

Gary Cunningham
HPLA 7004
Non-Assessed Assignment 3
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Translation, *Heroides* 7. 17-30

17 *Scilicet alter amor tibi restat et altera Dido,
 quamque iterum fallas, altera danda fides.*
19 *quando erit ut condas instar Carthagini urbem
 et uideas populos altus ab arce tuos?*
21 *omnia ut eueniant, nec te tua uota morentur,
 unde tibi, quae te sic amet, uxor erit?*
23 *uror ut inducto ceratae sulphure taedae,
 ut pia fumosis addita tura focus.*
25 *Aeneas oculis uigilantis semper inhaeret;
 Aenean animo noxque quiesque refert.*
27 *ille quidem male gratus et ad mea munera surdus,
 et quo, si non sim stulta, carere uelim;*
29 *non tamen Aenean, quamvis male cogitat, odi,
 sed queror infidum quæstaque peius amo.*

17 It is obvious that another love and another Dido waits for you,

 someone you may betray again, and another one's trust to be surrendered.

19 When will he be likely to build a city in the image of Carthage

 and might you look upon your people from its high citadel?

21 When all of your prayers come true, and are not delayed by the gods,

 from whence would you have a wife to love in this way?

23 I am burning like one covered in brimstone, clothed in pitch and sulfur ,

 like smoking incense placed in sacred hearths.

25 My attentive eyes always cling to Aeneas;

 Aeneas returns to my mind in the stillness of every night.

27 He is indeed ungrateful and indifferent to my kindness,

And is someone who, if I am not to be foolish, I should want to be rid of;

29 Aeneas I do not hate, however, though his plans are wicked,

But though I am grieved and complain of his treachery, I love him even worse.

Commentary. *Heroides* 7.115-30

115 *exul agor cineresque viri patriamque relinquo,*
 et feror in dubias hoste sequente uias.
117 *applicor his oris, fratrique elapsa fretoque*
 quod tibi donavi, perfide, litus emo.
119 *urbem constitui lateque patentia fixi*
 moenia finitimis invidiosa locis.
121 *bella tument; bellis peregrina et femina temptor*
 vixque rudis portas urbis et arma paro.
123 *mille procis placui, qui me coiere querentes*
 nescioquem thalamis praeposuisse suis.
125 *quid dubitas uinctam Gaetulo tradere Iarbae?*
 praebuerim sceleri brachia nostra tuo.
127 *est etiam frater, cuius manus impia poscit*
 respergi nostro sparsa cruore viri.
129 *pone deos et quae tangendo sacra profanes:*
 non bene caelestis impia dextra colit.

In this passage from Ovid's *Heroides VII*, Dido, queen of Carthage, writes to her love Aeneas, lamenting the many tribulations she endured in times past before his arrival from Troy, and then accusing him of wickedness and impiety for forsaking her. The story is taken from Vergil's *Aeneid*, and we may gather from what Dido says to Aeneas that the letter is written after Aeneas has told Dido of his intent to leave Carthage to found a new city.¹ Though Palmer

¹ Knox 1995: 201.

suggests the precise time of the letter's composition is *Aeneid* 4:413-5, I believe we could picture this taking place earlier, beginning at 4:408 at which Vergil writes,²

*quis tibi tum, Dido, cernenti talia sensus,
quosve dabas gemitus, cum litora fervere late
prospiceres arce ex summa, totumque videres
misceri ante oculos tantis clamoribus aequor!*
(Verg. *Aen.* 4:408-11)³

In the text under examination here, verses 115-30, Dido begins by telling of her earlier exile from her home in Tyre. Though not mentioning the name of her homeland specifically, the Roman reader would have been familiar with the story of Dido from Greek legend, and of her involvement with Aeneas from Vergil's epic, which Vergil may have contrived himself.⁴ Dido bemoans her exile, having left her homeland and her husband's ashes behind, '*cineresque viri patriamque relinquo*' (115). Ovid's Dido compares her past hardships to the one she now must endure as Aeneas leaves her.

Ovid uses nearly identical language to that used by Vergil at *Aeneid* 3:10-11, '*litora cum patriae lacrimans portusque relinquo | feror exsul in altum*'.⁵ But here, Ovid employs a clever twist by reversing the characters' roles as his heroine is writing to the hero, whereas Vergil's hero tells his story of woe to the lady, Dido.

Ovid employs some use of intertextuality within his own works (possibly) in Dido's complaint that she has been carried over dangerous roads with the enemy pursuing, '*et feror in*

² Palmer 1898, cited in Knox 1995: 202.

³ Goold 1999: 448.

⁴ Knox 1995: 201.

⁵ Knox 1995: 222.

dubias hoste sequente uias' (116). Paris makes a similar statement to Helen in Epistle 16.21, though this epistle may not have been Ovid's work.⁶

Ovid again uses a phrase possibly taken from Vergil, where Dido writes, '*applicor his oris*,' 'upon these shores' (117). A similar idiom is spoken by Dido to Aeneas, '*Quae vis immanibus applicat oris?*' (Verg. *Aen.* 1:616), and is used by Ovid in a similar way at least twice in other works with the idiom, '*applicor in terras...tuas*.'⁷

In the next verse (118), Ovid's Dido addresses Aeneas in one of many negative descriptive terms used in this epistle. She refers to him as '*perfide*,' that is, faithless, treacherous, false, or deceitful.⁸ Ovid imparts upon Dido not only heartbreak, but anger at her lover's decision to abandon her.

Ovid makes use of metaphor in this passage that we've seen before in his other works. At verse 121, Dido tells of the wars fought against her, '*bella tument*,' using a metaphor associated with the swelling of the sea which appears again in his *Georgics* 1.465 ('*tumescere bella*').

The heroine also exaggerates for emphasis, writing that she was courted by 'a thousand suitors' ('*mille procis placui*') but she apparently found no man satisfactory until Aeneas appeared on the scene (123). Another allusion to the *Aeneid* appears in verse 127, in which Dido refers to her brother's wicked hands, '*manus impia*,' that demand to be sprinkled with her

⁶ Knox 1995: 6.

⁷ Knox 1995: 222. The phrase is used at *Met.* 597 and *Trist* 3.9.10.

⁸ Morwood 2005: 136.

blood (*'respergi...cruore'*). The allusion is to *Aeneid* 1.345ff in which her brother, Pygmalion, commits wicked (*'impius'*) deeds against her.⁹

Finally, Ovid alludes to the story of Aeneas bringing the ancestral gods of Troy, the Penates, with him when he escaped the doomed city. Dido tells Aeneas to 'put aside the gods and the sacred things you desecrate by touching' (*'pone deos et quae tangendo sacra profanes'*) (129). This is a direct reference back to Vergil, 'Troy entrusts to you her holy things and household gods' (*'sacra suosque tibi commendat Troia Penates'*) (Verg. *Aen.*2.293, trans. Goold).¹⁰ In this verse Dido continues her scolding of Aeneas, now accusing him of impiety, *'profanes.'* Then in verse 130, *'impia dextra'* reflects back to *'manus impia'* of verse 127. Knox points out this particular use of the verb *'profano'* in 129 is not used prior to Ovid.¹¹

References

- Knox, P.E., 1995. *Ovid. Heroides: Select Epistles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goold, G.P., 1999. *Virgil. Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*. (H.R. Fairclough, trans.). Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Morwood, J., 2005. *Oxford Latin Desk Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁹ Gould 1999: 286-7.

¹⁰ Goold 1999: 336-7.

¹¹ Knox 1995: 224.