

Hell Hath No Fury: Circe as Dido in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 14

In the recent resurgence of scholarly interest in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, much ado has been made about Vergil's influence and the literary precedents engaged by Ovid as an epic receptionist. Perhaps the most notable case in point is Ovid's direct appropriation of Vergil's epic in Books 13 and 14, the retelling and modification of Aeneas' travels. Many questions surround the brevity with which the Aeneid is treated in Ovid leading scholars to question the intent and sincerity of Ovid's Virgilian project, whether he is deferring to Vergil and refraining from the treatment of Virgilian subjects in depth (Tarrant 2002) or steering Virgilian plot points towards an emphasis on his overall theme of metamorphosis (Hinds 1998, Otis 1966). In either case, Ovidian treatment results in surprisingly small attention paid to certain prominent Virgilian characters, of whom perhaps the most striking is Dido. Dido is explicitly mentioned (although, not by name) exactly once throughout this condensed epic-within-an-epic at *Met.* 14.80, receiving four lines of text before she is dismissed from the epic.

There may be, however, more to Ovid's apparent muteness on the affairs of the Carthaginian queen. While some scholars have done character studies of Dido within Vergil compared to Circe within the *Metamorphoses* (Papaioannou 2005, Segal 1968, 2002), there is more room for the treatment of Circe as a textually-based double for Dido. It is attractive to reconsider Ovid's dismissal of Dido in light of a recent scholarly trend of noting narrative intertextuality through the doublets of characters and episodes embedded within the narratives themselves (Thomas 1986, Edmunds 2001, Gildenhard/Zissos 2000, 2004). I propose that Ovid incorporates Dido into his text through the character of Circe, bringing Virgilian characterization to the fore even while suppressing the character of Dido. This paper strengthens and expands on extant arguments for an intertextual relationship between Dido in Books 1 and 4 of the *Aeneid*

and Circe in Book 14 of the *Metamorphoses* while suggesting strongly that Dido's departure from the text is her transformation into the textual presence of Circe. This is based on Ovid's use of Virgilian language to describe the actions of Circe, the intertextual parallels between these two women in context, and the physical placement of this doubling into a specific locus within the narrative. Considering Circe a vehicle for Dido's continued presence in Ovid's narrative not only reinforces a strong link between these two women, but adds evidence to the already suggested transformations of the text itself.

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