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**Dido in the classroom: interpretation, translation and reception**

In a section of a large lecture course currently being taught at my institution, and taken largely by non-majors, the teaching assistant posed the question of where the sympathies of the reader of Aeneid 4 reside. She was somewhat surprised that the unanimous view of the group, coming to the book in Mandelbaum's translation and for the first time, was that Aeneas is both justified in his actions and to be commended for putting the state before his own personal interests. My own experience, the last time I taught this book, to Classics majors a year or two ago, was almost the opposite, no doubt in part informed by my own strongly oppositional status as a Virgilian reader and teacher.

- How does one come to such a familiar passage? I now tend to approach the lines, at least initially, with a combination of dread and ennui at the old questions, and the challenge is to see the issue through the eyes of students, many of whom are approaching it for the first time. It is useful to introduce students to the larger ways in which the Aeneid is read, and has always been read, from different ideological perspectives, and any number of works of secondary literature are well applied in the classroom.
- Part of the challenge is to allow and encourage students to see different points of view, even when one is committed as a scholar to a particular perspective, and translation and other forms of reception, produced by scholars and poets, have proven useful in this process. The old chestnut of whether Dido and Aeneas were actually married in the cave scene, and if not whether Dido was in any way justified in her belief that she was (if that is what she believes), is a question that can be studied against the Dido tradition, which explores precisely the debate that may occur in the contemporary classroom. In the process of studying reception, students realize that they are part of a continuing critical community, itself no bad thing. There will be a handout.