



A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth

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One of the most compelling and durable of the great classical myths is that concerning Dido and Aeneas, which throughout the centuries has been appropriated and misappropriated for political and artistic ends. It offers much material for such uses: the representation of a city (Carthage) as an exotic encapsulation of the East; Dido's lack of constancy and the paradox of Aeneas, who has already abandoned his wife in Troy, but who, in abandoning Dido, remains true to Rome; the seduction of women in literature; the reworking of the myth to reflect Restoration politics. In this book, ten contributors from the fields of fine art, history, English literature, classics and music examine the myth in its complexity and ambiguity. Their findings indicate emphatically that Purcell's opera is very far from being merely a quaint baroque entertainment.

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