Ὦ Κλέων, παῦσαι φλυαρῶν· ἃν ὁκνῇς ἔτι μανθάνειν,
ἀνεπικούρητον σεαυτοῦ τὸν βίον λήσει ποιών.
οὔτε γὰρ ναυαγός, ἃν μὴ γῆς λάβῃται φερόμενος,
οὔποτ’ ἄν σώσειν αὐτὸν, οὔτ’ ἄν ἄνηρ πένης γεγὼς
μὴ οὐ τέχνην μαθῶν δύνατ’ ἄν ἀσφαλῶς ζῆν τὸν βίον.
“ἄλλα χρήματ’ ἐστίν ἡμῖν.” ἄ γε τάχιστ’ ἅπαλλυται.
“κτήματ’, οἰκίαι.” τύχης δὲ μεταβολὰς οὐκ ἄγνοείς,
ὅτι τὸν εὑπόρον τίθησι πτωχόν εἰς εἰς τὴν αὐρίον.
κἂν μὲν ὄρμισθη τις ἡμῶν εἰς λιμένα τὸν τῆς τέχνης,
ἐβάλετ’ ἄγκυραν καθάπις ἀσφαλείας εἵνεκα·
ἄλλ’ ἑταῖροι καὶ φίλοι σοι καὶ συνήθεις, νῇ Δία,
ἔρανον εἰσοίσουσιν. εὔχου μὴ λαβεῖν πεῖραν φίλων,
ei δὲ μή, γνώσηι σεαυτόν ἄλλο μηδὲν πλῆν σκιάν.

Stop talking nonsense, Cleon. If you won’t learn,
Before you know it, you’ll have nothing to fall back on in your life.
A shipwrecked man, you see, couldn’t save himself as he’s tossed about,
Unless he reaches land. Nor could a man who’s become poor,
Live a life of security – not unless he’s mastered some skill.
And if any one of us finds harbour in his skill,
He casts anchor, tying it fast for safety’s sake.
But if an untrained man is caught up in a storm and tossed about,
Nothing will save him from poverty in his old age.
‘But we have the money’ – yes, money which runs out fast,
‘Possessions, houses...’ – you know full well the reversals of fortune,
How she makes a beggar out of a rich man from one day to the next.
But, surely, companions, friends and soul mates,
Will help you out with loans... – pray you don’t have to make proof of friends,
Or you’ll learn you are nothing but a shadow.

I tried my hand at translating the sentiment of the fragment into the – admittedly limping – septenarii (with Gratwick’s notation, where BD are long, CA ancipitia):

O Cleon, aufer has nugas, si cunctaberis discere,
BcD, ABCDA / BCDaa, BcD
nemo tibi laturus est opem, neglegenti improvido.
Bcdd ABc Daa / BcD  ABcD
Nam nec naufragus umquam – terram pervagus nisi attigis –
BCDaa BC DA / BcD aBcD
se ille servat; neque pauper qui repente factus est,
BcDA, BcDA / BcDA, BcD
nisi didicerit utilem artem, tute qui victurus est?
bbcdda BcDA/  BcD ABcD
‘Est tamen pecunia mihi’ - quippe quae dilabitur.
BcD aBcdda / BcD ABcD
‘Sunt agr(i) aedes...’ Fors ferat, scin, quot vicissitudines?
BcDA BcDA/ BcDaBcD
Quamque facile pauperare sit parata divitem?
Bc dda BcDa / BcDa BcD
Si quis nostrum in artis portum sibi suam navem adpulit,
BcDa BcDA / bbcDABcD
ancoram iacit, salutem stabilitatemque invenit.
BcD, aB cDA / bbc DABcD
Sed inexpers tempestate si quis modo iactatus sit,
BcDA BCDA /Bcdd  ABcD
sollicitus senex malorum non habebit exitum.
Bcdd aB cDA / BcDa BcD
Sed sodales atque amici ac tibi aequales tui
This is a parainesis of striking rhetorical polish whose broad outlines can be seen by examining the variety of subjects, protases and apodoses and how they all connect together. Subject (especially one in a crisis), protasis (juxtaposing the stability of dry land, harbour, and techne, or lack thereof) and apodosis (safety from the elements and from poverty):

S1: Cleon, P1: if you don’t try to learn A1: you’ll find your life without support

S2: neither a shipwrecked man P2: if he doesn’t make it to the shore A2: will ever save himself,

S3: nor an impoverished man P3: if he doesn’t learn a trade A3: will lead a secure life,

S4 any one of us P4: if he finds harbour in some trade A4: he’ll anchor his ship for safety’s sake.

S5 an untrained man P5: if he’s tossed about in the wind A5: won’t be safe from poverty in old age.

The speaker then anticipates his opponent’s arguments in an effective triple hypophora and immediately refutes them:

(you’ll say) we have the money – money that runs out very quickly;

(or, if not the money, then) possessions, houses – sudden reversals of fortune can take them away;

(or, as the last resort) friends will help out – don’t put your friends to such a test or you’ll be disappointed in them.

The speaker is most probably a father (ἡμῖν\(^1\) 10) lecturing his son, via pervolgata patrum (Ter. Heaut. 101). He cannot be his opponent’s friend, given his professed low opinion of friendship. Seriousness and an authoritative style perhaps rule out a slave. The most obvious interpretation is that he is advising his son to

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\(^1\) Although there is a possibility that it is not inclusive and Cleon is thinking only of himself.
learn a trade. Lack of context makes it difficult to guess how this is relevant to the plot.

Poor fishermen in Pl. *Rudens* can praise *ars* omni *bus modis qui pauperes sunt homines miser *i* uiuont, / praesertim quibus nec quaestus est neque <e>didicere artem ullam*, 290-91, and *techne* is praised as security against insecure life: βίου δ’ ἐνεστιν ἄσφαλει’ ἐν ταῖς τέχναις, Men. fr. 68.3, πολύ γ’ ἐστὶ πάντων κτήμα τιμιώτατον / ἀπασιν ἀνθρώπωισιν εἰς τὸ ξῆν τέχνη Hipparchos 2.1-2. But artisans led a life of constant suffering and deprivation (Antiphanes fr. 123.6-9) whereas the speaker here is clearly addressing a well-off young man who is typical of New Comedy. I offer three possibilities:

1. Regardless of whether the young man is in love or not, his father is worried that he is not responsible enough and unprepared for the future. Such fathers usually ask their sons to take up *mercatura* and prepare a ship for them (*mercatum ire iussit* Pl. *Merc*. 358, Most. 639). One can object that farmers and merchants are properly speaking not men of trade. These three categories are kept separate in Aristophanes: [the man is neither a γεωργός nor ἔμπορος] τί δαί; τέχνην τιν’ ἐμαθες; Ar. Plut. 905. Another objection is that the imagery of the rough seas and the comfort of the harbour are unsuitable for the purpose of persuading a young man to set foot on a ship – or was precisely such humorous incongruity intentional? Asking the son to take up trade and go on a business trip is a recognizable motif in New Comedy, but obviously relegated before the beginning of the drama, as it is useful only to the extent it creates problems on his return.

2. The possibility that a father is asking his son to take up some trade sounds different from a typical *parainesis*; it is strikingly a-philosophical, if not anti-philosophical. Note especially that ἀπαίδευτος is used at line 8 to convince indirectly a well-educated young man to ‘learn’ anew. Could then the father be talking instead about some other ‘survival skills’, not the ones mastered through apprenticeship or at school? At Pl. *Trin*. 295-7 (also by Philemon) a father is encouraging his son to imitate his *mores* and not go for the *artes* of the wicked men: hisce ego de artibus gratiam facio, / ne colas neue imbuas ingenium. / meo modo et moribus uiuito antiquis. ἀπαίδευτος could then point not to a lack of formal training, but lack of discipline of an *adulescens indomitus* (cf. Pl. *Trin.*

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750-1). This interpretation, however, seems less probable: sudden impoverishment at line 12 is floated as a real possibility; besides, the son, no matter how dissolute, would hardly contradict his father by even seeming unwilling (v. 1) to adopt his father’s ethical precepts.

3. Unless a minor character is speaking, we have an unusual situation where a rich father is for some reason asking his son to learn a trade – whether in earnest or as a scheme to bring him to his senses – cf. the situation in Ter. *Heat*. 960ff (and similar keywords: stultitia tua; neque consulere in longitudinem; haec ...perdere; ibi tuae stultitiae ...erit praesidium). More guesswork would be futile. Judging merely by precedents, the speech may be an attempt to rouse an idle, well-off boy who has too much time on his hands3. It would be then possible, that the father is trying to direct his son away from a love affair. In Pl. *Mercator* Charinus, a young man wasting his father’s property on his love interest, gets tired of his father’s constant preaching, obeys him and goes on a business trip (80-4).

More can be said about the topic of friendship. Friends are mentioned in the final subiectio, sandwiched between ἀλλὰ and νὴ Δία, an emphatic position for Demosthenes, who was fond of this rhetorical figure4, and are an object of the most scathing attack. It can be a mere rhetorical ploy to exhort his son to rely more on himself, or it can be the speaker’s sincerely held view, and in that case he would be certainly proved wrong in the course of the play. This was Knemon’s frame of mind (οὐδέν’ εὖνοιν ωμήν / ἔτερον ἔτερωι τῶν ἀπάντων ἂν γενέσθαι, Men. *Dysk.* 720-21) before Gorgias’ noble act (ἔργον... ἄνδρος εὐγενεστάτου 723) saved him from a comic version of a sudden death at sea: a fall down the well. The speaker may be later even subjected to a retort along the lines of *Dysk.* 979ff. Sostratos is ready to prove himself a friend to Gorgias by offering him his sister in marriage, a selfless act, accompanied by a speech on the need to help as many people as one can: γενναίως... ἐπικουρεῖν πᾶσιν, εὐπόρους ποεῖν ὡς ἂν δύνη πλείστους, 806-8. See K. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality* (Oxford, 1974), p. 177-79. Philemon and

3 There is little to go on except Stobaeus’ inclusion of this fragment in the section on idleness, περὶ ἄργιας. *If nimium otium* is Cleon’s problem (and there is nothing that would directly suggest that) then we are dealing with one of the prerequisites of love affairs in New Comedy: Ter. *Heaut.* 109, cf. Pl. *Trin.* 650-51, *Bacch.* 1083, and poor farmers have no time for it: Men. *Dysk.* 343f.

Menander probably read Aristotle’s theory of φιλία (Eth. Nic. VIII-IX), as well as Theophrastus’ treatises (including perhaps the one On Friendship) as they were being published. Genuine selfless friendship is often staged and problematized – however, it is not clear in what concrete way the theme of friendship, and whether between old men or their sons, was developed in this play.

**Rhetorical effects.** Without a possibility of knowing how this intriguing speech fit into its play, we can note its elaborate rhetorical effects. There is a symmetry of expressions: οὐτε...οὐτε, ἀλλὰ...ἀλλὰ, a striking hyperbaton: τῆς ἀπορίας...σωτηρίαν (9), repetition of words, a feature which seems to have been one of Philemon’s favourite stylistic devices: μανθάνειν, μαθών, σεαυτοῦ, σεαυτόν, τὸν βίον (2, 5), ἀν +subjunctives, words of the same root (polyptota): ἀσφαλῶς – ἀσφαλείας, σώσειν – σωτηρίαν, ἀγνώστην – γνώσηι, φερόμενος – φοροῦμενος – εἰσοίσουσιν, ἀπορίας – εὔπορον, or repetitions of similar concepts: τάχιστα – εἰς τὴν αὐριον or of the opposite ones: ζῆν – ἀπόλλυται, εἰς τὸ γῆρας – εἰς τὴν αὐριον. This elaborateness makes it possible that the speech is little or not at all relevant to the plot.

**Metre.** Serious speeches of general interest in trochaic tetrameters appear both in Old and New Comedy and perhaps they ultimately derive from Old Comedy’s epirrhemata, cf. Fraenkel, *De media et nova comoedia quaestiones selectae* (Diss. Göttingen, 1912), p. 87-8; Handley, *The Dyskolos of Menander* (London 1965), p. 59-60, 252-3; Gomme-Sandbach, *Menander. A Commentary* (Oxford, 1973), p. 36f, Arnott GR 19 (1972) 78-80, Alexis. *The Fragments* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 268. Philemon’s trochaic tetrameters are similar to those of Menander rather than Aristophanes: both the median diaeresis and tribrachs occur more often in Menander than in Aristophanes, who avoids tribrachs in 7th foot: there are 5 cases, each a tetrasyllabic word, of which two are proper names. Philemon has it here (φερόμενος, 3) and so does Menander in e.g. ἀποθάνοι Sam. 607. A dactyl before a

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final iamb was considered rare\(^6\) but we now see them not only here but also in Menander (ἐἶναι τὸ γεγονός Sam. 602). Porson-Havet’s law is ignored, as commonly in comic poets (λάβηται φερόμενος, 3).

**Tradition and apolitical New Comedy.** The sea with its dangers provides an appropriate image for the frustrating instability of fortune and sudden calamities in life throughout Greek literature, as the ubiquitous use of e.g. the verb χειμάζεσθαι testifies. Life itself is beyond one’s control, much like a voyage on sea with its dangers of ναυαγία/πενία. Life is ‘un voyage maritime’\(^7\) and men can just as easily become shipwrecked as poor – or both, like Nicodemus shipwrecked on the shore of Attica in Pl. *Vidularia.*

It is worth noticing how the traditional material is either ignored or given an apolitical domestic life. In Old Comedy trades were used to ridicule men of authority: Eupolis wrote *Dyers* much to Alcibiades’ displeasure.\(^8\) Cratinus makes fun of Dionysius for being a barber (Hesychius δ 1890), and then there is Knemon the Tanner, komoidoumenos in the Old Comedy (J. Traill, *Persons of Ancient Athens*, Toronto 1994-, no. 579130) for his connection with a highly disreputable trade. Family connections with an unglamorous trade were a stick with which to beat nouveaux riches or pretentious men. Satyric drama also touched upon some trades to show a new perspective on tradition myths, e.g. Sophocles’ *Πλύντριαι.*

Although it was established and recognizable to Greeks with rhetorical education (cf. Nisbet *Odes I*, p. 180 on its literary pedigree), the metaphorical use of the ship of state is not used in New Comedy. One can, however, imagine that along with Euripides, lighter subjects such as Dionysos Shipwrecked, Ναυαγός (Aristophanes fr. 277, although rejected by ancient scholars as not his, see *Life of Aristophanes*, Koster XXVIII 66-7) had some influence.

Education and the father-son relationship was another important topic. Ar. *Clouds* is a comedy not only about sophistic education (ὅρᾷς οὖν ὡς ἀγαθὸν τὸ μανθάνειν; 826), but also about the conflict of generations and parasitic, idle philosophers. In this fragment, the learning to which the young man is exhorted is,


as noted above, strikingly a-philosophical.

1 ὦ Κλέων Clearly not the long dead Kleon the Tanner, nor is there anything in the fragment to suggest that Stratocles – a Cleon for a new generation – is meant here, pace Major, *GRBS* 38 (1997) 48-9. As the usage of ὦ probably decreased during the fourth century and particularly at the end of that century (Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address*, p. 201) with usage down to only 12 percent in Menander, its use seems to be approaching that of koine (Schwyzer Gr. Gr. II. 61⁴, Mayser, *Grammatik der Griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit* 1926-38: ii.i.55). ὦ with proper names in Philemon is used 4 times. Significantly, it always marks the beginning of a gnomic speech: fr. 120.1, 135.1, 136.1, and here. Menander provides more dramatic context and Gomme-Sandbach on *Dysk*. 823 are right to say that it can indicate appeals, remonstrance, or gnomic speeches.⁹

⁹ All cases of ὦ with *proper* names in Menander can be grouped thus:

**a) a gnomic speech or a smug or pompous lecture:** *Georg*. fr. 3,1: ‘sententious old bore’, Arnott, *Kith* 81: ’a smug lecture on how to choose a wife’, Arnott, *Kith* fr. 4,1, perhaps *Kith* fr. 10 (context unknown), *Mis*. fr. 7 Sandbach, fr. *300*, fr. 795.1 KA. fr. 1001.1 (spurious); **commiseration:** *Kith* fr. 1.1 ‘I used to think that… but now I see that even the rich like you have troubles’. *Pompous* fr. 246,2 (Naukleros), **downright impudent:** *Dis. Ex*. fr. 2,2 (ὁ Bentley) if authentic, ‘the gradiloquent mumbo-jumbo of an impudent trickster’ Arnott. fr. 193, 1 (Hippokomos) could be another impudent conversation in which the Cynic Monimus is mentioned.

**b) distress and strong emotions (e.g. of love):** *Asp*. 19 Smikrines is shaken (or acting that way) by the news of Kleostratos’ death, but note that Daos replies with Ἐμμυρίνη, 20, *Georg*. 22: a distressed Myrrhine talks to her nurse (‽) Philinna, *Dysk*. 635: Simiche in distress after Knemon’s calamity, *Perinthia* 3: Daos is about to be burnt alive. **Hurting from love:** *Heros* 19, *Kolax* 69 Sandbach (B68 Arnott): perhaps Pheidias is discussing with his parasite Gnaathon how his girl has been sold by a pimp.

The categories below can be subsumed under a) or b):

**c) sincere appeals** fr. 53 KA: calling upon Zeus philios, fr. 663 KA context unknown.

**d) bitterness** *Heros* 72: Laches is threatening to expel Plangon, speaks with bitterness to Myrrhine.

**e) address to an absent character,** clearly full of sadness or indignation, but ὦ can also be a formal marker of apostrophizing an absent character: *Asp*. 14, 284: both addressed to the absent Kleostratus, *Dysk*. 220: Daos addressing angrily an absent Knemon (‘I hope all gods… blast you for your sins’). For the sake of completeness, there is a special form of **f) greetings:** *Georg* 41, ὦ χαίρε πολλά, Μυρρίνη, ‘with formal, but apparently sincere,

ἄν ὄκνης τὸ μανθάνειν ‘if you won’t make an effort to learn’ or ‘to understand what I’m saying’? ὀκνῶ + inf. is the usual form in all Menandrian cases: Georg.17, Epitr. 448, Sam. 47, Perik. 800, fr. 710.2, 655.2. The only remaining case, fr. 656.1 is incomplete. For verbs of ‘fear, shrinking, prevention, and so on’ with infinitives see Guy L. Cooper, III, K. W. Krüger, Attic Greek Prose Syntax (Ann Arbor, 1998) vol. 1: 55.3.18. At 18B he gives examples of the rarer articular infinitives: X. Cyr. 3.1.27, Pl. Ap. 28d, Grg. 522e. Cobet’s γάρ is perhaps better suited in line 3, Porson’s τι is suited only to a specific dramatic context; and so the consensus of SMA, though not sacrosanct, is important. The article creates a substantivized direct object or is used anaphorically in reference to something mentioned earlier.

2 ἀνεπικούρητον the word is first seen here and does not reappear until Onasander, as Kassel and Austin note. Alcidamas of Elea has δυσεπικούρητον, a hapax likewise used for heightened effect.¹⁰ To help people, ἐπικουρεῖν, is the standard of gentlemanly behaviour. In Dyskolos the young men put to shame their older relatives when they display it: at Dysk. 717 Knemon realizes that his hopes of achieving autarkeia were illusory – one always needs a helping hand (δεῖ γὰρ εἶναι – καὶ παρεῖναι – τὸν ἐπικουρήσοντ’ ἀεί). Sostratos too persuades his father of the importance of being generous to others: ἐπικουρεῖν πάσιν 807. We do not see many new negative compounds in Middle and New Comedy.¹¹ Durham, Vocabulary, p. 24 finds 19 new negative compounds in Menander in contrast to Aristophanes and the Old Comedy, which gives us 92 examples. Philemon, too,


seems to prefer elsewhere to express his ideas through negative clauses rather than with compounds with ἀ-privative (see below, line 3).

σεαυτοῦ τὸν βίον in place of ἀνεπικούρητον σου τὸν βίον. This position occasionally occurs (KG i.620, Cooper-Krüger 47.9.18, cf. Ar. Nub. 515-6 τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ, but τὴν σεαυτοῦ φύσιν 960), Cratinus fr. 311, Mnesimachus 3.3 KA, Ar. fr. 605, fr. adesp. 1000.38 KA: ἐμαυτῆς τὸν ἴδιον βλάψω βίον. Men. Ep. 488 τύλλουσ’ ἐαυτῆς τὰς τρίχας, etc. Galen has 4 times παρ'/or καθ’ ὶλον ἐμαυτοῦ τὸν βίον. σεαυτοῦ may also be used to add emphasis on ‘your own life’ if some cautionary tale about someone else preceded and motivated this speech.

3 οὔτε γὰρ Philemon has a fondness for negative examples in gnomic fragments (it is not A… nor B…), most clearly in fr. 97, see Conca, Acme 26 (1973) 130-31. Rather than define what something is, he shows that something is not a case of A or B, where he is free to choose the most vivid A’s and B’s.

γῆς λάβηται both of the shipwrecked: τ<erra>m attigi<>, Pl. Vid. 76. Achilles Tatius, Leucippe et Clitophon 3.5.6.20; and of a safe arrival: Leucippe 5,16,7,3. This was easily extended into metaphorical use: esse in terra atque in tuto loco Pl. Merc. 195, Most. 738. It is used slightly differently in Plut. Quaest. Conv. 730e8.

5 μὴ οὐ τέχνην μαθῶν. μὴ οὖ (with the usual synizesis) μαθῶν = εἰ μὴ μάθαι. ‘Μὴ οὖ is occasionally used with participles in negative sentences, in place of the simple μή, to express a negative condition.’ Goodwin, Moods and Tenses, § 818. E.g. ‘Ἡκεῖς γὰρ οὐ κενὴ γε, τοῦτ ἐγὼ σαφῶς ἐξοιδά, μὴ οὐχὶ δεῖμ’ ἐμοὶ φέρουσά τι, i.e. you have not come empty-handed, — (not at least) without bringing me some cause for alarm (i.e. οὐκ εἰ μὴ φέρεις). Soph. O.C. 359. οὔτ᾽ ἀνήρ πένης γεγώς δύνατ’ ἢν ἀσφαλῶς ζῆν, οὗ (δύνατ’ ἢν) εἰ μὴ μάθοι τέχνην > μὴ οὗ μαθῶν ἀσφαλῶς ζῆν τὸν βίον mot juste for both social security and safe sailing: Pausanias (VII.21.7) claims ἀσφάλειας was Poseidon’s epithet, see Olson on Ar.

6 εἰς λιμένα τὸν <τῆς> τέχνης. Bentley’s τέχνης is universally accepted as τύχης in codd. is a common mistake for it. As τύχη has connotations of instability here, the ‘harbour of (unstable, uncertain) tyche’ would make no sense. Now in tragedy λιμήν with gen. can mean ‘protection from’: κακῶν, Aesch. Supp. 471, χείματος, Eur. Andr. 891; however, even that is out of question here: what harbour could truly protect against tyche? The symmetry with line 8 (κἂν μὲν… τέχνης vs. ἂν δ’ ἀπαίδευτος) also calls for τέχνη here.


καθάψας ‘having made the anchor fast so as to be safe’ ἀνάπτειν is used in nautical contexts: DGE II.1 to tie, moor, Eur. Med. 770, HF 478, cf. also IT 1351 ἄγκυραν ἐξανῆπτον ’were suspending the anchor from the cat-head’. Evidence for καθάψαν as a nautical term is lacking. Kock’s πείσματα (retinacula puppis, Ov. Met. 15. 696) may have been inspired by examples such as Od.15.498: ἐκ δ’ εὐνάς ἐβάλον, κατὰ δὲ πρυμνήσι’ ἔδησαν. The word was still used by Plato, Laws 893b ἀσφαλοῦς πείσματος, but it is perhaps unnecessary. A touch of prolixity drives home the point: the mooring in a craft or trade must be permanent.


9 τῆς ἀπορίας εἰς τὸ γῆρας οὐκ ἔχει σωτηρίαν. the hyperbaton is worth notice. Cf. Men. Asp. 11-2: τὸν μακρὸν πόνων τινά / ἄνάπαωσιν εἰς τὸ γῆρας. Philemon, fr. 111 has another image where sailing and ἐφόδια – provisions for a journey by sea and by extension maintenance or ‘life savings’ – are used to drive home a point about the necessity of preparing for old age. Utopias in Old Comedy often paint a picture of a pleasant life in old age: Crates fr. 16: ἄνηρ γέρων will not have to work
(διακονεῖν) and all kitchen appliances will be automated. In stark contrast to this passage, it is also common to hope for (or mourn the loss of) pleasant company of friends to spend one’s old age with: Cratinus, fr. 1.4-5 Κύμωνι λιπαρόν γήρας εὖωχούμενος / αἰῶνα πάντα συνδιατρίψειν.

10 ‘ολλὰ χρήματ’ ἔστιν ἡμῖν.’ ἂ γε τάχιστ’ ἀπόλλυται. γε is commonly used in answers, even answers in imaginary dialogues. On its own, it is impossible to decide whether to treat this verse as spoken by one or two persons, see Denniston, Greek Particles, p. 137 (viii). But everything that follows, esp. line 13 strongly suggests that the figure called hypophora (subiectio) is used. Rehdantz-Blass still give the fullest examples from Demosthenes. An up-to-date treatment is in Cooper, Zur syntaktischen Theorie und Textkritik der attischen Autoren (diss. Zürich, 1971), p. 10-31.

11 κτήματ’, οἰκίαι. κτήματα is a malleable term, but χρήματα καὶ κτήματα was a productive jingle, cf. e.g. Sandys’ note on Isocr. Ad Demonicum 28. Perhaps this (rather than ἄγροι, as Enk assumes) is the original of Plautus’ fundi et aedes, Truc. 174, 177, 186, 214, Men. 1158.

τύχης δὲ μεταβολὰς οὔκ ἀγνοεῖς. Haviland, QS 19 (1984) 179-202. Gomme-Sandbach, p. 243 suggest that the use of the plural may signify that a variety of misfortunes bring the reversal from riches to poverty. Fortune can change easily13 and the wealth is precarious. One should not just hope for good luck but proactively work with Tyche (Philemon, fr. 56). In New Comedy the change for the worse only concerns material possessions and does not extend to the wider plot.14 To look for safety in a trade is rather unusual. One easily finds in

13 τύχη ἀβέβαιος, οὐ βέβαιος’ is regularly used to express the precariousness of riches: Eur. El. 941, HF 511-12, Phoen. 555-8, Alex. fr. 283 KA, Men. Georg. fr. 2.4, Dysk. 797 with Handley ad loc.

14 Bruzzese, Studi su Filemone comico, 2011, p. 166.
literature somewhat more parainetic suggestions: e.g. Isocrates’ exhortation to Demonicus (ἡ δὲ τῆς ἀρετῆς κτῆσις... μόνη μὲν συγγηράσκει, πλούτου δὲ κρείττων... Dem. 7, cf. Soph. fr. 201d Radt), safer than wealth is ψυχή Alexis 341, φύσις E. El. 940-41, friends’ gratitude Men. Dysk. 797-812, τὸ νομίζεισθαι χρηστοί, fr. 261, cf. ubi amici, ibidem opes, Pl. Truc. 885.

12 One can become poor through profligacy (Gnatho and his friend, patria qui abligurrierat bona, Ter. Eun. 235) and spending too much on their love affairs. Interestingly, that possibility is not mentioned here. Unimpeachable characters are reduced to poverty through other means: they go bankrupt when the ship that carried their livelihood sank (as happened to Pataikos in Men. Perik, 806-9) or by excessively helping their friends (Arist. Nic. Eth. 1121a19, Daemones in Pl. Rudens: sed dum alios servat se impedivit interim, rem bene paratam comitate perdidit 37-8). This is much softer and less political than are the cases found in Old and Middle Comedy where taxes, law-suits, liturgies may also cause loss of money, see Antiphanes fr. 202 with I. Konstantakos, A Commentary on the Fragments of Eight Plays of Antiphanes (Diss. Cambridge, 2000), p. 231.

eἰς τὴν αὐριον. cf. Theog. 664-5: καὶ ὃς μάλα πολλὰ πέπαται / ἐξαπίνης †άπο πάντ’ οὖν † ὀλεσε νυκτί μὴν. On Eur. Phoen. 558 and a fragment from his Ino, Demetrius of Phalerum (Περὶ τύχης, fr. 83B Fortenbaugh, Schütrumpf) says: τὰ μὲν ἄλλα καλὸς ἔφη λέγειν αὐτὸν βέλτιον δ’ ἔχειν ἂν, εἰ μὴ μίαν ἡμέραν ἄλλα σταμμὴν ἐπε χρόνου. He also wrote Περὶ γῆρως. Handley and Webster note some similarities between Demetrius, Menander and the contemporary philosophic theories (Handley Dysk., p. 271, Webster Studies in Menander, Manchester, 1950, p. 201). It is possible that Philemon was part of this intellectual milieu.

13 ἥλι ἐταῖροι καὶ φίλοι σοι καὶ συνήθεις, νὴ Δία, Rehdantz-Blass, p. 35: †Das Kernwort der ὑποφορά kann durch die Stellung zwischen ἄλλα und νὴ Δία sehr gehoben werden.’ For this reason I prefer to see φίλοι καὶ συνήθεις not as adjectives (LSJ) but rather as nouns – as often in later Greek – in what some would call περιβολή (proximity; in Ps.-Aelius Aristides, Ars Rhet. 1.3.3.1 τοὺς ἐταῖρους καὶ φίλους is given as an example). Cf. combinations such as amicus et sodalis, Pl. Merc. 475, aequalem et sodalem, Merc. 612, amice...aequalis, Trin. 48.
14 ἔρανον εἰσοίσουσιν ἔρανον (εἰσ)φέρειν = ἐρανίζειν of interest-free loans or generous favours done without an eye for gain (δανείζειν is used of lending at interest). See Arnott’s commentary on Alexis, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 423-4 with bibliography. Lending and borrowing is often used to describe particular character traits in Theoph. Characters, cf. Diggle’s commentary (Cambridge, 2004), p. 175. Arnott collects examples of the common sentiment expressed in fr. 282 and perhaps relevant here – that the greatest favour a father can bestow on his son is to raise him properly. Here a father seems to be implying that to expect ἔρανος from friends is useless: the son should rather listen to him.

eὖχοι μή λαβεῖν πεῖραν φίλων, In Athens it is harder and harder to see who is a real friend and who is just after your money: ubi qui amici, qui infideles sint nequeas pernoscere Pl. Merc. 839. res amicos invenit Pl. St. 520ff., cf. Philemon, fr. 68.3-5 KA: if you have Amaltheia’s horn, i.e. money, τοῦτ’ ἐὰν ἔχῃ κ., λέγε / πρὸς τοῦτ’ εἰ βούλει, πάντα σοι γενήσεται, / φίλοι, βοηθοί, μάρτυρες, συνοικίαι. In paraenetic literature one is directly exhorted to test his friends by pretending that he needs something: μήτε μετὰ βλάβης πειρῶ τῶν φίλων, μήτε ἀπείρος εἶναι τῶν ἐταίρων θέλε. τοῦτο δὲ ποιήσεις, ἐὰν μή δεόμενος τὸ δεῖσθαι προσποιή, Isocrates, Dem. 24.

15 εἰ δὲ μή, Cooper Zur syntaktischen Theorie, p. 180-1, Kühner-Gerth 2.484, also 2.486.6, Stahl 418.3. Cooper-Krüger 65.5.12, G. Wakker Conditions and Conditionals (Amsterdam, 1994), p. 282, Beroutsos’ Commentary (Göttingen, 2005) on Men. Asp. 156f. where the less common ἐὰν δὲ μή appears. Ideally speaking (often with μάλιστα μέν), pray that you don’t have to test your friends. The elliptic condition expressed by εἰ δὲ μή shows the less desirable, second best alternative or, as here, is simply a fossilized expression (as can be seen from its illogical use after the negative imperatives) ‘otherwise, or else’.

γνώσηι σεαυτὸν ἄλλο μηδέν πλὴν σκιάν. Verbs of perception sometimes take μή, cf. Thompson, Syntax of Attic Greek, p. 354. For μηδέν of persons, cf. Smyth 2736. μηδέν with a participle (here abbreviated) has a generic significance, although in Sophocles and Euripides the boundaries between the generic and specific uses of οὐ / μή with participles become porous.
Odysseus, seeing how Athena is deluding Ajax, realizes the horrible truth that the divine power over mortals is absolute. Men are unaware, deluded or, even if suspecting a higher agent, definitely powerless against the divine or against the upheavals of fortune – and that realization makes him compassionate even towards his sworn enemy:

ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδέν’ οἶδ’· ἐπουκτίρω δέ νιν δόστην ἐμπας, καίπερ ὄντα δυσμενὴ, ὅθονεκ’ ἂτι συγκατέζευκται κακῇ, οὐδὲν τὸ τούτου μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦμον σκοπῶν. ὀρῶ γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδέν ὄντας ἄλλο πλὴν εἰδολ’ ὁσοπερ ζόμεν ἢ κούφην σκιάν. (Soph. Aj. 121ff.)

As Pindar realizes, joy is transitory, and man’s existence is insubstantial: ἐπάμεροι· τί δέ τις; τί δ’ οὔ τις; / σκι ᾶς ὄναρ ἄνθρωπος (Pyth. 8,95f.). Prosperity is in constant danger of a reverse and adversity is next-door to annihilation (Aesch. Ag. 1327ff.).

Property is as life to mortals, goes the common lament: χρήματα γὰρ ψυχή πέλεται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι. Hes. Erga 686, χρήματα χρήματ’ ἄνηρ / ὃς φᾶ κτεάνων θ’ ἄμα λειψθείς καὶ φίλων. Pind. Isthm 2.11. With money, one can boast to be somebody: Eur. El. 939 ήχεις τις εἶναι χρήμασι σθένων. Without money one is without value: οὐδέν ἐστιν, he is as good as dead, cf. Timocles fr. 35.1: τάργυριόν ἐστιν ἀμίμα καὶ ψυχή βροτοῖς, Pl. Trin. 257 ubi qui eget, quam preti sit parui. A penniless lover is treated as a corpse: Pl. Ps. 309ff. Truc. 164-8, 340-2. In the Old Comedy utopia a young man who used to spend his time with a rich old woman no longer needs her wealth and νῦν δέ σ’ οὐκέτι ζῆται Ar. Pl. 1033. A dead man is just a shadow under the earth, a poor or needy man is such a shadow already on earth. He is ignored and in order to avoid helping him, people pretend not to see him and turn the other way – a needy person then becomes a true shadow, cf. Ar. Pl. 834-7, esp. οἱ δ’ ἐξετρέποντο κοὐκ ἐδόκουν ὃραν μ’ ἔτι 837, Ter. Eun. 238 omnes noti me atque amici deserunt. Ter. Eun. 238 omnes noti me atque amici deserunt. Cf. Eur. Med. 561, Bond on Eur. HF 55-7, Theognis 209-10, Taillardat, Images, p. 45 n2.

Just like with Odysseus, out of true knowledge of the human condition and of the
absolute power of gods or Fortune, comes true compassion. Because good fortune and wealth are transient, one can never be sure of his own future. With such knowledge, helping friends in need comes easy:

οὐκ ἄχθομαι σ᾿ ἵδὼν τε καὶ λαβὼν φίλον.

ὅστις γὰρ εὖ δρᾶν εὖ παθὼν ἐπίσταται,

παντὸς γένοτ᾿ ἂν κτήματος κρείσσων φίλος. (Soph. Philoctetes 671ff.)

Both the father and the son have undoubtedly later come to the same conclusion that friendship is the most important thing in life: τοῦ βίου / τί γάρ ἐστιν ἡμῖν τῶν φίλων μεῖζόν ἄρμον; Adesp. 1017.49-50 K-A 15.

15 As I close this paper with such a beautiful sentiment, I am reminded of the immense debt of gratitude to true friends at the Classics Department here at Kyoto University: Professor Emeritus Tetsuo Nakatsukasa and Professor Hiroyuki Takahashi. Although I am about to leave Japan, it is my deeply-held wish that this is just temporary and that one day I will be able to return to Japan and find a way to repay their gifts of friendship by contributing to the Classical studies in Japan.