

ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

From Chloroform to Thalia and Erato, Liebig's Muses of Comedy and Love Poetry



Instead of dance, Erato ("beloved") governed romance as the Muse of Love Poetry. On this Italian card advertising a company cofounded by chloroform pioneer Justus von Liebig (1803 to 1873), a seated Erato (*right*) is pictured playing the cithara, the musical and etymological precursor to today's guitar. If a 20th-century actor portrayed Erato poorly, that thespian often "got the hook" and was dragged offstage. That hook represented the shepherd's crook of Thalia ("blooming"), the Muse of Comedy and Bucolic Poetry. Thalia (*left*) was frequently depicted as here, holding a tambourine or drum and standing near her iconic mask(s) of comedy. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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