

Et in Arcadia Ego: Elegiac Shadows over the Vergilian (Para-)Text

Just as tombstones already litter the idyllic landscape of ancient pastoral (e.g. Theocritus, *Idylls* 7.10-11; Vergil, *Eclogues* 5.40-44, 9.59-60), so too did the intertwining genres of epitaph and elegy cast their shadow over Vergil's *Aeneid* before it reached the hands and minds of many ancient readers. This paper advances Pandey (2017) in exploring how rumors of Vergil's death may have affected early receptions of his epic, re-triangulating its elegiac notes through the generic 'intermediality' of epigram and epitaph (cf. Ramsby 2007 and Dinter *et alii* in Keith 2011).

Ancient biographers including Donatus and Jerome understood Vergil's last composition to be an elegiac inscription for his own tomb in Campania: *Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc / Parthenope; cecini pascua, rura, duces* (cf. Frings 1998, Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008, Stok 2010). As he lay dying in Brundisium, the epic poet thus participated in the elegiac convention of writing his own epitaph and monumentalizing a future moment as already past (cf. e.g. Callimachus, *Epigrams* 35; Vergil, *Eclogues* 10.33-34; Propertius 2.13.31-40; Tibullus 1.3.55-56). This epitaph adds a paratextual elegiac seal to the epic, framing its half-lines as internal evidence of its 'incompletion' upon the author's death (cf. O'Hara 2010, Krevans 2015). It also posthumously reenacts the *Aeneid*'s own elegiac/epitaphic remapping of Italy around the deaths of Palinurus, Misenus, and Caieta (as noted by Thomas in Kyriakidis 1998).

Epitaphic elegy would also play an important role in artifactualizing the *Aeneid* after the death of its author. Elegists frequently construct their subject positions through personal future readership of past-tense epic events: hence Gallus' anticipation of 'reading' Caesar's great exploits (*fixa legam spolieis deivitiore tueis*, Qasr Ibrîm fr. line 5, ed. Hollis 2007) and Propertius' fantasy of 'reading' triumphal *tituli* at 3.4.16, evolving into Ovid's radical

dissociation of readerly interpretation from authorial intent at *Ars* 1.219-228. The elegiac epigraphs that prefaced many copies of the *Aeneid* (e.g. Martial 14.186 and the pseudo-Ovidian introduction with decastich *argumenta* accompanying MS. Vat. Lat. 3867) similarly positioned ancient readers to view Vergil's text as an inanimate corpus, a "patient etherised upon a table," much as the *sphragis* of the *Georgics* (4.559-66) retroactively transformed this didactic song into a past-tense object (*canebam*, 559) within a fictionalized historical context (*Caesar dum magnus ad altum / fulminat Euphraten*, 560-61).

In eulogizing and pre-digesting Vergil's corpus for the personal consumption of readers, these elegiac paratexts call attention to the monumentality, but also the historical and corporeal alienity, of the text that followed. They thus function as epitaphs for an epic that once represented a living response to an uncertain future, and serve as a case study in the power of paratext to (p/re)shape readers' responses.

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