

## MEDEA AND DIDO <sup>1</sup>

'Apollonius Rhodius was the major inspiration for the love-episode of Dido and Aeneas in the *Aeneid*.' This well-worn judgement derives ultimately from an apparent commonplace of antiquity<sup>2</sup>. Criticism of Virgil until quite recent years was fonder of perpetuating it, however, than testing its truth, and of describing Virgil's indebtedness in terms of what he used rather than the way in which he used it<sup>3</sup>. For Dido an important debt also to Euripides' *Medea* has long been asserted, but its definition is still a new study<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to audiences in a number of places whose members heard this paper as a lecture and offered suggestions for its improvement, and in particular to Mr J.C.B. Foster, of the University of Liverpool, who read the final version and allowed me to see his illuminating paper *Some Devices of Drama Used in Aeneid* 1-4, before its publication in «P.V.S.» 13 (1973-4), 28-41.

<sup>2</sup> *Imprimis* Servius on *Aen.* IV 1: *Apollonius Argonautica scripsit ubi inducit amantem Medeam; inde totus hic liber translatus est, de tertio Apollonii*. For the more cautious view of Macrobius, *Sat.* V 17, 4, see n. 27 below.

<sup>3</sup> An exhaustive bibliography up to 1931 is given by A. S. PEASE, *Aeneidos liber quartus* (Cambridge, Mass. 1935), 13 n. 93: for a more recent and judicious review see H. HERTER, «Bursian» 285 (1944-55), 328-32 (331f on Dido and Medea): cf. especially M. HÜGI, *Vergils Aeneis und die hellenistische Dichtung* (Bern 1952), 79-99 (who 86 n. 1 comments on the recent tendency to devalue Medea against Dido) and B. OTIS, *Virgil: a Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1963), 62-96.

The newer appraisal is associated particularly with F. Klingner's demand not for the 'what' but the 'how' of Virgil's use of Apollonius (*Virgil*. Fondation Hardt, Entretiens II, 1956, 131ff, cf. his *Virgil*, Stuttgart 1967, 437-9 — but R. HEINZE, *Vergils epische Technik*, Leipzig 1915<sup>3</sup>, 249 had already insisted on the 'how and why'); for some earlier but still suggestive discussions see e.g. J. W. MACKAIL, *Lectures in Greek Poetry* (London 1911<sup>3</sup>), 242ff, 252ff, 262ff; R. M. HENRY, *Medea and Dido*, «C.R.» 44 (1930), 97-108; E. K. RAND, *The Magical Art of Virgil* (Princeton 1931), 393ff.

<sup>4</sup> For the cursory and incidental discussions published before 1930 see PEASE 13 n. 91 (32ff for other Didonian models and influences); HEINZE 115-44 is still most important. For 'material' from Tragedy in *Aen.* IV see PEASE 8-11 nn. 43-

This paper results from an attempt to inform myself more adequately and coherently about the relationship between Medea and Dido than I had been able to do by reading partial and scattered discussions, especially in some of the standard general books on Virgil; I was dissatisfied too by the essays most likely to be known or accessible to English readers (by R. M. Henry and E. K. Rand; see n. 3) because they deal almost exclusively with Apollonius. I try here to review some of the more important considerations in assessing comparatively the conception of Medea in Euripides' tragedy and in the *Argonautica*, and of Dido in the *Aeneid*, in relation to the whole temper and purpose of these works. The most recent work on the *Aeneid* shows more and more clearly how Virgil's own invention and art dominate a poem whose matter or colours sometimes stem demonstrably from the whole literary tradition, not only epic<sup>5</sup>. Without pretending originality I hope to offer something more than a mere subjective synthesis which confirms Virgil's individuality; what I owe to received opinion will be obvious without exhaustive documentation, and it is no part of my purpose to note finer points of language or imagery<sup>6</sup>. My wish is to be useful and suggestive to others who may have had the same difficulty as I in examining the question.

77 and e.g. W.F.J. KNIGHT, *Roman Vergil* (London 1944<sup>1</sup>), 98-100, (1966<sup>2</sup>: Penguin Books) 169-75, W. S. MAGUINNESS, *L'inspiration tragique de l'Enéide*, « L.A.C. » 32 (1963), 478; for Dido in general and Tragedy see HENRY (n. 3 above) 102f; RAND (n. 3 above) 368-71, 382 n. 1 (older lit.), 408-10; S. STABRYLA, *Latin Tragedy in Virgil's Poetry* (Cracow 1970), 66 n. 123 and (lit.) 128f; M. WIGODSKY, *Vergil and Early Latin Poetry* (*Hermes Einzelschr.* 24, 1972), 91-3 (lit.); G. HIGHET, *The Speeches in Vergil's Aeneid* (Princeton 1972), 218-31; J. C. B. FOSTER (n. 1 above).

The first major study of Euripides and Virgil is not easily accessible: B. C. FENIK, *The Influence of Euripides on Virgil's Aeneid* (microf. diss., Princeton 1960; résumé in « Diss. Abstracts » 21 (1960), 881f; summary review by V. Pöschl, « AAHG » 22 (1969), 19f; shorter and once more incidental studies by e.g. K. von FRITZ, *Antike und moderne Tragödie* (Berlin 1962), 371-7 (= « Antike und Abendland » 8 (1959), 66-71: from *Die Entwicklung der Iason-Medea Sage und die Medea des Euripides*, *ib.* 322-429); B. OTIS, *The Originality of the Aeneid, Virgil* (ed. D. R. Dudley, London 1969), 34f, 51f; G. W. WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford 1968), 374-87.

<sup>5</sup> I think primarily of the works of Klingner, Knauer, Otis, Pöschl, Quinn, Wigodsky, R. D. Williams and G. W. Williams; cf. the valuable Introduction to V. Pöschl, *The Art of Virgil* (trans. G. Seligson, Ann Arbor 1963), esp. 6ff.

<sup>6</sup> Pease's commentary on Book IV is famously exhaustive on minuter *Quellenforschung*; for Books I and IV see the commentaries by R. G. AUSTIN (I. Oxford 1971; IV: Oxford 1966) and R. D. WILLIAMS (*The Aeneid of Virgil*, Books 1-6, London 1972) and HIGHET, *Speeches* (n. 4 above) 185-276, with the detailed studies of Stabryla and Wigodsky (n. 4 above); for Apollonius' contribution to both Books see esp. HÜGI (n. 3 above) 88-98.

Euripides' tragedy and Books III and IV of the *Argonautica* contain the principal surviving poetic accounts of Medea. There is no reason to think that Virgil himself would have turned rather to other works when thinking of Medea and Jason — still less to mythographers — for the influence of Euripides and Apollonius in the ancient literary tradition was as powerful as it seems exclusive to us<sup>7</sup>. It would be false to our better understanding of how Virgil worked, however, to think of some synthetic image of Medea, formed from a combination of Euripides and Apollonius, floating in his mind as the model of Dido. Even if these two Medeas are Dido's main literary ancestors, there are very many more poetic and dramatic contributors to her role, her characterisation and her spoken emotions, all of them subordinate to Virgil's uniquely Roman conception.

Now Euripides and Apollonius handle different parts of Medea's story, Euripides the tragic outcome of her marriage to Jason, Apollonius the helpless involvement of Medea in his fabulous adventures, and then her part in their happy conclusion — at which point Apollonius stops. Euripides has a dramatist's concentration, and is unmistakably topical in his treatment; Apollonius works within the broader frame of the epic genre — but it is a frame in which the pressures of Alexandrian fashion and sensibility can scarcely be contained. Those are the big and obvious differences between Euripides and Apollonius: almost just because they handle different parts of Medea's story in different ways, the simple fact they both draw on the riches of her mythical character makes it inevitable that we should want to associate them in an influence of Virgil; inevitable too, we should imagine Virgil turning back as it were from Apollonius to Euripides in the very same way we recognise Apollonius could not free himself from the influence of Euripides in shaping his own Medea, although in a quite different situation and literary world. Next, however much we want to think Servius and Macrobius were somehow right in giving Apollonius the major influence<sup>8</sup>, we must be

<sup>7</sup> Ennius' tragedy *Medea Exul* (for the title, and differentiation from his other play *Medea*, modelled probably on Euripides' *Aegeus*, see H. D. JOCELYN, *The Tragedies of Ennius* (Cambridge 1967), 61 and 342-50, who discusses also the relation with Pacuvius' *Medea* and Accius' *Medea*) seems to have been modelled very closely on Euripides' *Medea*: see e.g. HERTER (n. 3 above) 327, WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality* 359ff and WIGODSKY (n. 4 above) 93. Wigodsky argues « that since Vergil certainly imitated Ennius' prologue verbally the other echoes of Euripides which have been detected may also be in fact echoes of Ennius » — but the sparse fragments of Ennius' play lend themselves only to hypothetical comparison with Virgil's poem (taken to extremes by STABRYLA (n. 4 above) 84ff).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. nn. 2, 27.

struck that in a very general way it is the plot of Euripides' play which is closer to the Dido and Aeneas episode: Medea and Jason separate there as do Dido and Aeneas, even if Jason, the man, suffers the immediate tragedy in one, Dido, the woman, in the other. In Apollonius Medea and Jason keep together despite their differences and distrusting.

Euripides builds his play round the misery of a wife and mother whose husband rejects her for another woman on specious grounds: he sets aside his obligation to her, and to their children — an obligation in any ordinary moral reckoning inescapable, and in Jason's case increased by the simple debt to Medea for his own life. He tells Medea his action is in order to secure through his marriage into the royal house of Corinth the right to extend his protection to Medea and the children (*Med.* 459ff, 547ff, 593ff); it is, in fact, to secure his own life and advancement. Jason has a poor case to defend and Euripides exposes the dilemma of a man governed above all by the instinct of self-preservation, and yet conscious of a need to justify his weakness to himself; in this he fails, and to Medea can only appear selfish. Though he is concerned for the children, and knows enough of the potential violence of Medea's nature to fear her retaliation might extend also to them, still he is deceived by Medea's apparent capitulation and acceptance of the need for them to part.

It is important to the wider question to reflect not only on the character of Medea in Euripides and Apollonius in attempting to assess their contribution to Virgil's Dido, but also to consider the qualities of her two Jasons — and Jason's stature both as partner in love with Medea and her antagonist in the working out of their future. Euripides makes us wrestle with our sympathies: we despise Jason for selfish weakness and pity Medea for the way he abandons her, but we end by marvelling with pity and fear for the vengeance she takes on him, as far in excess of what he deserves as the demonic fury of Medea when rejected surpasses the resentment of an ordinary woman. Whatever we concede to Euripides' concern with the passionate extremes of the female sex in the creative period to which the *Medea* belongs, this is Medea's play all through; she is cast for the role of tragic heroine with typical Euripidean brilliance: not just the woman loved and scorned, naturally inclined to resentment and revenge, but the terrible Medea of myth, total in her emotions, both in love and in hate, when she can commit herself to either; a sorceress, conversant with the fabulous and sinister; daughter of a barbaric king at the edge of the known world; familiar with sudden, crushing brutality. The success of Jason's Argonauts depended in the end on her lack of scruple or conscience as much as on her supernatural powers: when Jason has her back in a world of normal values, in Corinth,

his attitude to her is not just reluctant gratitude for his life, or even tolerance, but resentment of his debt and her continuing dominance. This is the woman Euripides presents first as deserted wife and mother, commanding sympathy, but at the same time hinting the menace of her abnormal passions. Few things in Euripides show better the sureness of his insight than the subtlety with which he has Medea fencing with the notion of striking at Jason, not just through his new bride, but also through their own children. Very early in the play (112-4), Medea instinctively curses her children and husband as the tokens of her present agony — but are we to understand the idea of this exquisite vengeance forms slowly, growing from her first thought of killing Jason, his bride and her father (374ff)? that it begins to work as Jason first speaks of his anxiety for them, and hardens as chance brings Aegeus to Corinth, explaining the misery of his childlessness (669ff) — or does it suddenly overmaster her, its beautiful cruelty in concert with the impulse of her savage heart? The horror of the intended deed tortures Medea, now working its attraction on the barbaric side of her, now repellent to her mother's love. The instinctive drive of her inmost being cannot be resisted by any counsel of her reason: love loses to pride and hate<sup>9</sup>. Because she has already destroyed Jason's bride, the children are doomed too: so shall they better die by their mother's hand<sup>10</sup>; ruthless logic prevails. In the end, Medea has been the agent of her own agony, through the success of her plan to kill Jason's bride as much as the fury that conceived it. If the killing is the extreme gratification of that fury, the play ends with Medea transfigured, in triumph, revealed as daughter of the Sun himself, riding safely off in the magic chariot; as Lesky well puts it, symbolically «above the dramatic plane of human suffering and guilt, vanishing completely into the world of the demonic»<sup>11</sup>. Jason is left completely broken, uncomprehending, embittered and helpless, imploring the gods for punishment on one whose monstrous crime belongs to their own inexplicable world: but the myth told of no unhappy end for Medea. Perhaps because of that, Euripides sensed the aesthetic impossibility of ending the play with Medea in more than token remorse for the killing of her children; nor can he make any explicit comment

<sup>9</sup> On the well known interpretative crux *Med.* 1078 θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσων τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων see H. DILLER, «Hermes» 94 (1966), 267-75.

<sup>10</sup> *Med.* 1236-41; cf. 1060ff, with PAGE's Commentary (Oxford 1938); G. A. SEECK, *Euripides' Medea* 1059-68; *a Problem of Interpretation*, «G.R.B.S.» 9 (1968), 291-317; W. STEIDLE, *Studien zum antiken Drama* (München 1968), 152-68, esp. 160ff.

<sup>11</sup> A. LESKY, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen* (Göttingen 1972<sup>3</sup>), 312, cf. *History of Greek Literature* (London 1966), 369f.

on the thing. Expiation is a concept absent from Medea's myth and make-up: the only resolution Euripides offers his audience is their expectation that Medea will be eternally tormented by the knowledge of the deed <sup>12</sup>.

Euripides concentrates on the extremes of anguish and fury to which Medea is by nature liable, and the betrayal of her love exposes her. In Apollonius Medea is a minor but important character, her involvement with Jason both attractively and awkwardly handled. She falls in love with Jason; their love moves towards marriage as Medea insists on that as the price of her continued help. The focus of interest in the *Argonautica* stays uncomfortably and sometimes unconvincingly on the hero Jason: a hero whose resolution and endurance are not at all unfailing <sup>13</sup>. Even before he gets to Colchis, he falls in love with Hypsipyle on Lemnos and will be stopped from his quest for the Fleece unless Heracles shakes him free of her (I 865ff). He is helpless, almost indifferent, when the Argonauts argue whether to return to fetch Heracles when he gets left behind (I 1284ff). Apollonius makes his caution appear the act of a wise but still brave leader when he attempts to negotiate with Aeetes for the Fleece, but it is evident he expects to fail (III 169ff, 384ff, 402ff); here is no Odysseus, ever careful to try word first but in the end a man of quick and firm decision. There are signs in the myth even before Euripides of a weakening of Jason's heroic stature: he needs help not just against supernatural opponents, such as Medea alone could give him against Aeetes' bulls, but also against human ones such as a Homeric hero would take in his stride <sup>14</sup>. In Euripides, the weakness both of Jason's position and of his character, and the extra dominance thereby accorded Medea, are important considerations in the tragedy.

<sup>12</sup> For various interpretations of the end of the play see LESKY (n. 11 above), STEIDLE (n. 10 above) 165ff and e.g. D. J. CONACHER, *Euripidean Drama* (Toronto 1967), 197f.

<sup>13</sup> Jason's equivocal heroic stature has long been recognised: RAND (n. 3 above) 398f; OTIS, *Originality* (n. 4 above) 35 and 52 n. 6; G. LAWALL, *Apollonius' Argonautica: Jason as Anti-hero*, «Y.C.S.» 19 (1966), 119-69 (166-9 on Jason and Medea); C. R. BEYE, *Jason as Love-hero in the Argonautica*, «G.R.B.S.» 10 (1969), 37. For a defence of Apollonius' Jason, however, whose heroic stature is carefully safeguarded by emphasis on his internal resolution and brilliant execution of Medea's instructions, despite the threat to it from Medea's love and the concentration for much of Book III on her inner turmoil, see P. HÄNDEL, *Beobachtungen zur epischen Technik des Apollonios Rhodios* (München 1954), 101f, 104f and esp. 117f cf. (A. Körte-) P. HÄNDEL, *Die hellenistische Dichtung* (Stuttgart 1960), 196.

<sup>14</sup> See VON FRITZ (n. 4 above) 332ff, 372-6, 376 n. 76a, who stresses that this element of weakness invades the original myth ('The Fleece') from other episodes; cf. LAWALL (n. 13 above) 149.

Apollonius followed this trend in the role of Jason, perhaps unconsciously: one feels the *Argonautica* ends happily for Jason almost in spite of him. Apollonius nevertheless seems intrigued by this weak side of Jason, and looks at it at length in some places; but he does not allow it to devalue him totally, or lead him into tragedy: that would be unthinkable in the epic of his time <sup>15</sup>.

There is an unevenness observable in Medea in Apollonius <sup>16</sup>, which is worth investigating and may best be understood when we realise that this is the sort of hero she is matched with: weak enough to require her help when it is essential and when it is not, but strong enough, and attractive enough in the conventional epic manner, to compel her love at their first encounter and to match it with the brilliance of the exploits he performs under her instruction <sup>17</sup>.

Euripides had helped to begin the intellectual literary exploration of the female heart. In some ways Apollonius' Medea is an uneasy compromise between a heroine in whom the tides of emotion are described through a kind of Euripidean, rational self-analysis, and one in whom they seem to ebb and flow still in the uncomplicated manner of high epic <sup>18</sup>. Apollonius' capacity to characterise the way man and woman fall in love represents a midway stage between the largely physical conceptions familiar from Sappho onwards, and the subtler, more intellectual description of the feelings which appear in the Hellenistic and later poets <sup>19</sup>. The chemistry of Medea's awakening love is still a mystery which shows mainly on the surface of the body and in the wild leaping of the heart <sup>20</sup>, but Apollonius blends with its depiction something of a Euripidean turmoil within: on the one hand there is her instinc-

<sup>15</sup> See HÄNDEL, *Beobachtungen* (n. 13 above), esp. 93-118.

<sup>16</sup> Often noticed, first by E. ROHDE, *Der griechische Roman* (Leipzig 1876<sup>1</sup>), 105; U. VON WILAMOWITZ-MÖLLENDORFF, *Die hellenistische Dichtung* (Berlin 1924), II, 202, cf. e.g. HENRY (n. 3 above) 98f, 104; VON FRITZ (n. 4 above) 376f; HÄNDEL, *Beobachtungen* (n. 13 above) 75f. 116f; OTIS, *Virgil* (n. 4 above) 64f; E. PHINNEY, *Narrative Unity in the Argonautica*, « T.A.P.A. » 98 (1967), 333ff.

I was able to see only after completing this paper: G. PADUANO, *Studi su Apollonio Rodio* (Roma 1972), whose 'Parte Seconda: Le due Medee e il problema della personalità nelle *Argonautiche*' (pp. 61-239) discusses in great depth 'la liaison erotica tra Giasone e Medea'.

<sup>17</sup> See esp. HÄNDEL, *Beobachtungen* (n. 13 above) 116f.

<sup>18</sup> HÄNDEL, *Beobachtungen* 95f, cf. Henry (n. 3 above) 101.

<sup>19</sup> HÄNDEL, *Beobachtungen* 99f. For the development of the 'Liebesmotiv' in Epic and Tragedy see esp. Hügi (n. 3 above) 81 n. 2, for the long tradition of physical symptoms Hügi 89f.

<sup>20</sup> *Argon.* III 297f, 681ff, 724ff, 962ff, cf. 444-62; cf. F. VIAN, *Apollonios de Rhodes: Argonautiques Chant III* (Paris 1961), 10 n. 1.

tive attraction to the handsome Jason, which is increased as she enjoys repeated fantasies about him <sup>21</sup>; on the other hand doubt about the cause and propriety of her love sets in almost at once, tormenting her (III 450-71); later, as she wakes from her dream, she finds a rational analysis for her disquiet. This restrains her, from a sense of conflict with her duty to her father <sup>22</sup>, but also tolerates her love's disguise in anxiety for her sister Chalciope's two sons. Yet her love blossoms largely within the simple descriptive world of girl-meets-boy: the spontaneous attraction of a maiden new to love, inexperienced and unsophisticated in its management, her reactions confused by notions of a virgin's honour; she fears to go ahead not just because it is without her parents' knowledge, but also because they will be hurt by it all: only in this mild sense has her dilemma a moral dimension <sup>23</sup>. So Medea saves her conscience by manipulating her concern for Chalciope's sons, companions of Jason, in such a way that her sister can seem to ask freely for her help — the help of her magic — to save her sons' lives, and with them Jason's (III 636-741); and then to Jason she may and must commit herself.

The process of Medea's love for Jason in Book III, the suppression of her misgivings, the self-deceit of her provocation and acceptance of her sister's appeal — all this is interwoven by Apollonius into the main narrative, of Jason's own unhappy appeal to Aeetes and his hopeless undertaking of the king's cruel challenge. The passion of Medea draws from the poet his most sensitive writing, but remains in the end a side-issue <sup>24</sup>: a brilliant if interrupted vignette, ahead of its time, and one of the most original things in Alexandrian literature; for all its art, it conveys a naturalness and spontaneity reminiscent of Nausicaa's girlish crush on Odysseus <sup>25</sup>. At the same time, it involved Apollonius in a conception of Medea which was difficult to accommodate to her stature in the myth; it produced an inconsistency he either ignored deliberately in the confidence of his Medea in love, or, just possibly,

<sup>21</sup> E.g. III 446f νόος δέ οἱ ἦύτ' ὄνειρος / ἐρπύζων πεπότῃτο μετ' ἔχνια νισσομένοιοι, 451ff.

<sup>22</sup> III 640 (compare the dream-picture at 630ff); for the motif later, in her 'Euripidean' monologue (771-801), see 743, 779f, 796ff.

<sup>23</sup> For this lack of a true conflict within Medea see HEINZE (n. 3) 126, HENRY (n. 3) 101, WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality* 377.

<sup>24</sup> For the break in the epic tradition involved in this elevation of a 'romance' into a main episode, even if it remains in the end subordinate, cf. HENRY 100, HÄNDEL, *Beobachtungen* (n. 13 above) 98f, 102, OTIS, *Originality* (n. 4 above) 34f, 57f.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. HÄNDEL, *Beobachtungen* 94f.



may not have noticed. The same emotionally immature and helpless Medea is the competent, unfrightened servant of Hecate, the cool instructress of Jason in taming the bulls, the calm soother of the dragon that guards the Fleece — yet also the most anxious for flight once the Fleece is taken (IV 6ff). <sup>26</sup> In Book IV of the *Argonautica* the inconsistency is more apparent, however: and it is here worth recalling that it was Book IV and not III that Macrobius saw as the main influence on Virgil in *Aeneid* IV <sup>27</sup>.

When the Argonauts are cut off in their flight by the pursuing Colchians, Apollonius makes Jason seem ready to come to terms with them and even surrender Medea, to whom he has long promised himself in marriage as the price of his safe return to Greece (IV 338-49). At this threat of desertion, Medea blazes into a sudden fury of contemptuous and menacing anger, but is no less quickly placated by Jason's excuses; she so far recovers her love and collaboration that she contrives the treacherous murder of her own brother Apsyrtus, the leader of the pursuers (IV 350-420). The reader accepts the fury because it and the murder were part of the myth which held many such acts by Medea; but its sudden blazing and subsidence seem made merely to give the episode effect, rather than deepen the portrayal of Medea <sup>28</sup>: in fact, the behaviour of Medea later in the Book is, against all reason, quite untouched by what we would think of as a shattering experience, at the very least destructive of any real trust between her and Jason. Later, when she cries for the pity and help of Circe (IV 749f) and Arete (IV 1011ff), her whole bearing and anxiety are those of the simple, love-sick girl wrestling with her conscience at the start of Book III. It is as if Apollonius has thrown the episode in without care or realisation of its consequence for the consistency of her character. Still, we must accept that Medea is not Apollonius' chief concern; he seems not to be concerned by the seeds in her being and behaviour of the tragedy that befell herself and Jason in Corinth, though this episode throws them up. Indeed, he ignores the tragic end of the story altogether <sup>29</sup>, stopping his poem at the point of maximum happiness for both, the arrival in Greece.

<sup>26</sup> See the discussions cited in n. 16 above.

<sup>27</sup> Sat. V 17,4 *de Argonauticorum quarto ... librum Aeneidos suae quantum totum paene formaverit ad Didonem vel Aeneam amatoriam incontinentiam Medae circa Iasonem transferendo*. 'Quarto' has bothered scholars, understandably but perhaps unnecessarily: 'gemeint ist tertio et quarto', HÜGI (n. 3 above) 85 n. 1; 'recte third' P. V. DAVIES, *Macrobius: the Saturnalia* (New York 1969), 359; the latest editor of Macrobius, J. WILLIS (Bibl. Teubn. 1963), is silent.

<sup>28</sup> On this episode see HÄNDEL, *Beobachtungen* 75-7 and *Die hellenistische Dichtung* (n. 13 above) 173f and esp. 197.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. e.g. MACKAIL (n. 3 above) 263f, VON FRITZ (n. 4 above) 375. On the

In this episode from Book IV there is a clear instance of the great difference between Apollonius and Virgil in their use of matter and motifs from their predecessors. Apollonius leans on Euripides for the scene in which the wild fury of a threatened Medea assails a defensive Jason (IV 359ff), who seems to her only to have enjoyed her love as long as it was of use to him. He borrows the motif for his poem without reconciling to the rest of his portrayal the extra, terrifying dimension of Medea's nature it reveals; it shows much more than a Medea who is incidentally capable of supernatural magic. This is why it is useful to bear in mind the diminished heroic stature of Jason in this epic: the fury of Medea is easier for the poet to motivate if it comes in reaction to such cheapness from Jason, and he uses it to make the scene a *tour de force*; but it does not convince us of the poet's artistic control of his characters. When Virgil pictures Dido's fury against an apparently selfish and culpable Aeneas, the scene inevitably reminds us of its joint origin in Euripides and Apollonius, just as Virgil wishes — but through Virgil's art it is now convincingly in place in Dido's tragedy: vital to, and consistent with, the whole character and destiny of both Dido and Aeneas; it is therefore «right» in the development of both the episode and the whole poem.<sup>30</sup>

To come now to Virgil. At the cost of repeating familiar arguments, it is best to start with the place and importance of Dido in the *Aeneid* as a whole; only after that is reflection on her Medean ancestry profitable. In the barest structural terms, the Carthage episode dominates Books I and IV and encircles the *Odyssey*-type narrative of Books II and III. It is the mainspring of the first part of the poem; it has its roots in the exposition of the gods' will for Aeneas and the founding of Rome, which Virgil sets at the very beginning of the *Aeneid*. So, Brooks Otis rightly tells us<sup>31</sup>, it is an integral part of the main movement of the work: we must recognise that, and also understand its importance for the establishment of Aeneas' quality as the founding-hero. Moreover, Virgil deliberately recalls the figure of Dido to confront Aeneas in the underworld (VI 450-75). The lesson of Carthage within the poem's recreated world, and also in that of Virgil's Rome so prominent in Book VI, has a continu-

'abrupt' end of the poem see H. FRAENKEL, *Noten zu den Argonautika des Apollonios* (München 1968), 622ff.

<sup>30</sup> For Virgil's power of deepening immeasurably the significance of such motifs taken from the tradition see e.g. MACKAIL (n. 3 above) 256f; HEINZE (n. 3 above) 112 n. 4, 257; RAND 391; for Homer and Apollonius there is a brief but telling exemplification in AUSTIN, *Aeneid I* xiii f.

<sup>31</sup> *Virgil* 67, cf. e.g. HEINZE 117.

ing significance. There is the intentional symbolism of Dido's Carthage and Aeneas' Rome, and of the germ of their historical conflict in the tragic disillusionment of Book IV; the echo of the personal tragedy gains a deeper meaning amid the prophetic interpretations of Book VI.

Book I prepares for the meeting of Aeneas and Dido, and sketches the flaming of passion within the queen. Book IV, Dido's tragedy, has been seen as an epyllion within a larger epic<sup>32</sup>, but its markedly dramatic form has an almost Aristotelian design; disaster follows the transient attainment of utmost happiness in a reversal or *peripeteia*<sup>33</sup>, attended by various *anagnoriseis* or recognitions: by Dido of her illusions' collapse, when she realises that the sacrifice to it of her *pudor* and *fama* (321-3), and the betrayal of her *fides* to the dead Sychaeus (552), were in vain; by Aeneas of the harder path of destiny (361, 395-6); by Anna of the whole tragedy of deception, her own and Dido's (675). There is further dramatic art in the interruption of the whole scene at Carthage by the flashback of Books II and III. Book I ends in a moment of false hope that is the brink of danger for Aeneas' mission<sup>34</sup>, but the urgent needs of the present must wait while the causes and influences in the past are reviewed, the stature of the hero explored, and the measure of him before his destiny taken: Virgil deliberately delays the first great crisis of the poem. The gain is more than in dramatic tension, however. While Aeneas' narrative in Books II and III unfolds, we sense increasingly the similarities in experience and hope between Dido and Aeneas. While Virgil thus leaves to our imagination the inevitability of Dido's closer sympathy for Aeneas, the abrupt statement of her total surrender which begins Book IV still releases in us a sudden realisation of her love's insidiousness, and of its danger<sup>35</sup>.

Book I also contains essential matter for the appraisal of Dido's role as antagonist to Aeneas, a role that she enacts only within Book IV. In relation to the particular problem we are examining, we must take note that in Euripides it is the man who is the antagonist, in Apollonius the woman, there as here partner first. Despite the hinted menace of Juno's protection of Carthage (set very early in the Book, I 12ff), the meeting of Dido and Aeneas is within the Gods' ultimate purpose for

<sup>32</sup> Cf. esp. HEINZE 118f, who insists on Virgil's attempt to maintain the tone of heroic epic despite the scale and nature of the episode predisposing it to Hellenistic 'Kleinmalerei'.

<sup>33</sup> First so described by HEINZE 119f, 324; cf. PEASE, *Aeneid IV* 5 and 10, and esp. KINGNER, *Virgil* (Stuttgart 1967), 437f.

<sup>34</sup> Especially well brought out by AUSTIN, *Aeneid I* vii, xvii.

<sup>35</sup> I am particularly grateful for Mr. Forster's help with this paragraph.

the Trojan refugees, and Jupiter himself ensures she shall welcome them (I 298-9). When Aeneas first sees Dido, it is only after he has twice had his anticipations powerfully shaped. His mother Venus describes Dido's own harsh fortune to him, so that he may feel an instinctive sympathy for one who has suffered in much the same way as he (I 335-68). His visual impressions of Dido's new Carthage confirm those feelings, and for the reader generally enlarge the background of meaning (I 418ff). Aeneas is received in a rising new city; its builders, themselves exiles from disaster, have worked into its fabric reminders of the suffering which is all men's lot before they prosper: Carthage commemorates the fall of Troy. This is Dido's city, and her queen will be sympathetic (I 461-3) — but she is also, Virgil is careful to make his audience feel, a real queen, if she can found so fair a city after flight, in the way Aeneas too must try (I 507-8). Dido, then, is more than a helping hand; more than a wise Arete to Odysseus; more than a Medea whose aid is magic, powerful where Jason has no hold: she is Aeneas' equal already, and more, in the visible achievements of a sovereign; and she is his equal in the same field of accomplishment<sup>36</sup>. Here we must leave Jason behind: as foil or hero he has no common ground with Aeneas, who is far greater than any Jason in heroic achievement and destiny.

Before Aeneas actually meets Dido, it is not only his sympathy that Virgil engages for her, but ours also, and at a level far deeper than the rather sentimental sort we feel initially for Apollonius' maiden, romantically intoxicated with her handsome hero (*Argon.* III 284, 297-8, 453ff etc.). Dido too has had her expectations shaped and heightened by reports of Trojan courage (I 565ff, 619ff). When the mist in which Venus has brought Aeneas secretly into her court is rolled away, future king and present queen, man and woman, are suddenly face to face (I 584ff) — but not as strangers politely seeking a hold on each other's sympathy, for that is already secured; one has the feeling Virgil wishes at one level to maximise the speed with which Aeneas' narrative can get under way, at the other to make plausible the similarly quick personal engagement between him and Dido. The formalities of entertaining a refugee king and his retinue are quickly covered: Book I ends with Virgil describing the imminent surrender of Dido's impressionable heart, doubly inflamed by Cupid, who is disguised as Ascanius by Venus; how accurate is Virgil's picture of the childless widow, ready to abandon the memory

<sup>36</sup> For Dido's stature, commensurate with her 'tragic' quality, see e.g. OTIS, *Originality* (n. 4 above) 57f; W. CAMPS, *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid* (Oxford 1969), 33-5; AUSTIN, *Aeneid I* xvii f.

of her husband's love for the hopes of a new (I 715-22)! If Virgil here seems to recall the intervention of Eros which formally sparks the love of Medea for Jason in Apollonius, he binds the overt divine machinery of conventional epic far more convincingly into the fundamentally human plane of motivation. The intervention of Venus is not simply to win approval for the love-affair by attributing it to the gods. The link is far more significant: episode and human experience are woven together into the control of the whole poem's development by the gods; both joy and pain are theirs to give in the working-out of their provision.

So love grows between Dido and Aeneas; not with the romantic suddenness of Apollonius' Medea, though Virgil shares some of the physical detail: it is a conscious, if still an irresistible, path for both of them. Aeneas warms to Dido from his feeling of shared suffering, admiration and gratitude, although Virgil is not explicit about his commitment to their love until he and Dido have broken apart; for the present we must understand that the lengthening interruption of the voyage to Italy is sign enough of his distraction. Dido's emotions are explored in full, however. Why? Externally, because of the established influence of the role of the deserted wife or lover; because of the most appropriate model for Dido as helper, lover and in the end rejected partner of the refugee hero, Medea, herself part of a tradition that began with Calypso, and includes Circe, Nausicaa, Arete, Hypsipyle in Book II of the *Argonautica* and Ariadne in Catullus' epyllion<sup>37</sup>; because to study the hero too closely in an erotic context was still aesthetically questionable in high epic<sup>38</sup>. Internally, because Virgil exploits that impossibility of reducing his hero's stature precisely in order to reflect nonetheless on the personal cost of involvement in high matters of destiny like the founding of cities: again we see why Dido is Aeneas' equal. This is not only the tragedy of Dido, in that she loses her happiness and her city, together with her self-respect, but also the tragedy of Aeneas, for her emotional suffering is made to suggest his too, if not his agony of conscience. Aeneas never debates the nature or rightness of his duty, but simply forgets it in his love.

To go back a little: in Book I the love of Dido for Aeneas is conceived and grows to a point where Dido is preoccupied by it. Book IV begins at a point of crisis, where she must find some way to control her love or break before it. The crisis is for Aeneas too; its tragic resolution is the

<sup>37</sup> See esp. KLINGNER (n. 33 above) 463ff; for Catullus see R. WESTENDORP-BOERMA, « Acta Class. » 1 (1958), 55ff; WIGODSKY (n. 4 above) 128ff; HIGHER (n. 4 above) 218-31; J. FERGUSON, « P.V.S. » 11 (1971-2), 28-31; cf. n. 51 below.

<sup>38</sup> KLINGNER 465, cfr. WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality* 374f and 285.

Book's only, continuous theme, its climax Dido's death: so the episode's dramatic requirements are achieved; at the same time it is successfully accommodated to the pace, scale and temper of the whole poem.

Just as he avoids the romantic, Virgil goes far beyond his predecessors in exploiting the tragedy and not the simple pathos of parted lovers. Calypso and Circe cry, Nausicaa's loss of a love she could hardly formulate is merely hinted; Apollonius gives Hypsipyle's sadness at Jason's going a little more space (*Argon.* I 886ff), but Dido is conceived from the start as a figure of tragedy<sup>39</sup>: expelled from her own land by a harsh fate and yet in Carthage not really prepared for its further chances; a queen profoundly responsible to her people and her own moral integrity, susceptible from ordinary human temptation to the subsequent torment of conscience. *Infelix, misera, nescia* are the adjectives that keep her close like a shadow through Virgil's story<sup>40</sup>. The moment of her illusory happiness with Aeneas is brief in the poet's eye, deliberately: Virgil hurries the disaster on.

Book IV has the speed and economy, but also the occasional detailed focus, of Euripides' tragedy, but is relieved by the greater variety of resources available to the epic poet. Virgil provides the framework in narrating the external action, and colours his description with judicious use of simile or other atmosphere, hurrying or retarding with masterly sureness. The Trojans scurry like ants to be ready once the signal to leave Carthage is given (IV 396ff), but when Dido's last night of anguish begins, the sleepless turmoil of her heart is thrown into relief by a deliberate, almost languid picture of nature's nocturnal calm. So too in Apollonius, before Medea's last debate with herself: the image is a cliché, but in Virgil's hands it seems both freshly imagined and exactly placed<sup>41</sup>.

The Book falls easily into three parts<sup>42</sup>, and I comment now selectively on each of these in the context of the Medea-Dido association. In the first, Dido overcomes her inner resistance to love. Apollonius' Medea is restrained expressively by her maidenly αἰδώς or shame (*Argon.* III 653, 681, 742, 785); we saw that its moral dimension was very limited. She contrives to quieten her misgivings by manipulating her sister Chalciope into requesting her help for Jason. Dido's scruples are

<sup>39</sup> See esp. OTIS, *Virgil* 87.

<sup>40</sup> From the first mention at I 299 *fati nascia Dido* to the last at VI 456 *infelix Dido* (I ignore the isolated later mentions at IX 266, XI 74): cf. PEASE on IV 68, CAMPS (n. 36 above) 35, 149 n. 10. For the significance of *incautam* in the simile at IV 70 see R. A. HORNSBY, *Patterns of Action in the Aeneid* (Iowa City 1970), 91f.

<sup>41</sup> *Argon.* III 744ff, *Aen.* IV 522ff; cf. esp. HÜGI (n. 3 above) 95.

<sup>42</sup> I-295, 296-503, 504-705; see esp. K. QUINN, *Virgil's Aeneid: a Critical Description* (London 1968), 135f.

founded in her *pudor*, which obliges her to the faithful memory of her dead husband, as well as tempers her behaviour in general. *Pudor* is a concept of moral restraint of far greater meaning than Greek αἰδώς<sup>43</sup>. Its power within Dido increases her stature as a symbolic adversary to Aeneas. She is here invested with a peculiarly *Roman* quality: her humanity and sympathy for Aeneas are overlaid with a dignity of personal conduct appropriate to a Roman lady<sup>44</sup>. The surrender of her *pudor*, partly through the sophistry of her sister Anna, partly through her own fatal capacity for self-deception, is infinitely more significant than the capitulation of Medea to her own inmost wishes, however skilfully Apollonius manages that portrayal<sup>45</sup>. Aeneas has attracted the love of a great queen, engaged on no less an enterprise than himself; he too seems open to that love's enjoyment. All this is against his certain destiny, for if the love of Dido and Aeneas prospers, it will be Carthage and not Rome that is the new Troy. Roman *pudor*, an obstacle in Carthaginian Dido to that love's fulfilment, and, in a way, a safeguard of Aeneas' destiny, has been overcome: two great persons have abandoned a higher charge for private feeling, and the hard lesson of fate is made plain when they are forcibly recalled to that trust. The suppression of Dido's *pudor* illustrates both the greatness of the temptation, and, in relief, indicates the seriousness of the cause abandoned in its sacrifice. So Virgil powerfully adapts and transforms the motif of Medea's surrender, by setting it within his own specially significant context.

It may be well too to be clear about the comparative roles of Medea's sister Chalcioppe, and Anna. Chalcioppe was inextricably in the Argonaut myth, for she was mother of two of Jason's men, and Apollonius accommodates her rather than exploits her. She is not fully trusted by Medea, as Anna is by Dido (except at the end), and she serves Medea's involvement only in a mechanical way<sup>46</sup>. Anna is not an entire invention of Virgil — in one version of the legend she follows Aeneas to Italy out of love<sup>47</sup>. He has her as confidante to Dido, in a role inherited from

<sup>43</sup> *Aen.* IV 27 (see Pease or Austin), 55, 322 — but the idea is anticipated in Book I: 344, 719-22: see HEINZE 125f, KLINGNER 44iff.

<sup>44</sup> See esp. HEINZE 125, WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality* 278f.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. HENRY (n. 3 above) 106; OTIS, *Virgil* 77 and *Originality* 57f; CAMPS 34.

<sup>46</sup> For the differences in detail and intention between the roles of Chalcioppe and Anna see HENRY (n. 3 above) 103f and esp. HEINZE 127f; for Chalcioppe see esp. HÄNDEL, *Beobachtungen* (n. 13 above) 99f. 108ff.

<sup>47</sup> Pease on IV 421, cf. his pp. 49ff; A. A. BARRETT, *Anna's Conduct in Aeneid* 4, « Vergilius », 16 (1970), 21-5. For the dispute whether, and in which book, Naevius' *Bellum Punicum* had Aeneas touching at Carthage and falling in love with Dido, see (allowing this) HEINZE 115ff, HENRY (n. 3 above) 103, HÜGI (n. 3

drama; and in a way Virgil uses her as in a play: she helps to get the action under way at the start of the book, and Virgil varies the form by using her in dialogue with Dido; he reserves soliloquies for specially important stages of Dido's tragedy, again as in high drama <sup>48</sup>. And at the end of the book Anna returns, to deepen the pathos of Dido's death, and to remind us of the other relationship, happy and uncomplicated, with which the book began but is now also broken.

To return: Dido begins to think herself as good as married to Aeneas; her drive to build Carthage begins to fail. Rumours circulate; Iarbas, a desert prince whose hand she has scorned, complains to Jupiter. Thus made aware also of Aeneas' failing, the king of gods sends Mercury to recall Aeneas to his duty; the Trojans begin secret preparations to leave (IV 289-91). Aeneas thinks enough of Dido to feel obliged — indeed, to want — to tell her he must leave, but cannot find the right time or words. Virgil allows his hesitation to give way to Dido's gathering suspicion and anger, which now take command of the whole book; from now on, all is seen from Dido's inward eye, in speech with Aeneas or Anna, or in monologue or soliloquy.

Her first angry reproach of Aeneas (305-30) has a transparent literary history. Her feelings, reactions, arguments can be separately and severally traced in Euripides, Apollonius and Catullus <sup>49</sup>. Her series of questions, each more violent than the last, is not a new device, either in drama or epic, but Virgil adds to their logical exposition the new dimension of a no less logical climax of emotional disturbance, most accurately observed: with the cumulative weight of argument is coupled the convincing transition from harsh and angry accusation to tearful, open entreaty, as calculated gives way to natural passion <sup>50</sup>. Aeneas in his reply (333-61) conceals any regret or sympathy with a tight-lipped statement of his subservience to his destiny: 'Italy, not Carthage'. Dido understands only weak and human betrayal, not the command of a higher power; she curses him for his coldness, threatening vengeance (365-87). If the motif calls up the ghost of Euripides' deserted Medea

above) 79, KLINGNER 438f, (lit.) WIGODSKY 34; (Aeneas in Africa, but not in love with Dido) V. BUCHHEIT, *Vergil und die Sendung Roms* (Heidelberg 1963), 35ff, 49ff, N. HORSFALL, « P.V.S. » 13 (1973-4), 8ff; (attributing it to Virgil's invention) WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality* 381.

<sup>48</sup> IV 534-52, 590-629, 651-2: cf. HEINZE 127 and esp. HIGHT (n. 4 above) 176-84.

<sup>49</sup> These are the principal 'sources': see PEASE on IV 305 but esp. HIGHT 220f.

<sup>50</sup> KLINGNER 447f.



and her unhappy echo in Apollonius <sup>51</sup>, we should bear in mind a clear difference between the Euripidean and the Virgilian situation. Medea from the beginning of the play knows of Jason's imminent desertion, and is already planning vengeance: her angry words to him are charged with the genuine emotion of a rejected wife, yet shot through from the start with her hidden malice. In Dido the thought of vengeance is slow to work, through a normal reaction to her wound: anger, first, then dismay, but containing still a little hope, a reluctance to accept. Aeneas is left helpless in his unspoken longing to console her, but Virgil sees fit to explore and substantiate that longing and its sincerity only when the two meet again the underworld. Yet it is there, if only hinted, in Book IV — but why is it only hinted? Is Virgil here subservient to the pattern of Euripides' Jason, weak, seemingly without a sense of guilt, stolid in self-righteousness because he has no other defence? Or does he risk that impression, in the desire to leave the emotional field to Dido <sup>52</sup>? Is Aeneas here deliberately played down, simply to hasten Dido's destruction? Or has Virgil no choice? Is he so controlled by the external machinery of his story, that it was the gods who commanded Aeneas' departure, whatever Aeneas' own feelings <sup>53</sup>? Should we think that, just as in the *Odyssey* the gods command Calypso to release Odysseus, so here the gods ordain Aeneas' going — but that because the sufferings of a woman are the matter of high poetry, in both it is the woman's reaction which receives the main attention? — in fact, is Virgil here carried along by a current which runs counter to his own purpose? Or does he turn this contradiction to his advantage, as I suggested earlier? Does he accept that he is prevented from exploring the inner feelings of the very person

<sup>51</sup> *Med.* e.g. 160ff, 364ff; *Argon.* IV 355-90, esp. 381ff. Dido's speech at *Aen.* IV 362-87 is particularly rich in the pathetic commonplaces of deserted lovers: see the 'rhetorical' analysis by R. D. WILLIAMS, *Vergiliana*, ed. H. BARDON, R. VERDIÈRE (Leiden 1970), 422-8. For Catullus' Ariadne see esp. P. OKSALA, «Arctos» 3 (1962), 167ff (cited by HIGHER 221); cf. n. 37 above.

<sup>52</sup> WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality* 383ff notes that Virgil comes near making Aeneas appear dishonourable, in saying little direct about him, but in compensation Dido is clearly shown to be mistaken; HEINZE 123 n. 1 comments on Virgil's reluctance to dwell on his hero's failings. For some other comments on the unsympathetic portrayal (which at least avoids overt compromise of Aeneas' *gravitas*) see e.g. MACKAIL (n. 3 above) 263, HENRY (n. 3 above) 103, RAND (n. 3 above) 399f, CAMPS 29.

<sup>53</sup> HENRY 107 observes that Aeneas breaks down, like Dido, but can recover because of the gods' warning to him — but WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality* 386 (cf. 378) suggests that Mercury's words are the voice of Aeneas' own conscience, not conventional divine machinery. For the gods' role in Aeneas' and Dido's love see CAMPS 33f.

with whom he is most concerned, his hero, in this sort of context, and can only hint at the effect on him there of the sudden irresistible command of heaven — which makes his actions in human terms indefensible? Is it because of this he reflects the private sufferings of Aeneas by concentrating on those of Dido, whose grief and anger could be portrayed — indeed, exploited? Here, at least: for while the shock and stress are on Aeneas, Virgil gives only a glimpse of the hero's inner torment: 332 *curam sub corde premebat*. 395 *magnoque animum labefactus amore* <sup>54</sup>. Virgil wants here simply to state the strength and steadiness of Aeneas before the call of his higher duty, while he concentrates the emotional focus elsewhere. The hero is rehabilitated in capacity for human sympathy only in Book VI, when the crisis is past, but the memory and the sorrow remain.

So Dido taunts Aeneas with betrayal and ingratitude, but tries through Anna to delay his going. Though she will not face Aeneas herself, still she hopes for time — 'empty time', she calls it (433) —, respite from her anger, time to learn to bear her grief; and she will repay the grace with her death (436). The word 'death' rings ominously here: it hints a dark if not less determined purpose. Dido used the threat of death in her first outburst against Aeneas: now it assumes a stronger hold, the promise of release <sup>55</sup>. Anna's failure to move Aeneas, who stands firm as a mighty oak despite his inner longing to comfort Dido (441-9), perhaps even to love her again, turns the promise into a need. Aeneas is finally lost, and with him Dido's illusions: she realises the extent of her self-deception, and also the enormity of her betrayal of herself and her dead husband <sup>56</sup>. The knowledge terrifies and deranges her; fearsome visions and hallucinations, centring on figures from Tragedy marked by an inherited curse, or great guilt <sup>57</sup>, torment her; the sense of her own guilt slowly comes to dominate her. The atmosphere of the sinister and supernatural is maintained when Dido has Anna prepare

<sup>54</sup> For Aeneas' inner feelings, expressed by Virgil in these two places and his speech of defence (333-61), see HIGHT 72-9.

<sup>55</sup> For Dido's constant thoughts of death see CAMPS 32 and 149 n. 4.

<sup>56</sup> Dido's *culpa* (the word at IV 19, 172) is well described by WILLIAMS, *Tradition and Originality* 384, cf. 379.

<sup>57</sup> 469-73; cf. esp. KLINGNER 453, HORNSBY (n. 40 above) 94f, and the fine discussion of the passage by Mr. FOSTER (n. 1 above) who writes on 471 *scaenis agitatus* 'by putting these (figures) specifically on the stage Virgil for a moment ceases to treat Dido simply as a literary heroine . . . she is a real-life creature, although her tragedy is as striking as that of these theatrical paradigms' (« P.V.S. » 13, 1973-4, 37).

mysterious sacrifices (478-98); a pyre is built, on which to burn the relics of Aeneas' stay, the gifts they exchanged in happiness (504-21). Dido deceives Anna, telling her she has a final solution, either to restore Aeneas to her or rid her of him. A priestess from a remote place is employed for her special power and spells; the reader too is almost taken in, thinking that Dido is preparing some last desperate attempt to recover Aeneas with love-magic.

This whole scene is the third strong reminder of Medea in the book. The collapse of Dido's hope unhinges her self-control: the way is open to extremes of self-torment, to imagined acts of frenzied retaliation. There always lay hidden in Euripides' Medea the forces of violence and cruelty, scarcely contained: but while they were native in her, of the very essence of a barbarian sorceress, in Virgil's Dido the impulse to violence is the last, despairing product of disappointment, resentment and unbearable strain<sup>58</sup>. Nonetheless, the mark of the mythical Medea is on her. Dido's resort to magic, too, it is tempting to refer to her Medean ancestry, even though she uses it second-hand<sup>59</sup>. Virgil intends more than a further reference to his literary model, however: his purpose, perhaps, it is suggested<sup>60</sup>, is to accentuate the tragic horror of Dido's imminent death by linking her human suffering in some way with the remote and mysterious world of conventional epic, where the magical is freely associated with disaster and darkens its terror.

Dido's deliberate deception of Anna is again a Tragic motif: Ajax deceives before his suicide, Medea gains time for her revenge by deceiving Jason<sup>61</sup> — indeed, deceit and cunning are instinctive to Medea. When Virgil borrows the motif for Dido, it is in the moment of her suffering and not of any retaliation: Anna is deceived not just to make Dido's secret plan for death plausible in the bare terms of action; the pathos of her lonely end is heightened. Above that, the motif also works consistently with Dido's own capacity for self-deception: is she, we

<sup>58</sup> Pease exaggerates when he writes already on 365 'the dormant element of Oriental savagery in her nature is let loose': for this earlier outburst see the assessment by Austin in his Commentary.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. HÜGI (n. 3 above) 64-6, 'Die Schicht der Zauberin Medea'.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. HEINZE 141f. A.-M. TUPET, « R.E.L. » 48 (1970), 229-58, thinks Dido's magic gives real meaning to her curses at 607-27 and to her suicide, a ritual sacrifice (or *devotio*), all part of her attempt to guarantee the evil miseries of the Punic Wars. For a less sympathetic view (Dido's action 'strange, abnormal and therefore discreditable') see N. HORSFALL, « P.V.S. » 13 (1973-4), 7.

<sup>61</sup> For echoes of Sophocles' Ajax (suicide from dishonour, but friends deceived before death) see OTIS, *Originality* (n. 4 above) 57f, HIGHT 227-8.

think, still perhaps deluding herself Aeneas may not after all be lost? is her elaborate plan for suicide another cruel fantasy? Then the sight of Aeneas sailing away destroys her last hold on life.

In the bare fact of her death Dido finally parts company with Medea, but the links are there till the very end. Dido's final restless night holds her last debate with herself, just as Apollonius' Medea was torn on her sleepless bed between duty to her father and his punishment, and love of Jason and life. The tension of Dido's debate, however, and the agony of her dilemma are closer to Medea's final torment in Euripides' play about the killing of her children. Medea in Apollonius chooses life because she is too young to die, Dido chooses death because that is what she deserves: she has betrayed her faith to her dead husband. While Dido resolves on death, Mercury catches something of her dark purpose, perhaps of vengeance, and conveys it to Aeneas (560-70). When she sees the harbour empty of ships, the god is proved right: all her vague threats now find specific form. The cruel knowledge of hindsight gives extra bitterness to her telling prophecy of the future wars of Rome and Carthage, and her curse on Aeneas and his descendants (607-29). There is more than a hint here of the wild fury of the witch Medea, the demonic satisfaction with which Euripides' Medea puts the crippling punishment of Jason above the damage to herself. Yet her death is not a climax of frustration and fury turned finally against her own self: rather it is the inevitable end, and Virgil closes the book almost in the manner of a requiem: Anna and the women of Carthage mourn, Juno sends Iris with absolution. We are reminded of the dying fall typical of Tragedy, when a *dea ex machina* attempts consolation <sup>62</sup>.

The tragedy of Dido is played out, episodic and concentrated in conception, displacing the hero Aeneas from the centre of the epic stage. It casts a shadow over Rome's foundation, but repeats the hard lesson of all great epic: there is no room for weakness when men are appointed by the gods to accomplish some great purpose; that and human failing must not conflict, cannot even co-exist. So Aeneas suffers: his 'guilt', if guilt it is, is to relax his duty for his love; the gods hold the founding hero firm to their purpose, but his humanity is scarred although he knows and accepts the higher call. And Dido too, who cannot recognise the higher providence and knowingly betrays her faith to her dead husband. This is the wider background of meaning against which to understand the Medean ancestry of Dido: human tragedy is combined with the hard founding of a great empire which was a living fact to the

<sup>62</sup> See Austin on IV 705.

poet and his audience. Medea remains, in the end, a myth. From Euripides ultimately comes Virgil's conception of a Dido doomed by her nature to great suffering: a woman first, but internally the battlefield of doubt, the calls of reason, honour and duty obscured and obstructed by the stronger drives of instinct. From Apollonius he took more of Dido's peripheral colour: the mechanism of her growing love; some scenic motifs for her battle with her conscience; atmosphere and images. Virgil's own is the essence of the tragic queen, the absolute power of her tragedy and its setting in the greater background of the whole epic. Perhaps only the unconscious art of Homer before him had achieved as much in epic, in the story of Achilles: helpless before the god's will and his own nature, though fighting both; extreme in anger and revenge in the grip of war; like Dido, but not Medea, capable at the last of some measure of atonement.

CHRISTOPHER COLLARD