

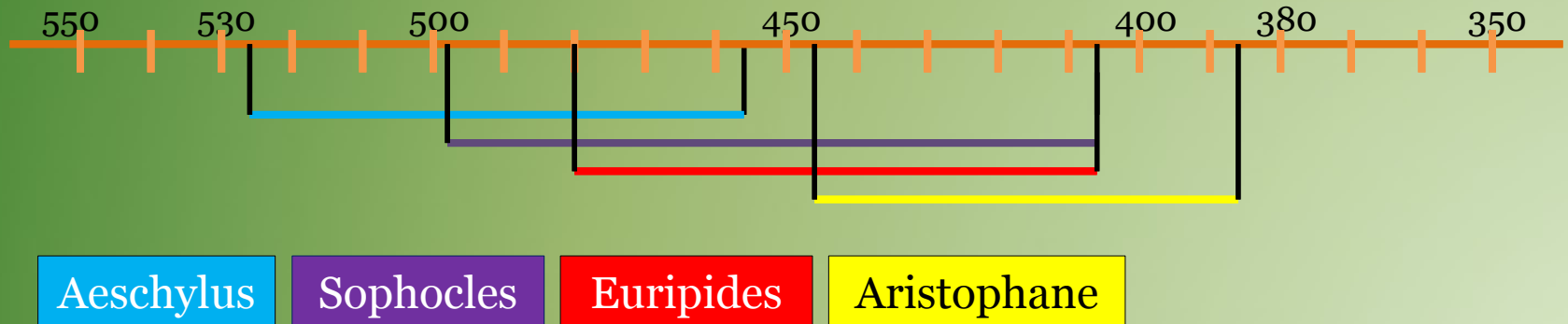


# Aristophanes – Frogs

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# The plot

- Dionysus (with his servant Xanthias) goes to the Underworld to get the great poet Euripides back
- He asks Heracles for a way and is dressed like him (as a parody of the story how Heracles went to the Underworld for Cerberos)
- He rows the boat with Charon while being accompanied by the chorus of frogs
- In the Underworld Euripides and Aeschylus are arguing over the throne for the best poet
- A poetry competition takes place – Dionysus decides the winner is Aeschylus and takes him on the Ground instead of Euripides



# Vulgarisms

- **Xanthias**  
Can I say the really funny one?
- **Dionysus**  
Of course,  
Go right ahead—but don't let me catch you  
saying this.
- **Xanthias**  
What's that?
- **Dionysus**  
That you must shift your pack to ease  
yourself.

- **Aeacus**  
By Zeus our Saviour, a real  
gentleman  
is your master.
- **Xanthias**  
Of course he's a real gentleman,  
he only knows how to drink and  
screw.

# Humour

*before they went to the Underworld, Dionysus wanted a dead man to take their heavy bags.*

- **Dionysus**

And sure enough, they're bringing out a corpse right here.

Hallo you there ! —you, the dead man, I mean;

Will you take this baggage down to Hell?

- **Corpse**

Will you pay two drachmas?

- **Dionysus**

God no, less than that.

[...]

- **Corpse**

If you don't put down two drachmas, no deal.

- **Dionysus**

Come, take nine obols.

- **Corpse**

I'd rather be alive again.

# Interaction with the audience

- **Dionysus**  
Have you met here with any parricides [murder of one's father]  
Or perjurers [similar to a liar], as he told us?
- **Xanthias**  
Haven't you?
- **Dionysus**  
By Poseidon, yes. I think I see some now.  
*Looking to the audience.*

*(when they see Empusa)*

- **Dionysus**  
Where can I escape?
- **Xanthias**  
And where can I?
- **Dionysus** *(begs a priest sitting in the first row)*  
Oh priest, preserve me now, to be your drinking buddy.

*(after Empusa's gone)*

- **Dionysus**  
Good grief, how I grew pale at the sight of her.
- **Xanthias** *(points at the priest)*  
But this thing of yours got stained reddish brown with fear.

# Criticizing other poets at the time

- **Heracles**  
And where's Xenocles?
- **Dionysus**  
Oh, God! May he drop dead!
- **Heracles**  
What of Pythangelus?
- **Xanthias**  
No word of me,  
long suffering with this shoulder ache of  
mine!

# Empusa

- **Xanthias**  
And now, by Zeus, I see a monstrous beast.
- **Dionysus**  
What kind?
- **Xanthias**  
O horrible! it takes all kinds of shapes,  
Now it's an ox, and now a mule, and now  
A lovely woman.
- **Dionysus**  
Where is she? I'll go meet her.
- **Xanthias**  
Wait, now it's not a woman, but a bitch.
- **Dionysus**  
Why, this must be Empusa.
- **Xanthias**  
Ah! her whole face burns like fire.
- **Dionysus**  
Does she have a leg of bronze?
- **Xanthias**  
By Poseidon, yes,  
and the other is cow dung.  
Be sure of it.
- **Dionysus**  
Where can I escape?



# Mythological creatures



68.

*Cerberum domat Hercules.*

Cerberus





Sfinx



Tragelapho  
s



Echidna



Typhon



The  
Gorgons

# Frogs

Charon tells Dionysus:

- You'll hear lovely melodies  
once you make the effort.

The amazing music of the swan frogs.

[...] *[As the small boat begins to move, the Chorus of Frogs is heard from off stage.]*

- CHORUS OF FROGS

Brekekekex koax koax

Brekekekex koax koax.

Children of the marsh and lake  
harmonious song now sweetly make,  
our own enchanting melodies  
koax koax.

[...]

Brekekekex koax koax.



- DIONYSUS *[still rowing]*  
I'm starting to get a pain in the ass  
from all your koax koax.
- CHORUS OF FROGS  
Brekekekex koax koax.
- [...]
- DIONYSUS  
Piss off—and take that koax koax with  
you.  
Nothing but koax koax.
- [...]
- DIONYSUS  
Stop it, you music-loving tribe!
- CHORUS OF FROGS  
No, no. We'll sing on all the more—  
if we've ever hopped on shore  
on sunny days through weeds and  
rushes  
rejoicing in our lovely songs  
as we dive and dive once more,  
or as from Zeus' rain we flee  
to sing our varied harmonies  
at the bottom of the marsh,  
our bubble-splashing melodies.

[...]

- DIONYSUS  
Go on. Keep croaking. I don't care.
  - CHORUS OF FROGS  
We'll croak on 'til our throats wear out.  
We'll croak all day.
  - DIONYSUS  
Brekekekex koax koax  
You never beat me in this play!
  - CHORUS OF FROGS  
And you've no chance to win your way,  
not matched with us.
  - DIONYSUS  
And you've no hope outdoing me.  
No, no. If I must I'll yell all day,  
koaxing you to get my way—  
Brekekekex koax koax
- [Dionysus listens for a response from the  
Chorus, but there is none.]*
- You see. Sooner or later I was going to win—  
and make you stop your harsh koaxing din.

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THE END