Defining *Amantem*: Dido and Popular Modern English Translations of the *Aeneid*

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Introduction

The translator is not faceless. The act of carrying one author's words into a different language is a profound one which requires the translator to keep their wits (and face) about them. This can be especially seen when translating classical languages, since those works are millennia older than their translators and the original authors operate in a context that, for all its similarities to modern society, is often a foreign land. Thus, a translator must perform several balancing acts to reach across centuries while still rendering their translation into something a modern audience will not only understand but enjoy. It is this process and its effects on one specific character in a particular Roman epic that is the focus of this paper. The *Aeneid* by Publius Vergilius Maro (normally stylized as Vergil or Virgil) is *the* Roman epic poem. Written between 29 and 19 BCE, the Latin epic tells the story of Aeneas, a Trojan refugee from the Trojan War who is destined to, after a long wandering, reach Italy and found the Roman race. Once, the tale commanded Western culture, but now its influence has waned while the Homeric epics continue to enthrall the public imagination.[1] Still, the *Aeneid* is taught in schools and pulled off bookshelves; new translations are always forthcoming, and the rise of debate over the essence of classics itself and its value may bring the epic to the fore again. As such, it is valuable to note both where the epic has been and where it should go from there. This paper seeks to aid in that discussion by illuminating how popular modern English translations of the *Aeneid* approached a character who has attracted note, debate, sympathy, and recrimination from Ancient Roman and modern English readers alike: Dido, the Queen of Carthage.

The power of Dido and Book 4, her book, are well-known. It is the figure of her and the progression of her story from Queen of Carthage to abandoned lover to woman dead by her own hand that have sparked the greatest discussions of Aeneas' status as a hero and the meaning of

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[1] A.M. Juster, "Aeneid Wars," *Athenaeum Review*, no. 6 (Summer 2021), 29-33: 33.

his epic. Adam Parry explains in his analysis of the *Aeneid*, "the most dramatic episode and the one in which Aeneas most loses his claims to heroism is the fourth book. The tragedy of Dido is lucid and deeply moving…"[2] The power of her tragedy is compounded by the fact that it is she, Steve Farron argues in his analysis of Dido and Aeneas, who commands our attention, since "Dido's passion for Aeneas is described with a brilliance and compassion that has been the cause of admiration of poets for the past 2,000 years."[3] It is thus worthwhile to examine the appearance and character of Dido specifically, since, if nothing else, she appears heavily in the first and fourth books of the *Aeneid*, which are often sampled to be read in classrooms or by the passing classics enthusiast.[4] This paper will first establish variables by which translation can be analyzed and confirm the value of seeing the translator in the text. Then it will examine the translation history of Dido in popular modern English translations, i.e. Cecil Day Lewis, Allen Mandelbaum, Robert Fitzgerald, Robert Fagles, and Sarah Ruden.[5] Finally, it will summarize the consequences of translation which can be ascertained from these versions of the *Aeneid*.

Variables of Translation: Fidelity, Cadence, and Expressiveness

Commentary on translation is rarely a flippant or easy thing. Gordon Williams, in his review of Robert Fitzgerald's 1983 *Aeneid*, notes that comparison between translators is likely to be "invidious."[6] Robert Fagles agrees with this sentiment in the postscript to his own 2006 translation, claiming that any translator who outlines their process may open themselves up to undue judgment, "of course it is a risky business, stating what one has tried to do, or worse, the

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[2] Adam Parry, "The Two Voices of Virgil's 'Aeneid,'" *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 2, no. 4 (1963), 66–80: 76-7.
[3] Steven Farron, "The Aeneas-Dido Episode as an Attack on Aeneas' Mission and Rome," *Greece & Rome* 27, no. 1 (1980), 34–47: 35.
[4] Eric A. Havelock, "Fitzgerald's American 'Aeneid,'" *The Hudson Review* 37, no. 3 (1984), 483–90: 485.
[5] For examinations of English translations of the *Aeneid* beyond the character of Dido, see Evelyn W. Adkins' work, "The Mirror's Reflection: Virgil's *Aeneid* in English Translation," as well as select chapters in *Virgil and His Translators*, edited by Susanna Braund and Zara Martirosova Torlone.
[6] Gordon Williams, "Robert Fitzgerald's *Aeneid*," *The Sewanee Review* 92, no. 4 (1984), 630–39: 635.

principles one has used (petards will probably hoist the writer later)."[7] However, no matter the risk of examining translation, it is a worthwhile process. This is particularly true today, since, as Alessandro Fo explains when trying to communicate the importance of translation theory, it is becoming less and less common for epics to be read in their original language; the translator now speaks for the author more than ever before.[8] Add into this concern an ongoing reckoning about the "class, race and gender biases" inherent in the field of classics,[9] and the reasons for defining and determining the qualities of translation are illuminated.

Most of that conversation is undertaken with the language of translation theory. Susanna Braund and Zara Martirosova Torlone state that translation theory is understood through "binaries": source versus target language, domesticating versus foreignizing approach, visible or invisible translator.[10] These binaries attempt to break down the intricacy of translation into definable elements, ways in which we can see the transmutation of one text into another, one author into another. Translation is, literally, from its Latin parts, the act of "having carried something across." I submit that there are three major variables involved with translation that demonstrate this "carrying": fidelity, cadence, and expressiveness.[11] Fidelity refers to faithfulness with the source language/text. Often, a translator must decide whether to sacrifice meaning present in the source language (in the case of this paper, Latin) in order to create ease of understanding in the target language (here, English). This is a perpetual process for the translator. While negotiating fidelity, a translation must also make decisions about cadence. This variable

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[7] Vergil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fagles with introduction by Bernard Knox, (New York: Penguin Group, 2006): 481.
[8] Alessandro Fo, "Limiting Our Losses: A Translator's Journey through the *Aeneid*," in *Virgil and His Translators*, ed. by Susanna Braund and Zara Martirosova Torlone, trans. Jelena Todorovic and Susanna Braund, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 412-21: 420.
[9] Juster, "Aeneid Wars," 30.
[10] Susanna Braund and Zara Martirosova Torlone, "Introduction: The Translation History of Vergil," in *Virgil and His Translators*, ed. Susanna Braund and Zara Martirosova Torlone, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1-19: 4-5.
[11] Fo, "Limiting Our Losses," 420.

refers to the format of a translation. It is the decision for it to be prose or verse, blank verse or free, rhymed or not, six beats or five. This is all in the pursuit of meter that can produce, as Bernard Knox would say, "'a music that works like an incantation.'"[12] Hopefully, that music can reproduce a kind of expressiveness, a beauty to the new, translated text that echoes the qualities of the original source text. Thus, we can see that these variables are in many ways interdependent and interrelated. A decision in one area affects another until, eventually, the entire translation is a testament to a translator's unique concoction of these variables.

The approach of a popular modern English translator of the *Aeneid* to these three variables is affected by two elements. First, the state of *Aeneid*/Vergilian scholarship at the time, since all modern translators position themselves against and amongst the Vergilian scholarship of their day, seeing as they are themselves scholars.[13] Moreover, as Fo points out, "translators read other translators, and it would be both foolish and incorrect to pretend otherwise."[14] Second, there is the locus —the philosophy, style, and approach— of the particular translator. This element is rooted in New Historicism, which holds "political and religious ideologies as crucial factors in the sometimes surprising outcomes [of translation] and emphasizes that translations can never be ranked only in terms of failure or success, because each one has elements of both and contributes to future translation attempts."[15] Essentially, the presence of the translator is affirmed by this approach, as is the importance of judging translators within their societal and personal context. The translators of the *Aeneid* are no strangers to this idea, either. Fagles writes that the translator is affected by "his mood and mind, and his appreciation of the author. Whether or not such things find full expression, they may inform his approach, and perhaps a part of his

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[12] Vergil (Fagles), 484.
[13] Susanna Braund, "Vergil After Vietnam," in *Virgil and His Translators*, ed. Susanna Braund and Zara Martirosova Torlone, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018): 107-23: 107.
[14] Fo, "Limiting Our Losses," 419.
[15] Braund and Martirosova Torlone, "Introduction," 8.

work as well."[16] So, the translator is not faceless, and they are affected by the academia surrounding them as well as their own locus. The question we must now ask is: what does this mean for Dido?

Day Lewis: Domestication and the Hoodwink

We begin with the British poet laureate C. Day Lewis' 1952 translation of the *Aeneid*. In an introduction to his *Aeneid* that he wrote himself, Day Lewis summarizes the variables of translation succinctly when he asks a question of every take on the epic, "is the translation alive as a poem in our own language, and has it been successful in catching something of the Vergilian tone?"[17] As he answers this question, Day Lewis meditates on a core truth of his translation, and furthermore of this paper as well, "When a poet sits down to translate another poet, he always wants something of him, though he may not be fully aware of this."[18] However, though Day Lewis appears clear-headed about the factors involved in translation that affect his work, this self-introspection soon fades. He claims that the differences between translations are "over minutiae" and that "a translator who studies [scholars' comments] and uses his own imagination is unlikely to go far wrong about the general sense of a passage."[19] This self-assuredness will materialize in Day Lewis' translation many times, most notably in how he manipulates the Latin, particularly surrounding Dido, with less an eye on fidelity and more on conveying a certain understanding of the text. Day Lewis' verse translation may be line-for-line with the Latin,[20] but this fidelity is supplanted by the need for expressiveness, at least as he would define it. That is to say, Day Lewis believed that a "good translation" takes to heart the question, "how would Vergil have told the story, if he had been born in England, and in this present age?"[21] Day Lewis

[16] Vergil (Fagles), 487.
[17] Vergil, *The Aeneid of Vergil*, trans. Cecil Day Lewis, (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1952): 9.
[18] Ibid., 9.
[19] Ibid., 7.
[20] Braund, "Vergil After Vietnam," 107.
[21] Vergil (Day Lewis), 9.

thought that only John Dryden with his *Aeneid* in 1697 had achieved this exchange of expression between author and translator.[22] We can see why Day Lewis is a firm believer in the same traditionalist, domesticating approach to Vergilian text that Dryden used, one which "valued good poetry over literal accuracy."[23] With Day Lewis, this philosophy is shown in particular through his preoccupation with colloquial language.

Day Lewis' work was always intended to be for the wider British audience. In fact, he wrote it knowing that it would be broadcast by the BBC, and so he attempted to connect the epic to the recently ended world war, thereby bringing it into the modern age.[24] This attempted connection is why Day Lewis uses what Patrick Cheney calls "living contemporary language," particularly the "language of modern war— a language familiar to an audience who had only recently been through World War II (the translation was first broadcast in 1950 and first published in 1952)..."[25] For example, it is not just *Troiae*, "Troy," which Aeneas comes from in Day Lewis' version (Vergil 1.1);[26] it is "Troy's frontier" (Day Lewis 1.1). Also, Aeneas is granted passage into the underworld by the golden bough, which is translated as a "passport" (Day Lewis 6.632). The reason for these renderings is that Day Lewis wanted to "hold the listener's attention."[27] Since he himself confessed that he had a "soft spot" for poetry that embraces a colloquial approach,[28] he believed that using words and frameworks such as these would do that. However, the question becomes, as he strives to hold our attention, what Dido is

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[22] Ibid., 7.
[23] Juster, "Aeneid Wars," 30.
[24] Patrick Cheney, "C. Day Lewis's Translation of Virgil's 'Aeneid': A 'Living Contemporary Language,'" *Comparative Literature Studies* 20, no. 4 (1983), 435–45: 435.
[25] Ibid., 436.
[26] N.b. Latin text of the *Aeneid* is sourced from The Latin Library online, which can be found at https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/verg.html. Also, definitions of words come from *Online Latin Dictionary* by Enrico Olivetti, https://www.online-latin-dictionary.com/. The definitions are further supplemented by *A Latin Dictionary* by Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, published by Patristic Publishing, 2019.
[27] Cheney, "C. Day Lewis's Translation of Virgil's 'Aeneid,'" 439.
[28] Ibid., 440.

he creating? One line in particular can function as a litmus test to discover that. *Quis fallere possit amantem?* (Vergil 4.296) is a phrase that can signal what kind of Dido is appearing in a translation. It comes just before the grand confrontation between Dido and Aeneas when the former realizes that the latter is leaving her. A literal translation is, "who is able to deceive a lover?"[29] In this rendering of the line, *amantem* is given its literal definition, "lover" or "loving one." Day Lewis, in full form, translates the moment as "but who can ever hoodwink a woman in love?" (Day Lewis, 4.295). *Fallere*, which is defined as "to deceive," "to slip by," or even "to cheat," is instead fashioned into "hoodwink," a colloquial phrase that instills in the reader a sense that the positions of Dido and Aeneas are unequal. Aeneas did not merely attempt to deceive her, he tried to hoodwink her, bamboozle her, even swindle her. This connotation, when coupled with the less-than-literal interpretation of *amantem* as "a woman in love," creates a sense that Dido is at a disadvantage. This characterization does in fact occur throughout Day Lewis' translation.

Something which informs this characterization is the belief that it is faithful to the original Roman interpretation of the epic. It has been the practice of "orthodox interpretations," according to Adam Parry, to privilege what the Roman reader would have thought, how "*he* would have taken the poem ultimately as a great work of Augustan propaganda, clapped his hands when Aeneas abandons the overemotional Dido, and approved with little qualification the steady march of the Roman state to world dominion…"[30] The story goes that Dido, in the original Roman view, "'was the aggressor in her marriage with Aeneas, an intolerable assumption of a male prerogative.'"[31] This act, along with her abandonment of her vow to her first husband, Sychaeus, to remain faithful to him even after death, ensured her descent into love

[29] Literal translations that are offered for comparison are my own.
[30] Adam Parry, "The Two Voices of Virgil's 'Aeneid,'" *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 2, no. 4 (1963), 66–80: 69-70. N.b. For more on the historical context of Vergil's Dido, see Marilyn Desmond's book, *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality, and the Medieval Aeneid*, particularly the chapter titled, "*Dux Femina Facti*: Virgil's Dido in the Historical Context."
[31] Ibid., 70.

akin to madness. She is “a woman wild with passion,” cut by “love’s flame” that “eats into / Her gentle flesh” (Day Lewis 4.66-7). She is consumed by her obsession with Aeneas, and as she is, her city falls into disrepair, “great frowning walls, head-in-air cranes, all at a standstill” (Day Lewis 4.89). She abandons her duty, and the question begs to be asked, particularly in Day Lewis’ translation: does she fail because she is a woman who took on a male role, because she could not control herself, could not honor her promises? For Day Lewis, the answer is not only yes, but also that there is a level of deservedness in the suffering Dido endures as love wreaks havoc on her and her dereliction of duty continues.[32]

We can see this in particular when Day Lewis takes the lines when Dido comes upon the idea to kill herself, *Tum vero infelix fatis exterrita Dido / mortem orat; taedet caeli convexa tueri* (Vergil 4.450-1), to be, “But hapless Dido, frightened out of her wits by her destiny, / Prayed for death: she would gaze no more on the dome of daylight” (Day Lewis 4.450-1). Here, *infelix* does not mean the more common “unhappy” or “unlucky,” but “hapless,” a deeper recrimination of the queen, a starker depiction of her powerlessness. Furthermore, Day Lewis extrapolates *exterrita* to denote that Dido is not just “terrified,” but “frightened out of her wits.” Furthermore, the *furias* (Vergil 4.474), “fury,” which motivates this choice of death is rendered by Day Lewis as “a criminal madness” (Day Lewis 4.474). Moreover, she “doomed herself” to her end (Day Lewis 4.475), whereas it is literally said that “she settled on death,” *decrevitque mori* (Vergil 4.475). The Dido of Day Lewis overflows with imagery that emphasizes her fall from grace much more strongly. She is a failed leader, a hapless woman, a doomed queen, a lover nearly hoodwinked. Day Lewis can extend the Latin to create this overt narrative *because* he leans into less literalism and more poetry. The problem is that a flawed, yet sympathetic Dido is not part of

[32] One has to wonder if there was special attention applied to this notion of abandoned duty because of the wartime context; Dido is, after all, a leader who failed, and Europe in 1952 had experience with those. Was Day Lewis encouraging his modern readers to sense that parallel?

the poetic framework Day Lewis has constructed, since his vision of the epic is more concerned with capturing the majesty of the destiny laid out for Aeneas, something Dido is oppositional to, not incorporated in. A. M. Juster is critical of the tradition which Day Lewis is embodying through his portrayal of Dido; namely that traditional, European one which glorifies the Augustan age while obscuring its "repulsive aspects."[33] It does this in order to not only confirm the pro-imperialist, pro-Augustan, propagandist tilt of the *Aeneid*, but also to validate European imperialism which has long identified with Aeneas' tale.

Day Lewis sought identification between Aeneas and post-war England; he felt that Aeneas offered an "archetype" that the Allied World War II mindset could have "sympathy" for, particularly once he couched his translation in common language.[34] In this mindset, Dido does not fit as anything but an adversarial archetype herself. She is an obstacle, distraction, and "woman in love." Her madness is rendered "criminal." There is power to originality; the coming analyses of other popular modern English translations will demonstrate this too. However, what Day Lewis' translation also shows is the danger of overly privileging a translator's interpretation and voice over the author's. With his translation, Day Lewis is less trying to seek a future for this epic of the past and more trying to carry the past into the future.[35] Not only that, but it is a past that obscures its flaws and heightens its majesty, especially attractive to a poet who was hyper-sensitive to the beaten down atmosphere of Europe post-World War II. Day Lewis, in attempting to inspire an Aeneas-like destiny in the minds of his modern readers, manifests Dido less as a character of her own right and agency, more as a leader who failed and a woman who was led astray, betrayed, and finally, ruined by love. Though Day Lewis does stretch the Latin at times in search of his own original expression, it can be argued that he does not stray too far

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[33] Juster, "Aeneid Wars," 29.
[34] Cheney, "C. Day Lewis's Translation of Virgil's 'Aeneid,'" 443.
[35] Ibid., 443.

from the source language. He merely manipulates it to offer up connotations that, once they accumulate, make the Carthaginian queen into that "woman wild with passion." In his search for expressiveness and his romp away from fidelity, Day Lewis coalesced in his colloquial, domesticated language a Dido who perhaps is what Vergil would have imagined if he had been born in England, and in Day Lewis' own fraught age.

Mandelbaum: Putnam, Harvard, and Post-Vietnam

A very different approach comes next with Allen Mandelbaum's 1971 translation of the *Aeneid*. Part of this is because Vergilian scholarship had gone through a shift, but another part of it too was the locus of Mandelbaum himself. Let us begin with the personal impetus behind Mandelbaum's translation. He himself writes that he valued Vergil's "humanity."[36] This emphasis on humanity perhaps arose because Mandelbaum came to the *Aeneid* during a time of "personal discontent" which "Virgil consoled."[37] The *Aeneid* became a project of passion to alleviate that discontent. Eventually, his effort was rewarded. In 1973, Mandelbaum won the National Book Award for Translation.[38] His translation is "distinguished."[39] Erich Segal, in his review, wrote that "Allen Mandelbaum has produced a living *Aeneid*, a version that is unmistakably poetry."[40] The accolades of the translation are noted then, but more importantly, this is the popular version to turn to when in need of a "post-Vietnam poet."[41] This is because Mandelbaum's translation is truly worth noting because of how it typifies the Harvard School, a movement in Vergilian scholarship instigated by American classicists in the 1960s and 70s. Stephen Harrison summarizes the position of the school as, "the *Aeneid* 'presented a pessimistic view alongside the surface glory of Aeneas and Rome… The dark side of political success and the cost of

[36] Braund, "Vergil After Vietnam," 109.
[37] Vergil, *The Aeneid of Vergil*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, (New York: Bantam Books, 1971): xi.
[38] "The Aeneid of Virgil - National Book Foundation." *National Book Foundation*. 2022.
[39] Williams, "Robert Fitzgerald's *Aeneid*," 635.
[40] Erich Segal, "*Arma Virumque Cano*," *The New York Times*, June 25, 1972.
[41] Braund, "Vergil After Vietnam," 111.

imperialism, a cost felt by the victor as well as victim, was the essential message.'"[42] Moreover, the school is critical of past Vergilian scholarship, since even "the most intelligent of critics have actively avoided the truth of what [Vergil] is saying."[43] What these classicists were doing was repositioning the way the *Aeneid* would be considered in the hopes of coming closer to what they thought Vergil was actually saying. It is no accident that this radical redesign came amidst the anti-Vietnam and anti-establishment sentiments of the 1960s.[44] Classics as a field was undertaking a process of reinvention, just as many areas of Western life did during this era. This, then, is the approach which Mandelbaum engages with, not that of Dryden or Day Lewis.

To begin, this approach to the *Aeneid* focuses on the ending of the poem, which has given many translators and readers pause over the centuries. In the final moments of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas, having bested Turnus, his rival in Italy, kills the other man after he has already submitted to Aeneas' will. The Harvard School says that this act, which was spurred on by emotion and appears damnably impious (Aeneas is noted as a pious, duty-bound man, an aspect of his character that underpins his destiny), validates the idea that Vergil is critical of Aeneas and the notion of empire-making.[45] In fact, it is in Aeneas' so-called enemies that the Harvard School most clearly sees a subversive Vergil at work. One of those enemies is, of course, Dido. After all, she calls down a curse upon Aeneas and his progeny, essentially foretelling the coming conflicts between Carthage and Rome. She even makes an allusion to Hannibal, stating, "May an avenger rise up from my bones, / one who will track with firebrand and sword / the Dardan settlers, now and in the future" (Mandelbaum 4.862-4). However, the anti-imperialist approach submits that Vergil wants more from Dido than a curse or an obstacle in the journey. Michael C. J. Putnam, a

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[42] Ibid., 108.
[43] Segal, "*Arma Virumque Cano*."
[44] Braund, "Vergil After Vietnam," 108.
[45] Michael C. J. Putnam, "Dido's Long Dying," *Daedalus* 143, no. 1 (2014), 99–106: 101.

noted Vergilian scholar and proponent of the Harvard School, claims that "the poet extends the time-span of Dido's suffering so as gradually to draw the reader into close sympathy with her circumstances."[46] We live her suffering with her, and we see her death, and then we continue to see echoes of her loss as the epic continues on. It is postulated that she shares kinship with others who died in the poem, like Pallas and Turnus.[47] There is logic to this belief. In the case of Pallas, after his death, when he is put on the funeral pyre, he is wrapped in a tunic given to Aeneas by "Sidonian Dido, glad in that task, [who] had / once made for him with her own hands, weaving / thin gold into the web" (Mandelbaum 11.96-8). With Turnus, their deaths almost seem to mirror each other. When Dido is saved from her long dying (since she was unfated to die), it is stated that "at once / the warmth was gone, the life passed to the winds" (Mandelbaum 4.970-1). Later on, Turnus, another casualty of Aeneas' destiny, also has his soul leave, but in the opposite direction, "his limbs fell slack with chill; and with a moan / his life, resentful, fled to Shades below" (Mandelbaum 12.1270-1). Two sides of the same coin, three fatalities along the way to achieving the Roman imperial dream: why depict all of these deaths as somehow linked if not for a purpose? It is difficult to claim with Vergil that there was no fulsome intent behind his words and framework; though the poem lies unfinished, it is said that he would spend sometimes even an entire day working on one line.[48] When considering that Vergil spent the last eleven years of his life on the poem, the weight of his expression is understood.[49] These connections in the text have meaning, but as always, it is up to the translator to carry that meaning and possibility from one language into another.

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[46] Ibid., 102.
[47] Ibid., 105-6.
[48] Eric A. Havelock, "Fitzgerald's American 'Aeneid,'" *The Hudson Review* 37, no. 3 (1984), 483–90: 486.
[49] Vergil (Mandelbaum), viii.

Mandelbaum in his translation is committed to the Harvard School idea that Dido is meant to be a sympathetic counterpoint to Aeneas' imperial destiny. As such, in his translation, the reader is drawn into "Dido's emotional world."[50] He follows the example of Steve Farron who, speaking with a Harvard School voice, notes that Vergil focuses on "Dido, her emotions, and the terrible tragedy that she undergoes as a result of her love for Aeneas."[51] There are several ways to confirm Vergil's desire for the reader to find sympathy for Dido. For one, her speeches to Aeneas, while emotional, are artfully crafted, to the point of Aeneas having no response to her arguments except that he must go not of his own will.[52] Also, Mandelbaum makes us identify with "gracious Dido still aware of nothing / and never dreaming such a love could ever / be broken—" (Mandelbaum 4.389-91), so we feel the betrayal of Aeneas' leaving more keenly. When she confronts Aeneas, this identification is carried through with the simple rendering of the *amantem* line as, "for who can deceive a lover?" (Mandelbaum 4.396). Finally, we witness love slowly kill Dido and imbibe the pain too, something that Putnam (along with the rest of the Harvard School), would have us take note of, "literal wounds have now been added to a single, metaphorical hurt, forcing us to contemplate the arc of this very development as one type of suffering leads to, and is piled upon, another during the approach of death."[53] Mandelbaum punctuates this point in his translation before even the mention of love as a wound; at the outset of Book 4, he states that "the queen is caught between love's pain / and press" (Mandelbaum 4.1-2). In comparison, Day Lewis has the same Latin written as, "the queen had been growing more grievously love-sick" (Day Lewis 4.1). In Mandelbaum, there is a sense of urgency, a sharpness, and even a sensation of how difficult this madness is to bear, versus Day Lewis,

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[50] Putnam, "Dido's Long Dying," 103.
[51] Steve Farron, "The Aeneas-Dido Episode as an Attack on Aeneas' Mission and Rome," *Greece & Rome* 27, no. 1 (1980), 34–47: 34.
[52] Parry, "The Two Voices," 77.
[53] Putnam, "Dido's Long Dying," 104.

where she is "grievously love-sick"; this version of the line is less intense. Mandelbaum's Dido enters Book 4 with an acuteness of pain that primes us to both decry Aeneas' actions and breathe a sigh of relief when her suffering comes to an end.

The Harvard School has more complaints than just these against the traditionalist, orthodox approach. Most strikingly, Farron challenges the assertion that Roman readers would dismiss Dido as an overemotional aggressor and lean into Augustan destiny while modern ones commiserate with her based on a extra-textual "romantic and individualistic" sentiment.[54] He states, instead, that other writers of Vergil's own time like Ovid, Lucretius, Catullus, and Horace did not shy away from depicting emotion or romance in their works.[55] Moreover, in civic life, Farron notes that Cicero, in his defenses of Cluentius and Murena, "dwells on their poverty and wretchedness," since he thought this would win more favor for them than citing the public good.[56] This sense is echoed in Mandelbaum's translation when it takes great care with the long dying of Dido, the culmination of the acute wound of love which had so afflicted her and was now made manifest through Aeneas' own sword. Mandelbaum ruminates on the horror of her death:

> She breathes; the deep wound in / her chest is loud and hoarse. Three times she tried / to raise herself and strained, propped on her elbow; / and three times she fell back upon the couch. / Three times with wandering eyes she tried to find / high heaven's light and, when she found it, sighed. (Mandelbaum 4.949-54)

Here, *caelo lucem*, literally, "light in the sky," is rendered as "high heaven's light," and *quaesivit*, "she sought," is fashioned into the much weightier, drawn out, "she tried to find." The wound does not "whistle" or "hiss," *stridit*; instead, it is "loud and hoarse." Dido does not die easy. Mandelbaum ensures we know this, with his word choices and emphasis. It is what his Harvard

[54] Farron, "The Aeneas-Dido Episode," 41.
[55] Ibid., 42.
[56] Ibid., 42-3.

School calls for, and it is also what Mandelbaum needed to do in order for the *Aeneid* to alleviate his own personal discontent. He and his fellow scholars wanted something out of the *Aeneid* that reflected their moment in time, so they reimagined their relationship with it as well as the poet at the heart of it. In doing so, they reimagined Dido too.

Fitzgerald: "For Modern Taste"

In his review, Eric Havelock stated that "Robert Fitzgerald's version of the *Aeneid* outranks any other that has come to my attention and it does so easily."[57] He called it an "achievement [which] is comprehensive and remarkable."[58] Part of the reason why Fitzgerald's 1983 *Aeneid* is so preferred and indeed so popular is because it is rendered "for modern taste," and it tackles the variables of translation in light of that.[59] One of the clearest ways that this can be discerned is through Fitzgerald's use of cadence and expressiveness to communicate tone. Indeed, it seems as if Fitzgerald achieves with his version the accessibility and poetry of a modern voice that Day Lewis had been striving for with his colloquialisms. Gordon Williams states that, here, "one reads without fatigue or distraction or manipulation, through multiple changes of tone."[60] The cadence of translation normally poses a unique challenge, since rendering the "virtuosity of rhythm" which the Latin has in a way that echoes the original and yet does not dissolve into "parody" is an immensely difficult task.[61] To address this issue, Fitzgerald puts the poem in loose iambic pentameter.[62] It is loose because the line is broken at times by a two-beat, four-beat, or, most often, a three-beat line.[63] This is not so unlike Day Lewis, who also had a verse translation with its own kind of rhythm, but the meter here is arguably more

[57] Havelock, "Fitzgerald's American 'Aeneid,'" 483.
[58] Ibid., 483.
[59] Ibid., 484.
[60] Williams, "Robert Fitzgerald's *Aeneid*," 633.
[61] Havelock, "Fitzgerald's American 'Aeneid,'" 486.
[62] Ibid., 489.
[63] Williams, "Robert Fitzgerald's *Aeneid*," 632.

effective. Also, unlike Day Lewis, Fitzgerald seeks to bring the Vergilian past into the future with a "more elevated and formal register," one that evokes bygone days and a nobility of purpose.[64] This is how Fitzgerald escapes parody and creates a modern tone: he tries to capture something of Vergil's majestic diction and, in doing so, fashion the *Aeneid* into a truly epic story of men bound by destiny and the trials they face. For the essential lesson of the epic is this, Fitzgerald tells us, "at the core of it is respect for the human effort to build, to sustain a generous polity— against heavy odds. Mordantly and sadly it suggests what the effort may cost, how the effort may fail. But as a poem it is carried onward victoriously by its own music."[65] Inherent in this synthesis of the epic's thesis is the supposition that Dido, though a lamentable victim of "the human effort to build, to sustain a generous polity," is a character whose sacrifice is necessary.

This vision of Dido emanates in large part from the fact that Fitzgerald, for all that his translation is called a modern, American *Aeneid*, kept many old hallmarks of *Aeneid* translations. For instance, A. M. Juster notes that Fitzgerald's translation is "elegant," but also claims that "it achieved concision at the cost of excluding key details and it continued the tradition of looking at Rome through rose-colored glasses."[66] Susanna Braund agrees, stating that while Fitzgerald notes the cost of Aeneas' destiny, he focuses more on the end achievement.[67] Fitzgerald's translation is a good one, in that it has its own musicality and elegance, which Braund and Juster would agree with, but it also has its flaws in that journey to expressivity. For instance, Fitzgerald makes a point of preserving the figure of Vergil in the form of his apostrophes, the moments when Vergil steps away from the narrative as narrator to comment on the situation.[68] However, while the form of the apostrophe is carried from the Latin to the English, is the meaning too?

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[64] Braund, "Vergil After Vietnam," 113.
[65] Vergil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald, (New York: Random House, 1983): 470.
[66] Juster, "Aeneid Wars," 30.
[67] Braund, "Vergil After Vietnam," 111.
[68] Williams, "Robert Fitzgerald's *Aeneid*," 636.

Quis fallere possit amantem is an apostrophe. Vergil steps away from either Dido or Aeneas' perspective to comment on the reason for the confrontation between the two. Fitzgerald signifies this appearance of the narrator with an em dash, but he then interprets the line as, "—for who deceives a woman in love?" (Fitzgerald 4.404). Here, we can sense a connection to not the approach of Mandelbaum, but Day Lewis instead. The figure of the "woman in love" returns. This variance in translation reflects how, in many ways, Fitzgerald's *Aeneid* sidesteps the concerns and meditations of the Harvard School. This may be because of his experiences in World War II. In his postscript, Fitzgerald ruminates on how he first read the *Aeneid* in its entirety during fall 1945, at the close of the war, when he was stationed in the Pacific.[69] It was inevitable that he drew comparisons between that present moment and the content of the epic, since as he sat reading, he "heard young submarine skippers, the finest Annapolis products, give their lighthearted accounts of shelling poor junks to smithereens in the China Sea."[70] There was, as he noted, an attraction to seeing the epic as validating the many trials and tribulations of an "effort" not unlike the one going on around him. In the faces of his comrades, he saw Aeneas and his Trojans. But where did he see Dido?

To answer that question, we should also note another aspect of Fitzgerald's locus: his Homeric roots. Before coming to the *Aeneid*, Fitzgerald was a Homerist, and a noted one at that.[71] He translated the *Odyssey* in 1961 and the *Iliad* in 1974.[72] This background allowed Fitzgerald to pick up on the *Aeneid*'s own Homeric roots and to see the epic's framework, characters, and meaning as fundamentally inspired by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. As such, Fitzgerald believed that Dido was a composite of Odysseus' feminine distractions, like Calypso,

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[69] Vergil (Fitzgerald), 465.
[70] Ibid., 466.
[71] Havelock, "Fitzgerald's American 'Aeneid,'" 483.
[72] Braund, "Vergil After Vietnam," 111.

Circe, and especially Nausicaa, whose welcoming attitude Dido replicates.[73] These women are diversions in the *Odyssey*, characters who complicate the plot's movement forward while also offering a counterpoint to the virtues of the hero. Dido offers the same to Aeneas. She is a leader, like him, who had to flee a conflict and lead her people to begin again, something that Aeneas is fated to do. They are, in many ways, foils to each other and reflections of the same story. Fitzgerald time and again in his translation makes this linkage clear. For example, Dido is at her height when we meet her in Book 1; we hear tales of her before we even see her, particularly from the mouth of Venus, who tells the story of Dido's founding of Carthage to Aeneas, stating, *dux femina facti* (Vergil 1.364). A literal translation of this line might be, "a leader woman did these deeds." Fitzgerald has the phrase as, "and captaining the venture was a woman" (Fitzgerald 1.498), setting up a parallel between Dido and Aeneas, since the queen later sees the Trojan for the first time and she "stood in astonishment, first at the sight / Of such a captain, then at his misfortune" (Fitzgerald 1.836-8). However, for all their similarity, Dido falls short where Aeneas does not, and diverts him from his great effort. She then becomes a testament to how a great leader and a grand undertaking can be led astray.

In trying to illustrate this failure and the causes of it, Fitzgerald chooses to highlight a few aspects of her story. Some of these highlights are more overt than others, a consequence of Fitzgerald's decision to make an epic for the modern taste. For example, he offers titles for the books of the epic as a way to guide the modern reader toward greater understanding. However, in the process, he may have also encouraged overly simplistic interpretations of the epic. In Dido's case, this is reflected by the fact that Book 4, Dido's story, is titled "The Passion of the Queen."[74] Thus, Fitzgerald assesses for the reader that this is, at its core, the story of her "passion," not her

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[73] Vergil (Fitzgerald), 454.
[74] Ibid., 108.

madness, nor her death, nor Aeneas' betrayal or their confrontations. Book 4 is the story of Dido's greatest fault. This emphasis can be seen in the moments when Dido's resolution to die is described. As with Day Lewis, this juncture in the text is illustrative of Fitzgerald's positionality. In his version, the lines are rendered as, "on Dido in her desolation now / Terror grew at her fate. She prayed for death, / Being heartsick at the mere sight of heaven" (Fitzgerald 4.622-4). She is here not "hapless," but still desolate. Not "frightened out of her wits by her destiny," but growing in "terror" at it. Fitzgerald even adds to the sentiment, declaring that Dido is "heartsick" at the sky, when she is "weary of it" or "disgusted by it" in the Latin, *taedet*. Her heart, the source of her passion, is what guides her decision. This emphasis on the presence of Dido's faulty passion is affirmed later on the text, when the "madness" which led her to pray for death is not translated as Day Lewis' "criminal," but as "fatal," since the queen is tormented by a "conquered heart" (Fitzgerald 4.474-5). Contrast this interpretation with Mandelbaum's much more active, even defiant Dido, "she had gripped this madness in her mind / and, beaten by her grief, resolved to die" (Mandelbaum 4.654-5). Fitzgerald's Dido does not "resolve" or "grip" as Mandelbaum's does. Nor is she without her wits, as Day Lewis would have her. Instead, she is torn apart by love. She no longer commands herself or her decisions; instead, her passion does. Fitzgerald's translation emphasizes the unjust nature of this fact, but it also ensures, through its subtle anchoring of Dido to Aeneas and the significance it places on passion's defeat of her, that Dido is, more than anything else, the "mordantly and sadly" suggested cost of Aeneas' great effort.

Fagles: Searching for Aeneas' Voice

When Robert Fagles' rendition of the *Aeneid* arrived in 2006, it was said that it picked up on an epic tradition which flowed directly from Fitzgerald. In the words of Garry Wills, "A very good version has been replaced by a better one."[75] Indeed, together Fitzgerald, Mandelbaum, and

[75] Garry Wills, "The Jolting Shocks of War," *Poetry* 189, no. 5 (2007), 396–403: 403.

Day Lewis had long commanded the field of popular modern English translations. Then Fagles came along, ushering in the twenty-first century and a whole slew of new *Aeneid* translations.[76] For his part, Fagles claimed that he “learned” most about translating “Virgil’s Latin line” from Fitzgerald’s example.[77] This can be easily seen just from the commonalities between the two. For instance, like Fitzgerald, Fagles has a tendency to stray from the meter. He usually employs a five or six-beat line that sometimes expands to seven or even eight.[78] Moreover, one of Fagles’ assets as a translator is his flexibility, particularly in terms of meter, but also in general.[79] It is also one of his greatest flaws, since it can lead to “an unnecessary degree of expansion and a slower unfolding of the story.”[80] His translation lengthens scenes and lines out, inciting fatigue that Fitzgerald had evaded with his translation. Even more importantly, Fagles sometimes “wanders” from the source text.[81] This can be seen, in a minimal sense, in his variation on the *amantem* line, since he reproduces it as “who can delude a lover?” (Fagles 4.367). The choice of “delude” for *fallere* is an expansive one, but not so far away from the usual definitions like “to deceive” or “to disappoint.” However, this is far from the only moment when Fagles pushes the limits of the text. The most incriminating instance (as far as Dido is concerned) comes when Aeneas contrives to approach Dido in “a way to soften the blow that he must leave” (Fagles 4.364). In this moment, the Latin calls Dido *optima*, “best,” which could be an adjective applied to her by either the narrator or Aeneas (Vergil 4.291). Fagles greatly expands the sentiment, stating that phrasing the news of his leaving is difficult for Aeneas because this is “Dido who means the world to him” (Fagles 4.360). Here, we see how Fagles and Fitzgerald diverge; the

[76] Braund, “Vergil After Vietnam,” 113.
[77] Vergil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fagles with introduction by Bernard Knox, (New York: Penguin Group, 2006): 498.
[78] Wills, “The Jolting Shocks of War,” 400.
[79] Ibid., 401.
[80] Braund, “Vergil After Vietnam,” 116.
[81] Juster, “Aeneid Wars,” 30.

former attempts to conjure an Aeneas whose voice espouses affection for the Carthaginian queen, and compassion for her position, and in doing so, creates a Dido whose tragedy is deepened.

This perspective is affirmed by Fagles in a number of ways. For one, like Fitzgerald, Fagles offers titles for the books to his readers. Unlike Fitzgerald, though, he does not claim Book 4 to be about passion, but "The Tragic Queen of Carthage."[82] Fagles furthermore argued that the woe sewn into the *Aeneid* and especially the character of Dido was a result of the fact "Virgil's performance in Latin is a reperformance of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Greek, a 'Homerization' of the legendary past of Rome."[83] For he was a Homerist like Fitzgerald (publishing his *Iliad* in 1990 and his *Odyssey* in 1996), and thus he embraced the Homeric roots of the *Aeneid*; he just thought that they were communicating a different outlook than what Fitzgerald had advocated.[84] Both Fitzgerald and Fagles identify Dido with the "temptresses in the *Odyssey*, Circe and Calypso," as well as welcoming Nausicaa, but Fagles takes the literary modeling a step further to posit that Dido is also like Penelope, Odysseus' faithful wife, since she is "loyal to Aeneas, if only he will embrace her as his queen."[85] This tension between temptation and loyalty, one Homeric model and another, legend and tragedy, is at the center of the *Aeneid*, Fagles would argue. He notes that Vergil so often straddles the line between "grandeur and accessibility," more so even than Homer.[86] This makes rendering his words with fidelity supremely difficult while also attaining a level of expressiveness and retaining a sense of cadence. The Latin has layers of meaning which are difficult to maintain in English; the characters have contradictions that are both harmonious and dangerous, a tension that is also

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[82] Vergil (Fagles), 167.
[83] Ibid., 485.
[84] Braund, "Vergil After Vietnam," 115.
[85] Vergil (Fagles), 487.
[86] Ibid., 481.

hard to carry across. What Fagles attempts, with his translation, is to illuminate this element of the *Aeneid*.

He does it primarily not through the description of Homeric inheritance, but the two voices theory. This approach claims that Vergil's narrative appears at odds with itself on purpose. This dual voice concept posits that "We hear two distinct voices in the Aeneid, a public voice of triumph, and a private voice of regret."[87] Essentially, Vergil has both a pro- and anti-imperialist voice. Through this theory, we can see how Dido is a complicated character, one who is both failure and undue victim, because that is what Vergil means for her to be. Fagles himself explains, "time and again one hears the two Virgilian voices at odds, echoing an opposition between action and reflection, patriotism and personal assertion, public exultation and wrenching private sorrow."[88] This is the narrative dichotomy that Dido sits in the middle of. Parry, the original espouser of the theory, stated that the Dido episode in particular displayed how Aeneas actually *failed* in his search for piety, that thing which underscores his destiny and heroism, since in the Roman state piety was to both the state *and* relationships.[89] By abandoning Dido the way he did, though he did it for his fate, Aeneas committed an act of profound impiety. Likewise, Aeneas possesses a destiny, and Dido is a roadblock to it, but this is a thing to lament, not exalt. The dual voice can be illustrated in how Fagles renders the meeting of Dido and Aeneas in the underworld. He casts Aeneas, as he often does, in a position of profound sympathy towards the fallen queen. Where Fitzgerald translates that "Aeneas still gazed after her in tears, / Shaken by ill fate and pitying her" (Fitzgerald 6.638-9), Fagles expounds, "But Aeneas, no less / struck by her unjust fate, escorts her from afar / with streaming tears and pities her as she passes" (Fagles 6.551-3). In both versions, Aeneas tells Dido that he left "against my will, my queen" (Fitzgerald

[87] Parry, "The Two Voices," 79.
[88] Vergil (Fagles), 492.
[89] Parry, "The Two Voices," 77.

6.620) or rather, "my Queen, against my will" (Fagles 6.535), but does Aeneas make these "appeals, with welling tears, / [trying] to soothe her rage, her wild fiery glance" (Fagles 6.543-4) or "to placate / The burning soul, savagely glaring back, / And tears came to his eyes" (Fitzgerald 6.629-30)? Same meeting, same Latin, same characters, but different emotions are teased out, different perceptions of their relationship are extracted. In Fagles, Aeneas becomes the personification of that personal, private voice of regret when confronted with Dido. "Tears" do not just come to his eyes; they are "welling," and he does not want her to go, shown when he "escorts" her as she leaves, whereas in Fitzgerald he merely gazes after her, considerate but also distant. Here, with that private voice, there is no distance. In Fagles' translation, Aeneas feels Dido's loss keenly, and so do we.

Fagles treats us to an Aeneas that is far more regretful and entangled with Dido than in other translations. Her death is haunting, her fate hurts, and when she confronts him after the *amantem* line, we see that her love had a profound effect on Aeneas. In Fitzgerald's version, when Aeneas goes to rebut Dido's speech decrying his intent to leave, "The man by Jove's command held fast his eyes / And fought down the emotion in his heart. / At length he answered" (Fitzgerald 4.456-8). Here, Aeneas does find the moment distressing, but he strides past that "emotion" to reply "at length." Compare this with Fagles' Aeneas at the same moment, "he, / warned by Jupiter now, his gaze held steady, / fought to master the torment in his heart. At last / he ventured a few words" (Fagles 4.412-5). The whole interaction has shifted. Not only is this Aeneas buoyed by "torment," he intends only "a few words." This seems to communicate a profound struggle by the Trojan. Like Dido, he feels intensely; for him and Dido both, their parting is a source of anguish. In the end, he does leave her, but Fagles' interpretation of the relationship between the two and Aeneas' state of mind at the moment of abandonment truly

underscores the last thing he says to her while she lives, "I set sail for Italy— / all against my will" (Fagles 4.451-2). In this search for Aeneas' voice, Fagles at times expands the Latin. Yet, the reasons for this are clear. Fagles sought a Dido and Aeneas who would possess both the nobility of Fitzgerald's version and the Harvard School roots of the two voices theory. Whether he found them in the text or wandered away to find them in his own voice is a matter for debate, but the point still remains: Fagles' Dido is a manifestation of the tension he sees at the core of the epic.

Ruden: Restraint, in Iambic Pentameter

Finally, we come to Sarah Ruden, whose translation was first released in 2008, but was then revised in 2021.[90] Ruden's *Aeneid* is the first full translation of the epic into English by a woman.[91] Yet, she herself claims that her womanhood does not mean so much; rather, she should be taken seriously as a translator alone and also not be "'expected to rescue women characters in the *Aeneid*, or Roman women, or women in general.'"[92] Indeed, as we have seen, a translator does not "rescue." Rather, we might say that they recast according to their locus and scholarship. However, Ruden is fascinating in this regard. Unlike the other translators I have examined, Ruden came to the *Aeneid* not out of wartime admiration or discontent, or as part of completing a translation of classic epics, but as part of a career move. She states that she "'wanted to translate a well-known work, with some assured sales and attention attached to its title,'" something that Yale University Press provided for her when they commissioned her to translate the *Aeneid*.[93] She did not feel great kinship with Vergil from the outset; instead, she had to "learn the joys of devotion" as she went along.[94] That push for devotion came not necessarily from her

[90] Juster, "Aeneid Wars," 31.
[91] Raymond Cormier, "Review of *The Aeneid, Vergil*, by S. Ruden," *Vergilius (1959-)* 55 (2009), 131–38: 131.
[92] Braund, "Vergil After Vietnam," 120.
[93] Ibid., 119.
[94] Ibid., 119.

womanhood, but possibly as a result of her Quakerism. Quakers do not usually accede to the idea of accepting divine will, but the *Aeneid*, as we have seen, revolves around this idea.[95] Ruden, to compensate for this difference, resolved to listen to Vergil instead of extracting meaning from him. Day Lewis was correct when he said every translator wants something of the poet they are engaging with, but Ruden had much less expectation than he, Mandelbaum, Fitzgerald, or Fagles did and much less identification with Vergil and his poetic framework. It is in this aspect that Ruden's true strength lies; she had "to give herself up to her author."[96] This is also where, if anywhere, Ruden believes that a female voice does have an edge over a male one, since it seeks "'a sense of personal connection,'" thereby adhering to the fidelity variable with an intensity that is lacking in male translations.[97] The presence and voice of Vergil is therefore privileged. Ruden manifests this privilege, this decision to listen, by prioritizing restraint in her translation.

This restraint is practiced in several areas. For one, the translation is line-for-line, meaning that a line of Latin corresponds directly to one in English. Not only that, but Ruden incorporates "serious philology in ways that Fagles… did not."[98] This is to mean Ruden considers phrases carefully, taking to heart the power of definition. As such, her word choice is "rarely off-key."[99] She does not offer titles for the books, another aspect to be expected from her restraint. The reader is thus encouraged to read, and look deeper, even further into the words that have been curated for them. She also restricts her cadence by rendering the *Aeneid* into strict blank verse (in her case iambic pentameter), a decision which earned both applause and condemnation, as Juster testifies, "I once witnessed a panel where two tenured Ivy League professors tried to shout Ruden down as she tried to explain her rationale for her decisions on

[95] Ibid., 119-20.
[96] Ibid., 121.
[97] Ibid., 121.
[98] Juster, "Aeneid Wars," 33.
[99] Ibid., 33.

prosody."[100] However, Ruden was firm in her conviction and maintained it throughout the text, an achievement all the more admirable once one notes that she has ten or eleven syllables in her lines where Fagles had up to seventeen.[101] The combination of iambic pentameter and "serious philology" leads to a translation that is characterized by succinct, impactful poetry. For instance, in her rendering of the *amantem* line, Ruden is simplistic, almost cuttingly so, "But who can fool a lover?" (Ruden 4.296). The impact of all these decisions is seen in the overall effect of the translation. Garry Wills in his review stated that "this is the first translation since Dryden's that can be read as a great English poem in itself."[102] In Wills' view, Ruden's work actually achieves the goals of making a "good translation" that were set out by Day Lewis. However, in that achievement, Ruden does not abandon Vergil, since she achieves the "melancholy melodiousness" of the Latin's heroic hexameter while achieving a "tight aphoristic ring," same as Vergil does.[103] Juster agrees, stating that "I am confident it will be a long time before a translator exceeds the standard that she has set."[104] Raymond Cormier adds that "the immediacy, sheer beauty, and timelessness of the original Latin masterpiece at times lift off these pages with gem-like originality."[105] And so too does Ruden's Dido appear to almost lift off the page, infused with a dynamism born of Ruden's originality and her devotion to Vergil.

Perhaps the starkest example of the bearing Ruden's particular approach has on the characterization of Dido comes in the form of a phrase uttered by Mercury when he warns Aeneas to hasten his plans to leave. At the end of his speech, the god tells the Trojan, *varium et mutabile semper / femina* (Vergil 4.569-70). Day Lewis translates it as "Woman was ever / A veering, weathercock creature" (Day Lewis 4.569-70), Mandelbaum as "An ever / uncertain and

[100] Ibid., 31.
[101] Garry Wills, "Closer Than Ever to Vergil," *The New York Review*, March 12, 2009.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Juster, "Aeneid Wars," 33.
[105] Cormier, "Review of *The Aeneid*," 132.

inconstant thing is woman" (Mandelbaum 4.786-7), Fitzgerald as "Woman's a thing / Forever fitful and forever changing" (Fitzgerald 4.791-2), Fagles as "Woman's a thing / that's always changing, shifting like the wind" (Fagles 4.710-1). We can see from the tone and approach of these translations why the line has a reputation for being misogynistic in the Latin itself and in English especially.[106] Contrast all these, then, with Ruden, who takes a more open-ended, streamlined approach, "A woman is a changing, / A fitful thing" (Ruden 4.569-70). The insertion of an "a" is not necessarily called for in Latin since the language does not use articles, but Ruden makes a point of highlighting the ambiguity in the line. Here, she prods the reader to ask if Mercury is referring to all women or just this one woman, Dido, which is in line with the fact that *femina*, "woman," by definition alone could mean either. She also makes the choice to lose *semper*, which could mean "always," "ever," or "at all times." She envelopes the meaning into "changing," reflecting a continued state of being. Again, this leads the reader to be more thoughtful of the passage's meaning. How is Dido changing? What makes her fitful? In the other translations, these questions are not invited because the phrase is rendered more forcefully. There is an alignment, subconscious or not, to one perspective over another. Therefore, while these other translations show originality too, they do not invoke the same sense of depth.

In fact, throughout Ruden's version of Dido's story, there is a cultivation of depth that is thought-provoking. Take, for instance, the very first meeting of Dido and Aeneas. In Book 1, Aeneas sees Dido for the first time, after being told stories about her by Venus, as he is taking in a mural of the Trojan war that the queen has had painted. Fitzgerald translates the moment as, "Now, while these wonders were being surveyed / By Aeneas of Dardania, while he stood / Enthralled, devouring all in one long gaze, / The queen paced toward the temple in her beauty, /

[106] Vergil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Sarah Ruden with introduction by Susanna Braund, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2021): 143.

Dido, with a throng of men behind" (Fitzgerald 1.673-7). Compare with Ruden's version, "Astounding pictures, rendering Aeneas / Of Troy transfixed, entranced— but while he stared, / Dido, the lovely queen, paced to the temple, / A large and youthful troop attending her" (Ruden 1.494-7). Same moment, same Latin, but different connotations and implications arise from each. To start, the word *iuvenum*, meaning "youths," "young men," or "young women," is rendered by Fitzgerald as simply, "men," versus Ruden, who states that Dido is followed by a "youthful troop." This choice modifies how we first Dido in the narrative; is she accompanied by men, projecting a sort of male power to support her female leadership, or is she attended by youths, imbuing her regality with a sense of freshness? More importantly, what headspace is Aeneas in when he first sees her? Is he "devouring all in one long gaze," or "transfixed, entranced"? The former, Fitzgerald's rendering, appears to almost foreshadow the coming calamity of Dido and Aeneas' relationship; Dido will be consumed by love of Aeneas, so it makes sense that he approaches their relationship through the act of "devouring." In contrast, Ruden's Aeneas is struck still, "transfixed, entranced" by the pictures on Dido's walls, and it is almost implied that, once the queen enters, she astounds him too. The voice of Aeneas that Fagles was searching for is glimpsed in this translation, but it is not drawn to the surface and laid out explicitly; Ruden instead hints at Aeneas' feelings, teasing that there is something deeper between the two even at this first meeting that accords them beyond their ultimate fate. It is a first meeting on more equitable footing, that pays due respect to the full stateliness of Dido when we meet her.

Thus, it is clear that Ruden does not so much "rescue" Dido, just as the translator herself would claim. Instead, she pulls the queen forward into the narrative, isolates her as a character which is not fundamentally limited to her value as a foil to Aeneas or the presence of literary and historical models like Nausicaa. This, I propose, is the result of Ruden's emphasis on "devotion."

In this devotion, Ruden listened to the text and found, like many other Vergilian translators, something about it that correlated with her life, her locus. Braund, in her introduction to the 2021 edition, notes that Ruden's own experiences living and working in South Africa helped her come to "understand the brutality of civil war and convinced her that divine forces are at work in history, but in no simple and satisfying way when seen from a human perspective. Her perspective seems to me to resemble closely that of Vergil."[107] That acceptance of the lack of satisfying simplicity in the workings of the divine (when coupled with a perhaps Quaker-driven devotion) informed an approach to the *Aeneid* that did not ask Vergil to advocate an Augustan destiny for the modern age, support recriminations of warfare, or even be both imperialist and not all at once. Ruden does not posit that she has all the answers to the meaning of Vergil's epic, so she does not attempt to manipulate them to suit her own perceptions. Instead, she lets Vergil's characters breathe. Their struggles with fate play out in a manner which leaves them open to interpretation, just as it is in the Latin. Ruden's translation reminds its readers that this is a work which is full of depth and layering; the complications surrounding that were, after all, what led to the two voices theory in the first place. But what is important for this paper is how, with Ruden's approach, Dido is seen, and heard, and left open-ended. She is a changing, fitful woman; she is the lovely queen; her "love wound" is "brutal" (Ruden 4.1); she has a "conquered heart" (Ruden 4.474), but she is also a "good lady" (Ruden 4.291). Ruden encourages us through this characterization, as with every aspect of her translation, to look deeper. What Dido would we like to see? What voice of Vergil would we like to hear? Her translation wins accolades because it is able to accommodate multiple answers to those questions.

Consequences of Translation: Value of the Dual Voice Approach

[107] Ibid., 24.

In the Latin alone, Dido is a complex character. She curses the Roman race, and in doing so brings Hannibal down on their heads; she argues her position against Aeneas leaving with passion and vigor; she built a city in exile, leading her people to great heights; she is beautiful, lovely, and stately when we meet her; we watch her descend into madness before a final act of profound tragedy that the epic's hero has pity for. She is *dux et regina*, "leader and queen," but she is also *femina*, "woman." How do we reconcile these truths? How do we conceptualize her journey through the epic? These questions have been asked and answered differently by each of the translations I have examined, demonstrating not only the locus of the translators and the effect of Vergilian scholarship, but also the whole journey Dido has been on through modernity. What these translations offer is an opportunity for us to see where the field of classics has been and where it might go. When attempting to synthesize the reasons why Mandelbaum's translation was valuable, Segal wrote, "This *Aeneid* may not be for all time (only Virgil's is), but it is for ours."[108] What he meant was that this translation, in that moment in time, with its Harvard School contemplations, was an attestation of the age they lived in as much as it was an adaptation of a two-thousand-year-old work. The specter of Vergil survives, but translators come and go, forever linked to the time and place wherein they translated.

However, the ephemeral nature of translation is not something to be denied or decried, but instead recognized and appreciated. One of the binaries in translation theory which Braund and Martirosova Torlone lay out is that of the visible versus invisible translator, which essentially refers to how much or how little the translator should be evident in the text. Usually, the argument is that the translator should appear as little as possible. Samuel Johnson once said, "'A translator is to be like his author; it is not his business to excel him.'"[109] But it is also not the

[108] Segal, "*Arma Virumque Cano*."
[109] Williams, "Robert Fitzgerald's *Aeneid*," 637.

translator's business to disappear, since this is near if not completely impossible. Recall the New Historicist approach: a translator cannot be divorced from the act of translation, so the work becomes both timeless and an artifact of a singular time, the translator's time. Day Lewis and Fitzgerald demonstrated this through their links to World War II that appear throughout their *Aeneid*s, just as Ruden displays a restraint in approach that seems to be a reaction to the profligate expansion of meaning that went on in prior translations, like Fagles'. Analysis of a translator's bearing on the text *is* essential because serious concerns have arisen today that classics have at times (deliberately or otherwise) misconstrued the nature of an ancient writer's work, thereby limiting our understanding of it.[110] So, instead of feigning that the translator does not exist as an intermediary between the source and text languages as well as the modern and ancient, their role should be illuminated.

The two voices theory offers us a framework by which to understand the importance of the translator. Vergil has a dual voice: one that is public, pro-imperialist, propagandist, and essentially Augustan; another that is private, anti-imperialist, and regretful. Both voices have a part to play in the epic. Likewise, translators have a dual voice. One, which could be termed the public, surface level, and overt one, is consumed by the fidelity variable; it tries to speak as Vergil as much as possible. The other voice is more private and personal; a conflagration of a translator's own locus and their perspective on *Aeneid* scholarship, this voice is about who a translator is and what they want from the text. It affects how they see cadence, expressiveness, and even fidelity. It also demonstrates why the five translations I have analyzed are popular, modern, and English, but also very different. It is essential to recognize the presence of this voice. Translators cannot eliminate themselves from their translations; nor should they. Their work is a tribute to their time, beliefs, and philosophies. A translation is a piece of art, and so it

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[110] Miriam Kamil, "I Shall — #$% You And *@$# You," *Eidolon* (blog), *Palimpsest Media LLC*, January 17, 2019.

requires flexibility of expression. The problems come when we forget that translators do have a voice and when they forget to listen to the voice of Vergil. When this occurs, the popular modern English translations of the *Aeneid* which are read in classrooms and stocked on bookshelves end up with a version of the epic that the public believes is true to the original text but is rather far from it. Thus, the consequences of translation that can be gleaned from this paper are this: the translator is not faceless, and we should not believe them to be. They hear the voice of Vergil and carry it across to their readers, but in doing so, they leave behind something of themselves.

Conclusion

It has been reiterated many times during this paper that decisions must be made about a translation. They include: will cadence akin to the Latin be preserved? Will the lines conjure the beauty of the epic in a way that links Roman readers and modern ones? Will words find definitions that Vergil would have approved? In answering these questions, translators sacrifice. The text becomes altered in order to attain understanding. This is the price of translation, but there is a deeper question, a more essential one for the shifting ground of modern classics: have characters been warped in the past by these decisions by translators? In Dido's case, the answer is yes. In these popular modern English translations, she is many permutations of the same Carthaginian queen. Some take more from her than others. Some confine her to their interpretation of the text and what it means. No matter how invisible the translator attempts to be, they will always exist in their translation. This is not a fact to be obscured or ashamed of, but instead embraced. We should not deceive ourselves that the translator can disappear; instead, we should recognize the bearing and power they have on the text. In this way, we can illuminate, for example, both the presence of overt self-perspective (as in Day Lewis' case) and the power of devotion to rendering character (as in Ruden's case). Moreover, we can glimpse the potential of

translations in the future by those of differing identity based on race, gender, and sexual identification. What attributes could they bring to the table? This paper demonstrated massive differences in the expression of Dido simply along the spectrums of pro-imperialist to anti-imperialist, pre-Vietnam to post, British to American, Homeric to not, Quaker to not, and female to male. Imagine the permutations of Dido waiting to be found as more translations from even more different bases of experience are added. Who will she become when they see her, hear her, and finally, speak for her? They each will define *amantem* for themselves, with the specter of Vergil over their shoulder, as it has been with each translation. As they do, their Dido will come into existence alongside a poetry distinct to them. What we must do, as conscious readers, is attempt to hear the dual voice of the translator and Vergil at work.

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