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In copertina: *Lex sacra* dal tempio di Casa Marafioti a Locri Epizefirii.

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Pseudo-Epicharmean verses in a new inscription from the Necropolis of Cyrene (Tomb S147)

Angela Cinalli (Center of Hellenic Studies, Harvard University)

When I received the invitation for participating at this miscellanea from Dr. Francesco Camia, whom I acknowledge my gratitude, I was moving the first steps in the analysis of the inscription herein presented. While at the Center for Palaeographical and Epigraphical Studies of the Ohio State University for a post-doctoral fellowship, I advanced in this study. In the process, I have always kept in mind the constructive and generous suggestions Professor Lazzarini offered me in the preliminary phase of the reading and reconstruction of this Cyrenaean inscription. During our afternoons at the École Française de Rome, where we still use to meet with frequency and enjoying discussions, Professor Lazzarini has often dedicated her time to me and graciously shared her wisdom. Among other passions, we have always shared the interest for Cyrene, and dedicating this study to her means coming full circle, as I return it to her matured and through it I take the chance to express my thankfulness for the guidance I benefited from, which extends far beyond academia.

During the surveys of the Archaeological Mission in Cyrenaica of the University “G. D’Annunzio” of Chieti in 2006, a large tomb was discovered in the Necropolis of Cyrene. Although it was registered in the Cassels’ 1955 catalogue as Tomb S147, it has remained unpublished since. The documentation of the tomb was brought to completion by the University of Chieti team who also proceeded to reinter the monument, in order to preserve it from tomb looters who seem to have recently violated it. The tomb has been included in the Chieti University GIS and it is currently under study, while a preliminary description of its features has been published¹.

¹ The tomb was presented at the XVIIIth International Congress of Classical

Tomb S147 is located in the Southern Necropolis of Cyrene. After its first stage, dating back to the Late Hellenistic Period, the tomb went through various phases of re-use until the Imperial Age. The external arrangement of the tomb consists of a large buried court with a false-façade on the Western side showing the entrance to the tomb. A long “galleried loculus chamber” (so-called after the J. C. Thorn classification of Cyrenaean funerary typologies²) belongs to the first stage of Tomb S147. The farthest loculi of this Late Hellenistic Gallery (AB), leading to Room C with a barrel-vaulted soffit, have been broken to enlarge the interior of the tomb. The details of doors and architraves were decorated with red and blue painting, whose traces are still *in situ*. A second stage of the tomb can be recognized in Room D featured with Alexandrian loculi and a complex series of rectangular Rooms (E-L) can be classified between this phase and later enlargements throughout the centuries (Fig. 1).

Besides the architectural patterns, showing points of contact with Mediterranean and Alexandrian³ funerary contexts, the most remarkable aspect of Tomb S147 consists of its rich epigraphic apparatus. The surprising prevalence of inscriptions traced mainly in charcoal on the interior walls of most burial rooms has inspired for S147 the name of the “Carboncini Tomb”⁴. Among the epigraphic documents of the interior space of this tomb, the charcoal inscriptions featured on the walls

Archaeology (AIAC) held in Merida in May 2013 by the author of this paper, Drs. L. Cherstich, and D. Lagatta. In the proceedings, a general description of the archaeological and epigraphic apparatus is given: vd. Cherstich – Cinalli - Lagatta 2014. A general discussion of the epigraphic features of S147 has been also included in Cinalli 2015. I wish to acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to Prof. Paola Lombardi who generously shared work prior to its publication and provided me substantive assistance and illuminating comments for the restoration of this inscription. At the same time, I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Oliva Menozzi, Director of the Archaeological Mission in Cyrenaica of the University “G. D’Annunzio” of Chieti, for involving me in the research project on newly discovered inscriptions of Cyrenaica. I am also grateful to Dr. Luca Cherstich for providing me archaeological data and photographic materials of Tomb S147.

² Thorn 2005, 333-335, 350-352.

³ For the analysis of contacts between Cyrene and Alexandria, vd. Cherstich 2008.

⁴ Owing to their perishability, charcoal inscriptions are seldom preserved. Besides the “Carboncini Tomb”, we know thus far only one more tomb with inscriptions of this kind from the Necropolis of Cyrene: the “Garden Tomb”. A discussion of the epigraphic apparatus of the “Garden Tomb” has been included in Cinalli 2015 (vd. nt. 1). An in-depth study of the “Garden Tomb” from archaeological, decorative, and epigraphic points of view has been published in Cinalli 2014.

of Gallery AB are impressive for their quantity. They mainly consist of names and funerary formulas as to create a summary of burials. One of the inscriptions though, traced aside the fifth loculus wall of Gallery B, is enthralling for its content and literary inspiration.

It was not possible to examine the inscription directly *in situ*, nevertheless its reconstruction has been largely pursued. The palaeographical analysis of the “Carboncini Tomb” inscriptions suggests that at least two or three writers left their traces on the walls. The style of the writer of the inscription herein analyzed looks like the hand creating the inscriptions of Gallery A. The text has a lightweight and slight writing and the letters look very irregular in size and shape. Vertical strokes of *eta* and *pi* are curved, *delta* is sometimes similar to *omicron* and the curve of *sigma* and *epsilon* (both lunate) is very narrow. The inscription has been written using the space available between the fifth loculus and the architrave introducing to Room C, so that nothing else would be expected on both sides. Even though the photograph does not allow further speculations, arguably nothing preceded the first line of the inscription whereas, on the basis of some traces of letters beneath line 6, we infer that the text was supposed somehow to continue, at least for one more line (Figg. 2, 3)

Νεκρὸς ἡμὶ κόπρος,
 Κόπρος δ' ἔβη γῆ·ν·
 δ' ἐστὶ θεὸς ἢ τι
 θεὸν γῆ, κα[ι] θεὸς δ' ἐστὶ
 5 νεκρός. [Χαῖρ]ε Φιλησὼ Ἰλ-
 αρίωνος Lz⁵
 [- - -]

“Dead I am dirt, the dirt went in the soil. Earth is god or somewhat divine, then the dead is god. Farewell Phileso daughter of Hilarion, aged seven [- - -]”.

At line 2, the accusative of motion γῆν seems to neglect the final *nu*. It is difficult to affirm whether this is to be assumed as a choice rather than a distraction. On the contrary, I prefer the square brackets for the final *iota* of καί at line 4 since, in my opinion, it is no more distinguishable owing to the condition of decay of the wall in this par-

⁵ The sign L followed by a numeral is used with frequency to indicate the age, in Cyrenaican inscriptions: Marengo 1991, 656.

ticular point. Four or so indiscernible letters of a word ending with *epsilon* come before the name of the deceased at line 5. The most logical integration for this lacuna seems to be [χαῖρ]ε, an acclamation commonly attested in funerary contexts all over the Greece⁶. Also ὑγίαινε, an acclamation occurring with frequency among the inscriptions of the Carboncini Tomb, could be a suitable possibility of reconstruction, if only the space before the final *epsilon* allowed integrating more than four letters.

According to an in-depth-analysis of the photograph and to a distinguished comparison (Pl., *Phdr.* 242e), we propose to read, between lines 3 and 4, ἦ τι θε[ο]ν. The form θε[ο]ν for θεῖον, as a result of simplification of the diphthong -ει in antevocalic position, is not surprising at Cyrene⁷ and this clearly implies that the accent, on short syllable preceded by another short syllable, is an acute one.

This inscription is dedicated to the memory of a young deceased named Philesos,⁸ daughter of Ilarion⁹. The main focus of this text undoubtedly consists of the lines commenting upon death and divine. They in fact appear as a quotation of a well-known epigram shaped as a syllogism by the Pseudo-Epicharmus (fr. 297 K.-A.), attested by the Schol. (bT) Hom. X 414.

εἰμὶ νεκρός·
νεκρὸς δὲ κόπρος, γῆ δ' ἡ κόπρος ἐστίν·
εἰ δὴ γῆ θεός ἐστ', οὐ νεκρός, ἀλλὰ θεός.

⁶ In Cyrenaica, e.g., on a pre-Roman stele from Ptolemais: Bazama - Reynolds 1978-1979, 260.

⁷ Lonati 1990, 73.

⁸ The occurrences of the name Philesos come from Egypt: I.Syringes 641; SEG 2, 855. This latter inscription, on a painted funerary stele from Alexandria, records also the names of two women from Cyrene: Philesos and Sparte.

⁹ The name Hilarion does not occur in Cyrene but is largely documented in Central and Northern Greece, Asia Minor, and Italy. This anthroponym is attested, also in the form Εἰλαρίων, from the Hellenistic-Late Hellenistic period and the first century BC (in Crete, Egypt, Illyria, Attica, Delphi, and Kos: SEG 23, 554; Perdrizet - Lefebvre, *Memnonion* 614-615, nr. 637; I.Apollonia 99; Stamires 1942, 222 nr. 26; IG II² 1970; FD III 6, 107; LSCG 174), but most of the documents date to the second and the third century AD and arrive from Attica and Boeotia (IG II² 2245; SEG 12, 137; IG VII 2444, 2672), from the Northern regions of Greece (Dimitsas, *Ἡ Μακεδονία* 292 (3); IG X 2, 1, 730; I.Histriae 218; I.Tomis 83; CIRB 87, 91, 723), from Mysia and Phrygia in Asia Minor [ZPE 19 (1975) 223, 3; I.Hadrianoi 86; CIG 3664; MAMA 4, 227, 256], and from Rome (IGUR I 160). This name frequently occurs also in Late Antiquity in Thessaly, Arabia and Palestina, and in Sicily (Giannopoulos 1908, 294 nr. 9; SEG 8, 298; 20, 482; IGLS 21, 2 nr. 153; I.Gerasa 292; I.Catania 189; Manni Piraino 1973, 148; SEG 15, 580).

These verses had a long literary and epigraphic life over the centuries. They are to be included among the adages circulating under Epicharmus' name. Their fame led to the establishment of the unfading success of Epicharmus as an author of wise sentences as well as a comic poet¹⁰. A collection of his wisdom quoted in the works of other authors was also composed. During this complex process of conservation of sentences by Epicharmus, the genuine material was inevitably soon adulterated through both wrong attributions and forgers' additions¹¹. A skilled forger indeed, seems to be the author of the syllogism here considered and some clarifications about its cultural milieu and *ratio* will be convenient for better understanding the background of the inscription of the Carboncini Tomb. The first line strictly depends on Heraclitus 22 B 96 D.-K.: νέκυες γὰρ κοπρίων ἐκβλητότεροι: body is useless and despicable¹² without *psyche*¹³ which rather attributes value to it¹⁴. Evidently, this passage by Heraclitus obtained success and its revivals proposed by Plutarch¹⁵ and further intellectuals as Plotin and Julian¹⁶ univocally kept interpreting it as follows: the body, valueless by itself, gains nobility and significance respectively by *psyche* and its divine nature. The involvement of earth related to dead body¹⁷ in the Pseudo-Epicharmean syllogism pertains the well-known concept of fertilizing effect of decomposing corpses. The oldest testimony of this idea can be found in Archilochus (cited by Plutarch)¹⁸

¹⁰ Cassio 1985, 43; Álvarez Salaz 2007a, 146-147.

¹¹ Álvarez Salas 2007a, 147, 150.

¹² Macchiario 1930, 400-401, comments on the inconsistency of the interpretation of this Heraclitean passage as body impurity.

¹³ Without going through the debate on Heraclitus' *psyche* (Snell 1951, 40 ff.; Sarri 1997, 113-116) and on its limitlessness and deepness (fr. 45 D.-Kr.; Mondolfo 1956, 33-44; Walzer 1939, 82 nt. 1), it is worth to point out that this passage shows the co-existence of both naturalistic (fr. 22 A 16; 22 B 78; 76) and mystical (fr. 22 B 96; 27) theories.

¹⁴ The passage has been matched to the orphic doctrine considering the soul imprisoned into the body: Macchiario 1930, 402; Nestle 1905.

¹⁵ In Plu. 669a, this passage is engaged to a gastronomic metaphor: body finds its consistency in soul just as meat obtains its taste and flavour through salt: 'νέκυες γὰρ κοπρίων ἐκβλητότεροι,' καθ' Ἡράκλειτον, κρέας δὲ πᾶν νεκρὸν ἐστὶν καὶ νεκροῦ μέρος· ἡ δὲ τῶν ἀλῶν δύναμις, ὥσπερ ψυχὴ παραγενομένη, χάριν αὐτῷ καὶ ἡ δονὴν προστίθησι.

¹⁶ Plot., *Enn.* 5, 1, 2, 40-42; Jul., *Or.* 7, 20, 23-7.

¹⁷ Eur., *Alc.* 463-464.

¹⁸ Archil. fr. 292W apud Plu., *Mar.* 21, 7. Plutarch mentions the expression by Archilochus τὰς ἀρούρας παινεσθαι describing the custom of the Massalietai to

and Aeschylus recalled it too¹⁹. In the Pseudo-Epicharmus syllogism, the deceased is κόπρος because of the putrid humors its body exhales²⁰ (σηπεδών, as in Plutarch²¹) and γῆ becomes κόπρος by absorbing them. After the starting point showing strong affinities to established topics of philosophy and literature, the forger has added a *continuum* that is properly compliant with Epicharmus' thought adjusting his brainchild with consistency. In fact, the ideas of re-assimilation of the deceased to the earth and of deification of the body both seem to belong to Epicharmus' wisdom²². According to a passage of the *Epicharmus* by Ennius²³, earth births mankind and takes it back after death: *Terris gentis omnis peperit et resumit denuo* (fr. IV, 48 Vahl. = Varr., *L. L.* 5, 64). This concept, more than a mere reference to the role of earth as *genitrix*, can be interpreted as a connection to the theory of the Pythagorean metempsychosis²⁴: the earth does not waste anything of what it produces since the whole matter is necessary to souls for reincarnation²⁵. This dichotomy between earthy and celestial nature recalls the following fragment: *Terra corpus est, at mentis ignis est* (fr. V, 51 Vahl. = Prisc. 7, p. 341, 20 H.). The igneous essence of vital flow is still connected to the Pythagoreans. In a Plutarchean quotation of Epicharmus, the idea of elements separating and then reassembling, as they participate in a whole, universal, and eternal plan, vividly emerges: καλῶς οὖν ὁ Ἐπίχαρμος “συνεκρίθη” φησί “καὶ διεκρίθη καὶ κάπηλθεν ὅθεν ἦλθεν πάλιν, γὰρ μὲν εἰς γᾶν, πνεῦμα δ' ἄνω· τί τῶν δεχαλεπόν; οὐδὲ ἓν.” (fr. 213 K.-A. = Plu. 110a-b). Πνεῦμα goes

fatten the fields with putrid humors (σηπεδών) produced by the fallen. Cfr. also Plu. 398d and Schröder 1990, 220.

¹⁹ Aesch., *Sept.* 587: ἔγωγε μὲν δὴ τήνδε πιανῶ χθόνα. The verb used is the same one of Archilochus: vd. nt. 17. Here, in this sentence pronounced by the herald, the focus is all but clear: is it the worthlessness of body after death or the return to soil and to natural elements of the vital force when body passes away (*sim.* Pind., *Nem.* 9, 23)? For the points of contact between Aeschylus and Epicharmus, vd.: Kerkhof 2001, 136 ff.; Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012, 85-86.

²⁰ Cfr. Greg. Nyss., *Inscr. Ps.* 5, 173.

²¹ Plu., *Mar.* 21, 7.

²² Chiappelli 1889, 588.

²³ Pascal 1919; Bettini 1979, 31-51.

²⁴ The Pythagorean influence in the *Epicharmus* by Ennius could be attributed to Aristoxenus: Cassio 2002, 51: “Aristoxenus probably laid special emphasis on the Pythagorean elements in the Pseudepicharmea, thus consciously or unconsciously encouraging their production and circulation.”

²⁵ Levi 2013, 22-24, 32.

above²⁶ and earth re-joins to itself. One more fragment clearly attests that, in Epicharmus' thought, earth is among the *pricipia* provided of a divine nature (fr. 199 K.-A. = Men. fr. 838 K.-A. apud Stob. 4, 31a, 30): ὁ μὲν Ἐπίχαρμος τοὺς θεοὺς εἶναι λέγει ἀνέμους, ὕδωρ, γῆν, ἥλιον, πῦρ, ἀστέρας. Γῆ is substantially the key of this syllogism. It turns into κόπρος receiving the νεκρός *in se*, who, on his part shares the divine nature of γῆ becoming θεός himself. It is also worth pointing out that, after the initial Heraclitean statement, the Pseudo-Epicharmus epitaph continues as a λόγος αὐξανόμενος²⁷, for which the Syracusan is considered the promoter. Through the sharpness featuring this dialectical *lusus*, a comic and hyperbolic sense (λόγος ἐν λόγῳ) might even be meant so that the true intention of the author behind this syllogism could result ambiguous²⁸. Regardless of these verses are or not intended as burlesque, we are not allowed to speculate either they were intended to contrast with the Heraclitean idea of body's futility or rather to stand as a development of this speculation²⁹. Whilst a humorous intention for the literary version of the Pseudo-Epicharmean sentence could be considered³⁰, we will see that this seems unlikely for the epigraphic examples of it, all coming from funerary contexts.

Beyond the new example from Cyrene, four other inscriptions featuring the Pseudo-Epicharmus text are attested thus far, two in Greek and two in Latin. The two Greek inscriptions come from Eretria and Thisbe, respectively dating to the third century BC and to the second-third century AD, while the two Latin inscriptions both come from Rome and date between the first and the third century AD.

T.1: IG XII 9, 290; Peek 1942, 2; GVI 1126

Funerary stele from Eretria for Diogenes son of Diodoros. Third-second century BC

ll. 2-3: [Ε]ἰ θεός ἐσθ' ἡ γῆ, κάγώ θεός εἰμι δικαίως / ἐκ γῆς γὰρ βλαστῶν γενόμεν νεκρός, ἐγ δὲ νεκροῦ γῆ — — — — — — — — — — Διογένης — — — — — — — — — —

²⁶ Cfr. fr. 166 K.-A. There, a parodistic intent for soul intended as breath according to Xenophanes could conceivably be implied: Álvarez Salas 2007b, 123-125.

²⁷ Plu. 559 b.

²⁸ Epich. fr. 76 K.-A. = Eust. in Od. p. 1634, 5.

²⁹ Chiappelli 1889, 588-589 (with reference to older bibliography).

³⁰ Λόγος περὶ αὐξήσεως: Plu. 1083a-d.

T.2: Peek 1942, 3; GVI 1941

Funerary stele for a priestess of Charops³¹, found in Thisbe and preserved in Thebes, atop which a snake twisting towards a seated lion is represented (cfr. *IG VII 2359*). Second-third century AD

ll. 7-8: ἐνθάδ' ἐγὼ κεῖμαι νεκρὰ κόνις· εἰ δὲ κόνις, γῆ· εἰδ' ἢ γῆι θεός ἐστί, ἐγὼ θεός, οὐκέτι νεκρά

T.3: *CIL* 6, 29609; *CLE* 974

Funerary stele, found in Rome and now in Munich, for the ten-year-old girl named Vitalis. First century AD (?)³²

ll.4-6: ... *mortua hic sita sum, / cinis sum, cinis terra est, terra dea est, / ergo ego mortuua non sum*

T.4: *CIL* 6, 35887 (1); *CLE* 1532 (3); *ILS* 8168 (4)

Funerary stele for Mus, girl aged thirteen, found in Rome and preserved at the Musei Capitolini. Second-third century AD

ll. 2-3: *mortua heic ego sum et sum cinis, is cinis terra st: / sein est terra dea, ego sum dea, mortua non sum*

As it can be observed, the four inscriptions reproducing the Pseudo-Epicharmus verses cover an extremely large range, from both chronological and geographical points of view. These testimonies do not provide a direct parallel to the new inscription from Cyrene, nonetheless some details and affinities need to be pointed out for a better understanding of it.

The first point to be noted is that three of the four Pseudo-Epicharmean inscriptions are dedicated to women. Particularly, the two epitaphs from Rome are for two young girls, as well as Philesa the seven-year-old daughter of Hilarion in the Cyrenaean inscription.

Despite the various exempla of facetious funerary epitaphs³³, the tone of the four inscriptions heretofore considered results as anything but comic. With its own nuances, every syllogism follows a rationalist moral trying to prove the deification of the deceased or at least his survival after death. Even leaving aside the Eretrian epitaph for Diogenes (T.1) – called φῦς δίκαιος καὶ εὐσεβής – and for the priestess of Cha-

³¹ Vd. Peek 1942, 27-29, for a general background of the inscription.

³² Peek 1942, 29, proposes this dating for the inscription.

³³ E.g. I.Thespiiai 1244 (= BE 1955, 118a); IG XII Suppl. 152; IG XIV 1746.

rops (T.2), it is clear that in the epitaphs for the two Roman girls the intention is not at all mocking the untimely death of the children but, by contrast, inconsolably grieving the end of their short existence³⁴. Similarly, the attempt at demonstrating Philesos's divine nature appears to be the elaboration of mourning obtained through hope rather than joke³⁵.

In the inscription from Thisbe and in both inscriptions from Rome (dating first to third century AD), one item in particular does not match with the literary version of the syllogism: *κόνις* = *cinis*. Since the archaeological data are lacking, we cannot speculate as to whether this lexical choice depends on the burial typology. We can affirm, though, that owing to the use of *κόνις* = *cinis*, the allusion to the body's decomposition loses its realistic touch and roughness. We can notice how the Pseudo-Epicharmean syllogism abandons the philosophical background and its complexity in the epigraphic versions arrives at a sort of Panism, which is particularly evident in the two inscriptions from Rome. There, the concept moves towards the idea of reunification of the deceased into the earth's bosom. This sort of generalization is anchored to the established belief considering Terra as a divinity producing and receiving life; whence, the deceased is part of an undying circle where death is not *per se* involved³⁶. This funerary *topos*³⁷, which finds place in visual arts from the first century BC and beyond³⁸, matches together with Fate (T.3, line 1: *invida sors fati, rapuisti Vitalem*) considered as a power taking life prematurely³⁹. The inscriptions from Rome show they have inherited various influences, among which the Epicharmean concept revived by Ennius seems to play a role together with a conceivable circulation of the syllogism as a maxim of popular wisdom.

Analyzing the structure of the epigraphic documents hitherto known, it can be noticed that the inscription from Thisbe, regardless of the use of *κόνις* instead of *κόπρος*, can be judged as the closest reproduction of the literary version since it closely preserves the structure of the syllogism and the assimilation of the deceased to *θεός*. Also the testimonies from

³⁴ Peek 1942, 31-32 shares this opinion.

³⁵ On the contrary, cfr. SEG 33, 1468 line 5 (funerary inscription from Ptolemais). There, a rationalistic sentiment relieves the pain for a two years-old girl's death: οὐδεις ἀθά[να]τος.

³⁶ Harkness 1899, 69-70; Eitrem 1910, 467-479; Weinstock 1934, 791-806.

³⁷ Cfr. also: CIL 6, 18579.

³⁸ Moore 1988, 171-177; Ghisellini 1994, 879-889.

³⁹ Tolman 1910, 35-36.

Rome suitably reproduce the composition of the syllogism. The one for Mus even preserves the concept of the divine nature of the deceased, whereas the epitaph for the young Vitalis humbly neglects this concept while maintaining the idea of immortality. The epitaph from Eretria instead, the earliest of the four so far attested, only partially recalls the literary version of the syllogism whose structure is pleonastically altered through the involvement of the verb βλαστάνω.

Let us remark upon some elements concerning the inscription from Cyrene here discussed. It *de facto* represents the fifth epigraphic testimony of a statement attributed to the Pseudo-Epicharmus, still yet suited to the grief for a woman and more precisely for a young girl. If we consider the other epigraphic examples of the Pseudo-Epicharmean syllogism, we realize that the Carboncini Tomb inscription turns the tables, testifying not simply to one more occurrence of these verses but in fact appearing to be the most accurate re-elaboration of the literary version ever documented. In fact this latest discovered epigraphic testimony from Cyrene encompasses all the elements of the syllogism, maintaining the order as we find them in the literary version by Pseudo-Epicharmus: νεκρός -κόπρος -γῆ - θεός. As for the lexical choices too, the new inscription from Cyrene adheres most closely to the literary model, as this is the only epigraphic example where the crudity of κόπρος is preferred to κόνις / *cinis* (T.1-T.4). In this newly discovered version, κόπρος holds a central and pivotal place, testifying to a direct correlation between the Cyrenaean inscription and the literary version of the syllogism. We are not able to determine if either the literary version or an epigraphic trend has inspired the process of diffusion of the syllogism, though we can stand by the fact that the inscription from Cyrene is thus far the epigraphic example of the syllogism which more closely resembles the structure of the literary version. Nonetheless, we must point out that, in this new version from Cyrene, the connection between the body and earth presents a shifting of concept compared to the literary syllogism since κόπρος is not any longer identified with γῆ but progresses from body into γῆ (l. 2: κόπρος δ' ἔβη γῆ<ν>). This variation on the theme could depend on different variables: for example, it might be a possible result of a process of circulation of the statement or it might be imputed to the writer, as far as we admit either some sort of carelessness or even, on the contrary, a conscious choice. Accepting the idea of an educated writer, aware of the meaning un-

derlying his words, it would perhaps be legitimate to suggest that the Platonic quotation is not accidental.

At any rate, considering altogether the epigraphic documents gathered up to now, we are allowed to infer that the Pseudo-Epicharmean maxim circulated at various social levels and was applied to funerary use over the centuries, acquiring over time different nuances as a statement suited to grief.

As a matter of fact,, the Pseudo-Epicharmean syllogism is not the only ready-made funerary formula with philosophical background we acknowledge in the funerary environment of Cyrenaica. A further formula, whose process of circulation resembles in several ways the Pseudo-Epicharmean sentence, features an inscription from Ptolemais⁴⁰ commemorating the gladiator Anthiocus: οὐκ ἦμην καὶ ἐγενάμην / οὐκ εἶμι καὶ οὐ μέλι μοι. This sentence implies the Epicurean attitude of indifference for life or death and circulated – as well as the Pseudo-Epicharmean one – over the centuries throughout the ancient world both in Greek and Latin in different possible variables⁴¹.

To conclude, according to some clues offered by the other examples of the Pseudo-Epicharmean syllogism and to the archaeological environment, we can speculate also about a possible chronological range for this new inscription from Cyrene. In fact, on the basis of the inscriptions from Thisbe and Rome, we acknowledge that the use of κόνις = *cinis* in place of κόπρος occurred in epigraphic material as early as the early Imperial period. This consideration of course stands whether we attribute the terminological variation of κόνις = *cinis* to a diffusion rather than to an acquainted lexical choice. Whether or not we accept this hypothesis, we may date the new inscription from Cyrene to a phase earlier than the first century AD, when the *cinis* variation is first documented (vd. T.3). On the other hand, following the architectural idea of evolution conjectured by J. C. Thorn for the burial typologies of the Necropolis of Cyrene, Gallery AB of the Carboncini Tomb, which hosts the Pseudo-Epicharmean inscription, should belong to the Late Helle-

⁴⁰ OMS VI, 109-111 (with corrections to previous editions). GVI 1135, proposes the second/ third centuries AD as possible time frame for the inscription. The formula is widespread in inscriptions from Rome (IGUR III 1283, 1397, 1398), as well as in inscriptions from Asia Minor.

⁴¹ On the use of this formula, vd. BE 1950, 204 p. 207; 1961, 739; Robert 1965, 95. For the expression οὐ μέλι μοι as a formula employed in both love and funerary inscriptions, vd. Bevilacqua 1991, 234.

nistic period⁴². The conflation of the epigraphic parallels and the archaeological data then could allow us to attempt to place the inscription from Cyrene at a stage in between the inscriptions from Eretria and the one from Rome for the young girl Vitalis (T.1, T.3). Accordingly, we might infer that the archaeological data pointing to the Late Hellenism comply with the epitaph for the young Phileso.

Although we are not able to trace the steps of the circulation of the Pseudo-Epicharmean verses, the inscription from Cyrene adds an important piece to their history and is a new testimonial of the Epicharmus' appeal at various levels of communication. All of the five epigraphic documents of the syllogism heretofore attested support the idea of its remarkable diffusion over the centuries in the Greek and Roman funerary sphere as a widespread epigram belonging to the cultural heritage.

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⁴² Thorn 2005, 350-352 (vd. nt. 2).

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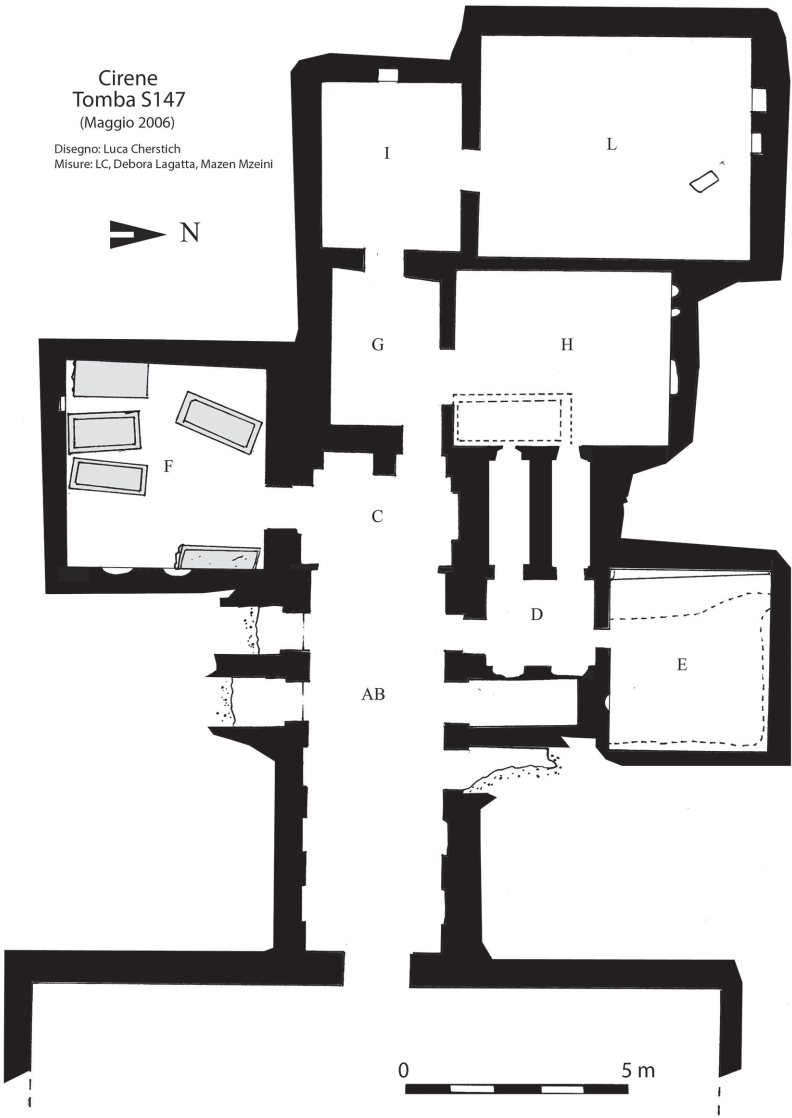


Fig. 1. The *Carboncini Tomb*: planimetry (drawing by L. Cherstich).



Fig. 2. The Pseudo-Epicarmean inscription of the *Carboncini Tomb*. Gallery B, Loculus 5 (photo author).

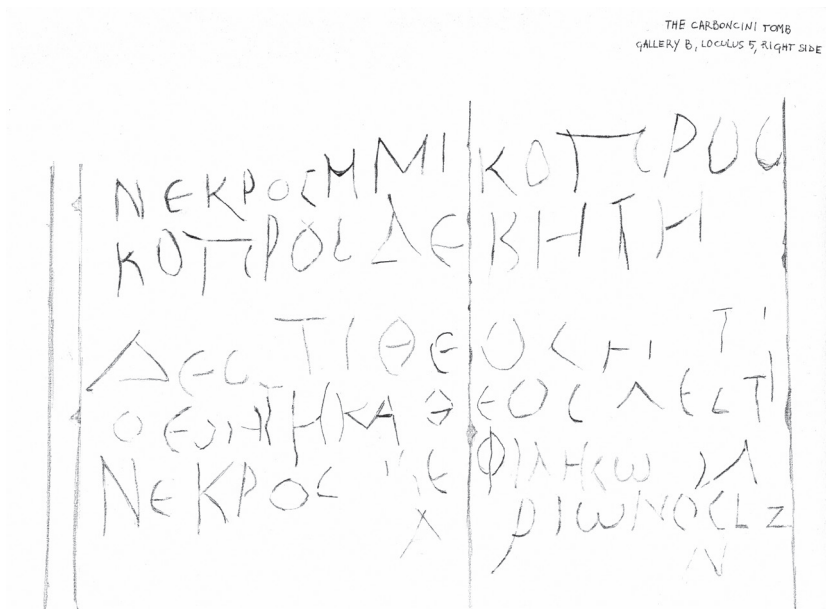


Fig. 3. The Pseudo-Epicarmean inscription of the *Carboncini Tomb* (drawing by the author).