Whereas any attention paid in the past to the eighth book of the *Palatine Anthology* was traditionally perfunctory if not outright disdainful, a more sophisticated attitude has developed recently, whereby the book is evaluated as a whole – a coherent collection of epigrams focusing on the theme of death and burial. Even the author’s marked tendency toward repetitif motifs, which has undoubtedly hampered a positive perception of the collection, is now explained by the work’s didactic aim.

Any attention paid to the eighth book of the Palatine Anthology has traditionally been perfunctory if not outright disdainful. Recently, however, a more sophisticated attitude has developed, whereby the book is evaluated as a whole – a coherent collection of epigrams focusing on the theme of death and burial. The author’s marked tendency toward repetitif motifs has undoubtedly hampered a positive perception of the collection. However, this propensity can be explained by the work’s didactic aim. Beyond any consideration of the contents and the valuable historical and social references they contain, not least the allusions to certain funerary practices of the 4th century AD, another clear reason for interest in these epigrams lies in their classical inspiration. With amplified attention paid to the author’s formal techniques and literary models, it has become increasingly clear that Gregory is more classicizing in his epigrams than in the rest of his poetry. In the case of this epigram, as we shall see, the kind of desecration involved, whether of pagan tombs by Christians or vice versa, has long been a matter of perplexity.

*Conspectus siglorum*. *m*. = standard reading in all manuscripts; *codd*. = reading found in all codices except P; P = *Palatinus gr.* 23. Apart from this, the four most important manuscripts for reconstructing the text are the *Laurentianus* 7,10, the *Ambrosianus* gr. 433 (H 45 *Sup*.), the *Parisini* gr. 991 and 992. For further discussion of the manuscript tradition, see Waltz, *op. cit*., pp. 3-10 e 32-33.