

KENT J. RIGSBY

TWO CRETAN EPITAPHS

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Two Cretan Epitaphs

Two funerary epigrams of late Hellenistic date, discovered in 1983 at Lato in Crete, have been published by M. W. Baldwin Bowsky (*Hesperia* 58 [1989] 115-129). I suggest here some changes of interpretation.

One monument is the grave of a child of seven years. The poem presents many problems; my concern here is the heading in larger letters that precedes it, which the editor took to name two persons in the nominative, the deceased Theodotus (with three patronymics) and his mother Aristono:

Θιόδοτος Θιοδ[ότ]ω
 Βιάννω Εὐαγόρω Ἄρι[σ]τ[ο]-
 νῶι Θιοδότω χαίρει

Several features are troubling: that so many generations of Theodotus are specified; that the living and the dead are not distinguished by case — one would have preferred a dative for the dead; that we must assume a feminine nominative in -ῶι, attested in Cretan but unusual; that the mother's father bears the same name as her husband and his father; that she alone is named in the heading, yet the poem itself invokes both father and mother (without however naming them in what survives). I would urge a simpler construction, father and mother in the nominative bidding farewell to their son in the dative:

Θιόδοτος Θιοδ[ότ]ω,
 Βιαννῶ Εὐαγόρω, Ἄρι[σ]τ[ό]-
 νωι Θιοδότω χαίρει

The mother's name Βιαννῶ has a feminine ending found everywhere in Greece, in Crete e.g. *Ἐπιτάφιος* of *I. Cret.* I xxii 58, *Φιλικκῶ* of III iv 37.26.¹ The dead child is Ἄριςτονος, a frequent enough masculine name, and his father is the same Theodotus as in line 1; the stemma offered by the editor can be simplified accordingly.

The other monument is the grave of a scholar (σοφιστής), Cleitonymus son of Mnastocles, the eighth of the seven sages. Lines 10 ff. are difficult; he is lamented by the whole city,

10 οὐ γὰρ [οὖν] ἦρωσ ἐν γήραι βίον ὡς δέ τις ἀστήρ
 λάμψας ἐβέσθη δαίμονος ἀκρισίαι
 12 πατρίδα ρυόμενος βουλαίς· ἀγαθῆ δὲ προνοία
 οἰκονόμοι δόξης κίονες ἐκράτεσαν.
 τρισσοὺς γὰρ λίπε παῖδας ἐούς. (κτλ.)

¹ For -ω and -ωι in Cretan cf. M. Bile, *Le dialect crétois ancien* (*Etudes crétoises* 27 [1988]) 180.

The editor translates, "The hero certainly did not extinguish his life in old age glowing like some star, through the imprudence of his daimon, while protecting his country with his counsels. Rather the oikonomoi, pillars of his reputation, prevailed in good foresight. For he left three sons of his own."

The sequence of thought is less than clear. In line 10, οὖν is not logical or metrical (and is perhaps too long for the space), βίον cannot easily depend on the passive ἐκβέεθῃ, and δέ is intrusive. The sentiment, frequently met, is that the deceased did not reach old age but died in his prime; after γάρ an active verb is needed, to take βίον as object and to contrast (δέ) with ἐκβέεθῃ. Restore then:

10 οὐ γὰρ [ἐπ]ήρωσεν γήραι βίον, ὡς δέ τις ἀστὴρ

As to what follows, I would interpret thus:

10 for he did not cripple his life with old age, but, having blazed forth
like some star, he was extinguished by the caprices of fortune,

12 he who guarded the fatherland with his counsels. But by his good foresight,
pillars have prevailed as custodians of his fame:

for he left his three sons...

For the metaphor of a crippled life,² compare the gnome πῆρωσις ἄπαις βίος at *Anth. Gr.* 9.359.7 (attributed to Plato Comicus), and ἀναπηροβίων γερόντων, "old men of crippled life," in Phrynichus (fr. 4 Demiańczuk [70A Edmonds]). This association of crippling and old age is obvious and familiar; cf. γέροντας καὶ ἀναπήρους, Isaeus fr. 10 Roussel. In 13, οἰκονόμοι are not civic magistrates but generic "custodians" or "dispensars," metaphorical like οἰκονόμος τῆς τῶν ἀκουόντων ἡδονῆς in Alcidas;³ ταμίαια often serves similarly in the poets (Theog. 1186, Critias fr. 1.11, *Anth.Gr.* 6.42.4). As to κίονες, the editor rightly remarked the frequency of "pillars" for sturdy males in Greek literature. I would mention too a more esoteric usage, "shooting stars." The scientists had labored to distinguish meteors of divergent appearance (cf. Arist. *Meteor.* 341; *Mund.* 392b, 395b); that κίων, "column," was the name given one type we know from Heraclides Ponticus (fr. 116 Wehrli²: a bare list that does not reveal what characterized the κίων). If this is meant here, that would be consistent with the conceit of the poem: the star is extinguished, but he has left behind a meteor shower, his sons, to carry on his fame.⁴ But I hesitate to recommend this interpretation without knowing of what subject Cleitonimus was a "sophist." At 7–8 we have κοίρανον ἱστορίας, πικτὸν ἔρ[ε]ιμα νόμων. The editor, who reasonably identified him with one the kosmoi attested at

² [ἐπ]ήρωσεν is possible, "he did not fill (out) his life with old age"; but this strains the verb, which should mean "fill one's life with" (as Philo *Gig.* 55, Aristid. *Or.* 1.349 Behr).

³ Cited at Arist. *Rh.* 1406b26 as an example of frigidity.

⁴ Compare the astrological jargon at *Anth.Gr.* 11.170, with L. Robert, in *L'épigramme grecque* (Entr. Fondation Hardt 14 [1967]) 214–220.

Lato in 116/5 B.C.,⁵ translated σοφιστήν "statesman," then "master of historical inquiry." But ἱστορίη need not be specifically historical research (e.g. Eur. fr. 910 N.). If there is a labored astronomical image in the epigram, we might suspect that his investigations were astrological and that it was by those counsels, rather than an historian's lore, that he protected his city. But while kings and emperors resorted to astrologers, I can cite no instance of a city doing so, and leave the question open.

Duke University

Kent J. Rigsby

⁵ Κλητόνυμος Μναστροκλείος, *I.Cret.* I xvi 26 and 33.