

SEPULCHRAL EPIGRAM FOR AN ATHENIAN PHYSICIAN

With a new fragment identified by G. A. Stamires, published by B. D. Meritt, *Hesperia* XXXIII 1964, p. 224, No. 71 with photograph, and highlighted by J./L. Robert, *Bull. ép.* 1965, No. 143, the sepulchral epigram *IG II² 5935* is engraved in five epigraphical lines. We prescind from this arrangement and set up the text in three lines of dactylic hexameters as follows.

*Νούσων εἰη[τῆν] σ[ὺν το]ῖς ἀγαθ[οῖσι] | Κράτωνα νν
Κύντον Φοντήιον | Γαργήτιον ἦδε κέκευθε vacat |
χθόν, φίλλους δὲ τύπους δείκνυ | σιν ὁ λάνος Ἐρμῆς vacat*

“The earth here has hidden a healer of sickness, endowed with the good qualities, Craton, Q. Fonteius, of Gargettus; the marble herm displays features which were dear.”

As the Roberts commented, the new piece confirmed the sense restored by Koumanoudes¹⁾ in line 3 and the exact wording restored by him in lines 4–5, but the text presented above is offered in the belief that the publication in *Hesperia* contained two errors of interpretation, worth correcting.

In epigraphical line 2 Meritt mistook the vacant area after *Κράτωνα* for rational punctuation, so that he interpreted as one sentence all that preceded. Hence, although in line 1 he rightly retained the sense of the first word²⁾ of Wilhelm’s restoration and discarded the rest, he thought that Σ[...]*ης Ἀγάθ[οιο]* could be the name of the man who erected the monument. The vacant area, however, marks the end of the first metrical line. Vacant areas have been left after each metrical line, but in the two other cases the end of the metrical line coincided with that of an epigraphical line. Missing the second and third, Meritt misunderstood the significance of the first vacant area.

Usually the epigram praised a physician both for his skill and for his morality, as in an epigram at Smyrna published by W. Peek, *Ath. Mitt.* LVI 1931, 124, No. 7, ἀμφοτέρων, τέχνην τ’ ἀγαθός και ἦθεα κεδνός. At Athens Plutarch’s friend Serapion had attached prime importance to the physician’s

1) S. A. Koumanoudes, Ἀττικῆς ἐπιγραφαὶ ἐπιτύμβιοι (Athens 1871) 393.

2) A. Wilhelm, *Beiträge zur griechischen Inschriftenkunde* (Vienna 1907), 160–162, No. 139 restored line 1 εἰη[τρὸν] σ[οφίη λάμψαντα], after rediscovering the inscription and reading the sigma and the breathing signs. Wilamowitz in G. Kaibel’s *Epigrammata graeca ex lapidibus conlecta* (Berlin 1878) 108 had restored εἰη[τῆρα και ἐσθλὸν δ’ ἀνδρα], and Dittenberger, *IG III* (1882) 1327, εἰη[τῆρα και ἔξοχον ἀνδρα].

morality³), and perhaps that is why the uninspired composer of our poem failed to mention the subject's skill. There is a further possible interpretation, namely that Craton had passed his *δοκιμασία*, which, conducted by laymen, concerned moral character rather than skill⁴). The inscription, as Wilhelm noted, belongs to the second half of the second century after Christ.

The other error is the conflation of the name Κ. Φον(τήιος) Μάξιμος in the prytany catalogues of *Hesperia* IV 1935, p. 48, No. 11 and XXXIII 1964, p. 224, No. 7 with Κ. Φοντήιος Κράτων here. They are presumably from the same family, but Maximus and Craton are certainly not identical.