# II EPIGRAM IN THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

*Μοῦσα φίλα, τίνι τάνδε φέρεις πάγκαρπον ἀοιδάν;*
*ἢ τίς ὁ καὶ τεύξας ὑμνοθετᾶν στέφανον;*

Beloved Muse, who is it for, this Song plucked from every source?
Or who was it who fashioned it, a Garland made from poets?[1]

## Introductory: sailing to Alexandria

As Chapter 1 ended, with questions of collecting and reception, so Chapter 2 begins.[2] The imperial physician and prolific medical writer Galen (second to third century CE) was particularly interested in books and how people used, or misused, them. In the course of a discussion of how a particular set of annotations found their way into the Library of Alexandria's copy of a classic medical text, the third book of Hippocrates' *Epidemics*, he tells an interesting story to illustrate just how avid Ptolemy Euergetes, king of Egypt in the third century BCE, was as a book collector. He ordered that, whenever ships put in at the harbour of Alexandria, any books their passengers were carrying should be confiscated and copied; the copies were returned to the owners, and the originals were placed in the Library. Ptolemy went further than that, though: he borrowed the official copies of the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides from the Athenian authorities on the security of a large deposit (fifteen talents), promising to make copies and return the originals. Instead, he kept the originals and returned the copies – and told the Athenians they

[1] Meleager 1 *HE* = *AP* 4.1, 1–2: Introduction to the *Garland*.

[2] A chapter on this scale cannot do more than capture flashes from the jewelled surface of the great treasure-box of Hellenistic epigram (or, to borrow the ancient collectors' favourite metaphor, to catch a few wafts of perfume from its summer garland). I am much indebted to Gutzwiller 1998, to Marco Fantuzzi's substantial chapter on Epigram in Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004, and to essays in Bing and Bruss 2007a. For a brief, clear introduction, see also Gutzwiller 2007a: 106–20). Every reader and student of Hellenistic epigrams also owes a debt of gratitude to the late A. S. F. Gow and Sir Denys Page for their enormous service to later scholars in collecting, editing, and elucidating these poems in *HE* and *FGE* (as well as later epigrams in *GPh*).

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could keep the deposit as well.[3] The story neatly symbolizes shifts in the Greek world after Alexander's conquests, and sets the scene for the age that follows.[4] The cultural centre of gravity moves from the city-states of 'old' Greece (Athens) to the capitals of the new Hellenistic kingdoms (Alexandria). The cultural function of the texts of tragedy is also transformed: from civic records of historic performances and scripts for revived performances,[5] they become, on the one hand, collector's items (assuming that Ptolemy's desire for the *originals* is not grounded purely in a concern for accuracy) and, on the other hand, data in an enormous scholarly archive of information. Ptolemy's behaviour towards the Athenians displays a combination of respect (he acknowledges the importance of their Great Writers), contempt (he has no compunction about tricking them), and, as befits his title (*euergetês* means 'benefactor'), kingly generosity (nothing constrains him to let the Athenians keep his deposit *and* give them the copies he had made – which, Galen tells us, were lavishly produced). In this world of collectors and collections,[6] a genre as eminently collectable as epigram was bound to flourish.

This was not the only respect in which epigram was appealing to the cultural and literary tastes of the Hellenistic world.[7] Callimachus of Cyrene, the dominant literary figure of the third century BCE, spent much of his career at the court (and in the Library) of Ptolemy Euergetes. He used the prologue of his (now sadly fragmentary)

[3] Galen, *Commentaries on Book III of Hippocrates' Epidemics*, 17a.606–8 Kühn; see also Erskine 1989: 39. Galen does not specify *which* Ptolemy Euergetes, but Ptolemy III Euergetes I seems a more likely candidate than Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II a century later.

[4] Suspiciously neatly, in fact: Battezzato 2003 argues that the story is essentially a cultural-historical myth. For a brief introduction to the history and culture of the Hellenistic age, see Gutzwiller 2007a: 1–25; for a larger survey, see Shipley 2000 and essays in Erskine 2003. Readers with some knowledge of Greek wishing to sample the literature of the period should turn to Hopkinson 1988, a selection of some of the most important and enjoyable texts with useful introduction and commentary.

[5] On third-century revivals of 'old' tragedy see e.g. Habicht 1997: 105.

[6] Once again Nita Krevans' formulation, which we have already encountered in the Introduction, is apt: 'the kings collected objects (art, books) and creatures (zoological specimens, scholars). The scholars collected information' (Krevans 2007: 131).

[7] The term 'Hellenistic', originally applied to post-classical forms of the Greek language and ultimately derived from the Greek word *Ἑλληνιστής* used in the Acts of the Apostles (6:1, 9:29) to refer to Jews who used the Greek language, has come to refer broadly to the period from the conquests of Alexander to Rome's domination and eventual conquest of the Greek world (see *OED* s.v.; for a brief account of the history of the term's use in scholarship, see Shipley 2000: 1). The present discussion follows Gow and Page's definition (*HE* xiii): 'the period between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. and the compilation by Meleager of Gadara of the anthology which he called *Στέφανος*', i.e. about 100 BCE. The emphasis will be on the first half of this period: on possible reasons for the under-representation of second-century epigrams in Meleager's *Garland*, see Argentieri 2007: 147–9.

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aetiological poem, the *Aitia*, to set out an influential literary manifesto. In it, he replies to detractors, whom he does not name but refers to as 'Telkhines', malevolent mythological beings associated with the island of Rhodes. They have criticized him, he says, for failing to produce a big poem on a big, heroic subject, but instead spinning out verses a little at a time, like a child at play. In reply, Callimachus defends his 'few-lined' (ὀλιγόστιχος) approach to poetry, and outlines an aesthetic that judges poems by skill not by scale, valuing delicacy, lightness, and the quest for new directions. The charge of being childlike also misses its mark. The poet acknowledges that physical old age weighs heavily on him, but he would shake it off if he could; playfulness does not preclude sophistication, and literary play offers a space where the old can continue to be fictionally – and spiritually – young. Epigram clearly passes the test of being 'few-lined'; as I hope this chapter will demonstrate, it also provided Callimachus and other Hellenistic poets with a perfect frame in which to display their inventiveness, wit, and versatility.[8]

Any discussion of Hellenistic epigram is bound to be highly selective and to reflect the tastes and interests of the author, who is, in effect, creating a new *Garland*. In what follows, I aim less to present any kind of comprehensive overview (for which the reader is referred to the works cited in note 2) than to provide an introduction to some of the features that make these poems attractive and interesting, and some ways in which they may be approached.

## Preliminaries: books and poets

Unless otherwise stated, the epigrams discussed in this chapter have been selected from two sources. One is Gow and Page's *Hellenistic Epigrams* (*HE*), which collects epigrams of Hellenistic date transmitted in the *Anthology*, plus others by the same authors that have been preserved by other means: for example, because they were quoted by other ancient authors. The other is the *editio minor* (that is, smaller-scale, and thus handier, edition) of the complete surviving works

[8] For discussion of this famous prologue (*Aetia* F 1) see Hunter 2004a: 66–77. Cf. also briefer programmatic statements in epigrams 2 *HE* = 28 P = *AP* 12.43 and 56 *HE* = 27 P = *AP* 9.507, and Theoc. *Id.* 1.47–54, where the boy so engrossed in crafting a toy that he is oblivious to the world around him (including a fox that is trying to eat his lunch) seems likely to be a metaphor for the poet of bucolic verse. For an introduction to Hellenistic aesthetics, see Gutzwiller 2007a: 26–49.

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of Posidippus of Pella, including the 'new Posidippus' contained in the Milan papyrus (AB: 1–112 AB is the Milan 'new Posidippus', 113–50 AB are works known to us from other sources). These two sources represent two different ways in which epigrams have come down to us, and in which they circulated in antiquity: in anthologies organized according to the whim of the collector (thematically, for the most part, in the case of *AP*; alphabetically by author in the case of *HE*, with anonymous poems after 'Z' and Meleager set aside as a special case at the very end); or in books of poems created and published by the poet, raising the possibility that the arrangement itself is part of the act of poetic composition, directing the reader's response to the poems not just as individual units, but as a collection. As we saw in the Introduction, the principle of organization in the Milan papyrus is again thematic, but the choice of what themes to include (and, so far as we can judge given the incomplete state of the surviving book, to omit) is strikingly idiosyncratic. The discovery of the Milan papyrus has encouraged scholars in their efforts to reconstruct the original poetry books of other epigrammatists.[9] Such studies can produce fascinating results but are necessarily speculative, while the accumulation of mutually supporting hypotheses can give an appearance of solidity to reconstructions that are in fact rather fragile.[10] For these reasons, the present discussion will not address the arrangement of epigrams in books, actual or hypothetical, in any detail; readers will, however, be referred to such discussions elsewhere, especially in the case of epigrams that are claimed (sometimes very persuasively) to be statements of an author's literary 'programme'.[11]

[9] See especially Gutzwiller 1998; also 2007a, emphasizing the importance of author-edited poetry books (108), but also acknowledging the likelihood of selective reading, which adds to the paradoxical 'fluidity' of the genre (119–20).

[10] There is also a risk of reconstructing the books that we would wish the ancient authors to have composed, displaying the maximum of whatever form of literary artfulness modern critical taste seeks from them (and, insofar as the Milan volume is artful, the precise form of its artfulness is not something that we could ever have predicted from our other evidence). Of course, to say this is in part simply to recognize that every engagement with epigram is, among other things, an act of reception, and thus about us as well as about the ancient poems.

[11] The most important and influential account of the organization of Hellenistic epigrams into books is Gutzwiller 1998: scholarly, closely argued, and often persuasive, but in my view over-confident. In the case of the Milan papyrus, I am largely convinced by Nita Krevans' view, *contra* Gutzwiller 2004, 2005a and others, that the arrangement of the book is more utilitarian than aesthetic or rhetorical, revealing precisely the mindset of a *collector* more than that of an artificer (Krevans uses the metaphor of the 'reference librarian' vs. the 'symphony conductor'). Briefly, she suggests that the organization of poems within each thematic section can be explained by two principles: (1) poems on similar topics are grouped together, and (2) poems that exemplify the given theme most clearly come first, followed by more marginal cases (Krevans 2005, especially 93–6; Krevans 2007). Of course, as GN points out to me, a critic inclined to see the

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After the inception of literary epigram, epigrams in books (whether poetry books or collections) continued to coexist with inscribed epigrams throughout antiquity; dedications continued to be made, and tombs and other monuments erected, and, just as book epigram adopted motifs from earlier inscribed epigram, so inscriptions looked to literary epigrams for models.[12] It is often impossible to tell whether a poem transmitted in books was originally meant for inscription on an object or not,[13] and, since ancient readers would have been equally in the dark, it does not really matter (except in cases such as Myron's *Cow*, where a reader who is not aware that the statue has become the subject of a competitive game will not fully get the joke). Many epigrams, on the other hand, make no reference to any real or imagined inscriptional setting. Such epigrams are sometimes described as 'epideictic', a term that goes back to the ancient anthologists and ultimately to Greek rhetorical theory (where it refers to the genre of speeches composed for purposes of display, rather than for use in practical legal or political situations). Since the epigrams in question do not have anything very significant in common, the usefulness of the term is open to question.[14] An interesting example of a clearly literary epigram being turned into an inscription is provided by Callimachus 8 *HE* = 42 P = *AP* 12.118 (an apology from a lover who has beset, or in this case, kissed, his beloved's doorpost), which was painted, sometime in the first century CE, on one of the inner walls of a building (the so-called 'Auditorium of Maecenas') on the Esquiline in Rome.[15]

Since exploration of some of the flavours of Hellenistic epigrams will take us on a zigzagging journey through time and space, it may be

organization as artful could argue (for example) that Posidippus teases the reader by presenting apparently straightforward thematic categories, which he then proceeds to stretch to the limits by including odder and odder examples: see e.g. Hunter 2004b: 99 on such 'generic wit'. Which explanation we find more plausible or economical will depend on our beliefs about the culture in which the collection was created.

[12] This two-way process is well outlined in Bettenworth 2007.

[13] See Bettenworth 2007: 80–5 on 'surplus of information' as a possible indication of literariness (i.e. an object, such as the bronze cock in Callimachus 25 *HE* = 56 P = *AP* 6.149 [see below, p. 55], would not need to tell us what it was if it were before our eyes). Real dedications do sometimes provide unnecessary information, however: for instance, on the horses in the Athenian victory offering, 'Simonides' 3 *FGE*, which we encountered in the previous chapter.

[14] See Gutzwiller 1998: 316; Lauxtermann 1998; Rossi 2002.

[15] See Kaibel 1876, and, on the inscription's setting in this building, Patterson 1992 (probably 'a triclinium and/or nymphaeum', p. 206); see also Murray 1985: 43. The poem is discussed further below, pp. 74–7.

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helpful to begin by locating, as far as possible, the writers whom we will encounter. Biographical evidence is generally scarce and uncertain; I follow the example of Page (OCT, x–xi; see also Argentieri 2007, 147) in organizing the poets whose work will be discussed into rough groupings according to their likely *floruit* (period of artistic activity):

***c*.310–290**: Aeschrion, possibly from Samos or from Mytilene on Lesbos; Anyte, from Tegea in Arcadia; Nossis, from Epizephyrian Locri, a Greek colony near the toe of the boot of Italy; Phalaecus, about whom nothing more than an approximate date is known. Anyte and Nossis are among the few women writers of Hellenistic epigram whose work is known to us;

***c*.275**: Asclepiades, from the island of Samos; Callimachus, from the Greek city of Cyrene in modern Libya, but resident for much of his life in Alexandria; Hedylus, possibly an Athenian or possibly from Samos; Posidippus, from the Macedonian capital, Pella;

***c*.250**: Leonidas of Tarentum, from the Greek city of Taras (Latin Tarentum, modern Taranto) in southern Italy, so called to distinguish him from another, later, poet of epigram, Leonides or Leonidas of Alexandria;

***c*.250–200**: Dioscorides, whose place of origin is obscure. He is said at one point in the *Anthology* to be from Nicopolis, but it is unclear how reliable this evidence is, and in any case Nicopolis ('Victoryville') was a common place name. He is likely to have spent time in Alexandria;

**220–180**: Alcaeus, from Messene in the Peloponnese, not to be confused with the early lyric poet, Alcaeus of Mitylene;

**second century**: Philetas of Samos, probably in fact Philitas, Greek Φιλίτας, but the spelling with an 'e' has become conventional; 'of Samos' to distinguish him from a more famous poet, Philetas of Cos, but the reality of this distinction is not beyond doubt (*HE* 476);

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**second/first century**: Meleager, from the Greco-Syrian city of Gadara;[16] his biographical epitaphs for himself tell us that he was educated in Tyre in Phoenicia and later settled on the island of Cos;

**of uncertain, probably third- or second-century, date**: Glaucus, whose name is a common one, and nothing is known of this author of three poems identified by Gow and Page as Hellenistic; Pancrates, also author of three poems in *HE*, and possibly but not certainly the same person as an Arcadian of that name said to have written a poem about fishing.

Finally, one poet not included by Gow and Page in *Hellenistic Epigrams* (or by Meleager in his *Garland*) makes an appearance here: Meleager's near contemporary and fellow countryman, Philodemus of Gadara. This philosopher, scholar, poet, and associate of aristocratic Romans, whose writings on a variety of subjects are gradually emerging from the charred papyrus rolls of the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum, was also the author of a number of vivid and clever epigrams transmitted in the *Anthology* that have much in common with those collected in Meleager's *Garland*. Philodemus, who seems to have spent a significant portion of his life in Italy (and around the Bay of Naples in particular), is an important figure in the encounter between Greek and Roman culture in the first century BCE, and may serve to represent the transition between the present chapter and Chapter 4, on Greek epigram in the Roman world.[17]

## Dedicatory and ecphrastic epigrams

As we saw in Chapter 1, the original function of a dedicatory epigram is to articulate in language a ritual act, the pious offering of a gift to a deity; it may also invite the reader to re-enact this giving. The set of relationships involved (between giver, object given, recipient, and reader) is inventively explored in Hellenistic epigram. A humorous

[16] Modern Umm Qays in Jordan, near the Syrian and Israeli borders; a town familiar to readers of the New Testament from the episode in the life of Christ narrated in Matthew 8:28–32, though in fact a variant reading should probably be adopted, which would turn the 'Gadarene swine' into 'Gerasene swine' (see Sider 1997: 3 n. 2).

[17] For a fuller encounter with Philodemus' epigrams, see David Sider's useful commentary, Sider 1997; see also Nisbet 2000 for some cautionary remarks on Sider's attempts to reconstruct Philodemus' life and views.

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(but also perfectly 'functional') epigram of Callimachus serves to set the scene (25 *HE* = 56 P = *AP* 6.149):

*Φησὶν ὅ με στήσας Εὐαίνετος – οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγε*
*γιγνώσκω – νίκης ἀντί με τῆς ἰδίης*
*ἀγκεῖσθαι χάλκειον ἀλέκτορα Τυνδαρίδῃσι.*
*πιστεύω Φαίδρου παιδὶ Φιλοξενίδεω.*

(The man who set me up, Euainetos, says – since obviously I
don't know – that it's for my very own victory
that I am dedicated, a bronze cock, to the sons of Tyndareus.
I take his word for it; he's the son of Phaidros, son of Philoxenos.

With great lightness of touch, the epigram plays on its ability to make the mute bronze figure speak. The words give it a 'voice', but of course the actual 'knowledge' comes not from it but from Euainetos, who made the dedication (and had the epigram attached to it). The figure's 'witlessness' is underlined by its identification with the live cock that won the cockfight for Euainetos: how can it not even know about its *own* victory? The final line turns in a new direction by assigning some cognitive skills to the figure after all, and not just a voice: it can decide who is to be trusted and who is not. This in turn points back, though, to the function of figure and epigram together as a monument: the reason Euainetos is to be trusted is because of his lineage – which it is the epigram's function to record.[18]

Another Callimachean epigram has the inanimate gift speak, this time not addressing the reader but in dialogue with the recipient (22 *HE* = 34 P = *AP* 6.351):

*Τίν με, λεοντάγχ' ὦνα συοκτόνε, φήγινον ὄζον*
*θῆκε – Τίς; – Ἄρχῖνος. – Ποῖος; – Ὁ Κρής. – Δέχομαι.*

To you, Lord Lion-Strangler, Boar-Slayer, me, an oak club,
dedicated – Who? – Arkhinos. – Which? – The Cretan. – I accept.

Here the essential information (and some further information – the object's identity as a club – that would be unnecessary if this were a

[18] See Bettenworth 2007: 84–5 and Tueller 2008: 191–2. See Gutzwiller 1998: 190–3 for a reading of this poem as part of what she thinks was a significantly arranged sequence in Callimachus' epigram book; she suggests that a further level of irony is added by the reader's awareness that the real 'speaker' is neither the figure nor Euainetos, but Callimachus. For a slightly different reading of this epigram as 'question[ing] the conventions of the genre', see Köhnken 2007: 308; see also Fantuzzi 2004b: 316–7 and Meyer 2007: 200–1.

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real dedication) is provided in a very short space while simultaneously generating a miniature comic drama. The humble object addresses Heracles in a tone that is reverential and incongruously grand, with its compound epithets and resonant form of address *ôna* ('Lord'). The god, on the other hand, has heard this before, and is unimpressed: the club's rhetoric is merely delaying the essential piece of information, the name of the dedicatee. This information turns out not to be sufficient: Arkhinos is well-known, but not the only Arkhinos around, so the god still does not know whether the offering is acceptable. The answer is the desired one, and the god takes the club.[19]

An athletic dedication by Phalaecus presents a more complex dialogue (2 *HE* = *AP* 13.5):

α – Νικῶ δίαυλον. β – Ἀλλ' ἐγὼ παλαίων.
γ – Ἐγὼ δὲ πεντάεθλον. δ – Ἀλλ' ἐγὼ πύξ.
ϵ – Καὶ τίς τύ; α – Τιμόδημος. β – Ἀλλ' ἐγὼ Κρής.
γ – Ἐγὼ δὲ Κρηθεύς. δ – Ἀλλ' ἐγὼ Διοκλῆς.
ϵ – Καὶ τίς πατήρ τοι; α – Κλεῖνος. βγδ – Ὥσπερ ἄμμιν.
ϵ – Ἔμπη δὲ νικῇς; α – Ἰσθμόϊ. ϵ – Τὺ δ' ἔμπη;
β ? – Νέμειον ἄν λειμῶνα καὶ παρ' Ἥρα.

A – I've won the footrace. B – I've won in wrestling.
C – I've won the pentathlon. D – I've won at boxing.
E – And who are you? A – Timodemos. B – But I'm Kres.
C – And I'm Kretheus. D – But I'm Diokles.
E – And who's your father? A – Kleinos. B, C, D – He's ours too.
E – And where did you win? A – At the Isthmus. E – And where did you?
B – In the meadow of Nemea, and at Hera's [festival].

The epigram, which is in an unusual metre (catalectic iambic trimeters), records victories by four brothers (A: Timodemos, B: Kres, C: Kretheus, and D: Diokles), information about which is elicited from them by the questions of (presumably) a passer-by, the anonymous E.

[19] Other translators, following LSJ *ποῖος* III (where 'Call. *Epigr.* 36' must be a misprint and intend to refer to this epigram, 34 P), have translated *ποῖος*; in line 2 as the equivalent of *ποδαπός;* 'where's he from?' Gutzwiller 1998: 194 suggests that the answer 'from Crete' may be satisfactory because Cretans are known for manliness. I think the poem has more point if the word has its more common sense of 'which?': the god takes an interest in strong men, has heard of more than one Arkhinos, and would not take an offering from just any of them. The ethnic is sufficient to identify *this* Arkhinos, and an offering from (presumably, the famous) 'Arkhinos of Crete' is acceptable. This is not to suggest that Callimachus necessarily has a *real* Arkhinos in mind: the whole scenario is probably entirely fictional. For the translation 'which?' see also Ferguson 1970: 69.

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It is hard enough to follow with the benefit of clear modern print, and with the useful addition of letters to identify each speaker (which I have borrowed from *HE*). The ancient reader could not expect these, and would also have to manage without conventions such as spaces between words, punctuation, and capital letters for names, thus being faced with something more like:

*ΝΙΚΩΔΙΑΥΛΟΝΑΛΛΕΓΩΠΑΛΑΙΩΝ*
*ΕΓΩΔΕΠΕΝΤΑΕΘΛΟΝΑΛΛΕΓΩΠΥΞ*
*ΚΑΙΤΙΣΤΥΤΙΜΟΔΗΜΟΣΑΛΛΕΓΩΚΡΗΣ…*

that is,

IVEWONTHEFOOTRACEIVEWONINWRESTLING
IVEWONTHEPENTATHLONIVEWONATBOXING
ANDWHOAREYOUTIMODEMOSBUTIMKRES…, etc.[20]

Of course there are some clues, like the repetition of phrases such as 'but I'm', indicating a change of speaker; but it must still have been formidably hard to work out what's meant to be going on.[21] The task is not made easier by the facts that the name of one of the boys is also an ethnic adjective (Kres means 'Cretan', as in the Arkhinos epigram above) and that their father's name, Kleinos, is also an adjective meaning 'famous' or 'glorious' (which may indeed be a pun; the appropriateness of his name is confirmed by the fact that he has four sons all capable of winning victories within a short enough space of time to have a common victory monument). The difficulty of reading the poem probably contributed to damage suffered by the text in the process of transmission: in line 6 I have printed Herman's very doubtful conjecture *Ἰσθμόϊ* in place of the meaningless transmitted letters *ισθμονη*, and it seems likely that at least one couplet is missing at the end (we need to be told where the other two boys were victorious).

So where Callimachus 22 effortlessly invites us into a miniature comic drama, Phalaecus 2 presents us with an uphill struggle. There are two ways of looking at this. One is that Phalaecus is not so good an epigrammatist as Callimachus. This is true. Modern scholars are cautious of making such value judgements but, while epigram is a literary genre, it is also a game (we might almost say a sport), and it is a game that Callimachus plays brilliantly (as well as by particularly

[20] Cf. Krevans 2007: 137 on the layout of the Milan papyrus.
[21] Cf. Tueller 2008: 195 on the complex, and therefore confusing, character of this poem.

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strict rules).[22] Even once we have seen how it works, this poem lacks the economy of expression and the dramatic immediacy of appeal of Callimachus'. From another point of view, though, the difficulty of reading is precisely the point of the poem: it is the challenge that the poet makes to the reader and, if we examine that challenge further, it turns out to be rather clever. The problem of the poem consists in working out how many people are talking. Once we have worked out that 'Kres' here doesn't mean 'Cretan' but is a proper name (since otherwise there would be no explanation for the equivalence of pattern between lines 3 and 4), we have four named individuals, who, so far, could be introducing themselves to each other. In line 4, though, there is nothing to restrict 'He's ours too' to any subgroup of those named so far, so it becomes clear that they must *all* be sons of Kleinos, and therefore are all obviously known to each other. Thus it is revealed that there is another person 'in' the epigram, namely the person asking the questions – in other words, the reader, who becomes identified with the anonymous passer-by. The poem invites us (and indeed compels us, if we choose to read it in the first place) to become involved in it by solving its puzzle, and thus to locate ourselves within it. It resembles the riddle of the Sphinx, whose solver is also its solution. The role of the reader is to find the reader, and the poem presents a self-contained literary game, whether to be played at dinner parties or in the library we cannot say (see below, pp. 68–71, on sympotic epigram).

The subjects of some dedicatory epigrams are frankly bizarre, such as Anonymus 43 *HE* = *AP* 6.45, in which a hedgehog caught stealing grapes by impaling them on its prickles is dedicated live to Dionysus. One important category related to those by victorious athletes consists of dedications by workers, of various kinds, of the tools of their trade. Thus, in Philetas of Samos 1 *HE* = *AP* 6.210, an elderly *hetaira* ('courtesan') dedicates clothes and other equipment 'which a gentleman may not speak of' to Aphrodite on her retirement; in Leonidas of Tarentum 7 *HE* = *AP* 6.204, a carpenter similarly offers his tools to Athena; in Pancrates 1 *HE* = *AP* 6.117, a smith offers tools to Hephaestus, and so on. Such poems provide an opportunity for portraits or stories in miniature. Consider, for example, two

[22] On Callimachus' fastidiousness in following metrical 'laws', see Fantuzzi 2004a: 35–37 and Magnelli 2007: 180–1.

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consecutive poems from the anthology, also by Leonidas (41 *HE* = *AP* 6.288, 42 *HE* = 6.289):

*Αἱ Λυκομήδευς παῖδες Ἀθηνὼ καὶ Μελίτεια*
*καὶ Φιντὼ Γλῆνίς θ', αἱ φιλεργόταται,*
*ἔργων ἐκ δεκάτας ποτιθύμια τόν τε πρόσεργον*
*ἄτρακτον καὶ τὰν ἄτρια κριναμέναν*
*κερκίδα, τὰν ἱστῶν μολπάτιδα, καὶ τὰ τροχαῖα*
*πανία κἀργαστὰς τούσδε ποτιρρόγεας*
*καὶ σπάθας εὐβριθεῖς, πολυάργυρε· τὼς δὲ πενιχραί*
*ἐξ ὀλίγων ὀλίγαν μοῖραν ἀπαρχόμεθα.*
*τῶν χέρας αἰὲν, Ἀθάνα, ἐπιπλήσαιο μὲν ἴσως*
*θείης δ' εὐσιπύους ἐξ ὀλιγησιπύων.*[23]

The daughters of Lykomedes, Atheno and Meliteia,
and Phinto and Glenis, women devoted to their work,
as a tithe of their work dedicate gifts to your liking: their workmate
the spindle, and she who parts the warp,
the shuttle, singing dancer through the web, and the running
bobbins, and these hard-working weights,
and the hefty beaters, goddess rich in silver! Thus, poor as we are,
of the little we have we offer a little share.
For this may you, equally, Athena, keep our hands ever full,
and make our breadbasket plentiful, instead of scanty.

*Αὐτονόμα, Μελίτεια, Βοΐσκιον, αἱ Φιλολᾴδεω*
*καὶ Νικοῦς Κρῆσσαι τρεῖς, ξένε, θυγατέρες,*
*ἁ μὲν τὸν μιτοεργὸν ἀειδίνητον ἄτρακτον,*
*ἁ δὲ τὸν ὀρφνίταν εἰροκόμον τάλαρον,*
*ἁ δ' ἅμα τὰν λεπτῶν εὐάτριον ἐργάτιν ἱστῶν*
*κερκίδα, τὰν λεχέων Πανελόπας φύλακα,*
*δῶρον Ἀθαναίᾳ Πανίτιδι τῷδ' ἐνὶ ναῷ*
*θῆκαν Ἀθαναίας παυσάμεναι καμάτων.*

Autonoma, Meliteia, Boïskion, Philolaides'
and Niko's three Cretan daughters, stranger –
the first, her yarn-making, ever-whirling spindle;
the second, her night-watching wool-guarding workbasket;
the third too, the strong-weaving worker of light webs,
her spindle, the protector of Penelope's bed –

[23] The text of this poem is seriously problematic in two places: line 6 (MSS *κερταστὰς τούσδε ποτιρ(ρ)όγεας*) and line 7 (MSS *πολυάργυρα*). For the sake of producing a continuous translation, I print the conjectures that Gow and Page seem to regard as closest to defensible, but neither is altogether satisfactory. *ἴσως* in line 9 has also been questioned, and I am not confident about the translation of this final couplet.

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as a gift to Athena of the Bobbin, in this temple,
dedicated, when they ceased from Athena's toils.

Both poems use rare poetic words combined with variations on the technical terminology of spinning and weaving to create an atmosphere that is poised between the homely and the remote.[24] The semi-personification of the tools (the shuttle as dancer in 41, the basket [if my translation of the slightly obscure Greek phrase, guided by Gow and Page's note in *HE*, is correct] as guardian of the wool while its owners sleep) underlines the women's seclusion, again with a slightly ambivalent effect: an image of security and familiarity, with the friendly tools as constant companions, or of loneliness and monotony, with the tools as their *only* companions? In each case, we are invited to supply or conjecture additional bits of information, to play the *Ergänzungsspiel* ('game of completion'). Neither poem, for instance, gives us any direct indication of the age or status of the women,[25] apart from the fact that Autonoma, Meliteia, and Boïskion are able to stop working whereas Atheno, Meliteia, Phinto, and Glenis are not. Also, what is being dedicated? It makes sense for Autonoma and her sisters to dedicate their work tools, but not for Atheno and hers, who will still need them to effect their hoped-for escape from poverty.[26] Might the dedication actually consist of images, or a painting, of the tools? In the latter case, the epigram will become a kind of ecphrasis (word picture) of the painting. Such a dedication would cost money and/or time that the sisters can ill afford, but perhaps such a symbolic dedication to the goddess might make the real tools more efficacious, thus helping them in the future to win the bread they now lack.

Obviously these are questions that do not in reality have answers; they are part of the game that the epigram sets in play. Again, we might ask, how is it that Autonoma and the others *are* able to give up work? Is it because they are going to be married, to husbands

[24] In 41, *potithumia* ('to [your] liking'), *molpâtida* ('performer of a μολπή [a song and dance performance])', *eubritheis* ('hefty'), and *eusipuous* ('having a full breadbasket') are *hapax legomena*, that is, words not attested elsewhere in Greek. Of this last adjective's opposite, *oligêsipuôn* ('having a scanty breadbasket'), only one other instance is known, in another of Leonidas' dedicatory epigrams, 36 *HE* = *AP* 6.300. In 42, *eirokomon* is a borrowed Homeric *hapax* (here in the narrower sense of the term, meaning a word that occurs only once in the Homeric poems: Hom. *Il.* 3.387), while *orphnitan* (which I have translated as 'night-watching' but whose sense is uncertain) is a *hapax* in the wider sense, as is Athena's epithet *Panitidi* ('of the Bobbin').

[25] Unless *paides* ('daughters'/'children') in line 1 of 41 should be taken as bearing sense II in LSJ ('in relation to Age') as well as sense I ('in relation to Descent').

[26] See Gow and Page's introductory note to Agis 1 *HE*, pointing to similar examples, including poems that imitate this one.

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rich enough that their wives will not need to weave? That might be suggested by the Homeric allusion in 42.6 (to Penelope's ruse of employing an unfinished piece of weaving, which she worked on by day and secretly unravelled by night, as an excuse to put off marrying one of her suitors: *Od.* 19.137–55); if weaving is characterized as a delayer of marriage, perhaps the women are setting aside their weaving equipment because marriage is imminent. It is remarkable, though, if they are all getting married at once. Another possible reason would be old age, as in the case of the elderly musicians who dedicate their instruments on retirement in Leonidas 43 *HE* = *AP* 5.206; but ancient Greeks tended to think of old age (short of death, that is) as troublesome, not as the 'ceasing from toils' referred to in the final line. In fact, as Kathryn Gutzwiller points out, such expressions have more of the resonance of an epitaph;[27] and as she says, retirement from a profession is indeed the end of one life and the start of a new one – and so too is marriage.

Finally it is worth pointing out how the different voices with which the two epigrams address the reader once again set a different tone. Atheno and the others address the goddess directly, which is appropriate in a dedication that is also a prayer for help; the reader's position is thus slightly voyeuristic, looking in on an intense moment in the lives of strangers. The second poem, by contrast, addresses the reader directly as 'stranger': this is a scene that we are *meant* to see.[28] The women can properly take pride in this (imagined) public monument to their improved circumstances; at the same time, the impersonal, third-person voice helps them avoid giving any impression that they are over-proud or complacent in their prosperity.

Focussing on such imaginary scenes should not beguile us into thinking that epigram and history part company in the Hellenistic period. Nossis commemorates a victory of her Locrian countrymen over the Bruttians in a striking epigram (2 *HE* = *AP* 6.132):

> Ἔντεα Βρέττιοι ἄνδρες ἀπ' αἰνομόρων βάλον ὤμων
> θεινόμενοι Λοκρῶν χερσὶν ὕπ' ὠκυμάχων,
> ὧν ἀρετὰν ὑμνεῦντα θεῶν ὑπ' ἀνάκτορα κεῖνται
> οὐδὲ ποθεῦντι κακῶν πάχεας οὓς ἔλιπον.

[27] Gutzwiller 1998: 93.

[28] Tueller 2008: 101 suggests that this may be the earliest surviving dedicatory epigram to adopt the funerary convention of the 'address to the passer-by' (one that Leonidas himself does not use in his funerary epigrams).

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> These arms men of Bruttium cast off from shoulders doomed to die
> as they were rained with blows at the hands of the Locrians, swift in battle;
> singing in praise of their valour they are dedicated in the gods' temples,
> and feel no yearning for the cowards' forearms they left.

There is no reason to doubt (but equally no means of establishing) the reality of this battle, of which nothing else is known, between the Locrians and their non-Greek south Italian neighbours. In its pride and ferocious scorn for the defeated enemy, the poem recalls the Athenian dedication 'Simonides' 3 *FGE*, quoted by Herodotus, that we encountered in Chapter 1. There are several respects, however, in which the technique, if not the effect, is more subtle and less direct. In its opening words, for instance, by placing the 'men of Bruttium' in the nominative case, it adopts the perspective of the Bruttians, and indeed suggests for a moment the possibility that this may be *their* dedication: the sentence could just as well continue 'These arms men of Bruttium dedicated, having conquered…'.[29] The word 'men' (*andres*), has the additional connotation of 'brave men', men who live up to a masculine warrior ideal. It soon becomes apparent that this mark of honour is being given to the Bruttians only the more effectively, and devastatingly, to take it away again. By throwing away their shields they throw away their manhood, a process that we see completed when their very shields label them *kakoi*, 'cowards', in the final line.[30]

Similarly the poem takes up the Bruttians' subject position in the first line only to move in line 3, most unexpectedly, to the subject position of their captured shields: as Gow and Page note, this is the only known instance of the verb *humneô* ('hymn', 'sing in praise

[29] Unlikely, of course, in practice, since the Bruttians were not Greek-speakers. In its later line order, 'Simonides' 3 also begins with the defeated, *ἔθνεα Βοιωτῶν καὶ Χαλκιδέων* ('peoples of Boeotia and Chalcis'); but, while the neuter plural *ethnea* ('peoples') could be either nominative (indicating subject) or accusative (indicating object), the use of this word as opposed to the honorific *andres* would make it instantly clear to an Athenian reader that these must be the losers and that the word should therefore be understood as accusative.

[30] The idea that a *rhipsaspis*, a soldier who casts off his shield, loses his masculinity by doing so is famously encapsulated in the apocryphal story of the Spartan mother saying to her son, on handing him his shield as he leaves for battle, *ἢ ταύταν ἢ ἐπὶ ταύτας*, literally 'this or on this', i.e. either bring the shield back safely or return carried on it dead (followed by other similar anecdotes at 241f in the *Sayings of Spartan Women* attributed to Plutarch; on other tellings of this story in antiquity and later, see Hammond 1980). It also has rich literary resonances, for example with Archil. 5, a daring expression of indifference by the soldier-poet who has left his shield behind in a retreat; on the relationship between Nossis' poem and Archilochus' see Tueller 2008: 100–1.

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of') being used with something inanimate as its subject. The shields now have more claim to subjectivity, and a voice, than their former human owners, and they use their new-found powers to sing the praises of the victors.[31] As the opposition of *andres* ('men') in line 1 to *kakôn* ('cowards') in line 4 marks the beginning and end of the process whereby the life force moved from the Bruttians to their shields, so the contrast between *ap'…balon ômôn* ('they threw from their *shoulders*') and *pakheas…elipon* ('they left the *forearms*') provides a remarkable close-up on the moment it happened: at the beginning of the movement, volition was with the Bruttians, who cast their shields down off their shoulders in order to run away faster; but at the moment they made this cowardly decision, volition passed to their disgusted shields, which (or rather who) completed the movement, from lower arm to ground, and left their former owners of their own accord.[32]

Meanwhile, the victorious Locrians, who might be thought in danger of disappearing from view in the midst of this strange drama, are picked out by the epithet *ôkhumakhos* ('swift in fighting'), which has an authentic Homeric ring but in fact turns out to be a *hapax* (a word used nowhere else in surviving Greek). There is a striking correspondence of sound, and equivalence of metrical quantity, between *ap' aino-morôn* ('from doomed-to-die') in line 1 and *hup' ôku-makhôn* ('by swift-fighting'[33]) in line 2, and it is tempting to

[31] I am not entirely convinced by Gutzwiller's suggestion that Nossis makes the shields voice the victors' praise in order to express masculine values while preserving her own distinctly feminine persona (Gutzwiller 1998: 80.). As a parallel for ὑμνεῦντα, Gow and Page cite Anyte 4 *HE*, where a stone tomb 'sings' (ἀείδει) the verse that records the dead man's brave death in battle. The personification of the shields is perhaps further underlined by the unusual use of the plural verb κεῖνται with a neuter plural subject. Exceptions to the rule that n. pl. subject has singular verb are usually (a) where the n. pl. noun refers to people or other living creatures or (b) where it refers not to a cohesive group of things but to things distributed over space or time: KG 2.1 pp. 65–6; the latter explanation might also apply if, in view of 'the gods' temples', we are meant to think of the shields as dedicated in several different places, a possibility raised by Gow and Page.

[32] As GN points out to me, this physical movement is accompanied by a poetic movement into semantic focus: what the Bruttians threw from their shoulders could have been various kinds of equipment (e.g. swords slung on sword belts); what leaves their forearms is clearly their shields. While the forearm goes through the handle of the shield, the weight is borne by the shoulders, and it is 'on their shoulders' that warriors are generally said to carry shields (Hom. *Il.* 11.527, etc.), so, in a culture in which arms and armour were a matter of everyday experience, the reference to their forearms perhaps contributes to capturing the Bruttians' humiliating situation. A rare case in which someone is said to hold a shield on the forearm is Posidippus 36 AB 6 (ἐν πήχει κοῖλον ἔχουσα σάκος), where the holder is Queen Arsinoe II Philadelphus. To have the shield slung on her shoulders would perhaps masculinize the queen too much.

[33] Though in fact if Gow and Page are right 'by' belongs grammatically with the preceding word *khersin* 'hands'.

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suggest that the two together sound an underlying elegiac note by suggesting *ôkumorôn*, the corresponding grammatical form of a much more familiar word, the Homeric adjective *ôkumoros* ('swift to die'):[34] winners or losers, death comes too soon to us all.

A famous epigram by Posidippus on an equally famous allegorical statue by the sculptor Lysippus provides a convenient transition to the genre of ecphrastic epigram[35] (Posidippus 19 *HE* = 142 AB = *AP* 16.275):

*Τίς πόθεν ὁ πλαστής; – Σικυώνιος. – Οὔνομα δὴ τίς;*
*– Λύσιππος. – Σὺ δὲ τίς; – Καιρὸς ὁ πανδαμάτωρ.*
*– Τίπτε δ' ἐπ' ἄκρα βέβηκας; – Ἀεὶ τροχάω. – Τί δὲ ταρσούς*
*ποσσὶν ἔχεις διφυεῖς; – Ἵπταμ' ὑπηνέμιος.*
*– Χειρὶ δὲ δεξιτέρῃ τί φέρεις ξυρόν; – Ἀνδράσι δεῖγμα*
*ὡς ἀκμῆς πάσης ὀξύτερος τελέθω.*
*– Ἡ δὲ κόμη τί κατ' ὄψιν; – Ὑπαντιάσαντι λαβέσθαι*
*νὴ Δία. – Τἀξόπιθεν δ' εἰς τί φαλακρὰ πέλει;*
*– Τὸν γὰρ ἅπαξ πτηνοῖσι παραθρέξαντά με ποσσίν*
*οὔτις ἔθ' ἱμείρων δράξεται ἐξόπιθεν.*
*– Τοὔνεχ' ὁ τεχνίτης σε διέπλασεν; – Εἵνεκεν ὑμέων,*
*ξεῖνε, καὶ ἐν προθύροις θῆκε διδασκαλίην.*

– Who's your sculptor, and where's he from? – From Sikyon. – And his name?
– Lysippus. – And who are you? – All-conquering Opportunity [*Kairos*].
– Why are you standing up on tiptoe? – I'm always on the run. –Why do you have
a pair of wings on your feet? – I'm flying, borne by the wind.
– Why are you holding a razor in your right hand? – As a sign to men
that I am more acute than any blade.
– Why do you have hair over your face – For anyone who meets me to grab me by,
by Zeus. – And why is the back of your head bald?
– Because once I have run past on my winged feet
no-one, however much he wants to, can then seize me from behind.
– What did the artist make you for? – For people like you,
stranger, and he put me up as a lesson, here in the portico.

[34] Used by Thetis of Achilles in a series of memorable scenes in the *Iliad*: 1.417, 1.505, 18.95, 18.457.

[35] On the meaning of the term 'ecphrasis' in antiquity and in modern scholarship (briefly: in antiquity, any vivid description; in modern scholarship: an extended description of a work of art), see Gutzwiller 2002: 85 n. 1; on the category 'ecphrastic epigram', see further Männlein-Robert 2007: 251–2.

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The epigram has some, but not all, of the outward form of a dedication. It names the 'dedicator'/artist who erected the statue, and *thêke* ('put [me] up') in the last line echoes the standard dedicatory *anethêke* ('put up = dedicated'). There is no divine dedicatee, though; in a sense, the onlooker for whom the statue is a lesson takes the place of the dedicatee. What the epigram essentially does, however, is evoke and interpret the allegorical statue through the device of the dialogue between monument and passer-by. Its epigrammatic 'point' consists in the wide-eyed naïveté of the questioner, who needs every detail explained to him; this in turn points to the paradox of the statue, aiming to 'capture' fleeting, abstract Opportunity in static, figurative bronze. The figure's last utterance gives vent to the statue's exasperation that, because of the interrogator's inability to 'read' its visual signs, it is unable to do its didactic job without the assistance of the epigram.[36] At the same time, by its use of the plural pronoun *humeôn* ('you [plural]', translated 'people like you' above) in juxtaposition with the singular form of address *xeine* ('stranger'), it draws attention to the role of the reader.[37] In a literal sense, obviously, it can be interpreted as 'you and other passers-by' ('people like you'), but it also signals that the audience for its lesson extends beyond the individual imagined as being in the presence of the statue: that is, it includes us, the readers of the epigram. The epigram has thus effectively replaced the statue: insofar as we are 'like' the internal reader, the imaginary passer-by, it enables us to understand and learn from the statue just as well as if we had seen it, and without the epigram's help we would not be able to make sense of the statue even if it were before our eyes.[38]

The Kairos epigram is typical of Hellenistic 'ecphrastic' epigram in that, by contrast with rhetorical ecphrasis, its concern is primarily with the significance, interpretation, and 'point' of the artwork rather

[36] On the wider question of the relationship between the kind of supplementation required of the viewers of Hellenistic art and the readers of Hellenistic epigram, see Zanker 2004: 72–102 (99–100 specifically on Kairos). It has been suggested persuasively that the Kairos statue's declaration that it is located *en prothurois* ('in the portico') contains a pun, because it suggests the use of *prothura* ('the parts before the door') to refer to the early stages of a programme of study: 'a lesson in the portico' is thus also 'a lesson for beginners' (Prauscello 2006).

[37] Cf. Gutzwiller 2002: 96: 'the plural *ὑμέων*…pulls the reader into the group represented by this viewing *ξεῖνος*'.

[38] For other interpretations of this poem, see e.g. Gutzwiller 2002: 95–6 and Männlein-Robert 2007, 260–2. Tueller 2008: 196–7 notes that all but the last of the statue's replies could actually be 'spoken' by Kairos/Opportunity himself. In fact this is true of the last reply as well, if we supply 'my statue' instead of 'me' as the object of *θῆκε* ('placed'), though on this occasion the question is unambiguously *addressed to* the statue.

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than with vivid and detailed evocation of its visual appearance.[39] This contrast can, however, be overstated; some of the poems in the Milan papyrus collection, in particular, do seem concerned to create intense visual effects, as in this example from the section devoted to *Lithika*, 'Poems About Stones' (Posidippus 7 AB):

ἐξ Ἀράβων τὰ ξάνθ' ὀ[ρέων κατέρ]υτα κυλίων,
εἰς ἅλα χειμάρρους ὦκ' [ἐφόρει ποτα]μὸς
τὸν μέλιτι χροιὴν λίθ[ον εἴκελον, ὅ]ν Κρονίο[υ] χεὶρ
ἔγλυψε· χρυσῷ σφιγκτ[ὸς ὅδε γλυκερ]ῇ
Νικονόῃ κάθεμα τρη[τὸν φλέγει, ἣ]ς ἐπὶ μαστῷ
συλλάμπει λευκῷ χρωτὶ μελιχρὰ φάη.

As it swept tawny-coloured debris down from Arabian mountains
the river, swollen with winter rain, brought swiftly to the sea
the stone with a surface like honey, which the hand of Kronios
carved: bound in gold, for sweet
Nikonoe it sets fire to her inlaid necklace, as on her breast
its honeyed light shares radiance with her pale skin.

The poem has a double development. One is from the tumultuous evocation of stones borne headlong from exotic mountains, via the painstaking art of the jeweller who tames or civilizes the gem by carving it and mounting it in gold, to the tableau of the jewel resting on Nikonoe's breast. The other is through a succession of colour images, from the rubble in the Arabian river (described as *xanthos*, an adjective applied to human hair as well as, for example, to lions and horses, and often translated 'blond' or 'tawny' but hard to pin down precisely), via the honey simile, the placement in the gold mount, and the fire metaphor, once again to the climactic juxtaposition with Nikonoe's skin. Here, visual evocation of the stone's colour (though not of its precise form) is clearly crucial to the poem, but it is still subordinated to a 'point', an exploration of the oppositions between nature and culture, life and art.[40] The 'wild' stone is captured, carved, and bound, but bursts out again with 'natural' energy when it reaches

[39] Cf. Männlein-Robert 2007: 252. This point is well illustrated by contrasting Posidippus' epigram on Lysippus' Kairos statue with a later rhetorical ecphrasis of the same work, by Callistratus (writing possibly in the fifth century CE), *Descriptions of Statues* 6. Three-quarters of Callistratus' account is devoted to the statue's miraculously lifelike appearance; the interpretation of the allegory is relegated to a sentence at the end and put in the mouth of another person, an expert who 'happened to be present'.

[40] See Hoffman 2004 on the vividness and 'real-world' qualities of poems in the Milan papyrus; there is a danger of overstatement. On 7 AB see Bing 2005: 125–7, and Kuttner 2005: 145 (and Kuttner's chapter more generally on the *Lithika* as a 'cabinet of curiosities').

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its intended place on Nikonoe's breast (it is not a coincidence that its colour is that of honey, a substance liminal between nature and culture). The interplay of the etymologically related and semantically overlapping words *khroia* ('surface') in line 3 and *khrôs* ('skin') in line 6 underlines the juxtaposition of honeyed stone with pale skin and the placement of one exquisite surface upon another, but also suggests an affinity, or blurring of identity, between the jewel and its wearer. On the one hand, the gem is alive; on the other hand, Nikonoe is herself a jewel.[41]

A theme common to both ecphrastic epigram and rhetorical ecphrasis is the miracle, or paradox, of Life captured in the lifeless media of Art, as in the Myron's Cow epigrams and, for instance, in another poem on a statue from the Milan papyrus, this time from the *Hippika* ('Poems About Horses') section (Posidippus 72 AB):

> *τοῦ πώλου θηεῖσθε τὸ λιπαρές, ὡς πνόον ἕλκει*
> *πάντι τύπῳ καὶ πᾶς ἐκ λαγόνων τέταται*
> *ὡς νεμεοδρομέων· Μολύκῳ δ' ἤνεγκε σέλινα*
> *νικήσας ἄκρῳ νεύματι καὶ κεφάλῃ.*
>
> Look at the colt's determination, how it draws breath
> through its whole form, and its whole body is stretched out from the flanks
> as when running the race at Nemea; for Molykos it took the celery-crown
> when it won by a nod of the tip of its nose.

The figure of a horse flying to victory is praised for capturing precisely those qualities that, on the face of it, plastic art cannot convey: its abstract quality of eagerness to win, its accentuated drawing of breath, even the place and nature of its victory. As with the Kairos poem, however, what this ultimately reveals is that we need to be told (see the opening imperative 'look') how to view the statue, it *requires* commentary; and since the commentary conjures the statue by forcing the reader to imagine it, the plastic artwork itself becomes dispensable.[42]

[41] See also Kuttner 2005: 163 on the logic of reproduction and copying at work in these poems, whereby the ultimate answer to the question 'what is the truly lasting gem?' is the poem itself; as Kuttner puts it, 'gem poetry is perhaps gem magic'.

[42] Papalexandrou 2004: 253–5 emphasizes the interdependency of poem and artwork; perhaps with a literary scholar's prejudice, I am inclined to see the poem as taking the place of the artefact. For an image of a bronze figure perhaps similar to the one described in the epigram, the 'Artemision horse', see Acosta-Hughes, Kosmetatou, and Baumbach 2004, Figure 2.

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## Sympotic, amatory, and erotic epigrams

Wine, love, sex, and the symposium or men's drinking party (with male and female entertainers) do not always go together in epigram but they often do, and for that reason these fluid categories of epigrammatic poetry will be discussed together. The association of inscribed verse with sympotic, or possibly sympotic, activities goes back to a very early date, as attested by two famous early graffiti: the 'Dipylon oinochoe' and 'Nestor's cup'. The first, one of the very earliest Greek inscriptions known to us, was written in the eighth century BCE on the shoulder of a wine jug found in a grave near the Dipylon gate in Athens (*CEG* 432 = IG I$^2$ 919, SEG 39: 41[a]):[43]

> hὸς *νῦν ὀρχεστὸν πάντον ἀταλότατα παίζει,*
> *τὸ τόδε κλΙμιν*

that is,

> *ὃς νῦν ὀρχεστῶν πάντων ἀταλώτατα παίζῃ,*
> *τῷ τόδε* [six letters of uncertain interpretation]
>
> Whoever now of all the dancers performs [lit. 'plays'] most sweetly,
> [?]For him is this…

The inscription, Homeric in style, appears to identify the vessel as a prize in a dancing contest, and the fact that the verb used underlines the playfulness of the performance makes it tempting to imagine a sympotic context.[44]

'Nestor's cup' (not the only archaeologically discovered vessel to have been given this name, but perhaps the one with the best title to it; see Hom. *Il.* 11.632–7 for the fictional cup on which they are presumably modelled, which 'another man would struggle to raise from the table when it was full, but the old man Nestor lifted effortlessly') is a drinking vessel also found in a grave, this time on the island of Pithekoussai (modern Ischia) off the cost of Italy, on which the following lines (the first either prose or metrically unusual

[43] I print Hansen's text from *CEG*. Numerous attempts have been made to read and interpret the letters in the second line, but it remains enigmatic; the reading of the first line, however, is clear.

[44] For discussion of the vessel and its possible sympotic context, see e.g. B. Powell 1991: 158–63; Fantuzzi 2004b: 285–6 with 286 n. 7; Day 2007: 35–6; Henrichs 2003: 45–6 (envisaging a religious context); and Osborne and Pappas 2007: 133–4 (with photograph).

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verse, the second and third hexameters) are inscribed (*CEG* 454 = IGASMG III 2):[45]

> *Νέστορός ϵ[ἰμ]ι ϵὔποτον ποτέριον.*
> hὸς δ' ἂν τόδϵ πίϵσι ποτϵρί[ο] αὐτίκα κϵῖνον
> hίμϵρος hαιρέσϵι καλλιστϵ[φά]νο Ἀφροδίτϵς.

that is,

> *Νέστορός ϵἰμι ϵὔποτον ποτήριον.*
> *ὅς δ' ἂν τῷδϵ πίῃσι ποτηρίῳ, αὐτίκα κϵῖνον*
> *ἵμϵρος αἱρήσϵι καλλιστϵφάνου Ἀφροδίτης.*
>
> I am Nestor's cup, good for drinking.
> Whoever drinks from this cup, he will at once
> be seized by desire for fair-crowned Aphrodite.

This inscription echoes other kinds of inscription: the very common and simple ownership inscription 'I am so-and-so's', and curse inscriptions: an oft-quoted parallel is IG XIV 865, on a pot about half a century later in date found at Cumae, not far from Ischia: 'I am Tataie's lekythos ['flask']. Whoever steals me will go blind'. It is tempting to see in this small vessel's self-description as *eupoton*, 'good for drinking' (or 'easy to drink from'), a playful reference to the Homeric passage, in which Nestor's huge cup is *hard* for anyone other than Nestor to drink from. The likelihood of such an allusion has been questioned, and the inscription has been variously interpreted;[46] at the very least, it is clear that we have here some inscribed verses linking the themes of wine and love.

These intriguing beginnings do not, however, inaugurate a tradition of inscribed verses on amatory or sympotic subjects; in fact, apart from them, Hellenistic sympotic and erotic epigram have almost no direct antecedents, which has led to much debate about how these genres originated. One possible hypothesis is that this is a case of the principle we have already encountered, that epigram arises when

[45] Note that, in *CEG*, the dates '535–20' and '525–20' are misprints for '735–20' and '725–20' respectively: see *CEG* II, p. 304.

[46] For discussion see e.g. B. Powell 1991: 163–7 (clever sympotic humour); West 1994, Faraone 1996, and Henrichs 2003: 46–7 (all seeing the inscription as a magic charm; West suggests a connection with lost epics telling of Nestor's earlier career); Fantuzzi 2004b: 286–7 ('certainly a product of the world of the symposium'); and Osborne and Pappas 2007: 134–5 (with photograph; 'plays with both the conventions of curses and knowledge of the epic tradition').

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elegy meets scissors. Love and wine were certainly prominent in the repertoire of early elegy. Ancient books required quasi-editorial effort from their readers, and it would be natural for readers to look out for self-contained excerpts quotable, say, at a symposium; it would be an easy transition from finding excerpts to modifying such excerpts in order to make them *more* self-contained, and thence to creating 'excerpts' (that is, epigrams), from scratch. The story is unlikely to have been anything like this simple, but some connection between these epigrams and elegy seems extremely likely.[47] Another influence, directly or indirectly, is likely to have been an inscriptional practice that definitely *was* associated with the classical symposium, namely the game of writing on pots or potsherds variations on the formula 'X *kalos*', ('so-and-so [is] beautiful/ attractive').[48]

However it was that epigram found its way to the symposium, and whether the parties at which it made itself at home were real or fictional ones, it undoubtedly flourished in its new environment, adopting motifs both from earlier erotic verse and from other epigrammatic forms, and establishing many of the characteristic themes of later love poetry in both Greek and Latin (and in other languages thereafter). An epigram of Hedylus (5 *HE*, not in the *Anthology* but quoted by the second- to third-century-CE writer Athenaeus, 11 472f) serves to set the scene:

> *Πίνωμεν· καὶ γάρ τι νέον, καὶ γάρ τι παρ᾽ οἴνον*
> *εὕροιμ᾽ ἂν λεπτὸν καί τι μελιχρὸν ἔπος.*
> *ἀλλὰ κάδοις Χίου με κατάβρεχε καὶ λέγε, 'παῖζε*
> *Ἡδύλε'· μισῶ ζῆν ἐς κενὸν οὐ μεθύων.*
>
> Let's drink! You know, something new, something wine-inspired
> is bound to come to me, some subtle, honey-coloured talk.
> Drench me with vats of Chian and say: 'Play,
> Hedylus!' I loathe living emptily, not being drunk.

[47] On the 'editorial' demands that ancient books made of their readers, see Krevans 2007: 135–6; on elegy and epigram, see especially Bowie 2007, with references to earlier discussions; see also Aloni 2009, especially 179–82, envisaging epigram as entering the sympotic repertoire alongside elegy at an early date (182). As this chapter and the preceding one will have made clear, I do not fully share Aloni's view of epigram as having a 'character of completeness' by contrast with the 'dialogic structure' of elegy, and thus inviting a relatively passive response, though he is of course right to stress that the two forms invite a different kind of response.

[48] On *kalos* inscriptions, see e.g. Lissarague 1999. For uncertain but intriguing evidence of a particularly elaborate *kalos* game in an Athenian public building in the early fifth century, possibly involving parody of the process of ostracism, see A. Steiner 2002.

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The poem sets a high standard of sympotic extravagance: *kadoi* ('vats') are storage vessels, not drinking vessels (sizes varied, but one ancient reference indicates a capacity of approximately nine gallons/forty litres: see *HE* p. 293); and the fact that the wine is coming 'straight from the *kados*' has the further implication that it is unmixed. Drinking unmixed wine seems to have been a practice more common at fictional symposia (cf. Callimachus 8, discussed below) than at real ones, where mixing wine with water in varying proportions was an important piece of social ceremony. The alcoholic soaking the poet calls for also seems in tension with his hope that wine will bring witty inspiration; as will be seen, the effect of wine on the wits of the scholar-poet is another recurrent epigrammatic theme. Finally, there is a characteristic ambiguity, or gap left to be filled in by the reader, in the poem's closing words: what sort of filling of the void are we to envisage? Will drinking remedy the emptiness of Hedylus' life, or merely make him oblivious to it?

A calmer but equally ambivalent sympotic scene is evoked with characteristic vividness and economy by an epigram of Callimachus (13 *HE* = 43 P =*AP* 12.134):

> Ἕλκος ἔχων ὁ ξεῖνος ἐλάνθανεν· ὡς ἀνιηρόν
> πνεῦμα διὰ στηθέων – εἶδες; – ἀνηγάγετο,
> τὸ τρίτον ἡνίκ' ἔπινε, τὰ δὲ ῥόδα φυλλοβολεῦντα
> τὠνδρὸς ἀπὸ στεφάνων πάντ' ἐγένοντο χαμαί.
> ὤπτηται μέγα δή τι. μὰ δαίμονας, οὐκ ἀπὸ ῥυσμοῦ
> εἰκάζω, φωρὸς δ' ἴχνια φὼρ ἔμαθον.
>
> The stranger has a wound we hadn't noticed: how painfully
> he drew that breath – did you notice? – up into his breast,
> as he drank the third cup, and the roses were shedding their petals
> off the man's garlands, and they all ended up on the ground!
> He's got the fever badly. In the gods' name, that's no haphazard
> guess: I know a thief's tracks, I'm a thief myself.

The speaker's address to his fellow guest, with the urgent aside 'did you notice?', achieves the mise-en-scène immediately; the poem's dramatic development hinges on the speaker's instinctive identification with the stranger as a fellow lover, and on the pathetic fallacy of the

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corresponding 'droopiness' of the garland and its wearer. The proverbial ending rounds the poem off neatly, but does so with ambiguity, again demanding more work from the reader. The primary sense is clear enough, as in the English expressions 'set a thief to catch a thief' or 'it takes one to know one', but what are the implications of likening lovers to thieves? Is it a reminder that, for all their suffering and self-pity, lovers are always to some extent predatory, 'raiders on the flock', seeking to snatch favours from the objects of their affection?[49] Or does the man's thief-like 'furtiveness' consist in his attempt to conceal his love instead of telling his fellow guests all about his latest infatuation, thus breaking the rules of commensality? If so, the poem's ending activates an ambiguity inherent in the word *xeinos* in line 1, Greek for both 'stranger' and 'guest/friend'. At the same time, it points a questioning finger at the poet's own persona as well: has he drawn attention to the other man's lovesickness simply as a distraction strategy from his own?

Another frequent theme is the irresistible power of love and the extremities to which it drives the lover. In Asclepiades 11 *HE* = *AP* 5.64, a man in love defies the elements:

> *Νεῖφε, χαλαζοβολεῖ, ποίει σκότος, αἴθε, κεραύνου,*
> *πάντα τὰ πορφύροντ' ἐν χθονὶ σεῖε νέφη·*
> *ἢν γάρ με κτείνῃς τότε παύσομαι, ἢν δὲ μ' ἀφῇς ζῆν*
> *κἂν διαθῇς τούτων χείρονα, κωμάσομαι·*
> *ἕλκει γάρ μ' ὁ κρατῶν καὶ σοῦ θεός, ᾧ ποτε πεισθείς,*
> *Ζεῦ, διὰ χαλκείων χρυσὸς ἔδυς θαλάμων.*
>
> Snow, hurl down hail, make darkness, send thunder and lightning,
> shake every cloud that hangs purple over the earth;
> if you kill me, then I will stop, but if you let me live
> you can make worse weather than this, and I'll still revel [go on a *kômos*]:
> what pulls me is the god who rules even you, at whose persuasion,
> Zeus, you once slipped as gold into a bronze bedroom.

The speaker's forthright tone when addressing the Father of Gods and Men demands explanation, which line 5 provides: he need not fear Zeus, or rather is incapable of heeding him, because the force that

[49] Cf. Socrates' words at Pl. *Phdr.* 241d: *ὡς λύκοι ἄρνας ἀγαπῶσιν, ὡς παῖδα φιλοῦσιν ἐρασταί* ('just as wolves are fond of lambs, so lovers like a boy'), a slight misquotation (or affected misquotation, since it may well be Plato's own composition) of a proverbial-sounding hexameter; and see Luck 1959 on later developments of this motif, including a possible one in Callimachus' *Iambics* and several in later epigram.

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impels him, Love, is more powerful than them both. The final line provides an added twist: Love's power over Zeus took the precise form of transforming the weather god into a different kind of 'weather', the golden rain-shower that he became in order to make love to Danaë. At the same time, the epigram's closing lines enact the power of Love: the moment he enters the poem, the storm clouds and violence of the first four lines are replaced by the tranquil, if slightly sinister, tableau of Danaë's miraculous impregnation.

This is one of many epigrams that evoke the *kômos*, the outdoor revel following the symposium that might, among other possibilities, lead the lover, intoxicated with love and wine, to the beloved's door. If the latter remains shut, as in Callimachus 63 *HE* = 36 P = *AP* 5.23 (a poem whose attribution to Callimachus has been questioned),[50] the result is a *paraklausithyron* or 'song at the closed door' (sometimes Latinized: *paraclausithyron*), a form much imitated by Roman love poets:

> *Οὕτως ὑπνώσσαις, Κωνώπιον, ὡς ἐμὲ ποιεῖς*
> *κοιμᾶσθαι ψυχροῖς τοῖσδε παρὰ προθύροις·*
> *οὕτως ὑπνώσσαις, ἀδικωτάτη, ὡς τὸν ἐραστήν*
> *κοιμίζεις, ἐλέου δ' οὐδ' ὄναρ ἠντίασας.*
> *γείτονες οἰκτείρουσι, σὺ δ' οὐδ' ὄναρ· ἡ πολιὴ δέ*
> *αὐτίκ' ἀναμνήσει ταῦτά σε πάντα κόμη.*
>
> I hope you sleep as comfortably, Konopion, as you make me
> lie, here in this cold doorway.
> I hope you sleep as comfortably, brute, as the resting place you give
> your lover – but you don't even dream of pity.
> Your neighbours are sorry for me, but you don't dream of it. Turned grey,
> though, your hair will soon remind you of all this.

The poem promises a reversal of roles: the girl will be sorry when she is old, a commonplace of later (if this poem is by Callimachus) love poetry. This poignant future reversal is in tension, however, with another, more humorous, one in the present: the girl, a *hetaira* ('prostitute'/'escort'), has a professional name that can be translated 'Mosquitina', little biting insect (GN suggests 'Gnatalie'), a creature whose usual role is to keep an otherwise sound sleeper awake by buzzing around and threatening to bite (and a name which is perhaps meant to suggest Konopion's skill in 'irritating' her customers into

[50] For one thing because Callimachus' self-presentation elsewhere in his epigrams is as a lover of boys, not girls: Gutzwiller 1998: 213–4.

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sexual arousal). Here, though, Konopion is sleeping soundly (in spite of her lover's wishes), while he is the one creating the nocturnal noise (and keeping the neighbours awake).[51]

In the poem mentioned earlier as having been incorporated in the decor of an elite Roman dining room, Callimachus varies the *paraklausithyron* theme, with clear interplay with Asclepiades 11, discussed above (Callimachus 8 *HE* = 42 P = *AP* 12.118):

*Εἰ μὲν ἑκών, Ἀρχῖν', ἐπεκώμασα, μυρία μέμφου,*
*εἰ δ' ἄκων ἦκω, τὴν προπέτειαν ἔα.*
*Ἄκρητος καὶ Ἔρως μ' ἠνάγκασαν, ὧν ὁ μὲν αὐτῶν*
*εἷλκεν, ὁ δ' οὐκ εἴα τὴν προπέτειαν ἐᾶν·*
*ἐλθὼν δ' οὐκ ἐβόησα τίς ἢ τίνος, ἀλλ' ἐφίλησα*
*τὴν φλιήν. εἰ τοῦτ' ἐστ' ἀδίκημ', ἀδικέω.*

If I chose to come on a revel [*kômos*], Arkhinos, blame me a million times,
but if I had no choice but to come, then let the impulse alone.
It was Unmixed Wine and Love who compelled me, and of the two of them
one pulled me on, while the other would not let me let the impulse alone;
and when I arrived, I didn't give my name or my surname,[52] but kissed
your doorframe; if that's a crime, I'm a criminal.

The poem is a 'cancelled' paraclausithyron: far from lamenting outside the closed door, the lover/speaker has merely kissed it, and now defends himself for his behaviour. The precise situation is slowly revealed by the play of tenses: aorists (a part of the Greek verb used to mark an action as complete) in lines 1, 3, and 5 indicate that the *kômos* behaviour, that is, the intoxicated arrival at the beloved's door, is over; the verb *hêkô* in line 2 implies 'I have come (and am now here)'; the present tense of the imperatives in lines 1 and 2 and of the

[51] On the question of the attribution to Callimachus see Tarán 1979: 91–2; on the name Konopion, ibid. 91 n. 110, quoting an article by K. J. McKay that I have not been able to consult. McKay's interpretation of the name's significance, surprisingly seldom mentioned in discussions of this poem, is clearly correct. The interpretation and text of line 3 are disputed (see *HE* p. 215 and Taran 1979: 90 with n. 104). I suspect that, in this poem of sleep and sleeplessness, there is further play with the expression *oud' onar* ('not even [in] a dream', repeated in line 4), which in Greek is usually a dead metaphor meaning 'not in the slightest'. The unexpected sense provided if we construe the verb *ἀντιά(ζ)ω* with the genitive *ἐλέου* (which would have the girl failing to *receive*, instead of failing to feel, pity) brings the metaphor back to life by forcing us to reinterpret *ὄναρ* as the verb's direct object: she has not 'met even a dream of pity', i.e. she is sleeping so soundly in spite of everything that her lover's plight does not even impinge on her dreams. See Tueller 2008: 130–1 on this poem's exploitation of funerary motifs.

[52] Literally 'my father's name', serving to identify a visitor in answer to the question 'who's there?'

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indicatives in the final line show the speaker addressing the beloved directly. The speaker has come to the house in usual *kômos*-fashion but, instead of staying obdurately behind closed doors, the beloved has come out, without even being summoned, and asked what he is doing there. Callimachus uses this 'doorless' paraclausithyron, with the conventional barrier between the desirer and the object of desire removed, as an opportunity for reflection on problems of self-control, passion, and free will.

The word *propeteia* ('impulsiveness', 'rashness', 'unmeditated action') in line 2 is ambiguous. It could mean '*your* impulse to blame me', the impulsiveness of which has already been suggested by the use of the hyperbolic word *muria* ('a million times'; strictly 'ten thousand times', but the standard word in Greek for a number too big to count) in line 1; or it could mean '*my* impulsiveness in coming here', which is the sense it takes on unambiguously when the word is repeated in line 4.[53] The text of line 4 is uncertain in the manuscript tradition but the reading, with its almost exact repetition of the second half of line 2, is confirmed by the Roman wall inscription of the poem mentioned earlier. The inscription's publisher, Georg Kaibel, pointed out that the word *propeteia* also carries suggestions of the vocabulary of Stoic logic, and proposed that we might think of the boy Arkhinos as being pupil to an austere Stoic tutor, and of the speaker of the poem as celebrating his own freedom from such constraints.[54] Gow and Page in *HE* (p. 163) gently mock the suggestion that Arkhinos 'was being twitted with a Stoic education' as far-fetched. We do not, however, need to presuppose any biographical reference (or indeed any very specific reference to Stoic doctrine) in order to recognize how the poem parodies, or plays with, philosophical discussions of motivation and free will (the technical vocabulary of philosophy was later to become a frequent target of epigrammatic wit).

A scholastic, logic-chopping tone is established by the mannered presentation of alternatives in the openings of lines 1 and 2 ('if on

[53] Bücheler, as reported in Kaibel 1876: 5, noting this ambiguity, points out (4) that there may be yet another sense latent in the word; προπέτεια is formed from the root of the verb προπίπτω, 'fall forward', and we may be invited to think of the drunken lover as having literally fallen on the ground at the beloved's doorpost. Bücheler's discussion of the poem, exploring its intertextuality with earlier and later literature (esp. Prop. 1.3.13–14), is still well worth reading. For a qualified defence, which I do not find convincing, of one of the manuscript readings of this line, see Tarán 1979: 67–8.

[54] Kaibel 1896: 266–8. For an introduction to the philosophical schools of the Hellenistic period, see Mitsis 2003; for a more detailed survey of Hellenistic philosophy, see Algra, et al. 1999, and on the Stoics in particular, see Inwood 2003.

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the one hand by-choice…if on the other hand not-by-choice', *ei men hekôn…ei de âkôn*). It is underlined by the etymological wordplay suggested by the juxtaposition *âkôn hêkô* ('not-by-choice I have come'), by the near repetition of the line-ending from line 2 to line 4 (*tên propeteian eâ…tên propeteian eân*), suggestive of the iteration of technical terms in philosophical treatises, and finally by the convolutedness (pronounced 'unattractive' by Gow and Page) of the double use of the verb *eaô* ('allow, let, let alone') in line 4: *ouk eiâ tên propeteian eân*, ('would not let me let the impulse alone'), further emphasized by the jingling assonance of *eiâ…-eian…eân*. And it is not only at the stylistic level that the poem has suggestions of the philosophical schoolroom: indeed, it is argumentative from the start.

The question at stake is: 'who has shown himself to be governed by reason: Arkhinos or the speaker?' Line 1 implies that this is a question that Arkhinos himself has prejudged: reproach is already on his lips. But, it points out, he has done so without first considering the speaker's psychological state. Did the latter act by choice? If not, it is irrational to blame him – all the more so to blame him excessively (*muria*), thereby showing lack of restraint. The change of verb in line 2, from *epekômasa* ('I came on a revel') to *hêkô* ('I have come'), draws attention to a further respect in which Arkhinos has failed the rationality test. He omitted to consider not only the speaker's motivational state but also the correct description of his action. Was it a *kômos* at all? We will soon see that it was not, since he did not even announce himself or knock on the door. It thus becomes increasingly unclear whether it is the speaker or Arkhinos who has a case to answer on the charge of impulsiveness (*propeteia*).

In line 3, the agents who compelled the speaker are introduced: Wine and Love. As we have seen in Asclepiades 11, it is a truism that no-one, not even Zeus, can resist Love; lovers' excuses of this kind are commonplace, often mentioning wine as well.[55] Here, though, the argument that the poem develops gives new point to this commonplace idea. Love alone was not in fact sufficient (the imperfect tense of the verb *heilken* ['was dragging', 'tried to drag'] in line 4 marks the action as uncompleted and thus dramatizes the speaker's resistance as well as Love's deployment of force). Wine, and not just wine but wine in its extreme, unmixed form, was required as well; and even then, the effect

[55] All-conquering Love is mythologically articulated in the 'deception of Zeus' scene in the *Iliad* (14.153–351; see esp. line 294, 'as he saw her, so Love enfolded his shrewd wits'); cf. e.g. Eur. *Hipp.* 443–58. See Gow and Page's note (*HE* 163) for similar excuses on behalf of a lover.

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on him is expressed in surprisingly negative terms, as debilitating rather than overwhelming. It 'would not let him let [the impulse] alone'. Far from being spontaneously impulsive, the speaker is revealed as having shown extraordinary resistance against overwhelming odds. Finally, as the last couplet indicates, the power Love and wine were able to exert was over his body alone, not his mind or power of speech, and did not extend even to producing impulsive physical treatment of any *sentient* creature. He came to the door, but did not say anything. He kissed – not the beloved, but the doorpost. That is all. He is able to rest his case.[56]

Another debate about the impulse to go on a *kômos*, this time in the form of an internal dialogue, appears in Meleager 19 *HE* = *AP* 12.117, a poem that brings together motifs from both Asclepiades 11 and Callimachus:

*Βέβλησθω κύβος· ἅπτε· πορεύσομαι. – Ἠνίδε τόλμαν·*
*οἰνοβαρές, τίν' ἔχεις φροντίδα; – Κωμάσομαι,*
*κωμάσομαι. – Ποῖ, θυμέ, τρέπῃ; – Τί δ' Ἔρωτι λογισμός;*
*ἅπτε τάχος. – Ποῦ δ' ἡ πρόσθε λόγων μελετή;*
*– Ἐρρίφθω σοφίας ὁ πολὺς πόνος· ἕν μόνον οἶδα*
*τοῦθ', ὅτι καὶ Ζηνὸς λῆμα καθεῖλεν Ἔρως.*

Let the die be cast! Light torches: I'm on my way. – What recklessness!
you drunkard, what's your idea? – I'm going to party [go on a *kômos*]!
I'm going to party! – Where are you heading for, my heart? – What does
Love care for reasoning?
Light torches, quickly! – Where's your past commitment to reason?
– To hell with all the hard work of wisdom! There's just one thing
I know: that Love brought low the courage even of Zeus.

In this poem the rare adjective *oinobares* ('weighed down by wine', 'drunkard') in line 2 is a clear reminiscence of the abuse addressed by Achilles to Agamemnon during their famous argument in Book 1 of the *Iliad* (1.225):

*οἰνοβαρές, κυνὸς ὄμματ' ἔχων, κραδίην δ' ἐλάφοιο*

You drunkard, with the eyes of a dog and the heart of a deer!

and thus suggests the other two accusations, of shamelessness and lack of courage, as well as that of drunkenness; it also connects the poet's

[56] See also Gutzwiller 2007b: 324 on this poem as an example of Callimachus' evocation of deflected desire.

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inner struggle, perhaps comically, with another argument in which an external force (in that case *Atê*, 'Infatuation') deprived one party of reason, thus precipitating the events of the epic and, ultimately the death of Achilles and the fall of Troy. The Homeric allusion is appropriate both to the solemnity and to the bookish preferences of the 'voice of reason'; it prepares for, and is trumped by, the other voice's appeal to the example of Zeus at the end of the poem ('I may be no better than an Agamemnon, but then again I am no worse than a Zeus').[57]

Erotic epigrams are not always as subtly concerned as Callimachus 8 with the rights and wrongs of the lover's behaviour. Some poems describe the attractions of the beloved, as in Philodemus 12 *GPh* = 12 Sider = *AP* 5.132:

> Ὢ ποδός, ὢ κνήμης, ὢ τῶν ἀπόλωλα δικαίως
> μηρῶν, ὢ γλουτῶν, ὢ κτενός, ὢ λαγόνων,
> ὢ ὤμοιν, ὢ μαστῶν, ὢ τοῦ ῥαδινοῖο τραχήλου,
> ὢ χειρῶν, ὢ τῶν μαίνομαι ὀμματίων,
> ὢ κατατεχνοτάτου κινήματος, ὢ περιάλλων
> γλωττισμῶν, ὢ τῶν θῦέ με φωναρίων·
> εἰ δ' Ὀπικὴ καὶ Φλῶρα καὶ οὐκ ᾄδουσα τὰ Σαπφοῦς,
> καὶ Περσεὺς Ἰνδῆς ἠράσατ' Ἀνδρομέδης.
>
> Her foot! Her calf! Her truly knock-me-out
> thighs! Her buttocks! Her mound! Her waist!
> Her shoulders! Her breasts! Her slender neck!
> Her hands! Her driving-me-crazy eyes!
> Her so-professional action! Her incomparable
> tonguework! Her kill-me-for-them whisperings!
> So what if she's Italian and called 'Flora' and can't sing Sappho's songs.
> Perseus fell in love with an Indian, Andromeda.[58]

The poet catalogues Flora's charms from the ground up, foot to eyes, symmetrically centred on her waist as item six out of eleven; having reached the head, he goes on to her intellectual qualities, that is, her

[57] There is probably also a reminiscence, conscious or unconscious, of the use of the word in an epigram likely to have been included in Meleager's *Garland*, 'Simonides' 3 *HE* = 66 *FGE* = *AP* 7.24, where the poet Anacreon is described (without any pejorative implication) as *ὁ φιλάκρητός τε καὶ οἰνοβαρής φιλόκωμος* ('the neat-wine-loving and wine-heavy lover of the *kômos*', line 5). This and Meleager's poem seem to be the only instances of the adjective (other than in quotations or discussions of the *Iliad* passage) in surviving Greek literature down to Oppian in the second century CE (Oppian *Halieutica* 2.412, 4.671).

[58] The exclamation marks in my translation aim to convey the effect of the repeated use of the exclamatory word *ô* in the Greek.

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love-making technique. There is a humorous tension between the rather matter-of-fact list and the poet's extravagant interjections expressing the effect the girl has on him; this is developed by the change of tack in the final couplet, from the infatuation suggested by 'kill-me-for-them' (literally 'offer me as a sacrifice for them') in line 6 to the cool acknowledgement of 'defects' in line 7 and the rationalizing appeal to a mythological precedent in the final line. This poem fits loosely in the category of Philodemus' erotic epigrams that Sider labels 'dark-but-comely',[59] which could be seen as a development of the tension between Love and Reason that we have seen explored by Callimachus: the scholar-poet is too realistic to imagine his beloved to be perfection – but is attracted to her nonetheless. Another example is Philodemus 8 *GPh* = 17 Sider = *AP* 5.115:

*μικκὴ καὶ μελανεῦσα Φιλαίνιον, ἀλλὰ σελίνων*
*οὐλοτέρη καὶ μνοῦ χρῶτα τερεινοτέρη*
*καὶ κεστοῦ φωνεῦσα μαγώτερα καὶ παρέχουσα*
*πάντα καὶ αἰτῆσαι πολλάκι φειδομένη.*
*τοιαύτην στέργοιμι Φιλαίνιον ἄχρις ἂν εὕρω*
*ἄλλην, ὦ χρυσέη Κύπρι, τελειοτέρην.*

She's tiny and dark-skinned, is Philainion; but her hair is curlier
than celery leaves, and her skin is softer than down,
and her voice is more seductive than the Girdle, and she does
everything, and often doesn't bother to ask for pay.
I'm happy with such a Philainion until I find
another, golden Cypris, closer to perfection.

Again there is humour in the way the poem veers between infatuated enthusiasm and cynicism. The Girdle of line 3 is the *Kestos*, Aphrodite's Girdle, familiar to any educated Greek from *Iliad* 14.214–17 (part of the 'deception of Zeus' episode mentioned earlier):[60]

*Ἦ, καὶ ἀπὸ στήθεσφιν ἐλύσατο κεστὸν ἱμάντα*
*ποικίλον, ἔνθα δέ οἱ θελκτήρια πάντα τέτυκτο·*
*ἔνθ' ἔνι μὲν φιλότης, ἐν δ' ἵμερος, ἐν δ' ὀαριστὺς*
*πάρφασις, ἥ τ' ἔκλεψε νόον πύκα περ φρονεόντων.*

[59] See Sider 1997: 33 and 123.
[60] On the *Kestos*, see further Sider 1997: 124–5.

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She [Aphrodite] spoke, and from her breast she loosed the girdle strap[61]
of many colours, in which all her charms were stored:
in it was affection, in it was yearning, in it was flirtatious
persuasion, which deceives the minds even of the most strong-witted.

If Philainion's voice is more seductive than the *Kestos*, it is very seductive indeed – but the next moment the speaker's mind turns, with an effect of bathos, to much less lofty aspects of the girl's appeal.

Other epigrams are positively raunchy, such as Dioscorides 5 = *AP* 5.55, described by the lemmatist (that is, the author of the headings to the poems) in *AP*, whether disapprovingly or appreciatively we shall never know, as *pornikôtaton* ('highly pornographic'). Its speaker describes having sex with a woman in the position known as *kelês* ('horseback'), in which, against the grain of the Greek male tendency to imagine women as animals needing to be tamed, the man is the horse and the woman is the rider:

*Δωρίδα τὴν ῥοδόπυγον ὑπὲρ λεχέων διατείνας*
*ἄνθεσιν ἐν χλοεροῖς ἀθάνατος γέγονα.*
*ἡ γὰρ ὑπερφυέεσσι μέσον διαβᾶσά με ποσσίν*
*ἤνυσεν ἀκλινέως τὸν Κύπριδος δόλιχον,*
*ὄμμασιν νωθρὰ βλέπουσα· τὰ δ' ἠύτε πνεύματι φύλλα*
*ἀμφισαλευομένης ἔτρεμε πορφύρεα,*
*μέχρις ἀπεσπείσθη λευκὸν μένος ἀμφοτέροισιν*
*καὶ Δωρὶς παρέτοις ἐξεχύθη μέλεσι.*

When I stretched pink-bottomed Doris out wide over my bed
among spring flowers, I became immortal.
Straddling her extraordinary legs across me
unswervingly she ran Love's endurance race to the end,
with a languid look in her eyes, which, like leaves in the wind
sparked in their brilliance as she tossed forward and back,
until the pale vigour poured itself out for both of us
and Doris sprawled off me, her limbs relaxed.[62]

[61] While the phrase *kestos himas* probably really means 'embroidered strap', the adjective *kestos* was later reinterpreted as a noun referring to the girdle itself; see LSJ s.v. 2.

[62] There are some uncertainties of interpretation: in addition to Gow and Page (whose suggestions I have mostly followed), see Schrier 1979, Baldwin 1980, Schrier 1982, and Zanker 2007: 247. The usage of the verb *διατείνω* ('stretch out/across') in line 1 is unusual; there may be a pun between a metaphorical sense, 'put her to full stretch', i.e. employed her talents to the full (developed by *ἤνυσεν ἀκλινέως* ['unswervingly ran…to the end'] in line 4), and a literal, physical sense, 'stretched her out across me' (developed by *διαβᾶσα* ['straddling'] in line 3). In line 4, the *δόλιχος*, which I have translated 'endurance race', is a long-distance foot race. *τὰ… πορφύρεα* in lines 5–6 has been much discussed: Gow and Page suggest a reference to Doris' breasts, Baldwin argues for her buttocks or thighs; I am persuaded by Schrier's defence (based

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The poem's paradox is that the 'immortality' that the poem's speaker says he acquired from his experience with Doris seems largely to take the form of detachment from it: he observes and describes, while the energy and concentration of the sex act (indicated by the abstracted gaze), and the final exhaustion, all belong to the woman.[63] It is interesting that the one moment of mutuality, underlined by *amphoteroisin* ('for both [of us]') at the end of the penultimate line, is the moment of climax. In orgasm, the poet's subjectivity and the objectifying gaze that he directs at the woman are simultaneously, but momentarily, annihilated.

This moment, the discharge by both love-makers of their 'pale vigour', is also the moment when the poem declares its own literary relationship with another poem, once lost but now famous, by the archaic poet Archilochus (seventh century BCE).[64] Archilochus, of whose work tantalizingly little has survived, was famous in antiquity for his (supposed) courtship of a girl called Neoboule and for the viciously abusive poems he wrote about her and her family after being rejected. In the fragmentary poem F 196a West (sometimes known as the 'Cologne Archilochus' from its discovery on a papyrus there), the poet narrates an episode in which he meets a young girl (possibly Neoboule's younger sister) in an isolated spot. At the start of the fragment the girl is speaking: the poet has clearly propositioned her and she is trying to persuade him to turn his attentions elsewhere. He tries again to persuade her, promising that he will stop short of penetration and contrasting the girl's honest simplicity with Neoboule's harshness and withered charms; finally, whether by persuasion or coercion, he induces the girl to join him in a sexual embrace among the summer flowers, and, in the final lines, reports how he 'released his pale vigour

on taking *πορφύρεα* to mean 'shining', 'sparkling' rather than 'deep red/purplish in colour') of early scholars' assumption that the reference is to her eyes. On the nautical metaphor contained in the *hapax* *ἀμφισαλευομένης* ('being tossed about'), see Murgatroyd 1995: 15. In an article that provides a detailed and fascinating survey of the sea as sexual metaphor in Greek and Roman poetry, he suggests a reference here to Doris' mythological namesake, Doris the Oceanid, wife of Nereus (Hes. *Theog.* 240–2), whose name can stand for the sea, e.g. *Doris amara* at Virgil *Eclogues* 10.4.

[63] On the poet's stance as spectator and the 'exchange of perspectives' in this poem, see further Zanker 2007: 247; see also Acosta-Hughes and Barbantini 2007: 450 n. 97 for the persuasive idea (with reference to the allusion to Archilochus to which we will turn shortly) that Dioscorides 'transfers the elements of the *locus amoenus* [idyllic natural location]…to the landscape of Doris' body'.

[64] See Acosta-Hughes and Barbantini 2007: 450 with n. 97.

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(*leukon menos*), touching her blond hair' (51–2).[65] The allusion sets up a striking contrast on the one hand between the vehemently emotional and sexually aggressive archaic poet and the half-detached, indulgent epigrammatist, and on the other hand between the inexperienced, passive young girl ambushed by Archilochus and Dioscorides' energetic sexual professional.[66] At the same time, it provides a gloss on Dioscorides' claim at the end of line 2 that he 'became immortal': his encounter with Doris is a literary encounter, and it is by evoking it in an epigram that the poet is able to share literary immortality with the ancient Archilochus.

Another encounter with a sexual professional is dramatized in Philodemus 4 *GPh* = 20 Sider = *AP* 5.46:

> *Χαῖρε σύ. – Και σύ γε χαῖρε. – Τί δεῖ σε καλεῖν; – Σὲ δέ; – Μήπω*
> *τοῦτο φιλοσπούδει. – Μηδὲ σύ. – Μή τιν' ἔχεις;*
> *Αἰεί τὸν φιλέοντα. – Θέλεις ἅμα σήμερον ἡμῖν*
> *δειπνεῖν; – Εἰ σὺ θέλεις. – Εὖ γε· πόσου παρέσῃ;*
> *– Μηδέν μοι προδίδου. – Τοῦτο ξένον. – Ἀλλ' ὅσον ἄν σοι*
> *κοιμηθέντι δοκῇ, τοῦτο δός. – Οὐκ ἀδικεῖς.*
> *– Ποῦ γίνῃ; πέμψω. – Καταμάνθανε. – Πηνίκα δ' ἥξεις;*
> *– Ἥν σὺ θέλεις ὥρην. – Εὐθὺ θέλω. – Πρόαγε.*
>
> Hi there. – Hello to you too. – What's your name? – What's yours? You needn't
> worry about that just yet. – Then you needn't either. – Are you with someone?
> – With my boyfriend…whoever he is at the time. – Would you like to have dinner with me
> today? – If you like. – Excellent! How much will you charge?
> – Don't pay me in advance…– That's unusual! –…but once we've
> been to bed, pay me what you think best. – That's a fair deal!
> – Where will I find you? I'll have you picked up. – Work it out. – When will you come?
> Whatever time you like. – I'd like it right now. – Let's go.

This vivid street-scene is a virtuoso performance in the art of accommodating the choppiness and informality of everyday dialogue

[65] Some caution is necessary because crucial letters are lost on the papyrus, and Dioscorides' poem constitutes part of the case for Merkelbach's supplement *leuk]on aphêka menos* (*therm]on* 'hot' would be another possibility); but the case seems to me to be very strong.

[66] On the Archilochus poem see e.g. Carey 2009: 156–8. While capturing the (in my view sinister and disturbing) gentleness of the scene, Carey seems to me to overstate the extent to which the girl is presented as 'allowing' herself to be seduced, or indeed as having any effective agency in the episode at all.

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within the formal structure of the elegiac couplet (the language, in Gow and Page's words, is 'largely if not wholly vernacular, with one or two poetical liberties in the word-order', *GPh* p. 376).[67] The atmosphere is that of New Comedy, the tone relaxed and urbane; I do not detect the 'professional's hauteur' attributed by Sider 1997: 132, to what he calls the 'saucy prostitute', nor much sign of the manipulation on her part to which he refers; the transaction seems to me much more matter-of-fact and reciprocal. The delicacy with which the male speaker elicits the information that the woman's services are indeed for sale evokes the edginess of the demi-monde; compare and contrast Philodemus 21 Sider = Antiphilus 14 *GPh* = *AP*, dramatising an encounter in which a man attempts to accost a female passer-by, gets no reply, but vows to continue pursuing her. Humour is generated by the contrast between the polite circumlocutions ('have dinner', 'been to bed') and the directness of the practical arrangements, as well as by the urgency suddenly discovered in the final line.

Nossis declares the primacy of love in a poem that may have been programmatic, perhaps opening her epigram collection (1 *HE* = *AP* 5.170):

> Ἄδιον οὐδὲν ἔρωτος, ἃ δ' ὄλβια δεύτερα πάντα
> ἐστίν· ἀπὸ στόματος δ' ἔπτυσα καὶ τὸ μέλι.
> τοῦτο λέγει Νόσσις· τίνα δ' ἃ Κύπρις οὐκ ἐφίλασεν
> οὐκ οἶδεν κήνα τἄνθεα ποῖα ῥόδα.
>
> Nothing is sweeter than love, other blessings all
> come second: even honey I spit from my mouth.
> This is what Nossis says: but anyone whom the Cyprian has not kissed
> is a woman who does not know what roses Love's flowers are.[68]

[67] In line 7, the imperative καταμάνθανε ('work it out', more literally 'learn' or 'understand') leaves several possibilities open. Sider suggests that the man interrupts the woman in his eagerness, i.e. καταμάνθανε in effect means 'I'll tell you', but the speaker is stopped before she can do so. Gow and Page (*GPh* p. 377) tentatively opt for 'you can find out', an indication that the woman's address is common knowledge. I am inclined to agree with the suggestion of Kaibel 1885: 7–8 that the word points to some form of extra-textual communication. Following Jacobs, he suggests a 'calling-card'; another possibility would be an imagined gesture, either pointing to her lodgings or indicating that she is currently at the spot where she regularly solicits business, and will not move until hired.

[68] See Gutzwiller 1998: 75–9 for an interesting if slightly dogmatic interpretation of this poem; I am not convinced that spitting honey is to be read as 'reject[ing] the tradition of Hesiodic epic' (76). I tentatively accept Gutzwiller's defence of the MS text in line 4 (78 n. 82), though, *pace* Gutzwiller, the sense must then be 'does not know what sort of roses the flowers [of Love] are', not 'does not know what sort of flowers roses are' (which would be e.g. οὐκ οἶδεν ποῖα ἄνθεα (τὰ) ῥόδα). I agree with Gutzwiller that it is not necessary to assume an explicit

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The poem belongs in a long tradition of 'priamels' (poems listing items implicitly or explicitly compared with one another) on the subject of what is best or most desirable. Famous early examples include the opening of Pindar, *Olympian I* ('Water is best…') and, a particularly important model for the present poem, the first lines of Sappho 16: 'Some say a force of cavalry, others of infantry, others of ships, to be the fairest thing on the dark earth; but I say it is whatever someone loves…'.[69] Like Sappho, Nossis underlines the assertion of her own view ('I say'/'Nossis says') but, where Sappho then goes on to state that the surpassing beauty of the love object 'can easily be made understandable to anyone' by means of a mythological example, Nossis takes a different line. She sees no point in trying to explain or persuade: there is no substitute for personal experience. Another likely model for Nossis' poem, also modelled on Sappho's and following its structure more closely, is Asclepiades 1 *HE* = *AP* 5.169:

> Ἡδὺ θέρους διψῶντι χιὼν ποτόν, ἡδὺ δὲ ναύταις
> ἐκ χειμῶνος ἰδεῖν εἰαρινὸν Στέφανον·
> ἥδιον δ' ὁποτὰν κρύψῃ μία τοὺς φιλέοντας
> χλαῖνα, καὶ αἰνῆται Κύπρις ὑπ' ἀμφοτέρων.
>
> Pleasant is snow to drink when thirsty in summer, and pleasant to sailors
> is the sight, after winter, of a sign of spring, the Crown;
> more pleasant, though, is when lovers are hid by a single
> cloak, and Cypris wins approval from them both.[70]

Thus through imitation and reminiscence epigrams accumulate additional layers of meaning.[71] These poems of Asclepiades and Nossis

sexual reference in order to understand the poem, but am not certain that such an interpretation should be ruled out.

[69] Cf. also the poem reported by Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1214a 1–8 as being inscribed on the propylaea of the Letöon at Delos: *κάλλιστον τὸ δικαιότατον, λῷστον δ' ὑγιαίνειν·/ πάντων ἥδιστον δ' οὗ τις ἐρᾷ τὸ τυχεῖν*, 'The most beautiful thing is what is most just, and the best thing is to be healthy;/ but the sweetest thing is to get what one desires.'

[70] The Crown (Greek *Stephanos*, the same word used later by Meleager for his 'Garland') is apparently the constellation known as the Northern Crown, *Corona Borealis*, which, as the sixth-century-CE astrological writer John Lydus reports, sets at dawn on the Nones (7th) of March, and may thus be a sign of spring (see *HE* 118, Lydus *De Ostentis* 61.12 = p. 122 line 16 Wachsmuth; '192.8' in *HE* appears to be an error; 'evening rising' presumably indicates Gow and Page's silent approval of Merkel's conjecture, reported but rejected by Wachsmuth, of *φαίνεται… ἑσπέρᾳ* in place of *δύεται…ὄρθρου*). For an interesting, if not entirely persuasive, reading of this poem as a commentary on Epicurean theories of pleasure, see Clayman 2007: 508–9.

[71] As Acosta-Hughes and Barbantani 2007: 450 put it, 'especially effective in Nossis' recollection of Asclepiades is her perception of Asclepiades as reader of Sappho'.

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may in turn allude to two poems by Anyte that exemplify her interest in rustic and pastoral scenes, and which may again be programmatic:

*Ἵζε᾽ ἅπας ὑπὸ καλὰ δάφνας εὐθαλέα φύλλα*
*ὡραίου τ᾽ ἄρυσαι νάματος ἁδὺ πόμα*
*ὄφρα τοι ἀσθμαίνοντα πόνοις θέρεος φίλα γυῖα*
*ἄμπαύσῃς πνοιᾷ τυπτόμενα Ζεφύρου.*

Sit down, everyone, under the beautiful dense leaves of the laurel
and draw sweet drinking-water from the lovely stream,
to give your limbs panting from summer toil
relief, struck by the gusts of the West Wind.
Anyte 16 *HE* = *AP* 9.313

*Ξεῖν᾽, ὑπὸ τὰν πέτραν τετρυμένα γυῖ᾽ ἀνάπαυσον –*
*ἁδύ τοι ἐν χλωροῖς πνεῦμα θροεῖ πετάλοις –*
*πίδακά τ᾽ ἐκ παγᾶς ψυχρὸν πίε, δὴ γὰρ ὁδίταις*
*ἄμπαυμ᾽ ἐν θερμῷ καύματι τοῦτο φίλον.*

Stranger, rest your wearied limbs under the rock –
it is pleasant, the sound of the breeze in the fresh leaves –
and drink cold water from the stream; for travellers
enjoy this relief in the midst of summer heat.
Anyte 18 *HE* = *AP* 16.228

The two poems' inscriptional setting, whether real or imaginary, is a spring by the wayside; the address to the passer-by is clearly borrowed from the earlier tradition of funerary epigram. Anyte offers water and green shade to the passer-by – and thus, by implication, her poetry to the reader – as a pleasantly cooling relief from toil; Asclepiades and Nossis use her as a foil in expressing their preference for the more hectic pleasures of love.[72]

We conclude this section with two poems in which the lover's gaze is linked with celestial objects. The first is 'Plato' 1 *FGE* (attributed to the philosopher Plato in antiquity, but generally agreed to be of Hellenistic date):

*Ἀστέρας εἰσαθρεῖς, ἀστὴρ ἐμός· εἴθε γενοίμην*
*οὐρανός, ὡς πολλοῖς ὄμμασιν εἰς σὲ βλέπω.*

You are gazing at the stars, my star: I wish I could become
the sky, to look at you with many eyes.

[72] On Anyte, see Gutzwiller 1998: 54–74 (on these poems, esp. 68–73); for discussion of 'pastoral' or 'bucolic' as a subgenre of epigram, a good starting-point is Stanzel 2007.

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The poem is full of light. The reader is invited to envisage the face of the addressee, presumably a boy, turned up to the stars; the light of the stars shining on his face and illuminating it, confirming his status as the 'star' of the lover's universe; the returning gaze of the innumerable stars, now reconfigured as the eyes of heaven; and, finally, the insatiable longing gaze of the speaker-lover, excluded from the tranquil reciprocity of 'star' and stars in his extravagant, unrealizable wish to multiply his own vision.[73] The image of the stars as innumerable amorous eyes is adapted in Catullus 7, the famous kiss-counting poem, where the stars have become innumerable voyeurs, lines 7–8: *aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox, / furtivos hominum vident amores* ('or as many as the stars which, in the silence of night, / observe the secret love affairs of humans').

A different heavenly encounter is involved in the peaceful love scene of Philodemus 9 *GPh* = 14 Sider = *AP* 5.123:

> *Νυκτερίνη δικέρως φιλοπάννυχε φαῖνε, Σελήνη,*
> *φαῖνε δι' εὐτρήτων βαλλομένη θυρίδων·*
> *αὔγαζε χρυσέην Καλλίστιον. ἐς τὰ φιλεύντων*
> *ἔργα κατοπτεύειν οὐ φθόνος ἀθανάτῃ.*
> *ὀλβίζεις καὶ τήνδε καὶ ἡμέας, οἶδα, Σελήνη·*
> *καὶ γὰρ σὴν ψυχὴν ἔφλεγεν Ἐνδυμίων.*
>
> Two-horned night-watcher, friend of night parties, shine! Selene,
> shine, casting your light through the latticed shutters.
> Cast your rays on golden Kallistion. For an immortal
> to spy on lovers' work is no affront.
> You think both her and me happy, I know, Selene:
> your soul too caught fire for Endymion.

Here both the speaker and the moon-goddess Selene are spectators of Kallistion in her sleep, a reminder to the latter of her love for the sleeping Endymion. The mythological precedent invites comparison with the poems that we have already encountered in which lovers invoke the example of Zeus as an excuse, but Selene is assumed not merely to understand the speaker's feelings but to congratulate him. It is a remarkable move to make a deity call mortals happy; similarly 'affront' or 'resentment' (*phthonos*) is an attitude more naturally feared

[73] 'Plato' 2 *FGE* is another 'star' poem, this time an epitaph: *ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν ἑῷος, / νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις ἔσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις* ('Once you shone as the morning star among the living, / and now you are dead you shine as an evening star among the perished'); the epitaph adds to the poignancy of the love poem and it is likely that the two were conceived as a pair: see Scodel 2003: 264.

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by mortals from gods than vice versa. Selene's role is transformed from that of light-giver to that of onlooker, an effect that is brought into focus by the ambiguity of the verb *katopteuein* in line 4: as well as meaning 'act as a spy on' (Gow and Page, *GPh* p. 380), it is also used of astronomers 'observing' the heavenly bodies (Sider 1997: 115). Through this series of inversions, the epigram invites us to see the brightest light in the imagined room as emanating, not from the moon addressed in its first and final couplets, but from 'golden Kallistion' at its centre, whose epithet *khruseê* ('golden') is, as Gow and Page observe, one commonly associated with the goddess of love herself.[74]

The Roman elegist Propertius alludes to this epigram of Philodemus in the famous third poem of his first book. In this poem, Propertius (or rather 'Propertius', his poetic persona) comes home inebriated after a night out to find his girlfriend Cynthia asleep, and stands in contemplation until Cynthia, woken by the light of the moon entering her bedroom, wakes up and scolds him for deserting her. In a detailed discussion of the relationship between the two poems, Joan Booth suggests that the effect of Propertius' treatment is to activate sinister undercurrents beneath the apparently perfect surface of Philodemus' poem.[75] How can the poet 'know' (line 5) that Selene's attitude is sympathetic rather than jealous, that the moonlight is a benign rather than a baneful or disruptive presence? And how can we, as readers, be sure that the speaker of the poem and Kallistion are as united as line 5 suggests, or indeed that he is really a gentle and solicitous lover rather than a drunken delinquent (cf. line 1, 'friend of night parties') like Propertius' persona in his poem, or worse still, the would-be assailant imagined by that narrator as troubling Cynthia's dreams? Another interesting comparison can be made with John Donne's poem *The Sunne Rising*, where the celestial visitor, this time the sun, is at first an intruder, an unwelcome reminder that the night of love is over:

> Busie old foole, unruly Sunne,
> Why dost thou thus,
> Through windowes, and through curtaines call on us?

but, as the poet reflects on love's ability to transcend space, time, and convention, becomes by the end of the poem an accepted part of the

[74] This association is underlined by the following phrase *φιλεύντων / ἔργα* ('works of lovers'), which, as Sider notes, evokes expressions such as *ἔργα / πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης* ('works of greatly golden Aphrodite') at Hes. *Op.* 521: Sider 1997: 115.

[75] Booth 2001, especially 543–4.

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lovers' universe-in-miniature, being subsumed into their world rather as the moon's light is subsumed by Philodemus' Kallistion:

> Shine here to us, and thou art every where;
> This bed thy center is, these walls, thy spheare.

## Funerary epigrams

Having explored some of Hellenistic epigram's innovations, we should observe briefly that it was no less successful in developing epigram's most traditional form, the epitaph. As we saw in the case of inscriptional epigrams, epitaphs can be no less effective for being simple, for example Callimachus 46 *HE* = 17 P = *AP* 7.453:

> *Δωδεκέτη τὸν παῖδα πατὴρ ἀπέθηκε Φίλιππος*
> *ἐνθάδε, τὴν πολλὴν ἐλπίδα, Νικοτέλην.*
>
> His son aged twelve years old father Philippos set aside
> here, his abundant hope, Nikoteles.

The closeness of father and son, and thus the sadness of their separation, is suggested both by the placing of their names at line-end and by the juxtaposition *paida patêr* ('son father') in the first line, which is also a *hysteron proteron* (reversal of order: here, object before subject, son before father) underlining the violation of the norm that it is the duty of children to bury their parents. The choice of the verb *apethêke*, here translated 'set aside', is unexpected,[76] and triggers a range of possible meanings. Most basically, Philippos is setting aside his son – being parted from him for ever. He is also laying aside his hope, and there may be additional grim irony in the word's association with storage of precious objects: Nikoteles was a prospect for the future that will now never be realized. The use of a verb not commonly associated with burial may also suggest the father's inability to accept what has happened. In the final line, *ten pollên elpida* ('his abundant hope') is given heavy, lingering emphasis by alliterative sounds, by the long syllables and double consonant of *pollên*, and by its grammatical

[76] The active voice, used here (and nowhere else in Callimachus' surviving work), usually means simply 'put away' (e.g. in a chest: Hom. *Il.* 16.254), while the much more common middle voice has a range of senses including 'lay aside', 'put in storage', or (rarely) 'bury'. See *GPh* p. 199, and Hopkinson 1988: 247 for suggested interpretations.

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separation, indicated by the editorial commas, from the other words in the line. The adjective *pollên* ('abundant', more literally 'much', 'great in quantity') is also carefully chosen, pointing to the open-endedness of parental hope: limitless but also, as Nikoteles' fate shows, of unforeseeable outcome.

The stillness evoked by this poem may be contrasted with the drama of another Callimachean funerary epigram, this time without specific reference to a place of burial (32 *HE* = 20 P = *AP* 7.517):[77]

> *Ἠῷοι Μελάνιππον ἐθάπτομεν, ἠελίου δέ*
> *δυομένου Βασιλὼ κάτθανε παρθενική*
> *αὐτοχερί· ζώειν γὰρ ἀδελφεὸν ἐν πυρὶ θεῖσα*
> *οὐκ ἔτλη. δίδυμον δ' οἶκος ἐσείδε κακόν*
> *πατρὸς Ἀριστίπποιο, κατήφησεν δὲ Κυρήνη*
> *πᾶσα τὸν εὔτεκνον χῆρον ἰδοῦσα δόμον.*
>
> At break of day we were burying Melanippos, and as the sun
> was setting the girl Basilo died
> By her own hand: to live when she had put her brother on the fire
> she could not bear. It was a twin sorrow for the house to see
> Of father Aristippos, and Cyrene was cast down in silence,
> the whole city, having seen the child-blessed household empty.

The beginning and ending of the opening line set the time-frame of the drama, from sunrise to sunset, and with their keening vowel sounds (*êôoi…êeliou…*) make us hear the mourning cries (Greek cries of grief encountered in tragedy include *ô*, *ômoi*, *iô*, *iou*, and *êe*). The first person plural verb 'we were burying' draws the reader into the ritual action. The two four-syllable words *parthenikê*, *autokheri* ('unmarried', 'by her own hand'), enjambed across lines 2 and 3, present with devastating directness the pathos of a life (by ancient Greek standards) unfulfilled, but also of Basilo's preservation of autonomy in death, untouched by any hand but her own; they may remind us of Phrasikleia's epitaph encountered in Chapter 1. It is no coincidence that the adjective *autokheir*, of which *autokheri* ('by her own hand') is the adverb, occurs repeatedly in the most famous drama of an unmarried girl who dies because of love for her brother, Sophocles' *Antigone*.[78] Basilo might

[77] As with dedicatory epigram, it is generally very hard to tell whether literary funerary epigrams were in fact also inscribed, though in this case there is evidence to suggest that the dramatis personae were real people (*HE* p. 190).

[78] The adjective has a broad sense meaning someone who 'acts for themself' or 'does something with their own hands', a narrower sense of 'perpetrator' or 'killer', and a specific sense of 'suicide'. It occurs five times in this play, more often than in any other surviving tragedy

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be said to outdo the tragic heroine in her sisterly devotion: Antigone dies as a result of her attempt to bury her brother; Basilo successfully completes the ritual, but still cannot bear to live without him.

As the poem develops, the scene presented to the reader pans out, from the graveside to the household to the whole city of Cyrene. It then fades with *katêphêsen* ('was cast down in silence') in line 5: this verb implies a mute lowering of the eyes, and thus both drops the viewer's gaze and hushes the cries of mourning. The last line drives home the poem's point with another powerful juxtaposition, *euteknon khêron* ('blessed-with-children empty', or 'bereft').

In a famous pair of epitaphs, Callimachus sketches his own family history (29 *HE* = 21 P = *AP* 7.525; 30 *HE* = 35 P = *AP* 7.415):

> *Ὅστις ἐμὸν παρὰ σῆμα φέρεις πόδα, Καλλιμάχου με*
> *ἴσθι Κυρηναίου παῖδά τε καὶ γενέτην.*
> *εἰδείης δ' ἄμφω κενρ ὁ μέν κοτε πατρίδος ὅπλων*
> *ἦρξεν, ὁ δ' ἤεισεν κρέσσονα βασκανίης.*
>
> You who make your way past my marker [*sêma*], know that of Callimachus
> of Cyrene I am the son and father.
> You may know them both: one once led his country's arms
> in battle, the other sang songs stronger than jealousy.[79]
>
> *Βαττιάδεω παρὰ σῆμα φέρεις πόδας εὖ μὲν ἀοιδήν*
> *εἰδότος, εὖ δ' οἴνῳ καίρια συγγελάσαι.*

(followed by *Oedipus the King* and Euripides' *Electra*, each with three instances). It is applied to all three characters who die: of Haemon (1175) and Eurydice (1315) to report their suicides, and by Antigone of herself, in the final scene in which she appears, but this time referring to her burial of her parents and brother 'with her own hands'. These instances are foreshadowed by two occurrences in the mouth of Creon: referring to the deaths of Eteocles and Polynices at 172, and referring to the 'perpetrator' of Polynices' attempted burial at 306. For a close reading of this poem as a 'tragedy in miniature' echoing *Antigone*, see Ambühl 2002, especially 9–11 (10 n. 43 on *autokheir*); also Harder 2007: 409 for a brief summary in English of Ambühl's conclusions. Ambühl further suggests that the poem's theme of devotedness between siblings is ideologically connected with the Ptolemaic monarchs' practice of sibling marriage, reflected in the epithet Philadelphos ('brother-/sister-loving'). On epigrams honouring Ptolemaic kings and queens (there are many in the Milan papyrus), see Ambühl 2007.

[79] This epigram as transmitted in *AP* has two additional lines that correspond to lines 37–8 of the *Aetia* prologue and that do not connect easily in sense here with what has gone before: *οὐ νέμεσις· Μοῦσαι γὰρ ὅσους ἴδον ὄθματι παῖδας / μὴ λόξῳ, πολίους οὐκ ἀπέθεντο φίλους* ('never mind [or 'no wonder'], because those whom the Muses have looked at in childhood / with no sidelong glance, they do not reject as friends when they are grey'). I follow Pfeiffer, Gow and Page, and others in assuming that these lines have been added here in error. For an interpretation based on the assumption that they do belong here (as well as in the *Aetia*), see Fantuzzi 2004b: 297–9.

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You are making your way past the marker [*sêma*] of Battiades, an expert
in song, but also in well-timed laughter accompanying wine.

The first is for Callimachus' father, the second for Callimachus himself; the closely matching formulae in line 1 strongly suggest that they are designed as a pair. It is, as usual, impossible to say whether the poems were designed for inscription, but this formula, with the address to the passer-by, clearly invokes the conventions of inscribed epitaphs and the poems proceed to play with those conventions. The epitaph for the father names the son and grandfather (both called Callimachus) but not the father himself; the epitaph for Callimachus provides the name of his father (Battos) but not the poet's own.[80] In the father's epitaph, momentary puzzlement is created by the claim to be the same person's 'son and father', before *amphô* ('both') reveals that two people of the same name are in question; the fact that the poem says nothing whatsoever about its supposed 'subject' (reflected in the lemmatist's misidentification of it in *AP* as an epitaph for the poet himself) is surely a joke.[81] Instead, with the balanced clauses in lines 2 and 3 and the sound correspondences between *êrxen* ('led') and *êeisen* ('sang'), it proposes an equivalence between the older Callimachus' career as a general in the service of his country and the younger Callimachus' career as a poet whose work conquers jealous critics: a *militia carminis* that points the way to the *militia amoris* ('military service of Love'), a central motif of Latin love poetry.[82] The poet's own epitaph uses the limited space left in the distich by the quasi-inscriptional formula to announce his expertise with exquisite brevity, as a scholar, poet, and witty symposiast possessing the judgement to balance these roles in due time and measure. The word *eidotos*, which I have translated 'expert', is in fact a participle, 'having knowledge of', normally present in tense (and thus paradoxical in an epitaph); it is tempting to see it as instructing the reader to reflect on what kind of *sêma* ('marker') this is. Now it has entered a book, the poet's mark

[80] Battos is also the name of the legendary founder of Callimachus' home city, Cyrene, and it has been suggested that the patronymic 'Battiades' in this poem should be understood as a poetic nickname, 'scion of Battos', rather than as evidence that Callimachus' father was indeed called Battos. No conclusive answer is possible, but the epigram pair has more point if it is his father's name. See further Fantuzzi 2004b: 297–9.

[81] It is also interesting, as GN points out, that the younger Callimachus, author of the epitaph, is referred to in the past tense, 'sang'. This usage, which may have contributed to the lemmatist's error, perhaps evokes an inscriptional setting projected into the future, and a resulting sense of timelessness or of being outside time.

[82] On the development of the *militia amoris* theme, see Murgatroyd 1979 and Gutzwiller 1993.

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or trace with which we are presented as readers is independent of his own life, and of his own mortality.[83]

As has been seen, funerary epigrams can be intensely emotional, but they do not have to be deadly serious. Sometimes they offer a puzzle, as in Alcaeus 16 *HE* = *AP* 7.429:

> *Δίζημαι κατὰ θυμὸν ὅτου χάριν ἁ παροδῖτις*
> *δισσάκι φεῖ μοῦνον γράμμα λέλογχε λίθος*
> *λαοτύποις σμίλαις κεκολαμμένον. ἦ ῥα γυναικί*
> *τᾷ χθονὶ κευθομέναᾳ Χιλιὰς ἦν ὄνομα;*
> *τοῦτο γὰρ ἀγγέλλει κορυφούμενος εἰς ἓν ἀριθμός.*
> *ἦ τὸ μὲν εἰς ὀρθὰν ἀτραπὸν οὐκ ἔμολεν,*
> *ἁ δ' οἰκτρὸν ναίουσα τόδ' ἠρίον ἔπλετο Φειδίς;*
> *νῦν Σφιγγὸς γρίφους Οἰδίπος ἐφρασάμαν.*
> *αἰνετὸς οὐκ δισσοῖο καμὼν αἴνιγμα τύποιο*
> *φέγγος μὲν ξυνετοῖς ἀξυνέτοις δ' ἔρεβος.*

> I'm asking myself in my mind for what reason this roadside
> stone has received Phi twice as the only inscription
> carved on it by the stone-carver's chisels. Is it that the woman
> hidden under the earth went by the name of Khilias ['Thousand']?
> That's the report the number gives, added up as a single sum.
> Or did that idea not go down the right road
> and was the woman who lives in this sad tomb called Pheidis ['Phi Twice']?
> That's it! I'm Oedipus, I've solved the Sphinx's riddle.
> All credit to him, the man who made a riddle from two signs,
> light for the clever but darkness for the stupid.

The poem plays self-consciously with the fact that it is *not* the (imagined) inscriptional epitaph, the text of which is simply *ΦΦ*, the Greek letter phi twice over. The 'point' is that the dead woman's name *Φειδίς* (Pheidis), can be reinterpreted in Greek as *φεῖ δίς* ('phi twice'), but also means 'sparing', 'thrifty', and thus the very short inscription represents both the sound of her name and the character trait that it implies. The speaker initially goes down the 'wrong road' of interpreting the signs according to the Greek system of using letters as numbers, in which *Φ* equals 500 and *ΦΦ* would thus be a possible way of writing 1000. There is additional humour, perhaps underlined by the congratulatory final couplets, in the fact that the result is a long

[83] See also Gutzwiller 1998: 213; her suggestion that this was the concluding poem of a collection is attractive.

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epigram (much longer than most real epitaphs) that conspicuously lacks the economy of the inscription it describes.[84]

In an epigram in the unusual choliambic metre, the *hetaira* Philaenis is made to deny authorship of a famous book on sexual technique that circulated under her name (Aeschrion 1 *HE* = *AP* 7.345):

> *Ἐγὼ Φίλαινις, ἡ ’πίβωτος ἀνθρώποις,*
> *ἐνταῦθα γήρᾳ τῷ μακρῷ κεκοίμημαι.*
> *μή μ’, ὦ μάταιε ναῦτα, τὴν ἄκραν κάμπτων*
> *χλεύην τε ποιεῦ καὶ γέλωτα καὶ λάσθην,*
> *οὐ γάρ, μὰ τὸν Ζῆν’, οὐ μὰ τοὺς κάτω κούρους,*
> *οὐκ ἦν ἐς ἄνδρας μάχλος οὐδὲ δημώδης.*
> *Πολυκράτης δὲ τὴν γονὴν Ἀθηναῖος,*
> *λόγων τι παιπάλημα καὶ κακὴ γλῶσσα,*
> *ἔγραψεν οἷ’ ἔγραψ’ ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐκ οἶδα.*
>
> I, Philaenis, the one everyone talks about,
> have been laid to rest here, far into old age.
> You cheeky sailor, as you round the headland
> don’t jeer at me or make me a rude joke:
> I swear by Zeus, I swear by the Boys below,
> I wasn’t randy with men or an easy lay.
> It was Polycrates, an Athenian by race,
> a jerker-out of words, a filthy tongue,
> who wrote – whatever he wrote: I personally don’t know.[85]

The Athenian Polycrates to whom Philaenis is made to ascribe the book must be the rhetorician of that name, famous for speeches (now lost) on paradoxical subjects, including a spoof prosecution speech against Socrates, and thus a reasonable choice as author of an outrageous book, though it is not clear why he is chosen in particular. The poem is innovative in asking the passer-by *not* to do something, by contrast with the conventional request to ‘stand and pity’ or the like. This points to a further paradox. Normally, the function of an epitaph is to tell us who it commemorates and thus keep their name, at least, alive. Philaenis has a different problem: her name is (so the

[84] For a more extensive discussion of this poem, interpreting it as a statement of Alcaeus’ literary programme, see Bruss 2002/3.

[85] The reference of the oath ‘by the Boys below’ is unclear: see *HE* p. 5. ‘The *Kouroi*’ would normally be the Dioscuri, Castor and Polydeuces, but they do not belong ‘below’ in the Underworld; we might expect *μὰ τὴν κάτω κούρην* (‘by the Girl below’, i.e. ‘by Persephone’), and this has been suggested as an emendation, but the corruption in the manuscripts would be hard to explain. It is possible that there is a joke in the idea that Philaenis, because of her profession, cannot swear as other women do by the chaste Persephone, but there is no obvious parallel.

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poem says) on everyone's lips already, but in connection with a false story, which the epigram attempts to refute. The irony is that, in denying Philaenis' association with the book, the imagined inscription and the actual poem serve instead to perpetuate it.[86] There is also obvious humour in Philaenis being made to accost a sailor – indeed, every passing sailor – precisely in order to assure him that she is not 'that sort of girl', and perhaps also in her being made to do so in a metre particularly associated with an author of distinctly raunchy verse, the poet Hipponax of the sixth century BCE.

Needless to say Hellenistic funerary epigram does not waste the opportunity to play with dramas involving multiple voices in dialogue. An example that is particularly enjoyable, if grim in its way, is Callimachus' epigram on Kharidas (31 *HE* = 13 P = *AP* 7.524):

> *Ἦ ῥ' ὑπὸ σοὶ Χαρίδας ἀναπαύεται; – Εἰ τὸν Ἀρίμμα*
> *τοῦ Κυρηναίου παῖδα λέγεις, ὑπ' ἐμοί.*
> *– Ὦ Χαρίδα, τί τὰ νέρθε; – Πολὺ σκότος. – Αἱ δ' ἄνοδοι τί;*
> *– Ψεῦδος. – Ὁ δὲ Πλούτων; – Μῦθος. – Ἀπωλόμεθα.*
> *Οὗτος ἐμὸς λόγος ὔμμιν ἀληθινός, εἰ δὲ τὸν ἡδύν*
> *βούλει, Πελλαίου βοῦς μέγας εἰν Ἀίδῃ.*
>
> Is it true that Kharidas is resting under you? – If it's Arimmas
> of Cyrene's son you mean, yes, under me.
> – Kharidas, what's the Underworld like? – Very dark. – And the Upward Roads?
> – A lie. – And Pluto? – A fairy-story [*muthos*]. – We're done for!
> – That's the true account I have for you, but if it's the nice one
> you're after, a whole ox costs one Pellan coin in Hades.

The poem offers sophisticated play on the obviously absurd, but conventionally well-established, idea that the epitaph is spoken by the dead person, and takes it a step further by creating a dialogue.[87] The

[86] See Rosen 2007: 475 n. 30, and, on the negative request to the passer-by, see Tueller 2008: 65–6; see also 192. The poem is imitated by Dioscorides 26 *HE* = *AP* 7.450, on the same theme. Fragments of the book attributed to Philaenis have been found on a papyrus, P. Oxy. XXXIX 2891: see Beta 2007: 313 n. 11, with references. On Polycrates, see Livingstone 2001: 28–40. 'Exculpatory' poems such as this one are on the fringes of a much larger genre of imaginary epitaphs for famous people from the past (writers of tragedy and comedy, philosophers, etc.): on such poems see e.g. Rosen 2007, on poems about the poets Archilochus and Hipponax; Fantuzzi 2007, on poems with theatrical themes; and Clayman 2007, on philosophers in epigram.

[87] On Callimachus' 'conversations with the dead', see further Fantuzzi 2004b: 322–8. Another example in which the passer-by asks the dead person for information about conditions in the Underworld is Callimachus 51 *HE* = 4 P = *AP* 7.317, on the legendary misanthrope Timon: *Τίμων, οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἐσσί, τί τοι, σκότος ἢ φάος, ἐχθρόν; / – τὸ σκότος· ὑμέων γὰρ πλείονες εἰν Ἀίδῃ* ('Timon, since you're not alive any more, which do you really hate, the Dark or the Light? – The

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'passer-by' initially addresses the stone, rather like someone knocking on a door and asking whether they have got the right address; the stone politely replies, again rather like a slave answering the door, and the passer-by accordingly turns to its 'master', Kharidas.[88] Kharidas obligingly replies to each question, but his answers fail to oblige the questioner because they knock away one by one the props supporting his belief in an afterlife – and thus, of course, also demolish the possibility that Kharidas could in fact have a voice to speak with.[89] The final line reveals Kharidas' irritation, understandable especially in view of the passer-by's tactless remark in line 4, where *apôlometha* 'we're done for!' could also be translated 'we're dead'. *We* (that is, the passer-by and we the readers) by definition are not. Kharidas is, and it is impolite, as well as unnecessary, to draw attention to this inequality of status between us and him.

The point of the 'whole ox' reference in the final line has been much discussed; it seems likely to have a double meaning. On the one hand, it offers the questioner not content with the truth a 'nice' version instead ('food is dirt cheap in Hades'; or, as GN suggests we might put it, 'Hell as an all-you-can-eat steak buffet'). On the other hand, and more obscurely, it plays simultaneously on the expression 'a great ox has stood on my tongue' (which goes back to the watchman's prologue in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* [36–7] and means 'I can't possibly tell you') and on the Greek burial practice of placing a coin in the dead person's mouth with which to pay Charon, the ferryman, in the Underworld. In this sense, the resultant meaning is that the coin in his mouth (perhaps a coin with a figure of an ox on it, or a low-value coin made of oxhide) has turned into a 'great ox' preventing him from speaking, so he *cannot* offer a comforting account; or, to put it another way, he cannot speak because he is dead.[90] The punning reply, containing a comforting answer for the simple-minded and a more

Dark, because there are more of you people in Hades'); see also 33 *HE* = 2 P = *AP* 7.520. Such poems provide a likely model for the second-century-CE writer Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*.

[88] On the unusual role of the stone as intermediary, see Tueller 2008: 114.

[89] In this interrogation and in another related poem, 33 *HE* (which effectively gives an 'address' for anyone wishing to trace the dead person in Hades, explaining that he will be found 'among the pious': see Fantuzzi 2004: 323–4), it is tempting to see a parody of ritual texts buried with initiates which instruct the dead person on what he or she must say in answer to certain questions in order to reach a better place in the next world, e.g. : 'Ahead you will find from the Lake of Memory cold water pouring forth; there are guards before it. They will ask you, with astute wisdom, what you are seeking in the darkness of murky Hades. Say, "I am a child of Earth and starry Sky…"'. On such texts see Graf and Johnston 2007 (quotation from p. 17).

[90] This is essentially the interpretation of Livrea 1990: 319–24; see also Gutzwiller 1998: 210–11. On Charon's fee, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 303–21.

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honest one, which contains no comfort, for those able to understand, will remind alert readers of the lines of the *Agamemnon* that follow the 'great ox' proverb: 'the House itself, if it were to acquire a tongue, could give the clearest answer; since I, of my own free will, speak for listeners who understand, but am silent for those who do not' (37–9). The dead Kharidas is as likely to acquire a tongue as the House of Atreus; the answer given by 'Kharidas' in the poem, like the watchman's answer in the play, addresses two different audiences on two different levels.

Once we notice the questioner's mistake in saying *apôlometha* in line 4, it becomes clear that the whole dialogue has in a sense arisen from a misunderstanding, caused by insufficient attention to the various ways of saying 'dead' in Greek. My translation of line 1 takes advantage of the fact that in Greek, as in English, to say that someone is 'resting' (*anapauetai*) is a euphemistic way of saying that they are dead. Thus the poem's opening question is ambiguous. If it is taken as meaning 'Is it true that it's under *you* that Kharidas is "resting" [i.e. "lying dead"]?', then the stone's reply, 'yes', is accurate. If, on the other hand, it is taken to mean 'Is it true that what Kharidas is doing under you is "resting"?', then the correct answer would be 'no, he's dead', and the poem should properly end here.

A common type of poem that plays on the locatedness of inscriptional epigram and the contrasting circulation of epigram in book form is the 'message epitaph', for example, Asclepiades 31 *HE* = *AP* 7.500:[91]

> Ὦ παρ᾽ ἐμὸν στείχων κενὸν ἠρίον, εἶπον, ὁδῖτα,
> εἰς Χίον εὖτ᾽ ἂν ἵκῃ πατρὶ Μελησαγόρῃ
> ὡς ἐμὲ μὲν καὶ νῆα καὶ ἐμπορίην κακὸς Εὖρος
> ὤλεσεν, Εὐίππου δ᾽ αὐτὸ λέλειπτ᾽ ὄνομα.
>
> You who walk past my empty grave, report it, traveller,
> when you come to Chios, to my father Melesagoras
> that me, and my ship, and my cargo, the cruel East Wind
> destroyed, but that my name, Euippos, is left.

Of course, this sort of message has its model in the 'tell them at Sparta' motif of the epitaph for the Spartan dead that we encountered in Chapter 1; but the Battle of Thermopylae was big news, the fallen Spartans were heroes of Greece (or at any rate the epigrammatist

[91] On such poems see Tarán 1979: 132–49; on this poem and the related poem Callimachus 38 *HE* = 18 P = *AP* 7.272, see Bruss 2005: 104–10.

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intended that they should be so), and Sparta was a powerful presence throughout the Greek world. What reason does Euippos have to believe that the reader of his epitaph is going to Chios, and why should he expect anyone to trouble to find his father? The answer is clearly that he cannot; such poems underline the radical sense in which the dead are lost and scattered. At the same time, they point to the ability of the book, portable and durable through copying, to gather them together again in fictional, literary form: to re-collect them.[92]

We conclude this section, and this chapter, with a poem that is not funerary at all, but that is an intriguing variation on the message-epitaph (Nossis 11 *HE* = *AP* 7.718):

> *Ὦ ξεῖν', εἰ τύ γε πλεῖς ποτὶ καλλίχορον Μιτυλήναν*
> *τᾶν Σαπφοῦς χαρίτων ἄνθος ἐναυσόμενος*
> *εἰπεῖν ὡς Μούσαισι φίλαν τήνᾳ τε Λόκρισσα*
> *τίκτεν· ἴσαις δ' ὅτι μοι τοὔνομα Νοσσίς. ἴθι.*
>
> Stranger, if you are sailing to Mitylene, place of beautiful dancing,
> to take inspiration from the flower of Sappho's graces,
> say that a daughter dear to her and to the Muses a woman of Lokris
> bore. You need to know that my name is Nossis. Go.[93]

Unlike Asclepiades' epitaph, this poem does provide the addressee with a motive for going to Lesbos, and a plausible one: the addressee is by definition a reader of Nossis, and a reader of Nossis might reasonably be expected to have an interest in poetry in general and in Sappho in particular. Nossis does not specify the intended recipient of her message, but she surely wishes to be known not to the people of Mitylene in general but to its most famous daughter in particular. Her poem thus replaces Asclepiades' implausible request to take information about a dead person to a living person with an impossible request to take information about a living person to a dead person.[94]

[92] See Bruss 2005: 106–7 on the poem's self-conscious fictionality.

[93] On this poem, see especially Gutzwiller 1998: 65–6; also Acosta-Hughes and Barbantani 2007: 445–6. There are significant textual uncertainties; the text I have printed follows Gutzwiller (with a minor change of punctuation in line 4), who in turn follows Gallavotti. Gutzwiller's theory that this poem imitating Asclepiades closed Nossis' epigram collection, just as Nossis 1 *HE*, also imitating Asclepiades and likewise signed with the poet's name, opened it, goes beyond what we can hope to prove from present evidence but is nonetheless extremely tempting.

[94] I do not mean to imply that Nossis' poem is directly modelled on Asclepiades'. On this see Tueller 2008: 64, arguing against Gutzwiller 1998. Unlike Tueller, I think that the two poems are clearly related, but I agree with him that the relationship need not be one of imitation (in either direction). Tueller rightly emphasizes the echo in *ὦ ξεῖν' … εἰπεῖν* of the Thermopylae epitaph

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In what is simultaneously self-advertisement, an assertion of literary genealogy, and a fan letter, Nossis imputes to literary epigram the potential not just for space travel but for time travel. The following chapters will explore some of the ways in which she may have been right.

'Simonides' 22b *FGE* ὦ ξεῖν', ἀγγέλλειν..., which underlines the programmatic quality of the epigram and its mission to establish a link with the past; the classical heritage to which Nossis lays claim is poetic rather than military.

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