

The two female *duces* in the *Aeneid*: The comparing the figures of Camilla and Dido through an analysis of the common adjectives used to describe them

Las dos *duces* femeninas en la *Eneida*: la comparación de las figuras de Camila y Dido a través del análisis de los adjetivos comunes utilizados para describirlas

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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the figure of Camilla in the *Aeneid* and compares it with the renowned figure of Dido to identify the principal similarities and differences between them. In particular, to better understand Virgil's view of the two, I collect and comment on the adjectives used to describe both figures and show that the majority are used with different meanings and for different purposes, emphasizing the uniqueness of the two *duces* in the poem.

KEYWORDS: Vergil, *Aeneid*, Camilla, Dido, Roman epic.

RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza la figura de Camila en la *Eneida* y la compara con la renombrada figura de Dido para identificar las principales semejanzas y diferencias entre ambas. En particular, para comprender mejor la visión que Virgilio tiene de ambas, recojo y comento los adjetivos utilizados para describir a ambas figuras y muestro que la mayoría se emplean con significados y propósitos diferentes, subrayando la singularidad de las dos *duces* en el poema.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Virgilio, *Eneida*, Camila, Dido, épica romana.

0. Introduction

Despite being considered an androcentric genre due to its characters and themes, Virgil's *Aeneid* includes several mortal women with unique qualities with regard to personality and morality, social status and political position. A total of fifty-three mortal women are named by the poet, not including those that are in groups, those that remained unnamed, and the deities who were once mortal: virgins, mothers, sisters, queens, slaves, brides, warriors, priestesses, comrades, young and old¹. Camilla is an atypical and paradoxical

1. In alphabetical order: Acca, Aegiale, Amata, Andromache, Anna, Ariadne, Barce, Beroe, Caieta, Calibe, Camilla, Casmilla, Cassandra, Caeneus, Clelia, Cleopatra, Clytemnestra, Creusa, Cumaeon Sibyl, Dido,

figure among them. She represents a reversal of the common female paradigm that is confined to the domestic sphere and exhibits emotions usually linked to men, for example by expressing military will. Although other women fighters such as the Amazons or the Italids appear in the poem, Camilla shares the title of *dux* only with Dido; both are the only ones in charge of an army and a population in a patriarchal and misogynistic society.

To better explore this dynamic, I first analyze Camilla's figure by focusing on the adjectives that describe her. Next, I present a comparison between Camilla and Dido, discussing their first appearances and their deaths and addressing recurring themes in the depictions of both, such as their correlation with specific female deities and with images of gold. Finally, to clarify their similarities and differences, I examine the common adjectives employed by the poet to depict both figures to analyze whether these are used with the same intended meanings or if there is a different subtext for each heroine. Overall, the analysis provides insight into the author's view of the two women and highlights the significance of principal epithets used for both.

1. The Volscian queen

Camilla's character is introduced twice in the *Aeneid*. The first mention occurs at the end of Book 7 (803-804), when the allies ready to take the field alongside Turnus are listed. The second is in Book 11 (432-433), before the outbreak of war in Latium:

*Hos super advenit Volsca de gente Camilla
agmen agens equitum et florentis aere catervas.*

*Est et Volscorum egregia de gente Camilla
agmen agens equitum et florentis aere catervas.*

What is evident from these two lines is their high degree of similarity. In fact, it is clear that Virgil wants to extol two aspects of Camilla's figure: her Volscian descent and her being head of a great army (*agens*). In contrast to her description in Book 11, which is interrupted, the one in 7 continues until the end of the book and places Camilla in an honorable position, typically reserved for warriors of remarkable merit and renowned fame. The fifteen lines dedicated to her introduction (7, 803-817) already perfectly frame her paradoxical traits and peculiarities: both a *bellatrix* and *virgo*, she is described as *non adsueta* to the jobs provided by Minerva (7, 805-806)², but rather participates in fierce battles and is capable of running faster than the wind³. The young and the mothers admire her with astonished souls (814: *attonitis inhians animis*) as she passes by: she is pure

Eriphyle, Eurydice, Evadne, Harpalyce, Hecuba, Helena, Hermione, Hesione, Hippolyta, Hippotas, Ilia/Rhea, Iliona, Io, Larina, Laodamia, Lavinia, Leda, Licinia, Manto, mother of Euryalus, Pasiphae, Penthesilea, Peridia, Phaedra, Pholoe, Polyxena, Procris, priestess of the people Massyla, Pyrgo, Sabella, Silvia, Tarpeia, Tulla.

2. Verg, *Aen.* 7, 805-806: [...] *non illa colo calathisque Minervae / femineas adsueta manus* [...]. «Unaccustomed with (her) feminine hands to Minerva's distaff or baskets». Interestingly, the reference to Minerva does not highlight her potential war skills but instead emphasizes her inadequacy in traditional women's crafts.

3. Virgil describes her formidable running ability (7, 808-811): she is so swift that she can run atop the stalks of the crops without ruining them or above the sea without wetting her feet. For more on this topic, see Giannotti (2021).

and elegant while being authoritarian and proud. She wears a purple cloak and a golden brooch in her hair, but at the same time carries weapons: a quiver and a shepherd's myrtle staff (7, 814-817). Indeed, Camilla is an unusual character that one would not expect to find at this point in the story. She represents what Cristóbal (1988: 49) calls a «variation»: the presence of a female figure in a bellicose context, where the woman is neither the spoils to be reaped nor the hostage to be rescued by male heroes. She is a commander with impressive war skills in battle who plays an active and significant role in the development of the Latium war, as becomes evident when Turnus places her at the head of all the Italic and Tiburtine troops (11, 517-519).

In fact, Book 11 explores Camilla's character in depth, allowing us to delve into her personality. We find her before the outbreak of war in Latium, where she and her army meet with Turnus to discuss war tactics. As she dismounts her horse as a sign of respect for him, her entire cohort imitates her out of respect for their leader. The Volscian *regina* then proposes to Turnus that she battle Tyrrhenian cavalry *sola*, before they arrive in the city (11, 502-506):

«Turne, sui merito si qua est fiducia forti,
audeo et Aeneadam promitto occurrere turmae
solaque Tyrrhenos equites ire obvia contra.
me sine prima manu temptare pericula belli,
tu pedes ad muros subsiste et moenia serva»⁴.

In this passage, Virgil introduces a commanding woman with enormous charisma who is ready to lead on the battlefield, imposing herself even on Turnus; the use of imperatives (*sine*, *subsiste*) suggests that Camilla is the person in charge, although without disparaging Turnus' authority as king. From this scene, we understand that her defining traits include courage and impulsiveness, but notably, her boldness when she boasts of taking on an arguably impossible mission alone, despite overseeing an army. She evokes admiration in her followers; she is defined as *horrenda* (507), an unusual and striking adjective for a mortal woman (Morello 2008: 41), but not used derogatorily, it rather conveys a sense of «admirable» or «inspiring reverential fear»⁵. When Turnus apostrophizes her as *decus Italiae* (508), this further demonstrates that the respect is mutual and highlights her Italic origins.

Further on, the military narration is interrupted, and the text assumes a more intimate tone when Diana reveals the Volscian queen's past to the nymph Opis (11, 539-580). She shows Camilla's father, Metabus, consecrating her to the god of the hunt to save the *infantem* (541, 549, 573) while fleeing from the city of Priverno. Here, some aspects of Camilla emerge that were unknown and in blatant contradiction to the persona introduced so far, as she is called *cara* (537, 550, 586), *supplex* (559), *infelix* (563). Nonetheless, it is important to note that these adjectives appear for her solely in this single episode and are not mentioned elsewhere: *cara* is employed only by Diana to underscore their intimate relationship (537 *cara mihi ante alias*; 550 *caro oneri*; 586 *cara [...]* *com-*

4. «O Turnus, if the courageous has some faith in himself, I dare and promise to face the forces of *Aeneadam*, and alone go against the Tyrrhenian knights. Concede that I may attempt with my own force the first perils of war, you infantry remain at the walls and guard the defences».

5. Besides Camilla, only the Cumaean Sibyl is *horrenda* (6, 10).

itumque [...] *una mearum*), whereas *supplex* is used by the father in prayer to persuade the gods to save his daughter. Finally, *infelix* is employed to convey the peril of such a situation (11, 563):

*infelix fugit in iaculo stridente Camilla*⁶.

In this case, the attribute is linked to the concept of death: on the one hand, it may express the girl's uncertainty of survival, while on the other hand, it could allude to her forthcoming destiny since she will be killed by a spear from Arruns. Weapons are both her salvation and destruction. The following lines (11, 567-580) return to the concept of the «little» Camilla (11, 575 *parvae*) and illustrate her upbringing far removed from civilization. Living a pastoral life among the mountains, Metabus nursed his daughter with the milk of wild beasts and trained her early in arms and hunting (11, 578 *tela manu iam tum tenera puerilia torsit*). Instead of dressing in gold and purple as a princess or queen should, bare tiger hide covers her shoulders, underlining her uncivilized nature⁷. All these elements distinguish the heroine from the traditional canons and gender stereotypes prevalent in the classical world. However, Virgil mentions that many Tyrrhenian mothers would have desired her as their daughter-in-law (11, 581-584):

*multae illam frustra Tyrrhena per oppida matres
optavere nurum; sola contenta Diana
aeternum telorum et virginitatis amorem
intemerata colit*⁸.

This emphasizes that the erotic dimension is foreign to the Volscian queen; in fact, Virgil accentuates the meanings of *sola* and *contenta*, placing the former in contrast to *multae* and both in the absolute ablative. Although the possibility of Camilla assuming the role of a wife arises, she finds fulfillment only in her devotion to Diana and maintains, as *intemerata*, an enduring love for weapons and virginity⁹. Chastity is an essential aspect of Camilla's character: she attracts the highest number of occurrences of the appellation *virgo* among all women in the poem¹⁰.

6. «The unfortunate Camilla fled on the shrill spear». Zieske (2008) seems to agree with the meaning of «unglücklich». Ratti (2006) instead contends that the adjective should be translated as «barren» arguing that Camilla, as Diana's servant, is condemned to a life of chastity. Nevertheless, the meaning should not be tied to the etymological sense, especially since Camilla is still an infant and in a perilous situation.

7. The genesis of Camilla's character is still a problem for many scholars, mainly because she is not found in classical literature outside of Virgil (Fratantuono: 2006, 290). Certainly, she is a Virgilian invention that was modeled on Greek prototypes (Cristóbal: 1988, 45). Most claim similarity with Harpalyce (Servius, *ad Aen.* 1, 3.7), the swift Atlanta (Arrigoni: 1992, 17), and Penthesilea (Basson: 1986). See Arrigoni (1994) and Egan (2012) for the name's etymology.

8. «Many mothers among the Tyrrhenian cities futilely had desired her as a daughter-in-law; being only contented by the goddess Diana, she cherishes inviolate an eternal love for weapons and virginity».

9. The adjective recurs only two other times: *intemerata fides* (2, 143) e *munera* [...] / *intemerata* (3, 177-178).

10. The appellation *virgo* denotes primarily and almost with a certain monopoly, Camilla (7, 806; 11, 507; 11, 508; 11, 565; 11, 593; 11, 604; 11, 664; 11, 676; 11, 718; 11, 762; 11, 778; 11, 791; 11, 804; 11, 808; 11, 841) and is never adopted for Dido. Such a high frequency of the term (13 occurrences) is recorded only for her. The other mortal female figures called *virgo* are: the Penthesilea (1, 493); Cassandra (2, 403; 2, 413);

Just as the past, the future of the Volscian queen is also unveiled by Diana: she spoils the tragic end to which the *miseranda* (593) Camilla is destined, ordering the nymph Opis to strike with an avenging arrow anyone who outrages the sacred body of the huntress and expounding the details of the tomb she will prepare (11, 587-594).

As the Trojans reach the city walls, war erupts in Latium. The Latin forces face significant challenges; however, a compelling depiction of Camilla's fierce determination and exceptional combat abilities signals a pivotal moment in the conflict (11, 648-651):

*At medias inter caedes exultat Amazon,
unum exerta latus pugnae, pharetrata Camilla,
et nunc lenta manu spargens hastilia denset,
nunc validam dextra rapit indefessa bipennem*¹¹.

For the first and only time, Camilla is related to the figure of the Amazon, and specifically to the Amazons of Thrace, Penthesilea and Hippolyta (11, 659-663); according to their customs, she is depicted naked on one side, as if to suggest her exposure to danger (*exerta*)¹². At this point, Virgil's language becomes more specific with adjectives and participles that belong to the military sphere, such as *pharetrata*, *spargens* and *indefessa*. The indefatigable Camilla fights the enemy on all fronts and with all weapons within reach, thus portrayed as a fierce and fearless hunter. The description of her *aristeia* is evocative; Virgil's choice of words depicts an energetic woman who is fearless and ruthless, but above all *aspera* (11, 664) in slaying an uncountable number of victims in the clashes¹³. Amidst suggestive imagery and bloodbaths, Camilla commits a massacre (11, 676-677):

*quotque emissa manu contorsit spicula virgo,
tot Phrygii cecidere viri*¹⁴.

Furthermore, she appears impassive and characterized by courage and arrogance typical of man-warriors when killing Ornytus, she reports (11, 688-689):

«[...] *nomen tamen haud leve patrum
manibus hoc referes, telo cecidisse Camillae*»¹⁵.

Camilla continues to demonstrate impressive strength by defeating two of the Teucrians' strongest warriors, Butes and Orsiloehus. In the cunning pursuit of the latter, her

Polyxena (3, 321); Sibyl (3, 445; 6, 45; 6, 104; 6, 318; 6, 409; 6, 560); Lavinia (7, 72; 7, 362; 7, 389; 11, 479; 12, 69; 12, 70); Io (7, 791); and Larina (11, 655).

11. «But in the midst of the slaughter, Camilla the archer exults as an Amazon armed with quiver, one side fully exposed to the battle, now throwing a sheaf of arrows with her flexible hand, and then with her right hand she twirls the firm two-edge axe».

12. Generally, Amazons left one breast uncovered during confrontations to have more freedom of movement with their arm during fights (see Prop. 3. 14. 15); for the same purpose but with a more striking image, they were often portrayed with their right breast amputated.

13. The adjective *indefessa* occurs only once while *aspera* is encountered only for Camilla among all mortal women.

14. «And as many arrows the virgin shot with her hand, so did many Phrygian heroes fall».

15. «Thou shalt bring back no small boast to the souls of the ancestors, of having fallen by the hand of Camilla».

true nature as a huntress becomes evident as wild and heedless to the pleas of her prey, coming across as almost apathetic (11, 694-698). However, the situation changes with the arrival of Aunus' son - whose name is unworthy of mention - when he attempts to dupe her into retreating by insinuating that the Italians' skill lies only in equestrian combat and challenges her to hand-to-hand combat (11, 705-708). This innuendo deeply offends the Volscian queen, who does not remain indifferent to the enemy's slander. Indeed, her epithets strongly reflect her emotions: she is *furens acrique accensa dolore* (11, 709), infuriated and wounded by the insult she has suffered, but at the same time, she remains *interrita* (11, 711), ready to face even the riskiest situations with bravery. Virgil's rising climax regarding women's emotions in war intensifies with *ignea* (11, 718), when Aunus' son, thinking he has found an escape route when Camilla dismounts, flees from battle as a coward. Consumed by rage, Camilla so ardently desires to punish the Ligurian *vanus* that her ferocity is compared to that of a hawk attacking a dove and tearing out its entrails with its razer-sharp talons (721-724).

Up to this point, Camilla is portrayed as ruthless and invincible. However, the story takes a different turn due to divine interferences, particularly from Jupiter and Apollo. Initially, Jupiter incites the Etruscan leader Tarchon to battle, fueling the mortal's anger and prompting his people to take action against Camilla's slaughter (733-734):

«[...] quae tanta animis ignavia venit?
femina palantis agit atque haec agmina vertit!»¹⁶.

With these words, Tarchon spurs his soldiers to respond to a woman's attack. From these lines, we realize that men were embarrassed to be defeated by a woman, as it was unthinkable for them to face a strong female warrior in the context of war.

During the battle in Latium, Camilla's attention is caught by the robes and golden armor of Phrygian Chloereus (11, 778-782):

*hunc virgo, sive ut templis praefigeret arma
Troia, captivo sive ut se ferret in auro,
venatrix, unum ex omni certamine pugnae
caeca sequebatur totumque incauta per agmen
femineo praedae et spoliolum ardebat amore*¹⁷.

The *venatrix* Camilla pursues the former priest of Cybele as *caeca et incauta* (781), as if he were a rare prey¹⁸. Unbeknownst to her, she is also being targeted by Arruns, who waits for the right moment to strike. Camilla's weakness is underscored by her desire to possess the enemy's spoils and gold and by the two adjectives that frame her as a vulnerable human. However, the latter may also refer to the unexpectedness of the situation, as

16. «What so great a cowardice has entered (your) souls? A woman makes you flee here and there and makes armies retreat!».

17. «The virgin blindly pursued solely him in all the fray of battle and recklessly longed to strike her prey and take the spoils, both to dedicate the Trojan weapons in temples and to show herself as a huntress in the enemy's gold».

18. More details about Camilla and Chloereus in Starry West (1985).

is the case with Sychaeus¹⁹. Although her nature as a woman is underlined by descriptor *femineo*, the dangerous desire to adorn herself with enemy weapons and gold is not alien to the male dimension and, consequently, cannot be recognized as a specific of the female gender²⁰. For instance, in a fit of vengeance, Aeneas will not spare Turnus precisely because he recognizes the baldric of his friend Pallas worn by him (12, 930-952). Fratanuono (2009: 261) considers Servius' identification of *femineo* with irrationality and impatience to be sexist, putting in evidence the misogyny of Camilla's opponents who also would have felt envy for a woman who was distinguished and obtained much glory at the expense of hapless male adversaries. Similarly, for Arrigoni (1982: 51-52), the reason why the heroine targets Chloerus is related neither to illogicality nor to the desire for riches of shallow matrons. Considering that she is already in possession of a golden bow (11, 652 *aureus arcus*), Camilla's true intentions may actually be honorable: to dedicate weapons to temples in gratitude to the deities for their help in the war, as the illustrious and victorious generals used to do, flaunting the enemy's spoils as a vanquisher.

The Chloerus episode does not alter Camilla's reputation nor determine her death, but it partly justifies it. The Volscian queen succumbs to the divine interference of Apollo, who fulfills the first part of Arruns' prayer, that is, to surprise Camilla with a *subita morte* (796) and return to his homeland (11, 785-793)²¹. While her killer flees in fear and hides in the forest, Camilla, as *moriens* (816), tries in vain to remove the spear piercing her, but falls *exanguis* (818). Then, on the verge of death, she gives her last orders to her confidant and companion, *soror* Acca (823), dying with dignity as a true leader. She releases the reins, surrenders her weapons, and is subsequently described by Virgil: *vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras* (11, 831)²², as if to emphasize the fact that her death was not expected and represents an indignation to the Volscian queen. Hence, her end is still a valiant one in an ethical and aesthetic sense; the nymph Opis does not allow the queen to be left *indecorem* (845) and avenges her, planting an arrow in the chest of her killer, who will perish abandoned by his companions and without any fame, in antithesis to Camilla who is surrounded by the *trepidae comites* (893)²³. Camilla's tragic death has profound implications for the ongoing conflict, affecting both factions (833: *crudescit pugna*)²⁴.

19. 1, 350: [*Pygmalion Sychaeum*] *clam ferro incautum superat*. Dido is also *incauta* (4,70) when she acts like a doe shot with an arrow and wanders all over the city, consumed by passion.

20. Euryalus also gathers the enemy's remains after he and Nisus surprise the Trojans in their camp at night, resulting in numerous deaths: *Euryalus phaleras Rhamnetis et aurea [...] / cingula [...] / [...] rapit* (9, 359-364) and [...] *galeam Messapi [...] decoram / induit* (9, 365-366). However, their ambush is compromised when the gleam of the helmet collected by Euryalus catches the enemies' attention at dawn, revealing their location.

21. The force with which the spear penetrates the virgin's skin to drink her blood, as well as the use of some explicit terms (11, 803 *exsertam papillam*) have led many scholars to recognize in Camilla's death also her deflowering. «She is, in a sense, raped by the spear» (De Boder 2019: 149). See also Oliensis (1997: 308); Horsfall (2003: 444); and Ratti (2006: 416).

22. «And with a breath, the spirit indignantly fled under the shadows». The same line is also used for Turnus' death, which concludes the entire poem (12, 952).

23. Other female fighters are mentioned in the poem, along with Camilla. Virgil lists some of the *lectae comites* (11, 655), *bonas ministras* (658): *virgo Larina* (655), *Tulla* and *Tarpeia* (656). Special esteem and affection are reserved for *soror* Acca, *fida ante alias quae sola Camillae / quicum partiri curas* (821-822), to whom the dying Camilla assigns the task of going to Turnus and urging him to enter the battle to drive the Trojans out of the city.

24. Although Camilla is an enemy to the Trojan, Virgil repeats the affliction of her death several times: 587: *fatis acerbis*; 589: *infausto omine*; 839: *tristi mulcatam morte Camillam*; 841: *crudele [...] / supplicium*; 896-897: *saevissimus [...] / nuntius*.

The Rutuli and Camilla's troops are forced to flee, dispersing as they reach the city walls for safety. While Camilla's passing demoralizes the allied forces, the ordinary mothers display remarkable resilience. Though shaken and in mourning, they draw courage from the example set by the Italic queen and are prepared to fight –*primaque mori pro moenibus ardent* (895)²⁵– reflecting their determination to defend their homeland rather than surrender to the enemy. Thus, besides reproducing an example of a Latin woman with a strong sense of duty, Camilla serves as an inspiration and spurs other laywomen to risk their lives to defend their homes.

2. The Punic queen: similarities and differences with Camilla

The first noteworthy difference between Dido and Camilla is revealed by a comparison of their first appearances in the poem. While the author spends fifteen lines introducing Camilla and her main characteristics and abilities, Dido is dedicated less than two (1, 297-300):

[Juno] *Maia genitum demittit ab alto,
ut terrae utque novae pateant Karthaginis arces
hospitio Teucris, ne fati nescia Dido
finibus arceret*²⁶.

From simply reading these lines, our conception of Dido remains shallow. The description *Karthaginis arces; ne finibus arceret* clarifies that she certainly plays an important political role, that of the monarch. Instead, the concise, almost lapidary sentence *fati nescia Dido* signifies her naiveté and implies an impending calamity in the woman's future. There are no other clues here, and perhaps none are needed. The noun phrase underscores a significant and proper aspect of Dido's character; indeed, we often encounter epithets that indicate her lack of awareness regarding her fate throughout the poem²⁷.

Additional information about the Punic queen is revealed when Aeneas encounters Venus. Just as with Camilla, Dido's past is narrated by a deity (1, 338-368), but the two scenes are incongruent. As we saw above, the narrative concerning Camilla unfolds within a dramatic yet intimate framework, infused with a tone of melancholy and tenderness; Diana speaks to Opis about Camilla in a manner reminiscent of a proud mother. In contrast, when Venus tells of Dido, her primary objective is to convey her knowledge regarding the city of Carthage and the historical context of its ruler to Aeneas. Consequently, the tone adopted in this instance is more detached and formal, especially since their relationship lacks the closeness or intimacy of Diana and her favorite handmaid Camilla. Another distinction is apparent in the adjectives used by the deities to describe the two women:

25. «And they long to die first in defence of the city walls».

26. «(Jupiter) sends Maia's child from above, such that the lands and strongholds of Carthage may be opened in hospitality to the Trojans, and that Dido, unaware of her fate, may not keep them away from the borders (of her country)».

27. In Book 1 with the same negative connotation as in 1, 718-719: *inscia Dido, / insidat quantus miserae deus*, also accentuated by *misera*. With litotes 1, 630: *non ignora mali*, to specify that she already knows suffering (usurpation of throne, killing of husband, and abandonment of homeland). In Book 4, we see a reversal of meaning following the episode of the invasion. The Dido of Book 4, different from that of Book 1, has knowledge of her fate: *haut ignara futuri* (4, 508), for she conceals her intention to die. Finally, we no longer find negations but only a positive attribute: *certa mori* (4, 564).

while those of the Volscian queen's backstory are restricted to that particular episode and diverge from her main personality presented earlier, some of those used by Venus outline Dido's famous traits: *fugiens*²⁸ (341), *miserae* (344), *intactam* (345), *aegram / amantem* (351-352), *commota* (360). One of the most notable epithets of the Punic queen, which appears multiple times in the poem, is, in fact, *misera*²⁹. Although *misera* had become slang to refer to a person in love, Virgil also superimposes its more profound and original meaning, which alludes to real unhappiness (Paratore 2012: 180). Unlike Dido, the aspect of love in the slang meaning is absent for Camilla, and we find only one occurrence of the gerundive *miseranda* when the goddess Diana anticipates her doom. The use of *intacta* in Venus' narrative specifies that Dido's father had given her to Sychaeus as a virgin; whereas the virgin status is temporary for Dido, Camilla remains and will remain a *virgo*³⁰. Finally, it is indeed significant that among all the women in the *Aeneid* and even Aeneas' legitimate wives, only Dido is *amans*, referring to her state of mind and feelings³¹. Its first occurrence is already tied to the adjective *aegra*, as if to suggest that love is the emotion that determines Dido's suffering. Conversely, Camilla is estranged from love and its pain: she prioritizes a devotion to purity and a deep appreciation for weaponry.

While Camilla never interacts with Aeneas, Dido has an intimate relationship with the Trojan. When Aeneas and his companions are contemplating the temple dedicated to Juno with its carvings depicting the Trojan War under construction while surrounded by Venus' cloud rendering them invisible, the queen of Carthage arrives in all her splendor and beauty (1, 496-497):

*regina ad templum, forma pulcherrima Dido,
incessit magna iuvenum stipante caterva*³².

When they first appear, both Camilla and Dido are escorted: the former by her warriors, the latter by her youthful attendants. *Pulcherrima* will be put in contrast to the epithet *horrenda* depicting the Volscian queen; while *horrenda* places the focus on the authority and almost fear that Camilla inspires, the superlative *pulcherrima* accentuates Dido's beauty, possibly to justify the woman's impending seduction of Aeneas. To capture her grace and charm, Dido is compared to the elegance and grace of the goddess Diana leading dances by the banks of the Eurotas or during the games at Corinth, surrounded and followed by her nymphs, the Oreads (1, 498-504). An aspect of this section that distin-

28. Dido is *fugiens* because she is fleeing from the betrayal of her envious brother Pygmalion, while Camilla, using a hunting technique, simulates fleeing during the reciprocal chase in the conflict with Orsilichus.

29. Dido's occurrences of *misera*: 1, 344; 1, 597; 1, 719; 4, 315; 4, 420; 4, 429; 4, 697; sometimes in superlative *miserrima* (4, 117; 4, 437).

30. Ramsby (2010, 15) suggests using *intactae segetis* (7, 808) to illustrate Camilla's running ability might allude to her permanent *virgo* status. However, the identification of a hypallage would seem forced, as Virgil always prefers to clearly state her status as a virgin rather than to allude to it, even more so since the very appellation *virgo*, as we have seen, recurs most for Camilla specifically.

31. The participle *amans* refers to her love for Sychaeus only once (1, 352), while it appears related to Aeneas in all other instances (4, 101: *ardet amans Dido traxitque per ossa furorem*; 4, 296: *quis fallere possit amantem?*; 4, 370: «*num lacrimas victus dedit aut miseratus amantem est?*»; 4, 429-430: «*quo ruit? extremum hoc miserae det munus amanti: / exspectet facilemque fugam ventosque ferentis*»; 4, 478-479: «*inveni, germana, viam (gratare sorori), / quae mihi reddat eum vel eo me solvat amantem*»).

32. «The beautiful queen Dido moves to the temple, while a large number of young men stood around her».

guishes itself from Dido's defining characteristics is her momentary rationality. Only in this context is the woman depicted a fair ruler (1, 507-508):

*iura dabat legesque viris, operumque laborem
partitibus aequabat iustis aut sorte trahebat*³³.

However, her fairness notwithstanding, she soon loses all reason and clarity due to the overwhelming passion provoked by divine involvement. In stark contrast, Camilla appears ruthless and savage by nature.

It seems odd that Trojan men will feel ashamed of being defeated by Camilla, while the messengers of the twelve ships that were scattered at sea and separated from Aeneas were not embarrassed of having a woman in charge. They, in fact, *ibant / orantes veniam* (1, 518-519) and present a pleading and reverent attitude toward the queen. She, in turn, shows herself welcoming and kind (1, 567: *non obtunsa adeo gestamus pectora Poeni*)³⁴, even offering her help or the possibility of their remaining in Carthage (1, 573-574):

*urbem quam statuo, vestra est; subducite navis;
Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur*³⁵.

The Punic queen is the only one who cares for the Trojans' unhappy fate. When the divine cloud dissipates and Dido and Aeneas finally meet, he addresses her: *o sola infandos Troiae miserata labores* (1, 597)³⁶, expressing her singularity. For Camilla, as we have seen, *sola* gives emphasis to her courageous, swaggering character and her status as a virgin, while for Dido, after this occurrence, the adjective almost always turns out to be related to the theme of abandonment and loneliness³⁷.

Scholars have noted a similarity in the physical description of Camilla (7, 814-817) and Dido (Wilhelm 1987: 47), particularly when Dido is preparing to go hunting (4, 138-139), which is a pastime for her and does not reflect her essential character as it does for Camilla:

33. «(Dido) gave laws and rights to men, and she divided the toil of labor equally or drew it by lot».

34. «(We) Carthaginians do not have such insensitive spirits».

35. «The city I fund is yours: draw ashore the ships; the Trojans and Tyrians will be treated by me with no difference».

36. «You, who solely feels compassion for the unspeakable travails of Troy».

37. First, when Anna asks her sister if she is destined to be alone and to love no one else after the death of her husband Sychaeus (4, 32-33: «*solane perpetua maerens carpere iuventa / nec dulcis natos Veneris nec praemia noris?*»). Later when she is depicted listening to the Trojan hero's misfortunes: *sola domo maeret vacua stratisque relictis / incubat: illum absens absentem auditque videtque* (4, 82-83), in which the imagery is striking, and the state of loneliness is conspicuous due to terms related to remoteness, particularly by the polypt *absens absentem*. Then again in lines 4, 466-467, when she dreams of Aeneas *semperque relinqui / sola sibi [...] videtur*. Naturally, the adjective for Dido also takes on the meaning of uniqueness precisely when she confronts Aeneas about his secret plan to escape from Carthago and blames him for ruining her reputation (4, 320-323: «*te propter Libycae gentes Nomadumque tyranni / odere, infensi Tyrii; te propter eundem / extinctus pudor et, qua sola sidera adibam, / fama prior*»). Finally, *sola* is also used for Sidonia in the sense of «unaccompanied», when on the last night before her death, she questions her options, whether to follow Aeneas alone or remain with her subjects (4, 543: «*sola fuga nautas comitabor ovanti?*»).

*cui pharetra ex auro, crines nodantur in aurum,
aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem*³⁸.

Both royal figures are armed with quivers, wear purple clothing, and have gold ornaments in their hair. The motif of gold is often related to Dido³⁹. Generally, the Punic queen is depicted as possessing various riches throughout the poem, yet unlike her avaricious brother Pygmalion (1, 349 *auri caecus amore*), she is never portrayed as a fanatic for gold, a trait that had been attributed to women in literary texts since at least the age of Plautus⁴⁰. In Camilla, on the other hand, there is the desire to possess and flaunt enemy gold for the sake of glory. However, we do not see the same level of lust for wealth as in Martial's Gellia (VIII, 81, 1, 9), who values her pearls more than her own children and swears only by them, not by the gods.

Lastly comes the matter of Dido's death (4, 641-665). Like Camilla's, it also causes heartache among her handmaids. However, though it is a consequence of divine interference, it is Dido who makes the decision to end her life, and her death will not be avenged (659 *moriemur inultae*), as opposed to Camilla's. Dido cannot bear that a man has deceived her, causing her to renege on her faithfulness to the late Sychaeus, thereby compromising her authority and endangering her from neighboring kingdoms (4, 320-321). She believes her death is deserved (547 *«quin morere, ut merita es»*), although Virgil contradicts her by describing her as *nec fato merita nec morte* (696), urging the reader to empathize with her once again. Possibly to restore her reputation, Dido decides to commit suicide by throwing herself on the sword of the Trojan hero while casting a curse on the Roman race. Suicide, in fact, was considered an extreme manifestation of loyalty to values and, therefore, a courageous act chosen to defend honor. The language describing Dido when on the brink of death is blunt and distressing: she is *trepida et effera* (4, 642), *pallida*⁴¹ (4, 644), *furibunda* (4, 646), and *morata* (4, 649). In Anna's monologue, Virgil invites us to share in her sorrow (4, 672-687) as she tends to her dying sister, much like the companion Acca does for Camilla. However, through Anna's character, who embraces her sister *semianimen* (686), we witness her profound despair, contrasting with Acca, whose emotions remain unexplained. Instead, we see only Acca's determination to fulfill Camilla's dying wishes, reflecting her spirit as a warrior. Ultimately, a parallel becomes evident between Dido and Camilla: just as the goddess Diana sends the nymph Opis to avenge the fallen Volscian queen in battle, Juno, out of pity, will send Iris to release Dido's *luctantem animam* from her body (4, 693-695).

38. «She carries a golden quiver, her hair tied in a golden net, and a golden buckle secures her purple robe».

39. First, with the gifts offered by Aeneas in exchange for her hospitality (1, 647-655): a gold-embroidered cloak that had once belonged to Helen (1, 648 *pallam signis auroque rigentem*), a necklace of pearls and a crown of precious gems and gold (1, 654-655 *colloque monile / bacatum et duplicem gemmis auroque coronam*). Second, it appears when the interior of the palace is described during the scene of the banquet: Dido is portrayed on a bed of gold (1, 698 *aurea sponda*), the ceilings are gilded (726 *laequearis aureis*), even the cup used for the libation of wine is made of gold (1, 728-729 *gravem gemmis auroque [...] / [...] paternam*), as well as Iopa's cetra being gilded (740-741 *cithara aureata*). In Book 4, her horse that was prepared for hunting is resplendent with gold (4, 134 *ostroque insignis et auro / [...] sonipes*). Lastly, there are *doni* that the *dives Dido* (4, 263) gifts to Aeneas and his son: a purple winter cape embroidered with gold (4, 262); several talents of gold (9, 265-266) and two other robes of purple and gold, one of which will be used to wear Pallas' spoils (11, 72-79).

40. See *Epid.* 5, 639 ss., and *Men.* 3, 524 ss. and Tacitus (*ann.* 3, 53).

41. The image of her death also evokes memories of Cleopatra's demise (8, 709 *pallantem morte futura*).

3. Common adjectives: observations

Although the two archetypal female characters in the *Aeneid* share some themes and characteristics, they each have distinct personalities. Consequently, the adjectives they share often convey different meanings and purposes.⁴²

Adjective / Participle	Frequency		Occurrence	
	Camilla	Dido	Camilla	Dido
<i>accensa</i>	1	2	XI 709	IV 364; IV 697
<i>deserta</i>	1	1	XI 843	IV 330
<i>infelix</i>	1	8	XI 563	I 712; I 749; IV 68; IV 450; IV 529; IV 596; V 3; VI 456
<i>incauta</i>	1	1	XI 781	IV 70
<i>fugiens</i>	1	1	XI 694	I 341
<i>furens</i>	2	7	XI 709; XI 762	I 659; IV 65; IV 69; IV 283; IV 298; IV 465; IV 548
<i>iens</i>	1	1	VII 813	VI 476
<i>moriens</i>	1	3	XI 816	IV 610; IV 674; IV 678
<i>sola</i>	2	6	XI 504; XI 582	IV 322
<i>supplex</i>	1	2	XI 559	IV 414; IV 535
<i>suspensa</i>	1	1	VII 810	IV 9

Table 1: Adjectives shared by Camilla and Dido.

Turning to the adjectives not yet addressed, we see that *deserta*, much like *sola*, reflects Dido's loneliness and abandonment. After learning that the Trojan fleet was readying ships for departure, the queen inveighed against Aeneas, expressing that she would feel less abandoned if she had children with him: «*saltem si qua mihi de te suscepta fuisset / ante fugam suboles [...] / [...] / non equidem omnino capta ac deserta viderer*» (4, 327-330)⁴³. This usage, reinforced by the participle *capta*, reveals how closely the adjective is linked to her emotional state. In contrast, *deserta*, when used to describe Camilla, signifies physical isolation from civilization, as noted by Opis: «*nec tibi desertae in dumis coluisse Dianam / profuit*» (11, 843)⁴⁴.

The adjective *supplex* is found only in descriptions of the two mortal female figures of Camilla and Dido. Still, while Camilla is called *supplex* by her father, who attempts to save the endangered child by consecrating her to the goddess Diana, the epithet for Dido

42. During the selection, I considered qualifying adjectives, participles, and gerundives due to their potential adjectival use. However, I did not examine indicative adjectives, as they are more general and ubiquitous within the poem.

43. «At least if I had had some offspring from you before (your) escape, I certainly would not feel that I was completely deceived and abandoned».

44. «Nor did it help you to have the venerated Diana with you when you were alone in the woods».

recurs on two occasions. Once, Virgil wonders what Dido might have been feeling as she watched the ships preparing to set sail and for the last time as *supplex animos summittere amori* (4, 414), sending her sister to implore Aeneas not to leave. The other time is when she cannot decide how to react to Aeneas' departure and deliriously contemplates pleading with Iarbas for marriage (4, 534-536: «*Nomadumque petam conubia supplex*»).

The employment of *infelix* for Camilla occurs only once and is related to the concept of death, when she is depicted as a child in distress. For Dido, however, the epithet is distinctive: it is the queen's most noted and studied descriptor and manifests her general discontent, foreshadowed in book 1 and strongly evident in book 4 in her misery and laments. In the very first use of the attribute, Virgil conveys a dramatic path for Dido: *praecipue infelix, pesti devota futurae* (1, 712), thus announcing the future love that will be a cause of ruin for the queen of Carthage. Indeed, as it will be with Camilla, the adjective here is strongly linked to the concept of death and doom, especially in lines 4, 450-451 (*Tum vero infelix fatis exterrita Dido / mortem orat*)⁴⁵, when Dido explicitly prays to die. The repeated use of the term evokes sympathy for the «unfortunate» woman, even after she breaks her solemn promise to her deceased husband. After her death, Dido continues to be referred to as «*infelix Dido*»: first, when Aeneas, wandering at sea, observes the city walls *moenia [...] quae iam infelicis Elissae / conlucent flammis* (5, 3-4)⁴⁶, and second, in their encounter in the Underworld (6, 456). Rebert (1928: 59-60) argues that the use of *infelix* reveals where Virgil's true sympathies lie and emphasizes his condemnation of the immutable decree of the Fates⁴⁷.

The participle *accensa* generally signifies a state of agitation and anger, using fire as a metaphor. Camilla is labeled as *accensa* due to the insolence she endures from the son of Aunus, while Dido appears angry when Aeneas attempts to justify his departure (4, 362-364), which he has been trying to conceal. However, in Dido's case, the term may not only express her anger but also hint at her burning love⁴⁸. The adjective appears twice for her and only once for Camilla. Notably, it is also recorded in both women juxtaposed with *furens*, which is more frequent and typical for the Punic queen: we find it once before the divine intervention and six times after. In the former case, (1, 657-660):

*At Cytherea novas artis, nova pectore versat
consilia, ut faciem mutatus et ora Cupido
pro dulci Ascanio veniat, donisque furentem
incendat reginam atque ossibus implicet ignem*⁴⁹

the meaning is related to the future inevitability of falling in love and presages the drama that will unfold in Book 4, where the term becomes more charged with feeling, initially representing the fiery passion that the queen of Carthage harbors for Aeneas, and later the

45. «Then the unhappy Dido, shaken by the facts, prays for death».

46. «(Aeneas) looked at the walls already glowing with the flames of the unfortunate Elissa».

47. The adjective records more than 40 occurrences within the poem and does not only recur for Dido and Camilla. See Rebert (1928).

48. Even as she is dying the poet depicts her as *misera ante diem subitoque accensa furore* (4, 697). Similarly, also with the variant *incensa: saevit inops animi totamque incensa per urbem / bacchatur* (4, 300-301).

49. «But Cytherea meditates in her soul new accomplishments, new plans: that Cupid, changed in appearance and countenance, should come in the place of Ascanius and inflame the furious queen with gifts and folds fire in her bones».

characteristics of a possessed person close to delirium and madness⁵⁰. In distinction, the participle does not achieve the tragic and pathetic nature for Camilla, even when it is used in the second incidence to signal that she has gone berserk in battle.

The participle *suspensa* is used metaphorically for both women. For Camilla, it accentuates her extraordinary ability to run so swiftly over water that she seems to be suspended above it (7, 810 *fluctu suspensa tumentis*). Meanwhile, for Dido, the term conveys her sentiments of anxiety when she confesses her love for Aeneas to her sister Anna: «*Anna soror, quae me suspensam insomnia terrent!*» (4, 9)⁵¹.

Finally, it is curious that the present participle *iens* of the action verb is always adopted in accusative (*euntem*) to portray Dido in the Underworld walking away from Aeneas, while depicting the figure of Camilla advancing in the parade of allies.

4. Conclusion

After analyzing Camilla's figure, it becomes clear that the adjectives used by Virgil highlight her paradoxical nature and uniqueness, as many are exclusive to her and almost always appear only once in the poem. Initially, Camilla is depicted in a «divinized» manner: she is a virgin, *agens*, *horrenda*, brave (*sola*) and apostrophized as the «pride of Italy». However, when Diana recounts her story, the adjectives related to features other than her virginity reveal her more human side, reserved for the goddess alone: *infans*, *cara*, *parva*, *contenta*, *intemerata*, but also *miseranda* because she is destined to die while fighting for the wrong faction. During the battle, they emphasize her strength, her fearlessness, and her remarkable skills (*indefessa*, *fugiens*, *velocis*, *aspera*, *interrita*), while also exposing her vulnerabilities (*furens*, *ignea*, *caeca* and *accensa*).

By comparing the Volscian queen with the Punic one, we have identified some shared characteristics between the two. First, both are female leaders (*dux*), Dido of the Carthaginian people and Camilla of the Volscian cavalry, who assume powerful roles normally attributed to men without losing their femininity. Second, both women are «foreigners» to the empire. While Dido, albeit more civilized than her Volscian counterpart, poses a threat to Rome since the famous general and statesman Hannibal will one day descend from her, Camilla is held in higher esteem since she is Italic. Third, their stories are narrated by two deities, and they are linked to the goddess Diana. Dido is compared to her with a simile (1, 496-504), while Camilla is the dearest handmaid of the deity. Their clothing represents another shared characteristic, both being dressed in purple and accessorized with gold to enhance their figure as queens; the theme of gold clearly is present for both. However, it occurs passively for Dido in relation to her status as queen, whereas for Camilla, we note the active desire to adorn herself with enemy gold, despite her already having a golden weapon. Finally, both are pawns in the gods' game that leads them both to their deaths. While the royal Camilla, as Viparelli (2008: 18) writes, is «killed but not defeated», thus becoming an idol of female patriotism, Dido fails her subjects and obtains moral redemp-

50. See 4, 65-66: *quid vota furentem, / qui delubra iuvant?*; 4, 68-69: *uritur infelix Dido totaque vagatur / urbe furentis*; the participle starts to resemble the image of the Furies after Mercury commands Aeneas to depart from Carthage (4, 283-284: «*heu quid agat? quo nunc reginam ambire furentem / audeat adfatu?*»), when she learns indirectly of Aeneas' departure (4, 298-299: «*eadem impia Fama furenti / detulit armari classem cursumque parari*»); when she dream Aeneas (4, 465-466: *agit ipse furentem / in somnis ferus Aeneas*) and finally when she turns to Anna and says: «*tu prima furentem / his, germana, malis oneras atque obicis hosti*» (4, 548-549), almost realizing her state, which led her to break her promise to Sychaeus' ashes. 51. «Sister Anna, what dreams terrify me and keep me anxious!».

tion only in the Underworld, when she regains the authoritative and fair personality of Books 1 and 2, after she is no longer influenced by the gods⁵².

Ultimately, in analyzing common adjectives, we noticed that they can often be interpreted with different shades of meaning. Therefore, the poet's decision to employ the same adjectives for both women may be influenced by the hexameter's metrical structure or may serve to convey metaphorical concepts. Generally, some of these are more common for and characteristic of Dido, reflecting her dimensions of sadness and doom (*infelix, supplex*), loneliness (*sola, deserta*), and passion (*furens, accensa*)⁵³. They are also laden with pathos in Camilla, but they do not reflect the erotic and amorous aspects typical of Dido; rather, they reproduce her wild and instinctive nature, or the misfortune presented by Diana. Although both women share some of the poet's linguistic choices, they each present their distinctive characters and play essential, albeit unlikely, roles in the *Aeneid*. Indeed, the poet is deeply invested in both stories, feeling not only compassion but also sympathy for them. His sympathy is particularly notable when considering that neither of them is killed directly by the protagonist hero and that, among all the mortal women depicted in the *Aeneid*, Dido is uniquely described as *optima* (4, 291) and *candida* (5, 571), while Camilla is the only one referred to as *dia* (11, 657).

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52. While Aeneas weeps and declares his love for her, admitting that he left Carthage unwillingly (6, 456-466), she remains silent and as an *inimica* (6, 472) leaves without addressing a single word to him, returning to the shadowy woods to her consort Sychaeus.

53. Other epithets of Dido related to her unhappiness/doom: *aegram* (1, 351; 4, 35; 4, 389), *gemens* (1, 465), *lacrimans* (1, 459; 1, 470), *maerens* (4, 32), *perdita* (4, 541), *saucia* (4, 1); and to her passion/possession: *capta* (4, 84; 4, 326; 4, 330), *demens* (4, 78; 4, 374), *errans* (4, 211), *evicta* (4, 474), *male sana* (4, 8).

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