

Allusions to Archaic Elegy in the Epigrams of Leonidas of Tarentum  
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Within the epigrams of the *Greek Anthology*, some scholars have identified a few elegiac elements. For example, in his article on the influence of archaic elegy on sympotic epigrams, Bowie proposes that Asclepiades, Callimachus, Hedylus and Posidippus “see themselves as in some respects reworking the early elegiac tradition.”<sup>1</sup> I would like to add Leonidas of Tarentum to this list.

In their commentary on Leonidas of Tarentum, Gow and Page identify two epigrams by Leonidas as elegies: 11 GP = AP 7.440 and 71 GP = AP 7.466.<sup>2</sup> Using these elegies as my starting point, I will investigate how the poetry of Leonidas of Tarentum engages archaic elegy. I will begin by investigating the influence of archaic elegy on Leonidas with particular focus on the works of Mimnermus and Tyrtaeus. Through this investigation, I will show not only that the qualities of lamentation in archaic elegy influence Leonidas of Tarentum, but also that the didacticism that is common in archaic elegy is being refashioned by Leonidas to suit his own collection of epigrams.

Leonidas applies elegiac didacticism in some of his poems in order to emphasize his own philosophy, which stresses the moribund nature of life. He refashions the elegy of Tyrtaeus by defining a sort of virtue in his epigrams, but instead of relating this virtue to valor earned through polemic pursuits for Sparta, Leonidas presents the virtue of the traveler, who is alone, jaded, and ready to embrace death. Yet, he proposes immortality of his characters and himself through his poetry. Leonidas also alludes to the philosophy put forward by Mimnermus, which stresses the futility of living. Through the combination of lamentation and didacticism Leonidas fuses elegy and epigram in an original way.

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<sup>1</sup> Bowie, E. 2007. “From Archaic Elegy to Hellenistic Sympotic Epigram?” In Bing, P. & J.S. Bruss, edd. *Brill’s Companion to Hellenistic Epigram*. Boston, 95-112.

<sup>2</sup> Gow, A.S.F. & D.L. Page. 1965. *Commentary: Leonidas of Tarentum*. London.