



[Author] CEG 524 (unknown author)

[Place of discovery] Athens

[Source] Marble stele with painted olive wreath

[Typology] Elegy (epitaph)

[Period] 400–350 BC (middle of the 4th century BC)

[Text]

Ἄρχιππος
Σκαμβωνίδης

εἴ τις ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀρετῆς ἔνεκ' ἐστεφανώθη,
πλεῖστον ἐγὼ μετέχων τοῦδ' ἔτυχον στεφάν[ου]
χρυσοῦ· Ἀθηναίων δὲ ἐστεφάνωσε πόλις·
εὐδαίμων δὲ ἔθανον παῖδων παῖδας καταλείπω[ν]

[Metrics]

Prose for the deceased's name and demotic; sequence of hexameter, pentameter, pentameter and hexameter for the epigram. Correption in v. 3 χρυσοῦ Ἀθηναίων; *scriptio plena* in v. 3 δὲ
ἐστεφάνωσε

and v. 4 δὲ ἔθανον, but elided form in v. 1 ἔνεκ' ἐστεφανώθη.

[Critical apparatus]

Milesian Ionic alphabet with notation of long vowels but not secondary ones (thus v. 2 τὸδ', v. 3 χρυσῷ). Name of the deceased and demotic inscribed in larger letters above the painted wreath.

[Translation]

Archippos Scambonides
If any man was ever crowned for virtue,
I, possessing it to the fullest, received this golden crown,
and the city of Athens placed it upon me.
I died happy, leaving children and grandchildren behind.

[Comment]

This is one of many examples of epigraphic epigrams from the 4th century that reveal significant similarities with classical elegies and their innovations, namely the alteration of the normal hexameter-pentameter stanzaic sequence, the adoption of metaphorical and allusive language, and greater formal refinement, thanks to the number and variety of rhetorical devices, with a particular preference for figures of sound. It is a conception of poetic creation as a game and virtuosity in the use of words: literary examples of this new way of composing elegies are frs 1 and 5 W. by Dionysius Calco or fr. 4 W. by Critias. In the case of CEG 524 the deceased's name and deme are inscribed separately, outside the metrical text, in larger letters, while the verse sequence is skillfully arranged in a chiastic order of hexameter, pentameter, pentameter, and hexameter. This intertwined structure, typical of a crown, is significantly echoed by the verb στεφανώ and the noun στέφανος, which appear in three of the four verses of the epigram, placed in the clause and arranged in the

deliberate sequence verb – noun – verb, emphasizing the interweaving. Noteworthy is also the *enjambement* στεφάνου / χρυσοῦ in v. 2 f., linking the two pairs of verses and contributing to the intertwining, as well as the polytoton in v. 4, παῖδων παῖδας, creating a periphrasis to indicate the grandchildren. The sophistication of the composition is further enhanced visually by the painted olive wreath on the stele, beneath which the epitaph itself is placed.

[Reference edition]

P.A. HANSEN, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca saeculi IV a. Chr. n.* (CEG II), Berolini et Novi Eboraci 1989.

[Essential bibliography]

K. FLOWER SMITH, ‘Some Irregular Forms of the Elegiac Distich’, *AJPh* 22.2, 1901, 165-194; A. CONZE, *Die attischen Grabreliefs*, Band III, Tafel 278 n. 1323, Berlin 1906.

[Keywords]

Sepulchral epigram, classical elegy, irregular metrical structure, formal elaboration

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