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P. CAIR. ZEN. 4.59532 –
TWO EPITAPHS FOR A HUNTING DOG CALLED TAURON

TIINA PUROLA

Ἴνδὸν ὄδ' ἀπύει τύμβος Ταύρωνα θανόντα
κείσθαι, ὁ δὲ κτείνας πρόσθεν ἐπεῖδ' Ἀΐδαν
θῆρ ἅπερ ἄντα δρακεῖν, συὸς ἢ ῥ' ἀπὸ τᾶς Καλυδῶνος
λείψανον, εὐκάρποις ἐμ πεδίοις τρέφετο
Ἄρσινόας ἀτίνακτον, ἀπ' αὐχένος ἀθρόα φρίσσω
λ]όχμαῖς καὶ γε[ν]ύων ἀφρὸν ἀμεργόμενος·
σὺν δὲ πεσῶν σκύλακος τόλμαι στήθη μὲν ἐτοίμως
ἠλόκις, οὐ μέλλων δ' αὐχέν' ἔθηκ' ἐπὶ γᾶν
δρα]ξάμενος γὰρ ὁμοῦ λοφιᾶι μέγαλοιο τένοντος
ο]ὺ πρ[ι]ν ἔμυσεν ὀδόντ' ἔσθ' ὑπέθηκ' Ἀΐδα.
.....] Ζή[νω]να πον[ων] ἀδίδακτα κυναγόν,
καὶ κατὰ γᾶς τύμβῳ τὰν χάριν ἠργάσατο.

ἄλλο
σκύλαξ ὁ τύμβῳ τῷδ' ὑπ' ἐκτερισμένος
Ταύρων, ἐπ' αὐθένταισιν οὐκ ἀμήχανος·
κάπρω γὰρ ὡς συνῆλθεν ἀντίαν ἔριν,
ὁ μὲν τις ὡς ἄπλατος οἰδήσας γένυν
στήθος κατηλόκισε λευκαίνων ἀφρῶ·
ὁ δ' ἀμφὶ νώτῳ δισσὸν ἐμβαλὼν ἴχνος
ἐδράξατο φρίσσοντος ἐκ στέρνων μέσων
καὶ γᾶ συνεσπείρασεν· Ἀΐδα δὲ δοὺς
τὸν αὐτόχειρ' ἔθναισκεν, Ἴνδὸν ὡς νόμος.
σῶζων δὲ τὸν κυναγὸν ᾧ παρείπετο
Ζήνον' ἐλαφρᾶ τᾶδ' ὑπεστάλη κόνει.*

* The text has been printed as in the Supplementum Hellenisticum, no. 977.

The archive of Zenon is the largest and the best known documentary papyrus archive of the Hellenistic period and it has a tremendous value for studies on the social and economic history of early Ptolemaic Egypt.¹ The archive does also include a few literary papyri, of which P. Cair. Zen. 4.59532 contains two epigrams.² Both of these epigrams deal with the same subject, the death of a dog called Tauron who died defending his master Zenon against a wild boar. Both epigrams are relatively long, the first of them has 12 verses of elegiac metre, the other consists of 11 iambic lines. The epigrams are separated from each other with the heading ἄλλο. The papyrus is vertically folded and on the back side of the papyrus is the address: τῷ παρ' Ἀπολλωνίου Ζήνωνι.

The poems have been published several times in collections containing epigrams and literary papyri, but, strangely, the papyrus has very seldom been studied as a whole.³ In my opinion, however, what is interesting in this papyrus is the question whether the epigrams were really meant to be inscribed on stone, as generally believed. This rarely questioned hypothesis of the "grave stone" of Tauron has always puzzled me because, it is in fact most difficult to say whether a Hellenistic epigram known from a non-inscriptional source is really epigraphical or not. The difficulty is caused by the emergence of the new genre of epigram, the fictional epitaph. This problem of the epigrams of Tauron cannot be solved if the poems are separated from each other and if we do not ask why the papyrus was stored in the Zenon archive, or what is principally the relationship between literary and documentary texts in such documentary archives. The aim of this article is to put these epigrams into the context of the archive of Zenon, to compare

¹ The definition of an "archive" is not a simple matter and should perhaps be carefully reconsidered. In this article by an "archive" is meant papyri, which have been found in the same physical context and which can be linked together through one or more persons occurring in the papyri. Details of the Zenon Archive can be easily found for example from Pestman, *A Guide to the Zenon Archive*, Pap. Lugd.-Bat. 21 (1981)

² Editio princeps: P. Edgar 48, *ASAE* 19 (1920).

³ U. Wilcken, *Archiv* 6 (1919-20), 453-4; *SB III-IV* (1926) no. 6754; D.L. Page, *Greek Literary Papyri* (=GLP), Loeb, London 1942, no. 109; Peek, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften* (=GVI), Berlin, 1955, no. 1968; Pack, *The Greek and Latin Literary Texts from the Graeco-Roman Egypt*² (=Pack), Ann Arbor 1965, no 1761; Hengstl (ed.), *Griechische Papyri aus Ägypten*, München 1978 (Tusculum Bücherei), no. 98; Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* (=FGE), Cambridge, 1981, 456-8; *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (=SH) no. 977; I. Cazzaniga (*Eirene* 11 (1973) 71-89), for instance, has written an article on the papyrus but studies the elegiac epigram only.

the poems with epigraphical and literary epigrams of the early Hellenistic period and to find out if this approach confirms the assumption that Tauron's epitaphs are composed to be inscribed, or if, on the other hand, it becomes more probable that they represent the Alexandrian genre of fictional epitaph.

As I already said, the archive of Zenon is one of the most important sources for the early Ptolemaic Egypt. Zenon worked for the *dioiketes* Apollonios, and he was in charge of Apollonios' estate in Philadelphia (Fayum), and the archive consists mainly of the correspondence between these two men and of the documents concerning the organisation of the estate. The documents have been dated between the years 261 and 239 B.C. The literary texts are very few compared to the documentary ones: the number of the papyri in the archive published so far amount to more than 3000 and only thirteen of them are of literary nature, dealing either directly or indirectly with literature.⁴

In his article W. Clarysse discusses the interesting matter of literature in documentary archives.⁵ Concerning the Zenon archive he concludes that although the literary pieces give a vivid picture of the "cultural" interests of Zenon, they were not stored on purpose: "it is clear that these fragments drifted only accidentally into Zenon's papers."⁶ He also notes that Zenon no doubt had a personal library but that it is completely lost to us. About the library of Zenon Clarysse is definitely right, but I am not quite sure about the statement that the literary papyri in the archive are there only by chance. If we look at the literary pieces in the Zenon archive, we notice that two of them seem to be school exercises,⁷ and W. Pestman in his typological survey suggests that at least P. Cair. Zen. 4.59535 might have been written by Epharmostus, the younger brother of Zenon. Among the "literary" papyri there is also a farming calendar written by Zenon himself⁸ and a list of strange words and phrases⁹ of which the exact meaning and contents, however, remain unsolved. The remaining literary texts in the archive of

⁴ For a typological survey of the Zenon papyri, see W. Pestman, *A Guide to the Zenon Archive*, Pap. Lugd.-Bat. 21a.

⁵ W. Clarysse, *Literary papyri in documentary "archives"*, *Studia Hellenistica* 27 (1983) 43-62.

⁶ W. Clarysse, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁷ P. Cair. Zen. 4.59533 and 59535.

⁸ P. Lugd.-Bat. 20.64.

⁹ P. Cair. Zen. 4.59534.

Zenon deal with literature only indirectly.¹⁰

Analyzing the reasons why literary texts have been preserved in the archives, W. Clarysse states that besides coincidentally, the texts might have, for example, been used as handbooks (and this might be the reason for saving the word list mentioned above). In my opinion, emotional reasons, too, could make one not to throw away a piece of a text which seems unimportant as such. In fact, the literary texts among official and personal documents might be something someone does not deliberately save, but hesitates to destroy, too. The school exercises of Epharmostus (if this is a correct assumption) might well have been something Zenon saved for emotional reasons, since he seems to have been most affected to his brother. The same is true with the text Zenon wrote himself: he might have been too shy to put it into his library but could not throw it away, either.¹¹

What about the epigrams for Tauron? As I mentioned in the beginning of this article the papyrus was folded, which could indicate that it was deliberately saved. Most scholars agree that the epigrams of Tauron were ordered from some Alexandrian poet on the occasion of Tauron's death during Zenon's hunting trip and that the poems were really meant for inscription.¹² Those who have suggested that the epigrams are literary

¹⁰ P. Col. Zen. 2.60 (a fragment of a letter concerning schoolbooks, probably for Epharmostus), P.Cair. Zen. 4.59651 (on the verso of a "hypomnema" a quotation of the play "Myrmidon" by Aeschylus), P.Cair. Zen. 4.59588 (a mention about some books copied in Zenon's office), P.Cair. Zen. 4.59603 (a fragment of a letter concerning a lecture on Homer which was going to be held in Philadelphia) and P. Mich. Zen. 77 (a letter containing iambic verses among prose. W. Clarysse mentions that Edgar identifies the author of this letter with the author of the epigrams on P.Cair. Zen. 4.59532. This, however, is not quite correct: having initially suggested the identification Edgar concludes: "There remains little likelihood that they were composed by the same author" (P. Mich. Zen. p. 156)). There are still three more papyri, namely P. Lugd.-Bat. 20. 14, 15, and 16, which all contain literary fragments. These texts, however, according to the typology of the archive of Zenon by Pestman, do not belong with certainty to the archive.

¹¹ Of course, there is always the possibility that the literary papyri were put in the archive simply to wait for the transportation to the cartonnage-factory or to be otherwise re-used (most of the papyri I have referred to here do have some blank space). However, in my opinion this explanation is somewhat too simple: Would an archive of documents be the obvious place for waste-papyrus? But if so, the speculation for the reasons why literary texts have been preserved, for example, in the archive of Zenon will have been superfluous.

¹² For example, Page, FGE, p. 457; Gow - Page, HE II, p. 90; SH p. 490; P. M. Fraser,

"exercises" have argued that a dog dying for his master is a literary *topos* and that it is improbable that the area of Fayum was so dangerous in the 3rd century.¹³ These arguments are not very convincing as such, but we must also ask why the papyrus was saved, if the epigrams had been inscribed: after the poems had been inscribed the papyrus would have become useless. The easiest solution is that the epigrams were inscribed and the papyrus was sent to the archive to be reused, but as I observed in note 11, in my opinion the other possibilities are worth considering, too. It is possible that 1) only one of the epigrams was inscribed (both of the epigrams give the same information); or that 2) the epigrams come from the latest period of the archive and they simply never reached a stone; or that 3) Zenon had ordered poems from several poets and decided to inscribe an epigram other than one of these two. Since all the alternatives are thinkable there still remains the possibility that the epigrams are fictional: the epigrams could have been sent for Zenon attached to a private letter, without being meant to be inscribed, and that is why they have been found in the archive. But let us now turn to search for epigraphic evidence for epitaphs of dogs to see if there are parallels for the assumed grave monument of Tauron.

Animals are not uncommon in Greek literature and animals, also dogs, have been discussed in various monographs and articles.¹⁴ In the case of Tauron the work most referred to is the study by Herrlinger from the year 1930, which include metrical epitaphs for animals throughout the ancient world.¹⁵ The problem is that although Herrlinger, unlike many others, does separate the epigraphical material from the literary one, the epigraphical epigrams to which everyone after Herrlinger refers to, are of much later date

Ptolemaic Alexandria I, p. 611. M. Rostovtzeff, *A large estate in Egypt in the third century B.C.*, New York 1979 (reprint of the 1922 ed.), p. 112 goes even further: "Who knows that some fortunate excavator will perhaps find in Philadelphia the grave of the brave dog and it's epitaph on stone, not on paper."

¹³ Préaux, *L'économie royale des Lagides*, Bruxelles 1939, p. 201 and Gorteman, *CdE* 32 (1957) 116-118. I have not noticed that the existence of boars in Philadelphia would as such have been questioned. It should, however, be remembered that boars were not the most usual animals to be hunted in Egypt and the landscape in Arsinoites is not the typical one for boars.

¹⁴ For example, see S. Lilja, *Dogs in Ancient Greek Poetry*, *Comm. Hum. Litt.* 56, Helsinki 1976 with bibliography.

¹⁵ Herrlinger, *Totenklage um Tiere in der Antiken Dichtung*, *Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft* 8, 1930.

than the epigrams of Tauron: the earliest example of a metrical epitaph for a dog, GVI 309 (Mytilene) is not earlier than 1st century A.D., and other examples, GVI 691, 1365 and 192 are of even later date. On the other hand, I do not want to argue that it would be impossible that earlier epigrams for dogs or other animals existed: we know of relatively old inscriptions for race horses, and the latest finds in the Syntagma-square in Athens show that dogs were highly appreciated: the excavations have revealed in a cemetery, which contains tombs of Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods and among them there have been found graves for dogs and horses.¹⁶ The fact remains, however, that we do not really have epigraphical evidence for epigrams for animals from the Ptolemaic period.¹⁷ Somewhat surprisingly there are practically no epigrams on animals at all from Egypt where one above all would expect to find them. The only metrical inscription on an animal is for a cobra, of which the length of the poem is notable: the cobra-epitaph contains 12 lines, as is also the case in the first one of the epigrams for Tauron.¹⁸

Compared to the epigraphical evidence we do have many epigrams on animals in the *Anthologia Palatina*, AP 7,189-216 consists entirely of such poems. A dog can be found in only one epigram in this group, AP 7,211 by Tymnes where the name of the dog is Tauros (!). A dog is presented also by a later poet, Antipater of Thessalonica in his epigram AP 9,417. Anyte of Tegea who was among the first to compose epigrams on animals has written at least one for a dog (= HE Anyte X) and so has "Simonides" (= FGE Simonides LXIX).¹⁹ From an epigram preserved on a papyrus we know of still one more dog, but the fragment is too small for any conclusions on the nature of the epigram.²⁰ The majority of the animal epigrams in the AP are on animals other than dogs, for example on birds or dolphins, and the very

¹⁶ For the epigrams for race horses see, FGE "Anacreon" VI (= AP 6,135) 6th cent B.C. and commentary, FGE, p. 401-02. For the Syntagma square excavations, see the newspaper "Kathimerini" 12.5. 1994.

¹⁷ The same is true of the inscriptions containing two epigrams: For example Peek, *Griechische Grabgedichte* (=GG) lists many "Parallelgedichte", GG 457 and 265 are even separated with the heading ἄλλο, but they are both dated to the late antiquity.

¹⁸ Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine*, Paris 1969. It is also true, of course, that animal cults were an Egyptian phenomenon and that erecting grave monuments with epigrams was part of the Greek culture.

¹⁹ The poem by Simonides is generally considered as Hellenistic, Page FGE, p. 291.

²⁰ The text can be found in SH, number 986.

favorite subjects of Hellenistic animal epigrams are different kinds of grasshoppers. This raises the question of fictionality in animal epigrams, *i.e.* it seems unlikely that such epigrams could have been written for real inscriptions. A.S.F. Gow and D.L. Page have presented a fascinating theory about these epigrams, suggesting that they could have been meant to be inscribed on a cheaper material than marble and that they were perhaps written for children.²¹ This is a very tempting idea, but most of the epigrams on animals are very stereotypical and clearly imitate each other and it is hard to imagine that they are anything else than literary creations. If we compare the epigrams for Tauron with the epigrams in the AP, it becomes clear that the theme is exactly the kind which would have fascinated a Hellenistic epigrammatist.

If we take a closer look at the language and the style of the Tauron epigrams we can immediately say that they resemble more the epigrams in the *Anthologia Palatina* than the epigraphical epigrams in general. In fact the style is very much the usual learned Hellenistic and their syntax is somewhat complicated as is usual in Alexandrian epigrams. It is interesting to note that the language of the epigrams is a mixture of epigraphical formulas and Hellenistic allusions to mythology. For example, the first couplet of the first poem could very well be from an inscription but, at the same time, it contains the verb ἀπύω, which we do not know from the inscriptional epigrams and is rare in the AP as well (it is attested only in AP 9,99 and 16,17). It is also worth noting that although the first poem gives an impression of learned style (the complicated allusion to the Calydonian boar) it contains also somewhat clumsy repetition (the words τύμβος and Ἀίδης occur twice). As far the latter epigram is concerned, we can say that it is more intensive than the first one, but its phraseology is also unusual for inscriptions (for example the expression ἐπ' αὐθένταισιν οὐκ ἀμήχανος and the word αὐτοχεῖρ are very strange). The most typical epigraphical expression of the second epigram occurs in the last verse, but even here it is somewhat suspect: the idiomatic adjective with κόνις is κούφη, but here it is used with the word ἔλαφρή. But most important is that the poems seem to be written in a manner of Hellenistic imitation: the second epigram is a skilful variation of the first one. They have several words in common without giving the impression of being exactly alike and this is what makes them more literary than inscriptional: they could very well be written for an

²¹ Gow-Page HE II, p. 91.

anthology of epigrams, which in the 3rd century seem to have been rather common.

To conclude, there seems to be almost no evidence at all for the inscriptional nature of these epitaphs of Tauron: we do not know such epigrams for dogs on stone during the early Hellenistic period and the language is not typical of the early Hellenistic epigraphical epigrams, either. It is true, on one hand, that the incident of the dog's death is very realistically described, but realism is a distinctive feature in all the fictional epitaphs. It is also to be noted that the epigram AP 15,51 by Archias, which seems to be epideictic as it describes a sculpture representing the Calydonian boar, contains much the same phraseology as the epigrams of Tauron. This may indicate that the theme was common in Hellenistic epigrams, because Archias often writes variations of early Hellenistic themes. It is also possible that the incident described in the epigrams really happened. In this case it might be that the poet took part to the hunting and was touched by the courage of Tauron and sent a couple of epigrams to Zenon as consolation. But this, of course, is only speculation and cannot be confirmed in any way.

I hope to have been able to show that at least certain doubts should be raised about the usual statement on the epigraphical nature of Tauron's epitaphs and epigrams known from papyri in general, because the Hellenistic epigrammatists were excellent in imitating reality if they wanted to. Thus, realism in a description of a certain event is no reason alone for assuming that an epigram was inscribed on stone.

University of Helsinki