

Failed Address: Catullus 101 in the *Aeneid*

The paper examines Catullus 101, the poet's address to his deceased brother, in respect to its surprisingly extensive reception in the *Aeneid*. It finds that this intertext extends far beyond the well-known recurrence of *per aequora uect-* in the poem (101.1; verbatim or recognizably modified 11 times in *A.*, as listed in Schmiel 1979), appearing rather in nearly every funerary context in *A.* 1-6 and at crucial moments in 7-12. In light of the intertextual relation between 101.1-2 and *Odyssey* 1.1-4 (Conte 1986: 32-35) and Vergil's practice of distributing single instances of intertextual reception over textually remote passages (Wills 1998), it sees 101 as a globalizing, structural presence in *A.*, an instance of "Catullan plot" as recently identified and pursued by Hardie (2012).

In specific terms, the paper reads Vergil reading 101 in the following ways: 1) as literary mimesis of Roman ritual practice; 2) as intratextual emblem for Catullan epic (poem 64) and precedent for Vergil's own Roman adaptation of Homeric epic, and 3) as speech of arrival and departure, with the boundaries between these categories blurred by death and crystallized in *aeue atque uale* at 101.10.

As ritual mimesis, poem 101 insists on the vanity or failure of the action it dramatizes. Against Feldherr's (2000) positive construal of the speaker's attitude toward ritual practice, the poet's "*Odyssey*" to his brother's tomb is unheroic, his "reunion" unreal, his address neither responded to nor heard, and his purpose therefore frustrated (so *mutam* and *nequiquam*, 101.4). Yet the poem is a defense of its self-acknowledged failure: where the reality of death renders successful address impossible, it also brings about circumstances in which failed address and ritual performance are an appropriate response (101.7-8, and especially the piled-up adversatives *nunc tamen interea*).

For 101 as totalizing emblem and thematization of arrival and departure, two moments in *A.* are most crucial: Anchises' and Aeneas' initial reunion in Elysium and the Marcellus coda to the *Heldenschau* at its end (6.679-702 and 860-86). Where the presence of 101 has long been acknowledged in the former scene, it has previously only been suspected in the latter (Shackleton Bailey 1986, 205). As communication between dead and living kin, respective moment of arrival/greeting and departure/farewell, central passage for *A.* as a whole and climax of its "Odyssean half," the passages taken together constitute a maximally privileged site for global readings of 101, "Vergil's Catullus," and indeed of *A.* itself.

In either scene, the 101 intertext seizes on the rhetorical and explanatory aspect of the poem described above. In either case, the poem is focalized through the rhetorical exigencies of the character speaking, just as 101 itself had been the poet-speaker's personal refraction of Ariadnean rhetoric in poem 64. Anchises triumphantly corrects Catullan failure in the former scene, pointing out that Aeneas' heroic feat has here enabled a *successful* address (6.692-93). In the latter, forced by Aeneas' unwelcome question to confront his own powerlessness in the face of death, the grief-stricken Anchises must resort to Catullan rhetoric to explain the vain funerary rites he is spontaneously moved to perform (6.885-86). Catullus' rhetoric of failure reasserts itself precisely at the moment of Anchises' failure of rhetoric, and for the same reason.

Bibliography

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