

Dido, Carthage and myth

- In previous literary tradition and myth:
- e.g. tradition that Dido committed suicide on pyre (e.g. Timaeus) rather than marry African king
- e.g. myth of Aeneas' stay at Carthage (NB "With charm and shrewdness asked [s]he earnestly
How Aeneas forsook the city Troy." (Naevius Bk 1.19-20; tr. Warmington where assumption is that Latinus is addressing Aeneas)
- E.g. tradition of Aeneas' relationship with Anna
"Varro says that it was not Dido but Anna who was driven by love of Aeneas to kill herself on the pyre" (Servius supplemented on Verg. *Aen.* 4.682)

Passages:

Anna's speech to Dido (*Aen.* 4.31-53)

Anna replies: "O you who are dearer to your sister than the light, are you, lonely and sad, going to pine away all your youth long, and know not sweet children or love's rewards? Do you think that dust or buried shades give heed to that? Grant that until now no wooers moved your sorrow, not in Libya, nor before then in Tyre; that Iarbas was slighted, and other lords whom the African land, rich in triumphs, rears; will you wrestle also with a love that pleases? And does it not come to your mind whose lands you have settled in? On this side Gaetulian cities, a race invincible in war, unbridled Numidians, and the unfriendly Syrtis hem you in; on that side lies a tract barren with drought, and Barcaeans, raging far and wide. Why speak of the wars rising from Tyre, and your brother's threats . . . ? I certainly believe that it was with the gods' favour and Juno's aid that the Ilian ships held their course hither with the wind. What a city you will see rise here, my sister, what a realm, by reason of such a marriage! With Teucric arms beside us, to what heights will Punic glory soar? Only ask favour of the gods and, with sacrifice duly offered, be lavish with your welcome, and weave pleas for delay, while at sea winter rages fiercely and Orion is stormy—while the ships are shattered, and the skies intractable!"

35–38: Dido rejected suitors in Tyre (but where was the time? Anna exaggerating to make a point?) and Libya (NB tradition of Dido rejecting suitors)

43: The *Barcae* are the people of Barce, possibly chosen to evoke associations with the Carthaginian Barca family (Hannibal!).

47–49: "three exclamatory sentences (*quam... urbem, ... quae... regna! – quantis... rebus!*) designed to entice Dido to yield to her passion by invoking grand prospects of the city and the fame that is bound to ensue for her from the liaison. Overall, the design is chiasmic: Anna begins with Dido and Carthage (*urbem, regna*) before adding a reference to Aeneas (*coniugio tali*); she then proceeds with another reference to Aeneas (*Teucrum ..comitantibus armis*) before concluding with Carthage (*Punica... gloria*). The chiasmus ensures that Aeneas ends up at the centre of Carthage and its imperial future." (Gildenhard). Connections with future Punic wars and struggle involved?

Dido's speech to Aeneas, *Aeneid* 4.305-330

"False one! Did you really hope to cloak so foul a crime, and to steal from my land in silence? Does neither our love restrain you, nor the pledge once given, nor the doom of a cruel death for Dido? Even in the winter season do you actually hasten to labour at your fleet, and to journey over the sea in the midst of northern gales, heartless one? What! If you were not in quest of alien lands and homes unknown, were ancient Troy yet standing, would Troy be sought by your ships over stormy seas? Is it from me you are fleeing? By these tears and your right hand, I pray you—since nothing else, alas, have I left myself—by the marriage that is ours, by the nuptial rites begun, if ever I

deserved well of you, or if anything of mine has been sweet in your sight, pity a falling house, and if yet there be any room for prayers, put away, I pray, this purpose. Because of you the Libyan tribes and Numidian chiefs hate me, the Tyrians are my foes; because of you I have also lost my honour and that former fame by which alone I was winning a title to the stars. To whose mercy do you leave me on the point of death, guest—since that alone is left from the name of husband? Why do I linger? Is it till Pygmalion, my brother, overthrow this city, or the Gaetulian Iarbas lead me captive? At least, if before your flight a child of yours had been born to me, if in my hall a baby Aeneas were playing, whose face, in spite of all, would bring back yours, I should not think myself utterly vanquished and forlorn.”

Dido’s speech before suicide, *Aeneid* 4.590- 629

“O God,” she cries, “shall he go? Shall the intruder have made of our realm a laughing stock? Will pursuers not fetch arms and give chase from all the city, and some of them speed ships from the docks? Go, haste to bring fire, serve arms, ply oars! What say I? Where am I? What madness turns my brain? Unhappy Dido, do only now your sinful deeds come home to you? Then was the time, when you gave your crown away. Behold the pledge and promise of him who, so they say, carries with him his ancestral gods and bore his worn-out father on his shoulders! Could I not have seized him, torn him limb from limb, and scattered the pieces on the waves? Could I not have put his men to the sword, and Ascanius himself, and served him up as a meal at his father’s table? But perhaps the issue of battle had been doubtful? Suppose it had been: doomed to death, whom had I to fear? I should have carried fire into his camp, filled his decks with flame, blotted out father and son together with the whole race, and immolated myself on top of all. O Sun, whose rays survey all that is done on earth; and Juno, agent and witness of my unhappy love; Hecate, whose name is wailed by night in city streets; and Avenging Furies and gods of dying Elissa: hear me now; turn your anger upon the sins that merit it, and listen to my prayers! If that accursed wretch must needs reach harbour and come to shore, if Jove’s ordinances so demand and this is the outcome fixed: yet even so, harassed in war by the arms of a fearless nation, expelled from his territory and torn from Iulus’ embrace, let him plead for aid and see his friends cruelly slaughtered! Nor yet, when he has submitted to the terms of an unjust peace, may he enjoy his kingship or the life he longs for, but perish before his time and lie unburied on a lonely strand! This is my prayer; this last utterance I pour out with my blood. Then do you, Tyrians, persecute with hate his stock and all the race to come, and to my dust offer this tribute! Let no love or treaty unite the nations! Arise from my ashes, unknown avenger, to harass the Trojan settlers with fire and sword—today, hereafter, whenever strength be ours! May coast with coast conflict, I pray, and sea with sea, arms with arms; war may they have, themselves and their children’s children!”