Frogs

ARISTOPHANES

c. 446–386 BC

Frogs

Βάτραχοι

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited



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Frogs · Aristophanes (c. 446–386 BC)

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited. Parallel-text edition, Forage, October 2026. forage.com/aristophanes/frogs

Greek text: F. W. Hall and W. M. Geldart, *Aristophanis Comoediae*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907; Hall d. 1933, Geldart d. 1922), via the Perseus Digital Library (github.com/PerseusDL/canonical-greekLit), CC BY-SA 4.0. English: translated from the Greek with AI (Claude), then edited for accuracy and consistency. Not reviewed by a human specialist. Free to reuse under CC BY-SA 4.0. Margin numbers are line numbers.

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Set in Source Serif 4, with Gentium Book Plus.

CONTENTS

Introduction vii

Frogs 1

Prologue 1
Parodos 14
First Lyric Scene 18
Parabasis 27
First Episode 28
First Choral Song 32
Second Lyric Scene 32
Agon 35
Second Choral Song 42
Third Lyric Scene 43
Second Episode 57
Exodos 57

INTRODUCTION

Athens in 405 BC was losing a long war, and its great tragic poets were gone: Euripides and Sophocles had both died within the past year or so. So Dionysus, god of the theater, puts on Heracles' lion skin, takes up a club, and sets off for the underworld with his slave Xanthias to bring Euripides back.

The journey is a run of comic set pieces—a croaking chorus of frogs on the lake of the dead, a band of initiates singing to Iacchus, a doorkeeper who can't tell the god from the slave. Then the play turns into a contest in Hades between Aeschylus, the grand old poet of Athens' heroic generation, and Euripides, the clever modern. They mock each other's prologues and songs, weigh their verses on a scale, and argue over what poets are for.

Frogs won first prize at the Lenaea and was, unusually, given a second performance. It is the first sustained piece of literary criticism in Greek, and still very funny.

Frogs

Athens, then the road to the underworld, the lake of the dead, and Pluto's palace in Hades.

PROLOGUE

Dionysus and his slave Xanthias get directions from Heracles, then cross the lake with Charon and the frogs.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1	**XANTHIAS** Εἴπω τι τῶν εἰωθότων ὦ δέσποτα, / ἐφ' οἷς ἀεὶ γελῶσιν οἱ θεώμενοι;	**XANTHIAS** Master, shall I say one of the usual things, the ones the audience always laughs at?
3	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τὸν Δί' ὅ τι Βούλει γε, πλὴν "πιέζομαι," / τοῦτο δὲ φύλαξαι· πάνυ γάρ ἐστ' ἤδη χολή.	**DIONYSUS** By Zeus, anything you like, except "I'm getting crushed." Watch out for that one. It just makes me sick by now.
5	**XANTHIAS** μηδ' ἕτερον ἀστεῖόν τι;	**XANTHIAS** Not some other witty one either?
	DIONYSUS πλήν γ' "ὡς θλίβομαι."	**DIONYSUS** Anything but "Oof, I'm being squashed!"
6	**XANTHIAS** τί δαί; τὸ πάνυ γέλοιον εἴπω;	**XANTHIAS** Well then, shall I say the really funny one?
	DIONYSUS νὴ Δία / θαρρῶν γε· μόνον ἐκεῖν' ὅπως μὴ 'ρεῖς,	**DIONYSUS** By Zeus, go right ahead, don't be shy. Just make sure you don't say that one—
7	**XANTHIAS** τὸ τί;	**XANTHIAS** Which one?
8	**DIONYSUS** μεταβαλλόμενος τἀνάφορον ὅτι "χεζητιᾷς."	**DIONYSUS** —where you shift your carrying pole and say you need to take a shit.
9	**XANTHIAS** μηδ' ὅτι τοσοῦτον ἄχθος ἐπ' ἐμαυτῷ φέρων, / εἰ μὴ καθαιρήσει τις, ἀποπαρδήσομαι;	**XANTHIAS** Not even that I've got such a load on me that if somebody doesn't take it off, I'm going to fart it out?
11	**DIONYSUS** μὴ δῆθ', ἱκετεύω, πλήν γ' ὅταν μέλλω 'ξεμεῖν.	**DIONYSUS** Please, no, I beg you. Not unless I'm about to throw up.
12	**XANTHIAS** τί δῆτ' ἔδει με ταῦτα τὰ σκεύη φέρειν, εἴπερ ποιήσω μηδὲν ὧνπερ Φρύνιχος εἴωθε ποιεῖν καὶ Λύκις κἀμειψίας;	**XANTHIAS** Then why did I have to carry all this baggage, if I'm not going to do any of the stuff Phrynichus and Lycis and Ameipsias always do?[1]
16	**DIONYSUS** μή νυν ποιήσῃς· ὡς ἐγὼ θεώμενος, ὅταν τι τούτων τῶν σοφισμάτων ἴδω, πλεῖν ἢ 'νιαυτῷ πρεσβύτερος ἀπέρχομαι.	**DIONYSUS** Well, don't. Because when I'm sitting in the audience and I see one of those clever tricks, I go home more than a year older.
19	**XANTHIAS** ὦ τρισκακοδαίμων ἄρ' ὁ τράχηλος οὑτοσί, / ὅτι θλίβεται μέν, τὸ δὲ γέλοιον οὐκ ἐρεῖ.	**XANTHIAS** Oh, my poor, god-forsaken neck: it gets squashed, but it isn't allowed to say the funny bit.

1 Phrynichus, Lycis and Ameipsias were comic poets, rivals of Aristophanes; Ameipsias' play beat *Frogs*' predecessor *Clouds*.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
21	**DIONYSUS** εἶτ' οὐχ ὕβρις ταῦτ' ἐστὶ καὶ πολλὴ τρυφή, ὅτ' ἐγὼ μὲν ὢν Διόνυσος υἱὸς Σταμνίου αὐτὸς βαδίζω καὶ πονῶ, τοῦτον δ' ὀχῶ, ἵνα μὴ ταλαιπωροῖτο μηδ' ἄχθος φέροι;	**DIONYSUS** Isn't this outrageous, the height of pampering? Here am I, Dionysus, son of Wine Jar, walking and slogging away myself, while I give this one a ride so he won't wear himself out or have to carry a load.[2]
25	**XANTHIAS** οὐ γὰρ φέρω 'γώ;	**XANTHIAS** So I'm not carrying anything?
	DIONYSUS πῶς φέρεις γὰρ ὅς γ' ὀχεῖ;	**DIONYSUS** How can you be carrying when you're being carried?
26	**XANTHIAS** φέρων γε ταυτί.	**XANTHIAS** Well, I'm carrying this stuff.
	DIONYSUS τίνα τρόπον;	**DIONYSUS** How?
	XANTHIAS Βαρέως πάνυ.	**XANTHIAS** Very heavily.
27	**DIONYSUS** οὔκουν τὸ Βάρος τοῦθ' ὃ σὺ φέρεις ὄνος φέρει;	**DIONYSUS** Isn't the donkey carrying the weight you're carrying?
28	**XANTHIAS** οὐ δῆθ' ὅ γ' ἔχω 'γὼ καὶ φέρω μὰ τὸν Δί' οὔ.	**XANTHIAS** Not the load I've got on me and am carrying, it isn't. By Zeus, no.
29	**DIONYSUS** πῶς γὰρ φέρεις, ὅς γ' αὐτὸς ὑφ' ἑτέρου φέρει;	**DIONYSUS** How can you be carrying it, when you're being carried by someone else?
30	**XANTHIAS** οὐκ οἶδ'· ὁ δ' ὦμος οὑτοσὶ πιέζεται.	**XANTHIAS** I don't know. But this shoulder of mine is getting crushed.
31	**DIONYSUS** σὺ δ' οὖν ἐπειδὴ τὸν ὄνον οὐ φῄς σ' ὠφελεῖν, / ἐν τῷ μέρει σὺ τὸν ὄνον ἀράμενος φέρε.	**DIONYSUS** Well, since you say the donkey's no help to you, take your turn: pick up the donkey and carry it.
33	**XANTHIAS** οἴμοι κακοδαίμων· τί γὰρ ἐγὼ οὐκ ἐναυμάχουν; / ἦ τἄν σε κωκύειν ἂν ἐκέλευον μακρά.	**XANTHIAS** Oh, damn my luck! Why wasn't I in the sea battle? Then I'd be telling you to go howl, long and loud.[3]
35	**DIONYSUS** κατάβα πανοῦργε. καὶ γὰρ ἐγγὺς τῆς θύρας ἤδη βαδίζων εἰμὶ τῆσδ', οἷ πρῶτά με ἔδει τραπέσθαι. παιδίον, παῖ, ἠμί, παῖ.	**DIONYSUS** Get down, you rascal. I'm already near the door here, where I was supposed to turn off first. Boy! Boy! Hey, boy!
38	**HERACLES** τίς τὴν θύραν ἐπάταξεν; ὡς κενταυρικῶς / ἐνήλαθ' ὅστις· εἰπέ μοι τουτὶ τί ἦν;	**HERACLES** Who's banging on the door? Whoever it was charged at it like a Centaur. Tell me, what was all that?
40	**DIONYSUS** ὁ παῖς.	**DIONYSUS** Boy.
	XANTHIAS τί ἔστιν;	**XANTHIAS** What is it?
	DIONYSUS οὐκ ἐνεθυμήθης;	**DIONYSUS** Didn't you notice?
	XANTHIAS τὸ τί;	**XANTHIAS** Notice what?

2 "Son of Wine Jar" (Stamnios) is a comic patronymic in place of the god's real one, "son of Zeus."
3 Slaves who rowed at the battle of Arginusae (406 BC) were rewarded with their freedom.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
41	**DIONYSUS** ὡς σφόδρα μ' ἔδεισε.	**DIONYSUS** How scared he was of me.
	XANTHIAS νὴ Δία μὴ μαίνοιό γε.	**XANTHIAS** By Zeus, yes: scared you'd gone mad.
42	**HERACLES** οὔ τοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα δύναμαι μὴ γελᾶν· / καίτοι δάκνω γ' ἐμαυτόν· ἀλλ' ὅμως γελῶ.	**HERACLES** By Demeter, I can't help laughing. I'm biting my lip, but I'm laughing anyway.
44	**DIONYSUS** ὦ δαιμόνιε πρόσελθε· δέομαι γάρ τί σου.	**DIONYSUS** My dear fellow, come here. I need something from you.
45	**HERACLES** ἀλλ' οὐχ οἷός τ' εἴμ' ἀποσοβῆσαι τὸν γέλων ὁρῶν λεοντῆν ἐπὶ κροκωτῷ κειμένην. τίς ὁ νοῦς; τί κόθορνος καὶ ῥόπαλον ξυνηλθέτην; ποῖ γῆς ἀπεδήμεις;	**HERACLES** I just can't shoo this laughter away, seeing a lion skin draped over a saffron gown. What's the idea? What are a woman's boot and a club doing together? Where on earth have you been traveling?[4]
48	**DIONYSUS** ἐπεβάτευον Κλεισθένει—	**DIONYSUS** I was serving aboard Cleisthenes—[5]
49	**HERACLES** κἀναυμάχησας;	**HERACLES** And you fought at sea?
	DIONYSUS καὶ κατεδύσαμέν γε ναῦς / τῶν πολεμίων ἢ δώδεκ' ἢ τρεῖς καὶ δέκα.	**DIONYSUS** Yes, and we sank enemy ships, twelve or thirteen of them.
51	**HERACLES** σφώ;	**HERACLES** You two?
	DIONYSUS νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω.	**DIONYSUS** By Apollo, yes.
	XANTHIAS κᾆτ' ἔγωγ' ἐξηγρόμην.	**XANTHIAS** And then I woke up.
52	**DIONYSUS** καὶ δῆτ' ἐπὶ τῆς νεὼς ἀναγιγνώσκοντί μοι τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν ἐξαίφνης πόθος τὴν καρδίαν ἐπάταξε πῶς οἴει σφόδρα.	**DIONYSUS** And there on the ship, while I was reading the *Andromeda* to myself, all of a sudden a longing struck my heart. You can't imagine how hard.[6]
55	**HERACLES** πόθος; πόσος τις;	**HERACLES** A longing? How big?
	DIONYSUS μικρὸς ἡλίκος Μόλων.	**DIONYSUS** Small. About the size of Molon.[7]
56	**HERACLES** γυναικός;	**HERACLES** For a woman?
	DIONYSUS οὐ δῆτ'.	**DIONYSUS** No.
	HERACLES ἀλλὰ παιδός;	**HERACLES** For a boy, then?
	DIONYSUS οὐδαμῶς.	**DIONYSUS** Not at all.
57	**HERACLES** ἀλλ' ἀνδρός;	**HERACLES** For a man, then?
	DIONYSUS ἀπαπαί.	**DIONYSUS** Aaagh!
	HERACLES ξυνεγένου τῷ Κλεισθένει;	**HERACLES** Did you get it on with Cleisthenes?

4 The saffron gown and soft boots were women's wear (and part of Dionysus' costume); the lion skin and club are Heracles' trademarks.
5 Cleisthenes, a man Aristophanes regularly mocks for his beardlessness and effeminacy; "serving aboard" him also hints at sex.
6 *Andromeda*, a romantic tragedy by Euripides produced in 412 BC.
7 Molon, an actor, apparently a very large man.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
58	**DIONYSUS** μὴ σκῶπτέ μ' ὦδέλφ'· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἔχω κακῶς· / τοιοῦτος ἵμερός με διαλυμαίνεται.	**DIONYSUS** Don't make fun of me, brother. I'm in a really bad way: that's the kind of desire that's tearing me to pieces.
60	**HERACLES** ποῖός τις ὦδελφίδιον;	**HERACLES** What kind, little brother?
	DIONYSUS οὐκ ἔχω φράσαι. ὅμως γε μέντοι σοι δι' αἰνιγμῶν ἐρῶ. ἤδη ποτ' ἐπεθύμησας ἐξαίφνης ἔτνους;	**DIONYSUS** I can't explain it. But I'll tell you in riddles anyway. Have you ever had a sudden craving for pea soup?
63	**HERACLES** ἔτνους; βαβαιάξ, μυριάκις γ' ἐν τῷ βίῳ.	**HERACLES** Pea soup? Wow! Ten thousand times in my life.
64	**DIONYSUS** ἆρ' ἐκδιδάσκω τὸ σαφὲς ἢ 'τέρᾳ φράσω;	**DIONYSUS** Am I making it clear, or shall I put it another way?
65	**HERACLES** μὴ δῆτα περὶ ἔτνους γε· πάνυ γὰρ μανθάνω.	**HERACLES** Not about pea soup, please. I understand perfectly.
66	**DIONYSUS** τοιουτοσὶ τοίνυν με δαρδάπτει πόθος / Εὐριπίδου.	**DIONYSUS** Well, that's the kind of longing that's devouring me—for Euripides.
67	**HERACLES** καὶ ταῦτα τοῦ τεθνηκότος;	**HERACLES** What, and him dead?
68	**DIONYSUS** κοὐδείς γέ μ' ἂν πείσειεν ἀνθρώπων τὸ μὴ οὐκ / ἐλθεῖν ἐπ' ἐκεῖνον.	**DIONYSUS** Yes, and nobody on earth could talk me out of going after him.
69	**HERACLES** πότερον εἰς Ἅιδου κάτω;	**HERACLES** What, down to Hades?
70	**DIONYSUS** καὶ νὴ Δί' εἴ τί γ' ἔστιν ἔτι κατωτέρω.	**DIONYSUS** Yes, by Zeus, and further down, if there's anything further.
71	**HERACLES** τί βουλόμενος;	**HERACLES** What for?
	DIONYSUS δέομαι ποιητοῦ δεξιοῦ. / οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὐκέτ' εἰσίν, οἱ δ' ὄντες κακοί.	**DIONYSUS** I need a clever poet. The good ones are gone, and the ones who are left are bad.
73	**HERACLES** τί δ'; οὐκ Ἰοφῶν ζῇ;	**HERACLES** What? Isn't Iophon alive?[8]
	DIONYSUS τοῦτο γάρ τοι καὶ μόνον ἔτ' ἐστὶ λοιπὸν ἀγαθόν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ' ἄρα· οὐ γὰρ σάφ' οἶδ' οὐδ' αὐτὸ τοῦθ' ὅπως ἔχει.	**DIONYSUS** Well, that's the one good thing still left—if it even is that. I'm not really sure how that one stands, either.
76	**HERACLES** εἶτ' οὐχὶ Σοφοκλέα πρότερον Εὐριπίδου / μέλλεις ἀναγαγεῖν, εἴπερ ἐκεῖθεν δεῖ σ' ἄγειν;	**HERACLES** Then if you have to bring someone up from there, why not bring Sophocles rather than Euripides?
78	**DIONYSUS** οὐ πρίν γ' ἂν Ἰοφῶντ', ἀπολαβὼν αὐτὸν μόνον, ἄνευ Σοφοκλέους ὅ τι ποιεῖ κωδωνίσω. κἄλλως ὁ μέν γ' Εὐριπίδης πανοῦργος ὢν κἂν ξυναποδρᾶναι δεῦρ' ἐπιχειρήσειέ μοι· ὁ δ' εὔκολος μὲν ἐνθάδ' εὔκολος δ' ἐκεῖ.	**DIONYSUS** Not until I've got Iophon on his own and tested how he rings without Sophocles. Besides, Euripides is a slippery customer: he might even try to run away up here with me. Sophocles, though, was easygoing here and he's easygoing there.

8 Iophon, son of Sophocles and a tragic poet himself, was suspected of getting help from his father.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
83	**HERACLES** Ἀγάθων δὲ ποῦ ’στιν;	**HERACLES** And where’s Agathon?
	DIONYSUS ἀπολιπών μ’ ἀποίχεται, / ἀγαθὸς ποιητὴς καὶ ποθεινὸς τοῖς φίλοις.	**DIONYSUS** He’s left me and gone away, a good poet and much missed by his friends.[9]
85	**HERACLES** ποῖ γῆς ὁ τλήμων;	**HERACLES** Where on earth has the poor man gone?
	DIONYSUS ἐς Μακάρων εὐωχίαν.	**DIONYSUS** To the Feast of the Blessed.[10]
86	**HERACLES** ὁ δὲ Σενοκλέης;	**HERACLES** And Xenocles?[11]
	DIONYSUS ἐξόλοιτο νὴ Δία.	**DIONYSUS** To hell with him, by Zeus!
87	**HERACLES** Πυθάγγελος δέ;	**HERACLES** And Pythangelus?
	XANTHIAS περὶ ἐμοῦ δ’ οὐδεὶς λόγος / ἐπιτριβομένου τὸν ὦμον οὑτωσὶ σφόδρα.	**XANTHIAS** And nobody says a word about me, with my shoulder getting worn down like this.
89	**HERACLES** οὔκουν ἕτερ’ ἔστ’ ἐνταῦθα μειρακύλλια τραγῳδίας ποιοῦντα πλεῖν ἢ μύρια, Εὐριπίδου πλεῖν ἢ σταδίῳ λαλίστερα.	**HERACLES** But aren’t there other young lads around here writing tragedies, more than ten thousand of them, and a mile more talkative than Euripides?
92	**DIONYSUS** ἐπιφυλλίδες ταῦτ’ ἐστὶ καὶ στωμύλματα, χελιδόνων μουσεῖα, λωβηταὶ τέχνης, ἃ φροῦδα θᾶττον, ἢν μόνον χορὸν λάβῃ, ἅπαξ προσουρήσαντα τῇ τραγῳδίᾳ. γόνιμον δὲ ποιητὴν ἂν οὐχ εὕροις ἔτι ζητῶν ἄν, ὅστις ῥῆμα γενναῖον λάκοι.	**DIONYSUS** Those are runts left on the vine, chatterboxes, choirs of twittering swallows, butchers of the art. Give them a chorus and they’re gone in a flash, after pissing on tragedy just once. Look as hard as you like, you won’t find a fertile poet anymore, one who could sound out a noble phrase.
98	**HERACLES** πῶς γόνιμον;	**HERACLES** Fertile how?
	DIONYSUS ὡδὶ γόνιμον, ὅστις φθέγξεται τοιουτονί τι παρακεκινδυνευμένον, αἰθέρα Διὸς δωμάτιον, ἢ χρόνου πόδα, ἢ φρένα μὲν οὐκ ἐθέλουσαν ὀμόσαι καθ’ ἱερῶν, γλῶτταν δ’ ἐπιορκήσασαν ἰδίᾳ τῆς φρενός.	**DIONYSUS** Fertile like this: a man who’ll come out with something daring, along the lines of “Aether, Zeus’s little parlor,” or “the foot of time,” or “a mind that would not swear upon the sacrifice, and a tongue that perjured itself apart from the mind.”[12]
103	**HERACLES** σὲ δὲ ταῦτ’ ἀρέσκει;	**HERACLES** And you like that stuff?
	DIONYSUS μᾶλλὰ πλεῖν ἢ μαίνομαι.	**DIONYSUS** Like it? I’m more than crazy about it.
104	**HERACLES** ἦ μὴν κόβαλά γ’ ἐστίν, ὡς καὶ σοὶ δοκεῖ.	**HERACLES** Come on, it’s sheer flimflam, and you know it.
105	**DIONYSUS** μὴ τὸν ἐμὸν οἴκει νοῦν· ἔχεις γὰρ οἰκίαν.	**DIONYSUS** “Do not take up lodging in my mind”: you have a house of your own.
106		

9 Agathon, a tragic poet, had moved to the court of King Archelaus of Macedon.
10 A play on the Isles of the Blessed, the heroes’ paradise; Archelaus’ court was famously lavish.
11 Xenocles and Pythangelus were minor tragic poets of the day.
12 Parodies of Euripidean phrases; the last twists *Hippolytus* 612, “My tongue has sworn, my mind is unsworn.”

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	HERACLES καὶ μὴν ἀτεχνῶς γε παμπόνηρα φαίνεται.	**HERACLES** Well, it obviously is just plain rotten.
107	**DIONYSUS** δειπνεῖν με δίδασκε.	**DIONYSUS** You teach me how to eat dinner.
	XANTHIAS περὶ ἐμοῦ δ' οὐδεὶς λόγος.	**XANTHIAS** And nobody says a word about me.
108	**DIONYSUS** ἀλλ' ὧνπερ ἕνεκα τήνδε τὴν σκευὴν ἔχων ἦλθον κατὰ σὴν μίμησιν, ἵνα μοι τοὺς ξένους τοὺς σοὺς φράσειας, εἰ δεοίμην, οἵσι σὺ ἐχρῶ τόθ', ἡνίκ' ἐπὶ τὸν Κέρβερον, τούτους φράσον μοι, λιμένας ἀρτοπώλια πορνεῖ' ἀναπαύλας ἐκτροπὰς κρήνας ὁδοὺς πόλεις διαίτας πανδοκευτρίας, ὅπου κόρεις ὀλίγιστοι.	**DIONYSUS** Anyway, the reason I've come in this get-up, dressed as you: it's so you can tell me about your hosts, the ones you used that time you went after Cerberus, in case I need them. Tell me about them: harbors, bakeries, brothels, rest stops, turnoffs, springs, roads, towns, lodgings, land-ladies—the places with the fewest bedbugs.
115	**XANTHIAS** περὶ ἐμοῦ δ' οὐδεὶς λόγος.	**XANTHIAS** And nobody says a word about me.
116	**HERACLES** ὦ σχέτλιε τολμήσεις γὰρ ἰέναι καὶ σύ γε;	**HERACLES** You poor devil, are you really going to dare go too—you?
117	**DIONYSUS** μηδὲν ἔτι πρὸς ταῦτ', ἀλλὰ φράζε τῶν ὁδῶν ὅπῃ τάχιστ' ἀφιξόμεθ' εἰς Ἅιδου κάτω· καὶ μήτε θερμὴν μήτ' ἄγαν ψυχρὰν φράσῃς.	**DIONYSUS** No more of that. Just tell me which road will get us down to Hades fastest. And don't tell me one that's too hot, or one that's too cold.
120	**HERACLES** φέρε δὴ τίν' αὐτῶν σοι φράσω πρώτην; τίνα; μία μὲν γὰρ ἔστιν ἀπὸ κάλω καὶ θρανίου, κρεμάσαντι σαυτόν.	**HERACLES** Well now, which one shall I tell you about first? Which? There's one by way of a rope and a stool: you hang yourself.
122	**DIONYSUS** παῦε, πνιγηρὰν λέγεις.	**DIONYSUS** Stop it. That one's stifling.
123	**HERACLES** ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἀτραπὸς ξύντομος τετριμμένη / ἡ διὰ θυείας.	**HERACLES** Well, there's a short, well-beaten path —through the mortar.
124	**DIONYSUS** ἆρα κώνειον λέγεις;	**DIONYSUS** You mean hemlock?
125	**HERACLES** μάλιστά γε.	**HERACLES** Exactly.
	DIONYSUS ψυχράν γε καὶ δυσχείμερον· / εὐθὺς γὰρ ἀποπήγνυσι τἀντικνήμια.	**DIONYSUS** A cold, wintry one. It freezes your shins straightaway.[13]
127	**HERACLES** βούλει κατάντη καὶ ταχεῖαν σοι φράσω;	**HERACLES** Want me to tell you a fast one, down-hill?
128	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τὸν Δί' ὡς ὄντος γε μὴ βαδιστικοῦ.	**DIONYSUS** Yes, by Zeus. I'm not much of a walker.
129	**HERACLES** καθέρπυσόν νυν ἐς Κεραμεικόν.	**HERACLES** Then stroll on down to the Ceramicus.[14]
	DIONYSUS κᾆτα τί;	**DIONYSUS** And then what?
130	**HERACLES** ἀναβὰς ἐπὶ τὸν πύργον τὸν ὑψηλόν—	**HERACLES** Climb up the tall tower—
	DIONYSUS τί δρῶ;	**DIONYSUS** And do what?

13 Hemlock was ground in a mortar; its poison numbs the body from the legs upward.
14 The Ceramicus, a district of Athens where a torch race was held; the runners set off when the torch was dropped from a tower.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
131	**HERACLES** ἀφιεμένην τὴν λαμπάδ’ ἐντεῦθεν θεῶ, κἄπειτ’ ἐπειδὰν φῶσιν οἱ θεώμενοι “εἶναι,” τόθ’ εἶναι καὶ σὺ σαυτόν.	**HERACLES** —and watch the torch being let go from up there. Then when the spectators shout “Let them go!”, let yourself go too.
133	**DIONYSUS** ποῖ	**DIONYSUS** Where?
	HERACLES κάτω.	**HERACLES** Down.
134	**DIONYSUS** ἀλλ’ ἀπολέσαιμ’ ἂν ἐγκεφάλου θρίω δύο. / οὐκ ἂν βαδίσαιμι τὴν ὁδὸν ταύτην.	**DIONYSUS** But I’d splatter two pies’ worth of brains. I won’t take that road.
135	**HERACLES** τί δαί;	**HERACLES** Which one, then?
136	**DIONYSUS** ἥνπερ σὺ τότε κατῆλθες.	**DIONYSUS** The one you went down by that time.
	HERACLES ἀλλ’ ὁ πλοῦς πολύς. εὐθὺς γὰρ ἐπὶ λίμνην μεγάλην ἥξεις πάνυ ἄβυσσον.	**HERACLES** But it’s a long voyage. First you’ll come to a huge lake, absolutely bottomless.
138	**DIONYSUS** εἶτα πῶς περαιωθήσομαι;	**DIONYSUS** And how do I get across?
139	**HERACLES** ἐν πλοιαρίῳ τυννουτῳί σ’ ἀνὴρ γέρων / ναύτης διάξει δύ’ ὀβολὼ μισθὸν λαβών.	**HERACLES** In a tiny little boat, this big, an old man, a ferryman, will take you over. His fare is two obols.
141	**DIONYSUS** φεῦ, ὡς μέγα δύνασθον πανταχοῦ τὼ δύ’ ὀβολώ. πῶς ἠλθέτην κἀκεῖσε;	**DIONYSUS** Wow! Those two obols have such power everywhere! How did they get down there too?
142	**HERACLES** Θησεὺς ἤγαγεν. μετὰ ταῦτ’ ὄφεις καὶ θηρί’ ὄψει μυρία δεινότατα.	**HERACLES** Theseus brought them. After that you’ll see snakes and wild beasts by the thousand, most terrible.[15]
144	**DIONYSUS** μή μ’ ἔκπληττε μηδὲ δειμάτου· / οὐ γάρ μ’ ἀποτρέψεις.	**DIONYSUS** Don’t try to scare me or frighten me. You won’t turn me back.
145	**HERACLES** εἶτα βόρβορον πολὺν καὶ σκῶρ ἀείνων· ἐν δὲ τούτῳ κειμένους, εἴ που ξένον τις ἠδίκησε πώποτε, ἢ παῖδα κινῶν τἀργύριον ὑφείλετο, ἢ μητέρ’ ἠλόασεν, ἢ πατρὸς γνάθον ἐπάταξεν, ἢ ’πίορκον ὅρκον ὤμοσεν, ἢ Μορσίμου τις ῥῆσιν ἐξεγράψατο.	**HERACLES** Then lots of mud and ever-flowing shit. And lying in it, anyone who ever wronged a guest, or screwed a boy and filched the money back, or beat his mother, or punched his father in the jaw, or swore a false oath, or copied out a speech of Morsimus.[16]
152	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐχρῆν γε πρὸς τούτοισι κεἰ / τὴν πυρρίχην τις ἔμαθε τὴν Κινησίου.	**DIONYSUS** By the gods, they should add anyone who learned Cinesias’ war dance, too.[17]
154	**HERACLES** ἐντεῦθεν αὐλῶν τίς σε περίεισιν πνοή, ὄψει τε φῶς κάλλιστον ὥσπερ ἐνθάδε,	**HERACLES** Next, a breath of pipes will surround you, and you’ll see a most beautiful light, just like

15 Two obols was a familiar sum at Athens (the festival allowance, for one); the joke credits Theseus, Athens’ founding hero, who also went down to Hades, with taking the custom there.
16 Morsimus, a tragic poet Aristophanes considered dreadful.
17 Cinesias, a dithyrambic poet mocked for his skinniness and newfangled music.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	καὶ μυρρινῶνας καὶ θιάσους εὐδαίμονας ἀνδρῶν γυναικῶν καὶ κρότον χειρῶν πολύν.	here, and myrtle groves, and happy bands of men and women, and loud clapping of hands.
158	**DIONYSUS** οὗτοι δὲ δὴ τίνες εἰσίν;	**DIONYSUS** And who are they, exactly?
	HERACLES οἱ μεμυημένοι—	**HERACLES** The initiates—
159	**XANTHIAS** νὴ τὸν Δί' ἐγὼ γοῦν ὄνος ἄγω μυστήρια. / ἀτὰρ οὐ καθέξω ταῦτα τὸν πλείω χρόνον.	**XANTHIAS** By Zeus, I'm the donkey carrying the Mysteries, that's for sure. But I'm not holding this stuff any longer.[18]
161	**HERACLES** οἵ σοι φράσουσ' ἁπαξάπανθ' ὧν ἂν δέῃ. οὗτοι γὰρ ἐγγύτατα παρ' αὐτὴν τὴν ὁδὸν ἐπὶ ταῖσι τοῦ Πλούτωνος οἰκοῦσιν θύραις. καὶ χαῖρε πόλλ' ὦδελφέ.	**HERACLES** —who'll tell you everything you need. They live right beside the road, at the very doors of Pluto. And so, a fond farewell, brother.
164	**DIONYSUS** νὴ Δία καὶ σύ γε / ὑγίαινε. σὺ δὲ τὰ στρώματ' αὖθις λάμβανε.	**DIONYSUS** By Zeus, you too: take care. You, pick up the bedding again.
166	**XANTHIAS** πρὶν καὶ καταθέσθαι;	**XANTHIAS** Before I've even put it down?
	DIONYSUS καὶ ταχέως μέντοι πάνυ.	**DIONYSUS** Yes, and be quick about it.
167	**XANTHIAS** μὴ δῆθ', ἱκετεύω σ', ἀλλὰ μίσθωσαί τινα / τῶν ἐκφερομένων, ὅστις ἐπὶ τοῦτ' ἔρχεται.	**XANTHIAS** No, please, I beg you. Hire one of the dead people being carried out, someone who's going that way anyway.
169	**DIONYSUS** ἐὰν δὲ μὴ εὕρω;	**DIONYSUS** And if I can't find one?
	XANTHIAS τότε μ' ἄγειν.	**XANTHIAS** Then take me.
	DIONYSUS καλῶς λέγεις. καὶ γάρ τιν' ἐκφέρουσι τουτονὶ νεκρόν, οὗτος, σὲ λέγω μέντοι, σὲ τὸν τεθνηκότα· ἄνθρωπε βούλει σκευάρι' εἰς Ἅιδου φέρειν;	**DIONYSUS** Good idea. And look, they're carrying out a dead man right here. You there—yes, I mean you, the dead one! Fellow, do you want to carry a bit of baggage down to Hades?
173	**CORPSE** πόσ' ἄττα;	**CORPSE** How much?
	DIONYSUS ταυτί.	**DIONYSUS** This.
	CORPSE δύο δραχμὰς μισθὸν τελεῖς;	**CORPSE** You'll pay two drachmas?
174	**DIONYSUS** μὰ Δί' ἀλλ' ἔλαττον.	**DIONYSUS** Zeus, no. Less.
	CORPSE ὑπάγεθ' ὑμεῖς τῆς ὁδοῦ.	**CORPSE** Keep going, you lot.
175	**DIONYSUS** ἀνάμεινον ὦ δαιμόνι', ἐὰν ξυμβῶ τί σοι.	**DIONYSUS** Hold on, my good fellow, let's see if we can come to terms.
176	**CORPSE** εἰ μὴ καταθήσεις δύο δραχμάς, μὴ διαλέγου.	**CORPSE** If you don't put down two drachmas, don't bother talking.
177	**DIONYSUS** λάβ' ἐννέ' ὀβολούς.	**DIONYSUS** Take nine obols.
	CORPSE ἀναβιοίην νυν πάλιν.	**CORPSE** I'd sooner come back to life!

18 A proverb: donkeys carried the supplies for the Mysteries at Eleusis, all the work and none of the rite.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
178	**XANTHIAS** ὡς σεμνὸς ὁ κατάρατος· οὐκ οἰμώξεται; / ἐγὼ βαδιοῦμαι.	**XANTHIAS** How stuck-up the damned thing is! He'll be sorry. I'll walk.
179	**DIONYSUS** χρηστὸς εἶ καὶ γεννάδας. / χωρῶμεν ἐπὶ τὸ πλοῖον.	**DIONYSUS** You're a good man and a true. Let's head for the boat.
180	**CHARON** ὠὸπ παραβαλοῦ.	**CHARON** Ohop! Bring her in!
181	**XANTHIAS** τουτὶ τί ἔστι;	**XANTHIAS** What's this?
	DIONYSUS τοῦτο; λίμνη νὴ Δία / αὕτη 'στὶν ἣν ἔφραζε, καὶ πλοῖόν γ' ὁρῶ.	**DIONYSUS** This? By Zeus, it's the lake he was telling us about, and I can see a boat.
183	**XANTHIAS** νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ κἄστι γ' ὁ Χάρων οὑτοσί.	**XANTHIAS** By Poseidon, and that's Charon there.
184	**DIONYSUS** χαῖρ' ὦ Χάρων, χαῖρ' ὦ Χάρων, χαῖρ' ὦ Χάρων.	**DIONYSUS** Hello, Charon! Hello, Charon! Hello, Charon!
185	**CHARON** τίς εἰς ἀναπαύλας ἐκ κακῶν καὶ πραγμάτων; τίς ἐς τὸ Λήθης πεδίον, ἢ σ' Ὄνου πόκας, ἢ σ' Κερβερίους, ἢ σ' κόρακας, ἢ 'πὶ Ταίναρον;	**CHARON** Who's for rest from troubles and cares? Who's for the Plain of Lethe, or the Donkey-Shearings, or the Cerberians, or the crows, or Taenarum?[19]
188	**DIONYSUS** ἐγώ.	**DIONYSUS** Me.
	CHARON ταχέως ἔμβαινε.	**CHARON** Get in, quick.
	DIONYSUS ποῖ σχήσειν δοκεῖς; / ἐς κόρακας ὄντως;	**DIONYSUS** Where are you planning to land? Really at the crows?
189	**CHARON** ναὶ μὰ Δία σοῦ γ' οὕνεκα. / ἔσβαινε δή.	**CHARON** Yes, by Zeus—for your sake, anyway. Come on, get in.
190	**DIONYSUS** παῖ δεῦρο.	**DIONYSUS** Boy, over here.
	CHARON δοῦλον οὐκ ἄγω, / εἰ μὴ ναυμάχησε τὴν περὶ τῶν κρεῶν.	**CHARON** I don't take slaves, unless he fought in the sea battle to save his hide.
192	**XANTHIAS** μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἔτυχον ὀφθαλμιῶν.	**XANTHIAS** By Zeus, I didn't. I happened to have eye trouble.
193	**CHARON** οὔκουν περιθρέξει δῆτα τὴν λίμνην κύκλῳ;	**CHARON** Then you can run around the lake, can't you?
194	**XANTHIAS** ποῦ δῆτ' ἀναμενῶ;	**XANTHIAS** So where should I wait?
	CHARON παρὰ τὸν Αὐαίνου λίθον / ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀναπαύλαις.	**CHARON** By the Withering Stone, at the rest stop.
195	**DIONYSUS** μανθάνεις;	**DIONYSUS** Got it?
	XANTHIAS πάνυ μανθάνω. / οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, τῷ ξυνέτυχον ἐξιών;	**XANTHIAS** Got it perfectly. Damn my luck, what bad omen did I run into when I set out?

19 "To the crows" was the Greek for "go to hell"; the "Donkey-Shearings" means nowhere at all, and Taenarum, a cape in the Peloponnese, had an entrance to the underworld.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
197	**CHARON** κάθιζ' ἐπὶ κώπην. εἴ τις ἔτι πλεῖ, σπευδέτω. / οὗτος τί ποιεῖς;	**CHARON** Sit to the oar. Anyone else sailing, hurry up. You there, what are you doing?
198	**DIONYSUS** ὅ τι ποιῶ; τί δ' ἄλλο γ' ἢ / ἵζω 'πὶ κώπην, οὗπερ ἐκέλευές με σύ;	**DIONYSUS** What am I doing? What else but sitting on the oar, where you told me to?
200	**CHARON** οὔκουν καθεδεῖ δῆτ' ἐνθαδὶ γάστρων;	**CHARON** Sit down here, won't you, Potbelly?
	DIONYSUS ἰδού.	**DIONYSUS** There.
201	**CHARON** οὔκουν προβαλεῖ τὼ χεῖρε κἀκτενεῖς;	**CHARON** Now put your hands forward and stretch out your arms.
	DIONYSUS ἰδού.	**DIONYSUS** There.
202	**CHARON** οὐ μὴ φλυαρήσεις ἔχων ἀλλ' ἀντιβὰς / ἐλᾷς προθύμως;	**CHARON** Stop fooling around! Brace your feet and row like you mean it.
203	**DIONYSUS** κᾆτα πῶς δυνήσομαι ἄπειρος ἀθαλάττωτος ἀσαλαμίνιος ὢν εἶτ' ἐλαύνειν;	**DIONYSUS** And how am I supposed to row, when I'm inexperienced, unseafaring, un-Salamined?[20]
205	**CHARON** ῥᾷστ'· ἀκούσει γὰρ μέλη / κάλλιστ', ἐπειδὰν ἐμβάλῃς ἅπαξ,	**CHARON** Easily. You'll hear the loveliest songs, as soon as you dip your oar—
206	**DIONYSUS** τίνων;	**DIONYSUS** Whose?
207	**CHARON** βατράχων κύκνων θαυμαστά.	**CHARON** Frog-swans. Amazing.
	DIONYSUS κατακέλευε δή.	**DIONYSUS** Call the stroke, then.
208	**CHARON** ὦ ὀπὸπ ὦ ὀπόπ.	**CHARON** O-op, op! O-op, op!
209	**FROGS** βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ, βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ. λιμναῖα κρηνῶν τέκνα, ξύναυλον ὕμνων βοὰν φθεγξώμεθ', εὔγηρυν ἐμὰν ἀοιδάν, κοὰξ κοάξ, ἣν ἀμφὶ Νυσήιον Διὸς Διόνυσον ἐν Λίμναισιν ἰαχήσαμεν, ἡνίχ' ὁ κραιπαλόκωμος τοῖς ἱεροῖσι Χύτροισι χωρεῖ κατ' ἐμὸν τέμενος λαῶν ὄχλος. βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.	**FROGS** Brekekekex koax koax, brekekekex koax koax. Marsh-born children of the springs, let's sound our cry of hymns in tune with the pipe, my sweet-voiced song, koax koax, the song we raised for Nysian Dionysus, son of Zeus, in the Marshes, when the crowd of people, reeling from the revel, at the holy Feast of Pots comes trooping through my sacred ground. Brekekekex koax koax.[21]
222	**DIONYSUS** ἐγὼ δέ γ' ἀλγεῖν ἄρχομαι τὸν ὄρρον ὦ κοὰξ κοάξ· ὑμῖν δ' ἴσως οὐδὲν μέλει.	**DIONYSUS** Well, I'm starting to get a pain in my ass, you koax koax. Not that you care, I suppose.
225	**FROGS** βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.	**FROGS** Brekekekex koax koax.

20 The men of Salamis, an island off Athens, were proverbial oarsmen.
21 Dionysus had a sanctuary "in the Marshes" at Athens; the Feast of Pots was the last day of his spring festival, the Anthesteria.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
226	**DIONYSUS** ἀλλ’ ἐξόλοισθ’ αὐτῷ κοάξ· / οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστ’ ἀλλ’ ἢ κοάξ.	**DIONYSUS** To hell with you, koax and all! / You’re nothing but koax.
228	**FROGS** εἰκότως γ’ ὦ πολλὰ πράττων. ἐμὲ γὰρ ἔστερξαν εὔλυροί τε Μοῦσαι καὶ κεροβάτας Πὰν ὁ καλαμόφθογγα παίζων· προσεπιτέρπεται δ’ ὁ φορμικτὰς Ἀπόλλων, ἕνεκα δόνακος, ὃν ὑπολύριον ἔνυδρον ἐν λίμναις τρέφω. βρεκεκεκὲξ κοάξ κοάξ.	**FROGS** And rightly so, you busybody. For the Muses of the lovely lyre love me, and horn-hoofed Pan, who plays the reedy pipe, and Apollo the lyre-player delights in me too, for the reed I grow for him, the bridge beneath his lyre, here in the waters of the marsh. Brekekekex koax koax.
236	**DIONYSUS** ἐγὼ δὲ φλυκταίνας γ’ ἔχω, χὠ πρωκτὸς ἰδίει πάλαι, κᾆτ’ αὐτίκ’ ἐκκύψας ἐρεῖ—	**DIONYSUS** Well, I’ve got blisters, and my ass has been sweating for ages, and any minute now it’ll poke out and say—
239	**FROGS** βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.	**FROGS** Brekekekex koax koax.
240	**DIONYSUS** ἀλλ’ ὦ φιλῳδὸν γένος / παύσασθε.	**DIONYSUS** Please, you song-loving tribe, / stop.
241	**FROGS** μᾶλλον μὲν οὖν φθεγξόμεσθ’, εἰ δή ποτ’ εὐηλίοις ἐν ἀμέραισιν ἠλάμεσθα διὰ κυπείρου καὶ φλέω, χαίροντες ᾠδῆς πολυκολύμβοισι μέλεσιν, ἢ Διὸς φεύγοντες ὄμβρον ἔνυδρον ἐν βυθῷ χορείαν αἰόλαν ἐφθεγξάμεσθα πομφολυγοπαφλάσμασιν.	**FROGS** No, we’ll sing all the louder, if ever on sunny days we’ve leapt through the sedge and the rushes, rejoicing in our song’s many-diving melodies, or, fleeing the rain of Zeus, we’ve sung, deep down in the water, our shimmering dance in bubbly-splashy-plops.
251	**DIONYSUS** βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ. / τουτὶ παρ’ ὑμῶν λαμβάνω.	**DIONYSUS** Brekekekex koax koax. / I’m taking that one off you.
253	**FROGS** δεινά τἄρα πεισόμεσθα.	**FROGS** Then we’re in for something awful.
254	**DIONYSUS** δεινότερα δ’ ἔγωγ’, ἐλαύνων / εἰ διαρραγήσομαι.	**DIONYSUS** Something worse for me, if I row / until I burst.
256	**FROGS** βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.	**FROGS** Brekekekex koax koax.
257	**DIONYSUS** οἰμώζετ’· οὐ γάρ μοι μέλει.	**DIONYSUS** Go howl. I don’t care.
258	**FROGS** ἀλλὰ μὴν κεκραξόμεσθά γ’ ὁπόσον ἡ φάρυξ ἂν ἡμῶν χανδάνῃ δι’ ἡμέρας.	**FROGS** Oh yes, we’ll croak as loud as our throats can hold, all day long.
261	**DIONYSUS** βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ. / τούτῳ γὰρ οὐ νικήσετε.	**DIONYSUS** Brekekekex koax koax. / You won’t beat me at that.
263	**FROGS** οὐδὲ μὴν ἡμᾶς σὺ πάντως.	**FROGS** And you certainly won’t beat us.
264	**DIONYSUS** οὐδὲ μὴν ὑμεῖς γ’ ἐμὲ οὐδέποτε· κεκράξομαι γὰρ	**DIONYSUS** And you won’t beat me, not ever. I’ll shout,

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	κἂν δέῃ δι' ἡμέρας βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ, ἕως ἂν ὑμῶν ἐπικρατήσω τῷ κοάξ, βρεκεκεκὲξ κοὰξ κοάξ.	all day long if I have to, brekekekex koax koax, till I beat you at your koax, brekekekex koax koax.
268	ἔμελλον ἄρα παύσειν ποθ' ὑμᾶς τοῦ κοάξ.	I knew I'd stop you and your koax in the end.
269	**CHARON** ὦ παῦε παῦε, παραβαλοῦ τὼ κωπίω, / ἔκβαιν', ἀπόδος τὸν ναῦλον.	**CHARON** Whoa, stop, stop! Bring her in with the oars. Get out. Pay the fare.
270	**DIONYSUS** ἔχε δὴ τὠβολώ. / ὁ Ξανθίας. ποῦ Ξανθίας; ἦ Ξανθία.	**DIONYSUS** Here you are, two obols. Xanthias! Where's Xanthias? Hey, Xanthias!
272	**XANTHIAS** ἰαῦ.	**XANTHIAS** Hallooo!
	DIONYSUS βάδιζε δεῦρο.	**DIONYSUS** Come over here.
	XANTHIAS χαῖρ' ὦ δέσποτα.	**XANTHIAS** Hello, master.
273	**DIONYSUS** τί ἔστι τἀνταυθοῖ;	**DIONYSUS** What's it like over there?
	XANTHIAS σκότος καὶ βόρβορος.	**XANTHIAS** Darkness and mud.
274	**DIONYSUS** κατεῖδες οὖν που τοὺς πατραλοίας αὐτόθι / καὶ τοὺς ἐπιόρκους, οὓς ἔλεγεν ἡμῖν;	**DIONYSUS** So did you see the father-beaters anywhere around there, and the perjurers he told us about?
275	**XANTHIAS** σὺ δ' οὔ;	**XANTHIAS** Didn't you?
276	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ 'γωγε, καὶ νυνί γ' ὁρῶ. / ἄγε δὴ τί δρῶμεν;	**DIONYSUS** By Poseidon, I did, and I can see them right now. Well then, what shall we do?[22]
277	**XANTHIAS** προϊέναι βέλτιστα νῷν, ὡς οὗτος ὁ τόπος ἐστὶν οὗ τὰ θηρία τὰ δεῖν' ἔφασκ' ἐκεῖνος.	**XANTHIAS** Best to keep moving, because this is the place where he said the terrible beasts were.
279	**DIONYSUS** ὡς οἰμώξεται. ἠλαζονεύεθ' ἵνα φοβηθείην ἐγώ, εἰδώς με μάχιμον ὄντα φιλοτιμούμενος. οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτω γαῦρόν ἐσθ' ὡς Ἡρακλῆς. ἐγὼ δέ γ' εὐξαίμην ἂν ἐντυχεῖν τινι λαβεῖν τ' ἀγώνισμ' ἄξιόν τι τῆς ὁδοῦ.	**DIONYSUS** He'll be sorry. He was just bragging to scare me, out of jealousy, knowing what a fighter I am. There's nobody as vain as Heracles. Me, I'd pray to run into something and win some exploit worthy of the trip.
285	**XANTHIAS** νὴ τὸν Δία καὶ μὴν αἰσθάνομαι ψόφου τινός.	**XANTHIAS** By Zeus, I can hear some sort of noise.
286	**DIONYSUS** ποῦ ποῦ 'στιν;	**DIONYSUS** Where, where is it?
	XANTHIAS ἐξόπισθεν.	**XANTHIAS** Behind us.
	DIONYSUS ἐξόπισθ' ἴθι.	**DIONYSUS** Get behind, then.
287	**XANTHIAS** ἀλλ' ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ πρόσθε.	**XANTHIAS** No, it's in front.
	DIONYSUS πρόσθε νυν ἴθι.	**DIONYSUS** Get in front, then.

22 Dionysus is looking at the audience.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
288	**XANTHIAS** καὶ μὴν ὁρῶ νὴ τὸν Δία θηρίον μέγα.	**XANTHIAS** Oh, by Zeus, now I see a huge beast.
289	**DIONYSUS** ποῖόν τι;	**DIONYSUS** What sort?
	XANTHIAS δεινόν· παντοδαπὸν γοῦν γίγνεται τοτὲ μέν γε βοῦς, νυνὶ δ' ὀρεύς, τοτὲ δ' αὖ γυνὴ ὡραιοτάτη τις.	**XANTHIAS** Terrible. It keeps turning into all sorts of things: one moment a cow, now a mule, and now again a gorgeous woman.
291	**DIONYSUS** ποῦ 'στι; φέρ' ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἴω.	**DIONYSUS** Where is she? Let me go at her.
292	**XANTHIAS** ἀλλ' οὐκέτ' αὖ γυνή 'στιν, ἀλλ' ἤδη κύων.	**XANTHIAS** But it's not a woman any more. Now it's a dog.
293	**DIONYSUS** Ἔμπουσα τοίνυν ἐστί.	**DIONYSUS** Then it's Empusa.[23]
	XANTHIAS πυρὶ γοῦν λάμπεται / ἅπαν τὸ πρόσωπον.	**XANTHIAS** Well, its whole face is blazing with fire.
294	**DIONYSUS** καὶ σκέλος χαλκοῦν ἔχει;	**DIONYSUS** And has she got a bronze leg?
295	**XANTHIAS** νὴ τὸν Ποσειδῶ, καὶ βολίτινον θάτερον, / σάφ' ἴσθι.	**XANTHIAS** By Poseidon, yes, and the other one's made of cow shit, I swear.
296	**DIONYSUS** ποῖ δῆτ' ἂν τραποίμην;	**DIONYSUS** Where can I turn?
	XANTHIAS ποῖ δ' ἐγώ;	**XANTHIAS** Where can I?
297	**DIONYSUS** ἱερεῦ διαφύλαξόν μ', ἵν' ὦ σοι ξυμπότης.	**DIONYSUS** Priest, protect me, so I can come drinking with you![24]
298	**XANTHIAS** ἀπολούμεθ' ὦναξ Ἡράκλεις.	**XANTHIAS** We're done for, lord Heracles!
	DIONYSUS οὐ μὴ καλεῖς μ' / ὤνθρωφ', ἱκετεύω, μηδὲ κατερεῖς τοὔνομα.	**DIONYSUS** Please, man, don't call me that! Don't say the name!
300	**XANTHIAS** Διόνυσε τοίνυν.	**XANTHIAS** Dionysus, then.
	DIONYSUS τοῦτό γ' ἧττον θατέρου. / ἴθ' ᾗπερ ἔρχει.	**DIONYSUS** That's even worse than the other. Keep going the way you're going.
301	**XANTHIAS** δεῦρο δεῦρ' ὦ δέσποτα.	**XANTHIAS** This way, this way, master.
302	**DIONYSUS** τί δ' ἔστι;	**DIONYSUS** What is it?
	XANTHIAS θάρρει· πάντ' ἀγαθὰ πεπράγαμεν, ἔξεστί θ' ὥσπερ Ἡγέλοχος ἡμῖν λέγειν, "ἐκ κυμάτων γὰρ αὖθις αὖ γαλῆν ὁρῶ." ἤμπουσα φρούδη.	**XANTHIAS** Cheer up, it's all turned out well. We can say, like Hegelochus, "Out of the waves I see once more a clam." Empusa's gone.[25]
305	**DIONYSUS** κατόμοσον.	**DIONYSUS** Swear it.
	XANTHIAS νὴ τὸν Δία.	**XANTHIAS** By Zeus.

23 Empusa, a shape-shifting bogey sent by Hecate, said to have one leg of bronze.
24 Dionysus runs to his own priest, who had the seat of honor in the front row of the theater.
25 The actor Hegelochus, in Euripides' *Orestes*, mispronounced *galēn'* ("calm") as *galēn* ("weasel"); "clam" for "calm" gives the same effect.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
306	**DIONYSUS** καῦθις κατόμοσον.	**DIONYSUS** Swear it again.
	XANTHIAS νὴ Δί'.	**XANTHIAS** By Zeus.
	DIONYSUS ὄμοσον.	**DIONYSUS** Swear.
	XANTHIAS νὴ Δία.	**XANTHIAS** By Zeus.
307	**DIONYSUS** οἴμοι τάλας, ὡς ὠχρίασ' αὐτὴν ἰδών.	**DIONYSUS** Oh, poor me, how pale I went when I saw her!
308	**XANTHIAS** ὀδὶ δὲ δείσας ὑπερεπυρρίασέ σου.	**XANTHIAS** And this thing here got so scared it turned brown on your behalf.
309	**DIONYSUS** οἴμοι, πόθεν μοι τὰ κακὰ ταυτὶ προσέπεσεν; / τίν' αἰτιάσομαι θεῶν μ' ἀπολλύναι;	**DIONYSUS** Oh, where have these troubles fallen on me from? Which of the gods shall I blame for my destruction?
311	**XANTHIAS** αἰθέρα Διὸς δωμάτιον ἢ χρόνου πόδα;	**XANTHIAS** "Aether, Zeus's little parlor"? Or "the foot of time"?
312	**DIONYSUS** οὗτος.	**DIONYSUS** Hey, you.
	XANTHIAS τί ἔστιν;	**XANTHIAS** What is it?
	DIONYSUS οὐ κατήκουσας;	**DIONYSUS** Didn't you hear?
	XANTHIAS τίνος;	**XANTHIAS** Hear what?
313	**DIONYSUS** αὐλῶν πνοῆς.	**DIONYSUS** A breath of pipes.
	XANTHIAS ἔγωγε, καὶ δᾴδων γέ με / αὔρα τις εἰσέπνευσε μυστικωτάτη.	**XANTHIAS** I did. And a breeze of torches wafted over me, very mystical.
315	**DIONYSUS** ἀλλ' ἠρεμὶ πτήξαντες ἀκροασώμεθα.	**DIONYSUS** Let's crouch down quietly and listen.

PARODOS

A chorus of initiates sings hymns to Iacchus and Demeter and mocks Athenian politicians.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
316	**CHORUS** Ἴακχ' ὦ Ἴακχε. / Ἴακχ' ὦ Ἴακχε.	**CHORUS** Iacchus, Iacchus! / Iacchus, Iacchus![26]
318	**XANTHIAS** τοῦτ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖν' ὦ δέσποθ'· οἱ μεμυημένοι ἐνταῦθά που παίζουσιν, οὓς ἔφραζε νῷν. ᾄδουσι γοῦν τὸν Ἴακχον ὅνπερ Διαγόρας.	**XANTHIAS** That's it, master: the initiates he told us about are celebrating somewhere around here. Anyway, they're singing the Iacchus hymn, the one Diagoras sings.[27]
321	**DIONYSUS** κἀμοὶ δοκοῦσιν. ἡσυχίαν τοίνυν ἄγειν / βέλτιστόν ἐσθ', ἕως ἂν εἰδῶμεν σαφῶς.	**DIONYSUS** I think so too. So the best thing is to keep quiet until we know for sure.
324	**CHORUS** Ἴακχ' ὦ πολυτίμητ' ἐν ἕδραις ἐνθάδε ναίων, Ἴακχ' ὦ Ἴακχε,	**CHORUS** Iacchus, much-honored, dwelling here in your shrine,

26 Iacchus, a god of the Eleusinian Mysteries, identified with Dionysus; his name was shouted in the procession from Athens to Eleusis.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	ἐλθὲ τόνδ’ ἀνὰ λειμῶνα χορεύσων ὁσίους ἐς θιασώτας, πολύκαρπον μὲν τινάσσων περὶ κρατὶ σῷ βρύοντα στέφανον μύρτων, θρασεῖ δ’ ἐγκατακρούων ποδὶ τὰν ἀκόλαστον φιλοπαίγμονα τιμάν, χαρίτων πλεῖστον ἔχουσαν μέρος, ἁγνάν, ἱερὰν ὁσίοις μύσταις χορείαν.	Iacchus, Iacchus, come to dance across this meadow to your holy companions, shaking the fruitful myrtle crown that blooms around your head, and stamping with a bold foot our unbridled, play-loving rite, that holds the greatest share of the Graces, the pure and holy dance for your holy initiates.
337	**XANTHIAS** ὦ πότνια πολυτίμητε Δήμητρος κόρη, / ὡς ἡδύ μοι προσέπνευσε χοιρείων κρεῶν.	**XANTHIAS** Lady, much-honored daughter of De- meter, what a sweet smell of pork has wafted over me![28]
339	**DIONYSUS** οὔκουν ἀτρέμ’ ἕξεις, ἤν τι καὶ χορδῆς λάβῃς;	**DIONYSUS** Then keep still, won’t you, and maybe you’ll get some sausage too.
340	**CHORUS** †ἔγειρε φλογέας λαμπάδας ἐν χερσὶ γὰρ ἥκει τινάσσων†, Ἴακχ’ ὦ Ἴακχε, νυκτέρου τελετῆς φωσφόρος ἀστήρ. φλογὶ φέγγεται δὲ λειμών· γόνυ πάλλεται γερόντων· ἀποσείονται δὲ λύπας χρονίους τ’ ἐτῶν παλαιῶν ἐνιαυτοὺς ἱερᾶς ὑπὸ τιμᾶς. σὺ δὲ λαμπάδι † φλέγων† προβάδην ἔξαγ’ ἐπ’ ἀνθηρὸν ἔλειον δάπεδον χοροποιὸν μάκαρ ἥβαν.	**CHORUS** Rouse the blazing torches, for he comes, shaking them in his hands, Iacchus, Iacchus, the light-bearing star of our nighttime rite. The meadow blazes with flame; old men’s knees are leaping; they shake off their sorrows and the long seasons of their ancient years at your holy rite. And you, ablaze with your torch, lead forward to the flowering marshy plain, blessed one, the young who make the dance.
354	εὐφημεῖν χρὴ κἀξίστασθαι τοῖς ἡμετέροισι χοροῖσιν, ὅστις ἄπειρος τοιῶνδε λόγων ἢ γνώμῃ μὴ καθαρεύει, ἢ γενναίων ὄργια Μουσῶν μήτ’ εἶδεν μήτ’ ἐχόρευσεν, μηδὲ Κρατίνου τοῦ ταυροφάγου γλώττης Βακχεῖ’ ἐτελέσθη, ἢ βωμολόχοις ἔπεσιν χαίρει μὴ ’ν καιρῷ τοῦτο ποιοῦσιν, ἢ στάσιν ἐχθρὰν μὴ καταλύει μηδ’ εὔκολός ἐστι πολίταις, ἀλλ’ ἀνεγείρει καὶ ῥιπίζει κερδῶν ἰδίων ἐπιθυμῶν, ἢ τῆς πόλεως χειμαζομένης ἄρχων καταδωροδοκεῖται, ἢ προδίδωσιν φρούριον ἢ ναῦς, ἢ τἀπόρρητ’ ἀποπέμπει ἐξ Αἰγίνης Θωρυκίων ὢν εἰκοστολόγος κακοδαίμων, ἀσκώματα καὶ λίνα καὶ πίτταν διαπέμπων εἰς Ἐπίδαυρον,	Let there be holy silence, and let him stand aside from our choruses who is a stranger to words like these, or is not pure in mind; who has never seen or danced the rites of the noble Muses, or been ini- tiated into the Bacchic mysteries of the tongue of bull-eating Cratinus; who enjoys clownish words when they’re out of place; who doesn’t put an end to hateful faction or deal kindly with his fellow cit- izens, but stirs it up and fans it, greedy for his own gain; who, holding office while the city is tossed by storms, takes bribes; who betrays a fort or ships, or smuggles forbidden goods out of Aegina —I mean Thorycion, that wretched tax collector— sending oar pads and sailcloth and pitch across to Epidaurus;[29]

27 Diagoras of Melos, a notorious atheist condemned for mocking the Mysteries.
28 Each initiate sacrificed a piglet to Demeter and Persephone.
29 Cratinus, the great comic poet of the previous generation (“bull-eater” was a title of Dionysus); Thorycion is otherwise unknown, here accused of supplying the enemy fleet at Epidaurus.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
365	ἢ χρήματα ταῖς τῶν ἀντιπάλων ναυσὶν παρέχειν τινὰ πείθει, ἢ κατατιλᾷ τῶν Ἑκαταίων κυκλίοισι χοροῖσιν ὑπᾴδων, ἢ τοὺς μισθοὺς τῶν ποιητῶν ῥήτωρ ὢν εἶτ' ἀποτρώγει, κωμῳδηθεὶς ἐν ταῖς πατρίοις τελεταῖς ταῖς τοῦ Διονύσου· τούτοις αὐδῶ καὖθις ἀπαυδῶ καὖθις τὸ τρίτον μάλ' ἀπαυδῶ ἐξίστασθαι μύσταισι χοροῖς· ὑμεῖς δ' ἀνεγείρετε μολπὴν καὶ παννυχίδας τὰς ἡμετέρας αἳ τῇδε πρέπουσιν ἑορτῇ.	or who talks someone into providing money for the enemy's ships; or shits on the shrines of Hecate while singing for the circular choruses; or who, as a politician, nibbles away the poets' pay because he was made fun of in the ancestral rites of Dionysus. To all these I proclaim, and again I proclaim, and a third time I proclaim: stand aside from the initiates' dances. And you, raise up the song and our all-night revels, which befit this festival.[30]
372	χώρει νυν πᾶς ἀνδρείως ἐς τοὺς εὐανθεῖς κόλπους λειμώνων ἐγκρούων κἀπισκώπτων καὶ παίζων καὶ χλευάζων, ἡρίστηται δ' ἐξαρκούντως.	Now go, each of you, boldly into the flowery hollows of the meadows, stamping, and mocking, and playing and jeering: we've had lunch enough.
378	ἀλλ' ἔμβα χὤπως ἀρεῖς τὴν Σώτειραν γενναίως τῇ φωνῇ μολπάζων, ἣ τὴν χώραν σῴζειν φήσ' ἐς τὰς ὥρας, κἂν Θωρυκίων μὴ βούληται.	Now step out, and be sure to lift up the Savior Goddess nobly, singing her praise aloud, who promises to keep our land safe through all its seasons, even if Thorycion doesn't want it.
384	ἄγε νυν ἑτέραν ὕμνων ἰδέαν τὴν καρποφόρον βασίλειαν / Δήμητρα θεὰν ἐπικοσμοῦντες ζαθέαις μολπαῖς κελαδεῖτε.	Come now, raise another kind of hymn: honor the fruit-bearing queen, the goddess Demeter, and sing her glory in holy songs.
386	Δήμητερ ἁγνῶν ὀργίων ἄνασσα συμπαραστάτει, καὶ σῷζε τὸν σαυτῆς χορόν, καί μ' ἀσφαλῶς πανήμερον παῖσαί τε καὶ χορεῦσαι·	Demeter, queen of the pure rites, stand by us, and keep your own chorus safe, and let me, safely, all day long, play and dance;
391	καὶ πολλὰ μὲν γέλοιά μ' εἰ- πεῖν, πολλὰ δὲ σπουδαῖα, καὶ τῆς σῆς ἑορτῆς ἀξίως παίσαντα καὶ σκώψαντα νι- κήσαντα ταινιοῦσθαι.	and let me say many funny things, and many serious things too, and, when I've played and joked in a way worthy of your festival, win, and wear the victor's ribbons.
396	ἄγ' εἶα νῦν καὶ τὸν ὡραῖον θεὸν παρακαλεῖτε δεῦρο ᾠδαῖσι, τὸν ξυνέμπορον τῆσδε τῆς χορείας.	Come on, now, call the youthful god here too with songs, the fellow traveler of our dance.
399	Ἴακχε πολυτίμητε, μέλος ἑορτῆς ἥδιστον εὑρών, δεῦρο συνακολούθει πρὸς τὴν θεὸν καὶ δεῖξον ὡς ἄνευ πόνου	Iacchus, much-honored, who found the sweetest song of our festival, come along with us to the goddess, and show how without toil

30 "Circular choruses" were dithyrambs: the target is Cinesias, said to have fouled a shrine of Hecate.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	πολλὴν ὁδὸν περαίνεις. Ἴακχε φιλοχορευτὰ συμπρόπεμπέ με.	you travel a long road. Iacchus, lover of the dance, escort me on my way.
405	σὺ γὰρ κατεσχίσω μὲν ἐπὶ γέλωτι κἀπ᾽ εὐτελείᾳ τόδε τὸ σανδαλίσκον καὶ τὸ ῥάκος, κἀξηῦρες ὥστ᾽ ἀζημίους παίζειν τε καὶ χορεύειν. Ἴακχε φιλοχορευτὰ συμπρόπεμπέ με.	For it was you who, for a laugh and to save money, ripped this little sandal and this rag, and you found a way for us to play and dance without paying a penny. Iacchus, lover of the dance, escort me on my way.
411	καὶ γὰρ παραβλέψας τι μειρακίσκης νῦν δὴ κατεῖδον καὶ μάλ᾽ εὐπροσώπου συμπαιστρίας χιτωνίου παραρραγέν- τος τιτθίον προκύψαν. Ἴακχε φιλοχορευτὰ συμπρόπεμπέ με.	For just now, with a sidelong glance, I caught sight of a girl, a very pretty playmate, and through a tear in her little dress a nipple was peeking out. Iacchus, lover of the dance, escort me on my way.
417	**DIONYSUS** ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἀεί πως φιλακόλου- θός εἰμι καὶ μετ᾽ αὐτῆς παίζων χορεύειν βούλομαι.	**DIONYSUS** And me, somehow I always like to follow along, and I want to play and dance with her.
419	**XANTHIAS** κἄγωγε πρός.	**XANTHIAS** Me too!
420	**CHORUS** βούλεσθε δῆτα κοινῇ σκώψωμεν Ἀρχέδημον; ὃς ἑπτέτης ὢν οὐκ ἔφυσε φράτερας.	**CHORUS** So shall we all together make fun of Archedemus? At seven he still hadn't cut his citizen teeth.[31]
423	νυνὶ δὲ δημαγωγεῖ ἐν τοῖς ἄνω νεκροῖσι, κἀστὶν τὰ πρῶτα τῆς ἐκεῖ μοχθηρίας.	But now he's a leader of the people among the dead up there, and he's top of the villainy over there.
426	τὸν Κλεισθένους δ᾽ ἀκούω ἐν ταῖς ταφαῖσι πρωκτὸν τίλλειν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ σπαράττειν τὰς γνάθους·	And I hear that Cleisthenes' son is plucking his asshole at the tombs and tearing at his cheeks;[32]
429	κἀκόπτετ᾽ ἐγκεκυφώς, κἄκλαε κἀκεκράγει Σεβῖνον ὅστις ἐστὶν ἀναφλύστιος.	and he was beating his breast, bent over, and weeping and wailing for Sebinus, whoever he is, of Anaphlystus.[33]
432	καὶ Καλλίαν γέ φασι τοῦτον τὸν Ἱπποβίνου κύσθου λεοντῆν ναυμαχεῖν ἐνημμένον.	And they say Callias, this son of Hippobinus, fights at sea in a lion skin made of pussy.[34]
435	**DIONYSUS** ἔχοιτ᾽ ἂν οὖν φράσαι νῷν Πλούτων᾽ ὅπου ᾽νθάδ᾽ οἰκεῖ; ξένω γάρ ἐσμεν ἀρτίως ἀφιγμένω.	**DIONYSUS** Could you tell the two of us where Pluto lives around here? We're strangers, just arrived.
438		

31 Archedemus, a popular leader accused of not being a true-born Athenian; boys were enrolled in their phratry (clan) as children, and the Greek puns on "clansmen" (*phrateras*) and "teeth."
32 Tearing hair and cheeks were gestures of mourning; plucking the anus was a depilation practice associated with men who were penetrated.
33 Puns: Sebinus suggests *binein*, "to fuck," and Anaphlystus, a real Attic deme, suggests *anaphlan*, "to jerk off."
34 Callias, the richest man in Athens, was son of Hipponicus; "Hippobinus" makes it "Horse-Fucker."

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	CHORUS μηδὲν μακρὰν ἀπέλθῃς, μηδ' αὖθις ἐπανέρῃ με, ἀλλ' ἴσθ' ἐπ' αὐτὴν θύραν ἀφιγμένος.	**CHORUS** You needn't go far, or ask me again: you've come right to his door, believe me.
441	**DIONYSUS** αἴροι' ἂν αὖθις ὦ παῖ.	**DIONYSUS** Pick it up again, boy.
442	**XANTHIAS** τουτὶ τί ἦν τὸ πρᾶγμα; / ἀλλ' ἢ Διὸς Κόρινθος ἐν τοῖς στρώμασιν.	**XANTHIAS** What's this business now? Same old "Corinth, son of Zeus," in the bedding.[35]
444	**CHORUS** χωρεῖτε νῦν ἱερὸν ἀνὰ κύκλον θεᾶς, ἀνθοφόρον ἀν' ἄλσος παίζοντες οἷς μετουσία θεοφιλοῦς ἑορτῆς· ἐγὼ δὲ σὺν ταῖσιν κόραις εἶμι καὶ γυναιξίν, οὗ πανννυχίζουσιν θεᾷ, φέγγος ἱερὸν οἴσων.	**CHORUS** Go now into the goddess's holy circle, through her flowering grove, at play, all who share in this festival the gods love; and I'll go with the girls and the women, where they keep the night-long vigil for the goddess, to carry the holy light.
449	χωρῶμεν ἐς πολυρρόδους λειμῶνας ἀνθεμώδεις, τὸν ἡμέτερον τρόπον τὸν καλλιχορώτατον παίζοντες, ὃν ὅλβιαι Μοῖραι ξυνάγουσιν.	Let's go to the meadows full of roses and flowers, playing in our own way, the way of the loveliest dances, which the blessed Fates bring together.
455	μόνοις γὰρ ἡμῖν ἥλιος καὶ φέγγος ἱλαρόν ἐστιν, ὅσοι μεμυήμεθ' εὐ- σεβῆ τε διήγομεν τρόπον περὶ τοὺς ξένους καὶ τοὺς ἰδιώτας.	For the sun and the joyful light belong to us alone, all of us who have been initiated and have led righteous lives toward strangers and toward our fellow citizens.

FIRST LYRIC SCENE

At Pluto's door, Dionysus and Xanthias keep swapping the lion skin as Heracles' old victims and admirers appear.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
460	**DIONYSUS** ἄγε δὴ τίνα τρόπον τὴν θύραν κόψω; τίνα; / πῶς ἐνθάδ' ἄρα κόπτουσιν οὐπιχώριοι;	**DIONYSUS** Right, so how do I knock on this door? How? How do the locals knock around here, I wonder?
462	**XANTHIAS** οὐ μὴ διατρίψεις, ἀλλὰ γεύσει τῆς θύρας, / καθ' Ἡρακλέα τὸ σχῆμα καὶ τὸ λῆμ' ἔχων.	**XANTHIAS** Quit stalling and give that door a taste of you. You've got Heracles' outfit and Heracles' guts.
464	**DIONYSUS** παῖ παῖ.	**DIONYSUS** Boy! Boy!
	AEACUS τίς οὗτος;	**AEACUS** Who's there?
	DIONYSUS Ἡρακλῆς ὁ καρτερός.	**DIONYSUS** Heracles the mighty.
465	**AEACUS** ὦ βδελυρὲ κἀναίσχυντε καὶ τολμηρὲ σὺ καὶ μιαρὲ καὶ παμμίαρε καὶ μιαρώτατε,	**AEACUS** You disgusting, shameless, reckless creature, you vile, all-vile, vilest of the vile! You

35 "Corinth, son of Zeus" was a proverb for tiresome repetition; *Korinthos* also suggests *koreis*, "bedbugs."

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	ὃς τὸν κύν' ἡμῶν ἐξελάσας τὸν Κέρβερον ἀπῇξας ἄγχων κἀποδρὰς ᾤχου λαβών, ὃν ἐγὼ 'φύλαττον. ἀλλὰ νῦν ἔχει μέσος· τοία Στυγός σε μελανοκάρδιος πέτρα Ἀχερόντιός τε σκόπελος αἱματοσταγὴς φρουροῦσι, Κωκυτοῦ τε περίδρομοι κύνες, ἔχιδνά θ' ἑκατογκέφαλος, ἣ τὰ σπλάγχνα σου διασπαράξει, πλευμόνων τ' ἀνθάψεται Ταρτησία μύραινα· τὼ νεφρὼ δέ σου αὐτοῖσιν ἐντέροισιν ἡματωμένω διασπάσονται Γοργόνες Τειθράσιαι, ἐφ' ἃς ἐγὼ δρομαῖον ὁρμήσω πόδα.	drove off our dog Cerberus, throttled him, bolted, and got clean away with him, the dog I was guarding! But now you're caught in the middle. So fast does the black-hearted rock of Styx and the blood-dripping crag of Acheron hold you under guard, and the prowling hounds of Cocytus, and the hundred-headed Viper, who will rend your guts to shreds! A Tartessian lamprey shall fasten on your lungs, and your two kidneys, bloodied, bowels and all, shall the Teithrasian Gorgons tear apart. To fetch them I now direct my racing foot![36]
479	**XANTHIAS** οὗτος τί δέδρακας;	**XANTHIAS** Hey, you, what have you done?
	DIONYSUS ἐγκέχοδα· κάλει θεόν.	**DIONYSUS** I've shat myself. Call on the god![37]
480	**XANTHIAS** ὦ καταγέλαστ' οὔκουν ἀναστήσει ταχὺ / πρίν τινά σ' ἰδεῖν ἀλλότριον;	**XANTHIAS** You ridiculous creature, get up, quick, before some stranger sees you!
481	**DIONYSUS** ἀλλ' ὡρακιῶ. / ἀλλ' οἶσε πρὸς τὴν καρδίαν μου σφογγιάν.	**DIONYSUS** But I'm feeling faint. Here, bring me a sponge for my heart.
483	**XANTHIAS** ἰδοὺ λαβέ, προσθοῦ.	**XANTHIAS** There, take it, hold it on.
	DIONYSUS ποῦ 'στιν;	**DIONYSUS** Where is it?
	XANTHIAS ὦ χρυσοῖ θεοὶ / ἐνταῦθ' ἔχεις τὴν καρδίαν;	**XANTHIAS** Golden gods! *That's* where you keep your heart?
484	**DIONYSUS** δείσασα γὰρ / ἐς τὴν κάτω μου κοιλίαν καθείρπυσεν.	**DIONYSUS** It got scared and crawled down into my lower belly.
486	**XANTHIAS** ὦ δειλότατε θεῶν σὺ κἀνθρώπων.	**XANTHIAS** You're the biggest coward of all gods and men!
	DIONYSUS ἐγώ; πῶς δειλὸς ὅστις σφογγιὰν ᾔτησά σε; οὐκ ἂν ἕτερός γ' αὖτ' ἠργάσατ' ἀνήρ.	**DIONYSUS** Me? How can I be a coward when I asked you for a sponge? No other man would have done that.
488	**XANTHIAS** ἀλλὰ τί;	**XANTHIAS** Then what would he have done?
489	**DIONYSUS** κατέκειτ' ἂν ὀσφραινόμενος, εἴπερ δειλὸς ἦν· / ἐγὼ δ' ἀνέστην καὶ προσέτ' ἀπεψησάμην.	**DIONYSUS** If he were a coward, he'd have lain there sniffing it. But I got up, and what's more, I wiped myself.
491	**XANTHIAS** ἀνδρεῖά γ' ὦ Πόσειδον.	**XANTHIAS** What bravery, by Poseidon!
	DIONYSUS οἶμαι νὴ Δία. σὺ δ' οὐκ ἔδεισας τὸν ψόφον τῶν ῥημάτων καὶ τὰς ἀπειλάς;	**DIONYSUS** I think so too, by Zeus. And you weren't scared by all his thundering words and threats?

36 Aeacus' threats parody high tragic diction, then sink into the everyday: Tartessus in Spain was famous for its lampreys, and Teithras was a village in Attica.
37 A twist on the ritual formula at a libation, "It is poured, call on the god" (ekkechutai); Dionysus says enkechoda, "I've shat myself."

	GREEK	ENGLISH
493	**XANTHIAS** οὐ μὰ Δί’ οὐδ’ ἐφρόντισα.	**XANTHIAS** No, by Zeus, I didn’t give them a thought.
494	**DIONYSUS** ἴθι νυν ἐπειδὴ λῃματίας κἀνδρεῖος εἶ, σὺ μὲν γενοῦ ’γὼ τὸ ῥόπαλον τουτὶ λαβὼν καὶ τὴν λεοντῆν, εἴπερ ἀφοβόσπλαγχνος εἶ· ἐγὼ δ’ ἔσομαί σοι σκευοφόρος ἐν τῷ μέρει.	**DIONYSUS** All right then, since you’re so gutsy and brave, you be me. Take this club and the lion skin, if your guts are so fearless. And I’ll take my turn as your baggage carrier.
498	**XANTHIAS** φέρε δὴ ταχέως αὖτ’· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλὰ πειστέον· καὶ βλέψον ἐς τὸν Ἡρακλειοξανθίαν, εἰ δειλὸς ἔσομαι καὶ κατὰ σὲ τὸ λῆμ’ ἔχων.	**XANTHIAS** Hand them over, quick. I’ve no choice but to obey. Now take a look at Heraclexanthias and see whether I turn out a coward with a spirit like yours.
501	**DIONYSUS** μὰ Δί’ ἀλλ’ ἀληθῶς οὐκ Μελίτης μαστιγίας. / φέρε νυν ἐγὼ τὰ στρώματ’ αἴρωμαι ταδί.	**DIONYSUS** No, by Zeus, you look exactly like that rascal from Melite who needs a whipping. Come on, then, let me pick up this baggage.[38]
503	**MAID** ὦ φίλταθ’ ἥκεις Ἡράκλεις; δεῦρ’ εἴσιθι. ἡ γὰρ θεός σ’ ὡς ἐπύθεθ’ ἥκοντ’, εὐθέως ἔπεττεν ἄρτους, ἧψε κατερεικτῶν χύτρας ἕτνους δύ’ ἢ τρεῖς, βοῦν ἀπηνθράκιζ’ ὅλον, πλακοῦντας ὤπτα κολλάβους. ἀλλ’ εἴσιθι.	**MAID** Heracles, darling, is it you? Come in here! The moment the Goddess heard you were coming, she started baking bread and boiling up two or three pots of split-pea soup. She roasted a whole ox over the coals and baked cakes and rolls. Come on in!
508	**XANTHIAS** κάλλιστ’, ἐπαινῶ.	**XANTHIAS** That’s very kind. No, thank you.
	MAID μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω οὐ μή σ’ ἐγὼ περιόψομἀπελθόντ’, ἐπεί τοι καὶ κρέα ἀνέβραττεν ὀρνίθεια, καὶ τραγήματα ἔφρυγε, κῷνον ἀνεκεράννυ γλυκύτατον. ἀλλ’ εἴσιθ’ ἅμ’ ἐμοί.	**MAID** By Apollo, I’m not going to stand by and let you leave, not when she’s stewed up some chicken too, and toasted nibbles, and mixed the sweetest wine. Come in with me.
512	**XANTHIAS** πάνυ καλῶς.	**XANTHIAS** Very nice of you.
	MAID ληρεῖς ἔχων οὐ γάρ σ’ ἀφήσω. καὶ γὰρ αὐλητρίς γέ σοι ἥδ’ ἔνδον ἔσθ’ ὡραιοτάτη κὠρχηστρίδες ἕτεραι δύ’ ἢ τρεῖς.	**MAID** Don’t be silly. I’m not letting you go. There’s a gorgeous flute girl in there waiting for you, and two or three dancing girls besides.
515	**XANTHIAS** πῶς λέγεις; ὀρχηστρίδες;	**XANTHIAS** What’s that? Dancing girls?
516	**MAID** ἡβυλλιῶσαι κἄρτι παρατετιλμέναι. ἀλλ’ εἴσιθ’, ὡς ὁ μάγειρος ἤδη τὰ τεμάχη ἔμελλ’ ἀφαιρεῖν χἠ τράπεζ’ εἰσήρετο.	**MAID** Ripe young things, freshly plucked. Come in! The cook was just about to take the fish steaks off the fire, and the table was being brought in.
519	**XANTHIAS** ἴθι νυν φράσον πρώτιστα ταῖς ὀρχηστρίσιν ταῖς ἔνδον οὔσαις αὐτὸς ὅτι εἰσέρχομαι. ὁ παῖς ἀκολούθει δεῦρο τὰ σκεύη φέρων.	**XANTHIAS** Go on, then. First of all, tell the dancing girls in there that I’m coming in personally. Boy! Follow me this way with the luggage.
522	**DIONYSUS** ἐπίσχες οὗτος. οὔ τί που σπουδὴν ποιεῖ, ὁτιή σε παίζων Ἡρακλέα ’νεσκεύασα;	**DIONYSUS** Hold it, you! You’re not taking this seriously, are you, just because I dressed you up as

38 Melite was an Athenian district with a famous shrine of Heracles; the jibe may be aimed at a well-known local.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	οὐ μὴ φλυαρήσεις ἔχων ὦ Ξανθία, ἀλλ' ἀράμενος οἴσεις πάλιν τὰ στρώματα.	Heracles for a joke? Stop fooling around, Xanthias. Pick up the baggage and carry it again.
526	**XANTHIAS** τί δ' ἔστιν; οὔ τι πού μ' ἀφελέσθαι διανοεῖ / ἅδωκας αὐτός;	**XANTHIAS** What's this? You're not thinking of taking back what you gave me yourself?
527	**DIONYSUS** οὐ τάχ', ἀλλ' ἤδη ποιῶ. / κατάθου τὸ δέρμα.	**DIONYSUS** I'm not thinking about it, I'm doing it. Put down that skin.
528	**XANTHIAS** ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι / καὶ τοῖς θεοῖσιν ἐπιτρέπω.	**XANTHIAS** I call witnesses to this! I leave it to the gods!
529	**DIONYSUS** ποίοις θεοῖς; τὸ δὲ προσδοκῆσαί σ' οὐκ ἀνόητον καὶ κενὸν ὡς δοῦλος ὢν καὶ θνητὸς Ἀλκμήνης ἔσει;	**DIONYSUS** What gods? Wasn't it stupid and empty-headed of you to expect that you, a slave and a mortal, could be Alcmene's son?
532	**XANTHIAS** ἀμέλει καλῶς· ἔχ' αὖτ'. ἴσως γάρ τοί ποτε / ἐμοῦ δεηθείης ἄν, εἰ θεὸς θέλοι.	**XANTHIAS** Fine, fine. Have them. Maybe some day you'll need me, god willing.
534	**CHORUS** ταῦτα μὲν πρὸς ἀνδρός ἐστι νοῦν ἔχοντος καὶ φρένας καὶ πολλὰ περιπεπλευκότος, μετακυλίνδειν αὐτὸν ἀεὶ πρὸς τὸν εὖ πράττοντα τοῖχον μᾶλλον ἢ γεγραμμένην εἰκόν' ἑστάναι, λαβόνθ' ἓν σχῆμα· τὸ δὲ μεταστρέφεσθαι πρὸς τὸ μαλθακώτερον δεξιοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός ἐστι καὶ φύσει Θηραμένους.	**CHORUS** That's the way of a man with brains and sense, who's sailed the seas a lot: always roll yourself across to the side of the ship that's riding well, rather than stand there like a painted picture, stuck in one pose. To swing round to the comfier spot is the mark of a clever man, a born Theramenes.[39]
541	**DIONYSUS** οὐ γὰρ ἂν γέλοιον ἦν, εἰ Ξανθίας μὲν δοῦλος ὢν ἐν στρώμασιν Μιλησίοις ἀνατετραμμένος κυνῶν ὀρ- χηστρίδ' εἶτ' ᾔτησεν ἀμίδ', ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς τοῦτον βλέπων τοὐρεβίνθου 'δραττόμην, οὗ- τος δ' ἅτ' ὢν αὐτὸς πανοῦργος εἶδε, κᾆτ' ἐκ τῆς γνάθου πὺξ πατάξας μοὐξέκοψε τοῦ χοροῦ τοὺς προσθίους;	**DIONYSUS** Wouldn't it be a joke if Xanthias, a slave, sprawled back on Milesian rugs, were kissing a dancing girl, then called for a pot to piss in, and I, watching him, grabbed hold of my chickpea, and he, being a rogue himself, spotted it, and then punched me on the jaw and knocked out the front row of my chorus?[40]
549	**INNKEEPER** Πλαθάνη Πλαθάνη δεῦρ' ἔλθ', ὁ πανοῦργος οὑτοσί, ὃς ἐς τὸ πανδοκεῖον εἰσελθών ποτε ἐκκαίδεκ' ἄρτους κατέφαγ' ἡμῶν.	**INNKEEPER** Plathane, Plathane, come here! It's that crook who came into our inn once and gobbled up sixteen of our loaves.
551	**PLATHANE** νὴ Δία / ἐκεῖνος αὐτὸς δῆτα.	**PLATHANE** By Zeus, it's the very man!
552	**XANTHIAS** κακὸν ἥκει τινί.	**XANTHIAS** Somebody's in for trouble.

39 Theramenes, an Athenian politician notorious for changing sides; he was nicknamed "the Buskin," a boot that fits either foot.
40 "Chickpea" is slang for the penis; "the front row of my chorus" means his front teeth.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
553	**INNKEEPER** καὶ κρέα γε πρὸς τούτοισιν ἀνάβραστ’ εἴκοσιν / ἀν’ ἡμιωβολιαῖα.	**INNKEEPER** And twenty helpings of stewed meat on top of that, at half an obol each.
554	**XANTHIAS** δώσει τις δίκην.	**XANTHIAS** Somebody’s going to pay.
555	**INNKEEPER** καὶ τὰ σκόροδα τὰ πολλά.	**INNKEEPER** And all that garlic.
	DIONYSUS ληρεῖς ὦ γύναι / κοὐκ οἶσθ’ ὅ τι λέγεις.	**DIONYSUS** You’re talking nonsense, woman. You don’t know what you’re saying.
556	**INNKEEPER** οὐ μὲν οὖν με προσεδόκας, ὁτιὴ κοθόρνους εἶχες, ἂν γνῶναί σ’ ἔτι; τί δαί; τὸ πολὺ τάριχος οὐκ εἴρηκά πω.	**INNKEEPER** Oh, so you thought I wouldn’t recognize you anymore, just because you’re wearing those boots? And what else? I haven’t even mentioned all that salt fish.
559	**PLATHANE** μὰ Δί’ οὐδὲ τὸν τυρόν γε τὸν χλωρὸν τάλαν, / ὃν οὗτος αὐτοῖς τοῖς ταλάροις κατήσθιεν	**PLATHANE** No, by Zeus, or the fresh cheese, you poor thing, that he wolfed down baskets and all.
561	**INNKEEPER** κἄπειτ’ ἐπειδὴ τἀργύριον ἐπραττόμην, / ἔβλεψεν ἔς με δριμὺ κἀμυκᾶτό γε.	**INNKEEPER** And then, when I asked for my money, he gave me a nasty look and started bellowing.
563	**XANTHIAS** τούτου πάνυ τοὔργον· οὗτος ὁ τρόπος πανταχοῦ.	**XANTHIAS** That’s him all over. That’s how he behaves everywhere.
564	**INNKEEPER** καὶ τὸ ξίφος γ’ ἐσπᾶτο μαίνεσθαι δοκῶν.	**INNKEEPER** And he pulled out his sword, acting like a madman.
565	**PLATHANE** νὴ Δία τάλαινα.	**PLATHANE** By Zeus, he did, you poor dear!
	INNKEEPER νὼ δὲ δεισάσα γέ που ἐπὶ τὴν κατήλιφ’ εὐθὺς ἀνεπηδήσαμεν· ὁ δ’ ᾤχετ’ ἐξάξας γε τὰς ψιάθους λαβών.	**INNKEEPER** And we two were so terrified we jumped straight up onto the shelf, and he rushed out and was off, taking the mats with him.
568	**XANTHIAS** καὶ τοῦτο τούτου τοὔργον.	**XANTHIAS** That’s him all over too.
	PLATHANE ἀλλ’ ἐχρῆν τι δρᾶν.	**PLATHANE** Well, we have to do something.
569	**INNKEEPER** ἴθι δὴ κάλεσον τὸν προστάτην Κλέωνά μοι.	**INNKEEPER** Go on, call my patron Cleon for me.[41]
570	**PLATHANE** σὺ δ’ ἔμοιγ’ ἐάνπερ ἐπιτύχῃς Ὑπέρβολον, / ἵν’ αὐτὸν ἐπιτρίψωμεν.	**PLATHANE** And you, if you run into Hyperbolus, get him for me, so we can crush this man.
571	**INNKEEPER** ὦ μιαρὰ φάρυξ, ὡς ἡδέως ἄν σου λίθῳ τοὺς γομφίους κόπτοιμ’ ἄν, οἷς μου κατέφαγες τὰ φορτία.	**INNKEEPER** You disgusting gullet, how I’d love to take a rock and smash those molars you used to eat up my stock!
574	**PLATHANE** ἐγὼ δέ γ’ ἐς τὸ βάραθρον ἐμβάλοιμί σε.	**PLATHANE** And I’d love to throw you into the Pit.
575	**INNKEEPER** ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν λάρυγγ’ ἂν ἐκτέμοιμί σου / δρέπανον λαβοῦσ’, ᾧ τὰς χόλικας κατέσπασας.	**INNKEEPER** And I’d love to take a sickle and cut out that throat you swallowed my sausages with.

41 Cleon and Hyperbolus, popular leaders savaged in Aristophanes’ earlier plays, were long dead by 405 BC, so in Hades they are on hand to help.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
577	**PLATHANE** ἀλλ' εἶμ' ἐπὶ τὸν Κλέων', ὃς αὐτοῦ τήμερον / ἐκπηνιεῖται ταῦτα προσκαλούμενος.	**PLATHANE** Well, I'm off to Cleon. He'll have a summons on you today and reel it all back out of you.
579	**DIONYSUS** κάκιστ' ἀπολοίμην, Ξανθίαν εἰ μὴ φιλῶ.	**DIONYSUS** May I die horribly if I don't love Xanthias.
580	**XANTHIAS** οἶδ' οἶδα τὸν νοῦν· παῦε παῦε τοῦ λόγου. / οὐκ ἂν γενοίμην Ἡρακλῆς ἄν.	**XANTHIAS** I know, I know what you're thinking. Stop, stop right there. I'm not going to be Heracles again.
581	**DIONYSUS** μηδαμῶς / ὦ Ξανθίδιον.	**DIONYSUS** Don't say that, Xanthias, dear.
582	**XANTHIAS** καὶ πῶς ἂν Ἀλκμήνης ἐγὼ / υἱὸς γενοίμην δοῦλος ἅμα καὶ θνητὸς ὤν;	**XANTHIAS** And how could I be Alcmene's son, when I'm a slave and a mortal?
584	**DIONYSUS** οἶδ' οἶδ' ὅτι θυμοῖ, καὶ δικαίως αὐτὸ δρᾷς· κἂν εἴ με τύπτοις, οὐκ ἂν ἀντείποιμί σοι. ἀλλ' ἤν σε τοῦ λοιποῦ ποτ' ἀφέλωμαι χρόνου, πρόρριζος αὐτός, ἡ γυνή, τὰ παιδία, κάκιστ' ἀπολοίμην, κἀρχέδημος ὁ γλάμων.	**DIONYSUS** I know, I know you're angry, and you're right to be. Even if you hit me, I wouldn't say a word. But if I ever take it away from you again from now on, may I die horribly, root and branch, me, my wife, my kids, and bleary-eyed Archedemus too.[42]
589	**XANTHIAS** δέχομαι τὸν ὅρκον κἀπὶ τούτοις λαμβάνω.	**XANTHIAS** I accept the oath, and on those terms I'll take it.
590	**CHORUS** νῦν σὸν ἔργον ἔστ', ἐπειδὴ τὴν στολὴν εἴληφας ἥνπερ εἶχες ἐξ ἀρχῆς πάλιν, ἀνανεάζειν … καὶ βλέπειν αὖθις τὸ δεινόν, τοῦ θεοῦ μεμνημένον ᾧπερ εἰκάζεις σεαυτόν. εἰ δὲ παραληρῶν ἁλώσει κἀκβαλεῖς τι μαλθακόν, αὖθις αἴρεσθαί σ' ἀνάγκη 'σται πάλιν τὰ στρώματα.	**CHORUS** Now it's your job, since you've taken back the costume you had at the start, to make yourself young again … and glare fiercely once more, remembering the god you're playing. But if you're caught babbling and let slip anything soft, you'll have to lift the baggage again.
597	**XANTHIAS** οὐ κακῶς ὦνδρες παραινεῖτ', ἀλλὰ καὐτὸς τυγχάνω ταῦτ' ἄρτι συννοούμενος. ὅτι μὲν οὖν, ἢν χρηστὸν ᾖ τι, ταῦτ' ἀφαιρεῖσθαι πάλιν πειράσεταί μ' εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι. ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐγὼ παρέξω 'μαυτὸν ἀνδρεῖον τὸ λῆμα καὶ βλέποντ' ὀρίγανον. δεῖν δ' ἔοικεν, ὡς ἀκούω τῆς θύρας καὶ δὴ ψόφον.	**XANTHIAS** Not bad advice, gentlemen. As it happens, I was just thinking the same myself. I know perfectly well that if something good turns up he'll try to take it all back. But even so, I'll show myself brave in spirit with a glare as sharp as oregano. And it looks like I'll need to: I hear a noise at the door already.

42 "Bleary-eyed" was Archedemus' nickname; he led the prosecution of the generals after the battle of Arginusae.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
605	**AEACUS** ξυνδεῖτε ταχέως τουτονὶ τὸν κυνοκλόπον, / ἵνα δῷ δίκην· ἀνύετον.	**AEACUS** Tie up this dog thief, quick, so he can pay for it. Hurry up, you two!
606	**DIONYSUS** ἥκει τῳ κακόν.	**DIONYSUS** Somebody's in for trouble.
607	**XANTHIAS** οὐκ ἐς κόρακας; μὴ πρόσιτον.	**XANTHIAS** Go to hell! Don't you come near me!
	AEACUS εἶεν, καὶ μάχει; ὁ Διτύλας χὠ Σκεβλύας χὠ Παρδόκας χωρεῖτε δευρὶ καὶ μάχεσθε τουτῳί.	**AEACUS** Oh, so you want a fight? Ditylas! Sceblyas! Pardocas! Get over here and fight this man.
610	**DIONYSUS** εἶτ' οὐχὶ δεινὰ ταῦτα, τύπτειν τουτονὶ / κλέπτοντα πρὸς τἀλλότρια;	**DIONYSUS** Well, isn't that shocking, him hitting out, when he steals other people's property too?
611	**AEACUS** μᾶλλ' ὑπερφυᾶ.	**AEACUS** Monstrous, more like.
612	**DIONYSUS** σχέτλια μὲν οὖν καὶ δεινά.	**DIONYSUS** Disgraceful, I'd say, and shocking.
	XANTHIAS καὶ μὴν νὴ Δία εἰ πώποτ' ἦλθον δεῦρ', ἐθέλω τεθνηκέναι, ἢ 'κλεψα τῶν σῶν ἄξιόν τι καὶ τριχός. καί σοι ποιήσω πρᾶγμα γενναῖον πάνυ· βασάνιζε γὰρ τὸν παῖδα τουτονὶ λαβών, κἄν ποτέ μ' ἔλῃς ἀδικοῦντ', ἀπόκτεινόν μ' ἄγων.	**XANTHIAS** Look, by Zeus, if I've ever been here before, I'm willing to drop dead, or if I ever stole anything of yours worth so much as a hair. And I'll make you a really generous offer: take this slave of mine and torture him, and if you ever find I've done wrong, take me away and put me to death.[43]
618	**AEACUS** καὶ πῶς βασανίσω;	**AEACUS** And how shall I torture him?
	XANTHIAS πάντα τρόπον, ἐν κλίμακι δήσας κρεμάσας ὑστριχίδι μαστιγῶν, δέρων, στρεβλῶν, ἔτι δ' ἐς τὰς ῥῖνας ὄξος ἐγχέων, πλίνθους ἐπιτιθείς, πάντα τἄλλα, πλὴν πράσῳ μὴ τύπτε τοῦτον μηδὲ γητείῳ νέῳ.	**XANTHIAS** Every way there is. Tie him to a ladder, hang him up, whip him with a bristle whip, flay him, rack him, pour vinegar up his nose, pile bricks on him, everything else. Only don't beat him with a leek or a fresh spring onion.
623	**AEACUS** δίκαιος ὁ λόγος· κἄν τι πηρώσω γέ σου / τὸν παῖδα τύπτων, τἀργύριόν σοι κείσεται.	**AEACUS** That's fair. And if I maim your slave at all while beating him, you'll get compensation.
625	**XANTHIAS** μὴ δῆτ' ἔμοιγ'. οὕτω δὲ βασάνιζ' ἀπαγαγών.	**XANTHIAS** Not on my account. Just take him off and torture him.
626	**AEACUS** αὐτοῦ μὲν οὖν, ἵνα σοὶ κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς λέγῃ. κατάθου σὺ τὰ σκεύη ταχέως, χὤπως ἐρεῖς ἐνταῦθα μηδὲν ψεῦδος.	**AEACUS** No, right here, so he'll tell it to your face. You, put down the baggage, quick, and see you don't tell any lies here.
628	**DIONYSUS** ἀγορεύω τινὶ ἐμὲ μὴ βασανίζειν ἀθάνατον ὄντ'· εἰ δὲ μή, αὐτὸς σεαυτὸν αἰτιῶ.	**DIONYSUS** I hereby give notice: nobody is to torture me, because I'm immortal. Otherwise you'll have only yourself to blame.
630	**AEACUS** λέγεις δὲ τί;	**AEACUS** What are you saying?
631	**DIONYSUS** ἀθάνατος εἶναί φημι Διόνυσος Διός, / τοῦτον δὲ δοῦλον.	**DIONYSUS** I say I'm immortal, Dionysus, son of Zeus, and this one's a slave.
632	**AEACUS** ταῦτ' ἀκούεις;	**AEACUS** Do you hear that?

43 Under Athenian law a slave's evidence counted only if taken under torture, and a master could offer his slave for questioning.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	XANTHIAS φήμ' ἐγώ. καὶ πολύ γε μᾶλλόν ἐστι μαστιγωτέος· εἴπερ θεὸς γάρ ἐστιν, οὐκ αἰσθήσεται.	**XANTHIAS** I do. All the more reason to whip him: if he's a god, he won't feel it.
635	**DIONYSUS** τί δῆτ', ἐπειδὴ καὶ σὺ φῂς εἶναι θεός, / οὐ καὶ σὺ τύπτει τὰς ἴσας πληγὰς ἐμοί;	**DIONYSUS** Well then, since you say you're a god too, why don't you take the same number of blows as me?
637	**XANTHIAS** δίκαιος ὁ λόγος· χὠπότερόν γ' ἂν νῷν ἴδῃς κλαύσαντα πρότερον ἢ προτιμήσαντά τι τυπτόμενον, εἶναι τοῦτον ἡγοῦ μὴ θεόν.	**XANTHIAS** That's fair. And whichever of us you see crying first, or minding the beating at all, take it that he's not the god.
640	**AEACUS** οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως οὐκ εἶ σὺ γεννάδας ἀνήρ· / χωρεῖς γὰρ ἐς τὸ δίκαιον. ἀποδύεσθε δή.	**AEACUS** There's no doubt about it, you're a real gentleman: you go straight for what's fair. Strip, both of you.
642	**XANTHIAS** πῶς οὖν βασανιεῖς νὼ δικαίως;	**XANTHIAS** So how will you torture us fairly?
	AEACUS ῥᾳδίως· / πληγὴν παρὰ πληγὴν ἑκάτερον.	**AEACUS** Easy. Blow for blow, each of you in turn.
643	**XANTHIAS** καλῶς λέγεις.	**XANTHIAS** Sounds good.
644	**AEACUS** ἰδού.	**AEACUS** There!
	XANTHIAS σκόπει νυν ἤν μ' ὑποκινήσαντ' ἴδῃς.	**XANTHIAS** Now watch and see if I flinch.
645	**AEACUS** ἤδη 'πάταξά σ'.	**AEACUS** I've already hit you.
	XANTHIAS οὐ μὰ Δί'.	**XANTHIAS** No, by Zeus, you haven't.
	AEACUS οὐδ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖς. / ἀλλ' εἶμ' ἐπὶ τονδὶ καὶ πατάξω.	**AEACUS** It doesn't look like it, either. Well, I'll go over to this one and hit him.
646	**DIONYSUS** πηνίκα;	**DIONYSUS** When?
647	**AEACUS** καὶ δὴ 'πάταξα.	**AEACUS** I've already hit you.
	DIONYSUS κᾆτα πῶς οὐκ ἔπταρον;	**DIONYSUS** Then how come I didn't sneeze?
648	**AEACUS** οὐκ οἶδα· τουδὶ δ' αὖθις ἀποπειράσομαι.	**AEACUS** I don't know. I'll try this one again.
649	**XANTHIAS** οὔκουν ἀνύσεις τι; ἀτταταῖ.	**XANTHIAS** Get on with it, won't you? Ow-ow-ow!
	AEACUS τί τἀτταταῖ; / μῶν ὠδυνήθης;	**AEACUS** Why "ow-ow-ow"? Did that hurt?
650	**XANTHIAS** οὐ μὰ Δί' ἀλλ' ἐφρόντισα / ὁπόθ' Ἡράκλεια τἀν Διομείοις γίγνεται.	**XANTHIAS** No, by Zeus, I was just thinking about when the festival of Heracles at Diomeia comes round.[44]
652	**AEACUS** ἄνθρωπος ἱερός. δεῦρο πάλιν βαδιστέον.	**AEACUS** What a devout fellow! Back over here again.
653	**DIONYSUS** ἰοὺ ἰού.	**DIONYSUS** Ooh! Ooh!
	AEACUS τί ἔστιν;	**AEACUS** What is it?

44 Diomeia was an Athenian district that held a lively festival of Heracles; Xanthias passes off his cry of pain as a cry of delight.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	DIONYSUS ἱππέας ὁρῶ.	**DIONYSUS** I see cavalry!
654	**AEACUS** τί δῆτα κλάεις;	**AEACUS** Then why are you crying?
	DIONYSUS κρομμύων ὀσφραίνομαι.	**DIONYSUS** I smell onions.
655	**AEACUS** ἐπεὶ προτιμᾷς γ' οὐδέν.	**AEACUS** Because you don't mind it at all, of course.
	DIONYSUS οὐδέν μοι μέλει.	**DIONYSUS** Doesn't bother me a bit.
656	**AEACUS** βαδιστέον τἄρ' ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τονδὶ πάλιν.	**AEACUS** Then I'd better go over to this one again.
657	**XANTHIAS** οἴμοι.	**XANTHIAS** Ow!
	AEACUS τί ἔστι;	**AEACUS** What is it?
	XANTHIAS τὴν ἄκανθαν ἔξελε.	**XANTHIAS** Get this thorn out.
658	**AEACUS** τί τὸ πρᾶγμα τουτί; δεῦρο πάλιν βαδιστέον.	**AEACUS** What's going on here? Back over this way again.
659	**DIONYSUS** Ἄπολλον—ὅς που Δῆλον ἢ Πυθῶν' ἔχεις.	**DIONYSUS** Apollo!—you who hold Delos, or Pytho somewhere...
660	**XANTHIAS** ἤλγησεν· οὐκ ἤκουσας;	**XANTHIAS** That hurt him. Didn't you hear?
	DIONYSUS οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἐπεὶ / ἴαμβον Ἱππώνακτος ἀνεμιμνῃσκόμην.	**DIONYSUS** Not me. I was just remembering a line of Hipponax's iambics.[45]
662	**XANTHIAS** οὐδὲν ποιεῖς γάρ· ἀλλὰ τὰς λαγόνας σπόδει.	**XANTHIAS** You're getting nowhere. Pound him in the flanks.
663	**AEACUS** μὰ τὸν Δί' ἀλλ' ἤδη πάρεχε τὴν γαστέρα.	**AEACUS** No, by Zeus. Right, now let's have your belly.
664	**DIONYSUS** Πόσειδον	**DIONYSUS** Poseidon...
	XANTHIAS ἤλγησέν τις.	**XANTHIAS** Somebody's hurting.
665	**DIONYSUS** ὃς Αἰγαίου πρῶνας ἢ γλαυκᾶς μέδεις ἁλὸς ἐν βένθεσιν.	**DIONYSUS** ...who rule the headlands of the Aegean, or the gray sea's depths![46]
668	**AEACUS** οὔ τοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα δύναμαί πω μαθεῖν ὁπότερος ὑμῶν ἐστι θεός. ἀλλ' εἴσιτον· ὁ δεσπότης γὰρ αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς γνώσεται χἠ Φερρέφατθ', ἅτ' ὄντε κἀκείνω θεώ.	**AEACUS** By Demeter, I just can't work out which of you is the god. Go on in, both of you. My master will know you himself, and so will Persephone, since they're gods too.
672	**DIONYSUS** ὀρθῶς λέγεις· ἐβουλόμην δ' ἂν τοῦτό σε / πρότερον νοῆσαι, πρὶν ἐμὲ τὰς πληγὰς λαβεῖν.	**DIONYSUS** You're right. Only I wish you'd thought of that before I took the beating.

45 Hipponax, a sixth-century BC poet famous for coarse and abusive iambic verse.
46 Dionysus turns his yell into a tragic quotation, from Sophocles' *Laocoon* according to ancient commentators.

PARABASIS

The chorus addresses the audience, urging amnesty for past offenders and a return to good, decent leaders.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
675	**CHORUS** Μοῦσα χορῶν ἱερῶν· ἐπίβηθι καὶ ἔλθ' ἐπὶ τέρψιν ἀοιδᾶς ἐμᾶς, τὸν πολὺν ὀψομένη λαῶν· ὄχλον, οὗ σοφίαι μυρίαι κάθηνται φιλοτιμότεραι Κλεοφῶντος, ἐφ' οὗ δὴ χείλεσιν ἀμφιλάλοις δεινὸν ἐπιβρέμεται Θρῃκία χελιδὼν †ἐπὶ βάρβαρον ἐζομένη πέταλον· † κελαδεῖ δ' ἐπίκλαυτον ἀηδόνιον νόμον, ὡς ἀπολεῖται, κἂν ἴσαι γένωνται.	**CHORUS** Muse of the holy choruses, step forward and come to delight in my song, to look on the great throng of people where countless skills sit in their seats, more hungry for honor than Cleophon— on whose babbling lips a Thracian swallow roars terribly, perched on a foreign leaf; she trills a nightingale's tearful dirge: that he'll be done for even if the votes come out even.[47]
686	τὸν ἱερὸν χορὸν δίκαιόν ἐστι χρηστὰ τῇ πόλει ξυμπαραινεῖν καὶ διδάσκειν. πρῶτον οὖν ἡμῖν δοκεῖ ἐξισῶσαι τοὺς πολίτας κἀφελεῖν τὰ δείματα, κεἴ τις ἥμαρτε σφαλείς τι Φρυνίχου παλαίσμασιν, ἐγγενέσθαι φημὶ χρῆναι τοῖς ὀλισθοῦσιν τότε αἰτίαν ἐκθεῖσι λῦσαι τὰς πρότερον ἁμαρτίας. εἶτ' ἄτιμόν φημι χρῆναι μηδέν' εἶν' ἐν τῇ πόλει· καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρόν ἐστι τοὺς μὲν ναυμαχήσαντας μίαν καὶ Πλαταιᾶς εὐθὺς εἶναι κἀντὶ δούλων δεσπότας. κοὐδὲ ταῦτ' ἔγωγ' ἔχοιμ' ἂν μὴ οὐ καλῶς φάσκειν ἔχειν, ἀλλ' ἐπαινῶ· μόνα γὰρ αὐτὰ νοῦν ἔχοντ' ἐδράσατε.	It's right for the sacred chorus to join in giving the city good advice and instruction. So first of all, we think the citizens should be put on an equal footing and their fears taken away. If anyone slipped up, tripped by Phrynichus' wrestling holds, I say those who stumbled then should be allowed to clear themselves of the charge and wipe out their earlier mistakes. Next, I say no one in the city should be stripped of his citizen rights. It's a disgrace that men who fought in one sea battle should become Plataeans overnight, masters instead of slaves. Not that I could call that anything but well done; no, I approve. It's the only sensible thing you've done.[48]
697	πρὸς δὲ τούτοις εἰκὸς ὑμᾶς, οἳ μεθ' ὑμῶν πολλὰ δὴ χοἱ πατέρες ἐναυμάχησαν καὶ προσήκουσιν γένει, τὴν μίαν ταύτην παρεῖναι ξυμφορὰν αἰτουμένοις. ἀλλὰ τῆς ὀργῆς ἀνέντες ὦ σοφώτατοι φύσει πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἑκόντες συγγενεῖς κτησώμεθα κἀπιτίμους καὶ πολίτας, ὅστις ἂν ξυνναυμαχῇ. εἰ δὲ ταῦτ' ὀγκωσόμεσθα κἀποσεμνυνούμεθα, τὴν πόλιν καὶ ταῦτ' ἔχοντες κυμάτων ἐν ἀγκάλαις, ὑστέρῳ χρόνῳ ποτ' αὖθις εὖ φρονεῖν οὐ δόξομεν.	Besides that, these men, who like their fathers have fought many sea battles at your side and are your own kin, ought to be forgiven this one misfortune when they ask. Come, you who are by nature the wisest of men, let go of your anger, and let's gladly make everyone who fights at sea with us our kinsmen, with full rights as citizens. But if we puff ourselves up and stand on our dignity over this, and at a time when our city lies in the arms of the waves, then some day later on we won't be thought to have shown much sense.
706		

47 Cleophon, the leading popular politician, who opposed peace with Sparta; he was mocked as half-Thracian, and a tied vote normally meant acquittal.
48 Phrynichus led the oligarchic coup of 411 BC, and its supporters later lost their citizen rights; the slaves who rowed at Arginusae in 406 BC were freed and given citizenship, as the Plataeans once had been.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	εἰ δ' ἐγὼ ὀρθὸς ἰδεῖν βίον ἀνέρος ἢ τρόπον ὅστις ἔτ' οἰμώξεται, οὐ πολὺν οὐδ' ὁ πίθηκος οὗτος ὁ νῦν ἐνοχλῶν, Κλειγένης ὁ μικρός, ὁ πονηρότατος βαλανεὺς ὁπόσοι κρατοῦσι κυκησιτέφρου ψευδολίτρου κονίας καὶ Κιμωλίας γῆς, χρόνον ἐνδιατρίψει· ἰδὼν δὲ τάδ' οὐκ εἰρηνικὸς ἔσθ', ἵνα μή ποτε κἀποδυθῇ μεθύων ἄνευ ξύλου βαδίζων.	If I can see straight into the life and ways of a man who has a beating coming, he won't be long either, this ape who pesters us now, little Cleigenes, the worst bath-man of all who lord it over fake-soda lye mixed with ash and Cimolian clay, he won't hang around long. Knowing this, he's no man of peace, so he won't someday be stripped while drunk, walking without his stick.[49]
718	πολλάκις γ' ἡμῖν ἔδοξεν ἡ πόλις πεπονθέναι ταὐτὸν ἔς τε τῶν πολιτῶν τοὺς καλούς τε κἀγαθοὺς ἔς τε τἀρχαῖον νόμισμα καὶ τὸ καινὸν χρυσίον. οὔτε γὰρ τούτοισιν οὖσιν οὐ κεκιβδηλευμένοις, ἀλλὰ καλλίστοις ἁπάντων, ὡς δοκεῖ, νομισμάτων καὶ μόνοις ὀρθῶς κοπεῖσι καὶ κεκωδωνισμένοις ἔν τε τοῖς Ἕλλησι καὶ τοῖς βαρβάροισι πανταχοῦ χρώμεθ' οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ τούτοις τοῖς πονηροῖς χαλκίοις χθές τε καὶ πρώην κοπεῖσι τῷ κακίστῳ κόμματι.	We've often thought the city treats its fine, upstanding citizens the same way it treats the old coinage and the new gold. Those coins are not counterfeit. They're the finest coins there are, by all accounts, the only ones properly struck and ringing true, everywhere among Greeks and non-Greeks alike. Yet we make no use of them, but use these rotten bits of bronze, struck yesterday or the day before with the worst stamp there is.[50]
727	τῶν πολιτῶν θ' οὓς μὲν ἴσμεν εὐγενεῖς καὶ σώφρονας ἄνδρας ὄντας καὶ δικαίους καὶ καλούς τε κἀγαθοὺς καὶ τραφέντας ἐν παλαίστραις καὶ χοροῖς καὶ μουσικῇ, προυσελοῦμεν, τοῖς δὲ χαλκοῖς καὶ ξένοις καὶ πυρρίαις καὶ πονηροῖς κἀκ πονηρῶν εἰς ἅπαντα χρώμεθα ὑστάτοις ἀφιγμένοισιν, οἷσιν ἡ πόλις πρὸ τοῦ οὐδὲ φαρμακοῖσιν εἰκῇ ῥᾳδίως ἐχρήσατ' ἄν. ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν ὦνόητοι μεταβαλόντες τοὺς τρόπους χρῆσθε τοῖς χρηστοῖσιν αὖθις· καὶ κατορθώσασι γὰρ εὔλογον, κἄν τι σφαλῆτ', ἐξ ἀξίου γοῦν τοῦ ξύλου, ἤν τι καὶ πάσχητε, πάσχειν τοῖς σοφοῖς δοκήσετε.	And it's the same with citizens. The ones we know are well-born and self-controlled, just men, fine and upstanding, raised in wrestling schools and choruses and the art of the Muses, we kick around; while the brass ones, the foreigners, the redheads, scoundrels born of scoundrels, the latest arrivals, we use for everything, men the city once wouldn't lightly have used even as scapegoats. So now at least, you fools, change your ways and make use of the good men again. If you succeed, you'll get the credit; and if you come to grief, at least you'll be hanging from a decent tree, and whatever happens to you, wise men will think you suffered it with honor.[51]

FIRST EPISODE

Aeacus tells Xanthias that Aeschylus and Euripides are fighting over the chair of tragedy, with Dionysus as judge.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
738	**AEACUS** νὴ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρα γεννάδας ἀνὴρ / ὁ δεσπότης σου.	**AEACUS** By Zeus the Savior, your master's a real gentleman.
739		

49 Cleigenes, a politician against peace, apparently a bath-house owner accused of selling adulterated soap; he carried a stick against muggers when out drinking.
50 Athens' old silver coinage was trusted everywhere; in the emergency of 406–405 BC the city issued gold coins and plated bronze ones.
51 Scapegoats (pharmakoi) were worthless people driven out of a Greek city in a purification ritual.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	XANTHIAS πῶς γὰρ οὐχὶ γεννάδας, / ὅστις γε πίνειν οἶδε καὶ βινεῖν μόνον;	**XANTHIAS** How could he not be a gentleman? All he knows is drinking and fucking.
741	**AEACUS** τὸ δὲ μὴ πατάξαι σ' ἐξελεγχθέντ' ἄντικρυς, / ὅτι δοῦλος ὢν ἔφασκες εἶναι δεσπότης.	**AEACUS** And not beating you after you'd been caught red-handed claiming to be the master when you were the slave!
743	**XANTHIAS** ᾤμωξε μέντἄν.	**XANTHIAS** He'd have been howling if he had.
	AEACUS τοῦτο μέντοι δουλικὸν / εὐθὺς πεποίηκας, ὅπερ ἐγὼ χαίρω ποιῶν.	**AEACUS** Now that's a proper slave's move you just made, the kind of thing I love doing.
745	**XANTHIAS** χαίρεις, ἱκετεύω;	**XANTHIAS** You love it, really?
	AEACUS μᾶλλ' ἐποπτεύειν δοκῶ, / ὅταν καταράσωμαι λάθρᾳ τῷ δεσπότῃ.	**AEACUS** Oh, yes. I feel like I've reached the top grade of the Mysteries when I curse my master behind his back.
747	**XANTHIAS** τί δὲ τονθορύζων, ἡνίκ' ἂν πληγὰς λαβὼν / πολλὰς ἀπίῃς θύραζε;	**XANTHIAS** And what about grumbling under your breath when you've had a good beating and you're heading out the door?
748	**AEACUS** καὶ τοῦθ' ἥδομαι.	**AEACUS** I enjoy that too.
749	**XANTHIAS** τί δὲ πολλὰ πράττων;	**XANTHIAS** And poking your nose into everything?
	AEACUS ὡς μὰ Δί' οὐδὲν οἶδ' ἐγώ.	**AEACUS** By Zeus, there's nothing like it!
750	**XANTHIAS** ὀμόγνιε Ζεῦ· καὶ παρακούων δεσποτῶν / ἅττ' ἂν λαλῶσι;	**XANTHIAS** Zeus, god of our kin! And eavesdropping on whatever the masters are saying?
751	**AEACUS** μᾶλλὰ πλεῖν ἢ μαίνομαι.	**AEACUS** It drives me wild.
752	**XANTHIAS** τί δὲ τοῖς θύραζε ταῦτα καταλαλῶν;	**XANTHIAS** And blabbing it all to outsiders?
	AEACUS ἐγώ; / μὰ Δί' ἀλλ' ὅταν δρῶ τοῦτο, κἀκμιαίνομαι.	**AEACUS** Me? By Zeus, when I do that, I come all over myself.
754	**XANTHIAS** ὦ Φοῖβ' Ἄπολλον ἔμβαλέ μοι τὴν δεξιάν, καὶ δὸς κύσαι καὐτὸς κύσον, καί μοι φράσον πρὸς Διός, ὃς ἡμῖν ἐστιν ὁμομαστιγίας, τίς οὗτος οὕνδον ἐστὶ θόρυβος καὶ βοὴ χὠ λοιδορησμός;	**XANTHIAS** Phoebus Apollo! Give me your right hand, let me kiss you, and you kiss me. And tell me, by Zeus, the god of all of us who get whipped, what's all this racket in there, the shouting and the abuse?
758	**AEACUS** Αἰσχύλου κεὐριπίδου.	**AEACUS** Aeschylus and Euripides.
759	**XANTHIAS** ἆ.	**XANTHIAS** Ah.
	AEACUS πρᾶγμα πρᾶγμα μέγα κεκίνηται μέγα / ἐν τοῖς νεκροῖσι καὶ στάσις πολλὴ πάνυ.	**AEACUS** There's a business, a big business, got stirred up big among the dead, a whole lot of strife.
761	**XANTHIAS** ἐκ τοῦ;	**XANTHIAS** Over what?

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	AEACUS νόμος τις ἐνθάδ' ἐστὶ κείμενος ἀπὸ τῶν τεχνῶν ὅσαι μεγάλαι καὶ δεξιαί, τὸν ἄριστον ὄντα τῶν ἑαυτοῦ συντέχνων σίτησιν αὐτὸν ἐν πρυτανείῳ λαμβάνειν θρόνον τε τοῦ Πλούτωνος ἐξῆς—	**AEACUS** There's a law laid down here for all the arts that are great and clever: whoever's the best among his fellow artists gets free meals in the town hall and a chair next to Pluto—[52]
765	**XANTHIAS** μανθάνω.	**XANTHIAS** I see.
766	**AEACUS** ἕως ἀφίκοιτο τὴν τέχνην σοφώτερος / ἕτερός τις αὐτοῦ· τότε δὲ παραχωρεῖν ἔδει.	**AEACUS** —until someone else came along who was more skilled in the art than he was. Then he had to make way.
768	**XANTHIAS** τί δῆτα τουτὶ τεθορύβηκεν Αἰσχύλον;	**XANTHIAS** So why has this got Aeschylus so worked up?
769	**AEACUS** ἐκεῖνος εἶχε τὸν τραγῳδικὸν θρόνον, / ὡς ὢν κράτιστος τὴν τέχνην.	**AEACUS** He held the chair of tragedy, as the best at the art.
770	**XANTHIAS** νυνὶ δὲ τίς;	**XANTHIAS** And who has it now?
771	**AEACUS** ὅτε δὴ κατῆλθ' Εὐριπίδης, ἐπεδείκνυτο τοῖς λωποδύταις καὶ τοῖσι βαλλαντιοτόμοις καὶ τοῖσι πατραλοίαισι καὶ τοιχωρύχοις, ὅπερ ἔστ' ἐν Ἅιδου πλῆθος, οἱ δ' ἀκροώμενοι τῶν ἀντιλογιῶν καὶ λυγισμῶν καὶ στροφῶν ὑπερεμάνησαν κἀνόμισαν σοφώτατον· κἄπειτ' ἐπαρθεὶς ἀντελάβετο τοῦ θρόνου, ἵν' Αἰσχύλος καθῆστο.	**AEACUS** When Euripides came down, he started putting on shows for the muggers and purse-snatchers and father-beaters and housebreakers, and that's the crowd in Hades. And when they heard his counter-arguments and his twists and turns, they went crazy for him and decided he was the most skilled. Then he got puffed up and laid claim to the chair where Aeschylus sat.
778	**XANTHIAS** κοὐκ ἐβάλλετο;	**XANTHIAS** And nobody threw stones at him?
779	**AEACUS** μὰ Δί' ἀλλ' ὁ δῆμος ἀνεβόα κρίσιν ποιεῖν / ὁπότερος εἴη τὴν τέχνην σοφώτερος.	**AEACUS** No, by Zeus. The people clamored for a trial to decide which of them was more skilled in the art.
781	**XANTHIAS** ὁ τῶν πανούργων;	**XANTHIAS** The people—that crowd of crooks?
	AEACUS νὴ Δί' οὐράνιόν γ' ὅσον.	**AEACUS** By Zeus, yes, to high heaven.
782	**XANTHIAS** μετ' Αἰσχύλου δ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἕτεροι σύμμαχοι;	**XANTHIAS** And didn't Aeschylus have any allies on his side?
783	**AEACUS** ὀλίγον τὸ χρηστόν ἐστιν, ὥσπερ ἐνθάδε.	**AEACUS** Decent people are few and far between, just like here.
784	**XANTHIAS** τί δῆθ' ὁ Πλούτων δρᾶν παρασκευάζεται;	**XANTHIAS** So what's Pluto planning to do?
785	**AEACUS** ἀγῶνα ποιεῖν αὐτίκα μάλα καὶ κρίσιν / κἄλεγχον αὐτῶν τῆς τέχνης.	**AEACUS** Hold a contest, right away, a trial and test of their art.
786	**XANTHIAS** κἄπειτα πῶς / οὐ καὶ Σοφοκλέης ἀντελάβετο τοῦ θρόνου;	**XANTHIAS** Then how come Sophocles didn't lay claim to the chair too?

52 In Athens, free meals in the Prytaneum, the town hall, were a high public honor.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
788	**AEACUS** μὰ Δί’ οὐκ ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλ’ ἔκυσε μὲν Αἰσχύλον, ὅτε δὴ κατῆλθε, κἀνέβαλε τὴν δεξιάν, κἀκεῖνος ὑπεχώρησεν αὐτῷ τοῦ θρόνου· νυνὶ δ’ ἔμελλεν, ὡς ἔφη Κλειδημίδης, ἔφεδρος καθεδεῖσθαι· κἂν μὲν Αἰσχύλος κρατῇ, ἔξειν κατὰ χώραν· εἰ δὲ μή, περὶ τῆς τέχνης διαγωνιεῖσθ’ ἔφασκε πρός γ’ Εὐριπίδην.	**AEACUS** No, by Zeus, not him. When he came down, he kissed Aeschylus and clasped his right hand, and Aeschylus made room for him on the chair. And now, as Cleidemides said, he was going to sit by as the reserve: if Aeschylus wins, he’ll stay where he is; if not, he said, he’d fight it out with Euripides over the art.[53]
795	**XANTHIAS** τὸ χρῆμ’ ἄρ’ ἔσται;	**XANTHIAS** So it’s really going to happen?
	AEACUS νὴ Δί’ ὀλίγον ὕστερον. κἀνταῦθα δὴ τὰ δεινὰ κινηθήσεται. καὶ γὰρ ταλάντῳ μουσικὴ σταθμήσεται—	**AEACUS** By Zeus, yes, any minute now. And that’s when the terrible stuff will get going. The art of the Muses will be weighed on the scales—
798	**XANTHIAS** τί δέ; μειαγωγήσουσι τὴν τραγῳδίαν;	**XANTHIAS** What? They’re going to weigh out tragedy like a sacrificial lamb?
799	**AEACUS** καὶ κανόνας ἐξοίσουσι καὶ πήχεις ἐπῶν / καὶ πλαίσια ξύμπτυκτα—	**AEACUS** They’ll bring out rulers and yardsticks for words, and folding frames—
800	**XANTHIAS** πλινθεύσουσι γάρ;	**XANTHIAS** What, are they making bricks?
801	**AEACUS** καὶ διαμέτρους καὶ σφῆνας. ὁ γὰρ Εὐριπίδης / κατ’ ἔπος βασανιεῖν φησι τὰς τραγῳδίας.	**AEACUS** —and set squares and wedges. Euripides says he’s going to put the tragedies to the torture, word by word.
803	**XANTHIAS** ἦ που βαρέως οἶμαι τὸν Αἰσχύλον φέρειν.	**XANTHIAS** I imagine Aeschylus is taking that pretty hard.
804	**AEACUS** ἔβλεψε γοῦν ταυρηδὸν ἐγκύψας κάτω.	**AEACUS** Well, he lowered his head and glared like a bull.
805	**XANTHIAS** κρινεῖ δὲ δὴ τίς ταῦτα;	**XANTHIAS** And who’s going to judge all this?
	AEACUS τοῦτ’ ἦν δύσκολον· σοφῶν γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ἀπορίαν ηὑρισκέτην. οὔτε γὰρ Ἀθηναίοισι συνέβαιν’ Αἰσχύλος—	**AEACUS** That was the tricky part. The two of them found skilled men in short supply. Aeschylus didn’t get on with the Athenians—
808	**XANTHIAS** πολλοὺς ἴσως ἐνόμιζε τοὺς τοιχωρύχους.	**XANTHIAS** Maybe he thought a lot of them were housebreakers.
809	**AEACUS** λῆρόν τε τἄλλ’ ἡγεῖτο τοῦ γνῶναι πέρι φύσεις ποιητῶν· εἶτα τῷ σῷ δεσπότῃ ἐπέτρεψαν, ὁτιὴ τῆς τέχνης ἔμπειρος ἦν. ἀλλ’ εἰσίωμεν· ὡς ὅταν γ’ οἱ δεσπόται ἐσπουδάκωσι, κλαύμαθ’ ἡμῖν γίγνεται.	**AEACUS** —and he thought everyone else was rubbish when it came to judging poets’ talents. So they handed it over to your master, since he knows the art. But let’s go in. When our masters get serious, it means tears for us.

53 The “reserve” was the wrestler who sat out a bout to take on the winner; Cleidemides was probably an actor in Sophocles’ plays.

FIRST CHORAL SONG

The chorus imagines the coming clash between the thundering Aeschylus and the sharp-tongued Euripides.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
814	**CHORUS** ἦ που δεινὸν ἐριβρεμέτας χόλον ἔνδοθεν ἕξει, ἡνίκ' ἂν ὀξύλαλον παρίδῃ θήγοντος ὀδόντα ἀντιτέχνου· τότε δὴ μανίας ὑπὸ δεινῆς ὄμματα στροβήσεται.	**CHORUS** Terrible, surely, the rage that will rise in the thunderer's heart when he sees his rival, the sharp-tongued one, whetting his tusk; and then, in a terrible frenzy, his eyes will roll.[54]
818	ἔσται δ' ἱπολόφων τε λόγων κορυθαίολα νείκη σχινδαλάμων τε παραξόνια σμιλεύματά τ' ἔργων, φωτὸς ἀμυνομένου φρενοτέκτονος ἀνδρὸς ῥήμαθ' ἱπποβάμονα.	There will be helmet-flashing battles of horse-plumed words, splintering axles and shavings of fine-chiseled work, as the man who carpenters minds fights to fend off phrases that ride on horseback.
822	φρίξας δ' αὐτοκόμου λοφιᾶς λασιαύχενα χαίταν, δεινὸν ἐπισκύνιον ξυνάγων βρυχώμενος ἥσει ῥήματα γομφοπαγῆ πινακηδὸν ἀποσπῶν γηγενεῖ φυσήματι·	Bristling the shaggy mane on his natural crest, knitting a terrible brow, he will roar and hurl words bolted together, ripping them off like planks with the blast of an earthborn giant.
826	ἔνθεν δὴ στοματουργὸς ἐπῶν βασανίστρια λίσφη γλῶσσ' ἀνελισσομένη φθονεροὺς κινοῦσα χαλινοὺς ῥήματα δαιομένη καταλεπτολογήσει πλευμόνων πολὺν πόνον.	Then the mouth-crafting tongue, smooth tester of verses, uncoiling itself, shaking the reins of envy, will split up his phrases and chop into tiny arguments all that huge labor of lungs.

SECOND LYRIC SCENE

The two poets trade insults, and Dionysus has them pray before the contest begins.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
830	**EURIPIDES** οὐκ ἂν μεθείμην τοῦ θρόνου, μὴ νουθέτει. / κρείττων γὰρ εἶναί φημι τούτου τὴν τέχνην.	**EURIPIDES** I won't give up the chair, so don't lecture me. I say I'm better at the art than he is.
832	**DIONYSUS** Αἰσχύλε τί σιγᾷς; αἰσθάνει γὰρ τοῦ λόγου.	**DIONYSUS** Aeschylus, why are you silent? You can hear what he's saying.
833	**EURIPIDES** ἀποσεμνυνεῖται πρῶτον, ἅπερ ἑκάστοτε / ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαισιν ἐτερατεύετο.	**EURIPIDES** He'll start by putting on his grand, aloof act—the same trick he used to pull every time in his tragedies to amaze people.
835	**DIONYSUS** ὦ δαιμόνι' ἀνδρῶν μὴ μεγάλα λίαν λέγε.	**DIONYSUS** My good man, don't talk too big.
836	**EURIPIDES** ἐγῷδα τοῦτον καὶ διέσκεμμαι πάλαι, ἄνθρωπον ἀγριοποιὸν αὐθαδόστομον, ἔχοντ' ἀχάλινον ἀκρατὲς ἀπύλωτον στόμα, ἀπεριλάλητον κομποφακελορρήμονα.	**EURIPIDES** I know this man. I've had him figured out for ages: a maker of wild men, stubborn-mouthed, with a mouth that has no bridle, no con-

54 The chorus parodies grand epic style: the "thunderer" is Aeschylus, the sharp-tongued rival Euripides.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
		trol, no gate; a man nobody can out-talk, a bundler of bombast.
840	**AESCHYLUS** ἄληθες ὦ παῖ τῆς ἀρουραίας θεοῦ; σὺ δή με ταῦτ' ὦ στωμυλιοσυλλεκτάδη καὶ πτωχοποιὲ καὶ ῥακιοσυρραπτάδη; ἀλλ' οὔ τι χαίρων αὖτ' ἐρεῖς.	**AESCHYLUS** Is that so, son of the goddess of the vegetable patch? You say this to me, you collector of chit-chat, you maker of beggars, you stitcher of rags? You won't get away with saying it.[55]
843	**DIONYSUS** παῦ' Αἰσχύλε, / καὶ μὴ πρὸς ὀργὴν σπλάγχνα θερμήνῃς κότῳ.	**DIONYSUS** Stop, Aeschylus, and do not let wrath inflame your heart with rancor.
845	**AESCHYLUS** οὐ δῆτα πρίν γ' ἂν τοῦτον ἀποφήνω σαφῶς / τὸν χωλοποιὸν οἷος ὢν θρασύνεται.	**AESCHYLUS** No, not until I've shown him up plainly for what he is, this maker of lame heroes, for all his swagger.
847	**DIONYSUS** ἄρν' ἄρνα μέλανα παῖδες ἐξενέγκατε· / τυφὼς γὰρ ἐκβαίνειν παρασκευάζεται.	**DIONYSUS** A lamb, a black lamb, boys, bring it out! There's a hurricane getting ready to break.[56]
849	**AESCHYLUS** ὦ Κρητικὰς μὲν συλλέγων μονῳδίας, / γάμους δ' ἀνοσίους ἐσφέρων ἐς τὴν τέχνην.	**AESCHYLUS** You who scrape together Cretan solos and bring unholy marriages into the art![57]
851	**DIONYSUS** ἐπίσχες οὗτος ὦ πολυτίμητ' Αἰσχύλε. ἀπὸ τῶν χαλαζῶν δ' ὦ πόνηρ' Εὐριπίδη ἄναγε σεαυτὸν ἐκποδών, εἰ σωφρονεῖς, ἵνα μὴ κεφαλαίῳ τὸν κρόταφόν σου ῥήματι θενὼν ὑπ' ὀργῆς ἐκχέῃ τὸν Τήλεφον· σὺ δὲ μὴ πρὸς ὀργὴν Αἰσχύλ' ἀλλὰ πραόνως ἔλεγχ' ἐλέγχου· λοιδορεῖσθαι δ' οὐ πρέπει ἄνδρας ποιητὰς ὥσπερ ἀρτοπώλιδας. σὺ δ' εὐθὺς ὥσπερ πρῖνος ἐμπρησθεὶς βοᾷς.	**DIONYSUS** Hold it right there, most honored Aeschylus. And you, Euripides, you rogue, get yourself out of range of the hailstones if you've got any sense, or in his rage he'll hit you on the temple with a capital phrase and knock your Telephus out of your skull. And you, Aeschylus, not in anger: test him and be tested calmly. It isn't proper for poets to trade abuse like bread-sellers in the market. But you go straight off roaring like a holm oak on fire.[58]
860	**EURIPIDES** ἕτοιμός εἰμ' ἔγωγε, κοὐκ ἀναδύομαι, δάκνειν δάκνεσθαι πρότερος, εἰ τούτῳ δοκεῖ, τἄπη, τὰ μέλη, τὰ νεῦρα τῆς τραγῳδίας, καὶ νὴ Δία τὸν Πηλέα γε καὶ τὸν Αἴολον καὶ τὸν Μελέαγρον κἄτι μάλα τὸν Τήλεφον.	**EURIPIDES** I'm ready, myself, and I'm not backing out: I'll bite and be bitten first, if he likes—my verses, my lyrics, the very sinews of tragedy, yes, by Zeus, my *Peleus* and my *Aeolus* and my *Meleager*, and above all my *Telephus*.[59]
865	**DIONYSUS** τί δαὶ σὺ βουλεύει ποιεῖν; λέγ' Αἰσχύλε.	**DIONYSUS** And you, what do you want to do? Speak, Aeschylus.
866	**AESCHYLUS** ἐβουλόμην μὲν οὐκ ἐρίζειν ἐνθάδε· / οὐκ ἐξ ἴσου γάρ ἐστιν ἀγὼν νῷν.	**AESCHYLUS** I'd rather not have competed here. The contest between us isn't on equal terms.
867	**DIONYSUS** τί δαί;	**DIONYSUS** Why not?
868		**AESCHYLUS** Because my poetry didn't die with me, but his died with him, so he'll have it all on

55 Euripides' mother was mocked in comedy as a vegetable-seller, and his heroes for appearing in beggars' rags.
56 Black victims were sacrificed to avert storms; the Greek τυφώς is both a hurricane and the storm-monster Typhon.
57 Euripides wrote a *Cretans* and was known for lyric solos; "unholy marriages" points to plots like the incest in his *Aeolus*.
58 *Telephus* was Euripides' notorious play whose hero, a king, appears disguised in beggar's rags.
59 *Peleus*, *Aeolus* and *Meleager* were also plays by Euripides, now lost.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	AESCHYLUS ὅτι ἡ ποίησις οὐχὶ συντέθνηκέ μοι, τούτῳ δὲ συντέθνηκεν, ὥσθ' ἕξει λέγειν. ὅμως δ' ἐπειδή σοι δοκεῖ, δρᾶν ταῦτα χρή.	hand to recite. Still, since you think so, it has to be done.[60]
871	**DIONYSUS** ἴθι νυν λιβανωτὸν δεῦρό τις καὶ πῦρ δότω. ὅπως ἂν εὔξωμαι πρὸ τῶν σοφισμάτων ἀγῶνα κρῖναι τόνδε μουσικώτατα· ὑμεῖς δὲ ταῖς Μούσαις τι μέλος ὑπᾴσατε.	**DIONYSUS** Come on then, somebody give me incense here, and fire, so I can pray, before all this cleverness starts, that I judge this contest in the truest spirit of the Muses. And you, sing the Muses a song.
875	**CHORUS** ὦ Διὸς ἐννέα παρθένοι ἀγναὶ Μοῦσαι, λεπτολόγους ξυνετὰς φρένας αἳ καθορᾶτε ἀνδρῶν γνωμοτύπων, ὅταν εἰς ἔριν ὀξυμερίμνοις ἔλθωσι στρεβλοῖσι παλαίσμασιν ἀντιλογοῦντες, ἔλθετ' ἐποψόμεναι δύναμιν δεινοτάτοιν στομάτοιν πορίσασθαι ῥήματα καὶ παραπρίσματ' ἐπῶν. νῦν γὰρ ἀγὼν σοφίας ὁ μέγας χωρεῖ πρὸς ἔργον ἤδη.	**CHORUS** Daughters of Zeus, nine maidens pure, Muses, who look down on the subtle and clever minds of men who mint maxims, whenever they come to a quarrel and argue with sharp-witted, twisting wrestling holds, come and watch the power of two most formidable mouths to supply phrases and sawn-off scraps of verse. For now the great contest of skill gets down to work at last.
885	**DIONYSUS** εὔχεσθε δὴ καὶ σφώ τι πρὶν τἄπη λέγειν.	**DIONYSUS** Now you two pray as well, before you recite your verses.
886	**AESCHYLUS** Δήμητερ ἡ θρέψασα τὴν ἐμὴν φρένα, / εἶναί με τῶν σῶν ἄξιον μυστηρίων.	**AESCHYLUS** Demeter, who nourished my mind, make me worthy of your mysteries.[61]
888	**DIONYSUS** ἐπίθες λαβὼν δὴ καὶ σὺ λιβανωτόν.	**DIONYSUS** You take some incense too and put it on.
	EURIPIDES καλῶς· / ἕτεροι γάρ εἰσιν οἷσιν εὔχομαι θεοῖς.	**EURIPIDES** No, thank you. The gods I pray to are different ones.
890	**DIONYSUS** ἴδιοί τινές σοι, κόμμα καινόν;	**DIONYSUS** Private ones of your own? A new coinage?
	EURIPIDES καὶ μάλα.	**EURIPIDES** Very much so.
891	**DIONYSUS** ἴθι δὴ προσεύχου τοῖσιν ἰδιώταις θεοῖς.	**DIONYSUS** Go on, then, pray to your private gods.
892	**EURIPIDES** αἰθὴρ ἐμὸν βόσκημα καὶ γλώσσης στρόφιγξ καὶ ξύνεσι καὶ μυκτῆρες ὀσφραντήριοι, ὀρθῶς μ' ἐλέγχειν ὧν ἂν ἅπτωμαι λόγων.	**EURIPIDES** Aether, my pasture, and Pivot of the Tongue, and Intelligence, and Nostrils keen to scent: grant that I rightly refute whatever arguments I get hold of.[62]

60 Aeschylus' plays had the unusual privilege of being restaged in Athens after his death.
61 Aeschylus came from Eleusis, home of Demeter's Mysteries.
62 These "gods" mock the new science and sophistry; in *Clouds* Aristophanes has Socrates pray to Air and Aether as well.

AGON

Euripides mocks Aeschylus' bombast; Aeschylus says poets must make citizens better, and Euripides made them worse.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
895	**CHORUS** καὶ μὴν ἡμεῖς ἐπιθυμοῦμεν παρὰ σοφοῖν ἀνδροῖν ἀκοῦσαι τίνα λόγων ἐμμέλειαν ἔπιτε δαΐαν ὁδόν. γλῶσσα μὲν γὰρ ἠγρίωται, λῆμα δ' οὐκ ἄτολμον ἀμφοῖν, οὐδ' ἀκίνητοι φρένες. προσδοκᾶν οὖν εἰκός ἐστι τὸν μὲν ἀστεῖόν τι λέξειν καὶ κατερρινημένον, τὸν δ' ἀνασπῶντ' αὐτοπρέμνοις τοῖς λόγοισιν ἐμπεσόντα συσκεδᾶν πολλὰς ἀλινδήθρας ἐπῶν.	**CHORUS** And we are eager to hear from two skilled men what melody of words you'll bring along the road of battle. Their tongues have turned savage, neither of them lacks nerve, and neither mind is slow to move. So we can expect that one will say something smart and filed down fine, while the other, ripping words up roots and all, will fall on him and scatter a whole dust-wallow of verses.
905	**DIONYSUS** ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα χρὴ λέγειν· οὕτω δ' ὅπως ἐρεῖτον / ἀστεῖα καὶ μήτ' εἰκόνας μήθ' οἷ' ἂν ἄλλος εἴποι.	**DIONYSUS** Well, you need to speak as quickly as you can. But make sure what you say is smart—no similes, and nothing anyone else would say.
907	**EURIPIDES** καὶ μὴν ἐμαυτὸν μέν γε τὴν ποίησιν οἷός εἰμι, ἐν τοῖσιν ὑστάτοις φράσω, τοῦτον δὲ πρῶτ' ἐλέγξω, ὡς ἦν ἀλαζὼν καὶ φέναξ οἵοις τε τοὺς θεατὰς ἐξηπάτα μώρους λαβὼν παρὰ Φρυνίχῳ τραφέντας. πρώτιστα μὲν γὰρ ἕνα τιν' ἂν καθῖσεν ἐγκαλύψας, Ἀχιλλέα τιν' ἢ Νιόβην, τὸ πρόσωπον οὐχὶ δεικνύς, πρόσχημα τῆς τραγῳδίας, γρύζοντας οὐδὲ τουτί.	**EURIPIDES** Well now, what sort of poet I am myself I'll tell you at the very end. First I'll show up this man for the charlatan and fraud he was, and the tricks he used to cheat his audiences—fools he took over after Phrynichus had raised them. First of all he'd sit some single figure down, all wrapped up—an Achilles, say, or a Niobe—without showing the face, as window-dressing for the tragedy, and they didn't make a peep, not even this much.[63]
914	**DIONYSUS** μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ δῆθ'.	**DIONYSUS** No, by Zeus, they didn't.
	EURIPIDES ὁ δὲ χορός γ' ἤρειδεν ὁρμαθοὺς ἂν / μελῶν ἐφεξῆς τέτταρας ξυνεχῶς ἄν· οἱ δ' ἐσίγων.	**EURIPIDES** And the chorus would pound out strings of songs, four in a row, one after another, while the characters stayed silent.
916	**DIONYSUS** ἐγὼ δ' ἔχαιρον τῇ σιωπῇ, καί με τοῦτ' ἔτερπεν / οὐχ ἧττον ἢ νῦν οἱ λαλοῦντες.	**DIONYSUS** And I enjoyed the silence. It gave me as much pleasure as the chatterers do now.
917	**EURIPIDES** ἠλίθιος γὰρ ἦσθα, / σάφ' ἴσθι.	**EURIPIDES** That's because you were simple-minded, believe me.
918	**DIONYSUS** κἀμαυτῷ δοκῶ. τί δὲ ταῦτ' ἔδρασ' ὁ δεῖνα;	**DIONYSUS** I think so too. But why did what's-his-name do it?
919		**EURIPIDES** Pretentiousness. So the spectator would sit there waiting for the moment when

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	EURIPIDES ὑπ᾽ ἀλαζονείας, ἵν᾽ ὁ θεατὴς προσδοκῶν καθοῖτο, / ὁπόθ᾽ ἡ Νιόβη τι φθέγξεται· τὸ δρᾶμα δ᾽ ἂν διήῃ.	Niobe would say something. And meanwhile the play would be running on.
921	**DIONYSUS** ὦ παμπόνηρος, οἷ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐφενακιζόμην ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ. / τί σκορδινᾷ καὶ δυσφορεῖς;	**DIONYSUS** What a total scoundrel! So that's how he was conning me. —What are you squirming and fretting for?
922	**EURIPIDES** ὅτι αὐτὸν ἐξελέγχω. κἄπειτ᾽ ἐπειδὴ ταῦτα ληρήσειε καὶ τὸ δρᾶμα ἤδη μεσοίη, ῥήματ᾽ ἂν βόεια δώδεκ᾽ εἶπεν, ὀφρῦς ἔχοντα καὶ λόφους, δεῖν᾽ ἄττα μορμορωπά, ἄγνωτα τοῖς θεωμένοις.	**EURIPIDES** Because I'm showing him up. And then, after he'd done all this nonsense and the play was already half over, he'd say a dozen words as big as oxen, with eyebrows and crests on them, fearsome bogey-faced things nobody in the audience had ever heard of.
926	**AESCHYLUS** οἴμοι τάλας.	**AESCHYLUS** Oh, misery!
	DIONYSUS σιώπα.	**DIONYSUS** Be quiet.
927	**EURIPIDES** σαφὲς δ᾽ ἂν εἶπεν οὐδὲ ἕν—	**EURIPIDES** And he'd never say a single clear thing—
	DIONYSUS μὴ πρῖε τοὺς ὀδόντας.	**DIONYSUS** Don't grind your teeth.
928	**EURIPIDES** ἀλλ᾽ ἢ Σκαμάνδρους ἢ τάφρους ἢ ᾽π᾽ ἀσπίδων ἐπόντας γρυπαιέτους χαλκηλάτους καὶ ῥήμαθ᾽ ἱππόκρημνα, ἃ ξυμβαλεῖν οὐ ῥᾴδι᾽ ἦν.	**EURIPIDES** —but it was all Scamanders, or trenches, or bronze-beaten griffin-eagles on shields, and words as steep as cavalry cliffs, which weren't easy to make sense of.
930	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐγὼ γοῦν ἤδη ποτ᾽ ἐν μακρῷ χρόνῳ νυκτὸς διηγρύπνησα τὸν ξουθὸν ἱππαλεκτρυόνα ζητῶν τίς ἐστιν ὄρνις.	**DIONYSUS** By the gods, I for one once lay awake a long stretch of the night trying to work out what sort of bird the tawny horse-rooster was.[64]
933	**AESCHYLUS** σημεῖον ἐν ταῖς ναυσὶν ὦμαθέστατ᾽ ἐνεγέγραπτο.	**AESCHYLUS** It was an emblem painted on ships, you complete ignoramus!
934	**DIONYSUS** ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν Φιλοξένου γ᾽ ᾤμην Ἔρυξιν εἶναι.	**DIONYSUS** And I thought it was Eryxis, son of Philoxenus.[65]
935	**EURIPIDES** εἶτ᾽ ἐν τραγῳδίαις ἐχρῆν κἀλεκτρυόνα ποιῆσαι;	**EURIPIDES** So you had to put a rooster into tragedy too?
936	**AESCHYLUS** σὺ δ᾽ ὦ θεοῖσιν ἐχθρὲ ποῖ᾽ ἄττ᾽ ἐστὶν ἄττ᾽ ἐποίεις;	**AESCHYLUS** And you, you enemy of the gods, what sort of things did you make?
937	**EURIPIDES** οὐχ ἱππαλεκτρυόνας μὰ Δί᾽ οὐδὲ τραγελάφους, ἅπερ σύ, ἂν τοῖσι παραπετάσμασιν τοῖς Μηδικοῖς γράφουσιν· ἀλλ᾽ ὡς παρέλαβον τὴν τέχνην παρὰ σοῦ τὸ πρῶτον εὐθὺς	**EURIPIDES** Not horse-roosters, by Zeus, or goat-stags like you, the kind they paint on Persian tapestries. No: when I first took over the art from you, all bloated with bombast and heavy words, the very first thing I did was slim it down and take

63 Phrynichus was an early tragic poet (active c. 510–476 BC); Achilles and Niobe sat veiled and silent in Aeschylus' lost *Myrmidons* and *Niobe*.
64 "Tawny horse-rooster" is a phrase from Aeschylus' *Myrmidons*.
65 Eryxis is otherwise unknown; presumably he was mocked for his looks or his strutting.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	οἰδοῦσαν ὑπὸ κομπασμάτων καὶ ῥημάτων ἐπαχθῶν, ἴσχνανα μὲν πρώτιστον αὐτὴν καὶ τὸ βάρος ἀφεῖλον ἐπυλλίοις καὶ περιπάτοις καὶ τευτλίοισι λευκοῖς, χυλὸν διδοὺς στωμυλμάτων ἀπὸ βιβλίων ἀπηθῶν· εἶτ' ἀνέτρεφον μονῳδίαις—	off the weight with little verses and walks and white beets, giving it a juice of chit-chat strained out of books. Then I built it up again on solos—[66]
944	**DIONYSUS** Κηφισοφῶντα μιγνύς.	**DIONYSUS** —with a dose of Cephisophon mixed in.[67]
945	**EURIPIDES** εἶτ' οὐκ ἐλήρουν ὅ τι τύχοιμ' οὐδ' ἐμπεσὼν ἔφυρον, ἀλλ' οὐξιὼν πρώτιστα μέν μοι τὸ γένος εἶπ' ἂν εὐθὺς τοῦ δράματος.	**EURIPIDES** Then I didn't babble whatever came into my head, or plunge in and make a mess. No, the first character to come out would right away give me the play's whole pedigree—
947	**DIONYSUS** κρεῖττον γὰρ ἦν σοι νὴ Δί' ἢ τὸ σαυτοῦ.	**DIONYSUS** Well, by Zeus, it was a better one than your own.[68]
948	**EURIPIDES** ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἐπῶν οὐδὲν παρῆκ' ἂν ἀργόν, ἀλλ' ἔλεγεν ἡ γυνή τέ μοι χὠ δοῦλος οὐδὲν ἧττον, χὠ δεσπότης χἠ παρθένος χἠ γραῦς ἄν.	**EURIPIDES** Then from the opening lines on I'd leave nobody idle. The wife would speak, and the slave just as much, and the master and the young girl and the old woman.
950	**AESCHYLUS** εἶτα δῆτα / οὐκ ἀποθανεῖν σε ταῦτ' ἐχρῆν τολμῶντα;	**AESCHYLUS** Well then, shouldn't you have been put to death for daring that?
951	**EURIPIDES** μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω· / δημοκρατικὸν γὰρ αὖτ' ἔδρων.	**EURIPIDES** No, by Apollo. I was doing something democratic.
952	**DIONYSUS** τοῦτο μὲν ἔασον ὦ τᾶν. / οὐ σοὶ γάρ ἐστι περίπατος κάλλιστα περί γε τούτου.	**DIONYSUS** Leave that one alone, my friend. When it comes to that subject, it's not the best walk for you to take.[69]
954	**EURIPIDES** ἔπειτα τουτουσὶ λαλεῖν ἐδίδαξα—	**EURIPIDES** Then I taught these people to talk—
	AESCHYLUS φημὶ κἀγώ. / ὡς πρὶν διδάξαι γ' ὤφελες μέσος διαρραγῆναι.	**AESCHYLUS** I'll say you did. And I wish you'd burst down the middle before you taught them!
956	**EURIPIDES** λεπτῶν τε κανόνων ἐσβολὰς ἐπῶν τε γωνιασμούς, νοεῖν ὁρᾶν ξυνιέναι στρέφειν ἐρᾶν τεχνάζειν, κάχ' ὑποτοπεῖσθαι, περινοεῖν ἅπαντα—	**EURIPIDES** —to apply subtle rules and set square to verses, to think, see, understand, twist, love, contrive, suspect the worst, think round everything—
958	**AESCHYLUS** φημὶ κἀγώ.	**AESCHYLUS** I'll say you did.
959	**EURIPIDES** οἰκεῖα πράγματ' εἰσάγων, οἷς χρώμεθ', οἷς ξύνεσμεν, ἐξ ὧν γ' ἂν ἐξηλεγχόμην· ξυνειδότες γὰρ οὗτοι ἤλεγχον ἄν μου τὴν τέχνην· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκομπολάκουν ἀπὸ τοῦ φρονεῖν ἀποσπάσας, οὐδ' ἐξέπληττον αὐτούς, Κύκνους ποιῶν καὶ Μέμνονας κωδωνοφαλαροπώλους.	**EURIPIDES** —bringing in everyday things, things we use, things we live with, where I could be shown up, since these people knew them and could criticize my art. But I didn't blow hot air, dragging them away from good sense, and I didn't stun them with Cycnuses and Memnons riding

66 Euripides describes his reform as a doctor's regimen: a slimming diet, exercise ("walks"), and purges.
67 Cephisophon, a member of Euripides' household, was said to help write his plays (and to sleep with his wife).
68 Comedy regularly sneered at Euripides' humble family.
69 Probably a dig at Euripides' last years at the court of the Macedonian king.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	γνώσει δὲ τοὺς τούτου τε κἀμοὺς ἑκατέρου μαθητάς. τουτουμενὶ Φορμίσιος Μεγαίνετός θ' ὁ Μανῆς, σαλπιγγολογχυπηνάδαι, σαρκασμοπιτυοκάμπται, οὑμοὶ δὲ Κλειτοφῶν τε καὶ Θηραμένης ὁ κομψός.	horses with bells on their bridles. You'll recognize his disciples and mine. His are Phormisius and Megaenetus the oaf, trumpet-lance-beards, flesh-ripping pine-benders. Mine are Cleitophon and Theramenes the smart.[70]
968	**DIONYSUS** Θηραμένης; σοφός γ' ἀνὴρ καὶ δεινὸς ἐς τὰ πάντα, ὃς ἢν κακοῖς που περιπέσῃ καὶ πλησίον παραστῇ, πέπτωκεν ἔξω τῶν κακῶν, οὐ Χῖος ἀλλὰ Κεῖος.	**DIONYSUS** Theramenes? A smart man, and clever at everything. If he ever falls into trouble and it's right on top of him, he's fallen clear of the trouble: no losing Chian, he, but a lucky Ceian.[71]
971	**EURIPIDES** τοιαῦτα μέντοὐγὼ φρονεῖν τούτοισιν εἰσηγησάμην, λογισμὸν ἐνθεὶς τῇ τέχνῃ καὶ σκέψιν, ὥστ' ἤδη νοεῖν ἅπαντα καὶ διειδέναι τά τ' ἄλλα καὶ τὰς οἰκίας οἰκεῖν ἄμεινον ἢ πρὸ τοῦ κἀνασκοπεῖν, "πῶς τοῦτ' ἔχει;" "ποῦ μοι τοδί; τίς τοῦτ' ἔλαβε;"	**EURIPIDES** That's the kind of thinking I introduced to these people, putting reasoning and inquiry into my art, so that now they understand everything and see through it all—and, in particular, run their households better than before and look into things: "How's this doing?" "Where's that thing of mine?" "Who took this?"
980	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τοὺς θεοὺς νῦν γοῦν Ἀθηναίων ἅπας τις εἰσιὼν κέκραγε πρὸς τοὺς οἰκέτας ζητεῖ τε, "ποῦ 'στιν ἡ χύτρα;" "τίς τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀπεδήδοκεν" "τῆς μαινίδος; τὸ τρύβλιον" "τὸ περυσινὸν τέθνηκέ μοι·" "ποῦ τὸ σκόροδον τὸ χθιζινόν;" "τίς τῆς ἐλάας παρέτραγεν;" τέως δ' ἀβελτερώτατοι κεχηνότες Μαμμάκυθοι Μελιτίδαι καθῆντο.	**DIONYSUS** By the gods, yes: now every Athenian who walks into his house yells at the slaves and demands, "Where's the pot?" "Who's bitten the head off the sprat?" "The bowl I had last year is dead on me." "Where's yesterday's garlic?" "Who's been nibbling the olive?" Whereas before they sat there like perfect idiots, gaping Mammacythuses, Melitideses.[72]
992	**CHORUS** τάδε μὲν λεύσσεις φαίδιμ' Ἀχιλλεῦ· σὺ δὲ τί φέρε πρὸς ταῦτα λέξεις; μόνον ὅπως ... μή σ' ὁ θυμὸς ἁρπάσας ἐκτὸς οἴσει τῶν ἐλαῶν· δεινὰ γὰρ κατηγόρηκεν. ἀλλ' ὅπως ὦ γεννάδα μὴ πρὸς ὀργὴν ἀντιλέξεις, ἀλλὰ συστείλας ἄκροισι χρώμενος τοῖς ἱστίοις, εἶτα μᾶλλον μᾶλλον ἄξεις καὶ φυλάξεις,	**CHORUS** "You see this, shining Achilles": but you, come, what will you say to this? Only take care your temper doesn't seize you and carry you off past the olive trees; he has made terrible charges. So, noble sir, take care you don't answer in a rage: reef in your sails and use only their edges, then little by little bring her on and keep watch

70 Phormisius (famous for his shaggy beard) and Megaenetus were bluff Athenian public figures; Cleitophon and Theramenes were politicians of the new clever style.
71 In dice the "Chian" was the losing throw and the "Coan" the winning one; Theramenes came from Ceos, so Aristophanes turns "Coan" into "Ceian."
72 Mammacythus and Melitides were proverbial simpletons.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	ἡνίκ' ἂν τὸ πνεῦμα λεῖον καὶ καθεστηκὸς λάβῃς.	until you catch a wind that's smooth and steady.[73]
1004	**DIONYSUS** ἀλλ' ὦ πρῶτος τῶν Ἑλλήνων πυργώσας ῥήματα σεμνὰ / καὶ κοσμήσας τραγικὸν λῆρον, θαρρῶν τὸν κρουνὸν ἀφίει.	**DIONYSUS** Come on, you who first of all the Greeks built towering words of grandeur and dressed up tragic drivel: have courage and open the tap!
1006	**AESCHYLUS** θυμοῦμαι μὲν τῇ ξυντυχίᾳ, καὶ μου τὰ σπλάγχν' ἀγανακτεῖ, εἰ πρὸς τοῦτον δεῖ μ' ἀντιλέγειν· ἵνα μὴ φάσκῃ δ' ἀπορεῖν με, ἀπόκριναί μοι, τίνος οὕνεκα χρὴ θαυμάζειν ἄνδρα ποιητήν;	**AESCHYLUS** I'm angry at the way things have turned out, and my guts are indignant that I have to argue against this man. But so he can't claim I'm at a loss, answer me: what should a poet be admired for?
1009	**EURIPIDES** δεξιότητος καὶ νουθεσίας, ὅτι βελτίους τε ποιοῦμεν / τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν.	**EURIPIDES** For cleverness and good advice, because we make people better in their cities.
1010	**AESCHYLUS** τοῦτ' οὖν εἰ μὴ πεποίηκας, ἀλλ' ἐκ χρηστῶν καὶ γενναίων μοχθηροτάτους ἀπέδειξας, τί παθεῖν φήσεις ἄξιος εἶναι;	**AESCHYLUS** Then if you haven't done that, but have taken good, noble men and turned them into utter wretches, what will you say you deserve to suffer?
1012	**DIONYSUS** τεθνάναι· μὴ τοῦτον ἐρώτα.	**DIONYSUS** Death. Don't ask him.
1013	**AESCHYLUS** σκέψαι τοίνυν οἵους αὐτοὺς παρ' ἐμοῦ παρεδέξατο πρῶτον, εἰ γενναίους καὶ τετραπήχεις, καὶ μὴ διαδρασιπολίτας, μηδ' ἀγοραίους μηδὲ κοβάλους ὥσπερ νῦν μηδὲ πανούργους, ἀλλὰ πνέοντας δόρυ καὶ λόγχας καὶ λευκολόφους τρυφαλείας καὶ πήληκας καὶ κνημῖδας καὶ θυμοὺς ἑπταβοείους.	**AESCHYLUS** Well then, look at the kind of men he got from me to begin with: noble, six feet tall, not dodgers of their civic duty, not market-loafers or tricksters like today's, or rogues, but men breathing spears and lances and white-plumed helmets and casques and greaves and hearts of sevenfold oxhide.
1018	**DIONYSUS** καὶ δὴ χωρεῖ τουτὶ τὸ κακόν· κρανοποιῶν αὖ μ' ἐπιτρίψει.	**DIONYSUS** Here comes the trouble now. He'll wear me out with his helmet-making again.
1019	**EURIPIDES** καὶ τί σὺ δράσας οὕτως αὐτοὺς γενναίους ἐξεδίδαξας;	**EURIPIDES** And what did you do to teach them to be so noble?
1020	**DIONYSUS** Αἰσχύλε λέξον, μηδ' αὐθάδως σεμνυνόμενος χαλέπαινε.	**DIONYSUS** Tell him, Aeschylus, and don't be so stubbornly proud and touchy.
1021	**AESCHYLUS** δρᾶμα ποιήσας Ἄρεως μεστόν.	**AESCHYLUS** I wrote a play full of Ares.
	DIONYSUS ποῖον;	**DIONYSUS** Which?
	AESCHYLUS τοὺς ἑπτ' ἐπὶ Θήβας· / ὃ θεασάμενος πᾶς ἄν τις ἀνὴρ ἠράσθη δάιος εἶναι.	**AESCHYLUS** *Seven Against Thebes*. Every man who saw it longed to be a warrior.
1023	**DIONYSUS** τουτὶ μέν σοι κακὸν εἴργασται· Θηβαίους γὰρ πεποίηκας / ἀνδρειοτέρους ἐς τὸν πόλεμον, καὶ τούτου γ' οὕνεκα τύπτου.	**DIONYSUS** That was a bad thing you did there: you made the Thebans braver in war. You deserve a beating for that.[74]

73 The opening quotes Aeschylus' *Myrmidons*; olive trees marked the turning point of the racecourse.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1025	**AESCHYLUS** ἀλλ' ὑμῖν αὖτ' ἐξῆν ἀσκεῖν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῦτ' ἐτράπεσθε. εἶτα διδάξας Πέρσας μετὰ τοῦτ' ἐπιθυμεῖν ἐξεδίδαξα νικᾶν ἀεὶ τοὺς ἀντιπάλους, κοσμήσας ἔργον ἄριστον.	**AESCHYLUS** But you could all have trained for it yourselves; you just didn't turn your minds to it. Then after that I put on *Persians* and taught them always to long to beat their enemies, glorifying a superb achievement.[75]
1028	**DIONYSUS** ἐχάρην γοῦν, †ἡνίκ' ἤκουσα περὶ Δαρείου τεθνεῶτος,† / ὁ χορὸς δ' εὐθὺς τὼ χεῖρ' ὠδὶ συγκρούσας εἶπεν "ἰαυοῖ."	**DIONYSUS** I certainly loved it when I heard about dead Darius, and the chorus at once clapped their hands together like this and cried "iauoi!"[76]
1030	**AESCHYLUS** ταῦτα γὰρ ἄνδρας χρὴ ποιητὰς ἀσκεῖν. σκέψαι γὰρ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὡς ὠφέλιμοι τῶν ποιητῶν οἱ γενναῖοι γεγένηνται. Ὀρφεὺς μὲν γὰρ τελετάς θ' ἡμῖν κατέδειξε φόνων τ' ἀπέχεσθαι, Μουσαῖος δ' ἐξακέσεις τε νόσων καὶ χρησμούς, Ἡσίοδος δὲ γῆς ἐργασίας, καρπῶν ὥρας, ἀρότους· ὁ δὲ θεῖος Ὅμηρος ἀπὸ τοῦ τιμὴν καὶ κλέος ἔσχεν πλὴν τοῦδ' ὅτι χρήστ' ἐδίδαξεν, τάξεις ἀρετὰς ὁπλίσεις ἀνδρῶν;	**AESCHYLUS** That's what poets ought to work at. Look how useful the noble poets have been from the very beginning. Orpheus taught us rites and to keep from killing; Musaeus taught cures for diseases and oracles; Hesiod the working of the land, the seasons for crops, plowing. And the divine Homer—where did he get his honor and fame if not from teaching useful things: battle formations, feats of excellence, the arming of men?[77]
1036	**DIONYSUS** καὶ μὴν οὐ Παντακλέα γε ἐδίδαξεν ὅμως τὸν σκαιότατον· πρώην γοῦν, ἡνίκ' ἔπεμπεν, τὸ κράνος πρῶτον περιδησάμενος τὸν λόφον ἤμελλ' ἐπιδήσειν.	**DIONYSUS** And yet he didn't teach Pantacles, at any rate, the clumsiest man alive. Just the other day, when he was marching in the procession, he'd strapped his helmet on first and was about to fasten the crest on afterward.[78]
1039	**AESCHYLUS** ἀλλ' ἄλλους τοι πολλοὺς ἀγαθούς, ὧν ἦν καὶ Λάμαχος ἥρως· ὅθεν ἡμὴ φρὴν ἀπομαξαμένη πολλὰς ἀρετὰς ἐποίησεν, Πατρόκλων, Τεύκρων θυμολεόντων, ἵν' ἐπαίροιμ' ἄνδρα πολίτην ἀντεκτείνειν αὐτὸν τούτοις, ὁπόταν σάλπιγγος ἀκούσῃ. ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ Δί' οὐ Φαίδρας ἐποίουν πόρνας οὐδὲ Σθενεβοίας, οὐδ' οἶδ' οὐδεὶς ἥντιν' ἐρῶσαν πώποτ' ἐποίησα γυναῖκα.	**AESCHYLUS** But he taught plenty of other good men, I tell you, including Lamachus the hero. My mind took its imprint from him and created many excellences—Patrocluses, lion-hearted Teucers—to rouse the citizen to measure himself against them whenever he heard the trumpet. But no, by Zeus, I didn't create lustful women like Phaedra or Stheneboea, and nobody knows of any woman in love I ever created.[79]
1045	**EURIPIDES** μὰ Δί' οὐ γὰρ ἐπῆν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης οὐδέν σοι. μηδέ γ' ἐπείη.	**EURIPIDES** No, by Zeus, there wasn't a bit of Aphrodite in you. And may there never be!
1046	**AESCHYLUS** ἀλλ' ἐπί τοι σοὶ καὶ τοῖς σοῖσιν πολλὴ πολλοῦ 'πικαθῆτο, / ὥστε γε καὐτόν σε κατ' οὖν ἔβαλεν.	**AESCHYLUS** Whereas on you and yours she sat heavy, very heavy—so heavy she knocked you yourself flat.[80]

74 Thebes was one of Athens' enemies in the Peloponnesian War.
75 *Persians* (472 BC) celebrates the Athenian victory over the Persian fleet at Salamis.
76 The Greek line is corrupt; in *Persians* the ghost of the dead king Darius is summoned by the lamenting chorus.
77 Musaeus was a legendary poet and seer, linked like Orpheus with mystery cults.
78 Pantacles, an Athenian mocked for his clumsiness.
79 Lamachus was an Athenian general killed in Sicily in 414 BC; Phaedra and Stheneboea are Euripidean wives who lust after young men.
80 Gossip held that Euripides' wife was unfaithful to him.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1047	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τὸν Δία τοῦτό γέ τοι δή. / ἃ γὰρ ἐς τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἐποίεις, αὐτὸς τούτοισιν ἐπλήγης.	**DIONYSUS** By Zeus, that's certainly true. What you wrote about other men's wives, you got hit with yourself.
1049	**EURIPIDES** καὶ τί βλάπτουσ' ὦ σχέτλι' ἀνδρῶν τὴν πόλιν ἁμαὶ Σθενέβοιαι;	**EURIPIDES** And how, you wretch, do my Stheneboeas harm the city?
1050	**AESCHYLUS** ὅτι γενναίας καὶ γενναίων ἀνδρῶν ἀλόχους ἀνέπεισας / κώνεια πιεῖν αἰσχυνθείσας διὰ τοὺς σοὺς Βελλεροφόντας.	**AESCHYLUS** Because you induced noble women, wives of noble men, to drink hemlock out of shame on account of your Bellerophons.
1052	**EURIPIDES** πότερον δ' οὐκ ὄντα λόγον τοῦτον περὶ τῆς Φαίδρας ξυνέθηκα;	**EURIPIDES** So this story I composed about Phaedra wasn't true, then?
1053	**AESCHYLUS** μὰ Δί' ἀλλ' ὄντ'· ἀλλ' ἀποκρύπτειν χρὴ τὸ πονηρὸν τόν γε ποιητήν, καὶ μὴ παράγειν μηδὲ διδάσκειν. τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισιν ἔστι διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖσιν δ' ἡβῶσι ποιηταί. πάνυ δὴ δεῖ χρηστὰ λέγειν ἡμᾶς.	**AESCHYLUS** No, by Zeus, it was true. But a poet ought to hide what's wicked, not bring it on stage and teach it. Little children have a schoolmaster to tell them things; grown men have poets. We absolutely must say what's good for them.
1056	**EURIPIDES** ἦν οὖν σὺ λέγῃς Λυκαβηττοὺς καὶ Παρνασσῶν ἡμῖν μεγέθη, τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ χρηστὰ διδάσκειν, ὃν χρῆν φράζειν ἀνθρωπείως;	**EURIPIDES** So when you talk to us about Lycabettuses and things the size of Parnassus, is that teaching what's good? You ought to talk like a human being.[81]
1058	**AESCHYLUS** ἀλλ' ὦ κακόδαιμον ἀνάγκη μεγάλων γνωμῶν καὶ διανοιῶν ἴσα καὶ τὰ ῥήματα τίκτειν. κἄλλως εἰκὸς τοὺς ἡμιθέους τοῖς ῥήμασι μείζοσι χρῆσθαι· καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἱματίοις ἡμῶν χρῶνται πολὺ σεμνοτέροισιν. ἀμοῦ χρηστῶς καταδείξαντος διελυμήνω σύ.	**AESCHYLUS** But, you poor devil, great thoughts and ideas necessarily give birth to words of the same size. Besides, it's fitting for demigods to use bigger words; after all, they wear far grander clothes than we do. I set a good example, and you ruined it.
1062	**EURIPIDES** τί δράσας;	**EURIPIDES** By doing what?
1063	**AESCHYLUS** πρῶτον μὲν τοὺς βασιλεύοντας ῥάκι' ἀμπισχών, ἵν' ἐλεινοὶ / τοῖς ἀνθρώποις φαίνοιντ' εἶναι.	**AESCHYLUS** First, by dressing kings in rags, so they'd look pitiful to people.
1064	**EURIPIDES** τοῦτ' οὖν ἔβλαψά τι δράσας;	**EURIPIDES** And what harm did I do by that?
1065	**AESCHYLUS** οὔκουν ἐθέλει γε τριηραρχεῖν πλουτῶν οὐδεὶς διὰ ταῦτα, / ἀλλὰ ῥακίοις περιειλάμενος κλάει καὶ φησὶ πένεσθαι.	**AESCHYLUS** Well, because of it no rich man is willing to serve as a trierarch. He wraps himself up in rags and whines and says he's poor.[82]
1067	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τὴν Δήμητρα χιτῶνά γ' ἔχων οὔλων ἐρίων ὑπένερθεν. / κἂν ταῦτα λέγων ἐξαπατήσῃ, παρὰ τοὺς ἰχθῦς ἀνέκυψεν.	**DIONYSUS** Yes, by Demeter, with a tunic of thick wool on underneath. And if he gets away with that story, up he pops at the fish stalls.
1069	**AESCHYLUS** εἶτ' αὖ λαλιὰν ἐπιτηδεῦσαι καὶ στωμυλίαν ἐδίδαξας, ἣ 'ξεκένωσεν τάς τε παλαίστρας καὶ τὰς πυγὰς ἐνέτριψεν	**AESCHYLUS** Then you taught them to cultivate chatter and glib talk, which emptied the wrestling schools and wore down the butts of the young

81 Lycabettus is a hill in Athens; Parnassus a great mountain above Delphi.
82 Wealthy Athenians were required to fund and command a warship for a year, a duty called the trierarchy.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	τῶν μειρακίων στωμυλλομένων, καὶ τοὺς Παράλους ἀνέπεισεν ἀνταγορεύειν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν. καίτοι τότε γ' ἡνίκ' ἐγὼ 'ζων, οὐκ ἠπίσταντ' ἀλλ' ἢ μᾶζαν καλέσαι καὶ "ῥυππαπαῖ" εἰπεῖν.	men sitting around chattering, and persuaded the crew of the *Paralus* to talk back to their officers. Yet back when I was alive, all they knew how to do was call for their barley cake and shout "rhyppapai!"[83]
1074	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω, καὶ προσπαρδεῖν γ' ἐς τὸ στόμα τῷ θαλάμακι, καὶ μινθῶσαι τὸν ξύσσιτον κἀκβάς τινα λωποδυτῆσαι· νῦν δ' ἀντιλέγει κοὐκέτ' ἐλαύνων πλεῖ δευρὶ καὖθις ἐκεῖσε.	**DIONYSUS** Yes, by Apollo, and fart in the face of the rower below, and smear shit on their messmate, and go ashore and mug somebody. Now he talks back, and doesn't row anymore, just sails this way and then back again.[84]
1078	**AESCHYLUS** ποίων δὲ κακῶν οὐκ αἴτιός ἐστ'; οὐ προαγωγοὺς κατέδειξ' οὗτος, καὶ τικτούσας ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς, καὶ μιγνυμένας τοῖσιν ἀδελφοῖς, καὶ φασκούσας οὐ ζῆν τὸ ζῆν; κᾆτ' ἐκ τούτων ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν ὑπογραμματέων ἀνεμεστώθη καὶ βωμολόχων δημοπιθήκων ἐξαπατώντων τὸν δῆμον ἀεί, λαμπάδα δ' οὐδεὶς οἷός τε φέρειν ὑπ' ἀγυμνασίας ἔτι νυνί.	**AESCHYLUS** What evils isn't he to blame for? Didn't he put on stage women who act as go-betweens, and women giving birth in temples, and sleeping with their brothers, and saying that life isn't life? And because of this our city has filled up with undersecretaries and buffoon monkeys of the people, forever deceiving the people—and nobody can carry a torch anymore, they're so out of training.[85]
1089	**DIONYSUS** μὰ Δί' οὐ δῆθ', ὥστ' ἐπαφαυάνθην Παναθηναίοισι γελῶν, ὅτε δὴ βραδὺς ἄνθρωπός τις ἔθει κύψας λευκὸς πίων ὑπολειπόμενος καὶ δεινὰ ποιῶν· κᾆθ' οἱ Κεραμῆς ἐν ταῖσι πύλαις παίουσ' αὐτοῦ γαστέρα πλευρὰς λαγόνας πυγήν, ὁ δὲ τυπτόμενος ταῖσι πλατείαις ὑποπερδόμενος φυσῶν τὴν λαμπάδ' ἔφευγεν.	**DIONYSUS** No, by Zeus, they can't. I nearly dried up laughing at the Panathenaea, when some slow fellow was running, bent over, pale, fat, falling behind, and making a terrible job of it. And then the Potters' Quarter men at the gates slapped him on the belly, ribs, flanks, butt, and as they beat him with their flat palms, he let out a little fart, and, blowing on his torch, ran off.[86]

SECOND CHORAL SONG

The chorus urges the poets to argue boldly, assuring them the audience is clever enough to follow.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1099	**CHORUS** μέγα τὸ πρᾶγμα, πολὺ τὸ νεῖκος, ἁδρὸς ὁ πόλεμος ἔρχεται. χαλεπὸν οὖν ἔργον διαιρεῖν, ὅταν ὁ μὲν τείνῃ βιαίως, ὁ δ' ἐπαναστρέφειν δύνηται κἀπερείδεσθαι τορῶς. ἀλλὰ μὴ 'ν ταὐτῷ κάθησθον· ἐσβολαὶ γάρ εἰσι πολλαὶ χἄτεραι σοφισμάτων.	**CHORUS** Big the issue, fierce the quarrel, mighty the war that's coming on. So it's a hard job to decide, when one of them pulls with violence and the other can wheel around and push back sharply. But don't both stay sitting in one place:

83 The *Paralus* was a state warship crewed by citizens known for their fierce democratic views; "rhyppapai" was a rowers' chant.
84 Rowers on the lowest tier of a trireme sat right below the seats of the men above them.
85 All allusions to Euripides: the Nurse in *Hippolytus*, Auge in *Auge*, Canace in *Aeolus*, and a famous line from his *Polyidus*.
86 At the torch race of the Panathenaea festival, spectators in the Potters' Quarter (Ceramicus) slapped runners who lagged behind.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	ὅ τι περ οὖν ἔχετον ἐρίζειν, λέγετον ἔπιτον ἀνά τε δέρετον τά τε παλαιὰ καὶ τὰ καινά, κἀποκινδυνεύετον λεπτόν τι καὶ σοφὸν λέγειν.	there are plenty of other lines of attack, and clever ones. Whatever you have to quarrel about, speak, charge, flay the old things and the new, and take the risk of saying something subtle and skilled.
1109	εἰ δὲ τοῦτο καταφοβεῖσθον, μή τις ἀμαθία προσῇ τοῖς θεωμένοισιν, ὡς τὰ λεπτὰ μὴ γνῶναι λεγόντοιν, μηδὲν ὀρρωδεῖτε τοῦθ'· ὡς οὐκέθ' οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχει. ἐστρατευμένοι γάρ εἰσι, βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἕκαστος μανθάνει τὰ δεξιά· αἱ φύσεις τ' ἄλλως κράτισται, νῦν δὲ καὶ παρηκόνηνται. μηδὲν οὖν δείσητον, ἀλλὰ πάντ' ἐπέξιτον θεατῶν γ' οὕνεχ' ὡς ὄντων σοφῶν.	And if you're afraid of this, that there may be some ignorance among the spectators, so that they won't catch the subtleties of what you say, don't worry about that at all: it's not like that anymore. They're veterans, and every one of them has a book and is learning the clever stuff. Their natures are superb anyway, and now they've been sharpened too. So don't be afraid at all, but go through everything, since, as far as the audience goes, they're wise.

THIRD LYRIC SCENE

The poets attack each other's prologues and lyrics, weigh their verses, and Dionysus chooses Aeschylus.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1119	**EURIPIDES** καὶ μὴν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς τοὺς προλόγους σου τρέψομαι, ὅπως τὸ πρῶτον τῆς τραγῳδίας μέρος πρώτιστον αὐτοῦ βασανιῶ τοῦ δεξιοῦ. ἀσαφὴς γὰρ ἦν ἐν τῇ φράσει τῶν πραγμάτων.	**EURIPIDES** All right, now I'll turn to your prologues themselves. That's the first part of a tragedy, so that's where I'll test this clever man first. He was unclear in setting out the facts.
1123	**DIONYSUS** καὶ ποῖον αὐτοῦ βασανιεῖς;	**DIONYSUS** And which one of his will you test?
	EURIPIDES πολλοὺς πάνυ. / πρῶτον δέ μοι τὸν ἐξ Ὀρεστείας λέγε.	**EURIPIDES** Lots of them. But first recite me the one from the *Oresteia*.
1125	**DIONYSUS** ἄγε δὴ σιώπα πᾶς ἀνήρ. λέγ' Αἰσχύλε.	**DIONYSUS** Come on, then, silence, everybody. Speak, Aeschylus.
1126	**AESCHYLUS** "Ἑρμῆ χθόνιε πατρῷ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη," "σωτὴρ γενοῦ μοι σύμμαχός τ' αἰτουμένῳ." "ἥκω γὰρ ἐς γῆν τήνδε καὶ κατέρχομαι."	**AESCHYLUS** "Hermes of the underworld, you who watch over a father's powers, be my savior and my ally, I beg you. For I have come to this land, and I return."[87]
1129	**DIONYSUS** τούτων ἔχεις ψέγειν τι;	**DIONYSUS** Can you find anything to fault there?
	EURIPIDES πλεῖν ἢ δώδεκα.	**EURIPIDES** More than a dozen things.

87 The opening lines of Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, the second play of the *Oresteia*, spoken by Orestes at his murdered father's tomb.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1130	**DIONYSUS** ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ πάντα ταῦτά γ’ ἔστ’ ἀλλ’ ἢ τρία.	**DIONYSUS** But that’s only three lines altogether.
1131	**EURIPIDES** ἔχει δ’ ἕκαστον εἴκοσίν γ’ ἁμαρτίας.	**EURIPIDES** And each one has twenty mistakes in it.
1132	**DIONYSUS** Αἰσχύλε παραινῶ σοι σιωπᾶν· εἰ δὲ μή, / πρὸς τρισὶν ἰαμβείοισι προσοφείλων φανεῖ.	**DIONYSUS** Aeschylus, I advise you to keep quiet. Otherwise you’ll turn out to owe a lot more than three lines of iambics.
1134	**AESCHYLUS** ἐγὼ σιωπῶ τῷδ’;	**AESCHYLUS** Me, keep quiet for him?
	DIONYSUS ἐὰν πείθῃ γ’ ἐμοί.	**DIONYSUS** If you take my advice, yes.
1135	**EURIPIDES** εὐθὺς γὰρ ἡμάρτηκεν οὐράνιόν γ’ ὅσον.	**EURIPIDES** Because right off the bat he’s made a mistake as big as the sky.
1136	**AESCHYLUS** ὁρᾷς ὅτι ληρεῖς;	**AESCHYLUS** You see what drivel you’re talking?
	DIONYSUS ἀλλ’ ὀλίγον γέ μοι μέλει.	**DIONYSUS** I couldn’t care less.
1137	**AESCHYLUS** πῶς φῄς μ’ ἁμαρτεῖν;	**AESCHYLUS** How do you say I made a mistake?
	EURIPIDES αὖθις ἐξ ἀρχῆς λέγε.	**EURIPIDES** Say it again from the beginning.
1138	**AESCHYLUS** “Ἑρμῆ χθόνιε πατρῷ’ ἐποπτεύων κράτη.”	**AESCHYLUS** “Hermes of the underworld, you who watch over a father’s powers.”
1139	**EURIPIDES** οὔκουν Ὀρέστης τοῦτ’ ἐπὶ τῷ τύμβῳ λέγει / τῷ τοῦ πατρὸς τεθνεῶτος;	**EURIPIDES** Now, isn’t it Orestes who says this, at the tomb of his dead father?
1140	**AESCHYLUS** οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω.	**AESCHYLUS** That’s exactly what I’m saying.
1141	**EURIPIDES** πότερ’ οὖν τὸν Ἑρμῆν, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ἀπώλετο αὐτοῦ βιαίως ἐκ γυναικείας χερὸς δόλοις λαθραίοις, ταῦτ’ “ἐποπτεύειν” ἔφη;	**EURIPIDES** So what does he mean? His father was killed violently at a woman’s hand, by secret treachery, and Hermes “watched over” that?
1144	**AESCHYLUS** οὐ δῆτ’ ἐκεῖνον, ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἐριούνιον Ἑρμῆν χθόνιον προσεῖπε, κἀδήλου λέγων ὁτιὴ πατρῷον τοῦτο κέκτηται γέρας—	**AESCHYLUS** Of course not. It’s Hermes the Helper he’s addressing as the god of the underworld, and he makes it clear by saying that Hermes holds this office as a privilege from his father—
1147	**EURIPIDES** ἔτι μεῖζον ἐξήμαρτες ἢ ’γὼ ’βουλόμην· / εἰ γὰρ πατρῷον τὸ χθόνιον ἔχει γέρας—	**EURIPIDES** That’s an even bigger mistake than I was hoping for. Because if he holds his underworld office from his father—
1149	**DIONYSUS** οὕτω γ’ ἂν εἴη πρὸς πατρὸς τυμβωρύχος.	**DIONYSUS** Then he’d be a grave robber on his father’s side.
1150	**AESCHYLUS** Διόνυσε πίνεις οἶνον οὐκ ἀνθοσμίαν.	**AESCHYLUS** Dionysus, the wine you’re drinking has no bouquet.
1151	**DIONYSUS** λέγ’ ἕτερον αὐτῷ· σὺ δ’ ἐπιτήρει τὸ βλάβος.	**DIONYSUS** Recite him the next one. And you, keep an eye out for the damage.
1152	**AESCHYLUS** “σωτὴρ γενοῦ μοι σύμμαχός τ’ αἰτουμένῳ.” / “ἥκω γὰρ ἐς γῆν τήνδε καὶ κατέρχομαι—”	**AESCHYLUS** “Be my savior and my ally, I beg you. For I have come to this land, and I return—”

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1154	**EURIPIDES** δὶς ταὐτὸν ἡμῖν εἶπεν ὁ σοφὸς Αἰσχύλος.	**EURIPIDES** The wise Aeschylus has told us the same thing twice.
1155	**DIONYSUS** πῶς δίς;	**DIONYSUS** Twice how?
	EURIPIDES σκόπει τὸ ῥῆμ'· ἐγὼ δέ σοι φράσω. "ἥκω γὰρ ἐς γῆν," φησί, "καὶ κατέρχομαι·" "ἥκω" δὲ ταὐτόν ἐστι τῷ "κατέρχομαι."	**EURIPIDES** Look at the wording, and I'll explain it to you. "For I have come to this land," he says, "and I return." But "I have come" is the same thing as "I return."
1158	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τὸν Δί' ὥσπερ γ' εἴ τις εἴποι γείτονι, / "χρῆσον σὺ μάκτραν, εἰ δὲ βούλει, κάρδοπον."	**DIONYSUS** By Zeus, yes! It's as if someone said to his neighbor, "Lend me a kneading bowl, or if you'd rather, a bowl for kneading."
1160	**AESCHYLUS** οὐ δῆτα τοῦτό γ' ὦ κατεστωμυλμένε / ἄνθρωπε ταὔτ' ἔστ', ἀλλ' ἄριστ' ἐπῶν ἔχον.	**AESCHYLUS** No, it's not the same thing at all, you chattered-out windbag. That line is as good as a line can be.
1162	**EURIPIDES** πῶς δή; δίδαξον γάρ με καθ' ὅ τι δὴ λέγεις;	**EURIPIDES** How so? Go on, explain to me what exactly you mean.
1163	**AESCHYLUS** "ἐλθεῖν" μὲν ἐς γῆν ἔσθ' ὅτῳ μετῇ πάτρας· χωρὶς γὰρ ἄλλης συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν· φεύγων δ' ἀνὴρ "ἥκει" τε καὶ "κατέρχεται."	**AESCHYLUS** Anybody who has a share in his country can "come" to it. He's come, and nothing more to it. But a man in exile both "comes" and "returns."
1166	**DIONYSUS** εὖ νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω. τί σὺ λέγεις Εὐριπίδη;	**DIONYSUS** Good one, by Apollo! What do you say to that, Euripides?
1167	**EURIPIDES** οὐ φημὶ τὸν Ὀρέστην κατελθεῖν οἴκαδε· / λάθρᾳ γὰρ ἦλθεν οὐ πιθὼν τοὺς κυρίους.	**EURIPIDES** I say Orestes didn't "return" home. He came in secret, without the authorities' permission.
1169	**DIONYSUS** εὖ νὴ τὸν Ἑρμῆν· ὅ τι λέγεις δ' οὐ μανθάνω.	**DIONYSUS** Good one, by Hermes! Though I don't understand what you're saying.
1170	**EURIPIDES** πέραινε τοίνυν ἕτερον.	**EURIPIDES** Well then, carry on with the next one.
	DIONYSUS ἴθι πέραινε σὺ / Αἰσχύλ' ἀνύσας· σὺ δ' ἐς τὸ κακὸν ἀπόβλεπε.	**DIONYSUS** Go on, Aeschylus, carry on, hurry up. And you, watch out for the bad bit.
1172	**AESCHYLUS** "τύμβου δ' ἐπ' ὄχθῳ τῷδε κηρύσσω πατρὶ" / "κλύειν ἀκοῦσαι."	**AESCHYLUS** "Upon this mound of the tomb I call upon my father to hear, to hearken."
1173	**EURIPIDES** τοῦθ' ἕτερον αὖθις λέγει, / "κλύειν ἀκοῦσαι," ταὐτὸν ὂν σαφέστατα.	**EURIPIDES** There he goes again, saying the same thing twice: "to hear, to hearken." They're obviously the same.
1175	**DIONYSUS** τεθνηκόσιν γὰρ ἔλεγεν ὦ μόχθηρε σύ, / οἷς οὐδὲ τρὶς λέγοντες ἐξικνούμεθα.	**DIONYSUS** He was talking to the dead, you pest. You can't get through to them even if you say it three times.
1177	**AESCHYLUS** σὺ δὲ πῶς ἐποίεις τοὺς προλόγους;	**AESCHYLUS** And how did you write your prologues?

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	EURIPIDES ἐγὼ φράσω. κἄν που δὶς εἴπω ταὐτόν, ἢ στοιβὴν ἴδῃς ἐνοῦσαν ἔξω τοῦ λόγου, κατάπτυσον.	**EURIPIDES** I'll tell you. And if I say the same thing twice anywhere, or you see any padding in it that isn't doing a job, spit on me.
1180	**DIONYSUS** ἴθι δὴ λέγ'· οὐ γάρ μοὔστιν ἀλλ' ἀκουστέα / τῶν σῶν προλόγων τῆς ὀρθότητος τῶν ἐπῶν.	**DIONYSUS** Go on, then, recite. I've no choice but to hear how perfectly correct the words of your prologues are.
1182	**EURIPIDES** "ἦν Οἰδίπους τὸ πρῶτον εὐδαίμων ἀνήρ"—	**EURIPIDES** "At first, Oedipus was a happy man"—[88]
1183	**AESCHYLUS** μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ δῆτ', ἀλλὰ κακοδαίμων φύσει, ὅντινά γε πρὶν φῦναι μὲν Ἀπόλλων ἔφη ἀποκτενεῖν τὸν πατέρα, πρὶν καὶ γεγονέναι· πῶς οὗτος ἦν τὸ πρῶτον εὐδαίμων ἀνήρ;	**AESCHYLUS** No, by Zeus, he certainly wasn't! He was unhappy by birth. Before he was even born, Apollo said he would kill his father—before he even existed! How was he "at first a happy man"?
1187	**EURIPIDES** "εἶτ' ἐγένετ' αὖθις ἀθλιώτατος βροτῶν."	**EURIPIDES** "Then later he became the most wretched of mortals."
1188	**AESCHYLUS** μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ δῆτ', οὐ μὲν οὖν ἐπαύσατο. πῶς γάρ; ὅτε δὴ πρῶτον μὲν αὐτὸν γενόμενον χειμῶνος ὄντος ἐξέθεσαν ἐν ὀστράκῳ, ἵνα μὴ 'κτραφεὶς γένοιτο τοῦ πατρὸς φονεύς· εἶθ' ὡς Πόλυβον ἤρρησεν οἰδῶν τὼ πόδε· ἔπειτα γραῦν ἔγημεν αὐτὸς ὢν νέος καὶ πρός γε τούτοις τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μητέρα· εἶτ' ἐξετύφλωσεν αὑτόν.	**AESCHYLUS** No, by Zeus, he certainly didn't! He never stopped being that. How could he? First, as soon as he was born, they put him out in a pot in the middle of winter, so that he wouldn't grow up and murder his father. Then he hobbled off to Polybus with both feet swollen. Then, young as he was, he married an old woman, and on top of that she was his own mother. Then he blinded himself.
1195	**DIONYSUS** εὐδαίμων ἄρ' ἦν, / εἰ κἀστρατήγησέν γε μετ' Ἐρασινίδου.	**DIONYSUS** So he was happy—provided he'd also served as a general with Erasinides.[89]
1197	**EURIPIDES** ληρεῖς· ἐγὼ δὲ τοὺς προλόγους καλοὺς ποιῶ.	**EURIPIDES** Drivel. I write fine prologues.
1198	**AESCHYLUS** καὶ μὴν μὰ τὸν Δί' οὐ κατ' ἔπος γέ σου κνίσω τὸ ῥῆμ' ἕκαστον, ἀλλὰ σὺν τοῖσιν θεοῖς ἀπὸ ληκυθίου σου τοὺς προλόγους διαφθερῶ.	**AESCHYLUS** Well, by Zeus, I'm not going to nibble at every word of yours line by line. With the gods' help, I'll destroy your prologues with a little oil flask.
1201	**EURIPIDES** ἀπὸ ληκυθίου σὺ τοὺς ἐμούς;	**EURIPIDES** With a little oil flask? You, destroy mine?
	AESCHYLUS ἑνὸς μόνου. ποιεῖς γὰρ οὕτως ὥστ' ἐναρμόττειν ἅπαν, καὶ κῳδάριον καὶ ληκύθιον καὶ θύλακον, ἐν τοῖς ἰαμβείοισι. δείξω δ' αὐτίκα.	**AESCHYLUS** Just one. The way you write, anything fits into your iambics: a little fleece, a little oil flask, a little sack. I'll show you right now.
1205	**EURIPIDES** ἰδού, σὺ δείξεις;	**EURIPIDES** Oh, really? You'll show me?

88 The opening of Euripides' lost *Antigone*.
89 Erasinides was one of the generals who won the sea battle of Arginusae in 406 BC and were then executed by the Athenians for failing to rescue the shipwrecked.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	AESCHYLUS φημί.	**AESCHYLUS** I will.
	DIONYSUS καὶ δὴ χρὴ λέγειν.	**DIONYSUS** All right, then, you have to recite.
1206	**EURIPIDES** Αἴγυπτος, ὡς ὁ πλεῖστος ἔσπαρται λόγος, ξὺν παισὶ πεντήκοντα ναυτίλῳ πλάτῃ Ἄργος κατασχών—	**EURIPIDES** "Aegyptus, as the most widely sown tale tells, with his fifty sons, by the oar of seafaring, putting in at Argos—"[90]
1208	**AESCHYLUS** ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.	**AESCHYLUS** lost his little oil flask.[91]
1209	**DIONYSUS** τουτὶ τί ἦν τὸ ληκύθιον; οὐ κλαύσεται; / λέγ' ἕτερον αὐτῷ πρόλογον, ἵνα καὶ γνῶ πάλιν.	**DIONYSUS** What was that "little oil flask"? Damn him! Recite him another prologue, so I can see it again.
1211	**EURIPIDES** "Διόνυσος, ὃς θύρσοισι καὶ νεβρῶν δοραῖς" "καθαπτὸς ἐν πεύκαισι Παρνασσὸν κάτα" "πηδᾷ χορεύων"—	**EURIPIDES** "Dionysus, who, with thyrsus and with skins of fawns arrayed, amid the pine torches down Parnassus leaps in the dance—"[92]
1213	**AESCHYLUS** ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.	**AESCHYLUS** lost his little oil flask.
1214	**DIONYSUS** οἴμοι πεπλήγμεθ' αὖθις ὑπὸ τῆς ληκύθου.	**DIONYSUS** Oh no, we've been hit by the oil flask again!
1215	**EURIPIDES** ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἔσται πρᾶγμα· πρὸς γὰρ τουτονὶ τὸν πρόλογον οὐχ ἕξει προσάψαι λήκυθον. "οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις πάντ' ἀνὴρ εὐδαιμονεῖ·" "ἢ γὰρ πεφυκὼς ἐσθλὸς οὐκ ἔχει βίον," "ἢ δυσγενὴς ὤν"—	**EURIPIDES** It won't be a problem. To this prologue he won't be able to attach an oil flask. "There is no man who is happy in all things: either he is nobly born and has no livelihood, or being of low birth—"[93]
1219	**AESCHYLUS** ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.	**AESCHYLUS** lost his little oil flask.
1220	**DIONYSUS** Εὐριπίδη—	**DIONYSUS** Euripides—
	EURIPIDES τί ἔσθ';	**EURIPIDES** What is it?
	DIONYSUS ὑφέσθαι μοι δοκεῖ· / τὸ ληκύθιον γὰρ τοῦτο πνευσεῖται πολύ.	**DIONYSUS** I think you'd better take in your sail. This little oil flask is going to blow a gale.
1222	**EURIPIDES** οὐδ' ἂν μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα φροντίσαιμί γε· / νυνὶ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τοῦτό γ' ἐκκεκόψεται.	**EURIPIDES** By Demeter, I couldn't care less. This time it'll be knocked right out of his hands.
1224	**DIONYSUS** ἴθι δὴ λέγ' ἕτερον κἀπέχου τῆς ληκύθου.	**DIONYSUS** Go on, then, recite another one—and keep away from the oil flask.
1225	**EURIPIDES** "Σιδώνιόν ποτ' ἄστυ Κάδμος ἐκλιπὼν" / "Ἀγήνορος παῖς"—	**EURIPIDES** "Cadmus, once, departing from the city of Sidon, Agenor's son—"[94]
1226	**AESCHYLUS** ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.	**AESCHYLUS** lost his little oil flask.

90 From the opening of Euripides' lost *Archelaus*.
91 The phrase fits neatly into the second half of a Euripidean iambic line after its usual pause, so Aeschylus can tack it onto any of these openings; the little flask may also carry a crude double meaning.
92 From Euripides' lost *Hypsipyle* (or possibly his *Archelaus*).
93 The opening of Euripides' lost *Stheneboea*.
94 From the opening of Euripides' lost *Phrixus*.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1227	**DIONYSUS** ὦ δαιμόνι’ ἀνδρῶν ἀποπρίω τὴν λήκυθον, / ἵνα μὴ διακναίσῃ τοὺς προλόγους ἡμῶν.	**DIONYSUS** My dear fellow, buy the oil flask off him, so he doesn’t grind our prologues to pieces.
1228	**EURIPIDES** τὸ τί; / ἐγὼ πρίωμαι τῷδ’;	**EURIPIDES** What? Me, buy it from him?
1229	**DIONYSUS** ἐὰν πείθῃ γ’ ἐμοί.	**DIONYSUS** If you take my advice, yes.
1230	**EURIPIDES** οὐ δῆτ’, ἐπεὶ πολλοὺς προλόγους ἔξω λέγειν ἵν’ οὗτος οὐχ ἕξει προσάψαι ληκύθιον. “Πέλοψ ὁ Ταντάλειος ἐς Πῖσαν μολὼν” “θοαῖσιν ἵπποις”—	**EURIPIDES** No way. I’ve got plenty of prologues I can recite where he won’t be able to attach an oil flask. “Pelops, the son of Tantalus, to Pisa coming with swift horses—”[95]
1233	**AESCHYLUS** ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.	**AESCHYLUS** lost his little oil flask.
1234	**DIONYSUS** ὁρᾷς, προσῆψεν αὖθις αὖ τὴν λήκυθον. ἀλλ’ ὦγάθ’ ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἀπόδος πάσῃ τέχνῃ· λήψει γὰρ ὀβολοῦ πάνυ καλήν τε κἀγαθήν.	**DIONYSUS** See? He’s attached the oil flask again. My good man, even now, pay him for it at any price. You’ll get a really fine one for an obol.
1237	**EURIPIDES** μὰ τὸν Δί’ οὔπω γ’· ἔτι γὰρ εἰσί μοι συχνοί. / “Οἰνεύς ποτ’ ἐκ γῆς”—	**EURIPIDES** No, by Zeus, not yet. I’ve still got lots left. “Oeneus, once, from the land—”
1238	**AESCHYLUS** ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.	**AESCHYLUS** lost his little oil flask.
1239	**EURIPIDES** ἔασον εἰπεῖν πρῶθ’ ὅλον με τὸν στίχον. “Οἰνεύς ποτ’ ἐκ γῆς πολύμετρον λαβὼν στάχυν” “θύων ἀπαρχάς”—	**EURIPIDES** Let me say the whole line first! “Oeneus, once, from the land reaping a harvest of many measures, offering the first fruits—”[96]
1241	**AESCHYLUS** ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.	**AESCHYLUS** lost his little oil flask.
1242	**DIONYSUS** μεταξὺ θύων; καὶ τίς αὖθ’ ὑφείλετο;	**DIONYSUS** In the middle of the sacrifice? And who swiped it?
1243	**EURIPIDES** ἔα αὐτὸν ὦ τᾶν· πρὸς τοδὶ γὰρ εἰπάτω. / “Ζεύς, ὡς λέλεκται τῆς ἀληθείας ὕπο”—	**EURIPIDES** Leave him alone, my friend. Let him try it on this one. “Zeus, as has been told by truth itself—”[97]
1245	**DIONYSUS** ἀπολεῖ σ’· ἐρεῖ γάρ, “ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν.” τὸ ληκύθιον γὰρ τοῦτ’ ἐπὶ τοῖς προλόγοισί σου ὥσπερ τὰ σῦκ’ ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἔφυ. ἀλλ’ ἐς τὰ μέλη πρὸς τῶν θεῶν αὐτοῦ τραποῦ.	**DIONYSUS** He’ll finish you. He’ll say, “lost his little oil flask.” That little oil flask grows on your prologues like styes on the eyes. For gods’ sake, turn to his lyrics instead.
1249	**EURIPIDES** καὶ μὴν ἔχω γ’ οἷς αὐτὸν ἀποδείξω κακὸν / μελοποιὸν ὄντα καὶ ποιοῦντα ταὔτ’ ἀεί.	**EURIPIDES** All right, I’ve got material to prove he’s a bad lyric poet who keeps writing the same thing over and over.
1251	**CHORUS** τί ποτε πρᾶγμα γενήσεται; φροντίζειν γὰρ ἔγωγ’ ἔχω, τίν’ ἄρα μέμψιν ἐποίσει ἀνδρὶ τῷ πολὺ πλεῖστα δὴ καὶ κάλλιστα μέλη ποιήσαντι	**CHORUS** Whatever is going to happen? I can’t help wondering what fault he’ll find with the man who wrote by far the most lyrics, and the finest,

95 The opening of Euripides’ *Iphigenia among the Taurians*.
96 The opening of Euripides’ lost *Meleager*.
97 The opening of Euripides’ lost *Melanippe the Wise*.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	τῶν μέχρι νυνί. θαυμάζω γὰρ ἔγωγ' ὅπῃ μέμψεταί ποτε τοῦτον τὸν Βακχεῖον ἄνακτα, καὶ δέδοιχ' ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ.	of anyone to this day. I wonder how he can ever find fault with him, the lord of Bacchic song, and I'm afraid for him.
1261	**EURIPIDES** πάνυ γε μέλη θαυμαστά· δείξει δὴ τάχα. / εἰς ἓν γὰρ αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ μέλη ξυντεμῶ.	**EURIPIDES** Truly marvelous lyrics! That'll soon be clear. I'll chop all his lyrics down into one.
1263	**DIONYSUS** καὶ μὴν λογιοῦμαι ταῦτα τῶν ψήφων λαβών·	**DIONYSUS** All right, I'll take some of these pebbles and keep count.
1264	**EURIPIDES** Φθιῶτ' Ἀχιλλεῦ, τί ποτ' ἀνδροδάικτον ἀκούων ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν; Ἑρμᾶν μὲν πρόγονον τίομεν γένος οἱ περὶ λίμναν. ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν;	**EURIPIDES** Phthian Achilles, why, when you hear the man-slaying— iē!—pounding, do you not come to the rescue? Hermes we honor as our forefather, we the people of the lake. Iē, the pounding! Do you not come to the rescue?[98]
1268	**DIONYSUS** δύο σοὶ κόπω Αἰσχύλε τούτω.	**DIONYSUS** That's two poundings for you, Aeschylus.
1270	**EURIPIDES** κύδιστ' Ἀχαιῶν Ἀτρέως πολυκοίρανε μάνθανέ μου παῖ. / ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν;	**EURIPIDES** Most glorious of the Achaeans, wide-ruling son of Atreus, learn from me. / Iē, the pounding! Do you not come to the rescue?[99]
1272	**DIONYSUS** τρίτος ᾠσχύλε σοὶ κόπος οὗτος.	**DIONYSUS** That's pounding number three for you, Aeschylus.
1274	**EURIPIDES** εὐφαμεῖτε· μελισσονόμοι δόμον Ἀρτέμιδος πέλας οἴγειν. ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν; κύριός εἰμι θροεῖν ὅδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν. ἰὴ κόπον οὐ πελάθεις ἐπ' ἀρωγάν;	**EURIPIDES** Hush, keep holy silence! The bee-keeping priestesses are at hand to open the house of Artemis. Iē, the pounding! Do you not come to the rescue? I have the right to proclaim the auspicious power of the men on the road. Iē, the pounding! Do you not come to the rescue?[100]
1278	**DIONYSUS** ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ τὸ χρῆμα τῶν κόπων ὅσον. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἐς τὸ βαλανεῖον βούλομαι· ὑπὸ τῶν κόπων γὰρ τὼ νεφρὼ βουβωνιῶ.	**DIONYSUS** Zeus almighty, what a load of poundings! I want to go to the bathhouse. With all this pounding my kidneys are swelling up.
1281	**EURIPIDES** μὴ πρίν γ' ἂν ἀκούσῃς χἀτέραν στάσιν μελῶν / ἐκ τῶν κιθαρῳδικῶν νόμων εἰργασμένην.	**EURIPIDES** Not before you've heard another set of his lyrics, these made out of the melodies he sings to the lyre.
1283	**DIONYSUS** ἴθι δὴ πέραινε, καὶ κόπον μὴ προστίθει.	**DIONYSUS** Go on, then, get on with it—and don't add any pounding.

98 A patchwork of lines from Aeschylus' lost *Myrmidons* and *Soul-Raisers*, with the refrain tacked on; *kopos* means both the pounding of breasts in mourning and exhaustion.
99 Probably from Aeschylus' lost *Telephus*.
100 The first line comes from Aeschylus' lost *Priestesses*, the third from his *Agamemnon* (104).

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1285	**EURIPIDES** ὅπως Ἀχαιῶν δίθρονον κράτος, Ἑλλάδος ἥβας, τοφλαττοθρατ τοφλαττοθρατ, Σφίγγα δυσαμεριᾶν πρύτανιν κύνα, πέμπει, τοφλαττοθρατ τοφλαττοθρατ, σὺν δορὶ καὶ χερὶ πράκτορι θούριος ὄρνις, τοφλαττοθρατ τοφλαττοθρατ, κυρεῖν παρασχὼν ἰταμαῖς κυσὶν ἀεροφοίτοις, τοφλαττοθρατ τοφλαττοθρατ, τὸ συγκλινές τ' ἐπ' Αἴαντι, τοφλαττοθρατ τοφλαττοθρατ.	**EURIPIDES** How the twin-throned might of the Achaeans, the flower of Hellas— tophlattothrat tophlattothrat— sends the Sphinx, the hound that presides over days of doom— tophlattothrat tophlattothrat— with spear and avenging hand, the bird of onslaught— tophlattothrat tophlattothrat— granting it to meet the reckless hounds that roam the air— tophlattothrat tophlattothrat— and the leaning toward Ajax— tophlattothrat tophlattothrat.[101]
1296	**DIONYSUS** τί τὸ "φλαττοθρατ" τοῦτ' ἐστίν; ἐκ Μαραθῶνος ἢ / πόθεν συνέλεξας ἰμονιοστρόφου μέλη;	**DIONYSUS** What's this "phlattothrat"? Did you collect these rope-twisters' songs at Marathon, or where?
1298	**AESCHYLUS** ἀλλ' οὖν ἐγὼ μὲν ἐς τὸ καλὸν ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ ἤνεγκον αὖθ', ἵνα μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν Φρυνίχῳ λειμῶνα Μουσῶν ἱερὸν ὀφθείην δρέπων· οὗτος δ' ἀπὸ πάντων †μὲν φέρει, πορνιδίων†, σκολίων Μελήτου, Καρικῶν αὐλημάτων, θρήνων, χορειῶν. τάχα δὲ δηλωθήσεται. ἐνεγκάτω τις τὸ λύριον. καίτοι τί δεῖ λύρας ἐπὶ τούτων; ποῦ 'στιν ἡ τοῖς ὀστράκοις αὕτη κροτοῦσα; δεῦρο Μοῦσ' Εὐριπίδου, πρὸς ἥνπερ ἐπιτήδεια ταῦτ' ᾄδειν μέλη.	**AESCHYLUS** Well, I took them from a fine source and put them to fine use, so that nobody would see me picking flowers in the same holy meadow of the Muses as Phrynichus. But this man takes from everywhere: from cheap prostitutes' ditties, from Meletus' drinking songs, from Carian pipe tunes, from dirges, from dance songs. That'll soon be clear. Somebody bring me the lyre. And yet what do we need a lyre for, with this stuff? Where's that girl who clicks the castanets? Come here, Muse of Euripides, you're just the right accompanist for these songs.[102]
1308	**DIONYSUS** αὕτη ποθ' ἡ Μοῦσ' οὐκ ἐλεσβίαζεν, οὔ.	**DIONYSUS** This Muse never sucked anybody off Lesbos-style. Oh no, not her.[103]
1309	**AESCHYLUS** ἀλκυόνες, αἳ παρ' ἀενάοις θαλάσσης κύμασι στωμύλλετε, τέγγουσαι νοτίοις πτερῶν ῥανίσι χρόα δροσιζόμεναι· αἵ θ' ὑπωρόφιοι κατὰ γωνίας εἰειειειλίσσετε δακτύλοις φάλαγγες ἱστόπονα πηνίσματα, κερκίδος ἀοιδοῦ μελέτας, ἵν' ὁ φίλαυλος ἔπαλλε δελφὶς πρῴραις κυανεμβόλοις μαντεῖα καὶ σταδίους,	**AESCHYLUS** Halcyons, who by the ever-flowing waves of the sea chatter on, wetting your wings' skin with the damp drops, bedewed; and you, in corners under the roof, spiders, who whi-i-i-irl with your fingers the loom-laboring threads of the spindle, care of the singing shuttle, where the pipe-loving dolphin leapt by the dark-beaked prows,

101 Scraps of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (108–111), his lost *Sphinx* and *Thracian Women,* stitched together with "tophlattothrat," a nonsense imitation of lyre-strumming.
102 Meletus was a poet of drinking songs; Caria, in Asia Minor, was known for its mournful pipe music.
103 "To act like a woman of Lesbos" was Greek slang for fellatio; Lesbos was also the home of lyric song.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	οἰνάνθας γάνος ἀμπέλου, βότρυος ἕλικα παυσίπονον. περίβαλλ' ὦ τέκνον ὠλένας. ὁρᾷς τὸν πόδα τοῦτον;	oracles and racecourses, gleam of the vine's wine-flower, tendril of the grape that ends all toil. Throw your arms around me, child. Do you see this foot?[104]
1323	**DIONYSUS** ὁρῶ.	**DIONYSUS** I see it.
1324	**AESCHYLUS** τί δαί; τοῦτον ὁρᾷς;	**AESCHYLUS** What, then? Do you see this one?
	DIONYSUS ὁρῶ.	**DIONYSUS** I see it.
1325	**AESCHYLUS** τοιαυτὶ μέντοι σὺ ποιῶν τολμᾷς τἀμὰ μέλη ψέγειν, ἀνὰ τὸ δωδεκαμήχανον Κυρήνης μελοποιῶν; τὰ μὲν μέλη σου ταῦτα· βούλομαι δ' ἔτι τὸν τῶν μονῳδιῶν διεξελθεῖν τρόπον. ὦ νυκτὸς κελαινοφαὴς ὄρφνα, τίνα μοι δύστανον ὄνειρον πέμπεις ἐξ ἀφανοῦς, Ἀίδα πρόμολον, ψυχὰν ἄψυχον ἔχοντα, μελαίνας Νυκτὸς παῖδα, φρικώδη δεινὰν ὄψιν, μελανονεκυείμονα, φόνια φόνια δερκόμενον, μεγάλους ὄνυχας ἔχοντα. ἀλλά μοι ἀμφίπολοι λύχνον ἅψατε κάλπισί τ' ἐκ ποταμῶν δρόσον ἄρατε, θέρμετε δ' ὕδωρ, ὡς ἂν θεῖον ὄνειρον ἀποκλύσω. ἰὼ πόντιε δαῖμον, τοῦτ' ἐκεῖν'· ἰὼ ξύνοικοι, τάδε τέρα θεάσασθε. τὸν ἀλεκτρυόνα μου συναρπάσασα φρούδη Γλύκη.	**AESCHYLUS** And you write stuff like this, and dare to criticize my lyrics, you who compose your songs in the style of Cyrene's twelve positions? So much for your lyrics. But I want to go on and run through the style of your solo arias. Dark-gleaming gloom of night, what wretched dream do you send me from the unseen, Hades' messenger, with a soul that is soulless, child of black Night, a shuddering, dreadful sight, clad-in-black-corpse-robes, glaring murder, murder, with great talons? Come, my maids, light me a lamp, and draw dew from the rivers in pitchers, and heat water, so I may wash away the god-sent dream. Io, god of the sea, this is it! Io, my housemates, behold these portents: Glyce has snatched my rooster and gone.[105]
1344	Νύμφαι ὀρεσσίγονοι. ὦ Μανία ξύλλαβε. ἐγὼ δ' ἁ τάλαινα προσέχουσ' ἔτυχον ἐμαυτῆς ἔργοισι, λίνου μεστὸν ἄτρακτον εἰειειειλίσσουσα χεροῖν κλωστῆρα ποιοῦσ', ὅπως κνεφαῖος εἰς ἀγορὰν φέρουσ' ἀποδοίμαν·	Nymphs born in the mountains! Mania, grab her! And I, poor wretch, happened to be minding my own work, a spindle full of flax whi-i-i-irling in my hands, making thread, so that before dawn I might take it to market and sell it.

104 A parody of Euripides' lyrics, strung together from bits of several plays with his drawn-out notes; the "foot" is a metrical one, which Aeschylus says limps.
105 Cyrene was a famous courtesan, said to know twelve positions.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	ὁ δ' ἀνέπτατ' ἀνέπτατ' ἐς αἰθέρα κουφοτάταις πτερύγων ἀκμαῖς· ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχε' ἄχεα κατέλιπε, δάκρυα δάκρυά τ' ἀπ' ὀμμάτων ἔβαλον ἔβαλον ἁ τλάμων. ἀλλ' ὦ Κρῆτες, Ἴδας τέκνα, τὰ τόξα λαβόντες ἐπαμύνατε, τὰ κῶλά τ' ἀμπάλλετε κυκλούμενοι τὴν οἰκίαν.	But he flew up, flew up into the air on the lightest tips of his wings, and left me griefs, griefs, and tears, tears from my eyes I shed, I shed, poor me. But, Cretans, children of Ida, take up your bows and come to my aid, swing your limbs and surround the house.
1359	ἅμα δὲ Δίκτυννα παῖς Ἄρτεμις καλὰ τὰς κυνίσκας ἔχουσ' ἐλθέτω διὰ δόμων πανταχῇ, σὺ δ' ὦ Διὸς διπύρους ἀνέχουσα λαμπάδας ὀξυτάτας χεροῖν Ἑκάτα παράφηνον ἐς Γλύκης, ὅπως ἂν εἰσελθοῦσα φωράσω.	And with you let the maiden Dictynna, Artemis the fair, come with her little hounds through every part of the house; and you, daughter of Zeus, holding up twin-flamed torches, sharpest bright, in your hands, Hecate, light my way to Glyce's, so that I can go in and catch her in the act.
1364	**DIONYSUS** παύσασθον ἤδη τῶν μελῶν.	**DIONYSUS** That's enough songs, both of you.
	AESCHYLUS κἄμοιγ' ἅλις. ἐπὶ τὸν σταθμὸν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀγαγεῖν βούλομαι, ὅπερ ἐξελέγξει τὴν ποίησιν νῷν μόνον. τὸ γὰρ βάρος νὼ βασανιεῖ τῶν ῥημάτων.	**AESCHYLUS** Enough for me too. Now I want to bring him to the scales. That's the only thing that will really test our poetry: the weight of our words will put us to the proof.
1368	**DIONYSUS** ἴτε δεῦρό νυν, εἴπερ γε δεῖ καὶ τοῦτό με / ἀνδρῶν ποιητῶν τυροπωλῆσαι τέχνην.	**DIONYSUS** Come over here, then, if I really have to do this too—weigh out the art of poets like cheese.
1370	**CHORUS** ἐπίπονοί γ' οἱ δεξιοί. τόδε γὰρ ἕτερον αὖ τέρας νεοχμόν, ἀτοπίας πλέων, ὃ τίς ἂν ἐπενόησεν ἄλλος; … μὰ τὸν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδ' ἂν εἴ τις ἔλεγέ μοι τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων, ἐπιθόμην, ἀλλ' ᾠόμην ἂν αὐτὸν αὐτὰ ληρεῖν.	**CHORUS** Clever people do take pains. For here's another marvel, brand new, full of strangeness—/ who else would have thought it up? … By the—I wouldn't have believed it if any passer-by had told me; I'd have thought he was talking nonsense.
1378	**DIONYSUS** ἴθι δὴ παρίστασθον παρὰ τὼ πλάστιγγ',	**DIONYSUS** Come on, stand next to the scale pans,
	AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES ἰδού.	**AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES** There.
1379	**DIONYSUS** καὶ λαβομένω τὸ ῥῆμ' ἑκάτερος εἶπατον, / καὶ μὴ μεθῆσθον, πρὶν ἂν ἐγὼ σφῷν κοκκύσω.	**DIONYSUS** and each of you take hold and say your line, and don't let go until I say "cuckoo."
1381	**AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES** ἐχόμεθα.	**AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES** We've got hold.
	DIONYSUS τοὔπος νῦν λέγετον ἐς τὸν σταθμόν.	**DIONYSUS** Now speak your line into the scales.
1382	**EURIPIDES** "εἴθ' ὤφελ' Ἀργοῦς μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος."	**EURIPIDES** "Would that the Argo's hull had never winged its way—"[106]

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1383	**AESCHYLUS** "Σπερχειὲ ποταμὲ βουνόμοι τ' ἐπιστροφαί."	**AESCHYLUS** "River Spercheius, and pastures where the cattle roam."[107]
1384	**DIONYSUS** κόκκυ, μέθεσθε· καὶ πολύ γε κατωτέρω / χωρεῖ τὸ τοῦδε.	**DIONYSUS** Cuckoo! Let go. His side goes down a lot lower.
1385	**EURIPIDES** καὶ τί ποτ' ἐστὶ ταῖτιον;	**EURIPIDES** And what on earth is the reason?
1386	**DIONYSUS** ὅτι εἰσέθηκε ποταμόν, ἐριοπωλικῶς ὑγρὸν ποιήσας τοὖπος ὥσπερ τἄρια, σὺ δ' εἰσέθηκας τοὖπος ἐπτερωμένον.	**DIONYSUS** Because he put in a river. He made his line wet, the way wool sellers wet their wool, and you put in a line with wings.
1389	**EURIPIDES** ἀλλ' ἕτερον εἰπάτω τι κἀντιστησάτω.	**EURIPIDES** Well, let him say something else and match it against mine.
1390	**DIONYSUS** λάβεσθε τοίνυν αὖθις.	**DIONYSUS** Take hold again, then.
	AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES ἦν ἰδού.	**AESCHYLUS AND EURIPIDES** There.
	DIONYSUS λέγε.	**DIONYSUS** Speak.
1391	**EURIPIDES** "οὐκ ἔστι Πειθοῦς ἱερὸν ἄλλο πλὴν λόγος."	**EURIPIDES** "Persuasion has no temple other than the word."[108]
1392	**AESCHYLUS** "μόνος θεῶν γὰρ Θάνατος οὐ δώρων ἐρᾷ."	**AESCHYLUS** "For Death alone of gods has no desire for gifts."[109]
1393	**DIONYSUS** μέθεσθε μέθεσθε· καὶ τὸ τοῦδέ γ' αὖ ῥέπει· / θάνατον γὰρ εἰσέθηκε βαρύτατον κακόν.	**DIONYSUS** Let go, let go! His side's sinking again. He put in death, the heaviest evil there is.
1395	**EURIPIDES** ἐγὼ δὲ πειθώ γ' ἔπος ἄριστ' εἰρημένον.	**EURIPIDES** And I put in persuasion, a beautifully spoken word.
1396	**DIONYSUS** πειθὼ δὲ κοὖφόν ἐστι καὶ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον. ἀλλ' ἕτερον αὖ ζήτει τι τῶν βαρυστάθμων, ὅ τι σοι καθέλξει, καρτερόν τε καὶ μέγα.	**DIONYSUS** Persuasion is a lightweight thing with no sense in it. Look for something else, one of the heavyweights, that'll drag your side down for you, something strong and big.
1399	**EURIPIDES** φέρε ποῦ τοιοῦτον δῆτά μοὐστί; ποῦ;	**EURIPIDES** Come on, where have I got anything like that? Where?
	DIONYSUS φράσω· / "βέβληκ' Ἀχιλλεὺς δύο κύβω καὶ τέτταρα."	**DIONYSUS** I'll tell you: "Achilles has thrown two ones and a four."[110]
1401	λέγοιτ' ἄν, ὡς αὕτη 'στὶ λοιπὴ σφῷν στάσις.	Go ahead, speak. This is your last weigh-in.
1402	**EURIPIDES** "σιδηροβριθές τ' ἔλαβε δεξιᾷ ξύλον."	**EURIPIDES** "And in his right hand he took a club heavy with iron."[111]

106 The opening line of Euripides' *Medea*.
107 From Aeschylus' lost *Philoctetes*.
108 From Euripides' lost *Antigone*.
109 From Aeschylus' lost *Niobe*.
110 A line from Euripides' lost *Telephus*, about a poor throw of the dice.
111 From Euripides' lost *Meleager*.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1403	**AESCHYLUS** “ἐφ’ ἅρματος γὰρ ἅρμα καὶ νεκρῷ νεκρός.”	**AESCHYLUS** “For chariot on chariot lay, and corpse on corpse.”[112]
1404	**DIONYSUS** ἐξηπάτηκεν αὖ σὲ καὶ νῦν.	**DIONYSUS** He’s fooled you again this time.
	EURIPIDES τῷ τρόπῳ;	**EURIPIDES** How?
1405	**DIONYSUS** δύ’ ἅρματ’ εἰσέθηκε καὶ νεκρὼ δύο, / οὓς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιντ’ οὐδ’ ἑκατὸν Αἰγύπτιοι.	**DIONYSUS** He put in two chariots and two corpses. Not even a hundred Egyptian porters could lift that.
1407	**AESCHYLUS** καὶ μηκέτ’ ἔμοιγε κατ’ ἔπος, ἀλλ’ ἐς τὸν σταθμὸν αὐτὸς τὰ παιδί’ ἡ γυνὴ Κηφισοφῶν ἐμβὰς καθήσθω, συλλαβὼν τὰ βιβλία· ἐγὼ δὲ δύ’ ἔπη τῶν ἐμῶν ἐρῶ μόνον.	**AESCHYLUS** No more line by line for me. Let him get in the scales himself—him, his kids, his wife, Cephisophon—and sit there with all his books in his arms. I’ll say just two lines of mine.
1411	**DIONYSUS** ἄνδρες φίλοι, κἀγὼ μὲν αὐτοὺς οὐ κρινῶ. οὐ γὰρ δι’ ἔχθρας οὐδετέρῳ γενήσομαι. τὸν μὲν γὰρ ἡγοῦμαι σοφὸν τῷ δ’ ἥδομαι.	**DIONYSUS** My friends, I’m not going to judge between them. I don’t want to be on bad terms with either one. I think one is skilled, and the other I enjoy.
1414	**PLUTO** οὐδὲν ἄρα πράξεις ὧνπερ ἦλθες οὕνεκα;	**PLUTO** So you won’t achieve any of what you came here for?
1415	**DIONYSUS** ἐὰν δὲ κρίνω;	**DIONYSUS** And if I do judge?
	PLUTO τὸν ἕτερον λαβὼν ἄπει, / ὁπότερον ἂν κρίνῃς, ἵν’ ἔλθῃς μὴ μάτην.	**PLUTO** You’ll take one of them and go, whichever you pick, so you won’t have come for nothing.
1417	**DIONYSUS** εὐδαιμονοίης. φέρε πύθεσθέ μου ταδί. ἐγὼ κατῆλθον ἐπὶ ποιητήν. τοῦ χάριν; ἵν’ ἡ πόλις σωθεῖσα τοὺς χοροὺς ἄγῃ. ὁπότερος οὖν ἂν τῇ πόλει παραινέσῃ μᾶλλόν τι χρηστόν, τοῦτον ἄξειν μοι δοκῶ. πρῶτον μὲν οὖν περὶ Ἀλκιβιάδου τίν’ ἔχετον γνώμην ἑκάτερος; ἡ πόλις γὰρ δυστοκεῖ.	**DIONYSUS** Bless you. All right, listen to me, both of you. I came down here for a poet. What for? So the city can be saved and keep on holding its choral festivals. So whichever of you gives the city some better advice, he’s the one I think I’ll take. First, then, about Alcibiades: what’s your view, each of you? The city’s in a difficult labor over him.[113]
1424	**EURIPIDES** ἔχει δὲ περὶ αὐτοῦ τίνα γνώμην;	**EURIPIDES** And what view does the city have of him?
	DIONYSUS τίνα; ποθεῖ μέν, ἐχθαίρει δέ, βούλεται δ’ ἔχειν. ἀλλ’ ὅ τι νοεῖτον εἴπατον τούτου πέρι.	**DIONYSUS** What view? It longs for him, it hates him, and it wants to have him. But tell me what you two think about him.
1427	**EURIPIDES** μισῶ πολίτην, ὅστις ὠφελεῖν πάτραν βραδὺς πέφυκε μεγάλα δὲ βλάπτειν ταχύς, καὶ πόριμον αὑτῷ τῇ πόλει δ’ ἀμήχανον.	**EURIPIDES** I hate a citizen who is slow by nature to help his country and quick to do it great harm, resourceful for himself and useless to the city.

112 From Aeschylus’ lost *Glaucus of Potniae*.
113 Alcibiades, the brilliant and unscrupulous Athenian general, was in exile at the time (405 BC), and Athens was divided over recalling him.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1430	**DIONYSUS** εὖ γ' ὦ Πόσειδον· σὺ δὲ τίνα γνώμην ἔχεις;	**DIONYSUS** Well said, by Poseidon! And you, what's your view?
1431	**AESCHYLUS** οὐ χρὴ λέοντος σκύμνον ἐν πόλει τρέφειν, / ἢν δ' ἐκτραφῇ τις, τοῖς τρόποις ὑπηρετεῖν.	**AESCHYLUS** One shouldn't rear a lion cub in the city. But if it has been reared, one should go along with its ways.
1433	**DIONYSUS** νὴ τὸν Δία τὸν σωτῆρα δυσκρίτως γ' ἔχω· ὁ μὲν σοφῶς γὰρ εἶπεν, ὁ δ' ἕτερος σαφῶς. ἀλλ' ἔτι μίαν γνώμην ἑκάτερος εἴπατον περὶ τῆς πόλεως ἥντιν' ἔχετον σωτηρίαν.	**DIONYSUS** By Zeus the Savior, I find this hard to decide. One of them spoke skillfully, the other clearly. But each of you give me one more view: what plan do you have for saving the city?
1437	**EURIPIDES** εἴ τις πτερώσας Κλεόκριτον Κινησίᾳ, / αἴροιεν αὖραι πελαγίαν ὑπὲρ πλάκα.	**EURIPIDES** If someone gave Cleocritus Cinesias for wings, the breezes would lift him over the flat expanse of the sea.[114]
1439	**DIONYSUS** γέλοιον ἂν φαίνοιτο· νοῦν δ' ἔχει τίνα;	**DIONYSUS** That would look funny. But what's the sense of it?
1440	**EURIPIDES** εἰ ναυμαχοῖεν κᾆτ' ἔχοντες ὀξίδας ῥαίνοιεν ἐς τὰ βλέφαρα τῶν ἐναντίων. ἐγὼ μὲν οἶδα καὶ θέλω φράζειν.	**EURIPIDES** If there were a sea battle, they could have little cruets of vinegar and sprinkle it in the enemy's eyes. I know the answer, and I want to tell you.
1442	**DIONYSUS** λέγε.	**DIONYSUS** Tell me.
1443	**EURIPIDES** ὅταν τὰ νῦν ἄπιστα πίσθ' ἡγώμεθα, / τὰ δ' ὄντα πίστ' ἄπιστα.	**EURIPIDES** When we consider what is now untrusted trusty, and what is trusty untrusted.
1444	**DIONYSUS** πῶς; οὐ μανθάνω. / ἀμαθέστερόν πως εἰπὲ καὶ σαφέστερον.	**DIONYSUS** What? I don't follow. Say it somehow more stupidly and more clearly.
1446	**EURIPIDES** εἰ τῶν πολιτῶν οἷσι νῦν πιστεύομεν, τούτοις ἀπιστήσαιμεν, οἷς δ' οὐ χρώμεθα, τούτοισι χρησαίμεσθ', ἴσως σωθεῖμεν ἄν. εἰ νῦν γε δυστυχοῦμεν ἐν τούτοισι, πῶς τἀναντί' ἂν πράττοντες οὐ σῳζοίμεθ' ἄν;	**EURIPIDES** If we stopped trusting the citizens we trust now, and made use of the ones we don't use, maybe we'd be saved. If we're doing badly with things as they are, then surely by doing the opposite we'd be saved?
1451	**DIONYSUS** εὖ γ' ὦ Παλάμηδες, ὦ σοφωτάτη φύσις. / ταυτὶ πότερ' αὐτὸς ηὗρες ἢ Κηφισοφῶν;	**DIONYSUS** Well done, Palamedes, you most ingenious of creatures! Did you come up with that yourself, or was it Cephisophon?[115]
1453	**EURIPIDES** ἐγὼ μόνος· τὰς δ' ὀξίδας Κηφισοφῶν. / τί δαὶ σύ; τί λέγεις;	**EURIPIDES** All by myself. The vinegar cruets were Cephisophon's. What about you? What do you say?
1454	**AESCHYLUS** τὴν πόλιν νῦν μοι φράσον / πρῶτον τίσι χρῆται· πότερα τοῖς χρηστοῖς;	**AESCHYLUS** First tell me who the city makes use of now. The good, decent men?
1455	**DIONYSUS** πόθεν; / μισεῖ κάκιστα.	**DIONYSUS** Where would it get them? It hates them like poison.

114 Cleocritus was apparently a big, ungainly man; Cinesias was famously skinny.
115 Palamedes, the legendary inventor, was the hero of a play by Euripides.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1456	**AESCHYLUS** τοῖς πονηροῖς δ' ἥδεται;	**AESCHYLUS** And it enjoys the scoundrels?
1457	**DIONYSUS** οὐ δῆτ' ἐκείνη γ', ἀλλὰ χρῆται πρὸς βίαν.	**DIONYSUS** Not it, no. But it uses them because it has to.
1458	**AESCHYLUS** πῶς οὖν τις ἂν σώσειε τοιαύτην πόλιν, / ᾗ μήτε χλαῖνα μήτε σισύρα συμφέρει;	**AESCHYLUS** Then how could anyone save a city like that, where neither a fine cloak nor a goat-hair rag will do?
1460	**DIONYSUS** εὕρισκε νὴ Δί', εἴπερ ἀναδύσει πάλιν.	**DIONYSUS** Find a way, by Zeus, if you're going to rise up again.
1461	**AESCHYLUS** ἐκεῖ φράσαιμ' ἄν· ἐνθαδὶ δ' οὐ βούλομαι.	**AESCHYLUS** Up there I'd tell you. Down here I don't want to.
1462	**DIONYSUS** μὴ δῆτα σύ γ', ἀλλ' ἐνθένδ' ἀνίει τἀγαθά.	**DIONYSUS** No, don't do that. Send the good things up from down here.
1463	**AESCHYLUS** τὴν γῆν ὅταν νομίσωσι τὴν τῶν πολεμίων εἶναι σφετέραν, τὴν δὲ σφετέραν τῶν πολεμίων, πόρον δὲ τὰς ναῦς ἀπορίαν δὲ τὸν πόρον.	**AESCHYLUS** When they consider the enemy's land their own, and their own the enemy's, and the ships their resources, and their resources no resource at all.[116]
1466	**DIONYSUS** εὖ, πλήν γ' ὁ δικαστὴς αὐτὰ καταπίνει μόνος.	**DIONYSUS** Good—except that the juror gulps it all down by himself.[117]
1467	**PLUTO** κρίνοις ἄν.	**PLUTO** You may judge now.
	DIONYSUS αὕτη σφῷν κρίσις γενήσεται· / αἱρήσομαι γὰρ ὅνπερ ἡ ψυχὴ θέλει.	**DIONYSUS** This will be my judgment between you: I'll choose the one my soul wants.
1469	**EURIPIDES** μεμνημένος νυν τῶν θεῶν οὓς ὤμοσας / ἦ μὴν ἀπάξειν μ' οἴκαδ', αἱροῦ τοὺς φίλους.	**EURIPIDES** Remember the gods you swore by, that you'd take me back home, and choose your friends.
1471	**DIONYSUS** "ἡ γλῶττ' ὀμώμοκ'," Αἰσχύλον δ' αἱρήσομαι.	**DIONYSUS** "My tongue has sworn"—but I'll choose Aeschylus.[118]
1472	**EURIPIDES** τί δέδρακας ὦ μιαρώτατ' ἀνθρώπων;	**EURIPIDES** What have you done, you filthiest of men?
	DIONYSUS ἐγώ; / ἔκρινα νικᾶν Αἰσχύλον. τιὴ γὰρ οὔ;	**DIONYSUS** Me? I judged Aeschylus the winner. Why shouldn't I?
1474	**EURIPIDES** αἴσχιστον ἔργον προσβλέπεις μ' εἰργασμένος;	**EURIPIDES** After doing the most shameful deed, you can look me in the face?
1475	**DIONYSUS** τί δ' αἰσχρόν, ἢν μὴ τοῖς θεωμένοις δοκῇ;	**DIONYSUS** "What's shameful, if it doesn't seem so" to the audience?[119]

116 The strategy Pericles had urged at the start of the war: abandon the countryside to the invaders, raid the enemy's land by sea, and rely on the fleet.
117 The pay for Athens' jurors used up public revenue that might have gone to the fleet.
118 Euripides' own line from *Hippolytus*, turned against him.
119 Parodying a notorious line from Euripides' lost *Aeolus*: "What's shameful, if it doesn't seem so to those who do it?"

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1476	**EURIPIDES** ὦ σχέτλιε περιόψει με δὴ τεθνηκότα;	**EURIPIDES** You heartless wretch, will you really just leave me here dead?
1477	**DIONYSUS** τίς οἶδεν εἰ τὸ ζῆν μέν ἐστι κατθανεῖν, / τὸ πνεῖν δὲ δειπνεῖν, τὸ δὲ καθεύδειν κώδιον;	**DIONYSUS** "Who knows if living is being dead," and breathing is dining, and sleeping is a sheepskin?[120]
1479	**PLUTO** χωρεῖτε τοίνυν ὦ Διόνυσ' εἴσω.	**PLUTO** Come inside, then, Dionysus, the two of you.
	DIONYSUS τί δαί;	**DIONYSUS** What for?
1480	**PLUTO** ἵνα ξενίσω 'γὼ σφὼ πρὶν ἀποπλεῖν.	**PLUTO** So I can entertain you both before you sail.
	DIONYSUS εὖ λέγεις / νὴ τὸν Δί'· οὐ γὰρ ἄχθομαι τῷ πράγματι.	**DIONYSUS** Good idea, by Zeus. I don't mind that one bit.

SECOND EPISODE

The chorus praises Aeschylus' good sense and mocks idle chatter with Socrates.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1482	**CHORUS** μακάριός γ' ἀνὴρ ἔχων ξύνεσιν ἠκριβωμένην. πάρα δὲ πολλοῖσιν μαθεῖν. ὅδε γὰρ εὖ φρονεῖν δοκήσας πάλιν ἄπεισιν οἴκαδ' αὖ, ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ μὲν τοῖς πολίταις, ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ δὲ τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ξυγγενέσι τε καὶ φίλοισι, διὰ τὸ συνετὸς εἶναι.	**CHORUS** Blessed is the man with a finely honed intelligence. There are many ways to learn this. Here is a man who showed good sense, and now he goes back home again, for the good of the citizens, for the good of his own family and friends, because he has intelligence.
1491	χαρίεν οὖν μὴ Σωκράτει παρακαθήμενον λαλεῖν, ἀποβαλόντα μουσικὴν τά τε μέγιστα παραλιπόντα τῆς τραγῳδικῆς τέχνης. τὸ δ' ἐπὶ σεμνοῖσιν λόγοισι καὶ σκαριφησμοῖσι λήρων διατριβὴν ἀργὸν ποιεῖσθαι, παραφρονοῦντος ἀνδρός.	The smart thing, then, is not to sit beside Socrates chattering, throwing away the art of the Muses and leaving out the most important things in the tragic art. But to waste your time in idleness on pompous talk and hair-splitting drivel is the mark of a man out of his mind.

EXODOS

Pluto sends Aeschylus back to save Athens, and Aeschylus leaves his chair to Sophocles.

	GREEK	ENGLISH
1500	**PLUTO** ἄγε δὴ χαίρων Αἰσχύλε χώρει, καὶ σῷζε πόλιν τὴν ἡμετέραν γνώμαις ἀγαθαῖς καὶ παίδευσον	**PLUTO** Go on, then, Aeschylus, go with joy, and save our city with good advice, and educate the fools—there are plenty of them. And take this and

120 Parodying Euripides' line "Who knows if living is being dead, and being dead is living?"; Dionysus adds a jingle on *pnein* (breathe) and *deipnein* (dine).

	GREEK	ENGLISH
	τοὺς ἀνοήτους· πολλοὶ δ' εἰσίν· καὶ δὸς τουτὶ Κλεοφῶντι φέρων καὶ τουτὶ τοῖσι πορισταῖς Μύρμηκί θ' ὁμοῦ καὶ Νικομάχῳ, τόδε δ' Ἀρχενόμῳ· καὶ φράζ' αὐτοῖς ταχέως ἥκειν ὡς ἐμὲ δευρὶ καὶ μὴ μέλλειν· κἂν μὴ ταχέως ἥκωσιν, ἐγὼ νὴ τὸν Ἀπόλλω στίξας αὐτοὺς καὶ συμποδίσας μετ' Ἀδειμάντου τοῦ Λευκολόφου κατὰ γῆς ταχέως ἀποπέμψω.	give it to Cleophon, and this to the revenue officials, Myrmex and Nicomachus both, and this to Archenomus. And tell them to come down here to me quickly and not dawdle. And if they don't come quickly, by Apollo, I'll brand them and shackle their feet together, and send them down under the earth fast, along with Adeimantus, son of Leucolophus.[121]
1515	**AESCHYLUS** ταῦτα ποιήσω· σὺ δὲ τὸν θᾶκον τὸν ἐμὸν παράδος Σοφοκλεῖ τηρεῖν καὶ διασῴζειν, ἢν ἄρ' ἐγώ ποτε δεῦρ' ἀφίκωμαι. τοῦτον γὰρ ἐγὼ σοφίᾳ κρίνω δεύτερον εἶναι. μέμνησο δ' ὅπως ὁ πανοῦργος ἀνὴρ καὶ ψευδολόγος καὶ βωμολόχος μηδέποτ' ἐς τὸν θᾶκον τὸν ἐμὸν μηδ' ἄκων ἐγκαθεδεῖται.	**AESCHYLUS** I'll do it. And you, hand my chair over to Sophocles to guard and keep safe for me, in case I ever come back here. Because in skill I judge him second. And make sure that rascal, that liar and buffoon, never sits in my chair, not even by accident.[122]
1524	**PLUTO** φαίνετε τοίνυν ὑμεῖς τούτῳ λαμπάδας ἱεράς, χἅμα προπέμπετε τοῖσιν τούτου τοῦτον μέλεσιν καὶ μολπαῖσιν κελαδοῦντες.	**PLUTO** Then all of you, show the holy torches for him, and escort him on his way, celebrating him with his own songs and dances.
1528	**CHORUS** πρῶτα μὲν εὐοδίαν ἀγαθὴν ἀπιόντι ποιητῇ ἐς φάος ὀρνυμένῳ δότε δαίμονες οἱ κατὰ γαίας, τῇ δὲ πόλει μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν ἀγαθὰς ἐπινοίας. πάγχυ γὰρ ἐκ μεγάλων ἀχέων παυσαίμεθ' ἂν οὕτως ἀργαλέων τ' ἐν ὅπλοις ξυνόδων. Κλεοφῶν δὲ μαχέσθω κἄλλος ὁ βουλόμενος τούτων πατρίοις ἐν ἀρούραις.	**CHORUS** First, grant a good journey to the poet as he goes, rising up to the light, you powers beneath the earth, and grant the city good ideas that bring great good. For so we'd be wholly done with great griefs and painful clashes in arms. Let Cleophon fight, and any other of them who wants, in his ancestral fields.[123]

121 Pluto hands over instruments of suicide (a sword, a noose, poison); Nicomachus was revising the city's laws, Adeimantus was a general, and Myrmex and Archenomus are otherwise unknown.
122 Sophocles had died in 406 BC, shortly before the play was produced.
123 Cleophon's mother was said to be Thracian, so his "ancestral fields" are in Thrace.