

From Chloroform to Melpomene, Liebig's Muse of Tragedy



Rather than with her sister Thalia's mask of comedy, the Muse Melpomene ("songstress") is associated with the mask of tragedy, affixed here (*low right*) to her iconic Club of Heracles (Hercules). In her role as the Muse of Tragedy, perhaps Melpomene has wrought havoc with her Herculanean Club, as depicted here on an Italian card advertising a company named after chloroform pioneer Justus von Liebig (1803 to 1873). Before the famous Library of Alexandria met its tragic end, the word *mouseion* ("shrine or seat of the Muses") was redefined as a place of study and eventually resurfaced in the English language as the word "museum." (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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