

A small sub-genre of Greek grave inscriptions dramatizes a husband and wife's final farewell. These poems adhere to a general template in which a husband apostrophizes his recently deceased wife, and she responds from Hades in an address that marks her last communication with the living. These 'goodbye'-scenes are staged at the tombstone, and the literary space of the tombstone itself provides a means for inventing, facilitating and commemorating the couple's parting words. In this paper I argue that this small class of inscribed epigrams contains some of the strongest witnesses to the contact between inscribed Greek sepulchral epigram and Latin elegy. As a case study, I focus on the particularly rich SGO I 01/01/07, a 2-1st c. BC Cnidian epitaph for a woman named Atthis, arranged as a dialogue between herself and her husband Theios.

Themes in Atthis' epitaph are echoed with particular force in, for instance, Catullus' elegiac treatment of the death of his brother. On Catullus 68, R. Hunter (2006) remarks that 'the poet's laments for his brother... can be "heard" as Laodamia's laments for her husband,' and SGO I 01/01/07 offers a strong Greek comparandum, an inscribed manifestation of this very model of spousal lamentation. While this and other examples from the Catullan corpus reflect Roman interaction with certain Greek *topoi*, Propertius 4.11 (for example) appears to react to this tradition of sepulchral epigram more generally. This poem, styled as the epitaph for Cornelia, consists entirely in Cornelia's last instructions to her husband. Here Propertius, like the poet of Atthis' inscription, imagines the tomb as the medium of his wife's last goodbye, uttered not in the moments before her death but sometime after, from Hades.

The epitaph for Atthis – an epitaph that advertises deep and abiding affection between Atthis and her husband (and specifically Atthis' chastity) – attests to a relationship that was only ever hoped for in the world of Latin love elegy, a genre whose practitioners often imagined their own deaths and dictated their own epitaphs (cf. e.g. Tibullus 1.3, Propertius 1.7 and 1.17), or even the death of the *puella* (esp. Propertius 4.7). This paper uses the example of the Cnidian epigram – an epitaph roughly dated to an era that saw the anthologizing of epigram and the transmission of Greek literature to Rome, to argue that the tropes of elegy reflect a real engagement and reaction to more contemporary traditions of inscribed (and not only 'book'), Greek (and not only Latin) sepulchral poetry.