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ARISTOPHANES

BIRDS · LYSISTRATA

WOMEN AT THE  
THESMOPHORIA



*Edited and Translated by*  
JEFFREY HENDERSON

Aristophanes (ca. 446–386 BC), one of the world's greatest comic dramatists, has been admired since antiquity for his iridescent wit and beguiling fantasy, exuberant language, and brilliant satire of the social, intellectual, and political life of Athens at its height. In this third volume of a new Loeb Classical Library edition of Aristophanes, Jeffrey Henderson presents a freshly edited Greek text and a lively, unexpurgated translation of three plays with full explanatory notes.

In *Birds* Aristophanes turns from the pointed political satire characteristic of earlier plays to a fantasy that soars literally into the air in search of a carefree world. Here the enterprising protagonists create a utopian counter-Athens, called Cloud-cuckooland, ruled by birds. *Lysistrata* blends boisterous comedy and an earnest call for peace. *Lysistrata*, our first comic heroine, organizes a panhellenic conjugal strike of young wives until their husbands end the war between Athens and Sparta. Athenian women again take center stage in *Women at the Thesmophoria*, this time to punish Euripides for portraying them as wicked. Parody of Euripides' plots enlivens this witty confrontation of the sexes.

The Introduction to this ongoing edition is in Volume I. Also in the first volume is *Acharnians*, in which a small landowner, tired of the Peloponnesian War, magically arranges a personal peace treaty; and

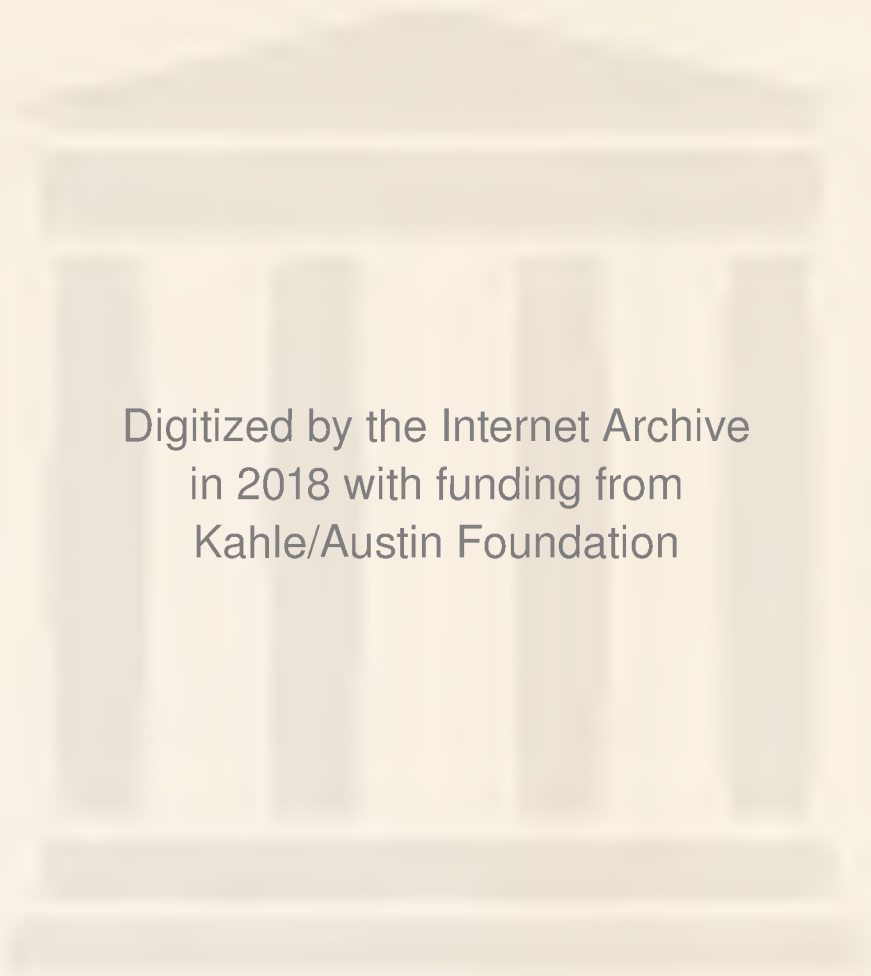
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ARISTOPHANES

III

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# ARISTOPHANES

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WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

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## PREFACE

For advice and criticism as this edition goes forward I wish to express my gratitude to George Goold, Editor Emeritus of the Library; Philippa Goold, Associate Editor; Zeph Stewart, Executive Trustee; and Professor S. Douglas Olson. For sabbatical support I am grateful to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the College of Arts and Sciences at Boston University.

Jeffrey Henderson

# BIRDS

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

*Birds* was produced by Callistratus<sup>1</sup> at the Dionysia of 414 and placed second; Ameipsias placed first with *Revelers* and Phrynichus third with *The Loner*.<sup>2</sup> *Birds* has the distinction of being the longest surviving comedy from antiquity (largely due to the multiplication of exemplificatory scenes after the parabasis), with the most adult speaking roles (22). Although the plot follows a pattern familiar from Aristophanes' other "heroic" plays—a complaint, a fantastic idea, its implementation following a contest, episodes exemplifying the consequences, and the hero's utopian triumph—it shows greater structural unity than in earlier plays, maintaining suspense by postponing the dénouement until the end, and momentum by having the Chorus Leader deliver the parabasis wholly in character; the plays of 411 show a similar concern for plot unity. *Birds* also has a spectacular chorus, each of whose twenty-four dancers seems to have represented a different bird;<sup>3</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> He had already produced at least three plays for Aristophanes (*Banqueters*, *Babylonians*, and *Acharnians*), and would later produce *Lysistrata*.

<sup>2</sup> It is possible that Phrynichus was also the author of *Revellers* and Ameipsias only its producer.

<sup>3</sup> Although a contemporary vase (Malibu, the J. Paul Getty

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lyrics are among Aristophanes' most elaborate and lovely; and the fantasy is truly aetherial.

Information about Aristophanes' career is scanty for the years between *Peace* (D 421) and *Birds*, the period of the Peace of Nicias. There is no sign of the partisan political engagement that had animated his earlier plays, and the datable fragments indicate a turn to mythological and other relatively apolitical subjects. Certainly the political environment had changed. Though the Peace of Nicias was not a true peace (the signatories remained mutually suspicious, and not all of Sparta's allies subscribed), Athens and its empire were quiet enough so that demagogic politics, Aristophanes' favorite theme in the 420s, had fallen into relative abeyance; he would not stoop to attack Hyperbolus, Cleon's successor, a target he declared fit only for lesser poets (*Clouds* 549–59). The political arena was instead dominated by the dashing young aristocrat Alcibiades, now making his first bid for ascendancy, and the wealthy Nicias, a veteran general and conservative stalwart. Their backgrounds, rival policies, and contrasting styles offered great comic potential, but since both were rightists hostile to demagogues (in 416 they colluded in Hyperbolus' ostracism), neither was much bothered by the comic poets.<sup>4</sup>

*Birds* fits this trend, differing from all of Aristophanes' other extant fifth-century plays in taking no topical issue, political or otherwise, as a theme, either expressly or, like

Museum 82.AE.83), which may illustrate our play, shows two identically costumed bird-dancers.

<sup>4</sup> For the political biases of Aristophanes and his rivals see vol. 1, pp. 12–23.

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*Knights* and *Wasps*, allegorically. To be sure, there is plenty of topical satire, but all of it is incidental to a fantasy that soars above the world's particulars to a conjured realm, where the most familiar hierarchies of empirical reality—earth and sky, nature and culture, polis and wilds, humans, animals, and gods—are blurred, reordered, or even abolished, and whose hero attains power surpassing even that of the gods.

Two old Athenians, Euelpides (“Confident”) and Peisetaerus (“Persuader of His Comrade(s)”),<sup>5</sup> have abandoned Athens in order to escape their debts. Led by a jackdaw and a crow, they visit Tereus, once human but now a bird,<sup>6</sup> to learn if on his flights he has ever seen a care-free polis where they could settle. But none of Tereus’ suggestions proves satisfactory, for no polis is carefree. Peisetaerus<sup>7</sup> then asks about the life of the birds, which is carefree but lacks a polis. Suddenly he has an astonishing idea: to turn the scattered bird world into a mighty bird polis. Tereus summons the birds, represented by the Chorus. Being inveterate enemies of humankind, the birds are initially hostile, but Peisetaerus wins them over by pointing out that they were the original kings of the universe long before the Olympians took over, and by proposing a

<sup>5</sup> The MSS’ “Peisthetaerus” is a grammatically impossible conflation of two original variants, Peithetaerus and (with the more usual formant) Peisetaerus.

<sup>6</sup> Only this element of the myth of Tereus and Procne is relevant; its violent elements (15 n.) are ignored.

<sup>7</sup> Or possibly Euelpides, for editors differ in assigning lines in the prologue; for discussion of the issues see H.-G. Nesselrath in *Museum Helveticum* 53 (1996) 91-99.



## BIRDS

plan: the birds will build an aerial city that completely occupies the sky; demand that the Olympians return power to them or face a blockade; and instruct humankind to sacrifice henceforth to the birds, for birds have the power to harm humans if they refuse, but also to give them every blessing if they accept. The birds are delighted with this plan and appoint Peisetaerus their leader; a magical root will give him wings. In the parabasis the Chorus Leader offers a cosmogony justifying the birds' claim to cosmic primogeniture.

Peisetaerus reappears newly winged, and names his new polis Cloudcuckooland. Scarcely has he begun the founding sacrifice when a parade of pests and profiteers, most of them satirizing familiar Athenian types, arrive seeking admission to the new polis; but none is admitted. Meanwhile Iris (Rainbow), messenger of the gods, is intercepted on her way to humankind to announce Zeus' command for a resumption of sacrifices; Peisetaerus contemptuously turns her away. Finally an embassy from the Olympian gods arrives to negotiate a settlement. But Peisetaerus, secretly aided by Prometheus (a traditional defender of humankind against Zeus, and a god held in great affection at Athens), talks them into complete surrender: Zeus will return his scepter to the birds, and to Peisetaerus hand over his thunderbolt and his regal power, personified by a maiden, Princess (*Basileia*, "Sovereignty"). In the finale, the Chorus praise and congratulate Peisetaerus as he weds Princess and becomes the new king of the universe.

The fantasy of *Birds*, though it is set far from Athens and lacks a political theme, nevertheless fits the utopian

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mold of *Acharnians* and *Peace*: a hero expels, excludes, or renders harmless those forces human, natural, or divine that frustrate personal happiness or impede the common welfare. In this respect Cloudcuckooland is a cosmic avatar of Dicaeopolis' marketplace, a utopian counter-Athens. Peisetaerus too remains very much a contemporary Athenian in his restlessness, his enterprising cleverness, his visionary ideas, his persuasive skill (displaying distinct sophistic elements), and his expansive dreams of power. Like previous comic heroes he wins the freedom to have things his own way and to enjoy untrammelled feasting and sex; it is also made clear that everyone else—birds, humans, and even the gods—are better off under his new regime than they had been under the old (cf. especially 610, 1271–1307, 1605–15, 1726–30).

Peisetaerus' new regime has nevertheless been seen as a sinister affair, along the lines of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. This reading requires that we view the play as fundamentally ironic. But that is a technique unparalleled in ancient comedy, and on any straightforward reading we are always encouraged to identify with Peisetaerus, and therefore to approve of what he does. There is no sign of a coming fall (as in *Clouds*), no qualms or disapproval from the Chorus or any sympathetic character. Nor is there anything that would strike the average spectator as self-evidently sinister. Burlesque treatments of the gods, for example, and expressions of dissatisfaction with their rule are hardly rare in Attic drama, and Peisetaerus' remark that he is roasting "some birds who have been convicted of attempted rebellion against the bird democracy" (1583–85) is merely an incidental joke about the previous year's tyranny-scare and

## BIRDS

spate of prosecutions in Athens,<sup>8</sup> and is of no importance to the plot of the play.

Still, the grandiosity of Peisetaerus' ambition, his subversion of the natural order of things, and his crowning apotheosis may fairly be thought hubristic even for a comic hero. Perhaps some spectators saw it that way, but probably not most of them, for Peisetaerus' ambition echoes the Athenians' own mood in the spring of 414. The previous summer they had dispatched, on the advice of Alcibiades, a great armada to conquer Sicily. According to Thucydides, who remarks on the expedition's "astonishing audacity" (6.31), the great majority of Athenians were stricken with "lust" for the power and wealth that this conquest would bring, were absolutely confident (*euelpides*) of success, and were so excessively enthusiastic as to view opponents of the expedition as disloyal to the city (6.24). Nor were Athenian spirits dampened even after a year of limited success in Sicily, the recall of Alcibiades from the command on a charge of impiety, and his subsequent defection to Sparta. On the contrary, the Athenians dispatched a second expedition to reinforce the first, and a few months after the performance of *Birds* even sent troops into Laconia in support of Argos (6.105), finally ending the Peace of Nicias.

The allusions to current events in *Birds* reflect this pop-

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Thucydides 6.53-61. The absence of any reference by name to any of the some 65 men denounced or convicted in these scandals in comedies written between 415 and 410 (the period of Alcibiades' first exile) may be the result of the Decree of Syracosius, which somehow limited comic freedom (Schol. *Birds* 1297, Phrynichus fr. 26).

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ular optimism: Nicias is praised for his strategic skill at Syracuse (363) and chided for delays (639); a would-be father beater is sent to the Thracian front (1360–71); and the reduction of Melos in 416, one of the most ominous episodes in Thucydides (5.84–111) and remembered after the war as an example of imperial excess, is the subject of a casual joke (186), as is the outlawry of Alcibiades (145–47). The Athenians were now at the peak of their power and confidence, with no inkling that within two years their great armada was to be utterly destroyed and their very survival cast into doubt.

### *Text*

Four papyri preserve fragments of *Birds*; two of them are not cited in the notes: *PBerol.* 13231 + 21201(2) (V/VI), partially preserving lines 819–29, 859–64, and *POxy.* ined. (II), partially preserving lines 1661–76 (cf. Dunbar's edition, p. 733).

There are twelve independent medieval MSS and one leaf of a palimpsest codex (F). Among the pre-triclinian witnesses there has been much horizontal contamination, with only RS, VE (in the first few hundred lines), and AM/ΓU showing consistent affinity as groups; M9, copied from E before E was damaged, can be used to reconstruct E's lost text. Triclinius' text (q) was based on a MS or MSS closely related to ΓU; the MSS descending from its hyparchetypes t and p reflect at least two levels of Triclinian recension as well as later editorial activity.

## BIRDS

### *Sigla*

- Π1 *PLouvre* ed. H. Weil, *RPh* 6 (1882) 179–85 (VI),  
 lines 1057–85, 1101–27  
 Π2 *POxy.* 1401 (V), lines 382–4, 460–61  
 F Laurentianus 60.9 (X<sup>ex</sup>), lines 1393–1454  
 R Ravennas 429 (c. 950)  
 S readings found in the Suda  
 V Venetus Marcianus 474 (XI/XII)  
 E Estensis a.U.5.10 (XIV/XV<sup>in</sup>), om. lines 222–601  
 M9 Ambrosianus L41 sup. (XIV), representing E in  
 lines 222–601  
 A Parisinus gr. 2712 (XIV<sup>in</sup>)  
 M Ambrosianus L 39 sup. (c. 1320)  
 Γ Laurentianus 31.15 (c. 1325)  
 U Vaticanus Urbinas 141 (XIV)  
 a the consensus of the MSS above  
 Vp2 Vaticanus Palatinus 67 (XV)  
 H Hauniensis 1980 (XV)  
 C Parisinus gr. 2717 (XV/XVI)  
 L Holkhamensis 88 (XV<sup>in</sup>)  
 Vv17 Vaticanus gr. 2181 (XIV<sup>ex</sup>)  
 B Parisinus gr. 2715 (XIV<sup>ex</sup>)  
 t the hyparchetype of LVv17B  
 p the hyparchetype of Vp2HC  
 q the consensus of pt



## ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ, Ἀθηναῖος  
ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ, Ἀθηναῖος  
ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ Τηρέως  
ΤΗΡΕΤΣ, ἔποψ  
γεγεννημένος  
ΙΕΡΕΤΣ  
ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ  
ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ  
ΜΕΤΩΝ  
ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ Ἀθηναίων  
ΨΗΦΙΣΜΑΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ  
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Α΄  
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Β΄  
ΙΡΙΣ  
ΚΗΡΤΞ Α΄  
ΠΑΤΡΑΛΟΙΑΣ  
ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ  
διθυραμβοποιός  
ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ  
ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΤΣ  
ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ  
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ  
ΤΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΣ θεός  
ΚΗΡΤΞ Β΄

ΧΟΡΟΣ ὀρνίθων

ΚΩΦΑ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ  
ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ καὶ  
ΜΑΝΟΔΩΡΟΣ/  
ΜΑΝΗΣ, οἰκέται  
Εὐελπίδου καὶ  
Πεισεταίρου  
ΟΙΚΕΤΑΙ Τηρέως, δύο  
ΦΟΙΝΙΚΟΠΤΕΡΟΣ  
ὄρνις  
ΜΗΔΟΣ ὄρνις  
ΕΠΟΨ ὄρνις  
ΚΑΤΩΦΑΓΑΣ ὄρνις  
ΠΡΟΚΝΗ, ἀηδὼν  
γεγεννημένη  
ΑΥΛΗΤΗΣ, κόραξ  
ἐσκενασμένος  
ΟΙΚΕΤΑΙ, τοξόται καὶ  
σφενδονῆται  
ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

EUELPIDES, an Athenian  
PEISETAERUS, an Athenian

SLAVE of Tereus

TEREUS, turned hoopoe

PRIEST

POET

ORACLE COLLECTOR

METON

INSPECTOR from Athens

DECREE SELLER

FIRST MESSENGER

SECOND MESSENGER

IRIS

FIRST HERALD

FATHER BEATER

CINESIAS, a dithyrambic  
poet

INFORMER

PROMETHEUS

POSEIDON

HERACLES

TRIBALLIAN God

SECOND HERALD

CHORUS of Birds

SILENT CHARACTERS

XANTHIAS and

MANODORUS (also  
called MANES),

Slaves of Euelpides

and Peisetaerus

SLAVES of Tereus

FLAMINGO, a bird

MEDE, a bird

HOOPOE, a bird

GOBBLER, a bird

PROCNE, turned night-  
ingale

PIPER, costumed as a  
raven

SLAVES, archers and  
slingers

PRINCESS

## ΟΡΝΙΘΕΣ

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὀρθὴν κελεύεις, ἧ τὸ δένδρον φαίνεται;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

διαρραγείης. ἦδε δ' αὖ κρώζει πάλιν.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τί, ὦ πόνηρ', ἄνω κάτω πλανύττομεν;  
ἀπολούμεθ' ἄλλως τὴν ὁδὸν προφορουμένω.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

5 τὸ δ' ἐμὲ κορώνη πειθόμενον τὸν ἄθλιον  
ὁδοῦ περιελθεῖν στάδια πλείν ἢ χίλια.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τὸ δ' ἐμὲ κολοιῶ πειθόμενον τὸν δύσμορον  
ἀποσποδῆσαι τοὺς ὄνυχας τῶν δακτύλων.

2-1761 Πεισ- Dobree: Πεισθ- a

---

<sup>1</sup> The name (unattested for a real person) means "Confident."

<sup>2</sup> The name (unattested for a real person) means "Persuader of His Comrade(s)."

## BIRDS

*The stage is arrayed as a wooded, rocky landscape, and the scene building represents first the Hoopoe's nest and later Peisetaerus' house; before it is a thicket. PEISETAERUS, carrying a crow, and EUELPIDES, carrying a jackdaw, enter by a side passage; behind them are their two Slaves, Xanthias and Manodorus, who carry the baggage.*

EUELPIDES<sup>1</sup>

*(to his jackdaw)* Is it straight ahead you're pointing us, toward that tree over there?

PEISETAERUS<sup>2</sup>

*(to his crow)* Blast you! *(to Euelpides)* This one keeps croaking "go back!"

EUELPIDES

Look, you wiseacre, what's the point of our trekking back and forth? We're goners if we keep rambling aimlessly every which way.

PEISETAERUS

I'm pitiful, letting a crow convince me to hike more than a hundred miles!

EUELPIDES

And I'm hapless, letting a jackdaw convince me to pound the nails off my toes!

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὅποι γῆς ἐσμὲν οἶδ' ἔγωγ' ἔτι.  
10 ἐντευθενὶ τὴν πατρίδ' ἂν ἐξεύροις σύ που;

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐδ' ἂν μὰ Δία γ' ἐντεῦθεν Ἐξηκεστίδης.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οἴμοι.

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

σὺ μὲν, ὦ τᾶν, τὴν ὁδὸν ταύτην ἴθι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἦ δεινὰ νῶ δέδρακεν οὐκ τῶν ὀρνέων,  
ὁ πινακοπώλης Φιλοκράτης μελαγχολῶν,  
15 ὃς τῶδ' ἔφασκε νῶν φράσειν τὸν Τηρέα,  
τὸν ἔποφ', ὃς ὄρνις ἐγένετ' <ἄνθρωπός ποτ' ὦν>  
κἀπέδοτο τὸν μὲν Θαρρελείδου τουτονὶ  
κολοιὸν ὀβολοῦ, τῆνδεδὶ τριωβόλου.  
τὼ δ' οὐκ ἄρ' ἦστην οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν δάκνειν.

16 <ἄνθρωπός ποτ' ὦν> Köchly: ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων a

<sup>3</sup> Excecestides was evidently vulnerable to the charge of having Carian ancestry (cf. 764) and thus of falsely claiming Athenian citizenship; he was ridiculed also in Phrynichus' *Loner* (fr. 20), produced at this same festival.

<sup>4</sup> To judge from 1076–83, Philocrates (otherwise unknown) was a prominent wholesaler of birds.

<sup>5</sup> In this myth, as dramatized by Sophocles (cf. *POxy.* 3013), probably in the late 430s, Tereus, King of Thrace, wed the Athe-



## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

I've even lost track of where in the world we are; you, I suppose, could find our native land from here?

EUELPIDES

God no, from here not even Execestides could!<sup>3</sup>

PEISETAERUS

(*stumbling*) Damn!

EUELPIDES

Travel your own path, friend.

PEISETAERUS

He's really done us dirty, that man from the bird market who sells by the tray, that crazy Philocrates.<sup>4</sup> He told us that these two birds would show us the way to Tereus,<sup>5</sup> the hoopoe who once was human and turned into a bird; and he sold us that Son of Tharreleides<sup>6</sup> there, the jackdaw, for an obol, and this crow for three obols. But they turn out to know nothing but nipping. (*to the jackdaw*) What are you

nian princess Procne, but on a later visit to Athens raped her sister Philomela, whose tongue he cut out to prevent her from telling anyone. But she depicted the crime on an embroidery she sent to Procne. The sisters avenged themselves by killing Itys, Procne's only child by Tereus, and serving him to his father for dinner. When Tereus chased the sisters with a sword, the gods changed him into a hoopoe, Procne into a nightingale, and Philomela into a swallow. The nightingale's song was regarded as a lament for Itys.

<sup>6</sup> Evidently a man resembling a jackdaw, which is small and noisy, like the diminutive Asopodorus (Eupolis fr. 255), whom the comic poet Teleclides compared to a jackdaw (fr. 46) and who was perhaps the man referred to here.

ARISTOPHANES

20 καὶ νῦν τί κέχηνας; ἔσθ' ὅποι κατὰ τῶν πετρῶν  
 ἡμᾶς ἔτ' ἄξεις; οὐ γάρ ἔστ' ἐνταῦθά τις  
 ὁδός.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐδὲ μὰ Δί' ἐνταῦθά γ' ἀτραπὸς οὐδαμοῦ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἦδ' ἡ κορώνη τῆς ὁδοῦ τι λέγει πέρι.  
 οὐ ταῦτ' αὐτὰ κρώζει μὰ Δία νῦν τε καὶ τότε.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τί δὴ λέγει περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

25 τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἢ  
 βρύκουσ' ἀπέδεσθαί φησί μου τοὺς δακτύλους;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐ δεινὸν οὖν δῆτ' ἔστιν ἡμᾶς δεομένους  
 ἐς κόρακας ἐλθεῖν καὶ παρεσκευασμένους  
 ἔπειτα μὴ ἔξευρεῖν δύνασθαι τὴν ὁδόν;  
 30 ἡμεῖς γάρ, ὦνδρες οἱ παρόντες ἐν λόγῳ,  
 νόσον νοσοῦμεν τὴν ἐναντίαν Σάκκᾳ·  
 ὁ μὲν γὰρ ὦν οὐκ ἀστὸς εἰσβιάζεται,  
 ἡμεῖς δὲ φυλῆ καὶ γένει τιμώμενοι,  
 ἀστοὶ μετ' ἀστῶν, οὐ σοβοῦντος οὐδενὸς  
 35 ἀνεπτόμεθ' ἐκ τῆς πατρίδος ἀμφοῖν τοῖν ποδοῖν,  
 αὐτὴν μὲν οὐ μισοῦντ' ἐκείνην τὴν πόλιν  
 τὸ μὴ οὐ μεγάλην εἶναι φύσει κεῦδαίμονα  
 καὶ πᾶσι κοινὴν ἐναποτεῖσαι χρήματα.

## BIRDS

gaping at this time? Do you mean to take us into these cliffs somewhere? I tell you, there's no passage here.

EUELPIDES

There isn't even a path around here, anywhere at all.

PEISETAERUS

Here's the crow saying something about the passage; yes indeed, it's croaking differently now.

EUELPIDES

What's it say about the passage, then?

PEISETAERUS

Nothing, only that it's going to chomp off my fingers!

EUELPIDES

(*to the spectators*) Isn't it terrible that just when we're ready and eager to go to the buzzards, we can't find the way? You see, gentlemen of the audience, we're sick with the opposite of Sacas'<sup>7</sup> sickness: he's a non-citizen trying to force his way in, while we, being of good standing in tribe and clan, solid citizens, with no one trying to shoo us away, have up and left our country with both feet flying. Not that we hate that city *per se*, as if it weren't essentially great and blest and open to everybody to come and watch their wealth fly away in fines. No, it's that the cicadas chirp on

<sup>7</sup> Sacas, "the Sacasian" (an Asian Scythian), was a nickname for the tragic dramatist Acestor (cf. *Wasps* 1221), who had evidently had trouble certifying his Athenian citizenship (cf. Metagenes fr. 14).

ARISTOPHANES

οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὖν τέττιγες ἕνα μῆν' ἢ δύο  
 40 ἐπὶ τῶν κραδῶν ἄδουσ', Ἀθηναῖοι δ' αἰεὶ  
 ἐπὶ τῶν δικῶν ἄδουσι πάντα τὸν βίον.  
 διὰ ταῦτα τόνδε τὸν βάδον βαδίζομεν,  
 κανοῦν δ' ἔχοντε καὶ χύτραν καὶ μυρρίνας  
 πλανώμεθα ζητοῦντε τόπον ἀπράγμονα,  
 45 ὅποι καθιδρυθέντε διαγενοίμεθ' ἄν.  
 ὁ δὲ στόλος νῶν ἐστὶ παρὰ τὸν Τηρέα,  
 τὸν ἔποπα, παρ' ἐκείνου πυθέσθαι δεομένω,  
 εἴ που τοιαύτην εἶδε πόλιν ἢ πέπτατο.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὔτος.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τί ἐστίν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἢ κορώνη μοι πάλαι  
 ἄνω τι φράζει.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

50 χῶ κολοῖος οὔτοςι  
 ἄνω κέχηνεν ὡσπερὶ δεικνύς τί μοι,  
 κοῦκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐκ ἔστιν ἐνταῦθ' ὄρνεα.  
 εἰσόμεθα δ' αὐτίκ', ἣν ποιήσωμεν ψόφον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οἶσθ' ὁ δρᾶσον; τῷ σκέλει θένε τὴν πέτραν.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

55 σὺ δὲ τῇ κεφαλῇ γ', ἴν' ἢ διπλάσιος ὁ ψόφος.

## BIRDS

their boughs for only a month or two, whereas the Athenians harp on their lawsuits their whole lives long. That's why we're trekking this trek, and wandering with basket, kettle, and myrtle boughs<sup>8</sup> in search of a peaceable place, where we can settle down and pass our lives. Our mission now is to visit Tereus the Hoopoe; we need to learn from him if anywhere on his flights he's seen that sort of city.

PEISETAERUS

Hey!

EUELPIDES

What is it?

PEISETAERUS

This crow's been trying for quite a while to show me something up there.

EUELPIDES

This jackdaw's been gaping upwards too, as if to point something out to me. There must be birds around here. (*they approach the scene building*) We'll soon find out, if we make some noise.

PEISETAERUS

Know what you should do? Thump that rock with your leg.

EUELPIDES

You thump it with your head, it'll make twice the noise.

<sup>8</sup> Implements used ceremonially in founding a settlement.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

σὺ δ' οὖν λίθῳ κόψον λαβών.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

πάνυ γ', εἰ δοκεῖ.

παῖ παῖ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί λέγεις, οὔτος; τὸν ἔποπα παῖ καλεῖς;  
οὐκ ἀντὶ τοῦ παιδός σ' ἐχρήν ἐποποῖ καλεῖν;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐποποῖ. ποιήσεις τοί με κόπτειν αὐθις αὐ.  
ἐποποῖ.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

60

τίνες οὔτοι; τίς ὁ βοῶν τὸν δεσπότην;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

Ἄπολλον ἀποτρόπαιε, τοῦ χασμήματος.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

οἶμοι τάλας, ὀρνιθοθήρα τουτῶν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὔτως τι δεινὸν οὐδὲ κάλλιον λέγεις.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

ἀπολείσθον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐσμὲν ἀνθρώπω.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

τί δαί;

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Well then, get a stone and knock.

EUELPIDES

If you like, I will. (*knocking with a stone*) Boy! Boy!

PEISETAERUS

Hey, what are you saying? Are you calling the Hoopoe “boy”? You should say “oh, Hoopoe,” not “hey boy.”

EUELPIDES

Oh, Hoopoe! You’ll only make me keep knocking, you know. Oh, Hoopoe!

*Enter from the stage door Tereus’ SLAVE, a bird with a large beak; Xanthias and Manodorus drop the baggage and retreat to the side; the crow and jackdaw fly away.*

SLAVE

Who’s there? Who’s shouting for the master?

PEISETAERUS

God save us, what a beak!

SLAVE

Heavens me, here’s a pair of birdnappers!

PEISETAERUS

Imagine speaking so harshly, and not more politely!

SLAVE

You two are dead!

PEISETAERUS

But we’re not mortals!

SLAVE

Well, what are you?



ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

65 ὑποδεδιωὺς ἔγωγε, Λιβυκὸν ὄρνεον.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

οὐδὲν λέγεις.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐρουὶ τὰ πρὸς ποδῶν.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

ὄδι δὲ δὴ τίς ἐστὶν ὄρνις; οὐκ ἐρείς;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐπικεχοδῶς ἔγωγε Φασιανικός.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀτὰρ σὺ τί θηρίον ποτ' εἶ, πρὸς τῶν θεῶν;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

ὄρνις ἔγωγε δούλος.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

70 ἠττήθης τινὸς

ἀλεκτρυόνος;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλ' ὅτε περ ὁ δεσπότης  
ἔποψ ἐγένετο, τότε γενέσθαι μ' ἠὔξατο  
ὄρνιν, ἵν' ἀκόλουθον διάκονόν τ' ἔχη.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

δεῖται γὰρ ὄρνις καὶ διακόνου τινός;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

75 οὗτός γ', ἅτ', οἶμαι, πρότερον ἄνθρωπός ποτ' ὦν.



BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Me? I'm a yellowbelly, a Libyan bird.

SLAVE

What nonsense!

PEISETAERUS

Really? Then check what's on the back of my legs.

SLAVE

And this other one, what kind of bird is he? Speak up.

EUELPIDES

I'm a brownbottom, from the Pheasance.

PEISETAERUS

(*to the Slave*) Say, what kind of creature might you be, in heaven's name?

SLAVE

Me, I'm a slavebird.

EUELPIDES

Vanquished by some fighting cock, eh?

SLAVE

No, it's just that when master turned into a hoopoe, he prayed that I become a bird too, so that he could still have an attendant and butler.

PEISETAERUS

Does a bird actually need a butler?

SLAVE

This one does. I guess it's because he once was human.

ARISTOPHANES

τοτὲ μὲν ἐρᾶ φαγεῖν ἀφύας Φαληρικάς,  
τρέχω ᾽π' ἀφύας ἐγὼ λαβὼν τὸ τρύβλιον·  
ἔττους δ' ἐπιθνμῆι, δεῖ τορύννης καὶ χύτρας,  
τρέχω ᾽πὶ τορύννην.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τροχίλος ὄρνις οὔτοσί.

80 οἷσθ' οὔν ὁ δρᾶσον, ᾧ τροχίλε; τὸν δεσπότην  
ἡμῖν κάλεσον.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἀρτίως νῆ τὸν Δία  
εὔδει καταφαγὼν μύρτα καὶ σέρφους τινάς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὅμως ἐπέγειρον αὐτόν.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΣ

οἶδα μὲν σαφῶς  
ὅτι ἀχθέσεται, σφῶν δ' αὐτὸν εἶνεκ' ἐπεγερω̄.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

85 κακῶς σύ γ' ἀπόλοι'. ὥς μ' ἀπέκτεινας δέει.

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

οἷμοι κακοδαίμων, χῶ κολοιός μοῖχεται  
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ᾧ δειλότατον σὺ θηρίον,  
δείσας ἀφῆκας τὸν κολοιόν.

BIRDS

He'll get a craving for fish fry from Phalerum, and I grab the pan and run out for the fish. Or he'll want lentil soup, we need a ladle and tureen, so I run for the tureen.

PEISETAERUS

This one's a roadrunner. So, roadrunner, you know what you should do? Call your master for us.

SLAVE

Oh no; he's just started his nap, after a lunch of myrtle berries and gnats.

PEISETAERUS

Wake him anyway.

SLAVE

Well, I'm quite sure he'll be annoyed, but as a favor to you I'll wake him up.

*Exit SLAVE.*

PEISETAERUS

*(calling after him)* And to hell with you, for scaring me to death!

EUELPIDES

I'll be damned, my jackdaw flew away from me in terror!

PEISETAERUS

You utter scaredy cat, so frightened that you let him go!

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

εἰπέ μοι,

σὺ δὲ τὴν κορώνην οὐκ ἀφήκας καταπεσών;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγε.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ποῦ γάρ ἐστ';

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

90

ἀπέπτατο.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἄρ' ἀφήκας; ὦγάθ', ὡς ἀνδρείος εἶ.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἄνοιγε τὴν ὕλην, ἵν' ἐξέλθω ποτέ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦ Ἡράκλεις, τουτὶ τί ποτ' ἐστὶ θηρίον;

τίς ἢ πτέρωσις; τίς ὁ τρόπος τῆς τριλοφίας;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

τίνες εἰσὶ μ' οἱ ζητοῦντες;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

95

οἱ δώδεκα θεοὶ

εἷξασιν ἐπιτρῖψαί σε.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

μῶν με σκώπτετον

ὀρῶντε τὴν πτέρωσιν; ἦ γάρ, ὦ ξένοι,

ἄνθρωπος.

BIRDS

EUELPIDES

Say, didn't you fall down and let your crow loose?

PEISETAERUS

I certainly did not.

EUELPIDES

Then where is it?

PEISETAERUS

It flew off.

EUELPIDES

So, my good man, you didn't let it go, brave fellow that you are?

TEREUS

*(within, to his Slave)* Unbar the woods, that I may at last come forth.

*Enter TEREUS from the stage door, with a hoopoe's head and wings, but few feathers; two Slaves accompany him.*

PEISETAERUS

Heracles, what kind of beast is this? What plumage? What manner of triple crest?

TEREUS

Who be those that seek me?

EUELPIDES

The Twelve Gods seem to have made a mess of you.

TEREUS

You two aren't making fun of me, are you, for the look of my plumage? Because I'll have you know, friends, I was once human.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐ σοῦ καταγελῶμεν.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἀλλὰ τοῦ;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τὸ ράμφος ἡμῖν σου γέλοιον φαίνεται.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

100 τοιαῦτα μέντοι Σοφοκλέης λυμαίνεται  
ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαισιν ἐμέ, τὸν Τηρέα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

Τηρεὺς γὰρ εἶ σύ; πότερον ὄρνις ἢ ταῶς;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ὄρνις ἔγωγε.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

κᾶτά σοι ποῦ τὰ πτερὰ;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἐξερρήκε.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

πότερον ὑπὸ νόσου τινός;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

105 οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὸν χειμῶνα πάντα τῶρνεα  
πτερορρνεῖ τε καῦθις ἕτερα φύομεν.  
ἀλλ' εἴπατόν μοι σφὼ τίν' ἐστόν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

νώ; βροτώ.

BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

It's not you we're laughing at.

TEREUS

What, then?

EUELPIDES

It's your beak that strikes us funny.

TEREUS

That's how shabbily Sophocles treats me—Tereus!—in his tragedies.

PEISETAERUS

So you're Tereus! Bird or peacock?

TEREUS

Me, I'm a bird.

EUELPIDES

Then where are your feathers?

TEREUS

They've fallen out.

EUELPIDES

From some disease?

TEREUS

No; in winter all birds shed their feathers, and then we grow new ones. But tell me who you two are.

PEISETAERUS

We two? Humans.

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ποδαπὼ τὸ γένος;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὄθεν αἱ τριήρεις αἱ καλάι.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

μῶν ἡλιαστά;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

μᾶλλον θάτερου τρόπου,  
ἀπηλιαστά.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

110 σπείρεται γὰρ τοῦτ' ἐκεῖ  
τὸ σπέρμ';

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὀλίγον ζητῶν ἂν ἐξ ἀγροῦ λάβεις.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

πράγους δὲ δὴ τοῦ δεομένω δεῦρ' ἦλθετον;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

σοὶ ξυγγενέσθαι βουλομένω.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

τίνος πέρι;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

115 ὅτι πρῶτα μὲν ἦσθ' ἄνθρωπος ὥσπερ νῶ ποτε,  
κάργυριον ὠφείλησας ὥσπερ νῶ ποτε,  
κοῦκ ἀποδιδούς ἔχαιρες ὥσπερ νῶ ποτε·  
εἶτ' αὖθις ὀρνίθων μεταλλάξας φύσιν



BIRDS

TEREUS

What nationality?

PEISETAERUS

Where the fine triremes come from.

TEREUS

Not a couple of jurors, I hope!

EUELPIDES

Oh no, the other kind: a couple of jurophobes.

TEREUS

Does that seed sprout there?

EUELPIDES

You'll find a little in the country, if you look hard.

TEREUS

Now then, on what business have you two come here?

PEISETAERUS

We want to confer with you.

TEREUS

About what?

PEISETAERUS

Well, originally you were human, like us, and once owed money, like us, and once enjoyed not repaying it, like us; then trading all that for the guise of birds, you've flown the

ARISTOPHANES

καὶ γῆν ἐπέπτου καὶ θάλατταν ἐν κύκλῳ,  
καὶ πάνθ' ὅσαπερ ἄνθρωπος ὅσα τ' ὄρνις φρονεῖς.  
120 ταῦτ' οὖν ἰκέται νὼ πρὸς σέ δεῦρ' ἀφίγμεθα,  
εἴ τινα πόλιν φράσειας ἡμῖν εὔερον  
ὥσπερ σισύραν ἐγκατακλινηῆναι μαλθακῆν.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἔπειτα μείζω τῶν Κραναῶν ζητεῖς πόλιν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

μείζω μὲν οὐδέν, προσφορωτέραν δὲ νῶν.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἀριστοκρατεῖσθαι δῆλος εἶ ζητῶν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

125 ἐγώ;  
ἤκιστα· καὶ τὸν Σκελλίου βδελύττομαι.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ποίαν τιν' οὖν ἤδιστ' ἂν οἰκοῖτ' ἂν πόλιν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

130 ὅπου τὰ μέγιστα πράγματ' εἶη τοιάδε·  
ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν μου πρῶ τις ἐλθὼν τῶν φίλων  
λέγοι ταδί· “πρὸς τοῦ Διὸς τοῦλυμπίου  
ὅπως παρέσει μοι καὶ σὺ καὶ τὰ παιδιά  
λουσάμενα πρῶ· μέλλω γὰρ ἐστιᾶν γάμους·  
καὶ μηδαμῶς ἄλλως ποιήσης· εἰ δὲ μή,  
μή μοι τότ' ἐλθης, ὅταν ἐγὼ πράττω κακῶς.”

## BIRDS

circuit of land and sea, and your mind contains everything a human's does, and everything a bird's does too. That's why we've come to visit, hoping you know of a nice cushy city, soft as a woolen blanket, where we could curl up.

TEREUS

Could you be looking for a city greater than the Cranaans'?<sup>9</sup>

PEISETAERUS

Not greater, no, just better suited to us.

TEREUS

You're obviously looking for an aristocracy.

PEISETAERUS

Who me? Not at all. Even Scellias' son makes me sick.<sup>10</sup>

TEREUS

Well then, what kind of city would you most like to live in?

PEISETAERUS

One where my worst troubles would be like this: a friend appears at my door one morning and says, "In the name of Zeus on Olympus, make sure that you and your kids wash up and be at my place bright and early; I'm giving a wedding feast. Now don't let me down, otherwise you needn't visit me when I'm in trouble!"

<sup>9</sup> Cranaus was a mythical king of Athens.

<sup>10</sup> Aristocrates, a signer of the Peace of Nicias in 421, a general in 413/12, and a moderate oligarch in 411 (Thucydides 5.19, 8.9, 89, 92); here his name alone is the joke.

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

135 νῆ Δία τάλαιπῶρων γε πραγμάτων ἐρᾶς.  
τί δαὶ σύ;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τοιούτων ἐρῶ καὶ γώ.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

τίνων;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὅπου ξυναντῶν μοι ταδί τις μέμψεται  
ὥσπερ ἀδικηθεὶς παιδὸς ὠραίου πατῆρ.  
“καλῶς γέ μου τὸν υἱόν, ᾧ στιλβωνίδη,  
140 εὐρῶν ἀπιόντ’ ἀπὸ γυμνασίου λελουμένον  
οὐκ ἔκυσας, οὐ προσεῖπας, οὐ προσηγάγου,  
οὐκ ὠρχιπέδισας, ᾧν ἐμοὶ πατρικὸς φίλος.”

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ᾧ δειλακρίων σύ, τῶν κακῶν οἴων ἐρᾶς.  
ἀτὰρ ἔστι γ’ ὅποίαν λέγετον εὐδαίμων πόλις  
παρὰ τὴν ἐρυθρὰν θάλατταν.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

145 οἴμοι, μηδαμῶς  
ἡμῖν γε παρὰ θάλατταν, ἵν’ ἀνακύψεται  
κλητῆρ’ ἄγουσ’ ἔωθεν ἡ Σαλαμινία.  
Ἑλληνικὴν δὲ πόλιν ἔχεις ἡμῖν φράσαι;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

τί οὐ τὸν Ἥλειον Λέπρεον οἰκίζετον  
ἐλθόνθ’;

BIRDS

TEREUS

My word, it's miserable troubles you long for! (*to Euelpides*) And what about you?

EUELPIDES

I long for much the same.

TEREUS

Namely?

EUELPIDES

A city where a blooming boy's father would bump into me and complain in this fashion, as if wronged: "A fine way you treat my son, Mr. Smoothy! You met him leaving the gymnasium after his bath, and you didn't kiss him, didn't chat him up, didn't hug him, didn't fondle his balls—and you my old family friend!"

TEREUS

Poor thing, what troubles you long for! Well, there actually is a happy city of the sort you two are talking about, on the shores of the Red Sea.

EUELPIDES

Oh no, no seaside for us! Not where the *Salaminia* will pop up one morning with a summonser on board.<sup>11</sup> Can't you tell us of a Greek city?

TEREUS

Why not go and settle at Lepreus, in Elis?

<sup>11</sup> One of two sacred galleys in the Athenian navy (the other was the *Paralus*) used for official dispatches and transport.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

150

ὅτι νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς ὅσ' οὐκ ἰδὼν  
βδελύττομαι τὸν Λέπρεον ἀπὸ Μελανθίου.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἄλλ' εἰσὶν ἕτεροι τῆς Λοκρίδος Ὀπούντιοι,  
ἵνα χρῆ κατοικεῖν.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἄλλ' ἔγωγ' Ὀπούντιος  
οὐκ ἂν γενοίμην ἐπὶ ταλάντῳ χρυσίου.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

155

οὗτος δὲ δὴ τίς ἐσθ' ὁ μετ' ὀρνίθων βίος;  
σὺ γὰρ οἶσθ' ἀκριβῶς.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

οὐκ ἄχαρις εἰς τὴν τριβήν·  
οὐ πρῶτα μὲν δεῖ ζῆν ἄνευ βαλλαντίου.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

πολλήν γ' ἀφείλες τοῦ βίου κιβδηλίαν.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

160

νεμόμεσθα δ' ἐν κήποις τὰ λευκὰ σήσαμα  
καὶ μύρτα καὶ μήκωνα καὶ σισύμβρια.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὕμεῖς μὲν ἄρα ζῆτε νυμφίων βίον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ·

ἦ μέγ' ἐνορῶ βούλευμ' ἐν ὀρνίθων γένει

## BIRDS

### EUELPIDES

For heaven's sake, Lepreus makes me sick, even though I've never seen it, because of Melanthius.<sup>12</sup>

### TEREUS

Well, there are the Opuntii in Locris; you should settle there.

### EUELPIDES

Not me; I wouldn't become an Opuntius<sup>13</sup> for a talent of gold.

### PEISETAERUS

But what about this life with the birds? Tell me about it; you know every detail.

### TEREUS

It wears quite nicely. To begin with, you must get by without a purse.

### EUELPIDES

You've removed much of life's fraudulence right there.

### TEREUS

And in the gardens we feed on white sesame seeds, myrtle berries, poppies, and watermint.<sup>14</sup>

### EUELPIDES

Why, you're all living the life of honeymooners!

### PEISETAERUS

Aha, aha! Oh what a grand scheme I see in the race of

<sup>12</sup> A tragic poet, who apparently suffered from the skin disease *lepra*.

<sup>13</sup> A man by this name is mentioned as one-eyed at 1294 and beak-nosed in Callias fr. 4 and Eupolis fr. 283.

<sup>14</sup> Items associated in Athenian life with festive occasions.

ARISTOPHANES

καὶ δύναμιν ἧ γένοιτ' ἄν, εἰ πίθοισθέ μοι.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

τί σοι πιθώμεσθ';

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὅ τι πίθησθε; πρῶτα μὲν

165 μὴ περιπέτεσθε πανταχῇ κεχηνότες·  
ὡς τοῦτ' ἄτιμον τοῦργον ἐστίν. αὐτίκα  
ἐκεῖ παρ' ἡμῖν τοὺς πετομένους ἦν ἔρη  
“τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος;” ὁ Τελέας ἐρεῖ ταδί·  
“ἄνθρωπος ὄρνις, ἀστάθμητος, πετόμενος,  
170 ἀτέκμαρτος, οὐδὲν οὐδέποτ' ἐν ταυτῷ μένων.”

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

νῆ τὸν Διόνυσον εὖ γε μωμᾶ ταυταγί.  
τί ἂν οὖν ποιοῖμεν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οἰκίσατε μίαν πόλιν.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ποίαν δ' ἂν οἰκίσαιμεν ὄρνιθες πόλιν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἄληθες, ὧ σκαιότατον εἰρηκῶς ἔπος;  
βλέψον κάτω.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

καὶ δὴ βλέπω.

168 ἐστὶν οὗτος Hermann: ὄρνις οὗτος vel οὗτος ὄρνις a



## BIRDS

birds, and power that could be yours, if you take my advice!

TEREUS

What advice would you have us take?

PEISETAERUS

What advice should you take? For a start, don't fly around in all directions with your beaks agape; that's discreditable behavior. For example, back where we come from, if among the flighty crowd you ask, "Who's that guy?" Teleas<sup>15</sup> will reply, "The man's a bird, unstable, flighty, unverifiable, never ever staying in the same spot."

TEREUS

By Dionysus, that's a fair criticism. But what can we do about it?

PEISETAERUS

Found a single city.

TEREUS

But what kind of city could mere birds found?

PEISETAERUS

Really, what an utterly doltish remark! Look down.

TEREUS

Very well.

<sup>15</sup> Probably the son of Telenicus, of the deme Pergase, currently serving as a Treasurer of Athena; a wealthy politician (cf. 1024–25) ridiculed elsewhere for gluttony, political trickery, and shiftiness, cf. *Peace* 1008–09, Phrynichus fr. 21, Plato com. fr. 176. Here both the text and the point of the joke are uncertain.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

175

βλέπε νυν ἄνω.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

βλέπω.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

περίαγε τὸν τράχηλον.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

νὴ Δία

ἀπολαύσομαί <τί> γ', εἰ διαστραφήσομαι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

εἶδές τι;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

τὰς νεφέλας γε καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐχ οὗτος οὖν δήπου ἔστιν ὀρνίθων πόλος;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

πόλος; τίνα τρόπον;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

180

ὥσπερ <ἂν> εἴποι τις, τόπος.

ὅτι δὲ πολεῖται τοῦτο καὶ διέρχεται

ἅπαντα διὰ τούτου, καλεῖται νῦν πόλος.

ἦν δ' οἰκίσσητε τοῦτο καὶ φράξθηθ' ἅπαξ,

ἐκ τοῦ πόλου τούτου κεκλήσεται πόλις.

185

ὥστ' ἄρξεται ἀνθρώπων μὲν ὥσπερ παρνόπων,

τοὺς δ' αὖ θεοὺς ἀπολείτε λιμῶ Μηλίῳ.

BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Now look up.

TEREUS

I'm looking.

PEISETAERUS

Turn your head around.

TEREUS

Yes, it would really do me good to sprain my neck!

PEISETAERUS

Did you see anything?

TEREUS

I saw the clouds and sky.

PEISETAERUS

Well then, surely that's the birds' site?

TEREUS

Site? In what sense?

PEISETAERUS

Their place, you might say. It's a place to *visit*, and where everything makes *transit*, so it's now called merely a *site*. But as soon as you settle and fortify it, this *site* will instead be called a *city*. And then you'll rule over humans as you do over locusts; and as for the gods, you'll destroy them by Melian famine.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> In summer 416 the Athenians had besieged the small island of Melos, and upon its surrender exterminated the adult males and enslaved the women and children, for refusing to join the empire (Thucydides 5.84–116).

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

πῶς;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἐν μέσῳ δήπουθεν ἀήρ ἐστι γῆς.  
εἶθ', ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς, ἦν ἰέναι βουλόμεθα  
Πυθώδε, Βοιωτοὺς δίοδον αἰτούμεθα,  
190 οὔτως, ὅταν θύσωσιν ἄνθρωποι θεοῖς,  
191 ἦν μὴ φόρον φέρωσιν ὑμῖν οἱ θεοί,  
193 τῶν μηρίων τὴν κνῖσαν οὐ διαφρήσετε.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἰοὺ ἰοῦ· μὰ γῆν, μὰ παγίδας, μὰ νεφέλας, μὰ  
δίκτυα,  
195 μὴ ἔγωγε νόημα κομψότερον ἤκουσά πω·  
ὥστ' ἂν κατοικίζοιμι μετὰ σοῦ τὴν πόλιν,  
εἰ ξυνδοκοίη τοῖσιν ἄλλοις ὀρνέοις.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τίς ἂν οὖν τὸ πρᾶγμα' αὐτοῖς διηγήσαιο;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

σύ.  
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτοὺς βαρβάρους ὄντας πρὸ τοῦ  
200 ἐδίδαξα τὴν φωνὴν ξυνὸν πολὺν χρόνον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

πῶς δῆτ' ἂν αὐτοὺς ξυγκαλέσειας;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ῥαδίως.  
δευρὶ γὰρ ἐμβὰς αὐτίκα μάλ' εἰς τὴν λόχμην,

BIRDS

TEREUS

How?

PEISETAERUS

Between them and the earth is air, no? So look: just as we must ask the Boeotians for a visa whenever we want to visit Delphi, in the same way, whenever humans sacrifice to the gods, you won't let the aroma of the thigh bones pass through unless the gods pay you tribute.

TEREUS

Oho! So help me earth, snares, gins, and nets, I've never heard a more elegant idea! I'd like to join you in founding this city, if the other birds concur.

PEISETAERUS

And who's going to explain the plan to them?

TEREUS

You are. Look, I've lived with them a long time, and they're not the barbarians they were before I taught them language.

PEISETAERUS

Then how will you call them together?

TEREUS

Easily. I'll just step right into my thicket here and wake up

ARISTOPHANES

ἔπειτ' ἀνεγείρας τὴν ἐμὴν ἀηδόνα,  
καλοῦμεν αὐτούς· οἱ δὲ νῶν τοῦ φθέγματος  
205 ἑάνπερ ἐπακούσωσι θεύσονται δρόμῳ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦ φίλτατ' ὀρνίθων σύ, μή νυν ἔσταθι  
ἀλλ' ἀντιβολῶ σ', ἄγ', ὡς τάχιστ' εἰς τὴν λόχμην  
εἴσβαινε κἀνέγειρε τὴν ἀηδόνα.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἄγε σύννομέ μοι, παῦσαι μὲν ὕπνου,  
210 λῦσον δὲ νόμους ἱερῶν ὕμνων,  
οὓς διὰ θείου στόματος θρηνεῖς  
τὸν ἐμὸν καὶ σὸν πολύδακρυν Ἴτυν,  
ἐλελιζομένη διεροῖς μέλεσιν  
γέννος ξουθῆς. καθαρὰ χωρεῖ  
215 διὰ φυλλοκόμου μίλακος ἠχῶ  
πρὸς Διὸς ἔδρας, ἴν' ὁ χρυσοκόμας  
Φοῖβος ἀκούων τοῖς σοῖς ἐλέγοις  
ἀντιψάλλων ἐλεφαντόδετον  
φόρμιγγα θεῶν ἴστησι χορούς·  
220 διὰ δ' ἀθανάτων στομάτων χωρεῖ  
ξύμφωνος ὁμοῦ  
θεία μακάρων ὀλολυγή.

17 Procne, cf. 15 n.

18 Euripides appears to have borrowed this description of the nightingale in *Helen* 1111–13, produced in 412.

19 Apollo.

## BIRDS

my nightingale,<sup>17</sup> and together we'll call them. If they hear our voices they'll come running.

### PEISETAERUS

Dearest of birds, don't just stand there; please, I implore you, step into the thicket as quick as you can and wake up the nightingale!

*TEREUS steps behind the thicket*

### TEREUS

Come, my songmate, leave your sleep,  
and loosen the strains of sacred songs,  
that from your divine lips bewail  
deeply mourned Itys, your child and mine,  
trilling forth fluid melodies  
from your vibrant throat.<sup>18</sup>

*(emerging on the roof as the piper begins to play the nightingale's song)*

Pure the sound  
that ascends through green-tressed bryony  
to Zeus' abode, where gold-tressed  
Phoebus<sup>19</sup> listens to your songs of grief  
and, strumming in response his ivoried  
lyre, stirs the gods to their dance;  
and from deathless lips arises  
in harmonious accord  
the divine refrain of the Blest.



ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τοῦ φθέγματος τοῦρνηθίου·  
οἶον κατεμελίτωσε τὴν λόχμην ὄλην.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὔτος.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τί ἐστιν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐ σιωπήσει;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

225

τί δαί;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὔποψ μελωδεῖν αὐ̂ παρασκευάζεται.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἐποποποῖ ποποποποῖ ποποῖ,  
ἰὼ ἰὼ ἰτὼ ἰτὼ ἰτὼ ἰτὼ  
ἴτω τις ὦδε τῶν ἐμῶν ὁμοπτέρων·

230

ὅσοι τ' εὐσπόρους ἀγροίκων γύας  
νέμεσθε, φῦλα μυρία κριθοτράγων  
σπερμολόγων τε γένη  
ταχὺ πετόμενα, μαλθακὴν ἰέντα γῆρυν·  
ὅσα τ' ἐν ἄλοκι θαμὰ

235

βῶλον ἀμφιτιτυβίζεθ' ὦδε λεπτὸν  
ἠδομένα φωνᾶ·  
τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ.

## BIRDS

EUELPIDES

Lord Zeus, that birdy's voice! How it turned the whole  
thicket to honey!

PEISETAERUS

Hey there.

EUELPIDES

Yes?

PEISETAERUS

Be quiet!

EUELPIDES

What for?

PEISETAERUS

The Hoopoe's getting ready to sing again.

TEREUS

Epopopoi popopopoi popoi,  
ye ye co co co co  
come ye hither every bird of fellow feather,  
all who range over country acres  
richly sown, the myriad tribes who feed on  
barleycorn,  
and the races of seed pickers  
that swiftly fly, casting a cozy cry;  
and all who oft round the clod  
in the furrow twitter delicately  
this happy sound,  
tio tio tio tio tio tio tio!

ὄσα θ' ὑμῶν κατὰ κήπους ἐπὶ κισσοῦ  
 κλάδεσι νομὸν ἔχει,  
 240 τὰ τε κατ' ὄρεα τὰ κοτινοτράγα τὰ  
 κομαροφάγα,  
 ἀνύσατε πετόμενα πρὸς ἐμὰν αὐδάν·  
 τριοτὸ τριοτὸ τοτοβρίξ·

οἳ θ' ἐλείας παρ' αὐλῶνας ὀξυστόμους  
 245 ἐμπίδας κάπτεθ', ὄσα τ' εὐδρόσους γῆς τόπους  
 ἔχετε λειμῶνά τ' ἐρόεντα Μαραθῶνος  
 ὄρνις τε πτεροποίκιλος  
 ἀτταγᾶς ἀτταγᾶς·

250 ὦν τ' ἐπὶ πόντιον οἶδμα θαλάσσης  
 φῦλα μετ' ἀλκνόμεσσι ποτήται,  
 δεῦρ' ἴτε πευσόμενοι τὰ νεώτερα·  
 πάντα γὰρ ἐνθάδε φῦλ' ἀθροΐζομεν  
 οἰωνῶν ταναοδείρων.

255 ἤκει γάρ τις δριμὺς πρέσβυς  
 καινὸς γνώμην  
 καινῶν ἔργων τ' ἐγχειρητήης.

ἀλλ' ἴτ' εἰς λόγους ἅπαντα,  
 δεῦρο δεῦρο δεῦρο δεῦρο·  
 260 τοροτοροτοροτοροσίξ,  
 κικκαβαῦ κικκαβαῦ,  
 τοροτοροτορολιλιλίξ.

## BIRDS

And all of you who pasture on ivy boughs  
in the gardens,  
and you eaters of oleaster and arbutus  
in the hills,  
come flying at once to my call:  
triototrioto totobrix!

And you who in marshy vales snap up  
keen-mouthed gnats, and all who inhabit  
the earth's drizzly places and Marathon's lovely  
meadow,  
and the bird with dappled plumage,  
francolin, francolin!

And all whose tribes fly with the halcyons  
over the deep swell of the sea,  
come hither to learn the latest!  
Yes, here we're gathering all the tribes  
of neck-stretching birds,  
for an acute old man has appeared,  
novel in ideas  
and a doer of novel deeds.

Now all attend the conference,  
hither hither hither hither!  
Torotorotorotorotix,  
kikkabau kikkabau,  
torotorotorolililix!

*TEREUS disappears from the roof*

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὄρᾶς τιν' ὄρνιν;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ἄγὼ μὲν οὔ.  
καίτοι κέχηνά γ' εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν βλέπων.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

265 ἄλλως ἄρ' οὔποψ, ὡς ἔοικ', εἰς τὴν λόχμην  
ἐμβὰς ἐπόπωζε χαραδριὸν μιμούμενος.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

τοροτιῖξ τοροτιῖξ.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὦγάθ', ἀλλ' <οὔν> οὔτοσί καὶ δὴ τις ὄρνις ἔρχεται.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

νὴ Δί' ὄρνις δῆτα. τίς ποτ' ἐστίν; οὐ δῆπου ταῶς;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

270 οὔτος αὐτὸς νῶν φράσει. τίς ἐστίν ὄρνις οὔτοσί;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

οὔτος οὐ τῶν ἠθάδων τῶνδ' ὦν ὄρᾶθ' ὑμεῖς ἀεὶ,  
ἀλλὰ λιμναῖος.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

βαβαί, καλὸς γε καὶ φοινικιοῦς.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

εἰκότως <γε> καὶ γὰρ ὄνομ' αὐτῶ ἔστι  
φοινικόπτερος.

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Do you see any birds?

EUELPIDES

I certainly don't, though I'm all agape from watching the sky.

PEISETAERUS

Then it seems the Hoopoe copied the curlew, going into the thicket and crying hoo-poo for nothing.

TEREUS

*(emerging from the thicket in panoply)* Torotix torotix!

*Flamingo appears on the roof.*

EUELPIDES

Maybe so, my friend, but over here, look, a bird is coming!

PEISETAERUS

That's a bird all right! Whatever can it be? Surely not a peacock?

EUELPIDES

Our host here will tell us. *(to Tereus)* What kind of bird is that?

TEREUS

None of those commonplace birds you humans are used to seeing; he's a marsh bird.

EUELPIDES

My, how flamboyantly crimson he is!

TEREUS

Naturally, because his name is Flamingo.

*Mede appears on the roof.*

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

οὔτος, ὦ—σέ τοι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί βωστρεῖς;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἕτερος ὄρνις οὔτοσί.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

275 νῆ Δί' ἕτερος δῆτα χούτος ἕξεδρον χροιάν ἔχων.  
τίς ποτ' ἔσθ' ὁ μουσόμαντις, ἄτοπος ὄρνις  
ὀριβάτης;

ΤΗΡΕΥΣ

ὄνομα τούτῳ μῆδος ἔστι.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

Μῆδος; ὠναξ Ἡράκλεις.  
εἶτα πῶς ἄνευ καμήλου Μῆδος ὦν εἰσέπτετο;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἕτερος αὖ λόφον καθειληφώς τις ὄρνις οὔτοσί.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

280 τί τὸ τέρας τουτί ποτ' ἐστίν; οὐ σὺ μόνος ἄρ' ἦσθ'  
ἔποψ,  
ἀλλὰ χούτος ἕτερος;

<sup>275</sup> χροιάν Zonaras 759 Σ S: χώραν a



## BIRDS

EUELPIDES

Ho there, psst—yes, you!

PEISETAERUS

What do you want?

EUELPIDES

Here's another bird!

PEISETAERUS

Oh yes, that's another one all right, and he's also garbed in eccentric color.<sup>20</sup> (*To Tereus*) Who in the world is this vatic songster,<sup>21</sup> this outlandish mountain-ranging bird?

TEREUS

His name is mede.

EUELPIDES

Mede? Lord Heracles! But if he's a Mede, how did he fly here without a camel?

*Hoopoe appears on the roof.*

PEISETAERUS

Here's still another bird who's secured a crest.

EUELPIDES

What kind of apparition is this? (*to Tereus*) Then you're not the only hoopoe, but he's one too?

<sup>20</sup> Adapting a line from Sophocles' *Tyro* (fr. 654), "What is this bird occupying an eccentric position?"

<sup>21</sup> From Aeschylus' *Edonians* (fr. 60), referring to Orpheus or Dionysus.

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ούτοσὶ μὲν ἔστι Φιλοκλέους  
ἐξ ἔποπος, ἐγὼ δὲ τούτου πάππος, ὥσπερ εἰ λέγοις  
“Ἰππόνικος Καλλίου καὶ Ἰππονίκου Καλλίας.”

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

Καλλίας ἄρ' οὗτος οὔρνις ἐστίν. ὡς περὸρρυεῖ.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

285 ἄτε γὰρ ὦν γενναῖος ὑπὸ <τε> συκοφαντῶν τίλλεται,  
αἶ τε θήλειαι πρὸς ἐκτίλλουσιν αὐτοῦ τὰ πτερά.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὦ Πόσειδον, ἕτερος αὖ τις βαπτὸς ὄρνις οὔτοσί.  
τίς ὀνομάζεται ποθ' οὗτος;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ούτοσὶ κατωφαγᾶς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἔστι γὰρ κατωφαγᾶς τις ἄλλος ἢ Κλεώνυμος;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

290 πῶς ἂν οὖν Κλεώνυμός γ' ὦν οὐκ ἀπέβαλε τὸν  
λόφον;

## BIRDS

### TEREUS

This one here's the son of Philocles' hoopoe,<sup>22</sup> and I'm his grandfather, just as you might say Hipponicus son of Callias and Callias son of Hipponicus.<sup>23</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

So this bird is Callias. He's shed a lot of feathers.

### TEREUS

He's pedigreed, you see, so he gets plucked by shysters, and the females too keep plucking away at his plumage.

*Gobbler appears on the roof.*

### EUELPIDES

Poseidon! Here's still another brightly tinted bird. (*to Tereus*) What's this one called, I wonder?

### TEREUS

That one? Gobbler.

### PEISETAERUS

You mean there's another gobbler besides Cleonymus?<sup>24</sup>

### EUELPIDES

If that were really Cleonymus, he'd surely have tossed his crest.

<sup>22</sup> Philocles, nephew of Aeschylus and nicknamed "The Lark" (?476, 1295), wrote a tragic tetralogy *Pandionis*, which included Tereus' metamorphosis.

<sup>23</sup> For five generations the heads of one wealthy and distinguished family of the Ceryces clan had alternated these names; the current Callias was often ridiculed as a flagrant wastrel.

<sup>24</sup> A politician often ridiculed for obesity, gluttony, and effeminacy, and (uniquely in Attic comedy) for having thrown away his shield in battle (see 1470–81).

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀλλὰ μέντοι τίς ποθ' ἢ λόφωσις ἢ τῶν ὀρνέων;  
ἢ ᾗ τὸν διάυλον ἦλθον;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ὥσπερ οἱ Κᾶρες μὲν οὖν  
ἐπὶ λόφων οἰκοῦσιν, ὦγάθ', ἀσφαλείας οὔνεκα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦ Πόσειδον, οὐχ ὀράς ὅσον συνείλεκται κακὸν  
ὀρνέων;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

295 ὦναξ Ἄπολλον, τοῦ νέφους. ἰοὺ ἰού.  
οὐδ' ἰδεῖν ἔτ' ἔσθ' ὑπ' αὐτῶν πετομένων τὴν  
εἴσοδον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὔτοσι πέρδιξ.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐκεινοσὶ δὲ νῆ Δί' ἀτταγάς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὔτοσι δὲ πηνέλοψ.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐκεινηὶ δέ γ' ἀλκυών.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τίς γάρ ἐσθ' οὔπισθεν αὐτῆς;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὅστις ἐστί; κηρύλος.

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

(*to Tereus*) But tell me, what's the point of the birds' cresting? Perhaps they've come to march in review?

TEREUS

On the contrary, my friend, they're like the Carians: they nest on crests for safety's sake.

PEISETAERUS

(*looking toward the wings*) Poseidon, will you look at that! What a hell of a mob of birds has gathered!

EUELPIDES

Lord Apollo, what a cloud of them! Whooee! They're so many you can't see into the wings anymore!

*Enter the CHORUS, each member costumed as a different bird.*

PEISETAERUS

That one's a partridge.

EUELPIDES

And that one's surely a francolin.

PEISETAERUS

And that one's a wigeon.

EUELPIDES

And that one's a halcyon.

PEISETAERUS

So what's that one behind her?

EUELPIDES

That one? A snippet.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

κειρύλος γάρ ἐστιν ὄρνις;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

300

οὐ γάρ ἐστι Σποργίλος;

χαῦτηί γε γλαῦξ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί φῆς; τίς γλαῦκ' Ἀθήναζ' ἤγαγεν;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

κίττα, τρυγών, κορυδός, ἐλεᾶς, ὑποθυμῖς, περιστερά,  
νέρτος, ἰέραξ, φάττα, κόκκυξ, ἐρυθρόπους,  
κεβλήπυρις,  
πορφυρίς, κερχνής, κολυμβίς, ἀμπελῖς, φήνη,  
δρύοψ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

305

ἰὸν ἰού, τῶν ὀρνέων.

ἰὸν ἰού, τῶν κοψίχων.

οἶα πιπίζουσι καὶ τρέχουσι διακεκραγότες.

ἄρ' ἀπειλοῦσίν γε νῶν; οἴμοι, κεχήνασίν γέ τοι  
καὶ βλέπουσιν εἰς σὲ κάμέ.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τοῦτο μὲν κάμοι δοκεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

310/11

ποποποποποπο ποῦ μ' ὃς ἐκάλεσε; τίνα  
τόπον ἄρα νέμεται;

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

You mean there's a snip-it bird?

EUELPIDES

Isn't Sporgilus one?<sup>25</sup> And there's an owl.

PEISETAERUS

What? Who's brought an owl to Athens?<sup>26</sup>

EUELPIDES

Jay. Turtledove. Lark. Reed Warbler. Thyme finch. Rock Dove. Vulture. Hawk. Ring Dove. Cuckoo. Redshank. Red-head Shrike. Porphyron. Kestrel. Dabchick. Bunting. Lammergeier. Woodpecker.

PEISETAERUS

Whoeee, all the birds! Whoeee, all the peckers! How they peep and run around, outscreeching one another! Say, can they be threatening us? Oh dear, they've certainly got their beaks open, and they're staring at you and me!

EUELPIDES

I think so too!

CHORUS

Whe-whe-whe-whe-whe-whe-where's the one who  
called me? What  
spot is he settled on?

<sup>25</sup> Sporgilus ("Sparrow") was a barber.

<sup>26</sup> Proverbial, like "coals to Newcastle."



ARISTOPHANES

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ούτοσὶ πάλαι πάρειμι κούκ ἀποστατῶ φίλων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

314/15 τιτιτιτιτι τίνα λόγον ἄρα ποτέ  
πρὸς ἐμὲ φίλον ἔχων;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

κοινόν, ἀσφαλῆ, δίκαιον, ἡδύν, ὠφελήσιμον.  
ἄνδρε γὰρ λεπτῶ λογιστὰ δεῦρ' ἀφίχθον ὡς ἐμέ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πού; πᾶ; πῶς φήσ;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

320 φήμ' ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἀφίχθαι δεῦρο πρεσβύτα δύο·  
ἤκετον δ' ἔχοντε πρέμνον πράγματος πελωρίου.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ὦ μέγιστον ἑξαμαρτῶν ἐξ ὅτου ἴτραφην ἐγώ,  
πῶς λέγεις;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

μήπω φοβηθῆς τὸν λόγον.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τί μ' ἠργάσω;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἄνδρ' ἑδεξάμην ἔραστὰ τῆσδε τῆς ξυνουσίας.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

καὶ δέδρακας τοῦτο τοῦργον;

BIRDS

TEREUS

Here I am ready and waiting, and not aloof from friends.

CHORUS

Wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-what message then  
have you got for your friends?

TEREUS

One that concerns our whole community, promotes our security, and is right, gratifying, and advantageous. You see, two men are here to visit me, a pair of subtle thinkers.

CHORUS

Where? How? What do you mean?

TEREUS

I'm telling you, a pair of old men are here from the human world, and they've come bearing the prop of a prodigious plan.

CHORUS LEADER

Ah, you've made the worst blunder since I was fledged!  
What are you telling us?

TEREUS

Don't be flustered about my news just yet.

CHORUS LEADER

What have you done to me?

TEREUS

I've received two men passionately enamored of our society.

CHORUS LEADER

You've actually done this?

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

325

καὶ δεδρακῶς γ' ἤδομαι.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

κάστὸν ἤδη που παρ' ἡμῖν;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

εἰ παρ' ὑμῖν εἶμ' ἐγώ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) ἔα ἔα·

προδεδόμεθ' ἀνόσιά τ' ἐπάθομεν·

ὃς γὰρ φίλος ἦν ὁμότροφά θ' ἡμῖν

330 ἐνέμετο πεδία παρ' ἡμῖν,

παρέβη μὲν θεσμοὺς ἀρχαίους,

παρέβη δ' ὄρκους ὀρνίθων.

εἰς δὲ δόλον ἐκάλεσε,

παρέβαλέ τ' ἐμὲ παρὰ

γένος ἀνόσιον, ὅπερ

ἐξότ' ἐγένετ' ἐμοὶ

335 πολέμιον ἐτράφη.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλὰ πρὸς μὲν τοῦτον ἡμῖν ἔστιν ὕστερος λόγος·

τὼ δὲ πρεσβύτα δοκεῖ μοι τώδε δοῦναι τὴν δίκην

διαφορηθῆναί θ' ὑφ' ἡμῶν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὡς ἀπωλόμεσθ' ἄρα.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

αἴτιος μέντοι σὺ νῶν εἶ τῶν κακῶν τούτων μόνος.

ἐπὶ τί γάρ μ' ἐκείθεν ἤγες;

BIRDS

TEREUS

Yes, and I'm glad I did.

CHORUS LEADER

And they're already somewhere among us?

TEREUS

As sure as I'm among you.

CHORUS

Oo, oo!

We are betrayed, we are impiously defiled!  
Yes, our former friend, who browsed with us  
in the fields that feed us all,  
has broken our ancient ordinances,  
has broken our avian oaths.  
He's lured me into a trap,  
he's cast me out among  
an unholy race, that  
since its very creation  
has been groomed to be my foe.

CHORUS LEADER

Well, him we'll settle accounts with later; as for these two  
codgers, I think they should give us satisfaction on the  
spot, by being dismembered.

PEISETAERUS

So we're goners.

EUELPIDES

This damned mess we're in is all your fault, you know! (*gesturing toward the spectators*) Why did you bring me here  
from back there?

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

340

ἴν' ἀκολουθοίης ἐμοί.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἵνα μὲν οὖν κλάοιμι μεγάλα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τοῦτο μὲν ληρεῖς ἔχων  
 κάρτα· πῶς κλαύσει γάρ, ἦν ἅπαξ γε τῷ φθαλμῷ  
 ἄκκοπῆς;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ) ἰὼ ἰώ·

ἔπαγ' ἔπιθ' ἐπίφερε πολέμιον

345 ὄρμᾶν φονίαν, πτέρυγά τε παντᾶ

ἐπίβαλε περί τε κύκλωσαι·

ὡς δεῖ τῶδ' οἰμῶζειν ἄμφω

καὶ δοῦναι ῥύγχει φορβάν.

οὔτε γὰρ ὄρος σκιερὸν

οὔτε νέφος αἰθήριον

350 οὔτε πολιὸν πέλαγος

ἔστιν ὃ τι δέξεται

τῶδ' ἀποφυγόντε με.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλὰ μὴ μέλλωμεν ἤδη τῶδε τίλλειν καὶ δάκνειν.

ποῦ 'σθ' ὁ ταξίαρχος; ἐπαγέτω τὸ δεξιὸν κέρας.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τοῦτ' ἐκεῖνο. ποῖ φύγω δύστηνος;

<sup>346</sup> ἐπίβαλε] περίβαλε Reisig

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

To keep me company.

### EUELPIDES

To make me cry bitter tears is more like it.

### PEISETAERUS

Now you're making no sense at all; how do you expect to cry once you've had your eyes pecked out?

### CHORUS

Hi ho!

Forward march, launch a hostile  
bloody charge, from all sides  
put wings to them and surround them!  
For both these two must howl  
and furnish fodder for my beak.  
For there's no dusky mountain,  
no lofty cloud,  
no leaden sea  
to receive this pair  
in flight from me.

### CHORUS LEADER

Now without further ado let's pluck and peck these two.  
Where's the lieutenant? Have him bring up the right wing.

### EUELPIDES

This is it! Poor goner, where can I hide?

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὗτος, οὐ μενείς;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἴν' ὑπὸ τούτων διαφορηθῶ;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

πῶς γὰρ ἂν τούτους δοκεῖς

355

ἐκφυγεῖν;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως ἄν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἄλλ' ἐγὼ τοί σοι λέγω,  
ὅτι μένοντε δεῖ μάχεσθαι λαμβάνειν τε τῶν χυτρῶν.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τί δὲ χύτρα νώ γ' ὠφελήσει;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

γλαυῆξ μὲν οὐ πρόσσεισι νῶν.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τοῖς δὲ γαμφώνυξι τοισδί;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τὸν ὀβελίσκον ἀρπάσας  
εἶτα κατάπηξον πρὸ σαντοῦ.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

360

τοῖσι δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσι τί;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὀξύβαφον ἐντευθενὶ προθοῦ λαβὼν ἢ τρύβλιον.

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Hold your ground there!

EUELPIDES

And let them dismember me?

PEISETAERUS

But how do you expect to get away?

EUELPIDES

I've no idea.

PEISETAERUS

Well, I'll tell you what we should do: stand and fight, (*indicating the luggage*) and take up some of those kettles!

EUELPIDES

What good will a kettle do us?

PEISETAERUS

It'll keep the owls off us.

EUELPIDES

But what about those with the hooked talons there?

PEISETAERUS

Grab a skewer and plant it in front of you.

EUELPIDES

What about our eyes?

PEISETAERUS

Take out a saucer and shield them, or a bowl.



ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὦ σοφώτατ', εὖ γ' ἀνηῦρες αὐτὸ καὶ στρατηγικῶς·  
ὑπερακουτίζεις σύ γ' ἤδη Νικίαν ταῖς μηχαναῖς.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

365 ἔλελελεῦ· χῶρει, κάθες τὸ ῥύγχος· οὐ μέλλειν ἐχρῆν.  
ἔλκε, τίλλε, παῖε, δεῖρε· κόπτε πρώτην τὴν χύτραν.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

εἰπέ μοι, τί μέλλετ', ὦ πάντων κάκιστα θηρίων,  
ἀπολέσαι παθόντες οὐδὲν ἄνδρε καὶ διασπάσαι  
τῆς ἐμῆς γυναικὸς ὄντε ξυγγενεῖ καὶ φυλέτα;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

370 φεισόμεσθα γάρ τι τῶνδε μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς ἢ λύκων;  
ἦ τίνας τεισαίμεθ' ἄλλους τῶνδ' ἂν ἐχθίους ἔτι;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

εἰ δὲ τὴν φύσιν μὲν ἐχθροί, τὸν δὲ νοῦν εἰσιν φίλοι,  
καὶ διδάξοντές τι δεῦρ' ἤκουσιν ὑμᾶς χρήσιμον;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

πῶς δ' ἂν οἶδ' ἡμᾶς τι χρήσιμον διδάξειάν ποτε  
ἢ φράσειαν, ὄντες ἐχθροὶ τοῖσι πάπποις τοῖς ἐμοῖς;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

375 ἀλλ' ἀπ' ἐχθρῶν δῆτα πολλὰ μανθάνουσιν οἱ σοφοί.  
ἢ γὰρ εὐλάβεια σῶζει πάντα. παρὰ μὲν οὖν φίλου

## BIRDS

### EUELPIDES

Brilliant! A fine piece of improvisation and generalship. In clever stratagems you've already outstripped Nicias!<sup>27</sup>

### CHORUS LEADER

Eleleleu! Move out, level your beaks, no hanging back! Drag them, pluck them, hit them, flay them! First knock out the kettle!

### TEREUS

*(interposing himself)* Say, you scurviest of all creatures, why do you aim to destroy and mutilate two men who've done you no harm, who are my wife's kinsmen and fellow tribesmen?

### CHORUS LEADER

You mean we should show these men any more mercy than wolves? What enemies could we take revenge on more hateful than these?

### TEREUS

But suppose they're enemies by nature, yet friends by intention, and they've come here to give you some beneficial instruction?

### CHORUS LEADER

How could these men ever give us any beneficial instruction or advice? They were enemies of our very forefathers.

### TEREUS

Yet the wise can learn much from enemies. Caution does save the day—a lesson you can't learn from a friend, but

<sup>27</sup> Probably a reference to the victory at Syracuse the previous autumn, Thucydides 6.63–71.

ARISTOPHANES

οὐ μάθοις ἂν τοῦθ', ὁ δ' ἐχθρὸς εὐθὺς ἐξηνάγκασεν.  
 αὐτίχ' αἱ πόλεις παρ' ἀνδρῶν ἔμαθον ἐχθρῶν κοῦ  
 φίλων

380 ἐκπονεῖν θ' ὑψηλὰ τείχη ναῦς τε κεκτῆσθαι μακράς·  
 τὸ δὲ μάθημα τοῦτο σῶζει παῖδας, οἶκον, χρήματα.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἔστι μὲν λόγων ἀκούσαι πρῶτον, ὡς ἡμῖν δοκεῖ.  
 χρήσιμον μάθοι γὰρ ἂν τι καπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν σοφός.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οἶδε τῆς ὀργῆς χαλᾶν εἷξασιν. ἀναγ' ἐπὶ σκέλος.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

καὶ δίκαιόν γ' ἐστὶ καμοὶ δεῖ νέμειν ὑμᾶς χάριν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

385 ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ' ἄλλο σοί πω πρᾶγμ' ἐνηντιώμεθα.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

μᾶλλον εἰρήνην ἄγουσιν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

νῆ Δί', ὥστε τὴν χύτραν

τώ τε τρυβλίῳ καθίει·

καὶ τὸ δόρυ χρῆ, τὸν ὀβελίσκον,

περιπατεῖν ἔχοντας ἡμᾶς

390 τῶν ὄπλων ἐντός, παρ' αὐτὴν

τὴν χύτραν ἄκραν ὀρῶντας

ἐγγύς· ὡς οὐ φευκτέον νῶν.

382 σοφός Hamaker: σοφόν Π2 a

## BIRDS

the first lesson an enemy imposes. For instance, it was from enemies, not friends, that cities learned to build lofty walls and master warships, and that lesson safeguards children, household, and property.

### CHORUS LEADER

Well, in our opinion it's possible to hear them out first; a wise person can in fact learn something beneficial even from his enemies.

### PEISETAERUS

They look to be slackening their anger. Fall back by steps.

### TEREUS

(*to the Chorus*) It's also the right thing to do, and besides, you should cultivate my good graces.

### CHORUS LEADER

Well, we've surely never opposed you in any past dealings.

### EUELPIDES

They're acting more peaceable.

### PEISETAERUS

Indeed they are. So lower the kettle  
and the two bowls;  
and we should shoulder the spear—  
I mean the skewer—and walk patrol  
inside our encampment, looking along  
the very rim of the kettle,  
close in, since we mustn't run away.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐτεόν, ἣν δ' ἄρ' ἀποθάνωμεν,  
κατορυχησόμεσθα ποῦ γῆς;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

395 ὁ Κεραμεικὸς δέξεται νῶ.  
δημοσία γὰρ ἵνα ταφῶμεν,  
φήσομεν πρὸς τοὺς στρατηγοὺς  
μαχομένω τοῖς πολεμίοισιν  
ἀποθανεῖν ἐν Ὀρνεαῖς.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

400 ἄναγ' εἰς τάξιν πάλιν εἰς ταυτόν,  
καὶ τὸν θυμὸν κατάθου κύψας  
παρὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ὥσπερ ὀπλίτης·  
κἀναπυθώμεθα τούσδε τίνες ποτὲ  
405 καὶ πόθεν ἔμολον τίνι τ' ἐπινοία.  
ἰώ, ἔποψ, σέ τοι καλῶ.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

καλεῖς δὲ τοῦ κλύειν θέλων;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τίνες ποθ' οἶδε καὶ πόθεν;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ξένω σοφῆς ἀφ' Ἑλλάδος.

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<sup>28</sup> The Cerameicus, the potters' quarter where military funerals were held; cf. Thucydides 2.34.

## BIRDS

### EUELPIDES

But tell me, if we do get killed,  
where on earth will we be buried?

### PEISETAERUS

Potter's Field will take us.<sup>28</sup>  
You see, we'll get a state funeral  
by telling the generals  
that we died fighting the enemy  
at Finchburg.<sup>29</sup>

### CHORUS LEADER

*(to the Chorus)*

Re-form ranks as before,  
lean over and ground your temper  
alongside your anger, like infantrymen;  
and let's find out who these men may be,  
where they've come from,  
and with what in mind.  
Hey there, Hoopoe, I'm calling on you!

### TEREUS

And what is your wish in calling?

### CHORUS LEADER

Who may these men be, and whence?

### TEREUS

Two strangers from clever Greece.

<sup>29</sup> In the previous year an Athenian contingent had assisted in the siege of Orneae (~ *orneon* "bird"), a town in the Argolid, but its defenders slipped away and there was no battle; cf. Thucydides 6.7.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

410 τύχη δὲ ποία κομί-  
ζει ποτ' αὐτὸ πρὸς ὄρ-  
νιθας ἐλθεῖν;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἔρωσ  
βίου διαίτης τέ σου  
καὶ ξυνοικεῖν τέ σοι  
καὶ ξυνεῖναι τὸ πᾶν.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

τί φήσ;  
415 λέγει δὲ δὴ τίνας λόγους;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἄπιστα καὶ πέρα κλύειν.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

ὄρᾳ τι κέρδος ἐνθάδ' ἄξιον μονῆς,  
ὄτω πέποιθ' ἐμοὶ ξυνὼν  
κρατεῖν ἂν ἢ τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἢ  
420 φίλοισιν ὠφελεῖν ἔχειν;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

λέγει μέγαν τιν' ὄλβον, οὔτε λεκτὸν οὔ-  
τε πιστόν· ὡς σὰ πάντα καὶ  
τὸ τῆδε καὶ τὸ κείσε καὶ  
425 τὸ δεῦρο προσβιβᾶ λέγων.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

πότερα μαινόμενος;

## BIRDS

### CHORUS LEADER

And what chance  
can have brought them  
on a journey to the birds?

### TEREUS

A passionate desire  
for your way of life,  
to share your home  
and be with you completely!

### CHORUS LEADER

What do you mean?  
And what tales is he telling?

### TEREUS

Incredible and beyond belief.

### CHORUS LEADER

Does he see a way to cash in on his visit,  
convinced that being with me  
he'll overpower his enemy  
or be able to help his friends?

### TEREUS

He promises great prosperity, ineffable  
and incredible, for he makes a convincing case  
that you can have it all, what's here,  
and there, and everywhere.

### CHORUS LEADER

Is he insane?

---

415 λέγει Dindorf: λέγουσι a



ARISTOPHANES

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἄφατον ὡς φρόνιμος.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἔνι σοφόν τι φρενί;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

430 πυκνότατον κίναδος,  
σόφισμα, κύρμα, τρίμμα, παιπάλημ' ὄλον.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

λέγειν λέγειν κέλευέ μοι.  
κλύων γὰρ ὦν σύ μοι λέγεις  
λόγων ἀνεπτέρωμαι.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

435 ἄγε δὴ σὺ καὶ σὺ τὴν πανοπλίαν μὲν πάλιν  
ταύτην λαβόντε κρεμάσατον τύχ' ἀγαθῇ  
εἰς τὸν ἵπνον εἴσω πλησίον τοῦπιστάτου·  
σὺ δὲ τούσδ' ἐφ' οἷσπερ τοῖς λόγοις ξυνέλεξ' ἐγὼ  
φράσον, δίδαξον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

440 μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω 'γὼ μὲν οὐ,  
ἦν μὴ διάθωνταί γ' οἶδε διαθήκην ἐμοὶ  
ἦνπερ ὁ πίθηκος τῇ γυναικὶ διέθετο,  
ὁ μαχαιροποιός, μήτε δάκνειν τούτους ἐμὲ  
μήτ' ὀρχίπεδ' ἔλκειν μήτ' ὀρύττειν—

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐ τί που

τὸν—

BIRDS

TEREUS

Oh, how unutterably sane!

CHORUS LEADER

There's wisdom in his heart?

TEREUS

He's the craftiest fox,  
all cleverness, a go-getter, a smoothie, the crème de  
la craft!

CHORUS LEADER

Tell him to speak, to speak!  
For as I listen to the tale you tell  
I'm all aflutter.

TEREUS

*(to his Slaves)* All right then, you and you take my panoply  
back inside and hang it in the kitchen—knock on wood—  
by the trivet. *(to Peisetaerus)* And you inform and brief  
these birds about the proposals I summoned them to hear.

PEISETAERUS

I'll do nothing of the kind, not unless they promise me the  
same deal as the monkey made with his woman, you know,  
the knifemaker:<sup>30</sup> that they're not to bite me or yank my  
balls or poke me in the—

EUELPIDES

You can't mean the—

<sup>30</sup> The various guesses in the scholia show that not even ancient scholars could explain this allusion.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐδαμῶς. οὐκ, ἀλλὰ τῶφθαλμῶ λέγω.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

διατίθεμαι ἄγω.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

κατόμοσόν νυν ταῦτά μοι.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

445 ὄμνυμ' ἐπὶ τούτοις, πᾶσι νικᾶν τοῖς κριταῖς  
καὶ τοῖς θεαταῖς πᾶσιν,

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἔσται ταυταγί.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

εἰ δὲ παραβαίην, ἐνὶ κριτῇ νικᾶν μόνον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀκούετε λεῶ· τοὺς ὀπλίτας νυνμενὶ  
ἀνελομένους θῶπλ' ἀπιέναι πάλιν οἴκαδε,  
450 σκοπεῖν δ' ὅ τι ἂν προγράφωμεν ἐν τοῖς πινακίοις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) δολερὸν μὲν αἰεὶ κατὰ πάντα δὴ τρόπον  
πέφυκεν ἄνθρωπος· σὺ δ' ὅμως λέγε μοι. τάχα γὰρ  
τύχοις ἂν χρηστὸν ἐξειπὼν ὅ τι μοι παρορᾷς  
455 ἢ δύνάμιν τινα μείζω  
παραλειπομένην ὑπ' ἐμῆς φρενὸς ἀξυνέτου·  
σὺ δὲ τοῦθ' οὐρᾷς λέγ' εἰς κοινόν.  
ὁ γὰρ ἂν σὺ τύχης μοι  
ἀγαθὸν πορίσας, τοῦτο κοινὸν ἔσται.

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

No, not at all; the eyes, I was going to say.

### CHORUS LEADER

I promise.

### PEISETAERUS

Then swear to it.

### CHORUS LEADER

Here's my oath: to be victorious by unanimous vote of the judges and the spectators—

### PEISETAERUS

That you shall be!

### CHORUS LEADER

but if I break my oath, to win by only one vote.

### PEISETAERUS

Now hear this: the infantry may retrieve their arms and go back home, but should keep an eye on the boards for any notices we may post.

*They give their "armor" to Xanthias and Manodorus, who take it inside, then return.*

### CHORUS

A treacherous thing always in every way  
is human nature. But do make your case, for perhaps  
you may divulge a good quality that you see in me  
or some greater potential  
overlooked by my witless mind.  
Explain to us all this perception of yours,  
for whatever advantage you may provide me  
will be an advantage for us all.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

460 ἀλλ' ἐφ' ὅτῳπερ πράγματι τὴν σὴν ἤκεις γνώμην  
ἀναπέισων,  
λέγε θαρρήσας· ὡς τὰς σπονδὰς οὐ μὴ πρότερον  
παραβῶμεν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ὀργῶ νῆ τὸν Δία καὶ προπεφύραται λόγος  
εἷς μοι,  
ὄν διαμάττειν κωλύει οὐδέν. φέρε, παῖ, στέφανον·  
καταχέισθαι  
κατὰ χειρὸς ὕδωρ φερέτω ταχύ τις.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

δειπνήσειν μέλλομεν; ἢ τί;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

465 μὰ Δί' ἀλλὰ λέγειν ζητῶ τι πάλαι, μέγα καὶ  
λαρινὸν ἔπος τι,  
ὅ τι τὴν τούτων θραύσει ψυχὴν. οὕτως ὑμῶν  
ὑπεραλγῶ,  
οἵτινες ὄντες πρότερον βασιλῆς—

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἡμεῖς βασιλῆς; τίνος;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὑμεῖς  
πάντων ὀπόσ' ἔστιν, ἐμοῦ πρῶτον, τουδί, καὶ τοῦ  
Διὸς αὐτοῦ,

## BIRDS

### CHORUS LEADER

Now then, about this idea of yours that you've come to sell us: explain what kind of business it is, and never fear, we won't break the truce before you've had your say.

### PEISETAERUS

Well, I'm positively bursting to tell you, and I've got a special speech all whipped up, so nothing's stopping me from kneading it right into cake. (*to the Slaves*) Bring me a garland, boy, and one of you fetch water to pour over my hands, right away.

### EUELPIDES

Are we getting ready for dinner, or what?

### PEISETAERUS

No no, it's just that for quite some time I've been trying to put something into words, a big juicy utterance that will shatter these birds to the very soul. (*to the birds*) So sorrowful am I on your account, who once were kings—

### CHORUS LEADER

Us kings? Of what?

### PEISETAERUS

Yes you, kings of all that exists—starting with yours truly and including Zeus himself—and born a long time before

---

<sup>461</sup> *πρότερον* Π2 a: *πρότεροι* Hermann

ARISTOPHANES

ἀρχαιότεροι πρότεροί τε Κρόνου καὶ Τιτάνων  
ἐγένεσθε  
καὶ Γῆς.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

καὶ Γῆς;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

470

τουτὶ μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἐπεπύσμην.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀμαθῆς γὰρ ἔφυς κοῦ πολυπράγμων, οὐδ' Αἴσωπον  
πεπάτηκας,

ὃς ἔφασκε λέγων κορυδὸν πάντων πρώτην ὄρνιθα  
γενέσθαι,

προτέραν τῆς γῆς, κάπειτα νόσω τὸν πατέρ' αὐτῆς  
ἀποθνήσκειν·

γῆν δ' οὐκ εἶναι, τὸν δὲ προκείσθαι πεμπταῖον· τὴν  
δ' ἀποροῦσαν

475 ὑπ' ἀμηχανίας τὸν πατέρ' αὐτῆς ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ  
κατορύξαι.

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὁ πατήρ ἄρα τῆς κορυδοῦ νυνὶ κείται τεθνεὼς  
Κεφαλήσιν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐκουν δῆτ' εἰ πρότεροι μὲν γῆς, πρότεροι δὲ θεῶν  
ἐγένοντο,

## BIRDS

Cronus, and the Titans, and even Earth.<sup>31</sup>

CHORUS LEADER

Even Earth?

PEISETAERUS

I swear by Apollo.

CHORUS LEADER

I certainly never heard that.

PEISETAERUS

That's because you're naturally ignorant and uninquisitive, and you haven't thumbed your Aesop.<sup>32</sup> He says in his fable that the Lark was the first of all birds to be born, before Earth; and then her father died of a disease, but there being no earth, he'd lain out for four days<sup>33</sup> and she was at a loss what to do, until in desperation she buried her father in her own head.

EUELPIDES

So that's why to this day the Lark's father lies dead in the Head.<sup>34</sup>

PEISETAERUS

So if they were born before Earth and before the gods,

<sup>31</sup> For the standard divine succession myth see Hesiod, *Theogony* 133–210.

<sup>32</sup> The legendary animal fabulist, thought to have lived in early sixth-century Samos.

<sup>33</sup> In Athens the "laying out" was held the day after death, and burial followed the next morning.

<sup>34</sup> The deme Cephale ("Head") was the site of a large cemetery. There is perhaps another reference to Philocles the Lark (281 n.), since a Philocles of Cephale is attested in the fourth century (*PA* 14546).



ARISTOPHANES

ὡς πρεσβυτάτων ὄντων αὐτῶν ὀρθῶς ἐσθ' ἢ  
 βασιλεία;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

πάνυ τοίνυν χρὴ ρύγχος βόσκειν σε τὸ λοιπόν·  
 480 οὐκ ἀποδώσει ταχέως ὁ Ζεὺς τὸ σκῆπτρον τῷ  
 δρυκολάπτῃ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὡς δ' οὐχὶ θεοὶ τοίνυν ἦρχον τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸ  
 παλαιόν,  
 ἀλλ' ὄρνιαθες, κᾶβασίλευον, πόλλ' ἐστὶ τεκμήρια  
 τούτων.  
 αὐτίκα δ' ὑμῖν πρῶτ' ἐπιδείξω τὸν ἀλεκτρυόν', ὡς  
 ἐτυράννει  
 ἦρχέ τε Περσῶν πρῶτος πάντων, Δαρείων καὶ  
 Μεγαβάζων,  
 485 ὥστε καλεῖται Περσικὸς ὄρνις ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐτ'  
 ἐκείνης.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

διὰ ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἔχων καὶ νῦν ὥσπερ βασιλεὺς ὁ  
 μέγας διαβάσκει  
 ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὴν κυρβασίαν τῶν ὀρνίθων μόνος  
 ὀρθήν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὕτω δ' ἰσχυέ τε καὶ μέγας ἦν τότε καὶ πολὺς, ὥστ'  
 ἔτι καὶ νῦν

## BIRDS

doesn't it follow that the kingship is rightfully theirs by primogeniture?

### CHORUS LEADER

I swear by Apollo.

### EUELPIDES

Then from now on you should make a point of growing a beak—Zeus won't be quick to return his sceptre to the woodpecker!

### PEISETAERUS

Now then, in olden days it wasn't gods who ruled mankind and were kings, but birds, and I can prove this with arguments galore. For example, I'll start by showing you that the cock first ruled and reigned over the Persians, before all those Dariuses and Megabazuses,<sup>35</sup> and that's why he's still called the Persian Bird, in memory of that reign.

### EUELPIDES

So that's why to this day he struts about like the Great King, the only bird who gets to wear his hat cocked!

### PEISETAERUS

Such was his authority, so great and mighty was he then,

---

<sup>35</sup> Darius I reigned 522–486 and was repulsed by the Athenians at Marathon in 490; Megabazus (in Greek the name suggests "big-talker") was a commander during his reign.

ARISTOPHANES

ὑπὸ τῆς ῥώμης τῆς τότε ἐκείνης, ὁπότεν μόνον  
 ὄρθριον ἄσση,  
 490 ἀναπηδῶσιν πάντες ἐπ' ἔργον, χαλκῆς, κεραμῆς,  
 σκυλοδέψαι,  
 σκυτῆς, βαλανῆς, ἀλφιταμοιβοί,  
 τορνευτολურασπιδοπηγοί·  
 οἱ δὲ βαδίζουσ' ὑποδησάμενοι νύκτωρ—

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔμὲ τοῦτό γ' ἐρώτα.  
 χλαῖναν γὰρ ἀπώλεσ' ὁ μοχθηρὸς Φρυγίων ἐρίων  
 διὰ τοῦτον.  
 εἰς δεκάτην γὰρ ποτε παιδαρίου κληθεὶς ὑπέπινον  
 ἐν ἄστει,  
 495 κάρτι καθηῦδον· καὶ πρὶν δειπνεῖν τοὺς ἄλλους  
 οὗτος ἄρ' ἦσεν·  
 καγὼ νομίσας ὄρθρον ἐχώρουν Ἀλιμουντάδε, κάρτι  
 προκύνπτω  
 ἔξω τείχους, καὶ λωποδύτης παίει ῥοπάλω με τὸ  
 νῶτον·  
 καγὼ πίπτω μέλλω τε βοᾶν, ὁ δ' ἀπέβλισε  
 θοῖμάτιόν μου.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἰκτίνος δ' οὖν τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἦρχεν τότε  
 κἀβασίλευεν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τῶν Ἑλλήνων;

## BIRDS

that even to this day, as a result of that long-ago power, he has only to sing reveille and everyone jumps up to work, smiths, potters, tanners, cobblers, bathmen, grain traders, the whole carpentering, lyre-pegging, shield-fastening lot. In the dark men put on their shoes and set forth—

### EUELPIDES

I'll vouch for that! I, poor bastard, lost a cloak of Phrygian wool, thanks to him. I'd been invited to the city for a child's naming day, and had a bit to drink, and had just fallen asleep when right before dinner that bird up and crowed. I thought it was morning and set off for Halimus. And no sooner do I pop outside the city walls than a mugger clouts me from behind with a club. I fall down, and I'm getting ready to shout for help, but he's already extracted my coat!

### PEISETAERUS

To resume: back then the kite was the ruler and king over the Greeks.

### CHORUS LEADER

Over the Greeks?

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

500 καὶ κατέδειξέν γ' οὗτος πρῶτος βασιλεύων  
προκυλινδεῖσθαι τοῖς ἰκτίνοισ.

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

νὴ τὸν Διόνυσον, ἐγὼ γοῦν  
ἐκυλινδούμην ἰκτίνον ἰδών· κᾶθ' ὕπτιος ὦν  
ἀναχάσκων  
ὀβολὸν κατεβρόχθισα· κᾶτα κενὸν τὸν θύλακον  
οἴκαδ' ἀφείλκον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

Αἰγύπτου δ' αὖ καὶ Φοινίκης πάσης κόκκυξ  
βασιλεὺς ἦν·  
505 χῶπόθ' ὁ κόκκυξ εἶποι κόκκυ, τότ' ἂν οἱ Φοίνικες  
ἅπαντες  
τοὺς πυρούς ἂν καὶ τὰς κριθὰς ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις  
ἐθέριζον.

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τοῦτ' ἄρ' ἐκεῖν' ἦν τοῦπος ἀληθῶς· κόκκυ, ψωλοὶ  
πεδίονδε.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἦρχον δ' οὕτω σφόδρα τὴν ἀρχήν, ὥστ' εἴ τις καὶ  
βασιλεῖοι  
ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν τῶν Ἑλλήνων Ἀγαμέμνων ἢ  
Μενέλαος,  
510 ἐπὶ τῶν σκήπτρων ἐκάθητ' ὄρνις μετέχων ὃ τι  
δωροδοκίη.

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

That's right, and as king he instituted the custom of rolling on the ground before kites.<sup>36</sup>

### EUELPIDES

So help me Dionysus, I rolled when I saw a kite, and when I was on my back with my mouth open I swallowed an obol,<sup>37</sup> so I had to lug my sack home empty.

### PEISETAERUS

And furthermore, the cuckoo was king of all Egypt and Phoenicia; and whenever the cuckoo said "cuckoo," all the Phoenicians would start reaping the wheat and barley in their fields.

### EUELPIDES

So that's the real meaning of the saying, "Cuckoo! Knobs out and up country!"<sup>38</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

And so dominant was their dominion that in the Greek cities if some Agamemnon or Menelaus ever *was* king, a bird would be perched on his sceptre, getting a share of any presents he received.

<sup>36</sup> At their first appearance each year, as being harbingers of spring.

<sup>37</sup> Lacking pockets, Athenians carried small coins in their mouths.

<sup>38</sup> Perhaps a reveille call meaning "arise and prepare to march"; "knobs" translates *psoloi*, a word referring to men with *glandes penis* ("knobs") exposed: in the case of Greeks, by erection, of barbarians, by circumcision.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

τουτὶ τοίνυν οὐκ ἤδη γῶ· καὶ δῆτά μ' ἐλάμβανε  
 θαῦμα,  
 ὁπότε ἐξέλθοι Πρίαμός τις ἔχων ὄρνιν ἐν τοῖσι  
 τραγωδοῖς,  
 ὁ δ' ἄρ' εἰστήκει τὸν Λυσικράτη τηρῶν ὅ τι  
 δωροδοκοίη.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὁ δὲ δεινότατόν <γ> ἐστὶν ἀπάντων, ὁ Ζεὺς γὰρ ὁ  
 νῦν βασιλεύων  
 515 αἰετὸν ὄρνιν ἔστηκεν ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς  
 βασιλεὺς ὢν,  
 ἡ δ' αὖ θυγάτηρ γλαῦχ', ὁ δ' Ἀπόλλων ὡς θεράπων  
 ὢν ἰέρακα.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

νῆ τὴν Δήμητρ' εὖ ταῦτα λέγεις. τίνος οὐνεκα ταῦτ'  
 ἄρ' ἔχουσιν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἴν' ὅταν θύων τις ἔπειτ' αὐτοῖς εἰς τὴν χεῖρ', ὡς  
 νόμος ἐστίν,  
 τὰ σπλάγχνα διδῶ, τοῦ Διὸς αὐτοὶ πρότεροι τὰ  
 σπλάγχνα λάβωσιν.  
 520 ὦμνυ τ' οὐδεὶς τότ' <ἂν> ἀνθρώπων θεόν, ἀλλ'  
 ὄρνιθας ἅπαντες.  
 Λάμπων δ' ὦμνυσ' ἔτι καὶ νυνὶ τὸν χῆν', ὅταν  
 ἐξαπατᾷ τι.



## BIRDS

### EUELPIDES

You know, that's something I never realized. I was always bewildered when in the tragedies someone like Priam came on with a bird, but of course it was perched there to take note of whatever presents Lysicrates<sup>39</sup> pocketed.

### PEISETAERUS

But the most impressive proof of all is that Zeus, the current king, stands there with an eagle on his head as an emblem of his royalty, as does his daughter<sup>40</sup> with an owl, and Apollo, being a servant, with a hawk.

### CHORUS LEADER

By Demeter, that's right—but why have they got them?

### PEISETAERUS

So that when someone makes a sacrifice and puts the innards into the god's hand, as the custom goes, the birds themselves can grab the innards before Zeus can! And in those days not a soul would swear by a god; they all swore by birds. Even today Lampon<sup>41</sup> swears "by Goose" when

<sup>39</sup> Evidently an office holder or politician; the name is not uncommon.

<sup>40</sup> Athena.

<sup>41</sup> A distinguished authority on oracles and religious protocol, and prominent in public life since the 440s; ridiculed elsewhere in comedy for high living.



ARISTOPHANES

οὕτως ὑμᾶς πάντες πρότερον μεγάλους ἀγίους τ'  
ἐνόμιζον,

νῦν δ' ἀνδράποδ', ἡλιθίους, Μανᾶς.

ὥσπερ δ' ἤδη τοὺς μαινομένους

525 βάλλουσ' ὑμᾶς· κὰν τοῖς ἱεροῖς

πᾶς τις ἐφ' ὑμῖν ὀρνιθευτῆς

ἴστησι βρόχους, παγίδας, ράβδους,

ἔρκη, νεφέλας, δίκτυα, πηκτάς·

εἶτα λαβόντες πωλοῦσ' ἀθρούους·

530 οἱ δ' ὠνοῦνται βλιμάζοντες·

κοῦ μόνον, εἶπερ ταῦτα δοκεῖ δρᾶν,

ὀπτησάμενοι παρέθενθ' ὑμᾶς,

ἀλλ' ἐπικνῶσιν τυρόν, ἔλαιον,

σίλφιον, ὄξος, καὶ τρίψαντες

535 κατὰχυσμ' ἕτερον γλυκὺ καὶ λιπαρόν,

κᾶπειτα κατεσκέδασαν θερμὸν

θερμῶν ὑμῶν

αὐτῶν, ὥσπερ κενεβρείων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ) πολὺ δὴ πολὺ δὴ χαλεπωτάτους λόγους

540 ἤνεγκας, ἄνθρωφ'· ὡς ἐδάκρυσά γ' ἐμῶν πατέρων

κάκην, οἱ τάσδε τὰς τιμὰς προγόνων παραδόν-

των ἐπ' ἐμοῦ κατέλυσαν.

σὺν δέ μοι κατὰ δαίμονα καὶ <τινα> συντυχίαν

545 ἀγαθὴν ἤκεις ἐμοὶ σωτήρ.

ἀναθεὶς γὰρ ἐγώ σοι

τὰ νεόττια κᾶμαντὸν οἰκετεύσω.

## BIRDS

he's up to something crooked. That's how high and holy everyone deemed you then; but now you're mere knaves, simpletons, tomfools! These days they pelt you like lunatics; and even in the temples every bird hunter's out to get you, setting nooses, snares, limed twigs, toils, meshes, nets, decoys in traps. And when they've caught you they sell you wholesale, and the customers feel you up. And if they do buy you, they're not content to have you roasted and served up; no, they grate on cheese, oil, silphium, vinegar, and they whip up a second sauce, sweet and shiny, and baste it on hot, when you're hot yourselves, like meat from carcasses!

## CHORUS

Very harrowing, yes very, is the tale  
you've brought us, human. It made me weep at my  
fathers'  
baseness, who in my own time have wrecked these  
privileges of mine  
that my forebears bequeathed to them.  
But now you're here, by the grace of god or some  
happy chance,  
to be my savior.  
So shall I live, entrusting to you  
my nestlings and myself.

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523 δ' ἀνδράποδ', ἡλιθίους] δ' αὖ (cf. v. 611) Anon. in *Jenaische Allgem. Lit.-Zeitung* 1823 #30, col. 237

531 κοῦ μόνον Dunbar: κοῦδ' οὖν a

537 θερμῶν ὑμῶν Henderson: τοῦτο καθ' a

547 οἰκετεύσω Hermann: οἰκήσω (vel -κίσω) a: οἰκήσω δή t

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὅ τι χρῆ δρᾶν, σὺ δίδασκε παρών· ὡς ζῆν οὐκ  
ἄξιον ἡμῖν,  
εἰ μὴ κομιούμεθα παντὶ τρόπῳ τὴν ἡμετέραν  
βασιλείαν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

550 καὶ δὴ τοίνυν πρῶτα διδάσκω μίαν ὀρνίθων πόλιν  
εἶναι,  
κᾶπειτα τὸν ἀέρα πάντα κύκλῳ καὶ πᾶν τουτὶ τὸ  
μεταξὺ  
περιτειχίζειν μεγάλαις πλίνθοις ὀπταῖς ὥσπερ  
Βαβυλῶνα.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ὦ Κεβριόνη καὶ Πορφυρίων, ὡς σμερδαλέον τὸ  
πόλισμα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

κᾶπειδὰν τουτ' ἐπανεστήκη, τὴν ἀρχὴν τὸν Δί'  
ἀπαιτεῖν·  
555 κᾶν μὲν μὴ φῆ μηδ' ἐθελήσῃ μηδ' εὐθὺς  
γνωσιμαχήσῃ,  
ἱερὸν πόλεμον πρωυδᾶν αὐτῷ, καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσιν  
ἀπειπεῖν  
διὰ τῆς χώρας τῆς ὑμετέρας ἐστυκόσι μὴ  
διαφοιτᾶν,  
ὥσπερ πρότερον μοιχεύσοντες τὰς Ἀλκμήνας  
κατέβαινον  
καὶ τὰς Ἀλόπας καὶ τὰς Σεμέλας· ἦνπερ δ' ἐπίωσ',  
ἐπιβάλλειν

## BIRDS

### CHORUS LEADER

Now it's up to you to instruct us what we should do, because our life won't be worth living unless at all costs we recover our sovereignty.

### PEISETAERUS

Very well then, my first instruction is this: make a single city of birds; then encircle the whole atmosphere, all the area between earth and sky, with a wall of big baked bricks, like Babylon.

### CHORUS LEADER

Cebriones and Porphyrion,<sup>42</sup> what a redoubtable citadel!

### PEISETAERUS

And when that's up and ready, reclaim your rulership from Zeus; and if he refuses, and isn't willing, and doesn't give up at once, declare a holy war against him, and deny the gods the right to travel through your territory with erections, the way they used to descend for adultery with their Alcmenes<sup>43</sup> and Alopes<sup>44</sup> and Semeles.<sup>45</sup> And if they do

<sup>42</sup> Two of the Giants, whose rebellion against the Olympian gods was crushed in the Plain of Phlegra (cf. 824–25); *porphyrion* was also the name of a bird.

<sup>43</sup> Alcmena, Amphytrion's wife, was mother by Zeus of Heracles.

<sup>44</sup> Alope, Cercyon's daughter, was mother by Poseidon of Hippothoon.

<sup>45</sup> Semele, Cadmus' daughter, was mother by Zeus of Dionysus.

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<sup>553</sup> Κεβριόνη Brunck: Κεβριόνα a

ARISTOPHANES

560 σφραγίδ' αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ψωλήν, ἵνα μὴ βινῶσ' ἔτ'  
ἐκείνας.

τοῖς δ' ἀνθρώποις ὄρνιν ἕτερον πέμψαι κήρυκα  
κελεύω,

ὡς ὀρνίθων βασιλευόντων θύειν ὄρνισι τὸ λοιπόν,  
κᾶπειτα θεοῖς ὕστερον αὐθις· προσνείμασθαι δὲ  
πρεπόντως

τοῖσι θεοῖσιν τῶν ὀρνίθων ὃς ἂν ἀρμόττη καθ'  
ἕκαστον·

565 ἦν Ἀφροδίτῃ θύῃ, κριθὰς ὄρνιθι φαληρίδι θύειν·  
ἦν δὲ Ποσειδῶνί τις οἶν θύῃ, νήττη πυροῦς  
καθαγίζειν·

ἦν δ' Ἡρακλέει θύῃ τι, λάρω ναστοῦς θύειν  
μελιτοῦντας·

κἂν Διὶ θύῃ βασιλεῖ κριόν, βασιλεύς ἐστ' ὀρχίλος  
ὄρνις,

ᾧ προτέρω δεῖ τοῦ Διὸς αὐτοῦ σέρφον ἐνόρχην  
σφαγιάζειν.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

570 ἦσθην σέρφω σφαγιαζομένω. βροντάτω νῦν ὁ  
μέγας Ζάν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

καὶ πῶς ἡμᾶς νομιοῦσι θεοὺς ἀνθρωποὶ κούχῃ  
κολοιούς,

οἳ πετόμεσθα πτέρυγας τ' ἔχομεν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ληρεῖς. καὶ νῆ Δί' ὃ γ' Ἑρμῆς

## BIRDS

trespass, then clap a seal on their boners, so they can't fuck those women anymore. And I urge you to despatch another bird as a herald to mankind, announcing that, the birds being sovereign, they must henceforth sacrifice to the birds, and only afterwards to the gods; and that they must aptly assign to each of the gods the bird who's a fitting counterpart: if the sacrifice is to Aphrodite, sacrifice nuts to the phall-arope bird; if the sacrifice is a sheep to Poseidon, consecrate granola to the duck; if something's to be sacrificed to Heracles, sacrifice honeypies to the cormorant; and if it's a ram sacrifice to Zeus the King, the nut-hatch is a king bird,<sup>46</sup> and it's to him, ahead of Zeus himself, that a gnat with intact nuts must be slaughtered.

### EUELPIDES

I like that, slaughtering a gnat! So let the great Zan<sup>47</sup> thunder away!

### CHORUS LEADER

But how are humans supposed to believe we're gods and not daws? We fly around and wear wings.

### PEISETAERUS

That's nonsense! Why, Hermes certainly flies around and

<sup>46</sup> It is unclear what bird *orchilos* refers to (perhaps the wren), and why it was a "king" bird (perhaps a reference to the wren's gold crown or to Aesop's fable [Perry 434]); the translation preserves the pun on *orcheis* "testicles."

<sup>47</sup> A cultic form of Zeus' name.

ARISTOPHANES

πέτεται θεὸς ὦν πτέρυγας τε φορεῖ, κάλλοι γε θεοὶ  
πάνυ πολλοί.

αὐτίκα Νίκη πέτεται πτερύγοιν χρυσαῖν καὶ νῆ Δί'  
Ἔρωσ γε·

575 Ἴριν δέ γ' Ὀμηρος ἔφασκ' ἰκέλην εἶναι τρήρωνι  
πελείη.

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ὁ Ζεὺς δ' ἡμῖν οὐ βροντήσας πέμψει πτερόεντα  
κεραυνόν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἦν δ' οὖν ὑμᾶς μὲν ὑπ' ἀγνοίας εἶναι νομίσωσι τὸ  
μηδέν,

τούτους δὲ θεοὺς τοὺς ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ; τότε χρὴ  
στρούθων νέφος ἄρθεν

καὶ σπερμολόγων ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν τὸ σπέρμ' αὐτῶν  
ἀνακάψαι·

580 κάπειτ' αὐτοῖς ἢ Δημήτηρ πυροὺς πεινώσι μετρείτω.

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἐθελήσει μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ὄψει προφάσεις αὐτὴν  
παρέχουσιν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οἱ δ' αὖ κόρακες τῶν ζευγαρίων, οἷσιν τὴν γῆν  
καταροῦσιν,

καὶ τῶν προβάτων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐκκοψάντων ἐπὶ  
πίερα·

εἶθ' Ἀπόλλων ἰατρός <γ'> ὦν ἰάσθω· μισθοφορεῖ δέ.



## BIRDS

sports wings, and he's a god, and so do a great many other gods; Victory, for example, flies on golden wings, and so does Cupid, and Homer pronounced Iris to be "like to a trembling dove."<sup>48</sup>

### EUELPIDES

And won't Zeus thunder at us and hurl his "wingéd lightning bolt"?

### PEISETAERUS

But if out of ignorance they still think that you're nothing and the Olympians are gods, then a cloud of sparrows and seed pickers must arise and gobble up their seed in the fields. When they're famished, let Demeter dole out grain to them!

### EUELPIDES

She'll certainly renege; mark my words, she'll just make excuses.<sup>49</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

And let the ravens peck out the eyes of the oxen harnessed to plough their land, and of their sheep, as a challenge. Then let Apollo the Healer heal them—and earn his fee!

<sup>48</sup> *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 114.

<sup>49</sup> Like populist politicians, cf. *Knights* 1100–06, *Wasps* 715–18.

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576 ΕΥ. Bentley: ΠΕΙΣ. PC: 'ΕΠ. cett. πέμψει] πέμπει  
Anon. Parisinus saec. MDII (v. ed. Dunbar, p. 51) et Tyrwhitt



ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

585 μή, πρίν γ' ἂν ἐγὼ τὸ βοιδαρίω τῶμῶ πρότιστ'  
ἀποδῶμαι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἦν δ' ἠγῶνται σὲ θεόν, σὲ Ζῆνα, σὲ Γῆν, σὲ  
Κρόνον, σὲ Ποσειδῶ,  
ἀγάθ' αὐτοῖσιν πάντα παρέσται.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

λέγε δὴ μοι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

πρῶτα μὲν αὐτῶν τὰς οἰνάνθας οἱ πάρνοπες οὐ  
κατέδονται,  
ἀλλὰ γλαυκῶν λόχος εἰς αὐτοὺς καὶ κερχνηδῶν  
ἐπιτρίψει.  
590 εἶθ' οἱ κνῖπες καὶ ψῆνες ἀεὶ τὰς συκᾶς οὐ  
κατέδονται,  
ἀλλ' ἀναλέξει πάντας καθαρῶς αὐτοὺς ἀγέλη μία  
κιχλῶν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

πλουτεῖν δὲ πόθεν δώσομεν αὐτοῖς; καὶ γὰρ τούτου  
σφόδρ' ἐρώσιν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τὰ μέταλλ' αὐτοῖς μαντευομένοις οὔτοι δώσουσι τὰ  
χρηστά,  
τάς τ' ἐμπορίας τὰς κερδαλέας πρὸς τὸν μάντιν  
κατεροῦσιν,  
ὥστ' ἀπολείται τῶν ναυκλήρων οὐδεῖς.

## BIRDS

### EUELPIDES

No—at least not until I've sold my own little pair of oxen!

### PEISETAERUS

But if they accept you as their god, you as their Zeus, you as their Earth, you as their Cronus, you as their Poseidon, then all good things will be theirs.

### CHORUS LEADER

Give me an example of these good things.

### PEISETAERUS

For starters, the locusts won't devour their vine blooms; a single contingent of owls and kestrels will wipe them out. Then again, the mites and the gallflies won't always be devouring their fig trees; a single flock of thrushes will eat them clean up.

### CHORUS LEADER

But how will we give them wealth? Because that's a strong passion of theirs.

### PEISETAERUS

When they practice augury these birds will give them the motherlodes, and to the diviner they'll reveal the profitable voyages, so that no shipowner will be lost.

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<sup>586</sup> *σε Ζήνα* Sommerstein in *CQ* 48 (1998) 9–10 *praeuntibus*  
Blaydes et Dunbar: *σε βίον* a

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

595

πῶς οὐκ ἀπολείται;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

προερεῖ τις ἀεὶ τῶν ὀρνίθων μαντευομένῳ περὶ τοῦ  
πλοῦ·

“νυνὶ μὴ πλεῖ, χειμῶν ἔσται.” “νυνὶ πλεῖ, κέρδος  
ἐπέσται.”

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

γαῦλον κτῶμαι καὶ ναυκληρῶ, κοῦκ ἂν μείναιμι  
παρ’ ὑμῖν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τοὺς θησαυροὺς τ’ αὐτοῖς δείξουσ’ οὓς οἱ πρότερον  
κατέθεντο

600 τῶν ἀργυρίων· οὔτοι γὰρ ἴσασι· λέγουσι δέ τοι  
τάδε πάντες·

“οὔδεις οἶδεν τὸν θησαυρὸν τὸν ἐμὸν πλὴν εἴ τις  
ἄρ’ ὄρνις.”

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

πωλῶ γαῦλον, κτῶμαι σμινύην, καὶ τὰς ὑδρίας  
ἀνορύττω.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

πῶς δ’ ὑγίειαν δώσουσ’ αὐτοῖς, οὔσαν παρὰ τοῖσι  
θεοῖσιν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἦν εὖ πράττωσ’, οὐχ ὑγεία μεγάλη τοῦτ’ ἐστί;

## BIRDS

### CHORUS LEADER

They won't be lost? How so?

### PEISETAERUS

When he asks the diviner about his voyage, one of the birds will always tip him off: "Don't sail just now, a storm's on its way"; "Sail now, there's a profit in store."

### EUELPIDES

I'm buying a merchantman and becoming a shipowner—not staying here with you guys!

### PEISETAERUS

And they'll show them the hoards of silver that the old-timers buried; these birds know where they are. You do hear everyone say, "None but some bird knows where *my* treasure lies."

### EUELPIDES

I'm selling that merchantman, getting a shovel, and digging up pots!

### CHORUS LEADER

But how will the birds give them health? That rests with the gods.

### PEISETAERUS

If they're wealthy, they're plenty healthy, no?

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599 πρότερον] πρότεροι V<sup>pc</sup> M A t

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

σάφ' ἴσθι,

605 ὡς ἄνθρωπός γε κακῶς πράττων ἀτεχνῶς οὐδεὶς  
 ὑγιαίνει.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

πῶς δ' εἰς γῆράς ποτ' ἀφίξονται; καὶ γὰρ τοῦτ' ἔστ'  
 ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ.

ἢ παιδάρι' ὄντ' ἀποθνήσκειν δεῖ;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

μὰ Δί' ἀλλὰ τριακόσι' αὐτοῖς  
 ἔτι προσθήσουσ' ὄρνιθες ἔτη.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

παρὰ τοῦ;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

παρὰ τοῦ; παρ' ἑαυτῶν.  
 οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅτι πέντ' ἀνδρῶν γενεὰς ζῶει λακέρυζα  
 κορώνη;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

610 αἰβοῖ, πολλῶ κρείττους οὔτοι τοῦ Διὸς ἡμῖν  
 βασιλεύειν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐ γὰρ πολλῶ;  
 πρῶτον μὲν <γ'> οὐχὶ νεὸς ἡμᾶς  
 οἰκοδομεῖν δεῖ λιθίνους αὐτοῖς,  
 οὐδὲ θურῶσαι χρυσαῖσι θύραις,

615 ἀλλ' ὑπὸ θάμνοις καὶ πρινιδίοις

## BIRDS

EUELPIDES

You know it! No human's healthy at all if he's doing poorly.

CHORUS LEADER

But how will they reach old age? That's also up to Olympus.  
Or are they to die when they're tykes?

PEISETAERUS

Heavens no, the birds will add an extra three hundred  
years to their lives.

CHORUS LEADER

Where from?

PEISETAERUS

Where? From themselves: don't you know that "five ages  
of man lives the croaking crow"?<sup>50</sup>

EUELPIDES

Dammit, these birds are far better kings for us than Zeus!

PEISETAERUS

Far better for sure! To begin with, we needn't build them  
marble temples and gild the gates with gold; they'll make  
their homes in copses and woods, while for the bird VIPs

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. Hesiod, fr. 304.

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<sup>611</sup> lacunam unius metri suspiceret (cf. v. 523), suppl. e.g.  
<κρείττους, πολλῶ> Blaydes

## ARISTOPHANES

οἰκήσουσιν. τοῖς δ' αὖ σεμνοῖς  
 τῶν ὀρνίθων δένδρον ἐλαίας  
 ὁ νεὸς ἔσται. κούκ εἰς Δελφοὺς  
 οὐδ' εἰς Ἄμμων' ἐλθόντες ἐκεῖ  
 620 θύσομεν, ἀλλ' ἐν ταῖσιν κομάροις  
 καὶ τοῖς κοτίνοις στάντες, ἔχοντες  
 κριθάς, πυροὺς εὐξόμεθ' αὐτοῖς  
 ἀνατείνοντες τὸ χεῖρ' ἀγαθῶν  
 διδόναι τὸ μέρος· καὶ ταῦθ' ἡμῖν  
 625 παραχρῆμ' ἔσται  
 πυροὺς ὀλίγους προβαλοῦσιν.

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ὦ φίλτατ' ἐμοὶ πολὺν πρεσβυτῶν ἐξ ἐχθίστου  
 μεταπίπτων,  
 οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως ἂν ἐγὼ ποθ' ἐκὼν τῆς σῆς γνώμης  
 ἔτ' ἀφείμην.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐπαυχήσας δὲ τοῖσι σοῖς λόγοις  
 630 ἐπηπέιλησα καὶ κατώμοσα,  
 εἰάν σὺν παρ' ἐμὲ θέμενος ὁμόφρονας λόγους  
 δίκαιος ἄδολος ὅσιος ἐπὶ θεοὺς ἴης,  
 ἐμοὶ φρονῶν ξυνωδά, μὴ πολὺν χρόνον  
 635 θεοὺς ἔτι σκῆπτρα τὰμὰ τρίψειν.

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὅσα μὲν δεῖ ρώμη πράττειν, ἐπὶ ταῦτα  
 τεταξόμεθ' ἡμεῖς·

## BIRDS

an olive tree will be their temple. And we'll not be going to Delphi or Ammon<sup>51</sup> and sacrificing there; instead we'll stand among strawberries and wild olives holding grains of barley and wheat in our outstretched hands, and pray to the birds to give us a share of blessings; and we'll get these blessings right away, just for tossing them a few grains of wheat!

### CHORUS LEADER

Old man, my worst enemy changed into my very best friend, it's impossible that I could ever choose to discard this idea of yours!

### CHORUS

Emboldened by your words,  
I give notice and solemnly swear:  
if you bring to my cause congenial proposals,  
and fairly, squarely, righteously attack the gods,  
tuning your thoughts to mine, then not much longer  
will the gods be abusing my sceptre!

### CHORUS LEADER

So in the tasks that call for brawn, we're ready for duty; in

<sup>51</sup> A ram-headed Egyptian god, identified by the Greeks with Zeus, who had an oracular shrine at the Siwa oasis in Libya.

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632 δίκαιος ἄδολος ὄσιος Bergk: δικαίους ἀδόλους ὀσίους a



ARISTOPHANES

ὅσα δὲ γνώμη δεῖ βουλεύειν, ἐπὶ σοὶ τάδε πάντ'  
ἀνάκειται.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐχὶ νυστάζειν ἔτι  
ῶρα ἔστιν ἡμῖν οὐδὲ μελλονικιάν,  
640 ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα δεῖ τι δρᾶν.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

πρῶτον δέ γε  
εἰσέλθετ' εἰς νεοττιάν τε τὴν ἐμὴν  
καὶ τὰμὰ κάρφη καὶ τὰ παρόντα φρύγανα,  
καὶ τοῦνομ' ἡμῖν φράσατον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀλλὰ ράδιον.  
ἐμοὶ μὲν ὄνομα Πεισέταιρος, τῷδεδὶ  
Εὐελπίδης Κριῶθεν.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

645 ἀλλὰ χαίρετον  
ἄμφω.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

δεχόμεθα.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

δεῦρο τοίνυν εἴσιτον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἴωμεν· εἰσηγοῦ σὺ λαβὼν ἡμᾶς.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἴθι.

## BIRDS

the plans that call for brains, you're in charge of all that.

### PEISETAERUS

Well then, there's absolutely no time left for napping or a spell of Nicias' Paralysis;<sup>52</sup> no, we've got to accomplish something, and fast!

### TEREUS

Yes, but first come inside, into my nest, my sticks and such twigs as I have, and both of you tell us your names.

### PEISETAERUS

That's easy enough: my name is Peisetaerus, and this one here is Euelpides of Crioia.<sup>53</sup>

### TEREUS

A hearty welcome to you both.

### PEISETAERUS

Thank you.

### TEREUS

Well then, do come in, right this way.

### PEISETAERUS

(*to Euelpides*) Let's go in. (*to Tereus*) Please, show us in.

### TEREUS

Come on!

<sup>52</sup> Nicias had urged caution in sending the armada against Sicily (Thucydides 6.8, 25) and then had failed to follow up his victory before Syracuse (6.71, cf. Plutarch, *Life of Nicias* 16.8–9).

<sup>53</sup> For the significance of the names see 1–2 nn. Crioia and the variant Thria were actual Attic demes, but the comic point is unclear.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀτάρ, τὸ δεῖνα, δεῦρ' ἐπανάκρουσαι πάλιν.  
φέρ' ἴδω, φράσον νῶν, πῶς ἐγώ τε χούτοσι  
650 ξυνεσόμεθ' ὑμῖν πετομένοις οὐ πετομένω;

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

καλῶς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὄρα νυν, ὡς ἐν Αἰσώπου λόγοις  
ἔστιν λεγόμενον δῆ τι, τὴν ἀλώπεχ', ὡς  
φλαύρως ἐκοινώνησεν αἰετῷ ποτε.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

μηδὲν φοβηθῆς· ἔστι γάρ τι ρίζιον,  
655 ὃ διατραγόντ' ἔσεσθον ἐπτερωμένω.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὕτω μὲν εἰσίωμεν. ἄγε δῆ, Ξανθία  
καὶ Μανόδωρε, λαμβάνετε τὰ στρώματα.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

οὗτος, σὲ καλῶ, σὲ λέγω.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

τί καλεῖς;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τούτους μὲν ἄγων μετὰ σταντοῦ  
ἀρίστισον εἶ· τὴν δ' ἠδυμελῆ ξύμφωνον ἀηδόνα  
Μούσαις  
660 κατάλειψ' ἡμῖν δεῦρ' ἐκβιβάσας, ἵνα παίσωμεν μετ'  
ἐκείνης.

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

But, um, hold on, reverse oars, back this way! Look here, tell us, how can I and my pal here be your partners when you all can fly and we can't?

### TEREUS

Just fine.

### PEISETAERUS

Mind you now, there's a story in Aesop's fables about the fox, how once upon a time she fared poorly in partnership with an eagle.<sup>54</sup>

### TEREUS

Never fear, there's a certain little root; chew it and you'll have wings.

### PEISETAERUS

It's a deal; let's go inside. (*to the Slaves*) Come on then, Xanthias and Manodorus, pick up the baggage.

### CHORUS LEADER

(*to Tereus*) Yoo hoo! Yes you. A word, please.

### TEREUS

What is it?

### CHORUS LEADER

Do take these men with you and give them a good lunch; but that mellifluous nightingale, singer in the Muses' choir, bring her out here and leave her with us; we'd like to play with her.

<sup>54</sup> Aesop 1 Perry, first attested in Archilochus, frags. 172–81 West. The eagle had betrayed the fox by feeding her cubs to its eaglets, and the flightless fox could only curse the eagle; but when the eagle took hot goat-meat from an altar she set her nest afire, and the fox ate the eaglets as they fell.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦ τοῦτο μέντοι νῆ Δί' αὐτοῖσιν πιθοῦ.  
ἐκβίβασον ἐκ τοῦ βουτόμου τοῦρνίθιον·

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐκβίβασον αὐτοῦ, πρὸς θεῶν, αὐτήν, ἵνα  
καὶ νὸ θεασώμεσθα τὴν ἀηδόνα.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

665 ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ σφῶν, ταῦτα χρῆ δρᾶν. ἡ Πρόκνη,  
ἔκβαινε καὶ σαυτήν ἐπιδείκνυ τοῖς ξένοις.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ πολυτίμηθ', ὡς καλὸν τοῦρνίθιον·  
ὡς δ' ἀπαλόν, ὡς δὲ λευκόν.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἄρά γ' οἶσθ' ὅτι  
ἐγὼ διαμηρίζοιμ' ἂν αὐτήν ἠδέως;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

670 ὅσον δ' ἔχει τὸν χρυσόν, ὥσπερ παρθένος.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν αὐτήν κἂν φιλήσαί μοι δοκῶ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀλλ', ὦ κακόδαιμον, ρύγχος ὀβελίσκοιν ἔχει.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ῶν νῆ Δί' ἀπολέψαντα χρῆ  
ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὸ λέμμα κᾶθ' οὔτω φιλεῖν.

ΤΗΡΕΤΣ

ἴωμεν.

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Oh yes, by all means do as they ask! Bring the chick out of the tickle grass.

EUELPIDES

Heavens yes, do bring her out; we want to have a look at the nightingale too.

TEREUS

Well, if that's what you both want, I must oblige. Oh, Procne! Come outside and present yourself to our guests.

*Enter Procne, costumed as a girl piper with wings and a bird's head.*

PEISETAERUS

God almighty, what a beautiful chick! So tender and fair!

EUELPIDES

Know what? I'd be glad to spread those drumsticks!

PEISETAERUS

She's got quite a choker, like a debutante!

EUELPIDES

Me, I think I'd also like to give her a kiss.

PEISETAERUS

Look, you screw-up, she's got a couple of skewers for a beak!

EUELPIDES

OK, it's like an egg: we'll just have to peel that shell off her head and kiss her that way!

TEREUS

Let's go inside!

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

675 ἡγοῦ δὴ σὺ νῶν τύχάγαθῆ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ φίλη, ὦ ξουθή,  
 ὦ φίλτατον ὀρνέων,  
 πάντων ξύννομε τῶν ἐμῶν  
 ὕμνων, ξύντροφ' ἀηδοῖ,  
 680 ἦλθες ἦλθες ὄφθης,  
 ἡδὺν φθόγγον ἐμοὶ φέρουσ'.  
 ἀλλ', ὦ καλλιβόαν κρέκουσ'  
 αὐλὸν φθέγμασιν ἡρινοῖς,  
 ἄρχου τῶν ἀναπαίστων.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

685 ἄγε δὴ φύσιν ἄνδρες ἀμαυρόβιοι, φύλλων γενεᾶ  
 προσόμοιοι,  
 ὀλιγοδρανέες, πλάσματα πηλοῦ, σκιοειδέα φύλ'  
 ἀμενηνά,  
 ἀπτῆνες ἐφημέριοι, ταλαοὶ βροτοί, ἀνέρες  
 εἰκελόνειροι,  
 προσέχετε τὸν νοῦν τοῖς ἀθανάτοις ἡμῖν, τοῖς αἰὲν  
 ἐοῦσιν,  
 τοῖς αἰθερίοις, τοῖσιν ἀγήρως, τοῖς ἄφθιτα  
 μηδομένοισιν,  
 690 ἴν' ἀκούσαντες πάντα παρ' ἡμῶν ὀρθῶς περὶ τῶν  
 μετεώρων,  
 φύσιν οἰωνῶν γένεσίν τε θεῶν ποταμῶν τ' Ἐρέβους  
 τε Χάους τε

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

After you, then, and good luck to us!

*All except Procne and the Chorus exit into Tereus' nest.*

### CHORUS

Ah darling warbler,  
ah, dearest of birds,  
songmate of all my hymns,  
my nightingale companion,  
you're here, you're here, you're manifest,  
bringing sweet sound to me.  
Now, weaver of springtime tunes  
on the fair-toned pipes,  
lead off our anapests.

### CHORUS LEADER

Now then, ye men by nature just faintly alive, like to the race of leaves, do-littles, artefacts of clay, tribes shadowy and feeble, wingless ephemerals, suffering mortals, dreamlike people: pay attention to us, the immortals, the everlasting, the etherial, the ageless, whose counsels are imperishable; once you hear from us an accurate account of all celestial phenomena, and know correctly the nature of birds and the genesis of gods, rivers, Erebus, and Chaos,



ARISTOPHANES

εἰδότες ὀρθῶς, Προδίκῳ παρ' ἐμοῦ κλάειν εἵπητε τὸ  
λοιπόν.

Χάος ἦν καὶ Νύξ Ἐρεβός τε μέλαν πρῶτον καὶ  
Τάρταρος εὐρύς·

Γῆ δ' οὐδ' Ἀἴρ οὐδ' Οὐρανὸς ἦν· Ἐρέβους δ' ἐν  
ἀπείροσι κόλποις

695 τίκτει πρῶτιστον ὑπηνέμιον Νύξ ἢ μελανόπτερος  
ῶόν,

ἐξ οὗ περιτελλομέναις ὥραις ἔβλασταν Ἐρως ὁ  
ποθεινός,

στίλβων νῶτον πτερύγοιν χρυσαῖν, εἰκὼς ἀνεμώκεσι  
δίταις.

οὗτος δὲ Χάει πτερόεντι μιγείς νύχιος κατὰ

Τάρταρον εὐρὺν

ἐνεόττειυσεν γένος ἡμέτερον, καὶ πρῶτον ἀνήγαγεν  
εἰς φῶς.

700 πρότερον δ' οὐκ ἦν γένος ἀθανάτων, πρὶν Ἐρως  
ξυνέμειξεν ἅπαντα·

ξυμμειγνυμένων δ' ἐτέρων ἐτέροις γένητ' Οὐρανὸς  
Ὠκεανός τε

καὶ Γῆ πάντων τε θεῶν μακάρων γένος ἀφθιτον.

ᾧδε μὲν ἐσμεν

πολὺν πρεσβύτατοι πάντων μακάρων ἡμεῖς. ὡς δ'  
ἐσμὲν Ἐρωτος

πολλοῖς δῆλον· πετόμεσθά <τε> γὰρ καὶ τοῖσιν  
ἐρώσι σύνεσμεν·

705 πολλοὺς δὲ καλοὺς ἀπομωμοκότας παῖδας πρὸς  
τέρμασιν ὥρας

## BIRDS

thenceforth you'll be able to tell Prodicus from me to go to hell! <sup>55</sup>

In the beginning were Chaos and Night and black Erebus and broad Tartarus, and no Earth, Air, or Sky. And in the boundless bosom of Erebus did black-winged Night at the very start bring forth a wind egg, from which as the seasons revolved came forth Eros the seductive, like to swift whirlwinds, his back aglitter with wings of gold. And mating by night with winged Chaos in broad Tartarus, he hatched our own race and first brought it up to daylight. There was no race of immortal gods before Eros commingled everything; then as this commingled with that, Sky came to be, and Ocean and Earth, and the whole imperishable race of blessed gods. Thus we're far older than all the blessed gods, and it's abundantly clear that we're the offspring of Eros: we fly, and we keep company with lovers. Many are the fair boys who swore they wouldn't, and al-

<sup>55</sup> Prodicus of Ceos, a contemporary of Socrates with broad scientific and philosophical interests, traced the origin of gods to primitive nature- and hero-worship.

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<sup>698</sup> *νύχιος* Halbertsma: *νυχίω* vel *νυχίων* a S: *μύχιος* West

## ARISTOPHANES

διὰ τὴν ἰσχὺν τὴν ἡμετέραν διεμήρισαν ἄνδρες  
 ἔρασταί,  
 ὁ μὲν ὄρτυγα δούς, ὁ δὲ πορφυρίων', ὁ δὲ χῆν', ὁ δὲ  
 Περσικὸν ὄρνιν.

πάντα δὲ θνητοῖς ἔστιν ἀφ' ἡμῶν τῶν ὀρνίθων τὰ  
 μέγιστα.

πρῶτα μὲν ὥρας φαίνομεν ἡμεῖς ἦρος, χειμῶνος,  
 ὀπώρας·

710 σπείρειν μὲν, ὅταν γέρανος κρώζουσ' εἰς τὴν  
 Λιβύην μεταχωρῆ·

καὶ πηδάλιον τότε ναυκλήρῳ φράζει κρεμάσαντι  
 καθεύδειν,

εἶτα δ' Ὀρέστη χλαῖναν ὑφαίνειν, ἵνα μὴ ῥιγῶν  
 ἀποδύῃ.

ἰκτῖνος δ' αὖ μετὰ ταῦτα φανείς ἐτέραν ὥραν  
 ἀποφαίνει,

ἠνίκα πεκτεῖν ὥρα προβάτων πόκον ἠρινόν· εἶτα  
 χελιδών,

715 ὅτε χρῆ χλαῖναν πωλεῖν ἤδη καὶ ληδάριον τι  
 πρίασθαι.

ἔσμεν δ' ὑμῖν Ἄμμων, Δελφοί, Δωδώνη, Φοῖβος  
 Ἀπόλλων.

ἐλθόντες γὰρ πρῶτον ἐπ' ὄρνις οὕτω πρὸς ἅπαντα  
 τρέπεσθε,

πρὸς τ' ἐμπορίαν, καὶ πρὸς βιότου κτήσιν, καὶ πρὸς  
 γάμον ἀνδρός.

ὄρνιν τε νομίζετε πάνθ' ὅσαπερ περὶ μαντείας  
 διακρίνει·

## BIRDS

most made it to the end of their eligible bloom, but thanks to our power men in love did get between their thighs, one with the gift of a quail, another with a porphyryon, a goose, or a Persian bird. And mortals get all their greatest blessings from us birds. To start with, we reveal the seasons of spring, winter, and autumn. It's time to sow when the crane whoops off to Africa; that's when it tells the shipowner to hang up his rudder and go to sleep, and Orestes<sup>56</sup> to weave a cloak so he won't be cold when he's out mugging people. And then it's the kite's turn to appear and reveal another season, when it's time to shear the sheep's spring wool. And then there's the swallow when you should be selling your coat and buying a jacket. And we're your Ammon,<sup>57</sup> your Delphi, your Dodona,<sup>58</sup> your Phoebus Apollo, for you don't embark on any course without first consulting the birds—about business, about acquiring a livelihood, about a man's getting married. Whatever's decisive in prophecy you deem a bird: to you, an ominous utterance is a bird, a

<sup>56</sup> The nickname of the son of one Timocrates (schol. *Birds* 1487), after the mythical hero who wandered insane to Athens after killing his own mother.

<sup>57</sup> See 619 n.

<sup>58</sup> In Epirus, in NW Greece, where Zeus had an oracle.

## ARISTOPHANES

- 720 φήμη γ' ὑμῖν ὄρνις ἐστί, παρμόν τ' ὄρνιθα  
καλεῖτε,  
ξύμβολον ὄρνιν, φωνὴν ὄρνιν, θεράποντ' ὄρνιν, ὄνον  
ὄρνιν.  
ἄρ' οὐ φανερώς ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν ἐσμὲν μαντεῖος  
Ἀπόλλων;  
ἦν οὖν ἡμᾶς νομίσητε θεούς,  
ἔξετε χρῆσθαι μάντεσι, μούσαις,  
725 αὔραις, ὥραις, χειμῶνι, θέρει  
μετρίῳ, πνίγει· κούκ ἀποδράντες  
καθεδούμεθ' ἄνω σεμννόμενοι  
παρὰ ταῖς νεφέλαις ὥσπερ χῶ Ζεὺς·  
ἀλλὰ παρόντες δώσομεν ὑμῖν  
730 αὐτοῖς, παισίν, παίδων παισίν,  
πλουθυγίειαν, βίον, εἰρήνην,  
νεότητα, γέλωτα, χορούς, θαλίας  
γάλα τ' ὀρνίθων. ὥστε παρέσται  
735 κοπιᾶν ὑμῖν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν·  
οὔτω πλουτήσετε πάντες.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) Μοῦσα λοχμαία,  
τιοτιοτιοτιοτίγξ,  
ποικίλη, μεθ' ἧς ἐγὼ νά-  
740 παισί <τε καὶ> κορυφαῖς ἐν ὀρείαις,  
τιοτιοτιοτιοτίγξ,  
ἰζόμενος μελίας ἔπι φυλλοκόμου,  
τιοτιοτιοτιοτίγξ,

## BIRDS

sneeze you call a bird, a chance meeting's a bird, a sound's a bird, a good-luck servant's a bird, a braying donkey's a bird. So aren't we obviously your prophetic Apollo? Well then, if you treat us as gods you'll have the benefit of prophets, muses, breezes, seasons—winter, mild summer, stifling heat. And we won't run off and sit up there preening among the clouds, like Zeus, but ever at hand we'll bestow on you, your children, and your children's children healthy wealthiness, happiness, prosperity, peace, youth, hilarity, dances, festivities, and birds' milk. Why, you're liable to knock yourself out from good living, that's how rich you'll all be!

## CHORUS

Bosky Muse—  
tio tio tio tinx!—  
of intricate tone, joining you  
mid the vales and mountain peaks—  
tio tio tio tinx!—  
perched on a leaf-tressed ash—  
tio tio tio tinx!—

## ARISTOPHANES

- δι' ἐμῆς γέννος ξουθῆς μελέων  
 745 Πανὶ νόμους ἱεροὺς ἀναφαίνω  
 σεμνά τε Μητρὶ χορεύματ' Ὀρεία,  
 τοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτίγξ,  
 ἔνθεν ὡσπερὶ μέλιττα  
 Φρύνιχος ἀμβροσίων μελέων ἀπε-  
 750 βόσκετο καρπὸν ἀεὶ  
 φέρων γλυκεῖαν ὤδάν,  
 τιοτιοτιοτιοτίγξ.

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

- εἰ μετ' ὀρνίθων τις ὑμῶν, ᾧ θεαταί, βούλεται  
 διαπλέκειν ζῶν ἡδέως τὸ λοιπόν, ὡς ἡμᾶς ἴτω.  
 755 ὅσα γὰρ ἐνθάδ' ἐστὶν αἰσχρὰ τοῖς νόμῳ  
 κρατουμένοις,  
 ταῦτα πάντ' ἐστὶν παρ' ἡμῖν τοῖσιν ὄρνεσιν καλά.  
 εἰ γὰρ ἐνθάδ' ἐστὶν αἰσχρὸν τὸν πατέρα τύπτειν  
 νόμῳ,  
 τοῦτ' ἐκεῖ καλὸν παρ' ἡμῖν ἐστίν, ἣν τις τῷ πατρὶ  
 προσδραμῶν εἶπη πατάξας· “αἶρε πλήκτρον, εἰ  
 μαχεῖ.”  
 760 εἰ δὲ τυγχάνει τις ὑμῶν δραπέτης ἐστιγμένος,  
 ἀτταγᾶς οὔτος παρ' ἡμῖν ποικίλος κεκλήσεται.  
 εἰ δὲ τυγχάνει τις ὢν Φρῦξ μηδὲν ἦττον Σπινθάρου,  
 φρυγίλος ὄρνις ἐνθάδ' ἔσται τοῦ Φιλήμονος γένους.  
 εἰ δὲ δοῦλός ἐστι καὶ Κὰρ ὡσπερ Ἐξηκεστίδης,

755 τοῖς νόμῳ κρατουμένοις Henderson praeunte van  
 Leeuwen: τῷ νόμῳ κρατούμενα a



## BIRDS

from my vibrant throat I pour forth  
sacred strains of song for Pan  
and holy dance tunes for the Mountain Mother<sup>59</sup>—  
to to to to to to to to to tinx!—  
whence like a bee  
Phrynichus<sup>60</sup> ever sipped the nectar  
of ambrosial music  
to bring forth his sweet song—  
tio tio tio tio tinx!

### CHORUS LEADER

Spectators, if any of you wants to sew up the rest of his life pleasantly with the birds, come to us. Because all things shameful here, for people controlled by custom, are admirable among us birds. Say by custom it's shameful here to hit your father; up there it's admirable for someone to rush his father, hit him, and say "Put up your spur if you mean to fight!" And if you happen to be a runaway slave with a branded forehead, with us you'll be called a dappled francolin; if you happen to be no less a Phrygian than Spintharus,<sup>61</sup> up there you'll be a pigeon of Philemon's<sup>62</sup> breed; if you're a slave and a Carian like Execestides, join

<sup>59</sup> Cybele, the Anatolian mother goddess; both she and Pan were worshipped at Athens.

<sup>60</sup> The songs of this tragic poet, an older contemporary of Aeschylus, were still popular among the older generation, cf. *Wasps* 220, 268–69, 1490.

<sup>61</sup> Phrygians at Athens would be slaves; the Spintharus teased here for foreign ancestry may be the father of the fourth-century statesman Eubulus.

<sup>62</sup> Unknown.



ARISTOPHANES

765 φυσάτω πάππους παρ' ἡμῖν, καὶ φανοῦνται  
 φράτερες.  
 εἰ δ' ὁ Πεισίου προδοῦναι τοῖς ἀτίμοις τὰς πύλας  
 βούλεται, πέρδιξ γενέσθω, τοῦ πατρὸς νεόττιον·  
 ὡς παρ' ἡμῖν οὐδὲν αἰσχρόν ἐστιν ἐκπερδικίσαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ.) τοιάδε κύκνοι,  
 770 τιοτιοτιοτιοτίγξ,  
 συμμιγῆ βοῆν ὁμοῦ πε-  
 ροῖσι κρέκοντες ἴαχον Ἀπόλλω,  
 τιοτιοτιοτιοτίγξ,  
 ὄχθω ἐφεζόμενοι παρ' Ἐβρον ποταμόν,  
 775 τιοτιοτιοτιοτίγξ,  
 διὰ δ' αἰθέριον νέφος ἦλθε βοά·  
 πτῆξε δὲ φύλά τε ποικίλα θηρῶν,  
 κύματά τ' ἔσβεσε νήνεμος αἶθρη,  
 τοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτοτίγξ·  
 780 πᾶς δ' ἐπεκτύπησ' Ὀλυμπος·  
 εἶλε δὲ θάμβος ἄνακτας Ὀλυμπιά-  
 δες δὲ μέλος Χάριτες  
 Μοῦσαί τ' ἐπωλόλυξαν,  
 τιοτιοτιοτιοτιοτίγξ.

766 Πεισ- Daubuz: Πισ- a

## BIRDS

us and generate some forefeathers, and proper kinfolk will materialize; and if Peisias' son wants to betray the gates to the outlaws, let him become a partridge, a chick of the old cock, since among us there's nothing shameful in playing partridge tricks.<sup>63</sup>

### CHORUS<sup>64</sup>

Just so did swans—  
tio tio tio tio tinx!—  
beating wings in unison  
raise a harmonious whoop for Apollo—  
tio tio tio tio tinx!—  
gathered on the bank by Hebrus River—  
tio tio tio tio tinx!  
their whooping pierced the cloud of heaven;  
the manifold tribes of beasts were cowed,  
and the cloudless clear air quenched the waves—  
to to to to to to to to tinx!—  
All Olympus reverberated,  
amazement seized its lords, and the Olympian  
Graces and Muses  
replied in cheerful song—  
tio tio tio tio tinx!

<sup>63</sup> Peisias' son was perhaps the Cleombrotus called "son of Partridge" (cf. 1292–93) in Phrynichus com. fr. 55; "the outlaws" are probably those denounced in the sacrileges of 415 who had fled Athens and were condemned *in absentia*; "tricks" refers to the partridge's skill at evading pursuers.

<sup>64</sup> Probably recollecting Apollo's journey from the Hyperboreans to Delphi in a swan-drawn chariot, which Alcaeus had described in a famous paean (fr. 307).

## ARISTOPHANES

## ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

- 785 οὐδέν ἐστ' ἄμεινον οὐδ' ἥδιον ἢ φῦσαι πτερά.  
 αὐτίχ' ὑμῶν τῶν θεατῶν εἴ τις ἦν ὑπόπτερος,  
 εἶτα πεινῶν τοῖς χοροῖσι τῶν τραγωδῶν ἤχθετο,  
 ἐκπτόμενος ἂν οὔτος ἠρίστησεν ἐλθὼν οἴκαδε,  
 κᾶτ' ἂν ἐμπλησθεὶς ἐφ' ἡμᾶς αὐθις αὖ κατέπτατο.
- 790 εἴ τε Πατροκλείδης τις ὑμῶν τυγχάνει χεζητιῶν,  
 οὐκ ἂν ἐξίδισεν εἰς θοιμάτιον, ἀλλ' ἀνέπτατο,  
 κάποπαρδῶν κάναπνεύσας αὐθις αὖ κατέπτατο.  
 εἴ τε μοιχεύων τις ὑμῶν ἐστίν ὅστις τυγχάνει,  
 κᾶθ' ὀρᾶ τὸν ἄνδρα τῆς γυναικὸς ἐν βουλευτικῶ,
- 795 οὔτος ἂν πάλιν παρ' ὑμῶν πτερυγίσας ἀνέπτατο,  
 εἶτα βινήσας ἐκείθεν αὐθις αὖ κατέπτατο.  
 ἄρ' ὑπόπτερον γενέσθαι παντός ἐστίν ἄξιον;  
 ὡς Διειτρέφης γε πυτιναῖα μόνον ἔχων πτερὰ  
 ἠρέθη φύλαρχος, εἶθ' ἵππαρχος, εἶτ' ἐξ οὐδενὸς
- 800 μεγάλα πράττει κᾶστὶ νυνὶ ξουθὸς ἵππαλεκτρῶν.

## ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ταυτὶ τοιαυτί. μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ μὲν πράγμα πω  
 γελοϊότερον οὐκ εἶδον οὐδεπώποτε.

<sup>796</sup> κατέπτατο S: καθέζετο a

<sup>65</sup> Two decrees survive whose proposer(s) bore this name: *IG* i<sup>3</sup> 63 (420) and *Andocides* 1.73–80 (405); our man was nicknamed “The Shitter,” according to the scholiast.

<sup>66</sup> The 500 members of the Council had a block of reserved seats at the front, cf. *Peace* 887, 906.

<sup>67</sup> Despite his comic caricature as a distasteful arriviste (cf.

## BIRDS

### CHORUS LEADER

There's nothing better or merrier than sprouting wings. Say one of you spectators had wings, and got hungry, and grew bored with the tragic performances; then he'd have flown out of here, gone home, had lunch, and when he was full, flown back here to see us. And supposing some Patrocleides<sup>65</sup> in the audience needed to shit, he wouldn't have soaked his cloak; no, he'd have flown off, blown a fart, caught his breath, and flown back here again. And if there's anyone among you who happens to be an adulterer, and sees the lady's husband in the Councillors' seats,<sup>66</sup> he'd have used his wings to launch himself out of the audience, gone and fucked her, and then flown back here again. So isn't getting wings worth any price? Take Dieitrephes:<sup>67</sup> equipped only with the wings from chianti bottles,<sup>68</sup> he was elected tribal commander, then cavalry commander, till now, having started from nothing, he's flying high, an actual zooming horsecock.<sup>69</sup>

*Enter PEISETAERUS and EUELPIDES, now winged.*

### PEISETAERUS

Ta da, here we are! God, I've never seen a funnier sight.

also Cratinus fr. 251, Plato Com. fr. 31), Dieitrephes' family was in fact distinguished. In his current generalship he would command the Thracians responsible for the massacre at Mycalessus (Thucydides 7.29–30), and later he became an oligarch (8.64).

<sup>68</sup> As the wicker handles were called. <sup>69</sup> A mythical winged beast with the front end of a horse and the rear end of a cock, often depicted by Attic painters of the sixth and early fifth centuries and mentioned by Aeschylus in *Myrmidons* fr. 134 (cf. *Frogs* 933); used of strutting officers also in *Peace* 1177.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐπὶ τῷ γελᾶς;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἐπὶ τοῖσι σοῖς ὠκνυτέροις.

οἶσθ' ᾧ μάλιστ' ἔοικας ἐπτερωμένος;

805 εἰς εὐτέλειαν χηνὶ συγγεγραμμένῳ.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

σὺ δὲ κοψίχῳ γε σκάφιον ἀποτετιλμένῳ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ταυτὶ μὲν ἠκάσμεσθα κατὰ τὸν Δῖσχύλον·

“τάδ' οὐχ ὑπ' ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ τοῖς αὐτῶν πτεροῖς.”

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἄγε δὴ τί χρὴ δρᾶν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

πρῶτον ὄνομα τῇ πόλει

810 θέσθαι τι μέγα καὶ κλεινόν, εἶτα τοῖς θεοῖς  
θῦσαι μετὰ τοῦτο.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ταῦτα κάμοι συνδοκεῖ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

φέρ' ἴδω, τί δ' ἡμῖν ὄνομ' ἄρ' ἔσται τῇ πόλει;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

βούλεσθε τὸ μέγα τοῦτο τοῦκ Λακεδαίμονος  
Σπάρτην ὄνομα καλῶμεν αὐτήν;

## BIRDS

EUELPIDES

What are you laughing at?

PEISETAERUS

Those wing feathers of yours. Know what you look just like in those wings? A painted goose, done cheaply!

EUELPIDES

And you look like a blackbird with a bowl cut!

PEISETAERUS

To quote Aeschylus, we're stuck with these comparisons "not by others but by our own feathers."<sup>70</sup>

CHORUS LEADER

All right, what's on the agenda?

PEISETAERUS

First, we should give our city a name, something grand and notable; and then sacrifice to the gods.

EUELPIDES

My sentiments exactly.

CHORUS LEADER

Let's see then, what name will our city have?

PEISETAERUS

How about giving it that great Lacedaemonian name—Sparta?

<sup>70</sup> *Myrmidons* fr. 139, where Achilles, blaming himself for Patroclus' death, recalls an eagle shot by an arrow fletched with eagle feathers.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

Ἡράκλεις·

815 Σπάρτην γὰρ ἂν θείμην ἐγὼ τήμῃ πόλει;  
οὐδ' ἂν χαμεύνη πάνυ γε κειρίαν γ' ἔχων.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ὄνομ' αὐτῆ θησόμεσθ';

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

έντευθενὶ

ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν καὶ τῶν μετεώρων χωρίων  
χαῦνόν τι πάνυ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

βούλει Νεφελοκοκκυγίαν;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

820 ἰοὺ ἰοῦ·  
καλόν γ' ἀτεχνῶς <σὺ> καὶ μέγ' ἠῦρες τοῦνομα.

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

ἄρ' ἐστὶν αὕτη γ' ἢ Νεφελοκοκκυγία,  
ἵνα καὶ τὰ Θεογένους τὰ πολλὰ χρήματα  
τά τ' Αἰσχίνου 'σθ' ἅπαντα;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

καὶ λῶον μὲν οὖν·

825 τὸ Φλέγρας πεδίου, ἵν' οἱ θεοὶ τοὺς γηγενεῖς  
ἀλαζονευόμενοι καθυπερηκόντισαν.

822 Θεο- Dindorf: Θεα- a

823 λῶον Bentley cl. Σ: λῶστον a



## BIRDS

### EUELPIDES

Great Heracles, do you think I'd stick *my* city with the name Sparta? I wouldn't even use esparto twine for a mattress—if I had nice wide slats instead.

### PEISETAERUS

Then what name *will* we give it?

### CHORUS LEADER

A name suggesting all this, the clouds and the aerial spaces; something very highfalutin.

### PEISETAERUS

How about Cloudcuckooland?

### CHORUS LEADER

Yes, yes! You've found an absolutely great and wonderful name!

### EUELPIDES

Sure, this must be the same Cloudcuckooland where most of Theogenes'<sup>71</sup> assets are, and all of Aeschines'.<sup>72</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

No, even better than that: it's the Plain of Phlegra, where the Gods outshot the Earthborn at bragging!<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup> A common name, here perhaps the Theogenes ridiculed for imaginary wealth in Eupolis' *Demes* fr. 99.5, 9, cf. fr. 135.

<sup>72</sup> Ridiculed as a boaster also in *Wasps* 459, 1243.

<sup>73</sup> See 553 n.



ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

λιπαρὸν τὸ χρῆμα τῆς πόλεως. τίς δαὶ θεὸς  
πολιούχος ἔσται; τῷ ξανούμεν τὸν πέπλον;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί δ' οὐκ Ἀθηναίαν ἐῶμεν πολιάδα;

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

καὶ πῶς ἂν ἔτι γένοιτ' ἂν εὐτακτος πόλις,  
830 ὅπου θεὸς γυνὴ γεγουνῖα πανοπλίαν  
ἔστηκ' ἔχουσα, Κλεισθένης δὲ κερκίδα;

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

τίς δαὶ καθέξει τῆς πόλεως τὸ Πελαργικόν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὄρνις ἀφ' ἡμῶν τοῦ γένους τοῦ Περσικοῦ,  
ὅσπερ λέγεται δεινότατος εἶναι πανταχοῦ  
Ἄρεως νεοττός.

ΕΤΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

835 ὦ νεοττὲ δέσποτα.  
ὡς δ' ὁ θεὸς ἐπιτήδειος οἰκεῖν ἐπὶ πετρῶν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἄγε νυν σὺ μὲν βάδιζε πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα  
καὶ τοῖσι τειχίζουσι παραδιακόνει,  
χάλικας παραφόρει, πηλὸν ἀποδὺς ὄργασον,  
840 λεκάνην ἀνένευκε, κατάπεσ' ἀπὸ τῆς κλίμακος,  
φυλακὰς κατὰστησαι, τὸ πῦρ ἔγκρυστ' αἰεί,

833 ἡμῶν] ὑμῶν Kock

## BIRDS

### CHORUS LEADER

A gleaming<sup>74</sup> great city! Now what god shall be Citadel Guardian? For whom shall we weave the Robe?<sup>75</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

Why not let Athena Polias hold that post?

### EUELPIDES

And just how can a city remain well disciplined, where a god born a woman stands there wearing full armor, while Cleisthenes<sup>76</sup> plies a spindle?

### CHORUS LEADER

Then who *will* be taking charge of the city's Storkade?<sup>77</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

One of our birds, of the Persian breed,<sup>78</sup> the one universally known as a very fearsome Chick of Ares.

### EUELPIDES

My Lord Chick! And a god so well suited to life on the rocks.

### PEISETAERUS

(*to Euelpides*) Come on now, you take off for the sky and make yourself useful to the wall builders: bring them up gravel, roll up your sleeves and mix mortar, hand up a trough, fall off the ladder, station watchmen, keep the em-

<sup>74</sup> A favorite epithet of Athens, cf. *Acharnians* 637–40, *Knights* 1329, Pindar fr. 76.

<sup>75</sup> Athena Polias, Citadel Guardian of Athens, was presented with a robe at the Panathenaea.

<sup>76</sup> Often ridiculed as a beardless effeminate.

<sup>77</sup> The *Pelargikon*, designating the Mycenaean walls of the Acropolis and an enclosure at its foot. <sup>78</sup> See 483–84.

ARISTOPHANES

κωδωνοφορῶν περίτρεχε καὶ κάθεινδ' ἐκεῖ.  
 κήρυκα δὲ πέμψον τὸν μὲν εἰς θεοὺς ἄνω,  
 ἕτερον δ' ἄνωθεν αὖ παρ' ἀνθρώπους κάτω,  
 κακείθεν αὖθις παρ' ἐμέ.

ΕΥΕΛΠΙΔΗΣ

845 σὺν δέ γ' αὐτοῦ μένων  
 οἴμωζε παρ' ἐμ'.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἴθ', ὦγάθ', οἱ πέμπω σ' ἐγώ.  
 οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄνευ σοῦ τῶνδ' ἂ λέγω πεπράξεται.  
 ἐγὼ δ' ἵνα θύσω τοῖσι καινοῖσιν θεοῖς,  
 τὸν ἱερέα πέμψοντα τὴν πομπὴν καλῶ.  
 850 παῖ παῖ, τὸ κανοῦν αἵρεσθε καὶ τὴν χέρνιβα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) ὁμορροθῶ, συνθέλω,  
 συμπαραινέσας ἔχω  
 προσόδια μεγάλα σεμνὰ προσιέναι θεοῖ-  
 855 σιν, ἅμα δὲ προσέτι χάριτος ἔνε-  
 κα προβάτιόν τι θύειν.  
 ἴτω ἴτω ἴτω δὲ Πυθιάς βοά,  
 συναυλείτω δὲ Χαῖρις ᾠδᾶ.

858 συναυλείτω . . . ᾠδᾶ Hermann: συναδέτω . . . ᾠδᾶν a

<sup>79</sup> Modelled on a chorus from Sophocles' *Peleus*, according to the scholia.

## BIRDS

bers glowing, run a tour with the bell, and bed down on site. Send one herald up to the gods, and another down to mankind below, and then report back to me.

### EUELPIDES

Yes, and you can stay right here and report to me—in hell!

*Exit EUELPIDES.*

### PEISETAERUS

Go where I tell you, there's a good fellow; none of what I've talked about will get done without you. As for me, I'd better sacrifice to the new gods, so I'll invite the priest to organize the procession. (*calling through the stage door*) Boy! Boy! You boys pick up the basket and the holy water.

*Enter Xanthias and Manodorus with sacrificial requisites and a Piper costumed as a raven.*

### CHORUS<sup>79</sup>

I am with you, I concur,  
I hereby endorse your advice  
to approach the gods with grand and solemn hymns  
as we curry their favor as well  
by sacrificing a wee sheep.<sup>80</sup>  
Up up up with a Pythian cry,  
and let Chaeris pipe as we sing.<sup>81</sup>

*Enter a PRIEST leading a goat.*

<sup>80</sup> An anticlimactic victim for so important a ceremony, and the priest's goat even more so.

<sup>81</sup> A lyre player and piper often ridiculed in comedy for poor technique.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

860 παῦσαι σὺ φυσῶν. Ἡράκλεις, τουτὶ τί ἦν;  
τουτὶ μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ πολλὰ δὴ καὶ δεῖν' ἰδὼν  
οὔπω κόρακ' εἶδον ἐμπεφορβειωμένον.  
ἱερεῦ, σὸν ἔργον, θῦε τοῖς καινοῖς θεοῖς.

ΙΕΡΕΤΣ

865 δράσω τάδ'. ἀλλὰ ποῦ 'στιν ὁ τὸ κανοῦν ἔχων;  
εὐχεσθε Ἐστία τῇ ὀρνιθείῳ  
καὶ ἰκτίνῳ τῷ ἐστιούχῳ  
καὶ ὄρνισιν Ὀλυμπίοις καὶ Ὀλυμπίασι  
πάσι καὶ πάσησιν—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦ Σουνιέρακε, χαῖρ', ἄναξ Πελαργικέ.

ΙΕΡΕΤΣ

870 καὶ κύκνῳ Πυθίῳ καὶ Δηλίῳ  
καὶ Λητοῖ Ὀρτυγομήτρα  
καὶ Ἀρτέμιδι Ἀκαλανθίδι—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐκέτι Κολαινίς, ἀλλ' Ἀκαλανθίς Ἄρτεμις.

ΙΕΡΕΤΣ

875 καὶ φρυγίλῳ Σαβαζίῳ  
καὶ στρούθῳ μεγάλη  
Μητρὶ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων—

<sup>868</sup> πελάργιε Sommerstein

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

(*to the Piper*) Stop your piping! Heracles, what *is* this? I've certainly seen many amazing sights, but this I've never seen, a raven wearing a piper's harness! Priest, you're on; start sacrificing to the new gods.

### PRIEST

That I will, but where's the boy with the basket? All pray: to Hestia of the Birds, to Kite their Hearthkeeper, to the Olympian birds and birdesses each and all—

### PEISETAERUS

Hail, Hawk of Sunium,<sup>82</sup> Lord of the Seastork!

### PRIEST

and the Swan of Pytho and Delos,<sup>83</sup> and Leto the Quail Mother,<sup>84</sup> and Artemis the Curlew—

### PEISETAERUS

No more Colaenis,<sup>85</sup> now it's Artemis Curlew!

### PRIEST

and Pigeon Sabazius, and the Great Ostrich Mother of gods and men—

<sup>82</sup> Adapting an epithet of Poseidon.

<sup>83</sup> Apollo.

<sup>84</sup> I.e. the corncrake, alluding to Ortygia (Quail Island), where Leto gave birth to Artemis.

<sup>85</sup> Artemis' cult title in the deme Myrrhinus.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

Δέσποινα Κυβέλη, στρουῦθε, μήτερ Κλεοκρίτου.

ΙΕΡΕΤΣ

διδόναι Νεφελοκοκκυγιεύσιν  
ύγίειαν καὶ σωτηρίαν  
αὐτοῖσι καὶ Χίοισι—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

880 Χίοισιν ἤσθην πανταχοῦ προσκειμένοις.

ΙΕΡΕΤΣ

καὶ ἤρωσιν ὄρνισι καὶ ἠρώων παισί,  
πορφυρίωνι καὶ πελεκᾶντι  
καὶ πελεκίνω καὶ φλέξιδι  
καὶ τέτρακι καὶ ταῶνι  
885 καὶ ἐλεᾶ καὶ βασκᾶ  
καὶ ἐλασᾶ καὶ ἐδωλίω  
καὶ καταρράκτη καὶ μελαγκορύφω  
καὶ αἰγιθάλλω—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

890 παῦ· ἐς κόρακας· παῦσαι καλῶν. ἰοῦ ἰοῦ·  
ἐπὶ ποῖον, ᾧ κακόδαιμον, ἱερεῖον καλεῖς  
άλιαιέτους καὶ γύπας; οὐχ ὄρας ὅτι  
ἰκτῖνος εἶς ἂν τοῦτό γ' οἴχοιθ' ἀρπάσας;  
ἄπελθ' ἀφ' ἡμῶν καὶ σὺ καὶ τὰ στέμματα·  
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸς τουτογὶ θύσω μόνος.

886 ἐδωλίω Sommerstein cl. Σ et Phot.: ἐρωδίω a



## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Lady Cybele the Ostrich, mother of Cleocritus!<sup>86</sup>

PRIEST

grant to the inhabitants of Cloudcuckooland health and security, and for the Chians as well—<sup>87</sup>

PEISETAERUS

It's funny how the Chians get tacked on everywhere!

PRIEST

and the Avian heroes and the Heroes' children, Porphyrion and White Pelican and Grey Pelican and Red Hawk and Grouse and Peacock and Reed Warbler and Teal and Harrier and Heron<sup>88</sup> and Tern and Black Tit and Blue Tit—

PEISETAERUS

Stop, damn you, stop your invitations! Whew! How big do you think this victim is, you jinx, that you're inviting eagles and vultures to share? Don't you realize that a single kite could snatch this away? Get out of here, and take your wreaths with you! I'll perform this sacrifice all by myself.

*Exit* PRIEST.

<sup>86</sup> Perhaps the archon of 413/12 and/or the Herald of the Mysteries who worked to restore democracy in 403 (Xenophon *Hellenica* 2.4.20–22).

<sup>87</sup> In the Athenian empire Chios and Methymna enjoyed the special status of autonomous allies.

<sup>88</sup> Translating the mss' *erodios*, which displaced the original *edolios*, an unidentified (and therefore untranslatable) bird.



ARISTOPHANES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ) εἶτ' αὖθις αὖ τάρᾳ σοι  
 896 δεῖ με δεύτερον μέλος  
 χέρνιβι θεοσεβὲς ὅσιον ἐπιβοᾶν, καλεῖν  
 δὲ μάκαρας, ἕνα τινὰ μόνον, εἴ-  
 900 περ ἱκανὸν ἔξετ' ὄψον.  
 τὰ γὰρ παρόντα θύματ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν  
 γένειόν τ' ἐστὶ καὶ κέρατα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

θύοντες εὐξώμεσθα τοῖς περίνοις θεοῖς.

ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ

Νεφελοκοκκυγίαν  
 905 τὰν εὐδαίμονα κληῆσον, ὦ  
 Μοῦσα, τεαῖς ἐν ὕμνων  
 ἀοιδαῖς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα ποδαπόν; εἶπέ μοι, τίς εἶ;

ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ μελιγλώσσω ἐπέων ἰεὺς ἀοιδὰν  
 Μουσάων θεράπων ὀτρηρός,  
 910 κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἔπειτα δῆτα δούλος ὢν κόμην ἔχεις;

ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ πάντες ἐσμὲν οἱ διδάσκαλοι  
 Μουσάων θεράποντες ὀτρηροί,  
 κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον.

## BIRDS

### CHORUS

Then once more in your service  
I must raise a second song,  
godfearing and pious, for the ablution,  
and invite the blessed gods—just one of them,  
if you all want to have enough meat,  
for the sacrifice you've got there is nothing  
but a goatee and horns.

### PEISETAERUS

As we sacrifice, let us pray to the feathered gods.

*Enter POET.*

### POET

“Cloudcuckooland  
the Blest now celebrate,  
O Muse, in your hymns of song!”

### PEISETAERUS

Now where did this thing come from? Please identify yourself.

### POET

“I am he that launches a song of honey-tongued  
verses,  
the Muses' eager vassal,”  
to quote Homer.

### PEISETAERUS

You mean you're a slave, with hair that long?

### POET

“No, we master singers all are  
the Muses' eager vassals,”  
to quote Homer.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

915 οὐκ ἔτος ὄτρηρόν καὶ τὸ ληδάριον ἔχεις.  
ἀτάρ, ὦ ποιητά, κατὰ τί δεῦρ' ἀνεφθάρης;

ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ

μέλη πεποίηκ' εἰς τὰς Νεφελοκοκκυγίας  
τὰς ὑμετέρας κύκλιά τε πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ  
καὶ παρθένεια καὶ κατὰ τὰ Σιμωνίδου.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

920 ταυτὶ σὺ πότε' ἐποίησας; ἀπὸ ποίου χρόνου;

ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ

πάλαι, πάλαι δὴ τήνδ' ἐγὼ κλήζω πόλιν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἄρτι θύω τὴν δεκάτην ταύτης ἐγώ,  
καὶ τοῦνομ' ὥσπερ παιδίω νυνδὴ ἴθήμεν;

ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλά τις ὠκεία Μουσάων φάτις  
925 οἰάπερ ἵππων ἀμαρνυγὰ.  
σὺ δὲ πάτερ, κτίστορ Αἴτνας,  
ζαθέων ἱερῶν ὁμώνυμε,  
δὸς ἐμὶν ὅ τι περ τεᾶ κεφαλᾶ θέ-  
930 λεις πρόφρων δόμεν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τουτὶ παρέξει τὸ κακὸν ἡμῖν πράγματα,  
εἰ μή τι τούτῳ δόντες ἀποφευξόμεθα.

930 δόμεν West praeunte Blaydes: δόμεν ἐμὶν τείν fere codd.

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

No wonder you've got a meager jacket to match! Now why the hell did you come up here, poet?

### POET

I've composed songs for your Cloudcuckooland, lots of fine dithyrambs, maiden songs, and songs à la Simonides.<sup>89</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

When did you compose these songs? Starting when?

### POET

I've been celebrating this city for a long, long time.

### PEISETAERUS

But I've just begun its tenth-day sacrifice, and named it, like a baby, just moments ago!

### POET

"Nay, the Muses' voice is a swift one,  
like the twinkle of horses' hooves.  
But you, father, founder of Aetna,  
namesake of holy rites,  
grant me whatever you wish by your nod  
graciously to grant."<sup>90</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

This pest is going to cause us problems unless we give him something, and thus give him the slip. (*to a Slave*) You

<sup>89</sup> Simonides of Ceos (c. 566–468), reputedly the first poet to compose for a fee, had an ancient reputation for avarice, cf. testimonia 22–3 Campbell, *Peace* 697–99.

<sup>90</sup> Adapting a poem by Pindar (fr. 105a) written for the Syracusan ruler Hieron, who founded Aetna in 476/5.

ARISTOPHANES

οὗτος, σὺ μέντοι σπολάδα καὶ χιτῶν' ἔχεις,  
ἀπόδυθι καὶ δὸς τῷ ποιητῇ τῷ σοφῷ.

935 ἔχε τὴν σπολάδα· πάντως δέ μοι ριγῶν δοκεῖς.

ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ

τόδε μὲν οὐκ ἀέκουσα φίλα

Μοῦσα δῶρον δέχεται

τὸ δὲ τεᾶ φρενὶ μάθε

Πινδάρειον ἔπος—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

940 ἄνθρωπος ἡμῶν οὐκ ἀπαλλαχθήσεται

ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ

νομάδεσσι γὰρ ἐν Σκύθαις ἀλάται στρατῶν

ὃς ὑφαντοδόνητον ἔσθος οὐ πέπαται.

ἀκλεῆς δ' ἔβα

σπολὰς ἄνευ χιτῶνος.

945 ξύνες ὅ τοι λέγω.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ξυνίημ' ὅτι βούλει τὸν χιτωνίσκον λαβεῖν.

ἀπόδυθι· δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ποιητὴν ὠφελεῖν.

ἄπελθε τουτονὶ λαβών.

ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ

ἀπέρχομαι,

κὰς τὴν πόλιν γ' ἐλθὼν ποιήσω τοιαδί·

950/51 “κλήσον, ὦ χρυσόθρονε, τὰν τρομεράν, κρυεράν·

νιφόβολα πεδία πολύπορά τ' ἤλυθον.”

ἀλαλαί.

## BIRDS

there, you've got a shirt and vest; take one off and give it to our artful poet. (*to the Poet*) Here, take this vest; you seem to me quite frigid.

POET

"With no reluctance does my dear  
Muse accept this gift;  
but learn you in your heart  
a Pindaric saying—"91

PEISETAERUS

The fellow just won't part from us!

POET

"Yea among Scythian nomads does wander apart from  
his people  
the one who possesses no shuttle-actuated raiment;  
and inglorious does go"—a jerkin without a jacket.  
Pray understand what I mean.

PEISETAERUS

I understand that you want to snag that short jacket. (*to the other Slave*) Take it off; we've got to help the poet. (*giving the jacket to the Poet*) Take this, and off you go.

POET

I'm off, and when I get back I'm going to compose something like this in honor of your city:  
"Celebrate, Muse on golden throne, the shivering,  
freezing land;  
to the snowblown many-pathed plains have I come."  
Hurrah!

*Exit POET.*

91 Pindar fr. 105b.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

955 νῆ τὸν Δί' ἄλλ' ἤδη πέφευγας ταυταγὶ  
τὰ κρυερὰ τουδὶ τὸν χιτωνίσκον λαβῶν.  
τουτὶ μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ τὸ κακὸν οὐδέποτ' ἤλπισα,  
οὕτω ταχέως τοῦτον πεπύσθαι τὴν πόλιν.  
αὐθις σὺ περιχώρει λαβῶν τὴν χέρνιβα.  
εὐφημία ὄστω.

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

μὴ κατάρξῃ τοῦ τράγου.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

σὺ δ' εἶ τίς;

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

ὅστις; χρησμολόγος.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

960 οἴμωζέ νυν.

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

ὦ δαιμόνιε, τὰ θεία μὴ φαύλως φέρε·  
ὥς ἔστι Βάκιδος χρησμὸς ἄντικρυς λέγων  
εἰς τὰς Νεφελοκοκκυγίας.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

κᾶπειτα πῶς

ταῦτ' οὐκ ἐχρησμολόγεις σὺ πρὶν ἐμὲ τὴν πόλιν  
τῆνδ' οἰκίσαι;

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

(*calling after him*) But surely you've escaped from the freezing cold, now that you've snagged that jacket!—Good god, that was an annoyance I never expected, that he should have heard about our city so soon. (*to a Slave*) Boy, make another circuit with that holy water. Auspicious speech, please.

*Enter ORACLE COLLECTOR*

### ORACLE COLLECTOR

Don't start on that goat!

### PEISETAERUS

What? Who are you?

### ORACLE COLLECTOR

Why, an oracle collector.

### PEISETAERUS

Then to hell with you.

### ORACLE COLLECTOR

You daredevil, don't make light of religious matters! There is an oracle of Bacis<sup>92</sup> explicitly referring to Cloudcuckooland.

### PEISETAERUS

How come you didn't divulge this oracle *before* I founded the city?

<sup>92</sup> A legendary prophet whose oracles, many of which concerned international relations, were collected and discussed during the Peloponnesian War, cf. *Knights* 123–4, 1003–4, *Peace* 1070.



ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

965

τὸ θεῖον ἐνεπόδιζέ με.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἄλλ' οὐδὲν οἶον εἰσακούσαι τῶν ἐπῶν.

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

“ἄλλ' ὅταν οἰκήσωσι λύκοι πολιαί τε κορῶναι  
ἐν ταυτῷ τὸ μεταξὺ Κορίνθου καὶ Σικυῶνος—”

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί οὖν προσήκει δῆτ' ἐμοὶ Κορινθίων;

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

970

ἤνιξαθ' ὁ Βάκισ τοῦτο πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα.  
“πρῶτον Πανδώρα θῦσαι λευκότριχα κριόν·  
ὃς δέ κ' ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἔλθη πρῶτιστα προφήτης,  
τῷ δόμεν ἰμάτιον καθαρὸν καὶ καινὰ πέδιλα—”

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἔνεστι καὶ τὰ πέδιλα;

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

λαβὲ τὸ βυβλίον.

975

“καὶ φιάλην δοῦναι καὶ σπλάγχνων χεῖρ'  
ἐνιπλήσαι,—”

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

καὶ σπλάγχνα διδόν' ἔνεστι;

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<sup>93</sup> Riddling, because these territories were contiguous.

<sup>94</sup> Athens and Corinth had long been bitter enemies.

## BIRDS

### ORACLE COLLECTOR

Religious scruple restrained me.

### PEISETAERUS

Well, nothing beats listening to the actual verses.

### ORACLE COLLECTOR

“Nay when wolves and grey crows shall together have  
their abode  
in the place twixt Corinth and Sicyon—”<sup>93</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

But what have I got to do with any Corinthians?<sup>94</sup>

### ORACLE COLLECTOR

By that enigma Bacis meant the sky.  
“first sacrifice to Pandora<sup>95</sup> a ram with white fleece,  
and whosoever arrives first as expounder of my  
words,  
to him give a spotless cloak and fresh sandals—”

### PEISETAERUS

Are sandals really in there?

### ORACLE COLLECTOR

(*showing him*) Here's the book.  
“and give him the chalice, and fill up his hands with  
innards—”

### PEISETAERUS

Giving innards is in there too?

<sup>95</sup> Not the allegorical girl with the jar of evils in Hesiod's *Works* 42–105, but the earth goddess whose name means “giver of all gifts,” some of which the Oracle Collector now hopes to receive.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

λαβὲ τὸ βυβλίον.

“κὰν μὲν, θέσπια κούρε, ποιῆς ταῦθ’ ὡς ἐπιτέλλω,  
αἰετὸς ἐν νεφέλῃσι γενήσεται· αἱ δέ κε μὴ δῶς,  
οὐκ ἔσει οὐ τρυγῶν, οὐ λάιος, οὐ δρυκολάπτης.”

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

καὶ ταῦτ’ ἔνεστ’ ἐνταῦθα;

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

980

λαβὲ τὸ βυβλίον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐδὲν ἄρ’ ὅμοιός ἐσθ’ ὁ χρησμὸς τουτῶι,  
ὃν ἐγὼ παρὰ τὰ πόλλωνος ἐξεγραψάμην·  
“αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν ἄκλητος ἰὼν ἄνθρωπος ἀλαζῶν  
λυπῆ θύοντας καὶ σπλαγχνεύειν ἐπιθυμῆ,  
985 δὴ τότε χρὴ τύπτειν αὐτὸν πλευρῶν τὸ μεταξὺ—”

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

οὐδὲν λέγειν οἶμαί σε.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

λαβὲ τὸ βυβλίον.

“καὶ φείδου μηδὲν μηδ’ αἰετοῦ ἐν νεφέλῃσιν,  
μήτ’ ἦν Λάμπων ἢ μήτ’ ἦν ὁ μέγας Διοπέιθης.”

979 οὐ λάιος Meineke: οὐδ’ (οὐκ Α) αἰετός α

## BIRDS

### ORACLE COLLECTOR

Here's the book.

“and if, inspired youth, you carry out the orders I  
give you,  
you shall become an eagle midst the clouds; but if  
you give not,  
you shall be not a turtledove, not a rock thrush, not a  
woodpecker.”

### PEISETAERUS

That's in there too?

### ORACLE COLLECTOR

Here's the book.

### PEISETAERUS

*(producing a book)* Well now, your oracle doesn't match  
this one at all, an oracle I personally wrote down from  
Apollo:

“Yea when a charlatan type who arrives uninvited  
vexes the sacrificers and desires a share of the  
innards,  
then must you smite him in the place twixt the ribs—”

### ORACLE COLLECTOR

You must be kidding.

### PEISETAERUS

Here's the book.

“and spare not even an eagle midst the clouds,  
not if he be Lampon nor yet the great Diopethes.”<sup>96</sup>

<sup>96</sup> An oracular expert and prosecutor of atheists and intellectuals.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

καὶ ταῦτ' ἔνεστ' ἐνταῦθα;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

λαβὲ τὸ βυβλίον.

οὐκ εἶ θύραζ'; ἐς κόρακας.

ΧΡΗΣΜΟΛΟΓΟΣ

990

οἴμοι δείλαιος.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὔκουν ἐτέρωσε χρησμολογήσεις ἐκτρέχων;

ΜΕΤΩΝ

ἤκω παρ' ὑμᾶς—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἕτερον αὖ τουτὶ κακόν.

τί δ' αὖ σὺ δράσων; τίς ἰδέα βουλευμάτων;

τίς ἠπίνοια, τίς ὁ κόθορνος τῆς ὁδοῦ;

ΜΕΤΩΝ

995

γεωμετρήσαι βούλομαι τὸν ἀέρα

ὑμῖν διελεῖν τε κατὰ γύας.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

πρὸς τῶν θεῶν,

σὺ δ' εἶ τίς ἀνδρῶν;

<sup>994</sup> τίς ὁ κόθορνος τῆς] τίς ποθ' οὔρνις τῆς Blaydes: τῆς κοθορνωτῆς Sommerstein

<sup>996</sup> κατὰ γύας Dawes: κατ' ἀγυιάς a

BIRDS

ORACLE COLLECTOR

That's in there too?

PEISETAERUS

*(hitting him with the book)* Here's the book! Now get the hell out of here!

ORACLE COLLECTOR

Oh mercy me!

*Exit ORACLE COLLECTOR.*

PEISETAERUS

Go on, scat! Do your oracle mongering somewhere else!

*Enter METON, wearing effeminate boots and carrying out-sized geometrical instruments.*

METON<sup>97</sup>

I have come here—

PEISETAERUS

*(aside)* Here's another nuisance. *(to Meton)* And what have you come here to do? What form does your plan take? What idea, what buskin, is afoot?

METON

I want to survey the air for you and parcel it into acres.

PEISETAERUS

Good heavens, who on earth are you?

<sup>97</sup> The famous geometer and astronomer. His unmanly caricature in this scene may be connected with the rumor that he had resorted to arson just before the expedition to Sicily in order to evade service, cf. Plutarch *Nicias* 13.7–8, *Alcibiades* 17.5–6, Aelian *Varia Historia* 13.12.

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΕΤΩΝ

ὅστις εἴμ' ἐγώ; Μέτων,  
ὃν οἶδεν Ἑλλὰς χῶ Κολωνός.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

εἰπέ μοι,  
ταυτὶ δέ σοι τί ἐστι;

ΜΕΤΩΝ

κανόνες ἀέρος.

1000 αὐτίκα γὰρ ἀήρ ἐστι τὴν ἰδέαν ὅλος  
κατὰ πνιγέα μάλιστα. προσθεῖς οὖν ἐγὼ  
τὸν κανόν' ἄνωθεν τουτονὶ τὸν καμπύλον,  
ἐνθεῖς διαβήτην—μανθάνεις;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐ μανθάνω.

ΜΕΤΩΝ

1005 ὀρθῶ μετρήσω κανόνι προστιθείς, ἵνα  
ὁ κύκλος γένηταί σοι τετράγωνος κὰν μέσῳ  
ἀγορά, φέρονσαι δ' ὥσιν εἰς αὐτὴν ὁδοὶ  
ὀρθαὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ μέσον, ὥσπερ δ' ἀστέρος  
αὐτοῦ κυκλοτεροῦς ὄντος ὀρθαὶ πανταχῇ  
ἀκτῖνες ἀπολάμπωσιν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἄνθρωπος Θαλής.

Μέτων—

ΜΕΤΩΝ

τί ἐστιν;

BIRDS

METON

Who am I? Meton, renowned in Greece, and in Colonus too.<sup>98</sup>

PEISETAERUS

And pray tell what's all this you've got?

METON

Air rulers. Because for starters, the sky in its entirety is like a casserole cover. Accordingly, by positioning this ruler, which is curved, over its top, inserting a compass—do you follow?

PEISETAERUS

I don't follow.

METON

—and laying a straight ruler alongside it I'll take a measure, so that you will get a circle squared, with a market-place in the middle, and so there will be straight streets running into it and meeting at the very center, so that just as from a star, itself being round, rays will beam out straight in every direction.

PEISETAERUS

The man's a Thales.<sup>99</sup> Meton—

METON

What is it?

<sup>98</sup> A district of downtown Athens where Meton had set up a sundial, cf. fr. 227, Philochorus FGrH 328 F 122.

<sup>99</sup> The early sixth-century founder of the Milesian school of natural science and philosophy, who had become a byword for genius, cf. *Clouds* 180.



ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1010

ἴσθ' ὅτιη φιλω σ' ἐγώ,  
κάμοι πιθόμενος ὑπαποκίνει τῆς ὁδοῦ.

ΜΕΤΩΝ

τί δ' ἐστὶ δεινόν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὥσπερ ἐν Λακεδαίμονι  
ξενηλατοῦσι καὶ κεκίνηνταιί τινες.  
πληγαὶ συχναὶ κατ' ἄστυ.

ΜΕΤΩΝ

μῶν στασιάζετε;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ δῆτ'.

ΜΕΤΩΝ

ἀλλὰ πῶς;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1015

ὁμοθυμαδὸν  
σποδεῖν ἅπαντας τοὺς ἀλαζόνας δοκεῖ.

ΜΕΤΩΝ

ὑπάγοιμί γ' ἄρ' ἄν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

νῆ Δί', ὡς οὐκ οἶδ' ἂν εἰ  
φθαίης ἄν· ἐπίκεινται γὰρ ἐγγυὺς αὐταί.

ΜΕΤΩΝ

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων.

BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

You know I'm fond of you, so take my advice and hit the road.

METON

What's the problem?

PEISETAERUS

It's like Sparta: they're expelling foreigners, and punches have started flying pretty thick and fast all over town.

METON

You're not having a civil war, are you?

PEISETAERUS

God no, not that!

METON

What then?

PEISETAERUS

There's a unanimous decision to beat up all charlatans.

METON

In that case I *will* be going.

PEISETAERUS

Good idea; I don't know if you can get away in time, because those punches are close at hand. (*punching him*)

METON

Heaven help me!

*Exit METON*

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1013 -τοῦσι Elmsley: -τοῦνται a S: -τοῦντες v.l. Σ

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἔλεγον ἐγὼ πάλαι;

1020 οὐκ ἀναμετρήσει σαυτὸν ἀπιὼν ἀλλαχῆ;

ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

ποῦ πρόξενοι;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τίς ὁ Σαρδανάπαλλος οὔτοσί;

ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

ἐπίσκοπος ἦκω δεῦρο τῷ κνᾶμῳ λαχὼν  
εἰς τὰς Νεφελοκοκκυγίας.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἐπίσκοπος;

ἐπεμψε δὲ τίς σε δεῦρο;

ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

φαῦλον βιβλίον

Τελέου τι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1025 βούλει δῆτα τὸν μισθὸν λαβὼν  
μὴ πράγματ' ἔχειν ἀλλ' ἀπιέναι;

ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

νὴ τοὺς θεούς.

ἐκκλησιάσαι γοῦν ἐδεόμην οἴκοι μένων·  
ἔστιν γὰρ ἃ δι' ἐμοῦ πέπρακται Φαρνάκη.

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<sup>100</sup> Exemplifying the travelling inspectors sent by Assembly decree to enforce Athenian policies in the cities of the empire.

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Haven't I been trying to warn you? Go somewhere else, and survey yourself!

*Enter INSPECTOR, well dressed and carrying a pair of ballot boxes.*

INSPECTOR<sup>100</sup>

Where can I find consuls?

PEISETAERUS

Who's this Sardanapallus?<sup>101</sup>

INSPECTOR

I'm an Inspector, duly allotted to visit Cloudcuckooland.

PEISETAERUS

Inspector? On whose authority?

INSPECTOR

Some petty bill of Teleas'.

PEISETAERUS

Then would you like to take your pay and just leave, without any fuss?

INSPECTOR

I believe I will. I should be back home anyway, speaking in the Assembly; there's some business I've been handling for Pharnaces.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>101</sup> According to the Greeks, the wealthy and degenerate last king of Assyria before the loss of that empire to the Medes and Babylonians in the late seventh century.

<sup>102</sup> Persian satrap of Dascyleion until c. 413, when he was succeeded by his brother Pharnabazus, cf. Thucydides 2.67, 8.6, 58.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἄπιθι λαβών· ἔστιν δ' ὁ μισθὸς οὐτοσί.

ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

τουτὶ τί ἦν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1030

ἐκκλησία περὶ Φαρνάκου.

ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

μαρτύρομαι τυπτόμενος ὧν ἐπίσκοπος.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἀποσοβήσεις; οὐκ ἀποίσεις τὸ κάδω;  
οὐ δεινά; καὶ πέμπουσιν ἤδη ἰπισκόπους  
εἰς τὴν πόλιν, πρὶν καὶ τεθύσθαι τοῖς θεοῖς;

ΨΗΦΙΣΜΑΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ

1035

“ἐὰν δ' ὁ Νεφελοκοκκυγιεὺς τὸν Ἀθηναῖον ἀδικῆ—”

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τουτὶ τί ἔστιν αὐτὸ κακόν, τὸ βυβλίον;

ΨΗΦΙΣΜΑΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ

ψηφισματοπώλης εἰμὶ καὶ νόμους νέους  
ἦκω παρ' ὑμᾶς δεῦρο πωλήσων.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τὸ τί;

ΨΗΦΙΣΜΑΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ

1040

“χρῆσθαι Νεφελοκοκκυγιᾶς τοῖς αὐτοῖς μέτροισι

<sup>1040</sup> τοῖς αὐτοῖς Boissonade: τοῖσδε τοῖς a

BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Take your pay and leave; I've got it right here (*punches him*).

INSPECTOR

Hey, what was that?

PEISETAERUS

An assembly about Pharnaces.

INSPECTOR

Witnesses! Inspector under attack!

*INSPECTOR runs off.*

PEISETAERUS

Shoo, shoo, away with you! And take your ballot boxes too! Amazing—they're already sending inspectors to our city, before we've even held our founding sacrifice!

*Enter DECREE SELLER, with a large book.*

DECREE SELLER

(*reading*) "And if a Cloudcuckoolander commits an offence against an Athenian—"

PEISETAERUS

What sort of nuisance is this now, this book?

DECREE SELLER

I'm a decree seller, and I'm here to sell you some new laws.

PEISETAERUS

For instance?

DECREE SELLER

"The Cloudcuckoolanders are to use the selfsame mea-

ARISTOPHANES

καὶ σταθμοῖσι καὶ ψηφίσμασι καθάπερ Ὀλοφύξιοι.”

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

σὺ δέ γ' οἷσπερ Ὀτοτύξιοι χρήσει τάχα.

ΨΗΦΙΣΜΑΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ

οὗτος, τί πάσχεις;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1045

οὐκ ἀποίσεις τοὺς νόμους;  
πικροὺς ἐγὼ σοι τήμερον δείξω νόμους.

ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

καλοῦμαι Πεισέταιρον ὕβρεως εἰς τὸν Μουνιχιῶνα  
μῆνα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἄληθες, οὗτος; ἔτι γὰρ ἐνταῦθ' ἦσθα σύ;

ΨΗΦΙΣΜΑΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ

1050

“ἐὰν δέ τις ἐξελαύνῃ τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ μὴ δέχεται  
κατὰ τὴν στήλην—”

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, καὶ σὺ γὰρ ἐνταῦθ' ἦσθ' ἔτι;

ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ

ἀπολῶ σε καὶ γράψω σε μυρίας δραχμάς—

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<sup>103</sup> Parodying the language of the Coinage Decree (IG i<sup>3</sup> 1453 = ML 45, date uncertain), and substituting “decrees” for “coin-

## BIRDS

sure, weights, and decrees as the Olophyxians.”<sup>103</sup>

PEISETAERUS

And *you'll* soon be getting the same as the Black-and-Bluesians! (*strikes him*)

DECREE SELLER

Hey, what's the matter with you?

PEISETAERUS

Take your laws away from here! In a moment I'll be showing you some laws you won't like!

*DECREE SELLER runs off; INSPECTOR reappears.*

INSPECTOR

I summon Peisetaerus to appear in the month of Munychion on a charge of assault!

PEISETAERUS

Oh, is that right? What are you still doing here?

*DECREE SELLER reappears.*

DECREE SELLER

“And should anyone expel the officials and refuse them entry under the terms of the decree—”

PEISETAERUS

Heaven help me, are you still here too?

INSPECTOR

I'll ruin you! I'll write you up for a ten thousand drachma—

age.” Olophyxos was a small Athenian ally on the Athos peninsula; Peisetaerus counters with the made-up name “Ototyxi-ans,” punning on *ototoi* (a cry of pain).



ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ δὲ σοῦ γε τὰ κάδω διασκεδῶ.

ΨΗΦΙΣΜΑΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ

μέμνησ' ὅτε τῆς στήλης κατετίλας ἐσπέρας;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1055 αἰβοῖ· λαβέτω τις αὐτόν. οὔτος, οὐ μενεῖς;  
ἀπίωμεν ἡμεῖς ὡς τάχιστ' ἐντευθενὶ  
θύσοντες εἴσω τοῖς θεοῖσι τὸν τράγον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) ἤδη 'μοὶ τῶ παντόπτα  
καὶ παντάρχα θνητοὶ πάντες  
1060 θύσουσ' εὐκταίαις εὐχαῖς.  
πάσαν μὲν γὰρ γὰν ὀπτεύω,  
σώζω δ' εὐθαλείς καρποὺς  
κτείνων παμφύλων γένναν  
θηρῶν, ἃ πᾶν τ' ἐν γαίᾳ  
1065 ἐκ κάλυκος αὐξανόμενον γέννισι παμφάγοις  
δένδρεσί τ' ἐφημένα καρπὸν ἀποβόσκειται.  
κτείνω δ' οἱ κήπους εὐώδεις  
φθείρουσιν λύμαις ἐχθίσταις·  
έρπετά τε καὶ δάκετα <πάνθ' > ὅσαπερ  
1070 ἔστιν, ὑπ' ἐμᾶς πτέρυγος  
ἐν φοναῖς ὄλλυται.

1069 suppl. Dissen et Dobree

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

And I'll smash both of your ballot boxes!

*INSPECTOR flees.*

### DECREE SELLER

Do you recall those evenings when you used to crap on the inscribed decree?

### PEISETAERUS

Pew! Somebody grab hold of him!

*DECREE SELLER flees.*

Hey, why don't you stick around? (*to Slaves*) Let's get away from here as fast as we can, inside, where we can sacrifice the goat to the gods.

*PEISETAERUS and Slaves go inside.*

### CHORUS

To me, the omniscient  
and omnipotent, shall all mortals  
now sacrifice with pious prayers.  
For I keep watch over all the earth,  
and keep safe the blooming crops  
by slaying the brood of all species  
of critters, who with omnivorous jaws  
devour all that in soil sprouts from the pod  
and the fruit of the trees where they perch;  
and I slay those who spoil fragrant gardens  
with defilements most offensive;  
and upon creepers and biters every one  
from the force of my wing  
comes murderous destruction.

## ARISTOPHANES

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

- τῆδε μέντοι θῆμέρα μάλιστ' ἐπαναγορεύεται  
 ἦν ἀποκτείνῃ τις ὑμῶν Διαγόραν τὸν Μήλιον,  
 λαμβάνειν τάλαντον, ἦν τε τῶν τυράννων τίς τινα  
 1075 τῶν τεθνηκότων ἀποκτείνῃ, τάλαντον λαμβάνειν.  
 βουλόμεσθ' οὖν νῦν ἀνειπεῖν ταῦτα χῆμεῖς ἐνθάδε·  
 ἦν ἀποκτείνῃ τις ὑμῶν Φιλοκράτη τὸν Στρούθιον,  
 λήψεται τάλαντον, ἦν δὲ ζῶντά γ' ἀγάγη, τέτταρα,  
 ὅτι συνείρων τοὺς σπίνους πωλεῖ καθ' ἑπτὰ  
 τοῦβολοῦ,  
 1080 εἶτα φυσῶν τὰς κίχλας δείκνυσι καὶ λυμαίνεται,  
 τοῖς τε κοψίχοισιν εἰς τὰς ῥίνας ἐγχεῖ τὰ πτερά,  
 τὰς περιστεράς θ' ὁμοίως ξυλλαβὼν εἶρξας ἔχει,  
 κάπαναγκάζει παλεύειν δεδεμένας ἐν δικτύῳ.  
 ταῦτα βουλόμεσθ' ἀνειπεῖν· κεῖ τις ὄρνιθας τρέφει  
 1085 εἰργμένους ὑμῶν ἐν αὐλῇ, φράζομεν μεθιέναι.  
 ἦν δὲ μὴ πείθησθε, συλληφθέντες ὑπὸ τῶν ὀρνέων  
 αὐθις ὑμεῖς αὖ παρ' ἡμῖν δεδεμένοι παλεύσετε.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (ἀντ) εὐδαιμον φῦλον πτηνῶν  
 οἰωνῶν, οἳ χειμῶνος μὲν  
 1090 χλαίνας οὐκ ἀμπισχνοῦνται·

<sup>1078</sup> ζῶντά γ' ἀγάγη Burges: ζωνταπαγαγη Π1: ζῶντ'  
 ἀγάγη a

<sup>104</sup> Presumably (but not demonstrably) the first day of the Dionysia.

## BIRDS

### CHORUS LEADER

On this particular day,<sup>104</sup> you know, we hear it again proclaimed that whoever of you kills Diagoras the Melian<sup>105</sup> shall get a talent, and whoever kills any of the long deceased tyrants<sup>106</sup> shall get a talent. So now we want to make our own announcement right here: whoever of you kills Philocrates the Sparrovian shall get a talent, and four for bringing him in alive, on the grounds that he strings finches together and sells them seven an obol; furthermore that he inflates thrushes for degrading display; and crams the noses of blackbirds with their own feathers; and captures pigeons, keeps them caged, and forces them to play decoy, tethered to a net. That's the announcement we want to make. And whoever of you keeps caged birds in the yard, we order you to let them go; if you disobey, you will be captured by the birds, and it will be your turn to play decoy on our turf.

### CHORUS

Happy the race of feathered  
birds, who in the winter  
need wear no woolen cloaks;

<sup>105</sup> Dubbed "Diagoras of Quibbleton" by Hermippus in 430 (fr. 43) and aligned with Socrates in *Clouds* 830; outlawed for writings critical of the Eleusinian Mysteries, cf. Craterus *FGrH* 342 F 16 and Melanthius 326 F 3.

<sup>106</sup> Though the last Athenian tyrant had been expelled in 510 and there had been no real threat of a return to tyranny since the Persian Wars, demagogues kept the threat alive (cf. e.g. *Wasps* 488–507), and the recent scandals surrounding Alcibiades had reawakened popular fears of antidemocratic plots (Thucydides 6.53 ff.).

## ARISTOPHANES

- οὐδ' αὖ θερμὴ πνίγους ἡμᾶς  
 ἀκτὶς τηλαυγῆς θάλπει  
 ἀλλ' ἀνθηρῶν λειμώνων  
 φύλλ' ἐν κόλποις ἐνναίω,  
 1095 ἡνίκ' ἂν ὁ θεσπέσιος ὄξυ μέλος ἀχέτας  
 θάλπεσι μεσημβρινοῖς ἡλιομανῆς βοᾷ.  
 χειμάζω δ' ἐν κοίλοις ἄντροις  
 νύμφαις οὐρέιαις ξυμπαίζων·  
 ἡρινά τε βοσκόμεθα παρθένια  
 1100 λευκότροφα μύρτα Χαρί-  
 των τε κηπεύματα.

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

- τοῖς κριταῖς εἰπεῖν τι βουλόμεσθα τῆς νίκης πέρι,  
 ὅσ' ἀγάθ', ἣν κρίνωσιν ἡμᾶς, πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς  
 δώσομεν,  
 ὥστε κρείττω δῶρα πολλῶ τῶν Ἀλεξάνδρου λαβεῖν.  
 1105 πρῶτα μὲν γάρ, οὗ μάλιστα πᾶς κριτῆς ἐφίεται,  
 γλαῦκες ὑμᾶς οὔποτ' ἐπιλείψουσι Λαυρειωτικά·  
 ἀλλ' ἐνοικήσουσιν ἔνδον, ἐν τε τοῖς βαλλαντίοις  
 ἐννεοττεύσουσι κακλέψουσι μικρὰ κέρματα.  
 εἶτα πρὸς τούτοισιν ὥσπερ ἐν ἱεροῖς οἰκήσετε·  
 1110 τὰς γὰρ ὑμῶν οἰκίας ἐρέψομεν πρὸς αἰετόν·  
 κὰν λαχόντες ἀρχίδιον εἶθ' ἀρπάσαι βούλησθέ τι,  
 ὄξυν ἱερακίσκον εἰς τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῖν δώσομεν.  
 ἦν δέ που δειπνήτε, πρηγορεῶνας ὑμῖν πέμψομεν.  
 ἦν δὲ μὴ κρίνητε, χαλκεύεσθε μηνίσκους φορεῖν  
 1115 ὥσπερ ἀνδριάντες· ὡς ὑμῶν ὅς ἂν μὴ μῆν' ἔχη,

## BIRDS

nor in summer's stifling heat  
do the long rays roast us.  
For I dwell among the flora  
in the lap of flowery meadows,  
when the sun-crazy cicada with voice divine  
in the noonday heat intones his keen song;  
and I winter in hollow caverns,  
frolicking with mountain nymphs;  
and in spring we graze on myrtle berries,  
maidenly in their white florets,  
and the fruits of the Graces' garden.

### CHORUS LEADER

We'd like to say a word to the judges about winning the prize, namely all the benefits we'll bestow on them all if they vote for us, so they'll get far better gifts than Paris got.<sup>107</sup> Let's begin with what every judge craves most, those owls from Laureium:<sup>108</sup> they will never run out on you, no, they'll move into your house, and nest in your wallets, and hatch out small change. On top of that, you'll live in houses like temples, because we'll roof them with eagle gables. If you draw a nice little post, then want to do some pilfering, we'll equip you with a sharp crowbar. And if you go out for dinner, we'll send you each off with a gizzard. But if you vote against us, you'd better make some copper lids to wear, like statues, because any of you who doesn't

<sup>107</sup> Priam's son Alexander, better known as Paris, served as the judge of a divine beauty contest and got Helen as a bribe from Aphrodite for picking her over Hera and Athena.

<sup>108</sup> Coins made from silver mined at Laureium and bearing Athena's owl as an emblem.



ARISTOPHANES

ὅταν ἔχητε χλανίδα λευκήν, τότε μάλισθ' οὕτω  
 δίκην  
 δώσεθ' ἡμῖν, πᾶσι τοῖς ὄρنيσι κατατιλώμενοι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τὰ μὲν ἱέρ' ἡμῖν ἐστίν, ὠρνιθες, καλά.  
 ἀλλ' ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους πάρεστιν ἄγγελος  
 1120 οὐδείς, ὅτου πευσόμεθα τὰκεῖ πράγματα.  
 ἀλλ' οὔτοσὶ τρέχει τις Ἀλφειὸν πνέων.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Α΄

πού πού 'στι, πού πού πού 'στι, πού πού πού 'στι,  
 πού,  
 πού Πεισέταιρός ἐστίν ἄρχων;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὔτοσί.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Α΄

ἔξωκοδόμηταί σοι τὸ τεῖχος.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

εὖ λέγεις.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Α΄

1125 κάλλιστον ἔργον καὶ μεγαλοπρεπέστατον·  
 ὥστ' ἂν ἐπάνω μὲν Προξενίδης ὁ Κομπασεὺς  
 καὶ Θεογένης ἐναντίω δὺ ἄρματε,  
 ἵππων ὑπόντων μέγεθος ὅσον ὁ δούριος,  
 ὑπὸ τοῦ πλάτους ἂν παρελασαίτην.

## BIRDS

have a lid, whenever you're wearing a white suit, that's just when you'll pay the piper, getting crapped on by all of the birds.

*Enter PEISETAERUS.*

### PEISETAERUS

Our sacrifice, dear birds, has been auspicious. But how strange that no messenger is here from the wall, to brief us on how things are going there. Wait, here comes someone on the run, panting like an Olympic sprinter.

*Enter FIRST MESSENGER.*

### FIRST MESSENGER

Who who where's, who who who where's, who who who where's, who who where's Peisetaerus, the ruler?

### PEISETAERUS

Right here.

### FIRST MESSENGER

Your wall is all built.

### PEISETAERUS

Good news!

### FIRST MESSENGER

A very fine and very impressive achievement; it's so wide on top, Proxenides of Braggarton<sup>109</sup> and Theogenes could hitch two chariots to horses the size of the wooden one,<sup>110</sup> and pass each other head-on!

<sup>109</sup> Also called a braggart in *Wasps* 324–25.

<sup>110</sup> In which the Greeks concealed themselves in order to enter Troy.



ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

Ἡράκλεις.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Α΄

1130 τὸ δὲ μῆκός ἐστι, καὶ γὰρ ἐμέτρησ' αὐτ' ἐγώ,  
ἐκατοντορόγνιον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦ Πόσειδον, τοῦ μάκρους.

τίνες ὠκοδόμησαν αὐτὸ τηλικουτονί;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Α΄

ὄρνιαθες, οὐδεὶς ἄλλος, οὐκ Αἰγύπτιος  
πλινθοφόρος, οὐ λιθουργός, οὐ τέκτων παρήν,  
1135 ἀλλ' αὐτόχειρες, ὥστε θαυμάζειν ἐμέ.

ἐκ μὲν γε Λιβύης ἦκον ὡς τρισμύρια  
γέρανοι θεμελίους καταπεπωκῦναι λίθους·  
τούτους δ' ἐτύκιζον αἱ κρέκες τοῖς ῥύγχεσιν.

1140 ἕτεροι δ' ἐπλινθούργουν πελαργοὶ μύριοι  
ὔδωρ δ' ἐφόρουν κάτωθεν εἰς τὸν ἀέρα  
οἱ χαραδριοὶ καὶ τ' ἄλλα ποτάμι' ὄρνεα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἐπηλοφόρουν δ' αὐτοῖσι τίνες;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Α΄

ἐρωδιοὶ

λεκάναισι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τὸν δὲ πηλὸν ἐνεβάλλοντο πῶς;

1139 -ούργουν Bergk: -οφόρουν a

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Heracles!

FIRST MESSENGER

And as for its height—and I measured it myself—it's a hundred fathoms.

PEISETAERUS

Poseidon, that's high! Who built it so tall?

FIRST MESSENGER

Birds and birds alone, with no Egyptian brickbearer in sight, no mason, no carpenter, all with their own hands, an amazing sight to see. From Libya there came some thirty thousand cranes, who'd swallowed stones for the foundations, and these the corncrakes blocked with their bills, while another ten thousand storks made bricks, and the curlews with their fellow river birds brought water up to the sky.

PEISETAERUS

And who brought clay for them?

FIRST MESSENGER

Hérons, in hods.

PEISETAERUS

And how did they get the clay into the hods?

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Α΄

1145 τούτ', ὦγάθ', ἐξηύρητο καὶ σοφώτατα·  
οἱ χῆνες ὑποτύπτοντες ὥσπερ ταῖς ἄμαις  
εἰς τὰς λεκάνας ἐνέβαλλον αὐτὸν τοῖν ποδοῖν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί δῆτα πόδες ἂν οὐκ ἂν ἐργασαίαιτο;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Α΄

1150 καὶ νῆ Δί' αἱ νῆτταί γε περιεζωσμένοι  
ἐπλινθοβόλουν· ἄνω δὲ τὸν ὑπαγωγέα  
ἐπέτοντ' ἔχουσαι κατόπιν, ὥσπερ παιδία,  
τὸν πηλὸν ἐν τοῖς στόμασιν αἱ χελιδόνες.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί δῆτα μισθωτοὺς ἂν ἔτι μισθοῖτό τις;  
φέρ' ἴδω, τί δαί; τὰ ξύλινα τοῦ τείχους τίνες  
ἀπηργάσαντ';

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Α΄

ὄρνιθες ἦσαν τέκτονες

1155 σοφώτατοι πελεκᾶντες, οἱ τοῖς ῥύγχεσιν  
ἀπεπελέκησαν τὰς πύλας· ἦν δ' ὁ κτύπος  
αὐτῶν πελεκώντων ὥσπερ ἐν ναυπηγίῳ.  
καὶ νῦν ἅπαντ' ἐκείνα πεπύλωται πύλαις  
καὶ βεβαλάνωται καὶ φυλάττεται κύκλω,  
1160 ἐφοδεύεται, κωδωνοφορεῖται, πανταχῆ  
φυλακαὶ καθεστήκασι καὶ φρυκτωρίαι  
ἐν τοῖσι πύργοις. ἀλλ' ἐγὼ μὲν ἀποτρέχων  
ἀπονύψομαι· σὺ δ' αὐτὸς ἤδη τ'ἄλλα δρᾶ.

## BIRDS

### FIRST MESSENGER

That, my friend, was sheer genius: the geese dug their feet into it like shovels, and scooped it right into the herons' hods.

### PEISETAERUS

I guess nothing's impossible if you put your feet to it!

### FIRST MESSENGER

And by god there were the ducks, wearing belts and laying the bricks; and up flew the swallows with the trowel at their rear, like kiddies,<sup>111</sup> and plaster in their mouths.

### PEISETAERUS

Then why go on hiring workmen? Let's see, what else? Who did the woodwork for the wall?

### FIRST MESSENGER

The carpenter birds, very skilled, were woodpeckers, who pecked out the gates with their beaks; the din of their pecking was just like a shipyard! And now all those gateways are gated and bolted and surrounded by guards, patrolled by bell ringers; everywhere sentries are in place, with signal fires on the towers. As for me, I'm off to have a bath; see to the rest yourself.

*Exit FIRST MESSENGER.*

<sup>111</sup> The Greek is obscure and possibly corrupt.

---

<sup>1149</sup> -βόλων Higham: -φόρον a S

<sup>1151</sup> καὶ Lenting: τὸν a

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

1165 οὔτος, τί ποιεῖς; ἄρα θαυμάζεις ὅτι  
οὔτω τὸ τεῖχος ἐκτετείχισται ταχύ;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔγωγε· καὶ γὰρ ἄξιον·  
ἴσα γὰρ ἀληθῶς φαίνεται μοι ψεύδεσιν.  
ἀλλ' ὅδε φύλαξ γὰρ τῶν ἐκείθεν ἄγγελος  
εἰσθεῖ πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεῦρο πυρρίχην βλέπων.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Β΄

1170 ἰοὺ ἰού, ἰοὺ ἰού, ἰοὺ ἰού.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί τὸ πράγμα τουτί;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Β΄

δεινότατα πεπόνθαμεν.  
τῶν γὰρ θεῶν τις ἄρτι τῶν παρὰ τοῦ Διὸς  
διὰ τῶν πυλῶν εἰσέπτατ' εἰς τὸν ἀέρα,  
λαθῶν κολιοιοὺς φύλακας ἡμεροσκοπούς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1175 ὦ δεινὸν ἔργον καὶ σχέτλιον εἰργασμένος.  
τίς τῶν θεῶν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Β΄

οὐκ ἴσμεν· ὅτι δ' εἶχε πτερά,  
τοῦτ' ἴσμεν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὔκουν δῆτα περιπόλους ἐχρήν  
πέμψαι κατ' αὐτὸν εὐθύς;

## BIRDS

### CHORUS LEADER

Hey there, what's the matter? Amazed that the wall's been walled up so quickly?

### PEISETAERUS

Heavens above, I certainly am; and rightly so. To tell the truth, it sounds like a mighty tall tale! But look, here's a guard coming on the run to report on events over there, looking like a war dancer.

*Enter SECOND MESSENGER*

### SECOND MESSENGER

s.o.s! s.o.s! s.o.s!

### PEISETAERUS

What's all this fuss?

### SECOND MESSENGER

We've got terrible problems! One of the gods, Zeus' gods, has just now flown through the gates into our airspace, dodging the jackdaws, our daytime sentries.

### PEISETAERUS

A dire deed defiantly done! Which one of the gods?

### SECOND MESSENGER

We don't know; he had wings, we know that much.

### PEISETAERUS

Then shouldn't you have sent a border patrol after him at once?

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ Β΄

ἀλλ' ἐπέμψαμεν

τρισμυρίους ἰέρακας ἵπποτοξότας·

- 1180 χωρεῖ δὲ πᾶς τις ὄνυχας ἠγκυλωμένος,  
 κερχνῆς, τριόρχης, γύψ, κύμινδης, αἰετός·  
 ῥύμη τε καὶ πτεροῖσι καὶ ῥοιζήμασιν  
 αἰθῆρ δονεῖται τοῦ θεοῦ ζητουμένου·  
 κάστ' οὐ μακρὰν ἄπωθεν, ἀλλ' ἐνταῦθά που  
 ἤδη ἴστίιν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

- 1185 οὐκοῦν σφενδόνας δεῖ λαμβάνειν  
 καὶ τόξα. χώρει δεῦρο πᾶς ὑπηρέτης·  
 τόξευε, παῖε· σφενδόνην τίς μοι δότω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) πόλεμος αἴρεται, πόλεμος οὐ φατός,  
 1190/91 πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ θεούς. ἀλλὰ φύλαττε πᾶς  
 ἄερα περιέφελον, ὃν Ἔρεβος ἐτέκετο,  
 1195 μὴ σε λάθη θεῶν τις ταύτη περῶν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἄθρει δὲ πᾶς κύκλω σκοπῶν·  
 ὡς ἐγγὺς ἤδη δαίμονος πεδαρσίου  
 δίνης πτερωτὸς φθόγγος ἐξακούεται.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

- 1200 αὕτη σύ, ποῖ ποῖ ποῖ πέτει; μέν' ἤσυχος,  
 ἔχ' ἀτρέμας αὐτοῦ· στήθ'· ἐπίσχες τοῦ δρόμου.  
 τίς εἶ; ποδαπή; λέγειν ἐχρῆν ὀπόθεν ποτ' εἶ.



## BIRDS

### SECOND MESSENGER

We've done that, thirty thousand mounted archer hawks, and every bird with hooked talons is going along, kestrel, buzzard, vulture, great owl, eagle, and the sky's awhirl with the whirring of wings as the god's hunted down. And he's not far off; no, he's already somewhere nearby.

*Exit SECOND MESSENGER*

### PEISETAERUS

Then shouldn't we be taking up slings and arrows? All support personnel fall in! Shoot and sling! Somebody give me a sling!

*Enter Xanthias and Manes with the weapons.*

### CHORUS

War's broken out, war beyond words,  
between me and the gods! Now everyone stand guard  
on the cloud-girt air, scion of Erebus,  
in case some god sneaks past you here unseen.

### CHORUS LEADER

And everyone be alert on every side; the sound of an airborne god's whirring wings is already audible nearby.

*IRIS appears aloft on the stage crane.*

### PEISETAERUS

You there! Where where where are you flying? Be still! Stay right where you are! Halt! Stop moving! Who are you? Where from? You'd better start explaining just where you're from!



ARISTOPHANES

ΙΡΙΣ

παρὰ τῶν θεῶν ἔγωγε τῶν Ὀλυμπίων.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὄνομα δέ σοι τί; Πάραλος ἢ Σαλαμινία;

ΙΡΙΣ

Ἰρις ταχεῖα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

<πότερα> πλοῖον ἢ κύων;

ΙΡΙΣ

τί δὲ τοῦτο;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1205

ταυτηνί τις οὐ ξυλλήψεται  
ἀναπτόμενος τρίορχος;

ΙΡΙΣ

ἐμὲ ξυλλήψεται;

τί ποτ' ἐστὶ τουτὶ τὸ κακόν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οἰμῶξει μακρά.

ΙΡΙΣ

ἄτοπόν γε τουτὶ πρᾶγμα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

κατὰ ποίας πύλας  
εἰσῆλθες εἰς τὸ τείχος, ὦ μιαρωτάτη;

<sup>1203</sup> τί; Πάραλος ἢ Σαλαμινία; Robert: τί ἐστι; πλοῖον ἢ  
κυνῆ a S

BIRDS

IRIS<sup>112</sup>

From the gods I hail, the Olympian gods.

PEISETAERUS

And what's your name? Paralus or Salaminia?<sup>113</sup>

IRIS

Iris the Speedy.

PEISETAERUS

Boat or bitch?

IRIS

What is this?

PEISETAERUS

One of you cockerels, fly up and grab her!

IRIS

Grab me? What the hell is that supposed to mean?

PEISETAERUS

You're going to be awfully sorry!

IRIS

This is quite extraordinary.

PEISETAERUS

By what gate did you pass through the wall, you slut?

112 Goddess of the rainbow and messenger of Zeus in epic and tragedy, but often rudely treated in satyr drama.

113 See 146 n.

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1204 <πότερα> πλοῖον ἢ κύων; Robert: Πάραλος ἢ Σαλαμινία a

ARISTOPHANES

ΙΡΙΣ

1210 οὐκ οἶδα μὰ Δί' ἔγωγε, κατὰ ποίας πύλας.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἤκουσας αὐτῆς οἶον εἰρωνεύεται;  
πρὸς τοὺς κολοιάρχους προσῆλθες;

ΙΡΙΣ

πῶς λέγεις;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

σφραγίδ' ἔχεις παρὰ τῶν πελαργῶν;

ΙΡΙΣ

τί τὸ κακόν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἔλαβες;

ΙΡΙΣ

ὑγιαίνεις μέν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐδὲ σύμβολον

1215 ἐπέβαλεν ὀρνίθαρχος οὐδεῖς σοι παρών;

ΙΡΙΣ

μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔμοιγ' ἐπέβαλεν οὐδεῖς, ᾧ μέλε.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

κᾶπειτα δῆθ' οὕτω σιωπῇ διαπέτει  
διὰ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἀλλοτρίας καὶ τοῦ χάους;

ΙΡΙΣ

ποία γὰρ ἄλλη χρῆ πέτεσθαι τοὺς θεούς;

BIRDS

IRIS

I have absolutely no idea what gate.

PEISETAERUS

Just listen to Miss Innocent! Did you accost the Duty Daws?

IRIS

I beg your pardon?

PEISETAERUS

Did the Storks punch your ticket?

IRIS

How dare you!

PEISETAERUS

You didn't accept a pass?

IRIS

You are sane, I trust?

PEISETAERUS

And no Top Cock was around to enter your passage?

IRIS

Listen, mister, nobody's entered me at all!

PEISETAERUS

And so you just fly in this stealthy way through a city that's not yours, and through the void?

IRIS

But where else are the gods supposed to fly?

---

<sup>1212</sup> προσῆλθες; : πῶς Bachmann: πῶς (del. t) προσῆλθες;  
οὐ a

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1220 οὐκ οἶδα μὰ Δί' ἔγωγε· τῆδε μὲν γὰρ οὔ.  
ἀδικεῖς δὲ καὶ νῦν. ἄρά γ' οἶσθα τοῦθ' ὅτι  
δικαιοτάτ' ἂν ληφθεῖσα πασῶν Ἰρίδων  
ἀπέθανες, εἰ τῆς ἀξίας ἐτύγχανες;

ΙΡΙΣ

ἀλλ' ἀθάνατός εἰμ'.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1225 ἀλλ' ὅμως ἂν ἀπέθανες.  
δεινότατα γὰρ τοι πεισόμεσθ', ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ,  
εἰ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἄρχομεν, ὑμεῖς δ' οἱ θεοὶ  
ἀκολαστανεῖτε, κούδέπω γνώσεσθ' ὅτι  
ἀκροατέον ὑμῖν ἐν μέρει τῶν κρειπτόνων.  
φράσον δέ μοι νῦν τὸ πτέρυγε ποῖ ναυστολεῖς;

ΙΡΙΣ

1230 ἐγὼ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους πέτομαι παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς  
φράσουσα θύειν τοῖς Ὀλυμπίοις θεοῖς  
μηλοσφαγεῖν τε βουθύτοις ἐπ' ἐσχάραις  
κνισᾶν τ' ἀγυιάς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί σὺ λέγεις; ποίοις θεοῖς;

ΙΡΙΣ

ποίοισιν; ἡμῖν, τοῖς ἐν οὐρανῶ θεοῖς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

θεοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς;

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

I've absolutely no idea, but not through here. In fact, you're breaking the law right now. Do you realize that if you got what's coming to you, you'd deserve more than all other Irises to be captured and put to death?

IRIS

But I'm deathless!

PEISETAERUS

You'd be put to death anyway. Look here, we'll be in a terrible fix, the way I see it, if we're to be the rulers but you gods intend to misbehave and ignore the fact that it's now your turn to obey your superiors. So tell me right now where you're navigating those wings.

IRIS

I'll have you know I'm flying from the Father to mankind to deliver this message: give sacrifice to the Olympian gods; slaughter sheep on sacrificial altars; and fill the boulevards with their aromas.

PEISETAERUS

What do you mean? What gods?

IRIS

I mean us, the gods in heaven.

PEISETAERUS

So you're gods, eh?

---

1229 *μοι νῦν* Henderson: *τοί μοι α*

ARISTOPHANES

ΙΡΙΣ

1235

τίς γάρ ἐστ' ἄλλος θεός;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὄρνιθες ἀνθρώποισι νῦν εἰσιν θεοί,  
οἷς θυτέον αὐτούς, ἀλλὰ μὰ Δί' οὐ τῷ Δί.

ΙΡΙΣ

1240

ὦ μῶρε, μῶρε, μὴ θεῶν κίνει φρένας  
δεινάς, ὅπως μὴ σου γένος πανώλεθρον  
Διὸς μακέλλη πᾶν ἀναστρέψει Δίκη,  
λιγνὺς δὲ σῶμα καὶ δόμων περιπτυχὰς  
καταιθαλώσει σου Δικυμνίοις βολαῖς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1245

ἄκουσον, αὕτη· παῦε τῶν παφλασμάτων·  
ἔχ' ἀτρέμα. φέρ' ἴδω, πότερα Λυδὸν ἢ Φρύγα  
ταυτὶ λέγουσα μορμολύττεσθαι δοκεῖς;  
ἄρ' οἶσθ' ὅτι Ζεὺς εἴ με λυπήσει πέρα,  
μέλαθρα μὲν αὐτοῦ καὶ δόμους Ἀμφίονος  
καταιθαλώσω πυρφόροισιν αἰετοῖς,  
πέμψω δὲ πορφυρίωνας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν

1250

ὄρνις ἐπ' αὐτὸν παρδαλᾶς ἐνημμένους  
πλείην ἑξακοσίους τὸν ἀριθμόν; καὶ δὴ ποτε  
εἰς Πορφυρίων αὐτῷ παρέσχε πράγματα.

1255

σὺ δ' εἴ με λυπήσεις τι, τῆς διακόνου  
πρώτης ἀνατείνας τὸ σκέλει διαμηριῶ  
τὴν Ἴριν αὐτήν, ὥστε θαυμάζειν ὅπως  
οὔτω γέρων ὦν στύομαι τριέμβολον.

## BIRDS

### IRIS

Who else do you consider a god?

### PEISETAERUS

Birds are gods to humans now, and to them must humans sacrifice, not, by Zeus, to Zeus!

### IRIS

Ah fool, fool! Provoke not the terrible spleen of the gods, lest Justice wielding the Spade of Zeus utterly eradicate all your race; lest fiery fumes inflame your body and the enfolding embrace of your palace with thunderbolts Licymnian!<sup>114</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

Hey listen, stop your spluttering! Whoa there! Say, do you think it's a Lydian or a Phrygian you're trying to spook with that kind of talk? Do you realize that if Zeus annoys me any further, I shall inflame his manse and the halls of Amphion with flame-throwing eagles,<sup>115</sup> and I shall send into the sky against him porphyry birds clad in leopard skins,<sup>116</sup> more than six hundred strong? And there was a time when just one Porphyry caused him some trouble! And as for you, if you annoy me one bit, I'll deal with the servant girl first, Iris herself, spread her legs and screw her, and she'll be amazed how an old hulk like me can stay aloft for three rammings!

<sup>114</sup> According to scholia "a character in Euripides' *Licymnius* was thunderstruck," but no further details are known.

<sup>115</sup> Adapted, according to scholia, from Aeschylus' *Niobe* (fr. 160); cf. also Sophocles *Antigone* 2 and 1155.

<sup>116</sup> 553 n.; some painters thus depicted the Giants.



ARISTOPHANES

ΙΡΙΣ

διαρραγείης, ὦ μέλ', αὐτοῖς ῥήμασιν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἀποσοβήσεις; οὐ ταχέως; εὐράξ, πατάξ.

ΙΡΙΣ

ἦ μήν σε παύσει τῆς ὕβρεως οὐμὸς πατήρ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1260 οἴμοι τάλας. οὐκουν ἐτέρωσε πετομένη  
καταιθαλώσεις τῶν νεωτέρων τινά;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ) ἀποκεκλήκαμεν διογενεῖς θεοὺς  
1265 μηκέτι τὴν ἐμὴν διαπερᾶν πόλιν,  
μηδέ τιν' ἱερόθυτον ἀνὰ δάπεδον <ἐν> ἔτι  
τῆδε βροτῶν θεοῖσι πέμπειν καπνόν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1270 δεινόν γε τὸν κήρυκα τὸν παρὰ τοὺς βροτοὺς  
οἰχόμενον, εἰ μηδέποτε νοστήσει πάλιν.

ΚΗΡΤΞ Α΄

ὦ Πεισέταιρ', ὦ μακάρι', ὦ σοφώτατε,  
ὦ κλεινότατ', ὦ σοφώτατ', ὦ γλαφυρώτατε,  
ὦ τρισμακάρι', ὦ—κατακέλευσον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί σὺ λέγεις;

1266 <ἐν> Dunbar praeunte Stahl

BIRDS

IRIS

Blast you, mister, you and your foul language!

PEISETAERUS

Buzz off now, and make it quick! Shoo, shoo!

IRIS

I swear my father will put a stop to your insolence!

PEISETAERUS

Good grief, fly somewhere else why don't you, and inflame some younger man.

*IRIS flies off.*

CHORUS

We have barred the gods sprung from Zeus  
from any further passage through my city,  
and no more shall any mortal on a single killing floor  
send savory smoke to the gods by this route.

PEISETAERUS

It's terribly worrisome, the herald who went to mankind, if  
he never comes back again.

*Enter FIRST HERALD, holding a golden crown.*

FIRST HERALD

Hail Peisetaerus, Hail the Blest One, Hail the Most Wise,  
Hail the Most Illustrious, Hail the Most Wise, Hail the  
Most Slick, Hail the Triple Blest, Hail the—just give me  
my cue!

PEISETAERUS

What's your message?

## ARISTOPHANES

## ΚΗΡΤΞ Α΄

1275 στεφάνω σε χρυσῶ τῶδε σοφίας οὔνεκα  
στεφανούσι καὶ τιμῶσιν οἱ πάντες λεῶ.

## ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

δέχομαι. τί δ' οὔτως οἱ λεῶ τιμῶσί με;

## ΚΗΡΤΞ Α΄

ὦ κλεινοτάτην αἰθέριον οἰκίσας πόλιν,  
οὐκ οἶσθ' ὄσην τιμὴν παρ' ἀνθρώποις φέρει  
ὄσους τ' ἐραστὰς τῆσδε τῆς χώρας ἔχεις;  
1280 πρὶν μὲν γὰρ οἰκίσαι σε τήνδε τὴν πόλιν,  
ἐλακωνομάνουν ἅπαντες ἄνθρωποι τότε,  
ἐκόμων, ἐπέινων, ἐρρύπων, ἐσωκράτων,  
ἐσκυταλιοφόρου· νῦν δ' ὑποστρέψαντες αὖ  
ὀρνιθομανούσι, πάντα δ' ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς  
1285 ποιούσιν ἅπερ ὀρνιθες ἐκμιμούμενοι.  
πρῶτον μὲν εὐθὺς πάντες ἐξ εὐνῆς ἅμα  
ἐπέτονθ' ἔωθεν ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ νομόν·  
κᾶπειτ' ἂν ἅμα κατῆραν εἰς τὰ βιβλία,  
εἶτ' ἂν ἐνέμοντ' ἐνταῦθα τὰ ψηφίσματα.  
1290 ὠρνιθομάνουν δ' οὔτω περιφανῶς ὥστε καὶ  
πολλοῖσιν ὀρνίθων ὀνόματ' ἦν κείμενα.  
Πέρδιξ μὲν εἰς κάπηλος ὠνομάζετο  
χωλός, Μενίππῳ δ' ἦν Χελιδῶν τούνομα,  
Ἵπουντίῳ δ' ὀφθαλμὸν οὐκ ἔχων Κόραξ,  
1295 Κορυδὸς Φιλοκλέει, Χηναλώπηξ Θεογένει,  
Ἴβις Λυκούργῳ, Χαιρεφῶντι Νυκτερίς,  
Συρακοσίῳ δὲ Κίττα· Μειδίας δ' ἐκεῖ

## BIRDS

### FIRST HERALD

With this crown of gold all the people recognize and reward you for your wisdom.

### PEISETAERUS

I accept it. But why do the people honor me this way?

### FIRST HERALD

O founder of the most glorious aetherial city, don't you realize how greatly you're esteemed among mankind, and how many of them you can count as lovers of this land? Why, before you built this city all men were crazy about the Spartans: they wore their hair long, went hungry, never bathed, acted like Socrates, brandished batons. But now they've about-faced and gone bird-crazy, and they're having a wonderful time imitating birds in everything they do. For starters, at the crack of dawn they all fly the coop together, just like us, to root for writs; then they flock to the archives and there sharpen their bills. They're so blatantly bird-crazy that many even had bird names added to their own. There's one lame barkeep called Partridge;<sup>117</sup> Menippus took the name Swallow;<sup>118</sup> Opuntius is the One-Eyed Raven; Philocles the Lark; Theogenes the Shel-drake;<sup>119</sup> Lycurgus the Ibis;<sup>120</sup> Chaerephon the Bat,<sup>121</sup> Syracosius the Jay;<sup>122</sup> and Meidias is called Quail, and you

<sup>117</sup> 766–68 n.      <sup>118</sup> Unidentifiable.      <sup>119</sup> Unidentifiable.

<sup>120</sup> Son of Lycomedes and grandfather of the homonymous fourth-century statesman; the nickname implies some connection with Egypt, cf. Cratinus fr. 32, Pherecrates fr. 11.

<sup>121</sup> The associate of Socrates, often satirized as sallow, thin, and umbratile.

<sup>122</sup> A politician ridiculed for his “barking” oratory (Eupolis fr. 220) and for legislating against comic poets (Phrynichus fr. 27).

ARISTOPHANES

- Ὀρτυξ ἔκαλεῖτο· καὶ γὰρ ἦκειν ὄρτυγι  
 ὑπὸ στυφοκόπου τὴν κεφαλὴν πεπληγμένῳ.  
 1300 ἦδον δ' ὑπὸ φιλορνηθίας πάντες μέλη,  
 ὅπου χελιδῶν ἦν τις ἐμπεποιημένη  
 ἢ πηνέλοψ ἢ χήν τις ἢ περιστερὰ  
 ἢ πτέρυγες, ἢ πτεροῦ τι καὶ σμικρὸν προσῆν.  
 τοιαῦτα μὲν τὰ κεῖθεν. ἐν δέ σοι λέγω·  
 1305 ἦξουσ' ἐκεῖθεν δεῦρο πλείν ἢ μυριοί  
 πτερῶν δεόμενοι καὶ τρόπων γαμψωνύχων,  
 ὥστε πτερῶν σοι τοῖς ἐποίκοις δεῖ ποθέν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

- οὐκ ἄρα μὰ Δί' ἡμῖν ἔτ' ἔργον ἐστάναι.  
 ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα σὺ μὲν ἰὼν τὰς ἀρρίχους  
 1310 καὶ τοὺς κοφίνους ἅπαντας ἐμπύμπλη πτερῶν·  
 Μανῆς δὲ φερέτω μοι θύραζε τὰ περὰ·  
 ἐγὼ δ' ἐκείνων τοὺς προσιόντας δέξομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) ταχὺ δὴ πολυάνορα τάνδε πόλιν  
 καλεῖ τις ἀνθρώπων·

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

- 1315 τύχη μόνον προσείη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

κατέχουσι δ' ἔρωτες ἐμᾶς πόλεως.

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<sup>123</sup> A public official (Metagenes fr. 12) and avid bird fighter (Phrynichus fr. 43, Plato com. fr. 116); in the game of quail-

## BIRDS

know he did look like a quail who'd been knocked on the head by a hard tapper.<sup>123</sup> And from sheer ornithophilia they're all singing songs with a swallow in the lyrics, or a duck, or a goose, or a pigeon, or wings, or just a bit of feather attached. So that's the situation down below. But I'll tell you one thing: more than ten thousand of them will be making the trip up here, wanting wings and a raptor's way of life. So somewhere you'll have to find wings for the new arrivals.

*Exit FIRST HERALD.*

### PEISETAERUS

Then we certainly have no time to stand around. (*to Xanthias*) You go as quick as you can and fill all the hampers and baskets with wings, and have Manes bring the wings out here to me; I'll greet the visitors as they arrive.

*Xanthias and Manes go inside; during the following duet Manes brings out basketsfull of wings.*

### CHORUS

Soon some human will be calling  
this city very well-manned.

### PEISETAERUS

Just so our luck holds.

### CHORUS

Passion for my city grips the world.

tapping the bird's handler bet the tapper that his bird would stay in the ring, cf. Pollux 9.102, 109.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

θάπτον φέρειν κελεύω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί γὰρ οὐκ ἔνι ταύτῃ  
καλὸν ἀνδρὶ μετοικεῖν;

1320 Σοφία, Πόθος, ἀμβρόσιαι Χάριτες  
τό τε τῆς ἀγανόφρονος Ἑσυχίας  
εὐήμερον πρόσωπον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὡς βλακικῶς διακονεῖς.  
οὐ θάπτου ἐγκονήσεις;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ) φερέτω κάλαθον ταχύ τις περὺγων.  
1326 σὺ δ' αὖθις ἐξόρμα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τύπτων γε τοῦτον ὦδί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πάνυ γὰρ βραδύς ἐστί τις ὥσπερ ὄνος.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

Μανῆς γάρ ἐστι δειλός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1330 σὺ δὲ τὰ πτερὰ πρῶτον  
διάθες τάδε κόσμῳ·  
τά τε μουσίχ' ὁμοῦ τά τε μαντικὰ καὶ  
τὰ θαλάττι'. ἔπειτα δ' ὅπως φρονίμως  
πρὸς ἀνδρ' ὀρῶν περῶσεις.



BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

(to *Manes*)

Faster with those wings, I say!

CHORUS

For is anything missing here  
that's good for a settler to have?  
We've Wisdom, Desire, immortal Graces,  
and the happy countenance  
of kindhearted Tranquillity.

PEISETAERUS

(to *Manes*)

That's pretty lazy service!  
Speed it up there!

CHORUS

Quickly, a basket of wings over here;  
tell him again to hurry.

PEISETAERUS

I will, by hitting him like this!

CHORUS

Yes, he's a slowpoke, slow as an ass.

PEISETAERUS

A good-for-nothing *Manes*!

CHORUS

But first you must arrange  
these wings in proper order:  
musical wings here, prophetic there,  
and maritime, and then be sure you shrewdly  
size up the man when you wing him.



ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1335 οὐ τοι μὰ τὰς κερχνηῆδας ἔτι σου σχήσομαι,  
οὕτως ὀρώων σε δειλὸν ὄντα καὶ βραδύν.

ΠΑΤΡΑΛΟΙΑΣ

<εἰ γὰρ> γενοίμαν αἰετὸς ὑψιπέτας,  
ὡς ἀμποταθείην ὑπὲρ ἀτρυγέτου  
γλαυκᾶς ἐπ' οἶδμα λίμνας.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1340 ἔοικεν οὐ ψευδαγγελήσειν ἄγγελος·  
ἄδων γὰρ ὅδε τις αἰετοὺς προσέρχεται.

ΠΑΤΡΑΛΟΙΑΣ

αἰβοῖ.  
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν τοῦ πέτεσθαι γλυκύτερον.  
1343 [ἐρῶ δ' ἔγώ τι τῶν ἐν ὄρνεσιν νόμων.]  
ὄρنيθομανῶ γὰρ καὶ πέτομαι καὶ βούλομαι  
1345 οἰκεῖν μεθ' ὑμῶν κάπιθυμῶ τῶν νόμων.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ποίων νόμων; πολλοὶ γὰρ ὄρνεθων νόμοι.

ΠΑΤΡΑΛΟΙΑΣ

πάντων· μάλιστα δ' ὅτι καλὸν νομίζεται  
τὸν πατέρα τοῖς ὄρνεσιν ἄγχειν καὶ δάκνειν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

καὶ νῆ Δί' ἀνδρεῖόν γε πάννυ νομίζομεν,  
1350 ὃς ἂν πεπλήγη τὸν πατέρα νεοττὸς ὢν.

1337 <εἰ γὰρ> White

1338 ὑπὲρ] ὕπαρ Bergk

1343 del. Dobree, ab Ar. Byz. ad lacunam explendam

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

(to Manes) By the kestrels I swear you're in for it now; look how uselessly slow you are!

*Manes runs into the house.*

*Enter FATHER BEATER.*

### FATHER BEATER

O to become a high-flying eagle  
and soar beyond the barren pale  
over the waves of the gray sea!<sup>124</sup>

### PEISETAERUS

That messenger's message looks to be accurate: here comes someone singing about eagles.

### FATHER BEATER

Hi ho! Nothing's as much fun as flying! Yes, I'm bird-crazy, I'm on the wing, I want to live with you, I yearn for your laws.

### PEISETAERUS

What laws do you mean? Birds have many laws.

### FATHER BEATER

All of them! Especially the one where the birds think it's fine to peck and throttle your father.

### PEISETAERUS

We do in fact consider a bird very manly who's beaten up his father while still a chick.

<sup>124</sup> From Sophocles' *Oenomaus* (fr. 476).

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compositum indicare videtur ΣΥΕΓ: versum Pisitaeri excidisse putat Kakridis, e.g. πτερῶν ἄρ' ἦκεις δεόμενος; φέρε νυν φράσον  
Dunbar

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΑΤΡΑΛΟΙΑΣ

διὰ ταῦτα μέντοι δεῦρ' ἀνοικισθεῖς ἐγὼ  
ἄγχειν ἐπιθυμῶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ πάντ' ἔχειν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἡμῖν τοῖσιν ὄρνισιν νόμος  
παλαιὸς ἐν ταῖς τῶν πελαργῶν κύρβεσιν.  
1355 “ἐπὴν ὁ πατήρ ὁ πελαργὸς ἐκπετησίμους  
πάντας ποιήσῃ τοὺς πελαργιδέας τρέφων,  
δεῖ τοὺς νεοττοὺς τὸν πατέρα πάλιν τρέφειν.”

ΠΑΤΡΑΛΟΙΑΣ

ἀπέλαυσά γ' ἄρα νῆ Δί' ἐλθὼν ἐνθαδί,  
εἴπερ γέ μοι καὶ τὸν πατέρα βοσκητέον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1360 οὐδέν γ' ἐπειδήπερ γὰρ ἦλθες, ᾧ μέλε,  
εὔνους, πτερώσω σ' ὥσπερ ὄρνιν ὀρφανόν.  
σοὶ δ', ᾧ νεανίσκ', οὐ κακῶς ὑποθήσομαι,  
ἀλλ' οἶάπερ αὐτὸς ἔμαθον ὅτε παῖς ἦ. σὺ γὰρ  
τὸν μὲν πατέρα μὴ τύπτε, ταυτηνδὶ λαβὼν  
1365 τὴν πτέρυγα καὶ τουτὶ τὸ πλήκτρον θάτερα,  
νομίσας ἀλεκτρύονος ἔχειν τουδὶ λόφον,  
φρούρει, στρατεύου, μισθοφορῶν σαντὸν τρέφε.  
τὸν πατέρ' ἔα ζῆν. ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ μάχιμος εἶ,  
εἰς τὰπὶ Θράκης ἀποπέτου κάκεῖ μάχου.

ΠΑΤΡΑΛΟΙΑΣ

1370 νῆ τὸν Διόνυσον εὖ γέ μοι δοκεῖς λέγειν,  
καὶ πείσομαί σοι.

## BIRDS

### FATHER BEATER

That's exactly why I yearn to immigrate here, to throttle my father and take all he has.

### PEISETAERUS

But we birds have a law, an ancient one on the Storks' Tablets:<sup>125</sup> "When the father stork has provided for all his storklings and got them fully fledged, then the chicks must in their turn provide for their father."

### FATHER BEATER

A fat lot of good it's done me coming here, if I'll even have to feed my father now!

### PEISETAERUS

No, you won't. Seeing that you came here well disposed, my lad, I'm going to fit you with wings like an orphan bird. And young man, let me give you some pretty good advice, the sort of thing I myself was taught as a boy: don't beat your father. Instead, take this wing, and this spur in your other hand, and consider this crest your cockscomb. Now stand guard! Go on campaign! Work for a living! Let your father live his life! Since you want to fight, fly off to the Thracian front and fight there!<sup>126</sup>

### FATHER BEATER

By Dionysus, that does sound like good advice, and I'll follow it.

<sup>125</sup> Recalling the tablets in the Athenian agora on which were inscribed the laws of Draco and Solon; one of these concerned mistreatment of parents, cf. [Aristotle] *Constitution of the Athenians* 56.6.

<sup>126</sup> See Thucydides 7.9.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

νοῦν ἄρ' ἔξεις νῆ Δία.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἀναπέτομαι δὴ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον πετερυγέσσι κούφαις·  
πέτομαι δ' ὁδὸν ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἄλλαν μελέων—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1375 τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα φορτίου δεῖται πετρῶν.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἀφόβῳ φρενὶ σώματί τε νέαν ἐφέπων.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀσπαζόμεσθα φιλύρινον Κινησίαν.  
τί δεῦρο πόδα σὺ κυλλὸν ἀνὰ κύκλον κυκλείς;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

1380 ὄρνις γενέσθαι βούλομαι  
λιγύφθογγος ἀηδῶν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

παῦσαι μελωδῶν, ἀλλ' ὅ τι λέγεις εἶπέ μοι.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ὑπὸ σοῦ πετρωθεὶς βούλομαι μετάρσιος  
ἀναπτόμενος ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν καινὰς λαβεῖν  
1385 ἀεροδονήτους καὶ νιφοβόλους ἀναβολάς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν γὰρ ἄν τις ἀναβολὰς λάβοι;

BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

That's certainly the smart thing to do.

*Exit FATHER BEATER.*

*Enter CINESIAS.*

CINESIAS<sup>127</sup>

See, I soar up to Olympus on weightless wings,<sup>128</sup>  
I soar now on this path of song, and now on that—

PEISETAERUS

This here's going to take a whole load of wings!

CINESIAS

with fearless mind and body in quest of a new path.

PEISETAERUS

Our greetings to twiggy Cinesias! Why do you whirl your  
bandy foot hither in a pirouette?

CINESIAS

I wish to become a bird,  
a clear-voiced nightingale.

PEISETAERUS

Stop that vocalizing, and tell me what you're saying.

CINESIAS

I want wings from you, to fly on high and snatch from the  
clouds fresh preludes air-propelled and snowswept.

PEISETAERUS

You're saying you can snatch preludes from the clouds?

<sup>127</sup> A tall, thin composer of dithyrambs in the avant-garde style noted for astrophic "preludes," musical complexity, elaborate language, and high emotionalism. <sup>128</sup> From Anacreon fr. 378.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

κρέματα μὲν οὖν ἐντεῦθεν ἡμῶν ἢ τέχνη.  
τῶν διθυράμβων γὰρ τὰ λαμπρὰ γίγνεται  
ἀέρια καὶ σκοτεινὰ καὶ κβαναυγέα  
1390 καὶ πτεροδόνητα· σὺ δὲ κλύων εἴσει τάχα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγε.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

νῆ τὸν Ἡρακλέα σύ γε.  
ἅπαντα γὰρ δίδιμί σοι τὸν ἀέρα.  
εἶδωλα πετηνῶν  
αἰθεροδρόμων  
οἰωνῶν ταναοδείρων—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦόπ.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

1395 ἀνάδρομος ἀλάμενος  
ἄμ' ἀνέμων πνοαῖσι βαίην—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Δί' ἢ ἴγώ σου καταπαύσω τὰς πνοὰς.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

1400 τοτὲ μὲν νοτίαν στείχων πρὸς ὁδόν,  
τοτὲ δ' αὖ βορέα σῶμα πελάζων  
ἀλίμενον αἰθέρος αὐλακα τέμνων—  
χαρίεντά γ', ὦ πρεσβῦτ', ἐσοφίσω καὶ σοφά.



BIRDS

CINESIAS

Why, our whole art depends on them! In dithyrambs the dazzling bits are airy, dusky, darkly flashing, wing-propelled. Just listen, and you'll soon understand.

PEISETAERUS

I'd just as soon not.

CINESIAS

You absolutely must! Here, I'll run through the whole air for you:

Ah visions of wingéd  
sky-coursing  
long-necked birds—

PEISETAERUS

Whoa!

CINESIAS

oh to shoot up with a leap  
and run with the breaths of the winds—

PEISETAERUS

So help me god, I'll put a stop to *your* breaths! (*chases Cinesias with a pair of wings*)

CINESIAS

(*dodging*)

first travelling a southerly course,  
then swinging my body northwards,  
cleaving a harborless furrow of sky—  
(*stops, struck*) That's a very witty trick, old man, and tricky!

---

1395 ἀνάδρομος Henderson: τὸν ἀλάδρομον *vel sim.* a



ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐ γὰρ σὺ χαίρεις πτεροδόνητος γενόμενος;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ταυτὶ πεποίηκας τὸν κυκλιοδιδάσκαλον,  
ὃς ταῖσι φυλαῖς περιμάχητός εἰμ' αἰεῖ;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1405 βούλει διδάσκειν καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν οὖν μένων  
Λεωτροφίδη χορὸν πετομένων ὀρνέων  
Κρεκοπίδα φυλήν;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

καταγελάς μου, δῆλος εἶ.  
ἀλλ' οὖν ἔγωγ' οὐ παύσομαι, τοῦτ' ἴσθ' ὅτι,  
πρὶν ἂν πτερωθεῖς διαδράμω τὸν ἀέρα.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

1410/11 ὄρνιθες τίνες οἶδ' οὐδὲν ἔχοντες πτεροπόικιλοι,  
τανυσίπτερε ποικίλα χελιδοῖ;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν οὐ φαῦλον ἐξεγρήγορεν.  
ὄδ' αὖ μινυρίζων δευρό τις προσέρχεται.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

1415 τανυσίπτερε ποικίλα μάλ' αὐθις.

1407 Κρεκ- Kock: Κερκ- a

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129 For dithyrambic contests each of the ten Athenian tribes produced its own choruses.

BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

I thought you enjoy being wing-propelled!

CINESIAS

Is this how you treat me, the director of cyclic choruses whose services the tribes always fight for?<sup>129</sup>

PEISETAERUS

Then would you like to stay here with us and serve as director for Leotrophides,<sup>130</sup> with a chorus of flying birds, of the Corncrake Tribe?<sup>131</sup>

CINESIAS

Obviously you're making fun of me. But I'll have you know I don't intend to stop, not until I get my wings and scamper through the air!

*Exit CINESIAS.*

*Enter INFORMER, wearing a threadbare cloak.*

INFORMER

Who are these birds, these have-nots with dappled wings?  
O long-winged iridescent swallow!<sup>132</sup>

PEISETAERUS

This is no small nuisance that's reared its head. Here comes another one warbling away.

INFORMER

I repeat, O long-winged iridescent!

<sup>130</sup> Ridiculed elsewhere as being very thin, like Cinesias.

<sup>131</sup> Punning on the Athenian tribe name Cecropis.

<sup>132</sup> Adapted from Alcaeus fr. 345.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

εἰς θοϊμάτιον τὸ σκόλιον ἄδειν μοι δοκεῖ,  
δείσθαι δ' ἔοικεν οὐκ ὀλίγων χελιδόνων.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

τίς ὁ πτερῶν δεῦρ' ἐστὶ τοὺς ἀφικνουμένους;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὁδὶ πάρεστιν· ἀλλ' ὅτου δεῖ χρῆ λέγειν.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

1420 πτερῶν, πτερῶν δεῖ· μὴ πύθῃ τὸ δεύτερον.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

μῶν εὐθὺ Πελλήνης πέτεσθαι διανοεῖ;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

μὰ Δί', ἀλλὰ κλητήρ εἰμι νησιωτικὸς  
καὶ συκοφάντης—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦ μακάριε τῆς τέχνης.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

1425 καὶ πραγματοδίφης. εἶτα δέομαι πτερὰ λαβῶν  
κύκλω περισοβεῖν τὰς πόλεις καλούμενος.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὕπαι πτερύγων τι προσκαλεῖ σοφώτερον;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἴν' οἱ λησταί τε μὴ λυπῶσί με,

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<sup>133</sup> Alluding to the proverb "one swallow does not a summer make."

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

I think he's singing that song about his cloak; he's likely to need more than a few swallows!<sup>133</sup>

INFORMER

Who is it that gives wings to newcomers?

PEISETAERUS

That's me. But you must tell me what you need.

INFORMER

Its wings I want, wings! Do not ask me twice.<sup>134</sup>

PEISETAERUS

You don't intend to fly straight to Pellene, do you?<sup>135</sup>

INFORMER

God no; I'm a subpoena server working the islands, and an informer—

PEISETAERUS

What a glorious profession!

INFORMER

—and a lawsuit snoop. So I want to get wings and buzz around the islands serving subpoenas.

PEISETAERUS

Will you subpoena them any more efficiently with wingpower?

INFORMER

God no, it's so the bandits don't jump me, and so I can

<sup>134</sup> From Aeschylus' *Myrmidons* (fr. 140), substituting "wings" for "weapons."

<sup>135</sup> A Peloponnesian city where warm cloaks were awarded as prizes in chariot races; currently on hostile terms with Athens.

ARISTOPHANES

μετὰ τῶν γεράνων τ' ἐκείθεν ἀναχωρῶ πάλιν,  
ἀνθ' ἔρματος πολλὰς καταπεπωκῶς δίκας.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1430 τουτὶ γὰρ ἐργάζει σὺ τούργον; εἶπέ μοι,  
νεανίας ὦν συκοφαντεῖς τοὺς ξένους;

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

τί γὰρ πάθω; σκάπτειν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἕτερα νῆ Δί' ἔργα σώφρονα,  
ἀφ' ὧν διαζῆν ἄνδρα χρῆν τοσουτονὶ  
1435 ἐκ τοῦ δικαίου μᾶλλον ἢ δικορραφεῖν.

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ὦ δαιμόνιε, μὴ νουθέτει μ', ἀλλὰ πτέρου.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

νῦν τοι λέγων πτερῶ σε.

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

καὶ πῶς ἂν λόγοις  
ἄνδρα πτερώσειας σύ;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

πάντες τοι λόγοις  
ἀναπτεροῦνται.

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

πάντες;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἀκήκοας,

## BIRDS

make the return trip with the cranes, once I've filled up on lots of lawsuits for ballast.

PEISETAERUS

So that's your line of work, is it? An able-bodied young man like yourself informing on foreigners for a living?

INFORMER

But what am I supposed to do? I don't know how to use a shovel.

PEISETAERUS

But surely there are other respectable occupations, where a man your size should be making an honest living instead of cobbling up lawsuits.

INFORMER

Listen, mister, don't lecture me, just wing me.

PEISETAERUS

Know what? I'm winging you now, just by talking.

INFORMER

And just how can you wing a man with mere words?

PEISETAERUS

Words, you see, set everyone aflutter.

INFORMER

Everyone?

PEISETAERUS

Haven't you been in the barber shops and heard boys'

ARISTOPHANES

- 1440 ὅταν λέγωσιν οἱ πατέρες ἐκάστοτε  
τῶν μειρακίων ἐν τοῖσι κουρείοις ταδί·  
“δεινῶς γέ μου τὸ μειράκιον Διειτρέφης  
λέγων ἀνεπτέρωκεν ὥσθ' ἱππηλατεῖν”;  
ὁ δέ τις τὸν αὐτοῦ φησιν ἐπὶ τραγωδία  
1445 ἀνεπτερώσθαι καὶ πεποτηῆσθαι τὰς φρένας.

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

λόγοισί γ' ἄρα καὶ περοῦνται;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

φήμ' ἐγώ.

ὑπὸ γὰρ λόγων ὁ νοῦς τε μετεωρίζεται  
ἐπαίρεταί τ' ἄνθρωπος. οὕτω καὶ σ' ἐγὼ  
ἀναπτερώσας βούλομαι χρηστοῖς λόγοις  
τρέψαι πρὸς ἔργον νόμιμον.

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

- 1450 ἄλλ' οὐ βούλομαι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί δαὶ ποιήσεις;

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

- τὸ γένος οὐ καταισχνῶ·  
παππῶος ὁ βίος συκοφαντεῖν ἐστί μοι.  
ἀλλὰ πτέρου με ταχέσι καὶ κούφοις πτεροῖς  
ἰέρακος ἢ κερχνηῆδος, ὡς ἂν τοὺς ξένους  
1455 καλεσάμενος κᾶτ' ἐγκεκληκῶς ἐνθαδὶ  
κατ' αὐὶ πέτωμαι πάλιν ἐκεῖσε.

## BIRDS

fathers say, "It's terrible how Dietrephes has been talking to my boy and setting him all aflutter for horse racing!" And someone else says that his boy's mind has gone all aflutter for tragedy and flown the coop.

### INFORMER

So they actually get wings from words?

### PEISETAERUS

That's right: by words is the mind uplifted and a person transported. That's just how I want to set you aflutter too: with worthwhile words to convert you to legitimate work.

### INFORMER

But that's not what I want.

### PEISETAERUS

Then what do you intend to do?

### INFORMER

I'll not disgrace my family: informing has been our livelihood since my grandfather's day. Just rig me with the light, fast wings of a hawk or a kestrel, so I can subpoena the foreigners, get a judgment here, then fly back there again.



ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

*μανθάνω.*

ὠδὶ λέγεις· ὅπως ἂν ὠφλήκη δίκην  
ἐνθάδε πρὶν ἤκειν ὁ ξένος.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

*πάνυ μανθάνεις.*

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

κᾶπειθ' ὁ μὲν πλεῖ δεῦρο, σὺ δ' ἐκείσ' αὖ πέτει  
ἀρπασόμενος τὰ χρήματ' αὐτοῦ.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

1460

*πάντ' ἔχεις.*

*βέμβικος οὐδὲν διαφέρειν δεῖ.*

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

*μανθάνω*

*βέμβικα. καὶ μὴν ἔστι μοι, νῆ τὸν Δία,  
κάλλιστα Κορκυραῖα τοιαντὶ πτερὰ.*

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

*οἴμοι τάλας, μάστιγ' ἔχεις.*

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

*πτερὸ μὲν οὖν,*

1465

*οἴσί σε ποιήσω τήμερον βεμβικιᾶν.*

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

*οἴμοι τάλας.*

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

*οὐ πτερυγιεῖς ἐντευθενί;  
οὐκ ἀπολιβάξεις, ὦ κάκιστ' ἀπολούμενος;*

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

I get it: you mean the foreigner's case will be lost by default before he gets here.

INFORMER

Quite right.

PEISETAERUS

And then while he's sailing here, you're flying back there to snatch his property.

INFORMER

That's the whole story. It means whizzing around just like a top.

PEISETAERUS

A top—I know what you mean. (*rummaging*) And by god I've actually got some wings here that'll do just perfectly; they're from Corcyra.<sup>136</sup>

INFORMER

Good grief, that's a whip!

PEISETAERUS

No, a pair of wings; I'll use them this very day to make you whizz around like a top!

INFORMER

Good grief!

*Exit INFORMER on the run.*

PEISETAERUS

Now flutter away from here! Clear off! Goddamned pest!

<sup>136</sup> Well known for the manufacture of double-thonged whips.

## ARISTOPHANES

πικρὰν τάχ' ὄψει στρεψοδικοπανουργίαν.  
ἀπίωμεν ἡμεῖς ξυλλαβόντες τὰ πτερά.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) πολλὰ δὴ καὶ καινὰ καὶ θαν-  
1471 μάστ' ἐπεπτόμεσθα καὶ  
δεινὰ πράγματ' εἶδομεν.  
ἔστι γὰρ δένδρον πεφυκὸς  
ἔκτοπόν τι Καρδίας ἀ-  
1475 πωτέρω Κλεώνυμος,  
χρήσιμον μὲν οὐδέν, ἄλ-  
λως δὲ δειλὸν καὶ μέγα.  
τοῦτο τοῦ μὲν ἦρος ἀεὶ  
βλαστάνει καὶ συκοφαντεῖ,  
1480 τοῦ δὲ χειμῶνος πάλιν τὰς  
ἀσπίδας φυλλορροεῖ.
- (ἀντ) ἔστι δ' αὖ χώρα πρὸς αὐτῷ  
τῷ σκότῳ πόρρω τις ἐν  
τῇ λύχνων ἐρημία,  
1485 ἔνθα τοῖς ἦρωσιν ἄνθρω-  
ποι ξυναριστῶσι καὶ ξύν-  
εισι πλὴν τῆς ἐσπέρας.  
τηνικαῦτα δ' οὐκέτ' ἦν  
ἀσφαλὲς ξυντυγχάνειν.  
1490 εἰ γὰρ ἐντύχοι τις ἦρω  
τῶν βροτῶν νύκτωρ Ὀρέστη,  
γυμνὸς ἦν πληγεὶς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ  
πάντα τὰπιδέξια.

## BIRDS

You'll soon get a bitter dose of sleazy shysterism! (*to Slaves*) Come on, let's gather up these wings and go.

*PEISETAERUS and Slaves go inside.*

## CHORUS

Many wondrous novelties  
have we overflown, and  
many amazements have we seen.  
There's a tree, quite exotic,  
that grows beyond Wimpdom,  
and it's called Cleonymus,  
good for nothing, but otherwise  
voluminous and yellow.  
Each and every springtime  
it sprouts denunciations,  
while in wintertime, by contrast,  
its shields drop off like leaves.

Then there's a far-off country,  
at the very edge of darkness  
in the lampless steppes,  
where people meet the heroes  
for lunch and conversation,  
except in the evening:  
that's when it's no longer  
safe to meet them.

For if any mortal happened  
to run into the hero Orestes,  
he'd get stripped and paralyzed  
all down his right-hand side.

*Enter PROMETHEUS, muffled and carrying a parasol.*

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

οἴμοι τάλας, ὁ Ζεὺς ὅπως μή μ' ὄψεται.  
ποῦ Πεισέταιρος ἔστ';

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1495

ἔα, τουτὶ τί ἦν;  
τίς ὁ συγκαλυμμός;

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

τῶν θεῶν ὁράς τινα  
ἐμοῦ κατόπιν ἐνταῦθα;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ.  
τίς δ' εἶ σύ;

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

πηνίκ' ἐστὶν ἄρα τῆς ἡμέρας;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὀπηνίκα; σμικρόν τι μετὰ μεσημβρίας.  
ἀλλὰ σὺ τίς εἶ;

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

1500

βουλυτός, ἢ περαιτέρω;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οἴμ', ὡς βδελύττομαί σε.

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

τί γὰρ ὁ Ζεὺς ποιεῖ;  
ἀπαιθριάζει τὰς νεφέλας ἢ ξυννέφει;

BIRDS

PROMETHEUS

Oh what a fix! Zeus mustn't see me! Where's Peisetaerus?

*PEISETAERUS emerges, carrying a potty.*

PEISETAERUS

Yipes, what is this? What's this mufflement?

PROMETHEUS

Do you see any of the gods back there behind me?

PEISETAERUS

I certainly can't see any. But who are you?

PROMETHEUS

Then what's the time of day?

PEISETAERUS

The time? A little after midday. But who are you?

PROMETHEUS

Quitting time, or later?

PEISETAERUS

Damn it, I'm getting sick of this!

PROMETHEUS

And what's Zeus doing? Is he clearing the clouds away, or gathering them?

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οἴμωζε μεγάλ'.

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

οὔτω μὲν ἐκκεκαλύψομαι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦ φίλε Προμηθεῦ.

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

παῦε παῦε, μὴ βόα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί γάρ ἐστι;

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

1505

σίγα, μὴ κάλει μου τοῦνομα·  
ἀπὸ γάρ μ' ὀλεῖς, εἴ μ' ἐνθάδ' ὁ Ζεὺς ὄψεται.  
ἀλλ' ἵνα φράσω σοι πάντα τᾶνω πράγματα,  
τουτὶ λαβὼν μου τὸ σκιάδειον ὑπέρεχε,  
ἄνωθεν ὡς ἂν μὴ μ' ὀρώσιν οἱ θεοί.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1510

ιοὺν ἰού·

εἶ γ' ἐπενόησας αὐτὸ καὶ προμηθικῶς.  
ὑπόδυθι ταχὺ δὴ κᾶτα θαρρήσας λέγε.

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

ἄκουε δὴ νυν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὡς ἀκούοντος λέγε.

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

ἀπόλωλεν ὁ Ζεὺς.

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Go straight to hell!

PROMETHEUS

In that case, I'll get unmuffled.

PEISETAERUS

Prometheus, old friend!<sup>137</sup>

PROMETHEUS

Shh, shh! Don't shout!

PEISETAERUS

Why, what's up?

PROMETHEUS

Be quiet, don't mention my name. You'll be the death of me, if Zeus sees me here. Look, I'm going to tell you everything that's going on up there, so take this parasol and hold it over me, so the gods above won't see me.

PEISETAERUS

Aha! That was good thinking, positively Promethean. Quick, get under here, and speak freely.

PROMETHEUS

Then listen to this.

PEISETAERUS

Go on, I'm listening.

PROMETHEUS

Zeus is finished!

<sup>137</sup> Prometheus was worshipped at Athens as a fire god and patron of craftsmen.



ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

πηνίκ' ἄττ' ἀπώλετο;

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

- 1515 ἐξ οὔπερ ὑμεῖς ᾤκίσατε τὸν ἀέρα.  
θύει γὰρ οὐδεὶς οὐδὲν ἀνθρώπων ἔτι  
θεοῖσιν, οὐδὲ κνῖσα μηρίων ἀπο  
ἀνήλθεν ὡς ἡμᾶς ἀπ' ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου,  
ἀλλ' ὡσπερὶ Θεσμοφορίοις νηστεύομεν  
1520 ἄνευ θυηλῶν· οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι θεοὶ  
πεινῶντες ὥσπερ Ἴλλυριοὶ κεκριγότες  
ἐπιστρατεύσειν φάσ' ἀνωθεν τῷ Δί,  
εἰ μὴ παρέξει τὰμπόρι' ἀνεωγμένα,  
ἵν' εἰσάγοιτο σπλάγχνα κατατετμημένα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

- 1525 εἰσὶν γὰρ ἕτεροι βάρβαροι θεοὶ τινες  
ἀνωθεν ὑμῶν;

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

οὐ γάρ εἰσι βάρβαροι,  
ὅθεν ὁ πατρῶός ἐστιν Ἐξηκεστίδης;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὄνομα δὲ τούτοις τοῖς θεοῖς τοῖς βαρβάροις  
τί ἐστιν;

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

ὅ τι ἐστίν; Τριβαλλοί.

1527 -ίδη Brunck: -ίδης a

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

And approximately when was he finished?

PROMETHEUS

From the very moment you colonized the air. Now not a single human sacrifice to the gods any more, and since then not a whiff of thigh bones has wafted up to us; no, without burnt offerings we're as good as fasting at the Thesmophoria.<sup>138</sup> And the barbarian gods are so hungry they're shrieking like Illyrians and threatening to march down against Zeus<sup>139</sup> unless he gets the trading posts reopened so they can import their ration of innards.

PEISETAERUS

So there are some other gods, barbarians, up-country from you?

PROMETHEUS

How could we have no barbarians? That's where Execestides gets his ancestral god.

PEISETAERUS

And what's the name of these barbarian gods?

PROMETHEUS

Their name? Triballians.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>138</sup> For this festival see *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Introductory Note.

<sup>139</sup> Like an indigenous populace against colonists on the coast.

<sup>140</sup> A Thracian tribe allied with Athens and noted for their savagery.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

μανθάνω.

1530 ἐντεῦθεν ἄρα τοῦπιτριβείης ἐγένετο.

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

μάλιστα πάντων. ἐν δέ σοι λέγω σαφές·  
ἤξουσι πρέσβεις δεῦρο περὶ διαλλαγῶν  
παρὰ τοῦ Διὸς καὶ τῶν Τριβαλλῶν τῶν ἄνω·  
ὕμεις δὲ μὴ σπένδεσθ', ἐὰν μὴ παραδιδῶ  
1535 τὸ σκῆπτρον ὃ Ζεὺς τοῖσιν ὄρνισιν πάλιν,  
καὶ τὴν Βασίλειαν σοὶ γυναικ' ἔχειν διδῶ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τίς ἐστὶν ἡ Βασίλεια;

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

καλλίστη κόρη,

ἥπερ ταμιεύει τὸν κεραυνὸν τοῦ Διὸς  
καὶ τ'ἄλλ' ἀπαξάπαντα, τὴν εὐβουλίαν,  
1540 τὴν εὐνομίαν, τὴν σωφροσύνην, τὰ νεώρια,  
τὴν λοιδορίαν, τὸν κωλακρέτην, τὰ τριώβολα.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἅπαντά γ' ἄρ' αὐτῷ ταμιεύει;

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

φήμ' ἐγώ.

ἢ γ' ἦν σὺ παρ' ἐκείνου παραλάβης, πάντ' ἔχεις.  
τούτων ἔνεκα δεῦρ' ἦλθον, ἵνα φράσαιμί σοι  
1545 αἰεί ποτ' ἀνθρώποις γὰρ εὐνοὺς εἶμ' ἐγώ.

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

I get it; that must be where “balls to you” comes from.

PROMETHEUS

Altogether likely. But I’ll tell you one thing for sure: ambassadors will be coming here about a settlement, from Zeus and the Triballians up-country. But don’t you ratify a treaty unless Zeus returns his scepter to the birds and gives you Princess for your bride.

PEISETAERUS

Who’s this Princess?

PROMETHEUS

A most beautiful maiden, who looks after Zeus’ thunderbolt and everything else too: good counsel, law and order, decency, shipyards, mudslinging, paymasters, three-obol fees.

PEISETAERUS

You mean she looks after everything for him?

PROMETHEUS

That’s right: win her from him and you’ll have it all. That’s why I came here, to let you in on this. I’ve always been a friend to humanity.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

μόνον θεῶν γὰρ διὰ σ' ἀπανθρακίζομεν.

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

μισῶ δ' ἅπαντας τοὺς θεούς, ὡς οἶσθα σύ—

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Δί' αἰεὶ δῆτα θεομισῆς ἔφυς,  
Τίμων καθαρός.

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

ἀλλ' ὡς ἂν ἀποτρέχω πάλιν

1550 φέρε τὸ σκιάδειον, ἵνα με κἂν ὁ Ζεὺς ἴδῃ  
ἄνωθεν, ἀκολουθεῖν δοκῶ κανηφόρῳ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

καὶ τὸν δίφρον γε διφροφόρει τονδὶ λαβών.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) πρὸς δὲ τοῖς Σκιάποσιν λί-  
μνη τις ἔστ', ἄλουτος οὖ  
1555 ψυχαγωγεῖ Σωκράτης.  
ἔνθα καὶ Πείσανδρος ἦλθε  
δεόμενος ψυχὴν ἰδεῖν ἢ  
ζῶντ' ἐκείνον προὔλιπε,  
σφάγι' ἔχων κάμηλον ἀ-

---

141 The proverbial Athenian misanthrope.

142 A maiden chosen for this honor in a religious procession might be accompanied by assistants bearing a parasol and a stool.

143 Recalling Odysseus' visit to the underworld as described

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

Yes, if it weren't for you we wouldn't have barbecues.

PROMETHEUS

And I hate all the gods, as you know.

PEISETAERUS

Yes, you've always been on hateful terms with the gods, an absolute Timon.<sup>141</sup>

PROMETHEUS

But now I've got to run back again, so give me my parasol; this way, even if Zeus does see me from up there, he'll think I'm attending a basket bearer.<sup>142</sup>

PEISETAERUS

(*handing him the potty*) You may as well carry her stool too; here it is.

*Exit PROMETHEUS; PEISETAERUS goes inside.*

CHORUS<sup>143</sup>

Far away by the Shadefoots  
lies a swamp, where all unwashed  
Socrates conjures spirits.  
Pisander<sup>144</sup> paid a visit there,  
asking to see the spirit  
that deserted him in life.  
For sacrifice he brought a baby

in *Odyssey* 11 and dramatized in Aeschylus' *Spirit Conjurers* (*Psychagogoi*), cf. its fr. 273a.

<sup>144</sup> A general and democratic politician, later turned oligarch (see *Lysistrata*, Introductory Note); ridiculed elsewhere for cowardice (Eupolis fr. 35, Xenophon *Symposium* 2.14).

ARISTOPHANES

- 1560 μνόν τιν', ἧς λαιμοὺς τεμὼν  
 ὥσπερ οὐδυσσεὺς ἀπήλθε,  
 κᾶτ' ἀνήλθ' αὐτῷ κάτωθεν  
 πρὸς τὸ λαῖμα τῆς καμήλου  
 Χαιρεφῶν ἢ νυκτερίς.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

- 1565 τὸ μὲν πόλισμα τῆς Νεφελοκοκκυγίας  
 ὄραν τοδὶ πάρεστιν, οἱ πρεσβεύομεν.  
 οὔτος, τί δρᾶς; ἐπαρίστερ' οὕτως ἀμπέχει;  
 οὐ μεταβαλεῖς θοιμάτιον ᾧδ' ἐπιδέξια;  
 τί, ᾧ κακόδαιμον; Λαισποδίας εἶ τὴν φύσιν;  
 1570 ᾧ δημοκρατία, ποῖ προβιβᾶς ἡμᾶς ποτε,  
 εἰ τουτονγί γ' ἐχειροτόνησαν οἱ θεοί;  
 ἔξεις ἀτρέμας; οἴμωζε· πολὺ γὰρ δὴ σ' ἐγὼ  
 ἑώρακα πάντων βαρβαρώτατον θεῶν.  
 ἄγε δὴ, τί δρῶμεν, Ἡράκλεις;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀκήκοας

- 1575 ἐμοῦ γ', ὅτι τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἄγχειν βούλομαι,  
 ὅστις ποτ' ἔσθ' ὁ τοὺς θεοὺς ἀποτειχίσας.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

ἀλλ', ᾧγάθ', ἡρήμεσθα περὶ διαλλαγῶν  
 πρέσβεις.

1563 πρὸς τὸ λαῖμα cett. S<sup>rel</sup> Σ<sup>rel</sup>, cf. S λ 185 λαῖμα· τὸ αἶμα:  
 πρὸς τὸ λαῖτμα V SA λΣR; πρὸς τὸ δέρμα γρΣ<sup>REMΓ</sup>; πρὸς τε  
 θαῖμα Henderson



## BIRDS

camel and cut its throat,  
like Odysseus, then backed off;  
and up from below arose to him,  
drawn by the camel's gore,  
Chaerephon the bat.

*Enter POSEIDON, HERACLES, and TRIBALLIAN GOD.*

### POSEIDON

This municipality now present to our view is Cloud-cuckooland, the goal of our embassy. (*to Triballian*) Here, what do you think you're doing, draping your cloak like that, from right to left? Please reverse it, this way, from left to right. Oh, you sorry bungler! Are you built like Laespodias?<sup>145</sup> Ah democracy, what will you bring us to in the end, if the gods can elect this person ambassador? (*adjusting Triballian's cloak*) Please hold still! To hell with you! You're the most barbaric god I've ever laid eyes on. Well now, Heracles, what should we do?

### HERACLES

You've heard *my* opinion: I want to strangle the guy, whoever he is, that's blockaded the gods.

### POSEIDON

Listen, colleague, our charge is to discuss a settlement.

<sup>145</sup> A politician, probably elected general shortly before *Birds*, who presumably tried to hide misshapen calves by draping his cloak very low.



ARISTOPHANES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

διπλασίως μάλλον ἄγχειν μοι δοκεῖ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1580 τὴν τυρόκνηστίν τις δότω· φέρε σίλφιον·  
τυρὸν φερέτω τις· πυρπόλει τοὺς ἄνθρακας.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

τὸν ἄνδρα χαίρειν οἱ θεοὶ κελεύομεν  
τρέϊς ὄντες ἡμεῖς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἄλλ' ἐπικνῶ τὸ σίλφιον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τὰ δὲ κρέα τοῦ ταῦτ' ἐστίν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὄρνιθές τινες  
ἐπανιστάμενοι τοῖς δημοτικοῖσιν ὀρνέοις  
ἔδοξαν ἀδικεῖν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1585 εἶτα δῆτα σίλφιον  
ἐπικνῆς πρότερον αὐτοῖσιν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὦ χαῖρ', Ἡράκλεις.  
τί ἐστι;

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

πρεσβεύοντες ἡμεῖς ἤκομεν  
παρὰ τῶν θεῶν περὶ πολέμου καταλλαγῆς.

## BIRDS

HERACLES

All the more reason to strangle him, if you ask me.

*Enter PEISETAERUS and Slaves, with brazier, table, and cooking utensils.*

PEISETAERUS

Someone hand me the cheese grater. Pass the silphium. Someone get the cheese. Poke up these coals.

POSEIDON

We bid the gentleman greetings, a committee of three gods.

PEISETAERUS

Wait, I'm grating silphium on this.

HERACLES

And what sort of meat is that?<sup>146</sup>

PEISETAERUS

Some birds who've been convicted of attempted rebellion against the bird democracy.

HERACLES

So that's why you're grating silphium on them first?

PEISETAERUS

Oh, hello, Heracles. What's up?

POSEIDON

We have come as ambassadors from the gods to discuss an end to the war.

<sup>146</sup> Heracles traditionally had an insatiable appetite.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἔλαιον οὐκ ἔνεστιν ἐν τῇ ληκύθῳ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1590 καὶ μὴν τά γ' ὀρνίθεια λιπάρ' εἶναι πρέπει.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

ἡμεῖς τε γὰρ πολεμοῦντες οὐ κερδαίνομεν,  
 ὑμεῖς τ' ἂν ἡμῖν τοῖς θεοῖς ὄντες φίλοι  
 ὄμβριον ὕδωρ ἂν εἶχετ' ἐν τοῖς τέλμασιν,  
 ἀλκνουίδας τ' ἂν ἤγεθ' ἡμέρας αἰί.

1595 τούτων πέρι πάντων αὐτοκράτορες ἤκομεν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὔτε πρότερον πώποθ' ἡμεῖς ἤρξαμεν  
 πολέμου πρὸς ὑμᾶς, νῦν τ' ἐθέλομεν, εἰ δοκεῖ,  
 εἰάν τὸ δίκαιον ἀλλὰ νῦν ἐθέλητε δρᾶν,  
 σπονδὰς ποιεῖσθαι. τὰ δὲ δίκαι' ἐστὶν ταδί·

1600 τὸ σκῆπτρον ἡμῖν τοῖσιν ὄρνεσιν πάλιν  
 τὸν Δί' ἀποδοῦναι· κὰν διαλλαττώμεθα  
 ἐπὶ τοῖσδε, τοὺς πρέσβεις ἐπ' ἄριστον καλῶ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἔμοι μὲν ἀποχρῆ ταῦτα, καὶ ψηφίζομαι.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

τί, ὦ κακόδαιμον; ἠλίθιος καὶ γάστρις εἶ.

1605 ἀποστερεῖς τὸν πατέρα τῆς τυραννίδος;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἄληθες; οὐ γὰρ μείζον ὑμεῖς οἱ θεοὶ  
 ἰσχύσετ', ἣν ὄρνιθες ἄρξωσιν κάτω;

## BIRDS

PEISETAERUS

There's no oil in the bottle.

HERACLES

And bird meat should be glistening with it.

POSEIDON

For we gods are gaining nothing by the war; while for your part, friendly relations with the gods would win you rain-water for your puddles and halcyon days to enjoy year round. On all these issues we are authorized to ratify an agreement.

PEISETAERUS

But it was never our side that initiated hostilities against you, and we are now ready to ratify a treaty, if you like, as long as you're ready even at this late hour to do what's right. And what's right amounts to this: Zeus returns the sceptre back to us birds. If we can reach an agreement on these terms, I invite the embassy to lunch.

HERACLES

That's good enough for me; I vote aye.

POSEIDON

You what, you damned fool? You're an idiotic greedy-guts. Would you rob your father of his rule?

PEISETAERUS

How can you say that? Won't you gods actually have greater power if birds are sovereign down below? At pres-

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1598 τὸ Elmsley cl. Σ: τι a

ARISTOPHANES

νῦν μὲν γ' ὑπὸ ταῖς νεφέλαισιν ἐγκεκρυμμένοι  
κύψαντες ἐπιορκοῦσιν ὑμᾶς οἱ βροτοί·

1610 ἔαν δὲ τοὺς ὄρνις ἔχητε συμμάχους,  
ὅταν ὀμνύῃ τις τὸν κόρακα καὶ τὸν Δία,  
ὁ κόραξ παρελθὼν τοῦπιορκούντος λάθρα  
προσπτάμενος ἐκκόψει τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν θενών.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ ταῦτά γέ τοι καλῶς λέγεις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

κάμοι δοκεῖ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί δαὶ σὺ φῆς;

ΤΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΣ

1615 νὰ Βαισατρεῦ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὀρᾶς, ἐπαινεῖ χούτος.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἕτερόν νυν ἔτι

ἀκούσαθ' ὅσον ὑμᾶς ἀγαθὸν ποιήσομεν.

ἔάν τις ἀνθρώπων ἱερείον τῷ θεῶν

εὐξάμενος εἶτα διασοφίζεται λέγων·

1620 “μενετοὶ θεοί”, καὶ μάποδιδῶ μισητία,  
ἀναπράξομεν καὶ ταῦτα.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

φέρ' ἴδω τῷ τρόπῳ;

## BIRDS

ent, mortals can hide beneath the clouds, and with bowed heads swear false oaths in your names; but if you have the birds for allies, whenever anyone swears “by the Raven and by Zeus,” the Raven will happen by and swoop down on that perjurer before he knows it, and peck out his eye like a shot.

POSEIDON

By Poseidon, that’s a very good point.

HERACLES

I agree.

PEISETAERUS

And what do you say?

TRIBALLIAN GOD

Yeah Bubba.

HERACLES

See? He’s in favor too.

PEISETAERUS

Now listen to what else we’ll do for your benefit. If a human vows an offering to a god and then tries to squirm out of it with a sophism like “the gods are patient,”<sup>147</sup> and out of avarice doesn’t fulfill it, we’ll make him pay up.

POSEIDON

I’d like to know how.

<sup>147</sup> The full proverb was “the gods are patient, but keep their promises.”

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὅταν διαριθμῶν ἀργυρίδιον τύχη  
ἄνθρωπος οὗτος, ἢ καθῆται λούμενος,  
καταπτάμενος ἰκτῖνος ἀρπάσας λάθρα  
1625 προβάτοις δυοῖν τιμὴν ἀνοίσει τῷ θεῷ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τὸ σκῆπτρον ἀποδοῦναι πάλιν ψηφίζομαι  
τούτοις ἐγώ.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

καὶ τὸν Τριβαλλόν νυν ἐροῦ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁ Τριβαλλός, οἰμώζειν δοκεῖ σοι;

ΤΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΣ

σαὺ νάκα  
βακτάρια κροῦσα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

φησί μ' εὖ λέγειν πάνν.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

1630 εἴ τοι δοκεῖ σφῶν ταῦτα, κάμοι συνδοκεῖ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὗτος, δοκεῖ δρᾶν ταῦτα τοῦ σκῆπτρου πέρι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

καὶ νῆ Δί' ἕτερόν γ' ἐστὶν οὗ μνήσθην ἐγώ.  
τὴν μὲν γὰρ Ἑραν παραδίδωμι τῷ Δί,  
τὴν δὲ Βασιλείαν τὴν κόρην γυναικ' ἐμοὶ  
ἐκδοτέον ἐστίν.

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

When this guy happens to be counting his pennies or sitting in the bath, a kite will swoop down, filch a two-sheep penalty, and deliver it to the god.

*The three gods withdraw for a conference.*

### HERACLES

I vote aye again, to give them back the sceptre.

### POSEIDON

Then ask the Triballian too.

### HERACLES

*(waving his club)* Hey Triballian, how would you like some real pain?

### TRIBALLIAN GOD

No hittum hide wit bat.

### HERACLES

He says I'm quite right.

### POSEIDON

Well, if that's how you both vote, I'll go along with you.

### HERACLES

*(to Peisetaerus)* You there: we've voted to accept your terms regarding the sceptre.

### PEISETAERUS

And there's another request that I definitely recall making: Hera I concede to Zeus, but the girl Princess must be given to me as my wife.



ARISTOPHANES

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

1635 οὐ διαλλαγῶν ἐρᾶς.  
ἀπίωμεν οἴκαδ' αὐθις.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὀλίγον μοι μέλει.  
μάγειρε, τὸ κατάχυσμα χρῆ ποιεῖν γλυκύ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ δαιμόνι' ἀνθρώπων Πόσειδον, ποῖ φέρει;  
ἡμεῖς περὶ γυναικὸς μιᾶς πολεμήσομεν;

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

τί δαὶ ποιῶμεν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1640 ὅ τι; διαλλαττώμεθα.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

τί ᾧζύρ'; οὐκ οἶσθ' ἐξαπατῶμενος πάλαι;  
βλάπτεις δέ τοι σὺ σαυτόν. ἦν γὰρ ἀποθάνη  
ὁ Ζεὺς παραδοὺς τούτοισι τὴν τυραννίδα,  
πένης ἔσει σὺ· σοῦ γὰρ ἅπαντα γίγνεται  
1645 τὰ χρήμαθ', ὅσ' ἂν ὁ Ζεὺς ἀποθνήσκων καταλίπη.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οἴμοι τάλας, οἷόν σε περισοφίζεται.  
δεῦρ' ὡς ἔμ' ἀποχώρησον, ἵνα τί σοι φράσω.  
διαβάλλεται σ' ὁ θεῖος, ᾧ πόνηρε σύ.  
τῶν γὰρ πατρώων οὐδ' ἀκαρῆ μέτεστί σοι  
1650 κατὰ τοὺς νόμους· νόθος γὰρ εἶ κοῦ γνήσιος.

## BIRDS

### POSEIDON

It's not a settlement you're hot for. (*to his colleagues*) Let's go back home.

### PEISETAERUS

That's of little concern to me. Cook, be sure you make the sauce sweet.

### HERACLES

Man alive, Poseidon, what's your rush? Over a single woman we're out to fight a war?

### POSEIDON

Well, what can we do?

### HERACLES

Why, we settle.

### POSEIDON

What, you chump? Don't you realize that you've been getting duped all along? What's more, you're harming yourself. Look, if Zeus surrenders his rule to these birds, you'll be left a pauper when he dies, because you now stand to get the whole estate that he leaves behind at his death.

### PEISETAERUS

Good grief, how he's trying to fast-talk you! Come aside here, I want a word with you. Your uncle's out to cheat you, poor fellow. Of your father's estate you don't get a single penny; that's the law.<sup>148</sup> You see, you're a bastard, illegitimate.

<sup>148</sup> Throughout this passage, Athenian laws are assumed to apply to the gods; Heracles' mother was the mortal Alcmena, wife of Amphitryon.

ARISTOPHANES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐγὼ νόθος; τί λέγεις;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

σὺ μέντοι νῆ Δία  
ὦν γε ξένης γυναικός. ἢ πῶς ἄν ποτε  
ἐπίκληρον εἶναι τὴν Ἀθηναίαν δοκεῖς,  
οὔσαν θυγατέρ', ὄντων ἀδελφῶν γνησίων;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1655 τί δ' ἦν ὁ πατήρ ἐμοὶ διδῶ τὰ χρήματα  
νοθεῖ' ἀποθνήσκων;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ὁ νόμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔᾶ.  
οὔτος ὁ Ποσειδῶν πρῶτος, ὃς ἐπαίρει σε νῦν,  
ἀνθέξεταιί σοι τῶν πατρῶων χρημάτων  
φάσκων ἀδελφὸς αὐτὸς εἶναι γνήσιος.  
1660 ἐρῶ δὲ δὴ καὶ τὸν Σόλωνός σοι νόμον·  
“νόθῳ δὲ μὴ εἶναι ἀγχιστεῖαν παίδων ὄντων  
γνησίων·  
1665 ἐὰν δὲ παῖδες μὴ ὦσι γνήσιοι, τοῖς ἐγγυτάτῳ  
γένους  
μετεῖναι τῶν χρημάτων.”

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐμοὶ δ' ἄρ' οὐδὲν τῶν πατρῶων χρημάτων  
μέτεστιν;

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία. λέξον δέ μοι,

## BIRDS

### HERACLES

Me, a bastard? What are you talking about?

### PEISETAERUS

That's exactly what you are, your mother being an alien. Why else do you think that Athena as a daughter could be called The Heiress, if she had legitimate brothers?

### HERACLES

But couldn't my father at his death still leave me his property as a bastard's portion?

### PEISETAERUS

The law won't let him. Poseidon here, who's now getting your hopes up, will be the first to dispute your claim to your father's property, declaring himself the legitimate brother. I'll even quote you the law of Solon:<sup>149</sup> "A bastard shall not qualify as next of kin, if there are legitimate children; if there are no legitimate children, the next of kin shall share the property."

### HERACLES

You mean I have no share in my father's property?

### PEISETAERUS

Absolutely none. Tell me, has your father inducted you

<sup>149</sup> Solon's codification (early sixth century), to which Athenians tended to attribute their oldest laws; for the law on intestacy cf. Demosthenes 43.51, Isaeus 6.47.

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<sup>1656</sup> *νοθει̅ ἀπο-* Daubuz, cf. *γρΣ<sup>VE</sup>Γ* S Harpocr. Pollux: *νόθω*  
*᾽ξάπο-* *vel sim.* a

ARISTOPHANES

ἤδη σ' ὁ πατὴρ εἰσήγαγ' εἰς τοὺς φράτερας;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1670 οὐ δῆτ' ἐμέ γε. καὶ τοῦτ' ἐθαύμαζον πάλαι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἄνω κέχηνας αἵκειαν βλέπων;  
ἀλλ' ἦν μεθ' ἡμῶν ἦς, καταστήσας σ' ἐγὼ  
τύραννον ὀρνίθων παρέξω σοι γάλα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1675 δίκαι' ἔμοιγε καὶ πάλαι δοκεῖς λέγειν  
περὶ τῆς κόρης, κ' ἄγωγε παραδίδωμί σοι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

τί δαὶ σὺ φῆς;

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

τ' ἀναντία ψηφίζομαι.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἐν τῷ Τριβαλλῷ πᾶν τὸ πρᾶγμα. τί σὺ λέγεις;

ΤΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΣ

καλανι κοραυνα καὶ μεγάλα βασιλιναυ  
ὀρνιτο παραδίδωμι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

παραδοῦναι λέγει.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

1680 μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐχ οὗτός γε παραδοῦναι λέγει,  
εἰ μὴ βαβάζει γ' ὥσπερ αἱ χελιδόνες.

1681 βαβάζει γ' Bentley: βαδίζειν a

## BIRDS

into his phratry yet?<sup>150</sup>

HERACLES

Not me he hasn't, and that's always made me wonder.

PEISETAERUS

So why gape at the sky with an assaultive glare, when you could side with us? I'll appoint you ruler, and supply you with birds' milk.

HERACLES

Your claim to the girl sounds fair to me, as ever; I'm for handing her over to you.

PEISETAERUS

(*to Poseidon*) And what about you?

POSEIDON

I vote against.

PEISETAERUS

The whole business depends on the Triballian. (*to Triballian*) What do you say?

TRIBALLIAN GOD

Lovey tall missy Princessy I hand over birdie.

HERACLES

He says, hand her over.

POSEIDON

No, by Zeus, he's not saying hand her over; he's just twittering like the swallows.

<sup>150</sup> A religious guild whose members traced descent from a common ancestor; membership was a standard proof of citizenship, and the induction of young men as new members included lavish feasting.

ARISTOPHANES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐκοῦν παραδοῦναι ταῖς χελιδόσιν λέγει.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

σφῶ νυν διαλλάττεσθε καὶ ξυμβαίνετε·  
ἐγὼ δ', ἐπειδὴ σφῶν δοκεῖ, σιγήσομαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1685 ἡμῖν ἄ λέγεις σὺ πάντα συγχωρεῖν δοκεῖ.  
ἄλλ' ἴθι μεθ' ἡμῶν αὐτὸς εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν,  
ἵνα τὴν Βασίλειαν καὶ τὰ πάντ' ἐκεῖ λάβῃς.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

εἰς καιρὸν ἄρα κατεκόπησαν οὐτοῦ  
εἰς τοὺς γάμους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

1690 βούλεσθε δῆτ' ἐγὼ τέως  
ὄπτῶ τὰ κρέα ταυτὶ μένων; ὑμεῖς δ' ἴτε.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

ὄπτᾶς σὺ κρέα; πολλήν γε τευθείαν λέγεις.  
οὐκ εἶ μεθ' ἡμῶν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εὖ γε μέντ' ἀν διετεθήν.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἀλλὰ γαμικὴν χλανίδα δότω τις δεῦρό μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ) ἔστι δ' ἐν Φαναῖσι πρὸς τῇ  
1695 κλειψύδρα πανούργον Ἐγ-



## BIRDS

### HERACLES

All right, he's saying hand her over to the swallows.

### POSEIDON

Very well, you two negotiate the terms of a settlement; if that's your decision, I'll keep quiet.

### HERACLES

(to *Peisetaerus*) We've decided to agree to all your proposals. Now come with us to heaven yourself, and there get Princess and everything else.

### PEISETAERUS

Then these birds have been cut up just in time for my wedding!

### HERACLES

And if you like, I'll stay behind here in the meantime, and roast the meat; you go on ahead.

### POSEIDON

You? Roast meat? An orgy of gobbling, you mean. Better come with us.

### HERACLES

My, I would have liked that job.

### PEISETAERUS

Now someone fetch me a wedding jacket!

*All exit.*

### CHORUS

Over in the land of Extortia, near  
the Water Cache,<sup>151</sup> dwells the wicked

<sup>151</sup> Of fountain houses and also of the device used to time speeches in Athenian lawcourts.



ARISTOPHANES

γλωττογαστόρων γένος,  
οἱ θερίζουσίν τε καὶ σπεί-  
ρουσι καὶ τρυγῶσι ταῖς γλώτ-  
ταισι συκάζουσί τε

- 1700 βάρβαροι δ' εἰσὶν γένους,  
Γοργίαι τε καὶ Φίλιπποι.  
κὰπὸ τῶν ἐγγλωττογαστό-  
ρων ἐκείνων τῶν φιλίππων  
πανταχοῦ τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἢ  
1705 γλῶττα χωρὶς τέμνεται.

ΚΗΡΤΞ Β'

- ὦ πάντ' ἀγαθὰ πράττοντες, ὦ μείζω λόγου,  
ὦ τρισμακάριον πτηνὸν ὀρνίθων γένος,  
δέχεσθε τὸν τύραννον ὀλβίοις δόμοις.  
προσέρχεται γὰρ οἷος οὔτε παμφαῆς  
1710 ἀστῆρ ἰδεῖν ἔλαμψε χρυσαυγεί δρόμῳ,  
οὔθ' ἡλίου τηλαυγὲς ἀκτίνων σέλας  
τοιούτου ἐξέλαμψεν οἷος ἔρχεται  
ἔχων γυναικὸς κάλλος οὐ φατὸν λέγειν,  
πάλλων κεραυνόν, πτεροφόρον Διὸς βέλος.  
1715 ὀσμὴ δ' ἀνωνόμαστος εἰς βάθος κύκλου  
χωρεῖ, καλὸν θέαμα, θυμιαμάτων δ'  
αὔραι διαψαίρουσι πλεκτάνην καπνοῦ.

1710 δρόμῳ E p: δόμῳ cett.

1712 οἷος Dindorf: οἶον a

## BIRDS

race of Thrive-by-Tongues,  
who do their harvesting and sowing  
and vintaging by tongue,  
and also their culling.

They're a race of barbarians,  
Gorgiases and Philippuses.<sup>152</sup>

It's from these philippic  
Thrive-by-Tongues  
that all over Attica  
the tongue is specially excised.<sup>153</sup>

*Enter SECOND HERALD.*

### SECOND HERALD

Attention, you achievers of complete success, greater than words can say, you triple-blessed winged race of birds: welcome your ruler to his prosperous palace! Yea he draws near, more dazzling to behold than any meteor flaring on its path of golden beams, more than even the flare of the sun's far-beaming splendor of rays, as he comes bringing a lady of beauty surpassing description, and brandishing the thunderbolt, winged missile of Zeus. A fragrance unnamable ascends to the welkin's very depths, a fair spectacle, and breezes puff asunder the wreaths of smoke from the incense.

*Enter PEISETAERUS, wielding the thunderbolt, with Princess, as royal couple.*

<sup>152</sup> Gorgias, a Sicilian, taught rhetoric at Athens, and Philippus (a common name) was either his son (cf. *Wasps* 421) or a disciple.

<sup>153</sup> In sacrifices, cf. *Peace* 1109, Homer, *Odyssey* 3.332–41.

ARISTOPHANES

ὁδὶ δὲ καὐτός ἐστιν. ἀλλὰ χρῆ θεᾶς  
μούσης ἀνοίγειν ἱερὸν εὐφημον στόμα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 1720 ἄναγε δῖεχε πάραγε πάρεχε,  
περιπέτεσθε μάκαρα μάκαρι σὺν τύχῃ.  
ὦ φεῦ φεῦ τῆς ὥρας, τοῦ κάλλους.  
1725 ὦ μακαριστὸν σὺ γάμον τῆδε πόλει γήμας.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

- μεγάλαι μεγάλαι κατέχουσι τύχαι  
γένος ὀρνίθων  
διὰ τόνδε τὸν ἄνδρ'. ἀλλ' ὑμεναίοις  
καὶ νυμφιδίοισι δέχεσθ' ὦδαῖς  
1730 αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν Βασίλειαν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) Ἦρα ποτ' Ὀλυμπία  
τὸν ἡλιβάτων θρόνων  
ἄρχοντα θεοῖς μέγαν  
Μοῖραι ξυνεκοκίμισαν  
1735 ἐν τοιῶδ' ὑμεναίῳ.  
'Υμῆν ὦ, 'Υμέναι' ὦ.  
<'Υμῆν ὦ, 'Υμέναι' ὦ.>  
(ἀντ) ὁ δ' ἀμφιθαλῆς Ἔρως  
χρυσόπτερος ἠνίας  
ἠϋθυνε παλιπτόνους,  
1740 Ζηνὸς πάροχος γάμων

1734 suppl. Bentley

1736b suppl. Dindorf

## BIRDS

And here he is himself! Now let the divine Muse open her holy lips in auspicious song!

*Exit SECOND HERALD.*

### CHORUS

Get back! Divide! Form up! Make room!  
Fly by the man blest with blest luck!  
My oh my, her youth, her beauty!  
What a blessing for this city is the marriage you have  
made!

### CHORUS LEADER

Great, great is the luck that embraces  
the race of birds  
thanks to this man; now with wedding  
and bridal songs please welcome  
Himself and His Princess!

### CHORUS

Once were Olympian Hera  
and the mighty lord of the lofty  
throne of the gods  
united by the Fates  
with such a wedding song.  
Hymen Hymenaeus!  
Hymen Hymenaeus!

And blooming Eros  
of the golden wings guided  
the straining reins  
as best man at the wedding

ARISTOPHANES

τῆς τ' εὐδαίμονος Ἑρας.  
 Ὑμῆν ὦ, Ὑμέναι' ὦ.  
 Ὑμῆν ὦ, Ὑμέναι' ὦ.

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

ἐχάρην ὕμνοις, ἐχάρην ὠδαῖς·  
 ἄγαμαι δὲ λόγων.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

1745 ἄγε νυν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰς χθονίας  
 κλήσατε βροντὰς  
 τὰς τε πυρώδεις Διὸς ἀστεροπὰς  
 δεινὸν τ' ἀργῆτα κεραυνόν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ μέγα χρύσειον ἀστεροπῆς φάος  
 ὦ Διὸς ἄμβροτον ἔγχος  
 1750 πυρφόρον, ὦ χθόνιαι βαρναχέες  
 ὀμβροφόροι θ' ἅμα βρονταί,  
 αἷς ὄδε νῦν χθόνα σείει,  
 Δία δὲ πάντα κρατήσας  
 καὶ πάρεδρον Βασίλειαν ἔχει Διός.  
 Ὑμῆν ὦ, Ὑμέναι' ὦ.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

1755 ἔπεσθέ νυν γάμοισιν, ὦ  
 φύλα πάντα συννόμων  
 πτεροφόρ', ἐπὶ <δά>πεδον Διὸς  
 καὶ λέχος γαμήλιον.

## BIRDS

of Zeus and thriving Hera.  
Hymen Hymenaeus!  
Hymen Hymenaeus!

### PEISETAERUS

I'm pleased by your chants, pleased by your songs,  
and bowled over by your words.

### CHORUS LEADER

Come then, celebrate too  
his earth-shaking thunders  
and the fiery lightnings of Zeus  
and the awesome fulgent thunderbolt.

### CHORUS

Great golden glare of lightning!  
Zeus' immortal fire-bearing  
shaft! Thunders rumbling heavily  
in the ground and also bringing rain!  
With you this man now shakes the earth,  
new master of Zeus' estate  
and of Princess, attendant of Zeus' throne.  
Hymen Hymenaeus!

### CHORUS LEADER

Follow now the wedding party,  
all you winged tribes  
of fellow songsters, to Zeus' yard  
and to the bridal bower.

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1752  $\Delta\iota\alpha$  δὲ Haupt:  $\delta\iota\alpha$  σὲ τὰ a

1757 suppl. Meineke

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΙΣΕΤΑΙΡΟΣ

1760 ὄρεξον, ὦ μάκαιρα, σὴν  
    χείρα καὶ πτερῶν ἐμῶν  
λαβούσα συγχόρευσον· αἵ-  
    ρων δὲ κουφιῶ σ' ἐγώ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

1765 ἀλαλαλαί, ἰὴ παιῶν·  
    τήνελλα καλλίνικος, ὦ  
    δαιμόνων ὑπέρτατε.

## BIRDS

### PEISETAERUS

Hold out your hand, my happy one,  
and holding to my wings  
join me for a dance; I'll  
lift you up and swing you!

*PEISETAERUS and Princess, dancing, lead the way off; the  
Chorus follow.*

### CHORUS

Hip hip hooray! Hail Paeon!  
Hail your success, you  
highest of divinities!





# LYSISTRATA

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

*Lysistrata* was produced by Callistratus<sup>1</sup> in 411; we lack information about the festival, the competitors, and the prize, but internal evidence strongly favors the Lenaea.<sup>2</sup>

With the war once again threatening Athenian territory and destabilizing the democratic regime, Aristophanes returned in *Lysistrata* to the politically engaged style of comedy so prominent in his plays of the 420s, renewing his call for a negotiated settlement of the war, attacking the motives of its proponents, and appealing for panhellenic unity abroad and for both social and political unity at home. *Lysistrata* is notable too for its complex and ingenious plot, which continues a trend toward greater structural unity already apparent in *Birds*; for its sparkling depictions of a broad array of characters; for its remarkable blend of gaiety and earnestness; and for its apparent introduction of the first comic heroine.

The war began to go decisively against the Athenians in 413, when their great armada against Sicily was wiped out at Syracuse, with crippling losses of men, material, and wealth. Now a Spartan army of occupation once again sur-

<sup>1</sup> For this man see *Birds*, Introductory Note.

<sup>2</sup> On the dating see further *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Introductory Note.

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rounded Athens; important territory fell out of Athenian control; and several major allies quickly defected from the empire, with others threatening to follow. Many believed that the Athenians would soon be helpless, but by the end of 412 they had managed to refurbish their navy and win back some strategically important territory. The political and fiscal discipline required to stave off defeat was facilitated by the Assembly's willingness to accept restraints on its own autonomy, in particular the appointment of a board of ten elderly statesmen (including the tragic poet Sophocles) called Probouloi ("executive councillors"), who could expedite the war effort by bypassing the Assembly. An unnamed member of this board is the heroine's antagonist in *Lysistrata*.

Nevertheless, as the winter of 412/11 set in, Athens was still straitened financially and increasingly volatile politically. Thucydides provides a rough, and much debated, chronology (8.1–60).<sup>3</sup> Spartan negotiations with the Persian satrap Tissaphernes, which began in December and would produce an accord by late March, threatened to tip the balance of war decisively against Athens. Meanwhile, officers of the main Athenian naval base at Samos had also made secret contact with Tissaphernes, using as their intermediary the exiled Alcibiades, who promised to bring Persia into alliance with Athens if the Athenians would recall him and agree to "a more moderate constitution with a rather smaller number eligible for offices" (8.53). In mid-December the general Pisander was deputized to go to

<sup>3</sup> For recent discussion see H. Avery, "The Chronology of Peisander's Mission to Athens," *Classical Philology* 94 (1999) 127–46.

## ARISTOPHANES

Athens to engineer the acceptance of Alcibiades' demands. After meeting privately with political sympathizers, Pisander put his proposals before the Assembly, which authorized him to lead an embassy to Alcibiades and Tissaphernes. Although Alcibiades proved unable to deliver Persian support, the officers proceeded with their conspiracy; over the following months they launched a campaign of propaganda, intimidation, and assassination that by summer had succeeded in installing an oligarchic government.

The topical references and plot assumptions in *Lysistrata* suit the period after Pisander had returned to Athens but before the Assembly had heard his proposals: he is the only politician singled out by name for abuse, but is portrayed as being the same democratic extremist as he had "always" been (489–92). The play contains no hint of possible constitutional changes (cf. 577–78, which condemn factions of all stripes); no awareness of anti-democratic sentiment at Samos (cf. 313); no allusion to Alcibiades; no thought of money from the Persians (the plot assumes the availability only of the Acropolis funds, cf. 170–79, 486–97); and makes emphatic calls for panhellenic cooperation against Persia that would be pointless after the Assembly had authorized Pisander's embassy. Since this cannot have happened as late as the Dionysia, *Lysistrata* must have been produced at the Lenaea, which in 411 probably fell in early to mid-February.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The resulting delay of some two months between the deputizing of Pisander and his proposals to the Assembly remains mysterious; Pisander may have needed the time to test the political waters, or he may not have gone to Athens immediately, perhaps

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In the play, an Athenian woman named Lysistrata organizes and successfully prosecutes a panhellenic women's conspiracy that forces the men of Athens and Sparta to negotiate a settlement of the war and promise never to fight one another again. Her name, though borne by actual women, is dramatically apt: it means "Disbander of Armies," with the first element (*Lysi-*) also connoting the power of sexual desire to "loosen" a man's limbs. Her conspiracy consists of two separate initiatives. One is a conjugal strike (supported by the goddess Aphrodite) whereby the young wives from all the warring states will refuse to perform their domestic (especially sexual) duties until their husbands lay down their arms and come home to stay. The other is the occupation of the Acropolis (supported by the goddess Athena), whereby the older women of Athens will deny access to the funds needed to continue the war. When the older women have secured the Acropolis the young wives join them there.

The strike plot, described in the prologue and illustrated later in the play by Cinesias and Myrrhine, succeeds virtually unopposed: after only six days the young warriors are sexually desperate enough to agree to whatever terms Lysistrata demands. The occupation plot contains the agonistic component of the play: strife between semichoruses of old men who storm the Acropolis, and old women who repulse them; and a debate between Lysistrata and an elderly Magistrate who has come to arrest her. When the occupation plot has eliminated official

because the officers thought it prudent to wait until the Peloponnesians had beached their fleet for the winter (late January, cf. Thucydides 8.44.4).



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opposition, and the strike plot has made the young husbands capitulate to their wives, Athenian and Spartan ambassadors negotiate their differences and promise eternal friendship. Reconciliation of the semichoruses prefigures reconciliation between the warring cities and symbolizes the end of bitter divisiveness between sexes and citizens generally.

The comic fantasy of *Lysistrata* lies in its projection of women's characteristic roles outside the domestic sphere. Aristophanes assimilates the polis (Athens) to the individual household, and the aggregate of poleis (Greece) to a neighborhood. For, in effect, *Lysistrata* converts the Acropolis into a household for all citizen women. Its exclusivity turns the tables on the men, who have neglected their wives and excluded them from the process of policy making. And just as a wife might protect the household money from a spendthrift husband, so *Lysistrata* bars the Magistrate's access to the state treasuries. Fantastic, too, is the strength, independence, and discipline displayed by the women versus the weakness, dependency, and rapid capitulation of the men: a reversal of prevailing gender stereotypes and one that in Athenian terms could only reflect badly on the men.

The characterizations are also socially and politically pointed. The old men of the chorus are rank-and-file veterans of the democracy's wars against tyrants and barbarians, but now live on state pay, dissipate Athens' inherited wealth by their unreasoning support of the war, and have forgotten the panhellenic solidarity that once made Greece prosperous and secure. The old politicians, represented by the Magistrate, prosecute the war solely to make a profit at the expense of ordinary citizens and soldiers.

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The old women of the chorus boast of lifelong service in the city's most venerable religious institutions and belong to the upper stratum of Athenian society. The young husbands and wives, both Athenian and foreign, wish only for the restoration of sexual and domestic normality. The caricature of Spartans is amusing but benign.

Putting not a hero but a heroine in charge of the plot was apparently a novelty, perhaps prompted at least in part by the ticklishness of an appeal for peace in 411, for despite their hardships most Athenians were determined to persevere in the war; even during the summer, when the oligarchs repeatedly sought a treaty with Sparta (Thucydides 8.70–71, 90), both the military (8.77–78) and the people (8.97) steadfastly opposed negotiation. By contrast, Aristophanes' earlier peace plays were produced at times when a negotiated settlement was supported by a significant minority (*Acharnians* in 425) or actually imminent (*Peace* in 421). A heroine provided a respectable citizen who could make plausible arguments for reconciliation at home and abroad while at the same time standing outside and above the prevailing political turmoil and military uncertainty. Furthermore, women as a united class modeled the important theme of solidarity: their concerted action in a just cause contrasts sharply with the factional and chaotic actions of the men, just as the old notion of a "race of women" exemplified Aristophanes' wished-for "race of Greeks" once again united against barbarians (cf. especially 1128–34). At the same time, the intrinsic humor in the spectacle of women turning the tables on and besting the men provided constant comic relief, and so defused potential spectator indignation.

Though *Lysistrata* may have been partially inspired by



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such traditional figures as Homer's Andromache (cf. lines 519–20) and the virtuous heroines of Euripides' recent tragedies, she remains an extraordinary invention. Identified neither as a young housewife nor as an older woman, she is the master strategist, commander, and spokesman, while the other women are her agents. She understands and uses her helpers' talents but does not herself share in them; in fact she pointedly differentiates herself from the other women, especially the ludicrous young wives. She champions not only the interests of her own sex but also the traditional values of all Greeks male and female, and she possesses a degree of intelligence, will, and eloquence that would have been considered extraordinary in a citizen of either sex. In her possession of the most admired attributes of power, wisdom, and statesmanship, in her dual role as defender of home and of polis, in her acquaintance with both domestic and martial arts, in her panhellenic outlook, in her advocacy of internal solidarity, in her self-discipline and immunity to sexual temptation, in her appeal to young and old, and in her close connection with the Acropolis, *Lysistrata* finds her closest analogue in Athena herself.

Perhaps also in Athena's chief priestess. The Acropolis cult of Athena Polias was the city's oldest and most revered religious institution. Its priestess, who served for life, came always from the ancient family of the Eteobutadae and had an official residence on the Acropolis, where she managed the cult and its female personnel, and where she discharged many ritual functions on behalf of the polis, including the guardianship of Athena's treasuries. Since Athena's temple symbolized the ideal Athenian household, and her priestly personnel epitomized every household's

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female managers, the Polias priestess—the highest public position a woman could hold—was in effect the First Lady of Athens. She had a public visibility and authority unavailable to any other woman.

In 411 the Polias priestess was Lysimache, who held office for sixty-four years and who appears to have been known, or thought, to be opposed to the war (*Peace* 991–92). Since her name is very close to our heroine's<sup>5</sup> and may be specifically alluded to in the play itself (554), it is not unlikely that Aristophanes intended to assimilate Lysistrata to Lysimache in order to invest his heroine with some of the priestess' authority and further strengthen her association with the goddess. Close portraiture, however, is unlikely: the priestess, like the goddess, was but one associative element of a unique heroine, who in the course of the play resorts to tactics arguably unbecoming a priestess, and achieves a stature that no woman, Lysimache included, could ever actually attain.

Still other elements from the world of cult and myth inform the plot of *Lysistrata*: the Amazons (678–79), the Lemnian women (299–300), and the many festivals in which women ritually exclude, defy, or even replace men; the Magistrate, forcibly dressed as a woman and symbolically killed (530–38, 599–607), recalls the mythical kings (e.g. Lycurgus and Pentheus) whom Dionysus' maenads overpower. Nor can the prominence of Athena behind the heroine, and of the Acropolis in the plot, fail to have reminded the spectators of the foundation myth of Athens it-

<sup>5</sup> The name Lysistrata was in fact borne by more than one Polias priestess in later times, and perhaps in earlier times too, since Lysimache is the first identifiable incumbent.

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self: Athena had challenged Poseidon for the city and won, only to support, in her uniquely inclusive way, the primacy of male institutions in the polis.<sup>6</sup> In 411 Aristophanes used such traditional myths and rituals as symbolic ingredients in a comedy intended in no small part to remind males of the crucial role women played in the maintenance and success of those institutions.

### *Text*

Three papyri preserve fragments of *Lysistrata*; one of these is not cited in the notes, *PAnt.* 75+211 (V/VI), partially preserving lines 307–13, 318–20, 342–46, 353–62. There are five independent medieval MSS, which divide into two groups: (1) R, which alone preserves the complete text, and Mu2 (XV), which, though copied directly from R, incorporates the work of an early editor who made simple emendations and supplied many line attributions; and (2) ΓBVp2H, which descend from a lost MS lacking lines 62–131, 200–67, 820–89, 1098–1236. Γ is the main ancestor of B and Vp2H, which descend from a hyparchetype p. But Γ subsequently lost lines 1035–end as well, so that for lines 1035–97 and 1237–end this group is represented only by Bp. Two 15<sup>th</sup>-c. MSS, which contain only scholia to *Lysistrata* and which were copied from Γ before its mutilation (Neapolitanus II D 49 and Oxoniensis Bodleianus Baroccianus 38B), provide some additional information about the lost text of Γ. In two sections of the play (roughly 280–590 and 900–50) both B and (to a lesser extent) p con-

<sup>6</sup> The central text for this role of Athena is Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.

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tain significant readings from an otherwise lost source independent of R and Γ. The Suda's quotations derive from texts similar to R and include the sections missing in ΓBp.

### *Sigla*

- Π1 *PColon.* 14 (IV), lines 145–53, 182–87, 197–99, 188
- Π2 *PBodl.gr. class. e 87(P)* (IV/V), lines 433–47, 469–84
- R Ravennas 429 (c. 950)
- S readings found in the Suda
- all the following MSS lack lines 62–131, 200–67, 820–89, 1098–1236*
- Γ Leidensis Vossianus gr. F52 (c. 1325), also lacking lines 1035-end
- B Parisinus gr. 2715 (XIV<sup>ex</sup>)
- Vp2 Vaticanus Palatinus 67 (XV)
- H Hauniensis 1980 (XV)
- a the consensus of RΓBp (1–1034) or RBp (1035-end)
- p the hyparchetype of Vp2H

### *Annotated Editions*

- F. H. M. Blaydes (Halle 1880)
- J. van Leeuwen (Leiden 1903)
- B. B. Rogers (London 1911), with English translation
- U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (Berlin 1927)
- J. J. Henderson (Oxford 1987)
- A. H. Sommerstein (Warminster 1990), with English translation

## ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ  
ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ  
ΜΥΡΡΙΝΗ  
ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ *γυνή*  
*Λακωνική*  
ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ  
ΓΡΑΤΣ Α  
ΓΡΑΤΣ Β  
ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ  
ΓΥΝΗ Α  
ΓΥΝΗ Β  
ΓΥΝΗ Γ  
ΓΥΝΗ Δ  
ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ *άνηρ*  
*Μυρρίνης*  
ΠΑΙΔΙΟΝ *Κινησίου καὶ*  
*Μυρρίνης*  
ΚΗΡΥΞ *Λακεδαιμονίων*  
ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ  
ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ  
ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ  
ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α  
ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ  
ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Β

ΧΟΡΟΣ *γερόντων*  
ΧΟΡΟΣ *γυναικῶν*

ΚΩΦΑ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ  
ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΣ ΑΤΤΙΚΑΙ  
ΙΣΜΗΝΙΑ *γυνή*  
*Θηβαία*  
ΓΥΝΗ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΑ  
ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΣ  
ΛΑΚΩΝΙΚΑΙ  
ΣΚΥΘΑΙΝΑ *θεράπεινα*  
*Λυσιστράτης*  
ΘΕΡΑΠΟΝΤΕΣ *τοῦ*  
*Προβούλου δύο*  
ΤΟΞΟΤΑΙ *τέτταρες*  
ΓΡΑΕΣ  
ΜΑΝΗΣ, *οἰκέτης*  
*Κινησίου*  
ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ  
ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΑΙ  
ΘΕΡΑΠΟΝΤΕΣ *τῶν*  
*πρεσβευτῶν τῶν*  
*Λακεδαιμονίων*  
ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ  
ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΑΙ  
ΔΙΑΛΛΑΓΗ  
ΘΥΡΩΡΟΣ



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LYSISTRATA  
CALONICE  
MYRRHINE  
LAMPITO, a Spartan wife  
MAGISTRATE  
FIRST OLD WOMAN  
SECOND OLD WOMAN  
THIRD OLD WOMAN  
FIRST WIFE  
SECOND WIFE  
THIRD WIFE  
FOURTH WIFE  
CINESIAS, Myrrhine's husband  
BABY of Cinesias and Myrrhine  
HERALD from Sparta  
SPARTAN DELEGATE  
FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE  
SECOND ATHENIAN DELEGATE

CHORUS of Old Men  
CHORUS of Old Women

SILENT CHARACTERS  
ATHENIAN WIVES  
ISMENIA, a Theban wife  
CORINTHIAN WIFE  
SPARTAN WIVES  
SCYTHIAN GIRL,  
Lysistrata's slave  
SLAVES of the Magistrate  
SCYTHIAN POLICEMEN, four  
OLD WOMEN  
MANES, Cinesias' slave  
SPARTAN DELEGATES  
SLAVES of the Spartan Delegates  
ATHENIAN DELEGATES  
RECONCILIATION  
DOORKEEPER

## ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

### ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀλλ' εἴ τις εἰς Βακχεῖον αὐτὰς ἐκάλεσεν,  
ἢ 'ς Πανὸς ἢ 'πὶ Κωλιάδ' εἰς Γενετυλλίδος,  
οὐδ' ἂν διελθεῖν ἦν ἂν ὑπὸ τῶν τυμπάνων.  
νῦν δ' οὐδεμία πάρεστιν ἐνταυθοῖ γυνή·  
5 πλὴν ἢ γ' ἐμὴ κωμῆτις ἢδ' ἐξέρχεται.  
χαῖρ', ὦ Καλονίκη.

### ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

καὶ σύ γ', ὦ Λυσιστράτη.  
τί συντετάραξαι; μὴ σκυθρώπαζ', ὦ τέκνον·  
οὐ γὰρ πρέπει σοι τοξοποιεῖν τὰς ὀφρῦς.

### ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀλλ', ὦ Καλονίκη, κάομαι τὴν καρδίαν,  
10 καὶ πόλλ' ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῶν γυναικῶν ἄχθομαι,  
ὅτι ἢ παρὰ μὲν τοῖς ἀνδράσιν νενομίσμεθα  
εἶναι πανοῦργοι—

### ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

καὶ γάρ ἐσμεν νῆ Δία.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bacchus (Dionysus), Pan, and the Genetyllides (goddesses of procreation) all had erotic associations.

## LYSISTRATA

*A neighborhood in Athens, after dawn. The scene building has a large central door and two smaller, flanking doors. From one of these LYSISTRATA emerges and looks expectantly up and down the street.*

### LYSISTRATA

Now if someone had invited them to a revel for Bacchus, or to Pan's shrine, or to Genetyllis' at Colias,<sup>1</sup> the streets would be impassible, what with their tambourines. But as it is, there's not a single woman here. (*the far door opens*) Except that my neighbor here's coming out. Good morning, Calonice.<sup>2</sup>

### CALONICE

And you, Lysistrata.<sup>3</sup> What's bothering you? Don't frown, child. Knitted brows don't become you.

### LYSISTRATA

But my heart's on fire, Calonice, and I'm terribly annoyed about us women. You know, according to the men we're capable of any sort of mischief—

### CALONICE

And so we surely are!

<sup>2</sup> The name means "Fair Victory."

<sup>3</sup> The name means "Disbander of Armies."



ARISTOPHANES

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

εἰρημένον δ' αὐταῖς ἀπαντᾶν ἐνθάδε  
βουλευσομέναισιν οὐ περὶ φαύλου πράγματος,  
εὔδουσι κούχ ἤκουσιν.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

15

ἀλλ', ὦ φιλτάτη,  
ἤξουσιν χαλεπή τοι γυναικῶν ἕξοδος.  
ἢ μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν περὶ τὸν ἄνδρ' ἐκύπτασεν,  
ἢ δ' οἰκέτην ἤγειρεν, ἢ δὲ παιδίου  
κατέκλινεν, ἢ δ' ἔλουσεν, ἢ δ' ἐψώμισεν.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

20

ἀλλ' ἦν γὰρ ἕτερα τῶνδε προὔργιαίτερα  
αὐταῖς.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

τί δ' ἐστίν, ὦ φίλη Λυσιστράτη,  
ἐφ' ὃ τι ποθ' ἡμᾶς τὰς γυναῖκας ξυγκαλεῖς;  
τί τὸ πράγμα; πηλίκον τι;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

μέγα.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

μῶν καὶ παχύ;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

νῆ τὸν Δία καὶ παχύ.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

κᾶτα πῶς οὐχ ἤκομεν;

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

but when they're told to meet here to discuss a matter of no trifling importance, they sleep in and don't show up.

CALONICE

Honey, they'll be along. You know, it's a lot of trouble for wives to get out of the house: we're giving hubby a hand, or waking up a slave, or putting the baby to bed, or bathing it, or feeding it a snack.

LYSISTRATA

Nonetheless, there was other business that should matter more than all of that.

CALONICE

Well, Lysistrata dear, what exactly is this business you're calling us women together for? What's the deal? Is it a big one?

LYSISTRATA

It's big.

CALONICE

Not juicy as well?

LYSISTRATA

Oh yes, it's big *and* juicy.

CALONICE

Then how come we're not all here?

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

25 οὐχ οὗτος ὁ τρόπος· ταχὺ γὰρ ἂν ξυνήλθομεν.  
ἀλλ' ἔστιν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ πράγμ' ἀνεζητημένον  
πολλαῖσί τ' ἀγρυπνίαισιν ἐρριπτασμένον.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ἦ πού τι λεπτόν ἐστι τούρριπτασμένον;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

οὕτω γε λεπτόν ὥσθ' ὅλης τῆς Ἑλλάδος  
30 ἐν ταῖς γυναιξίν ἐστιν ἡ σωτηρία.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ἐν ταῖς γυναιξίν; ἐπ' ὀλίγου γ' ἄρ' εἶχετο.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὡς ἔστ' ἐν ἡμῖν τῆς πόλεως τὰ πράγματα,  
ἦ μηκέτ' εἶναι μήτε Πελοποννησίουσ—

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

βέλτιστα τοίνυν μηκέτ' εἶναι νῆ Δία.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

35 Βοιωτίους τε πάντας ἐξολωλέναι.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

μὴ δῆτα πάντας γ', ἀλλ' ἄφελε τὰς ἐγχείλεις.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

περὶ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν δ' οὐκ ἐπιγλωττήσομαι  
τοιούτου οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ὑπονόησον σύ μοι.  
ἦν δὲ ξυνέλθωσ' αἱ γυναῖκες ἐνθάδε,  
40 αἶ τ' ἐκ Βοιωτῶν αἶ τε Πελοποννησίων  
ἡμεῖς τε, κοινῇ σώσομεν τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

That's not what I meant! If it were, we'd all have shown up quickly enough. No, it's something I've been thinking hard about, tossing it around night after sleepless night.

CALONICE

After all that tossing it must be limp by now.

LYSISTRATA

So limp that the salvation of all Greece lies in the women's hands!

CALONICE

In the women's hands? A precarious place to be!

LYSISTRATA

Yes, our country's future depends on us: whether the Peloponnesians become extinct—

CALONICE

Well, that would be all right with me!

LYSISTRATA

and all the Boeotians are annihilated—

CALONICE

Not all of them, please—do spare the eels!<sup>4</sup>

LYSISTRATA

I won't say anything like that about the Athenians; you get the point. But if the women gather together here—the Boeotian women, the Peloponnesian women, and ourselves—together we'll be able to rescue Greece!

<sup>4</sup> Eels from Lake Copais were a great delicacy, but contraband during the war.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

τί δ' ἂν γυναῖκες φρόνιμον ἐργασαίαιτο  
 ἢ λαμπρόν, αἶ καθήμεθ' ἐξηνθισμένοι,  
 κροκωτοφοροῦσαι καὶ κεκαλλωπισμένοι  
 45 καὶ Κιμβερικ' ὀρθοστάδια καὶ περιβαρίδας;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ταῦτ' αὐτὰ γάρ τοι κάσθ' ἃ σώσειν προσδοκῶ,  
 τὰ κροκωτίδια καὶ τὰ μύρα χαῖ περιβαρίδες  
 χῆγχουσα καὶ τὰ διαφανῆ χιτώνια.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

τίνα δὴ τρόπον ποθ';

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὥστε τῶν νῦν μηδένα  
 50 ἀνδρῶν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν αἶρεσθαι δόρυ—

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

κροκωτὸν ἄρα νῆ τὸ θεῶν ἔγὼ βάψομαι.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

μηδ' ἀσπίδα λαβεῖν—

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

Κιμβερικὸν ἐνδύσομαι.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

μηδὲ ξιφίδιον.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

κτῆσομαι περιβαρίδας.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἄρ' οὐ παρεῖναι τὰς γυναῖκας δῆτ' ἐχρῆν;

LYSISTRATA

CALONICE

But what can mere women do that's intelligent or illustrious? We sit around the house looking pretty, wearing saffron dresses, and make-up, and Cimberic gowns, and pleasure-boat slippers.

LYSISTRATA

Exactly! That's exactly what I think will rescue Greece: our fancy little dresses, our perfumes and our slippers, our rouge and our see-through underwear!

CALONICE

Just how do you mean?

LYSISTRATA

They'll guarantee that not one of the men who are still alive will raise his spear against another—

CALONICE

In that case, by the Two Goddesses,<sup>5</sup> I'll have a dress dyed saffron!

LYSISTRATA

nor hoist his shield—

CALONICE

I'll wear a Cimberic gown!

LYSISTRATA

nor even pull a knife!

CALONICE

I'll go shopping for slippers!

LYSISTRATA

So shouldn't the women have arrived by now?

<sup>5</sup> Demeter and Kore (Persephone).

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

55 οὐ γὰρ μὰ Δί' ἀλλὰ πετομένας ἤκειν πάλαι.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀλλ', ὦ μέλ', ὄψει τοι σφόδρ' αὐτὰς Ἀττικὰς,  
ἅπαντα δρώσας τοῦ δέοντος ὕστερον.  
ἀλλ' οὐδὲ Παράλων οὐδεμία γυνὴ πάρα,  
οὐδ' ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

60 ἐπὶ τῶν κελήτων διαβεβήκασ' ὄρθρῃαι.  
ἀλλ' ἐκεῖναί γ' οἶδ' ὅτι

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

οὐδ' ἄς προσεδόκων κάλογιζόμενῃ ἐγὼ  
πρώτας παρέσεσθαι δεῦρο τὰς Ἀχαρνέων  
γυναῖκας, οὐχ ἤκουσιν.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ἢ γοῦν Θεογένους  
ὡς δεῦρ' ἰούσα τὰκάτειον ἤρετο.  
65 ἀτὰρ αἶδε καὶ δὴ σοι προσέρχονται τινες.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

αἶδ' αὖθ' ἕτεραι χωροῦσί τινες.

63 Θεο- ΣR: Θεα- R S

64 θοῦκάτειον ἤρετο Bentley et Daubuz cl. ΣRS



LYSISTRATA

CALONICE

By now? My god, they should have taken wing and flown here ages ago!

LYSISTRATA

Well, my friend, you'll find they're typically Athenian: everything they do, they do too late. There isn't even a single woman here from the Paralia, nor from Salamis.<sup>6</sup>

CALONICE

Don't worry, I just know they've been astride their pinnaces since dawn.

LYSISTRATA

And the women I reckoned would be here first, and counted on, the women from Acharnae, they're not here either.

CALONICE

Well, Theogenes<sup>7</sup> wife, for one, was rigging her jib<sup>8</sup> to come here.

*Groups of women begin to enter from both sides, among them MYRRHINE.*

But look, here come some of your women now!

LYSISTRATA

And there come some others, over there!

<sup>6</sup> Two regions of Attica that evoke the names of Athens' two fastest ships, the *Paralus* and the *Salaminia*.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the shipowner, Theogenes of Acharnae, ridiculed elsewhere as greedy, boastful, and boorish.

<sup>8</sup> Or, with the scholiasts' variant, "was consulting a shrine of Hecate" (a goddess popular with women).

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ἰοὺ ἰού,

πόθεν εἰσίν;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

Ἄναγυρουντόθεν.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

νῆ τὸν Δία·

ὁ γοῦν Ἄνάγυρός μοι κεκινῆσθαι δοκεῖ.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

μῶν ὕστεραι πάρεσμεν, ᾧ Λυσιστράτη;  
τί φῆς; τί σιγᾶς;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

70

οὐκ ἐπαινῶ, Μυρρίνη,  
ἤκουσαν ἄρτι περὶ τοιούτου πράγματος.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

μόλις γὰρ ἠῦρον ἐν σκότῳ τὸ ζώνιον.  
ἄλλ' εἴ τι πάνυ δεῖ, ταῖς παρούσαισιν λέγε.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

75

μὰ Δί' ἄλλ' ἐπαναμείνωμεν ὀλίγου γ' οὔνεκα  
τάς τ' ἐκ Βοιωτῶν τάς τε Πελοποννησίων  
γυναῖκας ἐλθεῖν.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

πολὺ σὺ κάλλιον λέγεις.  
ἦδι δὲ καὶ δὴ Λαμπιτῶ προσέρχεται.

---

<sup>9</sup> Anagyrus, a deme named after the malodorous plant *Anagyris foetida*.

LYSISTRATA

CALONICE

Phew! Where are *they* from?

LYSISTRATA

From Stinkton.<sup>9</sup>

CALONICE

Of course; I knew someone was raising a stink.

MYRRHINE<sup>10</sup>

I hope we're not too late, Lysistrata. What do you say? Why don't you say something?

LYSISTRATA

Myrrhine, I don't applaud anyone who shows up late for important business.

MYRRHINE

Well, I couldn't find my girdle; it was dark. But now that we're here, tell us what's so important.

LYSISTRATA

No, let's wait a little while, until the women from Boeotia and the Peloponnese get here.

MYRRHINE

That's a much better plan. And look, here's Lampito<sup>11</sup> coming now!

*Enter LAMPITO, accompanied by other Spartan Wives; Ismenia, a Theban Wife; and a Corinthian Wife.*

<sup>10</sup> Myrrhine ("Myrtle"), a very common name in life and in comedy, was particularly apt for this play, being associated with Aphrodite, used in bridal garlands, and slang for vulva.

<sup>11</sup> Lampito was an actual royal name in Sparta, but no contemporary of that name is known.

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὦ φιλτάτη Λάκαινα, χαίρε, Λαμπιτοῖ.  
οἶον τὸ κάλλος, ὦ γλυκυτάτη, φαίνεται.  
80 ὡς δ' εὐχροεῖς, ὡς δὲ σφριγᾶ τὸ σῶμά σου.  
κὰν ταῦρον ἄγχοις.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

μάλα γ', οἰῶ, ναὶ τὸ σιῶ·  
γυμνάδδομαί γα καὶ ποτὶ πνγὰν ἄλλομαι.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ὡς δὴ καλὸν τὸ χρῆμα τῶν τιτθῶν ἔχεις.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

ἄπερ ἱερείον τοί μ' ὑποψαλάσσετε.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

85 ἠδὲ δὲ ποδαπή 'σθ' ἠ νεᾶνις ἠτέρα;

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

πρέσβειρά τοι ναὶ τὸ σιῶ Βοιωτία  
ἵκει ποθ' ὑμέ.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

νῆ Δί' ὡς Βοιωτία  
καλόν γ' ἔχουσα τὸ πεδίον.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

καὶ νῆ Δία  
κομφότατα τὴν βληχῶ γε παρατετιλμένη.

84 ἱαρείον van Herwerden

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

Greetings, Lampito, my very dear Spartan friend! My darling, how vivid your beauty! What rosy cheeks, what firmness of physique! You could throttle a bull!

LAMPITO<sup>12</sup>

It's true, I think, by the Twin Gods.<sup>13</sup> I do take exercise, and I jump-kick my butt.

CALONICE

And what a fine set of tits you've got!

LAMPITO

Hey, you're feeling me up like a beast for sacrifice!

LYSISTRATA

And this other young lady here, where's she from?

LAMPITO

By the Twin Gods, she's here as the representative of Boeotia.

MYRRHINE

She certainly looks like Boeotia, with all her lush bottom-land.

CALONICE

Indeed, and with her bush most elegantly pruned.

<sup>12</sup> In *Lysistrata* all the Spartans speak a caricatured version of Laconian, their local dialect.

<sup>13</sup> The Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, brothers of Helen and special patrons of the Spartans.

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τίς δ' ἡτέρα παῖς;

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

90

χαῖα ναὶ τὸ σιώ,

Κορινθία δ' αὖ.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

χαῖα νῆ τὸν Δία

δήλη 'στὶν οὔσα ταυταγὶ κἀντευθενί.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

τίς δ' αὖ συναλίαξε τόνδε τὸν στόλον  
τὸν τᾶν γυναικῶν;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἤδ' ἐγώ.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

μύσιδδέ τυ

ὅ τι λῆς ποθ' ἀμέ.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

95

νῆ Δί', ὦ φίλη γύναι,

λέγε δήτα τὸ σπουδαῖον ὅ τι τοῦτ' ἐστὶ σοι.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

λέγοιμ' ἂν ἤδη. πρὶν <δὲ> λέγειν, ὑμᾶς τοδὶ  
ἐπερήσομαί, τι μικρόν.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ὅ τι βούλει γε σύ.

<sup>94</sup> μύσιδδέ τυ Valckenaer: μνσιδδέτω a

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

And who's this other girl?

LAMPITO

A lady of substance, by the Twin Gods, from Corinth.

CALONICE

She's substantial all right, both frontside and backside.

LAMPITO

Now who's convened this assembly of women?

LYSISTRATA

Right here; I'm the one.

LAMPITO

Then do explain what you want of us.

CALONICE

Yes, dear lady, do speak up. What's this important business of yours?

LYSISTRATA

I'm ready to tell you. But before I tell you, I want to ask you a small question; it won't take long.

CALONICE

Ask away.



ARISTOPHANES

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

100 τούς πατέρας οὐ ποθείτε τούς τῶν παιδίων  
ἐπὶ στρατιᾶς ἀπόντας; εὖ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι  
πάσαισιν ὑμῖν ἔστιν ἀποδημῶν ἀνὴρ.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ὁ γοῦν ἐμὸς ἀνὴρ πέντε μῆνας, ὦ τάλαν,  
ἄπεστιν ἐπὶ Θράκης φυλάττων Εὐκράτη.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ὁ δ' ἐμός γε τελέους ἑπτὰ μῆνας ἐν Πύλῳ.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

105 ὁ δ' ἐμός γα, καὶ κ' ἐκ τᾶς ταγάς ἔλση ποκά,  
πορπακισάμενος φροῦδος ἀμπτάμενος ἔβα.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

110 ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μοιχοῦ καταλέλειπται φειφάλυξ.  
ἔξ οὔ γὰρ ἡμᾶς προὔδοσαν Μιλήσιοι,  
οὐκ εἶδον οὐδ' ὄλισβον ὀκτωδάκτυλον,  
ὃς ἦν ἂν ἡμῖν σκυτίνη 'πικουρία.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἐθέλοιτ' ἂν οὔν, εἰ μηχανὴν εὔροιμ' ἐγώ,  
μετ' ἐμοῦ καταλύσαι τὸν πόλεμον;

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

115 νῆ τὸ θεὸν  
ἐγὼ μὲν ἄν, κἂν εἴ με χρεῖη τοῦγκυκλον  
τουτὶ καταθείσαν ἐκπιεῖν αὐθημερόν.

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

Don't you all pine for your children's fathers when they're off at war? I'm sure that every one of you has a husband away from home.

CALONICE

My husband's been away five months, my dear, at the Thracian front; he's guarding Eucrates.<sup>14</sup>

MYRRHINE

And mine's been at Pylos seven whole months.

LAMPITO

And mine, whenever he does come home from the regiment, is soon strapping on his shield and flying off again.

CALONICE

Even lovers have vanished without a trace. Ever since the Milesians revolted from us, I haven't even seen a six-inch dildo, which might have been a consolation, however small.<sup>15</sup>

LYSISTRATA

Well, if I could devise a plan to end the war, would you be ready to join me?

CALONICE

By the Two Goddesses, I would, even if I had to pawn this dress and, on the very same day, drink up the proceeds!

<sup>14</sup> Substituting the name of an Athenian commander, not certainly identifiable, for the name of a city that the Athenians were besieging.

<sup>15</sup> Miletus, a notable exporter of dildoes (cf. fr. 592.16–28), had defected the previous summer (Thucydides 8.17).

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

115 ἐγὼ δέ γ' ἄν, κὰν ὡσπερεὶ ψῆτταν δοκῶ  
δοῦναι ἂν ἐμαντῆς παρατεμούσα θῆμισυ.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

ἐγὼν δὲ καὶ κα ποττὸ Ταῦγετόν γ' ἄνω  
ἐλσοιμ' ὅπῃ μέλλοιμί γ' εἰράναν ἰδῆν.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

λέγοιμ' ἄν· οὐ δεῖ γὰρ κεκρύφθαι τὸν λόγον.  
120 ἡμῖν γάρ, ὦ γυναῖκες, εἶπερ μέλλομεν  
ἀναγκάσειν τοὺς ἄνδρας εἰρήνην ἄγειν,  
ἀφεκτέ' ἐστι—

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

τοῦ; φράσον.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ποιήσεται οὖν;

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ποιήσομεν, κὰν ἀποθανεῖν ἡμᾶς δέη.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀφεκτέα τοίνυν ἐστὶν ἡμῖν τοῦ πέους.  
125 τί μοι μεταστρέφεσθε; ποῖ βαδίζετε;  
αὐται, τί μοι μνᾶτε κἀνανεύετε;  
τί χρῶς τέτραπται; τί δάκρυον κατείβεται;  
ποιήσεται ἢ οὐ ποιήσεται; ἢ τί μέλλετε;

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

οὐκ ἂν ποιήσαιμ', ἀλλ' ὁ πόλεμος ἐρπέτω.

LYSISTRATA

MYRRHINE

As for me, I'd even cut myself in two like a flounder and donate half to the cause!

LAMPITO

And I would climb to the summit of Taygetus,<sup>16</sup> if I could catch sight of peace from there.

LYSISTRATA

Here goes, then; no need to beat around the bush. Ladies, if we're going to force the men to make peace, we're going to have to give up—

CALONICE

Give up what? Tell us.

LYSISTRATA

You'll do it, then?

CALONICE

We'll do it, even if it means our death!

LYSISTRATA

All right. We're going to have to give up—the prick. Why are you turning away from me? Where are you going? Why are you all pursing your lips and shaking your heads? What means your altered color and tearful droppings? Will you do it or not? What are you waiting for?

CALONICE

Count me out; let the war drag on.

<sup>16</sup> The tallest peak in Laconia.

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

130 μὰ Δί' οὐδ' ἔγὼ γάρ, ἀλλ' ὁ πόλεμος ἐρπέτω.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ταυτὶ σὺ λέγεις, ὦ ψῆττα; καὶ μὴν ἄρτι γε  
ἔφησθα σαυτῆς κἄν παρατεμεῖν θῆμισυ.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ἄλλ', ἄλλ' ὅ τι βούλει. κἄν με χρῆ, διὰ τοῦ πυρὸς  
ἔθέλω βαδίζειν. τοῦτο μᾶλλον τοῦ πέους·  
135 οὐδὲν γὰρ οἶον, ὦ φίλη Λυσιστράτη,

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τί δαὶ σύ;

ΓΤΝΗ Α΄

κἀγὼ βούλομαι διὰ τοῦ πυρός.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὦ παγκατάπυγον θῆμέτερον ἅπαν γένος.  
οὐκ ἔτὸς ἀφ' ἡμῶν εἰσιν αἱ τραγωδίαί  
οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐσμεν πλὴν Ποσειδῶν καὶ σκάφη.  
140 ἄλλ', ὦ φίλη Λάκαινα,—σὺ γὰρ εἶν γένη  
μόνη μετ' ἐμοῦ, τὸ πρᾶγμ' ἀνασωσαίμεσθ' ἔτ'  
<ἄν>—

ξυμψήφισαί μοι.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

χαλεπὰ μὲν ναὶ τὸ σιῶ  
γυναῖκας ὑπνῶν ἐστ' ἄνευ ψωλᾶς μόνας.  
ὅμως γὰρ μάν· δεῖ τὰς γὰρ εἰράνας μάλ' αὖ.

LYSISTRATA

MYRRHINE

Me too, by Zeus; let the war drag on.

LYSISTRATA

This from you, Ms. Flounder? Weren't you saying just a moment ago that you'd cut yourself in half?

CALONICE

Anything else you want, anything at all! I'm even ready to walk through fire; rather than the prick. There's nothing like it, my dear Lysistrata.

LYSISTRATA

And what about you?

ATHENIAN WIFE

I'm ready to walk through fire too.

LYSISTRATA

Oh what a low and horny race are we! No wonder tragedies get written about us: we're nothing but Poseidon and a tub.<sup>17</sup> But my dear Spartan, if you alone would side with me, we might still salvage the plan; give me your vote!

LAMPITO

By the Twin Gods, it's difficult for females to sleep alone without the hard-on. But no matter, I assent; we need peace.

<sup>17</sup> In a myth twice dramatized by Sophocles, Tyro was seduced by the god Poseidon disguised as her lover, and exposed the resulting twin boys in a tub by the river.

## ARISTOPHANES

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

145 ὦ φιλτάτη σὺ καὶ μόνη τούτων γυνή.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

εἰ δ' ὡς μάλιστ' ἀπεχοίμεθ' οὐ σὺ δὴ λέγεις,—  
ὃ μὴ γένοιτο,—μᾶλλον ἂν διὰ τουτογὶ  
γένουτ' ἂν εἰρήνη;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

πολύ γε νῆ τὸ θεῷ.

εἰ γὰρ καθήμεθ' ἔνδον ἐντετριμμένοι,  
150 κὰν τοῖς χιτωνίοισι τοῖς ἀμοργίνοις  
γυμναὶ παρίοιμεν δέλτα παρατετιλμένοι,  
στύοιντο δ' ἄνδρες κἀπιθυμοῖεν σπλεκοῦν,  
ἡμεῖς δὲ μὴ προσίοιμεν, ἀλλ' ἀπεχοίμεθα,  
σπονδὰς ποιήσαιντ' ἂν ταχέως, εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

155 ὁ γῶν Μενέλαος τᾶς Ἑλένας τὰ μάλᾳ πα  
γυμνᾶς παρανιδῶν ἐξέβαλ', οἶῶ, τὸ ξίφος.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

τί δ', ἦν ἀφιῶσ' ἄνδρες ἡμᾶς, ὦ μέλει;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τὸ τοῦ Φερεκράτους, κύνα δέρειν δεδαρμένην.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

φλυαρία ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τὰ μεμιμημένα.  
160 ἔὰν λαβόντες δ' εἰς τὸ δωμάτιον βία  
ἔλκωσιν ἡμᾶς;

153 προσῖδο[ιμεν] Π1



LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

You're an absolute dear, and the only real woman here!

CALONICE

Well, what if we did abstain from, uh, what you say, which heaven forbid: would peace be likelier to come on that account?

LYSISTRATA

Absolutely, by the Two Goddesses. If we sat around at home all made up, and walked past them wearing only our diaphanous underwear, with our pubes plucked in a neat triangle, and our husbands got hard and hankered to ball us, but we didn't go near them and kept away, they'd sue for peace, and pretty quick, you can count on that!

LAMPITO

Like Menelaus! As soon as he peeked at bare Helen's melons, he threw his sword away, I reckon.<sup>18</sup>

CALONICE

But what if our husbands pay us no attention?

LYSISTRATA

As Pherecrates said, skin the skinned dog.<sup>19</sup>

CALONICE

Facsimiles are nothing but poppycock. And what if they grab us and drag us into the bedroom by force?

<sup>18</sup> Menelaus, King of Sparta, bent on killing his unfaithful wife Helen after the fall of Troy, dropped his sword at the sight of her; Euripides had apparently added the detail about her breasts in *Andromache* 627–31. <sup>19</sup> I.e., “use a dildo.” The comic poet Pherecrates was an older contemporary of Aristophanes; ancient scholars could not locate this quotation.

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀντέχου σὺ τῶν θυρῶν.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ἐὰν δὲ τύπτωσιν;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

παρέχειν χρὴ κακὰ κακῶς·  
οὐ γὰρ ἔνι τούτοις ἠδονὴ τοῖς πρὸς βίαν.  
κᾶλλως ὀδυνᾶν χρὴ· κἀμέλει ταχέως πάνν  
165 ἀπεροῦσιν. οὐ γὰρ οὐδέποτ' εὐφρανθήσεται  
ἀνὴρ, ἐὰν μὴ τῇ γυναικὶ ξυμφέρῃ.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

εἴ τοι δοκεῖ σφῶν ταῦτα, χῆμῖν ξυνδοκεῖ.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

καὶ τὼς μὲν ἀμῶν ἄνδρας ἀμὲς πείσομε  
παντᾶ δικαίως ἄδολον εἰράναν ἄγην·  
170 τὸν τῶν Ἀσαναίων γὰρ μὰν ῥνάχετον  
πᾶ κά τις ἀμπείσειεν αὐτὸ μὴ πλαδδιῆν;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἡμεῖς ἀμέλει σοι τά γε παρ' ἡμῖν πείσομεν.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

οὔχ, ἅς πόδας κ' ἔχωντι ταὶ τριήρεις  
καὶ τῶργύριον τῶβυσσον ἧ παρ τᾶ σιῶ.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

175 ἀλλ' ἔστι καὶ τοῦτ' εἶ παρεσκευασμένον·  
καταληψόμεθα γὰρ τὴν ἀκρόπολιν τήμερον.  
ταῖς πρεσβυτάταις γὰρ προστέτακται τοῦτο δρᾶν,

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

Hold onto the door.

CALONICE

And what if they beat us?

LYSISTRATA

Then submit, but disagreeably: men get no pleasure in sex when they have to force you. And make them suffer in other ways as well. Don't worry, they'll soon give in. No husband can have a happy life if his wife doesn't want him to.

CALONICE

Well, if the two of you agree to this, then we agree too.

LAMPITO

And we will convince *our* menfolk to keep a completely fair and honest peace. But how can anyone keep your Athenian rabble from acting like lunatics?

LYSISTRATA

Don't worry, we'll handle the persuasion on our side.

LAMPITO

Not so, as long as your battleships are under canvas and your Goddess' temple<sup>20</sup> has a bottomless fund of money.

LYSISTRATA

No, that's also been well provided for: we're going to occupy the Acropolis this very day. The older women are assigned that part: while we're working out our agreement

<sup>20</sup> The treasury of Athena on the Acropolis.

ARISTOPHANES

ἕως ἂν ἡμεῖς ταῦτα συντιθώμεθα,  
θύειν δοκούσαις καταλαβεῖν τὴν ἀκρόπολιν.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

180 παντᾶ κ' ἔχοι· καὶ τᾶδε γὰρ λέγεις καλῶς.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τί δῆτα ταῦτ' οὐχ ὡς τάχιστα, Λαμπιτοῖ,  
ξυνωμόσαμεν, ὅπως ἂν ἀρρήκτως ἔχη;

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

πάρφαινε μὰν τὸν ὄρκον, ὡς ὁμιώμεθα.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

καλῶς λέγεις. ποῦ 'σθ' ἡ Σκύθαινα; ποῖ βλέπεις;  
185 θὲς εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν ὑπτίαν τὴν ἀσπίδα,  
καί μοι δότω τὰ τόμιά τις.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

Λυσιστράτη,

τίν' ὄρκον ὀρκώσεις ποθ' ἡμᾶς;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὄντινα;

εἰς ἀσπίδ', ὥσπερ, φασίν, Αἰσχύλος ποτέ,  
μηλοσφαγούσας.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

μὴ σύ γ', ὦ Λυσιστράτη,

190 εἰς ἀσπίδ' ὁμόσῃς μηδὲν εἰρήνης πέρι.

LYSISTRATA

down here, they'll occupy the Acropolis, pretending to be up there for a sacrifice.

LAMPITO

Sounds perfect, like the rest of your proposals.

LYSISTRATA

Then why not ratify them immediately, Lampito, by taking an oath, so that the terms will be unbreakable?

LAMPITO

Unveil the oath, then, and we'll all swear to it.

LYSISTRATA

Well said. Where's the Scythian girl?

*A Scythian Girl comes out of the scene building with a shield.*

What are you gawking at? Put that shield down in front of us—no, the other way—and someone give me the severings.

CALONICE

Lysistrata, what kind of oath are you planning to make us swear?

LYSISTRATA

What kind? The kind they say Aeschylus once had people swear, slaughtering an animal over a shield.<sup>21</sup>

CALONICE

Lysistrata, please don't take any oath about peace over a shield!

<sup>21</sup> In *Seven Against Thebes* 42–48, where the Seven vow to take Thebes or die in the attempt.

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τίς ἂν οὖν γένοιτ' ἂν ὄρκος;

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

εἰ λευκὸν ποθεν  
ἵππον λαβοῦσαι τόμιον ἐντεμοίμεθα;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ποῖ λευκὸν ἵππον;

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ἀλλὰ πῶς ὁμούμεθα  
ἡμεῖς;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

195 ἐγώ σοι νῆ Δί', ἣν βούλη, φράσω.  
θεῖσαι μέλαιναν κύλικα μεγάλην ὑπτίαν,  
μηλοσφαγοῦσαι Θάσιον οἴνου σταμνίον  
ὁμόσωμεν εἰς τὴν κύλικα μὴ 'πιχεῖν ὕδωρ.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

φεῦ δᾶ, τὸν ὄρκον ἄφατον ὡς ἐπαινίω.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

φερέτω κύλικά τις ἔνδοθεν καὶ σταμνίον.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

200 ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, <ὁ> κεραμῶν ὅσος.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ταύτην μὲν ἂν τις εὐθὺς ἤσθειη λαβών.

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

Then what kind of oath will it be?

CALONICE

What if we got a white stallion<sup>22</sup> somewhere and cut a piece off him?

LYSISTRATA

White stallion? Get serious.

CALONICE

Well, how *are* we going to swear?

LYSISTRATA

If you'd like to know, I can certainly tell you. We put a big black wine cup hollow up, right here; we slaughter a magnum of Thasian wine into it; and we swear not to pour any water into the cup!

LAMPITO

Oh da, I can't find words to praise that oath!

LYSISTRATA

Somebody go inside and fetch a cup and a magnum.

*The Scythian Girl takes the shield inside and returns with a huge wine bottle and cup.*

MYRRHINE

Dearest ladies, what a jumbo jug!

CALONICE

Just touching this could make a person merry!

<sup>22</sup> A costly and exotic sacrifice, perhaps recalling the oath taken by Helen's suitors, cf. Pausanias 3.20.9.



ARISTOPHANES

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

καταθείσα ταύτην προσλαβοῦ μοι τοῦ κάπρου.  
δέσποινα Πειθοῖ καὶ κύλιξ φιλοτησία,  
τὰ σφάγια δέξαι ταῖς γυναιξὶν εὐμενής.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

205 εὐχρων γε θαῖμα κάποπυτίζει καλῶς.

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

καὶ μὰν ποτόδδει γ' ἀδὺ ναὶ τὸν Κάστορα.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ἐάτε πρώτην μ', ᾧ γυναικες, ὀμνύναι.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην οὐκ, ἐάν γε μὴ λάχης.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

210 λάζυσθε πᾶσαι τῆς κύλικος, ᾧ Λαμπιτοῖ·  
λεγέτω δ' ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν μί' ἄπερ ἂν καγὰ λέγω·  
ὑμεῖς δ' ἐπομείσθε ταῦτα κάμπεδώσετε.  
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οὔτε μοιχὸς οὔτ' ἀνήρ—

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεὶς οὔτε μοιχὸς οὔτ' ἀνήρ—

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὅστις πρὸς ἐμὲ πρόσεισιν ἔστυκῶς. λέγε.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

215 ὅστις πρὸς ἐμὲ πρόσεισιν ἔστυκῶς. παπαῖ,  
ὑπολύεταιί μου τὰ γόνατ', ᾧ Λυσιστράτη.

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

Hands off! Now all join me in laying hands upon this boar. Mistress Persuasion and Cup of Fellowship, graciously receive this sacrifice from the women. (*She opens the bottle and pours wine into the cup*)

CALONICE

The blood's a good color and spurts out nicely.

LAMPITO

It smells good too, by Castor!

MYRRHINE

Ladies, let me be the first to take the oath!

CALONICE

Hold on, by Aphrodite! Not unless you draw the first lot!

LYSISTRATA

All of you lay your hands upon the cup; you too Lampito. Now one of you, on behalf of you all, must repeat after me the terms of the oath, and the rest of you will then swear to abide by them. No man of any kind, lover or husband—

CALONICE

No man of any kind, lover or husband—

LYSISTRATA

shall approach me with a hard-on. Speak up!

CALONICE

Shall approach me with a hard-on. Oh god, my knees are buckling, Lysistrata!

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

οἴκοι δ' ἀταυρώτη διάξω τὸν βίον—

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

οἴκοι δ' ἀταυρώτη διάξω τὸν βίον—

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

κροκωτοφοροῦσα καὶ κεκαλλωπισμένη—

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

220 κροκωτοφοροῦσα καὶ κεκαλλωπισμένη—

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὅπως ἂν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτυφῇ μάλιστά μου·

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ὅπως ἂν ἀνὴρ ἐπιτυφῇ μάλιστά μου·

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

κοῦδέποθ' ἐκούσα τάνδρῖ τῶμῶ πείσομαι.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

κοῦδέποθ' ἐκούσα τάνδρῖ τῶμῶ πείσομαι.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

225 ἔαν δέ μ' ἄκουσαν βιάζηται βία—

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ἔαν δέ μ' ἄκουσαν βιάζηται βία—

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

κακῶς παρέξω κοῦχὶ προσκινήσομαι.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

κακῶς παρέξω κοῦχὶ προσκινήσομαι.

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

At home in celibacy shall I pass my life—

CALONICE

At home in celibacy shall I pass my life—

LYSISTRATA

wearing a saffron dress and all dolled up—

CALONICE

wearing a saffron dress and all dolled up—

LYSISTRATA

so that my husband will get as hot as a volcano for me—

CALONICE

so that my husband will get as hot as a volcano for me—

LYSISTRATA

but never willingly shall I surrender to my husband.

CALONICE

but never willingly shall I surrender to my husband.

LYSISTRATA

If he should use force to force me against my will—

CALONICE

If he should use force to force me against my will—

LYSISTRATA

I will submit coldly and not move my hips.

CALONICE

I will submit coldly and not move my hips.

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

οὐ πρὸς τὸν ὄροφον ἀνατενῶ τὸ Περσικά.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

230 οὐ πρὸς τὸν ὄροφον ἀνατενῶ τὸ Περσικά.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

οὐ στήσομαι λέαιν' ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

οὐ στήσομαι λέαιν' ἐπὶ τυροκνήστιδος.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ταῦτ' ἐμπεδοῦσα μὲν πίοιμ' ἐντευθενί—

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ταῦτ' ἐμπεδοῦσα μὲν πίοιμ' ἐντευθενί—

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

235 εἰ δὲ παραβαίην, ὕδατος ἐμπλήθ' ἢ κύλιξ.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

εἰ δὲ παραβαίην, ὕδατος ἐμπλήθ' ἢ κύλιξ.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

συνεπόμνυθ' ὑμεῖς ταῦτα πᾶσαι;

ΠΑΣΑΙ

νῆ Δία.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

φέρ' ἐγὼ καθαγίσω τήνδε.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

τὸ μέρος γ', ὦ φίλη,  
ὅπως ἂν ὦμεν εὐθὺς ἀλλήλων φίλαι.

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

I will not raise my Persian slippers toward the ceiling.

CALONICE

I will not raise my Persian slippers toward the ceiling.

LYSISTRATA

I won't crouch down like the lioness on a cheese grater.

CALONICE

I won't crouch down like the lioness on a cheese grater.

LYSISTRATA

If I live up to these vows, may I drink from this cup.

CALONICE

If I live up to these vows, may I drink from this cup.

LYSISTRATA

But if I break them, may the cup be full of water.

CALONICE

But if I break them, may the cup be full of water.

LYSISTRATA

So swear you one and all?

ALL

So swear we all!

LYSISTRATA

All right, then, I'll consecrate the cup. (*She takes a long drink*)

CALONICE

Only your share, my friend; let's make sure we're all on friendly terms from the very start.

*After they drink, a joyful cry of women is heard offstage.*

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΑΜΠΙΤΩ

τίς ὠλολυγά;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

- 240                                    τοῦτ' ἐκεῖν' οὐγὼ ἄλεγον·  
αἰ γὰρ γυναιῖκες τὴν ἀκρόπολιν τῆς θεοῦ  
ἤδη καθειλήφασιν. ἀλλ', ὦ Λαμπιτοῖ,  
σὺ μὲν βάδιζε καὶ τὰ παρ' ὑμῖν εὖ τίθει,  
τασδὶ δ' ὀμήρους κατάλιφ' ἡμῖν ἐνθάδε.  
245 ἡμεῖς δὲ ταῖς ἄλλαισι ταῖσιν ἐν πόλει  
ξυνεμβάλωμεν εἰσιοῦσαι τοὺς μοχλοὺς.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

οὐκουν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ξυμβοηθήσειν οἶει  
τοὺς ἄνδρας εὐθύς;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

- ὀλίγον αὐτῶν μοι μέλει.  
οὐ γὰρ τοσαύτας οὐτ' ἀπειλὰς οὔτε πῦρ  
250 ἤξουσ' ἔχοντες ὥστ' ἀνοιῖξαι τὰς πύλας  
ταύτας, ἐὰν μὴ ἴφ' οἷσιν ἡμεῖς εἶπομεν.

ΚΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην οὐδέποτε γ'. ἄλλως γὰρ ἂν  
ἄμαχοι γυναιῖκες καὶ μιαραὶ κεκλήμεθ' ἂν.



LYSISTRATA

LAMPITO

What's that hurrah?

LYSISTRATA

It's just as I was telling you before: the women have occupied the Acropolis and the Goddess' temple. Now, Lampito: you be off and see to your end of the bargain, but leave these women here with us as hostages.

*Exit LAMPITO.*

Meanwhile, let's go inside with the other women on the Acropolis and help bar the gates.

CALONICE

But don't you think the men will quickly launch a concerted counterattack on us?

LYSISTRATA

I'm not worried about them. They can't come against us with enough threats or fire to get these gates open, except on the terms we've agreed on.

CALONICE

No they can't, so help me Aphrodite! Otherwise we women wouldn't deserve to be called rascals you can't win a fight with!

*All exit into the central door of the scene building, which henceforth represents the Acropolis gates.*

*Enter MEN'S CHORUS, elderly and poorly dressed; each dancer carries a pair of logs, an unlit torch, and a bucket of live coals.*

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

χώρει, Δράκης, ἡγοῦ βάδην, εἰ καὶ τὸν ὦμον ἀλγείης  
255 κορμου̐ τοσουτονὶ βάρως χλωρᾶς φέρων ἐλαίας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ

(στρ) ἦ πόλλ' ἄελπτ' ἔνεστιν ἐν τῷ μακρῷ βίῳ, φεῦ,  
258/9 ἐπεὶ τίς ἄν ποτ' ἤλπισ', ὦ Στρυμόδωρ', ἀκούσαι  
260 γυναικας, ἃς ἐβόσκομεν κατ' οἶκον ἐμφανὲς κακόν,  
κατὰ μὲν ἄγιον ἔχειν βρέτας,  
κατὰ τ' ἀκρόπολιν ἐμὰν λαβεῖν  
κλήθροισί τ' αὖ καὶ μοχλοῖ-  
265 σι τὰ προπύλαια πακτοῦν;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα πρὸς πόλιν σπεύσωμεν, ὦ  
Φιλοῦργε,  
ὅπως ἂν αὐταῖς ἐν κύκλῳ θέντες τὰ πρέμνα ταυτί,  
ὅσαι τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτ' ἐνεστήσαντο καὶ μετῆλθον,  
μίαν πυρὰν νήσαντες ἐμπρήσωμεν αὐτόχειρες  
270 πάσας, ἀπὸ ψήφου μιᾶς, πρώτην δὲ τὴν Λύκωνος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ

(ἀντ) οὐ γὰρ μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ' ἐμοῦ ζῶντος ἐγχανοῦνται  
273/4 ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ Κλεομένης, ὃς αὐτὴν κατέσχε πρῶτος,

<sup>23</sup> The names given to members of this semichorus are generic for old men.

<sup>24</sup> The ancient olivewood image of Athena Polias.

<sup>25</sup> Because Lycon's wife had a reputation for promiscuity (Eupolis 232), the men imagine (wrongly) that she must be the

## LYSISTRATA

### MEN'S LEADER

Onward, Draces,<sup>23</sup> lead the way, even if your shoulder does ache from toting such a heavy load of green olivewood.

### MEN'S CHORUS

If you live long enough you'll get many surprises, yes  
sir!

Well, Strymodorus, who in the world ever thought  
we'd hear

that women, the blatant nuisance we've reared in our  
homes,

now control the Sacred Image<sup>24</sup>

and occupy my Acropolis,

And to top it all, with bolts and bars  
close off the citadel gates?

### MEN'S LEADER

Let's hurry to the Acropolis, Philurgus, full speed ahead, so we can lay these logs in a circle around all the women who have instigated or abetted this business. Let's erect a single pyre and incinerate them with our own hands, all of them on a single vote, starting with Lycon's wife!<sup>25</sup>

### MEN'S CHORUS

By Demeter, they'll not laugh at me while I'm alive!  
Not even Cleomenes,<sup>26</sup> the first to occupy this place,

ringleader; her husband and their son Autolycus (characters in Xenophon's *Symposium*) were also notorious for high living, cf. *Wasps* 1301, Cratinus 214, Eupolis 61.

<sup>26</sup> A Spartan king (c. 520–490) who in 508 had occupied the Acropolis for two days on the invitation of Athenian oligarchs, and was allowed to leave under truce, paving the way for the restoration of the democratic leader Cleisthenes.

ARISTOPHANES

275/6 ἀπήλθεν ἀψάλακτος, ἀλλ' ὅμως Λακωνικὸν πνέων  
 ὄχετο θῶπλα παραδοὺς ἐμοί,  
 σμικρὸν ἔχων πάνυ τριβώνιον,  
 πεινῶν ῥυπῶν ἀπαράτιλ-  
 280 τος, ἐξ ἐτῶν ἄλουτος.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

οὕτως ἐπολιόρκησ' ἐγὼ τὸν ἄνδρ' ἐκείνον ὡμῶς  
 ἐφ' ἐπτακαίδεκ' ἀσπίδων πρὸς ταῖς πύλαις  
 καθεύδων.

τασδὶ δὲ τὰς Εὐριπίδη θεοῖς τε πᾶσιν ἐχθρὰς  
 ἐγὼ οὐκ ἄρα σχήσω παρῶν τολμήματος τοσοῦτου;  
 285 μή νυν ἔτ' ἐν <τῇ> τετραπόλει τοῦμὸν τροπαῖον εἶη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ

(στρ) ἀλλ' αὐτὸ γάρ μοι τῆς ὁδοῦ  
 λοιπὸν ἐστὶ χωρίον  
 τὸ πρὸς πόλιν τὸ σιμόν, οἷ σπουδὴν ἔχω.  
 πῶς <δῆ> ποτ' ἐξαμπρεύσομεν  
 290 τοῦτ' ἄνευ κανθηλίου;  
 ὡς ἐμοῦ γε τὸ ξύλω τὸν ὦμον ἐξιπώκατον.  
 ἀλλ' ὅμως βαδιστέον,  
 καὶ τὸ πῦρ φυσητέον,  
 μή μ' ἀποσβεισθὲν λάθη  
 πρὸς τῇ τελευτῇ τῆς ὁδοῦ.

294a φῦ φῦ.

295 ἰοὺ ἰοὺ τοῦ καπνοῦ.

(ἀντ) ὡς δεινόν, ὦναξ Ἡράκλεις,

## LYSISTRATA

left here intact. No, for all he breathed the Spartan spirit,  
he left without his weapons—surrendering to me!—  
with only a little bitty jacket on his back,  
starving, filthy, unshaven,  
unwashed for six whole years.

### MEN'S LEADER

That's the way I laid siege to that fellow—savagely! We camped before the gates in ranks seventeen deep. And now shall I stand by and do nothing to put down the effrontery of these women, enemies of all the gods and of Euripides?<sup>27</sup> Then my trophy in the Tetrapolis may as well disappear!<sup>28</sup>

### MEN'S CHORUS

My trek is nearly done;  
all that remains is the steep stretch  
up to the Acropolis, where I can't wait to be!  
How in the world are we going to haul  
these loads up there without a donkey?  
This pair of logs is utterly crushing my shoulder!  
But I've got to soldier on,  
and keep my fire alight.  
It mustn't go out on me before I've reached my goal.  
Ouch, ugh! The smoke!

How terribly, Lord Heracles, this smoke

<sup>27</sup> Euripides' reputation as a misogynist, first attested here, underlies the plot of *Women at the Thesmophoria*.

<sup>28</sup> The stone monument at Marathon, one of the four associated towns of the Tetrapolis, that commemorated the great Athenian victory over the Persians in 490.

ARISTOPHANES

- προσπεσόν μ' ἐκ τῆς χύτρας  
ὥσπερ κύων λυττώσα τῶφθαλμῶ δάκνει.  
κάστιν γε Δήμνιον τὸ πῦρ  
300 τοῦτο πάσῃ μηχανῇ·  
οὐ γὰρ <ἄν> ποθ' ᾧδ' ὀδαῖξ ἔβρυκε τὰς λήμας ἐμοῦ.  
σπεῦδε πρόσθεν εἰς πόλιν  
καὶ βοήθει τῇ θεῶ.  
ἢ πότ' αὐτῇ μάλλον ἢ  
νῦν, ᾧ Δάχης, ἀρήξομεν;  
305 φύ φύ.  
305a ἰοὺ ἰοὺ τοῦ καπνοῦ.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

- τουτὶ τὸ πῦρ ἐγρήγορεν θεῶν ἑκατι καὶ ζῆ.  
οὔκουν ἄν, εἰ τὼ μὲν ξύλω θείμεσθα πρῶτον αὐτοῦ,  
τῆς ἀμπέλου δ' εἰς τὴν χύτραν τὸν φανὸν  
ἐγκαθέντες  
ἄψαντες εἶτ' εἰς τὴν θύραν κριηδὸν ἐμπέσοιμεν,  
310 κἂν μὴ καλούντων τοὺς μοχλοὺς χαλῶσιν αἱ  
γυναῖκες,  
ἐμπιμπράναι χρὴ τὰς θύρας καὶ τῷ καπνῷ πιέζειν.  
θώμεσθα δὴ τὸ φορτίον. φεῦ τοῦ καπνοῦ, βαβαιάξ.  
τίς ξυλλάβοιτ' ἂν τοῦ ξύλου τῶν ἐν Σάμῳ  
στρατηγῶν;  
ταυτὶ μὲν ἤδη τὴν ράχιν θλίβοντά μου πέπαιται.  
315 σὸν δ' ἔργον ἐστίν, ᾧ χύτρα, τὸν ἄνθρακ' ἐξεγείρειν,  
τὴν λαμπάδ' ἡμμένην ὅπως πρώτιστ' ἐμοὶ  
προσοίσει.



## LYSISTRATA

jumped from the bucket and attacked me!  
It bit both my eyes like a rabid bitch!  
And as for this fire, it's Lemnian  
in every possible way;<sup>29</sup> otherwise  
it wouldn't have bitten into my bloodshot eyes that  
way!  
Hurry forth to the citadel,  
run to the Goddess' rescue!  
When would be a better time than now to help her,  
Laches?  
Ouch, ugh! The smoke!

### MEN'S LEADER

This fire's awake, by the grace of the gods, and plenty lively too. Let's place our logs right here, then dip our torches into the buckets, and when they're lighted we'll charge the gates like rams. If the women don't unbolt the gates when we invite their surrender, we'll set the portals afire and smoke them into submission. Very well, let's put the logs down. Phew, that smoke! Damn! Would any of the generals at Samos care to help us with this wood?<sup>30</sup> (*laying down the logs*) These have finally stopped crushing my back! Now it's your job, bucket, to rouse your coals to flame and thus supply me—step one!—with a lighted torch. Lady

<sup>29</sup> The island, then an Athenian colony, was volcanic; its name puns on *lemai* "bloodshot eyes"; and according to legend, its women had once murdered their husbands.

<sup>30</sup> Since the end of summer 412 Samos had been the headquarters of the Athenians' Aegean fleet.



ARISTOPHANES

δέσποινα Νίκη, ξυγγενοῦ τῶν τ' ἐν πόλει γυναικῶν  
τοῦ νῦν παρεστῶτος θράσους θέσθαι τροπαῖον  
ἡμᾶς.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

λιγνὺν δοκῶ μοι καθορᾶν καὶ καπνόν, ᾧ γυναῖκες,  
320 ὥσπερ πυρὸς καομένου· σπενυστέον ἐστὶ θᾶπτον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ

- (στρ) πέτου πέτου, Νικοδίκη,  
πρὶν ἐμπεπρήσθαι Καλύκη  
τε καὶ Κρίτυλλαν περιφυσῆτω  
ὑπὸ τ' ἀνέμων ἀργαλέων  
325 ὑπὸ τε γερόντων ὀλέθρων.  
ἀλλὰ φοβοῦμαι τόδε μῶν ὑστερόπους βοηθῶ;  
νῦν δὴ γὰρ ἐμπλησαμένη τὴν ὑδρίαν κνεφαία  
μόλις ἀπὸ κρήνης ὑπ' ὄχλου καὶ θορύβου  
καὶ πατάγου χυτρείου,  
330/1 δούλαισιν ὠστιζομένη  
στιγματίαις θ', ἀρπαλέως  
ἀραμένη, ταῖσιν ἐμαῖς  
δημότισιν καομέναις  
335 φέρουσ' ὕδωρ βοηθῶ.
- (ἀντ) ἤκουσα γὰρ τυφογέρον-  
τας ἄνδρας ἔρρειν, στελέχη  
φέροντας ὥσπερ βαλανεύσοντας

324 τ' ἀνέμων Οεγί: τε νόμων α

## LYSISTRATA

Victory,<sup>31</sup> be our ally, help us win a trophy over the women on the Acropolis and their present audacity!

*Enter the WOMEN'S CHORUS on the run; its members are nicely dressed and carry water pitchers on their heads.*

### WOMEN'S LEADER

I think I can see sparks and smoke, fellow women, as if a fire were ablaze. We must hurry all the faster!

### WOMEN'S CHORUS

Fly, fly, Nicodice,<sup>32</sup>  
before Calyce and Critylla go up  
in flames, fanned all around  
by nasty winds  
and old men who mean death!  
I'm filled with dread: am I too late to help?  
I've just come from the well with my pitcher;  
I could hardly fill it in the dim light of dawn,  
in the throng and crash and clatter of pots,  
fighting the elbows of housemaids  
and branded slaves; zealously  
I hoisted it onto my head, and to aid the women,  
my fellow citizens faced with fire,  
here I am with water!

I've heard that some frantic old men  
are on the loose, toting logs  
up to the Acropolis, about three talents' worth,<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> I.e., Athena Nike, whose temple stands on the right as one faces the Propylaea, the main entrance to the Acropolis.

<sup>32</sup> The women's names, like the men's, are apparently generic.

<sup>33</sup> Around 175 pounds, a comic exaggeration.

## ARISTOPHANES

- εἰς πόλιν ὡς τριτάλαντα βάρος,  
 δεινότατ' ἀπειλοῦντας ἐπῶν  
 340 ὡς πυρὶ χρῆ τὰς μυσαρὰς γυναῖκας ἀνθρακεύειν.  
 ἄς, ὦ θεά, μή ποτ' ἐγὼ πιμπραμένας ἴδοιμι,  
 ἀλλὰ πολέμον καὶ μανιῶν ῥυσαμένας  
 Ἑλλάδα καὶ πολίτας·  
 ἐφ' οἷσπερ, ὦ χρυσολόφα  
 345 πολιοῦχε, σὰς ἔσχον ἔδρας.  
 καί σε καλῶ ξύμμαχον, ὦ  
 Τριτογένει', ἦν τις ἐκεί-  
 νας ὑποπιμπρήσιν ἀνὴρ,  
 φέρειν ὕδωρ μεθ' ἡμῶν.

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- 350 ἔασον, ὦ, τουτὶ τί ἦν; ἄνδρες πονωπονηροί·  
 οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἂν χρηστοί γ' ἔδρων οὐδ' εὐσεβεῖς τὰδ'  
 ἄνδρες.

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμ' ἡμῖν ἰδεῖν ἀπροσδόκητον ἦκει·  
 ἔσμός γυναικῶν οὕτοσιν θύρασιν αὐτῶν βοηθεῖ.

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- 355 τί βδύλλεθ' ἡμᾶς; οὐ τί που πολλὰ δοκοῦμεν εἶναι;  
 καὶ μὴν μέρος γ' ἡμῶν ὁρᾶτ' οὐπω τὸ μυριοστόν.

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ὦ Φαιδρία, ταύτας λαλεῖν ἐάσομεν τοσαντί;  
 οὐ περικατᾶξαι τὸ ξύλον τύπτουτ' ἐχρῆν τιν' αὐταῖς;

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<sup>34</sup> An ancient epithet of Athena thought to recall her birth near a mythical river or lake.

## LYSISTRATA

like stokers at the public bathhouse,  
screaming the direst threats, that  
“we’ve got to burn these horrible women to  
charcoal.”

Goddess, may I never see these women aflame,  
but rather see them rescue from war and madness  
Greece and their fellow countrymen!  
For to that end, Golden Crested  
Guardian of the Citadel, have they seized your  
shrine.

And I invite you to be our ally,  
Tritogeneia,<sup>34</sup> and if any  
man among them sets it afire,  
to be there with water!

### WOMEN’S LEADER

Hold on! Hey! What’s this? Men! Awful, nasty men! No gentlemen, no god-fearing men would ever be caught doing this!

### MEN’S LEADER

This here’s a complication we didn’t count on facing: this swarm of women outside the gates is here to help the others!

### WOMEN’S LEADER

Fear and trembling, eh? Don’t tell me we seem a lot to handle, because you haven’t even seen the tiniest fraction of our forces yet!

### MEN’S LEADER

Phaedrias, are we going to let these women jabber on? Why hasn’t somebody busted a log over their heads?

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

θώμεσθα δὴ τὰς κάλπιδας χῆμείς χαμᾶζ', ὅπως ἄν,  
ἦν προσφέρῃ τὴν χεῖρά τις, μὴ τοῦτό μ' ἐμποδίζῃ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

360 εἰ νὴ Δί' ἤδη τὰς γνάθους τούτων τις ἢ δις ἢ τρις  
ἔκοψεν ὥσπερ Βουπάλου, φωνὴν ἄν οὐκ ἄν εἶχον.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

καὶ μὴν ἰδού· παταξάτω τις· στᾶσ' ἐγὼ παρέξω,  
κοῦ μή ποτ' ἄλλη σου κύων τῶν ὄρχεων λάβηται.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

εἰ μὴ σιωπήσει, θενῶν σου ἴκκοκκιῶ τὸ γῆρας.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

365 ἄψαι μόνον Στρατυλλίδος τῷ δακτύλῳ προσελθῶν—

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τί δ', ἦν σποδῶ τοῖς κονδύλοις; τί μ' ἐργάσει τὸ  
δεινόν;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

βρύκουσά σου τοὺς πλεύμονας καὶ τᾶντερ'  
ἐξαμήσω.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

οὐκ ἔστ' ἀνὴρ Εὐριπίδου σοφώτερος ποιητής·  
οὐδὲν γὰρ ὧδε θρέμμ' ἀναιδές ἐστιν ὡς γυναῖκες.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

370 αἰρώμεθ' ἡμείς θοῦδατος τὴν κάλπιν, ὦ Ῥοδίππη.

## LYSISTRATA

### WOMEN'S LEADER

We too should ground our pitchers, so they won't be in our way if anyone lays a hand on us.

### MEN'S LEADER

By god, if someone had socked them in the mouth a couple of times, like Bupalus,<sup>35</sup> they wouldn't be making any noise!

### WOMEN'S LEADER

OK, here's my mouth; someone take a sock at it; I'll stand here and take it. But then I'm the last bitch that ever grabs you by the balls!

### MEN'S LEADER

If you don't shut up, I'll knock you right out of your old hide!

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Come over here and just touch Stratyllis with the tip of your finger.

### MEN'S LEADER

What if I give you the one-two punch? Got anything scary to counter with?

### WOMEN'S LEADER

I'll rip out your lungs and your guts with my fangs.

### MEN'S LEADER

No poet's wiser than Euripides: as he says, no beast exists so shameless as womankind!

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Let's pick up our water pitchers, Rhodippe.

<sup>35</sup> A Chian sculptor vilified by the sixth-century iambic poet Hipponax (fr. 120).

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τί δ', ὦ θεοῖς ἐχθρά, σὺ δεῦρ' ὕδωρ ἔχουσ' ἀφίκου;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

τί δ' αὖ σὺ πῦρ, ὦ τύμβ', ἔχων; ὡς σαυτὸν  
ἐμπυρεύσων;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν ἵνα νήσας πυρὰν τὰς σὰς φίλας ὑφάψω.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἐγὼ δέ γ', ἵνα τὴν σὴν πυρὰν τούτῳ κατασβέσαιμι.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τοῦμὸν σὺ πῦρ κατασβέσεις;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

375

τοῦργον τάχ' αὐτὸ δείξει.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδά σ' εἰ τῆδ' ὡς ἔχω τῆ λαμπάδι σταθεύσω.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

εἰ ρύμμα τυγχάνεις ἔχων, λουτρόν <γέ σοι>  
παρέξω.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἐμοὶ σὺ λουτρόν, ὦ σαπρά;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

καὶ ταῦτα νυμφικόν γε.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἤκουσας αὐτῆς τοῦ θράσους;



LYSISTRATA

MEN'S LEADER

Why are you here with water, you witch?

WOMEN'S LEADER

And why are you here with fire, you tomb? To burn yourself up?

MEN'S LEADER

Me, I'm here to build a pyre and burn up your friends.

WOMEN'S LEADER

And I've come to put it out with this.

MEN'S LEADER

You put out my fire?

WOMEN'S LEADER

That's what you soon will see.

MEN'S LEADER

I think I might barbecue you on the spot with this torch of mine.

WOMEN'S LEADER

Got any soap with you? I'll give you a bath.

MEN'S LEADER

You give me a bath, you rotten crone?

WOMEN'S LEADER

A bath fit for a bridegroom!

MEN'S LEADER

Listen to her insolence!

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

*ἐλευθέρα γάρ εἶμι.*

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

*σχῆσω σ' ἐγὼ τῆς νῦν βοῆς.*

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

380

*ἀλλ' οὐκέτ' ἠλιάζει.*

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

*ἔμπρησον αὐτῆς τὰς κόμας.*

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

*σὸν ἔργον, ὦ χελῶε.*

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

*οἴμοι τάλας.*

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

*μῶν θερμόν ἦν;*

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

*ποιῖ θερμόν; οὐ παύσει; τί δρᾶς;*

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

*ἄρδω σ', ὅπως ἀναβλαστανεῖς.*

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

385 *ἀλλ' αὐός εἶμ' ἤδη τρέμων.*

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

*οὐκοῦν, ἐπειδὴ πῦρ ἔχεις, σὺ χλιανεῖς σεαυτόν.*

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<sup>36</sup> Jury service, for which a small stipend was paid by the polis, was popular with impecunious old men.

LYSISTRATA

WOMEN'S LEADER

I'll have you know I'm a free woman!

MEN'S LEADER

I'll put a stop to your bellowing.

WOMEN'S LEADER

You're not on a jury now, you know.<sup>36</sup>

MEN'S LEADER

Torch her hair!

WOMEN'S LEADER

(*dousing them*) Achelous, you're on!<sup>37</sup>

MEN'S LEADER

Wooh! Damn!

WOMEN'S LEADER

I hope it wasn't too hot?

MEN'S LEADER

Hot? Stop it! What do you think you're doing?

WOMEN'S LEADER

I'm watering you, so you'll bloom again.

MEN'S LEADER

But I'm already dried out from shivering!

WOMEN'S LEADER

You've got fire there; why not sit by it and get warm?

*Enter MAGISTRATE, with two Slaves carrying crowbars, and four Scythian Policemen.*

<sup>37</sup> Achelous, a river in NW Greece, was metonymic for "water," especially in ritual contexts.

## ARISTOPHANES

## ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ἄρ' ἐξέλαμψε τῶν γυναικῶν ἡ τρυφὴ  
 χά τυμπανισμὸς χοῖ πυκνοὶ Σαβάζιοι,  
 ὃ τ' Ἀδωνιασμὸς οὔτος οὐπὶ τῶν τεγῶν,  
 390 οὐ γὰρ ποτ' ὦν ἤκουον ἐν τῆκκλησίᾳ;  
 ἔλεγεν ὁ μὴ ὥρασι μὲν Δημόστρατος  
 πλεῖν εἰς Σικελίαν, ἡ γυνὴ δ' ὀρχουμένη  
 "αἰαὶ Ἀδωνιν" φησίν. ὁ δὲ Δημόστρατος  
 ἔλεγεν ὀπλίτας καταλέγειν Ζακυνθίων,  
 395 ἡ δ' ὑποπεπωκῦ ἡ γυνὴ ἔπι τοῦ τέγους  
 "κόπτεσθ' Ἀδωνιν" φησίν. ὁ δ' ἐβιάζετο,  
 ὁ θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὸς καὶ μιαρὸς Χολοζύγης.  
 τοιαῦτ' ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἀκολαστάσματα.

## ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἄν, εἰ πύθιοιο καὶ τὴν τῶνδ' ὕβριν;  
 400 αἰ τ' ἄλλα θ' ὑβρίκασι κακ τῶν καλπίδων  
 ἔλουσαν ἡμᾶς, ὥστε θαῖματίδια  
 σείειν πάρεστιν ὥσπερ ἐνεουρηκότας.

## ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ τὸν ἀλυκὸν δίκαιά γε.  
 ὅταν γὰρ αὐτοὶ ξυμπονηρευώμεθα  
 405 ταῖσιν γυναιξὶ καὶ διδάσκωμεν τρυφᾶν,  
 τοιαῦτ' ἀπ' αὐτῶν βλαστάνει βουλεύματα.  
 οἱ λέγομεν ἐν τῶν δημιουργῶν τοιαδί.

38 A Phrygian god similar to Dionysus, whose worship had recently become popular at Athens, especially among women and slaves.

## LYSISTRATA

### MAGISTRATE

So the women's profligacy has flared up again, has it, the tomtoms, the steady chants of "Sabazios,"<sup>38</sup> this worship of Adonis on the rooftops?<sup>39</sup> I heard it all once before while sitting in Assembly. Demostratus<sup>40</sup> (bad luck to him!) was moving that we send an armada to Sicily,<sup>41</sup> while his wife was dancing and yelling "Poor young Adonis!" Then Demostratus moved that we sign up some Zakynthian infantry, but his wife up on the roof was getting drunk and crying "Beat your breast for Adonis!" But he just went on making his motions, that godforsaken, disgusting Baron Bluster! From women, I say, you get this kind of riotous extravagance!

### MEN'S LEADER

(*indicating the Women's Chorus*) Save your breath till you hear about *their* atrocities! They've committed every outrage, even doused us with those pitchers. So now we get to shake water out of our clothes as if we'd peed in them!

### MAGISTRATE

By Poseidon the Salty, it serves us right! When we ourselves abet our wives' misbehavior and teach them profligacy, these are the sort of schemes they bring to flower! Aren't we the ones who go to the shops and say this kind of

<sup>39</sup> Adonis (in myth, the mortal youth whom Aphrodite loved) was a Semitic import not recognized by the city. His cult was celebrated in mid-summer on rooftops by women, who planted quickly withering gardens and lamented the death of the young god.

<sup>40</sup> A democratic politician evidently still prominent.

<sup>41</sup> For the assemblies leading up to the departure of the armada for Sicily in summer 415, see Thucydides 6.1–32, with Plutarch *Nicias* 12–13 and *Alcibiades* 18.

## ARISTOPHANES

“ὦ χρυσοχόε, τὸν ὄρμον ὃν ἐπεσκεύασας,  
 ὀρχουμένης μου τῆς γυναικὸς ἐσπέρας  
 410 ἢ βάλανος ἐκπέπτωκεν ἐκ τοῦ τρήματος.  
 ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν ἔστ’ εἰς Σαλαμίνα πλευστέα·  
 σὺ δ’ ἦν σχολάσης, πάσῃ τέχνῃ πρὸς ἐσπέραν  
 ἐλθὼν ἐκείνη τὴν βάλανον ἐνάρμοσον.”  
 ἕτερος δέ τις πρὸς σκυτοτόμον ταδὶ λέγει  
 415 νεανίαν καὶ πέος ἔχοντ’ οὐ παιδικόν·  
 “ὦ σκυτοτόμε, τῆς μου γυναικὸς τοῦ ποδὸς  
 τὸ δακτυλίδιον πιέζει τὸ ζυγόν,  
 ἄθ’ ἀπαλὸν ὄν· τοῦτ’ οὖν σὺ τῆς μεσημβρίας  
 ἐλθὼν χάλασον, ὅπως ἂν εὐρυτέρως ἔχη.”  
 420 τοιαύτ’ ἀπήντηκ’ εἰς τοιαυτὰ πράγματα,  
 ὅτε γ’ ὢν ἐγὼ πρόβουλος, ἐκπορίσας ὅπως  
 κωπῆς ἔσονται, τὰργυρίου νυκτὶ δέον,  
 ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν ἀποκέκλημαι τῶν πυλῶν.  
 ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν ἔργον ἐστάναι. φέρε τοὺς μοχλοὺς,  
 425 ὅπως ἂν αὐτὰς τῆς ὕβρεως ἐγὼ σχέθω.  
 τί κέχηνας, ὦ δύστηνε; ποῖ δ’ αὖ σὺ βλέπεις,  
 οὐδὲν ποιῶν ἀλλ’ ἢ καπηλείον σκοπῶν;  
 οὐχ ὑποβαλόντες τοὺς μοχλοὺς ὑπὸ τὰς πύλας  
 ἐντεῦθεν ἐκμοχλεύσετ’; ἐνθενδὶ δ’ ἐγὼ  
 ξυνεκμοχλεύσω.

## ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

430 μηδὲν ἐκμοχλεύετε·  
 ἐξέρχομαι γὰρ αὐτομάτη. τί δεῖ μοχλῶν;  
 οὐ γὰρ μοχλῶν δεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ νοῦ καὶ φρενῶν.

## LYSISTRATA

thing: “Goldsmith, about that choker you made me: my wife was having a ball the other night, and now the prong’s slipped out of the hole. Me, I’ve got to cruise over to Sallamis,<sup>42</sup> so if you’ve got time, by all means visit her in the evening and fit a prong in her hole.” Another husband says this to a shoemaker, a teenager sporting no boyish cock: “Shoemaker, about my wife’s tootsy: the thong is squeezing her pinky winky, where she’s tender. So why don’t you drop in on her some lunchtime and loosen it up so there’s more play down there?” That’s the sort of thing that’s led to all this, when I, a Magistrate, have lined up timber for oars and now come to get the necessary funds, and find myself standing at the gates, locked out by women! But it’s no use just standing here. (*to the two Slaves*) Bring the crowbars; I’ll put a stop to their arrogance. What are you gaping at, you sorry fool? And where are you staring? I said crowbar, not winebar!<sup>43</sup> Come on, put those crowbars under the gates and start jimmying on that side; I’ll do the jimmying over here.

## LYSISTRATA

(*emerging from the gates*): Don’t be doing any jimmying; I’m coming out on my very own. Why do you need crowbars? It’s not crowbars you need, but rather brains and sense.

<sup>42</sup> An overnight voyage.

<sup>43</sup> Like women, slaves were stereotypically bibulous.



ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ἄληθες, ὦ μιὰρὰ σύ; ποῦ ἴστί τοξότης;  
ξυλλάμβαν' αὐτὴν κῶπίσω τὸ χεῖρε δεῖ.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

435 εἰ τᾶρα νῆ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν τὴν χεῖρά μοι  
ἄκραν προσοίσει δημόσιος ὢν, κλαύσεται.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ἔδεισας, οὔτος; οὐ ξυναρπάσει μέσῃν  
καὶ σὺ μετὰ τούτου χάνύσαντε δήσετον;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

440 εἰ τᾶρα νῆ τὴν Πάνδροσον ταύτῃ μόνον  
τὴν χεῖρ' ἐπιβαλεῖς, ἐπιχεσεῖ πατούμενος.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ἰδοῦ γ' ἐπιχεσεῖ. ποῦ ἴστιν ἕτερος τοξότης;  
ταύτην προτέρα ξύνδησον, ὅτι καὶ λαλεῖ.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

εἰ τᾶρα νῆ τὴν Φωσφόρον τὴν χεῖρ' ἄκραν  
ταύτῃ προσοίσεις, κύαθον αἰτήσεις τάχα.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

445 τουτὶ τί ἦν; ποῦ τοξότης; ταύτης ἔχου.  
παύσω τιν' ὑμῶν τῆσδ' ἐγὼ τῆς ἐξόδου.

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44 One of the daughters of the mythical King Cecrops, and worshipped as a heroine on the Acropolis.

45 A title of Hecate, a popular women's goddess associated with the moon and with the birth and rearing of children; her epithet here puns on "eye" or "eye salve."

LYSISTRATA

MAGISTRATE

Really, you witch! Where's a policeman? (*to First Policeman*) Grab her and tie both hands behind her back.

LYSISTRATA

If he so much as touches me with his fingertip, mere public servant that he is, so help me Artemis he'll go home crying!

MAGISTRATE

What, are you scared? (*to Second Policeman*) You there, help him out; grab her around the waist and tie her up, on the double!

*Enter First Old Woman from the gates.*

FIRST OLD WOMAN

If you so much as lay a hand on her, so help me Pandrosos,<sup>44</sup> I'll beat the shit out of you!

MAGISTRATE

Beat the shit out of me? Where's another policeman? (*to Third Policeman*) Tie her up first, the one with the dirty mouth!

*Enter Second Old Woman from the gates.*

SECOND OLD WOMAN

If you raise your fingertip to her, so help me our Lady of Light,<sup>45</sup> you'll be begging for an eye cup!

MAGISTRATE

What's going on? Where's a policeman? (*to Fourth Policeman*) Arrest her. I'll foil at least one of these sallies of yours!

*Enter Third Old Woman from the gates.*

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

εἰ τάρρα νῆ τὴν Ταυροπόλον ταύτη πρόσσει,  
ἐκκοκκιῶ σου τὰς στενοκωκύτους τρίχας.

ΠΡΟΒΟΤΛΟΣ

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων· ἐπιλέλοιφ' ὁ τοξότης.  
450 ἀτὰρ οὐ γυναικῶν οὐδέποτ' ἔσθ' ἠττητέα  
ἡμῖν· ὁμόσε χωρῶμεν αὐταῖς, ὦ Σκύθαι,  
ξυνταξάμενοι.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

νῆ τὼ θεὸ γνώσεσθ' ἄρα  
ὅτι καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν εἰσι τέτταρες λόχοι  
μαχίμων γυναικῶν ἔνδον ἐξωπλισμένων.

ΠΡΟΒΟΤΛΟΣ

455 ἀποστρέφετε τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν, ὦ Σκύθαι.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὦ ξύμμαχοι γυναικες, ἐκθείτ' ἔνδοθεν,  
ὦ σπερμαγοραιολεκιθολαχανοπώλιδες,  
ὦ σκοροδοπανδοκεντριαρτοπώλιδες,  
οὐχ ἔλξετ', οὐ παιήσετ', οὐκ ἀράξετε,  
460 οὐ λαιδορήσετ', οὐκ ἀναισχυντήσετε;  
παύσασθ', ἐπαναχωρεῖτε, μὴ σκυλεύετε.

ΠΡΟΒΟΤΛΟΣ

οἴμ' ὡς κακῶς πέπραγέ μου τὸ τοξικόν.

LYSISTRATA

THIRD OLD WOMAN

If you come near her, so help me Tauropolus,<sup>46</sup> I'll rip out your hair till you scream!

MAGISTRATE

Damn my luck, I'm out of policemen. But men must never, ever be worsted by women! Form up ranks, Scythians, and let's charge them!

LYSISTRATA

By the Two Goddesses, you'll soon discover that we also have four squadrons of fully armed combat women, waiting inside!

MAGISTRATE

Scythians, twist their arms behind their backs!

LYSISTRATA

Women of the reserve, come out double-time!

*Enter Old Women.*

Forward, you spawn of the marketplace, you soup and vegetable mongers! Forward, you landladies, you hawkers of garlic and bread! Tackle them! Hit them! Smash them! Call them names, the nastier the better! That's enough! Withdraw! Don't strip the bodies!

*Policemen run away howling; Old Women reenter the Acropolis.*

MAGISTRATE

How awful! What a rout of my archer troops!

<sup>46</sup> Under this title Artemis had an east-Attic cult that featured all-night ceremonies.

## ARISTOPHANES

### ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀλλὰ τί γὰρ ὦρον; πότερον ἐπὶ δούλας τινὰς  
ἤκειν ἐνόμισας, ἢ γυναιξὶν οὐκ οἶει  
χολὴν ἐνεῖναι;

### ΠΡΟΒΟΥΤΛΟΣ

465 νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω καὶ μάλα  
πολλὴν γ', εἴνπερ πλησίον κάπηλος ἦ.

### ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ὦ πόλλ' ἀναλώσας ἔπη πρόβουλε τῆσδε <τῆς> γῆς,  
τί τοῖσδε σαυτὸν εἰς λόγον τοῖς θηρίοις ξυνάπτεις;  
οὐκ οἶσθα λουτρὸν οἶον αἶδ' ἡμᾶς ἔλουσαν ἄρτι  
470 ἐν τοῖσιν ἱματιδίοις, καὶ ταῦτ' ἄνευ κούιας;

### ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἀλλ', ὦ μέλ', οὐ χρὴ προσφέρειν τοῖς πλησίοισιν  
εἰκῆ  
τὴν χεῖρ'. εἴν δὲ τοῦτο δρᾶς, κυλοιδιᾶν ἀνάγκη.  
ἐπεὶ ἴθελω ἄγ' ἰσφρόνως ὥσπερ κόρη καθῆσθαι,  
λυπούσα μηδέν' ἐνθαδί, κινούσα μηδὲ κάρφος,  
475 ἦν μή τις ὥσπερ σφηκιᾶν βλίττη με κᾶρεθίζη.

### ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ

(στρ) ὦ Ζεῦ, τί ποτε χρησόμεθα τοῖσδε τοῖς κνωδάλοις;  
478 οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἀνεκτὰ τάδε γ', ἀλλὰ βασανιστέον  
τόδε σοι τὸ πάθος μετ' ἐμοῦ,  
480 ὃ τι βουλόμεναί ποτε τὴν  
Κραναᾶν κατέλαβον, ἐφ' ὃ τι τε  
μεγαλόπετρον ἄβατον ἀκρόπολιν,  
ἱερὸν τέμενος.

## LYSISTRATA

### LYSISTRATA

Well, what did you expect? Did you think you were going up against a bunch of slave girls? Or did you think women lack gall?

### MAGISTRATE

Oh yes, they've got plenty of that, provided there's a wine bar nearby.

### MEN'S LEADER

You've little to show for all your talk, Magistrate of this country! What's the point of fighting a battle of words with beasts like these? Don't you comprehend the kind of bath they've given us just now—when we were still in our clothes, and without soap to boot?

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Well, sir, you shouldn't lift your hand against your neighbors just anytime you feel like it. If you do, you're going to end up with a black eye. You see, I'd rather be sitting modestly at home like a maiden, bothering no one here, stirring not a single blade of grass. But if anyone annoys me and rifles my nest, they'll find a wasp inside.

### MEN'S CHORUS

Zeus, how on earth shall we deal with these  
monsters?

This is past what I can bear; now's time to investigate  
this incident along with me,  
what they thought they were doing  
when they occupied Cranaus'<sup>47</sup> citadel  
and the great crag of the Acropolis,  
a restricted, holy place.

<sup>47</sup> A mythical king of Athens.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἀνερώτα καὶ μὴ πείθου καὶ πρόσφερε πάντας  
ἐλέγχους·

485 ὡς αἰσχροὺν ἀκωδώνιστον ἔαν τὸ τοιοῦτον πρᾶγμα  
μεθέντας.

ΠΡΟΒΟΤΛΟΣ

καὶ μὴν αὐτῶν τοῦτ' ἐπιθυμῶ νῆ τὸν Δία πρῶτα  
πυθέσθαι,

ὅ τι βουλόμεναι τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν ἀπεκλήσατε τοῖσι  
μοχλοῖσιν.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἵνα τὰργύριον σῶν κατέχοιμεν καὶ μὴ πολεμοῖτε δι'  
αὐτό.

ΠΡΟΒΟΤΛΟΣ

διὰ τὰργύριον πολεμοῦμεν γάρ;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

καὶ τᾶλλα γε πάντ' ἐκυκήθη.

490 ἵνα γὰρ Πείσανδρος ἔχοι κλέπτειν χοῖ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς  
ἐπέχοντες

αἰεί τινα κορκορυγὴν ἐκύκων. οἱ δ' οὖν τοῦδ' οὐνεκα  
δρώντων

ὅ τι βούλονται τὸ γὰρ ἀργύριον τοῦτ' οὐκέτι μὴ  
καθέλωσιν.

ΠΡΟΒΟΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλὰ τί δράσεις;



LYSISTRATA

MEN'S LEADER

Now question her and don't give in; cross-examine everything she says. It's scandalous to let this sort of behavior go unchallenged.

MAGISTRATE

Here's the first thing I'd really like to find out from them: what did you hope to gain by putting our Acropolis under lock and key?

LYSISTRATA

To keep the money safe, and to keep you from using it to finance the war.

MAGISTRATE

We're at war on account of the money, is that it?

LYSISTRATA

Yes, and that's why everything else got messed up too. It was for opportunities to steal that Pisander and the others who aimed to hold office were always fomenting some kind of commotion. So let them keep fomenting to their hearts' content: they'll be withdrawing no more money from this place.

MAGISTRATE

But what do you plan to do?

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τοῦτό μ' ἐρωτᾶς; ἡμεῖς ταμιεύσομεν αὐτό.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ὑμεῖς ταμιεύσετε τὰργύριον;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τί <δὲ> δεινὸν τοῦτο νομίζεις;

495 οὐ καὶ τᾶνδον χρήματα πάντως ἡμεῖς ταμιεύομεν  
ὑμῖν;

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ἄλλ' οὐ ταῦτόν.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

πῶς οὐ ταῦτόν;

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

πολεμητέον ἔστ' ἀπὸ τούτου.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἄλλ' οὐδὲν δεῖ πρῶτον πολεμεῖν.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

πῶς γὰρ σωθησόμεθ' ἄλλως;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς σώσομεν.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ὑμεῖς;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἡμεῖς μέντοι.

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

You're asking me that? We'll manage it for you.

MAGISTRATE

*You'll* manage the money?

LYSISTRATA

What's so strange about that? Don't we manage the household finances for you already?

MAGISTRATE

That's different.

LYSISTRATA

How so?

MAGISTRATE

These are war funds!

LYSISTRATA

But there shouldn't even be a war.

MAGISTRATE

How else are we to protect ourselves?

LYSISTRATA

We'll protect you.

MAGISTRATE

You?

LYSISTRATA

Yes, us.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

σχέτλιόν γε.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὡς σωθήσει, κὰν μὴ βούλη.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

δεινόν <γε> λέγεις.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀγανακτεῖς,

ἀλλὰ ποιητέα ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ὅμως.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

500

νὴ τὴν Δήμητρ' ἄδικόν γε.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

σωστέον, ὦ τᾶν.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

κεῖ μὴ δέομαι;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τοῦδ' οὔνεκα καὶ πολὺ μᾶλλον.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ὑμῖν δὲ πόθεν περὶ τοῦ πολέμου τῆς τ' εἰρήνης  
ἐμέλησεν;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἡμεῖς φράσομεν.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

λέγε δὴ ταχέως, ἵνα μὴ κλάης.

LYSISTRATA

MAGISTRATE

What brass!

LYSISTRATA

You'll be protected whether you like it or not.

MAGISTRATE

You're going too far!

LYSISTRATA

Angry, are you? It still must be done.

MAGISTRATE

By Demeter, you've got no right!

LYSISTRATA

You must be saved, dear fellow.

MAGISTRATE

Even if I don't ask to be?

LYSISTRATA

All the more so!

MAGISTRATE

How come you're concerned with war and peace anyway?

LYSISTRATA

We'll tell you.

MAGISTRATE

Well, make it snappy, unless you want to get hurt.

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀκροῶ δῆ,

καὶ τὰς χεῖρας πειρῶ κατέχειν.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ δύναμαι· χαλεπὸν γὰρ  
ὑπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτὰς ἴσχειν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

505

κλαύσει τοῖνυν πολὺ μᾶλλον.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

τοῦτο μὲν, ὦ γραῦ, σαυτῇ κρώξαις. σὺ δέ μοι λέγε.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ταῦτα ποιήσω.

ἡμεῖς τὸν μὲν πρότερόν γε χρόνον <σιγῇ γ' >

ἠνειχόμεθ' <ὑμῶν >

ὑπὸ σωφροσύνης τῆς ἡμετέρας τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἄττ'  
ἐποιεῖτε·

οὐ γὰρ γρύζειν εἰᾶθ' ἡμᾶς· καί τοι κ' ἠρέσκετέ γ' ἡμᾶς.

510 ἀλλ' ἠσθανόμεσθα καλῶς ὑμῶν, καὶ πολλάκις ἔνδον  
ἂν οὔσαι

ἠκούσαμεν ἄν τι κακῶς ὑμᾶς βουλευσαμένους μέγα  
πρᾶγμα·

εἶτ' ἀλγοῦσαι τ' ἀνδοθεν ὑμᾶς ἐπανηρόμεθ' ἂν  
γελάσασαι

“τί βεβούλευται περὶ τῶν σπονδῶν ἐν τῇ στήλῃ  
παραγράψαι

ἐν τῷ δήμῳ τῆμερον ὑμῖν;” “τί δὲ σοὶ τοῦτ' ;” ἦ δ' ὅς  
ἂν ἀνήρ·

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

Listen then, and try to control your fists.

MAGISTRATE

I can't; I'm so angry I can't keep my hands to myself.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Then you're the one who'll get hurt!

MAGISTRATE

Croak those curses at yourself, old bag! (*to Lysistrata*) You, start talking.

LYSISTRATA

Gladly.<sup>48</sup> Before now, and for quite some time, we maintained our decorum and suffered <in silence> whatever you men did, because you wouldn't let us make a sound. But you weren't exactly all we could ask for. No, we knew only too well what you were up to, and many a time we'd hear in our homes about a bad decision you'd made on some great issue of state. Then, masking the pain in our hearts, we'd put on a smile and ask you, "How did the Assembly go today? Any decision about a rider to the peace treaty?"<sup>49</sup> And my husband would say, "What's that to you?"

<sup>48</sup> The following account recalls the conversation between Hector and Andromache in *Iliad* 6.

<sup>49</sup> In 419/18 the Athenians appended to the text of the Peace of 421 "the Spartans have violated their oaths," cf. Thucydides 5.56.



ARISTOPHANES

“οὐ σιγήσει;” καὶ γὼ ’σίγων.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

515

ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ ποτ’ ἐσίγων.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

κἂν ᾧ μωζές γ’, εἰ μὴ ’σίγας.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τοιγὰρ <ἐγὼ> μὲν τότε’ ἐσίγων.

<αὐθις δ’> ἕτερόν τι πονηρότερον βούλευμ’  
ἐπεπύσμεθ’ ἂν ὑμῶν·

εἶτ’ ἠρόμεθ’ ἂν· “πῶς ταῦτ’, ὦνερ, διαπράττεσθ’ ὦδ’  
ἀνοήτως;”

ὁ δέ μ’ εὐθὺς ὑποβλέψας <ἂν> ἔφασκ’, εἰ μὴ τὸν  
στήμονα νήσω,

520 ὁτοτύξεσθαι μακρὰ τὴν κεφαλὴν· “πόλεμος δ’  
ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει.”

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ὀρθῶς γε λέγων νῆ Δί’ ἐκείνος.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

πῶς ὀρθῶς, ὦ κακόδαιμον,  
εἰ μηδὲ κακῶς βουλευομένοις ἐξῆν ὑμῖν ὑποθέσθαι;  
ὅτε δὴ δ’ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδοῖς φανερώς ἠκούομεν  
ἤδη·

“οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ.”—“μὰ Δί’ οὐ δῆτ’  
<ἔσθ’>,” ἕτερός τις,—

525 μετὰ ταῦθ’ ἡμῖν εὐθὺς ἔδοξεν σῶσαι τὴν Ἑλλάδα  
κοινῇ

LYSISTRATA

Shut up!" And I'd shut up.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

I wouldn't have shut up!

MAGISTRATE

If you hadn't shut up you'd have got a beating!

LYSISTRATA

Well, that's why I did shut up—then. But later on we began to hear about even worse decisions you'd made, and then we would ask, "Husband, how come you're handling this so stupidly?" And right away he'd glare at me and tell me to get back to my sewing if I didn't want major damage to my head: "War shall be the business of menfolk," unquote.<sup>50</sup>

MAGISTRATE

He was right on the mark, I say.

LYSISTRATA

How could he be right, you sorry fool, when we were forbidden to offer advice even when your policy was wrong? But then, when we began to hear you in the streets openly crying, "There isn't a man left in the land," and someone else saying, "God knows, there isn't, not a one," after that we women decided to lose no more time, and to band to-

<sup>50</sup> Hector at *Iliad* 6.492.

ARISTOPHANES

ταῖσι γυναιξὶν συλληχθείσαις. ποῖ γὰρ καὶ χρῆν  
ἀναμεῖναι;  
ἦν οὖν ἡμῶν χρηστὰ λεγουσῶν ἐθελήσητ'  
ἀντακροᾶσθαι  
κἀντισιωπᾶν ὥσπερ χῆμεῖς, ἐπανορθώσαιμεν ἀν  
ὕμᾶς.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΔΟΣ

ὕμεῖς ἡμᾶς; δεινόν γε λέγεις κοῦ τλητὸν ἔμοιγε.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

σιώπα.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΔΟΣ

530 σοί γ', ὦ κατάρατε, σιωπῶ ἄγῳ, καὶ ταῦτα κάλυμμα  
φορούση  
περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν; μὴ νυν ζώην.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀλλ' εἰ τοῦτ' ἐμπόδιόν σοι,  
παρ' ἐμοῦ τουτὶ τὸ κάλυμμα λαβῶν  
ἔχε καὶ περίθου περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν,  
κᾶτα σιώπα.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

535 καὶ τουτογὶ τὸν καλαθίσκον.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

κᾶτα ξαίνειν ξυζωσάμενος  
κνάμους τρώγων  
πόλεμος δὲ γυναιξὶ μελήσει.

LYSISTRATA

gether to save Greece. What was the point of waiting any longer? So, if you're ready to listen in your turn as we give you good advice, and to shut up as we had to, we can put you back on the right track.

MAGISTRATE

You put us? Outrageous! I won't stand for it!

LYSISTRATA

Shut up!

MAGISTRATE

Me shut up for you? A damned woman, with a veil on your face no less? I'd rather die!

LYSISTRATA

If the veil is a problem for you, here, take mine, it's yours, put it on your head, and then shut up!

FIRST OLD WOMAN

And take this sewing basket too.

LYSISTRATA

Now hitch up your clothes and start sewing; chew some beans while you work. War shall be the business of women-folk!

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

540 αἴρεσθ' ἄνω, γυναῖκες, ἀπὸ τῶν καλπίδων, ὅπως ἂν  
 ἐν τῷ μέρει χῆμεῖς τι ταῖς φίλαισι συλλάβωμεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ

(ἀντ) ἔγωγ' γε > γὰρ <ἂν> οὔποτε κάμοιμ' ἂν ὀρχουμένη,  
 οὐδὲ καματηρὸς ἂν ἔλοι γόνατά μου κόπος.  
 ἐθέλω δ' ἐπὶ πᾶν ἰέναι  
 μετὰ τῶνδ' ἀρετῆς ἔνεχ', αἷς  
 545 ἔνι φύσις, ἔνι χάρις, ἔνι θράσος,  
 ἔνι <δὲ> τὸ σοφόν, ἔνι φιλόπολις  
 ἀρετὴ φρόνιμος.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἀλλ', ὦ τηθῶν ἀνδρειοτάτη καὶ μητριδίῳ  
 ἀκαληφῶν,  
 550 χωρεῖτ' ὀργῇ καὶ μὴ τέγγεσθ'. ἔτι γὰρ νῦν οὔρια  
 θεῖτε.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀλλ' ἤνπερ ὁ <τε> γλυκύθυμος Ἔρωσ χῆ  
 Κυπρογένει' Ἀφροδίτη  
 ἴμερον ἡμῶν κατὰ τῶν κόλπων καὶ τῶν μηρῶν  
 καταπνεύσῃ,  
 κᾶτ' ἐντέξῃ τέτανον τερπνὸν τοῖς ἀνδράσι καὶ  
 ῥοπαλισμούς,  
 οἶμαί ποτε Λυσιμάχας ἡμᾶς ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλησι  
 καλεῖσθαι.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

τί ποιησάσας;

## LYSISTRATA

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Rouse yourselves, women, away from those pitchers, it's our turn to pitch in with a little help for our friends!

### WOMEN'S CHORUS

Oh yes! I'll dance with unflagging energy;  
no toilsome effort will weary my knees.  
I'm ready to face anything  
with women as courageous as these:  
they've got character, charm, and guts,  
they've got intelligence and heart  
that's both patriotic and smart!

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Now, most valiant of prickly mommies and spikey gran-  
nies, attack furiously and don't go mushy: you're still  
running with the wind!

## LYSISTRATA

If Eros of the sweet soul and Cyprian Aphrodite imbue our  
thighs and breasts with desire, and infect the men with  
sensuous rigidity and bouts of truncheonitis, then I believe  
all Greece will one day call us Disbanders of Battles.<sup>51</sup>

### MAGISTRATE

For what achievement?

<sup>51</sup> *Lysimachai*, possibly alluding to the priestess Lysimache; see Introductory Note.

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<sup>541</sup> suppl. Enger

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

555 ἦν παύσωμεν πρῶτιστον μὲν ξὺν ὅπλοισιν  
ἀγοράζοντας καὶ μαινομένους.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

νῆ τὴν Παφίαν Ἀφροδίτην.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

νῦν μὲν γὰρ δὴ κὰν ταῖσι χύτραις καὶ τοῖς  
λαχάνοισιν ὁμοίως  
περιέρχονται κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν ξὺν ὅπλοις ὥσπερ  
Κορύβαντες.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

νῆ Δία· χρὴ γὰρ τοὺς ἀνδρείους.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

560 ὅταν ἀσπίδ' ἔχων καὶ Γοργόνα τις κᾶτ' ὠνῆται  
κορακίνους.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

νῆ Δί' ἐγὼ γοῦν ἄνδρα κομήτην φυλαρχοῦντ' εἶδον  
ἐφ' ἵππου  
εἰς τὸν χαλκοῦν ἐμβαλλόμενον πῖλον λέκιθον παρὰ  
γραός·  
ἕτερος δ' αὖ Θραῆξ πέλτην σείων κᾶκόντιον ὥσπερ ὁ  
Τηρεὺς  
ἐδεδίσκετο τὴν ἰσχαδόπωλιν καὶ τὰς δρυπεπεῖς  
κατέπινεν.



LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

If to begin with we can stop people from going to the market fully armed and acting crazy.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Paphian Aphrodite be praised!

LYSISTRATA

At this very moment, all around the market, in the pottery shops and the grocery stalls, they're walking around in arms like Corybants!<sup>52</sup>

MAGISTRATE

I say a man's got to act like a man!

LYSISTRATA

But it's totally ridiculous when a man with a Gorgon-blazoned shield goes shopping for sardines!

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Amen! I saw a long-haired fellow, a cavalry captain, on horseback, buying porridge from an old woman and packing it into his brass hat. Another one, a Thracian, was shaking his shield and spear like Tereus;<sup>53</sup> he scared the fig lady out of her wits and gulped down all the ripe ones!

<sup>52</sup> Eastern divinities associated with ecstatic dancing, and a popular way to refer to lunatics.

<sup>53</sup> Thracian mercenaries struck Athenians as wild and uncivilized; for the myth of Tereus see *Birds* 15 n.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

565 πῶς οὖν ὑμεῖς δυνατὰ παῦσαι τεταραγμένα  
πράγματα πολλὰ  
ἐν ταῖς χώραις καὶ διαλύσαι;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

φαύλως πάνν.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

πῶς; ἀπόδειξον.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὥσπερ κλωστήρ', ὅταν ἡμῖν ἦ τεταραγμένος, ὧδε  
λαβοῦσαι,  
ὑπενεγκοῦσαι τοῖσιν ἀτράκτοις τὸ μὲν ἐνταυθοί, τὸ  
δ' ἐκείσε,  
οὕτως καὶ τὸν πόλεμον τοῦτον διαλύσομεν, ἥν τις  
ἑάσῃ,  
570 διενεγκοῦσαι διὰ πρεσβειῶν τὸ μὲν ἐνταυθοί, τὸ δ'  
ἐκείσε.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ἐξ ἐρίων δὴ καὶ κλωστήρων καὶ ἀτράκτων  
πράγματα δεινὰ  
παύσειν οἴεσθ'; ὡς ἀνόητοι.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

κὰν ὑμῖν γ' εἴ τις ἐνῆν νοῦς,  
ἐκ τῶν ἐρίων τῶν ἡμετέρων ἐπολιτεύεσθ' ἂν ἅπαντα.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

πῶς δὴ; φέρ' ἴδω.

LYSISTRATA

MAGISTRATE

So how will you women be able to put a stop to such a complicated international mess, and sort it all out?

LYSISTRATA

Very easily.

MAGISTRATE

How? Show me.

LYSISTRATA

*(taking the sewing basket from the Magistrate and using its contents to illustrate)* It's rather like a ball of yarn when it gets tangled up. We hold it this way, and carefully wind out the strands on our spindles, now this way, now that way. That's how we'll wind up this war, if we're allowed: un-snarling it by sending embassies, now this way, now that way.

MAGISTRATE

You really think your way with wool and yamballs and spindles can stop a terrible crisis? How brainless!

LYSISTRATA

I do think so, and if *you* had any brains you'd handle all the polis' business the way we handle our wool!

MAGISTRATE

How then? I'm all ears.

## ARISTOPHANES

## ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

πρῶτον μὲν ἐχρῆν, ὥσπερ πόκον, ἐν βαλανείῳ  
 575 ἐκπλύναντας τὴν οἰσπώτην ἐκ τῆς πόλεως, ἐπὶ  
 κλίνης  
 ἐκραβδίξειν τοὺς μοχθηροὺς καὶ τοὺς τριβόλους  
 ἀπολέξαι,  
 καὶ τοὺς γε συνισταμένους τούτους καὶ τοὺς  
 πιλοῦντας ἑαυτοὺς  
 ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀρχαῖσι διαξῆναι καὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀποτίλαι·  
 εἶτα ξαίνειν εἰς καλαθίσκον κοινὴν εὐνοίαν ἅπαντας  
 580 καταμειγνύοντας· τοὺς τε μετοίκους κεί τις ξένος ἢ  
 φίλος ὑμῖν,  
 κεί τις ὀφείλη τῷ δημοσίῳ, καὶ τούτους  
 ἐγκαταμείξαι·  
 καὶ νῆ Δία τὰς γε πόλεις, ὅποσαι τῆς γῆς τῆσδ'  
 εἰσὶν ἄποικοι,  
 διαγιγνώσκειν ὅτι ταῦθ' ὑμῖν ὥσπερ τὰ κατάγματα  
 κείται  
 χωρὶς ἕκαστον· κᾶτ' ἀπὸ τούτων πάντων τὸ  
 κάταγμα λαβόντας  
 585 δεῦρο ξυνάγειν καὶ ξυναθροίζειν εἰς ἓν, κᾶπειτα  
 ποιῆσαι  
 τολύπην μεγάλην κᾶτ' ἐκ ταύτης τῷ δήμῳ χλαῖναν  
 ὑφῆναι.

## ΠΡΟΒΟΤΛΟΣ

οὐκουν δεινὸν ταυτὶ ταύτας ραβδίξειν καὶ  
 τολυπεύειν,

## LYSISTRATA

### LYSISTRATA

Imagine the polis as a fleece just shorn. First, put it in a bath and wash out all the sheep dung; spread it on a bed and beat out the riff-raff with a stick, and pluck out the thorns; as for those who clump and knot themselves together to snag government positions, card them out and pluck off their heads. Next, card the wool into a sewing basket of unity and goodwill, mixing in everyone. The resident aliens and any other foreigner who's your friend, and anyone who owes money to the people's treasury, mix them in there too. And oh yes, the cities that are colonies of this land: imagine them as flocks of your fleece, each one lying apart from the others. So take all these flocks and bring them together here, joining them all and making one big bobbin. And from this weave a fine new cloak for the people.

### MAGISTRATE

Isn't it awful how these women go like this with their sticks,

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583 ὑμῶν B: ἡμῶν R Γ p

ARISTOPHANES

αἷς οὐδὲ μετῆν πάνυ τοῦ πολέμου;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

καὶ μὴν, ὦ παγκατάρατε,  
πλεῖν ἢ διπλοῦν γ' αὐτοῦ φέρομεν. πρῶτιστον μὲν  
γε τεκοῦσαι  
κάκπέμφασαι παῖδας ὀπλίτας—

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

590

σίγα, μὴ μνησικακήσης.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

εἶθ' ἤνικα χρῆν εὐφρανθῆναι καὶ τῆς ἡβῆς  
ἀπολαῦσαι,  
μονοκοιτοῦμεν διὰ τὰς στρατιάς. καὶ θῆμέτερον μὲν  
ἔάσω,  
περὶ τῶν δὲ κορῶν ἐν τοῖς θαλάμοις γηρασκουσῶν  
ἀνιῶμαι.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

οὐκουν κἄνδρες γηράσκουσιν;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

595 ὁ μὲν ἤκων γάρ, κἂν ἦ πολίος, ταχὺ παῖδα κόρην  
γεγάμηκεν·  
τῆς δὲ γυναικὸς μικρὸς ὁ καιρός, κἂν τούτου μὴ  
᾽πιλάβηται,  
οὐδεὶς ἐθέλει γῆμαι ταύτην, ὅττενομένη δὲ κάθηται.

ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὅστις ἔτι στῦσαι δυνατὸς—

LYSISTRATA

and like that with their bobbins, when they share none of the war's burdens?

LYSISTRATA

None? You monster! We bear more than our fair share, in the first place by giving birth to sons and sending them off to the army—

MAGISTRATE

Enough of that! Don't open old wounds.

LYSISTRATA

Then, when we ought to be having fun and enjoying our bloom of youth, we sleep alone because of the campaigns. And to say no more about our own case, it pains me to think of the maidens growing old in their rooms.

MAGISTRATE

Men grow old too, don't they?

LYSISTRATA

That's quite a different story. When a man comes home he can quickly find a girl to marry, even if he's a greybeard. But a woman's prime is brief; if she doesn't seize it, no one wants to marry her, and she sits at home looking for good omens.<sup>54</sup>

MAGISTRATE

But any man who can still get a hard-on—

<sup>54</sup> That is, omens foretelling marriage.



ARISTOPHANES

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

σὺ δὲ δὴ τί μαθὼν οὐκ ἀποθνήσκεις;  
 600 χωρίον ἐστίν· σορὸν ὠνήσει·  
 μελιτοῦτταν ἐγὼ καὶ δὴ μάξω.  
 λαβὲ ταυτὶ καὶ στεφάνωσαι.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

καὶ ταυτασὶ δέξαι παρ' ἐμοῦ.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

καὶ τουτονγὶ λαβὲ τὸν στέφανον.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

605 τοῦ δεῖ; τί ποθεῖς; χώρει 'ς τὴν ναῦν·  
 ὁ Χάρων σε καλεῖ,  
 σὺ δὲ κωλύεις ἀνάγεσθαι.

ΠΡΟΒΟΤΛΟΣ

εἴτ' οὐχὶ δεινὰ ταῦτα πάσχειν ἔστ' ἐμέ;  
 νῆ τὸν Δί' ἀλλὰ τοῖς προβούλοις ἄντικρυς  
 610 ἔμαντὸν ἐπιδείξω βαδίζων ὡς ἔχω.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

μῶν ἐγκαλεῖς ὅτι οὐχὶ προὔθέμεσθά σε;  
 ἀλλ' εἰς τρίτην γοῦν ἡμέραν σοι πρὸ πάνυ  
 ἤξει παρ' ἡμῶν τὰ τρίτ' ἐπεσκευασμένα.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

οὐκέτ' ἔργον ἐγκαθεύδειν ὅστις ἔστ' ἐλεύθερος.  
 615 ἀλλ' ἐπαποδυνώμεθ', ὦνδρες, τουτωῖ τῷ πράγματι.

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

Why don't you just drop dead? Here's a grave site; buy a coffin; I'll start kneading you a honeycake.<sup>55</sup> (*removing her garland*) Use these for a wreath.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

(*handing him ribbons*) You can have these from me.

SECOND OLD WOMAN

And this crown from me.

LYSISTRATA

All set? Need anything else? Get on the boat, then; Charon is calling your name and you're holding him up!<sup>56</sup>

MAGISTRATE

Isn't it shocking that I'm being treated like this? So help me god, I'm going straight to the other magistrates to display myself just as I am!

*MAGISTRATE exits with his slaves.*

LYSISTRATA

I hope you won't complain about the funeral we gave you. I tell you what: the day after tomorrow, first thing in the morning, we'll perform the third-day offerings at your grave!

*LYSISTRATA and OLD WOMEN exit into the Acropolis.*

MEN'S LEADER

No free man should be asleep now! Let's strip for action, men, and meet this emergency! (*they remove their jackets*)

<sup>55</sup> Among women's traditional duties was managing funerals.

<sup>56</sup> Charon ferried dead souls across the river Styx into the underworld.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ

- (στρ) ἤδη γὰρ ὄζειν ταδὶ πλειόνων  
 καὶ μειζόνων πραγμάτων μοι δοκεῖ,  
 618/9 καὶ μάλιστ' ὀσφραίνομαι τῆς Ἰππίου τυραννίδος·  
 620 καὶ πάνν δέδοικα μὴ τῶν Λακώνων τινὲς  
 δεῦρο συνεληλυθότες ἄνδρες εἰς Κλεισθένους  
 622/3 τὰς θεοῖς ἐχθρὰς γυναῖκας ἐξεπαίρουσιν δόλω  
 καταλαβεῖν τὰ χρήμαθ' ἡμῶν τόν τε μισθόν,  
 625 ἔνθεν ἔζων ἐγώ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

- δεινὰ γάρ τοι τάσδε γ' ἤδη τοὺς πολίτας νουθετεῖν,  
 καὶ λαλεῖν γυναῖκας οὔσας ἀσπίδος χαλκῆς πέρι,  
 καὶ διαλλάττειν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀνδράσιν Λακωνικοῖς,  
 οἷσι πιστὸν οὐδὲν εἰ μὴ περ λύκῳ κεχηνότι.  
 630 ἀλλὰ ταῦθ' ὕφηναν ἡμῖν, ὦνδρες, ἐπὶ τυραννίδι.  
 ἀλλ' ἐμοῦ μὲν οὐ τυρανεύσουσ', ἐπεὶ φυλάξομαι  
 καὶ "φορήσω τὸ ξίφος" τὸ λοιπὸν "ἐν μύρτου  
 κλαδί,"  
 ἀγοράσω τ' ἐν τοῖς ὄπλοις ἐξῆς Ἀριστογείτονι,  
 ὦδέ θ' ἐστήξω παρ' αὐτόν· αὐτὸ γάρ μοι γίγνεται  
 635 τῆς θεοῖς ἐχθρᾶς πατάξαι τῆσδε γραὸς τὴν γνάθον.

## LYSISTRATA

### MEN'S CHORUS

I think I smell much bigger trouble in this,  
a definite whiff of Hippias' tyranny!<sup>57</sup>  
I'm terrified that certain men from Sparta  
have gathered at the house of Cleisthenes  
and scheme to stir up our godforsaken women  
to seize the Treasury and my jury pay,  
my very livelihood.

### MEN'S LEADER

It's shocking, you know, that they're lecturing the citizens  
now, and running their mouths—mere women!—about  
brazen shields. And to top it off they're trying to make  
peace between us and the men of Sparta, who are no more  
trustworthy than a starving wolf. Actually, this plot they  
weave against us, gentlemen, aims at tyranny! Well, they'll  
never tyrannize over *me*: from now on I'll be on my guard,  
I'll "carry my sword in a myrtle branch"<sup>58</sup> and go to market  
fully armed right up beside Aristogiton.<sup>59</sup> I'll stand beside  
him like this (*posing like Aristogiton's statue*): that way I'll  
be ready to smack this godforsaken old hag right in the jaw!  
(*advances on the Women's Leader*)

<sup>57</sup> The last Athenian tyrant, expelled in 510; his name (based on *hippos* "horse") suggests the equestrian position in sexual intercourse (woman on top).

<sup>58</sup> Quoting from a patriotic drinking song (*PMG* 893–96) about the tyrant-slayers (next note); the phrase might also connote the sexual penetration of women.

<sup>59</sup> In the marketplace stood bronze statues of Harmodius and Aristogiton, the young men who killed Hipparchus, the brother of the tyrant Hippias, in 514; they and their descendants were subsequently revered as tyrant-slayers and freedom fighters.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

οὐκ ἄρ' εἰσιόντα σ' οἴκαδ' ἢ τεκοῦσα γνώσεται.  
ἀλλὰ θώμεσθ', ὦ φίλαι γράες, ταδὶ πρῶτον χαμαί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ

- (ἀντ) ἡμεῖς γάρ, ὦ πάντες ἀστοί, λόγων  
κατάρχομεν τῇ πόλει χρησίμων·  
640/1 εἰκότως, ἐπεὶ χλιδῶσαν ἀγλαῶς ἔθρεψέ με·  
ἐπταὶ μὲν ἔτη γεγῶσ' εὐθύς ἡρρηφόρου·  
εἶτ' ἀλετρις ἢ δεκέτις οὔσα τάρχηγέτι,  
644/5 καὶ χέουσα τὸν κροκωτὸν ἄρκτος ἢ Βραυρωνίοις·  
κἀκανηφόρου· ποτ' οὔσα παῖς καλὴ ἵχουσ'  
ἰσχάδων ὄρμαθόν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- ἄρα προῦφείλω τι χρηστὸν τῇ πόλει παραινέσαι;  
εἰ δ' ἐγὼ γυνὴ πέφυκα, τοῦτο μὴ φθονεῖτέ μοι,  
650 ἦν ἀμείνω γ' εἰσενέγκω τῶν παρόντων πραγμάτων.  
τοῦράνου γάρ μοι μέτεστι· καὶ γὰρ ἄνδρας  
εἰσφέρω.

644-5 τάρχηγέτι et Βραυρωνίοις transp. Sommerstein

645 καὶ χέουσα Stinton: καταχέουσα R: κατέχουσα Γ Β ρ

<sup>60</sup> The Arrhephoroi were two girls who spent a year living on the Acropolis serving Athena Polias, principally by weaving her robe and carrying it in the Panathenaic procession, the most prestigious of all processions. The girls, selected by the Assembly and the King Archon, were between seven and eleven years old and came only from the noblest Athenian families.

## LYSISTRATA

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Just try it, and your own mommy won't recognize you when you get home! Come on, fellow hags, let's start by putting these jackets on the ground. (*they remove their jackets*)

### WOMEN'S CHORUS

Citizens of Athens, we begin  
by offering the city valuable advice,  
and fittingly, for she raised me in splendid luxury.  
As soon as I turned seven I was an Arrephoros;<sup>60</sup>  
then when I was ten I was a Grinder<sup>61</sup> for the  
    Foundress;<sup>62</sup>  
and shedding my saffron robe I was a Bear at the  
    Brauronia;<sup>63</sup>  
and once, when I was a fair girl, I carried the Basket,  
wearing a necklace of dried figs.<sup>64</sup>

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Thus I owe it to the polis to offer some good advice. And even if I *was* born a woman, don't hold it against me if I manage to suggest something better than what we've got now. I have a stake in our community: my contribution is

<sup>61</sup> Wellborn girls who served a goddess—probably Demeter at Eleusis—by grinding ritual cakes.

<sup>62</sup> That is, Artemis, the patron deity of the Brauronia.

<sup>63</sup> The Brauronia, open to select girls five to ten years old, culminated in the Ritual of the Bears (*Arcteia*), in which at some point the girls removed a saffron-dyed robe and performed (as vase paintings show) naked.

<sup>64</sup> Maiden basket-bearers were a feature of many processions, the figs symbolizing fertility; the climactic placement here suggests the Panathenaea.



ARISTOPHANES

τοῖς δὲ δυστήνοισι γέρουσιν οὐ μέτεσθ' ὑμῖν, ἐπεὶ  
 τὸν ἔρανον τὸν γενόμενον παππῶον ἐκ τῶν Μηδικῶν  
 εἶτ' ἀναλώσαντες οὐκ ἀντεισφέρετε τὰς εἰσφοράς,  
 655 ἀλλ' ὑφ' ὑμῶν διαλυθῆναι προσέτι κινδυνεύομεν.  
 ἄρα γρυκτόν ἐστιν ὑμῖν; εἰ δὲ λυπήσεις τί με,  
 τῶδέ σ' ἀψήκτω πατάξω τῷ κοθόρνῳ τὴν γνάθον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ

(στρ) ταῦτ' οὖν οὐχ ὕβρις τὰ πράγματ' ἐστὶ πολλή;  
 660 κἀπιδώσειν μοι δοκεῖ τὸ χρῆμα μᾶλλον.  
 ἀλλ' ἀμυντέον τὸ πρᾶγμ' ὅστις γ' ἐνόρχης ἔστ'  
 ἀνῆρ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐξωμίδ' ἐκδυώμεθ', ὡς τὸν ἄνδρα δεῖ  
 ἀνδρὸς ὄζειν εὐθύς, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐντεθριώσθαι πρέπει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ

ἀλλ' ἄγετε λευκόποδες,  
 665 οἵπερ ἐπὶ Δειψύδριον  
 ἦλθομεν ὅτ' ἡμεν ἔτι,  
 νῦν δεῖ, νῦν ἀνηβῆσαι πάλιν κἀναπτερωῶσαι  
 670 πᾶν τὸ σῶμα κἀποσείσασθαι τὸ γῆρας τόδε.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

εἰ γὰρ ἐνδώσει τις ἡμῶν ταῖσδε κἂν σμικρὰν  
 λαβήν,  
 οὐδὲν ἐλλείψουσιν αὐταὶ λιπαροῦς χειρουργίας,

653 γενόμενον Geel: λεγόμενον a S

664 λευκ- Hermann cl. Hesych. λ 1392: λυκ- a S Photius



## LYSISTRATA

men. You miserable geezers have no stake, since you've squandered your paternal inheritance, won in the Persian Wars, and now pay no taxes in return. On the contrary, we're all headed for bankruptcy on account of you! Have you anything to grunt in rebuttal? Any more trouble from you and I'll clobber you with this rawhide boot right in the jaw! (*raises her foot at the Men's Leader*)

### MEN'S CHORUS

Now doesn't this behavior of theirs amount to extreme hubris?

And I do believe the situation will only get worse. Every man with any balls must stand up to this threat!

### MEN'S LEADER

Let's doff our shirts, because a man's got to smell like a man from the word go, and shouldn't be all wrapped up like souvlaki. (*they remove their shirts*)

### MEN'S CHORUS

Come on, Whitefeet!<sup>65</sup>

We went against Leipsydrium<sup>66</sup>  
when we still were something;  
now we've got to rejuvenate, and give wing  
to our whole bodies, and slough off this old skin!

### MEN'S LEADER

If any man among us gives these women even the tiniest handhold, there's no limit to what their nimble hands will

<sup>65</sup> A military nickname of disputed, but evidently patriotic, significance.

<sup>66</sup> In the hills of northern Attica, where rebels battled the tyrant Hippias after his brother's assassination.

ARISTOPHANES

675 ἀλλὰ καὶ ναῦς τεκτανοῦνται, κάπιχειρήσουσ' ἔτι  
 ναυμαχεῖν καὶ πλεῖν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ Ἄρτεμισία.  
 ἦν δ' ἐφ' ἵππικὴν τράπωνται, διαγράφω τοὺς  
 ἱππέας·

ἵππικώτατον γάρ ἐστι χρῆμα κάποχον γυνή,  
 κοῦκ ἂν ἀπολίσθοι τρέχοντος. τὰς Ἀμαζόνας  
 σκόπει,

ἄς Μίκων ἔγραψ' ἐφ' ἵππων μαχομένας τοῖς  
 ἀνδράσιν.

680 ἀλλὰ τούτων χρῆν ἀπασῶν εἰς τετρημένον ξύλον  
 ἐγκαθαρμόσαι λαβόντας τουτουὶ τὸν ἀνχένα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ

(ἀντ) εἰ νῆ τὸ θεώ με ζωπυρήσεις, λύσω

683/4 τὴν ἐμαυτῆς ὕν ἐγὼ δῆ, καὶ ποιήσω

685/6 τήμερον τοὺς δημότας βωστρεῖν σ' ἐγὼ  
 πεκτούμενον.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΑ

687/8 ἀλλὰ χῆμεῖς, ὦ γυναῖκες, θᾶπτον ἐκδυνώμεθα,

689/90 ὡς ἂν ὄζωμεν γυναικῶν αὐτοδαξ ὠργισμένων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ

νῦν πρὸς ἔμ' ἴτω τις, ἵνα

μήποτε φάγη σκόροδα

μηδὲ κυάμους μέλανας.

ὡς εἰ καὶ μόνον κακῶς ἐρεῖς, ὑπερχολῶ γάρ,

---

67 A queen of Halicarnassus who commanded naval actions against the Greeks during the Persian invasion of 480, cf. Herodotus 7.99, 8.68–69, 87–88.

## LYSISTRATA

do. Why, they'll even be building frigates and launching naval attacks, cruising against us like Artemisia.<sup>67</sup> And if they turn to horsemanship, you can scratch our cavalry: there's nothing like a woman when it comes to mounting and riding; even riding hard she won't slip off. Just look at the Amazons in Mikon's paintings,<sup>68</sup> riding chargers in battle against men.<sup>69</sup> Our duty is clear: grab each woman's neck and lock it in the wooden stocks! (*advances on the Women's Leader.*)

### WOMEN'S CHORUS

By the Two Goddesses, if you fire me up  
I'll come at you like a wild sow and clip you bare,  
and this very day you'll go bleating to your friends for  
help!

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Quickly, women, let's take off our shirts too, because we've  
got to smell like women mad enough to bite! (*remove their  
shirts*)

### WOMEN'S CHORUS

All right now, someone attack me:  
he'll eat no more garlic  
and chew no more beans.  
If you so much as curse at me, I'll boil over with such  
rage,

<sup>68</sup> These paintings, commissioned in mid-century, adorned the Stoa Poikile and the Theseum, cf. Pausanias 1.15, 17.

<sup>69</sup> Legend had it that the Amazons (like the Persians) once invaded Attica and occupied the Acropolis, and were routed by the Athenians in battle.

ARISTOPHANES

695 αἰετὸν τίκτοντα κἀνθαρός σε μαιεύσομαι.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

οὐ γὰρ ὑμῶν φροντίσαιμ' ἄν, ἦν ἐμοὶ ζῆ Λαμπιτῶ  
ἢ τε Θηβαία φίλη παῖς εὐγενῆς Ἴσμηνία.

οὐ γὰρ ἔσται δύναμις, οὐδ' ἦν ἐπτάκις σὺ ψηφίση,  
ὅστις, ὦ δύστην', ἀπήχθου πᾶσι καὶ τοῖς γείτοσιν.

700 ὥστε κἀχθὲς θῆκάτη ποιούσα παιγνίαν ἐγὼ  
ταῖσι παισὶ τὴν ἐταίραν ἐκάλεσ' ἐκ τῶν γειτόνων,  
παῖδα χρηστὴν κἀγαπητὴν ἐκ Βοιωτῶν ἔγχελυν,  
οἱ δὲ πέμψειν οὐκ ἔφασκον διὰ τὰ σὰ ψηφίσματα.  
κούχλι μὴ παύσησθε τῶν ψηφισμάτων τούτων, πρὶν  
ἄν

705 τοῦ σκέλους ὑμᾶς λαβὼν τις ἐκτραχηλίση φέρων.  
ἄνασσα πράγους τοῦδε καὶ βουλευμάτος,  
τί μοι σκυθρωπὸς ἐξελέλυθας δόμων;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

κακῶν γυναικῶν ἔργα καὶ θήλεια φρῆν  
ποιεῖ μ' ἀθυμεῖν περιπατεῖν τ' ἄνω κάτω.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

710 τί φῆς; τί φῆς;

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀληθῆ, ἀληθῆ.

<sup>70</sup> In Aesop's Fable 3, the beetle avenges a wrong done it by an eagle by breaking the eagle's eggs; these had been placed in Zeus' lap for safekeeping, but when the beetle dropped dung into Zeus' lap, he unthinkingly jumped up and spilled the eggs. Here there is an implied threat to the men's testicles.

## LYSISTRATA

I'll be the beetle midwife to your eagle's eggs.<sup>70</sup>

### WOMEN'S LEADER

You men don't worry me a bit, not while my Lampito lives and my Ismenia, the noble Theban girl. You'll have no power to do anything about us, not even if you pass a decree seven times: that's how much everyone hates you, you sad sack, and especially our neighbors. Why, just yesterday I threw a party for the girls in honor of Hecate,<sup>71</sup> and I invited my friend from next door, a fine girl who's very special to me: an eel from Boeotia.<sup>72</sup> But they said they wouldn't let her come because of your decrees. And you'll never, ever stop passing these decrees until someone grabs you by the leg, throws you away, and breaks your neck! (*She makes a grab for the Men's Leader's leg.*)

*Enter LYSISTRATA from the Acropolis.*

O mistress of this venture and stratagem,  
why come you from the palace so dour of mien?<sup>73</sup>

### LYSISTRATA

The deeds of ignoble women and the female heart  
do make me pace dispirited to and fro.

### WOMEN'S LEADER

What say you? What say you?

### LYSISTRATA

'Tis true, too true!

<sup>71</sup> See 64 n.

<sup>72</sup> See 36 n.

<sup>73</sup> Lines 706–17 (except 715) are tragic pastiche.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΑ

τί δ' ἐστὶ δεινόν; φράζε ταῖς σαυτῆς φίλαις.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἄλλ' αἰσχρὸν εἰπεῖν καὶ σιωπήσῃ βαρύ.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΑ

μή νύν με κρύψῃς ὅ τι πεπόνθαμεν κακόν.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

715 βινητιῶμεν, ἧ βράχιστον τοῦ λόγου.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΑ

ἰὼ Ζεῦ.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τί Ζῆν' αὐτεῖς; ταῦτα δ' οὖν οὕτως ἔχει.

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν αὐτὰς ἀποσχεῖν οὐκέτι

οἷα τ' ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν· διαδιδράσκουσι γάρ.

720 τὴν μὲν γε πρώτην διαλέγουσαν τὴν ὀπὴν

κατέλαβον ἧ τοῦ Πανός ἐστὶ ταῦλίον,

τὴν δ' ἐκ τροχιλείας αὖ κατειλυσπωμένην,

τὴν δ' αὐτομολοῦσαν· τὴν δ' ἐπὶ στρούθου μίαν

ἤδη πέτεσθαι διανοουμένην κάτω

725 εἰς Ὀρσιλόχου χθὲς τῶν τριχῶν κατέσπασα.

πάσας τε προφάσεις ὥστ' ἀπελθεῖν οἴκαδε

ἔλκουσιν. ἠδὲ γοῦν τις αὐτῶν ἔρχεται.

αὕτη σύ, ποῖ θεῖς;

---

<sup>74</sup> For Pan see 2 n. This grotto, on the northern slope of the Acropolis, was where Apollo raped the Athenian princess Creusa;



LYSISTRATA

WOMEN'S LEADER

What dire thing? Pray tell it to your friends.

LYSISTRATA

'Tis shame to say and grief to leave unsaid.

WOMEN'S LEADER

Hide not from me the damage we have taken.

LYSISTRATA

The story in briefest compass: we need a fuck!

WOMEN'S LEADER

Ah, Zeus!

LYSISTRATA

Why rend the air for Zeus? Anyway, that's the way it is. The truth is, I can't keep them away from their husbands any longer; they're running off in all directions. The first one I caught was over there by Pan's Grotto,<sup>74</sup> excavating the hole; yet another was trying to escape by clambering down a pulley cable. And yesterday another one mounted a sparrow<sup>75</sup> and was about to fly off to Orsilochus' house<sup>76</sup> when I pulled her off by her hair. They're coming up with every kind of excuse to go home.

*FIRST WIFE rushes from the Acropolis.*

Hey you! What's your hurry?

the resulting child, Ion, became the ancestor of the Ionian peoples.

<sup>75</sup> Sparrows were emblematic of sexual appetite and eaten as aphrodisiacs, and "sparrow" was a slang term for both penis and vagina.

<sup>76</sup> Evidently a ladies' man, otherwise unknown.



ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ Α

οἴκαδ' ἐλθεῖν βούλομαι.  
οἴκοι γάρ ἐστιν ἔριά μοι Μιλήσια  
ὑπὸ τῶν σέων κατακοπτόμενα.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

730

ποίων σέων;  
οὐκ εἶ πάλιν;

ΓΤΝΗ Α

ἄλλ' ἤξω ταχέως νῆ τῶ θεώ,  
ὅσον διαπετάσασ' ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης μόνον.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

μὴ διαπετάννυ, μηδ' ἀπέλθης μηδαμῆ.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

ἄλλ' ἐὼ 'πολέσθαι τᾶρι';

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἦν τούτου δέη.

ΓΤΝΗ Β

735 τάλαιν' ἐγώ, τάλαινα τῆς ἀμόργιδος,  
ἦν ἄλοπον οἴκοι καταλέλοιφ'.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

αὕτη 'τέρα  
ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμοργιν τὴν ἄλοπον ἐξέρχεται.  
χώρει πάλιν δεῦρ'.

ΓΤΝΗ Β

ἄλλὰ νῆ τὴν Φωσφόρον  
ἔγωγ' ἀποδείρασ' αὐτίκα μάλ' ἀνέρχομαι.

LYSISTRATA

FIRST WIFE

I want to go home. I've got some Milesian woolens in the house, and the moths are chomping them all up.

LYSISTRATA

Moths indeed! Get back inside.

FIRST WIFE

By the Two Goddesses, I'll be right back; just let me spread them on the bed!

LYSISTRATA

Don't you spread anything, or go anywhere.

FIRST WIFE

So I'm supposed to let my woolens be wasted?

LYSISTRATA

If that's what it takes.

*SECOND WIFE rushes from the Acropolis.*

SECOND WIFE

Oh my god, my god, my flax! I forgot to shuck it when I left the house!

LYSISTRATA

Here's another one off to shuck her flax. March right back here.

SECOND WIFE

By our Lady of Light, I'll be back in a flash; just let me do a little shucking.

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

740 μή, μὴ ᾿ποδείρης· ἦν γὰρ ἄρξης τουτουί,  
 ἑτέρα γυνὴ ταῦτόν ποιεῖν βουλήσεται.

ΓΤΝΗ Γ

ὦ πότνι ᾿Ιλείθυ, ἐπίσχες τοῦ τόκου  
 ἕως ἂν εἰς ὄσιον μόλω ᾿γὼ χωρίον.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τί ταῦτα ληρεῖς;

ΓΤΝΗ Γ

αὐτίκα μάλα τέξομαι.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἄλλ' οὐκ ἐκύεις σύ γ' ἐχθές.

ΓΤΝΗ Γ

745 ἄλλὰ τήμερον.  
 ἄλλ' οἴκαδέ μ' ὡς τὴν μαῖαν, ὦ Λυσιστράτη,  
 ἀπόπεμψον ὡς τάχιστα.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τίνα λόγον λέγεις;

τί τοῦτ' ἔχεις τὸ σκληρόν;

ΓΤΝΗ Γ

ἄρρεν παιδίον.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην οὐ σύ γ' ἄλλ' ἢ χαλκίον

<sup>742</sup> ᾿Ιλείθυ Coulon cl. titulis: Εἰλείθυ(ι)α vel Εἰλήθυ(ι)α a testt.

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

No! No shucking! If *you* start doing it, some other wife will want to do the same.

*THIRD WIFE rushes from the Acropolis.*

THIRD WIFE

O Lady Hileithya, hold back the baby till I can get to a more profane spot!<sup>77</sup>

LYSISTRATA

What are you raving about?

THIRD WIFE

I'm about to deliver a child!

LYSISTRATA

But you weren't pregnant yesterday.

THIRD WIFE

But today I am. Please, Lysistrata, send me home to the midwife, right away!

LYSISTRATA

What's the story? What's this thing you've got under there? It's hard.

THIRD WIFE

It's a boy.

LYSISTRATA

By Aphrodite, it's obvious you've got something metallic

<sup>77</sup> Childbirth, of which Hileithya (variously spelled) was the goddess, was forbidden in sanctuaries like the Acropolis.

ARISTOPHANES

750 ἔχειν τι φαίνει κοῖλον· εἴσομαι δ' ἐγώ.  
ὦ καταγέλαστ', ἔχουσα τὴν ἱερὰν κυνῆν  
κυεῖν ἔφασκες;

ΓΤΝΗ Γ

καὶ κυῶ γε νῆ Δία.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τί δῆτα ταύτην εἶχες;

ΓΤΝΗ Γ

ἵνα μ' εἰ καταλάβοι  
ὁ τόκος ἔτ' ἐν πόλει, τέκοιμ' εἰς τὴν κυνῆν  
755 εἰσβάσα ταύτην, ὥσπερ αἱ περιστραφαί.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τί λέγεις; προφασίζει· περιφανῆ τὰ πράγματα.  
οὐ τὰμφιδρόμια τῆς κυνῆς αὐτοῦ μενεῖς;

ΓΤΝΗ Γ

ἀλλ' οὐ δύναμαι ἄγωγ' οὐδὲ κοιμᾶσθ' ἐν πόλει,  
ἐξ οὗ τὸν ὄφιν εἶδον τὸν οἰκουρόν ποτε.

ΓΤΝΗ Δ

760 ἐγὼ δ' ὑπὸ τῶν γλαυκῶν γε τάλαιν' ἀπόλλυμαι  
ταῖς ἀγρυνπνίαισι κικκαβαζουσῶν αἰεί.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὦ δαιμόνια, παύσασθε τῶν τερατευμάτων.  
ποθείτ' ἴσως τοὺς ἄνδρας· ὑμᾶς δ' οὐκ οἶει  
ποθεῖν ἐκείνους; ἀργαλέας γ' εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι

763 ὑμᾶς Sommerstein: ἡμᾶς a

LYSISTRATA

and hollow under there. Let's have a look. Ridiculous girl!  
You're big with the sacred helmet, not with child!<sup>78</sup>

THIRD WIFE

But I *am* with child, I swear!

LYSISTRATA

Then what were you doing with this?

THIRD WIFE

Well, if I began to deliver here in the citadel, I could get into the helmet and have my baby there, like a pigeon.

LYSISTRATA

What kind of story is that? Excuses! It's quite obvious what's going on. You'll have to stay here till your—helmet has its naming day.

THIRD WIFE

But I can't even *sleep* on the Acropolis, ever since I saw the snake that guards the temple.

*FOURTH WIFE rushes from the Acropolis.*

FOURTH WIFE

And what about poor me—listening to the owls go *woo woo* all night is killing me!

LYSISTRATA

You nutty girls, enough of your horror stories! I guess you do miss your husbands; but do you think they don't miss you? They're spending some very rough nights, I assure

<sup>78</sup> That is, the helmet from the great bronze statue of Athena Promachus on the Acropolis.

ARISTOPHANES

765 ἄγουσι νύκτας. ἀλλ' ἀνάσχεσθ', ὦγαθαί,  
καὶ προσταλαιπωρήσατ' ἔτ' ὀλίγον χρόνον·  
ὡς χρησμὸς ἡμῖν ἔστιν ἐπικρατεῖν, εἰάν  
μὴ στασιάσωμεν. ἔστι δ' ὁ χρησμὸς οὕτοσί.

ΓΤΝΗ Γ

λέγ' αὐτὸν ἡμῖν ὅ τι λέγει.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

σιγᾶτε δή.

770 ἀλλ' ὅποταν πτήξωσι χελιδόνες εἰς ἓνα χῶρον,  
τοὺς ἔποπας φεύγουσαι, ἀπόσχωνταί τε φαλήτων,  
παῦλα κακῶν ἔσται, τὰ δ' ὑπέρτερα νέρτερα θήσει  
Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης—

ΓΤΝΗ Γ

ἐπάνω κατακεισόμεθ' ἡμεῖς;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἦν δὲ διαστῶσιν καὶ ἀνάπτωνται πτερύγεσσι  
775 ἐξ ἱεροῦ ναοῖο χελιδόνες, οὐκέτι δόξει  
ὄρνεον οὐδ' ὀτιοῦν καταπυγωνέστερον εἶναι.

ΓΤΝΗ Γ

σαφῆς γ' ὁ χρησμὸς νῆ Δί'. ὦ πάντες θεοί.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

μή νυν ἀπείπωμεν ταλαιπωρούμεναι,  
ἀλλ' εἰσῴωμεν. καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν τουτογί,  
780 ὦ φίλταται, τὸν χρησμὸν εἰ προδώσομεν.



LYSISTRATA

you. Just be patient, good ladies, and put up with this only a little bit longer. There's an oracle predicting victory for us, but only if we stick together. (*produces a scroll*) Here's the oracle right here.

THIRD WIFE

Tell us what it says.

LYSISTRATA

Be quiet, then.

Yea, when the swallows hole up in a single home,  
fleeing the hoopoes<sup>79</sup> and leaving the phallus alone,  
then are their problems solved, and high-thundering  
Zeus  
shall reverse what's up and what's down—

THIRD WIFE

You mean *we'll* be lying on top?

LYSISTRATA

But:

if the swallows begin to argue and fly away  
down from the citadel holy, all will say,  
no bird more disgustingly horny lives today!

THIRD WIFE

A pretty explicit oracle. Ye gods!

LYSISTRATA

Then let's not quit when the going is tough, but let's go back inside. Dear comrades, it would be a real shame if we betray the oracle.

*All exit into the Acropolis.*

<sup>79</sup> See *Birds* 15 n.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΕΡΟΝΤΩΝ

- (στρ) μῦθον βούλομαι λέξαι τιν' ὑμῖν, ὃν ποτ' ἤκουσ'  
 783 αὐτὸς ἔτι παῖς ὢν.  
 784/5 οὕτως ἦν νεανίσκος Μελανίων τις,  
 786/7 ὃς φεύγων γάμον ἀφίκετ' ἐς ἐρημίαν, κὰν  
 788 τοῖς ὄρεσιν ᾧκει·  
 791 καὶ κύνα τιν' εἶχεν,  
 789 κᾶτ' ἐλαγοθήρει  
 790 πλεξάμενος ἄρκυς,  
 792 κούκέτι κατήλθε πάλιν οἴκαδ' ὑπὸ μίσους.  
 793/4 οὕτω τὰς γυναῖκας ἐβδελύχθη  
 795 'κεῖνος, ἡμεῖς τ' οὐδὲν ἦττον  
 τοῦ Μελανίωνος, οἱ σώφρονες.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

βούλομαί σε, γραῦ, κύσαι—

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

κρομμύων γ' ἄρ' οὐκ ἔδει.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

κἀνατείνας λακτίσαι.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

800 τὴν λόχμην πολλὴν φορεῖς.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

καὶ Μυρωνίδης γὰρ ἦν  
 τραχὺς ἐντεῦθεν μελάμπυ-  
 γός τε τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἅπασιν·

791 ante 789 (om. 790) S: del. Weise

LYSISTRATA

MEN'S CHORUS

I want to tell you all a tale that once I heard  
when but a lad.

In olden times lived a young man named Melanion.<sup>80</sup>  
In flight from marriage he went off to the wilderness  
and lived in the mountains  
and kept a dog  
and wove traps  
and hunted rabbits;  
but he never went home again because of his hatred.  
That's how much he loathed women.  
And, being wise, we loathe them just  
as much as Melanion did.

MEN'S LEADER

I'd like to kiss you, old thing—

WOMEN'S LEADER

Then you'll lay off the onions!

MEN'S LEADER

and lift a leg to kick you!

WOMEN'S LEADER

That's a lot of bush you're sporting!

MEN'S LEADER

Well, Myronides too was bristly down there,  
and hairy-arsed to all his enemies;

<sup>80</sup> Melanion is best known for using the trick of the golden apples to win a footrace against the huntress-maiden Atalante and thus her hand in marriage; here the old men may refer to a version of the myth in which Melanion was celibate and Atalante his divine companion, like Hippolytus and Artemis in Euripides' play *Hippolytus*.

ARISTOPHANES

ὡς δὲ καὶ Φορμίων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ

(ἀντ) καὶ γὰρ βούλομαι μῦθόν τιν' ὑμῖν ἀντιλέξαι  
807 τῷ Μελανίωνι.

808/9 Τίμων ἦν τις αἰδρυτος ἀβάτοισιν

810/1 ἐν σκώλοισι τὰ πρόσωπα περιειργμένος, Ἐ-  
ρινύων ἀπορρώξ.

οὔτος οὖν ὁ Τίμων

814a ὄχεθ' ὑπὸ μίσους

814b <εἰς τόπον ἔρημον>

815 πολλὰ καταρασάμενος ἀνδράσι πονηροῖς.

οὔτω 'κεῖνος ἡμῖν ἀντεμίσει

τοὺς πονηροὺς ἀνδρας αἰεί,

819/0 ταῖσι δὲ γυναιξὶν ἦν φίλτατος.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

τὴν γνάθον βούλει θένω;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

μηδαμῶς· ἔδεισά γε.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἀλλὰ κρούσω τῷ σκέλει;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τὸν σάκανδρον ἐκφανεῖς.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

825 ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀν οὐκ ἴδοις

814 lacunam posuit Biset, suppl. Blaydes

817 ἡμῖν Bergk cl. Σ<sup>R</sup>: ὑμῶν a

## LYSISTRATA

so too was Phormion.<sup>81</sup>

### WOMEN'S CHORUS

I too want to tell you all a tale in reply  
to your Melanion.

There once was a drifter named Timon,<sup>82</sup>  
his visage girded by impregnable thorns,  
an offshoot of the Furies.

So this Timon  
wandered off because of his hatred  
<into a desolate place,>  
constantly cursing the wickedness of men.  
That's how much he joined us in loathing  
wicked men, ever and always.  
But he was a dear friend to women.

### WOMEN'S LEADER

How would you like a punch in the mouth?

### MEN'S LEADER

No no! You're really scaring me!

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Then how about a good swift kick?

### MEN'S LEADER

If you do you'll be flashing your twat!

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Even so, old lady though I am,

<sup>81</sup> Two Athenian generals of the past, who were remembered for hardiness and courage.

<sup>82</sup> A legendary misanthrope, and a main character in several Greek comedies, who (despite the women's claim) is elsewhere said to have hated men and women alike.

ARISTOPHANES

καίπερ οὔσης γραὸς ὄντ' αὐ-  
τὸν κομήτην, ἀλλ' ἀπεψι-  
λωμένον τῷ λύχνῳ.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἰοὺ ἰού, γυναῖκες, ἴτε δεῦρ' ὡς ἐμέ  
ταχέως.

ΓΤΝΗ

830 τί δ' ἐστίν; εἶπέ μοι, τίς ἢ βοή;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἄνδρ', <ἄνδρ'> ὀρῶ προσιόντα παραπεπληγμένον,  
τοῖς τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ὀργίοις εἰλημμένον.  
ὦ πότνια, Κύπρου καὶ Κυθήρων καὶ Πάφου  
μεδέουσ', ἴθ' ὀρθὴν ἤνπερ ἔρχει τὴν ὁδόν.

ΓΤΝΗ

ποῦ δ' ἐστίν, ὅστις ἐστί;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

835 παρὰ τὸ τῆς Χλόης.

ΓΤΝΗ

ὦ νῆ Δί' ἐστὶ δῆτα. τίς κάστιν ποτε;

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὀρᾶτε. γιγνώσκει τις ὑμῶν;

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

νῆ Δία

ἔγωγε· κάστιν οὐμὸς ἀνὴρ Κινησίας.

LYSISTRATA

you'll never see it  
long-haired, but depilated  
with the lamp.

*LYSISTRATA appears on the roof.*

LYSISTRATA

Hurray! Ladies, come here, quickly!

*MYRRHINE and several other Wives join Lysistrata.*

WIFE

What is it? What's all the shouting?

LYSISTRATA

A man! I see a man coming this way, stricken, in the grip of Aphrodite's mysterious powers. Lady Aphrodite, mistress of Cyprus and Cythera and Paphos, let the path that you've embarked on be upright!

WIFE

Where is he, whoever he is?

LYSISTRATA

He's by Chloe's shrine.

WIFE

Oh yes, now I see him! But who is he?

LYSISTRATA

Take a good look. Anyone recognize him?

MYRRHINE

Oh God, I do. And it's my own husband, Cinesias!



ARISTOPHANES

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

840 σὸν ἔργον ἤδη τοῦτον ὀπτᾶν καὶ στρέφειν  
καΐξηπεροπεύειν καὶ φιλεῖν καὶ μὴ φιλεῖν,  
καὶ πάνθ' ὑπέχειν πλὴν ὧν σύνοιδεν ἢ κύλιξ.

ΜΥΡΡΙΝΗ

ἀμέλει, ποιήσω ταῦτ' ἐγώ.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ  
ξυνηπεροπεύσω <σοὶ> παραμένουσ' ἐνθαδί,  
καὶ ξυσταθεύσω τοῦτον. ἀλλ' ἀπέλθετε.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

845 οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, οἶος ὁ σπασμός μ' ἔχει  
χῶ τέτανος ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τροχοῦ στρεβλούμενον.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τίς οὗτος οὐντὸς τῶν φυλάκων ἐστώς;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἐγώ.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀνὴρ;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἀνὴρ δῆτ'.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

οὐκ ἄπει δῆτ' ἐκποδών;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

σὺ δ' εἰ τίς ἠκβάλλουσα μ';

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

Then it's your job to roast him, to torture him, to bamboozle him, to love him and not to love him, and to give him anything he wants, except what you and our wine cup know about.

MYRRHINE

Don't you worry, I'll do it!

LYSISTRATA

And I'll stick around to help you bamboozle and roast him. Now everyone get out of sight!

*Exit Wives, enter CINESIAS with Manes, who holds a baby.*

CINESIAS

Oh, oh, evil fate! I've got terrible spasms and cramps. It's like I'm being broken on the rack!

LYSISTRATA

Who goes there, poking up within our defense perimeter?

CINESIAS

Me.

LYSISTRATA

A man?

CINESIAS

*(brandishing his phallus)*: Of course a man!

LYSISTRATA

In that case clear out of here!

CINESIAS

And who are you to throw me out?

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἡμεροσκόπος.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

850 πρὸς τῶν θεῶν νυν ἐκκάλεσόν μοι Μυρρίνην.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἰδοὺ καλέσω ἄγε Μυρρίνην σοι; σὺ δὲ τίς εἶ;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἀνὴρ ἐκείνης, Παιονίδης Κινησίας.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ὦ χαῖρε φίλτατ'· οὐ γὰρ ἀκλεῆς τοῦνομα  
τὸ σὸν παρ' ἡμῖν ἐστὶν οὐδ' ἀνώνυμον.

855 ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ σ' ἔχει διὰ στόμα.  
κἂν ῥὸν ἢ μῆλον λάβῃ, “Κινησία  
τουτὶ γένοιτο,” φησὶν.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ὦ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν—

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

860 νῆ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην· κἂν περὶ ἀνδρῶν γ' ἐμπέση  
λόγος τις, εἴρηκ' εὐθέως ἢ σὴ γυνὴ  
ὅτι λῆρός ἐστι τᾶλλα πρὸς Κινησίαν.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἴθι νυν κάλεσον αὐτήν.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

τί οὖν; δώσεις τί μοι;

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

The daytime sentry.

CINESIAS

Then in the gods' name call Myrrhine out here to me.

LYSISTRATA

Listen to him, "call Myrrhine"! And who might you be?

CINESIAS

Her husband, Cinesias, from Paeonidae.<sup>83</sup>

LYSISTRATA

Well hello, darling! Among us *your* name is hardly unknown or unmentioned. Your wife always has you on her lips; she'll be eating an egg or an apple and she'll say, "This one's for Cinesias."

CINESIAS

Oh gods!

LYSISTRATA

Aphrodite be my witness! And whenever the conversation turns to men, your wife speaks right up and says, "Compared with Cinesias, all the rest are trash!"

CINESIAS

Come on now, call her out!

LYSISTRATA

Ahem. Got anything for me?

<sup>83</sup> Possibly the poet Cinesias (an uncommon name) caricatured in *Birds*, but the name was more likely chosen for the pun on *kinein* "screw," just as the deme name Paeonidae reminds us of *paiein* "bang."

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἔγωγέ <σοι> νῆ τὸν Δί, ἣν βούλη γε σύ.  
ἔχω δὲ τοῦθ'· ὅπερ οὖν ἔχω, δίδωμί σοι.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

φέρε νυν καλέσω καταβᾶσά σοι.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ταχύ νυν πάνυ·

865 ὡς οὐδεμίαν ἔχω γε τῷ βίῳ χάριν,  
ἐξ οὐπερ αὐτῇ ἔξηλθεν ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας,  
ἀλλ' ἄχθομαι μὲν εἰσιών, ἔρημα δὲ  
εἶναι δοκεῖ μοι πάντα, τοῖς δὲ σιτίοις  
χάριν οὐδεμίαν οἶδ' ἐσθίων. ἔστυκα γάρ.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

870 φιλω̄ φιλω̄ ἄγὼ τοῦτον· ἀλλ' οὐ βούλεται  
ὑπ' ἐμοῦ φιλεῖσθαι. σὺ δέ με τούτῳ μὴ κάλει.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ὦ γλυκύτατον Μυρρινίδιον, τί ταῦτα δρᾶς;  
κατάβηθι δεῦρο.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ μὲν αὐτόσ' οὔ.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἐμοῦ καλοῦντος οὐ καταβήσει Μυρρίνη;

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

875 οὐ γὰρ δεόμενος οὐδὲν ἐκκαλεῖς ἐμέ.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἐγὼ οὐ δεόμενος; ἐπιτετριμμένος μὲν οὖν.

LYSISTRATA

CINESIAS

(*Indicating his phallus*): Indeed I do, if you want it. Then what about this? (*tossing her a purse*) It's all I've got, and you're welcome to it.

LYSISTRATA

All right, I'll go down and call her for you.

*LYSISTRATA leaves the ramparts.*

CINESIAS

Make it quick, now! (*alone*) I've had no joy or pleasure in my life since the day she left my home. I go into the house and feel agony; everything looks empty to me; I get no pleasure from the food I eat. Because I'm horny!

*MYRRHINE appears on the ramparts.*

MYRRHINE

I love that man, I love him! But he doesn't want my love. Please don't make me go out to him!

CINESIAS

Myrrhinikins, dearest, why are you doing this? Come down here!

MYRRHINE

I'm positively not going down there!

CINESIAS

You won't come down when I ask you, Myrrhine?

MYRRHINE

You're asking me, but you don't really want me.

CINESIAS

Me not want you? Why, I'm in agony without you!

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ἄπειμι.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

μὴ δῆτ', ἀλλὰ τῷ γοῦν παιδίῳ  
ὑπάκουσον. οὗτος, οὐ καλεῖς τὴν μαμμίαν;

ΠΑΙΔΙΟΝ

μαμμία, μαμμία, μαμμία.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

880 αὐτή, τί πάσχεις; οὐδ' ἐλεεῖς τὸ παιδίον  
ἄλουτον ὃν κᾶθηλον ἔκτην ἡμέραν;

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ἔγωγ' ἐλεῶ δῆτ'. ἀλλ' ἀμελής αὐτῷ πατήρ  
ἔστιν.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

κατάβηθ', ὦ δαιμονία, τῷ παιδίῳ.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

οἶον τὸ τεκεῖν. καταβατέον.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

885 ἐμοὶ γὰρ αὐτὴ καὶ νεωτέρα δοκεῖ  
πολλῷ γεγενῆσθαι κάγανώτερον βλέπειν·  
χὰ δυσκολαίνει πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ βρενθύεται,  
ταῦτ' αὐτὰ δὴ 'σθ' ἂ καί μ' ἐπιτρίβει τῷ πόθῳ.



LYSISTRATA

MYRRHINE

Goodbye.

CINESIAS

No, wait! At least listen to the baby. Come on you, yell for mommy!

BABY

Mommy! Mommy! Mommy!

CINESIAS

Hey, what's wrong with you? Don't you feel sorry for the baby, unwashed and unsuckled for six days already?

MYRRHINE

Him I feel sorry for; too bad his father doesn't care about him.

CINESIAS

Come down here, you screwy woman, and see to your child!

MYRRHINE

How momentous is motherhood! I have to go down there.

*MYRRHINE disappears from the roof.*

CINESIAS

*(to the spectators)* What choice do I have? Yes, she seems much younger than I remember, and has a sexier look in her eyes. And the way she acted prickly to me and very stuck-up, that's exactly what makes me want her even more!

*Enter MYRRHINE from the Acropolis gates.*

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

890 ὦ γλυκύτατον σὺ τεκνίδιον κακοῦ πατρός,  
φέρε σε φιλήσω, γλυκύτατον τῇ μαμμία.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

τί, ὦ πονήρα, ταῦτα ποιεῖς χᾶτέραις  
πέιθει γυναιξί; κάμ' ἄχθεσθαι ποιεῖς  
αὐτή τε λυπεῖ.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

μὴ πρόσαγε τὴν χεῖρά μοι.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

τὰ δ' ἔνδον ὄντα τὰμὰ καὶ σὰ χρήματα  
χεῖρον διατίθης.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

895 ὀλίγον αὐτῶν μοι μέλει.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ὀλίγον μέλει σοι τῆς κρόκης φορουμένης  
ὑπὸ τῶν ἀλεκτρυόνων;

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ἔμοιγε νῆ Δία.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

τὰ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἰέρ' ἀνοργίαστά σοι  
χρόνον τοσοῦτόν ἐστιν. οὐ βαδιεῖ πάλιν;

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

900 μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἦν μὴ διαλλαχθῆτέ γε  
καὶ τοῦ πολέμου παύσησθε.

LYSISTRATA

MYRRHINE

My sweetie, my bitty baby, that's got such a bad father, let me give you a kiss, mommy's little dearest!

CINESIAS

What do you think you're doing, you naughty girl, listening to those other women and giving me a hard time and hurting yourself as well?

MYRRHINE

Don't you lay your hands on me!

CINESIAS

You know you've let our house, your things and mine, become an utter mess?

MYRRHINE

It doesn't bother me.

CINESIAS

It doesn't bother you that the hens are pulling your woollens apart?

MYRRHINE

Not a bit.

CINESIAS

And what a long time it's been since you've celebrated Aphrodite's holy mysteries. Won't you come home?

MYRRHINE

I certainly will not, not until you men agree to a settlement and stop the war.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

τοιγάρ, ἦν δοκῆ,  
ποιήσομεν καὶ ταῦτα.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

τοιγάρ, ἦν δοκῆ,  
κ᾿ἀγωγ' ἄπειμ' ἐκείσε· νῦν δ' ἀπομώμοκα.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

σὺ δ' ἀλλὰ κατακλίνηθι μετ' ἐμοῦ διὰ χρόνου.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

905 οὐ δῆτα· καίτοι σ' οὐκ ἐρῶ γ' ὡς οὐ φιλω̄.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

φιλεῖς; τί οὖν οὐ κατεκλίνης, ᾧ Μύρριον;

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ᾧ καταγέλαστ', ἐναντίον τοῦ παιδίου;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

μὰ Δί' ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γ' οἴκαδ', ᾧ Μανῆ, φέρε.  
ἰδοὺ τὸ μέν σοι παιδίον καὶ δὴ ἔκποδών·  
σὺ δ' οὐ κατακλινεῖ;

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

910 ποῦ γὰρ ἂν τις καί, τάλαν,  
δράσειε τοῦθ';

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ᾔπου; τὸ τοῦ Πανὸς καλόν.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

καὶ πῶς ἔθ' ἀγνή δῆτ' ἀνέλθοιμ' εἰς πόλιν;

LYSISTRATA

CINESIAS

All right, if that's what's decided, then that's what we'll do.

MYRRHINE

All right, if that's what's decided, then I'll be coming home.  
But meanwhile I've sworn to stay here.

CINESIAS

But at least lie down with me; it's been so long.

MYRRHINE

No, I won't. But I'm not saying I don't love you.

CINESIAS

You love me? Then why not lie down, Myrrie?

MYRRHINE

You must be joking! Right here in front of the baby?

CINESIAS

Of course not! Manes, take it home.

*Exit Manes.*

There you are, the kid's out of the way. Won't you lie down?

MYRRHINE

But my dear, just where could a person do it?

CINESIAS

Where? Pan's Grotto<sup>84</sup> will do fine.

MYRRHINE

But how could I go back up to the Acropolis no longer  
pure?

<sup>84</sup> See 721 n.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

κάλλιστα δήπου, λουσαμένη τῇ Κλεψύδρα.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ἔπειτ' ὁμόσασα δῆτ' ἐπιορκήσω, τάλαν;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

915 εἰς ἐμὲ τράποιτο· μηδὲν ὄρκου φροντίσης.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

φέρε νυν ἐνέγκω κλινίδιον νῶν.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

μηδαμῶς·  
ἀρκεῖ χαμαὶ νῶν.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω, μή σ' ἐγὼ  
καίπερ τοιοῦτον ὄντα κατακλινῶ χαμαί.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἦ τοι γυνὴ φιλεῖ με, δήλη ὅστιν καλῶς.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

920 ἰδού, κατάκεισ' ἀνύσας τι, καγὼ ἔκδύομαι.  
καίτοι, τὸ δεῖνα, ψίαθός ἐστ' ἐξοιστέα.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ποία ψίαθος; μή μοί γε.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

νῆ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν,  
αἰσχροὺν γὰρ ἐπὶ τόνου γε.

LYSISTRATA

CINESIAS

Very easily done: just wash off in the Clepsydra.<sup>85</sup>

MYRRHINE

You're telling me, dear, that I should break the oath I swore?

CINESIAS

Let that be on my head; don't you worry about any oath.

MYRRHINE

All right then, let me fetch us a bed.

CINESIAS

Nothing doing; the ground will serve for us.

MYRRHINE

Apollo no! I wouldn't dream of letting you lie on the ground, no matter what kind of man you are.

*Myrrhine goes into Pan's Grotto.*

CINESIAS

You know, she really loves me, that's quite obvious!

MYRRHINE

*(returning with a cot)* There we are! Lie right down while I undress. But wait, um, yes, a mattress! Must go get one.

CINESIAS

What do you mean, a mattress? No thanks.

MYRRHINE

By Artemis, it's nasty on cords.

<sup>85</sup> A spring on the northwest slope of the Acropolis.



ARISTOPHANES

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

δός μοί νυν κύσαι.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ἰδού.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

παπαιάξ. ἤκέ νυν ταχέως πάνυ.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

925 ἰδού ψίαθος. κατάκεισο, καὶ δὴ ἴκδύομαι.  
καίτοι, τὸ δεῖνα, προσκεφάλαιον οὐκ ἔχεις.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἄλλ' οὐδὲ δέομ' ἔγωγε.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

νὴ Δί' ἄλλ' ἐγώ.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἄλλ' ἦ τὸ πέος τόδ' Ἡρακλῆς ξενίζεται;

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ἀνίστασ', ἀναπήδησον. ἤδη πάντ' ἔχω;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

930 ἅπαντα δῆτα. δεῦρό νυν, ὦ χρυσίον.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

τὸ στρόφιον ἤδη λύομαι. μέμνησό νυν·  
μή μ' ἐξαπατήσης τὰ περὶ τῶν διαλλαγῶν.

LYSISTRATA

CINESIAS

Well then, give me a kiss.

MYRRHINE

There.

CINESIAS

Oh lordy! Get the mattress quick!

MYRRHINE

*(returning with a mattress)* There we are! Lie back down and I'll get my clothes off. But wait, um, a pillow, you haven't got a pillow!

CINESIAS

But I don't need one!

MYRRHINE

But I do!

CINESIAS

Is this cock of mine supposed to be Heracles waiting for his dinner?<sup>86</sup>

MYRRHINE

*(returning with a pillow)* Lift up now, upsy daisy. There, is that everything?

CINESIAS

Everything for sure. Now come here, my little treasure!

MYRRHINE

I'm just getting my breastband off. But remember: don't break your promise about a peace settlement.

<sup>86</sup> Heracles was portrayed in myths as having a huge appetite for food and sex.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

νῆ Δί' ἀπολοίμην.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ἀλλὰ σισύραν οὐκ ἔχεις.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

μὰ Δί' οὐδὲ δέομαί γ', ἀλλὰ βινεῖν βούλομαι.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

935 ἀμέλει, ποιήσεις τοῦτο· ταχὺ γὰρ ἔρχομαι.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἄνθρωπος ἐπιτρίψει με διὰ τὰ στρώματα.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ἔπαιρε σαυτόν.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἀλλ' ἐπήρται τουτογί.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

βούλει μυρίσω σε;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω μή μέ γε.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

νῆ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην, ἣν τε βούλη γ' ἣν τε μή.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

940 εἴθ' ἐκχυθείη τὸ μύρον, ᾧ Ζεῦ δέσποτα.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

πρότεινε δὴ τὴν χεῖρα καλείφου λαβών.

LYSISTRATA

CINESIAS

So help me Zeus, I hope to die if I do!

MYRRHINE

You don't have a blanket.

CINESIAS

It's not a blanket I want—I want a fuck!

MYRRHINE

Don't worry, that's just what you're going to get. I'll be back in a flash.

CINESIAS

That woman will drive me nuts with all her bedding!

MYRRHINE

*(returning with a blanket)*: Get up.

CINESIAS

I've already got it up!

MYRRHINE

Want some scent?

CINESIAS

Apollo no, none for me.

MYRRHINE

But I will, so help me Aphrodite, whether you like it or not.

CINESIAS

Then let the scent flow! Lord Zeus!

MYRRHINE

*(returning with a round bottle of perfume)* Hold out your hand. Take some and rub it in.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

οὐχ ἤδὺ τὸ μύρον μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω τουτογί,  
εἰ μὴ διατριπτικόν γε κούκ ὄζον γάμων.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

τάλαιν' ἐγώ, τὸ Ῥόδιον ἤνεγκον μύρον.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἀγαθόν· ἕα αὐτ', ὦ δαιμονία.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

945

ληρεῖς ἔχων.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

κάκιστ' ἀπόλοιθ' ὁ πρῶτος ἐψήσας μύρον.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

λαβὲ τόνδε τὸν ἀλάβαστον.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἀλλ' ἕτερον ἔχω.

ἀλλ' ὦζυρά, κατάκεισο καὶ μὴ μοι φέρε  
μηδέν.

ΜΤΡΡΙΝΗ

ποιήσω ταῦτα νῆ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν.

950

ὑπολύομαι γοῦν. ἀλλ' ὅπως, ὦ φίλτατε,  
σπονδὰς ποιείσθαι ψηφιεῖ.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

βουλεύσομαι.

ἀπολώλεκέν με κάπιτέτριφεν ἢ γυνῆ  
τά τ' ἄλλα πάντα κάποδείρασ' οἴχεται.

LYSISTRATA

CINESIAS

I really dislike this scent; it takes a long time warming up and it doesn't smell conjugal.

MYRRHINE

Oh silly me, I brought the Rhodian scent!<sup>87</sup>

CINESIAS

It's fine! Let it go, you screwy woman!

MYRRHINE

What are you babbling about?

CINESIAS

Goddamn the man who first decocted scent!

MYRRHINE

*(returning with a long, cylindrical bottle)* Here, try this tube.

CINESIAS

I've got one of my own! Now lie down, you witch, and don't bring me anything more.

MYRRHINE

That's what I'll do, so help me Artemis; I'm just getting my shoes off. But remember, darling, you're going to vote for peace.

*MYRRHINE dashes into the Acropolis.*

CINESIAS

I'll give it serious consideration. *(finding Myrrhine gone)*  
The woman's destroyed me, annihilated me! Not only that:  
she's pumped me up and dropped me flat!

<sup>87</sup> Why this was a mistake is unclear.

ARISTOPHANES

οἷμοι τί πάθω; τίνα βινήσω,  
 955 τῆς καλλίστης πασῶν ψευσθείς;  
 πῶς ταυτηνὶ παιδοτροφήσω;  
 ποῦ Κυναλώπηξ;  
 μίσθωσόν μοι τὴν τίτθην.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἐν δεινῷ γ', ὦ δύστηνε, κακῷ  
 960 τείρει ψυχὴν ἐξαπατηθείς.  
 κ' ἄγωγ' οἰκτίρω σ'· αἰαί.  
 ποῖος γὰρ νέφρος ἂν ἀντίσχοι,  
 ποία ψυχὴ, ποῖοι δ' ὄρχεις,  
 ποία δ' ὀσφύς, ποῖος δ' ὄρρος  
 965 κατατεινόμενος  
 καὶ μὴ βινῶν τοὺς ὄρθρους;

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, δεινῶν ἀντισπασμῶν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ταυτὶ μέντοι νυνὶ σ' ἐποίησ'  
 ἢ παμβδελύρα καὶ παμμυσάρα.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

970 μὰ Δί' ἀλλὰ φίλη καὶ παγγλυκέρα.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ποία γλυκερά; μιὰρὰ μιὰρά.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

<μιὰρὰ μιὰρα> δῆτ', ὦ Ζεῦ Ζεῦ.



LYSISTRATA

Ah, what shall I do? Whom shall I screw,  
cheated of the loveliest of them all!  
How will I raise and rear this orphaned cock?  
Is Fox Dog<sup>88</sup> out there anywhere?  
Lease me a nursemaid!

MEN'S LEADER

Yes, frightful agony, you wretch,  
does rack the soul of one so sore bediddled.  
Sure I do feel for you, alas!  
What kidney could bear it,  
what soul, what balls,  
what loins, what crotch,  
thus stretched on the rack  
and never getting a morning fuck?

CINESIAS

Ah Zeus! The cramps attack anew!

MEN'S LEADER

And this is what she's done to you,  
the detestable, revolting shrew!

CINESIAS

No, she's totally sweet and dear!

MEN'S LEADER

Sweet, you say! She's vile, vile!

CINESIAS

Yes, vile, vile! O Zeus, Zeus,

---

<sup>88</sup> The nickname of the pimp or brothel keeper Philostratus, cf. *Knights* 1069.

ARISTOPHANES

975 εἴθ' αὐτὴν ὥσπερ τοὺς θωμοὺς  
 μεγάλῳ τυφῶ καὶ πρηστῆρι  
 ξυστρέψας καὶ ξυγγογγύλας  
 οἴχοιο φέρων, εἶτα μεθείης,  
 ἢ δὲ φέροιτ' αὖ πάλιν εἰς τὴν γῆν,  
 κᾶτ' ἐξαίφνης  
 περὶ τὴν ψωλὴν περιβαίη.

ΚΗΡΤΞ

980 πᾶ τᾶν Ἀσανᾶν ἐστὶν ἅ γερωχία  
 ἢ τοὶ πρυτάνιες; λῶ τι μυσίξαι νέον.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

σὺ δ' εἶ τί; πότερ' ἄνθρωπος ἢ Κονίσσαλος;

ΚΗΡΤΞ

κᾶρυξ ἐγών, ὦ κυρσάνιε, ναὶ τῶ σιῶ  
 ἔμολον ἀπὸ Σπάρτας περὶ τᾶν διαλλαγᾶν.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

985 κᾶπειτα δόρυ δῆθ' ὑπὸ μάλης ἤκεις ἔχων;

ΚΗΡΤΞ

οὐ τὸν Δί' οὐκ ἐγώνγα.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ποῖ μεταστρέφει;  
 τί δὴ προβάλλει τὴν χλαμύδ'; ἢ βουβωνιᾶς  
 ὑπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ;

975 ξυγγογγύλας Cobet: ξυγγογγυλίσας a

984 περὶ τᾶν δ.] δ. πέρι van Herwerden

## LYSISTRATA

please hit her like a heap of grain  
with a great tornado and firestorm,  
sweeping her up and twirling her  
into the sky, and then let go  
and let her fall back down to earth again,  
to land smack dab  
on the point of my hard-on!

*Enter HERALD.*

HERALD<sup>89</sup>

Where be the Senate of Athens or the Prytanies? I wish to tell them some news.

CINESIAS

And what might you be? Are you human? Or a Coni-salus?<sup>90</sup>

HERALD

By the Twain, I'm a Herald, youngun, come from Sparta about the settlement.

CINESIAS

And that's why you've come hiding a spear in your clothes?

HERALD

I'm not, I swear!

CINESIAS

Why are you twisting away from me? And why hold your coat out in front of you? Got a swollen groin from the long ride, maybe?

<sup>89</sup> On the Spartan Herald's dialect see 81 n.

<sup>90</sup> A demon or divinity associated with ithyphallic dances.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΡΤΞ

ἀλεός γα ναὶ τὸν Κάστορα  
ὄνθρωπος.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἀλλ' ἔστυκας, ὦ μιαρώτατε.

ΚΗΡΤΞ

990 οὐ τὸν Δί' οὐκ ἐγώνγα· μηδ' αὖ πλαδδίη,

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

τί δ' ἐστὶ σοι τοδί;

ΚΗΡΤΞ

σκυτάλα Λακωνικά.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

εἶπερ γε, χαῦτη 'στὶ σκυτάλη Λακωνική.  
ἀλλ' ὡς πρὸς εἰδότη' ἐμὲ σὺ τάληθη λέγε.  
τί τὰ πράγμαθ' ὑμῖν ἐστι τὰν Λακεδαίμονι;

ΚΗΡΤΞ

995 ὀρσὰ Λακεδαίμων πᾶά καὶ τοὶ σύμμαχοι  
ἅπαντες ἐστύκαντι· Πελλάνας δὲ δεῖ.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

ἀπὸ τοῦ δὲ τουτὶ τὸ κακὸν ὑμῖν ἐνέπεσεν;  
ἀπὸ Πανός;

ΚΗΡΤΞ

οὐκ, ἀλλ' ἄρχε μὲν, οἶῶ, Λαμπιτώ,  
ἔπειτα τᾶλλαι ταὶ κατὰ Σπάρταν ἀμᾶ  
1000 γυναῖκες ἔπερ ἀπὸ μιᾶς ὑσπλαγίδος  
ἀπήλαάν τὼς ἄνδρας ἀπὸ τῶν ὑσσάκων.

LYSISTRATA

HERALD

By Castor, the man's crazy!

CINESIAS

Why, you've got a hard-on, you dirty rascal!

HERALD

I certainly do not! Don't be talking twaddle.

CINESIAS

Then what do you call *that*?

HERALD

A Spartan walking stick.

CINESIAS

Then *this* is a Spartan walking stick too. Listen, I know what's up; you can be straight with me. How are things going in Sparta?

HERALD

All Sparta rises, and our allies all have hard-ons. We need Pellana.<sup>91</sup>

CINESIAS

Who caused this calamity to befall you? Was it Pan?<sup>92</sup>

HERALD

No, the one who started it, I reckon, was Lampito, and then the other women in Sparta all together, as from a starting gate, excluded the men from their pork pies.

<sup>91</sup> Significance obscure: either a place name with a sexual significance now lost, or a pun on an unattested word meaning vagina or anus.

<sup>92</sup> Pan (2 n.), frequently portrayed as ithyphallic, could also inflict ithyphallism.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

πῶς οὖν ἔχετε;

ΚΗΡΤΞ

μογίομες· ἂν γὰρ τὰν πόλιν  
ἄπερ λυχνοφορίοντες ὑποκεκύφames.

1005 ταὶ γὰρ γυναιῖκες οὐδὲ τῷ μύρτω σιγῆν  
ἔῶντι, πρὶν χ' ἅπαντες ἐξ ἑνὸς λόγῳ  
σπονδὰς ποιηῶμεσθα ποττὰν Ἑλλάδα.

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΑΣ

τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα πανταχόθεν ξυνομώμοται  
ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν ἄρτι νυνὶ μανθάνω.

1010 ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα φράζε περὶ διαλλαγῶν  
πρέσβεις ἀποπέμπειν αὐτοκράτορας ἐνθαδί.  
ἐγὼ δ' ἑτέρους ἐνθένδε τῆ βουλῆ φράσω  
πρέσβεις ἐλέσθαι τὸ πέος ἐπιδείξας τοδί.

ΚΗΡΤΞ

ποτάόμαι· κράτιστα γὰρ παντᾶ λέγεις.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

1015 οὐδέν ἐστι θηρίον γυναικὸς ἀμαχώτερον,  
οὐδὲ πῦρ, οὐδ' ᾧδ' ἀναιδῆς οὐδεμία πάρδαλις.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ταῦτα μέντοι <σὺ> ξυνιῖς εἶτα πολεμεῖς ἐμοί,  
ἐξόν, ᾧ πόνηρέ, σοι βέβαιον ἔμ' ἔχειν φίλην;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ὡς ἐγὼ μισῶν γυναικας οὐδέποτε παύσομαι.

## LYSISTRATA

CINESIAS

So how are you faring?

HERALD

We're hard up! We walk around town hunched over, like men carrying lamps. The women won't let us even touch their cherries till all of us unanimously agree to make peace with the rest of Greece.

CINESIAS

So this business is a global conspiracy by all the women! Now I get it! Very well, you go back to Sparta as quick as you can and tell them to send delegates here with full powers to negotiate a treaty. And I'll arrange for our Council to choose their own ambassadors; this cock of mine will be Exhibit A.

HERALD

I'll fly. Your advice is absolutely capital.

*HERALD and CINESIAS exit in opposite directions.*

MEN'S LEADER

No beast, nor even fire, is harder to battle than a woman, and no leopard is so ferocious.

WOMEN'S LEADER

So you understand that, and yet you're still fighting me, when it's possible, you rascal, to have our lasting friendship?

MEN'S LEADER

Because I'll never stop hating women!



ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

1020 ἀλλ' ὅταν βούλη σύ. νῦν δ' οὖν οὐ σε περιόψομαι  
 γυμνὸν ὄνθ' οὕτως. ὄρα γὰρ ὡς καταγέλαστος εἶ.  
 ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐξωμίδ' ἐνδύσω σε προσιούσ' ἐγώ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τοῦτο μὲν μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ πονηρὸν ἐποιήσατε·  
 ἀλλ' ὑπ' ὀργῆς γὰρ πονηρᾶς καὶ τότε' ἀπέδυν ἐγώ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

1025 πρῶτα μὲν φαίνει γ' ἀνὴρ, εἶτ' οὐ καταγέλαστος εἶ.  
 κεί με μὴ ἴλυπεις, ἐγώ σου κἂν τόδε τὸ θηρίον  
 τοῦπὶ τῶφθαλμῶ λαβοῦσ' ἐξεῖλον ἄν, ὃ νῦν ἔνι.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τοῦτ' ἄρ' ἦν με τοῦπιτρίβον. δακτύλιος οὔτοσί·  
 ἐκσκάλευσον αὐτό, κἄτα δείξον ἀφελουσά μοι  
 ὡς τὸν ὀφθαλμόν γέ μου νῆ τὸν Δία πάλαι δάκνει.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

1030 ἀλλὰ δράσω ταῦτα· καίτοι δύσκολος ἔφυς ἀνὴρ.  
 ἦ μέγ', ὦ Ζεῦ, χρῆμ' ἰδεῖν τῆς ἐμπίδος ἔνεστί σοι.  
 οὐχ ὀρᾶς; οὐκ ἐμπίς ἐστιν ἤδε Τρικορυσία;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

νῆ Δί' ὠνησάς γέ μ', ὡς πάλαι γέ μ' ἐφρεωρύχει,  
 ὥστ', ἐπειδὴ ἔξηρέθη, ρεῖ μου τὸ δάκρυον πολὺ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

1035 ἀλλ' ἀποψήσω σ' ἐγώ, καίτοι πάνυ πονηρὸς εἶ,  
 καὶ φιλήσω.

## LYSISTRATA

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Well, choose your own time. But meanwhile I'm not going to let you go undressed like that. Just look how ridiculous you are! I'm coming over and putting your shirt back on.

### MEN'S LEADER

That's certainly no mean thing you've done; in fact, it was mean of me to take it off in anger before.

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Now you look like a man again, and not so ridiculous. And if you weren't so nasty to me I'd have grabbed that bug in your eye and taken it out; it's still in there now.

### MEN'S LEADER

So that's what's been tormenting me! Here's a scraper; please dig it out of my eye, then show it to me when you've pulled it out, because it's really been biting my eye for quite some time.

### WOMEN'S LEADER

All right, I will, though you're a born grouch. My god, what a humongous gnat you've got in there! See this? Isn't it positively Tricorysian?<sup>93</sup>

### MEN'S LEADER

You've certainly helped me out, because that thing's been digging wells in me for a long time, and now that it's out, my eyes are streaming copious tears.

### WOMEN'S LEADER

Then I'll wipe them away—though you're quite a rascal—and kiss you.

<sup>93</sup> The deme Tricorythus abutted a large marsh on the Bay of Marathon.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

μὴ φιλήσης.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἦν τε βούλη γ' ἦν τε μή.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλὰ μὴ ὦρασ' ἴκοισθ'· ὡς ἔστ' ἠωπικαὶ φύσει,  
κάστ' ἐκείνο τοῦπος ὀρθῶς κοῦ κακῶς εἰρημένον,  
οὔτε σὺν πανωλέθροισιν οὔτ' ἄνευ πανωλέθρων.

1040 ἀλλὰ νυνὶ σπένδομαί σοι, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν οὐκέτι  
οὔτε δράσω φλαῦρον οὐδὲν οὔθ' ὑφ' ὑμῶν πείσομαι.  
ἀλλὰ κοινῇ συσταλέντες τοῦ μέλους ἀρξώμεθα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) οὐ παρασκευαζόμεσθα

1043/4 τῶν πολιτῶν οὐδέν', ὦνδρες,

1045 φλαῦρον εἰπεῖν οὐδὲ ἔν,

ἀλλὰ πολὺ τοῦμπαλιν

πάντ' ἀγαθὰ καὶ λέγειν καὶ

δρᾶν· ἱκανὰ γὰρ τὰ κακὰ

καὶ τὰ παρακείμενα.

1050 ἀλλ' ἐπαγγελλέτω πᾶς ἀνὴρ καὶ γυνή,

1051/2 εἴ τις ἀργυρίδιον

δέεται λαβεῖν, μνᾶς ἢ δὺ ἢ τρεῖς· ὡς ἔσω

ἴσθιν κᾶχομεν βαλλάντια.

1055 κᾶν ποτ' εἰρήνη φανῆ,

ὅστις ἂν νυνὶ δανείσηται παρ' ἡμῶν,

LYSISTRATA

MEN'S LEADER

Don't kiss me!

WOMEN'S LEADER

I'll kiss you whether you like it or not!

MEN'S LEADER

The worst of luck to you! You're natural sweet-talkers, and that ancient adage is right on the mark and no mistake: "Can't live with the pests or without the pests either." But now I'll make peace with you, and nevermore mistreat you or suffer mistreatment from you. Now let's come together, and begin our song.

*The semichoruses unite into a single chorus.*

CHORUS

We don't intend, gentlemen,  
to say anything about any citizen  
that's slanderous in the slightest,  
but quite the opposite:  
to say and do only  
what's nice, because you've already got  
more than enough troubles.  
So let every man and woman tell us  
if they need to have a little cash,  
say two or three minas;<sup>94</sup> we've got it at home,  
and we've even got purses to put it in.  
And if peace should ever break out,  
anyone that borrows from us now

<sup>94</sup> 200–300 drachmas, enough to support an ordinary family for a year.

## ARISTOPHANES

ἦν λάβη, μηκέτ' ἀποδῶ.

- (ἀντ) ἔστιαν δὲ μέλλομεν ξέ-  
 νους τινὰς Καρυστίους, ἄν-  
 1060 δρας καλοῦς τε καγαθοῦς.  
 κάστι <μὲν> ἔτνος τι, καὶ  
 δελφάκιον ἦν τί μοι, καὶ  
 τοῦτο τέθυχ', ὥστε γίγ-  
 νεσθ' ἀπαλὰ καὶ καλά.  
 1065 ἦκετ' οὖν εἰς ἐμοῦ τήμερον· πρῶ δὲ χρῆ  
 τοῦτο δρᾶν λελουμένους  
 αὐτούς τε καὶ τὰ παιδί', εἶτ' εἴσω βαδί-  
 ζειν, μηδ' ἐρέσθαι μηδένα,  
 ἀλλὰ χωρεῖν ἄντικρυς  
 1070 ὥσπερ οἴκαδ' εἰς ἐαυτῶν γεννικῶς, ὡς  
 ἡ θύρα κεκλήσεται.

## ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΣ

- καὶ μὴν ἀπὸ τῆς Σπάρτης οἰδὶ πρέσβεις ἔλκοντες  
 ὑπήνας  
 χωροῦσ', ὥσπερ χοιροκομείον περὶ τοῖς μηροῖσιν  
 ἔχοντες.  
 ἄνδρες Λάκωνες, πρῶτα μὲν μοι χαίρετε,  
 1075 εἶτ' εἶπαθ' ἡμῖν πῶς ἔχοντες ἦκετε.

## ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ

τί δεῖ ποθ' ὑμὲ πολλὰ μυσίδδην ἔπη;  
 ὀρῆν γὰρ ἔξεσθ' ὡς ἔχοντες ἴκομες.

1057 ἦν Willems: ἄν (ἀν Sophianus) a

## LYSISTRATA

need no longer repay it—if he's had it!

We're getting set to entertain  
some visitors from Carystus today;<sup>95</sup>  
they're fine and handsome gentlemen.

There's some soup, and I had  
a nice piglet and  
sacrificed it, so it's turning  
into tasty tenders.

So visit me at home today; and  
do get up early and take a bath,  
you and the kids, and walk right in.  
You needn't ask anyone's permission,  
just go straight on inside  
as if into your own home,  
because the door will be locked!

*Enter SPARTAN DELEGATES, with Slaves.*

### CHORUS LEADER

Look, here come delegates from Sparta, trailing long  
beards and wearing something like a pig pen around their  
thighs. Gentlemen of Sparta: first, my greetings! Then tell  
us, how are you faring?

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

What's the use of wasting lots of words? It's plain to see  
how we're faring. (*they open their cloaks*)

<sup>95</sup> Troops from this ally were stationed in Athens.

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1062 ὥστε Palmer: ὥστε τὰ κρέα α      1063-4 γίγνεσθ'  
Sommerstein: γενέσθ' p γρΣR: ἔξεσθ' R: ἔξεσθ' B

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

βαβαί· νενεύρωται μὲν ἤδε συμφορὰ  
δεινῶς τεθερμῶσθαί τε χεῖρον φαίνεται.

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ

1080 ἄφατα. τί κα λέγοι τις; ἀλλ' ὅπῃ σέλει  
παντᾶ τις ἐλσῶν ἀμὶν εἰράναν σέτω.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ὀρώ καὶ τούσδε τοὺς αὐτόχθονας  
ὥσπερ παλαιστὰς ἄνδρας ἀπὸ τῶν γαστέρων  
θαίματι' ἀποστέλλοντας· ὥστε φαίνεται  
1085 ἀσκητικὸν τὸ χρῆμα τοῦ νοσήματος.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

τίς ἂν φράσειε ποῦ ἴστιν ἡ Λυσιστράτη;  
ὡς ἄνδρες ἡμεῖς οὐτοὶ τοιουτοῖ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

χαῦτη ξυνάδει θάτέρα ταύτη νόσος.  
ἦ που πρὸς ὄρθρον σπασμὸς ὑμᾶς λαμβάνει;

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

1090 μὰ Δί' ἀλλὰ ταυτὶ δρῶντες ἐπιτετρίμμεθα.  
ὥστ' εἴ τις ἡμᾶς μὴ διαλλάξει ταχύ,  
οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐ Κλεισθένη βινήσομεν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

εἰ σωφρονεῖτε, θαίματια λήψεσθ', ὅπως  
τῶν ἐρμοκοπιδῶν μή τις ὑμᾶς ὄψεται.

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<sup>96</sup> The Greek puns on *asketikon* ("pertaining to athletic training") and *askitikon* ("suffering from abdominal swelling").



## LYSISTRATA

### CHORUS LEADER

Wow! This condition has grown terribly tense, and looks to be inflamed worse than before.

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

Unspeakable! What can one say? Just let someone come and make peace for us on any terms he likes.

*Enter ATHENIAN DELEGATES.*

### CHORUS LEADER

Look, now I see these native sons holding their cloaks away from their bellies too, like men wrestling! Looks like a bad case of prickly heat.<sup>96</sup>

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Who can tell us where Lysistrata is? Because we men are present, and palpably so. (*they open their cloaks*)

### CHORUS LEADER

Their condition seems to jibe with these others. Now, does this cramping seize you in the wee hours?

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Yes, and what's worse, we're worn absolutely raw by being in this condition! I mean, if someone doesn't reconcile us soon, there's no way we won't be fucking Cleisthenes!

### CHORUS LEADER

If you've got any sense, you'll cover up there: you don't want one of the Herm-Docker clan to spot you.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> In 415, just before the departure of the Sicilian expedition, the faces and phalli of the pillar-images of Hermes, which stood in the streets throughout Athens, were mutilated. Since not all of the perpetrators had been identified, Aristophanes suggests that some were among the spectators, cf. Thucydides 6.27.

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α  
νὴ τὸν Δί' εὖ μέντοι λέγεις.

1095

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ  
ναὶ τὼ σιώ  
παντᾶ γα. φέρε τὸ ἔσθος ἀμβαλώμεθα.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α  
ὦ χαίρεθ', οἱ Λάκωνες· αἰσχρά γ' ἐπάθομεν.

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ  
ὦ πολυχαρείδα, δεινά γ' αὖ πεπόνθαμες,  
αἰκ εἶδον ἀμὲ τῶνδρες ἀμπεφλασμένως.

1100

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α  
ἄγε δὴ, Λάκωνες, αὖθ' ἕκαστα χρὴ λέγειν.  
ἐπὶ τί πάρεστε δεῦρο;

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ  
περὶ διαλλαγᾶν  
πρέσβης.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α  
καλῶς δὴ λέγετε· χῆμεῖς τουτογί.  
τί οὐ καλοῦμεν δῆτα τὴν Λυσιστράτην,  
ἥπερ διαλλάξειεν ἡμᾶς ἂν μόνη;

1105

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ  
ναὶ τὼ σιώ, καὶ λῆτε, τὸν Λυίστρατον.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α  
ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἡμᾶς, ὡς ἔοικε, δεῖ καλεῖν·  
αὐτὴ γάρ, ὡς ἤκουσεν, ἦδ' ἐξέρχεται.

## LYSISTRATA

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

That's certainly good advice.

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

By the Twain Gods, it is indeed. Come on, let's put our cloaks back on!

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Greetings, Spartans! We've had a terrible time.

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

Dear colleague, we've had a fearful time, if those men saw us fiddling with ourselves.

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Come on, then, Spartans, let's talk details. What is the purpose of your visit?

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

As delegates for a settlement.

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Very good to hear it; that's what we are too. So why don't we invite Lysistrata, since she's the only one who can reconcile us?

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

Sure, by the Twain Gods, and Lysistratus too if you like!<sup>98</sup>

*Enter LYSISTRATA from the Acropolis gates.*

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Well, it seems we needn't invite her: she must have heard us, for here she comes herself.

<sup>98</sup> Perhaps teasing an effeminate Lysistratus, possibly the son of Macareus of Amphitrope mentioned in Schol. *Wasps* 787.

## ARISTOPHANES

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

χαῖρ', ὦ πασῶν ἀνδρειοτάτη· δεῖ δὴ νυνὶ σε  
γενέσθαι

δεινὴν <μαλακὴν,> ἀγαθὴν φαύλην, σεμνὴν ἀγανὴν,  
πολύπειρον·

- 1110 ὡς οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῇ σῇ ληφθέντες ἕγγι  
συνεχώρησάν σοι καὶ κοινῇ τὰγκλήματα πάντ'  
ἐπέτρεψαν.

## ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ἀλλ' οὐχὶ χαλεπὸν τοῦργον, εἰ λάβοι γέ τις  
ὀργῶντας ἀλλήλων τε μὴ ἴκπειρωμένους.

τάχα δ' εἴσομαι ἴγώ. ποῦ ἴστιν ἡ Διαλλαγή;

- 1115 πρόσαγε λαβοῦσα πρῶτα τοὺς Λακωνικούς,  
καὶ μὴ χαλεπῇ τῇ χειρὶ μηδ' αὐθαδικῇ,  
μηδ' ὥσπερ ἡμῶν ἄνδρες ἀμαθῶς τοῦτ' ἔδρων,  
ἀλλ' ὡς γυναικας εἰκός, οἰκείως πάνυ.  
ἦν μὴ διδῶ τὴν χεῖρα, τῆς σάθης ἄγε.

- 1120 ἴθι καὶ σὺ τούτους τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἄγε·  
οὗ δ' ἂν διδῶσι, πρόσαγε τούτου λαβομένη.  
ἄνδρες Λάκωνες, στήητε παρ' ἐμέ πλησίον,  
ἐνθένδε δ' ὑμεῖς, καὶ λόγων ἀκούσατε.  
ἐγὼ γυνὴ μὲν εἰμι, νοῦς δ' ἔνεστί μοι.

- 1125 αὐτὴ δ' ἐμαντῆς οὐ κακῶς γνώμης ἔχω,  
τοὺς δ' ἐκ πατρός τε καὶ γεραιτέρων λόγους  
πολλοὺς ἀκούσασ' οὐ μεμούσωμαι κακῶς.  
λαβοῦσα δ' ὑμᾶς λαιδορῆσαι βούλομαι

1109 suppl. Wilamowitz

## LYSISTRATA

### CHORUS LEADER

Hail, bravest of all women! Now you must be forceful and flexible, high-class and vulgar, haughty and sweet, a woman for all seasons; because the head men of Greece, caught by your charms, have gathered together and are jointly submitting all their disputes to you for arbitration.

### LYSISTRATA

Well, it's not a hard job, if you catch them when they're hot for it and not testing each other for weaknesses. I'll soon find out. Where's Reconciliation?

*Enter Reconciliation, costumed as a naked girl, from the Acropolis.*

Take hold of the Spartans first and bring them here; don't handle them with a rough or hectoring hand, or ignorantly, the way our husbands used to handle us, but use a wife's touch, like home sweet home. If he won't give you his hand, lead him by his weenie. Now go and fetch those Athenians too; take hold of whatever part they offer and bring them here. Spartans, stand close to me, and you Athenians stand on this side. Now listen to what I have to say. It's true I'm a woman, but still I've got a mind: I'm pretty intelligent in my own right, and because I've listened many a time to the conversations of my father and other elders, I'm pretty well educated too.<sup>99</sup> Now that you're my captive audience I'm ready to give you the

<sup>99</sup> Lines 1124–27 are paratragic and at least partially quote from Euripides' *Wise Melanippe* (1124 = fr. 483).

ARISTOPHANES

- κοινη̄ δικαίως, οὐ̄ μιᾶς γε χέρνιβος  
 1130 βωμοὺς περιρραίνοντες ὥσπερ ξυγγενεῖς  
 Ὀλυμπίασιν, ἐν Πύλαις, Πυθοῖ—πόσους  
 εἴποισι' ἂν ἄλλους, εἴ με μηκύνειν δέοι;—  
 ἐχθρῶν παρόντων βαρβάρῳ στρατεύματι  
 Ἕλληνας ἄνδρας καὶ πόλεις ἀπόλλυτε.  
 1135 εἷς μὲν λόγος μοι δεῦρ' αἰεὶ περαίνεται.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

ἐγὼ δ' ἀπόλλυμαί γ' ἀπειψωλημένος.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

- εἶτ', ὦ Λάκωνες, πρὸς γὰρ ὑμᾶς τρέψομαι,  
 οὐκ ἴσθ' ὅτ' ἐλθὼν δεῦρο Περικλείδας ποτὲ  
 ὁ Λάκων Ἀθηναίων ἰκέτης καθέζετο  
 1140 ἐπὶ τοῖσι βωμοῖς ὠχρὸς ἐν φοινικίδι  
 στρατιὰν προσαιτῶν; ἢ δὲ Μεσσήνη τότε  
 ὑμῖν ἐπέκειτο χῶ θεὸς σείων ἅμα.  
 ἐλθὼν δὲ σὺν ὀπλίταισι τετρακισχιλίοις  
 Κίμων ὅλην ἔσωσε τὴν Λακεδαίμονα.  
 1145 ταυτὶ παθόντες τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὑπο  
 δηοῦτε χώραν, ἧς ὑπ' εὖ πεπόνθατε;

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

ἀδικοῦσιν οὗτοι νῆ Δί', ὦ Λυσιστράτη.

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ

ἀδικίωμας· ἀλλ' ὁ πρωκτὸς ἄφατον ὡς καλός.



## LYSISTRATA

tongue-lashing you deserve—both of you. You two sprinkle altars from the same cup like kinsmen, at Olympia, at Thermopylae, at Pytho—how many other places could I mention if I had to extend the list—yet when enemies are available with their barbarian armies, it's Greek men and Greek cities you're determined to destroy. That takes me through one of my arguments.<sup>100</sup>

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

My cock is bursting out of its skin and killing me!

## LYSISTRATA

Next, Spartans, I'm going to turn to you. Don't you remember when Pericleidas the Spartan came here once and sat at the altars as a suppliant of the Athenians, pale in his scarlet uniform, begging for troops? That time when Messenia was up in arms against you and the god was shaking you with an earthquake? And Cimon went with four thousand infantrymen and rescued all Sparta? After being treated that way by the Athenians, you're now out to ravage the country that's treated you well?<sup>101</sup>

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

They're guilty as can be, Lysistrata!

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

We're guilty, but what an unspeakably fine arse!

<sup>100</sup> Line 1135 quotes Euripides' *Erechtheus*, fr. 363.

<sup>101</sup> After the earthquake of 464 Sparta's subject communities revolted, and Athens sent military assistance. Lysistrata omits the sequel: the pro-Spartan Athenian commander Cimon was dismissed by the Spartans, and his subsequent political eclipse paved the way for the first Peloponnesian War.



ARISTOPHANES

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

1150 ὑμᾶς δ' ἀφήσειν τοὺς Ἀθηναίους <μ' > οἶει;  
 οὐκ ἴσθ' ὅθ' ὑμᾶς οἱ Λάκωνες αὐθις αὐ  
 κατωνάκας φοροῦντας ἐλθόντες δορὶ  
 πολλοὺς μὲν ἄνδρας Θετταλῶν ἀπώλεσαν,  
 πολλοὺς δ' ἐταίρους Ἰππίου καὶ ξυμμάχους,  
 ξυνεκβαλόντες τῇ τόθ' ἡμέρᾳ μόνοι  
 1155 κήλευθέρωσαν κἀντὶ τῆς κατωνάκης  
 τὸν δῆμον ὑμῶν χλαῖναν ἡμπέσχον πάλιν;

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ

οὔπα γυναικ' ὅπωπα χαίωτέραν.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

ἐγὼ δὲ κύσθον γ' οὐδέπω καλλίονα.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

1160 τί δῆθ' ὑπηργμένων γε πολλῶν κἀγαθῶν  
 μάχεσθε κοῦ παύεσθε τῆς μοχθηρίας;  
 τί δ' οὐ διηλλάγητε; φέρε, τί τοῦμποδῶν;

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ

ἀμές γὰ λῶμες, αἴ τις ἀμὶν τῶγκυκλον  
 λῆ τοῦτ' ἀποδόμεν.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

ποῖον, ᾧ τᾶν;

1154 ξυνεκβαλόντες van Herwerden: ξυνεκμαχοῦντες R

LYSISTRATA

LYSISTRATA

Do you think I'm going to let you Athenians off? Don't you remember how the Spartans in turn, when you were dressed in slaves' rags, came with their spears and wiped out many Thessalian fighters, many friends and allies of Hippias? That day when they were the only ones helping you to drive him out? And how they liberated you, and replaced your slaves' rags with a warm cloak, as suits a free people?<sup>102</sup>

SPARTAN DELEGATE

I've never seen a classier woman!

FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

And I've never seen a lovelier cunt!

LYSISTRATA

So why, after so many fine favors done, are you fighting instead of calling a halt to your misbehavior? Why not make peace? Come on, what's in the way?

SPARTAN DELEGATE

We're ready, if they're ready to return to us this abutment.<sup>103</sup>

LYSISTRATA

What abutment, sir?

<sup>102</sup> The Spartan king Cleomenes helped expel the Athenian tyrant Hippias in 510. Again *Lysistrata* omits the sequel: Cleomenes returned three years later in a failed attempt to undermine the Athenians' new democracy, cf. 274–80.

<sup>103</sup> Each of the places specified has a sexual double meaning that could be illustrated by reference to *Reconciliation's* body.

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ

*τὰν Πύλον,*

*τᾶσπερ πάλαι δεόμεθα καὶ βλιμάδδομες.*

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

1165 *μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ τούτο μὲν γ' οὐ δράσετε.*

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

*ἄφετ', ὦγάθ', αὐτοῖς.*

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

*κᾶτα τίνα κινήσομεν;*

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

*ἕτερόν γ' ἀπαιτεῖτ' ἀντὶ τούτου χωρίον.*

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

*τὸ δεῖνα τοίνυν, παράδοθ' ἡμῖν τουτονὶ  
πρώτιστα τὸν Ἐχινούντα καὶ τὸν Μηλιᾶ*

1170 *κόλπον τὸν ὄπισθεν καὶ τὰ Μεγαρικὰ σκέλη.*

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ

*οὐ τὸ σιώ, οὐκὶ πάντα γ', ὦ λισσάνιε.*

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

*ἐᾶτε, μηδὲν διαφέρου περὶ σκελοῖν.*

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

*ἤδη γεωργεῖν γυμνὸς ἀποδὺς βούλομαι.*

LYSISTRATA

SPARTAN DELEGATE

Pylos<sup>104</sup> here, that for a long time we've been coveting and feeling out.

FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

So help me Poseidon, that you won't get!

LYSISTRATA

Give it to them, good sir.

FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Then who will *we* be able to harrass?

LYSISTRATA

Just ask for some other place in return for that one.

FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Well, let's see now. First of all give us Echinous here and the Malian Gulf behind it and both Legs.<sup>105</sup>

SPARTAN DELEGATE

By the Twain Gods, we're not handing over *everything*, dear fellow!

LYSISTRATA

Let it go: don't be squabbling about a pair of legs.

FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Now I'm ready to strip down and start ploughing!

<sup>104</sup> Literally "gate," exploiting the stereotype of Spartan predilection for anal intercourse with either sex; the Athenians will opt for the vagina, and so the settlement will be mutually satisfactory.

<sup>105</sup> Echinous (literally "sea urchin place" for female pubis); Malian Inlet (*malon* "apple" for buttocks); Legs (for the connecting walls) of Megara.

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ

ἐγὼν δὲ κοπραγωγὴν γὰ πρῶ ναὶ τῷ σιῷ.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

- 1175 ἐπὴν διαλλαγῆτε, ταῦτα δράσετε.  
ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ δρᾶν ταῦτα, βουλευσασθε καὶ  
τοῖς ξυμμάχοις ἐλθόντες ἀνακοινώσατε.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ Α

ποίοισιν, ᾧ τᾶν, ξυμμάχοις; ἐστύκαμεν.  
οὐ ταῦτὰ δόξει τοῖσι συμμάχοισι νῶν,  
βινεῖν, ἅπασιν;

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ

- 1180 τοῖσι γῶν ναὶ τῷ σιῷ  
ἀμοῖσι.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ Α

καὶ γὰρ ναὶ μὰ Δία Καρυστίοις.

ΛΤΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ

- καλῶς λέγετε. νῦν οὖν ὅπως ἀγνεύσετε,  
ὅπως ἂν αἱ γυναῖκες ὑμᾶς ἐν πόλει  
ξενίσωμεν ᾧ ἐν ταῖσι κίσταις εἶχομεν.  
1185 ὄρκους δ' ἐκεῖ καὶ πίστιν ἀλλήλοις δότε.  
κᾄπειτα τὴν αὐτοῦ γυναῖχ' ὑμῶν λαβὼν  
ἄπεισ' ἕκαστος.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ Α

ἀλλ' ἴωμεν ὡς τάχος.

1174 πρῶ Biset: πρῶτα R

LYSISTRATA

SPARTAN DELEGATE

And bright and early I want to start spreading manure, by the Twain Gods!

LYSISTRATA

You both may do those things after you've ratified the settlement. Now then, if after due deliberation you do decide to settle, go back and confer with your allies.

FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Allies, dear lady? We're too hard up for that! Won't our allies, all of them, come to the same decision we have, namely, to fuck?

SPARTAN DELEGATE

Ours will, by the Twain Gods!

FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

And so, for sure, will the Carystians!<sup>106</sup>

LYSISTRATA

You make a good case. For the time being see to it you remain pure, so that we women can host you on the Acropolis with what we brought in our boxes. There you may exchange pledges of mutual trust, and then each of you may reclaim his own wife and go home.

FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Well, let's get moving right away.

<sup>106</sup> See 1059 n.

ARISTOPHANES

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ

ἄγ' ὅπᾶ τυ λῆς.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ Α

νῆ τὸν Δί' ὡς τάχιστ' ἄγε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) στρωμάτων δὲ ποικίλων καὶ  
 χλανιδίων καὶ ξυστίδων καὶ  
 1190 χρυσίων, ὅσ' ἐστὶ μοι,  
 οὐ φθόνος ἔνεστί μοι  
 πᾶσι παρέχειν φέρειν τοῖς  
 παισίν, ὅποταν τε θυγά-  
 τηρ τινὶ κανηφορῇ.  
 1195 πᾶσιν ὑμῖν λέγω λαμβάνειν τῶν ἐμῶν  
 χρημάτων νῦν ἔνδοθεν,  
 καὶ μηδὲν οὕτως εἶ σεσημάνθαι τὸ μὴ οὐ-  
 χὶ τοὺς ῥύπους ἀνασπάσαι,  
 1200 χᾶττ' <ἂν> ἔνδον ἦ φορεῖν.  
 ὄψεται δ' οὐδὲν σκοπῶν, εἰ μὴ τις ὑμῶν  
 ὀξύτερον ἐμοῦ βλέπει.
- (ἀντ) εἰ δέ τω μὴ σίτος ὑμῶν  
 ἐστι, βόσκει δ' οἰκέτας καὶ  
 σμικρὰ πολλὰ παιδιά,  
 1205 ἔστι παρ' ἐμοῦ λαβεῖν  
 πυρίδια λεπτὰ μέν, ὁ δ'  
 ἄρτος ἀπὸ χοίνικος ἰ-

1193 παισίν Bentley: πᾶσιν a



## LYSISTRATA

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

Lead on wherever you wish.

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

God yes, as quick as you can!

*Exit LYSISTRATA, Reconciliation, and the DELEGATES; the Slaves sit down outside the Acropolis gates, which are attended by a Doorkeeper.*

### CHORUS

Intricate tapestries,  
nice clothes and fine gowns,  
and gold jewellery—all that I own  
I'll ungrudgingly provide  
to everyone for their  
sons, and whenever a daughter  
marches with the basket.<sup>107</sup>  
I now invite you all to help yourselves  
to the possessions in my house;  
nothing is sealed up so tight  
that you can't break the seals  
and carry away whatever's inside.  
But you won't see anything unless  
your eyes are sharper than mine.

If anyone's out of bread  
but has slaves to feed  
and lots of little kids,  
you can get flour from my house—  
puny grains, true,  
but a pound of them grow up to be

<sup>107</sup> See 646 n.

ARISTOPHANES

δεῖν μάλα νεανίας.

- 1210 ὅστις οὖν βούλεται τῶν πενήτων ἴτω  
 εἰς ἐμοῦ σάκους ἔχων  
 καὶ κωρύκους· ὡς λήψεται πυρούς. ὁ μα-  
 νῆς δ' οὐμὸς αὐτοῖς ἐμβαλεῖ.  
 πρὸς γε μέντοι τὴν θύραν  
 προαγορεύω μὴ βαδίζειν τὴν ἐμήν, ἀλλ'  
 1215 εὐλαβεῖσθαι τὴν κύνα.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

- ἄνοιγε τὴν θύραν σύ. παραχωρεῖν ἔδει.  
 ὑμεῖς, τί κάθησθε; μὼν ἐγὼ τῇ λαμπάδι  
 ὑμᾶς κατακαύσω; φορτικὸν τὸ χωρίον.  
 οὐκ ἂν ποιήσαιμ'. εἰ δὲ πάνυ δεῖ τοῦτο δρᾶν,  
 1220 ὑμῖν χαρίσασθαι προσταλαιπωρήσομεν.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Β

χῆμέις γε μετὰ σοῦ ξυνταλαιπωρήσομεν.  
 οὐκ ἄπιτε; κωκύσεσθε τὰς τρίχας μακρά.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

οὐκ ἄπιθ', ὅπως ἂν οἱ Λάκωνες ἔνδοθεν  
 καθ' ἡσυχίαν ἀπίωσιν εὐωχημένοι;

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Β

- 1225 οὐπω τοιούτον συμπόσιον ὅπωπ' ἐγώ.  
 ἦ καὶ χαρίεντες ἦσαν οἱ Λακωνικοί·  
 ἡμεῖς δ' ἐν οἴνῳ συμπόται σοφώτατοι.

## LYSISTRATA

a loaf that's very hearty to see.  
Any of the poor are welcome  
to come to my house with sacks  
and bags to carry the flour away; my houseboy  
will pour it in for them.  
A warning though:  
don't come to my door—  
beware of the watchdog there!

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

*(within the Acropolis)* Open the door, you! *(bursts through the door, sending the Doorkeeper tumbling)* You should have got out of the way. *(other Athenians emerge)* You there, why are you sitting around? Want me to singe you with this torch? What a stale routine! I refuse to do it. *(to the spectators)* Well, if it's absolutely necessary, we'll go the extra mile, to do you all a favor. *(chases the Slaves with his torch)*

### SECOND ATHENIAN DELEGATE

*(joining the First)* And we'll help you go that extra mile! *(to the Slaves)* Scram, you! You'll cry for your hair if you don't!

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Yes scram, so the Spartans can come out after their banquet without being bothered.

*The Slaves are chased off.*

### SECOND ATHENIAN DELEGATE

I've never seen such a party! The Spartans were really charming, and we were superb company ourselves over the drinks.

## ARISTOPHANES

## ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ Α

- ὀρθῶς γ', ὅτι ἡ νήφοντες οὐχ ὑγιαίνομεν.  
 ἦν τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἐγὼ πείσω λέγων,  
 1230 μεθύοντες ἀεὶ πανταχοῖ πρεσβεύσομεν.  
 νῦν μὲν γὰρ ὅταν ἔλθωμεν εἰς Λακεδαίμονα  
 νήφοντες, εὐθὺς βλέπομεν ὅ τι ταραξόμεν·  
 ὥσθ' ὅ τι μὲν ἂν λέγωσιν οὐκ ἀκούομεν,  
 ἃ δ' οὐ λέγουσι, ταῦθ' ὑπονενοήκαμεν,  
 1235 ἀγγέλλομεν δ' οὐ ταῦτὰ τῶν αὐτῶν πέρι.  
 νυνὶ δ' ἅπαντ' ἤρεσκεν· ὥστ' εἰ μὲν γέ τις  
 ἄδοι Τελαμῶνος, Κλειταγόρας ἄδειν δέον,  
 ἐπηνέσαμεν ἂν καὶ πρὸς ἐπιωρκήσαμεν.  
 ἀλλ' οὐτοῖ γὰρ αὖθις ἔρχονται πάλιν  
 1240 εἰς ταυτόν. οὐκ ἐρρήσεται, ὦ μαστιγίαι;

## ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ Β

νῆ τὸν Δί· ὡς ἤδη γε χωροῦσ' ἔνδοθεν.

## ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ

ὦ πολυχαρείδα, λαβὲ τὰ φνιάτήρια,  
 ἵν' ἐγὼν διποδιάξω τε καείσω καλὸν  
 ἐς τὼς Ἀσαναίως τε χάμ' ἄεισμ' ἀμᾶ.

1244 χάμ' ἄεισμ' Meineke: καὶ ἡμᾶς R S: καὶ ἐς ἡμᾶς B p

<sup>108</sup> Two popular drinking songs; *Telamon* (cf. *PMG* 898–99) was warlike, while *Cleitagora* began (we have only the opening, cf. *Wasps* 1245–47) by referring to peace and prosperity.

## LYSISTRATA

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

That figures, because when we're sober we get unhinged. If the Athenians will take my advice, from now on we'll go on all our diplomatic missions drunk. As it is, when we go to Sparta sober, we at once start looking for ways to stir up trouble. And so when they say something we don't hear it, and when they don't say anything we read things into that, and we each come away with different reports of the same discussions. But this time everything was agreeable. When somebody sang *Telamon* when he should have been singing *Cleitagora*,<sup>108</sup> we'd applaud him and even swear up and down that—

*The Slaves approach.*

Hey, those slaves are back again! Get lost, you whip-fodder!

*They chase the Slaves away.*

### SECOND ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Well now, here they come out of the gates.

*Enter SPARTAN DELEGATES from the Acropolis; their leader carries bagpipes.*

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

(*to the stage-piper or a piper who accompanies the Spartans*) Grab the pipes, my good man, and I'll dance a two-step and sing a fine song for the Athenians and ourselves.

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

1245 λαβὲ δῆτα τὰς φυσαλλίδας πρὸς τῶν θεῶν·  
ὡς ἦδομαί γ' ὑμᾶς ὀρῶν ὀρχουμένους.

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ

ὄρμαόν τῷ κυρσανίῳ,  
Μναμόνα, τὰν τεὰν  
1250 Μῶάν, ἅτις οἶδεν ἀμέ τῶς τ' Ἀσαναί-  
ως, ὅκα τοὶ μὲν ἐπ' Ἄρταμιτίῳ  
πρώκροον σιεῖκελοι  
ποττὰ κᾶλα,  
τὼς Μήδως τ' ἐνίκων·  
ἀμέ δ' αὖ Λεωνίδας  
1255 ἄγεν ἄπερ τὼς κάπρωσ  
σάγοντας, οἰῶ, τὸν ὀδόντα· πολὺς δ'  
ἀμφὶ τὰς γέννας ἀφρὸς ἄνσειεν,  
πολὺς δ' ἀμᾶ καπτῶν σκελῶν ἴετο.  
1260 ἦν γὰρ τῶνδρες οὐκ ἐλάσσωσ  
τᾶς ψάμμασ τοὶ Πέρσαι.  
ἀγροτέρα σηροκτόνε, μόλε  
δεῦρο, παρσένε σιά,  
ποττὰσ σπονδάσ,  
1265 ὡσ συνέχης πολὺν ἀμέ χρόνον. νῦν δ'  
αὖ φιλία τ' ἀὲσ εὔποροσ εἶη  
ταῖσι συνθήκαισι, καὶ τᾶν αἰμυλᾶν ἀ-

<sup>1262</sup> ἀγροτέρα Dindorf: ἀγροτέρ' Ἄρτεμι α

## LYSISTRATA

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Gods above, do take the pipes: I just love to watch you people dance!

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

Memory, speed to this lad  
your own Muse, who knows  
about us and the Athenians,  
about that day at Artemisium<sup>109</sup>  
when they spread sail like gods  
against the armada  
and defeated the Medes;  
while we were led by Leonidas,<sup>110</sup>  
like wild boars we were, yes,  
gnashing our tusks, our jaws running  
streams of foam, and our legs too.  
The enemy outnumbered  
the sands on the shore, those Persians.  
Goddess of the Wilds, Beast Killer,<sup>111</sup>  
come this way, maiden goddess,  
to join in the treaty,  
and keep us together for a long time.  
Now let friendship in abundance  
attend our agreement always, and let us

<sup>109</sup> The naval battle against the Persians in 480, in which 200 of the 333 Greek ships were Athenian, cf. Herodotus 8.1–21.

<sup>110</sup> Leonidas led the defense against the Persians at Thermopylae, in which all 300 Spartans were killed; this action occurred at the same time as Artemisium, cf. Herodotus 7.175–238.

<sup>111</sup> Artemis under this special title (*Agrotera*) was worshipped at both Sparta and Athens, where her annual sacrifice commemorated the battle of Marathon in 490.



ARISTOPHANES

1270 λωπέκων παναῖμεθα.

ὦ, δεῦρ' ἴθι, δεῦρο,

ὦ κυναγὲ παρσένε.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΤΗΣ Α

ἄγε νυν ἐπειδὴ τᾶλλα πεποίηται καλῶς,

ἀπάγεσθε ταύτας, ὦ Λάκωνες, τασδεδὶ

1275 ὑμεῖς· ἀνὴρ δὲ παρὰ γυναῖκα καὶ γυνή

στήτω παρ' ἄνδρα, κᾶτ' ἐπ' ἀγαθαῖς ξυμφοραῖς

ὀρχησάμενοι θεοῖσιν εὐλαβώμεθα

τὸ λοιπὸν αὖθις μὴ ἕξαμαρτάνειν ἔτι.

πρόσαγε χορόν, ἔπαγε <δὲ> Χάριτας,

1280 ἐπὶ δὲ κάλεσον Ἄρτεμιν,

ἐπὶ δὲ δίδυμον εὐφρον' Ἰήιον

ἐπὶ δὲ Νύσιον, ὃς μετὰ μαινάσι

βάκχιος ὄμματα δαίεται,

Δία τε πυρὶ φλεγόμενον, ἐπὶ δὲ

1285 πότνιαν ἄλοχον ὀλβίαν

εἶτα δὲ δαίμονας, οἷς ἐπιμάρτυσι

χρησόμεθ' οὐκ ἐπιλήσμοσιν

Ἑσυχίας πέρι τῆς μεγαλόφρονος,

1290 ἣν ἐποίησε θεὰ Κύπρις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλαλαί, ἰὴ παιών.

αἶρεσθ' ἄνω, ἰαί,

1281 δίδυμον Enger: δίδυμον ἄγε (ἄγετε Bp) χορὸν a

1289 ἀγανόφρονος Reisig cl. Av. 1321

## LYSISTRATA

ever abandon foxy stratagems.  
O come this way, this way,  
o Virgin Huntress!

*Lysistrata escorts the Athenian and Spartan Wives from the Acropolis.*

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Well! Now that everything else has been wrapped up so nicely, it's time for you Spartans to reclaim these wives of yours, and you Athenians, these here. Let's have husband stand by wife and wife by husband, and then to celebrate our great good fortune let's have a dance for the gods. And let's be sure never again to make the same mistakes!

Bring on the dance, include the Graces,  
and invite Artemis,  
and her twin brother, the benign Healer,<sup>112</sup>  
and the Nysian whose eyes flash  
bacchic among his maenads,<sup>113</sup>  
and Zeus alight with flame  
and the thriving Lady his consort,<sup>114</sup>  
and invite the divine powers  
we would have as witnesses  
to remember always this humane Peace,  
which the goddess Cypris<sup>115</sup> has fashioned.

### CHORUS

Alalai, yay Paian!  
Shake a leg, iai!

<sup>112</sup> Apollo.

<sup>113</sup> Dionysus was reared on the legendary mountain of Nysa.

<sup>114</sup> Hera.      <sup>115</sup> Aphrodite.

ARISTOPHANES

ὡς ἐπὶ νίκη, ἰαί.  
εὐοῖ, εὐοῖ, εὐαῖ, εὐαῖ.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ Α

1295 <ῶ> Λάκων, πρόφαινε δὴ σὺ μοῦσαν ἐπὶ νέα νέαν.

ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΤΗΣ

Ταῖγέτον αὐτ' ἔραννὸν ἐκλιπῶά,  
Μῶά μόλε, <μόλε,> Λάκαινα, πρεπτόν ἀμὶν  
κλέῶά τὸν Ἀμύκλαις σιὸν  
καὶ Χαλκίοικον Ἀσάναν,  
1300 Τυνδαρίδας τ' ἀγασώς,  
τοὶ δὴ παρ Εὐρώταν ψιάδδοντι.  
εἶα μάλ' ἔμβη,  
ὦ εἶα κοῦφα πάλον, ὡς  
Σπάρταν ὑμνίωμες,  
1305 τᾶ σιῶν χοροὶ μέλοντι  
καὶ ποδῶν κτύπος,  
χᾶτε πῶλοι ταὶ κόραι  
παρ τὸν Εὐρώταν  
ἀμπάλλοντι πυκνὰ ποδοῖν  
1310 ἀγκονίωαί,  
ταὶ δὲ κόμαι σείονται  
ᾗπερ Βακχᾶν θυρσαδδῶαν καὶ παιδδῶαν.  
ἀγῆται δ' ἅ Λήδας παῖς  
1315 ἀγνὰ χοραγὸς εὐπρεπής.

1298 σιὸν Valckenaer: Ἀπόλλω σιὸν (σεὸν Β) α

1299 Ἀσάναν α: ἄνασσαν γρΣ<sup>R</sup>

## LYSISTRATA

Dance to victory, iai!  
Evoi evoi, evai evai!

### FIRST ATHENIAN DELEGATE

Now, my dear Spartan, your turn to give us some music: a novel song to match a novel song!

### SPARTAN DELEGATE

Come back again from fair Taygetus,  
Spartan Muse, come and distinguish this occasion  
with a hymn to the God of Amyclae<sup>116</sup>  
and Athena of the Brazen House<sup>117</sup>  
and Tyndareos' fine sons,<sup>118</sup>  
who gallop beside the Eurotas.  
Ho there, hop!  
Hey there, jump sprightly!  
Let's sing a hymn to Sparta,  
home of dances for the gods  
and of stomping feet,  
where by the Eurotas' banks  
young girls frisk like fillies,  
raising underfoot  
dust clouds,  
and tossing their tresses  
like maenads waving their wands and playing,  
led by Leda's daughter,<sup>119</sup>  
their chorus leader pure and pretty.

<sup>116</sup> Apollo's sanctuary in Sparta, on the river Eurotas.

<sup>117</sup> The Spartan equivalent of Athena Polias at Athens.

<sup>118</sup> See 81 n.

<sup>119</sup> I.e., Helen, worshipped at Sparta not as the adulterous wife of epic poetry but as the ideal Spartan maiden and bride.

ARISTOPHANES

ἀλλ' ἄγε, κόμαν παραμπύκιδδε χερί, ποδοῖν τε  
πάδη

1320/1 ἄ τις ἔλαφος, κρότον δ' ἀμᾶ ποίη χορωφελήταν,  
τὰν δ' αὖ σιὰν τὰν παμμάχον, τὰν Χαλκίοικον  
ῥμνη.

## LYSISTRATA

*(To the chorus)* Come now, band your hair with your hand, with your feet start hopping like a deer, and start making some noise to spur the dance! And sing for the goddess who's won a total victory, Athena of the Brazen House!

*All exit dancing, the chorus singing a traditional hymn to Athena.*





WOMEN AT THE  
THESMOPHORIA

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

No production notices for *Women at the Thesmophoria* survive, but the available evidence favors the Dionysia of 411.

For the year there are three firm indicators. (1) A scholium on line 190 puts Euripides' death "in the sixth year" after the production, which by normal inclusive reckoning gives us 411, if the Marmor Parium is correct in dating Euripides' death to 407/6 (*FGrH* 239 A 63). Other sources date it to 406/5, the same year as the death of Sophocles, but this is probably a case of biographical synchronism, for it is incompatible with the plausible report in the *Life of Euripides* (44–47) that Sophocles led his chorus in mourning for him at a dramatic festival, which could be no later than the Dionysia of 406. (2) Lines 1060–61 refer to "last year's" production of Euripides' *Andromeda*, placed by a scholium on *Frogs* 53 "in the eighth year" before that play's production (406/5), i.e. in 412. (3) The reference in line 804 to Charminus' defeat at Syme in winter 412/11 (Thucydides 8.41–42), in a passage belittling Athenian naval performance generally, both rules out an earlier date and would lack point at a later date, since by the following year the Athenian navy had recovered its dominance in the Aegean.

For the festival the evidence, though less straightfor-

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

ward, clearly points to the Dionysia. Since *Lysistrata*, securely attested for 411, can be assigned with confidence to the Lenaea,<sup>1</sup> then *Women at the Thesmophoria* was presumably produced at the later festival, for though a poet could have two comedies produced at the same festival,<sup>2</sup> this was certainly rare. The internal evidence also indicates the Dionysia: whereas *Lysistrata* reflects the political status quo before the Assembly authorized Pisander's embassy to negotiate with Alcibiades and the Persians even at the cost of changing the democratic constitution, *Women at the Thesmophoria* reflects the period during which those negotiations were under way, condemning medizers (336–37, 365–66), subverters of the constitution (361–62), and aspirants to tyranny (338–39, 1143–44) in passages whose detachability from the action suggests that they were inserted not long before the performance.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Aristophanes is likelier to have planned *Lysistrata* for the parochial Lenaea and *Women at the Thesmophoria* for the cosmopolitan Dionysia than vice versa: the former is densely topical and sharply critical of current Athenian policy, while the latter is largely apolitical, is set at a festi-

<sup>1</sup> See *Lysistrata*, Introductory Note.

<sup>2</sup> Aristophanes seems to have done so at the Lenaea of 422 and Phrynichus at the Dionysia of 414 (see the Introductory Notes to *Wasps* and *Birds*), with only one of the plays being produced by its author, as we would expect to be the rule in competition; if this was the case in 411, Aristophanes presumably produced *Women at the Thesmophoria*, since Callistratus produced *Lysistrata*.

<sup>3</sup> See Thucydides 8.56–59, 65.2–66.5. It is highly unlikely that these passages would have been either inserted or left in the play after the failure of the embassy had been announced or the oligarchs' campaign of terror and assassination had already begun.

## ARISTOPHANES

val widely celebrated in the Greek world, and satirizes an internationally popular poet.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it seems that *Women at the Thesmophoria* itself soon gained an audience abroad, since we find its parodic hostage scene (688–764) depicted on a bell crater from southern Italy c. 370.<sup>5</sup>

*Women at the Thesmophoria* was never intended to be a politically engaged play, but rather a satire of wives and their portrayal in Euripides' tragedies, using extensive parody and the theme of gender inversion to explore the nature of dramatic mimesis both comic and tragic. The plot takes off from Euripides' reputation (assumed in *Lysistrata* 283–84 and 368–69 but not attested earlier) as a portrayer of wicked wives, and is built around scenes from the dramas of adventure and intrigue with happy endings that Euripides had been composing after the failure of his Trojan trilogy in 415.

Euripides (then about seventy years old) goes with his Kinsman<sup>6</sup> to ask the young tragic poet Agathon for help in a crisis: the matrons of Athens, assembled for the Thesmophoria, plan to decree his death because his scandalous heroines have alerted husbands to their hitherto secret misbehavior. Would Agathon, who claims that his effeminacy enables him to create realistic female charac-

<sup>4</sup> For Euripides' contemporary celebrity see Plutarch, *Life of Nicias* 29.2–3.

<sup>5</sup> Martin von Wagner Museum, Würzburg, H5697.

<sup>6</sup> This character is referred to in the play only as *kedestes*, denoting any close relative by marriage. Ancient commentators identified him with Euripides' father-in-law Mnesilochus, but Euripides' high-handed treatment of him makes this unlikely, and we know of no comic hero who represents an actual person.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

ters, be willing to disguise himself as a woman, infiltrate the Thesmophoria, and plead Euripides' case? When Agathon refuses, the Kinsman volunteers to undertake the mission. Shaven and disguised as a woman, the Kinsman attends the festival and contributes a defense speech that outrages rather than mollifies the matrons: Euripides, he argues, has not revealed even the tiniest fraction of the whole truth. The women become suspicious, and with the help of another Athenian effeminate, Cleisthenes, soon expose the Kinsman as a male intruder and sentence him to death. But the Kinsman, in parody of Euripides' *Telephus*, seizes a hostage (a wine skin disguised as a baby girl) and takes refuge at an altar, where he is guarded first by Critylla, a tough old woman, and then by a barbarian Archer. Euripides tries to rescue the Kinsman by reenacting rescue scenes from his own recent plays (*Palamedes*, *Helen*, and *Andromeda*), but these fail to deceive Critylla and the Archer. Finally, Euripides disguises himself as an old bawd, distracts the Archer with a dancing girl, and frees the Kinsman, having promised the women that he will never again portray them unfavorably.

The Thesmophoria was an appropriate dramatic venue both for a women's assembly and a confrontation between the genders. Its principal deities were the archetypal mother Demeter, goddess of cereal crops and human fertility, and her daughter Kore (Attic Pherephatta or Persephone). Their myth told how Hades, god of the underworld, kidnapped Kore and forced her to be his queen, and of Demeter's angry search for Kore, her blighting of the land in retaliation, and her final compromise with Hades: Demeter would provide crops for half the year but withhold them during the other half, when Kore lived with her



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infernal husband. This myth provided the pattern for, and explanation of the festival's rituals, mysteries, and sexual symbolism; the power, solidarity, and self-sufficiency of its celebrants; and its pervasive atmosphere of hostility toward men.

Aristophanes avoids satirizing the women's ritual activities *per se*, choosing only a few superficial details as the basis for his comic fantasy, whereby the female festive community parodies the male civic polis, and the women's assembly parodies the men's, including the ability to condemn an enemy. The assimilation is enhanced if the Thesmophoria actually met on Pnyx Hill, where the Athenian assembly (composed exclusively of adult citizen men) normally sat. This cannot be verified and may be part of the fantasy, but if so Aristophanes does not exploit it, as he does with the women's fantastic transgressions of male space in *Lysistrata* and *Assemblywomen*: our play takes the festival's location for granted, giving no hint that this was abnormal procedure.

The setting is the second day of Thesmophoria, a gloomy fast in which the women reverted to ancient ways, appropriate to the spirit of vengefulness with which they attack Euripides. The capture of a male spy (the Kinsman) recalls not only Euripides' *Telephus* but also episodes from Thesmophorian legends, much as the fate of the Magistrate in *Lysistrata* recalls the mythical victims of Dionysus' maenads. And Euripides, in his attempts to rescue the Kinsman from death and in his final compromise with the women, lightly suggests Demeter herself.

Euripides' reputation as a misogynist was evidently based not only on the predilection of so many of his female characters for misconduct but also on their unprecedented

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

intensity and vividness. These characters were of course already present in the traditional myths, and other tragic poets had also dramatized them. But Euripides was distinct in having frequently embellished the myths, making wicked characters (male and female) even worse; inviting the audience at least to empathize with them; and making their speech and behavior seem closer to everyday experience than was customary in tragedy. In *Women at the Thesmophoria* the realism of the women created by Agathon and Euripides is a central element of the plot. Thus Euripides' portrayal of women could be thought relevant to the women who inhabited the spectators' own households.

If such realism was traditionally a hallmark not of tragedy but of comedy, then Euripides has transgressed the boundaries not only of gender but also of genre. Aristophanes puts Euripidean realism to the test of real life, or at any rate real life as fabricated by comedy: can the Kinsman bring off his role as a matron at the Thesmophoria, and when that fails, can Euripides rescue him by restaging his escape scenes? In the end, Euripidean tragedy is exposed as being just as artificial as the female costumes worn by Agathon, Euripides, and the Kinsman, and just as inadequate in the face of actual women, past masters of illusion and deception. Meanwhile, comedy reveals its own superiority at depicting the real world: the Kinsman's speech on the misbehavior of women is more realistic (according to the motive stereotypes) than Euripides' plays, and when Euripides' own stratagems have failed he is forced to resort to a comic ruse to rescue himself and the Kinsman.

Thus it seems that the comic poet has exposed and punished Euripides' genre transgression just as effectively



## ARISTOPHANES

as the women have punished his gender transgression. Euripidean realism is effective only when an audience suspends its disbelief and cooperates with the artifice, which Critylla and the Archer refuse to do. By contrast comedy, like its on-stage representative, the earthy and irrepressible Kinsman, can maintain its own generic integrity while incorporating tragedy, and also (at least in the case of Euripides) go tragedy one better. On the dramatic stage as in the women's world, normality is restored: Euripides will continue to write plays, but not about real women, and the rebellious matrons will go back to being (or at least seeming to be) proper wives.

### *Text*

Four papyri preserve fragments of *Women at the Thesmophoria*; two of these are not cited in the notes, *POxy.* 3839 (II/III), containing lines 25 (?), 742–66, 941–956, and *POxy.* 3840 (IV), containing lines 1185–93. Only one independent medieval MS (R) preserves the text. Mu2 (XV), though copied directly from R, incorporates the work of an early editor who made simple emendations and supplied many line attributions.

### *Sigla*

- Π1      *PSI* 1194 + *PSI* xiv p. xv (II), lines 139–46, 237–46, 272–88, 94–96, 804–9
- Π2      *POxy.* 1176 fr. 39 col. xii 1–16 (II), lines 335–37, 374–75<sup>7</sup>
- R        Ravennas 429 (c. 950)

<sup>7</sup> This is a copy of Satyrus' *Life of Euripides*, which quotes these lines.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

*Annotated Editions*

F. H. M. Blaydes (Halle 1880).

A. von Velsen (Leipzig 1883).

J. van Leeuwen (Leiden 1904).

B. B. Rogers (London 1904), with English translation.

A. H. Sommerstein (Warminster 1994), with English translation.

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

*Εὐριπίδου*

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

*Ἀγάθωνος*

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

ΜΙΚΑ

ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΠΩΛΙΣ

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

ΠΡΥΤΑΝΙΣ

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ *Σκύθης*

ΗΧΩ

ΚΩΦΑ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΣ *Ἀττικάί*

ΜΑΝΙΑ *τίτθη Μίκας*

ΕΛΑΦΙΟΝ

ΤΕΡΗΔΩΝ

ΧΟΡΟΣ *Θεσμοφοριαζουσῶν*

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KINSMAN of Euripides  
EURIPIDES  
SLAVE of Agathon  
AGATHON  
CRITYLLA  
MICA  
GARLAND SELLER  
CLEISTHENES  
MARSHAL  
SCYTHIAN POLICEMAN  
ECHO

CHORUS of women  
celebrating the  
Thesmophoria

SILENT CHARACTERS  
ATHENIAN WOMEN  
MANIA, Mica's nurse  
ELAPHIUM  
TEREDON

## ΘΕΣΜΟΦΟΡΙΑΖΟΤΣΑΙ

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, χελιδὼν ἄρά ποτε φανήσεται;  
ἀπολεῖ μ' ἀλύων ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἑωθινοῦ.  
οἶόν τε, πρὶν τὸν σπλήνα κομιδῇ μ' ἐκβαλεῖν,  
παρὰ σοῦ πυθέσθαι ποῖ μ' ἄγεις, ὠῦριπίδη;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

5 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀκούειν δεῖ σε πάνθ' ὅσ' αὐτίκα  
ᾔψει παρεστῶς.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς λέγεις; αὐθις φράσον·  
οὐ δεῖ μ' ἀκούειν;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐχ ἅ γ' ἂν μέλλης ὀράν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐδ' ἂρ' ὀράν δεῖ μ';

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐχ ἅ γ' ἂν ἀκούειν δέη.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς μοι παραινεῖς; δεξιῶς μέντοι λέγεις.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

*EURIPIDES and KINSMAN walk from a side passage toward the scene building.*

KINSMAN

Ah Zeus, will the spring swallow ever show up? This guy will be the death of me, plodding around since daybreak. Might it be possible, before I puke out my guts, to find out from you, Euripides, just where you're taking me?

EURIPIDES

You needn't hear it all, since you're going to see it for yourself.

KINSMAN

What? Say again? I needn't hear?

EURIPIDES

No, not what you're about to see.

KINSMAN

And I needn't see either?

EURIPIDES

No, not what you need to hear.

KINSMAN

What are you telling me? It's pretty subtle. You say that I

ARISTOPHANES

10 οὐ φῆς σὺ χρῆναί μ' οὔτ' ἀκούειν οὔθ' ὁρᾶν;

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

χωρὶς γὰρ αὐτοῖν ἑκατέρου ἔστιν ἡ φύσις.

[ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τοῦ μήτ' ἀκούειν μήθ' ὁρᾶν;

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

εὖ ἴσθ' ὅτι.]

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς χωρὶς;

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὔτω ταῦτα διεκρίθη τότε.

Αἰθὴρ γὰρ ὅτε τὰ πρῶτα διεχωρίζετο

15 καὶ ζῶ' ἐν αὐτῷ ξυνετέκνου κινούμενα,

ᾧ μὲν βλέπειν χρῆ πρῶτ' ἐμηχανήσατο

ὀφθαλμὸν ἀντίμιμον ἡλίου τροχῶ,

ἀκοῆς δὲ χοάνην ὦτα διετετρήνατο.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

διὰ τὴν χοάνην οὖν μήτ' ἀκούω μήθ' ὁρῶ;

20 νῆ τὸν Δί' ἤδομαί γε τουτὶ προσμαθών.

οἶόν γέ πού ἔστιν αἱ σοφαὶ ξυνουσίαι.

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

πόλλ' ἂν μάθοις τοιαῦτα παρ' ἐμοῦ.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς ἂν οὖν

πρὸς τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τούτοισιν ἐξεύροίμ' ὅπως

ἔτι προσμάθοιμι χωλὸς εἶναι τὸ σκέλει;



WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

should neither hear nor see?

EURIPIDES

I'm saying that these two are by nature mutually distinct.

[KINSMAN

What, not hearing and not seeing?

EURIPIDES

To be sure.]

KINSMAN

How do you mean, distinct?

EURIPIDES

This is how they were separated long ago: Aether, when in primordial time he began to separate from Earth and with her begat within himself living things astir, first fashioned for sight the eye, counter image of the solar disc, and, as a funnel for hearing, drilled the ear.

KINSMAN

So because of this funnel I'm not to hear or see? I'm certainly delighted to have this additional lesson. These deep conversations really are something!

EURIPIDES

You could learn many other such lessons from me.

KINSMAN

As a matter of fact I'd love to figure out how to learn another fine lesson: how to go lame in both legs!

---

<sup>12</sup> del. van Herwerden

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

*βάδιζε δευρὶ καὶ πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν.*

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

25

*ἰδού.*

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

*ὄρᾱς τὸ θύριον τοῦτο;*

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

*νῆ τὸν Ἑρακλέα*

*οἶμαί γε.*

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

*σίγα νυν.*

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

*σιωπῶ τὸ θύριον.*

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

*ἄκου'.*

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

*ἀκούω καὶ σιωπῶ τὸ θύριον.*

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

*ἐνταῦθ' Ἀγάθων ὁ κλεινὸς οἰκῶν τυγχάνει  
ὁ τραγωδοποιός.*

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

30

*ποιὸς οὗτος Ἀγάθων;*

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

Come along here and pay attention.

*They mount the stage and move toward the central door of the stage building.*

KINSMAN

Now what?

EURIPIDES

Do you see that doorway?

KINSMAN

By Heracles, I believe I do!

EURIPIDES

Be quiet now.

KINSMAN

I'm being quiet about the doorway.

EURIPIDES

Listen.

KINSMAN

I'm listening and being quiet about the doorway.

EURIPIDES

This happens to be the dwelling of the renowned tragic poet Agathon.<sup>1</sup>

KINSMAN

What Agathon do you mean?

<sup>1</sup> Agathon, having won first prize in his debut in 416, was the most innovative tragic poet of the younger generation, and famed for his personal beauty and promiscuous passive homosexuality.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔστιν τις Ἀγάθων—

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

μῶν ὁ μέλας, ὁ καρτερός;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλ' ἕτερός τις. οὔχ ἑόρακας πρόποτε;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

μῶν ὁ δασυπώγων;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὔχ ἑόρακας πρόποτε;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί' οὔπω γ' ὥστε καμέ γ' εἰδέναί.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

35 καὶ μὴν βεβίνηκας σύ γ', ἀλλ' οὔκ οἶσθ' ἴσως.  
ἀλλ' ἐκποδὼν πτήξωμεν, ὡς ἐξέρχεται  
θεράπων τις αὐτοῦ πῦρ ἔχων καὶ μυρρίνας,  
προθυσόμενος, ἔοικε, τῆς ποιήσεως.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

εὐφημος πᾶς ἔστω λαός,  
40 στόμα συγκλήσας· ἐπιδημεῖ γὰρ  
θίασος Μουσῶν ἔνδον μελάθρων  
τῶν δεσποσύνων μελοποιῶν.  
ἔχέτω δὲ πνοὰς νήνεμος αἰθήρ,  
κῦμα δὲ πόντου μὴ κελαδεῖτω  
γλαυκόν—

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

There is an Agathon—

KINSMAN

You don't mean the suntanned, strong one?

EURIPIDES

No, a different one. You've never seen him?

KINSMAN

Not the one with the full beard?

EURIPIDES

You've never seen him?

KINSMAN

Absolutely not, as far as I know.

EURIPIDES

Well, you must have fucked him, though you might not know it. But let's hunker out of the way; one of his slaves is coming outside with brazier and myrtle sprigs, probably to make an offering for his master's success in poetic composition.

*Enter Agathon's Slave.*

SLAVE

Let the folk keep holy silence,  
gating the mouth, for here sojourns  
the holy company of Muses within  
the suzerain's halls, fashioning song.  
Let Aether windless hold his breath,  
and the whelming brine its boom,  
gray—

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<sup>32</sup> *ἑώρακας* Bentley: *ἑώρακα* R

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

βομβάξ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

45

σίγα. τί λέγει;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

πτηνῶν τε γένη κατακοιμάσθω,  
θηρῶν τ' ἀγρίων πόδες ὑλοδρόμων  
μὴ λυέσθων—

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

βομβαλοβομβάξ.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

μέλλει γὰρ ὁ καλλιπεῆς Ἀγάθων  
πρόμος ἡμέτερος—

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

50

μῶν βινείσθαι;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

τίς ὁ φωνήσας;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

νήνεμος αἰθήρ.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

δρυνόχους τιθέναι δράματος ἀρχάς.  
κάμπτει δὲ νέας ἀψίδας ἐπῶν,  
τὰ δὲ τορνεύει, τὰ δὲ κολλομελεῖ,  
55 καὶ γνωμοτυπεῖ κἀντονομάζει  
καὶ κηροχυτεῖ καὶ γογγύλλει  
καὶ χοανεύει—

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

Blah!

EURIPIDES

Shhh! What's he say?

SLAVE

Let the feathered tribes lie down in rest,  
and the paws of wild beasts that course the woods  
be checked—

KINSMAN

Blah blah blah!

SLAVE

for that mellifluous Agathon,  
our champion, prepares—

KINSMAN

to get fucked?

SLAVE

Who uttered that?

KINSMAN

Windless Aether.

SLAVE

— to lay the keel of his inchoate drama.  
He's warping fresh strakes of verses;  
some he planes down, others he couples,  
minting aphorisms, swapping meanings,  
channeling wax and rounding the mold  
and funneling metal—



ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ λαικάζει.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

τίς ἀγροιώτας πελάθει θριγκοῖς;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὄς ἔτοιμος σοῦ τοῦ τε ποιητοῦ  
60 τοῦ καλλιεποῦς <κατὰ> τοῦ θριγκοῦ  
συγγογγύλας καὶ συστρέψας  
τουτὶ τὸ πέος χοανεῦσαι.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

ἦ που νέος γ' ὢν ἦσθ' ὑβριστής, ὦ γέρον.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὦ δαιμόνιε, τοῦτον μὲν ἔα χαίρειν, σὺ δὲ  
65 Ἀγάθωνα μοι δεῦρ' ἐκκάλεσον πάση τέχνῃ.

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

μηδὲν ἰκέτευ'. αὐτὸς γὰρ ἔξεισιν τάχα·  
καὶ γὰρ μελοποιεῖν ἄρχεται. χειμῶνος οὖν  
ὄντος κατακάμπτειν τὰς στροφὰς οὐ ράδιον,  
ἦν μὴ προϊῆ θύρασι πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί οὖν ἐγὼ δρῶ;

ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

70 περίμεν', ὡς ἐξέρχεται.

60 suppl. Faber

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

and sucking cocks.

SLAVE

What yokel draws nigh the ramparts?

KINSMAN

One who's ready to take you and your  
mellifluous poet, and spin you around,  
and bend you over, and up your rampart  
funnel this cock of mine.

SLAVE

Old man, I can't imagine what a rapist you were when you  
were a boy.

EURIPIDES

(*to Slave*): My good fellow, forget about him! Just summon  
Agathon here to me; it's urgent.

SLAVE

Supplicate not; the master shall soon emerge. You see, he's  
beginning to fashion a song, and, it being wintertime,<sup>2</sup> he's  
hard put to limber his riffs without coming outdoors into  
the sun.

EURIPIDES

So what should I be doing?

SLAVE

Wait around; he's coming out.

*Exit Slave.*

<sup>2</sup> In 412/11 the Thesmophoria, which normally fell in October, had fallen in November.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δράσαι διανοεῖ με τήμερον;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐγὼ πυθέσθαι βούλομαι  
τί τὸ πράγμα τουτί. τί στένεις; τί δυσφορεῖς;  
οὐ χρήν σε κρύπτειν ὄντα κηδεστὴν ἐμόν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

75 ἔστιν κακόν μοι μέγα τι προπεφυραμένον.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ποιῖόν τι;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τῆδε θῆμέρα κριθήσεται  
εἴτ' ἔστ' ἔτι ζῶν εἴτ' ἀπόλωλ' Εὐριπίδης.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ πῶς; ἐπεὶ νῦν γ' οὔτε τὰ δικαστήρια  
μέλλει δικάζειν οὔτε βουλῆς ἐσθ' ἔδρα,  
80 ἐπείπερ ἐστὶ Θεσμοφορίων ἡ μέση.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τοῦτ' αὐτὸ γάρ τοι κάπολεῖν με προσδοκῶ.  
αἱ γὰρ γυναῖκες ἐπιβεβουλεύκασί μοι  
κὰν Θεσμοφόροι μὲλλονσι περί μου τήμερον  
ἐκκλησιάζειν ἐπ' ὀλέθρῳ.

80 ἐπείπερ ἐστὶ Nauck: ἐπεὶ τρίτη ὅστι R, cf. Σ

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<sup>3</sup> Perhaps from Euripides' *Bellerophon*, cf. *Peace* 58, 62.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

O Zeus, what do you mean to do to me today?<sup>3</sup>

KINSMAN

I'd truly like to be told what's going on here. What's all this groaning? What's the trouble? You shouldn't be hiding it from me: I'm your kinsman.

EURIPIDES

Some rather nasty trouble has been cooked up for me.

KINSMAN

Like what?

EURIPIDES

This very day it will be adjudged: does Euripides live on, or is he a goner?

KINSMAN

How can that be? The courts won't be trying cases today, and the Council isn't in session either, because it's the middle day of the Thesmophoria.<sup>4</sup>

EURIPIDES

Precisely; that's what I expect will make a goner of me. The women, you see, have devised a plot against me, and today in the sanctuary of the Two Thesmophoroi<sup>5</sup> they're going to hold an assembly<sup>6</sup> on the question of my destruction.

<sup>4</sup> The "Fast Day" (*nesteia*), when the celebrants abstained from food and drink.

<sup>5</sup> Demeter Thesmophoros and Pherrephatta (Persephone or Kore, "Maiden") were the principal deities of the Thesmophoria.

<sup>6</sup> As for the Thesmophoria women formed a cultic organization headed by their own elected leaders (*archousai*), here Aristophanes imagines the women turning it into a political assembly, as the men did on the Pnyx.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τιῆ τί δή;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

85 ὅτιῆ τραγωδῶ καὶ κακῶς αὐτὰς λέγω.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ καὶ δίκαιά <γ'> ἂν πάθοις.  
ἀτὰρ τίν' εἰς ταύτας σὺ μηχανῆν ἔχεις;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

Ἄγάθωνα πείσαι τὸν τραγωδοδιδάσκαλον  
εἰς Θεσμοφόροιν ἔλθειν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δράσουτ'; εἰπέ μοι.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

90 ἐκκλησιάσουτ' ἐν ταῖς γυναιξὶ χὰν δέῃ  
λέξουθ' ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

πότερα φανερόν ἢ λάθρα;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

λάθρα, στολῆν γυναικὸς ἠμφιεσμένον.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τὸ πρᾶγμα κομψὸν καὶ σφόδρ' ἐκ τοῦ σοῦ τρόπου.  
τοῦ γὰρ τεχνάζειν ἡμέτερος ὁ πυραμοῦς.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

σίγα.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

Whatever for?

EURIPIDES

Because I make tragedy of them and slander them.

KINSMAN

Well, it would certainly serve you right. But what's your strategy against these women?

EURIPIDES

To persuade Agathon, the tragic producer, to go to the Thesmophorium.

KINSMAN

And do what? Tell me.

EURIPIDES

To attend the women's assembly and say whatever's necessary on my behalf.

KINSMAN

Openly or in disguise?

EURIPIDES

In disguise, dressed up like a woman.

KINSMAN

A pretty cute bit, and just your style. We take the cake for craftiness!

EURIPIDES

Shh!

---

87 *εις ταύτας* Sandbach: *ἐκ ταύτης* R

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δ' ἐστίν;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

95

Ἄγαθων ἐξέρχεται.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ ποῦ <'σθ';

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὅπου > 'στίν; οὗτος οὐκκυκλούμενος.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄλλ' ἢ τυφλὸς μέν εἰμ'; ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐχ ὀρῶ  
ἄνδρ' οὐδέν' ἐνθάδ' ὄντα, Κυρήνην δ' ὀρῶ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

σίγα· μελωδεῖν αὖ παρασκευάζεται.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

100 μύρμηκος ἀτραπούς, ἢ τί διαμινυρίζεται;

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

ἱερὰν χθονίαιν

δεξάμεναι λαμπάδα, κοῦραι, ξὺν ἐλευθέρῃ  
πατρίδι χορεύσασθε βοάν.

<sup>96</sup> suppl. Meineke

<sup>101</sup> χθονίαιν Meineke: χθονίαις R

<sup>103</sup> πραπίδι Wecklein



## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

What?

EURIPIDES

Agathon's coming out.

*AGATHON, reclining on a chaise longue and surrounded by feminine paraphernalia, is wheeled out on the eccyclema.*

KINSMAN

Where is he?

EURIPIDES

Where is he? Right there, the man who's being rolled out.

KINSMAN

Well, I must be blind, because I can't see any *man* there at all, only Cyrene!<sup>7</sup>

EURIPIDES

Shh; he's getting ready to sing his aria.

KINSMAN

What's that he's vocalizing, ant tracks or something?

AGATHON<sup>8</sup>

*as leader*

Maidens, take up the holy  
torch of the Nether Twain,<sup>9</sup> and with country  
freed, dance a loud cry!

<sup>7</sup> A celebrated courtesan, cf. *Frogs* 1327–28 with scholia.

<sup>8</sup> Agathon's song imagines the maidens of Troy celebrating after the Greeks had lifted their siege; its rhythms, mainly Ionic, suggest asiatic luxury and effeminacy.

<sup>9</sup> Demeter and Persephone.

τίνι δαιμόνων ὁ κῶμος;  
 105 λέγε νυν. εὐπκ(ε)λίστως δὲ τοῦμὸν  
 δαίμονας ἔχει σεβίσαι.

ἄγε νῦν, ὀλβίζετε, Μοῦσα(ι),  
 χρυσέων ρύτορα τόξων  
 Φοῖβον, ὃς ἰδρύσατο χώρας  
 110 γύαλα Σιμουντίδι γᾶ.

χαῖρε καλλίσταις ἀοιδαῖς,  
 Φοῖβ', ἐν εὐμούσοισι τιμαῖς  
 γέρας ἱερὸν προφέρων.

τάν τ' ἐν ὄρεσι δρυογόνοισι  
 115 κόραν ἀείσατ' Ἄρτεμιν ἀγροτέραν.

ἔπομαι κλήζουσα σεμνὰν  
 γόνον ὀλβίζουσα Λατοῦς,  
 Ἄρτεμιν ἀπειρολεχῆ.

120 Λατώ τε κρούματά τ' Ἀσιάδος ποδὶ  
 παράρυθμ' εὐρυθμα Φρυγίων  
 διὰ νεύματα Χαρίτων.

σέβομαι Λατώ τ' ἄνασσαν

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

*as chorus*

For which deity hold we our revel?  
O say! I'm obediently disposed  
when it comes to adoring the gods.

*as leader*

Come now, Muses, venerate  
him who draws golden arrows,  
Phoebus, who founded our country's vales  
in the land of the Simois.<sup>10</sup>

*as chorus*

Take joy in our song most fair,  
Phoebus, the first to flaunt the holy gift  
of our musical tribute.

*as leader*

Hymn too the maiden born in the oak-birthing  
mountains, Artemis of the Wild.

*as chorus*

I follow you, invoking, praising  
the holy spawn of Leto,  
Artemis untried in bed!

*as leader*

Yes Leto, and the chords of the Asian strings  
beating nicely against the beat as the Phrygian  
Graces nod the tempo.

*as chorus*

I venerate Lady Leto

---

<sup>10</sup> Apollo, who with Poseidon built the walls of Troy; the Simois was a river in the Trojan plain.

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<sup>105</sup> suppl. Reiske                      <sup>107</sup> ὀλβίζετε (ὄλβιζε iam Bentley)  
Gannon: ὄπλιζε R suppl. Wilamowitz

κίθαρίν τε ματέρ' ὕμνων  
125 ἄρσενι βοᾷ δοκίμων.

τᾷ φάος ἔσσυτο δαιμονίοις  
ὄμμασιν, ὑμετέρας τε δι'  
αἰφνιδίου ὀπός· ὦν χάριν  
ἄνακτ' ἄγαλλε<τε> Φοῖβον.

χαῖρ', ὄλβιε παῖ Λατοῦς.

## ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

130 ὧς ἠδὺ τὸ μέλος, ὦ πότνιαι Γενετυλλίδες,  
καὶ θηλυδριῶδες καὶ κατεγλωττισμένον  
καὶ μανδαλωτόν, ὥστ' ἐμοῦ γ' ἀκρωμένου  
ὑπὸ τὴν ἔδραν αὐτὴν ὑπήλθε γάργαλος.  
καί σ', ὦ νεανίσχ', εἴ τις εἶ, κατ' Αἰσχύλον  
135 ἐκ τῆς Λυκουργείας ἐρέσθαι βούλομαι.  
ποδαπὸς ὁ γύννις; τίς πάτρα; τίς ἢ στολή;  
τίς ἢ τάραξις τοῦ βίου; τί βάρβιτος  
λαλεῖ κροκωτῶ; τί δὲ λυρὰ κεκρυφάλῳ;  
τί λήκυθος καὶ στρόφιον; ὡς οὐ ξύμφορα.  
140 τίς δαὶ κατόπτρου καὶ ξίφους κοινωνία;  
σύ τ' αὐτός, ὦ παῖ, πότερον ὡς ἀνὴρ τρέφει;  
καὶ ποῦ πέος; ποῦ χλαῖνα; ποῦ Λακωνικαί;  
ἀλλ' ὡς γυνὴ δῆτ'; εἶτα ποῦ τὰ τιτθία;  
τί φῆς; τί σιγᾶς; ἀλλὰ δῆτ' ἐκ τοῦ μέλους  
145 ζητῶ σ', ἐπειδὴ γ' αὐτὸς οὐ βούλει φράσαι;

125 δοκίμων Schöne: δοκίμῳ R S: δόκιμον Dindorf, cf. Σ<sup>R</sup>

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

and the cithara, mother of songs  
renowned for their masculine clangor.

*as leader*

Whereby did a sparkle whisk from eyes  
divine, as also by virtue of your  
startling vociferation; wherefore  
all glorify Lord Phoebus!

*as chorus*

Hail, happy scion of Leto!

### KINSMAN

Holy Genetyllides,<sup>11</sup> what a pretty song! How feministic and tongue-gagged and deep-kissed! Just hearing it brought a tingle to my very butt! And you, young lad, I want to ask you, à la Aeschylus' *Lycurgeia*,<sup>12</sup> what kind of female you are. Whence comes this femme? What's its homeland? What's its dress? What confoundment of living is this? What has a lute to chat about with a party dress? Or a lyre with a hairnet? Here's an oil flask and a brassiere: how ill-fitting! And what's this society of mirror and sword? And you yourself, child, are you being raised male? Then where's your dick? Your suit? Your Spartan shoes? All right, say you're a woman: then where are your tits? Well? Why don't you answer? Or must I find you out from your song, since you yourself refuse to speak?

<sup>11</sup> See *Lysistrata*, 2 n.

<sup>12</sup> A tetralogy dramatizing the struggle between the Thracian king Lycurgus and Dionysus, who in the first play, *Edonians* (as in Euripides' *Bacchae*, 453 ff.), is taunted for his effeminate qualities.

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<sup>127</sup>  $\upsilon\mu$ - Nietzsche:  $\eta\mu$ - R

<sup>128</sup> suppl. Austin

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

ὦ πρέσβυ πρέσβυ, τοῦ φθόνου μὲν τὸν ψόγον  
 ἤκουσα, τὴν δ' ἄλγησιν οὐ παρεσχόμεν·  
 ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν ἐσθήθ' ἅμα <τῇ> γνώμη φορῶ.  
 χρὴ γὰρ ποιητὴν ἄνδρα πρὸς τὰ δράματα  
 150 ἂ δεῖ ποιεῖν, πρὸς ταῦτα τοὺς τρόπους ἔχειν.  
 αὐτίκα γυναικεῖ ἦν ποιῆ τις δράματα,  
 μετουσίαν δεῖ τῶν τρόπων τὸ σῶμ' ἔχειν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκοῦν κελητίζεις, ὅταν Φαίδραν ποιῆς;

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

ἀνδρεία δ' ἦν ποιῆ τις, ἐν τῷ σώματι  
 155 ἔνεσθ' ὑπάρχον τοῦθ'. ἂ δ' οὐ κεκτήμεθα,  
 μίμησις ἤδη ταῦτα συνθηρεύεται.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὅταν σατύρους τοίνυν ποιῆς, καλεῖν ἐμέ,  
 ἵνα συμποιωῶ σοῦπισθεν ἐστυκῶς ἐγώ.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

ἄλλως τ' ἄμουσόν ἐστι ποιητὴν ἰδεῖν  
 160 ἀγρεῖον ὄντα καὶ δασύν. σκέψαι δ' ὅτι  
 Ἰβυκος ἐκεῖνος κἀνακρέων ὁ Τήσιος  
 κἀλκαῖος, οἵπερ ἀρμονίαν ἐχύμισαν,  
 ἐμιτροφόρουν τε καὶ διεκλῶντ' Ἰωνικῶς.  
 καὶ Φρύνιχος,—τοῦτον γὰρ οὖν ἀκήκοας—  
 165 αὐτός τε καλὸς ἦν καὶ καλῶς ἠμπίσχετο·

163 διεκλῶντ' Τουρ: διεκίνων R: διεκίνου S

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

AGATHON

Old man, old man, I heard your envious mockery, yet felt no pain thereat. I coordinate my clothing with my thoughts. To be a poet, a man must suit his behavior to the requirements of his plays. If, say, he's writing plays about women, his body must partake of women's behavior.

KINSMAN

So when you're writing a *Phaedra*, you climb on top?<sup>13</sup>

AGATHON

If one writes about men, that element of the body is at hand. But qualities we do not have must be sought by mimicry.

KINSMAN

Well, let me know when you're writing about satyrs; I'll get behind you with my hard-on and show you how.

AGATHON

Besides, 'tis discordant to see a poet looking loutish and shaggy. Observe that the renowned Ibycus, and Anacreon of Teos, and Alcaeus—poets who put some spice into music—used to wear bonnets and cavort Ionian style.<sup>14</sup> And Phrynichus—you must have heard of *him*—was both beautiful and beautifully dressed.<sup>15</sup> And that's why his

<sup>13</sup> *Phaedra's* love for her stepson, dramatized by both Sophocles and Euripides, made her a byword for the wanton wife.

<sup>14</sup> These lyric poets of the previous century were known especially for their love songs.

<sup>15</sup> A tragic poet of the Aeschylean period, noted for the sweetness of his poetry.



ARISTOPHANES

διὰ τοῦτ' ἄρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ κάλ' ἦν τὰ δράματα.  
ὅμοια γὰρ ποιεῖν ἀνάγκη τῇ φύσει.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ταῦτ' ἄρ' ὁ Φιλοκλέης αἰσχροὺς ὦν αἰσχροῶς ποιεῖ,  
ὁ δὲ Ξενοκλέης ὦν κακὸς κακῶς ποιεῖ,  
170 ὁ δ' αὖ Θεόγυις ψυχρὸς ὦν ψυχροῶς ποιεῖ.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

ἅπασ' ἀνάγκη. ταῦτα γάρ τοι γνοῦς ἐγὼ  
ἔμαντὸν ἐθεράπευσα.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς, πρὸς τῶν θεῶν;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

παῦσαι βαῦζων· καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ τοιοῦτος ἦν  
ὦν τηλικούτος, ἡνίκ' ἤρχομην ποιεῖν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

175 μὰ τὸν Δί', οὐ ζηλῶ σε τῆς παιδεύσεως.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἄλλ' ὦνπερ οὔνεκ' ἦλθον, ἔα μ' εἰπεῖν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

λέγε.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

Ἀγάθων, “σοφοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, ὅστις ἐν βραχεῖ  
πολλοὺς καλῶς οἴός τε συντέμνειν λόγους.”  
ἐγὼ δὲ καινῇ ξυμφορᾷ πεπληγμένος  
ικέτης ἀφίγμαι πρὸς σέ.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

plays were also beautiful. For as we are made, so must we compose.

KINSMAN

That must be why the revolting Philocles writes so revoltingly, and the base Xenocles<sup>16</sup> so basely, or the frigid Theognis<sup>17</sup> so frigidly!

AGATHON

It's an absolute rule, and because I understood that, I doctored myself up.

KINSMAN

How, for heaven's sake?

EURIPIDES

Stop your barking! I was the same way at his age, when I began to write.

KINSMAN

I certainly don't envy you your rearing!

EURIPIDES

All right, let me tell you why I've come.

AGATHON

Do say.

EURIPIDES

Agathon, "'tis the sage man who can say much in a few finely trimmed words."<sup>18</sup> Smitten by novel misfortune, I am come a suppliant to your door.

<sup>16</sup> A son of the tragic poet and general Carcinus; he seems to have suffered a recent theatrical or political embarrassment, cf. 440–42.

<sup>17</sup> Long noted for the "frigidity" of his style, cf.

*Acharnians* 138–40.

<sup>18</sup> From Euripides' *Aeolus*, fr. 28.

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

180

τοῦ χρείαν ἔχων;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

μέλλουσί μ' αἱ γυναῖκες ἀπολεῖν τήμερον  
τοῖς Θεσμοφορίοις, ὅτι κακῶς αὐτὰς λέγω.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

τίς οὖν παρ' ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ὠφέλειά σοι;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

185

ἢ πᾶσ'. εἰ γὰρ ἐγκαθεζόμενος λάθρα  
ἐν ταῖς γυναιξίν, ὡς δοκῶν εἶναι γυνή,  
ὑπεραποκρίνη μου, σαφῶς σώσεις ἐμέ.  
μόνος γὰρ ἂν λέξειας ἀξίως ἐμοῦ.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

ἔπειτα πῶς οὐκ αὐτὸς ἀπολογεῖ παρών;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

190

ἐγὼ φράσω σοι. πρῶτα μὲν γιγνώσκομαι·  
ἔπειτα πολίος εἶμι καὶ πώγων' ἔχω,  
σὺ δ' εὐπρόσωπος, λευκός, ἐξυρημένος,  
γυναικόφωνος, ἀπαλός, εὐπρεπῆς ἰδεῖν.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

Εὐριπίδη—

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί ἐστίν;

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

ἐποίησάς ποτε

“χαίρεις ὄρων φῶς, πατέρα δ' οὐ χαίρειν δοκεῖς;”

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

AGATHON

What is your need?

EURIPIDES

The women at the Thesmophoria are preparing to destroy me this very day, because I slander them.

AGATHON

So what can we contribute to your cause?

EURIPIDES

Everything! If you attend the women's meeting covertly—because you'll pass for a woman—and rebut their accusations against me, you'll surely be my salvation. For you alone could speak in a manner worthy of me.

AGATHON

Then why don't you go and make your own defense?

EURIPIDES

I'll tell you. First, I'm well known. Second, I'm an old graybeard. You, by contrast, are good-looking, pale, clean shaven, soft, presentable, and you sound like a woman.

AGATHON

Euripides—

EURIPIDES

Well?

AGATHON

—did you yourself once write, “You love life, son: do you think your father doesn't?”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Alcestis* 691, where Pheres rejects his son's request to die in his place.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔγωγε.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

195 μή νυν ἐλπίσης τὸ σὸν κακὸν  
 ἡμᾶς ὑφέξειν. καὶ γὰρ ἂν μαινοίμεθ' ἄν.  
 ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ὃ γε σὸν ἐστὶν οἰκείως φέρε.  
 τὰς συμφορὰς γὰρ οὐχὶ τοῖς τεχνάσμασιν  
 φέρειν δίκαιον, ἀλλὰ τοῖς παθήμασιν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

200 καὶ μὴν σύ γ', ᾧ κατάπυγον, εὐρύπρωκτος εἶ  
 οὐ τοῖς λόγοισιν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς παθήμασιν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί δ' ἐστὶν ὅτι δέδοικας ἐλθεῖν αὐτόσε;

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

κάκιον ἀπολοίμην ἂν ἢ σύ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

πῶς;

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

ὅπως;

205 δοκῶν γυναικῶν ἔργα νυκτερείσια  
 κλέπτειν ὑφαρπάζειν τε θήλειαν Κύπριν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἰδού γε κλέπτειν· νῆ Δία βινεῖσθαι μὲν οὖν.  
 ἀτὰρ ἢ πρόφασίς γε νῆ Δί' εἰκότως ἔχει.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί οὖν; ποιήσεις ταῦτα;

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

I did.

AGATHON

Then don't expect us to shoulder your misfortune. We'd have to be crazy! No, your own burden you must privately shoulder yourself. Misfortune should by rights be confronted not with tricky contrivances but in a spirit of submission.

KINSMAN

You certainly got *your* wide asshole, you faggot, not with words but in the spirit of submission!

EURIPIDES

What is it that makes you afraid to go to that particular place?

AGATHON

I would perish more wretchedly than you!

EURIPIDES

Why?

AGATHON

Why, you ask? I'd appear to be stealing the nocturnal doings of women and absconding with the female Cypris.<sup>20</sup>

KINSMAN

"Stealing" he says! Getting fucked is more like it. Still, his excuse is pretty plausible.

EURIPIDES

What's it to be, then? Will you do it?

<sup>20</sup> I.e., Aphrodite; Agathon fears that he would make a more attractive woman than the women themselves, and so provoke their hatred.

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

μὴ δόκει γε σύ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὦ τρισκακοδαίμων, ὡς ἀπόλωλ'.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

Εὐριπίδη,

210 ὦ φίλτατ', ὦ κηδεστά, μὴ σαυτὸν προδῶς.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

πῶς οὖν ποιήσω δῆτα;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τοῦτον μὲν μακρὰ  
κλάειν κέλευ', ἐμοὶ δ' ὅ τι βούλει χρῶ λαβών.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἄγε νυν, ἐπειδὴ σαυτὸν ἐπιδίδως ἐμοί,  
ἀπόδυθι τουτὶ θοῖμάτιον.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ δὴ χαμαί.

ἀτὰρ τί μέλλεις δρᾶν μ'?

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

215 ἀποξυρεῖν ταδί,

τὰ κάτω δ' ἀφεύειν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἀλλὰ πρᾶττ', εἴ σοι δοκεῖ·  
ἢ μὴ 'πιδούναι 'μαντὸν ὄφελόν ποτε.



WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

AGATHON

Don't count on it.

EURIPIDES

Triple wretched me, ah thus to perish!

KINSMAN

Euripides! Dearest fellow! Kinsman! Don't give up on yourself!

EURIPIDES

But what will I do?

KINSMAN

Tell this guy to go to hell, and put me to use however you want.

EURIPIDES

Well, now! Since you've signed yourself over to me, take off that cloak.

KINSMAN

There, it's on the ground. But what do you mean to do to me?

EURIPIDES

To shave this clean, and singe you off down there.

KINSMAN

Then go right ahead, if you think it best; otherwise I should never have handed myself over to you.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

Ἀγάθων, σὺ μέντοι ξυροφορεῖς ἐκάστοτε,  
χρηῆσόν τί νυν ἡμῖν ξυρόν.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

αὐτὸς λάμβανε  
ἐντεῦθεν ἐκ τῆς ξυροδόκης.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

220

γενναῖος εἶ.  
κάθιζε· φύσα τὴν γνάθον τὴν δεξιάν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

οἶμοι.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί κέκραγας; ἐμβαλῶ σοι πάτταλον,  
ἦν μὴ σιωπᾶς.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἀτταταῖ ἰατταταῖ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὗτος σύ, ποῖ θεῖς;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

εἰς τὸ τῶν σεμνῶν θεῶν·

225

οὐ γὰρ μὰ τὴν Δήμητρά γ' ἐνταυθοῖ μενῶ  
τεμνόμενος.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὔκουν καταγέλαστος δῆτ' ἔσει  
τὴν ἡμίκραιραν τὴν ἑτέραν ψιλὴν ἔχων;

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

Agathon, you've always got razors with you; how about lending us one?

AGATHON

Take one yourself from my razor case.

EURIPIDES

You're a gentleman. (*to Kinsman*) Sit down. Blow out your cheek, the right one.

KINSMAN

Oh no!

EURIPIDES

What's this bellyaching? If you don't quiet down I'll have to stick a peg in your mouth.

KINSMAN

Ayeeee!

EURIPIDES

Hey, where are you running off to?

KINSMAN

To the shrine of the Venerable Goddesses!<sup>21</sup> Because, by Demeter, I'm not about to sit here getting cut up!

EURIPIDES

Then won't you look ridiculous, walking around with one side of your face shaved!

<sup>21</sup> A cave near the Areopagus offering asylum from enemies.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὀλίγον μέλει μοι.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

μηδαμῶς, πρὸς τῶν θεῶν,  
προδῶς με. χῶρει δεῦρο.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

κακοδαίμων ἐγώ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

230 ἔχ' ἀτρέμα σαυτὸν κἀνάκνυπτε. ποῖ στρέφει;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

μῦ μῦ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί μύζεις; πάντα πεποίηται καλῶς.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

οἶμοι κακοδαίμων, ψιλὸς οὖν στρατεύσομαι.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

μὴ φροντίσης· ὡς εὐπρεπῆς φανεῖ πάνν.  
βούλει θεᾶσθαι σαυτόν;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

εἰ δοκεῖ, φέρε.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὄρᾳς σεαυτόν;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

235

οὐ μὰ Δί', ἀλλὰ Κλεισθένη.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

I don't care!

EURIPIDES

In the name of heaven, don't let me down! Come back here.

KINSMAN

What a fix I'm in!

EURIPIDES

Now hold still, and tilt your head back. Quit squirming!

KINSMAN

Mmm mmm.

EURIPIDES

What are you mmm-ing for? It's all done, and you look fine!

KINSMAN

Damn the luck; when I rejoin my regiment I'll literally be a leatherneck!

EURIPIDES

Don't worry about it: you'll be so good-looking. (*holding up a mirror*) Want to see yourself?

KINSMAN

OK, if you like.

EURIPIDES

Do you see yourself?

KINSMAN

God no, I see Cleisthenes!

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀνίστασ', ἴν' ἀφεύσω σε, κἀγκύφας ἔχε.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

οἷμοι κακοδαίμων, δελφάκιον γενήσομαι.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐνεγκάτω τις ἔνδοθεν δᾶδ' ἢ λύχνον.  
ἐπίκνυπτε· τὴν κέρκον φυλάττου νυν ἄκραν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

240 ἐμοὶ μελήσει νῆ Δία, πλήν γ' ὅτι κάομαι.  
οἷμοι τάλας. ὕδωρ ὕδωρ, ὦ γείτονες,  
πρὶν ἀντιλαβέσθαι πρωκτὸν <ἕτερον> τῆς φλογός.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

θάρρει.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τί θαρρῶ καταπευρπολημένος;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκέτ' οὐδὲν πρᾶγμά σοι· τὰ πλείιστα γὰρ  
ἀποπεπόνηκας.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

245 φεῦ, ἰοὺ τῆς ἀσβόλου.  
αἰθὸς γεγένημαι πάντα τὰ περὶ τὴν τράμιν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

μὴ φροντίσης· ἕτερος γὰρ αὐτὰ σπογγιεῖ.

<sup>242</sup> suppl. Medaglia ex Π1

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

Get up so I can singe you; bend over and don't move.

KINSMAN

Damn the luck, I'm going to be roast pig!

EURIPIDES

Somebody bring out a torch or a lamp.

*Slave brings out a lighted torch and hands it to Euripides.*

Bend over. Now watch out for the tip of your dick.

KINSMAN

I'll watch out, all right—only I'm on fire! Oh no, no! (*to the audience*) Water! Water, neighbors, before somebody else's arse catches fire!

EURIPIDES

Be brave!

KINSMAN

How am I supposed to be brave when I'm being turbo-vulcanized?

EURIPIDES

You've got nothing more to fret about; you've suffered through the worst part.

KINSMAN

Yuk! Oh, the soot! All around my crotch I'm blackened!

EURIPIDES

Don't worry, someone else will sponge it off.



ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

οἰμώξετ' ἄρ', εἴ τις τὸν ἐμὸν προκτὸν πλυνεῖ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

250 Ἀγάθων, ἐπειδὴ σαυτὸν ἐπιδούναι φθονεῖς,  
ἀλλ' ἱμάτιον γοῦν χρήσον ἡμῖν τουτωῖ  
καὶ στρόφιον· οὐ γὰρ ταῦτά γ' ὡς οὐκ ἔστ' ἐρεῖς.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

λαμβάνετε καὶ χρήσθ'. οὐ φθονῶ.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τί οὖν λάβω;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὅ τι; τὸν κροκωτὸν πρῶτον ἐνδύου λαβών.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

νῆ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην, ἡδύ γ' ὄζει ποσθίου.  
σύζωσον ἀνύσας.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

αἶρέ νυν στρόφιον.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

255

ἰδού·

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἴθι νυν κατάστειλόν με τὰ περὶ τὸ σκέλει.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

κεκρυφάλου δεῖ καὶ μίτρας.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

ἡδὲ μὲν οὖν  
κεφαλή περίθετος, ἣν ἐγὼ νύκτωρ φορῶ.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

If anyone tries to wipe *my* arse for me, he'll be sorry!

EURIPIDES

Agathon, since you refuse to offer yourself, at least loan us a dress for this fellow here, and a brassiere; you won't deny you've got them.

AGATHON

Take them and use them; I don't mind.

KINSMAN

Which one should I take?

EURIPIDES

Hmm. This party dress here; try it on first.

KINSMAN

By Aphrodite, it has a nice scent of weenie. Quick, belt it up.

EURIPIDES

Now hand me a brassiere.

AGATHON

Here.

KINSMAN

Come on, arrange the pleats around my legs.

EURIPIDES

We need a hairnet and a hat.

AGATHON

Even better, this wig that I wear after dark.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

νὴ τὸν Δί', ἀλλὰ κάπιτηδεῖα πάνν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄρ' ἀρμόσει μοι;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

260

νὴ Δί', ἀλλ' ἄριστ' ἔχει.

φέρ' ἔγκυκλόν τι.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

λάβαν' ἀπὸ τῆς κλινίδος.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὑποδημάτων δεῖ.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

τὰμὰ ταυτὶ λάμβανε.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄρ' ἀρμόσει μοι; χαλαρὰ γοῦν χαίρεις φορῶν.

ΑΓΑΘΩΝ

265

σὺ τοῦτο γίγνωσκ'. ἀλλ', ἔχεις γὰρ ὦν δέει,  
εἴσω τις ὡς τάχιστα μ' εἰσκυκλησάτω.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀνὴρ μὲν ἡμῖν οὔτοσὶ καὶ δὴ γυνὴ  
τό γ' εἶδος. ἦν λαλῆς δ', ὅπως τῷ φθέγματι  
γυναικιεῖς εὖ καὶ πιθανῶς.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

πειράσομαι.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

By god, that's just the thing!

KINSMAN

Well, will it fit me?

EURIPIDES

It's simply perfect! (*to Agathon*) Let's have a wrap.

AGATHON

Take it from the couch.

EURIPIDES

We need pumps.

AGATHON

Take mine here.

KINSMAN

Will they fit me? (*putting them on*) You certainly like some wiggle room!

AGATHON

That's your own business; you have what you need. Now someone roll me back inside, on the double!

*The eccyclema rolls back inside the house, the door closing behind it.*

EURIPIDES

Our gentleman here is a real lady, at least to look at. But when you talk, be sure your voice sounds feminine, and be convincing!

KINSMAN

I'll try.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

βάδιζε τοίνυν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

μαὶ τὸν Ἀπόλλω οὐκ, ἦν γε μὴ  
ὁμόσης ἐμοί—

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί χρήμα;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

270 συσσωσείν ἐμὲ  
πάσαις τέχναις, ἦν μοί τι περιπίπτῃ κακόν.

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὄμνυμι τοίνυν αἰθέρ', οἴκησιν Διός.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τί μᾶλλον ἢ τὴν Ἴπποκράτους ξυνοικίαν;

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὄμνυμι τοίνυν πάντα ἄρδην τοὺς θεούς.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

275 μέμνησο τοίνυν ταῦθ', ὅτι ἡ φρῆν ὤμοσεν,  
ἡ γλῶττα δ' οὐκ ὁμώμοκ', οὐδ' ὄρκωσ' ἐγώ.

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔα σπεῦδε ταχέως· ὡς τὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας  
σημείον ἐν τῷ Θεσμοφορείῳ φαίνεται.  
ἐγὼ δ' ἄπειμι.

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<sup>22</sup> From Euripides' *Wise Melanippe*, fr. 487.

<sup>23</sup> Perhaps (with schol.) the general and nephew of Pericles, though he had been killed in 424 (Thucydides 4.101).

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

Off with you now!

KINSMAN

Apollo, no! First you've got to promise me—

EURIPIDES

Promise what?

KINSMAN

that you'll use any and all means to help save me if anything bad befalls me.

EURIPIDES

I swear then by Aether, Abode of Zeus.<sup>22</sup>

KINSMAN

You might as well swear by Hippocrates'<sup>23</sup> Apartment House!

EURIPIDES

I swear then by all the gods bar none.

KINSMAN

Well then, remember that your heart has sworn and not merely your tongue, and I didn't get the promise only from your tongue!<sup>24</sup>

EURIPIDES

Will you please get going! Look, there's the signal for the assembly at the Thesmophorium. As for me, I'm off.

<sup>24</sup> Paraphrasing a notorious line from Euripides' *Hippolytus* 612, "My tongue has sworn, but my heart remains unsworn," spoken by Hippolytus of the oath of silence that Phaedra's nurse had made him swear before revealing Phaedra's secret passion.

## ARISTOPHANES

## ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

δεῦρό νυν, ὦ Θρᾶτθ', ἔπον.

- 280 ὦ Θρᾶττα, θέασαι, καομένων τῶν λαμπάδων  
 ὅσον τὸ χρῆμ' ἀνέρχεθ' ὑπὸ τῆς λιγνύος.  
 ἀλλ', ὦ περικαλλεῖ Θεσμοφόρω, δέξασθέ με  
 ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ καὶ δεῦρο <καὶ> πάλιν οἴκαδε.  
 ὦ Θρᾶττα, τὴν κίστην κάθελε, κᾶτ' ἔξελε  
 285 τὸ πόπανον, ὅπως λαβοῦσα θύσω ταῖν θεαῖν.  
 δέσποινα πολυτίμητε Δήμητερ φίλη  
 καὶ Φερρέφαττα, πολλὰ πολλάκις μέ σοι  
 θύειν ἔχουσαν, εἰ δὲ μᾶλλὰ νῦν λαθεῖν.  
 καὶ τὴν θυγατέρα Χοιρίον ἀνδρός μοι τυχεῖν  
 290 πλουτοῦντος, ἄλλως δ' ἡλιθίου κάβελτέρου,  
 καὶ Ποσθαλίσκον νοῦν ἔχειν μοι καὶ φρένας.  
 ποῦ ποῦ καθίζωμ' ἐν καλῶ, τῶν ῥητόρων  
 ἴν' ἐξακούω; σὺ δ' ἄπιθ', ὦ Θρᾶττ', ἐκποδῶν.  
 δούλοις γὰρ οὐκ ἔξεστ' ἀκούειν τῶν λόγων.

## ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

- 295 εὐφημία ἔστω, εὐφημία ἔστω. εὐχεσθε ταῖν  
 Θεσμοφόροις,  
 300 καὶ τῶ Πλούτῳ, καὶ τῇ Καλλιγενείᾳ, καὶ τῇ  
 Κουροτρόφῳ,  
 καὶ τῶ Ἑρμῇ, καὶ <ταῖς> Χάρισιν, ἐκκλησίαν τήνδε  
 καὶ σύνοδον τὴν νῦν

287 Φερρ- Π1: Φερ- R

289 Χοιρίον Fritzsche cl. Σ<sup>R</sup>: χοῖρον R

291 Ποσθαλίσκον Dindorf cl. Σ<sup>R</sup>: πρὸς θάληκον R



## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

*EURIPIDES exits by a side passage. Stage hands set up a dais and chairs in front of the stage building. Meanwhile, CRITYLLA, MICA, GARLAND SELLER, Mania, and other Women enter from a side passage and move toward the chairs. KINSMAN also heads for center stage.*

### KINSMAN

*(to an imaginary maid)* Come along this way, Thratta. Oh Thratta, look! The torches are burning, and such a crowd is moving up to the sanctuary through the smoke! O Twain Thesmophoroi, surpassingly lovely, grant that good luck attend me both coming here and going home again! Thratta, put down the box and take out the cake, so I can make an offering to the Twain Goddesses. Demeter, reverend Mistress mine, and Pherrephatta,<sup>25</sup> grant me plenty for plenty of sacrifices to you, and if not, grant at least that I get away with this! And may my daughter Pussy meet a man who's rich but also childishly stupid, and may little Dick have brains and sense! Now where, where do I find a good seat for hearing everything the speakers say? You go away from here, Thratta; slaves aren't allowed to listen to the speeches.

*The CHORUS enters the orchestra with torches, as CRITYLLA mounts the dais.*

### CRITYLLA

Observe ritual silence; ritual silence please! Offer your prayers to the Twain Thesmophorian Goddesses, to Wealth, to Calligeneia, to the Nurse of the Young, to Hermes and to the Graces, that this assembly and today's

<sup>25</sup> See 83 n.

## ARISTOPHANES

- κάλλιστα καὶ ἄριστα ποιῆσαι, πολυφελῶς μὲν  
 <τῆ> πόλει τῆ Ἀθηναίων,  
 305 τυχηρῶς δ' ὑμῖν αὐταῖς. καὶ τὴν δρῶσαν καὶ  
 ἀγορεύουσαν τὰ βέλτιστα  
 περὶ τὸν δῆμον τὸν Ἀθηναίων καὶ τὸν τῶν  
 γυναικῶν, ταύτην νικᾶν. ταῦτ'  
 310 εὔχεσθε, καὶ ὑμῖν αὐταῖς τὰγαθά. ἰὴ παιῶν, ἰὴ  
 παιῶν, ἰὴ παιῶν. χαίρωμεν.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

- δεχόμεθα καὶ θεῶν γένος  
 λιτόμεθα ταῖσδ' ἐπ' εὐχαῖς  
 φανέντας ἐπιχαρῆναι.  
 315 Ζεῦ μεγαλώνυμε χρυσολύρα  
 τε Δῆλον ὃς ἔχεις ἱεράν,  
 καὶ σύ, παγκρατὲς κόρα  
 γλανκῶπι χρυσόλογχε πόλιν  
 οἰκοῦσα περιμάχητον, ἔλθὲ δεῦρο·  
 320 καὶ πολυώνυμε θηροφόνῃ,  
 Λατοῦς χρυσώπιδος ἔρνος,  
 σύ τε, πόντιε σεμνὲ Πόσειδον  
 325 ἀλιμέδον, προλιπῶν  
 μυχὸν ἰχθυόεντα  
 οἰστροδόνητον,  
 Νηρέος εἰναλίου τε κόραι  
 Νύμφαι τ' ὀρίπλαγκτοι.  
 χρυσέα δὲ φόρμιγξ  
 ἰαχήσειεν ἐπ' εὐχαῖς

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

convocation be conducted in the finest and most excellent manner, to the great benefit to the city of Athens and with good fortune for you yourselves. And may she have the victory whose actions and whose counsel best serve the Athenian Commonwealth and the Women's Commonwealth. Be this your prayer, and for yourselves all good things. Ié Paion, ié Paion, ié Paion! Cheers to us!

### CHORUS

We say amen to that, and ask  
the race of gods to signal  
their pleasure at our prayers.  
Zeus of the grand name, and you with the golden lyre  
who live on holy Delos;<sup>26</sup>  
and you, almighty Maiden  
with the gleaming eyes and golden spearpoint,<sup>27</sup>  
who dwell in a city you fought for,<sup>28</sup> come this way!  
And you of the many names, slayer of beasts,  
seed of Leto of the golden eyes,<sup>29</sup>  
and you, august master Poseidon,  
who rule the brine, quit now  
the fishy deep  
so lashable to frenzy;  
and you, daughters of marine Nereus;  
and you nymphs who range the mountains.  
May Apollo's golden lyre  
resound in harmony with our prayers,

<sup>26</sup> Apollo.

<sup>27</sup> Athena.

<sup>28</sup> In a contest with Poseidon for Attica, Athena prevailed by her gift of the olive tree, cf. Herodotus 8.55.

<sup>29</sup> Artemis.

## ARISTOPHANES

330 ἡμετέραις· τελέως δ' ἐκκλησιάσασαιμεν Ἀθηνῶν  
εὐγενεῖς γυναῖκες.

## ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

εὐχεσθε τοῖς θεοῖσι τοῖς Ὀλυμπίοις  
καὶ ταῖς Ὀλυμπίαισι, καὶ τοῖς Πυθίοις  
καὶ ταῖσι Πυθίαισι, καὶ τοῖς Δηλίοις  
καὶ ταῖσι Δηλίαισι, τοῖς τ' ἄλλοις θεοῖς.  
335 εἴ τις ἐπιβουλεύει τι τῷ δήμῳ κακὸν  
τῷ τῶν γυναικῶν, ἢ ἰπικηρυκεύεται  
Εὐριπίδῃ Μήδοις <τ' > ἐπὶ βλάβῃ τινὶ  
τῇ τῶν γυναικῶν, ἢ τυραννεῖν ἐπινοεῖ,  
ἢ τὸν τύραννον συγκατάγειν, ἢ παιδίον  
340 ὑποβαλλομένης κατεῖπεν, ἢ δούλη τινὸς  
προαγωγὸς οὖσ' ἐνετρύλισεν τῷ δεσπότη,  
ἢ πεμπομένη τις ἀγγελίας ψευδεῖς φέρει,  
ἢ μοιχὸς εἴ τις ἐξαπατᾷ ψευδῆ λέγων  
καὶ μὴ δίδωσιν ἂν ὑπόσχηταί ποτε,  
345 ἢ δῶρά τις δίδωσι μοιχῷ γραῦς γυνή,  
ἢ καὶ δέχεται προδιδούσ' ἑταίρα τὸν φίλον,  
κεῖ τις κάπηλος ἢ καπηλὶς τοῦ χοῶς  
ἢ τῶν κοτυλῶν τὸ νόμισμα διαλυμαίνεται,  
κακῶς ἀπολέσθαι τοῦτον αὐτὸν κῶκίαν  
350 ἀρᾶσθε, ταῖς δ' ἄλλαισιν ὑμῖν τοὺς θεοὺς  
εὐχεσθε πάσαις πολλὰ δοῦναι καγαθά.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξυνευχόμεσθα τέλεα μὲν  
πόλει, τέλεα δὲ δήμῳ

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

and may we well born women of Athens  
hold a faultless meeting!

### CRITYLLA

Pray to the Olympian gods and to the Olympian goddesses, to the Pythian gods and Pythian goddesses, to the Delian gods and Delian goddesses, and to the other gods as well. If anyone conspires in any way to harm the Women's Commonwealth; or negotiates secretly with Euripides and the Medes in any way to the women's harm; or contemplates either becoming a tyrant or abetting a tyrant's installation; or denounces a woman who has passed off another's child as her own; or is a mistress' go-between slave who spills the beans to the master, or when sent on a mission brings back false messages; or is a lover who deceives a woman with lies or reneges on promised gifts; or is an old woman who gives gifts to a young lover; or is a courtesan who takes gifts from her boyfriend while cheating on him; or is a barman or barmaid who sells short pints or liters: put a curse on every such person, that they perish wretchedly and their families along with them! As for the rest of you, ask the gods to give you every blessing!

### CHORUS

We join you in praying that these wishes  
will fully come true for the people

- τὰ δ' εὐγματ' ἀποτελείσθαι,  
 355 τὰ δ' ἄρισθ' ὅσαις προσήκει  
 νικᾶν λεγούσαις. ὀπόσαι δ'  
 ἕξαπατῶσιν παραβαίνουσί τε τοὺς  
 359 ὄρκους τοὺς νενομισμένους,  
 361 ἢ ψηφίσματα καὶ νόμους  
 ζητοῦσ' ἀντιμεθιστάναι,  
 τὰ πόρρητά τε τοῖσιν ἐ-  
 χθροῖς τοῖς ἡμετέροις λέγουσ',  
 365 ἢ Μήδους ἐπάγουσι τῶν  
 κερδῶν οὐνεκ' ἐπὶ βλάβῃ,  
 ἀσεβοῦσ' ἀδικοῦσί τε τὴν πόλιν.  
 ἀλλ', ὦ παγκρατὲς  
 Ζεῦ, ταῦτα κυρώσειας, ὥσθ'  
 370 ἡμῖν θεοὺς παραστατεῖν,  
 καίπερ γυναιξὶν οὔσαις.

## ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

- ἄκουε πᾶσ'. ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ τάδε  
 τῇ τῶν γυναικῶν· Τιμόκλει' ἐπεστάται,  
 Λύσιλλ' ἐγραμμάτευεν, εἶπε Σωστράτη·  
 375 ἐκκλησίαν ποιεῖν ἕωθεν τῇ μέσῃ  
 τῶν Θεσμοφορίων, ἣ μάλισθ' ἡμῖν σχολή,  
 καὶ χρηματίζειν πρῶτα περὶ Εὐριπίδου,  
 ὅ τι χρῆ παθεῖν ἐκείνον· ἀδικεῖν γὰρ δοκεῖ  
 ἡμῖν ἀπάσαις. τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται;

354 εὐγματ' ἀποτελείσθαι Willems: εὐγματα γενέσθαι R:  
 εὐγματ' ἐπιγενέσθαι Burges



## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

and for the polis as well;  
 and that the women who counsel best  
 will prevail as they deserve to. But those  
 who deceive us and break  
 their solemn oaths;  
 or try to substitute  
 decrees for laws;  
 or reveal our secrets  
 to our enemies;  
 or invite the Medes in to our harm  
 for the sake of gain:  
 they all commit sacrilege and wrong the city.  
 O Zeus all-powerful,  
 ratify these prayers, so that  
 the gods are arrayed on our side,  
 although we are but women!

### CRITYLLA

Attention everyone! The Women's Assembly—Timocleia presiding, Lysilla being secretary, Sostrate<sup>30</sup> proposing—has passed the following motion: an Assembly will be held at dawn of the middle day of the Thesmophoria, when we have the most free time, its principal agendum being deliberation about the punishment of Euripides, who in the view of us all is a criminal. Now who wishes to speak to this question?

<sup>30</sup> Typical women's names.

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<sup>360</sup> κερδῶν οὔνεκ' ἐπὶ βλάβῃ R: del. Reisig      <sup>361</sup> νόμους  
 Blaydes: νόμον R      <sup>365-6</sup> τῶν κερδῶν Austin, cf. 360: τῆς  
 χώρας R      <sup>373</sup> Τιμόκλει' R Σ S: Ἀρ[χίκλ]ει' Π2



## ARISTOPHANES

ΜΙΚΑ

ἐγώ.

ΚΡΙΤΤΛΛΑ

380 περίθου νυν τόνδε πρῶτον πρὶν λέγειν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

σίγα, σιώπα, πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν· χρέμπτεται γὰρ  
 ἤδη,  
 ὅπερ ποιούσ' οἱ ῥήτορες. μακρὰν ἔοικε λέξειν.

ΜΙΚΑ

φιλοτιμία μὲν οὐδεμιᾶ μὰ τὸ θεῶ  
 λέξουσ' ἀνέστην, ὧ̄ γυναῖκες· ἀλλὰ γὰρ  
 385 βαρέως φέρω τάλαινα πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον,  
 προπηλακιζομένας ὀρώσ' ὑμᾶς ὑπὸ  
 Εὐριπίδου τοῦ τῆς λαχανοπωλητρίας  
 καὶ πολλὰ καὶ παντοῖ' ἀκουούσας κακά.  
 τί γὰρ οὔτος ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἐπισμῆ τῶν κακῶν;  
 390 ποῦ δ' οὐχὶ διαβέβληχ', ὅπουπερ ἔμβραχύ  
 εἰσὶν θεαταὶ καὶ τραγωδοὶ καὶ χοροί,  
 τὰς μοιχοτρόφους, τὰς ἀνδρεραστρίας καλῶν,  
 τὰς οἰνοπότιδας, τὰς προδότιδας, τὰς λάλους,  
 τὰς οὐδὲν ὑγιές, τὰς μέγ' ἀνδράσιν κακόν;  
 395 ὥστ' εὐθὺς εἰσιόντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἱκρίων  
 ὑποβλέπουσ' ἡμᾶς σκοποῦνταιί τ' εὐθέως  
 μὴ μοιχὸς ἔνδον ἦ τις ἀποκεκρυμμένος.  
 δράσαι δ' ἔθ' ἡμῖν οὐδὲν ὦνπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ  
 ἔξεστι τοιαῦθ' οὔτος ἐδίδαξεν κακὰ  
 400 τοὺς ἄνδρας ἡμῶν. ὥστ' εἴαν τίς <καὶ> πλέκη

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

MICA

I do.

CRITYLLA

(*handing her a garland*) Put this on first, then speak.

CHORUS LEADER

Quiet! Silence! Pay attention, because she's clearing her throat just like the politicians. She'll probably be making a long speech.

MICA

By the Twain, I have not risen to speak, fellow women, out of any personal ambition; no, but because I have long unhappily endured seeing you get dragged through the mire by Euripides, son of that herb-selling woman,<sup>31</sup> and subjected to the whole gamut of slurs. With what abuse has this fellow not besmirched us? Where, on any occasion where there are spectators, tragic actors, and choruses, has he spared us his disparagement, calling us lover-keepers, man-chasers, wine-oglers, traitors, chatterboxes, utter sickies, the bane of men's lives? That's why, as soon as our men get home from the grandstand, they start right in giving us suspicious looks and searching the house for a hidden lover. We can no longer do anything the way we used to do before, so terrible are the things this man has taught our husbands about us. If a wife so much as weaves a gar-

<sup>31</sup> A perennial Aristophanic jibe, though Euripides' mother was well born; perhaps the jibe refers to an otherwise unknown stepmother.

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<sup>392</sup> *μοιχοτρόφους* (*μοιχο-Σοι* 128) Daubuz: *μυχοτρόπους* R  
<sup>400</sup> suppl. Dobree

- γυνὴ στέφανον, ἔραν δοκεῖ· κὰν ἐκβάλλη  
 σκευὸς τι κατὰ τὴν οἰκίαν πλανωμένη,  
 ἀνὴρ ἐρωτᾷ· “τῷ κατέαγεν ἢ χύτρα;  
 οὐκ ἔσθ’ ὅπως οὐ τῷ Κορινθίῳ ξένῳ.”  
 405 κάμνει κόρη τις; εὐθύς ἀδελφὸς λέγει  
 “τὸ χρῶμα τοῦτό μ’ οὐκ ἀρέσκει τῆς κόρης.”  
 εἶέν. γυνὴ τις ὑποβαλέσθαι βούλεται  
 ἀποροῦσα παίδων, οὐδὲ τοῦτ’ ἔστιν λαθεῖν.  
 ἄνδρες γὰρ ἤδη παρακάθηνται πλησίον·  
 410 πρὸς τοὺς γέροντάς θ’ οἱ πρὸ τοῦ τὰς μείρακας  
 ἤγοντο, διαβέβληκεν, ὥστ’ οὐδεὶς γέρων  
 γαμεῖν ἐθέλει γυναῖκα διὰ τοῦπος τοδί·  
 “δέσποινα γὰρ γέροντι νυμφίῳ γυνή.”  
 εἶτα διὰ τοῦτον ταῖς γυναικωνίτισιν  
 415 σφραγίδας ἐπιβάλλουσιν ἤδη καὶ μοχλοὺς  
 τηροῦντες ἡμᾶς, καὶ προσέτι Μολοττικούς  
 τρέφουσι μορμολυκεία τοῖς μοιχοῖς κύνας.  
 καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ξυγγνώσθ’· ἃ δ’ ἦν ἡμῖν πρὸ τοῦ  
 αὐταῖς ταμιεῦσαι καὶ προαιρούσαις λαβεῖν,  
 420 ἄλφιτον, ἔλαιον, οἶνον, οὐδὲ τοῦτ’ ἔτι  
 ἔξεστιν. οἱ γὰρ ἄνδρες ἤδη κληδία  
 αὐτοῖ φοροῦσι κρυπτά, κακοηθέστατα,  
 Λακωνικ’ ἄττα, τρεῖς ἔχοντα γομφίους.  
 πρὸ τοῦ μὲν οὖν ἦν ἀλλ’ ὑποῖξαι τὴν θύραν  
 425 ποιησαμέναισι δακτύλιον τριωβόλον·  
 νῦν δ’ οὗτος αὐτοὺς ὠκότερις Εὐριπίδης  
 ἐδίδαξε θριπήδεστ’ ἔχειν σφραγίδια  
 ἐξαψαμένους. νῦν οὖν ἐμοὶ τούτῳ δοκεῖ

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

land, she's suspected of being in love, and if she drops some utensil as she moves around the house, her husband asks, "Who's the pot being broken for? 'Tis sure in honor of your Corinthian guest!"<sup>32</sup> Say a girl gets sick; right away her brother says, "This maiden's hue does please me not at all!"<sup>33</sup> There's more. A childless wife wants to pass off another's baby as her own and can't even get away with that, because now our husbands plant themselves nearby. He's slandered us to the old men too, who used to marry young girls; now no old man wants to get married because of the line, "The elderly bridegroom takes himself a boss."<sup>34</sup> Then, because of this man, they install locks and bolts on the women's doors to guard them, and not only that, they raise Molossic hounds to spook lovers. All that is forgivable. But now we're not even allowed to do what used to be our own jobs: keeping household inventory and removing supplies on our own, like flour, oil, and wine, because our husbands now carry the house keys with them, complicated nasty things with triple teeth, imported from Sparta. Before, we had no trouble opening the door with just a signet ring ordered up for three obols. But now their household spy, Euripides, has taught them to use little seals etched with complex wormholes, which they carry around fastened to their clothes. I therefore propose that one way

<sup>32</sup> Alluding to Euripides' *Stheneboea*, whose adulterous heroine constantly pines for her husband's young "Corinthian guest," Bellerophon; cf. Euripides fr. 664, Cratinus fr. 299.

<sup>33</sup> The (Euripidean) source is unknown.

<sup>34</sup> From Euripides' *Phoenix*, fr. 804.3.

## ARISTOPHANES

ὄλεθρόν τιν' ἡμᾶς κυρκανᾶν ἀμωσγέπως,  
 430 ἢ φαρμάκοισιν ἢ μιᾷ γέ τω τέχνῃ,  
 ὅπως ἀπολείται. ταῦτ' ἐγὼ φανερώς λέγω·  
 τὰ δ' ἄλλα μετὰ τῆς γραμματέως συγγράφομαι.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) οὐπω ταύτης ἤκουσα  
 πολυπλοκώτερας γυναικὸς  
 435 οὐδὲ δεινότερον λεγούσης.  
 πάντα γὰρ λέγει δίκαια.  
 πᾶσαν ἰδέαν ἐξετάζει,  
 πᾶν δ' ἐβάστασε φρενὶ πυκνῶς τε  
 ποικίλους λόγους ἀνηῦρεν  
 εὖ διεζητημένους.  
 440 ὥστ' ἂν εἰ λέγοι παρ' αὐτὴν  
 Ξενοκλῆς ὁ Καρκίνου, δοκεῖν ἂν αὐτόν,  
 ὡς ἐγῶμαι, πᾶσιν ὑμῖν  
 ἄντικρυς μηδὲν λέγειν.

## ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΠΩΛΙΣ

ὀλίγων ἔνεκα καὐτὴ παρήλθον ῥημάτων.  
 τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλ' αὕτη κατηγόρηκεν εὖ·  
 445 ἃ δ' ἐγὼ πέπονθα, ταῦτα λέξαι βούλομαι.  
 ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἀπέθανεν μὲν ἐν Κύπρῳ  
 παιδάρια πέντε καταλιπών, ἀγὼ μόλις  
 στεφανηπλοκοῦσ' ἔβοσκον ἐν ταῖς μυρρίναις.  
 τέως μὲν οὖν ἀλλ' ἡμικάκως ἐβοσκόμην·

437 πᾶσαν ἰδέαν ἐξετάζει Hermann: πάσας δ' εἰδέας (ιδ- S)  
 ἐξήτασε(ν) R S

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

or another we brew up some kind of destruction for this man, either poisons or some other technique whereby he gets destroyed. This then is the argument of my speech; the rest I will draft with the Secretary's assistance.

### CHORUS

I've never heard a woman  
more intricate of mind  
or more impressive as a speaker.  
Everything she says is right.  
She's reviewed every aspect,  
she's weighed each detail in her mind, and  
sagaciously  
devised a whole spectrum  
of well-chosen arguments.  
So if Xenokles, Carcinus' son,  
should vie with her at speaking,  
I think that all of you would find him  
utterly unconvincing.

*Garland Seller stands, takes the garland from the Herald,  
and mounts the platform.*

### GARLAND SELLER

I have come forward too, to make but a few remarks. This lady has cogently presented most of the charges; but I want to speak out about my own personal sufferings. My husband died in Cyprus, leaving me with five small children that I've had a struggle to feed by weaving garlands in the myrtle market. So until recently I managed to feed them

---

438 πᾶν von Velsen: πάντα R S



## ARISTOPHANES

- 450 *νῦν δ' οὗτος ἐν ταῖσιν τραγωδίαις ποιῶν  
τοὺς ἄνδρας ἀναπέπεικεν οὐκ εἶναι θεούς·  
ὥστ' οὐκέτ' ἐμπολῶμεν οὐδ' εἰς ἡμισυ.  
νῦν οὖν ἀπάσαισιν παραινῶ καὶ λέγω  
τοῦτον κολάσαι τὸν ἄνδρα πολλῶν οὐνεκα·*
- 455 *ἄγρια γὰρ ἡμᾶς, ὦ γυναῖκες, δρᾶ κακά,  
ἅτ' ἐν ἀγρίοισι τοῖς λαχάνοις αὐτὸς τραφεῖς.  
ἀλλ' εἰς ἀγορὰν ἄπειμι· δεῖ γὰρ ἀνδράσιν  
πλέξαι στεφάνους ξυνηματιαίους εἴκοσιν.*

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ἕτερον αὖ τι λῆμα τοῦτο*
- 460 *κομψότερον ἔτ' ἢ τὸ πρότερον ἀναπέφηνεν.  
οἶα κατεστωμύλατο  
οὐκ ἄκαιρα, φρένας ἔχουσα  
καὶ πολύπλοκον νόημ', οὐδ'  
ἀσύνετ', ἀλλὰ πιθανὰ πάντα.*
- 465 *δεῖ δὲ ταύτης τῆς ὕβρεως ἡμῖν τὸν ἄνδρα  
περιφανῶς δοῦναι δίκην.*

## ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

- τὸ μὲν, ὦ γυναῖκες, ὀξυθυμείσθαι σφόδρα  
Εὐριπίδη, τοιαῦτ' ἀκουούσας κακά,  
οὐ θαυμάσιόν ἐστ', οὐδ' ἐπιζεῖν τὴν χολήν.  
καυτὴ γὰρ ἔγωγ',—οὕτως ὀναίμην τῶν τέκνων—*
- 470 *μισῶ τὸν ἄνδρ' ἐκείνον, εἰ μὴ μαίνομαι.*

<sup>35</sup> Implying commercialization of the tragic art.

<sup>36</sup> This speech, like Dicaeopolis' in *Acharnians* (497–566), is modelled on a speech by the hero of Euripides' *Telephus*, the



## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

only half badly. But now this guy who composes in the tragedy market<sup>35</sup> has persuaded the men that gods don't exist, so my sales aren't even half what they were. I therefore urge and advise all women to punish this man for his many crimes, for wild are his attacks upon us, since he himself was raised among wild herbs. But I'm off to the market: I've got an order to plait garlands for a group of twenty men.

### CHORUS

This second courageous testimony  
turns out to be even classier than the first!  
The stuff she ranted on about  
wasn't irrelevant, owned good sense  
and close-woven thought,  
and wasn't silly but altogether convincing.  
For this outrage the man must pay us the penalty  
in no uncertain terms!

*Kinsman mounts the platform.*

### KINSMAN<sup>36</sup>

It is not surprising, ladies, that you are very keenly enraged at Euripides when he slanders you this way, indeed that your bile is aboil. Why, let me have no profit in my children if I myself don't hate the man; I'd have to be crazy not to!

Greek king of Mysia whose land the Greeks mistakenly attacked on their way to Troy. Telephus disguises himself as a beggar, enters Agamemnon's palace, and pleads his case. Exposed and threatened with death, he seizes Agamemnon's son, the baby Orestes, and takes refuge at an altar; this scene is also parodied in *Acharnians* (325–51) and later in this play (688 ff.).

ὅμως δ' ἐν ἀλλήλαισι χρὴ δοῦναι λόγον·  
 αὐταὶ γὰρ ἐσμεν, κούδεμί' ἐκφορὰ λόγου.  
 τί ταῦτ' ἔχουσαι 'κείνον αἰτιώμεθα  
 βαρέως τε φέρομεν, εἰ δὴ ἡμῶν ἢ τρία  
 475 κακὰ ξυνειδῶς εἶπε δρώσας μυρία;  
 ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὴ πρῶτον, ἵνα μᾶλλον λέγω,  
 ξύνοιδ' ἐμαντῇ πολλὰ <δεῖν'·> ἐκείνο δ' οὖν  
 δεινότατον, ὅτε νύμφη μὲν ἦν τρεῖς ἡμέρας,  
 ὁ δ' ἀνὴρ παρ' ἐμοὶ καθηῦθεν. ἦν δέ μοι φίλος,  
 480 ὅσπερ με διεκόρησεν οὔσαν ἐπτέτιν.  
 οὔτος πόθῳ μου 'κνυεν ἐλθὼν τὴν θύραν·  
 κᾶτ' εὐθὺς ἔγνω· εἶτα καταβαίνω λάθρα.  
 ὁ δ' ἀνὴρ ἐρωτᾷ· "ποῖ σὺ καταβαίνεις;" "ὅποι;  
 στρόφος μ' ἔχει τὴν γαστέρ', ὦνερ, κῶδύνη·  
 485 εἰς τὸν κοπρῶν' οὖν ἔρχομαι." "βάδιζέ νυν."  
 κᾶθ' ὁ μὲν ἔτριβε κεδρίδας, ἄνηθητον, σφάκον·  
 ἐγὼ δὲ καταχέασα τοῦ στροφέως ὕδωρ  
 ἐξῆλθον ὡς τὸν μοιχόν· εἶτ' ἠρείδομαι  
 παρὰ τὸν Ἀγυιᾶ κῦβδ', ἐχομένη τῆς δάφνης.  
 490 ταῦτ' οὐδεπόποτ' εἶφ', ὀρᾶτ', Εὐριπίδης·  
 οὐδ' ὡς ὑπὸ τῶν δούλων τε κῶρεωκόμων  
 σποδούμεθ', ἦν μὴ 'χωμεν ἕτερον, οὐ λέγει·  
 οὐδ' ὡς, ὅταν μάλισθ' ὑπό του ληκώμεθα  
 τὴν νύχθ', ἔωθεν σκόροδα διαμασώμεθα,  
 495 ἵν' ὀσφρόμενος ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ τείχους εἰσιῶν  
 μηδὲν κακὸν δρᾶν ὑποτοπῆται. ταῦθ', ὀρᾶς,

477 suppl. Dawes

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

Still, we should permit open discussion among ourselves: we're on our own and there will be no leaking of what we say. Why are we bringing that man up on these charges, and getting so angry with him just for mentioning two or three of our misdeeds, out of the thousands of others he knows we've committed? I myself to begin with, not to mention anyone else, have a lot of awful things on my conscience. I'll tell you maybe the worst. I'd been married only three days, and my husband was sleeping beside me. But I had a boyfriend who'd deflowered me when I was seven and still had the hots for me. He came scratching at the door and I knew right away who it was. I start to steal downstairs, and my husband asks, "Where are you going downstairs?" "Where? I've got colic and achiness in my stomach, husband, so I'm going to the can." "Go on then." And he starts grinding up juniper berries, dillweed, and sage, while I pour water into the door socket and go out to meet my lover. Then I bend over, holding onto the laurel tree by Apollo's Pillar,<sup>37</sup> and get my humping. Euripides has never said anything about that, see what I mean? Nor how we get banged by the slaves and mule grooms if we haven't got anyone else, he doesn't talk about that. Nor how whenever we spend the night getting thoroughly balled by somebody, we chew garlic in the morning so when the husband gets home from the city walls he'll smell it and won't suspect that we've been doing anything nasty. He's never said anything about that, see what I mean? And

<sup>37</sup> A pillar and statue of Apollo Agyieus stood in the street before many houses, and was also part of the permanent decor of the theatrical stage building.

## ARISTOPHANES

- οὐπόποτ' εἶπεν. εἰ δὲ Φαίδραν λαιδορεῖ,  
 ἡμῖν τί τοῦτ' ἔστ'; οὐδ' ἐκεῖν' εἶρηκέ πω,  
 ὡς ἡ γυνὴ δεικνύσα τάνδρῖ τοῦγκυκλον  
 500 ὑπανγᾶσ' οἶόν ἐστιν, ἐγκεκαλυμμένον  
 τὸν μοιχὸν ἐξέπεμψεν, οὐκ εἶρηκέ πω.  
 ἑτέραν δ' ἐγῶδ' ἢ ἴφασκεν ὠδίνειν γυνὴ  
 δέχ' ἡμέρας, ἕως ἐπρίατο παιδίον.  
 ὁ δ' ἀνὴρ περιήρχετ' ὠκυτόκι' ὠνούμενος·  
 505 τὸ δ' εἰσέφερε γραῦς ἐν χύτρα, τὸ παιδίον,  
 ἵνα μὴ βοῶη, κηρίῳ βεβυσμένον.  
 εἶθ' ὡς ἔνευσεν ἢ φέρουσ', εὐθύς βοᾷ·  
 “ἄπελθ' ἄπελθ', ἤδη γάρ, ὦνέρ, μοι δοκῶ  
 τέξειν.” τὸ γὰρ ἦτρον τῆς χύτρας ἐλάκτισεν.  
 510 χῶ μὲν γεγηθῶς ἔτρεχεν, ἡ δ' ἐξέσπασεν  
 ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ παιδίου, τὸ δ' ἀνέκραγεν.  
 εἶθ' ἡ μιαρὰ γραῦς, ἡ ἴφερεν τὸ παιδίον,  
 θεῖ μειδιῶσα πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ λέγει  
 “λέων λέων σοι γέγονεν, ἀντέκμαγμα σόν,  
 515 τὰ τ' ἄλλ' ἀπαξάπαντα καὶ τὸ πόσθιον  
 τῶ σῶ προσόμοιον, στρεβλὸν ὥσπερ κύτταρον.”  
 ταῦτ' οὐ ποιούμεν τὰ κακά; νῆ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν  
 ἡμεῖς γε. κᾶτ' Εὐριπίδῃ θυμούμεθα,  
 οὐδὲν παθοῦσαι μείζον ἢ δεδράκαμεν;

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (ἀντ) τουτὶ μέντοι θαυμαστόν,  
 521 ὀπόθεν ἠύρέθη τὸ χρῆμα,  
 χῆτις ἐξέθρεψε χώρα

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

if he abuses Phaedra, what's that to us? Nor has he ever told the one about how the wife showed her husband her robe to admire how it looked against the light, and thus got her lover out of the house all muffled up, he's never told about that. And I know another wife who pretended to be in labor for ten days, until she could buy a baby, while her husband was running all over town buying medicine to quicken birth. An old woman brought it in a pot, the baby I mean, its mouth stuffed with a honeycomb so it wouldn't cry. Then the old woman gave the signal and the wife yells, "Out you go, husband, out you go; this time I think I'm giving birth!" Yes, the baby had kicked the pot's belly! He ran out joyous, she unplugged the child's mouth, and it raised a shout. Then the dirty old lady who'd brought the baby runs out to the husband smiling and says, "You've got a lion, sir, a lion, the very image of yourself, sir, with everything a perfect match, its little weenie too, curled over like an acorn!" Don't we commit these misdeeds? By Artemis, we do too! And then do we get mad at Euripides, though he's done nothing worse to us than what we've done ourselves?<sup>38</sup>

### CHORUS

This is really astonishing!  
Where was she dug up,  
and what land brought forth

<sup>38</sup> Lines 518–19 are adapted from Euripides' *Telephus*, fr. 711.



## ARISTOPHANES

τήνδε τὴν θρασεῖαν οὔτω.  
 τάδε γὰρ εἰπεῖν τὴν πανοὔργου  
 525 κατὰ τὸ φανερόν ᾧδ' ἀναιδῶς  
 οὐκ ἂν ῥόμην ἐν ἡμῖν  
 οὐδὲ τολμῆσαί ποτ' ἂν.  
 ἀλλὰ πᾶν γένοιτ' ἂν ἤδη.  
 τὴν παροιμίαν δ' ἐπαινῶ τὴν παλαιάν·  
 ὑπὸ λίθῳ γὰρ παντί που χρῆ  
 530 μὴ δάκη ῥήτωρ ἀθρεῖν.

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶ τῶν ἀναισχύντων φύσει γυναικῶν  
 οὐδὲν κάκιον εἰς ἅπαντα πλὴν ἄρ' εἰ γυναῖκες.

## ΜΙΚΑ

οὐ τοι μὰ τὴν Ἄγλαυρον, ᾧ γυναῖκες, εὖ φρονεῖτε,  
 ἀλλ' ἢ πεφάρμαχθ' ἢ κακόν τι μέγα πεπόνθατ'  
 ἄλλο,  
 535 ταύτην ἐῶσαι τὴν φθόρον τοιαῦτα περιωβρίζειν  
 ἡμᾶς ἀπάσας. εἰ μὲν οὖν τις ἔστιν—, εἰ δὲ μή,  
 ἡμεῖς  
 αὐταί τε καὶ τὰ δουλάρια τέφραν ποθὲν λαβοῦσαι  
 ταύτης ἀποψιλώσομεν τὸν χοῖρον, ἵνα διδαχθῇ  
 γυνὴ γυναικας οὔσα μὴ κακῶς λέγειν τὸ λοιπόν.

## ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

540 μὴ δῆτα τόν γε χοῖρον, ᾧ γυναῖκες. εἰ γὰρ οὔσης  
 παρρησίας κάξον λέγειν ὅσαι πάρεσμεν ἀσταί,  
 εἶτ' εἶπον ἀγίγνωσκον ὑπὲρ Εὐριπίδου δίκαια,  
 διὰ τοῦτο τιλλομένην με δεῖ δοῦναι δίκην ὑφ' ὑμῶν;

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

a woman so audacious?

I wouldn't have thought the hussy  
would ever have had the nerve  
to say these things so brazenly  
right before our eyes!

Now I guess anything is possible,  
and I endorse the old saying:  
you've got to look under every rock,  
or a politician may bite you.<sup>39</sup>

### CHORUS LEADER

No, there's nothing worse in every way than women born  
shameless—except for the rest of women!

### MICA

By Aglaurus,<sup>40</sup> ladies, you're not thinking straight! No,  
you're bewitched, or something else is badly wrong with  
you, to let this scum get away with slandering all of us so  
outrageously! Is there anyone out there who'll . . . well, if  
there isn't, we ourselves, along with our slave girls, will get  
a hot coal somewhere and singe the hair off this woman's  
pussy; that'll teach her never again to badmouth her fellow  
women!

### KINSMAN

Please no, ladies, not my pussy! There *is* freedom of  
speech here, and all of us who are citizens *are* entitled to  
speak, so if I merely said on Euripides' behalf what I know  
to be fair, am I to be punished by depilation at your hands?

<sup>39</sup> Substituting "politician" for the proverb's "scorpion."

<sup>40</sup> Aglaurus and Pandrosus, daughters of the mythical Attic  
King Cecrops, had ancient women's sanctuaries on the Acropolis.



ARISTOPHANES

ΜΙΚΑ

οὐ γάρ σε δεῖ δοῦναι δίκην; ἤτις μόνη τέτληκας  
 545 ὑπὲρ ἀνδρὸς ἀντειπεῖν, ὃς ἡμᾶς πολλὰ κακὰ  
 δέδρακεν  
 ἐπίτηδες εὐρίσκων λόγους, ὅπου γυνὴ πονηρὰ  
 ἐγένετο, Μελανίππας ποιῶν Φαίδρας τε· Πηνελόπην  
 δὲ  
 οὐπόποτ' ἐποίησ', ὅτι γυνὴ σώφρων ἔδοξεν εἶναι.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδα ταῖτιον· μίαν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν εἴποις  
 550 τῶν νῦν γυναικῶν Πηνελόπην, Φαίδρας  
 ἀπαξάσας.

ΜΙΚΑ

ἀκούετ', ὦ γυναῖκες, οἷ' εἶρηκεν ἡ πανούργος  
 ἡμᾶς ἀπάσας αὐθις αὐῖ.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ νῆ Δί' οὐδέπω γε  
 εἶρηχ' ὅσα ξύνοιδ'. ἐπεὶ βούλεσθε πλείον' εἶπω;

ΜΙΚΑ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν ἔτ' ἔχοις· ὅσα γὰρ ἤδησθ' ἐξέχεας  
 ἅπαντα.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

555 μὰ Δί' οὐδέπω τὴν μυριοστήν μοῖραν ὦν ποιούμεν.  
 ἐπεὶ τάδ' οὐκ εἶρηχ', ὄρας, ὡς στλεγγίδας λαβοῦσαι  
 ἔπειτα σιφωνίζομεν τὸν σῖτον—

<sup>557</sup> οἶνον Küster, cf. Arist. Top. 145a23, Poll. 6.19

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

MICA

What, you shouldn't be punished? You, the only woman with the effrontery to contradict us about a man who's abundantly wronged us by purposely finding stories where a woman turns out bad, by creating Melanippes<sup>41</sup> and Phaedras. But never has he created a Penelope,<sup>42</sup> because she was a woman noted for her virtue.

KINSMAN

Well, I can tell you why: you can't cite me a single Penelope among all the women now alive; absolutely all of us are Phaedras!

MICA

Women, hear how the hussy insults us all, again and again!

KINSMAN

By god, I haven't yet told everything I know: you want to hear more?

MICA

You can't have anything else to say: you've poured out every drop of what you know.

KINSMAN

Not even the ten-thousandth part of what we do. For example, I haven't mentioned, you know, how we take bath-scrapers and then siphon off the grain—

<sup>41</sup> The subject of two plays by Euripides, Melanippe was raped by Poseidon and bore twin sons, then was accused by her father of unchastity.

<sup>42</sup> Odysseus' virtuous wife in Homer's *Odyssey*.

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΙΚΑ

ἐπιτριβείης.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὥς τ' αὖ τὰ κρέ' ἐξ Ἀπατουρίων ταῖς μαστροποῖς  
διδούσαι

ἔπειτα τὴν γαλῆν φάμεν—

ΜΙΚΑ

τάλαιν' ἐγώ· φλυαρεῖς.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

560 οὐδ' ὡς ἑτέρα τὸν ἄνδρα τῷ πελέκει κατεσπόδησεν,  
οὐκ εἶπον· οὐδ' ὡς φαρμάκοις ἑτέρα τὸν ἄνδρ'  
ἔμηνεν,  
οὐδ' ὡς ὑπὸ τῇ πυέλῳ κατώρυξέν ποτ'—

ΜΙΚΑ

ἐξόλοιο.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

Ἀχαρνικὴ τὸν πατέρα.

ΜΙΚΑ

ταῦτα δῆτ' ἀνέκτ' ἀκούειν;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

565 οὐδ' ὡς σὺ τῆς δούλης τεκούσης ἄρρεν εἶτα σαυτῇ  
τοῦθ' ὑπεβάλου, τὸ σὸν δὲ θυγάτριον παρήκας  
αὐτῇ.

ΜΙΚΑ

οὔ τοι μὰ τὸ θεὸ σὺ καταπρόϊξει λέγουσα ταυτί,  
ἀλλ' ἐκποκιῶ σου τὰς ποκάδας.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

MICA

You should be whipped!

KINSMAN

or how we give cutlets from the Apaturia Feast<sup>43</sup> to our go-betweens and then say the cat took them—

MICA

Mercy me, what nonsense!

KINSMAN

or how another woman bashed her husband with an axe, I haven't mentioned that; or how another made her husband insane with drugs; or how one time an Acharnian woman buried under the tub—

MICA

I hope you die!

KINSMAN

her own father—

MICA

Must we listen to this?

KINSMAN

or how your slave girl had a baby boy and you passed it off as your own, and gave your own baby girl to the slave.

MICA

By the Twain, you won't get away with saying this: I'll pluck out your short and curlies with my own hands!

<sup>43</sup> A kinship festival for men and boys which excluded women.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐ τοι μὰ Δία σύ γ' ἄψει.

ΜΙΚΑ

καὶ μὴν ἰδού.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ μὴν ἰδού.

ΜΙΚΑ

λαβὲ θοῖμάτιον, Φιλίστη.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

πρόσθιγε μόνον, κἀγὼ σε νῆ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν—

ΜΙΚΑ

τί δράσεις;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

570 τὸν σησαμοῦνθ' ὃν κατέφαγες, τοῦτον χεσεῖν  
ποιήσω.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

παύσασθε λοιδορούμεναι· καὶ γὰρ γυνή τις ἡμῖν  
ἔσπουδακυῖα προστρέχει. πρὶν οὖν ὁμοῦ γενέσθαι,  
σιγάθ', ἴν' αὐτῆς κοσμίως πυθώμεθ' ἄττα λέξει.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

575 φίλαι γυναῖκες, ξυγγενεῖς τοῦμοῦ τρόπου,  
ὅτι μὲν φίλος εἶμ' ὑμῖν, ἐπίδηλος ταῖς γνάθοις.  
γυναικομανῶ γὰρ προξενῶ θ' ὑμῶν αἰί.  
καὶ νῦν ἀκούσας πρᾶγμα περὶ ὑμῶν μέγα  
ὀλίγω τι πρότερον κατ' ἀγορὰν λαλούμενον,  
ἤκω φράσων τοῦτ' ἀγγελῶν θ' ὑμῖν, ἵνα

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

Don't you dare lay a hand on me!

MICA

Just watch me!

KINSMAN

Just watch *me!*

MICA

Hold my jacket, Philiste.

KINSMAN

Just touch me, and by Artemis I'll—

MICA

You'll what?

KINSMAN

That sesame cake you gulped down, I'll make you shit it out!

CRITYLLA

Stop abusing each other! A woman is heading for our meeting in a hurry. Before this gets to be a brawl I want you quiet, so we can hear what she has to say in an orderly fashion.

*Enter CLEISTHENES, beardless and effeminately dressed.*

CLEISTHENES

Dear ladies, my kindred in lifestyle, my devotion to you is evident from my clean jowls. Yes, I am crazy about women and represent your interests always. This time, just a little while ago, I heard a grave business concerning you being bandied about in the marketplace, and I am here to apprise you of it and inform you, so that you may consider it

ARISTOPHANES

580 σκοπήητε καὶ τηρήητε μὴ καὶ προσπέση  
 ὑμῖν ἀφάρκτοις πρᾶγμα δεινὸν καὶ μέγα.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

τί δ' ἐστίν, ὦ παῖ; παῖδα γάρ σ' εἰκὸς καλεῖν,  
 ἕως ἂν οὕτως τὰς γνάθους ψιλὰς ἔχῃς.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

Εὐριπίδην φάσ' ἄνδρα κηδεστήν τινα  
 585 αὐτοῦ γέροντα δεῦρ' ἀναπέμψαι τήμερον.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

πρὸς ποῖον ἔργον ἢ τίνος γνώμης χάριν;

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

ἴν' ἅττα βουλευοῖσθε καὶ μέλλοιτε δρᾶν,  
 ἐκεῖνος εἶη τῶν λόγων κατάσκοπος.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

καὶ πῶς λέληθεν ἐν γυναιξὶν ὦν ἀνὴρ;

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

590 ἀφηῦσεν αὐτὸν κἀπέτιλ' Εὐριπίδης  
 καὶ τᾶλλ' ἅπανθ' ὥσπερ γυναικ' ἐσκεύασεν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

πέιθεσθε τούτῳ ταῦτα; τίς δ' οὕτως ἀνὴρ  
 ἡλίθιος ὅστις τιλλόμενος ἠνείχετο;  
 οὐκ οἶομαι ἄγωγ', ὦ πολυτιμῆτῳ θεῷ.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

595 ληρεῖς. ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἦλθον ἀγγελῶν,  
 εἰ μὴ ἔπεπύσμην ταῦτα τῶν σάφ' εἰδόντων.



## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

and take steps to forestall a great and terrible trouble from befalling you while your guard is down.

CRITYLLA

What is it, my boy? Yes, it's only natural to call you boy, as long as you keep your jowls so smooth.

CLEISTHENES

They're saying Euripides has sent some kinsman of his, an old man, up here this very day.

CRITYLLA

On what sort of mission, or as part of what strategy?

CLEISTHENES

To be a spy, eavesdropping on whatever you women are discussing and planning to do.

CRITYLLA

But how could a man have gone unnoticed among women?

CLEISTHENES

Euripides singed and plucked him, and otherwise decked him out exactly like a woman.

KINSMAN

Do you believe what he says? What man would be fool enough to stand still for a plucking? I for one doubt it, you most reverend Twain Goddesses!

CLEISTHENES

Rubbish! I wouldn't have come here with this news if I hadn't heard it from reliably informed sources.

## ARISTOPHANES

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

τὸ πρᾶγμα τουτὶ δεινὸν εἰσαγγέλλεται.  
 ἀλλ', ὦ γυναῖκες, οὐκ ἐλινύειν ἐχρῆν,  
 ἀλλὰ σκοπεῖν τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ ζητεῖν ὅπου  
 600 λέληθεν ἡμᾶς κρυπτὸς ἐγκαθήμενος.  
 καὶ σὺ ξυνέξευρ' αὐτόν, ὡς ἂν τὴν χάριν  
 ταύτην τε κακείνην ἔχης, ὦ πρόξενε.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

ζητητέαι τᾶρ' ἐστέ.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

604 κακοδαίμων ἐγώ.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

φέρ' ἴδω, τίς εἶ πρώτη σύ;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

603 ποῖ τις τρέψεται;

ΜΙΚΑ

605 ἔμ' ἦτις εἴμ' ἦρου; Κλεωνύμου γυνή.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

γιγνώσκεθ' ὑμεῖς ἦτις ἔσθ' ἠδὲ γυνή;

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

γιγνώσκομεν δῆτ'. ἀλλὰ τὰς ἄλλας ἄθρει.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

ἠδὲ δὲ δῆ τίς ἐστίν, ἢ τὸ παιδίον  
 ἔχουσα;

603-4 transp. Maas

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

CRITYLLA

It's a terrible business that's been reported. Well, women, we mustn't sit around doing nothing! We've got to look for this man and find out where he's been sitting unnoticed in his disguise. And you, Mr. Representative, help us in the search, and so add this to our debt of gratitude to you!

CLEISTHENES

Then you've all got to be questioned.

KINSMAN

What terrible luck!

CLEISTHENES

Let's see, you first: who are you?

KINSMAN

How do I get out of here?

MICA

You want to know who I am? I'm Cleonymus' wife.

CLEISTHENES

Do all of you recognize this woman?

CRITYLLA

Yes, we know her; now question the others.

CLEISTHENES

This one, who is she? The one with the baby?

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΙΚΑ

τίτθη νῆ Δί' ἐμή.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

διοίχομαι.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

610 αὕτη σύ, ποῖ στρέφει; μέν' αὐτοῦ. τί τὸ κακόν;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἔασον οὐρήσαί μ'. ἀναίσχυντός τις εἶ.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

σὺ δ' οὖν ποίει τοῦτ'. ἀναμενῶ γὰρ ἐνθάδε.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

ἀνάμενε δῆτα καὶ σκόπει γ' αὐτὴν σφόδρα·  
μόνην γὰρ αὐτήν, ὦνερ, οὐ γιγνώσκομεν.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

πολὺν γε χρόνον οὐρεῖς σύ.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

615 νῆ Δί', ὦ μέλε,  
στραγγουριῶ γάρ· ἐχθὲς ἔφαγον κάρδαμα.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

τί καρδαμίζεις; οὐ βαδιεῖ δεῦρ' ὡς ἐμέ;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δῆτά μ' ἔλκεις ἀσθενούσαν;

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

MICA

That's definitely my wetnurse.

KINSMAN

I'm done for!

CLEISTHENES

(*to Kinsman*) You there! Where are you off to? Stay where you are! What's the matter?

KINSMAN

Let me go pee. (*Cleisthenes offers his arm*) You're a rude one!

CLEISTHENES

All right, then, get along; I'll wait for you here.

*Kinsman goes aside.*

CRITYLLA

Yes, wait for her, and watch her closely. She's the only woman, sir, that we don't recognize.

CLEISTHENES

You're certainly taking a long time to pee.

KINSMAN

Yes, my good man, because I'm retaining water; I ate cress seeds yesterday.

CLEISTHENES

Cress seeds, eh? Come back over here, if you please.

*Kinsman hesitates, and Cleisthenes fetches him.*

KINSMAN

Why do you manhandle me when I'm not feeling well?

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

εἶπέ μοι,

τίς ἐστ' ἀνὴρ σοι;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τὸν ἐμὸν ἄνδρα πυνθάνει;

620 τὸν δείνα γιγνώσκεις, τὸν ἐκ Κοθωκιδῶν;

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

τὸν δείνα; ποῖον;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἔσθ' ὁ δεῖν', ὃς καί ποτε

τὸν δείνα, τὸν τοῦ δείνα—

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

ληρεῖν μοι δοκεῖς.

ἀνήλθες ἤδη δεῦρο πρότερον;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

νῆ Δία

ὄσέτη γε.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

καὶ τίς σουστὶ συσκηνήτρια;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἢ δεῖν' ἔμοιγ'.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

625 οἴμοι τάλας, οὐδὲν λέγεις.

ΚΡΙΤΥΛΛΑ

ἄπελθ'. ἐγὼ γὰρ βασανιῶ ταύτην καλῶς

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

CLEISTHENES

Tell me, who is your husband?

KINSMAN

You want to know who my husband is? You know the guy, guy from Phalladelphia?<sup>44</sup>

CLEISTHENES

Guy? Which guy?

KINSMAN

He's the guy who once, when the guy, that son of the guy—

CLEISTHENES

I think you're babbling. Have you come up here before?

KINSMAN

Sure, every year.

CLEISTHENES

And who's your roommate here?

KINSMAN

Mine? A gal.

CLEISTHENES

Good grief, you're making no sense!

CRITYLLA

(*to Cleisthenes*): Step aside; I'll give this gal a proper grill-

<sup>44</sup> Cothocidae, an actual deme, but whose first syllable suggests a word meaning "penis."



ARISTOPHANES

ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν τῶν πέρυσι. σὺ δ' ἀπόστηθί μοι,  
 ἵνα μὴ ἴπακούσης ὧν ἀνὴρ. σὺ δ' εἶπέ μοι  
 ὅ τι πρῶτον ἡμῖν τῶν ἱερῶν ἐδείκνυτο.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

630 φέρ' ἴδω, τί μέντοι πρῶτον ἦν; ἐπίνομεν.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

τί δὲ μετὰ τοῦτο δεύτερον;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

προὔπινομεν.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

ταυτὶ μὲν ἤκουσάς τινος. τρίτον δὲ τί;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

σκάφιον Ξένυλλ' ἤτησεν· οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἀμῖς.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

οὐδὲν λέγεις. δεῦρ' ἐλθέ, δεῦρ', ὦ Κλείσθηνες.  
 ὅδ' ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ ὃν λέγεις.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

635 τί οὖν ποιῶ;

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

ἀπόδυσον αὐτόν· οὐδὲν ὑγιές γὰρ λέγει.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

κάπειτ' ἀποδύσεται ἑννέα παίδων μητέρα;

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

χάλα ταχέως τὸ στρόφιον.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

ing about last year's festivities. Come on, stand away, since you're a man and mustn't overhear. (*To the Kinsman*) Now, you, tell me which of the holy things was revealed to us first.

KINSMAN

Let's see now, what was the first thing? We had a drink.

CRITYLLA

And what was the second?

KINSMAN

We drank a toast.

CRITYLLA

Somebody told you! And what was the third?

KINSMAN

Xenylla asked for a potty because there wasn't a urinal.

CRITYLLA

Wrong! Come here, Cleisthenes; this is the man you're after.

CLEISTHENES

Well, what do I do now?

CRITYLLA

Strip him: his story's fishy.

KINSMAN

So you people really mean to strip a mother of nine?

CLEISTHENES

Hurry up and get that brassiere off.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὠναίσχυντε σύ.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

ὡς καὶ στιβαρά τις φαίνεται καὶ καρτερά·  
640 καὶ νῆ Δία τιθούς γ' ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἔχει.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

στερίφη γάρ εἰμι κοῦκ ἐκύησα πώποτε.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

νῦν· τότε δὲ μήτηρ ἦσθα παίδων ἐννέα.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

ἀνίστασ' ὀρθός. ποῖ τὸ πέος ὠθείς κάτω;

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

τοδὶ διέκνυψε καὶ μάλ' εὔχρων, ὦ τάλαν.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

καὶ ποῦ ἔστιν;

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

645 αὐθις εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν οἴχεται.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

οὐκ ἐνγεταυθί.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

μᾶλλον δεῦρ' ἤκει πάλιν.

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

ἰσθμόν τιν' ἔχεις, ἄνθρωπ'· ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

(to *Cleisthenes*) How rude of you!

CRITYLLA

My, she's really a stocky one, and strong! And she certainly hasn't got tits like we do.

KINSMAN

That's because I'm sterile, and never did get pregnant.

CRITYLLA

Really! But just now you were the mother of nine.

CLEISTHENES

Stand up straight. Where are you shoving your cock down there?

CRITYLLA

(*running behind Kinsman*) Here it is! Its head is sticking out; nice color, too, deary.

CLEISTHENES

Where?

CRITYLLA

Now it's gone back in front!

CLEISTHENES

It's not up here!

CRITYLLA

No, it's come back here again!

CLEISTHENES

That's some isthmus you've got there, buddy! You shuttle

ARISTOPHANES

τὸ πέος διέλκεις πυκνότερον Κορινθίων.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

ὦ μιαρὸς οὔτος. ταῦτ' ἄρ' ὑπὲρ Εὐριπίδου  
ἡμῖν ἐλοιδορεῖτο.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

650

κακοδαίμων ἐγώ,  
εἰς οἷ' ἐμαντὸν εἰσεκύλισα πράγματα.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

ἄγε δῆ, τί δρῶμεν;

ΚΛΕΙΣΘΕΝΗΣ

τουτονὶ φυλάττετε  
καλῶς, ὅπως μὴ διαφυγὼν οἰχήσεται  
ἐγὼ δὲ ταῦτα τοῖς πρυτάνεσιν ἀγγελῶ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

655

ἡμᾶς τοίνυν μετὰ τοῦτ' ἤδη τὰς λαμπάδας  
ἀψαμένας χρῆ  
ξυζωσαμένας εἶ κἀνδρείως τῶν θ' ἱματίων  
ἀποδύσας  
ζητεῖν, εἴ που κάλλος τις ἀνὴρ ἐσελήλυθε, καὶ  
περιθρέξαι  
τὴν πύκνα πᾶσαν καὶ τὰς σκηναὶς καὶ τὰς διόδους  
διαθρήσαι.

660

εἶα δῆ, πρῶτιστα μὲν χρῆ κοῦφον ἐξορμᾶν πόδα  
καὶ διασκοπεῖν σιωπῇ πανταχῆ. μόνον δὲ χρῆ  
μὴ βραδύνειν, ὡς ὁ καιρὸς ἐστὶ μὴ μέλλειν ἔτι.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

your cock back and forth more than the Corinthians!<sup>45</sup>

CRITYLLA

What a degenerate! That's why he insulted us in defense of Euripides.

KINSMAN

I'm in a bad spot. What a mess I've tumbled myself into!

CRITYLLA

(to Cleisthenes) All right, what now?

CLEISTHENES

Put him under close guard, and see that he doesn't escape. I'll go and report this to the authorities.

*Exit CLEISTHENES. CRITYLLA and the other Women enter the stage house. MICA and Mania, holding the baby, stand guard over KINSMAN.*

CHORUS LEADER

Well, our next job now is to light these torches, hitch up our clothes right manfully, take off our jackets, and find out if any other man has come against us, and scour the entire Pnyx,<sup>46</sup> and search the tents and the alleyways. So forward march! First of all we should launch a quick foot and inspect everything thoroughly and silently. Just so we don't take too long, since this is the moment to stop hesitating,

<sup>45</sup> Playing on a slang meaning of isthmus = "crotch," and referring to the causeway built across the Isthmus of Corinth, which linked the Corinthian and Saronic Gulfs.

<sup>46</sup> The hill on which Athenian assemblies and (probably) the Thesmophoria were held.

ἀλλὰ τὴν πρώτην τρέχειν χρή μ' ὡς τάχιστ' ἤδη  
κύκλω.

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

εἰά νυν ἴχνευε καὶ μά-  
τευε ταχὺ πάντ', εἴ τις ἐν τό-  
ποις ἐδραῖος  
ἄλλος αὖ λέληθεν ὦν.

665 πανταχῇ δὲ ρῖψον ὄμμα,  
καὶ τὰ τῆδε <καὶ τὰ κείσε>  
καὶ τὰ δεῦρο  
πάντ' ἀνασκόπει καλῶς.

ἦν γὰρ ληφθῆ δράσας ἀνόσια,  
δώσει τε δίκην καὶ πρὸς τούτῳ  
τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνδράσιν ἔσται

670 παράδειγμ' ὕβρεως ἀδίκων τ' ἔργων  
ἀθέων τε τρόπων·  
φήσει δ' εἶναι τε θεοὺς φανερώς,  
δείξει τ' ἤδη

πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις σεβίζειν δαίμονας

675 δικαίως τ' ἐφέπειν ὅσια καὶ νόμιμα  
μηδομένους ποιεῖν ὅ τι καλῶς ἔχει.

κὰν μὴ ποιῶσι ταῦτα, τοιάδ' ἔσται  
αὐτῶν ὅταν ληφθῆ τις ὅσια <μὴ> δρῶν,

680 μανίαις φλέγων, λύσση παράκο-  
πος, πᾶσιν ἐμφανῆς ὄρᾶν

<sup>662</sup> χρή μ' Austin: χρῆν R

<sup>666</sup> suppl. Kaibel cl. Av. 424-25



WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

and for me to lead the foray on the run, as quick as I can, all around!

CHORUS<sup>47</sup>

Move out then quickly! Get on the track  
and trail of any other man  
who may be in the area,  
entrenched behind our backs.  
Cast your eyes in all directions,  
over this way, over that way,  
and over here;  
give everything a good examination!

If he's caught as a doer of sacrilege,  
he'll be punished, and more than that:  
to other men he'll be an example  
of outrageousness, of wrongdoing,  
of godless ways!  
He'll profess that the gods do clearly exist,  
and then he'll be a lesson  
to all men that it's well to revere the gods  
and righteously follow divine and human laws,  
taking care to do what's good.  
And here's what happens if they don't:  
any man caught in an impious act  
will burn and rage in rabid insanity,  
his every act a manifest proof

<sup>47</sup> Tragic pastiche, perhaps including material from a chorus in Euripides' *Telephus*, cf. fr. 727a.

667 ληφθῆ Reisig: μὴ λάθῃ R      679 suppl. Burges

681/2 παράκοπος Bothe: παράκοπος εἴ τι δρώῃ R

ARISTOPHANES

ἔσται γυναιξὶ καὶ βροτοῖς  
 ὅτι τὰ παράνομα τὰ τ' ἀνόσια  
 685 παραχρῆμ' ἀποτίνεται θεός.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἀλλ' ἔοιχ' ἡμῖν ἅπαντά πως διεσκέφθαι καλῶς.  
 οὐχ ὀρώμεν γοῦν ἔτ' ἄλλον οὐδέν' ἐγκαθήμενον.

ΜΙΚΑ

ᾶ ᾶ.  
 ποῖ ποῖ σὺ φεύγεις; οὔτος οὔτος, οὐ μενεῖς;  
 690 τάλαιν' ἐγώ, τάλαινα, καὶ τὸ παιδίον  
 ἐξαρπάσας μοι φροῦδος ἀπὸ τοῦ τιθθίου.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

κέκραχθι. τοῦτο δ' οὐδέποτε σὺ ψωμιεῖς,  
 ἦν μή μ' ἀφῆτ'. ἀλλ' ἐνθάδ' ἐπὶ τῶν μηρίων  
 πληγὲν μαχαίρα τῆδε φοινίας φλέβας  
 καθαιματώσει βωμόν.

ΜΙΚΑ

695 ᾧ τάλαιν' ἐγώ.  
 γυναικες, οὐκ ἀρήξετ'; οὐ πολλὴν βοήν  
 στήσεσθε καὶ τροπαῖον, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μόνου  
 τέκνου με περιόψεσθ' ἀποστερουμένην;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔα ἔα.  
 700 ᾧ πότνιαι Μοῖραι, τί τόδε δέρκομαι  
 νεοχμὸν αὖ τέρας;

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

for all women and mortals to see  
that lawlessness and sacrilege  
are punished on the spot by god!

### CHORUS LEADER

Well, we seem to have given everything a thorough inspection, and we don't see any other man lurking hereabouts.

*Kinsman seizes Mica's baby and runs to the altar in the orchestra.*<sup>48</sup>

### MICA

Hey! Hey! Where do you think you're going? Stop, you! Stop, won't you? Good grief, oh my, he's even gone and snatched my baby right from the tit!

### KINSMAN

Scream away! You'll never feed it again if you don't let me go! Nay, here and now, smitten to his crimson veins by this bodkin atop the thigh bones, shall he begore the altar!

### MICA

Good grief! Women, please help! Please raise a great war cry and a victory trophy, and not look aside as I am bereft of my only child!

### CHORUS

Ah! Ah!

August Fates, what novel horror is this  
that I behold?

<sup>48</sup> See 466 n.

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<sup>685</sup> παραχρήμ' ἀποτίνεται θεός Henderson: θεὸς ἀπο-  
τίνεται· παραχρήμά τε τίνεται R

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ὡς ἅπαντ' ἄρ' ἐστὶ τόλμης ἔργα κἀναισχυντίας.  
οἶον αὖ δέδρακεν ἔργον, οἶον αὖ, φίλοι, τόδε.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

οἶον ὑμῶν ἐξαράξω τὴν ἄγαν αὐθαδίαν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

705 ταῦτα δῆτ' οὐ δεινὰ πράγματ' ἐστὶ καὶ περαιτέρω;

ΜΙΚΑ

δεινὰ δῆθ', ὅτι γ' ἔχει μου ἔαρπάσας τὸ παιδίον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί ἂν οὖν εἴποι πρὸς ταῦτά τις, ὅτε  
τοιαῦτα ποιῶν ὄδ' ἀναισχυντεῖ;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

κούπω μέντοι γε πέπαυμαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

710 ἄλλ' οὖν ἤκεις γ' ὅθεν οὐ φαύλως  
711/2 ἀποδρὰς λέξεις οἶον δράσας  
διέδυσ ἔργον, λήψει δὲ κακόν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τοῦτο μέντοι μὴ γένοιτο μηδαμῶς, ἀπεύχομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

715 τίς ἂν σοι, τίς ἂν σύμμαχος ἐκ θεῶν  
ἀθανάτων ἔλθοι ξὺν ἀδίκους ἔργοις;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

μάτην λαλεῖτε· τήνδ' ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀφήσω.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

CHORUS LEADER

The whole world is full of impudence and brass! What a deed he's done this time, fellow women, what a deed this is!

KINSMAN

A deed that'll knock the stuffing out of your arrogance!

CHORUS LEADER

Isn't this an awful business, and worse than awful?

MICA

Awful indeed! He's gone and snatched away my baby!

CHORUS

What can we say to this,  
when he is unashamed of such deeds?

KINSMAN

And I'm not finished yet, either!

CHORUS

Still, here you are where you won't easily escape  
to boast that you did such a deed,  
then gave us the slip. No, you'll get yours!

KINSMAN

I pray that that may never ever come to pass!

CHORUS

Who, I say, who of the immortal gods  
would come to your aid in wrongdoing?

KINSMAN

Your point is moot anyway. I'll never give up this girl!

## ARISTOPHANES

## ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ τὸ θεὸν τάχ' οὐ  
 χαίρων ἴσως ἐνυβριεῖς  
 720 λόγους τε λέξεις ἀνοσίους.  
 ἀθείοι γὰρ ἔργοις ἀνταμει-  
 722/3 ψόμεσθά σ', ὥσπερ εἰκός, ἀντὶ τῶνδε.  
 τάχα δὲ μεταβαλοῦσ' ἐπὶ κακὸν ἑτερότρο-  
 725 πος ἐπέχει τύχη.

## ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἀλλὰ τάσδε μὲν λαβεῖν χρῆν ἐκφέρειν τε τῶν  
 ξύλων,  
 καὶ καταίθειν τὸν πανοῦργον πυρπολεῖν θ' ὅσον  
 τάχος.

## ΜΙΚΑ

ἴωμεν ἐπὶ τὰς κληματίδας, ὦ Μανία.  
 κἀγὼ σ' ἀποδείξω θυμάλωπα τήμερον.

## ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

- 730 ὕφαπτε καὶ κάταιθε· σὺ δὲ τὸ Κρητικὸν  
 ἀπόδουθι ταχέως. τοῦ θανάτου δ', ὦ παιδίον,  
 μόνην γυναικῶν αἰτιῶ τὴν μητέρα.  
 τουτὶ τί ἐστίν; ἀσκὸς ἐγένεθ' ἢ κόρη  
 οἴνου πλέως καὶ ταῦτα Περσικὰς ἔχων.  
 735 ὦ θερμόταται γυναῖκες, ὦ ποτίσταται  
 κὰκ παντὸς ὑμεῖς μηχανώμεναι πιεῖν,  
 ὦ μέγα καπήλοις ἀγαθόν, ἡμῖν δ' αὖ κακόν,  
 κακὸν δὲ καὶ τοῖς σκευαρίοις καὶ τῇ κρόκη.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

### CHORUS

But maybe soon, by the Twain Goddesses,  
your outrageous behavior will prove joyless,  
as will your unholy speech!

For we will repay you, as is fitting,  
with godless deeds in answer to your own.  
Your luck has quickly changed to the bad,  
and heads in another direction!

### CHORUS LEADER

Here, you should have grabbed these torches and fetched  
some wood, to burn up the criminal and incinerate him as  
quickly as possible.

### MICA

Let's go for the firewood, Mania! (*To Kinsman*) And I'll  
personally turn you into a shower of sparks this very day!

*Mica and Mania go inside.*

### KINSMAN

Light me up and burn me down! (*unwrapping the baby*) As  
for you, off with this Cretan swaddling, quickly. And for  
your death, my child, blame but a single woman, your  
mother! What is this? The baby girl's become a skin full of  
wine, and wearing Persian booties to boot! Women, you  
overheated dipsomaniacs, never passing up a chance to  
wangle a drink, a great boon to bartenders but a bane to  
us—not to mention our crockery and our woollens!

*Mica and Mania reenter with firewood.*



ARISTOPHANES

ΜΙΚΑ

παράβαλλε πολλὰς κληματίδας, ὦ Μανία.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

740 παράβαλλε δῆτα. σὺ δ' ἀπόκριναί μοι τοδί·  
τουτὶ τεκείν φῆς;

ΜΙΚΑ

καὶ δέκα μῆνας αὐτ' ἐγὼ  
ἤνεγκον.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἤνεγκας σύ;

ΜΙΚΑ

νῆ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τρικότυλον ἢ πῶς; εἶπέ μοι.

ΜΙΚΑ

τί μ' ἠργάσω;  
ἀπέδυσας, ὠναίσχυντέ, μου τὸ παιδίον  
τυννοῦτον ὄν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

745 τυννοῦτο; μικρὸν νῆ Δία.  
πόσ' ἔτη δὲ γέγονε; τρεῖς Χοᾶς ἢ τέτταρας;

ΜΙΚΑ

σχεδὸν τοσοῦτον χῶσον ἐκ Διονυσίων.  
ἀλλ' ἀπόδος αὐτό.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω τουτονί.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

MICA

Pile them on nice and thick, Mania.

KINSMAN

Go ahead, pile them on. But tell me one thing: do you claim to have given birth to this?

MICA

Carried it all ten months myself.<sup>49</sup>

KINSMAN

You carried it?

MICA

By Artemis, I did.

KINSMAN

What's the proof—seventy-five, was it?

MICA

How dare you? You've undressed my child—disgusting!—a tiny baby!

KINSMAN

Tiny? It is pretty small at that. How many years old? Three Wine-Jug Festivals or four?<sup>50</sup>

MICA

That's about right, plus a Dionysia. But give it back!

KINSMAN

No, by Apollo there!<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Lunar months counted inclusively.

<sup>50</sup> During the festival of Anthesteria, three-year-olds were specially recognized, and men competed for a wineskin in a drinking contest.

<sup>51</sup> The image of Apollo Agyieus in front of the stage house.

ARISTOPHANES

ΜΙΚΑ

ἐμπρήσομεν τοίνυν σε.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

πάνυ γ' ἐμπίμπρατε.

750 αὐτῆ δ' ἀποσφαγήσεται μάλ' αὐτίκα.

ΜΙΚΑ

μὴ δῆθ', ἱκετεύω σ'. ἀλλ' ἔμ' ὅ τι χρῆζεις ποίει  
ὑπέρ γε τούτου.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

φιλότεκνός τις εἶ φύσει.

ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἦττον ἤδ' ἀποσφαγήσεται.

ΜΙΚΑ

οἴμοι, τέκνον. δὸς τὸ σφαγείον, Μανία,  
755 ἴν' οὖν τό γ' αἶμα τοῦ τέκνου τοῦμοῦ λάβω.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὑπεχ' αὐτό· χαριούμαι γὰρ ἔν γε τοῦτό σοι.

ΜΙΚΑ

κακῶς ἀπόλοι'. ὡς φθονερός εἶ καὶ δυσμενής.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τουτὶ τὸ δέρμα τῆς ἱερείας γίγνεται.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

τί τῆς ἱερείας γίγνεται;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τουτί. λαβέ.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

MICA

Then we'll incinerate you.

KINSMAN

By all means, incinerate away. (*producing a knife*) But this little girl will get sacrificed on the spot.

MICA

Don't do it, I beseech you! Do what you want with me, for this one's sake.

KINSMAN

You've a good mother's instincts. But nonetheless this girl's going to get her throat cut.

MICA

Ah my baby! Give me the slaughter bowl, Mania, so I can at least catch my own child's blood.

KINSMAN

Hold it under there; I'll do you this one favor. (*Kinsman slashes the wineskin*)

MICA

Damn you to hell! You're hateful and cruel!

KINSMAN

The hide here goes to the priestess.

*CRITYLLA comes out of the stage house.*

CRITYLLA

What goes to the priestess?

KINSMAN

This; catch!

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

760 ταλαντάτη Μίκα, τίς ἐξεκόρησέ σε;  
τίς τὴν ἀγαπητὴν παῖδά σου ἔξηράσατο;

ΜΙΚΑ

ὁ πανοῦργος οὗτος. ἀλλ' ἐπειδήπερ πάρει,  
φύλαξον αὐτόν, ἵνα λαβοῦσα Κλεισθένη  
τοῖσιν πρυτάνεσιν ἂ πεποίηχ' οὗτος φράσω.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

765 ἄγε δὴ, τίς ἔσται μηχανὴ σωτηρίας;  
τίς πείρα, τίς ἐπίνοι'; ὁ μὲν γὰρ αἴτιος  
κάμ' εἰσκυλίσας εἰς τοιαυτὰ πράγματα  
οὐ φαίνεται, οὔπω. φέρε, τίς οὖν ἂν ἄγγελον  
πέμψαιμ' ἐπ' αὐτόν; οἶδ' ἐγὼ καὶ δὴ πόρον  
770 ἐκ τοῦ Παλαμήδους. ὡς ἐκείνος, τὰς πλάτας  
ῥίψω γράφων. ἀλλ' οὐ πάρεισιν αἱ πλάται.  
πόθεν οὖν γένοιτ' ἂν μοι πλάται; πόθεν; <φέρε,>  
τί δ' ἂν, εἰ ταδὶ τὰγάλματ' ἀντὶ τῶν πλατῶν  
γράφων διαρρίπτοιμι; βέλτιον πολὺ.  
775 ξύλον γέ τοι καὶ ταῦτα, κάκειν' ἦν ξύλον.

ὦ χεῖρες ἐμαί,

ἐγχειρεῖν ἔργῳ χρὴ πορίμῳ.

ἄγε δὴ, πινάκων ξεστῶν δέλτοι,

δέξασθε σμίλης ὀλκούς,

780 κήρυκας ἐμῶν μόχθων. οἴμοι,

772 suppl. Austin

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

### CRITYLLA

Poor, poor Mica! Who's ungirl'd you? Who's drained your only lass?

### MICA

This criminal here! But since you're here, stand guard over him, so I can get hold of Cleisthenes and tell the marshals what this man has done.

*Exit MICA and Mania.*

### KINSMAN

What's my plan for saving myself now? What move? What idea? The man who tumbled me into this mess in the first place is nowhere to be seen; not yet. Well then, what messenger might I send to him? In fact I do know a method, from his *Palamedes*:<sup>52</sup> like that fellow, I'll inscribe the oar blades, and deep-six them. But those oar blades aren't here. Now where could I get oar blades? Where, where? Say, what if instead of oar blades I wrote on these votive tablets and then tossed them in all directions? That's much better! They're wooden too, just like oar blades.

Hands of mine,  
you must put your hand to an effective job.  
Tablets of planed board,  
accept the knife's scratchings,  
harbingers of my troubles! Damn,

<sup>52</sup> In Euripides' lost play *Palamedes* (produced in 415) the hero, the inventor of writing and a Greek who fought at Troy, was falsely accused of treason and executed; his brother Oeax sent a message to their father by writing it on oar blades and floating them back to Greece.

ARISTOPHANES

τουτὶ τὸ ῥῶ μοχθηρόν.  
 χωρεῖ, χωρεῖ. ποίαν αὐλακα;  
 βάσκειτ', ἐπείγετε πάσας καθ' ὁδοῦς,  
 κείνα, ταῦτα· ταχέως χρή.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- 785 ἡμεῖς τοίνυν ἡμᾶς αὐτὰς εὖ λέξωμεν παραβᾶσαι.  
 καίτοι πᾶς τις τὸ γυναικείον φύλον κακὰ πόλλ'  
 ἀγορεύει,  
 ὡς πᾶν ἐσμὲν κακὸν ἀνθρώποις καὶ ἡμῶν ἐστὶν  
 ἅπαντα,  
 ἔριδες, νείκη, στάσις ἀργαλέα, λύπη, πόλεμος. φέρε  
 δὴ νυν,  
 εἰ κακὸν ἐσμεν, τί γαμείθ' ἡμᾶς, εἶπερ ἀληθῶς  
 κακὸν ἐσμεν,
- 790 κᾶπαγορεύετε μήτ' ἐξελθεῖν μήτ' ἐκκύψασαν ἀλῶναι,  
 ἀλλ' οὕτως πολλῇ σπουδῇ τὸ κακὸν βούλεσθε  
 φυλάττειν;  
 κᾶν ἐξέλθη τὸ γύναιόν ποι, κᾶθ' εὖρητ' αὐτὸ  
 θύρασιν,  
 μανίας μαίνεσθ', οὐς χρήν σπένδειν καὶ χαίρειν,  
 εἶπερ ἀληθῶς  
 ἔνδοθεν ἤυρετε φρουῶν τὸ κακὸν καὶ μὴ  
 κατελαμβάνετ' ἔνδον.
- 795 κᾶν καταδάρθωμεν ἐν ἀλλοτρίων παίζουσαι καὶ  
 κοπιῶσαι,  
 πᾶς τις τὸ κακὸν τοῦτο ζητεῖ περὶ τὰς κλίνας  
 περινοστώων.



## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

this R is a troublemaker!

There we go, there we go! What a scratch!

Be off then, travel every road,  
this way, that way, and better hurry!

### CHORUS LEADER

Well, let's step forward and sing our own praises! We'd better, because each and every man has a host of bad things to say about the female race, claiming that we're an utter bane to humanity and the source of all ills: disputes, quarrels, bitter factionalism, distress, war. Come on now, if we're a bane, why do you marry us? If we're truly a bane, why do you forbid us to leave the house or even get caught peeking out the window? Why do you want to keep such a careful guard on your bane? If the little woman goes out somewhere and you find her outdoors, you rage like lunatics instead of toasting the gods and giving thanks, as you would do if you'd truly found the bane of your household missing and couldn't find it in the house. If we fall asleep at someone else's house, worn out from enjoying ourselves, every husband makes the rounds of the couches looking

κὰν ἐκ θυρίδος παρακύπτωμεν, ζητεῖ τὸ κακὸν  
τεθεᾶσθαι

κὰν αἰσχυρθείσ' ἀναχωρήσῃ, πολὺ μᾶλλον πᾶς  
ἐπιθυμῆι

αὐθις τὸ κακὸν παρακύψαν ἰδεῖν. οὕτως ἡμεῖς  
ἐπιδήλως

800 ὑμῶν ἐσμεν πολὺ βελτίους. βάσανός τε πάρεστιν  
ιδέσθαι.

βάσανον δῶμεν, πότεροι χείρους. ἡμεῖς μὲν γάρ  
φαμεν ὑμᾶς,

ὑμεῖς δ' ἡμᾶς. σκεψώμεθα δὴ κἀντιτιθῶμεν πρὸς  
ἕκαστον,

παραβάλλουσαι τῆς τε γυναικὸς καὶ τᾶνδρὸς  
τοῦνομ' ἑκάστου.

Ναυσιμάχης μὲν γ' ἦππων ἐστὶν Χαρμῖνος· δῆλα δὲ  
τᾶργα.

805 καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ Κλεοφῶν χείρων πάντως δήπου  
Σαλαβακχοῦς.

πρὸς Ἀριστομάχην δὲ χρόνου πολλοῦ, πρὸς ἐκείνην  
τὴν Μαραθῶνι,

καὶ Στρατονίκην ὑμῶν οὐδεὶς οὐδ' ἐγχειρεῖ  
πολεμίζειν.

ἀλλ' Εὐβούλης τῶν πέρυσιν τις βουλευτῆς ἐστὶν  
ἀμείνων

παραδοὺς ἐτέρῳ τὴν βουλείαν; οὐδ' αὐτὸς τοῦτό γε  
φήσεις.

810 οὕτως ἡμεῖς πολὺ βελτίους τῶν ἀνδρῶν εὐχόμεθ'  
εἶναι.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

for his bane. If we peek out of our bedroom windows, everyone tries to catch a glimpse of the bane; and if we duck back in from embarrassment, everyone's all the more eager to catch a glimpse of the bane when it peeks out again. Thus it's pretty clear that we're far superior to you, and I've got a way to prove it. Let's take a test to see which sex is worse. We say it's you and you say it's us. Let's examine the issue by pairing the names of each man and each woman one on one. Take Charminus: he's worse than Nausimache,<sup>53</sup> as the record makes clear. And then Cleophon is of course worse in every way than Salabaccho.<sup>54</sup> And it's been a long time since any of you has even tried to measure up to Aristomache—I mean the one at Marathon—and Stratonice.<sup>55</sup> What about a certain one of last year's Councillors, who handed over his powers to someone else: is he better than Eubule?<sup>56</sup> (*pointing him out*) You wouldn't say so yourself! And so we claim to be much better than men.

<sup>53</sup> Charminus was an Athenian naval commander defeated the previous winter; the woman's name (a typical name, like the others to follow, except Salabaccho) means "victory at sea."

<sup>54</sup> Cleophon was a popular politician, Salabaccho a courtesan (cf. *Knights* 765).

<sup>55</sup> The names mean "outstanding in battle" and "military victory."

<sup>56</sup> The name means "good counsel."

## ARISTOPHANES

οὐδ' ἂν κλέψασα γυνὴ ζεύγει κατὰ πεντήκοντα  
τάλαντα  
εἰς πόλιν ἔλθοι τῶν δημοσίων· ἀλλ' ἦν τὰ μέγισθ'  
ὑφέληται,  
φορμὸν πυρῶν τάνδρὸς κλέψασ', αὐθημερὸν  
ἀνταπέδωκεν.

ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς ἂν πολλοὺς τούτων  
815 ἀποδείξαιμεν ταῦτα ποιοῦντας,  
καὶ πρὸς τούτοις γάστριδας ἡμῶν  
ὄντας μᾶλλον καὶ λωποδύτας  
καὶ βωμολόχους κἀνδραποδιστάς.  
καὶ μὲν δήπου καὶ τὰ πατρῶά γε

820 χείρους ἡμῶν εἰσιν σῶζειν.  
ἡμῖν μὲν γὰρ σῶν ἔτι καὶ νῦν  
τάντιον, ὁ κανὼν, οἱ καλαθίσκοι,  
τὸ σκιάδειον·

τοῖς δ' ἡμετέροις ἀνδράσι τούτοις  
825 ἀπόλωλεν μὲν πολλοῖς ὁ κανὼν  
ἐκ τῶν οἴκων αὐτῇ λόγχῃ,  
πολλοῖς δ' ἑτέροις ἀπὸ τῶν ὤμων  
ἐν ταῖς στρατιαῖς  
ἔρριπται τὸ σκιάδειον.

830 πόλλ' ἂν αἱ γυναῖκες ἡμεῖς ἐν δίκη μεμψαίμεθ' ἂν  
τοῖσιν ἀνδράσιν δικαίως, ἐν δ' ὑπερφυέστατον.  
χρῆν γάρ, ἡμῶν εἰ τέκοι τις ἄνδρα χρηστὸν τῇ  
πόλει,

ταξίαρχον ἢ στρατηγόν, λαμβάνειν τιμὴν τινα,  
προεδρίαν τ' αὐτῇ δίδοσθαι Στηνίοισι καὶ Σκίροις

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

And a woman would never steal about fifty talents a pop from the public treasury and then drive up to the Acropolis in a chariot and pair. The most a woman will filch is a cup of flour from her husband, and then she'll pay him back the same day.

We could show that many of the men here do these things, and are also more likely than us to be potbellies, muggers, spongers, and slave drivers. And when it comes to their patrimony, they're less able to preserve it than we are. We've still got our looms and weaving rods, our wool baskets and parasols. Contrast these husbands of ours: many have let their spear shaft disappear from the household, point and all, and many others have cast from their shoulders, in the heat of battle, their parasols!

Yes, we women have plenty of justified complaints to lodge against our husbands, one of which is very monstrous. If a woman bears a son who's useful to the polis—a taxiarch or a commander—she should receive some honor, and be given front-row seating at the Stenia and the Scira

## ARISTOPHANES

- 835 ἔν τε ταῖς ἄλλαις ἑορταῖς αἴσιν ἡμεῖς ἤγομεν·  
 εἰ δὲ δειλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν ἄνδρα τις τέκοι γυνή,  
 ἢ τριήραρχον πονηρὸν ἢ κυβερνήτην κακόν,  
 ὑστέραν αὐτὴν καθῆσθαι σκάφιον ἀποκεκαρμένην  
 τῆς τὸν ἀνδρείον τεκούσης. τῷ γὰρ εἰκός, ὦ πόλις,  
 840 τὴν Ὑπερβόλου καθῆσθαι μητέρ' ἡμφιεσμένην  
 λευκὰ καὶ κόμας καθείσαν πλησίον τῆς Λαμάχου,  
 καὶ δανείζειν χρήμαθ', ἢ χρῆν, εἰ δανείσειέν τινα  
 καὶ τόκον πράττοιτο, διδόναι μηδέν' ἀνθρώπων τόκον,  
 ἀλλ' ἀφαιρεῖσθαι βία τὰ χρήματ' εἰπόντας τοδί·  
 845 "ἄξία γοῦν εἰ τόκου τεκοῦσα τοιοῦτον τόκον."

## ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

- ἰλλὸς γεγένημαι προσδοκῶν· ὁ δ' οὐδέπω.  
 τί δῆτ' ἂν εἴη τοῦμποδῶν; οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως  
 οὐ τὸν Παλαμήδη ψυχρὸν ὄντ' αἰσχύνεται.  
 τῷ δῆτ' ἂν αὐτὸν προσαγαγοίμην δράματι;  
 850 ἐγὼ δα· τὴν καινὴν Ἑλένην μιμήσομαι.  
 πάντως ὑπάρχει μοι γυναικεία στολή.

## ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

τί αὖ σὺ κυρκανᾶς; τί κοικύλλεις ἔχων;  
 πικρὰν Ἑλένην ὄψει τάχ', εἰ μὴ κοσμίως  
 ἔξεις, ἕως ἂν τῶν πρυτάνεῶν τις φανῇ.

57 Like the Thesmophoria, these festivals honored Demeter and were celebrated only by women.

58 Hyperbolus, a leading popular politician and frequent object of comic ridicule before his ostracism in 417 or 416, was assassinated by oligarchs shortly after the production of this play; his



## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

and the other festivals that we women celebrate.<sup>57</sup> But if a woman bears a son who's a coward and a rascal—a bad trierarch or an incompetent pilot—she should sit behind the hero's mother with her hair cropped in a bowl cut. By what logic, you citizens, should Hyperbolus' mother,<sup>58</sup> dressed in white and wearing her hair down, get to sit near Lamachus'<sup>59</sup> mother and make loans? If she lends money at interest, no borrower should have to pay the interest, but should grab her money by force and tell her, "You're a fine one to be charging points after bearing such a disappointing son!"

### KINSMAN

I've gone cross-eyed looking for him, but so far no good. What could be keeping him? No doubt he's ashamed that his *Palamedes* was a flop. So which of his plays *can* I use to entice him? I've got it! I'll do a take-off on his recent *Helen*;<sup>60</sup> after all, I'm already wearing a woman's costume.

### CRITYLLA

What are you cooking up now? Why are you rubbernecking around? You'll see one hell of a Helen if you don't behave yourself until one of the marshals gets here.

mother (now in her fifties) had been caricatured in at least two plays as an alien, whore, and drunk.

<sup>59</sup> This Athenian commander, ridiculed in *Acharnians* and *Peace*, had died a hero's death in the Sicilian expedition; his mother would now be in her seventies.

<sup>60</sup> In this play, produced in 412, the abducted Helen turns out to have been a phantom, while the real Helen spent the war in Egypt in the palace of Proteus, whose son Theoclymenus now wants to marry her. After the war Menelaus discovers the truth and with the help of an Egyptian prophetess, Theonoe, escapes with Helen.



ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

855 Νείλου μὲν αἶδε καλλιπάρθενοι ῥοαί,  
ὃς ἀντὶ δίας ψακάδος Αἰγύπτου πέδον  
λευκῆς νοτίζει μελανοσυρμαῖον λεών.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

πανοῦργος εἶ νῆ τὴν Ἑκάτην τὴν φωσφόρον.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐμοὶ δὲ γῆ μὲν πατρίς οὐκ ἀνώνυμος,  
Σπάρτη, πατήρ δὲ Τυνδάρεως.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

860 σοί γ', ὦλεθρε,  
πατήρ ἐκεῖνός ἐστι; Φρυνώνδας μὲν οὖν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

Ἑλένη δ' ἐκλήθην.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

αὔθις αὖ γίγναι γυνή,  
πρὶν τῆς ἐτέρας δοῦναι γυναικίσεως δίκην;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ψυχαὶ δὲ πολλαὶ δι' ἔμ' ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρίοις  
ῥοαῖσιν ἔθανον.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

865 ὄφελος δὲ καὶ σύ γε.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

κὰ γὰρ μὲν ἐνθάδ' εἴμ'. ὁ δ' ἄθλιος πόσις  
οὐμὸς Μενέλεως οὐδέπω προσέρχεται.  
τί οὖν ἔτι ζῶ;

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

(*as Helen*):

These are the fair-maidened currents of the Nile,  
who in lieu of heavenly distillment floods the flats  
of bright Egypt for a people much given to laxatives.

CRITYLLA

By Hecate the Torch-Bearer, you're a villain!

KINSMAN

The land of my fathers is not without a name:  
'tis Sparta, and my sire is Tyndareus.

CRITYLLA

He's *your* father, you disaster? More likely it was Phry-  
nondas.<sup>61</sup>

KINSMAN

And Helen was I named.

CRITYLLA

You're turning into a woman again, before you've been  
punished for your first drag-show?

KINSMAN

Many a soul on my account by Scamander's  
streams has perished.

CRITYLLA

You should have been among them!

KINSMAN

And I am here, but my own ill-starred husband,  
Menelaus, has never come for me.  
So why do I still live?

<sup>61</sup> A proverbial villain.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

*τῶν κοράκων πονηρία.*

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

870 ἄλλ' ὥσπερ αἰκάλλει τι καρδίαν ἐμήν·  
μὴ ψεύσον, ὦ Ζεῦ, τῆς ἐπιούσης ἐλπίδος.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τίς τῶνδ' ἐρυνμῶν δωμάτων ἔχει κράτος,  
ὅστις ξένους δέξαιτο ποντίῳ σάλῳ  
καμόντας ἐν χειμῶνι καὶ ναυαγίαις;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

Πρωτέως τάδ' ἐστὶ μέλαθρα.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

875 ὦ τρισκακόδαιμον; ψεύδεται νῆ τὸ θεῷ,  
ἐπεὶ τέθνηκε Πρωτέας ἔτη δέκα.  
*ποίου Πρωτέως,*

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ποίαν δὲ χώραν εἰσεκέλσαμεν σκάφει;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

Αἴγυπτον.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὦ δύστηνος, οἱ πεπλώκαμεν.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

880 πείθει τι τῷ <κακῷ> κακῶς ἀπολουμένῳ  
ληροῦντι λήρον; Θεσμοφόριον τουτογί.

879 suppl. Scaliger

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

CRITYLLA

Because the vultures are shiftless!

KINSMAN

Yet something, as it were, tickles at my heart:  
deceive me not, o Zeus, in my nascent hope!

*Enter EURIPIDES, disguised as the shipwrecked Menelaus.*

EURIPIDES

Who, wielding power in this doughty manse,  
would welcome strangers sore beset in the briny  
deep midst tempest and shipwreck?

KINSMAN

These are the halls of Proteus.

CRITYLLA

*Proteus*, you sorry wretch? (*to Euripides*) By the Twain  
Goddesses, he's lying: Proteas has been dead for ten  
years!<sup>62</sup>

EURIPIDES

What land have we put into with our bark?

KINSMAN

Egypt.

EURIPIDES

Ah wretched luck, to have made for such a port!

CRITYLLA

Do you believe the ravings of this awful man, condemned  
to an awful death? This is the Thesmophorium!

<sup>62</sup> An Athenian commander active during the Periclean era.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

αὐτὸς δὲ Πρωτεύς ἔνδον ἔστ' ἢ ἕξωπιος;

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐ ναυτιᾶς ἔτ', ὦ ξένε,  
ὅστις <γ> ἀκούσας ὅτι τέθνηκε Πρωτέας  
ἔπειτ' ἐρωτᾶς· “ἔνδον ἔστ' ἢ ἕξωπιος;”

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

885 αἰαί, τέθνηκε. ποῦ δ' ἐτυμβεύθη τάφῳ;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τόδ' ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ σῆμ', ἐφ' ᾧ καθήμεθα.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

κακῶς ἄρ' ἐξόλοιο,—κᾶξολεῖ γέ τοι,—  
ὅστις γε τολμᾶς σῆμα τὸν βωμὸν καλεῖν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί δαὶ σὺ θάσσεις τάσδε τυμβήρεις ἔδρας  
φάρει καλυπτός, ὦ ξένη;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

890

βιάζομαι

γάμοισι Πρωτέως παιδὶ συμμείξαι λέχος.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

τί, ὦ κακόδαιμον, ἐξαπατᾶς αὖ τὸν ξένον;  
οὔτος πανουργῶν δεῦρ' ἀνήλθεν, ὦ ξένε,  
ὡς τὰς γυναῖκας ἐπὶ κλοπῇ τοῦ χρυσίου.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

895 βάνζε τοῦμὸν σῶμα βάλλουσα ψόγῳ.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

Is lord Proteus within, or out of doors?

CRITYLLA

You must still be seasick, stranger, if you ask if Proteas is within or out of doors, when you've just heard that he's dead.

EURIPIDES

Alas, he is dead! Where was he duly entombed?

KINSMAN

This is his very tomb whereon I sit.

CRITYLLA

Well, die and go to hell—and you will die for daring to call this altar a tomb!

EURIPIDES

Why do you sit upon this sepulchral seat,  
veiled in a shroud, strange lady?

KINSMAN

Against my will am I to serve the bed  
of Proteus' son in marriage.

CRITYLLA

You loser, why do you keep hoaxing the stranger? Stranger, this man is a criminal come up here to the women's meeting to snatch their baubles.

KINSMAN

Bark at my person, pelt me with abuse!

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ξένη, τίς ἢ γραῦς ἢ κακορροθούσά σε;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

αὕτη Θεονόη Πρωτέως.

ΚΡΙΤΥΛΛΑ

μὰ τὸ θεῶ,

εἰ μὴ Κρίτυλλά γ' Ἀντιθέου Γαργηπτόθεν.  
σὺ δ' εἶ πανοῦργος.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὅποσα τοι βούλει λέγε·

900 οὐ γὰρ γαμοῦμαι σῶ κασιγνήτῳ ποτὲ  
προδοῦσα Μενέλεων τὸν ἐμὸν ἐν Τροίᾳ πόσιν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

γύναι, τί εἶπας; στρέψον ἀνταυγείς κόρας.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

αἰσχύνομαί σε τὰς γνάθους ὑβρισμένη.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τουτὶ τί ἐστιν; ἀφασία τίς τοί μ' ἔχει.

905 ὦ θεοί, τίν' ὄψιν εἰσορῶ; τίς εἶ, γύναι;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

σὺ δ' εἶ τίς; αὐτὸς γὰρ σὲ κάμ' ἔχει λόγος.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

Ἑλληνίς εἶ τις ἢ ἴπιχωρία γυνή;



WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

Strange lady, who is the crone that vilifies you?

KINSMAN

'Tis Proteus' daughter, Theonoe.

CRITYLLA

No, by the Twain Goddesses, I'm Critylla, daughter of Antitheus, from Gargettos!<sup>63</sup> (*to Kinsman*) And you're a criminal!

KINSMAN

Say what you will, for never shall I wed  
your brother and so betray Menelaus, my husband  
at Troy.

*Euripides approaches Kinsman.*

EURIPIDES

What said'st thou, lady? Return my pupils' gaze!

KINSMAN

I feel shame—for the violation of my jowls.

EURIPIDES

What can this be? A speechlessness holds me fast!

*He removes Kinsman's veil.*

O gods, what sight do I see? Who *are* you, lady?

KINSMAN

And who are you? The same thought strikes us both.

EURIPIDES

Are you Greek, or a native woman?

<sup>63</sup> An ordinary-sounding name, patronymic, and deme.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

Ἑλληνίς. ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σὸν θέλω μαθεῖν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

Ἑλένη σ' ὁμοίαν δὴ μάλιστ' εἶδον, γύναι.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

910 ἐγὼ δὲ Μενελέω σ', ὅσα γ' ἐκ τῶν ἰφύων.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔγνωσ ἄρ' ὀρθῶς ἄνδρα δυστυχέστατον.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ χρόνιος ἐλθὼν σῆς δάμαρτος ἐσχάρας,  
λαβέ με, λαβέ με, πόσι, περίβαλε δὲ χέρας.

915 φέρε, σὲ κύσω. ἄπαγέ μ' ἄπαγ' ἄπαγ' ἄπαγέ με  
λαβὼν ταχὺ πάνν.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

κλαύσετ' ἄρα νῆ τὸ θεῶ  
ὅστις σ' ἀπάξει τυπτόμενος τῇ λαμπάδι.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

σὺ τὴν ἐμὴν γυναιῖκα κωλύεις ἐμέ,  
τὴν Τυνδάρειον παῖδ', ἐπὶ Σπάρτην ἄγειν;

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΑ

920 οἴμ' ὡς πανοῦργος καὐτὸς εἶναί μοι δοκεῖς  
καὶ τοῦδέ τις ξύμβουλος. οὐκ ἐτὸς πάλαι

---

<sup>64</sup> For the original *es cheras* (into my arms) is substituted *escharas* ("brazier," slang for vulva).

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

Greek. But I now would learn *your* story.

EURIPIDES

I cannot help but see Helen in you, lady!

KINSMAN

And I Menelaus in you—to judge from your rags!

EURIPIDES

You have recognized aright the unluckiest of men!

*Euripides embraces Kinsman.*

KINSMAN

O timely come into your own wife's charms!<sup>64</sup>  
O hold me, hold me, husband, in your arms!  
Come, let me kiss you! Take, oh take, oh take  
me away posthaste!

*Euripides takes Kinsman by the hand and begins to lead him from the altar.*

CRITYLLA

(*blocking their path*) By the Twain Goddesses, whoever tries to take you away is going to be sorry, after he gets pummeled with this torch!

EURIPIDES

Wouldst you prevent me my very own wife, the  
daughter  
of Tyndareus, to take to Sparta?

CRITYLLA

Oh my, you strike me as being a villain yourself, and some kind of ally of this other one. No wonder you kept acting

ARISTOPHANES

ἡγυπτιάζετ'. ἀλλ' ὅδε μὲν δώσει δίκην·  
προσέρχεται γὰρ ὁ πρύτανις χῶ τοξότης.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τουτὶ πονηρόν. ἀλλ' ὑπαποκινητέον.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ δ' ὁ κακοδαίμων τί δρῶ;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

925

μὲν' ἤσυχος.

οὐ γὰρ προδώσω σ' οὐδέποτ', ἤνπερ ἐμπνέω,  
ἦν μὴ προλίπωσ' αἱ μυρίαί με μηχαναί.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

αὕτη μὲν ἢ μήρινθος οὐδὲν ἔσπασεν.

ΠΡΥΤΑΝΙΣ

930

ὄδ' ἔσθ' ὁ πανοῦργος ὃν ἔλεγ' ἡμῖν Κλεισθένης;  
οὗτος, τί κύπτεις; δῆσον αὐτὸν εἰσάγων,  
ὦ τοξότ', ἐν τῇ σανίδι, κάπειτ' ἐνθαδὶ  
στήσας φύλαττε καὶ προσιέναι μηδένα  
ἔα πρὸς αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ τὴν μάστιγ' ἔχων  
παῖ', ἦν προσίη τις.

ΚΡΙΤΤΑΛΛΑ

935

νὴ Δί' ὡς νυνδὴ γ' ἀνὴρ  
ὀλίγου μ' ἀφείλετ' αὐτὸν ἰστιορράφος.

<sup>65</sup> Dishonest people, according to the Greeks.

<sup>66</sup> A length of planking on which criminals were executed by suspension, as on a cross.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

like Egyptians!<sup>65</sup> But this man is going to pay the price: here comes the Marshal and an Archer.

EURIPIDES

This is bad. I've got to mosey on out of here.

*He moves to the wings.*

KINSMAN

But what about me? What am *I* going to do?

EURIPIDES

Stay calm. I'll never desert you, as long as I draw breath, or until I exhaust my vast supply of stratagems!

*Exit EURIPIDES.*

KINSMAN

Well, *this* particular fishing line didn't catch much!

*Enter MARSHAL and ARCHER, armed with a whip, bow, and quiver.*

MARSHAL

So this is the villain that Cleisthenes told us about! (*to the Kinsman*) You! What are you skulking for? (*to Archer*) Archer, take him inside and bind him on the plank,<sup>66</sup> then set him up right here and keep an eye on him. Don't let anybody get near him. If anybody tries to, take your whip and hit him!

CRITYLLA

Do that, by god, because just a minute ago a man *did* try to make off with him—a sail-stitcher!

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ πρύτασι, πρὸς τῆς δεξιᾶς, ἦνπερ φιλεῖς  
κοίλην προτείνειν ἀργύριον ἢν τις διδῶ,  
χάρισαι βραχὺ τί μοι καίπερ ἀποθανουμένω.

ΠΡΥΤΑΝΙΣ

τί σοι χαρίσωμαι;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

940 γυμνὸν ἀποδύσαντά με  
κέλευε πρὸς τῇ σανίδι δεῖν τὸν τοξότην,  
ἵνα μὴ ᾖ κροκωτοῖς καὶ μίτραις γέρων ἀνήρ  
γέλωτα παρέχω τοῖς κόραξιν ἐστιῶν.

ΠΡΥΤΑΝΙΣ

ἔχοντα ταῦτ' ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ σε δεῖν,  
ἵνα τοῖς παριούσι δῆλος ᾖς πανούργος ὢν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

945 ἱατταταιάξ. ὦ κροκώθ', οἷ' εἴργασαι.  
κούκ ἔστ' ἔτ' ἐλπίς οὐδεμία σωτηρίας.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΑ

ἄγε νυν ἡμεῖς παίσωμεν ἅπερ νόμος ἐνθάδε ταῖσι  
γυναιξίν,  
ὅταν ὄργια σεμνὰ θεαῖν ἱεραῖς ὥραις ἀνέχωμεν,  
ἅπερ καὶ  
Παύσων σέβεται καὶ νηστεύει,  
950 πολλάκις αὐταῖν ἐκ τῶν ὥρων

---

67 In reality, no citizen could be summarily punished without a hearing.

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

(*kneeling before the Marshal*) Marshal, by this right hand of yours—which you're so fond of cupping in the direction of anyone who might put silver in it—do me a small favor even though I'm condemned to death!

MARSHAL

What favor?

KINSMAN

Tell the archer he's got to strip me naked before he ties me to the plank: I'm an old man and I don't want to be left dressed in scarves and petticoats when the crows eat me—they'd laugh!

MARSHAL

The Council has decreed that you must die wearing these,<sup>67</sup> so that everyone who sees you will know what kind of criminal you are!

KINSMAN

Aieeee! O dresses, what ye have wrought! There's no chance I'll be saved now!

*ARCHER takes KINSMAN inside; CRITYLLA and MARSHAL exit.*

CHORUS LEADER

All right, now, let's do a cheerful dance, as is the women's custom here, when in the holy season we celebrate our solemn mysteries for the Twain Goddesses—the very ones Pauson,<sup>68</sup> too, honors by fasting, as he joins in our prayer to

<sup>68</sup> Pauson, a painter, jokester, and caricaturist, is elsewhere mocked for being poor.



ARISTOPHANES

εἰς τὰς ὥρας ξυνεπευχόμενος  
τοιαῦτα μέλειν θάμ' ἑαυτῷ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὄρμα χώρει,  
κούφα ποσίν, ἄγ' εἰς κύκλον,  
955 χειρὶ σύναπτε χεῖρα  
ῥυθμὸν χορείας πᾶσ' ὕπαγε,  
956 βαῖνε καρπαλίμοιν ποδοῖν.  
ἐπισκοπεῖν δὲ πανταχῇ  
κυκλοῦσαν ὄμμα χρῆ χοροῦ κατάστασιν.

(στρ) ἅμα δὲ καὶ  
960 γένος Ὀλυμπίων θεῶν  
μέλπε καὶ γέραιρε φωνῇ  
πᾶσα χορομανεῖ τρόπῳ.

(ἀντ) εἰ δέ τις  
προσδοκᾷ κακῶς ἐρεῖν  
965 ἐν ἱερῷ γυναικὰ μ' οὔσαν  
ἄνδρας, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖ.

ἀλλὰ χρῆν,  
ὥς πρὸς ἔργον αὖ τί καινόν,  
πρῶτον εὐκύκλου χορείας  
εὐφυνᾷ στηῆσαι βάσιν.

(στρ) πρόβαινε ποσὶ τὸν Ἐκὺλῦραν

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

them that from season to season such celebrations be often  
in his thoughts!

### CHORUS

Let's start our number:  
go light on your feet, form up a circle  
and all join hands;  
everyone mark the beat of the dance;  
step out with an agile foot!  
Our choreography should allow us  
to turn an eye in every direction.

And all the while, everyone,  
for the race of Olympian gods  
lift your voice in reverend song  
as the dance turns crazily.

Anyone who  
expects that we, being women,  
will in this sanctuary utter abuse  
against men is mistaken.

Now we should rather  
approach another novel task  
by first halting the graceful  
steps of our circle dance.

Step out singing for the God with the Lyre<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Apollo.

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<sup>952</sup> μέλλειν R, corr. Zanetti

<sup>956</sup> πᾶσ' ὕπαγε Austin: ὕπαγε πᾶσα R

<sup>969</sup> suppl. Zanetti

## ARISTOPHANES

970 μέλπουσα καὶ τὴν τοξοφόρον

Ἄρτεμιν, ἄνασσαν ἀγνήν.

χαῖρ', ὦ Ἐκάεργε,

ὄπαζε δὲ νίκην.

Ἦραν τε τὴν τελείαν

μέλψωμεν ὥσπερ εἰκός,

975 ἢ πᾶσι τοῖς χοροῖσιν ἐμπαίζει τε καὶ

κλῆδας γάμου φυλάττει.

(ἀντ) Ἑρμῆν τε νόμιον ἄντομαι

καὶ Πάνα καὶ Νύμφας φίλας

ἐπιγελάσαι προθύμως

980 ταῖς ἡμετέραισι

χαρέντα χορείαις.

ἔξαιρε δὴ προθύμως

διπλῆν, χάριν χορείας.

παίσωμεν, ὦ γυναῖκες, οἷάπερ νόμος·

νηστεύομεν δὲ πάντως.

985 ἀλλ' εἶα, πάλλ', ἀνάστρεφ' εὐρύθμῳ ποδί·

τόρευε πᾶσαν ὦδῆν.

ἡγοῦ δέ γ' ὦδ' αὐτὸς σύ,

κισσοφόρε Βακχεῖε

δέσποτ'· ἐγὼ δὲ κώμοις

σε φιλοχόροισι μέλψω.

(στρ) Εὖιε, ὦ Διὸς σὺ

991 Βρόμιε, καὶ Σεμέλας παῖ,

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

and for the Archeress,  
Artemis the Chaste Lady;  
hail, You who Work from Afar,<sup>70</sup>  
and grant us victory!<sup>71</sup>  
It's right that we also sing for Hera,  
fulfiller of marriages,  
who partners us in all our dances  
and holds the passkeys of wedlock.

And I ask Hermes the Shepherd  
and Pan and his dear Nymphs  
to enjoy these dances of ours  
and smile generously upon them!  
So begin the double-time  
with spirit, for the dance's sake.  
Let's get into it, ladies, as custom commands:  
we're fasting anyway!

Hey now, jump, swing around with a solid beat,  
let all your song peal out!  
This way, Lord Bacchus crowned with ivy,  
do personally be our leader:  
and with revels I will hymn you,  
who love the dance!

Euius, you Noisemaker,  
son of Zeus and Semele,

<sup>70</sup> Usually indicating Apollo, here apparently Artemis.

<sup>71</sup> That is, in the dramatic competition, and also perhaps in the war.

---

<sup>990</sup> Εὐίε, ὦ Διὸς σὺν Enger: εὐίον ὦ Διόνυσε R

ARISTOPHANES

χοροῖς τερπόμενος  
κατ' ὄρεα Νυμ-  
φᾶν ἐρατοῖς ἐν ὕμνοις,  
ὦ Εὐί' Εὐί', εὐοί,  
<παννύχιος> ἀναχορεύων.

(ἀντ) ἀμφὶ δὲ σοὶ κτυπεῖται  
996 Κιθαιρώνιος ἠχώ,  
μελάμφυλλά τ' ὄρη  
δάσκια πετρώ-  
δεις τε νάπαι βρέμονται  
κύκλω δὲ περί σε κισσὸς  
1000 εὐπέταλος ἔλικι θάλλει.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ἐνταῦτά νυν οἰμῶξι πρὸς τὴν αἰτρίαν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ τοξόθ', ἰκετεύω σε—

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

μή μ' ἰκετεύσι σύ.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

χάλασον τὸν ἥλον.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ἀλλὰ ταῦτα δρᾶσ' ἐγώ.

<sup>994</sup> suppl. Coulon

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

who enjoy the dances  
of Nymphs at their charming songs  
as you ramble over the mountains—  
Euius, Euius, euoi!—  
striking up the dances all night long;  
and all around you their cries  
echo on Cithaeron,  
and the mountains shady  
with dark leaves and the rocky  
valleys reverberate.  
And all around you ivy tendrils  
twine in lovely bloom.

*ARCHER*<sup>72</sup> enters with *KINSMAN*, now clamped to a plank,  
and props him up against the altar.

ARCHER

There, now: you can do your bellyachin' to the open air!

KINSMAN

Archer, I beseech you—

ARCHER

Don' you be seechin' me!

KINSMAN

Loosen the clamp!

ARCHER

No, but I'll do *this*.

<sup>72</sup> This Archer, being a Scythian and a public slave, speaks broken Greek.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, μᾶλλον ἐπικρούεις σύ γε.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ἔτι μᾶλλο βούλις;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

1005

ἀτταταῖ ἰατταταῖ·

κακῶς ἀπόλοιο.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

σίγα, κακόδαιμον γέρον.

πέρ', ἐγὼ ἔξενέγκι πορμός, ἵνα πυλάξι σοι.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ταυτὶ τὰ βέλτιστ' ἀπολέλαυκ' Εὐριπίδου.

ἔα· θεοί, Ζεῦ σῶτερ, εἰσὶν ἐλπίδες.

1010

ἀνὴρ ἔοικεν οὐ προδώσειν, ἀλλὰ μοι  
σημεῖον ὑπεδήλωσε Περσεὺς ἐκδραμών,  
ὅτι δεῖ με γίγνεσθ' Ἀνδρομέδαν. πάντως δέ μοι  
τὰ δέσμ' ὑπάρχει. δῆλον οὖν <τοῦτ' > ἔσθ' ὅτι  
ἤξει με σώσων· οὐ γὰρ ἂν παρέπτετο.

1015

φίλαι παρθένοι, φίλαι,  
πῶς ἂν ἀπέλθοιμι καὶ  
τὸν Σκύθην λάθοιμι;

1013 suppl. Dobree

1017 λάθοιμι Ellebodius: λάβοιμι R



## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

Good grief, you're *tightening* it!

ARCHER

Wan' it even tighter?

KINSMAN

Owww! Ahhh! God damn you!

ARCHER

Shut up, you damn geezer! Well, I'm gonna go get a mat for while I'm guardin' you.

*ARCHER goes inside.*

KINSMAN

This is the reward I get for befriending Euripides! (*peering into the distance*) Ah! Ye gods and Savior Zeus, there's still hope! It seems the man won't give up on me: he just popped up as Perseus, meaning I'm supposed to be Andromeda.<sup>73</sup> I've certainly got the requisite chains, and he's obviously on his way to rescue me; otherwise he wouldn't have zipped by!

Dear maidens dear,  
how might I get away  
and escape the Scythian?

<sup>73</sup> In Euripides' *Andromeda*, produced together with *Helen* in 412, the flying hero Perseus, equipped by Hermes with winged cap and sandals, rescues the maiden Andromeda, whose father Cepheus, the king of Ethiopia, had chained her to a rock to be eaten by a sea monster, hoping thus to appease Poseidon. As the play opens, the desolate Andromeda speaks with the echo of her own voice from the caves on the shore, then is joined by a chorus of sympathetic maidens.

## ARISTOPHANES

- κλύεις, ὦ προσάδουσ'  
 ἀνταῖς ἐν ἀντροῖς;  
 1020 κατάνευσον, ἕασον ὡς  
     τὴν γυναικά μ' ἐλθεῖν.  
 ἀνοικτος ὅς μ' ἔδησε, τὸν  
     πολυπονώτατον βροτῶν.  
 μόλις δὲ γραῖαν ἀποφυγὼν  
 1025 σαπρὰν ἀπωλόμην ὅμως.  
 ὅδε γὰρ ὁ Σκύθης φύλαξ  
     πάλαι ἐφεστῶς ὀλοὸν ἀφίλον  
     ἐκρέμασέ <με> κόραξι δειπνον.  
 ὄρας, οὐ χοροῖσιν οὐδ'  
 1030 ὑφ' ἡλίκων νεανίδων  
     κημὸν ἔστηκ' ἔχουσ',  
     ἀλλ' ἐν πυκνοῖς δεσμοῖσιν ἐμπεπλεγμένη  
     κῆτει βορὰ Γλαυκέτη πρόκειμαι.  
 Γαμηλίῳ μὲν οὐ ξὺν  
 1035 παιῶνι, δεσμῷ δὲ  
 γοᾶσθέ μ', ὦ γυναῖκες, ὡς  
     μέλεα μὲν πέπονθα μέλε-  
     ος—ὦ τάλας ἐγώ, τάλας,—  
 ἀπὸ δὲ συγγόνων ἀνομ' ἀνομα πάθεια,  
 1040 φῶτα λιτομένα,  
 πολυδάκρυτον Ἄϊδα γόον φλέγουσα,  
 —αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, ἔ ἔ—

1018-19 προσάδουσ' ἀνταῖς Sommerstein: προσαιδούσσαι  
 τὰς R: προσανδῶ σε τὰν Bothe, cf. E. fr. 118-19

1028 suppl. Mehler

1031 κημὸν Hermann: ψῆφον κημὸν R

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

Do you hear me, you in the caverns,  
 who reply in song to my cries?  
 Permit me, do let me  
 go home to my wife!  
 Pitiless he who enchained me,  
 most sorely tested of mortal men!  
 I got free of a rotten old hag  
 only to die anyway!  
 For this Scythian guard,  
 long posted over me, has hung me up,  
 doomed and friendless, as supper for vultures!  
 Behold, not now in dances  
 nor with girls my own age do I stand  
 wielding a voting-funnel;  
 nay rather enchained in tight bondage  
 am I set out as fodder for the monster Glaucetes!<sup>74</sup>  
 Mourn me, ladies,  
 with a hymn  
 not of marriage but of jail,  
 for wretched do I suffer wretchedly  
 —alas alack, woe is me!—  
 and from kin lawless sufferings, lawless,  
 tho I implored the man, igniting tearfullest Stygian  
 groans  
 —ai ai! oh oh!—

<sup>74</sup> An Athenian elsewhere mocked for his passion for gourmet seafood.

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1039 ἄνομ' Blaydes: ἀλλὰν R      1040 λιτομένα Enger cl. Σ<sup>R</sup>  
 δεομένη: λιτομένην R: ἀντομένα(ν) γρ Σ<sup>R</sup>      1041 φλέγουσα  
 Enger: φεύγουσαν R

ARISTOPHANES

- ὄς ἔμ' ἀπεξύρησε πρῶτον,  
 ὄς ἐμὲ κροκόεντ' ἀμφέδυσεν·  
 1045 ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖσδε τόδ' ἀνέπεμψεν  
 ἱερόν, ἔνθα γυναῖκες.  
 ἰὼ μοι μοίρας  
 ἂν ἔτικτε δαίμων.  
 ᾧ κατάρατος ἐγώ·  
 τίς ἐμὸν οὐκ ἐπόψεται  
 πάθος ἀμέγαρτον ἐπὶ κακῶν παρουσία;  
 1050 εἴθε με πυρφόρος αἰθέρος ἀστήρ  
 τὸν βάρβαρον ἐξολέσειεν.  
 οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἀθανάταν φλόγα λεύσσειν  
 ἐστὶν ἐμοὶ φίλον, ὡς ἐκρεμάσθην,  
 λαιμότμητ' ἄχη δαιμόνι', αἰόλαν  
 1055 νέκυσιν ἐπὶ πορείαν.

ΗΧΩ

χαῖρ', ᾧ φίλη παῖ· τὸν δὲ πατέρα Κηφέα  
 ὅς σ' ἐξέθηκεν ἀπολέσειαν οἱ θεοί.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

σὺ δ' εἰ τίς ἦτις τοῦμὸν ὄκτιρας πάθος;

ΗΧΩ

- Ἦχώ, λόγων ἀντωδὸς ἐπικοκκάστρια,  
 1060 ἥπερ πέρυσιν ἐν τῷδε ταύτῳ χωρίῳ

1044 ἀμφέδυσεν Σ<sup>R</sup>: ἐνέδυσεν R

1051 βάρβαρον R: ἄθλιον γρΣ<sup>R</sup>: δύσμορον Brunck

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

the one who first shaved me,  
who put on me these saffron things  
and to top it off sent me up  
to this sanctuary where the women are.  
O force of my destiny  
that a god engendered!  
O me accursed!  
Who will not behold my suffering,  
with its drastic evils, as unenviable?  
Ah, would that a fiery bolt from heaven above  
would obliterate that barbarian!  
No more is it agreeable to look upon  
the sun's deathless flame, when I am hung up,  
damned by the gods to cut-throat grief, bound for  
a quicksilver trip to the grave.

*Enter ECHO.*<sup>75</sup>

ECHO

Greetings, dear girl; but may the gods obliterate your  
father Cepheus for exposing you out here.

KINSMAN

And who are you that take pity on my plight?

ECHO

Echo, a comedienne who sings back what she hears, who  
just last year, in this very place, personally assisted Euripi-

<sup>75</sup> The nymph Echo had foiled Hera's attempt to punish other nymphs with whom Zeus had been having affairs; in revenge Hera made her able to say only what she had just heard. In Euripides' play Echo lived in the cave where Andromeda was chained.

ARISTOPHANES

Εὐριπίδῃ καὐτῇ ξυνηγωνιζόμην.  
 ἄλλ', ὦ τέκνον, σὲ μὲν τὸ σαυτῆς χρῆ ποιεῖν,  
 κλάειν ἔλεινῶς.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

σὲ δ' ἐπικλάειν ὕστερον.

ΗΧΩ

ἔμοι μελήσει ταῦτά γ'. ἄλλ' ἄρχου λόγων.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

1065 ὦ Νύξ ἱερά,  
 ὡς μακρὸν ἵππευμα διώκεις  
 ἄστεροειδέα νῶτα διφρεύουσ'  
 αἰθέρος ἱεράς  
 τοῦ σεμνοτάτου δι' Ὀλύμπου.

ΗΧΩ

δι' Ὀλύμπου.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

1070 τί ποτ' Ἀνδρομέδα περίαλλα κακῶν  
 μέρος ἐξέλαχον—

ΗΧΩ

μέρος ἐξέλαχον—

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

θανάτου τλήμων—

ΗΧΩ

θανάτου τλήμων.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

des in the contest. But now you must play your part: start wailing piteously.

KINSMAN

And you'll wail in response!

ECHO

Leave that to me. Now begin your part.

KINSMAN

O holy night,  
how long is your chariot's course  
as you drive o'er the starry expanse  
of holy Aether  
through Olympus!

ECHO

Through Olympus!

KINSMAN

Why o why has Andromeda had  
so much more than her share of ills?

ECHO

Share of ills!

KINSMAN

Unhappy in my death!

ECHO

Unhappy in my death!



ARISTOPHANES

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἀπολείς μ', ὦ γραῦ, στωμυλλομένη.

ΗΧΩ

στωμυλλομένη.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

1075 νῆ Δί' ὀχληρά γ' εἰσήρρηκας  
λίαν.

ΗΧΩ

λίαν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦγάθ', ἔασόν με μονωδῆσαι,  
καὶ χαριεῖ μοι. παῦσαι.

ΗΧΩ

παῦσαι.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

βάλλ' ἐς κόρακας.

ΗΧΩ

βάλλ' ἐς κόρακας.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

τί κακόν;

ΗΧΩ

τί κακόν;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ληρέϊς.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

KINSMAN

You're killing me, old bag, with your jabbering!

ECHO

Jabbering!

KINSMAN

God, your interruptions are annoying  
in the extreme!

ECHO

Extreme!

KINSMAN

Dear fellow, please let me finish my song,  
thank you very much. Do stop!

ECHO

Do stop!

KINSMAN

Go to hell!

ECHO

Go to hell!

KINSMAN

What's wrong with you?

ECHO

What's wrong with you?

KINSMAN

You're babbling!

ARISTOPHANES

1080

ΗΧΩ

ληρείς.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

οἴμωζ'.

ΗΧΩ

οἴμωζ'.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὀτότυζ'.

ΗΧΩ

ὀτότυζ'.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

οὔτος, τί λαλείς;

ΗΧΩ

οὔτος, τί λαλείς;

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

πρυτάνεις καλέσω.

ΗΧΩ

πρυτάνεις καλέσω.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

σὶ κακόν;

1085

ΗΧΩ

σὶ κακόν;

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

πῶτε τὸ πωνή;

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

ECHO

You're babbling!

KINSMAN

Damn you!

ECHO

Damn you!

KINSMAN

Drop dead!

ECHO

Drop dead!

*ARCHER returns with a mat.*

ARCHER

Hey, you, what's all this talkin'?

ECHO

Hey, you, what's all this talkin'?

ARCHER

I'll call the Marshals!

ECHO

I'll call the Marshals!

ARCHER

Damn you!

ECHO

Damn you!

ARCHER

Where's that voice?

ARISTOPHANES

ΗΧΩ

πῶτε τὸ πωνή;

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

σὺ λαλείς;

ΗΧΩ

σὺ λαλείς;

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

κλαύσαι.

ΗΧΩ

κλαύσαι.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

κακκάσκι<ς> μοι;

ΗΧΩ

κακκάσκι<ς> μοι;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

1090 μὰ Δί', ἀλλὰ γυνὴ πλησίον αὐτή.

ΗΧΩ

πλησίον αὐτή.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ποῦ 'στ' ἡ μιανὰ;

<ΗΧΩ

ποῦ 'στ' ἡ μιανὰ;>

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ δὴ φεύγει.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

ECHO

Where's that voice?

ARCHER

(*to Kinsman*) Are you babblin'?

ECHO

Are you babblin'?

ARCHER

You're gonna be sorry!

ECHO

You're gonna be sorry!

ARCHER

You laughin' at me?

ECHO

You laughin' at me?

KINSMAN

God no, it's that woman right there!

ECHO

Right there!

ARCHER

Where is the slut?

ECHO

Where is the slut?

KINSMAN

She's getting away!

---

1088 κλαύσαι Rogers: κλαύσαιμι R

1089 suppl. Fritzsche

1092-94 sic supplevi et disposui, alii aliter

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ποῖ ποῖ πεύγεις;

< ΗΧΩ

ποῖ ποῖ πεύγεις;>

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

οὐ καιρήσεις.

< ΗΧΩ

οὐ καιρήσεις.>

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ἔτι γὰρ γρύζεις;

ΗΧΩ

1095

ἔτι γὰρ γρύζεις;

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

λαβὲ τὴ μιανὰ.

ΗΧΩ

λαβὲ τὴ μιανὰ.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

λάλο καὶ κατάρατο γυναιῖκο.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1100

ὦ θεοί, τίν' ἐς γῆν βαρβάρων ἀφίγμεθα  
ταχεῖ πεδίλω; διὰ μέσου γὰρ αἰθέρος  
τέμνων κέλευθον πόδα τίθημ' ὑπόπτερον  
Περσεὺς πρὸς Ἄργος ναυστολῶν, τὸ Γοργόνοσ  
κάρη κομίζων.



WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

ARCHER

Where, where ya goin'?

ECHO

Where, where ya goin'?

ARCHER

You won' get away with it!

ECHO

You won' get away with it!

ARCHER

You still yappin'?

ECHO

You still yappin'?

ARCHER

Grab the slut!

ECHO

Grab the slut!

ARCHER

Yackety, confounded woman!

*EURIPIDES appears on the stage crane as Perseus.*

EURIPIDES

Ye gods, to what barbaric land am I come  
on sandal swift? For through the empyrean  
cutting a swath I aim my wingéd foot  
to Argos, and the cargo that I carry  
is the Gorgon's head!<sup>76</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Perseus kept the head of Medusa in a leather bag and used it to petrify his own enemies before finally turning it over to Athena.

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

τί λέγεις; τὴν Γόργος πέρι  
τὸ γραμματέο σὺ τὴν κεφαλῆ;

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τὴν Γοργόνοσ  
ἔγωγέ φημι.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

Γόργο τοι κάγω λέγει.

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1105 ἔα, τίν' ὄχθον τόνδ' ὀρώ καὶ παρθένον  
θεαῖσ ὁμοίαν ναῦν ὅπως ὠρμισμένην;

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ ξένε, κατοίκτιρόν με, τὴν παναθλίαν·  
λύσόν με δεσμῶν.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

οὐκὶ μὴ λαλήσι σύ.  
κατάρατο, τολμᾶσ ἀποτανουμένη λαλεῖσ;

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1110 ὦ παρθέν', οἰκτίρω σε κρεμαμένην ὀρών.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

οὐ παρτέν' ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἀμαρτωλὴ γέρων  
καὶ κλέπτο καὶ πανούργο.

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ληρεῖσ, ὦ Σκύθα.  
αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν Ἀνδρομέδα, παῖσ Κηφέωσ.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

ARCHER

Say what? You got the head of Gorgos, the secretary?<sup>77</sup>

EURIPIDES

'Tis the Gorgon's, I say once more.

ARCHER

Gorgos, yeah, that's what I said.

*Euripides alights from the crane.*

EURIPIDES

Oho, what crag is this I see? What maiden,  
fair as a goddess, moored like a boat thereto?

KINSMAN

O stranger, pity me in my misfortune cruel!  
O free me from my bonds!

ARCHER

You, button your lip! You scum, you got the nerve to blab  
when you're about to be a *dead* maiden?

EURIPIDES

O maiden, 'tis with pity I see you hang there!

ARCHER

That's no maiden! That's a dirty old man, a crook and a  
creep!

EURIPIDES

Rubbish, my Scythian! This is Cepheus' child, Andromeda.

<sup>77</sup> An otherwise unknown public official.

---

<sup>1102</sup> Γόργος Bothe: Γοργόνοσ R

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

σκέψαι τὸ σῦκο· μή τι μικκὸν παίνεται;

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1115 φέρε δεῦρό μοι τὴν χεῖρ', ἵν' ἄψωμαι κόρης.  
φέρε, Σκύθ'· ἀνθρώποισι γὰρ νοσήματα  
ἅπασιν ἔστιν· ἐμὲ δὲ καὐτὸν τῆς κόρης  
ταύτης ἔρωσ εἴληφεν.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

οὐ ζηλῶσί σε.

1120 ἀτὰρ εἰ τὸ πρωκτὸ δεῦρο περιεστραμμένον,  
οὐκ ἐπτόνησά σ' αὐτὸ πυγίζεις ἄγων.

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί δ' οὐκ ἔᾶς λύσαντά μ' αὐτήν, ὦ Σκύθα,  
πεσεῖν ἐς εὐνήν καὶ γαμήλιον λέχος;

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

εἰ σπόδρ' ἐπιτυμείς τῇ γέροντο πυγίσο,  
τῇ σανίδο τρήσας ἐξόπιστο πρῶκτισον.

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1125 μὰ Δί', ἀλλὰ λύσω δεσμά.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

μαστιγῶσ' ἄρα.

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

καὶ μὴν ποιήσω τοῦτο.

1114 σῦκο Sommerstein: σκυτο R: κύστο Scaliger

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

ARCHER

Lookit that figgie:<sup>78</sup> it don't look little, do it now?

EURIPIDES

Give me her hand, that I might clasp the lass!  
Please, Scythian; all human flesh is weak. In my own case,  
love for this girl has me in its grip.

ARCHER

I don' envy you. But I tell you, if his arsehole was turned  
around this way, I wouldn't say nothin' if you was to go an'  
screw it.

EURIPIDES

Why don't you let me untie her, Scythian, that I may couch  
her in the nuptial bower?

ARCHER

If you're so hot to bugger the old guy, why don' you drill a  
hole in the backside of that there plank and buttfuck him  
that way?

EURIPIDES

God no, I'd rather untie the chains.

ARCHER

Try it—if you wanna get whipped.

EURIPIDES

I shall do it anyway!

<sup>78</sup> "Fig" (*sukon*) was slang for the female genitals, "fig tree" (*suke*) for the male; the Archer uses the former sarcastically.

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

τὸ κεπαλή σ' ἄρα  
τὸ ξιπομάκαιραν ἀποκεκόψι τουτοῖ.

ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

αἰαῖ· τί δράσω; πρὸς τίνας στρεφθῶ λόγους;  
ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν ἐνδέξαιτο βάρβαρος φύσις.  
1130 σκαιοῖσι γάρ τοι καινὰ προσφέρων σοφὰ  
μάτην ἀναλίσκοις ἄν. ἀλλ' ἄλλην τινὰ  
τούτῳ πρέπουσαν μηχανὴν προσοιστέον.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

μιαρὸς ἀλώπηξ, οἶον ἐπιτήκιζί μοι.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

μέμνησο, Περσεῦ, μ' ὡς καταλείπεις ἀθλίαν.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

1135 ἔτι γὰρ σὺ τῇ μάστιγαν ἐπιτυμείς λαβεῖν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Παλλάδα τὴν φιλόχορον ἐμοὶ  
δεῦρο καλεῖν νόμος εἰς χορόν,  
παρθένον ἄζυγα κούρην,  
1140 ἢ πόλιν ἡμετέραν ἔχει  
καὶ κράτος φανερόν μόνη  
κληδοῦχος τε καλεῖται.  
φάνηθ', ὦ τυράννουσ  
στυγοῦσ', ὥσπερ εἰκός.  
1145 δῆμός τοί σε καλεῖ γυναι-  
κῶν· ἔχουσα δέ μοι μόλοις

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

ARCHER

I'd have to chop off yer head with this here scimitar.

EURIPIDES

*(aside)*

Ah me, what action, what clever logic now?  
All wit is lost upon this savage lout.  
For work a novel ruse upon a clod  
and you have worked in vain. I must apply  
a different stratagem, one suitable for *him*.

*Exit EURIPIDES.*

ARCHER

The lousy fox, what monkey-tricks he tried to pull on me!

KINSMAN

Remember, Perseus, what a wretched state you're leaving  
me in!

ARCHER

So you're still hungry for a taste of the whip, are ya?

CHORUS

Pallas Athena, the dancers' friend, it is my  
custom to invite here to our dance.  
Maiden girl unwedlocked,  
who, alone safeguards our city  
and holds manifest power  
and is called Keeper of the Keys,  
show yourself, you who loathe  
tyrants, as is fitting.  
The country's female people  
summon you: please come,



ARISTOPHANES

εἰρήνην φιλέορτον.

ἤκετ' ἐ τ' > εὐφρονες, ἴλαοι,

πότνιαι, ἄλσος ἐς ὑμέτερον,

1150 ἄνδρας ἴν' οὐ θεμίτ' εἰσορᾶν

1151/2 ὄργια σέμν', ἵνα λαμπάσιν

1153/4 φαίνεται, ἄμβροτον ὄψιν.

1155 μόλετον, ἔλθετον, ἀντόμεθ', ὦ

Θεσμοφόρω πολυποτνία.

εἰ καὶ πρότερόν ποτ' ἐπηκόω ἤλθετον

<καὶ> νῦν ἀφίκεσθ', ἰκετεύομεν

ἐνθάδ' ἡμῖν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1160 γυναῖκες, εἰ βούλεσθε τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον  
σπονδὰς ποιήσασθαι πρὸς ἐμέ, νυνὶ πάρα,  
ἐφ' ᾧτ' ἀκούσαι μηδὲν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ μηδαμὰ  
κακὸν τὸ λοιπόν. ταῦτ' ἐπικηρυκεύομαι.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΑ

χρεία δὲ ποία τόνδ' ἐπεισφέρεις λόγον;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1165 ὄδ' ἐστὶν οὖν τῇ σανίδι κηδεστῆς ἐμός.  
ἦν οὖν κομίσωμαι τοῦτον, οὐδὲν μὴ ποτε  
κακῶς ἀκούσητ'. ἦν δὲ μὴ πίθησθέ μοι,  
ἂ νῦν ὑποικουρεῖτε, τοῖσιν ἀνδράσιν  
ἀπὸ τῆς στρατιᾶς παροῦσιν ὑμῶν διαβαλῶ.

1148 suppl. Enger

ἀνδράσιν R

1151 σέμν' Hermann: σεμνὰ θεαῖν R

1158 suppl. Wilamowitz

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

bringing peace, comrade of festivity.  
Come too, gracious happy  
sovereigns,<sup>79</sup> to your own precinct,  
where men are forbidden to behold  
the divine rites that by torchlight  
you illumine, an immortal sight.  
Approach, come, we pray,  
o most puissant Thesmophoroi!  
If ever before you answered our call,  
now too, we beseech you,  
come here to us!

*Enter EURIPIDES, dressed like a bawd and carrying a small harp and a travel bag, with Elaphium, a dancing girl, and Teredon, a boy piper.*

### EURIPIDES

*(to the Chorus)* Ladies, if you want to make a permanent peace treaty with me, now is the time. I'll stipulate that in the future none of you woman will ever again be slandered in any way by me. This is my official proposal.

### CHORUS LEADER

And what is your purpose in offering this proposal?

### EURIPIDES

This man on the plank here is my kinsman. If I can take him away with me, you'll never hear another insult. But if you refuse, whatever you've been doing behind your husbands' backs while they're away at the front, I'll denounce to them when they return.

<sup>79</sup> Demeter and Persephone.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

1170 τὰ μὲν παρ' ἡμῖν ἴσθι σοι πεπεισμένα·  
τὸν βάρβαρον δὲ τοῦτον αὐτὸς πείθε σύ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐμὸν ἔργον ἐστίν· καὶ σόν, ὦ λάφιον, ἅ σοι  
καθ' ὁδὸν ἔφραζον, ταῦτα μεμνήσθαι ποιεῖν.  
πρῶτον μὲν οὖν δῖελθε κἀνακάλπασον.

1175 σὺ δ', ὦ Τερηδών, ἐπαναφύσα Περσικόν.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

τί τὸ βόμβο τοῦτο; κῶμό τις ἀνεγεῖρί μοι;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἢ παῖς ἔμελλε προμελετᾶν, ὦ τοξότα.  
ὀρχησομένη γὰρ ἔρχεθ' ὡς ἄνδρας τινάς.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ὀρκῆσι καὶ μελετῆσι, οὐ κωλύσ' ἐγώ.

1180 ὡς ἐλαπρός, ὥσπερ ψύλλο κατὰ τὸ κώδιο.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

φέρε θοιμάτιον ἄνωθεν, ὦ τέκνον, τοδί·  
καθιζομένη δ' ἐπὶ τοῖσι γόνασι τοῦ Σκύθου  
τὼ πόδε πρότεινον, ἵν' ὑπολύσω.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ναίκι, ναί

κάτησο, κάτησο, ναίκι, ναίκι, τυγάτριον.

1185 οἴμ' ὡς στέριπο τὸ τιπτί, ὥσπερ γογγυλί.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

αὔλει σὺ θᾶπτον· ἔτι δέδοικας τὸν Σκύθην;

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

### CHORUS LEADER

Count on us for our part of the bargain; but as for this barbarian, you've got to make your own deal.

### EURIPIDES

I'm ready for that job. (*veiling his face*) And your job, Elaphium, is to remember to do what I told you on the way over here. All right, the first thing is to walk back and forth swinging your haunches. And you, Teredon, accompany her on your pipes with a Persian dance tune.

### ARCHER

What's all the noise? A bunch of revellers is wakin' me up.

### EURIPIDES

This girl was all set to rehearse, officer; you see, she's on her way to dance for some gentlemen.

### ARCHER

Let her dance and rehearse; I won't stop her. She's pretty nimble, like a bug on a rug.

### EURIPIDES

All right, girl, off with your dress, and sit on the Scythian's lap. Now stick out your feet so I can take off your shoes.

### ARCHER

Yeah, sit down, sit down, yeah, yeah, sweetie! Wow, what firm titties—like turnips!

### EURIPIDES

Piper, play faster. (*to Elaphium*) Still afraid of the Scythian?

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

καλό γε τὸ πυγῆ. κλαῦσί γ', ἦν μὴ ἕνδον μένης.  
εἶεν· καλὴ τὸ σκῆμα περὶ τὸ πόστιον.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

καλῶς ἔχει. λαβὲ θοιμάτιον· ὥρα ἔστι νῶν  
ἤδη βαδίζειν.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

1190 οὐκὶ πιλῆσι πρώτά με;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

πάνν γε· φίλησον αὐτόν.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ὄ ὄ ὄ, παπαπαπαῖ,  
ὡς γλυκερὸ τὸ γλῶσσ', ὥσπερ Ἀττικὸς μέλις.  
τί οὐ κατεύδει παρ' ἐμέ;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

χαῖρε, τοξότα·  
οὐ γὰρ γένοιτ' ἂν τοῦτο.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ναὶ ναί, γράδιον,  
ἐμοὶ κάρισο σὺ τοῦτο.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1195 δώσεις οὖν δραχμήν;

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ναί, ναίκι, δῶσι.

WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

ARCHER

What a fine butt! (*looking down*) You'll be sorry if you don't stay inside my pants! (*opening his trousers*) There, that's better for my prick.

EURIPIDES

(*to Elaphium*). Well done. Grab your dress, it's time for us to be going.

ARCHER

Won't she give me a kiss first?

EURIPIDES

Sure. Kiss him.

ARCHER

Woo woo woo! Boyoboy! What a sweet tongue, like Attic honey! Why don't you sleep with me?

EURIPIDES

Goodbye, officer; that's not going to happen.

ARCHER

No, wait, my dear old lady, please do me this favor.

EURIPIDES

You'll pay a drachma, then?<sup>80</sup>

ARCHER

Sure I will.

<sup>80</sup> A very high price.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τὰργύριον τοίνυν φέρε.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ἄλλ' οὐκ ἔκωδέν. ἀλλὰ τὸ συβήνην λαβέ.  
ἔπειτα κομίσις αὐτίς. ἀκολουθεῖ, τέκνον.  
σὺ δὲ τοῦτο τήρει τῇ γέροντο, γράδιο.  
ὄνομα δέ σοι τί ἐστίν;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1200

Ἄρτεμισία.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

μεμνήσι τοίνυν τοῦνομ'. Ἄρταμουξία.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1205

Ἐρμῆ δόλιε, ταυτὶ μὲν ἔτι καλῶς ποιεῖς.  
σὺ μὲν οὖν ἀπόμενε, παιδάριον, ταυτὶ λαβών.  
ἐγὼ δὲ λύσω τόνδε. σὺ δ' ὅπως ἀνδρικῶς  
ὅταν λυθῆς τάχιστα φεύξει καὶ τενεῖς  
ὡς τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ παιδί' οἴκαδε.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐμοὶ μελήσει ταυτά γ', ἣν ἅπαξ λυθῶ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

λέλυσο. σὸν ἔργον, φεῦγε πρὶν τὸν τοξότην  
ἤκοντα καταλαβεῖν.

ΚΗΔΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ δὴ τοῦτο δρῶ.

1198 κομίσις Sommerstein: κομίζεις R



WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

EURIPIDES

Well, let's have it.

ARCHER

But I've got nothing on me! (*offering his quiver*) Wait, take my shaft case; and give it back after! (*to Elaphium*) You come with me! (*to Euripides*) Now you watch the old man, granny! And what's your name?

EURIPIDES

Artemisia.

ARCHER

Remember that name: Artamuxia.

EURIPIDES

Trickster Hermes, just keep on giving me this good luck! (*to Teredon*) You can run along now, kid; and take this stuff with you. And I'll release this one. (*to Kinsman*) As soon as you get loose you'd better run like a man away from here and head back home to your wife and kids.

KINSMAN

I'll do that, as soon as I'm loose.

EURIPIDES

Go free! It's up to you to escape before the archer comes back and arrests you.

KINSMAN

That's just what I'm going to do!

*EURIPIDES and KINSMAN run off; ARCHER returns with Elaphium.*

---

1203 *ταυτί* Dobree, cf. Σ<sup>R</sup>: *τουτί* R

1208 *λέλυσαι* Bentley

ARISTOPHANES

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

- 1210 ὦ γράδι', ὡς καρίεντό σοι τὸ τυγάτριον  
 κού δύσκολ', ἀλλὰ πρᾶο. ποῦ τὸ γράδιο;  
 οἴμ' ὡς ἀπόλωλο. ποῦ τὸ γέροντ' ἐντευτενί;  
 ὦ γράδι', ὦ γρά'. οὐκ ἐπαινῶ, γράδιο.  
 Ἄρταμουξία.  
 διέβαλέ μού γραῦς. ἐπίτρεκ' ὡς τάκιστα σύ.
- 1215 ὀρτῶς δὲ <σὺ> συβήνη 'στί καταβήνησι γάρ.  
 οἴμοι,  
 τί δρᾶσι; ποῖ τὸ γράδι'; Ἄρταμουξία.

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΑ

τὴν γραῦν ἐρωτᾶς ἢ 'φερεν τὰς πηκτίδας;

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ναί, ναίκι. εἶδες αὐτό;

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΑ

ταύτη γ' οἴχεται  
 αὐτή τ' ἐκείνη καὶ γέρων τις εἶπετο.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

κροκῶτ' ἔκοντο τὴ γέροντο;

ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΑ

- 1220 φήμ' ἐγώ·  
 ἔτ' ἂν καταλάβοις, εἰ διώκοις ταυτηί.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

ὦ μιαρὸ γρᾶο. πότερο τρέξι τὴν ὁδό;  
 Ἄρταμουξία.

1214 ἐπίτρεκ' Gannon: ἀπότρεκ' R

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

### ARCHER

Old lady, your girl is nice and easygoing, no trouble at all! (*looking around*) Where's the old lady? Oh no, now I'm done for! Where'd the old man get to? Old lady! Lady! I don't like this at all, old lady! Artamuxia! The old bag's tricked me! (*to Elaphium*) You, run after her as quick as you can!

*Elaphium runs off.*

(*realizing his quiver is gone*) Justly is it called a shaft case: I fucked mine away and got shafted! Oh my, what am I gonna do? Where'd that old lady get to? Artamuxia!

### CHORUS LEADER

Are you asking for the lady with the harp?

### ARCHER

Yeah, yeah! Seen her?

### CHORUS LEADER

She went that way (*pointing left*), and there was an old man with her.

### ARCHER

Was the old man wearing a yellow dress?

### CHORUS LEADER

That's right. You might still catch them if you go that way (*pointing right*).

### ARCHER

The dirty old bag! Which way should I go again? Artamuxia!

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ὀρθὴν ἄνω δίωκε. ποῖ θεῖς; οὐ πάλιν  
τηδὶ διώξει; τοῦμπαλιν τρέχεις σύ γε.

ΤΟΞΟΤΗΣ

1225 κακόδαιμον. ἀλλὰ τρέξι. Ἄρταμουξία.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

τρέχε νυν κατ' αὐτοὺς ἐς κόρακας ἐπουρίσας.

ἀλλὰ πέπαισται μετρίως ἡμῖν·  
ὥσθ' ὥρα δὴ ἔστι βαδίζειν  
οἴκαδ' ἐκάστη. τὸ Θεσμοφόρω δ'  
1230 ἡμῖν ἀγαθὴν  
τούτων χάριν ἀνταποδοῖτον.

1226 κατ' αὐτοὺς ἐς Jackson: κατὰ τοὺς R

## WOMEN AT THE THESMOPHORIA

CHORUS LEADER

Right! Straight up that hill! Where are you going? No, run the other way! No, you're going the wrong way!

ARCHER

Damn! I've gotta run! Artamuxia!

*Exit ARCHER*

CHORUS LEADER

Now run off after them—straight to hell, and bon voyage!

Well, we've had our share of fun.

Now it's time for each woman

to go on home. May the two Thesmophoroi

reward you with fine

thanks for this performance!

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