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Talking Dead: The Deceased as Speaker in Hellenistic Funerary Epigrams

1. *CEG* 132, dated to c. 650 BCE:[1]

   Δϝεινία τόδε [σᾶ|μα] τὸν ὄλεσε π|όντος ἀναι[δές].

   This marker is of Dweinias, whom the shameless sea destroyed.

2. Homer, *Iliad* 23.392–97:[2]

   <div align="right">αἳ δέ οἱ ἵπποι</div>

   ἀμφὶς ὁδοῦ δραμέτην, ῥυμὸς δ᾽ ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἐλύσθη.
   αὐτὸς δ᾽ ἐκ δίφροιο παρὰ τροχὸν ἐξεκυλίσθη,
   ἀγκῶνάς τε περιδρύφθη στόμα τε ῥῖνάς τε,
   θρυλίχθη δὲ μέτωπον ἐπ᾽ ὀφρύσι· τὼ δέ οἱ ὄσσε
   δακρυόφι πλῆσθεν, θαλερὴ δέ οἱ ἔσχετο φωνή.

   <div align="right">…and his horses</div>

   ran on either side of the way, the pole was solved down on the earth.
   He himself was sent spinning out of the chariot beside the wheel,
   so that his elbows were all torn, and his mouth, and his nostrils,
   and his forehead was lacerated about the brows, and his eyes
   filled with tears, and the springing voice was held fast within him.

   * See below for more on Allan's five categories of narrative features conducive to immersion. I supplement Allan's approach with Grethlein and Huitink's study of narrative immersion through enactivism; see bibliography.

3. Leonidas of Tarentum (c. 320-260 BCE), *AP* 7.506:[3]

   Κἠν γῇ καὶ πόντῳ κεκρύμμεθα· τοῦτο περισσὸν
       ἐκ Μοιρέων Θάρσυς Χαρμίδου ἠνύσατο.
   ἦ γὰρ ἐπ᾽ ἀγκύρης ἔνοχον βάρος εἰς ἅλα δύνων,
       Ἰόνιόν θ᾽ ὑγρὸν κῦμα κατερχόμενος,
   τὴν μὲν ἔσωσ᾽, αὐτὸς δὲ μετάτροπος ἐκ βυθοῦ ἔρρων
       ἤδη καὶ ναύταις χεῖρας ὀρεγνύμενος,
   ἐβρώθην· τοῖόν μοι ἐπ᾽ ἄγριον εὖ μέγα κῆτος
       ἦλθεν, ἀπέβροξεν δ᾽ ἄχρις ἐπ᾽ ὀμφαλίου.
   χἤμισυ μὲν ναῦται, ψυχρὸν βάρος, ἐξ ἁλὸς ἡμῶν
       ἤρανθ᾽, ἥμισυ δὲ πρίστις ἀπεκλάσατο·
   ἠόνι δ᾽ ἐν ταύτῃ κακὰ λείψανα Θάρσυος, ὦνερ,
       ἔκρυψαν· πάτρην δ᾽ οὐ πάλιν ἱκόμεθα.

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[1] Text and translation taken from E. L. Bowie (2010), with some adaptions.
[2] The translation of Homer is adapted from Lattimore (2011).
[3] All Greek epigram texts are from the online version of W. R. Paton (1917); translations are my own.

I am buried both in the land and in the sea; this exceptional deed
    from the Fates Tharsys, son of Charmides, accomplished.
For diving for the liable weight of the anchor,
    I descended into the wet Ionian waves;
the anchor I saved, but I, coming back from the depths
    and already reaching out my hands to the sailors,
was eaten; onto me such a savage and great sea-monster
    came, and gulped me down as far as the navel.
The half of me, a cold burden, from the sea the sailors
    took up, but the other half the saw-fish bit off.
On this beach are the vile remains of Tharsys, good Sir;
    that they buried, but I never came home to my country.

4. Antipater of Sidon (c. 2nd century BCE), *AP* 7.172:

Ὁ πρὶν ἐγὼ καὶ ψῆρα καὶ ἁρπάκτειραν ἐρύκων
    σπέρματος, ὑψιπετῆ Βιστονίαν γέρανον,
ῥινοῦ χερμαστῆρος ἐῢστροφα κῶλα τιταίνων,
    Ἀλκιμένης, πτανῶν εἶργον ἄπωθε νέφος·
καί μέ τις οὐτήτειρα παρὰ σφυρὰ διψὰς ἔχιδνα
    σαρκὶ τὸν ἐκ γενύων πικρὸν ἐνεῖσα χόλον
ἠελίου χήρωσεν· ἴδ᾿ ὡς τὰ κατ᾿ αἰθέρα λεύσσων
    τοὺμ ποσὶν οὐκ ἐδάην πῆμα κυλινδόμενον.

Formerly I, warding off the starlings and that robber
    from the crops, the high-flying Bistonian crane,
swinging the pliant arms of my leathern sling,
    Alcimenes, was keeping the crowd of birds away;
and a dipsas viper wounded me about the ankles,
    injecting into my flesh the bitter bile from her jaws
robbed me of the sunlight. Look how gazing at things in the air
    I noticed not the evil that was creeping at my feet.

* Allan's Five Categories of Immersive Features:

1) *Verisimilitude*: a narrative conjures up vivid, life-like representations of persons and events in space by means of identifiable sensory details, realistic pacing, detailed spatial information, etc.;

2) *Perspective*: a narrative lets the audience empathize with a character by means of an internally focalized narrative, and one grounded in a proximal deixis (the "here and now");

3) *Transparency*: a narrative deprives itself of any overarching narrative voice and metanarrative comments so as not to draw the audience's attention to the genre's conventions;

4) *Interest and Emotional Involvement*: a narrative creates suspense, contains information vital to the story, and thus guides the emotional response from the audience and triggers their interest;

5) *Principle of Minimal Departure*: a narrative is established consistently in accordance with how the real world works and facilitates the audience's entrance into the storyworld.[4]

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4 Allan, "Herodotus and Thucydides," 132.