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THE TRAGIC AND THE COMIC TEREUS

Fred Bishop in memoriam

The Tereus of Aristophanes' *Birds* is a remarkable character whose dramatic function as a self-professed refugee from the tragic stage and mediator continues to engage students of the play.[1] Much work on *Birds* implicitly addresses the questions "Why has Aristophanes chosen Tereus as his intermediary between men and birds?" and "What connection might exist between the legends of Tereus, their literary treatments, and the design of *Birds*?"[2] Though a Thracian,[3] Tereus in the comedy speaks a colloquial Attic as well as an exalted, mock-tragic Greek. He is at times pathetic, at times genial, and always funny. He lives, moreover, in perfect harmony with Prokne (who in

[1] He enters at line 92 and exits at line 675. The traditional assignment of lines in the prologue (e.g., in Coulon, *Aristophane*) seems improved in Sommerstein's *Birds,* the text of which I use here. Peisetairos' role as protagonist is thereby made more coherent, as he is in control from the very beginning. Sommerstein's text is based for the most part on Marzullo, "L'interlocuzione" 181–91 (also Fraenkel, *Beobachtungen* 61–65). Translations given are also Sommerstein's (with minor changes), unless otherwise noted.

[2] Recently Zannini-Quirini, *Nephelokokkygia* 41, who notes that "molte delle componenti del personaggio mitico vengono funzionalmente utilizzate nella commedia." He points out, in particular, Tereus' warlike character, skill in various crafts (cf. the Boio[s] version of the myth featuring a Polytekhnos = Tereus), the Hoopoe's characteristic song, and his "savage (barbarian)" context. Zannini-Quirini seeks the broadest possible thematic implications of the Tereus *myth.* See also Hofmann, *Mythos und Komödie* 72–78, and Alink, *De Vogels* 50–65.

[3] So in the better-known literary treatments of the legend (e.g., Sophokles and Ovid). Important secondary literature on this myth includes Hiller von Gärtingen, *De Graecorum Fabulis* 35–56; Mayer, "Mythistorica"; Robert, *Griechische Heldensage* 154–62; Halliday, *Indo-European Folk-tales* 85–112; Chandler, "Nightingale"; Cazzaniga, *La saga di Itis*; Mihailov, "La légende de Térée"; Fontenrose, "The Sorrows of Ino and Procne"; Schroeder, "ΠΡΟΚΝΗ"; Zaganiaris, "Le mythe de Térée"; and Segal, "Philomela's Web."

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Birds has no speaking part) and behaves in a manner that would have been comically familiar to spectators at the City Dionysia. Virtually all distinctive features of the violent legend—the rape and imprisonment of Philomela, the glossectomy, the sacrifice of Itys, and the Dionysian cult context of the Athenian sisters' revenge—are banished from the comic stage. Finally, and what seems most significant, Aristophanes has made Tereus a benevolent bridge between the Athenians and the comic Beyond, between the "here" of the polis and theater and an avian "nowhere" in which Peisetairos invents Nephelokokkygia. Tereus' primary function, in fact, is to have taught and disseminated language among "barbarians" in order to prepare a theatrical and linguistic context for Peisetairos' creative activities. Thus, beyond his transformation from man into bird, Tereus undergoes further and extensive metamorphosis from a tragic character into a comic character at the hands of Aristophanes. Rather than accept this metamorphosis as routine burlesque of traditional material, I argue that the comic Tereus, as a pointed and devious comment on Sophoklean innovation (in *Tereus,* ca. 432), is an Aristophanic masterstroke that furnishes the complex thematic foundation of the comedy.

At once innovative and familiar, the paratragic aspect of *Birds* is a striking example of how Aristophanes uses tragic forms to express comic ideas: by transplanting Tereus from the context which Sophokles had charged with a strong Atheno–barbarian tension, and by subjecting him to a comic transformation, Aristophanes engages the "boundless optimism" which we must suppose was the governing mood in the demos in the spring of 414.[4] At the same time, the character's tragic provenance as well as the surprising results of his catalytic role in *Birds* have ominous overtones, a dark lining, as it were, which continues to attract attention.[5] Nephelokokkygia is thus located between a present world in which the tragic past may be forgotten and a future world in

[4] Sommerstein, *Birds* 5, who notes that "it is symptomatic of this [optimism] that every time an allusion is made in the play to current, recent, or projected military operations, the tone adopted is one of almost cheerful bellicosity." For a recent discussion of paratragedy see Foley, "Tragedy and Politics."

[5] Whitman, *Comic Hero* 167–200; Arrowsmith, "Fantasy Politics of Eros"; and Zannini–Quirini, *Nephelokokkygia,* highlight different aspects of the terrors and dangers implicit in the play. The latter, for example, speaks of the "monstrous and ambiguous" inhabitants of Nephelokokkygia (*Nephelokokkygia* 86), whose rejection of the present entails a "dangerous" return to mythical origins (p. 150). For a wide–ranging analysis of Nephelokokkygia see Pozzi and Wickersham, *Myth and the Polis* (especially Pozzi's "The Polis in Crisis," 126–63).

which past terrors must be reinscribed. The paratragic usurpation of *Tereus* exemplifies a thoroughgoing "poetics of transformation," a programmatic concern in *Birds* with the usurpation, assimilation, and transformation of genre, history, myth, and texts.

Since the early nineteenth century,[6] scholars have puzzled over Peisetairos' statement of purpose (esp. 39–48), which unlike similar passages in earlier plays (*Knights* 36–72, *Wasps* 54–73) seems to have little explicit relevance to the subsequent action:

> οἱ μὲν γὰρ οὖν τέττιγες ἕνα μῆν' ἢ δύο
> ἐπὶ τῶν κραδῶν ᾄδουσ', Ἀθηναῖοι δ' ἀεὶ
> ἐπὶ τῶν δικῶν ᾄδουσι πάντα τὸν βίον.
> διὰ ταῦτα τόνδε τὸν βάδον βαδίζομεν·
> κανοῦν δ' ἔχοντε καὶ χύτραν καὶ μυρρίνας
> πλανώμεθα ζητοῦντε τόπον ἀπράγμονα,
> ὅποι καθιδρυθέντε διαγενοίμεθ' ἄν.
> ὁ δὲ στόλος νῷν ἐστι παρὰ τὸν Τηρέα,
> τὸν ἔποπα, παρ' ἐκείνου πυθέσθαι δεομένω,
> εἴ που τοιαύτην εἶδε πόλιν ἢ 'πέπτατο.
>
> That's the thing: the cicadas chirp on the branches
> for a month or two, the Athenians chirp away
> at lawsuits continually all their lives long.
> That's why we're trekking this trek;
> with a basket, a pot and some myrtle-wreaths,
> we're wandering in search of a trouble-free place,
> where we can settle and pass our lives.
> Our journey now is to see Tereus the hoopoe,
> wanting to find out from him if he's seen
> a city of that kind anywhere he's flown over.

The apparent irrelevance of these opening claims, along with the general indeterminacy of the Athenians' quest, suggests that the design of *Birds* departs from the linear sequence (problem/conflict–*sōtēria*–consequences) characteristic of the *engagé* comedies produced in the

[6]In his twelfth lecture, for example, A. W. Schlegel (*Lectures* 166) dismisses the possibility that *Birds* is somehow *engagé* and suggests that the play is "a harmless display of merry pranks, which hit alike at gods and men without any particular object in view." That the problem was recognized in antiquity is clear from Hypothesis II (to *Birds*). Hofmann, *Mythos und Komödie* 79, notes of the latter that "Sie berichten von einer Kontroverse unter antiken Philologen (ohne dass wir die Beteiligten genauer eingrenzen können) über die Methoden aristophanischer Handlungsgestaltung." See the discussion of this problem in Dobrov, "Metaphor of Deferral" 209–17.

420s, that is, before the seven–year hiatus in the extant corpus. Furthermore, as one critic recently put it, "*Birds* differs from all the other fifth–century plays of Aristophanes that survive in having no strong and obvious connection with a topical question of public interest, whether political . . . , literary–theatrical . . . , or intellectual–educational."[7] I submit, however, that the prologue, in its references to Tereus (lines 15 and 46) along with the ensuing dialogue (lines 92–208), far from being irrelevant, points to a neglected and central motive developed through the parabasis and fully realized in Nephelokokkygia (the epeisodia): the reshaping of the themes and situations of a poignant political tragedy (Sophokles' *Tereus*) into a comic polity arising from a series of paratragic transformations. Peisetairos combines the rhetorical prowess of a sophist with the comic playwright's creativity as he supervises the many entrances and exits of characters from his polis–as–comedy named Trap (νεφέλη) for Chattering Fools (κόκκυγες). Nephelokokkygia thus unfolds as a play written and directed by the protagonist![8] The process by which a drama derives much of its meaning from its context within the polis (its festivals, laws, language, and customs) appears to be reversed: Aristophanes builds an insubstantial city "made of drama" subject to the rules of performance for which the transformed tragic model serves as a living blueprint. *Birds* is indeed "the artistic culmination of Aristophanes' earlier technique"[9] in its unusually balanced synthesis of political, literary–theatrical, and intellectual themes.

FLIGHT FROM TRAGIC ΛΥΜΑΙ TO COMIC ΣΚΩΜΜΑΤΑ

Entering the theatrical space holding a jackdaw and a crow, respectively, Peisetairos and Euelpides announce that they have been sent on their journey by a certain (otherwise unknown) trader:

[7] Sommerstein, *Birds* 1. Similar observations are made by Henderson (*Maculate Muse* 83) and many other students of the play. The difference between *Birds* and the earlier extant comedies certainly suggests a process of gradual evolution. For a play produced between *Peace* and *Birds* see Geissler, *Chronologie* 50.

[8] Many specifically theatrical aspects of the comic polis were discussed in papers by Niall Slater and Gregory Dobrov at the 1990 A.P.A. program on the *Birds*, to be published in Dobrov, *The City as Comedy*.

[9] Henderson, *Maculate Muse* 82. The maturity and complexity of *Birds* has been often noted and is well analyzed by Newiger, "Die *Vögel* und ihre Stellung"; and Gelzer, "Aristophanes' Dramatic Art."

οὐκ τῶν ὀρνέων,
ὁ πινακοπώλης Φιλοκράτης μελαγχολῶν,
ὃς τώδ' ἔφασκε νῷν φράσειν τὸν Τηρέα,
τὸν ἔποφ', ὃς ὄρνις ἐγένετ' †ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων.†[10] (13–16)

that man from the bird market,
that loony tray-vendor Philokrates, who told us
that these two birds would show us where to find Tereus,
the hoopoe, who was turned ⟨ ⟩ into a bird.

After wandering aimlessly about the orchestra for some time, the men finally stumble upon Tereus' dwelling, where they confront a slave who has followed his master through metamorphosis. The slave-bird's costume and apologetic description of Tereus' behavior (especially the curious mixture of avian and Athenian diets) prepare the spectators for the hoopoe's bombastic entrance at line 92: ἄνοιγε τὴν ὕλην ἵν' ἐξέλθω ποτέ, "throw wide the wood, that I might enter at last." This mock-tragic "open sesame" (cf. the pun *hylēn* ~ *pylēn*), along with other exotic elements deriving from the Near Eastern lore of the hoopoe,[11] are emblematic of the uniqueness and comic strangeness of Aristophanes' Tereus. The unexpected appearance, speech, and behavior of the bird-man elicit laughter from his visitors: "You look as though the Twelve Gods had blasted you!" jeers Euelpides. Tereus responds defensively:

[10]The crux (line 16, ἐκ τῶν ὀρνέων) no doubt conceals a phrase which anticipates Peisetairos' explanation (46–48) of his interest in Tereus. A compelling solution is offered by Koenen, "Tereus in den *Vögeln*," who emends to ἐκ τῶν ὀργίων, restoring an allusion to the Dionysian cult context of Tereus' metamorphosis. We should then translate "Tereus, the hoopoe, who became a bird from the rites (of Dionysos)." In this case ἐκ + genitive would denote both a causal and a temporal connection between the Dionysian Trieterika and Tereus' metamorphosis.

[11]Thompson, *Greek Birds* 95–100. Sacred in Egypt and in Islamic tradition (as one of the four creatures it is forbidden to kill), the hoopoe is associated with the sun by virtue of its rayed crest. The lore of this bird involves odd behavior and magic. It was believed, for example, to use the herb ἀδίαντον to liberate its imprisoned young (cf. the magic root introduced at lines 654–55 to transform men into birds). Thompson notes (98) that this "is a version of the well-known Samir legend (the 'open Sesame' of the Forty Thieves), and is told also of the Hoopoe in connexion with Solomon. . . . Hence used in magic to reveal secrets or discover treasure." See also Kanellis, *Catalogus Faunae Graeciae,* and Lamberton and Rotroff, *Birds of the Athenian Agora,* and (for bibliography especially) Arnott, "Some Bird Notes." For the hoopoe in particular see Oder, "Der Widehopf"; Dawson, "The Lore of the Hoopoe"; and Griffith, "The Hoopoe's Name."

Τη. μῶν με σκώπτετον
ὁρῶντε τὴν πτέρωσιν; ἦ γάρ, ὦ ξένοι,
ἄνθρωπος.
Πε. οὐ σοῦ καταγελῶμεν.
Τη. ἀλλὰ τοῦ;
Πε. τὸ ῥάμφος ἡμῖν σου γελοῖον φαίνεται.
Τη. τοιαῦτα μέντοι Σοφοκλέης λυμαίνεται
ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαισιν ἐμὲ τὸν Τηρέα.
Πε. Τηρεὺς γὰρ εἶ σύ; πότερον ὄρνις ἢ ταῶς; (96–102)

TE. You're not making fun of me, are you,
just because you see this plumage? I was once a man, you know,
gentlemen.
PE. It's not you we're laughing at.
TE. What is it, then?
PE. It's your beak we think looks funny.
TE. This is the injury Sophokles inflicts on me,
Tereus, in his tragedy.
PE. You're Tereus, are you? Are you a bird or a peacock?

From this exchange it emerges that Aristophanes' Tereus claims the Sophoklean stage as his place of origin. "The Hoopoe of Aristophanes' play is a literary bird," notes Drew Griffith. "He makes it explicit that he is not merely the Tereus familiar from the broad field of myth but, much more precisely, he is *the very same character* that Sophocles staged."[12] This connection is clarified by the entrance of a character whom Kock calls "der zweite Tereus–Wiedehopf"—the third of the much–discussed "four dancers of the parodos (268–293)."[13] His appearance at line 279 surprises Euelpides, who thought Tereus to be the only representative of the species:

Ευ. τί τὸ τέρας τουτί ποτ' ἐστίν; οὐ σὺ μόνος ἄρ' ἦσθ' ἔποψ,
ἀλλὰ χοὖτος ἕτερος;
Τε. οὑτοσί μέν ἐστι Φιλοκλέους
ἐξ ἔποπος, ἐγὼ δὲ τούτου πάππος, ὥσπερ εἰ λέγοις
"Ἱππόνικος Καλλίου κἀξ Ἱππονίκου Καλλίας."
Ευ. Καλλίας ἄρ' οὗτος οὔρνις ἐστίν. ὡς πτερορρυεῖ.
Τε. ἅτε γὰρ ὢν γενναῖος ὑπό τε συκοφαντῶν τίλλεται,
αἵ τε θήλειαι πρὸς ἐκτίλλουσιν αὐτοῦ τὰ πτερά. (280–86)

[12] Griffith, "The Hoopoe's Name" 60 (emphasis added).

[13] Kock, *Die Vögel* 36. On the four dancers see Lawler, "Four Dancers"; Carrière, "La chorégraphie des *Oiseaux*"; and Dover, *Aristophanic Comedy* 145.

EU. What extraordinary sight is this? So you're not the only hoopoe—
there's also this other one?
TE. He's the son of Philokles' hoopoe
[or "Philokles the hoopoe"] and I'm his grandfather—just as you might say
"Hipponikos was the son of Kallias and Kallias [Jr.] the son of Hipponikos."
EU. So this bird is Kallias. What a lot of feathers he's lost!
TE. Yes; being a pedigree bird, he gets plucked by prosecutors,
and in addition to that the females pull out his feathers.

This oblique joke seeks to express the relationship between the two hoopoes in terms of the Athenian custom of alternating male names for successive generations. A grandfather–father–son sequence in one branch of the Kērykes family is correlated with a comically contrived hoopoe succession:[14]

Kallias (*PA* 7825)	Tereus: deuteragonist of Sophokles' *Tereus*
Hipponikos (*PA* 7658)	Philokles, i.e., the hoopoe in his tetralogy *Pandionis*; or Philokles himself (satirized as *aiskhros,* "ugly")
Kallias Jr. (*PA* 7826)	Tereus: the second hoopoe, i.e., the third of four dancers in *Birds* 279–84.

Thus the first hoopoe of *Birds* is Sophokles' Tereus and he is the "grandfather" of the dancer (hoopoe no. 2 of *Birds*). The intervening "generation" is represented by a hoopoe associated with Philokles, the minor tragedian satirized elsewhere by the comic poets.[15] This sets up a multileveled joke in which Aristophanes simultaneously mocks (1) Philokles'

[14] See Sommerstein, *Birds* 216.

[15] Schol. 281 informs us that Philokles, the son of Philopeithes and Aeschylus' sister, was known as Ἁλμίωνος, "son of Briny," for his harsh style. See, e.g., *Wasps* 461–62 and *Thesm.* 168 with scholia. Sommerstein, *Birds* 215–16, points out that the phrase Φιλοκλέους ἐξ ἔποπος could also mean "Philokles the hoopoe," in which case the allusion would be to Philokles' personal appearance (so in *Thesm.*). It is best to let the ambiguity stand, since the reading "from Philokles' hoopoe (i.e., his Tereus)" is suggested by the lineage: the Philokles-hoopoe is the "son" of Sophokles' Tereus. The reading "from Philokles the hoopoe," on the other hand, supplies the necessary intermediate name, giving the sequence Tereus–Philokles–Tereus necessary for the parallelism to work (i.e., to match Kallias–Hipponikos–Kallias). Merkelbach, *Beiträge* 26–27, emends the text in a way that makes Aristophanes' dancer identical with Philokles' tragic character, yielding parallelism between the Sophoklean Tereus and the "Philoklean Hoopoe." The text makes sense, however, without emendation.

work (the tetralogy *Pandionis*) as derivative of Sophokles, (2) Philokles' appearance: his pointed head suggests the crest of a hoopoe or lark (cf. line 1295), (3) the profligate lifestyle of Kallias Jr., and, finally, (4) his own work, in that the dancer, who is properly *Aristophanes'* hoopoe, corresponds to the degenerate younger Kallias, a popular target of comic ridicule (cf. Eupolis *Kolakes,* ca. 421). Ludwig Koenen may be correct in placing line 287 before 280 to make the phrase βαπτὸς ὄρνις, "dipped/gaudy bird," apply to the second hoopoe, thus restoring another aspect of the joke: the connection between the profligate Kallias–bird and his brother–in–law Alkibiades, who was himself lampooned a year earlier by Eupolis in *Baptai,* a comedy featuring a chorus of female votaries of the Thracian Kottyto.[16]

Although the hoopoe whom Peisetairos and Euelpides first encounter is, therefore, Sophokles' Tereus, he speaks as a refugee from the tragic stage and complains of ill treatment by the tragedian: "λυμαίνεται ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαισιν ἐμὲ τὸν Τηρέα," "This is the injury Sophokles inflicts on me, Tereus, in his tragedy." It is most natural to conclude from this response that Aristophanes is here satirizing the Sophoklean *costume* of the transformed Tereus. "In his *Tereus,*" notes the scholiast, "Sophokles enacted the metamorphoses of Tereus (ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν ἀπωρνιθωμένον) and Prokne into birds, which is the basis for the many jokes at Tereus' expense [in *Birds*]."[17] While one may

[16] Koenen, "Tereus in den *Vögeln*" 86–87. (The unfortunate typographical error at this point in Koenen's argument is corrected in Merkelbach, *Beiträge* 26.) Regarding the Βάπται see (with caution) Edmonds, *FAC* I 330–31 and Kassel and Austin *PCG* V 331–43, frr. 76–98. The indirectness of this reference to Alkibiades (cf. a similar strategy at *Birds* lines 145–47) would seem to support Sommerstein, "Decree of Syrakosios," in his revival of J. Droysen's hypothesis that the so-called Decree of Syrakosios forbade ὀνομαστὶ κωμῳδεῖν, "explicit lampoons (involving the name)" of the hermokopid *atimoi.* Many studies of *Birds* spanning the century and a half from Süvern's *Essay* to Katz's "The *Birds* and Politics" detect satire of Alkibiades of one sort or another. Few will be convinced, however, by the more recent attempt in Vickers, "Alcibiades on Stage."

[17] Schol. 100, ἐν γὰρ τῷ Τηρεῖ Σοφοκλῆς ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν ἀπωρνιθωμένον καὶ τὴν Πρόκνην· ἐν ᾧ [i.e., quam ob causam] ἔσκωψε [ὁ Ἀριστοφάνης] πολλὰ τὸν Τηρέα (White, *Scholia* 32). Sommerstein, *Birds* 205, and others have built upon the dismissal of this scholion by Welcker, *Griechischen Tragödien* 386, to reject the possibility of there having been physical representation of the metamorphosis in Sophokles' play. The dubious authority of Horace (*A.P.* 187) is usually invoked in this connection. The tragic λύμη referred to by the comic Tereus is assumed to be merely verbal (i.e., the contents of a messenger speech). Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 144 n. 74, reports the interesting suggestion by E. K. Borthwick, no doubt inspired by the Arkhilokhean epithet, that the tragic Tereus was "costumed in the Thracian manner of hair–style (*akrokomoi*) and headgear," so that

wonder about the extent of this "enactment," it is clear that the results of the transformation were somehow emphasized on the tragic stage. First of all, these words, along with the attribution of his sparse plumage to the "winter moulting of all birds" (105–6) are meant as an apology for Tereus' appearance. Secondly, the imperfective aspect of λυμαίνεσθαι, primarily a verb of *physical* outrage[18] used to account for the funny beak, suggests that the innovation involved visible and permanent changes. Thus it is interesting that Tereus' entrance in *Birds* is immediately marked by an association with Sophokles' tragedy and, more specifically, with Sophoklean invention in the form of an unusually pathetic spectacle. From a comic perspective the tragic pathos is characterized as λυμαίνεσθαι and elicits laughter at Tereus' beak and plumage, in anticipation of later jokes about the second hoopoe plucked bare by sycophants and rapacious women. This particular translation from tragic pathos (viewed as λῦμαι, "maltreatment") into comic σκώμματα, "jesting," may be regarded as programmatic of Aristophanes' technique in *Birds* with respect to Tereus (as well as other literary "targets" such as the *Prometheia*) and leads us to examine in greater detail the original being parodied. A review of *Tereus* is also necessary at this point, since neither the fragments of Sophokles' play nor the various attempts at reconstruction have figured prominently in the literature on *Birds*. If Aristophanes' Tereus is indeed a literary bird, the dramatic origins of this tragic model deserve careful consideration.

TEREUS TRAGICUS: THE NEGLECTED SOURCE

Tereus, of which fifty-seven or so lines survive, is one of the better-attested lost tragedies of Sophokles. In the century and a half since F. G. Welcker's fundamental work,[19] as much as may be reason-

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his metamorphosis into a hoopoe would seem more appropriate. See Peisetairos' suggestion (lines 1363–66) that the young Patroloias forsake father-beating and go fight instead on the Thracian coast. The appropriate equipment for this involves a spur and *cock's comb,* items which invoke the imagery of a cockfight in a distinctly Thracian context.

[18]The semantics of λυμαίνεσθαι are those of *physical* outrage (cf. LSJ: 1. outrage, maltreat, harm, injure, spoil, ruin; 2. inflict indignities or outrages upon, cause damage, etc.). Tereus' use of the verb to defend his funny beak suggests that the outrage inflicted on him by Sophokles involved being brought onstage in a striking bird-costume. So Kock, *Die Vögel*: "Und eben die als ein λυμαίνεσθαι (100) empfundene 'Befiederung,' die ἀπωρνέωσις überhaupt, hat ihm Sophokles angetan, der sie in seiner Tragödie (fr. 523 ff N[2]) . . . auf die Bühne gebracht hat."

[19]Welcker, *Griechischen Tragödien* 374–88.

ably expected in the way of reconstruction and thematic analysis has been done.[20] The only new light to be shed on the subject in recent years has been the publication of P.Oxy. 42.3013, which may derive from the controversial *Tales* (hypotheses) of Dikaiarkhos.[21] My purpose in surveying the evidence for the lost play is to enable the reader to appreciate the element of Sophoklean innovation, that is, both the extensive reshaping of the traditional material ("the myth") and certain unusual and striking features of the performance as well. I argue, moreover, that it is precisely to these aspects of the tragic model that Aristophanes has responded in re-presenting Tereus.

The papyrus hypothesis is remarkably similar to the several other summaries of the Sophoklean Tereus story.[22] The lost play can be said to have involved (in narrative or action) at least the following events and situations:[23]

[20] In addition to Welcker, *Griechischen Tragödien*, see Pearson, *Fragments of Sophocles* II 221–38 (frr. 581–95); Buchwald, *Studien zur Chronologie* 33–42; Bacon, *Barbarians* 86–88; Johansen, "Sophocles" 286–87; Webster, *Introduction to Sophocles* 4, 176–77; Calder, "Sophocles' *Tereus*"; Radt, *TGF* IV 435–45 (frr. 581–95); Sutton, *The Lost Sophocles* 127–32; Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 51–86; and Hourmouziades, "Sophocles' *Tereus*."

[21] Parsons, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* XLII 46–50. Gelzer, "Sophokles' *Tereus*" 183–92, believes the hypothesis to derive from a Dikaiarkhan original, in which he and others follow Haslam, "Authenticity." "A slightly mauled Sophoclean [hypothesis] we now have, almost certainly," he notes, "in P.Oxy. XLII 3013." See also Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 57–58. Rusten, "Tales from Euripides," argues against Dikaiarkhan authorship. On this question see also Kassel, "Hypothesis"; Luppe, "Dikaiarchos' *hypotheseis*"; and Sutton, "Evidence."

[22] Tzetzes on Hesiod, *Works and Days* 566 (Radt, *TGF* 435), and a scholion on Aristophanes' *Birds* 212; see Mihailov, "La légende de Térée" 94–95, and Mayer, "Mythistorica" 490. I give Parsons's translation: "Tereus, the *hypothesis*: Pandion, the ruler of the Athenians, having (two) daughters, Procne and Philomela, united the elder, Procne, in marriage with Tereus the king of the Thracians, who had by her a son whom he named Itys. As time passed, and Procne wished to see her sister, she asked Tereus to travel to Athens to bring (her back). He, after reaching Athens and receiving the girl from Pandion and making half the return journey, fell in love with the girl. And he disregarded his trust from Pandion and violated her. But, as a precaution in case she should tell her sister, he cut out the girl's tongue. On arriving in Thrace, and Philomela being unable to speak her misfortune, she revealed it by means of a piece of weaving. When Procne realized the truth, driven mad by jealousy . . . she took Itys and killed him and after cooking him served him up to Tereus. He ate the meal without realizing. The women took flight and became, one of them a nightingale, one a swallow, and Tereus a hoopoe."

[23] Adapted from Hourmouziades, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 135.

1. Arrival of Tereus and Philomela from Athens
2. Revelation of Tereus' crime by the "voice of the shuttle"
3. Prokne's reaction
4. The slaughter of Itys
5. Tereus' meal
6. Flights of Prokne and Philomela
7. Metamorphosis of Tereus, Prokne, and Philomela into birds.

Pre–Sophoklean and contemporary primary testimonia are few.[24] Of the many later passages attesting various versions of the legend ("Theban," "Megaro–Athenian," "Asiatic," etc.), the most useful and most likely to reflect knowledge of Sophokles' play are the nine fragments of Accius' *Tereus* and the well–known passage in the sixth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[25] There can be little doubt that here, as in many other instances, a famous tragedy was an influential model for the Roman poet.[26] Besides ordering and assigning the fragments, the main points of contention in reconstructing the play have been (1) the identity and role of the chorus, (2) the distribution of elements 1–7 above among actors' scenes (epeisodia), (3) the extent of the Dionysian theme (e.g., in the choral odes), (4) the nature of the final divine epiphany, and (5) the character and role of Tereus, especially in connection with the question of the Dryas episode.

A conservative review of the dramatis personae would include Prokne (played by the protagonist), Tereus and Hermes (deuteragonist), Nurse, Servant, Messenger (tritagonist), Philomela, Itys (silent characters), and a chorus of Thracian men, most likely Tereus' atten-

[24] *Od.* 19.518–23; Hes. *Op.* 564–70 and fr. 125; Sapph. fr. 135 Page; Aes. *Ag.* 1140–49, *Supp.* 60–67; Eur. fr. 773 Nauck, *Rh.* 550; Philokles *Pandionis* (Radt, *TGF* V 139–41). See also Soph. *El.* 107, 148–49. "The legend," observes Kiso (*The Lost Sophocles* 57), "must have included both the husband's crime and the wife's vengeance when Sophocles found dramatic material in it. No other great tragedian except Sophocles seems to have dramatized it." Mihailov, "La légende de Térée" 88, points out that the passage in the *Agamemnon* suggests that the story of Prokne and Tereus must have been quite familiar to the Athenian audience for the allusion to be effective.

[25] Accius frr. 639–55 in Warmington, *Remains* II 543–49. The fragments of Livius' *Tereus* seem less dependent on Sophokles (so Warmington, *Remains* 10 and 542).

[26] Welcker, *Griechischen Tragödien* 376. So Warmington, *Remains* II 543, who says concerning Accius that "the model was, it seems, chiefly Sophocles." For a contrary view see Bömer, *Metamorphosen* III 115–19. Mihailov, "La légende de Térée" 88, emphasizes the fundamental place of Sophokles' play in the literary tradition of the Tereus story.

dants.[27] Controversial in this list are the identities of the god and the chorus. In light of the reassignment of the "Aiskhylean" fragment, preserved by Aristotle, to Sophokles (now fragment 581 Radt; see note 51 below), it seems reasonable to assume that the *rhēsis* relating the metamorphosis of Tereus, Prokne, and Philomela is spoken by a messenger–god, not the pro–Thracian Ares.[28] The action takes place before the palace of Tereus in Thrace, a major feature of Sophokles' design being to associate Tereus with *historical* Thrace (e.g., Haimos, Rhodope) rather than the "prehistoric" Thracian–occupied Phokis (Daulis), and to place him and Prokne at a considerable remove from Athens. The play is set on a day of the triennial Thracian feast in honor of Dionysos, on which local custom may have specified a sacrifice followed by a private royal meal (Ovid *Met.* 6.647–49 has Prokne invent this feature). Sophokles innovatively exploited the festival context to mitigate the horror of the events and to provide the women an opportunity for revenge.[29] In the absence of explicit structural data, the design of the play

[27] Prokne's isolation (fr. 583 Radt), the suppression of her grief (Ov. *Met.* 6.581–86 and Accius frr. 643–44 Warmington), and the deceit involved in the recognition and revenge suggest that Prokne had to contend with a hostile chorus. The choral fragments seem more appropriate to a male chorus, as Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 61, points out (see frr. 590–93 Radt). Hourmouziades, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 137, extends the potential similarities between the *Tereus* and Sophokles' *Trakhiniae* (a connection made by Webster, Welcker, and others) and argues for a *female* chorus.

[28] Dissenting from Welcker, *Griechischen Tragödien* 383–84, who suggests Hermes as the *deus*, Calder, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 88, nominates "the father of the belligerent, reigning monarch, the Thracian Ares." Since the status of fr. 581 Radt is vital for identifying the deus ex machina in the play, it seems more sensible to shy away from assigning this fragment, with its neutral tone of admonition and σωφροσύνη, "soundness of mind," "discretion," to so partisan and violent a god as Ares.

[29] Welcker, *Griechischen Tragödien* 376, on the basis of Ovid *Met.* 6.587, Accius fr. 647 Warmington, and Libanius *Narr.* 18, makes much of the festival element in the play. Since Hiller von Gärtingen, *De Graecorum Fabulis* 41, first made the connection, the striking parallels between the Tereus myth and Plutarch's account (*Quaest. Gr.* 38) of the Dionysian Agrionia (Orkhomenos) have been much discussed. See, e.g., Mihailov, "La légende de Térée" 100–103. A Campanian fragment of Caivano Painter (Dresden PV 2891, ca. 350–320) seems to show Tereus armed with a πέλεκυς, apparently a pre–Hellenic Thraco–Phrygian cult implement (see Apollodorus 3.14.8). The much-discussed ἐν δὲ ποικίλῳ φάρει, "in an embroidered cloak," of fr. 586 Radt may refer to maenad dress, Philomela's *textum*, or both. Koenen, "Tereus in den *Vögeln*" 84, cites M. Bieber's identification of a Paestan potsherd depicting Tereus: "hängen von dem Gürtel des Tereus, der die Schwestern verfolgt, die dionysischen Wollfäden herab." The specifics of the cult as represented by Sophokles, however, are irretrievable. What seems certain, how-

is best regarded as involving four sequences of actors' scenes typically articulated by choral songs (parodos, stasima, and exodos lyrics).[30] The similarity in language and technique between *Trakhiniai* and *Tereus* suggests that the latter "had the diptych form. The first part dealt with the loneliness of Procne . . . and the return of Tereus. . . . The second part dealt with the vengeance taken by Procne and the transformations."[31]

The most important issues relating the plot with actors' scenes are (1) whether Tereus' return from Athens is narrated as a past event or incorporated into the action of the play and (2) whether the Dryas episode related by Hyginus (*Fab.* 45) constituted part of Sophokles' design. The time which elapses between Tereus' return and the final crisis (a year in Ovid *Met.* 6.571) would seem to preclude both events' being incorporated directly into the action.[32] In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the most we should assume is that the first part of the play developed the theme of how Prokne's long–standing despair and isolation in Thrace had been renewed and deepened by Philomela's relatively recent "death." An account of the expedition to Athens and its tragic conclusion fits quite naturally in the context of Prokne's famous lament (fr. 583 Radt), which most likely belongs to an expository prologue.

Hyginus relates a version of the myth in which Tereus, warned by portents of Itys' imminent murder *a propinqua manu,* kills his brother, Dryas, in a misguided attempt to save the boy.[33] Including this episode

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ever, is that the play was set on the day of a Dionysian festival, that the festival involved a sacrificial meal, and that Prokne and Philomela exploited their freedom as maenads to get revenge on Tereus.

[30] So Welcker, Calder, and most. Hourmouziades, in order to incorporate the Dryas episode, posits five "epeisodia." In light of the scant remains of the choral element of the play, it seems futile to try to determine the precise number of epeisodia.

[31] Webster, *Introduction to Sophocles* 177. Hourmouziades, "Sophocles' *Tereus,*" makes even more of the similarity between the *Trakhiniai* and the *Tereus,* positing a friendly female chorus, a "Likhas and Iole scene," etc.

[32] Gelzer, "Sophokles' *Tereus*" 191. Calder, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 89, for example, suggests that during the first stasimon "one year of dramatic time passes (Ov. M. 6.571)." While this is not impossible, it is safer to assume that the action of the Tereus takes place within the typical Sophoklean dramatic day. "Was vor diesem Tag geschehen war," says Gelzer, "muss irgendwann im Verlauf des Stücks erzählt worden sein."

[33] Hyg. *Fab.* 45, *Procne cognita sorore et Terei impium facinus, pari consilio machinari coeperunt regi talem gratiam referre. interim Tereo ostendebatur in prodigiis Ity filio eius mortem a propinqua manu adesse. quo responso audito, cum arbitraretur Dryantem fratrem suum filio suo mortem machinari, fratrem Dryantem insontem occidit.*

in a reconstruction, it has been argued, would both "humanize" Tereus and justify the traditional title.[34] The absence of Dryas from all major sources, however, is a strong indication that he did not figure in Sophokles' play. Consequently, of the plot features listed above, items 4 and 5 are reported by a messenger (or a similar character), while the metamorphosis receives somewhat special treatment in a divine epiphany and *rhēsis*. It is also possible that Sophokles marked the symbolic death of Tereus, Prokne, and Philomela visually on the *ekkyklēma* in a tableau involving subtle tokens of the metamorphosis. The arrival of Tereus from Athens and the report of Philomela's "death," on the other hand, must be recounted in the prologue by Prokne as an event of the recent past.

The best-known fragment of the *Tereus* (583 Radt), which in all likelihood inspired Medeia's lament (*Medeia* 230–51), suggests that the play opens with an expository monologue in which Prokne bewails her misfortunes, perhaps in the presence of a trustworthy character (nurse?):

> νῦν δ' οὐδέν εἰμι χωρίς. ἀλλὰ πολλάκις
> ἔβλεψα ταύτῃ τὴν γυναικείαν φύσιν,
> ὡς οὐδέν ἐσμεν. αἳ νέαι μὲν ἐν πατρὸς
> ἥδιστον, οἶμαι, ζῶμεν ἀνθρώπων βίον·
> τερπνῶς γὰρ ἀεὶ παῖδας ἁνοία τρέφει.
> ὅταν δ' ἐς ἥβην ἐξικώμεθ' ἔμφρονες,
> ὠθούμεθ' ἔξω καὶ διεμπολώμεθα
> θεῶν πατρῴων τῶν τε φυσάντων ἄπο,
> αἱ μὲν ξένους πρὸς ἄνδρας, αἱ δὲ βαρβάρους,
> αἱ δ' εἰς ἀγηθῆ δώμαθ', αἱ δ' ἐπίρροθα.

[34] In response to Gelzer, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 191: "Von entscheidender Bedeutung muss die Rolle der Prokne gewesen sein. Schon Welcker hat sich die Frage vorgelegt, warum das Stück nicht nach ihr benannt wurde." Hourmouziades, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 138, argues that Tereus, as a victim of misinterpreted omens, becomes "a tragic figure in the Sophoclean sense of the term, a hero, in fact, not very different from Heracles or even Oedipus." In light of the fact, however, that no source except Hyginus (not even Ovid!) mentions Dryas, it is highly unlikely that this striking episode was represented by Sophokles only to be subsequently forgotten or suppressed. The tragic Tereus, moreover, clearly impressed posterity as an unusually savage character. The very "problem" with which Hourmouziades begins his argument—that Tereus redundantly sequesters Philomela *and* cuts out her tongue—suggests that Sophokles made his Tereus *more* violent than he had been traditionally, innovating the "preventive" glossectomy (a feature otherwise unknown in Greek legend) in order to set up the recognition by means of a written message. It is this aspect of dramatic innovation which Aristotle reacts to at *Poetics* 1454b30–37.

καὶ ταῦτ', ἐπειδὰν εὐφρόνη ζεύξῃ μία,
χρεὼν ἐπαινεῖν καὶ δοκεῖν καλῶς ἔχειν

But now, separated from home, I am undone. Often indeed,
have I observed how miserable my sex is in this respect.
When we are girls, our life in our father's house
is the sweetest, I think, that can fall to mortals;
for the days of thoughtless childhood are ever glad.
But when we come to years of discretion,
we are thrust out and sold in marriage
far away from our ancestral gods and from our parents:
some of us to other parts of Hellas, some to barbarians,
some to joyless households, some into places of reproach.
And in this, when once the nuptial night is past,
we must acquiesce, and deem that it is well. (tr. Jebb, adapted)

Noteworthy here is the correlation of the general helplessness and isolation of women "sold in marriage" (cf. *ekdōsis*) with the misery of an Athenian princess among barbarians. Her recollection of life at home in Pandion's palace is sharply offset by the phrase *nun d',* which introduces the present lament: "*now, however,* among Thracians and far from Athens (*khōris*), I am nothing!" The *anoia* of a carefree childhood anticipates the phrase spoken by the god after the final crisis (fr. 589 Radt): ἄνους ἐκεῖνος· αἱ δ' ἀνουστέρως ἔτι ἐκεῖνον ἠμύναντο, "[Tereus] is a fool, but [Prokne and Philomela] exhibited even greater folly in punishing him." Accius echoes these words (frr. 639–42 Warmington) in characterizing Tereus as a savage *amore vecors flammeo,* "mad with burning desire," who committed a heinous crime *ex dementia* (cf. Ovid *Met.* 6.456–60). Sophokles thus makes a full circle of the Homeric phrase in which the "Daughter of Pandareos, the greenwood nightingale" is said to kill her son Itylos δι' ἀφραδίας (*Od.* 19.518–23): the Athenian women are forced to pass from the blissful folly of childhood to the madness of revenge in which they assimilate to Tereus' senseless barbarism. To this context also belongs fragment 584 Radt, in which Prokne says she envies the woman "who has not experienced a foreign land."[35]

The entrance of the chorus, consisting of Thracian men, would do

[35] Since I am assuming that Tereus has already returned from Athens, the words πολλά σε ζηλῶ βίου, "I am much envious of your life," cannot be addressed to Philomela, whom Prokne already believes to be dead. Prokne seems to be speaking in general of the woman fortunate enough to marry close to home. The fragments of Accius which may belong here (645–46, 655 Warmington) are less informative.

little to comfort the grieving queen. "Their constant presence on the stage," suggests Kiso, "helps to emphasize the loneliness of Procne."[36] There follows a scene involving dialogue between Prokne and Tereus in which the latter offers words of consolation:

> ἀλγεινά, Πρόκνη, δῆλον· ἀλλ' ὅμως χρεὼν
> τὰ θεῖα θνητοὺς ὄντας εὐπετῶς φέρειν (fr. 585 Radt)
>
> Clearly, [your loss/this situation] is painful. Yet,
> as mortals, we must graciously accept what the gods send.

By encouraging Prokne to accept her sister's "death" Tereus clearly hopes to discourage any further inquiries into his recent journey and crimes. His efforts are thwarted, however, in a subsequent episode when an embroidered *peplos* is brought to Prokne—a gift which at least one source identifies as traditionally offered to the queen on the occasion of the Dionysian festival.[37]

It is clear that a closely following scene involved the delivery of Philomela's *textum* and the subsequent recognition. Placing the journey to Athens and Philomela's "death" in the recent past avoids an awkward lapse of dramatic time in order to bring the action to its dénouement. Prokne, moreover, is not required to pass abruptly from the initial shock of grief to controlled deception as she receives the gift and reads her sister's message. The courier—most likely one of Philomela's attendants (a man; fr. 588 Radt)—is ignorant of the real purpose of his assignment, as are the other Thracian slaves and retainers of Tereus. The passage in the sixteenth chapter of *Poetics* referring to this moment in Sophokles' *Tereus* is reinforced by other evidence in making clear that Philomela's weaving involved a *written* message, a feature invented by Sophokles for his dramatic purposes—in Aristotle's words, a recognition strategy πεποιημένον ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ, "invented by the poet."[38]

[36] Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 65.

[37] Cf. Libanius *Narr.* 18: "Taking advantage of a feast during which it was the custom for Thracian women to send gifts to the queen, Philomela sent [Prokne] a robe embroidered with writing describing the violence which she had experienced."

[38] Such an epistle is not unique in tragedy: In *Trakhiniai*, for example, Herakles leaves behind an inscribed tablet (δέλτον ἐγγεγραμμένην ξυνθήμαθ', 157–58) while Iphigeneia's letter (*IT* 725–94) and "dictation" are well-known features of Euripidean invention which Aristotle implicitly equates with Philomela's epistle in the *Tereus*. In his classification of εἴδη ἀναγνωρίσεως, "types of recognition," Aristotle ranks such dra-

It seems quite clear that the glossectomy was an auxiliary feature introduced to set up the recognition by means of writing and reading. The language of Tzetzes' "hypothesis" (Radt, *TGF* 435)—τὴν αὐτῆς γλῶτταν θερίζει, "he shears her tongue"—is distinctly tragic and is most likely a quotation from our play relating to this moment.

Shaken by what she has read, Prokne carefully solicits details of Philomela's whereabouts from the servant who brought the *peplos*, encouraging him to tell the truth (fr. 588 Radt). Ovid's account (*Met.* 6.583–86) as well as several fragments of Accius' play point to this moment of outrage checked by great self-control: "you practice, woman, the way of many wives," say the chorus disapprovingly, "in that you strain your might against your husband's dignity" (frr. 643–44 Warmington). A painting by the Dolon Painter on a Lucanian bell krater (see note 47 below) suggests that Tereus was present at least during the delivery of the *peplos*. Prokne is forced to conceal her grief and must plot silently (Accius, frr. 645–46 Warmington) to take advantage of the festival occasion. Once she leaves the palace, she gives free rein to her rage:

> Concita per silvas turba comitante suarum
> Terribilis Procne furiisque agitata doloris,
> Bacche, tuas *simulat*; (Ovid *Met.* 6.594–96)

> Surrounded by her (female) attendants
> Prokne rushes through the forest
> frightful in her frenzied rage of pain,
> *feigning* your fury, Bakkhos.

Our evidence strongly suggests that this Dionysian element, like "the voice of the shuttle," is yet another feature "invented by the poet" to serve a specific and complex dramatic purpose. Sophokles has Prokne and Philomela use the revelry, maenad dress, and ritual as a versatile disguise for the several stages of their reunion and vengeance—a point in *Tereus* that seems to anticipate (perhaps even serve as the model for)

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matic devices next to last in terms of intellectual and technical skill. See Cazzaniga, *La saga di Itis* I 50, with most scholars, on the following evidence: Ovid *Met.* 6.577–81, *purpureasque notas filis intexuit albis . . . carmen miserabile legit*; Apollodorus 3.14.8, ἡ δὲ ὑφήνασα ἐν πέπλῳ γράμματα, "having embroidered the robe with letters"; schol. *Birds* 212, ὑφαίνουσα διὰ γραμμάτων ἐδήλωσε, "made manifest by embroidering with letters." Similar language is found in other accounts (Lib. *Narr.* 18, and Achill. Tat. 5.5).

the much-discussed metatheatrical strategies of Euripides' *Bakkhai*.[39] As the master of illusion and disguise, Dionysos is a natural choice to preside over the Athenian sisters' grim theater of revenge. Prokne is made strange by the Bacchic transformation which prepares the spectators for the final, violent episode. It is hardly surprising that this powerful combination of sacrificial irony and Dionysian metatheater also impressed Euripides enough for him to draw upon Sophokles' Prokne for his *Medeia*.[40]

Although the Thracian and Dionysian elements are complementary innovations on the part of the poet, "it is precisely in this play where the action swirls along the edge of sobriety that Bacchism is to be brought in, and not merely as a dramatic expedient."[41] Prokne leaves the palace to fetch her sister "in great haste, dressed in a maenad's attire" (fr. 586 Radt). The exhortation to address a prayer to Dionysus belongs here as well: *deum Cadmogena natum Semela adfare et famulanter pete,* "entreat in servile fashion the god, son of Kadmos' daughter Semele" (fr. 647 Warmington). There follows another choral song for which Calder suggests "a Dionysiac theme."[42] That such a theme was present in one or more of the odes is clear from a choral fragment (591 Radt) which Welcker, Jebb, and others have seen as reflecting a basic principle of Dionysian cult:

> ἓν φῦλον ἀνθρώπων, μί' ἔδειξε πατρὸς
> καὶ ματρὸς ἡμᾶς ἁμέρα τοὺς πάντας· οὐδεὶς
> ἔξοχος ἄλλος ἔβλαστεν ἄλλου.
> βόσκει δὲ τοὺς μὲν μοῖρα δυσαμερίας,
> τοὺς δ' ὄλβος ἡμῶν, τοὺς δὲ δουλεί-
>   ας ζυγὸν ἔσχεν ἀνάγκας.

> The human race is one; a single day brought forth all
> of us from our father [Ouranos] and mother [Gaia].

[39] See, e.g., Segal, *Dionysiac Poetics,* esp. ch. 7, "Metatragedy: Art, Illusion, Imitation," 215–71; and Foley, *Ritual Irony* 205–57. Cultic disguise as a metatheatrical strategy seems to have played a part also in Euripides' *Peliades* (where Medea was disguised as a priestess) and *Ino* (in which the heroine participates in a bacchic ceremony on Parnassus). See Mihailov, "La légende de Térée" 101.

[40] McDermott, *Euripides'* Medea 47. Cf. also the cryptic description of Itys' death as φόνον θυόμενον Μούσαις, "murder, sacrifice to the Muses" (*Herakles* 1021–23).

[41] Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 80. Mihailov's unconvincing conclusions, "La légende de Térée" 103, detract somewhat from his interesting discussion, 98–103.

[42] Calder, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 89.

No one is born more exalted than another.
Yet some of us are fed the doom of evil days,
others are nourished by prosperity, while others still
are caught in the ineluctable yoke of slavery.

The glancing cosmogonic reference here may also point to an Orphic theme naturally suggested by the Thracian setting. This may be the sole trace of the dramatic source of Aristophanes' famous parody of Orphic cosmogony in the parabasis of *Birds*. The themes of titanomachy and, by assimilation, gigantomachy are also suggested and may be relevant to the revolt against the gods in the latter half of the comedy.[43] This song of a Thracian chorus celebrating the equality of all men on the occasion of the Dionysian Trieterika, moreover, is unmistakably ironic as it marks the dramatic time during which the two high-bred Athenian women plot their unspeakable crime. The willful assimilation of the Athenian princesses to the "barbarism" of their surroundings is thus rendered all the more horrific. The natural savagery and senseless violence (cf. ἄνους, fr. 589 Radt) of Sophokles' Tereus is echoed by Accius (frr. 639–42 Warmington):

Tereus indomito more atque animo barbaro
conspexit in eam; amore vecors flammeo,
depositus, facinus pessimum ex dementia
confingit.

Tereus, a man of ways untameable
and savage heart, did turn his gaze upon her;
senseless with flaming love, a man laid low,
the foullest deed he fashioned from his madness. (tr. Warmington)

Prokne's and Philomela's revenge, on the other hand, elicits the severe judgment (fr. 589 Radt) cited above: an impetuous erotomaniac, Tereus is "senseless," to be sure, but the slaughter of Itys and macabre feast are acts of vengeance and, as such, are even more senseless and inex-

[43] A parallel passage (*Orphic Hymns* 37.1) cited by Pearson ad loc. is instructive in this connection: Τιτῆνες, Γαίης τε καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀγλαὰ τέκνα, ἡμετέρων πρόγονοι πατέρων, "Titans, illustrious children of Gaia and Ouranos, our parents' forebears." Peisetairos refers jokingly to this Titan lineage in his speech promoting the priority of the birds over the gods (*Birds* 468–69). The many references to cosmogony and the titanomachy/gigantomachy are discussed in considerable detail by Hofmann, *Mythos und Komödie* 177–96.

cusable. The other choral fragments (592 and 593 Radt, nine verses in all), though metrically interesting,[44] are harder to place, since their commentary on the dangers of presumption and the mutability of human fortune does not mention specific people or events and can be applied only to the final crisis of the play. It is worth noting, however, that the chorus is not blindly loyal to Tereus and, as we would expect, comments on the events with some degree of detachment.

In the following scene Prokne returns with her sister disguised as a maenad and relates Tereus' crimes to the chorus (frr. 648–49, 639–42 Warmington).[45] *Non est lacrimis hoc agendum,* Ovid has Prokne exhort her sister, *sed ferro, sed siquid habes, quod vincere ferrum possit!* "Now is not the time for tears but for the sword; for something indeed, if you have it, even more powerful than the sword!" (*Met.* 6.611–13). As the women plan their revenge, Itys appears, suggesting himself quite naturally as their victim. At this point someone (a nurse?) contemplates rescuing the boy from the queen in such a way as to elude Tereus at the same time (frr. 652–53 Warmington). The sacrifice and cooking take place during the following choral song (third stasimon), which, if Welcker is correct, was a poignant lament for Itys.

The fourth episode involved an attempt on the part of the chorus to dissuade Prokne from carrying out the final act of her revenge. Her answer may have been the hubristic exclamation of scorn: *Alia hic sanctitudo est, aliud nomen et numen Iovis,* "Here holiness is different, different here the name and nod of Jupiter" (fr. 650 Warmington). Realizing that their words have had no effect, the chorus observe: *Struunt sorores Atticae dirum nefas,* "The Athenian sisters are plotting dire wickedness" (fr. 651 Warmington). Tereus, who must have entered by this point, speaks with Prokne, who, in Kiso's words, "seduces him into the palace with the pretext that she has prepared a sacred ancestral meal which he must consume alone. . . . One recalls the carpet scene in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon.*"[46] The chorus sings another song.

As the final stasimon comes to its conclusion, we hear Tereus' cry

[44] Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 73, cites Buchwald's *Studien zur Chronologie* on the strong similarity between these verses and the dactylo-epitrites at *Oidipous Tyrannos* 1086 and *Aias* 172. Although this observation has potential value for dating the play, it is less useful in reconstruction.

[45] See Welcker, *Griechischen Tragödien* 380–81, and Radt, *TGF* 437, for discussion of other fragments relating to the glossectomy which, for various reasons, have not been generally accepted.

[46] Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 70.

of horror (offstage) as he realizes what he has been eating: Ἥλιε, φιλίπποις Θρῃξὶ πρέσβιστον σέλας, "Sun, most august light for horse-loving Thracians" (fr. 582 Radt). The exodos must have unfolded in at least three stages: confrontation and pursuit, metamorphosis, and epiphany. First, Tereus armed with an ἀκόντιον or some similar weapon confronts the two sisters and pursues them across the stage. This moment is recalled by Aristophanes in *Lysistrata* (563): ἕτερος δ' αὖ Θρᾷξ πέλτην σείων κἀκόντιον, ὥσπερ ὁ Τηρεύς, ἐδεδίττετο τὴν ἰσχαδόπωλιν, "and another, a Thracian, brandishing a light shield and a javelin, just like Tereus, frightened the fig vendor," an allusion suggesting that the original performance (as, subsequently, the script and iconography) of *Tereus* was impressive enough to be remembered and quoted decades after its production. All three exit by one of the *eisodoi*.

Iconographic evidence for Sophokles' play attests several scenes which must have been especially memorable.[47] The general impression conveyed by these images is that *Tereus* was not only a rather unusual and thorough reworking of traditional material, as a script, but deeply impressed its spectators as a violent and original spectacle. Memory of the latter, possibly the pursuit and final tableau, quite obviously moti-

[47]Most interesting are several Italian examples dating from the late fifth to the middle fourth centuries: there is the well-known Apulian fragment by the Painter of the (Berlin) Dancing Girl depicting the Thracian king with the inscription THPEYΣ (Bibliothèque Nationale, ca. 430/420), a picture by the Dolon Painter on a Lucanian bell krater (CA 2193, Louvre; ca. 400–370/60) of the *peplos* scene in which Prokne receives her sister's *textum* in the presence of the king, and a Campanian fragment by the Caivano Painter (PV 2891, Dresden; ca. 330/310) depicting the flight of Prokne and Philomela: Tereus rushes from the palace holding what appears to be a πέλεκυς and (if Margaret Bieber is correct) a child's bone. This painting, which certainly illustrates Sophokles' play, is a visual correlate to the Aristophanic allusion cited above (*Lys.* 563). Finally, Simon, "Tereus," associates with Sophokles' *Tereus* the striking polychrome Tarantine fragment (Gnathia krater, Würzburg 832; ca. 340) depicting an actor holding his mask. For discussions of the iconographic evidence and bibliography see Webster, *Monuments* 152; Mihailov, "La légende de Térée" 98–103; Gelzer, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 188–92; Radt, *TGF* 473; and Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 144 n. 73. Scholarly opinion seems nearly unanimous (Simon, Schmidt, Bieber, and others) in identifying the painting on the Lucanian bell krater (Dolon Painter) as illustrating Sophokles' *Tereus*. Trendall and Webster's view that this painting illustrates a scene from Euripides' *Medeia* is less convincing because there are no children present. Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 75, notes that the Prokne statue in the Akropolis Museum "(dated to 430–20 B.C. by H. Knell) may have been a dedication on the occasion of a victory in dramatic competition, possibly of Sophocles' *Tereus*." For plates see Cambitoglou and Trendall, *Apulian Red-figured Vase-painters*, and Trendall, *The Red-figured Vases of Lucania*.

vated Aristophanes' hoopoe character in *Birds*. Another striking feature of the several representations of the tragic Tereus is the wealth and detail of the tragic costumes. It is almost certain that *Birds* contained further imitation or parody of this aspect of the Sophoklean performance.

It is conceivable that the moment of metamorphosis was illustrated by the display of Tereus, Prokne, and Philomela on the *ekkyklēma* in a superimposition of the death tableau of the *Khoephoroi* exodos and the familiar Euripidean deus ex machina. The rapid succession of events would seem to preclude a full costume change.[48] I suggest that we imagine this moment marking the conclusion of the tragedy as an arrangement of three characters (Tereus in pursuit?) in which their metamorphosis is marked symbolically by certain prominent signs—a token change of clothing or headdress, perhaps. The death wish implicit in the desiderative metaphor of lyric and tragic poetry "Would that I were a bird" (that is, the desire to flee from life and the human condition) is well known[49] and would make quite natural the association of this desperate tableau of metamorphosis–in–crisis with the scenes of death which had already been presented on the *ekkyklēma*. Thus Sophokles would achieve a counterpoint of sorts between this final image of the unfortunate "birds" and his audience's expectation of a death scene. Such a visual representation of the lyric metaphor would certainly have been an innovative and powerful moment of theatrical symbolism. The compelling suggestion (see note 17) that Tereus was "costumed in the Thracian manner of hair–style (*akrokomoi*) and headgear" would contribute to the effectiveness of the final tableau and constitute

[48] On the question of mask and costume–change in tragedy see Foley, *Ritual Irony* 252 with n. 66.

[49] The yearning to become a bird is a common lyric topos, Alkman fr. 26 being perhaps the most famous (βάλε δὴ βάλε κηρύλος εἴην ὅς τ' ἐπὶ κύματος ἄνθος ἅμ' ἀλκυόνεσσι ποτῆται, etc.). See Goosen, "Die Tiere." More or less contemporary tragic examples are numerous: E. *Hipp*. 732–51, *Hel*. 1478–94, *Andr*. 861–62; S. *OC* 1080–84, fr. 476 [*Oinomaos*], etc. This desiderative metaphor often expresses an implicit death wish. See, e.g., E. *Ion* 1238–45, *HF* 1157–62, *Hec*. 1096–1106. The song from Sophokles' *Oinomaos* is transplanted into a comic context when quoted by the young man (second sequence of intruders) at *Birds* 1337–39. For laments with implicit or explicit death wish see Führer, *Formproblem–Untersuchungen* 130–35. For a good discussion of bird metamorphoses see Forbes–Irving, *Metamorphosis* 96–127, 248–49. Of specific interest is tragic Prokne, concerning whom Ludwig Koenen reminds me of Wilamowitz on *HF* 1022, Fraenkel on Aeschylus' *Ag*. 1144, Easterling on Sophokles' *Tr*. 963. Prokne figures in a papyrus fragment of Euripides' *Kresphontes* (P. Mich. Inv. 6973), which Koenen is preparing to publish.

part of the "outrage" (λυμαίνεται) which the comic Tereus says has been inflicted on him by Sophokles. The final stage of the exodos involved the appearance of a *deus,* perhaps Hermes, who reproaches the Athenian women as foolish and their revenge as a "remedy worse than the illness" applied by a foolish doctor (fr. 589 Radt).[50] To this final *rhēsis* belongs the famous fragment (581 Radt) which has been attributed to Sophokles' *Tereus* since Welcker's time:[51]

τοῦτον δ' ἐπόπτην ἔποπα τῶν αὑτοῦ κακῶν
πεποικίλωκε κἀποδηλώσας ἔχει
θρασὺν πετραῖον ὄρνιν ἐν παντευχίᾳ·
ὃς ἦρι μὲν φανέντι διαπαλεῖ πτερὸν
κίρκου λεπάργου· δύο γὰρ οὖν μορφὰς φανεῖ
παιδός τε χαὐτοῦ νηδύος μιᾶς ἄπο·
νέας δ' ὀπώρας ἡνίκ' ἂν ξανθῇ στάχυς,
στικτή νιν αὖθις ἀμφινωμήσει πτέρυξ·
ἀεὶ δὲ μίσει τῶνδ' †ἄπ' ἄλλον† εἰς τόπον
δρυμοὺς ἐρήμους καὶ πάγους ἀποικιεῖ

And this hoopoe, an initiate into his own misfortunes,
he (Zeus) has embroidered, having manifested him
as a bold bird, living among rocks, in full armor.
When spring comes, he will ply the wing of a hawk
with white feathers, as he will display two forms
from a single womb, both the fledgling's and his own.
Whenever the stalks of grain grow yellow in early July,
a spotted wing will guide him anew.
But, driven by hatred for these [women], he will always fly
to another place, inhabiting lonely thickets and crags.

(tr. Kiso, adapted)

[50] Fr. 589 Radt: ἄνους ἐκεῖνος· αἱ δ' ἀνουστέρως ἔτι / ἐκεῖνον ἠμύναντο ⟨πρὸς τὸ⟩ καρτερόν. / ὅστις γὰρ ἐν κακοῖσι θυμωθεὶς βροτῶν / μεῖζον προσάπτει τῆς νόσου τὸ φάρμακον, / ἰατρός ἐστιν οὐκ ἐπιστήμων κακῶν. "[Tereus] is foolish, to be sure; but [Prokne and Philomela] showed even greater folly in vindictively punishing him. A mortal who, in anger at adverse circumstances, applies a remedy worse than the disease, is a doctor ignorant of ills."

[51] Having noted a few "mistakes" of quotation in Plato and Aristotle, Welcker (*Griechischen Tragödien* 384–85) attributes this fragment (cited from "Aiskhylos" in *H.A.* 9.49b, 633a17) to Sophokles. The main arguments supporting Welcker and those who follow him (Oder, Pearson, Robert, Mihailov, Calder, and Radt, to name a few) are (1) that there is no evidence of a *Tereus* by Aiskhylos and (2) that the periphrasis with ἔχειν + participle as well as the adverb ἡνίκα, while attested in Sophoklean verse, are absent from Aiskhylos.

This passage suggests that the tragic poet innovated Tereus' metamorphosis into a crested hoopoe, choosing the supposedly strange and harsh–tempered bird to represent the alien, warlike Thracian. The similarity of ἔποψ and ἐπόπτης along with the apparent uncertainty about the hoopoe's appearance and behavior no doubt conspired to encourage this innovation.[52] Sophokles, moreover, seems to be at pains to reconcile an older version of the myth, in which Tereus becomes a common hawk, with his dramatic metamorphosis of a barbarian into a correspondingly strange bird. Motivation for this epiphany must be sought in the unusual resolution of the final crisis: the metamorphoses, unlike suicide or murder, have a supernatural cause and, as such, must be reported by a messenger, most likely Hermes, capable of revealing the will of Zeus. This *rhēsis* no doubt prompts the sententious strophe (fr. 590 Radt) which resembles the closing words of the chorus in several other Sophoklean plays (e.g., *Aias* and *Trakhiniae*):

θνητὴν δὲ φύσιν χρὴ θνητὰ φρονεῖν,
τοῦτο κατειδότας ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν
πλὴν Διὸς οὐδεὶς τῶν μελλόντων
ταμίας ὅ τι χρὴ τετελέσθαι.

Men of mortal race must think mortal thoughts.
Knowing this full well, that there is none
but Zeus to dispose of what is to come
in the way that it must be accomplished.

It is hard not to detect an anti–Thracian sentiment in Sophokles' spectacle of two high–bred Athenian women driven to commit crimes which exceed their barbarian hosts' "natural" savagery. The very fact,

[52] The rather odd picture presented in this fragment of a perennial bird which, in effect, changes species from season to season suggests that the hoopoe's natural history was less than familiar to Sophokles and his contemporaries. The strangeness of the hoopoe is comically exaggerated throughout *Birds*. The similarity between the folk etymologies of Tereus (from τηρέω) and *epops* (ἐποπτεύω) may have influenced Sophokles' design. Sophokles' play with words here, moreover, seems to have inspired further wordplay in the comedy. "The derivation of ἔποψ from ἐφοράω," writes Griffith ("The Hoopoe's Name" 60–61), "as though it were an apocope of ἔποψις ('panorama') is underscored by two things. The first is the close resemblance of Τηρεύς to τηρέω, a synonym for ἐφοράω. This resemblance was remarked already in antiquity, when the folk–etymology deriving Τηρεύς from τηρέω was current. The second factor is the association of the Hoopoe with two overseeing divinities, Helios and Zeus." He goes on (61) to document the folk etymology in some detail.

however, that Prokne and Philomela are said to have become "even more senseless" than Tereus suggests that the foreign context and xenophobic rhetoric coupled with the cheerful occasion of the Dionysian festival only serve to highlight the depravity of the two sisters. The Atheno–Thracian antithesis thus contributes to the ironic undermining of Athenian superiority (cf. *Andromakhe* 168–77) in the spectacle of Pandion's daughters outdoing their host and ally in savagery.[53] This complex interplay of "natural" and willful savagery is quite clearly the product of Sophokles' dramatic design, which imparted to the "myth" of Tereus and Prokne its definitive shape. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that after the production of this tragedy, mention of Tereus et al. was made, more often than not, in reference to Sophokles' play.

Although dating the play on the basis of the anti–Thracian theme cannot be precise, it is reasonable to follow Webster, Calder, and many other scholars in regarding the *Medeia* (431) as the *terminus ante quem*.[54] The context of the first years of the Peloponnesian War calls to mind Thoukydides' polemic (2.29.3) in which the historian asserts vehemently that Teres (father of the Athenians' Thracian ally Sitalkes) has nothing to do with the Tereus who married Pandion's daughter Prokne.[55] Marcel Detienne has recently argued that the anti–Thracian

[53] In pointing out this irony I cannot follow Kiso and Hourmouziades in their attempts to "humanize" Sophokles' Tereus and to represent him as a "tragic hero" and "loving father." Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 81, suggests that in Sophokles' play "the presupposed distinction between civilization and barbarism turned out to be fallacious." For different reasons Hourmouziades, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 138, argues that the Thracian "becomes the loving father, who does not refrain from committing a purposeless murder [i.e., killing Dryas] in order to protect his child."

[54] Calder, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 91, argues that "Medeia slays her children to spite the faithless Jason. Ovid already drew the parallel at *Amores* 2.14.29 sq. Medea's infanticides were an Euripidean innovation. Before him she merely absconded with the children. The Tereus story contrarily was an aetiological legend to explain the nightingale's plaintive cry *Ityn, Ityn*. The infanticide was central and indispensable. I should not hesitate to place *Tereus* before *Medea,* dated by its hypothesis to 431 B.C. The plot motivation, the destructive effects of excessive sibling affection, recalls *Antigone* of March 443 B.C. I should be prepared to accept a date in the early 430s roughly contemporary with *Trachiniae*." See also Kiso, *The Lost Sophocles* 74–76.

[55] In describing the three–way conflict between Athens, Macedon, and Thrace characterized by a series of unstable agreements in the late 430s, Thoukydides defends Sitalkes as a trustworthy middleman. M. Mayer and others have argued that this passage (as well as the other mythological digressions, e.g., 2.99.3, 2.102.5–6) is a response to contemporary tragedy (see Halliday, *Indo–European Folk–tales* 105; Cazzaniga, *La saga di Itis* 61–62; Gernet, *Mélanges* 202–7; Rusten, *Thucydides* 19). The historian's polemic at

feeling on the part of the Athenians was informed by an especially acute hostility of a developed literary culture towards barbarians who were hostile to the art of writing and to education.[56] Sophokles' *Tereus* would seem to be a striking example of the "war" between Thracians and writing. The tragedy was especially powerful since it involved the double spectacle of a Thracian attempting to suppress communication by means of mutilation and the cunning victory of (Athenian) writing over Thracian violence. The subversion of this theme lies at the heart of Aristophanes' comic Tereus in *Birds*.

TEREUS COMICUS

It is hardly controversial to assert that "the canonical form of the [Tereus] myth was clearly fixed by Sophocles" and that the influence of

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this point would be especially understandable if the Athenians had been impressed by a powerful anti-Thracian play just before the outbreak of the war. "The use of Thracian allies and troops was not popular in Athens (Ar. *Ach.* 141–71)," notes Rusten, "and they were eventually responsible for one of the worst atrocities of the war (7.29). It would have been easy to believe that Sitalces was descended from the savage king whose story had been dramatized in Sophocles' *Tereus*." Mayer, *Mythistorica* 491, says, "Es scheint mir ganz unverkennbar, dass es der Tereus des Sophokles sein muss, gegen den er [Thoukydides] polemisiert." For the Thracian element in Euripides' *Hekabe* see Segal, "Violence and the Other" 127–28 (with bibliography, 109 n. 1). See also Delebecque, *Euripide* 154–64, and Danov, *Altthrakien* 163, 289.

[56] Detienne, "Orpheus" 2–3: "The inhabitants of Thrace, Orpheus' native country, are illiterate people; even more, they are so illiterate that they consider the knowledge of writing indecent. Consequently, the works going about under Orpheus' name are, as Androtion says, 'myths,' *mûthoi*, fictions. One should see in them the work of a forger. The charge is serious, since, at that time, Thracians had the reputation of being the most bloodthirsty and wild of all barbarians. Everyone knows, as Xenophon testifies, that on the shores of the Black Sea, they will even kill each other to get hold of the effects of shipwrecked Greeks but they leave on the shore, as valueless goods, boxes full of written papyrus rolls. Even more, during an incident of the Peloponnesian War, which Thucydides (who should know) labels one of the most horrible atrocities of the war, they slaughtered with the short sword—which is not a regular weapon of the Greeks—all of the children of the city of Mykalessos gathered in the school, helpless children learning how to read and write. Obviously, the role of the Thracians, full of scorn for writing, was to destroy in fury everything which concerned the intellectual sphere: books, tools, and men. Androtion goes straight to the point: when a Thracian hears the word book, he draws his sword." This passage is published in a modified form in Detienne, *L'écriture* 110.

the tragic performance was deep and long-lasting.[57] Even from the incomplete picture that we have of the lost play it is obvious that the tragedian's contribution was extensive. *Birds,* produced in March 414, stands as an elaborate testament to the profound impression made by Sophokles' *Tereus*. We may marvel at the power of memory required of both the comic poet and his spectators for the explicit parody of a tragedy produced well over a decade before to be intelligible and effective.[58] It is nevertheless not unusual for a comedy and a "target" tragedy (tragic model) to be separated by a number of years. Euripides' *Telephos,* for example, was produced in 438, thirteen years before its extended parody as "the old play" in *Acharnians* (line 415). There can be little doubt, moreover, that memorable tragedies (or excerpts thereof) were kept alive and circulated as texts for private use. Aristophanes himself makes this clear in passages such as *Clouds* 1371 (a *rhēsis* from Euripides) and *Frogs* 52–54 (Dionysos as reader of Euripides' *Andromeda*). The comic Tereus of *Birds* identifies Sophokles' play as his place of origin, thereby inviting us to investigate how Aristophanes has transformed the tragic character into a central player in his comedy.

I argue elsewhere that a major thematic moment of *Birds* is the comic subversion of the desiderative lyric metaphor "Would that I were a bird!"[59] The unusual climax of Sophokles' *Tereus* was unquestionably the most elaborate and memorable tragic enactment of this metaphor: the oblique death-in-metamorphosis served as an innovative conclusion to a series of equally innovative dramatic events. In designing the literary synthesis that is *Birds* Aristophanes quite obviously fastened on

[57] Halliday, *Indo-European Folk-tales* 98–100. Hourmouziades, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 134, distinguishes Sophokles' contribution from the older legend: "no matter how decisive the Sophoclean influence may have been for the final shaping of the myth, its later accounts, with the exception of Ovid's elaborate narrative . . . invariably fall back on some initial trend, which seems to have been that of explaining, in the form of an αἴτιον, the idiosyncratic habits of the nightingale and the swallow." Gelzer, "Sophocles' *Tereus*" 188, discusses the breadth of the influence of Sophokles' play, especially in art. For a Middle Comic *Tereus* (Anaxandrides) see Athenaios *Deipn.* 9.373, and Nesselrath, *Mittlere Komödie,* 216–18.

[58] On this subject see Schlesinger, "Indications of Parody" 309–13. Slater, *Reading Petronius* 19–20, makes the point that knowledge of the model being parodied may not always be necessary for sincere enjoyment of a comic work.

[59] Dobrov, "Metaphor of Deferral."

Sophokles' dramatic intersection of language and spectacle: the poetic flight from the human condition in a crisis (possible only in language) becomes a comic flight from the Athenian condition, with the ultimate "flight" of Athenians in droves from their city to the bird–polis. While the tragic trio of Tereus, Prokne, and Philomela pass, in metamorphosis, out of an explicitly horrible past into an indeterminate animal state which preserves old hostilities, Peisetairos and Euelpides flee from rather vague social "problems" into what turns out to be a complex and harmonious avian future in Nephelokokkygia. Tereus, himself a refugee from tragedy, undergoes an important secondary role–transformation before our very eyes: first an active guide whom the Athenians approach as suppliants, he assumes a passive role in which he serves as the living blueprint for Peisetairos' Great Idea. From the moment of Peisetairos' inspiration with the bird life, Tereus becomes the Athenian's assistant, taking instructions and learning from him. Tereus' catalytic role connects the various thematic strands of the comedy in a flexible and dynamic fashion that derives much of its force from Aristophanes' systematic parody of the Sophoklean invention that had so impressed the spectators of *Tereus*. In this respect Aristophanes succeeds in matching the creativity of his older contemporary by producing an innovative comic countercharacter. Thus, point by point:

(1a) *Thrace in the tragedy.* The setting of *Tereus* has been removed from Phokis to Thrace with attendant emphasis on an Atheno–Thracian antithesis: Prokne and Philomela reunite far from home among barbarians with whom they can have nothing in common. From nearby Daulis, the women have been exiled to the quintessentially barbaric Thrace.[60] Sophokles thus sets up a stark polarity between literate Athenians and the antiliterate Thracians, across which the spark of Philomela's epistle flashes to ignite the final crisis. The violent effort to suppress language by means of mutilation, a feature invented by Sophokles for his play, fits quite naturally in the context of this polarity.

(1b) *Thrace in the comedy.* Tereus' behavior in *Birds* is far from that of a violent Thracian erotomaniac. The tragic Tereus was made especially strange by being placed far from Athens in an entirely foreign and barbaric country. Contradicting Sophokles' removal of the king from Daulis to Thrace, Aristophanes makes his character comically

[60] For a detailed discussion of the Daulis question see Mayer, *Mythistorica* 489–94, and Halliday, *Indo-European Folk-tales* 104–6, who argues that Tereus was originally a Megarian hero.

familiar, as we have seen. He speaks a colloquial Attic (of course), has a servant, and, much like an Athenian, eats Phalerum whitebait and pea soup using a bowl, pot, and stirring-spoon. The name of Tereus seems to have occurred naturally to Philokrates, the Athenian vendor who recommended him to Peisetairos and Euelpides. Throughout the scenes featuring the hybrid Epops, his Thracian past and ethnic character are rejected. At *Birds* 1363–69, for example, Peisetairos says to the young *patraloias* who wishes to settle in Nephelokokkygia:

σὺ γὰρ
τὸν μὲν πατέρα μὴ τύπτε· ταυτηνδὶ λαβὼν
τὴν πτέρυγα καὶ τουτὶ τὸ πλῆκτρον θἀτέρᾳ,
νομίσας ἀλεκτρυόνος ἔχειν τονδὶ λόφον,
φρούρει, στρατεύου, μισθοφορῶν σαυτὸν τρέφε,
τὸν πατέρ' ἔα ζῆν· ἀλλ', ἐπειδὴ μάχιμος εἶ,
εἰς τἀπὶ Θρᾴκης ἀποπέτου κἀκεῖ μάχου.

Don't hit your father; just take this wing
and this spur in your other hand,
imagine that this comb you've got is a cock's,
and do garrison duty, serve on expeditions, maintain yourself
by earning pay. Let your father live. In fact, as you're a fighting type,
fly off to the Thracian Coast and fight there.

Far from being ignorant, threatening, or strange, Tereus is a widely traveled bird (118) who inspires laughter and sympathy. The most striking aspect of Aristophanes' neutralization of the tragic Atheno–Thracian antithesis is his promotion of Tereus to the forefront as an articulate intermediary coupled with the virtual banishment of Sophokles' Athenian protagonist: Prokne has no speaking part in the comedy and, as Frank Romer has pointed out, does not even appear onstage as a bird![61] It is hard not to be impressed by this ironic spectacle: the Athenian princess, famous as the eloquent protagonist who laments the lot of women and punishes her husband for his erotic crimes, is trotted out by Tereus as a silent character (more accurately, a flute–girl) to be the butt of Peisetairos' and Euelpides' lusty jokes (665–74). Peisetairos finds her "a lovely birdie . . . fair, and tender," while Euelpides says

[61] Romer, "When Is a Bird not a Bird?" 136–38. For a discussion of the relationship between writing and violence against women in the post–Sophoklean tradition, especially Ovid, see Joplin, "Voice of the Shuttle" 43–53.

that he would have "great pleasure in spreading her legs" and "peeling her like an egg."

In *Birds* Prokne's exile amidst violent foreigners is translated into a political allotopia[62] (Nephelokokkygia), an important aspect of which is its gradual familiarization: the city in the air, which is located essentially "nowhere," comes to look and sound more and more like Athens. Although Tereus explicitly identifies the birds as having been barbarians (199–200) whom he had to teach Greek (!), the hostility of the bird mob is short-lived and is mollified by Peisetairos' *rhēsis* and concluding treaty. Unlike Thracians, the "natural" community of birds lacks a strong and ancient tradition and submits easily to the creative *didaskalia* (teaching, choreography) of Peisetairos. This comic portrayal of the persuasion of the Athenian demos by members of the sociopolitical elite influenced by the activist sophists (e.g., Alkibiades)[63] is a far cry from an encounter between Athenians and Thracians. If we consider the result of Peisetairos' city-planning activities (Athenians flock to the bird city), it is clear that the relationship between Athens and Nephelokokkygia is the polar opposite of the Sophoklean hostility between Athens and the royal house of Tereus. The fact that Peisetairos and Euelpides *voluntarily* flee from Athens to establish a successful colony by manipulating a natural community of bird-barbarians insures a pointed reversal of Sophokles' ethnic schema at every moment of the comedy. Tereus' prominent role in *Birds* serves to keep this reversal in the dramatic foreground. In this respect *Birds* represents the culmination of an evolving comic idea: the Eldorado scenarios of early comedy (cf. Telekleides' *Amphiktyones, PCG* fr. 1) involved refugees from culture passing their time blissfully in a natural paradise. Pherekrates' *Agrioi* (*PCG* frr. 5–20) challenged this topos by showing how two such refugees would come to grief, sharing the hardships of cultureless savages in the wilderness. *Birds,* however, presents the spectacle of inevitable civilization: frustrated by what they find in "nature," the refugees from city and culture proceed to organize, civilize, and build. "Nature" and "barbarians" yield as Athens comically reproduces itself in the air!

(2a) *Metamorphosis in the tragedy.* That Sophokles innovatively transformed his Tereus into a hoopoe (instead of a hawk) "rests on unimpeachable evidence."[64] The *rhēsis,* with its suggestive play on the

[62] See Konstan, "City in the Air."
[63] Henderson, "Peisetairos and the Athenian Elite."
[64] Pearson, *Fragments of Sophocles* 224.

word ἔποψ and an odd representation of the bird's natural history (fr. 581 Radt), is an addition to the earlier form of the legend attested, for example, by Aiskhylos (*Hiketides* 63), who mentions the nightingale "pursued by a hawk," κιρκηλάτου τ' ἀηδόνος. Exhibiting behavior and an appearance that were popularly seen as strange and even repugnant (e.g., hostile to women, smearing its nest with human excrement), the hoopoe suits the tragedian's barbarized king, a point emphasized at line 280 when Euelpides expresses surprise that Tereus is not the *only* representative of his species.[65] The visual connection between the hoopoe's crest and the Thracian hairstyle (*akrokomos*) was most likely exploited in the final tableau. Sophokles enacted the lyric topos "I wish I were a bird" as a visual metaphor for death on the *ekkyklēma*. The metamorphosis of Tereus into a crested hoopoe was thus both thematically and visually motivated. Hofmann is certainly correct in pointing out that whereas in the pre–Sophoklean version of the legend metamorphosis was a simple punishment, in Tereus "die Metamorphose . . . erst von Sophokles als Erlösung umgedeutet wurde. Dieser positive Schluss ist es, den Aristophanes als Grundgedanken für sein Spiel übernommen, ja noch weiter ausgebaut hat."[66]

(2b) *Metamorphosis in the comedy.* Griffith's "The Hoopoe's Name" explores Aristophanes' play on the name ἔποψ, "hoopoe." Since Old Comedy thrives on exuberant wordplay, it is natural that Sophokles' choice of species (and play therewith) would have been cheerfully exploited and greatly extended by Aristophanes in *Birds*. Griffith discerns a variety of puns from the obvious "pooping" cries (ἐποποῖ, 58 and 227) to a subtle play on ἐπί, ὀπ– (εἶδον), and πετ– at line 48: Peisetairos says that he is seeking Tereus the Hoopoe to find out from him "if he's seen a city of that [trouble–free, ἀπράγμων] kind anywhere he's flown over," εἴ που τοιαύτην εἶδε πόλιν ᾗ 'πέπτατο. Since this bird "is the very same character that Sophokles staged in his *Tereus*," Griffith notes, it is "singularly appropriate that the pun which Aristophanes makes on the Hoopoe's name had almost certainly been made by Sophokles in this very play, the *Tereus*."[67] This is a comic

[65] Aelian *NA* 3.26, οἱ ἔποπές εἰσιν ὀρνίθων ἀπηνέστατοι . . . etc. See Thompson, *Greek Birds* 97–98, on the behavior, nest, and habitat of the hoopoe as understood by various cultures. It is important to avoid the pitfall of circularity, however, by noting that Aelian may have been influenced by the myth, at least as regards the misogyny.

[66] Hofmann, *Mythos und Komödie* 74.

[67] Griffith, "The Hoopoe's Name" 60.

extension of the wordplay in fragment 581 Radt: from Sophokles' allusion to Eleusinian ἐποπτεία, "initiation" (and perhaps to Zeus Epopetes/Epopeus), Aristophanes has created a rich network of jokes that collectively characterize the comic Tereus' function as initiator of Athenians into birdhood (we might say ὀρνιθαγωγός), with an implicit "parody of religious worship in which the birds cast themselves in the role of those gods who could best be called παν(τ)όπται, that is to say Zeus (cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 1045) and Helios (cf. Aesch. *Prom.* 91)."[68]

In addition to the punning strategies mentioned above, Aristophanes has undermined Sophokles' dramatic point. Whereas the metamorphosis into a hoopoe in tragedy represents the Thracian king's strange and savage nature, the peculiar appearance of the comic Epops is made the object of several aggressive jokes. "Are you a bird or a peacock?" asks a bewildered Peisetairos in line 102. Failing to identify Tereus' species, he reaches for the most alien and exotic ornithoid he can think of, the ταῶς (peacock), a name which in *Birds* is used to denote a marginal or entirely unfamiliar species (cf. 269).[69] This use of ταῶς to comically extend the hoopoe's strangeness illustrates well how Aristophanes abuses and distorts what one might call "popular ornithology" to suit his purposes (indeed, the serious ornithologist will be frustrated at times by Aristophanes' text). The metamorphosis of the comic Epops, moreover, appears to be incomplete and elicits Euelpides' com-

[68]Griffith, "The Hoopoe's Name" 61. "Finally," he concludes (63), "the words of the tragedian which line 48 calls to mind would have been resonant for an Athenian audience, for the ἐπόπτης denotes him who in the mysteries of Demeter had passed from being 'one who keeps his eyes closed' (μύστης) to the stage of 'beholding' (ἐποπτεία), and so has reached the furthest limit of vision and knowledge. Such a man by virtue of the power of flight imparted to him by his metamorphosis is Tereus, and by the application of his little root (*Av.* 654f.) he provides the men with wings and leads them to the knowledge which they seek."

[69]"Probably most Athenians had heard a good deal of talk about peacocks," notes Sommerstein (*Birds* 206), "but had never seen one; they were such a rarity that the aviary of Demos son of Pyrilampes, who exhibited his peacocks to the public once a month (charging an admission fee, according to Aelian *NA* 5.21), attracted visitors from as far afield as Sparta and Thessaly." In an article titled "Fowl Play" (*Nomos* 41–63) Cartledge discusses the prosopography behind Antiphon's speech *Against Erasistratos concerning (the) Peafowl* (frr. 57–59). He reconstructs the lawsuit of one Erasistratos against Demos son of Pyrilampes with the suggestion that this suit inspired Aristophanes' *Birds*. In connection with the Athenian spelling and pronunciation of ταῶς (Athenaios *Deipn.* IX.397c–d) he remarks (*Nomos* 52) that "there could be no more graphic illustration of the peacock's irremediable foreignness, and more specifically its orientalism . . . to Athenian eyes and ears."

ment that he looks "as though the Twelve Gods had blasted" him (95–96). Tereus' attempt to excuse his funny appearance ("all birds shed their feathers in winter") suggests that the Aristophanic costume exceeded the "Sophoklean indignities" (100) to make the Epops perfectly ridiculous. The dangerously sparse coat of the second hoopoe is given an even more hilarious explanation (285–86): the poor fellow, like Kallias son of Hipponikos, has been plucked bare by prosecutors and females! Thus Aristophanes marks his comic commentary on the strangeness of the Sophoklean hoopoe innovation by extending the tragic wordplay (ἔποψ ~ ἐπόπτης, "hoopoe" ~ "initiate") and distorting the tragic costume so as to adapt Tereus to his new role as guide and catalyst in *Birds*. This transformation of the hoopoe's dramatic effect is linked with Aristophanes' neutralization of the Atheno–Thracian antithesis: fragment 581 Radt describes the result of Tereus' metamorphosis in terms of a bitter *apoikia* of a solitary bird in a rocky terrain. This exile connected with hatred for Prokne and Philomela contrasts with the happy life of Tereus and his wife in *Birds*: *apoikia* becomes an Athenian desideratum, a place which attracts *apragmones* (cf. 44) to a new involvement in public life in comic contradiction to Perikles' famous criticism of such men.[70]

(3a) *The name "Tereus" in the tragedy.* There can be little doubt that Sophokles established the Thracian king's name as Τηρεύς (as opposed to Zethos, Polytekhnos, etc.), perhaps as an allusion to Teres, the king who united the kingdom of the Odrysians in the first half of the fifth century.[71] The *redende Name* of Prokne's grim "custodian" (cf. τηρέω) thus expresses a general anti–Thracian feeling as well as specific disapproval of the Athenians' alliance with Teres' son Sitalkes (reigned 440–424) at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War.

(3b) *The name "Tereus" in the comedy.* Aristophanes' choice of Tereus, it has been argued, was inspired by Sophokles' innovative treatment of metamorphosis as a *solution* (as opposed to a punishment; see note 66). Birdhood does, indeed, turn out to be a practical solution

[70]Thoukydides 2.63: "Men like these [*apragmones*] would soon ruin a state, either here, if they should persuade others, or if they should settle in some other land founding an independent state all to themselves; for retiring and unambitious men are not secure unless flanked by men of action" (tr. Rex Warner).

[71]Robert, *Griechische Heldensage* 156. Although conclusive proof is lacking, the indirect evidence, especially Thoukydides' polemic (2.29.3), suggests that the name "Tereus" was established for the Thracian king by Sophokles.

for Peisetairos and Euelpides, but Tereus' mock–tragic entrance (92) surely involves some play with Sophokles' significant name suggestive of vigilance and guarding: "this understanding of the name [i.e., from τηρέω] is consonant with Tereus' unexpected appearance: having heard of a human dining with ladle and pot (76–79), we meet a bird battened on myrtles and gnats (82); having searched for the 'Watcher,' we find him asleep (82)."[72]

(4a) *Language, recognition, and metatheater in the tragedy.* In addition to the incarceration of Philomela, Sophokles has Tereus cut out her tongue in order to set up the recognition by means of the "voice of the shuttle." The passage in *Poetics* mentioned above (16.1454b30–37), set alongside the peculiar, doubly determined suppression of Philomela (incarceration *and* mutilation), strongly suggests that Sophokles invented the tongue–cutting to set up another dramatic innovation: the destruction of Tereus by an act of writing (the recognition scene involving Philomela's *textum*). Occurring nowhere else in Greek legend as a means of preventing communication, this "lingual castration" is highly marked and serves to emphasize Tereus' singular savagery. His role as violent suppressor of language is thereby also specified.[73]

The revelation of Tereus' crimes by means of a *written message* woven and sent by the mutilated Philomela is a remarkable device designed specifically for the tragic stage by Sophokles, as Aristotle makes clear (see note 38). The immediate result is the victory of the Athenian women's literate cunning over their oppressive and crude Thracian environment. An irony implicit in the sophisticated strategy surfaces: Philomela becomes a swallow capable only of χελιδονίζειν; she is deprived of intelligible (Greek) speech, and her song becomes proverbial

[72]Griffith, "The Hoopoe's Name" 61 n. 11.

[73]Aiskhylean drama attests a simpler pre–Sophoklean tradition: as in the case of the passage in *Hiketides* mentioned above (line 62, hawk instead of hoopoe), *Agamemnon* 1050–51 attests an earlier version of the legend which makes no mention of shearing Philomela's tongue. Klytaimnestra says she will "persuade Kassandra (in Greek)" provided that she is not a monolingual barbarian who can only chatter like a swallow: ἀλλ' εἴπερ ἐστὶ μὴ χελιδόνος δίκην / ἀγνῶτα φωνὴν βάρβαρον κεκτημένη. This is the familiar association of swallow–song and foreign languages (see below) which, if anything, foreshadows Kassandra's mantic loquacity, *not* her inability to speak. The implication here is that a talkative Philomela was transformed into an equally "talkative" bird. For a different view see Ahl, "The Art of Safe Criticism" 182–84, whose argument depends on allusion by Aiskhylos to the glossectomy.

for unintelligible foreign chatter.[74] The spectacle of Tereus exposed and destroyed by means of writing seems to have been especially memorable (cf. note 47, on the Lucanian bell krater).

Sophokles has Prokne and Philomela use the occasion of the Trieterika to carry out their revenge. The vivid Dionysian element in Ovid (*Met.* 6.587–600) most likely reflects Sophokles' *Tereus,* an inference based both on Ovid's frequent use of tragedy (especially here) and on the absence of this element in other versions of the Tereus myth. Particularly important is the tragedian's metatheatrical deployment of this element: the Dionysian cult context provides the costume and setting for the Athenian sisters' play within the play. The maenad disguise, the sacred meal, and the gift of a special ὕφος, as well as the elements of violence and sacrifice, are nicely integrated, dramatically and thematically, in the Dionysian context.

(4b) *Language, recognition, and metatheater in the comedy.* Tereus is first engaged by the Athenian refugees as a natural bridge between their past and a desired, if uncertain, future. Peisetairos appeals to him in a passive mode, employing the language of supplication as he asks for guidance:

> ὅτι πρῶτα μὲν ἦσθ' ἄνθρωπος ὥσπερ νώ ποτε,
> κἀργύριον ὠφείλησας ὥσπερ νώ ποτε,
> κοὐκ ἀποδιδοὺς ἔχαιρες ὥσπερ νώ ποτε·
> εἶτ' αὖθις ὀρνίθων μεταλλάξας φύσιν
> καὶ γῆν ἐπέπτου καὶ θάλατταν ἐν κύκλῳ,
> καὶ πάνθ' ὅσαπερ ἄνθρωπος ὅσα τ' ὄρνις φρονεῖς.
> ταῦτ' οὖν ἱκέται νὼ πρὸς σὲ δεῦρ' ἀφίγμεθα,
> εἴ τινα πόλιν φράσειας ἡμῖν εὔερον,
> ὥσπερ σισύραν ἐγκατακλινῆναι μαλθακήν. (114–22)

[74] For the swallow's chatter as a metaphor for babble see A. *Ag.* 1050; Ar. *Birds* 1680–81, *Frogs* 93, 679–81; E. fr. 88 Nauck; Ion (the tragedian) fr. 33 Nauck. See also Thompson, *Greek Birds* 320. "Les anciens comparaient une langue barbare (étrangère) au cri de l'hirondelle," writes Zaganiaris ("Le mythe de Térée" 222). "De là le mot ὁ χελιδὼν (au masculin) a pris le sens de barbare et le verbe χελιδονίζω = βαρβαρίζω. Du même sens provient le proverbe χελιδόνων μουσεῖα qui désigne des mots barbares et inconcevables. Ce dicton convient aux hommes bavards et ennuyeux. L'expression est une parodie de ἀηδόνων μουσεῖα d'Euripide qui désigne des choeurs des rossignols. De même l'expression d'Aristophane χείλεσιν ἀμφιλάλοις δεινὸν ἐπιβρέμεται θρηκία χελιδὼν désigne son cri barbare en faisant allusion au mythe de la métamorphose qui a eu lieu en Thrace."

It is because you were originally a man, once upon a time, like us;
and you owed people money, once upon a time, like us;
and you liked to avoid paying them, once upon a time, like us.
Then later you changed to the shape of a bird,
and you've flown over land and sea in every direction;
and you have all the knowledge that a man has and that a bird has.
That's why we've come here to you [as suppliants],
to beseech you if you could tell us of some city that's nice and fleecy,
soft as a wooly mantle to go to sleep in.

The wisdom of the feathered guru, however, amounts to little more than a series of weak puns on proper names (Aristokrates, Melanthios, Opuntios) surrounding Peisetairos' and Euelpides' lusty scenarios of the good ἀπράγμων life (128–42). The chief suppliant, disappointed, begins to study Tereus himself. "What's this life here with the birds like?" he asks (155). "You'll know all about it." As Peisetairos "reads" Tereus—his living blueprint for the future—he is suddenly struck by the Great Idea which clarifies his own *redende Name*:

Πε. φεῦ φεῦ·
ἦ μέγ' ἐνορῶ βούλευμ' ἐν ὀρνίθων γένει
καὶ δύναμιν, ἣ γένοιτ' ἄν, εἰ <u>πίθοισθέ</u> μοι.
Τη. τί σοι <u>πιθώμεσθ'</u>;
Πε. ὅ τι <u>πίθησθε</u>; πρῶτα μὲν . . . (162–64)

PE. Yow!
I see in the race of birds what could be a grand design
and a mighty power, were you to be *persuaded* by me.
TE. What do you want us to be *persuaded* of?
PE. What should you be *persuaded* of [you ask]? Well, first of all . . .

Aristophanes marks this important moment etymologically by a triple repetition of the morpheme πιθ–, which anticipates the comic name of the as yet unnamed protagonist (see 644): Peisetairos now assumes leadership as "persuader of friends" and fellow members of ἑταιρίαι, "clubs."[75] His plan for a bird rebellion and boycott unfolds so rapidly that Tereus, now his student, has difficulty following it. When the meaning of Peisetairos' vigorous speech (180–83), the kernel of which is the

[75] Hubbard, *Mask of Comedy* 160, suggests that *Birds* (like Amepsias' *Revellers*, which won the comic competition of 414) was directed against the ἑταιρίαι "thought to be responsible for the sacriliges [of 415]."

pun πόλος ~ πόλις ("firmament" ~ "state"), finally dawns on Tereus, he unwittingly hints at the significant name of the future city (Νεφελοκοκκυγία) as Peisetairos' "trap" (νεφέλη) for "fools" (κόκκυγες):

Τη. ἰοὺ ἰού.
μὰ γῆν, μὰ παγίδας, μὰ νεφέλας, μὰ δίκτυα,
μὴ 'γὼ νόημα κομψότερον ἤκουσά πω·
ὥστ' ἂν κατοικίζοιμι μετὰ σοῦ τὴν πόλιν,
εἰ ξυνδοκοίη τοῖσιν ἄλλοις ὀρνέοις.
Πε. τίς ἂν οὖν τὸ πρᾶγμ' αὐτοῖς διηγήσαιτο;
Τη. σύ.
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτούς, βαρβάρους ὄντας πρὸ τοῦ,
ἐδίδαξα τὴν φωνὴν ξυνὼν πολὺν χρόνον.
Πε. πῶς δῆτ' ἂν αὐτοὺς ξυγκαλέσειας;
Τη. ῥᾳδίως.
δευρὶ γὰρ εἰσβὰς αὐτίκα μάλ' εἰς τὴν λόχμην,
ἔπειτ' ἀνεγείρας τὴν ἐμὴν ἀηδόνα,
καλοῦμεν αὐτούς· (194–204)

TE. Wowee!
Holy Earth! Holy snares, gins and nets,
but I've never heard a cleverer idea!
So much so that I'll found this city with you,
should the other birds agree.
PE. Then who's going to explain the idea to them?
TE. You. They used to be inarticulate [barbarians],
but I've lived with them a long time and I've taught them language.
PE. So how are you going to call them together?
TE. Easily. I'll go into my thicket here right away,
and wake up my nightingale,
and we'll summon them.

The reversal of Sophokles' *Tereus* is complete: in the tragedy the Atheno–Thracian antithesis provides the context for Tereus' efforts to suppress communication by means of the incarceration and "lingual castration" of Philomela. When the latter's *textum* defeats these efforts, Prokne avenges her sister in the most horrible way possible. Connecting two salient innovations, Sophokles has Tereus' suppression of language trigger the Athenian sisters' Dionysian theater of revenge. In Sophokles' play within the play, Tereus, a Thracian "full of scorn for writing" (see note 56), seeking "to destroy in fury everything which concerned the intellectual sphere," is himself destroyed by writing and

the superior intellectual abilities of the Athenians. Tragedy reacts, as it were, to the Thracian's war on language by complicating its own discourse and imbedding one performance (Prokne and Philomela disguised as maenads simulate Trieteric ritual) in another. I have suggested that the bloody conclusion of Sophokles' play may have presented to the audience a symbolic tableau in which Tereus, Prokne, and Philomela were represented as having passed out of the human condition following a series of unspeakable crimes. Even in this metaphorical death–as–solution the hoopoe shuns all women, nurturing an eternal hatred for them (fr. 581 Radt).

Aristophanes makes his Tereus a benevolent teacher and disseminator of language, and not any language, at that, but Greek! The comic counterinnovation provides Peisetairos with a linguistic context for his city–planning activities. The fact that this "Thracian" has taught his fellow barbarians Greek unleashes a new wave of Athenian cunning and creativity that surfaces as a comedy within a comedy. I argue elsewhere[76] that the persuasive speeches of the agon (451–638) represent a unique metatheatric moment in Aristophanic drama in which Peisetairos as *khorodidaskalos* trains a hostile bird *taxis* for their solemn "parodos" as a new chorus in the parabasis. Assimilating the Athenian's clever "lessons," the birds assume a new identity to deliver an authoritative comic cosmogony. Peisetairos, representing the comic poet, stands aside, as the birds perform with an impressive air of autonomy. The comic polis, Nephelokokkygia, emerges as a play written and directed by Peisetairos, who supervises the many entrances and exits of various (often quite literate) characters in his comedy. Tereus' activities of disseminating language are catalytic for this metacomedy, allowing Peisetairos' political career to mirror, among other things, the improvisational creativity of a comic poet.

CONCLUSION, ΛΕΓΩΝ ΠΤΕΡΩ ΣΕ: FROM TONGUE TO WING

Whereas the tragic Tereus' war on language precipitated a crisis which forced the participants to escape an intolerable human condition into birdhood (symbolic of death), the comic Tereus' linguistic pedagogy opens for the Athenians a political future marked by wings which Aristophanes uses as signs of rhetorical prowess and comic freedom.

[76] Dobrov, *The City as Comedy*.

The multidirectional governing metaphor of *Birds,* in which men assimilate to birds and birds to men, etc., springs directly from the presence onstage of Tereus, the incarnate comic "metaform." "The apotheosis of Peisetairos is only the climax of a persistent pattern," writes Sommerstein,[77]

> running through the play from start to finish, of subversion (both in word and in deed) of the established hierarchy of the universe with its unbridgeable gulfs between immortals and mortals, and between man and the lower animals. Over and over again, men are spoken of as birds, gods as birds or as men, birds as men or as gods. Tereus, his wife, and his servant, are birds who were once human; Peisetairus and Euelpides acquire wings and feathers during the play; while before himself becoming the new supreme god, Peisetairus has offered to make a god (Heracles) "sovereign of the birds." All boundaries and categories seem to be obliterated, just as Cloudcuckooville itself defies logic and nature, this walled and gated city which somehow floats in mid–air, which Iris can fly through without realizing it exists, which visitor after visitor from earth can reach *before* being equipped with wings. . . . Nowhere, even in Aristophanes, are the laws of the universe so utterly set aside for the hero's benefit. He has but to will, and it is so. His power is total.

This essentially linguistic power (cf. the central pun in line 184) drives the series of theatrical innovations which produce Nephelokokkygia. The comic Tereus has restored the severed tongue, and Aristophanes celebrates a bizarre possible future.[78] Metamorphosis into birds represents a comic solution of a very different kind. Wings signify rhetorical prowess coupled with the freedom to escape "tragedy" in precisely the same way as Tereus, bird–man par excellence, escaped from Sophokles' play to *Birds*. The chorus invite the spectators to join them in their bird comedy:

> οὐδέν ἐστ' ἄμεινον οὐδ' ἥδιον ἢ φῦσαι πτερά.
> αὐτίχ' ὑμῶν τῶν θεατῶν εἴ τις ἦν ὑπόπτερος,
> εἶτα πεινῶν τοῖς χοροῖσι τῶν τραγῳδῶν ἤχθετο,
> ἐκπτόμενος ἂν οὗτος ἠρίστησεν ἐλθὼν οἴκαδε,
> κᾆτ' ἂν ἐμπλησθεὶς ἐφ' ἡμᾶς αὖθις αὖ κατέπτατο. (785–89)

[77] Sommerstein, *Birds* 3–4.

[78] In all discussions of the power of language in Aristophanes, *Birds* in particular, it is necessary to acknowledge Whitman's fundamental work *Aristophanes and the Comic Hero.*

> There's nothing more advantageous or more agreeable than to grow wings.
> For instance, if one of you spectators were winged,
> and if he were hungry and bored with the tragic performances,
> he could have flown out of here, gone home, had lunch,
> and when he'd filled himself up, flown back here to see us.

The spectators are invited to fly, with the birds, from the annoyances of tragedy and the constraints of the theater to enjoy the usual carnal pleasures celebrated in Old Comedy: food, sex, and the relief of defecation. As Peisetairos disburses wings to newcomers the creative power of speech is expressed in a number of metaphors of "taking wing," ἀναπτερῶ/ἀνεπτερῶσθαι (1437–39, 1445, 1449), the most vivid of which is λέγων πτερῶ σε, "I render you winged through speech." This brave new world of birds is not one of undifferentiated bliss, however. Peisetairos' apotheosis and tyrannical rule suggest that latent in the total subversion of the barbaric and tragic (i.e., Sophokles' *Tereus*) is the potential for a return to the same: the outrageous success of Peisetairos' aggressive attack on the established order appears, in the end, to be a return to a terrifying pre–Olympian monarchy in which Peisetairos, like Kronos (and like the tragic Tereus), eats his own "children."

I submit that at the heart of Aristophanes' complex design in *Birds* is the systematic usurpation of Sophoklean innovation. *Birds* is not merely a concatenation of general mythical travesties (as Hofmann, for example, and Zannini–Quirini argue) but a sophisticated synthesis of reactions to specific people, events, dramatic performances, and texts. As in the case of the Prometheus scene, which Herington has shown to involve parody of the *Prometheia*,[79] so the first half of *Birds* arises from an exuberant improvisation on the themes and situations of one of the most memorable tragedies of the fifth century. This improvisation, moreover, engages the powerful mechanism of metamorphosis which works throughout *Birds* as a poetic program, a comic poetics of transformation. Characters, situations, dramatic *Bauformen*, and themes are subjected to an exuberant and relentless series of metamorphoses the sum of which is the conversion of the indeterminate world of the prologue into Nephelokokkygia, a fantastic polis occupying a strategic position between gods and men. Each of the manifold transformations catalyzed by Tereus is interesting in itself and deserves much fuller

[79] Herington, "*Birds* and *Prometheia*."

treatment than can be given here. The metamorphosis of the chorus, for example, from a natural community of birds into a self-aware *politeia* of Nephelokokkygians has important metatheatrical implications for the enactment of the polis after the parabasis. An equally significant metamorphosis is that of Peisetairos from a disaffected exile seeking a τόπος ἀπράγμων, first into an energetic and opinionated sophist-choreographer, and then into the supreme tyrant and anti-Zeus. Sophokles' *Tereus,* refracted through the prism of paratragedy, informs the design of *Birds* on many levels from the governing metaphor of transformation to the definition of "Athenian" and "polis" against a barbarian other. In creating his own masterpiece incorporating and transforming a product of Sophokles' dramatic genius, Aristophanes was, quite clearly, honoring his older contemporary with the highest praise.[80]

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