

## AENEID VI COMMENTARY

They have finally arrived in Italy after 7 years. L 1 refers to A's last farewell to Palinurus.

### P 147

**Eucben Cumae** – Cumae was the first Greek settlement in Italy and was founded by settlers from Chalcis in Eubaca. Western Land – Italy. 38-36 base of operations in navl war between Augustus and Pompey Sextus.

**Sibyl** – the priestess of Apollo; Sibylla was a type – name for such oracular priestesses. The collection of her oracles known s the sibylline books played a very considerable part in Roman Religion; during Augustus's reign they were transferred to the temple of Apollo on the Palatine. A told to consult Sibyl by Helenus Bk 3, Ancjises Bk 5. Can still visit Sibyl's cave today.

**Daedalus** – An Athenian craftsman/inventor helped Pasiphae wife of Minoo, King of Crete, to satisfy her love for the bull, a love which Venus, angered, had implanted in her. As a result of this the hybrid monster called the Minotaur was born to her; it was kept in a labyrinth built by Daedalus and fed on human sacrifices. After Daedalus had helped Theseus solve the maze, he was imprisoned but escaped by making himself wings and flying North to Cumae.

**Androgeos** – A son of Minos demanded the payment of seven youths and seven maidens each year as a sacrifice to the Minotaur.

**Cnossos** – the chief town of Crete.

### P 148

**Princess Ariadne** – daughter of Persiphae and Minos; she fell in love with Theseus, who killed the Minotaur and found his way out of the maze by the thread which Ariadne at Daedalus' instigation gave him.

**Icarus** – Daedalus' son; he flew over too near the sun on the wings his father had made for him and fastened on with wax, so that the wax melted and he fell into the sea and was drowned.

### P 149

**Paris.....Achilles the Aeacid** – Paris (renowned for his archery\_ with Apollo's help killed Achilles (grandson of Aeacus) by shooting him in the hell, the only part of him not invulnerable.

**Massylians.....Syrtes** – this refers to the coast of Africa off which the Trojans were shipwrecked (bk 1)

**Trivia** – Diana, goddess of cross-roads. She shared with her brother Apollo this sacred site at Cumae.

**Tiber** – an Italian river, on which Rome stands.

**Simois and Xanthus** – rivers of Troy

**New Achilles** – this refers to Turnus, prince of the Rutulis. He is often compared with the Greeks in the second half of the poem. Turnus was born of the nymph Venilia, Achilles of the sea-goddess Thetis.

### P150

**Again, as before.....foreign bride** – the first foreign bride was Helen whose abduction led to the Trojan war; this one will be Lavinia, whose betrothal to Aeneas will lead to the war with the Rutulians.

**Greek city** – Palanteum, the city of Evander who will assist the Trojans against the Rutulians.

**Infernal King** – Pluto, god of the Underworld

**Acheron** – one of the rivers of the underworld; it was thought to issue forth into Lake Avemus

**Orpheus** – the legendary musician from Thrace; he was given permission to go down to the underworld to bring back his dead wife Eurydice.

**Pollux** – when the mortal Castor died, his twin brother, the immortal Pollux, was allowed to die in his stead for six months each year. The monsters of hell were charmed by his music.

**Theseus** – attempted to carry off Proserpina and was sentenced to eternal punishment, chained to a seat.

### P 151

**Hercules** – one of Hercules labours was to bring back.....???.....to the underworld

**Cocytus/...styx** – rivers of the underworld.

**Juno of the Lower World** – Proserpina, wife of Pluto.

### P 152

**The Aeidid Misenus** – son of Aolus, god of the winds. His death emphasizes mortality, Aeneas is special.

**Triton** – one of the sea-deities, famous for the music which he played on a sea shell; so Misenus' folly is highly provocative.

**P 153**

**Like the mistletoe** – the simile compares the strangeness of the golden bough on an ordinary tree with mistletoe which grows on host trees; it also deepens the sense of mystery because of the magic associations of mistletoe in ancient folk-lore.

**P 154**

**A mountain...which is still called Misenus** – Punta di Miseno, a flat topped hill near Naples

**Mother of the Eumenides** – is night

**Her great sister** – Earth

**King of the Styx** - Pluto

**P 155**

**Centaurs** – composite figures of a human and a horse

**Scylla** – a maiden above and sea-monster below; she has twelve feet and six necks

**Briareus** – A hundred armed giant

**Lerna's beast** – the hydra killed by Hercules; a monstrous water snake.

**P 156**

**Chimaera** – A mixture of lion, goat and snake; it breathed.....???

**Gorgons** – Three hideous sisters the most famous of whom was Medusa, who had snakes instead of hair

**Harpies** – Birds with human (female) heads

**Geryon** – A giant with 3 bodies; killed by Hercules

**Charon** – the ferryman who transported the souls of the dead across the styx

As numerous were they – the main point of the simile is the large number of ghosts; a second point of similarity is the fluttering of the ghosts like birds and leaves; a third is that for the ghosts, as for the leaves and the migrating birds, the summer of their lives is past.

**P 157**

**Styx, by whose dread power...oaths** – an oath by the Styx was the most binding of all possible oaths.

**Flitting.....hundred years** – after this period the ghost, who hadn't received proper burial rites, was allowed to cross the styx.

**Leucaspis and Orontes** – the reference is to the storm at Book 1:113ff where Orontes' ship, with its Lycians, was sunk before Aeneas' eyes. Leucaspis was also on this ship.

**Palinurus** – the helmsman of Aeneas ship whose death is described at Book 5:833ff. Enticed by the God sleep, Palinurus had fallen overboard and been lost.

**P 158**

**Some savage tribesman** – the people of Lucania

**Velia's harbor** – South of Naples, near Cape Palinurus, where Palinurus reached Italy.

**They shall erect a tomb.....Palinurus forever** – when the people of Lucania were suffering from a plague the oracle told them to placate the ghost of Palinurus, and so they consecrated a grove and a tomb to him. The place is still called Punta di Palinuro.

**P 159**

**Hercules** – one of Hercules labours was to bring back from the Underworld the three headed watch dog Cerberus.

**Theseus and Pirithous** – went down to rescue Proserpine, Pluto's queen, whom he had abducted while she was gathering flowers with her mother, Ceres, sister of Jupiter and Pluto. (hence uncle)

**P 160**

**Phaedra** – loved her stepson Hippolytus

**Procris** – hid and jealously watched her husband Cephalus and was accidently killed by him.

**Eriphyle** – bribed by a necklace, she induced her husband Amphiarus to join the Argive war against the Thebans in which he was killed, and his son Alcmaeon killed her in vengeance

**Evadne** – The wife of Capaneus, killed herself on his pyre.

**Pasiphae** – see note to pg 147; Pasiphae's love for the bull caused Minos to throw her in prison, where she died.

**Laodamia** – the wife of Protesilaus, the first Greek to be killed at Troy, chose to accompany him back to the Underworld after he had been permitted to visit her for a short time.  
**Caeneus** – was the maiden Caenis changed by Neoptune in a male and after death reverting to her original sex.

#### P 161

**Not by my will.....imperiously forced** – this was the point which Aeneas had tried to make to Dido in her lifetime. She is unable to accept it now as she was then.

**Tydeus, Parthenopaus, Adrastus** – three of the leaders in the legendary war of the 'seven against Thebes'

**Glaucus, Medan etc.....Idaeus** – Trojans who fell in the war against the Greeks, all known to Aeneas.

**Dardanids** – another name for Trojans.

#### P 162

**Deiphobus** – A son of Priam, one of Troy's champions. He was briefly mentioned in book 2. Here he symbolizes all those who fell on Troy's last night, when Aeneas escaped.

**Rhoetean Shore** – The shore near Troy.

#### P 163

**Disastrous marriage-room** – Deiphobus had married Helen after the death of Paris towards the end of the Trojan War.

**Aeolid Ulysses** – a reference to the version of Ulysses ancestry which said that he was not the son of Laertes, but was the illegitimate son of Sisyphus, the son of Aeolus.

**Elysium** – The Home of the blessed; open to all those who have deserved to go there because of a life well-lived on earth

**Tartarus** – The part of the underworld reserved for the worst sinners.

#### P 164

**Phlegethon** – the burning river of hell

**Tisiphone** – one of the three Furies; the "avenger of bloodshed"

**Rhadamanthus** – brother of Minos, King of Crete. The judge of those sent to Tartarus

**Hydra** – a monster with fifty heads (or sometimes 100 heads)

**Two sons of Aloeus** – Otus and Ephialtes, who took part in the rebellion of the Giants and Titans against Jupiter, and by piling mountains on top of each other, tried to invade heaven.

#### P 165

**Salmoneus** – an almost unknown story

**Elis' city** – the city, Salmone, in the middle of the region called Elis, which was specially associated with Jupiter Olympius.

**Tityos** – a giant who assaulted the goddess Latona

**The Lapithone** – A legendary Thessalian people, best known .....????

**Ixion** – assaulted Juno and was punished by being stretched out on a wheel

**Pirithous** – See note to pg 159. The normal version of Pirithous' punishment is that he was confined in chains. The punishment assigned to him here is that of Tantalus, starving in sight of plenty (hence our word tantalise).

**Phlegyas** – an ancestor of the Lapiths, was punished for setting fire to Apollo's temple at Delphi.

**Theseus** – as punishment for trying to carry off Proserpina (see note to pg 159) was fixed to a chair from which he could not move.

#### P 166

**The battlements.....furnaces of the Cyclopes** – this is the entrance to Elysium, impassable to the living except with the talisman of the golden bough. It was constructed by Vulcan and his Cyclopes in their forges

**Land of Joy** – Elysium, Land of the Blessed

**Orpheus** – the mythological founder of music, also of significance here because of the religious ideas associated with his name which Anchises expounds in 724ff

**Teucer, Ilus, Assaracus, Dardanus** – all of these were ancestors of the Trojans. Ilus was the grandfather of Priam and Assaracus the grandfather of Anchises.

#### P 167

**The river Eridanus** – the river Po, the main river of Virgil's own countryside; here it is said to originate in Elysium.  
**Musgeus** – like Orpheus, a legendary poet and musician

#### P 168

**The royal power of Africa** – Dido; Anchises fears about Aeneas' stay in Africa with Dido were justified; this was the hardest part of the journey for his "pietas" to overcome.  
**Three times.....of a dream** – these lines are repeated from Aeneid 2: 792-4, where they are used of Creusa's ghost. The loneliness of Aeneas is very strongly stressed in...???  
**It was ever the vision of yourself** – Anchises had appeared in dreams to Aeneas at Carthage (4.351ff) and again in Sicily (5.722ff), on this last occasion instructing Aeneas to visit the underworld.

#### P 170

**The Alban name of Silvius** – The kings of Alba Longa were all called Silvius as their dynasty name. Virgil here says the name is derived from the son of Aeneas and Lavinia.  
**Procas, Capys, Numitor, Aeneas Silvius** – were all kings of Alba Longa; Numitor was the grandfather of Romulus, founder of Rome.  
**Civic Crown** – The "Civic Crown" of oak leaves was awarded to Romans who had saved the life of a fellow citizen in battle. It had been voted to Augustus as a perpetual honour in 27BC and adorned the doors of his palace.  
**Nomentum....Cora** – these are all little towns near Rome. Some of them deserted by Virgil's time.  
**Romulus** – the son of Mars and Rhea Silvia, who is here, given her Trojan name of Ilia.  
**Assarcus** – see note to p 166  
**The exalted life above** – the sense is that Mars marks Romulus out as a god. Romulus was deified on his death.  
**Mother of Berecyntus** – Cybele, the great mother of the gods. Rome is compared with her as being similarly 'blessed in her bread' and there is also a pictorial comparison between the 'turreted crown' which Cybele wore and the turrets of the circular wall round the seven hills of Rome.

#### P 171

**Caesar** – this is a reference to Augustus not to Julius Caesar who is referred to later (826ff)  
**Son of the deified** – Augustus was the adopted son of Julius Caesar, who was deified after his death.  
**Golden Centuries once more** – the concept is of an idyllic Golden Age; a return to the legendary Golden Age when Saturn was king of the gods.  
**Garamantians** – A people of Africa  
**Atlas** – the....?????.....against Jupiter and as punishment had to hold up the world. Mt Atlas is in Northwest Africa.  
**The Caspian Kingdom.....Lake Maeotis** – these areas (Lake Maeotis = Crimea) are the north-eastern boundary of Rome's empire. Like the Garamantians and the Indians they are mentioned as examples of people at the very boundaries of the known world  
**The sevenfold mouth of the Nile** – this reference to the Nile has special significance. It refers to the final victory by Augustus at Actium in 31BC, over Antony and Cleopatra, queen of Egypt.  
**Hercules...Bacchus** – the comparison with these two indicates firstly that Augustus, like them, will extend his influence over the whole world; secondly that like them he will make possible a civilized way of life (as Hercules did with his twelve labours and Bacchus by taming wild nature, have symbolized by tigers); thirdly that like them he is a mortal who will be deified.  
**Numa** – Numa pompilius, the second King of Rome, who was especially associated with religious rites and peaceful law-giving, in contrast with Romulus, a king of warlike qualities.  
**Cures** – A little town in Sabine territory from which Numa came.  
**Tullus....Ancus** – the third and fourth kings of Rome  
**Tarquin's dynasty** – Tarquin the elder was the fifth King of Rome; Tarquin the Proud was the seventh and last king.  
**Brutus, the avenger** – Tarquin the Proud was expelled by Brutus following the rape of Lucretia by Tarquin's son Sextus and a republic was set up.

#### P 172

**The first.....consul's authority** – Brutus became one of the first consuls. Two consuls were elected annually. They were the chief public officials, presiding over the Senate and commanding the army.  
**His own sons to execution** – Brutus' sons joined Tarquin in his efforts to return to Rome. Brutus as consul had them put to death for their rebellion.....?????.....themselves to death on the battlefield; the Drusi were one of the most

famous Roman families of all (Augustus' wife Livia was one of their number); Torquatus put his sons to death for having fought out of line; Camillus recovered Rome from the Gauls after they had taken it, and regained the standards captured at the River Allia.

**One Caesar, father of the bride** – a reference to Julius Caesar, whose daughter Julia was married to Pompey.

**Caesar and Pompey** – were opponents in the civil war (49BC – 45BC)

**Mummius** – defeated Corinth in 146BC and celebrated a triumph

**Aemilius Paullus** – the Roman General who defeated King Perseus of Macedonia at the battle of Pydna in 168BC. Perseus claimed descent from Achilles, grandson of Aeacus (hence Perseus to Aeacid). The Greeks here are referred to by the names of the Greek cities of Argos And Mycenae, term appropriate to Aeneas' time.

**Great Cato** – Cato the elder; known for his unplaceable hostility to Carthage

**Cossus** – one of the three Romans who won the spolia opima (rich spoils), awarded to a Roman General who felled the enemy general in personal combat.

**Bracchus and his family** – the two famous brothers who attempted to introduce land reforms, as well as their immediate ancestors who achieved military glory in the second Punic War and afterwards.

? **two of Scipio's line** – Scipio Africanus the elder won the final battle for the second Punic War at Zama 202BC.

Scipio Africanus the younger (Aemilianus) destroyed Carthage in the third Punic War.

? – the Roman general who opposed Pyrrhus in the early third century BC

? **Serranus** – the famous Roman Commander in the first Punic War who, when captured by the Carthaginians, chose to die rather than return to Rome and .....???

#### P 173

**But you Roman.....brought low** – the clearest statement in the whole poem about the nature of Rome's mission – to bring government, civilization, stability and peace to the world

**Marcellus** – a leading Roman general of the period of the second Punic War against Carthage; just before this time the Gauls of Northern Italy had rebelled against Roman Rule. Marcellus was given the "spolia opima" (see note on Cossus p 172) for killing the general of the Insubrian Gauls in 222BC

**Father Quirinus** – A reference to Romulus who was also awarded the "spolia optima"

**A young man, very handsome.....armour** – this is the young Marcellus (not actually named till line 883). The son of Augustus' sister Octavia and married to Augustus' daughter Julia, Marcellus was marked out as Augustus' heir but died at the age of 19 in 23BC

**Field of Mars** – an open space near the River Tiber where Marcellus' funeral was held. Marcellus was buried with extraordinary funeral honours in Augustus' Mausoleum in the Campus Martius, adjacent to the Tiber.

#### P 174

**Laentine Nations.....Latinus** – the Laurentines were the inhabitants of Latium, ruled by King Latinus, against whom in the end Aeneas had to wage war (as is told in the second half of the Aeneid)

**Gates of sleep** – the exits from the Underworld; one of horn for true dreams and one of ivory for false dreams. Aeneas

**leaves by the ivory gate** – perhaps because he is not a real shade; or perhaps so that we can regard the visit to the Underworld as a dream or vision of Aeneas, personal to him. The book is thus part of Aeneas' experience, a re-enactment of his past and a vision for his future.

**Caieta's harbor** – well north of Cumae, on the way to the Tiber. The name is derived from Aeneas' nurse who died on arrival there. (Bk 7:2)