

A Study of *Elpis* in Ancient Greek Literary Laments and Songs for the Dead: Hope and the Tradition of Greek Lament

Estudio de *Elpis* en los lamentos y cantos a los muertos de la literatura griega antigua: la esperanza y la tradición del lamento griego

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Fecha de recepción: 30/10/2023

Fecha de aceptación: 11/04/2023

ABSTRACT: Much of current scholarship aims at reconstructing ritual lamentation based on evidence from early Greek epic and lyric poetry and fifth-century tragedy. This paper, although it is an examination of a specific human emotion, *elpis*, within the corpus of early and classical Greek epic, lyric, and dramatic poetry that are thought to preserve the oral traditions of the genre, takes also into consideration the inscribed ancient Greek songs for the dead; that is archaic and classical epigrams and their later counterparts encountered, mainly, in the *Greek Anthology*. A study of *elpis*, a highly culturally dependent emotion, within these contexts will allow us to have a glimpse of the hermeneutic frames provided by each poetic genre, their performative contexts, and the expectation of the audiences, as well as of the general world-view that is shared by the poetic genres in question. In other words, a study of *elpis* in ancient Greek laments and songs for the dead will enable us to have a slightly clearer image of the evolution and the nature of this oral genre from archaic times until the Late Antiquity.

KEYWORDS: *elpis*, hope, ritual lament, ancient emotions.

RESUMEN: Gran parte de la erudición actual pretende reconstruir el lamento ritual basándose en pruebas procedentes de la poesía épica y lírica griega temprana y de la tragedia del siglo V. El presente trabajo, aunque examina una emoción humana específica, *elpis*, dentro del corpus de la poesía épica, lírica y dramática griega antigua y clásica que se considera que conserva las tradiciones orales del género, también tiene en cuenta los antiguos cantos griegos inscritos para los muertos, es decir, los epigramas arcaicos y clásicos y sus homólogos posteriores encontrados, principalmente, en la Antología griega. El estudio de la *elpis*, una emoción que depende en gran medida de la cultura, dentro de estos contextos nos permitirá vislumbrar los marcos hermenéuticos que proporciona cada género poético, sus contextos performativos y las expectativas del público, así como la visión general del mundo que comparten los géneros poéticos en cuestión. En otras palabras, el estudio del *elpis* en los lamentos y cantos a los muertos de la Grecia antigua nos permitirá tener una imagen algo más clara de la evolución y la naturaleza de este género oral desde la época arcaica hasta la Antigüedad tardía.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *elpis*, esperanza, lamento ritual, emociones antiguas.

Introduction

Ritual lament¹ is part of a rite of passage after which the deceased will attain a stable identity as deceased and the survivors through a period of liminality and mourning will find a new position within the community². The practice of ritual lamentation in ancient Greece is attested in ancient sources and remains to this day part of a living folk tradition³. Unfortunately, not even one sample of an ancient Greek ritual lament, an oral genre *par excellence*, has come down to us. Anyone who wishes to examine any aspect of ritual lament in ancient Greece has to turn to ancient Greek literature.

Much of current scholarship aims at reconstructing ritual lamentation based on evidence from early Greek epic and lyric poetry and fifth-century tragedy. This paper, although an examination of a specific human emotion, *elpis*⁴, within the corpus of early and classical Greek epic, lyric, and dramatic poetry that are thought to preserve the oral traditions of the genre, takes also into consideration the inscribed ancient Greek songs for the dead, that is, archaic and classical epigrams and their later counterparts encountered, mainly, in the *Greek Anthology*.

Most classicists focus on prototypical emotions like anger and fear that we can easily detect in classical texts. Hope is not considered by many a primary emotion but one belonging to a wider palette of secondary emotions⁵. This emotion is primarily culturally shaped⁶. The most common word that denotes ‘hope’ in Greek is the verb ἔλπω or ἐέλπω and its derivatives. The noun that has a similar sense as the word hope is *elpis*. However, Greek *elpis* is generally regarded as a more complex concept than English ‘hope’. Greek *elpis* does not always focus on a positive outcome⁷. We agree with many modern scholars who share the view that Hesiod’s myth of Pandora (*Works and the Days* 90-105), whose exact meaning remains unfathomable, encapsulates in a prototypical fashion the ambivalence of hope in Greek thought⁸. Within certain contexts, *elpis* conveys the same sense as hope in English. In these cases, the fulfillment of the hypothesis in question is presented as comparatively likely (or, when the verb is negative, as comparatively unlikely) and the context excludes any notion of desire that the hypothesis should be fulfilled⁹.

Since we regard *elpis* as a highly culturally dependent, if not constructed, emotion, we believe that its study within these contexts will allow us to have a glimpse of the hermeneutic frames provided by each poetic genre, their performative contexts, and the expectation of the audiences, as well as of the general worldview that is shared by the poetic genres in question. In other words, a study of *elpis* in ancient Greek laments, or at least in

1. For this paper, when I speak of ritual lament as a lyric genre alluded to in a series of epic, lyric, and dramatic compositions, I refer to the range of conventions that could evoke ritual lamentation in ancient Greek audiences.

2. See Derderian 2001: 3-4, with more bibliography.

3. See Alexiou 1974: 5.

4. Even though we consider Greek *elpis* as a wider and more complex emotion than the English ‘hope’, when we speak of hope, we refer to the aspect of Greek *elpis* that conveys the almost same sense as English hope.

5. See Cairns 2016: 15-16.

6. See Cairns 2016: 15-16.

7. See Cairns 2016: 17.

8. See on this Kazantzidis 2018: 2, with more bibliography. On the special role of *elpis* in Hesiod’s *Works and the Days* see West 1978: 169-170. On Hesiod and hope see also Strauss-Clay 2003: 102-104.

9. See Cairns 2016: 18.

the various literary genres that allude to ritual lament, and songs for the dead will enable us to have a slightly clearer image of the evolution and the nature of this oral genre from the archaic times until the Late Antiquity.

***Elpis* in Archaic and Classical Laments and Songs for the Dead**

The antithesis between past and present is a manifestation of the antithetical thought, that is, one of the characteristics of ritual lament in ancient Greece¹⁰. This antithesis is more amply emphasized when the mourner states that when the dead were alive in the past, they were a source of hope for the ones that depended on them, but now the present and the future seem grim¹¹. A plethora of literary laments and songs for the dead, epic or lyric, refer to deceived *elpides* of the mourner or the deceased, especially when they are caused by the premature death of a young person. That the unexpected, usually premature, death of an individual has deceived the hopes or expectations of the parents, the relatives, the community or the deceased person is also a widespread *topos* in epitaphs, metrical or not¹². These hopes often revolve around the future success of the deceased, for example, hopes of being educated and rewarding his parents or hopes for a good marriage¹³. These deceived *elpides* often involved the bereaved. A common expectation of parents is that of being taken care of by their children in old age¹⁴.

Our first examples come from the Homeric *gōoi*. Briseis in *Iliad* 19 laments the death of Patroclus. She starts by highlighting the opposition between a blissful past when Patroclus was alive and a painful present after his death (lines 287-289), she refers to other sufferings experienced by her (lines 290-294), and then refers to her hopes for a better future, which have been shattered.

Lines 295-300:

οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδέ μ' ἔασκες, ὅτ' ἄνδρ' ἐμὸν ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς
ἔκτεινεν, πέρσεν δὲ πόλιν θείοιο Μύνητος,
κλαίειν, ἀλλὰ μ' ἔφασκες Ἀχιλλῆος θείοιο
κουριδίην ἄλοχον θήσειν, ἄξειν τ' ἐνὶ νηυσὶν
ἐς Φθίην, δαίσειν δὲ γάμον μετὰ Μυρμιδόνεσσι.
τῷ σ' ἄμοτον κλαίω τεθνηότα μείλιχον αἰεὶ,

Yet you'd not even let me weep when swift Achilles
killed my husband and sacked the city of godlike Mynēs—
you said you'd see me the lawful wedded wife
of godlike Achilles, you'd take me back on your ships to Phthiē,
and hold a marriage feast for me among the Myrmidons. So
I mourn your death without cease: you were always kind to me¹⁵.

10. For the role of antithetical thought in Greek laments see Alexiou 1974: 131-161, 165-171.

11. See Tsagalis 2004: 30.

12. See Chaniotis 2018: 353-354. In this paper, we focus on metrical epitaphs.

13. See Chaniotis 2018: 355.

14. See Chaniotis 2018: 355.

15. For Homer's text, we follow the edition of Allen and Monro. For the *Iliad*, we follow the translation of Green, unless otherwise stated.

Briseis remembers how Patroclus used to console her when she was sad. Patroclus had promised to help her make her hopes for a better future come true by making her the wedded wife of Achilles. His personal intervention, which Patroclus' premature death has deprived her of, guaranteed that Achilles would bear Briseis in his ships to Phthia, and make her a marriage feast among the Myrmidons. Achilles' lament for Patroclus follows that of Briseis, creating a kind of antiphony. As it has been observed, antiphony can also generate thematic resemblance and, in this case, the themes both mourners unravel have a responsive nature¹⁶. Achilles speaks of the blissful past when Patroclus was alive and the painful present after his death (lines 315-321), refers to other sufferings experienced by him (lines 321-327), and mentions his hopes for a better future, which have been frustrated¹⁷.

Lines 328-337:

πρὶν μὲν γὰρ μοι θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἐώλπει
οἷον ἐμὲ φθίσεσθαι ἀπ' Ἄργεος ἵπποβότοιο
αὐτοῦ ἐνὶ Τροίῃ, σὲ δέ τε Φθίην δὲ νέεσθαι,
ὡς ἂν μοι τὸν παῖδα θοῆ ἐνὶ νηὶ μελαίνῃ
Σκυρόθεν ἐξαγάγοις καὶ οἱ δεΐξιας ἕκαστα
κτῆσιν ἐμὴν δμῶάς τε καὶ ὑπερεφές μέγα δῶμα.
ἤδη γὰρ Πηληϊά γ' ὄτομαι ἢ κατὰ πάμπαν
τεθνάμεν, ἢ που τυτθὸν ἔτι ζῶοντ' ἀκάχησθαι
γῆραί τε στυγερῶ καὶ ἐμὴν ποτιδέγμενον αἰεὶ
λυγρὴν ἀγγελίην, ὅτ' ἀποφθιμένοιο πύθεται.

Until now the heart in my breast had cherished the hope
that I alone should die far from horse-grazing Argos,
here at Troy, but that you should return to Phthiē,
and that you'd pick up my son in your swift black ship
from Skyros, and show him everything that was mine—
my possessions, my servants, my splendid high-roofed house,
since by now I suppose that Pēleus must either be at last
dead, or, if barely alive still, bowed down by the inroads
of loathsome old age, and by waiting forever to hear
unhappy tidings of me, that at last I've perished.

Achilles uses the term ἐώλπει and a common metaphor of hope in ancient Greek poetry that refers to this emotion to describe his feelings¹⁸. His *elpis* took place in his *thymos*. His *thymos* is situated in his breast (line 328). As Cairns notes, in Homer, the attribution of hope to the personified *thymos* often presents the experience of hoping in a certain way: as something that seems to arise spontaneously within a person and to possess a certain affective and motivational character, as an impulse that presents itself to the individual rather than being something that the individual sets out to generate (Cairns 2016: 20-21). But what did Achilles hope for? Achilles hoped that Patroclus would survive and return to Phthia and take his child in the swift, black ship from Scyrus, and show him everything—his possessions, his slaves, and his high-roofed house. Achilles laments the fact that his

16. See Tsagalis 2004: 49.

17. See Tsagalis 2004: 49.

18. See Cairns 2016: 18-20.

friend will not be in a position to do for Neoptolemus what he would certainly have done if he had been destined to return home.

A similar case is found in the lament of Andromache for Hector in *Iliad* 22. It has been argued that Andromache's *gōos*-speech is the continuation of the *homilia* scene between Hector and Andromache in Book 6¹⁹. There, Andromache referred to the possibility of Astyanax becoming an orphan if Hector fell on the battlefield, whereas Hector (6.476-481) prayed to Zeus that his son might distinguish himself among the Trojans²⁰. The imagery referring to Astyanax in Book 22 is a direct rejection of Hector's hopes as verbalized in his prayer. Andromache practically corrects her husband's words²¹. Andromache's lament «replies» to the former by presenting the grim picture of reality once Hector is dead, and by imagining the future of Astyanax, whose father's prayer has been in vain²². Hector hoped that Astyanax will rule over Troy, will be valiant, and will surpass him. Andromache complained that Hector will be of no use to their child. Even if her boy lives, he will suffer. Others will take away his lands and he will have his portion of labor and sorrow. Hector's death shatters the hopes that he had for his child, as we learn in Andromache's lament. Hector in the *Iliad* is a hero destined to have his hopes dashed. As Tsagalis observes (Tsagalis 2004: 144), the same idea is also expressed in Nestor's speech to Agamemnon in 10.104-105: οὐ θην Ἔκτορι πάντα νοήματα μητίετα Ζεὺς / ἐκτελέει, ὅσα πού νυν ἐέλπεται [Zeus of the counsels, I think, will not accomplish for Hektor all his designs and all he hopes for now]²³.

These deceived *elpides* often appear in archaic and classical funerary epigrams. Hope as an emotion associated with sub-adults²⁴ is often found in the funerary record in Hellenistic and Roman Greece. The child itself could be described as the *elpis* of his parents, but what was commonly expressed was the destruction of parental hopes through death²⁵. In most epigrams these hopes seemed to be left unspecified. In these cases, parental *elpis* is associated with expectation, since the child's future is unknown; however, there is also the strong desire for a positive future in which the children will perform their social roles to the best of their abilities. The combination of desire and anticipation creates an emotion that we can understand as hope²⁶.

In *CEG* 5I, inscribed on a stele base around 510 B.C. and found in Kerameikos, an anonymous person laments the dead youth Smikythos, who destroyed his friends' good hope (οἰκτίρο προσορο[ν] | παιδὸς τόδε σῆμα | θανόντος / Σμικύθ[ο] | | ἥος τε φίλον ὄλεσε|ν ἔλπ' ἀγαθόν, I lament as I behold this marker of the dead youth Smikythos, who destroyed his friends' good hope)²⁷. We do not know who the speaker is, it can even be the monument itself²⁸, but we are aware that the boy's death deprived his loved ones of their hopes. We also learn that the young maiden Hediste, in *CEG* 732, an epigram found in Histria dating from the fourth century B.C., that the maiden hoped herself for fame for

19. See Tsagalis 2004: 131, with more bibliography.

20. See Tsagalis 2004: 131.

21. See Tsagalis 2004: 131.

22. See Tsagalis 2004: 131-132.

23. This translation belongs to Tsagalis.

24. See Bobou 2018: 330.

25. See Bobou 2018: 330.

26. See Bobou 2018: 331.

27. We follow the text and the translation of Day.

28. See Day 1989: 25-26.

her beauty and propriety but died before marriage (Ἡδίστη / Εὐαγόρο / θυγάτηρ // [--- --] / τίς θνητῶν κραδίης οὕτως ἐκύ[ρη]σεν ἀνοίκτου, ὅστις ἄ[ν] / οὐκ ἐπὶ σοί, παρθένε, δάκρυ [χέοι] / ἢ κάλλει κόσμωι τε μολοῦσ' ἀεὶ [ἐλ]/πίδα δόξης : Ἡδίστη : πρὸ γάμω[ν] / ὤλεσας ἡλικίαν [Hediste daughter of Evagoras. What mortal has such a pitiless heart that he would not shed tears for you, maiden, you who could have hoped for fame for your beauty and propriety, Hediste, and have lost your youth before marriage?])²⁹. We can suppose that these *elpides* revolved around the domestic sphere. In these funerary epigrams, hope is attached to a young person by his relatives and friends.

The first testimonies of the belief in the existence of an afterlife also belong to the corpus of archaic and classical funerary epigrams. The *persona loquens* of the poem inscribed on SEG 38.440 seems to assume that Sosikrates' soul exists after his death and, merged with the ethereal heaven, wanders (Σωσικράτους τόδε μνήμα χυτὴ κατὰ γαῖα καλύπτει, / ὃς θάν' ο < ὑ > χ ὀσίως / ἀλλ' ἀδίκωι θανάτωι / ψυχὴ δ' αἰθερίωι κόσμωι μειχθεῖσα πλανᾶται [this grave of Sosikrates is hidden by a mound of earth, he died not piously but with an iniquitous death, and his soul, mixed with the ethereal heaven, wanders])³⁰. In an epigram coming from fourth-century B.C. Attica, we learn that Nikoptoleme will have a place next to Persephone, if any recognition of piety exists (CEG 603: σῆς ἀρετῆς, Νικοπτολέμη, χρόνος οὔποτε λ [ὑ] σει | / μνήμην ἀθάνατον, σῶι πόσει ἦν ἔλιπες / εἰ δέ τις εὐσεβίας παρὰ Φερσεφόνοι χάρις ἐστίν , | / καὶ σοὶ τῆσδε μέρος δῶκε Τύχη φθιμένει [Of your excellence, Nikoptoleme, time shall not destroy its immortal remembrance, which you have left to your husband. And if any recognition of piety exists next to Persephone, to you too, dead, Fortune has granted some share]). The speaker of CEG 571 asserts Melitta that she will honor and love her dead Nurse and shares her belief and hope that if there is any reward for the good, Melitta will receive the honor to take a place next to Persephone and Pluto³¹. These are some of the first testimonies of a gradual, but qualitative, change in the conception of piety, where it ceases to be merely an attitude and becomes connected to a belief that showing piety towards the gods in this life may have its reward after death³², even though they are indications that this kind of hope for an afterlife may be linked to the followers of mystery cults (Eleusinian, Dionysiac, Orphic, etc.)³³. But are similar hopes for the afterlife attested to literary songs for the dead coming from the archaic or classical age?

Pindaric *thrēnoi*, composed during the early classical period, characterize lament as an act of reciprocity and a continuation of sharing between living and dead communities over the barrier of mortality³⁴. In these compositions, the end of life is not regarded as a definitive moment of change³⁵. The *thrēnos* treats life and death or reincarnation as analogical and integral wholes bound less by a liminal period of transition than by a change in existence embodied by the onset of the afterlife or reincarnation, itself associated with the positive gift of the god³⁶. This genre emphasizes the well-being of the afterlife, ὄλβος,

29. We follow the text and the translation of González González for all epigrams, unless otherwise stated.

30. See the analysis of González González (2019: 129-32).

31. For this epigram see also González González 2019: 133-134.

32. See González González 2019: 132-133.

33. See González González 2019: 137-138.

34. See Derderian 2001: 117.

35. See Derderian 2001: 120.

36. See Derderian 2001: 120.

and the particular fate of the initiate in life after death³⁷. Fragment 133 S-M³⁸ represents a conception of the afterlife disconnected from the traditional poetic imagery of the underworld, and perhaps draws on Empedoclean, Pythagorean, Orphic, or Dionysiac philosophy³⁹. Although the fragment refers to initiation, the image of death here remains analogous to those above: continued exchange in the afterlife as among the community of the living, the attainment of heroic status or reincarnation (lines 2-5), and a continued reputation among the living even after death⁴⁰.

***Elpis* in Ancient Greek Tragic Laments**

The antiphonal form of song of lamentation continued and was elaborated in the *kommos* of tragedy⁴¹. Often a solo song, especially the *parodos*, turns into a threnodic song when the chorus sings along with the mourning actor⁴². However, Greek tragedy tends to distort and mix up choral genres⁴³. This is also the case with songs of lament. Tragedy often subverts the funerary ritual, for example, in cases when the mourner laments in isolation or laments his future death or when the body itself may be absent, isolating the lament from the funeral ritual with which it is normally associated⁴⁴. In Greek tragedy one can even grieve for his imminent demise⁴⁵. Lamentation in ancient Greek tragedy can be ignited not only by a recent death⁴⁶, but also by the anticipation of such an event⁴⁷, by a

37. See Derderian 2001: 123. See, for example, fr. 129.9 S-M: εὐανθῆς ἅπας τέθαλεν ὄλβος; fr. 131a S-M: ὄλβιοι δ' ἅπαντες αἴσα λυσιπόνων τελετῶν; fr. 134 S-M: εὐδαιμόνων δραπέτας οὐκ ἔστιν ὄλβος; fr. 137.1 S-M: ὄλβιος ὅστις ἰδὼν κεῖν' εἶσ' ὑπὸ χθόν'. Pindar links piety and morality to a happy afterlife in fr. 214 S-M, using the terminology of this emotion. Nonetheless, we cannot tell if this fragment belongs to a Pindaric *thrénos*.

38. οἷσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος / δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὑπερθεὺν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτω ἔτει / ἀνδιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν, ἐκ τῶν βασιλῆες ἀγαοὶ / καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφία τε μέγιστοι / ἄνδρες αὖξοντ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἦροες ἄ- / γνοι πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλέονται [But as for those from whom Persephone accepts requital for the ancient grief, in the ninth year she returns their souls to the upper sunlight, from them arise proud kings and men who are swift in strength and greatest in wisdom, and for the rest of time they are called sacred heroes among men]. We follow the translation of Race.

39. See Derderian 2001: 124 for more bibliography.

40. See Derderian 2001: 124.

41. Arist. *Poet.* 12. 1452b.

42. On this issue see Pattoni 1989: 49-60. Weiss argues that lament, when not in its purely solo form, typically involves a lyric exchange between a female leader and a sympathetic female chorus, as is seen in some of Euripides' plays. See Weiss 2014: 125.

43. See Weiss 2020.

44. See Swift 2010: 322-323.

45. See Chong-Gossard 2013: 40.

46. Wright's definition of tragic lament is rather strict. She defines lament in tragedy as «a song or a speech given by a character alone or with other characters or the chorus on the occasion of death». See Wright 1986: 2.

47. Wright recognizes that there were tragic laments for anticipated or imagined deaths, but considers them novelties representing innovations on the occasion. See Wright 1986: 2, n. 4. Swift underlines that tragedy often subverts the funerary ritual, e.g., in cases when the mourner laments in isolation or laments his/her future death or when the body itself may be absent, isolating the lament from the funeral ritual with which it is normally associated. See Swift 2010: 322-323. According to Chong-Gossard, in Greek tragedy, one can grieve for his imminent demise. See Chong-Gossard 2013: 40.

death that happened in the past⁴⁸, or by the fall of a city⁴⁹. There are laments performed exclusively by a solo singer. There are also laments performed by male singers, which seem to be the norm in real life since performances of ritual lamentation in real life usually involve an antiphonal dialogue between a central figure and a chorus of women⁵⁰.

Tragedy offers us the rare opportunity to hear the deceased lamenting himself or herself. We encounter several tragic heroes or heroines lamenting themselves⁵¹. One example is Antigone in Sophocles' eponymous tragedy. Antigone in lines 806-882 mourns her death along with the Chorus. It is obvious that this is a perversion of mourning practices as Antigone mourns her death⁵², but this tragic practice allows us to have a glimpse of the voice of the 'deceased'.

Lines 806-816:

ὄρατ' ἔμ', ὦ γᾶς πατρίας πολῖται,
τᾶν νεάταν ὁδὸν
στείχουσιν, νεάτον δὲ φέγ-
γος λεύσσοσαν ἀελίου,
κοῦποτ' αὖθις· ἀλλὰ μ' ὁ παγ-
κοίτας Ἅϊδας ζῶσαν ἄγει
τᾶν Ἀχέροντος
ἀκτάν, οὔθ' ὕμεναίων
ἔγκληρον, οὔτ' ἐπι νυμ-
φείδ' ἔτι με τίς ὕ-
μνος ὕμνησεν, ἀλλ' Ἀχέροντι νυμφεύσω.

Behold me, fellow citizens
of my ancestral land,
walking the last mile, the last road,
seeing the sun's light
which I shall never see again 810
for the last time.
Hades, the god of death,
who puts us all to sleep,
leads me living to the banks of Acheron.
No wedding songs are sung for me
as I become his bride⁵³.

Although she does not use the terminology of *elpis*, Antigone refers to what she believed that she would receive, that is, a husband. Instead of getting married, Antigone is going to die⁵⁴.

48. See Suter 2003: 5-6.

49. See Alexiou 1974: 83-85; Suter 2003: 5-6.

50. Nonetheless, lament was not a particularly gendered genre in Greek tragedy. See Suter 2002: 156.

51. Self-lamentation was a usual practice of captive women in Greek tragedy. See Dué 2006: 16, 20.

52. See Swift 2010: 403.

53. For *Antigone*, we use the text of Lloyd-Jones and Wilson. We follow the translation of Fainlight and Littman.

54. In *Antigone*, the views expressed on hope are rather pessimistic. The ambivalence that hope can have, is discussed by the Chorus in lines 615-625. According to the Chorus, human beings succumb to ἄτη because

Tragedy offers us the rare opportunity to hear the laments of male heroes. In lines 815-865 of Sophocles' *Ajax*⁵⁵, Ajax gives a speech before his suicide. Many of these lines resemble the language of lament⁵⁶. In lines 850-853, Ajax imagines his mother's grief and refers to ritual funerary activities. In lines 859-865, Ajax bids farewell to Salamis and Troy and refers again to ritual practice. Of course, we encounter a perversion of mourning practice, since the deceased speaks his own epitaph⁵⁷. What is more, Ajax in his speech expresses his hopes concerning his moment of death and his new form of existence as a dead body. Ajax prays to Hermes for a quick and painless death (lines 833-835), and Zeus for his brother to discover his dead body quickly (lines 823-832). He also prays to the Furies, wishing that the Argives will see his dead body (lines 836-845), and to the Sun to send the news of his death to his parents (lines 846-865). Ajax does not use the terminology of *elpis*, but he refers to the near future, focusing on the here and now of his death, and expresses likely hypotheses. He talks about a desired outcome, and the element of desire, striving, or yearning is implied in this context.

Tragic heroines and heroes often lament someone else's fate. In lines 1021-1049 of Euripides' *Medea*, we have an unusual case. The children are not dead yet, but their mother laments them as if they were already dead. Their mourner will also be their killer. Medea laments her failed *elpides* regarding her children. Although Medea's words can be heard as the complaints of one who is to be permanently separated from her living children, they are easily recognized by the audience as motifs of mourning for dead children⁵⁸. Medea calls herself miserable and tells her children that she had many hopes for them. Medea hoped that her boys would tend to her in her old age and dress her for burial with their own hands.

Lines 1032-1036:

ἦ μὴν ποθ' ἢ δύστηνος εἶχον ἐλπίδας
πολλὰς ἐν ὑμῖν, γηροβοσκήσειν τ' ἐμὲ
καὶ καθανοῦσαν χερσὶν εὖ περιστελεῖν,
ζηλωτὸν ἀνθρώποισι· νῦν δ' ὄλωλε δὴ
γλυκεῖα φροντίς.

Truly, many were the hopes that I, poor fool,
once had in you, that you would tend me in my old age
and when I died dress me for burial with your own hands,
an enviable fate for mortals. But now this
sweet imagining has perished⁵⁹.

As Medea seems to perform a private ritual lament, she also seems to invert many of the conventions of the genre⁶⁰, since she will be the one to take the life of the people she mourns. In Euripides' *Heracles* (lines 451-496), Megara laments the children's impend-

they are lured by hope in the form of both their own desires and God-sent deception. See also Griffith 1999: 229.

55. For the *Ajax*, we use the edition of Lloyd-Jones and Wilson.

56. See Swift 2010: 402-403.

57. See Swift 2010: 403.

58. See Mastromarde 2002: 335.

59. We use the text and the translation of Kovacs.

60. See Swift 2010: 408.

ing death. Although their mourner will not be their killer, as in *Medea*, many of the conventions of private ritual lament and the usual mourning ritual are inverted. The dead are not yet dead, and the mourner will be one of the deceased⁶¹. Although Megara does not sing in these lines, her speech resembles the private facets of ritual lament where a song was the preferred form of expression. Megara mentions how bitterly her *elpides* have disappointed her (lines 461-462: ἤ πολὺ με δόξης ἐξέπαισαν ἐλπίδες, / ἦν πατὴρ ὕμῶν ἐκ λόγων ποτ' ἤλπισα [Oh, how far have I fallen from that expectation of good hope, which I hoped for once from the words of your father])⁶². Megara uses an image of falling to emphasize the lability of *elpis*. Her hopes or desires for her sons, which in this case were the same as her beliefs (δόξης), have fallen⁶³. These hopes were once formed from the words of their father. Heracles wanted to exalt them with three principalities while Megara was choosing the best brides for them, scheming to link them by marriage to Athens, Thebes, and Sparta. Megara's high hopes come into sharp contrast with their humiliating fate⁶⁴.

Euripides' *Trojan Women* is the tragedy of laments⁶⁵. In lines 740-779⁶⁶, Andromache laments Astyanax's fate. Although Andromache does not use lyric meter, many of the conventions of private ritual lamentation are present⁶⁷, and we are allowed to say that this part of *Trojan Women* alludes, at least, to the tradition of ritual lament⁶⁸. Although Andromache does not use the terminology of this emotion, she identifies as the source of the child's ill-fortune the nobility of his father (lines 743-745), which was the source of salvation for others. As Kovacs argues (Kovacs 2018: 247), Andromache by using the phrase διὰ κενῆς in line 757 not only uses the «in vain I raised you» motif to express dismay when one's child dies and cannot be a γηροβοσκός but here Andromache means that she expected to have the pleasure of seeing Astyanax grown to manhood. Andromache's speech seems influenced by her lament in the *Iliad* that recalls Hector's hopes regarding their son's future in the *homilia* only to subvert them⁶⁹. Once again, the mourned person has not yet died. The dashed hopes of Hecuba for the boy are a large part of her moving speech to his corpse at 1167-1202⁷⁰.

In the closing scenes of *Rhesus*⁷¹, grieving Musa establishes a hero-cult, infusing the play with some gladness and some hope⁷². She declares that she prefers to mourn Rhesus alone in lines 948-949⁷³, reversing the threnodic convention, as she prefers a personal

61. See Swift 2010: 407.

62. We use the text of Kovacs and the translation of Fisher.

63. See Cairns 2016: 35. ἐξέπαισαν derives from the verb ἐκπαίω (throw). See LSJ s.v. ἐκπαίω.

64. Fisher observes that the same happens in the comparable cases in Euripides' *Hecuba* (lines 349-354) and *Trojan Women* (lines 342-347, 484-490).

65. Suter argues that Euripides is presenting the whole *Trojan Women* as a lament. See Suter 2003: 10.

66. For the *Trojan Women*, we use the edition of Diggle.

67. See Swift 2010: 409.

68. Wright also identifies lines 740-763 as a lament for Astyanax. See Wright 1986: ch. 6 and 7. See also Suter 2003: 6.

69. On the relationship between the *Iliad* and the *Trojan Women* see, for example, Dyson and Lee 2000: 25-27; Suter 2003: 17; Munteanu 2010-2011: 136-137.

70. See Kovacs 2018: 247.

71. For the *Rhesus*, we use the edition of Fries.

72. See Markantonatos 2004: 16.

73. On Musa's decision see the comments of Fries. See Fries 2014: 464-465, with more bibliography.

mourning song rather than formal activity, and as an individual rather than a group⁷⁴. Musa, while lamenting her son, denies Hector's offer of a stately burial (lines 959-960). Instead, she announces her plan to establish a cult for Rhesus in Thrace. Her programmatic statement delineates a mystical schema, which brings to mind distinctive Orphic, Eleusinian, and Bacchic themes⁷⁵. Musa will ask Persephone to send up Rhesus' soul. His post-mortem fate is to lie hidden in the caves of Thrace, and to act as a prophet of Dionysus. She alludes to eschatological hopes promised by mystery cults⁷⁶.

The Chorus often plays a central part in tragic lamentation. Ismene and Antigone in the Exodus of Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, while performing an antiphonal lament along with the Chorus, they wonder to what last *elpis* does the divinity now drive them (lines 1748-1750: φεῦ, φεῦ· ποῖ μόλωμεν, ὦ Ζεῦ; / ἐλπίδων γὰρ ἐς τί<ν> ἔτι> με / δαίμων τανῶν γ' ἐλαύνει; [Alas, alas—where can we turn next, O Zeus? Toward what last hope is fate driving me?])⁷⁷. *Elpis* here refers to the future of the survivors, and it is presented as God-sent. The divinity is said to pull, push or drag people into *elpis*⁷⁸.

The Chorus of *Alcestis* seems to hope that the heroine might survive the day against all odds. Their only hope is to somehow reverse her day of death. The men try to hold onto this hope. They wonder if there is any *elpis* that the heroine will save her life in line 146 (ἐλπίς μὲν οὐκέτ' ἐστὶ σῶζεσθαι βίον; [Is there then no hope that her life may be saved?])⁷⁹, and they try to cling to their hope in line 131, although they seem to admit that her odds of surviving are slim (line 131: νῦν δὲ βίου τίς ἔτ' ἐλπίδα προσδέχομαι; [But now what hope can I still embrace that she will live?]). The Chorus sings a funeral song to honor Alcestis in lines 435-476. They sing their farewell to Alcestis and they mention their hope that Alcestis will be rewarded in her afterlife for her piety. They also refer to the fact that any song has a function of the memorialization of the dead, and in this case, the memorialization of Alcestis⁸⁰.

In lines 1226-1259 of *Trojan Women*, an antiphonal lament to mourn Astyanax is performed by Hecuba and the female Chorus. Hecuba says that her grandson's death has torn the high hopes of Andromache to shreds (lines 1251-1255: ἰὼ ἰώ· / μελέα μήτηρ, ἦ τὰς μεγάλας / ἐλπίδας ἐν σοὶ κατέκναψε βίου. / μέγα δ' ὀλβισθεὶς ὡς ἐκ πατέρων / ἀγαθῶν ἐγένου, / δεινῷ θανάτῳ διόλωλας [Ah! ah! Unhappy mother, whose high hopes for your life have been wrecked! You, child, though greatly blessed in your noble birth, have perished by a terrible death!])⁸¹. As Cairns notes (Cairns 2016: 35, n. 80), here *elpis* is not presented as the desire that aims at a target, but (by metonymy) as the target, the object of desire itself, as an object that may be torn, shattered, or broken⁸².

74. See Swift 2010: 410.

75. See Markantonatos 2004: 32. On the establishment of Rhesus' cult by Musa see also Fries 2014: 13, 15, 468.

76. See Markantonatos 2004: 33.

77. We use the text of Lloyd-Jones and Wilson and the translation of Fainlight and Littman.

78. See LSJ s.v. ἐλαύνω.

79. For *Alcestis*, we use the text and the translation of Kovacs. As Parker suggests, here, the members of the Chorus seek to clear away the question of whether Alcestis can survive, before going on to ask about the funeral arrangements. See Parker 2007: 84.

80. See Swift 2010: 405.

81. For the *Trojan Women*, we use the text of Diggle and the translation of Kovacs.

82. Κνάπτω means to tear and it is also used to describe a form of torture. See LSJ s.v. κνάπτω.

***Elpis* in Hellenistic, Imperial, and Late Antique Funerary Epigrams**

The tradition of inscribed songs for the dead flourished during the Hellenistic times and it continued until the Late Antiquity. In the material record, almost always the emotion of *elpis* is expressed by parents or guardians since children were considered too young to understand and express it, as this particular emotion has a cognitive aspect and presupposes the ability to understand one's present position⁸³. Nonetheless, in some Hellenistic and Imperial epigrams for people who have died young, we often hear the deceased talking about deceived *elpides*. In *SEG* 38, coming from second-century A.D. Beroia, the beautiful maiden Parthenope complains that Jealousy and Pluteus stripped off the golden flower and cut the highest *elpides* of her parents (καὶ κείρας γονέων ἐλπίδας ἐσθλοτάτας, κείρας γονέων ἐλπίδας ἐσθλοτάτας [and cut short her parents' most glorious hopes])⁸⁴. The parents of Phileas from Cyprus, who are at an advanced age, have lost their only *elpis* (*Salamine* 13.192: οἱ δ' ὀλέσαντες / ἐλπίδα τὰν μούναν γηραλέοι γενέται). The young Mne-monios, in an epigram probably coming from the second century A.D. from Thessalian Larisa, uses the same image used in the epigram for the death of Parthenope. Jealousy and Pluteus (Hades) plundered the golden flower and cut short the most wretched *elpides* of those close to him (*SEG* 35.630.10-11: κείρας ἰδίων ἐλπίδας ἀθλοτάτας [and cut short the most wretched hopes of those close to him])⁸⁵. In a first or second century A.D. funerary epigram for young Nicanor (*EAM* 193: Ἄιδης ... ἐλπίδας ἐκκόψας ἡμετέρων τοκέω[v] [Hades cutting the hopes of my parents])⁸⁶, we learn from the dead 12-year-old boy that Hades shattered the hopes of his parents. The deceased wonders, in an epigram found in Thespiiai (*I.Thespiiai* 1247) inscribed sometime during the third century A.D., if there is someone who passed by his grave and did not lament the unfulfilled hopes of their parents (τίς ἐλπίδες οὐ[κ ἐδάκρυσεν] τὰς ἀτελ(ε)ῖς γονέων, εἰς ἐμὲ δερκόμε[νος] [and who did not weep the unfulfilled hopes of my parents when seeing me?])⁸⁷. Young Hypatos, in a first century A.D. epigram found in Capri (*GV* 1576), complains because Hades interrupted his *elpides* and the *elpides* of his parents (ἄρτι δὲ καὶ γονέων ἐλπίδ' ἐμὴν στερέσας [a horrible fate has deprived my parents of the expectations they had of me])⁸⁸.

Most of these hopes are not specified, but sometimes we can have a glimpse of these unfulfilled hopes. In an epigram from Perinthos (*AEM* 8.220-221) for the death of a young athlete, we can hear the voice of Doras telling us that jealous Hades put him to sleep despite him being the *elpis* of his father and his fatherland (παῖδά με καὶ πατρὸς ἐλπίδα καὶ πατέρος [as a child I was the hope of my fatherland and my father])⁸⁹. This epigram provides us a glimpse of the kind of hopes that were left unfulfilled⁹⁰. Doras was the hope for athletic victories. A girl named Rhadon in a Hellenistic epigram from Crete (*ICret.* 2.5.50, first century A.D.) refers to her marriage that never took place because Hades violated

83. See Bobou 2018: 331. See Cairns 2016 for the cognitive and affective aspects of hope as an emotion.

84. We use the translation of Hunter.

85. This poem does not need to be an imitation of the poem for Parthenope. Most probably, they both depend on earlier 'models', circulating both orally and in written form. See on this Hunter 2022: 12-13. We use the translation of Hunter.

86. We use the translation of Chaniotis. See Chaniotis 2018.

87. We use the translation of Chaniotis. See Chaniotis 2013.

88. We use the translation of Chaniotis. See Chaniotis 2018.

89. We use the translation of Bobou.

90. See more on this epigram in Bobou 2018: 332-333.

her while she was still a maiden. Hades is said to spill the *elpides* of her parents (γονέων δ' ἐλπίδας ἐξέχεα [I have failed the hopes of my parents])⁹¹. In a late third/early fourth century A.D. epigram from Tomis (*IScM* II 384), Lillas complains that *elpides* led him to believe that he could rear a child. His belief gave him hope (εἰς ἐλπίδας ἄγεσθαι [and to be led into hopes])⁹². Nonetheless, his hopes have been frustrated.

The parents of the deceased always lose their *elpides*. Deceived hope misses its target, in a funerary epigram coming from the Hellenistic period (*SEG* 8.269: ἔσφηλεν δ' ἐλπίδα τις νέμεσις [and some nemesis frustrated your hope])⁹³. The mourner's *elpis* regarding his son missed the target (σφάλλειν) due to an early death. *Elpis* is not only goal-oriented⁹⁴, but also requires reasoning⁹⁵. *Elpis* can miss the target or be misplaced. A first-century B.C. funerary epigram coming from Chios (*GVI* 1420: γηροτρόφους ἐλπίδας ὠφράνισεν [has been robbed of his hopes of finding carers in old age])⁹⁶ informs us that a premature death «orphaned» (ὠφράνισεν) the bereaved parents of the hope of being taken care of when they get old. The ending of hopes is a familiar epitaphic motif, but this epigrammatist suggests that the elder Protarchos, the father of the deceased, was robbed of his hopes and uses a term used for children left behind, not for the elder⁹⁷, emphasizing the man's passion. In *GV* 661 from Kios, we learn that the father of Asklepiodotos hid all the joy of his *elpides* in the ground (τὴν πᾶσαν εἰς γῆν ἐλπίδων κρύψας χαρὰν [He hid all the joy of hopes in the ground])⁹⁸.

The funerary epigrams of the *Greek Anthology* are literary texts that imitate real-life funerary epigrams. These later inscribed songs for the dead are a curious case, since they exhibit remarkable stability at the morphological and thematic level, although they have a large chronological range: from classical times to the Late Antiquity. Young people's *elpides* often remain unfulfilled. In an epigram written by Agathias (7.583) the marriage of an unnamed woman led to her demise. The woman and her child died during childbirth. Agathias draws a picture of the unborn baby striving to see the light. We are told that the *elpides* of the baby to be born remained unfulfilled for three days (τὸ βρέφος ἀπρήκτοις ἐλπίσι τικτόμενον [the babe remained with unfulfilled hope of its being born])⁹⁹. This is also the case of Eustorgius in Agathias' 7.589. The young man died at the age of 17 and left his *elpides* of studying law unfulfilled (θεσμῶν τ' Ἀυσονίων ἐλπίδα μαυιδέην [and his unfulfilled hope of learning in Roman Law]). In an epigram dedicated to Helen by Parmenion (7.184)¹⁰⁰, the girl died before getting married and the *elpis* of her suitors mourned equally for her who belonged to no one (οὐδενὸς ἢ πάντων ἐλπίς ἔκλαυσεν ἴσως [for the hope of all mourned equally for her who was yet no one's])¹⁰¹.

A series of metaphors are used to describe the deceived hopes of the dead or their loved ones. In an epigram written, supposedly, by Plato for the death of Dion of Syracuse

91. This translation is mine. For more on this epigram, see Martínez Fernández 2006: 177-178.

92. We use the translation of Horsley. See Horsley 1982.

93. We use the translation of Chaniotis. See Chaniotis 2018.

94. See Cairns 2016: 35 for this metaphor.

95. See Chaniotis 2018: 353.

96. The translation is based on Hunter's. See Hunter 2022: 46, 122.

97. See Hunter 2022: 122.

98. For more on this epigram see Bobou 2018: 329-330. We use the translation of Bobou.

99. We follow the edition of Paton.

100. We follow the edition of Paton.

101. We follow the translation of Paton.

(7.99)¹⁰², we learn that Dion has died just at the point when his «broad hopes» seemed near to fulfillment, and in death, he is honored by his townsmen. Dion's *elpides*, resembling a fluid, are said to have been spilled by the gods (δαίμονες εὐρείας ἐλπίδας ἐξέχεαν [the gods spilt all your far-reaching hopes])¹⁰³. Dion's *elpides* resemble a fluid that can be spilt. Appolonides in 7.389, mourns the fate of Poseidippous who has to bury his four sons. Death is said to have cut short all his *elpides* of them (τὴν πολλὴν παίδων ἐλπίδα κειραμένου [that cut short all his hopes of them])¹⁰⁴. *Elpides* can also be put to rest. This is the case in an epigram written by Parmenion on the death of young Crocale (7.183). Death took the maidenhood of the girl and the *elpides* of her parents were laid rest not by marriage, but by the tomb (τὰς δὲ γαμούντων / ἐλπίδας οὐ θάλαμος κοίμισεν, ἀλλὰ τάφος [and the fond anxiety of her parents was set to rest not by marriage but by the tomb])¹⁰⁵. Serapion of Alexandria adopts a philosophical tone in 7.400, mourning the death of a man of labor. He addresses the passer-by and tells him to announce to all people that eagerly pursuing other *elpides*, similar or not to the hopes of the deceased, is the common fate of all to rest at the end in the haven of such a hope (σπεύδοντες ἐς ἄλλας ἐλπίδας εἰς τοίην ἐλπίδα λυόμεθα [eagerly pursuing other hopes we all rest at the end in the haven of such a hope])¹⁰⁶. Here *elpis* is the one that puts people to rest.

Elpis has a tendency to fail in the achievement of its goals and this is what makes it an object that is light or insubstantial or an entity that is liable to take wing and fly off¹⁰⁷. In 7.376, written by Crinagoras on Seleucus' death, the *elpides* of all men are presented as empty (τί κεναισιν ἀλώμεθα θαρσῆσαντες / ἐλπίσιν, ἀτηροῦ ληθόμενοι θανάτου [why do we wander confiding in empty hopes, oblivious of painful death?])¹⁰⁸. This is a common metaphor denoting the temporary or illusory nature of *elpis*¹⁰⁹. These empty hopes make men confident, or even over-confident and lead them to forget that they will die. *Elpis* is described as an object that can be easily destroyed. Diotimus mourns the death of Lesbon in 7.420, and calls the *elpides* of humans the light goddesses (ἐλπίδες ἀνθρώπων, ἐλαφραὶ θεαί). If human hopes had a different nature, then Lesbon would not have been dead. *Elpides* are often depicted as light in ancient Greek poetry¹¹⁰.

Elpis is something that can be stored up, even in a grave. Philippus, a bereaved father, stores up his 12-year-old son, his great *elpis* in Callimachus' epigram (7.453: Δωδεκέτη τὸν παῖδα πατὴρ ἀπέθηκε Φίλιππος / ἐνθάδε, τὴν πολλὴν ἐλπίδα, Νικοτέλην [his father Philippus stored up here his twelve-year-old son, his great hope, Nicoteles])¹¹¹. The verb ἀπέθηκε denotes either the act of burying someone in the ground or the act of stowing something away to use it later¹¹². *Elpides* are described as an object in 7.490 Anyte's epigram on the death of Antibia. The maiden had many suitors eager to marry her due to her beauty and good character. Fate sent the *elpides* of all to roll far away (ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πάντων /

102. See Bowra 1938, with more bibliography.

103. See LSJ s.v. ἐκχέω. We use the edition of Paton.

104. We follow the translation of Paton.

105. We follow the translation of Paton.

106. We follow the translation of Paton.

107. See Cairns 2016: 35.

108. We follow the translation of Paton.

109. See Cairns 2016: 29-30.

110. See Cairns 2016: 35 with n. 85 for more examples.

111. We use the translation of Cairns. See Cairns 2016.

112. See LSJ s.v. ἀποτίθημι.

ἐλπίδας οὐλομένα Μοῖρ' ἐκύλισε πρόσω [Fate, in the case of all, sent their hopes rolling far away)]¹¹³. Isidorus warns the passer-by, using the voice of the deceased Eteocles in 7.532, that *elpis* is something that has the power to draw someone from his ordinary life and lead him into a life full of danger. *Elpis* of the sea drew Eteocles from husbandry and made him a merchant (πόντιος ἐλπὶς εἴλκυσεν [whom the hopes of the sea drew from])¹¹⁴. This verb is commonly used to describe the power of magnets or magic spells to attract people to someone or something¹¹⁵.

There are indications in several epigrams of the *Greek Anthology* that the ancient Greeks had hopes concerning either the status of the deceased as such (their moment of death, the grave, the dead body) or the future of the deceased involving their afterlife. Nonetheless, the terminology of the emotion or the common metaphors describing this emotion are not encountered in these epigrams. The author of 7.23 expresses his hopes that Anacreon's ashes and bones may have joy while he is in the grave. In 7.26, it is the poet himself who asks the passer-by to pour some drops of wine on his ashes so that his bones may rejoice refreshed with wine. In 7.28, the poet expresses a similar wish.

In Gregory Nazianzus' *Upon the Violators of Tombs*, we learn that there are people able to hope that they will gain something from the dead and especially their tombs. In 8.186, the deceased person complains because someone has violated his tomb, hoping to gain gold from the dead (εἰ μὴ χρυσὸν ἔχειν ἤλπετο ἐκ νεκρῶν [if gold he had not hoped to gain from the dead]). The *persona loquens* regards the resting places of the dead as living organisms since he wishes that the memorials of the dead were also dead (νεκρῶν νεκρὰ πέλοι καὶ μνήματα [if only the dead's memorials were dead]). A tomb is full of life, although its inhabitant is lifeless. This condition of the tomb allows the violators of tombs to gain profit by something that has to do with the here and now of a dead body. In 8.208, the deceased person wishes to the violator of his tomb ill. We can even suppose that this violator did not earn much, since the speaker calls his *elpis* an empty one (ἐλπίδι κούρη [in empty hope]). We know that when this metaphor is used, the aims of the hoping person are not properly met¹¹⁶. The speaker of 8.209, laments the violation of his exceptional tomb. He states that his resting place was ruined by someone who hoped to get gold (κάμῃ χρυσὸς ἔπερσε μέγαν περικαλλέα τύμβον / ἐλπισθεὶς [in hope of gold, one wasted me, this large exquisite tomb]).

In the *Greek Anthology*, we encounter numerous epigrams attesting to the swift from the belief that death is a final event that separates in perpetuum the deceased from their old life, and the living to the belief that there is an afterlife. We learn that prominent people, such as poets, continue to enjoy the activities they enjoyed while they were alive. Anacreon still sings, dances, and drinks in the underworld in several funerary epigrams (7.25, 7.27, 7.30, 7.31), Sappho continues her poetic performances in the epigram of Dioscurides, and Plato's soul in 7.61 dwells among the Blest. The soul of Aetius, the distinguished orator, is in Olympus and rejoices with Zeus and the other gods. In 7.241, most likely Ptolemy Eupator¹¹⁷ is said not to have been led by Hades to his house, but by Zeus

113. We use the edition of Paton.

114. We follow the edition of Paton.

115. See LSJ s.v. ἔλκω.

116. See Cairns 2016: 32-33.

117. It is not certain which of the Egyptian princes this is – perhaps Ptolemy Eupator, who died in about 150 B.C.

to Olympus. In 7.363, we learn that also Zenodotus' soul was found in heaven, where Orpheus and Plato were. Diodorus in 7.370 informs us that Menander's soul can be found in the abode of Zeus or the Islands of the Blest. Lollius Bassius, an epigrammatist of the first century A.D., informs us that Germanicus, a prominent Roman general, belongs to the stars and not to Hades. Common people, like Pnytagoras in 7.374, can also continue their journey. The deceased in this case informs us that although his body cannot be found, he embarked on another boat among the dead. In 7.365, the son of Cinyras embarks on a boat that will lead him to the afterlife. The bereaved father implores Hades to receive him, for the boy cannot walk steadily in his sandals, and he fears setting his bare feet on the sand of the beach. Finally, Gregory Nazianzus in epigram 8.81, who writes a funerary epigram for himself, uses the terminology of *elpis* referring to his hope for an afterlife (ἐλπιδ' ἐπουρανίην, a hope in heaven), attaching a new theological meaning to this phrase.

Conclusions

We examined a series of texts starting from the Homeric *gōoi* and ending with fourth-century A.D. epigrams of the *Greek Anthology*. We argue that a study of *elpis* in ancient Greek literary laments and songs for the dead will enable us to have a slightly clearer image of the evolution of this oral genre from archaic times to the Late Antiquity. The various performers of laments and songs for the dead in ancient Greek literature, complain about their lost *elpides*. They also have hopes for an afterlife. We are free to suppose that *elpis*, as a socially constructed emotion, provides us glimpses of social and religious changes. Sporadically, in archaic and classical epigrams we get the impression that the ancient Greeks believed that the body of the dead was gone, but their soul outlived its mortal vessel. The existence of an afterlife is often linked in these epigrams to the piety of the deceased, if not to their participation in various mystery cults. These hopes expressed in material evidence are often treated like an object that may be torn, cut, lost, spilled, and hidden in the ground, or that misses its target like an arrow.

There are a lot of perversions of ritual lament and its conventions within the tragic corpus, as we hear people near death perform a lament for their death, killers mourn their victims or victims to be, and people deny mourning their loved ones along with other people. In the literary laments embedded in ancient Greek tragedy, the young are more often grieved, and similar emphasis is placed on the deceived hopes of their parents or other relatives. Parents often lament their lost hopes of being taken care of by their children, their deceived hopes of their children's prosperity and longevity, and even public success. The people mourning themselves are allowed to talk about their hopes, even when they are relatively young. In comparison with the Homeric laments, there are references to *elpides* concerning the here and now of a recently dead person and the afterlife. Nonetheless, the terminology of hope and almost all the common metaphors of *elpis* in ancient Greece appear more often when the mourners, or the one who is destined to die, speak about their past hopes.

The traditional opposition between life and death, past and present is almost non-existent in many of the epigrams of the *Greek Anthology*. The deceased find pleasure in what pleased them while they were alive, whether it be the art of poetry or more earthy pleasures. They are also given a voice to talk about their *elpides*. They often refer to a period when the catalectic event had not yet occurred, the liminal stage of death and burial, the existence of the dead in their final resting place, and the future of the dead and

the bereaved. Often the distinction between their dead body and their immortal soul is underlined. *Elpides* concerning their afterlife are expressed and linked to mystery cults and even to the Christian faith. The existence of the monument and all its implications, as well as the fact that from the Hellenistic times on we have been a culture of books, encourage all types of communication between the dead and the living, and ultimately, encourage beliefs of an afterlife. The terminology of *elpis* and the metaphors attached to hope, which are considerably enriched, more often appear in the epigrams talking about deceived hopes.

Even if a study of hope in these contexts cannot fully illuminate the evolution of ritual lament, it can provide indications about the nature of this genre. Laments served psychological, religious, and social needs. These needs changed from time to time according to the beliefs regarding death and life after death. The tradition of lament was influenced not only by societal changes and religious beliefs, but also by the emergence of the book culture that offered new opportunities to the genre. We cannot doubt that the study of emotions in ancient Greece can also shed new light on various literary and social phenomena.

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