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MARTA GONZÁLEZ GONZÁLEZ, *Funerary Epigrams of Ancient Greece. Reflections on Literature, Society and Religion*, London (Bloomsbury Academic) 2019, 213 pp., £ 90,00, ISBN 9781350062429 (hardback edition); 2021, £ 28,99, ISBN 9781350182882 (paperback edition).

As part of a new wave of interest in inscribed Greek epigrams, the volume under review offers a general presentation of Greek metrical epitaphs. It focuses primarily on their literary aspects and considers their historical and chronological contexts in order to derive information about the society that created them and the religious beliefs of the people by whom they were commissioned to commemorate loved ones.

Although this is not reflected in the title (or subtitle), the analysis is limited to a specific time frame: the selection involves only epigrams from the archaic and classical ages, from the sixth to the fourth centuries B.C. (with occasional exceptions), especially from Attica, although evidence from other areas is included. Priority is given to those epitaphs whose material context (stelai, statues) survives. As G(onzález) G(onzález) rightly stresses, texts are better understood when the monument they were supposed to interact with is also preserved. Although Greek funerary art is notoriously very stereotypical, several cases show that text and monument complement each other (a phenomenon known as ‘intermediality’, an exegetic category which is not mentioned in the book, but which fits epigrammatic poetry particularly, since from the very beginning this genre was conceived as a combination of two different *media*<sup>1</sup>). A particularly interesting example of such an interaction is provided by CEG 102, inscribed on a marble with a *loutrophoros* (Kerameikos, *in situ*, ca. 400 B.C.). The presence of the *loutrophoros* informs us that the boy to whom the monument is dedicated perished before marriage, although there is no reference to this circumstance in the text. This allows us to partially rectify the widespread belief that the topic of death before marriage is mostly reserved for young unmarried girls: «marble *loutrophoroi* indicate the graves of those dead before marriage, of either sex, but they are more frequent on the grave of men than of women, who married much earlier» (p. 70). This is a very interesting observation, which prompts further thoughts: possibly, the different emphasis on the theme of death before marriage in epitaphs for girls compared to ones for boys does not depend only on age differences and/or statistical reasons, but on the different degree of importance assigned to marriage itself by women compared to men. While epitaphs for young men may draw on a wide selection of themes to show what life possibilities death has deprived them of, in the case of women, who are almost exclusively associated with the domestic sphere, there is not much to grieve for apart from the impossibility for them to get married and have children. Grave monuments for boys may thus limit themselves to visually alluding to the theme of death before marriage, while the epitaph may have a different focus; in the case of women, there is basically no choice.

A brief *Introduction* (pp. 1-8) clearly states the aims of the book and thoroughly reviews previous works on the topic. Eight chapters follow.

Ch. 1 (*The funerary landscape: a reflection of the world of the living*) and 2 (*The literary form: tears of Simonides... and Pindar*) are of an introductory nature, and although they do not contain much new information, they effectively summarise complex questions.

Ch. 1 aims to reconstruct the archaeological landscape and describes the evolution of Greek funerary practices and the general traits of the art that emerges from them. G.G. rightly stresses the growing tendency towards ostentation in Athenian grave monuments, which apparently was not affected by Solonian sumptuary enactments. Ch. 2 introduces the reader to the literary aspects of the Greek funerary epigram and stresses «its conscious incorporation into tradition» (p. 25), which involves echoes from previous literature – from Homer to elegiac poetry, to tragedy – embedded in the new, catchy form of a short poem designed to be engraved in a limited space. G.G. tries to explain how the private metrical epitaph differs from other similar genres, such as the *epitaphios logos* and the public metrical epitaph in the *demosion sema*. She reviews representative examples of epitaphic literature, from Simonides' famous poems related to the Persian Wars to Pindar's *threnoi*. She concludes that epitaphs share considerable points of contact with the threnody and the *encomium*, although – as Bruno Gentili maintains – they are not in themselves lamentations for the deceased, «but rather an exhortation to a proper mourning for the dead» (p. 34)<sup>2</sup>. Drawing on previous scholarship – especially on an article by Gregory Nagy<sup>3</sup> – she also notes the progressive 'democratisation' of ideas of excellence (*arete*): by the fourth century B.C., they were no longer the privilege of a specific social group, but reflected shared values.

The main focus of ch. 3 (*Phrasikleia, forever a maiden. Kroisos, whom raging Ares destroyed*) is two exceptional – and much studied – memorials from the archaic age, Phrasikleia (a funerary *kore* crafted by the famous artist Aristion of Paros) and Kroisos (a *kouros*), taken as splendid examples of fine funerary art preserved together with their epigrams. A discussion of other archaic epitaphs of young nobles closes the chapter. Although most of the ideas contained in these pages are not new, G.G. offers an admirable synthesis of previous scholarship and of the most relevant issues raised by these monuments (and related texts). Her discussion is always clear, well-balanced, and interspersed with sensible remarks. I particularly appreciated, for its methodological value, her observation (p. 51) that if the epitaph for Parthenika, where the name of her sister, Damoklea, appears, had been found in Attica instead of Thera, scholars would probably have associated it with the Alcmaeonids, as they do with Phrasikleia, given the popularity of names derived from the root *kleos* within the family<sup>4</sup>.

Ch. 4 (*How to deprive the year of its spring*) offers some new insights on a much-studied theme: mourning for the death of young people, one of the most widespread motifs in funerary epigrams. Particularly persuasive is G.G.'s new interpretation of the symbolism of the mirror represented on Attic stelai of the classical period. Without totally discarding alternative interpretations offered by previous scholars (as the author observes, the mirror is a polysemic iconographic element, whose meanings are partly defined by the context in which it appears), she envisages the mirror as an indication of both gender (female) and age/status (maiden vs married woman). This conclusion is reached through the observation that the surviving stelai can be divided into two types: (1) woman looking at herself in the mirror (alone or accompanied by another female figure); (2) woman displaying a mirror (never alone; these scenes always involve two or more characters). In the former case, the mirror indicates a maiden, in the latter a married woman (as shown by the presence of other members of the family, children and husband included).

Ch. 5 (*Immortal remembrance of friends*) focuses on epitaphs dedicated not by family members, as is most usual, but by intimate friends. Particular attention is paid to a well-known epitaph – that dedicated by Euthylla to her friend Biote – which raises interesting

questions about friendship between women in the ancient world, an unexplored topic, owing to the scarcity of our sources. G.G. persuasively concludes that the context rules out both the idea that the two women are courtesans, and that they are members of the same family; Euthylla and Biote must have been friends, although the degree of intimacy between the two women is impossible to determine. Her warning against the temptation to use the modern categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality when interpreting ancient *philotes* is sound and commendable. The parallel with Erinna's verses for the death of Baucis (p. 80), already pointed out by several scholars, is useful, although the discussion could have profited from previous scholarship on the topic (there is no mention, for instance, of C. Neri, *Erinna. Testimonianze e frammenti*, Bologna 2003, the standard edition of the poetess).

Ch. 6 (*Wives and their masters*) focuses on epitaphs for husbands and wives. The analysis carried out in these pages raises interesting gender issues, which complement those addressed in the preceding chapter, and in other parts of the book (the different roles of women and men in Greek society is one of the *files rouges* of the work; it is thus surprising not to find any reference to work specifically devoted to this topic, such as A.-M. Vérilhac, *L'image de la femme dans les épigrammes funéraires grecques*, in A.-M. V. (ed.), *La femme dans le monde méditerranéen*, I. *Antiquité*, Lyon 1985, 85-112). G.G. points out that men are remembered as husbands not in their own memorials, where allusions to the family sphere are very rare, but in those of their wives, who are regularly praised for their domestic virtues (among the examples discussed is *CEG* 530, Melite's stele, found in Piraeus and dated to ca. 465-340 B.C.; here it is analysed in the light of the positive model of a wife represented by the bee-woman in Sem. fr. 7,86 W.<sup>2</sup>). Without providing any specific examples, she informs the reader that epitaphs where the profession of the woman is mentioned do exist, and that in all likelihood those women «were also wives, even though their memorial does not mention it». She then concludes that the *corpus* of epitaphs analysed shows «the relative importance, for men and women, of being married» (p. 111).

Ch. 7 (*Powerful enemies: childbirth, the sea*) focuses on two types of epitaphs where the cause of death is stated (an uncommon feature in Greek epitaphs): death in childbirth and death at sea. While the former is obviously an exclusively female death, the latter is a predominantly (though not exclusively) male. G.G. thus tries to draw a parallel between these two types of epitaphs, and stresses possible points of contacts involving language and metaphors. One example is the choice of the term *κυμτόχος* (v. 2) in the third-century epitaph from Larissa for Potala, who died in childbirth<sup>3</sup>: this compound, which may be translated as 'of child-birth', literally means 'that produces waves'; as such, it reminds the reader of the waves at sea as a cause of death in the epitaphs of victims of shipwrecks. While the attempt to link the two types of epitaphs is, to my mind, not particularly convincing, the chapter contains several interesting observations: e.g. in the above-mentioned epigram for Potala, the epitaph states that, as a consequence of her death in childbirth, the deceased can be called «neither a complete woman nor a maiden» (οὔτε γυνή πάμπαν κεκλημένη οὔτε τι κόρη, l. 3). As G.G. aptly remarks, this affirmation «offers us another piece of information: the young woman had not yet had any other children. The woman was a true *gyne* (γυνή) when she became a mother, and not from the fact of being married» (p. 120). Equally interesting is the discussion of Plut. *Lyc.* 27,2, which opens the chapter (pp. 114s.). Here the widely adopted emendation {τῶν} λεχοῦς instead of the transmitted τῶν ἰεῶν introduces a parallel between men who died in battle and women who died of childbirth. G.G. convincingly argues for the opportuneness of retaining the transmitted text, but this

makes the passage not immediately relevant to her discussion: one wonders whether it might have been better for the author to make this text the focus of a separate publication, and then to refer the reader to the latter in her book (especially since she draws upon her previous publications elsewhere in the volume).

Ch. 8 (*Reward for piety... next to Persephone*) focuses on eschatological allusions in funerary epigraphy, a quite exceptional phenomenon for the archaic and classical ages. In this case, the funerary monument – as the reader is often reminded in the book – commemorates the dead in a retrospective sense: it does not «anticipate the future with allusions to a promise of life after death, but articulates present social ideals and represents a certain ideology» (p. 97). Resemblances to expressions used in the famous *lamellae aureae*, focusing on Persephone, are pointed out.

*Conclusions* (pp. 147-150), *Notes* (pp. 151-187), a *Bibliography* (pp. 189-204), an *Index of Inscriptions* (pp. 204-206), a *Table of Concordances* (p. 207), and a useful general *Index* (pp. 209-213), featuring Greek words in a transliterated form, close the book.

Also worth mentioning, given the author's emphasis on the importance of studying texts and images together, is the fact that throughout the book the discussion is supported by (black and white) pictures of the most relevant monuments.

Some further remarks. On pp. 72s., the treatment of the verb ἥρπασαζ is somewhat simplistic: the author limits herself to observing that the verb denotes violent abduction, but she does not explain that the image of the dead being snatched by Hades (or by the Nymphs) is a widespread funerary *topos* (the reader could at least have been referred to the vast previous bibliography on the topic).

In describing the stele of Democlidēs, the victim of a shipwreck, G.G. poignantly remarks: «the rest of the stele is practically empty, emphasizing the loneliness of the victim in the immensity of the sea» (p. 121). In doing so, however, she disregards the possibility that the empty space on the stele may have been originally intended to be filled by a picture.

The Greek suffers from several misprints<sup>6</sup>, and other infelicities are occasionally detectable<sup>7</sup>.

The bibliography is less full than one would have expected: to the missing titles mentioned throughout this review, one should add at least V. Garulli, *Byblos lainee. Epigrafia, letteratura, epitafio*, Bologna 2012 and A. Wypustek, *Images of Eternal Beauty in Funerary Verse Inscriptions of the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman Periods*, Leiden-Boston 2013, two of the most important studies on inscribed funerary epigrams published in recent years, which – surprisingly – are never referred to.

Despite these and other criticisms which I have raised above, this book offers a very clear and manageable survey of Greek funerary epigrams and is particularly recommendable to those who are new to the subject, while at the same time offering an enjoyable and stimulating reading to a more expert audience. The author is to be commended for handling with admirable confidence a vast *corpus* of texts and for offering a multidisciplinary analysis which touches upon questions related to literature, archaeology, religion, society, history, and gender.

<sup>1</sup> Among other works on the topic, see A. Petrovic, 'Kunstvolle Stimme der Steine, sprich!' *Zur Intermedialität der griechischen Epigramme*, «A&A» LI (2005) 30-42; M. Dinter, *Inscriptional intermediality in Latin elegy*, in A. Keith (ed.), *Hellenistic Epigram and Latin Elegy*, Newcastle 2011, 7-18 and Id., *Inscriptional intermediality in Latin literature*, in P. Liddel-P. Low (edd.), *Inscriptions and Their Uses in Greek and Latin Literature*, Oxford 2013, 303-316; S. Muth-A. Petrovic, *Medientheorie als Chance. Überlegungen zur historischen Interpretation von Texten und Bildern*, in B. Christiansen-U. Thaler (edd.), *Ansehenssache. Formen von Prestige in Kulturen des Altertums*, München 2012, 281-318; L. Floridi, *Αὐδὴ τεχνήεσσα λίθου: intermedialità e intervisualità nell'epigramma greco*, «S&T» XVI (2018) 25-54.

<sup>2</sup> In Gentili's words, quoted by G.G. (p. 34), the burial epigram is «un complemento necessario della tomba per serbare tra i vivi e, in taluni casi, per affidare ai posteri la memoria del defunto» (B. G., *Epigramma ed elegia*, in *L'Epigramme Grecque*, «Entr. Hardt» XIV, 1968, 55).

<sup>3</sup> G. Nagy, *Aristocrazia: caratteri e stile di vita*, trad. it. in S. Settis (ed.), *I Greci. Storia, cultura, arte, società*, II/1, Torino 1996, 577-598.

<sup>4</sup> As pointed out by Jesper Svenbro in his pioneering book *Phrasikleia. Anthropologie de la lecture en Grèce ancienne*, Paris 1988, 13-32.

<sup>5</sup> E. Cairon, *Les épitaphes métriques hellénistiques du Péloponnèse à la Thessalie*, Budapest 2009, 274-278 (nr. 92).

<sup>6</sup> E.g. *πότε* for *ποτέ*, p. 47 (twice), 70, 118 (twice); *ἐταῖρα* for *ἐταίρα*, p. 77; *ἠδεῖα* for *ἠδεῖα*, p. 80; *οἶκος* for *οἶκος*, p. 101; *ἄιδεω* for *ἄιδεω*, p. 135.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. p. 26: Calinus for Callinus (the same misspelling in the index, p. 209) and Alberto Aloni for Antonio Aloni; p. 132: *demones* for *daimones*.

ALFRED E. HOUSMAN, *L'applicazione del pensiero alla critica del testo*, a c. di LUIGI BATTEZZATO, con estratti inediti dal *Notebook X* e uno scritto di GIAN BIAGIO CONTE, Pisa (Edizioni della Normale) 2021, 142 pp., € 9,50, ISBN 9788876427022.

Il volume, che è incentrato sulla figura di Alfred Edward H(ousman) (1859-1936) come filologo e solo marginalmente come poeta, consta di quattro diverse sezioni: la prima è costituita da un saggio introduttivo di L. Battezzato; la seconda dall'importante contributo che dà il titolo al libro; la terza da una raccolta antologica di frasi annotate da H. nel suo *Notebook X*; la quarta da un'acuta riflessione di G.B. Conte su quanto delle idee filologiche di H. trova riscontro nella moderna psicologia cognitiva. L'opera, nel suo insieme, fornisce dunque una stimolante occasione per riflettere sul pensiero di un grande della nostra disciplina: da un rapido sunto delle linee essenziali del saggio centrale converrà prendere le mosse.

Il *focus* riguarda la critica del testo, nelle attività essenziali di *recensio* ed *emendatio*: di essa si dice che è nel contempo arte e scienza, e che si basa innanzi tutto sulla ragione e sul buon senso. Sono queste, infatti, per H. le qualità che permettono di acquisire un'esatta comprensione del contesto: sia quando ci si mi-

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