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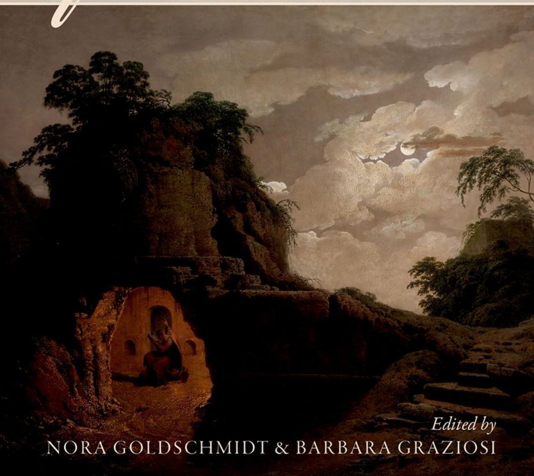
TOMBS OF THE ANCIENT *poets*

Between literary reception and material culture



Edited by
NORA GOLDSCHMIDT & BARBARA GRAZIOSI

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Between Literary Reception and Material Culture

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NORA GOLDSCHMIDT
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List of Abbreviations

AB	C. Austin and G. Bastianini, eds, *Posidippi Pellaei quae supersunt omnia* (Milan, 2002)
AP	*Palatine Anthology*
APl	*Planudean Anthology*
Bernabé	A. Bernabé, ed., *Poetae epici Graeci. Testimonia et fragmenta*, part II, 3 vols (Munich, 2004–7)
CEG	P. A. Hansen, ed., *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca* (New York, 1983–9)
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1863–)
DK	H. Diels and W. Kranz, eds, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edn, 3 vols (Berlin, 1951–2)
FGE	D. L. Page, ed., *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1981)
FGrHist	F. Jacoby, ed., *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Berlin, 1923–)
G-P	A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, eds, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1965)
G-P, *Garland*	A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, eds, *The Greek Anthology: The Garland of Philip and Some Contemporary Epigrams*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1968)
GV	W. Peek, ed., *Griechische Vers-Inschiften*, vol. 1: *Grab-Epigramme* (Berlin, 1955)
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*, 12 vols (Berlin, 1873–1981)
IGRR	R. Cagnat et al., eds, *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*, vols 1, 3–4 (Paris, 1911–27)
ILLRP	A. Degrassi, ed., *Inscriptiones Latinae liberae rei publicae*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Florence, 1963–5)
KA	R. Kassel and C. Austin, eds, *Poetae Comici Graeci* (Berlin, 1983–95)
LIMC	L. Kahil et al., eds, *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zurich, 1981–97)
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, eds, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 9th edn (Oxford, 1940; with revised supplement by P. G. W. Glare, 1996)
Pf.	R. Pfeiffer, ed., *Callimachus*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1962)
PIR^2	*Prosopographia Imperii Romani. Saec. I, II, III*, 7 vols, 2nd edn (Berlin, 2006)
PMG	D. L. Page, ed., *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford, 1962)

Powell	J. U. Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina. Reliquiae minores poetarum graecorum aetatis ptolemaicae, 323–146 A. C.* (Oxford, 1925)
P.Oxy.	*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (London, 1898–)
Reifferscheid	A. Reifferscheid, ed., *C. Suetoni Tranquilli praeter Caesarum libros reliquiae* (Leipzig, 1860)
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (Amsterdam, 1923–)
SGO	R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, eds, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten*, 5 vols (Munich, Stuttgart, and Leipzig, 1998–2004)
SH	H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons, eds, *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (Berlin, 1983)
SupplItal	G.L. Gregori and M. Mattei, eds, *Supplementa Italica. Imagines. Supplementi fotografici ai volumi italiani del CIL*, *Roma (CIL, VI)*, I. *Musei Capitolini* (Rome, 1999)
TrGF	B. Snell, R. Kannicht, and S. Radt, eds, *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*, 4 vols (Göttingen, 1971–85)
VSD	*Vita Donatiana e Vita Suetoniana desumpta*, in G. Brugnoli and F. Stok, eds, *Vitae Vergilianae antiquae* (Rome, 1997), 9–56
W	M. L. West, ed., *Iambi et elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Oxford, 1989)
Wendel	C. Wendel, ed., *Scholia in Apollonium Rhodium vetera* (Berlin, 1974)

Abbreviations of ancient authors and texts follow the Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th edn; titles of journals are abbreviated according to *L'Année philologique*.

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Introduction

Nora Goldschmidt and Barbara Graziosi

THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR

When he was 51, Virgil decided to retire to Greece and Asia for a three-year period with the single purpose of revising the *Aeneid*, so that he would then be free to devote the rest of his life to philosophy. But when, after embarking on his journey, he met Augustus in Athens, who was returning to Rome from the East, he decided not to stay away but, in fact, to return together with him. Virgil then caught a fever while he was touring the nearby town of Megara in the sweltering heat. He worsened his condition by not breaking up his journey, so that he was in a far more serious state when he put ashore at Brundisium. He died there within a few days, on the eleventh before the Kalends of October, in the consulship of Gnaeus Sentius and Quintus Lucretius. His remains were borne to Naples and laid in a tomb which is on the road to Puteoli, within two miles of the city. On the tomb is a couplet he composed himself:

Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc
Parthenope. cecini Pascua, Rura, Duces.

Mantua bore me, Calabria took me away, and now
Parthenope holds me. I sang of pastures, agriculture, and leaders.

(*VSD* 35–6)[1]

[1] The Latin text reads:

anno aetatis quinquagesimo secundo impositurus Aeneidi summam manum statuit in Graeciam et in Asiam secedere triennioque continuo nihil amplius

This ancient account of Virgil's death culminates in an epitaph he composed for his own tomb. In a terse two lines, the poet takes on the role of his own biographer and literary historian. He states where he was born (Mantua), where he died (the port of Brundisium in Calabria), and where he now rests (Parthenope, that is to say Naples). It is this last location that most fully exposes the autobiographical conceit of the epitaph: a man is likely to know his place of birth, may realize that he is about to die in a particular place, but has no control over the subsequent whereabouts of his body. He may express a wish, to be sure, but the matter rests in the hands of others. The same is true, of course, of literary reception. After the short biography which opens the epitaph, an even shorter sentence encapsulates Virgil the author, organizing his oeuvre in chronological sequence and ascending order of genre: first the pastoral *Eclogues*; then the agricultural *Georgics*; and finally the martial epic *Aeneid*.

The epitaph extends Virgil's life and oeuvre: it poses as his last work and suggests that the poet still speaks to us from his grave.[2] There is a clear connection between the poem and the genuine works of Virgil: the epitaph echoes several autobiographical passages, or 'seals' (*sphrageis*), contained in his poems.[3] Moreover, the sequence of works—*Eclogues*, *Georgics, Aeneid*—is already implied within those works themselves. Still, the epitaph makes an important contribution to literary history: the sequence only becomes canonical when set in stone. The life and the oeuvre are sealed by death. We are told that Virgil's original plans were interrupted. He enjoyed no old age, and no graduation from poetry to philosophy. Virgil's *curriculum vitae* thus failed to conform to a standard ancient pattern, according to which epic poetry was propaedeutic

quam emendare ut reliqua vita tantum philosophiae vacaret. sed cum ingressus iter Athenis occurrisset Augusto ab oriente Romam revertenti, destinaretque non absistere atque etiam una redire, dum Megara vicinum oppidum ferventissimo sole cognoscit, languorem nactus est, eumque non intermissa navigatione auxit ita, ut gravior aliquanto Brundisium appelleret, ubi diebus paucis obiit XI Kal. Octobr. Cn. Sentio Q. Lucretio conss. ossa eius Neapolim translata sunt tumuloque condita, qui est via Puteolana intra lapidem secundum, in quo distichon fecit tale.

[2] For the inscription of this epitaph on the so-called 'Tomb of Virgil', and the subsequent epitaphs imagined for it, see Hendrix, Chapter 14 and Smiles, Chapter 15 in this volume, together with Trapp (1984).

[3] See Chapters 12 and 13 in this volume.

to philosophy.[4] Death broke up that sequence, and simultaneously established a new one: the *rota Vergiliana*, 'Virgil's wheel', a poetic career ascending to progressively grander genres of poetry. For centuries, this career remained an important model: poets as different as Petrarch and Wordsworth imitated the *rota* in their own lives and works.[5]

Virgil was by no means the only ancient poet said to have composed his own epitaph. From Homer to Ennius and beyond, Graeco-Roman antiquity engendered a whole series of auto-epitaphs in which poets allegedly set in stone their 'last work'. The poets' self-composed epitaphs followed funerary conventions that also applied more generally: ancient tombs often exhibited inscriptions that stated, in verse and in the first person, 'Here I lie . . . '.[6] In short, even ordinary people became poets after their death.[7] Still, the case of actual poets was different, in at least two respects. Their epitaphs extended and defined their oeuvres—and, in turn, helped to shape their reception. Our opening example illustrates this double function clearly: just as Virgil's epitaph drew from his poetry (and a tradition of poetic epitaphs that extended back to Ennius and Homer), so, too, it shaped the lives and works of later poets for an unusually long period of time, some two millennia to date.[8]

The tomb, then, is the place where life ends and Life begins; where the oeuvre is extended and received; where death is lamented and immortality affirmed.[9] In the case of a poet, immortality means, in

[4] Virgil's contemporary Horace emphatically marks his own transition from poetry to philosophy in *Epistles* 1.1 (esp. 1.1.7–12), where he also presents epic, specifically, as propaedeutic to philosophy. In general, the Augustan poets display an intense interest in the relationship between life and work, and in the way in which autobiographical passages can be used in order to organize their own oeuvre in chronological sequence.

[5] Hardie and Moore (2010), esp. 19; 282–3.; cf. also de Armas (2002) on Cervantes. For the alternative 'anti-career'—that is to say, a deliberate and conscious refusal to imitate Virgil's—see Lipking (1981), 131.

[6] For a discussion of the first-person voice in sepulchral epigrams, see Vestrheim (2010).

[7] This aspect of ancient culture has attracted intense scholarly attention in recent years. *CEG* provides an overview of Greek funerary epigrams on stone; important recent work on inscriptional epigram (not always wholly separable from literary epigram) includes Bing and Bruss (2007), 29–93; Prioux (2007); Baumbach, Petrovic, and Petrovic (2010); and Christian (2015).

[8] See above, n. 5.

[9] See recently Laqueur (2015) for a broader cultural history of mortal remains, which restates the importance of the tomb and of burial as part of 'the enormous amount of cultural work . . . that needs to go into giving a dead body meaning' (p. 46).

the first instance, preservation of the works, so that they may find new readers. In turn, those readers keep the poet alive through their wish to know about his or her life and person. Pliny talks explicitly about this desire for the author. He describes libraries as places where 'immortal spirits speak to us', and comments on the fashion to place portraits of the authors next to their works. He presents it as a form of reception most pleasing to the deceased writer; but he also points out that 'desire gives birth' to the author, even in cases when the author is, in point of fact, unknown:

> non est praetereundum et novicium inventum, siquidem non ex auro argentove, at certe ex aere in bibliothecis dicantur illis, quorum immortales animae in locis iisdem loquuntur, quin immo etiam quae non sunt finguntur, pariuntque desideria non traditos vultus, sicut in Homero evenit. utique maius, ut equidem arbitror, nullum est felicitatis specimen quam semper omnes scire cupere, qualis fuerit aliquis.
>
> We must not pass over a novelty that has also been invented: portraits made, if not of gold or silver yet at least of bronze, are set up in the libraries in honour of those whose immortal spirits speak to us in the same places. In fact, even imaginary likenesses are made, and desire gives birth to countenances that have not been handed down to us, as occurs in the case of Homer. At any rate, in my view, there is no greater kind of happiness than that all people for all time should want to know what kind of person one was.
>
> Pliny, *Natural History* 35.9–10

Biography and portraiture are important aspects of a poet's *Nachleben*; they make up for an absence. This can be characteristic of modern as well as ancient responses to literature. In her essays on life writing, *Body Parts*, Hermione Lee speaks of a desire that recalls Pliny's *desideria*: 'what makes biography so curious . . . is that . . . we keep catching sight of a real body, a physical life.'[10] Again, like Pliny, Lee insists that this desire for the body, and for physical contact, happens in the mind of the reader. Her celebrated biography of Virginia Woolf ends with a chapter on her suicide and her suicide note, her death and her last work, as it were. It also describes where she was buried, and what was inscribed in stone (a quotation from *The Waves*). Still, as the final sentence insists, Woolf 'went on living and changing after death'.[11]

In the case of Virgil, the ancient account of his death lives on and changes through many subsequent iterations, most arrestingly perhaps

[10] Lee (2005), 3. [11] H. Lee (1996), 767.

in Broch's *The Death of Virgil* (1945). Here, the last hours of the poet's life involve a comparison between the brutalities of Roman society and the beautiful lies of literature, a disgusted rejection of poetry, an eventual agreement to hand over the *Aeneid* to Augustus (in exchange for the freedom of his slaves), and finally a dying vision of a sea voyage. It is not difficult to see in that vision, and the book more generally, the facts of Broch's own life as a Jewish writer who escaped Vienna for Britain and the United States shortly after the Nazi *Anschluss* of Austria. The ancient poet lives on in what others make of him.[12]

The tomb, meanwhile, marks a transition. As Jean-Pierre Vernant points out, it signals an absence, that of the missing person whose bones it holds: 'the being it evokes, like a substitute, appears in the form of the stone as that which has gone far away, which would not deign to be there, that which belongs to an inaccessible "elsewhere".'[13] At the same time, the tomb can also mark a moment of liberation. To adapt the words of Roland Barthes, when it comes to a poet's burial, the death of the author most clearly signals the birth of the reader.[14] Barthes' celebrated essay, 'The Death of the Author', was primarily concerned with the free play of texts once liberated from authorial control—and, written in Paris in 1967, shortly before the student occupation of the Sorbonne, was itself an act of emancipation from the influence of previous generations. What was missing from Barthes' statement, however, and from the vast discussions and publications it subsequently inspired, was an understanding of authors and readers in their full-bodied physicality. There was little acknowledgement that 'poetry emerges from and is attended to by the mortal body', as Platt writes in this volume.[15] This book stems from that realization—from an interest in physical contact and its absence.[16]

[12] Broch worked on an earlier version of the novel during three weeks' imprisonment in Bad Aussee in March 1938 and completed it as an exile in the United States. For a poetological reading of *Der Tod des Vergil*, see Heizmann (2016), 179–86. For Broch's biofictional reception of Virgil, see Goldschmidt (forthcoming), ch. 5.

[13] Vernant (1990), 32: 'L'être qu'il évoque, à la manière d'un substitute, se manifeste dans la forme de la pierre comme ce qui s'est enfui au loin, qui ne saurait être là, qui appartient à un inaccessible ailleurs' (trans. Neer (2010), 15).

[14] Barthes (1967). [15] P. 22.

[16] In this respect, it can be seen as part of a wider movement away from rather impersonal and disembodied models of intertextuality and towards an understanding of literature as grounded in lived experience—specifically, as a form of human contact. In antiquity, the author was seen and created as an embodiment of his or her oeuvre: Graziosi (2002) argued this in relation to Homer; the project *Living Poets: A New*

The point is not just that the tomb physically substitutes for the body of the author, but also that readers may be physically present at the tomb, or imagine themselves to be there. Reading the tomb and reading the work are connected enterprises, because they are embedded in an ancient system of commemoration that involves both literature and material culture. Just as the auto-epitaphs of poets have their roots in wider cultural practices—specifically first-person funerary inscriptions in verse—so all tombs, and not just those of poets, are sites of reading. Jesper Svenbro argued, in an influential monograph, that the boundary between tomb and text is inherently permeable. Meaning 'sign', 'symbol', 'signal', as well as 'tomb', the Greek *sēma* can be read just as much as a text written out on papyrus, calling for acts of interpretation that parallel textual communication strategies.[17] Within this general framework, the tombs of poets are a special case: they mark out an absence and stimulate a desire for the figure 'behind' the texts—something that Barthes, as well as Pliny, acknowledged: 'I *desire* the author, I need his figure.'[18] They are also, and more intensely than other tombs, sites of reading, because the 'reading' of the tomb is in effect intertextual, in dialogue not only with other tombs, but with the oeuvre of the buried author.

This is something contemporary poets understand and know how to exploit. In a recent programme for BBC Radio 4, contemporary British poets Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts describe their pilgrimages to the places where other, earlier poets lived and died: the account works well as an introduction to poetry and has now also been published as a book entitled *Death of the Poets*.[19] In the course of walking in the footsteps of other poets, Farley and Symmons Roberts suggest, to these two readers at least, a few questions about their own eventual deaths, particularly given their emphasis on coincidence of time and place.[20] In *This Is Not a Novel*, David

Approach to Ancient Poetry explores this aspect of ancient culture from a variety of angles: <https://livingpoets.dur.ac.uk>.

[17] Svenbro (1993). For the multiple meanings of *sēma*, see also Vernant (1990) and (1991); Nagy (1983); Nagy (1990b), ch. 8; Sourvinou-Inwood (1995); Neer (2010), 14–19 and *passim*, and Alcock and Schnapp-Gourbeillon in Henry and Kelp (2016), 1–8 and 205–18.

[18] Barthes (1975), 27. Cf. Burke (1992) for the 'return' of the author in twentieth-century critical theory.

[19] Farley and Symmons Roberts (2017): the book focuses on places of birth and death; tombs are left unexplored.

[20] Ange Mlinko (2017), reviewing the volume for the *London Review of Books*, seems to have had the same idea: 'Farley and Roberts take cover under the impersonal

Markson (writing in his seventies and in poor health) is more explicit: he lists the deaths of some five hundred poets, writers, philosophers, politicians, actors, and athletes, turning towards the end—and in some defiance—to the ancient poets:[21]

> When the city I extol shall have
> perished, when the men to whom I sing
> shall have faded into oblivion, my words
> shall remain.
> Said Pindar.
>
> *Non omnis moriar.* I shall not wholly die.
> Said Horace.
>
> *Per saecula omnia vivam.* I shall live forever.
> Said Ovid.[22]

Markson then adds a diagnosis, which is at once literary and physiological: 'Writer's cancer.'[23] *This Is Not a Novel* grows like a tumour, from one death-generating scene to the next, until it suddenly stops—with a valediction, a handing-over: 'Farewell and be kind.'[24]

first-person plural as if to say to the gods: "Move on, nothing to look at here".' *Death of the Poets*, however, hardly exploits the possibilities of autobiography and auto-epitaphic poetry, beyond a few urbane suggestions.

[21] Markson (2016), 147. [22] Markson (2016), 147.

[23] Markson (2016), 148.

[24] Markson (2016), 148. After *This Is Not a Novel*, first published in 2001, Markson went on to write a sort of sequel, *The Last Novel*, published in 2010. Towards the end of that work, too (which turned out to be, in fact, his last), he considered the ancient poets one more time. The passage is quoted here in a posthumous edition (2016), 439–41:

> Having died they are not dead.
> Wrote Simonides of the Spartans slain at Plataea.
>
> Keats, in a last letter some weeks before the end, telling a friend it is difficult to say goodbye:
>
> I always made an awkward bow.
>
> Tiny drops of water will hollow out a rock.
> Lucretius wrote.
>
> . . .
>
> Dispraised, infirm, unfriended age.
> Sophocles calls it.
>
> . . .
>
> The old man who will not laugh is a fool.
>
> *Als ick kan.*

In antiquity, the tombs of the poets were presented as extensions of their works not just through the inscriptions they bore, but also through their locations and the behaviour they inspired. Pindar, who celebrated athletic victories, was buried at the racecourse in Thebes.[25] Actors performed the plays of Aeschylus at his grave.[26] The tomb of Stesichorus was an elaborate octagonal monument, which expressed specific theories about musical harmony.[27] A statue of Ennius was placed in the tomb of the Scipiones, in recognition of the poet's role in establishing their name.[28] Horace was buried in the tomb of Maecenas, the great patron of his poetry.[29] Many more examples could be adduced to illustrate the correspondence between tomb and work: in a useful recent monograph, Flore Kimmel-Clauzet offers a vast survey, which we recommend as a companion to this volume.[30] Silvia Barbantani devotes a whole monograph to the traditions concerning just three tombs: those of Ibycus, Stesichorus, and Simonides.[31] In this great abundance of material there is one complication: none of the tombs just mentioned actually survives. All we have are texts that describe real or, in some cases, imagined monuments.

This volume focuses on Greek and Roman poets whose oeuvres are known, and situates their tombs between literary reception and material culture. This aim determines the range of cases considered. Tombs which, on the basis of archaeological and epigraphic evidence alone, can be identified as graves of (otherwise unknown) poets feature here only in as much as they shed light on relevant practices of commemoration.[32] The exception is the tomb of Quintus Sulpicius Maximus, which deserves a whole chapter. Although all we have, in his case, is a funerary monument, the tomb itself preserves the otherwise unknown oeuvre: a substantial hexameter poem, which established Maximus' reputation as a poet when he was only a young boy, is inscribed on two columns, to the left and the right of

[25] Paus. 9.23.2. [26] *Life of Aeschylus* 11, discussed by Bakola in Chapter 6.

[27] See the interpretation offered by Barbantani (2010), 34.

[28] Cic., *Arch.* 9.22, discussed together with other relevant sources by Martelli in chapter 3.

[29] *Life of Horace*, p.4* Klingner.

[30] Kimmel-Clauzet (2013); see also her 'Poets' tombs and conceptions of poetry' at <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01328536>.

[31] Barbantani (2010).

[32] See, most importantly, the case discussed on pp. 22–3: a cist tomb excavated in Daphne, dating to the fifth century BCE, which clearly contained the remains of a poet.

his portrait. The monument, in this case, makes the oeuvre. At the other end of the spectrum, we discuss tombs of famous poets which exist only as literary constructions. We even include a chapter on the fictional tombs of fictional characters created by poets: they, too, are an aspect of literary reception and, indeed, of material culture. It seems to us that, if the term 'material culture' has any force at all, it must include the imagined materiality of the tomb, as well as the actual materials out of which tombs were made. Between monuments with no literary oeuvres and oeuvres with no monuments, there are many intermediate cases—including that of Virgil, with which this collection ends. Near Naples, an ancient Roman tomb has long served as a site of Virgilian memory, even if there is no reason to assume that the remains of the ancient poet were buried in it. From antiquity onwards, countless visitors paid homage to Virgil at the alleged site of his tomb. To this day, school children from all over Europe leave scribbled messages at the tomb of the ancient poet, asking him for help in love—and good marks in their Latin examinations.

Topoi

As Liddell and Scott state, the Greek term *topos* can denote not only a physical place, and specifically a place of burial, but a literary commonplace.[33] The tombs of the ancient Greek and Roman poets are both: physical places and/or spaces of the imagination—*lieux de mémoire*, in the words of Pierre Nora.[34] There are direct, tangible ways to interact with tombs as physical objects. Several chapters in this collection explore what people did and do when visiting them: worship, recite, paint, fall asleep, write graffiti, convert from business to literature, and (especially if they are themselves poets) plan the location and design of their own tombs.[35] In the sixteenth century,

[33] LSJ s.v. I.5; II.2.
[34] Nora (1984–92); (1989); (1996).
[35] Bakola, Bing, and Hanink discuss, from a variety of perspectives, the relationship between hero cult and the cult of poets: see Chapters 6, 7, and 11 respectively. On reciting poetry at the tombs of poets, see Bakola at p. 126 and Hanink at p. 235; on painting, Smiles Chapter 15; on falling asleep, Graziosi pp. 187–9; on writing graffiti, Hendrix pp. 292–7. The most famous literary conversion is, arguably, that of Boccaccio at the tomb of Virgil: see the account of how he turned from business to literature given by Giovanni Villani (1280–1348) in *Liber de civitatis Florentiae famosis civibus*, ed. Galetti, Florence 1847, p. 17, discussed by Trapp (1984), 10.

the Neapolitan humanist Jacopo Sannazaro built his own posthumous memorial next to that of Virgil. Centuries later, the corpse of the lyric poet, philosopher, and philologist Giacomo Leopardi was buried near there, too. The graves of poets near Naples inspired the collection of another set of tombs: the 'Poets' Corner' in Westminster Abbey. The epigram that Pietro Bembo wrote to commemorate the death of Sannazaro in 1530 insisted on the deceased's proximity to Virgil: when Spenser died a few decades later, in 1599, an epigram celebrated, in similar terms, that poet's burial next to the grave of Chaucer. His tomb in turn led to a steady addition of poets' graves in Westminster Abbey.[36]

There are, then, material ways of engaging with the tombs of poets, including the practice of placing them next to each other, and thus imbuing specific sites with literary significance. At the same time, there are also ways of engaging with tombs that involve no specific, material locations at all. For example, we need not imagine that the epitaphs on the graves of poets collected in the *Palatine Anthology* were ever inscribed on stone. What those poems do, rather than mark specific monuments and places, is create a different kind of 'poets' corner'—an imaginary graveyard through which readers stroll in their mind. In fact, two epigrams allegedly composed to mark the tomb of Euripides insist that 'the whole of Greece' is his grave.[37] As *lieux de mémoire*, the tombs of poets have all and nothing to do with physical location.

Accordingly, chapters in this collection explore the place of both real and imaginary tombs in the reception of literature through key topoi, which are used to structure the collection into four parts. The first governing commonplace is the opposition between literature and material culture, the life of the mind vs the apprehensions of the body. The contrast is not new. Pindar declared with some pride at the beginning of *Nemean* 5: 'I am no sculptor . . . ' and went on to point out that his poem would travel 'on every ship and boat' spreading the news that Pytheas won the pancratium competition, whereas a statue of the athlete would have to stay put 'on its pedestal' on the island of Aegina. Horace elaborated on this theme. The last poem in the third book of his *Odes* starts with the now proverbial *exegi monumentum*

[36] On the tombs of English poets, see further Matthews (2004) and Höschele's discussion in this volume, pp. 197–201.

[37] *AP* 7.45. 1–3, attributed to Thucydides: see discussion by Montiglio at p. 220; and 7.47, discussed by Platt at p. 31.

aere perennius, 'I have erected a monument more permanent than bronze', and goes on to reflect on Horace's own mortality: *non omnis moriar*, 'I shall not wholly die', a phrase that already featured above. Poetry itself is the monument that keeps the memory of the author alive. And yet, the transmission and reception of literature depends on physical survival, since it is stored and circulated on inscribed or encoded objects. All the chapters in the first section of this book break down easy dichotomies between literature and material culture—insisting that just as literature depends upon tangible records, so material tombs need to be interpreted with reference to the literary imagination.

In the Greek world, between the third and the first centuries BCE, the tombs of poets became the focus of sustained attention, both as monuments and as subjects of poetry (as the genre of *epitymbia*, short epigrams that posed as texts inscribed on graves, testifies). Platt explains: 'at a time when literary texts were being feverishly collected, copied, catalogued, canonized and archived, when contemporary poetry was carefully situating itself in relation to an emerging library culture, and when texts were being reframed and circulated in the context of anthologies, the tomb as inscribed marker of the poet's literal *corpus* offered a rich analogy to the physical objects that sustained his or her surviving *corpus* of work.'[38] Poems written on papyrus posed as grave inscriptions on stone. Conversely, inscriptions on monuments that commemorated poets (most famously those carved into the Archilocheion on Paros) were laid out as if they were columns of writing inked on papyrus.[39] What we witness, in this period, is an intertextuality of materials. In Chapter 2, Rawles travels the same route as Platt, but in the opposite direction: rather than insist on the materiality of textual transmission, he points out that inscribed texts were memorized and orally transmitted. This insight provides the key for his reading of Callimachus' 'Tomb of Simonides'—itself a reading of Simonides' own response to the poetics of inscribed epigram (and of his role as the inventor of memory techniques). Rawles argues that 'Callimachus presents Simonides' tomb not as an epitaph, but as a kind of "meta-epitaph"—an elegy which is not itself inscribed, but describes the loss of an inscribed

[38] P. 24. [39] For a later example, see p. 94.

tombstone': liberated from the tomb that once covered his body, the voice of Simonides now speaks through Callimachus' verse.[40]

From early on, funerary practices in Rome developed in dialogue with the Greek traditions set out in the first two chapters of this volume. For example, between the third and first centuries BCE, a grand tomb near the Via Appia served as a funerary monument for the prominent patrician family of the Scipiones. The inscribed *elogia* that commemorated their deaths testify to the influence of Hellenistic literary epigrams on Roman culture—yet this is not the main reason why Chapter 3 focuses on this tomb. As well as generations of Scipiones, the monument was believed to have once contained the statue of a man who did not belong to the family: the poet Quintus Ennius. Martelli considers how Ennius' poetry and his portrait contributed to the circulation of political prestige, and links the story of his statue to a later image of the poet in Varro's *De poetis*. She argues that Varro's collection of author portraits and the practice of erecting busts of authors in libraries (which became fashionable shortly afterwards) are best seen as 'a form of entombment – one that situates the *imago* of the poet alongside those of his literary forebears in a space that recognizes their identity as a group, much like the tomb of the Scipiones, or, indeed, as the atrium in a Roman household collects the *imagines* of a family's ancestors'.[41] Garulli, meanwhile, reminds us that real, biological families are as important as literary genealogies when approaching the tombs of poets. She considers the case of Quintus Sulpicius Maximus, who competed in poetry at the Capitoline Games of 94 CE and died soon afterwards at the age of 11. His parents set up an elaborate funerary monument in his memory, explaining its design: 'lest his parents may seem to have been unduly influenced by their affection for him, his extemporaneous verses have been inscribed here.'[42] The boy's oeuvre is framed by the monument, which provides a rich context for Garulli's reading of it—but as well as the poet's death we need to consider his parents' lives. Their names reveal that they were freed slaves: in terms of social capital, the monument substituted for the career young Maximus never had. Investment in the boy's literary talent and investment in his tomb were both effective means of social advancement. Like Martelli's

[40] Pp. 51–2. [41] P. 78.

[42] For a new edition and translation of all the texts inscribed on the tomb, see pp. 90–2.

chapter, Garulli's excavates the political significance of the tomb—even if in this case the focus is on a family of ex-slaves rather than the grand Scipiones.

Taken together, the chapters in Part I of this volume span a vast period of time, from antiquity to the present. They thus serve as a reminder that the study of classical reception is not the study of what happened after the end of antiquity. It is, in point of fact, inextricable from the study of ancient culture. This is particularly obvious in the piece that concludes this section: Chapter 5 begins with Ovid's own reception of his work, and shows how he writes about the future of his oeuvre with reference to the future entombment of his body. Through a series of case studies, the chapter goes on to illustrate an enduring preoccupation with Ovid's tomb through the centuries: the poet's tomb allegedly contained his lost final work, *De vetula*, and was repeatedly 'discovered' in both Romania and Rome.

Issues of authenticity surface repeatedly in the chapters collected in Part I and become the focus of attention, from a different perspective, in Part II: 'The Poet as Character'—a section that investigates the religious as well as the literary significance of tombs. Poetry and the cult of tombs developed in parallel in early Greece. At the time when Homeric epic began to spread through the Greek-speaking world, local communities devoted themselves to the cult of the great heroes celebrated in epic, typically at the tombs where they were thought to be buried. It can be no coincidence that the characters we find in poetry (for example, Agamemnon, Cassandra, Menelaus, Helen, Odysseus) were also recipients of cult.[43] What is crucial for this volume is a subsequent development: the poets who celebrated the heroes of myth and cult started to be worshipped themselves at their own alleged tombs.

Emmanuela Bakola identifies some key aspects of hero worship in Chapter 6, reassesses the depiction of the poet Aeschylus in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, and connects the play to the cult of Aeschylus' tomb in Sicily. What she offers is a new understanding of hero worship in terms of well-being, prosperity, fertility, and health—which in turn leads to a new interpretation of the relationship between biography, literary reception, and cult. In Chapter 7, Peter Bing focuses on Hellenistic epigrams commemorating the death of minor literary characters: a

[43] For further discussion and bibliography, see pp. 151–3 in this volume.

prostitute berated by Sappho, the daughters of Lycambes vilified by Archilochus, and the lovely Baucis, Erinna's friend. His chapter demonstrates how an interest in 'entombed literary figures . . . could manifest itself purely as literature, that is as poetry inspired by poetry, Art by Art, with no real-life component in ritual or cult'.[44] Still, it is no accident that some of the poems he discusses feature also in Chapter 1, where they support Platt's argument about the materiality of literature. And it is also no accident that these poems focus on minor female characters: the materiality of their bodies, once so attractive and now dead, serves as a foil to the enduring fame of the poets who created them in literature.

It seems that the poet's best hope of immortality is to become part of the mythical world s/he created. The final chapter in Part II explores this idea in reverse: it considers the case of a literary character, Orpheus, who was considered the author of real-life mystic texts. Chapter 8 argues that Orpheus the character and Orpheus the author coincide at his tomb. Various ancient sources suggest that the singer carried on performing poetry even after his death: he sang from his tomb and through the landscape. This helps to explain how Orphic authorship worked in antiquity, as well as the reasons why it was so contested. Some ancient critics argued that, far from being age-old works, Orphic poems were in fact recent forgeries. Devotees of Orpheus, meanwhile, could insist that the poet's voice was heard in stones, trees, caves, and birds—that is to say, in nature itself: Orphic authorship, from that perspective, was a matter of attentive reception, rather than fraud. The case of Orpheus is extreme, but the possibility that an oeuvre may continue to grow after the death of its author surfaces repeatedly in this volume: attribution is, after all, a form of posthumous homage.

Part III investigates a third, fundamental commonplace: the literary graveyard. Physical graves can be collected together, as in the assemblages of literary tombs near Naples or Westminster Abbey mentioned above, but the collection of tombs is a crucial topos of literature as well. A nineteenth-century ode may help to introduce what is at stake here: Ugo Foscolo's *Dei Sepolcri* (1807) attempts to create a nation, Italy, by lingering on the resting places of its famous men, particularly those buried in Santa Croce in Florence.

[44] P. 153.

Tombs, Foscolo insists, are of no use to the dead ('What compensation for my lost days can a stone be, / a stone that distinguishes my bones from the countless other bones / that death scatters over land and sea?'); what tombs do, rather, is inspire the living.[45] Thus, for example, he suggests that Italy would have deserved a better burial for the poet Parini, and argues that the ancient dead buried at Marathon inspire the modern Greeks, in his day still under Ottoman rule, with a desire for freedom. Tilted as the poem is towards the future, it concludes with ancient hero cult: a blind Homer rummaging through the abandoned tombs of the Troad and recreating, in poetry, the grave of Hector. This may seem like a purely literary enterprise, but *Dei Sepolcri* inspired elaborate acts of material memorialization—including the exhumation of Foscolo's own remains (he died in exile in 1827 and was buried in the cemetery of Chiswick, west London) and their ceremonial entombment in Santa Croce in 1871, in a grand nation-building exercise.

Like Foscolo's *Dei Sepolcri*, ancient literary collections of tombs did not focus exclusively on the graves of poets, and yet granted them special prominence. Through a painstaking reconstruction of ancient epigram collections, Regina Höschele shows how unique 'poets' corners' were created inside poetry books. Silvia Montiglio, for her part, identifies recurrent themes in the descriptions of poets' tombs in the *Palatine Anthology*—many of which feature also in other texts. Thus, for example, poets' tombs are generally characterized by lush vegetation, blooming anew, generation after generation. The vitality of literature is the focus of attention also in Chapter 11, where Johanna Hanink considers how Pausanias treats the tombs of poets in his *Description of Greece*. She presents the buried bones of both ancient poets and heroes featured in poetry as a 'root system . . . that in Pausanias' imagination nourishes the sacred Greek landscape, ensuring that the memories it holds always stay lush with life'.[46] Like Foscolo, Pausanias presents the tombs of poets as underground resources.

The final chapters, collected in Part IV of this volume, focus on a single, grand commonplace—the tomb of Virgil—and make up,

[45] Foscolo, *Dei Sepolcri* 12–15: 'qual fia ristoro a' dí perduti un sasso / che distingua le mie dalle infinite / ossa che in terra e in mar semina morte?'

[46] P. 250.

together, an extensive case study.[47] Andrew Laird, in Chapter 12, investigates the epitaphic quality of Virgil's own verse—how it inspired the traditions concerning his burial but also how, in turn, those traditions offer a useful and evocative key for reading his work. Specifically, the landscape of Aeneas' landfall, and of his descent into the underworld, described in *Aeneid* 5–7, is reimagined as a burial site for the poem's author. Irene Peirano Garrison, in Chapter 13, returns to that landscape—and its remarkable system of underground tunnels—in order to explore the earliest traditions associated with Virgil's tomb. She focuses on reports about Silius Italicus and his veneration of the tomb of Virgil, but also considers the ancient topos of the neglected and rediscovered grave. Harald Hendrix, in Chapter 14, focuses precisely on the 'rediscovery' of Virgil's tomb in the Renaissance, exploring its position in the cultures of scholarship and leisure (both of which thrive on the pleasures of reading). Finally, Sam Smiles shows how poetic inspiration can be expressed through the material idiom of painting: the tomb of Virgil inspired English artists on the Grand Tour, and thus contributed to the creation of new material cultures. The reputation of the poet became, for Turner and others, an important means of establishing the social value of artists, despite the materiality of their means of expression.

The purpose of this volume, as a whole, is to make a distinctive contribution to the study of literary reception by focusing on the materiality of the body and the tomb, and by arguing that the 'places', or topoi, outlined here mediate the relationship between classical poetry and its readers. Since Gadamer, Jauss, and Iser, from whom we have inherited the term, 'reception' studies have tended to privilege the aesthetic response of readers in the present over the contexts of authors in the past.[48] It is this approach, centred on the horizons of readers, that Charles Martindale influentially put forward in *Redeeming the Text*.[49] Since then, and in line with broader developments in the Humanities, the study of classical receptions has shifted (to put it crudely) from literary theory to cultural studies, broadly conceived.[50] The present volume can easily be located within that general development: it focuses

[47] All chapters in Part IV take J. B. Trapp's detailed survey of the history of the site as an important point of departure: Trapp (1984), with Trapp (1986).

[48] See especially Gadamer (1975); Iser (1978); Jauss (1982).

[49] Martindale (1993).

[50] See, for example, the essays collected in Machor and Goldstein (2001) and, for a brief and perceptive analysis, Leonard (2009).

on literature, yet insists that readers' horizons include material objects. Our volume also benefits from what art historian Dorothea von Hantelmann recentelly labelled the 'experiential turn', that is to say, a new attention to embodiment, experience, situation, and situatedness.[51] Martindale, in reassessing his own book twenty years after its publication, insisted on the transhistorical, which he defined as 'the seeking out of often fugitive communalities across time'.[52] Our contention here is that the tombs of the Greek and Roman poets, whether real or imagined, are places where such fugitive communalities are established.

[51] von Hantelmann (2014).

[52] Martindale (2013), 173. In theorizing the transhistorical, Martindale repeatedly refers to material objects (most prominently and programmatically Pater's response to art)—yet does not draw attention to this fact.

I

Material Texts, Textual Materials

1

Silent Bones and Singing Stones

Materializing the Poetic Corpus in Hellenistic Greece

Verity Platt

IMPLEMENTS FROM THE 'TOMB OF THE POET' (PIRAEUS ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM)

On the journey to the mundane afterlife,
You travel equipped to carry on your trade:
A bronze, small-toothed saw to make repairs,
The stylus and the ink pot and the scraper,
Wax tablets bound into a little book.

Here is the tortoise shell for the cithara,
Bored through with holes for strings, natural sound box.
Here is the harp's wood triangle, all empty—
The sheep-gut having long since decomposed
Into a pure Pythagorean music.

The beeswax, frangible with centuries,
Has puzzled all your lyrics into silence.
I think you were a poet of perfection
Who fled still weighing one word with another,
Since wax forgives and warms beneath revision.

From *Hapax* by A. E. Stallings[1]

[1] Stallings (2006), 19. Reprinted by kind permission of the publisher, Northwestern University Press.

In 1981 a salvage excavation in Daphne, Athens, brought to light a limestone cist grave dating to 430–425 BCE, which belonged to a man in his early twenties.[2] The belongings carefully buried with him (now displayed in the Piraeus Museum) identified the youth as a poet-musician: fragments of a harp, tortoise-shell lyre, and wooden aulos implied proficiency in performance (perhaps even training in the making of instruments, as suggested by a saw and chisel), while a stylus and inkpot, wax tablets and a papyrus roll demonstrated a facility with (and investment in) written texts (Figure 1.1).[3] Gathered as eternal accessories to the poet's profession, this assemblage reminds us that words do not, despite our best imaginings, have wings. Nor are they immortal. Rather, poetry emerges from and is attended to by the mortal body; it makes its way into the world by means of instruments, whether vocal, musical, or notational; and it is stored and circulated on inscribed objects, whether temporary compositions impressed into wax tablets, or more enduring texts inked onto papyrus. Adept in both oral and literary media, the occupant of the Daphne tomb poignantly demonstrates how all poetry depends upon material vehicles for its own survival, whether the singer's jawbone, the decomposed strings of his spindle-harp, or his treasured papyrus (which bears traces of epic verse—tantalizingly lost to posterity, the author(s) unidentified).[4] For A. E. Stallings (a living poet herself), it is the wax lingering on the ancient poet's *polyptychon,* 'frangible with centuries', that proves most haunting, since its malleable capacity for revision by the warm, living body is hardened by time once active composition has been suspended in the coldness of the tomb. The poet's relics thus speak of endless possibilities—of flawless compositions not yet crafted by 'a poet of perfection'—while reminding us that poetry is nevertheless a corporeal, a fallible, and a perishable art.

The Daphne tomb gives us a poet without a name, a craftsman-musician accompanied by the tools of his trade, with no surviving

[2] See Pöhlmann (2013) and Lygouri-Tolia (2014).

[3] On the instruments, see Terzēs (2013) on the harp, and Psaroudakēs (2013) on the aulos. On fragments recoverable from the tablets and papyrus (the earliest yet discovered in ancient Greek), see Pöhlmann and West (2012); West (2013) and Alexopoulou and Karamanou (2014), with further bibliography.

[4] See West (2013) and Alexopoulou and Karamanou (2014). For a sensitive exploration of the materiality of writing (and the metaphors to which it gives rise) in antiquity, see Butler (2011).