

*Quod accidit in spēluncā, in spēluncā manet: Adapting Aeneid 4 for College-Level Introductory Latin*

Teachers of introductory Latin at the college level face the challenge of persuading college students, who are often ready to discuss literature in a sophisticated way, to engage with textbooks that for the most part either offer no continuous narrative (in the case of many textbooks written on the grammar-translation model), or follow “family” storylines designed to appeal more to secondary-school readers than to collegiate ones (in the case of so-called “reading method” textbooks). This can be unsatisfying for motivated students eager to begin reading real Latin literature, as well as for students who may not continue with Latin after the first or second year, but nevertheless might benefit from gaining some knowledge about, say, Roman history or Latin epic. Adapting the narrative and dialogue of *Aeneid* 4 as a supplement to the class’ primary textbook affords students the opportunity to read a continuous narrative with broad appeal, and to connect their experience of language acquisition to a text with major cultural impact.

Using language calibrated to their progress in the primary textbook, students can acquire an increasingly complex understanding of Latin grammar, even as they gain familiarity with the characters and influences of one of Latin literature’s best-known narratives. I start in the first week with a daily sight reading segment that presents a simplified overview of the plot, using present tense verbs and nouns primarily drawn from declensions 1 and 2. In following weeks, we return to examine the story in more detail, adding in new vocabulary and morphology as the primary textbook introduces it. In the last weeks of the class, many of the lines presented are drawn directly from the *Aeneid*, allowing students to start thinking about Latin’s unique capacity to convey meaning, e.g.: at *Aeneid* 4.165-66 (*speluncam Dido dux et Troianus eandem/ deveniunt*), *speluncam...eandem* forms a word-picture, suggestively “enclosing” the soon-to-be

lovers within the privacy of the cave, while the placement of *dux* ahead of *et* creates an untranslatable moment of confusion about who the “leader” of the couple really is. Even in simplified form, *Aeneid* 4 conveys emotional depth and raises complex moral and ethical questions. College students enjoy and deserve the opportunity to see, even at an early stage of instruction, that such reading awaits them at the end of their often-arduous journey of textbook Latin.

The model I present could be applied to any Latin text, allowing teachers to present whatever literature they think best suits their classes. The *Aeneid*, however, offers a wealth of teaching resources generated for the high school AP syllabus, so instructors who choose the sections covered on the AP exam will easily be able to find illustrations, discussion questions, and other supplementary material.