

The comparison between vergil and homer

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In book 6 of *The Odyssey*, Homer compares princess Nausicaa's first impression to Odysseus by comparing her to the goddess Diana. In lines 494-519 in book 1 of *Aeneid*, Vergil uses the same comparison to describe Queen Dido seen by Aeneas, and there is a big resemblance between the two texts. Vergil, by using Homeric simile, means to establish Dido's similarities in character and position in the sequence of the story with those of Nausicaa.

There are several statements, mostly focused in lines 499-503, that are similar to descriptions of Nausicaa. First of all, Vergil says "Qualis in Eurotae ripis aut per iuga Cynthi exercet Diana choros" (lines 498-499). This means "just like Diana trains her dance in the banks of the Eurotae or along the ridges of the Cynthus". "In Eurotae ripis" (line 498) meaning 'in the banks of the Eurotae river' and "per iuga Cynthis" meaning 'along the ridges of the Cynthus mountain' corresponds to river Erymanthus and mountains of Taygetus where Diana "goes forth to hunt" in *The Odyssey*. Second of all, in "Quam mille secutae" (line 499), meaning 'a thousand Oreads followed her' in context, matches the part where the wood nymphs take their sport along with Diana.

"Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades" (line 500), meaning 'the Oreads gather here and there', builds an image of beautiful nymphs surrounding Diana, matching the part where she is "amid a whole bevy of beauties". It is also stated "gradiensque deas supereminet omnis" (line 501). This means 'proceeding, she towers above all goddesses(Oreads)'. This is a parallel to the section where Diana is described as "full head taller than the others" and "the loveliest amid a whole bevy of beauties", and how Nausicaa "outshines her handmaidens". Latona, Diana's mother, is mentioned in both passages. "

Latonae tacitum pertemptant gaudia pectus” (line 502) in Aeneid means ‘the silent heart of Latona filled up with joy’, showing how proud Latona is.

In The Odyssey, “then is Leto proud at seeing her daughter”. Vergil chose to incorporate these similarities to emphasize the parallelism of Dido and Nausicaa. Odysseus encounters Nausicaa on land, right after the long and difficult journey on the sea. Dido means the same to Aeneas as he has also suffered on sea, and land, where he meets her after the storms, is a representation of hope and civilization. This was proved in the preceding parts of Aeneid, as “magno telluris amore egressi optata potiuntur Troes harena” (line 171-172)- the Trojans, having gained hope with sand, disembarked with great love for the land. Moreover, the characters Dido and Nausicaa both serve as possible helpers for the protagonists to ultimately obtain their goals.

In Aeneid, Aeneas’s men seek the temple of Dido to ask for help: “templum... petebant” (line 519). Similarly, in The Odyssey, Minerva leads Odysseus to Nausicaa so that she would take him to her father who would provide him with ships and supplies. Despite the many similarities, there is a notable difference. In lines 500-501, it is mentioned that “Illa pharetram fert umero”, meaning ‘she carried a quiver on her shoulders’. This is a description of Diana that is unseen in book 6 of The Odyssey- it adds an image of fierceness and strength to Diana, which is then applied to Dido.

Such portrayal is suitable for Dido, as she is a powerful queen, unlike Nausicaa, whose beauty is the only thing that is emphasized. Dido’s power is shown right after the Homeric simile, as Vergil says “talīs erat Dido... per

medios instans operi regnisque futuris” (line 504). Here, she urges on ‘work’ and her ‘future kingdom’. This is a contrast to Nausicaa, who is dependent on her father and engages in trivial activities with her handmaidens. Also, the extent of the influence of Dido is significant, as she later begins a romantic relationship with Aeneas, while Odysseus has no interest in marrying Nausicaa. In conclusion, Vergil chooses to employ Homeric simile to compare Dido to Diana as Nausicaa is done the same in The Odyssey to portray how the position of Dido’s character corresponds to the storyline and the epic hero Aeneas.

The variation he has made is mainly to imply that Dido’s character is powerful and multidimensional, unlike Nausicaa.