

The Renewal of Epic: Vergil's *Aeneid* [Unit 7]

Primary Reading: Vergil, *Aeneid* 1 and 8.

General Reading:

Camps, W.A. *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969, 21-30 [Library].

Gransden, K. W. (ed.) *Vergil: Aeneid: Book VIII*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, 11-20 [Library].

Putnam, M. C. J. 'Virgil's *Aeneid*', in J. M. Foley (ed.) *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, Oxford: Blackwells, 2005, 452-475. [Moodle]

SECTION A: THE PROLOGUE

Discussion Points

1. How does Vergil signal to the reader that his work belongs to the genre of epic?
2. What are the parallels and differences with the prologues of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Argonautica*?
3. What type of epic is this going to be? What are going to be important themes?
4. What picture is painted of the gods, what of the poet?
5. How is a parallel created between Aeneas and Hercules established?
6. What is the function of myth in this prologue?

Secondary Reading:

Perkell, C. G. 'Aeneid 1: An Epic Programme', in C. G. Perkell (ed.) *Reading Vergil's Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide*. Oklahoma: Norman University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, 29-49. [Moodle]

SECTION B: PRESENTATIONS

1) DESCRIPTION OF DIDO'S TEMPLE

Discussion Points

1. Why would the temple walls have been described in detail? Of what does this remind you?
2. How does this 'art gallery' link present with past and future? Why would these vignettes have been chosen?
3. Which themes are emphasised in these pictures? What is the climax of the series?
4. Why would the fates of Hector and Achilles not have been the final picture?
5. What is the role of Aeneas?
6. How does the reader 'see' these pictures?

Secondary Reading:

Barchiesi, A. 'Ecphrasis', in Martindale C. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Vergil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 271-81 [Library].

Beck, D. 'Ecphrasis, Interpretation and Audience in *Aeneid* 1 and *Odyssey* 8', *AJPh* 128, 2007, 533-49. [Moodle]

Williams, R.D. 'The pictures on Dido's temple (*Aeneid* 1.450-93), in S. J. Harrison (ed.) *Oxford Readings Vergil's Aeneid*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 37-45 [Library].

2) THE HERCULES-CACUS EPISODE

Discussion Points

1. Why is this episode included in the *Aeneid*?
2. What does the episode explain? What does this show you about myth?
3. How does Vergil use symbolism in this episode?
4. What concept of heroism is shown in this episode? What type of hero is Hercules in the *Aeneid*?
5. What is the link between Aeneas, Hercules, and Augustus? What do Evander and Romulus contribute?
6. How are past, present and future linked in book 8?

Secondary Reading:

Galinsky, G.K. 'The Hercules-Cacus Episode in *Aeneid* VIII', *AJPh* 87, 1966, 18-51 [Moodle].

Morgan, L. 'Assimilation and civil war: Hercules and Cacus', in H.-P. Stahl (ed.) *Vergil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context*. London: Duckworth, 1998, 175-198 [Library].

SECTION D: THE DESCRIPTION OF AENEAS' SHIELD

Discussion Points

1. Compare and contrast this *ecphrasis* with the descriptions of Achilles' shield in the *Iliad*, the Pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles* and Jason's cloak in the *Argonautica*.
2. What is the purpose of this episode (political and poetic)? Why would Vergil have wanted to include such scenes?
3. What techniques does Vergil use in this *ecphrasis*? To what effect?
4. What is the significance of the tableau depicting the battle of Actium and which motifs does Vergil use in this episode?

Secondary Reading:

Please summarise an article on Moodle prior to the seminar:

Casali, S. 'The Making of the Shield: Inspiration and Repression in the *Aeneid*', in *G&R* 53, 2006, 185-204 [Moodle].

Faber, R. 'Vergil's 'Shield of Aeneas' (*Aeneid* 8.617-731) and the *Shield of Heracles*', *Mnemosyne* 53, 2000, 49-57. [Moodle]

Gale, M. R. 'The Shield of Turnus (*Aeneid* 7.783-92)', in *G&R* 44, 1997, 176-96. [Moodle]

Hardie, P. *Vergil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, 336-76 [Library].

Rossi, A. 'Ab Urbe Condita: Roman History on the Shield of Aeneas', in B. Breed and C. Damon (eds.) *Citizens of Discord: Rome and its Civil Wars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 145-58. [Moodle]

West, D.A. (1990), 'Cernere erat: the shield of Aeneas', in S. J. Harrison (ed.), *Oxford Readings Vergil's Aeneid*, Oxford, 295-304 [Library].