Rac(ializ)ing Dido

*Revised from a paper given to the Virgil Society on 20 March 2021**

Scholarship on the *Aeneid* has rarely touched upon 'race' as such, even though a large portion of work that could have fallen under this umbrella has been variously coated in adjacent and less incendiary concepts such as 'ethnicity', 'otherness', 'difference', and the like.[1] Even in the wake of an eventual reckoning with the historical amnesia connected to the refusal to engage with 'race' in studies of premodern Western societies,[2] Virgilian scholars, with the notable exception of Shelley Haley, continue to seem uninterested in the analytical tools provided by theories and philosophies of race, especially critical race theory.[3] The present article argues that such tools can give us instead significant insights into implied hierarchies, structures of differentiation, and interpersonal dynamics at work in a poem like the *Aeneid*, regardless of whether we conclude that 'race' is an actual dynamic in premodern literatures and societies or else a productive anachronism to work with.

The bulk of this contribution is a re-interpretation of Virgil's Dido in light of a renewed appreciation of how race theories transform our understanding of the dynamics between different people mentioned or implied in the course of the Libyan episode of the *Aeneid*. But before I start this discussion, it is worth explaining how I interpret the concept of 'race' and related terms ('racism', 'racialization', 'racecraft') and why I believe that a maximalist

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1 See, among others, Syed (2005); Reed (2007); Wimperis (forthcoming); Giusti (2018), specifically on Carthaginians.

2 For Geraldine Heng (2021) 4, not naming 'race' means "to sustain the reproduction of a certain kind of past, while keeping the doors shut to tools, analyses, and resources that can name the past differently".

3 Haley (2009) and (2021). The *Symposium Cumanum* 2021 included several contributions on 'race', albeit on Virgil's reception.

position on the relevance of 'race' for the study of Greco-Roman antiquity can open up new avenues in the interpretation of ancient literature. Some familiarity with the theories that I shall be drawing upon (especially critical race theory) is already presupposed in this article's title, which a) invokes the truism that 'race' is a verb (a process, an event, a performance) rather than – or before becoming – a noun;[4] b) posits the verb 'to race' as an equivalent of 'to racialize'; and c) assumes that race as a concept cannot exist – nor can human races exist – without the actions and processes of racism.

What I offer here is not a study on the 'ethnicity' or 'identity' of Dido – terms that possess equally complex and potentially anachronistic baggage and that will at any rate come into question in the course of the discussion –, but on the ways in which the *Aeneid* presents Dido as implicated in processes by which arbitrarily selected differences among human beings are hypostatized and classified in hierarchies of power in such a way as to provide justification for differential and unequal treatment. As alluded to by the ambiguity as to whether to interpret the 'Dido' of this article's title as grammatical subject or direct object,[5] I wish to spotlight her simultaneously passive and active role in such processes of racialization, which I explore in two separate sections: it will emerge from this discussion that Dido in the *Aeneid* is both the victim of the Romans' racializing of Phoenicians and Carthaginians, and herself an actor of the Phoenicians' racializing of autochthonous people in North Africa.

1. Race, Racism, Racialization

It has been commonly accepted since the early twentieth century that 'race' as a biological category has no scientific basis: namely, that perceptible physical characteristics commonly associated with 'race' cannot be attributed to discrete lines of genetic descent.[6] Thus, what we talk about when we talk about 'race' is generally recognized to be a sociological and cultural rather than a biological or scientific phenomenon.[7] The term stands for "the conception or the doctrine that nature produced humankind in distinct groups"[8] – which is an illusion, of course, and a product of false consciousness, but the fact that it bears very concrete

[4] Fields and Fields (2012) 96–7 speak of the substitution of 'race' for 'racism' as "the great evasion of American historical literature … disguised as race, racism becomes something Afro-Americans are, rather than something racists do".

[5] A nod to Desmond (1994).

[6] James and Burgos (2022).

[7] Cf. Fields and Fields (2012) 100–2, warning that "race is a social construction" can become a "trite formula" that "domesticates" the monstrosity of racism.

[8] Fields and Fields (2012) 16.

consequences in the world means that we cannot entirely divest it of reality.[9] Thus, while 'race' is an ideological structure of thought,[10] it is also a "social and historical process",[11] connected in a two-way causal relation with the tangible phenomenon of 'racism'.

The relationship between 'race' and 'racism' exemplifies a kind of 'chicken-and-egg' causality dilemma: on the one hand, we may say that 'racism' is the practice and the acting upon the ideology of 'race' (in other words, the belief in the ideology of 'race' gives rise to practices of 'racism'), and yet it is also true that it is in turn the practice of 'racism' that reifies 'race' and bestows reality upon it as a social phenomenon. This process of validating 'race' through the practice of 'racism' has been variously defined as 'racial formation', 'racialization', or 'racecraft'. The latter term, which has enjoyed a certain popularity even among classicists,[12] was coined by sociologist Karen Fields and her sister historian Barbara Fields in continuity with 'witchcraft': both terms highlight "the ability of pre- or non-scientific modes of thought to hijack the minds of the scientifically literate"[13] with very tangible, and very violent, historical consequences.

Emphasis on 'racial formation' or 'racialization' turns the spotlight onto the processual and social aspects of 'race', attempting a shift away from the idea that the term may indicate any recognizable lines of genetic descent in specific groups of humans. A similar shift is also encouraged by the necessary jettisoning of a subdivision of humans into 'races', and the adoption of the terminology of 'racialized groups' or 'racialized communities' instead. These are groups that become separated within societies on account of differences "that are selectively essentialized as absolute and fundamental, in order to distribute positions and powers differentially".[14] For Falguni Sheth, the production of such sets of differences, which compel society to think in terms of 'races', is a consequence of sovereign power attempting to tame potential threats against the current political order from specific groups of people. 'Race' does not simply 'divide' and 'separate' populations, but it also causes them to be "hypostatized into self-cohering wholes who are to be despised, vilified, and if not cast outside the gates of the city, then at least subordinated and exploited, if not physically or psychically managed".[15]

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[9] See Omi and Winant (2015) 110, reacting against the position of racial 'eliminativism', on which see James and Burgos (2022); cf. also Fields and Fields (2012) 193, "there is nothing 'mere' about a social construct".

[10] Cf. McCoskey (2012) 2: "at its most basic, race is an ideological structure that organizes and classifies perceived human variation". Sheth (2009) reads race as a 'technology' in a Foucauldian framework, "a way of organizing and managing populations" (22), emphasizing its 'causal' rather than 'descriptive' essence.

[11] Omi and Winant (2015) 110.

[12] See Padilla Peralta (2021); Murray (2021); Derbew (2021) and (2022).

[13] Fields and Fields (2012) 5–6.

[14] Heng (2018) 27.

[15] Sheth (2009) 39.

Traditionally, racial classification is thought of as based upon differences that can be perceived as phenotypical, and such visual and bodily dimension has been seen as crucial in maintaining the working of 'race' in societies, as well as in separating it from other forms of classification, such as 'ethnicity'.[16] As Michael Omi and Howard Winant put it, 'race' "*symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies*" and it is precisely because "race is located on the body [that] it has proved a convenient means of rule, a political technology through which power can be both exercised and naturalized".[17] Thus, when thinking about 'race', most people in contemporary Western societies would think about somatic characteristics, specifically about skin colour as the primary marker used for racial classification, and about the racial separation that sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois aptly called "the color line", specifying however that such division is arbitrary and historically constituted.[18] However, many race theorists have contested excessive emphasis on the phenotypical dimension of race, pointing out that somatic traits are only one of the ways in which human beings are socially and historically racialized, with others being cultural, linguistic, geographical, historical, religious.[19] The development of such conceptualizations of race beyond a classification solely based on phenotypical characteristics allows us to explore with a renewed freedom whether comparable mechanisms of oppression could have been at work in antiquity.

Another contested misconception of racial classification, as discussed below in relation to the work of Benjamin Isaac, is the idea that the traits upon which racial classification is based should be inheritable and unchangeable, given that a belief in the inheritability of core-traits is only characteristic of what is known as 'racial essentialism' and not of racial thought as a whole.[20] Indeed, racist structures of thought can operate on the assumption that racialized groups may 'assimilate' into different groups or cultures and thus lose their specificities, and such structures are no less racist for admitting the possibility of assimilation. In contemporary Western societies, we can think for example of requests for cultural and religious minorities to adopt Western cultural traits to 'integrate' with majoritarian groups,

[16] 'Race' and 'ethnicity' are often used in conjunction, but the terms have a different history and draw on different sets of theories (Fenton 2010). Mac Sweeney (2021) tentatively interprets 'race' as classifying people according to phenotypical characteristics and 'ethnicity' according to ideas about ancestry, granting that there remains an inevitable overlap between the two.

[17] Omi and Winant (2015) 110 and 247 (their emphasis).

[18] Du Bois (2015 [originally 1903]) 7: "the problem of the color line is the problem of the Twentieth Century". Cf. Omi and Winant (2015) 110: "although the concept of race invokes biologically based human characteristics (so-called 'phenotypes'), selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process".

[19] Already Sheth (2009); see also Lentin (2020); Törngren and Suyemoto (2022).

[20] See Samuels (2015) 730: "anti-essentialism is not inherently anti-racist". But cf. Ndiaye (2022) 6, on how 'heredity' keeps 'race' distinct from other types of oppression, such as gender.

and of how such requests may be based on presumptions of cultural and racial superiority that end up upholding structural racisms rather than undermining them.

When we come to the study of antiquity, these last two aspects of racial formation (namely, the formation of racialized groups based on human characteristics that are not necessarily phenotypical, and the possibility for racialization to be at work even without a belief in the inheritability of racial difference) become key points of contention in discussions about the applicability of 'race' to the ancient Mediterranean world. It is generally agreed, since the seminal work of Frank Snowden, Jr., that ancient Greeks and Romans did not differentiate on the basis of skin colour, nor generally on the basis of physical appearance, and that they did not coherently subscribe to a belief in the inheritability of core-traits.[21] Thus, scholars of the ancient Mediterranean whose understanding of race aligns with an essentialist view, as well as scholars treating "skin colour as a transhistorical signifier of racial identity rather than merely its modern guise",[22] have often been, and continue to be, wary of talking about 'race' in Greco-Roman societies, and have instead preferred to speak of 'ethnicity' (a concept which does not by itself entail hierarchy or oppression),[23] or 'ethnic' or 'xenophobic' 'prejudice' rather than 'racism'.[24] Ultimately, the choice is justified if we adopt a definition of 'race' as dependent upon both heredity and body type. If by 'race' we mean something along the lines of 'a classification of human groups into discrete and hereditary biological categories according to perceptible human variation', then this is indeed a phenomenon whose origin may be backdated, at the very earliest, to the late Middle Ages, but which in any case becomes pervasive in Europe only as the product of colonial encounters and in the wake of the transatlantic slave trade.[25]

That Greeks and Romans were quite able to essentialize selected human beings into distinguished categories for the purpose of oppression or differential treatment is not in

[21] Snowden (1970) and (1983); see also Thompson (1989); Derbew (2022). These basic views are shared by McCoskey (2012) and (2021), and Isaac (2004). Yet, while skin colour may not have been a primary marker of racial difference, it may be too hasty to underestimate the significance of somatic difference in the Greco-Roman world: see Samuels (2015), Patterson (1982) 177–9 and MacDonald (2002) 26–7 on the dangers of imagining a colourblind Greco-Roman antiquity.

[22] McCoskey (2021) 18; see also Derbew (2021).

[23] Murji and Solomos (2015) 8: "there is no equivalent term to *racism* in relation to ethnicity". On 'race' and 'ethnicity' cf. n. 16.

[24] Isaac (2004), discussed below, coins the possibility of 'proto-racism'; Gruen (2011) 3 excludes Greeks and Romans even from 'xenophobia' and 'ethnocentrism'; see the criticism of McCoskey (2021) 18, building on McCoskey (2006). Cf. also Skinner (2021) for a defence of a more capacious definition of 'racism' in the ancient world.

[25] See Heng (2018) on the emergence of the concept in mid-fifteenth-century Spain; cf. Hochman (2020). Derbew (2021) and (2022) 16–21 tentatively accepts the concept of 'race' (unrelated to physiognomy) in the ancient world, but vehemently denies the applicability of 'racism' to antiquity ([2021] 27 and [2022] 21). Without its connection to 'racism', however, it remains unclear how 'race' differs from mere recognition of difference.

question. But what has prevented scholars from labelling such differentiations or oppressions as forms of 'racism' is the observation that such differentiations do not depend upon physical appearance and are only at times attributable to ideas of heredity; it also doesn't help that the Greco-Roman world does not present a coherent or unified set of thoughts on the matter. Thus, Benjamin Isaac, in his search for continuity between antiquity and modernity in the history of racism,[26] labelled some ancient forms of human classification as 'proto-racist', but only in those cases when classification depends upon characteristics considered to be 'unalterable' because of 'heredity' or 'exterior influences'.[27] In doing so, he indicated as the main distinction between "racism and ethnic and other group prejudices… that such prejudices do not deny the possibility of change at an individual or collective level in principle".[28]

Isaac illustrates this rule by discussing Roman prejudice against Carthaginians, which finally brings us closer to Dido. In a passage of *De Lege Agraria*, Cicero praises the Roman ancestors for understanding that human character is engendered not by heredity but by the nature of the territory in which people are brought up (*Leg. Agr.* 2.95):

> non ingenerantur hominibus mores tam a stirpe generis ac seminis quam ex iis rebus, quae ab ipsa natura nobis ad vitae consuetudinem suppeditantur, quibus alimur et vivimus. Carthaginienses fraudulenti et mendaces non genere, sed natura loci…
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> Customs are not implanted in humans so much from their family stock or their genes as by those things that are supplied to us by nature itself to form our habit of living, and by which we nourish ourselves and we live. Carthaginians are deceitful and mendacious not due to their ancestry, but to the nature of their territory…

Cicero's passage is quite exemplary of the messiness of Greco-Roman thought when it comes to ascribing prejudice to natural causes. It showcases a form of environmental or geographical determinism that Isaac disjoins from 'racism' precisely because of the lack of emphasis on heredity, even though Cicero's use of *tam … quam* in the passage seems to imply that "family stock or genes" (*stirps generis ac seminis*) also matter, to an extent. *Punica fides*, Cicero goes on to explain, originated in Carthage's maritime setting, which caused

[26] A potentially dangerous operation, as warned by Derbew (2021) 27: "his mapping of a prototype of 'racism' onto the past lends historical legitimacy to the violent acts that racist perpetrators committed against Black people from the fifteenth century onwards".

[27] Isaac (2004) 37–8.

[28] Isaac (2004) 24.

the Carthaginians to be exposed to trade, greed, and "love of cheating" (*studium fallendi*). For Isaac, this is the ultimate example that Romans did not show racial prejudice but rather "ethnic prejudice together with elements of geographical determinism".[29] Similarly, Erich Gruen, while admitting that this, and other Ciceronian passages, "certainly seem to imply a racial failing", exonerates Cicero from his racism on the basis of the explanation adduced in its support.[30] And yet, according to the framework that I have previously outlined, the decision as to whether racialization is at work in a given context can only be made upon examining its consequences: it is not tied to the reasons for the classification of people into clear-cut 'races' in the first place. When it comes to racism, ancient sources are held to a different standard from modernity: in contemporary Western societies, we would not be so quick to exonerate a racist comment about people belonging to a certain nationality on the basis that the commentator thought that their propensities depend on 'nurture, not nature'.[31]

It is precisely because the ancients did not differentiate coherently on the basis of supposed genetic origins that we need a different understanding of how racialization worked in the ancient world.[32] For Isaac, the main point of differentiation between ethnic and racial prejudice is whether the cause for differentiation lies within 'human control' or not.[33] But it seems to me faulty to presume that humans have more control over their nurture than they have over their nature: Carthaginian character may not depend upon bloodline, but this does not mean that if an individual Carthaginian moves away from Carthage they will be exempt from stereotyping and vilification. This is laid bare in Plautus' *Poenulus*, where Punic stereotypes are applied to Hanno, a Carthaginian who has travelled to Calydon, but not to his nephew Agorastocles, who was abducted from Carthage in his infancy and brought up in Calydon. Neither has control over their upbringing, and Hanno's change of location does not exonerate him from the stereotypes that the soldier Antamynides applies to his whole *genus* (*sane genus hoc mulierosumst tunicis demissiciis*: "clearly this is a race of sex addicts – this kind, with their tunics hanging down", *Poen.* 1303).[34]

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[29] Isaac (2004) 89.

[30] Gruen (2013) 12–13; cf. also Gruen (2011) 132.

[31] Gruen (2013) 13. Cf. Skinner (2021) 39: "the contrast between our willingness to 'call out' racism in contemporary society … and the sort of special pleading which takes place on behalf of the Greeks could not be starker".

[32] See Haley (2009) 30: "it is anachronistic to insist that [the Greeks and Romans] had a race as we understand it. Instead, we must search out and analyze *their* construct of race" (her emphasis).

[33] Isaac (2004) 37–8 and *passim*.

[34] See Giusti (forthcoming, a) on how Plautus' *Poenulus* shows racialization depending upon language and culture (especially clothing and accessories) rather than somatic traits. On Punic stereotypes in the *Poenulus* see, among others, Franko (1996); Starks (2000); Giusti (2018) 75–87.

What is also problematic is the way in which Isaac underplays the assimilationist message implied in geographical determinism, which exempts non-[Greco-]Roman people from racism only in so far as they assimilate into [Greco-]Roman culture and come to be brought up in [Greco-]Roman territory.[35] Both Cicero and Plautus show evidence of racialization not because of the reasons for racial classification, but because of the racist outcomes that such classification engenders in terms of hierarchies and power dynamics between groups of people that cannot otherwise be explained with other axes of oppression, such as social status or gender. That Cicero is interested in retention of Roman power (and land) is uncontroversial in the context of *De Lege Agraria*: Carthaginians are a means to an end, serving to racialize Campanians with equally damning characteristics of arrogance – characteristics that geographical determinism conveniently allows to become contagious, so that Cicero can predict the future wickedness of the colonists whose settling in Campania he is opposing in this portion of the speech (*Leg. Agr.* 2.97). It is not by chance that Cicero presents his view of geographical determinism as handed down to us by the Roman ancestors (*maiores*), whom "we ought to venerate and worship among the immortal gods" (*in deorum immortalium numero venerandos a nobis et colendos*, *Leg. Agr.* 2.95). At the forefront, and as backbone, of his argument is the moral superiority of the Roman people (incidentally handed down to contemporary Romans by both bloodline and nurture), which becomes a justification for retention of sovereign power against other groups, such as Carthaginians, who we can say are 'racialized' in view of their fabricated moral inferiority, regardless of the causes for such fabrication. In other words, Cicero and Plautus are engaged in the racialization of Carthaginians not just because they demarcate Carthaginians who were brought up in Carthage as fundamentally different and morally inferior to the Romans, but because the fabrication of such moral inferiority becomes a justification for the Romans' domination of Carthage, and for an unequal distribution of power in the Mediterranean between these two selectively hypostatized groups of humans.

2. Racialized Dido

Virgil's Dido has long been interpreted in terms of Roman anti-Carthaginian prejudice, even though such prejudice has never been read against an explicitly 'racial' framework of structural and historical oppression. In a paper read to the Virgil Society in 1973, Nicholas Horsfall presented her as a stereotypically threatening Carthaginian, displaying "violence,

[35] Samuels (2015) 730.

greed, duplicity and hatred".[36] Although there is some evidence to suggest that already Homer's *Odyssey* presents a prejudiced, if not racialized, portrait of Phoenicians as greedy and untrustworthy merchants,[37] and although Horsfall himself does not downplay the model of Apollonius' Medea in *Aeneid* 4, he anchors his anti-Carthaginian reading of Dido in "Roman history and Roman prejudice".[38] Following Horsfall's cue, in the 1990s and early 2000s critics such as Sergio Casali and Alessandro Schiesaro have analyzed how intertextual networks can be explored to further highlight Dido's threat and unpredictability.[39] Others have instead turned *Punica fides* on its head, arguing that the very stereotype is used by Virgil in a collapsing of the Self-Other dialectic to single out the untrustworthiness and greed of Aeneas and the Trojans, who are in turn orientalized at significant junctures in the poem, especially in Book 4.[40]

As Sergio Casali pointed out,[41] we can observe this ambiguity of impiety at work in the "impious deeds" (*facta impia*) that "touch" Dido in one of her monologues: *infelix Dido, nunc te facta impia tangunt?* ("Wretched Dido, now you are touched by [his/your] wicked actions?", *Aen*. 4.596). The ambiguity of *facta impia* reflects a broader difficulty in attributing untrustworthiness to Dido or to Aeneas: Dido may be referring to Aeneas' breach of what she considered a marriage, a betrayal that can also be conflated with his abandonment of Creusa and, according to a tradition to which the *Aeneid* does not fail to allude, with his betrayal of Troy in exchange for his family's survival.[42] Yet she may be equally alluding to her own unfaithfulness to her dead husband Sychaeus (*non servata fides cineri promissa Sychaeo*: "I have not kept my promise to the ashes of Sychaeus", *Aen.* 4.552), and Horsfall suggests that despite Virgil eliciting mixed feelings about her, such "breach of *fides*" would have sounded "shocking to herself and to a Roman" as well as "ironically fitting for the first queen of Carthage".[43]

There clearly is an incoherence in suggesting that infidelity in widowhood would both "shock" Carthaginian Dido and at the same time adhere to the cultural standards expected from her people. More crucially, it is difficult to find anything specifically Carthaginian about Dido's rejection of the *univira* model, when public Roman *matronae* such as Augustus' sister Octavia could even forgo the customary mourning period in order to remarry for political

36 Horsfall (1973–4) 12.
37 See Winter (1995) and Giusti (forthcoming, a).
38 Horsfall (1973–4) 8. Cf. Isaac (2004) 324–55 and Gruen (2011) 115–40 on anti-Punic stereotypes.
39 Casali (2004–5) and (2019); Schiesaro (2005) and (2008). See Giusti (forthcoming, b) on the predominance of intertextual readings in scholarship on Dido.
40 Starks (1999); Reed (2007); Giusti (2018).
41 Casali (1999).
42 See Casali (1999); Scafoglio (2013); Cianciosi (forthcoming).
43 Horsfall (1973–4) 6.

reasons,[44] and Livia herself was still pregnant with the child of her divorced husband when she was remarried to Octavian.[45] Nor is there anything specifically Carthaginian in Dido's murderous wishes that she had torn Aeneas apart and scattered his limbs into the sea (*Aen.* 4.600–1) or slaughtered Ascanius to feed him to his father (4.601–2): these fantasies of revenge align her with the Theban Bacchae and Colchian Medea as much as with Athenian Procne,[46] and do not need to rely upon the idea that Carthaginians practised child sacrifice – something that suspicious critics have also seen at work in Dido's wish that Aeneas had left her with a child.[47] More to the point are Horsfall's observations of an aetiological transformation of Dido's "hatred" against Aeneas into the historical arch-enmity, and clear-cut division, between Carthaginians and Romans, a transformation that is indeed at work in her curse.[48] But I would not follow Horsfall in taking this historical "hatred" as characteristic of Carthaginians, all the more so since Livy himself reminds us, at the beginning of the third decade, not only that Hamilcar's hatred, inherited by Hannibal, had a point,[49] but that *odium* in the second Punic War was in fact reciprocal in both parties.[50]

It is beyond the purposes of this article to indict or absolve Dido of her supposed (Carthaginian) threat in the poem. What interests me is the process that allows her to be perceived as what Falguni Sheth theorized as the "unruly", namely "the element that is intuited as threatening to a political order ... because it signifies some immediate fact of difference that must be harnessed and located or categorized or classified in such a way so as not to challenge the ongoing political order".[51] This is, however, no easy task in an epic of variable and polyvalent focalization, and it is furthermore complicated by the way in which Dido's gender contributes to her othering and threat,[52] as well as by the possibility of racialization and orientalism at work for the Trojans themselves. Horsfall persuasively

[44] Plutarch, *Ant.* 31.

[45] Dio 48.44.

[46] Although arguably Procne's actions may be interpreted as responding to Tereus' 'barbaric' Thracian brutality. See Schiesaro (2005) and (2008) on these intertexts.

[47] *Aen.* 4.327–30, with Davidson (1998); Casali (2004–5) 149–50; Schiesaro (2005) 91–2. On Carthaginians practising child sacrifice, see already Ennius, fr. 214 Sk.

[48] *Aen.* 4.622–9; see Giusti (2018) 231–5.

[49] See Livy 21.1 and Polybius 3.9-10 on the seizure of Sicilia and Sardinia following the first Punic War, with Giusti (2018) 186–9.

[50] Livy 21.1: *odiis etiam prope maioribus certarunt quam viribus* ("they both fought with hatred greater than their strength").

[51] Sheth (2009) 26, drawing upon the process of the formation of the Enemy theorized by Carl Schmitt (1996). This is not altogether dissimilar from my previous analysis of Dido and Carthage as the Enemy in Schmittian terms in Giusti (2016) and (2018), but the racial framework adds a very different emphasis on the oppressive nature, and the violent consequences, of the process.

[52] See Haley (2009) and (2021) on the importance of maintaining an intersectional lens. On the threat that Dido poses to "the Roman cultural order", see especially Keith (2000) 115 and *passim*.

shows Virgil toying with a horizon of expectations predicated upon anti-Carthaginian sentiment, and such sentiment can be said to be based upon an historical racialization of Carthaginians from the viewpoint of Roman domination; yet we have seen that Virgil both exposes and subverts anti-Carthaginian prejudice without ever fully endorsing it. Still, what is brought to light by reading 'racialization' as intimately bound up with discourses of power and domination is that the only places in which Virgil *seems* to be endorsing it are crucially focalized not by the narrator, nor by Trojan Aeneas, but by the gods who support and further the cause of the Roman empire, and who may be deemed to embody an expression of sovereign power in the poem. I have mentioned that for the Fields sisters 'racecraft' is inseparable from the practice of racism as an act of violent aggression: originating "in human action and imagination", racecraft is "a kind of fingerprint evidence that *racism* has been on the scene".[53] In the *Aeneid*, it is telling that the only passages that explicitly apply racial stereotypes of untrustworthiness, greed and variability to Dido and her people are actually focalized through the pro-Roman divinities that simultaneously assault her: Venus and Mercury as Jupiter's messenger.

A relatively uncontroversial example of how the *Aeneid* relies upon the racialization of Carthaginians can be observed towards the end of Book 1, where the narrator tells us that Venus "clearly fears this untrustworthy household and the two-tongued Tyrians" (*quippe domum timet ambiguam Tyriosque bilinguis*, *Aen.* 1.661). The word *bilinguis* (which indicates both bilingualism or plurilingualism and treacherous character) can also be used as a slur, comparable to a line of Plautus' *Poenulus* where the slave Milphio describes polyglot Carthaginian Hanno as possessing "a two-forked tongue like a creeping beast" (*bisulci lingua quasi proserpens bestia*, *Poen.* 1034).[54] When we consider the context of Virgil's line, which is meant to provide an explanation for Venus' decision deceitfully to assault Dido by substituting Ascanius with Cupid,[55] the emphatic use of the explanatory *quippe* ("*for of course* she fears Carthaginian treachery…") is telling of the existence of 'racecraft' at the ideological level: *quippe* provides a racist justification for Venus' act of aggression, and at the same time appeals to the readers' racial prejudice for such defence to be upheld and understood.

A comparable but less explicit mechanism had already been at work in Mercury's first intervention in the city, which caused the Carthaginians to put aside their "fierce hearts" so that Dido could offer hospitality to the Trojans (*Aen*. 1.302–4):

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[53] Fields and Fields (2012) 19.

[54] See Giusti (2018) 79–81, 202. Cf. Servius *ad Aen.* 4.262 on Aeneas' need to be wary among "unknown and ambiguous people" (*ignotas et bilingues… gentes*).

[55] *Aen*. 1.658–60.

> et iam iussa facit, ponuntque ferocia Poeni
> corda volente deo; in primis regina quietum
> accipit in Teucros animum mentemque benignam.
>
> At once he carries out the commands, and the Punics
> put their fierce hearts aside, at the will of the god. Most of all
> the queen welcomes a serene spirit and a benevolent mind
> towards the Teucrians.

There is room for discussion as to whether *ferox* indicates savagery, as Horsfall would seem to want it,[56] or else a "warlike" and "courageous" spirit:[57] after all, Venus is described as *ferox* at *Aen.* 10.610 and for Harrison *ferocia* can be "a positive and Roman military virtue",[58] even though the fact that such "virtue" can be applied to the Romans does not mean that it loses its brutality. What is interesting, however, in terms of thinking about the ways in which racialization is inextricably tied to acts of violence, is that Mercury in this scene is making a similarly aggressive intervention to Venus' in making Dido welcoming towards the Trojans. Whatever change has been at work here, the rationale for this intervention was the presumption that Dido and the Carthaginians wouldn't receive the Trojans favourably, even though such protectiveness towards their borders need not imply *Punica fides*. Yet Mercury's suspicious attitude towards Dido, both Carthaginian and a woman in her untrustworthiness and variability, will surface again in Book 4, where he will be the one deity suggesting to Aeneas that unpredictable Dido is stirring up deceit in her heart (*illa dolos dirumque nefas in pectore versat*, 4.563) and planning stealthily to set the ships on fire (4.566–8).[59]

A final passage that seems to capitalize on Carthaginian (or better Phoenician) stereotyping, if not racialization, is Venus' telling of Dido's background story (*Aen.* 1.336–68). This speech contains no small amount of disingenuousness and cunning, given that Venus utters it while deceiving her own son under the false pretence of being a Tyrian huntress, and it is representative of how stereotypes can vary in conjunction with other axes of othering and oppression. According to Horsfall, Venus' subtle but repeated emphasis on the role of wealth and gold in this story is meant to single out greed, in line with the stereotypical Roman portrayal of Phoenicians and Carthaginians as "a great merchant people, with an

[56] See Horsfall (1973–4) 4 on "typically brutish Punic behaviour", although without glossing *ferocia*.
[57] See Henry (1873) 588.
[58] Harrison (1991) 222, with reference to Livy 9.6.13, *Romanam virtutem ferociamque*.
[59] On Mercury's role in this scene see Giusti (forthcoming, b).

unpleasant reputation for sharp dealing":[60] Sychaeus is said to be "very rich in gold" (*ditissimus auri*, 1.343),[61] Dido's brother Pygmalion kills him because he was "blinded by love of gold" (*auri caecus amore*, 1.349), and Dido leaves Tyre with "an incalculable weight of silver and gold" (*ignotum argenti pondus et auri*, 1.359) with which her comrades "load" the ships (*onerant … auro*, 1.363). When recalling Dido's oxhide feat, Venus specifies that the soil was "bought" (*mercatique solum*, 1.367), downplaying the extent to which it was conquered with cunning, and thus preferring to emphasize Phoenician wealth and trading practice rather than hinting at Dido's potentially treacherous character. This is in line with Venus' minimization of Dido's cunning and agency throughout this narrative: a domestication of her character meant to make her more appealing to Aeneas, since it is after all in Venus' interests that the two join in their contested 'marriage', so that Carthage can be destroyed from within.

This downplaying of Dido's cunning in obtaining Carthage's soil is only one of the ways in which Venus limits Dido's autonomy in comparison to the tradition narrated by Pompeius Trogus, as epitomized by Justin (Just. 18.4.1–6.8). In Venus' speech, Dido is "given" by her father to Sychaeus "still untouched", as if she were a gift (*cui pater intactam dederat*, *Aen.* 1.345).[62] In Trogus, her father Mutto,[63] upon dying, makes her heir to the throne together with her nine-year-old brother Pygmalion (*filio Pygmalione et Elissa filia… heredibus institutis*, Just. 18.3.4), but the Tyrians prefer to confer the kingdom upon the male heir, however young (*sed populus Pygmalioni, admodum puero, regnum tradidit*, Just. 18.4.4). It would not be a stretch to read her subsequent marriage to her uncle Acherbas (Just. 18.4.5), high priest of Melqart and second in power only to the king, as a calculated political move on Dido's part. Trogus-Justin also writes of Dido actively deceiving Pygmalion "with guile" (*fratrem dolo adgreditur*, Just. 18.4.10), an episode that Venus substitutes with Dido following the orders of her dead husband's ghost (*Aen*. 1.353–60), just like Aeneas left Troy under the instructions of dead Hector (*Aen*. 2.270–97). If Dido in Trogus prepared and loaded the ships, tricking Pygmalion and his servants into believing that she had tossed Sychaeus' treasure into the sea (Just. 18.4.10–15), in the *Aeneid* the ships with which Dido sets sail just "happen to be ready by chance" (*navis quae forte paratae*, *Aen.* 1.362), and the treasure

[60] Horsfall (1973–4) 6.

[61] *auri* is Huet's emendation for *agri*, which was felt to be inappropriate for a commercial and maritime people: see Conington (1863) 65. Mynors (1969) 113 accepts it; Horsfall (1973–4) 6 is doubtful. Conte (2019) 13 retains *agri* (the same clausula returns at *Aen*. 10.563), as does Stöckinger (2016) 181, arguing that it anticipates Dido's digging the treasure from the earth.

[62] Paschalis (1997) 49 suggests a pun on Dido and Greek *didōmi* ('to give').

[63] Probably Phoenician Mattan I, Mattenus in Josephus, Mettes in Servius (*ad Aen.* 1.343). Virgil calls him Belus (*Aen*. 1.621) and makes him homonymous with a Phoenician ancestor (*Aen*. 1.729); see below.

"is carried across the sea" in the passive voice (*portantur … opes pelago*, *Aen.* 1.363–4), with as little emphasis as possible on Dido's agency in the enterprise.

Venus' narrative shows that racialization need not be consistent in its application of character (or even somatic) traits, especially when working alongside other axes of oppression such as gender or social status. In Plautus' *Poenulus*, a somatic trait such as dark skin colour is noted only for the Carthaginian women of the play, arguably in conjunction with their sexualization;[64] conversely, orientalist traits of slavishness are only applied to the men who serve as Hanno's attendants, but not to Hanno himself, who is of high Carthaginian status.[65] Similarly, racialization in Venus' speech relies heavily upon her simultaneous gendering of the narrative: male Phoenicians may be characterized as rich, greedy, and untrustworthy, but Dido herself is represented in her passivity and innocence, so that Venus can make her enticing for Aeneas, while at the same time emphasizing the shockingly extraordinary circumstances that led to female leadership in this enterprise.[66]

So far, I have been focusing on the dynamics of Dido's possible racialization in the *Aeneid*, with an eye to the consequences that these may bring about in terms of justifying Roman rule in the Mediterranean against a people that was collectively presupposed to be treacherous, greedy, and wicked. What I have not yet dealt with is the question of whether there are discernible parameters, in the *Aeneid*, for attributing Carthaginians collectively to a category of less morally sound people, and for recognizing them as such. In this respect, the poem reflects the larger issues pertaining to racialization in Greco-Roman antiquity: Virgil offers no evidence as to whether Carthaginians would be recognizable by specific somatic traits, although there seems to be a possibility of characterization via clothing and accessories comparable to that presented by Plautus in the *Poenulus*.[67] Dido also doesn't seem to show specific hereditary traits, but the issue of her originally Argive bloodline matters to the extent that it joins Carthaginians and Greeks as enemies of the Trojans/Romans.

The *Aeneid* has very little to say on the somatic traits of either Dido and the Carthaginians or the local Africans.[68] With characteristically epic sketching, Virgil gives only a few details about Dido's appearance, though repeatedly emphasizing her beauty (*forma pulcherrima Dido,* 1.496; *pulcherrima Dido*, 4.60; *pulchra Dido*, 4.192). After she has died, in a passage filtered through Ascanius' recollection of her affection, we find a reference to *candida Dido* (5.571), but it is clearly forced to interpret this as a reference to fair complexion rather than

[64] Milphio describes the nurse Giddenis as "dark skinned" and beautiful (*Poen.* 1112–13); Antamynides jokes on the black skin of one of Hanno's daughters (*Poen.* 1289–91); see Giusti (forthcoming, a).

[65] *Poen.* 978–80, see Giusti (forthcoming, a).

[66] Servius *ad Aen.* 1.363 (*dux femina facti*): *pronuntiandum quasi mirum* ("it must be proclaimed as if incredible").

[67] On which see Giusti (forthcoming, a).

[68] Cf. Ethiopian Memnon on the temple scenes, who is said to be "black" (*nigri Memnonis*, 1.489).

purity of character,[69] and even if one were to take it as a reference to skin tone, it is crucial not to conflate it with contemporary ideas of 'whiteness'.[70] The only other reference to her skin tone, when Dido appears "pale at the prospect of oncoming death" (*pallida morte futura*, 4.644), makes it quite clear that this is the characteristic pallor of the dying (as well as lovers), and the adjective is indeed used in connection to the dead or the underworld in most other Virgilian references.[71] The phrase is re-echoed in the description of Cleopatra on Aeneas' shield (*pallentem morte futura*, 8.709), another character whose racialization in antiquity is not dependent upon skin colour.[72]

When Dido is agonizing, Virgil mentions her "fine breast" (*pectus … decorum*, *Aen.* 4.589) and "blond" hair (*flaventis … comas*, 4.590), also specified when Iris cuts a "blond" lock from her head after her death (*flavum … crinem*, 4.698). Dido's supposed blondness, albeit characteristic of epic beauty, has appeared suspicious to Virgilian commentators since antiquity: for Servius, the detail is meant to highlight her shameless morals, since well-respected matrons were supposed to be brunettes.[73] DServius, on the contrary, suggests that Dido may be a fake blonde, adducing as proof a passage from Cato on matrons "anointing" their hair "with blond ashes in order to make them shine" (*flavo cinere unctitabant ut rutili essent*, DServ. *ad Aen.* 4.698).[74] The suggestion that Dido's blondness may be artificial is also put forward by Shelley Haley, who reads a significant difference between the adjectival participle *flavens* at 4.590 and the adjective *flavus* at 4.698, with the former suggesting that Dido may have made her hair golden by artificial means during the meeting with the Massylian priestess.[75] What is at any rate certain is that both denote brightness rather than colour, a detail steeped in poetic intertextuality: we are clearly meant to recall the lock of

[69] Ogle (1925) 269–70 refers it to the honesty of Dido's affection (cf. Horace, *Sat*. 1.5.41); Pease (1935) 473 is unconvinced. Cf. Edgeworth (1992) 114–16.

[70] Cf. Haley (2009) on translating *candidus* as "bright brown" and *niger* as "bright black" with reference to *CIL* 4.1520, on which cf. Spal (2016) 97–8. Virgil contrasts *candidus* and *niger* as skin tones at *Ecl.* 2.16, but the point is that Menalcas works outdoors while Alexis works indoors.

[71] *Pallidus* and *pallens* modify the dead (*Aen*. 1.354, 8.197) or dying (*Aen*. 10.822), ghosts and shadows (*Geo*. 1.477, 3.357; *Aen*. 4.26, 4.243, 6.480; 6.275 on *Morbi*), Orcus and the underworld (*Geo*. 1.277, *Aen*. 8.245). *Pallidus* is also applied to Tisiphone (*Geo*. 3.552; *Aen*. 10.761), the Harpies (*Aen*. 3.217), the dawn (*Geo*. 1.446); *pallens* in the *Eclogues* seems reserved for the natural world (*Ecl.* 2.47, 3.39, 5.16, 6.54). Dido's *pallor* returns at *Aen*. 4.499 in the scene with the Massylian priestess. Cf. also Turnus' *pallor*, highlighting his oncoming death, at *Aen*. 12.221.

[72] See especially Haley (1993) 27–30 and (2009) 29–30, and MacDonald (2002) 21–44.

[73] Servius *ad Aen.* 4.698: *matronis numquam flava coma dabatur, sed nigra … huic ergo dat quasi turpi* ("matrons were never given blond hair, but black … thus Virgil gives it to Dido as if to someone dishonourable"), with Juvenal 6.120 as evidence; see Rivoltella (2019) 221–2.

[74] See Rivoltella (2019) 221–2, suggesting that *rutilus* denotes artificial blondness.

[75] Haley (2009) 38–9 goes on to compare the scene with Yoruban practices of ritualistic dousing of worshippers with ochre mud, arguing that Virgil may show familiarity with ancient African rites.

another Libyan queen, Berenice, which described itself in Catullus as the "dedicated spoils from a blond head" (*devotae flavi verticis exuviae*, Cat. 66.62), perhaps in competition with equally blonde Ariadne (*non flavo retinens subtilem vertice mitram*, Cat. 64.63), and which was "blond" because it had to shine in the firmament (*sed nos quoque fulgeremus*, 66.61–2).[76] That the lock of Berenice is a relevant intertext for Dido is confirmed by Aeneas' reference to Catullus' version of the poem when encountering Dido in the underworld and enigmatically placing himself in the position of the lock.[77]

Other aspects of Dido's visual characterization comment directly on gender rather than on ethnicity or race. Massimo Rivoltella argues that Anna's reference to Dido's *iuventa* (*Aen*. 4.32), to be translated as "mature age" rather than "youth", is atypically ascribed to a woman, and meant to highlight how Dido's lifespan is gendered as male, in accordance with the typically masculine public and political role that she fulfils.[78] When we first meet "very beautiful Dido" (*forma pulcherrima Dido*, 1.496), in a passage where male gaze may or may not be at work,[79] she is compared, in an extended simile, to the goddess Diana, who stands out in height from her retinue of nymphs (*gradiensque deas supereminet omnes*: "and as she walks, she is the tallest of all the goddesses", 1.501). The main term of comparison, in a surprising alteration of its Homeric model, is the solemn gait of both leaders.[80] Yet we also get the impression that Dido similarly stands out from her retinue, whose gender is left unspecified (*magna iuvenum stipante caterva*: "with a great crowd of youth thronging around her", 1.497), even though she is later said to walk among the people in the (collective) masculine (*per medios*, 1.504). It may be that the correspondence with the narrative has to be sought instead in the scene immediately following: once inside the temple, Dido places herself where we would expect an icon of Juno-Tanit,[81] seated "high on an elevated throne, surrounded by arms" (*saepta armis, solioque alte subnixa resedit*, 1.506). For David West, the expedient of specifying the height of Dido's throne is needed because "it would be unbecoming if Dido were taller than her warriors".[82] The (male) scholars' need to disconnect Dido from these arms and transform her unspecified company of youths into a retinue of male bodyguards of the queen speaks loudly to their discomfort with the gender dynamics of this passage, and of Dido's Carthage as a whole: it ends up telling us more about

[76] Cf. Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo* 2.86 on "blond Libyans" (ξανθῇσι Λιβύσσαις).

[77] See *Aen*. 6.460, *invitus regina tuo de litore cessi*, and Cat. 66.39, *invita, o regina, tuo de vertice cessi*. The allusion has attracted more scholarship than I can reference here: see Johnston (1987) and Drew Griffith (1995) with further bibliography.

[78] Rivoltella (2019) 209–12.

[79] See Starnone (2020) and (2021a) 157–213.

[80] See Rivoltella (2019) 212–15 also on the model of *Odyssey* 6.102–9 (Nausicaa compared to Artemis).

[81] See Austin (1971) 169.

[82] West (1969) 44.

the commentators' mental representation of Dido's body than the image that is actually projected by the text.[83]

To sum up, none of the references in the *Aeneid* to Dido's somatic traits contributes to a specific characterization of Dido as Carthaginian, although all of them speak to her gendered differentiation as a female leader. It is only in the specifications of clothing that the two aspects may converge. In her meeting with Aeneas, Venus says that Tyrian girls are recognizable by their custom of "carrying the quiver and wearing purple boots with a high ankle binding" (*virginibus Tyriis mos est gestare pharetram, | purpureoque alte suras vincire coturno*, *Aen*. 1.336–7). This is the typical dress of huntresses, with a line closely repeated from a projected image of Diana in the *Eclogues* (*Ecl.* 7.32); yet the "purple" here also stands for a stock luxury product of Phoenicians, reminding us of their characteristic wealth and stereotypical greed just before Venus gives her potentially damning speech. Luxurious Phoenician clothing also returns in the hunting scene, first in the purple and golden ornaments of Dido's horse (*ostro … insignis et auro*, *Aen*. 4.134), and then in Dido's purple dress (*purpuream … vestem*, 4.139), which she wears below a recognizably "Sidonian" cloak (*Sidoniam … chlamydem*, 4.137). In lines that are once again an evocation of Artemis/Diana, as presented in Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* (110–12), Dido showcases an excess of gold: from her golden quiver (*pharetra ex auro*, 4.138) to the clasp or band tying her (equally golden) hair (*crines nodantur in aurum*, 4.138),[84] up to the golden brooch fastening her purple dress (*aurea … fibula*, 4.139).

Recognizably Phoenician clothing will also be what risks turning Aeneas into a stereotypical Carthaginian: it is when Mercury sees him with "a sword studded with yellow stars of jasper" (*stellatus iaspide fulva | ensis*, 4.261–2) and "a cloak glowing with Tyrian purple" (*Tyrio … ardebat murice laena*, 4.262),[85] with "a fine thread of gold" interwoven by Dido herself (*tenui telas discreverat auro*, 4.264), that he decides that this territory, and people, have infected him with lust, loss of manliness, and idleness. Mercury accuses Aeneas of dissipating time in Libya (*Libycis teris otia terris*, 4.271) and addresses him as *uxorius* (4.266): the word is comparable to Antamynides' use of *mulierosus* at *Poen.* 1303 in denoting excessive fondness for women (and thus a tendency to obey them, with a loss of masculinity) in a passage where the Carthaginians' loose clothing (*tunicis demissiciis*, *Poen.* 1303) becomes visually symbolic of their loose morals and unrestrained sexuality.[86] It is tempting to read

[83] See Starnone (2020) 164–5 on Otto Friedrich Gruppe's proposal, in 1859, to expunge the entire simile, because he was so disturbed by the idea that Aeneas could be seduced by a sort of 'gigantessa' overtowering a crowd of men.

[84] For Servius *ad loc.* this could be a *retiolum*: see Rivoltella (2019) 218.

[85] Morgan (2020) suggests association between this *laena* and the flaminate.

[86] Cf. the specification of the Tiber as *uxorius* at Horace, *Carm*. 1.2.19–20, contributing to the characterization of the river as out of control.

an echo of this stereotype in the loose "hanging down" of Aeneas' cloak on his shoulders (*laena | demissa ex umeris*, 4.262–3),[87] and similar associations may be implied for the *discincti Afri* on the shield (8.724) and in Dido's loosening of her girdle before her death (*in veste recincta*, 4.518).

If we finally turn to look at Dido's bloodline, the *Aeneid* seems to hide more than reveal, although it arguably leaves clues for readers to find out that Dido's heritage matters for her people's future hostility to the Romans. As critics have long recognized, since Dido descends from Agenor (*Aen*. 1.338), her heritage can be traced back to Inachus and is ultimately Argive: this makes her a distant relative of Turnus, which may suggest that the conflict portrayed in the *Aeneid* could ultimately be read as a strife between the two strains of Inachus and Dardanus over control of Italy and the Mediterranean.[88] The *Aeneid* also refers to an ancestor called "Belus" when Dido brings to the banquet a bowl from which "Belus used to drink, and all those descended from him" (*pateram, quam Belus et omnes | a Belo soliti*, 1.729–30). It is clear that this cannot be Dido's homonymous father (mentioned at 1.621), but it is also problematic to identify him with Agenor's brother, who was the progenitor of another strain of the Inachid family, from which Turnus descended instead.[89]

On the one hand, the mention of Agenor and Belus serves to evoke Dido's originally Argive descent and to cast the Carthaginians as enemies of the Trojans/Romans; on the other, since the twin brothers were the sons of Libya, it may also suggest that Dido and her people believe in a matrilineal claim to the African land broadly comparable to the one that the Trojans have to Italy on the basis of their ancestor Dardanus. Yet since Libya is not, unlike Dardanus, the (male) originator of the line, we could also imagine that the *Aeneid* underwrites this potential claim, thereby showing that the Phoenicians/Carthaginians have no right of birth to the land that the Romans will end up conquering and annexing to their territory. Venus, who has a stake in downplaying Dido's leadership and in portraying her as disconnected from the land that Aeneas' descendants will end up conquering, undermines any potential claim of Dido to the land when saying that Carthage is "the city of Agenor" (*Agenoris urbem*, *Aen.* 1.338), but that "the borders are of the Libyans, a 'race' impossible to handle in war" (*sed fines Libyci, genus intractabile bello*, 1.339). In this way, she relegates Libya to the African borders of a city that she attempts to fashion as wholly Phoenician, while introducing neat boundaries between (urban) Phoenicians and (nomad)

[87] Starks (1999) 273–4; cf. Morgan (2020) 196 with further interpretations of the phrase at 201–3.

[88] Agenor was son of Libya, daughter of Epaphus, son of Io, daughter of Inachus; see Mackie (1993); Gale (1997); Brent (2004).

[89] It may be preferable to follow Servius *ad loc.* and interpret him as a Levantine monarch/deity equivalent to Semitic Ba'al: cf. Brent (2004) 146.

Africans that will continue to play an important and divisive role in the *Aeneid*, as I shall shortly discuss.

Yet the same erasure of Dido's female ancestry and of her matrilineal claim returns elsewhere in the poem, with the effect of highlighting her isolation and queerness as *femina dux*. When Aeneas asks Dido about her parents (1.606), she mentions her father Belus (*genitor … Belus*, 1.621), but keeps silent about her mother, who must have featured in Trogus (Just. 18.5.6–7) as the one who dissuaded Pygmalion from chasing Dido in Africa and waging war against her, a menace that remains alive in the *Aeneid* (4.43–4). Clearly enough, Dido's line is presented as a fully patrilineal one, where the "strong deeds of the fathers" (*fortia facta patrum*, *Aen.* 1.641) are embossed in gold and displayed in the palace, in "a very long series of feats traced through many male warriors from the ancient origin of the family line" (*series longissima rerum | per tot ducta viros antiqua ab origine gentis*, 1.641–2), even though that family line is most famous for its women: Io, Libya, Europa, the Danaids.[90] The *Aeneid*'s elision of these women in Dido's *genus* alienates her and excludes her from *both* the poem's focus on fathers *and* from the history of her own people.[91]

In sum, if we are looking for any major sign of ethnic or cultural difference as embodied by Virgil's Carthaginians, then we need look no further than their being ruled by a woman: in a sense, it is precisely the possibility of matrilinearity and female leadership that turns Carthage into 'the unruly', a threat not just to the Trojans but to the poem's political order, and which also becomes a catalyst for racial difference. In a necessarily intersectional reading, Dido's racialization becomes eventually indistinguishable from her gendering in Mercury's famous verdict on the untrustworthiness and mutability of her (Punic) femininity: *varium et mutabile semper | femina* ("a variable and changeable thing always | the woman", *Aen.* 4.569–70).[92]

3. Racializing Dido

Thus far, I have explored the possibility of Dido's racialization as a Phoenician and Carthaginian; yet, despite not being born and raised in Africa, Dido is also, in many

[90] On the ecphrasis of Io on Turnus' shield see Gale (1997); on the Danaids on Pallas' *balteus* see Spence (1991); Putnam (1994); Harrison (1998). Brent (2004) 153 notices a wordplay connecting Dido's silverware and Turnus' shield through evocation of their common Argive descent (*Aen.* 1.640, *inGENS ARGentum*, and 7.791, *ARGumentum inGENS*).

[91] Toll (1997) 42 notes that Aeneas' epithet *pater*, used thirty-one times in the poem, may be of even greater thematic importance than *pius*. For a comparable elision of Dido's line in Marlowe's *Dido* see Hendricks (1992) 174–6.

[92] Cf. Giusti (forthcoming, b), also on the universalizing power of *semper*. It bears repeating that the term 'intersectionality' was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989).

respects, an African queen, both to the extent that the Carthaginians were considered by the Romans an African people, and also because the Romans' reliance upon environmental and geographical determinism makes it so that Dido's character would inevitably be shaped by the territory into which she has moved. This possible racialization of Dido as African in the *Aeneid* has been proposed by Shelley Haley in conjunction with that of other African queens such as Cleopatra and Sophonisba.[93] In particular, Haley reads Dido's 'passion' as "a cultural stereotype projected upon Africans by Romans and Greeks"[94] which, together with her threatening destructive drive and her stereotypical foreign seductiveness, makes her "foreshadow later stereotypes of women of color, particularly of black women".[95] Moreover, she interprets Dido's desire for motherhood not as a wicked Carthaginian desire for child slaughter but as an expression of African "matrifocality"[96] and suggests an African background for the rituals that she performs with the Massylian priestess.[97] In what follows, I take my cue from Haley in thinking about Dido as an African character, but I suggest that her 'Africanization' develops progressively through the course of Book 4, and that it is complicated by the fact that as a Phoenician settler Dido can be accused of racializing the indigenous Africans in turn, both in the *Aeneid* and in the tradition preserved by Justin.[98]

It should not be forgotten that Dido, a future model for Queen Elizabeth I, is a colonizer, and a rather violent one at that.[99] In Justin, we read of an otherwise unknown episode according to which she abducts eighty virgins from the island of Cyprus and gives them in marriage to Tyrian youths, in order to ensure an offspring for her future settlement (Just. 18.5.4–5). It could be that Cyprus in this account was at the time Phoenician territory, especially because Dido in the *Aeneid* refers to her father Belus' "devastation" of this "rich" island, which "he conquered and kept under his rule" (*genitor tum Belus opimam | vastabat Cyprum, et victor dicione tenebat*, *Aen.* 1.621–2).[100] The historical Dido follows in her father's footsteps in her ruthless plundering of Cyprus' human wealth, which allows her retrospectively to buttress Carthage's (Cypriot-)Phoenician pedigree, projecting the illusion that Carthaginians shared no blood with the indigenous Africans.

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[93] See Haley (2009) and (2021). On Sophonisba see also Haley (1989) and (1990).

[94] Haley (2009) 35.

[95] Haley (2009) 40.

[96] Haley (2009) 35–7.

[97] Haley (2009) 35, 38–9.

[98] The distinction between Dido and the Africans will be stressed in explicitly racist terms in early modern European renditions, where the latter become the Muslim Moors on the stage of colonialist Europe, on which see Ndiaye (2022). For specific instances, cf. e.g. Giovanni Battista Lalli's 1634 *L'Eneide travestita*, 4.128; Marlowe's *Dido* 4.4.62–3; and generally the readings by Hendricks (1992) and MacDonald (2002) 73–4.

[99] On Dido's associations with Elizabeth see Cheney (1997) 99–114; Kallendorf (2007) 112–14.

[100] Brent (2004) 145 reads Belus' plundering of an island sacred to Venus as a further hint of the enmity between (Argive) Carthaginians and Trojans (proto-Romans).

Yet Justin's summary seems to suggest that there may have been an historical ambiguity in Trogus between, on the one hand, the plausible mixture of Phoenicians and Africans in the foundation of Carthage and, on the other, the projection of a city and people ethnically unrelated to local African communities. In one passage, we read that many of the neighbouring people came to Carthage for trading (Just. 18.5.10) and eventually settled there before the city's official foundation (*sedesque ibi statuentibus ex frequentia hominum velut instar civitatis effectum est*: "and then they decided to settle there, and so the gathering of people started to take the semblance of a state", Just. 18.5.11). And yet, in the episode of Dido turning down with her suicide the marriage proposal of a local African king (Just. 18.6), Trogus-Justin seems to rely on a clear-cut separation between the Carthaginians and the local Africans. The passage exacerbates differences between, and stereotypical portrayals of, both Punic and African people: both Dido and the Phoenicians who approach her "with Punic mind", or "guile" (*Punico … ingenio*, Just. 18.6.1), are stigmatized as treacherous and deceitful, while the Africans are presented as 'uncultivated' or 'uncivilised', since the Phoenicians report that a certain African king is asking them for someone to teach him and his people "a more civilized way of life" (*cultiores victus*, Just. 18.2, which literally refers to cultivation, the measure of 'civilization' in antiquity), but that they cannot find anyone in the city who would wish to go among "barbarian people, who live like wild beasts" (*barbaros et ferarum more viventes,* Just. 18.6.3).

Virgil's *Aeneid* reflects this ambiguous tension between Phoenicians and local Africans, as well as Dido's ambiguous fluctuation between a Phoenician and an African identity, which we may even see at work when comparing the characterization of the local inhabitants in Justin with her wish to live "like a wild beast" (*more ferae*, *Aen.* 4.551).[101] We have seen that Dido and the Carthaginians were imagined to be naturally protective of their borders (*Aen*. 1.299–300);[102] it is because of Mercury's intervention that Dido treats the Trojans "with no discrimination" (*nullo discrimine*, *Aen.* 1.574), but there may instead be *discrimen* between the Tyrians and the local inhabitants from whom she has stolen the land with the trick of the oxhide. In her speech, Venus clearly differentiates the borders between Tyrians and 'Libyans', conflating different African people into a single bellicose "race" (*sed fines Libyci, genus intractabile bello*: "but the bordering land is Libyan, a race impossible to handle in war", 1.339).[103] Dido herself, when talking to Ilioneus (1.616), refers to the Libyan shores as *immanes* ("monstrous", "frightful", "savage"), probably ascribing atrocity to the indigenous.[104]

[101] On Dido's regressive and even "primitive" drive see Schiesaro (2005) 97–103.

[102] Cf. the expulsion of drones from the beehive in the simile of *Aen*. 1.430–6, which is chock-full of military imagery, with Giusti (2014).

[103] On how borders serve purposes of racialization, cf. Mbembe (2019).

[104] See also Hesekamp (2021) 100; *contra* Austin (1971) 190 refers the adjective to the Carthaginians.

At the beginning of Book 4, Dido's sister Anna is keen to distinguish Carthage from its surroundings, but the similarities between her sister and the Africans become ironically obvious to the readers even as she speaks (*Aen*. 4.40–3):

> hinc Gaetulae urbes, genus insuperabile bello,
> et Numidae infreni cingunt et inhospita Syrtis;
> hinc deserta siti regio lateque furentes
> Barcaei.
>
> On this side the cities of the Gaetulians surround you, a race
> unconquerable in war,
> and the unbridled Numidians, and the inhospitable Syrtis;
> on this other, a waterless desert, and the Barcaei roam furiously
> on a vast tract of land.

In picturing themselves as isolated in the bastion of Carthage and surrounded by inimical nations, Anna echoes Venus' previous words (1.339), but she distinguishes between different African people. The "race unconquerable in war" is now that of the Gaetulians, joined in their hostility by Numidians and Barcaei, and by the hostile and desert landscape of Africa east and south-west of Carthage.[105] Anna's viewpoint here may be considered as in line with that of the Phoenicians as expressed in Justin. In the *Bellum Jugurthinum*, Sallust also pictured the Gaetulians as more warlike than the Libyans (*Libyes quam Gaetuli minus bellicosi*, *BJ* 18.12), just after specifying that both were "rough" and "uncivilized" (*Gaetuli et Libyes, asperi incultique*, *BJ* 18.1) insofar as they did not cultivate the land and lived off the meat of wild animals and fodder from the soil, while also having no laws, no customs, no authority and no settled homes. Just like Virgil, Sallust is at least presenting his description of the local Africans as originating from a Punic perspective, whether or not we believe his claim that this digression is based on the "Punic books" of King Hiempsal (*ex libris Punicis, qui regis Hiempsalis dicebantur, interpretatum nobis est*, *BJ* 17).[106]

Yet readers attentive to Virgil's dramatic irony will not fail to pick up on how the lines between Dido and the locals easily begin to blur. There seems to be an ironic slip in Anna's

[105] Hesekamp (2021) 92–3 speaks here of a "social gap" (*soziales Gefälle*) in Anna's perception of the locals as 'uncivilized', rather than racial difference.

[106] We should probably identify the king with Hiempsal II, king of Numidia between 80 and 60 BCE, although the Latin leaves it ambiguous whether the books were authored or possessed by him. Oniga (1995) 59–68 suggests that this would have been Hellenized rather than originally Punic scholarship.

application to the Numidians and the Barcaei of the same characteristics that will end up causing Dido's and Carthage's downfall: Anna's Numidians are "unbridled" (*infreni*, 4.41), technically because they practise bareback horse riding, but there may be a hint at their "unrestrained" sexuality,[107] while the *Barcaei* are specified as "widely furious" (*late … furentes*, 4.42), an adjective ironically apt to describe Dido's irrational passion in *Aeneid* 4.[108] Anna pictures Dido as isolated in her territory, surrounded by hostile people, and the "deserts" of Libya (*deserta siti regio*, 4.42) that Aeneas also claimed to be roaming (*Libyae deserta peragro*, 1.384) resurface in Dido's unconscious representation of this land when she dreams of chasing her fellow Tyrians in a "desert land" (*Tyrios deserta quaerere terra*, 4.468).[109] The wasteland evoked in this dream also comments on her own situation, since she has previously described herself as "captured and deserted" (*capta ac deserta*, 4.330; *deserta*, 4.677): in her unconscious, Dido becomes one and the same with the feminized, colonizable, and malleable landscape of Virgil's Africa.

There are other places in the poem that suggest that Carthage's borders may be as permeable to the local Africans as they are to Aeneas. Massylian cavalry guards Dido's palace before the hunt (4.132), and there may be good reason to believe that the court singer Iopas was a local African rather than a Phoenician. Servius tells us that Iopas was "an African king, one of Dido's suitors", invoking "Punic history" as his source (*Iopas vero rex Afrorum, unus de procis Didonis, ut Punica testatur historia*, Servius *ad Aen*. 1.738). He may be confusing Iopas with Iarbas,[110] but Alexander McKay has proposed an intriguing identification with Juba II (Greek Ἰόβας), the philosopher-king installed as king of Mauretania in around 23 BCE and especially interested, among other disciplines, in musicology.[111] For McKay, the allusion is flagged by Iopas' epithet *crinitus* at 1.740 (evoking the Latin *juba*, used for the flowing mane of animals) and by an evocation of Juba's wife Cleopatra Selene, daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, in the "wandering moon" of his song (*errantem lunam*, 1.742). Yet this is also a clear evocation of Dido, explicitly compared to the wandering moon at *Aen*. 6.452–4 (and to Diana, a moon goddess, at 1.498–504), and whose name 'Dido', according to Timaeus, was what the local Africans called her, because of her many "wanderings" (ὑπὸ τῶν Λιβύων διὰ τὴν πολλὴν αὐτῆς πλάνην Δειδὼ προσηγορεύθη ἐπιχωρίως, *BNJ* 566 F82). Whether or not the etymology of 'Dido' is Semitic in origin rather than

[107] Cf. Livy on Syphax' and Massinissa's lack of sexual restraint as a characteristic proper to all Numidians (29.23.4; 30.12.18), with Haley (1990) 375–81; Fabre-Serris (2021) 98–100; Hesekamp (2021) 91 n. 269.
[108] See Haley (2009) 35.
[109] See Hesekamp (2021) 73–4; 100–3 on the characters' perception of the deserted African space underscoring an "identity crisis".
[110] Conington (1863) 103.
[111] McKay (2004). On Juba II and Cleopatra Selene, see Roller (2003).

African,[112] it could be that Virgil himself believed Timaeus, since he has it alluded to by Iarbas, the only indigenous African who gets to speak in the *Aeneid*, when he refers to her as a "woman … *wandering* in our territory" (*femina quae nostris errans in finibus*, 4.211).[113]

Anna may picture Carthage as an isolated bastion of Phoenician purity – tellingly so when she is stressing Dido's own faithfulness to her deceased Phoenician husband and diverting Dido's sex drive and fury onto the local Africans. Yet it would be entirely reasonable to imagine it as a city open for local populations to live and trade in, with a court open to the assiduous frequentations of local kings. If we follow Servius and McKay in imagining Iopas as a local Numidian king, we may also wonder whether another historical allusion may be at work for Iarbas too, and if Virgil may be inviting his readers to think of historical African leaders attempting to control North African territory as lurking behind Dido's fictional suitors. This may be reflected in Virgil's specification of Iarbas as a Gaetulian (*Gaetulus Iarbas*, 4.326), which is not reported in any other source. Justin called him the leader of the "Maxitani" (Just. 18.6.1), quite certainly the Muxitani – that is, an historical African tribe whose name has been found in the Roman era in a suburb of Carthage, and must have been in control of the territory north of the Bagrada river.[114] Cato the Elder called him Iapon[115] and may have identified him with the king of the Zavecians or Zauekes, an ancient North African people who gave Libya the name of Zeugitana, and of whom we know little except that their women were chariot-drivers.[116] By making Iarbas a Gaetulian, Virgil may have had in mind a homonymous African prince Hiarbas who in the first century BCE led a revolt against the king of Numidia Hiempsal II, father of Juba I and grandfather of Juba II.[117]

Although Iarbas is referred to as a Gaetulian by Dido, the geographical co-ordinates of his scene in Book 4 show him instead as mixing elements of various African people. He is said to be the son of Jupiter Ammon and a Garamantian nymph (4.198), with the Garamantes being a Berber tribe that occupied today's Fezzan region, mentioned by Lucan as either sun-burned or black-skinned (*Garamante perusto*, Luc. 4.670); Lucan made them fight in the army of Juba I, and in the year of Virgil's death Cornelius Balbus (of Punic origin) celebrated a triumph over them in an expedition against Africa ordained by Augustus.[118] Yet

[112] As argued by Honeyman (1947).
[113] Cf. also Venus' reference to "fleeing Dido" at 1.340–1 (*Dido… fugiens*), and Dido's wandering in the underworld at 6.450–1 (*Dido* | *errabat*).
[114] Desanges (2010).
[115] Quoted in Solinus Polyhistor 27.10.
[116] Herodotus 4.193.
[117] See Roller (2003) 26–7.
[118] Herodotus already referred to the Garamantians as "a great nation" (ἔθνος μέγα, Herodotus 4.183; cf. 4.174–5). On Balbus' campaigns and triumph see Pliny, *NH* 5.35–7 with Desanges (1957). Virgil imagines the Romans' triumph over them at *Aen*. 6.794.

Iarbas also refers to his people as Maurusian = Mauretanian (*Maurusia … gens*, 4.206–7), another dark-skinned population, as the name betrays (μαυρός, "dark"),[119] living instead on the west side of Africa, near the Atlantic Ocean.[120] Iarbas is thus pictured as king of a vast North African territory, spreading from the oracle of Jupiter Ammon (in the Oasis of Siwah, at the border between Egypt and Libya), through the territory of the Garamantes in Fezzan, up to the territory of the Mauretanians and the Atlantic Ocean.[121] Just like Aeneas', his *genus* too is *ab Iove summo* (1.380).

Virgil specifies that Iarbas is a son of rape (*rapta Garamantide nympha*, 4.198), and the placing of this detail at his very introduction may lend some credit to those critics who have seen him as characterized by a violent attitude against women in general, and against Dido in particular.[122] And yet this characterization of Iarbas as a "primitive, barbarian despot … representative for other African chiefs"[123] does not stand the test of scrutiny. Yes, Dido refers to the Numidian kings (possibly including Iarbas) as "tyrants" (*tyranni*, 4.320), but so was her own brother (1.361).[124] It is true that Iarbas' use of *femina* (4.211) is contemptuous, and that it reduces Dido to her female and marriable status, denying her the leadership and role that she has achieved, but so was Venus' use of the term (1.364), and so will soon be Mercury's (4.570). Surprisingly for a character who is supposed to be characterized as 'primitive', Iarbas is engaged in quite sophisticated wordplay when he condescendingly says that he has provided Dido with a strip of land to cultivate (*litus arandum*, 4.212), which he deems worthless (playing on the expression *litus arare*, "wasting pains").[125] Iarbas is at most guilty of racializing the Trojans in turn, when describing "that Paris with his retinue of half men" (*ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu*, 4.215) according to proto-orientalist stereotypes, but there is little in the text to agree with Austin's statement that "fierce barbarian despot as he is, he regards Dido as a chattel, a woman to whose love he has a natural right; his attitude to Jupiter is childlike and naïve, and Virgil has drawn a subtle picture of primitive mentality".[126] As often happens with Greco-Roman texts,

[119] Lucan 4.678–9, *concolor Indo | Maurus*; cf. Manilius 4.729–30; Isidore, *Orig.* 14.5.10. Ovid makes Iarbas Maurusian (*maurus Iarba*, *Fast*. 3.552).

[120] DServ. *ad Aen*. 4.206.

[121] Cf. the list of people Iarbas reigns over in Silius (*Pun*. 2.56–64).

[122] See Hesekamp (2021) 94–6 following Austin (1955). Cf. Pease (1935) 225 on Iarbas and Turnus, "each a person of vigorous, not to say violent, disposition".

[123] Hesekamp (2021) 96, "das Bild eines primitiven, barbarischen Despoten … repräsentativ für die übrigen afrikanischen Stammesfürsten"; see also 91 n. 269 with Sallust, *BJ* 80 on Numidians and Moors holding women of little value.

[124] Austin (1955) 102 takes it merely as "rulers" and believes that Iarbas is meant. For Hesekamp (2021) 93 the word is evocative of brutality and violence.

[125] Pease (1935) 229–30; Austin (1955) 77; Hesekamp (2021) 95 n. 278.

[126] Austin (1955) 75.

the expectations of the modern scholar racialize the ancient character more than the text actually does.

I have argued that in Book 4 Dido seems to progressively mingle with the local Africans, despite instances where the text also suggests the non-permeability of Carthage's borders. There is a final portion of the poem that I believe elucidates Dido's progressive Africanization, while also maintaining an ambiguity in showing Dido's resistance to this very process. This is the double scene where Dido narrates to Anna her encounter with a Massylian priestess (*Aen*. 4.478–98) and goes on to perform the rites that the priestess supposedly instructs (4.504–21). In accordance with her reading of Dido as an African character, Haley argues for an African origin of these rituals, which makes them "familiar and comforting to Dido", against their common interpretation as highlighting her "deepening descent into madness and irrationality".[127] Here, I am less interested in probing any actual Africanness of these rituals than I am in thinking about how this episode epitomizes the multifocal and multi-directional ways in which racialization functions for and against Dido in the poem. On the one hand, we may argue that Dido attempts to racialize the indigenous priestess and thus divert onto *her* the witchcraft and irrationality that she is engaging with, just as we have seen Anna attempting to divert Dido's unrestrained lust and fury away onto the Numidians and the Barcaei. On the other hand, the final effect that the text would have on its Roman readers is a racialization of Dido herself as a type of barbarian witch, a racialization which is of course inseparable from the poem's misogynistic discourse.

The geography of the scene is interesting in thinking about both Carthage and Dido as merging with Africa at this point in the poem. When attempting to make Anna accept the idea that she has decided to approach magic rituals to keep Aeneas at her side, Dido takes her sister through a tortuous ecphrasis to the very edges of Africa and the known world, further and below Mauretania, where the territory of the Western Ethiopians meets the Atlantic Ocean (4.480–2). This is a land that the Romans will transform into a desert for their imagination of the marvellous, and that the Elder Pliny will populate with one-eyed, dog-headed, or four-legged people (*NH* 6.195).[128] From here came a priestess who was somehow introduced to Dido, although Dido is extremely reticent in telling Anna how this came about, claiming only that she "was shown" to her (*hinc mihi Massylae gentis monstrata sacerdos*, 4.483). Dido specifies that the priestess is Massylian, which means that she originally came not from the land of the Ethiopians but from the east of Numidia, at the very borders of Carthage, but at the time of this introduction she had just returned

[127] Haley (2009) 38.

[128] On this tradition see especially Evans (1999); Mudimbe (1988) 70–1 sees a continuity between Pliny's (and others') "geography of monstrosity" and later European ideas of Africa.

from western Ethiopia, where she used to guard the temple of the Hesperides and feed the serpent who in turn guarded the golden apples (4.484–5). Dido makes it clear to Anna that she is going to engage in magic against her will (*magicas invitam accingier artis*, 4.493), casting full responsibility onto this priestess (*monstratque sacerdos*: "it is the priestess who advises me", 4.498).

There is at least one inconsistency in the background story that Dido tells us about this priestess. This is the curious detail that the priestess sprinkles "narcotic poppy" (*soporiferum … papaver*, 4.486), when surely her task should have been to keep the serpent awake in his guard.[129] Dido seems here to evoke two different episodes from Apollonius' *Argonautica*: Hercules' killing of the serpent guarding the golden apples, which the Argonauts learn *post factum* (*Arg.* 4.1393–460), and Medea lulling to sleep the dragon guarding the golden fleece (*Arg.* 4.156–61). If this priestess had any responsibility in the demise of this serpent, then it is telling that she appears to combine two characters who comment on different aspects of Dido: Hercules as proto-colonizer of Africa, and Medea as scorned lover and potentially threatening barbarian sorceress. Indeed, Dido's ambiguous identification with the priestess becomes explicit during the actual rites, where the passage from the *regina* setting up the pyre (*at regina…*, 4.504) to the dishevelled priestess invoking the infernal gods (*crinis effusa sacerdos | ter centum tonat ore deos*, 4.509–10) and then back to Dido herself carrying the *mola* to the altars (*ipsa mola manibusque piis altaria iuxta…*, 4.517) does not necessarily imply a change of subject. Virgil's placing of the *sacerdos* as surrounded by the "altars" (*stant arae circum*, 4.509) and his later representation of Dido as "next to the altars" (*altaria iuxta*, 4.517) further underscores the identification between the two, with the effect that the reader will wonder whether "the priestess" at line 509 may in fact be none other than Dido herself "*as* priestess". The half line that hangs in between the two figures (*et matri praereptus amor*: "and the love snatched away from the mother", 4.516, a reference to the *hippomanes*) speaks to Dido as a painful reminder of her failed motherhood and of her failure to play an active genetic role in the Carthaginian line – which is, as Mairéad McAuley has emphasized, a great part of the tragedy of *infelix Dido*, with *infelix* standing for her as "sterile" and "unfruitful".[130] Whether, and how, the Carthaginian line will mix with the Africans rather than with the Trojans, Virgil never explicitly says: Dido dies childless, and the line of the Carthaginians springs from death in a sort of necromancy, with Hannibal invoked as a vindictive tragic demon, asked to rise from her bones (*exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor*, 4.625) in order to exact vengeance from the "entire future offspring and race"

[129] See already Servius *ad loc.*; Pease (1935) 396–8; Austin (1955) 144–5.
[130] McAuley (2016) 60. On the *hippomanes* see Starnone (2021b) with bibliography.

(*stirpem et genus omne futurum*, 4.622) that she wished had been hers.[131] Filling in this gap left by the *Aeneid*, both Ovid (*Fast*. 3.551–2) and Silius (*Pun*. 8.54–6) will explicitly claim that Iarbas and the Numidians chase the kingdom after Dido's death. In superimposing Dido with this autochthonous African priestess, Virgil seems to hint at this future history of Dido's originally Argive line.

To conclude, the scene of Dido as Massylian priestess conveys the hybridity of Dido as both racialized and racializing subject: it condenses her Punic-African racialization and the ambiguous ethnic status of her city, while also reminding us of her own attempts to divert her irrationality onto the indigenous inhabitants. That these attempts have at least deceived her modern critics, if not her sister, may be evidenced by Austin's reading of the scene, when he comments that "in contrast with … the witch and her horrid mumbo-jumbo, Dido seems calm and collected".[132] The scene stages racecraft and witchcraft as processes of irrational and intimate imagination, able to bring about real-life consequences both in the poem and in the world. To quote the Fields sisters, they are both "imagined, acted upon, and re-imagined, the action and imagining inextricably intertwined".[133] It is up to us to try in turn to imagine racecraft "outside or beyond the belief" as "a thing in itself worth scrutiny" in its formation.[134] To close with a caveat that they direct at contemporary Western societies, "it is impossible to understand what 'post-racial' might be without first understanding more profoundly than we do at present just what 'racial' is".[135] The same, we may add, holds true for the 'pre-' or 'proto-racial' in the study of the ancient world.

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[131] Cf. Giusti (2018) 232.
[132] Austin (1955) 155.
[133] Fields and Fields (2012) 19.
[134] Fields and Fields (2012) 20.
[135] Fields and Fields (2012) 20.

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