Greek Literature Weekend in Gloucester

22-23 February 2020

Course materials

Achilles killing Penthesilea. Tondo of an Attic red-figure kylix, 470–460 BCE

Contents

Session 1: Introductory

I. The Greek alphabet

Capital	Lower case	Name	Pronunciation	Transliteration
Α	α	alpha	l**a**rd/c**u**p	a
Β	β	beta	**b**at	b
Γ	γ	gamma	**g**oat	g
Δ	δ	delta	**d**og	d
Ε	ε	epsilon	b**e**t	e
Ζ	ζ	zeta	wi**sd**om/li**ds**	z
Η	η	eta	n**a**g	ē
Θ	θ	theta	**th**in	th
Ι	ι	iota	b**i**d/**ea**t	i
Κ	κ	kappa	**k**it	c/k
Λ	λ	lambda	**l**ot	l
Μ	μ	mu	**m**at	m
Ν	ν	nu	**n**ot	n
Ξ	ξ	xi	a**x**e	x
Ο	ο	omicron	l**o**g	o
Π	π	pi	**p**at	p
Ρ	ρ	rho	**r**ot	rh/r
Σ	σ/ς	sigma	**s**it	s
Τ	τ	tau	**t**op	t
Υ	υ	upsilon	Fr. l**u**ne	y
Φ	φ	phi	**f**at	ph
Χ	χ	chi	lo**ch**	ch/kh
Ψ	ψ	psi	dy**ps**omaniac	ps
Ω	ω	omega	r**a**w	ō

(a) Transliterate using the rules above, and suggest English words derived from these theatrical terms:

1. νοῦς 2. φρένες 3. σχίζω 4. ἡγεμών 5. πολύς
6. πόλις 7. ἄκρος 8. βραχύς 9. δολιχός 10. κεφαλή
11. θῶραξ 12. νέος 13. μορφή 14. κάτοπτρον 15. δίσκος
16. χρόνος 17. μαρτυρία 18. γράφω 19. κόμη 20. πάρδαλις

(b) Match the noise with the animal.

One clue to the sounds represented by the letters of the ancient Greek alphabet is the way the sounds of animals (and birds) are written. See if you can work out which animal makes each of these sounds:

αὖ αὖ
βῆ
βαῦ βαῦ
ἐποποῖ ποποποποποποποῖ

βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ
γρῦ γρῦ
τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιό

Clue: there are two dogs, a sheep, a frog, a pig and two birds (one is a hoopoe).

Some bird names clearly derive from the sounds they make – e.g. the hoopoe is called ἔποψ (like the English, and the Latin *upupa*).

Try to match the names to the birds, and find the odd word out which means 'cheep':

κόκκυξ πιππίζω κρέξ κόραξ κιχλή

The birds are corncrake, raven, cuckoo and thrush.

II. Dramatic Parts

Tragedy (session 4)

Table A: I. 1-92 Deianeira, Nurse, Hyllus; IV. 872-946 Nurse, Chorus

Table B: II. 531-632 Deianeira, Chorus, Lichas

Table C: III. 663-820 Deianeira, Chorus, Hyllus

Comedy (session 8)

Table A: I. 1-193 Peisthetairus, Euelpides, Footbird, Hoopoe

Table B: II. 801-1057 Peisthetairus, Euelpides, Chorus, Priest, Poet, Oracle Man, Meton, Inspector, Statute-seller

Table C: III. 1494-1694 Prometheus, Peisthetairus, Chorus, Poseidon, Heracles, Xanthias, Triballian

Session 2: Epic poetry

1. Homer *Iliad* 4. 422-538

As a heavy surf assaults some roaring coast,
piling breaker on breaker whipped by the West Wind,
and out on the open sea a crest first rears its head
then pounds down on the shore with hoarse, rumbling thunder
and in come more shouldering crests, arching up and breaking
against some rocky spit, exploding salt foam to the skies-—
so wave on wave they came, Achaean battalions ceaseless,
surging on to war. Each captain ordered his men
and the ranks moved on in silence . . .
You'd never think so many troops could march
holding their voices in their chests, all silence,
fearing their chiefs who called out clear commands,
and the burnished blazoned armor round their bodies flared,
the formations trampling on.
But not the Trojans, no . . .
like flocks of sheep in a wealthy rancher's steadings,
thousands crowding to have their white milk drained,
bleating nonstop when they hear their crying lambs —
so the shouts rose up from the long Trojan lines
and not one cry, no common voice to bind them
all together, their tongues mixed and clashed,
their men hailed from so many far-flung countries.
Ares drove them, fiery-eyed Athena drove the Argives,
and Terror and Rout and relentless Strife stormed too,
sister of manslaughtering Ares, Ares' comrade-in-arms —
Strife, only a slight thing when she first rears her head
but her head soon hits the sky as she strides across the earth.
Now Strife hurled down the leveler Hate amidst both sides,
wading into the onslaught, flooding men with pain.

At last the armies clashed at one strategic point,
they slammed their shields together, pike scraped pike
with the grappling strength of fighters armed in bronze
and their round shields pounded, boss on welded boss,
and the sound of struggle roared and rocked the earth.
Screams of men and cries of triumph breaking in one breath,
fighters killing, fighters killed, and the ground streamed blood.
Wildly as two winter torrents raging down from the mountain

swirling into a valley, hurl their great waters together,
flash floods from the wellsprings plunging down in a gorge
and miles away in the hills a shepherd hears the thunder —
so from the grinding armies broke the cries and crash of war.

Antilochus was the first to kill a Trojan captain,
tough on the front lines, Thalysias' son Echepolus.
Antilochus thrust first, speared the horsehair helmet
right at the ridge, and the bronze spearpoint lodged
in the man's forehead, smashing through his skull
and the dark came whirling down across his eyes —
he toppled down like a tower in the rough assault.
As he fell the enormous Elephenor grabbed his feet,
Chalcodon's son, lord of the brave-hearted Abantes,
dragged him out from under the spears, rushing madly
to strip his gear but his rush was short-lived.
Just as he dragged that corpse the brave Agenor
spied his ribs, bared by his shield as he bent low —
Agenor stabbed with a bronze spear and loosed his limbs,
his life spirit left him and over his dead body now
the savage work went on, Achaeans and Trojans
mauling each other there like wolves, leaping,
hurtling into each other, man throttling man.

And Telamonian Ajax struck Anthemion's son,
the hardy stripling Simoisius, still unwed . . .
His mother had borne him along the Simois' banks
when she trailed her parents down the slopes of Ida
to tend their flocks, and so they called him Simoisius.
But never would he repay his loving parents now
for the gift of rearing—his life cut short so soon,
brought down by the spear of lionhearted Ajax.
At the first charge he slashed his right nipple,
clean through the shoulder went the brazen point
and down in the dust he fell like a lithe black poplar
shot up tall and strong in the spreading marshy flats,
the trunk trimmed but its head a shock of branches.
A chariot-maker fells it with shining iron ax
as timber to bend for handsome chariot wheels
and there it lies, seasoning by the river . . .
So lay Anthemion's son Simoisius, cut down

by the giant royal Ajax.
Antiphus hurled at him —
the son of Priam wearing a gleaming breastplate
let fly through the lines but his sharp spear missed
and he hit Leucus instead, Odysseus' loyal comrade,
gouging his groin as the man hauled off a corpse —
it dropped from his hands and Leucus sprawled across it.
Enraged at his friend's death Odysseus sprang in fury
helmed in fiery bronze he plowed through the front
and charging the enemy, glaring left and right
he hurled his spear — a glinting brazen streak —
and the Trojans gave ground, scattering back,
panicking there before his whirling shaft —
a direct hit! Odysseus struck Democoon,
Priam's bastard son come down from Abydos,
Priam's racing-stables. Incensed for the dead
Odysseus speared him straight through one temple
and out the other punched the sharp bronze point
and the dark came swirling thick across his eyes—-
down he crashed, armor clanging against his chest.
And the Trojan front shrank back, glorious Hector too
as the Argives yelled and dragged away the corpses,
pushing on, breakneck on. But lord god Apollo,
gazing down now from the heights of Pergamus,
rose in outrage, crying down at the Trojans,
"Up and at them, you stallion-breaking Trojans!
Never give up your lust for war against these Argives!
What are their bodies made of, rock or iron to block
your tearing bronze? Stab them, slash their flesh!
Achilles the son of lovely sleek-haired Thetis —
the man's not even fighting, no, he wallows
in all his heartsick fury by the ships!"
So he cried
from far on the city's heights, the awesome god Apollo
But Zeus's daughter Athena spurred the Argives on —
Athena first in glory, third-born of the gods —
whenever she saw some slacker hanging back
as she hurtled through the onset.
Now Amarinceus' son
Diores — fate shackled Diores fast and a jagged rock
struck him against his right shin, beside the ankle.

Pirous son of Imbrasus winged it hard and true,
the Thracian chief who had sailed across from Aenus,
the ruthless rock striking the bones and tendons
crushed them to pulp — he landed flat on his back,
slamming the dust, both arms flung out to his comrades,
gasping out his life. Pirous who heaved the rock
came rushing in and speared him up the navel —
his bowels uncoiled, spilling loose on the ground
and the dark came swirling down across his eyes.
But Pirous —
Aetolian Thoas speared him as he swerved and sprang away
the lancehead piercing his chest above the nipple
plunged deep in his lung, and Thoas, running up,
wrenched the heavy spear from the man's chest,
drew his blade, ripped him across the belly,
took his life but he could not strip his armor.
Look, there were Pirous' cohorts bunched in a ring,
Thracians, topknots waving, clutching their long pikes
and rugged, strong and proud as the Trojan Thoas was,
they shoved him back — he gave ground, staggering, reeling.
And so the two lay stretched in the dust, side-by-side,
a lord of Thrace, a lord of Epeans armed in bronze
and a ruck of other soldiers died around them.

[Translated by Robert Fagles]

Τεύχεα δ᾽ οὐκ ἀπέδυσε· περίστησαν γὰρ ἑταῖροι
Θρήϊκες ἀκρόκομοι δολίχ᾽ ἔγχεα χερσὶν ἔχοντες,
οἵ ἑ μέγαν περ ἐόντα καὶ ἴφθιμον καὶ ἀγαυὸν
ὦσαν ἀπὸ σφείων· ὃ δὲ χασσάμενος πελεμίχθη.
Ὣς τώ γ᾽ ἐν κονίῃσι παρ᾽ ἀλλήλοισι τετάσθην,
ἤτοι ὃ μὲν Θρηκῶν, ὃ δ᾽ Ἐπειῶν χαλκοχιτώνων
ἡγεμόνες· πολλοὶ δὲ περὶ κτείνοντο καὶ ἄλλοι.

2. Quintus Smyrnaeus *Posthomerica* 1. 538-674

τοὺς δ᾽ ὁπότ᾽ εἰσενόησε δαΐφρων Πενθεσίλεια
θῆρας ὅπως θύνοντας ἀνὰ μόθον ὀκρυόεντα,
ἀμφοτέρων ὥρμησε καταντίον, ἠΰτε λυγρὴ
πάρδαλις ἐν ξυλόχοισιν ὀλέθριον ἦτορ ἔχουσα
αἰνὰ περισσαίνουσα θόρῃ κατέναντ᾽ ἐπιόντων
ἀγρευτέων, οἵπερ μιν ἐν ἔντεσι θωρηχθέντες
ἐσσυμένην μίμνουσι πεποιθότες ἐγχείῃσιν·
ὣς ἄρα Πενθεσίλειαν ἀρήιοι ἄνδρες ἔμιμνον
δούρατ᾽ ἀειράμενοι·

When battle-eager Penthesileia saw
These twain,[1] as through the scourging storm of war
Like ravening beasts they rushed, to meet them there
She sped, as when a leopard grim, whose mood
ls deadly, leaps from forest-coverts forth,
Lashing her tail, on hunters closing round,
While these, in armour clad, and putting trust
In their long spears, await her lightning leap;
So did those warriors twain with spears upswung
Wait Penthesileia. Clanged the brazen plates
About their shoulders as they moved. And first
Leapt the long-shafted lance sped from the hand
Of goodly Penthesileia. Straight it flew
To the shield of Aeacus' son, but glancing thence
This way and that the shivered fragments sprang
As from a rock-face: of such temper were
The cunning-hearted Fire-god's gifts divine.
Then in her hand the warrior-maid swung up
A second javelin fury-winged, against
Aias, and with fierce words defied the twain:
“Ha, from mine hand in vain one lance hath leapt!
But with this second look I suddenly
To quell the strength and courage of two foes, —
Ay, though ye vaunt you mighty men of war
Amid your Danaans! Die ye shall, and so
Lighter shall be the load of war’s affliction
That lies upon the Trojan chariot-lords.

[1] Achilles and Ajax

Draw nigh, come through the press to grips with me,
So shall ye learn what might wells up in breasts
Of Amazons. With my blood is mingled war!
No mortal man begat me, but the Lord
Of War, insatiate of the battle-cry.
Therefore my might is more than any man's."

With scornful laughter spake she: then she hurled
Her second lance; but they in utter scorn
Laughed now, as swiftly flew the shaft, and smote
The silver greave of Aias, and was foiled
Thereby, and all its fury could not scar
The flesh within; for fate had ordered not
That any blade of foes should taste the blood
Of Aias in the bitter war. But he
Recked of the Amazon naught, but turned him thence
To rush upon the Trojan host, and left
Penthesileia unto Peleus' son
Alone, for well he knew his heart within
That she, for all her prowess, none the less
Would cost Achilles battle-toil as light,
As effortless, as doth the dove the hawk.

Then groaned she an angry groan that she had sped
Her shafts in vain; and now with scoffing speech
To her in turn the son of Peleus spake:
"Woman, with what vain vauntings triumphing
Hast thou come forth against us, all athirst
To battle with us, who be mightier far
Than earthborn heroes? We from Cronos' Son,
The Thunder-roller, boast our high descent.
Ay, even Hector quailed, the battle-swift,
Before us, e'en though far away he saw
Our onrush to grim battle. Yea, my spear
Slew him, for all his might. But thou — thine heart
ls utterly mad, that thou hast greatly dared
To threaten us with death this day! On thee
Thy latest hour shall swiftly come — is come!
Thee not thy sire the War-god now shall pluck
Out of mine hand, but thou the debt shalt pay
Of a dark doom, as when mid mountain-folds

A pricket meets a lion, waster of herds.
What, woman, hast thou heard not of the heaps
Of slain, that into Xanthus' rushing stream
Were thrust by these mine hands? — or hast thou heard
In vain, because the Blessed Ones have stol'n
Wit and discretion from thee, to the end
That Doom's relentless gulf might gape for thee?”

He spake; he swung up in his mighty hand
And sped the long spear warrior-slaying, wrought
By Chiron, and above the right breast pierced
The battle-eager maid. The red blood leapt
Forth, as a fountain wells, and all at once
Fainted the strength of Penthesileia's limbs;
Dropped the great battle-axe from her nerveless hand;
A mist of darkness overveiled her eyes,
And anguish thrilled her soul. Yet even so
Still drew she difficult breath, still dimly saw
The hero, even now in act to drag
Her from the swift steed's back. Confusedly
She thought: “Or shall I draw my mighty sword,
And bide Achilles’ fiery onrush, or
Hastily cast me from my fleet horse down
To earth, and kneel unto this godlike man,
And with wild breath promise for ransoming
Great heaps of brass and gold, which pacify
The hearts of victors never so athirst
For blood, if haply so the murderous might
Of Aeacus' son may hearken and may spare,
Or peradventure may compassionate
My youth, and so vouchsafe me to behold
Mine home again? — for O, l long to live!”

So surged the wild thoughts in her; but the Gods
Ordained it otherwise. Even now rushed on
In terrible anger Peleus‘ son: he thrust
With sudden spear, and on its shaft impaled
The body of her tempest-footed steed,
Even as a man in haste to sup might pierce
Flesh with the spit, above the glowing hearth
To roast it, or as in a mountain-glade

A hunter sends the shaft of death clear through
The body of a stag with such winged speed
That the fierce dart leaps forth beyond, to plunge
Into the tall stem of an oak or pine.
So that death-ravening spear of Peleus' son
Clear through the goodly steed rushed on, and pierced
Penthesileia. Straightway fell she down
Into the dust of earth, the arms of death,
In grace and comeliness fell, for naught of shame
Dishonoured her fair form. Face down she lay
On the long spear outgasping her last breath,
Stretched upon that fleet horse as on a couch;
Like some tall pine snapped by the icy mace
Of Boreas, earth's forest-fosterling
Reared by a spring to stately height, amidst
Long mountain-glens, a glory of mother earth;
So from the once fleet steed low fallen lay
Penthesileia, all her shattered strength
Brought down to this, and all her loveliness.

Now when the Trojans saw the Warrior-queen
Struck down in battle, ran through all their lines
A shiver of panic. Straightway to their walls
Turned they in flight, heart-agonized with grief.
As when on the wide sea, 'neath buffetings
Of storm-blasts, castaways whose ship is wrecked
Escape, a remnant of a crew, forspent
With desperate conflict with the cruel sea:
Late and at last appears the land hard by,
Appears a city: faint and weary-limbed
With that grim struggle, through the surf they strain
To land, sore grieving for the good ship lost,
And shipmates whom the terrible surge dragged down
To nether gloom; so, Troyward as they fled
From battle, all those Trojans wept for her,
The Child of the resistless War-god, wept
For friends who died in groan-resounding fight.

Then over her with scornful laugh the son
Of Peleus vaunted: "In the dust lie there
A prey to teeth of dogs, to ravens' beaks,

Thou wretched thing! Who cozened thee to come
Forth against me? And thoughtest thou to fare
Home from the war alive, to bear with thee
Right royal gifts from Priam the old king,
Thy guerdon for slain Argives? Ha, 'twas not
The Immortals who inspired thee with this thought
Who know that I of heroes mightiest am,
The Danaans' light of safety, but a woe
To Trojans and to thee, O evil-starred!
Nay, but it was the darkness-shrouded Fates
And thine own folly of soul that pricked thee on
To leave the works of women, and to fare
To war, from which strong men shrink shuddering back."

So spake he, and his ashen spear the son
Of Peleus drew from that swift horse, and from
Penthesileia in death's agony.
Then steed and rider gasped their lives away
Slain by one spear. Now from her head he plucked
The helmet splendour-flashing like the beams
Of the great sun, or Zeus' own glory-light.
Then, there as fallen in dust and blood she lay,
Rose, like the breaking of the dawn, to view
'Neath dainty-pencilled brows a lovely face,
Lovely in death. The Argives thronged around,
And all they saw and marvelled, for she seemed
Like an Immortal. In her armour there
Upon the earth she lay, and seemed the Child
Of Zeus, the tireless Huntress Artemis
Sleeping, what time her feet forwearied are
With following lions with her flying shafts
Over the hills far-stretching. She was made
A wonder of beauty even in her death
By Aphrodite glorious-crowned, the Bride
Of the strong War-god, to the end that he,
The son of noble Peleus, might be pierced
With the sharp arrow of repentant love.
The warriors gazed, and in their hearts they prayed
That fair and sweet like her their wives might seem,
Laid on the bed of love, when home they won.
Yea, and Achilles' very heart was wrung

With love's remorse to have slain a thing so sweet,
Who might have borne her home, his queenly bride,
To chariot-glorious Phthia; for she was
Flawless, a very daughter of the Gods,
Divinely tall, and most divinely fair.

[Translated by A. S. Way]

Achilles vs Penthesilea, 540-30 BCE, by Exekias (British Museum, BM 1836.0224.127)

Session 3: Lucian *Icaro-Menippus: a Dialogue*.

This Dialogue, which is also called by the commentators Ὑπερνεφελος, or, 'Above the Clouds," has a great deal of easy wit and humour in it, without the least degree of stiffness or obscurity; it is equally severe on the gods and philosophers; and paints, in the warmest colours, the glaring absurdity of the whole pagan system.

MENIPPUS. Three thousand stadia[2] from the earth to the moon, my first resting-place; from thence up to the sun about five hundred parasangas[3]; and from the sun to the highest heaven, and the palace of Jupiter, as far as a swift eagle could fly in a day.

FRIEND. What are you muttering to yourself, Menippus, talking about the stars, and pretending to measure distances? As I walk behind you, I hear of nothing but suns and moons, parasangas, stations, and I know not what.

MENIPPUS. Marvel not, my friend, if I utter things aerial and sublime; for I am recounting the wonders of my late journey.

FRIEND. What! tracing your road by the stars, as the Phoenicians[4] do!

MENIPPUS. Not so, by Jove! I have been amongst the stars themselves.

FRIEND. You must have had a long dream, indeed, to travel so many leagues in it.

MENIPPUS. It is no dream, I assure you; I am just arrived from Jupiter.

FRIEND. How say you? Menippus let down from heaven?

MENIPPUS. Even so: this moment come from thence, where I have seen and heard things most strange and miraculous. If you doubt the truth of them, the happier shall I be to have seen what is past belief.

FRIEND. How is it possible, most heavenly and divine Menippus, that a mere mortal, like me, should dispute the veracity of one who has been carried above the clouds: one, to speak in the language of Homer, of the inhabitants of heaven? But inform me, I beseech you, which way you got up, and how you procured so many ladders; for, by your appearance, I should

[2] The ancient Greek stadium is supposed to have contained a hundred and twenty-five geometrical paces, or six hundred and twenty-five Roman feet, corresponding to our furlong. Eight stadia make a geometrical, or Italian mile; and twenty, according to Dacier, a French league. It is observed, notwithstanding, by Guilletiere, a famous French writer, that the stadium was only six hundred Athenian feet, six hundred and four English feet, or a hundred and three geometrical paces. The Greeks measured all their distances by stadia, which, after all we can discover concerning them, are different in different times and places.

[3] A Persian measure, approximately 4 miles.

[4] The Phoenicians, it is supposed, were the first sailors, and steered their course according to the appearance of the stars.

not take you for another Phrygian boy,[5] to be carried up by an eagle, and made a cup-bearer of.

MENIPPUS. You are an old scoffer, I know, and therefore I am not surprised that an account of things above the comprehensions of the vulgar should appear like a fable to you; but, let me tell you, I wanted no ladders, nor an eagle's beak, to transport me thither, for I had wings of my own.

FRIEND. This was beyond Daedalus himself, to be metamorphosed thus into a hawk, or jay, and we know nothing of it.

MENIPPUS. You are not far from the mark, my friend; for my wings were a kind of Daedalian contrivance.

FRIEND. Thou art a bold rogue indeed, and meant no doubt, if you had chanced to fall into any part of the ocean, to have called it, as Icarus did, by your own name, and styled it the Menippean Sea.

MENIPPUS. Not so; his wings were glued on with wax, and when the sun melted it, could not escape falling; but mine had no wax in them.

FRIEND. Indeed! now shall I quickly know the truth of this affair.

MENIPPUS. You shall: I took, you must know, a very large eagle and a vulture also, one of the strongest I could get, and cut off their wings; but, if you have leisure, I will tell you the whole expedition from beginning to end.

FRIEND. Pray do, for I long to hear it: by Jove the Friendly, I entreat thee, keep me no longer in suspense, for I am hung by the ears.

MENIPPUS. Listen, then, for I would by no means baulk an inquisitive friend, especially one who is nailed by the ears, as you are. Finding, on a close examination, that everything here below, such as riches, honours, empire, and dominion, were all ridiculous and absurd, of no real value or estimation, considering them, withal, as so many obstacles to the study of things more worthy of contemplation, I looked up towards nobler objects, and meditated on the great universe before me; doubts immediately arose concerning what philosophers call the world; nor could I discover how it came into existence, its creator, the beginning or the end of it. When I descended to its several parts, I was still more in the dark: I beheld the stars, scattered as it were by the hand of chance, over the heavens; I saw the sun, and wished to know what it was; above all, the nature of the Moon appeared to me most wonderful and extraordinary; the diversity of its forms pointed out some hidden cause which I could not account for; the lightning also, which pierces through everything, the impetuous thunder, the rain, hail, and snow, all raised my admiration, and seemed inexplicable to human reason. In this situation of mind, the best thing I thought which I could possibly do was to consult the philosophers; they, I made no doubt, were acquainted with the truth, and could impart it to me. Selecting, therefore, the best of them, as well as I could judge from the paleness and severity of their countenances, and the length of their

[5] Ganymede, whom Jupiter fell in love with, as he was hunting on Mount Ida, and turning himself into an eagle, carried up with him to heaven. "I am sure," says Menippus's friend, archly enough, "you were not carried up there, like Ganymede, for your beauty."

beards (for they seemed all to be high-speaking and heavenly-minded men), into the hands of these I entirely resigned myself, and partly by ready money, partly by the promise of more, when they had made me completely wise, I engaged them to teach me the perfect knowledge of the universe, and how to talk on sublime subjects; but so far were they from removing my ignorance, that they only threw me into greater doubt and uncertainty, by puzzling me with atoms, vacuums, beginnings, ends, ideas, forms, and so forth: and the worst of all was, that though none agreed with the rest in what they advanced, but were all of contrary opinions, yet did every one of them expect that I should implicitly embrace his tenets, and subscribe to his doctrine.

FRIEND. It is astonishing that such wise men should disagree, and, with regard to the same things, should not all be of the same opinion.

MENIPPUS. You will laugh, my friend, when I shall tell you of their pride and impudence in the relation of extraordinary events; to think that men, who creep upon this earth, and are not a whit wiser, or can see farther than ourselves, some of them old, blind, and lazy, should pretend to know the limits and extent of heaven, measure the sun's circuit, and walk above the moon; that they should tell us the size and form of the stars, as if they were just come down from them; that those who scarcely know how many furlongs it is from Athens to Megara, should inform you exactly how many cubits distance the sun is from the moon, should mark out the height of the air, and the depth of the sea, describe circles, from squares upon triangles, make spheres, and determine the length and breadth of heaven itself: is it not to the last degree impudent and audacious? When they talk of things thus obscure and unintelligible, not merely to offer their opinions as conjectures, but boldly to urge and insist upon them: to do everything but swear, that the sun[6] is a mass of liquid fire, that the moon is inhabited, that the stars drink water, and that the sun draws up the moisture from the sea, as with a well-rope, and distributes his draught over the whole creation? How little they agree upon any one thing, and what a variety of tenets they embrace, is but too evident; for first, with regard to the world, their opinions are totally different; some affirm that it hath neither beginning nor end; some, whom I cannot but admire, point out to us the manner of its construction, and the maker of it, a supreme deity, whom they worship as creator of the universe; but they have not told us whence he came, nor where he exists; neither, before the formation of this world, can we have any idea of time or place.

FRIEND. These are, indeed, bold and presumptuous diviners.

MENIPPUS. But what would you say, my dear friend, were you to hear them disputing, concerning ideal[7] and incorporeal substances, and talking about finite and infinite? for this is a principal matter of contention between them; some confining all things within certain limits, others prescribing none. Some assert that there are many worlds,[8] and laugh at those

[6] This was the opinion of Anaxagoras, one of the Ionic philosophers, born at Clazomene, in the first year of the seventieth Olympiad. See Plutarch and Diogenes Laert.

[7] Alluding to the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle.

[8] This was the opinion of Democritus, who held that there were infinite worlds in infinite space, according to all circumstances, some of which are not only like to one another, but every way so perfectly and absolutely equal, that there is no difference betwixt them. See Plutarch, and Tully, Quest. Acad.

who affirm there is but one; whilst another,[9] no man of peace, gravely assures us that war is the original parent of all things. Need I mention to you their strange opinions concerning the deities? One says, that number[10] is a god; others swear by dogs,[11] geese, and plane-trees. Some give the rule of everything to one god alone, and take away all power from the rest, a scarcity of deities which I could not well brook; others more liberal, increased the number of gods, and gave to each his separate province and employment, calling one the first, and allotting to others the second or third rank of divinity. Some held that gods were incorporeal, and without form; others supposed them to have bodies. It was by no means universally acknowledged that the gods took cognisance of human affairs; some there were who exempted them from all care and solicitude, as we exonerate our old men from business and trouble; bringing them in like so many mute attendants on the stage. There are some too, who go beyond all this, and deny that there are any gods at all, but assert that the world is left without any guide or master. I could not tell how to refuse my assent to these high-sounding and long-bearded gentlemen, and yet could find no argument amongst them all, that had not been refuted by some or other of them; often was I on the point of giving credit to one, when, as Homer says, "To other thoughts, My heart inclined."[12] The only way, therefore, to put an end to all my doubts, was, I thought, to make a bird of myself, and fly up to heaven. This my own eager desires represented as probable, and the fable-writer Aesop[13] confirmed it, who carries up, not only his eagles, but his beetles, and camels thither. To make wings for myself was impossible, but to fit those of a vulture and an eagle to my body, might, I imagined, answer the same purpose. I resolved, therefore, to try the experiment, and cut off the right wing of one, and the left of the other; bound them on with thongs, and at the extremities made loops for my hands; then, raising myself by degrees, just skimmed above the ground, like the geese. When, finding my project succeed, I made a bold push, got upon the Acropolis and from thence slid down to the theatre. Having got so far without danger or difficulty, I began to meditate greater things, and setting off from Parnethes or Hymettus[14] flew to Geranea,[15] and from thence to the top of the tower at Corinth; from thence over Pholoe[16] and Erymanthus quite to Taygetus. And now, resolving to strike a bold stroke, as I was already become a high flyer, and perfect in my art, I no longer confined myself to chicken flights, but getting upon Olympus, and taking a little light

[9] Empedocles, of Agrigentum, a Pythagorean; he held that there are two principal powers in nature, amity and discord, and that "Sometimes by friendship, all are knit in one, Sometimes by discord, severed and undone."

[10] Alluding to the doctrine of Pythagoras, according to whom, number is the principle most providential of all heaven and earth, the root of divine beings, of gods and demons, the fountain and root of all things; that which, before all things, exists in the divine mind, from which, and out of which, all things are digested into order, and remain numbered by an indissoluble series. The whole system of the Pythagoreans is at large explained and illustrated by Stanley. See his "Lives of Philosophers."

[11] See our author's "Auction of Lives," where Socrates swears by the dog and the plane-tree. This was called the ὁρκος Ραδαμανθιος or oath of Rhadamanthus, who, as Porphyry informs us, made a law that men should swear, if they needs must swear, by geese, dogs, etc., that they might not, on every occasion, call in the name of the gods. This is a kind of religious reason, the custom was therefore, Porphyry tells us, adopted by the wise and pious Socrates. Lucian, however, who laughs at everything here (as well as the place above quoted), ridicules him for it.

[12] See Homer's "Odyssey" book ix. 302.

[13] One of the fables here alluded to is yet extant amongst those ascribed to Aesop, but that concerning the camel I never met with.

[14] Mountains near Athens.

[15] A mountain between Geranea and Corinth.

[16] A high mountain in Arcadia, to the west of Elis. Erymanthus another, bordering upon Achaia. Taygetus another, reaching northwards, to the foot of the mountains of Arcadia.

provision with me, I made the best of my way directly towards heaven. The extreme height which I soared to brought on a giddiness at first, but this soon went off; and when I got as far the Moon, having left a number of clouds behind me, I found a weariness, particularly in my vulture wing. I halted, therefore, to rest myself a little, and looking down from thence upon the earth, like Homer's Jupiter, beheld the places— "Where the brave Mycians prove their martial force, And hardy Thracians tame the savage horse; Then India, Persia, and all-conquering Greece."[17] which gave me wonderful pleasure and satisfaction.

FRIEND. Let me have an exact account of all your travels, I beseech you, omit not the least particular, but give me your observations upon everything; I expect to hear a great deal about the form and figure of the earth, and how it all appeared to you from such an eminence.

MENIPPUS. And so you shall; ascend, therefore, in imagination with me to the Moon, and consider the situation and appearance of the earth from thence: suppose it to seem, as it did to me, much less than the moon, insomuch, that when I first looked down, I could not find the high mountains, and the great sea; and, if it had not been for the Rhodian Colossus, and the tower of Pharos, should not have known where the earth stood. At length, however, by the reflection of the sunbeams, the ocean appeared, and showed me the land, when, keeping my eyes fixed upon it, I beheld clearly and distinctly everything that was doing upon earth, not only whole nations and cities, but all the inhabitants of them, whether waging war, cultivating their fields, trying causes, or anything else; their women, animals, everything, in short, was before me.

FRIEND. Most improbable, all this, and contradictory; you told me but just before, that the earth was so little by its great distance, that you could scarce find it, and, if it had not been for the Colossus, it would not have appeared at all; and now, on a sudden, like another Lynceus, you can spy out men, trees, animals, nay, I suppose, even a flea's nest, if you chose it.

MENIPPUS. I thank you for putting me in mind of what I had forgot to mention. When I beheld the earth, but could not distinguish the objects upon it, on account of the immense distance, I was horribly vexed at it, and ready to cry, when, on a sudden, Empedocles[18] the philosopher stood behind me, all over ashes, as black as a coal, and dreadfully scorched: when I saw him, I must own I was frightened, and took him for some demon of the moon; but he came up to me, and cried out, "Menippus, don't be afraid, "I am no god, why call'st thou me divine?"[19] I am Empedocles, the naturalist: after I had leaped into the furnace, a vapour from Etna carried me up hither, and here I live in the moon and feed upon dew: I am come to free you from your present distress." "You are very kind," said I, "most noble Empedocles, and when I fly back to Greece, I shall not forget to pay my devotions to you in the tunnel of my chimney every new moon." "Think not," replied he, "that I do this for the

[17] See Homer's 'Iliad' xiii. 4

[18] It is reported of Empedocles, that he went to Etna, where he leaped into the fire, that he might leave behind him an opinion that he was a god, and that it was afterwards discovered by one of his sandals, which the fire cast up again, for his sandals were of brass. See Stanley's "Lives of the Philosophers." The manner of his death is related differently by different authors. This was, however, the generally received fable. Lucian with an equal degree of probability, carries him up to the moon.

[19] See Homer's 'Odyssey', xvi. 187. The speech of Ulysses to his son, on the discovery.

sake of any reward I might expect for it; by Endymion,[20] that is not the case, but I was really grieved to see you so uneasy: and now, how shall we contrive to make you see clear?" "That, by Jove," said I, "I cannot guess, unless you can take off this mist from my eyes, for they are horribly dim at present." "You have brought the remedy along with you." "How so?" "Have you not got an eagle's wing?" "True, but what has that to do with an eye?" "An eagle, you know, is more sharp-sighted than any other creature, and the only one that can look against the sun: your true royal bird is known by never winking at the rays, be they ever so strong." "So I have heard, and I am sorry I did not, before I came up, take out my own eyes and put in the eagle's; thus imperfect, to be sure, I am not royally furnished, but a kind of bastard bird." "You may have one royal eye, for all that, if you please; it is only when you rise up to fly, holding the vulture's wing still, and moving the eagle's only; by which means, you will see clearly with one, though not at all with the other." "That will do, and is sufficient for me; I have often seen smiths, and other artists, look with one eye only, to make their work the truer." This conversation ended, Empedocles vanished into smoke, and I saw no more of him. I acted as he advised me, and no sooner moved my eagle's wing, than a great light came all around me, and I saw everything as clear as possible: looking down to earth, I beheld distinctly cities and men, and everything that passed amongst them; not only what they did openly, but whatever was going on at home, and in their own houses, where they thought to conceal it. I saw Lysimachus betrayed by his son[21]; Antiochus intriguing with his mother-in-law[22]; Alexander the Thessalian slain by his wife; and Attalus poisoned by his son: in another place I saw Arsaces killing his wife, and the eunuch Arbaces drawing his sword upon Arsaces; Spartim, the Mede, dragged by the heels from the banquet by his guards, and knocked on the head with a cup. In the palaces of Scythia and Thrace the same wickedness was going forward; and nothing could I see but murderers, adulterers, conspirators, false swearers, men in perpetual terrors, and betrayed by their dearest friends and acquaintance.

Such was the employment of kings and great men: in private houses there was something more ridiculous; there I saw Hermodorus the Epicurean forswearing himself for a thousand drachmas; Agathocles the Stoic quarrelling with his disciples about the salary for tuition; Clinias the orator stealing a phial out of the temple; not to mention a thousand others, who were undermining walls, litigating in the forum, extorting money, or lending it upon usury; a sight, upon the whole, of wonderful variety.

FRIEND. It must have been very entertaining; let us have it all, I desire.

MENIPPUS. I had much ado to see, to relate it to you is impossible; it was like Homer's shield,[23] on one side were feasting and nuptials, on the other haranguing and decrees; here a sacrifice, and there a burial; the Getae at war, the Scythians travelling in their caravans, the Egyptians tilling their fields, the Phoenicians merchandising, the Cilicians robbing and plundering, the Spartans flogging their children, and the Athenians perpetually quarrelling and going to law with one another. When all this was doing, at the same time, you may

[20] When Empedocles is got into the moon, Lucian makes him swear by Endymion in compliment to his sovereign lady.
[21] Agathocles.
[22] Stratonice.
[23] Of Achilles. See the 18th book of the "Iliad.

conceive what a strange medley this appeared to me; it was just as if a number of dancers, or rather singers, were met together, and every one was ordered to leave the chorus, and sing his own song, each striving to drown the other's voice, by bawling as loud as he could; you may imagine what kind of a concert this would make.

FRIEND. Truly ridiculous and confused, no doubt.

MENIPPUS. And yet such, my friend, are all the poor performers upon earth, and of such is composed the discordant music of human life; the voices not only dissonant and inharmonious, but the forms and habits all differing from each other, moving in various directions, and agreeing in nothing; till at length the great master[24] of the choir drives everyone of them from the stage, and tells him he is no longer wanted there; then all are silent, and no longer disturb each other with their harsh and jarring discord. But in this wide and extensive theatre, full of various shapes and forms, everything was matter of laughter and ridicule. Above all, I could not help smiling at those who quarrel about the boundaries of their little territory, and fancy themselves great because they occupy a Sicyonian[25] field, or possess that part of Marathon which borders on Oenoe, or are masters of a thousand acres in Acharnae; when after all, to me, who looked from above, Greece was but four fingers in breadth, and Attica a very small portion of it indeed. I could not but think how little these rich men had to be proud of; he who was lord of the most extensive country owned a spot that appeared to me about as large as one of Epicurus's atoms. When I looked down upon Peloponnesus, and beheld Cynuria,[26] I reflected with astonishment on the number of Argives and Lacedemonians who fell in one day, fighting for a piece of land no bigger than an Egyptian lentil; and when I saw a man brooding over his gold, and boasting that he had got four cups or eight rings, I laughed most heartily at him: whilst the whole Pangaeus,[27] with all its mines, seemed no larger than a grain of millet.

FRIEND. A fine sight you must have had; but how did the cities and the men look?

MENIPPUS. You have often seen a crowd of ants running to and fro in and out of their city, some turning up a bit of dung, others dragging a bean-shell, or running away with half a grain of wheat. I make no doubt but they have architects, demagogues, senators, musicians, and philosophers amongst them. Men, my friend, are exactly like these: if you approve not of the comparison, recollect, if you please, the ancient Thessalian fables, and you will find that the Myrmidons,[28] a most warlike nation, sprung originally from pismires. When I had

[24] Greek, ὁ χορηγος

[25] Sicyon was a city near Corinth, famous for the richness and felicity of its soil.

[26] The famous Ager Cynurius, a little district of Laconia, on the confines of Argolis; the Argives and Spartans, whom it laid between, agreed to decide the property of it by three hundred men of a side in the field: the battle was bloody and desperate, only one man remaining alive, Othryades, the Lacedxmonian, who immediately, though covered with wounds, raised a trophy, which he inscribed with his own blood, to Jupiter Tropaeus. This victory the Spartans, who from that time had quiet
possession of the field, yearly celebrated with a festival, to commemorate the event.

[27] A mountain of Thrace. Dion Cassius places it near Philippi. It was supposed to have abounded in golden mines in some parts of it.

[28] When Eacus was king of Thessaly, his kingdom was almost depopulated by a dreadful pestilence; he prayed to Jupiter to avert the distemper, and dreamed that he saw an innumerable quantity of ants creep out of an old oak, which were immediately turned into men; when he awoke the dream was fulfilled, and he found his kingdom more populous than ever; from that time the people were called Myrmidons. Such is the fable, which

thus seen and diverted myself with everything, I shook my wings and flew off, "To join the sacred senate of the skies."[29] Scarce had I gone a furlong, when the Moon, in a soft female voice, cried out to me, "Menippus, will you carry something for me to Jupiter, so may your journey be prosperous?" "With all my heart," said I, "if it is nothing very heavy." "Only a message," replied she, "a small petition to him: my patience is absolutely worn out by the philosophers, who are perpetually disputing about me, who I am, of what size, how it happens that I am sometimes round and full, at others cut in half; some say I am inhabited, others that I am only a looking-glass hanging over the sea, and a hundred conjectures of this kind; even my light,[30] they say, is none of my own, but stolen from the Sun; thus endeavouring to set me and my brother together by the ears, not content with abusing him, and calling him a hot stone, and a mass of fire. In the meantime, I am no stranger to what these men, who look so grave and sour all day, are doing o' nights; but I see and say nothing, not thinking it decent to lay open their vile and abominable lives to the public; for when I catch them thieving, or practising any of their nocturnal tricks, I wrap myself up in a cloud, that I may not expose to the world a parcel of old fellows, who, in spite of their long beards, and professions of virtue, are guilty of every vice, and yet they are always railing at and abusing me. I swear by night I have often resolved to move farther off to get out of reach of their busy tongues; and I beg you would tell Jupiter that I cannot possibly stay here any longer, unless he will destroy these naturalists, stop the mouths of the logicians, throw down the Portico, burn the Academy, and make an end of the inhabitants of Peripatus; so may I enjoy at last a little rest, which these fellows are perpetually disturbing." "It shall be done," said I, and away I set out for heaven, where "No tracks of beasts or signs of men are found."[31] In a little time the earth was invisible, and the moon appeared very small; and now, leaving the sun on my right hand, I flew amongst the stars, and on the third day reached my journey's end. At first I intended to fly in just as I was, thinking that, being half an eagle, I should not be discovered, as that bird was an old acquaintance of Jupiter's, but then it occurred to me that I might be found out by my vulture's wing, and laid hold on: deeming it, therefore, most prudent not to run the hazard, I went up, and knocked at the door: Mercury heard me, and asking my name, went off immediately, and carried it to his master; soon after I was let in, and, trembling and quaking with fear, found all the gods sitting together, and seemingly not a little alarmed at my appearance there, expecting probably that they should soon have a number of winged mortals travelling up to them in the same manner: when Jupiter, looking at me with a most severe and Titanic[32] countenance, cried out, "Say who thou art, and whence thy country, name thy parents—"[33] At this I thought I should have died with fear; I stood motionless, and astonished at the awfulness and majesty of his voice; but recovering myself in a short time, I related to him everything from the beginning, how desirous I was of knowing sublime truths, how I went to the philosophers, and hearing them contradict one another, and driven to despair, thought on the scheme of making me wings, with all that had happened in my journey quite up to heaven. I then delivered the message to him from the Moon, at which, softening his

owed its rise merely to the name of Myrmidons, which it was supposed must come from μυρμηξ, an ant. To some such trifling circumstances as these we are indebted for half the fables of antiquity

[29] See Homer's "Iliad," i. 294.

[30] This was the opinion of Anaxagoras and is confirmed by the more accurate observations of modern philosophy.

[31] See Pope's Homer's "Odyssey," X. 113.

[32] Le. Such a countenance as he put on when he slew the rebellious Titans.

[33] See Homer's "Odyssey," I. 170

contracted brow, he smiled at me, and cried, “What were Otus and Ephialtes[34] in comparison of Menippus, who has thus dared to fly up to heaven; but come, we now invite you to supper with us; to-morrow we will attend to your business, and dismiss you.” At these words he rose up and went to that part of heaven where everything from below could be heard most distinctly; for this, it seems, was the time appointed to hear petitions. As we went along, he asked me several questions about earthly matters, such as, “How much corn is there at present in Greece? had you a hard winter last year? and did your cabbages want rain? is any of Phidias’s[35] family alive now? what is the reason that the Athenians have left off sacrificing to me for so many years? do they think of building up the Olympian temple again? are the thieves taken that robbed the Dodonian?” When I had answered all these, “Pray, Menippus,” said he, “what does mankind really think of me?” “How should they think of you,” said I, “but with the utmost veneration, that you are the great sovereign of the gods.” “There you jest,” said he, “I am sure; I know well enough how fond they are of novelty, though you will not own it.' There was a time, indeed, when I was held in some estimation, when I was the great physician, when I was everything, in short— “When streets, and lanes, and all was full of Jove.”[36] Pisa[37] and Dodona[38] were distinguished above every place, and I could not see for the smoke of sacrifices; but, since Apollo has set up his oracle at Delphi, and Aesculapius practises physic at Pergamus; since temples have been erected to Bendis[39] at Thrace, to Anubis in Egypt, and to Diana at Ephesus, everybody runs after them; with them they feast, to them they offer up their hecatombs, and think it honour enough for a worn-out god, as I am, if they sacrifice once in six years at Olympia; whilst my altars are as cold and neglected as Plato’s laws,[40] or the syllogisms of Chrysippus.” With this and such-like chat we passed away the time, till we came to the place where the petitions were to be heard. Here we found several holes, with covers to them, and close to every one was placed a golden chair. Jupiter sat down in the first he came to, and lifting up the lid, listened to the prayers, which, as you may suppose, were of various kinds. I stooped down and heard several of them myself, such as, “O Jupiter, grant me a large empire!” “O Jupiter, may my leeks and onions flourish and increase!” “Grant Jupiter, that my father may die soon!” “Grant I may survive my wife!” “Grant I may not be discovered, whilst I lay wait for my brother!” “Grant that I may get my cause!” “Grant that I may be crowned at Olympia!” One sailor asked for a north wind, another for a south; the husbandman prayed for rain, and the fuller for sunshine. Jupiter heard them all, but did not promise

[34] Otus and Ephialtes were two giants of an enormous size; some of the ancients, who, no doubt, were exact in their measurement, assure us that, at nine years old, they were nine cubits round, and thirty-six high, and grew in proportion, till they thought proper to attack and endeavour to dethrone Jupiter; for which purpose they piled mount Ossa and Pelion upon Olympus, made Mars prisoner, and played several tricks of this kind, till Diana, by artifice, subdued them, contriving, some way or other, to make them shoot their arrows against, and destroy each other, after which Jupiter sent them down to Tartarus. Some attribute to Apollo the honour of conquering them. This story has been explained, and allegorised, and tortured so many different ways, that it is not easy to unravel the foundation of it.

[35] Jupiter thought himself, we may suppose, much obliged to Phidias for the famous statue which he had made of him, and therefore, in return, complaisantly inquires after his family.

[36] From Aratus.

[37] A city of Elis, where there was a temple dedicated to Olympian Jupiter, and public games celebrated every fifth year.

[38] A city of Thessaly, where there was a temple to Jove; this was likewise the seat of the famous oracle.

[39] A goddess worshipped in Thrace. Hesychius says this was only another name for Diana.

[40] Alluding to his Republic, which probably was considered by Lucian and others as a kind of Utopian system.

everybody;— "—some the just request, He heard propitious, and denied the rest."[41] Those prayers which he thought right and proper he let up through the hole, and blew the wicked and foolish ones back, that they might not rise to heaven. One petition, indeed, puzzled him a little; two men asking favours of him directly contrary to each other, at the same time, and promising the same sacrifice; he was at a loss which to oblige; he became immediately a perfect Academic, and like Pyrrho,[42] was held in suspense between them. When he had done with the prayers, he sat down upon the next chair, over another hole, and listened to those who were swearing and making vows. When he had finished this business, and destroyed Hermodorus, the Epicurean, for perjury, he removed to the next seat, and gave audience to the auguries, oracles, and divinations; which having despatched, he proceeded to the hole that brought up the fume of the victims, together with the name of the sacrificer. Then he gave out his orders to the winds and storms: "Let there be rain to-day in Scythia, lightning in Africa, and snow in Greece; do you, Boreas, blow in Lydia, and whilst Notus lies still, let the north wind raise the waves of the Adriatic, and about a thousand measures of hail be sprinkled over Cappadocia." When Jupiter had done all his business we repaired to the feast, for it was now supper-time, and Mercury bade me sit down by Pan, the Corybantes, Attis, and Sabazius, a kind of demi-gods who are admitted as visitors there. Ceres served us with bread, and Bacchus with wine; Hercules handed about the flesh, Venus scattered myrtles, and Neptune brought us fish; not to mention that I got slyly a little nectar and ambrosia, for my friend Ganymede, out of good-nature, if he saw Jove looking another way, would frequently throw me in a cup or two. The greater gods, as Homer tells us[43] (who, I suppose, had seen them as well as myself,) never taste meat or wine, but feed upon ambrosia and get drunk with nectar, at the same time their greatest luxury is, instead of victuals, to suck in the fumes that rise from the victims, and the blood of the sacrifices that are offered up to them. Whilst we were at supper, Apollo played on the harp, Silenus danced a *cordax*[44], and the Muses repeated Hesiod's *Theogony*, and the first Ode of Pindar. When these recreations were over we all retired tolerably well soaked,[45] to bed, "Now pleasing rest had sealed each mortal eye, And even immortal gods in slumber lie, All but myself—"[46] I could not help thinking of a thousand things, and particularly how it came to pass that, during so long a time Apollo[47] should never have got him a beard, and how there came to be night in heaven, though the sun is always present there and feasting with them. I slept a little, and early in the morning Jupiter ordered the crier to summon a council of the gods, and when they were all assembled, thus addressed himself to them. "The stranger who came here yesterday, is the chief cause of my convening you this day. I have long wanted to talk with you concerning the philosophers, and the complaints now sent to us from the Moon make it immediately necessary to take the affair into consideration. There is

[41] See Homer's "Iliad," xvi. 250.

[42] Of Elis, founder of the Sceptic sect, who doubted of everything. He flourished about the hundred and tenth Olympiad.

[43] Ου γαρ σιτον εδουσ' ου πινουσ' αιθοπα οινον

"—-Not the bread of man their life sustains,

Nor wine's inflaming juice supplies their veins."

See Homer's "Iliad," v. 425.

[44] A provocative, licentious, and often obscene mask dance of ancient Greek comedy.

[45] Greek, υποβεβρεγμενοι.

[46] See the beginning of the second book of the "Iliad."

[47] Apollo is always represented as *imberbus*, or without a beard, probably from a notion that Phoebus, or the sun, must be always young.

lately sprung up a race of men, slothful, quarrelsome, vain-glorious, foolish, petulant, gluttonous, proud, abusive, in short what Homer calls, "An idle burthen to the ground."[48] These, dividing themselves into sects, run through all the labyrinths of disputation, calling themselves Stoics, Academics, Epicureans, Peripatetics, and a hundred other names still more ridiculous; then wrapping themselves up in the sacred veil of virtue, they contract their brows and let down their beards, under a specious appearance hiding the most abandoned profligacy; like one of the players on the stage, if you strip him of his fine habits wrought with gold, all that remains behind is a ridiculous spectacle of a little contemptible fellow, hired to appear there for seven drachmas. And yet these men despise everybody, talk absurdly of the gods, and drawing in a number of credulous boys, roar to them in a tragical style about virtue, and enter into disputations that are endless and unprofitable. To their disciples they cry up fortitude and temperance, a contempt of riches and pleasures, and, when alone, indulge in riot and debauchery. The most intolerable of all is, that though they contribute nothing towards the good and welfare of the community, though they are "Unknown alike in council and in field;"[49] yet are they perpetually finding fault with, abusing, and reviling others, and he is counted the greatest amongst them who is most impudent, noisy, and malevolent; if one should say to one of these fellows who speak ill of everybody, 'What service are you of to the commonwealth?' he would reply, if he spoke fairly and honestly, 'To be a sailor or a soldier, or a husbandman, or a mechanic, I think beneath me; but I can make a noise and look dirty, wash myself in cold water, go barefoot all winter, and then, like Momus, find fault with everybody else; if any rich man sups luxuriously, I rail at, and abuse him; but if any of my friends or acquaintance fall sick, and want my assistance, I take no notice of them.' "Such, my brother gods, are the cattle[50] which I complain of; and of all these the Epicureans are the worst, who assert that the gods take no care of human affairs, or look at all into them: it is high time, my brethren, that we should take this matter into consideration, for if once they can persuade the people to believe these things, you must all starve; for who will sacrifice to you, when they can get nothing by it? What the Moon accuses you of, you all heard yesterday from the stranger; consult, therefore, amongst yourselves, and determine what may best promote the happiness of mankind, and our own security." When Jupiter had thus spoken, the assembly rung with repeated cries, of "thunder, and lightning! burn, consume, destroy! down with them into the pit, to Tartarus, and the giants!" Jove, however, once more commanding silence, cried out, "It shall be done as you desire; they and their philosophy shall perish together: but at present, no punishments must be inflicted; for these four months to come, as you all know, it is a solemn feast, and I have declared a truce: next year, in the beginning of the spring, my lightning shall destroy them. "As to Menippus, first cutting off his wings that he may not come here again, let Mercury carry him down to the earth." Saying this, he broke up the assembly, and Mercury taking me up by my right ear, brought me down, and left me yesterday evening in the Ceramicus. And now, my friend, you have heard everything I had to tell you from heaven; I must take my leave, and carry this good news to the philosophers, who are walking in the Poecile.

[48] See Homer's "Iliad," 1. 134.
[49] See Homer's "Iliad," ii. 238.
[50] Greek, θρεμματα, what Virgil calls, *ignavurn pecus*

Session 4: Sophocles *Women of Trachis*

I. *Prologos* (1-92)

[*Scene: Trachis in front of the palace of HERACLES and DEIANEIRA. Enter DEIANEIRA and NURSE.*]

DEIANEIRA. There is an ancient proverb people tell
that none can judge the life of any man
for good or bad until that man is dead;
but I, for my part, though I am still living,
know well that mine is miserable and hard.
Even while I was living with my father
Oeneus in Pleuron I was plagued by fear
of marriage more than any other woman.
My suitor was the river Achelous,
who took three forms to ask me of my father:
a rambling bull once —- then a writhing snake
of gleaming colors — then again a man
with ox-like face: and from his beard's dark shadows
stream upon stream of water tumbled down.
Such was my suitor. As I waited there
I prayed my agony might end in death
before I ever shared my bed with him.
But later on, to my great joy, the glorious
child of Alcmena, son of Zeus, arrived,
and joined in combat with the river god,
and freed me. How they fought I cannot say,
I do not know: for only he who saw
that sight, yet did not tremble, could describe it;
but I sat petrified with terror, lest
my beauty might bring sorrow down upon me.
Then Zeus the warrior-king brought forth good issue —
if it *was* good . . . for though I am the wife
of Heracles I nourish fear on fear
in my concern for him, since each night brings
a sorrow which the next night steals away.
We have had children, yet he only sees them
as migrant farmers see their distant crops:
once when they sow and once again at harvest.
Such was his life that he came home but briefly;
then left again to serve his hard taskmaster.
But now that he is free from all his labors,
now I am seized by greater dread than ever.

For since the time he slew strong Iphitus,
we have been exiled here in Trachis, living
in a strange household; and where Heracles
has gone, no one can say. I only know
the bitter pangs his going left with me.
Surely he has endured some grave misfortune;
for no small time has passed since he departed,
but fifteen months already without tidings.
It *must* be some misfortune — as the tablets
he left with me forewarned. How often I
have prayed to God they would not bring me grief!

NURSE. Queen Deianeira, many times have I
seen you bewailing Heracles' departure
and weeping bitter tears of lamentation.
But now, if it is proper that a slave
should teach free people, I will speak up for you:
since you have such a multitude of children,
why not send one of them to seek your husband?
Hyllus should be the first to go, if he
has any care about his father's welfare.
But here he is, running fast toward the house!
If you believe my words were spoken rightly,
now is the time to try them on your son.

[*Enter HYLLUS*.]

DEIANEIRA. My child, my son, wise sayings sometimes come
even from humble people like this woman.
She is a slave, but what she says rings free.

HYLLUS. What, mother? Tell me, if it may be told.

DEIANEIRA. That, since your father has been gone so long,
it is disgraceful for you not to seek him.
HYLLUS. There is no need, if what I hear is true.

DEIANEIRA. Child, has some rumor told you where he is?

HYLLUS. They say he spent the whole long plowing season
working in bondage for a Lydian woman.

DEIANEIRA. If he has borne this, nothing will surprise me!

HYLLUS. But now, I hear, he has escaped that labor.

DEIANEIRA. Where is he living then . . . or is he dead?

HYLLUS. They say that he is warring -- or soon will –
against Euboea, Eurytus's city.

DEIANEIRA. Are you aware, my child, that he left with me
sure oracles about that very land?

HYLLUS. What are they, mother? I know nothing of them.
DEIANEIRA. Either his days will reach their end, or else,
when he has done this labor, he will live
all his remaining life in peace and calm.
Child, when his fate is hanging in the balance,
will you not help him? Our own safety lies
in his; for if he dies we perish with him.
HYLLUS. I will go, mother; and if I had known
these prophecies I would have left much sooner.
My father's usual fortunes gave no cause
to fear for him or be too deeply troubled;
but now I understand, and I will not
cease till I learn the whole truth in these matters.
DEIANEIRA. Go then, my son! The man who brings good news,
however late, will surely be rewarded.

II. Second episode (531-632)

[DEIANEIRA returns from the palace]

DEIANEIRA. Friends, while our visitor inside the palace
is bidding farewell to the captive maidens,
I have come forth to you in secret, partly
to tell you what I have contrived, but also
to win your sympathy for what I suffer.
I have received this maiden — no, not maiden –
this mistress, as a sailor welcomes freightage:
a burden which my heart finds hard to bear.
For now he will have two of us to clasp
under one blanket; this is the reward
Heracles, whom we call the good and faithful,
has given me for waiting all this time!
I cannot find it in me to be angry,
often as this disease has come upon him;
but then, to live together with her, sharing
my marriage-bed — what woman could endure it?
I see her youthful beauty blooming; mine
is vanishing: his eye will love to pluck
those blossoms, but will turn away from me.
I fear that Heracles will soon be called
my husband, but this younger woman's man.
Yet anger, as I said, is wrong for women
of understanding. Let me tell you, friends,

the solacing release that I have found.
I have long had a present, which a beast
once gave me, hidden in an urn of bronze.
While still a child I took it from the blood
of shaggy-breasted Nessus as he died —
Nessus, a centaur who would carry men
for pay across the deep Evenus river,
using no oars or sails to help convey them.
So, when my father sent me forth to follow
Heracles, as his bride, this monster bore me
upon his back and, when we reached midstream,
touched me with lusting hands: I screamed aloud:
then Zeus's son immediately turned round
and shot a feathered arrow whizzing through
his breast into his lungs. As he lay dying
the beast said, "Daughter of old Oeneus, listen
to me, and you will profit from this voyage,
for I will never carry any other.
Take in your hands the clotted blood around
my wound, in which the monstrous beast of Lerna,
Hydra, once dipped his arrows of black gall;
and this will be a love-charm for the heart
of Heracles, so that he will not ever
love anyone he looks on more than you."
I thought of this just now, my friends, for since
he died I have concealed it in my house;
and I have dipped this tunic in it, as
he said when living. Yes, I have performed it.
Qh, may I never come to know the meaning
of wickedness or women who are wicked;
but if I am able to excel this girl
by using magic charms on Heracles,
the means are ready. Do you think my actions
are rash? For if you do, I will not try them.

CHORUS. If there is any promise of success,
why then, I think that you have counseled wisely.

DEIANEIRA. The only promise is that it seems best —
and yet, I cannot know until I try.

CHORUS. Knowledge must come through action. You will never
be sure unless you put it to the test.

DEIANEIRA. Ah, we will soon know, for I see the herald

leaving the house. He will be going shortly.
Please keep my secret! Even shameful deeds,
when done in darkness, never bring disgrace.

[*LICHAS returns from the palace*]

LICHAS. Tell me what I must do now, child of Oeneus,
for I have been delayed here far too long.

DEIANEIRA. Lichas, while you were speaking with the maidens
inside, I have been making ready for you
a long robe to take back to Heracles —
a gift for him which my own hands have woven.
Give it to him and tell him to allow
no other man to put it on before him.
He must not let the sunlight or the fire
beside the altar or the hearth shine on it,
until he stands forth visible to all,
showing it to the gods while bulls are slaughtered.
This was my vow: that if I ever saw
or heard that he was coming, I would dress him
properly in this robe, and so present
a new man sacrificing in new garments.
Take him the seal stamped on this signet ring
as token — he will quickly recognize it.
Now go. Remember, first of all, the law
that messengers must not exceed their calling;
and then conduct yourself in such a way
that you may win my thanks as well as his.

LICHAS. As I am true to Hermes, god of heralds,
and to my sacred craft, I will not fail
to take this casket to him, as it is,
adding your message to attest your gift.

DEIANEIRA. Then you may leave us now, for you have seen
how matters stand with me here in the palace.

LICHAS. I have, and I shall say that all is well.

DEIANEIRA. You know the greeting that I gave the stranger —
you saw that I have welcomed her in friendship?

LICHAS. Yes; and my heart was deeply struck with pleasure.

DELANEIRA. Then what else can you tell him? For I fear
it is too soon to speak of my desire,
until I know if he desires me also.

[*DEIANEIRA enters the palace. LICHAS leaves*]

III. Third episode (663-820)

[*DEIANEIRA returns from the palace*.]

DEIANEIRA. My friends, I am afraid that I have gone
too far in everything I have just done.

CHORUS. What is it, Deianeira, child of Oeneus?

DEIANEIRA. I am not certain, yet I deeply fear
my hopes of good have brought about great harm.

CHORUS. Does it concern your gift to Heracles?

DEIANEIRA. It does. Oh, never recommend that any
be hasty when his action is uncertain!

CHORUS. Tell me your worries, if they may be told.

DEIANEIRA. So strange a thing has happened, friends,
that if I tell you, you will marvel at my words.
The tuft of white wool from a fleecy sheep
with which I smeared that stately robe just now,
has vanished — not consumed by anything
within the house; no, self-devoured it crumbled
down from the stone it lay on. I will tell you
more fully how this wonder came to pass.
None of the precepts which the savage Centaur
spoke when the bitter arrow pierced his side
did I forget, but held them in my mind
like words indelibly inscribed in bronze.
I did exactly as he told me to,
and kept the ointment in a hidden place
far from the warmth of sunlight or of fire
until the time should come to smear it on.
I did just so. And then, when I was ready,
I spread it secretly inside the palace
with wool which I had plucked from our own sheep,
and folded up the gift, and placed it in
a hollow, sunless casket, as you saw.
But when I went back in, I saw a sight
beyond the power of speech or understanding.
By chance I had thrown the piece of wool with which
I smeared the robe into the blazing heat
where sunlight fell; and as it warmed, it melted
away to nothing, crumbling into earth
exactly like the little particles
of sawdust which we see when trees are leveled.
It lies there still. And from the place it fell

a curdled clot of -bubbling foam seethed up,
like the rich juice squeezed from the purple fruit
of Bacchus' vine, when poured upon the ground.
And so I know not what to think. I see
only that I have done a dreadful deed.
Why — for what reason? — should the beast whose death
I caused have shown me kindness as he died?
It cannot be! No, wishing to destroy
his slayer, he deceived me. I have learned
too late, when learning can avail no longer!
For I alone — unless my mind deceives me –
I, to my grief, will bring about his ruin.
That very arrow, I am certain, wounded
Cheiron, a god; and it destroys whatever
creature it touches. The dark blood which flowed
from Nessus' wound contained that poison. Oh,
how can it not kill Heracles? It must!
And yet I am resolved, if he should fall,
to perish with him in the selfsame onslaught.
One who takes pride in being good by nature
will not endure a life marred by dishonor.

CHORUS. We must shun dreadful deeds; and yet must never
condemn our hopes until those deeds occur.

DEIANEIRA. In plans unwisely made there is no place
for hope, which might lend courage even now.

CHORUS. Men's wrath is softened toward those who have erred
unwittingly; and so it is with you.

DEIANEIRA. One who has known misfortune would not utter
such words, but only one who feels no sorrow.

CHORUS. It would be best if you were silent now
except in speaking to your son; for he
who left to seek his father has returned.

[*Enter HYLLUS*]

HYLLUS. Mother, I wish one of three things would happen:
either that you were dead; or, if you live,
that you were not my mother; or that you
would change the heart you now have for a better!

DEIANEIRA. What have I done, my child, to cause your hatred?

HYLLUS. You need not doubt that on this very day
you have destroyed your husband and my father.

DEIANEIRA. My son, what word is this which you have spoken?

HYLLUS. One which shall be confirmed; for who can render
unborn what has already seen the light?
DEIANEIRA. What are you saying, child? What man has told you
that I am guilty of so foul a deed?
HYLLUS. I saw my father's grievous fall myself,
with my own eyes, not heard it from some other.
DEIANEIRA. Where did you come upon him and stand by him?
HYLLUS. If you must know, then I shall tell you all.
After he plundered Eurytus's city
he carried off the choicest spoils of battle;
and, by a wave-washed headland of Euboea,
Cenaeum, he was dedicating altars
and woodland precincts to his father Zeus
when I, with joyous longing, first beheld him.
He was about to make great sacrifice
when his own herald Lichas came from home
bearing your gift to him, the robe of death.
He put it on as you had told him to,
and held and slaughtered twelve unblemished bulls,
the finest of the spoil; for he had brought
a hundred varied oxen to the altar.
At first — oh wretched man! — he prayed in calm
of mind, rejoicing in his lovely garment;
but when the gory flame began to blaze
up from the offerings on the sappy pine,
sweat covered all his body, and the robe
clung to his sides as if glued by a craftsman
to every joint; and from his very bones
shot up spasmodic, stinging pangs: the poison,
like some detested, bloody snake's, devoured him.
Then he cried out aloud for ill-starred Lichas,
who was in no way guilty of *your* crime,
to ask what treachery made him bring the robe;
but he, unlucky man! knew not, and answered
he had but brought the gift which you had given.
When Heracles heard this a penetrating
convulsive spasm clutched his lungs, and he
seized Lichas where the ankle joins the foot
and dashed him on a rock swept by the sea
so that the white brain seeped among his hairs,
and all his shattered skull was bloodied over.

At this the people raised a mournful cry
that one was maddened and the other slain;
and no one dared to go near Heracles.
For he was dragged to earth and drawn toward heaven
screaming and wailing: all around, the cliffs
and capes of Locris and Euboea thundered.
After his anguished tossing on the ground
and frequent cries of lamentation tired him –
cursing the ill-matched marriage he had made
with you at Oeneus' wedding ceremony,
where he had mated with his life's destruction —
then, through the circling shroud of smoke, he raised
his rolling eyes, and saw me in the crowd
sobbing, and fixed his gaze upon me, crying:
"Oh child, come to me, do not flee my torment
even if you must die along with me.
Take me away and put me in a place
where no one living may set eyes upon me;
or if you shrink from that at least convey me
elsewhere, so that I may not perish here."
We carried out his words and placed him in
our ship, and, with a struggle, brought him here
bellowing in his agony. Soon you
will see him — living, or but lately dead.
These are the plots and deeds against my father
which you stand guilty of. May vengeful Justice
and Furies pay you, if my prayer be sanctioned!
It shall! for you have spurned all sanctity
by killing him who was the best of men
on earth — whose equal you will never see!

[*DEIANEIRA silently turns and enters the palace*]

CHORUS. Why do you leave in silence? You must know
that silence pleads the cause of your accuser.

HYLLUS. Let her depart. And may some fair wind sweep her
far from the place where I must look upon her!
Why should a mother's name bring dignity
to her, whose deeds are nothing like a mother's?
Good riddance to her! May she find such pleasures
as she herself has given to my father.

[*HYLLUS goes into the palace*]

IV. Fourth episode (872-946)

[*Enter NURSE*]

NURSE. My children, great indeed were the misfortunes
the gift to Heracles has brought upon us.

CHORUS. Old Woman, tell us what new thing has happened.

NURSE. Queen Deianeira has departed now
upon her final journey, without stirring.

CHORUS. You do not mean that she has died?

NURSE. I do.

CHORUS. Poor woman, is she dead?

NURSE. Twice I have told you.

[*Commos*]

CHORUS. Oh, poor lost mistress! Tell me now the manner of her death.

NURSE. The deed was cruel.

CHORUS. Come tell me, woman, how she met her fate.

NURSE. She brought her own life to an end.

CHORUS. What passion or what madness
led her to wield the evil blade? How could she plan this death
after the other death which she had caused?

NURSE. With a stroke of the mournful steel.

CHORUS. Ah, foolish woman! did you see it then?

NURSE. I saw it, yes; for I was standing near.

CHORUS. What happened? Come now, speak.

NURSE. By her own hand she wrought the deed.

CHORUS. What are you saying?

NURSE. Only what is true.

CHORUS. This new bride, Iole, has brought to being her first-born child –
a Fury wreaking violence on our house!

NURSE. Too true! If you had been nearby and seen
her death, your pity would be greater still.

CHORUS. And did a woman's hand dare do this deed?

NURSE. Most horribly, as I will tell you now.
After she went, alone, into the palace
and saw her son strewing a hollow litter
outside, with which to go and meet his father,
she hid herself, lest anyone should see her,
and, falling near the altars, moaned aloud
that they were empty now; and wept whenever
she touched the objects she had known so well.
Then, as she roamed at random through the house,
if she but saw one of her own attendants,

she looked at him in misery, and sobbed,
calling upon the fate which now was hers
and on her childless state forever after.
But then she ceased, and suddenly I saw her
rush to the room which Heracles had slept in.
There I concealed myself and watched her actions
in secret, and beheld the woman spreading
coverlets on the couch of Heracles.
When she had finished this, she leapt upon them
and sat there in the middle of the bed,
where, bursting into streams of molten tears,
she called upon her couch and bridal chamber,
crying, “Farewell forever! In the future
you will not hold me as a bride again.”
She spoke no more, but with a vehement motion
she loosed her tunic, where the golden brooch
was fastened, just above her breast; and then
uncovered all her left side and her arm.
I ran away as fast as I had strength
and told her son of what she had contrived;
but by the time we reached her room again
we saw her with a two-edged sword stuck through her,
piercing her side and cleaving to her heart.
Her son screamed when he saw her, for he knew
that he had driven her to this in anger,
learning too late from servants that her deed
was done in ignorance, at the Centaur’s bidding.
And then the wretched boy showed no restraint
in sobbing and lamenting for her death,
caressing her with kisses; he fell down
and lay there by her side, and groaned that he
had falsely charged her with a wicked crime.
He wept that he must be deprived of both
her and his father, orphaned for his life.
Thus have these things occurred. And so, whoever
counts on the morrow or the days beyond,
thinks foolishly. Tomorrow will not come
until the present day is safe behind us.

Session 5: Antiphon *Prosecution Of The Stepmother For Poisoning*

Not only am I still too young to know anything of courts of law, gentlemen; but I am also faced with a terrible dilemma. On the one hand, how can I disregard my father's solemn injunction to bring his murderers to justice? On the other hand, if I obey it, I shall inevitably find myself ranged against the last persons with whom I should quarrel, my half-brothers and their mother. [2] Circumstances for which the defence have only themselves to blame have made it necessary that my charge should be directed against them, and them alone. One would have expected them to seek vengeance for the dead and support the prosecution; but as it is, the opposite is the case; they are themselves my opponents and the murderers, as both I and my indictment[51] state. [3]

Gentlemen, I have one request. If I prove that my opponents' mother murdered our father by malice aforethought, after being caught not merely once, but repeatedly, in the act of seeking his life,[52] then first avenge the outrage against your laws, that heritage from the gods and your forefathers which enables you to sentence the guilty even as they did; and secondly avenge the dead man, and in so doing give me, a lonely orphan, your aid. [4] For you are my kin; those who should have avenged the dead and supported me are his murderers and my opponents. So where is help to be sought, where is a refuge to be found, save with you and with justice? [5]

I am at a loss indeed to understand the feelings which have led my brother to range himself against me. Does he imagine that his duty as a son consists simply in loyalty to his mother? To my mind, it is a far greater sin to neglect the avenging of the dead man; and the more so since he met his doom as the involuntary victim of a plot, whereas she sent him to it by deliberately forming that plot. [6] Further, it is not for my brother to say that he is quite sure his mother did not murder our father for when he had the chance of making sure, by torture, he refused it; he showed readiness only for those modes of inquiry which could yield no certainty. Yet he ought to have been ready to do what I in fact challenged him to do, so that an honest investigation of the facts might have been possible; [7] because then, if the slaves had admitted nothing, he would have confronted me with a vigorous defence based on certainty, and his mother would have been cleared of the present charge. But after refusing to inquire into the facts, how can he possibly be certain of what he refused to find out? [How, then, is it to be expected, gentlemen of the jury, that he should be sure of facts about which he has not learned the truth?] [8]

What reply does he mean to make to me? He was fully aware that once the slaves were examined under torture his mother was doomed; and he thought that her life depended

[51] i.e., the charge as formally registered with the βασιλεύς （cf. Antiph. 6.38, 41 ff.）. The action itself was of course a δίκη φόνου

[52] A natural rhetorical exaggeration. The proof does not in fact occur as promised; but there is no good reason for supposing that the speech is therefore incomplete. In the circumstances outlined in the Introduction such a proof would have been impossible.

upon the avoiding of such an examination, as he and his companions imagined that the truth would in that event be lost to sight. How, then, is he going to remain true to his oath as defendant,[53] if he claims to be in full possession of the facts after refusing to make certain of them by accepting my offer of a perfectly impartial investigation of the matter by torture? [9] In the first place, I was ready to torture the defendants' slaves, who knew that this woman, my opponents' mother, had planned to poison our father on a previous occasion as well, that our father had caught her in the act, and that she had admitted everything— save that it was not to kill him, but to restore his love that she alleged herself to be giving him the potion. [10] Owing, then, to the nature of the slaves' evidence, I proposed to have their story tested under torture after making a written note of my charges against this woman; and I told the defence to conduct the examination themselves in my presence, so that the slaves might not give forced answers to questions put by me. I was satisfied to have the written questions used; and that in itself should afford a presumption in my favour that my search for my father's murderer is honest and impartial. Should the slaves resort to denial or make inconsistent statements, my intention was that the torture should force from them the charges which the facts demanded: for torture will make even those prepared to lie confine their charges to the truth. [11]

I am quite sure, though, that had the defence approached me with an offer of their slaves directly they learned that I intended to proceed against my father's murderer, only to meet with a refusal of the offer, they would have produced that refusal as affording the strongest presumption of their innocence of the murder. As it is, it was I who in the first place volunteered to conduct the examination personally, and in the second told the defence to conduct it themselves in my stead. Surely, then, it is only logical that this corresponding offer and refusal should afford a presumption in my favour that they are guilty of the murder. [12] Had I refused an offer of theirs to hand over their slaves for torture, the refusal would have afforded a presumption in their favour. The presumption, then, should similarly be in my favour, if I was ready to discover the truth of the matter, while they refused to allow me to do so. In fact, it is amazing to me that they should try to persuade you not to find them guilty, after refusing to decide their case for themselves by handing over their slaves for torture. [13]

In the matter of the slaves, then, it is quite clear that the defence were themselves anxious to avoid ascertaining the facts. The knowledge that the crime would prove to lie at their own door made them desirous of leaving it wrapped in silence and uninvestigated. But you will not do this, gentlemen, as I know full well; you will bring it into the light. Enough, though; I will now try to give you a true statement of the facts: and may justice guide me. [14]

[53] A curiously loose expression. The oath taken by both parties in cases of murder was always a διωμοσία, （cf. Antiph. 1.28）, never as here, an ἀντωμοσία

There was an upper room in our house occupied by Philoneos, a highly respected friend of our father's, during his visits to Athens. Now Philoneos had a mistress a whom he proposed to place in a brothel.[54] My brother's mother made friends with her; [15] and on hearing of the wrong intended by Philoneos, she sends for her, informing her on her arrival that she herself was also being wronged by our father. If the other would do as she was told, she said, she herself knew how to restore Philoneos' love for her and our father's for herself. She had discovered the means; the other's task was to carry out her orders. [16] She asked if she was prepared to follow her instructions, and, I imagine, received a ready assent.

Later, Philoneos happened to have a sacrifice to perform to Zeus Ctesius[55] in Peiraeus, while my father was on the point of leaving for Naxos. So Philoneos thought that it would be an excellent idea to make one journey of it by seeing my father as far as Peiraeus, offering the sacrifice, and entertaining his friend. [17] Philoneos' mistress accompanied him to attend the sacrifice. On reaching Peiraeus, Philoneos of course carried out the ceremony. When the sacrifice was over, the woman considered how to administer the draught: should she give it before or after supper? Upon reflection, she decided that it would be better to give it afterwards, thereby carrying out the suggestion of this Clytemnestra here.[56] [18] Now it would take too long for me to furnish or for you to listen to a detailed description of the meal so I shall try to give you as brief an account as I can of the administration of the poison which followed.

After supper was over, the two naturally set about pouring libations and sprinkling some frankincense to secure the favour of heaven, as the one was offering sacrifice to Zeus Ctesius and entertaining the other, and his companion was supping with a friend and on the point of putting out to sea. [19] But Philoneos' mistress, who poured the wine for the libation, while they offered their prayers—prayers never to be answered, gentlemen—poured in the poison with it. Thinking it a happy inspiration, she gave Philoneos the larger draught; she imagined perhaps that if she gave him more, Philoneos would love her the more: for only when the mischief was done did she see that my stepmother had tricked her. She gave our father a smaller draught. [20] So they poured their libation, and, grasping their own slayer, drained their last drink on earth. Philoneos expired instantly; and my father was seized with an illness which resulted in his death twenty days later. In atonement, the subordinate who carried out the deed has been punished as she deserved, although the crime in no sense originated from her: she was broken on the wheel and handed over to the executioner; and the woman from whom it did originate, who was guilty of the design, shall receive her reward also, if you and heaven so will.[57] [21]

[54] Clearly as a slave, as Philoneos has complete control over her, and she was later tortured and summarily executed.
[55] Zeus as a god of the household. Hence the sacrifice takes place at Philoneus' private residence.
[56] For the metaphorical use of the name cf. Andoc. 1.129 τίς ἂν εἴη οὗτος; Οἰδίπους, ἢ Αἴγισθος;
[57] αἰτία must here have the meaning of "ultimately responsible" rather than "guilty." That the παλλακή was to some extent guilty is implicitly acknowledged in the statement that she deserved her punishment.

Now mark the justice of my request as compared with my brother's. I am bidding you avenge once and for all time him who has been wrongfully done to death; but my brother will make no plea for the dead man, although he has a right to your pity, your help, and your vengeance, after having had his life cut short in so godless and so miserable a fashion by those [22] who should have been the last to commit such a deed. No, he will appeal for the murderess; he will make an unlawful, a sinful, an impossible request, to which neither heaven nor you can listen. He will ask you to refrain from punishing a crime which the guilty woman could not bring herself to refrain from committing. But you are not here to champion the murderers: you are here to champion the victims willfully murdered, murdered moreover by those who should have been the last to commit such a deed. Thus it now rests with you to reach a proper verdict; see that you do so. [23]

My brother will appeal to you in the name of his in mother who is alive and who killed her husband with out thought and without scruple; he hopes that if he is successful, she will escape paying the penalty for her crime. I, on the other hand, am appealing to you in the name of my father who is dead, that she may pay it in full; and it is in order that judgement may come upon wrongdoers for their misdeeds that you are yourselves constituted and called judges. [24] I am prosecuting to ensure that she pays for her crime and to avenge our father and your laws wherein you should support me one and all, if what I say is true. My brother, on the contrary, is defending this woman to enable one who has broken the laws to avoid paying for her misdeeds. [25] Yet which is the more just: that a willful murderer should be punished, or that he should not? Which has a better claim to pity, the murdered man or the murderess? To my mind, the murdered man: because in pitying him you would be acting more justly and more righteously in the eyes of gods and men. So now I ask that just as this woman put her husband to death without pity and without mercy, so she may herself be put to death by you and by justice; [26] for she was the willful murderess who compassed his death: he was the victim who involuntarily came to a violent end. I repeat, gentlemen, a violent end; for he was on the point of sailing from this country and was dining under a friend's roof, when she, who had sent the poison, with orders that a draught be given him, murdered our father. What pity, then, what consideration, does a woman who refused to pity her own husband, who killed him impiously and shamefully, deserve from you or anyone else? [27] Involuntary accidents deserve such pity: not deliberately planned crimes and acts of wickedness. Just as this woman put her husband to death without respecting or fearing god, hero, or human being, so she would in her turn reap her justest reward were she herself put to death by you and by justice, without finding consideration, sympathy, or respect. [28]

I am astounded at the shameless spirit shown by my brother. To think that he swore in his mother's defence that he was sure of her innocence! How could anyone be sure of what he did not witness in person? Those who plot the death of their neighbors do not, I believe, form their plans and make their preparations in front of witnessess; they act as secretly as possible and in such a way that not a soul knows; [29] while their victims are aware of

nothing until they are already trapped and see the doom which has descended upon them. Then, if they are able and have time before they die, they summon their friends and relatives, call them to witness, tell them who the murderers are, and charge them to take vengeance for the wrong; [30] just as my father charged me, young as I was, during his last sad illness. Failing this, they make a statement in writing, call their slaves to witness, and reveal their murderers to them. My father told me, and laid his charge upon me, gentlemen, not upon his slaves, young though I still was. [31] I have stated my case; I have championed the dead man and the law. It is upon you that the rest depends; it is for you to weigh the matter and give a just decision. The gods of the world below are themselves, I think, mindful of those who have been wronged.[58]

Aristotle mentions a similar case

But since the voluntary lies in no impulse, there will remain what proceeds from thought. For the involuntary is what is done from necessity or from force, and, thirdly, what is not accompanied by thought. This is plain from facts. For whenever a man has struck or killed a man, or has done something of that sort without having thought about it beforehand, we say that he has acted involuntarily, implying that the voluntariness lies in the having thought about it. For instance, they say that once on a time a woman gave a love-potion to somebody; then the man died from the effects of the love-potion, and the woman was put on her trial before the Areopagus, on her appearance before which she was acquitted, just for the reason that she did not do it with design. For she gave it in love, but missed her mark; wherefore it was not held to be voluntary, because in giving the love-potion she did not give it with the thought of killing. In that case, therefore, the voluntary falls under the head of what is accompanied with thought. [*Magna Moralia* I.16 1188b]

Thucydides on Antiphon

The one who planned the whole affair so as to produce this outcome and the one who gave the most thought to it was Antiphon, a man inferior in ability to none of his Athenian contemporaries, and possessed of a remarkable intellect and power to express in words what he was thinking. He did not willingly come forward before the assembly or in any other public arena, but was suspected by the people on account of his reputation for cleverness. But he was the man who was most able when asked for some advice to help those in disputes both in a law-court and in the assembly. [Thuc. 8.68.1]

[58] i.e., a curse will fall upon the living, unless justice is done to the dead. Cf. Tetral. Gen. Introd. pp. 38-39.

Session 7: Two successful professional women

I. Lais

1. Two poems from the *Greek Anthology*

(a) [Plato]

῾Η σοβαρὸν γελάσασα καθ᾽ ῾Ελλάδος, ἥ ποτ᾽ ἐραστῶν
ἑσμὸν ἐπὶ προθύροις Λαΐς ἔχουσα νέων,
τῇ Παφίῃ τὸ κάτοπτρον· ἐπεὶ τοίη μὲν ὁρᾶσθαι
οὐκ ἐθέλω, οἵη δ᾽ ἦν πάρος οὐ δύναμαι. [*Greek Anthology* VI.1]

(b) Julian Prefect of Egypt

Λαΐς ἀμαλδυνθεῖσα χρόνῳ περικαλλέα μορφήν,
γηραλέων στυγέει μαρτυρίην ῥυτίδων·
ἔνθεν πικρὸν ἔλεγχον ἀπεχθήρασα κατόπτρου,
ἄνθετο δεσποίνῃ τῆς πάρος ἀγλαΐης.
"Ἀλλὰ σύ μοι, Κυθέρεια, δέχου νεότητος ἑταῖρον
δίσκον, ἐπεὶ μορφὴ σὴ χρόνον οὐ τρομέει." [*Greek Anthology* VI.18]

2. Where is the tomb of Lais?

(a) As one goes up to Corinth are tombs, and by the gate is buried Diogenes of Sinope, whom the Greeks surname the Dog. Before the city is a grove of cypresses called Craneum. Here are a precinct of Bellerophontes, a temple of Aphrodite Melaenis and the grave of Lais, upon which is set a lioness holding a ram in her fore-paws. [Pausanias 2.2.4]

Coin of Hadrian showing the tomb of Lais in Corinth

(b) And Timæus, in the thirteenth book of his *History*, says she came from Hyccara, as Polemo has stated, where he says that she was murdered by some women in Thessaly, because she was beloved by a Thessalian of the name of Pausanias; and that she was beaten to death, out of envy and jealousy, by wooden footstools in the temple of Venus; and that from this circumstance that temple is called the temple of the impious Venus; and that her tomb is shown on the banks of the Peneus, having on it an emblem of a stone water-ewer, and this inscription—

> This is the tomb of Lais, to whose beauty,
> Equal to that of heavenly goddesses,
> The glorious and unconquer'd Greece did bow;
> Love was her father, Corinth was her home,
> Now in the rich Thessalian plain she lies;—

so that those men talk nonsense who say that she was buried in Corinth, near the Craneum. [Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 13.55]

3. Lais and the philosophers

(a) Diogenes Laertius *Lives of the Philosophers* 2.8 Aristippus

To one who accused him of living with a courtesan, he put the question, "Why, is there any difference between taking a house in which many people have lived before and taking one in which nobody has ever lived?" The answer being "No," he continued, "Or again, between sailing in a ship in which ten thousand persons have sailed before and in one in which nobody has ever sailed?" "There is no difference." "Then it makes no difference," said he, "whether the woman you live with has lived with many or with nobody." To the accusation that, although he was a pupil of Socrates, he took fees, his rejoinder was, "Most certainly I do, for Socrates, too, when certain people sent him corn and wine, used to take a little and return all the rest; and he had the foremost men in Athens for his stewards, whereas mine is my slave Eutychides." He enjoyed the favours of Laïs, as Sotion states in the second book of his *Successions of Philosophers*. To those who censured him his defence was, "I have Lais, not she me; and it is not abstinence from pleasures that is best, but mastery over them without ever being worsted."

(b) Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 12.63

We find also whole schools of philosophers which have openly professed to have made choice of pleasure. And there is the school called the Cyrenaic, which derives its origin from Aristippus the pupil of Socrates: and he devoted himself to pleasure in such a way, that he said that it was the main end of life; and that happiness was founded on it, and that happiness was at best but short-lived. And he, like the most debauched of men, thought that he had nothing to do either with the recollection of past enjoyments, or with the hope of future ones; but he judged of all good by the present alone, and thought that having enjoyed, and being about to enjoy, did not at all concern him; since the one case had no longer any existence, and the other did not yet exist and was necessarily uncertain: acting in this respect like thoroughly dissolute men, who are content with being prosperous at the present moment. And his life was quite consistent with his theory; for he spent the whole of

it in all kinds of luxury and extravagance, both in perfumes, and dress, and women. Accordingly, he openly kept Lais as his mistress; and he delighted in all the extravagance of Dionysius, although he was often treated insultingly by him.

Accordingly, Hegesander says that once, when he was assigned a very mean place at a banquet by Dionysius, he endured it patiently; and when Dionysius asked him what he thought of his present place, in comparison of his yesterday's seat, he said, “That the one was much the same as the other; for that one,” says he, “is a mean seat to-day, because it is deprived of me; but it was yesterday the most respectable seat in the room, owing to me: and this one to-day has become respectable, because of my presence in it; but yesterday it was an inglorious seat, as I was not present in it.” … And Aristippus sojourned a considerable time in Aegina, indulging in every kind of luxury; on which account Xenophon says in his *Memorabilia*, that Socrates often reproved him, and invented the apologue of Virtue and Pleasure to apply it to him. And Aristippus said, respecting Lais, “I have her, and I am not possessed by her.”

(c) Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 13.55

And Aristippus every year used to spend whole days with her in Aegina, at the festival of Neptune. And once, being reproached by his servant, who said to him—“You give her such large sums of money, but she admits Diogenes the Cynic for nothing;” he answered, “I give Lais a great deal, that I myself may enjoy her, and not that no one else may.” And when Diogenes said, "Since you, O Aristippus, cohabit with a common prostitute, either, therefore, become a Cynic yourself, as I am, or else abandon her;" Aristippus answered him—“Does it appear to you, O Diogenes, an absurd thing to live in a house where other men have lived before you.?” “Not at all,” said he. “Well, then, does it appear to you absurd to sail in a ship in which other men have sailed before you” “By no means,” said he. “Well, then,” replied Aristippus, “it is not a bit more absurd to be in love with a woman with whom many men have been in love already.”

Hans Holbein Lais of Corinth (1526)

4. Lais gets the better of Euripides

Λαίδα λέγουσι τὴν Κορινθίαν ποτὲ
Εὐριπίδην ἰδοῦσαν ἐν κήπῳ τινὶ
πινακίδα καὶ γραφεῖον ἐξηρτημένον
ἔχοντ᾽· ‘ ἀπόκριναι, φησίν, ὦ ποιητά μοι,
τί βουλόμενος ἔγραψας ἐν τραγῳδίᾳ ‘ἔρρ᾽,
αἰσχροποιέ’;’ καταπλαγεὶς δ᾽ Εὐριπίδης
τὴν τόλμαν αὐτῆς ‘σὺ γάρ, ἔφη, τίς εἶ, γύναι;
οὐκ αἰσχροποιός;’ ἡ δὲ γελάσασ᾽ ἀπεκρίθη·
‘τί δ᾽ αἰσχρόν, εἰ μὴ τοῖσι χρωμένοις δοκεῖ;’ [Athenaeus 582d]

The hetaera here asks the poet why he used αἰσχροποιός of Medea in Jason's elaborate denunciation of her (E. *Med*. 1346), although implying an obscene usage. With ἀπόκριναι, Lais invites the poet to deliver his own witticism in this conventional game of ripostes; he responds by turning the tables on the hetaera, but she (literally) has the last laugh.

Lais brilliantly responds with a famous line from his play, *Aeolus* (fr. 19), that probably referred to the incest of Maraceus with his sister Canace and in any case expressed his penchant for moral relativism. We see again the same comic procedure at work: the hetaira uses laughter and witticisms to put a powerful and derisive male interlocutor in his place by using his own inclinations and doctrines against him. … The ability to quote Euripides in the post-Classical era served as the consummate mark of *paideia*. [McClure, 2005, pp. 282-3]

5. From Epicrates' play *Anti-Lais* [Athenaeus 13.26]

But this fair Lais is both drunk and lazy,
And cares for nothing, save what she may eat
And drink all day. And she, as I do think,
Has the same fate the eagles have; for they,
When they are young, down from the mountains stoop,
Ravage the flocks and eat the timid hares,
Bearing their prey aloft with fearful might.
But when they're old, on temple tops they perch,
Hungry and helpless; and the soothsayers
Turn such a sight into a prodigy.
And so might Lais well be thought an omen;
For when she was a maiden, young and fresh,
She was quite savage with her wondrous riches;
And you might easier get access to
The satrap Pharnabazus. But at present,
Now that she's more advanced in years, and age
Has meddled with her body's round proportions,
'Tis easy both to see her and to scorn her.
Now she runs everywhere to get some drink;
She'll take a stater—aye, or a triobolus;
She will admit you, young or old; and is
Become so tame, so utterly subdued,
That she will take the money from your hand.

II. Phryne (c.371-c.315)

1. Phryne on trial

(a) Now Phryne was a native of Thespiæ; and being prosecuted by Euthias on a capital charge, she was acquitted: on which account Euthias was so indignant that he never instituted any prosecution afterwards, as Hermippus tells us. But Hyperides, when pleading Phryne's cause, as he did not succeed at all, but it was plain that the judges were about to condemn her, brought her forth into the middle of the court, and, tearing open her tunic and displaying her naked bosom, employed all the end of his speech, with the highest oratorical art, to excite the pity of her judges by the sight of her beauty, and inspired the judges with a superstitious fear, so that they were so moved by pity as not to be able to stand the idea of condemning to death "a prophetess and priestess of Venus." And when she was acquitted, a decree was drawn up in the following form: "That hereafter no orator should endeavour to excite pity on behalf of any one, and that no man or woman, when impeached, shall have his or her case decided on while present." [Athenaeus 13.59]

(b) He [Hyperides] was much given to venery, insomuch that he turned his son out of doors, to entertain that famous courtesan Myrrhina. In Piraeus he had another, whose name was Aristagora; and at Eleusis, where part of his estate lay, he kept another, one Philte a Theban, whom he ransomed for twenty minas. His usual walk was in the fish-market. [p. 56] It is thought that he was accused of impiety with one Phryne, a courtesan likewise, and so was sought after to be apprehended, as he himself seems to intimate in the beginning of an oration; and it is said, that when sentence was just ready to be passed upon her, he produced her in court, opened her clothes before, and discovered her naked breasts, which were so very white, that for her beauty's sake the judges acquitted her. [Ps.-Plutarch *Lives of the ten orators* 9]

Jean-Leon Gerome *Phryne revealed before the Areopagus* (1861)

2. Phryne and the artists

(a) But Phryne was a really beautiful woman, even in those parts of her person which were not generally seen: on which account it was not easy to see her naked; for she used to wear a tunic which covered her whole person, and she never used the public baths. But on the solemn assembly of the Eleusinian festival, and on the feast of the Posidonia, then she laid aside her garments in the sight of all the assembled Greeks, and having undone her hair, she went to bathe in the sea; and it was from her that Apelles took his picture of the Venus Anadyomene; and Praxiteles the statuary, who was a lover of hers, modelled the Cnidian Venus from her body; and on the pedestal of his statue of Cupid, which is placed below the stage in the theatre, he wrote the following inscription:—

Praxiteles has devoted earnest care
To representing all the love he felt,
Drawing his model from his inmost heart:
I gave myself to Phryne for her wages,
And now I no more charms employ, nor arrows,
Save those of earnest glances at my love.

And he gave Phryne the choice of his statues, whether she chose to take the Cupid, or the Satyrus which is in the street called the Tripods; and she, having chosen the Cupid, consecrated it in the temple at Thespiæ. And the people of her neighbourhood, having had a statue made of Phryne herself, of solid gold, consecrated it in the temple of Delphi, having had it placed on a pillar of Pentelican marble; and the statue was made by Praxiteles. And when Crates the Cynic saw it, he called it "a votive offering of the profligacy of Greece." And this statue stood in the middle between that of Archidamus, king of the Lacedæmonians, and that of Philip the son of Amyntas; and it bore this inscription— "Phryne of Thespiæ, the daughter of Epicles," as we are told by Alcetas, in the second book of his treatise on the *Offerings at Delphi*. [Athenaeus 13.59]

Mural from Pompeii believed to be based on Apelles' *Venus Anadyomene*, brought to Rome by Augustus.

(b) Leading from the prytaneum is a road called Tripods. The place takes its name from the shrines, large enough to hold the tripods which stand upon them, of bronze, but containing very remarkable works of art, including a Satyr, of which Praxiteles is said to have been very proud. Phryne once asked of him the most beautiful of his works, and the story goes that lover-like he agreed to give it, but refused to say which he thought the most beautiful. So a slave of Phryne rushed in saying that a fire had broken out in the studio of Praxiteles, and the greater number of his works were lost, though not all were destroyed.
[2] Praxiteles at once started to rush through the door crying that his labour was all wasted if indeed the flames had caught his Satyr and his Love. But Phryne bade him stay and be of good courage, for he had suffered no grievous loss, but had been trapped into confessing which were the most beautiful of his works. So Phryne chose the statue of Love; [Pausanias *Description of Greece* 1.20]

Angelica Kauffmann - Praxiteles Giving Phryne his Statue of Cupid (1794)

Copies of Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite (from left to right: the Colonna Venus, the Belvedere Venus)

3. Phryne's wealth

(a) But Phryne was exceedingly rich, and she offered to build a wall round Thebes, if the Thebans would inscribe on the wall, "Alexander destroyed this wall, but Phryne the courtesan restored it;" as Callistratus states in his treatise *on Courtesans*. And Timocles the comic poet, in his *Neæra*, has mentioned her riches; and so has Amphis, in his *Curis*. [Athenaeus 13.60]

(b) A gilt statue of Phryne was made by Praxiteles, one of her lovers, but it was Phryne herself who dedicated the statue. [Pausanias 10.15]

4. Phryne's witticisms

> A man named Morichus was courting Phryne,
> The Thespian damsel. And, as she required
> A mina, "'Tis a mighty sum," said Morichus,
> "Did you not yesterday charge a foreigner
> Two little pieces of gold?" "Wait till I want you,"
> Said she, "and I will take the same from you."
> 'Tis said that Nico, who was call'd the Goat,
> Once when a man named Pytho had deserted her,
> And taken up with the great fat Euardis,
> But after a time did send again for her,
> Said to the slave who came to fetch her, "Now
> That Pytho is well sated with his swine,
> Does he desire to return to a goat?"

Phryne, too, was once supping with a man of the same description, and, lifting up the hide of a pig, she said, "Take it, and eat[59] it." And once, when one of her friends sent her some wine, which was very good, but the quantity was small; and when he told her that it was ten years old; "It is very little of its age," said she. And once, when the question was asked at a certain banquet, why it is that crowns are hung up about banqueting-rooms, she said, "Because they delight the mind."[60] And once, when a slave, who had been flogged, was giving himself airs as a young man towards her, and saying that he had been often entangled, she pretended to look vexed; and when he asked her the reason, "I am jealous of you," said she, "because you have been so often smitten."[61] Once a very covetous lover of hers was coaxing her, and saying to her, "You are the Venus of Praxiteles;" "And you," said she, "are the Cupid of Phidias."[62] [Athenaeus 13.45]

[59] Punning on the similarity of κατατράγω, to eat, and τράγος, a goat.
[60] The Greek word is ψυχαγωγοῦσι, which might perhaps also mean to bring coolness, from ψῦχος, coolness.
[61] The young man says πολλαῖς συμπέπλεχθαι (γύναιξι scil.), but Phryne chooses to suppose that he meant to say πολλαῖς πληγαῖς, blows.
[62] This is a pun on the name φειδίας, as if from φείδω, to be stingy.

Two copies of Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos

Translation of two poems from the *Greek Anthology*

(a) [Plato]

I, Lais, whose haughty beauty made mock of Greece, I who once had
a swarm of young lovers at my doors,
dedicate my mirror to Aphrodite, since I wish not to look
on myself as I am, and cannot look on myself as I once was.

(b) Julian Prefect of Egypt

Lais, her loveliness laid low by time, hates whatever witnesses to her wrinkled age. Therefore, detesting the cruel evidence of her mirror, she dedicates it to the queen of her former glory. "Receive, Cytherea, the circle, the companion of youth, since thy beauty dreads not time." (tr. Paton)

Translation of what Lais said to Euripides

They say that Lais the Corinthian once,
When she saw Euripides in a garden,
Holding a tablet and a pen attached to it, said:
"Tell me, my poet,
why did you write in your tragedy
Away shameful doer?'" Whereupon Euripides, amazed
at her audacity, said, "What are you, woman?
Not a shameful doer?" And she, laughing, retorted,
"What is shameful, if it does not seem so to the doer?"

Session 7: Achilles Tatius *Leucippe and Clitophon*

Plot Summary

At the novel's start, the unnamed narrator is approached by a young man called Clitophon who is induced to talk of his adventures. In Clitophon's story, his cousin Leucippe travels to his home in Tyre, at which point he falls in love with her, despite his already being promised in marriage to his half-sister Calligone. He seeks the advice of another cousin (Kleinias), already experienced in love (this latter's young male lover dies shortly after). After a number of attempts to woo her, Clitophon wins Leucippe's love, but his marriage to Calligone is fast approaching. However, the marriage is averted when Kallisthenes, a young man from Byzantium who has heard of Leucippe's beauty, comes to Tyre to kidnap her, but by mistake kidnaps Calligone.

Clitophon attempts to visit Leucippe at night in her room, but her mother is awakened by an ominous dream. Fearing reprisals, Clitophon and Leucippe elope together and leave Tyre on a ship (where they meet another unhappy lover, Menelaos, responsible for his own boyfriend's death). Unfortunately, their ship is wrecked during a storm. They come to Egypt and are captured by Nile delta bandits. Clitophon is rescued, but the bandits sentence Leucippe to be sacrificed. Clitophon witnesses this supposed sacrifice and goes to commit suicide on Leucippe's grave, but it in fact turns out that she is still alive, the sacrifice having been staged by his captured friends using theatrical props.

The Egyptian army soon rescues the group, but the general leading them falls in love with Leucippe. Leucippe is stricken by a state of madness, the effect of a strange love potion given her by another rival, but is saved by an antidote given by the helpful stranger Chaireas. The bandits' camp is destroyed and the lovers and their friends make for Alexandria, but are again betrayed: Chaireas kidnaps Leucippe, taking her away on his boat. As Clitophon pursues them, Chaireas' men apparently chop off her head and throw her overboard.

Clitophon, distraught, returns to Alexandria. Melite, a widowed lady from Ephesus, falls in love with him and convinces him to marry her. Clitophon refuses to consummate the marriage before they arrive in Ephesus. Once there, he discovers Leucippe, who is still alive, another woman having been decapitated in her stead. It turns out that Melite's husband Thersandros is also still alive; he returns home and attempts to both rape Leucippe and frame Clitophon for murder.

Eventually, Clitophon's innocence is proven; Leucippe proves her virginity by entering the magical temple of Artemis; Leucippe's father (Sostratos) comes to Ephesus and reveals that Clitophon's father gives the lovers his blessing. Kallisthenes, Calligone's kidnapper, is also shown to have become a true and honest husband. The lovers can finally marry in Byzantium, Leucippe's town.

1. [7] I had a cousin Clinias, an orphan, young, but two years older than myself. He had been initiated into the cult of Eros, and the object of his desire was a boy. He competed so vigorously for the boy's affection that, when the latter had gazed in admiration at a horse Clinias had bought, he actually gratified him and gave it to him there and then. For this reason, I used to tease him mercilessly for his irresponsibility, in that he wasted his time with love, and that he was enslaved to erotic pleasure. He used to smile at me and shake his head, saying, 'Mark my words, you too will be a slave one day.'

It was straight to him that I went.[63] I greeted him and sat down beside him.

'Clinias,' I said, 'I have given you satisfaction for my teasing: I too have been enslaved.'

At this, he clapped his hands and burst out laughing; then he stood up and kissed my face, which showed all the signs of a lover's sleeplessness.

'You are in love,' he said, 'you truly are in love. Your eyes tell the whole story.'

As soon as he had spoken, Charicles (that was his boyfriend's name) came running up in distress.

'Oh Clinias,' he said, 'I am done for!'

Clinias joined in his wailing, as if he were a mere extension of his boyfriend's soul. With a tremulous voice, he spoke:

'Speak up: your silence will kill me! What is your trouble? Whom must we fight?'

'My father is arranging a marriage for me,' said Charicles, 'and, what is more, a marriage to an ugly girl, which doubles the trouble I must live with. After all, a woman is a wretched thing, even if she be pretty; but if she be cursed with ugliness too, the trouble is doubled. But my father is eager to bond the families because he is eyeing up their money. Oh, woe is me! I am being engaged to her wealth, to be sold into marriage!'

[8] On hearing these words, Clinias now turned pale. He began to beg the lad to refuse the marriage, slandering the entire female species:[64]

'Is your father already giving you up to marriage? What crime have you committed to justify such bondage? Do you not know the words of Zeus:

> I shall give mankind a bane in exchange for fire, wherewith all
> Might rejoice in their hearts, embracing their bane?[65]

[63] It was straight to him that I went: Clitophon visits Clinias as an eroto-didaskalos, a 'teacher of desire'. The phenomenon is familiar in ancient literature (Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*, Ovid in his *Ars amatoria*), including the novels (Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 2. 3-8; 3. I7-I9)

[64] slandering the entire female species: misogynist rants are a frequent feature in ancient literature (see Hesiod, *Theogony* 585-612; Semonides 7; Euripides, *Hippolytus* 616-17; Juvenal, *Satire* 6). The phrase 'female species' evokes Hesiod, *Theogony* 590, and the Hesiodic tone of the entire passage is underlined by the ensuing quotation.

[65] I shall give . . . bane: a quotation from Hesiod, *Works and Days* 57-8. The first woman, Pandora, was created by Zeus in revenge for Prometheus' theft of fire.

‘Such is the pleasure provided by women, which has similar properties to the Sirens:[66] women too kill with the pleasure of their song. You can gauge the scale of the evil from the very trappings of the wedding: the cacophony of the flutes, the crashing of doors, the waving of torches. Anyone who observed such a fracas would say, “The poor, unfortunate groom! It looks to me as if he is being sent off to war!”

‘If you were an uncultured bumpkin, you would not know of the plays about women. But you, you could even lecture others about all the lying fictions with which women have filled the stage: Eriphyle’s necklace, Philomela’s banquet, Sthenoboea’s slander, Aerope’s theft, Procne’s murder.[67] If Agamemnon desires the beauty of Chryseis, he brings a plague down on the Greeks; if Achilles desires the beauty of Briseis, he procures his own suffering; and if Candaules has a beautiful wife,[68] Candaules is murdered by his wife. Why, Helen’s nuptial flame lit another flame, which fell upon Troy; and how many suitors did the nuptials of Penelope, “Penelope the chaste”, destroy? Phaedra killed Hippolytus for love of him, Clytemnestra killed Agamemnon for want of love. O women, you stop at nothing! If they love, they kill; if they do not love, they kill. Handsome Agamemnon was doomed to die, Agamemnon, whose beauty was heavenly, who was “as to his eyes and head like unto Zeus who rejoiceth in thunder”,[69] and it was that head — O Zeus! — that his wife lopped off.

‘These are the accusations that you might level against beautiful women. So far, the misfortune is tolerable, since beauty offers some consolation for the troubles, that is to say a stroke of luck in a streak of misfortunes. But, as you say, if she is not even attractive, the disaster is doubled. How could anyone endure it — and a lad so handsome, at that? I beg you, by the gods, Charicles, do not succumb to slavery yet, do not lose your bloom before your adulthood — for this is another misfortune of marriage to add to the others, that it withers a boy when he is in his prime. Please, Charicles, do not wither yourself just yet! Do not allow a lovely rose to be plucked by an ugly farmer!’

‘Leave it to the gods, and to me’, said Charicles. ‘There are a few days until the date of the marriage, and a lot can happen even in one night. We shall seek a solution at our leisure. In

[66] Sirens: mythical female creatures who lured sailors to land with their song, only to kill them. See Homer, *Odyssey* 12. 39-54; 165-200.

[67] Eriphyle’s necklace . . . murder: a list of famous female deceivers of the tragic stage. Eriphyle betrayed her husband, Amphiaraus, for a necklace; Sthenoboea slandered Bellerophon to her husband Proetus; Aerope stole the golden fleece from her husband. Philomela’s presence in the list is anomalous: after she was raped by Tereus, who also cut her tongue out so that she could not testify against him, she wove the story and sent it to her sister Procne, who exacted horrible revenge (the story is told at 5. 5). The anomaly is explicable: Clinias’ blind rage and misogyny obscure the difference between villains and victims with grievances.

[68] Candaules … wife: more female literary figures, with varying degrees of responsibility for the crimes of which Clinias charges them. Agamemnon’s abduction of Chryseis, the daughter of a priest of Apollo, brought down the plague in vengeance (in the opening section of the *Iliad*: I. 92-102). When he had to return her, he took Achilles’ prize, Briseis; Achilles sulked, and as an indirect result his best friend Patroclus was killed. The story of Candaules, who was smitten with desire for his wife (!), and died as a result, is found in Herodotus (1. I2). Helen’s abduction from Sparta inspired the Greek force to attack Troy; according to the Odyssey, Penelope’s refusal to marry the suitors ended up in a bow contest for her hand, in which her husband Odysseus revealed himself and slaughtered them; Phaedra fell in love with her stepson, Hippolytus, but killed herself for shame and accused him in a note of raping her (see Euripides, *Hippolytus*); Clytemnestra took another lover, Aegisthus, while Agamemnon was at Troy, and murdered her husband on his return (see e.g. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*).

[69] as to . . . in thunder: cited from Homer, *Iliad* 2. 478.

the meantime, I am off for a ride. Since you presented me with that fine horse, I have not yet enjoyed your gift. The exercise will lighten the pain in my soul.'

With these words, he set off on his final journey, destined to ride that horse for the first and last time.

[9] I recounted to Clinias how the plot of my own story had unfurled: the affliction, the viewing, the lodging in our house, the meal, the girl's beauty. As I reached the end, I felt I was making a fool of myself:

'I cannot bear the pain, Clinias', I cried. 'Eros has attacked me in full force, and he harries the very sleep from my eyes. Everything that I see is a vision of Leucippe. No one before has ever suffered such misfortune: the cause of my suffering even shares a house with me!'

'Rubbish', replied Clinias. 'You are a very lucky lover. You do not have to contend with the doors to another's house, nor to arrange for a go-between: Fortune has handed you your beloved in person, picking her up and planting her in your house. After all, for another lover, the mere glimpse of a well-guarded girl suffices, and that lover counts it the greatest blessing even if he manages to get lucky with his eyes; while more blessed lovers are happy if they simply manage a few words. But you see her continually! You listen to her continually! You eat and drink with her! And you complain, with luck like that? You are an ungracious recipient of Eros' gifts. You do not understand the value of the sight of the beloved: it yields more pleasure than the act itself. You see, when two pairs of eyes reflect in each other, they forge images of each other's body, as in a mirror. The effluxion of beauty[70] floods down through the eyes to the soul, and effects a kind of union without contact. It is a bodily union in miniature, a new kind of bodily fusion.

'The act itself, too, will, I predict, be performed before long: continual association with your beloved is the best starting-point on the road to seduction, for the eye serves as the go-between of amorous feelings, and mutual familiarity is the most effective route to gratification. If wild beasts are tamed by familiarity, then woman too will be similarly softened, indeed much more easily. What is more, a lover of the same age has a certain allure for a girl. The natural impulses of that ripe age, coupled with the consciousness of being courted, often generate a reciprocal desire.[71] Every maiden wishes to be beautiful, enjoys being courted, and is grateful to her suitor for testifying to her beauty. If no one has courted her, she cannot yet believe that she is beautiful. So I have but one piece of advice to you: let her believe that she is desired, and she will soon imitate your desire.'

'How might this prophecy be fulfilled?' I asked. 'Tell me how to start out. You have been an initiate for longer than me, and you are already more familiar with the mysteries of Eros. What am I to say? What am I to do? How should I get my girl? I do not know the routes.'

[10] 'In these matters,' replied Clinias, 'you should seek no advice from any other: the god is a self-taught sophist.[72] It is the same as with newly born babies: no one teaches them how

[70] effluxion of beauty: from Plato, *Phaedrus* 2 51b; see also below, 5. 13.
[71] reciprocal desire: another allusion to Plato's *Phaedrus* (255d).
[72] a self-taught sophist: see also 5. 27, 'Eros even teaches eloquence'. The idea of Eros as a teacher comes in Euripides' first Hippolytus (fr. 430 Nauck); he is then called a 'sophist' by Plato (Symposium 203d) and Xenophon (Education of Cyrus 6. 1. 41).

to feed, but they master the art of their own accord, and they know that their food lies in their mother's breasts. Likewise, a young man who is pregnant with his first desire[73] also needs no instruction to give birth to it. Whensoever the birth-pangs strike, and fate's appointed time arrives, you will unerringly discover a means of parturition, though it be your first pregnancy. The god himself will be your midwife. But you should also hear and learn all the general rules, which do not depend on lucky breaks. Take care not to use erotic language to the girl: it is the act that you should aim to achieve, and in silence. Boys and maids are equally shy: even if they are inclined towards the pleasures of Aphrodite, they do not want to hear about what they are undergoing. They think that the shame lies in talking about it. Now mature women, *they* enjoy talking about it, but a maiden is different. She puts up with the border skirmishes of reconnoitring lovers, and tends to acquiesce suddenly with a nod; but if you mount a full-scale assault, and ask her outright to perform the act, you will stun her ears with your voice. She will blush, condemn your words, and consider them an affront. Even if she is willing to promise you gratification, she will be ashamed to do so. You see, the pleasure she derives from your words leads her to think that she is actually experiencing the act, and not simply listening to your attempts.

'If, though, you have more success via the other approach, by breaking her in gently, then maintain for the most part the silence of a mystery-cult. A lover's kiss is a silent command when given to a beloved who is willing to surrender, but a sign of capitulation when she is unpersuaded. And if you obtain some guarantee of action, often, when they come to the act, even if they are still willing, they want it to look as if they have been forced, seeking to deflect the charge of shameful consent by claiming coercion. So do not waver if you see her resisting, but observe how she resists. You will need to have mastered the principles then, too: if she struggles, do not force her (she is unpersuaded as yet); but if she now softens, assume the directorial role, in case you ruin the entire play.'

[11] 'What an excellent start you have given me on my journey, Clinias', I said. 'I pray I get there! But I am still afraid that success might mark the beginning of bigger troubles, spurring me on to greater desires. So what am I to do if my suffering increases? I could not marry her: I am pledged to another girl. My father is pressurizing me into this marriage, and his request is not unreasonable; that I should marry a girl who is not a foreigner, nor ugly - nor indeed is he selling me to raise money, as in Charicles' case. In fact, he is giving me his own daughter, and — O gods! - I thought she was beautiful enough until I saw Leucippe! But as it is, I am blind to her beauty, and have eyes for Leucippe alone. I am on the border between two countries at war: Eros is marshalled against my father. The one is standing, and his weapon is shame; the other lounges, brandishing his torch. How am I to deliver my verdict? Fate and nature are at war. I want to judge in your favour, father, but I have a more dangerous adversary: he is torturing the judge, he stands fully armed in the dock, he wields his torch as he is being tried! If I disobey him, father, his very flames consume me!'

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[73] pregnant with his first desire: this extended metaphor of childbirth recalls Plato's discussion of philosophical gestation at *Symposium* 206b—7a (see also Plato *Theaetetus* 150a—152d; Aristophanes, *Clouds* I37)

[15] After the burial, I immediately set off hurriedly to see the girl, who was in the ornamental garden of our house. The garden was in fact a grove, a substantial affair, a pleasure to the eyes. Around the grove was a wall, which was quite high. Each of the four lengths of wall was overshadowed by a troupe of columns, and within the perimeter, beneath the columns, paraded the trees. Branches abounded, interlocking, one on top of another: leaf caressed leaf, beside frond embracing frond, beside fruit coiling around fruit, so intimate was this kind of mingling of trees. Ivy and smilax grew around some of the trees, the sturdier ones. The smilax hung from the plane trees, thickening them with its tender thatch, while the ivy wound itself around the firs, absorbing the tree with its embraces. The tree formed a stay for the ivy, the ivy a garland for the tree. On either side of the trees, vines, supported by canes, abounded with leaves. The fruit was ripe and sprouting, and dangled through the gaps between the canes like locks of the reed's hair. The ground sparkled in the pale, marbled shade as the leaves on high fluttered in the wind beneath the sun. The flowers, with their intricate hues, displayed in turn their beauty: the earth's purple flower,[74] the narcissus, and the rose. Now the rose and the narcissus have identical calyces, in outline at any rate, like a floral bowl; but the colour of the rose's petals where they part around the calyx of the flower is blood-red, while the lower part is white, whereas the narcissus is like the rose's lower parts all over. The violet has no calyx at all, and its colour is like the effulgence of a calm sea. In the midst of the flowers a fountain was spurting, and a square conduit for its stream had been traced around it by human hand. The water served as a mirror for the flowers, so that the grove seemed to be doubled, part real and part reflection.

There were birds, too. Some were tame, spoilt by human nurture, and were feeding around the grove; others were free of wing, and frolicked around the peaks of the trees, either singing their birdsongs or exalting in the array of their feathers. The singers were cicadas and swallows, and they sang respectively of the love of Eos and the feast of Tereus.[75] The tame birds were the peacock, the swan, and the parrot. The swan was feeding around the water's springs, the parrot was suspended in a cage fixed around a tree, and the peacock trailed his fan among the flowers. The spectacle of the flowers gleamed in rivalry with the plumage of the birds——a garland of feathers.

[16] Now since I was keen to break the girl into the ways of desire, I struck up conversation with Satyrus,[76] taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the bird; for, as it happened, Leucippe was strolling with Clio and had come to a halt in front of the peacock,[77] since, again by chance, at that time the bird had fanned out his glory and staged a show of his feathers.

'The bird's actions, you know,' I said, 'are not without design. He is in love, you see: whenever he wishes to seduce his beloved, he glorifies himself like this. Do you see that hen near the plane tree?' I pointed out the female. 'She is the one to whom he's displaying his

[74] The violet

[75] Eos . . . Tereus: figures from mythology. Eos (Dawn) asked for immortality for her lover Tithonus, but forgot to ask for eternal youth (Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* 2I8-38); later tradition has him turned into a cicada. For the story of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela, see above, note on I. 8; the allusion here is to the subsequent fate of Philomela, who was metamorphosed into a nightingale.

[76] Satyrus: Clitophon's slave, introduced (as Clio, Leucippe's slave, will be) without warning.

[77] peacock: a common subject for description, such as the one which follows, in Imperial literature (Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 12. 2—3; Aelian, *On Animals* 5. 21; Lucian, *The Hall* II).

glory, his feathery meadow. The male's meadow is the more florid, for nature has sown gold on his feathers, and deep purple runs in a circle around an identical circle of gold, forming an eye on the plumage.'

[17] Satyrus grasped the gist of my words, and, to provide me with a pretext for speaking further on the subject, replied:

'Are you really saying that Eros has so much strength that he can actually hurl his brand as far as the bird kingdom?'

'Not only the bird kingdom', I said. 'After all, there is nothing marvellous in that: like them, he has wings. No, he can reach snakes, plants, and (in my opinion) stones! For example, the magnet desires iron: if she only sees him and touches him, she attracts him towards her as though she has an erotic flame inside her. Is this not a kind of kiss between the desirous stone and her beloved, the iron? Wise men tell a story about plants, a story that would be called an allegory if the countryfolk did not tell the story too. They say that there are various instances of plant desiring plant, but this desire particularly afflicts the palm tree. There are, they say, male and female palms. The male lusts after the female, and if the female is uprooted from the patch where the male is planted, the lusting male pines. The countryman understands what is upsetting the plant. He goes up to a point of vantage over the land and looks in the direction in which the palm has bowed (for it inclines towards its beloved). When he has ascertained this, he treats the plant's malady: he takes a shoot from the female palm and grafts it into the heart of the male. Thus he revives the soul of the plant, and life is breathed into its dying body, which recuperates, rejoicing in the embrace of its beloved. It is a botanical marriage.

[18] There is also another kind of marriage, a transmarine marriage of waters.[78] The lover is a river in Elis, the beloved a spring in Sicily. The river flows through the sea as though it were a plain. The sea does not destroy the sweet lover with its salty surge, but parts to make way for his course, and the parting of the sea acts as a channel for the river; in this way it escorts the Alpheus to his bride, Arethusa. Thus it is that whenever the Olympic Festival takes place, and many people cast all sorts of gifts into the eddies of the river, he immediately bears them to his beloved, a river's dowry.

'Yet another mystery of desire arises,[79] this time among snakes, and not just a mutual desire in snakes of the same species, but even between different types of snake. The viper, a terrestrial snake, is stung with desire for the lamprey, also a snake but a marine one (with the form of a snake but the habits of a fish). Now, whenever they wish to unite in marriage, the male goes to the seashore and whistles towards the sea a code for the lamprey: she recognizes the password and emerges from the waves. But she does not come out towards her groom immediately, for she knows that he bears death in his teeth: she climbs up onto a crag and waits for her groom to clean out his mouth. So they both stand looking at each other, the lover on the mainland, the beloved on her island. When the lover has spat out the cause of his bride's fear, and she has seen his death discharged onto the ground, only then

[78] a transmarine marriage of waters: the story of the desire of Alpheus (a river in the Peloponnese, on the Greek mainland) and Arethusa (a spring in Sicily) was well known in ancient times (e.g. Pindar, *Nemean Odes* 1. 1—2; Vergil, *Aeneid* 3. 694-6; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5- 577-641)

[79] Yet another mystery of desire arises: the passion of the viper and the lamprey, another oddity recorded elsewhere (Aelian, *On Animals* 1. 50; 9. 66; Oppian, *The Art of Fishing* 1. 554—78).

does she descend from the rock and emerge onto the mainland to enfold her lover and fear no more his kisses.'

[19] During this exposition, I was eyeing the girl to see how she reacted to hearing about desire. She seemed to be signalling that the experience was not without a certain pleasure. The effulgent beauty of the peacock seemed to me a lesser thing than Leucippe's countenance, for the beauty of her form was vying with the flowers of the meadow: her face gleamed with the complexion of narcissus, the rose bloomed forth from her cheeks, violet was the radiance that shone from her eyes, the clusters of her locks coiled more than ivy. Thus was the brilliant meadow that lay on Leucippe's face.

After a short while, she set off to go, as it was time for her to play the lyre. To me, though, she seemed still present: though departed, she had left behind her image in my eyes. So Satyrus and I congratulated ourselves, I for my storytelling and Satyrus for having provided me with the pretexts.

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5 [3] This is what happened. Chaereas had long ago conceived a secret passion for Leucippe, and this was the reason why he had made the revelation about the drug, both as an opportunity to snare us into his friendship and as a means of rescuing the girl for himself. Realizing that consent would not be forthcoming, he arranged a plot: assembling a band of bandits who shared his trade (he being a man of the sea), he arranged what they had to do; then he invited us to Pharos to share his hospitality, under the pretext of celebrating his birthday.

When we went outside, we encountered a bad omen. A hawk, chasing a swallow, hit Leucippe on the head with its wing. I was disturbed by this, and raised my head to heaven: 'O Zeus,' I said, 'what is this portent you reveal to us? If this bird is truly sent by you, then give us a clearer omen.' Now, on turning around I saw a picture hanging up (for I happened to be standing next to a painter's studio), and the encrypted meaning it conveyed was a similar one. It told of the violent rape of Philomela by Tereus,[80] who cut out her tongue. The picture incorporated the entire narrative of the drama: the robe, Tereus, the banquet. The maid was standing holding the unfolded robe; Philomela stood by her with her finger placed upon the robe, indicating the pictures woven into it. Procne had nodded her understanding of this performance: she was staring fiercely, furious at the picture. The embroidery showed the Thracian Tereus wrestling with Philomela for Aphrodite's prize. The woman's hair was torn, her girdle undone, her dress ripped, her chest half exposed. Her right hand was digging into Tereus' eyes, while her left sought to shut away her breasts with the shreds of her dress. Tereus held Philomela in his grip, pulling her towards him with all his bodily strength into a constricting, skin-to-skin embrace. This was the depiction the artist had woven into the robe. The remainder of the painting represented the women, simultaneously cackling and cowering, showing Tereus the leftovers of the feast in a basket, the head and hands of his son. Tereus was depicted leaping from his couch, waving his sword at the women and

[80] Philomela . . . Tereus: mythological characters; see 5. 5 and n. on 1. 8 for the story. The 'drama' referred to in the following line may (but need not) refer to a specific play, Sophocles' *Tereus* (now lost).

kicking his leg against the table. This was neither standing nor fallen, a pictorial indication that it was about to fall.

[4] Menelaus spoke up:

'I think we should postpone our journey to Pharos: the two signs have been clearly unfavourable, the bird's wing landing on us and the danger implied by the picture. Interpreters of signs say that if we encounter paintings as we set off to do something, we should ponder the myths narrated there, and conclude that the outcome for us will be comparable to the story they tell. This painting is filled with all sorts of negative aspects: illicit desire, shameless adultery, female misfortunes. For this reason, I advise you to postpone the expedition.'

His words seemed reasonable, and I made our excuses to Chaereas for that day. He went away extremely annoyed, promising to revisit us the next day. Now the female species[81] is rather fond of myths, and Leucippe said to me:

'What is the meaning of the myth in the painting? What were those birds? Who is that shameless man?'

I began to tell the story.

'The nightingale, the swallow, and the hoopoe: all three humans, all three birds. The hoopoe is the man; of the two women, Philomela is the swallow and Procne the nightingale. The women came from the city of Athens. The man's name was Tereus, and Procne was his wife. It seems that with barbarians one wife will not satisfy Aphrodite's needs, especially when the opportunity to indulge in rape presents itself Such an opportunity to display his nature was provided to this Thracian by Procne's kindly affection: she sent her husband to collect her sister. He began the outward journey still faithful to Procne, but the homeward one aflame for Philomela. On the way, he made Philomela his second Procne. Out of fear of Philomela's tongue, he gave her as her wedding present the gift of speechlessness, clipping the flower of speech. All to no avail, for artful Philomela invented silent speech:[82] she wove a robe to be her messenger, weaving the plot into the threads. The hand imitated the tongue: she revealed to Procne's eyes what normally meets the ears, using the shuttle to communicate her experience.

'When Procne heard from the robe of the rape, she sought to exact an excessive revenge upon her husband. Their anger was doubled, since there were two women of a single mind: they plotted a feast more ill-starred than their marriages, blending resentment into a recipe for atrocity. The feast was Tereus' son, whose mother Procne had been before her anger: she had no memory of the birth-pangs now. Thus do the pangs of resentment vanquish even the womb: for when wives desire nothing other than to hurt the husband who has brought grief to the marriage-bed, though they themselves suffer no less pain as they inflict it, they weigh up the pain of suffering against the pleasure of inflicting.[83] Tereus' feast was

[81] female species: see n. on I. 8 above.
[82] silent speech: an echo of Simonides, who referred to painting as 'silent poetry' (fr. 4.7b Campbell (Loeb)).
[83] they weigh up . . . inflicting an echo of Euripides' *Medea*, the paradigmatic drama of female revenge. 'JAS0N: You are hurting yourself too, and sharing in this grief. MEDEA: Know it well! But it salves the pain if you laugh no more' (1361—2; see also 569-73)

served up by the Furies:[84] the women brought him the leftovers of his son in a basket, cackling as they cowered. When Tereus saw the leftovers of his son, his meal filled him with sorrow: he realized that he was the father of the feast. When this dawned upon him, he flew into a mad rage, drew his sword, and ran at the women. They were whisked into the air, and Tereus was lifted up with them, metamorphosing into a bird. Even now they preserve[85] the image of their suffering: the nightingale flees, with Tereus in pursuit, retaining his hatred thus even in winged form.'

Cup from Etruria
c. 490-480 BC

At the left, Philomela (string fillet in her hair, and fastener of gold, a chiton doubly banded) advances towards the right while gesticulating, her hands raised, a sword at her side. On the right, Procne, from the front, with head turned to the left (hair waved, locks on her shoulders, same clothes), holds, by heaving him by the shoulders, a nude Itys, facing front (hair short, string fillet).

[84] Furies: personifications of revenge.

[85] preserve: there is an untranslatable etymological pun here. The birds, including Tereus (*Tereus*), 'preserve' (*térousin*) their former states. Tereus is singled out in the following sentence as a 'retainer' of anger.

Session 8: Aristophanes *Birds*

I. Prologos (1 – 193)

SCENE: *The play opens in a desolate stretch of country at some distance from Athens. At the rear of the stage rises a steep, rocky cliff.*

[*PEISTHETAERUS and EUELPIDES enter, followed by XANTHIAS and MANES carrying their baggage. PEISTHETAERUS carries on his wrist a crow*, *EUELPIDES a jackdaw*.]

EUELPIDES [*to his jackdaw*]: What's that? Straight on? Where the tree is?
PEISTHETAERUS [*to his crow*]: Make up your mind, damn you. [*To EUELPIDES*] She's cawing back the way we came, now.
EUELPIDES [*to his jackdaw*]: Up and down, this way, that way, what the dickens are you playing at? We're not getting anywhere.
PEISTHETAERUS: A hundred miles I must have walked by now. This crow of mine's been leading me round in circles.
EUELPIDES What about me, with this ruddy jackdaw? I've just about worn the nails off my toes, trying to go where she says.
PEISTHETAERUS: And where are we now, I should like to know?
EUELPIDES: Could you find your way back to Athens, do you think?
PEISTHETAERUS: I don't think even Execestides could, from here. [*EUELPIDES groans as he tries to keep his footing on the steep, rocky slope*.] All very well for you to groan, try coming up this way!
EUELPIDES: The fact is, we've been swindled. That fellow in the bird market must have seen us coming. Told us these birds would take us straight to Tereus, the king who turned into a hoopoe. One obol for this jackass of a jackdaw, and three for your confounded crow. Talk about rooking! And all they can do is bite. [*To his jackdaw*] Well, what are you gaping at now? Trying to lead me straight into the cliff? There's no way up here.
PEISTHETAERUS: No sign of a path here either. [PEISTHETAERUS' *crow begins to caw excitedly*.]
EUELPIDES: Here, what's she saying: Which way now?
PEISTHETAERUS: She's changed her mind. There's a new note in her caw.
EUELPIDES: Yes, but which way do we go? What does she say? [*The crow goes on cawing*.]
PEISTHETAERUS: She says – Ow! She says she's going to peck my fingers to bits.
EUELPIDES [*to the audience*]: It's a bit hard, isn't it, that when you've got two people who actually want to 'go to the crows', they can't find the way! You see, gentlemen (you do realize, by the way, that strictly speaking you aren't here at all), we've got Acestor's disease! - only in our case it's the other way round. He spends all his time, as an outsider, trying to find a way in; whereas we - respectable citizens, born of the purest Athenian stock, and acting under no compulsion whatever — are clearing out. And why, you may ask, have we taken wing (on foot) from our native city? Well, it isn't that we've anything against the city as such: it's as grand and happy a place as ever a man paid a fine in. But there it is: the

cicadas chirp away in the trees for a month on end, perhaps even two; but the Athenians yammer away in the lawcourts for the whole of their lives. Which is why you see us on the march, with our basket and our brazier and our myrtle, looking for a land without lawsuits, where we can settle down and live in peace. We're trying to find Tereus the Hoopoe: he must do quite a lot of flying around, he may have come across the kind of place we're looking for.
PEISTHETAERUS: Hey!
EUELPIDES: What's up?
PEISTHETAERUS: My crow keeps cawing sort of upwards.
EUELPIDES: Oh, yes - and look, my jackdaw's gawping upwards too: I think she's trying to show me something. Must be some birds around here somewhere. We can soon find out if we make a noise. [*They climb a little way up the cliff, shouting and making as much noise as they can.*]
PEISTHETAERUS: Remember the old nursery rhyme? 'Kick the rock with both your feet, Down come the dicky-birds, tweet tweet tweet.' [*He kicks the rock*.]
EUELPIDES: Why don't you use your head, it'll make more noise.
PEISTHETAERUS: Get a stone and bang the rock with that.
EUELPIDES: All right. [*He picks up a stone and starts banging it on a smooth piece of rock. Without knowing it, he is banging on the door of the HOOPOE's kitchen.*] Boy!
PEISTHETAERUS: Here, what are you thinking of? You can't say 'boy' to a hoopoe!
EUELPIDES: Well, hoopoe then. Hoop ho! Hoop ho! I'll have to knock again. [*He does so*.] Hoop ho! [*A door in the rock suddenly opens and they are confronted by the HOOPOE's servant the FOOTBIRD*. *He wears a bird-mask with an enormous beak. PEISTHETAERUS falls to the ground in terror. The crow and the jackdaw fly away*.]
FOOTBIRD: Who's this? Who's shouting for my master?
PEISTHETAERUS: Heaven preserve us, what an orifice!
FOOTBIRD [*equally terrified*]: Horrors, two bird-catchers!
EUELPIDES: I don't like his looks, and I don't like his tone.
FOOTBIRD [*recovering quickly*]: Clear off!
EUELPIDES: It's all right, w-we're not human b-beings.
FOOTBIRD: What are you, then?
EUELPIDES: To t-tell you the truth, I'm a wee bit –
FOOTBIRD: A weebit? No such bird. You mean a peewit.
EUELPIDES: No, a weebit. A Libyan bird.
FOOTBIRD: Nonsense! [*To PEISTHETAERUS*] And what kind of bird are you? Come on, answer.
PEISTHETAERUS: I'm - a puddle duck. If you don't believe me, look down there.
EUELPIDES: And what kind of creature are you, for goodness' sake?
FOOTBIRD: Oh, I'm a footbird, a gentlebird's gentlebird.
EUELPIDES: I suppose he beat you in a cockfight and took you prisoner.

FOOTBIRD: Well, no, not exactly. When my master was turned into a hoopoe he realized that he'd still need a reliable servant, so he asked for me to be turned into a bird too.
EUELPIDES: I didn't know birds needed servants.
FOOTBIRD: Well, he did: having been a man, he'd got used to the idea, I suppose. So now, if ever he feels like having a couple of sardines for breakfast, off I run with my little jar and fetch some from Phaléron. Or say he wants some soup: we need a pot, and a spoon for stirring. I fetch the spoon.
EUELPIDES: I see, a sort of errand-bird. Well, listen, Mr Errand-bird, I'll tell you what you can do: you can go and call your master.
FOOTBIRD: Quite impossible. He's just sleeping off the effects of his lunch.
EUELPIDES: Why, what did he have?
FOOTBIRD: Oh, the usual: myrtle berries, and a few gnats.
EUELPIDES: Well, go and wake him all the same.
FOOTBIRD [*holding out a claw into which* EUELPIDES *puts a grape*]: He won't like it, but - oh, very well, just to oblige you. [*He retires into the cliffside*.]
PEISTHETAERUS: Blast the bird, I nearly died of flight when he came out.
EUELPIDES: My jackdaw was so scared he flew away.
PEISTHETAERUS: You mean *you* were so scared you let go of him: coward!
EUELPIDES: And *you* were so scared you fell down in a heap, *and* let go of your crow.
PEISTHETAERUS: I never let go of her, what are you talking about?
EUELPIDES: Where is she now, then?
PEISTHETAERUS [*pompously*]: She flew away of her own volition.
EUELPIDES: In other words, you didn't let go, she just flew away. How brave of you. [*The* HOOPOE's *voice is heard*]
HOOPOE: Open the wood, I'm going out. [*The bushes high up on the cliffside roll apart revealing the* HOOPOE 's *luxurious 'nest'*. *The* HOOPOE *himself steps out*.]
EUELPIDES: Great heavens, what kind of a creature is this? Look at those feathers! And that triple crest!
HOOPOE: Who is it wants to see me?
EUELPIDES: Looks as though the gods have had a good go at *him*, I must say.
HOOPOE: Ah, my plumage amuses you, does it? I used to be a man once, you know, that's why it looks a little odd.
EUELPIDES: Oh no, we weren't laughing at *you*.
HOOPOE: What's so funny, then?
EUELPIDES: It's that beak of yours.
HOOPOE: I'd have you know it's copied exactly from the description of me in the *Tragedy of Tereus*, by Sophocles.
EUELPIDES: Oh, so you're Tereus. What are you, a bird or a peacock?
HOOPOE: A bird.
EUELPIDES: Then what's happened to your feathers?'
HOOPOE: They've moulted.

EUELPIDES: Have you been ill, or what?
HOOPOE: No, we birds always lose our feathers in the winter, and then we grow new ones. And now would you mind telling me who you are?
EUELPIDES: Who are we? Oh, we're human.
HOOPOE: What kind? Where are you from?
EUELPIDES: Where the best warships come from.
HOOPOE: Not lawcourt men?
EUELPIDES: No, quite the opposite: we're *anti*-lawcourt men.
HOOPOE: I didn't know such a species existed, where you come from.
EUELPIDES: Oh, in the rural areas you can still find a few specimens, if you look hard enough.
HOOPOE: And what business brings you here?
EUELPIDES: We wanted to consult you.
HOOPOE: What about?
EUELPIDES: Well, you were once a man, just like us. And you used to get into debt, just like us. And you liked to get out of paying, just like us. And then suddenly you got turned into a bird. And you flew over the land, and you circled over the sea, and you got a bird's eye view of everything. But a man's eye view at the same time. And that's why we've come here to see you. Perhaps you can tell us where to find a really comfortable city: warm and welcoming, like a soft, warm, fleecy blanket.
HOOPOE: So you're looking for a city that's greater than Athens?
EUELPIDES: Not greater. Just easier to live in.
HOOPOE: You favour an aristocratic form of government, I take it.
EUELPIDES: Heaven forbid: the very idea gives me the shivers.
HOOPOE: Then I don't understand. What kind of city do you want to live in?
EUELPIDES: A place where the very worst thing that could happen to you would be something like this: early in the morning a neighbour knocks at your door and says [*he puts on a tone of hysterical entreaty*] For God's sake, I implore you, have your bath early today - we're having a feast and you simply must come, and bring the children too, if you don't come I'll never forgive you, I'd do the same for you if you were celebrating, really I would, oh do come, do come.'
HOOPOE: A tragic situation indeed. [*To PEISTHETAERUS*] And what about you?
PEISTHETAERUS: That's exactly the kind of thing I dream of too.
HOOPOE: What kind of thing? Give me an example.
PEISTHETAERUS: Well, a chap comes up to you and he's quite purple in the face with fury, and he's got this very good-looking young son, you see, and he says: 'What's all this I hear about you and my boy? This is a fine way to go on, I must say. You meet him coming away from the gymnasium, clean and gleaming after his bath - and you don't make love to him, you don't speak to him, you don't go near him, you don't even tickle his balls. And you call yourself a friend of mine.'
HOOPOE: My poor fellow, what a taste for calamity you seem to have. But actually I think I do know of a happy place of the kind you describe. It's on the Red Sea.

EUELPIDES: Oh, not by the sea - that wouldn't do at all. The very first morning we'd wake up to find they'd sent the Salaminia after us, with a summons-server on board. Don't you know of anywhere in Greece?
HOOPOE: Why not go and live with the Lepreans, in Elis?
EUELPIDES: No thank you: I've never been there, but I've met Melanthios. One leprous poet's quite enough for me.
HOOPOE: Then there are those other fellows, the Opuntians, in Locris, that's where you should settle.
EUELPIDES: And be labelled 'Opuntios'? Not for a bag of gold! But - I say! What about the life you birds lead here? How do you find it, personally?
HOOPOE: Oh, the time passes pleasantly enough. For one thing, you have to live without a purse.
EUELPIDES: Well, that cuts out a good deal of the seamy side of life, far a start.
HOOPOE: We feed pretty well too, in the gardens: sesame, myrtle-berries, poppy-seed, mint …
EUELPIDES: Spiced wedding cake every day, what?
PEISTHETAERUS [*suddenly*]: My goodness, the possibilities I can see for you birds - and power too, if you'll let yourselves be guided by me.
HOOPOE: Guided by you? In what way?
PEISTHETAERUS: You want my advice? Very well. In the first place give up this habit of flying stupidly around all day; it's getting you a bad name. I mean, where we come from, ask someone like Teleas about one of these flighty types we have, and he'll say 'Oh, the man's an absolute *bird* — restless, shifty, flighty, unreliable, can't stay in one place for two minutes on end.'
HOOPOE: I see what you mean: a fair criticism. But what *should* we do?
PEISTHETAERUS: Stay in one place and found a city.
HOOPOE: What kind of a city could birds found, I ask you.
PEISTHETAERUS: That's a stupid question if ever there was one: look down there!
HOOPOE [*looking down*]: Well?
PEISTHETAERUS: Now look up there.
HOOPOE [*looking up*]: Well?
PEISTHETAERUS: Turn your head, look around you, that way, this way, behind you . . .
HOOPOE [*doing his best*]: All I'm getting out of this is a crick in the neck.
PEISTHETAERUS: And what do you see?
HOOPOE: Only the clouds and the sky.
PEISTHETAERUS: The sky, exactly: the great vault of heaven. Revolving on its axis - to which only the birds have access. Build a wall around it, turn this vast immensity into a vast, immense city, and then - you'll rule over man as you now rule over the insects; and as for the gods, they'll starve to death, like the Melians.
HOOPOE: How?

PEISTHETAERUS: The air lies between the earth and the sky, doesn't it? If we Athenians want to consult the oracle at Delphi, we have to ask the Boeotians to allow us through. Well, in fixture, when men offer sacrifices to the gods, the gods will have to pay duty on them, otherwise you won't grant transit rights for those fragrant meaty odours to pass through space, across foreign territory.

II. 801-1057

[*PEISTHETAERUS and EUELPIDES re-enter, each wearing a large pair of wings*.]

PEISTHETAERUS: Well, that's that, then.

EUELPIDES: My God, you do look funny. I never saw anything so ridiculous.

PEISTHETAERUS: What's so funny about me?

EUELPIDES: Those mighty pinions of yours. You know what you look like with wings on?

PEISTHETAERUS: You look as though someone had started to paint a goose and then run out of paint.

EUELPIDES: Well, you look like a blackbird with a pudding-basin haircut.

PEISTHETAERUS: We'd better drop these comparisons, or we'll be like the eagle in Aeschylus, 'slain by an arrow winged with his own feathers'.

EUELPIDES: What do we do next?

PEISTHETAERUS: First we must give our city a fine, high-sounding name, and then we must offer a sacrifice.

EUELPIDES: That sounds very sensible. Now, what name are we going to give it?

PEISTHETAERUS: How do you like the great Lacedaimonian name of 'Sparta'?

EUELPIDES: Not for my city, thank you. I hate the name so much I wouldn't even use esparto for a mattress. I'd rather sleep on the straps.

PEISTHETAERUS: What shall we call it, then?

EUELPIDES: We want something more ethereal - you know, something to do with skies and clouds and things

EUELPIDES: Yes [*He ponders*.] What about 'Much Cuckoo in the Clouds'?

CHORUS LEADER: Oh, marvellous! That's a fine big name, and no mistake.

EUELPIDES: 'In the clouds'! Where Theagenes keeps all that money he talks about, and Aeschines keeps his - well, everything.

PEISTHETAERUS: The famous battlefield, where the gods beat the giants — at the game of boasting.

EUELPIDES: Oh, what a splendid city it'll be! Who's going to be is guardian deity? For whom do we weave the sacred scarf?

PEISTHETAERUS: What's wrong with Athene?

EUELPIDES: Oh, no. You can't expect a well-run city if you've got a female goddess standing up there in full armour, while Cleisthenes gets on with his knitting.

EUELPIDES: Well, someone's got to guard the citadel.

CHORUS LEADER: We have among us no less a warrior than the Cock. Of Persian birth: the war-god's most illustrious chick.
EUELPIDES: O mighty chick! And just the right god to perch up there on the rock.
PEISTHETAERUS: Now, Euelpides, you'd better get up into the air and give a hand with the wall-building. Collect a barrowload of rubble: take your coat off and get down to mixing the mortar; carry the hods up the ladder, fill off, tell the watchmen what to do, keep the fires covered, rush round ringing a bell, fall asleep on the job - you know, make yourself thoroughly useful. Oh, yes, and send off a couple of messengers - one to tell the gods, and one to tell the men on earth; and then they can report back here to me.
EUELPIDES: And *you* can - get stuffed! Why should I do all the running about?
PEISTHETAERUS: Get along now, go where I tell you: none of those things'll get done if you're not there. [*EUELPIDES climbs a few steps up the cliffside and is wafted away*.] Now, if I'm going to sacrifice to the new gods, I must find a priest to conduct the ceremony. [*To XANTHIAS*] Boy! Take up the basket and the holy water. [*PEISTHETAERUS goes off in search of a priest. XANTHIAS and MANES proceed to the altar with the basket and water-jar*.]
EUELPIDES: Agreed, agreed!

With solemn odes
The gods must be addressed –
You're right about that.
And to ensure their favour
Some kind of sacrifice
Is quite essential.

CHORUS LEADER: Fling wide your beaks

And raise the holy cry;
And Chaeris the piper
Will play the accompaniment.

[*The CHORUS break out into a cacophonous parody of the cries of ecstatic worshippers, while a PIPER masked as a raven provides a painful obbligato. He is still playing when PEISTHETAERUS returns, carrying the sacrificial 'victim' and followed by a PRIEST.]*
PEISTHETAERUS [*to the PIPER*]: Stop that wheezing, for goodness' sake! [*The PIPER retires*.] Well, I've seen some odd things in my life, but a raven playing the oboe just about beats the hand. [*To PRIEST*] Now, sir, do your stuff. Perform the sacrifice to the new gods. [*He hands him the victim*] Very well: where is your basket bearer, is he ready? [*PRIEST and PEISTHETAERUS proceed to the altar and a small procession is firmed, led by XANTHIAS and MANES with the basket and water jar*.]
PRIEST [*as they march round the altar*]: Pray to the birds' equivalent of Hestia, to the Stork who guards your hearth, and to all the Olympian cock gods and hen gods –
PEISTHETAERUS: O Stork who sulkest over Sunium, all hail!
PRIEST: - and to the Pythian and Delian Swan, and Leto the Quail- Mother; Artemis and Bunting –
PEISTHETAERUS: I think she's gone a-hunting.

PRIEST: - and to the Phrygian Finch, and Ostrich the great Mother of gods and men –
PEISTHETAERUS: Ostrich the mother of Cleocritus! [*He imitates the walk of a well-known citizen*.]
PRIEST: - to grant health and safety to the people of Much Cuckoo in the Clouds, and likewise to their faithful allies in Chios.
PEISTHETAERUS: I love the way they always get dragged in.
PRIEST: And to the hero-birds and their descendants: the Purple Coot, the Pelican, the Shag; the Eagle and the Grouse; the Peacock and the Sedge-Warbler; the Tern and the Teal; the Heron and the Gannet; the Blackcap and the Tufted Tit –
PEISTHETAERUS: Whoa there, stop, stop, that's quite enough - what are you doing inviting all these ospreys and vultures? Look at the size of what we're sacrificing - a single kite could carry it oil: Get away, go to the crows, you and your garlands - go on, beat it. I'll do the sacrifice myself. [*He chases the PRIEST away.*]
CHORUS: Once again, oh once again
We must chant a holy strain:
Cancel what we said before,
Call to one god and no more;
As you see, our sacrifice
For more than one will not suffice –
It's nothing but the beard and horns.
PEISTHETAERUS [*raising the sacrificial knife*]: As we sacrifice this victim, let us pray to the feathered gods-oh dear, who's this? [*Enter a ragged POET, shivering with cold*.]
POET: Come, come, my Muse, and we will s-sing
A merry, merry roundelay
For M-much-Cuckoo-in-the Clouds,
The happy town that's born today!
PEISTHETAERUS: What's all this in aid of? Who on earth are you?
POET: A fount of honeyed words, of sweetest song; a bard; a nimble servant of the Muse, as Homer puts it.
PEISTHETAERUS: A servant, with hair that long?
POET: No, no, you misapprehend me: we poets are all nimble servants of the Muse, as Homer puts it.
PEISTHETAERUS: Did Homer put those holes in your shirt, as well?
POET: I've composed dozens of poems in honour of your noble city, Much Cuckoo in the Clouds: dithyrambs, of the finest quality, any number of them; songs for female voices, lyrics in the style of Simonides –
PEISTHETAERUS: When did you write all these? How long ago did you start?
POET: Oh, for as long as l can remember I've been praising your city in my poems.
PEISTHETAERUS: Well, that's a very odd thing, because I'm only just carrying out the naming ceremony at this moment.
POET: Did not the Muses whisper in my ear,

Wafting their message on the crystal breeze,
Swift as the glancing flash of horses' feet?
And now, O noble founder of this state,
Whose name (I quote from Pindar) calls to mind
The holy fire that on the altar burns,
What contribution would you care to make?

PEISTHETAERUS: We'll never get rid of the blighter at this rate, unless we give him something. [*To XANTHIAS*] Hey, you've got a jerkin on over your tunic: off with it, and give it to the learned Poet. [*XANTHIAS reluctantly obeys*.] There you are, you can have the jerkin. Not that it'll do much for that frigid poetry of yours. Brrr! [*He shivers*.]

POET: Far from unpleased is the Muse,
And graciously she doth accept thy gift;
But let me quote from Pindar once again -

PEISTHETAERUS: Some people just can't see when they're not wanted.

POET: Wand'ring with the nomads
How shall Straton fare
If he hath no woven garment
Next his skin to wear?
Of thy bounty, gracious sovereign,
I will gladly sing;
But a jerkin with no tunic –
Is that quite the thing?
You perceive the allusion?

PEISTHETAERUS: I perceive that you want the tunic as well. [*To XANTHIAS*] Come on, we can't deny a poet. [*XANTHIAS, with a sigh, removes his tunic and hands it to the POET*] There, take it and go.

POET: I go; and as I speed homewards l will compose something. How about this?
Lord, on thy golden throne,
Sing of the shimmering, shivering
Tremulous city - ah, I have visited
The fruitful snowfields,
Alalae! [*PEISTHETAERUS makes a threatening gesture, and the roar leaves hastily*.]

PEISTHETAERUS: There he goes again, shivering in the snowfields, even in that nice warm tunic. Well, that was a nuisance I hadn't bargained for: however did he find out about the city so quickly? — Right, pick up the jar and let's get on with the ceremony. [*Before they can resume their positions at the altar, the ORACLE MAN enters, carrying a tray of scrolls*.]

ORACLE MAN: PsstI Don't start the sacrifice yet!

PEISTHETAERUS: Who are you?

ORACLE MAN: Who am I? The oracle man.

PEISTHETAERUS: Well, get to hell out of here.

ORACLE MAN: Here, here, this won't never do. Scoffing at things divine? Look at this now - I've got an oracle here, guaranteed genuine, it's by Bakis himself. All about this here city of Much Cuckoo in the Clouds. Couldn't be plainer.
PEISTHETAERUS: Then why didn't you come out with it before I founded the city?
ORACLE MAN: Oh, come, sir - I couldn't do that, sir, not with my respect for religion I couldn't.
PEISTHETAERUS: Well, let's hear it - I'm dying to know what it says.
ORACLE MAN [reading]: 'But when the wolf and the grey crow do build their home together in the region that lieth between Corinth and Sicyon -'
PEISTHETAERUS: Corinth? What's all this got to do with me?
ORACLE MAN: Sssh! It's an oracle, don't you see? Bakis means the air. [*Reading*] '- in that day shalt thou sacrifice a white ram to Pandora; and upon him that first bringeth dice my words, thou shalt bestow a cloak without spot or blemish, and with new sandals shall he be shod -'
PEISTHETAERUS: Sandals too? Does it really say all that?
ORACLE MAN: Take the book and see for yourself. [*Reading*] 'And a bowl of wine shall be given unto him, and of the cooked meats of the sacrifice, yea, even so much as his hands can hold.'
PEISTHETAERUS: Is that bit in it too? About the cooked meat?
ORACLE MAN: Take the book and see for yourself. [*Reading*] 'And if thou doest these things according to my command, thou shalt he as an eagle that soareth in the clouds; but if thou doest them not, and givest not the gifts, verily thou shalt not be as an eagle, nay, nor a turtledove, nor so much as a lesser spotted Woodpecker.'
PEISTHETAERUS: Hold on! Does it really say all that?
ORACLE MAN: Take the book and see for yourself.
PEISTHETAERUS [*surreptitiously taking a heavy scroll from the tray*]: Funny, your oracle isn't a bit like the one I got from the temple of Apollo: I wrote it down – listen! [*Unrolling the scroll and pretending to read from it*] "But when an impudent scoundrel cometh uninvited and maketh himself a bloody nuisance to them that do carry out the sacrifice, and asketh for a share of the cooked meats, then shalt thou sock him hard between the ribs."
ORACLE MAN: It doesn't say that.
PEISTHETAERUS: Take the book and see for yourself [*He bangs him on the head with the scroll*.] And get out! Go and soothsay somewhere else.
[*The ORACLE MAN flees, scattering his stock, which PEISTHETAERUS flings after him. Meanwhile METON enters from the other side*.]
METON: I have come among you -
PEISTHETAERUS: Oh, no, not another! [*Imitating an actor in tragedy*] How purposed, sir, / Do you thus visit us on buskin'd foot? / What grave intention, what inspir'd design / Counsel: your journey? What's the big idea?
METON: I propose to survey the air for you: it will have to be marked out in acres.
PEISTHETAERUS: Good lord, who do you think you are?

METON: Who am I? Why, Meton. *The* Meton. Famous throughout the Hellenic world - you must have heard of my hydraulic clock at Colonus?
PEISTHETAERUS: [*eyeing METON's instruments*]: And what are those for?
METON: Ah, these are my special rods for measuring the air. You see, the air is shaped, how shall l put it? – like a sort of extinguisher; so all l have to do is to attach this flexible rod at the upper extremity, take the compasses, insert the point here, and - you see what l mean?
PEISTHETAERUS: No.
METON: Well, I now apply the straight rod - so - thus squaring the circle; and there you are. In the centre you have your market place: straight streets leading into it, from here, from here, from here. Very much the same principle, really, as the rays of a star: the star itself is circular, hut it sends out straight rays in every direction.
PEISTHETAERUS : Brilliant – the man's a genius. But - Meton!
METON: Yes?
PEISTHETAERUS: Speaking as a friend [he lowers his voice] I think you'd he wise to slip away now.
METON: Why, what's the danger?
PEISTHETAERUS: The people here are like the Lacedaemonians, they don't like strangers. And feeling's running rather high just at the moment.
METON: Party differences?
PEISTHETAERUS: Oh no, far from it: they're quite unanimous.
METON: What's happening, then?
PEISTHETAERUS: There's to be a purge of pretentious humbugs: they're all going to get beaten up. You know what I mean: like this. [*He begins to demonstrate.*]
METON: Perhaps I'd better be going.
PEISTHETAERUS: I'm not sure you're going to get away in time. [*His blows get progressively harder: meanwhile the CHORUS advances menacingly*.] Something tells me that someone's going to get beaten up quite soon! [*METON hastily gathers up his instruments and makes for the exit, pursued by the CHORUS*.] I warned you! Go and measure how far it is to somewhere else.

III. 1494 -1694

[*Enter PROMETHEUS, enveloped from head to foot in a blanket and carrying an umbrella*.]
PROMETHEUS: Phew! I hope to goodness Zeus won't spot me. Where's Peisthetaerus?
PEISTHETAERUS: Hallo, what have we here? Who's this muffled figure, I wonder?
PROMETHEUS [*indistinctly, through the blanket*]: There isn't a god following me, is there?
PEISTHETAERUS: Not that I can see. Why? Who are you?
PROMETHEUS [*unable to hear a word*.] What time of day is it?
PEISTHETAERUS: What time of day? Early afternoon. But who are you?
PROMETHEUS: How dark is it, then?
PEISTHETAERUS [*to test his deafness*]: You disgust me!
PROMETHEUS: And what's the weather like? Is old Zeus piling up clouds or scattering them?

PEISTHETAERUS [*shouting*]: You stink!
PROMETHEUS: Oh, good. Well, in that case perhaps I can unwrap. [*He uncovers his face*.]
PEISTHETAERUS: Prometheus, my dear fellow!
PROMETHEUS: Ssh! Keep your voice down!
PEISTHETAERUS: Why, whatever's the matter.
PROMETHEUS: Quiet! And whatever you do, don't shout my name all over the place. If Zeus sees me here, I'm done for. Here, you hold up this umbrella so the gods can't see me, and then I can tell you all about what's going on up there.
PEISTHETAERUS [*taking the umbrella and holding it over PROMETHEUS and himself*]: That's a brilliant idea. Truly Promethean. Come along under, then, and tell me all.
PROMETHEUS: Well now, listen.
PEISTHETAERUS: I'm all ears.
PROMETHEUS: Zeus is finished.
PEISTHETAERUS: Oh? Since when?
PROMETHEUS: Ever since you people started your aerial colony. The earth-dwellers have stopped sacrificing to the gods not so much as a whiff of burnt mutton fat has reached our nostrils from that day to this. We're having to fast, like the women on Thesmophoria Day. And the barbarian gods upstairs are squawking like Illyrians - they're absolutely ravenous, and they're threatening to come down and attack Zeus if he doesn't get the trade routes opened up again: they're getting really worried about their shredded offal imports.
PEISTHETAERUS: D'you mean to say there's another lot of gods living up above you - are there really such things as barbarian gods?
PROMETHEUS: Of course there are. Even Execestides has to have a patron god somewhere, hasn't he?
PEISTHETAERUS: And what are they called, these barbarian gods?
PROMETHEUS: Triballians.
PEISTHETAERUS: Can't make a pun on that - too bally difficult.
PROMETHEUS: One thing I can tell you for certain: there's a delegation on its way here, from Zeus and these Triballians, to talk about a peace settlement. But don't you agree to anything, except on two conditions: A, Zeus must hand the sceptre back to the birds, and B, you must be granted the hand of Sovereignty in marriage.
PEISTHETAERUS: Sovereignty? Who's she?
PROMETHEUS: She's the very beautiful girl who looks after Zeus' thunderbolts for him. She also holds the key of the Gifts to Mankind department, where Zeus keeps all the blessings of civilization: good government, wise policies, law and order, dockyards, endless slanging matches, public assistance officers and the half-drachma they pay out for a day's jury service.
PEISTHETAERUS: She seems to control everything.
PROMETHEUS: You name it, she can give it to you. Get her from Zeus, and you've got the lot. I came here specially to tip you off - I always have been a friend of Man, as you know.
PEISTHETAERUS: You certainly have. If it hadn't been for you there'd have been no sardines.

PROMETHEUS: And I hate that other lot, up there.
PEISTHETAERUS: Yes, you always have been at odds with the gods.
PROMETHEUS: When it comes to a chip on the shoulder, Timon isn't in it. Well, I'd better be running along. Hand me the umbrella, and then if Zeus looks down and sees me he'll think I'm part of the Panathenaic procession.
PEISTHETAERUS: Carry this stool as well, and he'll take you for one of the attendant virgins.
[*Exit PROMETHEUS*. *PEISTHETAERUS and his slaves fetch a brazier from the kitchen and begin to make preparations for a meal*.]
CHORUS: The Skiapods, or Ombripeds
Are most engaging fellers:
They hold their feet above their heads
And use them as umbrellas.
They live beside a stagnant lake,
Where Socrates - just fancy! –
Instructs his half-starved pupils in
The art of necromancy.
Peisander saw him work the trick
And said 'Oh, please repeat it!
I lost my spirit long ago;
I'd dearly love to meet it.'
'Then slay,' the unwashed sage replied,
'A lamb - but no, a lamb'll
Be much too small a sacrifice;
You'd better slay a camel.'
And now, to suck the victim's blood,
What grisly spectre rises?
'Tis Chaerephon, the human bat!
You do get some surprises!
[*POSEIDON, HERACLES and the GOD of the TRIBALLIANS enter, with attendants carrying their baggage and their ceremonial togas*.]
POSEIDON: Ah! I see we have arrived at our destination, gentlemen: the city of Much Cuckoo lies before us, and the delegation can proceed to business. [*The attendants hand them their togas, which they put on. The TRIBALLIAN, unfamiliar with the garment, does his best to copy the movements of the other two. They move forward and are about to approach PEISTHETAERUS, when POSEIDON, glancing at the TRIBALLIAN, exclaims in horror*.] Good heavens man, what are you thinking of? Do you realize you're improperly dressed? Dammit sir, you might at least wear it over the right shoulder. Who do you think you are, Laespodias or somebody? [*The TRIBALLIAN transfers the tail of his toga to his left shoulder, and then, in perplexity, back to the right*.] That's not the right shoulder, idiot, it's the wrong shoulder. The right shoulder is the left shoulder - here, let me do it for you. So much for democracy - where's it going to if this is the kind of fellow the gods elect? STAND STILL,

CAN'T YOU? Be damned to you. [*He gives it up*.] I've met some barbarian gods in my time, but nothing quite as barbarous as this. Well, Heracles, how do we go about things?
HERACLES: I've told you my views already. Just let me get at this fellow who's walled off the gods, whoever he is, and I'll strangle him for you.
POSEIDON: My dear Heracles, we've been sent here to initiate peace talks.
HERACLES: All the more reason to strangle him, I say.
PEISTHETAERUS: Pass me the cheese-grater, somebody. And the silphium. And the cheese, please. Fan up the fire a bit, will you?
POSEIDON: H'm! [*PEISTHETAERUS does not look up*.] H'm! H'm! [*PEISTHETAERUS begins to grate cheese and silphium over the birds.*] Hail, mortal! On behalf of my two divine colleagues and myself, I -
PEISTHETAERUS: Hold on a minute, I'm grating silphium.
HERACLES: Hullo, hullo, what's this you're roasting?
PEISTHETAERUS [*still without looking up*]: Conservatives. Just a few birds that have been found guilty of opposing the Democratic Party.
HERACLES: I notice you grate the silphium over them before putting them on the spit.
PEISTHETAERUS [*looking up at last*]: Why, Heracles, I do declare! Welcome, welcome! What brings you here?
POSEIDON: We have been sent as a delegation by the gods to discuss terms for ending the war.
XANTHIAS: There's no olive oil left in the bottle.
HERACLES: Oh, that's a pity. I always say poultry should be served absolutely glistening with oil.
POSEIDON: After all, we gods have nothing to gain by being at war; and, from your point of view, well, with the gods on your side you birds could be assured of well, er, a constant supply of rain-water in the puddles and, well, er, permanent halcyon days, what? We are fully authorized, I may say, to negotiate with you over all that kind of thing.
PEISTHETAERUS: We never started this war: we're quite ready to agree to an armistice here and now – so long as you're prepared to grant us our rights. In other words, Zeus must hand back the sceptre to the birds. If that is agreed [*he glances at HERACLES*] I shall be happy to invite the delegation to lunch.
HERACLES: Sounds fair enough. I vote we accept their terms.
POSEIDON: What, you gluttonous nincompoop? Are you going to deprive your father of his sovereignty?
PEISTHETAERUS: 0n the contrary, don't you see that the gods will be even more powerful, if the birds are in charge down below? As things are now, men can easily swear false oaths by you and get away with it. You never even notice; all they've got to do is wait till a cloud comes along. Whereas if you have the birds as your allies, and a man has to swear, not just 'by Zeus', but 'by the Raven and by Zeus' – then if he breaks his oath, at least the raven can do something about it: he can fly down quietly and peck the fellow's eyes out.
POSEIDON: By Poseidon, you've got a point there!

HERACLES: I couldn't agree more.
POSEIDON [*turning to the TRIBALLIAN*]: What's your opinion, sir?
TRIBALLIAN: Nabaisatreu.
PEISTHETAERUS: Well, there you are, you see: he thinks so too. Incidentally I'll tell you another useful thing we can do for you. Suppose a man vows an offering to one of you gods, and then, when the time comes - well, you know how it is, one excuse or another: 'the gods are patient', he'll say, to quiet his conscience - the miserly rascal. We'll make him pay up.
POSEIDON: How can you do that?
PEISTHETAERUS: When he's counting out his money, or lying in his bath, a kite can swoop down, snatch up the price of a couple of sheep, and bring it back to the god concerned.
HERACLES: I vote in favour of giving the sceptre back to the birds.
POSEIDON: I'd better ask the Triballian what he thinks.
HERACLES: Hey, you! Wake up there! Do you want a bashing?
TRIBALLIAN: Samaka baktarikrousa.
HERACLES: There you are! He says I'm absolutely right.
POSEIDON: Well, if you're both in favour of the proposal, I won't oppose it.
HERACLES [*to PEISTHETAERUS, who is still busy with his cooking*]: Hi! About that sceptre - we accept your terms.
PEISTHETAERUS: Oh, there's just one other thing, I nearly forgot. Zeus can keep Hera, but the girl, Sovereignty, must obviously become my wife, so he'll have to hand her over, I'm afraid.
POSEIDON: You obviously don't *want* a peace treaty; [*to his colleagues*] come on, let's get back home.
PEISTHETAERUS: Go, by all means, if you want to. Now, cook, mind you make the sauce really tasty.
HERACLES: Here, I say, Poseidon, where are you off to? Good god, man – I mean good man, god - we're not going to fight a war over a woman, are we?
POSEIDON: What else can we do?
HERACLES: What can we do? We can make peace.
POSEIDON: You poor fool, can't you see you're being swindled? You're acting against your own interests. if Zeus were to die, after handing over Sovereignty to these birds, you'd be reduced to penury. Don't you realize you inherit all his property when he dies?
PEISTHETAERUS: Don't listen to him, he's trying to confuse you. Come over here a minute and I'll tell you something. Your uncle's deceiving you. As the law stands, you won't get a penny out of your father's estate: you don't count as a pure-bred god.
HERACLES: Are you calling me a mongrel?
PEISTHETAERUS: Your mother was an alien, in other words a mortal. Do you think Athene would be addressed as 'Heiress of Zeus', if she had legitimate brothers?
HERACLES: Ah, but suppose my father leaves me the property in his will?
PEISTHETAERUS: He can't, it's against the law. And you can be quite sure that if you laid any claim to your father's estate, Poseidon would dispute it. What he's telling you now is just to

stir up your feelings. When the time comes he'll be the first to point out his racial purity. Solon's law makes it quite clear: 'Where there are pure-bred offspring, the children of alien wives have no right of inheritance; if there are no pure-bred offspring, the property is to be shared between the nearest relatives.'
HERACLES: Do you mean to say that I don't get anything at all?
PEISTHETAERUS: Not a penny. Did your father ever take you along to the phratry and have you enrolled?
HERACLES: No, he never did. I've always thought that was a bit odd. Why, the old - ! [*He shakes his fist heavenwards*.]
PEISTHETAERUS: No use scowling and shaking your fist at Heaven. But listen, if you come over to us I'll make a prince of you. You'll feed on peacock's milk.
HERACLES: Well now, as far as that girl is concerned - well, there again I think what you say is absolutely right. I'm in favour of handing her over.
PEISTHETAERUS [*to POSEIDON*]: And what do you say?
POSEIDON: I vote against it.
PEISTHETAERUS: Then the decision tests with the Triballian here. [*To TRIBALLIAN*] Well?
TRIBALLIAN [*with a tremendous effort to speak Greek*]: Plitty girly - Sowollinty - beeg hand over birdy, me.
HERACLES: There, he says hand her over.
POSEIDON: Nonsense, he's talking about swallows or something.
HERACLES: That's right - 'hand her over to the swallows'.
[*TRIBALLIAN nods vigorously*. *POSEIDON shrugs his shoulders*]
POSEIDON: Well, if that's how you both feel about it, there's nothing more for me to say. You've accepted his terms and that's that.
HERACLES [*to PEISTHETAERUS*]: We accept your terms. So if you'll just step up to Heaven with us, we can hand over the bride and all the rest of it.
PEISTHETAERUS: Lucky we've got these birds roasting here: they'll do nicely for the wedding feast.
HERACLES: I tell you what - supposing I stay behind and do the roasting for you while you're away?
PEISTHETAERUS: Do the tasting, more likely. No, I think you'd better come along with us.
HERACLES: Pity, I would have made a lovely job of it.
PEISTHETAERUS [*calling up to the HOOPOE's nest*]: Anyone got a wedding outfit I could borrow? [*A wedding robe is brought, and PEISTHETAERUS is helped into it. He and the three gods, with their attendants, set off in procession, heaven-wards*.]

Appendix 1: Time line

BCE			
800			
	c.730	Homer	
700			
600			
500			
	496-406	Sophocles	c. 450 *Women of Trachis*
	c. 485-406	Euripides	431 *Medea*
	480-411	Antiphon	421-411 *Against the Stepmother for Poisoning*
	447-386	Aristophanes	414 *Birds*
400	c.435-c.356	Aristippus of Cyrene	
300			
200			
100			
CE			
100	c.110-c.180	Pausanias	*Description of Greece*
	c. 125-180	Lucian	
	c. 170	Achilles Tatius	*Leucippe & Cleitophon*
200	c. 200 ?	Athenaeus	*Deipnosophistae*
300			
	c. 350 ?	Quintus Smyrnaeus	*Posthomerica*
400			

Appendix 2: Further Reading

Achilles Tatius & the novel

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Athenaeus

Atheaeus tr. Yonge, C. D. *Deipnosophists* http://www.attalus.org/info/athenaeus.html
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Stewart, A. (2007) 'Praxiteles' American Journal of Archaeology, Vol. 111, No. 3 pp. 565-569

Homer

Fagles, R. (1990) *Homer: The Iliad*, Viking Penguin
Griffin, J. (2001) *Homer*, London
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Lattimore, R. (1951) *The Iliad of Homer*, Chicago
Logue, C. (2001) *War Music*, Faber & Faber
Oswald, A. (2011) *Memorial: An Excavation of the* Iliad, Faber & Faber
Rutherford, R. (2013) *Homer*, Cambridge

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Baldwin, B. (1973) *Studies in Lucian,* Toronto: Hakkert
Hall, J.A. (1981) *Lucian's Satire* New York: Arno
Jones, C.P (1986) *Culture and Society in Lucian,* Cambridge: Harvard
Robinson, C. (1979) *Lucian and his Influence in Europe* London: Duckworth

Quintus Smyrnaeus

Quintus Smyrnaeus tr. A. S. Way *The Fall of Troy*, Amazon
Bär, S. (2010) 'Quintus Of Smyrna And The Second Sophistic' *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 105, pp. 287-316

Sophocles

Sophocles *Trachiniae* (ed. Easterling, P.) CUP
Sophocles (tr. Torrance, R.) (1961) *The Women of Trachis* and *Philoctetes,* Boston
Easterling, P.E. & Knox, B.M.W. (ed.) (1989) *Greek Drama*, Cambridge
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