

Vergilian Women and Underworlds [Unit 8]

Primary Reading: Vergil, *Aeneid* 1, 4 and 6.

SECTION A: DIDO

Discussion Points

Part One: Meeting and Union of Dido and Aeneas

1. How is Dido portrayed before the betrayal of Aeneas?
2. What mythical and epic exempla are used in the portrayal of Dido? Why?
3. To what extent are we supposed to think of Jason and Medea as corollaries to Aeneas and Dido?
4. How does Vergil differ from his mythological and epic influences? Why?
5. Are we supposed to think of historical examples when reading Dido? Why?
6. What are the roles of the gods in Dido and Aeneas' relationship?
7. Are Dido and Aeneas married? Does this affect our interpretation of their union?
8. Are we supposed to compare Dido and Lavinia? Who comes out on top?

Part Two: The Death of Dido

1. Is the characterisation of Dido in her death consistent with that earlier in the epic?
2. What mythological and epic exempla are used in the portrayal of Dido's death? Why?
3. How does Vergil differ from his epic and mythological influences? Why?
4. What is the traditional mythology associated with Dido's death? Why has Vergil chosen this version?
5. What is the significance of the method of Dido's death?
6. How would the history of Rome/Carthage/Egypt affect our interpretation of Dido's death?
7. Why has Vergil included Dido in the underworld? Does this meeting impact our interpretation of book 4?

Secondary Reading:

Cairns, F. *Virgil's Augustan Epic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 129-50 [Library].

Camps, W. A. *An Introduction to Vergil's Aeneid*, Oxford, 1969, 31-40 [Library].

Eidinow, J. S. C. 'Dido, Aeneas, and Iulus: Heirship and Obligation in *Aeneid* 4', in *CQ* 53, 2003, 260-7. [Moodle]

Hunter, R. L. *The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies*. Cambridge, 1993, 170-89. [Library]

Nelis, D. *Vergil's Aeneid and the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*, Leeds, 2001, 125-85 [Moodle].

Rudd, N. 'Dido's *Culpa*', in S. J. Harrison (ed.) *Oxford Readings in Vergil's Aeneid*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 145-66 [Moodle].

Spence, S. 'Varium et Mutabile: Voices of Authority in *Aeneid* 4', in C. G. Perkell (ed.) *Vergil's Aeneid: an Interpretative Guide*. Norman University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, 80-95. [Moodle]

Myth in Greek and Roman Epic

SECTION B: BOOK 6

Discussion Points

Part One: The first half of book 6

1. Why does Aeneas need to visit the underworld?
2. Why would Vergil have wanted to add a visit to the underworld?
3. What mythological and epic exempla are used in the creation of this book? Why?
4. How does Vergil differ from his mythological and epic exempla? Why?
5. What is the topography of the underworld in the first half of the book?
6. Who does Aeneas meet and why?

Part Two: The second half of book 6

1. What is the topography of the underworld in the second half of the book?
2. Who does Aeneas meet and why?
3. Explain the parade of Romans in the latter half of this book.
4. How does this book contribute to the themes and epic concerns of the *Aeneid* as a whole?
5. What mythological and epic exempla are used in the creation of the second half of the book? Do they differ from those of the first half? Why?
6. How does Aeneas return from the underworld? Why does he return from the ivory rather than horn gate?

Secondary Reading:

Camps, W.A. *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid*, Oxford, 1969, 84-94 [Library].

Feldherr, A. 'Putting Dido on the Map: Genre and Geography in Vergil's Underworld', *Arethusa* 32, 1999, 85-122. [Moodle]

Feeney, D.C. 'History and Revelation in Vergil's Underworld', in P. Hardie (ed.), *Virgil: Critical Assessments of Classical Authors*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, 221-43 [Moodle].

Gowers, E. 'Virgil's Sibyl and the 'Many Mouths' Cliché (*Aen* 6.625-7)', *CQ* 2005, 55, 170-82. [Moodle]

Leach, E. W. 'Viewing the Spectacula of *Aeneid* 6', in C. G. Perkell (ed.) *Virgil's Aeneid: an Interpretative Guide*. Norman University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, 111-27. [Moodle]

Powell, A. 'The peopling of the Underworld', in H.-P. Stahl (ed.), *Virgil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context*, London, 1998, 85-100 [Library].

Solmsen, F. 'The World of the Dead in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*', in Harrison, S.J. (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Virgil's Aeneid*, Oxford, 1990, 208-23 [Moodle].

Williams, R.D. 'The Sixth Book of the *Aeneid*', in Harrison, S.J. (ed.), *Oxford Readings in Virgil's Aeneid*, Oxford, 1990, 191-207 [Moodle].