The Blessed Afterlife in Old Comedy
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1. Telecleides, fr. 1 KA

λέξιον τοῖνυν βιόν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὁν ἐγὼ θυντοῖσι παρέχον.

εἰρήνη μὲν πρῶτον ἰππαῖν ὅπερ ὅδερ κατὰ χειρός,

ἡ γὰρ ἔρει̃ οὐ δέος οὐδὲ νόσους, ἄλλ’ ἀυτῶματ’ ἢν τὰ δέοντα·

οἶνοι γὰρ ἀπασ’ ἔρρει χαράδρα, μάζι δ’ ἄρτοις ἐμάχοντο

περὶ τοῖς στόμασιν τῶν ἀνάθρωποιν ἰκετεύουσαι καταπίνειν,

ἐiği τι φιλοῦεν, τὰς λευκοτάτας. οἱ δ’ ἰχθύες οἰκαδ’ ἱόντες

ἐξωπτόντες σφᾶς αὐτῶς ἄν παρέκειν’ ἐπὶ ταῖσι τραπέζις.

ζωμοῦ δ’ ἔρρει παρὰ τὰς κλίνας ποταμὸς κρέα θερμὰ κυλῦντων,

ὑποτριμματίων δ’ ὅσετοι τούτων τοῖς βουλομένωσιν παρῆσαν,

ὡςτ’ ἄρθρον τὴν ἐνθέσιν ἢν ἀρδὸνθ’ ἀπαλὴν καταπίνειν.

λεκανισκαίναν δ’ † ἀναίσπαστα † παρῆν ἠδυματίος κατάπαστα.

ὅπται δὲ κίλαι μετ’ ἀμητίσκοις εἶς τὸν φάρυγ’ εἰσεπέτοντο·

τῶν δὲ πλακοῦντων ὅστις τιμέομεν περὶ τὴν γνάθον ἢν ἀλαλητός.

μήτρας δὲ τόμους καὶ χναματίος οἱ παῖδες άν Ἧστραγάλλων.

οἱ δ’ ἀνάθρωποι πίονες ἱσαν τότε καὶ μέγα χρῆμα Γιγάντων.

Well, I will describe the life I provided for mortals in the olden days. First of all, peace was just like water poured over one’s hands. The earth produced nothing dangerous or poisonous, but all needs were produced of their own accord. Every torrent gully flowed with wine and barley cakes fought with bread loaves about men’s mouths pleading that the whitest of them be eaten, if they would be so kind. Fish would go home and after cooking themselves would spread out beside the guests. And a river of broth rolling chunks of warm meat flowed beside the couches and channels of little sauces were available for those who wanted some, so that there was no reason to begrudge one soaking his mouthful to make it soft and gulping it down. And in basins…were served sprinkled with seasonings. Stewed thrushes with little trimmings of meat. And people were fat and as big as Giants.

2. Pherecrates, fr. 113 KA

Ἀ. πλούσιος δ’ ἐκεῖν’ ἢν πάντα συμπεφυμένα,

ἐν πάσιν ἀγαθὸς πάντα τρόπον εἰργασμένα·

ποταμοὶ μὲν ἀθάρης καὶ μέλανος ζωμοῦ πλέον

διὰ τῶν στενοπῶν πομπολυγονίδες ἔρρεον

αὐτάσις μυστήλαις, καὶ ναοῖν τρύφη,

ὡςτ’ εὕμαιρη γε καυτοματίς τὴν ἐνθέσιν

χωρεῖν λιπαράν κατὰ τοῦ λάργυγος τοῖς νεκροῖς.

φύσκαι δὲ καὶ ξένωτες ἄλλαντων τόμοι

παρὰ τοῖς ποταμοῖς σίζοντ’ ἐκέχυν’ ἀντ’ ὀστράκων.

καὶ μήν παρῆν τεμάχι σὴν ἐξωπτομένα

καταχυσματίᾳ παντοδαποῖς ἐγγαρεῖε,

τεῦτοισι δ’ ἐγχέλεα συγκεκαλμένα.

σχελίδες δ’ ὀλόκληνηι πλησίου τακρώτοται

ἐπὶ πινακισκοίς, καὶ δίεφῳ’ ἀκροκόλια

Ἀ. Those things were there, all mixed up with treasures, and made from all good things in every way. And rivers full of porridge and black broth pass bubbling through channels, even with breadsops and bites of cake, so that mouthfuls pass easily and by themselves go smoothly down the throats of the dead. And tripe and piping-hot cuts of sausage are piled along the rivers, sizzling in place of shards. And indeed there are also baked fillets, marinated in sauces of all kinds, and eel cuts smothered in beets and tender sides of beef with nearly the whole leg on platters, and fragrant boiled trotters, and beef
...those who have been condemned in this way – and they are a great multitude and bound in chains – work at their task unceasingly both by day and throughout the entire night, enjoying no respite and being carefully cut off from any means of escape...these men, working in darkness as they do because of the bending and winding of the passages, carry lamps bound on their foreheads...and at this task they labor without ceasing beneath the sternness and blows of an overseer...and since no opportunity is afforded any of them to care for their bodies, and they have no garments to cover their shame, no man can look upon the unfortunate wretches without feeling pity for them because of the exceeding hardships they suffer. For no leniency or respite of any kind is given to any man who is sick, or maimed, or aged, or in the case of a woman for her weakness, but all without exception are compelled by blows to persevere in their labors, until through ill-treatment they die in the midst of their tortures. Consequently, the poor unfortunates believe, because their punishment is so
exceedingly severe, that the future will always be more terrible than the present and therefore look forward to death as more to be desired than life.

4. Washery (from Jones 1982)

5. Smelting Furnace (from Rihll 2001)

6. Theognis 467-496

Μηδένα τόδε' ἄκοντα μένειν κατέρυκε παρ’ ἡμῖν, μηδὲ θύραξέ κέλευ’ οὐκ ἐθέλοντ’ ἔναι, μηδ’ εἴδοντ’ ἐπέγειρε, Σιμονιάθη, ὄντιν’ ἄν ἡμῶν θωρηθέντ’ οίνοι μαλακός ύπνος ἔλη, μηδὲ τὸν ἄγρυπνόντα κέλευ’ ἄκοντα καθεύδειν.

‘πᾶν γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον χρήμα’ ἀνηράν ἔφυ.’

τὸι πίνειν δ’ ἐθέλοντι παραστάδον οἴνοχοεῖτο·

οὐ πάσας νόκτας γίνεται ἀβρά παθείν.

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ—μέτρον γὰρ ἔχει μεληδέος οἶνον—

ἂν τόν λυσικάκου μηδὲ κεφάλη σάλος ἔθεσεν.

ἠξο δ’ ὑς οἶνος χαριστήσατο ἀνδρὶ πεπόθαι.

οὔτε τι γὰρ νήφω οὔτε λίην μεθύω.

δς δ’ ἂν ὑπὲρβάλλη λόγιος μέτρον, οὐκέτι κεῖνος
tῆς αὐτοῦ γλώσσης καρπερός οὐδὲ νόου·

μυθεῖται δ’ ἀπάλαμνα, τὰ νήφοι σύντοι πάθειά,

αἰδεῖται δ’ ἐρδὸν οὐδέν, ὅταν μεθύσῃ,

τὸ πρὶν ἕδω σώφρον, τότε νήπιος. ἀλλὰ σὺ ταῦτα
gινόσκιν ὁ πίν’ οἶνον ὑπὲρβαλλόθην,

ἀλλὰ ἂν πρὶν μεθύειν ὑπανίστασο—μὴ σε βιάζω

γαστήρ ὅστε κακὸν λάτριν ἐφιμέριον—

ἡ παρέοιν ὁ πίνε. σὺ δ’ ἐξέχει τοῦτο μάταιον
cοπτάλλεις αἰεί· τοῦν πάντως τοι μεθύεις.

ἡ μὲν γὰρ ‘φέρεται φιλοτήσιος’, ἡ δὲ ‘πρόκειται,

τὴν δὲ ‘θεοίς σπένδεις’, τὴν δ’ ‘ἐπί χειρὸς ἔχεις’

αἰνεῖσθαι δ’ οὐκ οἶδας, ἀνίκητος δ’ τοι ὀύτος,

ὡς πολλὰς πίνοιν μή τι μάταιον ἔρει·

ὑμεῖς δ’ εὐ μυθεῖσθε παρὰ κρήτηρι μένοντες,

ἀλλήλων ἐρίδος δὴν ἅπερυκόμενοι.
Don’t hold back anyone of these so that he remain with us against his will, don’t tell anyone to depart who does not want to, don’t waken from his sleep, Simonides, anyone of us who, fortified with wine, has been overcome by gentle sleep, and don’t tell one who’s wide awake to sleep against his will. **All force is disagreeable.** And let (a slave) stand by and pour wine for him who wants to drink; it’s not possible to have a good time every night. But I’ll go home—**I’ve had my limit of honey-sweet wine**—and I’ll take thought for sleep that brings release from ills. **I’ve reached the stage where the consumption of wine is most pleasant for a man, since I am neither sober nor too drunk.** Whoever exceeds his limit of drink is no longer in command of his tongue or his mind; he says wild things that are disgraceful in the eyes of the sober, and he’s not ashamed of anything he does when he’s drunk. Formerly he was sensible, but then he’s a fool. **Aware of this, don’t drink wine to excess, but either rise before you’re drunk—don’t let your belly overpower you as if you were a wretched hired help for the day—or stay without drinking.** But you say “fill it up!” This is always your idle chatter; that’s why you get drunk. **One cup is a toast to friendship, another is set before you, another you offer as a libation to the gods, another you have as a penalty, and you don’t know how to say no.** That man is truly the champion who after drinking many cups will say nothing foolish. If you stay by the mixing bowl, make good conversation, long avoiding quarrels with one another and speaking openly to one and all alike. In this way a symposium turns out to be not half bad. (Trans. Gerber)

**Bibliography**

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