VERGIL’S CREUSA AND *ILIAD* 6

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There is critical agreement on Creusa’s importance to the *Aeneid* in illuminating the character of Aeneas, but polar disparity as to whether the light is favorable. Some assert that the appearance and loss of Creusa makes Aeneas more sympathetic\(^1\), while another suggests that Aeneas’ ‘neglect’ of his wife shows his ‘capacity for inhumane action’, which will culminate in his killing Turnus\(^2\). In her hostile interpretation of Aeneas’ relationship with Creusa, Perkell endorses a reading of *Aeneid* 2 almost as old as the *Aeneid* itself. Ovid’s Dido is likewise critical and unforgiving of Aeneas’ behavior toward Creusa. She accuses him:

> Omnia mentiris: nec enim tua fallere lingua<br>Incipit a nobis, primaque plectar ego.<br>Si quaeras ubi sit formosi mater Iuli,<br>Occidit a duro sola reficta viro. (*Her. 7.* 81-4)\(^3\)

There is considerable variation in the accounts of the Trojan hero and his wife, material that can lead to widely divergent conclusions\(^4\). Because of the wealth of options available to him, we must

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4) In the earliest myth she was called Eurydica (*Cypris*, in Pausan. *Ann.* 37); though others called her Creusa (*Livy* 1.3.2; *Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom.* 3.31.4; schol. *Lyc.* 1263; App. *Reg.* 1; *Ael.* 2.11.16). In all of the above, save Livy and Aelian, Creusa is the daughter of Priam, while in *Apollodorus* (*Bibl.* 3.12.5), and *Hyginus* (*Fab.* 90), she is called Prima’s daughter, but not the wife of Aeneas. It is likely that Vergil would have known the variants, especially those in *Ennius*, *Dionysius*, and *Apollodorus*. It is likely too that the *Aeneid* itself contributed to the stabilization or uniformity of later reports, such as Appian, Aelian, or the scholiast.

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read Vergil's adaptation of Creusa as carefully designed. One tradition, probably older than that of the 'abandonment' of Creusa, shows his wife accompanying the hero into exile. Dionysius of Halicarnassus cites Hellanicus for this version:

... (Aeneas) ἀνοίξας δὲ τὰς πύλας ὀπημεί συντεταγμένους ἔχων τοὺς λοιποὺς φυγάδας, ἀγομένους ἐπὶ ταῖς κρατίσταις συνωφρύνσει τοῦ τε πα-τέρα καὶ θεοῖς τοὺς πατρίσιους γυναικᾶ τε καὶ τέκνα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων εἰ πλείστοτε ἄξιον ἢν σῶμα ἢ χρήμα. (Ant. Rom. 1.45.4)

Naevius follows:

... amborum uxores
noctu Troiad exibant capitibus opertis,
flentes ambae, abuentes lacrimis cum multis. (Bell. Pun. fr. 4 M)

In addition, iconographical evidence attesting to their joint departure abounds\(^5\)). But while Dionysius privileges Hellanicus as the 'πιστότατος' source (Ant. Rom. 1.48.1), his otherwise complimentary account of Aeneas' actions contains a small potential problem. For when the assembled Trojans take their final departure, Creusa is no longer among those specified as included:

... τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους παῖδας Αἰνείας παραλαμβάνων καὶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὰ ἔκδη τῶν θεῶν, ἐπειδή παρεσκευάσθη τὸ ναυτικόν αὐτῷ, διαπλεῖ τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον... (Ant. Rom. 1.47.6)

There is a gap, and now she may be there, and simply not named, or she may have somehow disappeared\(^6\). In any case, her sudden absence is not accounted for.

This potential problem is realized, however, in other of Vergil's sources where there are explicit accusations against him. Lycophron, for instance, has Cassandra prophesy that Aeneas will lose his family, saving his father and household gods at the expense of his wife and children: παρῴσας καὶ δόματα καὶ τέκνα/καὶ κτήσειν ἀλλήν (Alex. 1263-4). This scenario, in which Ascanius is not saved with Anchises is clearly not identical to what Vergil eventually re-

of Lycophron. Still, that un-Vergilian details survive into Hyginus and Pausanias reminds us of their prevalence.

\(^5\) Austin (note 1 above), ad 795, provides numerous iconographical references.

\(^6\) The Tabula Iliaca reflects the same apparent discrepancy. In the first scene, the departure from the city gate, Aeneas and Ascanius are accompanied by a woman, while below, at the ship, the woman is no longer there.