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THE EPITAPH FOR ATTHIS: A LATE HELLENISTIC POEM ON STONE

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Abstract: *SGO* I 01/01/07 is a highly refined 20-line elegiac epitaph from Cnidus which probably dates to the first century BC. Despite the poem's striking formal features and poetic qualities it has received almost no attention since its first publication by Sir Charles Newton in 1863. The first four sections of this article demonstrate that the inscription represents an important witness to certain epigraphic practices and epitaphic traditions, including those of inscribed dialogue and lament. The final section then presents a reading of the poem which centres on the competing poetics of consolation, memory and forgetfulness proposed by the epitaph's two speaking voices.

In the spring of 1858 a large-scale British expedition to Asia Minor led by Charles Newton arrived at the site of ancient Cnidus.[1] After the group had first examined the sites of Cnidus proper a party set out to investigate the enormous sprawling necropolis (at about six miles long, one of the largest in the ancient world) that lies along the road leading eastward out of the city. Just off of this road, about a half-hour's walk from the city gate, Newton happened to notice the brush-covered ruins of an early Christian church whose floor 'was in great measure composed of slabs bearing Greek sepulchral inscriptions, which had evidently been taken from the numerous plundered tombs in the midst of which the church is situated'.[2] In his report of the expedition he printed a handful of inscriptions that had been found on the reused paving-stones and which he believed should be 'particularly noticed';[3] among these he gave pride of place to a Greek epitaph in verse for a woman named Atthis, inscribed on a marble slab measuring 25" by 25.5" by 4.5" (0.635m by 0.65m by 0.115m) and now housed in a storeroom of the British Museum. Figures 1 and 2 are photographs recently commissioned from the Museum (taken in March 2009) and represent the first and only authorized photographs of the stone.

My purposes in writing about this inscription, the 'Epitaph for Atthis' (republished most recently as *SGO* I 01/01/07),[4] are twofold. First, despite Newton's identification of the inscription as deserving particular attention it has since received almost none. Here I offer a

* jmh201@cam.ac.uk. I am very grateful to a number of people for helping this project along in a variety of ways. The staff of the British Museum were enormously helpful and supportive, and I am particularly thankful to Ian Jenkins for providing me with information about and access to the inscription. Christof Berns generously gave me unpublished information about the Cnidian necropolis and has allowed me to reproduce a personal picture of tombs from it here. Richard Hunter first pointed out this largely overlooked poem to me, and I owe many thanks to him as well as to James Diggle, Marco Fantuzzi, Chris Faraone, Regina Höschele, Donald Mastronarde and Helen Morales for reading and commenting upon earlier drafts. John Ma also helped me with some crucial lessons in epigraphy, and I am very grateful to him for his patience and enthusiasm. Finally I would like to thank the two *JHS* referees, who each provided me with extremely valuable comments and corrections.

[1] The expedition report consists of two volumes (the first being of plates): C.T. Newton, *A History of Discoveries at Halicarnassus, Cnidus, and Branchidae* (London 1862–1863). In 1861 Newton became the first Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum.

[2] Newton (n.1) vol. 2.2 474.

[3] Newton (n.1) vol. 2.2 475. He prints the text (inscription no. 54) at vol. 2.2 768–69; there is a fairly accurate drawing of the stone in vol. 1 (pl. XCIV).

[4] The inscription appears in the following editions: G. Kaibel, *Epigrammata graeca ex lapidibus conlecta* (Berlin 1878) 204; *GIBM* IV.1 829b; J. Geffcken, *Griechische Epigramme* (Heidelberg 1916) 208; W. Peek, *Griechische Grabgedichte* (*GG*) (Berlin 1960) 438; *Griechische Versinschriften: Band 1: Grab-Epigramme* (*GVI*) (Vienna 1980) 1874; W. Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Knidos Vol. 1* (Bonn 1992) 303.

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description of the poem and its formal features in the hope of reinspiring interest in the text, which represents both a finely-wrought late Hellenistic poem and an important witness to links between 'book' and inscribed epigram and to the development of certain epigraphic practices (such as stanzaic division, elegiac *eisthesis*, and inscribed dialogue and lament). In the second place, I wish to demonstrate that this anonymous poem, known only from the stone on which it was carved, both merits and rewards the kind of close attention to composition and poetics that until recently had generally been denied to inscribed epigram. So as to support this last claim, in the final section I propose a reading of the poem which centres on its intricate layering of speaking voices, as well as these voices' differing constructions of memory and forgetfulness and their competing poetics of consolation.

I. The 'Epitaph for Atthis'

This is the epitaph for Atthis (Charles Newton's transcription was entirely accurate, and the stone presents no difficulties of reading: see Fig. 1).

Λάινά σοι τύμβων δωμήματα[a] Θεῖος ἔτευξα,
᾽Ατθίς, ὁ δὶς τῆς σῆς ἡλικίς προγέρων,
εὐξάμενος χειρῶν ἀπὸ σῶν κόνιν· ἄκριτε δαῖμον,
ἀμφοτέροις ἡμῖν ἔσβεσας ἠέλιον.

᾽Ατθίς, ἐμοὶ ζήσασα καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πνεῦμα λιποῦσα, (5)
ὡς πάρος εὐφροσύνης νῦν δακρύων πρόφασι,
ἁγνά, πουλυγόητε, τί πένθιμον ὕπνον ἰαύεις,
ἀνδρὸς ἀπὸ στέρνων οὔποτε θεῖσα κάρα,
Θεῖον ἐρημώσασα τὸν οὐκέτι; σοὶ γὰρ ἐς ῞Αδαν
ἦλθον ὁμοῦ ζωᾶς ἐλπίδες ἀμετέρας. (10)

οὐκ ἔπιον Λήθης ᾽Αιδωνίδος ἔσχατον ὕδωρ,
ὥς σε παρηγορίην κἀν φθιμένοισιν ἔχω,
Θεῖε, πλέον δύστηνε, γάμων ὅτι τῶν ἀμιάντων
νοσφισθεὶς κλαίεις χηροσύνην θαλάμων.

τοῦτο σαοφροσύνας γέρας ᾽Ατθίδι τᾷ πολυκλαύτωι (15)
οὐκ ἴσον οὐδε ἀρετᾶς ἄξιον, ἀλλ᾽ ἐθέμαν
μνάμαν εἰς αἰῶνα φερώνυμον, αὐτὸς ἀνάγκαι
Θεῖος νηπιάχωι πνεῦμα χαριζόμενος.
οἴσω γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο χάριν σέο καὶ τὸν ἀπηνῆ
ὄμμασι τοῖς στυγνοῖς ὄψομαι ἠέλυον. (20)

[a] δωμήματα: δωρήματα Zingerle

For you the stone chambers of this tomb I, Theios, built,
Atthis, from whose hands I, twice your age,
had hoped to receive the dust.
O cruel fate, for us both you have blotted out the sun.

Atthis, who lived for me and in me left your last breath,
once a source of happiness, now of tears,
pure, much-lamented, why do you sleep the mournful sleep?
You who never moved your head from your husband's chest,
but now have deserted Theios who is no more. For along with you
my life's hopes went to Hades.

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I did not drink of the Lethe, daughter of Hades, the final water,
so that I might have the consolation of you, even among the dead.
Theios, even more wretched, for cheated of your untainted marriage
you weep for the widowing of our bedroom.

This is the due of the purity of Atthis much-wept,
neither equal to nor worthy of her virtue, but I have put up
this monument forever bearing your name, while I,
Theios, must continue to breathe for our child.
And I will bear even this for your sake,
and with miserable eyes look upon the cruel sun.

A few textual notes and epigraphic and literary parallels

1. δώμημα: Zingerle argued that the phrase a 'stone building' is not in keeping with the stylistic refinement of the poem;[5] he thus emended to δωρήματα on the grounds that τύμβων δωρήματα 'gifts of the tomb' is more elegant and engages in a *topos* of sepulchral poetry (i.e. that the tomb is a gift): δωρήματι τύμβου appears elsewhere in an epitaph from Sidyma in western Lycia.[6] But while Blümel claims that δώμημα is attested only in this inscription,[7] in an epitaph from Mysia (northwest Asia Minor)[8] a certain Asclepios has erected at Asclepida's graveside the δωμήματα δακρυόεντα (tearful monuments, 5–6) of altars and a *stele* 'instead of marriage' (ἀντὶ γάμου); a late inscription (AD 287/293) also honours the proconsul of Asia for decorating the spring of Didyma with δωμήμασιν so that it was 'elaborate to look upon' (ὡς ἐ{ι}σιδεῖν μὲν δαίδαλον, 5–6).[9] In Atthis' epitaph the word δωμήματα is clearly inscribed on the stone and at lines 16–17 Theios will return to the idea that he has set up the tomb himself (ἐθέμαν): Atthis' tomb is likely to have consisted of a significant building structure (see below) and δωμήματα would be appropriate to such an 'architectural' context.

2. Ἀτθίς: a rare name, whose most notable ancient bearer was a girl in the circle of Sappho (frr. 49, 96, 130 Voigt). *SGO* II 08/01/36 (first century BC) is also an epitaph for a certain Atthis; she explains her name by the fact that she was from Athens.

3. εὐξάμενος χειρῶν ἀπὸ σῶν κόνιν: 'from whose hands I had hoped to receive the dust', i.e. 'by whom I had hoped to be buried'. **ἄκριτε δαῖμον:** apostrophe of an evil *daimon* or fate (Μοῖρα) is a commonplace of inscribed epitaph and *epikedion* in general; ἄκριτος could be used of these or of the specific cause of death.[10]

5. εἰς ἐμὲ πνεῦμα λιποῦσα: the idea of leaving (behind) one's life-breath (πνεῦμα βίου) is common in epitaph, although that of leaving one's life-breath in someone or something is not; see however *IG* XII.8 93 (Imbros, third century BC): Neikephoros is buried 'having left her life-breath in the hands of his trusty wife' (ἐν χρηστῆς ἀλόχου πνεῦμα | λιπὼν παλάμαις, 4–5); *cf.* also on line 17 below. The concept is perhaps more familiar from Latin sources: *cf.* Ovid *Met.* 7.860–61 (Procris leaves her breath in Cephalus: *in me infelicem animam nostroque exhalat in ore*); *CIL* 6.6593 (an imitation of the Ovid?).[11]

[5] See pages 73–74 of J. Zingerle, 'Lexikalische Beiträge', *Glotta* 19 (1931) 72–85.

[6] E. Kalinka, *Tituli Lyciae linguis Graeca et Latina conscripti Fasc. 1* (Vienna 1920) no. 205.

[7] Blümel (n.4) 160.

[8] M. Barth and J. Stauber, *Inschriften Mysia & Troas: Olympene* (Packard Humanities Institute CD no. 7 1996) no. 2764.

[9] D. McCabe, *Didyma Inscriptions: Texts and List* (Packard Humanities Institute CD no. 6 1991) no. 564 II.

[10] For example, D. McCabe, *Teos Inscriptions: Texts and List* (Packard Humanities Institute CD no. 6 1991) no. 564 II (third century BC or later); *IG* IX 12 2:232a (second century BC).

[11] Many thanks to a *JHS* referee for pointing out these Latin examples.

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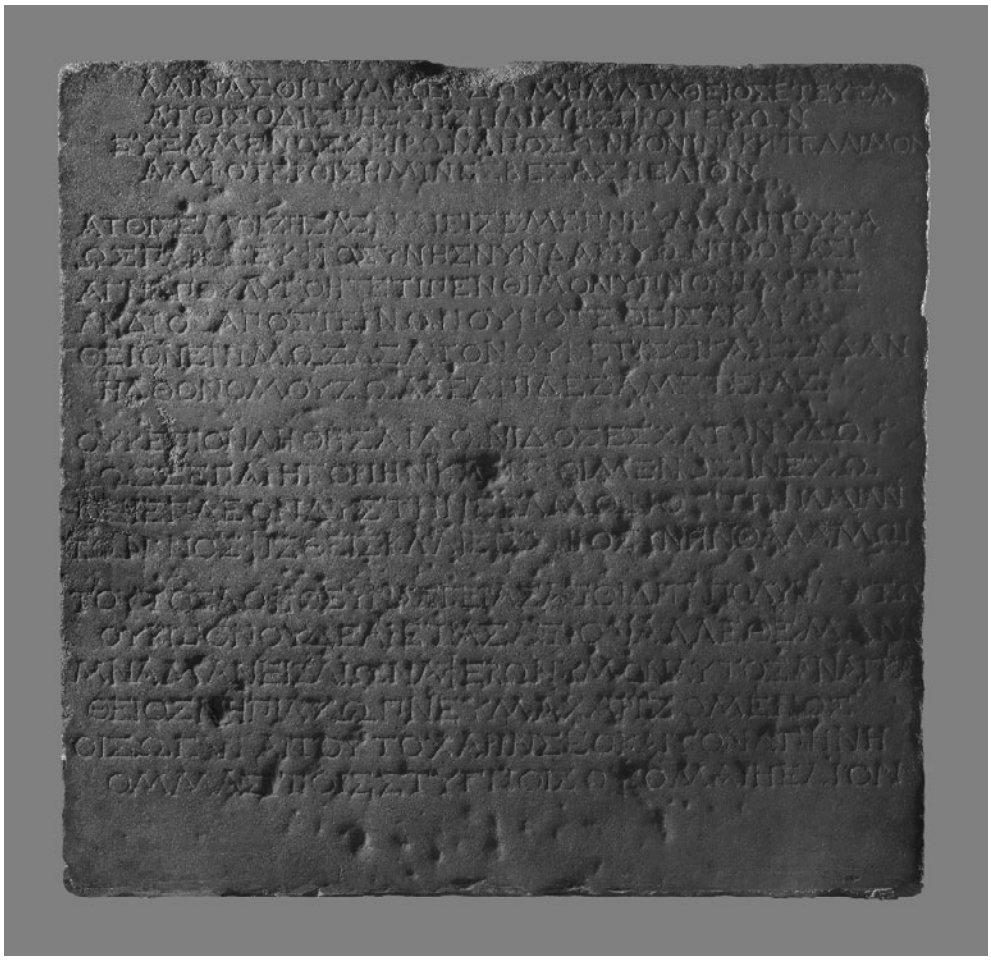


Fig. 1. *SGO* I 01/01/07, 'The Epitaph for Atthis' (courtesy of the British Museum)

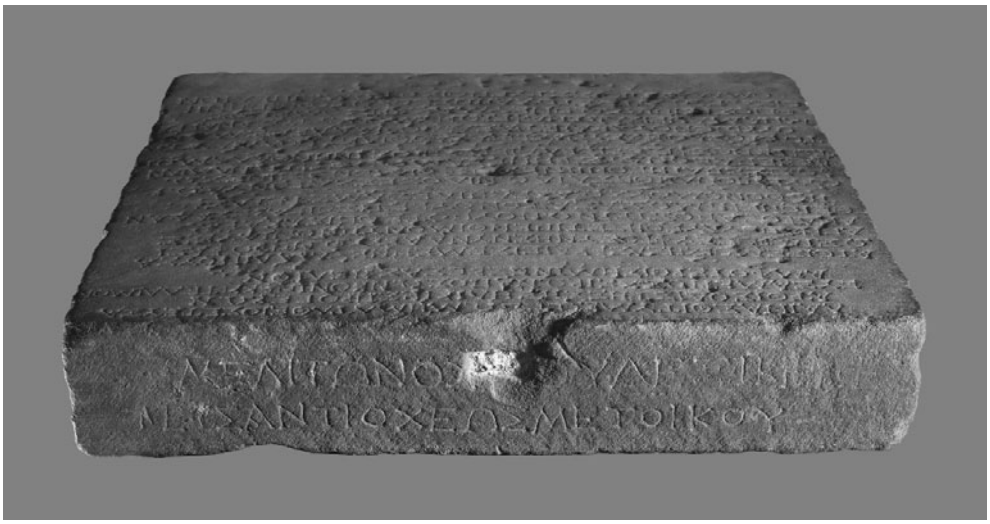


Fig. 2. Blümel 409, epitaph for Meliton (courtesy of the British Museum)

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7. πουλυγόητε: (*πολυγόητος) attested only here. **τί πένθιμον ὕπνον ἰαύεις:** an adjective modifying ὕπνον + a form of ἰαύω ('to sleep, pass the night') is a formulation regularly found in the Homeric *Hymns* and Hellenistic poetry: *cf.* especially *h.Hom.* to Aphrodite: τί νυ νήγρετον ὕπνον ἰαύεις; ('Why do you now sleep an unwaking sleep? 177); see also *h.Hom.* to Hermes 289; Callimachus *Aet.* fr. 75 Pfeiffer line 2; Posidippus 100 A–B line 1; Theoc. 3.49; also Soph. *Ajax* 1204 (a choral passage).
8. ἀνδρὸς ἀπὸ στέρνων οὔποτε θεῖσα κάρα: reminiscent of Catullus 3.8, concerning Lesbia's sparrow: *nec sese a gremio illius mouebat.*[12]
11–14: Atthis responds to her husband.
11. οὐκ ἔπιον Λήθης: *cf.* Lucian *Dialogues of the Dead* 28: when Protesilaus begs Pluto to be allowed to return to earth Pluto asks: Οὐκ ἔπιες, ὦ Πρωτεσίλαε, τὸ Λήθης ὕδωρ; (2.1) (on the idea of refusing to drink Lethe-water see section V below). **ἔσχατον ὕδωρ:** elsewhere only at *Orphic Argonautica* line 1104.
12. παρηγορίην: uniquely in Atthis' epitaph it is the deceased who claims to have 'consolation'; in the other two epitaphic attestations of the word we find the dead person claiming rather that it is the tomb which will provide consolation for the living: in a first-century BC inscription from Temenothyrai in Phrygia (*GVI* 849) the tomb for an Italian legionary was erected 'so that even in a foreign land [the surviving relatives] might have consolation' (ὅφρα καὶ ἐν ξείνῃ σχῶλσι παρηγορίαν, 14–15), while a monument for a dead child in Termessos (Pisidia, Asia Minor) is to serve as a 'consolation to his father' (πατρὶ παρηγορία, *TAM* III 550.8).[13]
13. ἀμιάντων: on the stone this last word of the hexameter runs onto line 14 (ἀμιάν|των).
15–20. Theios speaks again, though his words do not seem to mark a direct response to his wife.
16. ἀλλ' ἐθέμαν: ἀλλά emphatically marks the turn away from the 'proposition' of the first three stanzas and towards the 'resolution' of this final one.
19. χάριν σέο: reprises χαριζόμενος in the previous line.
20. ὄμμασι τοῖς στυγνοῖς: στυγνός can mean 'gloomy' or 'sullen' (*cf.* LSJ *s.v.* II) and is used of someone's expression (πρόσωπον) at, for example, Aesch. *Ag.* 639 and Eur. *Alc.* 777.

II. The stone

II.i. The stone and the tomb in the eastern necropolis

The top width of the stone (see Fig. 2) bears the following inscription, which as Newton observed probably indicates that the same stone had previously been used as another person's tomb-marker[14] (such reuse would not be out of the ordinary):

Μελίτωνος [τ]οῦ Δεξικρά-
τευς ᾽Αντιοχέως μετοίκου.

[The tombstone of?] Meliton, son of Dexicrates,
a metic from Antioch.

Christof Berns, an archaeologist who has extensively surveyed the Cnidian tombs, suggests to me that the probable concealment of this top edge combined with the fact that Atthis' inscription is

[12] One of the most interesting aspects of this inscription that is regrettably beyond the scope of this initial study is its relationship with the epitaphic language and conceits found in Roman elegy. For example, one thinks immediately of the similarity of premise in Propertius 4.7 and 4.11, poems which also explore the possibility of a dead woman addressing her husband (or lover) from beyond the grave.

[13] R. Heberdev, *Tituli Pisidiae linguis Graeca et Latina conscripti. Tituli Termessi et agri Termessensis* (Vienna 1941).

[14] Newton (n.1) vol. 2.2 no. 53 (768) (vol. 1 pl. XCIV) = Blümel (n.4) 409.

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adapted to the dimensions of the stone (and does not run across multiple stones belonging to a continuous wall) makes it more likely that for her the block was used as a *loculus* slab, that is as the covering stone to a slotted tomb (see Fig. 3, of Cnidian *loculi* tombs whose covering slabs are no longer in place).[15] A *loculus* tomb frequently belonged to a larger tomb ensemble (the case in Fig. 3) which housed the graves of multiple individuals, often from the same family. But while the nearly-square shape of this block and the reuse of the stone are suggestive of a *loculus* slab, the epitaph alone (as Dr Berns further points out to me) would, puzzlingly, seem to imply a more grandiose monumental tomb: in the inscription Theios places particular significance on the fact that he has built (or more likely commissioned) 'the stone chambers of this tomb' himself (line 1, a point which he re-emphasizes at 16–17).[16]

II.ii. Dating and letter forms

Newton concluded that all of the inscriptions found in the church ('with one exception', though he does not indicate which) were of the 'Roman period': 'Most of them probably belong to the second and third centuries A.D.'.[17] However, on the basis of literary criteria, Kaibel judged the epitaph for Atthis no older than the first century BC,[18] and the first century is indeed the chronological scope printed by all subsequent editors but Peek, who allows a wider possible range (second to first century BC). The strong *apices* that mark the lettering throughout the inscription and the use of the broken-bar *alpha* both corroborate the late second or first century BC as a plausible provenance:[19] the letter forms and the comparative evidence of other dated inscriptions from the area[20] alone admit of a (conservative) chronology for the epitaph that ranges from the second century BC to the first AD.

II.iii. Articulation of the inscription

Stanzaic division

The inscription is clearly divided on the stone into four strophes or 'stanzas' (the first, second and fourth are uttered by Theios, the third by Atthis), which are separated from each other by an interlinear space about as tall as a line of lettering. The stanzas are of four, six, four and six lines respectively (an A-B-A-B pattern), and as a result the poem seems also to fall naturally into two halves of ten lines each: the first ten-line section comprises Theios' apostrophe of Atthis (in two stanzas), while the next ten-line section consists of her response (one stanza) and Theios' final stanza.

[15] Christof Berns *per e-litteras* (4 May 2009). A drawing of the same monument (Tomb 1 in the south necropolis) appears as fig. 37 on page 155 of I.C. Love, 'Knidos-Excavations in 1967', *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* 16/2 (1967) 133–59; on the necropolis, see also page 153 of I.C. Love, 'A preliminary report of the excavations at Knidos, 1969', *AJA* 74/2 (April 1970) 149–55.

[16] The importance of considering sepulchral inscriptions in their 'visual, archaeological, or topographical' contexts is discussed on pages 4–9 of G.J. Oliver, 'An introduction to the epigraphy of death: funerary inscriptions as evidence', in G.J. Oliver (ed.), *The Epigraphy of Death* (Liverpool 2000).

[17] Newton (n.1) vol. 2.2 475.

[18] Kaibel (n.4) 75: 'I a. Chr. n. saeculo non antiquior titulus rara quadam verborum compositionisque arte conspicuus'.

[19] Noteworthy features among the letter forms (each about 1.75cm tall) also include: *epsilon* with a shorter second horizontal *hasta*; non-lunate *sigma* and *epsilon*; cursive zeta (Z); *theta* with a small horizontal *hasta* that does not touch the inside of the circle; *mu* with oblique *hastae* which are straight and do not splay outward at the bottom; *pi* with a slightly shorter second vertical *hasta*; *xsi* with no vertical *hasta* (Ξ); full-size *omicron*; *upsilon* with no horizontal *hasta* at the bifurcation; *phi* with a reduced circle-size; and *omega* with slightly extended horizontal *hastae*.

[20] For example, Blümel (n.4) 171 = Newton (n.1) vol. 2.2 745, no. 28 (vol. 1 pl. XC), first half of the second century BC (extremely similar but for the non-oblique *hastae* of the *mu*); Blümel (n.4) 185 = Newton (n.1) vol. 2.2 no. 43, second to first century BC (with less-pronounced *apices*).

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Fig. 3. Cnidian *loculus* tombs (courtesy of Christof Berns)

Also articulated in stanzas is a 24-line epitaph for a certain Ammonia[21] (discussed in further detail below), an elegiac inscription on a *stele* from Heracleopolis, Egypt which is startlingly similar to Atthis' and thought to date to the second half of the second century BC. In this poem, each of the three stanzas (of ten, six and eight lines respectively) is delivered by a different person: the first by the anonymous 'epigraphic' or 'epigrammatic' narrator, the second by Ammonia's husband Harmodius and the third by Ammonia herself – like Atthis, Ammonia speaks from the world of the dead. In Ammonia's inscription, however, the two stanzas that follow the first are inscribed under the heading of ἄλλο. This heading is rare, and when it does appear it is usually used to separate a series of epigrams (*Konkurrenzgedichte*) on stone[22] or to separate 'epigrams by a single author or on a repeating topic in papyri and manuscripts'.[23] Gow remarked that in such contexts the word has two possible meanings: it 'may be equivalent to τοῦ αὐτοῦ – "another [epigram] by the same author as the preceding"' or to 'εἰς τὸ(ν) αὐτό(ν) – "another [epigram] on the same theme"'.[24] Notable examples of this use of ἄλλο in papyri include *P.Cair.Zen.* 59532 (third century BC), which contains two different epitaphs – the first in

[21] Peek (n.4) *GVI* 1873 = E. Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine* (Paris 1968) no. 33; for a discussion of the inscription, see F. Zucker, 'Grabgedicht aus Herakleopolis', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 40 (1954) 118–23.

[22] An early example (431 BC) of a stone containing *Konkurrenzgedichte* is Peek *GVI* 20: two epigrams from a Polyandrion tomb in Athens' Kerameikos: cf. W. Peek, 'Ein milesisches Polyandrion', *Wiener Studien* 79 (1966) 218–30.

[23] K.J. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands: Hellenistic Epigrams in Context* (Berkeley 1998) 22.

[24] 'The meanings do not exclude each other, and in *AP* ἄλλο may sometimes cover both': A.S.F. Gow, *The Greek Anthology: Sources and Ascriptions* (London 1958) 29. On ἄλλο, see also P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford 1972) vol 2. 863; pages 453–54 of U. Wilcken, 'Nachtrag zu den Kairener Zenon-Papyri', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 6 (1920) 447–54.

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elegiacs, the second in iambics – on a dog who saved his master's life,[25] and *P.Louvre* 7172 ('P.Firmin-Didot', pre-161 BC), a papyrus that preserves, among other literary extracts, two epigrams of Posidippus on the lighthouse at Pharos and the Temple of Aphrodite Arsinoe at Zephyrium (Posidippus 115 and 116 A–B).[26]

Surprisingly, however, in the case of Ammonia's epitaph the heading ἄλλο does not introduce separate poems, but rather lines by different speakers within a single dialogue.[27] Given the stark similarities of both 'dramatic' form and content between Ammonia and Atthis' epitaphs, as well as the separation of stanzas on Atthis' by a single empty line (whose 'editorial' significance seems analogous to the unusual inscription of ἄλλο in Ammonia's case), it is tempting to think that the developed dialogue form of the epitaphs represents a certain evolution of *Konkurrenzgedichte* into longer single poems consisting of multiple stanzas.

Indentation of pentameters

Both the first and last stanza of Atthis' epitaph also importantly display clear *eisthesis* of the second 'pentameter' line of each elegiac distich, though this is irregular in stanza 2 (where only line 10 appears to be indented). In stanza 3 the letters των of line 13's ἀμιάντων run onto line 14, compromising the *eisthesis* of the line (there is however no clear reason as to why indentation should be absent from lines 6 and 8). Indented pentameters do not seem to appear much before the Common Era in Greek inscribed elegy, thus the *eisthesis* of the inscription would seem to recommend a date at least later in the first century BC.[28]

III. Formal features

III.i. Metre (elegiac couplets)

The rhythm of the hexameters is heavily dactylic: no line uses more than three spondees; every fourth foot is a dactyl, and in nine out of ten instances (the exception is line 1) the third foot, too, is dactylic: the fairly restrictive metrical aesthetic here is, therefore, to use Fantuzzi and Sens' preliminary formulation, aligned with 'Callimachean' principles of hexameter composition. These principles were in general less rigorously adhered to by the authors of anonymous epigrams on stone[29] (note however that the rhythm of Ammonia's epitaph, too, is *vorwiegend daktylisch*[30]). The outer metric of the inscription is thus marked by a degree of metrical precision that suggests a highly competent and 'literary' poet.[31]

[25] Gutzwiller (n.23) 22 (with bibliography).

[26] *Cf.* Gutzwiller (n.23) 22; see also pages 105–08 of D. Obbink, 'New old Posidippus and old new Posidippus: occasion and edition in the epigrams', in K.J. Gutzwiller (ed.), *The New Posidippus: A Hellenistic Poetry Book* (Oxford 2005) 97–118.

[27] 'Die drei Teile der Inschrift, durch zweimaliges ἄλλο getrennt, bieten nicht, wie meist in solchen Fällen, Variationen desselben Gedankens, sondern zuerst fortlaufende Mitteilungen und dann ein Gespräch': Zucker (n.21) 119.

[28] See R.D. Anderson, P.J. Parsons and R.G.M. Nisbet, 'Elegiacs by Gallus from Qasr Ibrim', *JRS* 69 (1979) 125–55 (the pentameters on the Gallus papyrus are indented): 'But Greek papyri, so far as I know, do not indent; nor do Greek inscriptions before the imperial age' (130). In Latin elegy indentation of the pentameter occurs as early as 101 BC (an elegiac inscription from Corinth): see pages 86–87 of S. Dow, 'Corinthiaca VI: the Latin elegiacs of ca. 101 B.C. VII. Greek elegiacs of the Roman Empire', *HSPh* 60 (1951) 81–100.

[29] M. Fantuzzi and A. Sens, 'The hexameter of inscribed Hellenistic epigram', in M.A. Harder, R.F. Regtuit and G.C. Wakker (eds.), *Beyond the Canon* (Hellenistica Groningana 11) (Groningen 2006). Fantuzzi and Sens demonstrate that there were poets outside the Alexandrian literary élite (such as 'professional epigrammatists who worked on commission and had no real connection to the inner centers of cultural privilege or authority') who nevertheless abided by '"Callimachean" metrical practice' (106).

[30] Zucker (n.21) 121.

[31] There is already evidence from the Classical period for professional poets writing epitaphs (for example, Eur. *Tro.* 1188–91).

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The inner metric also indicates formal competence: each hexameter displays bucolic diaeresis and also avoids word-ending both within the fourth-foot biceps ('Hermann's Bridge') and after a trochee or spondee in the second foot, if the word began in the first ('Meyer's First Law'). As is the case with Callimachean hexameters, each hexameter in the inscription has a caesura in the third foot. Of these caesurae, two are 'masculine' (lines 1 and 3). Seven lines also display a fifth-foot caesura (1, 5, 7, 13, 15, 17, 19), two of which are masculine. The total ratio of masculine to feminine caesurae is thus about 1:3, and a strong preference for the feminine caesura (which in general is more common in elegiac than stichic hexameters) is also evident in the poetry of Callimachus.[32]

III.ii. Dialect

One perplexing feature of the inscription is its varied dialectal texture. The trait of *Dialektmischung*, specifically of Ionic and Doric forms, has been observed in at least a few Greek elegiac inscribed epitaphs from Egypt and dated to the second half of the second century BC. One of these is Ammonia's[33]; another two come from Hassai bei Edfu and are signed (which is itself extremely rare) by a certain Herodes, perhaps a professional poet of epitaphs.[34] In Atthis' poem, the alternation of east and west Greek forms appears to occur along stanzaic lines: stanzas 1 and 3 use only Ionic η for Doric long α, while stanzas 2 and 4 show distinct Doric colouring.[35] The contrast is sharpest between stanzas 3 and 4, given that Atthis' language, especially in comparison with Theios' in the preceding line (ζωᾶς ἐλπίδες ἀμετέρας, 10), is distinctly non-Doric: in her two distichs we find Λήθης[36] (11), παρηγορίην (12), δύστηνε (13) and χηροσύνην (14), though elsewhere the Doric alternatives Λαθας and δύστανε are attested.[37] Theios' final stanza then contains two eye-catching forms typical of the Doric *koine*: ἀρετᾶς (16) and μνάμαν (17).[38] While the very fact of dialectal variation may constitute a kind of *Kunstsprache* marking the composition as poetic, the nature of the variance raises the question of whether Atthis' distichs were meant to have an Ionic flavour in contrast with her husband's: possible though speculative explanations include that Atthis was a foreigner (her name is suggestive of Attica: see on line 2 above), or even that the poet of this inscription somehow imagined the natural 'dialect' of the dead to be Ionic (perhaps thanks to the Homeric *nekyiai*?).[39]

[32] See pages 48–50 of F. Allen, 'On Greek versification in inscriptions', *Papers of the American School of Classical Studies* 4/3 (1888) 35–204.

[33] *Cf.* Zucker (n.21) 119, 121.

[34] Herodes' epitaph for a woman named Aphrodisia is signed Ἡρώδης ἔγραψεν; the one for Apollonius is signed Ἡρώδου: Bernand (n.21) nos 5, 35. On the poems, see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, 'Zwei Gedichte aus der Zeit Euergetes' II', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 1 (1901) 219–25. I thank an anonymous referee for pointing out that *IG* 12.5.30 (Paros, second century BC) represents another example of a signed epitaph: the last line tells us that Διονύσιος Μάγνης ποιητὴς ἔγραψεν.

[35] Cnidus was a Doric foundation. On the Doric *koine* see C.D. Buck, *The Greek Dialects* (Chicago 1928): 'a type of modified Doric […] prevails in the inscriptions of the last three centuries B.C.' (it retained 'a majority of the general West Greek characteristics, but with a tendency to eliminate local peculiarities') (176).

[36] The form Λάθα occurs seven times in Sacco's repertory of Lethe references in funeral epigram (six of these belong to the second/first centuries BC): G. Sacco, 'Lethe negli epigrammi funerari', *Epigraphica* 40 (1978) 40–52.

[37] Λάθας: *Tr. Adesp.* 372 Snell-Kannicht (line 4); *AP* 7.711 line 6; Peek (n.4) *GVI* 1585 (Cyzicus, second to first century BC). δύστανε: Soph. *OC* 542; Eur. *Med.* 442, 995; Theoc. 15.31.

[38] Kaibel (n.4) 204: 'Utraque enim binorum distichorum stropha ionice, utraque ternorum dorice scripta est [...] sententiarum tamen quam dicunt strophicam responsionem frustra quaeres'.

[39] See A. Sens, 'Doricisms in the new (and old) Posidippus', in B. Acosta-Hughes, E. Kosmetatou and M. Baumbach (eds), *Labored in Papyrus Leaves* (Washington DC 2004) 65–83 on the potential socio-political significances of Doric forms in epigrams by Posidippus of Pella.

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III.iii. Dialogue structure

Although a commonplace of epitaphs is an address (pronounced by the dead or the tomb itself) to the passer-by, until its final stanza Atthis' epitaph seems much like a private conversation between husband and wife that is only 'overheard' by the reader.[40] A part of Greek burial ritual documented in early Byzantine sources (but which had its roots in antiquity) was the τελευταῖος ἀσπασμός, or 'final greeting' of the deceased,[41] and it seems likely that Theios' address to Atthis, with all of its threnodic *topoi* (see below) represents (or documents?) something of this ritualized last goodbye: we might compare, for example, the Chorus' highly 'epitaphic'[42] farewell to the dead Alcestis in Euripides' *Alcestis* (lines 435–76). Atthis' inscription however imagines Atthis' response from Hades to her husband's farewell, and this feature marks its participation in what might be considered a small subset or sub-genre of 'dramatic' epitaphs whose defining characteristic is the scripting of a dialogue between a married couple at (especially the wife's) tomb-side.[43]

Six such epitaphs (including Atthis') appear in Peek's editions[44], and each of these variously elaborates the basic structure of a husband's apostrophe to his wife at her grave and his wife's response.[45] *CEG* 530 (*IG* II^2 12067), an Athenian epitaph from the fourth century BC, also suggests a similar interaction; here the 'final farewell' is explicitly marked with the pronouncement of χαῖρε ('hail and farewell') by both husband and wife:[46]

> χαῖρε, τάφος Μελίτης· χρηστ-
> ὴ γυνὴ ἐνθάδε κεῖται· | φιλοῦντα
> ἀντιφιλοῦσα τὸν ἄνδρα Ὀνήσιμ-
> ον ἥσθα κρατίστη. | τοιγαροῦν ποθεῖ
> θανοῦσάν σε, ἥσθα γὰρ χρηστὴ γυνή. – – |
> καὶ σὺ χαῖρε, φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, ἀλλὰ
> τοὺς ἐμοὺς φίλει. |
>
> Hail, grave of Melite; a good woman lies here.
> By loving your husband Onesimos in response to his love, you were the best.
> He thus longs for you now that you have died, for you were a good woman.
> Hail, you too, dearest man, and love my own (tr. Tsagalis).

[40] For 'the intense privacy' (and especially 'domestic privacy') of some Hellenestic grave monuments, see J. Bruss, *Hidden Presences: Monuments, Gravesites, and Corpses in Greek Funerary Epigram* (Leuven 2005) 56–57.

[41] See page 31 of M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Lanham MD and Oxford 2002): 'the ancient ritual custom of passionate invocation at the tomb is known to have persisted, alongside the literary convention of epigrams in dialogue form'.

[42] For example, κούφα σοι | χθὼν ἐπάνωθε πέσοι, γύναι, 'May the earth lie light above you, lady' (462–63).

[43] For a Hellenistic sepulchral epigram that plays with the idea of such a dialogue, see Philetas of Samos 2 Gow-Page = *AP* 7.481. In the first two lines of this epitaph a young girl's grave *stele* speaks, but in the second distich the narrative voice informs us that the girl's words are a response to her father (who is imagined as mourning at her tomb): χὰ μικκὰ τάδε πατρὶ λέγει πάλιν· ῞Ισχεο λύπας ('and the little girl says these things back to her father: "Leave off your grief"'): *cf.* A. Bettenworth, 'The mutual influence of inscribed and literary epigram', in P. Bing and J.S. Bruss (eds), *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram* (Leiden 2007) 69–93, page 77.

[44] Peek (n.4) *GVI* 1873–77, 1880. A striking Roman example of a dialogue-epitaph is *CIL* 6.1252, a three-part epitaph for the wife of a freedman who lived in the reign of Tiberius. On the front of the stone is a six-line elegiac epigram in Greek; each side of the stone also contains another poem (of 12 lines on the left; of 14 on the right). These three 'parts' can easily be read as *Konkurrenzgedichte*: see E. Courtney, *Musa Lapidaria* (Atlanta 1995) no. 180 with commentary; *cf.* also G. Hutchinson, *Propertius: Elegies Book IV* (Cambridge 2006) 231 (on the same page Hutchinson mentions Atthis' epitaph in passing). I am grateful to a *JHS* referee for pointing out this inscription.

[45] In Peek (n.4) 1875, the wife (Thermis) speaks first to her husband (Simalos); in 1877 the inscription (second century AD?) is from a sarcophagus that the husband has built for both himself and his wife.

[46] C. Tsagalis, *Inscribing Sorrow: Fourth-Century Attic Funerary Epigrams* (Berlin and New York 2008) 260: 'the composer of the epigram invites his fictive reader to assume that the speaker in the "second person" verbs of the [first] three verses is Melite's husband'.

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However, the epitaphic dialogue most reminiscent of Atthis' own (and perhaps also closest in date) is again the 24-line epitaph for Ammonia from Heracleopolis, Egypt. In the first of the inscription's three stanzas an anonymous narrator informs the passer-by (ὁδῖτα, 1) that the tomb belongs to Ammonia from Naucratis, who died in childbirth at the age of 35 and left three children (Arsinoe, Matron and Themisto) behind. Here the epitaphic narrator also lays emphasis on the fact that her husband has performed the funeral rites himself:

χείρεσσι δ' ὅμευνος
Ἁρμόδιος κτερίσας τῶιδ' ἐπέκρυψε τάφωι (5–6)

with his own hands her husband
Harmodius, having given her due honours, covered her with this tomb

In the second stanza of the epitaph Harmodius himself addresses his wife, lamenting that her death has orphaned their children and left grief and bitter tears in the house (δάκρυα λυγρά, 13; compare how Theios calls Atthis δακρύων πρόφασι, 'source of tears', 5). Harmodius ends his stanza on the same note as Theios concludes his first address to Atthis, with the suggestion that he cannot go on living apart from her: τὶ δ' ἐγὼ σοῦ δίχα φῶς ἔθ' ὁρῶ; (16) ('How will I go on looking at the light without you?').

Both husbands' addresses thus express strong feelings of abandonment and desolation with similar formulations. In Ammonia's case, however, it is her own response which concludes the poem: she commands her husband to leave off his lament (λῆξον στερνοτύποιο γόου, 17; compare Theios' address of Atthis as πουλυγόητε in his line 7), a commonplace of the dead's speech in sepulchral epigram and lament. She then consoles him with a number of epitaphic platitudes:[47] it is useless to lament over a deaf (or mute κωφός, 18) tomb;[48] hers is now the house of the dead (οἰκιά μοι νεκύων, 21); giving oneself over to grief is in vain (μάτην); and death is the road that all shall travel (πᾶσιν δ' ἥδ' ὑπόκειται ὁδός, 24).

Ammonia's reaction to her husband's grief contrasts sharply with Atthis' response to Theios (she calls him πλέον δύστηνε, thus apparently encouraging his sadness). Nevertheless, the fact that these texts otherwise resemble each other so closely suggests that their authors were writing within (or at least with an acute awareness of) a very specific sepulchral tradition, that is a tradition of epitaphs that 'staged' intimate dialogues at the tombside[49] and possibly grew out of the practice of writing sepulchral *Konkurrenzgedichte*; here too the fact that both Ammonia's and Atthis' epitaphs use an unusual melange of Doric and Ionic forms is notable. The dialogue found in these epitaphs moreover represents a marked departure from the far more common question-and-answer dialogues in which a passer-by elicits information from the deceased (or his tomb), of the kind that are frequent in both the corpus of inscribed epitaphs[50] and the seventh book of the *Palatine Anthology*.[51]

[47] On γνῶμαι in epitaph (with special reference to fourth-century Attic cases) see Tsagalis (n.46) 17–61.

[48] *Cf.* also in Roman elegy Propertius 2.13.57–58: *sed frustra mutos revocabis, Cynthia, Manis,* | *nam mea qui poterunt ossa minuta loqui?*

[49] The use in stonecutters' workshops of epitaphic 'handbooks' (which would have contained thesauri of appropriate sepulchral phrases and motifs) has long been postulated: for the Latin-language evidence see R. Cagnat, 'Sur les manuels des graveurs d'inscriptions Romaines', *Revue de Philologie* 13 (1889) 51–65; see also pages 10–11 of B. Mclean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (Ann Arbor 2002).

[50] *Cf.* Peek (n.4) *GVI* 1833–72.

[51] Important examples of this include Callimachus 31 Gow-Page = *AP* 7.524; Dioscorides 22 Gow-Page = *AP* 7.37; Meleager 121 Gow-Page = *AP* 7.79; Leonidas 70 Gow-Page = *AP* 163; Antipater of Sidon 22 Gow-Page = *AP* 164; also Posidippus 19 Gow-Page = 142 Austin Bastianini = *APl.* 16.275. On dialogues in epitaphs and epigram (with a number of examples), see pages 306–28 in M. Fantuzzi, 'The epigram', in M. Fantuzzi and R. Hunter (eds), *Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic Poetry* (Cambridge 2004) 283–349.

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IV. The 'Epitaph for Atthis' and lament

In line 7 of the epitaph Theios addresses Atthis as πουλυγόητε, a word that Newton observed must mean 'much lamented'[52] but which is not otherwise attested in literary sources or known inscriptions. This word's suggestion of γόος (ritual lament), especially considered in light of the number of threnodic *topoi* that appear in the poem, particularly in Theios' first ten lines (the first two stanzas), raises the question to what extent the epitaph should be understood as documenting – or at least suggesting – a ritual lament. While Day importantly demonstrated that some Archaic epitaphs already contained 'stylized narratives of funerary ritual, and others are a kind of script of funerary lament or eulogy',[53] Rossi has shown that Day's observations concerning the sepulchral poetics of Archaic and Classical epitaphs are even more valid for post-Classical epitaphs.[54] Indeed the inscription for Atthis, in which we find multiple references to Theios' construction of her tomb (and so to funeral ritual), is perhaps the most extensive personal lament to have been preserved in the epigraphic record.

IV.i. The 'Epitaph for Atthis' and traditional topoi *of lament*

In the Homeric poems, 'the γόος is a private genre performed by individuals among relatives or close friends, but often also in a larger public context'.[55] Eight γόοι in direct speech occur in the Homeric poems and in each instance of these 'ritual lament is viewed as part of the γέρας θανόντων',[56] or the 'due of the dead'. Theios' ten-line opening apostrophe of his deceased wife shares a number of characteristics with the Homeric γόοι that belonged to this 'due': for example, a Homeric mourner 'draws a contrast between the deceased and herself, paralleled by a contrast between the past in which the deceased was still alive and the present in which he is dead, often marked with νῦν'.[57] Such a contrast is explicit at line 6 of Atthis' epitaph, where Theios calls his wife 'once [πάρος] a source of happiness, now [νῦν] of tears'; it is also further developed at 8–9 ('You who never moved your head from your husband's chest, | but now have deserted Theios who is no more').[58] Furthermore, Alexiou has discussed how 'Inseparable from the contrast between past and present in the ancient lament was the contrast between mourner and dead',[59] and this contrast too is particularly important to Theios' rhetoric in the first two stanzas of the epitaph, where he makes insistent use of first- and second-person pronouns. Other elements of ritual lament evident in the inscription include what Alexiou calls the motifs of 'wish and curse'[60] (Theios 'had hoped to receive the dust' from Atthis' hands, 2–3) and 'praise and reproach'[61]: Theios accuses Atthis of having abandoned him (ἐρημώσασα, 9), and a tone of accusation also seems to characterize his question 'why do you sleep the mournful sleep?' (7). Although a number of ancient Greek epitaphs exhibit one or more of these *topoi* of lament, the variety that appears in Theios' lines (as well as the fact that his lines are presented as direct speech) suggests a relationship with oral traditions of lament that is more than casual. Additionally, when at line 15 Theios calls 'this' (τοῦτο) the γέρας of Atthis' *sophrosyne*, the ambiguity of the signification

[52] Newton (n.1) vol. 2.2 769.

[53] Page 24 of J. Day, 'Rituals in stone: early Greek grave epigrams and monuments', *JHS* 109 (1989) 16–28.

[54] L. Rossi, 'Lamentazioni su pietra e letteratura trenodica: motivi topici dei canti funerari' *ZPE* 126 (1999): 29–42.

[55] K. Derderian, *Leaving Words to Remember: Greek Mourning and the Advent of Literacy* (Leiden 2001) 31, n.64. Alexiou (n.41) distinguished θρῆνος (performed by professional mourners) and γόος as the two principal forms of ritual lament (102–03). On Homeric lament see also C. Tsagalis, *Epic Grief: Personal Laments in Homer's Iliad* (Berlin 2004).

[56] Derderian (n.55) 34. Achilles is explicit on this point at *Il.* 23.9: 'let us lament Patroclus, for this is the due of the dead' (Πάτροκλον κλαίωμεν· ὁ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θανόντων).

[57] Derderian (n.55) 36; *cf.* Alexiou (n.41) 166.

[58] Alexiou (n.41) identified the contrast of past and present as a theme that recurs 'in the lament throughout the Greek tradition' (171), though with some diachronic variation in the details: 165–71.

[59] Alexiou (n.41) 171.

[60] Alexiou (n.41) 178–81.

[61] Alexiou (n.41) 182–84.

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admits of the possibility that the inscribed poem itself, the lament to which it gestures, and the 'eternal, name-bearing monument' of the tomb (as well as Theios' own labours in constructing it) all ought to be construed as belonging to Atthis' γέρας, the 'due' of her purity.

A number of the *topoi* of Homeric lament listed above are also mentioned in section 16 'On Monody' (περὶ μονῳδίας)[62] of Menander Rhetor's treatise *On Epideictic Oratory*[63] (περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν, second half of the third century AD).[64] This section consists of a set of instructions on how to compose a funeral 'monody', an epideictic speech whose purpose is 'to lament and to show pity' (θρηνεῖν καὶ κατοικτίζεσθαι).[65] Menander identifies 'the divine Homer' as an early teacher of monody[66] and explains that he will therefore take the 'starting points'[67] of his own elaboration on the subject from the poet. Striking here is the precision with which the voice of Theios satisfies in his first stanza a number of this treatise's prescriptions for a 'monodic' oration: Menander explains, for example, that if the mourner is closely related to the deceased he should lament for his own desolation (τὴν ἐρημίαν ὀδύρεται τὴν ἑαυτοῦ, 434 line 24; *cf.* Theios' claim that Atthis has deserted him, ἐρημώσασα, at line 13 of the epitaph). The mourner should also inveigh against (σχετλιάζειν) the *daimones* and unjust fate responsible for the death (πρὸς δαίμονας καὶ πρὸς μοῖραν ἄδικον, 435 lines 10–11; *cf.* Theios' apostrophe of the ἄκριτος δαίμων at line 3). In general the monody should be arranged so as to address three 'time periods' (χρόνους): the present grief, past happiness and the dashing of future hopes ('what hopes the family had in him', οἵας εἶχεν ἐλπίδας ἐπ' αὐτῶι τὸ γένος, 435 line 29; *cf.* Theios' claim that 'along with you my life's hopes (ἐλπίδες) went to Hades' at lines 9–10). Thus, although Menander Rhetor's treatise probably postdates Atthis' epitaph by a couple of centuries, it is remarkable how many of his prescriptions have been fulfilled by the poet of the inscription.

IV.ii. Male lament

While the ritual Homeric γόος is typically a female speech-act, Menander Rhetor clearly presumes a male orator.[68] He identifies Priam's speech at *Il.* 21.416–28 as just such a monodic speech (λόγος μονωιδικός, 434 lines 13–14; one thinks also of Achilles' laments for Patroclus at *Il.* 18.324–42 and 23.19–23). He further explains that although monodies are generally delivered for those who have died young (ῥηθείη δ' ἂν μονωιδία καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἐπὶ τῆι αὐτοῦ γυναικὶ λέγοντος· 436 lines 24–26), a monody may also be delivered by a husband speaking it for his wife. Menander also prescribes that in this situation the husband should mention animals who mourn for lost mates (such as swans and swallows), the only motif that he cites which in no way appears in Theios' 'lament' for Atthis.[69]

Male mourning in Attic tragedy is the subject of a recent study by Suter, who demonstrates that lamentational speech in tragedy is by no means an essentially female act.[70] Building on the work of Wright, who established certain 'diagnostic' criteria for identifying lament in Greek

[62] For commentary on this section, see D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford 1981) 346–50.

[63] See M. Heath, *Menander: a Rhetor in Context* (Oxford 2004). A less substantial and detailed treatment of rhetoric appropriate to *epikedion* speeches is to be found in [Dionysius of Halicarnassus] *Ars Rhetorica* (Section 6, μέθοδος ἐπιταφίων).

[64] On Homer in Menander Rhetor and the view of Homer as the inventor of ancient rhetoric, see F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh 1972) 34–40.

[65] Men. Rh. 434 line 19 Russell-Wilson.

[66] Men. Rh. 434 lines 11–12.

[67] τὰς ἀφορμάς, Men. Rh. 434 line 16.

[68] Poets of the later Hellenistic period also seem to have experimented with poetic forms of male lament, of which Moschus' *Lament for Bion* is a clear example; largely modelled on that poem is Ovid *Am.* 3.9 (the 'Lament for Tibullus'): see J.D. Reed, 'Ovid's elegy on Tibullus and its models', *CPh* 92/3 (1997) 260–69. On the lament for Moschus (as well as Bion's 'Epitaph for Adonis') and Menander Rhetor's precepts for funereal 'monody', see F. Manakidou, 'Epitaphios Adonidos and Epitaphios Bionis: remarks on their generic form and their content', *MD* 37 (1997) 27–58.

[69] Men. Rh. 436 line 26, 437 line 1.

[70] A. Suter, 'Male Lament in Greek Tragedy', in A. Suter (ed.), *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond* (Oxford 2008) 156–80.

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tragedy,[71] Suter argues that in a number of plays which dramatize male laments (18 of the 42 passages of tragic lament identified by Wright are delivered by men)[72] there is no textual suggestion that the lament serves in any way to 'feminize' the mourner.[73] Furthermore, in tragedy male and female laments seem to show no differences in terms of 'occasion, strophic structures, meters, topoi, or linguistic features'.[74] Suter does however identify a pattern unique to male lament whereby the act of lamentation 'leads to the male's redemption and reintegration into his proper society':[75] this, she argues, is the case in (for example) Euripides' *Alcestis*, in which Admetus' lament for his wife (861–933) and expressions of remorse for her death (954–60) are followed by the appearance of Heracles, the revival of Alcestis and the re-establishment of Admetus' household order.[76] In the last stanza of Atthis' epitaph Theios declares his determination to go on living for the sake of his and Atthis' child, and we might even understand the 'narrative' suggested by this inscription as also resolving itself (in the final couplet) with Theios' reaffirmation of his household through his declaration of renewed dedication to his child: Theios' 'lament' leads not to anger, but to closure.

IV.iii. Alcestis 'stylization'

In both its premise and poetics Theios' initial ten-line lament for Atthis is similar to the lines delivered by Admetus just before his wife's death in Euripides' *Alcestis.* For example, like Theios Admetus considers the loss of his wife as tantamount to his own death:

> σοῦ γὰρ φθιμένος οὐκέτ' ἂν εἴην
> ἐν σοὶ δ' ἐσμὲν καὶ ζῆν καὶ μή (278–79)
>
> for with you dead I would no longer exist,
> My living and not-living rests with you.

Admetus' declaration is strongly echoed in Theios' own drastic description of himself as 'Theios who is no more' (Θεῖον ... τὸν οὐκέτι, 9). While such disheartened pronouncements by husbands who have lost their wives may not come across as altogether surprising, the dialogue structure of Atthis' epitaph does intrinsically recall a dramatic scene where the essential premise is also the death of a beloved wife. What is more, we know that quoting the story of Alcestis (whether verbally or visually), at least during the Roman era, was one way of stylizing a wife's death: a second-century AD epitaph from Sardinia informs the passer-by that in life the woman outshone Alcestis (σιγάσθω δ' Ἄλκηστις, 19) in dedication to her husband.[77] Certain of the myth's scenes are also carved on a small number of Roman sarcophagi, where representations of Alcestis serve as allegories for a wife's virtue.[78] It is therefore likely that by the time the epitaph for Atthis was composed an 'Alcestis-paradigm' for viewing and/or stylizing the death of a dear and devoted wife had entered into the Graeco-Roman world's repertory of funereal themes and motifs.

[71] E. Wright, *The Forms of Lament in Greek Tragedy* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania 1986). On lament in *Alcestis*, see now also L. Swift, *The Hidden Chorus: Echoes of Genre in Tragic Lyric* (Oxford 2010) 350–64.

[72] See Suter (n.70) Appendix at 171–72.

[73] The 'full' male laments (according to Wright's (n.71) criteria) are Teucer's in Soph. *Ajax* 992–1039; Creon's in Soph. *Ant.* 1261–1346; Oedipus' in Soph. *OT* 1307–366.

[74] Suter (n.70) 165.

[75] Suter (n.70) 166.

[76] Suter (n.70) 164–65.

[77] Peek (n.4) *GVI* 2005.

[78] S. Wood, 'Alcestis on Roman sarcophagi', *AJA* 82 (1978) 499–510; *LIMC* 1 *s.v.* Alkestis. For an ancient meditation on Alcestis' exceptional virtue, see Pl. *Symp.* 179b–c. On 'tragic vocabulary' in fourth-century Attic funerary epigrams, see Tsagalis (n.46) 269–71 (Tsagalis finds four parallels with lines from *Alcestis* in his corpus of epitaphs).

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V. Memory, forgetfulness and consolation: an interpretation

In the previous sections I have discussed how the poet of Atthis' epitaph shows virtuosity with the thesaurus of tropes and motifs available to lament and *epikedion*, as well as to epitaph more specifically: these commonplaces include the idea that the survivor had wanted to be buried by the person whom he has had to bury instead; 'the mourner is unwilling to outlive his loss';[79] death is like sleep;[80] the wife was a model of chastity/fidelity (σαοφροσύνα); and the tomb (μνάμα) is a permanent agent of memory.[81] Thus given the many sepulchral clichés that appear in Theios' lines, it is perhaps surprising that Atthis' four lines are comparatively free of them, particularly of those typically uttered by the dead to the living: she never asks Theios, as the dead in their epitaphs so often do, to leave off mourning.[82] Instead she seems to encourage him in his grief, calling him 'more wretched' (πλέον δύστηνε, 13) as it is he who has suffered the widowing (χηροσύνη, 14) of their untainted bedroom. Nor, moreover, does Atthis remind Theios that death is a fate common to all.

In this last section, my aim is to develop a reading of the inscription that centres on the uniqueness of Atthis' lines and foregrounds the importance of the different strains of memory, forgetfulness and consolation that are voiced by the poem's two 'competing' speakers. I argue that the final synthesis of Atthis' and Theios' opposing models, which culminates in Theios' resolution to carry on living, constitutes an extraordinary move on the part of the poet which ultimately enables him to transform so many epitaphic *topoi* into a highly original and complex example of inscribed sepulchral literature.

V.i. 'I did not drink of the Lethe...'

Theios ends his first speech on a bleak note: with Atthis, he declares, 'my life's hopes went to Hades' (10). Atthis, however, despairs less for her own situation and unlike Theios lays a claim to some consolation: 'I did not drink of the Lethe […] | And so I have the consolation [παρηγορία] of you, even among the dead' (11–12). Atthis' statement here is an unusual and so remarkable one, but a survey of the Lethe's appearance in earlier sources may help to shed light on its significance. A river with the Lethe's particular quality of inducing forgetfulness does not appear in literary sources before Plato's *Republic*,[83] at the end of which Socrates recounts what a man named Er is said to have seen in Hades, where in the company of a group of souls (who had just chosen their new lives, *Resp.* 617d–620e) he traversed the Plane of Lethe. The group then camped by the River of No Cares (παρὰ τὸν ᾽Αμέλητα ποταμόν), and there

> μέτρον μὲν οὖν τι τοῦ ὕδατος πᾶσιν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι πιεῖν, τοὺς δὲ φρονήσει μὴ σῳζομένους πλέον πίνειν τοῦ μέτρου· τὸν δὲ ἀεὶ πιόντα πάντων ἐπιλανθάνεσθαι. (621a–b)
>
> everyone had to drink a certain measure of the water, and those who were not saved by their own good sense drank more than their share. And whoever took a drink forgot everything.

The souls then fell asleep, and in the middle of the night amidst thunder and earthquakes they were borne aloft 'to birth, like shooting stars' (621b). Er noticed that it was the souls' own

[79] So R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Roman Epitaphs* (Urbana 1962) 203.

[80] See Lattimore (n.79) 164 and, for example, Callimachus' epitaph on Saon of Acanthus (41 Gow-Page = *AP* 7.451).

[81] A Homeric idea: see C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *'Reading' Greek Death: To the End of the Classical Period* (Oxford 1995) 139–40.

[82] On the theme, see Lattimore (n.79) 217–18.

[83] Hes. *Theog.* 227 calls Lethe the daughter of Eris (not of Hades, as Theios calls her in our poem), and the 'plain of Lethe' is mentioned in Arist. *Ran.* 185, though in neither of these texts does the image of Lethe water or any 'water of oblivion' appear.

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measure of φρόνησις that dictated how much of the water they drank, and consequently how complete their forgetfulness (λήθη) of Hades and their prior lives would be.[84]

It has been suggested that in Socrates' 'Myth of Er' Plato was drawing upon an 'Orphic taboo'[85] against drinking the water of the Lethe, for on a number of 'Orphic' *lamellae* (inscribed golden leaves buried with mystery initiates, found in tombs from Italy to Macedon and Crete to Lesbos) the dead receive express prohibitions against drawing near a spring whose water causes forgetfulness.[86] The leaf from Hipponium (*ca.* 400 BC),[87] for example, begins with the epigraph 'This is the work of Mnemosyne' (Μναμοσύνας τόδε ἔργον)[88] and tells how, when the soul of the deceased arrives in Hades, she will encounter a spring (κρήνα). At this spring 'souls of the dead refresh themselves' (ψυχαὶ νεκύων ψύχονται, 4), but the leaf warns the soul not to approach anywhere near it (ταύτας τᾶς κράνας μηδὲ σχεδὸν ἐγγύθεν ἔλθηις, 5). Instead, the soul must continue onward, where she will find τᾶς Μναμοσύνας ἀπὸ λίμνας | ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ προρέον (6–7) (cool water flowing from the lake of Mnemosyne). Guards stand watch at this lake and will ask the soul what her purpose is; she must say that she is the 'child of Earth and starry Heaven' (10), and tell them that she is thirsty and demands a drink:

ἀλ‹λ›ὰ δότ' ὤκ̣α
ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ πιέναι τῆς Μνημοσύνης ἀπὸ λίμ‹ν›ης (11–12)

but quickly give [me]
cool water to drink from the lake of Mnemosyne.

With very slight deviation, the same directives can be found on leaves from Sicily[89] and southern Italy (Petelia[90] and Pharsalos[91]); variations on an abbreviated form of the instructions also occur on all of the *lamellae* which have been found in Crete (*PEG* II.2 478–484a).[92] The Orphic leaves mentioned thus far together make up what is conventionally known as Group B,[93]

[84] On 'The Myth of Er' and reincarnation, see S. Halliwell, *Plato Republic 10* (Warminster 1988) 21–23; on the River Ἀμελής, memory and death, see J.-P. Vernant, *Mythe et Pensée chez les Grecs* (Paris 1969) 79–94.

[85] L. Albinus, *The House of Hades: Studies in Greek Eschatology* (Aarhus 2000) 143. See M.L. West, *Orphic Poems* (Oxford 1983) 1–3 for the view that there was no 'Orphism', only Orphic texts.

[86] On the Orphic leaves, see generally G. Pugliese Carratelli, *Le lamine d'oro orfiche. Istruzioni per il viaggio oltremondano degli iniziati greci* (Milan 2001); F. Graf and S.I. Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets* (London and New York 2007). On the fountain they mention (which is generally thought to be a fountain of the Lethe), see especially A. Bernabé and A.I.J. San Cristóbal, *Instructions for the Netherworld: The Orphic Gold Tablets* (Leiden 2008) 29–35. Bernabé and San Cristóbal mention the epitaph for Atthis in their survey of the history of the Lethe, but only in passing: 'The "water of forgetfulness" is also mentioned by an inscription of the 1st century B.C., in which a dead spouse consoles her widower (*IKnidos* 303, 11): "I did not drink the last water of the forgetfulness of Hades", which means that she still preserves her identity and still remembers her husband' (30). As Sacco's study (n.36) demonstrates, however, the mere fact that the Lethe is mentioned in Atthis' epitaph is not itself remarkable.

[87] *PEG* II.2 474 = Graf-Johnston 1. For bibliography, see *PEG* II.2; especially G. Foti and P. Carratelli, 'Un sepolcro di Hipponion e un nuovo testo orfico', *PP* 29 (1974) 91–126. See also F. Ferrari, *La fonte del cipresso bianco* (Turin 2007) 115–40.

[88] *Cf.* the reconstructed [Μνημοσύ]νης τόδ‹ε› ἔργ[ον in line 12 of the leaf from Petelia (*PEG* II.2 476, also fourth century BC, from southern Italy); *cf.* also Μνημοσύνης τόδε δῶρον ἀοίδιμον ἀνθρώποισιν in line 3 of the leaf from Rome (*PEG* II.2 491, 260 BC).

[89] *PEG* II.2 475 = Graf-Johnston 8.

[90] *PEG* II.2 476 = Graf-Johnston 2.

[91] *PEG* II.2.477 = Graf-Johnston 25.

[92] One of these is from a Roman cemetery near Rhethymnon, which shows that the leaves were still used even in the period (first century BC) to which Atthis' epitaph probably dates.

[93] The grouping (of eight leaves) was first made by G. Zuntz (*Persephone: Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia* (Oxford 1971) 355–93). See R. Janko, 'Forgetfulness in the golden tablets of memory', *CQ* 34 (1984) 89–100 on the inclusion of the leaves from Hipponium (publ. 1974) and Thessaly (publ. 1977) in Group B.

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a group whose member texts have been argued to derive from a single archetype.[94] Two of the group's *lamellae* also preserve lines promising the soul – if she follows instructions – an élite place among the dead. On the leaf from Hipponium (*PEG* II.2 474) this haven is with 'other initiates and Bacchants' (καὶ ἄλλοι | μύσται καὶ Βάκχοι, 14–15), while according to the leaf from Petelia (*PEG* II.2 476) it is among the 'heroes' (ἄ[λλοισι μεθ'] ἡρώεσσιν, 11).[95]

There are in fact two known epitaphs that appear to name the Lethe in a way that neatly corresponds to the directives from Group B of the leaves. A sepulchral inscription from Miletus (*GVI* 1829, second century BC?) begins οὐ Λήθης (*sc.* 'did you drink'; the line is fragmentary) and narrates how beautiful-ankled Hermes has whisked the soul of the dead man up to Olympus where he shines among the stars (ἄστροις ἅμα λάμπεις) and dwells with the 'blessed' (μακάρων, 8). In an epitaph from Egypt (*GVI* 1090, second century BC?), a Lycian boy buried in Abydus tells the passer-by that he now serves the throne of Osiris (Abydus was the traditional site of Osiris' cult centre and tomb).[96] He explains that even children of immortals must follow the 'fated path', but that Kyllenian Hermes bore him to the Elysian plane with the other children of the gods. The boy then caps his epitaph with a claim similar to the one made by Atthis: 'and I did not drink a draught of the Lethe' (καὶ λήθης οὐκ ἔπιον λιβάδα, 10). Thus *GVI* 1829 and 1090 both link, just like the Orphic *lamellae*, a soul's choice not to drink the Lethe with the possibility of enjoying an exceptional status in the afterlife.[97] It is for this reason that Atthis' claim in her own epitaph to have refused the 'final water' of the Lethe in order to retain the memory of her husband as her consolation among the *unexceptional* dead is of more consequence to the poetic strategies of the inscription than it may first appear.

Atthis' epitaph in effect represents an important step toward what we might see as a kind of 'secularization' of the Lethe, whereby the poet has in a sense domesticated the concept of rejecting this water by defining personal relationships, rather than religious precepts, as the scope of memory. There are in fact some other instances of epitaphs for deceased wives in which the dead woman claims that her love for her husband persists after death: in a third-century BC epitaph from Melos (*IG* XII.3 1190 = Kaibel 189), for example, she claims that 'even in death I love my husband' (Στέργω καὶ φθιμένα τὸν ἐμὸν πόσιν, 1; Atthis uses the similar phrase κἀν φθιμένοισιν, 12). Yet no inscription (nor any poem for that matter) before the epitaph for Atthis construes the retention of affectionate memory in death as the result of having avoided the Lethe. This is perhaps explained by the fact that, in at least the case of the Orphic leaves, the reason that memory in death is desirable has nothing to do with preserving bonds between the living and dead, but is rather predicated solely on the need to remember elements of 'mystery' rites and precepts. It is for this very purpose that the hymnic 'I' of the Orphic *Hymn* to Mnemosyne (from the Imperial period?)[98] asks the goddess to 'arouse memory' in the initiates (μύσται) (again, some Orphic leaves call themselves the ἔργα of Mnemosyne):

> ἀλλά, μάκαιρα θεά, μύσταις μνήμην ἐπέγειρε
> εὐιέρου τελετῆς, λήθην δ' ἀπὸ τῶν‹δ'› ἀπόπεμπε (9–10).
>
> But, blessed goddess, arouse in your initiates memory
> of the sacred rite, and send forgetfulness ('Lethe') away from them.

[94] For a summary of attempts (and objections raised to the endeavour) see Janko (n.93) 90.

[95] The last three lines of Janko's (n.93) reconstruction of Group B's archetype (199) synthesize these verses. On the idea of an archetype for the leaves, see also Ferrari (n.87) 118–21.

[96] Bernabé has amassed much evidence for the Orphic mysteries' connections with Osiris and Egypt: *PEG* II.2 40–63.

[97] On other epitaphs in which 'we catch an echo of Orphic phrase', see P. Gardner, *The Sculptured Tombs of Hellas* (New York 1896) 205–06.

[98] On the problem of dating the Orphic hymns, see A.N. Athanassakis, *The Orphic Hymns* (Missoula 1977) vii–viii.

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A parallel for the kind of 'domestication' of mystic motifs that I am suggesting is at work in Atthis' epitaph might even be seen in the group of 'Alcestis' sarcophagi mentioned above. Wood's analysis of one of these sarcophagi (Ostia, second century AD; for a married couple) reads its inscription, which identifies the female as a priestess of Magna Mater (whose cult followers believed in an afterlife),[99] in relation with its visual representations of Alcestis and Admetus. Wood convincingly deduces the couple's hope for reunion in the afterlife: here then is another instance where a spiritual/metaphysical concept has been transformed into a source of private comfort. In addition, the work of Cole has shown that many Greek sepulchral inscriptions contain assorted references to mystery religions[100] – but while there is ample evidence that mystery, especially Dionysiac, religion was vigorous in the Cnidus of Atthis' time,[101] here I wish simply to suggest that in very general terms this epitaph attests to a shift in the construction and expression of the Lethe taboo, away from the 'religious' and towards the sphere of personal relationships.[102]

V.ii. Economies of consolation

On the other hand, there are at least two particular *loci* in this poem (one before and one after Atthis' stanza) that function as clues to the more conventional or 'traditional' nature of the way in which Theios himself construes (Atthis') death. In line 7, he asks his wife 'why do you sleep the sorrowful sleep', where likening death with sleep was a conceit that was ancient already by Atthis' time. In Homer, for example, sleep and death are twins (ὕπνος καὶ θάνατος διδυμάονε, *Il.* 16.672) and the Underworld's 'meadow of asphodel' lies at the borders of the realm of dreams (δῆμος ὀνείρων, *Od.* 24.12).[103] Sacco has moreover shown that ὕπνος and λήθε can be linked in epitaph 'come connotati della morte',[104] and when Atthis begins her stanza by denying the Lethe (perhaps in oblique answer to Theios' question as to why she 'sleeps'), she also effectively rejects Theios' idea that death is like sleep (or unconsciousness, or λήθη).[105]

The second clear instantiation of Theios' more 'epic' construction of death and memory is spread over the fourth stanza, where he once again draws attention to the physical tomb that he has made (ἐθέμαν...αὐτός, 16–17). He calls it a γέρας (15) and μνάμαν...φερώνυμον (17), phrases that point back to 'epic' ideology: as discussed above, in Homer the tomb and funeral rites are called the γέρας θανόντων;[106] the importance of preserving one's name is also certainly an insistent Homeric theme. Thus in quoting, and even reinventing, the *topos* of shunning the Lethe – one that seems to have originated alongside the concept of the water itself, in the unconventional eschatologies of, for example, the *Republic* and Orphic texts – Atthis' speech taps into a 'spiritual' tradition of beliefs about death that seem to be very different from those suggested in her husband's lines. The presence of this dichotomy suggests that two very

[99] See bibliography in Wood (n.78) especially 504.

[100] S.G. Cole, 'Voices from beyond the grave: Dionysus and the dead', in T.H. Carpenter and C.A. Faraone (eds), *Masks of Dionysus* (Ithaca 1993) 276–95.

[101] Some of the evidence is collected on pages 198–99 of W. Quandt, *De Baccho ab Alexandri Aetate in Asia Minore Culto* (Halle 1912).

[102] Following a discussion of eschatological themes in Pindar's *threnoi*, Rossi (n.54) observes that in the fourth century BC epitaphs began to exhibit 'questo nuovo modo di vedere l'oltretomba' and to contemplate the possibility that the soul could be separated from the body and attain a sort of divine status in death. It is not until the beginning of the second century that inscriptions exhibit these sorts of themes with an 'intento consolatorio nei confronti dei vivi' (34).

[103] On sleep and death in Homer, see Albinus (n.85) 90–97.

[104] Sacco (n.36) 49.

[105] For the view of death as sleep as diametrically opposed to death as migration of the soul, see notably Plato *Apol.* 32d, where Socrates says that δυοῖν γὰρ θάτερόν ἐστιν τὸ τεθάναι: it is either to pass into a state of no longer existing, perceiving or feeling (like ὕπνος) or a μεταβολή [...] καὶ μετοίκησις τῆι ψυχῆι τοῦ τόπου.

[106] *Il.* 16.457=675. See Sourvinou-Inwood (n.81): in Homer, 'it is not only the burial involving the erection of a *tymbos*-and-*stele* that is said to be the due of the dead, but also mourning and weeping for them' (129–30, n.59); see also R. Garland, 'Γέρας θανόντων', *BICS* 29 (1982) 69–80.

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different perceptions of death convene in this poem. It is, moreover, by accounting for the opposition between Theios' and Atthis' constructions of death, and especially the way that these strain against each other in the text, that I believe we can begin to understand why Theios shows signs of 'consolation' and resolves to go on 'looking upon the sun' by the end of the poem despite Atthis' apparent encouragement of his grief. In fact the presence of the two different paradigms – perhaps representing different ways in which members of Theios' and Atthis' own community in Cnidus might have viewed death – puts on display and in dialogue differing means of finding (and providing) consolation.

In order to untangle this dynamic, we might compare the systems of consolation presumed by two other sepulchral epigrams, both found in the *Palatine Anthology*. The first is, to my knowledge, the only other epitaph which presents not drinking the Lethe as a way to remain 'ancora legati, sia pure solo col ricordo, ai propri cari'.[107] The epigram, supposedly from Corinth, is undated though presumably Roman:

τοῦτό τοι ἡμετέρης μνημήιον, ἐσθλὲ Σαβῖνε,
ἡ λίθος ἡ μικρὴ τῆς μεγάλης φιλίης.
αἰεὶ ζητήσω σε· σὺ δ' εἰ θέμις, ἐν φθιμένοισι
τοῦ Λήθης ἐπ' ἐμοὶ μή τι πίῃς ὕδατος. (*AP* 7.346)

A monument of our great affection, good Sabinus,
is this little stone.
I will always be looking for you. And you, if it is right, among the dead
do not drink whatever part of the Lethe concerns me.

The speaker of this poem has made, as Theios has for Atthis, a memorial (μνημήιον) which will eternally sustain his memory of his dear friend Sabinus. But he also establishes an expectation that his 'remembering' will be reciprocated when he asks Sabinus to refuse the Lethe, or at least the part of it that would make him forget his φίλος.[108] In this short epigram an economy of consolation thus operates between the living and dead through a simple system of *quid quo pro*, which is framed in terms of straightforward memory-exchange: 'I will remember you, if you promise to remember me, too.'

The other funeral epigram worth comparing to Atthis' own is the one surviving poem ascribed to the epigrammatist Heraclitus of Halicarnassus (Heraclitus 1 Gow-Page = *AP* 7.465), an epitaph that narrates how a certain woman named Aretemias died in labour along with one of her babies. A curious passer-by speaks the first half of the epigram; in the second half Aretemias then narrates the story of her death. She ends by explaining that, of the twins she bore, one she left to her husband, while the other she brought with her in death as a 'keepsake' of him:

δισσὰ δ' ὁμοῦ τίκτουσα τὸ μὲν λίπον ἀνδρὶ ποδηγὸν
γήρως, ἓν δ' ἀπάγω μναμόσυνον πόσιος. (7–8)

Having given birth to two children at once, I left one to my husband
as a guide in old age, but one I led away as a memento of my husband.

[107] Sacco (n.36) 51. See also the 'anti-echo' in a first- to second-century AD Chersonnese epitaph (*GVI* 1684), all 17 lines of which are a husband's apostrophe of his dead wife: σὺ δέ θρ‹ό›ο‹ν› οὐχὶ τοκήων, | οὐ πόσιος νενόηκας, ἐπεὶ πίες ἃ στύγα Λήθης (11–12).

[108] Though perhaps coincidental, it is nevertheless striking that in both Atthis' and Sabinus' epitaph the phrase ἐν φθιμένοισι(ν) appears in the same context.

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Gow and Page identified this last thought a 'novel turn' in Greek poetry, explaining that 'memories are usually left to the survivors by the dead';[109] similarly consolation (παρηγορία) usually comes to the living through the funeral monument, rather than to the dead through memory (*cf.* my discussion *ad* line 12 of Atthis' epitaph above). But here memory, with its attendant potential for providing solace, is distributed equally between the surviving husband and the deceased wife in the 'physical' form of their children. The balance Aretemias describes is thus a simple inversion of the system proposed by the friend of Sabinus: she and her husband will draw comfort from the 'mementos' of each other which they each now possess, rather than from the knowledge that each is remembered by the other.

The generation and distribution of consolation is, however, still more complicated in the epigram for Atthis. Her poem uses premises paralleled in the examples above (i.e. the idea of not drinking the Lethe and the 'novel turn' identified by Gow-Page in Aretemias' epitaph), but, on the other hand, jumbles the two logical systems: Atthis is consoled by her own memory of Theios, who himself would seem to draw consolation from the monument that he has constructed to bear forever Atthis' name (line 17). Thus here husband and wife lay claim to consolation via their differing methods of ensuring each's memory of the other: Atthis' consolation, which derives from refusing the Lethe, represents a more mystical and certainly less epically-rooted strategy than Theios', which is to build a monument, the physicality and ideological import of which are emphasized in this epitaph to an unusual degree. With this monument (and with this epitaph), Theios seems satisfied that he can generate a kind of κλέος for his wife by means of an enduring (εἰς αἰῶνα, 17) physical artefact of her virtues, 'unequal' to them as it might be. This is all then further complicated by the fact that both 'voices' of Atthis' epitaph are blended into the single voice of the epigrammatic 'narrator' (that is, Theios?). Despite how he presents himself, are we to imagine Theios as understanding and even accepting both his own and his wife's strategies of solace?

The delicate 'economy of consolation' in this inscribed epitaph thus operates on the level of both the individual and the pair. While Atthis and Theios each provide for their own consolation within individual frameworks, the unity of the couple is reinforced by the possibility that consolation derives also from the knowledge which each has by the end that the other has found a private source of comfort: once Atthis pronounces that she has παρηγορία, the sun returns (however cruel it is) for her husband. Theios, as putative architect of the epitaph, has thus succeeded in finding a degree of consolation despite having begun the poem with lament and in hopelessness. And perhaps even this complex and delicate layering of strategies of consolation (and levels of knowledge), remarkably accomplished here via so many epitaphic *topoi*, is alone enough to bear out the truth of Charles Newton's statement that this inscription should be 'particularly noticed'.[110]

[109] A.S.F. Gow and D. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams 2* (Cambridge 1965); see also pages 116–17 of R. Hunter, 'Callimachus and Heraclitus', *MD* 28 (1992) 113–23.

[110] Newton (n.1) vol. 2.2 475.

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