Aristophanes. Aves

The birds; ed. by
W.C. Green.
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THE

BIRDS OF ARISTOPHANES,

LITERALLY TRANSLATED,

WITH NOTES.

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INTRODUCTION.

The Birds was exhibited at the great Dionysia in B.c. 414, in the year of the second campaign in Sicily. Siévern, a learned German, labours to prove that it is throughout meant to discourage the Sicilian expedition and to ridicule it. Though there are of course many personal hits and references to history, and Peisthetaerus is in some respects meant for Alcibiades, the allegory does not seem consistent, for the scheme succeeds, and so can hardly be meant to discourage what it represents. The Birds gained the second prize.

The following is a sketch of the play.

Two Athenians weary of the litigiousness of their countrymen determine to seek a new home. They take a raven and jackdaw, who are to shew them the way to Tereus or Epops, the hoopoe. After some trouble they find a sort of door in the rock, out of which Trochilus the hoopoe's servant comes. He fetches out his master: they explain their errand, tell him the free and easy snug and idle kind of place they want. The hoopoe suggests one or two places which are rejected. Then it suddenly strikes Peisthetaerus that to found a city among the birds will be the best plan. This he explains to Epops, who is delighted, and with the help of the nightingale summons the birds from their various haunts. After a time they come trooping in, and are named by Epops. But on seeing the men they are greatly alarmed: they reproach Epops, and prepare to
attack the two adventurers, who prepare for defence. Epops however interferes, and so far pacifies them that they consent to hear what he has to say for the men, and then to hear the plan fully from Peisthetaerus himself. A truce is made: Peisthetaerus shows the birds that they were of old the sovereign rulers of the world, establishing this by many curious and comical proofs. This sovereignty Zeus and the gods have unjustly taken away, and the birds are now outraged and persecuted. The birds are easily convinced, and entrust themselves to Peisthetaerus, that they may recover their sovereignty. He advises that they shall concentrate themselves in one large city in the air, and refuse passage to the gods and to the savour of sacrifices. They shall explain to men that they the birds are the true deities. And Peisthetaerus explains what advantages they can hold out to men to tempt them to change to an easier and cheaper religion.

The birds are charmed: Peisthetaerus is to be the head and contriver, they will give the work. Epops takes Peisthetaerus and Euelpides into his nest to prepare them for the task by a good meal, and to give them a root by eating which they will become winged. The nightingale is left to help the Chorus in the Parabasis, or Address to the Audience.

The first or anapaestic part of this gives a legendary account of the beginning of the world, proving the antiquity of the birds: also their usefulness in all matters of human life. The second part is a short lyric strophe, an address to the Muse of the Wood. The third, of trochaics, invites men to come and join them, with some special and personal illustrations of the advantages. Then comes a lyric antistrophe describing the effects of the swan's melody: and a second piece of trochaics in praise of bird-life.

The two men with Epops return: both are now winged. After some search for a name, they fix on Nephelococcygia, or
Cloud-cuckoo-land. Euelpides is sent to look after the building of the city; Peisthetaerus, with the Chorus and a priest, performs solemn sacrifices to the birds. Meanwhile a poet comes in, having found out the new city. After some talk and scraps of nonsensical dithyrambic songs he is presented with a cloak and tunic, and so they are rid of him. Then comes an oracle-monger, wanting to get something, but his oracles are ridiculed, and he is beaten, and driven away. Meton the geometrician is treated much in the same way; as is also an Episcopus, or visiting inspector. A seller of decrees or statutes is also driven off. Peisthetaerus, and those with him, go in to finish the sacrifice, leaving the Chorus.

They in a second parabasis of two lyric and two trochaic systems again set forth the superiority of birds and their practical usefulness. Peisthetaerus re-enters. A messenger from the wall describes how a magnificent city has arisen, all the birds cleverly taking their part in the building. While they are talking, another messenger comes and reports the intrusion within the city of some deity. Measures are taken to apprehend the offender: who is soon found. It turns out to be Iris: she is quite mystified at what they tell her, of the birds being now the gods, and threatens them with the wrath of Zeus. At this Peisthetaerus laughs, retorts the threats against Zeus, and Iris is sent away.

A herald from mortals brings word that they are delighted, and have decreed honours to Peisthetaerus. He also describes the change and improvement in mortals' life: reports that they are all eager for bird life, and are coming up there to be furnished with wings.

Peisthetaerus accordingly provides feathers. The first candidate is a young man who has heard that maltreating and killing one's father is rather a virtue in birds. He finds however, that there are laws compelling the young to support
their parents. He is disappointed; but finally he is fitted out as a cock and sent to exercise his pugnacity on his country's foes in Thrace.

Next come Cinesias a dithyrambic poet. He wants wings that he may take still higher flights of song. He is beaten with wings, and retires. An informer wants wings to help him in his trade; which he explains. Being in vain exhorted to change to an honester occupation, he is at last driven off. Peisthetaerus then takes himself and his feathers away.

The Chorus here interpose a song describing some marvels which they have seen in their travels. Cleonymus a big coward, and Orestes a pick-pocket are satirized.

Peisthetaerus re-appears, and Prometheus comes running in to report how well the plan has succeeded, how the gods are being starved out, and how an embassy about terms is coming from them to the birds. He advises them to stand out for recovering the sovereignty.

After a short interlude by the Chorus, describing a mysterious adventure meant to ridicule Socrates and Chaerephon, the ambassadors appear. They are Poseidon, Hercules, and Triballus, a representative of the barbarian gods. Poseidon has much ado to keep his two colleagues in order. Peisthetaerus, occupied in cookery, will not attend to them for some time; when he does, he demands the restoration of the sovereignty. Hercules smelling the roast, would at once comply, and Peisthetaerus easily persuades him that this will be best for the gods. So Hercules votes to do so, and makes out that Triballus also consents. Poseidon is forced to submit, and this point is carried. Then Peisthetaerus makes the further demand of Basilea as wife. This Poseidon flatly refuses: and points out to Hercules that he will lose by Zeus losing his kingdom and property. But Peisthetaerus has a counter-argument to shew that he has nothing to lose,
and promises him all manner of good living with the birds. Hercules therefore votes for both concessions. Triballus does the same. Poseidon votes against it: but it is settled by the majority. They all depart for heaven to arrange the matter.

After another interlude of the Chorus, directed at informers and rhetoricians, a messenger reports the approach of the bride and bridegroom in great splendour, calling upon the Chorus to welcome them with song. This they do, and Peisthetaerus, birds, and all, go out to celebrate the wedding feast.
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Peisthetærus
Euelpides
Citizens of Athens.
Trochilus, servant of Epops.
Epops (Hoopoe), formerly Tereus king of Daulis.
Chorus of Birds.
A Priest.
A Poet.
An Oracle-seller.
Meton, the Geometrician.
A Visitor, or political inspector.
A Decree-seller.
Iris.
A Father-beater.
Cinesias.
An Informer.
Prometheus.
Poseidon.
Hercules.
Triballus, a barbarian god.
Heralds, Messengers, Servants.
Basilea, a mute person.
THE BIRDS.

Peisthetaerus, with a raven: Eulpidæ with a jackdaw: in a wild place.

Eulpidæ. (to the jackdaw). Do you bid [me go] the straight [way], where the tree appears?

Peisthetaerus. (to the raven). Plague take you! (To Eulpidæ) And this [raven] on the other hand croaks [for me to go] back.

Euel. Why, O wretched fellow, do we roam up and down? We shall perish fruitlessly zigzagging our way [thus].

Peisth. The idea that I obeying a raven, miserable man, should compass more than a thousand stadia of travel!

Euel. The idea that I obeying a jackdaw, ill-fated man, should wear the nails off my toes!

Peisth. But not even, where on earth we are, do I any longer know.

Euel. From hence could you anywhere find out your country?

Peisth. Not even, by Zeus, could Excecestides\(^3\) do so from hence.

Euel. Woe is me!

Peisth. This [woeful] road, do you take, my friend: [I will not].

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1. "May you burst." 2nd aor. opt. pass. of διαρρήγγυμι.

2. Join τὸ περελθεῖν, τὸ ἀποσποδῆσαι. Infinitive used as an exclamation.

3. A foreigner wishing to make himself out an Athenian: he, if any one, would therefore find his way to Athens.
EuEL. Truly a shameful trick he served us both, he of the bird-market,¹ the poulterer Philocrates, crazy man; who said that these two would point out to us from among the birds Tereus, the hoopoe, who became a bird: and he sold us this son of Tharreleides, the jackdaw, for an obol, and this raven for a three-obol-piece. But they seemingly were nothing but bite.² And now (to his jackdaw) why gape you? is it [somewhere] over the rocks whither you will yet lead us? for there is not any road here.

Peisth. No, by Zeus, here is not even a footpath anywhere.

EuEL. But what does the raven say about the way?

Peisth. It doesn't croak the same, by Zeus, now as it did then.

EuEL. What then does it say about the way?

Peisth. What else except that it says, while biting, that it will eat off my fingers?

EuEL. Is't not shameful then that we, wanting to go to the crows,³ and prepared, should then not be able to find the way? For we, good sirs, who are present at our words, suffer a disease the opposite to [that of] the Sacian.⁴ For he not being a citizen forces himself in: but we by tribe and birth honourable, citizens among citizens, no man scaring us away, [yet] flew up from our country with both feet;⁵ not indeed hating that city itself, [as asserting] that it is not great by nature, and prosperous, and public for all to pay away money in. For the tree-cricket indeed for one month or two sing upon the fig-branches, but the Athenians always sing upon the law-benches all their life. Therefore we are trudging on this our travel, and, bearing basket and pot and myrtle boughs, we wander seeking an untroubled place, where settling down

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1. "From the birds."
2. Or, if ἔστην be read, "they knew nothing but to bite." ἔστην = ἔδειθην from ἔδοξα.
3. That is "the dogs, the deuce, etc."
4. Sacian = Thracian. It is applied as a term of contempt to the tragic poet Acestor.
5. "With all the speed we might."
we may pass our time. And our journey is to Tereus, the hoopoe, we wanting to learn of him if anywhere, where he has flown, he has seen such a city.

Peisth. My friend.

Eucl. What is it?

Peisth. My raven for some time has been pointing somewhat upwards.

Eucl. And this jackdaw here gapes upwards, as if pointing out something to me: and it is not possible that there are not birds there. But we shall soon know, if we make a noise.

Peisth. But know you what to do? strike the rock with your leg.

Eucl. Yes, and you with your [hollow] head that there may be double the noise.

Peisth. But at all events, having taken a stone, knock with it.

Eucl. Certainly, if you like. (Takes a stone and knocks) Boy, boy!

Peisth. What are you saying, my friend? do you call the hoopoe 'boy'? Ought'n't you instead of boy to call 'Epopoi'?

Eucl. Epopoi! Will you then make me knock again? Epopoi!:

Out comes Trochilus, 'the runner bird,' or sand-piper.

Troch. Who are these? Who is it that calls for the master.

Eucl. Apollo the averter! what a yawning gape!

Troch. O me wretched! these two here are bird-catchers.

Eucl. (astonished at his thin piping voice) So terrible a creature, and not have a finer voice?

Troch. You shall perish.

1. "Do, do you know what?"—a combination of imperative and interrogative.

2. "Epops" is the Greek for hoopoe: and 'epopoi' sounds something like πατε, πατε.

3. The infinitive used as an exclamation. Connect this line with Euelpides' expression of terror at the bird's wide mouth. I do not see that the other explanations given are more probable than this. καλλιον λέγειν 'to speak better.'
Euel. But we are not men.
Troch. What then.
Euel. I am the Green-funk, a Libyan bird. But what creature are you, in the name of the gods?
Troch. A slave bird I.
Euel. Were you conquered by any cock?
Troch. No, but when my master became a hoopoe, then he prayed for me to become a bird, that he might have an attendant and servant.
Euel. Why, does a bird too want a servant?
Troch. Yes, this bird does, inasmuch as, I suppose, he was a man before. When he wishes to eat Phaleric anchovies, I run for anchovies, having taken the dish. And [suppose] he wants pea-soup, and there's need of a ladle and pot; I run for a ladle.
Euel. A runner bird this. Know you then what to do, Mr. Runner? call us your master.
Troch. But, by Zeus, he's just gone to sleep, having eaten myrtle-berries and some ants.
Euel. Nevertheless wake him up.
Troch. I know for certain that he'll be angry, but for the sake of you both I will wake him up. (He goes in to rouse his master.)
Peisth. (to Trochilus when gone.) May you perish miserably! how you killed me with fear.
Euel. O me ill-fated one! and my jackdaw is gone,1 owing to my fear.
Peisth. O you most cowardly creature, did you in fear let go your jackdaw?
Euel. Tell me, did you not let go your raven when you fell down?
Peisth. No by Zeus, not I.
Euel. Why, where is it?
Peisth. It has flown away.

1. μοιχεται is for μοι οἰχεται: but the μοι is to be taken with κολοιδος.
Euel. Then you did not let it go. O good sir, how valiant you are!

(Eops or Hoopoe heard at the door.)

Eops. Open the wood, that I may at length come out.

Euel. O Hercules, what ever creature is this? What is the plumage? what the fashion of the triple-crest?

Eops. Who are they that seek me?

Euel. The twelve gods seem to afflict you.¹

Eops. Are you mocking me, looking at my plumage? [nay do not so] for I was once a man, O strangers.

Euel. We're not scornfully laughing at you.

Eops. At what then?

Peisth. Your beak seems to us laughable.

Eops. Thus indeed does Sophocles in his tragedies misuse me Tereus.

Euel. Why, are you Tereus? Are you a bird or a peacock?

Eops. A bird I.

Euel. And then where are your feathers?

Eops. They have dropped off.

Euel. From some disease?

Eops. No, but in winter all birds drop their feathers, and then again we grow others. But tell me, who are you two?

Euel. We two? we're mortals.

Eops. But of what land by birth?

Euel. [Of the land] whence the beautiful triremes [are].

Eops. Are you law-court-men?²

Euel. No, but of the other style, anti-law-court-men.

Eops. Why, is that seed sown there?

Euel. You can, by seeking, get a little of it from the country.

¹. 'You seem as if you were afflicted by all the chief gods of heaven: you're in such a sorry plight.' He was badly feathered, as a caricature of Tereus in Sophocles' play. He attributes it, however, to moult.²

². 'Heliasts' members of the Helica. 'Apeliasts' a word coined to mean the opposite: haters of lawsuits. Eops is surprised that there are any such at Athens: to which Euelpides answers that there are a few to be found in the country, though the towns-people are so litigious.
Eops. And wanting what matter, pray, are you come here?

Euel. Wishing to converse with you.

Eops. About what?

Euel. Because, firstly, you were a man once, as we are; and you owed money once, as we do; and you rejoiced in not paying it once, as we do; then again, having changed to the nature of birds, you flew over both land and sea round about; and you have all the wisdom that man has, and that bird has. On this account therefore we have come hither to you as suppliants, if [haply] you could tell us of some [snug] fleecy city, soft to lie in, like a blanket.

Eops. Then do you seek a city greater than the Cranaan [Athens]?

Euel. Not at all a greater one, but one more congenial to us.

Eops. You are plainly seeking to be under an aristocracy.

Euel. I [seeking that]! By no means: I even abominate [Aristocrates] the son of Scellias.

Eops. What kind of city then would ye most gladly dwell in?

Euel. Where the greatest troubles would be such as this: let some one of my friends coming early to my door say this: In the name of Olympian Zeus, [see] that you be present for me, both you and your children, spruce and clean,¹ early to morrow: for I am going to hold a wedding feast. And do not refuse:² else never come to me then when I am in trouble.

Eops. By Zeus, very wretched troubles you wish for! (ironical). But there is a prosperous city, such as you speak of, by the Red Sea.

Euel. O me! by no means [speak] to us [of one] by the sea, where some-fine-morning the Salaminian trireme will pop up bringing a summoner. But have you a Greek city to tell us of?

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1. "Having bathed."
2. "Do otherwise than I ask." The next sentence is an exact inversion of what would be expected.
Epops. Why do you not go and settle in Elean Lepreum?
Euel. Because, by the gods, as far as [I can] not having seen it, I abominate Lepreum owing to Melanthius.¹

Epops. But there are others, Opuntians of Locris, where you ought to dwell.
Euel. Nay, I would not become Opuntius for a talent of gold. But pray what is this life among the birds? for you know it exactly.

Epops. Not unpleasant in the passing: where, firstly, you must live without purse.
Euel. Much that is counterfeit you at once remove from life [if money is gone].

Epops. And we feed in gardens on white sesame and myrtle-berries and poppy-seed and mint.
Euel. You then live the life of bridegrooms.

Peisth. Ah! ah! Truly I see a mighty plan [possible] among the race of birds, and a power which could be established, if you would obey me.

Epops. In what should we obey you?
Peisth. In what obey me? Why, first, do not fly about everywhere open-mouthed: for this employment is discreditable. For example, there [on earth] among us if one asks about the flutterers, Who is this fellow? Teleas will say this: The man is an unstable fluttering bird, uncertain, never at all remaining in the same place.

Epops. By Dionysus you blame us justly in this. What then shall we do?
Peisth. Found one city.

Epops. But what kind of a city could we birds found?
Peisth. [Say you] really [so]? O you who have spoken a most foolish word, look down.

¹ A bad poet: said to live at Lepreum—Lepreum and the Opuntians were probably out-of-the-way places. The latter place is rejected because of Opuntius, a one-eyed man.
EOPS. Well, I am looking.
PEISTH. Now look up.
EOPS. I am looking.
PEISTH. Turn your neck round.
EOPS. By Zeus, but shall I gain anything if I twist my neck awry?
PEISTH. Do you see anything?
EOPS. Yes, the clouds and the heavens.
PEISTH. Is not this then surely the pole of birds?¹
EOPS. Pole? in what way?
PEISTH. As if you were to say 'place.' But because this turns round and goes through [the centre of] all things, therefore it is called now 'pole.' And if you once colonize and fortify this, from this pole it will come to be called 'polity:' so that you will rule men like locusts, and destroy the gods by a Melian² famine.
EOPS. How?
PEISTH. Surely [you can see that] the air is in the middle between [them and] earth. Then just as we, if we wish to go to Pytho, ask the Boeotians for a passage, so, when men sacrifice to the gods, if the gods do not pay a tribute to you, you will not let pass the savoury steam of the thighs through the foreign city³ and empty space.
EOPS. Hurrah! Hurrah! By earth, by snares, by meshes, by nets! Never yet did I hear a neater device. So that I will with you found the city, if it seem good also to the other birds.
PEISTH. Who then will expound the matter to them?
EOPS. You. For I have taught them, being barbarians before that, language, I having been long time with them.
PEISTH. How, pray will you call them together?

¹ He puns on πόλος 'pole or axis, vault of heaven,' πολείσθαι 'to turn about, revolve,' and πόλις 'polity, state, city.'
² The Melians were reduced by the Athenians in the Peloponnesian war.
³ Foreign to the gods, not belonging to them.
Eops. Easily. For having straightway stepped this way into the grove, and then having roused up my Nightingale, we will call them: and they if they hear the voice of us both, they will hasten [hither] at a run.

Peisth. O you dearest of birds don't stand still then: but I beseech you, come, step into the grove as quickly as possible and rouse up the nightingale.

Epops. Come, my partner, cease from sleep, and utter the strains of sacred hymns, which thou chantest through thy divine mouth, trilling mine and thy much-bewept Itys with the liquid tones of thy loud throat. Clear rises through the leafy yew the sound [even] to the throne of Zeus: where golden-haired Phoebus hearing it, striking-responsive to thy plaints his ivory-inlaid lyre, starts the dances of the gods: and through immortal mouths rises at once in harmonious chorus the divine shout of the blessed ones.

(A flute heard.)

Peisth. O king Zeus, the voice of the bird! How it be-honeyed the whole grove.

Euel. My friend!

Peisth. What is it?

Euel. Won't you be silent?

Peisth. Why, pray?

Peisth. The hoopoe is again preparing to make music.

Epops. Epopopopopopopopopopoi! Io-io, ito ito, ito ito. Let each come hither of my feathered-kin. All of you that feed on the well-sown lands of the husbandmen, ye myriad tribes of barley-eaters, and races of seed-peckers, quickly flying, uttering a soft note. And all that in the furrow frequently twitter round the clod thus pipingly with glad voice Tio-tio-tio-tio-tio-tio-tio. And all of you that in gardens upon the branches of ivy find your food, and those in the mountains, and the wild-olive-eaters, and the arbutus-eaters, haste ye flying to my song. Trioto-trioto-toto-brix. And ye who by marshy dykes gulp down the sharp-mouthed gnats, and all ye that hold the well-
watered places of earth and the lovely mead of Marathon, and thou bird of mottled feather, woodcock, woodcock. And ye whose tribes fly with the halcyons over the briny swell of the sea, come ye hither, to learn the news: for we assemble here all the tribes of slender-necked birds. For a certain sharp old man is come, novel in thought, and an attempter of novel deeds. But come ye to the parliament all: hither, hither, hither! toro-toro-toro-toro-tix. kikkabau-kikkabau. toro-toro-toro-toro-lililix.

Peisth. Do you see any bird?

EuEL. No, by Apollo, not I. And yet I am gaping looking towards heaven.

Peisth. In vain then the hoopoe, as it seems, went into the grove and oh! oh! 'd;¹ imitating a curlew.

_A bird_, Torotix, torotix.

Peisth. My good friend, but here even now comes some bird.

EuEL. Yes, by Zeus, indeed 'tis a bird. What ever is it? Not surely a peacock?

Peisth. This [hoopoe] himself will tell us. (to Epops)

What bird is this?

Epops. This is not [one] of these usual [birds] which you are always seeing; but a marsh-bird.

Peisth. Bless me! a beautiful and flaming-purple bird!

Epops. Naturally so: for even its name is flamingo.

EuEL. My friend, ho! you indeed [I call] [to Peisthetaerus].

Peisth. Why do you shout?

EuEL. Here's another bird.

Peisth. Yes, by Zeus, another indeed is this, occupying a strange quarter.² What ever is the _musico-prophetic curious mountain walking bird._

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¹ I take this thus, reading _επιστρέφε_, not _επιστρέφε_, said to be = _επιστρέφε_ 'sat on eggs, hid itself.' _ἀξίων_ means to cry _α_.
² Or 'unlucky.' It is an augur's word.
³ This word, and perhaps the rest of the line, is parodied from _Æschylus_. Some read _ἀμποδάρν_ 'delicate-walker.'
**Epops.** The name of this is the Mede.

**Peisth.** The Mede? O king Hercules! Then how, being a Mede, did he fly in without a camel?

_Annother crested hoopoe appears._

**Euel.** Another bird again is here, one that has got on a crest.

**Peisth.** Whatever is this marvel? You then were not the only hoopoe, but this one also is another?

**Epops.** But this is [son] of Philocles [son] of hoopoe; and I am his father’s father: just as if you were to say Hipponicus [son] of Callias and [then again] Callias [son] of Hipponicus.

**Peisth.** Callias then this bird is: how he’s losing his feathers!

**Epops.** [Yes], for, as being noble, he is plucked by the sycophants, and the fair sex besides pluck out his feathers.*

**Peisth.** O Poseidon! another bird again, gay-coloured, is here. Whatever is he called?

**Epops.** This is the gobble-cock.

**Peisth.** Why, is there any other gobble-cock but Cleonymus?

**Epops.** How then, being Cleonymus,* has’nt he thrown away his crest?

**Peisth.** But indeed what ever is this crest-wearing of the birds? Have they come for the double-course-race?

**Epops.** Nay rather, like the Carians, they dwell on crests [of hills] for safety.

**Peisth.** O Poseidon! see you not what a plague of birds is mustered?

**Euel.** O king Apollo, what a cloud! Oh! Oh! It is no longer possible to see the entrance, owing to them as they fly in.

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1. Philocles wrote a play *‘Tereus*’ with an Epops in it. He is therefore called son of the original Epops, and his offspring Epops is grandson to Epops senior. A grandson often bore the grandfather’s name.

2. A young noble who had spent his property.

3. Cleonymus a cowardly runaway, who threw away his shield.

4. At which they wore crested helmets.
EOPHS. This is a partridge, that, by Zeus, is a wood-cock, this is a widgeon, that a halcyon.

EUEL. What, pray, is he behind her?

EOPHS. [Do you ask] who he is? the razor-bill.

PEISTH. Why, is there a razor-bill a bird?

EUEL. Why, is'nt there [the barber] Spongilus?

EOPHS. And this is an owl.

EUEL. What say you? who has brought an owl to Athens?¹

EOPHS. Jay, turtledove, titlark, barn-owl, thyme-finch, pigeon, buzzard, hawk, ring-dove, cuckoo, red-shank, red-pole, purple-scoter, kestrel, diver, vine-finch, sea-eagle, green-woodpecker.

EUEL. Oh! Oh! the birds. Oh! Oh! the blackbirds. How they twitter and run screaming in rivalry! Are they threatening us? Woe is me! they are at all events gaping and looking at you and me.

PEISTH. This seems so to me also.

The Chorus of birds have now entered and taken their places.

CHORUS. Whe-whe-whe-whe-whe-where then is he who called me? what place then does he dwell in?

EOPHS. Here am I present long ago, and I stand not aloof from my friends.

CHO. Having indeed wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-wha-word pray for me your friend?

EOPHS. [A word] common, safe, just, pleasant, profitable. For two men, subtle reasoners, have come hither to me.

CHO. Where? what way? how say you?

EOPHS. I say that from men have come hither two elders: and they have come having the stem of a mighty matter.

CHO. O [you] who have committed the greatest error since I was born, how say you?

EOPHS. Fear not yet my word.

CHO. What have you done to me?

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¹ i. e.—In lucum ligna, coals to Newcastle.
EPOPS. I have received two men lovers of this our company.
CHO. Have you even done this deed?
EPOPS. Yes, and having done it am pleased [at it].
CHO. And are they already somewhere with us?
EPOPS. [Yes], if I am with you.
CHO. Alas! alas! Ave have been betrayed, and have suffered unholy wrongs; for he who was a friend, and enjoyed common feeding plains with us, has transgressed ancient laws, and has transgressed the oaths of birds: and he has called me for treachery, and hazarded me among an unholy race, which, since it was born, was bred up hostile against me. But with him indeed there is for us a later reckoning [to be taken]: but it seems to me that these two elders must pay the penalty and be torn in pieces by us.

PEISTH. How are we undone then!
EUEL. You however are alone the cause to us both of these evils. For to what end did you bring me thence [from earth]?
PEISTH. That you might follow me.
EUEL. Nay rather that I might greatly weep.
PEISTH. In this you are foolish throughout, decidedly: for how will you weep, if once you have both your eyes pecked out?
CHO. Ho, ho! lead on, set on, bring on the hostile murderous attack, and cast round the wing on every side, and encircle them: since it is needful for both these two to cry for woe and to give food to the beak. For neither shady mountain nor æthereal cloud nor hoary sea is there which shall receive these two after escaping me.

But let us not delay to pluck and bite these at once. Where is the brigadier? let him lead on the right wing.
EUEL. This is that [which I said]. Where shall I flee, wretched man?

1. ἔχων 'having, holding, keeping,' adds an idea of duration, when used with a present tense of a verb thus.
Peisth. My friend, will you not stay?
Euel. That I may be torn to pieces by these [birds]?
Peisth. Why, how do you think you can escape these?
Euel. I do not know how I can.
Peisth. But I indeed tell you that we must fight standing-
our-ground, and take hold of our pots.1
Euel. And what good will the pot do us.
Peisth. An owl will not approach us.
Euel. But for these crooked-talonied [birds]?
Peisth. Having seized the spit then plant it before you.
Euel. But what [shall I do] for my eyes?
Peisth. Having taken from hence a saucer or dish, apply
it to them.
Euel. O most wise fellow, well have you invented this
and like-a-general: you already over-shoot Nicias in war-engines.2
Cho. Eleleleu! advance, couch your beak: it fits not to
delay. Pull, pluck, strike, play, knock first the pitcher.
Epops. Tell me, why are ye about, O worst of all creatures,
to destroy, having suffered nothing [yourselves], and to tear
asunder two men who are kinsmen and tribesmen of my
wife?3
Cho. Why indeed shall we spare these more than wolves?
or what others could we punish yet worse enemies than these?
Epops. But if by nature indeed enemies, yet in mind they
are friends: and they are come hither meaning-to-teach us
something advantageous.
Cho. But how could these ever teach us any thing
advantageous, or tell it, being enemies to my grandsires?
Epops. Nay but the wise assuredly learn many things from
enemies. For caution preserves everything. Now from a
friend you can’t learn this, but your enemy at once compels

1. To be used as shields: they had brought them for sacrificial purposes.
The owl would respect the Attic pottery.
2. At this time in Sicily: said to be especially skilful in the use of
\(\mu\eta\chi\alpha\rho\alpha\lambda\) for sieges, etc.
3. Procne wife of Tereus was daughter of a king of Athens.
you to it. For example, cities learnt from men their enemies, and not from friends, both to build lofty walls and to possess long ships. And this lesson saves children, house, property.

Cho. It is indeed advantageous, as it seems to us, first to hear words: for one might learn something wise even from one's enemies.

Peisth. These seem to relax their anger: retire step by step.

Eops. (to the Chorus) It is both just [for you to hear them], and you ought to grant the favour to me.

Cho. But indeed neither in any other matter yet have we opposed you.

Peisth. (observing the birds) They are more disposed for peace than before: so lower the pot and the two dishes: and the spear, [namely] the spit, it behoves us [still] holding to walk within the [line of] arms, looking close over the very edge of the pot [our shield]: since we must not fly.

Euel. But [tell me] truly, if perchance we die where in the earth shall we be buried?

Peisth. The Potters' quarter will receive us. For, in order that we may be buried at public cost, we will say to the war-office that we died fighting with the foe at Birdbury.¹

Cho. Fall back into rank to the same [order as before], and stooping lay down your anger beside your wrath, as a hoplite [lays down shield and spear]. And let us enquire of these who ever [they are] and whence they came, and for what device. Ho! hoopoe, I call you.

Eops. And you call me wishing to hear what?

Cho. Who ever are these and whence?

Eops. Strangers from clever Hellas.

Cho. And what ever fortune brings them to come to the birds?

Eops. Love of the [bird] life and habits, and of you, so as to dwell with and be with you entirely.

¹. Orneae, a town in the Peloponnese: with pun on ἐπον.
Cho. What say you? And what words pray do they say?
Eops. Things incredible [ay] and more [than incredible] to hear.
Cho. Does he [Peisthetaerus] see some gain worth his stay, [a gain] on which he trusts that by being with me he will be able either to master his foe or to serve his friends?
Eops. He speaks of a great prosperity, neither utterable nor credible; [for] how all these things are yours—both what is here and yonder and as far as this—he wins us over by saying.
Cho. Does he [say it] being mad?
Peisth. 'Tis inexpressible how sound-witted [he is].
Cho. Is there in his mind any cleverness?
Eops. A most shrewd fox [is he], cleverness, sharpness, shiftiness, finesse, all over.
Cho. Bid him tell me [his views]. For hearing the words which you say to me I am all fluttered [with eagerness].
Eops. Come now you and you (to Peisth. and Euel.) taking this your panoply hang it up again, with good fortune, inside in the chimney corner, near the rack. And do you [Peisthetaerus] state [and] explain for what discussions I assembled these birds.
Peisth. No by Apollo not I, unless these will covenant with me the covenant which the ape, that [hen-pecked] sword-maker, covenanted with his wife, [namely] that these will not bite me.
Cho. I make the covenant.
Peisth. Swear now this to me.
Cho. I swear on these terms, that I may win the prize by [the vote of] all the judges and all the spectators.
Peisth. This shall be so.
Cho. And if I should transgress, that I may win only by one judge [i. e. by a majority of one].
Peisth. Hear ye, O people: [we bid] the hoplites for-the-present taking up their arms to go back home again, and to observe what we may write up on the notice-boards.
Cho. A deceitful thing in every way indeed is man: but speak you to me nevertheless. For perchance you may happen to declare a good thing, which you see beyond what I see, or some greater power, neglected by my undiscerning mind, whereas you see this. Speak for the common [hearing]. For whatever you may happen to provide for me [of] good, this shall be common. But for what matter you are come, having persuaded your mind to it, say boldly: since we will assuredly not first transgress the treaty.

Peisth. And indeed I swell-with-eagerness, by Zeus, and I have one speech ready-kneaded-in-the-lump, which to knead-out-into-details¹ nothing hinders. Boy, bring a garland: let some one quickly bring water [to pour] over my hand.

Euelpides. Are we going to dine, or what?

Peisth. No by Zeus, but I have long been seeking to speak some big and thumping word which shall crush [and astonish] their [weak] mind: (turning to the birds) so exceedingly grieved am I for you, who being formerly kings——

Cho. We kings! of what were we [kings]?

Peisth. Of all that is; of me first, of this my friend here, and of Zeus himself, more ancient and before Cronos and the Titans you were, and before earth.

Cho. Even earth?

Peisth. Yes by Apollo.

Cho. This, by Zeus, I had not heard.

Peisth. No, for you were ignorant, and not over-busy, nor have you well thumbed AEsop; who said and stated that the lark was the first bird of all, before the earth, and that then her father died by sickness: and that there was no earth, and that he lay now five-days dead, and that she, being at a loss, in perplexity buried her father in her head.

Euelpides. Then the father of the lark now lies dead at Cephalae² [Heads].

1. δηλα has this distributive force.

2. A village in Attica. EUelpides puts in amusing remarks for his own and the audience's benefit throughout this scene.
EPOPS. Then indeed, if they were before earth and before the gods, is not the sovereignty rightly theirs as being eldest? ,

EUCL. Yes, by Apollo: therefore by all means it behoves you to feed-up your beak for the future: Zeus will not quickly give up the sceptre to the wood-pecker.

PEISTH. Now that not gods ruled men in old time but birds, and [that these] were sovereign, of this there are many proofs. But first for example I shall show you the cock, how he was monarch and ruled the Persians first of all, [before] Darius and Megabazus; so that he is called the Persian bird still, from that empire.

EUCL. [It's] because of this then [that] even now he struts-about like the great king, alone of birds wearing his tiara upright on his head.

PEISTH. And so strong was he, and great then, and wide-ruling, that yet, even now, from that former might of his, when he sings the morning strain, all men jump up to work, blacksmiths, potters, hide-tanners, cobblers, bathmen, meal-sellers, lyre-turning-shield-makers: and they trudge off, having put on their shoes, by night.

EUCL. Yes, ask me [for a proof of] this. For I, wretched fellow, lost a cloak of Phrygian wool through this cock. For once being invited to the tenth day [name-day] of a child I was drinking-a-little in the city, and was just becoming sleepy; and before the others were-well-at-supper this fellow, it seems, crowed1: and I thinking it morning started-off for Alimus, and I am just stooping [to get clear] outside the wall, when a footpad strikes me on the back with a cudgel: and I fall and am about to cry out: but he stripped off my cloak.

1. PEISTH. had said that all had to rise and go to work even before day. EUCL. says, yes, a wretched cock crowed even before supper was ended, and deceived me into going out. The translation above reads in v. 492 oi ðê. Those who read oi ðê render it “and those who shoe themselves and take their way by night.” i.e. robbers: making them a sort of additional trade after the others.
Peisth. And then a kite was formerly ruler and king of the Greeks.

Epops. Of the Greeks?

Peisth. Yes, and he being king first shewed [the custom] to fall-prostrate before kites.

Eucl. Yes, by Dionysus; I, for instance, prostrated myself having seen a kite: and then lying-on-my-back gaping upwards I swallowed annoobol: and then carried back home my sack empty.

Peisth. And again of Egypt and all Phœnixc the cuckoo was king: and whenever the cuckoo said 'cuckoo,' then all the Phœnicians would reap the wheat and barley in their plains.

Eucl. This then was really [the meaning of] that [proverbial] saying, 'Cuckoo! ye circumcised, to the plain!'

Peisth. And so vigorously did they exercise their rule that, even if any one was king in the cities of the Greeks, an Agamemnon or Menelaus, a bird sat on their sceptres, sharing whatever gifts each got.

Eucl. This now I did not know: and indeed a wonder possessed me, whenever any Priam, in a tragedy came out bearing a bird. But he [the bird] seemingly stood watching Lysicrates [to see] what bribes he took.

Peisth. And what is strangest of all, Zeus, who now reigns, stands bearing an eagle, a bird, upon his head [as] being king: and his daughter again an owl; but Apollo, as a subordinate, a hawk.

Cho. By Demeter, you say this well. On account of what then have they these things?

Peisth. In order that, when any one sacrificing then gives into their hand the entrails, as the law is, they themselves may receive the entrails before Zeus. And no one of men used to swear by a god then, but all by birds. And Lampon swears

1. Probably in homage to them as harbingers of spring.
2. He carried in his mouth the money to buy meal.
yet even now by the goose, when he is deceiving at all. Thus all formerly thought you great and holy; but now [think you] slaves, simpletons, drudges. And already they shoot at you, as at madmen, and in the temples every fowler sets against you springes, snares, limed-twigs, toils, meshes, nets, cages: and then having taken you they sell you wholesale: and others buy you, feeling you. And not even (if they are resolved thus to act towards you) do they serve you up after roasting you [respectably], but they scrape over you cheese, olive, silphium, vinegar, and, having pounded it, some other sauce sweet and greasy, and then pour this hot all over your [noble] selves, as if over dogs-meat.

Cho. Far indeed, far indeed the most distressful tale [I ever heard] you have brought, O man: since I weep for the baseness of my fathers, who, when their forefathers had bequeathed these honours, annulled them for my time. But you, I see, by fate and good fortune are come a preserver for me. For I having entrusted to you my nestlings and myself will dwell [secure]. But do you, being present, teach what it behoves to do: since to live is not worth our while, if we shall not recover by some means or other our own sovereignty.

Peisth. Well now, first I instruct you that there should be one city of the birds, and then that all this air round about, and all this mid-space, you wall round with big baked bricks, like Babylon.

Euel. O [ye giants] Cebriones and Porphyreon, how fearful a city!

Peisth. And then, if this be once established against [heaven], [I instruct] that you demand back from Zeus the empire: and if he say no, and be not willing, and do not at once knock under, that you proclaim a sacred war against him, and refuse the gods permission to pass through your territory

1. Manes was a common slave's name.
2. This refers to a scene in Euripides' Ion, where Ion is clearing the temple of birds.
on their love-errands. And I bid you send another bird as herald to men, [telling them] to sacrifice to birds in future, since the birds are the sovereigns, and then to the gods in turn afterwards: and [telling them] to assign properly to the gods whichever of the birds may suit each deity: if a man sacrifice to Aphrodite, to sacrifice wheat to the coot: if any one sacrifice a sheep to Poseidon, to devote wheat to the duck: if he sacrifice to Hercules,¹ to sacrifice honied cakes to the cormorant: and if he sacrifice a ram to Zeus the king, the wren is a king bird, to whom, even before Zeus himself, he must slay a perfect male ant.

EuEL. I am amused at the ant being slain. Now let great Zeus² thunder away [if he likes].

CHO. And how will men come to think us gods, and not jackdaws? us who fly and have wings?

PEISTH. You talk nonsense. Even Hermes, by Zeus, though he is a god, flies, and wears wings, yes, and very many other gods. And Iris, Homer said, was like a trembling dove. And does not Zeus,³ when he thunders, send us ‘winged’ lightning?

CHO. But if from stupidity they should think us to be nothing, and these to be [the true] gods that are in Olympus?

PEISTH. Then a cloud of sparrows and seed-peckers rising must eat up their seed from their fields: and then let Demeter [if she can] measure out wheat to them starving.

EuEL. She won’t consent [to do so], by Zeus, but you will see her alleging excuses.

PEISTH. And again let the crows peck out the eyes of the yoke-oxen with which they plough, and of the sheep, for a trial

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1. θόρη = θύ. The reasons for each bird are not plain. Hercules was gluttonous.
2. Ζάυ = Ζεύς. Comp. the genitive Ζηνός.
3. I give this line to Peisth., the next line and a half to the Chorus; following Meineke. πεμπει however would improve the sense for πεμψει. In v. 577 ἰμᾶς not ἱμάς.
[to see which are the true gods]. And then let Apollo, physician as he is, heal them: he's well paid for it.

Euel. Not so, before I first have sold my pair of oxen.

Peisth. But if they think you a god, you life, you earth, you Cronos, you Poseidon, then all good things will be present with them.

Cho. Tell me one of the good things.

Peisth. First indeed the locusts will not devour their vine-buds, but one troop of owls and kestrels will demolish them. And then the gnats and midges will not always devour the figs, but one flock of thrushes will pick them all off clean.

Cho. But whence shall we give them wealth? for this they strongly covet.

Peisth. These birds will give to them, [when] divining, the profitable mines, and will declare to the soothsayer the gainful trading-voyages, so that of ship-owners not one will be lost.

Cho. How will not be lost?

Peisth. Some one of the birds will always warn him [when] divining about the voyage: 'Don't sail now, there will be storm' or 'Now sail, gain will result.'

Euel. I buy [at once] a merchant craft, and become a ship-owner, and I won't remain with you.

Peisth. And they will shew to men the treasures of money which those of former times hid: for these [birds] know. And all, surely, say this, No one knows of my treasure, unless haply some bird.

Euel. I sell my craft, I get me a pickaxe, and dig up the [buried] pots.

Cho. But how will they give them health, that being with the gods?

Peisth. If they do well, isn't this great health? Be assured [that it is], since, as a man, no one absolutely who does ill is in health.

Cho. But how will they ever arrive at old age? for this too is in Olympus. Or must they die as children?
Peisth. No, by Zeus, but the birds will add to them yet three hundred years.

Cho. From whom?

Peisth. From whom? Why, from themselves. Do you not know that 'the croaking raven lives five generations of men?'

Euel. Bah! how much better are these than Zeus to reign over us!

Peisth. Are they not, much? First indeed it needs not for us to build stone temples to them, nor to fit them with golden doors; but beneath shrubs and holm-oaks they will dwell. And again [even] to the grandees among birds an olive-tree will be their temple. And we shall not go to Delphi, or to Ammon, and sacrifice there, but among the arbutus-trees and the wild-olives, standing, [and] holding barley [and] wheat, we shall pray to them, holding up our hands, to give us some share of good things: and these will at once be given to us on throwing down a little wheat.

Cho. O far dearest to me of old men, you that have changed [to be so] from [being] my most hated foe, it is not possible that I ever can willingly any longer dissent\textsuperscript{1} from your opinion. But, exulting in your words, I threaten and I swear that—if you joining with me [in] concordant conference, just, guileless, holy, will go against the gods, harmoniously minded with me—the gods shall not much longer handle my sceptre. But all that needs to do by strength, for this we will be appointed: but all that needs to counsel with the mind, all this is entrusted to you.

Epops. And indeed, by Zeus, no longer is it time for us to sleep, nor to delay-to-conquer\textsuperscript{2}; but as quickly as possible we must do something: and first enter ye into my nest and my straws and these present sticks; and both tell us your names.

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\textsuperscript{1} \(\acute{\alpha}φιλημ\). 2nd aor. opt. mid of \(\acute{\alpha}φιλημ\).

\textsuperscript{2} With pun on Nicias. 'To delay after Nicias' fashion.' Nicias was now general in Sicily.
Peisth. Nay, that's easy. My name is Peisthetæerus, and this man's Euelpides from Crius.

Epops. Well, hail both of you!

Peisth. We accept [the greeting]

Epops. Come hither then, enter.

Peisth. Let us go: [to Epops] do you take and lead us.

Epops. Come on.

Peisth. But [there's] what's-its-name—back water this way again! Come let me see, tell us, how shall I and my friend here be with you flying, we not flying?

Epops. [Oh!] excellently.

Peisth. See now how in Æsop's stories there is something said about the fox, how disastrously once he made partnership with the eagle.

Epops. Fear not at all: for there is a certain small root, which when you have eaten you will be winged.

Peisth. This being so, let us go in. Come, Xanthias and Manodorus, take you the rugs.


Epops. Why call you?

Cho. Leading these men with you breakfast them well: but the sweet-toned nightingale, singing-in-harmony-with the Muses, do you leave with us, having brought her out, that we may sport with her.

Peisth. Oh! indeed do comply with them, by Zeus, in this: bring out the dear bird from the thicket.

Euelpides. Bring her out from it, in heaven's name, that we two also may see the nightingale.

Epops. Well, if it seems good to you both, this we must do. Procne, come out, and shew yourself to the strangers.

(Enter Nightingale, a woman's figure with a bird's head.)

Peisth. O honoured Zeus, how beautiful is the dear

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1. τὸ δεῖνα 'that thing, so and so,' is used when in a hurry the speaker cannot put into words his idea. The whole passage means 'stop a bit,' there's a difficulty: don't go on so fast: hark back a little.'
bird! and how much gold she has [about her], like a maiden!

Euel. I indeed think [that I should like] to kiss her.

Peisth. But, O unhappy man, she has a beak of two spits.

Euel. But, by Zeus, one ought after peeling the case from her head, as [one does] an egg, then in that way, to kiss her.

Eops. Let us be going.

Peisth. Do you then lead us with good fortune.

(Exeunt Eops., Peisth., Euel.)

Chorus. (to the Nightingale). O dear one, O clear toned, O dearest of birds, partner of all my songs, companion nightingale, thou art come, thou art come, thou hast appeared, bringing for me thy sweet voice. But, O thou that soundest thy beautiful-toned flute with spring notes, begin the anapæsts¹.

(The chorus turn to the audience and deliver the Parabasis or Address).

Come now, ye men seeble-lived by nature, like to the race of leaves, of little might, fashioned of clay, shadowy strengthless tribes, wingless creatures-of-a-day, suffering mortals, dreamlike men, lend your mind to us the immortal, the ever existing, the ethereal, the never-aging, us who counsel imperishable things: that ye, having heard from us all things correctly about lofty themes, knowing correctly from me the nature of birds, and the origin of gods, and of rivers, and of Erebus, and of Chaos, may bid Prodicus in future go hang.

First existed Chaos and Night and black Erebus and wide Tartarus: and [neither] earth nor air nor heaven existed: but in the boundless bosom of Erebus black-feathered night lays first of all a wind-egg, from which, at the season as-it-came-round, sprang Love the desired one, glistening on his back with

¹. That is the parabasis, which was generally written in the anapaestic metre. See Introduction.
golden wings, like to the swift-eddying whirlwinds. And he, mating with gloomy winged Chaos in wide Tartarus, had for brood our kind and first brought them forth to light. But, before, a race of immortals there was not, till Love matched together all things: but when they mated, some with others, then came-into-being heaven and ocean and earth and the imperishable race of all the blessed gods. Thus are we far the eldest of all the blessed ones. And that we are [born] of Love is plain by many proofs: for we both fly, and company with lovers. And all the greatest things are to mortals from us birds. For, first, we show the seasons of spring, of winter, of autumn: 'the crane [bids] to sow, when screaming, he departs for Libya; and then bids he the shipmaster to hang up his rudder and sleep, and further [bids] Orestes weave him a cloak, that he may not, shivering with cold, strip other folks. And again after this the kite appearing shows another season, when it is time to shear the spring fleece of sheep: then the swallow [tells the season] when one ought now to sell one's cloak and buy a summer-dress. And we are to you Ammon, Delphi, Dodona, Phæbus Apollo. For, after first going to birds [seeking auguries] you thus turn to everything, to merchant-voyage, and to getting of property, and marriage of a husband. And you think all things a bird [omen] that decide about divination: an ominous-utterance is for you a bird, and a sneeze you call a bird, a meeting a bird, a sound a bird, a servant a bird, an ass a bird. Are we not plainly for you a prophetic Apollo?

If then you will consider us gods, you will be able to use [us as] prophets, Muses, breezes, seasons, winter, summer, moderate warmth. And we shall not, having run away, sit up aloft giving-ourselves-mighty-airs like Zeus: but being present we shall give you, to yourselves, your children's children,

1. The order of words is σπείρειν γέρανος φράζει θαν.....μεταχωρῆ, καὶ φράζει ναυκλήφω.....καθευδεῖν, καὶ φράζει Ὄρεστη ὕδαινειν. Orestes was a foot-pad: see above 497 for an adventure with one of his class: also below v. 1490.
health-and-wealth, life, peace, youth, laughter, dances, feasts, and—birds' milk. So that it will result to you to labour under [the weight of] your blessings: so wealthy will you all be.

(To the Muse, song by Semichorus).

Muse of the copse, tio-tio-tio-tio-ti-tin, of-varied-note, with whom I in the groves and on the mountain peaks, tio-tio-tio-ti-tin, sitting upon the leafy-ash, tio-tio-tio-ti-tin, utter forth through my trilling throat sacred strains of melodies to Pan, and holy strains-for-dancing to the Mountain Mother [Cybele], to-to-to-to-to-to-to-tin; whence, as a bee, Phrynichus fed on the fruit of ambrosial melodies, gathering alway sweet song, tio-tio-tio-ti-tin.

(To the audience).

If any one of you, O spectators, wishes to spend—his—time with the birds, living pleasantly for the future, let him come to us. For all things that here [on earth] are shameful, being subject to the law [as such], these all are with us birds honourable. For if here it is by law shameful to strike one's father, yet there [in the air] with us this is honourable, if one having run up to his father strike him and say, Lift your spur, if you will fight. And if any one of you happens to be brand-marked as a runaway, he with us will be called a speckled woodcock. And if any one happens to be a Phrygian no less than Spintharus, he will here [among the birds] be the bird phrygilus [or finch], of the kin of Philemon. And if he is a slave and Carian like Execestides, let him get grandfathers with us, and his fellow-tribesmen will be forth-coming. And

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1. Spintharus and Philemon were no doubt men who could not prove their true Athenian citizenship. So was Execestides: See above, v. 4. πᾶπωσ probably means some bird: perhaps φρατος also resembles some bird's name. A claimant of citizenship had to shew his πάπως and φρατος. Some equivalent might be attempted by 'grand-fathers' and 'grand feathers.'
if the son of Pisias wishes to betray the gates to [foreigners] who-have-no-civic-rights [at Athens], let him be a perdix [or partridge], a true chick of his father; since with us 'tis nothing shameful to perdicize¹ [or favour Perdiccas of Macedon].

(Song by Semi-chorus).

In such strains the Swans, tio-tio-tio-tio-tiotinx, sounding with their wings together a blended chorus, did hymn Apollo, tio-tio-tio-tiotinx, sitting on the bank by the river Hebrus, tio-tio-tio-tiotinx, and the sound came through the etherial clouds: and the various tribes of beasts cowered-in-fear, and the windless ether lulled the waves, to-to-to-to-to-to-to-to-tinx.

(To the audience).

Nothing is better or sweeter than to grow wings. For instance, of you spectators if any one was winged, and then being hungry was bored by the chorusses of the comic-poets, he, flying out, might go home and take his breakfast, and then, when filled, again fly back to us. Is it not worth anything to be winged? since even Diitrephes, having only wicker wings [from the flasks which he sells] was chosen colonel, then general of horse, then from a mere-nobody prospers mightily, and is now a tawny high-horse-cock-of-the-woods.²

Peisthetaerus and Euelpides return, with wings: also Epops.

Peisth. This [ends] thus. (looking at himself and companion) By Zeus I indeed never yet saw a more laughable thing.

EuEL. At what are you laughing?

Peisth. At your long wing-feathers. Know you what you're most like now that you are winged? [you're like] a [sign-board] goose done-by-contract for cheapness.

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¹. Others explain 'to play partridge' = 'to deceive,' because the partridge escapes the sportsman by some clever tricks.
². A mysterious word to denote something proud and pompous.
EUEL. And you [like] a blackbird [with his poll] plucked bowl-fashion.

PEISTH. These similes we have made after Aeschylus:¹ these [come] not from others, but by our own feathers.

EUEL. Come then, what ought we to do?

PEISTH. First to give some great and glorious name to our city; then after this to sacrifice to the gods.

EUEL. This seems good to me also.

EPOPS. Come let me see, and what shall be the name for our city?

PEISTH. Do ye wish that we should call it by that great name from Lacedaemon, [even] Sparta?

EUEL. Hercules! What! I give to my city Sparta [as a name]? Not even to a bedstead would I [put a rope of broom or spartum] by any means, while possessing a cord.

PEISTH. What name then shall we give to it?

EUEL. From hence, from the clouds and mid-air places, [we must get] some altogether grand name.

PEISTH. Do you wish Cloud-cuckoo-land?

EPOPS. Hurrah! hurrah! for beautiful entirely and great is the name you have found.

EUEL. Is this the Cloud-cuckoo-land where are both the many treasures of Theogenes, and all of Aeshines?

PEISTH. Ay, and best of all, the plain of Phlegra,² where the gods boasting outshot the giants.

EUEL. A beautiful thing³ [is] the city! What god, pray, will be the patron? for whom shall we clean the peplus [as we now do for Athene]?

PEISTH. But why do we not leave Athene the city's patroness?

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¹. Aeschylus refers to the eagle shot by an arrow feathered from its own wing.
². A land of things as unreal as Aeschines' boasted wealth, or the much bragged of and imaginary contest of gods and giants.
³. "The thing of the city" = "the city" by a common periphrasis.
Euel. And how could it be any longer an orderly city, where a deity being a woman stands wearing a panoply, but Cleisthenes [having] a shuttle?

Peith. Who then will keep the Pelargic [fortress] of the city?

Epops. A bird from among us of Persian race, who is said everywhere to be the most terrible cockerill of Ares.

Euel. O cockerill lord! And how fitted the bird is to dwell upon the rocks!

Peith. Come then, do you go to the air, and wait upon the builders: bring rubble [to fill in with], strip you, and temper the mortar, carry up the hod, tumble down from the ladder, post the guards, cover up the fire continually, run round bearing the bell, and sleep there: and send you two heralds, one to the gods above, and another again from aloft to men below, and thence [come] back to me.

Euel. (declining to go.) And do you remaining here cry your eyes out—for me [as far as I care].

Peith. [Nay] good sir, do go whither I send you. For none of these things which I speak of will be done without you. But I, that I may sacrifice to the new gods, will call the priest to conduct the procession. Slave, Slave, take ye the basket and the lustral-water.

Cho. I agree, I join in your wish, I join in approving, that we institute to the gods great solemn thanksgivings, and withal besides for gratitude sacrifice a sheep. And let the Pythian hymn ascend, ascend to the god: and let Chæris join his strain.

(A piper with a raven's head and leather mouthpiece comes in and blows.)

Peith. Stop you blowing. Hercules, what is this? This,

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1. A pun on the Pelasgic wall of the Athenian acropolis and Pelargic from πελαργός 'a stork.' The Persian bird, or cock, means probably Alcibiades.
by Zeus, I, who have seen many and strange things, never yet saw before, [to wit] a raven with a mouth-piece on. Priest, tis your duty now: sacrifice to the new gods.

PRIEST. I will do so. But where is he that has the basket? Pray ye to the bird Vesta, and to the hearth-guardian kite, and to all the Olympian birds and birdesses.

PEISTH. O Sunian-hawk\(^1\)—hail, thou Pelargian king.

PRIEST.—and to the Pythian and Delian swan, and to Quail-island-mother Leto, and to gold-finch Artemis.—

PEISTH. No longer is Artemis Colaenis but Acalanthis [gold-finch].

PRIEST.—and to the Sabazian phrygilus (or finch), and to the ostrich mighty mother of gods and men,—

PEISTH. [Hail!] Mistress Cybele, ostrich, mother of [great or greedy] Cleocritus.

PRIEST.—to grant to the Cloud-cuckoo-landers health and wealth, to themselves and the Chians.

PEISTH. I am pleased with the Chians\(^2\) tacked on everywhere.

PRIEST. And [pray ye] to the hero birds, and birds' children, the purple-scoter, woodpecker, pelican, fire-crest, grouse, peacock, barn-owl, pintail, bittern, heron, gannet, black-cap, titmouse.

PEISTH. Stop, mischief take you\(^3\)! stop calling them. Oh! Oh! to what a [sorry] victim, unhappy man, are you calling sea-eagles and vultures? Don't you see that one kite would seize and be off with this? Get you gone from us, you and your garlands: for I myself will sacrifice this alone.

CHO. Then again indeed must I sing for thee over the

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1. Parody on Σουνίδαρη 'Sunium-worshipped,' an epithet of Poseidon. The pun on Pelargian and Pelasgian we had above v. 832. Sabazius (v. 875) was a Phrygian Deity.
2. As firm friends of Athens, the Chians were included with them in treaties, etc.
3. The priest is discarded as useless and extravagant: one sorry sheep only being not enough for a large company.
lustral water a second strain, holy, devout; and must call the blessed ones, some one only [that is to say], if you are to have enough meat. For the present victim is nothing else but beard and horns.

(The priest goes: Peisth. and the Chorus go on with the rites)

PEISTH. Sacrificing let us pray to the feathered gods.

Enter a poet.

POET. Celebrate, O Muse, the happy Cloud-cuckoo-land in thy strains of hymns.

PEISTH. What sort of a creature is this? Tell me, who are you?

POET. I [am] one that utter song of honey-tongued words, of the Muses 'a henchman bold-and-ready,' after Homer's phrase.

PEISTH. And then indeed, being a slave do you [presume to] wear long hair?

POET. Not [a slave am I] but all we instructors-of-song are of the Muses henchmen bold-and-ready, after Homer's phrase.

PEISTH. Not without-cause then have you a coat old-and-shreddy. But O poet, for what came-you-up-on-a-fool's-errand hither?

POET. I have made songs to your Cloud-cuckoo-lands, both many beautiful cyclic strains, and for maiden-choirs, and after Simonides' lyrics.

PEISTH. Since when pray did you make these?

POET. Long, long indeed have I been celebrating this city.

PEISTH. Am I not just sacrificing at its tenth day feast, and but just now gave to it, as to an infant, its name?

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1. The Greek is a sort of pun on ἀτρησις 'active, ready,' and τετρήμνος 'in holes and tatters.'
2. φθείρεσθαι 'to go to ruin, to take a journey which is no use.' ἀνα 'up.'
POET. [Ay] but swift is fame with the Muses, even as the flashing-speed of horses. But thou, O father founder of Aetna 'name-sake of divine sacrifices, give to me whatever with thy head thou art willing readily to give, to me [a boon, an honour] to thee.

PEISTH. This plague will give us trouble, if we do not escape by giving him something. My friend (to Euelp. or to some attendant), you indeed have a cloak and coat, strip you, and give it to the wise poet. There (to the poet) take the cloak: certainly you seem to me to be shivering.

POET. This gift the friendly Muse receives not unwilling: but do thou in thy mind understand the word of Pindar.

PEISTH. The man will not leave us.

POET. For among the nomad Scythians wanders Straton, who possesses not a woven garment: and cloak without coat comes unhonoured: understand what I say to thee.

PEISTH. I understand that you want to get the coat. Strip you (to the other): for one must help the poet. Go (to poet), now that you've got this.

POET. I am going: and to the city, when I have gone, I will make this poem: Celebrate, O golden-throned [Apollo] the shivering icy [city]. Snow-stricken and much-sown plains have I traversed. Alalai!

PEISTH. By Zeus, but you have already escaped these cold shivers, having got this coat. This plague, by Zeus, I never expected, that this fellow so quickly would have heard about the city. Do you again (to his assistant) taking the lustral water go round. Let there be silence.

1. Hieron Τῆρων, from Τῆρων. This is from Pindar. The conclusion is meant to be nonsense.
2. Pindar's verse probably said that Straton was among the Scythians without a chariot or waggon, and the mules which he had, given him by Hieron, were of no use without a vehicle for them to draw.
3. Some read πολύπυρα 'fiery'—some πολύπυρα 'with many ways.'
(Enter an Oracle-monger.)

Oracle Mon. Begin not [the sacrifice of] the goat.
Peisth. And who are you?
Oracle Mon. Who? an oracle-monger.
Peisth. Go and be hanged then!
Oracle Mon. O sir, take not thus slightly divine things: since there is an oracle of Bacis speaking directly about Cloud-cuckoo-land.

Peisth. And then why did you not tell me this oracle before I had founded this city.
Oracle Mon. The divine will hindered me.
Peisth. Well, there's nothing like hearing the words.

[Speak on].

Oracle Mon. But when wolves and hoary ravens dwell together in the space between Corinth and Sicyon——

Peisth. What then have I to do with the Corinthians?¹

Oracle Mon. Bacis spoke enigmatically in this about the air. (Goes on with the oracle) First to Pandora [remember] to sacrifice a white-fleeced ram: and whoso shall come first as prophet of my words, to him [remember] to give a clean cloak and new sandals.²

Peisth. Are the sandals also in [the oracle]?
Oracle Mon. Take the book [and read].—And (continuing the oracle) to give the cup, and to fill his hand with the entrails.

Peisth. Is it also in [the oracle] to give the entrails?
Oracle Mon. Take the book.—And if, O divine youth, thou doest this which I command, thou shalt become an eagle in the clouds: but if thou givest not, thou shalt be neither turtle-dove, nor eagle, nor wood-pecker.

Peisth. Is this also in there?
Oracle Mon. Take the book.

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1. “What of the Corinthians matters to me?”
2. ὅμεν = ὅμεναι = ὅναι.
Peisth. Then the oracle is in no way like to this which I copied out from Apollo: (pretends to read) But when an uninvited man coming, a braggart, shall annoy the sacrificers and desire to share the entrails, truly then it behoves to beat him between the ribs.—

Oracle Mon. I think you are talking nonsense.

Peisth. Take the book. (continues the oracle)—And spare not at all even the eagle in the clouds, neither if it be Lampon, nor if the great Diopithes.

Oracle Mon. Is this too in there?

Peisth. Take the book. (Beats him) Will you not get you gone to the crows?

Oracle Mon. O me wretched!

Peisth. Will you not run off elsewhere and tell your oracles?

Oracle-monger goes: enter Meton the geometrician.

Meton. I come to you—

Peisth. This again is another plague. But what in turn, [come] you to do? what is the form of your purpose? what the device, what the tragic-buskin of your way?

Meton. I wish to survey geometrically the air for you, and to divide it out by acres.

Peisth. In the gods' name, and who of men are you?


Peisth. Tell me, and what are these things you have (pointing to his instruments)?

Meton. Air rulers. For, look you, the whole air is in form most like a fire-cover. Therefore I, having applied above this crooked rule, having planted my compasses—you understand?

Peisth. I don't understand.

Meton.—Shall measure with the straight rule, applying it, in order that the circle may be foursquare for you, and in the middle the market-place, and that there may be roads leading
to it straight towards the very centre, and, as from a star, from it, being round, straight spokes may radiate in every direction.

PEISTH. The man's a Thales! Meton.

METON. What is it?

PEISTH. Do you know that I love you? And, obeying me, move a little out of the way.

METON. But what is the danger?

PEISTH. As in Lacedæmon, there is an expulsion of strangers, and certain numerous blows are stirring through the city.

METON. Are you divided-by-faction?

PEISTH. By Zeus, certainly not.

METON. But how then?

PEISTH. Unanimously we are resolved to trounce all humbugs.

METON. Then I'll be moving on.

PEISTH. Yes by Zeus, since I don't know whether you will be in time: for these blows here are pressing on. (Beats 'him).

METON. O me miserable!

PEISTH. Did I not say so long ago? Will you not depart and measure yourself back elsewhere?

(Enter a Visitor."

VIS. Where are the public hosts?

PEISTH. Who is this Sardanapalus?

VIS. I am come hither, appointed visitor by lot of bean, to Cloud-cuckoo-land.

PEISTH. A visitor? and who sent you hither?

VIS. A little document of Teleas. (shews a paper as his authority).

PEISTH. What? Do you wish, having got your pay, not to have any trouble but to depart?

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1. An ἐπισκόπος: a title given to certain officers sent by the Athenians to subject states. The proxeni would be bound to entertain them.
Vis. Yes by the gods. Indeed I wanted, remaining at home, to take-part-in-the-assembly. For there are certain intrigues which have been carried on through me with [the satrap] Pharnaces.

Peisth. Take it and go. But your pay is—— this (beating him).

Vis. What is this?

Peisth. The assembly about Pharnaces.

Vis. I protest [at] being beaten, I being a visitor.

Peisth. Will you not be off? will you not take away your two ballot-boxes? Is it not a shame? they even already send visitors to the city, before even sacrifice has been made to the gods.

(Enter Decree-seller).

Decree-seller. (reading). And if the Cloud-cuckoo-lander wrong the Athenian——

Peisth. What plague again is this document?

Decree-sell. I am a decree-seller, and I am come here to you to sell new laws.

Peisth. As what?

Decree-sell. It behoves the Cloud-cuckoo-landers to use the same measures, weights, and decrees as the Olophyxians.

Peisth. And you shall use those which the beaten-by-sticks-y ones do (beats him).

Decree-sell. Sir, what are you doing?

Peisth. Will you not take away your laws? I shall render your laws disastrous for you to day.

Vis. I summon Peisthetaerus for assault, for the month Munychion.

Peisth. Indeed, my friend? what! were you still there? (turning to the Visitor).

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1. The pun is on Olophyxus a town in Thrace, and Ototyxians derived from óπορεῖ an exclamation of grief.
Decree-sel. And if any one drive out the magistrates, and receive them not according to the [edict on the] column—

Peisth. O me miserable; what! you too were still there? (turning to decree-seller).

Vis. I will ruin you, and I indict you for ten thousand drachmai.

Peisth. And I will scatter at least your ballot-boxes.

Vis. Remember when you befouled the column yester-

Peisth. Faugh! let some one seize him. (They run).

Sir, won't you stay? Let us go hence, with all speed, to sacrifice in-doors the goat to the gods.

Exeunt, leaving the Chorus alone.

Cho. Already to me, the all-surveyor and all-ruler shall all mortals sacrifice with votive prayers; for I survey all the earth, and I preserve the thriving fruits, killing the race of the many-tribed vermin, who, with all-devouring jaws [feed] on all [the fruit] that grows from the bud on the earth, and settling on the trees feed on their fruit: and I kill those who destroy with most hostile damage fragrant gardens: and all creeping things, and gnawing things that exist are destroyed by death from my wing. On this day however, it is especially pro-

claimed that, if any of you [mortals] kill Diagoras the Melian,¹ he shall receive a talent, and if any kill one of the dead tyrants, that he shall receive a talent. Now therefore we too here [in Bird-land] wish to proclaim this: If any one of you kill Philocrates the Struthian (sparrow-man) he shall receive a talent, and if he bring him alive, four: because, he stringing together finches, sells them at seven for the obol: and then he blows out and exhibits and maltreats thrushes; and he puts feathers into the blackbirds nostrils; and like-

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¹ Diagoras hated for his rejection of the popular deities: the tyrants always feared and suspected, 'even after death, as the poet comically supposes.
wise catches and keeps pigeons having shut them up, and forces them, imprisoned in a net, to act as decoys. These things we wish to proclaim: and if any one of you keeps birds imprisoned in his court, we bid him let them go. But if you do not obey, then caught by the birds in turn you imprisoned with us shall act as decoys.

O happy tribe of winged birds! who in winter clothe them not in cloaks, nor again does the fervid far-beaming ray of stifling heat warm us. But I dwell in the bosoms of the leaves of flowery meadows, when the divine noisy [cicada], sun-maddened with the noontide warmth, rings out his shrill tone. And I winter in hollow caves sporting with mountain nymphs. And we feed on the vernal, tender white myrtle-berries, and the garden-fruits of the Graces.

We wish to say something to the judges about the victory; how many good things we will give to all of them, if they judge us [the victors]: so that they shall receive far greater gifts than did Alexander.¹ For first, a thing which every judge covets most, owl-coins² from [the mines of] Laurium shall never fail you; but shall dwell inside, and in your purses nest and hatch small change. And then, besides all this, you shall dwell as in temples; for we will roof your houses to the 'eagle.'³ And if you, having allotted to you some petty office, then wish to claw for yourselves a trifle, we will give you a sharp young hawk for your hands. And if you be dining anywhere, we will send you crops. But if you do not judge us victors, fabricate crescent-guards for you to wear like statues; since whoever of you has not a crescent, when you have a white cloak on, then especially, thus [attired], will you pay us the penalty, being dirtied by all the birds.

(Enter Peisthetaerus.)

PEISTH. Our sacrifices, O birds, are favourable. But

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¹ That is, Paris, when he judged between the three goddesses.
² The silver coins were stamped with the owl or bird of Athené.
³ An architectural term for the pediment.
from the wall no messenger is come from whom we may learn matters there. But here runs some one, panting of Alpheus.¹

**First Messenger.** Where where is, where where where is, where where where is, where where is Peisthetaerus the commander?

**Peisth.** Here.

**First Mess.** Your wall is finished.

**Peisth.** You tell good tidings.

**First Mess.** A most beautiful work and most magnificent: so that upon it, from its breadth, could Proxenides the braggadocian and Theogenes drive past each other two chariots going contrary ways, with horses harnessed to them as large as the wooden [horse of Troy].

**Peisth.** Hercules!

**First Mess.** And the height is—for I measured it myself—one hundred fathoms.

**Peisth.** O Poseidon, what a height! Who built it to such a size?

**First Mess.** Birds, no one else, no Egyptian brick-bearer, no stone-worker, no carpenter was there; but with their own hands [the birds made it]: so that I marvelled. First, from Libya came about thirty thousand cranes, having swallowed stones² for the foundation. And these the bitterns hammered at with their beaks. And others, ten thousand storks [to wit], carried the bricks: and the curlews and other river birds carried the water from below up to the air.

**Peisth.** And who carried mortar for them?

**First Mess.** The herons, in pans.

**Peisth.** And how did they get the mortar put in?

**First Mess.** This, my good sir, was devised even most

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¹ That is 'like one who runs a race:' the Olympic games being held by the river Alpheus.

² Cranes were believed to ballast themselves with stones. See below v. 1429.
cleverly: the geese, striking down with their feet as with shovels, put it into the pans for them.

Peisth. What then will feet not effect?

First Mess. And, by Zeus, the ducks, girt up, carried bricks; and the swallows flew up, having on their backs the trowel, like [those who carry] children, [and] the mortar in their mouths.

Peisth. Why then should one any more hire hirelings? Come, let me see, what next? Who finished the woodwork of the wall?

First Mess. There were most clever bird carpenters, the woodpeckers, who with their bills hewed out the gates; and the noise of them while hewing was as in a dockyard. And now all those walls have been fitted with gates, and bolted, and are guarded all round, there is a going the round, a bearing the bell, everywhere sentries are set, and beacon-watches on the towers. But I will run away and wash: do you yourself now do the rest. (Exit.)

Cho. Friend, what do you? are you wondering that the wall has been completed so quickly?

Peisth. Yes, by the gods, that am I: for it deserves [wonder]: for truly it appears to me like fiction. But [stay], for here runs towards us a guard, as messenger of matters there, looking the war-dance.

Second Messenger. Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!

Peisth. What's the matter now?

Second Mess. We are shamefully treated. For just now one of the gods from Zeus flew into the air through the gates, unseen by the jackdaw guards the day-watchers.

Peisth. O he hath wrought a terrible and bold deed! Who of the gods [is it]?

1. I read αὐτοῖς with most MSS., and mark a difference between the middle voice ἐνεβάλλοντο and the active ἐνέβαλλον.

2. This is not satisfactory: probably the text is wrong or defective.
SECOND MESSENGER. We know not: but that he had wings, this we know.

PEISTH. Ought you not therefore to have sent the frontier-guards after him at once?

SECOND MESS. Nay we did send thirty thousand hawks mounted-archers, and every one advances with bent talons: kestrel, falcon, vulture, buzzard, eagle: and with their rush and wings and whirring the air is astir as the god is sought for. And he is not far distant, but is even now somewhere about here.

PEISTH. Then we must take slings and bows. Come hither every servant: shoot, strike, let some one give me a sling.

CHO. War is raised, war unspeakable, against me and the gods. But watch every one the cloud-wrapt air, that Erebus begat, lest any of the gods escape you passing this way. And gaze every one, looking around, for near already is heard the winged sound of the whirlwind-rush of a deity aloft.

PEISTH. Hey there! you lady, whither, whither, whither fly you? stay still, hold quiet: stand there: stop your course. Who are you? of what country? you must say whence in the world you are.

IRIS. I am from the Olympian gods.

PEISTH. And what is your name, ship or helmet?¹

IRIS. Swift Iris.

PEISTH. Paralus or Salaminian galley?

IRIS. But what is this? (Prepares to fly away).

PEISTH. Will not some falcon fly up and seize her?

IRIS. Seize me! What ever is this plague?

PEISTH. You shall rue it greatly.

IRIS. An absurd thing this.

¹ Ship, as having wings like sails: why helmet, is not certain, perhaps she wore a broad hat.
Peisth. By what gates did you enter in within the wall, O most abominable one?
Iris. By Zeus, I know not by what gates.
Peisth. Do you hear her, how she dissembles? (To Iris) Did you apply to the jackdaw-officers? do you say No? Have you a seal [as pass-port] from the storks?
Iris. What is this nonsense?
Peisth. Did you not get one?
Iris. Are you in your senses?
Peisth. And did no bird-officer give you the countersign?
Iris. No by Zeus, no one gave me [anything], my dear sir.
Peisth. And then indeed do you thus in silence fly through another's city and chaos?
Iris. Why, by what other way ought the gods to fly?
Peisth. I know not by Zeus: this way they ought not. And you are doing wrong. 1 And now know you not that most justly of all Irises would you, thus taken, have been put to death, if you had met with your deserts?
Iris. But I am immortal.
Peisth. But nevertheless you would have been put to death. For most shamefully shall we be treated, it seems to me, if we rule indeed others, but you gods shall run riot, and not yet recognize that you in turn must obey your superiors. But tell me pray, whither ply you your wings?
Iris. I? to men I fly from the father [Zeus] to tell them to sacrifice to the Olympian gods, and to slay sheep on the sacrificial altars, and to fill-with-rich-savour the streets.
Peisth. What say you? To what gods?
Iris. To what gods? To us the gods in heaven.
Peisth. Why, are you gods?
Iris. Who pray else is god?

1. Reading ἀδίκετις δέ. καὶ νῦν ἄρα. k. τ. λ.
Peisth. The birds are now gods to men, and to these they must sacrifice, and not to Zeus, by Zeus.

Iris. O fool, fool, stir not the mind of the gods, direful [in wrath]; lest Justice overthrow thy whole race utterly-destroyed by the mattock of Zeus, and fiery-smoke reduce to ashes thy body and the walls of thy house with Licymnian flashes.

Peisth. Listen, madam: stop your bubblings: keep quiet. Come, let me see, is it a Lydian or Phrygian slave you think to terrify-with-bugbears, speaking thus? Do you know that if Zeus shall trouble me further, his palace, and the house of Amphion, I will reduce to ashes with fire-bearing eagles; and will send against him porphyrian-birds, clad in leopard-skins, more than six hundred in number? And formerly, you know, one [giant] Porphyrion gave him trouble.

Iris. May you perish, fellow, words and all!

Peisth. Will you not be off? will you not swiftly [begone]? Quick! march!

Iris. Truly my father will stop you from your insolence.

Peisth. O dear me! will you not flying elsewhere burn to ashes some younger man?

(Exit Iris.)

Chorus. We have excluded the Zeus-born gods, so that no more may they pass through my city, nor any mortal send to the gods sacrificial smoke through the plain [of heaven] this way.

Peisth. 'Tis strange about the herald that went to mortals, if he's never going to come back.

Enter the herald.

Herald. O Peisthetaerus, O blessed, O wisest, O most

---

1. A scrap from the Alcestis of Euripides. Some of what follows is said to be parodied from the Niobe of Eschylus.
2. He being too old a bird to be frightened with such threats.
glorious, O wisest, O most subtle, O thrice blessed one—O urge me on!

PEISTH. What say you?

HERALD. All the nations crown you and honour you with this golden crown because of your wisdom.

PEISTH. I accept it. But why do the nations thus honour me?

HERALD. O you who have founded a most glorious city, you know not how great honour you win among men, and how many lovers of this country you have. For before you founded this city, all men then were Laconian-mad, they wore long hair, starved themselves, were dirty, were like Socrates, carried the scytale (staff): but now changing again they’re bird-mad, and in their joy do all that birds do, mimicking them. First indeed all immediately from bed in the early morning flew together, like we do, to the feeding-ground: and then together they would light down upon—documents, and then feed there on decrees. And so manifestly were they bird-mad, that even to many birds’ names were given. One lame petty-tradesman was named partridge, but Menippus’ name was swallow, Opuntius’ crow without an eye, Philocles’ lark, Theogenes’ sheldrake, Lycurgus’ ibis, Chaerephon’s bat, Syracosius’ jay: and Meidias there was called quail, for he was like a quail struck on the head by a quail-striker. And from love of birds all sang songs where some swallow had been put in, or widgeon, or some goose, or dove, or where wings, or some small fraction of a feather was present. Such is the state of things there [on earth]. But one thing I tell you. There will come thence hither more than ten thousand, wanting wings and claw furniture: so that for your new-residents you need feathers from somewhere.

1. νεοδός means feeding ground νόμος law. There is a pun on the two here: as also in v. 1346.

2. The Athenians used to play a game at hitting quails: the striker was called στυφοκόπος = ὄρνυγοκόπος.
Peisth. Then by Zeus 'tis no longer our business to stand idle. But with all speed do you go and fill all the hampers and baskets with feathers: and let Manes bring me out the feathers: and I will receive those of them that come.

Chorus. Soon will each man call our city populous.

Peisth. Only may fortune befriend us!

Cho. And love of my city is prevailing.

Peisth. I bid you bring [feathers] more quickly (to attendant).

Cho. For what good thing is there not in this city, [good] for a man to reside there? Wisdom, Love, ambrosial Graces, and the serene face of kindly-minded Quietness.

Peisth. How sluggishly you serve me! won't you bestir yourself more quickly?

Cho. Let some one quickly bring a basket of feathers. And do you [Peisthetenaeus] again start this fellow, beating him thus: for he is a very slow fellow, like a donkey.

Peisth. Yes, for he is a weak Manes.

Cho. But do you first arrange these feathers in order: the poetic at once and the prophetic and the marine. And then [see] that you wing [the new-comers] wisely, looking to the man.

Peisth. By the kestrels! I will not keep my hands off you longer, seeing you so weak and slow (to the slave).

Enter a Father-striker.

Father-str. Would I were a high-flying eagle, that I might soar above the barren [main] over the billow of the blue water.

Peisth. The messenger seems to be no bearer-of-false-tidings: for here comes some one singing of eagles.

Father-str. Ugh! There is nothing sweeter than flying: and I am in love with the laws [in fashion] among birds. For I'm bird-mad, and I fly, and I wish to dwell with you, and I desire your laws.

Peisth. What laws? for the laws of birds are many.
Father-str. All: but especially that it is held honourable with birds to throttle and peck one's father.

Peisth. Yes, and by Zeus we hold it quite a courageous thing [in him] who being a mere chick beats his father.

Father-str. On this account indeed I desire, having migrated up hither, to throttle my father and have all the property.

Peisth. But there is with us birds an ancient law on the statute-columns of the storks: when the father stork, nourishing them, shall have made all the young storks capable-of-flying, the young are bound in turn to nourish the father.

Father-str. Truly then I've got a good thing (ironically), by Zeus, in coming here, if I must even feed my father.

Peisth. You've got nothing [so bad as you think]: for since you came, my friend, with good intention, I will wing you like an orphan bird. And to you, O young man, I will give no bad advice, but such as I myself learnt when I was a boy. Do you indeed not beat your father; but taking this wing and this spur in the other hand, thinking that you have this cock's crest, do garrison duty, serve in the field, support yourself as a mercenary soldier, let your father live: but, since you are pugnacious, fly off to the Thraceward parts, and fight there.

Father-str. By Dionysus, you seem to me to say well, and I will obey you.

Peisth. You will be sensible, by Zeus. (Exit the young man).

Enter Cinesias, a dithyrambic poet.

Cinesias. I fly up to Olympus on light wings, and I fly now to one [now to another] path of melodies—

Peisth. This creature wants a [large] load of wings.

Cinesias. With fearless mind and body following a new [path].
Peisth. We salute Cinesias! of linden-wood-stays. Why circle you round hither your lame foot?

Cinesias. I wish to become a bird, a shrill-voiced nightingale.

Peisth. Stop melodizing, and tell me what you mean.

Cinesias. I wish, when winged by you, having, flown up aloft, to get from the clouds air-tossed and snow-beaten preludes.

Peisth. What! can one get preludes from the clouds?

Cinesias. Nay our art depends from thence. For of dithyrambs the brilliant parts are airy somethings and dark and gloomy-gleaming and wing-wafted: and you, hearing [a specimen] shall soon know.

Peisth. No indeed I won't.

Cinesias. Yes, by Hercules, you shall. For I will traverse for you the whole air; the forms of the air-coursing winged ones, the long necked birds—

Peisth. Avast!

Cinesias. Bounding in a course-over-the-sea may I speed on with the breezes of the winds,

Peisth. By Zeus, assuredly I will stop your breezes.

Cinesias. Now advancing towards the way of the south, now again bringing my body near to the north, cutting the harbourless furrow of ether.

( Peisthetaerus strikes him with a wing.)

A charming thing you devise, old man, and a clever.

Peisth. For do not you rejoice at being wing-wafted.

( Beats him harder.)

Cinesias. Have you treated thus this cyclic-chorus-teacher, me who am always fought for by the tribes?

---

1. Being slender and weak, Cinesias supported his body by a kind of stays made of linden-wood.

2. The sense is not clear: nor indeed meant to be. Perhaps εἰδωλα was to be governed by a word to come later; but Peisthetaerus interrupts.
Peisth. Do you wish then remaining with us to teach for Leotrophides a chorus of flying birds, the Cecropian tribe?

Cinesias. You mock at me, you are plain [in so doing.] But at all events I will not cease, know well that [I will not], before that I being winged have run through the air. (Exit.)

Enter an informer, singing.

Informer. What birds are these, possessing nothing, of varied plumage, O long winged pied swallow?

Peisth. This is no small plague that is aroused. Here again comes hither some one warbling.

Informer. Long winged pied one, again [I say].

Peisth. He seems to me to be singing the song about his cloak: and is likely to want swallows not a few.

Informer. Who's he that wings the comers hitherward?

Peisth. Here he is present: but you must say what you want.

Informer. Wings, wings I want: ask not a second time.

Peisth. Do you mean to fly straight for Pellene?

Informer. No by Zeus, but I am a summoner of islanders, and an informer.

Peisth. O happy in your trade!

Informer. And a lawsuit-hunter. And then I want, having got wings, to frighten the cities all round, summoning [victims to trial].

Peisth. In what will you summon more cleverly for wings?

Informer. Not at all, by Zeus, but [it's] lest the pirates may annoy me, and that I may return thence with the cranes, having swallowed down many lawsuits to serve for ballast.

---

1. Leotrophides is supposed to have been another poet. 'Cecropian' is thought to have some punning reference to κέρκος 'tail,' 'a long-tailed tribe.' But the point is not clear.

2. Or 'some birds are these,' if τινές, not τίνες, be read.

3. Which was in strips and many-coloured patches. Therefore he would want the season to be summer: and it takes many swallows to make a summer.

4. Where a cloak was the prize of the games.
Peisth. What? do you work at this trade? Tell me; being a young [and able] man, do you inform against foreigners?
Inform. Why, what should I do? for I know not how to dig.
Peisth. But there are other sensible trades, by Zeus, from which it behoves a man as big as you are to get a living, by honesty rather than by lawsuit-cobbling.
Inform. My dear sir, don't preach to me, but wing me.
Peisth. Even now while speaking I am winging you.
Inform. And how can you wing a man by words?
Peisth. All are winged by words.
Inform. All?
Peisth. Haven't you heard when fathers say on each occasion to the young lads in the barbers' shops as follows: Diitrephes has by his words wondrously winged my lad [with a desire] for horse-driving. And some one else says that his son is winged and in a flutter of mind for tragedy.
Inform. Then men are winged by words?
Peisth. I say they are. For by words the mind is raised aloft and the man elevated. Thus too I wish, having winged you with good words, to turn you to a lawful trade.
Inform. But I don't wish it.
Peisth. What then will you do?
Inform. I will not disgrace my family. To inform is my line of life from-my-grandsire. So wing me quickly, and with light wings of hawk or kestrel, that having summoned the foreigners [to trial] and then having accused them here, I may then again fly back thither.
Peisth. I understand. You mean thus: that the foreigner may already have lost his suit before he has come here.
Inform. You quite understand.
Peisth. And then he sails hither: but you again fly thither to seize his property.
Inform. You have it all. I must in nowise differ from a top.
Peisth. I understand the top. And indeed by Zeus I have these most beatiful Corcyrean wings. *(produces a double whip).*

Inform. O miserable me! you have a whip.

Peisth. Nay rather, wings, with which I to-day will make you spin.

Inform. O miserable me!

Peisth. *(beating him).* Will you not wing away hence? will you not decamp, O you that shall perish miserably? You shall soon see your cunning-wresting-of justice disastrous [to you].

Exit informer.

*(To the rest)* Let us collect the feathers and go.

[Exeunt Peisthetaerus and attendants.

Cho. Many things indeed both novel and wonderful have we flown over, and strange matters have we seen. For there is a certain tree growing, an extraordinary one, far away from Heart-land, Cleonymus: *good for nothing, but uselessly weak and big. This in Spring always buds and informs, but in winter again it sheds-like-leaves its shields. And there is a certain place, close on the very darkness, in the desert without candles, where men breakfast with and company with heroes, except at evening. But then no longer was it safe to meet with them. For if any one of mortals met the hero Orestes by night, he was stript bare, being struck by him, all down his right side.

Enter Prometheus with covered head.

Prometheus. O dear me! let not Zeus see me. Where’s Peisthetaerus?

Peisth. Ah! what is this? what [means] this veiling?

Prom. Do you see any of the gods behind me there?

Peisth. By Zeus no not I. But who are you?

---

1. The police at Corcyra had double-thonged scourges.

2. He puns on the name of a town Cardia, and 'heart, courage.' Cleonymus was a coward who threw away his shield.

3. Orestes was a hero, also a foot-pad of the time. There is a reference to evil influences, strokes of palsy, etc. inflicted on those who offended the heroes.
Prom. What time of day is it then?
Peisth. What time? a little past noon. But who are you?
Prom. Is it ox-loosing time, or later?
Peisth. O dear, how disgusted I am [at you]!
Prom. What pray is Zeus doing? Is he clearing away
the clouds, or gathering them?
Peisth. Plague take you!
Prom. Well then I will unveil.
Peisth. (recognising him) O my dear Prometheus!
Prom. Hush, hush, don't shout.
Peisth. Why, what's the matter?
Prom. Be silent, don't call out my name: for if Zeus
sees me here, he will destroy me. But, that I may tell you all
the affairs above, having taken this parasol of mine hold it
over me, that the gods may not see me.

Peisth. Bravo, bravo! Well did you devise this and in
Promethean (provident) wise, slip under it then quickly, and
then boldly speak.
Prom. Hear then now.
Peisth. Speak on, as deeming that I hear.
Prom. Zeus is undone.
Peisth. At what time about was he undone?
Prom. Since you colonized the air. For no one of men
any more now sacrifices anything to the gods, nor has the
savour from [victims'] thighs ascended to us from that time;
but, as at the Thesmophoria, we fast without victims: and the
barbarian gods starving, gibbering like Illyrians say they will
invade Zeus from above if he will not provide ports open, that
chopped entrails may be imported.

Peisth. What! are there some other barbarian gods
above you?
Prom. Why, are there not barbarian [gods] whence
Execestides gets his paternal1 [patron-deity]?

1. Every Athenian had a πατρίδος 'Απόλλων. Execestides' Apollo
must be a barbarian, he argues. Cf. l. 11 of this play.
Peisth. And what is the name of these barbarian gods?
Prom. What is it? Triballi.
Peisth. Hence then came the phrase May you be destroyed !
Prom. Most assuredly. But one thing I tell you plain. Ambassadors will come hither about terms from Zeus and the Triballians above. But do not you make treaty unless Zeus give up again the sceptre to the birds, and give you Basilea to have as wife.

Peisth. Who's Basilea?
Prom. A most beautiful maiden, who dispenses the thunderbolt of Zeus, and everything else, good-counsel, good-laws, orderliness, the docks, bad language, the treasurer, the three-Obol-pieces.

Peisth. Then she dispenses all things for him.
Prom. Yes. Whom if you shall get from him, you have everything. For this reason I came hither that I might tell you. For I am always well-disposed to men.

Peisth. Yes, for through you alone of the gods we broil [fish] on the coals.
Prom. And I hate all the gods, as you know.

Peisth. By Zeus yes, you were indeed always hated by [and hater of] the gods.
Prom. A perfect Timon 2. But, that I may run away again, give me the parasol that, even if Zeus see me from above; he may think I am following a [processional] basket-bearer 3.

Peisth. Yes, and take this chair and carry it. [Exeunt.
Cho. 4And near the Shadow-feet is a lake where unwashed

---

1. An untranslatable pun on the two words.
2. Timon was a misanthrope. Prometheus takes themos as meant actively: by analogy it should be passive. Probably it includes both here.
3. A parasol and chair were usually carried behind the basket-bearer.
4. This strophe and antistrophe at l. 1694 tell of some more marvels seen by the birds. The Σκιάτροδες are a mythical African tribe. The nonsensical story is to introduce Socrates as dirty, Pisander as a coward, Chaerephon by his nickname of Bat.
Socrates conjures-up-spirits. There too Pisander came wanting to see the spirit which forsook him when he was alive, bringing for victim a camel as a sort of lamb, whose throat he having cut, like Ulysses retired; and then there came up to him from below, making for the bloody-throat\(^1\) of the camel, Chærephon the [vampire] bat.

*Enter Poseidon, Hercules, and Triballus the barbarian god.*

**Poseidon.** The city of Cloud-cuckoo-land is present here to see, whither we come as ambassadors. You there (*to Triballus*) what are you doing? do you wear your cloak thus on the left? will you not shift the cloak thus to the right? You are a Læspodias\(^2\) by nature. O democracy, whither at last will you bring us, if the gods elected [as ambassador] this fellow.

**Trib.** Will you keep quiet.

**Posei.** Plague take you! for far indeed the most barbarous of all the gods [whom] I have seen [are] you. Come now, what are we to do, Hercules?

**Herc.** You have heard from me that I wish to throttle the man, whoever he is, who has walled out the gods.

**Posei.** But, my good sir, we have been chosen ambassadors about terms of peace.

**Herc.** Doubly the more does it seem good to me to throttle [him].

**Peisth.** (*occupied with his cookery*) Let some one give me the cheese-scraper. Bring the silphium. Let some one bring the cheese. Stir the coal fire.

**Herc.** We gods, being three, bid the man hail.

**Peisth.** But I am scraping over [the meat] silphium.

---

1. No one knows what λαίμα is. Nor can I see that Bentley’s proposed λαϊμα ‘sacrificial cake’ makes any sense. Chærephon comes to drink the blood, as the ghosts do in the passage of Homer’s Odyssey (Book XI.) referred to. Read perhaps πρὸς τὸδ᾽ αἷμα.

2. An awkward man, with reference to λαῖός ‘left-handed, gauche.’
Herc. And of what is this the flesh?

Peisth. Certain birds having risen up against the republican birds were judged to be wrong-doers [and put to death].

Herc. And then do you first scrape silphium over them?

Peisth. Ah! (noticing Hercules for the first time) good day, Hercules! What is it?

Herc. We are come as ambassadors from the gods about putting an end to the war.

Peisth. (returning to his cookery.) There is no oil in the flask. And yet birds' flesh ought to be well-oiled.

Herc. For both we gain nothing by warring, and you by being friends to us gods would have rain water in your tanks, and pass halcyon days alway. On all these points we come with full powers [to treat].

Peisth. But neither before did we ever begin war against you, and now we are willing, if it seems good, if even now you will consent to do the right thing, to make truce. But the right terms are these: for Zeus to restore again the sceptre to us birds: and if we make peace on these terms, I invite the ambassadors to dinner.

Herc. For me this suffices, and I vote [for it].

Posei. What, O miserable man? you are a simpleton and a glutton. Do you deprive your father of the sovereignty?

Peisth. Really [say you so]? Why, will not you gods have greater power, if the birds rule down below? Now indeed mortals hidden by the clouds stoop down and perjure themselves: but if you have the birds as allies, when a man swears by the crow and Zeus, the crow having come to the place will fly up to him secretly and strike and peck out the eye of the perjurer.

Posei. By Poseidon, methinks you speak this well.

Herc. To me too it seems so.

Peisth. What then do you say? (to Triballus).
THE BIRDS

TRIB. Nabaisatreu.¹

PEISTH. Do you see? he too assents. Now hear yet [in] another thing how great good we shall do to you. If any of men, having vowed a victim to any one of the gods then quibble-sophistically saying The gods are patient, and in his greediness do not pay it, we will exact this too.

POSEI. Come, let me see, in what way?

PEISTH. When this man happens to be counting out his money, or sits after he has bathed, [then] a kite having flown down, secretly carrying it off will bear up to the god the value of two sheep.

HERC. I again vote to restore the sceptre to these.

POSEI. Ask now Triballus too.

HERC. Triballus, do you decide to come to grief (threaten-ing him).

TRIB. Saunacabataricroura.

HERC. He says that I say quite right.

POSEI. If indeed you both decide this, I join in the decision.

HERC. My friend, we decide to do this about the sceptre.

PEISTH. And, by Zeus there is another thing which I [now] remember. For I leave Hera to Zeus, but he must give the maiden Basilea² to me to wife.

POSEI. (indignant) You do not want terms of peace. Let us go back home again.

PEISTH. It matters little to me. (turning to his cookery) Cook, you must make the sauce sweet.

HERC. (loth to lose the feast) My good man Poseidon, whither are you turning? Shall we war for one [paltry] woman?

POSEI. What pray are we to do?

HERC. What? why, make terms.

POSEI. What, O wretched one? do you not know that

¹. There is no real meaning in this or in Triballus’ gibberish in v. 1628.

². Basilea means 'queen,' and implies sovereignty.
you are deceived all along? And indeed you are damaging yourself. For if Zeus die having given up the sovereignty to these, you will be poor. For all the property that Zeus may leave behind him when he dies becomes yours.

Peisth. O dear me, how he is bamboozling you! Come aside this way to me, that I may tell you something. (To Hercules aside) Your uncle is misleading you, you poor fellow. For of your father's property not a fraction have you as share according to the laws, for you are base-born and not legitimate.

Herc. I base-born? what do you mean?

Peisth. Yes you indeed, by Zeus, being from a foreign woman. Or how do you think that Athene would ever be sole-heiress, being a daughter, if there were legitimate brothers.

Herc. But what if my father gives me the property at his death, as bastard's portion?

Peisth. The law does not allow him. This Poseidon, who now encourages you, will be the first to claim your father's property, asserting that he himself is a legitimate brother. But I will repeat to you the law of Solon: '[Be it enacted] that to the bastard there is no right-of-kin, if there are legitimate children: and if there be not legitimate children, that the nearest of kin share the property.

Herc. Then I have no share of my father's property?

Peisth. None indeed, by Zeus. And tell me, has your father already enrolled you among your clansmen?

Herc. No indeed: and truly I long ago wondered at it.

Peisth. Why then do you gape upwards, looking assault-and-battery? Nay, if you be with us, I will make you a king, [and] I will give you birds' milk.

Herc. You seem to me even again [as before] to speak what is right about the maiden; and I am for giving her up to you.

---

1. This was done when the boy came of age.
2. As if you would knock somebody down.
THE BIRDS

Peisth. What pray say you? (to Poseidon)

Posei. I vote for the opposite.

Peisth. The whole matter [rests] on Triballus. (to Triballus) What say you?

Trib. I am for giving up¹ to the birds the beautiful maiden and mighty Basilea.

Peisth. He bids to give her up.

Posei. No, by Zeus, he does not bid to give her up, except that he chatters like the swallows.

Peisth. Well then, he bids you give her up to the swallows.²

Posei. Do you two then make terms and agreement: but I, since it is resolved on by you both, will hold my tongue.

Herc. (to Peisth.) It is resolved by us to grant all that you propose. But come yourself with us to heaven, that you may receive Basilea and all [the rest] there.

Peisth. Then in the nick of time were these birds cut up for the wedding feast.

Herc. Do you wish that I remaining here should meanwhile cook this meat? but do you go.


Herc. I would however have disposed of it very well.

Peisth. But let some one bring me hither a wedding cloak. (Exeunt.)

Cho. There is in Phanæ³ by the clepsydra, a rascal race of men-who-live-by-their-tongue; who reap and sow and gather vintage and fig-harvest with their tongues: but barbarian they are by race, Gorgiases and Philippuses. And from those

---

1. Barbarous Greek for ἐρνος καλὴν κόρην καὶ μεγάλην Βασίλειαν.
2. This seems to mean that his giving his decision in swallow language is natural and right enough as it is to the swallows (birds) that the maiden is to be given up.
3. A port of Chios, but used here with reference to φαινειν and συνοφαντεῖν 'to inform.' Hence he puts in by the 'clepsydra.'
Philippuses who-live-by-their-tongue, [is derived the custom that] everywhere in Attica the tongue is [in sacrifices] cut separate.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. O ye that experience all good fortune, O [ye that experience fortune] too great for words, O thrice blessed winged race of birds, receive ye your king in happy home. For he approaches the gold-gleaming palace, such as neither an all-brilliant star shines to the sight, nor does the far-gleaming blaze of the rays of the sun shine forth so brightly as he [doth while he] comes, possessing the beauty of a woman not utterable in words, brandishing the thunderbolt, the feathered shaft of Zeus. And a perfume unnameable penetrates to the depth of heaven’s concave, a glorious sight; and from the incense the breezes waft-and-spread the wreath of smoke. And here is even himself. Wherefore it behoves to open the sacred welcoming mouth of the goddess muse.

Enter Peisthetaerus, Basilea, and attendants in state.

Cho. Lead up, divide, advance, give passage. Fly ye around, happy with happy fortune. Ah me, ah me, what bloom, what beauty! O thou that hast married a blessed marriage for this city! Mighty, mighty fortunes befall the birds’ race through this man. Wherefore with nuptial-songs and bridal odes receive him and Basilea. Formerly with just such a nuptial song did the fates lull to rest the mighty ruler of the gods, [him] of the inaccessible throne, with Olympian Hera. Hymen O, Hymenæus O. And Love doubly-blooming, golden-winged, guided the back-stretched reins companion-in-the-car at the nuptials of Zeus and happy Hera. Hymen O, Hymenæus O.

Peisth. I rejoice in the hymns, I rejoice in the songs: and I admire your words. Come now, celebrate also the subterraneous thunderings and fiery lightnings of Zeus, and the dread gleaming bolt.
CHO. O mighty golden brightness of lightning, O immortal firebearing spear of Zeus, O subterranean deep-rumbling, and withal rain-bearing thunders, with which this man now shakes the earth! By you having got possession of all things he has also Basilea the companion of Zeus. Hymen O, Hymenaeus O.¹

PEISTH. Follow the wedding now, O all ye feathered tribes of [birds] that feed together; go ye to the plain of Zeus and marriage bed. Stretch out, O blessed one, your hand and taking hold of my feathers dance with me: and I will raise and support you.

CHO. Alalæ! Io pæan! Hurrah! gloriously victorious one, O supremest of deities!

¹ Meineke reads δὲ αἱ δὲ πάντα 'and having got possession of all belonging to Zeus.' It is not clear what σὲ can refer to.
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