

AENEID IV COMMENTARY

Dido is a queen from Greek Tragedy. Her tragedy is that she gives up everything for her love. Queen – woman – torrent of frenzy, hatred, despair, vengeance. She is moved by A personal qualities and his appearance.

P 97

Appollo's Light – The sun

Erebus – The deepest, darkest part of the Underworld

P 98 Anna's persuasive speech, rhetorical devices, leads Dido to what she wants to do.

Iarbus – an African King

Gaetulians – The people to the south of Carthage

Numidians – The people to the west of Carthage

Syrtes – The name of the famous quicksands which lay to the Southeast of Carthage

The ferocious raiders from Barca – The Barcaei were a Nomadic Tribe. Barca was also the name of the family to which Hasdrubal and Hannibal belonged

Juno herself – Anna mentions Juno as the Chief Goddess of Carthage, and also as the goddess of marriage.

Constant imagery of fire, illness, wounding, frenzy, madness

P 99

Dicte – the mountain in Crete where Jupiter was born

Like a Doe – the actual point of comparison in the simile is in the wounded deer rushing wildly about; the other details relate to the themes and point forward as well as back. Dido the hunted and helpless victim has been caught off guard; the arrow of love has not yet caused death, but will do so and cannot be dislodged. The hunting shepherd is unaware of having shot his victim as Aeneas is unaware of the disastrous effect of the love he has caused.

Emotional behaviour: stops midsentence, hangs on his lips.

Behind scenes, alone, unhappy, trying to console herself by memory and imagination. Utter preoccupation with her love to the exclusion of all else.

P 100

Saturn's daughter, Jupiter's dear wife – the goddess Juno. Ruthless, malicious plotting of goddesses. J to frustrate the foundation of Rome by keeping A at Carthage. Irony and persuasion.

P 101

Dido is a toy to goddesses

The Cytherean – The goddess Venus; from the seat of her worship in Cythera, an island just south of Greece

Aurora arose and left the ocean – ie Dawn came; Aurora is the Goddess of Dawn.

Massylin Riders – an African people to the west of Carthage

He was like Apollo – this comparison is primarily concerned with beauty and majesty, secondly with hunting and archery; and thirdly is reminiscent of the comparison of Dido with Dianna in Bk 1.

Lycia – Southern Asia Minor; a river Xanthus flowed through here. Apollo was said to give Oracles during the winter months at Patara in Lycia, and in summer at Delos

Delos – the island home of Latona, mother of Apollo. Apollo and his twin sister Dianna were born here.

Dryopians – A people from North Cyprus

Agarthyrsans – A people from Scythia

Cynthus – the highest hill of Delos

P 102

The Dardan boy who was grandson of Venus – Ascanius, Aeneas' son

Earth...provoked to anger against the Gods – Earth was the mother of the Giants and the Titans who rebelled against Jupiter and were destroyed.

Coeus and Enceladus – Coeus was a Titan and Enceladus a Giant

Personification of Rumour, non-human imagery. To vary intensity of tragedy Rumour is swifted.

Other creatures weaken the faster they go.

P 103

Jupiter Ammon – (or Hammon) this was the epithet of Jupiter in Africa, Presumably indicating that an original local god Ammon was identified by the Romans with their Jupiter

This second Paris – implying that Aeneas is abducting another Helen.

P 104

Twice rescued him from his Greek foes – Venus rescued her son once from Diomedes (Iliad 5.311ff) and once from burning Troy (Aeneid 2: 589ff)

Unseals the eyes of death – so that the ghosts can see. In Roman ritual the eyes were closed by relatives at death and opened again on the pyre

Atlas – One of the Titans, Atlas was condemned to ? with Mt Atlas in North Africa.

P 105

Cyllenian Mercury - Mercury was born on Mt Cyllene in Arcadia

Atlas, his mother's sire – Maia, Mercury's mother was the daughter of Atlas

P 106

Mnestheus, Sergestus and Serestus – these men are the captains of Aeneas' ships

Like a Bacchanal – the female revelers at rites in honour of Bacchus performed their worship in a wild and orgiastic fashion, with the emotions completely dominating the rational faculties. Very important simile, marks point where she begins to lose control of her actions, becomes possessed

Mt Cithaeron – in Thrace, a place especially associated with the rites of Bacchus

P 107

Elissa – Dido's other name

Apollo at Gryniium – there was a wood sacred to Apollo at Gryniium in Lydia; the various prophecies inspired by Apollo were recounted in Book 3 to Dido, so she was well aware of them, though she chooses to ignore or ridicule them

P 108

Tigers of Hyrcania – Hyrcania was an area near the Caucasus mountains and the Caspian sea.

The father who is Saturn's son – Jupiter

P 109

Looking like ants – The main point of comparison is hustle and busy movement, but there is an important subsidiary point, namely smallness and distance. The reader is invited to see the Trojans as Dido saw them from their palace, tiny, far-off, remote from her now.

P 110

Like a strong oak tree – the simile gives a magnificent image of resolution which is assailed but not overthrown; the tree is fully grown, strong, deeply rooted and though it creaks in the gales and its trunk is shaken so that its leaves fall, it remains firmly fixed in its place. Virgil has added mental strength to what is usually a physical strength image

P 111

She was in the state of Pentheus – King of Thebes, who was driven to tragic madness by Dionysus so that he saw two suns in the sky, two cities of Thebes

Agamemnon's tormented sun Orestes – after having killed his mother Clytemnestra to avenge her murder of his father, Orestes was pursued by the ghost of his mother and the Furies

On the theatre stage – the comparison is not merely with the story of the Greek tragedy but with its actual performance onstage – a visual comparison

Spirits of the Curse – The Furies, spirits of vengeance

Firebrands and black snakes – the emblems of the avenging furies

P 112

Massylian priestess.....temple of the Hesperides – The Hesperides guarded the golden apples which Mother earth had given to Juno when she married Jupiter; they were helped in their task by a dragon

P 113

Hecate of three forms – in the sky Dianna is the moon, on earth the Huntress and below the earth Hecate, a goddess associated with witchcraft and horror. She is shown in art with three faces. Also called Trivia, goddess of cross-roads

Fount of Avernus – the entrance to the underworld

P 114

Treacherous Laomedon's nation - ???

Sidon – Virgil frequently uses this name instead of Tyre for the name of Dido's original home.

P115

Tithonus – the husband of Aurora, the dawn goddess. He was granted immortality by Jupiter, but not eternal youth.

P116

Let him afterwards.....unburied on a lonely strand – These curses on Aeneas in one way or another all come true. He was harassed in warfare by Turnus and his Rutulians; he left the Trojan camp and the embrace of Lulus to seek help from Evander; he saw the death of many of his men (notably Pallas); he accepted peace terms more favourable to the Italians than the Trojans; and he did not rule for long (three years), but (according to one version of the legend) was drowned in the Numicus or (according to another) killed in battle and his body not recovered.

Some Avenger – in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC the Romans and Carthaginians fought each other for supremacy in the Mediterranean. The Avenger in the form of Hannibal very nearly destroyed Rome in the years 217 and 216BC

P 117

Stygian Jupiter – Pluto, God of the Underworld

P118

Iris – Goddess of the Rainbow, Juno's messenger. Brings light at last to Dido's dark world

Proserpine – goddess of the Underworld, wife of Pluto

For since she perished....to Stygian Orcus – the meaning is that Dido dies only because she wished it, there was no other reason; she had not reached the end of her fated span, nor had she deserved death (eg because of some criminal action). Dido's death is self chosen.

A golden lock - by cutting a lock of Dido's hair Proserpina makes Dido sacred to the God of ?