



SHORTER NOTES

ARISTOPHANES, *BIRDS* 786–8

ABSTRACT

A conjecture in Birds 786–8.

Keywords: Aristophanes; *Birds*; emendation; εἶτα; corruption; participle

αὐτίχ' ὑμῶν τῶν θεατῶν εἴ τις ἦν ὑπόπτερος,
εἶτα πεινῶν τοῖς χοροῖσι τῶν τραγῳδῶν ἤχθετο,
ἐκπτόμενος ἂν οὗτος ἠρίστησεν ἐλθὼν οἶκαδε ...

‘For instance, if one of you spectators was winged, then, being hungry, was bored with the tragic choruses, he could have flown off, gone home and had lunch.’ The sequence ‘was winged ... then was bored’ is surprising. Being winged is not an event anterior to being bored but a condition which enables the action which follows. I should expect here the common idiom in which εἶτα (continuative or adversative, sometimes ἔπειτα or κἄτα or κᾗπειτα) is preceded not by a finite verb but by a participle (circumstantial or temporal): εἴ τις ὢν ὑπόπτερος | εἶτα, ‘if, being winged, he had then ...’. Cf. *Vesp.* 1071–2 εἴ τις ὑμῶν, ὦ θεαταί, τὴν ἐμὴν ἰδὼν φύσιν | εἶτα θαυμάζει. Precisely the same corruption is found at *Vesp.* 49 ἄνθρωπος ὢν (RV: ἦν j Greg. Cor.) εἶτ' ἐγένετ' ἐξαίφνης κόραξ. Other Aristophanic examples with ὢν are *Ach.* 498–9 εἰ πτωχὸς ὢν ἔπειτ' ἐν Ἀθηναίοις λέγειν | μέλλω, *Eq.* 391–2 ἀλλ' ὅμως οὗτος τοιοῦτος ὢν ἅπαντα τὸν βίον | κἄτ' ἀνὴρ ἔδοξεν εἶναι, *Ran.* 203–5 κἄτα πῶς δυνήσομαι | ἄπειρος, ἀθαλάττωτος, ἀσαλαμίνιος | ὢν εἶτ' ἐλαύνειν;, 367 ἦ τοὺς μισθοὺς τῶν ποιητῶν ῥήτωρ ὢν εἶτ' ἀποτρώγει. For further illustration see LSJ s.v. εἶτα I.2, ἔπειτα I.3, Olson on *Ach.* 23–4, Biles and Olson on *Vesp.* 49 and *Eq.* 280–1, and C. Collard, *Colloquial Expressions in Greek Tragedy* (Stuttgart, 2018), 105–6.

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