

CHAPTER 8

Epigrammatic contests, poeti vaganti and local history

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This paper addresses the role of wandering poets as local historians. There will be two principal limitations to my enquiry: first, the enquiry will be restricted to the period up to the end of the Hellenistic epoch, and secondly, I will examine only the activity of wandering poets as authors of poems written for public monuments. The first section discusses the fact that composing public epigrams, i.e. epigrams set up in public spaces¹ by groups, political institutions, ruling élites or the polis as a whole, was in a number of cases a task fulfilled by wandering poets. The second section is concerned with the procedure through which texts for public monuments were chosen, and it will be proposed that the procedure was occasionally agonistic. A closer look at the contexts of such epigrammatic competitions suggests that they took place in (a) the framework of public festivals, and (b) the framework of public commissions.

In the third section I will demonstrate that poems composed by wandering poets for local public monuments, even though they may reflect the patron's view or version of historical events, still had an impact which surpassed the boundaries of the polis, local group or political élite that sponsored them. Therefore, I will argue for a supra-local reception of poetry composed for local addressees. In this sense it will be suggested that one of the first media through which such poems were diffused were the earliest epigrammatic collections, which were organised on the principle of interest in local history.

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¹ On public space in archaic and early classical Greek *polises* see Holscher 1998.

WANDERING POETS AS COMPOSERS OF PUBLIC EPIGRAMS

That wandering poets were involved in composing public epigrams can be shown with certainty for the early fourth century, and we may, albeit rather tentatively, suppose the same already for the late sixth century.

If we take a glance at verse-inscriptions from public monuments from the archaic to Hellenistic periods,² we will soon notice that the names of their authors do not often accompany the poems.³ In regard to the names of the authors of both public and private epigrams, the stones remain silent for all of the archaic period and a great part of the classical period. It is only at the beginning of the fourth century BC that authors' names start emerging, carved upon the stone along with the epigrams; even then names do not occur in great numbers.⁴ Therefore, the little we know about the epigrammatists in the archaic and classical periods stems from literary sources, some of which are not entirely trustworthy in the matter of ascriptions.⁵

*Symmakhos of Pellana and an anonymous paidotribas at the court of
Arbinas: not wandering poets?*

The first secure occurrence of a poet's name on a stone comes with a base dedicated by the late fifth- / early fourth-century BC Xanthian dynast Arbinas. The rectangular base (inv. No. 6121), excavated during French excavations in the Letoon in 1973,⁶ bore a statue of the dynast dedicated to Leto. All four of its faces are inscribed. On two faces appear Greek poems (A+B), the other two (C+D) display texts in Lycian. The poem on face A (= *CEG* 888 vv. 1–19) is usually considered a long epigram (consisting of seventeen hexameters followed by an elegiac couplet) with a roughly twofold subject:⁷ for the most part the poem summarises the military exploits of Arbinas (with an emphasis on his subjugation of Xanthos, Pinara and

² Editions of the verse-inscriptions until the end of the fourth century BC are collected in Hansen *CEG*. There is no systematic collection of Greek epigrams on stone for the period third to first centuries BC. This period has been partly covered by Peek *GVZ*, Pfohl 1967 and Page *FGE*. Merkelbach-Stauber *SGO* I–V limit their collection to the Greek East and provide with it a bibliography, translations and commentaries.

³ This has been observed on numerous occasions ever since Kaibel 1873: 436. Cf. recently Gutzwiller 1998: 48, Fantuzzi 2004: 299–91 and Meyer 2005: 98 n. 265.

⁴ Pace Page 1981: 120, n. 2 who argued that it was only in Hellenistic times that we encounter poets' names on stone.

⁵ On signatures cf. Parsons 2002: 114–15.

⁶ Bryce 1986: 95. On the history of excavations and the base in general cf. Boutgarel/Metzger (*FdA* IX, 1), 149: 54.

⁷ For the full text see *FdA* IX, 1: 156 and *CEG* 888, with restorations p. 283. All translations, unless otherwise stated, are mine.

Telmessos, i.e. the establishment of his rule over the Lycians)⁸, but it also deals with the appearance of, and the grounds for the dedication of, the statue of Arbinas (vv. 8–10). It is in this context that we learn that the dedication of his statue to Leto was prompted by the Delphic oracle: v. 9 Πυθῶι ἐρωτήσας Λητῶι με ἀνέθηκεν ('Having inquired of the Delphic Oracle, he [sc. Arbinas] dedicated me . . .').

The last two verses, physically separated from the rest of the text, state explicitly that the poem's author comes from the Peloponnese, vv. 18f.:

Σύμμαχος Εὐμήδεος Πελλανεύς μάντις ἀ[μύμων]
δῶρον ἔτευξε ἔλεγῆια Ἀρβίνοι εὐσυνέτως.

Symmakhos of Pellana, son of Eumedes, blameless (?) seer fashioned with good understanding⁹ elegiac verses as a gift for Arbinas.

Poem B (*CEG* 888 vv. 19–53) from the same base is apparently not a single poem, but represents a set of five 'eulogies', in character very close to the Symmakhos-epigram, and only loosely bound together (if at all) by particles. Bousquet comments on the structure of the verse-inscription B as follows:¹⁰ 'Comme il arrive fréquemment, surtout dans les épitaphs, l' "éloge" du prince est fait de plusieurs versions, ou variants, mises bout à bout.'¹¹ This possibility could, and in my opinion should, be entertained: on metrical grounds alone one may read five separate poems, since the inscription uses sequences both of elegiac couplets and of hexameters.¹² As far as we can discern from the fragmentary lines, the content too suggests a division into separate verse-inscriptions, since a number of elements keep recurring in (arguably) separate poems: as in the poem of Symmakhos (A 16), at least three of the poems involved an apostrophe of Arbinas,¹³ and all of them seem to have had, in one way or another, the very same subject – the praise of Arbinas, especially of the military ventures he conducted as a young man¹⁴ and of the piety he displayed by dedicating the statue.¹⁵ Therefore on the Letoon-base inv. No. 6121 we seem to have a dossier of six Greek verse-inscriptions, one of which is inscribed alone, on a single face,

⁸ On this cf. Savalli 1988: 103–23. ⁹ On the meaning of εὐσυνέτως cf. below pp. 214–15.

¹⁰ For this and the text see *FdXIX*, 1: 159. Hansen (*CEG* 889, iii) prints Bousquet's text, albeit without many comments on the proposed division.

¹¹ Variation on a theme in epitaphic/commemorative epigrams is known since the early classical period (cf. e.g. *CEG* 174, 57–8, 593). On this cf. Fantuzzi forthcoming; for the Hellenistic period cf. Kirstein 2002.

¹² *FdXIX*, 1: 159. 'J'ai cru déceler la répartition: I: 1–7 (et probablement 8 ou 10 vers) hexamètres, II: 8–13, trois distiques élégiaques, III: 14–19, trois distiques élégiaques, IV: onze hexamètres, V: 31–4 deux distiques élégiaques.

¹³ *FdXIX*, 1: 157–8 poem B. Apostrophe: vv. 19, 20, 28, 32 (= *CEG* 888 iii 37, 47, 51).

¹⁴ Cf. *FdXIX*, 1: 156 v. 5, 157 vv. 4, 15. ¹⁵ *FdXIX*, 1: 156, vv. 8–10, 157, vv. 10 (?), 15–16, 32–4.

and accompanied by the name of its author, and five further anonymous epigrams inscribed together on a different face.

Symmakhos of Pellana is however not the only author of a public inscription whose name was recorded on a stone in Lycia. In the Letoon stood one further base also bearing an epigram and containing information about its author. This second base (inv. Nos. 271 + 453¹⁶), which also bore a dedication of Arbinas, is preserved in a much more battered shape. The poem consists of four elegiac couplets accompanying a dedication by Arbinas to Artemis. The first three couplets dealt with the military victories of Arbinas (stressing yet again his triumph over Xanthos, Telmessos and Pinara and his rule over Lycians),¹⁷ while the last couplet stated the name of the poet (vv. 7–8.):

παιδοτρίβας ἐπι
δῶρ' ἐποίησε ἐλ[

paidotribas . . .

fashioned as a present el[e]giac verses?

Whereas in the case of the *paidotribas*, it is not possible to infer much about the author of the dedicatory epigram, the information on Symmakhos is remarkable in more than one sense. It is noteworthy that the author comes from the Peloponnese since he states that his fatherland is Pellana; secondly, he states that the poem was a gift; thirdly, it is said that he is a *mantis a[mūmōn]*.

Even though at present we can not infer much about the relationships between the last Xanthian dynasts and the Greek world, it would be a fair guess that Symmakhos belonged to the group of wandering professionals. The contacts between the Greek world and Lycian dynasts, on a political level, have been newly reassessed by Keen¹⁸ who accepted that the evidence for direct contacts between Sparta or the Peloponnese and Lycia in general do not exist, at least as far as the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth century are concerned.

About the origin of the anonymous Greek who composed the dedicatory epigram of Arbinas not much can be deduced, but since he seemingly had the profession of *paidotribas*, perhaps he was yet another wandering professional. As we saw, his poem appears also to have been a present for the dynast, just like the poem of Symmakhos. Furthermore, the authors of both poems seem to have been fully aware and perhaps even proud of their skill,

¹⁶ CEG 889. *FdX* IX, 1: 159. Cf. ¹⁷ vv. 3–4.

¹⁸ Cf. Keen 1998: 140. Keen however does not exclude the possibility of some contact between Lycians and the Greek world.

as the position of their names on the stone implies: the names of the authors are marked out by being physically separated from the rest of the poems.¹⁹ The question therefore arises as to what kind of wandering professionals we should recognise in Symmakhos and the anonymous *paidotribas*. The case of the *paidotribas* is somewhat simpler than the case of Symmakhos: since his profession is clearly stated, one might imagine some sort of a *Gastarbeiter*, a professional instructor engaged to see to the prince's physical development, rather than a genuine 'wandering poet' in the narrow sense of the phrase.²⁰

The case of Symmakhos is more complex, due to the fact that his profession is labelled as μάντις ἀμ[ύμων] and to his emphasis on the poem as a present (δῶρον). Another instance where we can recognise the relationship of *xenia* between poet and addressee of the poem, and the poem as a present, is the well-known epigram of Simonides for the seer Megistias who fell together with Leonidas' three hundred.²¹ Herodotus states in the passage following the Thermopylae epigrams that it was Simonides who wrote the epigram, *kata xeiniēn*, thus implying that the poem was a gift for his deceased friend, as opposed to the rest of the epigrams on the Thermopylae memorial which were financed by the Amphictiony.²²

It is important to stress these two elements, since they involve several difficulties. How are we to interpret the *sphragis* in vv. 18–19? Is μάντις ἀμ[ύμων] an indication of Symmakhos' profession as a seer²³ or does he see himself in the tradition of a poet-prophet, a tradition familiar from the Roman *vates* and which is at least conceivable also in the poetry of the classical period?²⁴ As things stand, both possibilities must remain open

¹⁹ Cf. the photos at *FidX* IX, 2 pl. 72.2 (Symmakhos) and pl. 74 (*paidotribas*).

²⁰ The fact that he was the prince's instructor does not necessarily, of course, exclude the possibility that the man in question was a poet or even a poet of rank. Himertius, *Or.* 29.24 tells the story of Polycrates summoning Anacreon to Samos to instruct his son in music and poetry. The Greek in Lycia was however a *paidotribas*, a *gymnastic* teacher who presumably spent a longer time at Arbinas' court and this does exclude him from the category of *wandering* poets as defined below.

²¹ Hdt. 7.228 μνήμα τόδε κλεινοῖο Μεγιστία, ὃν ποτε Μῆδοι / Σπερχεῖον ποταμὸν κτεῖναν ἀμειψάμενοι, / μάντιος ὃς τότε Κῆρας ἐπερχομένας σάφα εἰδώς / οὐκ ἔτλη Σπάρτης ἡγεμόνας προλιπεῖν. ('This is the gravestone (*mnēma*) of the famed Megistias whom the Medes once killed after they passed over the river Spercheios, of the seer, who at that point knew very well that doom was about to fall, but could not find it in his heart to desert the Spartan leaders.')

²² Cf. Molyneux 1992: 175–9.

²³ Since the dedication of his statue was incited by a visit to Delphi (cf. above p. 197), one could imagine that Symmakhos was given the task of interpreting the answer of the oracle. For *mantis*, and *exēgetai* cf. Garland 1984: 75–123.

²⁴ Even though a solid parallel is lacking, one could imagine a similar development in Greek poetry: cf. Pind. fr. 150 Sn-M, μαντεύο, Μοῖσα, προφατεύσω δ' ἐγώ. For προφάτας cf. *Paeon* 6.6; Bacch. 9.3. Cf. also Pl. *Ion* 532d. It is notable, however, that Greek poets are inclined to take the role of a *prophētēs*, but not that of a *mantis*. On *mantis* vs. *prophētēs* cf. Nagy 1990b: 56–61, and 64.

and we can gain no certainty about the exact content of the label *mantis*. Both as a poet and as a seer Symmakhos could have belonged to a group of wandering professionals able to find a home with Arbinas.²⁵

It seems therefore that the Greek epigrams in Lycia were written by professionals, but not necessarily by professional wandering poets, since Symmakhos and the *paidotribas* were presumably in the service of their non-Greek employers for a longer time. If one makes a survey of the epigraphic evidence pertaining to Greek epigrams outside Greece, i.e. the commissions of Greek poets for non-Greek cities up to the Hellenistic period, it becomes obvious that there is no strong evidence that genuine wandering poets went beyond the limits of the Greek world. This statement is valid, of course, only if we define wandering poets in quite narrow terms, i.e. as poets who do not spend long at the place where they performed and as poets whose services were in some way reimbursed.²⁶

Ion of Samos at Delphi: a wandering poet

If therefore we can not securely classify these occurrences of the poets' signatures on the Lycian public monument as belonging to wandering poets, we should do so in the case of the epigrams of Ion of Samos. Probably no more than a decade after the poem of Symmakhos of Pellana was carved upon the monument in Xanthos, poems of Ion of Samos were inscribed upon a dedication of the Lacedaemonians in Delphi. Pausanias records these offerings and says that Spartans set up statues of the Dioscuri, Zeus, Apollo, Artemis,

²⁵ It is unnecessary to list here instances of the patronage of wandering poets by local rulers: that wandering *mantes* could also have been endorsed by wealthy sponsors is well known. Cf. Pl. *Rep.* 2.364b. Poems of Greek professionals working for non-Greek patrons are attested. The poems of Symmakhos and the *paidotribas* remind us of the epigram for the Greek architect Mandrocles who built the bridge over Bosphorus in 514. This epigram also involves praise of his employer, the Persian king Darius (Hdt. 4.88; A.P. 6.341 (vv. 1–3); Pseudo-Symeon, *Chron.* T 3; Dion. *Byz.* II 42). Βοσπορον ἰχθυοεντα γεφυρώσας, ἀνέθηκε / Μανδροκλῆς Ἥρη μνημόσυνον σχεδῆς, / αὐτῷ μὲν στεφανον περιθείς, Σαμίοισι δὲ κῦδος, / Δαρείου βασιλέος ἐκτελέσας κατὰ νοῦν ('After he had bridged Bosphorus, rich with fish, Mandrocles has dedicated to Hera a reminder of the overpass. He was crowned with a wreath, and the Samians with glory, when he accomplished the intentions of king Darius'). The evidence for commissions of wandering poets outside the Greek world before the Hellenistic period is scanty: notable is the case of Timocreon of Ialysos, for whom one can find no evidence that he was active as a poet at the court of Xerxes (unless one regards the personally motivated invectives against Themistocles as Persian commissions). On the other hand, Greek seers abroad or in the service of foreigners are well attested: cf. *mantis* Arexion (Xen. *An.* 6.4.13, 6.5.2, 6.5.8, Hofstetter No. 32); Basias (Xen. *An.* 7.8.10, Hofstetter No. 65); *mantis* Hegesistratos (Hdt. 9.37–4, Hofstetter No. 134); *mantis* Hippomachos (Hdt. 9.38 7; Hofstetter No. 160); *chrēsmologos* / *diathetes chresmōn* Onomakritos (Hdt. 7.6.11; Hofstetter No. 239).

²⁶ On the label 'professional poets' cf. Hardie 1983, 15–36 and below pp. 213–15.

Poseidon and Lysander, who was depicted as being crowned by Poseidon.²⁷ The epigrams for the Dioscuri and Lysander are partially preserved:²⁸

[παῖ Διός, ὦ] Πολύδευ[κ]ες, Ἴων [ῥκαὶ τοῖς]δ' ἔλεγείοι[ς]
 [ῥλαινέαν] κρηπῖδ' ἔστεφάνωσ[ε ῥτεά]ν,
 [ἀρχὸς ἐπ]εὶ πρῶτος, πρότερο[ς δ' ἔ]τι τοῦδε ναυάρ[χου],
 [ῥῆστας ἀγ]εμόνων Ἑλλάδος εὐρυχόρου.

εἰκόνα ἐὰν ἀνέθηκεν [ἐπὶ] ἔργωι τῶιδε ὅτε νικῶν
 ναυσὶ θοαῖς πέρσεν Κε[κ]ροπιδᾶν δύναμιν
 Λύσανδρος, Λακεδαιμόνα ἀπόρθητον στεφανώσα[ς]
 Ἑλλάδος ἀκρόπολ[ιν, κ]αλλίχορομ πατρίδα.
 ἑξάμο ἀμφιρῦτ[ας] τεῦξε ἔλεγείον : Ἴων.

[Child of Zeus]. Polydeuces. [with these] elegiacs Ion crowned [your stone] base, because you were the principal [commander], taking precedence even over this admiral, among the leaders of Greece with its wide dancing places.

Lysander set up this image of himself on this monument when with his swift ships he victoriously routed the power of the descendants of Kekrops and crowned the invincible Lacedaimon, the citadel of Greece, the homeland with the beautiful dancing-places. Ion of sea-girt Samos composed these elegiacs. (*CEG* 819 ii–iii, trans. M. Fantuzzi)

Even though the wording of the signature is to some extent similar to that of Symmakhos' epigram (τεῦξε ἔλεγείον),²⁹ we can find no support here for the assumption that Ion of Samos was already a professional in the service of the Lacedaemonians – the poem is not a gift, and Ion does not state that he has any other profession. In short, we might register Ion of Samos as the first epigraphically recorded case of a wandering poet commissioned by a polis to compose an epigram. It is quite remarkable how the poet's name, Ion, could be seen as corresponding to the nature of his profession.³⁰

The first recorded case of this kind will presumably not have been the earliest instance of this practice, and we have no reason to suppose that it was very unusual to engage a wandering poet to compose a public epigram. In fact, a random examination of the poetic signatures on stone suggests that, when a poet's name is recorded, the author is, more likely than not, a foreigner and thus, possibly, a wandering poet, as table 1 shows:

²⁷ Pausanias 10.9 7–10. ²⁸ On these poems cf. Fantuzzi 2004: 290–1.

²⁹ Notable also is the position of the *sphragis* which corresponds to that of Symmakhos, albeit it occupies only a pentameter. Should one accept the reading [πιεμψας μοι πρόπολον Σίμμαχον in *CEG* 888.28 (proposed by Bousquet, cf. *CEG* 888:284), its position would be comparable to that of Ion in 819 n. 1.

³⁰ Perhaps one might recognise a pun in the poet's name – Ἴων as Ἴών; or in the fact that a poet named *Ionian* writes ἔλεγείον. Cf. further above n. 6, n. 25.

Table 1 *Poets' signatures on stone (until III c. BC): Thessaly, Delphi, Lycia*

Poet and his provenance	Date	Sponsor or beneficiary	Epigram found at	Edition
1 Symmakhos of Pellana	early IV BC	Arbinas of Xanthos	Xanthos, Lycia	<i>CEG</i> 888
2 Anonymous <i>paidotribas</i> ; Attika(?)	early IV BC	Arbinas of Xanthos	Xanthos, Lycia	<i>CEG</i> 890
3 Ion of Samos	405–350 BC (?)	Spartans/ Lysandros (son of Aristokrites)	Delphi	<i>CEG</i> 819
4 Ion of Samos	405–350 BC (?)	Spartans	Delphi	<i>CEG</i> 819
5 Aphthonetos (?)	III BC (?)	Group of soldiers	Phallana, Thessaly	<i>ISE</i> p. 74
6 Herakleides, son of Trallianos	III BC	A family	Larisa, Thessaly	<i>IG IX</i> 2, 637

In only one out of six cases do we find a patronymic indicating that the poet in question might be a local. In the first four cases it is certain that the poets were foreigners. In the case of Aphthonetos it is quite difficult to determine whether he was a foreigner or not – we read only Ἀφθονήτου τὸ ἐλεγείον, there is no indication of his provenance nor do we find a patronym.³¹ One could argue that he was either a prominent citizen of Phallana or a well-known poet.³² Aphthonetos is not a unique case among the *epigrammatopoiōi*. There is a further attestation for the practice that only a name without further specification is inscribed. The third-century BC poet Eukleides, who composed a dedicatory epigram, offers a parallel case:

τῷ σφε καὶ Εὐκλείδης Μούσαι[ς φίλος, ἰ]ερ[ὸ]ς [- X]
κοσμεῖ ἀειμνήστοις εὐλογίας ἔπεσιν.

Therefore, Eukleides, friend of Muses, the sacred [. . .], adorns them with ever-memorable words of eulogy (*IG IX* 1, 131, vv. 5f.)

³¹ Aphthonetos' poem is most readily accessible at *ISE* I p. 74.

³² As a parallel case, one could perhaps think of Callimachus in Athens. Cf. *Ath. Ag.* XVI, 213, col. I, 70 and Oliver 2002: 6–8. We actually know an example, also from the Hellenistic period, of the practice that when a poet's current citizenship was unclear, only his name, without patronym or ethnonym, was recorded. Consider Diodorus of Sinope, who at the end of his life became Diodorus of Athens (cf. *IG XI* 105, 21 and *SEG* 33, 106).

Even if we did not have the names of wandering poets recorded on some public monuments, one might assume that the texts set up in the public space of a polis were not haphazardly chosen nor indiscriminately carved upon the stone. What exactly the procedure for choosing a poet was and what steps it included is a question well worth raising. Secondly, since we can observe that, at least in a number of cases, wandering poets had been involved in composing such texts, then the model we should propose must have allowed at least some access for non-citizens.

EPIGRAMMATIC CONTESTS

Turning now to the process of choosing epigrams for public monuments, I will argue that possibly already in the classical epoch, and quite probably in the Hellenistic period, some of the poems carved upon public monuments were chosen by means of epigrammatic contests.

The sources on this subject are neither very copious nor very detailed, yet there is some suggestion of agonistic contexts already for the early fifth century. I begin with a passage from the *Vita Aeschyli*, where the author explains the reason why Aeschylus left Athens.

ἀπῆρεν δὲ ὡς Ἱέρωνα [. . .] κατὰ δὲ ἐνίουσιν ἐν τῷ εἰς τοὺς ἐν Μαραθῶνι τεθνηκότας ἐλεγείῳ ἠσσηθεῖς Σιμωνίδη· τὸ γὰρ ἐλεγεῖον πολὺ τῆς περὶ τὸ συμπαθὲς λεπτότητος μετέχειν θέλει, ὃ τοῦ Αἰσχύλου, ὡς ἔφαμεν, ἐστὶν ἀλλότριον.

He [Aeschylus] went away to Hieron . . . since, as some say, he was defeated by Simonides in the epigram-contest for the fallen of Marathon. For the epigram demands a lot of refinement when it comes to sympathy and this is alien to Aeschylus as already mentioned. (*Vit. Aesch.* 8³³)

The noun ἐλεγεῖον has been translated as ‘epigram’ because, as Martin West has argued, the substantive, when used in the singular, denotes an elegiac couplet and, quite often, an epigram; even when used in the plural, it might denote an epigram, as we saw in the case of Ion of Samos, and later it could even be used for an epigram which was not written in elegiac couplets at all.³⁴

An epigrammatic contest, on the other hand, could be implied by the verb ἠσσηθεῖς which is well known from agonistic contexts,³⁵ and therefore the interpretation ‘epigram-contest’ seems possible. What this seems

³³ *TGF* iii. 33–4. On this passage cf. Oliver 1933:480; Podlecki 1984. 185; Molyneux 1992. 148–53; Boedeker 1995: 225; Obbink 2001. 79. Already Oliver argued that the term might denote an epigram.

³⁴ Cf. West 1974: 3. The term was probably coined by the end of the fifth century BC, cf. Bowie 1986. 25–7.

³⁵ Cf. LSI s.v.: *Passow Wörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*. s.v. δ. 1362: ‘in einem Wettstreite verlieren’.

to imply is that, at some stage of the process of choosing an epigram to be publicly displayed either the texts or their authors were in some respect assessed. Yet this is certainly not much more than just one possible way of understanding the passage, and I am not really inclined to give it much weight. The author of the *Vita* could, as Mary Lefkowitz argued,³⁶ have inferred information about the authors from their own poems or the texts of other poets – the *Vita* is much influenced by Aristophanes.³⁷ The information about the poets concerned is certainly quite precarious and the reasons for distrusting it outweigh those for confidence in it. If however we decide to accept the possibility that behind this the passage lies a contemporary – classical? – practice of organising epigrammatic contests, we will find confirmation of this assumption in epigraphic evidence.³⁸ I do not claim, of course, that this is the case for all public epigrams, but I do think it plausible that some were composed by wandering poets who were not necessarily appointed and commissioned, but had to take part and be victorious in a competition in order to have their epigram inscribed in public space.

This notion could be important for several reasons. Epigrams' supposed 'writteness' is often taken to be an essential feature of the genre's pre-Hellenistic history, and is taken to imply that it was only in the Hellenistic period that epigrams emerged as a full literary form, since until the Hellenistic period the epigram was 'excluded from the arena of oral discourse where poetry could obtain rank and status by performance, and reperformance, before a collective audience'.³⁹ If we can show that in the Hellenistic period, certainly, and possibly in the classical period as well, epigrams, even those inscribed on monuments, were not necessarily excluded from the arena of oral performance, then some aspects of our understanding of the epigram's early history and its place among the literary genres would have to be accordingly redefined.⁴⁰

The two basic starting-points for my suggestion are as follows. First I refer to an *a priori* reason. If we bear in mind how the designs for statues

³⁶ Lefkowitz 1981. ³⁷ Lefkowitz 1991: 119–22. See also Radt 1981: 1–7.

³⁸ Lefkowitz 1991: 121 speaks of an 'elegiac competition' and emphasises that 'the notion of *contest* matters more than its subject or the identity of his [sc. Aeschylus'] opponents'.

³⁹ Gutzwiller 1998: 2–3. A further feature which influenced the modern conception of the pre-Hellenistic epigram as a second-class poetry is certainly its anonymity and/or the fragility of its ascriptions. On the lack of authorial authority and on how poems of dubious authorship quickly turn into bad poems cf. Hunter 2002.

⁴⁰ Cf. also Fantuzzi 2004: 290, in the context of the importance of authorial identity: 'The epigrams of Ion [of Samos, for the text see above p. 201], on the contrary, suggest that verse inscriptions had already followed their autonomous course towards literary pretension and an authorial awareness, when the high period of the "literary" epigram dawned.'

which were set up in public space were chosen, one will remember that ever since the fifth century BC we have an agonistic setting: Pliny's report on the sculptors' competition to make an Amazon for the temple of Artemis in Ephesus is just one of the sources for this.⁴¹ Further cases of sculptors' competitions are also known from epigraphic evidence. If such a procedure is attested since the fifth century for statues set in the public space, for other products of figural arts and for the production of Panathenaic amphorae, then I can see no reason why contests for public epigrams should not be conceivable.⁴²

Secondly, there is a direct source for an epigrammatic contest. The following inscription (*IG IX 2, 531, see ll. 48f.*) was found in the Jewish cemetery in Larisa and is now in the Louvre. It is a list of victors in athletic and literary contests which were organised in 172 BC in honour of those who fought in the battle of Thermopylae. I print the full text:

Φίλωνος τοῦ Φίλωνος | τοῦ ταγεύοντος τὴν | πρώτην χώραν ἐν στρα-|τηγῶ
 Ηγησίᾳ, τιθέντος | 5 τὸν ἀγῶνα τοῖς προκε-|ικινδυνευκόσιν κατὰ τὸ | γενόμενον
 ὑπὸ τοῦ δὴ-|μου ψή|φισμα π|ερί τῆς | ἀνανεώ|σεως τοῦ ἀγῶ-|10 νος. οἱ
 νενεικηκότες | ταυροθηρίᾳ· Μάρκος Ἀρρό(ν)τιος, | καταλογίῃ π|αλαιᾶ· Φίλων
 Φίλωνος | ὁ νεώτερος, προσδρομῇ | ἵππέων· Δημήτριος Δημητρίου, |15 προσ-
 δρομῇ πεζῶν· Δημήτρι-|ος Ξένωνος, προσδρομῇ συ-|νωρίδι· Τειμασίθεος
 Γοργώπα, | ἀφιππολαμπάδι· Μάρκος Ἀρρόντιος, | σαλπιστάς· Λυσικλῆς
 Λεπτινίου, |20 κήρυκας· Πετάλων Διονυσίου, | παῖδας στάδιον· Γαῖος Κλώδιος
 Γα|ί-|ου, ἄνδρας στάδιον· Δημήτριος | Δημητρίου, παῖδας δίαυλον·
 Ν|εο-|μένης Ἀριστωνος, ἄνδρας |25 δίαυλον· Ἀριστόμαχος Ἐρμίου | παῖδας
 λαμπαδιστάς· Ἐμπεδίων | Ὀμήρου, παῖδας πύκτας· | Δημόνεικος Εὐδή-
 μου, ἄνδρας | πύκτας· Δημήτριος Δημητρί-|30 ου, παῖδας πανκράτιον·
 Φί-|λων Φίλωνος ὁ νεώτερος, | δευτέρας κρίσεως, παῖδας | πανκράτιον·
 Εὐπαλίδης Θε-|μιστογένους, ἄνδρας |35 πανκράτιον· Ἀσκληπιάδης
 | Ἀσκληπιάδου, ὀπλίτην· Κτή-|σων Πausανίου, ἀφιππο-|δρομάν· Ἀρισ-
 τομένης Ἀσανδρίδου, | ἀποβατικῶ· Λάδαμος Ἀργαίου, |40 σκοπῶ πεζῶν·
 Ἀλέξανδρος Κλέω-|νος, τόξω· Ὀνόμαρχος Ἡρακλείδου, | σκοπῶ ἵππέων·
 Ἀριστομένης Ἀσαν-|δρίδου, ἐγκωμίῳ λογικῶ· | Κόιντος Ὀκρίος Κόϊντου,
 ἐγκω-|45 μίῳ ἐπικῶ· Ἀμώμητος Φιλωξ(ε)νί-|δου, καταλογῇ νέᾳ· | Φίλων
 Φίλωνος ὁ νεώτερος, | ἐπιγρᾶνματι· Ἀμώμη-|τος Φιλοξενίδου.

(1–5) When Philon, son of Philon was *ἡγός* in the first division, and Hegesias was general, a competition was organised for those (6–10) who ran into peril and those who fell, as is decided by the decree of the polis, regarding the reinstatement of the

⁴¹ Pliny *NH*, 34, 53.

⁴² The evidence for contests in painting, drawing and sculpture at festivals (in Asia Minor) is collected in Donderer 1996, 329–38. Note the existence of the contests in painting in fifth century BC (Corinth, Delphi, Samos), Pliny *NH*, 35, 38, Donderer 1996: 333–4 with notes 27–33 (scholarship on authenticity). Cf. also *SEG* 37.626; *SEG* 46.2289; amphorae: *IG II* 6320

competition. The winners (11–15): in Bull-chasing (*taurothēria*) Marcus Arrontius. In the Old Catalogue (*katalogē palaia*) Philon Junior, son of Philon. In the Charge of Cavalry (*prosdromē hippeōn*) Demetrius, son of Demetrius. In the Charge of Infantry (*prosdromē pezōn*), Demetrius, son of Xenon. (16–20) In the Charge of Chariots (*prosdromē synōridi*), Timasitheus, son of Gorgopas. In the Torch-race on Horseback (*aphippolampadi*), Marcus Arrontius. Among the Trumpeters (*salpistas*), Lysicles, son of Leptines. Among the Shouters (Heralds; *kērykas*), Petalon, son of Dionysios. (21–5) In the Stadium-race for juniors Gaius Clodius, son of Gaius. In the Stadium-race for seniors, Demetrius, son of Demetrius. In the Double-course race (*diaulon*) for juniors, Neomenes, son of Ariston. In the Double-course race for seniors, Aristomachus, son of Hermias. (26–30) In the Torch-race for juniors Empedion, son of Homer. In the Boxing for juniors: Demoneicus, son of Eudemos. In the Boxing for seniors, Demetrius, son of Demetrius. In Boxing and Wrestling (*pankratōn*) for juniors, Philon Junior, son of Philon. In the second division, Boxing and Wrestling (*pankratōn*) for juniors, Eupalides, son of Themistogenes. In the Boxing and Wrestling (*pankratōn*) for seniors, Asclepiades, (36–40) son of Asclepiades. In the Race under Arms (*hoplitēn*), Kteson, son of Pausanias. In the Horse-race, Aristomenes, son of Asandrides. In the Chariot-leaping (*apobatikōi*), Ladamus, son of Argaeus. In Scouting-on-foot (*skopōi pezōn*), Alexander, son of Cleon. (41–5) Among archers, Onomarchus, son of Heracleides. In Scouting-on-horseback (*skopōi hippeōn*), Aristomenes, son of Asandrides. In the Prose-encomium, Quintus Ocrius, son of Quintus. In the Verse-encomium, Amometos, son of Philoxenides. (46–9) In the New Catalogue (*katalogē nea*), Philon Junior, son of Philon. In the epigram (*epigrammatī*), Amometos, son of Philoxenides.

Generically, the inscription belongs to the same class as *IG IX 2, 525–37* – that is to lists of victors in literary and musical competitions. The lists attest the existence of two different festivals held at Larisa, one international (the penteteric *Eleutheria* festival) and one local.⁴³ For the international festival, which as far as we can see included gymnastic, equestrian and musical disciplines (note that, apart from *aulōidia*, ‘literary’ disciplines are missing), the élite was gathered: *stratēgoi*, sons of *stratēgoi*, and high-born ladies entered their horses in races and so on. We also notice that contestants came from all over the Greek world – even when local contestants were victorious, their provenance was stated.⁴⁴

The above-cited inscription is one of five texts documenting the local festival,⁴⁵ and unlike the rest of the dossier it is preserved in excellent

⁴³ See Gallis 1988: 217–18. Pace S. G. Miller 2004: 86.

⁴⁴ *IG IX 2, 528* states that ‘Stratios, son of Melanthios, Thessalian from Kierion’ was victorious as *salpistas* (trumpeter), another Thessalian was the best among the *kērykes*; but the best piper came from Ephesus; the best cithara-player came from Antiochia upon Maiandros; the best citharode came from Naples.

⁴⁵ Local festival *IG IX 2, 527, 531–3*. A further text which supposedly also pertains to the local contest is published in *Arkhaiologikon Deltion* 16 (1960) 185.

condition. As we can see from the lines introducing the list of victors, the festival was probably neither penteteric, like the above-mentioned *Eleutheria* in Larisa, nor was it organised by the Thessalian *koinon*. It was based on the *psēphisma* of the *dēmos*, and *tāgoi* were responsible for its organisation. Louis Robert argued that the inscription bears witness to the festival held to commemorate the fallen and the fighters of the battle in 172/171 BC, when the Thessalian cavalry fought with the Romans against Perseus during the third Macedonian War. The wording of the opening clause (ll. 6–10 κατὰ τὸ γεγόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου ψή[φισμα π]ερὶ τῆς ἀνανεώ[σεω]ς τοῦ ἀγῶνος) shows that for some reason or other the festival ceased to exist at one point in time and was subsequently reintroduced, probably in the late second or early first century BC.⁴⁶ Due to the poor condition of the surviving inscriptions we can tell relatively little about its dynamic, at least as far as the variation, i.e. inclusion or exclusion of literary disciplines, is concerned. Only *IG IX 2, 531* provides a full list of victors and disciplines. Be that as it may, the impression one gains on the basis of this text is that the festival in question was essentially a commemorative one, viz. that it presented some sort of a Thessalian *agōn epitaphios*.⁴⁷ Its structure is quite remarkable since it resembles the structure of the actual battle with its prelude and ending – essentially the festival is a symbolic re-enactment of the combat and related events: if we assume that the sequence of disciplines in the list corresponds to the sequence of events in the festival, then we can discern the following groups of events: (a) sacrifice (*taurothēria* / battlefield sacrifice⁴⁸); (b) pre-battle speech/*katalogē palaia*;⁴⁹ (c) battle/military contests (*prosdromai*); (d) funeral games (sports, military skills and literary contests).

The literary disciplines are, like some of the athletic contests, referred to in the dative with instrumental connotation – that is to say ‘by means of’ or ‘due to his skill in’: we read that a Kointos (i.e. Quintus) Okrios was victorious in the competition called *enkōmion logikon*; Amometos, son of Philoxenides, won the competition of epic encomion (that is to say an encomium in hexameters as opposed to *enkōmion logikon*, the encomium in prose); Philon junior, son of Philon, won in a discipline called *katalogē*

⁴⁶ The date of the inscription is held to be uncertain by some scholars. It is however to some extent secured by the mention of Amometos, son of Philoxenides (ll. 48f. *IG IX 2, 531*) in a further document (a manumission record, cf. *SEG 35 599*). Helly 1983: 363–5 argues that the extant lists pertaining to the local festival indicate three different stages in its development after its reintroduction, starting with *IG IX 2, 533*, which he dates to 100 BC.

⁴⁷ For the individual components of an *agōn epitaphios* cf. Pl. *Menex* 249B, Jacoby 1944: 37–66, Clairmont 1983: 23, Pritchett 1979–85: IV, 106.

⁴⁸ On the religious character of *taurothēria* cf. *RE s.v. ταυροκαθαρσία*. Heliodor. *Aeth.* 10.30 witnesses that the final destination of the bull is the altar. On battlefield sacrifice Pritchett 1979–85: III: 83.

⁴⁹ On both *katalogai* cf. below pp. 208–9.

nea, which, at the moment at least, remains mysterious, whereas the same Amometos, who won in the epic *enkōmion*, also won with an *epigramma*. All of the disciplines, military, sports and literary, are connected with the praise of the fallen and fighting soldiers. The relevance of the disciplines connected with horse riding and with battle situations is obvious at first glance – the fact that no less than three *prosdromai* are organised speaks for itself.

The commemorative character of the literary disciplines is discernable as well. We find an *epigramma*, a hexametric and a prose *enkōmion*, and a *katalogē nea* (ll. 43–9), all of these being introduced by *katalogē palaia* (l. 12). It goes without saying that three of these disciplines simply do not occur as a frequent part of literary contests – unlike *enkōmia*, both *katalogai* and *epigramma* are, to my knowledge, not otherwise attested in the epigraphic evidence. The commemorative character of these genres is unmistakable for both types of *enkōmia* (which possess a long tradition and are attested in the inscriptional material).⁵⁰

More elusive is the exact nature of the *katalogai*. On its own, the term might recall Archilochean and dramatic *parakatalogē*, which is usually taken to be some kind of a performer's rap – a technique of rhythmic recital accompanied by music.⁵¹ Even though in the case of our *katalogē* we are clearly not dealing with a technique, but with a genre, it seems plausible that its nature is illuminated by the term *parakatalogē* and that some type of recital is meant. This impression is confirmed by a lemma in Hesychius (κ 1244 Latte) to which LSJ and Pickard-Cambridge refer:⁵² καταλογή· τὸ τὰ ἄισματα μὴ ὑπὸ μέλει λέγειν, 'to recite the poems without music'. A further lemma in Hesychius (κ 1213 Latte) might reveal the contents of this recital: notably, the verb καταλέγεσθαι is followed by the clarification ὀδύρεσθαι τὸν τεθνεῶτα. Therefore, to put together Hesychius' entries, we would seem to have some kind of lamentatory recital, which is attested in two distinct types, an old and a new. It is not necessary, however, to link the distinction between these two types to their generic characteristics

⁵⁰ *IG* VII 419, 9–10. Cf. Cameron 1995: 47–8, for the evidence and esp. 48: 'It is logical to assume that competitions for epic eulogies were widespread long before they were added to the sacred festivals.'

⁵¹ On *parakatalogē* cf. Arist. *Pr.* 19.6; Mathiesen 1999: 73 'parakatalogē . . . seem[s] to refer to the practice of using a vocal tone that combines speaking and singing in order to provide a particularly tragic effect at important points within composition'. On dramatic *parakatalogē* cf. West 1992: 40 with n. 6 and Sommerstein 2003: 14.

⁵² LSJ s. v. Pickard-Cambridge 1968: 156–7, with n. 7 referring to *IG* IX 2, 531. Gallis' explanation (1988: 228) of the terms is unacceptable: he assumes that the competition in poetic composition was divided into two categories (*palaia* and *nea katalogē*), 'the old and the new languages' and notices that 'it seems that the Greeks had the problem of two languages – ancient and modern Greek – even in antiquity'.

and to assume a distinction parallel to that between Old and New comedy or the like. If we look at the victors' list again, we notice that the old and new *katalogē* are not placed next to each other,⁵³ but that one opens the contests, and the other, in a sense, closes them. This might be taken as a hint at their different subject matter, and I would tentatively suggest that the *katalogē palaia* is to be compared to a pre-battle oration, whereas the *katalogē nea* might in its essence resemble *epitaphios logos*. *Katalogē palaia* could have, I suppose, included lists of names of the warriors of old, and could have presented a reminder of virtuous deeds accomplished before the battle against Perseus, whereas the new *katalogē* possibly glorified the new generation of heroes whose virtue was displayed in the combat commemorated by the festival.⁵⁴ It is neither surprising nor unattested that lists of fallen warriors should be the subject of a recital, viz. poetry,⁵⁵ and this type of recital, together with a competition in epigram-composition, seems quite fitting as a closing act of a commemorative festival.

Now that we have established public festivals as a context for epigrammatic contests, one could ask whether we should suppose that there were also further occasions on which epigrams (which were subsequently inscribed) could have been performed and could have competed with each other.⁵⁶ It would be logical to suppose that, apart from competitions within festivals, there were also competitions which were organised by the state or ruling élite for public commissions. The supposition that contests for public commissions were organised, as speculative as it may be, could explain some apparent oddities: (a) the existence of wandering poets as authors of public epigrams, and (b) some difficult contradictions pertaining to problems of authorship of some epigrams.

(a) The motivation of the wandering poets can, in my opinion, be summed up in three words: privileges, money and fame. The evidence

⁵³ As is usual in different types of the same *genus*, cf. the position of both encomia.

⁵⁴ For the evidence on the six classical funeral orations and recent scholarship cf. van Henten and Avemarie 2002: 17–18; Sourvinou-Inwood 1996: 191–3. For *epitaphios logos* see Loraux 1986. The existence of pre-battle orations has been taken as questionable by some scholars, yet the practice is still generally accepted.

⁵⁵ The obvious parallel are the oral traditions with strong genealogical elements, well attested in South-Slavic and Central-Asian oral epics, cf. Foley 2002: 199–203. Illuminating also are vv. 302–30 of Aeschylus' *Persians* which might give us an idea of what the *katalogai* could have looked like (I am indebted for this parallel to Leslie Kurke). The list of the Persian war-dead is modelled after Athenian casualty-lists, as Ebbot 2000 shows. The existence of this genre might, perhaps, help explain better Herodotus' statement that he 'learned the names of all the three hundred' fallen at Thermopylae (7.224).

⁵⁶ As remarked in the beginning of this paper, I will not consider epigrams which were solely meant for the oral arena: sympotic epigrams, quite agonistic in their essence, will therefore not be taken into account.

for privileges and fame is well known and there is no need to repeat it here. The financial part is, as often, somewhat more elusive, but as far as we can tell, writing a commissioned epigram seems to have been a desirable and rewarding task. Since most of the public epigrams stood in very prominent areas of a polis it does not cause surprise that they were often incised with considerable care. The verses on these monuments were usually cut by professional stone masons (however hard it may be in some cases to believe so), and copies of the incised verses were preserved, so that in the event of a stele being damaged or destroyed, the epigram could be republished. This kind of care for these texts can be seen as an indicator of their pecuniary value: bearing in mind that a relatively modest marble stele of the Hegeso-type could cost as much as a simple house in fourth-century Attica,⁵⁷ an assumption of a significant price for the poems inscribed on public monuments seems plausible. Actually, there are further indications that a public epigram could have cost a small fortune: the sepulchral epigram from the grave of the famous astrologist and *mantis* Petosiris (third century BC) is relevant here:⁵⁸

Πετόσειριν αὐδῶ τὸν κατὰ χθονὸς νέκυν,
 νῦν δ' ἐν θεοῖσι κείμενον· μετὰ σοφῶν σοφός.
 κεφάλαιον τούτων τῶν ἰαμβείων
 εἰς ἀργύριον λόγον ±,ητογ'
 τούτου δὲ αὐτοῦ, βψκ'

I speak of Petosiris, the corpse in the earth, but now laid among the gods: sage among sages.

The total sum of these iambic verses is 8373 silver drachmas: and the total sum of this is 2720.

The iambic lines of the epigram are apparently followed by an addendum (written by another hand) explaining the costs of the epigram. The figures were calculated by reading each letter of the epigram (from Πετόσειριν to σοφός) as a number, and then by doing so again with the author's own remark in lines 3–4. It is tempting to understand these lines as an ironic comment on the substantial amounts paid to the authors of public epigrams.

(b) There is also a second advantage in accepting the possibility of contests for public commissions: such a procedure could help explain

⁵⁷ For the Hegeso-stele cf. Breuer 1995: 66. Prices: Babler 1998: 59 n. 288, Nielsen *et al.* 1990. Inflation between fifth and fourth century: Loomis 1998. 240–50, 255–8. costs of engaging an epigram's inscription: *ibid.*, 121, Nolan 1981 (*non vidi*)

⁵⁸ *GVV* 11–6. *IMFGR* 125. See esp. Bing and Bruss 2007: 16 who draw attention to a passage from Athenaeus (5.209b) stating that Hieron II paid the poet Archimelus 1,500 bushels of wheat for a single epigram

some inconsistencies. The famous epigram on the tyrant-killers which was inscribed on a statue-base in the Athenian agora is attributed to Simonides by Hephæstion (*Ench.* 4, 6), a reliable source for Simonidean attributions.⁵⁹ The authorship has been doubted many times because Simonides was connected to the Peisistratids, and therefore it has seemed unlikely that the poet could have been the author of an epigram celebrating the murderers of his former patron, or that the Athenians were ready to engage someone connected to the regime which allegedly inflicted so many terrors on them.⁶⁰ I am not inclined to muse here on the fragility of the morals of poets living in societies governed by terror, but it is conceivable that Simonides somehow discovered a soft spot for the new regime(s).⁶¹ More serious is the problem of the aversion Athenians could have had towards the poet at the moment when the epigram was to be chosen⁶² – this makes a direct and unmediated commission quite unlikely. If however we allow for the existence of a public contest for a commission, then there is much less reason to reject the authorship of Simonides.

There is also a further reason why one might conceive of this type of contest: since the fifth century BC, we encounter parallel-epigrams, basically variations on a theme, epigrams dedicated to the same subject and sometimes even written on the same stone. It is interesting to note that, more frequently than not, we are dealing with public epigrams (as with poem B of Arbinas' dedication) and that only in the fourth century and especially in the Hellenistic period do we find such variations attested for private contexts (private dedicatory and, particularly, sepulchral epigrams). Perhaps this phenomenon should lead us to recognise the existence of epigrammatic contests and to assume that in cases where the victory was indecisive or the competition ended in a close call, a decision was made to publish not only the victorious epigram, but all the best ones.⁶³ Subsequently, what was originally a public practice found its place in private contexts and is also reflected in the endless variations of the Hellenistic 'book-epigram'.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ For the text of the epigram see Petrovic 2007: 113–31.

⁶⁰ Cf. Molyneux 1992: 73 with further bibliography.

⁶¹ Cf. Shear 1937: 352. 'Simonides was a poet by profession, who wrote poetry for financial remuneration, and it would have been good business policy for him to dissociate himself from the party of tyrants if he hoped to continue to receive commissions from the Athenians.'

⁶² There is no consensus on the date of the first group (Antenor's composition). The scholarship on this subject is vast; useful recent bibliography can be found in Rausch 1999: 43.

⁶³ On the variations in inscribed epigram in archaic and classical epoch Fantuzzi forthcoming, above p. 197.

⁶⁴ One might be attracted by the idea that, in return, the public epigrammatic competitions reflect the practice of private or half-private contexts, i.e. that they spawned from sympotic competitions in the composition of *skolia*. On verse and *skolia*-competitions see most recently Collins 2005: 54.

To sum up: two general contexts for epigrammatic competitions can be suggested – that of public festivals, and that of public commissions. Even though the existence of epigrammatic contests on the occasion of public festivals (an *agōn epitaphios*) is first attested in the Hellenistic period, one might suppose that the commemorative epigrams inscribed on battlefields or city memorials since the Persian Wars could have been selected in this manner as well.

It is certainly very tempting to suppose that the epigrams which were victorious in public festivals (presumably on the occasion of the introduction of a festival)⁶⁵ are the ones which were actually inscribed, especially since we know that, also in the case of the competitions of lyric poets, their victorious poems were inscribed on stone – Philodamos of Scarpheia and Aristonoos of Corinth are cases in point.⁶⁶ If, therefore, we take a look at the battlefield and home memorials including epigrams, from the time of the Persian Wars onwards, we should probably imagine that these epigrams might just present those which were victorious in commemorative contests (i.e. *epitaphioi agōnes*) and were subsequently inscribed.⁶⁷ Nothing demonstrates that the elective procedure of public epigrams is a pre-Hellenistic practice more clearly than the passage of Demosthenes accompanying the epigram for the fallen in the battle of Chaeronea. In a direct address to Aeschines, Demosthenes (*Cor.* 289) reminds him of the virtue of the fallen and says, before quoting the epigram⁶⁸ (bear in mind that it was Demosthenes who delivered the *epitaphios logos* for the fallen at Chaeronea): λέγε δ' αὐτῶ τουτί τὸ ἐπιγράμμα, ὃ δημοσίαι προεῖλεθ' ἡ πόλις αὐτοῖς ἐπιγράψαι. 'Read for his sake this epigram, which the state had publicly chosen to have inscribed for them'. On which occasion, other than the public funeral of the fallen at Chaeronea, at which the *epitaphios logos* of Demosthenes was delivered as well, could this epigram have been 'publicly chosen' by the Athenian polis?⁶⁹

⁶⁵ For a similar view in regard to the Plataea elegy of Simonides cf. Boedeker 1995: 223.

⁶⁶ Cameron 1995: 47.

⁶⁷ The number of epigrams which can be connected to public burial and (afterwards) to *patrios nomos* and festival (*epitaphios agōn*, be it a part of *patrios nomos* or not) both in and outside Attica is itself remarkable. See Clairmont 1983: 22–8.

⁶⁸ For the text cf. Clairmont 1983: 218–19.

⁶⁹ Cf. Yunis 2001 *ad loc.* 267–8. 'προεῖλεθ' implies that they chose the epigram deliberately, as in choosing policy'. Yunis connects δημοσίαι with ἐπιγράψαι, which is unnecessary since public epigrammatic competitions are, as we have seen, attested. There is intense debate as to whether the epigram quoted by Demosthenes is authentic – but this is irrelevant for the present discussion. See Wankel 1976 and Yunis 2001.

LOCAL HISTORY, SUPRA-LOCAL RECEPTION

Public epigram, being an occasional genre par excellence, can nicely illuminate what we are actually talking about when we talk about local history. At first glance, it might seem a strange phenomenon to engage wandering poets to compose texts which are not only to occupy the most significant places within public space, but should also reflect a local sense of history and local perception of a historical event.⁷⁰ Now, the key phrase 'local sense of history' leads us back to Athens from the end of the sixth century and to the public monuments which can illustrate what was emphasised in the presentation of an event. I will be able to show only in a very cursory manner what kind of local knowledge Simonides possibly possessed as he composed the epigram for the tyrant-killers; then I will return, also in a very cursory manner, to Symmakhos, and I will try to work up some aspects of the presentation of an historical event by a foreigner in Lycia.

Before discussing these aspects, however, we should turn back to the question of professionalism to take a closer look at the class of 'professional' wandering poets, who composed public epigrams: when did professional poets start composing public epigrams, i.e. when did epigram-composition start being a *technē*?⁷¹ There are several difficulties, arising from the nature of our evidence, which impede an unambiguous and simple answer. Since authors' names simply did not accompany epigrams on stone until the fourth century, in most cases the authorship of archaic and classical authors, claimed by later sources, is precarious, so much so that in the case of epigrams attributed to Simonides some editors accept only one poem as authentic. But even if the attributions are as unreliable as they are claimed to be, one might assume that the mercenary Muse of Simonides was certainly quite willing to be hired to compose an epigram. If my reasoning concerning fees paid for the composition of public epigrams is correct, and if the numerous anecdotes pertaining to Simonides' appreciation of adequate payment have any foundation in historical reality, it should not surprise that antiquity saw him as one of the first great poets of public epigrams.⁷² Be that as it may, the first secure clue that a poet could be engaged to compose an epigram (in this case a private *epitymbion*) comes with Euripides' *Troades* (vv. 1188–91). The engagement of poets for the composition of epigrams,

⁷⁰ This matter is obviously related to the phenomena discussed by D'Alessio (this volume).

⁷¹ On definition and features of a professional Greek poet cf. Hardie 1983: 15ff.

⁷² On financial aspects cf. above p. 210; on Simonides and money cf. Bell 1978: 29–86 and Carson 2002: 24–7. On finances and itinerant poets cf. Hardie 1983: 16.

even if we discard the evidence concerning Simonides, is therefore attested from the fifth century BC on.⁷³

It is small surprise, if a surprise at all, that in public epigrams which were composed by professional poets one observes the presentation of an event shaped by the ideology of the group which had the epigram carved upon a monument. Probably no other epigram could demonstrate this more clearly than that of Simonides on the tyrant-killers:⁷⁴ this poem acts not only as a propagandistic tool of Cleisthenes,⁷⁵ but is also very different from the view any contemporary Athenian could have had about the event.

If we take another look at the Greek epigrams composed for Arbinas of Xanthos, we can also find local elements. As problematic as their exact meaning may be, the texts in Lycian do contain motifs very similar to those in the epigrams of Symmakhos and the *paidotribas*. In both cases we have a short history of the military endeavours and victories of Arbinas. Further on, Symmakhos claims that he produced the elegiac couplets ‘*eusunetōs*’, whatever we might understand by this term. One could translate it with the adjective ‘skilfully’, but this is not quite what the word denotes. Its primary meaning is ‘easy to understand’ and should we ask why someone would employ such a word, we could presume that it pertains to the numerous homerisms in the poem.⁷⁶

The homerisms are worthy of closer inspection: Symmakhos, by calling himself a *mantis amūmōn*, is obviously presenting himself as Calchas (*Iliad* 1.92), as is noted by Bousquet.⁷⁷ Bousquet plausibly argues that Symmakhos knew by heart whole passages from the *Iliad* pertaining to Lycia and that a significant number of his verses were formulated exactly after the Lycian passages of the *Iliad*.⁷⁸ Therefore we are dealing here with the presentation

⁷³ τί και ποτε / γραψειεν αν σοι μουσσοποιος εν ταφῶ. / τὸν παῖδα τὸνδ' ἔκτειναν Ἀργεῖοι ποτε / δεισαντες, σισχρόν τοῦπιγρᾶμμα γ' Ἑλλάδι. Herodotus' ascription of the Megistias-epigram is earlier, of course, but due to textual problems allegedly uncertain in respect to its exact meaning. On that see Petrovic 2004.

⁷⁴ *IG I³* 502 vv. 2, 4, Heph. *Fuch* 4.6, (S 14-15 ed. Consrbruch) vv. 1-2; Eustathius, *Hom.* 984 12-13.

⁷⁵ There is a long and animated discussion concerning the question of who exactly commissioned Antenor's group. For an overview cf. Rausch 1999: 43 and Page *FGE*, 187. I adopt the view that it was Cleisthenes' circle. On epigram and propaganda cf. Cameron 1995: 291.

⁷⁶ One is tempted to see a pun in the fact that a *mantis* feels a need to stress that his poem is 'easy to understand' as opposed to his usual utterances.

⁷⁷ Bousquet sees a parallel between Symmakhos/Arbinas and Calchas/Agamemnon. Bousquet 1992: 163. 'Symmachos est le confident d'Arbinas comme Calchas est le confident d'Agamemnon.' I am not entirely convinced that intentionally evoking this very parallel would be good for Symmakhos' business-ventures. By the wording *mantis amūmōn*, Symmakhos is perhaps alluding to the parallel between his journeys and those of Calchas (perhaps even a legendary ancestor of Symmakhos?). For Calchas' journeys along the coast of Asia Minor, all the way to Pamphylia, Cilicia and Syria, cf. Hdt 7.91. On business-strategies cf. Martin (this volume).

⁷⁸ Bousquet 1992: 163-5.

of events modelled on the view of the ruling élite, but formulated in the poetic *lingua franca* of the Greek world. The local élite, Xanthians who could understand Greek, would probably agree with *what* is being said, whereas an educated Greek in Xanthos could (also?) agree with *how* it is being said. Something for all tastes.

Thus Arbinas certainly had a reason to be satisfied with Symmakhos. Honorific inscriptions, on the other hand, tell us a lot about the contentment of the Greek commissioners of poems dedicated to local history, sometimes even in detail. Long before the bunch of 'new Homers' and 'new Nestors' were praised for their compositions in the imperial period, we find hints which tell us pretty clearly what really mattered when history (that is, an event) was remembered by means of a poem. To reflect local perception was in this respect essential: to stress the supremacy of a ruler, to honour the achievements of a polis, to celebrate and disseminate the values of the élite.

The honours given to the poets, on the other hand, are especially well documented for the *eporoi*, the poets who wrote local epics; an inscription from Lamia dated to the third or second century BC is very informative in this respect. (*IG IX 2, 63*):

[ἀγαθαὶ τύχα]· ἔδοξε τᾷ πόλει· | [ἐπειδὴ Πολ?]ίτας Πολίτα Ὑπαταῖο[ς] |
 [ποιητῆς ἐ]πῶμ παραγενόμενο[ς] | [ἐν τὰμ] πόλιν δείξεις ἐποιήσατ[ο] | [ἐν
 αἴς] τᾷ πόλιος ἀξίως ἐπεμνάσ[θη], | [εἶν]αι αὐτὸν πρόξενον τᾷ πόλιος καὶ |
 [ε]ὐεργέταν, δεδόσθαι δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ πο- | λιτείαν τὸμ πάντα χρόνον καὶ
 γᾶ[ς] | καὶ οἰκίας ἐγκτησιν καὶ ἐπινομίαν | ιο καὶ ἀσφάλειαν καὶ κατὰ γᾶν
 καὶ κατὰ | θάλασσαν καὶ πολέμου καὶ εἰράνας κα[ι] | αὐτῷ καὶ ἐκγόνοις καὶ
 χρήμασιν τὸν | ἅπαντα χρόνον καὶ ὅσα τοῖς ἄλλοις | προξένοις καὶ εὐεργέ-
 ταις δίδοται πά[ν]- | ις τα. ἀρχόντων Θεομνάστου, Ζεύξις, Δε[ξι]- | [κ]ράτεος,
 στραταγέοντος Φιλίππου τοῦ Δε[ξι]- | [κρ]άτεος, ἵππαρχέοντος Μενεφύλου,
 ἔγγ[υος] | τᾷ προξενίας Φίλιππος Δεξικράτεο[ς].

With good fortune, the polis decided: Since Politas from Hypate, son of Politas, an epic poet, came to the city and made performances, in which he recalled the city appropriately, may he be pronounced a *proxenos* of the city and a benefactor, and may citizenship for all times be given to him, and the right of possessing land and of owning a house, and the right of pasture, and safety both on sea and land, in peace and war, to him and his descendents, and their property, for all times, and all that is given to other *proxenoi* and benefactors. Archons were Theomnastes, Zeuxis, Dexicrates, the general was Philipp, son of Dexicrates, *hipparchos* was Menephylos, and Philipp, son of Dexicrates, is certifying the right of proxeny.

Politas son of Politas from Hypate is being praised, because he (ll. 4–5) δείξεις ἐποιήσατ[ο] | [ἐν αἴς] τᾷ πόλιος ἀξίως ἐπεμνάσ[θη]. Obviously,

the small city of Lamia was more than happy that it was mentioned in the *epideixeis* of Politas⁷⁹ 'in a proper way'⁸⁰ by the poet, so happy, actually, that the poet was declared *proxenos* and *euergetēs* of the city, obtained life-long citizenship, the right to hold property and use public pasture-land, and his security was guaranteed both on land and sea, both in war and peace times. His *epideixis* was 'worthy of the city' and the praise he received is a consequence of the praise he gave.⁸¹

The reason for such forms of gratitude was certainly the knowledge that by means of a song, especially a hexameter encomium, a polis could be known and celebrated.⁸² Yet is the same valid for public epigrams, inscribed on stone, set firmly in place and time? Could they have the same or similar impact? I believe that at least since the Hellenistic period they did, and I believe that the principles of organisation of the early epigrammatic collections are in this respect important. If we seek traces of organisational principles, which could be either conjecturally or safely traced back to the fourth century, we might observe that a number of epigram collections were organised upon the principle of interest in local history, in public monuments and events in and anecdotes about a given city. It is very remarkable indeed that a significant number of Hellenistic epic poems and epigram collections bear very similar names.⁸³ Rhianus of Crete is in this respect a case in point, as the titles of Rhianus' poems *Achaika*, *Messenika*, *Thessalika* and *Eliaka* resemble titles of epigram collections from the fourth century BC and later. Obvious instances are the *epigrammata Attika* of Philochoros,⁸⁴ the *epigrammata Thebaika* of Aristodamos,⁸⁵ and the *Peri tōn kata poleis epigrammatōn* of Polemon.⁸⁶ Interest in local history is obviously present both in the case of epics and the collections of public epigrams. These inscriptions were not only read by local recipients, but were handed down at the latest by the end of the fourth century in collections which were organised on the principle of their interest for local history.

⁷⁹ The term is well defined in Pallone 1984: 165 'esibizioni in pubblico finalizzate principalmente a mettere in evidenza la capacità del singolo poeta e a cantare le glorie di un determinato popolo o de origini di una città'.

⁸⁰ Similar formulations are frequent, cf. Hardie 1983: 19–20, and Introduction, above p. 3. On this inscription and honours cf. also Cameron 1995: 48.

⁸¹ On honours cf. Hardie 1983: 18–19 and 26ff. ⁸² Cf. *FD* III, 1: 223.

⁸³ For the titles of the Hellenistic agonistic epics cf. Pallone 1984, Fantuzzi 1988: xxvff., Cameron 1995: 262.

⁸⁴ Harding 1994: 32–34. ⁸⁵ *Schol. A. R.*, 2.904, *Schol. Theoc.*, 7.103.

⁸⁶ *JGHIst* 328 T. There is a discussion concerning the exact title of the collection. Cf. Cameron 1993: 5.