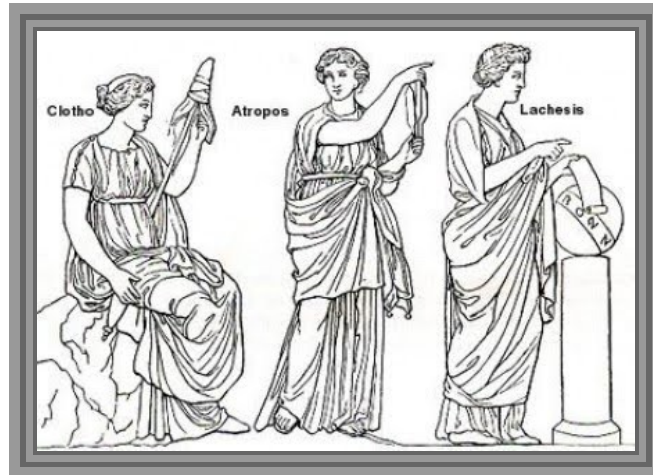


Aeneid Book VI Analysis 7:

Themes: Fate

Characters: Caelano



There are a number of themes in the Aeneid and it will help you answer questions on the literature part of the paper if you understand them. One of those themes is Fate. The Romans also thought that the three Fates or *Parcae* called *Nona*, *Κλωθώ* (*Clotho*, the Spinner); *Decuma*, *Λάχεσις* (*Lachesis*, the Alloter) and *Morta Ἄτροπος* (*Atropos* the Inflexible) controlled human destiny. How this interacted with Jupiter's control is not clear. This is all very different from the Christian attitude to life. Read the article here: <https://www.gotquestions.org/fate-destiny.html> which explains far better than I can what the Bible teaches on this topic.

The actions of the, often conflicting, gods are controlled by an over-arching destiny so that even they cannot not act independently. One of the common themes in the Aeneid is that fate always comes true. Jupiter as king of the gods is seen as the author of this master-plan and he ensures that it will come to pass by intervening if the actions of the other gods threaten it. The passage most involved with Fate in the IGCSE set text is the speech of the Harpy, Caelano. Her prophecy has come from Jupiter's master-plan but not directly. Jupiter told Apollo and Apollo told Caelano. Notice too the twisted nature of the fulfilment which although the prophecy sounds dire, leads to no harm to the Trojans. In Virgil's Aeneid Juno hates the Trojans because they are destined to found Rome which is destined to destroy Carthage, her favourite city. This conflict between the wishes of Venus (Aeneas' goddess mother) and Juno together with Jupiter's master-plan or fate can all be seen in Caelano's speech. Anchises prays to the “mighty gods” and although Fate cannot be overruled prophecies can be different in their fulfilment from their appearance at the time!

Exam style questions:

1. *Italiam cursu petitis ventisque vocatis:*
2. *ibitis Italiam portusque intrare licebit.*
3. *sed non ante datam cingetis moenibus urbem*
4. *quam vos dira fames nostraeque iniuria caedis*
5. *ambesas subigat malis absumere mensas.”*
6. *dixit, et in silvam pennis ablata refugit.*

Who is speaking and to whom? [2]

What does the speaker prophesy and how was the prophecy fulfilled? [2]

How does the prophecy relate to the speaker herself? [1]

Write out and scan line 6 marking the long and short syllables and divisions between the feet. [2]

Comment on Virgil's use of metre in this line. [1]

“The passage accomplishes a typically Virgilian feat of making the reader sympathize with both sides of a conflict.” To what extent do you agree? Support your answer with reference to the text of the whole speech. [5]

The first two of these questions require short answers, not necessarily even full sentences. The figures in brackets after the questions show how many marks the questions are worth. Notice that for two marks you must provide two pieces of information. So, for instance, in the first question there will be one mark for “who is speaking?” and another mark for “to whom?”

The third question is the scansion question. You get one mark for getting 3 feet correct and two for 6 correct feet. Notice that you are not asked to mark the caesura. At the moment do not try to do the scansion question without referring to your list of the six rules. Eventually you should memorise the rules.

Specimen answers on the next page.

Who is speaking and to whom?

The Harpy Caelano is speaking to Aeneas and his Trojan followers.

What does the speaker prophesy and how was the prophecy eventually fulfilled?

She prophesies that the Trojans will go to Italy and will be allowed to enter the port. But they will not surround the destined city with fortifications before they are driven by hunger to gnaw and devour even their very tables. When the companions land in Italy they “spread wheaten cakes under their meats.” This took the place of tables. They were short of food so when everything else was gone they began to eat the cakes also.

How does the prophecy relate to the speaker herself?

Caelano states that the prophecy is a punishment for the Trojans' attack on her and the other Harpies.

Scansion working:

No elisions.

No words ending in *m* followed by vowel or *h* so no elisions. No diphthongs:

dixit, et in silvam pennis ablata refugit.

Last five syllables:

dixit, et in silvam pennis ab | lātā rē | fūgīt.

How many syllables remain? 9. So there are **three spondees and a dactyl**.

Syllables followed by two consonants or *x* are long:

dīxīt, et īn sīlvām pēnnīs āb | lātā rē | fūgīt.

Any syllable between two longs will itself be long:

dīxīt, et īn sīlvām pēnnīs āb | lātā rē | fūgīt.

Counting backwards from the fifth foot, this leaves only one place for the dactyl:

dīxīt, ět | īn sīl | vām pēn | nīs āb | lātā rē | fūgīt.

Comment on Virgil's use of metre in this line.

The Harpy finishes speaking quickly (*dīxīt, ět*) and then in dignified spondees she sails off to the forest on her wings.

“This speech accomplishes a typically Virgilian feat of making the reader sympathize with both sides of a conflict.” To what extent do you agree? Support your answer with reference to the text of the whole speech. [5]

On the one hand Virgil makes us sympathize with the Trojans up to this point and then in this passage presents the other point of view. [1] The Trojans were hungry and Virgil's readers would have recognised the Harpies' duty of hospitality [1] but Virgil gives Caelano some good points. The Trojans did steal, [1] and they did try to fight the Harpies.[1] On the other hand it is difficult to feel sympathetic towards such an ugly monster. [1]The reader still empathizes more easily with the Trojans. [1]