

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

For the ancient Greeks, death marked not only the end of a physical life, but also the end and silencing of a voice – the hallmark of a vibrant social identity. This understanding is at the heart of the tradition of funerary epitaphs in the Greek world, with extant examples that ranges from a simple stele with an inscribed name to verse compositions of many lines accompanied by images or statues. In addition to inscriptional epitaphs there is a well-documented history of literary epitaphs from antiquity, which serve a similar function to their inscribed counterparts. All of these epitaphs, when either read or recited, participate in a process that draws speaker and addressee into dialogue, and create a fictional space in which the deceased is given a sort of afterlife (Schmitz 2010; Vestrheim 2010). This afterlife comes about in the form of preservation of voice and name: key components to the identity of the deceased.

This paper focuses on literary epitaphs, with a particular emphasis on the sepulchral epigrams composed for animals and attributed to Anyte of Tegea. The central argument is that these poems, frequently dismissed as an idiosyncratic or sentimental innovation typical of Hellenistic poets, offer an opportunity to discuss the importance of voice for groups on the fringes of Greek society, including women and children. By focusing on Anyte's epigrams, this paper to pursues the trace of the subaltern voice from a starting point outside of the traditional locus of voice and authority – male citizens – but which is nonetheless preoccupied with seemingly universal human concerns about death, grief, and memory.

Although the early Hellenistic poet Anyte of Tegea has been gradually acknowledged for her significant role as an innovator in the composition of epigrams and the development of that genre as a literary practice divorced from an inscriptional context (Gutzwiller 1998), the discourse around her poems has not fully explicated the effects of giving a voice to the subaltern through epitaphs and what this demonstrates about death and memory. In addition, much of the recent work

on Anyte has focused on her feminine voice that acts as a counterweight to the traditional poetic tradition (Snyder 1989; Gutzwiller 1998; Greene 2005). Although this is certainly an important aspect of interpreting Anyte's poems, it runs the risk of overlooking how Anyte's epigrams fit in with other epitaphs in the Greek Anthology, many of which take Anyte as a model for expressing emotion through the use of marginalized voices, in particular animals. It is the contention of this paper that Anyte's focus on women, children, and animals reveals a preoccupation with the capriciousness of death, a belief that death removes the status boundaries that are imposed on the living, and a concern for perpetuating the memory of the deceased.

Anyte uses the death of animals to induce a reflection on mortality that engages with the fears of obscurity that the loss of voice through death held for Greeks. The animal epitaphs considered in this paper offer a point of entry into a reflection on death, mortality, and memory that goes beyond the cultural ideals of a male-orientated society. The animal epitaphs reinforce the suddenness and ubiquity of death, and the poetry of Anyte reminds that a life cut short is a life to be mourned most of all. The traces of these individuals from marginal groups which remain in their epitaphs demonstrate the equalizing force of death: subaltern voices can endure with the same longevity as the voices of men and citizens, the majority groups capable of authoritative speech acts when they were alive.

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