



Accademia Editoriale

Invocatio ad Musam (Aen. 7, 37)

Author(s): Stratis Kyriakidis

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*, No. 33 (1994), pp. 197-206

Published by: [Fabrizio Serra editore](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40236045>

Accessed: 24/09/2012 07:15

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Fabrizio Serra editore and Accademia Editoriale are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Stratis Kyriakidis

Invocatio ad Musam (Aen. 7, 37)

The invocation to Erato in the proem to *Aeneid*'s Book 7 (37-45)¹ has been the subject of much discussion among scholars, as to the function of the Muse and the meaning the poet wishes to convey through her². Indeed, Vergil's use of this particular Muse just before the narrative of the «Iliadic» events begins is curious, to say the least. It is generally accepted that Vergil's invocation to Erato has as its model Apollonius Rhodius' invocation at 3,1 of his *Argonautica*: εἰ δ' ἄγε νῦν Ἑρατώ, παρὰ θ' ἴστασο καὶ μοι ἐνίσπε...» (R.L. Hunter) where the Hellenistic poet justifies his choice of the Muse through a *figura etymologica* based on the word ἔρωϛ³, and at the same time through the proem

Earlier versions of this paper were read in November 1993 at the 5th Panhellenic Symposium of Latin Studies held at Athens University and in February 1994 at a Seminar in the School of Classics of the University of Leeds where I benefitted from the stimulating discussion. I must express my thanks to the anonymous referees of «MD» for their helpful suggestions.

1. For reference to the *Aeneid*'s proems see at the end of this paper.
2. F.A. Todd, *Virgil's Invocation of Erato*, «Class. Rev.» 45, 1931, pp. 216-218; E. Fraenkel, *Some aspects of the Structure of Aeneid VII*, «Journ. Rom. Stud.» 35, 1945, pp. 1-14; Fr. Klingner, *Virgil: Bucolica Georgica Aeneis*, Stuttgart 1967, pp. 496 ff.; M.J. Putnam, *Aen. VII and the Aeneid*, «Amer. Journ. Philol.» 91, 1970, p. 418; W.P. Basson, *Pivotal Catalogues in the Aeneid*, Amsterdam 1975, ch. 3 pp. 95-116; C. Monteleone, *Encide 7.37: l'invocazione ad Erato come segnale*, «Ant. Class.» 46, 1977, p. 191; G. Lieberg, *De Musarum usu ac vi apud Vergilium*, in *Africa et Roma. Acta conventus Dacaricae habiti*, Roma 1979, pp. 230-238; I. Mariotti, *Il secondo proemio dell'Eneide*, in *Letterature Comparate. Problemi e Metodo. Studi in onore di Ettore Paratore*, Bologna 1981, vol. i, pp. 459-466; W. Suerbaum, *Enc. Virg.*, s.v. Muse, p. 634; F. De Martino, *Note apolloniane*, «Ann. Fac. di Lett. Univ. Bari», 27-28, 1984-85, pp. 101-117; R.F. Thomas, *From recusatio to commitment: the evolution of the Vergilian programme*, «Pap. Liv. Lat. Sem.» 5, 1985, pp. 61-73; M. Fernandelli, *Il compito della Musa*, «Quad. Filol. Class.» (Univ. degli Studi di Trieste) 5, 1986, pp. 87-104; Fr. Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic*, Cambridge 1989, p. 156; K. Toll, *What's love got to do with it? The Invocation to Erato, and Patriotism in the Aeneid*, «Quad. Urb. Cult. Class.», n.s. 33, 1989, pp. 107-118; B. Pavlock, *The Hero and the Erotic in Aeneid 7-12*, «Vergilius» 38, 1992, pp. 72-87; R. Hunter, *The Argonautica of Apollonius. Literary Studies*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 180-1.
3. Μηδείης ὑπ' ἔρωτι (3,3) and ἐπήρατον οὐνομα... (3,5); F. Vian (ed.) *Apollonios de Rhodes, Argon.*, Paris 1980, vol. 3, p. 50, note 1; R. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes. Argonautica Book III*, Cambridge 1989, ad 4-5.

informs the reader of the significance of love in his narrative⁴. In the proem of the Roman epic however, the invocation to the same Muse has been viewed variously by modern scholars. Bearing in mind that the *Aeneid* as a whole and in its parts is capable of being interpreted in more than one way, I shall attempt to discuss one further interpretation of this specific invocation.

It is true that the etymologising of the Muses' names has been a favourite preoccupation in antiquity. Ever since Hesiod's *Theogony* (60-75) we know of attempts made to etymologise the Muses' names and / or to allocate a specific province of interest to each one of them. It is also true, however, that these attempts – if they were not incomplete – did not constitute a broadly accepted system or canon for at least the greatest part of antiquity. To the best of my knowledge, the first complete system of attributes constructed for all nine of the Muses is by Diodorus Siculus⁵. Later on, Plutarch in his *Moralia* (*Quaest. conv.*)⁶ also compiles his own list. But these two systems do not coincide as they are based on different criteria of evaluation, and consequently do not represent a broadly accepted view. A third attempt was made in the 1st century A.D. by L. Annaeus Cornutus in his work *Theologiae Graecae Compendium* (ch. 14, Lang). In it the almost ignored by modern scholarship⁷ Stoic *grammaticus*, through the etymology of the Muses' names, attributes a province to each. His list of attributes, however, does not match exactly that either of Diodorus or Plutarch. Thus, even though it becomes clear from Propertius' words (3,3,33-4) that the notion of distinct areas for each one of the Muses had been gaining acceptance during that period, the view that one specific attribute is allocated to each particular Muse and accepted by all, cannot be supported⁸.

4. *Scholia in Apollonium Rhodium vetera, ad 3.5c* (215,5, Wendel); A. Hurst, *Apollonios de Rhodes, Manières de Coherence*, Institut Suisse de Rome, Rome 1967, p. 134; W.H. Race, *How Greek poems begin?* «Yale Class. Stud.» 29, 1992, p. 27.

5. Diod. Sic. 4,7,4.

6. 746F ff.; cf. 746 C-D.

7. For a recent survey on Cornutus see G. W. Most, *Cornutus and Stoic Allegoresis: A Preliminary Report*, «Auf. Nied. Röm. Welt» II, 36, 3, pp. 2014-65 (with bibliogr.), esp. 2018-29; see also D. Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – Oxford 1992, ch. 1, pp. 23-72.

8. See e.g. R.G.M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace. Odes, Book 1*, Oxford 1970, p. 282 f.; I. Mariotti, (note 2), p. 462; R. F. Thomas (note 2), p. 63 f. and note 11. S. Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone. Ovid and the selfconscious Muse*, Cambridge 1987, p. 139 f. note 41; A. Barchiesi, *Discordant*

From the 3rd century B.C. we have Rhianus' line πᾶσαι δ' εἰσαίτουσι, μῆς ὅτε τ' οὐνομα λέξις⁹ – a view corroborated by the common epic practice of invoking the Muse in the singular¹⁰. Servius *auctus* seems to agree with this when commenting on the relevance of the Muses' name at 7,37 *sane Erato vel pro Calliope vel pro qualicumque Musa posuit*; so too does Donatus, in his interpretation of 9, 525 where Vergil – in his view – invokes Calliope *velut unam specialiter Musam et tangens generaliter sub plurali numero universas, ut omnes rogatae videantur*. According to these testimonies Vergil's invocation to Erato falls within the scope of the epic tradition, as the invocation to any one Muse concerns all her ὁμόφρονας¹¹ sisters.

Vergil invokes Erato by name at 7, 37, repeating it in more general terms at 7, 41 *tu vatem tu, diva, mone*. Both invocations fall within the limits of the second major proem to the *Aeneid* (37-45) where the poet states the subjects he is going to treat. The importance of these subjects is emphasised a few lines further on, with the impressive statement: *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo / maius opus moveo* (44-45) with which the proem closes. The succinct and programmatic nature of the proem's heroic contents clearly places the second part of the *Aeneid* within the patterns of epic tradition¹². The absence, on the other hand, of any mention of the element of love is a strong indication of the secondary importance that this subject had for the narrative of books 7-12¹³.

Muses, «Proc. Cambr. Philol. Soc.» 37, 1991, p. 11. For a later even period see A.S. Gow and D.L. Page, *The Garland of Philip*, Cambridge 1968, vol. 2, pp. 306-7.

9. *Schol. in Apoll. Rhod. vetera*, ad 3,1-5c (215,15, Wendel.) = *Coll. Alex.* fr. 19 (p. 12 Powell): 'Ριανός δὲ ἐν α' Ἑλικῶν φησι μηδὲν διαφέρειν, εἰ μίαν ἐπικαλεῖται τῶν Μουσῶν τις, πάσας γὰρ σημαίνει διὰ τῆς μιᾶς. λέγει δὲ οὕτως 'πᾶσαι δ' εἰσαίτουσι, μῆς ὅτε τ' οὐνομα λέξις'.

10. Cf. J.H. Cramer, *Anecd. Oxon.* i.227 = *BGrFr, Aethiopsis*: fr. dub. 23 (32, Kinkel): Μοῦσα, ἀπὸ μιᾶς αἱ πᾶσαι λέγονται.

11. Hes. *Theog.* 60.

12. Cf. Hor. *Ars Poet.* 73-4: *Res gestae regumque ducumque et tristia bella / quo scribi possent numero, monstravit Homerus* and C.O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry. The 'ars Poetica'*, Cambridge 1971, ad loc. Cf. G.B. Conte, *Virgilio. Il genere e i suoi confini*, Milano 1984, ch. vi = *Proems in the middle*, «Yale Class. Stud.» 29, 1992, pp. 127 and 153 respectively. Thomas (note 2) sees a programmatic connection between this passage and *Eclogues* 4 and 6, and he further states that the harmony between programme and practice reflects the depth of Vergil's commitment to Callimacheanism (pp. 62 ff.).

13. Cf. Mariotti (note 2), p. 14; Suerbaum (note 2) p. 634 considers that the element of love has nothing to do in this part of the epic: «Si tratta di un rapporto

Since nothing in Vergil is left to chance or to mere coincidence, we should search for a reason as to why the poet reserved such exclusive treatment for Erato¹⁴. But to this end we should look at the invocations themselves and their relation to the responsibilities the poet seeks to attribute to the Muse or Muses invoked: that is, (a) how far the Muses have a major or even exclusive role to play in what is asked of them and (b) to what extent the participation of the poet in the narrative process is implied.

Amongst the first group, invocations referring primarily to the Muses, we have those at 9,77-79 and at 10,163; the invocations at 7, 641-46 and 9,525-28 should also be included in the same group; even though the latter have some verbal elements referring to the poet, nevertheless his role is underplayed. In 7, 641-46 he is mentioned only in the last line of the proem following five lines that list the subjects the Muses are asked to treat. Furthermore this line (646) notionally depends on the previous one (645), since its full meaning is revealed only in its antithesis to it. Line 645 states the well-known mnemonic and narrative qualities of the Muses (*et meministis enim, divae, et memorare potestis*)¹⁵, while l. 646 emphasises the difficulty with which mortals are able to comprehend the events that have taken place. In this instance the poet is counted among the anonymous throng of mortals (*ad nos*, 646) which means that there is a serious diminution of his role.

There remain the two major proems to the *Aeneid* in which Vergil has retained a special part for his poetic self. The invocations in these proems make up the second group, that is, the category in which the poet prominently participates in the narrative process, and recognises both for himself and for the Muses an allocation of responsibilities. In the first proem¹⁶, the *incipit* of the whole epic, the allocation of

giuridico, lo *ius conubii*». But see, among others, Lieberg, Pavlock, Hunter (note 2).

14. Of the six times that Vergil invokes the Muses in the *Aeneid* only in two does he call them by name. The first is that of Erato (7, 37) and the second at 9,525 where he invokes Calliope. The latter is a clear case of what Rhianus anticipated in his verse and Tib. Donatus confirmed in his work, namely the addressing of all the Muses through the invocation to a particular one. After all, this is what the plural forms that follow the invocation indicate: *Vos, o Calliope, precor, adspirate canenti* (9, 525), *et mecum ingentis oras evolvite belli* (9,528). In the other four cases the poet addresses the Muse generically (1, 8) or the Muses (9, 77) or 'goddesses' in general (7, 641, 645 and 10, 163).

15. Cf. *Il.* 2,485-6 ἡμεῖς γὰρ θεαὶ ἐστέ, πάρεστέ τε, ἰστέ τε πάντα. / ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν.

16. See now G. Namia, *Il proemio dell' Eneide e il modello omerico. L'inversione*

responsibilities to the poet and the Muse implies the distinction between the two but at the same time shows the relationship between them. Of the eleven lines of the proem¹⁷, in the first seven, the poet programmatically sets out what he intends to narrate while in the last four lines, he invokes the Muse to remind him of the reasons why the pious hero suffered so many hardships. In this way, we have, on the one hand, the intense presentation of the poet's self in the first person and in the first half-line of the whole epic (*arma virumque cano*), while, on the other, we have an equally strong invocation at line 8 (*Musa, mihi causas memora...*).

In the second proem the same allocation of responsibilities is observed: the Muse reminds (*mone*, 41), the poet narrates, and composes (*expediam, revocabo*, 40; *dicam* 41 and 42)¹⁸.

These two proems, which anticipate thematically the whole work or part of it (in the case of the second one), are of particular importance for the narrative. The first bears the weight of transmitting to the reader signs and features that generically and thematically characterise the epic¹⁹. The second proem, because of its position, could not claim an equal status with the first. So the poet has to make up for its positional handicap in order to give it appropriate weight, as it is actually the prelude to the second part of the narrative. This is achieved by its structure, by its position and by its content and to this end the poet is imitating, but also keeping aloof from the epic tradition²⁰. As in the first proem, we have here a programmatic account of what is going to follow; here too the poet appears in first person; his participation however, in this latter proem is stated repeatedly and variously. Vergil, in his effort to emphasise who the narrator is going to be, inverts the structure of the first proem reversing the relative position of the invocation and the subjects to be

del rapporto poeta-Musa, in E. Flores, A.V. Nazzaro, L. Nicastrì, G. Polara (eds.), *Miscellanea di Studi in onore di Armando Salvatore*, Napoli 1992, pp. 45-56.

17. See however M. Geymonat, *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*, Augustae Taurinorum 1973, p. 173: *prooemium Aeneidos idem est versuum numero ac illud Iliadis*. But cf. Namia (note 16), pp. 45 ff; R.G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber primus* with a commentary, Oxford 1971, ad 1-7; E. Paratore, *Virgilio. Eneide*. vol. I, libri I-II, Milano 1978, p. 130.

18. D.C. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic. Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition*, Oxford 1991, p. 186.

19. G. B. Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation* (ed. by Ch. Segal) Ithaca/London 1986, p. 35, n. 5, pp. 70 ff.

20. L. E. Rossi, *La fine alessandrina dell'Odisea e lo ζῆλος ὁμηρικὸς*, «Riv. Filol. Istr. Class.» s. III, 96, 1968, p. 161) considers the postponement of the invocation as one of Vergil's «notevoli antiomerismi strutturali».

narrated, increasing at the same time the number of the first person singular verbs²¹. The choice of these features has been made consciously as the conclusion of the proem suggests; *maior rerum... / maius opus moveo* (7, 44-45). The reason, therefore, why Vergil invokes Erato should be equal to the importance he wished to attribute to the proem. The poet invokes Erato as one of the Muses without necessarily associating her with love in its strict erotic sense: a view that may be deduced from the proem's content and which, as it has already been noted, Servius *auctus* shared.

For the Muse Erato there is a series of etymologies. The traditional and modern etymology relates the name to the verb ἐράω or ἐραμαι and consequently connects the Muse with love and love poetry. The locus classicus is Plato's *Phaedrus* 259d τῆ δὲ Ἐρατοῦ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἐρωτικοῖς. However, the etymologising of the Muses' name could offer more than one interpretation, a notion favoured also by the doctrine of the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus who maintained that words can have a double meaning²². This ambivalence in the meaning may be due to a partially different etymological approach or to an approximate significance given to the same etymology. Diodorus Siculus (4, 7, 4) for instance, shifts the perspective from the attributes given to Erato to the effects these attributes had on humans: Ἐρατῶ δ' ἀπὸ τοῦ τοὺς παιδευθέντας ποθεινοὺς καὶ ἐπεράστους ἀποτελεῖν. This interpretation, while not departing from the traditional etymology, highlights the human factor and relates the Muse to the liberal arts and high learning. Later, Plutarch moves in the same direction by accepting too the traditional etymology from ἐράω or ἐραμαι²³: ταῖς δὲ περὶ συνουσίαν σπουδαῖς ἢ Ἐρατῶ παρούσα μετὰ πειθοῦς λόγον ἐχούσης καὶ καιρὸν ἐξαιρεῖ καὶ κατασβέννυσι τὸ μανικὸν τῆς ἡδονῆς καὶ οἰστρώδες, εἰς φιλίαν καὶ πίστιν, οὐχ ὕβριν οὐδ' ἀκολασίαν τελευτώσης. From the way Plutarch records the domain of each Muse, it becomes apparent that he considers them as representing a way of life fit for the cultured person.

The interpretation of Lucius Annaeus Cornutus falls chronologically between the two preceding ones. The Stoic *grammaticus* retains the intellectual aspect of Erato and further adds another etymology of the

21. Fraenkel (note 2), p. 2 and note 4, sees in the two proems of the *Aeneid* a combination of the homeric invocation to the Muse and of the way the cyclic poet is using the first singular verb in the *Ilias parva* (Ἰλιον αἰεῖω καὶ Δαρδανίην ἐβπῶλον) and characterises «quite unhomeric» the first singular at *Il.* 2,493 (ἀρχοὺς αὐ νηῶν ἐρέω νῆας τε προπάσας). Cf. Klingner (note 2), pp. 384 ff. Austin (note 17) *ad* 1-7.

22. Varro *LL* 9, 1 = *SVF* 2, 151 (*Arnim*) and Gellius 11, 12 = *SVF* 2, 152.

23. *Moral.* (*Quaest. conv.*) 746E-F.

same kind: ἡ δὲ Ἐρατὴ πότερον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔρωτος λαβοῦσα τὴν ὀνομασίαν τὴν περὶ πᾶν εἶδος φιλοσοφίας ἐπιστροφὴν παρίστηται ἢ τῆς περὶ τὸ ἔρεσθαι καὶ ἀποκρίνεσθαι δυνάμεως ἐπίσκοπός ἐστιν, ὡς δὴ διαλεκτικῶν ὄντων τῶν σπουδαίων²⁴. In other words, he is deriving the Muse's name from the word 'love' (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔρωτος) but emphasises with the latter etymological version the dialectic dimension of question and answer. Actually, behind the two versions there is a common thought: the poet, or the philosopher for that matter, ἔραται πυθέσθαι²⁵, he wishes to find out, and ἔρωτᾷ, asks. Admittedly, Cornutus' view is formulated later than Vergil's time; it appears however, to confirm a notion that had begun to take shape before Vergil's time, as I shall attempt to show below.

In Cornutus's definition, there is a shift of the subjects related to Erato from love and love-poetry to love for philosophy – a shift that has also been noticed in the case of Diodorus Siculus while a new etymology is proposed from the verb ἔρωτάω. Now, this verb is one of the basic constituents in dialectic, the other one being the verb ἀμείβομαι and its compound forms ἀπαμείβομαι and ἀνταπαμείβομαι which we often find in the texts. In fact, the use of the latter verb presupposes the existence of the former by implication.

Cornutus' view seems to have no theoretical precedent. But in 1967, a papyrus fragment from Antinoopolis was published with some Callimachean lines and was later listed as fr. 238 *SH* of the *Aetia*²⁶. At line 8 of this fragment, after a space of approximately ten missing letters, we read: Ἐρατὴ δ' ἀνταπάμειπτο τά[δε]. Erato was clearly responding to some question that the poet had no doubt addressed to her²⁷. Neither the question posed nor the answer given by Erato has come down to us; what is important, however, is the participation of this particular Muse in this dialectic procedure of question and answer for which the definition of Cornutus considers her ἐπίσκοπον, that is an alert attendant (or vigilant guard).

This clear trend in Roman times not to relate the Muse Erato necessarily and strictly to love and love-poetry, should be associated with the well-known Callimachean technique of question and answer between the poet and the Muses in the first two books of the *Aetia*: a technique that, prior to Callimachus, was «unprecedented in poetry»

24. Ch. 14 (p. 16 Lang).

25. Cf. Soph. *OC* 511.

26. Fr. 238 *SH* (90, Lloyd-Jones / Parsons) = Barns-Zilliacus, «Papyr. Antinoop.» part III, 113.

27. See *SH* comm. ad loc. F. De Martino (note 2), p. 107: «è un vero e proprio dialogo del poeta con Erato».

and was «borrowed from scholarship» according to G. Kennedy²⁸. In Homer, the Muses are the source of inspiration, and poetic creation is the product thereof²⁹. The poet expresses what the Muse tells him. But the Callimachean innovation of the question and answer form sets the conditions for the poet's personal voice to be heard; through a profound erudition the poet now undertakes a special role in the narrative³⁰. The bipolarity thus introduced by the question and answer renders this technique a characteristic feature of aetiological poetry³¹. The same bipolarity in a blended form, appears also in the work of Posidippus where the Muse and the poet do not follow each other but sing together instead: νῦν δὲ Ποσει[ι]δίππῳ συγερόν συναείσατε γῆρας (*SH* 705,5). The same verb and in the same context is found again in Theocritus: Μοῖσαι Περίδες, συναείσατε τὰν ἑαδινάν μοι / παῖδ' (10,24, Gow). At the same time, 3rd century literary circles seem to have become aware of the dialectic relation between the poet and the Muse; a thought also supported by a fragment of the same period – and perhaps earlier than Callimachus – from Phoenix's

28. G. Kennedy, *Hellenistic Literary and Philosophical Scholarship in The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. by G. Kennedy, Cambridge 1989, p. 202.

29. The participation of the Homeric poet in the composition of his poems has been viewed variously. Phemius' words (αὐτοδίδακτός εἰμι..., *Od.* 22, 347-8) for instance, have been the ground for varied approaches: G. Lanata (*Poetica prelatonica. Testimonianze e frammenti*, Firenze 1963, p. 13 f.) among others, suggests that Phemius had received from the Muses the contents of his poems, but his art, the form of his work that is, was his, while W.J. Verdenius (*The principles of Greek Literary Criticism*, «Mnemosyne» 36, 1983, p. 38 f. and notes) maintains that «divine inspiration and human invention» are not contradictory but «rather complementary aspects of one and the same process» and although he accepts «a kind of collaboration between the singer and the Muse» he nevertheless gives to the latter the primary role.

30. Cf. Call. *Hymn.* 3, 186: εἰπέ, θεή, σὺ μὲν ἄμμιν, ἐγὼ δ' ἐτέροισιν αἰέσω; Theocr. 22, 116: εἰπέ, θεά, σὺ γὰρ οἶσθα ἐγὼ δ' ἐτέρων ὑποφήτης. But much earlier Pindar, (*Paeon* VI,6 (Bowra): με ... / αἰοῖμιον Περίδων προφάταν. fr. 137: μαντεύσο, Μοῖσα, προφατεύσο δ' ἐγὼ) who clearly refers to the poet – Muse relation. For the discussion concerning the above see A. Gercke, *Alexandrinische Studien*, «Rhein. Mus.» 44, 1889, p. 135 f.; G. Perrotta, *Poesia Ellenistica. Scritti minori II*, Roma 1978 (= «Stud. ital. filol. class.», n.s. 4, 1926, pp. 207-8, 220); A.S.F. Gow, *Theocritus*, vol. 2, Cambridge 1952, p. 311; G. Giangrande, *Use of Vocative in Alexandr. Poetry*, «Class. Quart.» 18, 1968, 55 ff.; L. Paduano Faedo, *L'inversione del rapporto poeta-Musa nella cultura ellenistica*, «Ann. della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (Lett., Stor. e Filos.)», serie II, 39, 1970, pp. 376-386, esp. pp. 377-382; E. Livrea, *Apollonii Rhodii Argonauticon liber IV*, Firenze 1973, ad 4,1381. Cf. G.O. Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry*, Oxford 1990, p. 64. T.D. Papanghelis, *Ἡ Ποιητικὴ τῶν Ρωμαίων «Νεωτέρων»*, Athens 1994, p. 36 f. but see also p. 179.

31. A. Barchiesi (note 8) p. 18, note 1.

poem *Koronistai*: ἀμείβομαι Μούσῃσι πρὸς θύρης ἕδων³². It is obvious that the function of question and answer does not presuppose a particular and exclusive connexion with Erato alone, but, in what has come down to us, it should also be noted that, in the question and answer session that Callimachus holds with the Muses, only in the case of Erato does the poet use a verb connected with dialectic³³. Thus, the highlight of this dialectic in Callimachean poetry finds its most concise form in the fragment of the papyrus from Antinoopolis. Erato not only inspires but also converses with the poet, representing, as she does, his wish to have access to the mnemonic material the Muse grants him. This notion, already in place poetically by Vergil's time, will find its theoretical formulation in the etymological definition of the Stoic Lucius Annaeus Cornutus³⁴.

The liberty the poet still had in the 1st century B.C. to refer to any Muse did not compel Vergil to invoke one particular Muse according to an existing and strict system of provinces. He was, therefore, in a position, while imitating Apollonius, to «play» with his model by selecting a Muse with distinct erotic allusions in the original. It becomes quite clear that Vergil here combines the Homeric technique of the proem and its programmatic nature, the Apollonian invocation to Erato as well as the Callimachean, or rather Hellenistic, distinction made between the poet and the Muse. Through this multi-layered *imitatio*, the Roman poet draws from Homer the technique and the subject-matter of the epic proem, but he also demonstrates his aloofness from the Homeric tradition of the poet-Muse relationship. With his invocation to Erato, he points to the Apollonian precedent; but his reasons are different from those of his Hellenistic counterpart. Vergil calls to mind the formula of Hellenistic epic but at the same time his

32. *Coll. Alex.* 16 (p. 233 Powell).

33. Cf. *Call. fr.* 7, 22; 43, 56 and 43, 84 (Pf.). It is interesting to note Hunter's (note 3) point that Apollonius Rhodius in his invocation to Erato (3, 1) also «allots an 'equal' role to his Muse (*sc.* Erato), in contrast to the prooemia of Books 1 and 4», *ad* 1.

34. Is it then a mere coincidence that Erato receives a special treatment in another work of aetiological nature, namely the *Fasti* of Ovid? There, even though six of the Muses are variously mentioned, the Roman poet converses actually and extensively only with Erato (4, 195-355). Mention of the other Muses occurs mainly in Book 5 of the *Fasti*, where they are all addressed by the poet and then Polymnia (11), Urania (57) and Calliope (81) speak in turn but they do not converse with the poet. At 6, 811 we have the formula *sic ego. sic Clio* that Ovid used in the case of Erato but here Clio speaks as a result of an invocation to all the Muses (6, 799, *dicite, Pierides, quis vos adiunxerit isti*).

Muse alludes to Callimachean dialectic. Moreover, he goes one step further. He is no longer subject to the Muse for his creation but has his own identity, and wishes his own voice to be heard. Erato is the Muse the poet asks for help in composing the second and – in his own words – most important part of his epic. With this invocation, as well as with the structure of the proem, the two poles of the composition, – the poet and the Muse – remain distinct. The poet asks the Muse – an act usually implied in all invocations – because he wishes to know (ἐρώμενος πυθέσθαι). Responsibility for the composition, however, rests with the poet himself. The poet now is not simply the mouth-piece of the Muse but a composer in his own right. In this place, crucial for the epic narrative, Vergil, following his Hellenistic counterparts, has enhanced, as in the first proem, the poetic role. By invoking Erato, Vergil alludes to his Hellenistic models in order to highlight his own personal contribution to the narrative; at the same time, however, the content and context of the proem fall within the Homeric epic tradition.

University of Thessaloniki