

The triumph, an important and solemn state ritual, was often appropriated by Roman poets as a useful metaphor. The Augustan elegists found in the motif of the *triumphator* a way to celebrate their own romantic triumphs and to elevate the genre of love-elegy. The motif is also found in the more obscure *Catalepton* 14, a poem from the *Appendix Vergiliana*. This poem presents itself as a product of Vergil, close to finishing the *Aeneid* and appealing to Venus for help in completing his great work. The theme of the triumph is woven throughout the poem in such a way that it builds not only on the models of the Augustan elegists but also on Vergil's own use of the *triumphator* motif. The end result is a metapoetic commentary on Vergil, the *Aeneid*, and the hierarchical ranking of elegy and epic.

As Galinsky has shown, the triumph motif was little used in Latin poetry until the Augustan poets seized on it as a way to talk about love and to celebrate the role of the lover (1969, 79). Propertius, for example, places the lover and his Muse in the chariot of the *triumphator* (3.1), elevating his private concerns to the level of a state celebration and claiming epic's lofty status for elegy. The motif allows him to revise the scale of societal and literary values (Miller 1995, 291). The metapoetical use of the triumph is even more evident in Ovid (*Am.* 1.2) where Cupid, standing in for love-elegy, leads a triumph over lovers (Athanasaki 1992) and thus a triumph of the genre of love-elegy.

*Catalepton* 14 is something of an anomaly in the *Appendix Vergiliana*. Unlike the other poems of the *Catalepton* it does not present itself as an item of Vergil's juvenilia. Its dramatic setting is the end of Vergil's life, as he struggles to finish the *Aeneid* and prays to Venus for aid in doing so. His appeal takes the form of a vow, a vow much like that of a campaigning general. He promises that if he is allowed to finish the work *Troius Aeneas* will travel the Roman world in triumph and the temples of Venus will be decorated with the spoils. The triumph motif is used with careful allusion to the Augustan love-elegists and to Vergil's own use of triumphal imagery. Most notably, in *Georgics* 3.8-11 Vergil had promised to lead the Muses back from conquered Helicon to Rome in triumph.

While the presence of triumphal imagery in *Catalepton* 14 had been noted as early as Heyne, few commentators have seen the metapoetical implications. The poem subverts traditional readings of the *Aeneid* by recasting the epic in an elegiac light. Aeneas triumphs but he does so in elegiac couplets and all the rewards of his triumph, the triumph of the *Aeneid* itself, are to be dedicated to Venus. The Vergil of the *Georgics* hoped to build a temple with Caesar in the middle; the 'Vergil' of *Catalepton* 14 will put a statue of *Amor* in the middle of his temple. Servius famously described the *Aeneid* as a poem meant to glorify Augustus. The author of *Catalepton* 14 disagrees. The *Aeneid* is a poem that glorifies Venus, that celebrates love. An odd reading, but one that the author asserts through careful use of the triumph motif, thereby granting elegy its ultimate triumph over epic.