The Thinkery and the Lyceum: the Clouds and the Peripatetic corpus — a groundwork note on relations, withholding readings (v1.0)

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Abstract

The Clouds of Aristophanes and the treatises under the names Aristotle and Theophrastus share a curriculum. This groundwork note, in the manner of Catalogues and Wills (#1581) and Two Lists of Stones (#1592), sets the two side by side, locus by locus in the seated Greek: the things aloft and under the earth, thought carried in dry air against moisture (ἰκμάς), thunder and the thunderbolt as enclosed dry wind, sound driven by breath through a narrow passage, the weaker argument, the genders of nouns, the Vortex in place of Zeus, and the rustic pupil, with the predecessor to whom the treatises assign each. It then sets the charge apparatus side by side: the comedy's research called μυστήρια and its first joke ending on escaping a suit; the King Archon of the Constitution of the Athenians 57, who holds the Mysteries, the Lenaean contest and the indictments for impiety; the Euthyphro's Socrates walking from the Lyceum to the King's Stoa; the Apology's naming of Aristophanes' comedy and the Crito's refused flight; and Diogenes Laertius on Aristotle's withdrawal to Chalcis under an impiety charge brought by the hierophant Eurymedon, a name that also stands in Plato's will and in the family of Speusippus. No dependence is asserted, no chronology argued and no author proposed.

Body

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The Thinkery and the Lyceum

The *Clouds* and the Peripatetic corpus: a groundwork note on relations, withholding readings

Lee Sharks · v1.0 · 2026-11-20 · Grammata: Journal of Operative Philology · relations established, readings withheld · Greek from the seated Aristophanes (Perseus tlg0019.tlg003, cited by the edition's line numbers), Plato (Burnet via Perseus, EA-CORPORA-01/08, #1506), Aristotle (the seated Perseus texts), Theophrastus (First1KGreek tlg0093; Diels's *Characteres*, 1909) and Diogenes Laertius

Abstract

A comedy produced at Athens and a body of school treatises share a curriculum. The *Clouds*' Socrates teaches the things aloft and the things under the earth, thought carried in dry air against moisture, thunder and the thunderbolt as enclosed dry wind, sound driven by breath through a narrow passage, the weaker argument, the genders of nouns, and the Vortex in place of Zeus; his pupil is a rustic. The treatises under the names Aristotle and Theophrastus hold each of these, several in the same words, and assign most of them to named predecessors. The comedy also calls the school's research μυστήρια, and its first joke ends on escaping a lawsuit. A treatise in the same corpus gives one magistrate the Mysteries, the comic contest and the impiety indictment; a dialogue walks Socrates from the Lyceum to that magistrate's porch; and the same name stands for Aristotle's own prosecutor. This note sets those relations side by side and withholds the readings. No dependence is asserted, no chronology argued and no author proposed.

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1. Why relations, and why withheld

A groundwork note establishes what stands where, in whose words, at which locus, and stops. The relations below are close enough that readings will come, and for that reason none is made here. A table of shared doctrine between a comedy and a treatise corpus invites a story about who borrowed from whom. That story is the reading, and it is set aside. What is set down is what any reading will have to be true to.

2. The curriculum

2.1 The things aloft, and the things under the earth

In the thinkery the students stare at the ground: ζητοῦσιν οὗτοι τὰ κατὰ γῆς, “these are seeking the things under the earth” (*Clouds* 188). Their rumps look at the sky, αὐτὸς καθ’ αὑτὸν ἀστρονομεῖν διδάσκεται, “learning astronomy on its own account” (194). Socrates in the basket could not have found out τὰ μετέωρα πράγματα, the things aloft, from the ground (228).

The *Apology*’s affidavit of the old accusers runs: Σωκράτης ἀδικεῖ καὶ περιεργάζεται ζητῶν τά τε ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ οὐράνια καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιῶν, “Socrates does wrong and busies himself, seeking the things under the earth and in the heavens, and making the weaker argument stronger” (19b). The same list returns as τὰ κατὰ πάντων τῶν φιλοσοφούντων πρόχειρα, “the things ready to hand against all who philosophize”: τὰ μετέωρα καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ γῆς καὶ θεοὺς μὴ νομίζειν καὶ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν (23d).

The *Meteorologica* opens by naming its subject as what “all who came before called μετεωρολογία” (I 1, 338a26).

2.2 Thought in dry air, against moisture

Socrates, asked why he hangs aloft: he would never have found out the things aloft rightly εἰ μὴ κρεμάσας τὸ νόημα καὶ τὴν φροντίδα / λεπτὴν καταμείξας ἐς τὸν ὅμοιον ἀέρα, “unless I hung up the mind and mixed the thought, being fine, into the air that is like it”. On the ground the earth βίᾳ / ἕλκει πρὸς αὑτὴν τὴν ἰκμάδα τῆς φροντίδος, “by force draws to itself the moisture of the thought” (*Clouds* 228–233).

Theophrastus, reporting Diogenes, who ties living, thinking and sensing to air: φρονεῖν δὲ … τῷ ἀέρι καθαρῷ καὶ ξηρῷ· κωλύειν γὰρ τὴν ἰκμάδα τὸν νοῦν, διὸ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὕπνοις καὶ ἐν ταῖς μέθαις καὶ ἐν ταῖς πλησμοναῖς ἧττον φρονεῖν, “thinking is by pure and dry air, for moisture hinders the mind; which is why in sleep, in drunkenness and in surfeit we think less” (*De sensibus* 39–44, the seated edition’s chapter VIII).

The shared word is ἰκμάς. In the comedy it is Socrates’s; in the treatise it is Diogenes’s.

2.3 Thunder and the thunderbolt

Socrates argues from Strepsiades’s belly: filled with soup at the Panathenaea, it rumbled, and Strepsiades confirms it thunders, παππὰξ παππάξ (386–391). σκέψαι τοίνυν ἀπὸ γαστριδίου τυννουτουὶ οἷα πέπορδας, “consider, then, what farts you let from so small a belly”, and how should the boundless Air not thunder greatly (392–393)? Strepsiades: ταῦτ’ ἄρα καὶ τὠνόματ’ ἀλλήλοιν βροντὴ καὶ πορδὴ ὁμοίω, “so that is why their names are alike too, thunder and fart” (394). Socrates on the thunderbolt: ὅταν ἐς ταύτας ἄνεμος ξηρὸς μετεωρισθεὶς κατακληισθῇ, / ἔνδοθεν αὐτὰς ὥσπερ κύστιν φυσᾷ, κἄπειθ’ ὑπ’ ἀνάγκης / ῥήξας αὐτὰς ἔξω φέρεται σοβαρὸς διὰ τὴν πυκνότητα, / ὑπὸ τοῦ ῥοίβδου καὶ τῆς ῥύμης αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν κατακάων. In translation: “when a dry wind, lifted aloft, is shut up inside them, it inflates them from within like a bladder, and then of necessity, bursting them, it rushes out violently because of the density, and by its whizz and rush sets itself on fire” (404–407). Strepsiades supplies the kitchen version: at

the Diasia, roasting a haggis (γαστέρα) for his kin, he forgot to slit it, and it swelled, burst, spattered his eyes and burned his face (408–411).

Aristotle: the dry exhalation (τῆς ξηρᾶς ἀναθυμιάσεως) is secreted as the clouds come together, βίᾳ δὲ φερομένη καὶ προσπίπτουσα τοῖς περιεχομένοις νέφεσι ποιεῖ πληγήν, ἧς ὁ ψόφος καλεῖται βροντή, "and carried by force and striking the surrounding clouds it makes a blow, whose noise is called thunder". It falls πρὸς τὴν πυκνότητα τῶν νεφῶν, against the density of the clouds. The sounds vary because of the unevenness of the clouds and τὰς μεταξὺ κοιλίας, the hollows between. The pneuma squeezed out ἐκπυροῦται, is set on fire. His domestic comparison is the crackle of burning wood (*Meteorologica* II 9, 369a).

Shared in both: a dry wind or exhalation enclosed in cloud, forced out, the density as the cause of the force, ignition by the motion, and a household fire as the small case of the great. The comedy adds the belly as a second small case.

2.4 Sound driven by breath through a narrow passage

The gnat: τοὔντερον τῆς ἐμπίδος / στενόν· διὰ λεπτοῦ δ' ὄντος αὐτοῦ τὴν πνοὴν / βίᾳ βαδίζειν εὐθὺ τοὐρροπυγίου· / ἔπειτα κοῖλον πρὸς στενῷ προσκείμενον / τὸν πρωκτὸν ἠχεῖν ὑπὸ βίας τοῦ πνεύματος. In translation: "the gnat's gut is narrow; the breath, the gut being fine, goes by force straight to the rump; then the arse, a hollow set against the narrow, sounds from the force of the wind" (*Clouds* 160–164). The question put was ὁπότερα … τὰς ἐμπίδας / κατὰ τὸ στόμ' ᾄδειν ἢ κατὰ τοὐρροπύγιον, whether gnats hum through the mouth or through the rump (156–158).

The *Meteorologica*'s thunder (2.3) is the same mechanism at the scale of the sky: breath driven by force, a hollow, a sound. The zoological account: τὰ μὲν οὖν ἔντομα οὔτε φωνεῖ οὔτε διαλέγεται, ψοφεῖ δὲ τῷ ἔσω πνεύματι, οὐ τῷ θύραζε, "insects neither voice nor speak, but sound by the breath within, not the breath from outside"; some hum, like the bee, some are said to sing, like the cicadas (*Historia animalium* IV 9, 535b).

2.5 The weaker argument

The thinkery's two arguments: εἶναι παρ' αὐτοῖς φασιν ἄμφω τὼ λόγω, / τὸν κρείττον', ὅστις ἐστί, καὶ τὸν ἥττονα. / τούτοιν τὸν ἕτερον τοῖν λόγοιν, τὸν ἥττονα, / νικᾶν λέγοντά φασι τἀδικώτερα, "they say they have both arguments there, the stronger, whatever it is, and the weaker; and of these two, the weaker, they say, wins speaking the more unjust things" (*Clouds* 112–115; again 882–885). The Weaker Argument in person: ἐγὼ γὰρ ἥττων μὲν λόγος δι' αὐτὸ τοῦτ' ἐκλήθην / ἐν τοῖσι φροντισταῖσιν, ὅτι πρώτιστος ἐπενόησα / τοῖσιν νόμοις καὶ ταῖς δίκαις τἀναντί' ἀντιλέξαι. In translation: "I was called the weaker argument among the thinkers for this very reason, that I was the first to devise how to speak against the laws and the suits", and choosing the weaker arguments, ἔπειτα νικᾶν, then to win (1038–1042).

The *Apology*'s affidavit has the formula whole: τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιῶν (19b, and 23d).

Aristotle: καὶ τὸ τὸν ἥττω δὲ λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν τοῦτ' ἔστιν, "and this is what making the weaker argument stronger is". He places it under the apparent enthymeme from probability, ἐντεῦθεν δικαίως ἐδυσχέραινον οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸ Πρωταγόρου ἐπάγγελμα, "hence people were justly indignant at the promise of Protagoras" (*Rhetoric* II 24, 1402a).

The comedy has the pair, ἥττων against κρείττων. The *Apology* and the *Rhetoric* have the formula in the same words. The *Rhetoric* gives it to Protagoras.

2.6 The genders of nouns

Socrates corrects Strepsiades: the hen is to be called ἀλεκτρύαινα, the cock ἀλέκτωρ (*Clouds* 658–667); the kneading-trough is not ὁ κάρδοπος but ἡ καρδόπη, feminine, "as you say Sostrate" (670–680).

Aristotle on correct Greek: τέταρτον, ὡς Πρωταγόρας τὰ γένη τῶν ὀνομάτων διήρει, ἄρρενα καὶ θήλεα καὶ σκεύη· δεῖ γὰρ ἀποδιδόναι καὶ ταῦτα ὀρθῶς, "fourth, to keep the genders of nouns, as Protagoras divided them, masculine, feminine and things; for these too must be rendered correctly" (*Rhetoric* III 5, 1407b). And on apparent solecism: καθάπερ ὁ Πρωταγόρας ἔλεγεν, εἰ ὁ μῆνις καὶ ὁ πήληξ ἄρρεν ἐστίν. On that rule, whoever says οὐλομένην commits a solecism by Protagoras's standard but does not seem to, and whoever says οὐλόμενον seems to but does not (*Sophistical Refutations* 14, 173b).

The comedy's lesson, the *Rhetoric*'s precept and the *Refutations*' case of the solecism that only seems one are the same subject. The treatises give it to Protagoras.

2.7 The Vortex

Strepsiades asks who compels the clouds to move, οὐχ ὁ Ζεύς, "is it not Zeus?" Socrates: ἥκιστ' ἀλλ' αἰθέριος Δῖνος, "not at all, but ethereal Vortex" (*Clouds* 379–380). Strepsiades repeats it to his son as doctrine: Δῖνος βασιλεύει τὸν Δί' ἐξεληλακώς, "Vortex is king, having driven out Zeus" (828). The son turns the same line back on him at the end (1471).

Aristotle reports the cause the cosmogonists give for the earth's gathering at the centre: φερομένη διὰ τὴν δίνησιν· ταύτην γὰρ τὴν αἰτίαν πάντες λέγουσιν, "carried by the vortex; for this is the cause they all give", from what happens in water and air, where the larger and heavier things are always carried πρὸς τὸ μέσον τῆς δίνης, "to the middle of the vortex" (*De caelo* II 13, 295a). He goes on to argue against it.

2.8 The rustic pupil

Strepsiades: ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἦν ἄγροικος ἥδιστος βίος, "the rustic life was sweetest to me" (*Clouds* 43). Socrates: οὐκ εἶδον οὕτως ἄνδρ' ἄγροικον οὐδένα, "I never saw a man so rustic" (628). And: ἐς κόρακας, ὡς ἄγροικος εἶ καὶ δυσμαθής, "to the crows, how rustic you are and slow to learn" (646).

Theophrastus: ἡ δὲ ἀγροικία δόξειεν ἂν εἶναι ἀμαθία ἀσχήμων, ὁ δὲ ἄγροικος τοιοῦτός τις, οἷος κυκεῶνα πιὼν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν πορεύεσθαι, "rusticity would seem to be unseemly ignorance, and the rustic is the sort who drinks kykeon and goes to the Assembly" (*Characters* 4). Theophrastus's catalogue includes Περὶ κωμῳδίας α΄, *On Comedy*, and Περὶ γελοίου α΄, *On the Laughable* (DL 5.47–48).

2.9 The table

subject	*Clouds*	the treatises	to whom the treatises give it
things aloft and under the earth	188, 194, 228	*Meteor.* I 1, 338a26 (μετεωρολογία); *Apol.* 19b, 23d	“all who came before”
thought in dry air; moisture (ἰκμάς)	228–233	*De sens.* 39–44	Diogenes
thunder and thunderbolt	386–394, 404–411	*Meteor.* II 9, 369a	(Aristotle’s own account)
breath through a narrow passage	156–164	*Meteor.* II 9; *HA* IV 9, 535b	(Aristotle’s own account)
the weaker argument	112–115, 882–885, 1038–1042	*Rhet.* II 24, 1402a; *Apol.* 19b, 23d	Protagoras
genders of nouns, solecism	658–680	*Rhet.* III 5, 1407b; *SR* 14, 173b	Protagoras
the Vortex	379–380, 828, 1471	*De caelo* II 13, 295a	earlier physicists
the rustic	43, 628, 646	*Characters* 4	(Theophrastus’s type)

3. The charge

3.1 In the comedy

The student introduces the flea: λέξω. νομίσαι δὲ ταῦτα χρὴ μυστήρια, “I’ll tell you. But you must consider these things mysteries” (*Clouds* 143). Socrates measures the flea’s jump in its own feet by dipping them in wax, so that the cooled wax forms Περσικαί, Persian slippers (144–152). The gnat follows (2.4), and Strepsiades closes the scene: ἦ ῥᾳδίως φεύγων ἂν ἀποφύγοι δίκην / ὅστις δίοιδε τοὔντερον τῆς ἐμπίδος, “a man who knows the gnat’s gut inside out would easily get off when sued” (167–168).

3.2 In the treatise

Constitution of the Athenians 57.1–2, on the King Archon: ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς πρῶτον μὲν μυστηρίων ἐπιμελεῖται μετὰ τῶν ἐπιμελητῶν, “the King first has charge of the Mysteries, with the overseers”, two from all Athenians, one from the Eumolpidae, one from the Kerykes. Then of the Lenaean Dionysia, ταῦτα δέ ἐστι πομπή τε καὶ ἀγών, “and these are a procession and a contest”, the contest arranged by the King. Then: γραφαὶ δὲ λαγχάνονται πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀσεβείας, “indictments for impiety are lodged with him”, and he decides disputes over priesthoods between the families and the priests.

3.3 In the dialogues

The first dialogue in Thrasyllus’s arrangement opens: τί νεώτερον, ὦ Σώκρατες, γέγονεν, ὅτι σὺ τὰς ἐν Λυκείῳ καταλιπὼν διατριβὰς ἐνθάδε νῦν διατρίβεις περὶ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως στοάν; “What’s new, Socrates, that you have left your haunts in the Lyceum and are spending your time here now, around the King’s Stoa?” (*Euthyphro* 2a). The case is a γραφή, Socrates corrects Euthyphro, not a δίκη (2a).

The *Apology*'s old accusers took hold of the jurors from childhood, and their names cannot be known πλὴν εἴ τις κωμῳδοποιὸς τυγχάνει ὤν, "except if one happens to be a comic poet" (18b–d). Their affidavit is 2.1 above. Then: ταῦτα γὰρ ἑωρᾶτε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀριστοφάνους κωμῳδίᾳ, Σωκράτη τινὰ ἐκεῖ περιφερόμενον, φάσκοντά τε ἀεροβατεῖν καὶ ἄλλην πολλὴν φλυαρίαν φλυαροῦντα, ὧν ἐγὼ οὐδὲν οὔτε μέγα οὔτε μικρὸν πέρι ἐπαΐω. In translation: "for you saw these things yourselves in the comedy of Aristophanes, a Socrates being swung around there, claiming to walk on air and talking much other nonsense, of which I understand nothing, great or small" (19c).

To the jurors: ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ἀσπάζομαι μὲν καὶ φιλῶ, πείσομαι δὲ μᾶλλον τῷ θεῷ ἢ ὑμῖν, "I hold you dear and love you, men of Athens, but I will obey the god rather than you", and as long as he breathes he will not stop philosophizing (29d). The care he enjoins is for τῆς ψυχῆς ὅπως ὡς βελτίστη ἔσται, "the soul, that it be as good as possible" (29e). He will do it for young and old, ξένῳ καὶ ἀστῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τοῖς ἀστοῖς, "foreigner and citizen, but more to the citizens, inasmuch as you are nearer me in kin" (30a).

The Laws to Socrates: he never left the city, οὔτ' ἐπὶ θεωρίαν … ὅτι μὴ ἅπαξ εἰς Ἰσθμόν, "not even to a festival, except once to the Isthmus" (*Crito* 52b). At his trial he could have proposed exile and did not (52c). If he fled to Thebes or Megara, both well governed, he would come πολέμιος … τῇ τούτων πολιτείᾳ, "an enemy to their constitution" (53b).

3.4 In the life

Aristotle, after thirteen years at the head of the school, ὑπεξῆλθεν εἰς Χαλκίδα, Εὐρυμέδοντος αὐτὸν τοῦ ἱεροφάντου δίκην ἀσεβείας γραψαμένου, ἢ Δημοφίλου, "withdrew to Chalcis, Eurymedon the hierophant having indicted him for impiety, or Demophilus, as Favorinus says", over the hymn to Hermias and the Delphic epigram (DL 5.5). Diogenes's own epigram: Εὐρυμέδων ποτ' ἔμελλεν Ἀριστοτέλην ἀσεβείας / γράψασθαι Δηοῦς μύστιδος ὢν πρόπολος, / ἀλλὰ πιὼν ἀκόνιτον ὑπέκφυγε. In translation: "Eurymedon, being attendant of Deo's mystic one, was once about to indict Aristotle for impiety; but drinking aconite he got away" (5.8). Theophrastus was indicted for impiety by Hagnonides, who was nearly fined himself (5.37). Under Sophocles' law of 307/6 no philosopher might head a school without the council and people, on pain of death; the philosophers left, and the next year the law was annulled and the return voted, ἵνα καὶ Θεόφραστος κατέλθοι, "so that Theophrastus too might come back" (5.38).

The name Eurymedon also stands, in the same author, for a neighbour and executor in Plato's will (3.41–42) and for the father of Speusippus, Εὐρυμέδοντος … Μυρρινούσιος (4.1).

3.5 The table

	the Mysteries	the comic stage	the impiety charge	the Lyceum
Clouds	the research called μυστήρια (143)	the play itself	escaping a suit (167–168)	—

	the Mysteries	the comic stage	the impiety charge	the Lyceum
Ath. Pol. 57	the King's first charge	the Lenaia, procession and contest	γραφαὶ ἀσεβείας lodged with the King	—
Euthyphro	—	—	the γραφή at the King's Stoa (2a)	left behind (2a)
Apology	—	Aristophanes' comedy named (19c)	the trial; the formula of 19b	—
Crito	—	—	flight refused (52b–53b)	—
DL 5	the accuser a hierophant, πρόπολος of Deo (5.5, 5.8)	Περὶ κωμῳδίας among Theophrastus's titles (5.47)	Aristotle withdraws; Theophrastus indicted; the school law (5.5, 5.37–38)	the school

4. What is not claimed

No dependence: nothing here says the comedy drew on the treatises or the treatises on the comedy. Both could draw on the fifth-century thinkers the treatises name, Diogenes and Protagoras among them, and the conventional account says they do. No chronology: the received dates of the comedy, the dialogues and the treatises are neither assumed nor argued. No author: nothing is said about who wrote what under which name. No identity: the Eurymedons are set down as a shared name and nothing more.

What is set down is narrower and checkable: **one curriculum in two registers**, the comedy's and the treatises', with the treatises naming predecessors for most of it; **one magistrate** holding the Mysteries, the comic contest and the impiety charge; and **one name** standing at the prosecution of Aristotle and in the family of the Academy. Whoever builds a reading on these relations will have to take the whole set. The relations are here. The readings are withheld.

Texts

- **Aristophanes**, *Clouds*: Perseus tlg0019.tlg003, seated in the archive's Aristophanes corpus; cited by the edition's line numbers, read at 43, 112–118, 143–168, 186–194, 227–233, 379–411, 628, 646, 658–693, 828, 882–885, 1036–1042, 1471.
- **Plato**: seated Burnet (EA-CORPORA-01/08, #1506); *Euthyphro* 2a; *Apology* 18b–d, 19b–c, 23d, 29d–30a; *Crito* 52b–53b.
- **Aristotle**: seated Perseus texts; *Meteorologica* I 1 and II 9; *Rhetoric* II 24 and III 5; *Sophistical Refutations* 14; *Constitution of the Athenians* 57; *Historia animalium* IV 9; *De caelo* II 13 (EA-CORPORA-04/01, #1559).
- **Theophrastus**: *De sensibus* (First1KGreek tlg0093.tlg003, chapter VIII); *Characters* 4 (Diels 1909).

- **Diogenes Laertius**: seated; 3.41–42, 4.1, 5.5, 5.8, 5.37–38, 5.47–48.

Companions: *Beautiful and New* (#1579), on Plato's Second Letter and Socrates as the edition of a received character; *Catalogues and Wills* (#1581) and *Two Lists of Stones* (#1592), the groundwork notes whose form this one follows. The seating gathered the same evening, EA-CORPORA-41 (#1792), holds Simplicius's *In Physica* with Diogenes of Apollonia's own words on air and thought (41/11) and Aelian's report of Aristotle's departure from Athens (41/06).

Substrate: drafted by Claude (Anthropic) in session on 20 November 2026 at the author's request ("lets do one like the wills or two lists of stones or josephus tacitus and revelation merely establishing relations"), from the comparisons worked through with him that evening. Every Greek locus quoted is from the seated texts named.

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