

## 5.2 Historiographical Dido

It is a sober truth: most of the literary production of Greek and Roman antiquity has vanished beyond recovery. Before the advent of printing and the possibility of mass production or, more recently, the IT-revolution and the attendant explosion in storage capacity, the transmission of a Greek or Latin text depended on its being painstakingly transcribed by hand, word for word, copy for copy. The labour-intensity of this process entailed a high degree of discrimination: premodern cultures picked and chose those texts for copying and transmission that they wished to preserve and cultivate for a particular purpose, consigning others, which they considered less important, to the margins. Copies of those works that did not attract continuous attention mouldered away in libraries or private collections before eventually disappearing altogether. Canons, like our canon of classical texts, are thus invariably selective. As a result, those texts that have survived in full exercise a special power over our minds and imagination. They continue to speak loud and clear—indeed often louder and clearer than they did initially since alternative voices that once challenged or even contradicted them have long since been silenced.

Canonical texts frequently determine which mythic variant or interpretation of a legendary figure enjoy hegemonic status within a cultural tradition—even when the version they broadcast constituted, at the time of composition, a sharp departure from orthodoxy. It is of course the case that *the* ‘correct’ version of a traditional story does not exist: authors working with legendary tales had sufficient creative license to give their subject matter the spin and imprint that suited their purpose. Yet despite the fact that myth-historical material offers a fluid medium for the literary imagination at play, authors frequently endowed their literary works with a claim to (some kind of) truth. Virgil is no exception: the *Aeneid* presents itself as (a version of) history—articulated of course by means of the conventions of the genre, i.e. epic. The chosen genre meant, for instance, that Virgil could include anthropomorphic divinities among his cast of characters without raising the eyebrows of his audience: the Olympic gods are a conventional feature of the epic genre after all, and for his early readers their appearance as such did not necessarily compromise the historical or referential value of his narrative. But ancient commentators considered other aspects of his literary world profoundly problematic precisely because the *Aeneid* operates under the pretense of presenting a historical account. The fourth-century

commentator Servius, for instance, rebuked Virgil for including episodes—such as the transformation of Aeneas' ships into sea-nymphs at *Aeneid* 9.77–122—that blatantly defy basic principles of empirical plausibility and are thus evidently bogus. Unlike anthropomorphic divinities, marvellous metamorphoses, at least according to some readers, violated the historical decorum of the epic genre. (This is part of the reason why Ovid's decision to write an entire epic entitled *Metamorphoses*, which postures as a world *history* from the beginnings of the universe down to his own times, is so outrageous.)

Criticisms such as Servius's drives home the point that the *Aeneid* was expected to conform to certain standards of empiricism and veracity. And in practice Virgil's epic taught generations of Roman school children (something about) their history: a repository of facts and figures about the Roman past, idiosyncratically plotted, to be sure, but of (some) historical value.<sup>270</sup> This, one could be forgiven to assume, holds especially true of the Dido episode. In Book 4, after all, Virgil offers a mythic aetiology ('an explanation of the causes') of indisputably historical events: Rome's enmity with Carthage and the protracted struggle between the two cities over supremacy in the Western Mediterranean in the third and second century BC. This struggle produced one of the most lethal foes Rome ever had to face: Hannibal. He is the avenger whom Dido conjures as part of her suicide curse at *Aeneid* 4.607–29. The meeting between Dido and Aeneas thus prefigures and explains important events in Roman history and therefore, by implication, stakes a claim to historical truth. But if one sniffs around in the margins of the canonical mainstream, it is still just possible to discover an alternative tradition—a tradition, in fact, that claims that Virgil made this part of his epic all up, in defiance of the truth. What I would like to do in this essay is to look at some little-read authors (some of whom have only survived in fragments or later summaries), who allow us to get a sense of this alternative tradition. Not all of them are easy to get hold of, and I have therefore cited the key texts or passages both in the original and in translation to facilitate further engagement with this fascinating if obscure material.<sup>271</sup>

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270. A 'compare-and-contrast' exercise concerning the historical value of the *Aeneid* and W. C. Sellar's & R. J. Yeatman's *1066 and All That: A Memorable History of England, comprising all the parts you can remember, including 103 Good Things, 5 Bad Kings and 2 Genuine Dates* (Methuen Publishing, 1930), could produce interesting results.

271. I nevertheless proceed selectively. For a more comprehensive account and more detailed discussion of this alternative tradition, see Lord (1969), as well as Horsfall (1990), Hexter

Let us begin with Macrobius, an intellectual snob from late antiquity, and author of the *Saturnalia*, ‘an encyclopedic compilation quarried from mostly unnamed sources ... and cast as a dialogue that gathers together members of the Roman aristocracy prominent in the late fourth century, along with their learned entourage, to discuss matters ridiculous and sublime, and above all the poetry the Virgil.’<sup>272</sup> Eustathius, one of the speakers in the dialogue, has the following to say about Virgil’s account of Dido (*Saturnalia* 5.17.4–6):<sup>273</sup>

...bene in rem suam vertit quidquid ubicumque invenit imitandum; adeo ut de Argonauticorum quarto, quorum scriptor est Apollonius, librum Aeneidos suae quartum totum paene formaverit, ad Didonem vel Aenean amatoriam incontinentiam Medae circa Iasonem transferendo. quod ita elegantius auctore digessit, ut *fabula lascivientis Didonis, quam falsam novit universitas, per tot tamen saecula speciem veritatis obtineat et ita pro vero per ora omnium volitet*, ut pictores fictoresque et qui figmentis liciorum contextas imitantur effigies, hac materia vel maxime in effigiandis simulacris tamquam unico argumento decoris utantur, nec minus histrionum perpetuis et gestibus et cantibus celebretur. tantum valuit pulchritudo narrandi ut *omnes Phoenissae castitatis conscii, nec ignari manum sibi iniectisse reginam, ne pateretur damnum pudoris*, coniveant tamen fabulae, et intra conscientiam veri fidem prementes malint pro vero celebrari quod pectoribus humanis dulcedo fingentis infudit.

[...he nicely adapted to his own purposes whatever he found that was worth imitating, from any and every source, going so far as to virtually shape the whole of the *Aeneid*’s fourth book on the model of Book 4 of the *Argonautica* by Apollonius, assigning to Dido or Aeneas the unrestrained love that Medea bore for Jason. Our author treated that theme so subtly that *the story of Dido lost in passion, which everyone knows is not true, has for so many generations now maintained the appearance of truth, and so flits about on the lips of men as though it were true*, that painters and sculptors and the weavers of tapestries use this above all as their raw material in fashioning their images, as though it were the unique pattern of beauty, and it is no less constantly celebrated in the gestures and songs of actors. The story’s beauty has had such power that though *everyone knows of the Phoenician queen’s chastity and is aware that she took her own life to avoid the loss of her honor*, they nonetheless wink at the tale, keep their loyalty to the truth to themselves, and prefer to celebrate as true the sweetness that the artist instilled in human hearts.]

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(1992), and Davidson (1998).

272. R. A. Kaster, ed., Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 3 vols, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 2011), vol.1, p. xii.

273. Text and translation are from Kaster’s Loeb edition (see previous note).

This remarkable text voices pronounced anti-Virgilian sentiments while acknowledging the well-nigh irresistible power and beauty of his poetry: Macrobius' character begins by blaming Virgil with a large-scale act of 'plagiarism': the poet, he claims, modeled his Dido episode on Apollonius Rhodius' account of Jason and Medea in *Argonautica* 4. (The Greek poet lived in the first half of the third century BC.) This, to be sure, is standard fare in ancient literary criticism. According to Donatus' *Life of Virgil* 46, detractors accused the poet already during his lifetime of thieving from Homer. (Virgil is said to have rebutted such charges of literary theft by claiming that it is easier to steal the club of Hercules than a line from Homer.) But then Macrobius' speaker ups the ante. In construing the encounter between Dido and Aeneas in analogy to Medea and Jason, Virgil, he submits, showed a brazen disregard for historical truth. What is more: *everyone* (he claims) knows that Virgil's version does not correspond to the facts and is, indeed, a *fraudulent* fiction. Switching to a 'reader-response' perspective, Macrobius' character proceeds to comment on the seductive allure that Virgil's poetry exercises over the minds of those who get swept away in his narrative. The *Aeneid* (and *Aeneid* 4 in particular) is so sweet and compelling from a human-interest point of view that readers gladly connive in Virgil's distortions of the truth. Against their better judgment and knowledge, they suspend their commitment to historical veracity, preferring instead to celebrate as true what is mere invention.

Virgil, according to Macrobius, is thus little better than his figure of *Fama*. In fact, the formulation that Virgil's made-up story *pro vero per ora omnium volitet* ('flits about on the lips of men as though it were true') recalls Virgil's characterization of *Fama* as 'clinging to the false and wrong, yet heralding truth' (*Aeneid* 4.188: *tam ficti prauisque tenax quam nuntia ueri*) and *Aeneid* 4.195: *haec passim dea foeda uirum diffundit in ora* ('these things the foul goddess spreads everywhere upon the lips of men').<sup>274</sup> Still, both for readers weaned on Virgil or for us who are fully aware of the great pliability of myth, the idiom of truth in the cited passage may well baffle. As Kaster quite rightly remarks in a footnote of his Loeb edition, Macrobius

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274. Both passages play off an epitaph of Ennius (239 – c. 169 BC): *nemo me lacrimis decoret nec funera fletul faxit. cur? uolito uiuos per ora uirum* (*Varia*, 17-18 Vahlen<sup>2</sup>) ('Let none honour me with tears nor prepare my funeral while weeping. Why? I fly alive on the lips of men'), which Virgil already imitated at *Georgics* 3.9: *... uictorque uirum uolitare per ora* ('[a path must be attempted whereby I may] fly victoriously on the lips of men').

here ‘speaks, a bit oddly, as though there were a “true” story of Dido independent of the poetic version.’<sup>275</sup>

Intriguingly, however, there arguably was—at least for some readers. A contemporary of Macrobius, the church father Jerome (347–420), gives us a hint of this alternative tradition, which preserved the ‘true’ story of Dido. In his treatise *Against Iovinianus*, he has the following to say about the foundress of Carthage (*Adversus Iovinianum* 1.43 = *Patrologia Latina* 23. 310):

Dido, soror Pygmalionis, multo auri et argenti pondere congregato, in Africam navigavit, ibique urbem Carthaginem condidit, et cum ab Jarba rege Libyae in conjugium peteretur, paulisper distulit nuptias, donec conderet civitatem. Nec multo post exstructa in memoriam mariti quondam Sichaei pyra, maluit ardere quam nubere. Casta mulier Carthaginem condidit...

[After Dido, sister of Pygmalion, had collected a great weight of gold and silver, she sailed to Africa and there founded the city of Carthage. When she was sought in marriage by Iarbas, king of Libya, she put off the wedding for a little while until she had founded her city. Not long after, having erected a pyre to the memory of her former husband Sychaeus, she preferred ‘to burn rather than to marry.’ A chaste woman founded Carthage...]

Many of the plot elements will be familiar to readers of Virgil. In both authors, Dido is the sister of Pygmalion and the former wife of the deceased Sychaeus, arrives in Africa on ships laden with riches (in particular gold), founds the city of Carthage, is wooed by the local king Iarbas, and ends up committing suicide after erecting a pyre under false pretense. But Jerome’s version of course features a glaring absence. Where in the world is Aeneas in *his* story? How could Jerome pass over the Virgilian protagonist in complete silence? Why is he not even worth a mention? And doesn’t Dido’s erotic escapade with the Trojan prince fatally compromise her reputation as a ‘chaste woman’ (*casta mulier*)? Jerome, clearly, neither cares for the *Aeneid* nor seems to be worried about upsetting readers familiar with Virgil’s version of Dido. His heroine dies without having met Aeneas and with her reputation and sense of shame intact. Indeed, according to Jerome, Dido committed suicide not because she lost her *pudor*, in an act of wrathful vengeance, madness, and regret, but in order to *preserve* her chastity and to remain loyal to her dead husband.<sup>276</sup>

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275. Kaster (2011), vol. 2, p. 409, n. 62.

276. Jerome is by no means the only church father who hails Dido as an *exemplum castitatis*, a paragon of chastity. See also Tertullian (c. 160 – c. 225 AD), *De Monogamia* 17.

Jerome—he, that is, who carried his library of pagan classics with him on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem and suffered from nightmares in which he saw himself getting whipped by Christ for the inordinate pleasure he took in Cicero’s prose style (‘You are a Ciceronian, not a Christian’, the son of God rebukes him while administering the punishment, combining the whipping with a good tongue-lashing)—Jerome of course knew his Virgil inside out.<sup>277</sup> The fact that he could conceive of Dido as a *casta mulier*, a model of chastity, in the teeth of *Aeneid* 4 is remarkable. It demonstrates that he considered an alternative variant of the Dido-story more plausible, more historical, more serious than the one we find in Virgil.

Jerome’s rejection of Virgil’s Dido in the *Adversus-Iovinianum* passage works by implication only. He just ignores *Aeneid* 4 as if it had never been written, much less enshrined in the Roman school curriculum. The anonymous author of the following epigram from the so-called *Appendix Planudea* is less reticent (= *Anthologia Graeca* 16.151):<sup>278</sup>

Ἀρχέτυπον Διδούς ἐρικυδέος, ὧ ξένε, λεύσσεις,  
 εἰκόνα θεσπεσίῳ κάλλει λαμπομένην.  
 τοιή καὶ γενόμην, ἀλλ’ οὐ νόον, οἶον ἀκούεις,  
 ἔσχον ἐπ’ εὐφήμοις δόξαν ἐνεγκαμένην.  
 οὐδὲ γὰρ Αἰνεΐαν ποτ’ ἐσέδρακον, οὐδὲ χρόνοισι 5  
 Τροίης περθομένης ἤλυθον ἐς Λιβύην·  
 ἀλλὰ βίας φεύγουσα Ἰαρβαίων ὑμεναίων  
 πῆξα κατὰ κραδῆς φάσγανον ἀμφίτομον.  
 Περιίδες, τί μοι αἰνὸν ἐφωπλίσσασθε Μάρωνα;  
 οἶα καθ’ ἡμετέρης ψεύσατο σωφροσύνης. 10

[You see, traveler, the original portrait of famous Dido, an image gleaming with divine beauty. And such a one I was, and did *not* have the mind of which you hear, having attained a good reputation on account of honourable deeds. For I never laid eyes on Aeneas, and I did not come to Libya at the time Troy was sacked. Rather, to eschew an enforced marriage with Iarbas I stuck the double-bladed sword through my heart. Muses, why did you equip dread Virgil with weapons against me? How he has lied about my prudence!]

277. Jerome, *Epistle* 22.30. For an English translation of this fascinating letter see *The Christian Classics Ethereal Library* at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf206.v.XXII.html>.

278. The *Appendix Planudea* is a collection of Greek epigrams and poems compiled by the Byzantine scholar Maximus Planudes, who lived from c. 1260 to c. 1305 (hence *Planudea*). The poems were mostly written much earlier. They then got attached, or appended (hence *Appendix*), to another collection of such poems, which is today known under the name of *Greek Anthology* (or *Anthologia Graeca*).



[That one, which you look at, traveler, am I, Dido, reproduced in wonderful ways and beautiful. I was such a person, and did not possess the mind that Maro [sc. Virgil] invented for me nor was my life tarnished by illicit desires.<sup>280</sup> For Trojan Aeneas never saw me nor reached Libya with his Trojan fleet, but fleeing the furies and the arms of pushy Iarbas, I preserved—I confess—my sense of shame through death, with my heart stabbed through, which a chaste sword struck, not madness or raw grief after my love suffered harm. Thus it pleases to have fallen: I lived without any damage to my reputation, and having exacted revenge, after construction of the walls, met my death.

Jealous Muse, why did you goad on Virgil against me so that he invented damages to my sense of shame? *You, readers, believe rather the historians about me than the lying poets who sing of secret affairs and the sexual liaisons of the gods, who besmear the truth in their poems and assimilate the gods to human sins.*]

This Latin translation follows the Greek original fairly closely, but concludes with an interesting elaboration (put in italics): Dido pleads with us readers to believe the story that *the historians* tell about her and not the one promulgated by ‘the lying poets’. She uses a generic plural and generalizes in what amounts to a wholesale condemnation of the poetic—and in particular epic—tradition of anthropomorphic divinities, but pointedly uses the term for poets that Virgil used of himself, i.e. *uatis*. Indeed, the phrase *falsidici uates* (‘lying poets’) is a malicious transmogrification of the Virgilian phrase *fatidici uates* (‘poet-prophets of historical destiny’) at *Aeneid* 8.340.

Who, exactly, are the historians we are supposed to consult? A passage in an anonymous treatise that we are unable to date with precision entitled *De Mulieribus* (‘On Powerful Women’) contains a decisive piece of information:<sup>281</sup>

Θειοσσώ. ταύτην φησὶ Τίμαιος κατὰ μὲν τὴν Φοινίκων γλῶσσαν ἑλίσσαν καλεῖσθαι, ἀδελφὴν δὲ εἶναι Πυγμαλίωνος τοῦ Τυρίων βασιλέως, ὑφ’ ἧς φησι τὴν Καρχηδόνα τὴν ἐν Λιβύῃ κτισθῆναι· τοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ Πυγμαλίωνος ἀναιρεθέντος, ἐνθεμένη τὰ χρήματα εἰς σκάφας μετὰ τινῶν πολιτῶν ἔφευγε, καὶ πολλὰ

280. Virgil’s full name was Publius Vergilius Maro.

281. The standard treatment of the *De Mulieribus* is D. Gera, *Warrior Women: The Anonymous Tractatus de Mulieribus* (Leiden, 1997). Since the author of the treatise here cites or summarizes the Greek historiographer Timaeus, the text is also available in Brill’s New Jacoby project, a re-edition of the collection of the fragments of the Greek historians by the German scholar Felix Jacoby (1876 – 1959), *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, under BNJ 566 F 82 (where BNJ = Brill’s New Jacoby; 566 = the number of the historian, i.e. Timaeus; F = fragment; 82 = the number of the fragment). I cite the BNJ text and translation (slightly adjusted).

κακοπαθήσασα τῆι Λιβύῃ προσηνέχθη, καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Λιβύων διὰ τὴν πολλὴν αὐτῆς πλάνην Δειδῶ προσηγορεύθη ἐπιχωρίως. κτίσασα δὲ τὴν προειρημένην πόλιν, τοῦ τῶν Λιβύων βασιλέως θέλοντος αὐτὴν γῆμαι, αὐτὴ μὲν ἀντέλεγεν, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν πολιτῶν συναναγκαζομένη, σκηψαμένη τελετὴν τινα πρὸς ἀνάλυσιν ὄρκων ἐπιτελέσειν, πυρὰν μεγίστην ἐγγὺς τοῦ οἴκου κατασκευάσασα καὶ ἄψασα, ἀπὸ τοῦ δώματος αὐτὴν εἰς τὴν πυρὰν ἔρριψεν.

[Theiosso: Timaios says this was what Elissa was called in Phoenician—she being the sister of Pygmalion, king of Tyre. And he says that she founded Carthage in Libya. When her husband was killed by Pygmalion, she put her possessions on shipboard and fled with some of the citizens, coming to Libya after great hardship. Because of her extensive wanderings, she was called ‘Deido’ by the Libyans in their local language. Once she had founded the aforementioned city, the king of Libya desired her as wife, but she refused him. She was, however, pressured by her citizens. On a pretext of performing a ritual to free herself from her oaths (not to marry), she constructed a large pyre by her house; when it had been lighted, she threw herself from her abode onto the pyre.]

With Timaios (or, in Latin spelling, Timaeus), we are leaving behind the world of late antiquity. The Greek historiographer lived from 356-260 BC, i.e. about three hundred years before Virgil! And his account of the Dido story clearly stands behind, but in essential details differs radically from, the one we find in the *Aeneid*. In both authors Dido is also known as Elissa; in both authors, she lived in the city of Tyre in Phoenicia; in both authors, she is the sister of Pygmalion; in both authors, Pygmalion killed her husband; in both authors, she collected possessions and assembled a group of citizens after the killing, fleeing her hometown and arriving as an exile in Libya; in both authors, she founded the city of Carthage; in both authors, a local king desired her to be his wife; in both authors, she refused to yield; in both authors, she decided to commit suicide; in both authors, she concealed her purpose behind fake-preparation for a magic ritual that involved construction of a pyre. But here the parallels end: in Timaeus, she commits suicide because she is determined to *preserve* her oath of chastity to her murdered husband; in Virgil, she commits suicide at least in part because she *violated* her oath of chastity to her murdered husband. Accordingly, in Timaeus the pretext for building the pyre consists in the apparent need to perform a ritual that would have freed her from the obligations of her oaths not ever to remarry, whereas in Virgil it is to rid herself of her fateful love for Aeneas.

One may legitimately wonder: what about Aeneas? Why doesn't Timaeus mention him? For those steeped in the chronology of Greek myth that Timaeus presupposes the answer is straightforward: Dido and Aeneas could not have met since they lived about three centuries apart! The best evidence for this salient detail comes from another obscure and difficult source, the *Philippic History* of the first-century BC historian Pompeius Trogus, a contemporary of Virgil's, which has only survived in the form of extracts by Justin (who may have lived in the late second century AD) entitled *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*. At 18.4.1–6.8, Justin recounts the story of Dido, in the Timaeian tradition, according to the following chronology:<sup>282</sup>

- 1195 BC: The founding of Tyre
- 1194 BC: The fall of Troy; Aeneas travels West
- c. 830 BC: King Mutto of Tyre dies, having appointed as his heirs his son Pygmalion and his daughter Elissa (a.k.a. Dido); Pygmalion becomes sole king and murders Elissa's husband (their uncle) Acherbas because of his wealth
- c. 815 BC: Elissa/ Dido flees Tyre with Acherbas' riches and reaches Libya
- 814 BC: The founding of Carthage
- 753 BC: The founding of Rome

According to this timeline, Aeneas had long traveled past the African shores before Dido ever set foot on them. In order for the two to meet, Virgil had to predate her arrival in Libya by roughly four centuries! Here we have the final piece of evidence we need to put Virgil in the dock for theft and slander—or to use a literary-critical, rather than legal idiom, cooption and correction, appropriation and adaptation. Perhaps following Naevius (c. 270–201 BC), who wrote a poem about Rome's first war with Carthage, the *Bellum Punicum*, which might have included a meeting between Dido and Aeneas, Virgil took over the basic plot of the Dido story from the Greek myth-historical tradition represented by Timaeus

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282. For the Latin text see O. Seel, *Iuniani Iustini Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum Pompei Trogi* (Stuttgart, 1972); for a translation see J. C. Yardley, *Justin: Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, American Philological Association Classical Resources, Series 3 (Atlanta, 1994).

and adjusted orthodox chronology so he could engineer a love affair between Dido and Aeneas, thereby turning the traditional reputation of the queen, who was renowned for her unconditional loyalty and chastity, on its head.<sup>283</sup>

It is time to summarize the most important of our findings so as to set the stage for further discussion:

1. Besides Virgil's account of Dido another, older version of her story circulated in antiquity, which can be traced back to the Greek historiographer Timaeus who wrote in the third century BC.
2. Virgil crafted his figure of Dido with the Timaeian version in mind, but altered it (perhaps following Naevius) in such a way that Dido could welcome Aeneas at Carthage and fall madly in love with him: instead of a queen who prefers to burn rather than marry, we get a woman on fire with love who throws oaths and caution to the wind in succumbing to illicit sexual desires.
3. Virgil's radical revision of the Dido-myth eventually came to eclipse the original variant, owing to the tremendous success enjoyed by the *Aeneid* from the day it was first published until today. But some readers in antiquity resisted the allure of Virgil's poetry. And with a bit of sleuthing and rummaging around in the debris of literary history, we are still able to recover a Dido untainted by Virgil's lurid imagination. It is a Dido that appealed to a range of authors who considered the Timaeian variant to be historically accurate, indeed true—as opposed to Virgil's account, which they dismissed as freely invented.
4. No one, however, disputes that *Aeneid* 4 offers extraordinary poetry of tremendous power and appeal. Virgil's transformation of a Dido renowned for exceptional chastity into a Dido who (momentarily) lost her sense of shame is masterful (if 'untrue'). Arguably, knowledge of the Timaeian tradition makes the text even more fascinating: part of Dido's mental struggle against the temptation

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283. The evidence for the possibility that Virgil followed the precedent of Naevius is considered by Horsfall (1990), pp. 138–39. Hexter (1992), p. 367 notes that 'stories about Aeneas varied widely and drastically during Virgil's lifetime, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing in Greek at Rome, noted already ca. 7 B.C.E. (e.g., *Roman Antiquities* 1.48–49, 53.4, 72–73). Neither Dionysius (1.47–53) nor another contemporary of Vergil, Livy, writing in Latin (*Ab urbe condita*, 1.1), includes a Carthaginian stopover on Aeneas' way from Troy to Italy.'

that Aeneas presents can be read as an attempt to resist what Virgil is doing to her: she clings with all her might to her previous identity and unblemished reputation, but ultimately can't but yield to the poet and his hero.

5. The recovery of the 'historical' Dido raises complex issues worth exploring further, revolving around (changing) notions of historical veracity, poetic license, the power of canonical texts, the seductive allure of great poetry, the question of historical justice for legendary characters, and the potential opposition of truth and beauty. Let the debate begin!