

**Epic & History**  
**Paper Assignment 2 - 10 pages**  
**Due May 2 at 12:00 pm**

As we have seen in class, Virgil had three major models for the *Aeneid*: the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Argonautica*. However, what he drew from these epics, what he ignored, and what he altered is very much determined by Virgil's own times and his aims for the poem. For this paper, you will look at either Dido or Aeneas, explain how Virgil had modeled them on earlier characters, and what this shows about Virgil, his audience, and his times. How does all this affect how we interpret these characters and the poem as a whole? Remember, Virgil's audience would have been familiar with the earlier epics and able to recognize Virgil's models.

In the case of Dido, the primary literary models are *Medeia* in the *Argonautica*, Andromache in the *Iliad*, and Nausicaa, Circe, and Calypso in the *Odyssey*. Some aspects which you might want to consider include:

- The role of Eros/Cupid in the romances
- The descriptions of *Medeia*/Dido falling in love with their respective men
- The respective "marriages" of Jason and *Medeia* and Dido and Aeneas
- Nausicaa and her obvious interest in Odysseus compared to Dido and Aeneas
- The role of magic for Circe, Calypso, *Medeia*, and Dido
- The different roles that the men have, especially for Dido and *Medeia*
- Andromache's relationship with Hector compared to Dido's with Aeneas

In the case of Aeneas, the major models are Jason in the *Argonautica*, Achilles in the *Iliad*, and Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. Some aspects you might want to consider include:

- Aeneas versus Achilles running the funeral games
- Aeneas and Achilles in battle, and their relationships with Pallas and Patroclus
- Anger of Achilles and Aeneas, and its role in their combat scenes
- The descents to the underworld - how are these accomplished, what kinds of figures to Odysseus and Aeneas see (or hear about), and what kind of information do they get?
- The leadership of Aeneas compared to that of Achilles, Odysseus, and particularly Jason
- Aeneas and the heroic codes followed by the earlier heroes.

Analyze what Virgil has kept and what he has changed, and explain why. How does his reinterpretation of his models inform our understanding of Dido's character, and her tragic end? How does this enable us to better understand Aeneas, his role in the poem, as a model Roman, and as founder of Rome? How might it help us better understand the end of the *Aeneid*? How might it better help us understand the Augustan era?

You should focus on closely reading and analyzing the texts themselves, and not attempt to dig through modern scholarship. I want to read what you have to say, not what someone else has to say! You may draw on class lectures and discussions for background, and of course talk to me if you want more background on any topics. Papers are due on May 2 at 12:00 pm - you can either bring them to my office (407 Old Main) or leave them in my mailbox (416 Old Main).