

“In and Out of Virgil’s Labyrinths”
Michael C.J. Putnam Lecture, 2021

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LIBER VI

BOOK VI

- MPR Sic fatur lacrimans classique immittit habenas,
et tandem Euboicis Cumarum adlabitur oris.
obvertunt pelago proras, tum dente tenaci
ancora fundabat navis, et litora curvae
5 praetexunt puppes. iuvenum manus emicat ardens
litus in Hesperium; quaerit pars semina flammae
abstrusa in venis silicis, pars densa ferarum
tectata rapit silvas, inventaque flumina monstrat.
at pius Aeneas arces, quibus altus Apollo
10 praesidet, horrendaeque procul secreta Sibyllae,
antrum immane, petit, magnam cui mentem animumque
Delius inspirat vates aperitque futura.
iam subeunt Triviae lucos atque aurea tecta.
Daedalus, ut fama est, fugiens Minoia regna,
15 praepetibus pinnis ausus se credere caelo,
insuetum per iter gelidas enavit ad Arctos
Chalcidicaeque levissimum tandem super adstitit arce.
redditis his primum terris tibi, Phoebe, sacravit
remigium alarum posuitque immania templa.
20 in foribus letum Androgeo; tum pendere poenas
Cecropidae iussi, miserum! septena quotannis
corpora natorum; stat ductis sortibus urna.
contra elata mari respondet Cnosia tellus:
hic crudelis amor tauri suppositaque furto
25 Pasiphae mixtumque genus prolesque biformis
FMPR Minotaurus inest, Veneris monumenta nefandae;
hic labor ille domus et inextricabilis error;
magnum reginae sed enim miseratus amorem
Daedalus ipse dolos tecti ambagesque resolvit,
30 caeca regens filo vestigia. tu quoque magnam
partem opere in tanto, sineret dolor, Icare, haberes;
bis conatus erat casus effingere in auro,
bis patriae cecidere manus. quin protinus omnia
perlegerent oculis, ni iam praemissus Achates
35 adforet atque una Phoebi Triviaeque sacerdos,
Deiphobe Glauci, fatur quae talia regi:
“non hoc ista sibi tempus spectacula poscit:
nunc grege de intacto septem mactare iuencos
praestiterit, totidem lectas de more bidentis.”
40 talibus adfata Aeneas (nec sacra morantur
iussa viri) Teucros vocat alta in templa sacerdos.

Thus he cries weeping, and gives his fleet the reins, and at last glides up to the shores of Euboean Cumae. They turn the prows seaward, then with the grip of anchors' teeth made fast the ships, and the round keels fringe the beach. In hot haste the youthful band leaps forth on the Hesperian shore; some seek the seeds of flame hidden in veins of flint, some despoil the woods, the thick coverts of game, and point to new-found streams. But loyal Aeneas seeks the heights, where Apollo sits enthroned,¹ and a vast cavern hard by, hidden haunt of the dread Sibyl, into whom the Delian seer breathes a mighty mind and soul, revealing the future. Now they pass under the grove of Trivia and the roof of gold.

Daedalus, it is said, when fleeing from Minos' realm, dared on swift wings to trust himself to the sky; on his unwonted way he floated forth towards the cold North, and at last stood lightly poised above the Chalcidian hill. Here first restored to earth, he dedicated to thee, Phoebus, the oarage of his wings and built a vast temple. On the doors is the death of Androgeos; then the children of Cecrops, bidden, alas, to pay as yearly tribute seven living sons; there

stands the urn, the lots now drawn. Opposite, rising from the sea, the Cretan land faces this; here is the cruel love of the bull, Pasiphaë craftily mated, and the mongrel breed of the Minotaur, a hybrid offspring, record of monstrous love; there that house of toil, a maze inextricable; but Daedalus, pitying the princess's great love, himself unwound the deceptive tangle of the palace, guiding blind feet with the thread. You, too, Icarus, would have large share in such a work, did grief permit: twice had he essayed to fashion your fall in gold; twice sank the father's hands. Ay, and all the tale throughout would their eyes have scanned, but now came Achates from his errand, and with him the priestess of Phoebus and Trivia, Deiphobe, daughter of Glaucus, who thus addresses the king: “Not sights like these does this hour demand! Now it were better to sacrifice seven bullocks from the unbroken herd, and as many ewes fitly chosen.” Having thus addressed Aeneas—and not slow are the men to do her sacred bidding—the priestess calls the Teucrians into the lofty fane.

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