

Call for Papers: Symposium Cumanum 2017

Symposium Cumanum 2017

Vergil and Elegy

June 27-30, 2017

Co-Directors: Micah Myers (Kenyon College) and Alison Keith (University of Toronto)

The Vergilian society invites proposals for papers for the 2017 Symposium Cumanum at the Villa Vergiliana in Cuma, Italy.

In the final book of the *Georgics*, Aristaeus' lament reaches his mother as one of her fellow nymphs is in the midst of song (4.345-51):

inter quas curam Clymene narrabat inanem
Vulcani, Martisque dolos et dulcia furta,
aque Chao densos divum numerabat amores.
carmine quo captae dum fuis mollia pensa
devolvunt, iterum maternas impulit aures
luctus Aristaei, vitreisque sedilibus omnes
obstipuere;

Deploying elegiac diction alongside Homeric allusion, Clymene tells of the *inanis cura* of Vulcan and the *doli* and *dulcia furta* of Mars (345-6). She then transitions to catalogue poetry (*numerabat*), in which she sings (*carmine*) of the *densi divum amores* beginning from Chaos (347-8). The nymphs are enraptured by the music as they weave *mollia pensa* until the *luctus* of Aristaeus strikes Cyrene's ears, interrupting Clymene's performance. More than Aristaeus' *luctus* infringing on the love poetry of Clymene, the passage intimates the deep level at which elegy — in its capacity as poetry of both love and lament — is part of the matrix of Vergilian art. All of Vergil's works have points of contact with elegiac poetry. Likewise, Vergil's poetry itself becomes a touchstone for elegy (Propertius 2.34, Tibullus 2.5, Ovid *Amores* 1.1, to name only a few examples). But Clymene's song suggests Vergil's more profound engagement with elegiac diction and thematics, especially in light of Anchises' catalogue in another subterranean scene (*A.* 6.681-2: *omnemque suorum/ forte recensebat numerum*; *A.* 6.868: *o gnate, ingentem luctum ne quaere tuorum*), in which the parade of great Romans parallels *densi divum amores*, the grief of Aristaeus interfaces with the grief of Aeneas' descendants, and the death of Marcellus parallels the loss of Aristaeus' bees. In the nearly thirty years since the appearance of Conte's *Rhetoric of Imitation*, questions of intertextuality and intergeneric interactions have continued to be a prominent feature of classical scholarship, and Vergilian studies in particular (especially Hinds' *Allusion and Intertext*, Depew and Obbink's *Matrices of Genre*, and Stephen Harrison's *Generic Enrichment in Vergil and Horace*). Hellenistic poetry catalyzed generic mixing, creating a new aesthetic that influenced even the earliest Roman poetry. But the elegiac revolution at Rome during Vergil's lifetime was more than a function of literary connoisseurism; it responded to the Roman political and cultural revolution. Vergil's poetry reveals a deep recognition of the innovative and dynamic contemporary shift that elegy represents. Vergil's engagements with elegy circumscribe this revolution, as his own work became recircumscribed by elegiac poets, both in the Augustan period and in later traditions. For example, the elegiac component of Vergil's poetics is a central, albeit largely neglected, facet of his late Medieval and early modern *Nachleben*.

This conference seeks reassessments of the relationship between Vergil and elegy: from Vergil's reception of Greek and Roman antecedents, to the role of Latin love elegy in Vergil's works, as well as elegiac responses to Vergilian poetics from antiquity to the present.

Papers are invited on topics including (but not limited to):

- – The influence of Greek elegy upon Vergil.
- – Vergil's engagement with elegy in terms of generic enrichment and mixing.
- – The elegiac component of Vergil's poetics and the role of elegy in the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*.
- – Elegiac poems that circulated under Vergil's name.
- – Maecenas, Messalla, and the politics of poetry and genre.
- – "Silver Latin" interrogations of Vergil's elegiac engagements.
- – Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance incorporations of Vergilian poetics into elegy.
- – Material culture, Vergil, and elegy.
- – Ecphrasis and elegy.

Papers will be 20 minutes long with ample time for discussion. The symposium will include three days of papers, discussion, and visits to Vergilian sites.

Participants will include Sharon James, John Miller, K. Sara Myers, Damien Nelis, James O'Hara, Alessandro Schiesaro, and Sarah Spence.

Interested scholars should send an abstract of no more than 300 words to myersm1@kenyon.edu by December 1, 2016.