

Triphiodorus' Aesthetic of *détournement*

Scholars have noted that Triphiodorus, in his *Sack of Troy* (edition by Gerlaud 1982), alludes many times to Callimachus (see De Stefani-Magnelli 2011). A passage where this procedure happens prominently is Triphiodorus' prologue. In compliance with the poetic principles expressed by Callimachus in the prologue to the *Aetia*, Triphiodorus proclaims to avoid excessive length in his poetry (see Miguélez-Cavero 2013, p. 62).

Tomasso, however, has recently (2012) denied that the Callimachean influence on Triphiodorus extends to any other aspects of the poem but length, as it has been the common understanding of modern interpreters. Moreover, he contends that features such as the swiftness of the narration and the small dimension of the poem itself arise from features that are already present in the Homeric poems rather than coming from elsewhere.

I shall argue that both these readings are, in fact, reductive. I will show that Triphiodorus' allegiance to Callimachean tenets is in fact nuanced and responds to a precise need of aesthetic independence. The numerous references to Callimachus in the prologue do prove to be an important reference point for the later author. Triphiodorus, however, does also detach his own poetic practice from Callimachean tenets in important regards.

On the one hand, the Muse Calliope whom the author invokes is - as it has not been pointed out by previous interpreters - the same as in Callimachus' elegy of Acontius and Cydippe. On the other hand, the contemporaneous reference to a «big story» and to a «hurrying» narrator and a «rapid song» do not point to a straightforward refusal of un-callimachean kinds of narration. The swiftness of both the song and the Muse seems to be dangerously close to the power of the course of the Assyrian river in Callimachus' hymn to Apollo, where the image acts as a metaphor for the kind of poetry Callimachus rejects. The «much song», instead, seems not

only to contrast with the much sung-about story of Ilium, but also with the «word little by little» to which Callimachus, in the prologue of the *Aetia*, assimilates his own poetry. Finally, Triphiodorus narration starts with a long series of negation of common situations in the Homeric poem. This feature strikingly recalls the first period of the prologue to the *Aetia*, in which Callimachus is reproached for not writing «a continuous poem or [kingly deeds] in many thousands or lines [or ancient] heroes». I shall argue that Triphiodorus skillfully avoids lengthy writing, but at the same time delves wholeheartedly into his Homeric narrative.

Bibliography

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