

CHAPTER ONE

What Is an Epigram?: Defining a Genre

Mario Citroni

1.1 The Problem

Generally regarded by ancients and moderns alike as a minor, marginal genre, epigram has displayed a vitality no less durable than that of the most prestigious genres. The composition of epigrams is already attested at the end of the eighth century BCE (the age to which the earliest extant Greek verse inscription dates back), and continued almost unbroken until late antiquity. After an intermittent presence in the Middle Ages, the fresh flourishing of the genre in the Renaissance, based on the recovery of its ancient forms, opened up the rich and lively history of epigram in European literature stretching through to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Collections of epigrams were also written during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and are still written today, albeit episodically and with a more idiosyncratic and experimental attitude. Such a long-lived and extensive presence is an indication of the genre's capacity to respond to substantive, non-ephemeral needs of poets and audiences in very different historical circumstances and cultural settings.

And yet defining this genre has always been very problematic. There are two distinct but interconnected reasons for this: a variety of content and forms that appears hard to fit into a single category; and the uncertainty of the boundaries separating it from other genres with similar characteristics.

The spectrum of content is almost limitless. The mode of utterance can range from the speech of a varying identifiable voice to dialogue, narration,

and description. One almost constant characteristic is brevity, but no single meter is employed – the most immediately significant formal trait for recognizing a genre in ancient literatures – nor is there a meter that is exclusive to the epigram: hence the difficulty in differentiating it from other genres of short poems that use the same metrical forms. Many, finally, are the occasions and functions of the epigram’s “use,” another key criterion in distinguishing genres, and which, for the epigram, range from inscription on objects and monuments, both sacred and profane, to recitation at symposia or other social situations, to circulation as informal writing or in book form, for entertainment, for literary or political polemic, for instruction, et cetera.

But epigram, which perhaps displays the greatest degree of variety among all the ancient genres, is also the one with the greatest degree of repetitiveness. On one hand there are the numerous typologies based on content and function: the funerary, votive, erotic, sympotic, “epideictic” (that is, “demonstrative,” with various sub-types: Rossi 2002, 151–55 and cf. Lauxtermann 1998), aphoristic, ephrastic, satiric, celebratory; then there are riddles, oracles, mythical or historical re-evocations, literary polemic, et cetera, always with the freedom to experiment with further types. On the other hand, within these typologies, and in part across them too, there is an insistent recurrence of motifs, situations, formulas, and compositional forms. A further aspect of this contradiction is that epigram, due to the freedom in the choice of themes, offers us rare and invaluable testimony of minor and intimate aspects of everyday life, but, usually, within a literarily formalized and conventional framework.

Some scholars of the ancient (Reitzenstein 1907, 111) and modern (Nowicki 1974, 10–19) output have denied that epigram, because of its diversification, can be considered as a definite genre. According to Crusius (1905, 2277) and others, the epigram in elegiac couplets, representing the majority of ancient production, should be considered together with elegy as part of a single genre; this thesis, which, as we shall see, seems to have some grounding in ancient theory, would lend itself to being applied also to the few Greek and many Latin epigrams in iambic and lyric meters. But an overwhelming ancient and modern tradition shared by poets, readers, and critics has recognized the epigram, however varied, problematic, and hard to pin down, to be a unitary genre.

The only “objective” way to define a genre seems to be to systematically describe its manifestations. This cannot be fully achieved within the bounds of this chapter, but it also runs up against a difficulty of principle, well known to those who study genre theory: a repertory of all the manifestations of a genre presupposes that we already know which works belong to it, and therefore that its identity is already defined. Moreover, with an approach of

this kind there is a risk of losing sight precisely of the unitary element we are searching for here. The outline of the essential phases in the development of Greek and Latin epigram in the next two sections therefore makes no claim to be complete, but simply attempts to single out the historical reasons why certain different literary realities were united under this single name, and to see what awareness the ancients themselves might have had of the identity of epigram.

1.2 Ideas of Greek Epigram Through Time

The word ἐπίγραμμα means “inscription,” that is, a text inscribed or painted onto an object (other meanings are: “annotation,” “title”). An inscription may publicize a text (typically, laws, decrees, pacts, lists), where there are reasons for its being made known independent of the tablet it is inscribed on, which is just its support: ἐπιγραφή and ἀναγραφή were usually used for that sense. Alternatively its function can be to give a particular meaning to the object it is inscribed on, and to preserve the memory of this meaning over time: typically, to attest who made it, owned it, offered it, and to which deity, person, or community, who the buried person is, to whom a monument is dedicated, who is represented in an image. It might also provide information about the life, circumstances of death, works, and virtues of the buried or commemorated person, or the reasons for the offering. Often the object, or the buried person, speaks in the first person: the inscription is also a way of giving voice to inanimate things (Burzachechi 1962) and to preserve the life and voice of the dead. To denote inscriptions with these functions, especially when written in verse, the word ἐπίγραμμα, attested since the fifth century BCE, was used almost exclusively.

Epigram is the only ancient poetic genre which is posited, in its name and effective original function, as inherently “written,” instead of an originally oral genre for which writing provided a stable support (the same could be said of the poetic epistle, which however arrived much later, and with limited diffusion). Due to its structural brevity, epigram could not be (though it has been hypothesized) a transcription of verses recited or sung on the occasion of funeral or votive rites, even if its content and expressive choices might have been influenced by them. That the text would have been read aloud, possibly by a literate intermediary for other people’s benefit, detracts nothing from the specificity of the epigram as a written text. Likewise, such specificity is in no way diminished by the fact that epigram is often constructed as an allocution of the dead, or of the tomb or of an anonymous mourner (Cassio 1994) to a passer-by, or of a passer-by to the dead or the tomb, or as

a dialogue between them. These conventional scenarios, widely used also in literary epigrams (Fantuzzi 2004, 306–38; Meyer 2005, 101–26; Tueller 2008), are perhaps a sign of the influence exerted on it by the oral nature of the other poetic genres.

The lesser prestige attributed to epigram in the ancient literary system is now widely considered to derive from its being a written genre. But insofar as it was written, epigram performed vital anthropological and identificatory roles, such as relations with the gods, the dead, and with the very idea of death and memory. I believe, instead, that for these reasons, the funerary and votive epigraphs, in prose and verse, were an important driving force in the unstoppable growth in the role of writing, and that the lower prestige of the epigram, which persisted in the prevalently written literary culture of imperial Rome, and in modern literature, derives from prejudices associated with its brevity, its occasional nature and, therefore, its apparent “ease” of creation.

Inscriptions in verse have always been much rarer than prose ones (data in Bing and Bruss 2007, 2–4). The decision to adopt the metrical form may have various motivations: enhancement of the distinction and value of the message and of the object it was inscribed on; communicative efficacy, because a poetic text can stir greater interest, be more striking, and remain more firmly impressed in the reader’s memory; the sacredness and suggestiveness deriving from the magical values associated with the poetic form. Anyone composing, commissioning, or reading a verse inscription would certainly have been aware of the specific identity of this product which, even at its simplest, stood out as being different from a prose inscription, in that it was endowed with the aesthetic, communicative, and magic–sacred qualities belonging to the poetic form. The precocious, stable use of *ἐπίγραμμα* to designate inscriptions in verse seems to offer linguistic confirmation of an awareness of the specificity of this genre of writing. The fact that, at the beginning of the fifth century, epigrams of great public importance like those for the fallen in the Persian Wars were, or were believed to have been, commissioned from a famous poet like Simonides presupposes that the verse inscription was already recognized as being fully integrated into the system of poetic genres.

The earliest inscribed epigrams are for the most part short and simple: until the end of the sixth century BCE they rarely exceed four lines, often repeat established formulas, and are almost all in hexameters, the meter of epic poetry, with which they also display remarkable affinities of language. From the second half of the sixth century we also find epigrams in iambic or trochaic meters, and in elegiac couplets. The latter quickly became the prevalent meter, and *ἐλεγίον* (strictly “elegiac couplet”) could also be used as a synonym of *ἐπίγραμμα*: in the singular, it denotes an inscribed poetic text of

more than one couplet in *CEG* 819 iii, from 405 BCE or some decades later, and then various times from the first century BCE onwards (West 1974, 4). Later it was also used occasionally to indicate epitaphs in non-elegiac meter (*ibid.*).

The reasons why the elegiac couplet was adopted as the prevalent meter cannot be identified. It has been argued (Reitzenstein 1893, 105; Gentili 1968, 65) that the rhythmic nature of the couplet, a compact strophe with a more expansive opening followed by two brief segments giving a strong sense of closure, made it particularly suited to the inscriptional modality. Besides this rather doubtful claim, there is the fact that the origin of elegy, and of the name ἔλεγχος itself, was generally traced back by the ancients to the funeral lament. The shared sepulchral theme, fundamental for both genres (though the ancients' assertion of its predominance in elegy is not borne out by surviving texts) might have attracted epigram from the hexameter to the very close rhythmic modality of elegy. A shared general theme, that is, might have been at the heart of the metrical assimilation that would subsequently form the basis for further thematic assimilations between the two genres, with the birth of the sympotic and erotic epigram. Grammatical treatises of the peripatetic school, in illustrating the etymology of ἔλεγχος, seem to regard the funeral lament in elegiac meter and the epitaph in elegiacs as the same reality (Reitzenstein 1907, 74–77), and the unitariness of the funerary/votive inscription in elegiac couplets and the elegiac lament seems to be presupposed by a passage (75–76) from Horace's *Ars poetica*. One of the sources of Horace's work was Neoptolemus of Parium, the only ancient author known to have written a treatise on epigram. The idea of an essential unity between epigram and elegy thus formed part of ancient perceptions of the genre, though this does not mean it necessarily corresponded to reality, nor do we know if the view was shared by everyone.

Between the fourth and third century BCE, the idea of epigram extended in two fundamental ways. Besides its value as an “inscribed poem,” which remained intact, it also extended to take in poems which, while having the features of inscribed texts, referred to solely imaginary tombs or objects. It also began to cover poems lacking any recognizable link with epigraphic writing.

The first shift can easily be reconstructed, albeit through conjecture. The spread of poetic epigraphs associated with important events or figures, and the fact that sometimes these were, or were considered to be, the work of eminent poets, stirred a two-fold interest – historical-antiquarian and literary – in being able to read them in book collections, doing away with the need to visit specific places or to rely on travelers' accounts. We know of a collection of *Attic Epigrams* prepared by the historian Philochorus between the fourth and third century BCE (see Maltomini in this volume), but similar

books might have existed before that: the texts of various epigrams were already reproduced by Herodotus in his work for their historical interest. And the workshops that actually produced the inscriptions had certainly long been using repertoire-books of exemplary texts, some taken from existing epigraphs, so clients could choose one to adapt to their needs.

The fact that verse inscriptions began to circulate in book form, freed from an actual physical tie with a monument or object, as texts destined for a present or future readership interested in poetry, would have given poets further motivation to write them, and to do so in an original way. All the more so as, in book form, the epigrams could also bear the name of their author, only very rarely recorded in epigraphic texts (Fantuzzi 2004, 287–91; Santin 2009). Freedom from any tie with the monument, enabling readers to enjoy epigrams for their essentially aesthetic interest, would have prompted authors to free themselves from that restriction in composing them, and to write fictitious sepulchral and votive texts with the new creative freedom afforded by no longer being bound by real occasions. The “inscriptions” are recognizably fictitious when they concern unrealistic burials or votive offerings (for example, for figures from myth or remote ages), or when they are parodic (for instance, celebrating a dead person’s vices rather than his virtues). But apart from the greater freedom of conception and elaboration, the literary epigrams are in principle undistinguishable from those composed for graves or real offerings, precisely because they were intentionally modeled on them. Nowadays it is considered likely that anthologies or collections of epigrams with a real or fictitious epigraphic purpose, attributed to known poets on varyingly solid grounds, were circulating in the fourth century BCE.

The leading poets of early Hellenism (end of fourth/third century) developed epigram greatly. It fully suited the new poetics privileging brief forms, in which the poet could achieve an ideal of sophisticated formal elegance, and, foregoing sublime heights, give voice to a private, even intimate world, and delicate feelings tinged with melancholic, ironic, or even playful shades. In such a spirit, they wrote many epigrams of an inscriptional, burial, or votive form, for the most part clearly fictitious. They wrote ephrastic epigrams, descriptions of objects, jewels, statues, and trophies for protectors and patrons in which we can see developments, sometimes very free ones, of inscriptional forms. But they also wrote many poems, especially erotic and sympotic ones, that made no reference to inscriptional modalities but were also called “epigrams.”

This latter extension represents a crucial turning point, which lies at the heart of the question forming the title of this chapter: what makes the identity of the genre problematic is, primarily, that it includes poems lacking the inscriptional form to which the name refers. This evolution is a historical-literary

problem that has not really been clarified. At a linguistic level, we can note that in a papyrus of the third century BCE (*P.Vindob.* G 40611) ἐπιγράμματα denotes an anthology of poems of which only the first words are given, but which in various cases can be recognized as non-inscriptional (and in some cases as non-elegiac). In a papyrus from the same age (*P.Petr.* II 49a = *Suppl. Hell.* 961), the term must have had the same meaning, designating as σύμμεικτα ἐπιγράμματα (“mixed epigrams”) a collection of which part of an elegiac poem on an epithalamic theme, at least 24 lines long and certainly not inscriptional (and in any case anomalous as an epigram), has survived (Cameron 1993, 7, 13; Argentieri 1998, 9). Further evidence between the third and second century BCE confirms this extended meaning of the term, which from then on would be stable: it was used by the peripatetic Hieronymus of Rhodes (third century BCE) for an erotic epigram attributed to Sophocles (*FGE* I) and by the grammarian Callistratus (second century BCE) for a sympotic epigram ascribed to Simonides (*FGE* LXXXVIII). The epigraph of 263/2 BCE (*IG* 9.1² i, 17a) containing the decree which, in awarding an honor to the poet Posidippus, describes him as ἐπιγραμματοποιός, seems to represent further confirmation (it would not just have referred to the writing of poems destined to be inscribed). The treatise “On epigrams” (Περὶ ἐπιγραμμάτων) by Neoptolemus of Parium, a third-century-BCE grammarian and poet who himself wrote epigrams, is likely to have referred to this extended meaning of the term as well. Puelma (1997) observes that epigrammatists themselves never used ἐπίγραμμα until the first century CE, preferring the traditional terms for oral poetry (ῥυμος, μέλισμα, ἔλεγχος). But this cannot be considered evidence of an unawareness of the genre’s identity, as Puelma thinks: the word ἐπίγραμμα might have been avoided because it was felt to be prosaic (as Puelma himself suggests).

The new extension of the term’s meaning corresponds to the emergence of a new type of composition. It can be seen as an evolution of the inscriptional epigram: freed from the tie with the material object, it became receptive to different themes, especially erotic and sympotic, and gnomic ones as well, drawing inspiration from other genres dealing with the same themes but distinguishing itself from them for certain typical features of the inscriptional epigram (brevity, concentration, a preference for elegiac meter) retained in this new dimension. But it could also be seen as the evolution of already-existing types of erotic and sympotic poetry which, in the course of their development, came into contact with epigram (in turn transformed with respect to its original modalities), from which they acquired those same typical features, and the name. Both these scenarios, perhaps two ways of representing the same phenomenon, pose the problem of the relationship between epigram and other genres exploring the same themes: lyric, *iambos*,

elegy (Gutzwiller 1998, 115–229). Between the fifth and third century BCE, these genres continued to be performed orally at symposia and at public and private rituals, but were also, or indeed prevalently, enjoyed as book reading, and were composed also for this purpose, as were epigrams following the path of development we have discussed. In the book, now a shared space for all these genres, an overlapping of themes is understandable; in particular, the difference between short elegy and non-inscriptional epigram, which shared the same meter, tended to dissolve. Another common space where these genres could influence each other was the oral one of the symposium, which was the context for singing, reciting, and off-the-cuff composing of poems in various meters on erotic, sympotic, and gnomic themes. These were often performed in sequences, with each participant being “obliged” to pick up from, vary, and try to outdo the execution of the person preceding him (a characteristic modality of a specific genre of light sympotic lyric called *skolion*). Participants in symposia, at least in more recent times, also recited, sometimes in verse, anecdotes, witticisms, jokey characterizations of individuals, riddles, aphorisms, polemical quips (serious and playful) on literary and philosophical themes, and expressions of homage to or even attacks on powerful figures. These are all recurrent themes in the epigrammatic tradition, which has also preserved many cases of variations on the same theme, produced in the context of poets’ vying to outdo one another. The non-inscriptional Hellenistic epigram, which circulated in book form but could also be recited (and sometimes perhaps improvised) at symposia, might perhaps derive from these convivial poetic practices (Reitzenstein 1893, 87–192; Cameron 1995, 76–103, objections in Bing 2009, 106–15, among others), included in the “epigram” category following their regularization in the short form and the conciseness characteristic of inscriptional poems. All the more so as these sympotic verse practices might themselves have had an inscriptional basis (Fantuzzi 2004, 284–87): the earliest extant epigrams, dating to the end of the eighth century BCE, are verse inscriptions on recipients (the “cup of Nestor,” the Dipylon and the Ithaca *oenochoai*: CEG 454, 432, 453), with references to wine, eros, and dance, and were probably intended to be recited in a symposium. Subsequently, we find inscriptions on goblets, mostly in prose and very elementary, which might have served as a basis for convivial poetic performances of extemporary or traditional texts. On the other hand, at a symposium there could be no space, or any inscriptional basis, for the fundamental types of epigram, the funerary and votive-sacred ones that gave the genre its early identity and its name. Except for a possible presence in funeral and religious banquets, these types could appear only marginally in symposia, for offerings and convivial gifts and for evoking the dead, also in a parodic and playful manner.

The papyrus of Posidippus (see Gutzwiller in this volume), a third-century-BCE collection of epigrams of which 112 are extant, all in elegiac meter, with as many as 95 comprising 4 or 6 lines and none more than 14, attests that the contours of a type of epigram were already clearly delineated: regular in its forms, which were prevalently of epigraphic derivation, but often with an impossible or improbable inscriptional collocation. A contemporary papyrus (*P.Berol.* 13270) also provides evidence, however, of the circulation of short elegiac poems together with sympotic lyric poems, suggesting a more uncertain reality, in which the separation between lyric, *iambos*, and epigram was not clear-cut (Gutzwiller 1998, 16–25). The compilers of the ancient anthologies forming the basis for the great Byzantine collections (Palatine and Planudean) that have come down to us, at least starting from Meleager (beginning of the first century BCE), probably selected the texts also on the basis of their conformity to that “regular” model of epigram, preventing us from seeing a more varied picture, in which, perhaps even after the third century BCE, in sympotic recitations as in book collections, short poems of different kinds and in varying meter could coexist with “epigrams” in elegiac couplets. It is significant that, among the Hellenistic poems passed down as epigrams, the ones of anomalous meter (Fantuzzi 2004, 39) or length come from the most ancient phase of this “new” genre (third century BCE: Cameron 1993, 13–15). And in any case if the anthologists did make such a selection, it means that at least from the time of Meleager elegiac meter and brevity were regarded as virtually necessary features of the genre (Dale 2010). Such criteria became more rigorous in the *Garland* of Philip (mid-first century CE), where epigrams in a meter other than elegiac are much rarer, and only one epigram appears to be more than 8 lines long, compared to 71 of those remaining from the Meleager *Garland* (Gow and Page 1968, vol. 1, xxxvii).

Clarity is also seriously hampered by the scarcity of surviving lyric, iambic, and elegiac output, especially from the fifth century BCE onwards, compared to the extensive (albeit partial) knowledge of the epigrammatic tradition resulting from the conservation of the Byzantine anthologies, of the vast epigraphic material, and of important papyrus texts. In the case of elegy, the genre closest to epigram by virtue of the meter, we can ascertain that, at least in archaic production, compositions of over 100 lines were admitted (and we also know of very extensive narrative elegiac poems). But we do not know the generally accepted minimum length, and therefore to what extent the erotic or sympotic epigram in elegiac couplets, with its brevity, represented a deviation from what was already practiced in the elegiac tradition (Bowie 2007). The compilation which, under the name of Theognis, also brings together texts of different origin and age, often includes very brief segments of complete meaning, sometimes just a single couplet, that

are not distinguishable from non-inscriptional epigrams: but some might be passages taken from longer elegies, as can be definitely ascertained in certain cases.

The panorama offered by the extant Greek tradition from the third century BCE onwards is essentially that of a well-defined genre. The general formal arrangement, characterized by brevity and elegiac meter, appears stable: epigrams in a different meter or longer than, say, 14 lines, are admitted, but felt to be exceptions (Morelli 2008). At the same time, there is a great variety of typologies, and almost boundless content. During the further evolution of Greek epigram in the imperial and Byzantine age, the comic-satiric epigram and the ephrastic one (which sometimes had didactic and religious ends) would undergo wide and in part new development – but they are all typologies already known to the Hellenistic epigram.

1.3 Ideas of Latin Epigram Through Time

Though it depends considerably on the Greek genre, Latin epigram has a quite different profile, which has played a key role, alongside and often in open competition with the Greek model, in defining the genre's identity in the modern tradition.

While in Greece the epigram had a stable structure from the third century BCE, in Rome it always appeared more open and varied, being considered a genre of uncertain identity and name (Citroni 2004). Pliny the Younger describes a rich variety of minor poetry in different meters composed by himself and his friends, clearly analogous to that of Martial. Speaking of a collection of his own, he says he chose the title *Hendecasyllabi* because it consisted of poems in that meter alone, but then he adds: “you could call them *epigrammata*, *idyllia*, *eclogae*, *poematia*, as many do (*ut multi*), or in whatever other way you prefer” (*Ep.* 4.14.9). One of his friends chose, in fact, the title *Poematia* (*Ep.* 4.27.1). Pliny does not say what he called his own collection of poems in varied meter (*Ep.* 8.21.4). Instead, he always designates as *epigrammata* the short poems his friends wrote in Greek (*Ep.* 4.3.3; 4.18.1), evidently referring in this case to what he considered to be a clear-cut genre, with a canonical author, who, for Pliny (*Ep.* 4.3.4) as for Martial (4.23), was Callimachus.

By contrast, Martial, also a friend of Pliny, shows he had a precise idea of the genre he worked in. He consistently used just one term, *epigramma*, and first published three “special” books consisting solely (*Liber spectaculorum*) or almost solely (*Xenia* and *Apophoreta*) of poems in elegiac couplets, and then a *corpus* of 12 books that are all homogeneous in their metrical variety: the

majority of the poems are in elegiac meter, but these alternate with significant numbers of pieces in hendecasyllables (phalaeceans) and a smaller number of scazons. Other kinds of meter – lyrics, iambics, or hexameters – appear only sporadically (data in Scherf 2001). This very controlled variety is fundamentally different from the Greek epigrammatic tradition known to us. Martial repeatedly declares that his supreme model, and that of the entire Latin epigram tradition, is Catullus. In fact, Catullus’ “minor” poems were likewise in elegiac couplets, phalaeceans, scazons and, occasionally, in other lyrical and iambic meters. The same meters were favored by the “neoterics” in Catullus’ circle, as far as can be deduced from remaining fragments. Pliny also considered Catullus (and Calvus) to be models of the minor poetry written among his acquaintances, where the same metric variety was managed very differently from Martial, as collections just of phalaeceans were commonplace (*Ep.* 7.4.8). Unlike Greek epigram, this “Catullian” genre did not seem unitarily definable to Pliny, as it did to Martial.

Neither for Catullus nor for the neoterics can we say whether they thought that poems not written in elegiac couplets belonged to the same genre as those that were, nor whether they used the term “epigram” for them, as Martial, but not Pliny, would do consistently. In Catullus’ book, as it has come down to us, the short poems in elegiac meter and the short poems in different meters form two separate sections, conventionally described by modern scholars as “epigrams” and “polymetrics”; but what is not known is if this ordering originated with the author, or at any rate reflected his intentions.¹ Catullus never uses the word *epigramma*, describing his phalaeceans as *hendecasyllabi* and the invective verse as *iambi*, which seemingly also included the invectives in phalaeceans (that we consider a lyric meter). Other authors’ citations do not help much. Quintilian (*Inst.* 1.5.20) describes a derisory poem in couplets by Catullus as an *epigramma*, and (10.1.96) lists Catullus among the iambic poets (as do Diom. *Gramm.* I 485.17 and Porph. *Hor. Carm.* 1.16.24), specifying however that he was not the author of a unitary iambic collection. A couplet of Calvus is quoted as an *epigramma* (schol. Luc. 7.726) and a hexameter-end by Cinna as *in epigrammatis* (Non. 87.24M.): in this case the reference to a collection thus named would be possible. Poems by Catullus and Calvus in phalaeceans are sometimes referred to as *hendecasyllabi*: only in two cases (Sen. *Controv.* 7.4.7 and Char. *Gramm.* I 97.13K) would the reference to a collection so identified be admissible, though improbable. Gellius uses the expression *in poematis* for a phalaecean by Calvus (*NA* 9.12.10), and two phalaeceans (19.13.5) and a scazon (9.12.12) by Cinna. Charisius (*Gramm.* 128.19 B.) refers, with the equally generic *in carminibus*, to a passage in elegiac meter of Calvus. Catullus, who for Martial is the canonical epigrammatist, was also remembered as *lyricus*

(*Jer. Ab Abr.* 150 and cf. *Ep.* 53.8.17), and, as we have seen, as the author of iambics. There is no reason to believe that any of the above qualifications stem from the poets themselves, for whom the genre status of this production seems to have been highly fluid.

Catullus 1, the dedication, in phalaeceans, of a collection of unknown content and length, is reminiscent of the preface and perhaps also the epilogue (both in elegiacs) of Meleager's *Garland* (Mondin 2011), a prestigious synthesis of the Hellenistic epigrammatic output which, published in the years in which Catullus was born, certainly represented important reading for him. It is improbable that with this allusion Catullus intended to propose his "polymetrics" as part of the same genre represented, in Greek, by the *Garland*. All his minor poetry, polymetric and elegiac, is profoundly different from Hellenistic epigram, quite apart from the fundamental difference in meter and the fact that about one third of the "polymetrics" exceed 18 lines. Equally fundamental is that none of the polymetrics or epigrams have the inscriptional form (Laurens 2012, 235–68) that the epigrams of the *Garland* very often preserved to "signal" their membership of the genre: Catullus 3 and 101, though influenced by the funerary epigram, have the form of "oral" laments in funeral occasions; poem 4, though influenced by the votive epigram, is an "oral" illustration of a dedicatory ritual, as is no. 36, a bizarre parody of a dedicatory ritual. Precisely these poems, the least distant from the inscriptional form, though impossible to imagine carved in stone, are among the "polymetrics" (except for 101), and in Catullus the allusions to Hellenistic epigrams are much more frequent in the "polymetrics" than in the "epigrams" (Reitzenstein 1907, 101–2; Ross 1969, 153). Moreover, among both the polymetrics and the epigrams there are personally aggressive, even violent poems, with scathing and obscene expressions directed at figures in the poet's world and at eminent political personalities of the age: the ancient Greek iambic tradition is interwoven here with traditional Roman practices (various remnants have survived) of politically polemical denigratory verse, while in the Greek epigram references to political debate are rare and almost never invective. Another great difference is that the experiences of a presumed autobiographical "I" dominate the entire collection, with a profound emotional involvement on the part of the subject, especially in the love poetry. In this, both in the "polymetrics" and in the "epigrams," though there are soft and even playful notes with affinities in Hellenistic poetry, intense expression is given to a genuine personal tragedy. Nothing equally lacerating can be found in Greek epigram: in this Catullus draws on, and explicitly refers to (51), the archaic Greek lyric tradition. Like all the major Latin poets, Catullus felt free to rework various Greek traditions, ancient and recent, in an original fashion. But the panorama of

Hellenistic poetry he must have been familiar with, and which was undoubtedly the crucial point of reference in this re-elaboration, would have been different from ours. Epigram must have presented, besides the exclusively elegiac mode attested by the Milan papyrus of Posidippus, greater scope for metrical variation than what we can find in the extant material of Meleager's *Garland*. And he must have known a variety of iambic, elegiac, and lyric minor poetry, produced between the third and first century BCE, that we can only glimpse thanks to indirect sources and papyrus remains. In the remains of Callimachus' *Iambi* we can discern an instance of a collection varying in meter, theme, and length, from which Catullus may have taken ideas but not a genre model. If we knew the *Παίγνια* of Philitas (a title similar to the Latin *nugae* used by Catullus to describe his poems), who was also an epigrammatist, and other analogous Greek collections (Gutzwiller 1998, 17–19), we would probably be able to find in them significant affinities with Catullus' short poems as a whole.

Catullus' short poems are highly original heirs not only of Greek traditions, but Latin ones as well: Lucilian satire, comedy, and an earlier Latin tradition of epigrams (Morelli 2000), which, as far as we can know it, appears very meager. The funerary metrical epigraphs, initially quite independent from the Greek tradition also because of the meter (Saturnian), later adopted Greek meters and themes. The Latin literary epigram began with Ennius, for whom all we have are some extremely brief inscriptional epigrams, solemn and monumental, in elegiac couplets. There was continuity of the inscriptional type in the purported self-epitaphs of Naevius, Plautus, and Pacuvius, of uncertain authorship and with an evident Hellenistic influence, and in Varro's lost epigrams about illustrious men. Lucilius had produced some parodic versions of the funerary epigrams. Politically and personally aggressive verse circulated continually in Rome from the time of Naevius through to late antiquity, often referred to as *epigrammata*, at least from the second century CE onwards, whether in elegiac couplets or in another meter. Around 100 BCE, erotic Latin poems in elegiac meter modeled on the Hellenistic epigram were written in refined aristocratic circles frequented also by Greek epigrammatists (Cameron 1993, 51–56; Morelli 2000): softly sentimental works, they were overlaid by expressive effects and conceits.

Catullus was the first artistic figure of great force and temperament to concentrate his efforts on writing short poems in meters of various kind. In his experimental, non-systematic output, in which different traditions, Greek and Latin, engaged with each other, the Augustan poets found important points of reference for their “regular” collections of iambic, lyric, and elegiac poetry. Martial was not the first to see in the “minor” production of Catullus the point of reference for a “regular” Latin epigram: he regarded himself as

the coherent heir of a tradition continued, after Catullus, by Domitius Marsus and Albinovanus Pedo in the Augustan age and by Gaetulicus in the Tiberian age. Only for Marsus do a few epigrams and fragments remain, both on funerary themes and of an aggressive or playful kind. The bringing together of poems in elegiacs and other Catullian meters into a single collection is not attested for Marsus, for whom we only have elegiac remnants (see Henriksén in this volume), but it is present in the pseudo-Vergilian *Catalepton*, in all likelihood compiled sometimes in the first century CE, and then in the *Priapea*, a monothematic collection probably already influenced by Martial (Citroni 2008; cf. O'Connor in this volume). The relative regularity in the mix of Catullian meters that can be found in these collections and in Martial (and perhaps already present in the predecessors he cites?), did not create a stable tradition: the *poetae novelli* of the second century CE experimented with a bolder polymetry in collections whose contours are unknown. The strong revival of the epigram from the fourth century CE onwards produced poems that conformed to the various typical modes of Greek epigram (funerary, votive, sympotic, erotic, scopic, gnomic, ecphrastic, didactic, religious, riddling, anecdotal, etc.), together with comic-satiric or autobiographical poems modeled on Martial, and other mixed forms in which the epigram is hard to distinguish from brief compositions collected, together with other more extensive ones, under titles such as *eclogae*, or *epistulae*, continuing the morphological liberty that the genre had for Pliny. Among the various pieces, of indistinct genre, collected in his *Silvae*, Statius identified two of them (both in hexameters, and both quite long: 77 and 37 lines respectively) as “epigramma-like” (2, *praef. epigrammatis loco scriptos*). Martial's attempt to give Latin epigram a canonical regularity, perhaps influenced by the relative formal regularity of Greek epigram, did not become established, though it did remain a model in Luxorius (sixth century CE). Yet Martial had had to engage not only with the more indefinite idea of the genre as attested by Pliny, but also with the “purist” view of those who, evidently considering the Greek model to be normative, did not admit epigrams not written in elegiac meter, or which were long (as they quite often are in Martial: data in Scherf 2001 and cf. Morelli 2008), or too aggressive and obscene. Martial answered these criticisms by claiming his epigram conformed to the Latin tradition (1, *praef.*, 2.77, 6.65).

Unlike Catullus, Martial (as Marsus had before him) wrote a number of funerary and votive epigrams, in keeping with the original nature of the genre, and a great many celebrative epigrams, often solemn in character: this was a Greek typology, practiced in Rome by Ennius, which reappeared in Marsus. He wrote some moralistic-edifying epigrams. Similar to Catullus is the constant presence of the authorial “I,” the prominence of literary

polemics, and of the playful and convivial dimension, while there is not much love poetry. One glaring characteristic is the marked presence of comic-satiric epigrams, less frequent in the Hellenistic output, which Greek poets active in Rome at the time of Nero had practiced by hitting out at very abstract and impersonal physical types and character traits. Martial, who was familiar with and in part imitated this Greek production, transformed it into a very lively criticism of morals, feeding on the Latin traditions of satire and comedy in the inventive boldness of his realistic representations and grotesque deformations of behavior, and in the freedom of his language.

The Greek and then Latin epigrammatic tradition had gradually developed a fondness for pointed endings, accentuating the expressive efficacy of the short form. This tendency ended up combining with post-Ciceronian rhetoric's taste for incisive *sententiae* at the end of an argumentative section (Barwick 1959). Martial achieved particularly dazzling results with his endings, above all but not only, his comic-realistic ones, in which the often unexpected final point denounced contradictions and paradoxes in social behavior, encapsulating the meaning of the whole poem. Only part of his work, albeit an important one, displays this characteristic, but it has particularly struck readers in every age: Martial has often been associated with just this aspect of his art, which, with an obvious distortion of historic reality, has been considered emblematic not only of his output but of the entire literary genre. It is above all due to Martial's prestige that an ingenious ending has often been considered an essential feature of the epigram, and that the term "epigram" in modern languages conveys above all the idea of a polemical and witty point.

1.4 Modern Theories

All the ancient and modern poetic forms assimilable to the ones featuring in the literary story outlined here can legitimately be defined as "epigrams," insofar as they are assimilable to poetic forms described as such by their authors or audiences during the course of Greek and Roman antiquity, to which modern culture has itself referred in seeking to identify the genre.

The rebirth and new life of the epigram in humanistic Latin literature and in different European literatures was accompanied by assiduous reflection on the nature of the genre. Scores of treatises were written about epigram between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (Hutton 1935, 59–72; Nowicki 1974; Weisz 1979, 26–43; Lausberg 1982, 78–101; Hess 1989, 30–59), testifying to the importance attributed to the genre and the persistent difficulty in defining a unitary identity, precisely because of the

non-unitary nature of the ancient tradition that has always been taken as a point of reference.

Ancient theorizations offered no foundations: antiquity produced many treatises, almost all lost, on various genres, but for the epigram, always regarded as marginal, we only know of the treatise of Neoptolemus, also lost. In Greek authors all we can find are some statements associating the genre with brevity (Lausberg 1982, 29–63). As we saw, Martial, on the basis of the Latin tradition deriving from Catullus, affirmed the legitimacy of epigrams that are not brief and are in meter other than elegiac; at the same time he regarded comicality, aggressiveness, and obscenity as not only legitimate but necessary, not in every epigram of course, but at least in part of an epigrammatic collection (1.35). Martial (4.23) seems to distinguish, within a unitary genre presided over by the same Muse (Thalia), between a Greek tradition, typified by Callimachus and characterized by *lepos* (“grace”), and a Latin tradition (for which we know he considered Catullus to be the canonical author) characterized by *sal* (“pungent spirit”). A similar distinction can probably also be discerned in the terms chosen by Pliny to characterize respectively Greek epigrams (cf. 4.3.4; 4.18) and minor Latin poems (cf. 7.9.9 *carmen ... argutum et breve*, “a short and clever poem”) written by his friends (Citroni 2004). It is certainly under the influence of Martial’s epigram, and his characteristic ingenious endings, that Fronto (*Ep.* 215.18–9, not known before the nineteenth century) affirms: “in epigrams the final lines must have a bright element” (*novissimos in epigrammatis versus habere oportet aliquid luminis*). In the fifth century CE Sidonius singled out *acumen* as the characteristic of the epigram.

The treatise writers of the sixteenth century (Robortello, Sebillet, Minturno, and others) often drew on these concepts and this terminology, singling out brevity, charm (*lepor*, *venustas*), and wit (*sal*, *acumen*) as unifying features of the genre, irrespective of its various manifestations.

Of crucial importance, and a lasting influence on later treatises and on the notion of the epigram in modern culture, was the chapter “Epigrammata” in the *Poetices libri* of Iulius Caesar Scaliger (1561), who applied a criterion of rhetorical, logic-based analysis to the genre. For Scaliger, the epigram is a *poema breve*, of which there are two types: a simple kind, describing a thing, person, or fact (*cum simplici cuiuspiam rei vel personae vel facti indicatione*); and a complex one, which deduces something else from that exposition on the basis of logical operators: “greater, lesser, equal, different, opposite” (*alia vero composita sunt, quae deducunt ex propositis aliud quiddam, idque aut maius aut minus aut aequale aut diversum aut contrarium*). It has two *virtutes peculiare*s, the yardsticks for measuring an epigram’s value: *brevitas*

and *argutia*. *Argutia* is *anima ac quasi forma* (“the soul and, as it were, the shape”) of the epigram. This structure (simple or complex) and these two *virtutes* are the genre’s unifying traits. Apart from this, it admits all themes, meters, tones, and styles. Scaliger gives a few Greek examples, of the inscriptional kind, of the simple epigram. The other examples are all from Catullus and Martial, the latter being considered superior in *argutia*, while the Catullian epigram is described as *mollis* (“gentle”), *tener* (“tender”), *languidus* (“delicate”), *suavis* (“charming”).

Many treatise writers later developed this approach, recognizing as an inherent property of the epigram a structure that could be interpreted according to Scaliger’s logical categories, and also to the very sophisticated ones adopted by ancient rhetoric, especially by Cicero and Quintilian, for the analysis and construction of comic effects in oratory (Citroni 2014). The most complete form of epigram seemed to be the complex one: Scaliger’s “deductive” epigram was defined as an “enthymeme” (a syllogism lacking one of the two premises, pertaining to rhetoric): the epigram was seen as the expression of an intellectualistic capacity to create witty and ingenious effects in a comic dimension or also, to a lesser degree, in a serious dimension (Cicero and Quintilian also taught that the procedure for wit is the same in both dimensions). The chief model of this ideal epigram was Martial, while the Greek epigram provided an alternative model of a delicate, sentimental epigram with a simple structure and little wit (Hutton 1946, 33–78); this was associated, in a singularly forced manner, also with the minor poetry of Catullus, whom Martial drew on for his comic verve. But it was also clearly forced to ignore the significant presence of comic elements and wit in Greek epigram, especially in the early imperial age, just as it was to reduce all of Martial’s work to an intellectualistic comicality obtained by constructing his poems on the basis of logical procedures (antitheses, paradoxes, plays on words), the mechanism of which is revealed in the striking conclusion, ignoring his mastery in depicting comic and parodic portraits, or his many sentimental, moral, and celebratory pieces.

The contrast of these models, though the fruit of a strained, non-historical interpretation, did, as we have seen, have some foundation in Martial’s own vision of the Latin tradition of the genre compared to the Greek one, was suggested by Scaliger’s examples, and was for a long time a significant point of reference for epigrammatists. The Martialian model prevailed above all in the seventeenth century, when Martial was taken as a model of Baroque *agudeza*.

Theorists, like poets, faced the problem of defining epigram not only in relation to other forms of ancient minor poetry, but also to the many

flourishing types of short poetry inherited from the Middle Ages: sonnets, madrigals, strambotti, quatrains, dizains, et cetera. The sonnet in particular, which tended to have a dense ending, sometimes with a sophisticated conceit, was often considered the modern form of epigram. But in distinguishing the field of the sonnet from that of modern epigram, the latter, also due to the role of *argutia* in the Latin tradition and to Martial's standing, was chiefly cast as light, playful, and occasional (Boileau defined the epigram as "just a witty remark adorned with two rhymes"), while the sonnet was deemed to be the sphere for serious and sentimental poetry (Hutton 1946, 42–44).

The contrast between the two models reached a highpoint in late eighteenth-century Germany, in the types of epigram propounded respectively by Lessing and Herder (Oswald 2014, 97–114). For Lessing the nature of the genre lay in its name: the literary epigram, insofar as it is an "inscription" without a physical monument, must always have two parts. The first, descriptive part, replaces the monument and generates a sense of expectancy (*Erwartung*) in the reader. The second represents the real inscription, and satisfies the expectation by providing clarification (*Aufschluss*) to the meaning of the first part. For Lessing, then, as for Scaliger and his many followers, the identity of epigram is bound up with its structure, specifically a two-part structure where each element of the first part must be functional to the second, which with a concise formulation reveals its sense. Lessing talks about an "enthymematic structure," but rather than the logical dynamic of deduction stressed by Scaliger, he favors the psychological one of expectation-satisfaction. For Lessing it was Martial who created this perfect form of epigram. His interpretation of the genre, and the terms *Erwartung* and *Aufschluss* to define the two parts, were adopted widely by Martial scholars until the mid-twentieth century and beyond, even though it entailed a rigidly intellectualistic vision of his art and of the entire genre (Citroni 1969). Herder proposed a more flexible and less intellectualistic model, based on the tradition of Greek epigram: epigram is not a concept preceded by adequate preliminary preparation, but first and foremost the representation of an object, fact, or sentiment. Herder also thought a two-part division to be typical of epigram, but rightly reaffirmed the full artistic autonomy of the first part, while the second was seen as being a clarification of the point of view from which the fact, object, or sentiment is represented. Herder openly declared his lack of fondness for Martial and his preference for Greek epigram, though he subsequently wrote a sophisticated "ecumenical" epigram proposing the coexistence of the two models: a garden where lovely, delicate flowers live alongside stinging bees (Hess 1989, 57).

1.5 Towards an Identikit

The diversity of the traditions and formal typologies that converge in the genre makes it impossible to reach a unitary definition. Overly broad definitions fail to characterize it, while distinguishing ones cover only part of the production traditionally recognized as falling within the genre, usually arbitrarily favoring the model of the two-part epigram with a final comic-witty point, despite the fact that it does not fit the majority of cases, not even in the work of Martial.

Attempts to pick out a series of features deemed necessary for a poem to be defined as an epigram (e.g., Hess 1989) have not yielded convincing results either. On the contrary, I believe there is no feature which is either necessary or sufficient, as such, to make a poem an epigram. But a number of qualities can be indicated which, given their frequent presence in at least some of the different types of poem traditionally defined as epigrams, can prompt us to define a poem as one, especially if they do not appear in isolation, but together with others.

Below is a brief and by no means exhaustive list of such features.

Brevity: stems from the objective spatial limits of the inscription, and is lent value in various ways by poets as a specific expressive resource of the genre (Lausberg 1982, 20–29): the Hellenistic poets found in the brief form the most suitable locus for refined elegance and intimacy, but brevity is also an artistic challenge to achieve expressive concentration, and is often a desirable or necessary quality of many forms of comic expression, or, vice versa, of sapiential forms (proverbs, apophthegms, oracles, etc.) present in various kinds of epigrams. It is the genre's most characteristic quality: long epigrams do exist, especially in the Latin and in the modern tradition, but they are always felt to be exceptions, recognizable as belonging to the genre only if they are included by the author or anthologist in collections of epigrams.

Presence of inscriptional features, in particular "deictics": this feature is strongly characterizing, and can be a sufficient condition for identifying an epigram, though limited, of course, to types with inscriptional origin.

Elegiac meter: this is widely prevalent, and characterizing, but not exclusive.

Expressive concentration: deriving from brevity, but not necessarily. Ancient and modern poets and theorists are well aware that it is possible to be "too long" even in the space of a couplet.

Two-part structure, especially with a pointed twist in the tail, preferably obtained by antitheses, parallelisms, plays on words, et cetera; above all in a comic and witty key, but sometimes on a serious note as well: it cannot be regarded as necessary, but if present strongly characterizes the genre.

Sense of closure: even in the absence of a striking conclusion, recent criticism in particular has stressed the epigram's characteristic of being a concluded discourse, while lyric and elegy often value an "open" conclusion. This feature could be traced back to the epigram's original purpose of assigning a certain meaning for all time to an object with a text enclosed in an objectively delimited space. The fundamental study of Smith (1968, 196–98) about the formal and content-based elements giving a sense of closure to a literary text, considers the epigram to be the emblematic example of a closed text.

Connection with an occasion: it is often said that the literary epigram, though the link with a monument has been lost, typically refers to something specific. Scaliger spoke of the "exposition of a thing, or a person, or a fact." This still seems to limit the possibilities of an epigram. Herder, and others before him, extended the concept of occasion to a feeling or even a myth, which may appear too indeterminate. The reference to a specific situation is in reality frequent in lyric (including the modern one) and elegy too, but it can be admitted that occasion has a more marked presence in the epigram, and is less readily absorbed by the subjective reaction of the poet to it.

Inclusion in a collection of epigrams: this is proof that the poem was considered by the author or anthologist as belonging to the genre.

The author's profession of limited commitment: expressions of modesty on the part of the author are a topical and recurrent feature of many genres, but almost only those authors who write epigrams link their professed limited artistic commitment to the chosen genre, to which a lower status is ascribed due to its organic brevity and occasional nature. Not the least reason for the role assumed by Martial as the canonical author of the genre in the eyes of many moderns is the fact that he provocatively presented the presumed lesser-ness of the genre as being superior to greater genres in its capacity to represent the variety and complexity of concrete human life.

NOTE

1. On Catullus as an "epigrammatist," see further Holzberg in this volume (not always agreeing with what is said about Catullus below).

REFERENCES

- Argentieri, Lorenzo. 1998. "Epigramma e libro: morfologia delle raccolte epigrammatiche premeleagree." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 121: 1–20.
- Barwick, Karl. 1959. *Martial und die Zeitgenössische Rhetorik*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.

- Bing, Peter. 2009. *The Scroll and the Marble: Studies in Reading and Reception in Hellenistic Poetry*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Bing, Peter, and Jon Steffen Bruss. 2007. "Introduction." In *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram: Down to Philip*, edited by Peter Bing and Jon Steffen Bruss, 1–26. Leiden-Boston: Brill.
- Bowie, Ewen. 2007. "From Archaic Elegy to Hellenistic Symptotic Epigram?" In *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram: Down to Philip*, edited by Peter Bing and Jon Steffen Bruss, 95–112. Leiden-Boston: Brill.
- Burzachechi, Mario. 1962. "Oggetti parlanti nelle epigrafi greche." *Epigraphica*, 24: 3–54.
- Cameron, Alan. 1993. *The Greek Anthology: From Meleager to Planudes*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Cameron, Alan. 1995. *Callimachus and His Critics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cassio, Albio Cesare. 1994. "I distici del *polyandron* di Ambracia e l'io anonimo nell'epigramma greco." *Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici*, 33: 101–17.
- Citroni, Mario. 1969. "La teoria lessinghiana dell'epigramma e le interpretazioni moderne di Marziale." *Maia*, 21: 215–43.
- Citroni, Mario. 2004. "Martial, Pline le Jeune et l'identité du genre de l'épigramme latine." *Dictynna*, 1 (<https://journals.openedition.org/dictynna/172>).
- Citroni, Mario. 2008. "Les proèmes des Priapées et le problème de la datation du recueil." In *Les vers du plus nul des poètes...: nouvelles recherches sur les Priapées*, edited by Frédérique Biville, Emmanuel Plantade, and Daniel Vallat, 35–51. Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée.
- Citroni, Mario. 2014. "Marziale e la logica del comico." In *Rideamus igitur: Humour in Latin Literature*, edited by Maria Voutsinou-Kikilia, Andreas N. Michailopoulos, and Sophia Papaioannou, 214–26. Athens: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (http://users.uoa.gr/~amichalop/index_htm_files/Rideamus%20igitur.pdf).
- Crusius, Otto. 1905. "Elegie." *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 5.2, cols. 2260–307.
- Dale, Alexander. 2010. "Lyric Epigrams in Meleager's *Garland*, the *Anthologia Palatina*, and the *Anthologia Planudea*." *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 50: 193–213.
- Fantuzzi, M. 2004. Chapters in Fantuzzi, Marco, and Richard Hunter, *Tradition and Innovation in Hellenistic Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gentili, Bruno. 1968. "Epigramma ed elegia." In *L'épigramme grecque: sept exposés suivis de discussions*, edited by Antony Erich Raubitschek et al., 37–90. Vandœuvres-Geneva: Fondation Hardt.
- Gow, Andrew S. F., and Denys L. Page. 1968. *The Greek Anthology: The Garland of Philip*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gutzwiller, Kathryn J. 1998. *Poetic Garlands. Hellenistic Epigrams in Context*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hess, Peter. 1989. *Epigramm*. Stuttgart: Metzler.

- Hutton, James. 1935. *The Greek Anthology in Italy to the Year 1800*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Hutton, James. 1946. *The Greek Anthology in France and in the Latin Writers of the Netherlands to the Year 1800*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Laurens, Pierre. 2012. *L'abeille dans l'ambre: célébration de l'épigramme de l'époque alexandrine à la fin de la Renaissance*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Lausberg, Marion. 1982. *Das Einzeldistichon: Studien zum antiken Epigramm*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.
- Lauxtermann, Marc D. 1998. "What Is an Epideictic Epigram?" *Mnemosyne*, 51: 525–37.
- Meyer, Doris. 2005. *Inszeniertes Lesevergnügen: das inschriftliche Epigramm und seine Rezeption bei Kallimachos*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Mondin, Luca. 2011. "Catullo 1 e Meleagro." In *Tanti affetti in tal momento: Studi in onore di Giovanna Garbarino*, edited by Andrea Balbo, Federica Bessone, and Ermanno Malaspina, 659–72. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.
- Morelli, Alfredo Mario. 2000. *L'epigramma latino prima di Catullo*. Cassino: Edizioni dell'Università di Cassino.
- Morelli, Alfredo Mario, ed. 2008. *Epigramma longum: da Marziale alla tarda antichità*. Cassino: Edizioni dell'Università di Cassino.
- Nowicki, Jürgen. 1974. *Die Epigrammtheorie in Spanien vom 16. Bis 18 Jahrhundert: Eine Vorarbeit zur Geschichte der Epigrammatik*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Oswald, Stephan. 2014. *Früchte einer grossen Stadt: Goethes "Venezianische Epigramme"*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Puelma, Mario. 1997. "Epigramma: osservazioni sulla storia di un termine greco-latino." *Maia*, 49: 189–213.
- Reitzenstein, Richard. 1893. *Epigramm und Skolion: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der alexandrinischen Dichtung*. Giessen: J. Rickersche Buchhandlung.
- Reitzenstein, Richard. 1907. "Epigramm." *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 6.1, cols. 71–111.
- Ross, David O. 1969. *Style and Tradition in Catullus*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rossi, Laura. 2002. "Composition and Reception in AP 9.1–583: *aphegheseis*, *epideixeis*, and *progymnasmata*." In *Hellenistic Epigrams*, edited by M. Annette Harder, Remco F. Regtuit, and Gerry C. Wakker, 151–74. Leuven: Peeters.
- Santin, Eleonora. 2009. *Autori di epigrammi sepolcrali greci su pietra: firme di poeti occasionali e professionisti*. Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei.
- Scherf, Johannes. 2001. *Untersuchungen zur Buchgestaltung Martials*. Munich: K. G. Saur.
- Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. 1968. *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tueller, Michael A. 2008. *Look Who's Talking: Innovations in Voice and Identity in Hellenistic Epigram*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Weisz, Jutta. 1979. *Das deutsche Epigramm des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart: Metzler.
- West, Martin L. 1974. *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*. Berlin: De Gruyter.