

ET IN ARCADIA EGO: VERGIL THE ELEGIST

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I. SOME LATIN EPITAPHS

A. *CIL* 12.1222: Rome. Elegiacs. (trans. Warmington)

Sei quis havet nostro conferre dolore(m) / adsit nec parveis flere quead lac {h}r<i=Y>mis / quam coluit dulci gavisus
amore puella(m) / [hic locat] infelix unica quei fuerat / [donec complevit] fatorum tempora numphe / [nunc sublat]a
domu cara su {e}is tegitur / [et candor vult]us et eo laudata figura / [umbra levis nun]c est parv<u=O>s et ossa cinis

If anyone cares to add *his own* grief to ours, here let him be; and with no scanty tears let him deign to weep.
Here an unhappy parent has laid to rest his one and only daughter Nymphé whom he cherished in the joy of
sweet love while the shortened hours of the Fates allowed it. Now she is torn away from home – earth covers
her, dear to her own; now her fair face, her form too, praised as fair, – all is airy shadow and her bones are a
little pinch of ashes.

B. *CIL* 12.2138: Near Cremona (early 1st century BCE?). Senarii. (trans. Warmington)

M(arcus) Staius / M(arci) l(ibertus) Chilo / hic / heus tu viator las/se qu[i] me praete/reis / cum diu ambula/reis tamen
hoc / veniundum est tibi / in f(ronte) p(edes) X in ag(ro) / p(edes) X

Marcus Staius Chilo, freedman of Marcus, lies here. Ah! Weary wayfarer, you there who are passing by me,
though you may walk as long as like, yet here's the place you must come to. Frontage 10', depth 10'.

C. Ennius (?) on Scipio: Vahlen, *Saturarum Reliquiae* III.7

quam tantam statuam statuet populus Romanus
quamve columnam, quae teque et tua gesta loquatur.

How great a statue will the Roman people raise to you,
or how high a column, that may praise you and your deeds?

II. ELEGISTS IMAGINE DEATH

D. Callimachus, *Epigrams* 35

E. Vergil, *Ecl.* 10.33-34: Gallus imagines his bones at rest

F. Tibullus 1.3.53-56: The poet imagines his funerary epitaph far from home

G. Propertius imagines death: 1.7, 1.17, 1.19, 1.21-22, 2.1, 2.8, 2.9, 2.11, 2.13-15, 2.20, 2.24, 2.26-28, 2.34, 3.16, 4.7

H. Propertius 2.13.31-42 (trans. mine)

deinde, ubi suppositus cinerem me fecerit ardor
accipiat Manis parvula testa meos,
et sit in exiguo laurus super addita busto,
quae tegat extincti funeris umbra locum,
et duo sint versus: QVI NVNC IACET HORRIDA PVLVIS,
VNIVS HIC QVONDAM SERVVS AMORIS ERAT.
nec minus haec nostri notescet fama sepulcri,
quam fuerant Pthii busta cruenta viri.
tu quoque si quando venies ad fata, memento,
hoc iter ad lapides cana veni memores.

interea cave sis nos aspernata sepultos:
non nihil ad verum conscia terra sapit.

Then when the heat beneath has turned me to ash, let a little urn receive my shade, and over my little tomb add a laurel, to cover with shade the place of my extinguished pyre, and let there be two verses: HE WHO NOW LIES HERE, COARSE DUST, ONCE WAS THE SLAVE OF A SINGLE LOVE. No less will the fame of our tomb become known than the bloody tomb of the Pythian hero long ago. And you too, if some day you come to your fate, remember, come on this path, grey-haired, to the remembering stones. Meanwhile, take care not to spurn my tomb: the earth, not wholly unconscious of truth, can sense.

I. Propertius 4.7.83-86 (trans. mine)

hic carmen media dignum me scribe columna,
sed breue, quod currens uector ab urbe legat:
"hic Tiburtina iacet aurea Cynthia terra:
accessit ripae laus, Aniene, tuae."

Here on the middle of a column write a song worthy of me,
but brief, which a traveler may read while hastening from the city:
"Here in Tiburtine earth lies golden Cynthia:
this glory, Anio, accrues to your banks."

III. EPIC POETS' ELEGIES / EPITAPHS

J. Epigram attributed to Ennius, Cicero *Tusc. Disp.* 1.15.34 = Vahlen *Epigrammata* 1 (trans. mine)

aspicite, o cives, senis Enni imaginis formam.
hic vestrum panxit maxima facta patrum.
nemo me lacrumis decoret nec funera fletu
faxit. cur? volito vivus per ora virum.

Behold, citizens, the aspect of the image of old Ennius.
He unfolded the great deeds of your forefathers.
Let nobody honor me with tears or render funeral service
with weeping. Why? I flit living through the lips of men.

K. Epitaph for Ballista (ascribed to the juvenile Vergil by the *Vita Suetonii Vulgo Donatiana* = VSD 17 and many others catalogued by Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008: 183, 203, 208, 213, 253, 285, 294, 308, 324, 347, 399-400; trans. mine)

monte sub hoc lapidum tegitur Ballista sepultus;
nocte die tutum carpe, viator, iter.

Under this mountain of rocks the buried Ballista is covered;
safely by night and day, traveler, make your way.

L. *Culex* 411-14 (trans. mine)

his tumulus super inseritur. tum fronte locatur
elogium, tacita firmat quod littera voce:
PARVE CVLEX PECVDVM CVSTOS TIBI TALE MERENTI
FVNTERIS OFFICIVM VITAE PRO MVNERE REDDIT.

The tumulus is sewn with these [flowers] above. Then on its face is placed
an elogium, which letters confirm with silent voice:
'O little gnat, the guardian of the flocks returns you the office of burial,
deserving as much in return for the gift of life.'

M. Vergil's epitaph in *VSD* 36 (cf. Anth. Lat. 485c: *Corduba me genuit, rapuit Nero, praelia dixi*; trans. mine)

Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc
Parthenope; cecini pascua, rura, duces.

Mantua gave birth to me; the Calabrians snatched me away; Parthenope
now holds me; I sang of pastures, plowlands, and leaders.

N. The *Aeneid's* original incipit according to *VSD* 42

ille ego qui quondam gracili modulatus avena
carmen et egressus silvis vicina coegi
ut quamvis avido parerent arva colono,
gratum opus agricolis, at nunc horrentia Martis
arma virumque cano...

O. Vergil, *Eclogues* 10.70-74 (trans. mine)

haec sat erit, diuae, uestrum cecinisse poetam,
dum sedet et gracili fiscellam texit hibisco,
Pierides: uos haec facietis maxima Gallo,
Gallo, cuius amor tantum mihi crescit in horas,
quantum uere nouo uiridis se subicit alnus.

It will be enough for your poet to have sung these words, divine
Pierides, while he sits and weaves a basket of supple hibiscus:
you will make these songs great above all to Gallus,
Gallus, for whom my love grows as much each hour
as the green alder shoots up in the new spring.

P. Vergil, *Georgics* 4.559-66 (trans. mine)

haec super arborum cultu pecorumque canebar
et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnus ad altum 560
fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentes
per populos dat iura viamque adfectat Olympo.
illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
Parthenope studiis florentem ignobilis oti,
carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque iuuenta, 565
Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi.

These things above on the care of fields and herds I was singing,
and trees besides, while great Caesar thunders in war
at the deep Euphrates and gives laws as a victor
to willing peoples and pursues a path toward heaven.
At that time sweet Parthenope nursed me, Virgil,
flourishing in the pursuits of inglorious leisure,
I who played with shepherds' songs and, bold in youth,
sang you, Tityrus, under the shelter of the spreading beech.

Q. Martial 14.186 (trans. mine)

quam brevis immensum cepit membrana Maronem
ipsius vultus prima tabella gerit.

How thin, the skin that holds the great Maro;
the first page wears his face.



Reverse of an aureus of Augustus, c. 19 BCE.
RIC² Augustus 316. American Numismatic Society.

R. Pseudo-Ovidian preface in MS. Vat. Lat. 3867 (trans. Schodde)

Virgilius magno quantum concessit Homero,
tantum ego Virgilio Naso poeta meo.
nec me praelatum cupio tibi ferre poeta;
ingenio tantum si loquor, hoc satis est.
argumenta quidem librorum prima notavi, 5
errorem ignarus ne quis habere queat.
bis quinos legerent, feci, quos carmine versus,
Aeneidos totum corpus ut esse putent.
adfirmo gravitate mea, me crimine nullo
livoris titulum praeposuisse tibi. 10

Vergil defers as much to the great Homer, as I, the poet Naso, defer to my Vergil. And I do not desire to hold myself preferable to you as a poet – if I speak with such talent, that is enough. Indeed I noted down the first arguments of the books, so that no-one unawares shall be able to make an error. I made twice-five verses for each, for people to read with song, the whole corpus of the *Aeneid* so they would consider how it is. I declare that I, with my seriousness, and with no fault of envy, have laid out before you the summary.

S. Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo* 107-12

IV. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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