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Aeneas' Deer-hunting and the Bees of Carthage: The Influence of Xenophon on Virgil

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Abstract

The classical Athenian polymath Xenophon is an unappreciated source for certain passages of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Close consideration of the parallels between texts from Xenophon's *Kynegeticus* and *Oeconomicus* and scenes from *Aeneid* 1 in particular will reveal an intricate web of intertextual allusions and demonstrate that Xenophon is a key literary antecedent for the decisions of the epic poet both to highlight the deer-hunting prowess of his hero and to accord a prominent place to bees and apian lore in his portrait of Elissa's nascent Carthage.

Keywords

Xenophon; Virgil; Aeneas; hunting; bees

The classical Athenian author and adventurer Xenophon is not typically cited among the literary influences on the Augustan poet Virgil.¹ While one could argue, for instance, that there is a thematic parallel between the story of the Trojan voyage to Latium and the celebrated journey of the Ten Thousand from the heart of the Persian Empire to the relative safety of the hinterland of the Greek world, the correspondences are imprecise, and there would seem to be jejune material for crafting an argument that the *Anabasis* and the *Aeneid* merit intertextual analysis. While the didactic and agricultural focus of the *Georgics* lends itself to considering Xenophon as a possible Virgilian source, the poet's epic of the aftermath of the Trojan War and the arduous process by which the future Rome would come into being does not seem to owe much to any of the products of the pen of the Athenian polymath.

But the richly varied surviving corpus of Xenophon's writings does offer passages that qualify as hitherto largely unappreciated sources for Virgilian epic reception. We shall consider two instances in which Xenophon seems to have been a significant source of inspiration for Virgil in the composition of the first and fourth books of the *Aeneid*: first the mythological frame of the *Cynegeticus* or treatise on hunting, and second the extended comparison of household management (in particular, the oversight thereof by a wife) to the work of a beehive (with its reigning queen bee) in the *Oeconomicus*. We shall consider both of these cases in which it seems that Xenophon was an important source for Virgil, with focus on how in each instance Xenophon's material offers inspiration for what emerges as a major, unifying subject of the first third of the *Aeneid*: Dido's Carthage and Aeneas' disastrous involvement with the Punic queen.² We shall see how both of these instances in which Xenophon qualifies as a source for passages in *Aeneid* 1 and 4 are closely interwoven, as key elements of the poet's presentation of the enigmatic figure of Dido/Elissa.³

While occasional, usually passing references to mythological lore pepper the works of Xenophon, there is nothing in his corpus quite like the miniature catalogue of heroic hunters that opens the *Cynegeticus*.⁴ Xenophon commences his work by ascribing the invention of hunting to Apollo and Artemis, noting that the divine twins bestowed the gift of this skill on the centaur Chiron in recognition of his signal virtue of behaving justly:

1 There are no relevant entries, for example, in the *Enciclopedia virgiliana* or *The Virgil Encyclopedia*; work has been done on the relevance of Xenophon for Virgil's *Georgics*, for which see especially Kronenberg (2009). I am grateful for the helpful suggestions of the anonymous referees, which greatly improved this study, and for the assistance of the editor.

2 For the overarching structure of the first third of the *Aeneid* and the connection of hunting thereto, note Glei (1991: p. 319).

3 "Dido" is more properly a title, and "Elissa" the queen's personal name. Given our argument that Virgil plays on the similar of the names Elissa and Melissa, generally "Elissa" is used in this study, except when discussing the Dido-Diana and Dido-deer similes.

4 Perhaps not surprisingly, the authenticity of the *Cynegeticus* has been challenged, in particular its mythological opening chapter. The question was not raised (to the best of our knowledge) in antiquity; Arrian, for example, accepted the work as genuine. In defense of Xenophon as the author see especially Gray (1985).

τὸ μὲν εὖρημα θεῶν, Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ Ἀρτέμιδος, ἄγραι καὶ κύνες: ἔδοσαν δὲ καὶ ἐτίμησαν τούτῳ
Χεῖρωνά διὰ δικαιοσύνην. (1.1)⁵

Xenophon proceeds to enumerate all those who were at one time or another taught by the impressively long-lived Chiron.⁶

Aeneas is one of Xenophon's prototypical hunters; he is the penultimate figure in the catalogue, immediately preceding the crowning mention of Achilles. Like the other heroes in the list, Aeneas is accorded a brief vignette that summarizes his salient qualities:

Αἰνεΐας δὲ σώσας μὲν τοὺς πατρώους καὶ μητρῶους θεοὺς, σώσας δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν πατέρα, δόξαν
εὐσεβείας ἐξηγέγκατο, ὥστε καὶ οἱ πολέμιοι μόνῳ ἐκείνῳ ὧν ἐκράτησαν ἐν Τροίᾳ ἔδοσαν μὴ συληθῆναι.
(1.15)

The Trojan hero is credited with saving his household gods, and with the rescue of his father; he is said to have earned such respect for his sense of reverence that he alone was honored with the privilege of not being despoiled by his enemies in the wake of Troy's fall. Xenophon speaks of Aeneas' piety as if it were a generally recognized quality; he was working in a tradition that has its roots in Homer, even if what we find in Xenophon and later authors goes appreciably beyond anything in the *Iliad*.⁷ It is a remarkable passage from classical Greek literature, of significance as a testimony of the Aeneas legend.

Aeneas is mentioned in Xenophon only in the first chapter of the *Cynegeticus*; of the three details of his story that are highlighted, the first two accord with the Virgilian depiction of the son of Anchises: with Xenophon's Αἰνεΐας δὲ σώσας μὲν τοὺς πατρώους καὶ μητρῶους θεοὺς we may compare the poet's *inferretque deos Latium* from the proem of the *Aeneid*, and with the details concerning the preservation of the Trojan Penates and his father, we may note Aeneas' recollection of events from Troy's last night in his banquet address in Elissa's Carthage. As for the question of the respect shown to Aeneas by the invading Greeks, Xenophon offers a citation relevant to the study of what we might label the "traitor tradition" that besmirches Aeneas' reputation in some strands of Troy lore.⁸ In Xenophon, Aeneas' possessions are preserved not because he was complicit in his city's ruin, but because of his reputation for piety (δόξαν εὐσεβείας); there is no reference to any notion that he betrayed his city, rather a strong emphasis on his sanctity. Whatever benefit he received from the Greeks, it was obtained honorably.

The notion that Aeneas was a masterful hunter provides an interesting background for Virgil's depiction of the hero in *Aeneid* 1. Certainly this is not a detail of Aeneas lore that Virgil borrowed from Homer. Hunting constitutes Aeneas' first act on arrival in

5 Passages from the *Cynegeticus* are cited from Marchant (1920). There are valuable annotations in the edition of Phillips and Willcock (1999).

6 Barringer (2001: pp. 125ff.) provides a superlative summary of the place of hunting in mythology.

7 Note here Moseley (1925); cf. Moseley (1926: pp. 73–75), and Erdmann (2000: pp. 184–187).

8 See here Momigliano (1987: pp. 276–277), and cf. Livy 1.1.1ff., with Ogilvie (1970: *ad loc.*).

North Africa (1.184–193).⁹ We may note here an interesting objection of some critics that is recorded in the Servian commentary on this passage: “*Sed cervi non sunt in ea parte Africae, id est in provincia nunc proconsulari, ad venit Aeneas ...*”¹⁰ Servius responds to the question with two possibilities: poetic license, or the conceit that in the heroic age, everything was everywhere. If it were widely held that there were no *cervi* in that region of Africa, then the depiction of Aeneas as a deer hunter takes on additional significance.

Apart from the arrival in Carthage, Aeneas is depicted as a hunter in connection to his affair with Elissa; we may note both the comparison of the queen to a wounded deer shot by an unknowing shepherd (4.68–73), and the locus of the hunt that serves as the setting for the commencement of the love affair (cf. 4.129ff.). Significantly, son will follow in the footsteps of the father; the war in Latium is inaugurated with the shooting of a stag by Ascanius (7.481ff.).¹¹ Indeed, some scholars have associated Aeneas' first African action with the outbreak of war, especially in light of the eventual breakdown of relations between Carthaginians and Trojans, and the hints of future conflict between the (Roman) descendants of Aeneas and their North African rivals.¹² Hunting is said to be a typical activity for Carthaginian girls, at least according to the disguised Venus of 1.314ff.¹³

Xenophon opens the *Cynegeticus* with Apollo and Artemis; in the *Aeneid*, Virgil compares first Dido to Diana, and in turn Aeneas to Apollo. The Dido-Diana simile comes as the queen enters her Junonian temple to oversee her regal responsibilities:

*qualis in Eurotae ripis aut per iuga Cynthi
exercet Diana choros, quam mille secutae
hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades; illa pharetram
fert umero gradiensque dea supereminet omnis
(Latonae tacitum pertemptant gaudia pectus):
talis erat Dido, talem se laeta ferebat
per medios instans operi regnisque futuris. (1.498–503)¹⁴*

Interestingly, there is no hint of the goddess' hunting avocation in the description, save the mention of her quiver; the picture is of the goddess with her oreads as they engage in the dance.¹⁵ Aeneas' Apollo comparison offers a parallel image:

9 On this passage note De Villiers (2013), and Rocca (1983: pp. 146ff.); on the topos more generally, see Dunkle (1973).

10 For the text (with commentary) see Vallat and Béjouis-Vallat (2023).

11 On the parallelism note Wimmel (1973: pp. 118–119).

12 Cf. Newman and Newman (2005: p. 53).

13 Contextually, Aeneas' mother dons the costume of a Tyrian huntress for her rendition of Elissa's background story to her son.

14 Passages from Virgil's *Aeneid* are quoted from Conte (2019).

15 The bibliography is appreciable; for a start see Thornton (1985), Pigoń (1991), Polk (1996), Suerbaum (1999: pp. 285–94), and Fratantuono (2022).

*qualis ubi hibernam Lyciam Xanthique fluenta
deserit ac Delum maternam inuisit Apollo
instauratque choros, mixtique altaria circum
Cretesque Dryopesque fremunt pictique Agathyrsi;
ipse iugis Cynthi graditur mollique fluentem
fronde premit crinem fingens atque implicat auro,
tela sonant umeris: haud illo segnior ibat
Aeneas, tantum egregio decus enitet ore. (4.143–150)*

Again, the deity is depicted leading the dance; archery weapons are mentioned, but no explicit reference is made to hunting. The context of the simile now, however, is the hunt. Additionally, there is an ominous implication that there will be a union between Diana and Apollo.¹⁶ The impossibility of this coupling reflects in part the poet's contemporary historical concern with the Ptolemaic regime in Egypt: it conjures the specter of the dalliances of both Caesar and Antony with Cleopatra. More generally, it serves as a reminder of the impossibility of a successful relationship between the Trojan guest and his Punic host.

Both the historical and the literary backgrounds of the simile are richly textured. Virgil's Dido-Diana comparison is modeled on the Homeric association of Nausicaä with Artemis,¹⁷ and the Apollonian of Medea with the goddess.¹⁸ The Aeneas-Apollo simile finds its own origins in Apollonius' comparison of Jason to the god.¹⁹ In the narrative of the love affair of Aeneas and Elissa, before the queen meets Aeneas, she is like Diana (1.498–503); once she is infatuated with her Trojan guest, she is like a wounded deer (4.68–73), in striking contrast to her former association with the goddess of the hunt, and a stunning transformation. Aeneas and she commence their sexual involvement at a hunt; the hero is now compared to Apollo, the great god of the hunt whose deer, in this case, is already fatally wounded. Significantly, we never see Aeneas or Elissa actually engage in any hunting exploit during the actual chase; Aeneas is seen successfully shooting stags upon landing in Africa, and he is poetically depicted as wounding Elissa.²⁰ The queen who was compared to Diana is never seen actually exercising the goddess' signature craft; ultimately, she is relegated to the status of wounded quarry. Aeneas' son, for his part, hopes to encounter formidable game (4.156–159).²¹

The *Cynegeticus* closes with a brief coda that references how women, too, have been exceptional in the art of the chase. The treatise offered a long list of famous hunters at its opening, and it ends with mention of two mortal huntresses, Atalanta and Procris:

16 Cf. Pöschl (1977: pp. 77ff.), also Otis (1964: pp. 74–76), and Clausen (2002: p. 41). On the rationale for the hint of allusion to an incestuous union see Hardie (2006).

17 *Od.* 6.102–109.

18 *Arg.* 3.877–884.

19 *Arg.* 1.307–309.

20 Cf. also 12.746–755, where Aeneas' pursuit of Turnus is compared to the hunting down of a stag by a relentless hound, on which see Tarrant (2012: *ad loc.*).

21 He will not be granted his wish; unlike Adonis, he will not face any peril from a boar. On the parallelism see Binek (2008: pp. 91ff.).

οὐ μόνον δὲ ὅσοι ἄνδρες κυνηγεσίῳ ἠράσθησαν ἐγένοντο ἀγαθοί, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες αἷς ἔδωκεν ἢ θεὸς ταῦτα Ἄρτεμις, Ἀταλάντη καὶ Πρόκρις καὶ ἦτις ἄλλη. (13.18)

Both heroines are cited alongside the goddess Artemis, the teacher of the practice; the passage neatly closes a ring with the mention of the didactic role of the divine twins from the opening of the work.²² Atalanta and Procris serve as examples; the work seemingly breezily concludes with a mention of others like them, huntresses left unspecified (καὶ ἦτις ἄλλη).

Atalanta and Procris do not enjoy particularly happy endings to their mythological stories. Procris is principally remembered for being accidentally slain by her husband Cephalus.²³ The complex figure of Atalanta is associated with the fateful events of the Calydonian boar hunt and the death of Meleager, and with the race she loses to Hippomenes/Milanon, and the subsequent leonine transformation of the passionate lovers.²⁴ Her exceptional athleticism was legendary.²⁵ Hunting thus proves to be an ominous enterprise for Procris in particular.²⁶ Certainly the same is true for Virgil's Elissa.²⁷ We cannot be certain of the exact mythological details that would have been in Xenophon's mind when he cited Atalanta and Procris, but it is highly probable that he was aware of darker traditions surrounding both huntresses. At the very least, like Elissa both Atalanta and Procris were not virgins, and thus ultimately not destined to remain under the protection of Artemis/Diana.²⁸

From hunting and deer we may turn to households and bees. In the *Oeconomicus*, Xenophon's Ischomachus is recalled describing his exchange with his wife about how her exercise of household management is akin to the labors of the queen bee in a hive:²⁹

22 These famous women are known best today from Ovid's accounts in the *Metamorphoses* (see 7.661ff., 8.260ff., 10.560ff.).

23 The stories about both her and her husband were many and varied; for a start see Bömer (2008: pp. 366ff.), with full accounting of both sources and commentary on the Ovidian narrative. Disentangling the lore of both Procris and Atalanta is beyond the scope of the present study.

24 Atalanta lore is as challenging to delineate as that of Procris; see here the extensive notes in Bömer (1977: pp. 94ff.), and Bömer (1980: pp. 188ff.), and cf. Mayor (2014: p. 439, n. 1). Xenophon names Meilanion (*sic*) as the successful suitor of Atalanta at *Cynegeticus* 1.7 (winning the girl qualifies as his hunting citation in the catalogue); cf. Propertius, c. 1.9–10, and see further Fratantuono (2008).

25 Cf. Scanlon (2002: pp. 174ff.).

26 We may note, too, that Xenophon notes that Cephalus was distinguished because of how he was carried off by Eos (*Cynegeticus* 1.5); in Ovid, the jealousy of the dawn goddess is the impetus for instigating Cephalus' fatal, unwitting attack on Procris. In Virgil, the fateful hunt is introduced by a dawn formula (4.129); further, there may be affinities between Cephalus' unknowing assault on his spouse, and the Aeneas-shepherd's similar striking of the Dido-deer.

27 The case of Virgil's Camilla may also be noted here; for her affinities with Dido and the perils she faces in making a transition from the world of the hunt to that of war (with ultimately fatal conflation of the two), see Wilhelm (1987), and cf. Capdeville (1992).

28 Virginal Camilla presents something of a contrasting image.

29 Huizenga (2013: pp. 89ff.) gives a detailed overview of the bee-wife passages; cf. Oost (1977–1978).

δοκεῖ δέ μοι, ἔφην, καὶ ἡ τῶν μελιττῶν ἡγεμῶν τοιαῦτα ἔργα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ προστεταγμένα διαπονεῖσθαι.
(7.32)

καὶ ποῖα δὴ, ἔφη ἐκείνη, ἔργα ἔχουσα ἡ τῶν μελιττῶν ἡγεμῶν ἑξομοιοῦται τοῖς ἔργοις οἷς ἐμὲ δεῖ πράττειν;
(7.33)

ὅτι, ἔφην ἐγὼ, ἐκείνη γε ἐν τῷ σήμνῃ μένουσα οὐκ ἐὰ ἀργούς τὰς μελίττας εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἄς μὲν δεῖ ἕξω ἐργάζεσθαι ἐκπέμπει ἐπὶ τὸ ἔργον, καὶ ἂ ἀν αὐτῶν ἐκάστη εἰσφέρει οἶδέ τε καὶ δέχεται, καὶ σῶζει ταῦτα ἔστ' ἂν δέη χρῆσθαι. ἐπειδὴν δὲ ἡ ὥρα τοῦ χρῆσθαι ἦκη, διανέμει τὸ δίκαιον ἐκάστη. καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἔνδον δ' ἕξυφαινομένοις κηρίοις ἐφέστηκεν, ὡς καλῶς καὶ ταχέως ὑφαίνηται, καὶ τοῦ γιγνομένου τόκου ἐπιμελεῖται ὡς ἐκτρέφεται: ἐπειδὴν δὲ ἐκτραφῆ καὶ ἀξιοεργοὶ οἱ νεοττοὶ γένωνται, ἀποικίζει αὐτοὺς σὺν τῶν ἐπιγόνων τινὶ ἡγεμόνι. (7.34)³⁰

The “model elite Athenian” Ischomachus³¹ has a well-ordered household in no small part because of his exemplary spouse.

Later in the work, Ischomachus continues the apian metaphor by comparing the choking action of weeds in a field of grain to that of useless drones that rob the other bees of their sustenance:

τί γάρ, ἔφη, ἂν ὕλη πνίγη συνεξορμῶσα τῷ σίτῳ καὶ διαρπάζουσα τοῦ σίτου τὴν τροφήν ὡςπερ οἱ κηφῆνες διαρπάζουσιν ἄχρηστοι ὄντες τῶν μελιττῶν ἃ ἂν ἐκεῖναι ἐργασάμεναι τροφήν καταθῶνται; ἐκκόπτειν ἂν νῆ Δία [τὴν τροφήν] δέοι τὴν ὕλην, ἔφην ἐγὼ, ὡςπερ τοὺς κηφῆνας ἐκ τῶν σμηνῶν ἀφαιρεῖν. (17.14)

Hives require meticulous management and assiduous attention; every challenge and difficulty redounds to the impressive achievement of the successful queen.

Virgil compares the work of the Carthaginians on their nascent city to the labor of busy bees in a hive:³²

*qualis apes aestate noua per florea rura
exercet sub sole labor, cum gentis adultos
educunt fetus, aut cum liquentia mella
stipant et dulci distendunt nectare cellas.
aut onera accipiunt uenientum, aut agmine facto
ignauum fucos pecus a praesepibus arcent:
feruet opus redolentque thymo fragrantia mella.* (1.430–436)

The simile offers an exquisitely detailed panorama, with implicit evocation of visual, auditory, and olfactory sensory cues.³³ Bee similes are time-honored tradition of classical

30 Quotes from the *Oeconomicus* are taken Marchant (1921). Pomeroy (1994) provides helpful annotations.

31 So Christ (2020: p. 79).

32 There is useful material in Haarhoff (1960); cf. Whitfield (1956).

33 Giusti (2014) proposes that the simile provides valuable insights into Virgil's exploration of Phoenician identity; for exemplary general appraisal cf. Kraggerud (1968: pp. 122ff.).

literature, with a pedigree Homeric,³⁴ Hesiodic,³⁵ and Apollonian.³⁶ Virgil's epic simile is deeply indebted to his description of apian activity in the fourth georgic, with a noteworthy degree of verbatim repetition.³⁷ The distillation of bee lore on display in both the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* includes the wealth of prose sources (notably Xenophon and Varro) at Virgil's disposal; in the case of Xenophon, we may discern a particularly apt source for the poet's depiction of Elissa, one that resonates through the epic. Lazy drones and all, Virgil's bee simile is indebted to Xenophon among other literary antecedents; the implications of the borrowing go far beyond mere mechanical echoing and intertextual nod to one's predecessors.

We cannot be certain of the full extent of knowledge in classical antiquity about the exact workings of a beehive; the fundamental question of whether the ancients knew that the colony's monarch was a queen is a subject of debate.³⁸ In Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* the head bee is referred to in female terms; the implication in *Aeneid* 1 is that Elissa is the queen bee of the Carthaginian hive.³⁹ The association of a dutiful woman with a bee is found as early as Semonides; the ideal wife is akin to a bee, busy with the works of management and maintenance of the home:

τὴν δ' ἐκ μελισσῆς: τὴν τις εὐτυχεῖ λαβῶν:
 κείνη γὰρ οἷη μῶμος οὐ προσιζάνει,
 θάλλει δ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς κάπαέξεται βίος:
 φίλη δὲ σὺν φιλεῦντι γηράσκει πόσι,
 τεκοῦσα καλὸν κούνομάκλυτον γένος:
 κάριπρεπῆς μὲν ἐν γυναιξὶ γίγνεται
 πάσησι, θεῖη δ' ἀμφιδέδρομεν χάρις:
 οὐδ' ἐν γυναιξὶν ἦδεται καθημένη,
 ὅκου λέγουσιν ἀφροδισίους λόγους.
 τοίας γυναικας ἀνδράσιν χαρίζεται
 Ζεὺς τὰς ἀρίστας καὶ πολυφραδεστάτας (fr. 7.83–93 West)⁴⁰

Semonides is a prominent figure in a venerable tradition. "By the time Xenophon writes his *Oeconomicus*, the idea of a good wife as an industrious bee seems to have become something of a trope. Phocylides wrote a poem remarkably similar in imagery to Semo-

34 *Il.* 2.87ff. ἦντε ἔθνεα εἰσι μελισσῶν ἀδινάων ...

35 *Theog.* 594ff. ὡς δ' ὀπότε ἐν σήμεσσι κατηρεφέεσσι μέλισσαι ...

36 *Arg.* 1.879ff. ὡς δ' ὅτε λείρια καλὰ περιβρομέουσι μέλισσαι ...

37 *Georg.* 4.167–169 = *Aen.* 1.434–436, *georg.* 4.462–463 ... *gentis adultos / educunt fetus; aliae purissima mella* = *Aen.* 1.431–432 ... *gentis adultos / educunt fetus, aut cum liquentia mella*, and *georg.* 4.464 = *Aen.* 1.433, except for the alteration of one word. On the poet's intratextual borrowing see further Briggs (1980: pp. 68ff.), Carlson (1972: pp. 53ff.), and Leach (1977).

38 Cf. here Hudson-Williams (1935), and Mayhew (1999).

39 Cf. Grant (1969), and Fratantuono and Smith (2002: ad 335 *Elissae*).

40 Text as in West (1992).

nides' passage on the bee woman ... (Phocylides, fr. 2 Diehl)."⁴¹ As early as Hesiod, the obvious correspondence of the industrious beehive to the well-ordered and smoothly-functioning household was a potent image to ward off any tendency to laziness.⁴²

Ischomachus' wife, it could be argued, displays an intelligence that is not only masterful, but one that even provides a useful corrective and compensation for her husband's talents.⁴³ The work of the "queen bee" of the household as described in the *Oeconomicus* is analogous to that of Elissa as she is depicted apportioning labors to the "worker bees" of Carthage; we may compare, for example, Xenophon's διανέμει τὸ δίκαιον ἐκάστη and Virgil's ... *operumque laborem / partibus aequabat iustis* (1.507–508). In Virgil, there is an interesting juxtaposition, not to say blurring of the worlds of the domesticated and the at least quasi-feral. When Elissa enters Juno's temple, she is compared to Diana as she leads her oreads; when she commences her monarchical duties, implicitly she is like a queen bee overseeing the tasks of the Carthaginian hive.⁴⁴ The glaring difference between the two women is that the Punic royal is a widow; she manages her household with no male partner. She is, in some sense at least, more authentically apian than Ischomachus' wife. Elissa also manages a realm, not a mere household; the lessons of household management described in Xenophon's musings on domestic management serve ultimately as blueprint for political oversight on a grander scale.⁴⁵

Bees in an important sense anchor the *Aeneid*; they figure in key moments in the framing Books 1, 6, 7, and 12.⁴⁶ Ultimately, one could argue that it is Aeneas' future wife Lavinia who fulfills the role of successful queen bee.⁴⁷ Elissa's own realm – her successful (at least initially) beehive – is destined for destruction. The beginning of the end comes with the inappropriate affair of Elissa and Aeneas, which ends with the Trojan departure from Carthage and the queen's increasingly despairing reflections on what she should do. Xenophon's Ischomachus raises the question with his wife of why she thinks that the servants of a household are willing to follow their mistress, in the manner of a swarm loyally accompanying its queen:

καὶ ἐγώ, ἔφη ὁ Ἰσχόμαχος, ἀγασθεὶς αὐτῆς τὴν ἀπόκρισιν εἶπον: ἄρα γε, ὦ γύναι, διὰ τοιαύτας τινὰς προνοίας καὶ τῆς ἐν τῷ σήμνῳ ἡγεμόνος αἱ μέλιτται οὕτω διατίθενται πρὸς αὐτήν, ὥστε, ὅταν ἐκείνη ἐκλίπη, οὐδεμία οἴεται τῶν μελιττῶν ἀπολειπτέον εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἔπονται πάσαι; (7.38)

41 For a comprehensive introduction to a vast topic note Carlson (2015); cf. Hobden (2017: pp. 152–173, especially 164ff.).

42 Cf. Sussman (1978).

43 See here Gini (1993), arguing in response to Murnaghan (1988).

44 Glazebrook (2009) argues that Xenophon crafts a portrait of a woman who is a strong aid to the household, rather than a stereotypical drain on resources; in Virgil, Dido is introduced as being Diana-like, only to become less productive and diligent in the execution of her duties under the influence of Venus.

45 See further here Lu (2011); cf. Nelsestuen (2017).

46 Cf. 6.707–709, 7.64–67, 12.587ff.

47 Cf. Fratantuono (2008b).

This is exactly the sort of thing that does not occur in Carthage: in the end Elissa commits suicide, thus in effect creating what entomologically would be the unthinkable scenario of a queen bee abandoning her hive in isolation, without a swarm. Before her death, Elissa contemplates impossible alternative fates:

*quid tum? sola fuga nautas comitabor ovantis?
an Tyriis omnique manu stipata meorum
inferar et, quos Sidonia vix urbe revelli,
rursus agam pelago et ventis dare vela iubebo?
quin morere ut merita es, ferroque averte dolorem.* (4.543–547)

Here she is depicted as envisaging either solitary flight (543), or a departure for a new home in the company of her *de facto* swarm (544–546). Death is what she sees as the only realistic choice (547).⁴⁸ Virgil employs an entomological metaphor to describe the process by which we move from the smoldering ruins of Troy to the nascent Lavinium and Rome in Latium (with our Carthaginian detour). Elissa's hive loses its queen, and will be subject to decline and inevitable demise. Latium will prove to be the Hesperian home for the immigrant Trojan swarm (7.64–70); in a moment of supreme frustration during the prosecution of the Latin war, Aeneas will consider attacking the city of Latinus and his future bride Lavinia; his contemplated action is compared to that of a shepherd smoking out bees (12.587–590).⁴⁹ It is a stunning moment in view of the eventual outcome of the conflict in central Italy and the destined union of Trojan and Ausonian, one to which we shall return. Aeneas never sought to attack Carthage; indeed he flees in the face of the queen's fiery threats and curses (cf. 4.593ff.).

In short, there will be no blending of Trojan and Carthaginian; Aeneas and his men will not find a new home in Elissa's beehive. Nor will Elissa and her subjects follow the Trojans to Latium. Aeneas, for his part, will experience a devastating war soon after arrival in his new home; ultimately, notwithstanding the victory of his cause, the Trojans and their new Ausonian neighbors will form a corporate polity in which the Trojans most certainly constitute the junior partners.⁵⁰

We may explore in more detail the implications of our argument. In Xenophon, Ischomachus' wife is cast as the successful, competent mistress of a wealthy estate; she is a paragon of masterful maintenance of her domain.⁵¹ For Virgil, the widowed Elissa exercises a comparable oversight of Carthage, which begins to deteriorate and ultimately is destroyed in the wake of her involvement with Aeneas. In an important sense, Aeneas is the destroyer (or at least disruptor) of the Carthaginian hive, however unintentionally and inadvertently. Just as the *pastor* of 4.71–72 is *nescius* as he wounds the Dido-deer, so

48 We may compare, too, *Cyropaedia* 5.124–125, where one of Cyrus' followers compares him to a king bee, the head of the hive whose subjects will accompany him wherever he goes; note also *Hellenica* 3.2.28 (where the Elean democrats swarm to their leader like bees), and cf. Holden (1895: pp. 157–158).

49 Fittingly, Virgil seals this signal passage with his anagrammatic *sphragis*, on which see Carter (2002).

50 Cf. Jupiter's decisive declaration to Juno at 12.834–837.

51 For the exceptional nature of the king/queen bee, see Brock (2004: pp. 247–258, especially 254–255).

Aeneas is unaware (at least at first) of the unfolding nightmare with Elissa. By the time he is livid and enraged on the Latin battlefield, in his envisaged attack on Latinus' city he will be like a shepherd who is all too aware of his plans: 12.587ff. *inclusas ut cum latebroso in pumice pastor / vestigavit apes fumoque implevit amaro*, etc. Needless to say, the Trojan shepherd will not smoke out any Latin bees; the Ausonian hive will not be harmed in the manner of the Carthaginian. Indeed, it will absorb the itinerant Trojan bees, exactly in accord with the apian portent of 7.64–67 *huius apes summum densae, mirabile dictu, / stridore ingenti liquidum trans aethera vectae, / obsedere apicem, et pedibus per mutua nexis / examen subitum ramo frondente pependit*: good biology, since honeybees are known to welcome migrants, even as they are prepared to defend against marauders seeking to steal honey.⁵²

The apian schema may be delineated: 1) in the wake of the destruction of Troy, the survivors take their leave, a swarm in search of a new hive (the death of Creüsa may be noted here; the Trojan exiles have no queen); 2) on arrival in Carthage, Aeneas and his people encounter a fully functioning, indeed thriving hive under the rule of the queen Elissa; 3) the affair between Aeneas and Elissa spells the end of her successful management of the hive, as Aeneas flees and his lover takes her own life; 4) as had been foretold in portent, the Trojan swarm arrives in Latium, where Lavinia waits as prospective queen; 5) war erupts, in mimicry of the conflict of honeybees; the conflict is settled with the death of Aeneas' antagonist Turnus.⁵³ The entomological outcome will be one hive, with one queen.

We may summarize the appreciable influence of Xenophon on Virgil. The striking description of the reverent Aeneas from the preface of the *Cynegeticus* accords perfectly with the Augustan poet's emphasis on the hero's *pietas*. The rescue of both the Penates and Anchises from the burning ruins of Troy is given prominent place in Xenophon's heroic *précis* of worthy hunters. Beyond this, Xenophon's designation of Aeneas as a consummate hunter is given a prominent place in *Aeneid* 1, and the image of Aeneas as a hunter is central to the depiction of the tragedy that unfolds between hero and host queen, from the inaugural action of Aeneas in Elissa's realm with his slaying of seven stags, to the image of Elissa as wounded deer and, climactically, the Carthaginian hunt that serves as backdrop for the commencement of the love affair. During the same hunting expedition, Aeneas' son is depicted as being eager to catch an impressive game quarry, a lion or a wild boar; in what proves to be a decisive moment in the commencement of the war in Latium, he will strike down a stag, in an act reminiscent of his father's own deer-hunting exploits both real and metaphorical.

52 On such apian behavior see Winston (1987: pp. 181ff.).

53 Virgil's dueling Trojan and Rutulian rivals recall the conflict of the rival king bees in the *Georgics* (4.67–102); the poet plays on the aforementioned ambivalence of the ancients as to the gender of the royal bee. And so Aeneas and Turnus (cf. Augustus and Antony) are like warring king bees, while simultaneously one may discern both Elissa and Lavinia playing the role of queen bee. The poet thus uses the same image in parallel, mutually non-exclusive ways; it was far easier to depict combat reminiscent of that of "king bees" in his martial epic, though we should note that the actual bee passages in the *Aeneid* relate to the biologically correct "queen bee", just as in the extended metaphor in the *Oeconomicus*.

When Aeneas first encounters Elissa, she is an admirable, successful young monarch, responsible for the crucial aspects of the early development of Carthage in the advent of its own march to Mediterranean imperial grandeur. Her able and impressive management of her city is like the equally efficient and productive oversight of a queen bee as she rules her hive. Her affair with Aeneas spells the end of her careful parentage of her apian colony. At 4.86–89 *non coeptae adsurgunt turres, non arma iuventus / exercet portusve aut propugnacula bello / tuta parant: pendent opera interrupta minaeque / murorum ingentes aequataque machina caelo*, Virgil highlights this consequence of her passionate dalliance: when the queen bee is distracted, the work of the hive ceases.⁵⁴

Is there any particular connection between the hunting lore and the bee imagery that we have discussed? “The early association of the bee with the cult of Artemis is attested by varied evidence ... As the owl was the emblem of Athena at Athens, so the bee seems to have been the emblem of Artemis of Ephesus.”⁵⁵ Elissa’s affair with Aeneas spells the end of any attempt on her part to be like either the goddess of the hunt, or the queen bee of a thriving Carthaginian colony.

Xenophon closes his hunting treatise with a haunting reference to other huntresses like Atalanta and Procris: καὶ ἦτις ἄλλη. Tellingly, in a moment of self-reflection not long before her suicide, Virgil’s Elissa will lament that she was not permitted to live a life in the manner of a wild animal: 4.550–551 *non licuit thalami expertem sine crimine vitam / degere more ferae ...*⁵⁶ At the conclusion of his *Cynegeticus*, Xenophon did not specify any additional celebrated huntresses who had been taught their craft by Artemis; he was content to name two heroines of dubious and troubled fortunes. In composing his Elissa narrative, Virgil took up Xenophon’s implicit invitation to think of other storied women like Atalanta and Procris, and he deftly juxtaposed the associations of Artemis with both hunting and bees in the splendid amalgam that is his Carthaginian queen. Ultimately, Virgil’s Elissa – her name but one letter removed from Melissa – would prove to be no Diana and no queen bee, her vision of somehow reconciling the wild world of the chase and the orderly maintenance of urban life shattered by her disastrous dalliance with Aeneas, the consummate deer-hunter.

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54 Cf. 4.87 *exercet* and 1.431 *exercet*, of the labor of the bees.

55 Elderkin (1939); cf. Bodson (1978: pp. 38–43), and Strelan (1996: pp. 91–92).

56 The comment invites comparison with the life of the infant and juvenile Camilla before her accession to war.

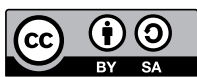
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