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The Beginnings of the *Märchenkomödie* in Classical Athens



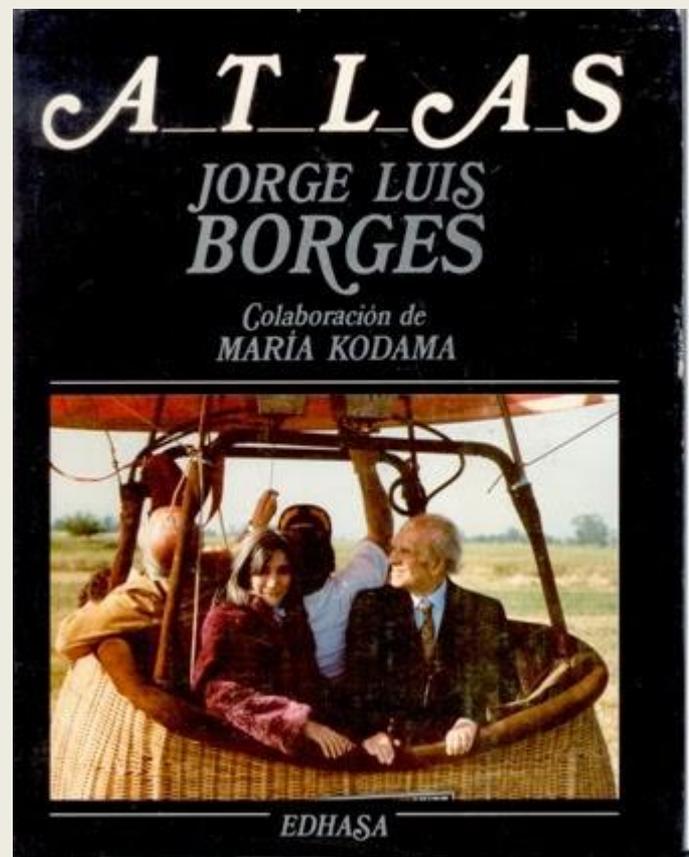
International Conference

Frammenti e dintorni — Fragmente im Kontext

Accademia di Studi Italo-Tedeschi, Merano, 8 November 2019



Borges and Maria Kodama at Voukourestiou Street, Athens, August 1983



The Hotel Grande Bretagne, Athens

Athens

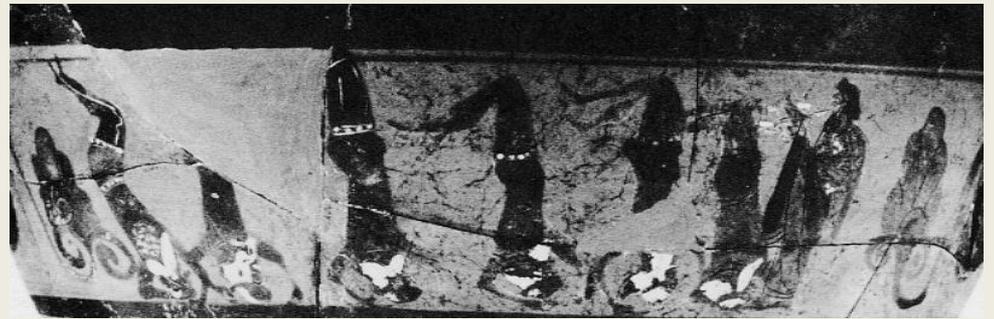
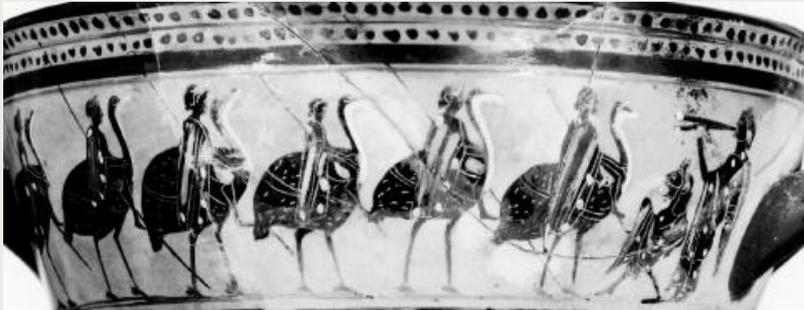
On the first morning, my first day in Athens, I was proffered the following dream. In front of me stood a row of books filling a long shelf. They formed a set of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, one of my lost paradises. I took down a volume at random. I looked up Coleridge: the article had an end but no beginning. I looked up Crete: it concluded but did not begin. I looked up the entry on Chess. At that point the dream shifted. On an elevated stage in an amphitheatre filled to capacity with an attentive audience, I was playing chess with my father, who was also the false Artaxerxes. (His ears having been cut off, Artaxerxes was found sleeping by one of his many wives; she ran her hand over his skull very gently so as not to awaken him; presently he was killed.) I moved a piece; my antagonist did not move anything but, by an act of magic, he erased one of my pieces. This procedure was repeated various times.

I awoke and told myself: *I am in Greece, where everything began, assuming that things, as opposed to articles in the dream's encyclopedia, have a beginning.*

Jorge Luis Borges, *Atlas*
(New York 1985), p. 37



Attic proto-comedy on Archaic vase-paintings





IG 2325E col. I: The earliest poets of Attic comedy

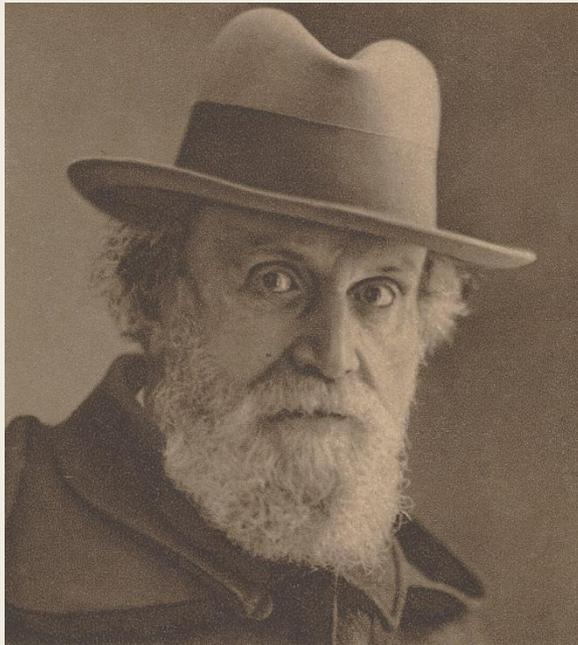


Epicharmus, the inventor of literary comedy

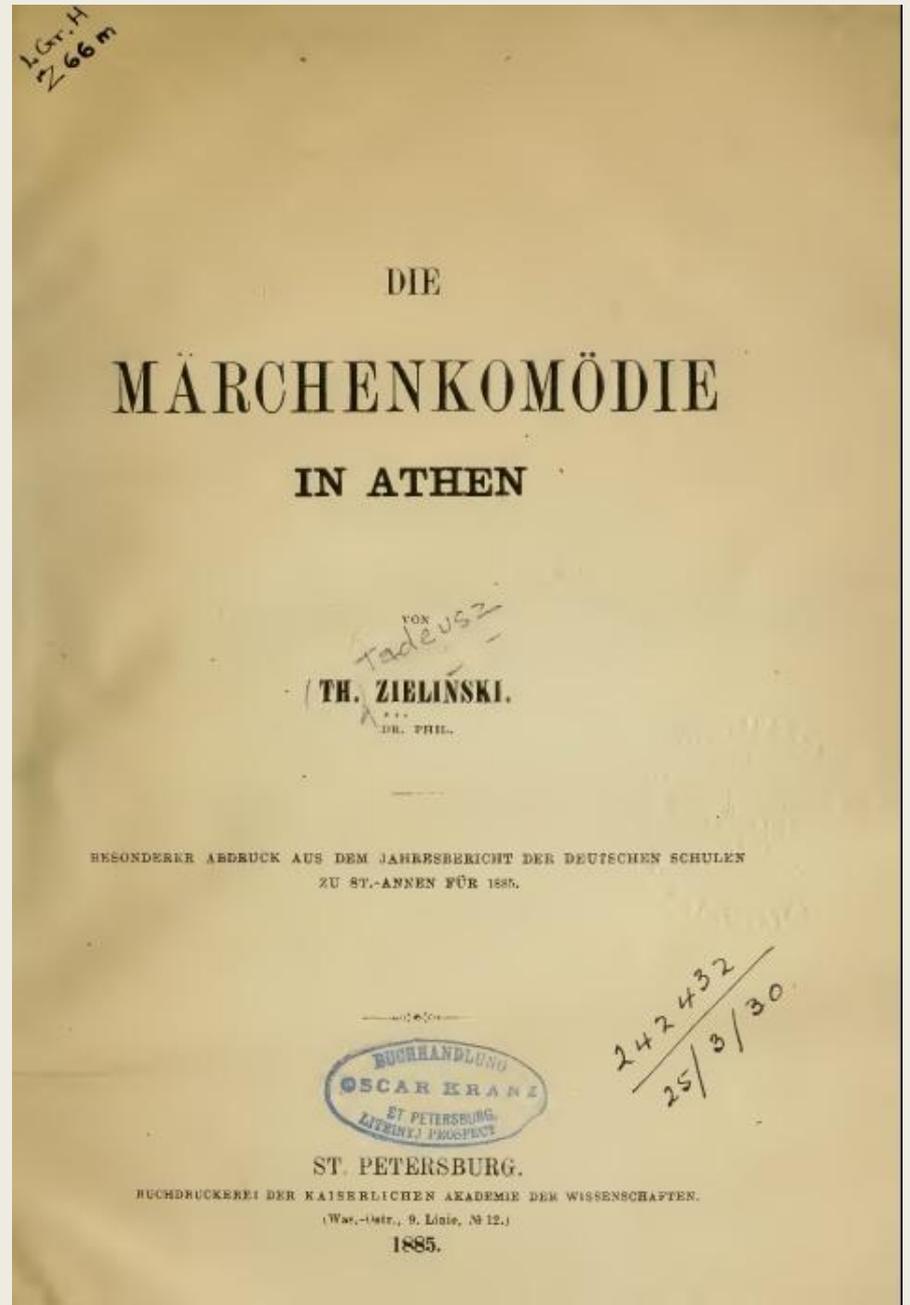
Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449a 38-b 9

ἡ δὲ κωμῳδία διὰ τὸ μὴ σπουδάζεσθαι ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἔλαθεν· καὶ γὰρ χορὸν κωμῳδῶν ὀψέ ποτε ὁ ἄρχων ἔδωκεν, ἀλλ' ἐθέλονται ἦσαν. ἤδη δὲ σχήματά τινα αὐτῆς ἐχούσης οἱ λεγόμενοι αὐτῆς ποιηταὶ μνημονεύονται. τίς δὲ πρόσωπα ἀπέδωκεν ἢ προλόγους ἢ πλήθη ὑποκριτῶν καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα, ἠγνόηται. τὸ δὲ μύθους ποιεῖν [Ἐπίχαρμος καὶ Φόρμις] τὸ μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκ Σικελίας ἦλθε, τῶν δὲ Ἀθήνησιν Κράτης πρῶτος ἤρξεν ἀφέμενος τῆς ἰαμβικῆς ἰδέας καθόλου ποιεῖν λόγους καὶ μύθους.

Comedy has had no history, because it was not at first treated seriously. It was late before the Archon granted a comic chorus to a poet; the performers were till then amateurs. Comedy had already taken definite shape when comic poets, distinctively so called, are heard of. Who furnished it with masks, or prologues, or increased the number of actors — these and other similar details remain unknown. As for the crafting of plots, it came originally from Sicily (Epicharmus and Phormis); of Athenian writers Crates was the first who abandoned the form of invective and created generalized themes and plots.

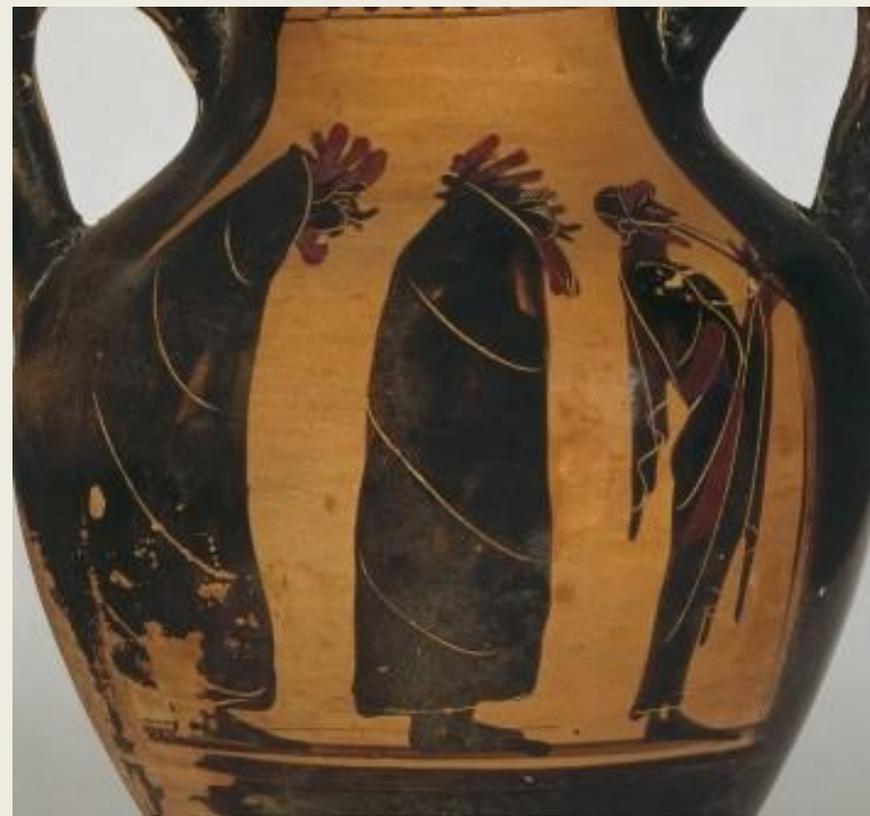


Tadeusz Zieliński
(1859-1944)





Attic black-figure oenochoe, British Museum B 509,
ca. 500-490 BCE



Attic black-figure amphora, Berlin,
Antikensammlung F 1830, ca. 480 BCE





Attic black-figure amphora, Berlin, Antikensammlung F 1697,
ca. 540 BCE



Attic black-figure skyphos, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 20.18, ca. 500-490 BCE



Attic black-figure skyphos, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 20.18 (reverse)



Attic red-figure psykter by Oltos, New York,
Metropolitan Museum 1989.281.69, ca. 500 BCE



Attic black-figure kylix, Louvre CA 1924,
ca. 490 BCE



Attic black-figure lekythos, Athens, Kerameikos 5671,
ca. 490 BCE



Attic black-figure lekythos, Palermo CAT 2816,
ca. 490 BCE

The pioneers: Magnes and Chionides

Aristophanes, *Knights* 520-525

τοῦτο μὲν εἰδὼς ἄπαθε Μάγνης ἅμα ταῖς πολιαῖς κατιούσαις,
ὃς πλεῖστα χορῶν τῶν ἀντιπάλων νίκης ἔστησε τρόπαια·
πάσας δ' ὑμῖν φωνὰς ἰεῖς καὶ ψάλλον καὶ πτερυγίζων
καὶ λυδίζων καὶ ψηνίζων καὶ βαπτόμενος βατραχείοις
οὐκ ἐξήρκεσεν, ἀλλὰ τελευτῶν ἐπὶ γήρως, οὐ γὰρ ἐφ' ἥβης,
ἐξεβλήθη πρεσβύτης ὢν, ὅτι τοῦ σκώπτειν ἀπελείφθη.

He knew what happened to Magnes, for one, as soon as the white hairs stole upon him — Magnes who had set up so many trophies of victory over his rivals' choruses. And yet, although he had produced every kind of sound for you, twanging the lyre, flapping wings, speaking Lydian, buzzing like a gall fly and dyeing himself frog-green, he did not last in the long run; but in the end, in his old age (as never in his youth!) he was driven from the stage, when he was an elderly man, because he was found wanting in satirical power.

Schol. on *Knights* 522a: ψάλλον: τοὺς Βαρβιτιστὰς ἂν λέγοι·
δρᾶμα δὲ ἐστὶ τοῦ Μάγνητος. (...) πτερυγίζων δὲ ὅτι καὶ
Ὅρνιθας ἐποίησε δρᾶμα· ἔγραψε δὲ καὶ Λυδοὺς καὶ Ψῆνας
καὶ Βατράχειους. ἔστι δὲ χρώματος εἶδος τὸ βατράχειον· ἀπὸ
τούτου καὶ βατραχίς ἰμάτιον. (...) τὸ ψηνίζων δὲ εἶπεν ὡς
πρὸς τοὺς Ψῆνας ἀναφέρων.

By “twanging the lyre” he must mean the *Lyre-Players*; this is a play by Magnes. (...) And “flapping wings” is said because Magnes composed a play entitled *Birds*. He also wrote *Lydians* and *Gall Flies* and *Frogs*. The “frog-green” is a kind of colour; the so-called “frog-cloth”, a kind of garment, is named after it. (...) As for “buzzing like a gall fly”, this refers to the comedy *Gall Flies*.

MAGNES
Βαρβιτισταί

Βάτραχοι

Λυδοί

Ὅρνιθες

Ψῆνες

CHIONIDES
Ἕρωες

Πέρσαι ἢ Ἀσσύριοι

Πτωχοί



Crates, *The Beasts* (Θηρία)

Fr. 16

(A) ἔπειτα δοῦλον οὐδὲ εἷς κεκτήσεται· οὐδὲ δούλην,

ἀλλ' αὐτὸς αὐτῷ δῆτ' ἀνὴρ γέρων διακονήσει;

(B) οὐ δῆθ', ὁδοιποροῦντα γὰρ τὰ πάντ' ἐγὼ ποιήσω.

(A) τί δῆτα τοῦτ' αὐτοῖς πλέον; (B) πρόσσεισιν αὐθ' ἕκαστον

τῶν σκευαρίων, ὅταν καλῆ τις “παρατίθου τράπεζα·

αὐτὴ παρασκευάζε σαυτήν. μάττε θυλακίσκε.

ἔγχει κύαθε. ποῦ 'σθ' ἡ κύλιξ; διάνιζ' ἰοῦσα σαυτήν.

ἀνάβαινε μᾶζα. τὴν χύτραν χρῆν ἐξερᾶν τὰ τεῦτλα.

ἰχθὺ βᾶδιζ'.” “ἀλλ' οὐδέπω 'πὶ θάτερ' ὀπτὸς εἰμι.”

“οὐκουν μεταστρέψας σεαυτὸν ἀλί πάσεις ἀλείφων;”

(A.) So no one is going to own a male or female slave, and an old man is going to do all his work himself?

(B.) Certainly not, because I'll make everything capable of moving itself.

(A.) How will this help them?

(B.) All his household equipment will come of its own accord, whenever someone shouts “Table! Set yourself beside me! And get yourself ready with no help! Knead, my little grain-sack! Pour some wine, ladle! Where's the cup? Go wash yourself! Get up on the table, barley-cake! The cookpot should already have been pouring out the beets. Fish! Get over here!” “But I'm not roasted on the other side yet”. “Then turn yourself over, baste yourself, and sprinkle on some salt!”

Fr. 18

ἔχοντες εὐπαθῆ βίον

παρουσίαν τε χρημάτων

Having a life of pleasure and property in abundance

Fr. 17

ἀλλ' ἀντίθεος τοι· ἴγὼ γὰρ αὖ τραπέμπαλιν

τὰ θερμὰ λουτρὰ πρῶτον ἄζω τοῖς ἐμοῖς

ἐπὶ κιόνων, ὥσπερ διὰ τοῦ Παιωνίου

ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάττης ὥσθ' ἐκάστῳ ρέυσεται

εἰς τὴν πύελον· ἐρεῖ δὲ θῦδωρ “ἀνέχετε.”

εἶθ' ἀλάβαστος εὐθέως ἤξει μύρου

αὐτόματος ὁ σπόγγος τε καὶ τὰ σάνδαλα

But just consider the other side. For I shall do the exact opposite and provide hot baths for my people, straight from the sea on columns, just like at the House of Healing, so that it will flow into everyone's bathtubs. The water will say “Turn me off now, people”, and immediately there will arrive on its own a jar full of scented oil, a sponge, and sandals.

Fr. 19

(A) καὶ τῶν ραφάνων ἔψειν χρῆ

ἰχθῦς τ' ὀπτᾶν τοὺς τε ταρίχους, ἡμῶν δ' ἄπο χειρᾶς ἔχεσθαι.

(B) οὐκ ἄρ' ἔτ' οὐδὲν κρέας, ὡς ὑμεῖς λέγετε, οὐδ' ὀτιοῦν ἐδόμεσθα,

οὐδ' ἐξ ἀγορᾶς, οὐδὲ τάκωνας ποιησόμεθ' οὐδ' ἀλλᾶντας;

(A.) Also you may boil cabbages and roast fresh and salted fish, but keep your hands away from us.

(B.) So, as you say, we won't be eating meat any more from the market? We won't be making any meat pies or sausages?

The comic Cockaigne

Pherecrates, *The Miners (Metallēs)*, fr. 113

πλούτῳ δ' ἐκεῖν' ἦν πάντα συμπεφυρμένα,
ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς πάντα τρόπον εἰργασμένα·
ποταμοὶ μὲν ἀθάρησ καὶ μέλανος ζωμοῦ πλέω
διὰ τῶν στενωπῶν τονθολογοῦντες ἔρρεον
αὐταῖσι μυστίλαισι, καὶ ναστῶν τρύφη,
ὥστ' εὐμαρῆ γε καὐτομάτην τὴν ἐνθεσιν
χωρεῖν λιπαρὰν κατὰ τοῦ λάρυγγος τοῖς νεκροῖς.
φύσκαί δὲ καὶ ζέοντες ἀλλάντων τόμοι
παρὰ τοῖς ποταμοῖς σίζοντ' ἐκέχυτ' ἀντ' ὄστράκων.
καὶ μὴν παρῆν τεμάχη μὲν ἐξωπτημένα
καταχυσματίοισι παντοδαποῖσιν εὐτρεπῆ,
τεύτλοισί τ' ἐγγέλεια συγκεκαλυμμένα.
σχελίδες δ' ὀλόκνημοι πλησίον τακερώταται
ἐπὶ πινακίσκοις, καὶ δίεφθ' ἀκροκόλια
ἡδιστον ἀτμίζοντα, καὶ χόλικες βοός,
καὶ πλευρὰ δελφάκει' ἐπεξανθισμένα
χναυρότατα παρέκειτ' ἐπ' ἀμύλοις καθήμενα.
παρῆν δὲ χόνδρος γάλατι κατανεμιμένος
ἐν καταχύτλοις λεκάναισι καὶ πνοῦ τόμοι.
(B) οἴμ' ὡς ἀπολεῖς μ' ἐνταῦθα διατρίβουσ' ἔτι,
παρὸν κολουμβᾶν ὡς ἔχει' ἐς τὸν Τάρταρον.
(A) τί δῆτα λέξεις, τάπιλοιπ' ἦνπερ πύθη;
ὅπται κίχλαι γὰρ εἰς ἀνάβραστ' ἠρτυμένα
περὶ τὸ στόμ' ἐπέτοντ' ἀντιβολοῦσαι καταπιεῖν,
ὑπὸ μυρρίναισι κάνεμώναις κεχυμένα.
τὰ δὲ μῆλ' ἐκρέματο, τὰ καλὰ τῶν καλῶν ἰδεῖν,
ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς, ἐξ οὐδενὸς πεφυκότα.
κόραι δ' ἐν ἀμπεχόναις τριχάπτοις, ἀρτίως
ἠβυλλιωῶσαι καὶ τὰ ρόδα κεκαρμένα,
πλήρεις κύλικας οἴνου μέλανος ἀνθοσμίου
ἦντλουν διὰ χώνης τοῖσι βουλομένοις πιεῖν.
καὶ τῶνδ' ἐκάστοτ' εἰ φάγοι τις ἢ πίοι,
διπλάσι' ἐγίγνετ' εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς πάλιν

(A.) There everything was mixed together by Wealth and made from all good things in every possible way. Rivers full of porridge and black broth with scoops of bread would gurgle and flow through the narrow passageways, and delicious flat-cakes as well. So a morsel would slide easily and smoothly by itself down the gullets of the dead. Beside the rivers, instead of shells, were scattered sausages and steaming slices of sizzling black pudding. Moreover, there were baked fish fillets nicely prepared with every sort of seasoning, and eels smothered in beets. Close by on little platters lay melt-in-your-mouth sides of beef, legs and all, and boiled pig's trotters with the most heavenly smell, and beef sausages, and delicious pork ribs browned and resting on the finest wheat rolls. There was polenta too, snow-covered with milk in colanders as big as tubs and slices of beestings.

(B.) Woman, you will kill me if you stay here any longer, when you can dive into the Underworld.

(A.) What will you say, when you learn the rest? Roast thrushes ready for stewing flew round our mouths, begging us to eat them, spread out beneath myrtle trees and anemones. Overhead hung apples, the fairest of the fair to see, growing from nowhere. And the girls in fine-spun shawls, just recently come to womanhood and their “roses” shorn, were ladling out cups full of fragrant dark wine through a funnel for those who wanted to drink. And when someone had eaten or drunk anything of these, immediately twice as much appeared all over again.

The grotesque monsters of comedy

Crates, *Lamia*, fr. 20

Schol. (Γ) in Aristoph. *Eccl.* 77: ἀρσενικῶς δὲ Λαμίαν <λέγουσι δὲ καὶ θηλυκῶς τὴν Λάμιαν add. Meineke>. ὑπὲρ ἧς ὁ Κράτης λέγει ἐν τῷ ὁμωνύμῳ δράματι, ὅτι σκυτάλην ἔχουσα ἐπέρδετο

Cf. (a) Aristoph. *Eccl.* 76-78: (ΓΥΝ. Α΄) ἔγωγέ τοι τὸ σκύταλον ἐξηνεγκάμην / τὸ τοῦ Λαμίου τουτὶ καθεύδοντος λάθρα. / (ΓΥΝ. Β΄) τοῦτ' ἔστ' ἐκείνων τῶν σκυτάλων ὧν πέρδεται.

(b) Aristoph. *Vesp.* 1174-1179: (ΒΔΕΛ.) ἐπιστήσει λόγους σεμνοὺς λέγειν / ἀνδρῶν παρόντων πολυμαθῶν καὶ δεξιῶν; / (ΦΙΛ.) ἔγωγε. (ΒΔΕΛ.) τίνα δῆτ' ἂν λέγοις; (ΦΙΛ.) πολλοὺς πάνυ. / πρῶτον μὲν ὡς ἡ Λάμι' ἀλοῦσ' ἐπέρδετο, / ἔπειτα δ' ὡς ὁ Καρδοπίων τὴν μητέρα— / (ΒΔΕΛ.) μὴ 'μοιγε μύθους ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων κτλ.

(c) Hesychius, *Lexicon* λ 248: Λάμια· Ἀριστοφάνης φησὶν, ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ τινος λαμιώδους γυναικὸς ἐνδιατριβούσης. τινὲς δὲ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ περδομένην γυναῖκα.

(d) Photius, *Lexicon* s.v. Λάμια: Λάμια· γυνὴ Ἀθήνησιν ἐν ἀγορᾷ διατρίβουσα, σκύταλον ἔχουσα καὶ ἀποσοφοῦσα. ἔστι δὲ καὶ θηρίον.

(e) Schol. in Pausan. 1.1.3 (III 218,8 Spiro): καὶ οὕτω μὲν Ἡσύχιος· Ἀριστοφάνης δὲ φησὶν <λαμιώδους> γυναικὸς ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἐστηκούσης. τινὲς δὲ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ περδομένην γυναῖκα.

Scholion on Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* 77: Lamias, in the masculine, <but we also say “Lamia” in the feminine>, concerning whom Crates, in his play of the same title, says that she held a stick in her hands and farted.

Cf. (a) Aristophanes, *Ecclesiazusae* 76-78: (WOMAN A) I brought out this cudgel of Lamias, stealthily, while he was asleep. (WOMAN B) So this is one of those cudgels he carries around when he farts.

(b) Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1174-1179: (BDELYCLEON) Will you know how to tell fine stories in the company of learned and smart men? (PHILOCLEON) Of course I will! (BD.) Well, what story would you tell? (PH.) Lots of them. First of all, how Lamia farted when she was caught; then how Cardopion with his mother— (BD.) No, please, not fairy tales! Rather the human kind of story etc.

(c) Hesychius, *Lexicon* λ 248: Lamia: Aristophanes says that she was a monstrous woman who spent her time in the marketplace. According to some others, she was a woman who farted in the marketplace.

(d) Photius, *Lexicon* s.v. *Lamia*: She was a woman who stayed in Athens; she had a cudgel and broke wind. There is also a monster of that name.

(e) Scholion in Pausanias 1.1.3: This is what Hesychius writes. Aristophanes speaks about a monstrous woman who stood in the marketplace. Some others say that she was a woman who farted in the marketplace.

Aristophanic monsters

Aristophanes, *Frogs* 285-305

ΞΑΝΘΙΑΣ νῆ τὸν Δία, καὶ μὴν αἰσθάνομαι ψόφου τινός.
ΔΙΟΝ. ποῦ ποῦ 'στιν; ΞΑ. ὀπισθεν. ΔΙ. ἐξόπισθέ νυν ἴθι.
ΞΑ. ἀλλ' ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ πρόσθε. ΔΙ. πρόσθε νυν ἴθι.
ΞΑ. καὶ μὴν ὀρῶ νῆ τὸν Δία θηρίον μέγα.
ΔΙ. ποῖόν τι; ΞΑ. δεινόν· παντοδαπὸν γοῦν γίνγεται·
τοτὲ μὲν γε βοῦς, νυνὶ δ' ὀρέυς, τοτὲ δ' αὖ γυνή
ὠραισιτάτη τις. ΔΙ. ποῦ 'στι; φέρ' ἐπ' αὐτήν ἴω.
ΞΑ. ἀλλ' οὐκέτ' αὖ γυνή 'στιν, ἀλλ' ἤδη κύων.
ΔΙ. Ἐμπουσα τοίνυν ἐστί. ΞΑ. πυρὶ γοῦν λάμπεται
ἅπαν τὸ πρόσωπον. ΔΙ. καὶ σκέλος χαλκοῦν ἔχει;
ΞΑ. νῆ τὸν Ποσειδῶ, καὶ βολίτινον θάτερον,
σάφ' ἴσθι. ΔΙ. ποῖ δήτ' ἂν τραποίμην; ΞΑ. ποῖ δ' ἐγώ;
ΔΙ. ἱερεῦ, διαφύλαξόν μ', ἵν' ὦ σοι ζυμπότης.
ΞΑ. ἀπολούμεθ', ὠναξ Ἡράκλεις. ΔΙ. οὐ μὴ καλεῖς μ',
ὠνθρωφ', ἱκετεύω, μηδὲ κατερεῖς τοῦνομα.
ΞΑ. Διόνυσε τοίνυν. ΔΙ. τοῦτό γ' ἦττον θάτερου.
ΞΑ. ἴθ' ἥπερ ἔρχει. δεῦρο δεῦρ', ὦ δέσποτα.

XANTHIAS My goodness! Listen, I can hear a noise.

DIONYSUS Where, where is it?

XAN. Behind you. DI. Then you go behind me.

XAN. No, it's in front. DI. Then go in front of me.

XAN. Heavens! Now I can see an enormous beast. DI. What is it like?

XAN. O, terrible! You see, it is taking all sorts of different shapes. Now it is a bull, now it's a mule, and then it becomes a very attractive woman.

DI. Where is she? Here, let me go after her!

XAN. Wait! She is not a woman any more, she already turned into a bitch.

DI. Then she is Empousa!

XAN. Certainly her whole face is blazing with fire.

DI. And has she got a leg made of bronze?

XAN. My goodness, yes! And the other one, I'm telling you, is made of cow dung.

DI. Oh, which way can I turn? XAN. And which way can I?

DI. My priest, keep me safe, so that I can drink with you at parties!

XAN. We are lost, my lord Heracles!

DI. I implore you, man, will you please not call me or mention my name?

XAN. Dionysus, then.

DI. No, this one you must avoid even more than the other.

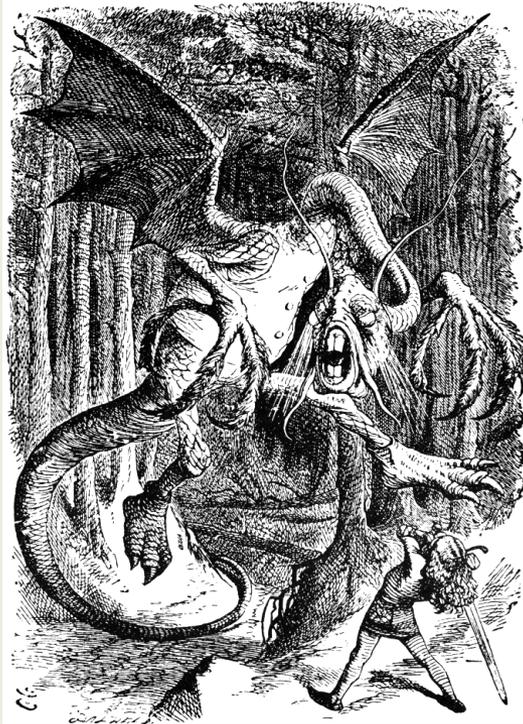
XAN. Go away where you came from, beast! Come here, come here, master.

Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1029-1037

οὐδ' ὅτε πρῶτόν γ' ἤρξε διδάσκειν, ἀνθρώποις φήσ' ἐπιθέσθαι,
ἀλλ' Ἡρακλέους ὀργὴν τιν' ἔχων τοῖσι μεγίστοις ἐπεχείρει,
θρασεώς ζυστὰς εὐθύς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ τῷ καρχαρόδοντι,
οὐ δεινόταται μὲν ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν Κύννης ἀκτῖνες ἔλαμπον,
ἑκατὸν δὲ κύκλῳ κεφαλᾷ κολάκων οἰμωξομένων ἐλιχμῶντο
περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν, φωνὴν δ' εἶχεν χαράδρας ὄλεθρον τετοκυίας,
φώκης δ' ὀσμὴν, Λαμίας ὄρχεις ἀπλύτους, πρωκτὸν δὲ καμήλου.
τοιούτων ἰδὼν τέρας οὐ φησιν δείσας καταδωροδοκῆσαι,
ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἔτι καὶ νυνὶ πολεμεῖ.

And when our poet first started to produce plays, as he says, he did not attack mere men, but with a spirit like that of Heracles he tackled the greatest monsters. Right from the start he courageously confronted the Jag-Toothed One himself, from whose eyes shone terrible rays like those of the Bitch-Star, and all around his head there were a hundred heads of accursed flatterers who licked him like snakes; and he had the voice of a torrent that brings destruction, and the smell of a seal, and the unwashed testicles of Lamia, and a camel's arsehole. On seeing such a monster, our poet refused to take fright and accept bribes, but he still fights for you until now.

Märchen and Attic Märchenkomödie



Archippus, *The Fishes* (Ἰχθύες)

Fr. 14

αἰρουμένους τε πραγμάτων ἐπιστάτας
ἀποδοκιμάζειν, <εἶτα δοκιμάζειν> πάλιν.
ἦν οὖν ποιῶμεν ταῦτα, κίνδυνος λαθεῖν
ἀπαξάπαντας γενομένους παλιναιρέτους

Now, we elect our comptrollers in order to reject them first, and afterwards we approve them again. So if we keep on doing this, there is a real danger that, without realizing it, they will all become second catch.

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(A) τί λέγεις σύ; μάντεις εἰσὶ γὰρ θαλάττιοι;
(B) γαλεοί γε, πάντων μάντεων σοφώτατοι

(A.) What are you saying? Are there really soothsayers in the sea?
(B.) Of course: the sturgeons, the wisest of all soothsayers!

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Fr. 17

ἱερεὺς γὰρ ἦλθ' αὐτοῖσιν ὀρφῶς του θεῶν

The dusky grouper came to them, the priest of one of the gods.

Fr. 18

ἱερεὺς Ἀφροδίτης χρύσοφρυς Κυθηρίας

The priest of the Cytherean Aphrodite, the gilt-head.

Fr. 30

ἄνδρες ἰχθύες

Gentlemen of the fishes

Fr. 23

Αἰγύπτιος μιαρῶτατος τῶν ἰχθύων κάπηλος,
Ἑρμαιος, ὃς βία δέρων ρίνας γαλεοὺς τε πωλεῖ
καὶ τοὺς λάβρακας ἐντερεύων, ὡς λέγουσιν ἡμῖν

Hermaeus the Egyptian, that most loathsome seller of fish, who violently skins rays and sturgeons and guts the sea basses and sells them, so they tell us.

Fr. 27

(Athen. VII 329b: κατὰ τὰς συγγραφὰς γὰρ τῶν ἰχθύων
καὶ Ἀθηναίων ταυτὶ πεποίηκεν)
ἀποδοῦναι δ' ὅσα ἔχομεν ἀλλήλων, ἡμᾶς μὲν τὰς Θράττας
καὶ Ἀθερίνην τὴν ἀύλητρίδα καὶ Σηπίαν τὴν Θύρσου καὶ
τοὺς Τριγλίας καὶ Εὐκλείδην τὸν ἄρξαντα καὶ
Ἀναγυροντόθεν τοὺς Κορακίωνα καὶ Κωβιοῦ τοῦ
Σαλαμινίου τόκον καὶ Βάτραχον τὸν πάρεδρον τὸν ἐξ
Ὠρεοῦ

In accordance with the treaty made between the fishes and the Athenians, the poet has written this:

To give back what we have of each other's: we will give back the Misses Herring, and Madame Smelt the flute-player, and Cuttlefisha the wife of Thyrsus, and the Red Mullet-Boys, and Euclid the former archon, and the Crowfishes from the deme of Anagyrus, and the son of Master Goby of Salamis, and the right honourable Frog, the inspector from Oreos.

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Athen. VIII 343c: Μελάνθιος ... ἐν δὲ τοῖς Ἰχθύσιν
Ἄρχιππος τῷ δράματι ὡς ὀμοφάγον δήσας παραδίδωσι
τοῖς ἰχθύσιν ἀντιβρωθησόμενον.

Melanthius (...) Archippus, in his play *The Fishes*, has him tied up and handed over to the fishes, to be eaten by them in revenge, because he was an ardent consumer of seafood.

The topsy-turvy world: Brothers Grimm, *The Fairy Tales*

No. 158, *The Tale of the Schlauraffen Land*

In the time of Schlauraffen I went there, and saw Rome and the Lateran hanging by a small silken thread, and a man without feet who outran a swift horse, and a keen sharp sword that cut through a bridge. There I saw a young ass with a silver nose which pursued two fleet hares, and a lime tree that was very large, on which hot cakes were growing. There I saw a lean old goat which carried about a hundred cart-loads of fat on his body, and sixty loads of salt.

Have I not told enough lies? There I saw a plough ploughing without horse or cow; and a child of one year threw four millstones from Ratisbon to Treves, and from Treves to Strasburg; and a hawk swam over the Rhine, which he had a perfect right to do. There I heard some fishes begin to make such a disturbance with each other, that it resounded as far as Heaven; and sweet honey flowed like water from a deep valley at the top of a high mountain, and these were strange things. There were two crows which were mowing a meadow; and I saw two gnats building a bridge, and two doves tore a wolf to pieces; two children brought forth two kids; and two frogs threshed corn together. There I saw two mice consecrating a bishop, and two cats scratching out a bear's tongue. Then a snail came running up and killed two furious lions. There stood a barber and shaved a woman's beard off; and two sucking-children bade their mother hold her tongue. There I saw two greyhounds which brought a mill out of the water; and a sorry old horse was beside it, and said it was right. And four horses were standing in the yard threshing corn with all their might, and two goats were heating the stove, and a red cow shot the bread into the oven.

Then a cock crowed, Cock-a-doodle-doo! The story is all told – Cock-a-doodle-doo!

No. 159, *The Tale of Lies (Lügenmärchen)*

I will tell you something. I saw two roasted fowls flying; they flew quickly and had their breasts turned to heaven and their backs to hell, and an anvil and a mill-stone swam across the Rhine prettily, slowly, and gently, and a frog sat on the ice at Whitsuntide and ate a ploughshare. Three fellows, who wanted to catch a hare, went on crutches and stilts; one of them was deaf, the second blind, the third dumb, and the fourth could not stir a step. Do you want to know how it was done? First, the blind man saw the hare running across the field, the dumb one called to the lame one, and the lame one seized it by the neck.

There were certain men who wished to sail on dry land, and they set their sails in the wind, and sailed away over great fields. Then they sailed over a high mountain, and there they were miserably drowned. A crab was chasing a hare which was running away at full speed, and high up on the roof lay a cow which had climbed up there. In that country the flies are as big as the goats are here.

Open the window, that the lies may fly out.

Aristophanes' *Birds*, the city in the air, and contemporary Athens



Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449b 5-9

τὸ δὲ μύθους ποιεῖν [Ἐπίχαρμος καὶ Φόρμις] τὸ μὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκ Σικελίας ἦλθε, τῶν δὲ Ἀθήνησιν Κράτης πρῶτος ἤρξεν ἀφέμενος τῆς ἰαμβικῆς ἰδέας καθόλου ποιεῖν λόγους καὶ μύθους.

As for the crafting of plots, it came originally from Sicily (Epicharmus and Phormis); of Athenian writers Crates was the first who abandoned the form of invective and created generalized themes and plots.

Anonymous *Prolegomena de Comoedia* (III pp. 8.29-31 Koster)

Φερεκράτης Ἀθηναῖος (...) γενόμενος <καὶ> ὄδε ὑποκριτῆς ἐξήλωσε Κράτητα, καὶ αὐτὸς μὲν λοιδορεῖν ἀπέστη, πράγματα δὲ εἰσηγούμενος καινὰ ἠὲ δοκίμει γενόμενος εὐρετικὸς μύθων.

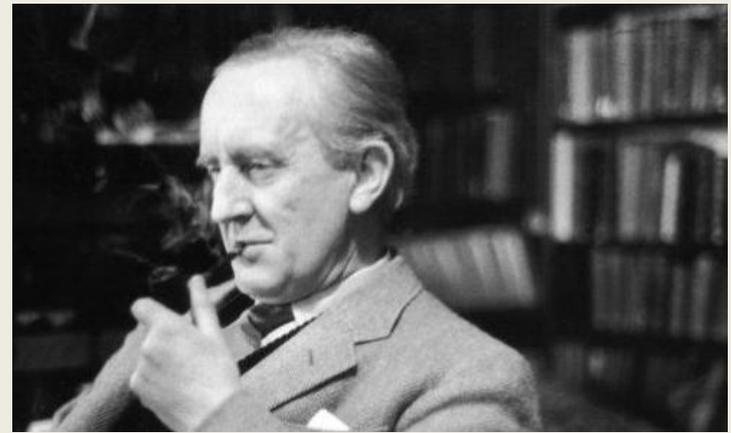
Pherecrates the Athenian (...) he too was an actor and followed the example of Crates. So he also refrained from invective, introduced novel material and had great success in the invention of plots.



The *Märchenkomödie* — An open parable?



J. R. R. Tolkien
(1892-1973)



Crates, *The Beasts* (Θηρία)

Fr. 16

(A) ἔπειτα δοῦλον οὐδὲ εἷς κεκτήσεται· οὐδὲ δούλην,

ἀλλ' αὐτὸς αὐτῷ δῆτ' ἀνήρ γέρων διακονήσει;

(B) οὐ δῆθ', ὁδοιποροῦντα γὰρ τὰ πάντ' ἐγὼ ποιήσω.

(A) τί δῆτα τοῦτ' αὐτοῖς πλέον; (B) πρόσσεισιν αὐθ' ἕκαστον

τῶν σκευαρίων, ὅταν καλῆ τις “παρατίθου τράπεζα·

αὐτὴ παρασκευάζε σαυτήν. μάττε θυλακίσκε.

ἔγχει κύαθε. ποῦ 'σθ' ἡ κύλιξ; διάνιζ' ἰοῦσα σαυτήν.

ἀνάβαινε μᾶζα. τὴν χύτραν χρῆν ἐξερᾶν τὰ τεῦτλα.

ἰχθὺ βάδιζ'.” “ἀλλ' οὐδέπω 'πὶ θάτερ' ὀπτὸς εἰμι.”

“οὐκουν μεταστρέψας σεαυτὸν ἀλί πάσεις ἀλείφων;”

(A.) So no one is going to own a male or female slave, and an old man is going to do all his work himself?

(B.) Certainly not, because I'll make everything capable of moving itself.

(A.) How will this help them?

(B.) All his household equipment will come of its own accord, whenever someone shouts “Table! Set yourself beside me! And get yourself ready with no help! Knead, my little grain-sack! Pour some wine, ladle! Where's the cup? Go wash yourself! Get up on the table, barley-cake! The cookpot should already have been pouring out the beets. Fish! Get over here!” “But I'm not roasted on the other side yet”. “Then turn yourself over, baste yourself, and sprinkle on some salt!”

Fr. 18

ἔχοντες εὐπαθῆ βίον

παρουσίαν τε χρημάτων

Having a life of pleasure and property in abundance

Fr. 17

ἀλλ' ἀντίθεος τοι· ἴγῳ γὰρ αὖ τραπέμπαλιν

τὰ θερμὰ λουτρὰ πρῶτον ἄζω τοῖς ἐμοῖς

ἐπὶ κιόνων, ὥσπερ διὰ τοῦ Παιωνίου

ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάττης ὥσθ' ἐκάστῳ ρέυσεται

εἰς τὴν πύελον· ἐρεῖ δὲ θῦδωρ “ἀνέχετε.”

εἶθ' ἀλάβαστος εὐθέως ἤξει μύρου

αὐτόματος ὁ σπόγγος τε καὶ τὰ σάνδαλα

But just consider the other side. For I shall do the exact opposite and provide hot baths for my people, straight from the sea on columns, just like at the House of Healing, so that it will flow into everyone's bathtubs. The water will say “Turn me off now, people”, and immediately there will arrive on its own a jar full of scented oil, a sponge, and sandals.

Fr. 19

(A) καὶ τῶν ραφάνων ἔψειν χρῆ

ἰχθῦς τ' ὀπτᾶν τοὺς τε ταρίχους, ἡμῶν δ' ἄπο χειρᾶς ἔχεσθαι.

(B) οὐκ ἄρ' ἔτ' οὐδὲν κρέας, ὡς ὑμεῖς λέγετ', οὐδ' ὀτιοῦν ἐδόμεσθα,

οὐδ' ἐξ ἀγορᾶς, οὐδὲ τάκωνας ποιησόμεθ' οὐδ' ἀλλᾶντας;

(A.) Also you may boil cabbages and roast fresh and salted fish, but keep your hands away from us.

(B.) So, as you say, we won't be eating meat any more from the market? We won't be making any meat pies or sausages?

Archippus, *The Fishes* (Ἰχθύες)

Fr. 14

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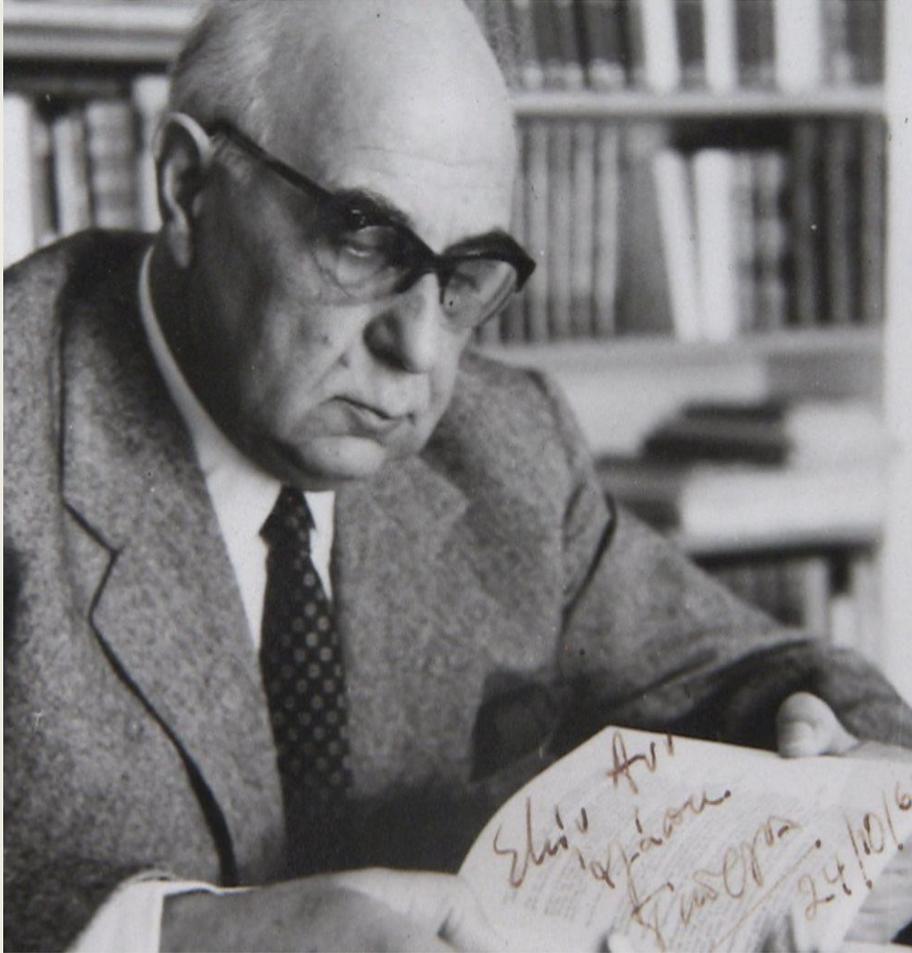
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Parables and fables



George Seferis (1900-1971)

George Seferis, *The Last Station* (1944)

Κι ἂ σοῦ μιλῶ με παραμύθια καὶ παραβολές
εἶναι γιατί τ' ἀκοῦς γλυκότερα, κι ἡ φρίκη
δὲν κουβεντιάζεται γιατί εἶναι ζωντανή
γιατί εἶναι ἀμίλητη καὶ προχωράει·
στάζει τὴ μέρα, στάζει στὸν ὕπνο
μνησιπήμων πόνος.

And if I speak to you in parables and fables
this is that you may listen to them with greater
sweetness, and the horror
cannot be talked about because it is alive
because it is speechless and continues to advance
and drips during day, drips into sleep,
μνησιπήμων πόνος.

Transl. Kimon Friar