



Eleonora SANTIN

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Biography

Eleonora Santin is an independent scholar and teacher in the secondary public school system. She works with the Chair of Greek Epigraphy at University of Rome « La Sapienza » and University of Bologna and with UMR 5189, CNRS (*HiSoMA*). She obtained her PhD in Ancient History in May 2007 at University of Rome « La Sapienza » with a *thesis* in Greek Epigraphy. Her main research interests include Greek poetry on stone, in particular sepulchral epigrams from Thessaly and signed epigrams from all regions of the Hellenic world. She is the author of a monograph «Autori di epigrammi sepolcrali greci su pietra. Firme di poeti occasionali e professionisti» (in press *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Memorie della Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche*, Roma, Bardi Editore) and she has written some articles on Greek epigraphic poetry.

Research project at Collegium de Lyon:

Literary culture in Thessaly on the basis of epigraphic evidence

For a long time, epigraphic sources have provided an important contribution to a detailed analysis and a global evaluation of literary culture in the complex and diverse reality of ancient Greek world; their role is becoming more and more appreciated, as is shown by the large number of papers which deal with this topic and with all that is traditionally connected to "the culture of the Muses" starting from epigraphic *corpora* or thematic collections of inscriptions.

Thessaly, a vast region in northern Greece, seems to have transmitted a very small list of poets, orators and philosophers who can take part in so called "great literature ". However, this information poverty received by the literary tradition is not necessarily a sign of weakness or absence of culture and dedication to intellectual activities in this country. Epigraphic sources, in particular recently discovered inscriptions or numerous texts already published but never considered as an homogeneous series, lead in the opposite direction.

In this year we will attempt to exploit epigraphic sources that are currently available to define as complete as possible a picture of Thessalian literary culture as it is drawn by the tradition of anonymous epigrams and documentary texts concerning professionals operating within the field of *paideia*.

Emphasizing the abundance and the great value of these documents, we should be able to demonstrate that there was in Thessaly a widespread literary culture, at least as far as can be observed in a civilization where education is always a privilege for an elite group. Moreover, we can assume there was, among people who have literacy skills and all the more among those who boasted of a good mastery of letters, the desire to display their knowledge publicly. We shall try to throw light on the relationship between these social groups and the literary models which entered in their *cursus* of studies or which were a part of an oral inheritance naturally acquired from the tradition.

We hope to demonstrate, in particular, but not exclusively, thanks to epigraphic documentation, that numerous cities in Thessaly showed considerable interest and appreciation for all people who practiced poetry, philosophy and rhetoric. This inclination for benevolence was sometimes directly linked to the requirements of propaganda and the civic political life.