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# Farewell to Arms – Farewell in Arms\*

## Depictions of Weapons on Stone and in Hellenistic Inscriptional Epigrams

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**ABSTRACT** – Through four case studies I discuss the importance and frequency of the appearance of weapons (an important element of epic imagery) in funerary poetry, and its relation to representations of arms on gravestones and monuments in the Hellenistic period, geographically ranging from Lycia and Caria to the Black Sea, from mainland Greece to the Aegean islands. One of the most common features of poetic epitaphs for soldiers (including citizens, mercenaries, and soldiers belonging to royal armies) is the celebration of the military valor (*arete*) of the deceased; on the other hand, except for the spear, weapons are not mentioned often in funerary poetry. When they are not mentioned in the epitaph, or when an epitaph is not present, weapons are sometimes represented on the funerary monument itself, in the form of reliefs or paintings, either in the context of a battle scene, or carried by the standing deceased, or simply as isolated objects, as symbols of his profession or social rank in life.

**KEYWORDS** – battle; epigram; epitaph; Hellenistic; inscription; soldier; war; weapons – army; battaglia; ellenistico; epigramma; epitaaffio; guerra; iscrizione; soldato.

Current research on epigraphic poetry has often underlined the importance of studying inscriptional epigrams not just as texts, but in close connection with the materiality of the monument they are inscribed on<sup>1</sup>. The emotional impact of such poems (especially funerary epigrams)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *e.g.* Garulli 2014; Petrovic - Petrovic - Thomas 2018; Angliker - Bultrighini 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Recently many studies have been devoted to the emotions in antiquity; for epitaphs. *e.g.*, see Chaniotis 2012b. Even when there is no inscription on the tombstone, pictures can convey emotions or sooth them: see Karlsson 2014.

depends not only on the ability of their author, but also on the craftsmanship of the engraver, and on the skills of the artisan devising the monument so as to blend the message conveyed by visual art with that expressed by the poetic words on the stone. Interaction between images and text, however, was not always possible, as a funerary tombstone was a costly object, and clients who were not particularly wealthy often had to choose between a figurative ornament and a textual memorial; only in rare cases do grave monuments display both. Here I will present three case studies related to the presence of weapons and parts of the armor on Hellenistic soldiers' graves<sup>3</sup>, both as featured in the visual arts and as an element of the poetic imagery of the epitaphs; finally, as a fourth case study, I shall add one dedicatory epigram. This article is part of an ongoing research on epigrams of the Hellenistic age with military themes<sup>4</sup>, and does not claim to be exhaustive on the topics covered, which would require, on the long term, a systematic collection of data from different periods and all geographical areas where stelae with an artistic representation of the deceased and an epitaph on the stone itself have been found. The aim here is to present different ways in which text and image can interact in the context of military burials for individual citizens; weapons depicted on public funerary monuments are not included in the present study.

## 1. WEAPONS DEPICTED ON STONE<sup>5</sup>

Not every funerary inscription declares explicitly the profession of the deceased or the circumstances of his death. This is also true of men who served in the army, either as professionals or as citizens occasionally summoned in defense of their own *polis*. Most of the grave monuments in antiquity are simple stelae bearing only the name of the deceased and a few words in prose. For those who could afford it, however, the degree of elaboration of a funerary monument was indeed a *status symbol*. In

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<sup>3</sup> The depiction of weapons and of armed youth on gravestones and on funerary vases was already a widespread phenomenon in the Classical period, in Athens and in other *poleis*, and has been the object of many studies (see e.g. Cadario 2004, 20-29); my focus, however, remains on the Hellenistic period.

<sup>4</sup> See Barbantani 2007; Barbantani 2014; Barbantani 2016; Barbantani 2018; Barbantani 2020. For military epitaphs of the 7th-5th century BCE, see Tentori Montalto 2017.

<sup>5</sup> On their typology in detail (with reference to friezes), see Polito 1998, 38-62.

keeping with local traditions and the taste of the clients, the artist could represent the fallen soldier in various ways.

In the *Totenmahlreliefs* the heroized dead are shown reclining at a banquet surrounded by their family and in civilian attire, but weapons often appear hanging on the walls of the banqueting hall: shields, cuirasses, greaves, helmets. Sometimes an equine protome is added to the image, recalling the rank of the dead person as a member of the cavalry<sup>6</sup>. Otherwise, the fallen soldier may be shown standing, taking his leave of the members of his family (*dexiosis* scenes): already in the classical period, the deceased may appear in military attire<sup>7</sup>. Sometimes, on the contrary, the deceased is depicted alone, with the tools of his trade: in the case of soldiers who died in battle, young or mature men are shown standing either as fully armed hoplites (*loricati*), or in ‘heroic nudity’<sup>8</sup>. Particularly touching is the image of the solitary and pensive youth, fully dressed in chiton and chlamys, leaning on a column (of a gymnasium?) and contemplating his own helmet, on a Rhodian *stèle* of the 3rd century BCE<sup>9</sup>. The painted stelae from Macedonia and the Black Sea area, from Phoenicia and the Middle East and from Egypt, likewise occasionally have depictions of standing warriors<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> For the *Totenmahlreliefs* see Fabricius 1999 and Fabricius 2016. For weapons and military gear hanging on the wall see e.g. the photos in Pfuhl - Möbius I 1977-1979, nr. 1834 (Samos, 3rd BCE), nr. 1797 (Samos, 2nd BCE), nr. 1575 (Samos, 1st BCE) and nr. 1399 (Miletupolis, Mysia, 2nd BCE, with also a scene of a cavalryman dismounted, with a squire carrying his shield, cf. below, p. 122).

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Nikolaidou-Patera 2013, 95-106, fig. nr. 13: Ambracia, 4th BCE (the woman is seated, the soldier standing); Grossman, 2001, 14-16: *Grave Stèle of Philoxenos with His Wife Philoumene*, ca. 400 BCE, unknown provenance (both the soldier and the woman are standing).

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Pfuhl - Möbius I 1977-1979, plates 52-53, esp. nr. 286-287 (Rhodes, late Hellenistic and 3rd BCE): youths in heroic nudity with cloak and weapons: sword or spear; nr. 285-284 (Rhodes, 2nd-1st BCE): *loricati*. For a survey on the *loricati* see Cadario 2004. From the Hellenistic period (esp. on Delos) onwards the cuirass is sometimes used as a *Panzertronk* (support for free-standing statues, often in heroic nudity): see Cadario 2001.

<sup>9</sup> See Pfuhl - Möbius, I 1977-1979, plate 53, nr. 289 (Rhodes, necropolis of Akanadia, beginning 3rd BCE). On depiction of young men from the gymnasium on stelae, see Zanker 1993.

<sup>10</sup> See Posamentir 2011, 368, fig. 10.14: painted stèle from Pantikapaion with young warrior wearing chiton, trousers, sword on a belt and carrying on his shoulders a shield and three arrows. Other reliefs on the Black Sea stelae are more influenced by the Athenian style (see Posamentir 2011, 371, figg. 10,16 and 10,17: two standing warriors, clothed, with helmet, and a naked warrior with helmet and shield, from Yubilenoye).

All over the Greek world, high-ranking officers may appear as cavalrymen mounted on horseback, or else leading their horse by the bridle, though sometimes this task is left to a servant<sup>11</sup>; even in the absence of the horse, officers are often represented with an attendant squire. In some cases, the animated, dramatic depiction of a battle scene is preferred to a static representation: this, however, is not meant to be realistic, a reliable account of the last battle fought by the deceased, but should rather be taken as an epic transfiguration of the dead hero's *res gestae*<sup>12</sup>.

Weapons appear in the context of a battle scene as actively wielded by the soldier and his enemies, as in some of the Hellenistic stelae of the Bithynian élite<sup>13</sup>. In other cases we are shown the aftermath of a battle, with the weapons and shield of the deceased scattered about or lying on the dead: on the broken relief on the upper part of the stele of the Bithynian officer Menas, which is one of the few to include a poetic epitaph (or rather two, imitating the layout of a book anthology)<sup>14</sup> the deceased is standing (only the lower part of the legs remains) on a fallen shield, near the corpses of two killed adversaries, still holding on tightly their shields (of two different shapes); an helmet lies on the ground nearby the feet of the victor. With extraordinary visual boldness, the leg of a fallen enemy dangles outside the area of the image and encroaches on the upper margin of the written space of the epigram. The first epigram of the two in fact points out (l. 3) that Menas fought as a foot soldier when he held off a cavalry attack (*πεζομάχος δ' ἰππείας ἐνὶ προμάχοισιν ἔμεινα*) and that (ll. 5-6) before dying he had struck down two enemies in

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For Macedonian tombstones see Kalaitzi 2016. For painted stele from Syria and Lebanon, see Couilloud - Le Dinahet 1974; Couilloud - Le Dinahet 2003; Annan 2014, 236-237; for Egypt, see Abramitis - Abbe 2019; Cole 2019.

<sup>11</sup> See *e.g.* the painted stele of Dionysos son of Bion, Alexandria, 2nd BCE, in Brown 1957, 28, nr. 27, plate XX, I (man followed by a boy carrying his shield and two spears); relief on a stele from Prusa, Bithynia 2nd BCE, in Pfuhl - Möbius I 1977-1979, nr. 509 (officer with horse, followed by a squire also with his shield and a spear).

<sup>12</sup> On battle scenes (*Kampfreliief*) in general see Pirson 2014 (175-185 for the Hellenistic period).

<sup>13</sup> On the Bithynian stelae, including that of Menas, see Post forthcoming; Cremer 1992; Kistler 2009, 53-64; Pirson 2014, 180-185.

<sup>14</sup> *IK Iznik* 751; *SGO* I 09/05/16. On the epigrams for Menas see Bar - Kochva 1974; Chaniotis 2005, 204-206; Fantuzzi, 2008; Garulli 2014, 151-152. The stele, from the area of Nicaea (Iznik) is now at the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul. A photo can be seen here: <https://www.livius.org/pictures/turkey/iznik-nicaea/nicaea-funery-relief-of-menas/>.

arms (ἐνὶ τεύχεσιν), a Thracian and a Mysian, possibly the two depicted on the stele. Both epigrams on Menas' grave, however, states that the brave soldier died in that battle (Kouropedion, 251 or 190 BCE), so his depiction on the relief as a triumphant victor standing over his enemies' corpses must have been an idealized representation of a hero still alive (for the benefit of his family and community), far from the brutal reality of his death in the fray of the battle.

In other parts of the Greek world, weapons as isolated objects become an iconographic ornament of the tomb. The simple representation of weapons and military attire is enough to mark that the deceased belonged to a certain social category, or even a specific military rank. This is the case of some Hellenistic examples from Boeotian tombs (Tanagra), representing helmets and shields in bas relief or in full relief<sup>15</sup>. Macedonian tombs are richly illustrated with brightly colored frescoes<sup>16</sup> depicting either fully armed soldiers (as in the Kinch tomb at Leukadia, end of 4th - early 3rd century BCE)<sup>17</sup>, or elements of the *panoplia* (helmets, shields, greaves, swords, spear)<sup>18</sup>. Sometimes we see a combination of different iconographic *topoi*: e.g. the rock-cut tomb of Alketas (most probably one of Alexander's officers), in the western necropolis of Termessos, is adorned by reliefs carved into the rock itself: one of these portrays the fully armed general striding on horseback, another a series of elements of his panoply (cuirass, helmet, shield, sword)<sup>19</sup>.

In the Hellenistic stelae from the Black Sea area<sup>20</sup>, especially from the *polis* of Chersonesos Taurike, old men's *mnemata* are characterized by the depiction of a rod or a scepter, a symbol of *auctoritas*, and young

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<sup>15</sup> Fraser - Rönne 1957, 48, *Theb.* 64, plate 12: shield; Fraser - Rönne 1957, 66-68, plate 18, 1-5 (helmets); 69-70, plates 1-2 (oval shield); Polito 1998, 50.

<sup>16</sup> See for an overview Polito 1998, 73-76. Painted tomb with depiction of panoplies or weapons are also present in Hellenistic Alexandria and in *Magna Graecia* (Taranto).

<sup>17</sup> Also known as Tomb of Niaousta, end 4th - beginning 3rd BCE: see Kinch 1920; Romiopoulou - Touratsoglou 1971.

<sup>18</sup> An example of weapons as a subject of a fresco is the Macedonian tomb of Lyson and Kallikles (Miller 1993; Chaniotis 2005, 206-207). In the lunettes (Miller 1993, 48-59) are depicted shields, corslets, greaves, helmets, and hanging swords. They have been interpreted either as trophies (captured armors), or, more likely, as gear worn by the military men buried there. On the *panoplia* of the Alketas' tomb see below, n. 19.

<sup>19</sup> End of 4th cent. BCE. See Pekridou 1986; Polito 1998, 77-78 (also with other examples from rock-cut tombs); Cadario 2004, 50-51.

<sup>20</sup> See in general for funerary monuments from this area, Montchamp 1993 (for representation of soldiers, see 191, 207-208).

men's stelae by polychrome reliefs representing a sword hung up with its scabbard<sup>21</sup>. Sometimes the sword is combined with a strigil and a globular aryballos, containing oil for physical training, probably to stress that the young man still frequented the *gymnasion* when he died<sup>22</sup>. Strigil and aryballos alone, without the sword, may indicate that the boy did not even start his active military life, but this is only my interpretation. In § 3 we shall see a perfect poetic match to these symbolic representations of objects.

## 2. VERSE EPITAPHS AND WEAPONS

Tombs inscribed with a poetic epitaph are often devoid of other artistic ornaments: the verses alone bear the task of reminding the community of the deceased, or the occasional «passer-by» (*xenos*) addressed by the epigram, of the biographic details of the dead citizen and the values he upheld during his lifetime, which were deemed worthy of being transmitted to the younger generation of his community<sup>23</sup>. Surprisingly, weapons are not always mentioned in epitaphs of soldiers, where military ἀρετή should be the focus. Many epitaphs in fact mention only in passing the *laudandus'* acts of valor on the battlefield, focusing rather on the sentiments of his grieving family and fellow citizens and the glory of the deceased<sup>24</sup>. When

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<sup>21</sup> Sword, scabbard, arrows, and other tools (and a ship?): Kalchedon, Bithynia, 2nd BCE (Posamentir 2001, fig. 7.4); stele of Nikasion, Gemlik (Kios) but probably of Nikomedeian provenance, 2nd BCE (Cremer 1991, Abb. 5.). For other examples of sword hung up with scabbard, see Posamentir 2011, nos. 3-6 (3: stele of Megakles, 6: stele of Herakleios), 14, 20, 21, 22, 26, 30, 46, C1, C16, C23-25 (here the sword is accompanied by a shield and a drape, cf. pp. 99-101), C26. For the date of the object depicted, see Posamentir 2011, 221-222 (4th-3rd BCE), 357-377 (comparison with contemporary stelae).

<sup>22</sup> Posamentir 2011, 146-149, esp. fig. 3.28 (p. 148). Sword and strigil: Posamentir 2011, nr. 46 (stele of Bakos): here the sword is sculpted (the hilt is lost), with the sword-belt painted in red; near the belt are traces of a strigil and an *aryballos*, suspended from a nail by a ribbon, both painted (cf. stele nr. 30) See also Posamentir 2011, nr. 5 (stele of Dionysios, son of Sannion); here we find in bas-relief a sword with sword-belt, hung on a nail rendered only in paint; also in relief, a strigil and an *aryballos* are suspended underneath a rosette. For other depiction of strigil and *aryballos* (without sword) see Posamentir 2011, nr. 65 (stele of Hermodoros, son of Alkimos), nos. 64 + 64a (stele of Theophantos, son of Apemantos), fig. 5.12 (p. 176): actual athletic equipment in bronze, as sculpted on nr. 13.

<sup>23</sup> See Chaniotis 2012a; Barbantani 2018, 286; Barbantani 2020.

<sup>24</sup> See Barbantani 2020.



weapons are mentioned, however, we find the same variety of representational choices we have seen above (§ 1) in the visual arts:

- a. Occasionally epitaphs do engage with the fighting performances of the deceased, describing them in a few conventional words mainly inspired by Homer and elegy (Tyrtaeus, Simonides)<sup>25</sup>. As in funerary reliefs, in epigrams we rarely find a realistic depiction of the actual battle or an account of specific episodes of combat<sup>26</sup>: usually we are presented with its heroic transfiguration. Hellenistic epitaphs for soldiers only occasionally indulge in gory imagery, choosing an idealistic representation of war by the re-use of the traditional language of epic and elegiac poetry, rich in stock formulae: the epitaph is meant to elicit feelings of sadness and pride, rather than fear and horror in its readers, portraying the fallen youth as the last in a line of Homeric heroes fighting for their *poleis* and a model for his fellow-citizens.
- b. It was pointed out in § 1 that, with the exception of the *panopliai*, when weapons are represented without their owner the artist chooses to focus only on a few, symbolic elements of military gear: usually sword, helmet, and shield. The same happens in poetic epitaphs: the most frequently mentioned items in the warrior's panoply are definitely the shield and the spear, both with a highly symbolic value, one as a protection, the other as an offense tool<sup>27</sup>; other weapons are less frequently mentioned. The spear is particularly important, as it not only evoked the *aristiai* of the Homeric heroes, but also, especially in the Hellenistic period, it became a powerful symbol of mastery in warfare and of political power.

### 3. CASE STUDIES 1 AND 2: WEAPONS MENTIONED IN THE EPITAPH AND DEPICTED ON THE STONE ITSELF

In rare cases weapons are depicted on the funerary monument and also mentioned in the epitaph on the stone itself. This is the case of the epigram from Choma dating to the 4th-3rd century BCE (or a later date,

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<sup>25</sup> See examples in Barbantani 2014, Barbantani 2018, 284-286; Barbantani 2019.

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. the dramatic end of Eugnotos of Akraephia in *GVI* 1603, 16-17 (293 BCE; Ma 2005; Ma 2013, 7, 48, 59n55, 61, 78n66, 119, 120, 237, 300-305). For gory imagery see other examples in Barbantani 2014.

<sup>27</sup> The topic has been explored, esp. on Hellenistic epitaphs, by Barbantani 2007 (with focus on the spear; see also Looijenga 2014); Barbantani 2014 (with focus on the shield); Barbantani 2016 (on the portrayal of weapons as sentient beings).

according to Tentori Montalto), celebrating two Lycian warriors, Osses and Manossas, who were fortunate enough to die in old age: *SGO IV 17/17/01*<sup>28</sup>. The only photograph of the stone, provided by the *editores principes*<sup>29</sup>, shows that the monument is broken in the upper part, and no traces remain of the relief that was above the epitaph. However, the epigram states very clearly, in the prominent position of the first verse, that the person who commissioned the tomb, the grandson (and namesake) of Osses, wished the «emblems/symbols of war» (σημέ' ἀρήϊα) to be exhibited on the *mnema*, in order to celebrate the heroism of his relatives. There must have been, therefore, a bas-relief above the epigram, which sported the «shield, the spear, the sword and the helmet» listed in the epigram (ἀσπίδα καὶ σιβύνην<sup>30</sup> καὶ φάσγανον ἠδὲ κυνεῖην). If the tomb itself was for the Greeks a *sema* («sign») of the value of the deceased, the tools of war depicted on it are even clearer *semata* of his ἀρετή: look at the 'signature' of the artist beneath the poem (l. 2: σήματα ἔτευξε τάδε, «created these signs»).

ἀσπίδα καὶ σιβύνην καὶ φάσγανον ἠδὲ κυνεῖην  
σημέ' ἀρήϊα ἐφέστα Ὀσσης Ὀσαβίμος υἱός  
Ὀσση πατρός πατρί καὶ τούτου πατρί Μανόσσα  
ἀνδράσι ἰφθίμοισι γέρας ἐπιτύμβιον εἶναι  
σώφροσιν εὐκλέεσιν ἐτεόλβοις ἠνόρεσιν τε  
προστασίη τε Αἴαντι ὁμώοις Τελαμώνος,  
τοὺς καὶ δειῶ δουπήσαντες ἔχει γεραιούς ὄδε τύμβος  
ἀεναίοιο δόμω Αἴδος μακάρων ἐνὶ χώρῳ.

5

Παίων Μουσαίου Περγαῖος λαῖνουργῶν  
τέχνη κάλλιστος σήματα ἔτευξε τάδε.

ἂν τις βλάβη τι τῶν περὶ τὸν τάφ[ον, ἔ]σται ἀμαρτωλὸς θεοῖς πάσιν

Osses, son of Osabimis, set up the shield, spear, sword and helmet, emblems of war, to be an adornment of the tomb of Osses his grandfather and Manossas his great-grand-father, mighty men of good fame, prudent and brave, of honest wealth, champions equal to Ajax son of Telamon, both

<sup>28</sup> See Bean - Harrison 1967, 43-44, nr. 8; Barbantani 2014, 318-319; Şahin 2014, 224-225; Tentori Montalto 2020. Robert 1969, 522 defines Ajax and Telamon epicchoric heroes of Lycia, Pisidia and Cilicia. The relief, now lost, was the work of the self-celebrating Paion of Perge, with the representation of the weapons listed in the first line.

<sup>29</sup> Bean - Harrison 1967, plate V, 1-2.

<sup>30</sup> The word σιβύνη usually defines a short spear used for hunting; this is the only time in Greek literature that it appears in a strictly military context; in epigrams commonly the spear is δόρυ or αἰχμή.

fallen in their old age, held by this tomb in the land of the Blessed, in the halls of eternal Hades.

Paeon, son of Musaeus, of Perge, supreme in the stone-cutter's art, worked these emblems.

If anyone injures anything pertaining to this tomb, he shall be judged a sinner in the eyes of all the gods. (Adapted translation by Bean - Harrison 1967, 43)

The two Lycian warriors, bearing non-Greek names, are compared in l. 6 to one of the most prominent Achaean hero, Ajax Telamonios, for their *προστασίη* (perseverance in holding their position *ἐν προμάχοις*)<sup>31</sup>. The anonymous poet creatively reworked the Homeric diction: cf. l. 4: *ἀνδράσι ἰφθίμοισι γέρας ἐπιτύμβιον εἶναι* with *Od. XVI 244: ἀνδρε δύω πολλοῖσι καὶ ἰφθίμοισι μάχεσθαι* (notice the dual in the *Odyssey*: the Lycian warriors buried are also two); the idea of the tomb as a *geras* to the dead comes from *Il. XVI 457*. At l. 7 *δοιπήσαντες* (*scil. δοιπήσαντας*) is inspired by the use of the verb *δοιπέω* = first «to fall with a heavy thud», hence in some circumstances, «to die» (*e.g.* in *Il. XXIII 679*)<sup>32</sup>. The relief and the epitaph were meant to mutually reinforce each other, stressing the 'Homeric stature' of the warriors buried there.

The second case study focuses on the shield. Together with the spear, the shield, as a means of protection for oneself and for a nearby fellow-soldier, is one of the most powerful symbols appearing in epitaphs of citizen-soldiers from every part of the Hellenic world: as a form of defensive armor, it metaphorically underlines the act of protecting the entire *polis*<sup>33</sup>. Occasionally it may appear also in the epitaphs of mercenaries, like the one for the Messenian Meletos found in Priene (3rd cen-

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<sup>31</sup> For this Homeric and Tyrtaic *topos* see Barbantani 2014, esp. 321-322, 324; Barbantani 2016, 196-198.

<sup>32</sup> See Zanusso 2019, 301-310.

<sup>33</sup> Epitaph for Aristarchos, from Phokis, Anticyra (3rd BCE; *IG IX, 1 1064; GVI 1640, Cairon nr. 54*): οἷς ἀρετῆς κατὰ πάντα μέλει βίον, οἱ δὲ τάχιστα / θνήσκουσι στυγερώων ἐγ ξυνοχαῖς πολέμων. / ὧγ καὶ Ἀρίσταρχος πάτρας ὑπερ ἀσπίδ' αἰείρας / ὄλετο δυσμενέωμ φύλον ἀμυνόμενος. «Those who cherish virtue throughout all their life, quickly die in the clashes of odious wars. Among these there is also Aristarchos, who, keeping his shield high in defense of his homeland, perished pushing back the army of the enemies». See also the epitaph of Aristagoras/ Areimenes, by Damagetos (Ambrakia, ca. 219 BCE; *A.P. VI 231 = GVI 1604; Barbantani 2014, 323*): Ὡδ' ὑπὲρ Ἀμβρακίας ὁ βοαδρόμος ἀσπίδ' αἰείρας / τεθνάμεν ἢ φεύγειν εἴλετ' Ἀρισταγόρας, / υἱὸς ὁ Θεοπόμπου. μὴ θαυμ' ἔχε Δωρικός ἀνὴρ / πατρίδος, οὗχ ἤβας ὄλλυμένας ἀλέγει. «Thus for Ambracia's sake the warrior Aristagoras, son of Theopompos, holding his shield on high, chose death rather

ture BCE: ll. 3-4: «none of the enemies ever saw the shield on my shoulders», meaning witnessed me retreating from battle like a coward<sup>34</sup>. I would like, however, to recall briefly here the remarkable epitaph of the fierce Carian Apollonios, from Tymnos (Caria, Rhodian Peraia), which I have already discussed elsewhere<sup>35</sup>. Unfortunately, also in this case the stone is broken, but the poem itself (ll. 1-2) invites the passerby to look at the snake (*drakon*) adorning the tomb,<sup>36</sup> which was also the emblem on Apollonios' shield (ll. 7-9):

ὦ ξένε, θάησαι, παριῶν ἰδὲ τόνδε δράκοντα,  
 ἀνδρὸς ἐπὶ κρατεροῦ σάματι φαινόμενον·  
 ὅς ποκα ναυσὶ θοαῖς πάτρας ὑπερ ἄλκιμον ἦτορ  
 δεικνύμενος πολλοὺς ὤλεσε δυσμενέων·  
 πολλὰ δ' ὄ γ' ἐν χέρσῳ κατενήρατο φοίνια δούρα  
 ἀνδρῶν ἀντιπάλων σάρκας ἐρειδόμενος. 5  
 νῦν δὲ θανῶν γηραιὸς ἐφ' αὐτῷ τόνδε δράκοντα  
 εἶσατο, τούδε τάφου θοῦρον ἔμεν φύλακα,  
 ὃν καὶ ἐπὶ ἀσπίδος εἶχεν, ὅτ' Ἄρεος ἔργα ἐπονεῖτο,  
 πολλὰ ἐπὶ δυσμενέσιν πήματα μαϊόμενος. 10  
 τοῦνομα δ' εἶ κ' ἐθέλης αὐτοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἀκούσαι,  
 εἰδήσεις ἐτύμως τὰ κατώτατα γράμματ' ἀναγνῶσαι.  
 Ἀπολλώνιος Ἀθ[η]νῶν

than flight. Wonder not threat: a Dorian cares for his country, not for the loss of his young life» (transl. W. Paton).

<sup>34</sup> Epitaph for the Messenian mercenary Meletos, from Priene (3rd BCE; *GVI* 799; *SGO* I 03/01/05; *int.* Peek 1980, 14, nr. 6; *SEG* XXX (1983), nr. 1363; see Barbantani 2014, 322; Barbantani 2016, 214, 218-219): [Ἀντιμάχου? μ' ἐσαθρε]ῖς Μεσσηνίον ὄντα Μέλητον, / [πολλάκις εἰς δῆριν] δοράτων ἐλθόντα σὺν ἔπλοις / [ἀντιπάλων δ' οὐδεὶς κ] αυχῆσεται ἐν δορὸς αἰγυμῆ / [ἐντροπαλιζόμενοι] οἰδεῖν σάκος ἀμφ' ὤμοισιν / [πρόσθ' ἀγέλας δὲ νεκ]ρᾶς ἐχθρῶν στάς δισσὰ τρόπαια / [ἤγειρα· προγόνων δ' ἄ]ξια δρῶν ἔθανον. «You see me, the Messenian Meletos [son of...], / [who often] went armed [into the clash of the spears]. / [None of the enemies] will boast / of having seen, in heat of the battle, the shield on my shoulder [while I was running away], / [but....] standing firm against the enemy troops, two trophies / [I erected; ] I died accomplishing deeds worthy [of the ancestors]».

<sup>35</sup> *GVI* 1260; *SGO* I Tymnos 01/02/01, 3rd-2nd cent. BCE. See Barbantani 2007, 115-116 and Barbantani 2014, 328-332 for further details and bibliography. For a photo of the squeeze see M. and N. Chaviaras, *Archaiologike Ephemeris* 58 (1911), 64-65 (65, nr. 63). Funerary images of the common citizen armed with spear are rare (see Pfuhl - Möbius I 1977-1979, nr. 283 from Cyzicus, and nr. 1900 from Erythrae, cf. Ma 2004, 207 e fig. 4, from Kibyra).

<sup>36</sup> For the *episeimon* of the snake/dragon see Barbantani 2014, 329-331.

Stranger, while you are passing by, look at this snake which appears on the tomb of a strong man.

Once, showing his mighty courage on the swift ships of his homeland, he destroyed a great number of enemies; also on dry land he wielded many murderous spears, piercing the flesh of his adversaries.

Now that he has died in old age, he has placed above himself this snake so that it would be a bold sentinel for his tomb.

He had it also on his shield, when he was toiling in the deeds of Ares, inflicting many sufferings on his enemies.

If you want to hear his name and the name of his father, you will truly know them on reading the letters below:

Apollonius son of At[hen]ion (*integravit* Peek)

The epitaph states that it was the veteran himself, who died in old age (like the Lycian soldiers we have seen above), who required this symbolic guard on his grave, to protect him after death as it had once defended him in the heat of the fighting during his lifetime. Shields with snakes as *episeimon* are often depicted on Greek vases (especially Athenian) from the 6th century BCE onwards: sometimes such a shield is wielded by a god (e.g. Athena) or a hero, sometimes by common soldiers<sup>37</sup>. The stress laid on the shield's *episeimon* of a Carian warrior, moreover, had a further importance, as allegedly (Hdt. I 171; cf. Strab. XIV 2, 27; Plin. *N.H.* VI 200) it was the Carians who first put figurative blazons on their shields.

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<sup>37</sup> In vase paintings, Athena often has a shield with snake *episeimon* (<https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/62FE371C-51BA-47FA-9B25-570C2A7CC6DE>), but also many human or semidivine warriors do. See some examples in the Beazley database.

Athenian, second half 6th BCE:

<https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/B8E1C8BD-4F93-45D0-8847-D357F93EBE5E;A1B9DD29-22A1-4249-8931-7A5A36DCE252;5A748262-1F6A-4BC5-BC67-7737B7ED284F;3BF1F646-99AA-40F9-AA5F-6A280842DB38>.

Athenian, first half 5th BCE:

<https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/6ADA9EA3-62FD-4C55-B3EF-6EF4DC206880;8B5CD013-6E03-403D-AEE2-255DF5EFF5CB;8B9ED614-E460-409C-85D8-61A62A93A978;5E06EAE8-BC9E-41FC-9AD2-33C145B14D97;B520CAD4-AF01-4C2D-8138-61E9BC898735>.

Athenian, second half 5th BCE:

<https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/10B0A97E-80ED-4F2F-9558-AC2540FF434B>.

Athenian, 525-475 BCE:

<https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/CE59C5F8-A2D9-4E11-99FA-EE1CCD1CB907>.

Athenian, 475-425 BCE:

<https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/A9C23E5D-AB9D-4CDB-80AF-E0B10EFD6F5A;2A9F5231-3A94-4CA1-8EE8-1AA597CA1E85>.

Unfortunately we cannot assess whether the snake was painted or in relief (or a painted relief, like the symbols on the Chersonesian stelae, see above, p. 137), or whether it was comprised in the round shape of a shield or represented as a free-standing creature. In any case, it should be observed that the image of the *drakon*, embodying the main characteristic of the dead veteran (and, if we accept Bresson's tentative integration of the last line<sup>38</sup> – Δ[ράκ]ωνος instead of Peek's reading Ἀθ[ην]ίωνος –, also the name of his father) is replicated twice on the same stone, in the epitaph and on the image above it. Once again, image and words reinforce each other on the tombstone.

#### 4. CASE STUDY 3: WEAPONS OF YOUNG BOYS WHO DIED WHILE COMPLETING THEIR GYMNASION EDUCATION

We have seen on the stelae from Chersonnesos (above, pp. 123-124) the combination of the two main symbols of 'competition' in peace and war: the strigil (related to athletic practice) and the sword. On those stelae, no depiction of the deceased youth appears, only the objects associated with his everyday activities, idly hung from a nail, abandoned by their departed owner, as in a sort of 'still life'. As a perfect counterpart to this simple but poignant imagery, I present an epigram which is basically a list of tools of paramilitary exercise, disembodied from their owner, Epikrates, a boy from Aphrodisias (Caria). This emotional epitaph in iambic trimeters as far as we know was not associated with a visual depiction of the weapons, as it is inscribed on a round base (possibly a commemorative altar), located in the *gymnasion* of the city<sup>39</sup>. The poem is a celebration of Epikrates' education, including, before the implements of his military and athletic training, the symbols of music and lyric poetry<sup>40</sup>, that is the *barbiton* (namely an ancient Aeolic stringed instru-

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<sup>38</sup> Bresson, 1991, 105-107, nr. 95 admits «Nous avons été tenté de lire Δ[ράκ]ωνος (le nom Dracôn, est bien attesté à Rhodes, en fait surtout à l'époque impériale, et le patronyme aurait bien convenu à l'évocation de l'épigramme, où le serpent est par deux fois mentionné). Mais nous ne lisons pas delta à l'initiale. Bien d'autres solutions sont possibles. Nous nous abstenons donc de toute restitution».

<sup>39</sup> For the texts and a full commentary see Chaniotis 2009a and Staab 2018, 329; cf. Barbantani 2016, 187-188.

<sup>40</sup> On the epitaphs related to gymnasium youths and on the exhibition of their literary education see Barbantani 2018, with bibliography on the gymnasium educational system; see also, for gymnasia in Greek and Roman Egypt, Paganini 2021.

ment), and the Homeric poems (l. 4): since the boy died prematurely, and probably not in battle, he could only have handled mock weapons (the shield «made of willow», l. 5), or exercised with real weapons (the javelin and the bow, l. 7), but only in the safe space of the *gymnasion*.

ὁ πέτρος ἀυδᾶ πατρὸς ἐξ Ἐπικράτους  
 Ἐπικράτην ὑπόντα τῶιδ' ὑπ'εἰρίῳ  
 ἔτ' ὄντα κοῦρον. ἀ κόνις δὲ [λ]είπεται  
 καὶ βάρβιτ' ἀκλόνητα, ται θ' Ὀμηρικαὶ  
 καὶ ξυστὰ κεύθροπακος ἰτέας κύκλος  
 τοὶ πῶλικοί τ' ἀγκτήρες<sup>41</sup> ἤραχνομένοι  
 τὰ τόξα θ' οἱ τ' ἄκοντες. οἴσιν ἐμπρέπων  
 ἐς Αἴδαν ὁ κοῦρος εὐκλεῆς ἔβη.

The stone speaks of Epikrates, the son of Epikrates, still a young man, who lies under this mound. The dust is left behind, and the *barbita*, no longer strummed, also the Homeric (poems?) and the spears and the willow circle (i.e. the shield) with the beautiful handle, the halters (?) of the young horses, covered with cobweb, the bows, and the javelins. Being distinguished in all this, the glorious young man went to Hades. (Transl. by A. Chaniotis)

The pitiful image of his military tools neglected and entangled in spiderwebs (l. 6) recalls a very fragmentary 2nd century BCE epitaph from Tegea, for Kallias<sup>42</sup>, whose death has left his weapons «orphans» (l. 5):

Οὐ θρασὺς ἐμ πολέμῳ α.....αιος ...ης  
 Καλλία, οὐδ'ενο..... ες...α...αν.  
 ἀλλὰ φ[ίλαν] ἐπι[- ~ ] μέγα χάρμα γονεῦσιν  
 [- ~ ]ων Αἴδαος στρυγνὸς ἐλήισατο  
 [- ~ ]ν ἐστενάχησ' ἐπὶ σοὶ πόλις, ὀρφανὰ δ' ἔντη  
 [- ~ ] ἐν λιπαραῖς παστάσι γυμνασίου.  
 [- ~ ]ους κλυτὲ [- ~ - ~ ] σὺ ποθεινός  
 .....με.....

Courageous in war you did not ...  
 Kallias, no one ... .

<sup>41</sup> Among the numerous linguistic peculiarities of the poem, well underlined by Staab 2018, 329, I add the peculiar (and so far unique, as far as I know) use of ἀγκτήρες in relation to horses, very likely with the meaning of «halter, bridle»; otherwise ὁ ἀγκτήρ, ἦρος (cf. ἄγχω) is usually a medical term, sometimes indicating an instrument for closing wounds, a δεσμός, or a part of the throat.

<sup>42</sup> For the text see Cairon, 2009, 125-128, nr. 39; for the stone, see Karagiorga 1963, 90 (III. ΤΥΧΑΙΑ ΕΥΡΗΜΑΤΑ – ΠΕΡΙ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΩΝ 1. Άγιος Σώστης Τεγέας); Peek 1971, nr. 14.

But your ... great joy for your parents.  
... Odious Hades took you as a prey  
Wailed for you your city, and the orphaned weapons,  
... In the shining colonnades of the gymnasium.  
... You glorious ... missed

The fact that also Kallias, like Epikrates, belonged to the ‘*gymnasium* class’<sup>43</sup> is proven by l. 6, where the «gleaming porches/colonnades of the *gymnasium*» are mentioned (λιπαρός is possibly an allusion to the oil used by the athletes). The marble above the epigram, according to the description of the finder (Th. Karageorga), has a bas-relief and a greeting in prose which do not exactly match the content of the epigram (unlike the monument to Osses and Manossas). The relief represents a scene of *dexiosis* (cf. § 1 above, p. 121) between two men, possibly father and son; one is a cavalryman on foot, holding the bridle of a horse, and the other a bearded man<sup>44</sup>. The words above the scene (Καλλίας, Ἐπιτέλης, / Χαίρετε) salute two men, Kallias and Epiteles, but the epitaph below the relief, at least in the surviving fragments, as we have seen above, addresses Kallias alone in the second person. This time there is no close connection between the text and the iconography of the tombstone. The depiction of weapons «orphaned», abandoned by the deceased boy, is highly emotional, and falls under the rhetorical category of the ‘pathetic fallacy’ or personification of inanimate objects<sup>45</sup>. Generally in epitaphs this term, «orphan», is used to lament the status of children (τέκνα) deprived of parents, and in epic and oracular literature the cities devastated by some calamity are described as «orphaned» or «widowed» of men<sup>46</sup>. The best parallel for the expression used in our epitaph is the sentence inscribed on the Macedonian shields conquered by Pyrrhus and dedicated in the temple of Zeus at Dodona (epigram *FGE* CXLII, quoted in Paus. I 13, 3): «Now orphaned they lie by the pillars of the temple of Zeus»<sup>47</sup> τῷ δὲ ἐν Δωδώνῃ Διὶ Μακεδόνων ἀνέθηκεν αὐτῶν τὰς ἀσπίδας. ἐπιγέγραπται δὲ καὶ ταύταις:

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<sup>43</sup> For other examples see Barbantani 2016, 206 n. 51, and Barbantani 2018.

<sup>44</sup> No reproduction available. For the *dexiosis* see Breuer 1995, 15-39.

<sup>45</sup> See Barbantani 2016, 224-228 for cases of personification of weapons, also as a bloodthirsty animals.

<sup>46</sup> Sotad. fr. 4b Powell, l. 2, in Dion. Hal. *de comp. verb.* 4, 31-34: ἔνθ’ οἱ μὲν ἐπ’ ἄκραισι πυραῖς νέκυες ἔκειντο / γῆς ἐπὶ ξένης, ὄρφανὰ τείχεα προλιπόντες / Ἑλλάδος ἐρής καὶ μυχὸν ἐστίης πατρώης, / ἦβην τ’ ἐρατὴν καὶ καλὸν ἡλίου πρόσωπον. See also Phlegon of Thralles, *Mirab.* 2, 11: χῆροι δ’ οἴκοι πάντες, 3.8: χῆρους δ’ οἴκους καὶ τείχεα θήσει.

<sup>47</sup> The reference has been suggested by Cairon 2009, 128.



αἶδε ποτ' Ἀσίδα γαῖαν ἐπόρθησαν πολύχρυσον,  
αἶδε καὶ Ἑλλάσιν δουλοσύναν ἔπορον.  
νῦν δὲ Διὸς ναῶ ποτι κίονας ὄρφανὰ κείται  
τᾶς μεγαλαυχῆτῳ σκυλα Μακεδονίας.

Other epitaphs for boys of the 'gymnasium class' who died before actually experiencing war combine the celebration of their education with the mention of their paramilitary training; unlike the epigram from Aphrodisia, some of these epitaphs are accompanied by the representation of the deceased youth with the implements of his *paideia*. Text and relief together complete the image of the young man as an excellent 'citizen in the making', whose perfection has been sealed and sanctioned by death: an ideal role model for those of his fellow citizens who pass by his grave. See e.g. on the Hellenistic epitaph for Hekataios, *SGO* II 09/07/09, from Kalchedon, Bithynia:

Ἑκαταῖος Ἑκαταίου / χαῖρε.  
τίς κατὰ γᾶς; Ἑκαταίου ὁμώνυμος ὃ ξένη πατρί  
οὐπω ἐφειβήην θηκάμενος γλαμύδα,  
τῶι σοφία μεμέλητο καὶ εὐμόχθ<ω>ν ἀπ' ἀγώνων  
νίκη καὶ γλυκεροὶ Πιερίδων κάματο[·].  
ὀκτωκαιδεχέτης δ' ἔλιπεν φάος· ἃ γὰρ ἀδεκ[—]<sup>στ</sup>[—]  
Μοῖρα που μερόπων ἀνιόχευσε βίους.

5

Hekataios, son of Hekataios, greetings. Who is under the ground? O stranger, a man homonym of <his father>, Hekataios; not having taken off his epebe's cloak yet, he dedicated himself to wisdom, and to winning the competitions where noble toils are rewarded, and to the sweet labors of the Pierides. He left the light at eighteen: in fact [.....] Moira drives the lives of mortals.

This poem is written beneath a relief depicting the epebe with two spears in his right hand, symbols of his military training, as is the cloak (*chlamys*) he wears; on the right side, a palm branch possibly alludes to his poetic victories, mentioned in the epigram, at l. 6, with the very Alexandrian metaphor «sweet toils of the Muses»<sup>48</sup>. While the poem does not mention weapons and only stresses the excellence of the boy in his literary education, his depiction on the relief shows him with a combination of military and poetic symbols, with a greater stress on the former. The two forms of expression are therefore complementary.

<sup>48</sup> See Asgari - Firatlı 1978.

Other epigrams for ephebes prematurely deceased mention their weapons, along with their *paideia*. The epitaph for the 18-year old Dionysos, from Nymphaion (*SGO* I 05/02/02, Smyrna, 1st BCE - 1st CE)<sup>49</sup> recalls that the boy had in his heart (ll. 4-6) «the most venerable symbols of the wisdom of the Muses, having just recently armed his shoulders with the quiver carrier of the arrows (lit. «the arrow bearer of the quiver»), as he showed to mortals the term of the *ephebia* (μουσοπόλου σοφίης σύμβολα κεδνοτάτα / ἄρτι καθαρμοσσοντ' ὤμοις φαρετρηφορον ἰόν / θεσμὸς ἐφηβείης ὡς κατέδειξε βροτοῖς). The *pharetra* (quiver) is also mentioned in the epitaph for the adolescent Philomousos, from Aeolic Cyma (*Fundort* Phokaia, 2nd-1st BCE)<sup>50</sup>:

αἰάζω Φιλόμουσον ἀεικλαύτω παρὰ τύμβῳ  
 δῦ[σμι]ορον, εἰμερτᾶς ἄνθος ἐφαβοσύνας,  
 οὐ τελέσανθ' ἐτέων δισσῶν κύκλον, ἀλλὰ πρὶν ὥρας  
 Ἑρμεία χθονίῳ θηκάμενο<ν> φαρέτραν.  
 μυρία δ' ἐγ νίκας κούφοις ποσὶν ἄνυσ' ἄεθλα  
 εἰς Αἶδαν στέψας οὐ δόμον, ἀλλὰ τάφον.  
 ἀλλὰ τὸν εὐσεβέων ναίων εὐφεγγέα χῶρον,  
 χαίροις οὐ χαρτὸν δῶμα λιπῶν τοκέων.

5

I mourn Philomusos, unfortunate, near his grave eternal source of lament, and the flower of his desirable youth. He did not complete the two-year cycle (= *ephebia*), but prematurely he consecrated his quiver to Hermes Chthonios. Infinite competitions he has won with his swift feet – and now in Hades he has crowned not a house, but a grave. But you are dwelling in the Land of the Blessed in the bright light, may you be happy having left the house of your parents, (now) without joy.

The boy died before completing the two-year training (*ephebia*), whose final act should have been the dedication of his quiver to Hermes, patron of the *gymnasion*: now the quiver goes to the Hermes of the Underworld (*Chthonios*, *Psychopompos*). No quiver and no weapons, however, seem to have a place in the relief, at least in what survives of the broken stele: it depicts the youth standing, while a little Psyche and a servant attend him. On the left a little Eros (or a servant) holds a long palm branch, usually a symbol of victory (l. 5: athletic competitions are mentioned); on

<sup>49</sup> *SGO* I 05/02/02. The epigram is accompanied by a relief showing the boy and two other person, a man and a woman (his parents?), but there are no visible symbols related to the epigram, see Pfuhl - Möbius 1977-1979, Taf. 98, nr. 640.

<sup>50</sup> *SGO* I 05/03/06; *SEG* XXIX 1218; *IK Kyme* 5, p. 251. Schmidt 1991, 18 Anm. 109; 20 Anm. 126; 129 Anm. 579.

a column hangs what has been interpreted as the satchel for the *discus*<sup>51</sup>. In the background is barely visible a shelf with book rolls, evidence of his literary *paideia*, alluded to also in the epigram for Epikrates. In this case epitaph and relief have not been conceived as strictly interdependent, but complete each other by underlining different details of the boy's life.

## 5. CASE STUDY 4: WEAPONS AS DEDICATIONS

The relatively limited treatment of weapons in inscriptional funerary poetry can be compared with the marked presence of weapons in dedicatory epigrams, where they are sometimes credited with a bloodthirsty nature (as already in the Homeric poems), which assimilates them to the god of War (ὁ φιλαίματος Ἄρης, in *A.P.* VII 226, 3)<sup>52</sup>. Some elaborate on the rhetorical *topos* «clean/unused weapons are not welcome to Ares» (Leonidas, *A.P.* IX 322; Antipater of Sidon, *A.P.* IX 323; Meleager, *A.P.* VI 163). Many examples of literary dedications come from the *Greek Anthology*, but there is no evidence that they were ever been used for the actual dedication of real weapons.

Completely different from these literary exercises is the dedicatory epigram from the temple of Isis and Serapis at Gortyna, Crete (2nd century BCE)<sup>53</sup>, where we find one of the most interesting occurrences of weaponry in Hellenistic inscriptional poetry. The stele, found *in situ*<sup>54</sup>, still has the upper section with a rectangular recess which could be used to lodge the offerings; no depiction of weapons was needed, as the real object was meant to hang on the stele or in the nearby sanctuary.

{ὁ Κρής εὔρε Πύ[ρο]ς με καὶ ἀμφ' ὦ[μοις] διφάλετρον |  
 {τόξον ἐλὼν Ἄρεος ἤπτετο φυλόπιδος}. |  
 {εὔρε δ' ἄρα π[.....]}

ὁ Κρής εὔρε Πύροος με καὶ ἀ|μφ' ὦμοις διφάλετρον | 1  
 τόξον ἐλὼν Ἄρεος ἤπτ | ετο φυλόπιδος. |  
 εὔρε δ' ἄρα πρόβλημα χρ | οὸς καὶ τεύχος ὀιστῶν |

<sup>51</sup> See Merkelbach - Stauber *comm. ad loc.*

<sup>52</sup> See Barbantani 2016, 224-228, with texts from the *Anthologia Palatina*.

<sup>53</sup> *IC* IV 243 (Guarducci 1950, 243-244); Martínez Fernández 2006, nr. 6; cf. Martínez Fernández 2006, nr. 7 = *IC* IV 244, pp. 244-246; Magnelli 1999. Apart from the first three lines (a small-font version of the first three verses), the epigram is not written following the usual layout of the elegiac couplets.

<sup>54</sup> For a photo see Martínez Fernández 2006, tavv. IV-V, figg. vii-ix.

ὁ θρασὺς Ἐρταίων φέρ | τατος ἐν προμάχοις, |  
 ἐξ οὗ πάσα φοβεῖ με νέ | ων ὠκύδρομος ἦβη. |  
 σοὶ δὲ Σάραπι καὶ Ἴσι δῶ | ρον ὑπὸ προδόμῳι. |  
 ἦθηκε μνημόσυνόν με Π | ὕρωσ σοὶ τόνδ' ἐπὶ νίκης |  
 πολλάκις ἐκ πολέμων | κῦδος ἀηράμενος.

The Cretan Pyroos invented me, and carrying on his shoulders a double quiver and a bow, he engaged in combat with Ares. He invented a cover for the body and a protection for the arrows<sup>55</sup>, the bold man excellent among the Cretans in the front line; this is why all the swift-running youths fear me! Pyroos dedicated me to you, Sarapis and Isis, as a gift in the vestibule, as a memory of his victory, having often raised glory in wars.

The epigram has been compared to a short literary dedication in catalectic iambic trimeters written by Callimachus for a Cretan archer (also a mercenary), *Ep.* 37 Pfeiffer = XVIII *HE* = *A.P.* XIII 7<sup>56</sup>:

ὁ Λύκτιος Μενοίτας<sup>57</sup>  
 τὰ τόξα ταῦτ' ἐπειπὼν  
 ἔθηκε τῇ, κέρας τοι  
 δίδωμι καὶ φαρέτρην  
 Σάραπι: τοὺς δ' ὀιστοῦς  
 ἔχουσιν Ἑσπερίται'.

Menoetas of Lyctus  
 dedicated this bow,  
 saying: «Here, Sarapis,  
 I give you my bow  
 and quiver. The arrows  
 the men of Hesperis have». (Trad. K. Gutzwiller)

In both epigrams the bow is a typical offer from a Cretan warrior, as archery was thought to be one of the specialties of this island (cf. *e.g.*

<sup>55</sup> I suspect that the πρόβλημα χρὸς καὶ τεῦχος ὀιστῶν are the two main uses of the double quiver indicated by the adjective διφάλετρον: a part functions as a shield, the other as a normal quiver. As we have seen above in the epigram for Philomousos, the φαρέτρα is mentioned sometimes in epitaphs for *gymnasion* boys as a symbol of their training.

<sup>56</sup> On the epigram see Gow - Page 1965 *ad loc.*; Vertoudakis 2000, 29-33; Kaczyńska 2000, 517-519; Stefanakis 2016, 74. Cf. Callim. *A.P.* VI 121, where another Cretan, Echemmas, dedicates a bow to Artemis, and Mnasalc. *A.P.* VI 9 = *HE* III (dedication of a bow and a quiver to Apollo by Promachos, inspired by Call. *A.P.* XIII 7, see commentary by Rapella 2019, 115-123).

<sup>57</sup> «Menitas» according to Daux 1941, 227.

Plato *Leg.* 625d, 794c; Polyb. IV 54-55, V 79, 10; Diod. V 74, 5; Strabo X 4, 16; Paus. IV 8, 3, IV 10, 14, IV 19, 4-6; Plut. Cleom. 21, 3; Athen. IV 143a-f). Bow, quiver and arrows occasionally, but not often, appear in reliefs and painting on funerary stelae<sup>58</sup>, but not accompanied by epitaphs: see e.g. the Hellenistic stele of Parthenios with sword and bow from Kalchuk (Chersonesos), and the stele of Getas (a Scythian guard?), with painted bow and quiver, from 5th century BCE Athens<sup>59</sup>. While the same weapons often return in literary and epigraphic dedications (especially of hunters and warriors) and also in funerary epigrams<sup>60</sup>, the Gortyna inscription is exceptional, as the relevant element here is not the dedication of the weapon *per se*, but its novelty. The dedicant, a certain Pyroos, is clearly a professional soldier, and certainly proud of his military valor (ll. 4-5), like other Cretan warriors we know from Hellenistic epitaphs (the Menoitais of Callimachus boasted that he had left all his arrows stuck in enemies). However, in the first three lines of the epigram he is presented, in a very Hellenistic way<sup>61</sup>, as an ingenious craftsman, a *πρώτος εὑρετής* of a new weapon: the verb *εὔρε* («he found») is used twice (ll. 1 and 3). The speaking object is indeed Pyroos' own invention: the equipment may be a peculiar type of double quiver (at l. 1 *διφάλετρον* = dissimilation of *διφάρετρον*, is a *hapax*) and a special shield; the poetic expression *πρόβλημα* (l. 3) recalls the fragment by Hybrias, a Cretan lyric poet of the 5th century BCE (Athen. XV 695)<sup>62</sup>. According to Martínez Fernández this military gear invented (or perfected)

<sup>58</sup> For bow, quiver and arrows on friezes, see Polito 1998, 56.

<sup>59</sup> Posamentir 2011, 362.

<sup>60</sup> *IosPE* I<sup>2</sup> 195 = *CEG* II 883 (North Black Sea, Olbia, late 4th BCE); Ramba 2014, 93-94; Stolba 2015, 47; Tentori Montalto 2017, 97 n. 2), epigram for Anaxagoras, winner in archery: *φημί διακοσίας τε και ὀγδοήκοντα ὀργυϊάς | και δύο τοξέεσσι κλεινὸν Ἀναξαγόραν | (5) υἱὸν Δημαγόρεω, Φιλτέω δὲ παῖδα [— —]; IG IX, 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 928 (Kerkyra, before 227 BCE; see D'Amore 2017, 205), epitaph for Alexandros, a cultivated *gymnasion* boy killed by pirates: *μυρί' ἀποφθιμένοιο τάφωι περι τῶιδε χυθείσα / παιδὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου μύρατο Καλλιόπα, / ὠκύμορον και ἀτεκνον ἐπει θέτο τῶιδ' ὑπὸ γαίαι / ἐπτακκαικοσετοῦς πνεῦμα λιπόντα βίου, / ἴστορα παιδείας, τόξωι κλυτόν, ὦ ποκα ληστὰς / ἀνδροφόνους ἀλίας κτεῖνεν ἐπὶ Στροφάσιν. / ἀλλ' ἴθι νῦν, παροδίτα, τὸν ἐκ χθονὸς Ἀλκινόοιο / χαῖρ' εἰπὼν ἀγαθοῦ παῖδ' ἀγαθὸν Σατύρου.**

<sup>61</sup> See Chaniotis 2009b, 94: the flautist Pronomos of Thebes (5th BCE) thrilled his audiences not only with the invention of a new type of *aulos*, but also with his facial expression and the movements of his body (Paus. IX 12, 6): *Πρόνομος δὲ ἦν ὃς πρώτος ἐπενόησεν αὐλοῦς ἐς ἅπαν ἁρμονίας εἶδος ἔχοντας ἐπιτηδείως, πρώτος δὲ διάφορα ἐς τοσοῦτο μελῆ ἐπ' αὐλοῖς ἤβλησε τοῖς αὐτοῖς. λέγεται δὲ ὡς και τοῦ πρώτου τῷ σχήματι και τῇ τοῦ παντὸς κινήσει σώματος περισσῶς δὴ τι ἔτερπε τὰ θέατρα.*

<sup>62</sup> Hybrias: *PMG* 909, ll. 2 and 7.

by Pyroos was similar to the equipment typical of the light infantry, the *ἀσπιδιώται* quoted by Polybius (Polyb. X 29, 6) or the *peltae creticae* mentioned by Livy (XLV 39, 29).<sup>63</sup>

In this bold Hellenistic dedication, ability in a specialized *τέχνη* is advertised in the first lines of the poem as more important than the traditional military *ἀρετή* (mentioned only in ll. 4-5). The reference to a very special kind of weapon in inscriptional epigrams is rare, and therefore noteworthy. We can recall here as a parallel a 2nd century BCE epitaph from Gonnoi (Thessaly) quoting for the first time the *kentrosphendon* (*kestros*), a device similar to a sling, devised for shooting heavy arrows with a «swirling» movement (*στρουμβηδόν*)<sup>64</sup>. The deceased, Dikaiogenes, describes in the first person his own death: «Ares took me in the fight; hitting me with a swirling blood-red [arrow] of the *kestros*, he pushed me to Hades from the land of Askyris (v. 4-7)». The *kestros* apparently was first used in the war between the Romans and Perseus king of Macedon (168 BCE), and in this context is described in detail by Polybius (XXVII, fr. 11, 1, from *Suda*, κ 1434 Adler, *s.v.* *κέστρος*, whose description is reprised by Livius (XLII 65, naming the throwing device «centrosphendon»)<sup>65</sup>.

The same word, but in the plural, *κέστροι*, is found a few centuries later (1st CE) in another epitaph, commemorating a prematurely deceased boy, Leon, who, like Philomousos, did not even complete his *gymnasion*

<sup>63</sup> See Martínez Fernández *ad loc.*

<sup>64</sup> Gonnoi, Thessaly, 2nd BCE. See Cairon, 2009, nr. 83. The epitaph has been re-edited and commented by Helly 2014. The stone, now broken, had an allotment for inserting a plaque with a relief, now also lost. Helly's article discusses in depth the nature of the weapon (266-270).

[-----]ΗΣ βαίνων παροδίτ[α]  
 [------]Ι τώιδε ὑποκεκλιμ[ένωι ?]  
 [------]ΣΙΑ Δικαιογένην ἔαι ΥΠΟΙ-  
 [------]Ω δ' εἶλεν Ἄρης ἀγορή  
 5 [- - οιστώ στρ]ο[μ]βηδόν ἐπεὶ **κέστροιο** δαφονῶ  
 [όξυβε]λῆς πλήξας ἤλασεν εἰς Αἰδέω  
 [γαίας ἀπ' Ἀ]σκυριεύς καὶ ἐθήκατο δάκρυα μητρι  
 [- - ]ετῆ λείπω δ' ἐμ μεγάροισιν ἔμοις  
 [- - κα]σίγνητον πολυήρατον δν Φιλοφῆρα  
 10 [- - - - ] μητῆρ Οἰνίαν ἐξετέκνου  
 [- - - - ]ΣΕΙ καὶ τοῖ ἐνὶ στέρνοις ἀδάκρυτον  
 [- - - - - ]Π! δάκρυά ἐν προβάλοις.

<sup>65</sup> Different are the *κέστροι* *μαχαίροειδείς* («sword-like spikes») mounted on the war carriages together with other sharp devices in Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* XX 1, 6, during the battle of Ausculum between the Romans and Pyrrhus (279 BCE).

training<sup>66</sup>: μέλλων φαρέτρης δ' ὄπλα καὶ κέστρων κράνη / πρόμοιρος εἶκτο νερτέρων ἐπ' ἀτραπούς, «being on the verge [*scil.* of obtaining] the tools of the quiver and the *kestroi* with their sling, he went before time on the path of the deceased» (ll. 6-7). Here, however, the term seems to identify a different kind of device, probably a sling, a lighter weapon than a *kentrosphedon* (if the boy was still training): the plural κέστροι are most probably the projectiles, the arrows (and not the sling, as in the Dikaiogenes epigram), while κράνη belongs to the family of words identifying the cornel/dogwood, a tree with a particularly hard wood, employed to make the shaft of spears or other work tools: it could refer here to the shaft of the κέστροι, or, most probably, to the sling used to throw them<sup>67</sup>.

## 6. CONCLUSION

I hope to have shown by a few case studies the complexity of the relation between the two means of communication, text and image. When a tomb is adorned by both a poem and by figurative art (whether relief or painting) the client, the poet and the *technitai* of the workshop in charge of the monument may choose to harmonize the two means of communication in order to enhance one, powerful, symbolic representation of the deceased (this is the case of the simple, effective images of the weapons of the Lycian warriors, and of the snake-emblem of Apollonios). In other circumstances, poem and image (the latter often quite elaborate) are complementary in showing different aspects of the character of the deceased (e.g. the *gymnasion* boys Hekataios and Philomusos). When the poem stands out alone on the stone, the mention of weapons may underline a special aspect of the person related to them, either the dedicant (the proud «inventor» Pyroos, praised by his own weapons) or

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<sup>66</sup> IG X, 2 1 876, Thessalonike (cenotaph for a boy who died far from home, in Euboea); *GVII* 1268; last edition and commentary in Vêrilhac 1978, I, nr. 23.

<sup>67</sup> κράνη, which in the stone has a iota adscript and is therefore meant to be in the dative, could possibly be an error for a neuter plural (κράνη), on the same syntactical level of ὄπλα, as hypothesised by Vêrilhac in her commentary: «Il existe un substantif féminin κράνος, attesté par un papyrus au moins (*P. Tebt.*, 39, 31), qui désigne une baguette de cornouiller. Une confusion de genre pouvait se produire assez facilement dans la famille du mot κράνεια, le cornouiller, qui présente des doublets et des alternances du neutre et du féminin: le neutre κράνον est l'équivalent tantôt de κράνεια (l'arbre), tantôt de κράνειον (le fruit). Peut-être est-il possible d'expliquer ainsi l'accusatif neutre κράνη». According to the meaning we assign to κράνη, we can translate either «the sling» or «the shafts» of the κέστροι.

the deceased (the ephebe Epikrates). In the latter case we have seen an epigram in the form of list, a poetic version of the «still life» depiction of weapons without an owner on military graves, stressing the sorrowful absence of the young soldier who once wore them.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

*FGE*

D. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams*, Cambridge 1981.

*GVI*

W. Peek, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften*, Chicago 1988 (Berlin 1955).

*HE*

A.S.F. Gow - D.L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*, Cambridge 1965.

*IC*

M. Guarducci, *Inscriptiones Creticae*, I-IV, Roma 1935-1950.

*IG*

*Inscriptiones Graecae*, Berlin 1877–

*IK Iznik*

S. Şahin, *Katalog der antiken Inschriften des Museums von Iznik (Nikaia)*, I-II (Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 9 and 10, 1-2), Bonn 1979, 1981-1982.

*IK Kyme*

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*IosPE*

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*PMG*

D.L. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci*, Oxford 1962.

*SEG*

*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Leiden - Amsterdam 1923.

*SGO*

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