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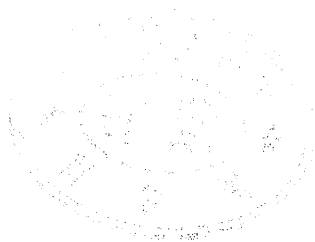
EDITOR EMERITUS

G. P. GOOLD

ARISTOPHANES

IV

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ARISTOPHANES

FROGS ASSEMBLYWOMEN WEALTH

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
JEFFREY HENDERSON



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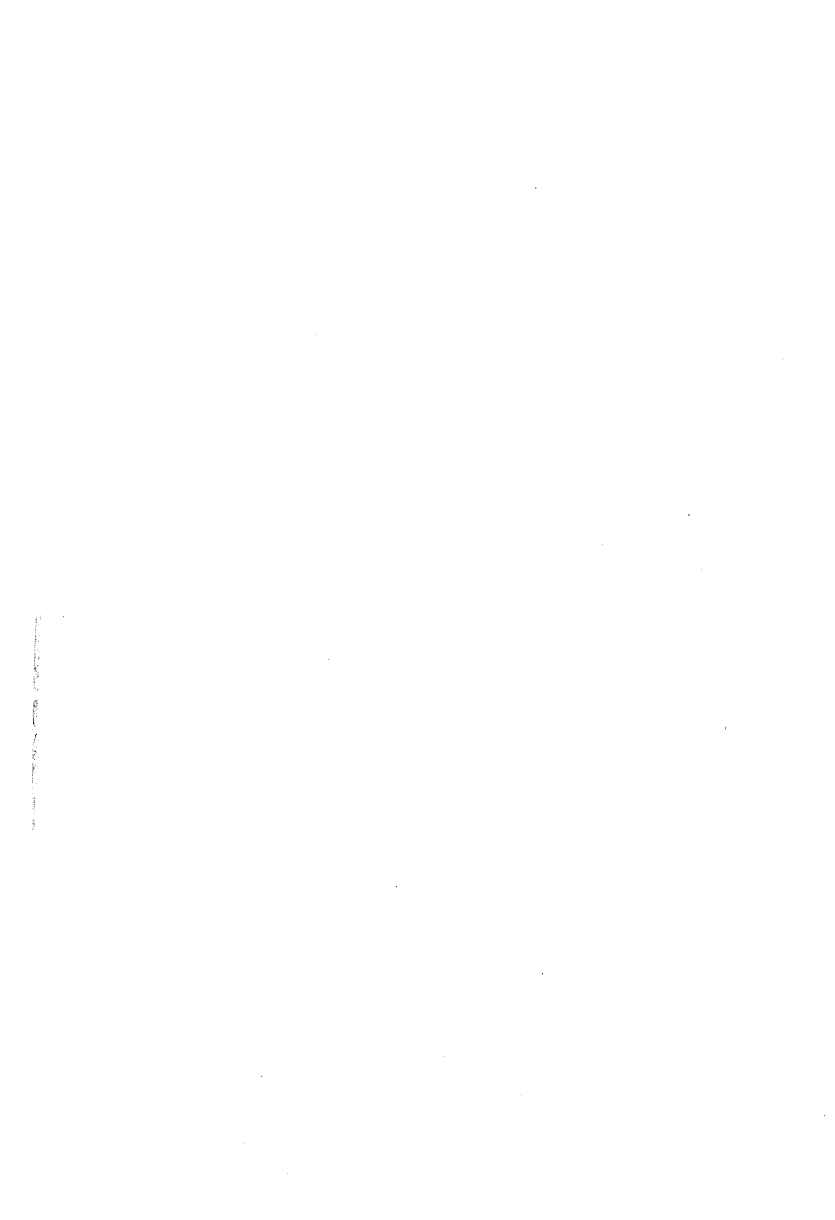
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CONTENTS

FROGS	1
ASSEMBLYWOMEN	237
WEALTH	413
INDEX	599

FROGS



INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Frogs was produced by Philonides¹ at the Lenaea of 405 and won the first prize; Phrynichus was second with *Muses* (whose title suggests an artistic, and perhaps literary, theme) and Plato third with *Cleophon* (a leading politician of the time attacked also in *Frogs*). According to the Hypothesis, citing Aristotle's pupil Dicaearchus, *Frogs* was (uniquely) restaged "because of its parabasis," and the ancient *Life* (T 1.35-39), probably also deriving from Dicaearchus, informs us that Aristophanes was "officially commended and crowned with a wreath of sacred olive, considered equal in honor to a gold crown, for the lines he had spoken in *Frogs* about the disenfranchised [686 ff.]." The decree that awarded the commendation and restaging must have been passed after the autumn of 405, when by the decree of Patrocleides the Athenians enacted the measure for which Aristophanes had appealed (Andocides 1.73-79), but before the overthrow of the democracy in the spring of 404, when an appeal for equal civic rights would have been ill received, so that the play will have

¹ He had produced Lenaeian plays for Aristophanes in 422 (either *Wasps* or *The Preview*) and 414 (*Amphiaraus*); presumably the provision of a second producer, which was in effect at the City Dionysia two months later (405 n.), did not (or not yet) apply to the Lenaea.

ARISTOPHANES

been restaged at the Lenaea of 404. For the restaging Aristophanes probably made only a few minor changes: lines 1251–60, 1431a-b, and 1437–53 seem to contain alternative versions of the text, but passages that would have been inappropriate at the time of the restaging remain, and there are no references to the events of early 404.

In *Frogs* Dionysus, disguised as Heracles, travels to the underworld with his cheeky slave, Xanthias, in order to retrieve his favorite tragic poet, the recently deceased Euripides. The first part of the play (1–673) chronicles their *katabasis* (descent to the underworld): a meeting with the real Heracles to obtain directions; Dionysus' voyage across the lake that leads to the underworld, ineptly rowing Charon's skiff and engaging in song with a chorus of frogs; comic terrors illustrating Dionysus' cowardice; the entry of the main chorus of Eleusinian Initiates, who live near the palace of Pluto, god of the underworld; several scenes of the sort that typically occur in the second part of a comedy, after the parabasis, in which Dionysus attempts to avoid the predicaments that await him upon arrival by exchanging his disguise with Xanthias; and finally Dionysus' admission into Pluto's palace.²

After the parabasis (674–737), there is a conversation between Xanthias and a slave of Pluto's that amounts to a second prologue introducing a new situation: Dionysus has been recruited by Pluto to judge a contest for the underworld Chair of Tragedy between Aeschylus, its long-time incumbent, and Euripides, who upon arrival has laid claim to preeminence in the art. Much of the ensuing con-

² The anti-heroic and burlesque portrayal of Dionysus in the first part of the play was long familiar in comedy and satyr drama.

FROGS

test focuses on the rivals' poetic techniques, with detailed critiques of actual passages from their plays and parody of their characteristic styles. But Aeschylus and Euripides also emerge as representatives of the character, both poetic and civic, of their respective eras, and the decisive test turns on which poet is more able to effect "the salvation of Athens and the continuation of her choral festivals" (1418–19). On this criterion Dionysus chooses Aeschylus, and Pluto tells him that he may take Aeschylus with him back to Athens; Sophocles, also recently deceased, will hold the Chair of Tragedy in his absence. The Chorus of Eleusinian Initiates lead Dionysus and Aeschylus off in a torchlight procession recalling the inspirational finale of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*.

Beyond being a landmark in the history of literary criticism, *Frogs* embraces two transcendent issues, the decline of Athens as a great power and the decline of tragedy as a great form of art, and connects them by portraying tragic poets as both exemplifying and shaping the moral and civic character of their times. His solution to both issues, the resurrection of Aeschylus from the dead, is both pessimistic and optimistic: if there were no longer any living poets who could inspire the Athenians to greatness, at least the works of Aeschylus lived on, and might inspire the Athenians to recapture the virtues that had made their city pre-eminent in his day.

The decline of Athens and its musical culture were hardly new themes in the comedies of Aristophanes and his contemporaries, and the remedy of resurrecting great men of the past had recently figured in at least two of them: in Eupolis' *Demes* (412) the hero Pyronides brings back four great leaders (Solon, Miltiades, Aristeides, and

ARISTOPHANES

Pericles), and in Aristophanes' *Gerytades* (c. 408) the poets of Athens send an embassy to the underworld, presumably to resurrect the goddess Poetry (cf. fr. 591.85–86); Pherecrates' *Crapataloi* (date unknown but probably before *Frogs*) may have been similar, since Aeschylus' ghost is a character, and someone is told what to expect in the underworld (frs. 86, 100). But these themes had taken on a special urgency at the time of *Frogs*, for a shortage both of reliable manpower and trustworthy leadership threatened Athenian prospects for surviving the war, and both Euripides and Sophocles had recently died.

The Athenians' military and political situation had not improved since the Sicilian disaster of 413 and now threatened to deteriorate. The naval victory at Arginusae the previous summer had given Athens control of the Aegean but came at a crippling cost: after all available manpower had been mobilized, including slaves enlisted as rowers on the promise of freedom and even citizenship,³ twenty-five ships and some five thousand men were lost, and in the subsequent recriminations all eight commanders were rashly condemned to death by the Assembly; in their ensuing remorse the Athenians compounded this mistake by denying commands to those they held responsible for the condemnations, including two exceptionally qualified captains, Theramenes and Thrasybulus. Alcibiades, who had capably led the Athenian naval effort since 411, had gone into voluntary exile in 407, and the question of his recall figures prominently in the decision between Aeschylus

³ This extraordinary action was no doubt a factor in the unusually prominent and complex characterization of Xanthias (cf. esp. 33, 693–99).

FROGS

and Euripides (1422–32); and the men who had been disenfranchised for their association with the oligarchy of 411, and on whose behalf Aristophanes appeals in the parabasis, were still debarred from civic life. Meanwhile, the Peloponnesians had finally begun to receive significant financial support from Persia, while the Athenians' financial situation steadily worsened: they were unable to restore their fleet to its pre-Arginusae strength, and their traditional silver coinage, augmented by an emergency issue of gold coins made by melting down the plating on the Victory statues in the Parthenon, had to be spent abroad to pay military expenses, and to be replaced at home by an issue of silver-plated bronze coins.

But even in this perilous situation, the popular leader Cleophon managed to persuade the Athenians to reject the chance of a negotiated peace offered by Sparta after Arginusae ([Aristotle], *Constitution of Athens* 34.1). No wonder the Athenians responded so warmly to the parabasis of *Frogs*, where the Chorus aptly upbraids them for choosing as leaders and fighters not the best men but the worst, just as they have traded their gold and silver coinage for base metal (686–705, 717–37).

The situation on the tragic stage was comparable, for Euripides had died early in 406 in his late seventies, and Sophocles a few months later in his early nineties. Both were international celebrities, and had long been considered the preeminent living masters of the art, with Aeschylus (who had died in the mid-450's) as the third member of the great tragic triad. But whereas the Athenians could redeem their political and military situation if they turned to the best people, who were still living among them and eager to serve (cf. 699), no such choice was available in the

ARISTOPHANES

case of tragic poets, for Dionysus can think of no worthy successors among those who remained (71–97), so that the redemption of tragedy could only be found beyond the grave. There seems to have been some justice in this appraisal of the prospects for tragedy, for even if the poets left in Athens were not as inferior as Dionysus claims, the fact remains that when revivals became part of the program at the City Dionysia in the early fourth century, only revivals of plays by Euripides and Sophocles are attested; Aeschylus had already (and uniquely) enjoyed this status during the fifth century.

The play assumes that Sophocles is dead, but that he is mentioned in only three detachable passages (76–82, 786–94, and 1515–19) suggests that he died too late to be incorporated more fully into the plot. Presumably the play was conceived and largely completed when he was still alive, and Aristophanes added these passages to adjust for his death. He may well have had to remove some passages as well, for the original script would somehow have acknowledged the presence of the still-productive Sophocles among living poets. But this acknowledgment need not have been very involved: in view of Sophocles' advanced age alone, Dionysus could simply have said, "there are no worthy poets left except Sophocles, and he won't be with us much longer." It is unlikely that Sophocles would have figured in the poetic contest even had he died at the same time as Euripides. In contrast to Euripides, Sophocles had never been an attractive target in comedy for either personal caricature or poetic parody, whereas the contrast between Aeschylus and Euripides personally, poetically, and as representatives of their eras ideally suited Aristophanes' purposes.

FROGS

The poetic contest in *Frogs* assumes that the spectators are familiar not only with dramatic literature (as distinct from performances of drama) but also with literary criticism, and that this familiarity was relatively recently acquired: as the Chorus says, "if you're afraid of any ignorance among the spectators, that they won't appreciate your subtleties of argument, don't worry about that, because things are no longer that way: they're veterans, and each one has a book and knows the fine points" (1108–14). Critiques of poets and their poetry, including metaphorical descriptions of their qualities and techniques, had long been a feature the Greek poetic tradition, and during the latter half of the fifth century became increasingly refined, as did the study of language and its communicative powers generally: the portrayal of poets and criticism of their works, both formal and through parody, was a staple subject of comedy; the language, style, and persuasive techniques of oratory and poetry were among the principal interests of sophistic thinkers and writers; and the increasing circulation and study of books had begun to create a more sophisticated awareness of poetry as literature, and of criticism as a formal approach to it. *Frogs* both reflects this development and contributed to it.

Text

Four papyri preserve parts of 165 lines of *Frogs*, and lines 454–59 are inscribed on a Hellenistic statue base from Rhodes (cf. G. Pugliesi-Carratelli, *Dioniso* 8 [1940] 119–23). Eighty-six medieval MSS (only *Wealth* and *Clouds* are better attested) contain the whole or the greater part of the play, about half of them entirely or

ARISTOPHANES

partly Triclinian, the rest exhibiting no consistent affiliations. Nearly all of the ancient variants not found in R or V are found in one or more of just eleven pre-Triclinian MSS (A E K M Md1 [1–959] Np1 P20^{ac} U Vb3 Vs1 ⊕), which in this edition (following Dover's) are represented by A and K. The Aldine *editio princeps* (1498) derived its text from the Triclinian MS L (Oxon. Bodl. Holkhamensis 88, early XIV), with additional readings from E (Estensis gr. 127 = a.U.5.10, late XIV).

Sigla

- I Rhodian inscription, lines 454–59
- Π1 *POxy.* 1372 (V), lines 44–50, 85–91, 840–61, 879–902
- Π2 *PBerol.* 13231 (V/VI), lines 234–63, 272–300, 404–10, 607–11
- Π3 *POxy.* 4517 (IV), lines 592–605, 630–47
- Π4 *POxy.* 4518 (V), lines 1244–48, 1277–81
- R Ravennas 429 (c. 950)
- V Venetus Marcianus 474 (XI/XII)
- S Readings found in the Suda
- A Parisinus Regius 2712 (XIII/XIV)
- K Ambrosianus C222 inf. (XIII/XIV), lines 1–1197, 1251–end
- a consensus of R V A K
- t Triclinian readings

Annotated Editions

- F. H. M. Blaydes (Halle 1889).
- J. van Leeuwen (Leiden 1896).
- B. B. Rogers (London 1902), with English translation.

FROGS

T. G. Tucker (London 1906).

L. Radermacher, rev. W. Kraus (Vienna 1954²), commentary only.

W. B. Stanford (London 1963²).

D. del Corno (Milan 1985), with Italian translation.

K. J. Dover (Oxford 1993).

A. H. Sommerstein (Warminster 1996), with English translation.

ΤΑ ΤΟΤ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ, οικήτης

Διονύσου

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ΝΕΚΡΟΣ

ΧΑΡΩΝ

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Φερρεφάττης

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΕΤΤΡΙΑ

ΠΛΑΘΑΝΗ

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ Πλούτωνος

ΠΛΟΤΤΩΝ

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ΚΩΦΑ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΟΝΟΣ Διονύσου

ΑΝΔΡΕΣ τὸν νεκρὸν

φέροντες

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑΙ τῶν

πανδοκευτριῶν

ΟΙΚΕΤΑΙ Πλούτωνος

ΔΙΤΤΛΑΣ καὶ

ΣΚΕΒΤΛΑΣ καὶ

ΠΑΡΔΟΚΑΣ τοξόται

ΜΟΤΣΑ Εὐριπίδου

ΧΟΡΟΣ *βατράχων*

ΧΟΡΟΣ *μυστῶν*

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

XANTHIAS, slave of

Dionysus

DIONYSUS

HERACLES

CORPSE

CHARON

AEACUS

MAID of Persephone

INNKEEPER

PLATHANE

SLAVE of Pluto

EURIPIDES

AESCHYLUS

SILENT CHARACTERS

DONKEY of Dionysus

PALL BEARERS

MAIDS of Innkeepers

SLAVES of Pluto

DITYLAS, SCEBYLAS,

PARDOCAS, Archers

MUSE of Euripides

CHORUS of Frogs

CHORUS of Initiates

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

εἶπω τι τῶν εἰωθότων, ᾧ δέσποτα,
ἐφ' οἷς αἰεὶ γελῶσιν οἱ θεώμενοι;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Δί' ὅ τι βούλει γε, πλήν "πιέζομαι."
τοῦτο δὲ φύλαξαι· πάνυ γάρ ἐστ' ἤδη χολή.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

μηδ' ἕτερον ἀστείόν τι;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

5 πλὴν γ' "ὡς θλίβομαι."

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τί δαί; τὸ πάνυ γέλοιον εἶπω;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ Δία
θαρρῶν γε· μόνον ἐκεῖν' ὅπως μὴ ῥεῖς—

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τὸ τί;

FROGS

Enter DIONYSUS and XANTHIAS from the side. Dionysus, disguised as Heracles, wears a lionskin over his saffron gown and carries a club; Xanthias rides a donkey and carries baggage suspended from a pole that rests on his shoulder. They make their way toward the stage house.

XANTHIAS

Shall I make one of the usual cracks, master, that the audience always laugh at?

DIONYSUS

Sure, any one you want, except "I'm hard pressed!" Watch out for that one; by now it's a groaner.

XANTHIAS

Then some other urbanity?

DIONYSUS

Anything but "I'm getting crushed!"

XANTHIAS

Well then, how about the really funny one?

DIONYSUS

Go right ahead, only make sure it's not the one where—

XANTHIAS

You mean—

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μεταβαλλόμενος τ'ανάφορον ὅτι χεζητιᾶς.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

μηδ' ὅτι τοσοῦτον ἄχθος ἐπ' ἐμαντῶ φέρων,
10 εἰ μὴ καθαιρήσει τις, ἀποπαρδήσομαι;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μὴ δῆθ', ἰκετεύω, πλήν γ' ὅταν μέλλω ἕξεμῖν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τί δῆτ' ἔδει με ταῦτα τὰ σκεύη φέρειν,
εἴπερ ποιήσω μηδὲν ὦνπερ Φρύνιχος
εἴωθε ποιεῖν; καὶ Λύκισ κάμειψία
15 σκεύη φέρουσ' ἐκάστοτ' ἐν κωμωδία;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μὴ νυν ποιήσης· ὡς ἐγὼ θεώμενος,
ὅταν τι τούτων τῶν σοφισμάτων ἴδω,
πλεῖν ἢ ἵναντῶ πρεσβύτερος ἀπέρχομαι.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ὦ τρισκακοδαίμων ἄρ' ὁ τράχηλος οὔτοσί,
20 ὅτι θλίβεται μὲν, τὸ δὲ γέλοιον οὐκ ἐρεῖ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

εἶτ' οὐχ ὕβρις ταῦτ' ἐστὶ καὶ πολλή τρυφή,
ὅτ' ἐγὼ μὲν ὦν Διόνυσος, υἱὸς Σταμνίου,
αὐτὸς βαδίζω καὶ πονῶ, τοῦτον δ' ὀχῶ,
ἵνα μὴ τάλαιπωροῖτο μηδ' ἄχθος φέροι;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

οὐ γὰρ φέρω ἴγώ;

FROGS

DIONYSUS

where you shift your baggage and say you need to shit.

XANTHIAS

Can't I even say that I've got such a load on me, if someone doesn't relieve me my rump will erupt?

DIONYSUS

Please don't! Wait till I need to puke.

XANTHIAS

Then why did I have to carry this baggage, if I'm not supposed to do any of the stuff Phrynichus always does? Lycis and Ameipsias too: people carry baggage in every one of their comedies.¹

DIONYSUS

Just don't do it, because when I'm in the audience and see one of those clever bits, I go home a whole year older.

XANTHIAS

What a triple jinxed neck I've got then, since it's getting crushed but can't make a funny comment.

DIONYSUS

How's that for being arrogant and spoiled rotten! After I, Dionysus son of Flagon, have toiled ahead on foot and let him ride, so he wouldn't get tired or have to bear a load.

XANTHIAS

Well, aren't I bearing one?

¹ Three of Aristophanes' competitors; Phrynichus was competing against *Frogs* with *Muses* and would win second prize.

ARISTOPHANES

- 25 ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
πῶς φέρεις γὰρ ὅς γ' ὀχεῖ;
ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
φέρων γε ταυτί.
- ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
τίνα τρόπον;
ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
βαρέως πάνν.
- ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
οὔκουν τὸ βάρος τοῦθ' ὃ σὺ φέρεις οὔνος φέρει;
ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
οὐ δῆθ' ὅ γ' ἔχω γὰρ καὶ φέρω, μὰ τὸν Δί' οὔ.
- ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
πῶς γὰρ φέρεις, ὅς γ' αὐτὸς ὑφ' ἑτέρου φέρει;
ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
30 οὐκ οἶδ'. ὁ δ' ὤμος οὔτοσὶ πιέζεται.
- ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
σὺ δ' οὖν ἐπειδὴ τὸν ὄνον οὐ φῆς σ' ὠφελεῖν,
ἐν τῷ μέρει σὺ τὸν ὄνον ἀράμενος φέρε.
ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων· τί γὰρ ἐγὼ οὐκ ἐνανμάχων;
ἦ τᾶν σε κωκύειν ἂν ἐκέλευον μακρά.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

How can you be bearing anything when you're riding?

XANTHIAS

Well, I'm bearing this.

DIONYSUS

How?

XANTHIAS

Quite unbearably!

DIONYSUS

But doesn't the donkey bear what you're bearing?

XANTHIAS

Not what I've got here and bear myself, it certainly doesn't.

DIONYSUS

But how can you bear anything, when something else bears you?

XANTHIAS

I don't know—but this shoulder of mine is hard pressed!

DIONYSUS

Very well, since you deny that the donkey's helping you, pick up the donkey and take your turn carrying *him*.

XANTHIAS

Blast my luck, why wasn't I in the sea battle? Then I'd be telling you to go to hell.²

² The Athenian fleet that was victorious at Arginusae the previous summer had been manned by a great levy that included slaves, who were then rewarded with freedom (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1.6.24, Hellanicus *FGrH* 323a F 25).

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

35 κατάβα, πανούργε. καὶ γὰρ ἐγγὺς τῆς θύρας
ἤδη βαδίζων εἰμι τῆσδ', οἱ πρῶτά με
ἔδει τραπέσθαι. παιδίον, παῖ, ἡμί, παῖ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τίς τὴν θύραν ἐπάταξεν; ὡς κενταυρικῶς
ἐνήλαθ' ὅστις—εἰπέ μοι, τουτὶ τί ἦν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὁ παῖς.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τί ἐστίν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οὐκ ἐνεθυμήθης;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

40

τὸ τί;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὡς σφόδρα μ' ἔδεισε.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

νῆ Δία, μὴ μαίνοιό γε.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ τοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα δύναμαι μὴ γελᾶν
καίτοι δάκνω γ' ἔμαντόν· ἀλλ' ὅμως γελῶ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὦ δαιμόνιε, πρόσελθε· δέομαι γάρ τί σου.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Dismount, you scamp! Here I am at the door that was to be my first stop. (*knocking*) Boy! (*knocking with his club*) Boy, I say, boy!

HERACLES is heard from within, then opens the door.

HERACLES

Who banged on the door? He assaulted it like a centaur, whoever—Say now, what's this supposed to be? (*turns aside to laugh*)

DIONYSUS

Boy?

XANTHIAS

What is it?

DIONYSUS

Did you see that?

XANTHIAS

See what?

DIONYSUS

How extremely scared of me he was!

XANTHIAS

Sure, scared that you've lost your mind.

HERACLES

By Demeter, I just can't stop laughing! Even though I'm biting my lip, I can't help laughing.

DIONYSUS

(*to Heracles*) Come here, my man; I'd like a word with you.

ARISTOPHANES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

45 ἀλλ' οὐχ οἷός τ' εἴμ' ἀποσοβῆσαι τὸν γέλων,
ὄρων λεοντῆν ἐπὶ κροκωτῶ κειμένην.
τίς ὁ νοῦς; τί κόθορνος καὶ ρόπαλον ξυνηλθέτην;
ποῖ γῆς ἀπεδήμεις;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐπεβάτενον Κλεισθέει.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

κἀναυμάχησας;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καὶ κατεδύσαμέν γε ναῦς
50 τῶν πολεμίων ἢ δώδεκ' ἢ τρισκαίδεκα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

σφῶ;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

κᾶτ' ἔγωγ' ἐξηγγρόμην.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καὶ δῆτ' ἐπὶ τῆς νεῶς ἀναγιγνώσκοντί μοι
τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν πρὸς ἑμαυτὸν ἐξαίφνης πόθος
τῆν καρδίαν ἐπάταξε πῶς οἶει σφόδρα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πόθος; πόσος τις;

³ Normally a woman's festive garment but regularly worn

FROGS

HERACLES

I just can't get rid of this laughter. It's the sight of that lionskin atop a yellow gown.³ What's the idea? Why has a war club joined up with lady's boots? Where on earth have you been?

DIONYSUS

I was serving topside with Cleisthenes.⁴

HERACLES

And did you engage?

DIONYSUS

Sank some enemy ships too, twelve or thirteen of them.

HERACLES

You two?

DIONYSUS

So help me Apollo.

XANTHIAS

And then I woke up.

DIONYSUS

Anyway, as I was on deck reading *Andromeda*⁵ to myself, a sudden longing struck my heart, you can't imagine how hard.

HERACLES

A longing? How big?

by Dionysus; he wore it with masculine apparel in Aeschylus' *Edonians*, parodied in *Women at the Thesmophoria* 130–45.

⁴ Perennially teased for effeminacy, and a character in *Women at the Thesmophoria* (574–654).

⁵ Euripides' play had been produced in 412 and parodied the following year in *Women at the Thesmophoria* (1015–1135).

ARISTOPHANES

- 55 ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
σμικρός, ἡλίκος Μόλων.
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
γυναικός;
ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
οὐ δῆτ'·
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ἀλλὰ παιδός;
ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
οὐδαμῶς.
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ἀλλ' ἀνδρός;
ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
ἀπαπαί.
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ξυνεγένου τῷ Κλεισθένει;
ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
μὴ σκῶπτέ μ', ὠδέλφ'· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἔχω κακῶς·
τοιούτος ἴμερός με διαλυμαίνεται.
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ
ποιός τις, ὠδελφίδιον;
ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι.
60 ὅμως γε μέντοι σοι δι' αἰνιγμῶν ἐρῶ.
ἤδη ποτ' ἐπεθύμησας ἐξαίφνης ἔττους;

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Small, the size of Molon.⁶

HERACLES

For a woman?

DIONYSUS

Nope.

HERACLES

Then for a boy?

DIONYSUS

Not at all.

HERACLES

For a man, then?

DIONYSUS

Ah ah!

HERACLES

Did you do it with Cleisthenes?

DIONYSUS

Don't tease me, brother; I'm truly in a bad way. That's how thoroughly this passion is messing me up.

HERACLES

What kind of passion, little brother?

DIONYSUS

I can't put it into words, but I'll try to explain it to you by analogy. Have you ever had a sudden craving for mine-strone?

⁶ A famous actor (cf. Demosthenes 19.246) and, according to the scholia, a large man.

ARISTOPHANES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἔτνους; βαβαιάξ, μυριάκις γ' ἐν τῷ βίῳ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἄρ' ἐκδιδάσκω τὸ σαφές, ἢ ἄτερα φράσω;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

65 μὴ δῆτα περὶ ἔτνους γε· πάνν γὰρ μαυθάνω.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τοιοντοσὶ τοίνυν με δαρδάπτει πόθος
Εὐριπίδου.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καὶ ταῦτα τοῦ τεθνηκότος;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κούδεις γέ μ' ἂν πείσειεν ἀνθρώπων τὸ μὴ οὐκ
ἐλθεῖν ἐπ' ἐκείνον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πότερον εἰς Ἄιδου κάτω;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

70 καὶ νῆ Δί' εἴ τί γ' ἔστιν ἔτι κατωτέρω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί βουλόμενος;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

δέομαι ποιητοῦ δεξιού.
οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὐκέτ' εἰσίν, οἱ δ' ὄντες κακοί.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τί δ'; οὐκ Ἰοφῶν ζῆ;

FROGS

HERACLES

Minestrone? Oh my, thousands of times in my life!

DIONYSUS

Am I spelling out the obvious, or should I express it another way?

HERACLES

No problem with minestrone; I get the point entirely.

DIONYSUS

Well, that's the kind of longing that's eating away at me for Euripides.

HERACLES

You mean, dead and all?

DIONYSUS

And nobody on earth can persuade me not to go after him.

HERACLES

Even below to Hades?

DIONYSUS

By heaven, even if there's somewhere below that.

HERACLES

What is it you want?

DIONYSUS

I need a talented poet, "for some are gone, and those that live are bad."⁷

HERACLES

How so? Isn't Iophon alive?⁸

⁷ From Euripides' *Oeneus* (fr. 565).

⁸ A son of Sophocles and a successful tragic poet.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τούτο γάρ τοι καὶ μόνον
 ἔτ' ἐστὶ λοιπὸν ἀγαθόν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ' ἄρα·
 75 οὐ γὰρ σάφ' οἶδ' οὐδ' αὐτὸ τοῦθ' ὅπως ἔχει.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἴτ' οὐ Σοφοκλέα πρότερον ὄντ' Εὐριπίδου
 μέλλεις ἀναγαγεῖν, εἴπερ γ' ἐκείθεν δεῖ σ' ἄγειν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οὐ, πρὶν γ' ἂν Ἰοφῶντ', ἀπολαβὼν αὐτὸν μόνον,
 ἄνευ Σοφοκλέους ὃ τι ποιεῖ κωδωνίσω.
 80 κἄλλως ὁ μὲν γ' Εὐριπίδης πανοὔργος ὢν
κἂν ξυναποδρᾶναι δεῦρ' ἐπιχειρήσειέ μοι
ὁ δ' εὐκόλος μὲν ἐνθάδ', εὐκόλος δ' ἐκεῖ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Ἀγάθων δὲ ποῦ ἔστιν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἀπολιπὼν μ' ἀποίχεται,
 ἀγαθὸς ποιητῆς καὶ ποθεινὸς τοῖς φίλοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ποῖ γῆς ὁ τλήμων;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

85 εἰς μακάρων εὐωχίαν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁ δὲ Ξενοκλέης;

⁹ Agathon, victorious in his debut in 416 (commemorated in

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Yes, and that's the only class act left, if it really is one; because I'm not exactly sure how that stands either.

HERACLES

If you must resurrect someone, then why not Sophocles, who's better than Euripides?

DIONYSUS

No, first I want to get Iophon alone by himself and evaluate what he produces without Sophocles. Besides, Euripides is a slippery character and would probably even help me pull off an escape, whereas Sophocles was peaceable here and will be peaceable there.

HERACLES

And where's Agathon?⁹

DIONYSUS

He's gone and left me; a fine poet and much missed by his friends.

HERACLES

Where on earth to, poor thing?

DIONYSUS

To party with the Blest.

HERACLES

What about Xenocles?¹⁰

Plato's *Symposium*) and famous both for his innovative style and his personal beauty, had left Athens with his lover Pausanias for the court of Archelaus of Macedon around 408; he is portrayed in *Women at the Thesmophoria*.

¹⁰ A son of Carcinus who defeated Euripides' Trojan trilogy in 415.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐξόλοιο νῆ Δία.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Πυθάγγελος δέ;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

περὶ ἐμοῦ δ' οὐδεὶς λόγος
ἐπιτριβομένου τὸν ὦμον οὕτωςι σφόδρα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὔκουν ἕτερ' ἔστ' ἐνταῦθα μειρακύλλια
90 τραγωδίας ποιοῦντα πλεῖν ἢ μυρία,
Εὐριπίδου πλεῖν ἢ σταδίῳ λαλίστερα;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐπιφυλλίδες ταῦτ' ἐστὶ καὶ στωμύλματα,
χελιδόνων μουσεῖα, λωβηταὶ τέχνης,
ἂ φρούδα θάττον, ἦν μόνον χορὸν λάβη,
95 ἅπαξ προσουρήσαντα τῇ τραγωδίᾳ.
γόνιμον δὲ ποιητὴν ἂν οὐχ εὖροις ἔτι
ζητῶν ἂν, ὅστις ῥῆμα γενναῖον λάκοι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πῶς γόνιμον;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὠδὶ γόνιμον, ὅστις φθέγγεται
τοιουτοῦ τι παρακεκινδυνευμένου,
100 “αἰθέρα Διὸς δωμάτιον,” ἢ “χρόνου πόδα,”
ἢ “φρένα μὲν οὐκ ἐθέλουσαν ὁμόσαι καθ' ἱερῶν,
γλώτταν δ' ἐπιορκήσασαν ἰδίᾳ τῆς φρενός.”

FROGS

DIONYSUS

To hell with *him*!

HERACLES

And Pythangelus?¹¹

XANTHIAS

Not a word about me, while my shoulder's getting so badly bruised?

HERACLES

Aren't there others here, lads by the thousands composing tragedies and out-blabbering Euripides by a mile?

DIONYSUS

Those are cast-offs and empty chatter, choirs of swallows, wreckers of their art, who maybe get a chorus and are soon forgotten, after their single piss against Tragedy. But if you look for a potent poet, one who could utter a lordly phrase, you won't find any left.

HERACLES

What do you mean, "potent"?

DIONYSUS

Potent, as in one who can give voice to something adventuresome, like "Aether, Bedchamber of Zeus,"¹² or "Time's Foot,"¹³ or "a heart unwilling to swear upon sacrificial victims, and a tongue forsworn separately from the heart."¹⁴

¹¹ Otherwise unknown.

¹² Misquoting *Wise Melanippe* (fr. 487), "Aether, Zeus' abode."

¹³ *Alexander* (fr. 42), *Bacchae* 889.

¹⁴ Paraphrasing *Hippolytus* 612.

ARISTOPHANES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

σέ δὲ ταῦτ' ἀρέσκει;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μᾶλλον πλεῖν ἢ μαίνομαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἦ μὴν κόβαλά γ' ἐστίν, ὡς καὶ σοὶ δοκεῖ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

105 μὴ τὸν ἐμὸν οἴκει νοῦν· ἔχεις γὰρ οἰκίαν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καὶ μὴν ἀτεχνῶς γε παμπόνηρα φαίνεται.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

δειπνεῖν με δίδασκε.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

περὶ ἐμοῦ δ' οὐδεὶς λόγος.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

110 ἀλλ' ὦνπερ ἔνεκα τήνδε τὴν σκευὴν ἔχων
ἦλθον κατὰ σὴν μίμησιν, ἵνα μοι τοὺς ξένους
τοὺς σοὺς φράσειας, εἰ δεοίμην, οἷσι σὺ
ἐχρῶ τόθ', ἠνίκ' ἦλθες ἐπὶ τὸν Κέρβερρον,
τούτους φράσον μοι, λιμένας, ἀρτοπώλια,
πορνεῖ', ἀναπαύλας, ἐκτροπᾶς, κρήνας, ὁδοὺς,
πόλεις, διαίτας, πανδοκευτρίας, ὅπου
κόρεις ὀλίγιστοι.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

115 περὶ ἐμοῦ δ' οὐδεὶς λόγος.

FROGS

HERACLES

You like that stuff?

DIONYSUS

Like it? Why, I'm crazy about it!

HERACLES

It's pure blarney, and you know it as well as I do.

DIONYSUS

Don't manage my mind,¹⁵ but mind your own business.

HERACLES

Come now, it's obviously complete rubbish.

DIONYSUS

Stick to your specialty: eating.

XANTHIAS

But not a word about me!

DIONYSUS

Well, the reason I've come wearing this outfit in imitation of you is so you'll tell me about those friends of yours who put you up when you went after Cerberus,¹⁶ in case I need them. Tell me about them, about the harbors, bakeries, whorehouses, rest areas, directions, springs, roads, cities, places to stay, the landladies with the fewest bedbugs.

XANTHIAS

But not a word about me!

¹⁵ *Andromeda* (fr. 144).

¹⁶ The three-headed watchdog of Hades, fetched up by Heracles in the last of his labors.

ARISTOPHANES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ σχέτλιε, τολμήσεις γὰρ ἰέναι καὶ σύ γε;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μηδὲν ἔτι πρὸς ταῦτ', ἀλλὰ φράζε τῶν ὁδῶν
ὅπῃ τάχιστ' ἀφίξομαι 'ς Ἴαιδου κάτω
καὶ μήτε θερμὴν μήτ' ἄγαν ψυχρὰν φράσης.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

120 φέρε δὴ, τίν' αὐτῶν σοι φράσω πρώτην; τίνα;
μία μὲν γὰρ ἔστιν ἀπὸ κάλω καὶ θρανίου,
κρεμάσαντι σαντόν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

παῦε, πνιγηρὰν λέγεις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἀτραπὸς ξύντομος τετριμμένη,
ἢ διὰ θυείας.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἄρα κώνειον λέγεις;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μάλιστά γε.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

125 ψυχρὰν γε καὶ δυσχείμερον
εὐθὺς γὰρ ἀποπήγνυσι τάντικνήμια.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

βούλει ταχεῖαν καὶ κατάντη σοι φράσω;

FROGS

HERACLES

You madcap, would you dare to go there too?¹⁷

DIONYSUS

Drop that subject; just give me the directions, my quickest route down to Hades, and don't give me one that's too hot or too cold.

HERACLES

Let me see, which one shall I give you first? Hmm. Well, there's one via rope and bench: you hang yourself.

DIONYSUS

Stop it, that way's too stifling.

HERACLES

Well, there's a shortcut that's well-beaten—in a mortar.

DIONYSUS

You mean hemlock?

HERACLES

Exactly.

DIONYSUS

That's a chill and wintry way! It quickly freezes your shins solid.

HERACLES

Want to hear about a quick downhill route?

¹⁷ In portraying this as Dionysus' first trip to the underworld, Aristophanes apparently ignores the myths of his rescue of Semele.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Δί', ὡς ὄντος γε μὴ βαδιστικοῦ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καθέρπυσόν νυν εἰς Κεραμεικόν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κᾶτα τί;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸν πύργον τὸν ὑψηλόν—

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

130

τί δρῶ;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀφιεμένην τὴν λαμπάδ' ἐντεύθεν θεῶ,
κᾶπειτ' ἐπειδὰν φῶσιν οἱ θεώμενοι
“εἶνται,” τόθ' εἶναι καὶ σὺ σαυτόν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ποῖ;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

κάτω.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἄλλ' ἀπολέσαιμ' ἂν ἐγκεφάλου θρίω δύο.
οὐκ ἂν βαδίσοιμι τὴν ὁδὸν ταύτην.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

135

τί δαί;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἦνπερ σὺ τότε κατῆλθες.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Yes indeed; I'm not much for hiking.

HERACLES

Then stroll to the Cerameicus—

DIONYSUS

Then what?

HERACLES

and climb the tower, the high one.

DIONYSUS

And do what?

HERACLES

Watch the start of the torch race, and when the spectators cry "they're off," then off you go too.

DIONYSUS

Where?

HERACLES

Down!

DIONYSUS

But I'd be wasting two brain croquettes. I'd rather not stroll that route.

HERACLES

Then how will you go?

DIONYSUS

The same way you went.

ARISTOPHANES

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' ὁ πλοῦς πολὺς.
εὐθὺς γὰρ ἐπὶ λίμνην μεγάλην ἤξεις πάνν
ἄβυσσον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

εἶτα πῶς γε περαιωθήσομαι;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

140 ἐν πλοιαρίῳ τυννουτῶί σ' ἀνὴρ γέρων
ναύτης διάξει δὺ' ὀβολῶ μισθὸν λαβῶν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

φεῦ.
ὡς μέγα δύνασθον πανταχοῦ τῶ δὺ' ὀβολῶ.
πῶς ἤλθέτην κάκεις;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

Θησεὺς ἤγαγεν.
μετὰ ταῦτ' ὄφεις καὶ θηρί' ὄψει μυρία
δεινότατα.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μή μ' ἐκπληττε μηδὲ δειμάτων·
οὐ γάρ μ' ἀποτρέψεις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

145 εἶτα βόρβορον πολὺν
καὶ σκῶρ ἀείνων· ἐν δὲ τούτῳ κειμένους,
εἴ που ξένον τις ἠδίκησε πώποτε,
ἢ παῖδα κινῶν τὰργύριον ὑφείλετο,
ἢ μητέρ' ἠλόησεν, ἢ πατρός γνάθον
150 ἐπάταξεν, ἢ ἰόρκον ὄρκον ὤμοσεν,

FROGS

HERACLES

That's a long voyage. First you'll come to a vast lake, quite bottomless.

DIONYSUS

Then how will I cross it?

HERACLES

An ancient mariner will ferry you across in a little boat no bigger than this, for a fare of two obols.¹⁸

DIONYSUS

Wow, what power those two obols have everywhere! How did they make their way down there?

HERACLES

Theseus brought them.¹⁹ After that, you'll see an infinity of serpents and beasts most frightful.

DIONYSUS

Don't try to shock or scare me off; you'll not deter me.

HERACLES

Then you'll see lots of mud and ever-flowing shit; in it lies anyone who ever wronged a stranger, or snatched a boy's fee while screwing him, or thrashed his mother, or socked his father in the jaw, or swore a false oath, or had someone

¹⁸ The traditional fare was one obol; here "two obols" probably refers to the two-obol dole introduced by Cleophon in 410 (Aristotle, *Constitution* 28.3; *IG* i³ 375–77), perhaps to the price of a theater ticket (but then "everywhere" is hard to explain).

¹⁹ The journey of Theseus, an Athenian hero, to the underworld was well known, and was dramatized in Critias' tragedy *Perithous* (date unknown, and alternatively attributed in antiquity to Euripides).

ARISTOPHANES

ἢ Μορσίμου τις ῥῆσιν ἐξεγράψατο.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐχρῆν γε πρὸς τούτοισι κει
τὴν πυρρίχην τις ἔμαθε τὴν Κινησίου.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

155 ἐντεῦθεν αὐλῶν τίς σε περίεισιν πνοή,
ᾧφει τε φῶς κάλλιστον ὥσπερ ἐνθάδε,
καὶ μυρρινῶνας καὶ θιάσους εὐδαίμονας
ἀνδρῶν γυναικῶν καὶ κρότον χειρῶν πολύν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οὔτοι δὲ δὴ τίνες εἰσίν;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἱ μεμνημένοι—

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

160 νῆ τὸν Δί' ἐγὼ γοῦν ὄνος ἄγω μυστήρια.
ἀτὰρ οὐ καθέξω ταῦτα τὸν πλείω χρόνον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἶ σοι φράσουσ' ἀπαξάπανθ' ὦν ἂν δέη.
οὔτοι γὰρ ἐγγύτατα παρ' αὐτὴν τὴν ὁδὸν
ἐπὶ ταῖσι τοῦ Πλούτωνος οἰκοῦσιν θύραις.
καὶ χαῖρε πόλλ', ὦδελφέ.

152-53 hos vv. Aristophanem Byz. quasi alternos notasse ΣVE,
unde 152 del. et 153 ἦ π. γρΣ

FROGS

copy out a speech by Morsimus.²⁰

DIONYSUS

And by heaven, we should add anyone who learned that war dance by Cinesias.²¹

HERACLES

And next a breath of pipes will waft about you, and there'll be brilliant sunlight, just like ours, and myrtle groves, happy bands of men and women, and a great clapping of hands.

DIONYSUS

And who are those people?

HERACLES

The initiates.

XANTHIAS

And I'm the damn donkey who carries out the Mysteries! But I'm not going to put up with it any longer. (*tossing down the baggage*)

HERACLES

They'll tell you everything you need to know. They live right beside the road you'll be taking, at Pluto's palace gate. So bon voyage, my brother.

HERACLES goes inside.

²⁰ Son of the tragic poet Philocles and great-nephew of Aeschylus; ridiculed also in *Knights* (401) and *Peace* (803).

²¹ The dance in full armor (*pyrriche*) was a prestigious competition at the quadrennial Panathenaea (held the previous summer). Cinesias was a contemporary dithyrambic poet much ridiculed in comedy for his wasted physique and airy, avant-garde music.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

165 ὑγίαινε. σὺ δὲ τὰ στρώματ' αὐθις λάμβανε.
νῆ Δία καὶ σύ γε

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

πρὶν καὶ καταθέσθαι;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καὶ ταχέως μέντοι πάνυ.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

μὴ δῆθ', ἰκετεύω σ', ἀλλὰ μίσθωσαί τινα
τῶν ἐκφερομένων, ὅστις ἐπὶ ταῦτ' ἔρχεται.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

εἰ δὲ μὴ ἔρω;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τότ' ἐμ' ἄγειν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καλῶς λέγεις.

170 καὶ γάρ τιν' ἐκφέρουσι τουτονὶ νεκρόν.
οὗτος, σὲ λέγω μέντοι, σὲ τὸν τεθνηκότα.
ἄνθρωπε, βούλει σκενᾶρι' εἰς Ἄιδου φέρειν;

ΝΕΚΡΟΣ

πόσ' ἄττα;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ταυτί.

ΝΕΚΡΟΣ

δύο δραχμὰς μισθὸν τελείς;

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Sure, and you be well too. (*to Xanthias*) You there, pick up that baggage again.

XANTHIAS

Before I've even put it down?

DIONYSUS

Yes, and make it snappy too.

XANTHIAS

No, please no! Hire someone instead, someone being laid to rest, who's headed in the same direction.

DIONYSUS

What if I can't find one?

XANTHIAS

Then take me.

Enter Pall Bearers, bearing a CORPSE on a bier.

DIONYSUS

Good suggestion. And look, here's a corpse they're bearing off now. (*approaching the bier*) You there, yes I mean you, the deceased one. Hey buddy, want to haul some bags to Hades?

CORPSE

How many?

DIONYSUS

These here.

CORPSE

Will you pay two drachmas?

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μὰ Δί, ἀλλ' ἔλαττον.

ΝΕΚΡΟΣ

ὑπάγεθ' ὑμεῖς τῆς ὁδοῦ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

175 ἀνάμεινον, ὦ δαιμόνι', ἐὰν ξυμβῶ τί σοι.

ΝΕΚΡΟΣ

εἰ μὴ καταθήσεις δύο δραχμάς, μὴ διαλέγου.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

λάβ' ἐννέ' ὀβολούς.

ΝΕΚΡΟΣ

ἀναβιώην νυν πάλιν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ὡς σεμνὸς ὁ κατάρατος. οὐκ οἰμώξεται;
ἐγὼ βαδιούμαι.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

χρηστὸς εἶ καὶ γεννάδας.
χωρῶμεν ἐπὶ τὸ πλοῖον.

ΧΑΡΩΝ

180 ὥπ, παραβαλοῦ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τουτὶ τί ἐστι;

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Certainly not that much.

CORPSE

Move along, bearers.

DIONYSUS

Hold on, fella, maybe we can work something out.

CORPSE

Put down two drachmas or shut up.

DIONYSUS

Here's one and a half.

CORPSE

I'd sooner live again!

CORPSE is borne away.

XANTHIAS

Pretty arrogant, the bastard. To hell with him! I'll go. (*picks up the baggage*)

DIONYSUS

You're a fine gentleman. Let's head for the boat. (*they move to the edge of the stage*)

CHARON punts a wheeled boat into the orchestra and over to the stage.

CHARON

Woo-op, lay her alongside.

DIONYSUS

(*looking out over the orchestra*) What's this?

ARISTOPHANES

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τούτο; λίμνη.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ Δία

αὐτή ᾽στὶν ἣν ἔφραζε, καὶ πλοῖόν γ' ὄρω.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ κάστι γ' ὁ Χάρων οὔτοσί.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

χαῖρ', ὦ Χάρων.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

χαῖρ', ὦ Χάρων.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ καὶ ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

χαῖρ', ὦ Χάρων.

ΧΑΡΩΝ

185 τίς εἰς ἀναπαύλας ἐκ κακῶν καὶ πραγμάτων;
τίς εἰς τὸ Δήθης πεδίον, ἧ ᾽ς ᾽Οκνου πλοκάς,
ἧ ᾽ς Κερβερίους, ἧ ᾽ς κόρακας, ἧ ᾽πὶ Ταίναρον;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐγώ.

¹⁸⁶ ᾽Οκνου πλοκάς Aristarchus ap. Phot. 338.8 = S o 399:
᾽Ονου πόκας a testt.

²² The triple greeting of Charon parodies a scene in Achaeus' lost satyr play, *Aethon* (*TrGF* 20 F 11).

FROGS

XANTHIAS

This? A lake.

DIONYSUS

Why yes, it's the very lake that he told us about, and I see a boat too.

XANTHIAS

Yes, by Poseidon, and that's Charon himself.

DIONYSUS

Welcome Charon!

XANTHIAS

Welcome, Charon!

DIONYSUS AND XANTHIAS

Welcome Charon!²²

CHARON

Who's for release from cares and troubles? Who's for the Plain of Oblivion? For Ocnus' Twinings?²³ The Land of the Cerberians?²⁴ The buzzards? Taenarum?²⁵

DIONYSUS

Me.

²³ A famous painting by Polygnotus at Delphi (Pausanias 10.29.1-2) depicted Ocnus in the underworld, plaiting a rope that a donkey keeps eating away; and he was known elsewhere in Athenian drama (Cratinus fr. 367, Pollux 4.142).

²⁴ A people mentioned in Sophocles (fr. 1060) and (variant) in *Odyssey* 11.14; here appropriately suggesting Cerberus (111 n.).

²⁵ The middle of the three promontories at the southern tip of the Peloponnese (now Cape Matapan), where Heracles entered the underworld to fetch Cerberus.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΑΡΩΝ

ταχέως ἔμβαινε.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ποῦ σχήσειν δοκεῖς;

ΧΑΡΩΝ

ἐς κόρακας.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὄντως;

ΧΑΡΩΝ

ναὶ μὰ Δία, σοῦ γ' οὔνεκα.

εἴσβαινε δῆ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

παῖ, δεῦρο.

ΧΑΡΩΝ

190

δοῦλον οὐκ ἄγω,
εἰ μὴ νεναυμάχηκε τὴν περὶ τῶν κρεῶν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἔτυχον ὀφθαλμῶν.

ΧΑΡΩΝ

οὔκουν περιθρέξει δῆτα τὴν λίμνην τρέχων;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ποῦ δῆτ' ἀναμενῶ;

¹⁹¹ κρεῶν] νεκρῶν (cj. Demetrius Ixion teste Photio 1.350) R
K γρΣRVE

¹⁹³ τρέχων A K: κύκλω R V

FROGS

CHARON

Hurry aboard.

DIONYSUS

Where are you headed?

CHARON

To the buzzards!

DIONYSUS

Really?

CHARON

Sure, just for you. Now get aboard!

DIONYSUS

(*to Xanthias*) Come on, boy.

CHARON

I'm not taking a slave, not unless he fought for his hide in the sea battle.²⁶

XANTHIAS

Actually, I couldn't be there; had the pinkeye.

CHARON

Then you'd better start running around the lake, double-time.

XANTHIAS

Then where should I wait?

²⁶ Arginusae, cf. 33 n.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΑΡΩΝ

παρὰ τὸν Αὐαίνου λίθον,
ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀναπαύλαις.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μανθάνεις;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

195 πάνν μανθάνω.

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, τῷ ξυνέτυχον ἐξιῶν;

ΧΑΡΩΝ

κάθιζ' ἐπὶ κόπην. εἴ τις ἔτι πλεῖ, σπευδέτω.
οὔτος, τί ποιεῖς;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὄ τι ποιῶ; τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἦ
ἴζω ἄπι κόπην, οὔπερ ἐκέλευές με σύ;

ΧΑΡΩΝ

200 οὔκονν καθεδεῖ δῆτ' ἐνθαδί, γάστρων;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἰδού.

ΧΑΡΩΝ

οὔκονν προβαλεῖ τὸ χεῖρε κάκτενεῖς;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἰδού.

ΧΑΡΩΝ

οὐ μὴ φλυαρήσεις ἔχων, ἀλλ' ἀντιβὰς
ἐλᾶς προθύμως.

FROGS

CHARON

By the Withering Stone; there's a rest stop there.

DIONYSUS

Did you get that?

XANTHIAS

Loud and clear. Damn my luck, what crossed my path when I left the house?

Exit XANTHIAS by one of the parodoi.

CHARON

(to Dionysus) Sit to the oar. *(Dionysus gets into the boat)* If anyone else is sailing, hurry it up. *(to Dionysus)* Hey you there, what do you think you're doing?

DIONYSUS

Who me? Just sitting on the oar, right where you told me.

CHARON

No, sit over here, fatso.

DIONYSUS

All right.

CHARON

Now put out those hands and stretch your arms.

DIONYSUS

All right.

CHARON

Quit playing around! Put your feet against the stretcher and start rowing, gung-ho.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κᾶτα πῶς δυνήσομαι
ἄπειρος, ἀθαλάττεντος, ἀσαλαμίνιος
ὦν εἴτ' ἐλαύνειν;

ΧΑΡΩΝ

205 ῥᾶστ' ἀκούσει γὰρ μέλη
κάλλιστ', ἐπειδὰν ἐμβάλῃς ἄπαξ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τίνων;

ΧΑΡΩΝ

βατράχων κύκνων θαυμαστά.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κατακέλευε δῆ.

ΧΑΡΩΝ

ὠπόπ, ὠπόπ.

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

βρεκεκεκέξ κοᾶξ κοᾶξ,
210 βρεκεκεκέξ κοᾶξ κοᾶξ.
λιμναῖα κρηνῶν τέκνα,
ξύναυλον ὕμνων βοᾶν
φθεγξώμεθ', εὔγηρην ἐμὰν
ἄοιδάν, κοᾶξ κοᾶξ,

215 ἦν ἀμφὶ Νυσηῖον
Διὸς Διόνυσον ἐν
λίμναισιν ἰαχήσαμεν,
ἦνίχ' ὁ κραιπαλόκωμος

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Now how will I manage that? I'm green, a landlubber, no Salaminian, and I'm supposed to row?

CHARON

It's very easy, because you'll hear some gorgeous songs as soon as you dip your oar.

DIONYSUS

Whose songs?

CHARON

The Frog Swans; wonderful stuff.

DIONYSUS

Then give me the stroke.

CHARON

O-op-op, O-op-op.

As the boat moves across the orchestra, a CHORUS OF FROGS enter by the parodoi and begin to leap about, following the boat.

FROGS

Brekekekex koax koax,
brekekekex koax koax!
Children of lake and stream,
let's voice a cry in concert
with the pipes, our own euphonious
song—koax koax—
that once we sounded
for the Nysean son of Zeus,
Dionysus, in the Marshes,
when the hungover throng of revellers

ARISTOPHANES

τοῖς ἱεροῖσι Χύτροις χω-
ρεῖ κατ' ἐμὸν τέμενος λαῶν ὄχλος.

220 βρεκεκεκέξ κοᾶξ κοᾶξ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐγὼ δέ γ' ἀλγείν ἄρχομαι
τὸν ὄρρον, ᾧ κοᾶξ κοᾶξ.

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

βρεκεκεκέξ κοᾶξ κοᾶξ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὕμῖν δ' ἴσως οὐδὲν μέλει.

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

225 βρεκεκεκέξ κοᾶξ κοᾶξ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐξόλοισθ' αὐτῷ κοᾶξ·
οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστ' ἄλλ' ἢ κοᾶξ.

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

εἰκότως γ', ᾧ πολλὰ πρᾶττων.

ἐμὲ γὰρ ἔστερξαν εὐλυροί τε Μοῦσαι

230 καὶ κεροβάτας Πάν, ὁ καλαμόφθογγα παίζων·

231/2 προσεπιτέρεται δ' ὁ φορμικτὰς Ἀπόλλων,

ἔνεκα δόνακος, ὃν ὑπολύριον

ἔνυδρον ἐν λίμναις τρέφω.

235 βρεκεκεκέξ κοᾶξ κοᾶξ.

FROGS

on holy Pot Day
reeled through my precinct.²⁷
Brekekekex koax koax!

DIONYSUS

As for me, my butt's
getting sore, you koax koax.

FROGS

Brekekekex koax koax!

DIONYSUS

But I don't suppose you care.

FROGS

Brekekekex koax koax!

DIONYSUS

Blast you, and your koax too!
Yes, all you are is koax.

FROGS

Quite so, you busybody!
For the Muses skillful on the lyre cherish us,
and hornfoot Pan, who plays the tuneful reeds,
and Apollo the Harper delights in us too,
in thanks for the stalks that I grow
in lake water, as girding for his lyre.
Brekekekex koax koax!

²⁷ The sanctuary of Dionysus ("Nysean" refers to Nysa, the mythical mountain of his birth) in the Marshes (located southwest of the Acropolis) was the site of the Anthesteria festival, the second day of which (Pitchers) featured heavy drinking, and the third and final day (Pots) the dedication of the pitchers.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐγὼ δὲ φλυκταίνας γ' ἔχω,
 χὼ πρωκτὸς ἰδίει πάλαι,
 κᾶτ' αὐτίκ' ἐκκύψας ἐρεῖ—

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

βρεκεκεκεξ̄ κοᾶξ̄ κοᾶξ̄.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

240 ἀλλ', ὦ φιλωδὸν γένος,
 παύσασθε.

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

μᾶλλον μὲν οὔν
 φθεγξόμεσθ', εἰ δὴ ποτ' εὐ-
 ηλίους ἐν ἀμέραισιν
 ἠλάμεσθα διὰ κυπείρου
 καὶ φλέω, χαίροντες ὠδῆς
 245 πολυκολύμβοισι μέλεσιν,
 ἢ Διὸς φεύγοντες ὄμβρον
 ἔνυδρον ἐν βυθῶ χορείαν
 αἰόλαν ἐφθεγξάμεσθα
 πομφολυγοπαφλάσμασιν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ καὶ ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

250 βρεκεκεκεξ̄ κοᾶξ̄ κοᾶξ̄.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τουτὶ παρ' ὑμῶν λαμβάνω.

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

δεινὰ τᾶρα πεισόμεσθα.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

But I've got blisters,
and my arsehole's been seeping,
and pretty soon it'll poke out and say—

FROGS

Brekekekex koax koax!

DIONYSUS

Ah, you songful race,
do stop!

FROGS

Oh no, we'll sound off
even louder, if ever
on sunshiny days
we hopped through sedge
and reed, rejoicing in our song's
busily diving melodies,
or if ever in flight from Zeus' rain
we chimed underwater in the depths
a chorale spangled with
bubbly ploppifications.

DIONYSUS AND FROGS

Brekekekex koax koax!

DIONYSUS

I'm borrowing this from you!

FROGS

What an awful thing to do!

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

253/4 δεινότερα δ' ἔγωγ', ἐλαύνων
255 εἰ διαρραγήσομαι.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ καὶ ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

βρεκεκεκέξ κοᾶξ κοᾶξ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οἰμῶζετ'· οὐ γάρ μοι μέλει.

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

ἀλλὰ μὴν κεκραξόμεσθ' ἄ γ'
ὅπόσον ἢ φάρυξ ἂν ἡμῶν
χανδάνη δι' ἡμέρας·

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ καὶ ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

260 βρεκεκεκέξ κοᾶξ κοᾶξ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τούτῳ γὰρ οὐ νικήσετε.

ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ

οὐδὲ μὴν ἡμᾶς σὺ πάντως.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οὐδὲ μὴν ὑμεῖς γ' ἐμέ,
οὐδέποτε κεκράξομαι γὰρ
265 κἂν με δῆ δι' ἡμέρας, ἔ-
ως ἂν ὑμῶν ἐπικρατήσω τῷ κοᾶξ.
βρεκεκεκέξ κοᾶξ κοᾶξ.

ἔμελλον ἄρα παύσειν ποθ' ὑμᾶς τοῦ κοᾶξ.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

But more awful for me, if this rowing
makes me burst apart.

DIONYSUS AND FROGS

Brekekekex koax koax!

DIONYSUS

Wail away; what do I care?

FROGS

In fact we'll bellow
as loud as our gullets will stretch,
all the livelong day!

DIONYSUS AND FROGS

Brekekekex koax koax!

DIONYSUS

You won't beat me at this!

FROGS

And you absolutely won't beat us!

DIONYSUS

And you won't beat me either,
never, for if need be I'll bellow
all the livelong day, until
I vanquish you at koax.
Brekekekex koax koax!

Exit FROGS, unseen by Dionysus.

(discovering them gone) I knew I'd put a stop to that koax
of yours!

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΑΡΩΝ

ὦ παῦε, παῦε, παραβαλοῦ τῷ κωπίῳ.
ἐκβαῖν', ἀπόδος τὸν ναῦλον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

270 ἔχε δὴ τῷ βολῷ.
ὁ Ξανθίας. ποῦ Ξανθίας; ἢ Ξανθία.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἰαῦ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

βάδιζε δεῦρο.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

χαῖρ', ὦ δέσποτα.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τί ἐστι τὰν ταυθῶ;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

σκότος καὶ βόρβωρος.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κατείδες οὖν που τοὺς πατραλοίας αὐτόθι
καὶ τοὺς ἐπιόρκους, οὓς ἔλεγεν ἡμῖν;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

275

σὺ δ' οὔ;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ ἄγωγε, καὶ νυνὶ γ' ὀρώ.
ἄγε δὴ, τί δρῶμεν;

FROGS

CHARON

(as the boat reaches the stage) Stop now, stop! Bring her alongside, with your oar. Off you go. Pay your fare!

DIONYSUS

Here's your two obols.

CHARON punts away and exits by a parodos.

Xanthias! Where's Xanthias? Hey Xanthias!

XANTHIAS

(off) Yo!

DIONYSUS

Get over here!

Reenter XANTHIAS by the other parodos, as having walked around the lake.

XANTHIAS

Hello, master.

DIONYSUS

What was your route like?

XANTHIAS

Darkness and mud.

DIONYSUS

So you must have seen those father beaters and perjurers that he told us about.

XANTHIAS

Didn't you?

DIONYSUS

Sure I did, by Poseidon; *(regarding the spectators)* and I can still see them. Well now, what's next?

ARISTOPHANES

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

προϊέναι βέλτιστα νῶν,
ὡς οὗτος ὁ τόπος ἐστὶν οὗ τὰ θηρία
τὰ δεινὸν ἔφασκ' ἐκείνος.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὡς οἰμώζεται.

280 ἡλαζονεύεθ' ἵνα φοβηθείην ἐγώ,
εἰδώς με μάχιμον ὄντα, φιλοτιμούμενος.
οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτω γαῦρόν ἐσθ' ὡς Ἡρακλῆς.
ἐγὼ δέ γ' εὐζαίμην ἂν ἐντυχεῖν τι
λαβεῖν τ' ἀγώνισμ' ἄξιόν τι τῆς ὁδοῦ.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

285 νῆ τὸν Δία· καὶ μὴν αἰσθάνομαι ψόφου τινός.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ποῦ ποῦ ἔστ';

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ὄπισθεν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐξόπισθέ νυν ἴθι.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἀλλ' ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ πρόσθε.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

πρόσθε νυν ἴθι.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

καὶ μὴν ὀρώ νῆ τὸν Δία θηρίον μέγα.

FROGS

XANTHIAS

We'd best be moving along, because this is the place where he was talking about those awful beasts.

DIONYSUS

And he'll regret it! He was bluffing, trying to scare me; he knew I'm a fighter, and he wanted no rival. There's nothing as puffed up as Heracles.²⁸ Why, I'd like nothing better than to run across one of them and chalk up an achievement worthy of this journey.

XANTHIAS

I know you would. As a matter of fact, I can hear something.

DIONYSUS

Where? Where is it?

XANTHIAS

Behind you.

DIONYSUS

Then get behind me!

XANTHIAS

But now it's in front.

DIONYSUS

Then get in front of me!

XANTHIAS

And now, by Zeus, I see a huge beast.

²⁸ Sophocles, *Philoctetes* fr. 788.1 (substituting "Heracles" for "a man").

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ποιόν τι;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

290 δεινόν. παντοδαπὸν γούν γίνεται
τοτὲ μὲν γε βούς, νυνὶ δ' ὄρεύς, τοτὲ δ' αὖ γυνή
ὠραιοτάτη τις.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ποῦ ἔστι; φέρ' ἐπ' αὐτήν ἴω.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκέτ' αὖ γυνή ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ἤδη κύων.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

Ἐμπουσα τοίνυν ἔστί.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

πυρὶ γούν λάμπεται
ἅπαν τὸ πρόσωπον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καὶ σκέλος χαλκοῦν ἔχει;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

295 νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ, καὶ βολίτινον θάτερον,
σάφ' ἴσθι.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ποῖ δῆτ' ἂν τραποίμην;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ποῖ δ' ἐγώ;

FROGS

DIONYSUS

What kind?

XANTHIAS

Frightful! Anyway, it's a shape-shifter: now a cow; now a mule; and now a woman, very nice looking.

DIONYSUS

Where? Come on, let me at her!

XANTHIAS

Wait, she's not a woman any more, she's a bitch.

DIONYSUS

Then it must be Empusa!

XANTHIAS

Yes, her whole face is ablaze with fire.

DIONYSUS

And does she have a brazen leg?

XANTHIAS

Yes indeed, and the other one's made of dung, I swear.

DIONYSUS

(running about) Where can I run to?

XANTHIAS

Where can I?

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἱερεῦ, διαφύλαξόν μ', ἵν' ὦ σοι ξυμπότης.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἀπολούμεθ', ὦναξ Ἡράκλεις.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οὐ μὴ καλείς μ',
ὠνθρωφ', ἱκετεύω, μηδὲ κατερείς τοῦνομα.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

Διόνυσε τοίνυν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

300 τούτ' ἔθ' ἦττον θάτερον.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἴθ' ἦπερ ἔρχει. δεῦρο δεῦρ', ὦ δέσποτα.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τί δ' ἐστί;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

θάρρει πάντ' ἀγαθὰ πεπράγαμεν,
ἔξεστί θ' ὥσπερ Ἡγέλοχος ἡμῖν λέγειν·
“ἐκ κυμάτων γὰρ αὐθις αὐὶ γαλῆν ὀρώ.”
Ἡμπουσα φρούδη.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

305 κατόμοσον.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

(*to the Priest of Dionysus in the front row of seats*) Priest, save me, so I can come to your party!²⁹

XANTHIAS

Lord Heracles, we're done for!

DIONYSUS

Don't invoke me, man, I beg you, and don't use my name!³⁰

XANTHIAS

Well then, hey Dionysus!

DIONYSUS

That's even worse!

XANTHIAS

(*to the imaginary Empusa*) Begone now! (*to Dionysus*) Come here, master; over here.

DIONYSUS

What?

XANTHIAS

Buck up; everything's working out just fine, and we can say, with Hegelochus, "After the storm how weasily we sail."³¹ Empusa's gone.

DIONYSUS

Swear it.

²⁹ Party for a victorious troupe after the performance, cf. *Acharnians* 1085–94.

³⁰ Dionysus is still disguised as Heracles.

³¹ This actor played the lead in Euripides' play *Orestes* three years earlier, and had thus mispronounced line 279; the comic poets Sannyrion (fr. 8) and Strattis (fr. 1, 63) also recall his mishap.

ARISTOPHANES

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

νῆ τὸν Δία.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καῦθις κατόμοσον.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

νῆ Δί'.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὄμοσον.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

νῆ Δία.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οἴμοι τάλας, ὡς ὠχρίασ' αὐτὴν ἰδών.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ὀδὶ δὲ δείσας ὑπερεπυρρρίασέ σου.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

310 *οἴμοι, πόθεν μοι τὰ κακὰ ταυτὶ προσέπεσεν;
τίν' αἰτιάσομαι θεῶν μ' ἀπολλύναι;
αἰθέρα Διὸς δωμάτιον ἢ χρόνου πόδα;*

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

οὔτος.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τί ἐστίν;

308 σου R: μου A K: που V

FROGS

XANTHIAS

So help me Zeus.

DIONYSUS

Swear it again!

XANTHIAS

By Zeus.

DIONYSUS

Swear.

XANTHIAS

By Zeus.

DIONYSUS

Good grief, how pale I went at the very sight of her!

XANTHIAS

(*indicating Dionysus' robe*) And how brown *this* went in fear for you!

DIONYSUS

Alas, whence have these woes befallen me? Whom of the gods shall I blame for my undoing? Aether, Bedchamber of Zeus? Or Time's Foot?³²

XANTHIAS

Shhh.

DIONYSUS

What is it?

³² Cf. line 100.

ARISTOPHANES

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

οὐ κατήκουσας;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τίνος;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

αὐλῶν πνοῆς.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἔγωγε, καὶ δάδων γέ με

αὔρα τις εἰσέπνευσε μυστικωτάτη.

315 ἀλλ' ἡρεμὲι πτήξαντες ἀκροασώμεθα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ἰακχ', ὦ Ἰακχε.

Ἰακχ', ὦ Ἰακχε.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τοῦτ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖν', ὦ δέσποθ'. οἱ μεμνημένοι
ἐνταῦθά που παίζουσιν, οὓς ἔφραζε νῶν.

320 ἄδουσι γοῦν τὸν Ἰακχον ὄνπερ Διαγόρας.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κάμοι δοκοῦσιν. ἡσυχίαν τοίνυν ἄγειν

βέλτιστόν ἐστιν, ὡς ἂν εἰδῶμεν σαφῶς.

³²⁰ Διαγόρας R A K γρV Σ^R Aristarchus ap. Σ^E Lex. Vindob.:
δι' ἀγορᾶς V Apollodorus Tarsensis ap. Σ^E Hesych. δ 975

FROGS

XANTHIAS

Didn't you hear?

DIONYSUS

Hear what?

XANTHIAS

The breath of pipes.

DIONYSUS

I did, and a most mystic whiff of torches wafted over me.
Let's hunker down here and have a listen.

CHORUS

(*off*)

Iacchus, Iacchus!³³

Iacchus, Iacchus!

XANTHIAS

It's just as I thought, master: the initiates he told us about are frolicking hereabouts. Listen, they're singing the Iacchus Hymn, the one by Diagoras.³⁴

DIONYSUS

I think so too. We'd better keep still until we know for sure.

Enter CHORUS of male and female initiates, wearing worn clothes and carrying torches.

³³ The Eleusinian cult name of Dionysus.

³⁴ Diagoras of Melos was a noted atheist who by 414 had been outlawed from Athens with a price on his head for impugning the Mysteries in a lyric poem (*Clouds* 830, *Birds* 1073-74, Hermippus fr. 43, [Lysias] 6.17, Craterus *FGrH* 342 F 16). The alternative segmentation *di' agoras* ("the one <they sing when processing> through the agora") is unlikely Greek.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) Ἰακχ', ὦ πολυτίμητ' ἐν ἔδραις ἐνθάδε ναίων,
 325 Ἰακχ', ὦ Ἰακχε,
 ἔλθ' ἐπὶ τόνδ' ἀνὰ λειμῶνα χορεύσων
 ὁσίους εἰς θιασώτας,
 πολύκαρπον μὲν τινάσσων
 περὶ κρατὶ σῶ βρύνοντα
 330/1 στέφανον μύρτων, θρασεῖ δ' ἐγκατακρούων
 ποδὶ τὴν ἀκόλαστον
φιλοπαίγμονα τιμῆν,
 334/5 Χαρίτων πλείστον ἔχουσαν μέρος, ἀγνήν, ἱερὰν
ὁσίους μύσταις χορείαν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ὦ πότνια πολυτίμητε Δήμητρος κόρη,
 ὡς ἡδύ μοι προσέπνευσε χοιρείων κρεῶν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οὔκουν ἀτρέμ' ἔξεις, ἦν τι καὶ χορδῆς λάβης;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (ἀντ) ἔγειρ' <ὦ> φλογέας λάμπαδας ἐν χερσὶ τινάσσων,
 342 Ἰακχ', ὦ Ἰακχε,
 νυκτέρου τελετῆς φωσφόρος ἀστήρ.
 φλέγεται δὴ φλογὶ λειμῶν
 345 γόνυ πάλλεται γερόντων·
 ἀποσεύονται δὲ λύπας
 347/8 χρονίους τ' ἐτῶν παλαιῶν ἐνιαυτοῦς
 ἱερᾶς ὑπὸ τιμῆς.
 350 σὺ δὲ λαμπάδι φέγγων

FROGS

CHORUS

Iacchus, dwelling exalted here in your abode,
Iacchus, Iacchus,
come to this meadow to dance
with your reverent followers,
brandishing about your brow
a fruitful, a burgeoning
garland of myrtle, and stamping
with bold foot in our licentious,
fun-loving worship,
that is richly endowed by the Graces, a dance
pure and holy to pious initiates.

XANTHIAS

Most exalted lady, daughter of Demeter, what a nice aroma
of pork wafted over me!

DIONYSUS

Then be still, and you might get some sausage too.

CHORUS

Awaken blazing torches, tossing them in your hands,
Iacchus, Iacchus,
brilliant star of our nighttime rite!
Lo, the meadow's ablaze with flame,
and old men's knees are aleap
as they shed their cares
and the longdrawn seasons of ancient years,
owing to your worship.
Now illuminate with torchlight

³⁴⁴ φλέγεται δὴ φλογὶ Hermann: φλογὶ φλέγεται
(φέγγεται R^{pc}: φθέγγεται^{ac}) δὲ V A U M^{pc}

ARISTOPHANES

προβάδην ἕξαγ' ἐπ' ἀνθηρὸν ἔλειον δάπεδον
χοροποιόν, μάκαρ, ἦβαν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

εὐφημῆν χρὴ καξίστασθαι τοῖς ἡμετέροισι
χοροῖσιν,

- 355 ὅστις ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων ἢ γνώμην μὴ
καθαρεύει
ἢ γενναίων ὄργια Μουσῶν μῆτ' εἶδεν μῆτ'
ἐχόρευσεν,
μηδὲ Κρατίνου τοῦ ταυροφάγου γλώττης Βακχεῖ
ἐτελέσθη,
ἢ βωμολόχοις ἔπεσιν χαίρει μὴ ἔν καιρῷ τοῦτο
ποιούντων,
ἢ στάσιν ἐχθρὰν μὴ καταλύει μηδ' εὐκόλος ἐστί
πολίταις,
- 360 ἀλλ' ἀνεγείρει καὶ ῥιπίζει κερδῶν ἰδίων ἐπιθυμῶν,
ἢ τῆς πόλεως χειμαζομένης ἄρχων
καταδωροδοκεῖται,
ἢ προδίδωσιν φρούριον ἢ ναῦς, ἢ τὰ πόρρητ'
ἀποπέμπει
ἐξ Αἰγίνης Θωρυκίων ὧν εἰκοστολόγος κακοδαίμων,
ἀσκόματα καὶ λῖνα καὶ πίτταν διαπέμπων εἰς
Ἐπίδαυρον,
- 365 ἢ χρήματα ταῖς τῶν ἀντιπάλων ναυσὶν παρέχειν
τινὰ πείθει,
ἢ κατατιλᾷ τῶν Ἑκατείων κυκλίοισι χοροῖσιν
ὑπάδων,

FROGS

and lead forth to blooming meadowland
our dancing youth, o blest one!

CHORUS LEADER

All speak fair, and the following shall stand apart from our dances: whoever is unfamiliar with such utterances as this, or harbors unclean attitudes, or has never beheld or danced in the rites of the first-class Muses nor been initiated in the Bacchic rites of bull-eating Cratinus' language,³⁵ or enjoys clownish words from those who deliver them at the wrong time, or forbears to resolve hateful factionalism and act peaceably toward other citizens,³⁶ but foments and inflames it from desire for personal gain, or as an official sells out the city when she's tossed on stormy seas, or betrays a fortress or fleet, or is a goddamned collector of 5% duties like Thorycion³⁷ and ships contraband from Aegina, sending oar pads, flax, and pitch across to Epidaurus,³⁸ or talks someone into supplying money for our adversaries' navy, or shits on the offerings for Hecate

³⁵ Cratinus, here given a Dionysiac epithet, was the leading comic poet of the generation before Aristophanes; his last attested play, *Pytine*, defeated *Clouds* in 423.

³⁶ Or, with the variant, "and act like a peaceable citizen."

³⁷ In 413 these harbor duties on Athens' allies had replaced the tribute; according to the scholia, Thorycion was a taxiarch.

³⁸ The island of Aegina was an Athenian settlement, and Epidaurus a contributor to the Peloponnesian navy.

³⁵⁸ ποιούντων von Velsen: ποιούσιν a

³⁵⁹ πολίταις K: πολίτ R: πολίτης V A

ARISTOPHANES

ἢ τοὺς μισθοὺς τῶν ποιητῶν ῥήτωρ ὦν εἶτ'
 ἀποτρώγει,
 κωμωδηθεὶς ἐν ταῖς πατρίοις τελεταῖς ταῖς τοῦ
 Διονύσου.
 τούτοις αὐδῶ καὶθις ἐπαυδῶ καὶθις τὸ τρίτον μάλ'
 ἐπαυδῶ
 370 ἐξίστασθαι μύσταισι χοροῖς· ὑμεῖς δ' ἀνεγείρετε
μολπὴν
 καὶ παννυχίδας τὰς ἡμετέρας, αἱ τῆδε πρέπουσιν
ἑορτῆ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) χώρει νυν πᾶς ἀνδρείως
 εἰς τοὺς εὐανθεῖς κόλπους
 374a λειμώνων ἐγκρούων
 374b κάπισκώπτων
 375 καὶ παίζων καὶ χλευάζων.
 ἠρίστηται δ' ἐξαρκούντως.

(ἀντ) ἀλλ' ἔμβα χῶπως ἀρεῖς
 τὴν Σώτειραν γενναίως
 τῆ φωνῆ μολπάζων,
 380 ἢ τὴν χώραν
σώσειν φήσ' εἰς τὰς ὥρας,
 καὶ Θωρυκίων μὴ βούληται.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἄγε νυν ἑτέραν ὕμνων ιδέαν τὴν καρποφόρον
 βασιλείαν,

FROGS

while singing for dithyrambic choruses,³⁹ or is a politician who nibbles away the poets' honoraria after being lampooned in a comedy during the ancestral rites of Dionysus.⁴⁰ To these I proclaim, and proclaim again, and thrice proclaim: stand apart from the initiates' dances; (*to the Chorus*) but do you awaken the song and our nightlong revels, which befit this festival.

CHORUS

Move on now boldly, everyone,
to the lap of the flowery
meadows, stamping the ground
and jesting
and frolicking and mocking;
you've breakfasted well enough!

So step out and be sure you exalt
the Savior Goddess⁴¹ in fine fashion,
hymning her with your voices,
she who vows to safeguard
our land through the ages,
despite what Thorycion wants.

CHORUS LEADER

Come now, celebrate in another form of song the queen of

³⁹ A reference to Cinesias (*Assemblywomen* 330 n.); for the offerings cf. *Wealth* 594–99.

⁴⁰ The scholia identify the author of this proposal (also mentioned in Plato com. fr. 141 and Sannyrion fr. 9) as Archinus "and possibly" (but less plausibly) "Agyrrhius."

⁴¹ Athena.

ARISTOPHANES

Δήμητρα θεάν, ἐπικοσμοῦντες ζαθέοις μολπαῖς
κελαδεῖτε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ.) Δήμητερ, ἀγνῶν ἀργίων
ἄνασσα, συμπαραστάτει,
386 καὶ σῶζε τὸν σαυτῆς χορόν·
καὶ μ' ἀσφαλῶς πανήμερον
παῖσαί τε καὶ χορεύσαι.

(ἀντ) καὶ πολλὰ μὲν γέλοιά μ' εἰ-
390 } πεῖν, πολλὰ δὲ σπουδαῖα, καὶ
} τῆς σῆς ἐορτῆς ἀξίως
} παῖσαντα καὶ σκώψαντα νι-
} κήσαντα ταινιούσθαι.

ἄγ' εἰά νιν
395 καὶ τὸν ὠραῖον θεὸν παρακαλεῖτε δεῦρο
ῶδαῖσι, τὸν ξυνέμπορον τῆσδε τῆς χορείας.

(στρ) Ἰακχε πολυτίμητε, μέλος ἐορτῆς
ἡδιστον εὐρών, δεῦρο συνακολουθεῖ
400 πρὸς τὴν θεὸν
καὶ δείξον ὡς ἄνευ πόνου
πολλὴν ὁδὸν περαίνεις.
Ἰακχε φιλοχορευτά, συμπρόπεμπέ με.

(ἀντ. α) σὺ γὰρ κατεσχίσω μὲν ἐπὶ γέλῳτι

FROGS

bounteous harvests, the goddess Demeter, adorning her
with holy hymns.

CHORUS

Demeter, lady of pure rites,
stand beside us
and keep your chorus safe;
and may I safely frolic and dance
all the livelong day.

And may I utter much that's funny,
and also much that's serious,
and may I frolic and jest
worthily of your festival
and be garlanded in victory.

Hey now,
let your song invite the youthful god as well,
our travel companion in this dance.

Exalted Iacchus, inventor of most enjoyable
festive song, come and march along with us
to the goddess,
and show us how effortlessly
you get through a long trek.⁴²
Iacchus lover of choruses, escort me on my way.
For it was you who, for a joke

⁴² From Athens to Eleusis, about twelve miles.

ARISTOPHANES

405 *κὰπ' εὐτελείᾳ τόδε τὸ σανδαλίσκον*
καὶ τὸ ῥάκος,
κᾶξηῦρες ὥστ' ἀζημίους
παίζειν τε καὶ χορεύειν.
 Ἰακχε φιλοχορευτά, συμπρόπεμπέ με.

(ἀντ. β) *καὶ γὰρ παραβλέψας τι μειρακίσκης*
 410 *ινυδῆ κατείδον καὶ μάλ' εὐπροσώπου,*
συμπαιστρίας,
χιτωνίου παραρραγέν-
τος τιθθίου προκύψαν.
 Ἰακχε φιλοχορευτά, συμπρόπεμπέ με.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐγὼ δ' αἰί πως φιλακόλου-
θὸς εἶμι καὶ μετ' αὐτῆς
παίζων χορεύειν βούλομαι.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

415 *κᾶγωγε πρὸς.*

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βούλεσθε δῆτα κοινῇ
σκώψωμεν Ἀρχέδημον;
ὃς ἐπτέτης ὧν οὐκ ἔφυσσε φράτερας,

⁴³ The chorus, in character as initiates, wear the customary old clothing (cf. *Wealth* 845 n.), but also call attention to the producer's cheapness in providing their costumes—no doubt a result of the Athenians' financial straits at this time: according to the scholiast, citing Aristotle (fr. 630), two producers were assigned

FROGS

and for economizing, had my sandals split
and my rags tattered,⁴³
and you who found a way for us
to frolic and dance without charge.
Iacchus lover of choruses, escort me on my way.

Just now in fact I stole a glance
at a young girl, a very pretty one too,
a playmate,
and where her dress was torn I saw
her titty peeking out.
Iacchus lover of choruses, escort me on my way.

DIONYSUS

I've always been an eager
follower, and want to play with her
as I dance.

XANTHIAS

Me too!

CHORUS

So what say we get together
and ridicule Archedemus?⁴⁴
At seven he still hadn't cut his kinsdom teeth,⁴⁵

to each competitor at the City Dionysia this year, because not enough candidates could be found who could afford to undertake the expense alone.

⁴⁴ Prosecutor of one of the commanders at Arginusae (Xenophon *Hellenica* 1.7); known as "Bleary Eyes" (588, Lysias 14.25) and mocked elsewhere for foreign ancestry (Eupolis fr. 80).

⁴⁵ Punning on *phrateras* ("brethren" of a phratry) and *phrasteres* (permanent teeth). Enrollment of a boy in his father's phratry normally took place in his first year, and was considered proof of legitimate birth and citizen status.

ARISTOPHANES

420 νυνὶ δὲ δημαγωγεῖ
 ἐν τοῖς ἄνω νεκροῖσι,
 κᾶστιν τὰ πρῶτα τῆς ἐκεῖ μοχθηρίας.

τὸν Κλεισθέου δ' ἀκούω
 ἐν ταῖς ταφαῖσι πρωκτὸν
 τίλλειν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ σπαράττειν τὰς γνάθους·

425 κὰκόπτει' ἐγκεκυφώς,
 κᾶκλαε κᾶκεκράγει
Σεβίνου ὅστις ἐστὶν Ἀναφλύστιος.

καὶ Καλλίαν γέ φασι
 τοῦτον τὸν Ἴπποκίνου
 430 κύσθου λεοντῆν ναυμαχεῖν ἐνημμένον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἔχουτ' ἂν οὖν φράσαι νῶν
 Πλούτων' ὅπου ἰθάδ' οἰκεῖ;
 ξένω γάρ ἐσμεν ἀρτίως ἀφιγμένοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μηδὲν μακρὰν ἀπέλθης,

422 Κλεισθέου R V A K; Κλεισθένη(ν) P20ⁱ U L Aldina

429 Ἴπποκίνου Sternbach; Ἴπποβίνου a S

430 κύσθῳ Bothe

46 No son of Cleisthenes (48 n.) is otherwise attested; alterna-

FROGS

but now he's a leading politician
among the stiffs above,
and holds the local record for rascality.

And I hear that Cleisthenes' son
is in the graveyard, plucking
his arsehole and tearing his cheeks;⁴⁶

all bent over, he kept beating his head,
wailing and weeping
for Humpus of Wankton, whoever that may be.⁴⁷

And Callias, we're told,
that son of Hippocoitus,⁴⁸
fights at sea in a lionskin made of pussy.⁴⁹

DIONYSUS

Now could you please tell us
where hereabouts Pluto dwells?
We're strangers who've just arrived.

CHORUS

You haven't very far to go

tive possibilities are "Cleisthenes' arsehole is . . . plucking and tearing its cheeks," or (with the variant) "Cleisthenes is . . . plucking . . . his arsehole and tearing his cheeks."

⁴⁷ "Sebinus of Anaphlystus" (suggesting *se binein* "fuck you" and *anaphlan* "masturbate") is evidently a fictitious name; it recurs in *Assemblywomen* 979–80. ⁴⁸ Callias (c. 450–c. 366), ridiculed in comedy for extravagance and debauchery since the 420s, by the 390s had largely squandered the fortune left him by his father Hipponicus (cf. *Assemblywomen* 810–12), whose name is here distorted for a pun on *kinein* "screw."

⁴⁹ Or, with Bothe's conjecture, "in a lionskin fights a pussy at sea." Cf. also 501 n.

ARISTOPHANES

435 μηδ' αὐθις ἐπανέρη με,
ἀλλ' ἴσθ' ἐπ' αὐτὴν τὴν θύραν ἀφιγμένως.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

αἴροι' ἂν αὐθις, ὦ παῖ.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τουτὶ τί ἦν τὸ πρᾶγμα
ἀλλ' ἢ Διὸς Κόρινθος ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

440 χωρεῖτέ νυν

441/2 ἱερὸν ἀνὰ κύκλον θεᾶς, ἀνθοφόρον ἀν' ἄλλος

443/4 παίζοντες οἷς μετουσία θεοφιλοῦς ἑορτῆς.

445 ἐγὼ δὲ σὺν ταῖσιν κόραις εἶμι καὶ γυναιξίν,

446/7 οὗ παννυχίζουσιν θεᾶ, φέγγος ἱερὸν οἴσων.

(στρ) χωρῶμεν εἰς πολυρρόδους
λειμῶνας ἀνθεμῶδεις,

450 τὸν ἡμέτερον τρόπον
τὸν καλλιχορώτατον
παίζοντες, ὃν ὄλβιαι
Μοῖραι ξυνάγουσιν.

(ἀντ) μόνοις γὰρ ἡμῖν ἥλιος
455 καὶ φέγγος ἱερὸν ἔστιν,
ὅσοι μεμνήμεθ' εὖ-

455 ἱερὸν I R V K: ἰλαρὸν A

FROGS

and needn't question me again:
I'll have you know you're right at his door.

DIONYSUS

Hoist it up again, boy.

XANTHIAS

This whole routine is nothing
but "Zeus' Cootie-rinthus" in the bedclothes.⁵⁰

CHORUS

Go forward now
to the goddess' sacred circle, and in her blossoming
grove
frolic, you who partake in the festival dear to the
gods.

I will go with the girls and the women,
to carry the sacred flame where they revel all night
for the goddess.

Let us go forward to the flowery
meadows full of roses,
frolicking in our own style
of beautiful dance,
which the blessed
Fates array.

For us alone is there sun
and sacred daylight,
for we are initiated

⁵⁰ "Zeus' son Corinthus" (here with a pun on *koreis* "bed-bugs") meant "the same old story."

ARISTOPHANES

σεβῆ τε διήγομεν
 τρόπον περὶ τοὺς ξένους
 καὶ τοὺς ἰδιώτας.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

460 ἄγε δὴ τίνα τρόπον τὴν θύραν κόψω; τίνα;
 πῶς ἐνθάδ' ἄρα κόπτουσιν οὐπιχώριοι;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

οὐ μὴ διατρίψεις, ἀλλὰ γεύσει τῆς θύρας,
 καθ' Ἡρακλέα τὸ σχῆμα καὶ τὸ λῆμ' ἔχων.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

παῖ παῖ.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

τίς οὗτος;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

Ἡρακλῆς ὁ καρτερός.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

465 ὦ βδελυρὲ κἀναίσχυντε καὶ τολμηρὲ σὺ
 καὶ μιαρὲ καὶ παμμίαρε καὶ μιαρῶτατε,
 ὃς τὸν κύν' ἡμῶν ἐξελάσας τὸν Κέρβερρον
 ἀπῆξας ἄγχων κἀποδρὰς ὄχου λαβῶν,
 ὃν ἐγὼ φύλαττον. ἀλλὰ νῦν ἔχει μέσος·

470 τοῖα Στυγὸς σε μελανοκάρδιος πέτρα
 Ἄχερόντιός τε σκόπελος αἵματοσταγῆς
 φρουροῦσι, Κωκυτοῦ τε περιδρομοὶ κύνες,
 ἔχιδνά θ' ἑκατογκέφαλος, ἣ τὰ σπλάγχνα σου

FROGS

and righteous was our behavior
toward strangers
and ordinary people.

DIONYSUS

Now then, how should I knock at the door? Hmm. I wonder how the locals knock here?

XANTHIAS

Stop dillydallying. Just tuck into that door; show Heracles' guts as well as his garb.

DIONYSUS

(*knocking with his club*) Boy! Boy!

AEACUS⁵¹

(*within*) Who's that?

DIONYSUS

The mighty Heracles.

AEACUS

(*emerging*) You loathesome, shameless, insolent scum you! Utter scum! Scum of the earth! You're the one who rustled our dog Cerberus, grabbed him by the throat and darted off and got clean away with him, the dog I was in charge of! Ah but now you're in a hammerlock, such is the black-hearted rock of Styx and such the blood-dripping crag of Acheron that hem you in, and the coursing hounds of Cocytus, and the hundred-headed Echidna, who shall lac-

⁵¹ The son of Zeus and Aegina and father of Peleus, who with Minos and Rhadymanthus judges souls in Hades, but also popularly thought of, much like St. Peter later, as Pluto's gatekeeper and steward. In Critias' *Perithous* (fr. 1) he had similarly accosted and questioned Heracles on his way to rescue Theseus and Perithous from the underworld.

ARISTOPHANES

διασπαράξει· πλευμόνων τ' ἀνθάψεται
 475 Ταρτησσία μύραινα, τὼ νεφρῶ δέ σον
 αὐτοῖσιν ἐντέροισιν ἡματωμένῳ
 διασπάσονται Γοργόνες Τειθράσιαι,
 ἐφ' ἅς ἐγὼ δρομαῖον ὀρμήσω πόδα.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

οὔτος, τί δέδρακας;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐγκέχοδα· κάλει θεόν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

480 ὦ καταγέλαστ', οὔκουν ἀναστήσει ταχὺ
 πρὶν τινά σ' ἰδεῖν ἀλλότριον;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὠρακιῶ.

ἀλλ' οἶσε πρὸς τὴν καρδίαν μου σπογγιάν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἰδού, λαβέ· προσθού. ποῦ 'στιν; ὦ χρυσοῖ θεοί,
 ἐνταῦθ' ἔχεις τὴν καρδίαν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

δείσασα γὰρ

485 εἰς τὴν κάτω μου κοιλίαν καθείρπυσεν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ὦ δειλότατε θεῶν σὺ κἀνθρώπων.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐγώ;

πῶς δειλὸς ὅστις σπογγιάν ἤτησά σε;

FROGS

erate your vitals, while the Tartessian moray clutches your lungs and Teithrasian Gorgons⁵² tear up your bleeding balls, and your guts along with them! Whom I on rapid foot shall now go fetch. (*goes back inside; Dionysus faints*)

XANTHIAS

Hey there, what's the matter?

DIONYSUS

My butt runneth over; let us pray.

XANTHIAS

Stand up right now, you clown, before somebody sees you!

DIONYSUS

But I feel faint. Please, give me a wet sponge for my heart.

XANTHIAS

Here, take this and apply it. Where is it? Ye golden gods, is that where you keep your heart?

DIONYSUS

Yes, it got scared and sneaked down to my colon.

XANTHIAS

You're the worst coward in heaven and earth!

DIONYSUS

Who me, a coward? Me, who asked you for a sponge,

⁵² Teithras was an Attic deme, presumably inhabited by some formidable ladies.

ARISTOPHANES

οὐ τὰν ἕτερός γ' αὐτ' εἰργάσατ' ἀνήρ.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἀλλὰ τί;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κατέκειτ' ἂν ὀσφραϊνόμενος, εἴπερ δειλὸς ἦν.
490 ἐγὼ δ' ἀνέστην καὶ προσέτ' ἀπειησάμην.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἀνδρεῖά γ', ὦ Πόσειδον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οἶμαι νῆ Δία.

σὺ δ; οὐκ ἔδεισας τὸν ψόφον τῶν ῥημάτων
καὶ τὰς ἀπειλάς;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

οὐ μὰ Δί' οὐδ' ἐφρόντισα.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἴθι νυν, ἐπειδὴ ληματίας κἀνδρέιος εἶ,
495 σὺ μὲν γενοῦ' γὰρ τὸ ῥόπαλον τουτὶ λαβῶν
καὶ τὴν λεοντῆν, εἴπερ ἀφοβόσπλαγχνος εἶ.
ἐγὼ δ' ἔσομαί σοι σκευοφόρος ἐν τῷ μέρει.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

φέρε δὴ ταχέως αὐτ'. οὐ γὰρ ἀλλὰ πειστέον.
καὶ βλέψον εἰς τὸν Ἡρακλειοξαυθίαν,
500 εἰ δειλὸς ἔσομαι καὶ κατὰ σέ τὸ λῆμ' ἔχων.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μὰ Δί' ἀλλ' ἀληθῶς οὐκ Μελίτης μαστιγίας.
φέρε νυν, ἐγὼ τὰ στρώματ' αἴρωμαι ταδί.

FROGS

something no other man would have dared?

XANTHIAS

Well, what would he have done?

DIONYSUS

If he were a coward, he'd have lain there in his own stink.
But I got up, and wiped myself too.

XANTHIAS

Poseidon, what bravery!

DIONYSUS

Damn right. Say, weren't you scared by those noisy rants
and threats?

XANTHIAS

Nope, never even gave it a thought.

DIONYSUS

Very well, if you're such a brave he-man, take this club
here and be me, and the lionskin too, if you're such a hard-
ass. And I'll take my turn being your bellboy.

XANTHIAS

Then hand them right over; after all, an order's an order.
(*drops the baggage, dons the lionskin, and takes the club*)
Now watch Xanthio-Heracles, and see if I turn into a
yellow-belly like you.

DIONYSUS

Not a chance: you're that whip-fodder from Melite to the
life!⁵³ Now let me hoist this baggage.

⁵³ Heracles had a temple in the deme Melite, but the scholia see here an allusion to Callias, earlier mentioned as wearing a lionskin (428-30 n.) and referred to also by Cratinus as a whipped slave (fr. 81).

ARISTOPHANES

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

ὦ φίλταθ' ἤκεις Ἡράκλεις; δεῦρ' εἴσιθι.
 ἢ γὰρ θεός σ' ὡς ἐπύθεθ' ἤκουτ', εὐθέως
 505 ἔπεπτεν ἄρτους, ἦψε κατερικτῶν χύτρας
 ἔτνους δὺ' ἢ τρεῖς, βοῦν ἀπηνθράκιζ' ὄλον,
 πλακοῦντας ὄπτα, κολλάβους. ἀλλ' εἴσιθι.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

κάλλιστ', ἐπαινῶ.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω οὐ μὴ σ' ἐγὼ
 περιόψομά πελθόντ', ἐπεὶ τοι καὶ κρέα
 510 ἀνέβραττεν ὀρνίθεια, καὶ τραγήματα
 ἔφρυγε, κῶνον ἀνεκεράννυ γλυκύτατον.
 ἀλλ' εἴσιθ' ἄμ' ἐμοί.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

πάνυ καλῶς.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

ληρεῖς ἔχων
 οὐ γάρ σ' ἀφήσω. καὶ γὰρ αὐλητρίς τέ σοι
 ἤδη ἕνδον ἔσθ' ὠραιότατη κῶρχηστρίδες
 ἕτεραι δὺ' ἢ τρεῖς.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

515 πῶς λέγεις; ὀρχηστρίδες;

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

ἠβυλλιῶσαι κάρτι παρατετιλμένοι.
 ἀλλ' εἴσιθ', ὡς ὁ μάγειρος ἤδη τὰ τεμάχη

FROGS

Enter *MAID* from the palace.

MAID

Heracles, sweetheart, is that you? Come right on inside. When the goddess heard you'd come, she started baking bread, heating two or three pots of split-pea soup, barbecuing a whole ox, and putting pies in the oven, dinner rolls too. Now come on in!

XANTHIAS

Thanks, you're too kind.

MAID

Absolutely not, I won't stand by and watch you leave! Listen, she was stewing birdmeat too, and toasting munchies, and mixing up some very sweet wine. Now come on in with me!

XANTHIAS

I'm quite fine.

MAID

Nonsense, I'm not letting you get away. Listen, there's a piper girl in there already, very pretty, and two or three dancing girls too.

XANTHIAS

What's that you say? Dancing girls?

MAID

In first flower and freshly trimmed. Now come in, because the cook was just about to take the fish off the grill, and

ARISTOPHANES

ἔμελλ' ἀφαιρεῖν χῆ τράπεζ' εἰσῆρετο.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἴθι νυν, φράσον πρώτιστα ταῖς ὀρχηστρίσιν
520 ταῖς ἔνδον οὔσαις αὐτὸς ὅτι εἰσέρχομαι.
ὁ παῖς, ἀκολουθεῖ δεῦρο τὰ σκευὴ φέρων.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐπίσχεσ, οὔτος. οὐ τί που σπουδῆν ποιεῖ,
ὀτιή σε παίζων Ἡρακλέα ἔνεσκεύασα;
οὐ μὴ φλυαρήσεις ἔχων, ὦ Ξανθία,
525 ἀλλ' ἀράμενος οἴσεις πάλιν τὰ στρώματα.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τί δ' ἐστίν; οὐ τί πού μ' ἀφελέσθαι διανοεῖ
ἄδωκας αὐτός;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οὐ τάχ', ἀλλ' ἤδη ποιῶ.
κατάθου τὸ δέρμα.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι
καὶ τοῖς θεοῖσιν ἐπιτρέπω.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ποίοις θεοῖς;
530 τὸ δὲ προσδοκῆσαί σ' οὐκ ἀνόητον καὶ κενὸν
ὡς δούλος ὢν καὶ θνητὸς Ἀλκμήνης ἔσει;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἀμέλει, καλῶς ἔχ' αὐτ'. ἴσως γάρ τοί ποτε
ἐμοῦ δεηθείης ἄν, εἰ θεὸς θέλοι.

FROGS

they're bringing in the tables.

XANTHIAS

Then go on ahead, and tell those dancing girls that I'm coming right in, in person. (*to Dionysus*) Boy, come along here, and bring our stuff.

DIONYSUS

Hold on there, you're not really taking it seriously, my having some fun by dressing you up as Heracles? Now stop kidding around, Xanthias, and pick up that baggage again.

XANTHIAS

What? You're not really thinking about taking back what you gave me, are you?

DIONYSUS

(*grabbing the lionskin*) Not maybe, I'm doing it! Off with that lionskin.

XANTHIAS

Witnesses take note! I'm putting this in the gods' hands.

DIONYSUS

Gods indeed! And how brainless and vain of you, a mortal slave, to think that you could be Alcmene's son!

XANTHIAS

Oh all right, then, take them. There may come a time, you know, when you'll need me again, god willing.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) ταῦτα μὲν πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἔστι
 νοῦν ἔχοντος καὶ φρένας
 535 καὶ πολλὰ περιπεπλευκότος,
 μετακυλίνδειν αὐτὸν αἰεὶ
 537a πρὸς τὸν εὖ πρᾶττοντα τοίχον
 537b μᾶλλον ἢ γεγραμμένην
 εἰκὸν' ἐστάναι, λαβόνθ' ἐν
 539a σχῆμα· τὸ δὲ μεταστρέφεσθαι
 539b πρὸς τὸ μαλθακώτερον
 540 δεξιῶν πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἔστι
 καὶ φύσει Θηραμένους.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- (ἀντ) οὐ γὰρ ἂν γέλοιον ἦν, εἰ
 542b Ξανθίας μὲν δούλος ὢν ἐν
 543a στρώμασιν Μιλησίοις
 543b ἀνατετραμμένος κυνῶν ὀρ-
 544a χηστρίδ' εἶτ' ἤτησεν ἀμίδ', ἐ-
 544b γὼ δὲ πρὸς τοῦτον βλέπων
 545 τοῦρεβίνθου ὄδραττόμην, οὐ-
 546a τος δ' ἄτ' ὢν καὐτὸς πανούργος
 546b εἶδε, κᾶτ' ἐκ τῆς γνάθου
 πὺξ πατάξας μούξέκοψε
 τοῦ χοροῦ τοὺς προσθίους;

FROGS

CHORUS

The mark of a man
with brains and sense,
one who's voyaged far and wide,
is ever to shift
to the comfy side of the ship
and not just stand fast
in one position, like a painted
picture; to roll over
to the softer side
is the mark of a smart man,
a born Theramenes.⁵⁴

DIONYSUS

Wouldn't it be hilarious
if Xanthias, a mere slave,
were lying all atumble
on Milesian coverlets, and kissing
a dancing girl, then asked for a potty,
and I was looking over at him
with my weenie in hand,
and he caught me watching,
recognizing a fellow rascal, then
punched me in the mouth and knocked out
my front row of chorus men?

Enter from the side a female INNKEEPER with her Maid.

⁵⁴ A leading politician nicknamed "Buskin" (a boot that fits either foot) for his knack of landing on his feet in any situation: in 411 he had helped both to establish and to overthrow the Four Hundred, and after Arginusae had transferred blame for failing to rescue Athenian shipwrecks onto his colleagues.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΕΤΤΡΙΑ

Πλαθάνη, Πλαθάνη, δεῦρ' ἔλθ'. ὁ πανούργος
οὔτοσί,

550 ὄς εἰς τὸ πανδοκεῖον εἰσελθὼν ποτε
ἐκκαίδεκ' ἄρτους κατέφαγ' ἡμῶν.

ΠΛΑΘΑΝΗ

νῆ Δία,

ἐκεῖνος αὐτὸς δῆτα.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

κακὸν ἤκει τινί.

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΤΤΡΙΑ

καὶ κρέα γε πρὸς τούτοισιν ἀνάβραστ' εἴκοσιν
ἀνημιωβολιαῖα.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

δώσει τις δίκην.

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΤΤΡΙΑ

καὶ τὰ σκόροδα τὰ πολλά.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

555 ληρεῖς, ὦ γυναί,

κούκ οἶσθ' ὅ τι λέγεις.

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΤΤΡΙΑ

οὐ μὲν οὖν με προσεδόκας,
ὅτι ἡ κοθόρνους εἶχες, ἀναγνῶναί σ' ἔτι.
τί δαί; τὸ πολὺ τάριχος οὐκ εἴρηκά πω.

FROGS

INNKEEPER

Plathane!⁵⁵ Plathane, come here! Here's that hooligan, the one who came to the inn and gobbled sixteen loaves of bread!

Enter PLATHANE with her Maid.

PLATHANE

By god, it *is* him!

XANTHIAS

Somebody's in for it.

INNKEEPER

And on top of that, twenty half-obol orders of stew at one go!

XANTHIAS

Somebody's gonna catch it.

INNKEEPER

And all that garlic!

DIONYSUS

Nonsense, madam; you don't know what you're talking about.

INNKEEPER

Hah! You didn't think I'd recognize you again with those buskins on. Well? I haven't even mentioned all that fish yet.

⁵⁵ The name (derived from *plathanon*, kneading board) was not uncommon.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΛΑΘΑΝΗ

560 μὰ Δί' οὐδὲ τὸν τυρόν γε τὸν χλωρόν, τάλαν,
ὄν οὗτος αὐτοῖς τοῖς ταλάροις κατήσθιεν.

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΤΤΡΙΑ

κάπειτ' ἐπειδὴ τὰργύριον ἐπραττόμην,
ἔβλεπεν εἰς με δριμὺ κάμυκάτό γε—

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τούτου πάνυ τούργον· οὗτος ὁ τρόπος πανταχοῦ.

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΤΤΡΙΑ

καὶ τὸ ξίφος γ' ἐσπάτο μαίνεσθαι δοκῶν.

ΠΛΑΘΑΝΗ

νῆ Δία, τάλαινα.

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΤΤΡΙΑ

565 νὼ δὲ δεισάσα γέ που
ἐπὶ τὴν κατήλιφ' εὐθύς ἀνεπηδήσαμεν·
ὁ δ' ὄχετ' ἐξάξας γε τὰς ψιάθους λαβῶν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

καὶ τοῦτο τούτου τούργον.

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΤΤΡΙΑ

ἀλλ' ἐχρῆν τι δρᾶν.
ἴθι δὴ κάλεσον τὸν προστάτην Κλέωνά μοι.

ΠΛΑΘΑΝΗ

570 σὺ δ' ἔμοιγ', ἐάνπερ ἐπιτύχης, Ὑπέρβολον,
ἴν' αὐτὸν ἐπιτρέψωμεν.

FROGS

PLATHANE

Right, dearie, or the fresh cheese that he ate up, baskets and all.

INNKEEPER

And when I presented the bill, he gave me a nasty look and started bellowing.

XANTHIAS

That's his style exactly; he acts that way everywhere.

INNKEEPER

And he drew his sword like a lunatic.

PLATHANE

Amen, my poor dear.

INNKEEPER

And we were so scared I guess we jumped right up to the loft, while he dashed out and got away, taking our mattresses with him.

XANTHIAS

That's his style, too.

INNKEEPER

Well, we should do something about it. (*to her Maid*) Go fetch my patron, Cleon.⁵⁶

PLATHANE

(*to her Maid*) And you go fetch mine, Hyperbolus,⁵⁷ if you run into him, so that we can fix this guy good.

⁵⁶ The leading politician of the 420s, a champion of ordinary citizens, and notorious for prosecutory zeal (cf. *Knights* and *Wasps*); he died in 422.

⁵⁷ Cleon's successor, and also much satirized in comedy; he died in 411.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΤΤΡΙΑ

ὦ μιὰρὰ φάρυξ,
ὡς ἠδέως ἄν σου λίθῳ τοὺς γομφίους
κόπτοιμ' ἄν, οἷς μου κατέφαγες τὰ φορτία.

ΠΛΑΘΑΝΗ

ἐγὼ δέ γ' εἰς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβάλοίμι σε.

ΠΑΝΔΟΚΤΤΡΙΑ

575 ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν λάρυγγ' ἄν ἐκτέμοίμι σου
δρέπανον λαβοῦσ', ᾧ τὰς χόλικας κατέσπασας.
ἀλλ' εἴμ' ἐπὶ τὸν Κλέων', ὃς αὐτοῦ τήμερον
ἐκπημιέται τὰτα προσκαλούμενος.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κάκιστ' ἀπολοίμην, Ξανθίαν εἰ μὴ φιλῶ.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

580 οἶδ' οἶδα τὸν νοῦν· παῦτε παῦτε τοῦ λόγου.
οὐκ ἄν γενοίμην Ἡρακλῆς αὖ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μηδαμῶς,

ὦ Ξανθίδιον.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

καὶ πῶς ἄν Ἀλκμήνης ἐγὼ
υἶὸς γενοίμην δούλος ἅμα καὶ θνητὸς ὢν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

585 οἶδ' οἶδ' ὅτι θυμοί, καὶ δικαίως αὐτὸ δρᾶς·
κἂν εἴ με τύπτοις, οὐκ ἄν ἀντείποιμί σοι.
ἀλλ' ἦν σε τοῦ λοιποῦ ποτ' ἀφέλωμαι χρόνου,

FROGS

INNKEEPER

(*to Dionysus*) You filthy hog, I'd just love to take a rock and bash out your teeth, that gobbled my goods!

PLATHANE

And I'd love to toss you into the executioner's pit!

INNKEEPER

And I'd love to get a sickle and cut out your gizzard, that guzzled my sausages! Now I'm off to get Cleon; he'll summons this guy today and wind the stuffing out of him!

Exit INNKEEPER and PLATHANE.

DIONYSUS

May I die a miserable death if I don't love Xanthias!

XANTHIAS

I know what you're thinking, I know. Stop talking, stop it. I'm not going to be Heracles again.

DIONYSUS

Don't be that way, Xanthikins.

XANTHIAS

And how could I, a mere mortal slave, become Alcmene's son?

DIONYSUS

I know you're angry, I know, and you've every right to be. You could even take a punch at me and I wouldn't complain. But I swear, if ever I take it away from you again, may

ARISTOPHANES

πρόρριζος αὐτός, ἡ γυνή, τὰ παιδιά,
κάκιςτ' ἀπολοίμην, κάρχέδημος ὁ γλάμων.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

δέχομαι τὸν ὄρκον κἀπὶ τούτοις λαμβάνω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) νῦν σὸν ἔργον ἔστ', ἐπειδὴ
591a τὴν στολὴν εἴληφας ἤνπερ
591b εἶχες, ἐξ ἀρχῆς πάλιν
592a ἀνανεάζειν <αὐτὸ λῆμα>
592b καὶ βλέπειν αὐθις τὸ δεινόν,
593a τοῦ θεοῦ μεμνημένον
593b ᾧπερ εἰκάζεις σεαυτόν.
ἦν δὲ παραληρῶν ἀλῶς ἢ
595 κάκβάλῃς τι μαλθακόν,
αὐθις αἴρεσθαί σ' ἀνάγκη
'σται πάλιν τὰ στρώματα.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

- (ἀντ) οὐ κακῶς, ὦνδρες, παραινεῖτ',
598b ἀλλὰ καὐτὸς τυγχάνω ταῦτ'
599a ἄρτι συννοούμενος.
599b ὅτι μὲν οὖν, ἦν χρηστὸν ἢ τι,
600 ταῦτ' ἀφαιρείσθαι πάλιν πει-
ράσεται μ' εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι.
602a ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐγὼ παρέξω
602b 'μαντὸν ἀνδρείϊον τὸ λῆμα
603a καὶ βλέπουτ' ὀρίγανον
603b δεῖν δ' ἔοικεν, ὡς ἀκούω
τῆς θύρας καὶ δὴ ψόφον.

FROGS

I die a miserable death and be utterly eradicated, my wife
and children too, and bleary Archedemus!

XANTHIAS

I accept your oath, and will take the gear on those terms.

CHORUS

Now it's up to you,
since you've accepted the outfit
you wore before, to revive anew
your old fighting spirit,
and once more look formidable,
mindful of the god
whose guise you're taking on.
If you're caught jabbering,
if you utter anything wimpish,
you'll be forced to hoist
the baggage once again.

XANTHIAS

Gentlemen, that's not bad advice,
but just now I happened to be
thinking along those lines myself.
Yes, I'm quite aware
that if anything good's to be gained
he'll try to take this outfit back.
But all the same you'll find me
brave in spirit,
with a pungent look in my eye.
And I'd better be, because I hear,
yes, a clattering at the door.

592 suppl. Seidler

595 *κακβάλης* Π V: *καὶ βάλης* R A K

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

605 { ξυνδέϊτε ταχέως τουτουὶ τὸν κυνοκλόπον,
} ἵνα δῶ δίκην ἀνύετον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἦκει τῷ κακόν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

οὐκ ἐς κόρακας; μὴ πρόσσιτον.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

εἶέν, καὶ μάχει;

ὁ Διτύλας χῶ Σκεβλύας χῶ Παρδόκας,
χωρεῖτε δευρὶ καὶ μάχεσθε τουτῶι.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

610 εἶτ' οὐχὶ δεινὰ ταῦτα, τύπτειν τουτουὶ
κλέπτοντα πρὸς τὰλλότρια;

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

μᾶλλ' ὑπερφυᾶ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

σχέτλια μὲν οὖν καὶ δεινά.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

καὶ μὴν νῆ Δία,

εἰ πώποτ' ἦλθον δεῦρ', ἐθέλω τεθνηκέναι,
ἢ κλεψα τῶν σῶν ἄξιόν τι καὶ τριχός.

FROGS

AEACUS bursts out of the door, with two Slaves.

AEACUS

Tie up this dog thief here right away, so he can pay his penalty. Get a move on!

DIONYSUS

Somebody's in for it!

XANTHIAS

You two stay the hell away from me!

AEACUS

Oh, so you want to fight, eh? (*calling inside*) Ditylas! Sceblyas! Pardocas!⁵⁸ Get out here and fight this guy!

Enter from the house Ditylas, Sceblyas, and Pardocas; they attack and subdue Xanthias.

DIONYSUS

Shocking, isn't it, the way this guy steals from people and then assaults them too!

AEACUS

Absolutely monstrous.

DIONYSUS

Terrible even, and shocking!

XANTHIAS

Now look here, dammit, I hope to die if I've ever been here before, or ever stole so much as a hair of your property!

⁵⁸ Names of (or suggesting) Scythian archers, who were used in Athens as police.

ARISTOPHANES

615 καί σοι ποιήσω πρᾶγμα γενναῖον πάνν·
 βασάνιζε γὰρ τὸν παῖδα τουτουὶ λαβών,
 κᾶν ποτέ μ' ἔλῃς ἀδικοῦντ', ἀπόκτεινόν μ' ἄγων.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

καὶ πῶς βασανίσω;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

πάντα τρόπον· ἐν κλίμακι
 δήσας, κρεμάσας, ὑστριχίδι μαστιγῶν, δέρων,
 620 στρεβλῶν, ἔτι δ' εἰς τὰς ρίνας ὄξος ἐγχείων,
 πλίνθους ἐπιτιθείς, πάντα τᾶλλα, πλὴν πρᾶσφ
 μὴ τύπτε τοῦτον μηδὲ γητείφ νέφ.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

δίκαιος ὁ λόγος· κᾶν τι πηρώσω γέ σοι
 τὸν παῖδα τύπτων, τὰργύριόν σοι κείσεται.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

625 μὴ δῆτ' ἔμοιγ'. οὕτω δὲ βασάνιζ' ἀπαγαγών.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

αὐτοῦ μὲν οὖν, ἵνα σοι κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς λέγη.
 κατάθου σὺ τὰ σκεύη ταχέως, χῶπως ἐρεῖς
 ἐνταῦθα μηδὲν ψεύδος.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἀγορεύω τιμὴ
 ἐμὲ μὴ βασανίζειν ἀθάνατον ὄντ'. εἰ δὲ μή,
 αὐτὸς σεαυτὸν αἰτιῶ.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

630 λέγεις δὲ τί;

FROGS

And I'll make you a right handsome offer: take my slave here and torture him, and if you catch me in any wrongdoing, then take me and put me to death.

AEACUS

And how should I torture him?

XANTHIAS

Any way you like. Bind him to the ladder. Hang him up. Bristle-whip him. Flay him. Rack him. Pour vinegar up his nose too. Put bricks on him. Anything at all, except don't beat him with a stalk of leek or onion.

AEACUS

Fair enough. And of course if my beating maims your slave, the compensation will be credited to your account.

XANTHIAS

Never mind that; just take him away and torture him.

AEACUS

No, I'll do it right here, so he can testify to your face. (*to Dionysus*) Put that baggage down right away, and see that you tell no lies here.

DIONYSUS

Somebody's hereby warned not to torture me, because I'm immortal. Otherwise, you'll have only yourself to blame.

AEACUS

What are you talking about?

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἀθάνατος εἶναί φημι, Διόνυσος Διός,
τούτον δὲ δούλον.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

ταῦτ' ἀκούεις;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

φήμ' ἐγώ.

καὶ πολὺ γε μᾶλλον ἔστι μαστιγωτέος·
εἶπερ θεὸς γὰρ ἔστιν, οὐκ αἰσθήσεται.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

635 τί δῆτ', ἐπειδὴ καὶ σὺ φῆς εἶναι θεός,
οὐ καὶ σὺ τύπτει τὰς ἴσας πληγὰς ἐμοί;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

δίκαιος ὁ λόγος· χῶπότερόν γ' ἂν νῶν ἴδῃς
κλαύσαντα πρότερον ἢ προτιμήσαντά τι
τυπτόμενον, εἶναι τούτον ἡγοῦ μὴ θεόν.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

640 οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐκ εἶ σὺ γεννάδας ἀνὴρ·
χωρεῖς γὰρ εἰς τὸ δίκαιον. ἀποδύεσθε δῆ.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

πῶς οὖν βασανιεῖς νῶ δικαίως;

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

ῥαδίως·

πληγὴν παρὰ πληγὴν ἐκάτερον.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

I'm saying that I'm immortal, Dionysus son of Zeus, and he's the slave.

AEACUS

(to *Xanthias*) Do you hear that?

XANTHIAS

I do. And all the more reason for a flogging; if he's really a god, he won't feel it.

DIONYSUS

All right, since you claim to be a god too, why shouldn't you be beaten along with me, stroke for stroke?

XANTHIAS

Fair enough. (to *Aeacus*) And whichever of us you catch yelping first, or caring at all that he's getting flogged, him you can consider no god.

AEACUS

You're beyond question a gentleman, the way you take the high road. Now both of you strip.

XANTHIAS

So how are you going to test us fairly?

AEACUS

Simple: stroke for stroke.

ARISTOPHANES

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

καλῶς λέγεις.

ἰδού· σκόπει νυν ἤν μ' ὑποκινήσαντ' ἴδης.
ἤδη ᾽πάταξας;

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

οὐ μὰ Δί'.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

645

οὐδ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἴμ' ἐπὶ τουδὶ καὶ πατάξω.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

πηνίκα;

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

καὶ δὴ ᾽πάταξα.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κᾶτα πῶς οὐκ ἔπτарον;

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδα· τουδὶ δ' αὐθις ἀποπειράσομαι.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

οὐκουν ἀνύσεις; ἰατταταῖ.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

τί τᾶτταταῖ;

μῶν ὠδυνήθης;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

650

οὐ μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἐφρόντισα
ὀπόθ' Ἑράκλεια τὰν Διομέιους γίγνεται.

FROGS

XANTHIAS

That's fine. (*presents his back*) OK, now see if you catch me flinching. Have you hit me yet?

AEACUS

Zeus no. (*strikes Xanthias*)

XANTHIAS

That's what I thought.

AEACUS

All right, now I'll go hit this other one. (*strikes Dionysus*)

DIONYSUS

Say when.

AEACUS

I just hit you!

DIONYSUS

Then why didn't I sneeze?

AEACUS

No idea. I'll try the other one again.

XANTHIAS

Then hurry up! (*struck*) Ow!

AEACUS

Why the "ow"? Did that hurt?

XANTHIAS

Hell no, I was just thinking of when the Heracles festival at Diomeia is scheduled.

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

ἄνθρωπος ἱερός. δεῦρο πάλιν βαδιστέον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ιοὺν ἰού.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

τί ἐστίν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἰππέας ὄρω.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

τί δῆτα κλάεις;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κρομμύων ὀσφραίνομαι.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

ἐπεὶ προτιμᾶς γ' οὐδέν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

655

οὐδέν μοι μέλει.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

βαδιστέον τᾶρ' ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τονδὶ πάλιν.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

οἴμοι.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

τί ἐστίν;

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τὴν ἄκανθαν ἔξελε.

FROGS

AEACUS

The man's sanctified. Let's go back the other way. (*strikes Dionysus*)

DIONYSUS

Hi yo!

AEACUS

What's the matter?

DIONYSUS

I see horsemen.

AEACUS

So why are you crying?

DIONYSUS

I can smell onions!⁵⁹

AEACUS

Meaning you didn't feel anything?

DIONYSUS

Couldn't care less!

AEACUS

Then I'd better go back over to the other one. (*strikes Xanthias*)

XANTHIAS

Ahh!

AEACUS

What's the matter?

XANTHIAS

(*lifting a foot*) Do take out this thorn.

⁵⁹ Typical cavalry rations.

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

τί τὸ πρᾶγμα τουτί; δεῦρο πάλιν βαδιστέον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

Ἄπολλον,—ὅς που Δῆλον ἢ Πυθῶν' ἔχεις.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἤλγησεν· οὐκ ἤκουσας;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

660

οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἐπεὶ
ἴαμβον Ἰππώνακτος ἀνεμιμησκόμην.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

οὐδὲν ποιεῖς γάρ· ἀλλὰ τὰς λαγόνας σπόδει.

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί', ἀλλ' ἤδη παρέχε τὴν γαστέρα.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

Πόσειδον.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἤλγησέν τις.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

664/5

—ὅς Αἰγαίου
πρωνὸς ἢ γλαυκᾶς μέδεις
ἀλὸς ἐν βένθεσιν.

FROGS

AEACUS

What's going on here? Got to go back over here. (*strikes Dionysus*)

DIONYSUS

Apollo!—who abides perchance on Delos or in Pytho.

XANTHIAS

That hurt him, didn't you hear?

DIONYSUS

No it didn't! I was just recollecting a line of Hipponax.⁶⁰

XANTHIAS

(*to Aeacus*) Look, you're getting nowhere: go ahead and bash him in the ribs.

AEACUS

God no; (*to Dionysus*) stick out your belly now. (*strikes Dionysus*)

DIONYSUS

Poseidon!

XANTHIAS

Somebody felt that!

DIONYSUS

—who hold sway
on the cape of Aegae or in
the depths of the deep blue sea.⁶¹

⁶⁰ The renowned sixth-century iambic poet from Ephesus; but this verse is ascribed by a scholiast to Hipponax's contemporary, Ananius.

⁶¹ From Sophocles' *Laocoon* (fr. 371).

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΑΚΟΣ

οὐ τοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα δύναμαι ἴγῳ μαθεῖν
 ὀπότερος ὑμῶν ἐστὶ θεός. ἀλλ' εἴσιτον·
 670 ὁ δεσπότης γὰρ αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς γινώσεται
 χῆ Φερρέφατθ', αἴτ' ὄντε κάκείνω θεώ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὀρθῶς λέγεις· ἐβουλόμην δ' ἂν τοῦτό σε
 πρότερον νοῆσαι, πρὶν ἐμὲ τὰς πληγὰς λαβεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) Μοῦσα, χορῶν ἱερῶν ἐπίβηθι καὶ
 675 ἔλθ' ἐπὶ τέρψιν ἀοιδᾶς ἐμᾶς,
 τὸν πολλὸν ὀψομένη λαῶν ὄχλον, οὗ σοφίαι
 μυρίαί κάθηνται
 φιλοτιμότεραι Κλεοφῶντος, ἐφ' οὗ
 δὴ χείλεσιν ἀμφιβάλοις
 680 δεινὸν ἐπιβρέμεται τις
 Θρηγία χελιδῶν
 ἐπὶ βάρβαρον ἐζομένη πέταλον·
 κελαδεῖ δ' ἐπίκλαυτον ἀηδόνιον
 νόμον, ὡς ἀπολείται,
 685 κὰν ἴσαι γένωνται.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τὸν ἱερὸν χορὸν δίκαιόν ἐστι χρηστὰ τῇ πόλει
ξυμπαραινεῖν καὶ διδάσκειν. πρῶτον οὖν ἡμῖν δοκεῖ

⁶² Persephone's Attic name.

⁶³ The most influential popular politician in the period after

FROGS

AEACUS

By Demeter, I can't make out which of you is a god. But go along inside; the master himself and Pherrephatta⁶² will recognize you, because they're gods too.

DIONYSUS

That's right. But I wish you'd thought of that before I took those blows!

Exit AEACUS, DIONYSUS, XANTHIAS, and Slaves into the palace.

CHORUS

Embark, Muse, on the sacred dance,
and come to inspire joy in my song,
beholding the great multitude of people,
where thousands of wits are in session
more high-reaching than Cleophon,⁶³
on whose bilingual lips
some Thracian swallow
roars terribly,
perched on an alien petal,
and bellows the nightingale's weepy
song, that he's done for,
even if the jury's hung.

CHORUS LEADER

It's right and proper for the sacred chorus to help give good advice and instruction to the city. First then, we think that

the restoration of democracy in 410, and executed in 404 (after the second performance of *Frogs*: cf. 1504) on trumped-up charges brought by anti-democratic forces; he was the titular character in the play by Plato that competed against the first *Frogs*.

ARISTOPHANES

ἐξισῶσαι τοὺς πολίτας κάφελειν τὰ δέϊματα.

690 κεί τις ἤμαρτε σφαλείς τι Φρυνίχου παλαίσμασιν,
 ἐγγενέσθαι φημι χρῆναι τοῖς ὀλισθοῦσιν τότε
 αἰτίαν ἐκθείσει λῦσαι τὰς πρότερον ἀμαρτίας.
εἴτ' ἄτιμόν φημι χρῆναι μηδέν' εἶν' ἐν τῇ πόλει·
 καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρόν ἐστι τοὺς μὲν ναυμαχήσαντας
 μίαν

καὶ Πλαταιᾶς εὐθύς εἶναι κἀντὶ δούλων δεσπότας·
 695 κούδὲ ταῦτ' ἔγωγ' ἔχοιμ' ἂν μὴ οὐ καλῶς φάσκειν
 ἔχειν,

ἀλλ' ἐπαινῶ· μόνα γὰρ αὐτὰ νοῦν ἔχοντ' ἐδράσατε·
 πρὸς δὲ τούτοις εἰκὸς ὑμᾶς, οἳ μεθ' ὑμῶν πολλὰ δὴ
 χοῖ πατέρες ἐναυμάχησαν καὶ προσήκουσιν γένει
τὴν μίαν ταύτην παρέιναι ξυμφορὰν αἰτουμένοις.
 700 ἀλλὰ τῆς ὀργῆς ἀνέντες, ᾧ σοφώτατοι φύσει,
 πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἐκόντες ξυγγενεῖς κτησώμεθα
κάπιτίμους καὶ πολίτας, ὅστις ἂν ξυναυμαχῇ.
 εἰ δὲ ταῦτ' ὀγκωσόμεσθα κάποσεμννούμεθα,
 τὴν πόλιν καὶ ταῦτ' ἔχοντες κυμάτων ἐν ἀγκάλαις,
 705 ὑστέρω χρόνῳ ποτ' αὖθις εὖ φρονεῖν οὐ δόξομεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ) εἰ δ' ἐγὼ ὀρθὸς ἰδεῖν βίον ἀνέρος

697 ὑμῶν R A K: ἡμῶν V

699 αἰτουμένοις R A K: -μένους V

⁶⁴ I.e., fears of prosecution or attack for offenses they had

FROGS

all the citizens should be made equal, and their fears removed,⁶⁴ and if anyone was tripped up by Phrynichus' holds,⁶⁵ I say that those who slipped up at that time should be permitted to dispose of their liability and put right their earlier mistakes. Next I say that no one in the city should be disenfranchised, for it's a disgrace that veterans of a single sea battle should forthwith become Plataeans, turning from slaves into masters;⁶⁶ not that I have any criticism to voice about that—indeed I applaud it as being your only intelligent action—but in addition to that it's fitting, in the case of people⁶⁷ who have fought many a sea battle at your side, as have their fathers, and who are your blood relations, that you pardon this one misadventure when they ask you to. Now relax your anger, you people most naturally sage, and let's readily accept as kinsmen and as citizens in good standing everyone who fights on our ships. If we puff ourselves up about this and are too proud to do it, especially now that we have a city "embraced by high seas,"⁶⁸ there will come a time when we'll seem to have acted thoughtlessly.

CHORUS

"If I read aright the life or character

committed under the oligarchy of 411, in spite of the amnesty of 410.

⁶⁵ One of the leaders of the Four Hundred, whose assassination in summer 411 accelerated the fall of their regime.

⁶⁶ Refugees of the Spartan massacre at Plataea in 427 were given Athenian citizenship (Thucydides 3.68, Demosthenes 59.104–6), just as had the slaves who rowed in the battle of Arginusae. ⁶⁷ I.e., those disenfranchised in 411.

⁶⁸ Archilochus fr. 213.

ARISTOPHANES

- ἢ τρόπον ὅστις ἔτ' οἰμώξεται,
 οὐ πολὺν οὐδ' ὁ πίθηκος οὗτος ὁ νῦν ἐνοχλῶν,
 Κλειγένης ὁ μικρός,
 710 ὁ πονηρότατος βαλανεύς ὁπόσοι
 κρατοῦσι κυκησίτεφροι
 ψευδολίτρον τε κονίας
 καὶ Κιμωλίας γῆς,
 χρόνον ἐνδιατρίψει· ἰδὼν δὲ τὰδ' οὐκ
 715 εἰρημικὸς ἔσθ', ἵνα μὴ ποτε κά-
 ποδυθῆ μεθύων ἄ-
 νευ ξύλου βαδίζων.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

- {
 720 {πολλάκις γ' ἡμῖν ἔδοξεν ἢ πόλις πεπουθῆναι
 ταῦτόν εἰς τε τῶν πολιτῶν τοὺς καλοὺς τε κάγαθοὺς
 εἰς τε τὰρχαῖον νόμισμα καὶ τὸ καινὸν χρυσίον.
 οὔτε γὰρ τούτοισιν οὔσιν οὐ κεκιβδηλευμένοι,
 ἀλλὰ καλλίστοις ἀπάντων, ὡς δοκεῖ, νομισμάτων
 καὶ μόνοις ὀρθῶς κοπέισι καὶ κεκωδωνισμένοι
 ἐν τε τοῖς Ἑλλησι καὶ τοῖς βαρβάροισι πανταχοῦ
 725 χρώμεθ' οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ τούτοις τοῖς πονηροῖς χαλκίοις
 χθές τε καὶ πρῶην κοπέισι τῷ κακίστῳ κόμματι.
 τῶν πολιτῶν θ' οὓς μὲν ἴσμεν εὐγενεῖς καὶ
σώφρονας

711 -τεφροι Radermacher: -τέφρου a S

⁶⁹ Adapted from a tragedy by Ion of Chios (*TrGF* 19 F 1).

⁷⁰ The only Cleigenes attested at this time served as Council

FROGS

of a man"⁶⁹ who's sure to be sorry yet,
then this monkey who's so annoying now—
pint-sized Cleigenes,⁷⁰
the basest bathman of all
the ash-mixers who lord it over
fake washing soda
and fuller's earth—
he won't be around much longer, and knows it,
so he's unpeaceable, for fear that some night
on a drunken stroll without his stick
he'll be mugged.

CHORUS LEADER

It's often struck us that the city deals with its fine upstanding citizens just as with the old coinage and the new gold.⁷¹ Though both of these are unalloyed, indeed considered the finest of all coins, the only ones minted true and tested everywhere among Greeks and barbarians alike, we make no use of them;⁷² instead we use these crummy coppers, struck just yesterday or the day before with a stamp of the lowest quality.⁷³ Just so with our citizens: the ones we ac-

Secretary in 410/9 (*IG* i³ 375.1, *Andocides* 1.96), and is perhaps the predatory litigator of *Lysias* 25.25 (where his name was conjectured by Schwartz for the mss' Cleisthenes). ⁷¹ The "old" was the traditional coinage made of silver from the Laureium mines, largely incapacitated since the enemy occupation of Deceleia, and the "new," issued in 407/6, was made from the dedications to Victory on the Acropolis. ⁷² Because they were earmarked for external payments, e.g. for imports and mercenaries.

⁷³ Silver-plated bronze coins issued along with the new gold coins; they were removed from circulation at some time between 403 and 392 (cf. *Assemblywomen* 815–22).

ARISTOPHANES

ἄνδρας ὄντας καὶ δικαίους καὶ καλοὺς τε κάγαθούς
καὶ τραφέντας ἐν παλαιίστραις καὶ χοροῖς καὶ
μουσικῇ.

- 730 προυσελούμεν, τοῖς δὲ χαλκοῖς καὶ ξένοις καὶ
 πυρρίαις
 καὶ πονηροῖς κακ πονηρῶν εἰς ἅπαντα χρώμεθα
 ὑστάτοις ἀφιγμένοισιν, οἷσιν ἢ πόλις πρὸ τοῦ
 οὐδὲ φαρμακοῖσιν εἰκῇ ῥαδίως ἐχρήσατ' ἄν.
 ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν, ὠνόητοι, μεταβαλόντες τοὺς τρόπους
- 735 χρήσθε τοῖς χρηστοῖσιν αἰθίς· καὶ κατορθώσασι
 γὰρ
 εὐλογον, κἄν τι σφαλῆτ', ἐξ ἀξίου γοῦν τοῦ ξύλου,
 ἦν τι καὶ πάσχητε, πάσχειν τοῖς σοφοῖς δοκήσετε.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

νῆ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτήρα, γεννάδας ἀνῆρ
 ὁ δεσπότης σου.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

- πῶς γὰρ οὐχὶ γεννάδας,
 740 ὅστις γε πίνειν οἶδε καὶ βινεῖν μόνον;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

τὸ δὲ μὴ πατάξαι σ' ἐξελεγχθέντ' ἀντικρυς,
 ὅτι δούλος ὦν ἔφασκες εἶναι δεσπότης.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ᾧμωξε μέντ' ἄν.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

τοῦτο μέντοι δουλικὸν
εὐθύς πεποίηκας, ὅπερ ἐγὼ χαίρω ποιῶν.

FROGS

knowledge to be well-born, well-behaved, just, fine, and outstanding men, men brought up in wrestling schools, choruses, and the arts, we treat them shabbily, while for all purposes we choose the coppers, the aliens, the red-heads,⁷⁴ bad people with bad ancestors, the latest arrivals, whom formerly the city wouldn't readily have used even as scapegoats. But even at this late hour, you fools, do change your ways and once again choose the good people. You'll be congratulated for it if you're successful, and if you take a fall, at least the intelligent will say that if something does happen to you, you're hanging from a worthy tree.

Enter from the palace XANTHIAS and a SLAVE of Pluto.

SLAVE

By Zeus the Savior, that master of yours is a gentleman.

XANTHIAS

Of course he's a gentleman; all he knows is boozing and balling.

SLAVE

But not to have beaten you as soon as you, the slave, were caught pretending to be the master!

XANTHIAS

He'd have regretted that!

SLAVE

Spoken like a true slave! I like talking that way myself.

⁷⁴ Conventional of Thracians (cf. 681), and in later comedy of slaves.

ARISTOPHANES

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

χαίρεις, ἰκετεύω;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

745

μᾶλλ' ἐποπτεύειν δοκῶ,
ὅταν καταράσωμαι λάθρα τῷ δεσπότη.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τί δὲ τονθορύζων, ἡνίκ' ἂν πληγὰς λαβὼν
πολλὰς ἀπίης θύραζε;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

καὶ τοῦθ' ἤδομαι.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τί δὲ πολλὰ πράττων;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

ὡς μὰ Δί' οὐδὲν οἶδ' ἐγώ.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

750 ὁμόγνιε Ζεῦ· καὶ παρακούων δεσποτῶν
ἅττ' ἂν λαλώσι;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

μᾶλλὰ πλεῖν ἢ μαίνομαι.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τί δὲ τοῖς θύραζε ταῦτα καταλαλῶν;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

ἐγώ;

μὰ Δί' ἄλλ' ὅταν δρῶ τοῦτο, κάκμιαίνομαι.

FROGS

XANTHIAS

You like it? I'm interested.

SLAVE

Why, it's like nirvana when I curse my master behind his back!

XANTHIAS

What about muttering when you leave the house after getting a good beating?

SLAVE

I love it.

XANTHIAS

What about meddling?

SLAVE

Positively nonpareil!

XANTHIAS

Zeus of True Kin! And eavesdropping on masters when they're gossiping?

SLAVE

I'm simply mad about it!

XANTHIAS

And what about blabbing what you've heard to outsiders?

SLAVE

Who, me? Why, doing that gives me an actual orgasm!

ARISTOPHANES

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἀπολλον, ἔμβαλέ μοι τὴν δεξιάν,
755 καὶ δὸς κύσαι καὐτὸς κύσον. καί μοι φράσον
πρὸς Διός, ὃς ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ὀμομαστιγίας,
τίς οὗτος οὐνδον ἐστὶ θόρυβος καὶ βοή
χῶ λοιδορησμός;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

Αἰσχύλου κεύριπίδου.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ᾶ.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

πράγμα, πράγμα μέγα κεκίνηται, μέγα
760 ἐν τοῖς νεκροῖσι καὶ στάσις πολλὴ πάνυ.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἐκ τοῦ;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

νόμος τις ἐνθάδ' ἐστὶ κείμενος·
ἀπὸ τῶν τεχνῶν, ὅσαι μεγάλαι καὶ δεξιαί,
τὸν ἄριστον ὄντα τῶν ἑαυτοῦ συντέχνων
σίτησιν αὐτὸν ἐν πρυτανείῳ λαμβάνειν
765 θρόνον τε τοῦ Πλούτωνος ἐξῆς—

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

μανθάνω.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

ἔως ἀφίκοιτο τὴν τέχνην σοφώτερος
ἕτερός τις αὐτοῦ· τότε δὲ παραχωρεῖν ἔδει.

FROGS

XANTHIAS

Phoebus Apollo, put 'er there, and let's exchange kisses!
(*sounds of wrangling are heard inside*) Now tell me, by Zeus, our mutual god of floggings, what's all this commotion and yelling and name-calling inside the palace?

SLAVE

It's Aeschylus and Euripides.

XANTHIAS

Aha.

SLAVE

An event's underway, a big event among the dead, and very intense factionalism.

XANTHIAS

About what?

SLAVE

There's a traditional custom down here: in each of the most important and skilled professions, the one who's best of all his fellow professionals is entitled to maintenance in the Prytaneum and a seat next to Pluto⁷⁵—

XANTHIAS

I get the picture.

SLAVE

—until someone more competent in the same craft arrives, at which point he has to step down.

⁷⁵ At Athens, free meals in the Prytaneum (the official building housing the sacred hearth) and privileged seating at public events were awarded for outstanding athletic, military, or political achievement.

ARISTOPHANES

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τί δήτα τουτὶ τεθορύβηκεν Αἰσχύλον;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

770 ἐκεῖνος εἶχε τὸν τραγωδικὸν θρόνον,
ὡς ὢν κράτιστος τὴν τέχνην.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

νυνὶ δὲ τίς;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

775 ὅτε δὴ κατῆλθ' Εὐριπίδης, ἐπεδείκνυτο
τοῖς λωποδύταις καὶ τοῖσι βαλλαντιοτόμοις
καὶ τοῖσι πατραλοίαισι καὶ τοιχωρῦχοις,
ὅπερ ἔστ' ἐν Ἄιδου πλήθος, οἱ δ' ἀκροώμενοι
τῶν ἀντιλογιῶν καὶ λυγισμῶν καὶ στροφῶν
ὑπερεμάνησαν κἀνόμισαν σοφώτατον
κᾶπειτ' ἐπαρθεῖς ἀντελάβετο τοῦ θρόνου,
ἴν' Αἰσχύλος καθῆστο.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

κοῦκ ἐβάλλετο;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

780 μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ὁ δῆμος ἀνεβόα κρίσιν ποιεῖν
ὁπότερος εἶη τὴν τέχνην σοφώτερος.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ὁ τῶν πανούργων;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

νῆ· Δί', οὐράνιον γ' ὄσον.

FROGS

XANTHIAS

So why has this flustered Aeschylus?

SLAVE

He was the one who held the Chair of Tragedy, for being dominant in that art.

XANTHIAS

And who holds it now?

SLAVE

When Euripides came down here, he started giving recitals for the muggers and purse-snatchers and father-beaters and burglars (there's a lot of them in Hades), and when they heard his disputations and twists and dodges, they went crazy for him and considered him the best, and that inspired him to claim the chair that Aeschylus was occupying.

XANTHIAS

And wasn't he pelted?

SLAVE

He was not; the public clamored to hold a trial of who's best in that art.

XANTHIAS

The criminal public clamored?

SLAVE

That's right, to high heaven.

ARISTOPHANES

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

μετ' Αἰσχύλου δ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἕτεροι σύμμαχοι;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

ὀλίγον τὸ χρηστόν ἐστίν, ὥσπερ ἐνθάδε.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τί δῆθ' ὁ Πλούτων δρᾶν παρασκευάζεται;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

785 ἀγῶνα ποιεῖν αὐτίκα μάλα καὶ κρίσιν
κάλεγχον αὐτοῖν τῆς τέχνης.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

κάπειτα πῶς

οὐ καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἀντελάβετο τοῦ θρόνου;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἐκείνος, ἀλλ' ἔκυσε μὲν Αἰσχύλος,
ὄτε δὴ κατήλθε, κἀνέβαλε τὴν δεξιάν·

790 κἀνεικος ὑπεχώρησεν αὐτῷ τοῦ θρόνου.

νυνὶ δ' ἔμελλεν, ὡς ἔφη Κλειδημίδης,

ἔφεδρος καθεδεῖσθαι· κἂν μὲν Αἰσχύλος κρατῆ,

ἔξειν κατὰ χώραν· εἰ δὲ μή, περὶ τῆς τέχνης

διαγωνιεῖσθ' ἔφασκε πρὸς γ' Εὐριπίδην.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

795 τὸ χρῆμ' ἄρ' ἔσται;

⁷⁸⁸ Αἰσχύλος Naber: Αἰσχύλον a

FROGS

XANTHIAS

But weren't there others who sided with Aeschylus?

SLAVE

The good are the minority, (*indicating the spectators*) just like up here.

XANTHIAS

So what does Pluto intend to do?

SLAVE

To hold a contest immediately, a test and trial of the artistry of both.

XANTHIAS

Then how come Sophocles didn't stake a claim to the chair?

SLAVE

Not him! When he came down here Aeschylus gave him a kiss and grasped his hand, and he withdrew any rival claim on the chair.⁷⁶ And now he's ready, in the words of Cleidemides,⁷⁷ to take a bye and sit it out, and if Aeschylus wins, he'll stay where he is; otherwise, he's promised to challenge Euripides for his art's sake.

XANTHIAS

So it's going to happen?

⁷⁶ Or, with the mss., "when he came . . . he kissed Aeschylus and grasped his hand, and *he* [in contrast with Euripides] withdrew . . ."

⁷⁷ Unknown.

ARISTOPHANES

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

νῆ Δί' ὀλίγον ὕστερον.
 κἀνταῦθα δὴ τὰ δεινὰ κινηθήσεται.
 καὶ γὰρ ταλάντῳ μουσικῇ σταθμῆσεται—

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

τί δέ; μειαγωγῆσουσι τὴν τραγωδίαν;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

καὶ κανόνας ἐξοίσουσι καὶ πήχεις ἐπῶν
 800 καὶ πλαίσια ξύμπτυκτα—

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

πλινθεύσουσι γάρ;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

καὶ διαμέτρους καὶ σφῆνας. ὁ γὰρ Εὐριπίδης
 κατ' ἔπος βασανιεῖν φησι τὰς τραγωδίας.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

ἦ που βαρέως οἶμαι τὸν Αἰσχύλον φέρειν.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

ἔβλεψε γοῦν ταυρηδὸν ἐγκύψας κάτω.

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

κρινεῖ δὲ δὴ τίς ταῦτα;

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

805 τοῦτ' ἦν δύσκολον·
 σοφῶν γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ἀπορίαν ἠήρισκέτην.
 οὔτε γὰρ Ἀθηναίοισι συνέβαιν' Αἰσχύλος—

FROGS

SLAVE

Yes, and pretty soon. And then we'll see great events set in motion. Poetic art will be weighed in a balance—

XANTHIAS

You mean they'll be weighing tragedy like Apaturia cutlets?⁷⁸

SLAVE

—and they'll be bringing out rulers, and measuring tapes for words, and folding frames—

XANTHIAS

You mean they'll be making bricks?

SLAVE

—and set squares and wedges; because Euripides says he's going to examine the tragedies word for word.

XANTHIAS

I'd guess that Aeschylus is pretty sore about that.

SLAVE

Well, he did put his head down and glowered like a bull.

XANTHIAS

And who's to be the judge?

SLAVE

That was a tough one, because both discovered a shortage of competent people. You see, Aeschylus wouldn't agree to use Athenians—

⁷⁸ A phratry festival (cf. 418 n.) to which fathers brought sacrificial meat to celebrate their sons' coming of age; an element of the ritual was the weighing of the meat.

ARISTOPHANES

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ

πολλοὺς ἴσως ἐνόμιζε τοὺς τοιχωρῦχους.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ

810 λῆρόν τε τᾶλλ' ἠγάειτο τοῦ γινῶναι πέρι
 φύσεις ποιητῶν. εἶτα τῷ σῶ δεσπότῃ
ἐπέτρεψαν, ὅτι τῆς τέχνης ἔμπειρος ἦν.
 ἀλλ' εἰσΐωμεν ὡς ὅταν γ' οἱ δεσπότηται
 ἐσπουδάκωσι, κλαύμαθ' ἡμῖν γίγνεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

815 ἦ που δεινὸν ἐριβρεμέτας χόλον ἔνδοθεν ἕξει,
 ἠνίκ' ἂν ὀξύλαλόν περ ἴδη θήγοντος ὀδόντα
 ἀντιτέχνον· τότε δὴ μανίας ὑπὸ δεινῆς
 ὄμματα στροβήσεται.

820 ἔσται δ' ὑψιλόφων τε λόγων κορυθαίολα νείκη
 σχινδάλαμοί τε παραξονίων σμιλεύματά τ' ἔργων
 φωτὸς ἀμυνομένου φρενοτέκτονος ἀνδρὸς
 ῥήμαθ' ἵπποβάμονα.

825 φρίξας δ' αὐτοκόμου λοφιάς λασιαύχενα χαίταν,
 δεινὸν ἐπισκύνιον ξυνάγων, βρυχώμενος ἥσει
 ῥήματα γομφοπαγῆ, πινακηδὸν ἀποσπῶν
 γηγενεῖ φυσῆματι.

818 ὑψι- U γρΣ: ἵππο- R V A K

819 σχινδάλαμοί Dover: σκινδαλάμων vel sim. a S παρα-
 ξονίων Stanford: παραξόνια a

FROGS

XANTHIAS

Maybe he considered too many of them crooks.

SLAVE

—and the rest of them he thought were pure piffle when it comes to judging what poets really are. Then they turned it over to your master, because he's familiar with the art. Now let's go inside, because serious business for our masters means afflictions for us.

XANTHIAS and SLAVE go inside; various measuring instruments are brought onstage.

CHORUS

Surely fearful wrath will fill the heart of the mighty
thunderer
when he sees the sharp-talking tusk of his rival in art
being whetted; then with fearful fury
will his eyes whirl about.

We'll have helmet-glinting struggles of tall-crested
words,
we'll have linchpin-shavings and chisel-parings of
artworks
as a man fends off a thought-building hero's
galloping utterances.

Bristling the shaggy-necked shock of his hirsute ridge
of mane,
his formidable brow frowning, with a roar he will hurl
utterances bolted together, tearing off timbers
with his gigantic blast.

ARISTOPHANES

ἔνθεν δὴ στοματοουργὸς ἐπῶν βασιανίστρια λίσπη
 γλῶσσο' ἀνελισσομένη, φθονερούς κινούσα
 χαλινοῦς,
 ῥήματα δαιομένη καταλεπτολογήσει
 πλευμόνων πολὺν πόνον.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

830 οὐκ ἂν μεθείμην τοῦ θρόνου, μὴ νουθέτει
κρείττων γὰρ εἶναί φημι τούτου τὴν τέχνην.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

Αἰσχύλε, τί σιγᾶς; αἰσθάνει γὰρ τοῦ λόγου.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀποσεμνυνεῖται πρῶτον, ἅπερ ἐκάστοτε
ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίασιν ἑτερατεύετο.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

835 ὦ δαιμόνι' ἀνδρῶν, μὴ μεγάλα λίαν λέγε.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐγὼ δα τοῦτον καὶ διέσκεμμαι πάλαι,
ἄνθρωπον ἀγριοποιόν, ἀνθαδόστομον,
 ἔχοντ' ἀχάλινον, ἀκρατές, ἀπύλωτον στόμα,
 ἀπεριλάλητον, κομποφακελορρήμονα.

838 ἀπύλωτον V A K: ἀθύρωτον R

FROGS

Then the smooth tongue unfurling, mouth-working
tester of words, slipping the reins of envy
will sort out those utterances and parse clean away
much labor of lungs.

Three chairs are brought out; then enter PLUTO, who takes the center chair, and DIONYSUS (now normally costumed), who takes the left-hand chair; then enter AESCHYLUS, who takes the right-hand chair, followed by EURIPIDES, who lays hands on it; alternatively, the whole tableau may be rolled out on the eccyclema.

EURIPIDES

Don't give me any lectures, I won't let go the chair! I say
I'm better at the art than he is.

DIONYSUS

Why so quiet, Aeschylus? You hear what he says.

EURIPIDES

He'll be haughtily aloof at first, just the way he tried to
mystify us in his tragedies.

DIONYSUS

Careful, my friend, don't speak too confidently!

EURIPIDES

I know this fellow, and have long had him pegged: he's
a creator of savages, a boorish talker, with an unbridled,
unruly, ungated mouth, uncircumlocutory, a big bom-
bastolocator.

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

840 ἄληθες, ὦ παῖ τῆς ἀρουραίας θεοῦ;
σὺ δὴ 'μέ ταῦτ', ὦ στωμυλιοσυλλεκτάδῃ
 καὶ πτωχοποιῆ καὶ ρακιοσυρραπτάδῃ;
 ἄλλ' οὐ τι χαίρων αὐτ' ἐρεῖς.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

παῦ', Αἰσχύλε,
 καὶ μὴ πρὸς ὀργὴν σπλάγχνα θερμήνης κότῳ.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

845 οὐ δῆτα, πρὶν γ' ἂν τοῦτον ἀποφῆνω σαφῶς
 τὸν χωλοποιὸν οἶος ὢν θρασύνεται.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἄρν' ἄρνα μέλανα, παῖδες, ἐξενέγκατε
 τυφῶς γὰρ ἐκβαίνειν παρασκευάζεται.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

850 ὦ Κρητικὰς μὲν συλλέγων μονωδίας,
γάμους δ' ἀνοσίους εἰσφέρων εἰς τὴν τέχνην—

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐπίσχεσ οὔτος, ὦ πολυτίμητ' Αἰσχύλε.
 ἀπὸ τῶν χαλαζῶν δ', ὦ πόνηρ' Εὐριπίδῃ,
 ἄναγε σεαυτὸν ἐκποδῶν, εἰ σωφρονεῖς,
 ἵνα μὴ κεφαλαίῳ τὸν κρόταφόν σου ῥήματι
 855 θενῶν ὑπ' ὀργῆς ἐκχέῃ τὸν Τήλεφον.

⁷⁹ Adapted from Euripides fr. 885 ("you scion of the sea goddess"); the origin of Aristophanes' allusions to Euripides' mother

FROGS

AESCHYLUS

Is that so, you scion of the greenery goddess?⁷⁹ This about me from you? You babble-collector, you creator of beggars,⁸⁰ you rag stitcher! Oh, you'll be sorry you said it!

DIONYSUS

Stop it, Aeschylus; heat not your innards with wrathful rage.⁸¹

AESCHYLUS

No, not till I've manifestly shown up this creator of cripples for what he is, for all his impudence.

DIONYSUS

A lamb, boys, bring out a black lamb! Here's a hurricane hurtling our way!

AESCHYLUS

You collector of Cretan arias,⁸² who brought unholy couplings into our art—

DIONYSUS

Hold on there, my exalted Aeschylus! And you, rascally Euripides, if you have any sense you'll move out of this hailstorm, or in his anger he may bash your skull with a crushing comeback and dash out your *Telephus*.⁸³ And

as a seller of wild herbs (*Acharnians* 457, 478, *Knights* 19, *Women at the Thesmophoria* 387, 456) is obscure.

⁸⁰ Cf. *Acharnians* 410–79, *Peace* 146–48.

⁸¹ Probably quoting or adapting an Aeschylean line.

⁸² Referring perhaps to their setting (cf. 1356–60), choreographic accompaniment, or mythical content (e.g. Pasiphae and Phaedra). ⁸³ Produced in 438 and featuring the classic Euripidean beggar-hero; parodied by Aristophanes in *Acharnians* and *Women at the Thesmophoria*.

ARISTOPHANES

σὺ δὲ μὴ πρὸς ὀργήν, Αἰσχύλ', ἀλλὰ πραόνως
 ἔλεγχ', ἐλέγχον· λαιδορεῖσθαι δ' οὐ πρέπει
 ἄνδρας ποιητὰς ὥσπερ ἄρτοπώλιδας·
 σὺ δ' εὐθύς ὥσπερ πρίνος ἐμπρησθεῖς βοᾷς.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

860 ἔτοιμός εἰμ' ἔγωγε, κοῦκ ἀναδύομαι,
 δάκνειν, δάκνεσθαι πρότερος, εἰ τούτῳ δοκεῖ,
 τᾶπη, τὰ μέλη, τὰ νεῦρα τῆς τραγωδίας,
 καὶ νῆ Δία τὸν Πηλέα γε καὶ τὸν Αἴολον
 καὶ τὸν Μελέαγρον κᾶτι μάλα τὸν Τῆλεφον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

865 σὺ δὲ δὴ τί βουλεύει ποιεῖν; λέγ', Αἰσχύλε.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ

ἐβουλόμην μὲν οὐκ ἐρίζειν ἐνθάδε·
οὐκ ἐξ ἴσου γάρ ἐστιν ἀγὼν νῶν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τί δαί;

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ

ὅτι ἡ ποίησις οὐχὶ συντέθηκέ μοι,
τούτῳ δὲ συντέθηκεν, ὥσθ' ἔξει λέγειν.
 870 ὅμως δ' ἐπειδὴ σοι δοκεῖ, δρᾶν ταῦτα χρή.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἴθι νυν λιβανωτὸν δεῦρό τις καὶ πῦρ δότω,
 ὅπως ἂν εὔξωμαι πρὸ τῶν σοφισμάτων
ἀγῶνα κρίναι τούδε μουσικώτατα·
ὑμεῖς δὲ ταῖς Μούσαις τι μέλος ὑπάσατε.

FROGS

you, Aeschylus, give and take arguments not angrily but calmly; it's unseemly for upstanding poets to squabble like bread women, but right away you start roaring like an oak tree on fire.

EURIPIDES

I'm ready if he is—and I won't back out—to go first in an exchange of pecks at my words, my songs, the sinews of my tragedies, including, yes, my *Peleus*, my *Aeolus*, my *Meleager*, and even my *Telephus*.

DIONYSUS

And what do you want to do, Aeschylus? Do say.

AESCHYLUS

I'd have preferred not to wrangle here, since the contest isn't equal.

DIONYSUS

How so?

AESCHYLUS

Because my poetry hasn't died with me, while his is as dead as he is, so he'll have it here to recite.⁸⁴ Still, if that's your decision, so be it.

DIONYSUS

Then someone bring me incense and fire here, and I'll preface the intellectualisms with a prayer that I may judge this contest with the utmost artistic integrity; (*to Chorus*) meanwhile, invoke the Muses with a song.

⁸⁴ Sometime after Aeschylus' death and before 425 (cf. *Acharnians* 10), a decree was passed permitting his plays to be entered in competition against new plays.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 875 ὦ Διὸς ἐννέα παρθένοι ἄγναι
 Μοῦσαι, λεπτολόγους ξυνετὰς φρένας αἰ καθορᾶτε
 ἀνδρῶν γνωμοτύπων, ὅταν εἰς ἔριν ὄξυμερίμοις
 ἔλθωσι στρεβλοῖσι παλαίσμασιν ἀντιλογούντες,
 ἔλθετ' ἐποψόμεναι δύναμιν
- 880 δεινοτάτοιον στομάτοιον πορίσασθαι
 ῥή<γ>ματα καὶ παραπρίσματ' ἐπῶν.
- 882/3 νῦν γὰρ ἀγῶν σοφίας ὁ μέγας
 χωρεῖ πρὸς ἔργον ἤδη.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- 885 εὔχεσθε δὴ καὶ σφῶ τι πρὶν τᾶπῃ λέγειν.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

Δήμητερ ἢ θρέψασα τὴν ἐμὴν φρένα,
 εἶναί με τῶν σῶν ἄξιον μυστηρίων.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐπίθεε λιβανωτὸν καὶ σὺ δὴ λαβῶν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἕτεροι γὰρ εἰσιν οἷσιν εὔχομαι θεοῖς. καλῶς·

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἴδιοί τινεσ σου, κόμμα καινόν;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

- 890 καὶ μάλα.

⁸⁸¹ suppl. Fraenkel

FROGS

The Chorus performs while Dionysus lights incense and silently prays.

CHORUS

Zeus' nine maiden daughters immaculate,
o Muses, who oversee the keen and subtly reasoning
minds
of men who mint ideas, when they come into conflict,
debating each other with knotty and precisely plotted
ploys,
come and behold the power
of two mouths most formidable at purveying
hewn chunks and whittlings of words.
Yes, now the great intellectual contest
at last goes into action.

DIONYSUS

Now each of you say a prayer before you say your piece.

AESCHYLUS

Demeter, who nourished my mind, may I be worthy of
your Mysteries!

DIONYSUS

(to Euripides) You take some incense too, and put it on the
fire.

EURIPIDES

No thanks; the gods I pray to are different.

DIONYSUS

Some private gods of your own, a novel coinage?

EURIPIDES

Precisely.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἴθι δὴ προσεύχου τοῖσιν ἰδιώταις θεοῖς.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

Αἰθήρ, ἐμὸν βόσκημα, καὶ Γλώττης Στρόφιγξ
καὶ Ξύνεσι καὶ Μυκτῆρες Ὀσφραντήριοι,
ὀρθῶς μ' ἐλέγχειν ὧν ἂν ἄπτωμαι λόγων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) καὶ μὴν ἡμεῖς ἐπιθυμοῦμεν
896a παρὰ σοφοῖν ἀνδροῖν ἀκοῦσαί
896b τινα λόγων ἐμμέλειαν·
ἔπιτε δαΐαν ὁδόν.
γλώσσα μὲν γὰρ ἠγρίωται,
899a λῆμα δ' οὐκ ἄτολμον ἀμφοῖν,
899b οὐδ' ἀκίνητοι φρένες.
900 προσδοκᾶν οὖν εἰκός ἐστι
901a τὸν μὲν ἀστεῖόν τι λέξειν
901b καὶ κατερρινημένον,
τὸν δ' ἀνασπῶντ' αὐτοπρέμνοις
τοῖς λόγοισιν ἐμπεσόντα
συσκεδᾶν πολλὰς ἀλινδήθρας ἐπῶν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

- 905 ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα χρὴ λέγειν· οὕτω δ' ὅπως ἐρεῖτον
ἀστεία καὶ μήτ' εἰκόνας μήθ' οἷ' ἂν ἄλλος εἴποι.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐμαντὸν μὲν γε, τὴν ποίησιν οἷός εἰμι,
ἐν τοῖσιν ὑστάτοις φράσω· τοῦτον δὲ πρῶτ' ἐλέγξω,
ὡς ἦν ἀλαζὼν καὶ φέναξ οἷοις τε τοὺς θεατὰς

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Then go ahead and pray to these unofficial gods.

EURIPIDES

Sky, my nourisher, and Pivot of Tongue, and Smarts, and Keen Nostrils, may I correctly refute any arguments I get hold of!

CHORUS

And now we're eager
to hear from two smart men
a real ballet of words.
Embark on the warpath!
Their tongues have gone wild,
their spirit lacks no boldness,
nor are their minds unmoved.
So it makes sense to expect
that this one will say something sophisticated
and finely honed,
while that one will launch his attack
with arguments torn up by the roots,
and scatter great dustclouds of words.

CHORUS LEADER

Now you must begin speaking at once, and be sure to come out with sophisticated material, not riddles or the sort of stuff just anyone could think up.

EURIPIDES

Very well, as for myself, the kind of poet I am, I will tell you in my final remarks; but first I'll expose my opponent for the charlatan and quack that he was, and by what means he hoodwinked his audiences, whom he took over from

ARISTOPHANES

910 ἐξηπάτα μώρους λαβὼν παρὰ Φρυνίχῳ τραφέντας.
 πρώτιστα μὲν γὰρ ἓνα τιν' ἂν καθίσειν ἐγκαλύψας,
 Ἀχιλλέα τιν' ἢ Νιόβην, τὸ πρόσωπον οὐχὶ δεικνύς,
πρόσχημα τῆς τραγωδίας, γρύζοντας οὐδέ τουτί.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ δῆθ'.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὁ δὲ χορός γ' ἤρειδεν ὄρμαθούς ἂν
 915 μελῶν ἐφεξῆς τέτταρας ξυνεχῶς ἄν· οἱ δ' ἐσίγων.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐγὼ δ' ἔχαιρον τῇ σιωπῇ, καί με τοῦτ' ἔτερπεν
 οὐχ ἦττον ἢ νῦν οἱ λαλοῦντες.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἠλίθιος γὰρ ἦσθα,
 σάφ' ἴσθι.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κάμαντῶ δοκῶ. τί δὲ ταῦτ' ἔδρασ' ὁ δείνα;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὑπ' ἀλαζονείας, ἵν' ὁ θεατῆς προσδοκῶν καθῆτο,
 920 ὁπόθ' ἢ Νιόβη τι φθέγγεται· τὸ δρᾶμα δ' ἂν διήει.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὦ παμπόνηρος, οἶ' ἄρ' ἐφανακιζόμεν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.
 τί σκορδινᾶ καὶ δυσφορεῖς;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὅτι αὐτὸν ἐξελέγχω.
 κάπειτ' ἐπειδὴ ταῦτα ληρήσειε καὶ τὸ δρᾶμα

FROGS

Phrynichus⁸⁵ already trained to be morons. He'd always start by having some solitary character sit there muffled up, say Achilles or Niobe, not letting us see their face (a poor excuse for tragic drama!) or hear even *this* much of a peep.

DIONYSUS

That's true, he didn't.

EURIPIDES

And while they sat there in silence, his chorus would rattle off four suites of choral lyric one after another without a break.

DIONYSUS

I enjoyed those silences, and found them no less pleasant than the chatterboxes we get nowadays.

EURIPIDES

That's because you were naive.

DIONYSUS

I think so too. But what was the guy up to?

EURIPIDES

Pure charlatanism. He wanted the spectator to sit there waiting for the moment when his Niobe would make a sound; meanwhile the play went on and on.

DIONYSUS

What a devil! The way he took me in! (*to Aeschylus*) Why are you fussing and fidgeting?

EURIPIDES

Because I'm exposing him. And then, when he'd hum-

⁸⁵ An older contemporary of Aeschylus.

ARISTOPHANES

ἤδη μεσοίη, ρήματ' ἄν βόεια δώδεκ' εἶπεν,
 925 ὄφρῦς ἔχοντα καὶ λόφους, δεῖν ἅττα μορμωροπά,
ἄγνωτα τοῖς θεωμένοις.

ΔΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

οἴμοι τάλας.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

σιώπα.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

σαφές δ' ἄν εἶπεν οὐδὲ ἔν—

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μῆ πρίε τοὺς ὀδόντας.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἢ Σκαμάνδρους ἢ τάφρους ἢ 'π' ἀσπίδων
 ἐπόντας

930 γρυπαιέτους χαλκηλάτους καὶ ρήμαθ' ἱππόκρημνα,
ἂ ξυμβαλεῖν οὐ ράδι' ἦν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τοὺς θεούς, ἐγὼ γοῦν
 ἤδη ποτ' ἐν μακρῷ χρόνῳ νυκτὸς διηγρύπησα
 τὸν ξουθὸν ἱππαλεκτρύονα ζητῶν τίς ἐστιν ὄρνις.

ΔΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

σημείον ἐν ταῖς ναυσίν, ὠμαθέστατ', ἐνεγέγραπτο.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν Φιλοξένου γ' ὄμην Ἔρυξιν εἶναι.

⁸⁶ Adapted from Euripides, *Hippolytus* 375–76.

FROGS

bugged along like that and the play was half over, he'd come out with a dozen words as big as an ox with crests and beetling brows, formidable bogey-faced things unfamiliar to the spectators.

AESCHYLUS

Good grief!

DIONYSUS

Be quiet!

EURIPIDES

And he wouldn't say a single intelligible word—

DIONYSUS

(to *Aeschylus*) Stop gnashing your teeth!

EURIPIDES

—but only Scamanders, or moats, or shields bronze-bossed and blazoned with griffin-eagles, and huge craggy utterances that weren't easy to decipher.

DIONYSUS

By heaven, I myself "have lain awake through long stretches of night trying to figure out"⁸⁶ what kind of bird a zooming horsecock is.

AESCHYLUS

It was carved on the ships⁸⁷ as a figurehead, you ignoramus!

DIONYSUS

And here I thought it was Philoxenus' son, Eryxis!⁸⁸

⁸⁷ I.e. the ships at Troy, cf. Aeschylus' *Myrmidons* fr. 134, Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 231 ff. ⁸⁸ Probably Eryxis of Cephisia (PA 5191), who had recently had a seat on the Council and (to infer from this context) a naval command.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

935 εἶτ' ἐν τραγωδίαις ἐχρῆν κάλεκτρούνα ποιῆσαι;

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ

σὺ δ', ὦ θεοῖσιν ἐχθρέ, ποῖ' ἄττ' ἐστὶν ἄττ' ἐποίεις;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐχ ἵπαλεκτρούνας μὰ Δί' οὐδὲ τραγελάφους, ἅπερ
σύ,ἂν τοῖσι παραπετάσμασιν τοῖς Μηδικοῖς
γράφουσιν·ἀλλ' ὡς παρέλαβον τὴν τέχνην παρὰ σοῦ τὸ
πρῶτον εὐθύς940 οἰδοῦσαν ὑπὸ κομπασμάτων καὶ ῥημάτων ἐπαχθῶν,
ἴσχυρα μὲν πρῶτιστον αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ βάρος
ἀφείλονἐπυλλίοις καὶ περιπάτοις καὶ τευτλίοισι λευκοῖς,
χυλὸν διδοὺς στωμυλμάτων ἀπὸ βιβλίων ἀπηθῶν·
εἶτ' ἀνέτρεφον μονωδίαις Κηφισοφῶντα μειγνύς.945 εἶτ' οὐκ ἐλήρουν ὅ τι τύχοιμ' οὐδ' ἐμπεσῶν ἔφυρον,
ἀλλ' οὐξιώων πρῶτιστα μὲν μοι τὸ γένος εἶπ' ἂν
εὐθύς
τοῦ δράματος.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ

κρεῖττον γὰρ ἦν σοι νῆ Δί' ἢ τὸ σαυτοῦ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῶν πρῶτων ἐπῶν παρήκ' ἂν οὐδέν'
ἄργόν,

ἀλλ' ἔλεγεν ἢ γυνή τέ μοι χῶ δούλος οὐδὲν ἦττον,

FROGS

EURIPIDES

But really, should one write about a *rooster* in tragedy?

AESCHYLUS

And what about you, you enemy of the gods, what sort of things did you write about?

EURIPIDES

Certainly not horsecocks or goatstags, like you, the sort of things they embroider on Persian tapestries. No, as soon as I first inherited the art from you, bloated with bombast and obese vocabulary, I immediately put it on a diet and took off the weight with a regimen of wordlets and strolls and little white beets, administering chatter-juice pressed from books; then I built up its strength with an admixture of Cephisophon's arias.⁸⁹ And I didn't write any old humbug that came into my head, or charge in and make a mess, but the very first character who walked onto my stage started by explaining the origins of the play.

AESCHYLUS

Because they were a damn sight better than your own!

EURIPIDES

Again, from the very first lines I wouldn't leave any character idle; I'd have the wife speak, and the slave just as much,

⁸⁹ Cephisophon was evidently a close friend of Euripides; the later tradition that he helped write Euripides' plays and seduced his wife (*Life* 92–96, cf. below, 1046–48) was probably derived from comedy.

ARISTOPHANES

χω̄ δεσπότης χῆ παρθένος χῆ γραῡς ἄν.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

950

εἶτα δῆτα

οὐκ ἀποθανεῖν σε ταῡτ' ἐχρήν τολμῶντα;

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω·

δημοκρατικὸν γὰρ αὐτ' ἔδρων.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τοῦτο μὲν ἔασον, ᾧ τᾶν

οὐ σοὶ γάρ ἐστι περίπατος κάλλιστα περί γε
τούτου.

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔπειτα τουτουσὶ λαλεῖν ἐδίδαξα—

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

φημὶ καγώ.

955 ὡς πρὶν διδάξαι γ' ὄφελος μέσος διαρραγῆναι.

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

λεπτῶν τε κανόνων εἰσβολὰς ἐπῶν τε γωνιασμούς,
νοεῖν, ὀρᾶν, ξυνιέναι, στρέφειν ἔδραν, τεχνάζειν,
κάχ' ὑποτοπεῖσθαι, περινοεῖν ἅπαντα—

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

φημὶ καγώ.

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οἰκεία πράγματ' εἰσάγων, οἷς χρώμεθ', οἷς
ξύνεσμεν,

960 ἐξ ᾧν γ' ἂν ἐξηλεγχόμην· ξυνειδότες γὰρ οὔτοι

FROGS

and the master, and the maiden, and the old lady.

AESCHYLUS

And for such audacity you surely deserved the death penalty!

EURIPIDES

No, by Apollo: it was a democratic act.

DIONYSUS

Better change the subject, my friend; that's not the best theme for a sermon from *you*!

EURIPIDES

(*indicating the spectators*) Then I taught these people how to talk—

AESCHYLUS

I'll say you did! If only you'd split in two before you had the chance!

EURIPIDES

—and how to apply subtle rules and square off their words, to think, to see, to understand, to be quick on their feet, to scheme, to see the bad in others, to think of all aspects of everything—

AESCHYLUS

I'll say!

EURIPIDES

—by staging everyday scenes, things we're used to, things that we live with, things that I wouldn't have got away with falsifying, because these spectators knew them as well as I

⁹⁵⁷ ἔδραν Ussher: ἐρᾶν a

ARISTOPHANES

ἤλεγχον ἄν μου τὴν τέχνην· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔκομπολάκουν
ἀπὸ τοῦ φρονεῖν ἀποσπάσας, οὐδ' ἐξέπληττον
αὐτούς,

Κύκνους ποιῶν καὶ Μέμνονας
κωδωνοφαλαροπόλους.

γνώσει δὲ τοὺς τούτου τε κάμους ἑκατέρου μαθητάς.
965 τουτουμενὶ Φορμίσιος Μεγαίνετός θ' ὁ Μανῆς,
σαλπιγγολογχυπηνάδαι, σαρκασμοπιτυκοκάμπται,
οὐμοὶ δὲ Κλειτοφῶν τε καὶ Θηραμένης ὁ κομψός.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

Θηραμένης; σοφός γ' ἀνὴρ καὶ δεινὸς εἰς τὰ πάντα,
ὃς ἦν κακοῖς που περιπέσῃ καὶ πλησίον παραστῆ,
970 πέπτωκεν ἔξω τῶν κακῶν, οὐ Χίος, ἀλλὰ Κεῖος.

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τοιαῦτα μέντοι γὰρ φρονεῖν
τούτοισιν εἰσηγησάμην,
λογισμὸν ἐνθεὶς τῇ τέχνῃ
καὶ σκέψιν, ὥστ' ἤδη νοεῖν
975 ἅπαντα καὶ διειδέναι
τά τ' ἄλλα καὶ τὰς οἰκίας
οἰκεῖν ἄμεινον ἢ πρὸ τοῦ
κἀνασκοπεῖν· “πῶς τοῦτ' ἔχει;
ποῦ μοι τοδί; τίς τόδ' ἔλαβεν;”

965 Μάγνης A, cf. Pollux 7.204-5

970 Κεῖος V A S λΣV: Κίος R K ΣRVE: Κῶος Aristarchus ap.

ΣVE

FROGS

and could have exposed my faulty art. I never distracted their minds with bombastic bluster, and never tried to shock them by creating Cynuses and Memnons with bells on their horses' cheek plates.⁹⁰ You can judge by comparing his followers and mine: his are Phormisius⁹¹ and Megaenetus the Stooze,⁹² bugle boys with long beards and lances, flesh-ripping pine-benders, while mine are Cleitophon⁹³ and the sharp Theramenes.

DIONYSUS

Theramenes? That man's formidably intelligent across the board: if he happens to get into trouble or even comes close to it, he gives that trouble the slip, not a bust after all but a blackjack!⁹⁴

EURIPIDES

That's how I encouraged these people to think, by putting rationality and critical thinking into my art, so that now they grasp and really understand everything, especially how to run their households better than they used to, and how to keep an eye on things: "How's this going?" "Where'd that get to?" "Who took that?"

⁹⁰ Trojan allies slain by Achilles; Memnon was a character in *Memnon* and *Weighing of Souls*, but Cynus cannot be assigned to any Aeschylean play on present evidence.

⁹¹ A moderate democrat whose beard suggested female genitalia (cf. *Assemblywomen* 97). ⁹² Otherwise unknown.

⁹³ A supporter and then an enemy of the Four Hundred; Plato portrays him as an associate of the sophist Thrasymachus (*Cleitophon* 406a, 410c, *Republic* 328b, 340a).

⁹⁴ Lit. "not a Chian [the lowest throw at dice] but a Cean [punning on 'Coan,' the highest throw, and suggesting foreign ancestry or a connection with the Cean philosopher Prodicus]."

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- 980 νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς, νῦν γοῦν Ἄθη-
ναίων ἅπας τις εἰσιῶν
κέκραγε πρὸς τοὺς οἰκέτας
ζητεῖ τε· “ποῦ ἔστιν ἡ χύτρα;
τίς τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀπεδήδοκεν
985 τῆς μαινίδος; τὸ τρύβλιον
τὸ περυσινὸν τέθνηκέ μοι.
ποῦ τὸ σκόροδον τὸ χθιζινόν;
τίς τῆς ἐλάας παρέτραγεν;”
τέως δ’ ἀβελτερώτατοι
990 κεχηνότες μαμμάκυθοι,
Μελιτίδαι καθήντο.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (ἀντ) τάδε μὲν λέύσσεις, φαίδιμ’ Ἀχιλλεῦ·
993a σὺ δὲ τί, φέρε, πρὸς ταῦτα λέξεις;
993b μόνον ὅπως
μὴ σ’ ὁ θυμὸς ἀρπάσας
995 ἐκτὸς οἴσει τῶν ἐλαῶν·
δεινὰ γὰρ κατηγορήκεν.
ἀλλ’ ὅπως, ὦ γεννάδα,
μὴ πρὸς ὀργὴν ἀντιλέξεις,
ἀλλὰ συστείλας ἄκροισι
1000 χρώμενος τοῖς ἰστίοις,
εἶτα μᾶλλον μᾶλλον ἄξεις
καὶ φυλάξεις, ἤνικ’ ἂν τὸ
πνεῦμα λείον καὶ καθεστηκὸς λάβης.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Heavens yes, these days each and every Athenian comes home and starts yelling at the slaves, demanding to know "Where's the pot? Who chewed the head off this sprat? The bowl I bought last year is shot! Where's that garlic from yesterday? Who's been nibbling olives?" They used to sit there like dummies, gaping boobies, Simple Simons.

CHORUS

"You behold all this, glorious Achilles!"⁹⁵

But what will you say in reply?

Only take care

that your anger doesn't seize you

and drive you off the track,

for his accusations are formidable.

Yes, take care, good sir,

that you don't reply in a rage,

but shorten your sails

and cruise with them furled,

then little by little make headway

and keep watch for the moment

when you get a soft, smooth breeze.

⁹⁵ The opening line of Aeschylus' *Myrmidons* (fr. 131).

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὦ πρῶτος τῶν Ἑλλήνων πυργώσας ῥήματα
σεμνὰ

1005 καὶ κοσμήσας τραγικὸν λήρον, θαρρῶν τὸν κρουνὸν
ἀφίει.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

θυμοῦμαι μὲν τῇ ξυντυχίᾳ, καὶ μου τὰ σπλάγχχν'
ἀγανακτεῖ,
εἰ πρὸς τοῦτον δεῖ μ' ἀντιλέγειν ἵνα μὴ φάσκη δ'
ἀπορεῖν με,
ἀπόκρινάι μοι, τίνος οὐνεκα χρῆ θαυμάζειν ἄνδρα
ποιητήν;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

δεξιότητος καὶ νουθεσίας, ὅτι βελτίους τε ποιούμεν
τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

1010 ταῦτ' οὖν εἰ μὴ πεποίηκας,
ἀλλ' ἐκ χρηστῶν καὶ γενναίων μοχθηροτέρους
ἀπέδειξας,
τί παθεῖν φήσεις ἄξιός εἶναι;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τεθνάναι· μὴ τοῦτον ἐρώτα.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

σκέψαι τοίνυν οἶους αὐτοὺς παρ' ἐμοῦ παρεδέξατο
πρῶτον,

FROGS

CHORUS LEADER

Now then, you who were the first of the Greeks to rear towers of majestic utterance and adorn tragic rant, take heart and open the floodgates!

AESCHYLUS

I'm enraged at this turn of events, and it sours my stomach that I have to debate this man, but I don't want him claiming that I'm at a loss, so answer me this: for what qualities should a poet be admired?

EURIPIDES

Skill and good counsel, and because we make people better members of their communities.

AESCHYLUS

And if you haven't done this, but rather turned good, upstanding people into obvious scoundrels, what punishment would you say you deserve?

DIONYSUS

Death; you needn't ask *him*!

AESCHYLUS

Then just consider what they were like when he took them

ARISTOPHANES

εἰ γενναίους καὶ τετραπήχεις, καὶ μὴ
 διαδρασιπολίτας,
 1015 μῆδ' ἀγοραίους μῆδὲ κοβάλους, ὥσπερ νῦν, μῆδὲ
 πανούργους,
 ἀλλὰ πνέοντας δόρυ καὶ λόγχας καὶ λευκολόφους
 τρυφαλείας
 καὶ πῆληκας καὶ κνημίδας καὶ θυμούς· ἑπταβοεῖους.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καὶ δὴ χωρεῖ τουτὶ τὸ κακόν· κρανοποιῶν αὖ μ'
 ἐπιτρέψει.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

καὶ τί σὺ δράσας οὕτως αὐτούς γενναίους
 ἐξεδίδαξας;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1020 Αἰσχύλε, λέξον, μῆδ' αὐθάδως σεμννόμενος
 χαλέπαινε.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

δρᾶμα ποιήσας Ἄρεως μεστόν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ποῖον;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

τούς Ἑπτ' ἐπὶ Θήβας·
 ὃ θεασάμενος πᾶς ἂν τις ἀνὴρ ἠράσθη δάιος εἶναι.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τουτὶ μὲν σοι κακὸν εἴργασται· Θηβαίους γὰρ
 πεποίηκας

FROGS

over from me, noble six-footers and not the civic shirkers, vulgarians, imps, and criminals they are now, but men with an aura of spears, lances, white-crested helmets, green berets, greaves, and seven-ply oxhide hearts.

DIONYSUS

This is going from bad to worse: making helmets now—he'll wear me out!

EURIPIDES

And just how did you train them to be so noble?

DIONYSUS

Speak up, Aeschylus, and don't be willfully prideful and difficult.

AESCHYLUS

By composing a play chock-full of Ares.

DIONYSUS

Namely?

AESCHYLUS

My *Seven Against Thebes*; every single man who watched it was hot to be warlike.

DIONYSUS

Well, that was an evil accomplishment, because you've

1018 -τρίψει R A: -τρίψεις V K

1019 γενναίους R: ἀνδρείους V A K

ARISTOPHANES

ἀνδρειότερους εἰς τὸν πόλεμον· καὶ τούτου γ' οὐνεκα
τύπτου.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

- 1025 ἀλλ' ὑμῖν αὐτ' ἐξῆν ἀσκεῖν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῦτ'
ἐτρέπεσθε.
εἶτα διδάξας Πέρσας μετὰ τοῦτ' ἐπιθυμῶν
ἐξεδίδαξα
νικᾶν αἰεὶ τοὺς ἀντιπάλους, κοσμήσας ἔργον
ἄριστον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐχάρην γοῦν, ἡνίκ' ἐπήκουσαν τοῦ Δαρείου
τεθνεώτος,
ὁ χορὸς δ' εὐθὺς τῷ χεῖρ' ὠδὶ συγκρούσας εἶπεν
"ἱανοί."

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

- 1030 ταῦτα γὰρ ἄνδρας χρὴ ποιητὰς ἀσκεῖν. σκέψαι γὰρ
ἀπ' ἀρχῆς
ὡς ὠφέλιμοι τῶν ποιητῶν οἱ γενναῖοι γεγένηται.
Ὅρφεὺς μὲν γὰρ τελετὰς θ' ἡμῖν κατέδειξε φόνων τ'
ἀπέχεσθαι,
Μουσαῖος δ' ἐξακέσεις τε νόσων καὶ χρησμούς,
Ἡσίοδος δὲ
γῆς ἐργασίας, καρπῶν ὥρας, ἀρότους· ὁ δὲ θεῖος
Ὅμηρος
1035 ἀπὸ τοῦ τιμῆν καὶ κλέος ἔσχεν πλὴν τοῦδ', ὅτι
χρήστ' ἐδίδαξεν,
τάξεις, ἀρετάς, ὀπλίσεις ἀνδρῶν;

FROGS

made the Thebans⁹⁶ more valiant in battle, and you deserve a beating for it.

AESCHYLUS

No, you could all have had the same training, but you didn't go in that direction. Thereafter I produced my *Persians*, which taught them to yearn always to defeat the enemy, and thus I adorned an excellent achievement.⁹⁷

DIONYSUS

I certainly enjoyed it when they listened to the dead Darius, and right away the chorus clapped their hands together like this and cried "aiee!"

AESCHYLUS

That's the sort of thing that poets should practice. Just consider how beneficial the noble poets have been from the earliest times. Orpheus revealed mystic rites to us, and taught us to abstain from killings; Musaeus instructed us on oracles and cures for diseases; Hesiod on agriculture, the seasons for crops, and ploughing. And where did the godlike Homer get respect and renown if not by giving good instruction in the tactics, virtues, and weaponry of men?

⁹⁶ The Thebans were bitter enemies of Athens in the Peloponnesian War.

⁹⁷ The defeat of the Persians at Salamis (in 480) and Plataea (479).

¹⁰²⁸ ἐπήκουσαν τοῦ Sommerstein praeunte Dover: ἤκουσα
περὶ a

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καὶ μὴν οὐ Παντακλέα γε
 ἐδίδαξεν ὅμως τὸν σκαιότατον. πρῶν γοῦν, ἤνικ'
 ἔπεμπεν,
 τὸ κράνος πρῶτον περιδησάμενος τὸν λόφον ἤμελλ'
 ἐπιδήσειν.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἄλλους τοι πολλοὺς ἀγαθοὺς, ὧν ἦν καὶ
 Λάμαχος ἥρωσ·
 1040 ὅθεν ἡμῆ φρῆν ἀπομαξαμένη πολλὰς ἀρετὰς
 ἐποίησεν,
 Πατρόκλων, Τεύκρων θυμολεόντων, ἵν' ἐπαίροιμ'
 ἄνδρα πολίτην
 ἀντεκτείνειν αὐτὸν τούτοις, ὅποταν σάλπιγγος
 ἀκούσῃ.
 ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ Δί' οὐ Φαίδρας ἐποίουν πόρνας οὐδὲ
 Σθενεβοίας,
 οὐδ' οἶδ' οὐδεὶς ἦντιν' ἐρώσαν πώποτ' ἐποίησα
 γυναῖκα.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

μὰ Δί', οὐ γὰρ ἐπῆν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης οὐδέν σοι.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

1045 μηδέ γ' ἐπέειπ'
 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σοί τοι καὶ τοῖς σοῖσιν πολλὴ πολλοῦ
 πικαθῆτο,
 ὥστε γε καὶ τὸν σε κατ' οὖν ἔβαλεν.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Yes, but all the same he didn't succeed with that lummox Pantacles,⁹⁸ who just the other day, in a parade, was trying to fasten the crest to his helmet after he'd put it on!

AESCHYLUS

But surely he did succeed with many other brave men, one of whom was the hero Lamachus;⁹⁹ from that mold my imagination created many profiles in courage, men like Patroclus and the lionhearted Teucer, in hopes of inspiring every citizen to measure himself against them every time he heard the bugle. But I certainly created no whores like Phaedra and Stheneboea,¹⁰⁰ and no one can find a lustful woman in anything I ever composed.

EURIPIDES

Certainly not, since Aphrodite had absolutely nothing to do with you.

AESCHYLUS

And I hope she never does! Whereas she plunked herself down plenty hard on you and yours, and yes, even flattened you personally.

⁹⁸ Ridiculed in the same terms by Eupolis in the 420s (fr. 318).

⁹⁹ His distinguished military career began in the 430s and ended with a courageous death in action in 414 (Thucydides 6.101); though Aristophanes portrayed him as a braggart soldier in *Acharnians*, he praised him after his death (*Women at the Thesmophoria* 841).

¹⁰⁰ Both heroines (of Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Stheneboea* resp.) propositioned a stepson (Hippolytus, Bellerophon) and then accused him of rape when rejected.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Δία τοὔτό γέ τοι δῆ.
ἀ γὰρ εἰς τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἐποίεις, αὐτὸς τούτοισιν
ἐπλήγης.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

καὶ τί βλάπτουσ', ὦ σχέτλι' ἀνδρῶν, τὴν πόλιν
ἀμαὶ Σθενέβοιαι;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

1050 ὅτι γενναίας καὶ γενναίων ἀνδρῶν ἀλόχους
ἀνέπεισας
κώνεια πίνειν αἰσχυνθείσας διὰ τοὺς σοὺς
Βελλεροφόντας.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

πότερον δ' οὐκ ὄντα λόγον τοὔτον περὶ τῆς Φαίδρας
ξυνέθηκα;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ὄντ'· ἀλλ' ἀποκρύπτειν χρὴ τὸ πονηρὸν
τόν γε ποιητήν,
καὶ μὴ παράγειν μηδὲ διδάσκειν. τοῖς μὲν γὰρ
παιδαρίοισιν
1055 ἐστὶ διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖσιν δ' ἠβῶσι
ποιηταί.
πάνν δὲ δεῖ χρηστὰ λέγειν ἡμᾶς.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἦν οὖν σὺ λέγης Λυκαβηττοὺς

FROGS

DIONYSUS

That's the truth, all right! You yourself got hit by the same stuff you wrote about other people's wives.

EURIPIDES

And what harm did my Stheneboeas do to the community, you bastard?

AESCHYLUS

You motivated respectable women, the spouses of respectable men, to take hemlock in their shame over your Bellerophons.

EURIPIDES

But the story I told about Phaedra was already established, wasn't it?

AESCHYLUS

Of course it was. But the poet has a special duty to conceal what's wicked, not stage it or teach it. For children the teacher is the one who instructs, but grownups have the poet. It's very important that we tell them things that are good.

EURIPIDES

So if you give us stuff like Lycabettus and massy Parnas-

ARISTOPHANES

καὶ Παρνασσῶν ἡμῖν μεγέθη, τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ χρηστὰ
 διδάσκειν,
 ὃν χρῆν φράζειν ἀνθρωπείως;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλ', ὦ κακόδαιμον, ἀνάγκη
μεγάλων γνωμῶν καὶ διανοιῶν ἴσα καὶ τὰ ῥήματα
τίκτειν.

1060 κἄλλως εἰκὸς τοὺς ἡμιθέους τοῖς ῥήμασι μείζοσι
χρῆσθαι·
 καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἱματίοις ἡμῶν χρῶνται πολὺ
 σεμνοτέροισιν·
 ἀμοῦ χρηστῶς καταδείξαντος διελυμνήνω σύ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί δράσας;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

πρῶτον μὲν τοὺς βασιλεύοντας ῥάκι' ἀμπισχόν, ἵν'
ἐλεινοὶ
τοῖς ἀνθρώποις φαίνοντ' εἶναι.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τοῦτ' οὖν ἔβλαψα τί δράσας;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

1065 οὐκ οὐν ἐθέλει γε τριηραρχεῖν πλουτῶν οὐδεὶς διὰ
 ταῦτα,
 ἀλλὰ ῥακίους περιλάμενος κλάει καὶ φησὶ
 πένεσθαι.

FROGS

sus,¹⁰¹ that's supposed to teach what's good? You should have done your instructing in plain human language.

AESCHYLUS

Look, you wretch, great thoughts and ideas force us to produce expressions that are equal to them. And anyway, it suits the demigods to use exalted expressions, just as they wear much more impressive clothing than we do; that's where I set a good example that you completely corrupted.

EURIPIDES

How so?

AESCHYLUS

First, you made your royals wear rags, so that they'd strike people as being piteous.

EURIPIDES

So what harm did I do there?

AESCHYLUS

Well, for one thing, that's why no rich man is willing to command a warship, but instead wraps himself in rags and whines, claiming to be poor.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Mountains.

¹⁰² A trierarchy was a service levied on the rich, who could sue for exemption by demonstrating insufficient wealth to a jury.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τὴν Δήμητρα χιτῶνά γ' ἔχων οὐλων ἐρίων
ὑπένερθεν.

κὰν ταῦτα λέγων ἔξαπατήσῃ, περὶ τοὺς ἰχθῦς
ἀνέκυψεν.

ΑἲΣΧΤΛΟΣ

1070 εἶτ' αὖ λαλιὰν ἐπιτηδεῦσαι καὶ στωμυλίαν ἐδίδαξας,
ἣ ἔκεένωσεν τὰς τε παλαιίστρας καὶ τὰς πυγὰς
ἐνέτριψεν

τῶν μειρακίων στωμυλλομένων, καὶ τοὺς Παράλους
ἀνέπεισεν

ἀνταγορεύειν τοῖς ἄρχουσι. καίτοι τότε γ', ἡνίκ'
ἐγὼ ἔζων,

οὐκ ἠπίσταντ' ἀλλ' ἣ μᾶζαν καλέσαι καὶ
"ῥυππαπαῖ" εἰπεῖν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω, καὶ προσπαρδεῖν γ' εἰς τὸ στόμα
τῶ θαλάμακι,

1075 καὶ μινθῶσαι τὸν ξύσσιτον κάκβας τινα
λωποδυτῆσαι.

1076/7 νῦν δ' ἀντιλέγει κούκέτ' ἐλαύνει πλεῖ δευρὶ καῦθις
ἐκεῖσε.

ΑἲΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ποίων δὲ κακῶν οὐκ αἰτιός ἐστ'·
οὐ προαγωγὸς κατέδειξ' οὔτος,

1080 καὶ τικτούσας ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς,
καὶ μειγνυμένας τοῖσιν ἀδελφοῖς,

FROGS

DIONYSUS

When he's actually wearing a soft woollen shirt underneath, by Demeter! And if he pulls that lie off, he pops up in the fish market!

AESCHYLUS

Then you taught people to cultivate chitchat and gab, which has emptied the wrestling schools and worn down the butts of the young men as they gab away, and prompted the crew of the *Paralus* to talk back to their officers.¹⁰³ Yet in the old days, when I was alive, all they knew how to do was shout for their rations and cry "heave ho!"

DIONYSUS

God yes, and fart in the bottom bencher's face, and smear shit on their messmates, and steal people's clothes when on shore leave! Now they talk back and refuse to row, and the ship sails this way and that.

AESCHYLUS

And what evils can't be laid at his door? Didn't he show women procuring,¹⁰⁴ and having babies in temples,¹⁰⁵ and sleeping with their brothers,¹⁰⁶ and claiming that "life is

¹⁰³ One of two triremes used for state business, whose all-citizen crew were strongly democratic (cf. Thucydides 8.73.5).

¹⁰⁴ Phaedra's nurse in *Hippolytus*.

¹⁰⁵ The heroine in *Auge*.

¹⁰⁶ Canace with Macareus in *Aeolus*, though this was probably a rape.

ARISTOPHANES

- καὶ φασκούσας οὐ ζῆν τὸ ζῆν;
 κᾶτ' ἐκ τούτων ἢ πόλις ἡμῶν
 ὑπογραμματέων ἀνεμεστώθη
 1085 καὶ βωμολόχων δημοπιθήκων
 ἐξαπατώντων τὸν δῆμον αἰεί,
 λαμπάδα δ' οὐδεὶς οἶός τε φέρειν
 ὑπ' ἀγυμνασίας ἔτι νυνί.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- μὰ Δί' οὐ δῆθ', ὥστ' ἐπαφηυάνθην
 1090 Παναθηναίοισι γελῶν, ὅτε δὴ
 βραδὺς ἄνθρωπός τις ἔθει κῆψας
 λευκός, πίων, ὑπολειπόμενος
 καὶ δεινὰ ποιῶν· κᾶθ' οἱ Κεραμῆς
 ἐν ταῖσι πύλαις παίουσ' αὐτοῦ
 1095 γαστέρα, πλευράς, λαγόνας, πυγῆν,
 ὁ δὲ τυπτόμενος ταῖσι πλατεΐαις
 ὑποπερδόμενος
 φυσῶν τὴν λαμπάδ' ἔφευγεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) μέγα τὸ πρᾶγμα, πολὺ τὸ νεῖκος,
 ἄδρὸς ὁ πόλεμος ἔρχεται.
 1100 χαλεπὸν οὖν ἔργον διαιρεῖν,
 ὅταν ὁ μὲν τείνη βιαίως,
 ὁ δ' ἐπαναστρέφειν δύνηται
 κἀπερείδεσθαι τορῶς.
 ἀλλὰ μὴ 'ν ταυτῶ κάθησθον·
 εἰσβολαὶ γάρ εἰσι πολλαὶ

FROGS

not life"?¹⁰⁷ As a result, our community's filled with assistant secretaries and clownish monkeys of politicians forever lying to the people, and from lack of physical fitness there's nobody left who can run with a torch.

DIONYSUS

Amen to that! I about died laughing at the Panathenaea when some laggard was running, all pale-faced, stooped over, and fat, falling behind and struggling badly; and then at the Gates the Potter's Field people whacked his stomach, ribs, flanks, and butt, and at their flat-handed slaps he started farting, and ran away blowing on his torch!

CHORUS

It's a great affair, a great quarrel,
a stern war that's in progress!
So it's a tough task to decide the issue,
when one strives forcefully
and the other can wheel around
and sharply counterattack.
Now don't just sit tight, you two:
there are plenty more thrusts to come,

¹⁰⁷ Perhaps Pasiphae in *Polyidus*.

ARISTOPHANES

χᾶτεραι σοφισμάτων.
 1105 ὃ τι περ οὖν ἔχετον ἐρίζειν,
 λέγετον, ἔπιτον, ἀνὰ δὲ δέρετον
 τὰ τε παλαιὰ καὶ τὰ καινὰ,
 κἀποκινδυνεύετον λεπ-
 τόν τι καὶ σοφὸν λέγειν.

(ἀντ) εἰ δὲ τοῦτο καταφοβεῖσθον,
 μή τις ἀμαθία προσῆ
 1110 τοῖς θεωμένοισιν, ὡς τὰ
 λεπτὰ μὴ γνῶναι λεγόντων,
 μηδὲν ὀρρωδεῖτε τοῦθ'· ὡς
 οὐκέθ' οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχει.
 ἐστρατευμένοι γάρ εἰσι,
 βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἕκαστος
 μανθάνει τὰ δεξιά·
 1115 αἱ φύσεις τ' ἄλλως κράτισται,
 νῦν δὲ καὶ παρηκόνηται.
 μηδὲν οὖν δείσητον, ἀλλὰ
 πάντ' ἐπέξιτον, θεατῶν γ'
 οὐνεχ', ὡς ὄντων σοφῶν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς τοὺς προλόγους σοι τρέψομαι,
 1120 ὅπως τὸ πρῶτον τῆς τραγωδίας μέρος
 πρῶτιστον αὐτοῦ βασιανῶ τοῦ δεξιοῦ
ἀσαφῆς γὰρ ἦν ἐν τῇ φράσει τῶν πραγμάτων.

FROGS

and more intellectualities.
So whatever your grounds of dispute,
argue out, attack, and lay bare
the old and the new,
and take a chance on saying
something subtle and sage.

And if you're afraid
of any ignorance among
the spectators, that they won't
appreciate your subtleties of argument,
don't worry about that, because
things are no longer that way.
For they're veterans,
and each one has a book
and knows the fine points;
their natural endowments are masterful too,
and now sharpened up.
So have no fear,
but tackle it all, resting assured
that the spectators are sage.

EURIPIDES

Now then, let me turn just to your prologues, so as first off
to examine the first section of this competent man's tragic
drama, because he was obscure in the exposition of his
plots.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καὶ ποῖον αὐτοῦ βασιανεῖς;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

πολλοὺς πάνυ.

πρῶτον δέ μοι τὸν ἐξ Ὀρεστείας λέγε.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1125 ἄγε δὴ σιώπα πᾶς ἀνήρ. λέγ', Αἰσχύλε.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

“Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε, πατρῶ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη
σωτήρ γενοῦ μοι σύμμαχός τ' αἰτουμένω·
ἦκω γὰρ εἰς γῆν τήνδε καὶ κατέρχομαι.”

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τούτων ἔχεις ψέγειν τι;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

πλεῖν ἢ δώδεκα.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1130 ἀλλ' οὐδὲ πάντα ταῦτά γ' ἔστ' ἄλλ' ἢ τρία.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔχει δ' ἕκαστον εἴκοσιν γ' ἁμαρτίας.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

Αἰσχύλε, παραινῶ σοι σιωπᾶν· εἰ δὲ μή,
πρὸς τρισὶν ἰαμβείοισι προσοφείλων φανεῖ.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ἐγὼ σιωπῶ τῷδ';

FROGS

DIONYSUS

And what prologue of his do you mean to examine?

EURIPIDES

A great many. First, recite me the one from the *Oresteia*.

DIONYSUS

Come on, everyone, be quiet! Go ahead, Aeschylus.

AESCHYLUS

"Underworld Hermes, who keeps watch over the paternal domain, be now, I pray, my ally and savior, for I've come back to this land and return."

DIONYSUS

Do you have any criticism of that?

EURIPIDES

A dozen or so.

DIONYSUS

But the whole quote is only three lines long!

EURIPIDES

And each one contains twenty mistakes.

DIONYSUS

Aeschylus, I advise you to keep quiet, or else you'll be shown up as liable for even more than three iambs!

AESCHYLUS

Me keep quiet for him?

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐὰν πείθῃ γ' ἐμοί.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1135 εὐθύς γὰρ ἡμάρτηκεν οὐράνιον ὄσον.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ὄρᾱς ὅτι ληρεῖς.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὀλίγον γέ μοι μέλει.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

πῶς φῆς μ' ἀμαρτεῖν;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

αὐθις ἐξ ἀρχῆς λέγε.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

“Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε, πατρῶ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη.”

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐκουν Ὀρέστης τοῦτ' ἐπὶ τῷ τύμβῳ λέγει
τῷ τοῦ πατρὸς τεθνεώτος;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

1140 οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

πότερ' οὖν τὸν Ἐρμῆν, ὡς ὁ πατήρ ἀπώλετο
αὐτοῦ βιαίως ἐκ γυναικείας χερὸς
δόλοισ λαθραίοις, ταῦτ' ἐποπτεύειν ἔφη;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ' ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἐριούνιον

FROGS

DIONYSUS

If you take my advice.

EURIPIDES

I say he's made a mistake of cosmic scale.

AESCHYLUS

Listen to you rant!

DIONYSUS

(*to Aeschylus*) Go ahead then, it doesn't matter to me.

AESCHYLUS

What mistake are you referring to?

EURIPIDES

Recite it again.

AESCHYLUS

"Underworld Hermes, who keeps watch over the paternal domain."

EURIPIDES

Now doesn't Orestes say this at the tomb of his dead father?

AESCHYLUS

That's exactly right.

EURIPIDES

So let me get this right: after his father had died violently at his wife's hands in a secret plot, he was saying that Hermes "kept watch" while this happened?

AESCHYLUS

He was not! He called on Nether Hermes as "Underworld

ARISTOPHANES

1145 Ἐρμῆν χθόνιον προσεῖπε, κἀδήλου λέγων
ὅτι· πατρῶον τοῦτο κέκτηται γέρας.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔτι μείζον ἐξήμαρτες ἢ ἄλλο βουλόμεν·
εἰ γὰρ πατρῶον τὸ χθόνιον ἔχει γέρας—

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οὕτω γ' ἂν εἴη πρὸς πατρὸς τυμβωρύχος.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ

1150 Διόννσε, πίνεις οἶνον οὐκ ἀνθοσμῖαν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

λέγ' ἕτερον αὐτῷ· σὺ δ' ἐπιτήρει τὸ βλάβος.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ

“σωτήρ γενοῦ μοι σύμμαχος τ' αἰτουμένω.
ἦκω γὰρ εἰς γῆν τήνδε καὶ κατέρχομαι.”

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

δις ταῦτόν ἡμῖν εἶπεν ὁ σοφὸς Αἰσχύλος.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

πῶς δις;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1155 σκόπει τὸ ῥῆμ'· ἐγὼ δέ σοι φράσω.

“ἦκω γὰρ εἰς γῆν,” φησί, “καὶ κατέρχομαι”·
ἦκειν δὲ ταῦτόν ἐστι τῷ κατέρχομαι.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Δί', ὥσπερ γ' εἴ τις εἴποι γείτονι·
“χρήσον σὺ μάκτραν, εἰ δὲ βούλει, κάρδοπον.”

FROGS

Hermes," and made it clear that Hermes possesses this function as a paternal inheritance.

EURIPIDES

That's an even bigger mistake than I was looking for! Because if he possesses the underworld as a paternal inheritance—

DIONYSUS

That would make him a graverobber on his father's side!

AESCHYLUS

Dionysus, the wine you're drinking has gone sour.

DIONYSUS

Recite him another one, and you watch for the mistake.

AESCHYLUS

"Be now, I pray, my ally and savior, for I've come back to this land and return."

EURIPIDES

The sage Aeschylus has told us the same thing twice.

DIONYSUS

How twice?

EURIPIDES

Look at the expression, and I'll show you. "I've come back to this land," he says, "and return"; but "coming back to" is the same as "returning."

DIONYSUS

Of course! It's like asking your neighbor, "Lend me a kneading trough, or else a trough to knead in."

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

1160 οὐ δῆτα τοῦτό γ', ὦ κατεστωμυλμένε
 ἄνθρωπε, ταῦτ' ἔστ', ἀλλ' ἄριστ' ἐπῶν ἔχον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

πῶς δῆ; δίδαξον γάρ με καθ' ὅτι δὴ λέγεις.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ἐλθεῖν μὲν εἰς γῆν ἔσθ' ὅτω μετῆ πάτρας·
 χωρὶς γὰρ ἄλλης συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν·
 1165 φεύγων δ' ἀνὴρ ἦκει τε καὶ κατέρχεται.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

εὖ νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω. τί σὺ λέγεις, Εὐριπίδη;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐ φημι τὸν Ὀρέστην κατελθεῖν οἴκαδε·
 λάθρα γὰρ ἦλθεν οὐ πιθὼν τοὺς κυρίους.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

εὖ νῆ τὸν Ἑρμῆν· ὅ τι λέγεις δ' οὐ μανθάνω.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

πέραινε τοῖνυν ἕτερον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1170 ἴθι πέραινε σύ,
 Αἰσχύλ', ἀνύσας· σὺ δ' εἰς τὸ κακὸν ἀπόβλεπε.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

“τύμβον δ' ἐπ' ὄχθῳ τῷδε κηρύσσω πατρὶ
 κλύειν, ἀκούσαι”—

FROGS

AESCHYLUS

That is not the same thing, you fool for folderol! The wording is excellent.

DIONYSUS

How so? Explain to me what you mean by that.

AESCHYLUS

Anyone who belongs to a country can "come back" to it; he just arrives without any further circumstance. But an exile both "comes back" and "returns."

DIONYSUS

Very good, by Apollo! What do you say, Euripides?

EURIPIDES

I deny that Orestes was coming home; he arrived secretly and without informing the authorities.

DIONYSUS

Very good, by Hermes, though I don't know what you mean.

EURIPIDES

Well, go ahead with another line.

DIONYSUS

Yes, hurry up and go ahead, Aeschylus; and you keep an eye out for the mistake.

AESCHYLUS

"And at this burial mound I invoke my father, to hearken and hear—"

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τούθ' ἕτερον αὖθις λέγει,
κλύειν, ἀκούσαι, ταὐτὸν ὃν σαφέστατα.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1175 τεθνηκόσιν γὰρ ἔλεγεν, ᾧ μόχθηρε σύ,
οἷς οὐδὲ τρὶς λέγοντες ἐξικνούμεθα.
σὺ δὲ πῶς ἐποίεις τοὺς προλόγους;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

κἄν που δις εἶπω ταὐτόν, ἢ στοιβὴν ἴδης
ἐνούσαν ἔξω τοῦ λόγου, κατάπτυσον.
κατάπτυσον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1180 ἴθι δὴ λέγ'· οὐ γὰρ μούστιν ἀλλ' ἀκουστέα
σῶν προλόγων τῆς ὀρθότητος τῶν ἐπῶν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

“ἦν Οἰδίπους τὸ πρῶτον εὐδαίμων ἀνὴρ,”—

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

1185 μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ δῆτ', ἀλλὰ κακοδαίμων φύσει.
ὄντινά γε, πρὶν φῦναι μέν, Ἀπόλλων ἔφη
ἀποκτενεῖν τὸν πατέρα, πρὶν καὶ γεγονέαι.
πῶς οὗτος ἦν τὸ πρῶτον εὐτυχῆς ἀνὴρ;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

“εἶτ' ἐγένετ' αὖθις ἀθλιώτατος βροτῶν.”

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ δῆτ', οὐ μὲν οὖν ἐπαύσατο.
πῶς γάρ; ὅτε δὴ πρῶτον μὲν αὐτὸν γενόμενον

FROGS

EURIPIDES

There again he says the same thing twice: "hearkening" and "hearing" are quite obviously identical.

DIONYSUS

Yes, but he was addressing the dead, my poor fellow, and we can't reach them even if we speak three times! Now how did you compose your own prologues?

EURIPIDES

I'll show you. And if anywhere I say the same thing twice, or you spot any irrelevant padding, why go ahead and spit on me.

DIONYSUS

Go ahead then, recite one. I'm more than eager to hear the verbal precision of your prologues.

EURIPIDES

"At first was Oedipus a lucky man—"

AESCHYLUS

He certainly was not; he was born unfortunate, seeing that he's the one who, even before his birth, Apollo said would kill his father—before he was even conceived! So how could he be "at first a lucky man"?

EURIPIDES

"—but then he became the wretchedest of mortals."

AESCHYLUS

Certainly not "became," by heaven, because he never stopped being that, did he? Considering that as a newborn

ARISTOPHANES

1190 χειμῶνος ὄντος ἐξέθεσαν ἐν ὀστράκῳ,
 ἵνα μὴ ἴκτραφείς γένοιτο τοῦ πατρὸς φονεύς·
 εἶθ' ὡς Πόλυβον ἤρρησεν οἰδῶν τῷ πόδε·
 ἔπειτα γραῦν ἔγημεν αὐτὸς ὦν νέος
 καὶ πρὸς γε τούτοις τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μητέρα·
 εἶτ' ἐξετύφλωσεν αὐτόν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1195 εὐδαίμων ἄρ' ἦν,
 εἰ κάστρατήγησέν γε μετ' Ἐρασινίδου.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ληρεῖς· ἐγὼ δὲ τοὺς προλόγους καλῶς ποιῶ.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

καὶ μὴν μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ κατ' ἔπος γέ σου κίσιω
 τὸ ῥῆμ' ἕκαστον, ἀλλὰ σὺν τοῖσιν θεοῖς

1200 ἀπὸ ληκυθίου σου τοὺς προλόγους διαφθερῶ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἀπὸ ληκυθίου σὺ τοὺς ἐμούς;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ἐνὸς μόνου.

ποιεῖς γὰρ οὕτως ὥστ' ἐναρμόζειν ἅπαν,
 καὶ κωδάριον καὶ ληκύθιον καὶ θυλάκιον,
 ἐν τοῖς ἰαμβείοισι. δείξω δ' αὐτίκα.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἰδού, σὺ δείξεις;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

φημί.

FROGS

they put him in a pot and exposed him in the dead of winter, so he wouldn't become his father's murderer when he grew up; then he wandered off on two swollen feet to Polybus; then as a young man he married an old lady; and on top of that she was his own mother; and then he blinded himself.

DIONYSUS

Yes, a lucky man, provided he also shared command with Erasinides!¹⁰⁸

EURIPIDES

Hogwash. I compose prologues very well.

AESCHYLUS

Look here, I certainly don't intend to pick away at your expressions word by word; instead, the gods willing, I'll demolish those prologues of yours with an oil bottle.

EURIPIDES

My prologues with an oil bottle?

AESCHYLUS

With only one. The way you compose, any such object can be tagged on to your iambs: "tuft of wool," "oil bottle," "little sack." I'll show you right now.

EURIPIDES

You'll show me, will you?

AESCHYLUS

I will.

¹⁰⁸ Among the admirals at Arginusae who were put to death for failing to rescue the shipwrecked sailors.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1205

καὶ δὴ χρὴ λέγειν.

“Αἴγυπτος, ὡς ὁ πλείστος ἔσπαρται λόγος,
ξὺν παισὶ πεντήκοντα ναυτίλῳ πλάτῃ
Ἄργος κατασχών” —

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ληκύθιον ἀπόλεσεν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1210 τουτὶ τί ἦν τὸ ληκύθιον; οὐ κλαύσεται;
λέγ’ ἕτερον αὐτῷ πρόλογον, ἵνα καὶ γινῶ πάλιν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

“Διόνυσος, ὃς θύρσοισι καὶ νεβρῶν δοραῖς
καθαπτὸς ἐν πεύκησι Παρνασσὸν κάτα
πηδᾶ χορεύων” —

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ληκύθιον ἀπόλεσεν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οἴμοι πεπλήγμεθ’ αὖθις ὑπὸ τῆς ληκύθου.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1215 ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν ἔσται πρᾶγμα· πρὸς γὰρ τουτουὶ
τὸν πρόλογον οὐχ ἔξει προσάψαι λήκυθον.
“οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις πάντ’ ἀνὴρ εὐδαιμονεῖ·
ἢ γὰρ πεφυκῶς ἐσθλὸς οὐκ ἔχει βίον,
ἢ δυσγενῆς ὢν” —

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ληκύθιον ἀπόλεσεν.

FROGS

EURIPIDES

All right, I'd better recite one. "Aegyptus, as the story is most widely disseminated, by sailor's oar together with his fifty sons, made for Argos and—" ¹⁰⁹

AESCHYLUS

Lost his oil bottle.

DIONYSUS

What's with this oil bottle? To hell with it! Recite him another prologue, so I can hear that again.

EURIPIDES

"Dionysus, decked out with wands and fawnskins midst the pines of Parnassus, leaping in the dance—" ¹¹⁰

AESCHYLUS

Lost his oil bottle.

DIONYSUS

Ouch, we're struck again by that oil bottle!

EURIPIDES

Well, no big deal. Here's a prologue that he can't attach an oil bottle to: "No man exists who's blessed in every way; he may have been noble born yet lacking livelihood, he may have been lowborn and—" ¹¹¹

AESCHYLUS

Lost his oil bottle.

¹⁰⁹ From *Archelaus*, according to the scholia, but ancient scholars could not locate these lines in the version available to them; presumably the opening in their text had been revised, either by Euripides or (more likely, since this was among Euripides' last plays) by later performers. ¹¹⁰ From *Hypsipyle* (fr. 752).

¹¹¹ From *Stheneboea* (fr. 661).

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

Εὐριπίδη.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί ἐστίν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1220

ὕφέσθαι μοι δοκεῖ·

τὸ ληκύθιον γὰρ τοῦτο πνευσεῖται πολὺ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

οὐδ' ἂν μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα φροντίσαιμί γε·
νυνὶ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τοῦτό γ' ἐκκεκόψεται.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἴθι δὴ λέγ' ἕτερον καπέχου τῆς ληκύθου.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1225

“Σιδώνιον ποτ' ἄστν Κάδμος ἐκλιπὼν
'Αγήνορος παῖς”—

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὦ δαιμόνι' ἀνδρῶν, ἀποπρίω τὴν λήκυθον,
ἵνα μὴ διακναίση τοὺς προλόγους ἡμῶν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τὸ τί;

ἐγὼ πρίωμαι τῷδ'·

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐὰν πείθῃ γ' ἐμοί.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Euripides?

EURIPIDES

What?

DIONYSUS

I think you should reef your sails; that oil bottle's blowing up a gale.

EURIPIDES

Quite the contrary, I'm not at all worried. This time it'll be knocked right out of his hand.

DIONYSUS

Then go ahead and recite another one, and dodge the oil bottle.

EURIPIDES

"Cadmus, Agenor's son, departed Sidon's citadel,
and—" ¹¹²

AESCHYLUS

Lost his oil bottle.

DIONYSUS

Listen, my friend, do buy that oil bottle, so he won't mangle our prologues.

EURIPIDES

What's that? Me buy from him?

DIONYSUS

If you take my advice.

¹¹² From the second *Phrixus* (fr. 819).

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

- 1230 οὐ δῆτ', ἐπεὶ πολλοὺς προλόγους ἔξω λέγειν
 ἔν' οὗτος οὐχ ἔξει προσάψαι λήκυθον.
 "Πέλοψ ὁ Ταντάλειος εἰς Πίσαν μολῶν
 θοαῖσιν ἵπποις"—

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- ὄρας, προσῆψεν αὐθις αὐτὴν τὴν λήκυθον.
 1235 ἀλλ', ὦγάθ', ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἀπόδος πάσῃ τέχνῃ·
 λήψει γὰρ ὀβολοῦ πάνυ καλήν τε κάγαθήν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐπω γ' ἔτι γάρ εἰσί μοι συχνοί.
 "Οἶνεύς ποτ' ἐκ γῆς"—

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

- ἔασον εἰπεῖν πρῶθ' ὅλον με τὸν στίχον.
 1240 "Οἶνεύς ποτ' ἐκ γῆς πολύμετρον λαβὼν στάχυν
 θύων ἀπαρχάς"—

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μεταξὺ θύων; καὶ τίς αὐθ' ὑφείλετο;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔασον, ὦ τᾶν· πρὸς τοδὶ γὰρ εἰπάτω.

FROGS

EURIPIDES

I will not, because I can recite plenty of prologues where he won't be able to attach an oil bottle. "Pelops, son of Tantalus, came to Pisa on swift steeds and—" ¹¹³

AESCHYLUS

Lost his oil bottle.

DIONYSUS

There, he attached that oil bottle again! My man, there's still time: please make him an offer. You'll get it for an obol, and it's fine quality.

EURIPIDES

No indeed, not yet; I've still got heaps. "Once Oeneus from his land—" ¹¹⁴

AESCHYLUS

Lost his oil bottle.

EURIPIDES

At least let me finish the whole line first! "Once Oeneus from his land reaped a bounteous harvest, and while sacrificing the first fruits—"

AESCHYLUS

Lost his oil bottle.

DIONYSUS

In the middle of his sacrifice? And who swiped it?

EURIPIDES

Never mind, my man; let him respond to this: "Zeus, as the

¹¹³ From *Iphigeneia among the Taurians* (1-2).

¹¹⁴ From *Meleager*, but not the opening lines (fr. 515), which do not allow the tag.

ARISTOPHANES

“Ζεύς, ὡς λέλεκται τῆς ἀληθείας ὑπο” —

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- 1245 ἀπολείς· ἐρεῖ γὰρ “ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.”
τὸ ληκύθιον γὰρ τοῦτ’ ἐπὶ τοῖς προλόγοισί σου
ὥσπερ τὰ σῦκ’ ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἔφν.
ἀλλ’ εἰς τὰ μέλη πρὸς τῶν θεῶν αὐτοῦ τραποῦ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

- 1250 καὶ μὴν ἔχω γ’ οἷς αὐτὸν ἀποδείξω κακὸν
μελοποιὸν ὄντα καὶ ποιῶντα ταῦτ’ αἰί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- τί ποτε πρᾶγμα γενήσεται;
φροντίζειν γὰρ ἐγὼ οὐκ ἔχω,
τίν’ ἄρα μέμψιν ἐποίσει
ἀνδρὶ τῷ πολὺ πλείιστα δὴ
1255 καὶ κάλλιστα μέλη ποιή-
σαντι τῶν μέχρι νυνί.

- θαυμάζω γὰρ ἔγωγ’ ὄπη
μέμψεταιί ποτε τοῦτον
τὸν Βακχείον ἄνακτα,
1260 καὶ δέδοιχ’ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

πάνν γε μέλη θαυμαστά· δείξει δὴ τάχα·
εἰς ἓν γὰρ αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ μέλη ξυντεμῶ.

FROGS

true story goes—"115

DIONYSUS

You'll be the death of me,¹¹⁶ because he's going to say "lost his oil bottle." Yes, that oil bottle grows on your prologues like sties on eyes. For heaven's sake turn to his choral lyrics now.

EURIPIDES

Very well, I've got the evidence to show that he's a bad lyricist and writes the same thing over and over.

CHORUS¹¹⁷

How will this affair proceed?
I simply can't imagine
what criticism he aims to make
of a man who composed
more lyrics of the finest quality
than anyone else to this day.

I simply can't help wondering
how he aims to criticize
this Bacchic lord,
and I'm afraid for him.

EURIPIDES

A great many wonderful lyrics, eh? We'll soon find out, because I'm going to trim all his lyrics to a single pattern.

¹¹⁵ From *Wise Melanippe* (fr. 481).

¹¹⁶ Alternatively, "he'll be the death of you . . ."

¹¹⁷ (1) 1252-56 and (2) 1257-60 are apparently authorial variants, probably composed for the first (2) and the revised (1) versions of the play; (2) has perhaps lost one or more lines at the end.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καὶ μὴν λογιόμμαι ταῦτα τῶν ψήφων λαβών.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1265 Φθιώτ' Ἀχιλλεύ, τί ποτ' ἀνδροδαίκτον ἀκούων
 ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν;
 Ἐρμᾶν μὲν πρόγονον τίομεν γένος οἱ περὶ λίμναν.
 ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

δύο σοι κόπω, Αἰσχύλε, τούτω.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1269/70 κύνιστ' Ἀχαιῶν, Ἀτρέως πολυκοίρανε
 μάνθανέ μου παῖ.
 ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τρίτος, Αἰσχύλε, σοι κόπος οὗτος.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1273/4 εὐφραμείτε. Μελισσονόμοι δόμον Ἀρτέμι-
 δος πέλας οἴγειν.
 1275 ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν;
 κύριός εἰμι θροεῖν ὄδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν.
 ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν;

118 From *Myrmidons* (fr. 132).

119 From *Ghost Raisers* (fr. 273).

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Very well, and I'll pick up some pebbles to count them off.

EURIPIDES

Phthian Achilles, why, when you hear the slaughter of heroes,—

Aiee the strike!—draw you not near to the rescue?¹¹⁸

We, the people of the lake shore, honor Hermes our forebear—¹¹⁹

Aiee the strike!—draw you not near to the rescue?

DIONYSUS

That's two strikes against you, Aeschylus.

EURIPIDES

Most reknowned of Achaeans, puissant child of Atreus,

hearken to me when I say—¹²⁰

Aiee the strike!—draw you not near to the rescue?

DIONYSUS

That's strike three, Aeschylus!

EURIPIDES

Keep holy silence! The Bee Governesses are nigh to open the temple of Artemis—¹²¹

Aiee the strike!—draw you not near to the rescue?

I've mastery yet to declare the propitious drive of wayfaring heroes.¹²²

Aiee the strike!—draw you not near to the rescue?

¹²⁰ Ancient scholars could not identify the source.

¹²¹ From *Priestesses* (fr. 87).

¹²² *Agamemnon* 104.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὸ χρῆμα τῶν κόπων ὅσον.
 ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν εἰς τὸ βαλανεῖον βούλομαι
 1280 ὑπὸ τῶν κόπων γὰρ τῷ νεφρῷ βουβωνιῷ.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

μή, πρὶν γ' ἀκούσης χιτέραν στάσιν μελῶν
 ἐκ τῶν κιθαρῳδικῶν νόμων εἰργασμένην.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἴθι δὴ πέραινε, καὶ κόπον μὴ προστίθει.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὅπως Ἀχαιῶν δῖθρονον κράτος,
 1284/5 Ἑλλάδος ἦβας,
 φλαττοθραττοφλαττοθρατ,
 Σφίγγα, δυσαμεριᾶν πρύντανιν κύνα, πέμπει,
 φλαττοθραττοφλαττοθρατ,
 ξὺν δορὶ καὶ χερὶ πράκτορι θούριος ὄρνις,
 1290 φλαττοθραττοφλαττοθρατ,
 κυρεῖν παρασχῶν ἰταμαῖς κυσὶν
 1291/2 ἀεροφοίτοις,
 φλαττοθραττοφλαττοθρατ,
 τὸ συγκλινές τ' ἐπ' Αἴαντι,
 1295 φλαττοθραττοφλαττοθρατ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τί τὸ φλαττοθρατ τοῦτ' ἐστίν; ἐκ Μαραθῶνος ἢ
 πόθεν συνέλεξας ἰμονιοστρόφου μέλη;

¹²³ Based on *Agamemnon* 108–11, with phrases inserted from

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Lord Zeus, what a volley of strikes! I'd like to get to the bathhouse, because these strikes have made my kidneys sore!

EURIPIDES

No, not till you've heard the next set of choral lyrics, made from tunes for the lyre.

DIONYSUS

Go ahead with it then, but don't put in any strikes.

EURIPIDES

How the twin-throned command of the Achaeans,
the flower of Greece—

brumda brumda brumda brum
sends the Sphinx, Head Bitch of Bad Days—

brumda brumda brumda brum
with avenging spear and arm, did the warlike bird of
omen—

brumda brumda brumda brum
that gave her into the hands of the nasty hounds
that roam the sky—

brumda brumda brumda brum
and the company clinging to Ajax—
brumda brumda brumda brum.¹²³

DIONYSUS

What's this brumda brumda brumda brum? Did you collect these rope-winders' songs from Marathon or someplace?

Sphinx (fr. 236), *Thracian Women* (fr. 84), and perhaps *Memnon* (cf. the scholia on 1291–92).

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

- ἀλλ' οὖν ἐγὼ μὲν εἰς τὸ καλὸν ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ
 ἤνεγκον αὐθ', ἵνα μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν Φρυνίχῳ
 1300 λειμῶνα Μουσῶν ἱερὸν ὀφθείην δρέπων·
 οὗτος δ' ἀπὸ πάντων μὲν φέρει, πορνωδιῶν,
 σκολίων Μελήτου, Καρικῶν ἀλλημάτων,
 θρήνων, χορειῶν. τάχα δὲ δηλωθήσεται.
 ἐνεγκάτω τις τὸ λύριον. καίτοι τί δεῖ
 1305 λύρας ἐπὶ τοῦτο; ποῦ ἔστιν ἢ τοῖς ὀστράκοις
 αὕτη κροτοῦσα; δεῦρο, Μοῦσ' Εὐριπίδου,
πρὸς ἣνπερ ἐπιτήδεια ταῦτ' ἄδειν μέλη.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

αὕτη ποθ' ἢ Μοῦσ' οὐκ ἔλεσβιάζειν, οὔ.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

- ἀλκύνες, αἱ παρ' ἀενάοις θαλάσ-
 1310 σης κύμασι στωμύλλετε,
 τέγγουσαι νοτίοις πτερῶν
 ῥανίσι χροῶα δροσιζόμεναι
 αἱ θ' ὑπωρόφιοι κατὰ γωνίας
 εἰεἰεἰεἰεἰλίσσετε δακτύλοις φάλαγγες
 1315 ἰστότονα πηνίσματα,
 κερκίδος ἀοιδοῦ μελέτας,
 ἵν' ὁ φίλανλος ἔπαλλε δελ-

1305 τοῦτο Sommerstein: τοῦτον a

FROGS

AESCHYLUS

Never mind that; I took them from a good source for a good purpose: so I wouldn't be caught culling the same sacred meadow of the Muses as Phrynichus, whereas this one takes material from everywhere: whore songs, drinking songs by Meletus,¹²⁴ Carian pipe tunes, dirges, and dances. Someone hand me my lyre! Then again, who needs a lyre for this job? Where's that female percussionist who plays potsherds? Oh Muse of Euripides, come out here; you're the proper accompanist for a recital of these songs.

Enter Muse of Euripides.

DIONYSUS

This Muse once, well, she never gave throat to a Lesbian tune!¹²⁵

AESCHYLUS

You halcyons, who chatter by the everflowing
waves of the sea,
wetting and bedewing the skin
of your wings with rainy drops;
and you spiders in crannies beneath the roof
who with your fingers wi-i-i-i-nd
loom-taut spoolings,
a recital by the minstrel loom,
where the pipe-loving dolphin leaped

¹²⁴ A sixth- (possibly early 5th-) century erotic poet, cf. Epicrates fr. 4.2.

¹²⁵ A reference to the Lesbian musical tradition (e.g. Sappho) and to fellatio (associated by the Athenians with Lesbos) and implying both musical and sexual unattractiveness.

ARISTOPHANES

φῖς πρῶραις κυανεμβόλοις
μαντεῖα καὶ σταδίους.

- 1320 οἰνάνθας γάνος ἀμπέλου,
βότρυος ἔλικα παυσίπονον,
περίβαλλ', ὦ τέκνον, ὠλένας.

ὄρᾱς τὸν πόδα τοῦτον;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὄρῶ.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

τί δαί; τοῦτον ὄρᾱς;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὄρῶ.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

- 1325 τοιαντὶ μέντοι σὺ ποιῶν
τολμᾶς τὰμὰ μέλη ψέγειν,
ἀνὰ τὸ δωδεκαμήχανον
Κυρήνης μελοποιῶν;

- 1330 τὰ μὲν μέλη σου ταῦτα βούλομαι δ' ἔτι
τὸν τῶν μονωδιῶν διεξελθεῖν τρόπον.

ὦ Νυκτὸς κελαινοφαῆς ὄρφνα,
τίνα μοι δύστανον ὄνειρον
πέμπεις, ἀφανοῦς Ἀίδα πρόμολον,

¹³³³ πρόμολον R V K: πρόπολον A^{ac}: πρόπυλον A^{pc}

FROGS

at the prows with their dark rams
for oracles and race tracks.
Sparkle of the vine's winey blossom,
anodyne tendril of the grape cluster,
throw your arms around me, child!¹²⁶
Notice that foot?

EURIPIDES

I do.

AESCHYLUS

And this one, see that?

EURIPIDES

I do.

AESCHYLUS

And you who compose such stuff
have the nerve to criticize my songs,
you who turn out lays à la Cyrene's
Twelve Tricks?¹²⁷

That will do for your choral lyrics; now I want to have a close look at the style of your arias.

O darkness of Night gloomily gleaming,
what baleful dream do you send me,
an emanation from obscure Hades,

¹²⁶ A pastiche from *Hypsipyle*, with snippets from *Meleager* and *Electra* (435-37).

¹²⁷ Cyrene was a famous courtesan, cf. *Women at the Thesmophoria* 98.

ARISTOPHANES

- ψυχὰν ἄψυχον ἔχοντα,
 1335a Νυκτὸς παῖδα μελαίνας
 1335b φρικώδη δεινὰν ὄψιν
 1336a μελανοεκκνείμονα
 1336b φόνια φόνια δερκόμενον,
 μεγάλους ὄνυχας ἔχοντα.
 ἀλλὰ μοι, ἀμφίπολοι, λύχνον ἄψατε
 1339a κάλπισί τ' ἐκ ποταμῶν δρόσον ἄρατε,
 1339b θέρμετε δ' ὕδωρ,
 1340 ὡς ἂν θείον ὄνειρον ἀποκλύσω.
 ἰὼ πόντιε δαῖμον,
 τοῦτ' ἐκεῖν'· ἰὼ ξύνοικοι,
 1343a τάδε τέρα θεάσασθε τὸν ἀλεκτρυόνα
 1343b μου ξυναρπάσασα φρούδη Γλύκη.
 Νύμφαι ὀρεσσίγονοι,
 1345 ὦ Μανία, ξύλλαβε.
 ἐγὼ δ' ἄ τάλαινα
 προσέχουσ' ἔτυχον ἐμαντῆς
 ἔργοισι, λίνον μεστὸν ἄτρακτον
 εἰειελίσσουσα χεροῖν
 1350a κλωστήηρα ποιούσ', ὅπως
 1350b κνεφαῖος εἰς ἀγορὰν
 φέρουσ' ἀποδοίμαν.
 1352a ὁ δ' ἀνέπτατ' ἀνέπτατ' ἐς αἰθέρα
 1352b κουφοτάταις πτερύγων ἀκμαῖς,
 ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχε' ἄχεα κατέλιπε,
 δάκρυα δάκρυνά τ' ἀπ' ὀμμάτων

FROGS

a thing of lifeless life,
ghastly child of black Night,
a fearful sight,
shrouded in cadaverous black,
with murderous murderous stare
and big claws?
Now handmaidens, light me a lamp,
fetch river dew in buckets,
and heat the water,
that I may wash away the god-sent dream.
Oho god of the deep,
it's come to pass! Oho my fellow lodgers,
behold these marvels: my rooster
Glyce has snatched, and vanished!
Nymphs of the mountains,
and you, Mania,¹²⁸ help me!
I, poor thing,
happened to be seeing to my own
chores, wi-i-i-inding in my hands
a full spindle of flax
as I made my cloth, so I could get
to the market before sunup
and sell it.
But he flew up flew up to the sky
on the lightest of wingtips,
leaving to me but woes woes,
and tears tears from my eyes

¹²⁸ A typical name for a slave or freedwoman.

ARISTOPHANES

- 1355 ἔβαλον ἔβαλον ἅ τλάμων.
 1356a ἀλλ', ὦ Κρήτες, Ἰδας τέκνα,
 1356b τὰ τόξα λαβόντες ἐπαμύνατε,
 1357a τὰ κῶλά τ' ἀμπάλλετε
 1357b κυκλοῦμενοι τὴν οἰκίαν.
 ἄμα δὲ Δίκτυννα παῖς ἅ καλὰ
 τὰς κνίσκας ἔχουσ' ἐλθέτω
 1360 διὰ δόμων πανταχῆ.
 1361a σὺ δ', ὦ Διός, διπύρους ἀνέχουσα
 1361b λαμπάδας ὀξυτάτας χεροῖν,
 Ἐκάτα, παράφηνον εἰς Γλύκης,
 ὅπως ἂν εἰσελθοῦσα φωράσω.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

παύσασθον ἤδη τῶν μελῶν.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ

κᾶμοιγ' ἄλις·

- 1365 ἐπὶ τὸν σταθμὸν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀγαγεῖν βούλομαι,
 ὅπερ ἐξελέγξει τὴν ποίησιν νῶν μόνον·
 τὸ γὰρ βᾶρος νὼ βασανιεῖ τῶν ῥημάτων.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἴτε δευρό νυν, εἶπερ γε δεῖ καὶ τοῦτό με,
 ἀνδρῶν ποιητῶν τυροπωλῆσαι τέχνην.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 1370 ἐπίπονοί γ' οἱ δεξιοί·
 τόδε γὰρ ἕτερον αὖ τέρας

¹³⁵⁸ ἅ Kock: Ἄρτεμις α

FROGS

did I shed shed in my misery.
Now you Cretans, children of Ida,
snatch up your bows and assist me!
Shake a leg aleap
and surround her house!
And with you let the fair maid Dictynna¹²⁹
take her pack of bitches and run
all throughout her halls.
And you, Hecate, daughter of Zeus,
brandishing in your hands the most searing
flame of your twin torches,
light my way to Glyce's,
so I can go in and search!

DIONYSUS

Now both of you stop the songs.

AESCHYLUS

I've had enough too; what I'd like to do is take him to the scales.¹³⁰ That's the only real test of our poetry; the weight of our utterances will be the decisive proof.

DIONYSUS

(*at the scales*) Come over here then, if that's what I really must do, weighing the art of poets like a cheese monger.

CHORUS

Experts are indefatigable,
for here is another marvel,

¹²⁹ A Cretan goddess similar to Artemis.

¹³⁰ This weighing scene is probably modelled on the scene in Aeschylus' *Weighing of Souls* where Zeus weighs the souls of Achilles and Memnon as they fight.

ARISTOPHANES

νεοχμόν, ἀτοπίας πλέων,
ὁ τίς ἂν ἐπενόησεν ἄλλος;
μὰ τόν, ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδ' ἂν εἶ τις
1375 ἔλεγέ μοι τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων,
ἐπιθόμην, ἀλλ' ὥόμην ἂν
αὐτὸν αὐτὰ ληρεῖν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἴθι δὴ παρίστασθον παρὰ τῷ πλάστιγγ'.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ καὶ ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἰδοῦ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καὶ λαβομένω τὸ ῥῆμ' ἑκάτερος εἶπατον,
1380 καὶ μὴ μεθῆσθον, πρὶν ἂν ἐγὼ σφῶν κοκκύσω.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ καὶ ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐχόμεθα.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τοῦπος νυν λέγετον εἰς τὸν σταθμόν.

ΕΥΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

“εἴθ' ὄφελ' Ἀργοῦς μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος.”

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

“Σπερχειὲ ποταμὲ βούνομοί τ' ἐπιστροφαί.”

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

κόκκυ.

FROGS

startling and altogether eccentric;
who else could have thought it up?
Gee, even if some chance passerby
had told me about this,
I wouldn't have believed him,
I'd have thought he was drivelling.

DIONYSUS

All right now, both of you stand by the scale pans.

AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES

Here we are!

DIONYSUS

Now each take hold of your pan and speak a line into it, and
don't let go until I give a cuckoo call.

AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES

Ready!

DIONYSUS

Now speak your lines into the scales.

EURIPIDES

"Ah would the good ship *Argo* ne'er had winged her
way."¹³¹

AESCHYLUS

"O river Spercheius and the haunts where oxen graze."¹³²

DIONYSUS

Cuckoo!

¹³¹ *Medea* 1.

¹³² From *Philoctetes* (fr. 249).

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ καὶ ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ
μεθεΐται.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
καὶ πολὺ γε κατωτέρω
χωρεῖ τὸ τοῦδε.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ
1385 καὶ τί ποτ' ἐστὶ ταῦτιον;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
ὁ τι; εἰσέθηκε ποταμόν, ἐριοπωλικῶς
ὑγρὸν ποιήσας τοῦπος ὥσπερ τάρια,
σὺ δ' εἰσέθηκας τοῦπος ἐπτερωμένον.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ
ἀλλ' ἕτερον εἰπάτω τι κἀντιστησάτω.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
λάβεσθε τοίνυν αὔθις.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ καὶ ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ
ἦν ἰδοῦ.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ
1390 λέγε.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ
“οὐκ ἔστι Πειθοῦς ἱερὸν ἄλλο πλὴν λόγος.”

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ
“μόνος θεῶν γὰρ Θάνατος οὐ δόρων ἐρά.”

¹³⁸⁴ μεθεΐται Radermacher: μεθεΐτε a

FROGS

AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES

There they go!

DIONYSUS

Look, this one's going much lower!

EURIPIDES

And just why is that?

DIONYSUS

Why? He put in a river, wetting his line like a wool merchant wetting wool, while you put in a line with wings on it.

EURIPIDES

Well, let him speak another one and weigh it against mine.

DIONYSUS

Then take hold again.

AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES

Ready!

DIONYSUS

Speak.

EURIPIDES

"Persuasion's only temple is the spoken word."¹³³

AESCHYLUS

"For the only god who covets no gifts is Death."¹³⁴

¹³³ From *Antigone* (fr. 170).

¹³⁴ From *Niobe* (fr. 161).

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μέθετε.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ καὶ ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

μεθείται.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

καὶ τὸ τοῦδέ γ' αὖ ῥέπει·
θάνατον γὰρ εἰσέθηκε, βαρύτατον κακόν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1395 ἐγὼ δὲ πειθῶ γ', ἔπος ἄριστ' εἰρημένον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

πειθῶ δὲ κοῦφόν ἐστι καὶ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον.
ἀλλ' ἕτερον αὖ ζήτηι τι τῶν βαρυστάθμων,
ὅ τι σοι καθέλξει, καρτερόν τι καὶ μέγα.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

φέρε ποῦ τοιούτον δῆτα μούστί; ποῦ;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

φράσω·

1400 .“βέβληκ' Ἀχιλλεὺς δύο κύβω καὶ τέτταρα.”
λέγουτ' ἄν, ὡς αὕτη 'στὶ λοιπὴ σφῶν στάσις.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

“σιδηροβριθές τ' ἔλαβε δεξιᾷ ξύλον.”

1393 μέθετε | μεθείται Blass et Radermacher: μεθείτε μεθείτε a

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Let 'em go!

AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES

There they go!

DIONYSUS

His went down farther again, because he put in Death, the heaviest blow.

EURIPIDES

But I put in Persuasion, a word that's always à propos.

DIONYSUS

Persuasion is a lightweight thing and has no mind of its own. Try to come up with something else this time, something heavyweight, big and strong enough to depress your pan.

EURIPIDES

Hmm, where have I got something like that? Hmm.

DIONYSUS

I suggest "Achilles cast two ones and a four."¹³⁵ Each speak your lines, please, because this is your final weighing.

EURIPIDES

"He took in hand the handle heavy with iron."¹³⁶

¹³⁵ A poor throw in dice; the line is adapted from an unknown play.

¹³⁶ From *Meleager* (fr. 531).

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

“ἐφ’ ἄρματος γὰρ ἄρμα καὶ νεκρῶ νεκρός.”

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐξηπάτηκεν αὖ σε καὶ νῦν.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τῷ τρόπῳ;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1405 δὺ’ ἄρματ’ εἰσέθηκε καὶ νεκρῶ δύο,
οὓς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιντ’ οὐδ’ ἑκατὸν Αἰγύπτιοι.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

καὶ μηκέτ’ ἔμοιγε κατ’ ἔπος, ἀλλ’ εἰς τὸν σταθμὸν
αὐτός, τὰ παιδί, ἢ γυνή, Κηφισοφῶν,
ἐμβὰς καθήσθω, ξυλλαβὸν τὰ βιβλία·

1410 ἐγὼ δὲ δὺ’ ἔπη τῶν ἐμῶν ἐρῶ μόνον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἄνδρες φίλοι, καὶ γὰρ μὲν αὐτοὺς οὐ κρίνω.
οὐ γὰρ δι’ ἔχθρας οὐδετέρῳ γενήσομαι·
τὸν μὲν γὰρ ἠγοῦμαι σοφόν, τῷ δ’ ἠδομαι.

ΠΛΟΤΤΩΝ

οὐδὲν ἄρα πράξεις ὡνπερ ἠλθες οὐνεκα.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐὰν δὲ κρίνω τὸν ἕτερον;

ΠΛΟΤΤΩΝ

1415 λαβὼν ἄπει
ὁπότερον ἂν κρίνης, ἴν’ ἔλθης μὴ μάτην.

FROGS

AESCHYLUS

"Chariot upon chariot, corpse upon corpse."¹³⁷

DIONYSUS

He's got the better of you once again!

EURIPIDES

How did he do it?

DIONYSUS

He put in two chariots and two corpses: even a hundred Egyptians couldn't lift that!

AESCHYLUS

No more of this line-by-line for me; he could get in that pan himself, with his wife and kids and Cephisophon, and take his books along too, and I'd have only to recite two of my lines.

DIONYSUS

(*to Pluto*) These men are my friends, and I'll not judge between them; I don't want to get on the bad side of either of them. One I consider a master, the other I enjoy!

PLUTO

Then you won't accomplish your mission here at all.

DIONYSUS

And what if I do reach a verdict?

PLUTO

The one you choose you may take back with you; that way you won't have come for nothing.

¹³⁷ From *Glaucus of Potniae* (fr. 38).

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- εὐδαιμονοίης. φέρε, πύθεσθέ μου ταδί.
ἐγὼ κατήλθον ἐπὶ ποιητήν. τοῦ χάριν;
ἴν' ἡ πόλις σωθείσα τοὺς χοροὺς ἄγῃ.
 1420 ὁπότερος οὖν ἂν τῇ πόλει παραινέσειν
μέλλῃ τι χρηστόν, τοῦτον ἄξειν μοι δοκῶ.
 πρῶτον μὲν οὖν περὶ Ἀλκιβιάδου τίν' ἔχετον
γνώμην ἐκάτερος; ἡ πόλις γὰρ δυστοκέι.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ

ἔχει δὲ περὶ αὐτοῦ τίνα γνώμην;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- τίνα;
 1425 ποθεῖ μὲν, ἐχθαίρει δέ, βούλεται δ' ἔχειν.
ἀλλ' ὅ τι νοεῖτον εἶπατον τούτου πέρι.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

μισῶ πολίτην, ὅστις ὠφελεῖν πάτραν
 βραδὺς φανείται, μεγάλα δὲ βλάπτειν ταχύς,
 καὶ πόριμον αὐτῷ, τῇ πόλει δ' ἀμήχανον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- 1430 εὖ γ', ὦ Πόσειδον. σὺ δὲ τίνα γνώμην ἔχεις;

1428 φανείται R S: πέφυκε V A K

138 This brilliant, aristocratic, and notorious leader was elected to the command of the Sicilian Expedition in 415 but, soon after it sailed, fled to Sparta to avoid prosecution in the scan-

FROGS

DIONYSUS

Bless you! (*to Aeschylus and Euripides*) Now listen to me. I came down here for a poet. Why? So our city could survive and continue her choral festivals. So whichever of you is prepared to offer the city some good advice, he's the one I've decided to take back with me. So for starters, which of you has an opinion about Alcibiades?¹³⁸ The city's in travail about him.

AESCHYLUS

And what does the city think of him?

DIONYSUS

Well: it yearns for him, detests him, and wants to have him.¹³⁹ Now both of you tell me what you think about him.

EURIPIDES

I detest the citizen who will prove to be slow to aid his country, quick to do her great harm, resourceful for himself, incompetent for the city.

DIONYSUS

Well said, by Poseidon! Now what's your opinion?

dal of the Mysteries; in 411 he broke with the Spartans and was elected commander by the Athenian fleet, and enjoyed considerable success during the next four years; in 407 he triumphantly returned to Athens and was elected Supreme Commander, but after the naval defeat at Notium a few months later was dismissed and retired to an estate on the Hellespont (*Xenophon Hellenica* 1.5.16–17), where in 404 he was assassinated on the orders of Lysander. Our passage shows that the issue of his recall was still a live one in the aftermath of Arginusae.

¹³⁹ Adapted from a line in *Ion's Guards* (fr. 44).

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

1431a οὐ χρὴ λέοντος σκύμνον ἐν πόλει τρέφειν.

1431b { μάλιστα μὲν λέοντα μὴ ἴν πόλει τρέφειν
ἦν δ' ἐκτραφῆ τις, τοῖς τρόποις ὑπηρετεῖν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτήρα, δυσκρίτως γ' ἔχω.
 ὁ μὲν σοφῶς γὰρ εἶπεν, ὁ δ' ἕτερος σαφῶς.
 1435 ἀλλ' ἔτι μίαν γνώμην ἐκάτερος εἶπατον
περὶ τῆς πόλεως ἦντιν' ἔχετον σωτηρίαν.

(A)

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

εἴ τις πτερώσας Κλεόκριτον Κινησίᾳ,
 ἄρειεν αὔρας πελαγίαν ὑπὲρ πλάκα—

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

γέλοιον ἂν φαίνοιτο. νοῦν δ' ἔχει τίνα;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1440 εἰ ναυμαχοῖεν, κᾶτ' ἔχοντες ὀξίδας
 1441 ῥαίνοιεν εἰς τὰ βλέφαρα τῶν ἐναντίων.

1437-50 sic disposuit Sommerstein, alii aliter

1438 ἄρειεν αὔρας Sommerstein praeceunte MacDowell:
 αἴροιεν αὔραι (αὔραις Mpc) a

FROGS

AESCHYLUS

(A)

It's not good to rear a lion cub in the city.

(B)

It's best to rear no lion in the city.¹⁴⁰

If you do raise one to maturity, then cater to its ways.

DIONYSUS

By Zeus the Savior, I can't decide! One spoke sagely, the other clearly. So each of you tell me one more idea that you have about the city's salvation.¹⁴¹

(A)

EURIPIDES

If someone were to wing Cleocritus¹⁴² with Cinesias, and send him aloft on the breezes o'er the watery plain—

DIONYSUS

That would be a funny sight! But what's the point?

EURIPIDES

If there were a naval battle in progress, and they carried vinegar cruets, they could spray it in the enemy's eyes.

¹⁴⁰ Apparently authorial variants, though we cannot tell which belonged to the original and which to the revision. Oracular references to the lion often point to tyrants or political strongmen, e.g. *Knights* 1037–44, Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 717–36.

¹⁴¹ Lines 1437–50 contain authorial variants whose priority and line order are controversial; for this arrangement see Sommerstein ad loc.

¹⁴² In *Birds* 877 a fat man with an ostrich for a mother.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- 1451 εὖ γ', ὦ Παλάμηδες, ὦ σοφωτάτη φύσις.
 1452 ταυτὶ πότερ' αὐτὸς ἤρως ἢ Κηφισοφῶν;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

- 1453 ἐγὼ μόνος· τὰς δ' ὀξίδας Κηφισοφῶν.

(B)

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν οἶδα καὶ θέλω φράζειν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- 1442 λέγε.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

- 1443 ὅταν τὰ νῦν ἄπιστα πίσθ' ἠγάμεθα,
τὰ δ' ὄντα πίστ' ἄπιστα—

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- 1444 πῶς; οὐ μανθάνω.
 1445 ἀμαθέστερόν πως εἶπε καὶ σαφέστερον.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

- 1446 εἰ τῶν πολιτῶν οἷσι νῦν πιστεύομεν,
 1447 τούτοις ἀπιστήσαιμεν, οἷς δ' οὐ χρώμεθα,
 τούτοισι χρησαίμεσθα—

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- 1448 σωθείημεν ἄν;

¹⁴⁴⁸ σωθείημεν ἄν R S: ἴσως σωθείημεν (σωθείμεν Dawes)
 ἄν fere cett.

FROGS

DIONYSUS

By Palamedes,¹⁴³ that's good; you're a genius! Did you think that up yourself, or was it Cephisophon?

EURIPIDES

All by myself, but Cephisophon thought up the cruets.

(B)

EURIPIDES

I've got one that I'd like to tell you.

DIONYSUS

Go ahead.

EURIPIDES

When we put our trust in what's untrusted, and what's trustworthy is untrusted—

DIONYSUS

How's that? I don't follow. Try to speak somewhat less cleverly and more clearly.

EURIPIDES

If we stopped trusting the citizens we now trust, and start making use of the citizens we now don't use—

DIONYSUS

Then we'd find salvation?

¹⁴³ The cleverest hero at Troy and a legendary inventor; subject of a play by Euripides parodied in *Women at the Thesmophoria* 768–84.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

- 1449 εἰ νῦν γε δυστυχοῦμεν ἐν τούτοισι, πῶς
 1450 τᾶναντί ἂν πράξαντες οὐ σωζοίμεθ' ἄν:

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τί δαὶ σύ; τί λέγεις;

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

- 1454 τὴν πόλιν νῦν μοι φράσον
 πρῶτον τίσι χρήται πότερα τοῖς χρηστοῖς;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- 1455 πόθεν;
 μισεῖ κάκιστα.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

τοῖς πονηροῖς δ' ἤδεται;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ' ἐκείνη γ', ἀλλὰ χρήται πρὸς βίαν.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

πῶς οὖν τις ἂν σώσειε τοιαύτην πόλιν,
 ἢ μήτε χλαῖνα μήτε σισύρα ξυμφέρει;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

- 1460 εὔρισκε νῆ Δί', εἴπερ ἀναδύσει πάλιν.

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

ἐκεῖ φράσαιμ' ἄν, ἐνθαδὶ δ' οὐ βούλομαι.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

μῆ δῆτα σύ γ', ἀλλ' ἐνθένδ' ἀνίει τὰγαθά.

FROGS

EURIPIDES

If we're faring poorly with the current bunch, how
wouldn't we find salvation if we did the opposite?

DIONYSUS

And what about you? What have you got to say?

AESCHYLUS

Tell me who the city's making use of now: the good people?

DIONYSUS

Of course not! She absolutely hates them.

AESCHYLUS

And she delights in the bad people?

DIONYSUS

No, she doesn't; she makes use of them perforce.

AESCHYLUS

Then how could anyone save a city like that, if she won't
wear either a cloak or a goatskin?

DIONYSUS

By god, think of something, if you want to go back up there.

AESCHYLUS

I'll tell you up there, but here I don't want to.

DIONYSUS

Oh no you don't; you send up your blessings from here.

1450 *πράξαντες* R S: *πράττοντες* V A K

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΙΣΧΤΛΟΣ

1465 τὴν γῆν ὅταν νομίσωσι τὴν τῶν πολεμίων
εἶναι σφετέραν. τὴν δὲ σφετέραν τῶν πολεμίων,
πόρον δὲ τὰς ναῦς, ἀπορίαν δὲ τὸν πόρον.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

εὖ, πλήν γ' ὁ δικαστῆς αὐτὰ καταπίνει μόνος.

ΠΛΟΤΤΩΝ

κρίνοις ἄν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

αὕτη σφῶν κρίσις γενήσεται.
αἰρήσομαι γὰρ ὄνπερ ἡ ψυχὴ θέλει.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

1470 μεμνημένος νυν τῶν θεῶν οὓς ὤμοσας
ἦ μὴν ἀπάξειν μ' οἴκαδ', αἰροῦ τοὺς φίλους.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἦ γλῶττ' ὁμώμοκ', Αἰσχύλον δ' αἰρήσομαι.

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

τί δέδρακας, ὦ μιαρῶτατ' ἀνθρώπων;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

ἐγώ;
ἔκρινα νικᾶν Αἰσχύλον. τιῆ γὰρ οὖ;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

αἰσχιστον ἔργον προσβλέπεις μ' εἰργασμένος;

FROGS

AESCHYLUS

When they think of the enemy's country as their own, and their own as the enemy's; and the fleet as their wealth; and their wealth as despair.

DIONYSUS

Good, except that the juryman will gobble that down all by himself!¹⁴⁴

PLUTO

Please render your verdict.

DIONYSUS

This will be my decision between you: I will choose the one that my soul wishes to choose.

EURIPIDES

Now remember the gods by whom you swore that you'd take me back home, and choose your friends.

DIONYSUS

It was my tongue that swore:¹⁴⁵ I'm choosing Aeschylus.

EURIPIDES

What have you done, you absolute scum of the earth?

DIONYSUS

Me? I've judged Aeschylus the winner; why shouldn't I?

EURIPIDES

How can you look me in the eye after doing something so utterly disgraceful?

¹⁴⁴ Referring to state pay for public services.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. line 101-2, above.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1475 τί δ' αἰσχρόν, ἦν μὴ τοῖς θεωμένοις δοκῆ;

ΕΤΡΙΠΙΔΗΣ

ὦ σχέτλιε, περιόψει με δὴ τεθνηκότα;

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τίς δ' οἶδεν εἰ τὸ ζῆν μὲν ἔστι κατθανεῖν,
τὸ πνεῖν δὲ δειπνεῖν, τὸ δὲ καθεύδειν κώδιον;

ΠΛΟΤΤΩΝ

χωρεῖτε τοίνυν, ὦ Διόνυσ', εἴσω.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

τί δαί;

ΠΛΟΤΤΩΝ

ἵνα ξενίσωκμεν > σφω πρὶν ἀποπλεῖν.

ΔΙΟΝΤΣΟΣ

1480 εὖ λέγεις

νῆ τὸν Δί· οὐ γὰρ ἄχθομαι τῷ πράγματι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ) μακάριός γ' ἀνὴρ ἔχων
ξύνεσιν ἠκριβωμένην.

πάρα δὲ πολλοῖσιν μαθεῖν·

1485 ὄδε γὰρ εὖ φρονεῖν δοκήσας

1480 suppl. Rogers

¹⁴⁶ Euripides' *Aeolus*, fr. 19, with "the spectators" substituted for "those who do it."

¹⁴⁷ The first phrase is from Euripides' *Polyidus* (fr. 638).

FROGS

DIONYSUS

What's disgraceful, if it doesn't seem so to the spectators?¹⁴⁶

EURIPIDES

You bastard, are you going to stand by and watch me stay dead?

DIONYSUS

Who knows if life be really death, and breath be dinner, and sleep a fleecy blanket?¹⁴⁷

*Exit EURIPIDES.*¹⁴⁸

PLUTO

Dionysus, you two go along inside now.

DIONYSUS

Why?

PLUTO

So we can entertain you before you depart.

DIONYSUS

Good suggestion, by Zeus; I can't complain about that!

PLUTO escorts DIONYSUS and AESCHYLUS into the palace.

CHORUS

Happy the man who has
keen intelligence,
as is abundantly clear:
this man, for his eminent good sense,

¹⁴⁸ Either he runs off or is wheeled back inside on the *eccyclema*, if it was used (cf. entrance at 830).

ARISTOPHANES

πάλιν ἄπεισιν οἴκαδ' αὖθις,
 ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ μὲν τοῖς πολίταις,
 ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ δὲ τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ
 ξυγγενέσι τε καὶ φίλοισι,
 1490 διὰ τὸ συνेतὸς εἶναι.

(ἀντ) χαρίεν οὖν μὴ Σωκράτει
παρακαθήμενον λαλεῖν,
ἀποβαλόντα μουσικὴν
τά τε μέγιστα παραλιπόντα
 1495 τῆς τραγωδικῆς τέχνης.
 τὸ δ' ἐπὶ σεμνοῖσιν λόγοισι
 καὶ σκαριφησμοῖσι λήρων
 διατριβὴν ἀργὸν ποιεῖσθαι,
 παραφρονούντος ἀνδρός.

ΠΛΟΥΤΩΝ

1500 ἄγε δὴ χαίρων, Αἰσχύλε, χῶρει,
καὶ σῶζε πόλιν τὴν ἡμετέραν
γνώμαις ἀγαθαῖς, καὶ παίδευσον
τοὺς ἀνοήτους· πολλοὶ δ' εἰσίν·
 καὶ δὸς τουτὶ Κλεοφῶντι φέρων
 1505 καὶ τουτουσὶ τοῖσι πορισταῖς
Μύρμηκί θ' ὁμοῦ καὶ Νικομάχῳ

1501 ἡμετέραν Scaliger

149 It is likely, though not indicated in the text, that Persephone enters as well, in view of her prominent Eleusinian associations. 150 Cf. 678 n. The objects given by Pluto (and

FROGS

is going back home again,
a boon to his fellow citizens,
a boon as well
to his family and friends,
through being intelligent.

So what's stylish is not to sit
beside Socrates and chatter,
casting the arts aside
and ignoring the best
of the tragedian's craft.
To hang around killing time
in pretentious conversation
and hairsplitting twaddle
is the mark of a man who's lost his mind.

*Enter PLUTO with AESCHYLUS, DIONYSUS, and XANTHIAS.*¹⁴⁹

PLUTO

Fare you well then, Aeschylus. Save our city with your fine counsels, and educate the thoughtless people; there are many of them. And take this and give it to Cleophon;¹⁵⁰ and this to the Commissioners of Revenue,¹⁵¹ together with Myrmex¹⁵² and Nicomachus;¹⁵³ and this to Archeno-

more fittingly carried by Xanthias than by Aeschylus, who will depart carrying a torch) are instruments of suicide, probably a sword, a noose, and a mortar of hemlock (cf. 121–34).

¹⁵¹ Nothing is known of their particular functions.

¹⁵² Otherwise unknown. ¹⁵³ Probably the defendant in Lysias 30 (399/98), who currently held an appointment to review, consolidate, and supervise the public inscription of the laws.

ARISTOPHANES

- τόδε δ' Ἀρχενόμω· καὶ φράζ' αὐτοῖς
 ταχέως ἤκειν ὡς ἐμὲ δευρὶ
 καὶ μὴ μέλλειν· κἂν μὴ ταχέως
 1510 ἤκωσιν, ἐγὼ νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω
 στίξας αὐτοὺς καὶ ξυμποδίσας
 μετ' Ἀδειμάντου τοῦ Λευκολόφου
 1513/4 κατὰ γῆς ταχέως ἀποπέμψω.

ΑΙΣΧΥΛΟΣ

- 1515 ταῦτα ποιήσω· σὺ δὲ τὸν θᾶκον
 τὸν ἐμὸν παράδος Σοφοκλεῖ τηρεῖν
 καὶ διασώζειν, ἦν ἄρ' ἐγὼ ποτε
 δεῦρ' ἀφίκωμαι. τοῦτον γὰρ ἐγὼ
 σοφία κρίνω δεύτερον εἶναι.
 1520 μέμνησο δ' ὅπως ὁ πανοῦργος ἀνὴρ
 καὶ ψευδολόγος καὶ βωμολόχος
 μηδέποτ' εἰς τὸν θᾶκον τὸν ἐμὸν
 μηδ' ἄκων ἐγκαθεδεῖται.

ΠΛΟΥΤΩΝ

- φαίνετε τοίνυν ὑμεῖς τούτῳ
 1525 λαμπάδας ἱεράς, χᾶμα προπέμπετε
 τοῖσιν τούτου τούτου μέλεσιν
 καὶ μολπαῖσιν κελαδούντες.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- πρῶτα μὲν εὐοδίαν ἀγαθὴν ἀπιόντι ποιητῇ
 εἰς φάος ὀρνυμένῳ δότε, δαίμονες οἱ κατὰ γαίας,
 1530 τῇ δὲ πόλει μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν ἀγαθὰς ἐπινοίας·

FROGS

mus;¹⁵⁴ and tell them hurry on down here to me, without delay; and if they don't come quickly, by Apollo I'll tattoo them, clap them in leg irons, and dispatch them below ground right quick,¹⁵⁵ along with Leucolophus' son, Adeimantus!¹⁵⁶

AESCHYLUS

That I shall do. And you hand over my chair to Sophocles to look after and preserve, for I rank him second to me in the art. And remember to see to it that that criminal, that liar, that buffoon, never sits down on my chair, not even accidentally.

PLUTO

(*to the Chorus*) Now display your sacred torches in this man's honor and escort him forth, hymning his praises with his own songs and melodies.

CHORUS

First, you gods below earth, grant to the departing poet a fine journey as he ascends to the sunlight, and to the city grant fine ideas that will bring fine blessings. For that way

¹⁵⁴ Otherwise unknown.

¹⁵⁵ These punishments were available to masters or overseers with misbehaved slaves.

¹⁵⁶ Alcibiades' cousin, who fled Athens after implication in the scandal of the Mysteries in 415, returned in 407, and then served as a general. He was the only Athenian prisoner not executed by the Spartans after Aegospotami, where he was widely believed to have behaved treasonously (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.1.32, cf. *Assemblywomen* 644–45), so that the reference here was probably added for the revised production. It may be relevant to Pluto's threat that he had unsuccessfully opposed an Assembly motion to mutilate all enemy prisoners (Xenophon *ibid.*).

ARISTOPHANES

πάγχυ γὰρ ἐκ μεγάλων ἀχέων παυσαίμεθ' ἂν οὕτως
ἀργαλέων τ' ἐν ὄπλοις ξυνόδων. Κλεοφῶν δὲ
μαχέσθω
κᾶλλος ὁ βουλόμενος τούτων πατρίοις ἐν ἀρούραις.

FROGS

we may have an end of great griefs and painful encounters in arms. Let Cleophon do the fighting, and any of those others who wants to fight on his own native soil!¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Implying non-Athenian ancestry, cf. 678–82, 730–33.



ASSEMBLYWOMEN

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

No precise information about the production of *Assemblywomen* survives,¹ but internal evidence dates it to the period of the "Corinthian War" (395–387/6), evidently between 392, the earliest the Athenians could be said to have had "a fleeting glimpse of salvation" (202–3), and the production of *Wealth* in 388; references to proposals to launch a fleet (197–98) and to collect large revenues by levying a new tax (823–29) best suit 391 (after the arrest and dismissal of Conon had cost Athens both his fleet and Persian money), or possibly 390 (after a fleet had actually been launched). Greater precision is impossible, for in *Assemblywomen* allusions to the political status quo are few, and serve mainly to motivate its abolition in favor of a radically new system, a communal utopia under female governance.

As in *Lysistrata* a heroine, Praxagora ("Woman Effective in Public"), leads her fellow Athenian women in a plot to save Athens from male misgovernance: the women disguise themselves as men, pack the Assembly, vote to transfer power to themselves, and elect Praxagora to be their commander. But unlike *Lysistrata*, whose plot was a tem-

¹ A scholium on line 193, citing Philochorus (*FGrH* 328 F 148), preserves discussion about the date, but is vaguely worded and probably corrupt.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

porary intervention designed to force the men to stop the war and return Greece to normality, Praxagora enacts a permanent economic, social, and sexual revolution. Private property is abolished: every citizen is to surrender his possessions to the common store, from which the women will provision all citizens equally, civic buildings having been turned into communal dining halls. Household and family are abolished too: dividing walls are to be removed, and any man may copulate with, and have children by, any woman, provided that the young and the beautiful of both sexes copulate with the old and the ugly first. As for slaves and other non-citizens, they will do the farming and (presumably) all other manual labor, and are debarred from sexual competition with citizens. In the new order, social inequalities based on wealth, age, and beauty are thus eliminated, and with them the principal motives for civic selfishness.

A pair of episodes illustrate the two main elements of the plan and the main problem that threatens their implementation: the desire of some to take unfair advantage of the new system by holding onto the privileges that they had enjoyed under the old. The first is a conversation between a law-abiding citizen, who is preparing to surrender his property, and a selfish sceptic, who hesitates to surrender his own. At the end of the scene the sceptic goes off to claim his place at the communal dinner while still hoping keep his property. We never learn whether his cheating succeeds, but Praxagora has already explained that under the new regime the desire to own property makes no sense, since everyone will be amply supplied from the common store. The second episode illustrates the new equality of sexual opportunity, which gives priority to the

ARISTOPHANES

old and the ugly. In this more elaborate scene, a young man who has enjoyed the communal feast nevertheless tries to visit his young girlfriend, but is frustrated by the intervention of three hags, each one older and uglier than the last, who stake their legal claim to his services. In the end the young man is dragged off by the last two hags together, since in their case it proves impossible to resolve the question of priority.

The final scene illustrates the benefits enjoyed by men who cooperate with the new regime. Praxagora's husband Blepyrus, earlier counted among the old and ugly and the last to come to dinner, now arrives in the embrace of two young girls, his virility apparently recovered. All that remains is for a tipsy maid to invite Blepyrus and the Chorus, representing all the women, to dance off to the feast, which she describes in opulent terms in a lively song.

In creating the comic utopia of *Assemblywomen* Aristophanes does not set up a true gynecocracy, where women usurp male roles,² but rather takes an old idea (at work also in *Lysistrata*), that polis management should be like household management, to its logical conclusion: the household actually replaces the polis, with the women playing their traditional roles as managers and caregivers. And since the polis is abolished, the men have no duties other than to put on their new clothes, eat, drink, and

² Mythical models included the Amazons (dramatized in an earlier comedy by Cephisodorus) and the Lemnian Women (comedies by Aristophanes and Nicocharas); Pherecrates' *Tyrannis* (cf. frs. 152, 269) and Theopompus' *Lady Soldiers* probably featured gynecocracies as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

copulate. In effect, the men will enjoy a life of carefree boyhood, with women doing all the chores—not unlike Hesiod's Golden Age, when men "lived like gods, with carefree heart, free and apart from trouble and pain," or the Silver Age, when "a boy was raised by his dear mother for a hundred years, a large infant playing in his house."³ But by relieving men of their responsibilities the women realize important gains too: liberated from confinement in their husbands' households, they may openly associate, enjoy the sexual freedom hitherto reserved for men without need of deception, and rest assured that their household will not be damaged by the men's foolish policies.

Assemblywomen also satirizes contemporary Athenian fondness for political experimentation and theorizing. The political crisis and constitutional reforms precipitated by the loss of their empire in 404, in combination with an Assembly revitalized by the introduction of pay for attendees,⁴ had prompted the Athenians to discuss and debate their democratic system afresh, and also stimulated speculation about ideal systems of government, including women's potential for participation in civic affairs.⁵ The best known of these ideal states, Plato's *Republic*, indeed envisions a regime for elite Guardians that is essentially the same as Praxagora's, save for its abolition of the tradi-

³ *Works and Days* 112–13, 130–31.

⁴ In *Acharnians* of 425 Aristophanes had complained that assemblies were poorly attended and that ordinary citizens were discouraged from speaking up.

⁵ Socrates, for example, reportedly believed in the natural equality of women: Xenophon *Symposium* 2.9.

ARISTOPHANES

tional distinction between men's and women's work, and its system of eugenic breeding.⁶ Since *Assemblywomen* cannot on chronological grounds have caricatured *Republic*, Plato may in fact have been inspired by the play; if both authors drew on a common source, it is unlikely to have been a written one, since Aristotle tells us that Plato's system had no antecedents.⁷

Assemblywomen follows the pattern of Aristophanes' fifth-century comedies in its plot but shows significant changes in formal structure, particularly in its handling of the chorus. Though the chorus plays a prominent role at the beginning and end of the play, its silent and gradual entry, subsequent absences, and minimal involvement in the central scenes are paralleled only in tragedy; there is no parabasis and only a truncated agon; and the choral songs separating episodes are absent from the script, the lacuna sometimes indicated by the note *chorou* ("place for a chorus"), as would become the norm by Menander's time.

Text

One papyrus contains parts of 32 lines of *Assemblywomen*, and four independent medieval MSS preserve the play in whole (R Λ) or in part (A Γ). The MSS divide into two families, with R on one side, and on the other A Γ , which have a common ancestor, and Λ , which derives from a close relative of Γ that was thoroughly corrected from R or a copy of R. Another MS (B), though derived from a

⁶ See especially *Republic*, books 3 and 5.

⁷ *Politics* 1266a31–36, 1274b9–10; he would hardly have mentioned a comic antecedent.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

copy of Γ , contains a number of good conjectures. The Aldine *editio princeps* (1498) was based on a MS (no longer extant) stemming from an ancestor of Λ that incorporated a number of corrections and emendations, some of which are found also in B.

Sigla

- Π *PMich.* inv. 6649 (IV/V), lines 600–16, 638–54
R Ravennas 429 (c. 950)
S Readings found in the Suda
A Parisinus Regius 2712 (XIV), lines 1–282
 Γ Laurentianus 31.15 (c. 1325), lines 1–1135
 Λ (= Pe1) Perusinus H 56 (XVⁱⁿ)
B Parisinus Regius 2715 (XV), lines 1–1135
a the consensus of R A Γ Λ (1–282), R Γ Λ (283–1135), R Λ (1136–end)

Annotated Editions

- F. H. M. Blaydes (Halle 1881).
J. van Leeuwen (Leiden 1905).
B. B. Rogers (London 1902), with English translation.
R. G. Ussher (Oxford 1973).
G. Paduano (Milan 1983), with Italian translation.
M. Vetta (Milan 1989), with Italian translation.
A. H. Sommerstein (Warminster 1998), with English translation.

ΤΑ ΤΟΤ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ, γυνή

Ἀττική

ΓΥΝΗ Α, γείτων

Πραξαγόρας

ΓΥΝΗ Β

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ, ἀνὴρ

Πραξαγόρας

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ Βλεπύρου

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

ΑΝΗΡ φειδωλός

ΚΗΡΥΚΑΙΝΑ

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ, μεράκιον

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

Πραξαγόρας

ΧΟΡΟΣ γυναικῶν

Ἀττικῶν

ΚΩΦΑ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΣΙΚΩΝ καὶ

ΠΑΡΜΕΝΩΝ, οἰκέται

τοῦ Γείτονος

ΜΕΙΡΑΚΕΣ δύο

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PRAXAGORA, an

Athenian wife

FIRST WOMAN, a

neighbor of Praxagora

SECOND WOMAN,

Praxagora's neighbor

BLEPYRUS, Praxagora's

husband

NEIGHBOR of Blepyrus

CHREMES

SELFISH MAN

HERALD, a woman

appointed by Praxagora

FIRST OLD WOMAN

GIRL

EPIGENES, a young man

SECOND OLD WOMAN

THIRD OLD WOMAN

MAID of Praxagora

CHORUS of Athenian

women

SILENT CHARACTERS

SICON and

PARMENON,

Neighbor's slaves

TWO GIRLS

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΖΟΤΣΑΙ

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

- ὦ λαμπρὸν ὄμμα τοῦ τροχηλάτου λύχνου,
κάλλιστ' ἐν εὐστόχοισιν ἐξηρημένον—
γούας τε γὰρ σὰς καὶ τύχας δηλώσομεν·
τροχῶ γὰρ ἔλαθεις κεραμικῆς ῥύμης ὕπο
5 μυκτῆρσι λαμπρὰς ἡλίου τιμὰς ἔχεις—
ὄρμα φλογὸς σημεῖα τὰ ξυγκείμενα.
σοὶ γὰρ μόνῳ δηλοῦμεν εἰκότως, ἐπεὶ
κὰν τοῖσι δωματίοισιν Ἀφροδίτης τρόπων
πειρωμέναισι πλησίος παραστατεῖς,
10 λорδουμένων τε σωμάτων ἐπιστάτην
ὀφθαλμὸν οὐδεὶς τὸν σὸν ἐξείργει δόμων.
μόνος δὲ μηρῶν εἰς ἀπορρήτους μυχοὺς
λάμπεις ἀφεύων τὴν ἐπανθοῦσαν τρίχα·
στοὰς δὲ καρποῦ Βακχίου τε νάματος
15 πλήρεις ὑπογνύσαισι συμπαραστατεῖς·
καὶ ταῦτα συνδρῶν οὐ λαλεῖς τοῖς πλησίον.
ἀνθ' ὧν συνέσει καὶ τὰ νῦν βουλευμάτα

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

An Athenian street before daybreak; the stage building represents three houses. From the central house emerges a young figure wearing men's clothing but a woman's mask, and carrying a walking stick and lighted lamp.

PRAXAGORA¹

O radiant eye of the wheel-whirled lamp, fairest invention of skilled artisans (yes, I shall reveal your pedigree and fortunes, for whirled on the wheel by the potter's impetus, you bear the sun's radiant offices in your nozzles): broadcast now the fiery signal as arranged. (*she swings the lamp to and fro*) You alone we make privy to our plot, and rightly, for also in our bedrooms you stand close by as we essay Aphrodite's maneuvers; and when our bodies are flexed, no one banishes from the room your supervisory eye. You alone illuminate the ineffable nooks between our thighs, when you singe away the hair that sprouts there; and you stand by us when stealthily we open pantries stocked with bread and the liquor of Bacchus; and you're an accomplice that never blabs to the neighbors. So you'll be in on our

¹ Praxagora's name means "Woman Effective in Public"; her opening lines parody an unknown tragic source or sources.

ARISTOPHANES

ὄσα Σκίροις ἔδοξε ταῖς ἐμαῖς φίλαις.

ἀλλ' οὐδεμία πάρεστιν ἄς ἤκειν ἐχρήν.

- 20 καίτοι πρὸς ὄρθρον γ' ἐστίν, ἢ δ' ἐκκλησία
αὐτίκα μάλ' ἔσται καταλαβεῖν δ' ἡμᾶς ἔδρας
23 δεῖ τὰς ἐταίρας κἀγκαθιζόμενας λαθεῖν,
22 ἄς Φυρόμαχος ποτ' εἶπεν, εἰ μέμνησθ' ἔτι.
τί δῆτ' ἂν εἴη; πότερον οὐκ ἐρραμμένους
25 ἔχουσι τοὺς πώγωνας, οὓς εἴρητ' ἔχειν;
ἢ θαῖμάτια τὰνδρεῖα κλειψάσαις λαθεῖν
ἦν χαλεπὸν αὐταῖς; ἀλλ' ὀρώ τονδὶ λύχνον
προσιόντα. φέρε νυν ἐπαναχωρήσω πάλιν,
μὴ καί τις ὦν ἀνὴρ ὁ προσιῶν τυγχάνει.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- 30 ὦρα βαδίζειν, ὡς ὁ κῆρυξ ἀρτίως
ἡμῶν προσιουσῶν δεύτερον κεκόκκυκεν.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἐγὼ δέ γ' ὑμᾶς προσδοκῶσ' ἐγρηγόρη
τὴν νύκτα πᾶσαν. ἀλλὰ φέρε τὴν γείτονα
τῆνδ' ἐκκαλέσωμαι θρυγανῶσα τὴν θύραν.
δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἄνδρ' αὐτῆς λαθεῖν.

22-23 transp. Dover

22 Φυρόμαχος R: Σφυρόμαχος A Γ Λ S Σ(i)^R: Κλεόμαχος
γρΛ Σ(ii)^R γρSΓA

31 -ουσῶν LeFebvre: -όντων a

² A women's festival for Demeter.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

present plans too, all that my friends agreed on at the Scira.²

But not one of the women who are supposed to meet here has shown up, though it's almost light and the Assembly begins any minute. We wenchmen must grab our seats, as Phyromachus once put it, if you still remember,³ and settle ourselves without attracting attention. What can be keeping them? Don't they have the false beards they were told to get? Was it hard for them to swipe their husbands' clothes without getting caught?

A figure dressed like a man and carrying a lamp and bundle enters the orchestra through a wing, leading several other figures, similarly dressed; these and the women soon to follow form the Chorus.

But I see a lamp over there, coming this way. I'll duck aside in case it happens to be a man.

CHORUS LEADER

Time to move! Just now, as we were on our way, the Herald crowed a second time.

PRAXAGORA

And I was up the whole night waiting for you. Now let me call this neighbor of mine out of the house; I'll scratch softly at her door, since her husband mustn't notice.

FIRST WOMAN emerges from the door, dressed in men's clothing.

³ Evidently this Phyromachus (otherwise unknown) had somehow mispronounced *hetairoi* "associates" as *hetairai* "courtesans"; and *hedras* "seats" can also mean "rear ends."

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ Α

35 ἤκουσά τοι
 ὑποδουμένη τὸ κνύμά σου τῶν δακτύλων,
 ἅτ' οὐ καταδαρθοῦς· ὁ γὰρ ἀνὴρ, ὃ φιλτάτη,
 Σαλαμίνιος γάρ ἐστιν ὃ ξύνειμ' ἐγώ,
 τὴν νύχθ' ὄλην ἤλαυνέ μ' ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν,
 40 ὥστ' ἄρτι τουτὶ θοιμάτιον αὐτοῦ ἔλαβον.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ὄρῳ καὶ Κλειναρέτην καὶ Σωστράτην
 προσιούσαν ἤδη τήνδε καὶ Φιλαινέτην.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

οὐκουν ἐπέξεσθ'; ὡς Γλύκη κατώμοσεν
 τὴν ὑστάτην ἤκουσαν οἶνον τρεῖς χοᾶς
 45 ἧ μὴν ἀποτείσειν κᾶρεβίνθων χοίνικα.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

τὴν Σμικυθίωνος δ' οὐχ ὄρᾶς Μελιστίχην
 σπεύδουσιν ἐν ταῖς ἐμβάσιν; καὶ μοι δοκεῖ
 κατὰ σχολὴν παρὰ τὰνδρὸς ἐξελθεῖν μόνη.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

τὴν τοῦ καπήλου δ' οὐχ ὄρᾶς Γενσιωστράτην
 50 ἔχουσιν ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ τὴν λαμπάδα;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

καὶ τὴν Φιλοδωρήτου τε καὶ Χαιρητάδου
 ὄρῳ προσιούσας χιτέρας πολλὰς πάννυ
 γυναικας, ὃ τι πέρ ἐστ' ὄφελος ἐν τῇ πόλει.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

FIRST WOMAN

I was just getting dressed when I heard you give the secret knock: see, I wasn't asleep. You know, my dear, the man I live with is from Salamis,⁴ and all night long he was sailing me under the sheets, so I just now got the chance to grab his cloak.

PRAXAGORA

Hey, I see Cleinarete and Sostrate coming, and there's Philainete.⁵

CHORUS LEADER

Get a move on; Glyce⁶ solemnly swore that the last woman here will be fined ten quarts of wine and a bag of chick-peas!

PRAXAGORA

Look, there's Smicythion's wife Melistiche trying to run in her old man's boots!⁷ And I think she's the only one who had no trouble getting away from her husband.

FIRST WOMAN

And there's the barkeep's wife Geusistrate.⁸ See her, with the torch in her hand?

PRAXAGORA

And there's Philodoretus' wife, and Chaeretades',⁹ and a lot more women besides, anyone who's anybody in town!

⁴ These islanders were noted oarsmen.

⁵ Typical names. ⁶ An ordinary name.

⁷ Perhaps this Smicythion (identity unknown) was negligent or impotent. ⁸ A comic version of women's names ending in *-strate*: *Geusi-* suggests wine drinking.

⁹ Identities unknown.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ Β

- καὶ πάνυ ταλαιπώρως ἔγωγ', ὦ φιλτάτη,
 55 ἐκδρᾶσα παρέδυν· ὁ γὰρ ἀνὴρ τὴν νύχθ' ὄλην
 ἔβηττε τριχίδων ἐσπέρας ἐμπλήμενος.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

κάθησθε τοίνυν, ὡς ἂν ἀνέρωμαι τάδε
 ὑμᾶς, ἐπειδὴ συλλελεγμένας ὀρώ,
ὅσα Σκίροις ἔδοξεν εἰ δεδράκατε.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

- 60 ἔγωγε· πρῶτον μὲν γ' ἔχω τὰς μασχάλας
 λόχμης δασυτέρας, καθάπερ ἦν ξυγκείμενον.
 ἔπειθ', ὁπόθ' ἀνὴρ εἰς ἀγορὰν οἴχοιτό μου,
 ἀλευφάμενη τὸ σῶμ' ὄλον δι' ἡμέρας
 ἐχραινόμεν ἑστῶσα πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον.

ΓΤΝΗ Β

- 65 κᾶγωγε· τὸ ξυρὸν δέ γ' ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας
 ἔρριψα πρῶτον, ἵνα δασυθείην ὄλη
 καὶ μηδὲν εἶην ἔτι γυναικὶ προσφερῆς.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἔχετε δὲ τοὺς πώγωνα, οὓς εἴρητ' ἔχειν
 πάσαισιν ὑμῖν, ὁπότε συλλεγοίμεθα;

ΓΤΝΗ Α

- 70 νῆ τὴν Ἑκάτην, καλόν γ' ἔγωγε τουτονί.

⁶⁹ ὑμῖν R Λ: ἡμῖν A Γ

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

Enter SECOND WOMAN on the run.

SECOND WOMAN

I had an awful time, my dear, making my escape and getting over here quietly. My husband stuffed himself with anchovies at dinner last night and was up all night coughing.

PRAXAGORA

(to Women and Chorus) Now then, please be seated, so I can put a question to you, now that I see you're all here: have you done everything we agreed on at the Scira?

FIRST WOMAN

I have. First, I've got armpits bushier than underbrush, just as we agreed; then, whenever my husband went off to the agora, I oiled myself and stood in the sun all day getting a tan.

SECOND WOMAN

Me too. I threw my razor out of the house right away, so that I'd get hairy all over and not look female at all.

PRAXAGORA

And you've all got the beards you were told to bring with you when next we met?

FIRST WOMAN

Sure, by Hecate; isn't this one a beauty?

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ Β

κ᾿ἄγωγ' Ἐπικράτους οὐκ ὀλίγῳ καλλίονα.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ὕμεις δὲ τί φατε;

ΓΤΝΗ Α

φασί· κατανεύουσι γούν.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

καὶ μὴν τά γ' ἄλλ' ὑμῖν ὀρώ πεπραγμένα·
Λακωνικὰς γὰρ ἔχετε καὶ βακτηρίας
75 καὶ θαϊμάτια τάνδρεία, καθάπερ εἶπομεν.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

ἔγωγέ τοι τὸ σκύταλον ἐξηνεγκάμην
τὸ τοῦ Λαμίου τουτὶ καθεύδοντος λάθρα.

ΓΤΝΗ Β

τουτ' ἔστ' ἐκείνο τὸ σκύταλον ᾧ πέρδεται.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

νῆ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτήρ' ἐπιτήδειός γ' ἂν ἦν
80 τὴν τοῦ πανόπτου διφθέραν ἐνημμένος
εἶπερ τις ἄλλος βουκολεῖν τὸν δῆμιον.
ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ὅπως καὶ τὰπὶ τούτοις δράσομεν,
ἕως ἔτ' ἐστὶν ἄστρα κατὰ τὸν οὐρανόν·
ἠκκλησία δ', εἰς ἣν παρεσκευάσμεθα
85 ἡμεῖς βαδίξειν, ἐξ ἕω γενήσεται.

78 ἐκείνο τὸ σκύταλον ᾧ Bothe: ἐκείνο (ἐκείνων S) τῶν
σκυτάλων ᾧν a S

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

SECOND WOMAN

And mine's a far piece nicer than Epicrates'¹⁰

PRAXAGORA

And what about the rest of you?

FIRST WOMAN

They've got them; see, they're nodding yes.

PRAXAGORA

And I see you've taken care of everything else: you've got Spartan boots and walking sticks and men's cloaks, just as we said.

FIRST WOMAN

I've brought Lamius' shillelagh; I took it as he slept.

SECOND WOMAN

That must be the shillelagh he uses to fart!¹¹

PRAXAGORA

By Zeus the Savior, if he wore old All-Eyes' leather jacket he'd be the very man to provide fodder for the public executioner.¹² But let's get on with the next items of business, while there are still stars in the sky. The Assembly we're prepared to attend begins at dawn.

¹⁰ A populist politician nicknamed "shield-bearer" because of his imposing beard (Platon fr. 130).

¹¹ Presumably this unidentifiable Lamius (according to the scholia, a nickname for one Mnesitheus) was likened to the fabled ogre Lamia, who carried a stick and "farted when captured" (*Wasps* 1177).

¹² Argus was the many-eyed giant sent by Hera to stand guard over Zeus' human favorite, Io, whom she had turned into a heifer.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ Α

νῆ τὸν Δί', ὥστε δεῖ γε καταλαβεῖν ἔδρας
ὑπὸ τῷ λίθῳ τῶν πρυτάνεων καταντικρύ.

ΓΤΝΗ Β

ταντί γέ τοι νῆ τὸν Δί' ἐφερόμην, ἵνα
πληρουμένης ξαίνοιμι τῆς ἐκκλησίας.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

πληρουμένης, τάλαινα;

ΓΤΝΗ Β

90 νῆ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν
ἔγωγε. τί γὰρ ἂν χεῖρον ἀκροώμην ἄρα
ξαίνουσα; γυμνὰ δ' ἐστί μου τὰ παιδία.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἰδοῦ γέ σε ξαίνουσαν, ἣν τοῦ σώματος
οὐδὲν παραφῆναι τοῖς καθημένοις ἔδει.
95 οὐκοῦν καλὰ γ' ἂν πάθοιμεν, εἰ πλήρης τύχοι
ὁ δῆμος ὡν κᾶπειθ' ὑπερβαίνουσά τις
ἀναβαλλομένη δείξειε τὸν Φορμίσιον.
ἦν δ' ἐγκαθεζώμεσθα πρότεροι, λήσομεν
ξυστειλάμεναι θαϊμάτια· τὸν πώγωνά τε
100 ὅταν καθῶμεν ὃν περιδησόμεσθ' ἐκεῖ,
τίς οὐκ ἂν ἡμᾶς ἄνδρας ἠγήσασθ' ὀρών;
Ἄγύρριος γοῦν τὸν Προνόμου πώγων' ἔχων
λέληθε· καίτοι πρότερον ἦν οὗτος γυνή.
νυνὶ δ', ὀράς, πράττει τὰ μέγιστ' ἐν τῇ πόλει.
105 τούτου γέ τοι, νῆ τὴν ἐπιούσαν ἡμέραν,
τόλμημα τολμῶμεν τοσοῦτον οὐνεκα,

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

FIRST WOMAN

Right you are, so we've got to grab some seats under the rock,¹³ right in front of the Chairmen.

SECOND WOMAN

(*producing a knitting basket*) That's exactly why I brought this along, to get some knitting done while the Assembly's filling up.

PRAXAGORA

Filling up, stupid?

SECOND WOMAN

Sure, by Artemis. Won't I be able to listen just as well while I knit? And my kids have nothing to wear.

PRAXAGORA

Listen to you: knitting! When you shouldn't be showing any part of your body to the men. Wouldn't we be in a fine fix if the citizenry's all there and then some woman has to climb over them, hitching up her clothes and flashing her—Phormisius!¹⁴ If we're the first to take our seats, no one will notice that we're wearing our cloaks wrapped tight. And when we unfurl the beards we'll tie on over there, what onlooker will think we're not men? Take Agyrrhius: now that he's wearing Pronomus' beard he passes for a man; and yet this very man used to be a woman.¹⁵ And now look at him, he's top cock in the city. And it's because of him, I swear by this dawning day, that we must dare such

¹³ I.e. the speaker's platform.

¹⁴ See *Frogs* 965.

¹⁵ Agyrrhius was a wealthy politician who recently had successfully proposed the introduction of Assembly pay; Pronomus is otherwise unknown.

ARISTOPHANES

ἦν πως παραλαβεῖν τῆς πόλεως τὰ πράγματα
δυνώμεθ' ὥστ' ἀγαθόν τι πράξει τὴν πόλιν.
 νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὔτε θέομεν οὔτ' ἐλαίνομεν.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

- 110 καὶ πῶς γυναικῶν θηλύφρων ξυνουσία
 δημηγορήσει;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

πολὺ μὲν οὖν ἄριστα πον.
 λέγουσι γὰρ καὶ τῶν νεανίσκων ὅσοι
 πλείστα σποδοῦνται, δεινοτάτους εἶναι λέγειν.
 ἡμῖν δ' ὑπάρχει τοῦτο κατὰ τύχην τινά.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

- 115 οὐκ οἶδα· δεινὸν δ' ἐστὶν ἢ μὴ ἴμπερία.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

οὔκουν ἐπίτηδες ξυνελέγημεν ἐνθάδε,
 ὅπως προμελετήσωμεν ἀκεῖ δεῖ λέγειν;
 οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις τὸ γένειον ἂν περιδουμένη
 ἄλλαι θ' ὅσαι λαλεῖν μεμελετήκασι πον.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

- 120 τίς δ', ὦ μέλ', ἡμῶν οὐ λαλεῖν ἐπίσταται;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἴθι δὴ σὺ περιδοῦ καὶ ταχέως ἀνὴρ γενοῦ.
 ἐγὼ δὲ θείσα τοὺς στεφάνους περιδήσομαι
 καυτῇ μεθ' ὑμῶν, ἦν τί μοι δόξη λέγειν.

ΓΤΝΗ Β

δεῦρ' ὦ γλυκυτάτη Πραξαγόρα· σκέψαι, τάλαν,

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

a daring deed, hopeful that somehow we can take over the government and do something good for the city. As it is, our city is oarless and becalmed.

FIRST WOMAN

But how can a congregation of women, with women's minds, expect to address the people?

PRAXAGORA

Much better than anybody, that's how. They say that the young men who've been reamed the most are also the most effective orators. And as luck would have it, that's exactly what nature suits us for!

FIRST WOMAN

I'm not so sure: inexperience is a dangerous thing.

PRAXAGORA

Well, isn't that why we've gathered here, to practice what we're going to say over there? You can't attach your beard too soon; and the same goes for the others who I'm sure have been practicing how to gab.

FIRST WOMAN

Is there anyone here, my friend, who hasn't got the gift of gab?

PRAXAGORA

All right then, you attach your beard and be a man; I'll put these garlands aside and attach my own, in case I decide to do some speaking too.

SECOND WOMAN

(holding a mirror) Come here, darling Praxagora. Look,

ARISTOPHANES

125 ὥς καὶ καταγέλαστον τὸ πρᾶγμα φαίνεται.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

πῶς καταγέλαστον;

ΓΤΝΗ Β

ὥσπερ εἴ τις σηπίαις
πώγωνα περιδήσειεν ἑσταθευμένας.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ὁ περιστάρχος, περιφέρειν χρῆ τὴν γαλήν.
πάριτ' ἔς τὸ πρόσθεν. Ἀρίφραδες, παῦσαι λαλῶν.
130 κάθιζε παριῶν. τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται;

ΓΤΝΗ Α

ἐγώ.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

περίθου δὴ τὸν στέφανον τύχ' ἀγαθῆ.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

ἰδοῦ.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

λέγοις ἄν.

ΓΤΝΓ Α

εἶτα πρὶν πιεῖν λέγω;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἰδοῦ πιεῖν.

¹⁶ Pointing up the incongruity of beards against the pale (and here insufficiently tanned) complexions of the women.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

my dear, how ridiculous this is.

PRAXAGORA

Why ridiculous?

SECOND WOMAN

It's like somebody bearded a grilled squid!¹⁶

PRAXAGORA

(*moving to the platform and speaking as Herald*) Purifier, please make your rounds with the sacrificial cat.¹⁷ All move into the sanctified area. Ariphrades,¹⁸ stop chattering; move forward and take your seat. Who wishes to address the Assembly?

FIRST WOMAN

I do.

PRAXAGORA

Then put on the garland, and may your speech be propitious.

FIRST WOMAN

Ready.

PRAXAGORA

You may speak.

FIRST WOMAN

Don't I get a drink first?

PRAXAGORA

Drink?

¹⁷ Actually the Assembly was purified with a piglet; the women, normally confined to the house, think of a housepet.

¹⁸ Otherwise unknown.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ Α

τί γάρ, ὦ μέλ', ἐστεφανωσάμην;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἄπιθ' ἐκποδών τοιαύτ' ἂν ἡμᾶς ἠργάσω
κάκει.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

135 τί δ'; οὐ πίνουσι κὰν τῆγκλησία;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἰδού γε σοὶ πίνουσι.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

νῆ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν,

καὶ ταῦτά γ' εὕζωρον. τὰ γοῦν βουλευμάτα
αὐτῶν, ὅσ' ἂν πράξωσιν ἐνθυμουμένοις,
ὥσπερ μεθύνοντων ἐστὶ παραπεπληγμένα.

140 καὶ νῆ Δία σπένδουσί γ'. ἢ τίνος χάριν
τοσαύτ' ἂν ἠύχοντ', εἴπερ οἶνος μὴ παρῆν;
καὶ λουδοροῦνταί γ' ὥσπερ ἐμπεπωκότες,
καὶ τὸν παροιοῦντ' ἐκφέρουσ' οἱ τοξόται.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

σὺ μὲν βάδιζε καὶ κάθησ'· οὐδὲν γὰρ εἶ.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

145 νῆ τὸν Δί', ἦ μοι μὴ γενειᾶν κρείττον ἦν·
δίψη γάρ, ὡς ἔοικ', ἀφανανθήσομαι.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἔσθ' ἤτις ἑτέρα βούλεται λέγειν;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

FIRST WOMAN

Well, sir, why else did I put on a garland?¹⁹

PRAXAGORA

Get off of there! You would have done the same thing to us in the real Assembly.

FIRST WOMAN

What? Don't they drink in the real Assembly?

PRAXAGORA

Listen to you, "don't they drink"!

FIRST WOMAN

They do, by Artemis, and straight shots at that! When you think about what they get up to, their decrees are like the ravings of drunkards. And they certainly pour libations too: why else would they make those long prayers, if they didn't have wine? And they yell at each other like drunks, and the police remove the guy who's had too much.

PRAXAGORA

You go and sit down. You're worthless!

FIRST WOMAN

I swear I would have been better off without this beard—I'm absolutely parched with thirst!

PRAXAGORA

Is there anyone else who wishes to speak?

¹⁹ Garlands were worn not only by speakers in assembly but also at symposia.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ Β

ἐγώ.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἴθι δὴ στεφανοῦ· καὶ γὰρ τὸ χρῆμ' ἐργάζεται.
 ἄγε νυν ὅπως ἀνδριστὶ καὶ καλῶς ἐρείς
 150 διερεισαμένη τὸ σχῆμα τῆ βακτηρία.

ΓΤΝΗ Β

ἐβουλόμην μὲν ἕτερον ἂν τῶν ἠθάδων
 λέγειν τὰ βέλτισθ', ἵν' ἐκαθήμην ἡσυχος.
 νῦν δ' οὐκ εἰάσω, κατὰ γε τὴν ἐμὴν μίαν,
 ἐν τοῖς καπηλείοισι λάκκους ἐμποιοῦν
 155 ὑδατος. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ δοκεῖ, μὰ τὸ θεῷ.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

μὰ τὸ θεῷ, τάλαινα; ποῦ τὸν νοῦν ἔχεις;

ΓΤΝΗ Β

τί δ' ἔστιν; οὐ γὰρ δὴ πιεῖν γ' ἤτησά σε.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

μὰ Δί' ἄλλ' ἀνὴρ ὢν τὸ θεῷ κατώμοσας,
 καίτοι τά γ' ἄλλ' εἰποῦσα δεξιώτατα.

ΓΤΝΗ Β

ὦ νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω—

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

160 παῦε τοίνυν, ὡς ἐγὼ
 ἐκκλησιάσουσ' οὐκ ἂν προβαίην τὸν πόδα
 τὸν ἕτερον, εἰ μὴ ταῦτ' ἀκριβωθήσεται.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

SECOND WOMAN

Me!

PRAXAGORA

Then don the garland; the plan's under way now. All right then, speak like a man and be cogent; lean hard on your stick.

SECOND WOMAN

I would have preferred that one of the usual speakers had offered the best counsel, so that I could have sat still. But as it is, my vote says we outlaw the installation in barrooms of kegs to hold water. I think it's bad policy, by the Two Goddesses.²⁰

PRAXAGORA

By the Two Goddesses, you bungler? Where is your mind?

SECOND WOMAN

What's the matter? I didn't ask for a drink.

PRAXAGORA

That's true, but you did swear by the Two Goddesses when you were supposed to be a man. And the rest was so good, too.

SECOND WOMAN

Oh! By Apollo—

PRAXAGORA

No, stop. (*taking the garland herself*) I won't take another step on the road to being an assemblywoman until everything's exactly right.

²⁰ I.e. Demeter and Persephone, a woman's oath.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ Β

φέρει τὸν στέφανον· ἐγὼ γὰρ αὖ λέξω πάλιν·
οἶμαι γὰρ ἤδη μεμελετηκέναι καλῶς.

165 ἐμοὶ γάρ, ὦ γυναῖκες αἰ καθήμεναι,—

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

γυναῖκας αὖ, δύστηνε, τοὺς ἄνδρας λέγεις;

ΓΤΝΗ Β

δι' Ἐπίγονόν γ' ἐκείνον· ἐπιβλέψασα γὰρ
ἐκείσε πρὸς γυναῖκας ὥομην λέγειν.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἄπερρε καὶ σὺ καὶ κάθησ' ἐντευθενί·
170 αὐτὴ γὰρ ὑμῶν γ' ἔνεκά μοι λέξειν δοκῶ
τονδὶ λαβούσα. τοῖς θεοῖς μὲν εὐχομαι
τυχεῖν κατορθώσασα τὰ βεβουλευμένα.
ἐμοὶ δ' ἴσον μὲν τῆσδε τῆς χώρας μετὰ
ὄσονπερ ὑμῖν· ἄχθομαι δὲ καὶ φέρω

175 τὰ τῆς πόλεως ἅπαντα βαρέως πράγματα.

ὄρω γὰρ αὐτὴν προστάταισι χρωμένην
αἰὲ πονηροῖς. κἄν τις ἡμέραν μίαν
χρηστὸς γένηται, δέκα πονηρὸς γίγνεται.
ἐπέτρεψας ἑτέρω πλείον' ἔτι δράσει κακά.

180 χαλεπὸν μὲν οὖν ἄνδρας δυσαρέστους νουθετεῖν,
οἱ τοὺς φιλεῖν μὲν βουλομένους δεδοίκατε,
τοὺς δ' οὐκ ἐθέλοντας ἀντιβολεῖθ' ἐκάστοτε.

ἐκκλησιαίαισι ἦν ὅτ' οὐκ ἐχρώμεθα
οὐδὲν τὸ παράπαν· ἀλλὰ τόν γ' Ἀγύρριον

185 πονηρὸν ἠγούμεσθα. νῦν δὲ χρωμένω

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

SECOND WOMAN

Give me back the garland; I want to try my speech again. I think I've got it down nicely now. In my view, assembled ladies—

PRAXAGORA

Again, you loser?²¹ You're calling men ladies!

SECOND WOMAN

It's that Epigonus²¹ over there: I caught sight of him and thought I was addressing ladies!

PRAXAGORA

(*taking the platform*) Shoo, you go back to your seat over there too. (*to the seated women*) To judge from what I've seen of your abilities it seems best that I put on this garland and make a speech myself. I beseech the gods to grant success to today's deliberations. My own stake in this country is equal to your own, and I am annoyed and depressed at all the city's affairs. For I see that she constantly employs scoundrels as her leaders. Even if one of them turns virtuous for one day, he'll turn out wicked for ten. You look to another one? He'll make even worse trouble. I realize how hard it is to talk sense to men as cantankerous as you, who fear those who want to befriend you and consistently court those who do not. There was a time when we convened no assemblies at all, but at least we knew Agyrrhius for a scoundrel. Nowadays we do convene them, and the people

²¹ Otherwise unknown, although a man with this rare name was listed among the female members of a cult association in the early fourth century (*IG ii² 2346.109*).

ARISTOPHANES

ὁ μὲν λαβὼν ἀργύριον ὑπερεπήνεσεν,
ὁ δ' οὐ λαβὼν εἶναι θανάτου φήσ' ἀξίους
τοὺς μισθοφορεῖν ζητοῦντας ἐν τῆκκλησίᾳ.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

νῆ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην εὖ γε ταυταγὶ λέγεις.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

190 τάλαιν', Ἀφροδίτην ὤμοσας; χαριέντά γ' ἂν
ἔδρασας, εἰ τοῦτ' εἶπας ἐν τῆκκλησίᾳ.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

ἄλλ' οὐκ ἂν εἶπον.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

μηδ' ἐθίζου νῦν λέγειν.

τὸ συμμαχικὸν αὖ τοῦθ', ὅτ' ἐσκοπούμεθα,
εἰ μὴ γένοιτ', ἀπολείν ἔφασκον τὴν πόλιν.
195 ὅτε δὴ δ' ἐγένετ', ἤχθοντο, τῶν δὲ ῥητόρων
ὁ τοῦτ' ἀναπίστας εὐθὺς ἀποδρὰς ᾤχετο.
ναῦς δεῖ καθέλκειν· τῷ πένητι μὲν δοκεῖ,
τοῖς πλουσίοις δὲ καὶ γεωργοῖς οὐ δοκεῖ.
Κορινθίοις ἄχθεσθε, κάκείνοί γέ σοι
200 νῦν εἰσὶ χρηστοί, καὶ σὺ νυν χρηστός γενοῦ.
ἀργεῖος ἀμαθής, ἀλλ' Ἰερώνυμος σοφός.

²² Probably conflating the Theban alliance of 395 (Lysias 16.13, Andocides 3.25; for the debate cf. Xenophon *Hellenica* 3.5.7–17) with its wider successor (Diodorus Siculus 14.82; for the recriminations cf. Xenophon *Hellenica* 4.2.18–23, 4.3.17–23); the discredited “supporter” is not certainly identifiable.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

who draw pay praise him to the skies, while those who draw none say that the people who attend for the pay deserve the death penalty.

FIRST WOMAN

Well said, by Aphrodite!

PRAXAGORA

Pitiful: you swore by Aphrodite. Wouldn't it be charming if you spoke that way in the Assembly?

FIRST WOMAN

But I wouldn't have.

PRAXAGORA

Well, don't get into the habit now. (*resuming her speech*) And about this alliance: when we were examining the issue, the people insisted that the city would perish if we did not ratify it. But when it finally was ratified, the people were unhappy, and its staunchest supporter had to leave town in a hurry.²² We need to launch a fleet: the poor man votes yes, the wealthy and the farmers vote no. You get angry with the Corinthians, and they with you;²³ now they're nice people, "so you be nice too."²⁴ The Argives are morons, but Hieronymus is sage.²⁵ And occasionally we get a

²³ Probably referring to the aftermath of the battle of Nemea in 394, when the allies feared that Corinth, which had not assisted their retreat, might join the Spartans.

²⁴ After its democratic revolution of 393/2 Corinth formed a union with Argos and in 392/1 rejected Spartan peace proposals that would have dissolved the union; Athens followed suit.

²⁵ Hieronymus was a prominent general in this period; the reference here is uncertain.

ARISTOPHANES

σωτηρία παρέκλυεν, ἀλλ' ὀργίζεται
Θρασύβουλος αὐτὸς οὐχὶ παρακαλούμενος.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

ὡς ξυνετὸς ἀνὴρ.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

νῦν καλῶς ἐπήνεσας.

- 205 ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐστ', ὧ δῆμε, τούτων αἴτιοι.
τὰ δημόσια γὰρ μισθοφοροῦντες χρήματα
ἴδια σκοπεῖσθ' ἕκαστος ὅ τι τις κερδανεῖ,
τὸ δὲ κοινὸν ὥσπερ Αἴσιμος κυλίνδεται.
ἦν οὖν ἐμοὶ πείθησθε, σωθήσεσθ' ἔτι
210 ταῖς γὰρ γυναιξὶ φημι χρῆναι τὴν πόλιν
ἡμᾶς παραδοῦναι. καὶ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις
ταύταις ἐπιτρόποις καὶ ταμίαισι χρώμεθα.

ΓΤΝΗ Β

εὖ γ' εὖ γε νῆ Δί', εὖ γε.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

λέγε, λέγ' ὦγαθέ.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

- ὡς δ' εἰσὶν ἡμῶν τοὺς τρόπους βελτίονες
215 ἐγὼ διδάξω. πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ τάρια
βάπτουσι θερμῶ κατὰ τὸν ἀρχαῖον νόμον
ἀπαξάπασαι, κοῦχι μεταπειρωμένας
ἴδοις ἂν αὐτάς. ἢ δ' Ἀθηναίων πόλις,

²⁰² ὀργίζεται Hermann: ορείζεται R: ὀρίζεται Δ: οὐκ
ὀρίζεται Α Γ

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

fleeting glimpse of salvation, but Thrasybulus gets angry that you're not inviting him to take charge.²⁶

FIRST WOMAN

This man's intelligent!

PRAXAGORA

Now that's the way to applaud! And you, the sovereign people, are responsible for this mess. For while drawing your civic pay from public funds, each of you angles for a personal profit. Meanwhile the public interest flounders like Aesimus.²⁷ But listen to my advice and you shall escape from your muddle. I propose that we turn over governance of the city to the women; after all, we employ them as stewards and treasurers in our own households.

SECOND WOMAN

Hear hear! Well said!

FIRST WOMAN

Pray continue, sir!

PRAXAGORA

And their character is superior to ours, as I will demonstrate. First, they dye their wool in hot water according to their ancient custom, each and every one of them; you'll never see them try anything new. But the Athenian state

²⁶ The "fleeting glimpse of salvation" probably refers to Spartan peace terms recently offered, only to be rejected by the Athenians; apparently it was Thrasybulus, the venerable general and stalwart democrat, who had decisively argued against peace (cf. also line 356–57). Praxagora portrays his opposition as selfish (desire for personal credit) rather than patriotic. ²⁷ Prominent since 403, when he had commanded the democratic forces in the civil war (Lysias 13.80), but perhaps currently in eclipse.

ARISTOPHANES

- εἰ τοῦτο χρηστῶς εἶχεν, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώζετο,
 220 εἰ μὴ τι καινόν <γ> ἄλλο περιηργάζετο.
 καθήμεναι φρύνουσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ·
 ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς φέρουσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ·
 223a τὰ Θεσμοφόρι' ἄγουσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ·
 223b πέττουσι τοὺς πλακοῦντας ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ·
 τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐπιτρίβουσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ·
 225 μοιχοὺς ἔχουσιν ἔνδον ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ·
 αὐταῖς παροψωνοῦσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ·
 οἶνον φιλοῦσ' εὐζωρον ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ·
 βινούμεναι χαίρουσιν ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ·
 ταύταισιν οὖν, ὦνδρες, παραδόντες τὴν πόλιν
 230 μὴ περιλαλῶμεν, μηδὲ πυνθανώμεθα
τί ποτ' ἄρα δρᾶν μέλλουσιν, ἀλλ' ἀπλῶ τρόπῳ
ἔῶμεν ἄρχειν, σκεψάμενοι ταυτὶ μόνα,
 ὡς τοὺς στρατιώτας πρῶτον οὔσαι μητέρες
σώζειν ἐπιθυμήσουσιν· εἶτα σιτία
 235 τίς τῆς τεκούσης θάττον ἐπιπέμψειεν ἄν;
 χρήματα πορίζειν εὐπορώτατον γυνή,
 ἄρχουσά τ' οὐκ ἂν ἐξαπατηθείη ποτέ·
 αὐταὶ γάρ εἰσιν ἐξαπατᾶν εἰθισμένοι.
 τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἑάσω. ταυτ' εἰάν πείθησθέ μοι,
 240 εὐδαιμονοῦντες τὸν βίον διάξετε.

ΓΤΝΗ Β

εἰ γ' ὦ γλυκντάτη Πραξαγόρα, καὶ δεξιῶς.
 πόθεν, ὦ τάλαινα, ταυτ' ἔμαθες οὕτω καλῶς;

220 suppl. Wilson

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

wouldn't hold on to that custom if it worked just fine; no, they'd be fiddling around with some innovation. Meanwhile the women settle down to their cooking, as they always have. They carry burdens on their heads, as they always have. They celebrate the Thesmophoria, as they always have. They bake cookies, as they always have. They drive their husbands nuts, as they always have. They hide their lovers in the house, as they always have. They buy themselves extra treats, as they always have. They like their wine neat, as they always have. They like a fucking, as they always have. And so, gentlemen, let us hand over governance of the city to the women, and let's not beat around the bush or ask what they plan to accomplish. Let's simply let them govern. Consider only these points: first, as mothers they'll want to protect our soldiers; and second, who would be quicker to send extra rations than the one who bore you? There's nobody more inventive at getting funds than a woman, and when in power she'll never get cheated, since women themselves are past masters at cheating. I'll pass over my other points. Adopt my resolution and you'll lead happy lives.

SECOND WOMAN

Well said, Praxagora my sweet! What skill! Where did you learn such fine talk, my dear?

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἐν ταῖς φυγαῖς μετὰ τὰνδρὸς ὄκησ' ἐν πυκνί.
ἔπειτ' ἀκούουσ' ἐξέμαθον τῶν ῥητόρων.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

245 οὐκ ἐτὸς ἄρ', ὦ μέλ', ἦσθα δεινὴ καὶ σοφὴ.
καὶ σε στρατηγὸν αἱ γυναῖκες ἀντόθεν
αἰρούμεθ', ἦν ταῦθ' ἀπινοεῖς κατεργάση.
ἀτὰρ ἦν Κέφαλος σοι λαιδορῆται προσφθαρείς,
πῶς ἀντερεῖς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐν τῆκκλησίᾳ;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

φήσω παραφρονεῖν αὐτόν.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

250 ἄλλὰ τοῦτό γε
ἴσασι πάντες.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἀλλὰ καὶ μελαγχολᾶν.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

καὶ τοῦτ' ἴσασιν.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ τρύβλια
κακῶς κεραμεύειν, τὴν δὲ πόλιν εὖ καὶ καλῶς.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

τί δ' ἦν Νεοκλείδης ὁ γλάμων σε λαιδορῆ;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

255 τούτῳ μὲν εἶπον ἐς κυνὸς πυγὴν ὄρᾶν.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

PRAXAGORA

During the displacements²⁸ I lived with my husband on the Pnyx,²⁹ and learned by listening to the orators.

FIRST WOMAN

Then it's no wonder, madam, that you were so impressive and sage. Furthermore, your fellow women hereby elect you general if you succeed with this plan of yours. But what if Cephalus³⁰ confronts you abusively? How do you plan to handle him in the Assembly?

PRAXAGORA

I'll say he's crazy.

FIRST WOMAN

But everyone knows that.

PRAXAGORA

Well, I'll say he's a dangerous psychopath.

FIRST WOMAN

Everyone knows that too.

PRAXAGORA

Then I'll say that a man who makes such crummy crockery will do a terrific job making the city go to pot.

FIRST WOMAN

But what if Neocleides the squinter abuses you?³¹

PRAXAGORA

To him I say, go squint up a dog's butt.

²⁸ I.e. after the Spartan investment of 413 or the battle of Aegospotami in 405. ²⁹ Where the Athenian Assembly was convened. ³⁰ A distinguished orator who ran a pottery business. ³¹ A politician known for using rough tactics.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ Α

τί δ' ἦν ὑποκρούωσίν σε;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

προσκινήσομαι

ἄτ' οὐκ ἄπειρος οὔσα πολλῶν κρουμάτων.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

ἐκείνο μόνον ἄσκεπτον, ἦν σ' οἱ τοξόται
ἐλκωσιν, ὅ τι δράσεις ποτ'.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἐξαγκωνιῶ

260 ὠδί· μέση γὰρ οὐδέποτε ληφθήσομαι.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἡμεῖς δέ γ', ἦν αἴρωσ', ἔαν κελεύσομεν.

ΓΤΝΗ Α

ταντὶ μὲν ἡμῖν ἐντεθύμηται καλῶς.
ἐκείνο δ' οὐ πεφροντίκαμεν, ὅτω τρόπῳ
τὰς χείρας αἴρειν μνημονεύσομεν τότε

265 εἰθισμέναι γὰρ ἔσμεν αἴρειν τῷ σκέλει.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

χαλεπὸν τὸ πρᾶγμ'· ὅμως δὲ χειροτονητέον
ἐξωμισάσαις τὸν ἕτερον βραχίονα.

ἄγε νυν ἀναστέλλεσθ' ἄνω τὰ χιτώνια·

ὑποδείσθε δ' ὡς τάχιστα τὰς Λακωνικάς,

270 ὥσπερ τὸν ἄνδρ' ἐθεᾶσθ', ὅτ' εἰς ἐκκλησίαν

μέλλοι βαδίζειν ἢ θύραζ' ἐκάστοτε.

ἔπειτ', ἐπειδὰν ταῦτα πάντ' ἔχη καλῶς,

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

FIRST WOMAN

And what if they try to screw you?

PRAXAGORA

I'll screw them right back: I know a good many tricks myself.

FIRST WOMAN

There's only one danger we haven't discussed: if the police jump you, what will you do then?

PRAXAGORA

I'll give them the elbow, like this; they'll never get me in a clinch.

CHORUS LEADER

And if they do hoist you, we'll, well, ask them to put you down.

FIRST WOMAN

Then we've got all of that planned out. But one thing we haven't considered is how we'll remind ourselves to put up our hands when we vote; we're so used to putting up our legs!

PRAXAGORA

That's a tough one; just remember that you vote by undraping your right arm and raising that hand. Now come on, hitch up your slippers and put on those boots as quick as you can, just as you saw your husband do when he was off to an Assembly or some errand. Then when you're all dressed

ARISTOPHANES

περιδείσθε τοὺς πώγωνα·ς. ἤνικ' ἂν δέ γε
 τούτους ἀκριβώσητε περιηρημοσμένοι,
 275 καὶ θαϊμάτια τάνδρεϊ', ἅπερ γ' ἐκλέψατε,
 ἐπαναβάλεσθε, κᾶτα ταῖς βακτηρίαις
 ἐπερειδόμεναι βαδίζετ' ἄδουσαι μέλος
 πρεσβυτικόν τι, τὸν τρόπον μιμούμεναι
 τὸν τῶν ἀγροίκων.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

εὖ λέγεις.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἡμεῖς δέ γε

280 προῖωμεν αὐτῶν· καὶ γὰρ ἐτέρας οἶομαι
 ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν ἐς τὴν πύκν' ἤξειν ἀντικρυς
 γυναικάς. ἀλλὰ σπεύσαθ', ὡς εἶωθ' ἐκεῖ
 τοῖς μὴ παροῦσιν ὀρθρίοις ἐς τὴν πύκνα
 ὑπαποτρέχειν ἔχουσι μηδὲ πάτταλον.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

285 ὦρα προβαίνειν ὧνδρες ἡμῖν ἐστί· τοῦτο γὰρ χρῆ
 μεμνημένας αἰεὶ λέγειν, ὡς μήποτ' ἐξολίσθη
 ἡμᾶς. ὁ κίνδυνος γὰρ οὐχὶ μικρός, ἦν ἀλώμεν
 ἐνδυνόμεναι κατὰ σκότον τόλμημα τηλικούτον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(στρ.) χωρῶμεν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ὧνδρες· ἠπέιλησε γὰρ
 291a ὁ θεοσμοθέτης, ὃς ἂν
 291b μὴ πρὸ πάντων τοῦ κνέφους
 291c ἦκη κεκοιμένος,
 292a στέργων σκοροδάλμη,

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

up, tie on your beards. And when you've attached them exactly right, put on the men's cloaks that you stole and drape them correctly. Now lean on those walking sticks as you set off, and sing an old men's song, country-style.

CHORUS LEADER

Great instructions!

PRAXAGORA

Let's go on ahead of them, because I expect some other women from the country will come directly to the Pnyx. Now hurry, because the drill on the Pnyx is, in by dawn or go home with nary a clothespin.³²

Exit PRAXAGORA, FIRST and SECOND WOMAN.

CHORUS LEADER

Gentlemen, it's time for us to march; and gentlemen is what we must always remember to say, and never let it slip our minds. We run no small risk if we're caught dressed up for so dark a deed of daring.

CHORUS

It's off to the Assembly, gentlemen! The magistrate has sounded his warning:
anyone who isn't there bright and early,
covered with dust,
happy with garlic soup for breakfast,

³² Only the first 6000 assemblymen in attendance were paid.

ARISTOPHANES

- 292b βλέπων ὑπότριμμα, μὴ
 292c δώσειν τὸ τριώβολον.
 293a ἀλλ', ὦ Χαριτιμίδη
 293b καὶ Σμίκυθε καὶ Δράκης,
 ἔπου κατεπέιγων,
 295a σαντῶ προσέχων ὅπως
 295b μηδὲν παραχορδιεῖς
 295c ὦν δεῖ σ' ἀποδείξαι
 ὅπως δὲ τὸ σύμβολον
 297a λαβόντες ἔπειτα πλη-
 297b σίοι καθεδούμεθ', ὡς
 297c ἂν χειροτονῶμεν
 ἅπανθ' ὅπόσ' ἂν δέη
 299a τὰς ἡμετέρας φίλας—
 299b καίτοι τί λέγω; φίλους
 299c γὰρ χρῆν μ' ὀνομάζειν.

- (ἀντ.) ὄρα δ' ὅπως ὠθήσομεν τούσδε τοὺς ἐξ ἄστεως
 302a ἤκοντας, ὅσοι πρὸ τοῦ
 302b μέν, ἡνίκ' ἔδει λαβεῖν
 302c ἐλθόντ' ὀβολὸν μόνον,
 303a καθῆντο λαλοῦντες
 303b ἐν τοῖς στεφανώμασιν,
 303c νυνὶ δ' ἐνοχλοῦσ' ἄγαν.
 304a ἀλλ' οὐχί, Μυρωνίδης
 304b ὅτ' ἦρχεν ὁ γεννάδας,
 305a οὐδεὶς ἂν ἐτόλμα
 305b τὰ τῆς πόλεως διοι-

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

with a salsa look in his eye,
will not get his three-obol pay.
Hey Charitimides,
Smicythus, and Draces,³³
get a move on,
see to it you don't
strike a false note
in the role you've got to play.
And when we've got
our tickets, let's be sure
to sit close together,
so as to raise our hands in favor
of whatever proposals
our womenfolk may want.
But what am I saying? Menfolk
is the word I ought to have used.

Let's be sure to jostle the assemblymen from town,
who before now
never used to attend,
when their pay was only one obol,
but would sit gossiping
in the garland shops.
Now they fight hard for seats.
Never in the good old days,
with noble Myronides in charge,³⁴
would anyone have dared
to husband the city's affairs

³³ Generic men's names.

³⁴ A highly successful general during the Persian invasions and into the mid-450s.

ARISTOPHANES

- 305c κείν ἀργύριον φέρων
 ἀλλ' ἦκεν ἕκαστος
 ἐν ἀσκιδίῳ φέρων
- 308a πιεῖν ἅμα τ' ἄρτον αὐ-
- 308b <τὸς> καὶ δύο κρομμύω
- 308c καὶ τρεῖς ἂν ἐλάας.
 νυνὶ δὲ τριώβολον
- 310a ζητοῦσι λαβεῖν, ὅταν
- 310b πράττωσί τι κοινόν, ὥσ-
- 310c περ πηλοφοροῦντες.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

- τί τὸ πρᾶγμα; ποῖ ποθ' ἢ γυνὴ φρούδη ἵστί μοι;
 ἐπεὶ πρὸς ἔω νῦν γ' ἔστιν, ἢ δ' οὐ φαίνεται.
 ἐγὼ δὲ κατάκειμαι πάλαι χεζητιῶν,
 τὰς ἐμβάδας ζητῶν λαβεῖν ἐν τῷ σκότῳ
- 315 καὶ θοιμάτιον. ὅτε δὴ δ' ἐκείνο ψηλαφῶν
 οὐκ ἐδυνάμην εὔρεῖν, ὁ δ' ἤδη τὴν θύραν
 ἐπεῖχε κρούων ὁ κοπρεαῖος, λαμβάνω
 τουτὶ τὸ τῆς γυναικὸς ἡμιδιπλοῖδιον
 καὶ τὰς ἐκείνης Περσικὰς ὑφέλκομαι.
- 320 ἀλλ' ἐν καθαρῷ ποῦ ποῦ τις ἂν χέσας τύχοι;
 ἢ πανταχοῦ τοι νυκτὸς ἔστιν ἐν καλῷ;
 οὐ γάρ με νῦν χέζοντά γ' οὐδεὶς ὄψεται.
οἴμοι κακοδαίμων; ὅτι γέρων ὦν ἡγόμεν
γυναιχ'. ὅσας εἴμ' ἄξιος πληγὰς λαβεῖν.
- 325 οὐ γάρ ποθ' ὑγιᾶς οὐδὲν ἐξελλήλυθεν
 δράσουσ'. ὅμως δ' οὖν ἔστιν ἀποπατητέον.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

for a handful of money.
No, everyone would come
bringing his own little bag lunch,
something to drink, some bread,
a couple of onions,
and three olives.
Now what they want
is three obols
for doing a public service,
like common laborers.

Exit Chorus.

Enter from Praxagora's doorway BLEPYRUS, an old man dressed in women's slippers and slip.

BLEPYRUS³⁵

What's going on? Where has my wife got to? It's getting near dawn and she's nowhere to be seen. I've been lying awake for ages, needing to shit, trying to grab my shoes and cloak in the dark. I've groped everywhere but couldn't find it, and all the while the dung man kept pounding at my back door, so finally I grabbed my wife's slip here and put on her Persian slippers. Now where oh where could a fellow shit in privacy? Well, anywhere is fine at night; at this hour no one's going to see me shitting. God what a fool I was, getting married at my age! I deserve a good flogging. She surely didn't go out on any decent errand. Anyway, I've got to do my business. (*squats down*)

³⁵ The name means "Peeper."

³⁰⁸ suppl. Sommerstein

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

τίς ἔστιν; οὐ δῆπου Βλέπυρος ὁ γειτιῶν;
 νῆ τὸν Δί' αὐτὸς δῆτ' ἐκεῖνος. εἶπέ μοι,
 τί τοῦτό σοι τὸ πυρρόν ἐστιν; οὔτι που
 330 Κινησίας σου κατατετίληκέν ποθεν;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ τῆς γυναικὸς ἐξελήλυθα
 τὸ κροκωτίδιον ἀμπισχόμενος οὐνδύεται.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

τὸ δ' ἱμάτιόν σου ποῦ ἔστιν;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι·
 ζητῶν γὰρ αὐτ' οὐχ ἠῦρον ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

335 εἶτ' οὐδὲ τὴν γυναικ' ἐκέλευσάς σοι φράσαι;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί· οὐ γὰρ ἔνδον οὔσα τυγχάνει,
 ἀλλ' ἐκτετρύπηκεν λαθοῦσά μ' ἔνδοθεν·
 ὁ καὶ δέδοικα μή τι δρᾶ νεώτερον.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ ταῦτὰ τοίνυν ἄντικρυς
 340 ἐμοὶ πέπονθας· καὶ γὰρ ἦ ξύνειμ' ἐγὼ
 φρούδη ἔστ' ἔχουσα θοιμάτιον οὐγὼ φόρον.
 κοῦ τοῦτο λυπεῖ μ', ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἐμβάδας.
 οὔκουν λαβεῖν γ' αὐτὰς ἐδυνάμην οὐδαμοῦ.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

NEIGHBOR, holding a lamp, appears at Second Woman's window.

NEIGHBOR

Who's that? Surely not my neighbor Blepyrus? By god, that is him. Say, what's that yellow all over you? Maybe Cinesias has hit you with his droppings?³⁶

BLEPYRUS

No. I'm out here wearing my wife's little yellow slip that she likes to put on.

NEIGHBOR

Where's your cloak?

BLEPYRUS

I can't say. I looked for it in the bedclothes and couldn't find it.

NEIGHBOR

And you didn't ask your wife to tell you where it is?

BLEPYRUS

I really couldn't. She doesn't happen to be in; she slipped out of the house on me, so I'm worried that she's up to no good.

NEIGHBOR

By Poseidon, exactly the same thing just happened to me. The woman I live with has gone off with the cloak I always wear. That wouldn't be so annoying, but she's taken my boots too; I couldn't lay my hands on them anywhere.

³⁶ A contemporary dithyrambic poet, teased elsewhere for some defecatory incident (cf. *Frogs* 366, with scholiast).

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

345 μὰ τὸν Διόνυσον, οὐδ' ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰς ἐμὰς
 Λακωνικάς, ἀλλ' ὡς ἔτυχον χεζητιῶν,
 ἐς τὸ κοθόρνῳ τὸ πόδ' ἐνθεῖς ἵεμαι,
 ἵνα μὴ ᾿γχεσάιμ' ἐς τὴν σισύραν· φανὴ γὰρ ἦν.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

τί δῆτ' ἂν εἶη; μῶν ἐπ' ἄριστον γυνή
 κέκληκεν αὐτὴν τῶν φίλων;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

350 οὐκουν ποιηρά γ' ἐστὶν ὃ τι κάμ' εἰδέναί.
 γνώμην γ' ἐμήν.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν ἰμονιάν τιν' ἀποπατεῖς, ἐμοὶ δ'
 ὦρα βαδίζειν ἐστὶν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν,
 ἦνπερ λάβω θοιμάτιον, ὅπερ ἦν μοι μόνον.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

355 κάγωγ', ἐπειδὰν ἀποπατήσω· νῦν δέ μοι
 ἀχράς τις ἐγκλήσασ' ἔχει τὰ σιτία.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

μῶν ἦν Θρασύβουλος εἶπε τοῖς Λακωνικοῖς;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

360 νῆ τὸν Διόνυσον ἐνέχεται γοῦν μοι σφόδρα.
 ἀτὰρ τί δράσω; καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τοῦτό με
 μόνον τὸ λυποῦν ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ὅταν φάγω,
 ὅποι βαδιεῖταιί μοι τὸ λοιπὸν ἢ κόπρος.
 νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὗτος βεβαλάνωκε τὴν θύραν,

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

By Dionysus, I couldn't find my Spartan boots either. But as luck would have it I had to shit, so I put my feet into these pumps and dashed out. I didn't want to shit on the comforter; just had it cleaned.

NEIGHBOR

What can it be? Maybe one of her lady friends invited her out for breakfast?

BLEPYRUS

That's probably it. She's not a tramp, as far as I know.

NEIGHBOR

Well, you must be pooping a ship's cable; me, I've got to be getting along to the Assembly, if, that is, I can get hold of my cloak; it's the only one I've got.

BLEPYRUS

Me too, as soon as I finish by business; at the moment some sort of choke pear's got my food blockaded inside.

NEIGHBOR

(*disappearing from the window*) Like the one Thrasybulus mentioned to the Spartans?³⁷

BLEPYRUS

By Dionysus yes; it's got me pretty uptight, anyway. (*to himself*) What am I going to do? This present predicament isn't my only anxiety: what's going to happen when I eat something? Where will the poop go? As it is, he's got my

³⁷ Or "against the Spartans;" the allusion is unclear.

ARISTOPHANES

- ὅστις ποτ' ἔσθ' ἄνθρωπος ἀχραδούσιος.
 τίς ἂν οὖν ἰατρόν μοι μετέλθοι, καὶ τίνα;
 τίς τῶν καταπρώκτων δεινός ἐστι τὴν τέχνην;
 365 ἄρ' οἶδ' Ἀμύνων; ἀλλ' ἴσως ἀρνήσεται.
 Ἄντισθένη τις καλεσάτω πάσῃ τέχνῃ
 οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἔνεκά γε στεναγμάτων
 οἶδεν τί προκτὸς βούλεται χεζητιῶν.
 ᾧ πότνι Ἰλείθνα μὴ με περιίδης
 370 διαρραγέντα μηδὲ βεβαλανωμένον,
 ἵνα μὴ γένωμαι σκωραμὶς κωμωδική.

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

οὗτος, τί ποιεῖς; οὔτι που χέζεις;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἐγώ;

οὐ δῆτ' ἔτι γε μὰ τὸν Δί', ἀλλ' ἀνίσταμαι.

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

τὸ τῆς γυναικὸς δ' ἀμπέχει χιτώνιον;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

- 375 ἐν τῷ σκότῳ γὰρ τοῦτ' ἔτυχον ἔνδον λαβῶν.
 ἀτὰρ πόθεν ἦκεις ἐτεόν;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

ἐξ ἐκκλησίας.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἤδη λέλυται γάρ;

³⁶⁴ κατὰ προκτὸν Β³⁶⁹ Ἰλείθνα Coulon cl. titulis: Εἰλείθν(ι)α a S

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

back door bolted, this fellow from Cul-de-Sac. Who will go for a doctor, and what kind? Any of you arsehole experts out there knowledgeable about my condition? Does Amynon know? But maybe he'll say no. Somebody call Antisthenes at any cost! When it comes to grunting, he's the man to diagnose an arsehole that needs to shit.³⁸ Mistress Hileithya,³⁹ don't let me down when I'm bursting and bolted; I don't want the role of comic potty!

Enter CHREMES.

CHREMES

Hey there, what are you doing? Not taking a shit, are you?

BLEPYRUS

Who, me? No indeed, not any longer anyway. I'm on my feet again.

CHREMES

Is that your wife's slip you're wearing?

BLEPYRUS

Yes, it was dark in the house and I grabbed it by mistake. But tell me, where have you been?

CHREMES

At the Assembly.

BLEPYRUS

You mean it's adjourned already?

³⁸ The identity of these men is uncertain, but an ancient commentator says that Amynon was not a doctor but a "prostituted politician."

³⁹ The goddess of childbirth.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

νῆ Δί' ὄρθριον μὲν οὖν.
καὶ δῆτα πολὺν ἢ μίλτος, ὦ Ζεῦ φίλτατε,
γέλων παρέσχευ, ἦν προσέρραινον κύκλω.

ΒΑΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τὸ τριώβολον δῆτ' ἔλαβες;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

380 εἰ γὰρ ὄφελον.
ἀλλ' ὕστερος νῦν ἦλθον, ὥστ' αἰσχύνομαι
<κεναῖς ἀπελθὼν χερσίν.

ΒΑΕΠΤΡΟΣ

381a οὐδὲν οὖν ἔχεις;>

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐδὲν ἄλλο γ' ἢ τὸν θύλακον.

ΒΑΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τὸ δ' αἴτιον τί;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

385 πλείστος ἀνθρώπων ὄχλος,
ὅσος οὐδεπόποτ', ἦλθ' ἀθρόος ἐς τὴν πύκνα.
καὶ δῆτα πάντα σκυτοτόμοις ἠκάζομεν
ὀρῶντες αὐτούς· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ὑπερφυῶς
ὡς λευκοπληθῆς ἦν ἰδεῖν ἠκκλησία.
ὥστ' οὐκ ἔλαβον οὔτ' αὐτὸς οὔτ' ἄλλοι συχνοί.

ΒΑΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐδ' ἄρ' ἂν ἐγὼ λάβοιμι νῦν ἐλθών;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

CHREMES

Yes indeed, and before daylight too. And dear Zeus, the ruddle got quite a laugh when they flung it around!⁴⁰

BLEPYRUS

Then you got your three obols?

CHREMES

I wish I had. But this time I was too late, so I'm ashamed to say <I've come away empty handed.

BLEPYRUS

So you've got nothing?>

CHREMES

Nope, absolutely nothing but my shopping bag.

BLEPYRUS

But what made you late?

CHREMES

A huge crowd of people showed up en masse at the Pnyx, an all-time record. And you know, we thought they all looked like shoemakers; really, the Assembly was awfully pale faced to behold. So I didn't get anything, and a bunch of others didn't either.

BLEPYRUS

So if I went there now I wouldn't get anything either?

⁴⁰ Vermilion dye was used to mark those late for Assembly.

^{381a} lacunam susp. Elmsley, suppl. van Leeuwen et Henderson

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

πόθεν;

390 οὐδ' ἂν μὰ Δί' εἰ τότ' ἦλθες, ὅτε τὸ δεύτερον
ἀλεκτρυνῶν ἐφθέγγετ'.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οἴμοι δείλαιος.

Ἄντίλοχ', ἀποίμωξόν με τοῦ τριωβόλου
τὸν ζῶντα μᾶλλον· τὰ μὰ γὰρ διοίχεται.
ἀτὰρ τί τὸ πράγμ' ἦν, ὅτι τοσοῦτον χρῆμ' ὄχλου
οὕτως ἐν ὥρᾳ ξυνελέγη;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

395 τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἢ
ἔδοξε τοῖς πρυτάνεσι περὶ σωτηρίας
γνώμας καθεῖναι τῆς πόλεως; κατ' εὐθέως
πρῶτος Νεοκλείδης ὁ γλάμων παρέίρπυσεν.
κάπειθ' ὁ δῆμος ἀναβοᾷ πόσον δοκεῖς,
400 “οὐ δεινὰ τολμᾶν τουτονὶ δημηγορεῖν,
καὶ ταῦτα περὶ σωτηρίας προκειμένον,
ὃς αὐτὸς αὐτῷ βλεφαρίδ' οὐκ ἐσώσατο;”
ὁ δ' ἀναβοήσας καὶ περιβλέψας ἔφη,
“τί δαί με χρῆ δρᾶν;”

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

405 “σκόροδ' ὁμοῦ τρίψαντ' ὀπῶ,
τιθύμαλλον ἐμβαλόντα τοῦ Λακωνικοῦ,
σαντοῦ παραλείφειν τὰ βλέφαρα τῆς ἐσπέρας,”
ἔγωγ' ἂν εἶπον, εἰ παρῶν ἐτύχανον.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

CHREMES

Hah! Not even if you'd got there before the cock stopped crowing!

BLEPYRUS

Oh my, what a blow!

Antilochus, raise not the dirge for those three obols
but for me who yet live: for all I had is gone.⁴¹

But what business could have fetched such a mob together
so early?

CHREMES

It could only be that the Chairmen decided to schedule deliberation about the salvation of the city. And right away Neocleides the squinter groped his way to the podium to speak first, but the people started to yell as loud as you please, "Isn't it dreadful that this guy dares to address us on the subject of our salvation no less, when he can't even save his own eyelids?" And he squints around and yells back, "Well, how can I help it?"

BLEPYRUS

If I'd been there I'd have said, "Grind up garlic and figs and add Spartan spurge, and rub it on your eyelids at bedtime."

⁴¹ Parodying Achilles' lament for Patroclus in Aeschylus' *Myrmidons* (fr. 138), substituting "those three obols" for "the deceased."

³⁹⁷ προθεῖναι Schömann

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

- μετὰ τοῦτον Εὐαίῳν ὁ δεξιώτατος
 παρῆλθε γυμνός, ὡς ἐδόκει τοῖς πλείοσιν
 410 αὐτός γε μέντοῦφασκεν ἱμάτιον ἔχειν.
 κάπειτ' ἔλεξε δημοτικωτάτους λόγους·
 “ὄρατε μὲν με δεόμενον σωτηρίας
 τετραστατήρου καῦτόν· ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐρῶ
 ὡς τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοὺς πολίτας σώσετε.
 415 ἦν γὰρ παρέχωσι τοῖς δεομένοις οἱ κναφῆς
 χλαίνας, ἐπειδὰν πρῶτον ἥλιος τραπῆ,
 πλευρίτις ἡμῶν οὐδέν' ἂν λάβοι ποτέ.
 ὅσοις δὲ κλίνη μή 'στι μηδὲ στρώματα,
 ἰέναι καθευδήσοντας ἀπονενιμμένους
 420 εἰς τῶν σκυλοδεψῶν· ἦν δ' ἀποκλήῃ τῇ θύρα
 χειμῶνος ὄντος, τρεῖς σισύρας ὀφειλέτω.”

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

- νῆ τὸν Διόνυσον χρηστά γ'. εἰ δ' ἐκείνά γε
 προσέθηκεν, οὐδεὶς ἀντεχειροτόνησεν ἄν,
 τοὺς ἀλφिताμοιβοὺς τοῖς ἀπόροις τρεῖς χοίνικας
 425 δεῖπνον παρέχειν ἅπασιν ἢ κλάειν μακρά,
 ἵνα τοῦτ' ἀπέλαυσαν Ναυσικύδους τὰγαθόν.

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

- μετὰ τοῦτο τοίνυν εὐπρεπῆς νεανίας
 λευκός τις ἀνεπήδησ' ὅμοιος Νικία
δημηγορήσων, κάπεχείρησεν λέγειν
 430 ὡς χρή παραδοῦναι ταῖς γυναῖξι τὴν πόλιν.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

CHREMES

After him, that success story Euaeon⁴² stepped forward, wearing only a shirt, most people thought, though he insisted he was wearing a cloak. His speech appealed mainly to the masses: "You see that I'm in need of salvation myself—about four bits would do it—but nevertheless I'll tell you how to save the city and its citizens. If the clothiers donate cloaks at the winter solstice to those who need them, none of us would ever again catch pneumonia. And you should allow anyone who hasn't got a bed or a blanket to sleep in the tanneries after they've washed up; if a tanner won't open his doors in wintertime, fine him three comforters."

BLEPYRUS

By Dionysus, what a noble thought! He'd have won unanimous approval if he'd added that grain dealers should give the needy three quarts for their dinner or face harsh punishment. They could have collected that benefit from Nausicydes!⁴³

CHREMES

Well, after that a pale, good-looking young man sprang to his feet to address the people; he looked like Nicias.⁴⁴ He made a case for handing the city over to the women.

⁴² Identity unknown, but evidently a poor man.

⁴³ A grain magnate mentioned also in Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.7.6 and Plato, *Gorgias* 487c.

⁴⁴ Probably the grandson of Nicias the statesman and general, now barely twenty years old (cf. *Lysias* 18.10).

ARISTOPHANES

εἶτ' ἐθορύβησαν κἀνέκραγον ὡς εὖ λέγοι,
τὸ σκυτοτομικὸν πλήθος, οἱ δ' ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν
ἀνεβορβόρυξαν.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

νοῦν γὰρ εἶχον, νῆ Δία.

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

435 ἀλλ' ἦσαν ἤττους· ὁ δὲ κατεῖχε τῇ βοῇ,
τὰς μὲν γυναῖκας πόλλ' ἀγαθὰ λέγων, σὲ δὲ
πολλὰ κακά.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

καὶ τί εἶπε;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

πρῶτον μὲν σ' ἔφη
εἶναι πανούργον.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

καὶ σέ;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

μή πω τοῦτ' ἔρη.
κάπειτα κλέπτην.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἐμὲ μόνον;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

καὶ νῆ Δία
συκοφάντην.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

And they all cheered and yelled "well said," this mass of cobblers, while the people from the country made deep rumbles.

BLEPYRUS

That's because they were using their brains, by heaven.

CHREMES

But they were the minority, and the speaker shouted them down. In his view, women could do no wrong, and you no right.

BLEPYRUS

And what did he say?

CHREMES

First, he called you a criminal.

BLEPYRUS

And what did he call you?

CHREMES

I'll get to that. Then he called you a crook.

BLEPYRUS

Only me?

CHREMES

That's right, and an informer too.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἐμὲ μόνον;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

καὶ νῆ Δία

τωνδὶ τὸ πλήθος.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

440 τίς δὲ τοῦτ' ἄλλως λέγει;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

γυναῖκα δ' εἶναι πράγμα ἔφη νουβυστικὸν 精明
καὶ χρηματοποιόν. κοῦτε τὰ πόρρητ' ἔφη
 ἐκ Θεσμοφόρου ἐκάστοτ' αὐτὰς ἐκφέρειν,
 σὲ δὲ καμὲ βουλευόντε τοῦτο δρᾶν αἰεί.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

445 καὶ νῆ τὸν Ἑρμῆν τοῦτό γ' οὐκ ἐψεύσατο.

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

ἔπειτα συμβάλλειν πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἔφη
 ἱμάτια χρυσί' ἀργύριον ἐκπώματα
 μόναις μόναις, οὐ μαρτύρων ἐναντίον,
 καὶ ταῦτ' ἀποφέρειν πάντα κοῦκ ἀποστειρεῖν,

450 ἡμῶν δὲ τοὺς πολλοὺς ἔφασκε τοῦτο δρᾶν.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

451 νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ μαρτύρων γ' ἐναντίον.

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

454 ἕτερά τε πλείστα τὰς γυναῖκας ἠνλόγει.

452 οὐ συκοφαντεῖν, οὐ διώκειν, οὐδὲ τὸν

453 δῆμον καταλύειν, ἄλλα πολλὰ κάγαθά.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

Only me?

CHREMES

That's right, you and most of this crowd here as well!

BLEPYRUS

Well, who'd deny that?

CHREMES

He went on to say that a woman is a creature bursting with brains, and a moneymaker, and that women never divulge the secrets of the Thesmophoria, by contrast with you and me, who leak what we say in Council all the time.

BLEPYRUS

By Hermes, that last point's no lie.

CHREMES

Then he said that women lend each other dresses, jewelry, money, drinking cups, privately and without witnesses, and always return everything and don't cheat, as most of us men, he claimed, do.

BLEPYRUS

By Poseidon, we cheat even when there *are* witnesses.

CHREMES

And he went on at great length in praise of the women, that they don't inform on people, don't sue them, don't try to overthrow the democracy, and lots of other virtues.

⁴⁵⁴ transp. Bachmann

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἔδοξεν;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

455

ἐπιτρέπειν γε τὴν πόλιν
ταύταις· ἐδόκει γὰρ τοῦτο μόνον ἐν τῇ πόλει
οὐπω γεγενῆσθαι.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

καὶ δέδοκται;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

φήμ' ἐγώ.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἅπαντά τ' αὐταῖς ἐστὶ προστεταγμένα
ἂ τοῖσιν ἀστοῖς ἔμελεν;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

οὐτω ταῦτ' ἔχει.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

460 οὐδ' εἰς δικαστήριον ἄρ' εἶμ', ἀλλ' ἡ γυνή;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

οὐδ' ἔτι σὺν θρέψεις οὐς ἔχεις, ἀλλ' ἡ γυνή.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐδὲ στένειν τὸν ὄρθρον ἔτι πράγμα' ἄρά μοι;

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

μὰ Δί' ἀλλὰ ταῖς γυναῖξι ταῦτ' ἤδη μέλει
σὺν δ' ἀστενακτὶ περδόμενος οἶκοι μενεῖς.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

And what was voted?

CHREMES

To turn the city over to them. That seemed to be the only thing that hasn't been tried.

BLEPYRUS

And this passed?

CHREMES

That's what I'm telling you.

BLEPYRUS

And they've been put in charge of everything that used to be the business of the citizens?

CHREMES

That's the way it is.

BLEPYRUS

So I won't be going to court anymore, my wife will?

CHREMES

And you won't be caring for your dependents anymore, your wife will.

BLEPYRUS

And I'll have no more need to groan myself awake at dawn?

CHREMES

God no, all that's the women's concern now; you can stop groaning and stay at home farting all day.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

465 ἐκείνο δεινὸν τοῖσιν ἡλίκοισι νῶν,
μὴ παραλαβοῦσαι τῆς πόλεως τὰς ἡγίας
ἔπειτ' ἀναγκάζωσι πρὸς βίαν—

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

τί δρᾶν;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

κινεῖν ἑαυτάς. ἦν δὲ μὴ δυνώμεθα,
ἄριστον οὐ δώσουσι.

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

σὺ δέ γε νῆ Δία

470 δρᾶ ταῦθ', ἵν' ἀριστᾶς τε καὶ κινήῃς ἅμα.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τὸ πρὸς βίαν δεινότατον.

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ τῇ πόλει

τοῦτο ξυνοίσει, ταῦτα χρῆ πάντ' ἄνδρα δρᾶν.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

λόγος γέ τοί τις ἔστι τῶν γεραιτέρων,
ὅσ' ἂν ἀνόητ' ἢ μῶρα βουλευσώμεθα,
475 ἅπαντ' ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον ἡμῖν ξυμφέρειν.

ΧΡΕΜΗΣ

καὶ ξυμφέροι γ', ὦ πότνια Παλλὰς καὶ θεοί.
ἀλλ' εἶμι· σὺ δ' ὑγίαινε.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

καὶ σύ γ', ὦ Χρέμης.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

But there lies the danger for men our age: once they've taken the reins of power they'll force us against our will to—

CHREMES

To what?

BLEPYRUS

To screw them! And if we can't perform, they won't make us breakfast.

CHREMES

By god, you'd better do *this* then,⁴⁵ so you can eat breakfast and screw at the same time.

BLEPYRUS

But it's absolutely terrible when you're forced!

CHREMES

But if this is state policy, every true man's got to do his part.

BLEPYRUS

Well, there *is* an ancestral saying, that however brainless or foolish our policies, all our affairs will turn out for the best.

CHREMES

And I hope they do turn out for the best, Lady Pallas and all you gods. Well, I must be off. Be well, friend.

BLEPYRUS

You too, Chremes.

Exit *CHREMES* *offstage*, *BLEPYRUS* *into his house*.

⁴⁵ The gesture and its significance are obscure.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἔμβα χῶρει.

- 480 ἄρ' ἔστι τῶν ἀνδρῶν τις ἡμῖν ὅστις ἐπακολουθεῖ;
στρέφου, σκόπει,
φύλαττε σαυτὴν ἀσφαλῶς, πολλοὶ γὰρ οἱ
πανούργοι,
μή πού τις ἐκ τοῦπισθεν ὦν τὸ σχῆμα καταφυλάξῃ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (στρ) ἀλλ' ὡς μάλιστα τοῖν ποδοῖν ἐπικτυπῶν βάδιζε.
ἡμῖν δ' ἂν αἰσχύνῃν φέροι
485 πάσαισι παρὰ τοῖς ἀνδράσιν
τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτ' ἐλεγχθέν.
πρὸς ταῦτα συστέλλου σεαυ-
τὴν καὶ περισκοπουμένη
<ἄθρει κύκλω> κάκεισε καὶ
488a τὰκ δεξιᾶς, μὴ ξυμφορὰ
488b γενήσεται τὸ πρᾶγμα.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- 490 ἀλλ' ἐγκουῶμεν τοῦ τόπου γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐσμεν ἤδη,
ὅθενπερ εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ὠρμώμεθ' ἡνίκ' ἦμεν.
τὴν δ' οἰκίαν ἔξεσθ' ὀρᾶν, ὅθενπερ ἡ στρατηγὸς
ἔσθ' ἢ τὸ πρᾶγμ' εὐρουσ' ὃ νῦν ἔδοξε τοῖς πολίταις.

487 suppl. Ussher

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS LEADER

Forward march!
Are any of the men following us?
Turn around, take a look,
watch yourselves carefully: there are lots of no-good
men about,
and one of them might be at our rear, inspecting our
deployment.

CHORUS

Right! As you march along stomp your feet as loud as
you can.
We would be in disgrace
before all our husbands
if this business were exposed.
And so stay closely wrapped,
and look all around you
watching this way and that,
both left and right, lest catastrophe
befall our operation.

CHORUS LEADER

Now let's make the dust fly: we're already near the
place
where we first set forth for Assembly.
We can see the house now where our commander
lives,
who thought up the plan that the citizens have now
enacted.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (ἀντ) ὄστ' εἰκὸς ἡμᾶς μὴ βραδύνειν ἔστ' ἐπαναμενούσας
 πώγωνας ἐξηρητημένας,
 495a μὴ καί τις ὄψεθ' ἡμέρας
 495b χῆμῶν ἴσως κατείπη.
 ἀλλ' εἶα δεῦρ' ἐπὶ σκιᾶς
 ἐλθούσα πρὸς τὸ τειχίον,
 παραβλέπουσα θατέρω,
 499a πάλιν μετασκευάζε σαν-
 499b τὴν αὖθις ἤπερ ἦσθα.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

- 500 καὶ μὴ βράδυν' ὡς τήνδε καὶ δὴ τὴν στρατηγὸν
 ἡμῶν
 χωροῦσαν ἐξ ἐκκλησίας ὀρώμεν. ἀλλ' ἐπείγου
 ἅπαντα καὶ μίσει σάκον πρὸς ταῖν γνάθωιν ἔχουσα·
 καῦται γὰρ ἄκουσαι πάλαι τὸ σχῆμα τοῦτ' ἔχουσιν.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

- ταυτὶ μὲν ἡμῖν, ὦ γυναικες, εὐτυχῶς
 505 τὰ πράγματ' ἐκβέβηκεν ἀβουλεύσαμεν.
 ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα, πρὶν τιν' ἀνθρώπων ἰδεῖν,
 ῥιπτεῖτε χλαίνας, ἐμβὰς ἐκποδῶν ἴτω,
 χάλα συναπτοὺς ἡνίας Λακωνικάς,
 βακτηρίας ἄφεσθε. καὶ μέντοι σὺ μὲν
 510 ταύτας κατευτρέπιζ', ἐγὼ δὲ βούλομαι,

495 ὄψεθ' ἡμέρας von Blumenthal: ὄψετ' ἡμᾶς R Λ: ὄψαιτο
 ἡμᾶς Γ 503 καῦται van Leeuwen: χαῦται a ἄκουσαι . . .
 ἔχουσιν Agar: ἤκουσιν . . . ἔχουσαι a

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

CHORUS

So we've no further need to waste time and hang
around
with these beards hanging off us;
someone might see us in the daylight
and maybe turn us in.
So come this way, into the shade
by the house wall,
keeping an eye peeled,
and change yourselves
back to the way you were.

CHORUS LEADER

And don't dally, for here we can see our commander
making her way from Assembly. Now get a move on
everyone, and lose those hateful hairbags on your
cheeks,
which have grudgingly worn this gear a long time
now.

Enter PRAXAGORA.

PRAXAGORA

We're in luck, ladies: this business has turned out as we
planned. Now before anybody sees you, get rid of those
cloaks as quick as you can; shoes out from underfoot; you,
undo the knotted Spartan reins;⁴⁶ toss away the walking
sticks. (*to Chorus Leader*) And you, get these women into
some kind of order. I'd like to sneak back into the house

⁴⁶ I.e. the laces of Spartan boots, cf. 74.

ARISTOPHANES

εἶσω παρερπύσασα πρὶν τὸν ἄνδρα με
 ἰδεῖν, καταθέσθαι θοιμάτιον αὐτοῦ πάλιν
 ὄθενπερ ἔλαβον, τᾶλλα θ' ἀξηνεγκάμην.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

<διά>κειται δὴ πάνθ' ἅπερ εἶπας, σὸν δ' ἔργον
 τᾶλλα διδάσκειν,
 515 ὃ τί σοι δρῶσαι ξύμφορον ἡμεῖς δόξομεν ὀρθῶς
 ὑπακούειν.
 οὐδεμιᾶ γὰρ δεινότερα σου ξυμμείξασ' οἶδα
 γυναικί.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

περιμέναιτέ νυν, ἵνα τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἦν ἄρτι
κεχειροτόνημαι,
ξυμβούλοισιν πάσαις ὑμῖν χρήσωμαι. καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ
 μοι
 ἐν τῷ θορύβῳ καὶ τοῖς δεινοῖς ἀνδρειόταται
 γεγένησθε.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

αὕτη, πόθεν ἦκεις, Πραξαγόρα;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

520 τί δ', ὦ μέλε,
 σοὶ τοῦθ';

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ὃ τί μοι τοῦτ' ἔστιν; ὡς εὐηθικῶς.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

οὔτοι παρά του μοιχοῦ γε φήσεις.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

before my husband sees me and put his cloak back where I got it, and all this other stuff I borrowed.

CHORUS LEADER

Everything's disposed just as you ordered. Now it's up to you to continue our training: by what useful service will we pass muster in your eyes? For I know that I've never encountered a woman more impressive than you.

PRAXAGORA

Then stick around: I'll use all of you as counsellors in running the office I've been elected to, because back there, amid the hubbub and danger, you proved very manly!

Enter BLEPYRUS from his house.

BLEPYRUS

It's you! Where have you been, Praxagora?

PRAXAGORA

Is that any of your business, sir?

BLEPYRUS

Any of my business? What innocence!

PRAXAGORA

Now don't start saying I've been at some lover's house.

⁵¹⁴ suppl. D'Angour in *BMCR* 11.17 2000

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἴσως

ένός γε.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

καὶ μὴν βασανίσαι τουτί γέ σοι
ἕξεστί.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

πῶς;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

εἰ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὄζω μύρου.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

525 τί δ' ; οὐχὶ βινεῖται γυνὴ κάνευ μύρου;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

οὐ δὴ τάλαιν' ἔγωγε.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

πῶς οὖν ὄρθριον
ῥῶχου σιωπῆ θοιμάτιον λαβούσα μου;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

γυνὴ μέ τις νύκτωρ ἑταίρα καὶ φίλη
μετεπέμψατ' ὠδίνουσα.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

κατ' οὐκ ἦν ἐμοὶ
φράσασαν ἰέναι;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

530 τῆς λεχοῦς δ' οὐ φροντίσαι
οὕτως ἐχούσης, ὦνερ;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

Maybe more than one!

PRAXAGORA

Very well, you can check it out.

BLEPYRUS

How?

PRAXAGORA

See if you can smell perfume on my head.

BLEPYRUS

What? Can't a woman get fucked even without perfume?

PRAXAGORA

Not I, more's the pity.

BLEPYRUS

Then why did you leave the house so early, without telling me, and taking my cloak with you?

PRAXAGORA

A woman I know, a dear friend, was in labor and asked me to attend her.

BLEPYRUS

So couldn't you have told me you were leaving?

PRAXAGORA

And not give a thought, husband, to a woman brought to bed in her condition?

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

εἰποῦσάν γ' ἐμοί.

ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἐνταῦθά τι κακόν.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

μὰ τὸ θεῶ

ἀλλ' ὥσπερ εἶχον ὠχόμην· ἐδεῖτο δὲ
ἤπερ μεθῆκέ μ' ἐξιέναι πάσῃ τέχνῃ.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

535 εἶτ' οὐ τὸ σαυτῆς ἰμάτιον ἐχρήν σ' ἔχειν;
ἀλλ' ἐμ' ἀποδύσασ', ἐπιβαλοῦσα τοῦγκυκλον,
ὦχου καταλιποῦσ' ὥσπερ εἰ προκείμενον,
μόνον οὐ στεφανώσασ' οὐδ' ἐπιθείσα λήκυθον.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

540 ψῦχος γὰρ ἦν, ἐγὼ δὲ λεπτή κάσθηνής·
ἔπειθ' ἴν' ἀλεαίνοιμι, τοῦτ' ἤμπεςχόμην.
σὲ δ' ἐν ἀλέᾳ κατακείμενον καὶ στρώμασιν
κατέλιπον, ὦνερ.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

αἱ δὲ δὴ Λακωνικαὶ

ὦχοντο μετὰ σοῦ κατὰ τί χῆ βακτηρία;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

545 ἵνα θοιμάτιον σώσαιμι, μεθυπεδησάμην
μιμουμένη σε καὶ κτυποῦσα τοῖν ποδοῖν
καὶ τοὺς λίθους παίουσα τῇ βακτηρίᾳ.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οἷσθ' οὖν ἀπολωλεκυῖα πυρῶν ἐκτέα,

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

Yes, but after telling me. There's something fishy here.

PRAXAGORA

Not at all, by the Two Goddesses. I went just as I was. The maid who came asked me to leave right away.

BLEPYRUS

Then shouldn't you have worn your own slip? Instead, you swiped my cloak and threw your slip over me, leaving me there like a corpse at the undertaker's; you all but laid me out with a wreath and urn!

PRAXAGORA

It was cold outside, and I'm thin and delicate, so I put this on to keep warm. And I left you lying snugly blanketed, husband.

BLEPYRUS

And why did my Spartan boots go with you, and my walking stick?

PRAXAGORA

I didn't want your cloak to get stolen, so I put these on to sound like you, stomping my feet and poking at stones with the stick.

BLEPYRUS

Do you realize that you've cost us eight quarts of wheat,

ARISTOPHANES

ὄν χρῆν ἔμ' ἐξ ἐκκλησίας εἰληφέναι;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

μὴ φροντίσης· ἄρρεν γὰρ ἔτεκε παιδίον.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἡκκλησία;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

550 μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἐφ' ἣν ἐγὼ χόμην.
ἀτὰρ γεγένηται;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ναὶ μὰ Δί'. οὐκ ἤδησθά με
φράσαντά σοι χθές;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἄρτι γ' ἀναμμνήσκομαι.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐδ' ἄρα τὰ δόξαντ' οἶσθα;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

κάθησο τοίνυν σηπίας μασωμένη.
555 ὕμῖν δέ φασι παραδεδοῦσθαι τὴν πόλιν.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

τί δρᾶν; ὑφαίνεις;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐ μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἄρχειν.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

what I'd have gotten by attending Assembly?

PRAXAGORA

Don't worry, she had a boy.⁴⁷

BLEPYRUS

Who, the Assembly?

PRAXAGORA

No no, the woman I attended. So, an Assembly was held?

BLEPYRUS

God yes. Don't you remember my telling you about it yesterday?

PRAXAGORA

Yes, now I remember.

BLEPYRUS

So you don't even know what was decided?

PRAXAGORA

I sure don't.

BLEPYRUS

Well, sit down and chew some cuttlefish: they say the city's been turned over to you women.

PRAXAGORA

For what job? Some sewing?

BLEPYRUS

God no, for governing!

⁴⁷ In which case Praxagora, as midwife, could expect to receive a gift worth more than the 3-obol Assembly payment.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

τίνων;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἀπαξ ἀπάντων τῶν κατὰ πόλιν πραγμάτων.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην μακαρία γ' ἄρ' ἡ πόλις
ἔσται τὸ λοιπὸν.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

κατὰ τί;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

πολλῶν οὐνεκα.
560 οὐ γὰρ ἔτι τοῖς ^{ἴβ} τολμῶσιν αὐτὴν αἰσχρὰ δρᾶν
ἔσται τὸ λοιπὸν οὐδ' αὖ', οὐδὲ μαρτυρεῖν,
οὐ συκοφαντεῖν—

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

μηδαμῶς πρὸς τῶν θεῶν
τουτὶ ποιήσης μηδ' ἀφέλη μου τὸν βίον.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ὦ δαιμόνι' ἀνδρῶν, τὴν γυναῖκ' ἔα λέγειν.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

565 μὴ λωποδυτῆσαι, μὴ φθονεῖν τοῖς πλησίον,
μὴ γυμνὸν εἶναι μὴ πένητα μηδένα,
μὴ λαιδορεῖσθαι, μὴ νευραζόμενον φέρειν.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ μεγάλα γ', εἰ μὴ ψεύσεται.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

PRAXAGORA

Governing whom?

BLEPYRUS

Absolutely all the city's affairs.

PRAXAGORA

Then, by Aphrodite, the city has a rosy future in store!

BLEPYRUS

How do you figure?

PRAXAGORA

For lots of reasons. You see, from now on aggressive people will be in no position to treat the city shamefully in any way, or to testify or trump up charges—

BLEPYRUS

Good heavens, don't do that, don't take away my livelihood!

NEIGHBOR has come out of his house to listen.

NEIGHBOR

Please, friend, let your wife talk.

PRAXAGORA

—no more mugging, no more envying the next guy, no more wearing rags, no more poor people, no more wrangling, no more dunning and repossessing.

NEIGHBOR

That would be great, by Poseidon, if she's not just making it up.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

570 ἀλλ' ἀποφανῶ τοῦθ', ὥστε σέ τέ μοι μαρτυρεῖν
καὶ τοῦτον αὐτὸν μηδὲν ἀντειπεῖν ἐμοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

νῦν δὴ δεῖ σε πυκνὴν φρένα
καὶ φιλόσοφον ἐγείρειν
φροντίδ' ἐπισταμένην
ταῖσι φίλαισιν ἀμύνειν.
κοινῇ γὰρ ἐπ' εὐτυχίαισιν
ἔρχεται γλώττης ἐπίνοια πολίτην
575 δῆμον ἐπαγλαϊοῦσα
576a μυρίασιν ὠφελίαισι βίου.
576b δηλοῦν δ' ὅ τί περ δύναται καιρός.
δεῖται γὰρ τι σοφοῦ τινος ἐξ-
ευρήματος ἢ πόλις ἡμῶν.
ἀλλὰ πέραινε μόνον
μήτε δεδραμένα μήτ'
εἰρημένα πω πρότερον.
μσοῦσι γὰρ ἦν τὰ παλαιὰ
580 πολλάκις θεῶνται.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

ἀλλ' οὐ μέλλειν, ἀλλ' ἄπτεσθαι καὶ δὴ χρὴ τῆς
διανοίας,
ὡς τὸ ταχύνειν χαρίτων μετέχει πλείστον παρὰ
τοῖσι θεαταῖς.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

PRAXAGORA

Let me explain it; you'll have to side with me, and even my mister here will have no rebuttal to *me*.

CHORUS

Now you must summon up
a shrewd intelligence
and a philosophic mind
that knows how to fight for your comrades.
For it's to the prosperity of all alike
that from your lips comes a bright idea
to gladden the lives of the city's people
with countless benefits;
now's the time to reveal its potential.
Yes, our city needs
some kind of sage scheme;
describe it in full, making sure only
that none of it's ever been
said or done before:
they hate to watch the same old stuff
over and over again!

CHORUS LEADER

No more delay! Here and now you must put your idea in play: what spectators most appreciate is speed.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ὅτι μὲν χρηστὰ διδάξω πιστεύω τοὺς δὲ
θεατάς,
 εἰ καινοτομεῖν ἐθελήσουσιν καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἡθάσι λίαν
 585 τοῖς τ' ἀρχαίοις ἐνδιατρίβειν, τοῦτ' ἔσθ' ὃ μάλιστα
 δέδοικα.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

περὶ μὲν τοῖνυν τοῦ καινοτομεῖν μὴ δείσης· τοῦτο
 γὰρ ἡμῖν
 δρᾶν ἀντ' ἄλλης ἀρχῆς ἐστίν, τῶν δ' ἀρχαίων
 ἀμελήσαι.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

μή νυν πρότερον μηδεὶς ὑμῶν ἀντίειπῃ μηδ'
 ὑποκρούσῃ,
 πρὶν ἐπίστασθαι τὴν ἐπίνοϊαν καὶ τοῦ φράζοντος
 ἀκούσαι.
 590 κοινωνεῖν γὰρ πάντας φήσω χρῆναι πάντων
μετέχοντας
 κάκ ταυτοῦ ζῆν, καὶ μὴ τὸν μὲν πλουτεῖν, τὸν δ'
 ἄθλιον εἶναι,
 μηδὲ γεωργεῖν τὸν μὲν πολλήν, τῷ δ' εἶναι μηδὲ
 ταφήναι,
 μηδ' ἀνδραπόδοις τὸν μὲν χρῆσθαι πολλοῖς, τὸν δ'
 οὐδ' ἀκολούθῳ.
 ἀλλ' ἕνα ποιῶ κοινὸν πᾶσιν βίοντον, καὶ τοῦτον
ὅμοιον.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

PRAXAGORA

Well, I'm sure my proposals are worthwhile, but I'm awfully worried about the spectators: are they ready to quarry a new vein and not stick with what's hoary and conventional?

NEIGHBOR

Don't worry about quarrying new veins: for us, indifference to precedent takes precedence over any other principle of government.

PRAXAGORA

Then let no one object or interrupt until you've heard the speaker out and understand the plan. Very well: I propose that everyone should own everything in common, and draw an equal living. No more rich man here, poor man there, or a man with a big farm and a man without land enough for his own grave, or a man with many slaves and a man without even an attendant. No, I will establish one and the same standard of life for everyone.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

πῶς οὖν ἔσται κοινὸς ἅπασιν;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

595 κατέδει πέλεθρον πρότερός μου.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

καὶ τῶν πελέθων κοινωνοῦμεν;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἔφθης μ' ὑποκρούσας·
 τοῦτο γὰρ ἤμελλον ἐγὼ λέξειν. τὴν γῆν πρώτιστα
ποιήσω
κοινὴν πάντων καὶ τὰργύριον καὶ τ'ἄλλ' ὅπόσ' ἐστὶν
ἐκάστω.

εἴτ' ἀπὸ τούτων κοινῶν ὄντων ἡμεῖς βοσκήσομεν
 ὑμᾶς

600 ταμιευόμεναι καὶ φειδόμεναι καὶ τὴν γνώμην
 προσέχουσαι.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

πῶς οὖν ὅστις μὴ κέκτηται γῆν ἡμῶν, ἀργύριον δὲ
 καὶ Δαρεικούς, ἀφανῆ πλοῦτον;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

τοῦτ' ἐς τὸ μέσον καταθήσει.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴ καταθεῖς ψευδορκήσει· κακῆσατο γὰρ διὰ
 τοῦτο.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὐδέν τοι χρήσιμον ἔσται πάντως αὐτῷ.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

How will it be the same for everyone?

PRAXAGORA

If we were eating dung you'd want the first bite!

BLEPYRUS

We'll be sharing the dung too?

PRAXAGORA

God no, I mean you cut me off by interrupting; I was just about to explain that point. My first act will be to communize all the land, money, and other property that's now individually owned. We women will manage this common fund with thrift and good judgment, and take good care of you.

NEIGHBOR

And what about the man who owns no land but has invisible wealth, like silver coin and gold darics?⁴⁸

PRAXAGORA

He'll contribute it to the common fund.

BLEPYRUS

And if he doesn't, he'll perjure himself; after all, that's how he got it in the first place!

PRAXAGORA

But see, it won't be of any use to him anyway.

⁴⁸ A widely circulated Persian coin worth 20 drachmas.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

κατὰ δὴ τί;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

605 οὐδείς οὐδὲν πενία δράσει· πάντα γὰρ ἔξουσιν
ἅπαντες,
ἄρτους, τεμάχη, μάζας, χλαίνας, οἶνον, στεφάνους,
ἐρεβίνθους.
ὥστε τί κέρδος μὴ καταθεῖναι; σὺ γὰρ ἔξευρῶν
ἀπόδειξον.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὔκουν καὶ νῦν οὐτοὶ μᾶλλον κλέπτουσ' οἷς ταῦτα
πάρεστιν;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

πρότερόν γ', ὠταῖρ', ὅτε τοῖσι νόμοις διεχρώμεθα
τοῖς προτέροισιν·
610 νῦν δ', ἔσται γὰρ βίος ἐκ κοινού, τί τὸ κέρδος μὴ
καταθεῖναι;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἦν μείρακ' ἰδὼν ἐπιθυμήσῃ καὶ βούληται
σκαλαθῦραι,
ἔξει τούτων ἀφελῶν δοῦναι, τῶν ἐκ κοινού δὲ
μεθέξει
ξυγκαταδαρθῶν.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἔξέσται προῖκ' αὐτῷ ξυγκαταδαρθεῖν.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

What do you mean?

PRAXAGORA

No one will be doing *anything* as a result of poverty, because everyone will have all the necessities: bread, salt fish, barley cakes, cloaks, wine, garlands, chickpeas. So where's his profit in not contributing? If you can find it, do tell me.

BLEPYRUS

But even now, aren't the people who have all this the bigger thieves?

NEIGHBOR

That was before, my friend, when we lived under the previous system. But now that everyone will be living from a common fund, where's his profit in not contributing?

BLEPYRUS

If he spots a girl and fancies her and wants a poke, he'll be able to take her price from this common fund and have all that's commonly wanted, when he's slept with her.

PRAXAGORA

No, he'll be able to sleep with her free of charge. I'm mak-

ARISTOPHANES

καὶ ταύτας γὰρ κοινὰς ποιῶ τοῖς ἀνδράσι
 συγκατακεῖσθαι
 καὶ παιδοποιεῖν τῷ βουλομένῳ.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

615 πῶς οὖν οὐ πάντες ἴασιν
 ἐπὶ τὴν ὠραιότητα αὐτῶν καὶ ζητήσουσιν ἐρείδειν;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

αἱ φανλότεραι καὶ σιμότεραι παρὰ τὰς σεμνὰς
 καθεδοῦνται
 κᾶτ' ἦν ταύτης ἐπιθυμία, τὴν αἰσχρὰν πρῶθ'
 ὑποκρούσει.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

καὶ πῶς ἡμᾶς τοὺς πρεσβύτας, ἦν ταῖς αἰσχροῖσι
 συνῶμεν,
 620 οὐκ ἐπιλείψει τὸ πέος πρότερον πρὶν ἐκεῖσ' οἱ φῆς
 ἀφικέσθαι;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

οὐχὶ μαχοῦνται περὶ σοῦ· θάρρει, μὴ δείσης· οὐχὶ
 μαχοῦνται.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

περὶ τοῦ;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

τοῦ μὴ ξυγκαταδαρθεῖν. καὶ σοὶ τοιοῦτον
 ὑπάρχει.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

ing these girls common property too, for the men to sleep with and make babies with as they please.

BLEPYRUS

Then won't everyone head for the prettiest girl and try to bang her?

PRAXAGORA

The homely and bob-nosed women will sit right beside the classy ones, and if a man wants the latter he'll have to ball the ugly one first.

BLEPYRUS

But what about us older men? If we go with the ugly ones first, our cocks won't have anything left when we get where you said.

PRAXAGORA

They won't fight about you, don't worry. Never fear, they won't fight.

BLEPYRUS

Fight about what?

PRAXAGORA

About not getting to sleep with you! Anyway, you've got that problem as it is.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τὸ μὲν ὑμέτερον γνώμην τιν' ἔχει· προβεβούλευται
 γὰρ ὅπως ἂν
 μηδεμίᾳς ἤ τρῦπημα κενόν· τὸ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τί
 ποιήσῃ;
 625 φεύξονται γὰρ τοὺς αἰσχύιους, ἐπὶ τοὺς δὲ καλοὺς
 βαδιοῦνται.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἀλλὰ φυλάξουσ' οἱ φαυλότεροι τοὺς καλλίους
 ἀπιόντας
 ἀπὸ τοῦ δείπνου καὶ τηρήσουσ' ἐπὶ τοῖσιν
 δημοσίοισιν.
 κούκ ἐξέσται παρὰ τοῖσι καλοῖς <καὶ τοῖς
 μεγάλοις> καταδαρθεῖν
 ταῖσι γυναιξίν πρὶν τοῖς αἰσχροῖς καὶ τοῖς μικροῖς
 χαρίσωνται.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

630 ἢ Δυσικράτους ἄρα νυνὶ ρὶς ἴσα τοῖσι καλοῖσι
 φρονήσῃ;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω· καὶ δημοτικὴ γ' ἡ γνώμη καὶ
 καταχρήνη
 τῶν σεμνοτέρων ἔσται πολλὴ καὶ τῶν σφραγίδας
 ἐχόντων,
 ὅταν ἐμβάδ' ἔχων εἶπη πρότερος, "παραχώρει κᾶτ'
 ἐπιτήρει,

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

Your side of the equation makes a certain sense; you've planned it that no woman's hole will go unplugged. But what do you mean to do for the men's side? Because the women will shun the ugly men and go for the handsome ones.

PRAXAGORA

Well, the homely men will tail the handsomer ones as they leave their dinner parties, and keep an eye on them in the public places, for it won't be lawful for handsome and tall men to sleep with any women who haven't first accommodated the uglies and the runts.

BLEPYRUS

So now Lysicrates'⁴⁹ nose will be up there with the beautiful people's!

NEIGHBOR

Absolutely. What's more, it's an idea that favors ordinary people, and it'll be a great joke on the big shots with signet rings when a guy wearing clogs speaks up and says, "Step

⁴⁹ Unidentifiable.

⁶²⁸ οἱ φαυλότεροι ante κοῦκ R Δ (v. om. Γ) del. et suppl. Tyrwhitt

ARISTOPHANES

ὅταν ἤδη ᾿γὼ διαπραξάμενος παραδῶ σοι
 δευτεριάζην.”

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

635 πῶς οὖν οὕτω ζώντων ἡμῶν τοὺς αὐτοῦ παῖδας
ἕκαστος
ἔσται δυνατὸς διαγιγνώσκειν;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

τί δὲ δεῖ; πατέρας γὰρ ἅπαντας
 τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους αὐτῶν εἶναι τοῖσι χρόνοισιν
 νομιούσιν.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐκουν ἄγξουσ’ εἶ καὶ χρηστῶς ἐξῆς πάντ’ ἄνδρα
 γέροντα
 διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν; ἐπεὶ καὶ νῦν γιγνώσκοντες πατέρ’
 ὄντα
 640 ἄγχουσι· τί δῆθ’ ὅταν ἀγνῶς ᾗ; πῶς οὐ τότε
 κάπιχεσούνται;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἀλλ’ ὁ παρεστῶς οὐκ ἐπιτρέψει· τότε δ’ αὐτοῖς οὐκ
 ἔμελλ’ οὐδὲν
 τῶν ἀλλοτριῶν, ὅστις τύπτοι, νῦν δ’ ἦν πληγέντος
 ἀκούσῃ,
 μὴ αὐτὸν ἐκείνον τύπτει δεδιῶς τοῖς δρώσιν τοῦτο
 μαχεῖται.

⁶³⁸ πάντ’ ἄνδρα van Leeuwen: τὸν πάντα a

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

aside and wait till I'm finished; then I'll give you seconds!"

BLEPYRUS

Well, if we live this way, how will any man be able to recognize his own children?⁵⁰

PRAXAGORA

Why should he? They'll regard all older men of a certain age to be their fathers.

BLEPYRUS

Then from now on won't sons methodically strangle each and every older man? Because even now they strangle their acknowledged father; what will happen when he's unacknowledged? Won't they'll shit on him as well?

PRAXAGORA

No, the bystanders won't allow it. They didn't used to care who was beating other people's fathers, but now if they hear a man getting beaten they'll worry that the victim is their own dad, and fight the attackers.

⁵⁰ Compare Plato, *Republic* 460–65.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τὰ μὲν ἄλλα λέγεις οὐδὲν σκαιῶς· εἰ δὲ προσελθὼν
 Ἐπίκουρος
 645 ἢ Δευκόλοφος “πάππαν” με καλεῖ, τοῦτ’ ἤδη δεινὸν
 ἀκοῦσαι.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

πολὺ μέντοι δεινότερον τούτου τοῦ πράγματός
 ἐστι—

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τὸ ποῖον;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

εἶ σε φιλήσειεν Ἀρίστυλλος φάσκων αὐτοῦ πατέρ’
 εἶναι.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οἰμῶζοι γ’ ἂν καὶ κωκῦοι.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

σὺ δέ γ’ ὄζοις ἂν καλαμίνθης.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἄλλ’ οὗτος μὲν πρότερον γέγονεν πρὶν τὸ ψήφισμα
 γενέσθαι,
 ὥστ’ οὐχὶ δέος μὴ σε φιλήσῃ.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

650 δεινὸν μέντ’ ἂν ἐπεπόνθειν.
τὴν γῆν δὲ τίς ἔσθ’ ὁ γεωργήσων;

650 -θη (-θην Δ) Bentley

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

There's nothing wrong with your analysis, but if Epicurus⁵¹ or Leucolophus⁵² start hanging around and calling me "daddy," it's going to be frightful to listen to.

NEIGHBOR

Well, I can think of something a lot more frightful.

BLEPYRUS

Such as?

NEIGHBOR

If Aristyllus⁵³ claims you're his father and kisses you!

BLEPYRUS

If he does he'll sorely regret it!

NEIGHBOR

And you'd smell of *eau d'ordure*!

PRAXAGORA

But he was born before our decree, so there's no need to worry that he'll kiss you.

BLEPYRUS

He'd still have been sorry if he did. But who will there be to farm the land?

⁵¹ Unidentifiable.

⁵² Presumably Leucolophides, the son of Adeimantus of Scambonidae, considered a traitor at Aegospotami and prosecuted in 393 (Dem. 19.191); cf. *Frogs* 1512 n.

⁵³ Apparently a coprophiliac, cf. *Wealth* 313-14, fr. 551.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

οὐ δούλοι. σοὶ δὲ μελήσει,
ὅταν ἦ δεκάπουν τὸ στοιχέιον, λιπαρῶ χωρεῖν ἐπὶ
δεῖπνον.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

περὶ δ' ἱματίων τίς πόρος ἔσται; καὶ γὰρ τοῦτ'
ἔστιν ἐρέσθαι.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

τὰ μὲν ὄνθ' ὑμῖν πρῶτον ὑπάρξει, τὰ δὲ λοιφ' ἡμεῖς
ὑφανοῦμεν.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

655 ἐν ἔτι ζητῶ· πῶς ἦν τις ὄφλη παρὰ τοῖς ἄρχουσι
δίκην τῶ;
πόθεν ἐκτείσει ταύτην; οὐ γὰρ τῶν κοινῶν γ' ἔστι
δίκαιον.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ δίκαι πρῶτον ἔσονται.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τοντὶ τοῦπος σ' ἐπιτρίψει.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

καγὼ ταύτην γνώμην ἐθέμην.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

τοῦ γὰρ τάλαν οὐνεκ' ἔσονται;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

πολλῶν οὐνεκα, νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω· πρῶτον δ' ἐνὸς
οὐνεκα δήπου,

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

PRAXAGORA

The slaves. Your only concern will be to get slicked up and head for dinner when the shadow stick's at ten feet.

BLEPYRUS

Then about overcoats, who will supply them? It's a reasonable question.

PRAXAGORA

Your current supply will do for now; later we'll weave you new ones.

BLEPYRUS

One more question: what happens if someone loses a lawsuit to somebody before the archons? How will he pay the judgment? It wouldn't be fair to take that from the common pool.

PRAXAGORA

But there won't be any lawsuits in the first place.

BLEPYRUS

That statement will be your undoing.

NEIGHBOR

That's my verdict too.

PRAXAGORA

But what, poor dear, will they sue over?

BLEPYRUS

My god, lots of things. Foremost, of course, is when a

ARISTOPHANES

ἦν τις ὀφείλων ἐξαρνήται.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

660

πόθεν οὖν ἐδάνεισ' ὁ δανείσας,
ἐν τῷ κοινῷ πάντων ὄντων; κλέπτων δῆπου 'στ'
ἐπίδηλος.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

νῆ τὴν Δήμητρ', εὖ γε διδάσκεις.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τουτὶ τοίνυν φρασάτω μοι,
τῆς αἰκείας οἱ τύπτοντες πόθεν ἐκτείσουσιν, ἐπειδὰν
εὐωχηθέντες ὑβρίζωσιν; τοῦτο γὰρ οἶμαί σ'
ἀπορήσειν.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

665

ἀπὸ τῆς μάζης ἧς σιτεῖται ταύτης γὰρ ὅταν τις
ἀφαιρῆ,
οὐχ ὑβριεῖται φαύλως οὕτως αὔθις τῇ γαστρὶ
κολασθεῖς.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐδ' αὖ κλέπτῃς οὐδεὶς ἔσται;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

πῶς γὰρ κλέψει μετὸν αὐτῷ;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐδ' ἀποδύσουσ' ἄρα τῶν νυκτῶν;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

οὐκ ἦν οἴκοι γε καθεύδης.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

debtor refuses to pay.

PRAXAGORA

But where did the creditor get the money to lend, all funds being in common? He's obviously a thief—of course!

NEIGHBOR

By golly, that's right.

BLEPYRUS

But let her answer me this: when people act rowdy after a dinner party and get into fights, how will they pay their fines for assault? That one, I think, will stump you.

PRAXAGORA

He'll pay out of his own bread ration. A decrease there will hit him right in the belly, so he'll think twice before he gets rowdy again.

BLEPYRUS

And will no one be a thief?

PRAXAGORA

Of course not: how can anyone steal what he's got a share in?

BLEPYRUS

So no more muggers at night?

NEIGHBOR

Not if you sleep at home!

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

οὐδ' ἦν γε θύραζ' ὥσπερ πρότερον· βίοςτος γὰρ
πάσιν ὑπάρξει.

670 ἦν δ' ἀποδύη γ', αὐτὸς δώσει· τί γὰρ αὐτῷ πράγμα
μάχεσθαι;
ἕτερον γὰρ ἰὼν ἐκ τοῦ κοινοῦ κρείττον ἐκείνου
κομιεῖται.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐδὲ κυβεύσουσ' ἄρ' ἄνθρωποι;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

περὶ τοῦ γὰρ τοῦτο ποιήσει;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τὴν δὲ δίαιταν τίνα ποιήσεις;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

κοινὴν πᾶσιν. τὸ γὰρ ἄστν
μίαν οἴκησίν φημι ποιήσειν συρρήξασ' εἰς ἓν
ἅπαντα,
ὥστε βαδίζειν εἰς ἀλλήλων.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

675 τὸ δὲ δείπνον ποῦ παραθήσεις;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

τὰ δικαστήρια καὶ τὰς στοιὰς ἀνδρῶνας πάντα
ποιήσω.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τὸ δὲ βῆμα τί σοι χρήσιμον ἔσται;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

PRAXAGORA

Not even when you go out as you used to, for all will be content with their condition. If someone tries to steal a cloak, the victim will let him have it. Why should he put up a fight? He can go to the common store and get a better one.

BLEPYRUS

And people won't gamble at dice?

PRAXAGORA

What would they use for stakes?

BLEPYRUS

And what standard of living will you establish?

PRAXAGORA

The same for all. I mean to convert the city into one household by breaking down all partitions to make one dwelling, so that everyone can walk into everyone else's space.

BLEPYRUS

And where will you serve dinner?

PRAXAGORA

I'll turn all the courthouses and porticoes into dining rooms.

BLEPYRUS

What will you do with the speakers' platform?

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

τοὺς κρατήρας καταθήσω
καὶ τὰς ὑδρίας, καὶ ραψοδεῖν ἔσται τοῖς
παιδαρίοισιν
τοὺς ἀνδρείους ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ, κεί τις δειλὸς
γεγένηται,
ἵνα μὴ δειπνῶσ' αἰσχυρόμενοι.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

680 νῆ τὸν Ἀπόλλω χάριέν γε.
τὰ δὲ κληρωτήρια ποῖ τρέψεις;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν καταθήσω,
κᾶτα στήσασα παρ' Ἀρμοδίῳ κληρώσω πάντας,
ἕως ἂν
εἰδὼς ὁ λαχὼν ἀπίη χαίρων ἐν ὁποίῳ γράμματι
δειπνεῖ.
καὶ κηρύξει τοὺς ἐκ τοῦ βῆτ' ἐπὶ τὴν στοιὰν
ἀκολουθεῖν
685 τὴν βασιλείον δειπνήσοντας, τὸ δὲ θῆτ' εἰς τὴν
παρὰ ταύτην,
τοὺς δ' ἐκ τοῦ κάππ' ἐς τὴν στοιὰν χωρεῖν τὴν
ἀλφιτόπων.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἵνα κάπτωσιν;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἴν' ἐκεῖ δειπνῶσιν.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

PRAXAGORA

I'll use it to store mixing bowls and water jugs, and the children can use it to recite poetry about brave men in battle, or about anyone who was cowardly, so they'll be ashamed to share the meal.

BLEPYRUS

An absolutely charming idea! And what will you do with the ballot boxes?

PRAXAGORA

I'll have them set up in the marketplace by Harmodius' statue⁵⁴ and have everyone draw lots, till each one has got his letter and gone off happily to whatever dining hall it assigns. Thus the Herald will instruct everyone with the letter R to proceed to dinner at the Royal Stoa; the Thetas will go to the one next to it; and the G's to the Grain Market.

BLEPYRUS

G as in guzzle?

PRAXAGORA

No, as in gourmandise.

⁵⁴ Located near the center of the marketplace.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ὄτω δὲ τὸ γράμμα
 μὴ ἕλκυσθῆ καθ' ὃ δειπνήσει, τούτους ἀπελώσω
 ἅπαντες;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

- ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔσται τοῦτο παρ' ἡμῖν·
 690 πᾶσι γὰρ ἄφθονα πάντα παρέξομεν,
 ὥστε μεθυσθεῖς αὐτῷ στεφάνῳ
 πᾶς τις ἄπεισιν τὴν δᾶδα λαβών.
 αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες κατὰ τὰς διόδους
 προσπίπτουσαι τοῖς ἀπὸ δείπνου
 695 τάδε λέξουσιν· “δεῦρο παρ' ἡμᾶς·
 ἐνθάδε μεῖράξ' ἐσθ' ὠραία.”
 “παρ' ἐμοὶ δ' ἑτέρα,”
 φήσει τις ἄνωθ' ἐξ ὑπερώου,
 “καὶ καλλίστη καὶ λευκοτάτη·
 700 πρότερον μέντοι δεῖ σε καθεύδειν
 αὐτῆς παρ' ἐμοί.”
 702a τοῖς εὐπρεπέσιν δ' ἀκολουθοῦντες
 702b καὶ μειρακίοις οἱ φαυλότεροι
 τοιάδ' ἐροῦσιν· “ποῖ θεῖς οὗτος;
 πάντως οὐδὲν δράσεις ἐλθών.
 705 τοῖς γὰρ σιμοῖς καὶ τοῖς αἰσχροῖς
 ἐψηφισται προτέροις βινεῖν,
 ὑμᾶς δὲ τέως θρῖα λαβόντας
 διφόρου συκῆς
 ἐν τοῖς προθύροισι δέφεσθαι.”

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

But people who draw no letter for dinner, will everyone push them away from the table?

PRAXAGORA

That won't happen with us; we'll provide everything for everyone unstintingly. Every single man will leave drunk, garland still on and torch in hand, and along the streets as they come from dinner the ladies will accost them like this: "Come here to our place; there's a lovely girl in here." "And over here," another one will cry from a second storey window, "is a very fine and exquisitely pale girl. Of course, you'll have to sleep with me before her." And the inferior men will chase after the handsome lads, saying "Hey you, where do you think you're off to? You're going to get nothing anyway: the law says that the the pug-nosed and the ugly get first fuck, while you grab the petals of your double-hung fig branch and jerk off in the doorway!" So

ARISTOPHANES

φέρε νυν φράσον μοι, ταῦτ' ἀρέσκει σφῶν;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ καὶ ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

710

πάνυ.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

βαδιστέον τὰρ' ἐστὶν εἰς ἀγορὰν ἐμοί,
ἵν' ἀποδέχωμαι τὰ προσιόντα χρήματα,
 λαβοῦσα κηρύκαιναν εὐφωρόν τινα.
 ἐμὲ γὰρ ἀνάγκη ταῦτα δρᾶν ἡρημένην
 715 ἄρχειν, καταστήσαι τε τὰ ξυσσίτια,
 ὅπως ἂν εὐωχῆσθε πρῶτον τήμερον.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἤδη γὰρ εὐωχησόμεσθα;

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

φήμ' ἐγώ.

ἔπειτα τὰς πόρνas καταπαῦσαι βούλομαι
ἀπαξαπάσας.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἵνα τί;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

δῆλον τουτογί;

720 ἵνα τῶν νέων ἔχωσιν αὐται τὰς ἀκμάς.

ΠΡΑΞΑΓΟΡΑ

καὶ τὰς γε δούλας οὐχὶ δεῖ κοσμουμένας
 τὴν τῶν ἐλευθέρων ὑφαρπάζειν Κύπριν,
 ἀλλὰ παρὰ τοῖς δούλοισι κοιμᾶσθαι μόνον,
 κατωνάκην τὸν χοῖρον ἀποτετιλμένας.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

tell me, does my plan meet with your approval?

BLEPYRUS AND NEIGHBOR

Very much so!

PRAXAGORA

Then I'll be going off to the marketplace to receive the goods as they come in, after I pick up a girl with a strong voice to be my herald. These are my duties as the woman elected to office. I must also organize the communal dinners, so you can have your first banquet this very day.

BLEPYRUS

The banquets are to start right away?

PRAXAGORA

That's what I'm telling you. Then I want to put all the prostitutes out of business.

BLEPYRUS

Why?

NEIGHBOR

(*indicating Praxagora and the Chorus*) That's obvious: so that these women can have their prick of the young men!

PRAXAGORA

What's more, slave girls will no longer be allowed to wear makeup and steal away the fond hearts of the free boys. They'll be allowed to sleep only with slaves, with their pussies trimmed like a woollen barn jacket.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

- 725 φέρε νυν ἐγὼ σοι παρακολουθῶ πλησίον,
 ἵν' ἀποβλέπωμαι καὶ λέγωσιν ἐμὲ ταδί,
 "τὸν τῆς στρατηγοῦ τούτου οὐ θαναμάζετε;"

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἐγὼ δ', ἵν' εἰς ἀγοράν γε τὰ σκευὴ φέρω,
 προχειριούμαι κάξετάσω τὴν οὐσίαν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

- 730 χῶρει σὺ δεῦρο, κιναχύρα, καλὴ καλῶς
 τῶν χρημάτων θύραζε πρώτη τῶν ἐμῶν,
 ὅπως ἂν ἐντετριμμένη κανηφορῆς,
 πολλοὺς κάτω δὴ θυλάκους στρέψασ' ἐμούς.
 ποῦ 'σθ' ἢ διφροφόρος; ἢ χύτρα, δεῦρ' ἔξιθι.
 735 νῆ Δία μέλαινά γ', ὡς ἂν εἰ τὸ φάρμακον
 ἔψουσ' ἔτυχες ᾧ Λυσικράτης μελαίνεται.
 ἴστω παρ' αὐτήν· δεῦρ' ἴθ', ἢ κομμώτρια.
 φέρε δεῦρο ταύτην τὴν ὕδριαν, ὕδριαφόρε,
 ἐνταῦθα. σὺ δὲ δεῦρ' ἢ κιθαρῳδός, ἔξιθι,
 740 πολλάκις ἀναστήσασά μ' εἰς ἐκκλησίαν
 ἄωρι νύκτωρ διὰ τὸν ὄρθριον νόμον.
 ὁ τὴν σκάφην λαβὼν προῖτω τὰ κηρία
 κόμιζε, τοὺς θαλλοὺς καθίστη πλησίον,

⁵⁵ The utensils are arrayed like participants in a major ritual procession such as the Panathenaea.

⁵⁶ The scholia identify this utensil as a hand mill.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

BLEPYRUS

Say, I'd like to tag along at your side, and share the spotlight, with people saying, "Look, that's none other than the Lady Commander's husband!"

Exit PRAXAGORA and BLEPYRUS.

NEIGHBOR

As for me, if I'm to be taking my possessions to the marketplace, I'd better collect them and take inventory of what I've got.

Exit NEIGHBOR into his house.

The Chorus sing a brief song, not preserved; then NEIGHBOR comes out of his house, followed by two slaves, Sicon and Parmenon, who bring out household utensils and line them up in the street.

NEIGHBOR

You there, my pretty bran sieve, first of my possessions, come prettily outside here, so you can be the Basket Bearer,⁵⁵ since you're so well powdered by all those bags of my flour that you've emptied. Where's the Chair Bearer? Cooking Pot, come outside here. My God, you're black, as if it was you that boiled the concoction Lysicrates uses to dye his hair! You stand next to her. Come here, my Maid in Waiting. Jug Bearer, bring that jug over here. And you come out here and be our Musician, since you've so often gotten me up for Assembly with your morning song at an ungodly hour of the night.⁵⁶ Whoever's got the Tray come forward; bring the honeycombs, and put the olive

ARISTOPHANES

καὶ τὸ τρίποδ' ἐξένεγκε καὶ τὴν λήκυθον.
745 τὰ χυτρίδι' ἤδη καὶ τὸν ὄχλον ἀφίετε.

ΑΝΗΡ

ἐγὼ καταθήσω τὰμά; κακοδαίμων ἄρα
ἀνὴρ ἔσομαι καὶ νοῦν ὀλίγον κεκτημένος.
μὰ τὸν Ποσειδῶ γ' οὐδέποτ', ἀλλὰ βασανῶ
πρώτιστον αὐτὰ πολλάκις καὶ σκέψομαι.
750 οὐ γὰρ τὸν ἐμὸν ἰδρῶτα καὶ φειδωλίαν
οὐδὲν πρὸς ἔπος οὕτως ἀνοήτως ἐκβαλῶ,
πρὶν ἐκπύθωμαι πᾶν τὸ πρᾶγμ' ὅπως ἔχει.
οὔτος, τί τὰ σκευάρια ταυτὶ βούλεται;
πότερον μετοικιζόμενος ἐξενήνοχας
αὐτ' ἢ φέρεις ἐνέχυρα θήσων;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

755 οὐδαμῶς.

ΑΝΗΡ

τί δῆτ' ἐπὶ στοίχου ἔστιν οὕτως; οὐ τι μὴν
Ἰέρωνι τῷ κήρυκι πομπὴν πέμπετε;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἀποφέρειν αὐτὰ μέλλω τῇ πόλει
εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν κατὰ τοὺς δεδογμένους νόμους.

ΑΝΗΡ

μέλλεις ἀποφέρειν;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

πάνυ γε.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

branches down beside them; bring out the two Tripods and the Oil Flask. Now let the throng of little pots follow along.

Enter SELFISH MAN.

SELFISH MAN

Imagine me turning in my stuff! I'd be a sorry excuse for a man, and virtually brainless. Never, by god! No, first of all I'll have to test and study the situation very carefully. On the strength of mere words I'm hardly about to throw away the fruits of my sweat and thrift in this sort of mindless way, until I've made thorough inquiries about the whole situation. You there, what's the point of these utensils? Are you moving? Do you mean to pawn them?

NEIGHBOR

Certainly not.

SELFISH MAN

Then why are they lined up like this? You're not arranging a procession for Hieron⁵⁷ the auctioneer, are you?

NEIGHBOR

God no! We're getting them ready to go to the marketplace for surrender to the state: it's the law of the land.

SELFISH MAN

You mean to turn them in?

NEIGHBOR

Of course.

⁵⁷ Otherwise unknown.

ARISTOPHANES

760 ANHP
κακοδαίμων ἄρ' εἶ,
νῆ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτήρα.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

πῶς;

ΑΝΗΡ

πῶς; ῥαδίως.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

τί δ'; οὐχὶ πειθαρχεῖν με τοῖς νόμοισι δεῖ;

ΑΝΗΡ

ποιόισιν, ᾧ δύστηνε;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

τοῖς δεδογμένοις.

ΑΝΗΡ

δεδογμένοισιν; ὡς ἀνόητος ἦσθ' ἄρα.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἀνόητος;

ΑΝΗΡ

765 οὐ γάρ; ἡλιθιώτατος μὲν οὖν
ἀπαξαπάντων.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ὅτι τὸ ταπτόμενον ποιῶ;

ΑΝΗΡ

τὸ ταπτόμενον γὰρ δεῖ ποιεῖν τὸν σῶφρονα;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

SELFISH MAN

Then, Zeus save us, you're a loser!

NEIGHBOR

How so?

SELFISH MAN

It's easy to see.

NEIGHBOR

Really? I'm not supposed to obey the laws?

SELFISH MAN

What laws, you sadsack?

NEIGHBOR

The laws that have been duly enacted.

SELFISH MAN

Duly enacted! How stupid can you get?

NEIGHBOR

Stupid?

SELFISH MAN

Well, aren't you? And not just stupid, but the biggest simpleton in the world?

NEIGHBOR

Because I do what I'm told?

SELFISH MAN

So you think the man of sense ought to do what he's told?

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

μάλιστα πάντων.

ΑΝΗΡ

τὸν μὲν οὖν ἀβέλτερον.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

σὺ δ' οὐ καταθεῖναι διανοεῖ;

ΑΝΗΡ

770 πρὶν ἂν γ' ἴδω τὸ πλῆθος ὅ τι βουλεύεται.
φυλάξομαι,

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

τί γὰρ ἄλλο γ' ἢ φέρειν παρεσκευασμένοι
τὰ χρήματ' εἰσίν;

ΑΝΗΡ

ἀλλ' ἰδὼν ἐπειθόμεν.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

λέγουσι γοῦν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς.

ΑΝΗΡ

λέξουσι γάρ.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

καί φασιν οἴσειν ἀράμενοι.

ΑΝΗΡ

φήσουσι γάρ.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἀπολείς ἀπιστῶν πάντ'.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

NEIGHBOR

Above everything else.

SELFISH MAN

No, that's what the imbecile does.

NEIGHBOR

So you don't intend to turn in your goods?

SELFISH MAN

I intend to be cautious, until I see what most people do.

NEIGHBOR

Why, they're getting ready to turn in their goods, of course.

SELFISH MAN

Well, I'll believe that when I see it.

NEIGHBOR

That's what they're saying around town, anyway.

SELFISH MAN

Say it? Sure they will.

NEIGHBOR

They're promising to bring their stuff in personally.

SELFISH MAN

Promise? Sure they will.

NEIGHBOR

You'll be the death of me with your total skepticism!

ARISTOPHANES

775

ΑΝΗΡ

ἀπιστήσουσι γάρ.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ὁ Ζεὺς σέ γ' ἐπιτρίψειεν.

ΑΝΗΡ

ἐπιτρίψουσι γάρ.

οἴσειν δοκεῖς τιν' ὅστις αὐτῶν νοῦν ἔχει;

οὐ γὰρ πάτριον τοῦτ' ἐστίν.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἀλλὰ λαμβάνειν

ἡμᾶς μόνον δεῖ;

ΑΝΗΡ

νῆ Δία· καὶ γὰρ οἱ θεοί.

780 γνώσει δ' ἀπὸ τῶν χειρῶν γε τῶν ἀγαλμάτων·

ὅταν γὰρ εὐχόμεσθα διδόναι τὰγαθά,

ἔστηκεν ἐκτείνοντα τὴν χεῖρ' ὑπτίαν,

οὐχ ὥς τι δώσουτ' ἀλλ' ὅπως τι λήψεται.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ὦ δαιμόνι' ἀνδρῶν, ἕα με τῶν προὔργου τι δρᾶν.

785 ταυτὶ γὰρ ἐστὶ συνδετέα. ποῦ μοῦσθ' ἰμάς;

ΑΝΗΡ

ὄντως γὰρ οἴσεις;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ναὶ μὰ Δία, καὶ δὴ μὲν οὖν

τωδὶ ξυνάπτω τὸ τρίποδε.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

SELFISH MAN

Be skeptical? Sure they will.

NEIGHBOR

God damn you!

SELFISH MAN

Damn? Sure they will. Do you really think that anyone with a brain is going to turn it in? That's not in our national character.

NEIGHBOR

You mean we should only take?

SELFISH MAN

Absolutely. That's what the gods do too. You can tell by the hands on their statues: whenever we pray for blessings, they stand there with their hands out, palm up, plainly not to give something, but to get something.

NEIGHBOR

Listen, wacko, let me get on with my business here. These things need to be packed. Where's my strap?

SELFISH MAN

So you're really going to surrender them?

NEIGHBOR

Yes indeed. In fact, I'm tying up these two tripods now.

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΝΗΡ

τῆς μωρίας,
τὸ μῆδὲ περιμείναντα τοὺς ἄλλους ὃ τι
δράσουσιν εἶτα τηρικαῦτ' ἤδη—

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

τί δρᾶν;

ΑΝΗΡ

790 ἐπαναμένειν, ἔπειτα διατρίβειν ἔτι.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἵνα δὴ τί;

ΑΝΗΡ

σεισμὸς εἰ γένοιτο πολλάκις,
ἢ πῦρ ἀπότροπον, ἢ διάξειεν γαλή,
παύσαιντ' ἂν ἐσφέροντες, ὦμβρόντητε σύ.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

χαρίεντα γοῦν πάθοιμ' ἂν, εἰ μὴ ἔχοιμ' ὅποι
ταῦτα καταθείην.

ΑΝΗΡ

795 μὴ γὰρ οὐ λάβοις ὅποι;
θάρρει, καταθήσεις, κὰν ἔνης ἔλθης.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

τιή;

ΑΝΗΡ

ἐγὼ δα τούτους χειροτονοῦντας μὲν ταχύ,
ἄτ' ἂν δὲ δόξῃ, ταῦτα πάλιν ἀρνούμενους.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

SELFISH MAN

What foolishness, not to wait and see what others are going to do, and then and only then—

NEIGHBOR

Do what?

SELFISH MAN

Wait a little longer, then put it off.

NEIGHBOR

The object being what?

SELFISH MAN

There might be an earthquake, or some ill-omened lightning, or a black cat darting across the street. That would put a stop to their depositions, you mental case!

NEIGHBOR

I'd be in a fine mess if I found no room left to deposit this stuff.

SELFISH MAN

Ah, no more room. Don't worry, they'll take your deposit even if you wait a couple of days.

NEIGHBOR

What do you mean?

SELFISH MAN

I know these people: they're quick to vote on something, then they turn around and refuse to abide by whatever it was.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

οἴσουσιν, ὦ τᾶν.

ΑΝΗΡ

ἦν δὲ μὴ κομίσωσι, τί;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἀμέλει, κομιούσιν.

ΑΝΗΡ

800

ἦν δὲ μὴ κομίσωσι, τί;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

μαχούμεθ' αὐτοῖς.

ΑΝΗΡ

ἦν δὲ κρείττους ὦσι, τί;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἄπειμ' ἑάσας.

ΑΝΗΡ

ἦν δὲ πωλώσ' αὐτά, τί;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

διαρραγείης.

ΑΝΗΡ

ἦν διαρραγῶ δέ, τί;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

καλῶς ποιήσεις.

ΑΝΗΡ

σὺ δ' ἐπιθυμείς εἰσφέρειν;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

NEIGHBOR

They'll bring in their stuff, pal.

SELFISH MAN

And what if they don't?

NEIGHBOR

Don't worry, they will.

SELFISH MAN

And what if they don't?

NEIGHBOR

We'll fight them.

SELFISH MAN

And what if they outnumber you?

NEIGHBOR

I'll walk away and leave them to it.

SELFISH MAN

And if they sell your stuff?

NEIGHBOR

Blast you to bits!

SELFISH MAN

And if I do blast to bits?

NEIGHBOR

You'll be doing a great service.

SELFISH MAN

Do you really want to surrender your stuff?

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

805 ἔγωγε· καὶ γὰρ τοὺς ἔμαντοῦ γείτονας
ὀρῶ φέροντας.

ΑΝΗΡ

πάνυ γ' ἂν οὖν Ἀντισθένης
αὐτ' εἰσενέγκοι· πολὺ γὰρ ἐμμελέστερον
πρότερον χέσαι πλείν ἢ τριάκονθ' ἡμέρας.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

οἴμωζε.

ΑΝΗΡ

Καλλίμαχος δ' ὁ χοροδιδάσκαλος
αὐτοῖσιν εἰσοίσει τι;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

810 πλείω Καλλίου.

ΑΝΗΡ

ἄνθρωπος οὗτος ἀποβαλεῖ τὴν οὐσίαν.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

δεινόν γε λέγεις.

ΑΝΗΡ

τί δεινόν; ὥσπερ οὐχ ὀρών
ἀεὶ τοιαῦτα γιγνόμενα ψηφίσματα.
οὐκ οἶσθ' ἐκεῖν' οὐδοξε τὸ περὶ τῶν ἀλῶν;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἔγωγε.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

NEIGHBOR

I do. And I see that my own neighbors are doing it too.

SELFISH MAN

Antisthenes would contribute his stuff—sure! It would suit him much better to take a month-long shit first!

NEIGHBOR

Go to hell!

SELFISH MAN

And Callimachus the chorus master,⁵⁸ would he contribute anything?

NEIGHBOR

More than Callias.⁵⁹

SELFISH MAN

(*aside*) This guy's gonna lose everything he has!

NEIGHBOR

That's putting it pretty drastically.

SELFISH MAN

What's so drastic? As if I don't see decrees like this all the time! Don't you remember the one about salt?

NEIGHBOR

Sure.

⁵⁸ Otherwise unknown.

⁵⁹ See *Frogs* 429 n.

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΝΗΡ

815 τούς χαλκοῦς δ' ἐκείνους ἤνικα
ἐψηφισάμεθ', οὐκ οἶσθα;

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

καὶ κακόν γέ μοι
τὸ κόμμ' ἐγένετ' ἐκείνο. πωλῶν γὰρ βότρυσ
μεστὴν ἀπῆρα τὴν γνάθον χαλκῶν ἔχων,
κάπειτ' ἐχώρου εἰς ἀγορὰν ἐπ' ἄλφιστα.
820 ἔπειθ', ὑπέχουτος ἄρτι μου τὸν θύλακον,
ἀνέκραγ' ὁ κῆρυξ· “μὴ δέχεσθαι μηδένα
χαλκὸν τὸ λοιπόν· ἀργύρω γὰρ χρώμεθα.”

ΑΝΗΡ

τὸ δ' ἔναγχος οὐχ ἅπαντες ἡμεῖς ὤμνυμεν
τάλαντ' ἔσεσθαι πεντακόσια τῇ πόλει
825 τῆς τετταρακοστῆς, ἣν ἐπόρισ' Εὐριπίδης;
κευθὺς κατεχρύσου πᾶς ἀνὴρ Εὐριπίδην.
ὅτε δὴ δ' ἀνασκοπουμένοις ἐφαίνετο
ὁ Διὸς Κόρινθος καὶ τὸ πρᾶγμ' οὐκ ἤρκεσεν,
πάλιν κατεπίττου πᾶς ἀνὴρ Εὐριπίδην.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

830 οὐ ταυτόν, ὦ τᾶν. τότε μὲν ἡμεῖς ἤρχομεν,
νῦν δ' αἱ γυναῖκες.

ΑΝΗΡ

ἄς γ' ἐγὼ φυλάξομαι,
νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ, μὴ κατουρήσωσί μου.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

SELFISH MAN

And when we voted for those copper coins, remember that?⁶⁰

NEIGHBOR

Yes, that coinage was certainly bad for me. After selling my grapes I shoved off with a mouthful of those coppers to the market for barley, and as soon as I held out my bag the herald shouted, "no one is to take any more copper; we're using silver now."

SELFISH MAN

And didn't we all recently swear that the city would raise five hundred talents from the two and a half percent tax levied by Heurippides?⁶¹ And how Heurippides was everyone's golden boy? But finally we looked into the matter more carefully, and it turned out to be just "Corinthus son of Zeus,"⁶² a quite inadequate measure; then Heurippides became everyone's tarbaby.

NEIGHBOR

That's different, pal: we were in power then; now the women are.

SELFISH MAN

And I mean to keep an eye on them, so help me Poseidon, so they don't piss all over me!

⁶⁰ See *Frogs* 718-37. ⁶¹ Son of Adeimantus of Myrrhinus and protege of Conon; after the failure of his tax plan, his name came to denote a score of forty in games of dice.

⁶² See *Frogs* 439 n.

825-29 *Εὐριπίδης* Bergk: *Εὐριπίδης* a

946 *δράσει* Brunck: *δράσοι* Γ: *δράσεις* R Δ

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι ληρεῖς. φέρε σὺ τὰνάφορον, ὁ παῖς.

ΚΗΡΤΚΑΙΝΑ

- ὦ πάντες ἄστοί, νῦν γὰρ οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχει,
 835 χωρεῖτ', ἐπείγεσθ' εὐθὺ τῆς στρατηγίδος,
 ὅπως ἂν ὑμῖν ἡ τύχη κληρουμένοις
 φράσῃ καθ' ἕκαστον ἄνδρ' ὅποι δειπνήσετε·
 ὡς αἱ τράπεζαί γ' εἰσὶν ἐπινενημένοι
 ἀγαθῶν ἀπάντων καὶ παρεσκευασμένοι,
 840 κλῖναί τε σισυρῶν καὶ δαπίδων νενασμένοι.
 κρατῆρας ἐγκιρνᾶσιν, αἱ μυροπώλιδες
 ἐστᾶσ' ἐφεξῆς, τὰ τεμάχη ριπίζεται,
 λαγῶ ἀναπηγνύασι, πόπανα πέττεται,
 στέφανοι πλέκονται, φρύγεται τραγήματα,
 845 χύτρας ἔτρουσ ἐψουσιν αἱ νεώταται·
 Σμοῖος δ' ἐν αὐταῖς ἵππικὴν στολὴν ἔχων
 τὰ τῶν γυναικῶν διακαθαίρει τρύβλια·
 Γέρων δὲ χωρεῖ χλανίδα καὶ κονίποδας
 ἔχων, καχάζων μεθ' ἐτέρου νεανίου·
 850 ἐμβὰς δὲ κείται καὶ τρίβων ἐρριμμένος.
 πρὸς ταῦτα χωρεῖθ', ὡς ὁ τὴν μᾶζαν φέρων
 ἔστηκεν· ἀλλὰ τὰς γνώθους διοίγετε.

ΑΝΗΡ

οὐκοῦν βαδιοῦμαι δῆτα. τί γὰρ ἔστηκ' ἔχων
 ἐνταῦθ', ἐπειδὴ ταῦτα τῇ πόλει δοκέι;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

NEIGHBOR

I don't know what you're going on about. Hoist that baggage, boy.

Enter HERALD.

HERALD

Now here this, all you citizens—yes, all are included now: get a move on and go straight to the Lady Commander's place, so that the luck of the draw can determine where each man among you will dine. The tables are set and heaped high with every kind of treat, and the couches are draped with cushions and coverlets. They're mixing the wine in bowls, and the scent girls are standing by. The fish fillets are on the grill; they're spitting hares; the rolls are abake, garlands plaited, munchies roasting; the littlest girls are boiling pots of pea soup, and Smoeus⁶³ is with them in his riding suit, licking the women's bowls clean. And Geron's⁶⁴ there wearing a new suit and fashionable pumps, joking with another young blade, his cheap boots and shabby cloak tossed aside. This is what you're invited to, so come along! The slaves are waiting with your daily bread; just open your mouths!

Exit HERALD.

SELFISH MAN

Well then, I'm ready to go! Why stand around here when the city has ratified all this?

⁶³ Noted for cunnilingus.

⁶⁴ Otherwise unknown; the name means "oldster."

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

855 καὶ ποῖ βαδιεῖ σὺ μὴ καταθεῖς τὴν οὐσίαν;

ΑΝΗΡ

ἐπὶ δεῖπνον.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

οὐ δῆτ', ἦν γ' ἐκείναις νοῦς ἐνῆ,
πρίν ἄν γ' ἀπενέγκης.

ΑΝΗΡ

ἀλλ' ἀποίσω.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

πηνίκα;

ΑΝΗΡ

οὐ τοῦμόν, ὦ τάν, ἐμποδῶν ἔσται.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

τί δαί;

ΑΝΗΡ

ἐτέρους ἀποίσειν φήμ' ἔθ' ὑστέρους ἐμοῦ.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

βαδιεῖ δὲ δειπνήσων ὅμως;

ΑΝΗΡ

860

τί γὰρ πάθω;

τὰ δυνατὰ γὰρ δεῖ τῇ πόλει ξυλλαμβάνειν
τοὺς εὖ φρονούντας.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἦν δὲ κωλύσωσι, τί;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

NEIGHBOR

Just where do you think you're going? You haven't turned in your goods.

SELFISH MAN

To dinner.

NEIGHBOR

Oh no you don't! If the women have any sense they won't feed you till you've brought in your property.

SELFISH MAN

Don't worry, I will.

NEIGHBOR

When?

SELFISH MAN

It won't be me that holds anyone up, my man.

NEIGHBOR

Meaning what?

SELFISH MAN

I mean others are bound to turn their stuff in even later than me.

NEIGHBOR

And you mean to go to dinner anyway?

SELFISH MAN

Sure, how can I help but go? All right-minded people should assist the state to the best of their ability.

NEIGHBOR

And what if they won't let you in?

ARISTOPHANES

ΑΝΗΡ

ὁμός' εἶμι κύψας.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἦν δὲ μαστιγῶσι, τί;

ΑΝΗΡ

καλούμεθ' αὐτάς.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

ἦν δὲ καταγελῶσι, τί;

ΑΝΗΡ

ἐπὶ ταῖς θύραις ἐστῶς—

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

865

τί δράσεις; εἰπέ μοι.

ΑΝΗΡ

τῶν ἐσφερόντων ἀρπάσομαι τὰ σιτία.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

βάδιζε τοίνυν ὕστερος· σὺ δ', ὦ Σίκων
καὶ Παρμένων, αἵρεσθε τὴν παμψησίαν.

ΑΝΗΡ

φέρε νυν ἐγὼ σοι ξυμφέρω.

ΓΕΙΤΩΝ

μή, μηδαμῶς.

870

δέδοικα γὰρ μὴ καὶ παρὰ τῇ στρατηγίδι,
ὅταν κατατιθῶ, προσποιῆ τῶν χρημάτων.

ΑΝΗΡ

νῆ τὸν Δία δεῖ γοῦν μηχανήματος τινος,
ὅπως τὰ μὲν ὄντα χρήμαθ' ἔξω, τοῖσδέ τε

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

SELFISH MAN

I'll lower my head and charge them.

NEIGHBOR

And if they beat you like a slave?

SELFISH MAN

I'll sue them.

NEIGHBOR

And if they laugh at your threats?

SELFISH MAN

I'll stand in the doorway—

NEIGHBOR

And do what, I'd like to know.

SELFISH MAN

—and snatch the food that they bring in.

NEIGHBOR

In that case you'd better go in after me. You there, Sicon, and you too, Parmenon, hoist my estate.

SELFISH MAN

Let me help you carry that.

NEIGHBOR

No, no thanks! I don't want to bring my contribution to the Lady Commander and have you pretending it's yours.

Exit NEIGHBOR and Slaves.

SELFISH MAN

I definitely need some kind of scheme to save the property

ARISTOPHANES

875 τῶν ματτομένων κοινῇ μεθέξω πως ἐγώ.
ὀρθῶς, ἔμοιγε φαίνεται βαδιστέον
ὀμόσ' ἐστὶ δειπνήσοντα κοῦ μελλητέον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

τί ποθ' ἄνδρες οὐχ ἤκουσιν; ὦρα δ' ἦν πάλαι.
ἐγὼ δὲ καταπεπλασμένη ψιμυθίῳ
ἔστηκα καὶ κροκωτὸν ἠμφιεσμένη
880 ἄργός, μινυρομένη τι πρὸς ἐμαυτὴν μέλος,
παίζουσ' ὅπως ἂν περιλάβοιμ' αὐτῶν τινα
παριόντα. Μοῦσαι, δεῦρ' ἴτ' ἐπὶ τοῦμόν στόμα
μελύδριον εὐροῦσαί τι τῶν Ἴωνικῶν.

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

885 νῦν μὲν με παρακύψασα προῦφθης, ᾧ σαπρά.
ῥου δ' ἐρήμας οὐ παρούσης ἐνθάδε
ἐμοῦ τρυγήσειν καὶ προσάξεσθαί τινα
ἄδουσ'. ἐγὼ δ', ἦν τοῦτο δρᾶς, ἀντάσομαι.
κεῖ γὰρ δι' ὄχλου τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τοῖς θεωμένοις,
ὅμως ἔχει τερπνόν τι καὶ κωμωδικόν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

890 τούτῳ διαλέγου κάποχώρησον· σὺ δέ,
φιλοττάριον αὐλητά, τοὺς αὐλοὺς λαβῶν
ἄξιον ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ προσαύλησον μέλος.

εἴ τις ἀγαθὸν βούλεται πα-
θεῖν τι, παρ' ἐμοὶ χρή καθεύδειν·
οὐ γὰρ ἐν νέαις τὸ σοφὸν ἔν-

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

I've got and also share in the treats being whipped up for these people. I think I've got it; I must commence Operation Dinner, and on the double!

Exit SELFISH MAN.

The Chorus sing a brief song, not preserved.

FIRST OLD WOMAN appears in the central doorway of the stage house, while a GIRL appears at the window of the house next door; both look up and down the street.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

What can be keeping the men? They're long overdue. Here I am, all plastered with makeup and wearing a party dress, just standing around, whistling myself a song, and my trap all set to snag one of them as he passes. Ye Muses, come sit on my lips, and find me some spicy Ionian tune.

GIRL

This time you're on lookout ahead of me, old moldy. You thought you'd strip an unwatched vineyard when I wasn't around, and entice some guy with your singing. If you try it, I'll sing a song of my own. And even if the audience finds this boring, there's still something pleasantly comic about it.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

(presenting her rump) Put your complaints in here, and get lost! *(to the piper)* You, my dear little piper, pick up your pipes and blow a tune that'll do us both proud.

Whoever wants to have a good time
should sleep with me.
For finesse dwells not in girls

ARISTOPHANES

- 895 εστιν, ἀλλ' ἐν ταῖς πεπέροις.
 οὐδέ τοι στέργειν ἂν ἐθέλοι μᾶλλον ἢ ἄγῳ
 τὸν φίλον ᾧπερ ξυνείην,
 ἀλλ' ἐφ' ἕτερον ἂν πέτοιτο.

NEANIS

- 900 μὴ φθόνει ταῖσιν νέαισι
 τὸ τρυφερὸν γὰρ ἐμπέφυκε
 τοῖς ἀπαλοῖσι μηροῖς,
 καπὶ τοῖς μήλοις ἐπαν-
 θεῖ· σὺ δ', ὦ γραῦ, παραλέλεξαι κἀντέτριψαι
 905 τῷ Θανάτῳ μέλημα.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

- ἐκπέσοι σου τὸ τρῆμα
 τό τ' ἐπίκλιτρον ἀποβάλοις
 βουλομένη σποδεῖσθαι.
 καπὶ τῆς κλίνης ὄφιν προσελκύσαι
 910 βουλομένη φιλήσαι.

NEANIS

- αἰαί, τί ποτε πείσομαι;
οὐχ ἦκει μούταῖρος
 μόνη δ' αὐτοῦ λείπομ' ἢ
 γάρ μοι μήτηρ ἄλλη βέβηκεν.
 καὶ τᾶλλα μ' οὐδὲν τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα δεῖ λέγειν.
 915 ἀλλ', ὦ μαῖ', ἱκετεύομαι,
 κάλει τὸν Ὀρθαγόραν,
 917a ὅπως σαυτῆς ἂν κατόναι',
 917b ἀντιβολῶ σε.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

but in ripe women.
You can bet she's no readier than I
to cherish the boyfriend I'm with,
but more likely to flit to another.

GIRL

Don't despise the girls,
for softness resides
in their tender thighs
and blossoms on their boobs.
But you, old bag, are tweezed and plastered,
the Grim Reaper's heartthrob.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

I hope your twat falls off,
and when you hanker for humping
you can't find your back seat.
And in bed when you hanker for smooching
I hope you take a snake in your arms.

GIRL

Ah, what will become of me?
My boyfriend hasn't come,
and I'm left here alone,
for my mother's out somewhere,
and I needn't say what comes next.
Well, nanny, I beg you,
call Doctor Dildo
so you can enjoy yourself.
Pretty please!

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

ἤδη τὸν ἀπ' Ἰωνίας

τρόπον, τάλαινα, κνησιᾶς.

920 δοκεῖς δέ μοι καὶ λάβδα κατὰ τοὺς Λεσβίους.

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄν ποθ' ὑφαρπάσαι-

ο τὰμὰ παίγνια· τὴν δ'

923a ἐμὴν ὥραν οὐκ ἀπολείς

923b οὐδ' ἀπολήψει.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

ἄδ' ὅποσα βούλει καὶ παράκνυθ' ὥσπερ γαλῆ·

925 οὐδεὶς γὰρ ὡς σέ πρότερον εἴσεισ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ.

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

οὔκουν ἐπ' ἐκφοράν γε καινόν γ', ὦ σαπρά.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

οὐ δῆτα.

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

τί γὰρ ἂν γραῖ καινά τις λέγοι;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

οὐ τοῦμὸν ὀδυνήσει σε γῆρας.

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

ἀλλὰ τί;

ἤγχουσα μᾶλλον καὶ τὸ σὸν ψιμύθιον;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

τί μοι διαλέγει;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Poor thing, you're already
itching for the Ionian toy,⁶⁵
and I think you also want to do the L, like the
Lesbians.⁶⁶

GIRL

But you'll never snatch
my boytoys away,
never spoil my youth
or poach a share.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Well, sing any tune you like, and peer out like a cat, be-
cause no man's going to visit you before me.

GIRL

Not for my funeral, anyway. Hey, that's a new one, old
moldy!

FIRST OLD WOMAN

No it isn't.

GIRL

No, who could tell an old lady anything new?

FIRST OLD WOMAN

It's not my age that'll hurt you.

GIRL

What then? Your makeup and rouge?

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Why do you keep talking to me?

⁶⁵ I.e., a dildo.

⁶⁶ With whom classical Greeks associated fellatio.

ARISTOPHANES

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

σὺ δὲ τί διακύνπτεις;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

930

ἐγώ;

ἄδω πρὸς ἐμαντὴν Ἐπιγένοι τῶμῶ φίλω.

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

σοὶ γὰρ φίλος τίς ἐστὶν ἄλλος ἢ Γέρης;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

δείξει γε καὶ σοί. τάχα γὰρ εἶσιν ὡς ἐμέ.
ὀδὶ γὰρ αὐτός ἐστιν.

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

οὐ σοῦ γ', ὦλεθρε,

δεόμενος οὐδέν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

935

νῆ Δί, ὦ φθίνυλλα σύ.

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

δείξει τάχ' αὐτός, ὡς ἔγωγ' ἀπέρχομαι.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

κἄγωγ', ἵνα γνῶς ὡς πολὺ σου μείζον φρονῶ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

εἶθ' ἐξῆν παρὰ τῇ νέα καθεύδειν
καὶ μὴ ᾽δει πρότερον διασποδῆσαι

⁶⁷ Identified by ancient commentators as the Geres of *Acharnians* 605, who would now be at least seventy; alternatively, the name may merely suggest *geron* ("old man").

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

GIRL

And why are you still peering around?

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Me? I'm humming a tune for my sweetheart Epigenes.

GIRL

You've got a sweetheart? You must mean Geres.⁶⁷

FIRST OLD WOMAN

You'll see for yourself, since he'll soon be coming to visit me. In fact, here he comes now!

Enter EPIGENES, wearing a garland and holding a torch.

GIRL

Not for any business with you, old pest!

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Au contraire, miss twiggy!

GIRL

He'll soon settle this himself; I'll be off now.

GIRL goes inside.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Me too, just so you'll see how much surer I am than you.

FIRST OLD WOMAN goes inside.

EPIGENES

How I wish I could sleep with the girl
and didn't first have to bang

ARISTOPHANES

- 940 ἀνάσιμον ἢ πρεσβυτέραν
οὐ γὰρ ἀνασχετὸν τοῦτό γ' ἐλευθέρω.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

- οὐ μῶζων ἄρα νῆ Δία σποδήσεις·
 οὐ γὰρ τὰπὶ Χαριξένης τὰδ' ἐστίν.
κατὰ τὸν νόμον ταῦτα ποιεῖν
 945 ἔστι δίκαιον, εἰ δημοκρατούμεθα.

ἀλλ' εἶμι τηρήσουσ' ὅ τι καὶ δράσει ποτέ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

εἴθ', ὦ θεοί, λάβοιμι τὴν καλὴν μόνην,
 ἐφ' ἣν πεπωκὼς ἔρχομαι πάλαι ποθῶν.

NEANIS

- ἔξηπάτησα τὸ κατάρατον γράδιον·
 950 φρούδη γὰρ ἐστὶν οἰομένη μ' ἔνδον μένειν.
 ἀλλ' οὐτοσὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς οὐ' μεμνήμεθα.

(στρ.) δεῦρο δῆ, δεῦρο δῆ,

- 952b φίλον ἐμόν, δεῦρό μοι
 πρόσσελθε καὶ ξύνεννος
 954a τὴν εὐφρόνην ὅπως ἔσει.
 954b πάνυ γὰρ τις ἔρωσ με δονεῖ
 955 τῶνδε τῶν σῶν βοστρύχων.

952-68 horum carminum etsi textus (praecipue in antistropha)
 per periphrasin depravatus est, sensus tamen satis perspicuus

961a suppl. Wilamowitz, cf. ad 963

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

a pug-nose or a crone!
This doesn't sit well with a free man.

FIRST OLD WOMAN reappears.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Then by heaven you'll bang to your sorrow;
this isn't Charixene's heyday.⁶⁸
If we still live under democracy,
we've got to do this legal and proper!

But I'll go inside to see what he ends up doing.

FIRST OLD WOMAN goes back inside.

EPIGENES

Ye gods, let me catch this pretty girl alone! It's her I've
come for in my cups, her I've long desired.

GIRL reappears in her window.

GIRL

I've completely foxed the little old lady, damn her; she's
gone, thinking that I was going to stay inside. But here's the
very boy we were talking about.

Hither now, hither now,
my dear one, hither
come to me and promise to be
my bedmate through the night.
A powerful passion sets me awirl
for those curly locks of yours.

⁶⁸ Evidently a courtesan of the pre-democratic era, cf. Cratinus fr. 153, Theopompus com. fr. 51.

ARISTOPHANES

- ἄτοπος δ' ἔγκειται μοί τις πόθος,
 ὅς με διακναίσας ἔχει.
 μέθες, ἰκνούμαί σ', Ἔρωσ,
 959a καὶ ποίησον τόνδ' ἐς εὐνήν
 959b τὴν ἐμὴν ἰκέσθαι.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

- (ἀντ.) δεῦρο δῆ, δεῦρο δῆ,
 961a <φίλον ἐμόν,> καὶ σύ μοι
 961b καταδραμοῦσα τὴν θύραν
 961c τήνδ' ἄνοιξον· εἰ δὲ μή,
 καταπεσὼν κείσομαι.
 ἀλλ' ἐν σῶ βούλομ' ἐγὼ κόλπῳ
 πληκτίζεσθαι μετὰ τῆς πυγῆς.
 965 Κύπρι, τί μ' ἐκμαίνεις ἐπὶ ταύτῃ;
 μέθες, ἰκνούμαί σ', Ἔρωσ,
 968a καὶ ποίησον τήνδ' ἐς εὐνήν
 968b τὴν ἐμὴν ἰκέσθαι.

- (στρ.) καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι μετρίως
 πρὸς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάγκην
 εἰρημέν' ἐστίν. σὺ δέ μοι,
 970 φίλτατον, ὦ ἰκετεύω,
 ἄνοιξον, ἀσπάζου με·
 διά τοι σὲ πόνους ἔχω.

- (ἀντ.) ὦ χρυσοδαίδαλτον ἐμόν
 μέλημα, Κύπριδος ἔρνος,

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

A strange longing besets me
and grinds me in its grip.
Release me, Eros, I beg you!
Please make this boy
come to my very own bed.

EPIGENES

Hither now, hither now,
you too, my dear one,
run down to this door for me
and open it wide; if you don't,
I'll fall flat on the doorstep!
But I'd rather lie in your lap
and swap strokes with your butt.
Aphrodite, why drive me mad for this girl?
Release me, Eros, I beg you!
Please make this girl
come to my very own bed.

Yet these words of mine
can but blandly express
my actual compulsion. But now,
my darling, oh, I beg you,
open up and welcome me.
It's you I'm hurting for!

Ah my fine-wrought golden
prize, bud of Aphrodite,

963 ἀλλ' Wilamowitz: φίλον, ἀλλ' a

963 σῶ βούλομ' ἐγὼ Wilamowitz: τῶ σῶ βούλομαι a

987 πεττοῖς (πετοῖς Γ) Γ Α: Παιτοῖς R Α Schol.

ARISTOPHANES

μέλιττα Μούσης, Χαρίτων

θρέμμα, Τρυφῆς πρόσωπον,

975a ἄνοιξον, ἀσπάζου με.

975b διά τοι σὲ πόρους ἔχω.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

οὔτος, τί κόπτεις; μῶν ἐμὲ ζητεῖς;

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

πόθεν;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

καὶ τὴν θύραν γ' ἤραττες.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ἀποθάνοιμ' ἄρα.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

τοῦ δαὶ δεόμενος δᾶδ' ἔχων ἐλήλυθας;

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

Ἄναφλύστιον ζητῶν τιν' ἄνθρωπον.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

τίνα;

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

980 οὐ τὸν Σεβίνον, ὃν σὺ προσδοκᾶς ἴσως.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην, ἣν τε βούλη γ' ἦν τε μή.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

honeybee of the Muses, nurseling
of the Graces, personification of Pleasure,
open up and welcome me.
Its you I'm hurting for!

Enter FIRST OLD WOMAN from her door.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Hey you, what's this knocking? Not looking for me, are
you?

EPIGENES

Surely you jest!

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Well, you certainly battered on my door.

EPIGENES

I'll be damned if I did!

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Then what are you after, with the torch and all?

EPIGENES

I'm looking for a fellow from Wankton.⁶⁹

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Which one?

EPIGENES

Not Mr. Humpus, whom you're probably expecting.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

(seizing him) Yes, by Aphrodite, whether you like it or not.

⁶⁹ See *Frogs* 427 n.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐχὶ νυνὶ τὰς ὑπερεξηκουτέεις
εἰσάγομεν, ἀλλ' εἰσαυθὺς ἀναβεβλήμεθα·
τὰς ἐντὸς εἴκοσιν γὰρ ἐκδικάζομεν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

985 ἐπὶ τῆς προτέρας ἀρχῆς γε ταυτ' ἦν, ᾧ γλύκων·
νυνὶ δὲ πρῶτον εἰσάγειν ἡμᾶς δοκεῖ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

τῷ βουλομένῳ γε κατὰ τὸν ἐν πεττοῖς νόμον.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐδείπνεις κατὰ τὸν ἐν πεττοῖς νόμον.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι λέγεις· τηνδεδί μοι κρουστέον.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

990 ὅταν γε κρούσης τὴν ἐμὴν πρῶτον θύραν.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐχὶ νυνὶ κρησέραν αἰτούμεθα.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

οἶδ' ὅτι φιλοῦμαι· νῦν δὲ θαυμάζεις ὅτι
θύρασί μ' ἤρρες. ἀλλὰ πρόσαγε τὸ στόμα.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ἀλλ' ᾧ μέλ' ὀρρωδῶ τὸν ἐραστήν σου.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

τίνα;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

EPIGENES

(shaking her off) Wait: we're entering no hearings for cases over sixty just now; we've tabled them for future consideration, while we clear our docket of cases under twenty.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

That was true under the old system, my sweet; but under current law you've got to enter us first.

EPIGENES

It's dealer's choice, by the rules of play.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

But you didn't eat dinner by those rules of play.

EPIGENES

I don't know what you're talking about. I've got to beat on this door.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Not until you first beat on mine!

EPIGENES

No thanks, we're not after a beater just now.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

I know I'm loved; you were just surprised to find me outside. Come on, give us a kiss.

EPIGENES

No ma'am; I'm terrified of your lover.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Who's that?

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

τὸν τῶν γραφέων ἄριστον.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

995

οὗτος δ' ἐστὶ τίς;

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ὃς τοῖς νεκροῖσι ζωγραφεῖ τὰς λεγκύθους.
ἀλλ' ἀπιθ', ὅπως μὴ σ' ἐπὶ θύραισιν ὄψεται.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

οἶδ', οἶδ' ὅ τι βούλει.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ σέ, νῆ Δία.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην, ἣ μ' ἔλαχε κληρουμένη,
μὴ γώ σ' ἀφήσω.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

1000

παραφρονεῖς, ὦ γράδιον.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

ληρεῖς· ἐγὼ δ' ἄξω σ' ἐπὶ τὰμὰ στρώματα.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

τί δῆτα κρεάγρας τοῖς κάδοις ὠνοίμεθ' ἄν,
ἐξὸν καθέντα γράδιον τοιουτοῦ
ἐκ τῶν φρεάτων τοὺς κάδους ξυλλαμβάνειν;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

1005

μὴ σκῶπτέ μ', ὦ τάλαν, ἀλλ' ἔπου δεῦρ' ὡς ἐμέ.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

EPIGENES

The best-selling painter.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

And who's that?

EPIGENES

The one who decorates funeral urns.⁷⁰ Better scam before he spots you in the doorway.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

I know what you're after, I know.

EPIGENES

And I certainly know what *you're* after!

FIRST OLD WOMAN

By Aphrodite, who gave me the luck of the draw, I'm not giving you up!

EPIGENES

You're crazy, old lady.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Nonsense! I'm going to escort you to my bed.

EPIGENES

Why should we buy tongs for our buckets, when we could run a crone like this down the well and use her to haul up those buckets?

FIRST OLD WOMAN

No more teasing, my boy; just come this way to my place.

⁷⁰ I.e., Death.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνάγκη μούστίν, εἰ μὴ τῶν ἐμῶν
τὴν πεντακοσιοστὴν κατέθηκας τῇ πόλει.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

νὴ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην, δεῖ γε μέντοι σ'. ὡς ἐγὼ
τοῖς τηλικούτοις ξυγκαθεύδουσ' ἥδομαι.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

1010 ἐγὼ δὲ ταῖς γε τηλικαύταις ἄχθομαι,
κοῦκ ἂν πιθοίμην οὐδέποτ'.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

ἀλλὰ νὴ Δία
ἀναγκάσει τουτί σε.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τί;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

ψήφισμα, καθ' ὃ σε δεῖ βαδίζειν ὡς ἐμέ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

λέγ' αὐτὸ τί ποτε κάστι.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

καὶ δὴ σοι λέγω.

1015 “ἔδοξε ταῖς γυναιξίν, ἦν ἀνὴρ νέος
νέας ἐπιθυμῆ, μὴ σποδεῖν αὐτὴν πρὶν ἂν
τὴν γραῦν προκρούσῃ πρῶτον. ἦν δὲ μὴ ἴθελῃ
πρότερον προκρούειν, ἀλλ' ἐπιθυμῆ τῆς νέας,
ταῖς πρεσβυτέραις γυναιξίν ἔστω τὸν νέον
1020 ἔλκειν ἀνατεῖ λαβομένας τοῦ παττάλου.”

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

EPIGENES

No! I don't have to, unless you've paid the city the .2% tax on me.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

By Aphrodite, you do have to. I just love sleeping with boys your age.

EPIGENES

And I just hate sleeping with women your age! I'll never consent.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

(*producing a scroll*) But this will make you.

EPIGENES

What's that?

FIRST OLD WOMAN

A decree that says you've got to come to my house.

EPIGENES

Read out what it actually says.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

All right, I shall. (*reading*) "The women have decreed: if a young man desires a young woman he may not hump her until he bangs an old woman first. Should he in his desire for the young woman refuse to do this preliminary banging, the older women shall be entitled with impunity to drag the young man off by his pecker."

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

οἴμοι, Προκρούστης τήμερον γενήσομαι.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

τοῖς γὰρ νόμοις τοῖς ἡμετέροισι πειστέον.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

τί δ' ἦν ἀφαιρήταί μ' ἀνὴρ τῶν δημοτῶν
ἢ τῶν φίλων ἐλθὼν τις;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

1025 ὑπὲρ μέδιμνόν ἐστ' ἀνὴρ οὐδεὶς ἔτι.
ἀλλ' οὐ κύριος

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ἔξωμοσία δ' οὐκ ἔστιν;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

οὐ γὰρ δεῖ στροφῆς.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἔμπορος εἶναι σκήψομαι.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

κλάων γε σύ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

τί δήτα χρὴ δρᾶν;

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

δεῦρ' ἀκολουθεῖν ὡς ἐμέ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

καὶ ταῦτ' ἀνάγκη μουστί;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

EPIGENES

Dear me, this very day I'm to play Procrustes!⁷¹

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Our laws must be obeyed.

EPIGENES

What if one of my demesmen or friends comes and offers bail for me?

FIRST OLD WOMAN

No man is any longer permitted to transact business over the one-bushel limit.⁷²

EPIGENES

Can't I swear off my duty?

FIRST OLD WOMAN

You can't squirm out of this duty!

EPIGENES

I'll get myself exempted as a merchant.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

You'll be sorry if you do!

EPIGENES

So what am I to do?

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Come along this way to my place.

EPIGENES

Is it an absolute necessity?

⁷¹ A legendary robber who fitted his victims to a bed by stretching those who were too short and trimming those who were too long; there is a pun on the verb *prokrouein* "to bang first."

⁷² Citing a law that in actuality applied to women.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

Διομήδειά γε.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

- 1030 ὑποστόρεσαί νυν πρῶτα τῆς ὀριγάνου
καὶ κλήμαθ' ὑπόθου συγκλάσασα τέτταρα
καὶ ταινίωσαι καὶ παράθου τὰς ληκύθους
ὔδατός τε κατάθου τοῦστρακον πρὸ τῆς θύρας.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

ἦ μὴν ἔτ' ὠνήσει σὺ καὶ στεφάνην ἐμοί.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

- 1035 νῆ τὸν Δί', ἦνπερ ἦ γέ που τῶν κηρίων·
οἶμαι γὰρ ἔνδον διαπεσεῖσθαί σ' αὐτίκα.

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

ποῖ τοῦτον ἔλκει;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

τόνδ' ἐμαυτῆς εἰσάγω.

ΝΕΑΝΙΣ

- οὐ σωφρονοῦσά γ' οὐ γὰρ ἡλικίαν ἔχει
παρὰ σοὶ καθεύδειν τηλικούτος ὢν, ἐπεὶ
1040 μήτηρ ἂν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον εἶησ ἢ γυνή.
ὥστ' εἰ καταστήσεσθε τοῦτον τὸν νόμον,
τὴν γῆν ἅπασαν Οἰδιπόδων ἐμπλήσετε.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Α

ὦ παμβδελυρά, φθονοῦσα τόνδε τὸν λόγον

¹¹¹² δὲ γῆ Dobree: δ' ἐγώ a

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

FIRST OLD WOMAN

Diomedes' necessity!⁷³

EPIGENES

Then strew the bier with marjoram, break four vine branches to lay underneath, deck it with ribbons, put the urns alongside, and set the water jug before your doorway.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

I bet you'll end up buying me a wedding garland too!

EPIGENES

I sure will, if I can find a waxen one somewhere,⁷⁴ because I think you're going to disintegrate pretty quickly in there!

Enter GIRL.

GIRL

Where are you dragging him off to?

FIRST OLD WOMAN

This is my own man I'm bringing home.

GIRL

That's not very prudent. He's the wrong age to be sleeping with you—you're more his mother than his wife. If you people start enforcing a law like this, you'll fill the whole country with Oedipuses.

FIRST OLD WOMAN

You dirty slut, you've thought up this objection out of pure

⁷³ The origin of this proverb, indicating ultimate compulsion, is variously explained by ancient scholars.

⁷⁴ Waxen garlands were used in funerals.

ARISTOPHANES

ἔξηυρες· ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σε τιμωρήσομαι.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

1045 νῆ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτήρα, κεχάρισαί γέ μοι,
ὦ γλυκύτατον, τὴν γραῦν ἀπαλλάξασά μου.
ὥστ' ἀντὶ τούτων τῶν ἀγαθῶν εἰς ἐσπέραν
μεγάλην ἀποδώσω καὶ παχείαν σοι χάριν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

1050 αὕτη σύ, ποῖ τουδὶ παραβάσα τὸν νόμον
ἔλκεις, παρ' ἐμοὶ τῶν γραμμάτων εἰρηκότων
πρότερον καθεύδειν αὐτόν;

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

οἴμοι δείλαιος.
πόθεν ἐξέκνιψας, ὦ κάκιστ' ἀπολουμένη;
τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκείνου τὸ κακὸν ἐξωλέστερον.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

βάδιζε δεῦρο.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

μηδαμῶς με περιίδης
ἐλκόμενον ὑπὸ τῆσδ', ἀντιβολῶ σ'.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

1055 ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγώ,
ἀλλ' ὁ νόμος ἔλκει σ'.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

οὐκ ἐμέ γ', ἀλλ' Ἐμπουσά τις,
ἐξ αἵματος φλύκταιναν ἠμφιεσμένην.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

envy. But I'll make you pay for it!

FIRST OLD WOMAN goes inside.

EPIGENES

By Zeus the Savior, sweetest, you've done me a favor by getting that crone off my back. For that, come evening, I'll slip you a big, juicy token of my gratitude!

Enter SECOND OLD WOMAN.

SECOND OLD WOMAN

Hey you! Where are you taking this man, in violation of the law? It's plainly stated that he's got to sleep with me first.

EPIGENES

Good grief, where did you pop out of, you apparition of damnation? This horror is more revolting than the last one!

SECOND OLD WOMAN

Get over here!

EPIGENES

Don't let her drag me away, I beg you!

GIRL runs away.

SECOND OLD WOMAN

It's not me but the law that drags you away.

EPIGENES

No, it's some kind of Empusa⁷⁵ covered with one big blood blister.

⁷⁵ A horrible bogey-woman; for a description cf. *Frogs* 288-96.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

ἔπον, μαλακίων, δεῦρ' ἀνύσας καὶ μὴ λάλει.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

1060 ἴθι νυν ἕασον εἰς ἄφοδον πρῶτιστά με
ἔλθόντα θαρρήσαι πρὸς ἔμαντόν· εἰ δὲ μὴ,
αὐτοῦ τι δρῶντα πυρρὸν ὄψει μ' αὐτίκα
ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

θάρρει, βάδιζ'· ἔνδον χεσεῖ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

δέδοικα κάγῳ μὴ πλέον γ' ἢ βούλομαι.
ἀλλ' ἐγγνητάς σοι καταστήσω δύο
ἀξιόχρεως.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

μὴ μοι καθίστη.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

1065 ποῖ σύ, ποῖ

χωρεῖς μετὰ ταύτης;

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἀλλ' ἔλκομαι.
ἀτὰρ ἦτις εἶ γε, πόλλ' ἀγαθὰ γένοιτό σοι,
ὅτι μ' οὐ περιεΐδες ἐπιτριβέντ'. ὦ Ἡράκλεις,
ὦ Πάνες, ὦ Κορύβαντες, ὦ Διοσκόρω,
1070 τοῦτ' αὖ πολὺν τούτου τὸ κακὸν ἐξωλέστερον.
ἀτὰρ τί τὸ πράγμ' ἔστ', ἀντιβολῶ, τουτί ποτε;
πότερον πίθηκος ἀνάπλεως ψιμυθίου
ἢ γραῦς ἀνεστηκυῖα παρὰ τῶν πλειόνων;

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

SECOND OLD WOMAN

Come along, you sissy. This way. Make it snappy, and no back talk.

EPIGENES

Wait! May I go to the bathroom first? It would help me get hold of myself. If you don't let me, I'll do something right here and you'll soon see me go brown with fear.

SECOND OLD WOMAN

Buck up and get moving; you can shit when we get in the house.

EPIGENES

I'm afraid I'll do more than I want! (*indicating his testicles*)
But I'll be glad to deposit two valuable sureties with you!

SECOND OLD WOMAN

Don't bother.

Enter THIRD OLD WOMAN.

THIRD OLD WOMAN

Hey you! Where are you going with her?

EPIGENES

I'm not going anywhere; I'm being kidnapped! But whoever you are, bless you if you don't just stand by and watch me be tormented. (*turning to see Third Old Woman*)
Heracles! Pan! Corybantes! Dioscuri! Here's another horror, and much more revolting than the last! Please, someone tell me what in the world it is! A monkey plastered with makeup? A hag arisen from the underworld?

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

μη σκώπτέ μ', ἀλλὰ δεῦρ' ἔπον.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

δενρὶ μὲν οὖν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

ὡς οὐκ ἀφήσω σ' οὐδέποτ'.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

1075 οὐδὲ μὴν ἐγώ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

διασπάσεσθέ μ', ὦ κακῶς ἀπολούμεναι.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἀκολουθεῖν σε δεῖ κατὰ τὸν νόμον.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

οὐκ, ἦν ἑτέρα γε γραῦς ἔτ' αἰσχίων φανῆ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

1080 ἦν οὖν ὑφ' ὑμῶν πρῶτον ἀπόλωμαι κακῶς,
φέρει πῶς ἐπ' ἐκείνην τὴν καλὴν ἀφίξομαι;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

αὐτὸς σκόπει σύ· τάδε δέ σοι ποιητέον.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ποτέρας προτέρας οὖν κατελάσας ἀπαλλαγῶ;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

οὐκ οἶσθα; βαδιεῖ δεῦρ'.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ἀφέτω νύν μ' αὐτή.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

THIRD OLD WOMAN

Cut the jokes and follow me.

SECOND OLD WOMAN

Oh no you don't; come along this way.

THIRD OLD WOMAN

I'll never let you go.

SECOND OLD WOMAN

Me neither!

EPIGENES

You're going to rip me in half, you hellbound creatures!

SECOND OLD WOMAN

The law says you've got to follow me.

THIRD OLD WOMAN

No it doesn't, not if an old woman appears who's even uglier.

EPIGENES

So tell me, if I'm miserably done in by you two, how will I get to that pretty girl?

THIRD OLD WOMAN

That's your problem. (*lewdly gesturing*) Just now you've got to do this.

EPIGENES

So which one do I have to poke first in order to get away?

THIRD OLD WOMAN

Isn't it obvious? Come this way!

EPIGENES

Then make this one let go of me.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

δενρὶ μὲν οὖν ἴθ' ὡς ἔμ'.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ἦν ἡδί μ' ἀφῆ.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀφήσω μὰ Δία σ'.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

1085

οὐδὲ μὴν ἐγώ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

χαλεπαί γ' ἂν ἦστε γενόμεναι πορθμῆς.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

τιή;

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ἔλκοντε τοὺς πλωτήρας ἂν ἀπεκναίετε.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

σιγῆ βάδιζε δεῦρο.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ὡς ἐμέ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

1090 τουτὶ τὸ πράγμα κατὰ τὸ Καννωνοῦ σαφῶς
ψήφισμα· βινεῖν δεῖ με διαλελημμένον.
πῶς οὖν δικωπεῖν ἀμφοτέρας δυνήσομαι;

ΓΡΑΤΣ Β

καλῶς, ἐπειδὰν καταφάγῃς βολβῶν χύτραν.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

SECOND OLD WOMAN

No! Come this way with me!

EPIGENES

If she'll let go.

THIRD OLD WOMAN

I certainly will not!

SECOND OLD WOMAN

Nor will I!

EPIGENES

You two would make rough ferryboat captains.

SECOND OLD WOMAN

How's that?

EPIGENES

You'd tug your passengers hard enough to wear them out.

THIRD OLD WOMAN

Shut up and get moving. This way!

SECOND OLD WOMAN

No, this way!

EPIGENES

This is obviously Cannonus' Law put into practice: I've got to appear in irons and fuck my accusers!⁷⁶ But how can I manage to man two boats with a single oar?

SECOND OLD WOMAN

Just fine—after you've wolfed down a potful of love bulbs.

⁷⁶ Cannonus' Law, datable to the era of the Persian Wars, ordered that those accused of injuring the Athenian people be bound and face (not fuck!) the charge before the people.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

οἴμοι κακοδαίμων· ἐγγὺς ἦδη τῆς θύρας
ἐλκόμενός εἰμ'—

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἔσται σοι πλέον·
ξυνεσπεσοῦμαι γὰρ μετὰ σοῦ.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

1095 μὴ πρὸς θεῶν·
ἐνὶ γὰρ ξυνέχεσθαι κρείττον ἢ δυοῖν κακοῖν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ Γ

νῆ τὴν Ἑκάτην, εἴαν τε βούλη γ' ἦν τε μή.

ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣ

ὦ τρισκακοδαίμων, εἰ γυναῖκα δεῖ σαπρὰν
βινεῖν ὅλην τὴν νύκτα καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν,
1100 κᾶπειτ', ἐπειδὰν τῆσδ' ἀπαλλαγῶ, πάλιν
φρύνην ἔχουσαν λήκυθον πρὸς ταῖς γνάθοις.
ἄρ' οὐ κακοδαίμων εἰμί; βαρυδαίμων μὲν οὔν,
νῆ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρ', ἀνὴρ καὶ δυστυχῆς,
ὅστις τοιούτοις θηρίοις συνείρξομαι.
1105 ὅμως δ', εἴαν τι πολλὰ πολλάκις πάθω
ὑπὸ τοῖνδε τοῖν κασαλβάδοιν δευρ' ἐσπλέων,
θάψαι μ' ἐπ' αὐτῷ τῷ στόματι τῆς ἐσβολῆς,
καὶ τήνδ' ἄνωθεν ἐπιπολῆς τοῦ σήματος
ζῶσαν καταπιτώσαντες, εἶτα τὸ πόδε
1110 μολυβδοχοήσαντες κύκλω περὶ τὰ σφυρὰ
ἄνω 'πιθεῖναι πρόφασιν ἀντὶ ληκύθου.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

EPIGENES

Oh, what a sorry end! I'm dragged to the very threshold!

THIRD OLD WOMAN

That's not going to help you: I'm going to fall in right behind you.

EPIGENES

God no: better to grapple with one evil than two!

THIRD OLD WOMAN

By Hecate, you've got no choice in the matter.

EPIGENES

(to the spectators) I'm damned three ways from Sunday if I have to fuck an old bag all night and all day, and after I get free of her, start in again on an old toad with a funeral urn already standing by her chops! So aren't I damned? Nay, a man heavily doomed, by Zeus the Savior, and unlucky, to be closeted with such creatures as these! But if the very worst really does befall me as I put into port atop these two floozies, bury me right where I penetrated the channel. *(indicating Third Old Woman)* As for her, while she's still alive, cover her with pitch all over and put her feet in molten lead up to her ankles, then stick her over my grave instead of an urn!

SECOND and THIRD OLD WOMEN drag Epigenes into the house and slam the door behind them.

Enter a tipsy MAID.

ARISTOPHANES

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΑ

- ὦ μακάριος μὲν δῆμος, εὐδαίμων δὲ γῆ,
 αὐτὴ τέ μοι δέσποινα μακαριωτάτη,
 ὑμεῖς θ' ὅσαι παρέστατ' ἐπὶ ταῖσιν θύραις,
 1115 οἱ γείτονές τε πάντες οἳ τε δημόται,
 ἐγὼ τε πρὸς τούτοισιν ἢ διάκονος,
 ἦτις μεμύρισμαι τὴν κεφαλὴν μυρώμασιν
 ἀγαθοῖσιν, ὦ Ζεῦ. πολὺ δ' ὑπερπέπαικεν αὖ
 τούτων ἀπάντων τὰ Θάσι' ἀμφορείδια·
 1120 ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ γὰρ ἐμμένει πολὺν χρόνον,
 τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἀπανθήσαντα πάντ' ἀπέπτατο,
 ὥστ' ἐστὶ πολὺ βέλτιστα, πολὺ δῆτ'. ὦ θεοί.
 κέρασον ἄκρατον· εὐφρανεῖ τὴν νύχθ' ὄλην
 ἐκλεγομένας ὅτι ἂν μάλιστ' ὄσμῃν ἔχη.
 1125 ἀλλ', ὦ γυναῖκες, φράσατέ μοι τὸν δεσπότην,
 τὸν ἄνδρ', ὅπου 'στί, τῆς ἐμῆς κεκτημένης.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

αὐτοῦ μένουσ' ἡμῖν γ' ἂν ἐξευρέιν δοκεῖς.
 μάλισθ' ὁδὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ἔρχεται.

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΑ

ὦ δέσποτ', ὦ μακάριε καὶ τρισόλβιε.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἐγώ;

ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑΙΝΑ

- 1130 σὺ μέντοι, νῆ Δί', ὥς γ' οὐδεὶς ἀνήρ.
 τίς γὰρ γένοιτ' ἂν μᾶλλον ὀλβιώτερος,
 ὅστις πολιτῶν πλείον ἢ τρισμυρίων

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

MAID

Blessed citizenry! Favored land! And most blessed of all, our mistress herself, and all you women who stand at our door, and all our neighbors and fellow demesmen, and me too, the maid, with my head perfumed with fine perfumes, Zeus be praised! But far surpassing all these fragrances are those nice little bottles of Thasian wine: they stay in your head a long time, when those others have lost their bouquet and completely evaporated. So they're far the best, yes by far, the gods be praised! Pour it neat and it'll make you merry all night long, if you pick the one with the best bouquet! Women, tell me where master is, I mean my mistress' husband.

CHORUS LEADER

If you wait right here you're bound to run into him. Yes indeed, here he is on his way to dinner now.

Enter BLEPYRUS, garlanded and embracing two Girls.

MAID

Oh master! You happy, you triple-lucky man!

BLEPYRUS

Who, me?

MAID

Sure you, by Zeus, beyond anyone else in the world. Who could be luckier? Out of more than thirty thousand citi-

1166-67 lacunam posuit Meineke, suppl. e.g. Sommerstein

ARISTOPHANES

ὄντων τὸ πλῆθος οὐ δεδείπνηκας μόνος;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

εὐδαιμονικόν γ' ἄνθρωπον εἴρηκας σαφῶς.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

ποῖ ποῖ βαδίσεις;

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

1135 ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ἔρχομαι.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

νῆ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην, πολὺ γ' ἀπάντων ὕστατος.

ὄμως δ' ἐκέλευε συλλαβοῦσάν μ' ἢ γυνῆ

ἄγειν σε καὶ τασδί μετὰ σοῦ τὰς μείρακας.

οἶνος δὲ Χιός ἐστι περιλελειμμένος

1140 καὶ τᾶλλ' ἀγαθὰ. πρὸς ταῦτα μὴ βραδύνετε,

καὶ τῶν θεατῶν εἴ τις εὖνους τυγχάνει

καὶ τῶν κριτῶν εἰ μὴ τις ἐτέρωσε βλέπει,

ἴτω μεθ' ἡμῶν πάντα γὰρ παρέξομεν.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

οὐκ οὖν ἅπασι δῆτα γενναίως ἐρεῖς

1145 καὶ μὴ παραλείψεις μηδέν', ἀλλ' ἐλευθέρως

καλεῖς γέροντα, μεράκιον, παιδίσκον; ὡς

τὸ δεῖπνον αὐτοῖς ἐστ' ἐπεσκενασμένον

ἀπαξάπασιν—ἦν ἀπίωσιν οἴκαδε.

ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς τὸ δεῖπνον ἤδη 'πέιξομαι

1150 ἔχω δέ τοι καὶ δᾶδα ταυτηνὴ καλῶς.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΑ

τί δῆτα διατρίβεις ἔχων, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄγεις

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

zens you're the only one who hasn't had dinner.

CHORUS LEADER

Yes, you make him sound quite a happy fellow.

MAID

Hey, where can you be off to now?

BLEPYRUS

Why, I'm off to dinner.

MAID

By Aphrodite, you're the last one by a mile. Still, your wife told me to gather you up and escort you there, and these girls with you. There's some Chian wine left over, and some other good stuff. So don't be late. And any of you spectators who favor us, and any of you judges who's not looking elsewhere, come along with us: we'll supply everything.

BLEPYRUS

Why don't you be a lady and address all of them, leaving no one out? Be liberal, invite the old man, the boy, the little child: there's dinner specially made for all of them—if they hurry home! Me, I'm shoving off to my own dinner now; (*indicating one of the Girls*) and fortunately I've got this little torch here to light my way!

CHORUS LEADER

Then why waste time here? Come on, take these girls and

ARISTOPHANES

τασδι λαβών; ἐν ὅσῳ δὲ καταβαίνεις, ἐγὼ
ἐπάσομαι μέλος τι μελλοδειπνικόν.
σμικρὸν δ' ὑποθέσθαι τοῖς κριταῖσι βούλομαι.

- 1155 τοῖς σοφοῖς μὲν τῶν σοφῶν μεμνημένοις κρίνειν
 ἐμέ,
τοῖς γελῶσι δ' ἠδέως διὰ τὸν γέλων κρίνειν ἐμέ—
 σχεδὸν ἅπαντας οὖν κελεύω δηλαδὴ κρίνειν ἐμέ—
 μηδὲ τὸν κλῆρον γενέσθαι μηδὲν ἡμῖν αἴτιον,
 ὅτι προείληχ'. ἀλλὰ πάντα ταῦτα χρῆ μεμνημένους
 1160 μὴ ἴπιρκεῖν, ἀλλὰ κρίνειν τοὺς χοροὺς ὀρθῶς αἰεί,
μηδὲ ταῖς κακαῖς ἐταίραις τὸν τρόπον προσεικέναι,
αἱ μόνου μνήμην ἔχουσι τῶν τελευταίων αἰεί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- ὦ ὦ, ὦρα δῆ,
 ὦ φίλαι γυναῖκες, εἶπερ μέλλομεν τὸ χρήμα δρᾶν,
 1165 ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ὑπανακινεῖν. Κρητικῶς οὖν τὸ πόδε
 καὶ σὺ κίνει.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

τούτο δρῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ τάσδε νῦν <τὰς μείρακας
 χρῆ συννπάγειν κούφα> λαγαρὰς τοῖν σκελίσκοιν
 τὸν ῥυθμόν.
 τάχα γὰρ ἔπεισι

¹¹⁷⁶ τρέχε Blaydes: ταχὺ a

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

get going! And while you're on your way down there, I'll sing a little pre-dinner tune.

BLEPYRUS, MAID, and Girls descend into the orchestra.

But first I have a small suggestion for the judges: if you're intelligent, remember the intelligent parts and vote for me; if you've got a sense of humor, remember the jokes and vote for me. Yes, it's virtually all of you that I'm asking to vote for me. And don't hold it against me that the luck of the draw has put me onstage first. So, bearing all this in mind, don't break your oath, but always judge the choruses fairly. Don't act like dishonest courtesans, who only remember their latest companions.

CHORUS

Hey, hey, it's time,
dear ladies, to shake a leg and hop off to dinner,
if we mean to do it at all. So you start moving your
feet too,
to a Cretan tune.⁷⁷

BLEPYRUS

That's what I'm doing!

CHORUS

And these girls too,
so lithe, should join us in lightly moving their gamas to
the rhythm.
For soon there'll be served

⁷⁷ Cretans were renowned dancers.

ARISTOPHANES

- λοπαδοτεμαχοσελαχογαλεο-
 1170 κρانيολευψανοδριμνποτριμματο-
 σιλφιολιπαρομελιτοκατακεχυμενο-
 κιχλεπικοσσυφοφαττοπεριστερα-
 λεκτρυνοποπτοπιφαλλιδοκιγκλοπε-
 λειολαγωσிரαιοβαφητραγα-
 1175 λοπτερυγών. σὺ δὲ ταῦτ' ἀκροασάμε-
 νος τρέχε καὶ ταχέως λαβὲ τρύβλιον.
 εἶτα κόνισαι λαβῶν
 λέκιθον, ἔν' ἐπιδειπνῆς.

ΒΛΕΠΤΡΟΣ

ἀλλὰ λαιμάττουσί που.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- 1180 αἶρεσθ' ἄνω, ἰαί, εὐαί·
 δειπνήσομεν, εὐοῖ, εὐαί,
 εὐαί, ὡς ἐπὶ νίκη.
 εὐαί, εὐαί, εὐαί, εὐαί.

ASSEMBLYWOMEN

limpets and saltfish and sharksteak and dogfish
and mullets and oddfish with savory pickle sauce
and thrushes with blackbirds and various pigeons
and roosters and pan-roasted wagtails and larks
and nice chunks of hare marinated in mulled wine
and all of it drizzled with honey and silphium
and vinegar, oil, and spices galore!⁷⁸ Now that you've
heard

what awaits you, run grab your plate quickly,
then raise the dust, but take
some porridge for dinner!

BLEPYRUS

I'm sure that they're stuffing it in.

CHORUS

Lift your legs aloft, hey hey,
We're off to dinner, hoy hoy,
and victory, hurray!
Hurray hurrah!

⁷⁸ In the Greek this list of foods is combined into one huge word.

WEALTH



INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Wealth was produced in 388 by Aristophanes in competition with Nicochares' *Spartans*, Aristomenes' *Admetus*, Nicophon's *Adonis*, and Alcaeus' *Pasiphae*, but the festival and prize are unreported. It was his last production in his own name; his final plays, *Cocalus* and *Aeolosicon*, were subsequently produced by his son, Araros.

Hellenistic scholars possessed a homonymous play by Aristophanes whose production they dated to 408. The fragments do not help us decide whether our play is a revision (like the extant *Clouds*) or a new play.¹ Its theme of wealth and justice would have been topical at either date, since the poverty of ordinary people is often mentioned in earlier plays and, for all we know, was an even more pressing issue in 408 than it was twenty years later. Comparative comments preserved in the scholia (at 115, 119, 173, 972, 1146) suggest that the two plays were similar enough (at least in part) to be confused, and while our play does contain passages datable after 408 (several topical allusions and the play's single choral song, 290–321), they are not integral to the plot and so could have been added in a revision. On the other hand, the structure and complexion of

¹ Fr. 458 may indicate the motif of blindness healed (as in our play), fr. 465 an Ionian or Doric speaker (not in our play).

ARISTOPHANES

our play are more typical of comedy in the fourth than in the fifth century. Its parodos and agon are truncated and unbalanced; there is no parabasis; and though the chorus is present throughout, it has only occasional lines of dialogue and only one song. As in later comedy, places where a choral song divided episodes are indicated by the note *chorou* ("place for a chorus"); presumably these *entr'actes* were not composed by Aristophanes. That ancient commentators mention this change particularly in regard to *Wealth* (cf. *Life*, T 1.51-54) may indicate that it was the first play to dispense with integrated choral songs. Also pointing to later comedy are the play's bland humor, linguistic simplicity, straightforward morality, relative lack of topicality and satirical animus, and the characters' commonplace names and personalities. Indeed these were the features that made *Wealth* the most popular of Aristophanes' works in later eras.

A noteworthy departure from Aristophanes' fifth-century practice is his changed moral stance toward economic inequality: whereas in earlier plays the poor as a class are often presumed to be wicked and the wealthy virtuous, in *Wealth* we find just the opposite; and when their economic situations are miraculously reversed, both poverty and injustice disappear. Noteworthy too is the prominence of Cario, the slave of the protagonist Chremylus, who is present throughout and plays an integral role in the plot. As in later comedy, master and resourceful slave share the main initiatives. Cario's cheeky vivacity counterpoints Chremylus' gloomy sobriety, and the scurrility that in earlier plays was an element of the protagonist's character is here concentrated largely in Cario, leaving Chremylus more dignified. Finally, the action of the play is unusually

WEALTH

concentrated: everything takes place before Chremylus' house, and three actors can play all the roles.

Chremylus, a farmer on the poor end of the landed class, has become so cynical as to doubt the value of honesty, and to wonder whether it would not be best to raise his beloved only son to be a criminal. He has travelled with Cario to Delphi to put this question to Apollo, who advised him to take home the first man he met on leaving the sanctuary. This turns out to be the god Wealth, an old and decrepit figure who reveals that Zeus had long ago blinded him so that he could not distinguish good men from bad. Chremylus decides to remedy this situation by restoring Wealth's sight. The Greeks typically imagined Wealth as being a young child of Demeter,² but here his decrepitude suits the allegory: it emphasizes that the unjust distribution of wealth has been going on a long time, and prepares for the god's rejuvenation.

Cario summons Chremylus' friends, a Chorus of impoverished farmers, while Chremylus fetches his friend Blepsidemus. After reassuring them at some length that his motives are altruistic and that he has not enriched himself dishonestly, Chremylus prepares to take Wealth to Asclepius' temple for the cure. But he is interrupted by the appearance of the horrible hag Poverty, who condemns his plan by pointing to her beneficial role in human society: without the fear of poverty as a motivation, humanity would produce and create nothing, so that there would be nothing for money to buy. Chremylus replies by vividly describing the hard life of the poor. Poverty counters by

² Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 969–74, *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 488–89.

ARISTOPHANES

drawing a distinction between poverty and beggary, and predicting that after a redistribution of wealth his life would be even harder than it already is. Chremylus mockingly replies that for poor people life simply cannot get any harder and that all mankind prefers wealth to poverty. To Poverty's complaint that "you're using ridicule and caricature and not taking this seriously," Chremylus replies, "you won't persuade me even if you convince me," and brusquely dismisses her.

Though Chremylus does not cogently refute Poverty at the theoretical level, his rebuttal is effective nonetheless: her arguments, which probably reflect contemporary economic theories, are palpably sophistic, and her physical ugliness and callous attitude are designed to be unsympathetic. As in earlier literature, she is portrayed as an unmitigated evil and a motivator of shameful acts,³ and can have won no sympathy from the majority of spectators. As she exits she predicts that "you'll summon me back here one day, both of you," but the subsequent success of Chremylus' plan proves her wrong.

Chremylus and Cario now take Wealth to the sanctuary of Asclepius for his cure, described by Cario in an exceptionally long and vivid narrative (653-747), and upon their return we meet a series of visitors who exemplify the consequences. The first two visitors illustrate the play's initial premise that the restoration of Wealth's eyesight will enrich the good and impoverish the bad (cf. 95-7): a good man comes to thank Wealth, and an Informer comes to complain. The Informer claims (rather like Poverty) that

³ Cf. Alcaeus 364 (sister of Helplessness), Theognis 351-54, 384-85, 649-52, Herodotus 8.111.3.

WEALTH

his activities benefit Athens, but his final vow to prosecute Wealth will not have helped his case in the eyes of the spectators. The Informer is the play's only representative of the political world; otherwise the issue of wealth and justice is viewed from the perspective of private lives, not as a political but a social problem, whose remedy is framed in intellectual and moral rather than political terms.

The next pair of visitors, a wealthy Old Woman and her former gigolo, illustrate a different outcome of Wealth's cure, that everyone is now wealthy: the Old Woman has not been impoverished (she can still offer gifts: 995-97), and the Young Man, newly enriched, no longer needs her. But the justice of this outcome is less clear: although Chremylus had expressed the hope (reminiscent of Praxagora's in *Assemblywomen*) that everyone will now become good once wickedness is no longer profitable (496-7), it is never implied that the Old Woman had been wicked or the Young Man good; indeed the Young Man comes off as a boorish ingrate, while Chremylus expresses sympathy for the Old Woman (1071-75) and obliges the Young Man to keep his promise to visit her that night (1200-01).

It remains to settle the old problem of Zeus' hostility to mankind. Hermes arrives to threaten divine vengeance, since people no longer sacrifice to the gods (recall the situation in *Birds*), but in his hungry condition is easily recruited to Chremylus' kitchen staff. A hungry Priest follows and offers to abandon Zeus for Wealth. But Chremylus proclaims that Zeus and Wealth are after all identical, and proposes to install Wealth "where he used to be," on the Acropolis as guardian of Athena's treasury (a reference to the bygone days of Athens' imperial pros-

ARISTOPHANES

perity), making it clear that all Athenians will benefit and portraying Chremylus as a civic benefactor not unlike Trygaeus in *Peace*.

Text

Seven papyri preserve fragments of *Wealth*; five of them are not cited in the notes: *POxy.* 4519 (III), partially preserving lines 1–16; *PBerol.* 13231 + 21202 (V/VI), partially preserving lines 134–38, 140–44, 171–73, 289–93, 311–19, 327–31, 347–55; *PAnt.* 180 (V/VI), partially preserving lines 466–67, 476–77, 499–501, 510–11, 806–8, 842–45; *POxy.* 4520 (V), partially preserving lines 635–679, 698–738; and *PLaur.* III.319 (V/VI), partially preserving lines 1135–39.

The transmission of *Wealth* has yet to be systematically investigated. There are over 150 medieval MSS, most of them late and only a few yet collated. Some 30 MSS (represented in this edition by A M U) are pre-Triclinian in their readings but are affected by horizontal contamination to such an extent that none show usefully consistent affinities; R and V separately and together are the most consistent source of good readings.

Sigla

- | | |
|----|--|
| Π1 | <i>POxy.</i> 1617 (V), parts of lines 1–19, 22–25, 32–56 |
| Π2 | <i>POxy.</i> 4521 (II), parts of lines 687–705, 726–31, 957–70 |
| R | Ravennas 429 (c. 950) |
| V | Venetus Marcianus 474 (XI/XII) |
| S | readings found in the Suda |
| A | Parisinus gr. 2712 (XIV ⁱⁿ) |

WEALTH

- M Ambrosianus L 39 sup. (XIV^m)
U Vaticanus Urbinas 141 (XIV)
a the consensus of R V A M U
t readings found only in Triclinian MSS

Annotated Editions

- A. von Velsen (Leipzig 1881).
F. H. M. Blaydes (Halle 1886).
J. van Leeuwen (Leiden 1904).
B. B. Rogers (London 1907), with English translation.
K. Holzinger (Vienna/Leipzig 1940), commentary only.
A. H. Sommerstein (Warminster 2001), with English translation.

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ οἰκέτης

Χρεμύλου

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ φίλος

Χρεμύλου

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ΓΥΝΗ *Χρεμύλου*

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

ΕΡΜΗΣ

ΙΕΡΕΤΣ Διὸς Σωτήρης

ΚΩΦΑ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΠΑΙΔΑΡΙΟΝ τοῦ

Δικαίου Ἀνδρός

ΜΑΡΤΥΣ

ΟΙΚΕΤΑΙ

ΧΟΡΟΣ ἀγροίκων

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CARIO, slave of

Chremylus

CHREMYLUS

WEALTH

BLEPSIDEMUS, friend

of Chremylus

POVERTY

WIFE of Chremylus

JUST MAN

INFORMER

OLD WOMAN

YOUNG MAN

HERMES

PRIEST of Zeus the

Savior

SILENT CHARACTERS

CHILD of Just Man

WITNESS

SLAVES

CHORUS of farmers

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

- ὡς ἀργαλέον πρᾶγμ' ἐστίν, ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ θεοί,
δοῦλον γενέσθαι παραφρονοῦντος δεσπότου
ἦν γὰρ τὰ βέλτισθ' ὁ θεράπων λέξας τύχη,
δόξῃ δὲ μὴ δρᾶν ταῦτα τῷ κεκτημένῳ,
5 μετέχειν ἀνάγκη τὸν θεράποντα τῶν κακῶν·
τοῦ σώματος γὰρ οὐκ ἔᾶ τὸν κύριον
κρατεῖν ὁ δαίμων, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἐωνημένον.
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ ταῦτα· τῷ δὲ Λοξία,
ὃς θεσπιωδεῖ τρίποδος ἐκ χρυσηλάτου,
10 μέμψιν δικαίαν μέμφομαι ταύτην, ὅτι
ιατρὸς ὢν καὶ μάντις, ὡς φασιν, σοφὸς
μελαγχολῶντ' ἀπέπεμψέ μου τὸν δεσπότην,
ὅστις ἀκολουθεῖ κατόπιν ἀνθρώπου τυφλοῦ,
τοῦναντίον δρῶν ἢ προσῆκ' αὐτῷ ποιεῖν.
15 οἱ γὰρ βλέποντες τοῖς τυφλοῖς ἡγούμεθα,
οὔτος δ' ἀκολουθεῖ, καμὲ προσβιάζεται,
καὶ ταῦτ' ἀποκρινόμενος τὸ παράπαν οὐδὲ γρῦ.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως σιγήσομαι,
ἦν μὴ φράσης ὃ τι τῷδ' ἀκολουθοῦμέν ποτε,

17 -μενος Bentley: -μένῳ R: -μένου cett. III S

WEALTH

A street in Athens, outside Chremylus' house. A blind and ragged old man enters from a wing, followed by Chremylus and his slave, Cario; both wear laurel wreaths, and Cario carries some sacrificial meat.

CARIO

Gods in heaven, it's a tough job slaving for a master who's out of his mind! The servant might offer the best advice, but if his owner decides not to follow it, the servant will surely share the grief. It's his fate that mastery of his own body is denied him, but belongs to his purchaser. And that's how things stand. But against Apollo, "who from a tripod of beaten gold dispenses prophecies,"¹ I have a valid complaint, and here it is: people claim that he's a healer and sage prophet, yet he discharged my master in a deranged condition. There he goes, following a blind person, exactly the opposite of what he should be doing: we who can see should lead the blind, but he keeps following, and makes me follow too, all the while giving my questions nary a peep in reply. (to *Chremylus*) Well, I certainly don't intend to keep quiet, master, not unless you tell me why

¹ From an unknown tragedy.

ARISTOPHANES

- 20 ὦ δέσποτ', ἀλλὰ σοι παρέξω πράγματα.
οὐ γάρ με τυπτήσεις στέφανον ἔχοντά γε.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

μὰ Δί' ἀλλ' ἀφελὼν τὸν στέφανον, ἦν λυπῆς τί με,
ἵνα μᾶλλον ἀλγῆς.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

- λῆρος· οὐ γὰρ παύσομαι
πρὶν ἂν φράσης μοι τίς ποτ' ἐστὶν οὐτοσί·
25 εὖνους γὰρ ὧν σοι πυνθάνομαι πάνυ σφόδρα.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ σε κρύψω· τῶν ἐμῶν γὰρ οἰκετῶν
πιστότατον ἠγοῦμαι σε καὶ κλεπτίστατον.
ἐγὼ θεοσεβῆς καὶ δίκαιος ὧν ἀνὴρ
κακῶς ἔπραττον καὶ πένης ἦν.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οἶδά τοι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

- 30 ἕτεροι δ' ἐπλούτουν, ἱερόσυλοι, ῥήτορες
καὶ συσκοφάνται καὶ πονηροί.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

πείθομαι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

- ἐπερησόμενος οὖν ὠχόμην ὡς τὸν θεόν,
τὸν ἐμὸν μὲν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ταλαιπώρου σχεδὸν
ἦδη νομίζων ἐκτετοξεῦσθαι βίον,
35 τὸν δ' υἱόν, ὅσπερ ὧν μόνος μοι τυγχάνει,

WEALTH

we're following this fellow; I'll just give you a hard time. And you wouldn't dare beat me when I'm wearing a wreath.²

CHREMYLUS

True enough, but if you pester me at all, I'll rip that wreath off, and you'll get it even worse.

CARIO

Nonsense. I won't give up until you tell me who this fellow is. I only ask with your welfare in mind, very much so.

CHREMYLUS

All right, I won't keep you in the dark; I consider you the most trustworthy of my slaves, and the most larcenous. I'm a just and godfearing man, and yet I've always been poor and unsuccessful.

CARIO

As I well know.

CHREMYLUS

While others have prospered: temple robbers, politicians, informers, rascals.

CARIO

I agree.

CHREMYLUS

And that's why I went to consult the god, not for my own miserable sake—at this point in my life I've shot all my arrows—but for my son, my only son. I wanted to find out if

² As coming from an oracular consultation at Delphi.

ARISTOPHANES

~~πενσόμενος εἰ χρῆ μεταβαλόντα τοὺς τρόπους
εἶναι πανούργον, ἄδικον, ὑγιῆς μηδὲ ἔν,
ὡς τῷ βίῳ τοῦτ' αὐτὸ νομίσας ξυμφέρειν.~~

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

“τί δῆτα Φοῖβος ἔλακεν ἐκ τῶν στεμμάτων;”

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

40 πεύσει. σαφῶς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς εἶπέ μοι ταδί·
ὅτῳ ξυναντήσαιμι πρῶτον ἐξιών,
ἐκέλενε τούτου μὴ μεθίεσθαί μ' ἔτι,
πέιθειν δ' ἑμαυτῷ ξυνακολουθεῖν οἴκαδε.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ τῷ ξυναντᾶς δῆτα πρῶτῳ;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τουτῷ.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

45 εἶτ' οὐ ξυνίης τὴν ἐπίνοιαν τοῦ θεοῦ
φράζουσαν, ᾧ σκαιότατέ, σοι σαφέστατα
ἀσκεῖν τὸν υἱὸν τὸν ἐπιχώριον τρόπον;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τῷ τοῦτο κρίνεις;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

δῆλον ὅτιη καὶ τυφλῷ
γνώναι δοκεῖ τοῦθ', ὡς σφόδρ' ἔστι συμφέρον
50 τὸ μηδὲν ἀσκεῖν ὑγιῆς ἐν τῷ νῦν γένει.

⁵⁰ γένει γρV: βίῳ R: ἔτει V: χρόνῳ ΠΙ γρV cett.

WEALTH

he should change his ways and become a criminal, unjust, completely unwholesome, considering that that's the way to get ahead in life.

CARIO

"What then did Phoebus pronounce from his holy wreaths?"³

CHREMYLUS

You'll find out. Here's what the god told me in plain terms: the first person I encountered on leaving the shrine I was told to stick to, and persuade to come home with me.⁴

CARIO

And whom did you encounter first?

CHREMYLUS

Him!

CARIO

Well, don't you see the god's point, which tells you quite plainly, you supreme dummy, to raise your son according to the local norm?

CHREMYLUS

How do you figure that?

CARIO

It's so obvious, even a blind man could see it: in our age, the key to real success is to avoid every wholesome practice.

³ From an unknown tragedy.

⁴ A motif from folklore, cf. Euripides, *Ion* 534-36.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως ὁ χρησμὸς εἰς τοῦτο ῥέπει,
ἀλλ' εἰς ἕτερόν τι μείζον. ἦν δ' ἡμῖν φράση
ὅστις ποτ' ἔστιν οὕτοσὶ καὶ τοῦ χάριν
καὶ τοῦ δεόμενος ἦλθε μετὰ νῶν ἐνθαδί,
55 πυθοίμεθ' ἂν τὸν χρησμὸν ἡμῶν ὃ τι νοεῖ.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἄγε δῆ, σὺ πότερον σαντὸν ὅστις εἶ φράσεις,
ἢ τὰπὶ τούτοις δρῶ; λέγειν χρὴ ταχὺ πάνν.

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν οἰμῶζειν λέγω σοι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μανθάνεις

ὅς φησιν εἶναι;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

σοὶ λέγει τοῦτ', οὐκ ἐμοί·
60 σκαιῶς γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ χαλεπῶς ἐκπνυθάνει.
ἀλλ' εἴ τι χαίρεις ἀνδρὸς εὐόρκου τρόποις,
ἐμοὶ φράσον.

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

κλάειν ἔγωγέ σοι λέγω.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

δέχου τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τὸν ὄρνιν τοῦ θεοῦ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐ τοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα χαιρήσεις ἔτι.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

That can't be the oracle's drift; no, it must be something loftier. Now if this fellow would just tell us who he is, and the why and wherefore of his coming here with us, we'd soon find out what our oracle means.

CARIO

All right you, are you going to identify yourself, or must I take additional steps? You'd better talk, and pretty fast.

WEALTH

My answer to you is, go to hell.

CARIO

Did you get who he said he is?

CHREMYLUS

He said it to you, not me. You did question him in a rude and clumsy way. (*to Wealth*) Now if you appreciate the manners of a man who keeps his word, please answer the question for me.

WEALTH

You can go to hell too.

CARIO

There you have the god's man and message.

CHREMYLUS

(*to Wealth*) By heaven, you won't get away with this!

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

65 εἰ μὴ φράσεις γάρ, ἀπό σ' ὀλῶ κακὸν κακῶς.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ὦ τᾶν, ἀπαλλάχθητον ἀπ' ἐμοῦ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

πώμαλα.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ μὴν ὃ λέγω βέλτιστόν ἐστ', ὦ δέσποτα.

ἀπολῶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον κάκιστα τουτονί.

ἀναθεὶς γὰρ ἐπὶ κρημνόν τιν' αὐτὸν καταλιπὼν

70 ἄπειμ', ἵν' ἐκείθεν ἐκτραχηλισθῆ πεσών.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' αἶρε ταχέως.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

μηδαμῶς.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐκ οὐκ ἐρεῖς;

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἦν πύθησθέ μ' ὅστις εἶμ', εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι
κακὸν τί μ' ἐργάσεσθε κοῦκ ἀφήσετεν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς ἡμεῖς γ', ἐὰν βούλη γε σύ.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

μέθεσθέ νῦν μου πρῶτον.

WEALTH

CARIO

If you don't start talking, I'm going to put a miserable end to your miserable life.

WEALTH

Mister, leave me alone, the both of you.

CHREMYLUS

Fat chance.

CARIO

My suggestion is the best, master: let me put a miserable end to this character. I'll plant him at the edge of some cliff and leave him there, so he can fall off and break his neck.

CHREMYLUS

All right, haul him off right now.

WEALTH

No!

CHREMYLUS

You'll talk, then?

WEALTH

But if you discover my identity, I'm sure you'll do something bad to me, and never let me go.

CHREMYLUS

I swear we will, if that's what you want.

WEALTH

Then take your hands off me first.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

75

ἦν, μεθίμεν.

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

ἀκούετον δὴ· δεῖ γάρ, ὡς ἔοικέ, με
λέγειν ἅ κρύπτειν ἢ παρεσκευασμένος.
ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι Πλούτος.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ὦ μιαρώτατε
ἀνδρῶν ἀπάντων, εἴτ' ἐσίγασ Πλούτος ὦν;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

80 σὺ Πλούτος, οὕτως ἀθλίως διακείμενος;
ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἄπολλον καὶ θεοὶ καὶ δαίμονες
καὶ Ζεῦ, τί φῆς; ἐκείνος ὄντως εἶ σύ;

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

ναί.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἐκείνος αὐτός;

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

αὐτότατος.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀνχμῶν βαδίσεις;
πόθεν οὖν, φράσον,

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

85 ὃς οὐκ ἐλούσατ' ἐξ ὅτουπερ ἐγένετο.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

All right, they're off.

WEALTH

Now listen; it seems I must tell you what I was prepared to conceal. You see, I'm Wealth.

CARIO

You scum of the earth, you weren't going to tell us that you're Wealth?

CHREMYLUS

You're Wealth, in such a miserable state? By Phoebus Apollo, Zeus, and all the gods and spirits, what are you saying? Are you really who you say?

WEALTH

Yes.

CHREMYLUS

The very one himself?

WEALTH

None other.

CHREMYLUS

Then how come you look so grubby?

WEALTH

I've been visiting Patrocles, who hasn't taken a bath since he was born.⁵

⁵ Identity uncertain; mentioned also in Aristophanes' *Storks* (fr. 455) as a wealthy miser.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τουτὶ δὲ τὸ κακὸν πῶς ἔπαθες; κάτειπέ μοι.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ὁ Ζεὺς με ταῦτ' ἔδρασεν ἀνθρώποις φθονῶν.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἂν μειράκιον ἠπέιλησ' ὅτι
ὡς τοὺς δικαίους καὶ σοφοὺς καὶ κοσμίους
90 μόνους βαδιοίμην· ὁ δὲ μ' ἐποίησεν τυφλόν,
ἵνα μὴ διαγιγνώσκομι τούτων μηδένα.
οὕτως ἐκείνος τοῖσι χρηστοῖσι φθονεῖ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

καὶ μὴν διὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς γε τιμᾶται μόνους
καὶ τοὺς δικαίους.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ὁμολογῶ σοι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

95 φέρε, τί οὖν;
εἰ πάλιν ἀναβλέψειας, ὥσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ,
φεύγοις ἂν ἤδη τοὺς πονηρούς;

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

φήμ' ἐγώ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὡς τοὺς δικαίους δ' ἂν βαδίζοις;

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

πάνν μὲν οὖν
πολλοῦ γὰρ αὐτοὺς οὐχ ἑώρακά πω χρόνου.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

But how did you fall on such hard times, I'd like to know?

WEALTH

Zeus did this to me because he resents mankind. You see, when I was a boy I vowed that I'd only visit the houses of just, wise, and decent people, so Zeus made me blind, to keep me from recognizing any of them.⁶ That's how much he resents good people.

CHREMYLUS

But it's only the good and the just that honor him!

WEALTH

I agree with you.

CHREMYLUS

All right now, suppose you regained your sight, just as it was before, would you start shunning the wicked?

WEALTH

Yes I would.

CHREMYLUS

And you'd visit the just?

WEALTH

Absolutely. It's been quite a while since I've laid eyes on them.

⁶ The blindness of wealth was an old motif, cf. Hipponax 36.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ θαυμά γ' οὐδέν· οὐδ' ἐγὼ γὰρ ὁ βλέπων.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

100 ἄφετόν με νῦν ἴστον γὰρ ἦδη τάπ' ἐμοῦ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

μὰ Δί', ἀλλὰ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐξόμεσθά σου.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

οὐκ ἠγόρευον ὅτι παρέξειν πράγματα
ἐμέλλετόν μοι;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

καὶ σύ γ', ἀντιβολῶ, πιθοῦ
καὶ μή μ' ἀπολίπῃς· οὐ γὰρ εὐρήσεις ἐμοῦ
105 ζητῶν ἔτ' ἄνδρα τοὺς τρόπους βελτίονα.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μὰ τὸν Δί', οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἄλλος πλὴν ἐγώ.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ταυτὶ λέγουσι πάντες· ἠνίκ' ἂν δέ μου
τύχῳσ' ἀληθῶς καὶ γένωνται πλούσιοι,
ἄτεχνῶς ὑπερβάλλουσι τῇ μοχθηρίᾳ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

110 ἔχει μὲν οὕτως, εἰσὶ δ' οὐ πάντες κακοί.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἀπαξάπαντες.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οἰμῶξει μακρά.

WEALTH

CARIO

That's no surprise: neither have I, and I can see!

WEALTH

Now let me go; you've heard my story.

CHREMYLUS

Oh no, we want to hold on to you all the more!

WEALTH

Didn't I predict that you two would make trouble for me?

CHREMYLUS

No, please hear me out, and don't run off; you'll never find a man with a better character than mine.

CARIO

No indeed, there's none better, except for me.

WEALTH

That's what they all say. But once they get their hands on me for real and become rich, their wickedness knows absolutely no bounds.

CHREMYLUS

True, that's how it is, but not everyone is bad.

WEALTH

Oh yes they are, all of them!

CARIO

You're really going to get it!

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

σοὶ δ' ὡς ἂν εἰδῆς ὅσα, παρ' ἡμῖν ἦν μένης,
γενήσεται ἀγαθὰ, πρόσσεχε τὸν νοῦν ἵνα πύθη.
οἶμαι γάρ, οἶμαι—ξὺν θεῷ δ' εἰρήσεται—
115 ταύτης ἀπαλλάξειν σε τῆς ὀφθαλμίας
βλέψαι ποιήσας.

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

μηδαμῶς τοῦτ' ἐργάσθη
οὐ βούλομαι γὰρ πάλιν ἀναβλέψαι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τί φῆς;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἄνθρωπος οὗτός ἐστιν ἄθλιος φύσει.

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

ὁ Ζεὺς μὲν οὖν εἰδὼς τὰ τούτων μῶρ', ἔμ', εἰ
πύθοιτ', ἂν ἐπιτρέψειε.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

120 νῦν δ' οὐ τοῦτο δρᾶ,
ὅστις σε προσπταίοντα περινοστεῖν ἐᾷ;

ΠΛΟΥΤΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ'. ἐγὼ δ' ἐκείνον ὀρρωδῶ πάνυ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἄληθες, ὦ δειλότατε πάντων δαιμόνων;
οἶει γὰρ εἶναι τὴν Διὸς τυραννίδα
125 καὶ τοὺς κεραυνοὺς ἀξίους τριωβόλου,
ἐὰν ἀναβλέψῃς σὺ κἂν σμικρὸν χρόνον;

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

If you only knew what blessings you stand to gain if you stay with us! Just pay attention and you'll find out. Because I think, yes I think, and I hope to god it's true, that I can cure this sickness in your eyes and restore your sight.

WEALTH

Please don't do that! I don't want my sight back.

CHREMYLUS

You don't?

CARIO

This fellow's a congenital loser.

WEALTH

No, Zeus is well aware of the foolishness of these people, and it's me he would torment if he found out.

CHREMYLUS

But isn't he doing that already, leaving you to stumble about from place to place?

WEALTH

Maybe, but all I know is that he scares the pants off me.

CHREMYLUS

Really? Of all divinities you're the most faint-hearted! Do you think that Zeus' rule and all his thunderbolts would be worth a dime if you regained your sight even for a moment?

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ἄ, μὴ λέγ', ὦ πόνηρε, ταῦτ'.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἔχ' ἥσυχος·

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀποδείξω σε τοῦ Διὸς πολὺ
μείζον δυνάμενον.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ἐμέ σύ;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

νῆ τὸν οὐρανόν.

130 αὐτίκα γὰρ ἄρχει διὰ τί ὁ Ζεὺς τῶν θεῶν;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

διὰ τὰργύριον· πλείστον γὰρ ἐστ' αὐτῶ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

φέρε,

τίς οὖν ὁ παρέχων ἐστὶν αὐτῶ τοῦθ';

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ὀδί.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

θύουσι δ' αὐτῶ διὰ τίν'; οὐ διὰ τουτονί;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ νῆ Δί' εὔχονται γε πλουτεῖν ἄντικρυς.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

135 οὔκουν ὄδ' ἐστὶν αἴτιος καὶ ῥαδίως
παύσειεν, εἰ βούλοιτο, ταῦτ' ἄν;

WEALTH

WEALTH

Oh no, you rascal, don't say that!

CHREMYLUS

Calm down, because I'm going to show you that you're far more powerful than Zeus.

WEALTH

Me, you say?

CHREMYLUS

Heavens yes! (to *Cario*) Now then, how come Zeus rules over the gods?

CARIO

Because of his riches; he's got the most.

CHREMYLUS

Very good. Now who is it that supplies it to him?

CARIO

(*indicating Wealth*) Him.

CHREMYLUS

And for whose sake do people sacrifice to Zeus? Isn't it for his sake?

CARIO

Quite right, and their very first prayer is for wealth.

CHREMYLUS

So isn't he responsible for all this? And couldn't he put a stop to it if he wanted?

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ὅτι τί δή;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὅτι οὐδ' ἂν εἷς θύσειεν ἀνθρώπων ἔτι
οὐ βούν ἄν, οὐχὶ ψαιστόν, οὐκ ἄλλ' οὐδὲ ἔν,
μὴ βουλομένου σοῦ.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

πῶς;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὅπως; οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως

140 ὠνήσεται δήπουθεν, ἦν σὺ μὴ παρὼν
αὐτὸς διδῶς τὰργύριον, ὥστε τοῦ Διὸς
τὴν δύναμιν, ἦν λυπῆ τι, καταλύσεις μόνος.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

τί λέγεις; δι' ἐμὲ θύουσιν αὐτῷ;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

φήμ' ἐγώ.

καὶ νῆ Δί' εἴ τί γ' ἐστὶ λαμπρὸν καὶ καλὸν
145 ἢ χαρίεν ἀνθρώποισι, διὰ σὲ γίγνεται.
ἅπαντα τῷ πλουτεῖν γάρ ἐσθ' ὑπήκοα.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἔγωγέ τοι διὰ μικρὸν ἀργυρίδιον
δοῦλος γεγένημαι πρότερον ὢν ἐλεύθερος.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

καὶ τὰς γ' ἑταίρας φασὶ τὰς Κορινθίας,
150 ὅταν μὲν αὐτάς τις πένης πειρῶν τύχη,

WEALTH

WEALTH

How do you mean?

CHREMYLUS

Well, no one would sacrifice another ox, or a barley cake, or anything else, if you weren't amenable.

WEALTH

How's that?

CHREMYLUS

Why, they could never buy it in the first place unless you were there to supply the money. So if Zeus gives you any trouble, you'll abolish his power all by yourself.

WEALTH

Are you telling me that I'm the reason they sacrifice to him?

CHREMYLUS

That's right. And what's more, it's through you that people have anything radiant, fine, or charming. Everything's in the service of wealth.

CARIO

In my case, it was for small change that I lost my freedom and became a slave.⁷

CHREMYLUS

And I've heard that Corinthian courtesans, when a poor

⁷ Since in Aristophanes' time Athenian citizens were not enslaved for debt, we are probably to think of Cario as a metic unable to pay a debt or a captive unable to pay his ransom.

ARISTOPHANES

οὐδὲ προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν· ἂν δὲ πλούσιος,
τὸν πρωκτὸν αὐτὰς εὐθύς ὡς τοῦτον τρέπειν.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ τοὺς γε παῖδάς φασι ταῦτο τοῦτο δρᾶν
οὐ τῶν ἐραστῶν ἀλλὰ τὰργυρίου χάριν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

155 οὐ τοὺς γε χρηστούς, ἀλλὰ τοὺς πόρνους· ἐπεὶ
αἰτοῦσιν οὐκ ἀργύριον οἱ χρηστοί.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

τί δαί;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὁ μὲν ἵππον ἀγαθόν, ὁ δὲ κύνας θηρευτικάς.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

αἰσχυρόμενοι γὰρ ἀργύριον αἰτεῖν ἴσως
ὀνόματι περιπέττουσι τὴν μοχθηρίαν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

160 τέχναι δὲ πᾶσαι διὰ σὲ καὶ σοφίσματα
ἐν τοῖσιν ἀνθρώποισιν ἐστ' ἠύρημένα.
ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἡμῶν σκυτοτομεῖ καθήμενος,
ἕτερος δὲ χαλκεύει τις, ὁ δὲ τεκταίνεται,
ὁ δὲ χρυσοχοεῖ γε χρυσίον παρὰ σοῦ λαβών—

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

165 ὁ δὲ λωποδυτεῖ γε, νῆ Δί', ὁ δὲ τοιχωρυχεῖ,—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὁ δὲ κναφεύει γ',

WEALTH

man makes a pass at them, pay him no mind, but if he's rich, they right away offer him their arse.

CARIO

And I've heard that boys do the same thing, not for their lovers' sake but for the money.

CHREMYLUS

But not the decent ones, only the whores; the decent ones don't ask for money.

CARIO

For what then?

CHREMYLUS

A good horse, or hunting dogs.

CARIO

No doubt they're ashamed to ask for money, and cover up their sluttiness with fancy words.

CHREMYLUS

All crafts and skills known to mankind were invented for your sake. For you, people sit and make shoes, or work bronze, or do carpentry, or smelt gold that they obtain from you—

CARIO

or mug people, by heaven, or break into houses—

CHREMYLUS

or make clothing—

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΟΝ

ὁ δέ γε πλύνει κώδια,—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὁ δὲ βυρσοδεφεῖ γ'—

ΚΑΡΙΟΝ

ὁ δέ γε πωλεῖ κρόμνα,—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὁ δ' ἀλούς γε μοιχὸς διὰ σέ που παρατίλλεται.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

οἴμοι τάλας, ταυτί μ' ἐλάνθανεν πάλαι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

170 μέγας δὲ βασιλεὺς οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦτον κομᾶ;
ἐκκλησία δ' οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦτον γίγνεται;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τί δαὶ τριήρεις; οὐ σὺ πληροῖς; εἰπέ μοι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

τὸ δ' ἐν Κορίνθῳ ξενικὸν οὐχ οὔτος τρέφει;
ὁ Πάμφιλος δ' οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦτον κλαύσεται;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

175 ὁ βελονοπώλης δ' οὐχὶ μετὰ τοῦ Παμφίλου;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

Ἄγύρριος δ' οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦτον πέρδεται;

⁸ Peltasts garrisoned there by the Athenian commander Iphicrates after a Spartan attack in 390 (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.5, 8).

WEALTH

CARIO

or launder woollens—

CHREMYLUS

or tan hides—

CARIO

or sell onions—

CHREMYLUS

or get caught in adultery and plucked, for your sake.

WEALTH

Dear me, I never realized all this!

CARIO

Doesn't the Great King preen on his account? And on his account doesn't the Assembly meet?

CHREMYLUS

And what about triremes? Tell me, isn't it you who fill them?

CARIO

And doesn't he provision the mercenary force in Corinth?⁸
And won't Pamphilus⁹ come to grief on his account?

CHREMYLUS

And the needle seller too, after Pamphilus?¹⁰

CARIO

And isn't he the source of Agyrrhius' happy farts?

⁹ Mentioned by the comic poet Plato (fr. 14) in connection with the theft of public funds, a charge probably made after his expedition against Aegina in 389, cf. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.1, Demosthenes 40.22. ¹⁰ Identified in a scholium as one Aristoxenus, otherwise unknown.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

Φιλέσιμος δ' οὐχ ἔνεκα σοῦ μύθους λέγει;
 ἢ ξυμμαχία δ' οὐ διὰ σέ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις;
 ἐρᾷ δὲ Δαῖς οὐ διὰ σέ Φιλωνίδου;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ὁ Τιμοθέου δὲ πύργος—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

180

ἐμπέσοι γέ σοι.

τὰ δὲ πράγματ' οὐχὶ διὰ σέ πάντα πράττεται;
μονώτατος γὰρ εἶ σὺ πάντων αἴτιος
καὶ τῶν κακῶν καὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, εὖ ἴσθ' ὅτι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

κρατοῦσι γοῦν κὰν τοῖς πολέμοις ἐκάστοτε
 185 ἐφ' οἷς ἂν οὗτος ἐπικαθέζηται μόνον.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ἐγὼ τοσαῦτα δυνατός εἰμ' εἰς ὧν ποιεῖν;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

καὶ ναὶ μὰ Δία τούτων γε πολλῶ πλείονα·
ὥστ' οὐδὲ μεστός σου γέγον' οὐδεὶς πώποτε.
τῶν μὲν γὰρ ἄλλων ἐστὶ πάντων πλησμονή·
 ἔρωτος,—

¹¹ Probably the Philepsius of Lamprae cited by Demosthenes (24.134), along with Agyrrhius, as a prominent politician; cf. also Plato com. fr. 238.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

And doesn't Philepsius tell tall tales for your sake?¹¹ And isn't the alliance with Egypt for your sake?¹² And isn't it for your sake that Lais loves Philonides?¹³

CARIO

And Timotheus' tower—¹⁴

CHREMYLUS

May it fall on your head! (*to Wealth*) Aren't all activities undertaken for your sake? Yes, it's you and you alone who motivate everything, the good and the bad alike; you can be sure of that.

CARIO

In warfare it's certainly true that the side he sits on invariably wins.

WEALTH

Can I do all that, and single-handedly?

CHREMYLUS

Absolutely, and lots more besides. No one ever gets their fill of you. There can be too much of anything else: of love—

¹² Athens sided with Evagoras of Cyprus, who in 391 had revolted against the Persians and allied himself with a fellow rebel, the Egyptian Pharaoh Acoris (reigned 392–79).

¹³ Lais was a celebrated courtesan born in 422/1 and now resident in Corinth; Philonides of Melite is ridiculed elsewhere as rich, corpulent, and foolish (Nicochares fr. 4, Philyllius fr. 22, Plato com. fr. 65.1.5–6, Theopompus fr. 5).

¹⁴ Son of the great general Conon, recently deceased, who would later enjoy a great political and military career.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἄρτων,—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

μουσικῆς,—

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

190

τραγημάτων,—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τιμῆς,—

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

πλακούντων,—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀνδραγαθίας,—

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ισχάδων,—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

φιλοτιμίας,—

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μάζης,—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

στρατηγίας,—

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

φακῆς.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

σοῦ δ' ἐγένετ' οὐδεὶς μεστὸς οὐδεπώποτε.
ἀλλ' ἦν τάλαντά τις λάβη τριακαίδεκα,

WEALTH

CARIO

of loaves—

CHREMYLUS

of the arts—

CARIO

of munchies—

CHREMYLUS

of honor—

CARIO

of cakes—

CHREMYLUS

of manliness—

CARIO

of figs—

CHREMYLUS

of ambition—

CARIO

of barley bread—

CHREMYLUS

of generalship—

CARIO

of lentil soup.

CHREMYLUS

But no one ever gets his fill of you. If someone gets his

ARISTOPHANES

- 195 πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐπιθυμῆ λαβεῖν ἑκκαίδεκα·
 καὶ ταῦθ' ἀνύσῃται, τετταράκοντα βούλεται,
 ἢ φησὶν οὐ βιωτὸν αὐτῷ τὸν βίον.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

εὖ τοι λέγειν ἔμοιγε φαίνεσθον πάνν·
 πλὴν ἔν μόνον δέδοικα—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

φράζε, τοῦ πέρι;

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

- 200 ὅπως ἐγὼ τὴν δύναμιν ἦν ὑμεῖς φατε
 ἔχειν με, ταύτης δεσπότης γενήσομαι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Δί', ἀλλὰ καὶ λέγουσι πάντες ὡς
 δειλότατόν ἐσθ' ὁ πλοῦτος.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ἦκιστ', ἀλλὰ με

- τοιχωρῦχος τις διέβαλ'. εἰσδὺς γάρ ποτε
 205 οὐκ εἶχεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν οὐδὲν λαβεῖν,
 εὐρῶν ἀπαξάπαντα κατακεκλημένα·
 εἶτ' ὠνόμασέ μου τὴν πρόνοιαν δειλίαν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

- μή νυν μελέτω σοι μηδέν' ὡς εἶν γένη
 ἀνὴρ πρόθυμος αὐτὸς εἰς τὰ πράγματα,
 210 βλέποντ' ἀποδείξω σ' ὀξύτερον τοῦ Λυγκέως.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

πῶς οὖν δυνήσει τοῦτο δρᾶσαι θνητὸς ὢν;

WEALTH

hands on thirteen talents, he hankers all the more to get sixteen; and if he achieves that, he wants forty, or else he says life isn't worth living.

WEALTH

You've both made a very convincing case, yet there's one thing that worries me.

CHREMYLUS

Please, what's that?

WEALTH

Just how I'm to become master of the power you say I have.

CHREMYLUS

Ah yes, everyone says that nothing's more cowardly than wealth.

WEALTH

Not true! That's a burglar's slander. You see, he broke into the house but had nothing to snatch, because he found everything under lock and key, so he called my precautions cowardice.

CHREMYLUS

Don't worry about a thing: if you'll just throw yourself wholeheartedly into this job, I'll give you better eyesight than Lynceus!¹⁵

WEALTH

And how will you manage that? You're a mere mortal.

¹⁵ A sharp-eyed Argonaut, cf. Apollonius of Rhodes 1.153-55.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἔχω τιν' ἀγαθὴν ἐλπίδ' ἐξ ᾧν εἶπέ μοι
ὁ Φοῖβος αὐτὸς Πυθικὴν σείσας δάφνην.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

κάκεινος οὖν ξύνοιδε ταῦτα;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

φήμ' ἐγώ.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ὀράτε—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

215 μὴ φρόντιζε μηδέν, ὦγαθέ·
ἐγὼ γάρ, εἴ τοῦτ' ἴσθι, κἂν δῆ μ' ἀποθανεῖν,
αὐτὸς διαπράξω ταῦτα.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

κἂν βούλη γ', ἐγώ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

πολλοὶ δ' ἔσονται χᾶτεροι νῶν ξύμμαχοι,
ὅσοις δικαίοις αἴσιν οὐκ ἦν ἄλφιτα.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

220 παπαῖ· πονηροὺς γ' εἶπας ἡμῖν ξυμμάχους.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐκ, ἦν γε πλουτήσωσιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς πάλιν.
ἀλλ' ἴθι σὺ μὲν ταχέως δραμών—

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

τί δρῶ; λέγε.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

I have high hopes, after what Phoebus told me, "when he personally shook the Pythian laurel bough."¹⁶

WEALTH

You mean he's in on this too?

CHREMYLUS

That's right.

WEALTH

Watch out now—

CHREMYLUS

Don't worry about a thing, my friend. Please rest assured that I'll pull this off, even if it means my death.

CARIO

I'll lend a hand, if you like.

CHREMYLUS

And we'll have many others for allies, righteous people who've gone without their daily bread.

WEALTH

Good grief, it's pretty poor allies you've assigned us.

CHREMYLUS

No, not once they've recovered their original wealth. (*to Cario*) Now you run off on the double—

CARIO

To do what, please?

¹⁶ From an unknown tragedy.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τοὺς ξυγγεώργους κάλεσον,—εὐρήσεις δ' ἴσως
 ἐν τοῖς ἀγροῖς αὐτοὺς ταλαιπωρουμένους,—
 225 ὅπως ἂν ἴσον ἕκαστος ἐνταυθοῖ παρῶν
 ἡμῖν μετάσχη τοῦδε τοῦ Πλούτου μέρος.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ δὴ βαδίζω. τουτοδὶ τὸ κρεάδιον
 τῶν ἔνδοθέν τις εἰσενεγκάτω λαβῶν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἔμοι μελήσει τοῦτό γ' ἄλλ' ἀνύσας τρέχε.
 230 σὺ δ', ὦ κράτιστε Πλούτε πάντων δαιμόνων,
 εἶσω μετ' ἐμοῦ δεῦρ' εἴσιθ'. ἡ γὰρ οἰκία
 αὕτη ἴσθιν ἦν δεῖ χρημάτων σε τήμερον
μεστὴν ποιῆσαι καὶ δικαίως κἀδίκως.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἄχθομαι μὲν εἰσιῶν, νῆ τοὺς θεούς,
 235 εἰς οἰκίαν ἕκαστοτ' ἄλλοτρίαν πάνν.
ἀγαθὸν γὰρ ἀπέλαυσ' οὐδὲν αὐτοῦ πώποτε,
 ἦν μὲν γὰρ εἰς φειδωλὸν εἰσελθὼν τύχῳ,
 εὐθὺς κατώρυξέν με κατὰ τῆς γῆς κάτω
 κἄν τις προσέλθη χρηστὸς ἄνθρωπος φίλος
 240 αἰτῶν λαβεῖν τι σμικρὸν ἀργυρίδιον,
 ἕξαρνός ἐστι μηδ' ἰδεῖν με πώποτε.
 ἦν δ' ὡς παραπλήγ' ἄνθρωπον εἰσελθὼν τύχῳ,
 πόρνοισι καὶ κύβοισι παραβεβλημένος
 γυμνὸς θύραζ' ἐξέπεσον ἐν ἀκαρεῖ χρόνον.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

Summon my fellow farmers—you'll probably find them laboring away in their fields—so that each one of them may join us here for his share of what Wealth has for us.

CARIO

I'm on my way. Let one of the household slaves come and take this piece of meat inside.

CHREMYLUS

I'll take care of that; you get a move on.

Exit CARIO.

Now, Wealth, most puissant of all divinities, please come inside here with me, because this is the house you've got to fill up with riches this very day, by fair means or foul.

WEALTH

By heaven, I really hate going into a strange house; it's never yet brought me any benefit. If I find myself in a pauper's house, he immediately digs a hole and puts me underground, and if a good friend of his comes to call and asks for a little loan, he swears he's never even laid eyes on me. And if I find myself in a degenerate's house, I'm thrown away on whores and dice, and in no time I'm out on the street shirtless.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

- 245 μετρίου γὰρ ἀνδρὸς οὐκ ἐπέτυχες πώποτε.
 ἐγὼ δὲ τούτου τοῦ τρόπου πὼς εἰμ' αἰεί
 χαίρω τε γὰρ φειδόμενος ὡς οὐδεὶς ἀνήρ
 πάλιν τ' ἀγαλῶν, ἡνίκ' ἂν τούτου δέῃ.
 ἀλλ' εἰστώμεν, ὡς ἰδεῖν σε βούλομαι
- 250 καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μόνον,
 ὃν ἐγὼ φιλῶ μάλιστα μετὰ σέ.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

πέιθομαι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τί γὰρ ἂν τις οὐχὶ πρὸς σέ τάληθῆ λέγοι;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

- ὦ πολλὰ δὴ τῷ δεσπότη ταῦτ' ὀνύχων φαγόντες,
 ἄνδρες φίλοι καὶ δημόται καὶ τοῦ πονεῖν ἐρασταί,
 255 ἴτ', ἐγκονεῖτε, σπεύδεθ', ὡς ὁ καιρὸς οὐχὶ μέλλειν,
 ἀλλ' ἔστ' ἐπ' αὐτῆς τῆς ἀκμῆς, ἧ δεῖ παρόντ'
 ἀμύνειν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

- οὐκ οὐκ ὀργῆς ὀρμωμένους ἡμᾶς πάλαι προθύμως,
 ὡς εἰκὸς ἔστιν ἀσθενεῖς γέροντας ἀνδρας ἤδη;
 σὺ δ' ἀξιόις ἴσως με θεῖν, πρὶν ταῦτα καὶ φράσαι
 μοι
- 260 ὅτου χάριν μ' ὁ δεσπότης ὁ σὸς κέκληκε δεῦρο.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οὐκ οὐκ πάλαι δήπου λέγω; σὺ δ' αὐτὸς οὐκ ἀκούεις.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

That's because you've never met a moderate man, but that's the character I've pretty much always had. No one's fonder of frugality than me, or of spending money either, when that's called for. Come on, let's go inside; I want to introduce you to my wife and only son, whom I love more than anything, except you.

WEALTH

That I can believe.

CHREMYLUS

Well, why would anyone lie to you?

Exit CHREMYLUS and WEALTH into the house; then CARIO reappears, leading the CHORUS of farmers.

CARIO

Friends, fellow demesmen, and lovers of hard labor, who like my master have many a time made a meal of thyme leaves, come ahead, raise some dust, hurry along; there's no time for tarrying, for this is the hour of decision, and you must lend a ready hand.

CHORUS LEADER

Surely you can see that we've been hustling eagerly the whole time, as much as can be expected of feeble old men. Maybe you think I should be running, before I've even heard the reason why that master of yours has summoned us here.

CARIO

Surely I've been telling you the whole time; it's you who

ARISTOPHANES

ὁ δεσπότης γάρ φησιν ὑμᾶς ἠδέως ἅπαντας
ψυχροῦ βίου καὶ δυσκόλου ζήσειν ἀπαλλαγέντας.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἔστιν δὲ δὴ τί καὶ πόθεν τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦθ' ὃ φησιν;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

265 ἔχων ἀφίικται δεῦρο πρεσβύτην τιν', ὦ πόνηροι,
 ῥυπῶντα, κυφόν, ἄθλιον, ῥυσόν, μαδῶντα, νωδόν
 οἶμαι δέ, νῆ τὸν οὐρανόν, καὶ ψωλὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ὦ χρυσὸν ἀγγείλας ἐπῶν, πῶς φῆς; πάλιν φράσον
 μοι.

δηλοῖς γὰρ αὐτὸν σωρὸν ἦκειν χρημάτων ἔχοντα.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

270 πρεσβυτικῶν μὲν οὖν κακῶν ἔγωγ' ἔχοντα σωρόν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

μῶν ἀξιοῖς φενακίσας ἔπειτ' ἀπαλλαγῆναι
 ἀζήμιος, καὶ ταῦτ' ἐμοῦ βακτηρίαν ἔχοντος;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

πάντως γὰρ ἄνθρωπον φύσει τοιοῦτον εἰς τὰ πάντα
 ἠγείσθῃ μ' εἶναι, κούδεν ἂν νομίζεθ' ὑγιᾶς εἰπεῖν;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

275 ὡς σεμνὸς οὐπίτριπτος. αἰ κνήμαι δέ σου βοῶσιν
 "ιοῦ ἰού," τὰς χοίνικας καὶ τὰς πέδας ποθοῦσαι.

WEALTH

haven't listened. My master says you're all going to live nicely and be rid of your chill and disagreeable way of life.

CHORUS LEADER

But what's it all about? And where's the wherewithal for his claim?

CARIO

Very well, you rascals: he's brought an oldster home, grubby, stooped, pitiable, shrivelled, mangy, toothless, and by heaven, I think he's even circumcised.¹⁷

CHORUS LEADER

O harbinger of golden news, what's that you say? Tell me again! Obviously you're saying he's come with a mound of money.

CARIO

Not I; rather a mound of mature malaise.

CHORUS LEADER

So you think you'll hoodwink us and get away with it? And me with my walking stick in hand?

CARIO

Do you really think I'm invariably that sort of person? And do you think I'm incapable of talking sense?

CHORUS LEADER

The scamp's pretty smug! Your shins are just asking for the stocks and chains, and will soon be yelling "ouch"!

¹⁷ As only barbarians were; here comically climaxing the list of physical debasements.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἐν τῇ σορῶ νυνὶ λαχὸν τὸ γράμμα σου δικάζειν,
σὺ δ' οὐ βαδίζεις; ὁ δὲ Χάρων τὸ ξύμβολον
δίδωσιν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

280 διαρραγείης. ὡς μόθων εἶ καὶ φύσει κόβαλος,
ὅστις φενακίζεις, φράσαι δ' οὐπω τέτληκας ἡμῖν,
οἶ πολλὰ μοχθήσαντες οὐκ οὔσης σχολῆς
προθύμως
δεῦρ' ἤλθομεν, πολλῶν θύμων ρίζας διεκπερῶντες.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἀλλ' οὐκέτ' ἂν κρύψαιμι. τὸν Πλούτον γάρ, ὦνδρες,
ἤκει
285 ἄγων ὁ δεσπότης, ὃς ὑμᾶς πλουσίους ποιήσει.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ὄντως γὰρ ἔστι πλουσίους ἡμῖν ἅπασιν εἶναι;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

νῆ τοὺς θεούς, Μίδαις μὲν οὖν, ἦν ὡτ' ὄνου λάβητε.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ὡς ἦδομαι καὶ τέρπομαι καὶ βούλομαι χορεύσαι
ὑφ' ἡδονῆς, εἴπερ λέγεις ὄντως σὺ ταῦτ' ἀληθῆ.

281 = v. 260 repetunt A M U: del. Bergk

285 ὑμᾶς cett: ἡμᾶς R M

287 Μίδαις Kuster: Μίδας a

WEALTH

CARIO

And you've drawn the token marked Court of the Coffin.¹⁸
You better get going; Charon will give you your ticket.

CHORUS LEADER

Blow yourself to bits! You're an imp and a rascal to play us for suckers, and you haven't yet bothered to explain anything to us, when we've taken great pains to be here, and time we can't afford to lose, passing right by innumerable thyme plants.

CARIO

All right, I won't keep you in the dark any longer. Gentlemen, my master's brought Wealth home with him, and he's going to make you wealthy.

CHORUS LEADER

You mean it's really possible for us to be wealthy?

CARIO

So help me god, you'll be Midases if you can find a pair of ass's ears!¹⁹

CHORUS LEADER

I'm so happy and so glad, I want to dance for joy, if what you're saying is really true.

¹⁸ Jurors, who were often impecunious elders, were assigned to courts by tokens drawn from an allotment machine.

¹⁹ The legendary Phrygian king Midas got from Dionysus the power to turn whatever he touched to gold, but ass's ears from Apollo for voting against him in a musical contest.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

(στρ.) καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ βουλήσομαι—θρεττανελο—τὸν
Κύκλωπα

291 μιμούμενος καὶ τοῖν ποδοῖν ὡδὶ παρενσαλεύων
ὕμᾱς ἄγειν. ἀλλ' εἶα, τέκεα, θαμίν' ἐπαναβοῶντες
βληχώμενοί τε προβατίων
αἰγῶν τε κίναβρώντων μέλη

295 ἔπεσθ' ἀπεψωλημένοι·
τράγοι δ' ἀκρατιεῖσθε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

(ἀντ) ἡμεῖς δέ γ' αὖ ζητήσομεν—θρεττανελο—τὸν
Κύκλωπα

βληχώμενοι σὲ τουτοῖσι πεινώντα καταλαβόντες,
πήραν ἔχοντα λάχανά τ' ἄγρια δροσερά,
κραιπαλῶντα

ἡγούμενον τοῖς προβατίοις,
300 εἰκῆ δὲ καταδαρθόντα που
μέγαν λαβόντες ἡμμένον
σφηκίσκον ἐκτυφλώσαι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

(στρ) ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν Κίρκην γε, τὴν τὰ φάρμακ'
ἀνακυκῶσαν,

ἢ τοὺς ἐταίρους τοῦ Φιλωνίδου ποτ' ἐν Κορίνθῳ

297 βληχώμενοι σὲ| βληχώμενόν τε V

300 -θόντα Porson: -θέντα a

WEALTH

CARIO²⁰

As for me, I'm ready—ta dum da dum—to do a
takeoff on the Cyclops
and lead you in dance, hopping with both feet like
this!

Hey now, kids, sing out after me loud and clear:
bleating songs of little lambs
and stinky goats,
follow me with pricks unsheathed:
you goats will have your breakfast.

CHORUS

Now it's our turn—ta dum da dum—to pull
something on the Cyclops
(that's you): bleating away, we'll find you feeling
famished,
toting a pouch of fresh wild herbs, hung over
as you lead your little lambs;
then as you carelessly curl up somewhere,
we'll hoist a big burning
stake and put out your eye.

CARIO²¹

Then I'll do Circe, the mixer of potions,
who one day in Corinth convinced Philonides'
companions

²⁰ A parody of a dithyramb by Philoxenus of Cythera, *Cyclops or Galateia* (frs. 815–24 Campbell), composed after he had fled the court of Dionysius of Syracuse, who came to power in 406. Cario sings the role of the Cyclops, the Chorus the role of Odysseus and his companions (cf. *Odyssey* 9.105–566). ²¹ Cario switches to the story of Odysseus and Circe (cf. *Odyssey* 10.210–574), for whom he substitutes Philonides and Lais (179 n.).

ARISTOPHANES

- ἔπεισεν ὡς ὄντας κάπρους
 305 μεμαγμένον σκῶρ ἐσθίειν,—αὐτὴ δ' ἔματτεν
 αὐτοῖς,—
 μιμήσομαι πάντας τρόπους·
 ὑμεῖς δὲ γρυλλίζοντες ὑπὸ φιληδίας
 ἔπεσθε μητρί, χοῖροι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

- (ἀντ) οὐκοῦν σέ, τὴν Κίρκην γε τὴν τὰ φάρμακ'
 ἀνακυκῶσαν
 310 καὶ μαγγανεύουσαν μολύνουσάν τε τοὺς ἐταίρους
 λαβόντες ὑπὸ φιληδίας
 τὸν Δαρτίου μιμούμενοι τῶν ὄρχεων κρεμῶμεν,
 μινθώσομέν θ' ὥσπερ τράγου
 τὴν ρίνα· σὺ δ' Ἀρίστυλλος ὑποχάσκων ἐρείς·
 315 “ἔπεσθε μητρί, χοῖροι.”

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

- ἀλλ' εἶά νιν τῶν σκωμμάτων ἀπαλλαγέντες ἤδη
 ὑμεῖς ἐπ' ἄλλ' εἶδος τρέπεσθ'·
 ἐγὼ δ' ἰὼν ἤδη λάθρα
 βουλήσομαι τοῦ δεσπότητος
 320 λαβών τιν' ἄρτον καὶ κρέας
 μασώμενος τὸ λοιπὸν οὕτω τῷ κόπῳ ξυνεῖναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

“χαίρειν” μὲν ὑμᾶς ἐστίν, ὦνδρες δημόται,

³¹⁸ ἤδη] εἶσω Bamberg

WEALTH

to behave like swine
and eat shit cakes—she kneaded them herself;
I'll act out the whole story,
while you grunt gaily
and follow your mother, piggies!

CHORUS

Now that you're Circe, the mixer of potions,
who's bewitching and befouling those companions,
we'll grab you gaily,
doing a takeoff on Laertes' son, and hang you by the
balls,
and rub your nose in shit
like a goat; and you'll play Aristyllus, and say,
"follow your mother, piggies!"

CARIO

Whoa now, it's time to cut short your jibes
and form up a different dance.
Me, I'm set to sneak off,
filch from my master
some bread and meat,
and spend the day working at gobbling it up.

Exit CARIO.

The Chorus performs an entr'acte.

Enter CHREMYLUS from the house.

CHREMYLUS

To offer you "greetings," fellow demesmen, is now old-

ARISTOPHANES

ἀρχαῖον ἤδη προσαγορεύειν καὶ σαπρόν·
 “ἀσπάζομαι” δ’ ὅτινῃ προθύμως ἦκετε
 325 καὶ συντεταμένως κοῦ κατεβλακευμένως.
 ὅπως δέ μοι καὶ τᾶλλα συμπαραστάται
 ἔσεσθε καὶ σωτήρες ὄντως τοῦ θεοῦ.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

θάρρει· βλέπειν γὰρ ἄντικρυς δόξεις μ’ Ἄρη.
 δεινὸν γὰρ εἰ τριωβόλου μὲν οὐνεκα
 330 ὡστιζόμεσθ’ ἐκάστοτ’ ἐν τῆκκλησίᾳ,
 αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν Πλοῦτον παρείην τῷ λαβεῖν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ὀρώ καὶ Βλεψίδημον τουτοῖν
 προσιόντα· δῆλος δ’ ἐστὶν ὅτι τοῦ πράγματος
 ἀκήκοέν τι τῇ βαδίσσει καὶ τῷ τάχει.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

335 τί ἂν οὖν τὸ πρᾶγμ’ εἶη; πόθεν καὶ τίνι τρόπῳ
 Χρεμύλος πεπλούτηκ’ ἐξαπίνης; οὐ πείθομαι.
 καίτοι λόγος γ’ ἦν, νῆ τὸν Ἡρακλέα, πολὺς
 ἐπὶ τοῖσι κουρείοισι τῶν καθημένων,
 ὡς ἐξαπίνης ἀνὴρ γεγένηται πλούσιος.
 340 ἔστιν δέ μοι τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ θαυμάσιον, ὅπως
χρηστόν τι πράττων τοὺς φίλους μεταπέμπεται.
οὐκουν ἐπιχώριόν γε πρᾶγμ’ ἐργάζεται.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν ἀποκρύψας ἐρώ· νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς,
 ὦ Βλεψίδημ’, ἄμεινον ἢ χθὲς πράττομεν,
 345 ὥστε μετέχειν ἔξεστιν· εἰ γὰρ τῶν φίλων.

WEALTH

fashioned and worn out; but I do "salute" you for turning up here so eagerly, so painstakingly, and so energetically. Please be my supporters also in the work that lies ahead, and the true saviors of the god.

CHORUS LEADER

Never fear, you'll look at me and see Ares himself. It would be bizarre of us to push and shove at every Assembly to get our three obols, and then let somebody take Wealth himself away from us!

CHREMYLUS

And here comes Blepsidemus too; the way he's striding and hurrying along, he's obviously heard something about what's going on.

Enter BLEPSIDEMUS.

BLEPSIDEMUS

All right, what's going on? How has Chremylus managed to become wealthy all of a sudden? I can't believe it, and yet, by Heracles, the loungers in the barbershops are talking plenty about it, how the man's become wealthy all of a sudden. And I'm really surprised that, achieving some prosperity, he's calling for his friends; that's not normal practice in this country.

CHREMYLUS

Well, I won't hold anything back. By heaven, Blepsidemus, we're doing better than we were yesterday, which means that you'll get a share, as one of our friends.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

γέγονας δ' ἀληθῶς, ὡς λέγουσι, πλούσιος;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἔσομαι μὲν οὖν αὐτίκα μάλ', ἣν θεὸς θέλῃ·
ἔνι γάρ τις, ἔνι κίνδυνος ἐν τῷ πράγματι.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

ποιός τις;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οἶος—

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

λέγ' ἀνύσας ὅ τι φῆς ποτε.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

350 ἦν μὲν κατορθώσωμεν, εὖ πράττειν αἰεί·
ἦν δὲ σφαλῶμεν, ἐπιτετρίφθαι τὸ παράπαν.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

τουτὶ πονηρὸν φαίνεται τὸ φορτίον
καί μ' οὐκ ἀρέσκει. τό τε γὰρ ἐξαίφνης ἄγαν
οὕτως ὑπερπλουτεῖν τό τ' αὖ δεδοικέναι
355 πρὸς ἀνδρὸς οὐδὲν ὑγιές ἐστ' εἰργασμένου.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

πῶς οὐδὲν ὑγιές;

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

εἴ τι κεκλοφῶς νῆ Δία
ἐκεῖθεν ἦκεις ἀργύριον ἢ χρυσίον
παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, κᾶπειτ' ἴσως σοι μεταμέλει.

WEALTH

BLEPSIDEMUS

You've really become wealthy, just as they say?

CHREMYLUS

No, but I very soon will be, God willing. You see, there's a certain, well, risk in the plan.

BLEPSIDEMUS

What sort of risk?

CHREMYLUS

Well—

BLEPSIDEMUS

Come right out with what you mean to say.

CHREMYLUS

If we succeed, we'll be prosperous forever; if we fail, we'll be completely wiped out.

BLEPSIDEMUS

There's something shady about this merchandise, and I don't like it. Such very sudden wealth combined with trepidation suggests a man who's up to no good.

CHREMYLUS

What do you mean, no good?

BLEPSIDEMUS

Maybe you've come back from there with silver or gold you've stolen from the god, yes, and now you're worried.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

Ἄπολλον ἀποτρόπαιε, μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

360 παῦσαι φλυαρῶν, ὠγάθ'. οἶδα γὰρ σαφῶς.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

σὺ μῆδὲν εἰς ἔμ' ὑπονόει τοιουτονί.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

φεύ,

ὡς οὐδὲν ἀτεχνῶς ὑγιές ἐστίν οὐδενός,
ἀλλ' εἰσὶ τοῦ κέρδους ἅπαντες ἤττονες.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὔ τοι, μὰ τὴν Δήμητρ', ὑγιαίνειν μοι δοκεῖς.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

365 ὡς πολὺ μεθέστηχ' ὦν πρότερον εἶχεν τρόπων.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

μελαγχολᾶς, ὠνθρωπε, νῆ τὸν οὐρανόν.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τὸ βλέμμ' αὐτὸ κατὰ χώραν ἔχει,
ἀλλ' ἐστὶν ἐπίδηλόν τι πεπανουργηκότι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

σὺ μὲν οἶδ' ὃ κρώζεις· ὡς ἐμοῦ τι κεκλοφότος
ζητεῖς μεταλαβεῖν.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

370

μεταλαβεῖν ζητῶ; τίνος;

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

Apollo save us, I swear I haven't!

BLEPSIDEMUS

Stop blustering, my friend; I know what's up.

CHREMYLUS

How dare you suspect me of such a thing!

BLEPSIDEMUS

Dear me, there's no trace of goodness in anyone; the lust for profit rules the world.

CHREMYLUS

By Demeter, you sound deranged to me.

BLEPSIDEMUS

He's changed so much from the way he used to be!

CHREMYLUS

By heaven, you're crazy, mister.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Why, even the look in his eye is shifty; yes, he's obviously done something bad.

CHREMYLUS

I know what *you're* clucking about: you think I've stolen something and want a cut.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Me want a cut? Of what?

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τὸ δ' ἐστὶν οὐ τοιοῦτον ἀλλ' ἐτέρως ἔχον.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

μῶν οὐ κέκλοφας, ἀλλ' ἤρπακας;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

κακοδαιμονᾶς.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὴν ἀπεστέρηκάς γ' οὐδένα;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγ'.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

375 ὦ Ἡράκλεις, φέρε, ποῖ τις ἂν
τράποιτο; τάληθές γὰρ οὐκ ἐθέλει φράσαι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

κατηγορεῖς γὰρ πρὶν μαθεῖν τὸ πρᾶγμα μου.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

ὦ τᾶν, ἐγὼ σοι τοῦτ' ἀπὸ σμικροῦ πάνν
ἐθέλω διαπράξαι πρὶν πυθέσθαι τὴν πόλιν,
τὸ στόμ' ἐπιβύσας κέρμασιν τῶν ῥητόρων.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

380 καὶ μὴν φίλως γ' ἂν μοι δοκεῖς, νῆ τοὺς θεούς,
τρεῖς μνᾶς ἀναλώσας λογίσασθαι δώδεκα.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

ὀρῶ τιν' ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος καθεδούμενον
ἰκετηρίαν ἔχοντα μετὰ τῶν παιδίων

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

It's not like that; it's something else entirely.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Maybe you aren't a thief, but a robber.

CHREMYLUS

You're possessed!

BLEPSIDEMUS

You haven't even defrauded anybody?

CHREMYLUS

I certainly haven't.

BLEPSIDEMUS

By Heracles, where do we go from here? He refuses to tell the truth!

CHREMYLUS

You're levelling charges before you've heard the facts from me.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Listen, friend, for a very small consideration I'm ready to pull this off before the whole town gets wind of it, by plugging the politicians' mouths with coins.

CHREMYLUS

Heavens yes, and I'm sure you'd be a real pal about it too, spending three minas and then charging me twelve.

BLEPSIDEMUS

I'm looking at a man who'll end up sitting in the dock, holding a suppliant's olive branch with his wife and children,

ARISTOPHANES

καὶ τῆς γυναικός, κοῦ διοίσοντ' ἄντικρυς
385 τῶν Ἡρακλειδῶν οὐδ' ὅτιοῦν τῶν Παμφίλου.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὔκ, ᾧ κακόδαιμον, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς ἐγὼ
καὶ τοὺς δικαίους τοὺς τε σώφρονας μόνους
ἀπαρτὶ πλουτῆσαι ποιήσω.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

τί σὺ λέγεις;

οὔτω πάνυ πολλὰ κέκλοφας;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οἴμοι τῶν κακῶν,

ἀπολείς.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

390 σὺ μὲν οὔν σεαντόν, ὥς γ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ', ἐπειδὴ Πλούτον, ᾧ μόχθηρε σύ,
ἔχω.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

σὺ πλούτον; ποῖον;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

αὐτὸν τὸν θεόν.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

καὶ ποῦ ἔστιν;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἔνδον.

WEALTH

absolute dead ringers for "The Children of Heracles" by Pamphilus.²²

CHREMYLUS

On the contrary, you jinx, I'm going to make good, just, and well behaved people wealthy, and only them.

BLEPSIDEMUS

What's that you say? Have you stolen that much?

CHREMYLUS

Damn it all, you'll be the death of me!

BLEPSIDEMUS

You'll be your own, is my guess.

CHREMYLUS

Oh no I won't, you rascal, because I've got Wealth.

BLEPSIDEMUS

You've got wealth? What sort of wealth?

CHREMYLUS

The god himself.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Then where is he?

CHREMYLUS

Inside.

²² After his death, Heracles' children, with their grandmother Alcmene and family friend Iolaus, took refuge at Athens from their persecutor, Eurystheus. The identity of this Pamphilus is uncertain; the famous painter of that name from Amphipolis (cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 35.36.7) is not known to have treated this subject.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

ποῦ;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

παρ' ἐμοί.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

παρὰ σοί;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

πάνν.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἐς κόρακας; Πλούτος παρὰ σοί;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

νῆ τοὺς θεούς.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

λέγεις ἀληθῆ;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

φημί.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

395

πρὸς τῆς Ἑστίας;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

τὸν θαλάττιον λέγεις;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

εἰ δ' ἔστιν ἕτερός τις Ποσειδῶν, τὸν ἕτερον.

WEALTH

BLEPSIDEMUS

Inside where?

CHREMYLUS

In my house.

BLEPSIDEMUS

In your house?

CHREMYLUS

That's right.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Like hell he is! Wealth in your house?

CHREMYLUS

The gods be my witness.

BLEPSIDEMUS

You're telling the truth?

CHREMYLUS

I am.

BLEPSIDEMUS

You swear by Hestia?

CHREMYLUS

By Poseidon, yes.

BLEPSIDEMUS

The sea god, right?

CHREMYLUS

If there's another Poseidon, I swear by him too.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

εἶτ' οὐ διαπέμπεις καὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, τοὺς φίλους;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐκ ἔστι πω τὰ πράγματ' ἐν τούτῳ.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

τί φῆς;

οὐ τῷ μεταδοῦναι;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

μὰ Δία· δεῖ γὰρ πρώτα—

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

400

τί;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

βλέψαι ποιῆσαι νῶν—

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

τίνα βλέψαι; φράσον.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τὸν Πλούτον, ὥσπερ πρότερον, ἐνί γέ τῳ τρόπῳ.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

τυφλὸς γὰρ ὄντως ἐστί;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

νῆ τὸν οὐρανόν.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἐτὸς ἄρ' ὡς ἔμ' ἦλθεν οὐδεπώποτε.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

405

ἀλλ' ἦν θεοὶ θέλωσι, νῦν ἀφίξεται.

WEALTH

BLEPSIDEMUS

And you're not sending him to visit us, your friends?

CHREMYLUS

Things haven't quite reached that stage.

BLEPSIDEMUS

What stage? The sharing stage?

CHREMYLUS

Exactly. You see, first—

BLEPSIDEMUS

What?

CHREMYLUS

we two must restore his sight—

BLEPSIDEMUS

Whose sight, please?

CHREMYLUS

Wealth's, as it was before, by whatever means.

BLEPSIDEMUS

You mean he's really blind?

CHREMYLUS

Heavens yes.

BLEPSIDEMUS

No wonder he's never visited my house!

CHREMYLUS

But, the gods willing, he'll come now.

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

οὔκουν ἰατρὸν εἰσαγαγεῖν ἐχρῆν τινά;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τίς δῆτ' ἰατρός ἐστι νῦν ἐν τῇ πόλει;
οὔτε γὰρ ὁ μισθὸς οὐδέν ἐστ' οὔθ' ἡ τέχνη.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

σκοπῶμεν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

οὐδ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

410 μὰ Δι', ἀλλ' ὅπερ πάλαι παρεσκευαζόμεν
ἐγώ, κατακλίνειν αὐτὸν εἰς Ἀσκληπιοῦ
κράτιστόν ἐστι.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

πολὺ μὲν οὔν, νῆ τοὺς θεούς.
μή νυν διάτριβ', ἀλλ' ἄννε πράττων ἐν γέ τι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

καὶ δὴ βαδίζω.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

σπεύδέ νυν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τοῦτ' αὐτὸ δρῶ.

²³ Why this should be the case is unclear.

WEALTH

BLEPSIDEMUS

So shouldn't we call in a doctor?

CHREMYLUS

Is there any such thing as a doctor in this town? There's no money in it, and so no practice.²³

BLEPSIDEMUS

(*scanning the audience*) Let's look for one.

CHREMYLUS

I don't see one.

BLEPSIDEMUS

I don't either.

CHREMYLUS

No, let's try something I'd already planned, to bed him down in Asclepius' temple.²⁴ That's best.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Yes, that's really a much better idea. Don't waste any time, now; hurry up and get something underway.

CHREMYLUS

I'm on my way.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Good, hurry up.

CHREMYLUS

That's what I'm doing.

Enter POVERTY, a hideous hag.

²⁴ Probably to be imagined as the one at Zea, near Athens and close to the sea (cf. 656); for the cult see S. B. Aleshire, *The Athenian Asclepieion* (Baltimore 1989).

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΝΙΑ

415 ὦ θερμὸν ἔργον κἀνόσιον καὶ παράνομον
τολμῶντε δρᾶν ἀνθρωπαρίῳ κακοδαίμονε,
ποῖ ποῖ τί φεύγετον; οὐ μενεΐτον;

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

Ἡράκλεις.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐξολῶ κακοὺς κακῶς·
τόλμημα γὰρ τολμᾶτον οὐκ ἀνασχετόν,
420 ἀλλ' οἶον οὐδεὶς ἄλλος οὐδεπώποτε
οὔτε θεὸς οὔτ' ἀνθρώπος. ὥστ' ἀπολώλατον.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

σὺ δ' εἶ τίς; ὠχρὰ μὲν γὰρ εἶναί μοι δοκεῖς.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

ἴσως Ἐρινύς ἐστίν ἐκ τραγωδίας·
βλέπει γέ τοι μανικόν τι καὶ τραγωδικόν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔχει γὰρ δᾶδας.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

425 οὐκοῦν κλαύσεται.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

οἴεσθε δ' εἶναι τίνα με;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

πανδοκεύτριαν

ἢ λεκιθόπωνιν· οὐ γὰρ ἂν τοσοντονὶ
ἀνέκραγες ἡμῖν οὐδὲν ἡδίκημένη.

WEALTH

POVERTY

How dare you do such a brazen, unholy, and lawless deed, you pair of lilliputian losers! Hey, just where do you mean to run off to? Stay where you are!

BLEPSIDEMUS

Holy Heracles!

POVERTY

Yes, I'm going give you the miserable death you deserve, for daring to commit an intolerable outrage, such as no one, human or divine, has ever dared before. So prepare to die!

CHREMYLUS

But who are you? You look pretty sickly to me.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Maybe she's a Fury from tragedy; she does have a rather crazed and tragic look.

CHREMYLUS

But she's got no torches.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Then she'll be very sorry!

POVERTY

But who do you think I am?

CHREMYLUS

An innkeeper or a gruel monger; otherwise you wouldn't have raised such a yelp when we'd done you no wrong.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΝΙΑ

430 ἀληθες; οὐ γὰρ δεινότατα δεδράκατον
ζητοῦντες ἐκ πάσης με χώρας ἐκβαλεῖν;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐκουν ὑπόλοιπον τὸ βάραθρόν σοι γίγνεται;
ἀλλ' ἥτις εἶ λέγειν σ' ἐχρῆν αὐτίκα μάλα.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ἦ σφὼ ποιήσω τήμερον δοῦναι δίκην
ἀνθ' ὧν ἐμὲ ζητεῖτον ἐνθένδ' ἀφανίσαι.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

435 ἄρ' ἐστὶν ἡ καπηλὶς ἡκ τῶν γειτόνων,
ἡ ταῖς κοτύλαις ἀεὶ με διαλυμαίνεται;

ΠΕΝΙΑ

Πενία μὲν οὖν, ἡ σφῶν ξυνοικῶ πόλλ' ἔτη.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

ἄναξ Ἄπολλον καὶ θεοί, ποῖ τις φύγη;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὗτος, τί δρᾶς; ὦ δειλότατον σὺ θηρίον,
οὐ παραμενεῖς;

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

ἤκιστα πάντων.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

440 οὐ μενεῖς;
ἀλλ' ἄνδρε δύο γυναῖκα φεύγομεν μίαν;

WEALTH

POVERTY

No wrong? Aren't you two behaving terribly by seeking to kick me out of the country altogether?

CHREMYLUS

Well, don't you have the death pit as a last alternative? But you've got to tell us here and now just who you are.

POVERTY

The one who's going to punish you this very day for seeking my banishment.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Wait, is she the barmaid from the neighborhood who's always cheating me on the drinks?

POVERTY

No, I'm Poverty, a resident of your community for many years.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Lord Apollo and all the gods, how do we get out of here?

CHREMYLUS

Hey, what's the matter with you? You cowardly critter, you stay right here!

BLEPSIDEMUS

That's the last thing I'll do!

CHREMYLUS

Stay. Are two men going to run away from one woman?

ARISTOPHANES

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

Πενία γάρ ἐστιν, ὧ πόνηρ', ἧς οὐδαμοῦ
οὐδὲν πέφυκε ζῶον ἐξωλέστερον.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

στήθ', ἀντιβολῶ σε, στήθι.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

μὰ Δί' ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

445 καὶ μὴν λέγω, δεινότατον ἔργον παρὰ πολὺ
ἔργων ἀπάντων ἐργασόμεθ', εἰ τὸν θεὸν
ἔρημον ἀπολιπόντε ποι φευξόμεθα
τηνδὶ δεδιότε, μηδὲ διαμαχούμεθα.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

450 ποίοισιν ὄπλοις ἢ δυνάμει πεποιοότε;
ποίον γὰρ οὐ θώρακα, ποίαν δ' ἀσπίδα
οὐκ ἐνέχυρον τίθησιν ἢ μιαρωτάτη;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

θάρρει· μόνος γὰρ ὁ θεὸς οὗτος οἶδ' ὅτι
τροπαῖον ἂν στήσαιο τῶν ταύτης τρόπων.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

455 γρύζειν δὲ καὶ τολμᾶτον, ὧ καθάρματε,
ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ δεινὰ δρῶντ' εἰλημμένω;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

σὺ δ', ὧ κάκιστ' ἀπολουμένη, τί λοιδορεῖ
ἡμῖν προσελθοῦσ' οὐδ' ὀτιοῦν ἀδικουμένη;

WEALTH

BLEPSIDEMUS

But she's Poverty, you dog; there's no creature more destructive anywhere!

CHREMYLUS

Hold on, please hold on.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Not me, by god!

CHREMYLUS

I tell you, we'll be doing far the most dastardly deed ever done, if we run off and leave the god deserted here, just because we're afraid of her and won't put up a fight.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Relying on what weapons or power? Is there a breastplate, is there a shield that the miserable bitch hasn't put in pawn?

CHREMYLUS

Take heart, because I'm sure this god will single-handedly score a victory over her evil ways.

POVERTY

You trash, you've still got the nerve to grumble after being caught red-handed in a terrible deed?

CHREMYLUS

And why, damn and blast you, do you come yelling at us when we've done you absolutely no wrong?

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΝΙΑ

οὐδὲν γάρ, ὦ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν, νομίζετε
ἀδικεῖν με τὸν Πλούτον ποιεῖν πειρωμένω
βλέψαι πάλιν;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

460 τί οὖν ἀδικοῦμεν τοῦτό σε,
εἰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποισιν ἐκπορίζομεν
ἀγαθόν;

ΠΕΝΙΑ

τί δ' ἂν ὑμεῖς ἀγαθὸν ἐξεύροιθ';

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὅ τι;
σὲ πρῶτον ἐκβαλόντες ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος—

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ἔμ' ἐκβαλόντες; καὶ τί ἂν νομίζετον
κακὸν ἐργάσασθαι μείζον ἀνθρώποις;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

465 ὅ τι;
εἰ τοῦτο δρᾶν μέλλοντες ἐπιλαθοίμεθα.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

καὶ μὴν περὶ τούτου σφῶν ἐθέλω δοῦναι λόγον
τὸ πρῶτον αὐτοῦ· κἂν μὲν ἀποφήνω μόνην
ἀγαθῶν ἀπάντων οὐσαν αἰτίαν ἐμὲ
470 ὑμῖν δι' ἐμέ τε ζῶντας ὑμᾶς· εἰ δὲ μή,
ποιεῖτον ἤδη τοῦθ' ὅ τι ἂν ὑμῖν δοκῇ.

WEALTH

POVERTY

Good gods, do you really think that by trying to restore Wealth's eyesight you do me no wrong?

CHREMYLUS

How do we wrong you if we can bring good to the whole human race?

POVERTY

What good could you two come up with?

CHREMYLUS

Want to know? When we've first kicked you out of Greece—

POVERTY

Kicked me out? And what do you think would do the human race more harm than that?

CHREMYLUS

More harm? If we abandoned what we plan to do.

POVERTY

Well now, that's an issue I'm ready to debate with you right on the spot. Either I'll demonstrate that I'm the sole source of all your blessings, and it's I who give you a life, or else go right ahead and do whatever you please.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ταυτὶ σὺ τολμᾶς, ὦ μιαρωτάτη, λέγειν;

ΠΕΝΙΑ

καὶ σύ γε διδάσκου· πάνν γὰρ οἶμαι ῥαδίως
ἄπανθ' ἀμαρτάνοντά σ' ἀποδείξειν ἐγώ,

475 εἰ τοὺς δικαίους φῆς ποιήσειν πλουσίους.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὦ τύμπανα καὶ κύφωνες, οὐκ ἀρήξετε;

ΠΕΝΙΑ

οὐ δεῖ σχετλιάζειν καὶ βοᾶν πρὶν ἂν μάθῃς.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

καὶ τίς δύναιτ' ἂν μὴ βοᾶν "ἰοὺ ἰοὺ"
τοιαῦτ' ἀκούων;

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ὅστις ἐστὶν εὖ φρονῶν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

480 τί δῆτά σοι τίμημ' ἐπιγράψω τῇ δίκῃ,
ἐὰν ἀλῶς;

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ὅ τι σοι δοκεῖ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

καλῶς λέγεις.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

τὸ γὰρ αὐτ', ἐὰν ἠτᾶσθε, καὶ σφῶ δεῖ παθεῖν.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

You vile witch, how dare you make such a case!

POVERTY

I do, and you pay attention to it, because I think I can easily show that you're completely wrong if you propose to make the just people rich.

CHREMYLUS

Oh cudgels and pillories, I need you here!

POVERTY

There's no need to curse and yell before you've heard me out.

CHREMYLUS

But who could help but yell "yukyuk" at hearing such talk?

POVERTY

Someone with good sense.

CHREMYLUS

And what penalty shall I impose if you lose your case?

POVERTY

Whatever you like.

CHREMYLUS

Excellent.

POVERTY

But the same applies to you two if you lose.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ικανούς νομίζεις δῆτα θανάτους εἴκοσιν;

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

ταύτη γε νῶν δὲ δὺ' ἀποχρήσουσιν μόνω.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

485 οὐκ ἂν φθάνοιτε τοῦτο πράττοντες· τί γὰρ
ἔχοι τις ἂν δίκαιον ἀντειπεῖν ἔτι;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἤδη χρῆν τι λέγειν ὑμᾶς σοφὸν ᾧ νικήσετε
τηνδὶ
ἐν τοῖσι λόγοις ἀντιλέγοντες, μαλακὸν δ' ἐνδώσετε
μηδέν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

φανερὸν μὲν ἔγωγ' οἶμαι γνῶναι τοῦτ' εἶναι πᾶσιν
ὁμοίως,
490 ὅτι τοὺς χρηστοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὖ πράττειν ἐστὶ
δίκαιον,
τοὺς δὲ πονηροὺς καὶ τοὺς ἀθέους τούτων τὰναντία
δήπου.
τοῦτ' οὖν ἡμεῖς ἐπιθυμοῦντες μόλις ἤυρομεν ὥστε
γενέσθαι
βούλευμα καλὸν καὶ γενναῖον καὶ χρήσιμον εἰς
ἅπαν ἔργον.
ἦν γὰρ ὁ Πλούτος νυνὶ βλέψη καὶ μὴ τυφλὸς ὢν
περινοστήῃ,
495 ὡς τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων βαδιεῖται κοῦκ
ἀπολείψει,

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

(to *Blepsidemus*) Do you think twenty death penalties will suffice?

BLEPSIDEMUS

For her, yes; for us, two will be more than enough.

POVERTY

You won't be long in getting them, for who could fairly rebut my case?

CHORUS LEADER

Now it's time for you to make a competent case and defeat her in the debate, leaving her no weak point to attack.

CHREMYLUS

I'll begin with what I think is obvious to everyone alike: that in all fairness the good people of the world should prosper, and the wicked and godless, the opposite, of course. Now that's what we want, and we finally found a way to make it happen, a fine, noble, and comprehensively workable plan. Because if Wealth should regain his eyesight and cease to wander around blind, he'll visit the good people and not desert them, and he'll shun the wicked and

ARISTOPHANES

τοὺς δὲ πονηροὺς καὶ τοὺς ἀθέους φευξέεται· κᾶτα
 ποιήσει
πάντας χρηστοὺς καὶ πλουτοῦντας δήπου τὰ τε θεία
 σέβοντας.
 καίτοι τούτου τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τίς ἂν ἐξεύροι ποτ'
 ἄμεινον;

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

οὐδείς· τούτου σοὶ μάρτυς ἐγώ· μηδὲν ταύτην γ'
 ἀνερώτα.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

- 500 ὡς μὲν γὰρ νῦν ἡμῖν ὁ βίος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις
 διάκειται,
 τίς ἂν οὐχ ἠγοῖτ' εἶναι *μανίαν* κακοδαιμονίαν τ' ἔτι
 μᾶλλον;
 πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὄντες πλουτοῦσι
 πονηροί,
 ἀδίκως αὐτὰ *ξυλλεξάμενοι* πολλοὶ δ' ὄντες πάννυ
 χρηστοὶ
 πράττουσι κακῶς καὶ πεινώσιν μετὰ σοῦ τε τὰ
 πλείεστα *σύνεισιν*.
- 505 οὔκουν εἶναί φημ', εἰ παύσει ταύτην βλέψας ποθ' ὁ
 Πλούτος,
 ὁδὸν ἦντιν' ἰὼν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀγάθ' ἂν μείζω
 πορίσειεν.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ἀλλ', ὦ πάντων ρᾶστ' ἀνθρώπων ἀναπεισθέντ' οὐχ
 ὑγιαίνειν

WEALTH

godless, and that will make everyone good, and rich of course, and god-fearing. Now who could come up with anything better for mankind than that?

BLEPSIDEMUS

Nobody, I'll guarantee you that, and you needn't bother to ask *her*.

CHREMYLUS

Just consider the current state of our human existence; who wouldn't think it's madness, or even divine malevolence? It's a fact that many people are wealthy despite being scoundrels who've amassed it unjustly, while a good many worthy people fare badly and go hungry, and spend most of their time in *your* company. That's why I declare that if ever Wealth recovered his eyesight and put a stop to *her*, there could be no better way to provide mankind with greater blessings.

POVERTY

How very easily the both of you have been suckered into

ARISTOPHANES

- δύο πρεσβύτα, ξυνθιασώτα τοῦ ληρεῖν καὶ
 παραπαίειν,
 εἰ τοῦτο γένοιθ' ὁ ποθεῖθ' ὑμεῖς, οὐ φημ' ἂν
 λυσιτελεῖν σφῶν.
- 510 εἰ γὰρ ὁ Πλούτος βλέψειε πάλιν διανείμειν τ' ἴσον
αὐτόν,
οὔτε τέχνην ἂν τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὔτ' ἂν σοφίαν
μελετώη
 οὐδεῖς ἀμφοῖν δ' ὑμῖν τούτοις ἀφανισθέντων
 ἐθελήσει
 τίς χαλκεύειν ἢ ναυπηγεῖν ἢ ράπτειν ἢ τροχοποιεῖν
 ἢ σκυτοτομεῖν ἢ πλιθουργεῖν ἢ πλύνειν ἢ
 σκυλοδεφεῖν
- 515 ἢ γῆς ἀρότροις ῥήξας δάπεδον καρπὸν Διῶς
 θερίσασθαι
 ἢν ἐξῆ ζῆν ἀργοῖς ὑμῖν τούτων πάντων ἀμελοῦσιν;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

λῆρον ληρεῖς. ταῦτα γὰρ ἡμῖν πάνθ' ὅσα νυνδὴ
 κατέλεξας
 οἱ θεράποντες μοχθήσουσιν.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

πόθεν οὖν ἔξεις θεράποντας;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὠνησόμεθ' ἀργυρίου δήπου.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

τίς δ' ἔσται πρῶτον ὁ πωλῶν,
 ὅταν ἀργύριον κάκεινος ἔχη;

WEALTH

derangement, you codgers, you members of the Blather and Babble Society! If you get your wish, you'll not be the better for it, I assure you. Because if Wealth regains his sight and shares himself out equally, absolutely no one will practice the arts and crafts, and once these vanish from your midst, who will want to do smithing or ship building or tailoring or wheelwrighting or shoemaking or bricklaying or laundering or tanning? Who will want to till the soil with ploughshares and reap Deo's²⁵ bounty, once you can live idly and ignore all this?

CHREMYLUS

That's nonsense, because everything you counted off just now will be the slaves' jobs.

POVERTY

And where will you get slaves?

CHREMYLUS

We'll buy them with money, of course.

POVERTY

But who will be the seller? He'll already have money.

²⁵ A poetic name for Demeter.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

520 κερδαίνειν βουλόμενός τις
 ἔμπορος ἤκων ἐκ Θετταλίας παρὰ πλείστων
 ἀνδραποδιστῶν.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἔσται πρῶτον ἀπάντων οὐδεὶς οὐδ'
 ἀνδραποδιστῆς
 κατὰ τὸν λόγον ὃν σὺ λέγεις δήπου. τίς γὰρ
 πλουτῶν ἐθελήσει
 κινδυνεύων περὶ τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς αὐτοῦ τοῦτο
 ποιῆσαι;
 525 ὥστ' αὐτὸς ἀροῦν ἐπαναγκασθεὶς καὶ σκάπτειν
 τᾶλλα τε μοχθεῖν
 ὀδυνηρότερον τρύψεις βίσιον πολὺ τοῦ νῦν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἐς κεφαλὴν σοί.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ἔτι δ' οὐχ ἕξεις οὔτ' ἐν κλίνῃ καταδαρθεῖν, οὐ γὰρ
 ἔσονται,
 οὔτ' ἐν δάπισιν· τίς γὰρ ὑφαίνειν ἐθελήσει χρυσίου
 ὄντος;
 οὔτε μύροισιν μυρίσαι στακτοῖς ὀπότεν νύμφην
 ἀγάγησθον,
 530 οὔθ' ἱματίων βαπτῶν δαπάναις κοσμηῆσαι
 ποικιλομόρφων.
 καίτοι τί πλέον πλουτεῖν ἔστιν τούτων πάντων
 ἀποροῦντα;

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

Some merchant from Thessaly, the capital of slave traffickers, who's looking to make a profit.

POVERTY

But first of all, there won't be a single slave trafficker anywhere—by the logic of your own argument, of course. When someone has wealth, why would he want to risk his very life in that kind of business? No, you'll be forced to do your ploughing and digging and other chores all by yourself, and so lead a much harder life than you do now.

CHREMYLUS

I hope it happens to you!

POVERTY

And you won't sleep in beds any more, or under quilts, because there won't be any, for who'll want to weave them once they've got money? And when you two bring home brides, you won't be scenting them with drops of perfume, or adorning them with expensive robes intricately dyed and decorated. Yet what good is wealth if you don't have all

ARISTOPHANES

παρ' ἐμοῦ δ' ἐστὶν ταῦτ' εὐπορα πάνθ' ὑμῖν ὦν
 δεῖσθον· ἐγὼ γὰρ
 τὸν χειροτέχνην ὥσπερ δέσποιν' ἐπαναγκάζουσα
 κάθημαι
 διὰ τὴν χρεῖαν καὶ τὴν πεινίαν ζητεῖν ὀπόθεν βίον
 ἔξει.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

- 535 σὺ γὰρ ἂν πορίσαι τί δύναι' ἀγαθὸν πλὴν φώδων
 ἐκ βαλανείου
 καὶ παιδαρίων ὑποπεινόντων καὶ γραϊδίων
 κολοσυρτόν;
 φθειρῶν τ' ἀριθμὸν καὶ κωνώπων καὶ ψυλλῶν οὐδὲ
 λέγω σοι
 ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους, αἱ βομβοῦσαι περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν
 ἀνιῶσιν,
 ἐπεγείρουσαι καὶ φράζουσαι· “πεινήσεις· ἀλλ'
 ἐπανίστω.”
- 540 πρὸς δέ γε τούτοις ἀνθ' ἱματίου μὲν ἔχειν ῥάκος·
 ἀντὶ δὲ κλίνης
 στιβάδα σχοίνων κόρων μεστήν, ἣ τοὺς εὐδοντας
 ἐγείρει
 καὶ φορμὸν ἔχειν ἀντὶ τάπητος σαπρόν· ἀντὶ δὲ
 προσκεφαλαίου
 λίθον εὐμεγέθη πρὸς τῇ κεφαλῇ· σιτεῖσθαι δ' ἀντὶ
 μὲν ἄρτων
 μαλάχης πτόρθους, ἀντὶ δὲ μάζης φυλλεῖ' ἰσχυῶν
 ῥαφανίδων,

WEALTH

that? It's from me that you get everything you need, because I'm the one who sits by the artisan like a taskmaster, compelling him by the pinch of poverty to seek his livelihood.

CHREMYLUS

What benefits can *you* provide, except blisters in the bathhouse and masses of hungry children and old ladies? Not to mention the lice, gnats, and fleas, too numerous to enumerate, that annoy us by buzzing around our heads and waking us up with the warning, "get up or you'll go hungry!" And on top of that, you have us wearing rags, not coats, and sleeping not on a bed but a bug-infested twine mat that doesn't let you get any sleep, under threadbare burlap instead of a blanket, with our heads not on a pillow but a hefty stone. And to eat, not bread but mallow shoots, not cake but withered radish leaves. We sit not on chairs

532 ἐμοῦ cett.: ἐμοὶ Vpc Mac

ARISTOPHANES

545 ἀντὶ δὲ θράνου στάμνου κεφαλὴν κατεαγότης, ἀντὶ
 δὲ μάκτρας
 πιθάκνης πλευρὰν ἔρρωγυῖαν καὶ ταύτην ἄρα γε
 πολλῶν
 ἀγαθῶν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀποφαίνω σ' αἴτιον
 οὔσαν;

ΠΕΝΙΑ

σὺ μὲν οὐ τὸν ἐμὸν βίον εἴρηκας, τὸν τῶν πτωχῶν
 δ' ἐπεκρούσω.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὔκουν δήπου τῆς Πτωχείας Πενίαν φαμὲν εἶναι
 ἀδελφήν;

ΠΕΝΙΑ

550 ὑμεῖς γ' οἵπερ καὶ Θρασυβούλῳ Διονύσιον εἶναι
 ὅμοιον.
 ἀλλ' οὐχ οὐμὸς τοῦτο πέπουθεν βίος οὐ μὰ Δί',
 οὐδέ γε μέλλει.
 πτωχοῦ μὲν γὰρ βίος, ὃν σὺ λέγεις, ζῆν ἐστὶν
 μηδὲν ἔχοντα·
 τοῦ δὲ πένητος ζῆν φειδόμενον καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις
προσέχοντα,
περιγίγμεσθαι δ' αὐτῷ μηδέν, μὴ μέντοι μηδ'
ἐπιλείπειν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

555 ὡς μακαρίτην, ὦ Δάματερ, τὸν βίον αὐτοῦ
 κατέλεξας,

WEALTH

but on broken crocks, and instead of a kneading trough we get one side of a barrel, and that's broken too. Now haven't I revealed the many blessings you bring to all humanity?

POVERTY

That's not my life you've described; you've sneaked in the life of beggars.

CHREMYLUS

Well, don't we say that Poverty is the sister of Beggary?

POVERTY

And you're the ones who also say that Thrasybulus is the same as Dionysius!²⁶ No, the life I represent is certainly nothing like that and never will be. You see, you're describing the beggar's life, which means living without possessions; by contrast, the poor man's life means being thrifty and hard working, and though he has nothing to spare, he doesn't lack the necessities either.

CHREMYLUS

By Demeter, how blessed you make his life sound, scrimp-

²⁶ The point is that Thrasybulus, a hero of the democracy (cf. 1146 n.) recently killed on campaign, could not be more different from Dionysius I, the stern tyrant of Syracuse; but some popular politician had evidently made the comparison.

ARISTOPHANES

εἰ φεισάμενος καὶ μοχθήσας καταλείψει μηδὲ
ταφήναι.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

σκώπτειν πειρᾶ καὶ κωμωδεῖν τοῦ σπουδάξιν
ἀμελήσας,
οὐ γινώσκων ὅτι τοῦ Πλούτου παρέχω βελτίονας
ἄνδρας
καὶ τὴν γνώμην καὶ τὴν ιδέαν. παρὰ τῷ μὲν γὰρ
ποδαγρῶντες
560 καὶ γαστρώδεις καὶ παχύκνημοι καὶ πιονές εἰσιν
ἀσελγῶς,
παρ' ἐμοὶ δ' ἰσχυροὶ καὶ σφηκῶδεις καὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς
ἀνιαροί.

ΧΡΕΜΤΑΟΣ

ἀπὸ τοῦ λιμοῦ γὰρ ἴσως αὐτοῖς τὸ σφηκῶδες σὺ
πορίζεις.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

περὶ σωφροσύνης ἤδη τοίνυν περανῶ σφῶν
κἀναδιδάξω
ὅτι κοσμιότης οἰκεῖ μετ' ἐμοῦ, τοῦ Πλούτου δ' ἐστ'
ἐνυβρίζειν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΑΟΣ

565 πάνν γοῦν κλέπτειν κόσμιόν ἐστιν καὶ τοὺς τοίχους
διορύττειν.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

·[νῆ τὸν Δί, εἰ δεῖ λαθεῖν αὐτόν, πῶς οὐχὶ κόσμιόν
ἐστιν;]

WEALTH

ing and toiling and then having nothing left for his own funeral!

POVERTY

You're using ridicule and caricature and not taking this seriously, since you're unaware that I produce better men than Wealth does in both mind and body. With him you'll find men with gout, potbellies, bloated legs, and disgustingly fat, while with me they're lean, wasp-waisted, and hard on the enemy.

CHREMYLUS

Perhaps it's by starvation that you give them that wasp waist.

POVERTY

Turning now to the issue of morality, I'll proceed to demonstrate that good behavior dwells with me, and arrogance with Wealth.

CHREMYLUS

And I suppose good behavior means stealing and burglary!

566 del. Bentley

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΝΙΑ

σκέψαι τοίνυν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν τοὺς ῥήτορας, ὡς
 ὅποταν μὲν
 ὦσι πένητες, περὶ τὸν δῆμον καὶ τὴν πόλιν εἰσὶ
 δίκαιοι,
 πλουτήσαντες δ' ἀπὸ τῶν κοινῶν παραχρῆμ' ἄδικοι
 γεγένηται,
 570 ἐπιβουλεύουσί τε τῷ πλήθει καὶ τῷ δήμῳ
 πολεμοῦσιν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ ψεύδει τούτων γ' οὐδέν, καίπερ σφόδρα
 βάσκανος οὔσα.
 ἀτὰρ οὐχ ἥττόν γ' οὐδὲν κλαύσει, μηδὲν ταύτῃ γε
 κομήσης,
 ὅτι ἡ ζῆτεῖς τοῦτ' ἀναπέσειν ἡμᾶς, ὡς ἔστιν ἄμεινον
 πενία πλούτου.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

καὶ σύ γ' ἐλέγξαι μ' οὔπω δύνασαι περὶ τούτου,
 ἀλλὰ φλυαρεῖς καὶ περνεγίζεις.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

575 καὶ πῶς φεύγουσί σ' ἅπαντες;

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ὅτι βελτίους αὐτοὺς ποιῶ. σκέψασθαι δ' ἔστι
 μάλιστα
 ἀπὸ τῶν παίδων τοὺς γὰρ πατέρας φεύγουσι
 φρονοῦντας ἄριστα

WEALTH

POVERTY

Just observe the politicians in every state: when they're poor, they do right by the people and the state; but when they get rich on public funds, they immediately become wrongdoers, plotting against the masses and warring against the people.

CHREMYLUS

Well, you don't misrepresent anything there, even though you're quite the witch. But don't imagine that this will get you any milder punishment for trying to persuade us that poverty is better than wealth.

POVERTY

But you haven't yet been able to refute me on this point; all you do is jabber and flail about.

CHREMYLUS

All right, why does everyone shun you?

POVERTY

Because I improve them. The case of children is the most instructive example: they shun the fathers who have their

ARISTOPHANES

αὐτοῖς. οὕτω διαγιγνώσκειν χαλεπὸν πράγμα' ἐστὶ
δίκαιον.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τὸν Δία φήσεις ἄρ' οὐκ ὀρθῶς διαγιγνώσκειν τὸ
κράτιστον·
κάκεῖνος γὰρ τὸν πλοῦτον ἔχει.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

580 ταύτην δ' ἡμῖν ἀποπέμπει.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ἀλλ', ὦ Κρονικαῖς λήμαις ὄντως λημῶντες τὰς
φρένας ἄμφω,
ὁ Ζεὺς δήπου πένεται, καὶ τοῦτ' ἤδη φανερώς σε
διδάξω.

εἰ γὰρ ἐπλούτει, πῶς ἂν ποιῶν τὸν Ὀλυμπικὸν
αὐτὸς ἀγῶνα
ἵνα τοὺς Ἑλληνας ἅπαντας αἰεὶ δι' ἔτους πέμπτου
ξυναγείρει,

585 ἀνεκέρυττεν τῶν ἀσκητῶν τοὺς νικῶντας
στεφανώσας
κοτίνου στεφάνῳ; καίτοι χρυσῶ μάλλον χρῆν, εἴπερ
ἐπλούτει.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐκὸν τούτῳ δήπου δηλοῖ τιμῶν τὸν πλοῦτον
ἐκεῖνος;
φειδόμενος γὰρ καὶ βουλόμενος τούτου μηδὲν
δαπανᾶσθαι,

WEALTH

best interests at heart. That's how difficult it is to appreciate what's right.

CHREMYLUS

Will you then claim that Zeus doesn't appreciate what's best? Because he too has wealth.

BLEPSIDEMUS

And sends *her* to us!

POVERTY

Oh, your wits are blinded by truly primeval sties, the both of you! Zeus of course is actually poor, as I now will clearly demonstrate. If he's wealthy, then why is it that when he holds the Olympic Games, where every fourth year he gathers all the Greeks together, he heralds the victorious athletes by crowning them with wild olive? If he's wealthy, he should crown them with gold.

CHREMYLUS

Doesn't that simply show that he values his wealth? Being thrifty, and unwilling to squander any of his wealth, he

ARISTOPHANES

λήροις ἀναδῶν τοὺς νικῶντας τὸν πλοῦτον ἐὰ παρ'
 ἑαυτῷ.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

590 πολὺ τῆς πενίας πρᾶγμ' αἴσχιον ζητεῖς αὐτῷ
 περιάψαι,
 εἰ πλούσιος ὢν ἀνελεύθερός ἐσθ' οὕτωςι καὶ
 φιλοκερδής.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλὰ σέ γ' ὁ Ζεὺς ἐξολέσειεν κοτίνου στεφάνῳ
 στεφανώσας.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

τὸ γὰρ ἀντιλέγειν τολμᾶν ὑμᾶς ὡς οὐ πάντ' ἔστ'
 ἀγάθ' ὑμῖν
 διὰ τὴν Πενίαν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

595 παρα τῆς Ἑκάτης ἔξεστιν τοῦτο πυθέσθαι,
 εἴτε τὸ πλουτεῖν εἴτε τὸ πεινῆν βέλτιον. φησὶ γὰρ
 αὐτῇ
 τοὺς μὲν ἔχοντας καὶ πλουτοῦντας δείπνον
 προσάγειν κατὰ μῆνα,
 τοὺς δὲ πένητας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀρπάζειν πρὶν
 καταθεῖναι.
 ἀλλὰ φθείρου καὶ μὴ γρύζης
 ἔτι μηδ' ὀτιοῦν.
 600 οὐ γὰρ πείσεις, οὐδ' ἦν πείσης.

WEALTH

adorns the winners with baubles and keeps the wealth for himself.

POVERTY

You're trying to impute to him something more disgraceful than poverty: being rich yet behaving like a greedy lowlife.

CHREMYLUS

I hope Zeus crowns *you* with a wild olive wreath, after he exterminates you!

POVERTY

How dare you keep denying that Poverty is the source of all your blessings?

CHREMYLUS

This is a question that Hecate can answer, whether it's better to be rich than poor. She'll tell you that every month the wealthy set out a meal for her, and that poor people snatch it up before it's even put down.²⁷ Now get lost and stop your grumbling; not another word! You won't persuade me even if you convince me.

²⁷ Hecate's shrines stood in the street before houses (*Wasps* 804); her "meals" were mere refuse, cf. Demosthenes 54.39.

⁵⁹⁶ προσάγειν κατὰ μῆνα (κ. μ. π. R M γρV) Holzinger: κατὰ μῆν' ἀποπέμπειν (προσπ. U) cett.

ARISTOPHANES

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ὦ πόλις Ἄργους, κλύεθ' οἶα λέγει.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

Παύσωνα κάλει τὸν ξύσσιτον.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

τί πάθω τλήμων;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἔρρ' ἐς κόρακας θάπτον ἀφ' ἡμῶν.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

605 εἶμι δὲ ποῖ γῆς;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

εἰς τὸν κύφωv· ἀλλ' οὐ μέλλειν
χρήσ', ἀλλ' ἀνύειν.

ΠΕΝΙΑ

ἦ μὴν ὑμεῖς γ' ἔτι μ' ἐνταυθοῖ
μεταπέμψεσθον.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

610 τότε νοστήσεις· νῦν δὲ φθείρου·
κρεῖττον γάρ μοι πλουτεῖν ἐστίν,
σὲ δ' εἶαν κλάειν μακρὰ τὴν κεφαλῆν.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

615 νῆ Δί', ἔγωγ' οὖν ἐθέλω πλουτῶν
εὐωχεῖσθαι μετὰ τῶν παίδων
τῆς τε γυναικός, καὶ λουσάμενος
λιπαρὸς χωρῶν ἐκ βαλανείου
τῶν χειροτεχνῶν

WEALTH

POVERTY

City of Argos, hearken to his words!²⁸

CHREMYLUS

Summon Pauson, your tablemate.²⁹

POVERTY

This is terrible; what am I to do?

CHREMYLUS

Get the hell out of here, and fast!

POVERTY

Where in the world shall I go?

CHREMYLUS

To the pillory. Come on, you mustn't tarry; get a move on!

POVERTY

Mark my words, you'll summon me back here one day,
both of you.

Exit POVERTY.

CHREMYLUS

That's when you'll come back; meanwhile, get lost. I'm
better off being rich, and letting you go to blazes.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Hear hear! As for me, I'm ready to revel in wealth with my
wife and kids, to take a bath, walk gleaming from the bath-

²⁸ From Euripides' *Telephus*, fr. 713, a hyperbolic request for witnesses to an outrageous claim, cf. *Knights* 813.

²⁹ Teased for poverty in *Acharnians* 854 and *Women at the Thesmophoria* 949.

ARISTOPHANES

καὶ τῆς Πενίας καταπαρδεῖν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

αὕτη μὲν ἡμῖν ἠπίτριπτος οἴχεται.
 620 ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ σύ γ' ὡς τάχιστα τὸν θεὸν
 ἐγκατακλινούντ' ἄγωμεν εἰς Ἀσκληπιοῦ.

ΒΛΕΨΙΔΗΜΟΣ

καὶ μὴ διατρίβωμέν γε, μὴ πάλιν τις αὖ
 ἐλθὼν διακωλύσῃ τι τῶν προὔργου ποιεῖν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

παῖ Καρίων, τὰ στρώματ' ἐκφέρειν ἐχρῆν
 625 αὐτόν τ' ἄγειν τὸν Πλούτον, ὡς νομίζεται,
 καὶ τᾶλλ' ὅσ' ἐστὶν ἔνδον εὐτρεπισμένα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ὦ πλεῖστα Θεσείοις μεμυστιλημένοι
 γέροντες ἄνδρες ἐπ' ὀλιγίστοις ἀλφίτοις,
 ὡς εὐτυχεῖθ', ὡς μακαρίως πεπράγατε,
 630 ἄλλοι θ' ὅσοις μέτεστι τοῦ χρηστοῦ τρόπου.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

τί δ' ἐστίν, ὦ βέλτιστε τῶν σαντοῦ φίλων;
 φαίνει γὰρ ἦκειν ἄγγελος χρηστοῦ τινος.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ὁ δεσπότης πέπραγεν εὐτυχέστατα,

WEALTH

house, and blow a fart at Poverty and her artisans!

CHREMYLUS

Well, we're rid of that damned witch. Now as quick as we can, let's you and I take the god to Asclepius' temple and bed him down.

BLEPSIDEMUS

Yes, let's waste no time, in case somebody else comes along and thwarts our enterprise.

CHREMYLUS

(calling into the house) Cario my boy, it's time to fetch the bedding and bring out the god himself, with due ceremony, as well as the other things we've got ready.

CARIO and other Slaves bring out WEALTH and items of bedding and baggage, and all march off stage.

The Chorus performs an entr'acte.

Enter CARIO, returned from Asclepius' shrine; it is now the following morning.

CARIO

You old men, who at many a festival for Theseus have sopped up soup with the tiniest of crumbs, you're in luck! You're on easy street! And so is everyone else who shares your good character!

CHORUS LEADER

What's up, best of all your fellow slaves? You look to be the harbinger of something good.

CARIO

My master's had the greatest stroke of luck, and Wealth

ARISTOPHANES

635 μάλλον δ' ὁ Πλούτος αὐτός· ἀντὶ γὰρ τυφλοῦ
 ἐξωμμάτῳται καὶ λελάμπρυνται κόρας,
Ἄσκληπιοῦ παιῶνος εὐμενοῦς τυχῶν.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

λέγεις μοι χαράν, λέγεις μοι βοάν.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

πάρεστι χαίρειν, ἦν τε βούλησθ' ἦν τε μή.

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

640 ἀναβοάσομαι τὸν εὐπαιδα καὶ
μέγα βροτοῖσι φέγγος Ἄσκληπιόν.

ΓΤΝΗ

τίς ἢ βοή ποτ' ἐστίν; ἀρ' ἀγγέλλεται
 χρηστόν τι; τοῦτο γὰρ ποθοῦσ' ἐγὼ πάλαι
 ἔνδον κάθημαι περιμένουσα τουτονί.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

645 ταχέως, ταχέως φέρ' οἶνον, ᾧ δέσποιν', ἵνα
 καυτὴ πίης—φιλεῖς δὲ δρῶσ' αὐτὸ σφόδρα—
 ὡς ἀγαθὰ συλλήβδην ἅπαντά σοι φέρω.

ΓΤΝΗ

καὶ ποῦ ἔστιν;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις· εἴσει τάχα.

ΓΤΝΗ

πέραινε τοίνυν ὅ τι λέγεις ἀνύσας ποτέ.

WEALTH

himself even more so: "yes, from being blind he's now well-sighted, and his pupils are made bright, since he's found a kindly healer in Asclepius."³⁰

CHORUS LEADER

Your news calls for joy, calls for cheers!

CARIO

Joy's in order, like it or not!

CHORUS LEADER

I'll lift a cheer for Asclepius, blessed in his children and a bright beacon for humankind!

Enter Chremylus' WIFE from the house.

WIFE

What's all this shouting? Has someone brought good news? That's what I've long desired, sitting in the house and waiting for this very man.

CARIO

Quickly, mistress, quickly fetch some wine, and you can have some too (you dearly love doing that), because I'm bringing you the whole gamut of blessings all at once!

WIFE

So where are they?

CARIO

In my report; you'll soon find out.

WIFE

Well, give me your report, and make it snappy!

³⁰ According to the scholiast, a quotation (at least in part) from Sophocles' *Phineus* (fr. 710).

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἄκουε τοίνυν, ὡς ἐγὼ τὰ πράγματα
650 ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν σοι πάντ' ἐρῶ.

ΓΥΝΗ

μὴ δῆτ' ἔμοιγ' εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μὴ τὰγαθὰ

ἂ νῦν γεγένηται;

ΓΥΝΗ

μὴ μὲν οὔν τὰ πράγματα.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ὡς γὰρ τάχιστ' ἀφικόμεθα πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
ἄγοντες ἄνδρα τότε μὲν ἀθλιώτατον,
655 νῦν δ' εἴ τιν' ἄλλον μακάριον κευδαίμονα,
πρῶτον μὲν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ θάλατταν ἤγομεν,
ἔπειτ' ἐλούμεν.

ΓΥΝΗ

νῆ Δί', εὐδαίμων ἄρ' ἦν
ἀνὴρ γέρων ψυχρᾶ θαλάττη λούμενος.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἔπειτα πρὸς τὸ τέμενος ἦμεν τοῦ θεοῦ.
660 ἐπεὶ δὲ βωμῶ πόπανα καὶ προθύματα
καθωσιώθη, πελανὸς Ἡφαίστου φλογί,
κατεκλίναμεν τὸν Πλοῦτον, ὥσπερ εἰκὸς ἦν
ἡμῶν δ' ἕκαστος στιβάδα παρεκαττύετο.

WEALTH

CARIO

Then listen; I'll break the whole business to you from head to foot.

WIFE

Don't break anything on *my* head!

CARIO

Not even the good news?

WIFE

No, just not that business.

CARIO

Then listen. As soon as we got to the shrine with that fellow—then very miserable, but now the happiest and luckiest in the world—we took him first to the sea and washed him.

WIFE

Oh yes, what good luck for an old man, to be washed in freezing water!

CARIO

Then we went to the god's precinct, and after the cakes and first offerings were burnt, "matter for Hephaestus' flame,"³¹ we bedded Wealth down in the proper fashion, and rigged up bunks for ourselves.

³¹ Recalling some tragic source.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ

ἦσαν δέ τινες κάλλοι δεόμενοι τοῦ θεοῦ;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

- 665 εἷς μὲν γε Νεοκλείδης, ὅς ἐστι μὲν τυφλός,
κλέπτων δὲ τοὺς βλέποντας ὑπερηκόντικεν
ἕτεροί τε πολλοὶ παντοδαπὰ νοσήματα
ἔχοντες. ὡς δὲ τοὺς λύχνους ἀποσβέσας
ἡμῖν παρήγγειλεν καθεύδειν τοῦ θεοῦ
- 670 ὁ πρόπολος, εἰπών, ἦν τις αἴσθηται ψόφου,
σιγᾶν, ἅπαντες κοσμίως κατεκείμεθα.
κὰγὼ καθεύδειν οὐκ ἔδυνάμην, ἀλλὰ με
ἀθάρης χύτρα τις ἐξέπληττε κειμένη
ὀλίγον ἄπωθεν τῆς κεφαλῆς του γραδίου,
- 675 ἐφ' ἣν ἐπεθύμουν δαιμονίως ἐφερπύσαι.
ἔπειτ' ἀναβλέψας ὀρῶ τὸν ἱερέα
τοὺς φθοῖς ἀφαρπάζοντα καὶ τὰς ἰσχάδας
ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῆς ἱερᾶς. μετὰ τοῦτο δὲ
περιῆλθε τοὺς βωμοὺς ἅπαντας ἐν κύκλῳ,
- 680 εἷ που πόπανον εἶη τι καταλελειμμένον·
ἔπειτα ταῦθ' ἤγιζεν εἰς σάκταν τινά.
κὰγὼ νομίσας πολλὴν ὀσίαν τοῦ πράγματος
ἐπὶ τὴν χύτραν τὴν τῆς ἀθάρης ἀνίσταμαι.

ΓΤΝΗ

ταλάντατ' ἀνδρῶν, οὐκ ἔδεδοίκεῖς τὸν θεόν;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

- 685 νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔγωγε, μὴ φθάσειέ με
ἐπὶ τὴν χύτραν ἐλθὼν ἔχων τὰ στέμματα.

WEALTH

WIFE

Were there any other patients at the shrine?

CARIO

One was Neocleides, who's blind but has a sharper eye than the sighted when it comes to stealing; and there were many others, with all kinds of illnesses. Then the temple servant put out the lamps and told us all to go to sleep, and to be quiet if we heard any noise, and we all lay there in good order. But I couldn't get to sleep. A pot of porridge sitting just beside some old lady's head was driving me nuts; I had a supernatural desire to slink over and get it. Then I looked up and saw the temple servant snatch the pastries and figs from the sacred table, and then make the rounds of all the altars in search of any leftover cakes, which he consecrated right into a sack. I appreciated the holiness of this procedure, so I left my bed for that pot of porridge.

WIFE

You utterly benighted man, weren't you afraid of the god?

CARIO

I certainly *was* afraid—that he'd come out wearing his gar-

681 ἤγιζεν cett. S: ἤτιζεν R: ἤκιζεν (κ in ras.) V

ARISTOPHANES

ὁ γὰρ ἱερεὺς αὐτοῦ με προῦδιδάξατο.
 τὸ γράδιον δ' ὡς ἤσθκάν>ετό μου τὸν ψόφον,
 τὴν χεῖρ' ἐνείρει κᾶτα συρίζας ἐγὼ
 690 ὁδᾶξ ἐλαβόμην ὡς παρείας ὦν ὄφισ.
 ἢ δ' εὐθέως τὴν χεῖρα πάλιν ἀνέσπασεν
 κατέκειτό θ' αὐτὴν ἐντυλίξασ' ἡσυχῇ
 ὑπὸ τοῦ δέους βδέουσα δριμύτερον γαλῆς.
 κἀγὼ τότε ἤδη τῆς ἀθάρης πολλὴν ἔφλων·
 695 ἔπειτ' ἐπειδὴ μεστὸς ἦν, ἀνεπανόμην.

ΓΤΝΗ

ὁ δὲ θεὸς ὑμῖν οὐ προσήειν;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οὐδέπω.

μετὰ τοῦτο δ' ἤδη καὶ γέλοιον δῆτά τι
 ἐποίησα. προσίοντος γὰρ αὐτοῦ μέγα πάνν
 ἀπέπαρδον ἢ γαστήρ γὰρ ἐπεφύσητό μου.

ΓΤΝΗ

700 ἦ πού σε διὰ τοῦτ' εὐθὺς ἐβδελύττετο.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οὐκ, ἀλλ' Ἰασὼ μὲν τις ἀκολουθοῦσ' ἄμα
 ὑπηρυθρίασε χῆ Πανάκει' ἀπεστράφη
 τὴν ρίν' ἐπιλαβοῦσ'. οὐ λιβανωτὸν γὰρ βδέω.

ΓΤΝΗ

αὐτὸς δ' ἐκεῖνος;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οὐ μὰ Δί' οὐδ' ἐφρόντισεν.

WEALTH

lands and beat me to the pot! His own priest had taught me that one. Now when the old lady heard the sound I was making, she stuck her hand into the pot; then with a hiss I grabbed it in my teeth like a garter snake. She pulled back that hand right quickly, and lay there quietly, all wrapped up in the blanket, farting in terror, stinkier than a weasel. That's when I took a big gobble of that porridge, and I didn't stop till I was full.

WIFE

But didn't the god approach you?

CARIO

Not yet; first I did one more amusing thing. As he was approaching, I let off a very big fart; my stomach had bloated on me.

WIFE

I'll bet that put you right on his shit list.

CARIO

No, but Iaso, who followed him in, blushed, and Panacea held her nose and turned away;³² my farts aren't incense, you know!

WIFE

And the god himself?

CARIO

He paid absolutely no attention at all.

³² Two of Asclepius' daughters.

⁶⁸⁹ *ἐνείρει* Fraenkel: *ὑφήρει* vel *ὑφήρει* a

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΤΝΗ

705 λέγεις ἄγροικον ἄρα σύ γ' εἶναι τὸν θεόν;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἀλλὰ σκατοφάγον.

ΓΤΝΗ

αἶ τάλαν.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μετὰ ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μὲν εὐθύς ἐνεκαλυψάμην
δείσας, ἐκείνος δ' ἐν κύκλῳ τὰ νοσήματα
σκοπῶν περιήει πάντα κοσμίως πάνν.

710 ἔπειτα παῖς αὐτῷ λίθινον θυνείδιον
παρέθηκε καὶ δοίδυκα καὶ κιβώτιον.

ΓΤΝΗ

λίθινον;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μὰ Δί' οὐ δῆτ', οὐχὶ τό γε κιβώτιον.

ΓΤΝΗ

σὺ δὲ πῶς ἑώρας, ᾧ κάκιστ' ἀπολούμενε,
ὅς ἐγκεκαλύφθαι φῆς;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

διὰ τοῦ τριβωνίου·

715 ὅπας γὰρ εἶχεν οὐκ ὀλίγας, μὰ τὸν Δία.
πρῶτον δὲ πάντων τῷ Νεοκλείδῃ φάρμακον
κατάπλαστον ἐνεχείρησε τρίβειν, ἐμβαλὼν
σκοροδῶν κεφαλὰς τρεῖς Τηνίων. ἔπειτ' ἔφλα
ἐν τῇ θυνείᾳ συμπαραμειγνύων ὁπὸν

WEALTH

WIFE

You're telling me the god's a bumpkin?

CARIO

Certainly not; he's just a shit eater.

WIFE

Ugh, you're awful!

CARIO

Well, after that I got scared and covered right up, while in very orderly fashion the god made his rounds, examining everyone's malady. Then his assistant brought him a mortar made of stone, a pestle, and a box.

WIFE

Made of stone?

CARIO

No, not the box, only the mortar.

WIFE

But you were covered up, you say, so how did you manage to see, damn and blast you?

CARIO

Through my cloak of course, since it's got quite a few peep holes. Now his very first job was grinding a poultice for Neocleides. He put in three heads of Tenian garlic, then added fig juice and squill, and pounded it in the mortar;

ARISTOPHANES

- 720 καὶ σχῖνον· εἶτ' ὄξει διέμενος Σφηττίῳ
κατέπλασεν αὐτοῦ τὰ βλέφαρ' ἐκτρέψας, ἵνα
ὀδυνῶτο μᾶλλον. ὁ δὲ κεκραγὼς καὶ βοῶν
ἔφην· ἀνάξας· ὁ δὲ θεὸς γελάσας ἔφη·
“ἐνταῦθά νυν κάθησο καταπεπλασμένος,
725 ἵν' ἐπομνύμενον παύσω σε τὰς ἐκκλησίας.”

ΓΤΝΗ

ὡς φιλόπολις τίς ἐσθ' ὁ δαίμων καὶ σοφός.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

- μετὰ τοῦτο τῷ Πλούτῳ παρεκαθέζετο,
καὶ πρῶτα μὲν δὴ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐφήψατο,
ἔπειτα καθαρὸν ἡμιτύβιον λαβὼν·
730 τὰ βλέφαρα περιέψησεν. ἡ Πανάκεια δὲ
κατεπέτασ' αὐτοῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν φοινικίδι
καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρόσωπον· εἶθ' ὁ θεὸς ἐπόππυσεν.
ἔξηξάτην οὖν δύο δράκοντ' ἐκ τοῦ νεῶ
ὑπερφνεῖ τὸ μέγεθος.

ΓΤΝΗ

ὦ φίλοι θεοί.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

- 735 τούτῳ δ' ὑπὸ τὴν φοινικίδ' ὑποδύνθ' ἡσυχῇ
τὰ βλέφαρα περιέλειχον, ὥς γ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ·
καὶ πρὶν σε κοτύλας ἐκπιεῖν οἴνου δέκα,
ὁ Πλούτος, ὦ δέσποινα, ἀνειστήκει βλέπων·
ἐγὼ δὲ τὴν χεῖρ' ἀνεκρότησ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς
740 τὸν δεσπότην τ' ἡγειρον. ὁ θεὸς δ' εὐθέως
ἠφάνισεν αὐτὸν οἷ τ' ὄφεις εἰς τὸν νεῶν.

WEALTH

then he drenched it all with Sphettian vinegar, turned out his eyelids, and smeared it in, to make the sting more painful. Neocleides jumped up screaming and yelling and tried to run, but the god laughed and said, "You sit right here, all poulticed up; it'll stop you from obstructing assemblies with your affidavits."

WIFE

That god's a true patriot, and smart too!

CARIO

Next, he took a seat beside our dear Wealth, and felt his head, then took clean gauze and daubed around his eyelids; Panacea wrapped his head and whole face in crimson cloth. Then the god whistled, and two serpents darted from the temple, extraordinarily large ones.

WIFE

Good heavens!

CARIO

They slipped quietly beneath the crimson cloth and started licking around his eyelids, I suppose. And sooner than you could drink five pints of wine, mistress, our Wealth stood up and could see. I clapped my hands for sheer joy and woke my master, and the god immediately disappeared into the temple, the serpents too.³³ You can

³³ This line shows that the incubation was outside the temple.

⁷²¹ ἐκτρέψας R V: ἐκοτρέψας cett.

⁷²⁷ Πλούτω τι Meineke: γέροντι Kappeyne

ARISTOPHANES

οἱ δ' ἐγκατακείμενοι παρ' αὐτῷ πῶς δοκεῖς
τὸν Πλούτον ἡσπάζοντο καὶ τὴν νύχθ' ὄλην
ἐγρηγόρεσαν, ἕως διέλαμψεν ἡμέρα.

745 ἐγὼ δ' ἐπήνουν τὸν θεὸν πάνυ σφόδρα,
ὅτι βλέπειν ἐποίησε τὸν Πλούτον ταχύ,
τὸν δὲ Νεοκλείδην μᾶλλον ἐποίησεν τυφλόν.

ΓΤΝΗ

ὄσσην ἔχεις τὴν δύναμιν, ὦναξ δέσποτα.
ἀτὰρ φράσον μοι, ποῦ 'σθ' ὁ Πλούτος;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἔρχεται.

750 ἀλλ' ἦν περὶ αὐτὸν ὄχλος ὑπερφυῆς ὅσος.
οἱ γὰρ δίκαιοι πρότερον ὄντες καὶ βίον
ἔχοντες ὀλίγον αὐτὸν ἡσπάζοντο καὶ
ἐδεξιούνθ' ἅπαντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἡδονῆς·

ὄσοι δ' ἐπλούτουν οὐσίαν τ' εἶχον συχνην
755 οὐκ ἐκ δικαίου τὸν βίον κεκτημένοι,
ὀφρῦς ξυνήγον ἐσκυθρώπαζόν θ' ἅμα.
οἱ δ' ἠκολούθουν κατόπιν ἐστεφανωμένοι
γελῶντες, εὐφημοῦντες· ἐκτυπέιτο δὲ
ἐμβὰς γερόντων εὐρύθμοις προβήμασιν.

760 ἀλλ' εἰ, ἀπαξάπαντες ἐξ ἑνὸς λόγου
ὀρχεῖσθε καὶ σκιρτᾶτε καὶ χορεύετε·
οὐδεὶς γὰρ ὑμῖν εἰσιούσιν ἀγγελεῖ,
ὡς ἄλφειτ' οὐκ ἔνεστιν ἐν τῷ θυλάκῳ.

ΓΤΝΗ

νῆ τὴν Ἑκάτην, καγὼ δ' ἀναδηῆσαι βούλομαι

WEALTH

imagine how everyone stayed up the whole night long, hugging him till the new day lit up. I was especially loud in my praises of the god, for giving Wealth his sight so quickly, and for making that Neocleides even blinder!

WIFE

How great your power, my sovereign lord! But tell me, where's Wealth now?

CARIO

He's on his way, but quite an immense crowd has collected around him. All the people who formerly led upright but meager lives wanted to greet him and shake his hand for sheer joy, while the wealthy, who had heaps of possessions, a living not acquired by upright means, were knitting their brows and wearing frowns. The others followed behind wearing garlands and laughing and voicing their blessings, and the old men's shoes beat out a nice rhythm for the parade. (*to the Chorus*) Come on now, everyone all together start dancing, skipping, and promenading, because you'll never again come home to hear the news that there's no more grain in your sack.

WIFE

By Hecate, I'd also like to drape a string of loaves around

ARISTOPHANES

765 εὐαγγελία σε κριβανιτῶν ὄρμαθῶ
 τοιαῦτ' ἀπαγγείλαντα.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μή νυν μέλλ' ἔτι,
 ὡς ἄνδρες ἐγγύς εἰσιν ἤδη τῶν θυρῶν.

ΓΤΝΗ

φέρε νυν, ἰοῦσ' εἴσω κομίσω καταχύσματα
 ὥσπερ νεωνήτοισιν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐγώ.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

770 ἐγὼ δ' ἀπαντήσαί γ' ἐκείνοις βούλομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΤ

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

καὶ προσκυνῶ γε πρῶτα μὲν τὸν ἥλιον,
 ἔπειτα σεμνῆς Παλλάδος κλεινὸν πέδον
 χώραν τε πᾶσαν Κέκροπος ἢ μ' ἐδέξατο.
 αἰσχύνομαι δὲ τὰς ἐμαντοῦ συμφοράς,
 775 οἷοις ἄρ' ἀνθρώποις ξυνὼν ἐλάνθανον,
 τοὺς ἀξίους δὲ τῆς ἐμῆς ὀμιλίας
 ἔφευγον, εἰδὼς οὐδέν. ὦ τλήμων ἐγώ,
 ὡς οὔτ' ἐκεῖν' ἄρ' οὔτε ταῦτ' ὀρθῶς ἔδρων.
 ἀλλ' αὐτὰ πάντα πάλιν ἀναστρέψας ἐγὼ
 780 δείξω τὸ λοιπὸν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὅτι
ἄκων ἐμαντὸν τοῖς πονηροῖς ἐπέδιδουν.

³⁴ Sweets were customarily tossed over slaves first entering a new master's house.

WEALTH

your neck for delivering such good news.

CARIO

Then don't delay, because the men are almost at the door.

WIFE

All right, I'll go in and fetch sweets, as for new-bought eyes!³⁴

CARIO

And me, I'm ready to greet the arrivals.

Exit CARIO to a wing, and WIFE into the house.

The Chorus performs an entr'acte.

Enter WEALTH from a wing.

WEALTH

Yes, ³⁵ and first I bow to the sun, then to the famous soil of august Pallas³⁶ and all the country of Cecrops,³⁷ which has received me. I feel shame at my own misadventures, realizing the kind of people I used to associate with unawares, while in complete ignorance I shunned those who deserved my company. How pitiful that in both respects I acted wrongly! But I intend to reverse that situation completely, and show the world that I didn't mean to put myself in the hands of the wicked.

Enter CHREMYLUS and CARIO from a wing.

³⁵ Wealth apparently replies to the Chorus' song, which is not extant.

³⁶ Athena.

³⁷ The legendary first king of Athens.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

βάλλ' ἐς κόρακας. ὡς χαλεπὸν εἰσιν οἱ φίλοι
οἱ φαινόμενοι παραχρῆμ' ὅταν πράττη τις εὔ.
νύττουσι γὰρ καὶ φλώσι τὰντικνῆμια,
785 ἐνδεικνύμενος ἕκαστος εὐνοιάν τινα.
ἐμὲ γὰρ τίς οὐ προσεῖπε; ποῖος οὐκ ὄχλος
περιεστεφάνωσεν ἐν ἀγορᾷ πρεσβυτικός;

ΓΤΝΗ

ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, καὶ σὺ καὶ σὺ, χαίρετον.
φέρε νυν, νόμος γάρ ἐστι, τὰ καταχύσματα
ταντὶ καταχέω σου λαβοῦσα.

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

790 μηδαμῶς.
ἐμοῦ γὰρ εἰσιόντος εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν
πρώτιστ' ἀναβλέψαντος οὐδὲν ἐκφέρειν
πρεπῶδές ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰσφέρειν.

ΓΤΝΗ

εἶτ' οὐχὶ δέξει δῆτα τὰ καταχύσματα;

ΠΛΟΤΤΟΣ

795 ἔνδον γε παρὰ τὴν ἐστίαν, ὥσπερ νόμος.
ἔπειτα καὶ τὸν φόρτον ἐκφύγοιμεν ἄν
οὐ γὰρ πρεπῶδές ἐστι τῷ διδασκάλῳ
ισχάδια καὶ τρωγάλια τοῖς θεωμένοις
προβαλόντ', ἐπὶ τούτοις εἶτ' ἀναγκάζειν γελᾶν.

ΓΤΝΗ

800 εὔ πάνυ λέγεις· ὡς Δεξίνικός γ' οὔτοσι
ἀνίσταθ' ὡς ἀρπασόμενος τὰς ισχάδας.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

(*shouting behind him*) Damn you all! (*aside*) Friends are trouble if they're the sort who suddenly materialize when you're successful. They jostle you and bang your shins, each one making a show of his affection. Who failed to greet me? What bunch of oldsters failed to crown me in the marketplace?

Enter WIFE from the house, with sweets.

WIFE

Hello, dearest, and you also; hello to you both. (*to Wealth*) Now then, let's honor tradition: I'll take hold of you and pour on these sweets.

WEALTH

Please don't! The first time I enter your house with my sight restored, you shouldn't be bringing anything out, but rather taking something in.

WIFE

But don't you want the sweets?

WEALTH

Yes, but inside, at your hearth; that's traditional. (*indicating the spectators*) Plus, we'll avoid the lowbrow humor: our producer shouldn't be tossing figs and munchies to the spectators in hopes of forcing their laughter.

WIFE

That's good advice, because look, there's Dexinicus³⁸ standing up, ready to catch the figs.

³⁸ Unknown; the name is unattested elsewhere.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΟΡΟΤ

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

- ὡς ἡδὺν πράττειν, ὦνδρές, ἔστ' εὐδαιμόνως,
καὶ ταῦτα μηδὲν ἐξευεγκόντ' οἴκοθεν.
ἡμῖν γὰρ ἀγαθῶν σωρὸς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν
- 805 ἐπεισπέπαικεν οὐδὲν ἡδικοκόσιν.
- 805a οὕτω τὸ πλουτεῖν ἔστιν ἡδὺν πράγμα δῆ.
ἡ μὲν σιπύη μεστή 'στι λευκῶν ἀλφίτων,
οἱ δ' ἀμφορῆς οἴνου μέλανος ἀνθοσμίου.
ἅπαντα δ' ἡμῖν ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσίου
τὰ σκευάρια πλήρη 'στίν, ὥστε θαυμάσαι.
- 810 τὸ φρέαρ δ' ἐλαίου μεστόν· αἱ δὲ λήκνυθι
μύρου γέμουσι, τὸ δ' ὑπερῶν ἰσχάδων.
ὄξις δὲ πᾶσα καὶ λοπάδιον καὶ χύτρα
χαλκῆ γέγονε· τοὺς δὲ πινακίσκους τοὺς σαπρούς
τοὺς ἰχθυηροὺς ἀργυροὺς πάρεσθ' ὁράν.
- 815 ὁ δ' ἵπνὸς γέγον' ἡμῖν ἐξαπίνης ἐλεφάντινος.
στατήρσι δ' οἱ θεράποντες ἀρτιάζομεν
χρυσοῖς· ἀποψώμεσθα δ' οὐ λίθους ἔτι,
ἀλλὰ σκοροδίους ὑπὸ τρυφῆς ἐκάστοτε.
καὶ νῦν ὁ δεσπότης μὲν ἔνδον βουθυτεῖ
- 820 ἦν καὶ τράγον καὶ κριὸν ἔστεφανωμένος,
ἐμὲ δ' ἐξέπεμψε ὁ καπνός· οὐχ οἶός τε γὰρ
ἔνδον μένειν ἦν· ἔδακνε γὰρ τὰ βλέφαρά μου.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

ἔπον μετ' ἐμοῦ, παιδάριον, ἵνα πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
ἴωμεν.

WEALTH

Exit WEALTH, CHREMYLUS, WIFE, and CARIO into the house.

The Chorus performs an entr'acte.

Enter CARIO from the house.

CARIO

Gentlemen, how nice it is to live happily, especially when there are no household expenses. A heap of goods has befallen our house, though we've done nothing bad! Yes, getting wealthy this way is mighty nice. Our grain tub's filled with white barley, our casks with dark fragrant wine, and all our purses are full of gold and silver like you wouldn't believe. Our well's full of olive oil, our jars are brimming with perfume, and the attic with figs. Our saucers, dishes, and pots have turned to bronze, and those worn-out fish platters are silvery to behold. Our kitchen's suddenly turned to ivory. We slaves pitch pennies with gold staters, and in our luxury we no longer use stones to wipe our bottoms, but cloves of garlic every time. Right now our master's in there all garlanded and offering up pig, goat, and ram, but the smoke's driven me outside here; I couldn't stand it in there, with the smoke stinging my eyes.

Enter JUST MAN, accompanied by a Child carrying a tattered cloak and old shoes.

JUST MAN

Come along, my child, so we can visit the god.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἔα, τίς ἐσθ' ὁ προσιῶν οὐτοσί;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

825 ἀνὴρ πρότερον μὲν ἄθλιος, νῦν δ' εὐτυχής.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

δῆλον ὅτι τῶν χρηστῶν τις, ὡς ἔοικας, εἶ.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

μάλιστ'.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἔπειτα τοῦ δέει;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

πρὸς τὸν θεὸν

ἤκω. μεγάλων γάρ μούστιν ἀγαθῶν αἴτιος.

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἱκανὴν οὐσίαν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς

830 λαβὼν ἐπήρκουν τοῖς δεομένοις τῶν φίλων,
εἶναι νομίζων χρήσιμον πρὸς τὸν βίον.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἦ πού σε ταχέως ἐπέλιπεν τὰ χρήματα.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

κομιδῇ μὲν οὔν.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οὐκοῦν μετὰ ταῦτ' ἦσθ' ἄθλιος.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

κομιδῇ μὲν οὔν. καὶ γὰρ μὲν ὦμην οὐς τέως

835 εὐεργέτησα δεομένους ἕξειν φίλους

WEALTH

CARIO

Hey, who's this visitor?

JUST MAN

A man once ruined, but now fortunate.

CARIO

It's obvious at a glance that you're an honest man.

JUST MAN

That's right.

CARIO

So what are you after?

JUST MAN

I'm here to see the god; it's him I thank for my great blessings. You see, I had a sufficient inheritance from my father and used it to help my needy friends, considering this a responsible way to behave.

CARIO

Let me guess: your money quickly ran out.

JUST MAN

Exactly right.

CARIO

And then you were ruined.

JUST MAN

Exactly right. I used to think that the needy people I helped would be true friends if I ever needed their help,

ARISTOPHANES

ὄντως βεβαίους, εἰ δεηθείην ποτέ·
οἱ δ' ἐξετρέποντο κοῦκ ἐδόκουν ὄραν μ' ἔτι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ κατεγέλων γ', εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

κομιδῇ μὲν οὖν
αὐχμὸς γὰρ ὦν τῶν σκευαρίων μ' ἀπώλεσεν.
840 ἀλλ' οὐχὶ νῦν, ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν
προσευξόμενος ἤκω δικαίως ἐνθάδε.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

τὸ τριβώνιον δὲ τί δύναται, πρὸς τῶν θεῶν,
ὃ φέρει μετὰ σοῦ τὸ παιδάριον τουτί; φράσον.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

καὶ τοῦτ' ἀναθήσων ἔρχομαι πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

845 μῶν ἐνεμνήθης δῆτ' ἐν αὐτῷ τὰ μεγάλα;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλ' ἐνερρίγωσ' ἔτη τριακαίδεκα.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

τὰ δ' ἐμβάδια;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

καὶ ταῦτα συνεχειμάζετο.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ ταῦτ' ἀναθήσων ἔφερεις οὖν;

WEALTH

but they turned their backs on me and pretended they didn't even know me any more.

CARIO

I'll bet they sneered at you, too.

JUST MAN

Exactly right. A drought that befell my coffers ruined me. But not now. That's why I'm here to pay the god my due respects.

CARIO

But what in heaven's name is that cloak doing here, the one your child is carrying? Do explain it.

JUST MAN

I'm bringing this too, as a dedication to the god.

CARIO

That's not what you wore for your initiation at the Great Mysteries, is it?³⁹

JUST MAN

No, it's what I wore to freeze in for thirteen years!

CARIO

And those shoes?

JUST MAN

They too braved the winters with me.

CARIO

And you've brought them to dedicate as well?

³⁹ At Eleusis, when it was customary to wear and then dedicate ragged clothing, cf. *Frogs* 404-7.

ARISTOPHANES

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Δία.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

χαρίεντά γ' ἤκεις δῶρα τῷ θεῷ φέρων.

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

850 οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ὡς ἀπόλωλα δείλαιος,
καὶ τρισκακοδαίμων καὶ τετράκις καὶ πεντάκις
καὶ δωδεκάκις καὶ μυριάκις· ἰὸν ἰού.
οὔτω πολυφόρῳ συγκέκραμαι δαίμονι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

Ἄπολλον ἀποτρόπαιε καὶ θεοὶ φίλοι,
855 τί ποτ' ἐστὶν ὃ τι πέπονθεν ἄνθρωπος κακόν;

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ σχέτλια πέπονθα νυνὶ πράγματα,
ἀπολωλεκῶς ἅπαντα τὰκ τῆς οἰκίας
διὰ τὸν θεὸν τοῦτον, τὸν ἐσόμενον τυφλὸν
πάλιν αὖθις, ἥνπερ μὴ 'πιλίπωσιν αἱ δίκαι;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

860 ἐγὼ σχεδὸν τὸ πρᾶγμα γινώσκεις δοκῶ.
προσέρχεται γάρ τις κακῶς πράττων ἀνὴρ,
εἶοικε δ' εἶναι τοῦ πονηροῦ κόμματος.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

νῆ Δία, καλῶς τοίουν ποιῶν ἀπόλλυται.

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

865 ποῦ, ποῦ 'σθ' ὁ μόνος ἅπαντας ἡμᾶς πλουσίους
ὑποσχόμενος οὔτος ποιήσειν εὐθέως,

WEALTH

JUST MAN

I certainly have.

CARIO

Charming gifts you've brought for the god!

Enter INFORMER with Witness.

INFORMER

Good heavens me, I'm cursed, I'm ruined and wretched, cursed thrice over, four times over, five times over, twelve times, infinite times! Boo hoo hoo! I've gotten mixed up with hundred-proof spirits!

CARIO

Healer Apollo and you kindly gods, I wonder what calamity this fellow's suffered?

INFORMER

Just tell me if my present sufferings aren't dire. I've lost everything I had in my house, and it's that god's fault, the one who's going to be blind again, if our courts don't fail us!

JUST MAN

I'm pretty sure I see what's going on here: our visitor's a man fallen on hard times, but he seems to be a bad penny.

CARIO

Yes indeed, and he does well to be ruined.

INFORMER

Where, oh where's the one who promised he'd single-handedly make us all wealthy on the spot, if ever he re-

ARISTOPHANES

εἰ πάλιν ἀναβλέψειεν ἔξ ἀρχῆς; ὁ δὲ
πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐνίους ἔστιν ἐξολωλεκώς.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ τίνα δέδρακε δῆτα τοῦτ';

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ἐμὲ τουτουί.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἦ τῶν πονηρῶν ἦσθα καὶ τοιχωρῶν;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

870 μὰ Δί', οὐ μὲν οὖν ἔσθ' ὑγιὲς ὑμῶν οὐδενός,
κούκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐκ ἔχετε μου τὰ χρήματα.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ὡς σοβαρός, ὦ Δάματερ, εἰσελήλυθεν
ὁ συκοφάντης. δῆλον ὅτι βουλιμιᾶ.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

875 σὺ μὲν εἰς ἀγορὰν ἰὼν ταχέως οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις·
ἐπὶ τοῦ τροχοῦ γὰρ δεῖ σ' ἐκεῖ στρεβλούμενον
εἰπεῖν ἅ πεπανούργηκας.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οἰμῶξ ἄρα σύ.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

νῆ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτήρα, πολλοῦ γ' ἄξιος
ἅπασι τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ὁ θεὸς οὗτος, εἰ
τοὺς συκοφάντας ἐξολεῖ κακοὺς κακῶς.

WEALTH

gained his original ability to see? But the fact is, there are some people he's totally ruined instead.

CARIO

Just whom has he treated that way?

INFORMER

Me, that's who.

CARIO

So you were one of the troublemakers and housebreakers?

INFORMER

Not at all; it's you people who are up to no good, and it must be you who've taken my goods.

CARIO

Ah Demeter, this informer makes quite a blustery entrance. It's a clear case of gluttonitis.

INFORMER

You, sir, had better report to the marketplace at once; that's where you'll be broken on the wheel and made to confess your crimes.

CARIO

You'll regret that!

JUST MAN

By Zeus the Savior, all Greece will be much obliged to our god if he puts these miserable informers to a miserable death!

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

880 οἴμοι τάλας· μῶν καὶ σὺ μετέχων καταγελαῖς;
ἐπεὶ πόθεν θοιμάτιον εἴληφας τοδί;
ἐχθῆς δ' ἔχοντ' εἰδόν σ' ἐγὼ τριβώνιον.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

οὐδὲν προτιμῶ σου· φορῶ γὰρ πριάμενος
τὸν δακτύλιον τονδὶ παρ' Εὐδάμου δραχμῆς.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

885 ἀλλ' οὐδέν' ἔστι συκοφάντου δῆγματος.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ἄρ' οὐχ ὕβρις ταῦτ' ἐστὶ πολλή; σκώπτετον,
ὅ τι δὲ ποιείτον ἐνθάδ' οὐκ εἰρήκατον.
οὐκ ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ γὰρ ἐνθάδ' ἐστὸν οὐδενί.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μὰ τὸν Δί', οὐκουν τῷ γε σῷ, σάφ' ἴσθ' ὅτι.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

890 ἀπὸ τῶν ἐμῶν γὰρ ναὶ μὰ Δία δειπνήσετε.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

ὡς δὴ 'π' ἀληθεία σὺ μετὰ τοῦ μάρτυρος
διαρραγείης.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μηδενός γ' ἐμπλήμενος.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ἀρνεῖσθον; ἔνδον ἐστίν, ὦ μαρωτάτω,

884 -δήμου ΣV

WEALTH

INFORMER

Damn it, are you on their side too, and deriding me? Just where did you get this cloak? Yesterday I saw you wearing a jacket.

JUST MAN

I'm paying no attention to you; I'm wearing this amulet I bought from Eudamus for a drachma.⁴⁰

CARIO

But there's no antidote for an informer's bite!

INFORMER

Well, isn't this absolutely outrageous? You're both laughing at me, but you haven't said what you're up to here; I think you're here for no good purpose.

CARIO

Not in your case we aren't, you can be sure of that.

INFORMER

In fact, it's my money that's going to pay for your dinner.

JUST MAN

I hope you literally bust a gut, and your witness too.

CARIO

An empty gut!

INFORMER

You won't own up? You scum of the earth, there's a whole

⁴⁰ Not inexpensive. The scholia say that this man was mentioned by Eupolis (fr. 96) and Ameipsias (fr. 26); perhaps also (with the Attic form, Eudemus, a common name) by Cratinus (fr. 302) and Plato Com. (fr. 214).

ARISTOPHANES

πολὺ χρῆμα τεμαχῶν καὶ κρεῶν ὀπτημένων.
895 υν υν υν υν υν υν.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

κακόδαιμον, ὀσφραίνει τι;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

τοῦ ψύχους γ' ἴσως·
ἐπεὶ τοιοῦτόν γ' ἀμπέχεται τριβώνιον.

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ταῦτ' οὖν ἀνασχέτ' ἐστίν, ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ θεοί,
τούτους ὑβρίζειν εἰς ἔμ'; οἴμ' ὡς ἄχθομαι
900 ὅτι χρηστὸς ὢν καὶ φιλόπολις πάσχω κακῶς.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

σὺ φιλόπολις καὶ χρηστός;

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ὡς οὐδεὶς γ' ἀνήρ.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐπερωτηθεὶς ἀπόκριναί μοι.

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

τὸ τί;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

γεωργὸς εἶ;

ΣΥΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

μελαγχολᾶν μ' οὕτως οἶει;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἔμπορος;

WEALTH

bunch of fish and meat being cooked in there! (*sniffs loudly*)

CARIO

Smell anything, sadsack?

JUST MAN

Maybe he's caught a cold, considering that jacket he's got on!

INFORMER

Gods above, must I put up with this, with their outrageous conduct toward me? I'm terribly hurt that an upstanding patriot like me should be mistreated.

JUST MAN

You, an upstanding patriot?

INFORMER

Second to none!

JUST MAN

Very well then, I have a question for you.

INFORMER

Ask away.

JUST MAN

Are you a farmer?

INFORMER

Do you think I'm crazy?

JUST MAN

A businessman, then?

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ναί, σκῆπτομαί γ', ὅταν τύχω.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

τί δαί; τέχνην τιν' ἔμαθες;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

905

οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

πῶς οὖν διέζης ἢ πῶθεν μηδὲν ποιῶν;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

τῶν τῆς πόλεως εἰμ' ἐπιμελητῆς πραγμάτων
καὶ τῶν ἰδίων πάντων.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

σύ; τί μαθῶν;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

βούλομαι.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

910

πῶς οὖν ἂν εἴης χρηστός, ὃ τοιχωρῦχε,
εἴ σοι προσήκον μηδὲν εἶτ' ἀπεχθάνει;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ προσήκει τὴν ἔμαντοῦ μοι πόλιν
εὐεργετεῖν, ὃ κέπφε, καθ' ὅσον ἂν σθένω;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

εὐεργετεῖν οὖν ἔστι τὸ πολυπραγμονεῖν;

WEALTH

INFORMER

Sure; at least I claim to be when the occasion arises.⁴¹

JUST MAN

Well, did you learn a craft?

INFORMER

Certainly not.

JUST MAN

Then what did you live on without a livelihood?

INFORMER

I'm a manager of all affairs public and private.

JUST MAN

You are? What qualifies you?

INFORMER

I volunteer.⁴²

JUST MAN

How can you be upstanding, you criminal, if you're loathed for meddling in what's none of your business?

INFORMER

None of my business, you bird brain, to benefit my own city with all my might?

JUST MAN

So being a busybody is beneficence?

⁴¹ Merchants could claim exemptions from military and other duties, cf. *Assemblywomen* 1027.

⁴² Under Attic law, a wrongdoer could be taken to court not only by an injured party but by any citizen, a provision which men like the Informer were thought to abuse for their own gain.

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

915 τὸ μὲν οὖν βοηθεῖν τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς κειμένοις
καὶ μὴ πιτρέπειν ἂν τις ἐξαμαρτάνῃ.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

οὐκ οὖν δικαστὰς ἐξεπίτηδες ἢ πόλις
ἄρχειν καθίστησιν;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

κατηγορεῖ δὲ τίς;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

ὁ βουλόμενος.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

οὐκ οὖν ἐκεῖνός εἰμ' ἐγώ;
ὥστ' εἰς ἔμ' ἤκει τῆς πόλεως τὰ πράγματα.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

920 νὴ Δία, πονηρόν γ' ἄρα προστάτην ἔχει.
ἐκεῖνο δ' οὐ βούλοι' ἂν, ἡσυχίαν ἔχων
ζῆν ἀργός;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ἀλλὰ προβατίου βίον λέγεις,
εἰ μὴ φανείται διατριβὴ τις τῷ βίῳ.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

οὐδ' ἂν μεταμάθοις;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

925 οὐδ' ἂν εἰ δοίης γέ μοι
τὸν Πλοῦτον αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ Βάττου σίλφιον.

WEALTH

INFORMER

No, but upholding the established laws is, and not letting a wrongdoer get away with it.

JUST MAN

Doesn't the city charge juries with just this function?

INFORMER

But who prosecutes?

JUST MAN

The volunteer.

INFORMER

Isn't that what I am? That's how the city's affairs become my business.

JUST MAN

And that's exactly why it has a rotten patron indeed. Look, wouldn't you rather mind your own business and have no work to do?

INFORMER

No, that's a sheep's life, having no apparent purpose in one's life.

JUST MAN

And you won't change your mind?

INFORMER

Not even if you gave me Wealth himself, and all of Battus'⁴³ fennel.

⁴³ The founder of the prosperous North African city of Cyrene.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

κατάθου ταχέως θοιμάτιον.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

οὔτος, σοὶ λέγει.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἔπειθ' ὑπόλυσαι.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

πάντα ταῦτα σοὶ λέγει.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

καὶ μὴν προσελθέτω πρὸς ἔμ' ὑμῶν ἐνθαδὶ
ὁ βουλόμενος.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οὔκουν ἐκείνός εἰμ' ἐγώ;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

930 οἴμοι τάλας, ἀποδύομαι μεθ' ἡμέραν.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

σὺ γὰρ ἀξιοῖς τὰλλότρια πράττων ἐσθίειν;

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ὄρῳς ἄ ποιεῖ; ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἀλλ' οἴχεται φεύγων ὃν ἦγες μάρτυρα.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

οἴμοι, περιείλημμαι μόνος.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

νυνὶ βοᾶς;

WEALTH

CARIO

Remove your cloak at once!

JUST MAN

Hey, he's speaking to you!

CARIO

Now your shoes!

JUST MAN

He's still speaking to you.

INFORMER

All right, I dare any of you to come over here and get me, any volunteer.

CARIO

Isn't that what I am?

INFORMER

(attacked) Good grief, I'm being stripped in broad daylight!

CARIO

I'll teach you to gobble other people's goods for a living!

INFORMER

(to Witness) See what he's doing? I call you to witness!

Witness runs off.

CARIO

Well, that witness you brought has run off on you.

INFORMER

Dear me, I'm left all alone.

CARIO

Screaming now, eh?

ARISTOPHANES

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

οἴμοι μάλ' αὖθις.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

935 δὸς σύ μοι τὸ τριβώνιον,
ἴν' ἀμφιέσω τὸν συκοφάντην τουτονί.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

μὴ δῆθ'· ἱερὸν γάρ ἐστι τοῦ Πλούτου πάλαι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἔπειτα ποῦ κάλλιον ἀνατεθήσεται
ἢ περὶ πονηρὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τοιχωρύχον;
940 Πλούτον δὲ κοσμεῖν ἱματίοις σεμνοῖς πρέπει.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

τοῖς δ' ἐμβαδίοις τί χρήσεται τις; εἶπέ μοι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς τὸ μέτωπον αὐτίκα δὴ μάλα
ὥσπερ κοτίνῳ προσπατταλεύσω τουτῳί.

ΣΤΚΟΦΑΝΤΗΣ

ἄπειμι· γινώσκω γὰρ ἥττων ὢν πολὺ
945 ὑμῶν· ἐὰν δὲ σύζυγον λάβω τινὰ
κἂν σύκινον, τοῦτον τὸν ἰσχυρὸν θεὸν
ἐγὼ ποιήσω τήμερον δοῦναι δίκην,
ὅτι ἡ καταλύει περιφανῶς εἰς ὢν μόνος
τὴν δημοκρατίαν, οὔτε τὴν βουλήν πιθῶν
950 τὴν τῶν πολιτῶν οὔτε τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐπειδὴ τὴν πανοπλίαν τὴν ἐμὴν

WEALTH

INFORMER

Dear me, I say!

CARIO

(*to Just Man*) Here, hand me that jacket; I want to put it on this informer.

JUST MAN

Please don't; it's already vowed to Wealth.

CARIO

What better place to dedicate it than a rotten criminal like this? Wealth deserves to be adorned in dignified garb.

JUST MAN

And what's to be done with the shoes, I ask you?

CARIO

Give me them too; I'll nail them right here on his forehead, like an offering on a wild olive tree.

INFORMER

I'll be leaving; I realize that I can't stand up to the pair of you. But if I find a teammate, no matter how ratty, I'll bring that mighty god of yours to justice this very day, for blatantly taking it upon himself alone to overthrow the democracy, without persuading the people's Council or the Assembly.

Exit INFORMER

JUST MAN

(*calling after*) Hey, since you're marching off in my gear,

ARISTOPHANES

ἔχων βαδίζεις, εἰς τὸ βαλανεῖον τρέχε·
 ἔπειτ' ἐκεῖ κορυφαῖος ἐστηκὼς θέρου.
 κάγῳ γὰρ εἶχον τὴν στάσιν ταύτην ποτέ.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

955 ἀλλ' ὁ βαλανεὺς ἔλξει θύραζ' αὐτὸν λαβὼν
 τῶν ὀρχιπέδων· ἰδὼν γὰρ αὐτὸν γινώσεται
 ὅτι ἔστ' ἐκείνου τοῦ πονηροῦ κόμματος.
 νὼ δ' εἰσῖωμεν, ἵνα προσεύξῃ τὸν θεόν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

960 ἄρ', ὦ φίλοι γέροντες, ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκίαν
 ἀφίγμεθ' ὄντως τοῦ νέου τούτου θεοῦ,
 ἣ τῆς ὁδοῦ τὸ παράπαν ἡμαρτήκαμεν;

ΚΟΡΤΦΑΙΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἴσθ' ἐπ' αὐτὰς τὰς θύρας ἀφυγμένη,
 ὦ μειρακίσκη· πυνθάνει γὰρ ὠρικῶς.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

φέρει νυν, ἐγὼ τῶν ἔνδοθεν καλέσω τινά.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

965 μὴ δῆτ'· ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐξελήλυθα.
 ἀλλ' ὅ τι μάλιστ' ἐλήλυθας λέγειν σ' ἐχρῆν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

πέπονθα δεινὰ καὶ παράνομ', ὦ φίλτατε·
 ἀφ' οὗ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς οὗτος ἤρξατο βλέπειν,
ἀβίωτον εἶναί μοι πεποίηκε τὸν βίον.

⁹⁵⁸ post h.v. spatium habet Π2, quae solum fines linearum
 exhibet: χοροῦ t, ut scholia metrica recentiora ad v. 850

WEALTH

double-time it over to the baths; set yourself up as the squad leader there and get warm. That's the position that I once held.

CARIO

But the bathman will grab him by the balls and drag him outside; he'll take one look at him and know him for that bad penny. Now let's go inside so you can make your devotions to the god.

CARIO and JUST MAN enter the house.

Enter from a wing OLD WOMAN, with a Slave who carries a tray of food.

OLD WOMAN

So, my dear old men, have I really come to the dwelling of this new god, or have I taken a completely wrong turn?

CHORUS LEADER

No, rest assured that you've come to his very door, my girl (since you ask so girlishly).

OLD WOMAN

Well then, I'll just call one of them out here.

CHREMYLOS comes out.

CHREMYLUS

No need; I'm coming out anyway. Now you must tell me exactly why you're here.

OLD WOMAN

My dear man, I've suffered terrible injustices! Ever since this god regained his sight, he's made my life unlivable.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

970 τί δ' ἐστίν; ἦ που καὶ σὺ συκοφάντρια
ἐν ταῖς γυναιξὶν ἦσθα;

ΓΡΑΤΣ

μὰ Δί', ἐγὼ μὲν οὔ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ λαχοῦσ' ἔπινες ἐν τῷ γράμματι;

ΓΡΑΤΣ

σκώπτεις· ἐγὼ δὲ κατακέκνισμαι δειλάκρα.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὔκουν ἐρεῖς ἀνύσασα τὸν κνισμὸν τίνα;

ΓΡΑΤΣ

975 ἄκουέ νυν. ἦν μοί τι μειράκιον φίλον,
πειχρὸν μὲν, ἄλλως δ' εὐπρόσωπον καὶ καλὸν
καὶ χρηστόν· εἰ γάρ του δεηθείην ἐγώ,
ἅπαντ' ἐποίει κοσμίως μοι καὶ καλῶς·
ἐγὼ δ' ἐκείνῳ ταῦτά πάνθ' ὑπηρέτουν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

980 τί δ' ἦν ὅ τι σου μάλιστ' ἐδεῖθ' ἐκάστοτε;

ΓΡΑΤΣ

οὐ πολλά· καὶ γὰρ ἐκνομίως μ' ἠσχύνετο.
ἀλλ' ἀργυρίου δραχμὰς ἂν ἦτησ' εἴκοσιν
εἰς ἱμάτιον, ὀκτῶ δ' ἂν εἰς ὑποδήματα·
καὶ ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς ἀγοράσαι χιτῶνιον
985 ἐκέλευσεν ἂν τῇ μητρί θ' ἱματίδιον
πυρῶν τ' ἂν ἐδεήθη μεδίμνων τεττάρων.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

What's the matter? You're not another informer, are you, some kind of female version among the women?

OLD WOMAN

Certainly not!

CHREMYLUS

Then maybe you showed up for drinking service without a valid token?⁴⁴

OLD WOMAN

You're making fun of me, but I'm all banged up, poor woman!

CHREMYLUS

Just what sort of banging are you talking about?

OLD WOMAN

Listen to this. I had a boyfriend, penniless but very good looking, fine, and honest. Whenever I asked him a favor, he accommodated me in fine fashion, and I did him all the same services.

CHREMYLUS

What did he typically want from you?

OLD WOMAN

Not much; he was extraordinarily modest. He'd request twenty silver drachmas for a coat, and eight for a pair of shoes; and he'd want me to buy little dresses for his sisters, and a little wrap for his mother; and he'd need four bushels of grain.

⁴⁴ A surprise for "jury service," for which volunteers were allotted tokens assigning them to a specific court and entitling them to payment.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐ πολλὰ τοίνυν, μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω, ταῦτά γε
εἴρηκας· ἀλλὰ δῆλον ὅτι σ' ἡσχύνετο.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

καὶ ταῦτα τοίνυν οὐχ ἔνεκα μισητίας
990 αἰτεῖν μ' ἔφασκεν, ἀλλὰ φιλίας οὐνεκα,
ἵνα τοῦμόν ἰμάτιον φορῶν μεμνήτό μου.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

λέγεις ἐρῶντ' ἄνθρωπον ἐκνομιώτατα.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ἀλλ' οὐχὶ νῦν ὁ βδελυρὸς ἔτι τὸν νοῦν ἔχει
τὸν αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μεθέστηκεν πάνν.
995 ἐμοῦ γὰρ αὐτῶ τὸν πλακοῦντα τουτονὶ
καὶ τᾶλλα τὰπὶ τοῦ πίνακος τραγήματα
ἐπόντα πεμψάσης ὑπειπούσης θ' ὅτι
εἰς ἐσπέραν ἤξοιμι—

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τί ἔδρας'; εἶπέ μοι.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ἄμμητα προσαπέπεμψεν ἡμῖν τουτονί,
1000 ἐφ' ᾧτ' ἐκέισε μηδέποτε μ' ἐλθεῖν ἔτι,
καὶ πρὸς ἐπὶ τούτοις εἶπεν ἀποπέμπων ὅτι
“πάλαι ποτ' ἦσαν ἄλκιμοι Μιλήσιοι.”

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

δῆλον ὅτι τοὺς τρόπους τις οὐ μοχθηρὸς ἦν,
ἔπειτα πλουτῶν οὐκέθ' ἤδεται φακῆ·

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

That's certainly not very much, I agree; he was clearly being modest.

OLD WOMAN

And he'd stress that his reason for asking was not greed but affection: when he was wearing that coat he would think of me.

CHREMYLUS

There was a fellow extraordinarily in love.

OLD WOMAN

But nowadays that skunk hasn't got the same attitude; he's completely changed his tune. You see, when I sent him this pie and the other munchies on the tray here, with a message that I'd visit him this evening—

CHREMYLUS

What did he do, I'd like to know?

OLD WOMAN

He sent it all back, along with this cheese cake, on condition that I never visit him again, and on top of that he added, "Once upon a time the Milesians were formidable."⁴⁵

CHREMYLUS

He obviously wasn't a person of shiftless character. Now that he's rich, he's lost his taste for lentil soup; before that,

⁴⁵ Proverbial of has-beens.

ARISTOPHANES

1005 πρὸ τοῦ δ' ὑπὸ τῆς πενίας ἅπαντ' ἂν ἦσθιεν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

καὶ μὴν πρὸ τοῦ γ' ὀσημέραι, νῆ τὼ θεῶ,
ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν ἐβάδιζεν αἰὲ τὴν ἐμήν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἔπ' ἐκφοράν;

ΓΡΑΤΣ

μὰ Δί', ἀλλὰ τῆς φωνῆς μόνον
ἐρῶν ἀκούσαι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τοῦ λαβεῖν μὲν οὖν χάριν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

1010 καί, νῆ Δί', εἰ λυπουμένην αἴσθιτό με,
νηττάριον ὑπεκορίζετ' ἂν καὶ φάττιον.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἔπειτ' ἴσως ἦτησ' ἂν εἰς ὑποδήματα.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

1015 μυστηρίοις δὲ τοῖς μεγάλοις ὀχουμένην
ἐπὶ τῆς ἀμάξης ὅτι προσέβλεψέν μέ τις,
ἐτυπτόμην διὰ τοῦθ' ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν.
οὕτω σφόδρα ζηλότυπος ὁ νεανίσκος ἦν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

μόνος γὰρ ἦδεθ', ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐσθίων.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

καὶ τὰς γε χεῖρας παγκάλας ἔχειν μ' ἔφη.

WEALTH

poverty made him eat anything.

OLD WOMAN

Oh yes, before that he used to come to my door every day without fail.

CHREMYLUS

Hoping there'd be a funeral?

OLD WOMAN

Not at all; only because he loved to hear my voice.

CHREMYLUS

He loved to get things, is more like it.

OLD WOMAN

And when he saw that I was feeling blue, ah yes, he'd call me his ducky and his dovey.

CHREMYLUS

Then he'd maybe ask for shoes.

OLD WOMAN

Once at the Great Mysteries somebody glanced at me as I rode on my wagon, and that got me a day-long beating. That's how very jealous the boy was!

CHREMYLUS

It seems he liked to have his food all to himself.

OLD WOMAN

And he said I had very beautiful hands.

1005 ἅπαντ' ἂν ἦσθ- Dobree: ἅπαντα γ ἦσθ- V S^r: ἅπανθ' ὑπήσθ- R: ἅπαντα κατήσθ' A M U: ἅπαντ' ἐπ- Athenaeus 170d: ἅπαντα S^A

1011 ὑπ. ἂν καὶ φάττιον (Bentley: βάτιον a) Porson: ἂν καὶ β. ὑπ. a

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὁπότε προτείνοιέν γε δραχμὰς εἴκοσιν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

1020 ὄξειν τε τῆς χροιάς ἔφασκεν ἡδὺ μου.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

εἰ Θάσιον ἐνέχεις, εἰκότως γε, νῆ Δία.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

τὸ βλέμμα θ' ὡς ἔχοιμι μαλακὸν καὶ καλόν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐ σκαιὸς ἦν ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ' ἠπίστατο
γραὸς καπρώσης τὰφόδια κατεσθίειν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

1025 ταῦτ' οὖν ὁ θεός, ὦ φίλ' ἄνερ, οὐκ ὀρθῶς ποιεῖ,
φάσκων βοηθεῖν τοῖς ἀδικουμένοις αἰί.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τί γὰρ ποιήσει; φράζε, καὶ πεπράξεται.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

1030 ἀναγκάσαι δίκαιόν ἐστι, νῆ Δία,
τὸν εὖ παθόνθ' ὑπ' ἐμοῦ πάλιν <μ'> ἀντ' εὖ ποιεῖν.
ἢ μῆδ' ὀτιοῦν <μ'> ἀγαθὸν δίκαιόν ἐστ' ἔχειν;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐκουν καθ' ἐκάστην ἀπεδίδου τὴν νύκτα σοι;

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδέποτε με ζῶσαν ἀπολείψειν ἔφη.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

When they held out twenty drachmas, that is.

OLD WOMAN

And he said that my skin smelled nice.

CHREMYLUS

When you were pouring Thasian wine,⁴⁶ I'll bet.

OLD WOMAN

And that I had tender beauty in my eyes.

CHREMYLUS

He was no dummy, that one; he knew how to gobble up a horny old lady's assets!

OLD WOMAN

In this, my dear man, the god behaves improperly, since he staunchly claims to come to the aid of injured parties.

CHREMYLUS

Then what shall he do? He'll act as you instruct.

OLD WOMAN

It's only right to force the man I treated well to treat me well in return. Or is it fair that I get no benefit at all?

CHREMYLUS

Well, didn't he pay you back every single night?

OLD WOMAN

But he promised he'd never leave me as long as I live.

⁴⁶ A fine red.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ὀρθῶς γε· νῦν δέ γ' οὐκέτι σε ζῆν οἶεται.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ὑπὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἄλγους κατατέτηκ', ᾧ φίλτατε.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

1035 οὐκ, ἀλλὰ κατασέσηπας, ὥς γ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

διὰ δακτυλίου μὲν οὖν ἐμέ γ' ἄν διελκύσαιο.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

εἰ τυγχάνοι γ' ὁ δακτύλιος ᾧν τηλίας.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

καὶ μὴν τὸ μειράκιον τοδὶ προσέρχεται,
οὔπερ πάλαι κατηγοροῦσα τυγχάνω·

1040 ἔοικε δ' ἐπὶ κῶμον βαδίζειν.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

φαίνεται·

στεφάνους γέ τοι καὶ δᾶδ' ἔχων πορεύεται.

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

ἀσπάζομαι.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

τί φησιν;

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

ἀρχαία φίλη,

πολιὰ γεγένησαι ταχύ γε, νῆ τὸν οὐρανόν.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

Quite rightly; but now he considers you no longer alive.

OLD WOMAN

In fact I'm pining away with grief, my dear man.

CHREMYLUS

No, you're rotting away, if you ask me.

OLD WOMAN

Why, you could pull me right through a ring.

CHREMYLUS

Provided the ring were the size of a barrel hoop.

OLD WOMAN

But look, here comes the young man now, the very one I've been castigating; he's probably off to a revel.

CHREMYLUS

He looks it; he's got garlands and a torch at any rate.

Enter from a wing YOUNG MAN.

YOUNG MAN

Salutations!

OLD WOMAN

What's he say?

YOUNG MAN

My ancient ladyfriend, how quickly you've turned grey; good heavens!

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΡΑΤΣ

τάλαιν' ἐγὼ τῆς ὕβρεος ἧς ὑβρίζομαι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

1045 ἔοικε διὰ πολλοῦ χρόνου σ' ἑορακέναι.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ποίου χρόνου, ταλάνταθ', ὅς παρ' ἐμοὶ χθὲς ἦν;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τοῦναντίον πέπονθε τοῖς πολλοῖς ἄρα·
μεθύων γάρ, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὀξύτερον βλέπει.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλ' ἀκόλαστός ἐστιν αἰεὶ τοῖς τρόποις.

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

1050 ὦ Ποντοπόσειδον καὶ θεοὶ πρεσβυτικοί,
ἐν τῷ προσώπῳ τῶν ῥυτίδων ὅσας ἔχει.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ᾶ ᾶ,
τὴν δᾶδα μή μοι πρόσφερ'.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

εὖ μέντοι λέγει.

ἐὰν γὰρ αὐτὴν εἰς μόνος σπινθὴρ βάλη,
ὥσπερ παλαιὰν εἰρεσιώνην καύσεται.

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

1055 βούλει διὰ χρόνου πρὸς με παίσαι;

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ποῦ, τάλαν;

WEALTH

OLD WOMAN

Mercy me, the insults I'm subjected to!

CHREMYLUS

It seems he hasn't seen you for a long time.

OLD WOMAN

What do you mean, a long time? He was with me just yesterday!

CHREMYLUS

Then he's reacting differently than most people: it seems that drunkenness has sharpened his eyesight.

OLD WOMAN

No, his behavior has always been impudent.

YOUNG MAN

Poseidon of the Deep and ye other gods of old, what countless wrinkles her face contains!

OLD WOMAN

Hey now, keep that torch away from me!

CHREMYLUS

She's right: if just one spark hits her, she'll go up like an old harvest wreath.

YOUNG MAN

Would you like to play with me a while?

OLD WOMAN

But where?

ARISTOPHANES

NEANIS

αὐτοῦ, λαβοῦσα κάρνα.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

παιδιὰν τίνα;

NEANIAS

πόσους ἔχεις ὀδόντας.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἀλλὰ γνώσομαι

κάγωγ'· ἔχει γὰρ τρεῖς ἴσως ἢ τέτταρας.

NEANIS

ἀπότεισον· ἓνα γὰρ γομφίον μόνον φορεῖ.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

1060 ταλάντατ' ἀνδρῶν, οὐχ ὑγιαίνειν μοι δοκεῖς,
πλυνόν με ποιῶν ἐν τοσοῦτοις ἀνδράσιν.

NEANIS

ὄναιο μὲν γ' ἄν, εἴ τις ἐκπλύνειέ σε.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ', ἐπεὶ νῦν μὲν καπηλικῶς ἔχει·
εἰ δ' ἐκπλυνεῖται τοῦτο τὸ ψιμύθιον,
1065 ὄψει κατάδηλα τοῦ προσώπου τὰ ῥάκη.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

γέρων ἀνῆρ ὦν οὐχ ὑγιαίνειν μοι δοκεῖς.

NEANIS

πειρᾶ μὲν οὖν ἴσως σε καὶ τῶν τιθίων
ἐφάπτεταί σου λανθάνειν δοκῶν ἐμέ.

WEALTH

YOUNG MAN

Right here; have these nuts.

OLD WOMAN

What kind of play do you mean?

YOUNG MAN

Guessing how many teeth you have.

CHREMYLUS

Here, let me guess: I say three or four.

YOUNG MAN

Pay up: she's only got a single molar.

OLD WOMAN

You bastard, you must be unhinged, to soak me with abuse in front of all these men.

YOUNG MAN

A good soaking would do you good.

CHREMYLUS

No it wouldn't; she's got herself ready for sale. If that rouge were washed off, you'd see the tattered remnants of her face.

OLD WOMAN

Old age must have unhinged you.

YOUNG MAN

Maybe he's making a play for you, and trying to grab your tits when he thinks I'm not looking.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΡΑΤΣ

μὰ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην, οὐκ ἐμοῦ γ', ὦ βδελυρὲ σύ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

1070 μὰ τὴν Ἑκάτην, οὐ δῆτα· μαινοίμην γὰρ ἄν.
ἀλλ', ὦ νεανίσκ', οὐκ ἐὼ τὴν μείρακα
μισεῖν σε ταύτην.

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

ἀλλ' ἔγωγ' ὑπερφιλῶ.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

καὶ μὴν κατηγορεῖ γέ σου.

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

τί κατηγορεῖ;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

1075 εἶναί σ' ὑβριστήν φησι καὶ λέγειν ὅτι
“πάλαι ποτ' ἦσαν ἄλκιμοι Μιλήσιοι.”

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

ἐγὼ περὶ ταύτης οὐ μαχοῦμαί σοι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τὸ τί;

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

αἰσχυνόμενος τὴν ἡλικίαν τὴν σὴν· ἐπεὶ
οὐκ ἄν ποτ' ἄλλω τοῦτ' ἐπέτρεπον ἄν ποιεῖν.
νῦν δ' ἄπιθι χαίρων συλλαβῶν τὴν μείρακα.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

1080 οἶδ', οἶδα τὸν νοῦν· οὐκέτ' ἀξιοῖς ἴσως
εἶναι μετ' αὐτῆς.

WEALTH

OLD WOMAN

By Aphrodite, not mine you won't, you pig!

CHREMYLUS

By Hecate, I'd be insane to do that. But look here, young man, I won't allow you to hate this girl.

YOUNG MAN

Who me? I adore her!

CHREMYLUS

And yet she makes complaints about you.

YOUNG MAN

What complaints?

CHREMYLUS

She says you're insulting, and that you say, "Once upon a time the Milesians were formidable."

YOUNG MAN

I'll let you have her without a fight.

CHREMYLUS

Meaning what?

YOUNG MAN

Out of respect for your age; I certainly wouldn't have extended this offer to anyone else. Now take the girl with my compliments, and run along.

CHREMYLUS

I know what's on your mind, I know: perhaps you don't think she's worth being with any more.

ARISTOPHANES

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

ὁ δ' ἐπιτρέψων ἐστὶ τίς;
οὐκ ἂν διαλεχθείην διεσπλεκωμένη
ὑπὸ μυρίων ἐτῶν γε καὶ τρισχιλίων.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

1085 ὅμως δ' ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὸν οἶνον ἡξίους
πίνειν, συνεκποτέ' ἐστὶ σοι καὶ τὴν τρύγα.

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

ἀλλ' ἔστι κομιδῇ τρυξ παλαιὰ καὶ σαπρά.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

οὐκοῦν τρύγοιπος ταῦτα πάντ' ἰάσεται.
ἀλλ' εἴσιθ' εἴσω.

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

τῷ θεῷ γοῦν βούλομαι
ἐλθὼν ἀναθεῖναι τοὺς στεφάνους τούσδ' ὡς ἔχω.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

1090 ἐγὼ δέ γ' αὐτῷ καὶ φράσαι τι βούλομαι.

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

ἐγὼ δέ γ' οὐκ εἴσειμι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

θάρρει, μὴ φοβοῦ·
οὐ γὰρ βιάσεται.

ΝΕΑΝΙΑΣ

πάνν καλῶς τοίνυν λέγεις·
ικανὸν γὰρ αὐτὴν πρότερον ὑπεπίπτουν χρόνον.

WEALTH

YOUNG MAN

And who's going to make me? I don't want relations with a woman who's been boinked by thirteen thousand—seasons.

CHREMYLUS

Be that as it may, you did see fit to drink the wine, so you've got to drink up the dregs too.

YOUNG MAN

But these dregs are utterly ancient and putrid.

CHREMYLUS

A wine strainer will cure all that. Now go along inside.

YOUNG MAN

I'd certainly like to go in and dedicate these garlands to the god right away.

OLD WOMAN

And I've got something to say to him myself.

YOUNG MAN

Then I'm not going inside.

CHREMYLUS

Take it easy, and never fear; she's not going to rape you.

YOUNG MAN

Well, that's very good to hear; I've spent quite enough time caulking her bottom.

ARISTOPHANES

ΓΡΑΤΣ

βάδιζ'. ἐγὼ δέ σου κατόπιν εἰσέρχομαι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

1095 ὡς εὐτόνως, ᾧ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὸ γράδιον
ὥσπερ λεπὰς τῷ μειρακίῳ προσείχετο.

ΧΟΡΟΤ

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

τίς ἔσθ' ὁ κόπτων τὴν θύραν; τουτὶ τί ἦν;
οὐδεῖς, ἔοικεν· ἀλλὰ δῆτα τὸ θύριον
φθεγγόμενον ἄλλως κλαυσιᾶ.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

σέ τοι λέγω,

ὁ Καρίων, ἀνάμεινον.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

1100 οὔτος, εἰπέ μοι,
σὺ τὴν θύραν ἔκοπτες οὕτωςι σφόδρα;

ΕΡΜΗΣ

1105 μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ἔμελλον· εἶτ' ἀνέφξάς με φθάσας.
ἀλλ' ἐκκάλει τὸν δεσπότην τρέχων ταχύ,
ἔπειτα τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ παιδιά,
ἔπειτα τοὺς θεράποντας, εἶτα τὴν κύνα,
ἔπειτα σαυτόν, εἶτα τὴν ὕν.

¹⁰⁹⁶ -είχετο R V: -ίσχεται cett. post h.v. Χοροῦ statu-
erunt scholia metrica recentiora ad v. 1042

WEALTH

OLD WOMAN

Get moving; I'll be right behind you.

YOUNG MAN and OLD WOMAN go into the house.

CHREMYLUS

Lord Zeus, that little old lady sticks to the boy as tight as a barnacle!

CHREMYLUS goes into the house.

The Chorus performs an entr'acte.

Enter from a wing HERMES, who knocks on the door.

CARIO

(emerging from the house) Who's that banging on the door? *(looking around)* What's going on? No one around, apparently. This door will have plenty to cry about if it's making noise for nothing. *(turns to go back inside)*

HERMES

You there, Cario, hold on!

CARIO

Hey, was that you banging on the door so loud?

HERMES

Not at all, though I was just about to when you opened it up. Now run quick and get your master out here, and his wife and kids, and his slaves, and his dog, then yourself, and the pig too.

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

εἰπέ μοι,

τί δ' ἐστίν;

ΕΡΜΗΣ

ὁ Ζεὺς, ὦ πόνηρε, βούλεται
εἰς ταῦτόν ὑμᾶς συγκυκῆσας τρύβλιον
ἀπαξάπαντας εἰς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβαλεῖν.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

1110 ἢ γλώττα τῷ κήρυκι τούτων τέμνεται.
ἀτὰρ διὰ τί δὴ ταῦτ' ἐπιβουλεύει ποιεῖν
ἡμᾶς;

ΕΡΜΗΣ

1115 ὅτι δεινότατα πάντων πραγμάτων
εἴργασθ' ἀφ' οὗ γὰρ ἤρξατ' ἐξ ἀρχῆς βλέπειν
ὁ Πλούτος, οὐδεὶς οὐ λιβανωτόν, οὐ δάφνην,
οὐ ψαιστόν, οὐχ ιερεῖον, οὐκ ἄλλ' οὐδὲ ἐν
ἡμῖν ἔτι θῖει ταῖς θεοῖς.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

μὰ Δι', οὐδέ γε
θύσει κακῶς γὰρ ἐπεμελείσθ' ἡμῶν τότε.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

καὶ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων μοι θεῶν ἦττον μέλει,
ἐγὼ δ' ἀπόλωλα κάπιτέτριμμα.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

σωφρονεῖς.

WEALTH

CARIO

What's up, I'd like to know?

HERMES

It's Zeus, you rascal: he's ready to mash up every last one of you in the same bowl and toss you into the executioner's pit!

CARIO

For this news the tongue gets sliced for the Herald.⁴⁷ But what's his reason for wanting to do that to us?

HERMES

Because you've committed the most terrible deeds. Ever since Wealth recovered his original sight, no one has offered us gods any sort of sacrifice: no incense, no bay, no barley cake, no victim, not a single thing.

CARIO

That's right, and they're not going to either, because you took bad care of us in the past.

HERMES

I'm not so worried about the other gods, but I myself am a goner, ruined!

CARIO

Very shrewd of you.

⁴⁷ As at an animal sacrifice.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΡΜΗΣ

1120 πρότερον γὰρ εἶχον ἂν παρὰ ταῖς καπηλίαισι
πάντ' ἀγάθ' ἔωθεν εὐθύς, οἰνοῦτταν, μέλι,
ἰσχάδας, ὅσ' εἰκός ἐστιν Ἑρμῆν ἐσθίειν
νυνὶ δὲ πεινῶν ἀναβάδην ἀναπαύομαι.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οὔκουν δικαίως, ὅστις ἐποίεις ζημίαν
1125 ἐνίοτε τοιαῦτ' ἀγάθ' ἔχων;

ΕΡΜΗΣ

οἴμοι τάλας,
οἴμοι πλακοῦντος τοῦ ἕν τετραδί πεπεμμένου.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

“ποθεῖς τὸν οὐ παρόντα καὶ μάτην καλεῖς.”

ΕΡΜΗΣ

οἴμοι δὲ κωλῆς ἦν ἐγὼ κατήσθιον—

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἀσκωλίαζ' ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τὴν αἰθρίαν.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

1130 σπλάγχνων τε θερμῶν ὧν ἐγὼ κατήσθιον.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ὀδύνη σε περὶ τὰ σπλάγχν' ἔοικέ τις στρέφειν.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

οἴμοι δὲ κύλικος ἴσον ἴσῳ κεκραμένης.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ταύτην ἐπιπιῶν ἀποτρέχων οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις;

WEALTH

HERMES

In the past I'd get all sorts of goodies from the barmaids, bright and early: wine cake, honey, figs, everything Hermes likes to eat; but now I'm cooling my heels up there and going hungry.

CARIO

And doesn't it serve you right, for occasionally punishing the people who gave you those goodies?

HERMES

What grief, grief for the cake that's baked on the fourth of the month!⁴⁸

CARIO

"You pine and vainly cry for one now gone."⁴⁹

HERMES

Grief for the ham that I used to eat!

CARIO

Ham it up here, out of doors.

HERMES

And for the hot innards that I used to eat!

CARIO

You seem to have an ache in your own innards.

HERMES

What grief for the tankard mixed one to one!

CARIO

Have a sip from this one, and then get lost.

⁴⁸ Hermes' traditional birthday, when he would be given special offerings; cf. Theophrastus, *Characters* 16.10.

⁴⁹ Addressed to Heracles, bereft of his beloved Hylas, in a lost tragedy (*TrGF* adesp. 63).

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΡΜΗΣ

ἄρ' ὠφελήσαις ἄν τι τὸν σταντοῦ φίλον;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

1135 εἴ του δέει γ' ὦν δυνατός εἰμί σ' ὠφελεῖν.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

εἴ μοι πορίσας ἄρτον τιν' εὖ πεπεμμένον
δοίης καταφαγεῖν καὶ κρέας νεανικὸν
ὦν θέθ' ὑμεῖς ἔνδον.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκφορά.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

καὶ μὴν ὅποτε τι σκευάριον τοῦ δεσπότου
1140 ὑφέλοι', ἐγὼ σ' ἂν λαυθάνειν ἐποίουν αἰεί.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἐφ' ᾧτε μετέχειν καυτός, ᾧ τοιχωρύχε·
ἦκεν γὰρ ἂν σοι ναστὸς εὖ πεπεμμένος.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

ἔπειτα τοῦτόν γ' αὐτὸς ἂν κατήσθιες.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

οὐ γὰρ μετεῖχες τὰς ἴσας πληγὰς ἐμοί,
1145 ὅποτε τι ληφθείην πανουργήσας ἐγώ.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

μὴ μνησικακήσης, εἰ σὺ Φυλὴν κατέλαβες.
ἀλλὰ ξύνοικον, πρὸς θεῶν, δέξασθέ με.

WEALTH

HERMES

Surely you'll give your old friend a little help?

CARIO

Provided I'm able to give you the help you want.

HERMES

How about fetching me some nicely baked bread to eat, and a hefty steak from the sacrifice you're making in there.

CARIO

This isn't carry-out!

HERMES

Yet when you would pilfer a dish from your master, I always helped you get away with it.

CARIO

On condition you got a share, you robber! Some nicely baked pastry always came your way.

HERMES

Which then you'd eat up yourself!

CARIO

Well, you never shared the whippings I got when I was caught doing something bad.

HERMES

Don't bear grudges, if you captured Phyle,⁵⁰ but in heaven's name, invite me to join your household!

⁵⁰ The capture of Phyle by Thrasybulus and the democratic exiles in 404/3 was the initial step in the overthrow of the Thirty, the restoration of the democracy, and a decree of general amnesty (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.4).

ARISTOPHANES

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἔπειτ' ἀπολιπὼν τοὺς θεοὺς ἐνθάδε μενεΐς;

ΕΡΜΗΣ

τὰ γὰρ παρ' ὑμῖν ἐστὶ βελτίω πολὺ.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

1150 τί δέ; ταῦτο μολεῖν ἀστεῖον εἶναί σοι δοκεῖ;

ΕΡΜΗΣ

πατρὶς γάρ ἐστι πᾶσ' ἴν' ἂν πράττη τις εὔ.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

τί δῆτ' ἂν εἴης ὄφελος ἡμῖν ἐνθάδ' ὦν;

ΕΡΜΗΣ

παρὰ τὴν θύραν Στροφαῖον ἰδρύσασθέ με.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

Στροφαῖον; ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔργον ἔστ' οὐδὲν στροφῶν.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

ἀλλ' Ἐμπολαῖον.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

1155 ἀλλὰ πλουτοῦμεν. τί οὖν
Ἐρμῆν παλιγκάπηλον ἡμᾶς δεῖ τρέφειν;

ΕΡΜΗΣ

ἀλλὰ Δόλιον τοῖνον.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

Δόλιον; ἤκιστά γε
οὐ γὰρ δόλου νῦν ἔργον, ἀλλ' ἀπλῶν τρόπων.

WEALTH

CARIO

You mean you'll abandon the gods and live here?

HERMES

You people do have it a lot better.

CARIO

Oh? Do you consider desertion such a nice thing?

HERMES

One's country is wherever one does well.⁵¹

CARIO

And what's in it for us if you're down here?

HERMES

Enshrine me at your door as Bracket God.

CARIO

Bracket God? But we've no use for bracketeering!

HERMES

God of Commerce then.

CARIO

But we're wealthy, so why should we subsidize Hermes the Reseller?

HERMES

In that case, God of Deceit.

CARIO

God of Deceit? Absolutely not: we now use not deceit but honest ways.

⁵¹ Probably a quotation from tragedy, as also line 1158.

ARISTOPHANES

ΕΡΜΗΣ

ἀλλ' Ἡγεμόνιον.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς ἤδη βλέπει,

1160 ὥσθ' ἠγεμόνος οὐδὲν δεησόμεσθ' ἔτι.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

Ἐναγώνιος τοίνυν ἔσομαι. καὶ τί ἔτ' ἐρείς;
Πλούτῳ γάρ ἐστι τοῦτο συμφορώτατον,
ποιεῖν ἀγῶνας μουσικούς καὶ γυμνικούς.

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

1165 ὡς ἀγαθόν ἐστ' ἐπωνυμίας πολλὰς ἔχειν
οὗτος γὰρ ἐξηύρηκεν αὐτῷ βιότιον.
οὐκ ἐτὸς ἅπαντες οἱ δικάζοντες θαμὰ
σπεύδουσιν ἐν πολλοῖς γεγράφθαι γράμμασιν.

ΕΡΜΗΣ

οὐκοῦν ἐπὶ τούτοις εἰσίω;

ΚΑΡΙΩΝ

καὶ πλῦνέ γε

1170 αὐτὸς προσελθὼν πρὸς τὸ φρέαρ τὰς κοιλίας,
ἵν' εὐθέως Διακονικὸς εἶναι δοκῆς.

ΙΕΡΕΥΣ

τίς ἂν φράσειε ποῦ ἵστί Χρεμύλος μοι σαφῶς;

WEALTH

HERMES

Then Guide God.

CARIO

But our god can see again, so we'll have no further need of a guide.

HERMES

Then I'll be God of Contests. How can you object to that? Holding artistic and athletic contests is perfectly congenial to Wealth.⁵²

CARIO

It's certainly convenient to have so many titles; he's devised a nice little livelihood for himself. No wonder all who serve on juries often contrive to get enrolled on several lists.⁵³

HERMES

Shall I go inside on these terms?

CARIO

Yes, and go personally to the well and wash some tripe, to make your immediate debut as Servant God.

CARIO and HERMES go inside.

Enter PRIEST from a wing.

PRIEST

Can anyone tell me exactly where Chremylus lives?

CHREMYLUS comes outside.

⁵² These were civic expenses undertaken by the wealthiest citizens.

⁵³ See 972 n.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΑΟΣ

τί δ' ἐστίν, ὦ βέλτιστε;

ΙΕΡΕΥΣ

τί γὰρ ἄλλ' ἢ κακῶς;

ἀφ' οὗ γὰρ ὁ Πλούτος οὗτος ἤρξατο βλέπειν,
ἀπόλωλ' ὑπὸ λιμοῦ καταφαγεῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἔχω,

1175 καὶ ταῦτα τοῦ σωτήηρος ἱερεὺς ὢν Διός.

ΧΡΕΜΤΑΟΣ

ἦ δ' αἰτία τίς ἐστίν, ὦ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν;

ΙΕΡΕΥΣ

θύειν ἔτ' οὐδεὶς ἀξιοί.

ΧΡΕΜΤΑΟΣ

τίνος οὐνεκα;

ΙΕΡΕΥΣ

ὅτι πάντες εἰσὶ πλούσιοι. καίτοι τότε,
ὄτ' εἶχον οὐδέν, ὁ μὲν ἂν ἦκων ἔμπορος
1180 ἔθυσεν ἱερείον τι σωθείς, ὁ δέ τις ἂν
δίκην ἀποφυγών, ὁ δ' ἂν ἐκαλλιερεῖτό τις
κάμέ γ' ἐκάλει τὸν ἱερέα· νῦν δ' οὐδὲ εἰς
θύει τὸ παράπαν οὐδὲν οὐδ' εἰσέρχεται,
πλὴν ἀποπατησόμενοί γε πλεῖν ἢ μύριοι.

ΧΡΕΜΤΑΟΣ

1185 οὐκ οὖν τὰ νομιζόμενα σὺ τούτων λαμβάνεις;

ΙΕΡΕΥΣ

τὸν οὖν Δία τὸν σωτήηρα καὶ τὸς μοι δοκῶ
χαίρειν ἑάσας ἐνθάδ' αὐτοῦ καταμένειν.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

What's up, my good man?

PRIEST

What else but trouble! Ever since this Wealth regained his sight, I've been perishing of hunger; I've nothing to eat, and me the priest of Zeus the Savior!

CHREMYLUS

Good heavens! And why is that?

PRIEST

Nobody bothers with sacrifices anymore.

CHREMYLUS

Why not?

PRIEST

Because everyone's wealthy. When they had nothing, the merchant back safely from a voyage would make a sacrifice, and the man acquitted in court, and the man whose sacrifice was auspicious would invite me over as priest. But now not a single one sacrifices anything at all, or even comes to the temple, except for countless thousands looking for a toilet.

CHREMYLUS

So you don't claim your orthodox share of that?

PRIEST

That's why I myself intend to bid Zeus the Savior goodbye, and settle down right here.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

θάρρει· καλῶς ἔσται γάρ, ἦν θεὸς θέλη.
ὁ Ζεὺς ὁ σωτὴρ γὰρ πάρεστιν ἐνθάδε,
αὐτόματος ἦκων.

ΙΕΡΕΥΣ

1190

πάντ' ἀγαθὰ τοίνυν λέγεις.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

ἰδρυσόμεθ' οὖν ἀντίκα μάλ'—ἀλλὰ περίμενε—
τὸν Πλούτον, οὐπὲρ πρότερον ἦν ἰδρυσμένος,
τὸν ὀπισθόδομον αἰὲ φυλάττων τῆς θεοῦ.
ἀλλ' ἐκδότω τις δεῦρο δᾶδας ἡμμένας,
ἔν' ἔχων προηγῆ τῷ θεῷ σύ.

ΙΕΡΕΥΣ

1195

πάνυ μὲν οὖν

δρᾶν ταῦτα χρή.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τὸν Πλούτον ἔξω τις κάλει.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ἐγὼ δὲ τί ποιῶ;

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

τὰς χύτρας, αἷς τὸν θεὸν
ἰδρυσόμεσθα, λαβοῦσ' ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς φέρε
σεμνῶς· ἔχουσα δ' ἦλθες αὐτῆ ποικίλα.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ᾧν δ' οὐνεκ' ἦλθον;

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

Cheer up! It's going to be all right, god willing, for Zeus the Savior is here with us; he's come of his own accord.

PRIEST

Well, you have nothing but good news!

CHREMYLUS

We're on our way right now to install Wealth—no, please stay—right where he was installed before, as permanent guardian of Athena's treasure chamber.⁵⁴ Now someone bring us lighted torches; you can lead the god's procession!

PRIEST

I'm very much obliged.

CHREMYLUS

Someone ask Wealth to come outside.

OLD WOMAN comes outside.

OLD WOMAN

And what may I do?

CHREMYLUS

Take the pots that we're going to use in the god's installation and carry them solemnly on your head. You've come wearing your own finery!

OLD WOMAN

But what about my problem?

⁵⁴ On the Acropolis.

ARISTOPHANES

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

1200

πάντα σοι πεπράξεται.

ἤξει γὰρ ὁ νεανίσκος ὡς σ' εἰς ἐσπέραν.

ΓΡΑΤΣ

ἀλλ' εἴ γε μέντοι, νῆ Δί', ἐγγυᾶ σύ μοι
ἤξειν ἐκείνον ὡς ἐμ', οἴσω τὰς χύτρας.

ΧΡΕΜΤΛΟΣ

1205

καὶ μὴν πολὺ τῶν ἄλλων χυτρῶν τὰναντία
αὐταὶ ποιοῦσιν· ταῖς μὲν ἄλλαις γὰρ χύτραις
ἢ γραῦς ἔπεστ' ἀνωτάτω, ταύτης δὲ νῦν
τῆς γραδὸς ἐπιπολῆς ἔπεισιν αἱ χύτραι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκέτι τοίνυν εἰκὸς μέλλειν οὐδ' ἡμᾶς, ἀλλ'
ἀναχωρεῖν
εἰς τοῦπισθεν· δεῖ γὰρ κατόπιν τούτων ἄδοντας
ἔπεσθαι.

WEALTH

CHREMYLUS

It's all taken care of: your young man will visit you tonight.

OLD WOMAN

Well, if you really guarantee that he'll visit me, I'll carry the pots.

CHREMYLUS

Look, these pots are doing the opposite of other pots: in other pots the slag's on top, but in this case the pots are atop this slag!

Enter WEALTH, followed by the rest of the household; PRIEST leads everyone off in procession.

CHORUS

Well, we shouldn't be tarrying; let's take up the rear! We should follow along behind them in song.

INDEX OF PERSONAL NAMES

Reference is to play and line number. Italicized references are foot-noted in the text.

- Achilles: F 912, 1264–66
Adeimantus: F 1512
Aeacus: F 464–78, 605–73
Aegyptus: F 1206–8
Aeschylus: F 758-end
Aesimus: A 208
Agathon: F 83–85
Agenor: F 1225–26
Agyrrhius: A 102–3, 183–88, W 176
Ajax: F 1294
Alcibiades: F 1422–32
Alcmene: F 531, 582
Ameipsias: F 12–15
Amynon: A 365
Antiloehus: A 392–93
Antisthenes: A 365–68, 806–8
Archedemus: F 416–21, 588
Archenomus: F 1507
Ariphrades: A 129
Aristyllus: A 647, W 314–15
Atreus: F 1268–70
Battus: W 925
Bellerophon: F 1051
Blepsidemus: W 332–626
Blepyrus: A *passim*
Cadmus: F 1225–26
Callias: F 428–30, 501 (?), A 810–12
Callimachus: A 809–10
Cannonus: A 1089–90
Cario: W *passim*
Cecrops: W 773
Cephalus: A 248–54
Cephisophon: F 944, 1408, 1452–53
Chaeretades: A 51
Charitimides: A 291
Charixene: A 943
Charon: F 180–270
Chremes: A 372–477
Chremylus: W *passim*
Cinesias: F 152–53, 366, 1437–41
Circe: W 302–15
Cleidemides: F 791
Cleigenes: F 706–17
Cleinarete: A 41

INDEX

- Cleisthenes: *F* 48, 57, (son of)
 422–27
 Cleitophon: *F* 967
 Cleocritus: *F* 1437–41
 Cleomachus: var. *A* 22
 Cleon: *F* 569, 577–78
 Cleophon: *F* 678–85, 1504,
 1532–33
 Corinthus: *F* 439, *A* 828
 Cratinus: *F* 357
 Cyclops: *W* 290–302
 Cyenus: *F* 963
 Cyrene: *F* 1327–28
- Darius: *F* 1028
 Dexinicus: *W* 800–01
 Diomedes: *A* 1029
 Dionysius: *W* 550
 Ditylas: *F* 608–22
 Draces: *A* 292
- Empusa: *A* 1056, *F* 288–96
 Epicrates: *A* 71
 Epicurus: *A* 644–45
 Epigenes: *A* 938–1111
 Epigonus: *A* 167–68
 Eryxis: *F* 934
 Euaeon: *A* 408–21
 Eudamus (*var.* -demus) *W* 883–
 84
 Euripides: *F* (*passim*); mss. at *A*
 823–29; mother of, *F* 839
- Geres: *A* 932
 Geron: *A* 858
 Geusistrate: *A* 49
 Glyce: *A* 43, *F* 1343, 1363–64
- Harmodius: *A* 682
 Heracles: *F* 38–165, 280–82;
 463–69; 494–673; *W* 382–85
 Hesiod: *F* 1033–34
 Heurippides: *A* 823–29
 Hieron: *A* 757, ?848
 Hieronymus: *A* 201
 Hipponax: *F* 661
 Hipponicus: cf. *F* 429 n.
 Homer: *F* 1034–36
 Hyperbolus: *F* 570–71
- Iophon: *F* 73–79
- Laertes: *W* 312; see also *Odys-*
 seus
 Lai: *W* 179, 302–15
 Lamachus: *F* 1039
 Lamius: *A* 76–78
 Leucolophus (1): *A* 644–45
 Leucolophus (2): *F* 1512
 Lynceus: *W* 210
 Lycis: *F* 12–15
 Lysicrates: *A* 630, 735–36
- Mania: *F* 1345
 Megaenetus: *F* 965
 Meletus: *F* 1302
 Melistiche: *A* 46
 Memnon: *F* 963
 Midas: *W* 287
 Molon: *F* 55
 Morsimus: *F* 151
 Musaeus: *F* 1033
 Myrmex: *F* 1506
 Myronides: *A* 304–5

INDEX

- Nausicydes: *A* 426
 Neocleides: *A* 254–55, 398–407,
 W 665–66, 716–25, 747
 Nicias: *A* 427–28
 Nicomachus: *F* 1506
 Niobe: *F* 912, 920

 Ocnus: *F* 186
 Odysseus: and Cyclops *W* 290–
 302; and Circe *W* 302–15
 Oedipus: *A* 1042, *F* 1182–96
 Oeneus: *F* 1238–41
 Orestes: *F* 1126–76
 Orpheus: *F* 1032

 Palamedes: *F* 1451
 Pamphilus (1): *W* 174–75
 Pamphilus (2): *W* 385
 Pantocles: *F* 1036–38
 Pardocas: *F* 608–22
 Parmenon: *A* 868
 Patrocles: *W* 84–85
 Patroclus: *F* 1041
 Pauson: *W* 602
 Pelops: 1232–33
 (Persephone): *F* 504–11
 Phaedra: *F* 1043–55
 Philaenete: *A* 42
 Philepsius: *W* 177
 Philodoretus: *A* 51
 Philonides: *W* 179, 302–15
 Philoxenus, son of: *F* 934
 Phormisius: *F* 965–66, *A* 97
 Phrynichus com.: *F* 12–15

 Phrynichus trag.: *F* 910, 1298–
 1300
 Phylomachus: *A* 22
 Plathane: *F* 549–78
 Polybus: *F* 1192
 Praxagora: *A* 1–729
 Procrustes: *A* 1021
 Pronomus: *A* 102–3
 Pythangelus: *F* 87

 Scebylas: *F* 608–22
 Sebinus: *F* 427, *A* 980
 Sicon: *A* 867
 Smicythion: *A* 46
 Smicythus: *A* 292
 Smoeus: *A* 846
 Socrates: *F* 1491–99
 Sophocles: *F* 76–82, 786–94,
 1515–19
 Sostrate: *A* 41
 Sphyromachus: var. *A* 22
 Stheneboea: *F* 1043–55

 Tantalus: *F* 1232–33
 Teucer: 1041
 Theramenes: *F* 533–41, 967–70
 Theseus: *F* 142, *W* 627
 Thorycion: *F* 362–64, 382
 Thrasybulus: *A* 202–3, 356, *W*
 550
 Timotheus: *W* 180

 Xanthias: *F* 1–813
 Xenocles: *F* 86