

ILL-FATED SHIELDS AND MAN-SLAYING SPEARS: ANYTE AND NOSSIS ON THE 'HEROIC CODE' IN THE HELLENISTIC EPIGRAM

A Martin (Stellenbosch University)

In Anyte's dedicatory epigram *AP* 6.123, the poetic speaker paints a gruesome image of a bloody, 'man-slaying' spear residing in an Arcadian temple of the goddess Athena. This votive text has been read as a 'womanly dislike of war' (Gutzwiller) conveyed by the female author's command of the weapon to 'no longer' shed the blood of its enemies upon the battlefield. A similar votive epigram by Nossis (*AP* 6.132) speaks of the brutal defeat of the 'ill-fated' Bruttians, whose shields now rest in the temples of the gods as a testimony to the bravery of the 'swift-fighting' Locrians, likewise interpreted as a subtle feminine critique of the heroic code, much due to the view that women poets did not compose on public, masculine matters unless for the purpose of modifying them or casting them aside (Skinner). However, reading *AP* 6.123 and 6.132 within their context of transmission may point to another possibility altogether. Although these texts are frequently analysed as companion pieces within what we assume was once each poet's own epigram book, they were originally preserved in the *Palatine Anthology* as part of a short sequence of dedicatory epigrams (*AP* 6.121–125, 6.127–128, and 6.132) that all share the theme of retired weapons resting in the sacred shrines of the gods. Closer examination reveals that each piece is connected to the next via verbal and thematic reiteration, thus creating an allusive network in a fixed literary trope ('resting weapons'), some condoning and others condemning military violence, irrespective of the author's gender. This paper therefore argues two points: that not only women poets disregarded the heroic code and that women poets may indeed have championed the heroic code despite their gender.

Keywords: Hellenistic epigram; *ekphrasis*; Anyte; Nossis; female poets; textual allusion.

Although Anyte and Nossis composed within the same era and genre, their poetry differs in many aspects. The former composed on subject matter that often reflects the brutal world of the heroic warrior (*e.g.*, *AP* 6.123, 7.208, 7.232, and 7.724), whilst the latter primarily constructed a woman's world of feminine sensuality and grace (*e.g.*, *AP* 6.275, 6.353, 9.332, and 9.604–605).¹ It is therefore not surprising

¹ For example, four epigrams convey the offering of dedicatory objects to Hera (*AP* 6.265) and Aphrodite (*AP* 6.275, 9.332, and 9.605) by women, and three ekphrastic

that Antipater of Thessalonica (*fl. c.* 11 BC–AD 12) refers to Anyte as the ‘female Homer’ (θηῆλος Ὅμηρος, *AP* 9.26.3) in his epigram on ancient Greek female poets, whilst Nossis earns the title ‘female-tongued’ (Νοσσις θηλύγλωσσος, 7).² We know from one of Nossis’ own epigrams that she was native to a Dorian colony in southern Italy called Locri Epizephyrii in Magna Graecia (Λοκρίς γᾶ / τίκτη μ’, *AP* 7.718.3–4),³ which was rumoured to have been a metonymic society (Polybius *Historiae* 12.5.6.2–3),⁴ with the earliest settlers constituting a band of citizen women and runaway slaves.⁵ As for the dating of her *floruit*, Nossis’ sepulchral epigram for Rhinthon of Syracuse (*AP* 7.414), who was allegedly active in the time of Ptolemy Soter (†283/2 BC),⁶ and Herodas’ (mid 3rd century BC) reference to Nossis in his *Mimiambi* (6.20–6.36 and 7.57–58), broadly place her in the early third century BC, possibly in the 280s.⁷

Anyte’s exact dating is uncertain, but according to Tatian (*Or. ad Graec.* 33.2), the renowned sculptor Cephisodotus (344–293 BC) constructed a statue of the female poet, thus placing her *floruit* in the early third century BC as well.⁸ Anyte’s birthplace is likewise uncertain; a caption to one of her epigrams declares Mytilene her provenance (Ἀνύτης Μιτυληναίας, *AP* 7.492 = *HE* 23), whilst Pollux (*Onom.* 5.48.5) claims that she was from rural Tegea in Arcadia (ἡ Τεγεαίτις Ἀνύτη), a far more likely option if we consider the large number of her pastoral-themed epigrams (*e.g.*, *AP* 9.313–314 and 16.228). In addition to her pieces on idyllic landscapes — in which strangers are often invited to rest their weary limbs under a shady tree after hours of toil in the sun⁹ — Anyte composed two votive epigrams for the male dedicants Echekratidas (*AP* 6.123) and Cleobotus

epigrams describe the portraits of women (*AP* 6.353–354 and 9.604), whilst Nossis’ final epigram (*AP* 6.273), now widely considered spurious, calls on Artemis to relieve Alcetis of her labour pains; see Skinner 1989:5, 13; Balmer 1996:83; Gutzwiller 1998:74; and Bowman 2019:82.

² Twenty-four epigrams are attributed to Anyte (Gow and Page 1965:35–41) and twelve to Nossis (Gow and Page 1965:151–154). For translations and discussions of these texts, see Gutzwiller 1998:54–88; Plant 2004:56–60, 2004:63–66; Greene 2005:139–153; and Skinner 2005b:112–130.

³ For this version of Nossis’ text, see Beckby 1957:422, vol. 2.

⁴ μὲν ὅτι πάντα τὰ διὰ προγόνων ἔνδοξα παρ’ αὐτοῖς / ἀπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν, οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔστιν (‘All distinctions of ancestry amongst them are from the women, not from the men’).

⁵ On the foundation legend of Locri, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1978:186–198; Skinner 1987:39–42; MacLachlan 1995:205–208; and Cairns 2016:347–349.

⁶ Suda s.v. Πίνθων.

⁷ Gutzwiller 1998:74–75.

⁸ On a date for Anyte’s *floruit*, see Gutzwiller 1993:72, 1998:54 n. 22; Plant 2004:56; and Hornblower and Spawforth 2012:114.

⁹ *AP* 9.313 = *HE* 16 and *AP* 16.228 = *HE* 18.

(*AP* 6.153), along with a number of sepulchral epigrams on the deaths of brave soldiers (*AP* 7.232 and 7.724), unmarried girls (e.g., *AP* 7.486, 7.490, 7.646, and 7.649), and pitiful animals (e.g., *AP* 7.202, 7.208, and 7.215).¹⁰ Greene's (2005:152) reference to Anyte's poetry as expressing 'the totality of human experience' therefore seems entirely appropriate considering the diverse nature of her lines.

This has not always been the case, however, with earlier scholarship declaring Anyte's poetry wholly 'masculine' and 'impersonal' in nature.¹¹ Skinner (2005b:113) — who is a strong advocate for the existence of a segregated female poetic tradition in ancient Greece¹² — is likewise of the view that, *unlike* Nossis, Anyte's lines 'conform to a conventional pattern' that is consistent with the patriarchal culture, a viewpoint that extends to other female poets as well. For instance, Skinner (1983:18) declares Corinna's verses 'pretty', but by no means 'women's poetry', on the premise that her treatment of local folklore 'pays marked deference to the canonical, male-dominated literary tradition'. The potential authorship of the Tattoo elegy by the Hellenistic female poet, Moero (300 BC), is rejected by Skinner (2005a:109, n. 6) on similar grounds: the poetic speaker's masculine voice 'falls outside the thematic range of ancient women's writing', the assumption being that women poets only composed on themes and within genres and metres¹³ that were deemed appropriate for their gender. Ancient Greek female-authored poetry that does not fall within these feminine literary borders is either regarded as a) 'anti-feminist' literature that pays homage to patriarchal structures,¹⁴ or b) as women-centred literature that appropriated these

¹⁰ Anyte's sepulchral epigram for a courageous puppy is also preserved in Pollux 5.48 (= *HE* 10).

¹¹ E.g., Wright 1923:328 and Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1924:136.

¹² On the argument for an exclusive female poetic tradition on the margins of the mainstream poetic tradition, see Showalter 1977:11, 1985:129; Donovan 1984:100; and Skinner 1993. On women poets composing for a wider audience, *i.e.*, within the public poetic tradition, see Bowman 1998, 2004, and 2019.

¹³ Gutzwiller 1997:202 argues that women poets primarily composed in private, women-centred genres and metres such as love lyric, lamentation, and lullaby, because the public genres of epic, elegy, and drama were too closely associated with the Greek patriarchal culture; see also Murray and Rowland 2007:211–212.

¹⁴ Rayer 1993:221–222 divides female-authored literature into three groups: 'non-feminist', 'feminist', and 'women-identified'. The first category pertains to female-authored writing that imitates and accepts (rather than challenges) the male literary tradition, and thus addresses a general audience. Feminist writing, on the other hand, challenges the male-dominated tradition, champions women's experiences, and thus addresses a mixed audience — 'male to accuse, and female to rally' (*ibid.* 222). The final category constructs a dialogue with other women's texts; it neither imitates nor

masculine themes for the sake of modifying them or casting them aside (Skinner 1983:13).

Take, for example, Anyte's votive epigram, *AP* 6.123 (*HE* 1), in which the poetic speaker paints a rather macabre image of a bloody, 'man-slaying' (βροτοκτόνε, 1) spear 'resting' ("Ἔσταθι, 1)¹⁵ in an Arcadian temple of the goddess Athena, a gift from the courageous Echekratidas. Take also Nossis' *AP* 6.132 (*HE* 2), which echoes Anyte's theme of weapons 'resting' (κεῖνται, 3) in the sacred shrines of the gods as testimonies to the bravery of the 'swift-fighting Locrians' (Λοκρῶν ὠκυμάχων, 2). Yet, despite the obvious similarities observed between these votive texts, Skinner reads Anyte's *AP* 6.123 as an example of (a) and Nossis' *AP* 6.132 as a case of (b): 'In contrast to Anyte's idealization of the warrior and his deeds of valor, Nossis tenders an undeniably patriotic, but still wry, comment upon the equivocal operations of the heroic code' (2005b:123). This interpretation does not sit well with Guzwiller (1993:72 and 1998:55), who contrarily argues that Anyte's interests in natural scenery and the death of young women are more consistent with a distinctly feminine poetic persona, one that is 'in opposition to the traditional composer of inscribed epigram'. To Guzwiller (1993:74), then, *AP* 6.123 should be read as an undeniable case of (b), since Anyte's brutal portrayal of the cruelty of battle — though clearly a celebration of Echekratidas' 'manliness' (ἀνορέα) — nonetheless displays a 'womanly dislike of war', communicated by the poetic speaker's request of the weapon to retire ("Ἔσταθι τῷδε) and 'no longer' (μηδ' ἔτι, 1) participate in such violent business.¹⁶

In the face of such controversial views, this study offers a third reading of these female poets' votive texts, in which (c) Anyte's and Nossis' preference of theme and diction is not as much a product of the authors' gender as it is a consequence of their chosen genre. Hellenistic epigrammatists often aimed to connect to a 'distant pastness' (Hunter 2003:485) that could be shared between poet and reader, and this was primarily achieved by evoking (*i.e.*, alluding to) the poetic traditions of their past — the hallmark of the Hellenistic age — for their

protests the male literary tradition but repossesses it to express female perspectives and experiences, and ultimately addresses a female audience.

¹⁵ The image of a weapon 'resting' in a temple is primarily conveyed through the dedicatory verbs ἵμαι (to sit / be seated), κείμαι (lit. to lie [down] = 'rest'), and τίθημι (to set / put / place). See *LSJ* 2010:351, 425, and 806.

¹⁶ Greene 2005:139 (and later 2019:287–301) reads Anyte's poetry as a balanced blend of the masculine and the feminine in the sense that Anyte's funerary texts for young women — who primarily died πρὸ γάμου ('before marriage') — combine the (feminine) elements of private, informal mourning with the (masculine) elements of public, formal mourning by alluding to Homer's lamentation scenes in which the heroic warrior is publicly lamented, thus placing the 'lived experiences of women into dialogue with the male heroic tradition' (*ibid.* 145).

contemporary audience.¹⁷ This allusive engagement between Text¹ and Text² is well attested in Meleager's *Garland* (Στέφανος, 100–90 BC),¹⁸ a comprehensive anthology of literary epigrams in which Anyte's and Nossis' poems were preserved.¹⁹ Within this anthology, Meleager arranged his epigrams in such a way as to underscore the allusive connections between one text and the next by i) grouping the epigrams together according to subject-matter (*e.g.*, wine = AP 5.134–137, cicadas = AP 7.189–198, and birds = AP 7.200–204) and / or ii) linking preceding poems to succeeding ones on grounds of their lexical or phraseological repetition.²⁰ Anyte's and Nossis' poetic perspective on weapons, war, and military violence may therefore be further divulged by considering these votive texts not as companion pieces within the authors' respective epigram books,²¹ but by reading them within their Meleagrian context, in other words, as part of a short sequence of connected epigrams that all share the *topos* of weapons of war *resting* in the sacred shrines of the gods (AP 6.121–125, 6.127–128, and 6.132),²² of which Anacreon's AP 6.141 may have served as a rudimentary prototype. Within this minor epigrammatic tradition, 'retired' spears and shields *no longer* participating in the

¹⁷ On the Hellenistic poet's frequent allusion to, and variation of, earlier poetic traditions, see Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004:292; Livingstone and Nisbet 2010:7, 50; and Garulli 2019:273.

¹⁸ See Cameron 1993:49–56.

¹⁹ In the proem to Meleager's *Garland* (AP 4.1), the male editor lists the names of forty-six poets whose works he had compiled into his single, multi-authored anthology, including Anyte (5) and Nossis (10). Unfortunately, Meleager's original collection is now lost to us, albeit not before Cephalas of Byzantium added many of these short texts to his own tenth-century AD codex, now referred to as the *Greek Anthology*; see Cameron 1993:19–33 and 97–116.

²⁰ See Gow and Page I 1965:xviii; Cameron 1968:324–325, 1993:19; Gutzwiller 1997b:171; Argentieri 2007:149, 156; Maltomini 2019:216; and Prioux 2019:389, who observe remnants of Meleager's original arrangement throughout Cephalas' own structural design.

²¹ Kirstein 2002:114 refers to 'companion pieces' as 'those epigrams, which are not only linked by mood, theme, genre, and verbal expression but also require each other in order to be fully appreciated and understood'. See Gutzwiller's article on 'Anyte's epigram book' (1993), in which the author observes lexical links and thematic connections between Anyte's epigrams that hint at a once-carefully-arranged epigram collection, now lost to us. She later argues the same for Nossis' epigrams (1998:75–88).

²² Callimachus' AP 6.121 features a Cretan's dedication of weapons (here, a bow and arrows) to the goddess Artemis (ἀνάθημα τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι). The succeeding epigram by Nicias entails the votive offering of a spear to Athena (ἀνάθημα τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ Νικίου, AP 6.122), whilst Hegesippus dedicates a shield to her (Ἡγησίππου ἀνάθημα τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ, AP 6.124), a theme that repeats in Mnasalces' AP 6.125 (ἀνάθημα τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ) and 6.128 (ἀνάθημα τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι Μνασάλκου). See Gow and Page's comparison of Meleagrian sequences by Weisshäupl 1889 and Stadtmüller 1894 in column form (I 1965:xxv).

war effort does not necessarily signify a (womanly) rejection of the heroic code but serve instead as an archetypal imperative of the ‘resting weapons’ trope, a small literary convention within which the denouncement of hateful war is by no means a gender specific occurrence. By examining these female poets’ allusive relationship with these poetic pieces, then, a more comprehensive understanding of Anyte’s and Nossis’ poetic intentions may emerge, one in which they may not have aimed to challenge the manly endeavours of war, but to champion it. In the process, I hope to ultimately indicate that a woman poet’s gender does not guarantee her dismissal of conventional material, in the same way that a male poet’s gender does not guarantee its devotion.

In Anyte’s *AP* 6.123, a Cretan by the name of Echekratidas offers his ‘man-slaying’ spear to the goddess Athena.²³ It paints a violent picture of a deadly weapon, referred to here as a ‘talon’ or ‘claw’ (ὄνυξ) that shed the blood of its master’s enemies about him. Retired from battle, it finally rests in Athena’s temple as a testament to its owner’s bravery in battle:

Ἔσταθι τᾶδε, κράνεια βροτοκτόνε, μηδ’ ἔτι λυγρόν
 χάλκεον ἄμφ’ ὄνυχα στάζε φόνον δαΐων,
 ἄλλ’ ἀνὰ μαρμάρεον δόμον ἡμένα αἰπὸν Ἀθάνας
 ἄγγελ’ ἀνορέαν Κρητὸς Ἐχεκρατίδα.

Stand here, man-slaying spear, no longer spill
 the mournful blood of your enemies about your bronze talon,
 but resting against the high marble house of Athena,
 announce the manliness of the Cretan Echekratidas.

An analysis of this short text reveals rich allusion to Homer’s heroic tradition. For example, Anyte’s sentence construction μηδ’ ἔτι λυγρόν / [...] ἄμφ’ ὄνυχα [...] / ἄλλ’ (1–3) may be a phraseological adaptation of Homer’s μηδ’ ἔτι δηρὸν / ἀμβαλλώμεθα ἔργον [...] / ἄλλ’ (*Iliad* 2.435–437),²⁴ which pertains to the Achaeans ‘no longer’ putting off their military deeds after a lengthy feast, but moving amongst the encamped soldiers, ‘we stir up sharp battle’ (ἐγείρομεν ὄξυν Ἄρηα, 440). Anyte’s description of the spear blade as ‘claw-like’ similarly evokes imagery from Homer’s battle scenes. Geoghegan (1978:161–162 and 1979:23–24) convincingly argues that ‘talon’ (ὄνυξ, 2) refers here not to the head of the spear, but to the spike at the butt-end of it (*i.e.*, σαυρωτήρ). This spiky end would be embedded into the ground, allowing for the gore of the enemy to spill down (στάζε, 2) the haft of the spear around the bronze ‘talon’ (χάλκεον ἄμφ’ ὄνυχα, 2). This image can also be observed in the *Iliad*, in which a group of sleeping warriors

²³ Gow and Page I 1965:35.

²⁴ Geoghegan 1979:21.

had driven their spears into the ground, erect ‘on their spikes’ (ἐπὶ σαυρωτῆρος, *Il.* 10.153), so that the ‘bronze’ (χαλκός) tip would shimmer brightly like Zeus’ lightning bolt (154). Anyte then incorporates these Homeric elements into a long-standing epigrammatic tradition, for this bronze-tipped spear is not resting *in* the house of the goddess — such a construction (*i.e.*, ἀνά + acc. = ‘in’) is not attested in ancient Greek (Geoghegan 1979:18) — but, rather, *alongside* the surface of the wall (*LSJ* 2010:51, s.v. C.I., acc.),²⁵ an image that regularly features in the ‘resting weapons’ trope and may have found its origin in a two-line inscription attributed to Anacreon (536/5 BC)²⁶ on a shield dedicated to the goddess Athena:

Ῥυσαμένα Πύθωνα δυσαχέος ἐκ πολέμοιο
ἀσπίς Ἀθηναίης ἐν τεμένει κρέματαί.

The shield that rescued Python from the pain of battle
is suspended in the temple of Athena.

That Anyte was familiar with the work of ‘Anacreon’, and even indebted to it, can be especially noted in the epigram that succeeds *AP* 6.141 (*i.e.*, *AP* 6.142), also attributed to Anacreon, which shares the name of the dedicant in Anyte’s own votive epigram (Θεσσαλίας μ’ ἀνέθηκ’ ἀρχὸς Ἐχεκρατίδας, *AP* 6.142.2 = ‘Echecratidas, the ruler of Thessaly, dedicated me ...’).²⁷ Here, Anyte is inspired by Anacreon’s image of a weapon of war retired and resting in the house of a goddess after serving its owner well. This motif of weapons leaning or hanging on, along, or against the wall of the temple is further developed in ‘Simonides’ *AP* 6.52 (514 BC)²⁸ on a spear resting against the pillar of Zeus’ temple, tired of battle:

Οὕτω τοι, μελία ταναά, ποτὶ κίονα μακρὸν
ἦσο, Πανομοφαῖω Ζηνὶ μένουσ’ ἱερά·
ἤδη γὰρ χαλκός τε γέρων αὐτὰ τε τέτρυσαι
πυκνὰ κραδαιομένα δαῖω ἐν πολέμῳ.

Rest thus, tall spear, upright against the high pillar,
remaining sacred to Panomphaean Zeus,
for now your bronze is old, and you have been worn out,
frequently brandished in wretched war.

²⁵ Philippus of Thessalonica similarly uses Anyte’s prepositional construction (ἀνά + acc.) in his own dedicatory epigram: two large bull horns fourteen palms long are offered to Heracles’ temple, where they ‘rest [upright] against the gateway’ (κείμεθ’ ἀνά πρόπυλον, *AP* 6.114.2).

²⁶ Although *AP* 6.141 was probably not composed by the real Anacreon, it is likely that Anyte assumed as much when she imitated the epigram; see Page 1981:123–124 and 141.

²⁷ Gutzwiller 1993:74.

²⁸ On the question of authorial authenticity, see Page 1981:283.

That Anyte wished to tap into this epigrammatic tradition is clear: not only does she recreate Simonides' dedicatory theme of a spear resting 'upright along' (Anyte = ἀνά + acc.; Sim. = ποτί + acc.)²⁹ the wall of a sacred temple, but she also adopts the male poet's use of the second person to illustrate the poetic speaker's direct address of the dedication. Moreover, Anyte recalls particular words from *AP* 6.52 to signal her poetic source and the tradition to which she is indebted for her creative piece, such as the lexical repetition of the dedicatory verb ἤμυα (Anyte = ἡμένα, 3; Sim. = ἦσο, 2) and the adjective δάϊος (Anyte = δαῖων, 2; Sim. = δαῖω, 4). However, Anyte's epigram appears almost more violent than her male predecessors' verses: whereas the weapon is described by 'Simonides' as battle-weary, Anyte's weapon is a blood-thirsty — and likely blood-stained — reminder of its owner's military success in war. Whereas Simonides' epigram comments on the brutality of war, Anyte's epigram conveys the brutality of the warrior, and where Python's shield once saved him from injury by others (*Anac. AP* 6.141), Echecratidas' spear inflicted injury *on* others. Finally, whereas the adjective δάϊος (4) is used to describe 'wretched' war in *AP* 6.52 above, it is utilised in Anyte's poem to expose the ferocity and bravery of the soldier who sheds the blood of his 'enemies' (δάϊοι, 2) in battle.

Like Anyte, Mnasalces (250 BC) adopts the 'resting weapons' trope in a manner that upholds the heroic code in his *AP* 6.128:

ἦσο κατ' ἠγάθειον τόδ' ἀνάκτορον, ἀσπὶ φαεννά,
 ἄνθεμα Λατώα δῆιον³⁰ Ἀρτέμιδι·
 πολλάκι γὰρ κατὰ δῆριν Ἀλεξάνδρου μετὰ χερσὶν
 μαρναμένα χρυσέαν οὐκ ἐκόνισσας ἴτυν.

Rest, shining shield, against this most holy shrine,
 a war-like dedication to Artemis, Leto's child,
 for many times throughout battle, fighting in the hands of Alexander,
 you covered your golden rim with dust.

Although the goddesses to whom the objects are dedicated differ, along with the objects themselves, one can note some similarities between Anyte's and Mnasalces' epigrams. A weapon of war becomes a votive offering for a goddess and rests in her temple, deserted since the elderly (or dead) warrior no longer has need of it. As one would expect from this trope, a prepositional construction is used to create the image of the weapon reclining 'against' (κατὰ) a vertical surface, echoing Anyte's *AP* 6.123 (ἀνά [...] δόμον, 3) and 'Simonides' *AP* 6.52 (ποτί

²⁹ *LSJ* 2010:51, s.v. C.I., acc. = 'up along', and s.v. C.I.2, acc. = 'over against' (p. 402).

³⁰ Ep. = δήιος; Dor. = δάϊος.

κίονα, 1).³¹ Mnasalces also utilises Simonides' and Anyte's dedicatory verb ἤμμαι (1) and adopts the word δάϊτος (2) to describe the nature of Artemis' gift. Here, Mnasalces likely did not mean 'wretched', as this would not make for an appropriate offering for a goddess. Rather, Gow and Page II (1965:403 [2618]) translate the word as 'war-like', on account of an excerpt from Apollonius' *Argonautica* (1.635) that conveys a similar context (δήια τεύχεα δῦσαι, 'to don war-like armour'). This war-like offering is covered either in blood (φόνος, *AP* 6.123.2) or dust (κονίω, *AP* 6.128.4) to emphasise the brutal nature of war, especially since dust would more easily cling to Alexander's shield if the object were first bloodied.³² Like Anyte, then, Mnasalces' dedicatory epigram does not appear to oppose military violence but commends the heroic warrior for his ferocious excellence on the battlefield 'many times over' (πολλάκι, 3).

A similar poetic structure can be noted in an epigram by Nicias (early 3rd century BC) in which a spear is similarly described as wrathful (*AP* 6.122):

Μαινὰς Ἐνυαλίου, πολεμαδόκε, θοῦρι κράνεια,
 τίς νύ σε θῆκε θεᾶ δῶρον ἐγερσιμάχα;
 Μήνιος· ἦ γὰρ τοῦ παλάμας ἀπο ρίμφα θοροῦσα
 ἐν προμάχοις Ὀδρύσας δήιον ἄμ πεδίων.

Maenad of Ares, war-monger,³³ furious spear!

Who set you up now, a gift for the battle-stirring goddess [*i.e.*, Athena]?³⁴

Menius, for in truth, leaping swiftly from the palms of his hands,

I destroyed the Odrysians at the battle front, along the hostile plain.

Line 3 may be an allusion to the *Iliad* 8.110–111, where the old Nestor's strength and speed are questioned, to which the aged soldier responds that he is still able to ride into battle 'so that Hector too might know if my spear-shaft also rages in my palms' (ὄφρα καὶ Ἴεκτωρ / εἴσεται εἰ καὶ ἐμὸν δόρυ μαίνεται ἐν παλάμησιν). Nicias' description of the spear closely resembles that of Anyte, with both poets conveying the violence of its purpose: Nicias refers to the weapon as a 'furious spear' (θοῦρι κράνεια, 1) and Anyte as a 'man-slaying spear' (κράνεια βροτοκτόνε, 1), evoking the epithet of 'man-slaying' Hector (Ἴεκτορος ἀνδροφόνου, *e.g.*, *Il.*

³¹ Note the shared pattern in line 1 alone: Mnasalces = dedicatory verb (imperative) + [adjective + weapon (voc.)]; Anyte = dedicatory verb (imperative) + [adjective + weapon (voc.)].

³² This brutal image is repeated in Hegesippus' *AP* 6.124, when Timanor's shield was 'often befouled with the dust of iron war' (πολλὰ σιδαρείου κεκονυμένα ἐκ πολέμου, 3). Trans. Paton 1916:367, vol. 1.

³³ Gow and Page II 1965:429 [2755] point out here that the spear 'is a votary of Ares as Maenads are of Dionysus'.

³⁴ See Gow and Page II 1965:429.

1.242, 6.498, and 16.77). Building on this traditional epigrammatic *topos*, Nicias incorporates into his lines the epic word δῆιος (4) that makes a standard appearance in this literary convention (Anyte *AP* 6.123.2; ‘Sim.’ *AP* 6.52.4; Mnas. *AP* 6.128.2). Nicias even goes as far as to compare the spear to a frenzied maenad (1), only not of a drunken Dionysus, but of a war-mad Ares, a gift worthy of the ‘battle-stirring’ (ἐγερσιμάχη, 2) warrior goddess. A few epigrams later, however, Menius’ ‘war-mongering’ (πολεμηδόκα, 1) spear is replaced by the battle-wearied shield of the white-haired Epixenus with the worn-out limbs, who — like his armour — seeks retirement from military duty. Leaving ‘hateful battle’ (στυγεράν [...] δῆριν, 1), the shield now rests in a temple of Artemis, preferring the song and dance of girls instead (*AP* 6.127):

Μέλλον ἄρα στυγεράν κάγώ ποτε δῆριν Ἄρηι
ἐκπρολιποῦσα χορῶν παρθενίων αἴειν
Ἀρτέμιδος περι ναόν, Ἐπίξενος ἔνθα μ’ ἔθηκεν,
λευκὸν ἐπεὶ κείνου γῆρας ἔτειρε μέλη.

And I *myself* was fated — having abandoned the hateful field of battle —
to listen to the song and dance of girls
around the temple of Artemis, where Epixenus placed me
when white, old age began to wear out his limbs.³⁵

Although Hegesippus’ *AP* 6.178 (*fl. c.* 250 BC) falls outside the Meleagrian sequence recognised by Weisshäupl (1889) and Stadtmüller (1894) (*i.e.*, *AP* 6.109–157), it deserves a mention in this study on grounds of its blatant allusion to the ‘resting weapons’ trope, especially Nicias’ epigram above, and may even once have belonged to this nexus of votive texts before later scribes rearranged Meleager’s original design:

Δέξαι μ’, Ἡράκλεις, Ἀρχεστράτου ἱερὸν ὄπλον,
ὄφρα ποτὶ ξεστὰν παστάδα κεκλιμένα
γηραλέα τελέθοιμι χορῶν αἴουσα καὶ ὕμνων·
ἀρκεῖτω στυγερά δῆρις Ἐνυαλίου.

Receive me, Heracles, the hallowed shield of Arcestratus,
so that, resting against your polished porch,
I may listen to song and dance.
Enough of hateful battle!

Once more, the preposition construction ποτὶ + accusative is used to reconstruct the image of a weapon ‘resting’ or ‘reclining’ (κλίνω) in a divinity’s temple, only this time, like with Nicias, ‘hateful battle’ (στυγερά δῆρις, 4; *cf.* στυγεράν [...] δῆριν,

³⁵ Translation inspired by Paton 1916:367, vol. 1.

AP 6.127.1) is replaced with ‘song and dance’ (χορῶν καὶ ὕμνων, 3). If Anyte’s poem is to be read as a womanly dislike of war, then what are we to make of Simonides’ *AP* 6.52, the spear no longer viewed as wrathful, but a weapon (*i.e.*, a warrior) ‘worn out’ (τρώω, *AP* 6.52.3) ‘by wretched war’ (δαῖψ ἐν πολέμῳ, 4)? The same can be asked of Nicias, who uses the very same trope to both praise war (*AP* 7.122) and to denounce it (*AP* 7.127), to glorify it in youth, and condemn it in old age, or Hegesippus’ concluding remark, ‘enough of hateful battle!’ (ἀρκεῖτω στυγερὰ δῆρις Ἐνυαλίου, *AP* 6.178.4)? From the above epigrams, it therefore seems that male poets could as easily reject the violence of war as women poets could endorse it. As Murray and Rowland (2007:227) state, the masculine voice can ‘accommodate a variety in its expression’. In other words, an insolent view of men’s military endeavours may also be classified as masculine, as in Archilochus’ well-known fragment (5.1–4):³⁶

ἀσπίδι μὲν Σαίων τις ἀγάλλεται, ἦν παρὰ θάμνῳ,
 ἔντος ἀμώμητον, κάλλιπον οὐκ ἐθέλων·
 αὐτὸν δ’ ἐξέσάωσα. τί μοι μέλει ἀσπίς ἐκεῖνη;
 ἔρρέτω· ἐξαῦτις κτήσομαι οὐ κακίῳ.

Some Saian is strutting about with my shield, which, beside a bush,
 a faultless weapon, I abandoned — not willingly.
 But I saved myself; what do I care about that shield?
 To hell with it! I shall acquire a new one none the worse.

Casting one’s shield aside in battle is a common literary phenomenon³⁷ and is equated with the cowardly act of fleeing the battlefield.³⁸ Aristophanes even uses this disgraceful act to insult Cleonymus by calling him a ῥίψασπις (‘shield-thrower’).³⁹ Unsurprisingly, this topos makes its way into the ‘resting weapons’ trope, first via Mnasalces’ *AP* 6.125 and then Nossis’ *AP* 6.132. The first epigram features a shield ‘resting’ (μένω) in the goddess’ temple, only this time, the male author preserves the heroic code, for Cleitus does not abandon its shield in the thick of battle:

Ἦδη τᾶδε μένω πολέμου δίχα, καλὸν ἄνακτος
 στέρνον ἐμῷ νῶτῳ πολλαίκι ῥυσαμένα.

³⁶ According to Hornblower and Spawforth 2012:140, Archilochus was active in the 7th century BC. For the Greek text, see West 1971:3, vol. 1.

³⁷ See Anacreon 36b.1; Hdt. 5.94–5 and Str. 13.1.38 referring to Alcaeus who allegedly threw away his armour during a battle between the Athenians and Mytilenaeans for the city of Sigeum; see Campbell 1982:427.

³⁸ Cf. Ael. *VH* 10.13; S.E. *Pyrrhoniae hypotyposes* 3.216.5–6.

³⁹ Ar. *Nu.* 353; *V.* 592: ἀσπίδαποβλής, ‘one that throws away his shield’, *i.e.*, ‘runaway’; Ar. 290; 1473–1481.

καίπερ τηλεβόλους ιούς καὶ χερμάδι' αἰνὰ
 μυρία καὶ δολιχὰς δεξαμένα κάμακας,
 οὐδέποτε Κλείτιοι λιπεῖν περιμάκεια πᾶχυν
 φαμί κατὰ βλοσυρὸν φλοῖσβον Ἐνυαλίου.

Here I remain far from battle, having saved
 the fair breast of my master by my back many times.
 Though having received far-reaching arrows and dreadful stones
 countless times — and long lances —
 I declare I never abandoned the long arm of Cleitus
 in the grim roar of battle.

Echoes of this convention can be noted in Hegesippus' *AP* 6.124, when Timanor's 'resting' (ἦμαι) shield felt compelled to inform the reader of his former place on his master's 'mortal shoulders' (βροτέων ὤμων, 1), a subtle commentary on the bravery of his owner who, like Cleitus, never deserted the battlefield. Nossis assumes this literary convention in a manner that not only looks favourably on the heroic code, but sharpens its poetic overtones:

Ἔντεα⁴⁰ Βρέττιοι ἄνδρες ἀπ' αἰνομόρων βάλλον ὤμων
 θεινόμενοι Λοκρῶν χερσὶν ὕπ' ὠκυμάχων,
 ὧν ἀρετὰν ὑμνεῦντα θεῶν ὑπ' ἀνάκτορα κεῖνται,
 οὐδὲ ποθεῦντι κακῶν πάχεας οὐς ἔλιπον.

The armour that the Bruttian men cast from ill-fated shoulders
 — when struck by the hands of the swift-fighting Locrians —
 rest in the temples of the gods, singing their [*i.e.*, the Locrians] valour,
 and long not for the arms of the cowards, whom *they* abandoned.⁴¹

By drawing on this established maxim, Nossis accentuates the cowardly behaviour of the Bruttians, a neighbouring enemy of Nossis' homeland, in a manner that her ancient Greek readership would recognise due to centuries of allusive reinforcement in canonical texts. Only, the female poet does not stop there: adding insult to injury, Nossis decrees that the Bruttians were so cowardly that their shields have forsaken them in shame, preferring instead the temples of the victorious Locrians. In so doing, Nossis delivers commentary on those who do not uphold the values of the heroic code. Not surprising, Murray and Rowland (2007:229) read Nossis' *AP* 6.132 as 'hyper-masculine and aggressively supportive

⁴⁰ According to Gow and Page *II* 1965:436 [2795], ἔντεα should be read as 'shields' specifically.

⁴¹ According to Pindar *O.* 10.13–15, the Locrians worshipped bronze-armoured Ares as much as they revered Calliope, the muse of poetry, song, and dance, thus dominating on the battlefield as much as they excelled in the arts.

of the heroic code' and therefore by no means 'deviant from the patriarchal culture'. A paper by Loman (2004:34–35) on women's valuable roles in times of war, be it at home or on foreign campaigns, draws a similar conclusion. Employing Anyte's sepulchral epigrams for men (*AP* 7.232 and 7.724) and Nossis' dedicatory text on the Bruttians, Loman (2004:35) postulates that women would more often mourn the defeat of their men or celebrate their victory than simply be grateful for peace *per se*. It can therefore be contended that these female poets commended men's military actions, which is consistent with other examples from ancient Greek texts where women are depicted as equally supportive of men's political and military activities.⁴² Indeed, in some cases, women were not only regarded as 'supporting the dominant male creed' (De Marre 2020:37) but were also perceived as actively upholding it. Although women partaking in war was seen as *παρὰ φύσιν* ('contrary to nature'), it is not unheard of in ancient texts: Pausanias 2.20.9 tells of the female poet Telesilla arming the women of Argos when their city was on the brink of defeat, receiving for their bravery a memorial beside their graves.⁴³ The women of Anyte's native land, Tegea, are also said to have laid in ambush for their Spartan invaders (Paus. 8.48.4) instead of simply hiding or fleeing, suggesting that women were quick to arm themselves when the need arose.⁴⁴ It should not, therefore, seem so peculiar to perceive the same warrior's spirit in women's poetry as in men's literature.

Moreover, Anyte's and Nossis' interest in the masculine theme of weapons and war is not so unusual to the Hellenistic period, which witnessed a gradual movement from oral performance to a written culture. This shift in poetic medium 'allowed female poets to express their genius and subjectivity in genres that were traditionally male' (Murray and Rowland 2007:212). Consequently, the persona of the poet was no longer tied to his or her gender, as was most often the case in previous periods.⁴⁵ Like Anyte, Nossis took full advantage of the era in which she was born, as an in-depth analysis of her dedicatory epigram reveals that her lines

⁴² *E.g.*, Hdt. 9.5.3 and Xen. *HG* 6.4.16.

⁴³ *Cf.* also Plut. *Mul. virt.* 4.245c–e.

⁴⁴ See De Marre 2020:37–38 on women's active participation in times of war, such as assisting with the digging of trenches, building walls during sieges, providing soldiers with food and drink, and taking care of the wounded. That women would throw projectiles like rooftiles down upon their unsuspecting enemies has also been attested in ancient Greek literature, *e.g.*, Plut. *Pyr.* 34.2.

⁴⁵ Barnard 1991:176 makes a similar observation, claiming that although Anyte was a woman, she wrote on the glory of battle and the death of the warrior in the same way that Hellenistic male poets would describe the lived experiences of women in sympathetic detail, especially the tragedy of dying in childbirth (*e.g.*, Callimachus *AP* 7.517, Dioscorides *AP* 7.166–167, Antipater of Sidon *AP* 7.464 and 7.711, and Diotimus *AP* 7.475).

are rich in allusion to the archaic heroic code. Nossis merges the ‘resting weapons’ trope with the heroic tradition by adopting the generic framework of the former whilst alluding to the latter. This is artfully accomplished by fusing votive language from the epigram genre with Homeric terminology from the epic genre. Displaying ἀρετή (3) in battle evokes the bravery of the Homeric warrior (*e.g.*, *Il.* 12.435, 14.130, and 14.365), but whereas the Locrians are ‘quick to fight’ (ὠκυμάχοι, 2), the Bruttians are ‘ill-fated’ (αἰνόμοροι, 1). Nossis employs this rare Homeric word to comment on the cursed fate of the Bruttians, as it was once used when Odysseus and his men quarrelled with the Cicones (*Od.* 9.93): brave in battle and great in number, they killed many of Odysseus’ ill-fated (αἰνομόροισιν) comrades. Likewise, it is used to refer to the cursed fate (αἰνομόροισιν, *Od.* 24.169) — and the beginning of death (καὶ φόνου ἀρχήν) — of Penelope’s suitors when Odysseus picked up his bow and felled them one by one. Andromache, too, describes herself as ill-fated (αἰνόμορον, *Il.* 22.481) in her famous lamenting speech on the death of her heroic husband, Hector. Nossis therefore unequivocally and unashamedly assumes a masculine poetic voice, despite her gender, to maintain an air of authenticity in her verses. Murray and Rowland (2007:226–229) are thus rightfully concerned with the way in which scholarship has neglected (or altogether ignored) the masculine voice observed in Nossis’ lines, read only *in relation to* the gender of the female poet and, thus, *in opposition to* the masculine heroic code. If there is one observation to be drawn from Nossis’ *AP* 6.132 and Anyte’s *AP* 6.123, it is that a female poet’s gender should not serve as instant affirmation of a defiant attitude towards masculine values and concerns.

To conclude, then, a ‘manly dislike of war’ is just as possible as a ‘womanly support of war’. The notion of ‘gender equals genre’ and *vice versa* was not consistently implemented when Anyte and Nossis were actively composing their epigrams, a phenomenon that may be accredited to these female poets and their tendency to move beyond the borders of ‘feminine speech’ into untrodden territories. This is especially notable when reading these female poets’ votive texts within their early context of transmission, namely in a short Meleagrian sequence of epigrams that resembles their dedicatory poetry in theme and diction. Although these female poets’ votive verses have generally been regarded as subtle critiques of the heroic code, and the patriarchal culture in general, this does not appear to be the case when regarded within the ‘resting weapons’ trope, in which views on the masculine values of the heroic tradition are varied: in some instances, a male author would praise military violence and victory (*e.g.*, *AP* 6.122 and 6.128); in others, he would denounce hateful battle and opt for the arts instead (*e.g.*, *AP* 6.52, 6.127, and 6.178). The same can be said of female poets, who — like the masculine poetic voice — can accommodate a variety of expressions, from conveying a mother’s love for her deceased daughter (Anyte), to signifying the

sensual relationships between women (Nossis), to calling forth the ‘resting weapons’ trope in a manner that not only evokes Homer’s heroic tradition but validates it. Consequently, Anyte’s use of conventional themes does not make *AP* 6.123 any less worthy of the title ‘women’s poetry’, in the same way that Nossis’ women-centred poetry does not make *AP* 6.132 any less conventional.

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