ἈΡΙΣΤΟΦΑΝΟΥΣ ARISTOPHANES’

Νεφέλαι Clouds

A Dual Language Edition

Greek Text Edited (1907) by
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English Translation and Notes by
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Generations of men are like the leaves.
In winter, winds blow them down to earth,
but then, when spring season comes again,
the budding wood grows more. And so with men:
one generation grows, another dies away. (Iliad 6)
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EDITORS’ NOTE

This book presents the Greek text of Aristophanes’ *Clouds* with a facing English translation. The Greek text is that of F.W. Hall and W.M. Geldart (1907), from the Oxford Classical Texts series, which is in the public domain and available as a pdf. This text has also been digitized by the Perseus Project (perseus.tufts.edu). The English translation and accompanying notes are those of Ian Johnston of Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo, BC. This translation is available freely online (records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/). We have reset both texts, making a number of very minor corrections, and placed them on opposing pages. The English translation has a line-formatting and numbering system that is different from the Greek text. To avoid confusion, we have eliminated those line numbers and indicated only the equivalent Greek line numbers in brackets in the English translation. The English translation sometimes assigns choral passages to different members of the chorus, which we indicate by introducing dashes into the Greek text. Otherwise we have followed the formatting of the OCT, regardless of the translation formatting. We hope these choices will make it easier to go back and forth between English and Greek.
On Satire in Aristophanes’ Clouds
by Ian Johnston

The following is the text of a lecture by Ian Johnston, delivered in part in the main lecture for Liberal Studies 111 at Malaspina College (now Vancouver Island University) in November 1998. References to the text are to the Arrowsmith translation in Four Plays by Aristophanes, Penguin, 1962.

Introduction

Today I want to begin by considering a curious topic: What is laughter and why do we like to experience laughter, both in ourselves and others? This will, I hope, serve as something of an entry point into a consideration of the social importance and uses of laughter in cultural experience. And this point, in turn, will assist in an introduction to the importance of humour and laughter in an important form of literature, namely, satire. All of this, I trust, will help to illuminate what is going on in the Aristophanic comedy we are studying this week, The Clouds.

To cover all these points is a tall order, and as usual I’m going to be skating on thin ice at times, but unless we have some sense of the social importance of humour and group laughter, then we may fail fully to understand just what Aristophanic satire is and what it sets out to do.

Laughter as a Shared Social Experience

Why do people laugh? And what is laughter? I don’t propose to answer this very complex psychological problem, but I would like to make some observations about laughter and humour which may help to clarify the issues usefully.

When you think about it, laughter is a curious phenomenon. People momentarily lose their poise, screw their faces up into funny expressions, often rock their bodies back and forth, and emit strange animal like noises which in almost any other circumstance would be considered socially quite unacceptable--snorting, wheezing, and so on. This odd behaviour is usually accompanied by feelings of emotional satisfaction so strong that the first impulse after a good laugh is to see if one can experience it again.

Also, the best laughter appears to be a group phenomenon. That is, we laugh best when we are with others and when they are engaging in the same
sort of behaviour. That which occasions laughter, the joke, is above all a social phenomenon. It requires a teller and an audience. We don’t tell jokes to ourselves, or if we do, they may prompt a modest chuckle. But when we get to the pub, we tell the same joke to a group and laugh uproariously along with all the others. When we hear a good joke, we normally don’t immediately want to run away and ponder it alone in the woods; we think about what fun we’re going to have telling it to a group of people who don’t know it and thus repeat the experience we have just been through. For it’s a curious fact that, even if we know the joke, we can derive considerable pleasure and laughter from hearing it or telling it again in the right context. In other words, the group response is, I would suggest, one key to understanding why laughter matters.

That’s why a laugh track is an important part of TV comedy. After all, watching television is not really a group experience, so if we are to enjoy the laughter a group has to be manufactured for us, so that we have the impression of participating in a group experience. In a tense TV drama, we don’t have a “gasp” track or anything that might put us in imaginary touch with a group undergoing the same experience. That’s not necessary, because in such situations we are very alone in some ways. But anything that we are supposed to laugh at is just not as funny if we are very conscious that there’s no one else participating with us. As the old saying has it, “Laugh and the world laughs with you; cry and you cry alone.”

Now, this on the face of it is odd. Human beings seem to derive great pleasure in sitting around listening to stories or seeing behaviour which then reduces them to a state in which they momentarily lose control of themselves and revert to strange animal-like behaviour, totally unbecoming to anyone who has any concern for self-control or a normal reasonably dignified appearance.

And this I think offers an important insight into the nature of laughter. When we laugh we are acknowledging that a good deal of what we do in life is rather silly, that human life is full of aspirations to be something better than we really are. A joke, and our shared response to a joke, deflates the dignity and self-control and self-imposed value that human beings place on themselves. When we laugh we are, in a sense, acknowledging that by our temporary loss of self-control and dignity.

For example, to take the simplest and commonest form of a joke. We spend a lot of time trying to walk upright in a graceful and well coordinated manner, and an important part of our self-identity is that we, well, are worth looking at: cool, dignified, and coordinated. Yet, nothing is funnier to us than to see someone take a well-staged pratfall, to slip on the banana peel, to lose the equilibrium we try so hard to maintain, which is such an important part of our individual dignity. Similarly, when someone is trying to reach up to the stars and his pants fall down (often as a reaction of reaching upward), we see that as funny, because its a sudden and unexpected reminder of the ambivalence of being a human being, a creature who aspires to great things in search of nobility but who has to cover his rather silly looking backside. The temporary and unexpected loss of control over ourselves registers as a shared agreeable experience.

A Sense of Humour

We talk about people having a sense of humour. What we mean, I think, by this phrase is the ability to perceive a certain discrepancy between the normal behaviour and the unexpected deflation of it. When a joke presents itself in language, responding to it with a sense of humour depends upon being able to see the ways in which language may be manipulated in unexpected ways to produce a curious effect, contrary to what we might have expected.

The most obvious example of this is the pun, which depends upon the audience’s ability to recognize the way in which a particular word can be unexpectedly manipulated to produce an effect contrary to our expectations. Some people have great difficulty appreciating puns—they don’t see the humour of treating language that way, either because they don’t see the multi-layered meanings of words or because they see them but they don’t think it’s very funny to treat language that way or because they find the pun just too common and obvious a form of comic surprise.

Possessing a sense of humour is a complex business. It’s not just a matter of rational understanding. We all know how lame it is to have a joke explained. The source of the humour may be exposed, but the joke is not funny any more. In other words, if the punch line doesn’t have a punch, a sudden and instantaneous effect, then the joke doesn’t do its work properly.

Another point here, of course, is that a sense of humour is something often unique to a particular cultural group. That’s clear enough, given that humour has to draw upon the shared experiences of the group in order to contradict them or surprise them. Listening to Bill Cosby’s story about Noah makes little sense to anyone who is quite unfamiliar with the story, who has never wondered exactly what a “cubit” is, or who has no knowledge of what modern suburban living really is. That’s one reason perhaps why one can learn the language of a country very well and yet still find much of its humour incomprehensible or unfunny (e.g., American Jewish humour, Chicano humour, and so on).
Aristophanes

The Joke: Some Thoughts About Structure

The things that make us laugh, I would suggest, are often of this nature. They are out of the blue reminders that, for all our pretensions to greatness, nobility, value and what not, we are curious animals, whose body parts and behaviour can often reveal that we are quite ridiculous, no matter how hard we try to avoid that truth. When we laugh together, we are sharing an insight into our common human nature.

Hence, the common observation that the most basic joke is one that contradicts our expectations (this is a standard Aristophanic device). In telling a joke, we set up certain expectations, which are then violated or altered in some unexpected way. The humour comes from a shared recognition that we've been had, that our human natures are somehow rather different from what we had imagined. Telling a joke well thus often requires two things: the ability to set up the expectation and then the ability to deliver the punch line which contradicts or deflates that expectation in an unexpected manner.

We all know people who are very poor joke tellers. They have no sense of structure or they blow the punch line too early. And few things are more frustrating to listen to than someone who tells jokes badly. Presenting a joke requires a certain sophistication, either in physical presentation or in the verbal telling, and if it's not done right, then the shared group experience doesn't take place. Setting up the joke is probably the more difficult part of the exercise, a fact which may be the reason why in a comedy twosome, like Abbott and Costello, the straight man, the set up artist, usually gets more pay than the deliverer of the punch line.

The ability to tell jokes well, however, is an enormous social asset, primarily because it's the quickest way to get the group's attention, to consolidate the feeling of a group as a group, and to transform any disunity or irritation into a pleasant, non-threatening, shared social experience. Many people, like myself, learn early in life that telling jokes or transforming potentially threatening situations into jokes is an enormously powerful survival tactic. If you can make someone who is threatening you laugh with you, then you have transformed the situation from one of danger to yourself into one of a shared moment of understanding of your common humanity.

The Greeks themselves had a favorite story about this phenomenon. It featured their most popular folk hero, Hercules. On one of his adventures he captured two nasty brothers, the Cercopes, and was carrying them off to do away with them. As they lay hanging down Hercules's back they started making jokes about his hairy, ugly rump. They were so funny that they got Hercules laughing so that he couldn't stop, and he had to let them go. After all, it's difficult to feel hostile towards someone who is constantly making you laugh together.

The Two-Edged Nature of the Joke

I have tried to stress the social basis for the humour which arises from sharing a joke in order to bring out the first key point of this lecture, that laughter and the presentations of jokes which bring it about, is above all else a social experience which has to be shared in order to be effective. Someone who is incapable of participating in a joke, for whom there is no laughter of the sort I have been describing, is in some important ways cut off from full participation in many of the most important ways in which groups consolidate their identity and learn together.

It's important to stress that not all jokes work in the same ways. There are, for example, at least two common effects of jokes--those which reinforce a group's identity by excluding others and those which educate the group into a new awareness of itself. For instance, a good deal of the most common colloquial humour is what we might call “locker room” laughter, the shared experience which comes from making fun of someone whom the group wishes to exclude. For it's clear that one of the most powerful ways in which a group of people can repel any outsiders or deal with the threat of unwelcome intrusions by outsiders is to make fun of such outsiders, to, in effect, dehumanize them, so that what we are sharing in our laughter is the shared awareness that we are better than such people.

Such “exclusionary” humour is the basis for a good deal of humour which these days we consider unacceptable--racist jokes, sexist jokes, ethnic jokes (The Andrew Dice Clay school of comic performance). While we disapprove of such humour often for the very Platonic reason that it corrupts our understanding of others not immediately like ourselves, we have to recognize that it is amazingly popular, no where more so than on the Internet. If we need any evidence of the importance many people place on using jokes and shared laughter as a means of maintaining a sense of exclusionary solidarity in the face of constant threats of intrusion, we have only to dial up an appropriate “hate” address on the Internet.

But humour can also be educational, that is, it can transform our understanding of the group, and by doing that in a way that we all share it can effect a pleasant, yet very effective transformation of the situation. To listen to Bill Cosby, for example, is to be reminded through laughter, that the life of a black child or parent is, for all our particular racial stereotyping, a shared human experience. In laughing at what we share together, we are unconsciously transforming our understanding of our mutual relationship in a common...
Aristophanes in the \textit{Clouds} may be taking a harshly critical view of Socrates or others, as we shall see, but there may well be an important positive moral purpose behind that.

I should note here that it is possible to write satire in the absence of any shared sense of moral standards, but the result is a curious form of “black” satire. This genre is particularly common today. Modern satire typically makes everything look equally ridiculous. In such a satiric vision, there is no underlying vision of what right conduct is and the total effect, if one tries to think about it, is very bleak indeed—s a sense that we might as well laugh at the ridiculousness of everything because nothing has any meaning. Whether we call this \textit{Monty Python} or \textit{Saturday Night Live} or \textit{This Hour Has Twenty-two Minutes} or whatever, it seems to add up to an attitude that since there’s no significant meaning to anything, we might as well laugh at everything. That will enable us to retreat with style from the chaos. Such an attitude is very
Satire: Some Comments on the Range

Given that central to what we call traditional satire is some underlying moral vision, so that the “negative” portrayal of the target works in the service of a “positive” vision, it is clear that satire can take on a wide range of tones. That is, the moral indignation at the heart of the satirist can lead him to something really vicious and savage, an unrelenting and unforgiving attack on what he sees as extreme moral corruption in what he is ridiculing, or, alternatively, the indignation of the satirist may temper itself with some affection for the target, so that the satire is much more good natured, less abusive and aggressive, even to the point where we are not sure just how much the comic portrait is really satiric or simply comic (as in, say, a celebrity “roast,” where a group of people attack one of their friends, but do so in an affectionate way, so that the target really has nothing to complain about, even if some of the jokes hit a tender nerve at times).

Satire thus can come in many forms, from savage to gentle, but it remains satire so long as we feel that the writer’s main purpose is making us laugh at conduct which he believes ought to be corrected. Whether we see Aristophanes’s portrayal of Socrates as aggressively vicious or as much more affectionately funny, the satiric purpose remains clear so long as we sense that Aristophanes intends us to see the Thinkery as something we should not place our faith in, as something ridiculous. To the extent that Socrates and the Thinkery become attractive to us (say, because of the energy and humour of the place), the satiric purpose is diminished. More of this later.

Satire: Some Basic Techniques

How does a satirist set about ridiculing the vice and folly she wants the audience to recognize as unacceptable? Remember that the challenge to the satirist is to get the moral point across with humour, so that the audience or the reader laughs in the appropriate manner. Put another way, the challenge is to put across serious matters in humorous ways.

Let me restate this point because it is crucial. The central message of satire is often very simple and can be stated quickly. Satire is, for reasons we shall consider in a moment, not a genre which encourages complex explorations of deep psychological issues in the characters. It’s much more like a repetitive insistence on the foolishness of certain kinds of behaviour. So the problem for the satirist is to make his treatment funny, that is, to keep the jokes coming quickly and with sufficient variety so that the audience stays interested in what is going on. Nothing is staler in art than a satire which runs out of steam or which starts to repeat itself in predictable ways. That’s why the staple form for modern satire is the short skit—set up, punch line, fade out. In a longer satire, like an Aristophanic play or Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels the problem is to keep the reader interested through one’s technique.

Well, there are a number of basic strategies. I list them here in no particular order.

1.

First, the satirist sets up a target—either a person like Socrates or Strepsiades or Pithetairos or a group like the Thinkery—which will symbolize the conduct he wishes to attack. Satire, in other words, has a clear target. Setting up the target in a way that can generate humour in a variety of ways is an important talent. The Thinkery, for instance, is not just a one-line joke about the nature of Sokratic inquiry; in the play it becomes the source for a number of other jokes, verbal and visual, e.g., Socrates hanging in a basket, the pot bellied stove (always emitting strange smoke), the students gazing at the ground with their bums in the air, all sorts of strange quasi-philosophical mumbo jumbo, and so on. On the stage, the Thinkery is a fertile source for humorous variety; the initial message may be simple and repetitive, so to keep the audience interested the theatrical presentation has to be varied and funny. Nothing is duller than a humorless satire.

But in The Clouds the target is not just Socrates. Another target is clearly the middle-aged Athenian male, Strepsiades, full of energy and crudity, desperate to sort out the difficulties of his personal life (the problems of belonging to a litigious, imperialistic society from which traditional systems of order have disappeared). And this Groucho Marx like character is put into hopelessly exaggerated situations, where he has to deal with the Thinkery. His reasons for wanting to have anything to do with Socrates and his manner of dealing with his trouble (in all its variety) is the source of most of the satire and identifies for us Aristophanes’s main target—the average Athenian citizen. Clearly, most Athenians are not exactly like Strepsiades, but there’s enough connection between him and the average citizen to make the satiric point clear enough.

2.

Second, the satirist will typically exaggerate and distort the target in certain ways in order to emphasize the characteristics he wishes to attack and, most importantly, to provide recurring sources of humour. Such exaggeration and distortion are key elements in the humour. The target must be close enough to the real thing for us to recognize what is going on, but...
sufficiently distorted to be funny, an exaggeration, often a grotesque departure from normality. The Clouds still can provide an amusing and provocative evenings entertainment for someone who has never heard of Socrates, but obviously the person who does have some familiarity with that figure is going to derive a great deal more from the play.

The example of a political cartoon is instructive here. When we laugh at the cartoon of, say, Clinton, we are responding to two things: a recognition of the original and of what the satirist has done to distort the original so as to make it ridiculous for a particular purpose. The cartoon may still be very funny for someone who doesn't know Clinton, but some of the immediate edge will clearly be lost.

In that sense, all satire is, of course, unfair, if by that we mean that the depiction of the target is not life-like, not a true copy, not naturalistic. Of course, it's not. There would be no cartoon if all we had was a photograph of Clinton. Making the targets ridiculous means bending them out of shape (as in a distorting mirror), not beyond recognition but certainly far from their normal appearance. The point of the satire often lies in the nature of the distortion. Much of the best satire depends, in other words, on a skilful caricature or cartoon, rather than on any attempt at a life-like rendition of the subject.

So to complain that Socrates in The Clouds is nothing like the real Socrates is to miss the point. Aristophanes is setting up his Socrates to symbolize in a ridiculously distorted manner certain ways of behaving which he wishes his audience to recognize as absurd. At the same time, the portrait has to have some recognizable connection to Socrates if the play is to make a connection with the audience. But it's important, too, to recognize that the main satire may not be directed so much at Socrates, ridiculous as he is, but at Strepsiades for his desire to believe in Socrates for his own self-interested purposes.

Such distortion obviously involves setting up a certain distance between the target and the audience. That is, we are not in a satire invited to consider the inner feelings of the targets or to speculate on any complex psychological motives for why they behave the way they do. The satirist focuses his ridicule on external behaviour, not on speculating about possible complex psychological motivation for that behaviour. To do the latter is to bring the audience into the inner workings of the target's heart and mind, and once one has done that, it is difficult to respond to the target satirically. To appreciate satire, that is, we have to have a sense of where the satirist wishes to correct.

This form of play, the Aristophanic comedy, is technically called Old Comedy, and it is, as I have observed, marked by a continuing variety in what goes on, more like an old style pantomime than the sorts of situation comedies we are used to (which derive from what we call New Comedy). The story, such as it is, focuses on one person's attempts to cope with the complexities of Athenian life in the face of very odd circumstances marked by all sorts of interruptions. As a vehicle for dramatic variety it is unsurpassed, but it certainly won't answer the needs of those who demand the consistent depiction of a naturalistic slice of life drama with an intricate plot.

A good many of these attacks are going to draw upon the shared cultural milieu of the playwright and the audience (names of particular people and events, excerpts from particularly well known speeches or plays, references to current affairs, and so on). The aim of the satirist is to deliver an unremitting attack on the target which the audience can laugh at, so that the audience's shared response, its laughter, can effectively deal with the behaviour which the satirist wishes to correct.

In this connection, the notion and use of satiric irony is important. This is a technique which, as its name suggests, confronts the audience with the discrepancy between what characters say and do and what we fully understand by their actions. To appreciate satire, that is, we have to have a sense of where
the satirist is coming from, so that we recognize the distortion and the ridiculous behaviour for what it is. If we fail to see the satiric irony at work, then our response may defeat the purposes of the satirist, because we will be tempted to say one of two things: (a) well, life’s not like that so I don’t see the point (e.g., there is such place as the Thinkery and that portrait of Socrates is just stupid, because he’s not like that in real life) or (b) hey, I think that action by the target is just great; maybe we should all be more like that (e.g., Hey that’s a great idea. I think I’ll enroll my son at the Thinkery).

If we fail to see the function of the satiric irony, in other words, we may dismiss the fiction as mere stupidity, or we may embrace it as something admirable. So the challenge of the satirist is to make the satiric intention clear but not overly obvious, so that the audience derives a certain pleasure from participating in the in-joke, in seeing what the writer is getting at through the humour.

That quality of satire makes it, for all its frequent crudity and knock-about farce, a much more “intellectual” genre than many others. To appreciate satire one has to be able to recognize the continuing existence of different levels of meaning (that is, of irony), and the more sophisticated the satire the more delicate the ironies. Or, put another way, satire requires a certain level of education and sophistication in the audience. People can still respond to the fun of Aristophanes, to the dramatic action and the crude fun, but with no sense for satiric irony, the point of the piece will get rather lost.

In assaulting the target in this way, the satirist is going to be pushing hard at the edge of what the audience is prepared to accept. If the satirist wants really to connect with the audience, then the writer is going often to be pushing language at the audience in new ways, taking risks with what they are prepared to accept. After all, if the purpose is to wake people up to the moral realities of their daily situation, then often some fairly strong language and surprising imagery is going to be in order. That, of course, presents the risk of offending the audience’s taste. If an audience turns away from the work in disgust, then they are not going to attend to whatever important moral lesson the satirist is striving to call attention to. Hence the more aggressive the satirist, the more delicately the writer has to walk along the line of what is acceptable and what is not. It’s no accident that expanding the envelope of what is acceptable on the stage or in prose is often the work of our satirists.

This point is worth stressing, because if a satirist is really touching a nerve in the audience, then a common response is to find ways to neutralize the satire. I have sketched out four of the common methods one can use to do that: (a) take the satire literally and dismiss it as absurd or embrace it as a good idea (the satiric irony is thus lost and the point of the satire evaporates), (b) reject the satire because it is too rude or crude (it offends my taste); (c) reject the satire because it is “unfair” or not sufficiently true to life (this is very similar to point a above); (d) reject the satire by failing to respond to the ironies.

Is Satire Ever Effective?

How effective is satire at realizing its objective, that is, the moral reformation of the audience? I suppose the short answer is not very often, especially nowadays, when being laughed at is often a sign of celebrity rather than something one is automatically ashamed of. I suspect that in closely knit groups, where one’s status and dignity are important, becoming a laughing stock is something one worries about. Under these circumstances, the satirist may indeed really connect with the target. That, however, may prompt extreme hostility to the writer rather than a reformation of the target’s character.

Swift observed that satire is like a mirror in which people see everyone’s face except their own. That, I suspect, is a very accurate observation, and to that extent the satirist is probably engaging in something of a vain endeavour: to get people to recognize their own ridiculousness and to avoid it in the future. Still, there may be some other, more useful point. For satire is not just a matter of attacking the target; it’s also a matter of attacking or at least challenging those who believe in the target, who do not see, that is, the moral imperfections at the basis of a particular social or political stance.

So it may be the case that satire works most effectively at educating an audience to see through the pretensions and folly of people whom it takes much more seriously than they ought to be taken. If it does that, then it has used laughter in a very constructive way, as mentioned above: it has helped to show us that too often our sense of what we are, as individuals and as groups, is too limited by delusions of grandeur. Too often we become enamored of false idols. Satire is one means of educating us against the practice.

The Clouds

If we acknowledge, then, that The Clouds is a satire, what does Aristophanes wish us to learn from witnessing the play? I take it that many of his satiric techniques are obvious enough from the text, although one needs to affirm that we are most unlikely to realize the full satiric potential of this wonderful play without witnessing a first-class production of it. There are few dramas that proffer such an invitation to use the full resources of the stage to keep the audience constantly involved in the action: all sorts of amazing stage devices, pyrotechnics, amusing costumes (including phalluses), repeated
physical conflict, and so on. We gather only a small and insufficient sense of the dramatic potential of the work by reading it.

Still, we do get some sense of how this play might appear, so we are in a position to explore what Aristophanes wants us to think about. I would maintain that the satire here goes through at least three distinct stages and that, in going through these stages, the tone of the satire changes from something very amusing and distant from us to something much closer to us, more potentially disturbing, and perhaps apocalyptic. By the end of the play we may well have moved beyond satire; we are, in any case, a long way from the opening scenes of the play.

In the opening scenes of the play, the butt of the satire is clearly Socrates. This may be (indeed, is) an unfair portrait of the Socrates we know from the Gorgias and the Apology (for one thing in those works Socrates is not concerned with physical science and expressly repudiates the notion that he wants to make the weaker argument the stronger). But the satire is very vigorous and funny. As an audience we can laugh good humouredly at a familiar face and place a considerable distance between us and what seems to be the major target of the satire.

One point to stress here is that in the opening of the play, the satire is (for an audience) quite comfortable. The laughter is (if we discuss it in terms of a distinction I introduced earlier) exclusionary. The variously silly things about the Thinkery and Socrates invite that audience to laugh at him as a charlatan and humbug. This is comfortable for an audience, because the satire is apparently directed at a single person, not at them, and since they are not Socrates, they are clearly not implicated in Aristophanes’s ridicule.

However, Socrates does not remain the sole (or even the most important target of Aristophanes’s satire), for the main aim of the satire changes somewhat when Strepsiades decides to enroll in the Thinkery himself. Strepsiades, after all, is a representative Athenian, and it is made clear to us that for him the attraction of Socrates’s school (which he has told us is humbug) is naked self-interest. He wants to defraud his fellow citizens out of the money he owes them. He wants, as he makes clear to us, to learn the art of breaking his promises at the expense of his fellow citizens.

At this point, Aristophanes is casting his satiric net more widely; this is no longer an attempt merely to expose Socrates to ridicule but to include the self-serving greed of Athenians, including, of course, some of those in the audience. In some respects, at this point Strepsiades becomes a more serious and uncomfortable target than Socrates—-and the moral tone becomes potentially somewhat more serious. After all, Socrates is in some sense better than Strepsiades. He may be silly, but at least he believes in what he is doing and devotes all his energies to doing that. Strepsiades, by contrast, is not at all interested in learning anything about what Socrates is up to; he simply wants to be equipped to escape his obligations. The satire here is just as funny, especially Strepsiades’s stupidity. But his willingness to corrupt language to serve his own interests is something more serious than Socrates’s wild speculations.

And this is reinforced by the sense that Strepsiades is not just a single particular Athenian known to the audience (like Socrates). Strepsiades is also a social type: a man who married above his station and has a son whose spending he cannot control. He is, in a sense, representative of a certain kind of citizen, many of whom may well be sitting in the audience. Thus, holding his self-interested greed up to ridicule is clearly implicating, not just one local weirdo, but a certain social type or social attitude. In other words, increasingly numbers of the audience who were laughing so comfortably at Socrates only a few minutes before are now being forced to laugh at themselves or their neighbours.

A similar shift occurs soon afterwards. Once we come to the debate between the Old and the New Philosophy, the satire changes its emphasis (or, rather, enlarges its concerns). This debate makes it clear that what is at stake here is not just a silly thinker or a greedy social type. What Aristophanes is after is an indictment of an entire way of life, especially of the modern trends which are eroding traditional values. The debate (especially if we see it on stage with the magnificent costumes and the ritualized combat) is very funny, but the moral concerns are coming much closer to home. The willingness to dispense with proven values in education and conduct brings with it the loss of something which the playwright clearly sees as something valuable.

It may be the case that Aristophanes is a staunch defender of the old values. But that need not be so. After all, the old philosophy comes in for some satiric jibes, especially for his prurience and rather simple indignation, which might well be presented as a sort of naïve stuffiness. But there can be no doubt, I think, of the seriousness of the issues at stake here, the erosion of old values enshrined in a shared tradition and a communal respect for that tradition.

In this connection, the decision of the narrator to label the disputants Philosophy and Sophistry may be somewhat misleading. Traditionally, these debaters have been called the Just (or Major or Better) Logic and the Unjust (or Minor or Weaker) Logic (as Arrowsmith’s long endnote on p. 153 indicates). Arrowsmith is right, I think, when he claims (in the same note) that “Aristophanes is talking, not about systems of formal logic, but about whole system of Reason, discursive and nondiscursive alike),” which he characterizes later (on p. 154) as an argument between “the rational guidance of Custom ... , the corrective rightness of traditional experience as against the restless
innovations and risky isolation from experience and history of the pure intellect."

To frame the dispute that way may be fair enough, but the labels Philosophy (for traditional values) and Sophistry (for innovation) may mislead, especially if we come to this play (as many readers to) fresh from dealing with Socrates's definition of his endeavour as philosophy (rather than as oratory), for it would appear to load the scales somewhat on behalf of what Arrowsmith calls Philosophy, when, in fact, the point of the satire may well be that both disputants are, for different reasons, equally foolish. The comic dispute, in other words, may be a funny dramatic symbol for a serious social problem which lies at the heart of this satire: the traditional ways of valuing have broken down, not because they have been "defeated" by some newer and more sophisticated form of valuing, but rather because the old traditions have become stuffy, pretentious, ungrounded, and silly. Aristophanes, in other words, may not be celebrating traditional values, so much as satirizing the vain glory of those values, now without power in a transformed world, forced to defend itself with indignant comparative spluttering about the penis length.

It's clear, too, just what is eroding that tradition: the ability to manipulate language. The New Philosophy (Sophistry) wins the day because the form of linguistic analysis it uses can, the face of the weakness of traditional beliefs, undermine the value of anything. We are seeing here (in satric comic form) something of the same thing that Herodotus is doing to traditional stories, subjecting them to rational analysis. Here, of course, the exercise is a parody of such analysis, but the effect is the same: calling the old story (and the values which it expresses) into question. The mistake of the Old Philosophy (or the fatal weakness) is a simple uncritical trust in a shared system of meaning in words and of the importance of certain old stores as enshrining permanent values. Having nothing intelligent to counter the New Philosophy's demolition of that shared meaning, the Old Philosophy can only acknowledge the loss.

What has contributed to developments of this method which lead to the loss of traditional value? The end of the debate between the two Philosophies makes that very clear. The responsibility lies with the audience of Athenian citizens, the "buggers," who are indicted by the Old Philosophy as he concedes defeat. By this point the easy satire of the opening of the play, where the audience member could feel a comfortable distance between himself and the ridiculous figure of Socrates, has altered significantly. Now, Socrates and his Thinkery are no longer the issue. The central concern is the neglect by the Athenians themselves of their old traditions and their love of novelty in the service of self-interest. The theatrical action is still very funny (the style has not changed), but the target is now all-encompassing.

The dramatic point is worth stressing. The play begins by inviting the audience to laugh at the ridiculousness of one particular person for his out-right humbuggery. As mentioned above, such satire poses no threat to members of the audience and draws them into the story with reassuring ease and much fun. But in the course of the play, the members of the audience are pressured to extend their understanding of humbuggery so that it now includes themselves. It's as if Aristophanes is asking very pointedly: All right, you found certain conduct in Socrates hilarious. How about that same conduct in yourselves? What's the difference?

The consequences of this attitude emerge in the quarrel between Strepsiades and his son. Again, there's a lot of humour in the exchange and the physicality of the staging, but the seriousness of the issue is made explicit. If we abandon traditions to serve only our individual self-interest, then we are left with a situation in which the only basis for human relationships is power. In such a world, why should a son not beat up his father and his mother? There is no particular reason not to. Since laws are only human conventions invented by the stronger party, they can be changed once power shifts, and people can now do more or less as they want. Pheidippides makes the case that human beings are just like animals, and in the animal world, the barnyard, power is the basis of all relationships.

It may be all very well for Strepsiades to yell at his son that if we wants to live as a barnyard animal he can go and shit on a perch. But Pheidippides's case has, in fact, been endorsed by Strepsiades earlier in the play when he puts his own self-interest ahead of anything else. After all, if, in the interests of one's personal advancement, one wants to cheat one's neighbours of what one owes (and has promised), then what defense does one have against the son who wants to beat his parents? The principles that one might want to invoke to prevent the latter are the same as those which should prevent the former. As Pheidippides demonstrates, once an old tradition grows too feeble and one sets about undermining tradition with the new linguistic analysis, anything is possible.

Here, of course, Aristophanes is touching a really sore point in Athenian social life (and in ours). How do we keep the good will of our children on whom we are going to depend? What is it that keeps children from exerting their superior physical power to abuse their parents when they don't get their way? In Athenian times, and even today, this is a significant concern, especially since the continuing health and peaceful life of the elderly requires the benevolent co-operation of the children (much more so than now). Once that goes, then something very basic to the fabric of our immediate family life breaks down. The members of Aristophanes's audience would have no trouble seeing in that issue something of direct importance in their lives (no more than members of a modern audience).
At this point in the play, I am suggesting, the satire, while still very robust and funny, is a lot more uncomfortable. The action is pushing us to the recognition that the real issue here is not Socrates (silly as he may be), but rather a self-interested greed which will rebound on us. Strepsiades’s initial motivation is to serve his self-interest in any way possible; without realizing it, he initiates a course of action which leads inevitably to his physical abuse. The responsibility for this lies, not with Socrates, nor even with Strepsiades, but with the members of the audience, the “buggers.” And this issue is now something with which all members of the audience will be fully involved, since they have parents and children and they certainly have a fear of family abuse. Aristophanes is pointing out that the very behaviour which makes Socrates so funny earlier in the play and which they, like Strepsiades, engage in out of self-interest, may well unleash behaviour of which they are all afraid (or ought to be).

The Chorus

That such a concern about the Athenian population generally is the major satiric thrust of the play is made more explicit by the single most important dramatic presence in the play: the Chorus of Clouds, in many ways the most ambiguous element in the play.

The Chorus is made up of seductive female singers and dancers (just how seductive the staging will determine), divine presences bringing with them the promise of rain and fertility. But it’s quickly made clear that they are primarily the divine personalities who answer to the desires of those who wish to create something in words, “goddesses of men of leisure and philosophers. To them we owe our repertoire of verbal talents; our eloquence, intellect, fustian, casuistry, force, wit, prodigious vocabulary, circumlocutory skill. . . .” Hence, they are defined as the patrons of all those who manipulate others with words. And this function is mirrored in their characteristic of having no definite shape, but taking on the form in accordance with what the perceiver wishes to see.

That may be the reason they come through in this play as having no consistent point of view, no easily assignable meaning. Socrates can hail them as his patron, and so can the figure of Aristophanes. They can celebrate Strepsiades’s decision to enroll in the Thinkery and berate the Athenian audience for its silliness about the lunar calendar--all the time dominating the stage with their singing and dancing. The “meaning” of the Chorus of Clouds (if that is the right word) is as protean as their shape: like the language the Athenians use for various purposes they have no firmness, no determinate form. To the extent this play has a cosmic divine presence, that’s brought to us by the Clouds themselves.

That comic business about the Clouds controlling everything for which the traditional gods are given credit, all that stuff about the cosmic convection principle, thunder as farting, and so on, may be funny, but the issue lies at the heart of the play’s moral indignation at what is happening in Athens, where the possibilities for a significant life are being systematically corrupted by the seductive power of words, of language itself, which is now being shaped to human beings’ desires, rather than directing those desires. The fact that the Clouds spend so much time singing and dancing (and this, one would hope, would be done beautifully on stage) enacts the very point the play is making about the issues they represent.

This point about the corruption of language applies to everyone in the play. For it’s not the case, I think, that Aristophanes is privileging the older (or ought to be).

The Ending of The Clouds

That irony I refer to helps to make the ending of this play potentially so ominous. Of course, a great deal is going to depend upon how the play is staged. But it’s no accident that Aristophanes ends this comedy with a wanton act of destruction, the burning down of the Thinkery. Why does Strepsiades do this? Well, one immediate cause appears to be the frustration he now finds himself in, when he realizes that he has been trapped by his own silliness and corruption. Instead of resolving the comedy in a peaceful way, with, for example, an acknowledgment of his errors and some form of reconciliation with his son, Aristophanes has him lash out with an action that indicates his loss of restraint, his decision to abandon thought, and to channel his confused feelings into violence.

There’s an interesting difference here between this work and the *Odyssey*. You will recall that the final act of Odysseus in that work is restraint. The destructiveness of the civil war is averted when the gods persuade Odysseus to hold back, to restrain his desire for revenge on the suitors. And the re-establishment of civic harmony in Ithaka requires that. This is a common end of a comic plot, where the sources of social disruption have been punished, killed, expelled, or forgiven, and there is a general sense of a restored social harmony. Similarly, the end of *Oedipus* is marked by restraint. Oedipus inflicts a horrific punishment on himself and is about to set out into self-imposed exile. But the community is still intact, still trying to absorb the significance of what has happened. And Thebes has been saved and will endure.
The ending of Clouds is not like this. The final vision we have in this play is of destruction. The script does not move us beyond that act. And if we see, as we might, that this destruction has involved some real human suffering and perhaps even death, then we have clearly moved into a world beyond the easy, distant comedy of the opening of the play. In a sense, we might say that we have moved well beyond satire in the closing moments, because we are no longer laughing. What we are seeing might be interpreted as an ominous warning: «What I have shown you is something silly and ridiculous, but the consequences of that are far from amusing.» This ending will be all the more powerful if we see in Socrates, as we might, an attractive energy and tolerable weirdness, so that his defeat registers as something of a loss.

I stress that this interpretation of the ending is one of many possibilities. It would be easy enough through the staging to take much of the sting out of it and to make the destruction of the Thinkery something relatively trivial and funny, perhaps even therapeutic. Much would depend upon the presentation of the destruction and the response of the people involved. But the fact that there is no prolonged choral closure after the burning, no final comic celebration of a reinstatement of a communal solidarity does raise the possibility that this ending is something more ironically serious than much of the rest of the comedy might suggest. It is a vision of mob violence.

And the role of the Chorus at this point in the play is significant. The Leader of the Chorus incites Strepsiades and Pheidippides on, urging them to give Socrates and his followers a good thrashing. This, of course, is the man whose labours they encouraged at the start of the play, a man who regarded them as his patron saint. There's a strong sense here that the Clouds themselves are applauding and enjoying the destruction we are witnessing, and they justify their encouragement with appeals to the "gods of heaven," an appeal which has revealed itself as empty during the course of the play, because no one manifests any sense of what a belief in such gods might mean.

In this matter of the tone at the ending of the play, there's an important ambiguity over Phedippides' last exit. Does he go back into his house or return to the Thinkery? He has not achieved any reconciliation with his father, so the latter is a distinct possibility that he goes into the school (a suggestion made by Martha Nussbaum and passed on, with strong reservations, in Alan Sommerstein's notes to the play). If a particular production chooses the latter possibility and includes Phedippides among the victims of Strepsiades' homicidal rage, then obviously the comedy at the end has become much more ironically bitter. More than that, too, because Phedippides' return to the school is a direct insult to his father, and thus one might well see it as the key event which triggers Strepsiades' final outburst. I'm not insisting on this view of the ending, but the possibility is certainly there.

If you see that this powerfully ominous ending as a persuasive possibility, then you can recognize how Aristophanes has significantly shifted his tone throughout the play and perhaps get a sense of why he does this. In a sense, he traps the audience. First, we gets us engaged in the work by inviting us to laugh at a ridiculous stranger with whom we share nothing in common: the satire is funny but safe, because we are not like Socrates. But then, by bringing the satire closer and closer to us, Aristophanes, through our own laughter, brings us face to face with the recognition that what we are really laughing at is not Socrates but our own conduct, our own foolishness arising out of self-interest. And then the work takes us into the consequences of that foolishness, both in the present and, more ominously, into the future. By the end of the play, we are no longer dealing with Sophists and greedy debt-ridden farmers; we are dealing with ourselves and a vision of what we may well become if we don't recognize what's at stake in the promises we make and the words we use.

This all comes about with great theatrical panache and lots of humour; but those features should not obscure the fact that Aristophanes is in deadly earnest in getting across his moral concerns about Athens. There may well be a sense here of tragic inevitability. The satire has gone beyond any sense of ridiculing behaviour which we can correct into an exploration of the inevitable destructiveness of the Athenian character: we were laughing at the particular foolishness of human beings; now we are invited to see that as an inherently self-destructive impulse which threatens the survival of the community. The Chorus of Clouds may promise life-giving rain, but what they represent is the process of destroying the city (and we are not permitted to forget here that Athens is at war).

We don't have to know much history to see that, if the ending here is an ominous warning, then it turned out to be prophetic. The Athenians did turn against Socrates and they did lose their traditional virtues in the course of the war. Along with those, of course, they also forfeited what they were most proud of: their political independence. In burning down the Thinkery, Strepsiades is pointing forward to much of the self-destructiveness which brought the Athenians, and countless other cultures proud of their values but increasingly consumed with self-interest, to grief.

Short Postscript on The Birds

Given what has been said above about satire, how are we to make sense of The Birds? Part of the satiric intention is clear enough, but in some ways there are complexities in this play which might lead us to wonder about the full satiric intentions.
Aristophanes

The play sets up a typical middle-aged Athenian as its main target. Pisthetairos and Euploidides have left the city ostensibly to find a better place, one free of the legal, economic, and political troubles of Athens. They are fed up with life in the city, and the birds, they think, will help them locate a more peaceful haven.

By the end of the play, of course, all this original intention has been subverted. Pisthetairos and Euploidides have become rulers of the birds and are, it seems, about to supplant the gods themselves. In the process they have persuaded the birds to surrender their freedom in the name of increasing their power and riches, and so what started out as a quest for a peacefully independent life for two Athenians ends up with an extension of their empire, a triumph which is to be celebrated by eating a couple of birds, the very creatures to whom they came at the start for advice about how to live.

On a fairly basic level the satiric intention here is clear enough: Aristophanes wants to hold up to ridicule the Athenian habit of aggressive interference, their innate imperialistic tendencies which make it impossible for them to live life without seeking domination. It is something bred into them, no matter how much they may want to escape its consequences. Arrowsmith makes this point in the long note on p. 317:

For if Aristophanes shows us in Pisthetairos here an Athenian exhausted by years of national restlessness and in search of a pragmosune [a life of relaxed leisure] among the Birds, it is precisely his point that no Athenian can escape his origin. And once arrived among the Birds, Pisthetairos promptly exhibits the national quality from which he is trying to escape. He is daring, acquisitive, ruthlessly energetic, inventive, and a thorough-paced imperialist. And finally, in the apotheosis that closes the play, he arrives at his logical destination--divinity. For a polupragmosune [the combination of these Athenian qualities], as Aristophanes ironically observed, is moved by nothing less than man's divine discontent with his condition, and the hunger of Athenians to be supreme, and therefore god.

The way in which Aristophanes presents this transformation suggests that it comes almost by instinct. Pisthetairos is, it seems, genuine in his desire to escape from the corrupting world of Athens, but he is incapable of repressing his urge to take charge, to urge the Birds to use whatever tactics are in their power to increase their dominion. He never expresses a particular reason for doing this, other than the idea that somehow power is good for its own sake--if one has an opportunity one should seize it. It is in one's self-interest to do so.

So in the play we see Pisthetairos expend a lot of energy to keep conventional civilization away from Cloudcuckooland--for his success is attracting settlers. But at the same time his very nature drives him to seek imperial control, which will, of course, threaten the very thing he originally sought to attain.

He succeeds in his imperial urges, and this is particularly significant, because of his linguistic skill, because of his ability to persuade, to use language to shape people to his own ends:

But my words are wings. . . . How else do you think mankind won its wings if not from words? . . . Through dialectic the mind of man takes wing and soars; he is morally and spiritually uplifted. And so I hoped with words of good advice to wing you on your way toward some honest trade. (290-291)

But the play invites us to contemplate, through a very exaggerated scenario, the ironic consequences of this view. How spiritually uplifted is Pisthetairos at the end? Through the most brutal tactics, which again and again remind the audience of what Athens is doing to others during the Peloponnesian War, Pisthetairos succeeds in elevating himself to god-like status, deceiving even the traditional deities and heroes.
HISTORICAL NOTE

Clouds was first produced in the drama festival in Athens—the City Dionysia—in 423 BC, where it placed third. Subsequently the play was revised, but the revisions were never completed. The text which survives is the revised version, which was apparently not performed in Aristophanes’ time but which circulated in manuscript form. This revised version does contain some anomalies which have not been fully sorted out (e.g., the treatment of Cleon, who died between the original text and the revisions). At the time of the first production, the Athenians had been at war with the Spartans, off and on, for a number of years.
ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ
ΜΑΘΗΤΑΙ ΣΩΚΡΑΤΟΥΣ
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ΧΟΡΟΣ ΝΕΦΕΛΩΝ
ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ΛΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ΠΑΣΙΑΣ ΔΑΝΕΙΣΤΗΣ
ΜΑΡΤΥΣ
ΑΜΥΝΙΑΣ ΔΑΝΕΙΣΤΗΣ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

STREPSIADHES: a middle-aged Athenian
PHEIDIPPIDES: a young Athenian, son of Strepsiades
XANTHIAS: a slave serving Strepsiades
STUDENT: one of Socrates’ pupils in the Thinkery
SOCRATES: chief teacher in the Thinkery
CHORUS OF CLOUDS
THE BETTER ARGUMENT: an older man
THE WORSE ARGUMENT: a young man
PASIAS: one of Strepsiades’ creditors
WITNESS: a friend of Pasias
AMYNIAS: one of Strepsiades’ creditors
STUDENTS OF SOCRATES
Νεφέλαι

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ιοὺ ιού·
ο Ζεύ βασιλεὺ τὸ χρῆμα τῶν νυκτῶν ὡσον·
ἀπέραντον. οὐδέποθ’ ἵμερα γενήσεται;
καὶ μὴν πάλαι γ’ ἀλεκτρυόνος ἱκέται ἐγώ·
oi δ’ οὐκέται τέκνων. ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἂν πρὸ τοῦ.
ἀπόλοιο δήτ’ ὁ πάλαις πολλῶν οὔτε ἱκέται,
ὁτ’ οὐδέ κολασί ἐξεστὶ μοι τόνοι οἰκέται.
ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ὁ χρηστὸς οὐτοσι νεανίας
ἐγείρεται τής νυκτός, ἀλλά πέρδεται
ἐν πέντε σιωπαῖς ἐγκκορδυλημένος.

ἀλλ’ ε’ ἐκεῖ ὥσον ἐγκκεκαλυμμένοι.

ἀλλ’ οὐ δύναμαι δεῖλαι εὐθὺς δακνόμενος
ὑπὸ τής δαπάνης καὶ τῆς φάτνης καὶ τῶν χρεῶν
δια τούτων τῶν ἱκέτων. ὁ δὲ κόμης ἐγὼ
ἐπιπάξεται τε καὶ ἐξωρικεύεται

ἀλλ’ οἱ τὸ γραμματεῖον κἄκφερε τὸ γραμματεῖον
ὅτ’ ἱππολεῖ θ’ ὡς ἑγὼ δ’ ἀπόλλυμαι
ὁμών ἀγούσαν τὴν σελήνην εἰκάδας·
οἱ γὰρ τόκοι χωροῦσιν. ἀπτε παῖ λύχνων,
κάκφερε τὸ γραμματεῖον, ἐν’ ἀναγνώ λαβῶν

4

Clouds

Scene: In the centre of the stage area is a house with a door to Socrates’ educational
establishment, the Thinkery. On one side of the stage is Strepsiades’ house,
in front of which are two beds. Outside the Thinkery there is a small clay
statue of a round goblet, and outside Strepsiades’ house there is a small
clay statue of Hermes. It is just before dawn. Strepsiades and Pheidippides
are lying asleep in the two beds. Strepsiades toses and turns restlessly.
Pheidippides lets a very loud fart in his sleep. Strepsiades sits up wide
awake.

STREPSIADIES

Damn! Lord Zeus, how this night drags on and on!
It’s endless. Won’t daylight ever come?
I heard a cock crowing a while ago,
but my slaves kept snoring. In the old days,
they wouldn’t have dared. Oh, damn and blast this war—
so many problems. Now I’m not allowed
to punish my own slaves. And then there’s him—
this fine young man, who never once wakes up,
but farts the night away, all snug in bed,
wrapped up in five wool coverlets. Ah well,
I guess I should snuggle down and snore away.

[Strepsiades lies down again and tries to sleep. Pheidippides farts again.
Strepsiades finally gives up trying to sleep]

I can’t sleep. I’m just too miserable,
what with being eaten up by all this debt—
thanks to this son of mine, his expenses,
his racing stables. He keeps his hair long
and rides his horses—he’s obsessed with it—
his chariot and pair. He dreams of horses.
And I’m dead when I see the month go by—
with the moon’s cycle now at twenty days,
as interest payments keep on piling up.

[Calling to a slave]

Hey, boy! Light the lamp. Bring me my accounts.

5
ὁπόσοι ὀφείλω καὶ λογίσωμαι τοὺς τόκους.
φέρ᾽ ἵδω τί ὀφείλω; δῶδεκα μνᾶς Πασίας.
tοῦ δώδεκα μνᾶς Πασίας; τί ἐχρησάμην;
ὅτε ἐπιράμην τὸν κοππατίαν. οὕμοι τάλας,
eἰλ ἐξεκάπην πρότερον τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν λίθω.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
Φιλων ἀδικεῖς. ἔλαυνε τὸν σαυτοῦ δρόμον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
tοῦτʻ ἔστι τούτι τὸ κακὸν ὧ μ’ ἀπολώλεκεν
ὅνειροπολεὶ γάρ καὶ καθεύδων ἵπποις.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
πόσους δρόμους ἐλὰ τὰ πολεμιστήρια;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐμὲ μὲν σὺ πολλοὺς τὸν πατέρ᾽ ἑλαῦνες δρόμους.
ἀτὰρ τί χρέος ἔβα με μετὰ τὸν Πασίαν;
tres μναί διφρίσκου καὶ τροχοῖν Ἀμυνίᾳ.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
ἀπαγέ τὸν ὑππον ἐξελίσα σύ καδε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀλλʼ ὧ μὲλʼ ἐξέλιμας ἐμὲ γ’ ἐκ τῶν ἐμῶν,
ὅτε καὶ δάκως ὑφὴληδ κάτεροι τόκου
ἐνεχράσεσθαί φασον.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
ἐτεὸν ὦ πάτερ
τί δυσκολαίνεις καὶ στρέφει τὴν νύχθ’ ὅλην;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
dάκω μὲ δήμαρχος τοὺς ἐκ τῶν στρωμάτων.

Aristophanes

Clouds

[Enter the slave Xanthias with light and tablets]

Let me take these and check my creditors.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

Let me see now . . .

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ [talking in his sleep]

Philon, that's unfair! Drive your chariot straight.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

That there's my problem—that's what's killing me.

Pheidippides [in his sleep]

Even fast asleep he dreams of horses!

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

In this war-chariot race how many times
do we drive round the track?

Pheidippides [in his sleep]

You're driving me,
your father, too far round the bend. Let's see,
after Pasias, what's the next debt I owe?

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

“Three minai to Amyntas.” For what?
A small chariot board and pair of wheels?

Pheidippides [in his sleep]

Let the horse have a roll. Then take him home.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

You, my lad, have been rolling in my cash.
Now I've lost in court, and other creditors
are going to take out liens on all my stuff
to get their interest.

Pheidippides [waking up]

You've been grumbling and tossing around there
all night long.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

I keep getting bitten—
some bum bailiff in the bedding.
ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἔασον ὦ δαμώνιε καταδαρθεῖν τί με.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐ δ’ οὖν κάθευδε· τὰ δὲ χρέα ταῦτ’ ἵσθ’ ὅτι ἐς τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀπαντὰ τίν πὴν τρέψεται. 40
ἐὰν ὁφελ’ ἣ προμήστρι’ ἀπολέσθαι κακῶς, ἦτο τε γῆμ’ ἐπήρη τίν σὴν μὴτέρα.
ἐμοι γὰρ ἦν ἄγρουκος ἣδίστος βίος· εὐρωτίων, ἀκόρητος, εἰκῇ κείμενος,
βρύων μελίτταις καὶ προβάτοις καὶ στεμφύλοις.
ἐπειτ’ ἐγίμμα Μεγακλέους τοῦ Μεγακλέους
αἰδελφιδὸν ἄγρουκος ὄν ἐξ ἀστείων,
σεμνὴν τρυφῶσαν ἐγκεκοισυρωμένην.
ταύτην ὅτ’ ἐγάμουν, συγκατεκλωμῶν ἐγὼ ὄξων τρυγός τρασιᾶς ἐπομενιῶς, 50
ἱ’ αὐτῶν κρόκου καταγλωττισμάτων,
εἰμι μὴν ἡμῖν οὐκ ἔνεστ’ ἐν τῷ λύχνῳ.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἴμοι· τί γάρ μοι τὸν πότην ἧπτες λύχνων; 60
δεῦρ’ ἔλθ’ ἵνα κλάῃς.
ΘΕΡΑΠΩΝ

ἐλαιὸν ἢμῖν οὐκ ἔνεστ’ ἐν τῷ λύχνῳ.
ΟΤΙ ΤΩΝ ΠΑΧΕΙΩΝ ΕΝΕΤΤΕΙΣ ΘΡΥΩΛΛΔΩΝ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὁτ’ ἐν ἀγάλματα χριστάνθων.
μετὰ ταῦθ’, ὅπως νῦν ἐγένεθ’ νῦς οὖτος, ἐμοὶ τε δὴ καὶ τῇ γυναικῇ τάγαθή, περὶ τοῦνόματος δὴ ἐντείθεν ἐλεοδορούμεθα· ἥ μὲν γὰρ ἰππὸν προανέβης πρὸς τοῦραμα, Ξάνθιππον ἢ Χαριππὸν ἢ Καλλιππίδην, ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦ πάππου 'τιθέμην Φειδωνίδην. τέως μὲν οὖν ἐκρινόμεθα· εἶτα τῷ χρόνῳ κοινῷ ξυνήθημεν κἀκεχεθα τοῦ τίθεμεν. τοῦτον τὸν νῦν λαμβάνον' ἐκορίζετο, ἁτοι γὰρ μέγας ἄριτ ἐλαύνης πρὸς πόλιν, ὥστε Μεγακλέης, ξυστίδ' ἔχων: ἐγὼ δὲ ἤδη. ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦ πάππου ἤτιθέμην Φειδωνίδην. τέως μὲν οὖν ἐκρινόμεθα· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπίθετο τοῖς ἐμοῖς οὐδὲν λόγοις, ἀλλ' ἵππερόν μου κατέχεεν τῶν χρημάτων. νῦν οὖν ὅλην τὴν νύκτα φροντίζων ὁδοῦ μίαν ηὗρον ἀτραπὸν δαιμονίως ὑπερφυᾶ, ἣν ἢν ἀναπείσω τουτονί, σωθήσομαι. ἀλλ᾽ ἐξεγεῖραι πρῶτον αὐτὸν βούλομαι. πῶς δὴτ᾽ ἂν ἠδίστ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐπεγείρε τε; [60]

After that, when this son was born to us—
I’m talking about me and my good wife—we argued over what his name should be. She was keen to add -hippos to his name, like Xanthippos, Callipedes, or Chaerippos.9 Me, I wanted the name Pheidonides, his grandpa’s name. Well, we fought about it, and then, after a while, at last agreed. And so we called the boy Pheidippides. She used to cradle the young lad and say, “When you’re grown up, you’ll drive your chariot to the Acropolis, like Megacles, in a full-length robe . . .” I’d say, “No—you’ll drive your goat herd back from Phelleus, like your father, dressed in leather hides . . .” He never listened to a thing I said. And now he’s making my finances sick—a racing fever. But I’ve spent all night thinking of a way to deal with this whole mess, and I’ve found one route, something really good—it could work wonders. If I could succeed, if I could convince him, I’d be all right. Well, first I’d better wake him up. But how? What would be the gentlest way to do it?

[Strepsiades leans over and gently nudges Pheidippides]

Pheidippides . . . my little Pheidippides . . .

Pheidippides [very sleepily]

What is it, father? [80]

Strepsiades

Give me a kiss—
then give me your right hand.

[Strepsiades sits up, leans over, and does what his father has asked]

Pheidippides

All right. There.

What’s going on?

Strepsiades

Tell me this—do you love me?
Aristophanes

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
ή τόν Ποσειδῶν τουτού τόν ἱππίων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
μη ἢ μοί γε τούτων μοιδαμῶς τόν ἱππίων
οὗτος γάρ ὁ θεός αἰτίως μοι τῶν κακῶν.
ἄλλ᾽ εἶπερ ἐκ τῆς καρδίας μ᾽ ὄντως φιλεῖς,
ὡς παῖ πᾶθοι.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
tί οὖν πίθωμαι δὴ τά σοι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐκστρέψον ὡς τάχιστα τοὺς σαυτοῦ τρόπους,
kαὶ μάνθαν’ ἐλθὼν ἃν ἐγὼ παραινέσω.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
λέγε δή, τί κελεύεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
καὶ τι πέισεις;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
πέισομαι τὸν Διόνυσον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
δεῦρο νυν ἀπάβλεπε.
ὁρᾷς τὸ θύριον τοῦτο καὶ τᾠκίδιον;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
ὁρῶ. τί οὖν τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶν ἐτεὸν ὦ πάτερ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ψυχῶν σοφῶν τούτος ἐστὶν φροντιστήριον.
ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἐνοικοῦσ᾽ άνδρες, οἳ τὸν οὐρανον

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
εἰσὶν δὲ τίνες;

Pheidippides

Yes, I do, by Poseidon, lord of horses.

Strepsiades

Don’t give me that lord of horses stuff—he’s the god who’s causing all my troubles.
But now, my son, if you really love me, with your whole heart, then follow what I say.

Pheidippides

What do you want to tell me I should do?

Strepsiades

Change your life style as quickly as you can, then go and learn the stuff I recommend.

Pheidippides

So tell me—what are you asking me?

Strepsiades

You’ll do just what I say?

Pheidippides

Yes, I’ll do it—

I swear by Dionysus.

Strepsiades

All right then.
Look over there—you see that little door, there on that little house?

Pheidippides

Yes, I see it.
What are you really on about, father?

Strepsiades

That’s the Thinkery—for clever minds.
In there men who argue and persuade.
They say that heaven’s an oven damper—it’s all around us—we’re the charcoal.
If someone gives them cash, they’ll teach him how to win an argument on any cause, just or unjust.

Pheidippides

Who are these men?
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ἀκριβῶς τοῦνομα·
μεριμνοφροντισταί καλοὶ τε κάγαθοι.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
αἱβοὶ πονηροὶ γ᾽, οἶδα. τοὺς ἀλαζόνας
tοὺς ἄχριώντας τοὺς ἀνυποδήτους λέγεις,
ὡς ὁ κακοδαίμων Σωκράτης καὶ Χαιρεφῶν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἡ ἢ σώπα· μηδὲν εὔπης νήπιον.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
οὐκ ἂν τὸν Διόνυσον, εἰ δοίης γέ μοι
tοὺς φασιανοὺς οὕς τρέφει Λεωγόρας.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἔλαιον παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς φασιν ἄμφω τῷ λόγῳ,
tὸν κρείττον᾽, ὡς ἔστι, καὶ τὸν ἥττονα.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
καὶ τί σου μαθήσομαι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἔλαιον παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς φασιν ἄμφω τῷ λόγῳ,
tὸν κρείττον᾽, ὡς ἔστι, καὶ τὸν ἥττονα.
τοῦτον τὸν ἐτέρον τοῦ λόγου, τὸν ἥττονα,
νικᾶν λέγοντα φασι ταξικότερα.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
ὁμοίως μοι τῶν ἄδικων τοῦτον λόγον,
αὐτὸν ὁφείλω διὰ σέ, τούτων τῶν χρεῶν
οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοθῇν οὐδ᾽ ἂν οβολὸν οὐδενί.

ΠΕΙΡΑΤΟΣ
οὐκ ἂν πιθοίμην· οὐ γὰρ ἂν τλαίην ἰδεῖν
tοὺς ἰππέας τὸ χρῶμα διακεκλισμένος.
Strepsiades

Then, by Demeter, you won’t be eating any of my food—not you, not your yoke horse, nor your branded thoroughbred. To hell with you—I’ll toss you right out of this house.\(^\text{14}\)

Pheidippides

All right—but Uncle Megacles won’t let me live without my horses. I’m going in the house. I don’t really care what you’re going to do.

Strepsiades

Well, I’ll not take this set back lying down. I’ll pray to the gods and then go there myself—I’ll get myself taught in that Thinkery. Still, I’m old and slow—my memory’s shot. How’m I going to learn hair-splitting arguments, all that fancy stuff? But I have to go. Why do I keep hanging back like this? I should be knocking on the door.

[Strepsiades marches up to the door of the Thinkery and knocks]

Hey, boy . . . little boy.

Student [from inside]

Go to Hell!

[The door opens and the student appears]

Who’s been knocking on the door?

Strepsiades

I’m Strepsiades, the son of Pheidon, from Cicynna.

Student

By god, what a stupid man, to kick the door so hard. You just don’t think. You made a newly found idea miscarry!

Strepsiades

I’m sorry. But I live in the country, far away from here. Tell me what’s happened. What’s miscarried?
ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ’ οὗ θέμει πλήν τοῖς μαθηταῖς λέγειν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

λέγε νῦν ἐμοὶ θαρρῶν· ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐτοσὶ ἰκῶ μαθητής ἐς τὸ φροντιστήριον.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

λέξω. νομίσαι δὲ ταῦτα χρὴ μυστήρια.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πῶς δήτα διεμέτρησεν;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

δεξιώτατα.
κηρὸν διατήξας, εἶτα τὴν ψύλλαν λαβὼν ἐνέβαψεν ἐς τὸν κηρὸν αὐτῆς τὼ πόδε, κᾆτα ψυχείσῃ περιέφυσαν Περσικαί. ταύτας ὑπολύσας ἀνεμέτρει τὸ χωρίον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ τῆς λεπτότητος τῶν φρενῶν.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

τί δήτ’ ἂν ἐτερον εἰ πίθου Σωκράτους φροντίσαι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ποίον; ἀντιβολῷ κάτειπέ μοι.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ἀνήρετ’ αὐτῶν Χαιρεφών ὁ Σφήττιος ὁπότερα τὴν γνώμην ἔχεις, τὰς ἕμπιδας κατὰ τὸ στόμ᾽ ἄδει νη κατὰ τούρροπτύγιον.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δή τ᾽ ἐκεῖνος εἶπε περὶ τῆς ἐμπίδος;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ἐφασκεν εἶναι τούντερον τῆς ἐμπίδος 160
στενῶν· διὰ λεπτοῦ δ᾽ ὤντος αὐτοῦ τὴν πνοὴν
βία βαδίζει καθιεροποιεύον·
ἔπειτα κοιλὸν πρὸς στενῷ προσκείμενον
τὸν πρωκτὸν ἠχεῖν ὑπὸ βίας τοῦ πνεύματος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

σάλπιγξ ὁ πρωκτὸς ἐστίν ἀρά τῶν ἐμπίδων. 165
ἄ τρισμακάριος τοῦ διεντερεύματος.
ἡ ῥᾳδίως φεύγων ἄν ἀποφύγοι δάκην
όστις δίοιδε τούντερον τῆς ἐμπίδος.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

πρώην δὲ γε γνώμην μεγάλην ἀφῃρέθη
ὑπ᾽ ἀσκαλαβώτου.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τίνα τρόπον; κάτειπέ μοι. 170

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ζητοῦντος αὐτοῦ τῆς σελήνης τὰς ὁδοὺς
καὶ τὰς περιφορὰς εἶτ᾽ ἀνω κεχηνότος
ἀπὸ τῆς ὀροφῆς νύκτωρ γαλεώτης κατέχεσεν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὕσθην γαλεώτῃ καταχέσαντι Σωκράτους.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ἐχθὲς δὲ γ᾽ ἡμῖν δεῖπνον οὐκ ἦν ἑσπέρας.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εἶεν· τί ὅδι πρὸς τάλφιτ᾽ ἐπαλαμήσατο;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

κατὰ τῆς τραπέζης καταπάσας λεπτὴν τέφραν
κάμψας ὀβελίσκον εἶτα διαβήτην λαβὼν
ἐκ τῆς παλαίστρας θοὶμάτων ύψειλετο.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δήτ’ ἐκείνον τὸν Θαλῆν θαυμάζομεν;
ἀνοιγ’ ἄνοιγ’ ἀνύσας τὸ φροντιστήριον,
καὶ δεῖξον ὡς τάχιστά μοι τὸν Σωκράτη.
μαθητικό γάρ· ἀλλ’ ἀνοιγε τὴν θύραν.
οὐ Ἡράκλεις ταυτὶ ποδαπὰ τὰ θηρία;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

τί ἐθαύμασας; τῷ σοι δοκοῦσι εἰκέναι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τοῖς ἐκ Πύλου ληφθεῖσι τοῖς Λακωνικοῖς.
ἀτὰρ τί ποτ’ ἐς τὴν γῆν βλέπουσιν οὕτω;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ζητοῦσιν οὗτοι τὰ κατὰ γῆς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

βολβοὺς ἀρα
ζητοῦσι. μή νυν τουτογί φροντίζετε·
ἐγὼ γὰρ οἶδ’ ἱν’ εἰσί μεγάλοι καὶ καλοί.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

οὗτοι δ’ ἐρεβοδιφῶσιν ὑπὸ τὸν Τάρταρον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δῆθ’ ὁ πρωκτὸς ἐς τὸν οὐρανὸν βλέπει;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

αὐτὸς καθ’ αὐτὸν ἀστρονομεῖν διδάσκεται.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μῆπο γε μήπω γ’· ἀλλ’ ἐπιμενάντων, ἵνα
αὐτοῖσι κοινώσω τι πραγμάτων ἐμὸν.
ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ
αὐτή δὲ σοι γῆς περίοδος πάσης. ὅρας; αἰσθέ μὲν Ἀθῆναι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τί σὺ λέγεις; σὺ πείθομαι, ἐπεὶ δικαστὰς οὐχ ὅρω καθημένοις.

STUDENT
It's not allowed.
They can't spend too much time outside, not in the open air.

[The students get up from their studying positions and disappear into the interior of the Thinkery. Strepsiades starts inspecting the equipment on the walls and on the tables]

STREPSIADES 
My goodness, what is this thing? Explain it to me.

STUDENT
That there's astronomy.

STREPSIADES
And what's this?

STUDENT
That's geometry.

STREPSIADES
What use is that?

STUDENT
It's used to measure land.

STREPSIADES
You mean those lands handed out by lottery.\(^{18}\)

STUDENT
Not just that—it's for land in general.

STREPSIADES
A fine idea—useful . . . democratic, too.

STUDENT
Look over here—here's a map of the entire world. See? Right there, that's Athens.

STREPSIADES
What do you mean?
I don't believe you. There are no jury men—I don't see them sitting on their benches.
ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ὁς τούτ’ ἀληθῶς Ἀττικὸν τὸ χωρίον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καὶ ποῦ Κικυννῆς εἰσίν οὐμοὶ δημόται;

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἔνεισιν. ἡ δὲ Ἐβοί, ὡς ὅρας,

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

όφη ὅπο γὰρ ἴμων παρετάθη καὶ Περικλέους,

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

ὅπου ὄπως οὖν τε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νὴ Δί᾽ οἰμώξεσθ᾽ ἄρα.

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

αὐτός.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τίς αὐτός;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐ διὰ ἄναψον αὐτὸν μοι μέγα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐ διὰ ἄναψον αὐτὸν μοι μέγα.
Αριστοφάνης

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ

αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν σὺ κάλεσον· οὐ γάρ μοι σχολή.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ Σώκρατε, 220
ὦ Σωκρατίδιον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

τί με καλεῖς ὥφημερε; 225

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πρῶτον μὲν ὁ τί δρᾷς ἀντιβολῶ κάτειπέ μοι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀεροβατῶ καὶ περιφρονῶ τὸν ἥλιον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐπειτ’ ἀπὸ ταρροῦ τοὺς θεοὺς ὑπερφρονεῖς,
ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, εἴπερ;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε 230
ἐξηῦρον ὀρθῶς τὰ μετέωρα πράγματα,
εἰ μὴ κρεμάσας τὸ νόημα καὶ τὴν φροντίδα
λεπτὴν καταμείξας ἐς τὸν ὅμοιον ἀέρα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί φῆς; 235

ﺞ οὐ γὰρ ἧν ὧν κατάβηθ᾽ ὡς ἐμέ, ἵνα με διδάξῃς ἁντιπερ οὔονεθ ἐλήλυθα.

ΣΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ηλθες δὲ κατά τί;
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

βουλόμενος μαθεῖν λέγειν.

ὑπὸ γὰρ τῶν χρήστων τε δύσκολωτάτων

άγομαι φέρομαι, τὰ χρήματ’ ἐνεχυράζομαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

πόθεν δ᾽ ὑπόχρεως σαυτὸν ἔλαθες γενόμενος;

νόσος μ᾽ ἐπέτριψεν ἱππικὴ δεινὴ φαγεῖν.

ἀλλὰ μὲ δίδαξον τὸν ἐπεικὸν τοῦ σοῦ λόγου,

τὸν μηδὲν ἀποδιδόντα. μισθὸν δ᾽ ὅντων ἀν

πράττῃ μ᾽ ἀμοιμαὶ σοι καταθήσει τοὺς θεούς.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ποίους θεοὺς ὀμεῖ σύ; πρῶτον γὰρ θεοὶ

ἡμῖν νόμισμ᾽ οὐκ ἔστι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τῷ γὰρ ὄμνυτ᾽; ἢ

σιδαρέοσιν ὥσπερ ἐν Βυζαντίῳ;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

καθίζε τοίνυν ἐπὶ τὸν ἱερὸν σκίμποδα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἰδοὺ κάθημαι.

οἱ Δί᾽ εἴπερ ἔστι γε.

καὶ ἔγγενέσθαι ταῖς Νεφέλαισιν ἐς λόγους,

ταῖς ἡμετέραισι δαίμοσιν;

μάλιστα γε.

καθίζε τοίνυν ἐπί τὸν ἱερὸν σκίμποδα.

ἰδοὺ κάθημαι.
Aristophanes

ΣΩΚΡΑΣ

toutōn toutων λαβὲ
tōn στέφανον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐπὶ τί στέφανον; οὗμι Σώκρατες
ἀσπέρ με τὸν Ἀθάμανθ’ ὅπως μή θύσετε.

ΣΩΚΡΑΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ ταύτα πάντα τοὺς τελουμένους
ήμεις ποιούμεν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐίτα δή τί κερδανῶ;

ΣΩΚΡΑΣ

λέγειν γενήσει τρῖμμα κρόταλον παιπάλη.
ἀλλ᾽ ἔχ᾽ ἀτρεμί.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ ψεύσει γέ με
καταπαττόμενος γενήσομαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΣ

εὐφημεῖν χρὴ τὸν πρεσβύτην καὶ τῆς εὐχῆς ἐπακούειν.
αἱ δέσποτα ἀνάκτητη Ἀήρ, ὃς ἔχει τὴν γῆν μετέωρον,
λαμπρὸς τ’ Αἰθήρ σεμναί τε θεαὶ Νεφέλαι βροντησικέ-
ραυνοι,
ἀρθήτε φάνητ’ αὐτές προευκολητεύοντος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μή ποτε κυνῆν οἴκοθεν ἐλθεῖν ἐμὲ τὸν κακοδαίμον’

ΣΩΚΡΑΣ

ἐλθεῖτε δῆτ᾽ οἱ πολυτίμητοι Νεφέλαι τῷ Ὀλύμπῳ εἰς ἐπίδειξιν
κάθησθε.
οί Μαιώτιν άλμην ἔχετ’ ὃ σκόπελον νυφόεντα Μίμαντος· ὑπακούσατε δεξάμεναι θυσίαν καὶ τοῖς ἱεροῖς χαρεῖσαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀέναιοι Νεφέλαι 275
ἀρθῶμεν φανεραὶ δροσερὰν φύσιν εὐάγητον,
πατρὸς ἀπ’ Ὡκεανοῦ βαρυαχέος ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων κορυφὰς ἐπὶ
δενδροκόμους, ἵνα 280
tηλεφανεῖς σκοπιάς ἀφορώμεθα,
καρποῦς τ’ ἀρδομέναν ἱερὰν χθόνα,
καὶ ποταμῶν ζαθέων κελαδήματα,
καὶ πόντον κελάδοντα βαρύβρομον.

όμμα γὰρ αἰθέρος ἢκάματον σελαγεῖται 285
μαρμαρέαις ἐν αὐγαῖς.

ἀλλ’ ἀποσεισάμεναι νέφος ὀμβρίου
ἀθανάτας ἱδέας ἐπιδώμεθα
τηλεσκόπῳ ὀμβατι γαίαν. 290

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὦ μέγα σεμναὶ Νεφέλαι φανερῶς ἠκούσατέ μου καλέσαντος.

ἡθον φωνῆς ἀμα καὶ βροντῆς μυκησαμένης θεοσέπτου;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καὶ σέβομαι γ’ ὃ πολυτίμητοι καὶ βούλομαι ἀντάποστερδεῖν
πρὸς τὰς βροντάς· οὕτως αὐτὰς τετρεμαίνω καὶ πεφόβημαι.

κεὶ θέμας ἐστὶν, ννι ν’ ἦδη, κεὶ μὴ θέμας ἐστι, χεσείω. 295
Αριστοφάνης

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐ μὴ σκώψει μηδὲ ποιήσει ἀπέρ οἱ τρυγοδαίμονες οὗτοι, ἀλλ’ εἰσφήμευ· μέγα γὰρ τι θεῶν κανεῖται σμῆνος ἁσίδαις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

παρθένοι ὁμβροφόροι

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πρὸς τοῦ Δίος ἀντιβολῶ σε φράσον, τίνες εἴσ’ ὦ Σώκρατες αὕται

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἥκιστ᾽ ἀλλ’ οὐράνιαι Νεφέλαι μεγάλαι θεαὶ ἀνδράσι μεγάλαι ἐοὶ προέρχομαι ὑπερεφεῖς καὶ ἀγάλματα, καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἀναδείκνυται, εὐστέφανοί τε θεῶν θυσίαι θαλίαι τε παντοδαπαῖς ἐν ὅμοι, ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν, ἵνα μυστοδόκος δόμος ἐν τελεταῖς ἁγίαις ἀναδείκνυται, οὐρασίως τε τοῦ θεοῦ δωρήματα, καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἀναδείκνυται, εὐστέφανοί τε θεῶν θυσίαι θαλίαι τε παντοδαπαῖς ἐν ὅμοι, ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν, ἵνα μυστοδόκος δόμος ἐν τελεταῖς ἁγίαις ἀναδείκνυται, οὐρασίως τε τοῦ θεοῦ δωρήματα, καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἀναδείκνυται, εὐστέφανοί τε θεῶν θυσίαι θαλίαι τε παντοδαπαῖς ἐν ὅμοι, ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν, ἵνα μυστοδόκος δόμος ἐν τελεταῖς ἁγίαις ἀναδείκνυται, οὐρασίως τε τοῦ θεοῦ δωρήματα, καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἀναδείκνυται, εὐστέφανοί τε θεῶν θυσίαι θαλίαι τε παντοδαπαῖς ἐν ὅμοι, ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν, ἵνα μυστοδόκος δόμος ἐν τελεταῖς ἁγίαις ἀναδείκνυται, οὐρασίως τε τοῦ θεοῦ δωρήματα, καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἀναδείκνυται, εὐστέφανοί τε θεῶν θυσίαι θαλίαι τε παντοδαπαῖς ἐν ὅμοι, ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν, ἵνα μυστοδόκος δόμος ἐν τελεταῖς ἁγίαις ἀναδείκνυται, οὐρασίως τε τοῦ θεοῦ δωρήματα, καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἀναδείκνυται, εὐστέφανοί τε θεῶν θυσίαι θαλίαι τε παντοδαπαῖς ἐν ὅμοι, ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν, ἵνα μυστοδόκος δόμος ἐν τελεταῖς ἁγίαις ἀναδείκνυται, οὐρασίως τε τοῦ θεοῦ δωρήματα, καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἀναδείκνυται, εὐστέφανοί τε θεῶν θυσίαι θαλίαι τε παντοδαπαῖς ἐν ὅμοι, ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν, ἵνα μυστοδόκος δόμος ἐν τελεταῖς ἁγίαις ἀναδείκνυται, οὐρασίως τε τοῦ θεοῦ δωρήματα, καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἀναδείκνυται, εὐστέφανοί τε θεῶν θυσίαι θαλίαι τε παντοδαπαῖς ἐν ὅμοι, ἀρρήτων ἱερῶν, ἵνα μυστοδόκος δόμος ἐν τελεταῖς ἁγίαις ἀναδείκνυται, οὐρασίως τε τοῦ θεοῦ δωρήματα, καὶ πρόσοδοι μακάρων ἀναδείκ

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

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ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ταῦτ’ ἀρ’ ἀκούσα’ αὐτῶν τὸ φθέγμ’ ἢ ψυχὴ μου πεπότηται, καὶ λεπτολογεῖν ἤδη ζητεῖ καὶ περὶ καπνοῦ στενολεσχεῖν, ἢρι τ’ ἐπερχομένῳ Βρομία χάρις, εὐκελάδων τε χορῶν ἐρεθίσματα, καὶ μοῦσα βαρύβρομος αὐλῶν.
καὶ γνωμιδίῳ γνώμην νύξασ᾽ ἑτέρῳ λόγῳ ἀντιλογῆσαι· ὥστ᾽ εἰ πῶς ἔστιν ἰδεῖν αὐτὰς ἢ δὴ φανερὸς ἐπιθυμώ.

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Aristophanes

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ μὰ Δ' οἶαθ᾽ ὅτι πλείστους αὐτὰς βόσκουσι σοφιστάς,
Θουριμάντεις ἰατροτέχνας σφαγιδονυχαργοκομίτες,
κυκλών τε χορῶν ἀσματοκάμπτας ἀνδρὰς μετεωροφένακας,
οὐδὲν δράντας βόσκουσι’ ἄργοις, ὅτι ταῦτας μονουσοποιοῦσιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ταῦτ’ ἂρ’ ἐποίουν ύγραν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταγλὰν δαίων ὀρμάν,
πλοκάμους θ' ἐκατογκεφάλα Τυφῶ πρημαινούσας τε θνηλας,
εἰτ’ αερίας διεράς, γαμψοὺς οἰωνοὺς ἀερονηχεῖς,
ὅμορους θ' ὑδάτων δροσερᾶν Νεφελᾶν· εἰτ’ ἀντ’ αὐτῶν
catέπινον κεστράν τεμάχη μεγαλᾶν ἀγαθὰ κρέα τ’ ὀρνίθεια κιχηλᾶν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

diὰ μέντοι τάσδ᾽ οὐχὶ δικαίως;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

λέξον δή μοι, τί παθοῦσαι,
εἴπερ νεφέλαι γ᾽ εἰσὶν ἀληθῶς, θνηταῖς εἴξασι γυναιξίν; οὐ γὰρ εἰκόνων τεμαχίων
κατέπινον κεστράν τεμαχῇ μεγαλᾶν ἀγαθὰ κρέα τ’ ὀρνίθεια κιχηλὰν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

φέρε ποίαι γὰρ των ἐσών;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδα σαφῶς· εἴξασιν γοῦν ἔριδον πεπταμένοισιν,
κοὐχὶ γυναιξὶν μὰ Δ’ οὐδ’ ὁτιάμ’ αὐτὰς δὲ μύνας ἔχουσιν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

άπόκρωναί νυν ἀττʼ ἂν ἔρωμαι.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

λέγε νυν ταχέως ὁ τι βούλει.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ηδὴ ποτ' ἀναβλέπας εἴδες νεφέλην κενταύρῳ ὁμοίαν,
ἡ παρδάλει ἢ λύκῳ ἢ ταύρῳ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νὴ Δι᾽ ἔγωγ᾽. εἶτα τί τοῦτο;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

γίγνονται πάνθ᾽ ὧ τι βούλονται. κἂτ' ἢν μὲν ἰδώσι καμάκτην
ἀγριόν τινα τῶν λασίων τούτων, οἰόν τῶν Ἴνεοφάντου,
σκώπτουσαι τὴν μανίαν αὐτοῦ κενταύροις ἤκασαν αὐτάς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί γὰρ ἅρπαγα τῶν δημοσίων κατίδωσι Σίμωνα, τί
drósων;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀποφαίνουσαι τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ ἐξαίφνης ἐγένοντο.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

tαὐτ' ἄρα ταῦτα Κλεώνυμοι ἀνταί τὸν ρήφασίν χθές
ἰδώσαι,
ὁτι δειλότατον τοῦτον ἐώρων, ἑλαφοι διὰ τούτ' ἐγένοντο.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

καὶ νῦν γ' ὅτι Κλεισθένη εἶδον, ὄρης, διὰ τούτ' ἐγένοντο

gynaikeis.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

χαίρετε τοῖς ὡς δέσποιναι- καὶ νῦν, ἐξερ τὴν κάλλων,
οὐρανομήκῃ ρήξατε κάμοι φωνήν, ὡς παμβασίλειαι.

Strepsiades

Ask me what you want.

Fire away.

Socrates

Have you ever gazed up there
and seen a cloud shaped like a centaur,
or a leopard, wolf, or bull?

Strepsiades

Yes, I have.

Socrates

They become anything they want.
So if they see some hairy savage type,
one of those really wild and wooly men,
like Xenophantes’ son, they mock his moods,
transforming their appearance into centaurs.

Strepsiades

What if they glimpse a thief of public funds,
like Simon? What do they do then?

Socrates

They expose
just what he’s truly like—they change at once,
transform themselves to wolves.

Strepsiades

Ah ha, I see.
So that’s why yesterday they changed to deer.
They must have caught sight of Cleonymos—
the man who threw away his battle shield—
they knew he was fearful coward.

Socrates

And now it’s clear they’ve seen Cleisthenes—
that’s why, as you can see, they’ve changed to women.

Strepsiades [to the Chorus of Clouds]

All hail to you, lady goddesses.
And now, if you have ever spoken out
to other men, let me hear your voice,
you queenly powers.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
 χαῖρ᾽ ὦ πρεσβῦτα παλαιογενὲς θηρατὰ λόγων φιλομούσων,
 σοὶ τε λεπτοτάτων λήρων ἵερεὺ, φράζε πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὅ ἐστιν
 χρῆσις.
 οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἄλλῳ γ᾽ ὑπακούσαμεν τῶν νῦν μεταφροσοφιστῶν
 πλὴν ᾧ Προδίκῳ, τῷ μὲν σοφίᾳ καὶ γνώμης οὖνεκα, σοὶ δὲ,
 ὅτι βρενθύει τ᾽ ἐν ταῖσιν ὁδὸς καὶ τὼφθαλμω ὁπαράβάλλεις,
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ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
 ἁ γῆ τοῦ φθέγματος, ὡς ἱερὸν καὶ σεμνὸν καὶ τερατῶδες.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
 αὕται γάρ τοι μόναι εἰσὶ θεαί, τἄλλα δὲ πάντ᾽ ἐστὶν
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ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
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ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
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Aristophanes

ΣΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ
αὕται βροντῶσι κυλινδάμεναι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τῷ τρόπῳ ὦ πάντα σὺ τολμῶν;

ΣΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ὅταν ἐμπλησθῶσιν ὕδατος πολλοῦ κάναγκασθῶσι φέρεσθαί, κατακρημνάμεναι πλήρεις ὃμβρου δί' ἀνάγκην, εἶτα βαρεῖαι εἰς ἀλλήλας ἐμπέπτουσαί βίγγυνται καὶ παταγοῦσιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ὁ δὲ ἀναγκάζων ἔστι τίς αὐτάς, οὐχ ὁ Ζεῦς, ὥστε φέρεσθαί;

ΣΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ήκαστ' ἀλλ' αἰθέριος Δῖνος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
Δῖνος; τούτι μ' ἐλελήθειν, ὥστε φέρεσθαι;

ΣΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ
οὐκ ήκουσάς μου τὰς Νεφέλας ὕδατος μεστὰς ὅτι φημὶ ἐμπιπτούσας εἰς ἀλλήλας παταγεῖν διὰ τὴν πυκνότητά;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
φέρε τούτι τῷ χρή πιστεύειν;

ΣΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἀπὸ σαυτοῦ 'γὼ σε διδάξω.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω καὶ δεινὰ ποιεῖ γ' εὐθὺς μοι, καὶ τετάρακται χώσπερ βροντή τὸ ζωμίδιον παταγεῖ καὶ δεινὰ κέκραγεν-ἀτρέμας πρῶτον παππάξ παππάξ, κάπετ' ἐπάγει παππάξ—

Socrates

These Clouds do, as they roll around.

Strepsiades

But how?

Explain that, you who dares to know it all.

Socrates

When they are filled with water to the brim and then, suspended there with all that rain, are forced to move, they bump into each other. They’re so big, they burst with a great boom.

Strepsiades

But what’s forcing them to move at all? Doesn’t Zeus do that?

Socrates

No—that’s the aerial Vortex.33

Strepsiades

Vortex! Well, that’s something I didn’t know. So Zeus is now no more, and Vortex rules instead of him. But you still have not explained a thing about those claps of thunder.

Socrates

Weren’t you listening to me? I tell you, when the Clouds are full of water and collide, they’re so thickly packed they make a noise.

Strepsiades

Come on now—who’d ever believe that stuff?

Socrates

I’ll explain, using you as a test case. Have you ever gorged yourself on stew at the Panathenaea and later had an upset stomach—then suddenly some violent movement made it rumble?34

Strepsiades

Yes, by Apollo! It does weird things—I feel unsettled. That small bit of stew rumbles around and makes strange noises, just like thunder. At first it’s quite quiet—“pappax pappax”—then it starts getting louder—

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χώταν χέξω, κομιδή βροντή παπαπαππάξ οόσπερ ἐκεῖναι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

σκέψαι τοίνυν ἀπὸ γαστριδίου τυννουτουί οία πέπορδας·
τὸν δ’ Ἀέρα τόνδ’ ἄντ’ ἀπέραντον πῶς οὐκ εἰκὼς μέγα

ΒΡΟΝΤΑΣ

ταῦτ’ ἄρα καὶ τῶνόματ’ ἀλλήλου βροντή καὶ πορδὴ ὀμοίω.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ταῦτ’ ἄρα καὶ τῶνόματ’ ἀλλήλου βροντή καὶ πορδή ὀμοίω.

τὸν δ’ Ἀέρα τόνδ’ ὄντ’ ἀπέραντον πῶς οὐκ εἰκὸς μέγα

βροντάν;

καὶ καταφρύγει βάλλων ἡμᾶς, τοὺς δὲ ζῶντας περιφλύει;

τούτον γὰρ δὴ φανερῶς ὁ Ζεὺς ἵησ’ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐπιόρκους.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

καὶ πῶς ὃ μῶρε σὺ καὶ Κρονίων ὄζων καὶ βεκκεσέληνε,

εἴπερ βάλλεταν γένος ἐνεπόρκους, δητ’ οὐχὶ Σίμων’ ἐνεπόρκους

οὐδὲ Κλεώνυμον οὐδὲ Θέωρον; καίτοι σφόδρα γ’ εἰσ’ ἐπιόρκους.

οὐκ οἶδ’

ἀτὰρ εὖ σὺ λέγειν φαίνει. τί γάρ ἐστιν δῆθ’ ὁ

κεραυνός;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδ’. ἀτὰρ εὖ σὺ λέγειν φαίνει. τί γὰρ ἐστιν δῆθ’ ὁ

κεραυνός;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὁταν ἐς ταὐτὰς ἄνεμος ἐρῶς μετεωρισθεὶς κατακλησθῇ,

ἔνδοθεν αὐτὰς ὁσπέρ κύστιν φυσά, κάπεθ’ ύπ’ ἀνάγχης

ρήξας αὐτὰς ἐξω φέρεται σοβαρός διὰ τὴν πυκνότητα,

ὑπὸ τοῦ ῥῶβδου καὶ τῆς ρύμης αὐτῶς ἑαυτῶν κατακάων.

“Aristophanes

“papapappax”—and when I take a shit,
it really thunders “papapappax”—
just like these Clouds.

Socrates

So think about it—
if your small gut can make a fart like that,
why can't the air, which goes on for ever,
produce tremendous thunder. Then there's this—
consider how alike these phrases sound,
"thunder clap" and "fart and crap."

Strepsiades

All right, but then explain this to me—
Where does lightning come from, that fiery blaze,
which, when it hits, sometimes burns us up,
sometimes just singes us and lets us live?
Clearly Zeus is hurling that at perjurers.

Socrates

You stupid driveling idiot, you stink
of olden times, the age of Cronos! If Zeus
is really striking at the perjurers,
how come he's not burned Simon down to ash,
or else Cleonymos or Theorus?
They perjure themselves more than anyone. No. Instead he strikes at his own temple
at Sunium, our Athenian headland,
and at his massive oak trees there. Why?
What's his plan? Oak trees can't be perjured.

Strepsiades

I don't know. But that argument of yours
seems good. All right, then, what’s a lightning bolt?

Socrates

When a dry wind blows up into the Clouds
and gets caught in there, it makes them inflate,
like the inside of a bladder. And then
it has to burst them all apart and vent,
rushing out with violence brought on
by dense compression—its force and friction
cause it to consume itself in fire.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νη Δι᾽ ἐγὼ γοῦν ἀτεχνῶς ἐπαθον τοιτὸ ποτε Διασίοισιν ὑπότων γαστέρα τοῖς συγγενέσιν, κατ᾽ οὐκ ἔσχων ἀμελήσασι· ἥ δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔφυσεν, εἰτ᾽ ἔξαφνης διαλακήσασα πρὸς αὐτὸ τῶφθαλμω ἔμοι προσετίλησεν καὶ κατέκαυσεν τὸ πρόσωπον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ τῆς μεγάλης ἐπιθυμήσας σοφίας ἄνθρωπε παρ᾽ ἡμῶν, ὡς εὐδαίμων ἐν Ἀθηναίοις καὶ τοῖς Ἑλλήσις, εἰ μνήμων ἐν καὶ φροντιστήν καὶ τὸ ταλαίπωραν ἐνεστὼν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, καὶ μὴ κάμνεις μὴ βαδίζων, μὴ ῥιγῶν ἄχθει λίαν μὴ ἀριστᾶν ἐπιθυμεῖς, οἴνου τ᾽ ἀπέχει καὶ γυμνασίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀμελεῖς, καὶ βέλτιστον τοῦτο νομίζεις, ὥστε εἰκὸς δεξιὸν ἄνδρα, νικᾶν πράττων καὶ πολεμίζων καὶ τῇ γλώσσῃ πολέμων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ᾽ οὖνκα γε ψυχῆς στερρᾶς δυσκολοκοίτου τε μερίμνης καὶ φειδωλοῦ καὶ τρυσιβίου γαστρὸς καὶ θυμβρεπιδείπνου, ἀμέλει θαρρῶν οὖν εἶμι ἀντίχρησθαν ἀναφερόμενοι χάριν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀλλὰ τί δήτ᾽ οὖν νομεῖς ἡδὴ θεῶν οὐδένα πλὴν ἀπερὶ ἡμεῖς, τὸΧάοσ τούτο καὶ τὰς Νεφέλας καὶ τὴν γλῶσαν, τρία ταυτὰ ἐν τῇ γλώσσῃ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐδ᾽ ἂν διαλεξθεῖσαν γ᾽ ἀτεχνῶς τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἀπαντῶν· οὐδ᾽ ἂν θορυβοῦσαν, οὐδ᾽ ἂν σπείρασαν, οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἰλισθητοῖν λίβανωτον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

λέγε νῦν ἡμῖν ὅ τι σοι δρῶμεν θαρρῶν, ὥσ ὡς ἀτυχήσεις ἡμᾶς τιμῶν καὶ θαμμάτων καὶ ζητῶν δεξιός εἶναι.
Strepsiades

O you sovereign queens,
from you I ask one really tiny favour—
to be the finest speaker in all Greece,
within a hundred miles.

Chorus Leader

You’ll get that from us.
From now on, in time to come, no one will win
more votes among the populace than you.

Strepsiades

No speaking on important votes for me!
That’s not what I’m after. No, no. I want
to twist all legal verdicts in my favour,
to evade my creditors.

Chorus Leader

You’ll get that,
just what you desire. For what you want
is nothing special. So be confident—
give yourself over to our agents here.

Strepsiades

I’ll do that—I’ll place my trust in you.
Necessity is weighing me down—the horses,
those thoroughbreds, my marriage—all that
has worn me out. So now, this body of mine
I’ll give to them, with no strings attached,
to do with as they like—to suffer blows,
go without food and drink, live like a pig,
to freeze or have my skin flayed for a pouch—
if I can just get out of all my debt
and make men think of me as bold and glib,
as fearless, impudent, detestable,
one who cobbles lies together, makes up words,
a practised legal rogue, a statute book,
a chattering fox, sly and needle sharp,
a slippery fraud, a sticky rascal,
foul whipping boy or twisted villain,
troublemaker, or idly prattling fool.
If they can make those who run into me
call me these names, they can do what they want—
no questions asked. If, by Demeter, they’re keen,
they can convert me into sausages
and serve me up to men who think deep thoughts.
Αριστοφάνης

ΧΟΡΟΣ

λήμα μὲν πάρεστι τοδέ γ᾽
οὐκ ἄτολμον ἀλλ᾽ ἕτοιμον, ἵσθι δ᾽ ὡς
tαῦτα μαθὼν παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ κλέος σύρανόμηκε
ἐν βροτοῖσιν ἐξεῖς. 460

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

tὶ πείσομαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τὸν πάντα χρόνον μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ
ζηλωτότατον βίον ἀνθρώπων διάξεις.

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ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀρά γε τούτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐγὼ ποτ᾽ ὡς
δῶμοιμαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁστε γε σου πολλοὺς ἐπὶ ταῖς βουλαῖς ἀεί καθήσαται,
βουλομένους ἀνακοινωῦσαν τε καὶ ἐς λόγον ἑλθέν
πράγματα καντιγραφῶς πολλάν ταλάντων,
ἀξία σῇ φρενὶ συμβουλευσομένους μετὰ σοῦ. 475

— ἄλλ᾽ ἐγχείρει τὸν πρεσβύτην ὅ τι περ μέλλεις προδιδάσκειν,
καὶ διακάνει τὸν νοῦν αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς γνώμης ἀποπειρῶ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄγε δὴ κάτειπέ μοι σὺ τὸν σαυτοῦ τρόπον,
ἵν᾽ αὐτὸν εἰδὼς ὅστις ἐστὶ μηχανὰς ἤδη ὀπεῖτοι πρὸς σὲ καινὰ προσφέρω. 480

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τί δέ; τειχομαχεῖν μοι διανοεῖ πρὸς τῶν θεῶν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐκ, ἀλλὰ βραχέα σου πυθέσθαι βούλουμαι.
ἡ μνήμονικὸς εἶ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

δύο τρόπω νῦ τὸν Δία.

Clouds

Chorus

Here's a man whose mind's now smart,
no holding back—prepared to start
When you have learned all this from me
you know your glory will arise
among all men to heaven’s skies.

Strepsiades

What must I undergo?

Chorus

For all time, you’ll live with me
a life most people truly envy.

Strepsiades

You mean I’ll really see that one day?

Chorus

Hordes will sit outside your door
wanting your advice and more—
to talk, to place their trust in you
for their affairs and lawsuits, too,
things which merit your great mind.
They’ll leave you lots of cash behind.

Chorus Leader [to Socrates]

So get started with this old man’s lessons,
what you intend to teach him first of all—
rouse his mind, test his intellectual powers.

Socrates

Come on then, tell me the sort of man you are—
once I know that, I can bring to bear on you
my latest batteries with full effect.

Strepsiades

What’s that? By god, are you assaulting me?

Socrates

No—I want to learn some things from you.
What about your memory?

Strepsiades

To tell the truth
it works two ways. If someone owes me something,
I remember really well. But if it’s poor me
that owes the money, I forget a lot.
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἔνεστι δῆτα μανθάνειν ἐν τῇ φύσει;
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
λέγειν μὲν οὐκ ἔνεστ’, ἀποστερεῖν δ’ ἐν.
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
πῶς οὖν δυνήσει μανθάνειν;
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀμέλει καλῶς.
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἄγε νυν ὅπως, ὅταν τι προβάλλω σοι σοφὸν
περὶ τῶν μετεώρων, εὐθέως ὑφαρπάσει.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τί δαί; κυνηδὸν τὴν σοφίαν σιτήσομαι;
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἄνθρωπος ἀμαθὴς οὑτοσὶ καὶ βάρβαρος.
δέδοικά σ’ οὐ πρεσβύτα μὴ πληγών δέει.
φέρ᾽ ἵδω τί δρήσθην, ἢν τίς σε τύπτη;
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τύπτομαι,
ἔπειτ᾽ ἐπισχὼν ὀλίγον ἐπιμαρτύρομαι,
εἶτ᾽ αὖθις διαλιπὼν δικάζομαι.
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἴθι νυν κατάθου θοἰμάτιον.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀδίκηκά τι,
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
οὐκ, ἀλλὰ γυμνοὺς εἰσίναι νομίζεται.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀλλ’ οὐχὶ φευράσων ἐγγὺ εἰσέρχομαι.
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
κατάθου. τί ληρεῖς;

Socrates
Do you have any natural gift for speech?
Strepsiades
Not for speaking—only for evading debt.
Socrates
So how will you be capable of learning?
Strepsiades
Easily—that shouldn’t be your worry.
Socrates
All right. When I throw out something wise
about celestial matters, you make sure
you snatch it right away. 
[490]
Strepsiades
What’s that about?
Am I to eat up wisdom like a dog?
Socrates [aside]
This man’s an ignorant barbarian!
Old man, I fear you may need a beating.
[to Strepsiades]
Now, what do you do if someone hits you?
Strepsiades
If I get hit, I wait around a while,
then find witnesses, hang around some more,
then go to court.
Socrates
All right, take off your cloak.
Strepsiades
Have I done something wrong?
Socrates
No. It’s our custom
to go inside without a cloak.
Strepsiades
But I don’t want
to search your house for stolen stuff.
Socrates
What are you going on about? Take it off.
Aristophanes

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ εἰπὲ δὴ νόν μοι.

ΣΩΚРАΤΗΣ τὸ τί; 500

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ ἢν ἐπιμελής ὦ καὶ προθήμως μανθάνω, τῷ τῶν μαθητῶν ἐμφερῆ γενήσομαι;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ οὐδὲν διοίσεις Χαιρεφῶντος τὴν φύσιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ οἴμοι κακοδαίμων ἡμιθνὴς γενήσομαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ οὐ μὴ λαλήσεις Χαιρεφῶντος τὴν φύσιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ ἢιμοι κακοδαίμων ἡμιθνὴς γενήσομαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ οὐδὲν διοίσεις Χαιρεφῶντος τὴν φύσιν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ ὡς δέδοικ᾽ ἐγὼ ἐς Τροφωνίου.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ χώρει· τί κυπτάζεις ἔχων περὶ τὴν θύραν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ ἵθι χαίρων τῆς ἀνδρείας
οὐνεκα ταύτης.

— εὐνυχία γένοιτο τάνθρωποι,
ὅτι προϊκὼν
ἐς βαθὺ τῆς ἡλικίας
νεωτέροις τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ
πράγμασι προσλαμβάνεται
καὶ σοφίαν ἐπασκεῖ.

— ὁ θεόμενοι κατερώ πρὸς ύμᾶς ἔλευθερος
tάληθη νὴ τῶν Διώνου σῶν ἐκθρέψαντά με.

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Strepsiades [removing his cloak and his shoes]

So tell me this—if I pay attention and put some effort into learning, which of your students will I look like?

Socrates

In appearance there’ll be no difference between yourself and Chaerephon.

Strepsiades

Oh, that’s bad.

You mean I’ll be only half alive?

Socrates

Don’t talk such rubbish! Get a move on and follow me inside. Hurry up!

Strepsiades

First, put a honey cake here in my hands. I’m scared of going down in there. It’s like going in ‘Trophonios’ cave.37

Socrates

Go inside.

Why keep hanging round this doorway?

[Socrates picks up Strepsiades’ cloak and shoes. Then Strepsiades and Socrates exit into the interior of the Thinkery]

Chorus Leader

Go. And may you enjoy good fortune, a fit reward for all your bravery.

Chorus

We hope this man thrives in his plan.

For at his stage of great old age he’ll take a dip in new affairs to act the sage.

Chorus Leader [stepping forward to address the audience directly]

You spectators, I’ll talk frankly to you now, and speak the truth, in the name of Dionysus, who has cared for me ever since I was a child.
οὕτω νικήσαμί τ’ ἐγὼ καὶ νομιζόμην σοφός, 520
ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ὡς ὑμῶν ποθ’ ἐκὼν προδόσῳ τοὺς δεξιοὺς,
καὶ ταύτην σοφότατ’ ἔχειν τῶν ἐμῶν κομμωδιῶν,
πρῶτος ἥξιωσ’ ἀναγεύσας ὑμᾶς, ἢ παρέχει μοι
ἐργον πλεάστον- εἰτ’ ἀνεχώρον ὑπ’ ἄνδρον φορτικῶν
ἡττήθης οὐκ ἄξιος ὑμ. ταύτ’ ὅν ὑμιν μέμφομαι 525
καὶ τοὺς σοφούς, ἀν οὐκέ ἐγὼ ταύτ’ ἑπραγματεύομην.

So may I win and be considered a wise man.

οὐδὲν ἦλθε ῥαψαμένη σκυτίον καθεἰμένον 530
οὐδὲ πρεσβύτης ὁ λέγων τἄπη τῇ βακτηρίᾳ
ὁ λέγων τἄπη τῇ βακτηρίᾳ, οὐδὲ κόμη ἐγέλας,
οὐδὲ ἑκάτερ’ διὰς ἐχοῦσ’, οὐδ’ ἵοὺ ἵοῦ βοᾷ,
αλλ’ αὐτῇ καὶ τοῖς ἐπεισὶν πιστεύουσ’ ἐλήλυθεν.
καγώ μὲν τοιοῦτοι ἀνὴρ ὡν ποιήσῃ οὐ κομώ,
οὐδ’ ὑμᾶς ζητῶ ἐξαπατάν δὲ καὶ τρίς ταύτ’ εἰσάγων,
ἀλλ’ αἰε καυμᾶς ἰδέας ἐσφήνοι σοφόμαι,
οὐδὲν ἀλλάξασιν ὑμιᾶς καὶ πάσας δεξιάς.
δὲ μέγιστον ὡντα Κλέων’ ἐπαυ’ ἐς τὴν γαστέρα,
κούκ ἐτάλμησ’ αὕθε ἐπεμπηθής’ αὐτὸ κειμένῳ. 550

So may I win and be considered a wise man.

For I thought you were a discerning audience
and this comedy the most intelligent
of all my plays. Thus, I believed it worth my while
to produce it first for you, a work which cost me
a great deal of effort. But I left defeated,
beaten out by vulgar men—which I did not deserve.
I place the blame for this on you intellectuals,
on whose behalf I went to all that trouble.
But still I won’t ever willingly abandon
the discriminating ones among you all,
not since that time when my play about two men—
one was virtuous, the other one depraved—
was really well received by certain people here,
whom it pleases me to mention now. As for me,
I was still unmarried, not yet fully qualified
to produce that child. But I exposed my offspring,
and another woman carried it away.
In your generosity you raised and trained it.
Since then I’ve had sworn testimony from you
that you have faith in me. So now, like old Electra,
this comedy has come, hoping she can find,

Since then I’ve had sworn testimony from you
that you have faith in me. So now, like old Electra,
Yet once Hyperbolos let others seize on him, 
they've not ceased stomping on the miserable man—
and on his mother, too. The first was Eupolis—
he dredged up his Maricas, a wretched rehash
of my play The Knights—he's such a worthless poet—
adding an aging female drunk in that stupid dance,
a woman Phrynichos invented years ago,
the one that ocean monster tried to gobble up.
Then Hermippos wrote again about Hyperbolos,
Now all the rest are savaging the man once more,
copying my images of eels. If anyone
laughs at those plays, I hope mine don't amuse him.
But if you enjoy me and my inventiveness,
then future ages will commend your worthy taste.

Chorus

For my dance I first here call 
on Zeus, high-ruling king of all
among the gods—and on Poseidon,
so great and powerful—the one
who with his trident wildly heaves
the earth and all the brine-filled seas,
and on our famous father Sky,
the most revered, who can supply
all things with life. And I invite
the Charioteer whose dazzling light
fills this wide world so mightily
for every man and deity.

Chorus Leader

The wisest in this audience should here take note—
you've done us wrong, and we confront you with the blame.
We confer more benefits than any other god
upon your city, yet we're the only ones
to whom you do not sacrifice or pour libations,
though we're the gods who keep protecting you.
If there's some senseless army expedition,
then we respond by thundering or bringing rain.
And when you were selecting as your general
that Paphlagonian tanner hated by the gods,
we frowned and then complained aloud—our thunder pealed
among the lightning bursts, the moon moved off her course,
Aristophanes

τὴν θεναιλλόδ’ εἰς ἀετῶν εὐθέως ξυνελκόσας 585
οὐ φανεῖν ἔβασκεν ὑμῖν, εἰ στρατηγήσει Κλέων.

άλλ’ ὁμώς ἔλεσθε τούτον. φασί γὰρ δυσβουλίαν
tήδε τῇ πόλει προσεῖναι, ταῦτα μέντοι τοὺς θεοὺς
ἀτ’ ὑμεῖς ἐξαμάρτητε ἐπί τὸ βέλτιον τρέπειν.

ὑς δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ξυνοίσει ράδις διδάξωμεν.

ἡνίκα μιν τὸν πόρον διάφορων ἔλαυντες καὶ κλοπῆς
ἐστὶ φημώσητε τούτον τῷ ἄλογῳ τὸν ἀιχένα,

καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι τοὺς θεοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον τὸ πράγμα
tῇ πόλει συνοίσεται.

αὐθις ὑμεῖς ἐς τἀρχαῖον ἐς τἀρχαῖον ἐς τἀρχαῖον

καὶ τοῦ ξύνοίσει ῥᾳδίως διδάξομεν· 590
δὲ καὶ τὸ ἄλογον δώρῳ δέλοντες καὶ κλοπῆς
καὶ κριτὶς ἑλόντες καὶ τοὺς κλοπῆς.

οἶκος ἡ τῆς ἐπιχώριος ἡμετέρα θεὸς

κωμαστὴς Διόνυσος 64

Clouds

the sun at once pulled his wick back inside himself,
and said if Cleon was to be your general
then he’d give you no light. Nonetheless, you chose him.
They say this city likes to make disastrous choices,
but that the gods, no matter what mistakes you make,
convert them into something better. If you want
your recent choice to turn into a benefit,
I can tell you how—it’s easy. Condemn the man—
that seagull Cleon—for bribery and theft. 590
Set him in the stocks, a wooden yoke around his neck.
Then, even if you’ve made a really big mistake,
for you things will be as they were before your vote,
and for the city this affair will turn out well.

Chorus

Phoebus Apollo, stay close by,
lord of Delos, who sits on high,
by lofty Cynthos mountain sides;
and holy lady, who resides
in Ephesus, in your gold shrine,
where Lydian girls pray all the time;
Athena, too, who guards our home,
her aegis raised above her own,
and he who holds Parnassus peaks
and shakes ... as he leaps,
lord Dionysus, whose shouts call
amid the Delphic bacchanal. 66

Chorus Leader

When we were getting ready to move over here,
Moon met us and told us, first of all, to greet,
— ἀμφί μιν αὐτὸ Φοῖβ’ ἀνὰξ

Δήλιε Κυνθίαν ἔχων
υψικέρατα πέτραν,
ἡ τ’ Ἕφεσον μάκαρα πάγχρυσον ἔχεις
οῖκον εν ὕμνο κάραι σε Λυδῶν μεγάλως σέβονσαι,
ἡ τ’ ἐπιχώριος ἡμετέρα θεὸς

κωμαστὴς Διόνυσος 64
Aristophanes

τῆς ἑορτῆς μὴ τυχόντες κατὰ λόγον τῶν ἕμερῶν. κἀθ᾽ ὅταν θέει δέη, στρεβλοῦτε καὶ δικάζετε. 620
πολλάκις δ’ ἡμῶν ἁγόρων τῶν θεῶν ἀπαστίαν, ἴμικ’ ἄθι εὐνοοῦμεν ἢ τῶν Μέμνου ἢ Σαρπηδόνα,
σπάνιθ’ ὑμεῖς καὶ γελάτ’. ἀνθ’ ὄν λαχῶν Ὀπέρβολος τήτες ἱερομηνικοῖς, κάπεδθ’ ὑφ’ ἡμῶν τῶν θεῶν
tῶν στέφανον ἀφθηρίζη. μάλλον γὰρ οὖτος εἶσεται κατὰ σελήνην ὡς ἄγεν χρῆ τοῦ βίου τὰς ἡμέρας.

625

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
μὰ τὴν Ἀναπνοὴν μὰ τὸ Χάος μὰ τὸν Ἀέρα
οὕτως ἄνδρ’ ἰγκροκον οὐδένα
οὐδ’ ἀπορον οὐδὲ σκαλιῶν οὐδ’ ἐπιλήσθητα.
ότις σκαλαθυρμάτ’ ἄτα μικρὰ μανθάνων
ταύτ’ ἐπιλέλησται πρὸν μαθεῖν· ὅμως γε μὴν
ἀντίν καλῶ θύραζε δευρὶ πρὸς τὸ φῶς.

630

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἰδοῦ·

635

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ’ οὖκ ἐσσάμ’ ἐξενεγκείς οἱ κόρεις.

[Enter Socrates from the interior of the Thinkery]

Socrates

By Respiration, Chaos, and the Air,
I’ve never seen a man so crude, stupid, clumsy, and forgetful. He tries to learn the tiny trifles, but then he forgets before he’s even learned them. Nonetheless, I’ll call him outside here into the light.

[Socrates calls back into the interior of the Thinkery]

Strepsiades, where are you? Come on out—and bring your bed.

Strepsiades [from inside]

I can’t carry it out—

the bugs won’t let me.

Socrates

Get a move on. Now!

[Strepsiades enters carrying his bedding]

Put it there. And pay attention.

Strepsiades [putting the bed down]

There!

Socrates

Come now, of all the things you never learned what to you want to study first? Tell me.

[Strepsiades is very puzzled by the question]

Poetic measures? Diction? Rhythmic verse?
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
περὶ τῶν μέτρων ἔγωγ’· ἐναγχὸς γὰρ ποτὲ ὑπ’ ἀλφιταμοῖβοι παρεκόπην διχοινίκῳ.

640

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
οὐ τοῦτ’ ἑρωτῶ σ’, ἀλλ’ ὃ τι κάλλιστον μέτρων ἔγει’· πότερα τὸ τρίμετρον ἢ τὸ τετράμετρον;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδὲν πρότερον ἣμεκτέου.

645

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
οὐδὲν λέγεις ἀνθρωπε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
περὶδον νυν ἐμοί,
ei μή τετράμετρον ἑστων ἣμεκτέον.

650

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἐς κόρακας, ὡς ἄγροικος εἰ καὶ δυσμαθής,
tαχὺ γ’ ἀν δύνασαι μανθάνειν περὶ ῥυθμῶν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τί δὲ μ’ ὠφελήσουσ’ οἱ ῥυθμοὶ πρὸς τἄλφιτα;

655

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
πρῶτον μὲν εἶναι κομψὸν ἐν συνουσίᾳ,
ἐπαΐονθ’ ὁποῖός ἐστι τῶν ῥυθμῶν
κατ’ ἐνόπλιον, χῶποῖος αὖ κατὰ δάκτυλον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
κατὰ δάκτυλον; νη τὸν Δί’, ἀλλ’ αὔδ’.

660

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
εἰπὲ δὴ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τίς ἄλλος ἀντὶ τουτοῦ τοῦ δακτύλου;
πρὸ τοῦ μέν, ἐτ’ ἐμοῦ παιδὸς ὄντος, οὕτωσι.
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἀγρεῖος εἶ καὶ σκαϊός.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
οὐ γὰρ φύσιν
tούτων ἐπιθυμῶ μανθάνειν οἶδέν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
tί δαί;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐκείν’ ἐκείνο, τὸν ἀδικώτατον λόγον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἀλλ’ ἐτερα δεὶ σε πρότερα τούτου μανθάνειν,
tῶν τετραπόδων ἃπτ’ ἐστὶν ὀρθῶς ἄρρενα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀλλ’ οἶδ᾽ ἔγωγε τἄρρεν’, εἰ μὴ μαίνομαι
κριὸς τράγος ταῦτα κύων ἀλεκτρυών.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ὁρᾷς ὃ πάσχεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
πῶς δὴ φέρ᾽;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ὅπως; ἀλεκτρυών κἀλεκτρυών.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ, νῦν δὲ πῶς με χρῆ καλεῖν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἀλεκτρύαιναν, τὸν δ’ ἐτερον ἀλέκτορα.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἄλεκτρύαιναν; εὖ γε νὴ τὸν Ἀέρα·
ὡστε ἀντὶ τούτου τοῦ διδάγματος μόνου
dιαλφιτώσω σου κύκλῳ τὴν κάρδοπον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ιδοὺ μάλ’ αὕθε τοὐθ’ ἐτερν. τὴν κάρδοπον
άρρενα καλεῖς θήλειαν οὖσαν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τῷ τρόπῳ
άρρενα καλῶ γὼ κάρδοπον;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

μάλιστα γε,
ὡσπερ γε καὶ Κλεώνυμον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

πῶς δή; φράσον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ταῦταν δύναται σοι κάρδοπος Κλεωνύμῷ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἄλλ’ ἀγάθ’ οὐδ’ ἦν κάρδοπος Κλεωνύμῳ,
ἀλλ’ ἐν θυείᾳ στρογγύλῃ γ’ ἄν ἐμάττετο.
ἀτὰρ τὸ λοιπὸν πῶς με χρή καλεῖν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὁπως;
τὴν καρδόπην, ὡσπερ καλεῖς τὴν Σωστράτην.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τὴν καρδόπην θήλειαν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀρθῶς γὰρ λέγεις.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐκεῖνο δ’ ἦν ἂν, καρδόπη, Κλεωνύμη.

---

“Fowlette?”

By the Air, that’s good! Just for teaching that
I’ll fill your kneading basin up with flour,
right to the brim.⁵²

Socrates

Once again, another error!
You called it basin—a masculine word—
when it’s feminine.

Strepsiades

How so? Do I call
the basin masculine?

Socrates

Indeed you do.
It’s just like Cleonymos.⁵³

Strepsiades

How’s that?
Tell me.

Socrates

You treated the word basin
just as you would treat Cleonymos.

Strepsiades [totally bewildered by the conversation]

But my dear man, he didn’t have a basin—
not Cleonymos—not for kneading flour.
His round mortar was his prick—the wanker—
he kneaded that to masturbate.⁵⁴
But what should I call a basin from now on?

Socrates

Call it a basinette, just as you’d say
the word Sostratette.

Strepsiades

Basinet—it’s feminine?

Socrates

It is indeed.

Strepsiades

All right, then, I should say
Cleonymette and basinette.⁵⁵
Socrates

You’ve still got to learn about people’s names—
which ones are male and which are female.

Strepsiades

I know which ones are feminine.

Socrates

Go on.

Strepsiades

Lysilla, Philinna, Cleitagora, Demetria . . .

Socrates

Which names are masculine?

Strepsiades

There are thousands of them—Philoxenos, Melesias, Amynias . . .

Socrates

You fool, those names are not all masculine.16

Strepsiades

What?

You don’t think of them as men?

Socrates

Indeed I don’t. If you met Amynias, how would you greet him?

Strepsiades

How? Like this, “Here, Amynia, come here.”57

Socrates

You see? You said “Amynia,” a woman’s name.

Strepsiades

And that’s fair enough, since she’s unwilling to do army service. But what’s the point?

Why do I need to learn what we all know?

Socrates

That’s irrelevant, by god. Now lie down—
[indicating the bed]
right here.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τί δρῶ;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἐκφρόντισόν τι τῶν σεαυτοῦ πραγμάτων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
μὴ δῆθ᾽ ἱκετεύω σ᾽ ἐνγεταῦθ᾽ ἀλλ᾽ εἴ γε χρή, χαμαί μ᾽ ἔσσον αὐτὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἐκφροντίσαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
οὐκ ἐστὶ παρὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἄλλα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
κακοδαίμων ἐγώ, οἵαν δίκην τοῖς κόρεσι δώσω τήμερον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
φρόντιζε δὴ καὶ διάλυρε πάντα τρόπον ταυτός
στρόβεις πυκνώσας.

tαχὸς δ᾽, ὅταν εἰς ἀπορον πέσῃς,
ἐπ᾽ ἄλλο πόδα
νόμιμα φρενός· ὑπνοὺς δ᾽ ἀπέστω γλυκίθμος ὕμματων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀτταταί ἀτταταί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
τὶ πάσχεις; τὶ κάμνεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀπόλλυμαι δείλαιος· ἐκ τοῦ σκίμποδος
dάκωνοι μ᾽ ἔξερπονες οἱ Κορίνθιοι,
καὶ τᾶς πλευρᾶς δαρδάπτουσιν
καὶ τῆν ψυχὴν ἐκπίνουσιν
καὶ τῶν πρωκτῶν διορύττουσιν,
καὶ μ᾽ ἀπολοίον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
μή νυν βαρέως ἄλγει λίαν.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καὶ πῶς; ὅτε μοι
φροῦδα τὰ χρήματα, φροῦδῇ χροιά,
φροῦδῇ ψυχή, φροῦδῇ ὀ’ ἐμβάς:
καὶ πρὸς τούτους ἔτι τοῖσι κακοῖς
φρουρᾶς ἄδων
όλιγου φρούδους γεγένημαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὗτος τί ποιεῖς; οὐχὶ φροντίζεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐγώ;

νη τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

καὶ τὶ δὴ τ’ ἐφρόντισας;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὑπὸ τῶν κόρεων εἰ μού τι περιλειφθήσεται.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀπολεῖ κάκιστ᾽.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ’ ἀγάθ’ ἀπόλωλ’ ἄρτιώς.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐ μαλθακιστεὶ ἀλλὰ περικαλυπτέα.
ἐξευρέτεος γὰρ νοῦς ἀποστερητικὸς:

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἶμοι τίς ἂν δὴ τ’ ἐπιβάλω
ἐξ ἀρνακίδων γνώμην ἀποστερητρίδα;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

φέρε νυν ἀθρήσω πρῶτον ὅ τι δρᾷ τουτοῦν. ὅτος καθεύδεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καὶ πῶς; ὅτε μοι
φροῦδα τὰ χρήματα, φροῦδῇ χροιά,
φροῦδῇ ψυχή, φροῦδῇ ὀ’ ἐμβάς:
καὶ πρὸς τούτους ἔτι τοῖσι κακοῖς
φρουρᾶς ἄδων
όλιγου φρούδους γεγένημαι.

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ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐγώ;

νη τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

καὶ τὶ δὴ τ’ ἐφρόντισας;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὑπὸ τῶν κόρεων εἰ μού τι περιλειφθήσεται. 720

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀπολεῖ κάκιστ᾽.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ’ ἀγάθ’ ἀπόλωλ’ ἄρτιώς.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

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καὶ πῶς; ὅτε μοι
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φροῦδῇ ψυχή, φροῦδῇ ὀ’ ἐμβάς:
καὶ πρὸς τούτους ἔτι τοῖσι κακοῖς
φρουρᾶς ἄδων
όλιγου φρούδους γεγένημαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὗτος τί ποιεῖς; οὐχὶ φροντίζεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐγώ;

νη τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

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καὶ τὶ δὴ τ’ ἐφρόντισας;

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ἐξ ἀρνακίδων γνώμην ἀποστερητρίδα;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

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καὶ πρὸς τούτους ἔτι τοῖσι κακοῖς
φρουρᾶς ἄδων
όλιγου φρούδους γεγένημαι.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὗτος τί ποιεῖς; οὐχὶ φροντίζεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐγώ;

νη τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

καὶ τὶ δὴ τ’ ἐφρόντισας;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὑπὸ τῶν κόρεων εἰ μού τι περιλειφθήσεται. 720

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀπολεῖ κάκιστ᾽.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀλλ’ ἀγάθ’ ἀπόλωλ’ ἄρτιώς.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐ μαλθακιστεὶ ἀλλὰ περικαλυπτέα.
ἐξευρέτεος γὰρ νοῦς ἀποστερητικὸς:

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἶμοι τίς ἂν δὴ τ’ ἐπιβάλω
ἐξ ἀρνακίδων γνώμην ἀποστερητρίδα;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

φέρε νυν ἀθρήσω πρῶτον ὅ τι δρᾷ τουτοῦν. ὅτος καθεύδεις;
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλων ᾽γω μὲν οὔ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἐχεις τι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

μὰ Δί οὐ δήτ᾽ ἐγώγ.’

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐδὲν πάνυ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐδέν γε πλὴν ὥ το πέος ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐδὲν γε πλὴν ἥ το πέος ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἐγκαλυψάμενος ταχέως τι φροντιεῖς;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

αὐτὸς ὅ τι βούλει πρῶτος ἐξευρὼ λέγε.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀκήκοας μυριάκις ἁγὼ βούλομαι,
περὶ τῶν τόκων, ὡς ἂν ἀποδῶ μηδενί.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἴθι νῦν καλύπτω καὶ σχάσας τὴν φροντίδα

λεπτὴν κατὰ μικρὸν περιφρόνει τὰ πράγματα,
ὀρθῶς διαιρῶν καὶ σκοπῶν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἴμοι τάλας.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ [uncovering his head]

No, I’m not.

Socrates

Have you grasped anything?

Strepsiades

No, by god, I haven’t.

Socrates

Nothing at all?

Strepsiades

I haven’t grasped a thing—except my right hand’s wrapped around my cock.

Socrates

Then cover your head and think up something—get a move on!

Strepsiades

What should I think about?

Tell me that, Socrates.

Socrates

First you must formulate what it is you want. Then tell me.

Strepsiades

You’ve heard what I want a thousand times—I want to know about interest, so I’ll not have to pay a single creditor.

Socrates

Come along now, cover up.

[Strepsiades covers his head again, and Socrates speaks to him through the blanket]

Now, carve your slender thinking into tiny bits, and think the matter through, with proper probing and analysis.

Strepsiades

Ahhh . . . bloody hell!
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
έχ᾽ ἄτρέμα· κἂν ἀπορῇς τι τῶν νοημάτων,
ἀφεῖς ἄπελθε, καὶ κατὰ τὴν γνώμην πάλιν
κάψας αὐτὸ καὶ ξυγόθρισον.

745

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ὦ Σωκράτιδοι φίληταν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
τί οὐ γέρον;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐχὼ τόκον γνώμην ἀποστερητικήν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ἐπίδειξον αὐτήν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
εἰπὲ δὴ νῦν μοι —

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
τὸ τί;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
γυναῖκα φαρμακίδ᾽ εἰ πριάμενος Θετταλήν
καθέλοιμι νύκτωρ τὴν σελήνην, εἶτα δὴ
αὐτὴν καθείρξαιμ᾽ ἐς λοφεῖον στρογγύλον, ὥσπερ κάτοπτρον, κᾆτα τηροίην ἔχων —

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
τί δῆτα τοῦτ᾽ ἂν ὠφελήσειέν σ᾽;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ὅ τι;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ὅτι δή τοῦτʼ ἂν ὠφελήσειέν σ᾽;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
οἱ τι;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ότι γνώμην.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ὁτιὴ κατὰ μῆνα τἀγύριον δανείζεται.
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
εὖ γ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ έτερον αὐτὶ σοι προβαλὼ τι δεξίον.
εἴ σοι γράφοιτο πεντετάλαντός τις δίκη.
ὅπως ἂν αὐτὴν ἀφανίσεις εἰπέ μοι. 760

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ὅπως; ὅπως; οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ἄταρ ζητητέον.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
μὴ νυν περὶ σαυτὸν εἴλλε τὴν γνώμην ἀεί,
ἀλλ᾽ ἀποχάλα τὴν φροντίδ᾽ ἐς τὸν ἀέρα
λινόδετον ἀσπερ μηλολόνθην τοῦ ποδός. 765

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ηὕρηκ᾽ ἀφάνισιν τῆς δίκης σοφωτάτην,
ὥστ᾽ αὐτὸν ἀκαθόριστον σ᾽ ἐμοί.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
ποίαν τινά;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἡδὴ παρὰ τοῖσι φαρμακοπώλαισι τὴν λίθον
ταῦταν ἐόρακας τὴν καλὴν, τὴν διαφανῆ,
ἀφ᾽ ἧς τὸ πῦρ ἅπτουσι; 770

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
τὴν ὕαλον λέγεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐγὼ γε. φέρε τί δὴτ ἂν, εἰ ταῦταν λαβών,
όποτε γράφοιτο τὴν δίκην ὁ γραμματεύς,
ἀπωτέρω στὰς ὧδε πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον
τὰ γράμματ᾽ ἐκτίθεις τῆς ἐμῆς δίκης;

ΣΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ
σοφῶς γε νὴ τὰς Χάριτας.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἴμ᾽ ὡς ἤδομαι
ὁτι πεντετάλαντος διαγέγραπται μοι δίκη.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄγε δὴ ταχέως τουτὶ ξυνάρπασον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
tὸ τί; 775

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὃπως ἀποστρέψαι ἀν αντιδικῶν δίκην
μέλλων ὀφλήσεως μὴ παρόντων μαρτύρων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

φαυλότατα καὶ ράστ᾽.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
eἰπὲ δή.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

καὶ δὴ λέγω.

εἰ πρόσθεν ἔτι μιᾶς ἐνεστώσης δίκης,
πρὶν τὴν ἐμὴν καλεῖσθ᾽, ἀπαγξαίμην τρέχων. 780

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐδὲν λέγεις.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔγωγ᾽, ἐπεὶ
οὐδὲσ καὶ ἐμοῦ τεθνεῶτος εἰσάξει δίκην.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ὑθλεῖς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οτϊ τῷ πρῶτῳ ἐνεργής,
νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔγωγ᾽, ἐπεὶ
οὐδέσ καὶ ἐμοῦ τεθνεῶτος εἰσάξει δίκην.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀλλ᾽ εἴθης ἐπιλήθης σὺ γ᾽ ἀττ᾽ ἄν καὶ μάθης·
ἐπεὶ τὶ νυνὶ πρῶτον ἐδιδάχθης; λέγε. 785

86

Clouds

STREPSIADES

Hey, I'm happy—
I've erased my law suit for five talents.

SOCRATES

So hurry up and tackle this next problem.

STREPSIADES

What is it?

SOCRATES

How would you evade a charge
and launch a counter-suit in a hearing
you're about to lose without a witness?

STREPSIADES

No problem there—it's easy.

SOCRATES

So tell me.

STREPSIADES

I will. If there was a case still pending,
another one before my case was called,
I'd run off and hang myself. [780]

SOCRATES

That's nonsense.

STREPSIADES

No, by the gods, it's not. If I were dead,
no one could bring a suit against me.

SOCRATES

That's rubbish. Just get away from here.
I'll not instruct you any more.

STREPSIADES

Why not?

Come on, Socrates, in god's name.

SOCRATES

There's no point—
as soon as you learn anything, it's gone,
you forget it right away. Look, just now,
what was the very first thing you were taught?

87
Aristophanes

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

φάρ’ ἵδω τί μέντοι πρώτον ἦν; τί πρώτον ἦν;
tίς ἦν ἐν ἤ ματτόμεθα μέντοι τάλφατα;
oίμοι τέν ἦν;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἐς κόρακας ἀποθερεῖ,
ἐπλησιμότατον καὶ σκαιότατον γερόντιον;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἴμοι τί ὁ κακοδαίμων πείσομαι; ἀπὸ γὰρ ὀλοῦμαι μὴ μαθὼν γλωττοστροφεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ήμεις μὲν ὁ πρεσβῦτα συμβουλεύομεν,
εἰ σοὶ τις νῦς ἐστιν ἐκτεθραμμένος,
pέμπειν ἐκεῖνον ἀντὶ σαυτοῦ μανθάνειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

αλλ᾽ ἔστ᾽ ἐμοίγ᾽ υἱὸς καλός τε κἀγαθός
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐθέλει γὰρ μανθάνειν. τί ἐγὼ πάθω?

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὐσωματεῖ γάρ καὶ σφριγᾷ,
cάστ᾽ ἐκ γυναικῶν ἑπτέρων τῶν Κοῖσυρας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀπὸ μέτειμί γ᾽ αὐτὸν. ἢν δὲ μὴ θέλῃ,
οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅπως οὐκ ἐξελῶ κ᾽ τῆς οἰκίας. ἀλλ᾽ ἐπανάμεινόν μ᾽ ὀλίγον εἰσελθὼν χρόνον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀρ’ αἰσθάνει πλέιστα δι’ ἰμάσις ἀγάθ᾽ αὐτίκα ἐξων
μόνας θεών; ὡς
ἐτοιμοῦ δὴ ἐστὶν ἀπαντά δράν
ὅσ’ ἐν κελεύῃς.

1. Clouds (Ancient Greek) by Aristophanes
2. Strepsiades questions Socrates about the first thing they kneaded flour for.
3. Socrates accuses Strepsiades of being the most forgetful and stupid old man.
4. Strepsiades asks for Socrates' advice on teaching his son.
5. Chorus Leader suggests sending the son to learn in Strepsiades' place.
6. Strepsiades considers his son, who is strong and proud, suitable for learning.
7. Chorus Leader advises Strepsiades, as Socrates' only god, to quickly get all sorts of lovely things.
8. Strepsiades moves back across the stage to his own house.
σὺ δ’ ἀνδρός ἐκπεπληγμένου καὶ φανερῶς ἐπηρμένου γνοὺς ἀπολάψεις ἃ τι πλείστον δύνασαι, ταχέως φιλεὶ γάρ πως τὰ τοιαῦθ᾽ ἐτέρα τρέπεσθαι.

στρεψιάδης
οὕτωι μὰ τὴν Ὄμιχλην ἐτ’ ἐνταυθοῖ μενεῖς· ἀλλ᾽ ἔσθι έλθὼν τοὺς Μεγακλέους κίνανας.

Φείδιππίδης
ὁ δαμόνιε, τί χρήμα πάσχεις ἢ πάτερ; οὐκ εἴδο φρονεῖς μὰ τὸν Δία τὸν Ὅλυμπιον.

στρεψιάδης
ιδοὺ γ’ ἰδοὺ, Δί’ Ὅλυμπιον· τῆς μωρίας, τὸν Δία νομίζειν ὄντα τηλικουτονί.

Φείδιππίδης
τί δὲ τοῦτ’ ἐγέλασας ἐτεόν;

στρεψιάδης
ἐνθυμούμενος ὃτι παιδάριον εἶ καὶ φρονεῖς ἀρχαιϊκά. ὁμως γε μὴν πρόσελθ’, ἵν’ εἰδής πλείονα, καὶ σοι φράσω τι πράγματ’ ὃ μαθών ἄνηρ ἔσει. ὅπως δὲ τούτο μὴ διδάξεις μηδένα.

Φείδιππίδης
ιδοῦ· τί ἔστω;

στρεψιάδης
ἀμοσας νυνὶ Δία.

Φείδιππίδης
ἐγὼγ’.

στρεψιάδης
ἀρᾶς οὖν ὃς ἁγαθὸν τὸ μαθάνειν; οὖκ ἔστω ὁ Φειδιππίδης Ζεὺς.

Φείδιππίδης
ἀλλὰ τίς;
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

Δίνος βασιλεύει τὸν Δ᾽ ἐξεληλακώς.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

αἶβοι τὶ ληρεῖς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἵσθι τοῦθ᾽ οὕτως ἔχον.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

tὶς φησι ταῦτα;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

Σωκράτης ὁ Μήλιος καὶ Χαιρεφῶν, ὃς οἶδε τὰ ψυλλῶν ἴχνη.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

σὺ δ’ ἐς τοσοῦτον τῶν μανιῶν ἐλήλυθας ὥστ’ ἀνδράσων πείθει χολῶσαι;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εὐστόμει καὶ μηδὲν εἴπῃς φλαῦρον ἄνδρας δεξιοὺς καὶ νοῦν ἔχοντας· ἃν υπὸ τής φειδωλίας ἀπεκείρατ’ οὐδεὶς πώποτ᾽ οὐδὲ ἠλείψατο, οὐδὲς ἐς βαλανεῖον ἦλθε λουσόμενος· σὺ δὲ ἀδιόπερ τεθνεῶτος καταλόει μου τὸν βίον. ἀλλ’ ὡς τάχιστ’ ἐλθὼν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ μάνθανε.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

τί δ᾽ ἂν παρ᾽ ἐκείνων καὶ μάθοι χρηστός τις ἄν; Οἴμοι τί δράσω παραφρονοῦντος τοῦ πατρός; πότερον παρανοίας αὐτὸν εἰσαγαγὼν ἔλω, ἢ τοῖς σοφοπηγοῖς τὴν μανίαν αὐτοῦ φράσω;
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
φέρ᾽ ἴδω, σὺ τοῦτον τί ὀνομάζεις; εἰπέ μοι.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
ἀλεκρύνα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
calώς γε. ταυτηνὶ δὲ τὺ;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
ἀλεκτρύν᾽.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀμφῶ ταῦτα; καταγέλαστος εἶ.
μὴ νῦν τὸ λοιπὸν, ἀλλὰ τίμες μὲν καλεῖν ἀλεκρύναναν τοῦτον δ᾽ ἀλέκτορα.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
διὰ ταῦτα δὴ καὶ θοἰμάτιον ἀπώλεσας;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
χάτερα γε πόλλ᾽. ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τι μάθοιμ᾽ ἑκάστοτε,
ἐπελανθανόμην ἂν εὐθὺς ὑπὸ πλήθους ἐτῶν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
διὰ ταῦτα δὴ καὶ θοἰμάτιον ἀπώλεσας;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀπολώλεκ᾽, ἀλλὰ καταπεφρόντικα.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
τὰς δ᾽ ἐμβάδας ποῖ τέτροφας ὦνόητε σύ;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀσσερ Περικλέης ἐς τὸ δέον ἀπώλεσα.
ἀλλ᾽ ἰδι βαδίς, ἰωμεν. εἰτα τῷ πατρὶ πιθάνειν ἄξιοματε· καγὼ τοῦ ποτε,
οἶδ᾽. ἔρευε σοι τραυλίσαντι πιθάνειν,
ὅπων ὑμᾶν ὀμφλόν ἐλαβον ἡλαστικῶν,
τοῦτον ἐμιάμην σοι Διασίοις ἀμαξίδα.

[Strepsiades returns with two birds, one in each hand. He holds out one of

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
Come on now, what do you call this? Tell me.

PHEIDIPPIDES
It's a fowl.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
That's good. What's this?

PHEIDIPPIDES
That's a fowl.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
They're both the same? You're being ridiculous.
From now on, don't do that. Call this one “fowl,”
and this one here “fowlette.”

PHEIDIPPIDES
"Fowlette”? That's it?
That's the sort of clever stuff you learned in there,
by going in with these Sons of Earth?

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
Yes, it is—
and lots more, too. But everything I learned,
I right away forgot, because I'm old.

PHEIDIPPIDES
That why you lost your cloak?

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
I didn't lose it—
I gave it to knowledge—a donation.

PHEIDIPPIDES
And your sandals—what you do with them,
you deluded man?

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
Just like Pericles,
I lost them as a “necessary expense.”
But come on, let's go. Move it. If your dad
asks you to do wrong, you must obey him.
I know I did just what you wanted long ago,
when you were six years old and had a lisp—
with the first obol I got for jury work,
at the feast of Zeus I got you a toy cart.
Aristophanes

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

η μήν σὺ τούτοις τῷ χρόνῳ ποτ’ ἀχθέσει. 865

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

εὖ γ’ ὅτι ἐπείσθης. δεῦρο δεῦρ’ ὃ Σώκρατες,
εξελθ’· ἄγω γάρ σοι τὸν νῦν τοιοῦτον
ἀκοντ’ ἀναπείσας.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

νηπίτος γάρ ἐστ’ ἐτι,
καὶ τῶν κρεμαθρῶν οὔπω τρίβω τῶν ἐνθάδε.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

αὐτὸς τρίβων εἶναί, εἰ κρίμαιο γε. 870

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἐς κόρακας; καταρᾷ σὺ τῷ διδασκάλῳ;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἰδοὺ κρέμαι’, ὡς ἠλίθιον ἐφθέγξατο
καὶ τοῖσι χείλεσιν διερρυηκόσιν. πῶς ἂν μάθοι ποθ’ οὗτος ἀπόφυξιν δίκης
ἡ κλίσιν ἢ χαῦνωσιν ἀναπεισηρίαν;
καίτοι γε ταλάντου τοῦτ’ ἔμαθεν Ὑπέρβολος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἀμέλει δίδασκε· θυμόσοφός ἐστιν φύσει
θυμόσοφός ἐστιν φύσει
八年

Pheidippides

You’re going to regret this one fine day.

Strepsiades

Good—you’re doing what I ask.

[Strepsiades calls inside the Thinkery]

Socrates,

come out here . . .

[Enter Socrates from inside the Thinkery]

Here—I’ve brought my son to you.

He wasn’t keen, but I persuaded him.

Socrates

He’s still a child—he doesn’t know the ropes.

Pheidippides

Go hang yourself up on some rope,

and get beaten like a worn-out cloak.

Strepsiades

Damn you! Why insult your teacher?

Socrates

Look how he says “hang yourself”—it sounds

like baby talk. No crispness in his speech. With such a feeble tone how will he learn

to answer to a charge or summons

or speak persuasively? And yet it’s true

Hyperbolos could learn to master that—

it cost him one talent.

Strepsiades

Don’t be concerned.

Teach him. He’s naturally intelligent.

When he was a little boy—just that tall—even then at home he built small houses,
carved out ships, made chariots from leather, and fashioned frogs from pomegranate peel.

You can’t imagine! Get him to learn

those two forms of argument—the Better, whatever that may be, and the Worse.

If not both, then at least the unjust one—
every trick you’ve got.
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
αὐτὸς μαθήσεται παρ’ αὐτῷ τῶν λόγων.
ἐγώ δ' ἀπέσομαι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
tούτό νυν μέμνησ᾽, ὅπως
πρὸς πάντα τὰ δίκαια ἀντιλέγεται.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
χώρει δευρί, δείξον σαυτὸν
τοῖς θεαταῖς, καίπερ θρασὺς ἂν.

"ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ἂν ὅποι χρήζεις. πολὺ γὰρ μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς λέγων ἀπολῶ.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ἀπολεῖς σὺ; τίς ᾠν;" Λίκαινα.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ήττων γ' ἂν.

"ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ἀλλὰ σε νικῶ τὸν ἐμοῦ κρείττων
φάσκοντ' ἐίναι.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
τί σοφὸν ποιῶν;

"ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
γνώμας καὶ κανάς ἐξευρίσκων.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ταῦτα γὰρ ἄνθει διὰ τοῦτον
tῶν ἀνοήτων.

"ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
οὐκ, ἄλλα σοφοῖς.

Socrates
He’ll learn on his own from the two styles of reasoning. I’ll be gone.

Strepsiades
But remember this—he must be able to speak against all just arguments.

[Enter the Better Argument from inside the Thinkery, talking to the Worse Argument who is still inside]

Better Argument
Come on. Show yourself to the people here—I guess you’re bold enough for that.

[Worse Argument emerges from the Thinkery]

Worse Argument
Go where you please.

The odds are greater I can wipe you out with lots of people there to watch us argue.

Better Argument
You’ll wipe me out? Who’d you think you are?

Worse Argument
An argument.

Better Argument
Yes, but second rate.

Worse Argument
You claim that you’re more powerful than me, but I’ll still conquer you.

Better Argument
What clever tricks do you intend to use?

Worse Argument
I’ll formulate new principles.

Better Argument [indicating the audience]
Yes, that’s in fashion now, thanks to these idiots.

Worse Argument
No, no. They’re smart.
ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  ἀπολῶ σε κακῶς.

'ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  εἰπὲ τί ποιῶν;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  τὰ δίκαια λέγων.  900

'ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  ἀλλ᾽ ἀνατρέψω γ᾽ αὔτ᾽ ἀντιλέγων·

οὐδὲ γὰρ εἶναι πάνω φημὰ δίσην.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  οὐκ εἶναι φής;

'ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  φέρε γὰρ ποῦ ᾽στιν;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  παρὰ τοῖσι θεοῖς.

'ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  πῶς δήτα δίκης σύσης ὁ Ζεὺς

οὐκ ἀπόλωλεν τὸν πατέρ᾽ αὐτοῦ
dίσας;  905

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  αἰβοῖ τουτὶ καὶ δὴ

χωρεῖ τὸ κακὸν· δότε μοι λεκάνην.

'ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  τυφογέρων εἶ κἀνάρμοστος.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  καταπύγων εἶ κἀναίσχυντος.

'ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  ῥόδα μ᾽ εἴρηκας.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  καὶ βωμολόχος.
"ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
κρίνεσι στεφανοῖς.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
καὶ πατραλοίας.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
χρυσῷ πάττων μ᾽ οὐ γιγνώσκεις.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
οὐ δῆτα πρὸ τοῦ γ', ἀλλὰ μολύβδῳ.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
νῦν δέ γε κόσμος τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἐμοὶ.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
θρασὺς εἶ πολλοῦ.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
σὺ δέ γ᾽ ἀρχαῖος.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
diὰ σὲ δὲ φοιτᾶν
οὐδὲὶς ἐθέλει τῶν μειρακίων.
καὶ γνωσθῆσαι ποτ᾽ Ἀθηναῖοι
ολὰ διδάσκεις τοὺς ἀνοήτους.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
αύχμεῖς αἰσχρῶς.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
σὺ δὲ γ᾽ εὖ πράττεις.
καίτοι πρότερόν γ᾽ ἐπτώχευες.
Τήλεφος εἶναι Μυσὸς φάσκων,
ἐκ πηριδίου
γνώμας τρῶγων Πανδελετείους.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ωὴ τοῖς σοφίας ἂς ἐμνήσθης.

Worse Argument
You adorn my head with lilies.

Better Argument
You destroyed your father!

Worse Argument
You don't mean to, but you’re showering me with gold.

Better Argument
No, not gold—before this age, those names were lead.

Worse Argument
But now, your insults are a credit to me.

Better Argument
You're too obstreperous.

Worse Argument
You're archaic.

Better Argument
It's thanks to you that none of our young men is keen to go to school. The day will come when the Athenians will all realize how you teach these silly fools.

Worse Argument
You're dirty—

Better Argument
But you're doing very well—
although in earlier days you were a beggar, claiming to be Telephos from Mysia, eating off some views of Pandeletos, which you kept in your wallet.68

Worse Argument
That was brilliant—

you just reminded me . . .
ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  
όμωι μανίας τής σῆς, πόλεώς θ',  
ητίς σε τρέφει  
λυμανόμενον τοῖς μειρακίων.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  
oύχι διδάξεις τούτον Κρόνος ἁν.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  
ἐπιτε γ' αὐτὸν σωθῆναι χρή  
καὶ μὴ λαλιὰν μόνον ἀσκήσαι.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  
δεῦρ ᾧ, τούτον δ' ἐὰ μαίνεσθαι.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  
κλαύσει, τὴν χεῖρ' ἣν ἐπιβάλλῃς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ  
παύσασθε μάχης καὶ λοιδορίας.  
ἄλλ' ἐπίδειξαι σὺ τε τοῖς προτέρους  
ἄττ' ἐδίδασκες, αὐτὸ τὴν καινὴν  
παίδευσιν, ὥσπερ ἂν ἀκούσας σφῷν  
ἀντιλεγόντων κρίνας φοιτᾷ.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  
δρᾶν ταῦτ' ἐθέλω.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  
κάγωγ' ἐθέλω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ  
φέρε δὴ πότερος λέξει πρότερος;

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ  
tούτων δύσων.  
καὶ' ἐκ τούτων ὁν ἄν λέξη  
ῥηματίων καναὶς αὐτόν  
καὶ διανοίᾳς κατασκεύασω.  
tο τελευταίον δ', ἢν ἀναγρύξῃ,  
tο πρόσωπον ἄταν καὶ τῷφθαλμῷ  
κεντούμενος ὡσπερ ὑπ' ἀνθρηνῶν  
ὑπὸ τῶν γνωμῶν ἀπολείται.
ΧΟΡΟΣ
νῦν δείξετον τῶν πισύνω τοῖς περιδεξίοις
λόγαις καὶ φροντίδας καὶ γνωστύποις μερίμναις,
ἀπότερος αὐτῶν λέγων ἀμείνων φανήσεται.
νῦν γὰρ ἑπάντα κάνους ἀνέέται σοφίας,
ἡς πέρι τοῖς ἑμοῖς φύλοις ἐστὶν ἁγῶν μέγαστος.

— ἀλλ’ ὁ πολλοῖς τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἦθεσι χρηστοῖς
στεφανώσασας,
ῥῆξον φωνῆν ἦτων χαίρεις, καὶ τὴν σαυτοῦ φύσιν εἶπέ.

ΔΙΚΛΙΟΣ ΔΟΓΟΣ
λέξω τοῖς τὴν ἀρχαίαν παιδείαν ὡς διέκειτο,
ὅτ’ ἐγὼ τὰ δίκαια λέγων ἤνθουν καὶ σωφροσύνην ἐνόμιστο.
πρῶτον μὲν ἔδει παιδὸς φωνὴν γρύξαντο μηδὲν ἀκοῦσαι·
εἶτ’ αὐτοῖς ἐδιδάσκαν τὸν μηρὸν μὴ ἐννέχοντας,
ἡ ’Παλλάδα περσόπολιν δειναί’, ἢ ’τηλέπορόν τι βώαμα.’
ἐντευκμένους τὴν ἀρμονίαν, ἢν οἱ πατέρες παρέδωκαν.
εἰ δὲ τις αὐτῶν βωμολογεῖσατ’ ἢ κάμψειν τινα καμπήν,
οἷά οἱ νῦν τὰς κατὰ Φρύλλιον τοιάτας τὰς δυσκολοκάμπτους,
ἐπετρίβετο τυπτόμενος πολλάς ὡς τὰς Μούσας ἀφανίζον.
ἐν παιδοτρίβου δὲ καθίζοντας τὸν μηρὸν ἔδει προβαλέσθαι
tοὺς παῖδας, ὅπως τοῖς ἐξοξθὲν μηδὲν δείξειν ἀπηνές.
εἶτ’ αὖ πάλιν Ἀθανάσιον συμφῆσαι, καὶ προνοεῖσθαι
eἰδωλοὺ τοῖς ἐραστῖς τῆς ἥβης μὴ καταλείψειν.

Χοροσ

Clouds

CHORUS
Trusting their skill in argument,
their phrase-making propensity,
these two men here are now intent
to show which one will prove to be
the better man in oratory.
For wisdom now is being hard pressed—
my friends, this is the crucial test.

CHORUS LEADER [addressing the Better Argument]
First, you who crowned our men in days gone by
with so much virtue in their characters,
let’s hear that voice which brings you such delight—
explain to us what makes you what you are.

BETTER ARGUMENT
All right, I’ll set out how we organized
our education in the olden days,
when I talked about what’s just and prospered,
when people wished to practise self-restraint.
First, there was a rule—children made no noise,
nomuttering. Then, when they went outside,
walking the streets to the music master’s house,
groups of youngsters from the same part of town
went in straight lines and never wore a cloak,
not even when the snow fell thick as flour.
There he taught them to sing with thighs apart.
They had memorize their songs—such as,
“Dreadful Pallas Who Destroys Whole Cities,”
and “A Cry From Far Away.” These they sang
in the same style their fathers had passed down.
If any young lad fooled around or tried
to innovate with some new flourishes,
like the contorted sounds we have today
from those who carry on the Phrynis style,
he was beaten, soundly thrashed, his punishment
for tarnishing the Muse. At the trainer’s house,
when the boys sat down, they had to keep
their thighs stretched out, so they would not expose
a thing which might excite erotic torments
in those looking on. And when they stood up,
they smoothed the sand, being careful not to leave
imprints of their manhood there for lovers.
Aristophanes

娼妓不蘸油的时候，没有孩子会用小手在肚脐下面摩擦——因此在性器上，会有一层薄薄的油渍，像在桃子上。他没有使自己的声音变得软而甜，以便与情人说话，也没有说一些华而不实的话，也没有坐下来，两条腿并在一起。

‘好论点’论点

‘坏论点’论点

‘好论点’论点

‘坏论点’论点

更妙的论点

哀歌

用油没有一个年轻人会用在肚脐下——这样在他的性器官上，就有一层薄薄的油渍，像在桃子上。他不使自己的声音变得软而甜，以便和情人说话，也没有说一些华而不实的话。他没有坐着，两条腿并在一起。更糟糕的论点是这样的——充满了为宙斯·波利厄斯的节日，蝉、被屠杀的公牛和塞德斯。

更好的论点

但重点在于——这些特征在我的教育中，培养出了这些人——他们是在马拉松战斗的。但你看看——你教育这些年轻人，他们从一开始就被包裹在长袍里。这让我感到痛苦，当他们来为他们表演他们的舞蹈时，其中一人的盾牌低低地挂着，遮住了他的生殖器，侮辱了特里托格涅亚。

所以年轻人，这就是你应该选择我的原因。要坚决。你会找到如何恨市场，避免公共澡堂，为羞耻的事情感到羞耻，当有人取笑你，就要发火，当你坐着给老人，不要侮辱你的父母，也不要在父亲面前年老时叫他雅派托——当他在你身上花费你的时间时，或者在你身上花费他的时间时，不要打断他，也不要提醒他他的年龄，叫他雅派托。——当他在你身上花费你的时间时，或者在你身上花费他的时间时，不要打断他，也不要提醒他他的年龄，叫他雅派托——当他在你身上花费你的时间时，或者在你身上花费他的时间时，不要打断他，也不要提醒他他的年龄，叫他雅派托。
Worse Argument

My boy, if you’re persuaded by this man, then by Dionysus, you’ll finish up just like Hippocrates’ sons—and then they’ll all call you a sucker of the tit.74

Better Argument

You’ll spend your time in the gymnasium—your body will be sleek, in fine condition. You won’t be hanging round the market place, chattering filth, as boys do nowadays. You won’t keep on being hauled away to court over some damned sticky fierce dispute about some triviality. No, no. Instead you’ll go to the Academy,75 to race under the sacred olive trees, with a decent friend the same age as you, wearing a white reed garland, with no cares. You’ll smell yew trees, quivering poplar leaves, as plane trees whisper softly to the elms, rejoicing in the spring. I tell you this—if you carry out these things I mention, if you concentrate your mind on them, you’ll always have a gleaming chest, bright skin, broad shoulders, tiny tongue, strong buttocks, and a little prick. But if you take up what’s in fashion nowadays, you’ll have, for starters, feeble shoulders, a pale skin, a narrow chest, huge tongue, a tiny bum, and a large skill in framing long decrees.76

And that man there will have you believing what’s bad is good and what’s good is bad.77 Then he’ll give you Antimachos’ disease—you’ll be infected with his buggery.

Chorus

O you whose wisdom stands so tall, the most illustrious of all. The odour of your words is sweet, the flowering bloom of modest ways—happy who lived in olden days!
τῶν προτέρων; πρὸς τάδε σ’ ὁ κομψοπρεπῆ μούσαν ἔχων, δεῖ σε λέγειν τι καυνόν, ὡς ἡδοκόμηκεν ἀνήρ. 1031

— δεινῶν δὲ σοι βουλευμάτων ἔουσε δεῖν πρὸς αὐτὸν, εἶπε πρὸς ἄνδρ’ ὑπερβαλέι καὶ μὴ γέλωστ’ ὀφλήσεις. 1035

ἌΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
καὶ μὴν πάλαι γ’ ἐπιγάμην τὰ σπλάγχνα κάπεθήμουν ἀπαντά ταύτ’ ἐναντίας γνώμαις συνταράξαι.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἦττων μὲν λόγος δ’ αὐτὸ τοῦτ’ ἐκλήθην ἐν τοῖς фροντισταῖσιν, ὡς πρῶτατος ἐπενόησα τοῖς νόμοις καὶ ταῖς δίκαιως τάναντί’ ἀντιλέξαι. 1040
καὶ τοῦτό πλεῖν ἢ μυρίων ἔστ᾽ ἄξιον στατήρων, ἀἱρούμενον τοὺς ἥττονας λόγους ἐπειτὰ νικάν.
σκέψαι δὲ τὴν παίδευσιν ᾗ πέποιθεν ὡς ἐλέγξω, ὅστις σε θερμῷ φῆσι λουθῆναι πρῶτον οὐκ ἐάσειν.
καὶ τοῦτʼ ἐναντίον ἔχων ψέγεις τὰς θερμὰς λουθράς; 1045

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ὅτι ἡ κάκιστον ἐστὶ καὶ δειλὸν ποιεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα.

ἍΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ἐπισχέσθαι· εὐθὺς γὰρ σ’ ἔχω μέσον λαβών ἄφυκτον.
καὶ μοι φράσον, τῶν τοῦ Διὸς παίδων τίν’ ἄνδρ’ ἁριστῶν ἡμῖν νομιζεῖς, εἰπὲ, καὶ πλείστους πόνους πονῆσαι.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδέν Ἡρακλέως βελτίων ἄνδρα κρίνω. 1050

[to the Worse Argument]
Your rival’s made his case extremely well, so you who have such nice artistic skill. must in reply give some new frill.

CHORUS LEADER
If you want to overcome this man it looks as if you’ll need to bring at him some clever stratagems —unless you want to look ridiculous.

WORSE ARGUMENT
It’s about time!
My guts have long been churning with desire to rip in fragments all those things he said, with counter-arguments. That’s why I’m called Worse Argument among all thinking men, because I was the very first of them to think of coming up with reasoning against our normal ways and just decrees. And it’s worth lots of money—more, in fact, than drachmas in six figures—to select the weaker argument and yet still win. Now just see how I’ll pull his system down, that style of education which he trusts. First, he says he won’t let you have hot water when you take a bath. What’s the idea here? Why object to having a warm bath?

BETTER ARGUMENT
The effect they have is very harmful—they turn men into cowards.

WORSE ARGUMENT
Wait a minute!
The first thing you say I’ve caught you out. I’ve got you round the waist. You can’t escape. Tell me this—of all of Zeus’ children which man, in your view, had the greatest heart and carried out the hardest tasks? Tell me.

BETTER ARGUMENT
In my view, no one was a better man than Hercules.
ἈΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ποῦ ψυχρὰ δῆτα πώποτ’ εἶδες Ἡράκλεια λουτρά; καίτοι τίς ἀνδρειότερος ἦν;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

taῦτ’ ἐστὶ ταῦτ’ ἐκεῖνα, ἃ τῶν νεανίσκων ἀεὶ δὲ ἰμέρας λαλοῦντων πλήρες τὸ βαλανεῖον ποιεῖ, κενὰς δὲ τὰς παλαίστρας.

ἈΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

εἰ εὗ ἁγορᾶ τὴν διατριβὴν ψέγεις· ἐγὼ δ’ ἐπανών. 1055 εἰ γὰρ πονηρὸν ἦν, Ὅμηρος οὐδέποτ᾽ ἂν ἐποίει τὸν Νέστορ’ ἀγορητὴν ἂν οὐδὲ τοὺς σοφοὺς ἅπαντας. ἀνεμι δὴ ἐπείδη ἐπηκόο εἰς τὴν γλῶτταν, ἤν ὁδὶ μὲν οὐ φησί χρῆναι τοὺς νέους ἀσκεῖν, ἐγὼ δὲ φημι. καί σωφρονεῖν αὐτὸς φησί χρῆναι· δύο κακῶς μεγάλα. 1060 ἐπεὶ σὺ διὰ τὸ σωφρονεῖν τῷ πώποτ’ εἶδες ἄγαθον τι γενόμενον, φράσον, καί μ’ ἐξέλεγξον εἰπών.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

πολλοῖς. ὁ γοῦν Πηλεύς ἔλαβε διὰ τὸ σωφρονεῖν ὁ Πηλεύς.

ἈΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

μάχαιραν, ἀστεῖον γε κέρδος ἔλαβεν ὁ κακοδαίμων. ὁ Ὑπέρβολος δ’ οὐκ τῶν λύχνων πλεῖν ή τάλαντα πολλὰ εἶλησε διὰ ποιηρίαν, ἂλλ’ οὐ μὰ ἔξελεγξον εἰπῶν. 1066 ἠγαθάν τι γενόμενον, φράσον, καί μ’ ἐξέλεγξον εἰπῶν.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

καὶ τὴν Θέτιν γ’ ἐγημε διὰ τὸ σωφρονεῖν ὁ Πηλεύς.

ἈΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

κατ’ ἀπολυποῦσα γ’ αὐτῶν ὡχεῖ, οὐ γὰρ ἤν υβριστῆς οὔδ’ ἵδις ἐν τοῖς στρῶμασιν τὴν νύκτα παννυχίζειν- γυνὴ δὲ σωφρονομένη χαίρει— σὺ δ’ εἶ Κρόιντππος. 1070

Worse Argument

And where'd you ever see cold water in a bath of Hercules? But who was a more manly man than him?

Better Argument

That's it, the very things which our young men are always babbling on about these days—crowding in the bath house, leaving empty all the wrestling schools.

Worse Argument

Next, you're not happy when they hang around the market place—but I think that's good. If it were shameful, Homer would not have labelled Nestor—and all his clever men—great public speakers. Now, I'll move on to their tongues, which this man says the young lads should not train. I say they should. He also claims they should be self-restrained. These two things injure them in major ways. Where have you ever witnessed self-restraint bring any benefit to anyone? Tell me. Speak up. Refute my reasoning.

Better Argument

There are lots of people. For example, Peleus won a sword for his restraint.

Worse Argument

A sword! What a magnificent reward the poor wretch received! While Hyperbolos, who sells lamps in the market, is corrupt and brings in lots of money, but, god knows, he's never won a sword.

Better Argument

But his virtue enabled Peleus to marry Thetis.

Worse Argument

Then she ran off, abandoning the man, because he didn't want to spend all night having hard sweet sex between the sheets—that rough-and-tumble love that women like. You're just a crude old-fashioned Cronos.
Aristophanes

σκέψαι γὰρ ὦ μειράκιον ἐν τῷ σωφρονεῖν ἅπαντα
ἀνέστων, ἰδοὺν τ’ ὅσων μέλλεις ἀποστερεῖσθαι,
pαιδῶν γυναικῶν κοπτᾶβων ὅψων πότων κυλλαμὼν.
καίτοι τί σοι ζην άξιον, τοῦτων ἐὼν στερηθῆς;
ἐνε. πάρεμ. ἐνεδειθὲν ἐς τὰς τής φύσεως ἀνάγκας, 1075
ἡμαρτε. ἡμάςθης, ἐμοίχευσός τι, κάτ’ ἔλθῃς.
ἀπόλωλας· ἀδύνατος γὰρ εἶ λέγειν. ἐμοὶ δ᾽ ὁμιλῶν
χρῶ τῇ φύσει, σκίρτα, γέλα, νόμιζε μηδὲν αἰσχρόν.
μοιχὸς γὰρ ἦν τύχῃς ἀλούς, τάδ᾽ ἀντερεῖς πρὸς αὐτόν,
ὡς οὐδὲν ἡμέραικας· εἶτ᾽ εἰς τὸν Δί᾽ ἐπανενεγκεῖν, 1080
κάκελως ὡς ἦττων ἔρωτός ἐστι καὶ γυναικῶν·
καίτοι σὺ θνητὸς ὢν θεοῦ πῶς μεῖζον ἃν δύναιο;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τί δ᾽ ἦν ῥαφανιδωθῇ πιθόμενός σοι τέφρᾳ τε τιλθῇ,
ἐξεί τινα γινόμεν λέγειν τὸ μῆ εὐρύπρωκτος εἶναι;

'ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

ἡν δ᾽ εὐρύπρωκτος ἦ, τί πείσεται κακόν; 1085

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τι μέν οὖν ἄν ἂν μεῖζον πάθοι τοῦτον ποτὲ;

'ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

τί δῆτ᾽ ἐρείς, ἦν τοῦτο νυκτῆς ἐμοῦ;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ

σιγήσομαι. τί δ᾽ ἄλλο;

Clouds

Now, my boy, just think off all those things
that self-restraint requires—you’ll go without
all sorts of pleasures—boys and women,
drunken games and tasty delicacies,
drink and riotous laughter. What’s life worth
if you’re deprived of these? So much for that.
I’ll now move on to physical desires.
You’ve strayed and fallen in love—had an affair
with someone else’s wife. And then you’re caught.
You’re dead, because you don’t know how to speak.
But if you hang around with those like me,
you can follow what your nature urges.
You can leap and laugh and never think
of anything as shameful. If, by chance,
you’re discovered screwing a man’s wife,
just tell the husband you’ve done nothing wrong.
Blame Zeus—alleging even he’s someone
who can’t resist his urge for sex and women.
And how can you be stronger than a god?
You’re just a mortal man.

Better Argument

All right—but suppose
he trusts in your advice and gets a radish
rammed right up his arse, and his pubic hairs
are burned with red-hot cinders. Will he have
some reasoned argument to demonstrate
he’s not a loose-arsed bugger?

Worse Argument

So his asshole’s large—
why should that in any way upset him?

Better Argument

Can one suffer any greater harm
than having a loose asshole?

Worse Argument

What will you say
if I defeat you on this point?

Better Argument

I’ll shut up.

What more could a man say?
'ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
φέρε δή μοι φράσον·
συνηγορούσιν ἐκ τῶν;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
πείθομαι.
τί δαί; τραγῳδοῦσ᾽ ἐκ τῶν;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
eὖ λέγεις.
δημηγοροῦσι δ᾽ ἐκ τῶν;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
ἄρα δῆτ᾽
ἐγνωκας ὡς οἴδεν λέγεις;
καὶ τῶν θεατῶν ὁπότεροι
πλείους σκόπει.

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
καὶ δη σκοπώ.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
tί δὴ ὧρᾶς;

ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
πολὺ πλείωνας νὴ τῶν θεαίς
τῶν εὐρυπρώκτων. τουτοινὶ
γοῦν οἶδ᾽ ἐγὼ κάκεωνι
καὶ τῶν κομήτητον τουτοινί.

"ΑΔΙΚΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ
tί δὴ ἔρεις;
Aristophanes

ΔΙΚΛΙΟΣ ΔΟΓΟΣ

ιὴττήμεθ᾽ ὃ κανούμενοι
πρὸς τῶν θεῶν δέξασθέ μου
θοιμάτων, ωσ
ἐξαντομολόγῳ πρὸς ὕμᾶς.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

τί δήτα, πότερα τούτον ἀπάγεσθαι λαβὼν
βούλει τὸν νίον, ἢ διδάσκω σοι λέγειν;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

δίδασκε καὶ κάλαξε καὶ μέμνησ᾽ ὅπως
εῦ μοι στομώσεις αὐτόν, ἐπὶ μὲν θάτερα
οἶον δικαίοις, τὴν δ᾽ ἔτεραν αὐτοῦ γνάθον
στόμωσον οὐαν ἐς τὰ μεῖξω πράγματα.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἀμέλει κομιεῖ τοῦτον σοφιστὴν δεξιόν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

άχρον μὲν οὖν οἵματι γε καὶ κακοδαίμονα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρείτε νῦν, οἶμαι δὲ σοι ταῦτα μεταμελήσεις.
τοῖς κριταῖς ἀι κερδαυοῦσαν, ἢν τι τόνδε τὸν χορὸν
ὡφελῶσ᾽ ἐκ τῶν δικαίων, βουλόμεθα ἡμεῖς φράσαι.
πρώτα μὲν γὰρ, ἢν νεὰν βούλησθ᾽ ἐν ὀρφα τοὺς ἄγροὺς,
ἵσομεν πράττοισαι υμῖν, τοῖς δ᾽ ἄλλοις υστερον.
εἶτα τὸν καρπὸν τεκούσας ἀμπέλους φυλάξομεν,
ἀμυντὸς αὐχμόν πεζένοι μητ᾽ ἄγαν ἐπομβρίαν.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

ἄτημά τις τις ἡμᾶς θητός ὃν οὐσίας θεάς.
προσεχέτω τὸν νοῦν, πρὸς ἡμῶν ὁι πείσεται κακά,
λαμβάνων οὐτ᾽ ἄλλον οὔτ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἄλλων ἐκ τοῦ χωρίον,
ἡμεῖς ἄν γὰρ αἰ τ᾽ ἐλαῖαι βλαστάωσ᾽ αἰ τ᾽ ἀμπέλου,
ἀποκεκόμωται τοιαῦτας σφενδόναις παιάζομεν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

κεραμόν πολλὴν παραγόμενον.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

someone miserably pale, I figure.

CHORUS LEADER

All right. Go in.
I think you may regret this later on.

Worse Argument and Hefidippides go into the Thinkery, while Strepsiades returns into his own house

We'd like to tell the judges here the benefits they'll get, if they help this chorus, as by right they should.
First, if you want to plough your lands in season, we'll rain first on you and on the others later.
Then we'll protect your fruit, your growing vines, so neither drought nor too much rain will damage them.
But any mortal who dishonours us as gods should bear in mind the evils we will bring him.
From his land he'll get no wine or other harvest.
When his olive trees and fresh young vines are budding, we'll let fire with our sling shots, to smash and break them.
If we see him making bricks, we'll send down rain, we'll shatter roofing tiles with our round hailstones.
Aristophanes

If ever there's a wedding for his relatives,
or friends, or for himself, we'll rain all through the night,
so he'd rather live in Egypt than judge this wrong. [1130]

/Strepsiades comes out of his house, with a small sack in his hand/

Strepsiades

Five more days, then four, three, two—and then
the day comes I dread more than all the rest. It makes me shake with fear—the day that stands
between the Old Moon and the New—the day
when any man I happen to owe money to
swears on oath he'll put down his deposit,
take me to court. He says he'll fi nish me,
do me in. When I make a modest plea
for something fair, "My dear man, don't demand
this payment now, ... I just don't care, not if Pheidippides has learned to argue. I'll fi nd out soon enough. Let's knock here,
at the thinking school.

/Socrates knocks on the door of the Thinkery/

Boy . . . Hey, boy . . . boy!

/Socrates comes to the door/

Socrates

Hello there, Strepsiades.

Strepsiades

First of all, you must accept this present.

/Socrates hands Socrates the small sack/

It's proper for a man show respect
to his son's teacher in some way. Tell me—
has the boy learned that style of argument
you brought out here just now?

Socrates

Yes, he has.

/Strepsiades/

In the name of Fraud, queen of everything,
that's splendid news!
Aristophanes

Socrates
You can defend yourself
in any suit you like—and win.

Strepsiades
I can?
Even if there were witnesses around
when I took out the loan?

Socrates
The more the better—
even if they number in the thousands.

Strepsiades [in a parody of tragic style]
Then I will roar aloud a mighty shout—
Ah ha, weep now you petty money men,
wait for yourselves, wail for your principal,
wait for your compound interest. No more
will you afflict me with your evil ways.
On my behalf there’s growing in these halls
a son who’s got a gleaming two-edged tongue—
he’s my... to my foes. He will remove
the mighty tribulations of his sire. Run off inside and summon him to me.

[Socrates goes back into the Thinkery]
My son, my boy, now issue from the house—
and hearken to your father’s words.

[Socrates and Pheidippides come out of the Thinkery. Pheidippides has been
transformed in appearance, so that he now looks, moves, and talks like the
other students in the Thinkery]

Socrates
Here’s your young man.

Strepsiades
Ah, my dear, dear boy.

Socrates
Ah, my dear, dear boy.

Strepsiades
Take him and go away.

[Socrates exits back into the Thinkery]

Strepsiades
Ah ha, my lad—
what joy. What sheer delight for me to gaze,
first, upon your colourless complexion,
to see how right away you’re well prepared
to deny and contradict—with that look
which indicates our national character
so clearly planted on your countenance—
the look which says, “What do you mean?”—the look
which makes you seem a victim, even though
you’re the one at fault, the criminal.
I know that Attic stare stamped on your face.
Now you must rescue me—since you’re the one
who’s done me in.

Pheidippides
What are you scared about?

Strepsiades
The day of the Old Moon and the New.

Pheidippides
You mean there’s a day that’s old and new?

Strepsiades
The day they say they’ll make deposits
to charge me in the courts! [1180]

Pheidippides
Then those who do that
will lose their cash. There’s simply no way
one day can be two days.

Strepsiades
It can’t?

Pheidippides: How?
Unless it’s possible a single woman
can at the same time be both old and young.

Strepsiades
Yet that seems to be what our laws dictate.

Pheidippides
In my view they just don’t know the law—
not what it really means.

Strepsiades
What does it mean?

Pheidippides
Old Solon by his nature loved the people. 85
Strepsiades

But that’s got no bearing on the Old Day—
or the New.

Pheidippides

Well, Solon set up two days
for summonses—the Old Day and the New,
so deposits could be made with the New Moon.\(^\text{1190}\)

Strepsiades

Then why did he include Old Day as well?

Pheidippides

So the defendants, my dear fellow,
could show up one day early, to settle
by mutual agreement, and, if not,
they should be very worried the next day
was the start of a New Moon.

Strepsiades

In that case,
why do judges not accept deposits
once the New Moon comes but only on the day
between the Old and New?

Pheidippides

It seems to me
they have to act like those who check the food—
they want to grab as fast as possible
at those deposits, so they can nibble them
a day ahead of time.

Strepsiades

That’s wonderful!

[to the audience]

You helpless fools! Why do you sit there—
so idiotically, for us wise types
to take advantage of? Are you just stones,
ciphers, merely sheep or stacked-up pots?
This calls for a song to me and my son here,
to celebrate good luck and victory.

[He sings]

O Strepsiades is truly blessed
for cleverness the very best,
what a brainy son he’s raised.
So friends and townsfolk sing his praise. Each time you win they’ll envy me—
you’ll plead my case to victory. So let’s go in—I want to treat, and first give you something to eat.

[Strepsiades and Pheidippides go together into their house. Enter one of Strepsiades’ creditors, Pasias, with a friend as his witness]

Pasias
Should a man throw away his money? Never! But it would have been much better, back then at the start, to ... drag you as a witness here today in this matter of my money. I’ll make this man from my own deme my enemy.

But I won’t let my country down—never—not as long as I’m alive. And so . . .

[raising his voice]
I’m summoning Strepsiades . . .

[Enter Strepsiades]
Strepsiades
Who is it?

Pasias
. . . on this Old Day and the New.

Strepsiades
I ask you here to witness that he’s called me for two days. What’s the matter?

Pasias
The loan you got, twelve minai, when you bought that horse—the dapple grey.

Strepsiades
A horse? Don’t listen to him. You all know how I hate horses.

Pasias
What’s more, by Zeus, you swore on all the gods you’d pay me back.
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
μὰ τὸν Δί᾽ οὐ γὰρ πω τὸτ’ ἐξηπίστατο
Φειδιππίδης μοι τὸν ἀκατάβλητον λόγον.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
νῦν δὲ διὰ τοῦτ’ ἐξαρνοὺς εἶναι διανοεῖ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τί γὰρ ἄλλ’ ἄν ἀπολαύσαμι τοῦ μαθήματος;

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
καὶ ταῦτ’ ἑθελήσεις ἀπομόσαι μοι τοὺς θεοὺς ἂν ἂν κελεύσω γὰρ σε;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
tοὺς ποίους θεοὺς;

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
tὸν Δία, τὸν Ἑρμήν, τὸν Ποσειδῶ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
νὴ Δία κἂν προσκαταθείην γ’ ἀστ’ ὀμόσαι τριῶβολον. 1235

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
ἀπόλοιο τοῖνν ἔνεκ’ ἀναιδείας ἔτι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἄλοιπν διασμηχθῆς ὄναιτ’ ἂν ὦτοσί.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
οἷ’ ὥς καταγελήσ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐξ χοᾶς χωρήσεται.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
οὐ τοι μὰ τὸν Δία τὸν μέγαν καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐμοῦ καταπροίξει.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
Yes, by god, but Pheidippides back then did not yet know the iron-clad argument on my behalf.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
So now, because of that, you’re intending to deny the debt? 1230

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
If I don’t, what advantage do I gain from everything he’s learned?

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
Are you prepared to swear you owe me nothing—by the gods—in any place I tell you?

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
Which gods?

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
By Zeus, by Hermes, by Poseidon.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
Yes, indeed, by Zeus—and to take that oath I’d even pay three extra obols. 88

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
You’re shameless—may that ruin you some day!

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ [putting Pasias on the belly]
This wine skin here would much better off if you rubbed it down with salt. 89

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
Damn you—you’re ridiculing me!

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ [still patting Pasias’ paunch]
About four gallons, that’s what it should hold.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ
By mighty Zeus, by all the gods, you’ll not make fun of me and get away with it! 133
Aristophanes

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

θαυμασίως ἧσθήν θεοῖς,
καὶ Ζεὺς γέλοιος ὄμνύμενος τοῖς εἰδόσιν.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ

ἡ μὴν σὺ τούτων τῷ χρόνῳ δώσεις δύκιν.
ἀλλ’ εἶτ’ ἀποδώσεις μοι τὰ χρήματ’ εἶτε μὴ,
ἀπόπεμψοιν ἀποκρινάμενοι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐχε νυν ἰάυνος.
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀποκρινοῦμαι σοι σαφῶς.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ

tί σοι δοκεῖ δράσειν;

ΜΑΡΤΥΣ

ἀποδώσεις μοι δοκεῖ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ποῦ ἁθ’ οὗτος ἁπαίτων με τάργύριον; λέγε
τούτι τί ἔστι;

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ

tοῦθ’ ὁ τι ἔστι; κάρδοπος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐπειτ’ ἁπαίτεις τάργυριον τοιοῦτος ὡς;
οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοήν οὐδ’ ἂν ἄβολον οὐδενί,
ὅστις καλέσεις κάρδοποι τήν καρδόπην.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ

οὐκ ἂρ’ ἀποδώσεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὔχ ὅσον γέ μ’ εἰδέναι.
οὐκον ἄνυσας τι βάττον ἀπολληταργεῖς
ἀπ’ τής θύρας;

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ

ἀπεμι. καὶ τοῦτ’ ἅσθ’ ὅτι
θῆσαι πρωταίνει ἕ μηκέτι ζῶην ἐγώ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

σταυριζόμενος μετὰ θεοῖς,
καὶ Ζεὺς γέλοιος ὄμνύμενος τοῖς εἰδόσιν.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ

ἡ μὴν σὺ τούτων τῷ χρόνῳ δώσεις δύκιν.
ἀλλ’ εἶτ’ ἀποδώσεις μοι τὰ χρήματ’ εἶτε μὴ,
ἀπόπεμψοιν ἀποκρινάμενοι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐχε νυν ἰάυνος.
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀποκρινοῦμαι σοι σαφῶς.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ

tί σοι δοκεῖ δράσειν;

ΜΑΡΤΥΣ

ἀποδώσεις μοι δοκεῖ.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ποῦ ἁθ’ οὗτος ἁπαίτων με τάργύριον; λέγε
τούτι τί ἔστι;

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ

tοῦθ’ ὁ τι ἔστι; κάρδοπος.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐπειτ’ ἁπαίτεις τάργυριον τοιοῦτος ὡς;
οὐκ ἂν ἀποδοήν οὐδ’ ἂν ἄβολον οὐδενί,
ὅστις καλέσεις κάρδοποι τήν καρδόπην.

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ

οὐκ ἂρ’ ἀποδώσεις;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὔχ ὅσον γέ μ’ εἰδέναι.
οὐκον ἄνυσας τι βάττον ἀπολληταργεῖς
ἀπ’ τής θύρας;

ΠΑΣΙΑΣ

ἀπεμι. καὶ τοῦτ’ ἅσθ’ ὅτι
θῆσαι πρωταίνει ἕ μηκέτι ζῶην ἐγώ.

134

Clouds

STREPSIADES

Ah, you and your gods—
that’s so incredibly funny. And Zeus—
to swear on him is quite ridiculous
to those who understand.

PASIAS

Some day, I swear,
you’re going to have to pay for all of this.
Will you or will you not pay me my money?
Give me an answer, and I’ll leave.

STREPSIADES

Calm down—
I’ll give you a clear answer right away.

[Strepsiades goes into his house, leaving Pasias and the Witness by themselves]

PASIAS

Well, what do you think he’s going to do?
Does it strike you he’s going to pay?

[Enter Strepsiades carrying a kneading basin]

STREPSIADES

Where’s the man who’s asking me for money?
Tell me—what’s this?

PASIAS

What’s that? A kneading basin.

STREPSIADES

You’re demanding money when you’re such a fool?
I wouldn’t pay an obol back to anyone
who called a basinette a basin.

PASIAS

So you won’t repay me?

STREPSIADES

As far as I know,
I won’t. So why don’t you just hurry up
and quickly scuttle from my door.

PASIAS

I’m off.
Let me tell you—I’ll be making my deposit.
If not, may I not live another day!

135
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
καὶ προσαπολεῖς ἃρ’ αὐτὰ πρὸς ταῖς δώδεκα.
καῖτοι σε τούτο γ’ οὐχὶ βούλομαι παθεῖν,
ὅτι ‘κάλεσας εὐθηκῶς τὴν κάρδοσαιν.

ΑΜΥΝΙΑΣ
ιό μοί μοι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐα.
τὶς οὔτοσι ποτ’ ἐσθ’ ὦ θρηνών; οὕτι ποι
τῶν Καρκίνου τις δαιμόνων ἐφθέγξατο;

ΑΜΥΝΙΑΣ
τί δ’ ὅστις εἰμὶ τοῦτο βούλεσθ’ εἰδέναι;
ἀνὴρ κακοδαίμων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
κατὰ σεαυτὸν νῦν τρέπον.

ΑΜΥΝΙΑΣ
ὡς κληρῆ δαίμων, ὡς τῆς βραυσαντυγν
Ἰππῶν ἑμῶν, ὡς Παλλᾶς ὡς μ’ ἀπώλεσας.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τί δαί σε Τληπόλεμός ποτ’ εὑργασταί κακῶν;

ΑΜΥΝΙΑΣ
μὴ σκώπτε μ’ ὃ τάν, ἀλλὰ μοι τὰ χρήματα
τῶν ὑδών ἀποδοῦινε κέλευσαι ἁλαβεν
ἄλλως τε μέντοι καὶ κακῶς πεπραγότι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τὰ ποία ταῦτα χρήμαθ’;

ΑΜΥΝΙΑΣ
ἀδανείσατο.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
κακῶς ἃρ’ ὁντως εἰχὲς, ὡς γ’ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς.
Aristophanes

**Clouds**

Amynias

By god, that’s true—
I was driving in my chariot and fell out.

Strepsiades

Why then babble on such utter nonsense,
as if you’d just fallen off a donkey?

Amynias

If I want him to pay my money back
am I talking nonsense?

Strepsiades

I think it’s clear
your mind’s not thinking straight.

Amynias

What’s that?

Strepsiades

From your behaviour here, it looks to me
as if your brain’s been shaken up.

Amynias

Well, as for you,
by Hermes, I’ll be suing you in court,
if you don’t pay the money.

Strepsiades

Tell me this—
do you think Zeus always sends fresh water
each time the rain comes down, or does the sun
suck the same water up from down below
for when it rains again?

Amynias

I don’t know which—
and I don’t care.

Strepsiades

Then how can it be just
for you to get your money reimbursed,
when you know nothing of celestial things?

Amynias

Look, if you haven’t got the money now,
at least repay the interest.

Strepsiades

This “interest”—
What sort of creature is it?
Aristophanes

Amynias

Don’t you know?

It’s nothing but the way that money grows, always getting larger day by day month by month, as time goes by.

Strepsiaides

That’s right.

What about the sea? In your opinion, [1290] is it more full of water than before?

Amynias

No, by Zeus— it’s still the same. If it grew, that would violate all natural order.

Strepsiaides

In that case then, you miserable rascal, if the sea shows no increase in volume with so many rivers flowing into it, why are you so keen to have your money grow? Now, why not chase yourself away from here?

[calling inside the house]

Bring me the cattle prod!

Amynias

I have witnesses!

[The slave comes out of the house and gives Strepsiaides a cattle prod. Strepsiaides starts poking Amynias with it]

Strepsiaides

Come on! What you waiting for? Move it, you pedigree nag!

Amynias

This is outrageous!

Strepsiaides [continuing to poke Amynias away]

Get a move on—or I’ll shove this prod all the way up your horse-racing rectum!

[Amynias runs off stage]

You running off? That’s what I meant to do, get the wheels on that chariot of yours really moving fast.

[Strepsiaides goes back into his house]
Chorus

Oh, it’s so nice to worship vice. This old man here adores it so he will not clear the debts he owes. But there’s no way he will not fall some time today, done in by all his trickeries, he’ll quickly fear depravities he’s started here. It seems to me he’ll soon will see his clever son put on the show... He’ll want his son (it may well be) to be struck dumb.

[Enter Strepsiades running out of his house with Pheidippides close behind him hitting him over the head]

Strepsiades

Help! Help! You neighbours, relatives, fellow citizens, help me—I’m begging you! I’m being beaten up! Owww, I’m in such pain—my head . . . my jaw.

[To Pheidippides]

You good for nothing, are you hitting your own father?

Pheidippides

Yes, dad, I am.
Aristophanes

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ μιαρὲ καὶ πατραλοῖα καὶ τοιχωρίχε.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

αὐθίς με ταύτα ταύτα καὶ πλείω λέγε.

ἀρ’ οἶσθ’ ὅτι χαίρω πόλλ’ ἀκοίνων καὶ κακά;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ λακκόπρωκτε.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

πάττε πολλοῖς τοῖς ρόδοις. 1330

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τὸν πατέρα τύπτεις;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

κάποφανῶ γε νῇ Δία

ὡς ἐν δίκη σ’ ἔτυπτον.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ὦ μιαρότατε,

καὶ πῶς γένοιτ’ ἄν πατέρα τύπτειν ἐν δίκῃ;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐγὼ γ’ ἀποδείξω καὶ σε νικήσω λέγων.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

τούτι σὺ νικήσεις;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

πολύ γε καὶ ῥάδιως.

ἐλοῦ δ’ ὁπότερον τοῖν λόγοιον βούλει λέγειν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ποίων λόγων;

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

τὸν κρείττον’ ἤ τὸν ἥττονα. 1335

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

See that! He admits he’s beating me.

PHEIDIPPIDES

I do indeed.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

You scoundrel, criminal—a man who abuses his own father!

PHEIDIPPIDES

Go on—keep calling me those very names—the same ones many times. Don’t you realize I just love hearing streams of such abuse?

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

You perverted asshole!

PHEIDIPPIDES

Ah, some roses! Keep pelting me with roses!!

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

You’d hit your father?

PHEIDIPPIDES

Yes, and by the gods I’ll now demonstrate how I was right to hit you.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

You total wretch, how can it be right to strike one’s father?

PHEIDIPPIDES

I’ll prove that to you—and win the argument.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

You’ll beat me on this point?

PHEIDIPPIDES

Indeed, I will.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

It’s easy. So of the two arguments choose which one you want.

PHEIDIPPIDES

The Better or the Worse.
By god, my lad,
I really did have you taught to argue
against what's just, if you succeed in this—
and make the case it's fine and justified
for a father to be beaten by his son.

Well, I think I'll manage to convince you,
so that once you've heard my arguments,
you won't say a word.

Well, to tell the truth,
I do want to hear what you have to say.

You've some work to do, old man. Think how to get the upper hand.
He's got something he thinks will work,
or he'd not act like such a jerk.
There's something makes him confident—
his arrogance is evident.

But first you need to tell the Chorus here
how your fight originally started.
That's something you should do in any case.

Yes, I'll tell you how our quarrel first began.
As you know, we were having a fine meal.
I first asked him to take up his lyre
and sing a lyric by Simonides—
the one about the ram being shorn.
But he immediately refused—saying
that playing the lyre while we were drinking
was out of date, like some woman singing
while grinding barley.

Well, at that point,
you should have been ground up and trampled on—
asking for a song, as if you were feasting
with cicadas.
Strepsiades

The way he’s talking now—

that’s just how he was talking there before.

He said Simonides was a bad poet.

I could hardly stand it, but at first I did.

Then I asked him to pick up a myrtle branch

and at least recite some Aeschylus for me.94

He replied at once, “In my opinion,

Aeschylus is first among the poets

for lots of noise, unevenness, and bombast—

he piles up words like mountains.” Do you know

how hard my heart was pounding after that?

But I clenched my teeth and kept my rage inside,

and said, “Then recite me something recent,

from the newer poets, some witty verse.” [1370]

So he then right off started to declaim

some passage from Euripides in which,

spare me this, a brother was enjoying sex

with his own sister— from a ... I verbally attacked

with all sorts of nasty, shameful language.

Then, as one might predict, we went at it—

hurling insults at each other back and forth.

But then he jumped up, pushed me, thumped me,

choked me, and started killing me.

Pheidippides

Surely I was entitled to do that
to a man who will not praise Euripides,
the cleverest of all.

Strepsiades

Him? The cleverest? Ha!

What do I call you? No, I won’t say—

I’d just get beaten one more time.

Pheidippides

Yes, by Zeus,
you would—and with justice, too.

Strepsiades

How would that be just? You shameless man,

I brought you up. When you lisped your words,

I listened ’til I recognized each one.
If you said “waa,” I understood the word and brought a drink; if you asked for “foo foo,” I’d bring you bread. And if you said “poo poo” I’d pick you up and carry you outside, until I crapped myself right where I was.

— Aristophanes

CHORUS

χειρισμών, οὐκ ἔτης
ἐξο ἐνεγκείν ὦ μιαρὲ
θύραζε μ’, ἀλλὰ πνιγόμενος
αὐτὸν ’ποίησα κακκάν.

— Aristophanes

CHORUS LEADER

εἰ μὲν γε βρῦν εἴποις, ἐγὼ γνοὺς ἂν πιεῖν ἐπέσχον
μαμμᾶν δ᾽ ἂν αἰτήσαντος ἢκὼν σοι φέρων ἂν ἄρτον:
κακκάν δ᾽ ἂν οὐκ ἔφθης φράσας, καγὼ λαβὼν θύραζε
ἐξέφερον ἂν καὶ προῦσαξάμεν σε· συ δ᾽ ἐμὲ νῦν ἀπάχων
βοώντα καὶ κεκραγόθ’ ὅτι
χειρισμῷν, οὐκ ἔτης
ἐξο ἐνεγκείν ὦ μιαρὲ
θύραζε μ’, ἀλλὰ πνιγόμενος
αὐτὸν ’ποίησα κακκάν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἷμαι γε τῶν νεωτέρων τὰς καρδίας
πηδάν ὁ τι λέξει.
εἰ γὰρ τοιαῦτα γ’ οὕτος ἐξειργασμένος
λαλῶν ἀναπείσει,
τὸ δέρμα τῶν γεραιτέρων λάβομεν ἂν
ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ἐρεβύθθην.

— Aristophanes

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ὡς ἡδὺ καινοῖς πράγμασιν καὶ δεξιοῖς ὁμιλεῖν,
καὶ τῶν καθεστώτων νόμων ὑπερφρονεῖν δύνασθαι. ἐγὼ γὰρ ὅτε μὲν ἱππικῇ τὸν νοῦν μόνῃ προσεῖχον,
οὐδ’ ἂν τρ’ εἰπεῖν ῥήμαθ’ ῥὸς τ’ ἢ πρὶν ἔζαρματεῖν,

νωνδ’ ἐπειδή μ’ οὐτοῖσι τούτοις ἔπαυσεν αὐτός,
γνώμαις δὲ λεπτάς καὶ λόγους ζύνειμαι καὶ μερήμαις,
οἷμαι διδαξεῖν ὡς δύκαιον τὸν πατέρα κολάζειν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἵππευε τοίνυν νὴ Δί’, ὡς ἔμοιγε κρεῖττόν ἐστίν
ἴπτων τρέφειν τέθριππον ᾗ τυπτόμενον ἐπιτρίβηναι.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ

ἐκεῖσε δ’ οδέν ἀπέσχισάς με τοῦ λόγον μέτεμψιμοι,
καὶ πρῶτ’ ἐρήσομαι σε τουτί· παιδά μ’ ὄντ’ ἔτυπτες;

Clouds

If you said “waa,” I understood the word and brought a drink; if you asked for “foo foo,” I’d bring you bread. And if you said “poo poo” I’d pick you up and carry you outside, and hold you up. But when you strangled me just now, I screamed and yelled I had to shit—but you didn’t dare to carry me outside, you nasty brute, you kept on throttling me, until I crapped myself right where I was. [1390]

CHORUS

I think the hearts of younger spry are pounding now for his reply—for if he acts in just this way and yet his logic wins the day I’ll not value at a pin any older person’s skin.

CHORUS LEADER

Now down to work, you spinner of words, you explorer of brand new expressions. Seek some way to persuade us, so it will appear that what you’ve been saying is right.

PH Eidippides

How sweet it is to be conversant with things which are new and clever, capable of treating with contempt established ways. When I was only focused on my horses, I couldn’t say three words without going wrong. But now this man has made me stop all that, I’m well acquainted with the subtlest views, and arguments and frames of mind. And so, I do believe I’ll show how just it is to punish one’s own father.

STRESIADES

By the gods, keep on with your horses then—for me caring for a four-horse team is better than being beaten to a pulp.

PH Eidippides

I’ll go back to where I was in my argument, when you interrupted me. First, tell me this—Did you hit me when I was a child?
Strepsiades: Yes.

But I was doing it out of care for you.

Pheidippides

Then tell me this: Is it not right for me
to care for you in the same way—to beat you—
since that’s what caring means—a beating?
Why must your body be except from blows,
while mine is not? I was born a free man, too.
"The children howl—you think the father
should not howl as well?" You’re going to claim
the laws permit this practice on our children.
To that I ... men should howl
before the young, because there’s far less chance
their natures lead them into errors.

Strepsiades

There’s no law that fathers have to suffer this.

Pheidippides

But surely some man first brought in the law,
someone like you and me? And way back then
people found his arguments convincing.
Why should I have less ... and other animals—
they avenge themselves against their fathers.
And yet how are we different from them,
except they don’t propose decrees?

Strepsiades

Well then,
since you want to be like cocks in all you do,
why not sleep on a perch and feed on shit?

Pheidippides

My dear man, that’s not the same at all—
not according to what Socrates would think.
Aristophanes

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
πρὸς ταῦτα μὴ τύπτ᾽· εἰ δὲ μῆ, σαυτὸν ποτ᾽ αἰτιάσει.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
καὶ πῶς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐπεὶ σὲ μὲν δίκαιος εἰμ᾽ ἐγὼ κολάζειν,
ποὺ δ᾽, ἤν γένηται σοι, τὸν νιών.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
ἡν δὲ μὴ γένηται, 1435
μάτην ἐμοὶ κεκλαύσεται, σὺ δ᾽ ἐγχανῶν τεθνήξεις.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐμοὶ μὲν ὄνδρες ἡλικεῖς δοκεῖ λέγειν δίκαια·
κάμοι εὐχαρεῖσι δοκεῖ τοῦτοισι ταπεική.
κλάεν γὰρ Ἦμασ εἰκὸς ἑστ᾽, ἦν μὴ δίκαια δρώμεν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
σκέφται δὲ χάτεραν ἔτι γνώμην.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἀπὸ γὰρ ὀλούμαι. 1440

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
καὶ μὴν ἰσῶς γ᾽ οὐκ ἀχθέσει παθῶν ἃ νῦν πέπονθας.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ποὺς δή; διδαξὼν γὰρ τί μ᾽ ἐκ τοῦτων ἑπωφελήσεις.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
τὴν μητέρ᾽ ὕσπερ καὶ σὲ τυπτήσω.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τί φής, τί φής σὺ; 1445
tούθ᾽ ἐτερον αὖ μεῖζον κακῶν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
τί δ᾽ ἤν ἐχίων τὸν ἡπτω
中国政府

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
πόρσ ταῦτα μή τύπτ᾽· εἰ δὲ μῆ, σαυτὸν ποτ᾽ αἰτιάσει.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
καὶ πῶς;

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ἐπεὶ σὲ μὲν δίκαιος εἰμ᾽ ἐγὼ κολάζειν,
ποὺ δ᾽, ἤν γένηται σοι, τὸν νιών.

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κλάεν γὰρ Ἦμασ εἰκὸς ἑστ᾽, ἦν μὴ δίκαια δρώμεν.

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σκέφται δὲ χάτεραν ἔτι γνώμην.

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ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
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ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ποὺς δή; διδαξὼν γὰρ τί μ᾽ ἐκ τοῦτων ἑπωφελήσεις.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
τὴν μητέρ᾽ ὕσπερ καὶ σὲ τυπτήσω.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τί φής, τί φής σὺ; 1445
tούθ᾽ ἐτερον αὖ μεῖζον κακῶν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
τί δ᾽ ἤν ἐχίων τὸν ἡπτω

Clouds

STREPSIADES
Even so, don’t beat me. For if you do,
you’ll have yourself to blame.

PHEIDIPPIDES
Why’s that?

STREPSIADES
Because I have the right to chastise you,
if you have a son, you’ll have that right with him.

PHEIDIPPIDES
If I don’t have one, I’ll have cried for nothing,
and you’ll be laughing in your grave.

STREPSIADES [addressing the audience]
All you men out there my age, it seems to me
he’s arguing what’s right. And in my view,
we should concede to these young sons what’s fair.
It’s only right that we should cry in pain
when we do something wrong.

PHEIDIPPIDES
Consider now another point.

STREPSIADES
No, no. [1440]

PHEIDIPPIDES
But then again
perhaps you won’t feel so miserable
at going through what you’ve suffered.

STREPSIADES
What’s that?
Explain to me how I benefit from this.

PHEIDIPPIDES
I’ll thump my mother, just as I hit you.

STREPSIADES
What’s did you just say? What are you claiming?
This second point is even more disgraceful.

PHEIDIPPIDES
But what if, using the Worse Argument,
I beat you arguing this proposition—
that it’s only right to hit one’s mother?
ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τί δ’ ἄλλο γ᾽ ἢν ταυτὶ ποιής,
οὐδέν σε κωλύσει σεαυ-
τὸν ἐμβαλεῖν ἐς τὸ βάραθρον
μετὰ Σωκράτους
καὶ τὸν λόγον τὸν ἡττω.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ταυτὶ δ’ ὑμᾶς ὦ Νεθέλαι πέποινθ’ ἐγὼ,
ὑμῶν ἀναθεῖς ἀπαντᾷ τὰμα πράγματα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν σαυτῷ οὐ τοῦτοις αἰτιος,
στρέψας σεαυτόν ἐς ποιηρᾶ πράγματα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τὰ δὴ ταῦτ’ οὐ μοι τότ’ ἠγορεύετε,
ἄλλ’ ἀνδρ’ ἄγρικοι καὶ γέροντ’ ἐπήρετε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἡμεῖς ποιούμεν ταῦθ’ ἐκάστοθ’ ὅταν τινὰ
γνῶμεν ποιηρῶν ὁντ’ ἐραστὴν πραγμάτων,
ἐως ἂν αὐτὸν ἐμβάλωμεν ἐς κακόν,
ὅπως ἂν εἰδή τοὺς θεοὺς διδουκέναι.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ὁμοί ποιηρά γ’ ὦ Νεθέλαι, δάκαια δέ.
οὐ γάρ μ’ ἔχριν τὰ χρήμαθ’ ἀδανεισάμην
ἀποστερεῖν, νῦν οὖν ὅπως ὦ φήλτατε
τῶν Χαερέφωντα τὸν μιαρὸν καὶ Σωκράτη
ἀπολέεις μετ’ ἐμοῦ λθών, οὐ σὲ καὶ ἐξηπάτων.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἂν ἀδικώσαμι τοὺς διδασκάλους.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
ναί ναὶ καταδέσθητι πατρῷον Δία.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙΔΗΣ
идοὺ γε Δίᾳ πατρῷον· ὡς ἄρχαιος εἶ.
Zend γάρ τις ἔστιν;
Aristophanes

Clouds

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

ἐστιν.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙ∆ΗΣ

οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐκ, ἐπεὶ

Δῖνος βασιλεύει τὸν Διὸ ἐξεληλακώς.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οὐκ ἐξεληλακικ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ τοῦτον φῶμην
diá τοῦτον τὸν δίνον, οἷον δεῖλαιος
ὅτε καὶ σε χυτρεοῦν ὄντα θεόν ἡγησάμην.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙ∆ΗΣ

ἐνταῦθα σαυτῷ παραφρόνει καὶ φληνάφα.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

οἷοι παρανοίαι: ὡς ἐμαινόμην ἄρα,

οἵτ᾽ ἐξεβάλλον τοὺς θεοὺς διὰ Σωκράτη.

αλλ᾽ ὁ φόλ᾽ Ἑρμῆ μηδαμίως θήμαινε μοι

μὴ δέ μ᾽ ἐπιτρύψῃς, ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχε

ἐμῶν παρανόησαντος ἀδολεχία.

καὶ μοι γενοῦ ἥμβουλος, εἰτ᾽ αὐτοὺς γραφήν

διωκάθω γραφάμενος ἐίθ᾽ ὁ τι σοι δοκεῖ.

ὁμώς παρανεὶς οὐκ ἔστο δικορραφάς,

ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ἐμμυπηρανά τὴν οἰκίαν

τῶν ἀδολεσχῶν, δεῦρο δεῦρ᾽ ὦ Ξανθία,

κλύμακα λαβών ἐξελθεί καὶ σμινύνη φέρων,

κάπετ᾽ ἐπαναβᾶς ἐπὶ τὸ φροντιστήριον

tὸ τέγος κατάσκαπτ᾽, εἰ φιλείς τὸν δεσπότην,

ἔως ἃν αὐτοῖς ἐμβάλῃς τὴν οἰκίαν.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

He does.

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙ∆ΗΣ

No, no, he doesn't—there's no way,

for Vortex has now done away with Zeus

and rules in everything.

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

He hasn't killed him.

[He points to a small statue of a round goblet which stands outside Thinkery]

I thought he had because that statue there,

the cup, is called a vortex.96 What a fool
to think this piece of clay could be a god!

ΦΕΙΔΙΠΠΙ∆ΗΣ

Stay here and babble nonsense to yourself.

[He looks for a moment at the statue] 97

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

My god, what lunacy. I was insane
to cast aside the gods for Socrates.

[He goes up and talks to the small statue of Hermes outside his house]

But, dear Hermes, don't vent your rage on me,

don't grind me down. Be merciful to me.

Their empty babbling made me lose my mind. 1480

Give me your advice. Shall I lay a charge,
go after them in court. What seems right to you?

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ

You counsel well. I won't launch a law suit.

[He looks at the statue for a moment]

[Xanthias, come here.]

Come outside—bring a ladder—a mattock, too.

then climb up on top of that Thinkery

and, if you love your master, smash the roof,

until the house collapses in on them.

[He looks for a moment at the statue] 98

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ: 

οἴμοι παρανοίας

ὡς ἐμαινόμην ἄρα,

ὅτ᾽ ἐξέβαλλον τοὺς θεοὺς διὰ Σωκράτη.

ἀλλ᾽ ὁ φόλ᾽ Ἑρμῆ μηδαμίως θήμαινε μοι

μὴ δέ μ᾽ ἐπιτρύψῃς, ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχε

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ἀλλ᾽ ὡς τάχιστ᾽ ἐμμυπηρανά τὴν οἰκίαν

τῶν ἀδολεσχῶν, δεῦρο δεῦρ᾽ ὦ Ξανθία,

κλύμακα λαβών ἐξελθεί καὶ σμινύνη φέρων,

κάπετ᾽ ἐπαναβᾶς ἐπὶ τὸ φροντιστήριον

tὸ τέγος κατάσκαπτ᾽, εἰ φιλείς τὸν δεσπότην,

ἔως ἃν αὐτοῖς ἐμβάλῃς τὴν οἰκίαν.
Someone fetch me a flaming torch out here. They may brag all they like, but here today I’ll make somebody pay the penalty for what they did to me.

[Another slave comes out and hands Strepsiades a torch. He joins Xanthias on the roof and tries to burn down the inside of the Thinkery]

STUDENT [from inside the Thinkery]

Help! Help!

STREPSIADES

Come on, Torch, put your flames to work.

[Strepsiades sets fire to the roof of the Thinkery. A student rushes outside and looks at Strepsiades and Xanthias on the roof]

STUDENT

You there, what are you doing?

STREPSIADES

What am I doing?

What else but picking a good argument with the roof beams of your house?

[A second student appears at a window as smoke starts coming out of the house]

STUDENT

Help! Who’s setting fire to the house?

STREPSIADES

It’s the man whose cloak you stole.

STUDENT

We’ll die. You’ll kill us all!

STREPSIADES

That’s what I want—unless this mattock disappoints my hopes or I fall through somehow and break my neck.

[Socrates comes out of the house in a cloud of smoke. He is coughing badly]

SOCRATES

What are you doing up on the roof?

STREPSIADES

I walk on air and contemplate the sun.
ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ
οἴμοι τάλας δείλαιος ἀποπνιγήσομαι.

ΧΑΙΡΕΦΩΝ
ἐγὼ δὲ κακοδαίμων γε κατακαυθήσομαι. 1505

ΣΤΡΕΨΙΑΔΗΣ
τί γὰρ μαθόντες τοὺς θεοὺς ύβρίζετε, καὶ τῆς σελήνης ἐσκοπεῖσθε τὴν ἕδραν;

ΕΡΜΗΣ
δίωκε βάλλε παῖε, πολλῶν οὕνεκα, μάλιστα δ᾽ εἰδὼς τοὺς θεοὺς ὡς ἠδίκουν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ήγεισθ' ἐξω· κεχόρευται γάρ μετρίως τὸ γε τῆμερον ἰμῖν. 1510

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SOCRATES [coughing]
This is bad—I’m going to suffocate.

STUDENT [still at the window]
What about poor me? I’ll be burned up.

[Strepsiades and Xanthias come down from the roof]

STREPSIADES [to Socrates]
Why were you so insolent with gods in what you studied and when you explored the moon’s abode? Chase them off, hit them, throw things at them—for all sorts of reasons, but most of all for their impiety.

[Strepsiades and Xanthias chase Socrates and the students off the stage and exit after them]

CHORUS LEADER
Lead us on out of here. Away! We’ve had enough of song and dance today.

[The Chorus exits]
NOTES

1. *Thinkery*: The Greek word *phrontisterion* (meaning school or academy) is translated here as Thinkery, a term borrowed from William Arrowsmith’s translation of *The Clouds*.

2. During the war it was easy for slaves to run away into enemy territory, so their owners had to treat them with much more care.

3. Wearing one’s hair long and keeping race horses were characteristics of the sons of very rich families.

4. The interest on Strepsiades’ loans would increase once the lunar month came to an end.

5. *twelve minai* is 100 drachmas, a considerable sum. The Greek reads “the horse branded with a *koppa* mark.” That brand was a guarantee of its breeding.

6. *Megacles* was a common name in a very prominent aristocratic family in Athens. Coesyra was the mother of a Megacles from this family, a woman well known for her wasteful expenditures and pride.

7. The Greek has “of Colias and Genetyllis” names associated with festivals celebrating women’s sexual and procreative powers.

8. Packing the wool tight in weaving uses up more wool and therefore costs more. Strepsiades holds up his cloak which is by now full of holes.

9. *-hippos* means “horse.” The mother presumably wanted her son to have the marks of the aristocratic classes. Xanthippos was the name of Pericles’ father and his son. The other names are less obviously aristocratic or uncommon.


11. *pheasants* were a rich rarity in Athens. Leogoras was a very wealthy Athenian.

12. *an obol* was a relatively small amount, about a third of a day’s pay for a jury member.
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13. *Knights* is a term used to describe the affluent young men who made up the cavalry. Pheidippides has been mixing with people far beyond his father's means.

14. A *yoke horse* was part of the four-horse team which was harnessed to a yoke on the inside.

15. I adopt Sommerstein's useful reading of this very elliptical passage, which interprets the Greek word *diabetes* as meaning a passive homosexual (rather than its usual meaning, "a pair of compasses"—both senses deriving from the idea of spreading legs apart). The line about selling the cloak is added to clarify the sense.

16. *Thales* was a very famous thinker from the sixth century BC.

17. The Athenians had captured a number of Spartans at Pylos in 425 and brought them to Athens where they remained in captivity.

18. Athenians sometimes apportioned land by lot outside the state which they had appropriated from other people.

19. Attica is the territory surrounded by and belonging to Athens.

20. A *deme* was a political unit in Athens. Membership in a particular deme was a matter of inheritance from one’s father.

21. In 446 BC the Athenians under Pericles put down a revolt in Euboea, a large island just off the coast of Attica.

22. *Athamas*, a character in one of Sophocles’ lost plays who was prepared for sacrifice. He was rescued by Hercules.


24. *Holy festivals*: the Eleusinian mysteries, a traditionally secret and sacred festival for those initiated into the band of cult worshippers.


26. *Typho*: a monster with a hundred heads, father of the storm winds (hence, our word *typhoon*).

27. *Thrush*: meat from a thrush was considered a delicacy, something that might be given to the winner of a public competition. These lines are mocking the dithyrambic poets (perhaps in comparison with the writers of comic drama).

28. *Xenophantes’ son*: a reference to Hieronymos, a dithyrambic and tragic poet. A centaur was known for its savage temper and wild appearance.


30. *Cleonemos*: an Athenian accused of dropping his shield and running away from a battle.

31. *Cleisthenes*: a notorious homosexual whom Aristophanes never tires of holding up to ridicule.

32. *Prodicus*: a well-known Athenian intellectual, who wrote on a wide variety of subjects. Linking Socrates and Prodicus as intellectual equals would strike many Athenians as quite absurd.

33. *Vortex*: the Greek word is *dinos* meaning a whirl or eddy. I adopt Sommerstein's suggestion for this word here.

34. *Panathenaia*: a major annual festival in Athens.

35. *Cronos*: the divine father of Zeus, the age of Cronos is part of the mythic past.

36. Legally an Athenian who believed someone had stolen his property could enter the suspect’s house to search. But he first had to remove any garments in which he might conceal something which he might plant in the house.

37. *Trophonios’ cave* was a place people went to get prophecies. A suppliant carried a honey cake as an offering to the snakes in the cave.

38. *Win*: this is a reference to the fact that the play is part of a competition. The speech obviously is part of the revisions made after the play failed to win first prize in its initial production. The speaker may have been Aristophanes himself or the Chorus Leader speaking on his behalf.

39. *Trained it*: This passage is a reference to Aristophanes’ first play, *The Banqueters*, and to those who helped him get the work produced. The child mentioned is a metaphorical reference to that work or to his artistic talent generally. The other woman is a metaphorical reference to Callistratos, who produced *The Banqueters*.

40. *Electra* was the sister of Orestes and spent a long time waiting to be reunited with him. That hope kept her going. When she saw her brother’s lock of hair on their father’s tomb, she was overjoyed that he
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had come back. The adjective “old” refers to the story, which was very well known to the audience.

41. These lines may indicate that in The Clouds the male characters did not wear the traditional phalluses or that the phalluses they did wear were not of a particular kind.

42. Cleon was a very powerful Athenian politician after Pericles. Aristophanes savagely attacked him in Knights. Cleon was killed in battle (in 422). Hyperbolos became a very influential politician after Cleon’s death.

43. Eupolis, Phrynichos, and Hermippos were comic playwrights, rivals of Aristophanes.

44. Paphlagonian tanner is a reference to Cleon, who earned his money from tanneries. Paphlagonia is an area in Asia Minor. The word here implies that Cleon was not a true Athenian.

45. seagull was a bird symbolic of thievery and greed. The contradiction in these speeches in the attitude to Cleon (who died the year following the original production) may be accounted for by the incomplete revision of the script.

46. holy lady is a reference to the goddess Artemis. The aegis is a divine cloak which has invincible powers to strike fear into the god’s enemies. Here it is invoked as a protection for Athens, Athena’s city. Dionysus lived in Delphi when Apollo was absent from the shrine during the winter.

47. Athenians followed a lunar calendar, but there were important discrepancies due to a very careless control over inserting extra days.

48. Memnon or Sarpedon: Memnon, the son of Dawn, was killed at Troy, as was Sarpedon, a son of Zeus, and leader of the Lycian allies of the Trojans.

49. religious council: the Amphictyonic Council, which controlled some important religious shrines, was made up of delegates from different city states. In Athens the delegate was chosen by lot. It’s not clear how the gods could have removed the wreath in question.

50. the dactyl is named from the Greek word for finger because it consists of one long stress followed by two short stresses, like the structure of bones in a finger. The phrase “which is like a digit” has been added to make the point clearer.

§1. I adopt Sommerstein’s suggested insertion of this line and a half in order to clarify what now follows in the conversation, which hinges on the gender of words (masculine, feminine, or neuter) and the proper ascription of a specific gender to words which describe male and female objects. The word “fowl” applies to both male and females and therefore is not, strictly speaking masculine. This whole section is a satire on the “nitpicking” attention to language attributed to the sophists.

§2. kneading basin: a trough for making bread.

§3. Cleonymos was an Athenian politician who allegedly ran away from the battle field, leaving his shield behind.

§4. to masturbate: the Greek here says literally “Cleonymos didn’t have a kneading basin but kneaded himself with a round mortar [i.e., mastur-bated].”

§5. The point of this very laboured joke seems to be making Cleonymos feminine, presumably because of his cowardice (running away in battle).

§6. The three names mentioned belong to well known Athenians, who may have all been famous for their dissolute life style. Socrates is taking issue with the spelling of the last two names which (in some forms) look like feminine names. Strepsiades, of course, thinks Socrates is talking about the sexuality of the people.

§7. Amynia: in Greek (as in Latin) the name changes when it is used as a direct form of address—in this case the last letter is dropped, leaving a name ending in -a, normally a feminine ending.

§8. Corinthian is obviously a reference to bed bugs, but the link with Corinth is unclear (perhaps it was a slang expression).

§9. bug: children sometimes tied a thread around the foot of a large flying bug and played with it.

60. The scribe would be writing on a wax tablet which the heat would melt.
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61. *Melos*: Strepsiades presumably is confusing Socrates with Diogoras, a well known materialistic atheist, who came from Melos (whereas Socrates did not).

62. *died*: part of the funeral rituals in a family required each member to bathe thoroughly.

63. *Sons of Earth*: a phrase usually referring to the Titans who warred against the Olympian gods. Here it also evokes a sense of the materialism of Socrates’ doctrine in the play and, of course, ironically ridicules the Thinkery.

64. “necessary expense”: refers to the well-known story of Pericles who in 445 BC used this phrase in official state accounts to refer to an expensive but secret bribe he paid to a Spartan general to withdraw his armies from Athenian territories around Athens. No one asked any embarrassing questions about the entry.

65. *speech*: the Greek says “with his lips sagging [or loosely apart].” Socrates is criticizing Pheidippides’ untrained voice.

66. *talent*: an enormous fee to pay for lessons in rhetoric. Socrates is, of course, getting Strepsiades ready to pay a lot for his son’s education.

67. Zeus overthrew his father, Cronos, and the Titans and imprisoned them deep inside the earth.

68. *Telephos from Mysia* was a hero in a play by Euripides in which a king was portrayed as a beggar. Pandeleotus was an Athenian politician. The imputation here is that the Worse Argument once did very badly, barely surviving on his wits and borrowed ideas.

69. *thighs apart*: keeping the thighs together was supposed to enable boys to stimulate themselves sexually.

70. *Phrynis style*: Phrynis was a musician who introduced certain innovations in music around 450 BC.

71. *Cedikides*: a dithyrambic poet well known for his old-fashioned style. The other references are all too ancient customs and rituals (like the old tradition of wearing a cicada broach or the ritual killing of oxen).

72. *Marathon*: a battle in 490 BC in which a small band of Greeks, mainly Athenians, defeated the Persian armies which had landed near Athens. The Panathenaea was a major religious festival in Athens. Tritogeneia was one of Athena’s titles.

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73. *Iapetus* was a Titan, a brother of Cronos, and hence very ancient.

74. Hippocrates was an Athenian, a relative of Pericles. He had three sons who had a reputation for childishness.

75. *Academy*: this word refers, not to Plato’s school (which was not in existence yet) but to a public park and gymnasium in Athens.

76. *long decrees*: The Greek says “and a long decree,” which makes little sense in English. The point of the joke is to set the audience up to expect “and a long prick” (which was considered a characteristic of barbarians).

77. Antimachos was satirized in comedy as a particularly effeminate man.

78. *drachmas*: the Greek has “more than ten thousand staters.” A stater was a general term for non-Athenian coins, usually of high value. The idea, of course, is equivalent to “a ton of money.”

79. *bath of Hercules*: was a term commonly applied to thermal hot springs.

80. This part of the argument is impossible to render quickly in English. Homer’s word is *agoretes*, meaning “speaking in the assembly.” The Worse Argument is implying that, since the word *agora* means market place, Homer is commending these men for “talking in the market place.”

81. Peleus once refused the sexual advances of the wife of his host. She accused him of immoral activity, and her husband set Peleus unarmed on a mountain. The gods admired Peleus’ chastity and provided him a sword so he could defend himself against the wild animals.

82. Peleus, a mortal king, married Thetis, a sea goddess, with the blessing of the gods. Their child was the hero Achilles. She later left him to return to her father (but not for the reason given in the lines following).

83. *asshole*: Someone caught in the act of adultery was punished by having a radish shoved up his anus and his pubic hair singed with hot ash. The various insults here (“loose-arsed bugger,” “gigantic asshole,” and so on) stand for the Greek perjorative phrase “wide arsed,” which, in addition to meaning “lewd” or “disgusting,” also carries the connotation of passive homosexuality, something considered ridiculous in mature men. Terms like “bum fucker” are too active to capture this sense of the insult.
84. The person making the charge in court had to make a cash deposit which was forfeit if he lost the case.

85. *Solon:* was a very famous Athenian law maker. In the early sixth century he laid down the basis for Athenian laws.

86. Pheidippides’ hair-splitting argument which follows supposedly establishes that the law suits against Strepsiades are illegal and should be tossed out because (in brief) the court had taken the deposit, which the creditor had to make to launch the suit, on the wrong day (the last day of the month instead of the first day of the new month). The case rests on a misinterpretation of the meaning of the term Old and New Day—which was single day between the old and the new moon. The passage is, of course, a satire on sophistic reasoning and legal quibbling for self-interest.

87. *my own deme:* the deme was the basic political unit in Athens. Membership in it passed down from one’s father.

88. *three extra obols:* Strepsiades means here that swearing the oath will be such fun he’s prepared to pay for the pleasure—an obvious insult to Pasias.

89. *salt:* leather was rubbed down as part of the tanning process. The phrase “wine skin” has been added to clarify the sense.

90. *Carcinus:* an Athenian writer of tragic drama.

91. Amynias is here quoting from a tragedy written by Carcinus’ son Xenocles.

92. *Tlepolemos* is a character in the tragedy mentioned in the previous note.

93. *Simonides:* was a well-known lyric poet of the previous century.

94. *myrtle branch:* traditionally a person singing at a drinking party held a myrtle branch unless he was playing a musical instrument.

95. *Paternal Zeus:* This seems to be an appeal to Zeus as the guardian of the father’s rights and thus a way or urging Pheidippides to go along with what his father wants. The line may be a quote from a lost tragedy.

96. *Vortex:* the Greek word *dinos,* meaning “whirl,” “eddy,” or “vortex,” also means a round goblet. The statue of such a goblet outside the Thinkery represents the presiding deity of the house.

97. It’s not clear whether Pheidippides goes back into his house or back into the school. If he does the latter, then the comic violence at the end of the play takes on a much darker tone, since Strepsiades’ murderous anger includes his son. In fact, the loss of his son might be the key event which triggers the intensity of the final destruction.