

Claremont Colleges

## Scholarship @ Claremont

---

Scripps Senior Theses

Scripps Student Scholarship

---

2022

### "All That Remains of Husband"

James L. Kleerup  
*Scripps College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps\\_theses](https://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps_theses)



Part of the [Ancient History, Greek and Roman through Late Antiquity Commons](#), and the [Classical Literature and Philology Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Kleerup, James L., "All That Remains of Husband" (2022). *Scripps Senior Theses*. 1841.  
[https://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps\\_theses/1841](https://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps_theses/1841)

This Open Access Senior Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Scripps Student Scholarship at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in Scripps Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact [scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu](mailto:scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu).

**“All That Remains of Husband”**

by  
**JAMES KLEERUP**

**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**PROFESSOR CHINN  
PROFESSOR ROSELLI**

**APRIL 30, 2021**

## Introduction

The question of Dido and Aeneas' marital status in the *Aeneid* is one which has been hotly debated by both scholars and the characters themselves<sup>1</sup>. Though certain aspects of their relationship seem to mimic Roman marriage ceremonies,<sup>2</sup> the *Aeneid* declines to assert definitively that the two are married. This has led to the question of whether they could in fact be considered husband and wife. Even within the text, Dido and Aeneas argue over whether or not they are married, with Dido saying that they are, and Aeneas denying that such a thing occurred<sup>3</sup>. Their marital status is important, as it narratively provides the basis for Carthage and Rome's animosity,<sup>4</sup> as well as changes how we see the characters involved. If they were in fact married, then Aeneas abandoned his wife when he left Carthage, making him impious.<sup>5</sup> For Pious Aeneas, the ancestral father of Rome, to commit such an act would tarnish not only his honor, but that of Rome<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, if they are not married, then Dido has been sleeping with a man out of wedlock, which tarnishes her reputation and puts both her and her city in danger from the surrounding African warlords<sup>7</sup>. Whether Dido and Aeneas are married or not means one of them loses their honor and reputation. However, Virgil leaves their relationship ambiguous, rather than saying definitively one way or another. This means neither side's reputation is harmed, but also neither is "right."

---

<sup>1</sup> See now Gutting (2006) 272 n. 33. Monti (1981) 30-36 and Williams (1962) 43-5 argue, from different perspectives, that Dido and Aeneas were married. Horsfall (1994) 128 argues that they were not married.

<sup>2</sup> See, famously, Austin (1955) 69

<sup>3</sup> See their famous debate at *Aen.* 4.305-387. Cf. also Iarbas' comments (*Aen.* 4.211-214).

<sup>4</sup> See Monti (1981) 30-36 on the union of Dido and Aeneas as a "dynastic marriage." Cf. Spence (1999) 89-90.

<sup>5</sup> It is important to note the importance of *pietas* as a wifely virtue in the Roman world: Forbis (1990) 439. The quality is attested in numerous epitaphs: *CIL* 6.26192 (=ILS 8398), *CIL* 6.11602 (=ILS 8402), *CIL* 8.11294 (=ILS 8444), *AE* 1987, 179.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Horsfall (1994) 124-126, Monti (1981) 76.

<sup>7</sup> See Horsfall (1994) 126-128 for bibliography.

While the *Aeneid* lacks a definitive moment that says whether Dido and Aeneas are married, parts of the language and the referential imagery to other myths point towards their marriage. However, some of the language similarly implies that their relationship is not one of marriage. This serves to further muddy the waters, leading to the scholarly question of what their relationship status truly is. In investigating the question anew, this thesis addresses three primary questions: Are Dido and Aeneas married? How do different readings of the text support or complicate our interpretations? And, why are matters left so vague? I argue that, to contemporary Roman readers, Dido and Aeneas' relationship would have been interpreted as marriage, even though Virgil left their relationship purposefully vague.

## History

To answer the question of Dido and Aeneas' marriage, we must first understand what actually constituted a marriage in the time of Virgil. Without this knowledge, we are unable to truly judge whether Dido and Aeneas might be married. Unfortunately, this proves a bit of a difficult question to answer. Many details of Roman marriage have been lost, and what remains, though clear to an ancient Roman, is not always obvious to modern scholars<sup>8</sup>. Additionally, the records that we do have come almost exclusively from upper class male authors describing a ceremony that was primarily focused on the woman's transition into married life.<sup>9</sup> The thoughts and feelings of the participants, especially the women, are left unknown to us.<sup>10</sup> The lack of a solid description has left scholars having to piece together evidence from various sources.

---

<sup>8</sup> This paper includes only a very brief overview of Roman marriage. For more detailed scholarship, see Dixon (2010), Glazebrook (2013), Hersch (2010), Prescott (1927), and Treggiari (1991).

<sup>9</sup> Hersch (2010) 1. Typical male attitudes toward wives: Pliny *Epistles* 4.10, 7.5, 8.5, Quintilian *Institutes* 6 preface, etc. Many epitaphs for Roman wives were written in the husband's voice (note especially *CIL* 11.654 where the deceased woman is depicted as speaking!).

<sup>10</sup> Possible women's voices on epitaphs for their husbands: *CIL* 6.35050, *CIL* 6.18817 (=ILS 8006).

Which, as Karen Hersch puts it, leaves us with a modern amalgam, “Even if we sifted through all the known evidence for Roman weddings, collected the elements common to each, and said with relative certainty that these were the rites and rituals of the Roman wedding known to Romans of that historical period, this ceremony – this amalgam wedding – would be our own creation, and not the experience of any one Roman.”<sup>11</sup> More than that, we must also take into account that the authors of the time would be writing with their own bias, causing them to emphasize parts which they deemed important. This further muddies the evidence that we have.

However, despite that, scholars do have a fairly decent theory of what parts constituted a Roman wedding. It is simply important to take into account the difficulty with which such theories have been developed, and to remember that the weddings themselves likely varied between people. It is additionally important to remember that the term “Roman wedding” refers to a huge number of people across a wide range of class, time, and location. So, while being wary of such generalities, I do my best to describe what would have been the practices during Virgil’s time.

First and foremost, the purpose of a Roman wedding was to produce legitimate offspring.<sup>12</sup> Praise for women was commonly focused on her sexual virtue - her ability to produce children, mainly sons, and her loyalty to her husband. The former can be seen in Quintilian’s preface to *Institutes 6*, wherein Quintilian grieves the loss of his young wife, but calls it a good death, as she died giving birth to a son.

si non meo casu, cui tamen nihil obici nisi quod uiuam potest, at illorum certe quos utique inmeritos mors acerba damnauit, erepta prius mihi matre eorundem, quae nondum expleto aetatis undeuicesimo anno duos enixa filios, quamuis acerbissimis rapta fatis, <non> infelix decessit. [5] Ego uel hoc uno malo sic eram adflictus ut me iam nulla fortuna posset efficere felicem. Nam cum, omni uirtute quae in feminas cadit functa,

---

<sup>11</sup> Hersch (2010) 1.

<sup>12</sup> Dixon (2010) 247.

insanabilem attulit marito dolorem, tum aetate tam puellari, praesertim meae comparata, potest et ipsa numerari inter uulnera orbitatis. (Quint. *Inst.* 6 *praef.* 4-5)

If such neglect of the gods is not visible in my own person, to whom nothing can be objected but that I am still alive, it is certainly manifest in the fate of those whom cruel death has condemned to perish so undeservedly, their mother having been previously snatched from me, who, after giving birth to a second son, before she had completed her nineteenth year, died, though cut off prematurely, a happy death. [5] By that one calamity I was so deeply afflicted that no good fortune could ever afterwards render me completely happy, for, exhibiting every virtue that can grace a woman, she not only caused incurable grief to her husband, but, being of so girlish an age, especially when compared with my own, her loss might be counted even as that of a daughter. (tr. Watson)

There are also examples of funerary inscriptions for women, in which the first thing mentioned is the production of sons.<sup>13</sup> As for the latter, in legendary accounts of women, such as Penelope, wife of Odysseus, and Lucretia, wife of L. Tarquinius Collatinus, we learn that these stories “...canonized female sexual loyalty within marriage as an important female trait and provided models for generations of Greco-Roman women.”<sup>14</sup> Penelope famously fended off suitors for ten years while waiting for Odysseus to return home, while Lucretia killed herself after being raped by Sextus Tarquinius. They serve as an example of wives remaining devoted and loyal to their husbands no matter the cost.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, the importance of female virginity comes in part from the desire for legitimate offspring.<sup>16</sup> In fact, a large part of the ceremony surrounding the Roman wedding was to proclaim the woman’s virginity and show the onlookers, “...by an outward show of ritual garments and actions, an invisible gift she brought to her husband that would make possible the birth of his legitimate progeny.”<sup>17</sup> As such, the importance of legitimacy cannot be understated when it comes to Roman marriage. These children would then

---

<sup>13</sup> See e.g., *CIL* 1.2.1211 (= *ILS* 8403)

<sup>14</sup> Glazebrook (2013) 73.

<sup>15</sup> See the story of Arria (Plin. *Epist.* 3.16) and the so-called *Laudatio Turiae* (*ILS* 8393).

<sup>16</sup> Hersch (2010) 11.

<sup>17</sup> Hersch (2010) 11.

belong to the father's family line, and even remain with him in the case of divorce. All of this was to ensure the continuation of family lineage, and the birth of productive members of Rome. This is seen through many customs and laws, such as the legal age for girls being 12 years old, "... the age at which the Romans thought menarche occurred; the girl was said then to be *viripotens*, 'capable of receiving a man.'<sup>18</sup> These Roman attitudes can be seen even within our text. In the beginning of the *Aeneid*, Juno tells Aeolus that she will give him a nymph in marriage, in exchange for his help. In the exchange, she specifically says the nymph would "... make you the father of fair offspring," (*Aen.* 1.75) [...*et pulchra faciat te prole parentem*]. Juno is specifically offering Aeolus a wife for the express purpose of having children, showing these same Roman customs. This passage is moreover based on *Iliad* 14.224-279 where Hera bribes Hypnos with the promise of marriage to a nymph.<sup>19</sup> In that passage there is no hint of children involved. Therefore, Vergil's inclusion of children within the intertext emphasizes this specifically Roman aspect of marriage. Additionally, no regard is given for the nymph's thoughts or feelings. While in theory consent was required from the bridal couple and their fathers, in practice the consent of the couple was generally assumed. In the case of the bride, her consent was limited to simply not protesting her parent's choice, although even the legitimate grounds for protest were limited.<sup>20</sup> Although the woman's consent was technically required, it does not follow that her opinions or feelings were consulted.

Though not a formal part of the marriage, dowries were common. This was to help make the union appear more official, as opposed to something closer to concubinage.<sup>21</sup> In fact, no ceremony or dowry was legally necessary. All that was required was the legal capacity to marry -

---

<sup>18</sup> Glazebrook (2013) 79. Again, funerary epitaphs for deceased wives indicate (sometimes) age at marriage.

<sup>19</sup> See now Farrell (2021) 52-56.

<sup>20</sup> Glazebrook (2013) 79.

<sup>21</sup> Glazebrook (2013) 80.

age, status, etc - and the intent to be married. Over time, the presence of a witness became an unwritten necessity, primarily for the upper class. Because of the lack of formal requirements, Caldwell points out that, "... in the absence of witnesses to the agreement, a relationship could be misunderstood by outsiders and, in theory, even by the couple themselves."<sup>22</sup> The ceremony, including witnesses, served to make clear to both the public and the participants what the relationship was. Furthermore, having a ceremony of some sort was more typical for high-born people, as concern about whether the subsequent children of a relationship were legitimate or not. This need to ensure that everyone is on the same page caused marriages, especially elite marriages, to include additional ceremonies that drew in the public, mainly a procession by the bride to her husband's house. This provided the public with a clear indication that a marriage was taking place, and allowed them to bear witness to the fact, in case questions of legitimacy or the nature of the relationship should arise.

Finally, it is important to note that Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* during the formative period leading to Augustus' marriage reforms. While Virgil technically died before they were officially passed,<sup>23</sup> Augustus tried, and failed, to pass them in 28 BCE, during Vergil's life.<sup>24</sup> These were primarily put in place to ensure the production of legitimate heirs, though there was evidently a heavily moralizing component to the law as well. Though these are less important to this discussion than they are in relation to works like Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, they are still a key part to the historical backdrop to Virgil's writings, which was one of uncertainty in regards to the politics of marriage. Aeneas, as the great ancestor of the Romans, stands as the prime example for what a good Roman should do. Yet when it comes to marriage, Virgil does not clearly align

---

<sup>22</sup> Caldwell (2008) 431.

<sup>23</sup> In 18 BCE (Suet. *Aug.* 34).

<sup>24</sup> Williams (1962) 28.

himself with Augustus' failed marriage laws. He could have painted the marriage between Dido and Aeneas as immoral, and thus turn it into a form of propaganda in favor of Augustus' reforms. This would have fit well with other sections of the *Aeneid*, which laud Augustus' accomplishments. However, by refraining from doing that, Virgil causes the reader to wonder if Augustus is right in trying to reform marriage. In any case, Vergil is clearly engaging with an important contemporary issue by dealing with questions of marriage.

## **Language**

The primary discussion of this paper will be looking at key passages of the *Aeneid* and discussing how various words and phrases may have been interpreted by a Roman audience, as well as any oddities in their presentation or usage. To this end, I will be examining the original Latin, as it pertains the most to the discussion of contemporary Romans, and using my own translations from the *Aeneid* unless stated otherwise. Though many scholars have translated the *Aeneid* over the centuries, all of those translations are limited by the author's own biases and the language it is being translated into, as the fact that some meaning will inevitably be lost. First off, every author, consciously or unconsciously, has their own biases when translating a text. They may pose certain restrictions upon themselves, such as maintaining poetic verse or a similar line structure, that they feel is most accurate to the text. Though I myself have my own biases, I have done my best to translate the text accurately and be transparent in my decisions. Secondly, certain words just do not have an exact representation from Latin to English. An example of this is the Latin word *pronuba*. A *pronuba* is a married woman who attends the bride in a Roman wedding. Though the definition is straight forward, there is not a good simple translation of it into English. Alternatively, there are some words that lose some of their nuance

when translated. For the purposes of this paper, I have done my best to emphasize the words that are key to the discussion of marriage, and will point out additional nuances that are not easily included in the translation itself.

The first place in *Aeneid* 4 where marriage between Dido and Aeneas is seriously brought up is when Juno confronts Venus on her bewitchment of Dido (which had taken place in Book 1). However, instead of fighting her, Juno offers Venus a snide congratulations, and proposes an end to their conflict:

Quam simul ac tali persensit peste teneri  
cara Iouis coniunx nec famam obstare furori,  
talibus adgreditur Venerem Saturnia dictis:  
“egregiam uero laudem et spolia ampla refertis  
tuque puerque tuus (magnum et memorabile numen),  
una dolo diuum si femina uicta duorum est.  
nec me adeo fallit ueritam te moenia nostra  
suspectas habuisse domos Karthaginis altae.  
sed quis erit modus, aut quo nunc certamine tanto?  
quin potius pacem aeternam pactosque hymenaeos  
exercemus? habes tota quod mente petisti:  
ardet amans Dido traxitque per ossa furorem.  
communem hunc ergo populum paribusque regamus  
auspiciis; liceat Phrygio seruire marito  
dotalisque tuae Tyrios permittere dextrae.”  
(Verg. *Aen.* 4.90-104)

At the same time, Jupiter’s beloved wife  
perceived Dido was in the grip of such a disaster,  
And that care for her reputation does not stand in the way of Dido’s mad passion,  
Saturn’s daughter approached Venus and states;  
“Truly, an excellent prize, a spoil you bring home,  
You and your boy, great and memorable God,  
One woman is crushed by the craft of two gods.  
Nor indeed does it escape me you that you have held fear for our ramparts,  
And suspect the homes of growing Carthage.  
But what end will there be, or where do we go now in such a contest?  
Instead, why do we not pursue everlasting peace, and agree upon a marriage?  
You have it all, whatever your mind desires:  
Dido is aflame with love, and draws frenzy into the bone.  
Therefore let us rule this people together, as equals;  
Let her, for all I care, serve a Phrygian husband,

And yield her Tyrians to your hand as a dowry.”

The most clear part of this dialogue is Juno proposing a marriage agreement, *pactos hymenaeos*. Not only do we have the presence of *hymenaeos*, which explicitly is related to marriage, but even *pactos*, to arrange or agree upon, is often used to discuss marriage. It is clear that Juno intends to marry the two mortals even though she is not entirely happy with the situation.<sup>25</sup> While there are some irregularities, there are some words that clearly point towards marriage, mainly *marito* (“spouse”) and *dotalisque* (“relating to a dowry”). These two words cannot be misunderstood to mean anything other than that which pertains to marriage. In this way, it seems like Juno is genuinely offering to give up Carthage, her city, to Venus as a dowry for Dido’s marriage to Aeneas. However, what is most interesting about the language here is the presence of *servire* (“to serve”). Juno isn’t saying Dido will marry, or even serve in marriage, which would be a verb more like *nubere*, but that Dido will be a slave to Aeneas. This raises the question of whether Juno means for them to marry or is commenting on Dido’s slave-like devotion to Aeneas. On the other hand, it is possible that Juno is alluding to the legal conception of Roman *manus* marriage.<sup>26</sup> If so, then Vergil has incorporated yet another recognizable aspect of Roman marriage into Juno’s speech.

While at first glance it seems atypical for women to be arranging the marriage. Certainly they are goddesses, but that does not exempt them from misogyny. This is especially true if we can understand them as acting effectively as Roman *patresfamilias* arranging a dynastic marriage between aristocratic families.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Roman weddings are one of the few places in which

---

<sup>25</sup> Again, Monti (1981) 30-36 interprets this as an arranged, dynastic marriage akin to those among the great aristocratic families of the Roman Republic.

<sup>26</sup> Gaius *Inst.* 1.48 implies that the condition of *manus* in marriage (i.e. the subordinate status of the wife) is akin to *mancipium* (status of those who are enslaved).

<sup>27</sup> Monti (1981) 30-36.

Roman women feature prominently. “In the majority of descriptions of Roman weddings, Roman authors focus on women’s involvement in the ceremony, from the female relatives who bedeck the bride, to the woman - married only once - who, some modern scholars assert, joins the hands of the couple in marriage (the *pronuba*) ... Apart from the *auspex* (one who seeks omens) and the groom, men stand largely in the background....”<sup>28</sup> So, while it is unusual for women to be arranging the marriage, the involvement of women in Roman weddings is important.

Additionally, this scene serves as a mimicry of the typical negotiations that would take place between the parents of the couple, with Venus being Aeneas’ mother and Juno as Dido’s patron. Juno’s position is a bit more unorthodox, but given that Dido’s brother killed her first husband, it is unlikely that her family would be involved in marriage negotiations.

In response to Juno’s offer, Venus gives token approval, without actually agreeing to it. Juno goes on to lay out her plan. While the two mortals are out hunting, she will create a storm, causing the couple to take shelter together in a cave. Inside which, “I will be present... and join them in everlasting marriage, and declare them one. / This will be their marriage,” (*Aen.* 4.125) [*adereo et... conubio iungam stabili propriamque dicabo. / hic hymenaeus erit.*]. At first glance, Juno’s words seem to offer no room for doubt. She, the goddess of marriage, will be present, *adereo*, in the cave, where she will join them, *iungam*, in marriage, *conubio*. It even ends with the simple three words, *hic hymenaeus erit*, leaving no doubt that this will be their marriage. However, these two sentences are less clear cut than they appear.

Starting with the word *iungam*, commonly translated as “I will join” or even “I will yoke.” While the verb is sometimes used in reference to marriage, it is more often used to signify an alliance or simply to clasp hands. In Book 1, Aeneas is reunited with his mother and says *cur*

---

<sup>28</sup> Hersch (2010) 2.

*dextrae iungere dextram* (*Aen.* 1.408), meaning clasping hands rather than joining in marriage. The more common verb to join in marriage is *iugare*. This word explicitly relates to marriage, such that it is one of Juno's epithets, *Iuno Iuga*.<sup>29</sup> That Juno herself would use *iungere* instead of *iugare* makes us question whether a marriage is actually going to take place, or if it is simply an alliance. However, two things make the meaning more explicit. Firstly, the presence of *conubio*, marriage. *Conubio* has no ambiguous meaning that could change that Juno is joining them in marriage. Secondly, the entire phrase, *conubio iugam stabili propriamque dicabo*, is word for word what Juno previously said in Book 1 to Aeolus (*Aen.* 1.73). In that scene, Juno promises him a nymph to marry if he helps her sink Aeneas' ship. There the meaning of marriage is clear and carries over to Juno's later offer.

However, the most ambiguous line here is that which appears the most simple: *Hic hymenaeus erit*. This is an unusual use of the singular *hymenaeus*, which has led to much scholarly discussion.<sup>30</sup> I have translated it to be, "this will be their marriage," but the singular *hymenaeus* more commonly is used to mean the wedding song or the god Hymen, while the plural, *hymenaei* typically is used to refer to the marriage itself.<sup>31</sup> As such, what seems the most clear cut actually leaves us with many questions. Is Juno saying, as some have translated it, that Hymen will be present? Or is she possibly saying this is their wedding song, which does not necessarily mean the wedding will occur? If Virgil does mean that this is their marriage, why use the less common singular form of *hymenaeus*?

Looking at the wedding song, it was a key part of the Roman wedding ceremony and was performed during the procession of the bride from her parent's house to her new husband's

---

<sup>29</sup> An altar to *Iuno Iuga* is attested in Rome (*Festus De verborum significatione* 92). On our passage Servius remarks that Juno sometimes has the epithet *iugalis*.

<sup>30</sup> Caldwell (2008) 423.

<sup>31</sup> O'Hara (2011) 34.

home.<sup>32</sup> Dido does not have such a procession. Not only because Aeneas has no home at the moment, but possibly because they are not actually engaging in a wedding. What immediately follows Juno's pronouncement is a detailed description of the hunting party, which we know Juno plans on sabotaging with rain. It seems there is no wedding song or procession here. However, Lauren Caldwell makes a compelling argument that not only is the scene in the cave reminiscent of a Roman wedding, but the entire hunting scene preceding it has parallels to Catullus 61, our most detailed depiction of a Roman wedding, and is representative of the procession of the bride to the husband's house.<sup>33</sup> If we accept this interpretation, then *hic hymenaeus erit* could be Juno kicking off the wedding procession with the wedding song.

After the metaphorical wedding procession, Dido and Aeneas find themselves together in a cave, whereupon we have the much debated wedding scene.

Prima et Tellus et pronuba Iuno  
dant signum; fulsere ignes et conscius aether  
conubiis, summoque ulularunt vertice Nymphae.  
Ille dies primus leti primusque malorum  
causa fuit; neque enim specie famave movetur  
nec iam furtivum Dido meditatur amorem:  
coniugium vocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam.  
(*Aen.* 4.166-172)

The Primordial Earth and Pronuba Juno give the signal;  
The fire flashes and the heavens are witness to the marriage,  
And the Nymphs on the highest peak shout.  
That day was the first death and the first misfortune  
The cause of it all; Nor indeed was she moved by appearance or fame  
Nor now does Dido consider her love secret:  
She calls it marriage, with that name she covers over her guilt.

Virgil has managed to pack a lot of imagery into this one passage, so I will break it down. At the beginning, we have *Tellus* and *aether*, the earth and the sky, which are both acting as a witness, a

---

<sup>32</sup> Hersch (2010) 239.

<sup>33</sup> Caldwell (2008).

key part of Roman marriage, but the invocation of them is suggestive of the *Hieros Gamos*, the sacred marriage, of the Earth and Sky<sup>34</sup>. Within Lucretius' text *De Rerum Natura*, he describes Father Sky descending into the lap of Mother Earth in fertilizing showers: *postremo pereunt imbres, ubi eos pater aether / in gremium matris terrai praecipitavit* (Lucretius *DRN* 1.250 "Lastly, showers perish when father ether / Has cast them into the lap of mother earth," tr. Melville). Its inclusion here additionally implies that what is occurring in the cave between Dido and Aeneas is a sacred marriage as well.

Next, have the invocation of *Pronuba Iuno*. As I discussed above, *pronuba* is a difficult word to translate into English while keeping its context. Fagles, for example, translated it as "Juno, Queen of Marriage" (Fagles 133), choosing to reference Juno's domain, whereas Buckley goes for "Juno who presides over marriage" (Buckley 180), and Conington actually switches the epithet to Tellus, "Earth, the venerable dame, and Juno" (Conington 107). Regardless of how it is translated, Juno is unmistakably here in her role as the goddess of marriage, and fulfilling her promise to Venus, where she said she would be present at the marriage.

Much of the following imagery is reminiscent of aspects of Roman marriage, such that the contemporary audience would not have failed to recognize them as such<sup>35</sup>. Within the cave, the lightning flashes, *fulsere ignes*, take the place of the usual nuptial torches and the nymphs shout, *ulularunt*, which is suggestive of a wedding song, though typically *ululare* is used for mourning as opposed to *hymenaeus*<sup>36</sup>. However, mourning is more fitting, as the following line says, "That day was the first death and the first misfortune / The cause of it all," (*Aen.* 4.169)

---

<sup>34</sup> O'Hara (2011) 39.

<sup>35</sup> Prescott (1927) 278.

<sup>36</sup> Hersch (2014) 18.

[*ille dies primus leti primusque malorum / causa fuit...*]. Though a wedding, it is marred by the approaching disaster, making a mourning chant more thematically accurate than a wedding song.

While most of this points towards what would be interpreted by a contemporary Roman audience as a wedding, the episode's conclusion confuses the issue some. Directly following is the line "...nor now does Dido consider her love secret: / She calls it marriage, with that name she covers over her guilt," (*Aen.* 4.171) [*...nec iam furtivum Dido meditatur amorem: / coniugium vocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam*]. Firstly, we have *coniugium*, which means marriage is unmistakably being discussed in this line. But before that we have *furtivum...amorem*, her secret love, a phrase which could suggest a clandestine affair. Although the phrase literally refers to Dido's early concealment of her unwanted passion, the phrase also shows up in Latin love poetry of the time in context that clearly describes affairs. In one of Catullus' love poems, he tells his lover Lesbia that his kisses to her will be, "...as many as the stars, when the night is silent, / that see the secret love of men ..." (Catullus 7.8) [*... aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox, / furtivos hominum vident amores...*]. Catullus' relationship with Lesbia is famously an affair, leading the same to be implied to Dido and Aeneas in this context.

This idea of a clandestine love affair hangs over the rest of the sentence, culminating with her guilt, *culpam*. However, it is unclear who is calling Dido and Aeneas' relationship *culpam*. Is Dido feeling guilty that she betrayed her oath of celibacy to her first husband? Not only is she breaking her oath, but she is breaking from the Roman ideal of *univira*, a woman who only marries once and considered the ideal for Roman women.<sup>37</sup> Or is the narrator condemning her actions? Furthermore, Dido *vocat*, calls their relationship marriage, but does she do so openly, or only in her mind? As we have discussed, a large part of the Roman marriage was the presence of

---

<sup>37</sup> See Williams (1958) 23-24 for a discussion, in connection with Dido, of the sources of the *univira* ideal.

witnesses, to ensure everyone was on the same page and to provide proof that the marriage properly took place. The problem arises here that all of their witnesses, specifically *Aether*, are divine and not spreading the news around. Thus it falls to the couple to tell others. If Dido is calling their relationship marriage only in her mind, then those around her may not know and have to rely on rumors, and it also leaves room for confusion between Dido and Aeneas as to the state of their relationship, which happens later in the book. Overall the line condemns Dido, implying that she is the only one that calls their relationship marriage, and that she does so only to make it acceptable, as opposed to an affair. It additionally implies that the scene we just witnessed in the cave is not, in fact, a wedding, but simply some elaborate ritual, casual hookup, or even just the two of them sheltering from the rain. It was all very ambiguous. This could be a harsh reversal from the previous lines, with the imagery that is highly reminiscent of that of marriages. In this way there is a disconnect between the force of the marriage imagery, which, “the Roman reader could hardly have failed to associate it in his thoughts with the splendor of a bridal procession, with the festal preparations for marriage in his everyday experience,”<sup>38</sup> and the force of the narrative, which, being the story of Aeneas, sides with him. However that tension between the two forces manifests in the form of textual instability, leaving the reader unsure which direction to take.

As to the question of whether Dido calls their relationship marriage openly or not, it is unclear. However, news of their relationship does spread across Africa thanks to Rumor, who is depicted as a monstrous terror. That Rumor is the one to spread it and not the couple themselves clearly shows that there is some disagreement or hesitancy on the part of the couple. However, it is unclear whether Rumor only spreads false news or also the truth. She is described as,

---

<sup>38</sup> Prescott (1927) 278.

“Clutching what is false and foul no less than reporting truth...reciting equally fact and impossibilities...” (*Aen.* 4.188) [...*tam ficti pravique tenax quam nuntia veri... et pariter facta atque infecta canebat...*]. This description seems to indicate that Rumor doesn't only just spread lies, but the truth as well. Additionally, it is Rumor who later brings word to Dido that the Trojans are preparing to leave, which was true, though Aeneas did not intend to leave without telling her. So, while it is monstrous Rumor who spreads news of the marriage, it is not clear whether in doing so she is spreading a truth or a lie. Additionally, as we do not get the scene of a clear marriage with both parties consenting, even the reader is not clear whether a marriage has taken place. Though it is unlikely that Dido, bewitched by Cupid, would not consent to a marriage, it is less clear whether Aeneas would give verbal agreement.

It is after Rumor has spread her monstrous wings that we have the final scene I want to examine: the argument between Dido and Aeneas after Dido finds out that he is attempting to leave the city. In her confrontation, Dido asserts that the two are married, while Aeneas argues that they are not. “But the queen (for who can deceive a lover) / Divined his treachery...” (*Aen.* 4.296) [*At regina dolos (quis fallere possit amantem?) / praesensit...*]. As before with *culpa*, it is unclear whether it is the narrator who is calling Aeneas' actions *dolos*, treachery, or if it is the text representing Dido's point of view. However, it is clear that, on some level, Aeneas' actions are being deemed reprehensible. The other key point here is *amantem*, lover. The narrative aside calls Dido Aeneas' lover, not his wife. Though the two are not mutually exclusive, it does imply to a degree that this is an affair and not a legal marriage. As the goal of marriage was to produce offspring, procreation was, by default, involved. However, for Roman men, sexual activity was not restricted to marriage. And it was thought that the variety of partners was matched by the forms of love they could take. “For instance, love between spouses ideally contained a deep-

rooted affection that belonged not so much to passion as to friendship and was characterized by terms such as *societas* and *concordia*. An affair with a prostitute, on the other hand, could be no more than a matter of physical, passionate love”<sup>39</sup> By placing Dido in the realm of lover, her relationship is being restricted to a purely physical one, which is distinctly different from what Dido felt their relationship was. After raging across the city, Dido confronts Aeneas. In her first words to him, she called Aeneas *perfide*, traitor or faithless one (*Aen.* 4.305), and later repeats it at line 366. Not only does this clearly show what she feels about the situation, but is also reminiscent of Catullus 64, which is the poet’s rendition of the myth of Theseus and Ariadne. A large chunk of the poem focuses on Ariadne being left behind, and her reaction to her abandonment. In the first sentence, she repeatedly calls Theseus *perfide* for abandoning her. “So, having carried me off from my father’s home, faithless one, have you left me on deserted shores, Theseus?” (Catullus 64.132) [*Sicine me patriis avectam, perfide, ab aris, perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseus?*]. Ariadne’s curse causes Theseus to forget the prearranged signals of his arrival and thereby causes the death of his father Aegeus (Catullus 64.238-250). In Catullus’ version there is no indication that this is an injustice perpetrated on Theseus and therefore Ariadne’s curse is a just one. Thus, in alluding to the circumstances of another woman abandoned by lover, Virgil is furthering the disapproval of Aeneas’ actions. Additionally, *perfide* carries the implication of oathbreaking, which in turn implies that marriage vows, something to break, were exchanged. Furthermore, Dido calls his plan *nefas*, impious. While this is generally bad, it is even worse for Aeneas, whose epithet is pious. The Roman conception of piety extended beyond devotion to the gods to include devotion to one’s family. In calling Aeneas impious, Dido is saying he is acting against his family, mainly her as his wife. She continues,

---

<sup>39</sup> Gutting (2006) 263. Gutting surveys the relevant inscriptions.

“Does our love not hold you? Nor the offered right hand?” (*Aen.* 4.307) [*nec te noster amor nec te data dextera quondam...*]. Here, Dido claims that their love was not one sided, which supports the idea that they both would agree to a marriage, the key required element. She goes on to call upon the offered right hand, *data dextera quondam*. Though the clasping of hands is a key element of Roman marriage,<sup>40</sup> with numerous statues and reliefs being found that depict husbands and wives clasping hands,<sup>41</sup> it is unclear whether, in this case, it was a pledge of marriage or merely a political alliance. Throughout the *Aeneid*, Virgil uses the clasping of hands in a multitude of situations, not just for marriage. As such, it is unclear whether the right hand Dido references may have been meant as an alliance, but was misconstrued by her to mean marriage. Dido emphasizes this aspect of Roman weddings by begging, “I pray, by these tears and your right hand... By our wedding vows, by the marriage we began...” (*Aen.* 4.314) [*per ego has lacrimas dextramque tuam te... per conubia nostra, per inceptos hymenaeos...*]. The repetition, this time with specific reference to marriage, leaves the audience with no doubt that Dido believes that their clasping of hands represented a marriage agreement. She flat out calls it *conubia nostra*, our marriage. Dido continues her prayer to Aeneas by asking, “In whose hands do you leave me here to die, O Guest / (Since that name is all that remains of ‘husband’)?” (*Aen.* 4.323) [*cui me moribundam deseris hospes / (hoc solum nomen quoniam de coniuge restat)?*]. Dido continues using extremely clear language, calling Aeneas formerly *coniuge*. In fact, she is saying that not only was Aeneas her husband, but that, by leaving, he has betrayed his oath to her. She also calls his *hospes*, guest, to further criticize his actions, as what he is doing goes against guest-friendship by endangering his host. He is leaving her at the mercy of the surrounding hostile African lords. Intertextually speaking, Dido’s reference to guest-friendship

---

<sup>40</sup> Hersch (2010) 199.

<sup>41</sup> Hersch (2010) 200.

activates the background of Odysseus in Phaeacia (both the episode in Carthage in the *Aeneid* and the episode in Phaeacia in the *Odyssey* are the final stops of the heroes in their journeys).<sup>42</sup> Dido effectively compares her own behavior to the benign and helpful Alcinous, and implies that Aeneas' behavior falls short of that of Odysseus.

However, for all her arguments, Aeneas, forewarned by Jove, presents a simple counterargument. They were never married. "I did not try to conceal this stealthy flight, do not imagine / Nor did I ever hold out the marriage torch, or enter into a marriage pact with you, (*Aen.* 4.337) [*neque ego hanc abscondere furto / speravi (ne finge) fugam, nec coniugis umquam / praetendi taedas aut haec in foedera veni,*]. Though his first point may be sincere, the reader knows he previously told his crew to conceal their initial preparations to depart, leaving the agonizing job of telling Dido to himself. To his second point, he argues that he did not hold out, *praetendi*, the marriage torch. *Praetendi*, here can be implied to mean hold out, but can also be to put forward as a pretense.<sup>43</sup> This distances himself from the accusations of marriage, as he states that he never did anything even close to a wedding ceremony with Dido. He even uses *foedera*, which generally means a political alliance, rather than *conubia* to further distance himself from Dido. He says that not only did he not enter into a marriage with her, but he did not even enter into an alliance. The only thing holding them together are guest relations, which Dido implies he has also broken. The argument ends with Dido's response, where she insults Aeneas, stresses what she has done for him, and wishes that he will die at sea calling her name (*Aen.* 4.365-387). Her two speeches contain multiple elements in common with the speeches of Medea (in both Euripides' play and Apollonius' *Argonautica*) and with Ariadne in Catullus 64. All three women call upon in anger the oaths men swore to them and demand reparation for the deeds they

---

<sup>42</sup> See Knauer (1964) 148-222.

<sup>43</sup> *OLD* s.v. *praetendo* 4.

committed for them. In all these other texts, the men do not come off as in the right, a fact Virgil had to have been aware of when he adapted elements of the speeches for Dido. In the next section I examine Vergil's intertexts with Apollonius and Euripides.

## Medea

While Homer's influence on Virgil is undeniable, it is worth exploring the impact Apollonius had on the *Aeneid*.<sup>44</sup> In his book, *The Argonautica of Apollonius*, Richard Hunter delves into Apollonius' influence on Virgil, arguing that:

Apollonius' use of Homer, Virgil's use of Apollonius, and Virgil's use of Homer are inter-related studies. While the *Argonautica* is a voyage through the Homeric texts, Virgil voyages past and beyond both Greek epics. Whereas Apollonius had paradoxically shown us a world constructed from Homer but crucially 'before Homer', Virgil presents a world already visited and marked by both Homer and Apollonius, and he structures an opposition between his two predecessors which bears a heavy weight of meaning.<sup>45</sup>

While Hunter is perhaps overly poetic in his description of the relationship between these three authors, the fact remains that there is clear influence from Apollonius' works on Virgil. He goes on to compare key moments throughout the *Aeneid* and *Argonautica*, ending with:

What I hope, however, is clear is that, at a deep level, Virgil exploits the *Argonautica* in more than one way, and that the 'idea' of this Greek poem is an important and significant strain within the array of textual voices that the *Aeneid* harnesses to its task.<sup>46</sup>

Hunter lays out a compelling argument as to the poetic importance and stylistic overlap between the two authors, but glosses over the narrative similarities, which is what I will be examining.

While Vergil's love story, the machinations of the goddesses, and the heroine's assistance of the hero come from Apollonius, Euripides' *Medea* provides much material for the ending of the

---

<sup>44</sup> See generally Nelis (2001).

<sup>45</sup> Hunter (1993) 172.

<sup>46</sup> Hunter (1993) 188.

Dido and Aeneas story.<sup>47</sup> In particular, the argument between Dido and Aeneas is reminiscent of Euripides' argument between Jason and Medea. And obviously the tragic ending of Book 4 has more in common with Euripides than Apollonius.

Stripped down to the bare bones, the stories of Dido and Medea, as depicted in Apollonius and Euripides, are incredibly similar. The two women are foreign (i.e. not native to the author's origin) royalty, who, through divine intervention by the same goddesses, fall in love with the hero, for whom they sacrifice their honor. The couples are then "married" in a cave before the heroine is abandoned by her partner. Digging deeper, we find that Virgil has taken scenes whole cloth from both Greek writers.

Starting from the beginning, both Medea and Dido are foreigners to the audience. Medea is the princess of Colchis, located on the far Eastern shore of the Black Sea. Her foreignness features prominently in Euripides' adaptation, *Medea*:

πάντων δ' ὅσ' ἔστ' ἔμψυχα καὶ γνώμην ἔχει  
γυναϊκές ἐσμεν ἀθλιώτατον φυτόν:  
ἄς πρῶτα μὲν δεῖ χρημάτων ὑπερβολῆ  
πόσιν πρίασθαι, δεσπότην τε σώματος  
[λαβεῖν: κακοῦ γὰρ τοῦτ' ἔτ' ἄλγιον κακόν].  
κὰν τῷδ' ἀγὼν μέγιστος, ἢ κακὸν λαβεῖν  
ἢ χρηστόν: οὐ γὰρ εὐκλεεῖς ἀπαλλαγὰι  
γυναιξὶν οὐδ' οἷόν τ' ἀνήνασθαι πόσιν.  
ἐς καινὰ δ' ἦθη καὶ νόμους ἀφιγμένην  
δεῖ μάντιν εἶναι, μὴ μαθοῦσαν οἴκοθεν,  
ὅπως ἄριστα χρήσεται ξυνευνέτη.  
(Eur. *Med.* 230-240)

Of all creatures that have breath and sensation, we women are the most unfortunate. First at an exorbitant price we must buy a husband and master of our bodies. [This misfortune is more painful than misfortune.] And the outcome of our life's striving hangs on this, whether we take a bad or a good husband. For divorce is discreditable for women and it is not possible to refuse wedlock. And when a woman comes into the new customs and practices of her husband's house, she must somehow divine, since she has not learned it at home, how she shall best deal with her husband. (tr. Kovacs)

---

<sup>47</sup> Collard (1975).

Medea cites that not only does she suffer as a woman, but doubly so being a foreigner, who is thus unaccustomed to the laws and customs of her husband's land, and lacks the ability to return home. Similarly, Dido, as the queen of Carthage, is doubly foreign. Firstly, she is a foreigner to Carthage itself, having originally been from Tyre before fleeing her murderous brother. She managed to raise the city of Carthage, but her position in Africa is tenuous, as:

Nec venit in mentem quorum consederis arvis?  
Hinc Gaetulae urbes, genus insuperabile bello,  
et Numidae infreni cingunt et inhospita Syrtis:  
hinc deserta siti regio lateque furentes  
Barcaeii  
(*Aen.* 4.39-43)

Does it not come in your mind whose land you have settled down?  
These Gaetulian cities, a race insurmountable in wars,  
and the unbridled Numidians and inhospitable Syrtis surround us;  
These desert region thirst and the people of Barce lie hidden,

Here Anna reminds Dido of the tenuous political position of the new city of Carthage and the Carthaginians' foreign status in Africa. Dido is moreover foreign to the audience for being a Carthaginian, Rome's ancestral enemy and thus the worst kind of foreign for Virgil's Roman audience. Notice Jupiter's admonition to Aeneas (via Mercury) not to stay in Carthage:

si nulla accendit tantarum gloria rerum  
nec super ipse sua molitur laude laborem,  
Ascanione pater Romanas inuidet arces?  
quid struit? aut qua spe inimica in gente moratur  
nec prolem Ausoniam et Lauinia respicit arua?  
nauiget! haec summa est, hic nostri nuntius esto.  
(*Aen.* 4.232-237)

If such a great future glory does not stir him,  
nor work for the sake of his own fame,  
does the father begrudge the son Roman walls?  
Whose walls does he build? What hope makes him delay among his foes,  
dot considering his Italian offspring and Lavinian fields?  
Let him set sail! That is the sum of it. Let that be our message!

Jupiter here characterizes Aeneas' love affair with Dido as an impediment to later history generally, and to the Punic Wars specifically. So not only is Dido foreign to the reader, but also in her own city. This places her in a precarious position, both narratively and to the Roman audience, which she is forced into when she is made to fall in love with Aeneas.

On that note, the intervention of the gods on Medea and Dido's life are one of the areas of striking similarities, down to the same deities. Looking first at Medea, we see Hera tentatively approaching Aphrodite:

οὐ τι βίης χατέουσαι ικάνομεν οὐδέ τι χειρῶν,  
ἀλλ' αὐτῶς ἀκέουσα τεῶ ἐπικέκλεο παιδὶ  
παρθένον Αἰήτεω θέλξαι πόθῳ Αἰσονίδαο.  
εἰ γάρ οἱ κείνη συμφράσσεται εὐμενέουσα,  
ῥηιδίως μιν ἐλόντα δέρος χρύσειον οἴω  
νοστήσειν ἐς Ἴωλκόν, ἐπεὶ δολόεσσα τέτυκται  
(Apollonius *Argonautica* 3.84-89)

We have not come in need of force or strength of hands. No, just calmly call upon your son to enchant Aetes' daughter with desire for Jason, for if she will give him kindly advice, I believe that he will readily seize the golden fleece and return to Iolcus, because she is very cunning. (tr. Race)

Though one could question Medea's ability to willingly do anything when under the influence of the gods, it is clear that the focus is on Jason and his quest, and Medea just happens to be a convenient pawn. Although Aphrodite initially mocks Hera, she quickly agrees, and sends Eros down. The god of love easily completes the task,

αὐτῶ δ' ὑπὸ βαιὸς ἐλυσθεὶς  
Αἰσονίδῃ γλυφίδας μέσση ἐνικάτθετο νευρῆ,  
ἰθὺς δ' ἀμφοτέρησι διασχόμενος παλάμησιν  
ἦκ' ἐπὶ Μηδείῃ· τὴν δ' ἀμφασίῃ λάβε θυμόν.  
αὐτὸς δ' ὑπορόφοιο παλιμπετεὺς ἐκ μεγάροιο  
καρχαλῶων ἦιξε· βέλος δ' ἐνεδαίετο κούρη  
νέρθεν ὑπὸ κραδίῃ φλογὶ εἴκελον.  
(Apollonius *Argonautica* 3.281-287)

He crouched down small at the feet of Jason himself, placed the arrow's notches in the center of the bowstring, pulled it straight apart with both hands, and shot at Medea; and speechless amazement seized her heart. He darted back out of the high-roofed hall, laughing out loud, and the arrow burned deep down in the girl's heart like a flame. (tr. Race)

At the will of the gods, Medea is trapped into a scheme which will force her to abandon her homeland and honor. It is the same deities, but in different roles, that inflict love upon Dido.

Venus, afraid of what Juno may do, asks Cupid to get close to Dido by disguising himself as

Ascanius:

tu faciem illius noctem non amplius unam  
falle dolo et notos pueri puer indue uultus,  
ut, cum te gremio accipiet laetissima Dido  
regalis inter mensas laticemque Lyaeum,  
cum dabit amplexus atque oscula dulcia figet,  
occultum inspires ignem fallasque ueneno.  
(*Aen.* 1.683-688)

And you with your cunning,  
forge his appearance--just one night, no more--put on  
the familiar features of the boy, boy that you are,  
so when the wine flows free at the royal board  
and Dido, lost in joy, cradles you in her lap,  
caressing, kissing you gently, you can breathe  
your secret fire into her, poison the queen  
and she will never know.  
(tr. Fagles)

Venus proposes this elaborate plan so that Juno cannot retaliate against Aeneas through Dido.

Cupid obeys his mother's orders, leaving Dido "seized by a blind fire" (*Aen.* 4.2) [*caeco carpitur igni*]. Not only are the situations of Dido and Medea similar, but there is a common language of "fire" inciting them to love.

Of course, the heroes also make promises to the women. They don't simply accept aid without giving something in return. Jason is quick to promise,

σοὶ δ' ἂν ἐγὼ τίσαιμι χάριν μετόπισθεν ἀρωγῆς,  
ἢ θέμις, ὡς ἐπέοικε διάνδιχα ναιετάοντας,

οὔνομα καὶ καλὸν τεύχων κλέος  
(Apollonius *Argonautica* 3.990-992)

And thereafter, as is right, I would repay you with gratitude for your help, as befits those who dwell far apart, by making glorious your name and fame. (tr. Race)

He initially promises only to spread her name around the Mediterranean, but later he eagerly swears to marry her.

δαιμονίη, Ζεὺς αὐτὸς Ὀλύμπιος ὄρκιος ἔστω  
Ἥρη τε Ζυγίη, Διὸς εὐνέτις, ἧ μὲν ἐμοῖσιν  
κουριδίην σε δόμοισιν ἐνιστήσεσθαι ἄκοιτιν,  
εὔτ' ἂν ἐς Ἑλλάδα γαῖαν ἰκώμεθα νοστήσαντες.  
(Apollonius *Argonautica* 4.95-98)

Poor girl! Let Olympian Zeus himself be witness to my oath and Hera too, goddess of marriage and sharer of Zeus' bed, that I shall truly establish you in my home as my lawfully wedded wife when we reach the land of Hellas on our return. (tr. Race)

Jason very clearly and plainly states that he will marry Medea, as thanks for her help in obtaining the golden fleece. And the two actually end up marrying, though not upon returning to Hellas as Jason wanted. Instead, they face many roadblocks on their return journey, and must marry in order to pass by King Alkinoos' land. Upon hearing that the two must marry, the Argonauts quickly made their way to a cave for the ceremony.

ἄνθεα δέ σφιν  
νύμφαι ἀμεργόμεναι λευκοῖς ἐνὶ ποικίλα κόλποις  
ἐσφόρεον·  
[...]  
Ἥρη Ζηνὸς ἄκοιτις, Ἰήσωνα κυδαίνουσα.  
κεῖνο καὶ εἰσέτι νῦν ἱερὸν κληίζεται ἄντρον  
Μηδείης, ὅθι τοὺς γε σὺν ἀλλήλοισιν ἔμειξαν  
τεινάμεναι ἑανοὺς εὐώδεις·  
(Apollonius *Argonautica* 4.1143-1145, 1152-1155)

And for them the nymphs gathered many-colored flowers, which they brought in their white bosoms. [...] For Hera herself, Zeus' wife, urged them to come in Jason's honor. To this day that holy cave is called Medea's cave, where the nymphs spread the fragrant linens and joined the couple together. (tr. Race)

The happy occasion, if a bit rushed, is attended by Hera herself, along with a company of nymphs. This imagery is almost an exact replica of what we see in the *Aeneid*, with one key difference. Apollonius clearly says that the marriage of Jason and Medea is fulfilled, meaning it is finalized. There is no doubt that they are married. In fact it is only that they are married, and have had sex, that allows them to continue their journey to Hellas.

Euripides, so to speak, takes over for the latter half of Medea and Jason's relationship, wherein things go downhill, with his tragedy *Medea*.<sup>48</sup> Jason leaves Medea for another woman, claiming it is for the good of his sons. Medea, rather understandably, does not take his betrayal well, and she decides to kill Jason's new bride, father-in-law, and their two sons (Euripides *Medea* 772-823). Finally, after her murder spree, Medea departs on Helios' own chariot, effectively taking herself out of reach of Jason (1318-end). Within the play there are many discussions of marriage and what is expected of the participants. Though written in Ancient Greece, we see the same emphasis on producing children. While confronting Jason, Medea lists all that she has done for him, while bemoaning what little she has got in return.

καὶ ταῦθ' ὑφ' ἡμῶν, ὃ κάκιστ' ἀνδρῶν, παθῶν  
προύδωκας ἡμᾶς, καινὰ δ' ἐκτίσω λέχη,  
παίδων γεγῶτων: εἰ γὰρ ἦσθ' ἄπαις ἔτι,  
συγγνώστ' ἂν ἦν σοι τοῦδ' ἐρασθῆναι λέχους  
(Euripides *Medea* 488-492)

And after such benefits from me, o basest of men, you have betrayed me and have taken a new marriage, though we had children. For if you were still childless, your desire for this marriage would be understandable. (tr. Kovacs)

Not only is Jason leaving Medea for another woman, but he is doing so despite already having two sons - the ultimate goal of any marriage. This, to Medea, makes his betrayal even worse, as

---

<sup>48</sup> Obviously, Euripides' play precedes Apollonius' epic. Nevertheless for Vergil the two texts would have provided his literary sources and could be used within the mythological timeline.

she has not failed him in any way as a wife. In this way Dido differs from Medea, as she has not given Aeneas a child, a fact she is painfully aware of.

saltem si qua mihi de te suscepta fuisset  
ante fugam suboles, si quis mihi paruulus aula  
luderet Aeneas, qui te tamen ore referret,  
non equidem omnino capta ac deserta uiderer.  
(*Aen.* 4.327-330)

At least if you had left me a child in my arms,  
before you deserted me. Some little Aeneas playing in the halls,  
to remind me of you by his face in spite of all your cruelty.  
Then I would not be seen as entirely deceived, as entirely abandoned,”

Dido is well aware that, as she has not had a child with Aeneas, their relationship lacks a degree of legitimacy. Additionally, even if they were married, Aeneas would be well within his rights to divorce her since she hadn't proved him an heir.<sup>49</sup>

The connection between Apollonius' Medea and Virgil's Dido is undeniable. However, in connection to this paper the importance lies not simply in the fact that they are connected, but that Virgil's audience would recognize their similarities. Virgil could reasonably assume that his audience were well read and would recognize the allusions to the *Argonautica*. So too would they recognize the key difference between the two women - Medea is unambiguously married and Dido is not. However, by comparing the two women in such an explicit way, Virgil is also ensuring his audience associates Medea's marital status with Dido's. That Medea is married so explicitly implies, intertextually at least, that Dido's take on the situation has legitimacy.

## Conclusion

---

<sup>49</sup> Dixon (2010) 248.

Ultimately, despite the vague language around it, I believe that, to the contemporary Roman audience, Dido and Aeneas would have been seen as married. The cave scene and the preceding hunt were laden with imagery that,

“... the Roman reader could hardly have failed to associate it in his thought with the splendor of a bridal procession, with the festive preparations for marriage in his everyday experience. Such an association the poet makes explicit when the scene in the cave itself is described...”<sup>50</sup>

Virgil was clearly implying a wedding in a way a Roman would have gleaned instantly. He even included the presence of Juno, the goddess of marriage.<sup>51</sup> Despite the vagueness of his language and failure to include a final confirmation for the audience, Virgil’s depiction of the wedding scene would be clear to his contemporary audience, as well as the characters themselves. Spence suggests that Aeneas is “...at best, unclear in his intentions and, at worst, downright misleading, especially when behavior suitable to a Roman marriage is considered.”<sup>52</sup> This goes to the notion, found in inscriptions relating to marriage relations, that married couples were linked forever. Indeed, Dido reclaims this ideal when she rejoins Sychaeus in the underworld! Additionally, the strange choice of words, such as using *iungere* and *hymenaeos* as opposed to more specific words or forms, don’t amount to much in the long run. Virgil was specifically trying to place some doubt in his readers about Dido and Aeneas’ marital status, but his word choice is consistent throughout the *Aeneid*. *Iungere* appears in Book 1 when Juno is specifically offering marriage to Aeolus, while Dido herself uses the singular *hymenaeos* to refer to their marriage at *Aeneid* 4.316. As such the language, while purposefully unclear, is consistent, such that I feel its marital implications can be assumed. Finally, there are numerous parallels to the story of Jason and Medea. Greek and Roman literature, especially epic, is highly referential. Virgil would have

---

<sup>50</sup> Prescott (1927) 278.

<sup>51</sup> Whose motivation is, of course, political!

<sup>52</sup> Spence (1999) 81.

expected his readers to know the different stories he was drawing connections to. He purposefully calls upon imagery and language similar to various depictions of Medea and Jason to draw the reader's attention to the parallels in his story. The base story of Dido and Aeneas is almost beat for beat that of Jason and Medea, with the key difference being that Jason and Medea are, without a doubt, married. It is actually the fact that they are married that causes strife in Euripides' *Medea*. However, Virgil still emphasizes the parallels, even down to the wedding scene in a cave. Thus, he is adding another layer of implication to the scene that Dido and Aeneas were married, even if the definitive act was not described.

However, despite all this, Virgil did keep his language purposefully vague. I believe this ties into the fact that he is depicting the great progenitor of Rome in a piece that, at least on its surface, is a very pro-Roman poem. Regardless of if one were to subscribe to the idea that the *Aeneid* is anti-Augustus, Aeneas, as the epic's hero and the ancestor of Rome, cannot have such an obvious moral failing, especially as he is pious Aeneas. If he were to clearly be married and leave his wife, he would be blatantly impious. It would stain not only his honor, but also the honor of Rome. As such, Virgil can not show such a serious failing. Additionally, more than just affecting Rome's honor, Aeneas' actions would also reflect back upon the emperor, Augustus. Augustus drew several connections between himself and Aeneas, as a way to further his image and cement his right to rule. On the Ara Pacis, the temple he erected, an image of himself is right next to one of Aeneas, both in the same pose. The Ara Pacis was a very visible forum for Augustus to push this connection. And Virgil was well aware of Augustus' plan and even helped assist him, going out of his way to connect Ascanius, Aeneas' son, to the name Iulius, thus tying Aeneas to the Julio-Claudian line that Augustus was himself a part of. However, all this makes it even more important that Aeneas not be shown with such a failing as impiety, especially given

Augustus' own work towards what he saw as a moral marriage. To do so, Virgil would be indirectly insulting Augustus and undermining his image, which would have been very dangerous.

For all of the above reasons, it is clear that Virgil could not depict Pious Aeneas as having the serious moral failing of abandoning his wife. However, he also does not go to the other end of the spectrum, depicting Dido as a scandalous woman simply having an affair. She is the ruler of Carthage, Rome's great enemy, and the initiator of the enmity between the two countries. There is nothing to prevent him from making Dido out to be a loose, dishonorable woman. He could have been extremely clear in making her have an affair with Aeneas, thus diminishing her and Carthage's honor. He instead keeps the answer of their marital status obscure, not answering it definitively one way or another. All this makes me believe even more that Dido and Aeneas were married, but, to maintain the honor of Aeneas, and Rome, Virgil could not conclusively show it.

## Works Cited

- Austin, R. G. (ed.) *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Quartus*. Oxford University Press, 1955.
- Caldwell, Lauren. "Dido's *Deductio*: *Aeneid* 4.127-65." *Classical Philology*, 103, 2008, 423-435.
- Collard, C. "Medea and Dido." *Prometheus* 1, 1975, 131-151.
- Dixon, S. "From Ceremonial to Sexualities: A Survey of Scholarship on Roman Marriage." In B. Rawson (Ed.) *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. Blackwell, 2010.
- Farrell, J. *Juno's Aeneid: A Battle For Heroic Identity*. Princeton University Press, 2021.
- Forbis, E. "Women's Public Image in Italian Honorary Inscriptions." *American Journal of Philology* 111, 1990, 493-512.
- Glazebrook, A. and Olson, K. "Greek and Roman Marriage." In T.K. Hubbard (Ed.) *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*. Blackwell, 2013.
- Gutting, E. "Marriage in the *Aeneid*: Venus, Vulcan, and Dido." *Classical Philology* 101, 2006, 263-279.
- Hersch, Karen K. *The Roman Wedding: Ritual and Meaning in Antiquity*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Horsfall, N. *A Companion to the Study of Vergi*. Brill, 1994.
- Hunter, R. *The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies*. Cambridge, 1993.
- Knauer, G. "Vergil's *Aeneid* and Homer." *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 5, 1964, 61-84.
- Monti, Richard. *The Dido Episode and the Aeneid*. Brill, 1981.
- Nelis, D. *Vergil's Aeneid and the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*. Leeds, 2001.
- O'Hara, J. (ed.) *Vergil Aeneid 4*. Newburyport, Focus, 2011.
- Prescott, Henry W. *The Development of Virgil's Art*. University of Chicago Press, 1927.
- Spence, Sarah. "*Varium et mutabile*: Voices of Authority in *Aeneid* 4." In C. Perkell (ed.) *Reading Vergil's Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide*. Oklahoma University Press, 1999.
- Treggiari, S. *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian*. Oxford, 1991.
- Williams, G. "Some Aspects of Roman Marriage Ceremonies and Ideals." *Journal of Roman Studies* 48, 1958, 16-29.
- Williams, G. "Poetry in the Moral Climate of Augustan Rome." *Journal of Roman Studies* 52, 1962, 28-46.