

an *aition* for the first Punic war is highly persuasive. Whereas Herodotus used the myths at the beginning of Book 1 as an example of the trivializing of historical causation, Naevius introduced *his* myth to elevate the subject-matter of his historical poem (Richter, pp. 48 f.). Exactly how Naevius linked myth and history is not clear, but Dido's great curse upon Aeneas and his descendants in *Aeneid* 4 suggests a way (4. 622 ff., cf. 384 ff., Brisson, p. 162, Richter, p. 53). In the *BP* the *libros futura continentes* (fr. 13a) which Venus gave Anchises, and better, the *verba Iovis filiam* (i.e. Venus) *consolantis spe futurorum* (fr. 13) during the storm in Book 1 of the *BP*—which may have brought the Trojans to Carthage—could have pointed towards the ultimate Roman victory, reaching out from the mythical excursus into the main narrative, as Virgil's Dido, introducing Hannibal into her curse, reaches out from myth into history.

The violence, greed, duplicity, and hatred which Dido displays in the *Aeneid* are, I hope to have shown, characteristics linked by Virgil and his contemporaries with the old hatreds of the Punic wars: this unromantic historical element in the *Aeneid*, so alien to what Virgil derives from Apollonius in particular, is precisely appropriate to the Dido of the *BP*; the influence of Naevius' Dido on Virgil's in character and function was, I suspect, vastly greater than can now be plausibly guessed, let alone proved.

APPENDIX

Postscript 1988

On the relationship of Virgil to Naevius I should have cited M. Wigodsky, *Virgil and Early Latin Poetry*, *Hermes Einzelschr.* 24 (1972), 29–34. A. La Penna's survey, *Enciclopedia Virgiliana* 2, s.v. *Didone*, is excellent. My exploration of the historical ironies in *Aen.* 1 and 4 seems not to have been received with much enthusiasm. See, however, F. Muecke, *AJP* 104 (1983), 134–55, and D. Feeney, *CQ* 34 (1984), 179–84. The remarks of J. Moles in *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*, ed. L. M. Whitby, P. R. Hardie, and M. Whitby (Bristol, 1987), 153–61 are notably well balanced.

Rudd - Unit 8.

7

Dido's *Culpa*

NIALL RUDD

It has long been acknowledged that the story of Dido in Books 1 and 4 of the *Aeneid* has some of the elements associated with tragedy. These elements have been listed by A. S. Pease on pp. 8–11 of his massive commentary and discussed at greater length by De Witt, Maguinness, Quinn, and others.¹ We therefore enquire from time to time what tragic view the episode embodies. In a lecture to the Virgil Society in 1951 Professor R. G. Austin described the death of Dido with his usual blend of sympathy and scholarship, adding as a comment: 'The Queen of the Gods ... had ended her sport at last. You will remember Hardy's words at the end of *Tess*: they have their place here.' Hardy's words come, of course, in the last paragraph of the book, just after *Tess* has been executed for murder: "'Justice" was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with *Tess*.' In his introduction to the same novel Hardy cites as a precedent for this remark Gloucester's well-known words in the fourth act of *King Lear*:

As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport. (iv. i. 37–8)

The two quotations are connected by the idea of divine sport. Men and women suffer and die to provide amusement for the gods. On the plainest interpretation both Gloucester and Hardy are claiming that the gods take a malevolent pleasure in destroying human lives. Even if we modify the idea of deliberate cruelty implied in this conception, we are still left with the notion of caprice. The gods' behaviour does not indicate any rational purpose.

Stated in these terms the idea can hardly be applied to the action of the *Aeneid*; for there, we are told, Jupiter does have a rational purpose. He is shaping the events of history so as to bring about the foundation

¹ N. W. De Witt, *CJ* 2 (1907), 283–8; W. S. Maguinness in his presidential address to the Virgil Society, 1955; K. Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description* (London, 1968), pp. 323–39.

and development of Rome's imperial power. Austin, to be sure, was talking about Juno, not Jupiter. Yet Juno too had her purpose:

hoc regnum dea gentibus esse,
si qua fata sinant, iam tum tenditque fouetque. (I. 17-18)

That this city [i.e. Carthage] should rule the world, if in any way the fates allowed it—this was even then the goddess's aim and cherished plan.

And so it would hardly be fair to see Dido as Juno's plaything. This difficulty was, one imagines, observed by Austin himself when he came to write the introduction to his commentary on Book 4. For although he incorporated a certain amount from the earlier lecture and again called attention to Hardy's tragic insight, he did not reproduce the reference to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. I shall come back later to Gloucester's comment in *Lear*, because in spite of what has just been said it seems to embody an important truth about the *Aeneid*. For the moment, however, I would suggest that another well-known quotation from the same play is a more accurate reflection of what Virgilian critics have tended to feel. I mean the words of Edgar in Act v, when he addresses the dying Edmund:

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us. (v. iii. 170-1)

This notion has been more attractive than the other for two reasons: first, because in the civilized periods of European history men have been reluctant to believe in a god that used his power in a wholly arbitrary way, bringing ruin and misery without just cause; and secondly, because this theory makes it seem possible to reconcile divine providence with the freedom of human will. Although many factors in Dido's life, such as race, rank, and sex, have been assigned to her by fate, she remains responsible for her own decisions and acts. That, as I say, is an attractive idea, and I used to think it might be true. I now suspect that it is a misleading oversimplification.

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us.

What, then, was Dido's vice? Or, to use the more polite term, what was her 'moral flaw'? Before we try to answer this it is well to be sure about what kind of thing we are looking for. A moral flaw is a disposition or tendency to act reprehensibly in a certain way in response to certain conditions. Hence it is a flaw in a man's character if he is prone to anger, avarice, gluttony, jealousy, lechery, pride, and sloth—to name only the

more familiar vices. So what was Dido's moral flaw? I must admit I am quite unable to say. Was she, perhaps, inordinately susceptible to men? This can hardly be so. Since her husband's death she had had no dealings with any men, and this (we are assured) was not from a lack of opportunity. In Anna's words:

aegram nulli quondam flexere mariti,
non Libyae, non ante Tyro; despectus Iarbas
ductoresque alii, quos Africa terra triumphis
diues alit. (4. 35-8)

Sick at heart as you were, no suitors in the past prevailed upon you, not in Libya, not earlier in Tyre; Iarbas was scornfully rejected and also other chieftains reared in Africa, that land rich in triumphs.

Nor, again, is there anything in the text of Book 1 to suggest that she was given to acts of wild impetuosity. On the contrary, we are given an impression of steadiness and dignity. So although it makes sense, if very incomplete sense, to say that Macbeth's ambition or Othello's jealousy was a flaw which led to disaster, Dido's tragedy cannot, it seems, be discussed in these terms.

If we look more closely at Pease's introduction we may possibly see how the mistake arose. On p. 9 he says 'Hero and heroine have each a distinct blemish in character, Dido's being her unfaithfulness to her vows to Sychaeus, that of Aeneas his temporary neglect of his divine mission...' But surely this is rather a confused way of thinking. Dido broke her vows to Sychaeus, yes. But that was an act—an act entailed by entering into a relationship with Aeneas. But an act can never be a blemish of character. The two things belong to different logical categories. It is interesting to find a similar mistake in C. M. Bowra's *From Virgil to Milton* (London, 1945). After speaking of 'great women whose character is their doom', Bowra goes on to say (p. 49) that 'Dido, like Turnus, has a tragic fault. She has taken a vow to be faithful to the spirit of her dead husband Sychaeus, but she breaks it when she unites herself to Aeneas.' The word 'fault' tends to conceal the confusion of categories, but it is there none the less.

If we go further and enquire what led Pease to look for a blemish in Dido's character, we shall probably find the answer on p. 39 of his introduction: 'Yet admirable as Dido's character in many respects is, it illustrates—and was surely intended to illustrate—that flaw or error which Aristotle recognized as necessary for a tragic hero or heroine.' This raises the old question about the meaning of *hamartia* in Aristotle's

Poetics (13. 1453 a 10). Pease says 'flaw or error', but these are two different things, and there is only one word in Aristotle. 'Flaw' has been the more popular interpretation since the appearance of Butcher's essay on Aristotle's theory of poetry and fine art,² but 'error', 'mistake', or 'misapprehension' is more probably what Aristotle meant. The matter is discussed in some detail by D. W. Lucas in the fourth appendix of his commentary on the *Poetics*,³ and that is his conclusion. Even if we are tempted to compromise and to look for some intermediate concept which will include both an ethical and an intellectual element,⁴ we must still (I believe) reject the simple notion of a moral flaw.

Nevertheless, it may yet be possible to hold that Dido's suffering was a punishment for her sinful relationship with Aeneas. This view would enable us to retain the idea of divine justice, emending Shakespeare to read:

The gods are just, and of our pleasant sins
Make instruments to plague us.

Someone better versed than I am in the history of Virgilian scholarship could no doubt show that this opinion has been held for centuries. It can be found in its most extreme form in Servius (though we cannot be sure that he is giving his own view). On the first line of Book 4 he comments 'uidetur et post amissam castitatem etiam iustus interitus'—'After the loss of her chastity even her death appears to be just.' In the 1920s H. W. Prescott put the same point in a slightly different way: 'Dido deserved her death; she broke her solemn oath to Sychaeus.'⁵ It may be apposite here to quote an observation by A. C. Bradley: 'We might not object to the statement that Lear deserved to suffer for his folly, selfishness, and tyranny; but to assert that he deserved to suffer what he *did* suffer is to do violence not merely to language but to any healthy moral sense.'⁶

I doubt if many readers of Virgil share Prescott's opinion, but it does raise a question of methodology which is sometimes overlooked, namely 'Is Virgil's judgement of Dido invariably identical with Dido's judgement of herself?' Brooks Otis believes it is. On p. 78 of his *Virgil* he writes: 'Dido ... reflects Virgil's own morality. In fact Dido's speeches ... convey ... a generalized analysis of the total moral-historical

² S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 4th edn. (London, 1911).

³ D. W. Lucas, *Aristotle, Poetics* (Oxford, 1968).

⁴ See, e.g., G. M. A. Grube, *Aristotle on Poetry and Style* (New York, 1958), pp. xxiv–xxv, and G. M. Kirkwood, *AJP* 92 (1971), 711–15.

⁵ H. W. Prescott, *The Development of Virgil's Art* (Chicago, 1927, repr. 1963), p. 290.

⁶ A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (London, repr. 1949), p. 32.

situation as both she and Virgil see it.' Well, that may often be true, but consider the following case. Towards the end of Book 4, after pondering and rejecting various courses of action, the heroine cries:

quin morere ut merita es, ferroque auerte dolorem. (547)

No! Die, as you deserve, and with steel put an end to your pain.

Are we therefore to conclude that Virgil also thought she deserved to die? Luckily one does not have to argue from probability; the poet has been quite explicit. In vv. 693 ff. Iris is sent down to release Dido from her agony because she has not yet been formally assigned to death. And why has she not been assigned to death?

quia nec fato merita nec morte peribat. (696)

Because it was not by fate's decree nor by a deserved death that she was dying.

So the queen did not deserve to die, and Virgil's verdict is not the same as Dido's own.

But did she deserve to suffer? And if so, why? Let us take first the contention that, in Otis's words, '[Dido] violates her duty to Carthage.'⁷ What effect does the liaison have on Carthage as a whole? We are not told very much about this. In the period just before the 'marriage', work in the city comes to a halt, military exercises cease, and people are (one assumes) beginning to talk (86–9, 91, 170). After the 'marriage' has been consummated Fama (Rumour) redoubles its activities, putting about the report that Dido and Aeneas are spending the entire winter in sensual pleasure:

regnum immemores turpique cupidine captos. (194)

Forgetful of their kingdoms, prisoners of foul lust.

But Fama, as Virgil says, tells lies and half-truths as well as facts (190). It is not clear that Dido is forgetful of her kingdom, though it could certainly be argued that Aeneas is forgetful of the kingdom which he is supposed to found in the future.⁸ At any rate some caution is advisable in view of the line which sums up Fama's reports:

haec passim dea foeda uirum diffundit in ora. (195)

These were the tales which the filthy goddess spread abroad on men's lips.

⁷ Brooks Otis in *Virgil*, ed. D. R. Dudley (London, 1969), p. 57.

⁸ See v. 267. When Rumour, reinforced by the prayers of Iarbas, reaches Jupiter, he turns his eyes towards the lovers. They are now said to be *oblitos famae melioris* (221), which is not the same thing as *regnum immemores*.

If we give weight to such evidence, we must also bear in mind that when Mercury comes to remind Aeneas of his mission he finds him, not in the queen's boudoir, but on the building sites of Carthage *fundantem arces et tecta nouantem* (260)—'laying the foundations of towers and building new dwellings'. This busy activity is further emphasized in Mercury's reprimand:

tu nunc Karthaginis altae
fundamenta locas pulchramque uxorius urbem
exstruis? (265-7)

Are you now laying the foundations of lofty Carthage and building a fine city in devotion to your wife?

Some scholars are reluctant to admit this as evidence of Dido's renewed activity, because Dido herself is not immediately present. But dramatically Dido cannot be present, because Mercury's words are for the ears of Aeneas alone. In any case it is clear that work has been resumed, and so the stoppage mentioned earlier must be regarded as temporary.

Caution is again required when we come to assess certain things said by Dido and her sister. In v. 321 Dido claims that because of her liaison with Aeneas the Tyrians are now hostile to her (*infensi Tyrii*). But this is part of a tremendous rhetorical appeal to Aeneas, and allowance must be made for exaggeration.⁹ So too, when Dido in v. 468 sees herself looking for the Tyrians in a desolate land, we must remember that this is the dream of a desperately unhappy woman overwhelmed by grief and shame. The balance has to be corrected the other way when Anna cries:

extincti te meque, soror, populumque patresque
Sidonios urbemque tuam. (682-3)

You have destroyed yourself and me, my sister, and the senate and people of Sidon, and your own city.

That too is the rhetoric of distraught affection. It implies that the survival of the state was utterly dependent on the queen. In literal fact, of course, it wasn't. Carthage was still to enjoy centuries of prosperity. What we can say for sure is that the city was at first stunned by the news of Dido's suicide and then broke into wild lamentation (666-71). From

⁹ From Jupiter's words in v. 235 it might seem that the Carthaginians were bitterly hostile to Aeneas: 'qua spe inimica in gente moratur?' But Jupiter may be speaking in his full knowledge of destiny. It is perhaps significant that when Mercury conveys the message to Aeneas the point is not mentioned. Instead the question is changed to: 'qua spe Libycis teris otia teris?' (271).

this it is fairly clear that at the deepest level Dido had not lost the hearts of her people.

Taking all these points together it is fair to conclude that at some point the Carthaginians began to disapprove of Dido's union with Aeneas, and that this weighed heavily on her conscience after she had been deserted. Nevertheless, we also have to remember that at an earlier stage of the relationship Dido had good reason to believe that an alliance with the Trojans would help rather than harm her city. Although she had other, different, scruples about falling in love with Aeneas, it never for a moment occurred to her that she was failing in her duty to Carthage. The political arguments advanced by Anna in vv. 39-49 were not questioned at the time: Carthage was surrounded by hostile peoples, there was danger of pursuit from Tyre itself; but with a Trojan alliance the state of Carthage had immense prospects of power and glory. Professor Otis says in his *Virgil*: 'It is made quite plain that Anna is wrong to undermine Dido's ... resolve' (78). Well, it may be plain to someone who knows the outcome, but it certainly wasn't plain to Anna, or to her sister. One sometimes forgets that as early as l. 572 ff. Dido offered the Trojans an equal share in her kingdom. In other words, without any prompting from Anna and before she even *saw* Aeneas, Dido thought it desirable for the Trojans to stay. So did Juno, who certainly had Carthage's interests at heart.

So although we may grant that there was some political failure on Dido's part—even if only a failure of tact—this ought not to be judged too harshly. More important, that failure was in no way a *cause* of her desertion and humiliation. It was rather a consequence of her passionate attachment to Aeneas. Hence her political failure cannot be regarded as part of her initial guilt.

When scholars speak of Dido's guilt they are, of course, referring primarily to her breach of faith with her dead husband Sychaeus. T. R. Glover, whose treatment of this episode is still among the best, chides the queen very gently for 'sacrificing her sense of right to her inclination'.¹⁰ Earlier he says: 'To resolve to win the love of Aeneas is no wrong thought or action, but to attempt it against her conscience is the first step towards shame.'¹¹ The point is put more forcefully by K. Quinn: 'She could have resisted passion more successfully: she could have known, or learnt, to put duty or *pudor* before infatuation; and after yielding to infatuation she could have been honest enough with herself not to

¹⁰ T. R. Glover, *Virgil* (London, 1912), p. 203.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 190.

pretend she had marriage within her grasp.¹² Brooks Otis is even more severe: 'Dido now realises her plight and her guilt (*En quid ago?* 534 f.), her helplessness and the criminal folly of her deed.'¹³ This represents an impressive body of testimony, but before we reach a final conclusion (if indeed finality is ever possible in such a matter) let us look once more at the relevant passages.

At the end of Book 1 Venus instructs Cupid to assume the form of Ascanius and inflame Dido's heart with love. Cupid must therefore gradually efface [her feelings of obligation to] Sychaeus—*paulatim abolere Sychaeum* (720), and occupy her long inactive affections with a living love. No censure so far—simply a statement of fact. At the banquet the queen drinks deep draughts of love (749), and by the time Aeneas has finished his tale she is wholly infatuated. Speaking to Anna at the beginning of Book 4, she says in effect: 'Had I not resolved to have done with marriage after Sychaeus' death I could perhaps have yielded to this one *culpa*' (15–19). The logic of this deserves comment. Strictly speaking, if Dido had not resolved to remain single then presumably she could have contemplated marrying Aeneas without any misgivings and there would have been no question of *culpa*. In fact she *has* made such a resolution and so marriage with Aeneas *would* involve *culpa*. These two ideas are compressed into one. The phrase *succumbere culpa* is hard to translate. One cannot properly be said to surrender to a 'frailty', 'weakness', or 'lapse', and yet in this particular line 'sin' is too heavily condemnatory. Perhaps 'surrender to this one temptation' would come nearest to the meaning, though *culpa* normally does not mean 'temptation'.

At any rate it is clear from what follows that at this point Dido is claiming that her modesty and her sense of loyalty to Sychaeus prevent her from forming an attachment to Aeneas. She reaffirms her oath, saying in effect 'May I die before I do violence to *pudor* (shame, modesty, self-respect), and may Sychaeus keep my love with him in the grave' (24–30). So the first suggestion that a new marriage would be in some way reprehensible comes from Dido herself. Then follows the speech of Anna, who, we are told, 'fanned into flame the queen's heart already kindled with love, gave hope to her wavering mind, and undid her *pudor*'—*solutique pudorem* (54–5). The repeated image of fire in v. 54 may well imply destructiveness, and here I would agree with Brooks Otis

¹² K. Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid*, p. 325.

¹³ Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford, 1964), p. 84. Cf. 'Dido's moral lapse is deliberate' etc., p. 77.

(78). But that doesn't prove that Virgil is censuring Anna for giving such advice or Dido for taking it. Virgil can imply that the passion is destructive because he knows the outcome. This knowledge (which we share with the poet after our first reading of the book) lends a sad irony to the next phrase, because giving hope to someone in doubt is normally a kind thing to do; Anna was not to know that such hope was doomed. Finally, the undoing or unfastening of *pudor* (a quasi-sexual phrase) is in itself a neutral idea. It is a task which may be faced not only by a seducer but also by a first or even a second husband. Suppose that Aeneas had been free to settle in Carthage, would there have been anything wrong on Dido's part in allowing herself to have hopes of marrying him? That is a question we shall have to discuss.

With the symbolic marriage in the cave a further stage is reached.

Ille dies primus leji primusque malorum
causa fuit; neque enim specie famaue mouetur
nec iam furtium Dido meditatur amorem:
coniugium uocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam. (169–72)

That day first was the cause of death and woe. For Dido ceases to be moved by appearances or by what people say. Nor does she engage any longer in a clandestine love-affair. She calls it marriage; with this name she provides a respectable covering for her wrong behaviour.

Virgil does not think it necessary to tell us how many Carthaginians were against the union in principle (and how strong their feelings were) and how many were simply indignant that there had been no official celebration. All we know is that people disapproved of what Dido was doing. So too, we aren't told whether Dido hopes they will accept the position in time, or whether she is defiant or merely indifferent. All we know is that she goes ahead. She calls the union marriage (and, with whatever justification, she has convinced herself that it *is* marriage¹⁴), but the wording of v. 172 cautions the reader against accepting this view, and we find later that Aeneas explicitly rejects it (338–9). The important word for us is *culpam*. In view of the case developed so far one wonders whether it might mean simply 'what she regarded as her guilt', but this won't do. For here *culpa* is distinguished from *coniugium*, and the word *nomen* implies that the relationship isn't really a *coniugium* at all. The phrase therefore cannot represent Dido's view of what is happening. When Dido was still in two minds, she believed that *coniugium* with

¹⁴ The passages which establish this are conveniently listed by Gordon Williams in *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), p. 381.

Aeneas would *be a culpa*. Now that she has, as she believes, married him, an appropriate comment would be 'She marries him and suppresses her feelings of guilt at having done so.' But that is not what Virgil says. We must therefore assume that he is not describing her feelings but condemning her conduct. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that this is the only line in which Virgil makes such a definite judgement. And even here he does not decide for us how serious in moral terms her guilt is. The *results*, of course, are disastrous, but how wicked is the queen herself? We are not yet in a position to say.

It is natural—and significant—that we hear no more of Dido's own sense of guilt until she realizes that Aeneas is about to leave her. Then it all comes flooding back. 'It was on your account', she cries to Anna, 'that my *pudor* was destroyed and my previous good name, which was my only path to immortal glory' (321–3). Later, after all her pleas have failed, we learn for the first time that Dido has kept in her palace a marble shrine in memory of Sychaeus (457–9). She is now so overwrought that at night-time she hears her dead husband's voice calling to her from the shrine; other sounds and visions also terrify her. She resolves to die and begins to make preparations. We then have a splendid soliloquy, ending with the lines:

Non licuit thalami expertem sine crimine uitam
degere more ferae, talis nec tangere curas;
non seruata fides cineri promissa Sychaeo. (550–2)

I was not allowed to remain unmarried, passing my life without blame like a creature of the wilds, immune from such unhappy love. The promise made to the ashes of Sychaeus has not been kept.

Here again the assertion that Dido is to blame for being unfaithful comes from the queen herself. Finally, when she sees the Trojans actually departing she launches into another powerful speech in which she says:

infelix Dido, nunc te facta impia tangunt? (596)

Luckless Dido, is it now that your godless deeds are coming home to you?

Facta impia—that is the last and most bitter of all her reproaches against herself. Once more we must ask whether Virgil means us to judge the queen as harshly as she judges herself.

At this point we should consider the ideal of what Tertullian calls *uniuiratus*.¹⁵ How important was it that a woman should have only one

¹⁵ The status of the *uniuira* is mentioned in Pease's long note on v. 29. The relevance of

husband in her lifetime? In very early days certain religious ceremonies could only be conducted by *uniuira*. Servius on 4. 19 mentions the crowning of Fortuna Muliebris, Livy speaks of sacrifices to Pudicitia, Varro says that in marriage ceremonies the *pronuba*, or matron of honour, had to be a woman who had married only once,¹⁶ and Valerius Maximus (2. 1. 3) refers to special honours reserved for *uniuira*. Let us look more closely at two of these passages. The first is Livy, 10. 23. 5. In the year 296 BC, the senate decreed two days of supplications to avert numerous portents which had occurred. During the celebrations a quarrel broke out among the matrons in the shrine of Pudicitia Patricia. It seems that a patrician woman called Verginia had been excluded from the rite on the grounds that she had married a commoner. Verginia retaliated by setting up a shrine in her own house. Calling the plebeian matrons in she said 'I dedicate this altar to Pudicitia Plebeia.' The plebeian altar, like the other, was tended by matrons of proven modesty who had been married to one man alone. Then, perhaps a little sadly, Livy adds: 'Afterwards the cult was degraded by ritually disqualified women, not matrons only but women of every station, and it finally passed into oblivion' (10).

The context of the passage of Valerius Maximus is also interesting. It occurs in Book 2 in the third section of the chapter headed *De Institutis Antiquis*. One such custom was that whereby women sat at meals while the men reclined. This custom was extended to religious observances, in which Jupiter lay on a couch while Juno and Minerva sat on chairs. Valerius adds: 'In our age this kind of austerity is retained on the Capitol more assiduously than in our homes, no doubt because it is more vital that goddesses should be kept in order than women.' Then comes the section beginning 'quae uno contentae matrimonio fuerant corona pudicitiae honorabantur' ('those women who had been content with a single marriage were honoured with the garland of virtue')—notice the tenses. Section four tells us that the first divorce took place five hundred years after the foundation of Rome, i.e. about 250 BC, if the text is emended on the basis of Aulus Gellius.¹⁷ Finally, section five says that the use of wine was once unknown to Roman women—'uini usus olim Romanis feminis ignotus fuit'. The sober Valerius explains: 'No doubt it

this to *Aen.* 4 is explored by Gordon Williams in *JRS* 48 (1958), 23–5. I am much indebted to Williams's discussion, though I reach rather different conclusions.

¹⁶ Servius on *Aen.* 4. 166.

¹⁷ There is a penetrating discussion of this divorce by A. Watson in *Revue d'Histoire du droit* 33 (1965), 38–50—a reference which I owe to Mr R. Seager.

was for fear that they might lapse into some kind of disgraceful conduct, because after Liber, the father of intemperance, the first step is usually to illicit sex.' These passages indicate that the *religious* importance of *uniuiratus* was by 25 BC very much a thing of the past.

No doubt it still survived as a social ideal, though how widespread and how deeply cherished it was is hard to assess. Some of the evidence that has been used in discussing the problem is less helpful than it seems. In Plautus, *Mostellaria* 190, a courtesan is listening to her maid, who says 'matronae non meretricium est unum inseruire uirum'—'It's for a married lady not for a courtesan to devote herself to one man.' In Terence's *Eunuchus* 122 Parmeno says to the courtesan Thais: 'neque tu uno eras contenta neque solus dedit'—'You weren't content with one man nor did just one of them reward you.' Here marriage to one man is opposed to the life of a prostitute.

In Plautus' *Mercator*, the old slave-woman Syra complains about the double standard whereby wives are divorced for infidelity though husbands aren't:

nam uxor contenta est, quae bona est, uno uiro:
qui minus uir una uxore contentus siet? (*Mer.* 824-5)

A wife, if she's good, is content with one man. Why shouldn't a man be content with one wife?

In poem 68. 135 Catullus complains, as if he were an aggrieved husband, that his mistress is not content with him alone: 'uno non est contenta Catullo'. In these two passages a permanent relationship with one man is contrasted with infidelity.

Horace provides yet another type of contrast:

felices ter et amplius
quos irrupta tenet copula nec malis
diuulsus querimoniis
suprema citius soluet amor die (*Odes* 1. 13. 17-20)

Thrice happy and more are those who are held together by an unbroken bond, whose love is not wrenched apart by bitter quarrelling, and who stay united until the final day.

Here a permanent relationship with one man means a marriage not broken by divorce. Turia's husband makes a similar point when he writes in her epitaph: 'rara sunt tam diuturna matrimonia finita morte non diuertio interrupta'—'Rare are marriages that last so long, termin-

ated by death not dissolved by divorce.¹⁸ None of these cases, therefore, provides the type of contrast which would be relevant to Dido—viz., that between a widow who marries again and one who does not.

The same point must be borne in mind when we consider the numerous epitaphs containing phrases like *solo contenta marito, uno contenta marito, uni deuota marito*, etc.¹⁹ Granted such phrases include the idea that the dead woman was never previously married to anyone else, but surely the important assertion is that she was never divorced. This is sometimes brought out elsewhere in the epitaph. In *Carm. Epigr.* 652, for example, we have the words:

contemptisque aliis me dicto iure secuta es
and rejecting others you loyally followed me.

When Cornelia pronounces her own encomium in Propertius 4. 11, the poet makes her say: 'in lapidé hoc uni nupta fuisse legar' (36)—'on this stone you will read that I was married to one husband'. Perhaps she is claiming that she wasn't married to anyone else before she married Paulus, but her primary purpose is surely to state that she was never divorced. This is supported by the sentence immediately following, which says (in paraphrase) 'I call my dead ancestors to witness that I never caused the Censor's rule to be relaxed and that my hearth never blushed for any sin of mine.' Similarly, when she says to her daughter 'see to it that, like me, you remain attached to a single husband'—*teneas unum uirum*—the intention uppermost in her mind is to warn the girl against divorce.²⁰

Some further information can be gathered from Seneca's remarks on marriage in his *De Matrimonio*, bits of which are embodied by St Jerome in his work *Aduersus Iouinianum* (Migne, vol. 23. 222 ff.).²¹ On p. 286 Jerome begins a section on wives who refused to survive after their husbands' deaths. This includes a summary of Timaeus' account of Dido's suicide (see below) and an approving reference to the Indian custom of suttee. On p. 287 he goes on to mention certain Roman widows who resolved not to remarry. This he finds admirable, but the reasons given by the ladies themselves range from 'For me my husband is always alive' to 'I don't see any man who wants me more than my

¹⁸ *Laudatio Turiae* CIL vi. 1527, 27. See M. Durry, *Éloge Funèbre* (Paris, 1950), p. 9.

¹⁹ See *Carm. Epigr.* 455, 643. 5, 736. 4.

²⁰ See D. R. Shackleton Bailey's note on Propertius 4. 11. 68 in *Propertiana* (Cambridge, 1956), p. 265.

²¹ Printed in Seneca, *Supplementum*, ed. F. Haase (Leipzig, 1902), pp. 26-32.

money.' One notices, too, that the words were spoken in reply to someone who thought the decision either odd or ill-advised. Annia, for instance, was urged by a kinsman to marry again, because she was still young and attractive. The younger Porcia is supposed to have asserted 'felix et pudica matrona nunquam praeterquam semel nubit' ('a happy and respectable wife marries only once'), but she said it when she heard someone praising a woman of good character (*quaedam bene morata*) who had married again. This would suggest that the women mentioned by Seneca were rather exceptional. Seneca himself clearly thought that for a woman second marriages were wrong, but one wonders how typical this censorious outlook was. For later sections of Jerome (pp. 291 ff.) show that Seneca also took a rather jaundiced view of *first* marriages. The marital troubles of Cicero, Socrates, Sulla, Pompey, and Cato the Censor are all referred to, and we are reminded of notorious women like Pasiphaë, Clytemnestra, Eriphyla, and Helen. The fact is that to the Stoic sage women were a nuisance; they interfered with his autonomy. So inasmuch as Seneca aspired to that ideal he felt at liberty to take an anti-feminist line. In another essay, entitled *How to cope with misfortune*, he addresses a man who is mourning the death of a good wife: 'How do you know she'd have *remained* good? Nothing is so fickle and unreliable as the female disposition. We all know of marriages that have broken up and of quarrels even more ugly than divorce between incompatible partners.'²² These words of comfort indicate that like St Paul, his fictitious correspondent, Seneca considered marriage only marginally preferable to combustion. The fact that he himself married twice and was apparently very happy (at least with his second wife) merely illustrates that here, as in other areas, there was an enormous gap between the great man's preaching and his practice.

Let us concede, then, that a certain amount of old-fashioned, rather sentimental, respect was still paid to women who had never been divorced and who, when widowed, chose not to remarry. Nevertheless, in the last century of the republic both divorce and remarriage were extremely common. This was especially true among the families of the aristocracy, in which marriage had an important political function. Augustus himself was Scribonia's third husband, and the Empress Livia, the most respected lady of the age, was not an *uniuira*, in spite of the polite fiction entertained by Horace in *Odes* 3. 14. 5. When Augustus drafted his social legislation remarriage took on a new importance. We

²² *De Remediis Fortuitorum*, in the *Supplementum*, ed. cit. 54.

don't know how prominently it figured in the abandoned programme of 28 BC, but certainly the Lex Iulia of 18 BC penalized widows if they *didn't* remarry. If, then, we put the question in the form most relevant to our enquiry, viz. 'Was it regarded as a disgrace for a widow to remarry?' the answer must surely be No. In Book 3 of the *Aeneid* the character of Andromache, who has been married to Hector, Pyrrhus, and Helenus, is treated with tenderness and respect. In Lucan's epic the same is true of Cornelia. Although she reproaches herself for bringing trouble to two husbands (Crassus and Pompey), no one else thinks her in any way blameworthy. As she leaves Lesbos the people grieve openly:

tanto deuinxit amore
hos pudor, hos probitas castique modestia uultus. (8. 115-16)

So great was the affection with which she held them by her decency and goodness and by her pure and model looks.

We have been discussing how deeply the Romans of the period from, say, 70 to 20 BC disapproved of widows' remarrying. It may, of course, be argued that the character of Dido is constructed on a much older model; that she holds before her the ideal of the early Roman *matrona*; and that the values of Virgil's day are not strictly relevant. It is quite true that Dido does prize the ideal of *uniuiratus*, but that is only part of a complex situation; for she is not in fact in the same position as an early Roman *matrona*. She is the queen of a young, forward-looking community; and so, over and above her latent maternal feelings, she has a duty to produce an heir for the royal family. The citizens of republican Rome had no immediate parallel in their own experience. But a somewhat analogous situation arose when the Emperor Augustus planned to continue his dynasty through the marriage of his daughter Julia. These plans were, as we know, tragically frustrated. Her first husband, Marcellus, died in 23 BC at the age of nineteen. She was then married to Agrippa and finally to Tiberius. If Augustus had any respect for the ideal of *uniuiratus*, such feelings were set aside without compunction when the interests of the state so demanded.

Dido also had reasons of state, which, as Virgil well knew, were inseparable from her own longings. With characteristic subtlety he arranges for the love of the childless queen to be awakened in the first place by Cupid in the form of Aeneas' son Ascanius. This is one of the many points in which Virgil departs from the story of Jason and Medea as told by Apollonius; more will be said about it below. Anna then adds fuel to the fire: 'You are dearer to your sister than the light of life. Are

you going to pine away through the whole of your youth in loneliness and sorrow, and not know the sweetness of children and the joys of love'—*'nec dulcis natos Veneris nec praemia noris?'* (33). In his note on this line Servius Danielis carefully points out that intercourse precedes birth, and he supplies a technical term for Virgil's change of order. Buscaroli remarks that the second expression is coloured by the purity of the first.²³ Pease understands Anna to mean 'neither parental nor (even) conjugal joys'. But could it not be that Anna's discreet nuance reflects Dido's emotional priorities? Soon after, we are told that when Aeneas is not with her Dido takes Ascanius on her knee (84–5). Later, when Aeneas decides to leave she appeals to him to pity her dying house—*miserere domus labentis* (318). It is not certain (though quite probable) that this includes the notion that without an heir the royal family will become extinct. But the thought of an heir emerges unmistakably:

saltem si qua mihi de te suscepta fuisset
ante fugam suboles, si quis mihi paruulus aula
luderet Aeneas, qui te tamen ore referret,
non equidem omnino capta ac deserta uiderer. (4. 327–30)

At least, if before you hurried away I had borne a child of yours, if I had a little Aeneas playing in the palace whose face would remind me of you in spite of everything, I would not feel so utterly ruined and desolate.

Consider a leader from an old royal house, whose marriage has been broken by death; one who, when warned by a dream, escaped the enemy's sword and led a band of followers to found a new city in exile; one who through many vicissitudes on land and sea has been distinguished for piety. Such a leader is Dido. It has, indeed, often been pointed out that in many respects she is Aeneas' *alter ego*. But there is one parallel which does not seem to be commonly mentioned. As Troy is burning Aeneas feels again and again the pull of the old heroic ideal—to die gloriously for one's country.²⁴ In the end he is persuaded to make his escape from Troy and to survive for the sake of his people's future, but he is more than once assailed by feelings of guilt and regret:

o terque quaterque beati,
quis ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis
contigit oppetere! (1. 94–6)

²³ C. Buscaroli, *Il libro di Didone* (Milan–Rome, 1932), p. 65.

²⁴ See, e.g., Homer, *Il.* 22. 73; Horace, *Odes* 3. 2. 13; Virgil, *Aen.* 2. 431–4.

Thrice and four times blessed are you who had the good fortune to die before your father's eyes under the high walls of Troy!

So too, one might reasonably say that Dido reveres the old ideal of *uniuiratus* and cannot abandon it without remorse. Granted the balance of emotions is different in the two cases, but the dilemma is surely analogous. If, therefore, we are determined to judge the morality of Dido's behaviour, it seems unfair to present it simply as a conflict between love and duty. On one side was her love for Sychaeus, her duty to his memory, and the force of the oath which she had sworn. On the other her love of Aeneas, her desire for children, and her hopes for the future of her people.

Before leaving the question of Dido's loyalty to her dead husband let us consider for a moment what function Sychaeus performs within the epic. In the account preserved by the third-century Sicilian historian Timaeus the Libyan king was determined to marry Dido. She was unwilling, but was pressed by her people to agree. Finally, pretending she was going to conduct a ritual which would release her from her oath to her husband, she built a pyre by the palace wall, lit it, and leaped into the blaze. Substantially the same version is given by Justin, writing in the third century AD. According to him, Dido built the pyre on the pretext of appeasing the spirit of her dead husband. Aeneas is not mentioned in either account. This may serve to remind us that the story of Dido and Sychaeus has no necessary connection with the story of Dido and Aeneas. Dido could, after all, have been captivated and then deserted by Aeneas even if she had not sworn to remain a widow or even if she had never previously been married.

Virgil, of course, uses the Sychaeus story with masterly skill. Thanks to Sychaeus, Dido's character is given an extra dimension in time. We are told how as a girl in Tyre she loved him and grieved at his death—perhaps with an added bitterness in that he was murdered by her own brother.²⁵ It is Sychaeus who constitutes the cause of her inner struggle—a struggle which gives her moral stature even though she has no chance of winning it. A psychological critic might further argue that Dido's feelings as a woman were the more powerful because they had been so long suppressed; and that the morbid and excessive nature of her passion was directly related to the torments of her guilty conscience.

Yet even if all these points are conceded it remains true that what brings disaster is not Dido's guilt but her love of Aeneas. Everything

²⁵ *Aen.* 4. 21.

comes back to that. Thus if we set aside the notion of a moral flaw and choose the other, more Aristotelian, idea of an error or mistake, we may find the error, as Quinn does, in her failure to realize that the relationship did not mean the same to Aeneas as it did to her; or we may point to the fact that Dido has heard and overlooked all the prophecies given to Aeneas by the Penates and Celaeno and Helenus about his Italian destiny; in either case the mistake was an immediate consequence of her love.

When we look more closely at the nature of this love we face a final question which is bound to affect our total view of the tragedy. As a way of leading into the point let us think for a moment about Dido's death. Her motives for killing herself may be stated in various forms, but most readers would probably agree that she does so because she has been betrayed and humiliated. The only way she can retrieve her dignity is by taking her own life. But while the act of suicide reflects her proud heroic temper, it is still the result of a rational decision. Venus did not compel her to die, nor did Juno. As Virgil says, she died not as a result of fate's decree but before her time (*ante diem*). She could have chosen otherwise.²⁶

The same, however, is not true of her falling in love with Aeneas. This is a point of central importance. Antigone buries her brother in the full knowledge of the consequences. Agamemnon, in agony of mind, chooses to kill his daughter so that the Greek fleet may sail for Troy. But Dido never chooses to fall in love with Aeneas. It may, of course, be objected that no one ever chooses to fall in love; but normally a romantic relationship, however ardent, can be fostered or discouraged. People do consider whether or not to become more deeply involved. But Virgil makes it quite clear, I think, that this privilege was never given to Dido. When her conversation with Anna takes place at the beginning of Book 4, it is already too late. 'The queen has long been injured with a deep love; she nourishes the wound with her life-blood, and is consumed by the fire which she keeps concealed.' To state the argument in a determinist form one might refer to the intervention of Venus, later abetted by Juno, and maintain that the goddesses' combined will was too strong for any mortal to withstand. A more libertarian reader might prefer to say that the divine action in the *Aeneid* should not be understood as a *cause* of human behaviour but rather as a parallel

²⁶ See the note of R. D. Williams on *Aen.* 4. 696-7. The phrase *subitoque accensa furore*, however, is rather difficult. How far it is consistent with our interpretation depends on what phase of Dido's *furore* is referred to.

phenomenon lending weight and universality to the drama below. Yet it doesn't really matter which view one takes, because wherever Dido's passion originates (from without or within) it is portrayed as a force which by its very nature overpowers resistance.

Let us recall how it began. Venus substitutes Cupid for Ascanius with the deliberate intention of making Dido fall madly in love:

At Cytherea nouas artis, noua pectore uersat
consilia, ut faciem mutatus et ora Cupido
pro dulci Ascanio ueniat, donisque furem
incendat reginam atque ossibus implicet ignem (l. 657-60)

But the Cytherean devises new wiles and new schemes within her heart: Cupid, with his appearance and face altered, is to come instead of Ascanius, by his gifts he is to inflame the queen to madness and wind fire around her bones.

She explains the plan to her son:

quocirca capere ante dolis et cingere flamma
reginam meditor (l. 673-4)

And so I intend to forestall [Juno], taking the queen by a trick and encircling her with flame.

She will steal Ascanius away to prevent him from discovering her trick (*dolos*). Cupid is to assume his appearance:

tu faciem illius noctem non amplius unam
falle dolo. (l. 683-4)

You by a trick are to counterfeit his appearance for just one night.

[When Dido takes you on her lap and kisses you]

occultum inspires ignem fallasque ueneno (l. 688)

You are to breathe into her an invisible fire and secretly administer poison.

These lines all emphasize Venus' trickery. The essence of a trick is, of course, its unexpectedness. The victim must be unaware of what is happening until it is too late. In due course Dido takes Cupid on her knee and fondles him, 'little knowing how mighty a god is sitting there and what misery he brings her'—

inscia Dido
insidat quantus miserae deus. (l. 718-19)

In other words, the fatal passion comes on Dido unawares. Her resistance is undermined before she can collect herself.

Another important word in vv. 657–60 (quoted above) is *furētem*. Cupid is to inflame the queen to *madness*. In Book 4 there are many variations on the theme of madness, but the only madness that concerns us here is that which afflicts Dido before Aeneas decides to leave; for this is the madness of Eros. Later, other emotions become mingled with it. We first hear of Dido's *furor* in Book 4 when she and Anna are conducting sacrifices to the deities of marriage with the intention of obtaining their good will and in particular of releasing the queen from her oath of loyalty to Sychaeus. It looks as if the priests of Carthage tried to give an encouraging interpretation of the ritual, but whatever they said was utterly irrelevant:

heu uatum ignarae mentes! quid uota furentem,
quid delubra iuuant? est mollis flamma medullas
interea et tacitum uiuit sub pectore uulnus.
uritur infelix Dido totaque uagatur
urbe furens, qualis coniecta cerua sagitta,
quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit
pastor agens telis liquitque uolatile ferrum
nescius. (65–72)

Alas for the ignorance of the priests' minds! What use are prayers, what use are shrines to one who is in a frenzy? All the time the flame devours her soft marrow, and the wound remains silently alive beneath her breast. The wretched Dido is on fire and paces through every part of the city in a frenzy, like a deer after the shooting of an arrow, a deer which, all unwary, amid the woods of Crete has been pierced from afar by a shepherd's hunting-weapon; he has left the flying steel behind him, unaware of what has happened.

This is a very significant passage. The word *incautam* reminds us once again that Dido was caught unawares; the repetition *furētem* . . . *furens* emphasizes the irrational nature of her love; and its raging intensity is brought out by the images of the fire and wounding.

The motif of fire is introduced by Venus as early as 1. 660, where she instructs Cupid to inflame the queen and wind fire round her bones. It reappears in 1. 673 and 688 (also quoted above). We are told of Cupid's burning face—*flagrantis uultus* (710), and of Dido's love which grows more intense as she gazes at him—*ardescit tuendo* (713). The fire is still raging in the second line of Book 4—*caeco carpitur igni*. The motif recurs again and again throughout the book, eventually finding its consummation in the flames of Dido's funeral pyre, which are visible to the departing Trojans from far out at sea (5. 1–7). The motifs of hunting, wounding, poison, and illness are slightly less prominent, yet each has its

own significance. The hunt, for instance, is prefigured by the epiphany of Venus in Book 1, where she is dressed as a huntress (318 ff.); Dido goes forth to hunt in 4. 136 ff.; but all the time she herself is the stricken quarry. The motif of the wound follows a similar course to that of fire; for Dido's wound of love becomes eventually the wound inflicted on her own body.

All these images reinforce one another. The violence of madness, fire, and wounding conveys the overwhelming power of Dido's passion, which sweeps aside all scruples, however honourable. One of the few scholars to stress this point is W. A. Camps, who says: 'the obsessive love that seizes her is a demonic force, not an impulse which her will could have overcome'.²⁷ The pity we feel as we see her in the grip of this terrible power turns to horror as we watch her total disintegration. But even when she is screaming for vengeance and calling down a curse of eternal enmity, it hardly occurs to us to condemn her. For whatever her deserts may have been (and I have argued that it is not easy to make a clear case against her) she did not deserve to suffer so cruelly.

And so we return to the quotation from *Lear* which we discussed at the beginning:

As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport.

We thought it unwise to accept this as a motto for the *Aeneid* because it implied that the gods acted merely from caprice. We have to believe, I take it, that in Virgil's view there *was* a divine purpose discernible in history. He did not hold such a view in his early days as an Epicurean, and to the end of his life he may well have had serious doubts, but it is hard to see how he could have brought his great epic to the verge of completion if this faith had not on the whole remained dominant in his mind. Nevertheless, he was too honest not to acknowledge that the process of history, whether divinely controlled or not, had always worked and continued to work without any regard for the merits of individual people, or even for the merits of nations. One recalls the feelings of Aeneas when he saw Dido for the last time:

nec minus Aeneas, casu percussus iniquo,
prosequitur lacrimis longe et miseratur euntem. (6. 475–8)

Yet none the less, Aeneas, stunned by the unfairness of her fate, follows her with tears from afar and pities her as she departs.

²⁷ W. A. Camps, *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid* (Oxford, 1969), p. 34.

Casu percussus iniquo. That is a feeling which thinking men have experienced in every age. Their response may be said to constitute the history of theology—and of atheism.

8

The Taciturnity of Aeneas

D. C. FEENEY

AENEAS: Good, good, my lord; the secrets of nature have not more gift in taciturnity.

(Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, Act IV scene iii)

I

Aeneas' speech of defence before Dido (*Aen.* 4. 333–61) is the longest and most controversial he delivers. Although by no means typical, it can open up some revealing perspectives over the rest of the poem.

The exchange between the two, having as its kernel a dispute over obligations and responsibilities, requires some words of context. The early part of the book describes the establishment of a liaison between the refugee leaders, while revealing amongst the poem's characters a wide discrepancy of opinion over the nature of that liaison. Juno announces that she will arrange the marriage of the couple (125–7); after the ensuing marriage-parody of the cave-scene (165–8), Dido also calls what now exists a 'marriage': 'coniugium uocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam' (172). Fama too, moving around Libya, speaks as if Dido has taken Aeneas for husband (192). But the local King Iarbas regards Aeneas as a pirate who has carried off a successful job of plunder (217), while Jupiter looks down from heaven and sees 'lovers', *amantis* (221). Mercury is able to address Aeneas as *uxorius* (266).

Some scholars would have it that there is a genuine ambiguity of fact here.¹ As they point out, Roman marriage was a matter of cohabitation

I refer to the following books by author's name only: G. Highet, *The Speeches in Virgil's Aeneid* (Princeton, 1972); R. Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*² (Leipzig, 1915); A. S. Pease, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus* (Harvard, 1935); R. G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus* (Oxford, 1955).

¹ G. Williams may fairly be taken as representative, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 378–83. Cf. J. Beaujeu, 'Le Mariage d'Énée et de Didon', *Revue du Nord* 36 (1954), 115–19. R. C. Monti goes even further, arguing that there is no ambiguity, and that Aeneas is indubitably married, *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid: Roman Social and Political Values in the Epic* (Mnemosyne Suppl. 66, Leiden: Brill, 1981), pp. 45–8.