Here I Lie on the Narrow Beach: Listening to Subaltern Voices in the Epitaphs of Anyte

Part One: Mourning Animals

1. Epitaph for a Puppy (Anyte 10)

ὤλεο δὴ ποτε καὶ σὺ πολύρριζον παρὰ θάμνον, Λόκρι, φιλοθέγγων ὦκυτάτη σκυλάκων, τούτον ἐλαφρίζοντι τεῷ ἐγκάθετο κόλῳ ἰον ἀμελλίκτον ποικιλόδειρος ἐχείς.

You perished when, among the many-rooted hedge, Locris, the swiftest of the noise-loving puppies, the many-colored viper put cruel venom into your nimble leg.

2. Epitaph for a War Horse (Anyte 9)

Μνᾶμα τόδε φθιμένου μενεδαίον εἴσατο Δάμι

Damis built this memorial of his steadfast horse, slain when tawny Ares struck his breast; black blood boiled through his thick hide, and drenched the earth with his painful death.

3. Epitaph for a Rooster? (Anyte 11)

οὐκέτι μ᾽ ὡς τὸ πάρος πυκναῖς πτερύγεσσιν ἔρεσσων ὄρσεις εἰς εὔνας ὄρθριος ἐγρήμενος· ἦ γάρ σ᾽ ὑπνώντα σίνις καθῆδον ἐπελθὼν ἐκτείνειν λαμιῷ ρίμφα καθεὶς ὄνυχα.

No longer as before will you, flapping with fast-beating wings, rouse me out of bed, waking at dawn; for while you were sleeping, a thief killed you, coming upon you stelthiliy and sending down his swift claws into your throat.

4. Epitaph for Myro’s Insects (Anyte 20)

ἀκρίδι τὰ κατ᾽ ἁρουραν ἀηδόνι καὶ δρυνοκοίτα τέττιτι ξύλον τομὶβον ἐπείξε Μυρῷ, παρθένιον στάξασα κόρα δάκρω· δισσὰ γὰρ αὐτάς παῦνι ὁ δυσπείθης ὥχετ ἐξὸν Ἄιδας.

For her locust, the nightingale in the field, and for her oak-dwelling cicada, Myro raised a common tomb, the girl shedding girlish tears; for Hades, who is difficult to persuade, has carried off her two pets.

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1 This paper follows Page’s 1975 Oxford edition of the text including the numbering of the epigrams, most of which are contained in Book 7 of the Palatine Anthology. Unless otherwise noted, translations of Greek are my own.
5. Epitaph for a Dolphin (Anyte 12)

οὐκέτι δὴ πλωτοῖσιν ἀγαλλόμενος πελάγεσιν
αὐξέν ἀναρρήνῳ βυσσοθείς ὄρνύμενος,
οὐδὲ περὶ σκαλωσὶς νεώς περικαλλέα χείλῃ
ποιφύζο τάμη τερπόμενος προτομά·
Άλλα με πορφυρά πόντου νοτίς ὄς ἐπὶ χέρσον,
κείμαι δὲ ῥαδινὰς τάνδε παρ’ ἀιώνα.

No longer delighting in floating waves will I toss up
my neck, rushing up from the bottom. Nor around
the gunwales of a ship, beautiful in their pins,2 will I
snort, enjoying my own image on a figurehead. But
the purple water of the sea banished me to dry land,
and here I lie on the narrow beach.

Part Two: Mourning Girls

6. Epitaph for Erato (Anyte 7)

λοίσθια δὴ τάδε πατρὶ φίλῳ περὶ χεῖρε βαλοῦσα
eῖπʼ Ἐρατῷ χλωροῖς δάκρυσι λείβονα·
Ὡς πέτερ, οὐ τοι ἐπ’ εἰμί, μέλας δ’ ἐμὸν ὅμα καλύπτει
ηδὴ ἀποθημένας κυάνεος ἐκάτωτος.

Throwing her arms around her dear father, Erato
spoke these final things, weeping pale tears: “Father,
I am no more, and already the dark blackness of
death covers my eyes as I die.”

7. Epitaph for Philaenis (Anyte 5)

πολλάκι τόδ’ ὀλοφθόνα κόρας ἐπὶ σάματι Κλείνα
mάτηρ ὀκύμορον παῖδ’ ἐβόασε φίλαν,
γυρίζει άγκάλεουσα Φιλαινίδος, ἀ πρὸ γάμου
χλωρὸν ὑπὲρ ποταμοῦ χεῦ Άχέροντος ἔβα.

Many times upon this tomb of her daughter, does
Kleina, a mother, shout for her dear child, who died
early, calling upon the soul of Philaenis, who before
marriage stepped across the pale stream of
Acheron’s river.

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2 This translation follows the suggestions of Geoghagen and Gutzwiller.