

Aeneid 1-17: some notes

Start of *Aeneid* 4: see Book 1 (where Dido falls in love, thanks at least partially to Cupid) + end of Book 3 (Dido has been listening to Aeneas narrating his story; Aeneas finishes: *Sic pater Aeneas intentis omnibus unus / fata renarrabat diuum cursusque docebat./conticuit tandem factoque hic fine quieuit.*)

1 *At regina*: again Book 4 at 296 and 504, causing tripartite division (structurally quasi-tragic, befitting tragic engagement in the book); nb her adversative role.

At: note Aeneas = *quieuit* (3.718); contrast line 5. Austin suggests movement now to focus on Dido rather than Aeneas and his Trojans and notes antithesis between Aeneas' sufferings which are past and Dido's sufferings which are already beginning.

regina: what is the point of reminding us that Dido is queen? Is this the right behaviour? "the focus has shifted from her impressive public persona to her tormented inner self. Yet Virgil's programmatic use of 'regina' at a moment when she is, above all, a woman madly in love serves as encouragement to appraise her not just as a desiring individual, but *as a queen*, that is, as someone who has a key social role to perform and may do so well or badly." (Gildenhard ad loc.)

iamdudum: has been suffering some time; Austin "all this long while"; getting worse?

saucia: wound imagery: cf. Apollonius Rhodius's Medea wounded by the arrow of Eros; cf. deer simile 70-3 > death (689 *vulnus*). Effect? Sinister foreshadowing? Pathos?

cura: of pain of passion; nb ablative (goes with *gravi*); picked up at 5 in ring composition. Cf e.g. 332 (Aeneas); 394 (Dido). "Dido's real *cura* ought to be the prudent governance of her city's affairs" (Gildenhard ad loc.).

"Virgil may be alluding to Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 4.1120: *usque adeo incerti tabescunt uolnere caeco* ('in such uncertain state they waste away with a wound invisible'). Appropriately, the line is part of his diatribe against love ('a romantic delusion') as opposed to sex ('a biological necessity'). And he certainly has in mind book 3 of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, which features Medea burning in secret love for Jason after being hit by one of Eros' arrows" (Gildenhard ad loc.)

2 *vulnus*: wound imagery continued

alit: "feeds": impact of word?

venis: 'in her bloodstreams' or 'with her bloodstreams'? Austin says probably instrumental.

caeco: i.e. hidden (ablative, agreeing with *igni*). Dido's passion becomes more visible as the book goes on.

igni: fire imagery (cf. 1.660 (in a passage whose words are reworked here); 1.713 *ardescit*) (metaphorical > building of pyre/ sack imagery 669-71/5.4 Aeneas sees "flammi" of pyre as he leaves). Effect? NB also Mercury's words 567 and Dido 594, 604.

3 *multus ... multa*: see MacLennan. Note Dido's interest in (Aeneas') ancestry (cf. 1.617-18). We know this includes someone (Venus) who is concerned with moving Aeneas on from Carthage.

virī virtus: "figura etymologica"; *virtus* ("excellence"?) is what a *vir* should have.

recursat: frequentative; Dido keeps thinking about this; obsessiveness ominous.

4 *haerent*: cf. arrow clinging (*haeret*) at 73 (deer simile). Dido can't shake this off.

infixi: "Virgil reuses *infixus* with reference to Dido's suicidal wound at 4.689: *infixum stridit sub pectore vulnus*. The lexical parallel thus constitutes another literalization of a metaphorical image as love turns into death" (Gildenhard ad loc.).

pectore: ablative without preposition "in her breast".

vultus: (plu) "features", take with *verba* as subjects of *haerent*.

5 Dido does not get *quies* (contrast Aeneas). Epicurean colouring to language? (Note that Lucretius in *DRN* portrays love negatively, including wound imagery 4.1068-9; Epicurean viewed self-indulgent sexuality as potentially harmful as damaging to *ataraxia*; *cura* cannot allow calmness necessary for

happiness). For Epicureanism and Dido, see Dyson, J. T. (1996), 'Dido the Epicurean', *Classical Antiquity* 15.2, 203–21.

6: take *Phoebea* with *lampade* (refers to the sun). Second “e” long as transliterated from the Greek.

6-7 *postera... Aurora*: =“the following dawn”

lustrabat: primarily “passing over” but with senses “purify” and “illuminate” behind.

7 *polo*: “from the heavens”,

8 Austin ad loc discusses rhythm: suggests elision at the end of the second foot and absence of a third foot caesura give metrical picture of urgency.

cum: with indicative (purely temporal).

male sana: “beside herself” (Austin who notes *male* has force of a negative and is a colloquial usage).

9-30 Address to Anna: note her later address to get her to persuade Aeneas and Anna’s involvement in the death scene. Anna particularly interesting in light of the mythic tradition in which she had an affair with Aeneas. The sisters are alike (8 *unanima*). Anna seems to know Aeneas very well (cf. 421-3).

Gildenhard comments on the structure: “(a) It comprises 21 lines in all, which fall into two halves of near-equal length (11/10), marked by two direct addresses to the internal audience, her sister

Anna: Anna soror (9) and Anna (20). Those who count along and expect the second half to be precisely equal in length to the first half will thus be disappointed. In line 30, which could have been the 11th line of the second half, Dido has finished speaking and bursts into tears. But this slight imbalance and seemingly premature end to her speech may be an artistic effect designed to convey Dido’s emotionally unbalanced condition.

(b) In thematic terms, the structure is tripartite, again in a symmetrical design (6/9/6):

1:9–14: Dido’s attempt to articulate in words her thoughts and feelings about Aeneas

2: 15–23: Exploration of a ‘what-if’

3: 24–29: Rejection of the ‘what-if’”

9-14: note the series of *qui* etc words. Cf Gildenhard: “The opening segment of the speech comprises an attempt by Dido to articulate in words the impression Aeneas has made on her. In doing so, she repeats from a personal, subjective perspective what Virgil has just described from the external, objective perspective of the narrator. She is so overpowered by feelings and emotions (ranging from deep reverence to strong erotic attraction and incipient sexual desire) that she appears to be ‘gushing’, and her Latin is accordingly palpably out of control. Noteworthy features that underscore that Dido is here venting strong feelings include the sequence of exclamations introduced by *quae* (9), *quis*(10),*quem* (11), *quam* (11), *quibus* (13), *quae* (14); the overemphatic string *quis nouus hic* (10); and the contorted expression *quem sese ore ferens* (11). Dido reaches the height of her pathos-dripping outburst with the exclamation *heu* (13), a profound expression of empathy for the trials and tribulations her hero has suffered, but also indicative of the profound yearning and passion-driven anxiety that she is experiencing herself this very moment, before she sobers down to a more measured mode of discourse from line 15 onwards.” Gildenhard well adduces Apollonius *Argonautica* 3. See 3.616–18 (Medea) ‘As for the girl, deep sleep was furnishing relief from her troubles as she lay in bed. But soon deceptive, baleful dreams began to disturb her, as they do when a girl is in distress.’ + 3.636–44 ‘Poor me! How these dire dreams have frightened me! I fear that this expedition of heroes will indeed bring some great harm—my mind is all aflutter about the stranger. Let him woo an Achaean girl far away among his own people, and let my care be for virginity and the home of my parents. Yet nevertheless, I will make my heart shameless and, no longer remaining aloof, will test my sister, to see if she will entreat me to aid in the contest because she is distressed for her sons—that would quench the terrible pain in my heart.’; “There are, then, clear parallels in plot (a heroine in erotic distress, deciding to seek out her sister after a night of frightful visions), and Virgil’s Latin obliquely recalls Apollonius’ Greek also on the level of metre and diction.” (Gildenhard)

9 *suspensam*: proleptic; in a state of anxious uncertainty or suspense/on tenterhooks (OLD)

insomnia: with the nightmarish visions (playing also on meaning of “sleeplessness”?), cf. Dido’s later dream. Hinting at Dido’s future problems with loyalty to Sychaeus?

10 *quis*; introducing an exclamation. *quis novus hic* agrees with *hospes*. “The use of *quis* as an exclamation together with the demonstrative pronoun *hic* makes a literal translation difficult: ‘What an unforeseen guest, this, who has entered our house!’..As Conington points out, Dido here quotes herself. See 1.627 (Dido speaking to Aeneas and his men): *quare agite, o tectis, iuvenes, succedite nostris* (‘Come therefore, young men, enter our halls’).” (Gildenhard)

novus: probably “strange”.

11 *quem sese ore ferens, quam forti pectore et armis!*: “syntactically, the line continues in apposition to *hospes*, giving two further specifications in different constructions: a present participle (*ferens*), followed by ablatives of quality (*forti pectore et armis*). The phrase *ore ferre* means ‘to exhibit or display in one’s features or expression’ (OLD s.v. *ferre* 9c). A painfully literal translation of *quem sese ore ferens* would go something like: ‘as whom (*quem*) displaying (*ferens*) himself (*sese*) in his mien (*ore*)!’” (Gildenhard)

11: see MacLennan. Debate over whether to take *armis* as from *armus* or *arma*. Gildenhard on *quam forti pectore et armis!*: “literally, this part of the sentence means ‘with how brave a chest and arms/shoulders!’ *pectore* recalls 4.4: *haerent infixi pectore uultus*, but whereas in the earlier passage *pectus* means Dido’s heart, here *pectus* seems to be referring above all to Aeneas’ musculature, specifically his pects. *Armis* could come either from *armus* (‘shoulder’) or, more likely, from *arma* (‘arms’). While *armus* is a possibility (Dido appreciating the buff chest and broad shoulders of her hero), *arma* yields a better meaning. Dido’s diction here (and elsewhere: see above all below on *heu, quibus ille/ iactatus fatis! quae bella exhausta canebat!*) recalls the language of the proem: if *armis* comes from *arma*, *forti pectore et armis* chiastically paraphrase Virgil’s keynote, which introduces his plot and his protagonist, i.e. *arma uirumque cano* (1.1), with *forte pectus* as a metonym, or *pars pro toto*, for *uir*. Dido’s appraisal of Aeneas is thus grounded in the poet’s reality, however much her overall picture may be distorted by the influence of Cupid.” (Gildenhard)

12: *nec vana fides*: sc. *est*. Dido now believes since she has seen Aeneas. Question of Aeneas’ trustworthiness- *fides* - later! Gildenhard comments “*credo* introduces the indirect statement *genus esse deorum*, with *nec uana fides* ... inserted as a parenthetical exclamation.” See her change of mind at 4.365–67.

13 *degeneres animos timor arguit. heu, quibus ille*: “a ‘breathless’, dactylic line. The gnomic formulation *degeneres animos timor arguit* is a curiously abstract and negative way of making the positive point that Aeneas has shown no fear and hence is not a ‘degenerate.’ (A *degener* is a person who has fallen short of the standards of excellence shown by his ancestors, indicating a worsening of the blood-line: put differently, Dido assesses Aeneas as living up to his illustrious ancestry.) This negative proof—*arguere*, in its basic sense, means ‘to show, demonstrate’, then also, in law court settings, ‘to convict, prove guilty’—reinforces Dido’s and Virgil’s obsession with lineage: the theme of noble descent and ignoble disposition recalls *gentis honos* at 4.4 (though the causal link Dido asserts between a show of fear and degeneracy also comes as a bit of a surprise given that a few lines earlier she had confessed to be suffering from a significant amount of fear...)” (Gildenhard)

13–14: cf *A.* 1.2 and 1.3. “How does Dido know that Aeneas is tossed about by fate, given that she thinks of her own biography as shaped by fortune? She may have picked up a hint from Aeneas’ discourse in Books 2 and 3, where *fata* figures prominently as a divine force shaping affairs in the human realm. Yet Dido, while adopting the idiom of historical necessity, remains unwilling to draw the necessary consequences.” (Gildenhard)

14 *quae canebat*: “what a draining of war’s cup he told” (Austin); Gildenhard suggests *exhausta* has sense of ‘down to the bitter end’ and is ironic given *horrida bella* (*Aen.* 7.41) lie in store for Aeneas upon his arrival in Italy and Dido herself will curse the future city of Rome with the prospect of prolonged warfare against her avenger Hannibal (4.621–29).

15–19: “Lines 15–19 contain one long conditional sequence. The protasis consists of two asyndetic *si*-clauses (15: *si... sederet*; 18: *si... pertaesum fuisset*). The first is in the imperfect subjunctive (a present contrary-to-fact), the second is in the pluperfect subjunctive (a past contrary-to-fact). They share the apodosis, i.e. *potui*, which is in the perfect indicative (rather than the subjunctive) since it is one of those verbs that ‘contain within themselves a subjunctive type of meaning (e.g. “could”, “should”).’...Scholars are divided on the meaning of the change in tense from imperfect to pluperfect subjunctive. Here is Gutting: ‘Dido’s first protasis is a statement that precludes infidelity to Sychaeus at the present time, but the second protasis only precludes infidelity in past time. The possibility of present infidelity is left open. Thus the change in tense reflects the incremental *paulatim abolere Sychaeum* begun by Cupid at 1.720. The apodosis, *huic uni forsitan potui succumbere culpa*, leaves no doubt of the cracks in Dido’s fidelity.’...Contrast MacLennan, who offers a more innocent reading: ‘The strength of feeling in this sentence is worth setting out. Dido could say in routine language, using the imperf. Subj., *si non me taederet succumbere possem*—“If I were not weary, I could yield”. Virgil gives her the intensive prefix *per-*; he suggests that the matter is over once and for all by using the pluperf. subj., intensifying that idea by *pertaesum fuisset* rather than *esset*.’..” (Gildenhard)

15 *mihi*: ethic dative.

15–16: “The *ne*-clause, which is the subject of the first *si*-clause with *fixum immotumque* as a predicative complement (‘if it were not planted in my mind as fixed and immovable that...’), specifies what Dido thinks she will remain unconditionally committed to. (*ali*)*cui* (*ali-* dropping out after *si*, *nisi*, *ne* and *num*) is the dative object, *me* the accusative object of *sociare*, which is a complementary infinitive with *uellem*. The generic reference to a comprehensive *aliquis* (‘anyone’) already prepares for the exception.” Gildenhard (who also notes Dido from a Phoenician root=‘Wanderer’...)

16: Austin notes the slow heavy spondees of the first three feet, marking Dido’s measured purpose.

17: sc. *me*; *morte* goes with *deceptam* and *fefellit*. Second love also cheats..