάλιοι (cf. Arat. ΠΠ3 ἄρόται καὶ βουκάλιοι ἄνδρες, Νονν. Dion. I III, etc.)3). The substantive ἄρότης, occurring as it does in Ionic prose (Herodotus, Hippocrates) is stylistically suited to the author's vocabulary: he is, as is well known, fond of Ionisms (e.g. γινομένης at § 16, πλέται at § 14) 4).

At § 46 we read that, after the tide has receded, ships on the shore must be propped up, to prevent them from falling upon one side and being filled by water when the tide turns. To designate the rise of the tide the author uses the words τῆς πλήμης . . . ἀπελθοῦσες. The participle has been changed by Müller to ἐπελθοῦσας, whom Schoff follows 5) ("the flood tide comes upon them suddenly"). In reality, ἀπελθοῦσας is perfectly sound: ἀπελθεῖν means here 'return' (cf. Thes., s.v. ἀπέρχομαι, συγ. D-1201 A6); at high tide, the water in fact 'comes back', 'returns' ἐσω . . . πάλιν . . . εἰς τούχαντον, cf. Arist. Meteor. 366 a 19 ff.

At § 55 the author explains that ships sailing along the coast, having reached the mouth of a river which is not navigable, cannot enter the latter and sail upstream: (τὰ πλοῖα) ἐπὶ σάλῳ διορμίζεται πρὸς ἀνάληψιν τῶν φορτίων διὰ τὸ τὸν ποταμὸν ἁλματα καὶ διάπλους ἔχειν ἐλαφροῦς. Ἐλαφροὺς means here 'shallow', exactly as at § 40; διάπλους means 'passages' (evidently between the 'bancs de sable': cf. Frisk, op. cit., 115). What can ἁλματα mean? The word