LAT240 (W11): Critical report

DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Choose

On this coming Monday (January 31), I will pass around a sign-up sheet, and you will choose a critical article for your report. Our goal is to cover the second half of the Aeneid (secondarily, Books 2, 3, and 5, which our Latin readings also skip) and some new topics. Therefore it is a requirement that your article not focus primarily on Book 1, 4, or 6. The basic choices will be:

- readings edited by Perkell (see http://moodletest.union.edu): the chapters on the books indicated; also chapters 13 (Aeneid as foundation story) and 14 (women of the Aeneid);
- other selected articles on the Aeneid: I can’t do better than the bibliography in the two syllabuses posted to Moodle;
- something else of your choice (for articles see L’Année philologique, Union’s e-journals, JSTOR; browse the books under Virgil: Criticism and Interpretation, though for some reason Heinze’s Virgil’s Epic Technique is not listed there; feel free to consult me for more recommendations).

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Write

By our class hour on the due date, write a 1000-to-1600 word report in which you do the following.

1. Summarize the article’s chief insights with extreme brevity. In other words, a quick and dense paragraph to impress the reader with the truly arresting “aha!” points you took from the article.
2. Use the article as a case study of the method of intelligent interpretation through close reading of the text’s details. In other words, teach your classmates (the report’s readers) some really great close reading techniques by analyzing how your article uses the text’s evidence to achieve really original interpretive results.
3. Apply the article’s insights to the Aeneid as a whole. In other words, what ramifications do these ideas have for the parts and aspects of the poem which the author was not directly addressing? Be sure to make specific claims: quote lines of the Aeneid not quoted by the article and show how the article’s approach can lead to some new insight into their significance.

You will post your report to the wiki and give it a perfect title.

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Introduce

In the following week, you will post a circa-400-word introduction to a classmate’s report in which you will present how its ideas relate interestingly to the whole class’s set of reports and ideas. In other words, once your eyes have been opened to the other 11 approaches described in the other reports, what can you say by way of introduction about the distinctive strengths, limitations, assumptions, and implications of the approach discussed in your classmate’s report? (N.B. You will not be allowed to comment on what you really like, what you classmate did a great job on, etc.)