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Examining Vergil's Understanding of Homer through Nausicaa and Dido

Rebekah Pimentel
Brigham Young University - Provo

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EXAMINING VERGIL'S UNDERSTANDING OF HOMER THROUGH NAUSICAA AND DIDO

by
Rebekah Pimentel

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Advisor: Roger Macfarlane

Honors Coordinator: Cecilia Peek

ABSTRACT

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Bachelor of Arts

Beyond demonstrating that Latin could achieve literary monumentality, the *Aeneid* filled the Augustan regime with echoes of Homer's ancient heroes. An inseparable component of Homer's tales is also found in the manner which Vergil integrates women and goddesses into Aeneas's odyssey towards founding Rome. I am examining gendered interactions in the *Odyssey* and *Aeneid* because I want to understand the differences between Vergil's hero and Homer's so that my reader can appreciate particular nuances in the reception of classical literary models in Augustan Rome. When we examine how Homer shows women helping or hindering Odysseus, we find templates that Vergil used for the development of his female characters. Considering this juxtaposition, I will pursue greater depth of understanding for the *Aeneid*'s nuanced reception of Homeric styles specifically by comparing Odysseus's encounter with Nausicaa to Aeneas's first encounter with Dido.

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To my parents, Joe and Lesley; thank you for igniting in me a deep-seated and never abating fire to know and learn all that I possibly can, including how to apply my knowledge and wisdom to lift and support those who I love. You have both taught me the importance of seeking the best things in life. I would not have accomplished all that I have here without your incalculable lessons.

My deepest gratitude to Roger Macfarlane, for his patient encouragement and never flagging support as I meandered across the ancient world with Vergil and Homer. Since the emphasis of my undergraduate experience has always been in Latin, I am especially grateful for his assistance in the couple of places where I needed help understanding Homer in the original Greek. Without his expertise, I am sure that I would not long have survived my own odyssey.

finibus Atticis reddas incolumem precor

I implore you return Vergil unharmed within the boundaries of Attica

(Horace, *Odes* 1.3.7)

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HEROES OF EPIC

We must first understand the ways that Vergil and Homer composed their respective epic poems. Vergil meticulously wrote each word of his epic, where Homer, or at least the oral tradition of the *Odyssey*, meant that not every word has specific purpose besides filling the meter of the line. Before sitting down to compose the epic poem, Vergil wrote a "prose synopsis of the Aeneid divided into twelve books."[1] This allowed him to plan the pace and content that he needed in order to successfully craft the *Aeneid*. It also allowed him time to workshop his opus, especially sections that he was struggling to compose, with others he trusted.[2] Vergil wrote the *Aeneid* at a rate of about two lines per day. On the other hand, the oral tradition of Homer's composition meant that the *Odyssey* likely experienced subtle shifts over time and because of this dichotomy, it is easier to believe that Vergil wrote everything with a specific purpose in mind than it is to believe that Homer did.

A downside to Vergil's meticulous work is that he died before completing the *Aeneid*. In fact, he ordered it to be burned on his deathbed.[3] But by then Rome knew of the greatness he was working to achieve in giving them a new founding myth. And even more magnificently, he was doing so in the tradition of Homer. While Vergil was not the first Roman to compose epic poetry,[4] his work promised Homeric greatness with the first three words: *arma virumque cano* (*Aeneid* 1.1) or "I sing arms and the man." Not only was he going to write like the great Homer, he was going to tackle both of Homer's

[1] E. Fantham, *Roman Literary Culture: from Plautus to Macrobius* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 85.
[2] Ibid, 86.
[3] O. Taplin, *Literature in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 392.
[4] Fantham, *Roman Literary Culture*, 96.

works in one volume smaller than either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. Before the first line is finished, Vergil in effect promises an epic poem about a hero who is better than both Achilles and Odysseus. The arms and war he will sing about do not start until the seventh book, but we meet the man Aeneas near the start as he sails the sea with his men.

Vergil knew Homer's work and also knew that in order to surpass it, he must show his familiarity with Homer's heroes and the ways they interacted with the world. I will examine the interactions they have with women, focusing on the parallels Vergil constructed for Aeneas. Of the many correspondences that could be discussed, I have decided to emphasize Odysseus's relationship with Nausicaa and Aeneas's with Dido, concentrating on Odysseus's relationship with Nausicaa and Aeneas's relationship with Dido, concentrating particularly on their first meetings.

Though most of the parallels discussed here focus on the comparisons found between specific aspects of encounters the heroes have with Nausicaa and Dido respectively, it is necessary to discuss other women Odysseus and Aeneas meet in order to understand Vergil's knowledge and use of Homeric literary techniques. The encounters they both suffer with goddesses will also be examined, though in a different light from the mortal women the heroes meet on their voyages. For the purposes of this paper, I will be defining a hero as a mortal man touched by divinity with a fateful purpose that will bring him personal glory. Perhaps that touch from divinity is one or more gods taking a close interest in that man's life, or the hero may be able to claim parentage of the gods. In Odysseus, we find the former, Aeneas the latter.

Both Odysseus and Aeneas are heavily influenced by the acts of the divine, with one deity creating opposition in their lives, another fostering the hero. Poseidon seeks

revenge on Odysseus in the name of Polyphemus, his son, while Athena closely attends to Odysseus. Aeneas is helped by his divine mother, Venus, and repeatedly harassed by Juno. Jupiter is involved with Aeneas's journey to about the same degree that Zeus is with Odysseus, and this involvement ends with the decree of the king of the gods enforcing the wishes of Athena and Venus respectively.

Athena serves as the patron goddess and overseer of Odysseus on his homeward journey while Venus works to help her son fulfill his destiny in founding Rome despite Juno's wishes to the contrary. Venus plays the part of Aeneas's patron goddess much as Athena did for Odysseus.[5] These divinities act as mentor and protector for their hero as he faces threats which are both mortal and supernatural.

There are inherent differences from the outset between Odysseus and Aeneas. In fact their motivations for their journeys are nearly opposite. Though both are journeying to their home, Odysseus's home is already established; he is returning. However, Aeneas is journeying in order to homestead, to found a city. The land of his fathers is destroyed and he leads his ragtag band of refugees across the Mediterranean, forced to leave the only home he has ever known. In this way, Aeneas has an anti-odyssey in the sense that his path in the first six books of the *Aeneid* is the reverse one we see Odysseus take. Where Homer introduces Odysseus in the middle of the Trojan War in the *Iliad* far from his home and his titular story follows his journey across the sea, Vergil has Aeneas start on a ship, and his story ends with a bitter war in the land he seeks to claim as his home. This integral difference in the way that Homer and Vergil tell their stories proves to be a necessary backdrop in gaining insight into the way Vergil regarded Homer.

[5] K. Reckford, "Aeneas Meets His Mother," *Arion* 3.2 (1996), 1-42.

Odysseus

As has been said, Odysseus will gain his *arete* by returning to his home and reclaiming it from the suitors pursuing his wife. While a clever and strong man, he would not have been able to succeed in this endeavor were it not for Athena's guiding hand.

The main points of Athena's assistance occur when Odysseus desperately needs help, especially once he finally reaches Ithaca. During the last several books of the *Odyssey*, Athena is almost constantly by his side, either as herself though hidden from others' eyes or disguised as a mortal. She is his spokesperson with Zeus, and the one who requests that Odysseus be allowed to return home (*Odyssey* 1.48-63, 5.4-20). After numerous indirect interventions in Odysseus's behalf, Athena shows her ingenuity after his arrival on Scheria. He is exhausted after yet another near-death encounter with Poseidon's rage and collapses in the brush, his raft destroyed and his clothes less than rags. He is yet again in a strange land and this time he has absolutely no resources. Athena sees that the best way to help him is to ensure that he and Nausicaa meet as soon as possible. We will examine this shortly.

Aeneas

The main interactions Aeneas has with the divine is either through his mother Venus or through Juno's plots. While Juno seeks revenge against the remnant of Troy that Aeneas and his people represent, Venus desires her son to found the city that will become the great Rome. The language of Aeneas's first meeting with his mother in the first book make the reader question how aware Aeneas initially was that the "huntress" before him was in fact his divine mother. He greets the godlike maiden by introducing himself as "pious Aeneas" which would only make sense to do in a foreign, hostile land

if he suspected he was talking to a divinity.[6] Yes, Vergil writes as though Aeneas is surprised when *avertens rosea cervice refulsit/ambrosiaque comae divinum vertice odorem / spiravere* (*Aeneid* 1.403-5) or "turning aside, the rose-colored neck brightly shone and her hair breathed the divine smell of ambrosia." But Aeneas has already commented on her obvious divinity upon their meeting by declaring *o dea certe* and then comparing her to Diana (*Aeneid* 1.326-9). But once he recognizes her true divine nature, she laughs and leaves, leaving her son distraught. Vergil says,

> ...ille ubi matrem
> agnovit tali fugientem est voce secutus:
> quid natum totiens, crudelis tu quoque, falsis
> ludis imaginibus? cur dextrae iungere dextram
> non datur ac versas audire et reddere voces?
> talibus incusat gressumque ad moenia tendit. (*Aeneid* 1.405-10)
>
> Aeneas recognized his mother, and he called after her: "What? Do you as well as everyone else trick your son with false appearances? Why not unite your right hand with mine, be given our truths, and also talk together?" Criticizing her so, he extends his steps toward the walls of Carthage.

Based on his reaction here, he definitely seems hurt and surprised after realizing who he is speaking with, but follows her advice and starts going toward Carthage's walls. When Venus acts deceitfully like this during her son's epic, it seems to come from a desire for humor.[7] We also can see that she uses the "tone and diction of comedy" in her conversation with Aeneas, particularly as she is leaving him.[8] This suggests that the motivation she has in helping her son achieve his destiny is coming from a place of more frivolity than concern for Aeneas.

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[6] S. Bartsch-Zimmer, *The Aeneid* (New York: Random House, 2020, forthcoming); cf. "Virgil's *Aeneid*: a new interpretation," J. Reuben Clark Lecture in Classics and the Classical Tradition, Brigham Young University, 20 Nov 2019.
[7] K. Reckford, "Aeneas Meets His Mother," *Arion* 3.2 (1996), 9.
[8] Ibid, 9.

There is also humor in her tone when she and Juno discuss his future with Dido. It is interesting to note that the only time the wills of these two goddesses intertwine concerns Dido. They both agree to play matchmaker with them. Juno, to deter Aeneas from founding Rome, Venus to prevent Aeneas from experiencing the heartache he will experience by continuing on his journey. But Venus's motivations usually carry a double meaning of some kind and are rarely straightforward.[9] In respect to Dido for instance, she knows that Aeneas will still leave soon and looks forward to the mayhem that will come to all parties involved.

Still, it seems there is a similarity for humorous deception between mother and son. Seeing that Venus is the embodiment of love and lust, it follows characteristically that she and her offspring would find it entertaining to play with others' hearts and feelings. Though Aeneas clearly does not find Venus's treatment of him entertaining as she does at the end of their conversation her, the information that Venus gives him concerning Dido and the current state of Carthage prove to be invaluable during his four-book stay.

Also, we see Aeneas repeatedly tell the gods what he knows is dutiful and yet does something else. Mercury has to twice come to the self-proclaimed pious Aeneas when carrying out Jupiter's orders that Aeneas must set sail for Italy. There is Mercury's initial visit which is very direct, and then he must come again because Aeneas is simply lounging on his boat after taking several days to get ready to set sail (*Aeneid* 4.553-70). While I would not say that Aeneas being slow to follow a deity's command is deceitful, I do say that it is wily because we will see how his wiliness gives him the room that he

[9] Ibid, 10.

wants to maintain control of the delicate situations he finds himself in.

NAUSICAA

This idea of deception, regardless of the hero's motivation, is frequently seen in both Aeneas and Odysseus. Sometimes Odysseus lies or avoids parts of the truth to secure his safety, sometimes he does it for his own entertainment, but always to safeguard his control. I argue that this is also the case with Aeneas. But first, we must understand more about the literary techniques Homer implements to show these characteristics in Odysseus, many of which are evident when Odysseus meets Nausicaa. In a powerful simile, Homer compares Nausicaa to the goddess Artemis as she plays near the sleeping Odysseus.

Artemis

Let us first examine the "white-armed girl" (*Odyssey* 6.100). We know that Nausicaa is a young woman of marriageable age, and we know that she is royal, a princess on this island. When Odysseus first sees her, he decides to flatter her in order to secure his safety and to safeguard his control. He starts by claiming that she looks "…like Zeus's daughter Artemis…" (*Odyssey* 6.151). This is an interesting comparison because Homer himself has already compared the princess to the virgin goddess. While describing her play with the other girls at the river while washing the clothes, Homer says she is "like Artemis the archer" (*Odyssey* 6.101). He then narrates how she leads the others (*Odyssey* 6.101), compares her playmates to "the rustic daughters of Zeus the Aegis King" (*Odyssey* 6.104-5), and describes in the midst of this simile how delighted Leto is (*Odyssey* 6.106).

As part of her hunting party, Artemis leads as a part of her hunting party a constant contingent of dryads, nymphs, and other minor goddesses who are often daughters of Zeus, as they go through the wilderness. Leto is her divine mother who is loved in equal measure by her powerful children. When Niobe claims her supremacy to Leto because she has more children than the Titaness, Apollo and Artemis kill her children in retribution for disparaging their mother. The great love between mother and daughter cannot be denied, and here Homer suggests that were Leto to see Nausicaa in this moment, she would feel the same joy as though it were in fact her own formidable daughter.

To further this simile, Homer has Odysseus remind the listener of Nausicaa's godlike characteristics in their first conversation. The first thing he says to the princess is,

> My lady, please! Are you divine or human?
> If you are some great goddess from the sky,
> you look like Zeus'sdaughter Artemis –
> you are as tall and as beautiful as she. (*Odyssey* 6.149-52)

He starts his flattery by comparing her to Artemis to serve as juxtaposition to the rest of the flattery he offers her about the greatness of her parents as well as the happiness and glory she will bring her future husband. Artemis is a virgin goddess who is associated with the wild and wildlife, but she is also the powerful goddess of the moon. It is easy to view Nausicaa as a powerful and virginal young woman. Later, we will see how Homer also compares Penelope to Artemis and Dido to Diana, Artemis's Roman counterpart.

Odysseus Encounter

The way that we see Vergil shape Aeneas's odyssey through Dido bears striking resemblances to the behavior, characteristics, and situations of those women Odysseus encountered in bygone centuries. In particular, the dichotomy of manliness in a woman

seems to be a common connector between the women who delay Aeneas and Odysseus from their homes as compared to those women who display characteristics considered more feminine. This difference is especially seen when looking at Dido's manly qualities, such as ruling a kingdom without a king, and the demure attitudes of Nausicaa.

An area of some stark similarities is found in the first harbor to which Homer and Vergil send their heroes. After long voyages they find themselves on shores that may be hostile though they are unsure of what awaits them. Athena and Venus provide Odysseus and Aeneas safety in the form of royal women, one a princess the other a queen and ruler. Once the heroes meet these women, they both cleverly say those things which they know will affect their audience most, effectively manipulating the situation to meet their needs in order to fulfill their destiny. As we examine the specific parallels of the meetings in both epics, we see how Vergil hints at the tragic future of Aeneas and Dido.

The reason Odysseus finds himself on Scheria is because Zeus, by way of Hermes, commanded Calypso to let him go after his seven-year captivity. Yet during his voyage on his makeshift raft, Poseidon discovers that Odysseus is once again on the sea and sends a storm to stop him. His raft wrecks and he stumbles ashore before collapsing from exhaustion. While Odysseus sleeps after crashing on Scheria, Athena decides the best way to help Odysseus is to go to Nausicaa in a dream and orchestrate their meeting. The language that she uses in the dream suggests that her marriage is coming soon, but specifically to a foreigner. Athena remarks to the princess in the dream that she ought to go clean the laundry by the river soon, since

> Your clothes are lying there in dirty heaps,
> though you will soon be married, and you need
> a pretty dress to wear, and clothes to give
> to all your bridesmaids…

> Surely you will not long remain unmarried.
> The best young men here in your native land
> already want to court you… (*Odyssey* 6.26-30, 33-35)

Athena wants Nausicaa at the river so that she will encounter Odysseus, and she decides the way to persuade the princess to do this is to directly discuss the imminence of Nausicaa's marriage. By suggesting specifically that the young men that she knows already are willing to court her, Athena then turns Nausicaa's mind to the possibility of marrying a foreigner the day before she happens upon Odysseus. The dream fulfills its purpose and the next day Nausicaa secures permission from her father to go wash clothes at the river, but while talking to him only hints at the prospects of marriage from her dream, though that was the main message Athena sent to her.

However, Homer tells us that Alcinous is aware of her true feelings. He tells his daughter "I could not grudge…anything you want" after Homer assures his listener that Alcinous understood the message behind his daughter's words (*Odyssey* 6.67). Homer is only able to disclose Alcinous's thoughts because his style of composition and telling is framed by a third-person omniscient narrator. This characteristic of the text balances the narration of the actions of the characters with their inner dialogues and makes the characters' motives more clear.

In this we see a striking difference in the way Vergil and Homer tell their tales. The narration in the *Odyssey* depends on an omniscient third-person narrator, while the narration of the *Aeneid* is a third-person limited narrator. Homer will often discuss and describe the thoughts, feelings, even motivations of his characters. Vergil describes scenes with physical descriptors, and very rarely if at all does the reader gain insight to the mental landscape of his characters, particularly Aeneas. As such, Vergil avoids

discussing the motives of his hero during the discussions Aeneas has with Dido which I will examine shortly. Vergil instead allows the reader to determine by personal observation what his and Dido's motivations might be from reading the story.

Once Nausicaa and her slave girls arrive at the river, they do not find Odysseus fast enough for Athena's liking. Homer tells us "Athena's eyes flashed bright. Odysseus/ must wake up, see the pretty girl, and have/ an escort to the town of the Phaeacians" (*Odyssey* 6.112-14). Again, the goddess is anxious for Nausicaa and Odysseus to meet in order to safeguard his continuing journey.

When Odysseus does awaken, his first thoughts show the low expectations that he has gained for the places he has found in his travels. He wonders to himself, "Are all the people wild and violent, /or good, hospitable, and god-fearing?" (*Odyssey* 6.120-21). The reason for his concerns is the troubles he has encountered in his travels on other islands in the past ten years, including such places as Aeaea and Ogygia. When encountering the women on those islands, Circe and Calypso respectively, he had to do different things with the different women to survive. With Circe, Hermes provided Odysseus the moly against her magic, but Odysseus still saw the need to offer sex to her in exchange for the restoration of his crew (*Odyssey* 10.229-345). With Calypso, Odysseus was trapped to the whims of the goddess for seven years until Zeus sent Hermes. In both situations, it took his wits to survive, but divine intervention to escape.

Because of his past experiences in strange places, it is little surprise that when Odysseus awakes on Scheria, he views the potential of an encounter with local inhabitants with dread instead of eagerness (*Odyssey* 6.119-26). Something, perhaps these intervening encounters with powerful women, has changed Odysseus's outlook. His

dread on Scheria is a far cry from the great desire for exploration he exhibited when visiting the island of Polyphemus, which was one of the first places he landed during his long journeys, and where he learned that it is sometimes more important to hide himself than to flaunt his heroic nature.[10] Odysseus not only hides his identity from Nausicaa, but from the whole of Alcinous's court until he is directly questioned by the great king (*Odyssey* 8.548-51). Only then does he reveal who he is, which then leads to him relating his journeys and struggles in his attempts to return home over the past decade.

Another member of the royal family has inquired about his identity already.[11] Arete politely asked him "Where are you from? And who gave you those clothes?" (*Odyssey* 8.238) However, when answering Arete (*Odyssey* 7.241-97) he provides a protracted answer only about the manner in which he acquired his clothes, ending his lengthy avoidance by saying, "now I have told you / the truth, no matter what" (*Odyssey* 7.296-97). Yet the listener knows that the real truth he has told has not addressed the queen's inquiry about his origin.

Odysseus's wiliness and sharp wits aid him particularly when he meets Nausicaa, which proves extremely opportune for him. She is the one who will warn Odysseus that in order to gain the transport home that he seeks, he must gain the goodwill of Arete, not of Alcinous (*Odyssey* 6.309-15). He is able to gain Nausicaa's trust quickly and earn this advice because he knows what to say to her in order to persuade her to secure his own safety in the face of his fears. This trust was something he had to work for himself despite Athena's assistance in preparing Nausicaa for their encounter; the girl is so scared when

[10] Y. Rinon, *Homer and the Dual Model of the Tragic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 90-91.
[11] Ibid, 91.

she first sees Odysseus that her legs start to tremble. But after Athena stills Nausicaa's trembling legs and "puts courage in her heart" (*Odyssey* 6.141), Homer reveals Odysseus's inner dialogue, which shows his motivations in this moment with the young princess.

> He wondered, should he touch her knees, or keep
> some distance and use charming words, to beg
> the pretty girl to show him to the town,
> and give him clothes. At last he thought it best
> to keep some distance and use words to beg her.
> The girl might be alarmed at being touched.
> His words were calculated flattery. (*Odyssey* 6.142-47)

Odysseus, the mastermind behind the creation of the Trojan Horse, knows that his only course of action to secure that which he needs is to beg this stranger for help. At the moment, these needs are simply clothes, food, and a ship that will sail by Ithaca. Granted, while that last need has been unattainable for ten years now, he now stands with the assurance that his return is divinely willed. Calypso promised him "…a wind / to blow [him] safely home…" (*Odyssey* 5.166-67) and she received this information from Hermes (*Odyssey* 5.112-16), who in turn was commanded by Zeus. However, because Odysseus has learned on different islands at different times that safety cannot be guaranteed by anyone except himself, he decides to flatter Nausicaa as well as to beg. But the way in which he flatters suggests some ulterior motives. And this flattery ends with an overt suggestion that it might be possible for them to wed.

> So may the gods grant all your heart's desires,
> a home and husband, somebody like-minded.
> For nothing could be better than when two
> live in one house, their minds in harmony,
> husband and wife. Their enemies are jealous,
> their friends delighted, and they have great honor. (*Odyssey* 6.180-85)

Though his design is to beg, Odysseus turns to honeyed words that speak of the

things he assumes a teenage girl with a royal upbringing must greatly anticipate. More than that, the fact that he is speaking to her about this in his present lowly condition so confidently hints at his true kingly identity. After helping him as best she can, including helping him get clean and dressed, Nausicaa says that they ought to return to her father's palace separately in case "someone rude may say, 'who is that big strong man with her?/Where did she find such a stranger?/Will he be her husband?" (*Odyssey* 6.274-77) The possibility of a relationship is on her mind and Odysseus's earlier overtures only added to this idea. Alcinous as well has their union on his mind.[12]

Odysseus has successfully gained Nausicaa's trust and she has her slaves give him clothes and oil to anoint himself with after washing (*Odyssey* 6.214-16). After he finishes cleaning and dressing, "Athena made him look / bigger and sturdier" (*Odyssey* 6.229-30) before he returns to the girls. Homer describes this beautification as Athena pouring "attractiveness across his head and shoulders" in much the same way that Hephaestus or any expert craftsman would pour gold or silver over their workmanship (*Odyssey* 6.236-37).

Because Odysseus's "handsomeness was dazzling" (*Odyssey* 6.238) and because Nausicaa believes even more now that it is the will of the gods that this stranger come in contact with her people, she turns to the girls who are with her and says, "I hope I get a man like this as a husband, / a man that lives here and would like to stay" (*Odyssey* 6.245-46). Athena did not make this change in his appearance until after he had already gained Nausicaa's trust on his own. But after having Athena discuss Nausicaa's marriageability in her dreams, Odysseus discussing it with her as well, and now seeing

[12] N. Austin, "The Wedding Text in Homer's Odyssey," Arion 1.2 (1991), 227-43.

the stranger transform to look like a god, it is little surprise that the princess wishes for a man such as Odysseus for a husband.[13]

However, she does not outright say that this is the specific man she wishes to marry, though she does hint at it. This is perhaps because Homer also has emphasized the great loyalty she feels to her island and her people. In the same breath as wishing to have a husband like Odysseus, she says that she hopes her husband would want to stay on Scheria. She does not want to leave her people. Even Alcinous, when he expresses his desire for Odysseus to marry Nausicaa, says that he would want Odysseus to stay with them (*Odyssey* 7.312-14) and to become as his own son. There are many parallels with Dido between these marital wishes we see in both Nausicaa and Alcinous, which suggests Vergil's continuing attempts to capture and claim the greatness of Homer as his own.

DIDO

A much more complex character than Nausicaa, Dido is a widowed queen who has built a powerful and beautiful city-state after enduring great personal challenges. While she no longer mourns the death of her beloved husband Sychaeus, his memory prevents her from considering other men, let alone desiring them. Her stalwart sister Anna provides great support to her and because of their conversations together, we are able to learn more about Dido's thoughts and motivations.

There is a great sense of foreboding surrounding her, especially since our introduction to her character comes from what Venus tells Aeneas about Dido's tragic history. And many of the epithets Vergil uses for Dido, such as *infelix* (*Aeneid* 1.749),

[13] N.P. Gross, "Nausicaa: A Feminine Threat," *The Classical World*, 69.5 (1976), 313.

foreshadow her imminent misery. Her unhappiness and misery more specifically foreshadow her death on account of her relationship with Aeneas.

Aeneas Encounter

The first time we find Aeneas on dry land is when he is galvanizing his men's morale after a devastating storm. Over half his fleet was lost in the storm, and he and his remaining men believe themselves to be the only survivors. This parallels Odysseus leaving Ogygia and arriving on Scheria after a storm as well. What is interesting is that Vergil has Aeneas and many of his ships survive the terrible storm, where Odysseus's meager raft was wrecked. Also, as made evident by Aeneas later providing gifts of Troy to Dido, Aeneas retained many of his provisions through the storm. Vergil again differs from Homer here, since Odysseus lost all the provisions and resources that Calypso gave him before leaving, including the clothes on his back.

Another parallel between the two heroes is that we are seeing them reemerge into narrative and story after seven years. While Homer has briefly told us about Odysseus previous to Hermes's arrival on Ogygia, Odysseus's story has been stalled while Calypso kept him the last seven years. But Aeneas's wanderings up to this point are largely unknown to us, save that he and his men have recently left Sicily and King Acestes (*Aeneid* 1.549-50) and what we hear him tell Dido in the second and third books, but we know little of their time there. In fact, we only know that the passage of time between his escape from Troy up to his arrival at Carthage is seven years due to Dido's remarks at the end of the first book. Her heart and desires are being kindled for Aeneas at that point, and she makes a request of her new guest. She says, "*nam te iam septima portat / omnibus errantem terries et fluctibus aestas*" (*Aeneid* 1.755-56) or "For this is now seven

summers that have carried you who have wandered through all the lands and waves."

Vergil shows how he knows Homer's text in his subsequent attempts to make Aeneas into an epic hero like Odysseus, in part by having Aeneas also reenter a narrative after seven years. It is not a coincidence that Vergil has Aeneas start his own epic after the same amount of time that Odysseus's story was paused on Ogygia. The way in which Vergil shares the duration of Aeneas's journey is also telling. Vergil has Dido reveal to the reader that Aeneas and his band have been wandering seven years since she has closely followed the events of Troy. In fact, she demonstrates how closely she has followed the events of Troy in the frieze of Juno's temple (*Aeneid* 1.623-29). This is a possible hint at their future relationship, since Dido knows so much about Aeneas and his past already, which Vergil foregrounds strongly with her knowledge of Aeneas. Still, Dido does not know what Aeneas has done in the time since Troy's fall.[14] It is the unknown elements of his past which will spell out unlucky Dido's fate.

In the last seven years, we do not know what Aeneas has done. We also do not truly know how the fall of Troy happened. Homer does not tell us, and neither does Vergil. Instead of telling the reader himself, Vergil steps aside as principal narrator in the second and third books and lets Aeneas tell Dido and her court all that transpired the day the Greeks burned Troy, and about his many odyssean adventures across the sea since then. In pre-Vergilian views of Aeneas, Rome's founding hero was thought to be a traitor who let the Greeks into Troy.[15] By having Aeneas tell Dido his tale, Vergil forces the reader into a position where they must determine for themselves the truthfulness of

[14] L. Fratantuono, *Madness Unchained* (Lexington Books, 2007), 26.
[15] S. Casali, "*Facta impia* (Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.435-36)," *Classical Quarterly* 49 (1999), 208.

Aeneas's story to Dido.[16] In effect, the reader becomes Dido as he shares his story.

But before we see the meeting of Aeneas and Dido, Vergil shows us the meeting of Aeneas and his mother, Venus. Shortly after his landfall, Aeneas is searching with Achates for some provisions and debating whether or not to press on towards Carthage. Venus comes to Aeneas to prepare him for his imminent encounter with the queen, much as Athena visited Nausicaa to guide her to Odysseus. In their conversation, Aeneas learns about Dido's backstory which will serve as a backdrop for some interesting parallels with the story he later tells Dido about his own past. We will focus on how this preparation with Venus allowed him to then say and do those things that would quickly win him Dido's trust. Quickly gaining Nausicaa's trust was Odysseus's goal as well, and Vergil applies that wiliness to Aeneas here in order to secure many of the same things that Odysseus found himself in need of on Scheria, including provisions.

When Dido arrives, Venus has hidden Aeneas from everyone's view in a cloud. Ilioneus, who survived the storm with many other men Aeneas thought to be lost, speaks with Dido, unaware that Aeneas is close by with Achates. Though this is more tangible than the hiding that Odysseus attempted while still suspicious of the Phaeacians, both heroes must hide parts of themselves in these encounters with both Dido and Nausicaa. Again building off the notion that Vergil is writing an odyssey in reverse for his hero, Aeneas is physically hidden from Dido whereas Odysseus avoids identifying himself. Also, there is reason to believe that Aeneas still keeps things hidden from his host even after physically revealing himself.

However, the wiliness that Aeneas shows when relating his story, as well as the

[16] Bartsch-Zimmer, *The Aeneid* (see above, note 6).

parallels he emphasizes between himself and Dido, is not something we can confirm. Unlike Homer, Vergil wrote his epic with a third-person limited narrator, which rarely allows us the privilege of knowing Aeneas's inner thoughts. One of these few occasions where we are told about his inner dialogue is shortly after his meeting with Dido. He sends his men back to the ships to fetch Ascanius since *omnis in Ascanio cari stat cura parentis* (*Aeneid* 1.646) or "All the attention of the caring parent rests on Ascanius." Yet even here, Vergil is the one speaking and the one narrating what is on Aeneas's mind. With Homer, his listener is aware of Odysseus'sfrequent implementation of subterfuge because he frequently gives the narration to the character. This inherent difference in how the texts are written allow Aeneas the room to misinform the reader as well as those he meets.

Later during a feast that Dido hosts for Aeneas and his men, she asks for his story. Most of Aeneas's encounters and conversations with Dido in the first and fourth books show Odyssean wiliness to ensure he gets the resources he needs in order to rest and then continue his journey to found Rome. There are interesting parallels between the story he tells of his part in the fall of Troy and the story his mother Venus tells him about Dido's own difficult life. It is arguable that Aeneas fabricates his story to match hers in key ways to quickly gain her trust and confidence.[17] One sweeping similarity is that they are both at various stages of establishing new homes and cultures for their people, who they have led far from their homelands.[18] Some of the other things Aeneas tells Dido include losing a spouse to violence (*Aeneid* 2.736-44), watching someone dear to him murdered on an

[17] Bartsch-Zimmer, *The Aeneid* (see above, note 6).
[18] E. Adler, *Vergil's Empire: Political Thought in the Aeneid* (Blue Ridge Summit: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 104.

altar (*Aeneid* 2.550-58), and even having to flee his home as the leader of a group of refugees.

In striking similarity to Odysseus and Nausicaa, after Aeneas reveals himself to Dido, Venus erases the wear he has experienced during his travels and makes him beautiful. As we examine the rhetoric used by Homer and Vergil, we also see some interesting differences. Athena beautified Odysseus after he had cleaned and dressed himself, but Aeneas emerged beautified from the cloud that Venus had shrouded him in before Dido's arrival. Even so, Vergil uses Homeric rhetoric to describe how Venus changed her son like this. He describes what this change looks like. "*Quale manus addunt ebori decus, aut ubi flavo / argentum Pariusve lapis circumdatur auro*" (*Aeneid* 1.592-93) or "Fine as the beauty craftsman's hands add to ivory, or to bright silver, or Parian marble, enveloped by gold."

Here we see Vergil similarly describe this event by comparing it with the work of a craftsman. And even more interestingly, he directly uses the words *argentum* and *aurum*, and Homer also describes the silver and gold with the Odysseus passage. Just like with Nausicaa and Odysseus, this event will lead to Dido desiring marriage coupled with an unwillingness to follow Aeneas to Italy and leave her people. But where Nausicaa's marriageability is established, though not explicitly acted on by Odysseus, Dido's marriageability is unclear due to her continuing devotion to Sychaeus. This is something that begins to plague her after hearing Aeneas's tale, and which then allows him the room to act where Odysseus did not.

After Aeneas finishes telling his tale both of Troy's fall and somewhat concerning his journeying since then, Dido confides to Anna that she could be made to forget

Sychaeus for Aeneas, which parallels Nausicaa's thoughts about the way others will think when they see her with Odysseus after his beautification. Specifically, Dido says

> si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet,
> ne cui me vinclo vellum sociare iugali,
> postquam primus amor deceptam morte fefellit,
> si non pertaesum thalami taedaeque fuisset,
> huic uni forsan potui succumbere culpae
> ... agnosco veteris vestigia flammae. (*Aeneid* 4. 15-19, 23)
>
> If my mind had not been settled and inflexibly fixed against joining any other to myself in a marriage bond, after my first love cheated me, having eluded me by his death, if not wearied of marriage and its torch, perhaps in this alone I might be able to succumb to this crime... I sense the traces of old fires.

As a woman who has already loved and married, she is fully aware of the emotions Aeneas inspires in her. But despite the deep affection she still holds for Sychaeus, she admits to Anna, her closest confidante, that she could possibly succumb to the temptation Aeneas presents to make forget her dead husband. But even as she tells this to Anna, she does so in a circumspect way that speaks of the inner turmoil these conflicting desires are creating within her. As Vergil has foreshadowed the entire time that we have known Dido, this turmoil proves to be her destruction.

Between Aeneas's tale that parallels her own in so many coincidental ways and Cupid's intervention, Dido's passions are enflamed for Aeneas. On Venus's orders, Cupid not only makes Dido start to forget Sychaeus, he also clouds her judgment. Dido might have come to realize that her potential union with Aeneas would be troublesome were it not for Venus enflaming their passions. It is interesting to examine this since Venus declares her motivation is to guide Aeneas along to Italy and the founding of Rome, yet creates this passionate tie between the two leaders.

When we look at how Dido reflects after her fight with Aeneas in book 4, she seems to know there is more to Aeneas than he has told her. In fact, there is reason to think that Vergil may be hearkening back to the pre-Vergilian views of Aeneas.[19] Dido says to herself:

> Infelix Dido, nunc te facta impia tangent?
> Tum decuit, cum sceptra dabas. En dextra fidesque,
> quem secum patrios aiunt portare penatis,
> quem subiisse umeris confectum aetate parentem! (*Aeneid* 4. 596-99)
>
> "Unhappy Dido, now will wicked deeds strike you? Then it was right, when you gave him the scepter. Behold the pledge and honesty of him who, as they say, carries with him his ancestral gods, of him who carried his aged father on his shoulders!"

It is unlikely that Dido is calling her own past with Sychaeus and her brother *facta impia*. Rather, based on her remonstration of Aeneas, it is more likely she is referring to the pre-Vergilian views of him. Among other things, he was labelled as a traitor to Troy before Augustus commissioned Vergil to write the epic.[20] It is because of this treachery that he was supposed to have successfully escaped the razing of his home, and it is also likely the way in which he was able to retain such amazing treasures from the great city several years after its fall.[21]

In these musings to herself, Dido feels that she has forsaken her crown, not simply because of her conjugal union with Aeneas, but because she listened to his words and the story he told about the fall of Troy. And since she views their relationship as something on equal footing with official marriage, she has also given her crown, her queendom, and

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[19] Bartsch-Zimmer, *The Aeneid* (see above, note 6).
S. Casali, "*Facta impia* (Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.435-36)," *Classical Quarterly* 49 (1999), 204.
[20] Publius Vergilius Maro and R.T. Ganiban, *Aeneid: Books 1-6* (Newburyport: Focus Publ., 2012), 362. Also, Casali, "*Facta impia*," 206.
[21] Bartsch-Zimmer, *The Aeneid* (see above, note 6).

her people to him. Dido now seems to count his "pledge and promise," his word, as naught.

Before this reflective moment, Venus and Juno effectively use Dido as a pawn to delay Aeneas indefinitely. What is interesting is the humor Venus once again shows. Though she has sealed Dido's heart to Aeneas's through Cupid, and she still clearly plans to see Aeneas get to Latium and marry Lavinia, she agrees to Juno's proposed plan. But when Juno says "*Hic hymenaeus erit,"* or "Here I will match them," Vergil tells the reader *non adversata petenti / adnuit atque dolis risit Cytherea repertis* (*Aeneid* 4.127-28) or "Not against the entreaty, she nodded her assent and Cytherea laughed at the discovered deceits." Venus seems to love any opportunity to laugh. And this laughter suggests her own subterfuge in the face of Juno's attempts to yet again forestall the imminent birth of Rome. Though the goddesses are in agreement, it is a matter of who will betray whom first.

In Juno's case, she sees Dido's love for Aeneas as an opportunity to possibly compromise with Venus and to block the fulfillment of Aeneas'sfate. At least for the moment, Aeneas will remain in Carthage with Dido as his wife where his people will prosper and carry on the spirit of Troy though they will become Carthaginians. What is particularly noteworthy in her conversation with Venus is the fact that she says *conubio iungam stabili propriamque dicabo*. (*Aeneid* 4.125) She proclaims "I shall join them in lasting marriage and make her his" and as the goddess of marriage, that adds validity to Dido's later belief that she and Aeneas are now married. Venus agrees to Juno's proposition, though she sees through this deception. Why would she agree to this arrangement when it takes Aeneas off his divinely appointed path? As a representation of

love and lust, Venus is fickle but also cunning. While she has outwardly agreed with Juno about the union of Aeneas and Dido, she knows Jupiter's prophecy (*Aeneid* 1.254-96).

Diana

Vergil hints at the presence of similar fickleness in Dido when he draws a Homeric simile between the Carthaginian queen and Diana. There are additional parallels between Dido and Nausicaa, and Vergil's choice to have Venus appear to Aeneas as a maiden with many similarities to Diana illuminates many of them. First, we will examine how Vergil shapes this simile outside Juno's temple.

> qualis in Eurotae ripis aut per iuga Cynthi
> exercet Diana choros, quam mille secutae
> hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades; illa pharetram
> fert umero gradiensque deas supereminet omnis
> (Latonae tacitum pertemptant gaudia pectus):
> talis erat Dido, talem se laeta ferebat
> per medios instans operi regnisque futuris. (*Aeneid* 1.498-504)
>
> Like Diana training her joined dancers on the river Eurota's banks or through Mount Cynthus, with a thousand Oreades escorting her to this side and this; Diana brings the quiver over her shoulder and taller than all the goddesses (this thoroughly agitates the silent heart of Latona with joy): Dido was of such a kind as Diana, she was bearing herself with joy among her people eager for work through the middle parts (of construction) and to the future queendom.

Very similar to the way that Homer describes Artemis as a Nausicaa figure, Vergil points out that Dido's rule makes her people happy and most interestingly describes how Latona (Leto) reacts to seeing her in the Diana simile. Vergil uses *gaudium*, or joy, to describe Leto's feelings toward her daughter. Homer also mentions Leto's reaction and love for Artemis in the Nausicaa simile. He says "γέγηθε δε τε φρένα Λητώ" (*Odyssey* 5.106) and the word Homer uses to describe Leto's feelings, γέγηθε, is a verb meaning "to take joy." This shows Vergil's specific understanding of Homer's

diction in key areas of the text.

The ways in which Vergil departs from the Homeric model in his comparison of Dido and Diana are also interesting. As Dido enters the temple, she is surrounded by warriors instead of handmaids, and Vergil focuses on her stately demeanor in contrast to the playful nature of Homer's Artemis simile. In his presentation of Dido, Vergil "...connects Dido to Venus, even while comparing her to Diana, by reiterating and by reinforcing the queen's close similarity to Venus."[22] By calling up imagery of Diana when first introducing Dido, Vergil is clearly alluding to Odysseus's similar description of Nausicaa as a type for Artemis, as discussed above.[23] However, Vergil is also showing that he will go beyond what Homer accomplished. The poet has already established a (somewhat ironic) link between Venus and Diana, having had Venus appear to her son in the guise of Diana. Now he compares Dido to both Venus and Diana in a single simile, whereas Homer only called up images of Artemis in his description of Nausicaa. One reason Vergil may have dome this was to foreshadow Dido's future with Aeneas, not only her heartbreak and death, but also the sexual intimacy she will share with him. Nausicaa had no such relationship with Odysseus. While Vergil is showing that Dido is a powerful figure who will help decide Aeneas's fate, much as Nausicaa did for Odysseus, the emotional depth of the Carthaginian queen is far more nuanced and mature than that of the Phaeaecian princess. She will experience great happiness because of her time with him, but also great sorrow. This becomes more clear as we consider the role and powers of both Venus and Diana.

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[22] M.K. Thornton, "The Adaptation of Homer's Artemis-Nausicaa Simile in the 'Aeneid'," *Latomus*, 44 (1985), 615-22.
[23] D.O. Ross, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Reader's Guide.* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 32.

When Venus first appears to Aeneas she is in the guise of Diana, her chaste opposite, and looks like a virgin huntress. While the two goddesses have different views on sexual practices, both hold dominion over different aspects of life and death, untamed things, and pursuit. Where Diana's realm is the wild and the beasts therein, Venus rules the hearts and lusts of all creatures, including man. Venus definitely has more control over Dido's heart than Diana, yet it is to the chaste goddess of the moon that Vergil makes his comparison here. This could be a sign of Dido's renewed chastity.[24] But since we have already seen Venus take on the guise of Diana, we must ask ourselves if Dido's current chastity will be as insubstantial as was Venus's disguise to Aeneas. Dido is a woman about whom we are unsure what she will do or how she will react to an event. She presents a complexity of character that often surprises the reader.

Penelope

On the other hand, Penelope can seem a more straightforward woman, but as we examine her more closely, we see a similarly complex character in Odysseus's queen. Penelope is a woman who is stalwart and loyal, both to herself and to her husband Odysseus. As we compare the first half of the *Aeneid* with Odysseus's voyages, we see that the heroes' most important and influential relationships with women are with Dido and Penelope respectively. Penelope is considered an equal partner to her long-distant husband. She is clever, demure, patient, cautious, yet firm and powerful. While she waits for his return, perhaps doubting if she will ever see him again, she maintains her virtue and grace while overseeing Telemachus'seducation.[25] As for Odysseus, during his time

[24] C.G. Polk, "Vergil's Penelope: The Diana Simile in 'Aeneid' 1.498-502," *Vergilius* 42 (1996),40.
[25] J. Gregory, *Cheiron's Way: Youthful Education in Homer and Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 114-18.

away from Ithaca, he simply wants to fulfill his duty and then return home. He was reluctant to leave her and head to Troy in the first place.

In this way, we see how Penelope serves as an archetype for the ancient woman in response to Odysseus's archetype of the ancient man. Their sense of self and their roles in the narrative are made more poignant because of their marriage bond. Penelope as the faithful wife is the lighthouse beacon home to Ithaca for Odysseus despite his hardships. During his ten-year attempt to return to his home and to her, she represents to him the life he wanted, yet never got to enjoy since he has been at Troy or the sea the last twenty years. In that way, she symbolizes hope for the wandering hero. She is a future he might still attain despite decades of setbacks.

Homer also compares Artemis to Penelope, which provides another interesting parallel. As he does with Nausicaa, Homer says twice that Penelope is "like Artemis" (*Odyssey* 17.37; 19.52). The reason he does this and connects these two women could hearken back to the marriageability of Nausicaa and the potential of Odysseus marrying her[26]. In this way, Nausicaa is a type for Penelope in that her help, even her mere presence, promises Odysseus the return home he has been searching for the past ten years. She is the one who meets his needs and connects him with her parents who have the power to help him finally reach Ithaca.

Interestingly, in the same breath that Homer proclaims Penelope is like Artemis, he also says "or golden Aphrodite." (*Odyssey* 17.38; 19.52) It is this same phrase and epithet in both instances. This also strengthens the connection between Penelope and Dido, because we have already seen that Vergil compares Dido to both Diana and Venus.

[26] T.V. Nortwick, "Penelope and Nausicaa," *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-)* 109 (1979), 269.

Both of the queens are compared to seemingly disparate goddesses, but these goddesses are powerful; they are inherently connected to life and to death. Homer and Vergil bring echoes of these characteristics with Dido and Penelope which serve as portents of the hardship to come to Odysseus and Aeneas. Aeneas's relationship with Dido had the most power to prevent him from founding Rome. Odysseus's relationship with Penelope inevitably drew him home to the great dangers the suitors presented. Neither woman wished her hero ill, yet it is because of them that both these heroes faced their greatest challenges. Note again the reverse order of this: Odysseus does not come to Penelope until the last few books of the *Odyssey*, and Dido is the first mortal woman Aeneas encounters in the text. She is also the topic of conversation with his mother Venus, the first goddess he meets with before arriving at Carthage. Dido continues to be a source of interest for the goddess of passion, which does not work to Dido's benefit.

Despite the machinations of Venus with Dido's heart, it is clear that Dido still feels very loyal to the dead Sychaeus (*Aeneid* 4.20-9). While her loyalty does offer the security of her constant rule to her people as *sola regina*, holding onto her devotion to Sychaeus deprives her of pleasure and joy. When she meets Aeneas, Dido has no plans to change her forward course, yet after hearing his story and Cupid's intervention (*Aeneid* 1.658-60), she starts to forget Sychaeus. The devotion she has fostered over the years for her long-dead husband completely turns to Aeneas, and in contrast to Penelope's steadfastness, it threatens to keep him from his destiny.

> et magnum falsi implevit genitoris amorem,
> reginam petit, haec oculis, haec pectore toto
> haeret et interdum gremio fovet inscia Dido
> insidat quantus miserae deus. at memor ille
> matris Acidaliae paulatim abolere Sychaeum
> incipit et vivo temptat praevertere amore

> iam pridem resides animos desuetaque corda. (*Aeneid* 1.716-22)
>
> And Cupid satisfied the great love of the deluded father, he entreated the queen, she clings with her eyes, with all her heart, and sometimes ignorant Dido cherishes him on her lap; how the great god may seize of the unfortunate one. But remembering his mother Acidalia, he began to dispel Sychaeus little by little with a living love and urges her inactive soul to anticipate and her heart now disaccustomed to love.

Vergil's subversion of the powerful yet faithful woman is in part a play off of the relationship Odysseus shares with Penelope. However, there are darker undertones to the relationship between Aeneas and Dido from the outset. The language that Vergil uses when describing the way that Cupid entreats Dido and then starts erasing Sychaeus from her memory can have explicit meaning. Specifically, when Vergil says that Dido *gremio fovet*. Dido cherishes the god on her lap, but *gremio* can instead refer to sexual organs, including "womb" or "vagina." Also, the verb used to describe the way Cupid responds to the queen holding him close is *insidat* which can mean seize, but can also refer to penetration. Though the rest of the narrative makes clear that Dido only has coitus with Aeneas, Vergil is suggesting a high level of intimacy between the queen and Cupid who is disguised as Ascanius, in order to demonstrate the imminent success of Cupid's handiwork. It is not long until Aeneas's and Dido's copulation. In this way Dido can be seen as a powerful temptress for Aeneas. This kind of temptation is not something we see in virginal Nausicaa, but we do find it in a minor goddess who shares other characteristics with Dido.

Calypso

Calypso is another complex woman, and Vergil further demonstrates Dido's developed maturity in comparison to Nausicaa by integrating some key parts of Odysseus's relationship with Calypso into Aeneas's relationship with Dido. From the

start, Vergil shows that Aeneas's journey will be in an opposite order from the one that Homer details for Odysseus. And since Odysseus has just left Ogygia and Calypso when Homer begins the story of Odysseus proper, that points to Aeneas soon meeting a type of Calypso. Not only do these parallels reinforce the idea of Vergil's reverse odyssey, it is also an interesting thought in its own merit and also exhibits a certain wiliness in Aeneas that echoes the kind of word play we repeatedly see Odysseus engage in with others.

Striking similarities between the relationship shared by Dido and Aeneas and that shared by Calypso and Odysseus point to Vergil intending his audience to see Dido as a Calypso type. Regardless of the legality (or illegality) of her marriage to Aeneas, Dido is similar to Calypso in that the hero is only allowed to leave the temporary conjugal mate upon the direct interference of Jupiter or Zeus. (*Odyssey* 5.28-43; *Aeneid* 4.223-37) In both cases, the king of gods sends Mercury or Hermes to ensure that the hero progresses to the next stage of his journey. Odysseus has been on Ogygia for seven years by the time Hermes finally comes to Calypso and tells her to free Odysseus. And were it not for Athena approaching Zeus in the first book of the *Odyssey*, he may have stayed there even longer. (*Odyssey* 1.80-96)

Aeneas could have stayed longer in Carthage with Dido and become a man content with answering to a woman whom he may love and even feel loyalty towards. Unfortunately, it is unsure how Aeneas feels about Dido since Vergil does not allow his reader into the thoughts of his hero. However, there is a familiar sense of foreboding in the idea of Aeneas's lingering. When Mercury comes, he tells Aeneas the will of Jupiter and that he must follow through on it quickly. When Hermes visited Ogygia, he went to Calypso and not Odysseus. Obviously, the messenger god would only deliver his

message to the person who has the ability to carry out Jupiter's or Zeus's orders, and it makes sense that Calypso has the power to fulfill Zeus's orders since she is an immortal goddess. It also makes sense that Mercury would only come to Aeneas since it his ships in the harbor, and it is upon him to found Rome. Jupiter has prophesied to Venus that this will be Aeneas's destiny.

Also, neither Odysseus or Dido are told that the imminent departure of the hero is decreed by the king of the gods himself. Rather, Calypso simply tells Odysseus "Stop grieving, please. You need not waste your life. / I am quite ready to send you off" (*Odyssey* 5.160-61) and makes it sound like her idea to have him finally leave her island.

In the case of Aeneas, Dido already knew that an end to their relationship was coming because she had sensed something was wrong and had heard rumors that he was leaving. The anguish of his leaving works her into such a frenzy that she finally approaches him and accuses him of betrayal (*Aeneid* 4.296-306). In the midst of this confrontation, he never tells her about Mercury's message or Jupiter's edict. Interestingly, among promises to always remember her great kindnesses, he says "*sed nunc Italiam magnam Gyrneus Apollo, / Italiam Lyciae iussere capessere sortes*..." (*Aeneid* 4.345-46) or "but now Gyrneus Apollo has ordered me to seize great Italy, that Italy which was the oracular response of Lycia."

There is no reason for him to lie to her about which god has commanded him to go to Italy, yet here, in the first conversation we see him in after talking with Mercury, Vergil has his hero name Apollo as his scapegoat to her. He does not take responsibility upon himself, but rather proclaims his duty to the gods, which extols the Roman virtue of putting duty before other relationships. In claiming that it is duty to Gyrneus Apollo

which constrains him to leave, Aeneas adds to the complexity of the situation. This is a rare epithet for Apollo, and Vergil himself uses it only one other time in his body of works, which is *Eclogue* 6.72.[27] Because Vergil uses this only one other time, it must be on purpose, but it is unclear why he chooses this.

Gyrnium is a town in Asia Minor, relatively close to Lycia. Both are sacred sites to Apollo.[28] Because of the closeness between these two places geographically compared to Carthage, I wonder if Aeneas is trying to gallantly suggest that this direction from Apollo came to him before even arriving on Dido's shores.[29] That would further cement the great necessity to leave her and set sail to Italy. It is also possible that he is addressing Apollo with this specific title because he is referencing the *Lyciae sortes* and it is more likely that Apollo is known there as Apollo of Grynium or Gyrneus Apollo.[30] It is hard to determine what Aeneas is insinuating. But if Aeneas had come to Carthage with this direction from Apollo already, it does not answer the question as to why he withheld this important information from Dido until she pressed the issue about the rumors of his imminent departure.

Interestingly, while Aeneas does say that "Italy" was what the oracle near Troy told him, most likely earlier in his travels, he specifies Apollo's more immediate counsel by saying "but now." Aeneas is telling her that Apollo came to him at about the same time that Vergil tells the reader Mercury came to him. Also, *sed nunc* is a spondee in the meter, which shows how Vergil wants to further emphasize the closeness of the time to

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[27] R. Coleman, ed., *Eclogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 197-98.
[28] R.G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus: edited with commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 109.
[29] Ibid, 109.
[30] J.J. O'Hara, *True Names: Virgil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Wordplay* (University of Michigan Press, 2016), 60.

the present conversation between Aeneas and Dido.

In both of the exchanges that occur after Mercury leaves, we again see how the person who receives the message from Mercury or Hermes is the person with the power in the relationship. However, I wonder if Vergil is showing the reader that Aeneas, and therefore Rome, is the one who has power over Dido who represents Carthage. By the time Vergil is writing, Carthage's defeat is still a sign of Roman might. Instead of sending Mercury to Dido, Vergil subverts Dido's parallels with Calypso in order to show Roman might and ultimately the *imperium* of Augustus. After all, Augustus is the one who not only commissioned this epic poem from Vergil, but Aeneas is a type for Rome's founding emperor.

CONCLUSION

Though the initial encounters of Odysseus and Aeneas with Nausicaa and Dido respectively are not considerable themselves, they set the tone for the rest of the time Homer and Vergil discuss these men, their accomplishments, their defeats and sorrows, and ultimately their fulfilled destinies.

Aeneas's Jovian appointed destiny is to find a new home for the remnant of the Trojans he leads and for his descendants to found the greatest empire in the world. Vergil composed this epic poem on Augustus's commission to hearken back to the greatness of Homer's epics while rewriting what the Roman educated public had learned about Aeneas previously.[31] Vergil takes Homer's *Odyssey* and builds it into something that serves as the introduction to the war Aeneas must wage in order to secure his new home

[31] Bartsch-Zimmer, *The Aeneid* (see above, note 6).

and start Rome's legacy. Augustus commissioned this composition of this poem to show how Rome had never before achieved such greatness and peace. This was made all the more poignant after nearly a century of civil wars.

The parallels we see particularly in the Nausicaa and Dido encounters show that not only was Vergil well aware of Homer's work and rhetorical devices, he strove to exemplify them in ways that demonstrate his greater ability. Vergil set out to write Rome's founding epic and also to prove himself as a man who stands [32] with Homer in terms of literary genius.

[32] Fantham, *Roman Literary Culture*, 96.

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