

Aeneas est invitus amator: The Use of paraclausithyron and ekphrasis in Aeneid 1

While the elegiac poets have been widely discussed in relation to the epic tradition, the epic reply in the conversation has been somewhat neglected. Saylor pointed out the presence of elegiac tropes in Vergil; this paper seeks to expand this conversation and examine the tensions presented around the dual presence of epic and elegiac tropes in the text. More specifically, this paper examines Vergil's use of epic and elegiac tropes to frame the conflict between Aeneas and Dido and argues that the intervention of Venus introduces elegiac tropes and frames Dido's introduction and interpretation of Aeneas. In turn, Aeneas's reading of the temple doors and flashback to the Trojan wars serves as interruptions to the elegiac narrative Venus strives to establish.

The elegiac tropes vie with epic for supremacy in the interactions between Dido and Aeneas. Venus attempts to frame Aeneas as the *exclusus amator* with Dido playing the role of welcoming lover. This framework explains Venus's costumed appearance as well as shaping her narrative introduction to Dido. Venus attempts to send Aeneas to Dido's doorstep as an *exclusus amator*. Within the text, Aeneas touches on each of the tropes Copley establishes as part of the understood Roman presentation of the *exclusus amator*: there are tears of suffering, a lament, a threshold symbolizing married fidelity, and finally, a closed door to be addressed. Within the narrative of the text, each of these elegiac touchstones stands as the result of Venus's intervention and attempt to control the situation in Carthage, about which she is openly and justifiably fearful on behalf of her son. Vergil uses this narrative as entrée to play with the generic expectations of his readers. When the goddess of love and Cupid intervene, the textual result must follow the elegiac example. However, the genre play is the reversal of the usual

elegiac *recusatio* for not writing epic and becomes an opportunity to problematize that very process.

The elegiac attempt at hijacking the epic tone progresses haltingly with the consistent refusal of the male lead to play his part and ultimately ending in tragedy. Vergil uses Aeneas' duty (*pietas*) as the ultimate counterexample as to why romantic dalliances are so dangerous. Aeneas' laments and tears remain steadfastly epic and focus on his own misfortunes and adventures as a leader of men rather than his suffering as a lover. At the threshold where he should declare his love, he instead narrates the ekphrastic remainders of his epic past. Finally, the door opens to find Dido receptive, but Aeneas dumbfoundedly following his role as military and appropriately epic leader.

This paper will use close textual examination of the text of Vergil in book I in comparison to both elegiac and epic texts to explore how Vergil plays with generic expectations to make an argument for the importance and centrality of epic in the midst of a conversation about justifying the role of elegy in Roman society. Specifically, the arguments will focus on the use of the *paraclausithyron* in contrast with the *ekphrasis* as presented on the doors of the temple of Juno. I will make extensive use of the secondary sources which discuss the roles of both *ekphrasis* and *paraclausithyron* in their more traditional generic use.

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