

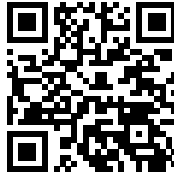
Peace

EIPHNH

Aristophanes

translated by Anonymous (Athenian Society, 1912)

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Peace

FIRST SERVANT: Quick, quick, bring the dung-beetle his cake.

SECOND SERVANT: Coming, coming.

FIRST SERVANT: Give it to him, and may it kill him!

SECOND SERVANT: May he never eat a better.

FIRST SERVANT: Now give him this other one kneaded up with ass's dung.

SECOND SERVANT: There! I've done that too.

FIRST SERVANT: And where's what you gave him just now; surely he can't have devoured it yet!

SECOND SERVANT: Indeed he has; he snatched it, rolled it between his feet and boiled it.

FIRST SERVANT: Come, hurry up, knead up a lot and knead them stiffly.

SECOND SERVANT: Oh, scavengers, help me in the name of the gods, if you do not wish to see me fall down choked.

FIRST SERVANT: Come, come, another made of the stool of a young scapegrace catamite. 'Twill be to the beetle's taste; he likes it well ground.

SECOND SERVANT: There! I am free at least from suspicion; none will accuse me of tasting what I mix.

FIRST SERVANT: Faugh! come, now another! keep on mixing with all your might.

SECOND SERVANT: I' faith, no. I can stand this awful cesspool stench no longer, so I bring you the whole ill-smelling gear.

FIRST SERVANT: Pitch it down the sewer sooner, and yourself with it.

SECOND SERVANT: Maybe, one of you can tell me where I can buy a stopped-up nose, for there is no work more disgusting than to mix food for a beetle and to carry it to him. A pig or a dog will at least pounce upon our excrement without more ado, but this foul wretch affects the disdainful, the spoilt mistress, and won't eat unless I offer him a cake that has been kneaded for an entire day.... But let us open the door a bit ajar without his seeing it. Has

he done eating? Come, pluck up courage, cram yourself till you burst! The cursed creature! It wallows in its food! It grips it between its claws like a wrestler clutching his opponent, and with head and feet together rolls up its paste like a ropemaker twisting a hawser. What an indecent, stinking, gluttonous beast! I know not what angry god let this monster loose upon us, but of a certainty it was neither Aphrodité nor the Graces.

FIRST SERVANT: Who was it then?

SECOND SERVANT: No doubt the Thunderer, Zeus.

FIRST SERVANT: But perhaps some spectator, some beardless youth, who thinks himself a sage, will say, "What is this? What does the beetle mean?" And then an Ionian, sitting next him, will add, "I think 'tis an allusion to Cleon, who so shamelessly feeds on filth all by himself." — But now I'm going indoors to fetch the beetle a drink.

SECOND SERVANT: As for me, I will explain the matter to you all, children, youths, grown-ups and old men, aye, even to the decrepit dotards. My master is mad, not as you are, but with another sort of madness, quite a new kind. The livelong day he looks open-mouthed towards heaven and never stops addressing Zeus. "Ah! Zeus," he cries, "what are thy intentions? Lay aside thy besom; do not sweep Greece away!"

TRYGAEUS: Ah! ah! ah!

FIRST SERVANT: Hush, hush! Methinks I hear his voice!

TRYGAEUS: Oh! Zeus, what art thou going to do for our people? Dost thou not see this, that our cities will soon be but empty husks?

FIRST SLAVE: As I told you, that is his form of madness. There you have a sample of his follies. When his trouble first began to seize him, he said to himself, "By what means could I go straight to Zeus?" Then he made himself very slender little ladders and so clambered up towards heaven; but he soon came hurtling down again and broke his head. Yesterday, to our misfortune, he went out and brought us back this thoroughbred, but from where I know not, this great beetle, whose groom he has forced me to become. He himself caresses it as though it were a horse, saying, "Oh! my little Pegasus, my noble aerial steed, may your wings soon bear me straight to Zeus!" But what is my

master doing? I must stoop down to look through this hole. Oh! great gods! Here! neighbours, run here quick! here is my master flying off mounted on his beetle as if on horseback.

TRYGAEUS: Gently, gently, go easy, beetle; don't start off so proudly, or trust at first too greatly to your powers; wait till you have sweated, till the beating of your wings shall make your limb joints supple. Above all things, don't let off some foul smell, I adjure you; else I would rather have you stop in the stable altogether.

SECOND SERVANT: Poor master! Is he crazy?

TRYGAEUS: Silence! silence!

SECOND SERVANT (TO TRYGAEUS): But why start up into the air on chance?

TRYGAEUS: 'Tis for the weal of all the Greeks; I am attempting a daring and novel feat.

SECOND SERVANT: But what is your purpose? What useless folly!

TRYGAEUS: No words of ill omen! Give vent to joy and command all men to keep silence, to close down their drains and privies with new tiles and to stop their own vent-holes.

FIRST SERVANT: No, I shall not be silent, unless you tell me where you are going.

TRYGAEUS: Why, where am I likely to be going across the sky, if it be not to visit Zeus?

FIRST SERVANT: For what purpose?

TRYGAEUS: I want to ask him what he reckons to do for all the Greeks.

SECOND SERVANT: And if he doesn't tell you?

TRYGAEUS: I shall pursue him at law as a traitor who sells Greece to the Medes.

SECOND SERVANT: Death seize me, if I let you go.

TRYGAEUS: It is absolutely necessary.

SECOND SERVANT: Alas! alas! dear little girls, your father is deserting you secretly to go to heaven. Ah! poor orphans, entreat him, beseech him.

LITTLE DAUGHTER: Father! father! what is this I hear? Is it true? What! you would leave me, you would vanish into the sky, you would go to the crows? 'Tis impossible! Answer, father, an you love me.

TRYGAEUS: Yes, I am going. You hurt me too sorely, my daughters, when you ask me for bread, calling me your daddy, and there is not the ghost of an obolus in the house; if I succeed and come back, you will have a barley loaf every morning — and a punch in the eye for sauce!

LITTLE DAUGHTER: But how will you make the journey? 'Tis not a ship that will carry you thither.

TRYGAEUS: No, but this winged steed will.

LITTLE DAUGHTER: But what an idea, daddy, to harness a beetle, on which to fly to the gods.

TRYGAEUS: We see from Aesop's fables that they alone can fly to the abode of the Immortals.

LITTLE DAUGHTER: Father, father, 'tis a tale nobody can believe! that such a stinking creature can have gone to the gods.

TRYGAEUS: It went to have vengeance on the eagle and break its eggs.

LITTLE DAUGHTER: Why not saddle Pegasus? you would have a more tragic appearance in the eyes of the gods.

TRYGAEUS: Eh! don't you see, little fool, that then twice the food would be wanted? Whereas my beetle devours again as filth what I have eaten myself.

LITTLE DAUGHTER: And if it fell into the watery depths of the sea, could it escape with its wings?

TRYGAEUS (SHOWING HIS PENIS): I am fitted with a rudder in case of need, and my Naxos beetle will serve me as a boat.

LITTLE DAUGHTER: And what harbour will you put in at?

TRYGAEUS: Why, is there not the harbour of Cantharos at the Piraeus?

LITTLE DAUGHTER: Take care not to knock against anything and so fall off into space; once a cripple, you would be a fit subject for Euripides, who would put you into a tragedy.

TRYGAEUS: I'll see to it. Good-bye! (To the Athenians.) You, for love of whom I brave these dangers, do ye neither let wind nor go to stool for the space of three days, for, if, while cleaving the air, my steed should scent anything, he would fling me head foremost from the summit of my hopes. Now come, my Pegasus, get a-going with up-pricked ears and make your golden bridle resound gaily. Eh! what are you doing? What are you up to? Do you turn your nose towards the cesspools? Come, pluck up a spirit; rush upwards from the earth, stretch out your speedy wings and make straight for the palace of Zeus; for once give up foraging in your daily food. — Hi! you down there, what are you after now? Oh! my god! 'tis a man emptying his belly in the Piraeus, close to the house where the bad girls are. But is it my death you seek then, my death? Will you not bury that right away and pile a great heap of earth upon it and plant wild thyme therein and pour perfumes on it? If I were to fall from up here and misfortune happened to me, the town of Chios would owe a fine of five talents for my death, all along of your cursed rump. Alas! how frightened I am! oh! I have no heart for jests. Ah! machinist, take great care of me. There is already a wind whirling round my navel; take great care or, from sheer fright, I shall form food for my beetle.... But I think I am no longer far from the gods; aye, that is the dwelling of Zeus, I perceive. Hullo! Hi! where is the doorkeeper? Will no one open?

* * * * *

The scene changes and heaven is presented.

HERMES: Meseems I can sniff a man. (He perceives Trygaeus astride his beetle.) Why, what plague is this?

TRYGAEUS: A horse-beetle.

HERMES: Oh! impudent, shameless rascal! oh! scoundrel! triple scoundrel! the greatest scoundrel in the world! how did you come here? Oh! scoundrel of all scoundrels! your name? Reply.

TRYGAEUS: Triple scoundrel.

HERMES: Your country?

TRYGAEUS: Triple scoundrel.

HERMES: Your father?

TRYGAEUS: My father? Triple scoundrel.

HERMES: By the Earth, you shall die, unless you tell me your name.

TRYGAEUS: I am Trygaeus of the Athmonian deme, a good vine-dresser, little addicted to quibbling and not at all an informer.

HERMES: Why do you come?

TRYGAEUS: I come to bring you this meat.

HERMES: Ah! my good friend, did you have a good journey?

TRYGAEUS: Glutton, be off! I no longer seem a triple scoundrel to you. Come, call Zeus.

HERMES: Ah! ah! you are a long way yet from reaching the gods, for they moved yesterday.

TRYGAEUS: To what part of the earth?

HERMES: Eh! of the earth, did you say?

TRYGAEUS: In short, where are they then?

HERMES: Very far, very far, right at the furthest end of the dome of heaven.

TRYGAEUS: But why have they left you all alone here?

HERMES: I am watching what remains of the furniture, the little pots and pans, the bits of chairs and tables, and odd wine-jars.

TRYGAEUS: And why have the gods moved away?

HERMES: Because of their wrath against the Greeks. They have located War in the house they occupied themselves and have given him full power to do with you exactly as he pleases; then they went as high up as ever they could, so as to see no more of your fights and to hear no more of your prayers.

TRYGAEUS: What reason have they for treating us so?

HERMES: Because they have afforded you an opportunity for peace more than once, but you have always preferred war. If the Laconians got the very slightest advantage, they would exclaim, "By the Twin Brethren! the Athenians shall smart for this." If, on the contrary, the latter triumphed and the Laconians came with peace proposals, you would say, "By Demeter, they want to deceive us. No, by Zeus, we will not hear a word; they will always be coming as long as we hold Pylos."

TRYGAEUS: Yes, that is quite the style our folk do talk in.

HERMES: So that I don't know whether you will ever see Peace again.

TRYGAEUS: Why, where has she gone to then?

HERMES: War has cast her into a deep pit.

TRYGAEUS: Where?

HERMES: Down there, at the very bottom. And you see what heaps of stones he has piled over the top, so that you should never pull her out again.

TRYGAEUS: Tell me, what is War preparing against us?

HERMES: All I know is that last evening he brought along a huge mortar.

TRYGAEUS: And what is he going to do with his mortar?

HERMES: He wants to pound up all the cities of Greece in it.... But I must say good-bye, for I think he is coming out; what an uproar he is making!

TRYGAEUS: Ah! great gods! let us seek safety; meseems I already hear the noise of this fearful war mortar.

WAR (ENTERS CARRYING A MORTAR): Oh! mortals, mortals, wretched mortals, how your jaws will snap!

TRYGAEUS: Oh! divine Apollo! what a prodigious big mortar! Oh, what misery the very sight of War causes me! This then is the foe from whom I fly, who is so cruel, so formidable, so stalwart, so solid on his legs!

WAR: Oh! Prasiae! thrice wretched, five times, aye, a thousand times wretched! for thou shalt be destroyed this day.

TRYGAEUS: This does not yet concern us over much; 'tis only so much the worse for the Laconians.

WAR: Oh! Megara! Megara! how utterly are you going to be ground up! what fine mincemeat are you to be made into!

TRYGAEUS: Alas! alas! what bitter tears there will be among the Megarians!

WAR: Oh, Sicily! you too must perish! Your wretched towns shall be grated like this cheese. Now let us pour some Attic honey into the mortar.

TRYGAEUS: Oh! I beseech you! use some other honey; this kind is worth four obols; be careful, oh! be careful of our Attic honey.

WAR: Hi! Tumult, you slave there!

TUMULT: What do you want?

WAR: Out upon you! You stand there with folded arms. Take this cuff o' the head for your pains.

TUMULT: Oh! how it stings! Master, have you got garlic in your fist, I wonder?

WAR: Run and fetch me a pestle.

TUMULT: But we haven't got one; 'twas only yesterday we moved.

WAR: Go and fetch me one from Athens, and hurry, hurry!

TUMULT: Aye, I hasten there; if I return without one, I shall have no cause for laughing. [Exit.

TRYGAEUS: Ah! what is to become of us, wretched mortals that we are? See the danger that threatens if he returns with the pestle, for War will quietly amuse himself with pounding all the towns of Hellas to pieces. Ah! Bacchus! cause this herald of evil to perish on his road!

WAR: Well!

TUMULT (WHO HAS RETURNED): Well, what?

WAR: You have brought back nothing?

TUMULT: Alas! the Athenians have lost their pestle — the tanner, who ground Greece to powder.

TRYGAEUS: Oh! Athené, venerable mistress! 'tis well for our city he is dead, and before he could serve us with this hash.

WAR: Then go and seek one at Sparta and have done with it!

TUMULT: Aye, aye, master!

WAR: Be back as quick as ever you can.

TRYGAEUS (TO THE AUDIENCE): What is going to happen, friends? 'Tis a critical hour. Ah! if there is some initiate of Samothrace among you, 'tis surely the moment to wish this messenger some accident — some sprain or strain.

TUMULT (WHO RETURNS): Alas! alas! thrice again, alas!

WAR: What is it? Again you come back without it?

TUMULT: The Spartans too have lost their pestle.

WAR: How, varlet?

TUMULT: They had lent it to their allies in Thrace, who have lost it for them.

TRYGAEUS: Long life to you, Thracians! My hopes revive, pluck up courage, mortals!

WAR: Take all this stuff away; I am going in to make a pestle for myself.

TRYGAEUS: 'Tis now the time to sing as Datis did, as he masturbated himself at high noon, "Oh pleasure! oh enjoyment! oh delights!" 'Tis now, oh Greeks! the moment when freed of quarrels and fighting, we should rescue sweet Peace and draw her out of this pit, before some other pestle prevents us. Come, labourers, merchants, workmen, artisans, strangers, whether you be domiciled or not, islanders, come here, Greeks of all countries, come hurrying here with picks and levers and ropes! 'Tis the moment to drain a cup in honour of the Good Genius.

CHORUS: Come hither, all! quick, quick, hasten to the rescue! All peoples of Greece, now is the time or never, for you to help each other. You see yourselves freed from battles and all their horrors of bloodshed. The day, hateful to Lamachus, has come. Come then, what must be done? Give your orders, direct us, for I swear to work this day without ceasing, until with the help of our levers and our engines we have drawn back into light the greatest of all goddesses, her to whom the olive is so dear.

TRYGAEUS: Silence! if War should hear your shouts of joy he would bound forth from his retreat in fury.

CHORUS: Such a decree overwhelms us with joy; how different to the edict, which bade us muster with provisions for three days.

TRYGAEUS: Let us beware lest the cursed Cerberus prevent us even from the nethermost hell from delivering the goddess by his furious howling, just as he did when on earth.

CHORUS: Once we have hold of her, none in the world will be able to take her from us. Huzza! huzza!

TRYGAEUS: You will work my death if you don't subdue your shouts. War will come running out and trample everything beneath his feet.

CHORUS: Well then! Let him confound, let him trample, let him overturn everything! We cannot help giving vent to our joy.

TRYGAEUS: Oh! cruel fate! My friends! in the name of the gods, what possesses you? Your dancing will wreck the success of a fine undertaking.

CHORUS: 'Tis not I who want to dance; 'tis my legs that bound with delight.

TRYGAEUS: Enough, an you love me, cease your gambols.

CHORUS: There! Tis over.

TRYGAEUS: You say so, and nevertheless you go on.

CHORUS: Yet one more figure and 'tis done.

TRYGAEUS: Well, just this one; then you must dance no more.

CHORUS: No, no more dancing, if we can help you.

TRYGAEUS: But look, you are not stopping even now.

CHORUS: By Zeus, I am only throwing up my right leg, that's all.

TRYGAEUS: Come, I grant you that, but pray, annoy me no further.

CHORUS: Ah! the left leg too will have its fling; well, 'tis but its right. I am so happy, so delighted at not having to carry my buckler any more. I sing and I laugh more than if I had cast my old age, as a serpent does its skin.

TRYGAEUS: No, 'tis no time for joy yet, for you are not sure of success. But when you have got the goddess, then rejoice, shout and laugh; thenceforward you will be able to sail or stay at home, to make love or sleep, to attend festivals and processions, to play at cottabos, live like true Sybarites and to shout, Io, io!

CHORUS: Ah! God grant we may see the blessed day. I have suffered so much; have so oft slept with Phormio on hard beds. You will no longer find me an acid, angry, hard judge as heretofore, but will find me turned indulgent and grown younger by twenty years through happiness. We have been killing ourselves long enough, tiring ourselves out with going to the Lyceum and returning laden with spear and buckler. — But what can we do to please you? Come, speak; for 'tis a good Fate, that has named you our leader.

TRYGAEUS: How shall we set about removing these stones?

HERMES: Rash reprobate, what do you propose doing?

TRYGAEUS: Nothing bad, as Cillicon said.

HERMES: You are undone, you wretch.

TRYGAEUS: Yes, if the lot had to decide my life, for Hermes would know how to turn the chance.

HERMES: You are lost, you are dead.

TRYGAEUS: On what day?

HERMES: This instant.

TRYGAEUS: But I have not provided myself with flour and cheese yet to start for death.

HERMES: You are kneaded and ground already, I tell you.

TRYGAEUS: Hah! I have not yet tasted that gentle pleasure.

HERMES: Don't you know that Zeus has decreed death for him who is surprised exhuming Peace?

TRYGAEUS: What! must I really and truly die?

HERMES: You must.

TRYGAEUS: Well then, lend me three drachmae to buy a young pig; I wish to have myself initiated before I die.

HERMES: Oh! Zeus, the Thunderer!

TRYGAEUS: I adjure you in the name of the gods, master, don't denounce us!

HERMES: I may not, I cannot keep silent.

TRYGAEUS: In the name of the meats which I brought you so good-naturedly.

HERMES: Why, wretched man, Zeus will annihilate me, if I do not shout out at the top of my voice, to inform him what you are plotting.

TRYGAEUS: Oh, no! don't shout, I beg you, dear little Hermes.... And what are you doing, comrades? You stand there as though you were stocks and stones. Wretched men, speak, entreat him at once; otherwise he will be shouting.

CHORUS: Oh! mighty Hermes! don't do it; no, don't do it! If ever you have eaten some young pig, sacrificed by us on your altars, with pleasure, may this offering not be without value in your sight to-day.

TRYGAEUS: Do you not hear them wheedling you, mighty god?

CHORUS: Be not pitiless toward our prayers; permit us to deliver the goddess. Oh! the most human, the most generous of the gods, be favourable toward us, if it be true that you detest the haughty crests and proud brows of Pisander; we shall never cease, oh master, offering you sacred victims and solemn prayers.

TRYGAEUS: Have mercy, mercy, let yourself be touched by their words; never was your worship so dear to them as to-day.

HERMES: I' truth, never have you been greater thieves.

TRYGAEUS: I will reveal a great, a terrible conspiracy against the gods to you.

HERMES: Hah! speak and perchance I shall let myself be softened.

TRYGAEUS: Know then, that the Moon and that infamous Sun are plotting against you, and want to deliver Greece into the hands of the Barbarians.

HERMES: What for?

TRYGAEUS: Because it is to you that we sacrifice, whereas the barbarians worship them; hence they would like to see you destroyed, that they alone might receive the offerings.

HERMES: 'Tis then for this reason that these untrustworthy charioteers have for so long been defrauding us, one of them robbing us of daylight and the other nibbling away at the other's disk.

TRYGAEUS: Yes, certainly. So therefore, Hermes, my friend, help us with your whole heart to find and deliver the captive and we will celebrate the great Panathenaea in your honour as well as all the festivals of the other gods; for Hermes shall be the Mysteries, the Dipolia, the Adonia; everywhere the towns, freed from their miseries, will sacrifice to Hermes, the Liberator; you will be loaded with benefits of every kind, and to start with, I offer you this cup for libations as your first present.

HERMES: Ah! how golden cups do influence me! Come, friends, get to work. To the pit quickly, pick in hand and drag away the stones.

CHORUS: We go, but you, the cleverest of all the gods, supervise our labours; tell us, good workman as you are, what we must do; we shall obey your orders with alacrity.

TRYGAEUS: Quick, reach me your cup, and let us preface our work by addressing prayers to the gods.

HERMES: Oh! sacred, sacred libations! Keep silence, oh! ye people! keep silence!

TRYGAEUS: Let us offer our libations and our prayers, so that this day may begin an era of unalloyed happiness for Greece and that he who has bravely pulled at the rope with us may never resume his buckler.

CHORUS: Aye, may we pass our lives in peace, caressing our mistresses and poking the fire.

TRYGAEUS: May he who would prefer the war, oh Dionysus, be ever drawing barbed arrows out of his elbows.

CHORUS: If there be a citizen, greedy for military rank and honours, who refuses, oh, divine Peace! to restore you to daylight, may he behave as cowardly as Cleonymus on the battlefield.

TRYGAEUS: If a lance-maker or a dealer in shields desires war for the sake of better trade, may he be taken by pirates and eat nothing but barley.

CHORUS: If some ambitious man does not help us, because he wants to become a General, or if a slave is plotting to pass over to the enemy, let his limbs be broken on the wheel, may he be beaten to death with rods! As for us, may Fortune favour us! Io! Paean, Io!

TRYGAEUS: Don't say Paean, but simply, Io.

CHORUS: Very well, then! Io! Io! I'll simply say, Io!

TRYGAEUS: To Hermes, the Graces, Hora, Aphrodité, Eros!

CHORUS: And not to Ares?

TRYGAEUS: No.

CHORUS: Nor doubtless to Enyalios?

TRYGAEUS: No.

CHORUS: Come, all strain at the ropes to tear away the stones. Pull!

HERMES: Heave away, heave, heave, oh!

CHORUS: Come, pull harder, harder.

HERMES: Heave away, heave, heave, oh!

CHORUS: Still harder, harder still.

HERMES: Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave, heave, oh!

TRYGAEUS: Come, come, there is no working together. Come! all pull at the same instant! you Boeotians are only pretending. Beware!

HERMES: Come, heave away, heave!

CHORUS: Hi! you two pull as well.

TRYGAEUS: Why, I am pulling, I am hanging on to the rope and straining till I am almost off my feet; I am working with all my might.

HERMES: Why does not the work advance then?

TRYGAEUS: Lamachus, this is too bad! You are in the way, sitting there. We have no use for your Medusa's head, friend.

HERMES: But hold, the Argives have not pulled the least bit; they have done nothing but laugh at us for our pains while they were getting gain with both hands.

TRYGAEUS: Ah! my dear sir, the Laconians at all events pull with vigour.

CHORUS: But look! only those among them who generally hold the plough-tail show any zeal, while the armourers impede them in their efforts.

HERMES: And the Megarians too are doing nothing, yet look how they are pulling and showing their teeth like famished curs; the poor wretches are dying of hunger!

TRYGAEUS: This won't do, friends. Come! all together! Everyone to the work and with a good heart for the business.

HERMES: Heave away, heave!

TRYGAEUS: Harder!

HERMES: Heave away, heave!

TRYGAEUS: Come on then, by heaven.

HERMES: Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave!

CHORUS: This will never do.

TRYGAEUS: Is it not a shame? some pull one way and others another. You, Argives there, beware of a thrashing!

HERMES: Come, put your strength into it.

TRYGAEUS: Heave away, heave!

CHORUS: There are many ill-disposed folk among us.

TRYGAEUS: Do you at least, who long for peace, pull heartily.

CHORUS: But there are some who prevent us.

HERMES: Off to the Devil with you, Megarians! The goddess hates you. She recollects that you were the first to rub her the wrong way. Athenians, you are not well placed for pulling. There you are too busy with law-suits; if you really want to free the goddess, get down a little towards the sea.

CHORUS: Come, friends, none but husbandmen on the rope.

HERMES: Ah! that will do ever so much better.

CHORUS: He says the thing is going well. Come, all of you, together and with a will.

TRYGAEUS: 'Tis the husbandmen who are doing all the work.

CHORUS: Come then, come, and all together! Hah! hah! at last there is some unanimity in the work. Don't let us give up, let us redouble our efforts. There! now we have it! Come then, all together! Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave! All together! (Peace is drawn out of the pit.)

TRYGAEUS: Oh! venerated goddess, who givest us our grapes, where am I to find the ten-thousand-gallon words wherewith to greet thee? I have none such at home. Oh! hail to thee, Opora, and thou, Theoria! How beautiful is thy face! How sweet thy breath! What gentle fragrance comes from thy bosom, gentle as freedom from military duty, as the most dainty perfumes!

HERMES: Is it then a smell like a soldier's knapsack?

CHORUS: Oh! hateful soldier! your hideous satchel makes me sick! it stinks like the belching of onions, whereas this lovable deity has the odour of sweet fruits, of festivals, of the Dionysia, of the harmony of flutes, of the comic poets, of the verses of Sophocles, of the phrases of Euripides...

TRYGAEUS: That's a foul calumny, you wretch! She detests that framer of subtleties and quibbles.

CHORUS: ... of ivy, of straining-bags for wine, of bleating ewes, of provision-laden women hastening to the kitchen, of the tipsy servant wench, of the upturned wine-jar, and of a whole heap of other good things.

HERMES: Then look how the reconciled towns chat pleasantly together, how they laugh; and yet they are all cruelly mishandled; their wounds are bleeding

still.

TRYGAEUS: But let us also scan the mien of the spectators; we shall thus find out the trade of each.

HERMES: Ah! good gods! look at that poor crest-maker, tearing at his hair, and at that pike-maker, who has just broken wind in yon sword-cutler's face.

TRYGAEUS: And do you see with what pleasure this sickle-maker is making long noses at the spear-maker?

HERMES: Now ask the husbandmen to be off.

TRYGAEUS: Listen, good folk! Let the husbandmen take their farming tools and return to their fields as quick as possible, but without either sword, spear or javelin. All is as quiet as if Peace had been reigning for a century. Come, let everyone go till the earth, singing the Paean.

CHORUS: Oh, thou, whom men of standing desired and who art good to husbandmen, I have gazed upon thee with delight; and now I go to greet my vines, to caress after so long an absence the fig trees I planted in my youth.

TRYGAEUS: Friends, let us first adore the goddess, who has delivered us from crests and Gorgons; then let us hurry to our farms, having first bought a nice little piece of salt fish to eat in the fields.

HERMES: By Posidon! what a fine crew they make and dense as the crust of a cake; they are as nimble as guests on their way to a feast.

TRYGAEUS: See, how their iron spades glitter and how beautifully their three-pronged mattocks glisten in the sun! How regularly they will align the plants! I also burn myself to go into the country and to turn over the earth I have so long neglected. — Friends, do you remember the happy life that peace afforded us formerly; can you recall the splendid baskets of figs, both fresh and dried, the myrtles, the sweet wine, the violets blooming near the spring, and the olives, for which we have wept so much? Worship, adore the goddess for restoring you so many blessings.

CHORUS: Hail! hail! thou beloved divinity! thy return overwhelms us with joy. When far from thee, my ardent wish to see my fields again made me pine with regret. From thee came all blessings. Oh! much desired Peace! thou art

the sole support of those who spend their lives tilling the earth. Under thy rule we had a thousand delicious enjoyments at our beck; thou wert the husbandman's wheaten cake and his safeguard. So that our vineyards, our young fig-tree woods and all our plantations hail thee with delight and smile at thy coming. But where was she then, I wonder, all the long time she spent away from us? Hermes, thou benevolent god, tell us!

HERMES: Wise husbandmen, hearken to my words, if you want to know why she was lost to you. The start of our misfortunes was the exile of Phidias; Pericles feared he might share his ill-luck, he mistrusted your peevish nature and, to prevent all danger to himself, he threw out that little spark, the Megarian decree, set the city aflame, and blew up the conflagration with a hurricane of war, so that the smoke drew tears from all Greeks both here and over there. At the very outset of this fire our vines were a-crackle, our casks knocked together; it was beyond the power of any man to stop the disaster, and Peace disappeared.

TRYGAEUS: That, by Apollo! is what no one ever told me; I could not think what connection there could be between Phidias and Peace.

CHORUS: Nor I; I know it now. This accounts for her beauty, if she is related to him. There are so many things that escape us.

HERMES: Then, when the towns subject to you saw that you were angered one against the other and were showing each other your teeth like dogs, they hatched a thousand plots to pay you no more dues and gained over the chief citizens of Sparta at the price of gold. They, being as shamelessly greedy as they were faithless in diplomacy, chased off Peace with ignominy to let loose War. Though this was profitable to them, 'twas the ruin of the husbandmen, who were innocent of all blame; for, in revenge, your galleys went out to devour their figs.

TRYGAEUS: And 'twas with justice too; did they not break down my black fig tree, which I had planted and dunged with my own hands?

CHORUS: Yes, by Zeus! yes, 'twas well done; the wretches broke a chest for me with stones, which held six medimni of corn.

HERMES: Then the rural labourers flocked into the city and let themselves be bought over like the others. Not having even a grape-stone to munch and longing after their figs, they looked towards the orators. These well knew that the poor were driven to extremity and lacked even bread; but they nevertheless drove away the Goddess each time she reappeared in answer to the wish of the country with their loud shrieks, that were as sharp as pitchforks; furthermore, they attacked the well-filled purses of the richest among our allies on the pretence that they belonged to Brasidas' party. And then you would tear the poor accused wretch to pieces with your teeth; for the city, all pale with hunger and cowed with terror, gladly snapped up any calumny that was thrown it to devour. So the strangers, seeing what terrible blows the informers dealt, sealed their lips with gold. They grew rich, while you, alas! you could only see that Greece was going to ruin. 'Twas the tanner who was the author of all this woe.

TRYGAEUS: Enough said, Hermes, leave that man in Hades, whither he has gone; he no longer belongs to us, but rather to yourself. That he was a cheat, a braggart, a calumniator when alive, why, nothing could be truer; but anything you might say now would be an insult to one of your own folk. Oh! venerated Goddess! why art thou silent?

HERMES: And how could she speak to the spectators? She is too angry at all that they have made her suffer.

TRYGAEUS: At least let her speak a little to you, Hermes.

HERMES: Tell me, my dear, what are your feelings with regard to them? Come, you relentless foe of all bucklers, speak; I am listening to you. (Peace whispers into Hermes' ear.) Is that your grievance against them? Yes, yes, I understand. Harken, you folk, this is her complaint. She says, that after the affair of Pylos she came to you unbidden to bring you a basket full of truces and that you thrice repulsed her by your votes in the assembly.

TRYGAEUS: Yes, we did wrong, but forgive us, for our mind was then entirely absorbed in leather.

HERMES: Listen again to what she has just asked me. Who was her greatest foe here? and furthermore, had she a friend who exerted himself to put an end

to the fighting?

TRYGAEUS: Her most devoted friend was Cleonymus; it is undisputed.

HERMES: How then did Cleonymus behave in fights?

TRYGAEUS: Oh! the bravest of warriors! Only he was not born of the father he claims; he showed it quick enough in the army by throwing away his weapons.

HERMES: There is yet another question she has just put to me. Who rules now in the rostrum?

TRYGAEUS: 'Tis Hyperbolus, who now holds empire on the Pnyx. (To Peace.) What now? you turn away your head!

HERMES: She is vexed, that the people should give themselves a wretch of that kind for their chief.

Trygaeus Oh! we shall not employ him again; but the people, seeing themselves without a leader, took him haphazard, just as a man, who is naked, springs upon the first cloak he sees.

HERMES: She asks, what will be the result of such a choice of the city?

TRYGAEUS: We shall be more far-seeing in consequence.

HERMES: And why?

TRYGAEUS: Because he is a lamp-maker. Formerly we only directed our business by groping in the dark; now we shall only deliberate by lamplight.

HERMES: Oh! oh! what questions she does order me to put to you!

TRYGAEUS: What are they?

HERMES: She wants to have news of a whole heap of old-fashioned things she left here. First of all, how is Sophocles?

TRYGAEUS: Very well; but something very strange has happened to him.

HERMES: What then?

TRYGAEUS: He has turned from Sophocles into Simonides.

HERMES: Into Simonides? How so?

TRYGAEUS: Because, though old and broken-down as he is, he would put to sea on a hurdle to gain an obolus.

HERMES: And wise Cratinus, is he still alive?

TRYGAEUS: He died about the time of the Laconian invasion.

HERMES: How?

TRYGAEUS: Of a swoon. He could not bear the shock of seeing one of his casks full of wine broken. Ah! what a number of other misfortunes our city has suffered! So, dearest mistress, nothing can now separate us from thee.

HERMES: If that be so, receive Opora here for a wife; take her to the country, live with her, and grow fine grapes together.

TRYGAEUS: Come, my dear friend, come and accept my kisses. Tell me, Hermes, my master, do you think it would hurt me to fuck her a little, after so long an abstinence?

HERMES: No, not if you swallow a potion of penny-royal afterwards. But hasten to lead Theoria to the Senate; 'twas there she lodged before.

TRYGAEUS: Oh! fortunate Senate! Thanks to Theoria, what soups you will swallow for the space of three days! how you will devour meats and cooked tripe! Come, farewell, friend Hermes!

HERMES: And to you also, my dear sir, may you have much happiness, and don't forget me.

TRYGAEUS: Come, beetle, home, home, and let us fly on a swift wing.

HERMES: Oh! he is no longer here.

TRYGAEUS: Where has he gone to then?

HERMES: He is harnessed to the chariot of Zeus and bears the thunderbolts.

TRYGAEUS: But where will the poor wretch get his food?

HERMES: He will eat Ganymede's ambrosia.

TRYGAEUS: Very well then, but how am I going to descend?

HERMES: Oh! never fear, there is nothing simpler; place yourself beside the goddess.

TRYGAEUS: Come, my pretty maidens, follow me quickly; there are plenty of folk awaiting you with standing tools.

CHORUS: Farewell and good luck be yours! Let us begin by handing over all this gear to the care of our servants, for no place is less safe than a theatre; there is always a crowd of thieves prowling around it, seeking to find some mischief to do. Come, keep a good watch over all this. As for ourselves, let us explain to the spectators what we have in our minds, the purpose of our play.

Undoubtedly the comic poet who mounted the stage to praise himself in the parabasis would deserve to be handed over to the sticks of the beadles. Nevertheless, oh Muse, if it be right to esteem the most honest and illustrious of our comic writers at his proper value, permit our poet to say that he thinks he has deserved a glorious renown. First of all, 'tis he who has compelled his rivals no longer to scoff at rags or to war with lice; and as for those Heracles, always chewing and ever hungry, those poltroons and cheats who allow themselves to be beaten at will, he was the first to cover them with ridicule and to chase them from the stage; he has also dismissed that slave, whom one never failed to set a-weeping before you, so that his comrade might have the chance of jeering at his stripes and might ask, "Wretch, what has happened to your hide? Has the lash rained an army of its thongs on you and laid your back waste?" After having delivered us from all these wearisome ineptitudes and these low buffooneries, he has built up for us a great art, like a palace with high towers, constructed of fine phrases, great thoughts and of jokes not common on the streets. Moreover 'tis not obscure private persons or women that he stages in his comedies; but, bold as Heracles, 'tis the very greatest whom he attacks, undeterred by the fetid stink of leather or the threats of hearts of mud. He has the right to say, "I am the first ever dared to go straight for that beast with the sharp teeth and the terrible eyes that flashed lambent fire like those of Cynna, surrounded by a hundred lewd flatterers, who spittle-licked him to his heart's content; it had a voice like a roaring torrent, the stench of a seal, a foul Lamia's testicles and the rump of a camel."

I did not recoil in horror at the sight of such a monster, but fought him relentlessly to win your deliverance and that of the Islanders. Such are the services which should be graven in your recollection and entitle me to your

thanks. Yet I have not been seen frequenting the wrestling school intoxicated with success and trying to tamper with young boys; but I took all my theatrical gear and returned straight home. I pained folk but little and caused them much amusement; my conscience rebuked me for nothing. Hence both grown men and youths should be on my side and I likewise invite the bald to give me their votes; for, if I triumph, everyone will say, both at table and at festivals, “Carry this to the bald man, give these cakes to the bald one, do not grudge the poet whose talent shines as bright as his own bare skull the share he deserves.”

Oh, Muse! drive the War far from our city and come to preside over our dances, if you love me; come and celebrate the nuptials of the gods, the banquets of us mortals and the festivals of the fortunate; these are the themes that inspire thy most poetic songs. And should Carcinus come to beg thee for admission with his sons to thy chorus, refuse all traffic with them; remember they are but gelded birds, stork-necked dancers, mannikins about as tall as a pat of goat’s dung, in fact machine-made poets. Contrary to all expectation, the father has at last managed to finish a piece, but he owns himself a cat strangled it one fine evening.

Such are the songs with which the Muse with the glorious hair inspires the able poet and which enchant the assembled populace, when the spring swallow twitters beneath the foliage; but the god spare us from the chorus of Morsimus and that of Melanthius! Oh! what a bitter discordancy grated upon my ears that day when the tragic chorus was directed by this same Melanthius and his brother, these two Gorgons, these two harpies, the plague of the seas, whose gluttonous bellies devour the entire race of fishes, these followers of old women, these goats with their stinking arm-pits. Oh! Muse, spit upon them abundantly and keep the feast gaily with me.

TRYGAEUS: Ah! ’tis a rough job getting to the gods! my legs are as good as broken through it. How small you were, to be sure, when seen from heaven! you had all the appearance too of being great rascals; but seen close, you look even worse.

SERVANT: Is that you, master?

TRYGAEUS: So I have been told.

SERVANT: What has happened to you?

TRYGAEUS: My legs pain me; it is such a plaguery long journey.

SERVANT: Oh! do tell me....

TRYGAEUS: What?

SERVANT: Did you see any other man besides yourself strolling about in heaven?

TRYGAEUS: No, only the souls of two or three dithyrambic poets.

SERVANT: What were they doing up there?

TRYGAEUS: They were seeking to catch some lyric exordia as they flew by immersed in the billows of the air.

SERVANT: Is it true, what they tell us, that men are turned into stars after death?

TRYGAEUS: Quite true.

SERVANT: Then who is that star I see over yonder?

TRYGAEUS: That is Ion of Chios, the author of an ode beginning "Morning"; as soon as ever he got to heaven, they called him "the Morning Star."

SERVANT: And those stars like sparks, that plough up the air as they dart across the sky?

TRYGAEUS: They are the rich leaving the feast with a lantern and a light inside it. But hurry up, show this young girl into my house, clean out the bath, heat some water and prepare the nuptial couch for herself and me. When 'tis done, come back here; meanwhile I am off to present this one to the Senate.

SERVANT: But where then did you get these pretty chattels?

TRYGAEUS: Where? why in heaven.

SERVANT: I would not give more than an obolus for gods who have got to keeping brothels like us mere mortals.

TRYGAEUS: They are not all so, but there are some up there too who live by this trade.

SERVANT: Come, that's rich! But I bethink me, shall I give her something to eat?

TRYGAEUS: No, for she would neither touch bread nor cake; she is used to licking ambrosia at the table of the gods.

SERVANT: Well, we can give her something to lick down here too.

CHORUS: Here is a truly happy old man, as far as I can judge.

TRYGAEUS: Ah! but what shall I be, when you see me presently dressed for the wedding?

CHORUS: Made young again by love and scented with perfumes, your lot will be one we all shall envy.

TRYGAEUS: And when I lie beside her and caress her bosoms?

CHORUS: Oh! then you will be happier than those spinning-tops who call Carcinus their father.

TRYGAEUS: And I well deserve it; have I not bestridden a beetle to save the Greeks, who now, thanks to me, can make love at their ease and sleep peacefully on their farms?

SERVANT: The girl has quitted the bath; she is charming from head to foot, both belly and buttocks; the cake is baked and they are kneading the sesame-biscuit; nothing is lacking but the bridegroom's penis.

TRYGAEUS: Let us first hasten to lodge Theoria in the hands of the Senate.

SERVANT: But tell me, who is this woman?

TRYGAEUS: Why, 'tis Theoria, with whom we used formerly to go to Brauron, to get tipsy and frolic. I had the greatest trouble to get hold of her.

SERVANT: Ah! you charmer! what pleasure your pretty bottom will afford me every four years!

TRYGAEUS: Let us see, who of you is steady enough to be trusted by the Senate with the care of this charming wench? Hi! you, friend! what are you drawing there?

SERVANT: I am drawing the plan of the tent I wish to erect for myself on the isthmus.

TRYGAEUS: Come, who wishes to take the charge of her? No one? Come, Theoria, I am going to lead you into the midst of the spectators and confide you to their care.

SERVANT: Ah! there is one who makes a sign to you.

TRYGAEUS: Who is it?

SERVANT: 'Tis Ariphrades. He wishes to take her home at once.

TRYGAEUS: No, I'm sure he shan't. He would soon have her done for, licking up all her life juice. Come, Theoria, put down all this gear. — Senate, Prytanes, look upon Theoria and see what precious blessings I place in your hands. Hasten to raise its limbs and to immolate the victim. Admire the fine chimney, it is quite black with smoke, for 'twas here that the Senate did their cooking before the War. Now that you have found Theoria again, you can start the most charming games from to-morrow, wrestling with her on the ground, either on your hands and feet, or you can lay her on her side, or stand before her with bent knees, or, well rubbed with oil, you can boldly enter the lists, as in the Pancratium, belabouring your foe with blows from your fist or otherwise. The next day you will celebrate equestrian games, in which the riders will ride side by side, or else the chariot teams, thrown one on top of another, panting and whinnying, will roll and knock against each other on the ground, while other rivals, thrown out of their seats, will fall before reaching the goal, utterly exhausted by their efforts. — Come, Prytanes, take Theoria. Oh! look how graciously yonder fellow has received her; you would not have been in such a hurry to introduce her to the Senate, if nothing were coming to you through it; you would not have failed to plead some holiday as an excuse.

CHORUS: Such a man as you assures the happiness of all his fellow-citizens.

TRYGAEUS: When you are gathering your vintages you will prize me even better.

CHORUS: E'en from to-day we hail you as the deliverer of mankind.

TRYGAEUS: Wait until you have drunk a beaker of new wine, before you appraise my true merits.

CHORUS: Excepting the gods, there is none greater than yourself, and that will ever be our opinion.

TRYGAEUS: Yea, Trygaeus of Athmonia has deserved well of you, he has freed both husbandman and craftsman from the most cruel ills; he has vanquished Hyperbolus.

CHORUS: Well then, what must we do now?

TRYGAEUS: You must offer pots of green-stuff to the goddess to consecrate her altars.

CHORUS: Pots of green-stuff as we do to poor Hermes — and even he thinks the fare but mean?

TRYGAEUS: What will you offer then? A fatted bull?

CHORUS: Oh, no! I don't want to start bellowing the battle-cry.

TRYGAEUS: A great fat swine then?

CHORUS: No, no.

TRYGAEUS: Why not?

CHORUS: We don't want any of the swinishness of Theagenes.

TRYGAEUS: What other victim do you prefer then?

CHORUS: A sheep.

TRYGAEUS: A sheep?

CHORUS: Yes.

TRYGAEUS: But you must give the word the Ionic form.

CHORUS: Purposely. So that if anyone in the assembly says, "We must go to war," all may start bleating in alarm, "Oï, oï."

TRYGAEUS: A brilliant idea.

CHORUS: And we shall all be lambs one toward the other, yea, and milder still toward the allies.

TRYGAEUS: Then go for the sheep and haste to bring it back with you; I will prepare the altar for the sacrifice.

CHORUS: How everything succeeds to our wish, when the gods are willing and Fortune favours us! how opportunely everything falls out.

TRYGAEUS: Nothing could be truer, for look! here stands the altar all ready at my door.

CHORUS: Hurry, hurry, for the winds are fickle; make haste, while the divine will is set on stopping this cruel war and is showering on us the most striking benefits.

TRYGAEUS: Here is the basket of barley-seed mingled with salt, the chaplet and the sacred knife; and there is the fire; so we are only waiting for the sheep.

CHORUS: Hasten, hasten, for, if Chaeris sees you, he will come without bidding, he and his flute; and when you see him puffing and panting and out of breath, you will have to give him something.

TRYGAEUS: Come, seize the basket and take the lustral water and hurry to circle round the altar to the right.

SERVANT: There! 'tis done. What is your next bidding?

TRYGAEUS: Hold! I take this fire-brand first and plunge it into the water.

SERVANT: Be quick! be quick! Sprinkle the altar.

TRYGAEUS: Give me some barley-seed, purify yourself and hand me the basin; then scatter the rest of the barley among the audience.

SERVANT: 'Tis done.

TRYGAEUS: You have thrown it?

SERVANT: Yes, by Hermes! and all the spectators have had their share.

TRYGAEUS: But not the women?

SERVANT: Oh! their husbands will give it them this evening.

TRYGAEUS: Let us pray! Who is here? Are there any good men?

SERVANT: Come, give, so that I may sprinkle these. Faith! they are indeed good, brave men.

TRYGAEUS: You believe so?

SERVANT: I am sure, and the proof of it is that we have flooded them with lustral water and they have not budged an inch.

TRYGAEUS: Come then, to prayers; to prayers, quick! — Oh! Peace, mighty queen, venerated goddess, thou, who presidest over choruses and at nuptials, deign to accept the sacrifices we offer thee.

SERVANT: Receive it, greatly honoured mistress, and behave not like the coquettes, who half open the door to entice the gallants, draw back when they are stared at, to return once more if a man passes on. But do not act like this to us.

TRYGAEUS: No, but like an honest woman, show thyself to thy worshippers, who are worn with regretting thee all these thirteen years. Hush the noise of battle, be a true Lysimacha to us. Put an end to this tittle-tattle, to this idle babble, that set us defying one another. Cause the Greeks once more to taste the pleasant beverage of friendship and temper all hearts with the gentle feeling of forgiveness. Make excellent commodities flow to our markets, fine heads of garlic, early cucumbers, apples, pomegranates and nice little cloaks for the slaves; make them bring geese, ducks, pigeons and larks from Boeotia and baskets of eels from Lake Copaïs; we shall all rush to buy them, disputing their possession with Morychus, Teleas, Glaucetes and every other glutton. Melanthius will arrive on the market last of all; 'twill be, "no more eels, all sold!" and then he'll start a-groaning and exclaiming as in his monologue of Medea, "I am dying, I am dying! Alas! I have let those hidden in the beet escape me!" And won't we laugh? These are the wishes, mighty goddess, which we pray thee to grant.

SERVANT: Take the knife and slaughter the sheep like a finished cook.

TRYGAEUS: No, the goddess does not wish it.

SERVANT: And why not?

TRYGAEUS: Blood cannot please Peace, so let us spill none upon her altar. Therefore go and sacrifice the sheep in the house, cut off the legs and bring them here; thus the carcass will be saved for the choragus.

CHORUS: You, who remain here, get chopped wood and everything needed for the sacrifice ready.

TRYGAEUS: Don't I look like a diviner preparing his mystic fire?

CHORUS: Undoubtedly. Will anything that it behoves a wise man to know escape you? Don't you know all that a man should know, who is distinguished for his wisdom and inventive daring?

TRYGAEUS: There! the wood catches. Its smoke blinds poor Stilbides. I am now going to bring the table and thus be my own slave.

CHORUS: You have braved a thousand dangers to save your sacred town. All honour to you! your glory will be ever envied.

SERVANT: Hold! here are the legs, place them upon the altar. For myself, I mean to go back to the entrails and the cakes.

TRYGAEUS: I'll see to those; I want you here.

SERVANT: Well then, here I am. Do you think I have been long?

TRYGAEUS: Just get this roasted. Ah! who is this man, crowned with laurel, who is coming to me?

SERVANT: He has a self-important look; is he some diviner?

TRYGAEUS: No, i' faith! 'tis Hierocles.

SERVANT: Ah! that oracle-monger from Oreus. What is he going to tell us?

TRYGAEUS: Evidently he is coming to oppose the peace.

SERVANT: No, 'tis the odour of the fat that attracts him.

TRYGAEUS: Let us appear not to see him.

SERVANT: Very well.

HIEROCLES: What sacrifice is this? to what god are you offering it?

TRYGAEUS (TO THE SERVANT): Silence! — (Aloud.) Look after the roasting and keep your hands off the meat.

HIEROCLES: To whom are you sacrificing? Answer me. Ah! the tail is showing favourable omens.

SERVANT: Aye, very favourable, oh, loved and mighty Peace!

HIEROCLES: Come, cut off the first offering and make the oblation.

TRYGAEUS: 'Tis not roasted enough.

HIEROCLES: Yea, truly, 'tis done to a turn.

TRYGAEUS: Mind your own business, friend! (To the servant.) Cut away. Where is the table? Bring the libations.

HIEROCLES: The tongue is cut separately.

TRYGAEUS: We know all that. But just listen to one piece of advice.

HIEROCLES: And that is?

TRYGAEUS: Don't talk, for 'tis divine Peace to whom we are sacrificing.

HIEROCLES: Oh! wretched mortals, oh, you idiots!

TRYGAEUS: Keep such ugly terms for yourself.

HIEROCLES: What! you are so ignorant you don't understand the will of the gods and you make a treaty, you, who are men, with apes, who are full of malice!

TRYGAEUS: Ha, ha, ha!

HIEROCLES: What are you laughing at?

TRYGAEUS: Ha, ha! your apes amuse me!

HIEROCLES: You simple pigeons, you trust yourselves to foxes, who are all craft, both in mind and heart.

TRYGAEUS: Oh, you trouble-maker! may your lungs get as hot as this meat!

HIEROCLES: Nay, nay! if only the Nymphs had not fooled Bacis, and Bacis mortal men; and if the Nymphs had not tricked Bacis a second time....

TRYGAEUS: May the plague seize you, if you won't stop wearying us with your Bacis!

HIEROCLES: ... it would not have been written in the book of Fate that the bonds of Peace must be broken; but first....

TRYGAEUS: The meat must be dusted with salt.

HIEROCLES: ... it does not please the blessed gods that we should stop the War until the wolf uniteth with the sheep.

TRYGAEUS: How, you cursed animal, could the wolf ever unite with the sheep?

HIEROCLES: As long as the wood-bug gives off a fetid odour, when it flies; as long as the noisy bitch is forced by nature to litter blind pups, so long shall peace be forbidden.

TRYGAEUS: Then what should be done? Not to stop the War would be to leave it to the decision of chance which of the two people should suffer the most, whereas by uniting under a treaty, we share the empire of Greece.

HIEROCLES: You will never make the crab walk straight.

TRYGAEUS: You shall no longer be fed at the Prytaneum; the war done, oracles are not wanted.

HIEROCLES: You will never smooth the rough spikes of the hedgehog.

TRYGAEUS: Will you never stop fooling the Athenians?

HIEROCLES: What oracle ordered you to burn these joints of mutton in honour of the gods?

TRYGAEUS: This grand oracle of Homer's: "Thus vanished the dark war-clouds and we offered a sacrifice to new-born Peace. When the flame had consumed the thighs of the victim and its inwards had appeased our hunger, we poured out the libations of wine." 'Twas I who arranged the sacred rites, but none offered the shining cup to the diviner.

HIEROCLES: I care little for that. 'Tis not the Sibyl who spoke it.

TRYGAEUS: Wise Homer has also said: "He who delights in the horrors of civil war has neither country nor laws nor home." What noble words!

HIEROCLES: Beware lest the kite turn your brain and rob....

TRYGAEUS: Look out, slave! This oracle threatens our meat. Quick, pour the libation, and give me some of the inwards.

HIEROCLES: I too will help myself to a bit, if you like.

TRYGAEUS: The libation! the libation!

HIEROCLES: Pour out also for me and give me some of this meat.

TRYGAEUS: No, the blessed gods won't allow it yet; let us drink; and as for you, get you gone, for 'tis their will. Mighty Peace! stay ever in our midst.

HIEROCLES: Bring the tongue hither.

TRYGAEUS: Relieve us of your own.

HIEROCLES: The libation.

TRYGAEUS: Here! and this into the bargain (strikes him).

HIEROCLES: You will not give me any meat?

TRYGAEUS: We cannot give you any until the wolf unites with the sheep.

HIEROCLES: I will embrace your knees.

TRYGAEUS: 'Tis lost labour, good fellow; you will never smooth the rough spikes of the hedgehog.... Come, spectators, join us in our feast.

HIEROCLES: And what am I to do?

TRYGAEUS: You? go and eat the Sibyl.

HIEROCLES: No, by the Earth! no, you shall not eat without me; if you do not give, I take; 'tis common property.

TRYGAEUS (TO THE SERVANT): Strike, strike this Bacis, this humbugging soothsayer.

HIEROCLES: I take to witness....

TRYGAEUS: And I also, that you are a glutton and an impostor. Hold him tight and beat the impostor with a stick.

SERVANT: You look to that; I will snatch the skin from him, which he has stolen from us. Are you going to let go that skin, you priest from hell! do you hear! Oh! what a fine crow has come from Oreus! Stretch your wings quickly for Elymnium.

CHORUS: Oh! joy, joy! no more helmet, no more cheese nor onions! No, I have no passion for battles; what I love, is to drink with good comrades in the corner by the fire when good dry wood, cut in the height of the summer, is crackling; it is to cook pease on the coals and beechnuts among the embers; 'tis to kiss our pretty Thracian while my wife is at the bath. Nothing is more

pleasing, when the rain is sprouting our sowings, than to chat with some friend, saying, "Tell me, Comarchides, what shall we do? I would willingly drink myself, while the heavens are watering our fields. Come, wife, cook three measures of beans, adding to them a little wheat, and give us some figs. Syra! call Manes off the fields, 'tis impossible to prune the vine or to align the ridges, for the ground is too wet to-day. Let someone bring me the thrush and those two chaffinches; there were also some curds and four pieces of hare, unless the cat stole them last evening, for I know not what the infernal noise was that I heard in the house. Serve up three of the pieces for me, slave, and give the fourth to my father. Go and ask Aeschinades for some myrtle branches with berries on them, and then, for 'tis the same road, you will invite Charinades to come and drink with me to the honour of the gods who watch over our crops."

When the grasshopper sings its dulcet tune, I love to see the Lemnian vines beginning to ripen, for 'tis the earliest plant of all. I love likewise to watch the fig filling out, and when it has reached maturity I eat with appreciation and exclaim, "Oh! delightful season!" Then too I bruise some thyme and infuse it in water. Indeed I grow a great deal fatter passing the summer this way than in watching a cursed captain with his three plumes and his military cloak of a startling crimson (he calls it true Sardinian purple), which he takes care to dye himself with Cyzicus saffron in a battle; then he is the first to run away, shaking his plumes like a great yellow prancing cock, while I am left to watch the nets. Once back again in Athens, these brave fellows behave abominably; they write down these, they scratch through others, and this backwards and forwards two or three times at random. The departure is set for to-morrow, and some citizen has brought no provisions, because he didn't know he had to go; he stops in front of the statue of Pandion, reads his name, is dumbfounded and starts away at a run, weeping bitter tears. The townsfolk are less ill-used, but that is how the husbandmen are treated by these men of war, the hatred of the gods and of men, who know nothing but how to throw away their shield. For this reason, if it please heaven, I propose to call these rascals to account, for they are lions in times of peace, but sneaking foxes when it comes to fighting.

TRYGAEUS: Oh! oh! what a crowd for the nuptial feast! Here! dust the tables with this crest, which is good for nothing else now. Halloa! produce the

cakes, the thrushes, plenty of good jugged hare and the little loaves.

A SICKLE-MAKER: Trygaeus, where is Trygaeus?

TRYGAEUS: I am cooking the thrushes.

SICKLE-MAKER: Trygaeus, my best of friends, what a fine stroke of business you have done for me by bringing back Peace! Formerly my sickles would not have sold at an obolus apiece, to-day I am being paid fifty drachmas for every one. And here is a neighbour who is selling his casks for the country at three drachmae each. So come, Trygaeus, take as many sickles and casks as you will for nothing. Accept them for nothing; 'tis because of our handsome profits on our sales that we offer you these wedding presents.

TRYGAEUS: Thanks. Put them all down inside there, and come along quick to the banquet. Ah! do you see that armourer yonder coming with a wry face?

A CREST-MAKER: Alas! alas! Trygaeus, you have ruined me utterly.

TRYGAEUS: What! won't the crests go any more, friend?

CREST-MAKER: You have killed my business, my livelihood, and that of this poor lance-maker too.

TRYGAEUS: Come, come, what are you asking for these two crests?

CREST-MAKER: What do you bid for them?

TRYGAEUS: What do I bid? Oh! I am ashamed to say. Still, as the clasp is of good workmanship, I would give two, even three measures of dried figs; I could use 'em for dusting the table.

CREST-MAKER: All right, tell them to bring me the dried figs; 'tis always better than nothing.

TRYGAEUS: Take them away, be off with your crests and get you gone; they are moulting, they are losing all their hair; I would not give a single fig for them.

A BREASTPLATE-MAKER: Good gods, what am I going to do with this fine ten-minae breast-plate, which is so splendidly made?

TRYGAEUS: Oh, you will lose nothing over it.

BREASTPLATE-MAKER: I will sell it you at cost price.

TRYGAEUS: 'Twould be very useful as a night-stool....

BREASTPLATE-MAKER: Cease your insults, both to me and my wares.

TRYGAEUS: ... if propped on three stones. Look, 'tis admirable.

BREASTPLATE-MAKER: But how can you wipe, idiot?

TRYGAEUS: I can pass one hand through here, and the other there, and so....

BREASTPLATE-MAKER: What! do you wipe with both hands?

TRYGAEUS: Aye, so that I may not be accused of robbing the State, by blocking up an oar-hole in the galley.

BREASTPLATE-MAKER: So you would pay ten minae for a night-stool?

TRYGAEUS: Undoubtedly, you rascal. Do you think I would sell my rump for a thousand drachmae?

BREASTPLATE-MAKER: Come, have the money paid over to me.

TRYGAEUS: No, friend; I find it hurts me to sit on. Take it away, I won't buy.

A TRUMPET-MAKER: What is to be done with this trumpet, for which I gave sixty drachmae the other day?

TRYGAEUS: Pour lead into the hollow and fit a good, long stick to the top; and you will have a balanced cottabos.

TRUMPET-MAKER: Ha! would you mock me?

TRYGAEUS: Well, here's another notion. Pour in lead as I said, add here a dish hung on strings, and you will have a balance for weighing the figs which you give your slaves in the fields.

A HELMET-MAKER: Cursed fate! I am ruined. Here are helmets, for which I gave a mina each. What am I to do with them? who will buy them?

TRYGAEUS: Go and sell them to the Egyptians; they will do for measuring loosening medicines.

A SPEAR-MAKER: Ah! poor helmet-maker, things are indeed in a bad way.

TRYGAEUS: That man has no cause for complaint.

SPEAR-MAKER: But helmets will be no more used.

TRYGAEUS: Let him learn to fit a handle to them and he can sell them for more money.

SPEAR-MAKER: Let us be off, comrade.

TRYGAEUS: No, I want to buy these spears.

SPEAR-MAKER: What will you give?

TRYGAEUS: If they could be split in two, I would take them at a drachma per hundred to use as vine-props.

SPEAR-MAKER: The insolent dog! Let us go, friend.

TRYGAEUS: Ah! here come the guests, children from the table to relieve themselves; I fancy they also want to hum over what they will be singing presently. Hi! child! what do you reckon to sing? Stand there and give me the opening line.

THE SON OF LAMACHUS: "Glory to the young warriors...."

TRYGAEUS: Oh! leave off about your young warriors, you little wretch; we are at peace and you are an idiot and a rascal.

SON OF LAMACHUS: "The skirmish begins, the hollow bucklers clash against each other."

TRYGAEUS: Bucklers! Leave me in peace with your bucklers.

SON OF LAMACHUS: "And then there came groanings and shouts of victory."

TRYGAEUS: Groanings! ah! by Bacchus! look out for yourself, you cursed squaller, if you start wearying us again with your groanings and hollow bucklers.

SON OF LAMACHUS: Then what should I sing? Tell me what pleases you.

TRYGAEUS: "'Tis thus they feasted on the flesh of oxen," or something similar, as, for instance, "Everything that could tickle the palate was placed on the table."

SON OF LAMACHUS: “’Tis thus they feasted on the flesh of oxen and, tired of warfare, unharnessed their foaming steeds.”

TRYGAEUS: That’s splendid; tired of warfare, they seat themselves at table; sing, sing to us how they still go on eating after they are satiated.

SON OF LAMACHUS: “The meal over, they girded themselves ...”

TRYGAEUS: With good wine, no doubt?

SON OF LAMACHUS: “... with armour and rushed forth from the towers, and a terrible shout arose.”

TRYGAEUS: Get you gone, you little scapegrace, you and your battles! You sing of nothing but warfare. Who is your father then?

SON OF LAMACHUS: My father?

TRYGAEUS: Why yes, your father.

SON OF LAMACHUS: I am Lamachus’ son.

TRYGAEUS: Oh! oh! I could indeed have sworn, when I was listening to you, that you were the son of some warrior who dreams of nothing but wounds and bruises, of some Boulomachus or Clausimachus; go and sing your plaguey songs to the spearmen.... Where is the son of Cleonymus? Sing me something before going back to the feast. I am at least certain he will not sing of battles, for his father is far too careful a man.

SON OF CLEONYMUS: “An inhabitant of Saïs is parading with the spotless shield which I regret to say I have thrown into a thicket.”

TRYGAEUS: Tell me, you little good-for-nothing, are you singing that for your father?

Son or Cleonymus. “But I saved my life.”

TRYGAEUS: And dishonoured your family. But let us go in; I am very certain, that being the son of such a father, you will never forget this song of the buckler. You, who remain to the feast, ’tis your duty to devour dish after dish and not to ply empty jaws. Come, put heart into the work and eat with your mouths full. For, believe me, poor friends, white teeth are useless furniture, if they chew nothing.

CHORUS: Never fear; thanks all the same for your good advice.

TRYGAEUS: You, who yesterday were dying of hunger, come, stuff yourselves with this fine hare-stew; 'tis not every day that we find cakes lying neglected. Eat, eat, or I predict you will soon regret it.

CHORUS: Silence! Keep silence! Here is the bride about to appear! Take nuptial torches and let all rejoice and join in our songs. Then, when we have danced, clinked our cups and thrown Hyperbolus through the doorway, we will carry back all our farming tools to the fields and shall pray the gods to give wealth to the Greeks and to cause us all to gather in an abundant barley harvest, enjoy a noble vintage, to grant that we may choke with good figs, that our wives may prove fruitful, that in fact we may recover all our lost blessings, and that the sparkling fire may be restored to the hearth.

TRYGAEUS: Come, wife, to the fields and seek, my beauty, to brighten and enliven my nights. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS: Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus! oh! thrice happy man, who so well deserve your good fortune!

TRYGAEUS: Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS: Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS: What shall we do to her?

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS: What shall we do to her?

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS: We will gather her kisses.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS: We will gather her kisses.

CHORUS: Come, comrades, we who are in the first row, let us pick up the bridegroom and carry him in triumph. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

TRYGAEUS: Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS: You shall have a fine house, no cares and the finest of figs. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

TRYGAEUS: Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS: The bridegroom's fig is great and thick; the bride's is very soft and tender.

TRYGAEUS: While eating and drinking deep draughts of wine, continue to repeat: Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS: Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

TRYGAEUS: Farewell, farewell, my friends. All who come with me shall have cakes galore.