

What does Meleager mean when he calls the epigrams of Leonidas of Tarentum “the thick clusters of ivy of Leonidas” (*AP* 4.1.15: ἐν δὲ Λεωνίδεω θαλεροῦς κισσοῖο κορύμβους)? Meleager’s description of the epigrams of Leonidas is part of a poem that introduces his own anthology (Gutzwiller 1998, 279-80), and commentators have not offered a satisfactory explanation of it (Gigante 1971, 14-17). Gow and Page (1965, 307) have suggested that the ivy simply marks Leonidas as a “prolific epigrammatist,” on account of the sheer number of his epigrams that are included by the anthologizers. The great number of Leonidas’ epigrams in the *Greek Anthology* (second in number only to Meleager) is remarkable, and the “thick clusters” perhaps references this abundance, yet Meleager’s use of “ivy” to refer metaphorically to merely the number of poems would be unusual. Instead, it is more likely that the ivy metaphor references an aspect of Leonidas’ style or typical themes, as with plant species for other poets.

This paper begins by discussing the metaphorical quality of flowers or plants in Meleager’s preface to his *Garland*, how the plants are applied representatively to certain poets in the anthology, and how the plant species correspond to certain poetic styles or themes of the authors’ collections from which Meleager created his *Garland* (Gow-Page 1965, 593-96; Gutzwiller 1997, 170). Next, it analyzes the metaphorical application of ivy in several epigrams in the *Greek Anthology*, in order to show how ivy’s representational quality in the Hellenistic period regularly has a paradoxical effect, which plays on the classical representation of ivy as associated with tragedy. Ivy in these epigrams references both final stationary respite, i.e. death, and also a sense of movement, growth, or journeying, as well as reward for poetic contest (e.g. Callimachus *AP* 9.565; Euphorion *AP* 6.279; Leonidas *AP* 6.154). This paper then illustrates how the poems that present a poetic persona for Leonidas elicit the coordinating themes of wandering, death, and poetic fame. The autobiographical epitaph of Leonidas (*AP* 7.715) in particular represents death as the end of a journey, for which Leonidas claims to receive everlasting fame, and thus it is reasonable to understand poetic wandering as a principal theme in Leonidas’ collection (cf. Höschel 200, 343-44; Gutzwiller 1998, 108). Since the paradox of stationary death and wandering is clear in Leonidas’ collection then too, associations with ivy as representative of death, wandering, and poetic fame seem to be natural references to the principal themes in Leonidas’ epigrams that Meleager captures in the preface to his *Garland*.