AOSIS

Some more ways to die: Accidental deaths in Hellenistic epigrams

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In this article, the focus falls on five Hellenistic epigrammatic poets (Theaetetus of Cyrene, Antipater of Thessalonica, Bianor of Bithynia, Apollonides of Nicaea and Antiphilus of Byzantium) and epigrams they wrote on the theme of extraordinary accidents. Typically of Hellenistic epigrammatists, each poet aimed at finding novelty and surprise, or at varying (and outdoing) predecessors' efforts. The process generated innovative language and thought, pushing the literary epigram far away from its origins in lapidary epitaphs. The article aims at demonstrating this.

Keywords: Hellenistic Epigrams; Accidental Deaths; Theaetetus; Antipater of Thessalonica; Bianor; Apollonides; Antiphilus.

Introduction

In the Palatine Anthology (*Anthologia Palatina*, henceforth *AP*), the 10th-century collection of Hellenistic epigrams, there are clusters or series of epigrams dealing with a common theme, which Richard Reitzenstein (1970 [1893]:95–97) termed *Konkurrenzgedichte* [poems of rivalry] (cf. also Fraser 1972:611; 863–864 nn. 426–430; Nisbet 2003:29–34; Obbink 2004:27). The aim of each poet was to create a competing variation of a version by a predecessor in order to exhibit his own linguistic skill and poetic invention. Restrictions of space allow only a limited selection and treatment here. This article discusses the theme of unusual and even bizarre accidents as treated by five epigrammatists: Theaetetus of Cyrene, Antipater of Thessalonica, Bianor of Bithynia, Apollonides of Nicaea and Antiphilus of Byzantium. Not much has been written on these poets or their epigrams, and then most of that is unsubstantiated and largely negative and dismissive. In each epigram, the language and thought will be discussed in detail in order to demonstrate the way in which the narratives are presented, and to add to the as yet scanty scholarly debate around these poets and poems. In the cases of Theaetetus and Apollonides, and Antipater and Bianor, epigrams on the same theme are compared.[1]

There is an aspect that all but one of these poets share: they had some connection with Italy and Republican and Imperial Rome. Whereas the epigrammatists of the 3rd, 2nd and early 1st centuries BCE had enjoyed the royal patronage of the Ptolemies, some were now clients of wealthy and influential Roman politicians and even of members of the imperial family (cf. e.g. Bowersock 1965:122–139; Pelliccio 2013:21–22; Williams 1978:134–138). Relevant biographical information is provided on these poets' connections with Imperial Rome. I trust that this offering will please the *honoranda*, all the more because her field of study and research was the Early Roman Empire.

Theaetetus of Cyrene

Two epigrammatists with this name feature in the *AP*. Callimachus lauds the earlier poet in the early 3rd century BCE and from Cyrene for having shunned the traditional, well-trodden path of dramatic contests, where he failed, in favour of the less usual, less-travelled path of epigrammatic poetry.[2] In the *Palatine Anthology*, 35 epigrams are ascribed specifically to Theaetetus Scholasticus (6th century CE), and five others simply to 'Theaetetus', presumably the earlier poet.[3] A sixth epigram (2 G-P), found in Diogenes Laertius (4.25), is an epitaph for the philosopher, Crantor, who died sometime between 270 and 265. This provides a *terminus post quem* for Theaetetus' dating.[4] It is very likely that the latter wrote the following epigram:

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1. All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

2. ἦλθε Θεαίτητος καθαρὴν ὁδόν [Theaetetus travelled along the pure road] (*Ep.* 7 Pfeiffer = *AP* 9.565; see further Albiani 2006; Beckby 1965:2.807; Cairns 2016:189–190; Fantuzzi 2007:484–485; Gutzwiller 1998:226).

3. *AP* 6.357/1 G-P; 7.444/5 G-P; 499/4 G-P; 727/3 G-P; 16.32a.

4. Geffcken (1957 [1934]); Gow and Page (1965:2.520).

χείματος οἰνωθέντα τὸν Ἀνταγόρεω μέγαν οἶκον
   ἐκ νυκτῶν ἔλαθεν πῦρ ὑπονειμάμενον·
ὀγδώκοντα δ᾽ ἀριθμὸν ἐλεύθεροι ἄμμιγα δούλοις
   τῆς ἐχθρῆς ταύτης πυρκαϊῆς ἔτυχον.
οὐκ εἶχον διελεῖν προσκηδέες ὀστέα χωρίς·
   ξυνὴ δ᾽ ἦν κάλπις, ξυνὰ δὲ τὰ κτέρεα·
εἷς καὶ τύμβος ἀνέστη· ἀτὰρ τὸν ἕκαστον ἐκείνων
   οἶδε καὶ ἐν τέφρῃ ῥηϊδίως Ἀΐδης.

[*On a winter's night, the drunken great house of Antagoras,*
   was secretly devoured by fire from beneath.
In total eighty, free men mixed with slaves,
   happened to suffer this hostile funeral pyre.
Their family members could not separate their bones;
   a common urn and common honours were theirs.
And one tomb was erected. But each one of them
   Hades easily knows even in the ash.] (*AP* 7.444/5 G-P, [*author's own translation*])

Pathos is created in a crescendo of details. The setting of the scene: a cold night in winter, the occupants in wine-induced sleep or still dining; the locality: the great house of Aristagoras; the unnoticed fire rising up from below; the 80 free-born and enslaved perishing together; the impossibility of identifying the remains of the victims; the shared, communal funerary urn, funeral rites and tomb; and the certainty that Hades can still distinguish each victim in the ash and restore their identity – a thought perhaps offered as consolation. The cause of the fire is not given, but coming as it did from below (ὑπονειμάμενον) suggests that it originated in the kitchen area where the cooking was taking place. The devastating impact of the blaze was aggravated by the intoxicated state of banqueters and slaves who failed to notice the danger, give warning and act.[5] None of this is explained in the epigram; the reader has to fill in the gaps and believe that the event was possible.

The diction of the epigram is quite simple, with only a few words that invite further scrutiny. The past participle οἰνωθέντα [heavy with wine] is not unusual, but the combination with οἶκον is attested only here.[6] The poet may have intended two meanings of οἶκος: 'the great house of Aristagoras' as a reigning family who are themselves intoxicated, or 'the drunken house' as hypallage.[7] The middle participle ὑπονειμάμενον is found only here and means 'having eaten away from beneath'.[8] The sense here is that the fire started somewhere beneath the inmates, presumably in the hypocaust,[9] and silently and unobserved spread and consumed the unsuspecting victims. The noun προσκηδέες, in the sense of blood-relationship, is unattested before Theaetetus.[10] Apart from the hypallage in οἰνωθέντα ... οἶκον,

there are other stylistic devices: the poetic form ἄμμιγα for the more usual ἀνάμιγα;[11] the unparalleled *iunctura* of ἐχθρῆς ... πυρκαϊῆς with the notion of the pyre being 'hostile' – that is not according to normal ritual practice; and the anaphora and alliteration in ξυνὴ δ᾽ ἦν κάλπις, ξυνὰ δὲ τὰ κτέρεα.

The narrative of a building collapsing and killing the banqueting occupants is not new.[12] The account of Callimachus, a contemporary of Theaetetus, contains details that reappear or are varied in Theaetetus' epigram. Callimachus mentions the ceiling or roof (μελάθρου), the dinner guests (δαιτυμόνων) and the house of the great Scopas-family (ὤλισθεν μεγάλους οἶκος ἐπὶ Σκοπάδας [the house fell on the mighty sons of Scopas]). Other poets vary the details of probably fictitious events and emphasise the dramatic irony and tragedy of people dying while enjoying themselves.[13]

Antipater of Thessalonica

Antipater of Thessalonica was active around 11 BCE to 12–15 CE. He had an important patron in Rome: Lucius Calpurnius Piso (born in 49/48 BCE, consul in 15, died 32 CE), to whom (and his two sons) Horace dedicated his *Epistula ad Pisones* or *Ars Poetica*.[14] Some of Antipater's epigrams are addressed to Piso.[15]

He also enjoyed imperial patronage. He addresses Gaius Iulius Caesar, son of Julia, the grandson and adopted son of Augustus, who was sent to the East by Augustus in 1 BCE and died in 4 CE (*AP* 9.59/46 G-P; 9.297/47 G-P).[16] He also heaped exaggerated praise on Cotys, king of Thrace from 12 to 19 CE (*AP* 16.75/48 G-P).[17]

In the *Anthology* 35, epigrams are ascribed to him with certainty with the rubric 'Antipater of Thessalonica', but many more are probably his in another 96 epigrams where the authorship is indicated simply as 'Antipater' or 'Antipater or another poet'.[18] Appreciation of his poetry has been largely negative,[19] but a recent assessment has found his epigrams clever, marked by subtle irony and pointed, unexpected endings.[20]

5. Compare also Abdelhamed (2018:13) who takes the epigram as evidence of the 'high-status life' and the abundant production of wine in Cyrenaica at the time.

6. LSJ s.v. οἰνόω. Also *TLG*.

7. LSJ s.v. οἶκος III.

8. LSJ s.v. ὑπονέμομαι. Gow and Page (1965:2.523) point out that, while νέμεσθαι is often used of fire (as in Hom. *Il*. 23.177; Hdt. 5.101), the compound occurs elsewhere only in Epich. fr. 9, but in the sense of 'deceive' or 'cheat'; compare LSJ s.v. νέμω B.I.2b, as metaphor. Elsewhere the use of the verb is restricted to medical writers and lexicographers; compare *TLG*.

9. Thus Beckby (1965:2.594).

10. LSJ s.v. προσκηδής II: 'connected by marriage', 'kinsfolk'; Gow and Page (1965:2.523). Later found only in Apollonius of Rhodes (4.717) and Herodotus (8.136); *TLG*.

11. LSJ s.v. ἄμμ- and ἀνάμιγα: 'promiscuously', 'confusedly'; Theaetetus is not mentioned.

12. Simon. Fr. 510 *PMG* (testimonia only); Call. *Aet.fr.* 64.11–14 Pfeiffer (only a reference to the Scopads in a restored text); after Theaetetus: Cic. *De or.* 2.86.351–353; Quint. 11.2.11–16 (who regards the story as fictitious); also Ov. *Ib.* 511–512; Val. Max. 1.8. Compare Campbell (1991:374–379); Page (1975:242–244).

13. Antip. Thess. *AP* 7.402; Antiphil. *AP* 7.375; Bianor *AP* 9.259; Pall. *AP* 7.610 (cf. Henderson 2013:79–81); Agath. *AP* 7.572; Constant. Rhod. *AP* 15.19; Anon. *AP* 7.298. Compare also Pelliccio (2013:147–148).

14. Compare Bowersock (1965:132–133); Eck (2003); Gow and Page (1968:2.18–20); Reitzenstein (1958 [1894]a); Syme and Seager (2003).

15. *AP* 6.242/43 G-P; 249/45 G-P; 335/41 G-P; 9.92/2 G-P; 93/31 G-P; 428/1 G-P; 541/44 G-P; 552/42 G-P; 10.25/40 G-P; 16.184/30 G-P.

16. Degani (2002a); Gow and Page (1968:2.57 and 58–59); Williams (1978:127–128).

17. Degani (2002a); Gow and Page (1968:2.59); Gutzwiller (1998:236–237); Reitzenstein (1958 [1894]a).

18. Gow and Page (1968:2.20–21); compare Degani (2002a); Cameron (2003a) – '80-odd'.

19. For example, Highet (1979a: 73) classified him as 'graceful, witty, and unimportant.'

20. Bowersock (1965:132) – 'the excellent Greek poet'; Degani (2002a); Cameron (2003a) – 'graceful'.

The following epigram deals with the death of a baby who approached a bee-hive:

τὸ βρέφος Ἑρμώνακτα διεχρήσασθε, μέλισσαι,
  φεῦ κύνες, ἑρπυστὴν κηρία μαιόμενον·
πολλάκι δ᾽ ἐξ ὑμέων ἐψισμένον ὤλεσατ᾽, αἰαῖ,
  κέντροις· εἰ δ᾽ ὀφίων φωλεὰ μεμφόμεθα,
πείθεο Λυσιδίκῃ καὶ Ἀμύντορι μηδὲ μελίσσας
  αἰνεῖν·κἀκείναις πικρὸν ἔνεστι μέλι.

[*Bees, you've slain baby Hermonax (alas, you dogs!),*
  a crawling child going after honey.
Though often fed by you, you have killed him, alas,
  with your stings. If we warn against snakes' nests,
listen to Lysidice and Amyntor not to praise bees
  either; they also have in them bitter honey.] (*AP* 9.302/69 G-P, [*author's own translation*])

Bees are accused of killing a baby named Hermonax when he crawled towards a hive. He was after the honey which he had often been fed, but now ironically, caused his death. The tragedy serves as a warning, issued to him and others by the parents, Lysidice and Amyntor, that bees, despite being associated with sweetness, are as dangerous as snakes.

The tragedy is highlighted by the antithesis of the first words of lines 1 and 2: τὸ βρέφος [the innocent child] and φεῦ κύνες [the dangerous dogs]. The abusive κύνες, already in Homer,[21] is here strengthened by the exclamation of anger, φεῦ, and this, together with the interjection common in tragedy αἰαῖ, elevate the grief and outrage.[22] The killing of the child by the bees is contrasted with their having also nourished him; sweetness turns into bitterness.[23]

There is apparent innovation in a few words: διεχρήσασθε, in the secondary, passive sense of kill or destroy, seems first to be attested here and is a particularly violent-sounding word for the bees' attack;[24] ἑρπυστήν appears here first;[25] the use of μαιόμενον is limited to poetry;[26] the passive ἐψισμένον in the sense of 'be fed' occurs nowhere else;[27] and φωλεά for serpents' nests, reappears only later.[28]

The last word confronts the critic with the choice of literal logic or poetic expression. Both the Palatine and Planudean codices have μέλι. However, Jacobs proposed βέλος [weapon] to apply more logically to both snakes and bees.[29] On the other

hand, μέλι creates an oxymoron with πικρόν [bitter honey], that encapsulates the theme of the epigram – something that βέλος cannot do. Bianor, who composed a variation on this epigram, also creates the oxymoron in the last line (see below). Poets are not bound by strict rules of logic.[30]

Bianor of Bithynia

The *floruit* of Bianor falls in the age of Augustus and Tiberius in the 1st century CE. Epigram *AP* 9.423/16 G-P describes the destruction of Sardis by an earthquake in 17 CE. Twenty-two epigrams in the *AP* bear his name. His work is regarded as mediocre, conventional in theme and lacking in stylistic skill.[31] The freak accident, described in the next epigram, also concerns a baby stung to death by bees – a variation on the previous epigram:

κοῦρον ἀποπλανίην ἐπιμάζιον Ἑρμώνακτα,
  φεῦ, βρέφος ὡς ἀδίκως εἵλετε βουγενέες.
ἠγνοίησεν ὁ δειλὸς ἐς ὑμέας οἷα μελίσσας
  ἐλθών· αἱ δ᾽ ἔχεων ἦτε χερειότεραι.
ἀντὶ δέ οἱ θοίνης ἐνεμάξατε φοίνια κέντρα,
  ὦ πικραί, γλυκερῆς ἀντίπαλοι χάριτος.

[*A young baby boy, straying, unweaned, Hermonax –*
  alas! how unjustly you killed him, you ox-bred bunch.
The poor child did not know as he went to you as if
  you were honey-bees. But you were worse than adders.
Instead of a feast you pressed your murderous stings into him,
  o sharp ones, antagonists of your sweet gift.] (*AP* 9.548/17 G-P, [*author's own translation*])

The tragedy in miniature plays off with a minimum of detail. A baby boy called Hermonax, still being breast-fed, crawls off towards a bee-hive, knowing only its association with honey, but ignorant of the danger. The bees attack more aggressively than vipers and sting the child to death and in the process betraying their own nature as makers of honey.

The narrative focuses alternately on the child and bees: the baby (κοῦρον ... Ἑρμώνακτα, 1), the bees (φεῦ ... εἵλετε βουγενέες, 2), the baby (ἠγνοίησεν ὁ δειλὸς, 3) and the bees (ἔχεων ἦτε χερειότεραι, 4), with a strong contrast between the deadly stings and sweet honey in the final couplet (ἀντὶ δέ ... θοίνης ... ἐνεμάξατε φοίνια κέντρα, 5; πικραί, γλυκερῆς ἀντίπαλοι χάριτος, 6). Pathos is created for the baby: he was still young and not yet weaned (ἀποπλανίην ἐπιμάζιον, 1); and the poor child was innocent and unknowing (ἠγνοίησεν ὁ δειλὸς, 3). Revulsion is expressed for the bees: they are 'born of oxen' (βουγενέες, 2); they acted unjustly (φεῦ, βρέφος ὡς ἀδίκως εἵλετε, 2); they were worse than adders (ἔχεων ἦτε χερειότεραι, 4); and they betrayed their own natures by causing death instead of pleasure (ἐνεμάξατε φοίνια κέντρα,/ὦ πικραί, γλυκερῆς ἀντίπαλοι χάριτος, 5–6).

There is some unusual diction. The substantive ἀποπλανίην means 'wanderer' or 'fugitive', and is recorded elsewhere only

21. Hom. *Il.* 8.299; 9.362; 13.623 (also for aggressive behaviour: 8.338; 18.283; 22.89); Ebeling (1885:956) – 'imago furoris'; Gow and Page (1968:2.74).

22. Compare also Setti (1890:101).

23. Compare also Setti (1890:101).

24. LSJ s.v. διαχράομαι, II.2 (pass.), where only D.L. 1.102 is mentioned.

25. LSJ and *TLG* s.v. ἑρπυστής (elsewhere dubiously at Nic. *Th.* 9.206, 397 and Opp. *Cyn.* 3.110). The reading is that of the *codex Palatinus*, accepted by Beckby (1965:3.370), as does LSJ s.v.: 'Nic. *Th.* 9, *et cetera*; of a mouse, *AP* 9.86 (Antiphil.).' Gow and Page (1968:1.54–55; 2.74) accept the reading of the *codex Planudeus* ἑρπηστήν on the grounds that ἑρπυστής is late.

26. LSJ s.v. μαίομαι: 'never in prose'.

27. LSJ s.v. ψίζω: 'feed on pap', 'breast-feed'; compare also *TLG*.

28. LSJ s.v. φωλεός: 'den, lair, esp. of the caves of bears'; later of serpents' nests (e.g. Paus. 8.16.2; Luc. *Philops.* 11).

29. Jacobs (1817:526): '*Comparatio cum serpentibus efficit, ut scribendum existimem*: κἀκείναις πικρὸν ἔνεστι βέλος.' Gow and Page (1968:2.74) follow Jacobs, since

serpents and bees have different 'venoms' and methods of injecting them; Beckby (1965:3.188) follows the codices.

30. Compare also Setti (1890:101).

31. Degani (2003); Gow and Page (1968:2.197); Reitzenstein (1958 [1897].

later in Philip, *AP* 9.240, also of a child straying into danger.[32] The adjective ἐπιμάζον (for the more usual ἐπιμαστίδιος), meaning 'on the breast', 'not yet weaned', only appears again much later in the 6th-century epigrammatist, Agathias (*AP* 5.276, not 275 as in LSJ), and then of a young woman.[33] The earliest attested occurrence of βουγενέες [born of an ox] is attributed to Empedocles who used the term to refer to imaginary strange creatures such as those 'with rolling gait, countless hands, bull-born, human-faced' (εἰλίποδ' ἀκριτόχειρα βουγενῆ ἀνδρόπρῳρα), a phrase cited by Plutarch in a philosophical discourse.[34] Philetas seems to be the earliest to apply the term to bees (βουγενέας … μελίσσας, Fr. 22),[35] and Callimachus also used the term of bees (ἀπὸ βουγενέων, Fr. 383.4 Pfeiffer). After Bianor, Meleagros writes ἔργα δὲ τεχνήεντα βοηγενέεσσι μελίσσαις/καλὰ μέλει [the ox-bred bees think about their lovely skilled works], *AP* 9.363.13–14). Paton translates βοηγενέεσσι as 'that the bull's carcass generates', citing Vergil, *Georgics* 4.555–556 (*liquefacta boum per viscera toto/ stridere apes utero* [through the putrified insides of cattle the bees buzz in the whole stomach]).[36] These uses are neutral in tone, presenting the information as factual; the expletive φεῦ in Bianor's epigram, however, leaves no doubt of the negative, angry, accusing tone in his use of βουγενέες. This aggressive tone is sustained in the most unusual use of the demonstrative pronoun αἱ for ὑμεῖς[37] and the comparison of the bees to vipers, emphasised by the hissing chi-sounds in ἔχεων … χερειότεραι. The simile appears only here.[38] The unique *iunctura* of ἐνεμάξατε and φοίνια with κέντρα and the poetic form of φοίνια heighten the register of the expression ἐνεμάξατε φοίνια κέντρα [you pressed your murderous stings into], a rare meaning of ἐμμάσσομαι.[39] Finally, as in epigram *AP* 7.542 above, πικρός has literal and figurative meanings operating simultaneously: the stings are 'sharp' and 'bitter' – both a cause of pain.

The original reader was expected to compare this epigram with Antipater's (*AP* 9.302) – its probable model.[40] A few details are the same in the two epigrams: the baby named Hermonax; the exclamation φεῦ; calling the bee-stings κέντρα, κέντροις; and using the adjectives πικραί and πικρόν. The differences are more pronounced. Antipater describes the child as ἑρπυστήν, Bianor as κοῦρον ἀποπλανίην; Antipater curses the bees as κύνες, Bianor as βουγενέες; for the act of killing, Antipater has διεχρήσασθε and ὠλέσατε, while Bianor uses εἵλετε and ἐνεμάξατε; for the bee-hive Antipater uses κηρία, Bianor μελίσσας; and Antipater refers to serpents as ὀφίων, Bianor as ἔχεων. Both poets use words and ideas not found in the other. Thus, while Antipater has μαιόμενον, πολλάκι … ἐψισμένον, αἰαῖ and the names of the parents (Λυσιδίκη

καὶ Ἀμύντορι), Bianor has ἐπιμάζων, ἀδίκως, ἠγνοίησεν, δεῖλος, θοίνης and φοίνια.

Apollonides of Nicaea (or Smyrna?)

The *floruit* of Apollonides falls in the 1st century BCE during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. He may be the rhetorician from Nicaea who also enjoyed the patronage of Tiberius.[41] A possible clue is provided by his imitation in *AP* 9.244/16 G-P of Vergil's *Georgics* 3.360–375, published in 29 BCE.[42] Further information has been gleaned from references in his epigrams to Roman politicians and Emperor Tiberius: Lucius Calpurnius Piso Frugi, consul in 15 BCE, proconsul of Asia in 8 BCE (*AP* 10.19/26 G-P);[43] Laelius Balbus, consul in 6 BCE (*AP* 9.280/21 G-P)[44]; Gaius Vibius Postumus, proconsul of Asia in 12–15 or 13–16 CE (*AP* 9.791/25 G-P)[45]; Tiberius' sojourn in Rhodes, 6 BCE to 2 CE (*AP* 9.287/23 G-P).[46]

Twenty-eight epigrams in the *AP* and an additional three in the *APl* are attributed to him.[47] Scholarship has largely ignored this skilful and inventive poet. Reitzenstein noted the influence of Leonidas of Tarentum, but also Apollonides' more uniform and selective diction, more careful use of metre than most of his contemporaries, and also the exceptional beauty of some of the funerary epigrams.[48] Gow and Page, without any close analysis, found him 'a competent but rather undistinguished composer', his achievement mediocre, and disagreed with Reitzenstein's perception of 'sublime beauty' in some funerary epigrams.[49] The recent study of Francesco Pelliccio (2013), goes a long way to stimulate renewed and more positive interest in this poet.

The following epigram is a variation on the theme of a collapsed ceiling:

> 'πρὸς παίδων', εἶπεν, 'γουνάζομαι, ἤν με θανοῦσαν
>   στείλῃς, μὴ σπεῖσαι δεύτερα φίλτρα γάμου'.
> εἶπεν· ὁ δ' εἰς ἑτέρην ἐσπούδασεν. ἀλλὰ Φίλιννα
>   Διογένην λήθης τίσατο καὶ φθιμένη·
> νυκτὶ γὰρ ἐν πρώτῃ θάλαμον σχάσε μῆνις ἄφυκτος,
>   ὡς μὴ λέκτρον ἰδεῖν δεύτερον ἠέλιον.

> [*'By our children,' she said, 'I beg you, if you've laid me out*
>   *in death, don't solemnise a second marriage's charms'.*
> *She spoke, but he eagerly sought another. Yet Philinna,*
>   *though dead, made Diogenes pay for forgetting.*
> *On the first night her unavoidable wrath destroyed the room,*
>   *so that his bed should not see a second sun*] (*AP* 9.422/11 G-P, [*author's own translation*])

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32. Compare LSJ, *TLG* s.v. ἀποπλανίας. Also Gow and Page (1968:2.207).

33. LSJ, *TLG* s.v. ἐπιμάζιος. Also Gow and Page (1968:2.207).

34. Plut. *Mor.* 1123b10 = Emp. Frr. 60.5; 61.2; 62.21; often repeated by others; compare LSJ and *TLG* s.vv. βουηγενής, ἀνδρόπρῳρα.

35. LSJ s.v. φοίνιος II.2 cites Aesch. *Ch.* 614; *Ag.* 1164 and Soph. *El.* 96; *Tr.* 770, but not this *locus*.

36. Paton (1958:197).

37. See Gow and Page (1968:2.207) and 125 on Antiphil. *AP* 5.307.3/13 G-P.

38. Compare LS s.vv. ἔχις and χερείων, poetical form of χείρων II.2: 'worse', 'harder', 'more severe'.

39. First attested in Call. *Dian.* 124. Compare LSJ and *TLG* s.v. ἐμμάσσομαι II; φοίνιος II.2 (for φοίνιος); Gow and Page (1968:2.207).

40. Beckby (1965:3.787, 806).

41. Diog. Laert. 9.109; Bowersock (1965:134); Reitzenstein (1965 [1895]; Williams (1978:126).

42. Compare Gow and Page (1968:2.156); Pelliccio (2013:22–25); Williams (1978:126–127).

43. Gow and Page (1968:2.163); Pelliccio (2013:24); Syme (1980:334–335).

44. Gow and Page (1968:2.158–159); Pelliccio (2013:25).

45. Gow and Page (1968:2.162); Pelliccio (2013:25); Syme (1966:60).

46. Gow and Page (1968:2.160); Pelliccio (2013:24).

47. Degani (2002c); Gow and Page (1968:2.147); see now Pelliccio (2013:30–34).

48. Reitzenstein (1965 [1895]).

49. Gow and Page (1968:2.148).

A wife, Philinna, entreats her husband, Diogenes, not to remarry after her death. He (conveniently?) forgets and hastens to remarry. The late wife's revenge is inevitable: on their wedding-night the bridal-chamber collapses on the couple, thus ending the marriage before dawn. There is an implicit moral: the wishes of a dying person should be heeded; if not, punishment is certain. The seriousness of the oath, emphasising the marital bond, is clear from Euripides, *Alcestis* 276: μὴ πρός σε θεῶν τλῇς με προδοῦναι,/μὴ πρὸς παίδων οὓς ὀρφανιεῖς [by the gods, do not take upon yourself to desert me, nor by the children whom you will make orphans][50] and Demosthenes, *In Aphobum* 2.20.5: ἱκετεύω, ἀντιβολῶ πρὸς παίδων, πρὸς γυναικῶν, πρὸς τῶν ὄντων ἀγαθῶν ὑμῖν [I beseech you, I entreat you, by your children, by your wives, by all the good things that you have].

The structure of the brief narrative develops in two contrasting stages in the first two couplets: Philinnas' entreaty, moving, elevated and full of pathos (1–2); and the cold and terse mention of Diogenes' action, followed suddenly by the consequences (3–4), the juxtaposition of their names separated by the enjambment reflecting their opposition. In the final distich comes the vengeance of the departed wife (5–6). Philinna's presence dominates the epigram.[51]

A few words and expressions seem unique or rare. The causative use of σχάσε (for ἔσχασε) is found only here, the shortened form and sound of the verb vividly evoking the sudden collapse of the room.[52] The active infinitive σπεῖσαι with an object accusative other than σπονδάς is rare and awkward, but from the context here used in the special sense of pouring a libation at a wedding-ceremony.[53] The *iuncturae* δεύτερα φίλτρα γάμου and μῆνις ἄφυκτος are unique.[54] The simplex form στείλῃς for the compositum περιστέλλω in the sense of bury, is rare.[55] Stylistic features are the epic and tragic overtones in γουνάζομαι,[56] μῆνις,[57] and ἄφυκτος;[58] the hypallage in δεύτερα φίλτρα γάμου, where the epithet naturally belongs with γάμου;[59] and the variation in δεύτερα φίλτρα ~ δεύτερον

ἠέλιον and θανοῦσαν ~ φθιμένη (both at the end of the line). The prosaic εἰς ἑτέρην ἐσπούδασεν contrasts with the elevated language used by Philinna.[60] The parallelism of δεύτερα φίλτρα and δεύτερον ἠέλιον connects the wife's request and the result of the husband's forgetfulness. In the last line, λέκτρον is metonymic for marriage and the syntax is ambiguous.[61] The repetition εἶπε ... εἶπε has led scholars to link this epigram to Catullus, *Carm.* 70.1 (*dicit ... dicit sed*), both concerning a broken promise on the part of one member of the couple.[62] The observation, however, even if valid, adds little or nothing to our understanding of Apollonides' epigram.

Comparison with the epigram of Theaetetus above, reveals the degree of variation on the topic. The setting changes from a banqueting-hall in a grand abode to a private room in an ordinary home; the time from a winter's night to a wedding-night; the number of victims from 80 to two people; the names from Aristagoras to Philinna and Diogenes; the cause of the disaster from a basement fire to the wrath of the deceased wife when her dying wish is ignored; from the remains of the dead being indistinguishable to the victims not seeing the light of the next day; and the lesson that Hades can identify the dead to the advisability of heeding the last wishes of a person, especially when expressed in the name of the children.

Antiphilus of Byzantium

Fifty-one epigrams, 45 in the *AP* and six more in the *APl,* are ascribed to Antiphilus of Byzantium, who also lived in the 1st century CE. There are testimonia which help us estimate his *floruit*. The first is his epigram *AP* 9.178/6 G-P in which 'Nero' is praised for his generosity to Rhodes:

> I, Rhodes, who once was Helios' island,[63] am now Caesar's, and I boast of equal light from both. Just when I was nearly extinguished, a new radiance illuminated me, o Helios, and Nero's light shone beside yours.[64] How shall I say to whom I owe most? The one brought me to the light from the depths, and the other saved me as I was sinking. (transl. Paton 1958:93, [*adapted*])

Reizenstein confidently and Paton tentatively identified the Nero as Tiberius and related it to epigram *AP* 9.287/23 G-P, by Apollonides[65]:

> I, the holy bird, who had never set foot in Rhodes, the eagle who was but a fable to the people of Cercaphus, came borne through the vast heaven by my high-flying wings, then when Nero was in

50. Pelliccio (2013:147) suggests that the opening lines echo the scene in which Alcestis declares that she is willing to die in the place of her husband Admetus and beseeches him not to remarry (*Alc.* 300–325); her reasons are fear of a step-mother who will be hostile to their children.

51. Compare Pelliccio (2013:149, 153).

52. LSJ s.v. σχάζω 6: 'cause a collapse'. Compare also Pelliccio (2013:154).

53. LSJ s.v. σπένδω II. (fin.), citing Apollonides. Gow and Page (1968:1.133) translate as 'solemnise'. Both Palatine and Planudean codices read σπεῖσαι, for which Reiske proposed the easier and more expected σπεύσῃς [you should hasten/seek <*to marry*], as in Hom. *Od.* 19.137: γάμον σπεύδουσιν [they insist on a marriage)] compare LSJ; Stadtmüller 1906:407 (f[*orte*] recte); Pelliccio (2013:151–152) who finds some support in the *figura etymologica* with ἐσπούδασε. But why would a Hellenistic poet choose the easier and more expected word?

54. Also Pellicccio (2013:152, 153).

55. LSJ s.vv. στέλλω 'make ready', 'bury' (only at Apoll. Rhod. 3.205); περιστέλλω 2: 'lay out a corpse', 'bury' (e.g. Hom. *Od.* 24.293); compare Pelliccio (2013:151).

56. LSJ and *TLG* s.v. γουνάζομαι: 'fall on one's knees', 'clasp someone's knees', 'implore' (Hom. *Il.* 11.130; 15.665; 22.338, 345; *Od.* 11.66; 13.324; *h.Hom. Ven.* 5.131, 187; Apoll. Rhod. 1.1133; 2.1128; 4.1029, 1053, 1668). Also Pelliccio (2013:149–150).

57. LSJ s.v. μῆνις: 'wrath of gods' (Hom. *Il.* 5.34; Aesch. *Ag.* 701); 'wrath' of Achilles, the first word in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 1.1). Compare also Pelliccio 2013:153.

58. LSJ s.v. ἄφυκτος: 'admitting no escape', 'inevitable' (Aesch. *Pr.* 903, of the eyes of the gods; Soph. *Tr.* 265, of arrows; *El.* 1388, of the dogs of the Erinyes; Eur. *Hipp.*1422 and *Med.* 531, 635, of bows and arrows; *Alc.* 984, of bonds), but also in lyric (Simon. 39.3, of death; Pind. *P.* 2.41, of fetters; *N.* 1.45, of Hercules' hands; *I.* 8.65, of the hand of the boxer Nicocles). Compare also Pelliccio (2013:153–154).

59. Thus also Pelliccio (2013:152).

60. LSJ s.v. σπουδάζω 2: 'pay serious attention', mostly in poetry; ἑτέρη may mean rival as in Asclep. *AP* 5.158.4 and Posidipp. *AP* 5.186.4; Pelliccio(2013:153).

61. λέκτρον can be taken as either object with δεύτερον ἠέλιον as subject; Gow and Page (1968:2.154; 1968:1.133 [so that no second sun should behold his bed]), and Paton (1958:234–235 [so that the sun never shone on his second marriage]); or *vice versa* as Pelliccio (2013:154 [*così che quel letto non vedesse un altro sole*]), citing Apollon. *AP* 9.281/22 G-P: δεύτερον Ἡρακλέα (object) and Antip. Sid. *AP* 7.6.2: δεύτερον ἀέλιον (object).

62. Gow and Page (1968:2.154); Pelliccio (2013:150).

63. Cercaphus, son of Helios, was the legendary founder of Rhodes.

64. Gow and Page (1968:1.95 and 2.120) where they translate 'surpassing', rejecting Paton's translation 'beside' (1958:93), on the grounds that 'the sun's light was fading when Nero's shone forth.' Against this interpretation, three objections can be raised: (1) in line 2, both suns shine equally (ἴσον ... φέγγος); (2) it is Rhodes' radiance that is 'sinking' (σβεννυμέναν με), not the sun's; and (3) it would be hubristic to claim that Nero's 'light' outshines that of Helios.

65. Paton (1958:93 n. 3); Reitzenstein (1958 [1894]b ('keine Zweifel'); compare Müller (1935:14–15).

the island of Helios. In his house I rested, at the beck of my master's hand, not shrinking from the future Zeus. (transl. Paton 1958:155; Gow& Page1968:1.141, [*adapted*])

Both Antiphilus and Apollonides, possibly near-contemporaries, refer to Helios' island, indulge in hyperbole (Caesar as a second sun and a future Zeus) and refer only to 'Nero'. Reizenstein and Paton link the epigram to Suetonius who reports an event shortly before Tiberius' departure from Rhodes in 2 CE (*Tib.* 14.4)[66]:

> *Ante paucosvero quam revocaretur dies aquilanum quamantea Rhodiconspecta in culmine domuseiusasseдit …* [In fact, a few days before he was recalled, an eagle, never before sighted in Rhodes, alighted on the roof of his house … (author's own translation)]

However, Tiberius is not known to have benefitted Rhodes in any way and in fact lived there involuntarily as a recluse to hide his *ignominia* (Suet. *Tib.* 12.1) and would hardly have done the Rhodians any favours.[67] Jacobs argued for Nero, citing Tacitus, who records that Nero, at 16 years of age, restored the freedom of the Rhodians (*reddita Rhodiis libertas*, *Ann.* 12.58), taken away in 44 CE by Claudius.[68] This act probably occurred in 54 CE after Nero became emperor.[69] The Rhodians' appreciation is preserved on an inscription[70] and commemorated on a drachm, showing on the obverse, Neroas Helios, wearing a laurel crown with the sun's rays forming a halo, and the legend αὐτογράτωρ Νέρων καῖσαρ, and, on the reverse, Nike standing on a prow with a wreath and palm, and opposite her a rose signifying Rhodes (ῥόδον).[71]

Less direct evidence of Antiphilus' dating is provided by his epigram *AP* 7.379, which refers to the great mole built at Puteoli (Dicaearcheia). Once thought to have been built by Caligula, but more probably begun by Claudius and completed by Nero.[72]

Antiphilus' inventiveness, metrical skill, elaborate and cultured style, use of exotic vocabulary, neologisms and antitheses, evidence of the influence of Leonidas of Tarentum has been acknowledged.[73] However, I have not found any epigrammatic variations on the themes of the two epigrams discussed here; they seem to be unique.

The freakish accident in the following epigram involves a herdsman:

Βόρχος ὁ βουποίμην ὅτ᾽ ἐπὶ γλυκὺ κηρίον εἷρπεν
    αἰγίλιπα σχοίνῳ πέτρον ἐπερχόμενος,
εἵπετό οἱ σκυλάκων τις ὁ καὶ βόσιν,ὃς φάγε λεπτὴν
    σχοῖνον ἀνελκομένῳ χραινομένην μέλιτι.
κάππεσε δ᾽ εἰς Ἀίδαο· τὸ δ᾽ ἀτρυγὲς ἀνδράσιν ἄλλοις
    κεῖνο μέλι ψυχῆς ὤνιον εἱρύσατο.

[*When Borchus the herdsman was going after sweet honeycomb,
    attacking a goatless rock with a rope, one
of his dogs following the herd and also him, chewed
    the thin rope, smeared with drawn-up honey.
He fell to Hades, and that honey, unharvested
    by other men, he'd plundered at the cost of his life.*] (*AP* 7.622/18 G-P, [*author's own translation*])

A cowherd descends a cliff by rope to obtain honey from an otherwise inaccessible hive, but one of his dogs chews through the rope which had become covered with honey and the man falls to his death. The narrative is clear and neat: the first two couplets build up the scene, while the third couplet gives the sudden result and moral. However, Gow and Page, referring to a fuller account by the historian Conon (1st century BCE–1st century CE), criticise the poet for leaving too much to the imagination and taking too much for granted.[74] Beckby comments '*Manches bleibt unklar*' and Waltz et al. surmise a missing distich after line 4.[75] Yet, the reader can clearly reconstruct and visualise the event: the honey is in an inaccessible place on the rock-face; it is far more easily and far less perilously retrieved from the cliff-edge above than by ascending with ropes; from the cliff-edge the dog then bites the rope, which by now has honey on it from other descents.[76] Once more, critics have to remember that writing history and poetry, differ in the latter's greater reliance on the reader's imagination, necessitated by the condensed expression in the restricted format of the genre. The historical or prose narrative will generally be longer. If Antiphilus knew Conon's tale, he would have counted on his readers to recognise and acknowledge his poetic recreation of the historian's version.

There is irony in the effort the herdsman puts in and the devastating outcome. The style is simple: only a few words drawing closer attention. The phrase αἰγίλιπα … πέτρον [a rock where no goats go], glossed by Hesychius as ὑψηλὴ τόπος, [a steep place] echoes Homer who also applies it to a rock: κατ᾽ αἰγίλιπος πέτρος (*Il.* 9.15 = 16.4) and ἀπ᾽ αἰγίλιπος πέτρος (*Il.* 13.63). The only other poetic texts to use the phrase are the *Homeric Hymn to Pan* 4 (κατ᾽ αἰγίλιπος πέτρης) and Perses (dates unknown), *AP* 7.501.3–4 (αἰγίλιπος δὲ/ πέτρου).[77] Also very rare in poetry is βόσις [fodder feed]: Homer applies it to food for fish (βόσιν ἰχθύσιν, *Il.* 19.268) and Theocritus to sheep (οὐ πᾶσαι βόσκονται ἴαν βόσιν [not all {*the flock*} graze on my feed], *Idyll* 25.8).[78] Antiphilus is here

66.Gow and Page (1968:2.160); Paton (1958:154 n. 2).

67.Compare Müller (1935:15–16).

68.Jacobs (1794–1814:9.51–52); Müller (1935:14–16).

69.Highet (1979b) left the identity of the 'Nero' open, dating the composition of the epigram to 5 BCE if it was about Tiberius, or 54 CE if it involved Nero. Cameron (2003b) states briefly that Nero was thanked for restoring the liberty of Rhodes.

70.*CIG* 12.1.2: ἀπὸ]-|[δοθείσ]ας τᾶι πόλει τὰς πατρίου πολιτείας καὶ … ὑπὸ τῶν [---- Νέ]-/[ρω]νος Καίσαρος καὶ … τὰν ποτὶ τὰν πόλιν εὖν[οιαν --]: 'the citizenship of the forefathers [*restored*] to the city and … by the … of [*Nero*] Caesar and kindness towards the city'. Compare Müller (1935:16).

71.Müller (1935:17–18 who relates the comparison of Nero to Helios with Hellenistic ruler-cult); Gow and Page (1968:2.119–120); Amandry, Burnett and Repolles (2005:457; plate 120, no. 2772).

72.Müller (1935:12–14).

73.Gow and Page (1968:2.116); Müller (1935:36); Reitzenstein (1958 [1894]b), rather grudgingly [a fertile phrase-maker and word-coiner, {*with*} often no feature of interest except the exotic vocabulary and the ingenuity of phrasing]; Degani (2002b).

74.Text in Jacoby (1968:26.202). Gow and Page (1968:2.128–129) regard the epigram as 'an abbreviated version of a presumably familiar anecdote, much more fully narrated by Conon …'. They do, however, reconstruct the scenario (p. 129).

75.Beckby (1965:2.602); Waltz *et al.* (1960:117 'inter 4 et 5 deesse distichon videtur').

76.Müller (1935:61–62) also gives a clear exposition of the process, although he presupposes an accomplice ('Begleiter') for hauling up the honey.

77.LSJ, *TLG* s.v. αἰγίλιψ: 'destitute even of goats', 'steep', 'sheer'; also Beckby (1965:2.602).

78.LSJ s.v. βόσις. Callimachus, *Aitia* fr. 3.64.16 Pfeiffer is too fragmentary to establish the application of his use of the word (as restored).

talking of cattle: Borchus is a βουποίμην, a word found only here.[79] Antiphilus is also the only recorded poet to use χραινομένην [stained] of honey.[80] The adjective ἀτρυγές is found only here.[81] The verb εἰρύσσατο (for εἰρύσσατο to avoid a lengthened syllable) implies violent dragging, drawing or plundering – here tragically and ironically fatal instead of profitable.[82]

The next epigram turns to an elderly corpse-collector:

νεκροδόκον κλιντῆρα Φίλων ὁ πρέσβυς ἀείρων
    ἐγκλιδόν, ὄφρα λάβοι μισθὸν ἐφημέριον,
σφάλματος ἐξ ὀλίγοιο πεσὼν θάνεν· ἦν γὰρ ἕτοιμος
    εἰς Ἀΐδην, ἐκάλει δ᾽ ἡ πολίη πρόφασις.
τὸν δ᾽ ἄλλοις ἐφόρει νεκυοστόλον, αὐτὸς ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ
    ἀσκάντην ὁ γέρων ἀχθοφορῶν ἔλαθεν.

[*Old Philo was lifting the couch for the dead, bending
    down, in order to earn his daily wage,
and falling from a slight stumble, died; for he was ready
    for Hades, and his grey hair, a reason, was calling;
and that bier which he bore for others, the old man
    himself carried for himself without knowing it*] (*AP* 7.634/19 G-P,
    [*author's own translation*])

The epigram revolves around the tragic irony of an aged corpse-collector suddenly succumbing to his end after tripping and being himself a copse being carried away. The simple style is deceptive. Words used in a new sense are νεκροδόκον [receiving the dead], for the more usual νεκροδέγμων, used of Hades by Aeschylus, *Prometheus* 152–153 (Ἄιδου/τοῦ νεκροδέγμονος [of Hades, receiver of the dead], but uniquely applied to a bier by Antiphilus[83]; κλιντῆρα, primarily a couch, here a bier, a meaning found elsewhere only in a Greek epigram (εἰμὶ δ᾽ ἀλυπότατος κλιντὴρ πάντεσσιν ἑτοῖμος [But I am the totally painless bier prepared for everyone]; Kaibel 1878, no. 450.5)[84]; similarly, ἀσκάντην which occurs only here of a bier.[85] The adverb ἐγκλιδόν [leaning bent down], Hecker's sensible conjecture for the unmetrical ἔνδον of the Palatine codex and the inappropriate ἔνδοθεν of the Planudean codex,[86] is rare, attested elsewhere in only three places: the *Homeric Hymn* 23 (*to Zeus*) 2–3: τελεσφόρον, ὅστε Θέμιστι/ ἐγκλιδὸν ἑζομένη πυκινοὺς ὀάρους ὀαρίζει, [{Zeus} the fulfiller who whispers words of wisdom to Themis as she sits leaning towards him],[87] and Apollonius of Rhodes 1.790 and 3.1008: ἡ δ᾽ ἐγκλιδὸν ὄσσε βαλοῦσα [but she cast her eyes aslant].[88] Antiphilus' use of σφάλματος in the sense of 'trip', 'stumble',

'false step' is the earliest recorded.[89] The word νεκυοστόλον [ferrying the dead] is rare and elsewhere applied to the river, Styx. The *Suda* lexicon under N glosses the word as ὁ τοὺς νεκροὺς δαπερῶν [the one who carries the corpses across]; Antiphilus, however, uses it in the sense of someone 'bearing the dead'.[90] Finally, the participle ἀχθοφορῶν is quite rare.[91]

Conclusion

The above discussion has tried to show how skilful the selected Hellenistic epigrammatists were in exploiting the brief form of the epigram to recreate the tragedy of accidental deaths. Within the confines of the genre, they managed to develop stories that exhibit the typical features of narrative and drama: setting, actors, action or events, sometimes also speech. The epigrams discussed above treat serious topics: the collapse of roofs on people enjoying themselves (Theaetetus 7.444; Apollonides 9.422), a baby stung to death by bees (Antipater 9.302; Bianor 9.548), a honey-seeker falling to his death (Antiphilus 7.622), and a corpse-collector tripping and dying alongside his cart (Antiphilus 7.634). Even though these and similar accidents probably occurred often enough in everyday life, what appears in the epigrams is a deliberate literary construct aiming at recreating something new, surprising and intellectually engaging in style and content. Although the narrated events are fictitious, the sympathy of the reader is aroused by means of pathos, vivid detail and epic or tragic diction, and strong irony.

As for style, one notes the (at least for us) innovative diction in the use of rare words, neologisms, new uses of familiar words, new *iuncturae*, and unique figurative language and other figures of speech. In the case of epigrams on the same topic, comparison reveals the variation in which later poets strove to vary and outdo a predecessor. This was one of the basic elements of Hellenistic literary theory and practice, which was to be taken over and perpetuated by the Roman poets in the well-known process of *imitatio et aemulatio*.

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Author's contributions

I declare that I am the sole author of this research article.

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79. LSJ and *TLG* s.v. βουποίμην. Also Gow and Page (1968:2.129); Müller (1935:35).

80. LSJ and *TLG* s.v. χραίνω: 'stain', 'smear'.

81. LSJ s.v. ἀτρυγής: 'unharvested', 'not gathered'; Müller (1935:35).

82. LSJ s.v. ἐρύω A, B.

83. LSJ s.vv. νεκροδόκος, νεκροδέγμων. Also Gow and Page (1968:2.129).

84. LSJ s.v. κλιντήρ; Müller (1935:64).

85. LSJ s.v. ἀσκάντης.

86. Beckby (1965:2.370); Gow and Page (1968:1.102–3; 2.129); Hecker (1843:278–79); Waltz et al. (1960:122).

87. Tr. Evelyn-White (1914:449).

88. LSJ s.v. ἐγκλιδόν, where the citation of Paulus Silentiarius is incorrectly given as 5.249 instead of 5.250, and which does not mention Antiphilus; compare *TLG*.

89. LSJ s.v. σφάλμα 1. The reference to 4.289 (ἐπὴν εἰς σφάλματα νεύσῃ [whenever he should decline to stumblings] rather involves the metaphorical meaning of 'fault' or 'error'; s.v. II.2. Compare also *TLG*.

90. LSJ and *TLG* s.v. νεκυοστόλος.

91. LSJ s.v. ἀχθοφόρος [bearing burdens] (Hdt. 7.187; Dion. Hal. 1.85; Ael. *NA* 2.25; this locus omitted); Gow and Page (1968:2.129), who add Antiphil. *AP* 16.333; Mel. *AP* 7.468.

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