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GENDER AND POWER: REPRESENTATIONS OF DIDO IN FRENCH TRAGEDY, 1558-1673

Laetitia Vedrenne

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (2009)

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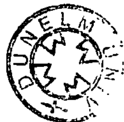
School of Modern Languages and Cultures
Durham University

2009



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ABSTRACT

Gender and Power: Representations of Dido in French Tragedy, 1558 - 1673

Laetitia Vedrenne
Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (2009)

This thesis examines five French tragedies dealing with the same legendary character, Dido, throughout a century: Etienne Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant* (c1558), Alexandre Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant* (1624), Georges de Scudéry's *Didon* (1637), François de Boisrobert's *La Vraye Didon* (1643) and Antoine Jacob Montfleury's *L'Ambigu comique* (1673). The interest of this study lies in the fact that, if Dido is a recurrent character, yet she is one of a very rare breed of female characters on the French stage: ruling queens. The tragedies and, in particular, the character of Dido are examined in relation to the evolution of literary trends and the historical and socio-political context in which they were produced.

The playwrights and their works are first looked at specifically with an aim to put them in context: the authors are considered in relation to literary and socio-political history, while each play is put in context within the complete works of the author. Dido is a ruling queen, which is rare on stage and a reflection of the rarity of women ruling over Early Modern France, it is therefore important to consider the contemporary institutions, practices and discourses on women, with specific references to the moralist controversy. The analysis of women in power over the time period covered by this study, including Catherine de Medici, Maria de Medici and Anne of Austria, provides the reader with the essential background and issues relating to the representation of female power on stage.

To complete the contextualisation of the five tragedies, a detailed analysis of the other rare instances of ruling queens in French tragedy helps establish patterns of representation for women in power, such as the key use of men, the 'peuple' and queens themselves as crucial threats to the integrity of the realm.

The analysis of Dido tragedies focuses on two axis: first a linguistic approach to the definition of gender and power deals with gendered rhetoric, the gender specific approach to *furor*, that is to say the loss of power, and the expression of guilt and innocence. The second axis of the analysis focuses on material representations of power on stage: firstly, the references to and/or use of symbolic objects such as crowns, thrones, sceptres, swords or jewels help identify the characters which are truly powerful. Finally, the analysis of the references to and/or use names and titles on stage to identify the protagonists is also used to reveal the actual power dynamic created by the playwrights.

The conclusion looks at the mixed success of the plays in Early Modern France and their absence from literary canons in modern France while keeping in mind the issues on gender and power.

In memoriam

Lilou,
Dr Dorothy Catling.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to my supervisor, Professor Jan Clarke, for the invaluable advice, support, patience, coffee and friendship she provided me with in order to give birth to this thesis. I am also very grateful to a number of scholars who have advised and helped me over the last few years. I would like to mention, in particular, Professors Jenny Britnell, Lucille Cairns and Ann Moss, Dr Sally Wagstaffe and Mrs Heather Fenwick at Durham University, and Madame Hyvernaud, in the English Department at Limoges University, France.

I am indebted to M. Jean-Claude Ternaux for giving an extremely useful preview of his edition of Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant.*

My research at the Bibliothèque Nationale was greatly aided by generous grants from the School's Postgraduate Fund and by Dr Emeline Vedrenne, whom I thank whole-heartedly.

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Last, but not least, I must thank my family, who have offered me unwavering support even though I had chosen the *perfide Albion.*

Declaration

No part of the material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in the University of Durham or any other university. The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published in any form, including electronic, without the author's prior written permission.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In the appendices 3 and 4, the following abbreviations have been used to refer to the characters:

a / an Anne
ac Achates
ar Argal
as Astart
b Barse / Barsine / Barcis
ch Chorus
d Dido
e Æneas
fe Fenice
fo Forbante
ia Iarbe
na Narbal
p Pygmalion

SPELLING

Throughout this thesis, the spelling of the editions used has been maintained. When I refer to the characters, I use the name as it appears in the play, elsewhere I use the accepted English version.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

METHODOLOGY

'[Q]ui de nos jours se soucie de Didon?' asked René Martin in 1990. Many scholars do; this was his answer to a purely rhetorical question and it is still true. Dido has been the subject of many studies, especially over the last two decades. The *Actes du colloque international* organized in 1988 at the Sorbonne under the direction of Pierre Grimal offers the most comprehensive approach to Dido from Antiquity to the twentieth century and from different perspectives, including literature, music, iconography and cinema.[1] Other studies such as Marilynn Desmond's reading of the Medieval Dido,[2] Michael Burden's collection of essays,[3] or Paola Bono's and M. Vittoria Tessitore's volume on Dido,[4] all attest to the interest that people still have in the Phœnician Queen. Moreover, even if Dido is not part of the national curriculum in its French form in France, unlike Phædra or Medea, there is a definite revival of interest in her story across not only Europe, especially with the performance of Marmontel's and Purcell's operas, but even across the Atlantic thanks to the performance of Purcell's opera and Christopher Marlowe's tragedy.[5]

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[1] René Martin, ed., *Énée et Didon: Naissance, fonctionnement et survie d'un mythe* (Paris: CNRS, 1990).
[2] Marilynn Desmond, *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality, and the Medieval 'Aeneid'* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).
[3] Michael Burden, ed., *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998).
[4] Paola Bono and M. Vittoria Tessitore, *Il Mito di Didone: avventure di una regina tra secoli e culture* (Milano: Mondadori, 1998).
[5] For example, and this list is not exhaustive, Marlowe's *Dido Queen of Carthage* was performed in Cambridge (MA) in 2005 by the American Repertory Theater, in Ohio in 2001 by the Target Margin Theater, in London in 2003 at the Globe, and in 2006 by the Angels in the Architecture. Purcell's *Dido and Æneas* was performed in Long Beach (California) in 1994 by the Long Beach Opera, in Prague at the International Spring Opera Festival in 1997 by the Cappella Accademica, in Mannheim (Germany) by the Mannheim chamber orchestra in 2003, in Buenos Aires in 2004 by the Opera de Cámara de Buenos Aires, in Edinburgh in 2005 by the Edinburgh Symphony Baroque, or in Newcastle by Opera North in June 2007.

Considering the number of scholarly volumes published on the subject, the production of yet another study on Dido might seem superfluous. Yet, I will endeavour to show that this thesis is of particular interest to the study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature and society. I propose to study Dido in a narrower field than those encompassed by the aforementioned publications, that is tragedy between 1555 and 1673, a period of time which broadly covers the birth of French tragedy, the classical period and the evolution of tragedy beyond classicism. This will allow for a systematic examination of what is comparable, by avoiding the confusion that could arise from comparing different genres or media.

This study intends to question the relevance of the character of Dido as a tragic character to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French audiences, in particular in relation to notions of gender and power. The corpus includes the following tragedies: Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant* (1555-1561?), Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant* (1624), Scudéry's *Didon* (1637), Boisrobert's *La Vraye Didon ou la Didon chaste* (1643) and Montfleury's *Ambigu comique ou les Amours de Didon et d'Ænée* (1673).[6] There will, thus, be the opportunity to cover a century, during which a number of important socio-political and religious changes influenced art. One tragedy has been excluded from the corpus, Jean Tabouret's *Dido, sive Amor insanus*, because no translation of this neo-Latin play has

[6] The following editions will be used throughout my thesis: Etienne Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, ed. Christine de Buzon and Jean-Claude Ternaux (Paris: Champion, 2002); Alexandre Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, ed. Alan Howe (Genève: Droz, 1994); Georges de Scudéry, *Didon*, in Christian Delmas, *Didon à la scène* (Toulouse: Sociétés de Littératures Classiques, 1992); François de Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon ou la Didon chaste*, in Christian Delmas, *Didon à la scène* (Toulouse: Sociétés de Littératures Classiques, 1992); Antoine Jacob Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique ou les Amours de Didon et d'Ænée* (Paris: Promé, 1673). Montfleury's *Ambigu Comique* has not been re-edited since the seventeenth-century, therefore I have provided the text of the tragic acts in appendix eight and will be using it for all references.

ever been published; moreover Michèle Ducos has commented on the play's poor quality.[7]

Drawing on gender, historical, cultural and literary studies, I intend to focus my thesis on the relation of literary production to contemporary French society. This means first concentrating on the authors, their individual backgrounds and, whenever possible, on the reasons that led them to choose the genre of tragedy and Dido as a subject. This, I will argue, is best understood when looking at French society around the time of composition, in relation to the contemporary views not only of women, but of the three Queens Regent of France: Catherine de Medici, Marie de Medici and Anne of Austria.

Considering that the notion of gender plays a central role in this analysis, it is essential to determine what I mean by gender and to highlight the importance of cultural studies in relation to it. If feminist theory has an important role to play, I would contend that its relevance is limited for this thesis because it applies concepts that are too modern for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France. Gender and cultural studies offer a more comprehensive and less biased view, in my opinion, of the issues at stake in the representation of female power. This is best exemplified by Judith Butler in her preface to *Gender Trouble*. She offers, I believe, a justification for the necessary contextualisation in the analysis of literary texts:

> To expose the foundational categories of sex, gender, and desire as effects of a specific formation of power requires a form of critical inquiry that Foucault, reformulating Nietzsche, designates as 'genealogy'. A genealogical critique refuses to search for the origins of gender, the inner truth of female desire, a genuine or authentic sexual identity that repression has kept from view; rather, genealogy investigates the political

[7] Jean Tabouret, *Dido, sive Amor insanus* (Paris: F. Blanville, 1609). Michèle Ducos briefly mentions this tragedy in her essay entitled 'Passion et Politique dans les tragédies de Didon', in Martin, *Enée et Didon*, p. 101.

> stakes in designating as an origin and *cause* those identity categories that are in fact the *effects* of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin. The task of this inquiry is to center on — and decenter — such defining institutions: phallogocentrism and compulsory heterosexuality.[8]

Drawing on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century institutions, practices and discourses, it will be possible to comprehend the representation and perception of the different Didos at the time of their composition and performance. The word representation is here essential, because it reveals the different levels of character construction dealt with by a playwright. In terms of gender construction, theatre has requirements that are not only met by the text itself, but by its actual embodiment by actors and actresses. This materiality of theatre creation is central to its understanding. The representation and perception of gender in theatre comes primarily and obviously, one might say, from the human form of the characters: female characters are most of the time played by actresses, they wear female clothing, have female voices, while male characters are played by actors.[9] This instant human and gendered recognition is normally supported by the text, but essentially the gender identity of the characters is already clear by the time the actors start to speak.

The five tragedies that I will be examining in this thesis, however, challenge the basic understanding of genders and their theatrical representation. For one thing, they are an oddity in that the five authors have chosen to put on stage a female ruler in her own realm. There are very few of these characters in sixteenth and seventeenth-century tragedy as I will show later. The reason behind this rarity is probably that such characters

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[8] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. viii-ix.

[9] However, in the case of Jodelle's tragedy, if it was indeed ever performed, it is likely to have been performed by the author himself and his fellow male college friends. See Lisa A. Freeman, *Character's Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) for the implications of the physical performance, required by the theatre, on the audience, p. 18.

are problematic as regards the institutions, practices and discourses of contemporary French society. This I will prove by dedicating the next chapter to contextualising the conditions of production of the aforementioned five tragedies.

The concept of character's identity needs to be addressed as well. A character's identity is a construct which does not limit itself to gender, of course, but involves a number of elements brought together by the author and which, as a whole, convey a convincing, coherent identity with an inner logic, allowing the audience to suspend their disbelief. The identity of characters is defined, within the tragedies studied here, mainly in terms of gender and power.

The notion of power is central to this thesis. I would, therefore, like to take the time now to highlight two notions of power to which I will be referring. These two aspects of power are closely but not necessarily linked: a distinction can be made between political power and persuasive power. Whereas the expectation is for the Queen to have political power and to be persuasive, it will be shown that there is no indispensable connection between the two. Both these aspects of power are defined and represented in the plays in different ways, whether linguistically or materially. These representations needed to be understood by the audience and, like gender, could be seen primarily and superficially on stage. For example, to denote royal power, kings and queens could be wearing crowns.[10] On a linguistic level, references to Dido and Æneas as 'reine' and 'prince' make it immediately clear that the characters are powerful. It could also be argued that, considering that the audience came to see a tragedy, they expected to

[10] This is an example of what Georges Forestier calls 'les signes statiques'. He explains that there are 'trois signes qui relèvent de l'instance représentative et non de l'instance textuelle, les marques physiques, la voix et le maintien [...].' Georges Forestier, *Esthétique de l'identité dans le théâtre français (1550-1680)* (Geneva: Droz, 1988), p. 227. See also William Turner's *Dido building Carthage* below, for pictorial representation of Dido's royal grandeur.

see powerful characters on stage, expectations which would have been confirmed by the material and linguistic elements mentioned above. Tragedies must, therefore, meet the expectations or preconceptions of the audience as to what power looks and sounds like. Those expectations or preconceptions came from the audience's understanding of what power was. This is why it is crucial to know who the audience and readership were and what world they lived in, to be able to decode the representations of power set before their eyes.

1. *Dido building Carthage,* William Turner (1815).

On another level, power lies with the word of the author. The decision to represent power, and here of course I mean royal power, was significant in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries and akin to propaganda, especially at the height of Richelieu's authority in France. Cardinal Richelieu openly used theatre as a tool to promote royalty. Jowett and O'Donnell define propaganda as 'the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape

perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist'.[11] The contribution of authors such as Scudéry and Boisrobert to an organised system of propaganda centred on Richelieu is undeniable as will be seen later. I would, however, argue that their predecessors, Jodelle and Hardy, and successor, Montfleury, were just as involved in such a system, albeit possibly unconsciously or less obviously because of the patronage system.[12] Jowett and O'Donnell explain that

> [s]uccessful propaganda relates to the prevailing mood of the times; therefore, it is essential to understand the climate of the times. [...] It is also important to know and understand the historical background. What has happened to lead up to this point in time? What deeply held beliefs and values have been important for a long time? What myths are related to the current propaganda? What is the source of these myths? A myth is not merely a fantasy or a lie, but rather is a model for social action.[13]

Consequently, I propose first to examine the contemporary practices and discourses relating to women through the roles attributed to them in society by moralist writers. I will concentrate in particular on the representation of famous women used as examples by these writers as a discourse representative of contemporary practices. Focusing on famous women is of particular interest in the context of this thesis, for I deal with a particular female character and the mere fact that it is in a tragic context has implications for the character's standing and status. The way in which women were considered did not necessarily apply to women in the nobility and especially queens, if only because the idea of monarchy by divine right made them the vessel for God's representative on earth. For this reason, it will be necessary to examine institutions,

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[11] Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999), p. 6.

[12] This will be developed further in the analysis of the individual authors and of their tragedies later in this introduction.

[13] Jowett and O'Donnell, *Propaganda*, p. 282.

practices and discourses relating to contemporary female rulers and their representation. The following chapter will focus on the representation of other queens performing a ruling role in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century tragedy. This analysis will enable me to introduce a model of analysis setting up the different forces at stake in plays dealing with female rulers

I will then examine the Dido tragedies in more detail, first concentrating, in chapter four, on the expression of gender and power. This chapter will be dedicated to a close examination of the rhetoric of the different characters in the tragedies, with a particular focus on gender-specific rhetoric and the expression of power and powerlessness. The final chapter will illustrate the practices employed by the authors to implement their gender discourse through specific linguistic and material representations of power in the five tragedies. This will lead me, in the conclusion, to the assessment of the plays as works representative of contemporary culture and society and an understanding of why Dido was such an attractive subject in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France.

INTRODUCTION TO PLAYS AND PLAYWRIGHTS

Before analysing the five tragedies in detail, it is important to put them in their context of production and performance, wherever possible. For this reason, the rest of this chapter will be dedicated to Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry, Boisrobert and Montfleury and their respective tragedies. It is essential to determine, for example, the reasons for which individual authors chose this particular topic, as well as the reasons behind their respective decisions to deal with a story that had already been put on stage, at least for Hardy, Scudéry, Boisrobert and Montfleury.

The choice of Dido for Jodelle first, and later for his fellow playwrights, is hardly surprising. The preponderance of Virgil in classical education from the Middle Ages to the present time is unquestionable. In 1944, in his presidential address to the Virgil Society, T. S. Eliot defined Virgil as an author who, in time, had

> ... acquire[d] the centrality of the unique classic; he is the centre of European civilization, in a position which no other poet can share or usurp. The Roman Empire and the Latin language were not any empire and any language, but an empire and a language with a unique destiny in relation to ourselves; and the poet in whom that Empire and that language came to consciousness and expression is a poet of unique destiny.[14]

The unique status Virgil and his main work, the *Æneid*, acquired through the centuries was mostly achieved thanks to the educational value attributed to both the author's style and the content of his most famous work. This is particularly relevant to the study of Dido tragedies in the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries because it sheds light on the playwrights' choice of subject. Early Modern authors would have been familiar with the story of Dido, and so would part of their audience. How many people in the audience

[14] T.S. Eliot, 'What is a Classic?' in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1975), pp. 128-29, quoted in Desmond, *Reading Dido*, p. 5.

would have had prior knowledge of the work of Virgil is difficult to establish; however, Desmond argues that the *Æneid* had been used, from the Middle Ages, as a scholarly text

> ... read by one segment of the population — the male elite, destined by education and/ or birth to occupy powerful positions in a hierarchically arranged social structure, a structure in which Latin literacy played a significant role in the formation of a 'persecuting society,' in R. I. Moore's term.[15]

This leads me to believe that, at the very least, the male members of the aristocracy and some of its female members would have known Virgil's version of Dido's story.[16] Recent studies also point to a wider dissemination of Latin, and of Virgil's work in particular, in the bourgeoisie, thereby expanding the section of the audience that would have been familiar with Dido's story.[17]

One of the major issues faced by the playwrights dealing with Dido is the transition from epic poem to tragedy: Dido's story is, in fact, not easily adapted to the stage because of the lack of action and of the time constraints classical tragedy increasingly imposed on seventeenth-century playwrights. Madeleine Lazard summarises this issue as follows:

> Si les amours d'Énée et de Didon constituent l'un des plus beaux thèmes de la littérature, ils ne se prêtent guère à nourrir une action dramatique. Peut-on imaginer de bâtir une tragédie sur une intrigue amoureuse dont le héros, Énée en Libye, n'est héroïque en aucun sens du terme? Ses raisons de quitter Carthage n'ont rien à voir avec l'histoire de Didon. Qui plus est, il n'a pas à subir la conséquence de sa faute.
>
> Quant à Didon, ses invectives et ses regrets, fort beaux certes, ne peuvent créer une action.[18]

---

[15] Desmond, *Reading Dido*, p. 3.

[16] For details of seventeenth-century women's access to education and, in particular, to Latin, see Linda Timmermans, *L'Accès des femmes à la culture (1589-1715)* (Paris: Champion, 1993).

[17] For details, see Desmond, *Reading Dido*, pp. 4-7 and corresponding notes.

[18] Madeleine Lazard, 'Didon et Énée au XVIe siècle: la *Didon se sacrifiant* de Jodelle', in Martin, *Enée et Didon*, p. 90.

Out of the five authors studied, four acknowledged Virgil as their main source of inspiration: Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury. However, Boisrobert deliberately set out to use different source texts because of the cultural bias Virgil imposed on his reading of Dido. However, it is undeniable that a number of elements of Boisrobert's play are inspired by the *Æneid* as I will show later.

Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant.*

Born in Paris in 1532, of noble extraction, Etienne Jodelle benefited from a classical education thanks to the vast library of his father and other relatives: they had accumulated a substantial collection of books on religion, philosophy and history. Jodelle had access to the works of Erasmus, Livy, Flavius, Thucydides, Virgil, but also to those of modern historians such as Froissart or Enguerrand de Monstrelet. Jodelle's great uncle, Etienne de Passavant, also had a substantial library, which was, according to Balmas, predominantly dedicated to figurative arts, and possessed in particular some books on stage decoration that were to have a great influence on Jodelle's work.[19] Jodelle received a royal reward for his *Cléopâtre captive*, which was performed at Henry II's court in Reims in 1552. On this occasion, Jodelle took the lead role and the cast included two of his friends from the Pléiade, Rémy Belleau and Jean de la Péruse. Jodelle became a more prolific poet than playwright, abandoning the theatre after the lack of interest in his *Didon*. We owe, however, to Etienne Jodelle, as founder of the *tragédie à l'antique*, some of the first tragedies written in French, and the first tragedy in French dedicated to Dido.

[19] Enea Balmas, *Un poeta del Rinascimento francese: Étienne Jodelle. La sua vita – il suo tempo* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1962), p. 44. This was particularly relevant in terms of the masquerades that he produced, and he was also commissioned to compile a collection of *inscriptions, figures, devises et masquarades* to be performed at a celebration in Paris in 1558. The latter was a complete failure and almost ruined him financially as well as losing him the favour of the court.

If Jodelle's *Didon* is so similar to Virgil's text, almost a translation, it stems from the fact that the Pléiade was promoting the imitation of the Ancients. The choice of Dido by Jodelle serves a dual purpose: it complies with the contemporary belief that 'une bonne traduction vaut trop mieus qu'une mauvaise invancion'.[20] Translating and adapting part of Virgil's epic poem was, therefore, in line with what the Pléiade was promoting. The sixteenth century saw the premises of the rules governing classical tragedy, and the imitation of the Ancients became gradually paramount in Early Modern theatre. Secondly, the posthumous publication of *Didon se sacrifiant* sheds light, according to Lazard, on La Mothe's desire to rehabilitate the memory of his friend who 'fut accusé d'impiété – et [...] on avait, en outre, contesté [sa] culture'.[21] It is, therefore, not unlikely that Jodelle's choice of subject was influenced by the very same accusations. Indeed, Balmas suggests that these criticisms were made during Jodelle's lifetime and not only posthumously.[22] It can also be safely assumed that his Dido was composed for court entertainment, after the success of his *Cléopâtre captive.*

The date of composition of Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant* is difficult to determine with precision. Beauchamps's *Recherches sur les théâtres de France* remain vague enough to suggest that Jodelle's second tragedy might have been successful, following the triumph of his *Cléopâtre captive*: 'Enfin Jodelle donna sa tragédie de *Didon*, faite ainsi que la *Cléopâtre*, avec des chœurs, selon la forme ancienne. [...] Jodelle eut sujet de s'applaudir du succès de ses pieces, & de la liberalité du roi [...]'.[23] Claude and François

[20] Jacques Pelletier du Mans, *L'Art Poétique*, ed. A. Boulanger (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1930), p. 105.
[21] Lazard, 'Didon et Énée au XVIe siècle', in Martin, *Enée et Didon*, p. 91.
[22] Balmas, *Étienne Jodelle*, p. 46.
[23] Pierre-François Godart de Beauchamps, *Recherches sur les théâtres de France depuis l'année 1611 jusques à présent*, 17 vols (Paris: Prault Père, 1735), I, 405-06.

Parfaict argue that Jodelle's *Didon* was performed in 1552,[24] but research has failed to provide conclusive evidence: the date seems unlikely, as this is the year the *Cléopâtre* was performed at court for Henri II, and if *Didon* had been performed at court or in any public venue in the same year, records would probably show this. Balmas refers to a sonnet by du Baïf that he believes to determine the date of composition of the play. However, his conclusions also remain unsound.[25] Du Baïf is the only person who refers to an actual performance of *Didon se sacrifiant*, but his sonnet is published, albeit not necessarily written, twenty years after the event.[26] From his analysis of the sonnet, Balmas concludes that *Didon* was not too distant in time from *Cléopâtre*.[27] Jean-Claude Ternaux narrows down the time of composition of *Didon* to the years 1553 to 1557, with the certainty of *Didon* being composed prior to 1561, because Jacques Grévin's 1561 tragedy, *César*, features at least one passage borrowed from *Didon se sacrifiant*.[28]

Dating the composition of Jodelle's tragedy is of the essence in contextualising it appropriately. I would argue that the representation on stage of a queen exercising royal prerogatives is significant in relation to the socio-political climate prevailing in France at the time. If we assume Ternaux to be right, and Jodelle's play to have been composed between 1553 and 1557, this means that *Didon se sacrifiant* was written at a time when Catherine de Medici had already acted as Queen Regent at least twice, in 1548 and 1552, and possibly three times, since she acted as Regent in 1557 as well. It is, therefore, possible to interpret Jodelle's choice of subject in the light of the contemporary political

[24] Claude and François Parfaict, *Dictionnaire des théâtres de Paris*, 7 vols (Paris: Rozet, 1767) II, 306.
[25] Balmas, *Etienne Jodelle*, pp. 256-57.
[26] 'Il sonetto di Baïf, benché publicato nel 1573, deve essere anteriore di almeno vent'anni [...]', Balmas, *Etienne Jodelle*, p. 256.
[27] 'Questo [du Baïf's sonnet] ci aiuta, incidentalmente, a situare nel tempo, la *Didon*, a non molta distanza dalla *Cléopatre*.' Balmas, *Etienne Jodelle*, p. 257.
[28] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, p. 8.

situation. However, several readings are possible, without necessarily being mutually exclusive.

Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant*, I have mentioned previously, was probably never performed during his lifetime; even if it were not performed - and we ignore the reasons for this - it can still be argued that Jodelle wrote his play to be performed at court, following the success of the representation of his *Cléopâtre captive* before Henry II. This means that the intended audience of his play was aristocratic and educated, male and female.[29] Consequently, Jodelle would have been likely to expect his audience to know Virgil's text, the main source of his play. The fact that Jodelle's play is very close to the Virgilian text, naturally leads me to conclude that the lyrical, or static, form chosen by the playwright was adapted to his intended audience or readership's tastes. The absence of actual dialogue, which may seem inappropriate for the stage, would have posed no problem to the reader. The lack of real dialogue and action, however, 'did lead to a growing dissatisfaction of the audience with regard to the stilted and formalized Renaissance tragedy introduced by Jodelle [...] after fifteen years or so, certainly as far as the nobility was concerned'.[30]

Without going into too much detail at this stage, it is possible to say here that one of the possible interpretations is that the character of Dido can be regarded as a stage representation of Catherine de Medici. This reading is, however, difficult to substantiate because of the controversial nature of such a comparison between the Queen of France

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[29] One caveat should be introduced here: the aristocracy was not as homogeneous in its level of education at the beginning of the seventeenth-century as, we can assume, at the end of the sixteenth century. Lough reports that a number of noblemen regarded learning with suspicion when it went beyond the acquisition of military, dance and music skills. For details, see John Lough, *An Introduction to Seventeenth-Century France* (London: Longmans, 1966), pp. 199-205.

[30] William Leon Wiley, *The Early Public Theatre in France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 34.

and the Queen of Carthage. Although Jodelle does not insist as much on Dido's guilt as some of his successors will, there is still no doubt left in the mind of the reader or audience that both Æneas and Dido are partly responsible for their respective fates. Moreover, the fact that Carthage is left at the end of act five without a suitable sovereign is a sign of Dido's failings as a monarch. Another interpretation might be that the character of Dido can be regarded as a counter-example to Catherine de Medici, who is the epitome both of a faithful wife to Henri II and of a powerful and efficient Queen. Let us not forget that in Virgil's and Jodelle's works, Dido has sworn on the ashes of her late husband that she will remain faithful to his memory and never remarry. Dido's passion for Æneas is, therefore, all the more immoral. Æneas is not only unsuitable because he is a foreigner, but because any partner for Dido makes her unfaithful to her vows. Complete opposite roles, then, in comparison with Catherine de Medici. The Queen's fiercest opponents never doubted her faithfulness to Henri II while he was alive, in spite of his infidelity; nor did they question the authenticity of her bereavement. Moralist writers from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century did use mythological and biblical female figures as examples and counter-examples in the education of women. It is then not altogether impossible that Jodelle's Dido was created as a figure not to be emulated but to be used as a warning against the pangs of passion. The differences between the Queen represented on stage and the Queen of France can, therefore, be interpreted as a celebration of the qualities of the latter.

Another particularly pregnant theme of Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant* is religion. In terms of contextualisation, this is hardly surprising considering that troubles had arisen publicly since the 1530s and that the Wars of Religion swept Europe for the best part of

the second half of the sixteenth century. Although there seems to be little doubt that Jodelle wrote his tragedy before the start of the armed conflicts, it is also undeniable that his *Didon* was composed at a time when anonymous denunciation, summary arrests and executions were not uncommon. Jodelle would have been acutely aware of this as he was a Reformist sympathiser,[31] and was accused of being a Reformist himself. He stayed in Geneva in his youth, but also wrote an apologia of the St Bartholomew massacre in 1572.[32] Change of heart or mere act of self-preservation at a time when it was safer to be a Catholic? We will probably never know. His religious affiliations might be a reason for the otherwise very enigmatic death sentence that was pronounced against him in 1564.[33] However, there is no evidence to support this theory and Balmas mentions Jodelle's financial troubles as another potential, if rather odd, reason for this.[34] The sentence was not carried out, and Jodelle died a pauper in 1573, with the majority of his works being published posthumously by his friend Charles de La Mothe.

Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant* is composed of 2,346 lines and five acts, which are not divided into scenes. The tragedy is lyrical in form which can be seen in the way the characters express themselves, most of the time, in long monologues, which are followed by the intervention of the chorus. In terms of structure, the first act is dedicated to the Trojans, thereby delaying the confrontation between Dido and Æneas until the second act and creating a modicum of dramatic tension. This dramatic ploy is essential for Jodelle, since there is no dramatic tension to be derived from the action: the playwright has chosen to make clear from the first act that Æneas is leaving Carthage. Considering that

[31] He wrote a poem to Théodore de Bèze; see Balmas, *Etienne Jodelle*, pp. 94-97.
[32] Ibid., p. 95.
[33] It remains enigmatic because there is no record of why he was sentenced to death or why the sentence was not carried out.
[34] Balmas, *Etienne Jodelle*, pp. 71-74.

there is no doubt that Æneas will leave, the audience must be left anticipating something else, namely Dido's reaction. Interestingly, this reaction is very much the main subject of the first act, in which the audience or readership see the Trojans contemplate the potential consequences of their departure for Dido and her kingdom. The clever juxtaposition of the 'effroy' felt by Æneas at the thought of seeing Dido again and the cold-bloodedness with which he faced the long list of terrible events leading to the destruction of Troy increases the dramatic tension (I, 181-292). The confrontation ensues in the second and third act, whereas the fourth and fifth acts are entirely dedicated to the female characters. Once again, Jodelle must counteract the lack of dramatic tension resulting from the lack of action, since Æneas has gone. The audience is, therefore, left wondering about the consequences of the Trojans' departure for Dido, with the introduction of premonitory dreams and the themes of the supernatural and witchcraft.[35] The play ends with Dido's suicide, using the sword Æneas left behind. These elements would have contributed to generate in the audience the feeling of horror and pity theoretically necessary to achieve catharsis. Even though Jodelle was obviously not bound by the rules of classical tragedy, as a keen imitator of the Ancients, he could not have failed to try and arouse these feelings in his audience and readers.

It would take another fifty years for Dido to reappear on the French stage, if indeed she had ever reached it with Jodelle, although she was by no means forgotten in

[35] Anne mentions several premonitory dreams in act IV (1795-1828, 1829-1832, 1839-1869), while Dido evokes witchcraft with a reference to a Massilian priestess and her dragon (IV, 1906-1938), which introduces an evocation of Medea (IV, 1939-40).

the meantime. The famously prolific Alexandre Hardy was the next playwright to offer her the possibility of reaching a French audience.[36]

Alexandre Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*

Hardy remains a rather enigmatic figure in French literature. Born around 1572,[37] probably in Paris, Hardy is said to have produced between five and eight hundred plays between 1592 and 1632, the year he died of the plague. From a bourgeois family, it is generally accepted that he received a classical education, like Jodelle.[38] However, the choice of an artistic career seems to have estranged him from his family and left him struggling financially.[39] He is credited for pulling tragedy out of the gutter by Maupoint,[40] whereas Beauchamps, while agreeing, gives a more measured evaluation of the playwright's surviving works:

> On les méprise aujourd'hui, parce que réellement, elles ont de grands défauts, & qu'elles n'offrent rien d'agréable à des lecteurs accoutumés à de meilleures choses. Cependant, si l'on veut en juger sans passion, on conviendra qu'elles sont meilleures que celles de Garnier, & des autres auteurs du second âge, & qu'il étoit difficile qu'il fist mieux dans le tems où il vivoit; en effet, on peut dire qu'il a tiré la tragédie des rues & des échaffauts; Corneille, Scudery, Sarasin, & plusieurs autres lui rendent de grands témoignages. On peut d'autant plus les en croire, qu'ils couroient la même carriere. On a donc mis Hardy à la tête du troisiéme âge, qui ne durant que quinze ans, fera voir les progrès de la tragédie, s'ils paroissent rapides; s'ils surprennent, on ne peut se dispenser d'en rapporter l'honneur à Hardy, qui n'a point, à la vérité, laissé de modele qu'on puisse suivre, mais qui a fraïé le chemin, in magnis tentasse sat est. Il prenoit la qualité de poete du roi.[41]

[36] On p. 306 of their *Dictionnaire*, the Parfaict brothers include a *Didon* by Guillaume de La Grange, allegedly performed in 1576. This play has unfortunately now disappeared.

[37] S. Wilma Deiekauf-Holsboer, *Vie d'Alexandre Hardy, poète du Roi, 1572-1632* (Paris: Nizet, 1972), p. 16.

[38] Deiekauf-Holsboer, *Vie d'Alexandre Hardy*, p. 17. On the social origins of Hardy, see also Alan Howe, *Ecrivains de Théâtre, 1600-1649* (Paris: Centre historique des Archives nationales, 2005), p. 95.

[39] Deiekauf-Holsboer, *Vie d'Alexandre Hardy*, p. 18.

[40] Maupoint, *Bibliothèque des théâtres* (Paris: Prault, 1733), p. 10.

[41] Beauchamps, *Recherches sur les théâtres de France*, pp. 48-49.

If his style is perceived as heavy-handed, the changes he introduced in tragedy as a genre are deemed to have been significant. For instance, the lesser role attributed to the chorus, in particular in his earlier plays, was to lead the way to its complete suppression at the end of his career, and more widely in French tragedy by the 1630s. His interest in theatre did not, however, reside solely in composition, Hardy was not only *poète ordinaire du roi*, since Deierfauf-Holsboer found documents proving that he was also *comédien ordinaire du roi*.[42] His interest in the stage may partly explain his success as a playwright: who better to write plays than one who performs them, and so understands the capacities as well as the restrictions of contemporary theatre both in its materiality and in its content?

The choice of Dido as a topic for Hardy is not entirely surprising. As a prolific writer, his source texts often included Greek and Roman authors, meaning that he would have known Virgil well. Jodelle's tragedy must have been known to him, since he mentions the pleasure to be derived from comparing his 'version avec celle des autres' in his address to the reader.[43] This is also supported by Deierkauf-Holsboer in her *Vie d'Alexandre Hardy*, in which she states that Jodelle's plays were still in Valleran le Conte's repertoire in the 1590s.[44] Although Hardy was not working with Valleran le Conte at the time, it can be assumed that he would have known of Jodelle's works because Jodelle's plays were still being performed. Jodelle's *Didon* was approximately fifty years old by the time Hardy had his own version staged; so although there was a

[42] Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Vie d'Alexandre Hardy*, p. 20, and Alan Howe, *Ecrivains de Théâtre*, p. 82.
[43] The address to the reader is reproduced in Ernst Stengel, *Le Théâtre d'Alexandre Hardy*, 5 vols, (Paris: H. Le Soudier, 1884), I, 4.
[44] Deierkauf-Holsboer states that Valleran Le Conte's troupe were staging Jodelle's plays in the provinces, see *Vie d'Alexandre Hardy*, p. 26.

slight risk of the audience finding the theme repetitive, it at least ensured they knew the story and enabled Hardy to put his mark on it.

Didon se sacrifiant was published in 1624 in the first volume of his *Théâtre*. In terms of contextualisation, because it is near impossible to offer a definitive date for the composition and performance of this play, it is difficult to give a specific contextual study of its composition. Various critics have proposed different dates and Alan Howe summarises the controversy in his edition of *Didon se sacrifiant* as follows: 'Lancaster proposa les années 1605-1615, Deierkauf-Holsboer la situa 'avant 1610'. Quelque vraisemblables que soient ces théories, tout ce que nous avons le droit d'affirmer avec certitude est que la pièce fut écrite avant 1620-1621'.[45] I would contend that even if Hardy's play was composed as early as 1605, this was still only eleven years after the death of Catherine de Medici, and collective memory of Regency and female power would have remained strong. If the play was composed after May 1610 and before 1617, it was composed under the Regency of Marie de Medici. Finally, if it was composed between 1617 and 1621, memories of women in power would, again, have undoubtedly been strong. It can, therefore, be concluded that the choice of the story of Dido was relevant to contemporary audiences, who could at the very least compare, if not identify, Dido with contemporary monarchs.

A particular aspect of the character of Dido which would have resonated with contemporaries of Marie de Medici's Regency is prodigality. Although it must be noted that it is not specific to Hardy's tragedy – it finds its source in Virgil's *Æneid* and is present in Jodelle's play as well – it is still interesting to note this parallel between the fictional queen and the historical queen. Without going into too much detail here, one can

[45] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, pp. 21-22.

see an admission of guilt by Dido in act III scene 1: her prodigality towards Æneas is blamed for the strife she now has to face. Similar accusations were made against Marie de Medici, especially in relation to the Concinis as will be discussed in the next chapters.

Hardy's style and the content of his plays were shaped by the growing dissatisfaction of the audience towards the static form of theatre but also by the popularisation of theatre. Valleran Le Conte set up his Troupe Royale at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1599, renting the premises from the *Confrérie de la Passion et de la Résurrection de Jésus Christ*, who had been performing mysteries since 1402; Mondory set up his troupe at the Marais in 1634. The rivalry of the two playhouses offered access to plays to a wider audience. Unlike Jodelle, the authors no longer dealt with the aristocracy, but with the bourgeoisie, and more generally the 'gens de collège, de palais ou de commerce' as described by the *lieutenant de police*.[46] Until the 1630s, theatres were deemed an inappropriate place for the 'honnête femme', yet there are a number of instances when such women attended plays: to avoid censure, a small number of 'honnête femmes' went to the theatre veiled.[47] Consequently, it can be concluded that Hardy's audience would have been predominantly male.

In terms of structure, as one of Hardy's earlier plays, *Didon se sacrifiant* still features choruses: it might have been performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1603,[48] as part of an early collaboration between the author and Valleran Le Conte's troupe.[49] What is interesting, when comparing Jodelle and Hardy, is that the latter was most probably

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[46] John Lough, *Writer and Public*, p. 155.
[47] See John Lough, *Seventeenth-Century French Drama: the Background* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 81, or Wendy Gibson, 'Women and the Notion of Propriety in the French Theatre (1628-1643)', in *Forum for Modern Languages Studies*, 11 (1975), 2.
[48] See Parfaict, *Dictionnaire*, p. 306.
[49] Contracts between Hardy and Valleran exist, but they only cover the period from 1611 onwards. For details, see Howe, *Ecrivains de Théâtre*, pp. 78-84.

involved in the performances of Valleran's troop.[50] From this, it can be concluded that Hardy's plays were more adapted to the stage than those of his predecessor. Moreover, unlike Jodelle, Hardy failed to obtain a powerful patron until 1615, which accounts, at least partly, for the prolific nature of his work. He could not count on the generosity of a powerful benefactor until then. Hardy earned a living from his writing. This explains, to a certain extent, why the quantity of Hardy's plays is more of the essence than their quality, and possibly why, in the case of *Didon se sacrifiant*, Hardy's tragedy is so similar to Jodelle's and still so close to Virgil's text, to the detriment of the dramatic tension.[51] Nevertheless, there is an attempt to create more dramatic tension within the play through the introduction on stage of Iarbe and the redistribution of Jodelle's long-winded five acts.[52]

Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant* – he even kept the same title as Jodelle – is shorter than Jodelle's at 2,026 lines. It is composed of five acts, which are divided into two or three scenes each.[53] Hardy not only kept the choruses, he used them as often as Jodelle, thus maintaining a strong lyrical element in his play. Hardy's play, like that of his predecessor, starts with the decision by Æneas to leave. The structure of Hardy's tragedy is similar to that of Jodelle in that the first act sees the separation of male and female characters: Jodelle kept his first act entirely masculine and Hardy kept the first scene of act I entirely masculine, whereas the second scene is entirely feminine. This allowed both playwrights to create a certain amount of dramatic tension, as the audience awaits the

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[50] Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Vie d'Alexandre Hardy*, p. 39.

[51] For an exact account of the passages translated directly from Virgil by Hardy, see Alan Howe's edition of *Didon se sacrifiant*, pp. 28-32. Hardy himself states that his play is 'presque entierement imitee du Poëte Latin', in his address to the reader (Ernst, Neudruck, ed., *Le Théâtre d'Alexandre Hardy*, p. 5).

[52] Iarbe is a local King who wishes to marry Dido; this name is spelt Iarbe by Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry, Hyarbas by Boisrobert and Hiarbe by Montfleury; for the sake of understanding, this character will be referred to as Iarbe throughout my thesis.

[53] With the exception of act five which is composed of one scene only.

first meeting of Dido with Æneas. The remaining structure of the two plays differs slightly: Hardy dedicated the second act to his masculine characters, thus delaying again the first meeting of the protagonists. The first scene of the third act sees the first and only meeting of Dido with Æneas, but the second scene of act IV sees the confrontation of Æneas by Anne,[54] which offers the audience an alternative to the already-staged confrontation of the main protagonists. Finally, Hardy's last act, like Jodelle's, is entirely dedicated to his female characters and ends with Dido's suicide, using the sword Æneas left behind, and the announcement that Iarbe will probably relinquish his claim over Carthage at the news of Dido's death.

There is no record of how many times Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant* was performed, yet it is obvious that the topic remained an attractive one to playwrights since, in 1637, Scudéry dedicated a third tragedy in French to Dido.

Georges de Scudéry, *Didon*

Born in Le Havre in 1601, to a noble but impoverished family, Georges de Scudéry was brought up by his uncle, after the death of his father in 1613, and seems to have received a good education, learning Italian and Spanish, as well as all the other subjects deemed essential for a young noble man.[55] According to Dutertre and Moncond'Huy, he followed in the paternal footsteps and turned to a career in the army, maybe as early as 1615, and as a *capitaine du régiment des Gardes* distinguished himself in the Piedmont wars, especially in 1629.[56] Seeking glory and a better financial situation, Scudéry then turned to the arts. He was already a prolific poet, mostly inspired by the women he loved, but

[54] Anne is Dido's sister and *confidante*.
[55] Eveline Dutertre and Dominique Moncond'Huy, ed., *Le Prince déguisé. La Mort de César* (Paris: Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1992), p. viii.
[56] Ibid., p. viii.

Scudéry then set his sights on theatre, which was experiencing a revival in France in the years 1629-1630.[57] Scudéry attracted the interest of the Comte de Belin, a strong supporter of the theatre, who offered Scudéry financial help until his death in 1637 and to whom Scudéry dedicated his *Didon*.[58] Scudéry also attracted the attention of the Cardinal de Richelieu, to whom he dedicated his first tragedy, *La Mort de César*. Richelieu's influence on Scudéry can be seen in the playwright's decision to give up theatre at the death of his patron in 1642.[59] A prolific poet as well as a playwright, Scudéry was also a literary critic, which earned him a seat at the Académie Française in 1650.[60]

The interest of Scudéry for Dido is a long-standing one and did not die with his heroine in 1637. She reappeared nearly ten years later, in his *Cabinet de Monsieur de Scudéry*, as the subject of a fictional painting by Da Vinci.[61] In this poem, Scudéry has decidedly taken sides and although Dido is abandoned by Æneas, she seems to suspend her suicidal gesture:

> Ah! je crois qu'elle est sauvée,
> Qu'elle épargne ses appas,
> Car elle ne frappe pas,
> Quoique sa main soit levée.[62]

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[57] Biet and Moncond'huy quote two lines engraved around the portrait of the author, and published in the second edition of *Le Trompeur puni*, and probably composed by Scudéry himself: 'Et poète et guerrier/ Il aura du laurier.' C. Biet and D Moncond'huy, eds, *Le Cabinet de Monsieur de Scudéry* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991), p. 7.
[58] Delmas, *Didon à la scène*, pp. xlviii-xlix.
[59] Ibid., p. xlix. See also Alan Howe, *Ecrivains de Théâtre*, p. 186, on his subsequent 'exile' to Marseilles.
[60] For his involvement in the *Querelle du Cid* and the Parisian literary salons , see Dutertre and Moncond'Huy, *Le Prince déguisé,* and Eveline Dutertre, *Scudéry dramaturge* (Geneva: Droz, 1988).
[61] The *Cabinet* was first published in Paris in 1646 by Courbé. The thirtieth painting entitled 'Didon qui se tue' is different from most of the other paintings described in the *Cabinet* precisely because it is not the description of a painting. There is indeed no record of Leonardo Da Vinci ever having featured Dido in any of his paintings. Moreover, the poem is not so much based on what the author allegedly sees, and can therefore describe, but on extradiegetic information and moral judgements, which explains the choice of a fictional rather than an actual painting. For more details, see Biet and Moncond'huy, eds, *Le Cabinet de Monsieur de Scudéry*, pp. 140-44.
[62] Ibid., p. 141.

The choice of Dido by Scudéry is not altogether surprising. Firstly, his education meant that he would have been familiar with the *Æneid.* Secondly, he had already shown an interest in Roman history through his first tragedy, *La Mort de César*. The appeal of Roman history for Scudéry and his contemporaries was two-fold: the imitation of the Ancients was still very much an essential part of the creative process in order to meet the critics' expectations;[63] second, French monarchs claimed to descend from the Roman Emperor Augustus. As Virgil's *Æneid* is generally considered an attempt to establish that Augustus was of divine descent, any reference to Æneas contributes to promote the French idea of monarchy by divine right. Close to Richelieu, who was attempting to promote the monarchy through theatre, Scudéry seems, therefore, to have carefully chosen topics for his two tragedies that were supporting the Cardinal's aim. The subject of *La Mort de César* was particularly suitable for the representation of a strong personal form of power on stage, while *Didon* is peppered with references to royal power,[64] or the role of monarchs,[65] all themes which, in terms of characterisation, clearly establish Dido as a monarch worthy of Richelieu's standards. In this, Scudéry contributes to maintaining the monarchy by divine right in adhering to the technique of propaganda as articulated by Jowett and O'Donnell:

> Messages have greater impact when they are in line with existing opinions, beliefs, and dispositions. Jacques Ellul (1965) said, 'The propagandist builds his techniques on the basis of his knowledge of man, his tendencies, his desires, his needs, his psychic mechanisms, his conditioning' (p.4). The propagandist uses belief to create belief by linking or reinforcing audience predispositions to reinforce propagandistic ideology or, in some cases, to create new attitudes or behaviours or both. Rather than try to change political loyalties, racial or religious attitudes,

[63] In the *Avertissement*, Scudéry repeatedly refers to his play as a translation of Virgil's text. Scudéry, *Didon*, pp. 5-6.
[64] See, for instance, the sun motif pervading the play.
[65] See, in particular, act I, scene 4.

> and other deeply held beliefs, the propagandist voices the propagandee's feelings about these things. Messages appear to be resonant, for they seem to be coming from within the audience rather than from without.[66]

Scudéry's audience was aware of French monarchs' claims and seeing them represented on stage would have served to reinforce its belief and willing participation in the existing feudal system. However, it is interesting to note that, in Scudéry's play, the political dimension is mostly introduced on a thematic rather than lexical level by secondary characters such as the courtiers, Hermon, Arbase or Hircan. The absence of King Iarbe in this play forces a shift of the politic theme from Dido and Æneas onto those characters, while the former are more concerned with personal matters.

If the choice of Dido as a main character is not surprising, it could have been problematic in view of Marie de Medici's controversial thirst for power which led to her banishment only four years before the first performance of *Didon* in 1635. Was it wise to represent a female ruler on stage at such a time? Had Marie de Medici been forgotten already? This is highly unlikely. Could the ultimate failure of this female ruler on stage serve to maintain the suspension of disbelief — the audience would readily accept this failure as inevitable based on their own experience of female rulers — and subtly reinforce the idea of female rule as inherently dangerous? Again, this is highly unlikely. Dido is portrayed overall as a good monarch, with very few negative references — substantially fewer, in fact, than in the previous plays by Jodelle and Hardy. This, I would contend, stems from the fact that the fundamental goal of Scudéry, under the influence of contemporary circumstances, is to paint a positive picture of monarchy, regardless of the gender of the monarch. Scudéry himself explains in the *Avertissement* that the aim of the play is to give women access to Virgil's beautiful text: 'comme le pays

[66] Jowett and O'Donell, *Propaganda*, p. 290.

Latin est trop loin de la France pour y faire voyager les Dames, c'est ici qu'elles pourront voir au moins une légère idée de tant d'excellentes choses, que leur cache une langue, qui n'est plus que dans les livres'.[67] This is in fact symptomatic of the increasing presence of women and, more generally, the diversification of the audience explains the evolution of style and content of plays. The playwrights adapted to trends and responded to the audience's demands. Thus, Scudéry's *Didon* differs from its predecessors in that it reflects the *galanterie* and *préciosité* emanating from the *salons*. Addressed to an educated and precious audience, Scudéry's tragedy is influenced by his frequentation of literary salons.[68] His audience is likely to have been proportionately more feminine, because, as Gibson explains, from 1628, encouraging women to go to the theatre was part of an attempt to address the issue of the sulfurous reputation of the theatre:

> To combat the old image of riotous immorality and dispel any notion that theatre-going was a pursuit fit only for the rabble, those whose livelihood depended on box-office takings set about creating a new, elevated image of drama. [...]
> The 'honnêteté' of the theatre was further vouchsafed, according to its champions, by the presence in the audience of a much broader and less exclusive social group, namely, the 'honnêtes femmes' who had allegedly ceased to frequent it previously, for fear of receiving some affront to their modesty.[69]

In terms of form, there are some variations to be expected in Scudéry's play: by 1635, the rules of classical tragedy were already actively used,[70] and the tastes of the audience had evolved and with that so had the genre requirements. Other variations are more original. *Didon* is much shorter than its predecessors, at 1,720 alexandrines, and

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[67] Scudéry, *Didon*, p. 6.
[68] It should be noted that Madeleine de Scudéry, his sister, held her own literary salon from 1652.
[69] Gibson, 'Women and the Notion of Propriety,' pp. 1-2.
[70] Boileau's *Art Poétique* is only published in 1674, but the publication of Mairet's *Sylvanire* in 1630 served to establish the rules.

adheres loosely to the rules of classical tragedy, something the two *Didon se sacrifiant* did not have to do: it is divided into five acts, each act is divided into five to seven scenes, and, for the first time, there is no chorus. If the unity of action is respected and, to a certain extent, the unity of place as well - the scene is at Carthage: it includes an indoor space, which can be assumed to be Dido's palace, and a nearby forest for the hunting scenes - the unity of time is not respected: the action is spread out over three days.

According to Delmas, the originality of Scudéry's play lies in its

> ... exploitation encore plus complète des discours rapportés de l'*Énéide*. Et ce parti va, en fait, dans le sens de l'efficacité dramatique. Comme on le sait, Scudéry fait débuter l'action beaucoup plus tôt que ses prédécesseurs, à l'arrivée des Troyens à Carthage. Le champ des traductions possibles de la source virgilienne se trouve alors considérablement élargi: outre la totalité du livre IV (alors que peu ou prou Jodelle et Hardy faisaient commencer la pièce au premier avertissement de Mercure), l'adaptateur peut incorporer dans son propre texte des éléments des livres I et II. C'est pourquoi la crise n'éclate qu'à l'acte IV où se trouve regroupé l'essentiel du dialogue entre Énée et Didon [...].[71]

However, like Jodelle, Scudéry kept Iarbe off stage, and although he is mentioned (I, 1, 47), he only appears as a rejected lover, without any mention of him representing a danger for the kingdom. The dramatic tension therefore cannot lie in this play with the feeling of urgency created by the imminent attack by an outside force.

Scudéry, like Jodelle and Hardy before him, keeps the main characters apart for the first scenes: the first scene is entirely feminine, dedicated to a dialogue between Dido and her sister Anne. The second and third scenes are entirely masculine with the introduction of Æneas and his band of Trojans. The fourth scene sees the return of Dido and Anne, the introduction of Barce and Dido's daughters (one of Scudéry's original inventions), Technis and Zertine, as well as a few male courtiers. Finally, in the fifth

[71] Delmas, *Didon à la scène*, p. xl.

scene of the first act, Dido and Æneas meet for the first time in the play. An important innovation in Scudéry's play lies in the vastly increased number of scenes in which both Dido and Æneas feature: six in total.[72] This stems from the fact that Scudéry starts his play before the decision to leave has been made by the Trojans, consequently a number of scenes are dedicated to Æneas courting Dido, before the scene of confrontation. The latter only occurs in act IV, scene 2, the penultimate encounter of the protagonists. Dido's recriminations are similar to those in the previous plays, that is to say very close to Virgil's text, and end with the Queen fainting. The rest of the fourth act is dedicated to the Trojans first and, more specifically, to the difficulty Æneas finds to do his duty, then to Dido and Anne and a reflection on men's inconsistency. Scudéry prolonged Dido's agony with an ultimate meeting with her lover in act V, scene 2, where Dido's fury is expressed by imprecations foreseeing the Punic wars, thus following Virgil's text.[73] The end of the final act is entirely devoted to the female characters and the preparation of Dido's death.[74] Interestingly, the next tragedy dedicated to Dido is published only six years later, and is extremely different to the generally accepted version of the Dido myth, as it was adapted to the tragic genre by Jodelle, Hardy or Scudéry.

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[72] Dido and Æneas feature together in the following scenes: I, 5; II, 2 and 6; III, 5, IV, 2; V, 2.
[73] It is also the last scene in which Æneas and the Trojans appear.
[74] With the following minor exception of scene 4, in which Dido's courtisans plan to avenge themselves against the Trojans, as well as the mute presence of Hircan in scene 5 and four lines spoken by Hermon in scene 6.

François de Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon ou La Didon chaste*

Born in Caen in 1592, François le Métel de Boisrobert initially followed in the paternal footsteps, trained as a lawyer and practiced law at the bar in Rouen.[75] In 1622, he arrived in Paris and placed himself in the service of Marie de Medici. This is where he met Monseigneur de Richelieu, bishop of Luçon. These initial meetings did not provide Boisrobert with the expected manna, as the Queen was banished from court and, with her, Richelieu and our author.[76] Eventually the return of the Queen and the promotion of Richelieu to Cardinal allowed Boisrobert to find his place at court, but not without leaving him with a sharp understanding of politics and of the power of words.[77] A founding member of the Académie Française, Boisrobert had also been chosen by the Cardinal to be a member of his *Société des cinq auteurs* created in 1635.[78] The aim of this group was to write tragedies according to plans drawn by the Cardinal himself and to promote the monarchy. Boisrobert was not a keen tragedy writer. *La Vraye Didon* is in fact his only tragedy; his skills tended to take him towards other genres such as tragicomedy and comedy. The subject and the genre chosen by Boisrobert are no coincidence. To explain the choice of Dido, we could mention the feeling of emulation between fellow authors which might have encouraged him to choose the same topic as his predecessors, or the fact that Dido was a legendary heroine associated with Rome, hence an appropriate subject. However, Boisrobert distinguished himself from his predecessors

[75] Tallemant des Réaux, *Le Cardinal de Richelieu, sa famille, son favori Bois-Robert* (1657-59) (Paris: Bossard, 1920), p. 179, and Emile Magne, *Le Plaisant Abbé de Boisrobert, fondateur de l'Académie Française, 1592-1662* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1909), pp. 27-32.
[76] Magne, *Le Plaisant Abbé de Boisrobert*, pp. 38-57. However, by 1624, Boisrobert was receiving a comfortable pension from the Cardinal and enjoyed numerous other 'bénéfices'. See Alan Howe, *Ecrivains de Théâtre*, p. 26.
[77] His writings got him in trouble on numerous occasions, see for instance Tallemant des Réaux, *Le Cardinal de Richelieu*, pp. 184-85 and 200-03.
[78] The *Société* also included Guillaume Colletet, Pierre Corneille, Claude de l'Estoile and Jean de Rotrou.

by choosing to ignore Virgil as a source text, or not so much ignore him as to denounce the cabal he started against Dido. The influence of the circumstances of composition is obvious in this case: Delmas details the cabal Boisrobert had himself fallen victim to at court and which led to his banishment.[79] The *dédicace* to Richelieu's niece, the comtesse d'Harcourt, is also revealing of this context, with references to the 'calomnie' that had targeted both Dido and the author.[80] The growing influence of women on theatre can also be witnessed in the *dédicaces* of contemporary plays, as can be seen with Boisrobert's play. Gibson thus asserts that, '[e]nthroned in their salons the ladies were already recognized "arbitores elegantiae" whose approbation was sought by poets [...]'.[81] Boisrobert's choice was representative both of women's association with virtue and the author's political acumen. For, Boisrobert might, in fact, be the author with the smallest intended audience. His *Vraye Didon* was written to ingratiate himself with Richelieu. His aim was, therefore, to satisfy the moral standards of his old patron. In order to do so, he composed a tragedy worthy of Richelieu's niece and sought to offer an example of female virtue.[82] It could, therefore, be argued that the popular success of his *Vraye Didon* did not much matter to Boisrobert as long as it pleased the Cardinal. The different intended audience of Scudéry and Boisrobert is reflected in the style and content of their respective plays. *Galanterie* and *préciosité* no longer feature in *La Vraye Didon*, but rather moral quandaries and a terrible striving to perform one's duty.

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[79] Delmas, *Didon à la scène*, pp. xlix-li.
[80] Ibid., p. 83.
[81] Gibson, 'Women and the Notion of Propriety,' p. 2.
[82] Delmas, *Didon à la scène*, pp. 81-82.

Consequently, Boisrobert used different sources, focusing instead on Justin's *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*,[83] as well as the Spanish tradition, especially Lobo Lasso de la Vega's *Tragedia de la honra de Dido restaurada.*[84] Relying on 'historical' sources, rather than the politically engaged Virgilian text, Boisrobert's aim was to rehabilitate Dido through a moral tragedy and thereby rehabilitate himself in the eyes of his protector and of the court. The use of inverted commas around the word historical highlights the fact that the criteria used by authors such as Justin to verify their sources are not those used by historians nowadays. If Justin cannot be accused of the same bias as Virgil, it must nevertheless be remembered that Justin's own sources are not necessarily reliable by modern standards. Scholars, however, refer to Justin's version of Dido's story as the historical tradition, as opposed to the legendary or mythical tradition which took shape with the *Æneid*.

The main consequence of Boisrobert's choice of source is revealed by the absence of Æneas in his play. There are, allegedly, three hundred years separating Æneas and Dido: Troy is supposed to have been destroyed in the twelfth century BC, whereas Carthage was only founded in the ninth century BC. Æneas the wanderer would have had to wander along time to meet the Queen of Carthage. In the absence of a love interest for his Dido, Boisrobert can concentrate on the moral dilemma faced by his Queen whose authority is challenged by two male protagonists: Iarbe and Pygmalion, Dido's own brother.

Ironically enough, Boisrobert explains in his *dédicace* to the comtesse that 'C'est en un mot la Vertu que je présente à la Vertu même', since the historical Dido 'aima

[83] Book XVIII, chapter VI. Quoted by Delmas, *Didon à la scène*, p. 84.
[84] Gabriel Lobo Lasso de la Vega, *Tragedia de la honra de Dido restaurada* (Alcalá de Henares: Lua Gracia, 1587). Quoted by Bono and Tessitore, *Il Mito di Didone*, p. 236.

mieux se donner la mort que de manquer à la fidélité qu'elle avait promise aux cendres de son époux'.[85] If his Dido refuses to give in to the solicitations of Iarbe in order to remain faithful to the promise made to her late husband, the comtesse d'Harcourt, on the other hand, had married the comte d'Harcourt after the death of her first husband. One can, therefore, wonder how appropriate it was to address the comtesse in his *dédicace*. It can only be concluded that the relations of the comtesse to Richelieu made it obvious that Boisrobert was really addressing her virtuous uncle. In a wider context, *La Vraye Didon* puts on stage once more a failed queen and we can again wonder how appropriate it would have been or how it would have been perceived by contemporary audiences.

La Vraye Didon differs from its predecessors on a number of levels. First the setting is different: the scene is set outside the walls of Carthage, not inside, in Dido's tent on the battlefield. In terms of structure, it differs greatly from the others because of the absence of Æneas. The basic structure is, of course, classic, with five acts divided into between three and seven scenes. Structurally, and in the narration, the role played by Æneas is split between Iarbe, Pygmalion and to a certain extent Dido. Iarbe has, for the first time, an important part in the play: he is present in nine scenes, although he only appears in one scene with Dido (II, 2). Iarbe and his men are clearly established as the outside force trying metaphorically and literally to make Carthage theirs. The passion that was present in the previous plays, that of Dido and Æneas, is here replaced by the equally destructive passion of Iarbe for Dido. Pygmalion, who was mentioned in previous plays as the murderer of Dido's husband but a distant threat, now appears in eight scenes, three of which are with Dido (I, 2; II, 2; III, 3). Finally, Delmas notes that

[85] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, p. 82.

> ... on assiste chez Boisrobert au déplacement sur Iarbas des fureurs de l'amour propre à la Didon virgilienne, par développement des indications de l'*Énéide*, jusqu'au siège de Carthage mentionné par Ovide au livre un des *Fastes* et repris par l'historien Justin.[86]

First an ally, then a traitor, Pygmalion here plays the role of Æneas as the internal force which endangers the kingdom. The scene of the *expositio* is once again left to Dido and Anne. The introduction of Pygmalion in the second scene, in a way, announces the masculinisation of the first act, as the next two scenes are entirely dedicated to men, as is most of the second act — except scene 2 and the confrontation of Dido and Iarbe. There are two scenes of confrontation in the play: early on in act II, there is the only encounter of Dido and Iarbe (II, 2), which rapidly turns into the confrontation of his passion with her stern virtue. The return of the female characters to the stage at the beginning of act III is short-lived since the male characters reappear in scene 2 and 3 and the next four scenes are entirely dedicated to them. The second scene of confrontation involves Dido and Pygmalion, after the discovery of his treachery (III, 3), and anticipates his forthcoming final betrayal.[87] The fourth act is equally overwhelmingly masculine (three scenes out of five), whereas the final act is dominated by female characters (male characters only play secondary roles in this act). It is interesting to note that paradoxically for a play named after a female character, it is the male characters who are overrepresented (ten scenes are entirely masculine, for five scenes only which are entirely feminine).

Antoine Jacob Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique ou les Amours de Didon et d'Ænée*

The next tragedy dedicated to Dido, thirty years later, goes back to Virgil's version of events. Antoine Jacob de Montfleury came from a different background to our previous

[86] Delmas, *Didon à la scène*, p. xlvi.
[87] He takes part in the sack of Carthage (V, 2).

authors. Born into an acting family, he had, initially, more experience of the theatre than Hardy, for instance, and was aware of material requirements as well as audience tastes.[88] Born in Paris in 1640, he was the son of the well-known actor Zacharie Jacob of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, who chose Montfleury as a *nom de scène* and later had it added to his own name.[89] Antoine's mother, Jeanne de la Chappe, was also an actress performing at the Hôtel de Bourgogne until 1667.[90] Antoine was not at first destined for a career in theatre: he was made *Avocat au Parlement* in 1660 and, according to the Parfaict brothers, started a new career in finance at the end of his life.[91] Montfleury, like Boisrobert, is the author of only one tragedy: *L'Ambigu comique ou les Amours de Didon et d'Ænée*. Its success is acknowledged by the author himself in his address to the reader:

> Je ne sçay si cette nouveauté aura quelque agrément sur le papier ; mais je me tiendray assez heureux, si le Lecteur peut avoir pour elle mesme indulgence que l'Auditeur, & si la lecture qu'il en fera ne détruit point l'estime que pres de trente Représentations consécutives luy ont acquise.[92]

The author of over twenty plays in the 1660s and 1670s, Montfleury was widely appreciated for his comedies, establishing him as Molière's main rival at the time. Clément and Laporte comment on Montfleury's 'expression que la décence a proscrite de

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[88] See, for example, the references to the Marais troupe in the first intermède of *L'Ambigu comique*, entitled *Le Nouveau Marié* (6, 10-68).
[89] See J. M. B. Clément and J. de Laporte, *Anecdotes dramatiques*, 3 vols (Paris: Veuve Duchesne, 1775) III, 357-58 and Georges Mongrédien and Jean Robert, *Les comédiens français du XVIIe siècle : dictionnaire biographique*, 3rd ed., (Paris: CNRS, 1981), pp. 132-33.
[90] Parfaict, *Dictionnaire*, p. 456.
[91] Ibid., p. 456.
[92] Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*, the pages are not numbered. This passage is on the fourth page of the address to the reader in the original edition which is used here. The original spelling has been preserved. For a detailed analysis of the number of the performances, see Jan Clarke, *The Guénégaud Theatre in Paris* (1673-1680), 2 vols (NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998) I, 325 and 330.

toutes nos comédies modernes', and on the narrow range of subjects of his comedies, yet they agree that his one tragedy showed great skills.[93]

L'Ambigu comique is not a classical tragedy, but a tragedy *à l'espagnol,* that is to say that each act is followed by a short comic *intermède* bearing no direct relation to the actual tragedy. This makes Montfleury's play the shortest of the five analysed in this thesis at 971 lines, since the tragedy itself is only three acts long, with each act being divided into five to seven scenes. The number of characters is consequently limited to six in order to preserve the coherence of the performance and reading.[94]

The choice of Dido by Montfleury is best explained by the author himself in his address to the reader:

> La crainte que j'avois que les Intermedes de celle-cy, qui n'en ont aucun avec ce qui les précede, n'interrompissent l'attention de l'Auditeur pour le Sérieux, me fit croire que je ne pourois l'empescher, qu'en faisant chois d'un Sujet fort connu. C'est ce qui me fit jetter les yeux sur le quatrième Livre de l'Æneide, où Virgile renferme les amours & la mort de Didon: outre que cette matiere est extrémement connuë, l'Antiquité ne nous a point laissé d'idée d'une passion ny plus forte ny plus touchante; & je me sentois si charmé des beautez de cet excellent Ouvrage, que je le regardois comme un Original d'apres lequel il estoit presque impossible de faire une méchante Copie. Comme ce Sujet avoit esté mis au Theatre par Estienne Jodelle, le premier qui ait fait des Tragedies en nostre Langue, & depuis mesme par des Autheurs dont la réputation a égalé le mérite, je n'aurois pas entrepris de le traiter, si je n'eusse appris d'Horace que les Oeuvres d'Homere & de Virgile sont des trésors dont il est permis à tout le monde de s'enrichir, & que les Sujets connus qui sont à tous ceux qui s'en veulent servir, deviennent propres & particuliers à celuy qui les traite.[95]

Aware of the work of his august predecessors, Montfleury chose Dido for the fame brought to her by Virgil and the French stage in previous decades. Like Jodelle and

[93] Clément and Laporte, *Anecdotes Dramatiques*, III, 359.
[94] These are Dido, Æneas, Achate, Hiarbe, Barsine and Philon, Dido's *capitaine des Gardes*. Barsine, identified as the *confidente de Didon*, plays the role attributed to both Barce and Anne in the other plays.
[95] Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*. See appendix 8, p. 323.

Hardy, Montfleury restricted himself to the fourth book of the *Æneid* and made his play start with the decision by Æneas to leave Carthage.

Unlike Boisrobert, Montfleury had no educational claim: his play is firmly rooted in the world of entertainment, which is reflected both in the format the author chose – the tragedy *à l'espagnol* – and in its content, with the treatment of the character of Dido standing out as the most obvious point of dissonance between the author and his predecessors. There are striking differences between Scudéry's *Didon* and *L'Ambigu comique*: Scudéry was imbued with *galanterie* and therefore chose to amend Virgil's text accordingly in order, for example, for Æneas and Dido to look less guilty in the eyes of his audience.[96] There is no such precaution in Montfleury's tragedy, although he also amended Virgil's text.[97] The distribution of scenes between male and female characters is similar to that in previous plays: the tragedy is dominated by male characters with eight scenes against two entirely dedicated to their female counterparts. The first two scenes of the play are dedicated to the *expositio*, which is the work of Æneas and Achate. Dido and Æneas are only present together on stage twice: I, 3 and II, 2. In the latter scene, Montfleury introduced the *topos* of the confrontation.

The main innovation in Montfleury's play is the new role given to Iarbe: on stage in five scenes out of eighteen, Iarbe represents less an outside threat than a love rival for Æneas. Dido even agrees to marry him, should he agree to kill the deserting Trojan (III, 6, 7). This role is all the more important since only Hardy and Boisrobert had put this character on stage before: yet, Boisrobert had established his Iarbe as a concrete external

[96] See Delmas, Didon à la scène, p. xliii-xliv.

[97] This is most obvious with the issue of marriage: Scudéry's Æneas does not promise marriage, hence does not break any promise, whereas Montfleury's hero has agreed to marry Dido and the preparations are ongoing at the beginning of the play (I, 2). Virgil, on the other hand, had remained vague on this particular question.

threat which needed to be kept out of Carthage,[98] whereas Hardy limited his presence to one scene (II, 1), in which Iarbe announced his departure, thereby confirming his identity as an foreigner. Montfleury is, therefore, the first author to amend the identity of Iarbe as an outsider.

[98] It must be remembered that the scene is set outside the Carthaginian walls.

CHAPTER 2
CONTEXTUALISATION: INSTITUTIONS, PRACTICES AND DISCOURSES ON WOMEN IN SIXTEENTH- AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

INSTITUTIONS AND DISCOURSES: THE MORALIST CONTROVERSY

This chapter aims to offer an overview of both femaleness and queenship in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France, that is to say the cultural and historical context in which Dido was created for the French stage. A description of femaleness and of the relationship of women to power in Renaissance and Early Modern France is essential before examining the character of Dido, because focusing on representations of a queen entails concentrating on the representation of women on the French stage. In order to have a better understanding of femaleness and queenship in this period, it is necessary to first examine the institutions, from theory to practice, and the works of the moralist writers and the *Querelle des femmes*, before looking at contemporary French Queens and the representation of female royal power in French drama over the same period.

Prior to any discussion of femaleness, it must be acknowledged here that queens enjoyed a very different status from that of the average woman, especially in France because of the notion of absolute monarchy.[1] However, the representation of queens on the tragic stage, in order for it to be appreciated by an audience coming from very different backgrounds, would have had to be based on features perceived to be common to most women, i.e. generic and gender stereotypes.[2] Furthermore, cultural and historical

[1] The French Queen is by definition meant to give birth to God's representative on Earth, the heir to the French throne.
[2] It should also be remembered that the five tragedies studied in this thesis were not destined for similar audiences as will be seen later; Jodelle's for instance was most certainly composed for Court entertainment.

frames of reference cannot be overlooked: it is obvious that these will have moulded gender representations within each author's mind.

While analysing Renaissance and Early Modern literature, one must resist what Jonathan Dollimore describes as 'the temptation simply to write the past according to our current theoretical predilections', meaning that forcibly applying the frame of modern literary or social theories onto Renaissance and Early Modern moralistic writing and literature will not necessarily help understand them better.[3] It is important to keep in mind the fact that this study is concerned with a fictional female character fashioned by male authors, therefore I will not attempt to analyse Dido as a Renaissance woman, but as the construction of Renaissance men. Fisher and Halley agree that, when studying Renaissance women in literature, 'by and large, the codes and conventions of courtly love were articulations not of women's 'erotic independence', but of masculine desire'.[4] Fisher and Halley reject the argument that women represented in medieval and Renaissance texts are an accurate description of women's actual social status in this period: '[...] as feminist literary critics know, the relationship between the textual record and historical experience is too problematic to allow us to read literary images as representations of women's lives and of their subjectivities'.[5] This is the reason why the analysis of moralist writing, and more widely of the historical context of production of the plays, is essential to this study

The five tragedies I will study in this thesis span over a century and yet all are influenced by the prevailing *mother – whore dichotomy* which originated in the historical

[3] Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), p. 24.
[4] Sheila Fisher and Janet E. Halley, eds, *Seeking the Woman in Late Medieval and Renaissance Writings: Essays in Contextual Criticism* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1989), p. 4.
[5] Fisher and Halley, *Seeking the Woman*, p. 4.

circumstances previously evoked. This dichotomy is best illustrated by quotations from contemporary works:

> Par femme toute Justice est née, par qui est tout rendu, tout donné, que par femme? Par qui est le Ciel ouvert, par femme? Par qui vient tout bien, par femme? Qui est-ce qui n'a eu, apporté, et receu don de femme? Qui est-ce qui a plus servy au bien de tout le monde que la femme. Les Anges du Ciel ont par la Vierge Marie receu le fils de Dieu incarné, les hommes l'ont receu pour Dieu, Sauveur et Redempteur.
>
> En liberalité, la femme surmonte toutes autres creatures, quand la Vierge Marie nous a donné le fils de Dieu eternel, reparateur du genre humain, qui contient toute valeur...
>
> Par exemple la Religion Chrestienne est au monde, car de la Vierge Marie nasquit Jesus-Christ... La femme est donc mere de toute Religion, fontaine de toute devotion [...].[6]

> Et quoy (diront-ils) pourroit-on excuser [les femmes] de legereté et inconstance? Chacun ne sçait-il pas que les femmes procedent avec autant de fragilité en leurs opinions et sentences que les enfans, qui considerera l'infirmité de leur sexe? Elles veulent et ne veulent, à mesme temps également toutes choses, prennent autant de formes que Prothée et de couleurs que le Cameleon. Et d'où procede que les enfans se courroucent et hayssent pour legeres occasions, sinon pour autant qu'ils ont l'esprit foible, par lequel ils sont gouvernez? N'est-ce pas l'opinion tenue des Philosophes que la femme n'est qu'un defaut de l'homme? Que l'esprit de la femme est inepte et incapable de choses bonnes, et prompt à concevoir les mauvaises, le tout à cause du defaut et privation, qui semble avoir je ne sçay quoy de connexe avec le naturel de la femme?[7]

These two quotations point to the paradox of the female figure in the early seventeenth century, as well as the force with which women were both loved and loathed. Femininity represents a real paradox in Renaissance society and a challenge to the political and religious elite and, by extension, to moralist writers: women are either despised ('l'esprit foible,' 'la femme n'est qu'un defaut de l'homme', 'l'esprit de la femme est inepte et incapable de choses bonnes') or admired ('Par qui vient tout bien, par femme?', 'En

[6] Laurens Le Peletier, *De la chasteté* (Andegavi: A. Mauger, 1635), pp. 63-64.
[7] Nicolas Angenoust, *Paranymphe des dames* (Troyes: P. du Ruau, 1629), pp. 2-5.

liberalité, la femme surmonte toutes autres creatures', 'La femme est donc mere de toute Religion').

INSTITUTIONS

This dichotomy is, however, not reflected in the institutions regulating the role and place of women in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France. To fully understand the implications of the representation on stage of a female ruler, it is necessary to first understand what the general situation of women was at the time when these representations were put on the French stage; this should enable us to then comment on the relevance of the character of Dido to the five playwrights we are examining here and their contemporary audiences. In *Woman Triumphant*, Ian Maclean has analysed an extensive list of the works published about women during the Renaissance and throughout the *Querelle des femmes* in the seventeenth century.[8] Maclean divides his overview of French Renaissance women's rights and status into various sections based on the theological, medical and legal evidence supplied by the reading of legal documents and of commentaries and debates arising from the interpretation of ancient and Christian authoritative texts. These texts perpetuated or gave birth to commonplaces about women's inferiority.

WOMEN IN THEOLOGICAL TEXTS

The theological status of women was not a point of dissension between Catholics and Reformers: they all agreed that women were human beings in their own right - that is to say that they accepted that women had a mortal body and an immortal soul - even though

[8] Ian Maclean, *Woman Triumphant: Feminism in French Literature, 1640-1652* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

it should be noted that this position had only been reached fairly recently and was still, if only in jest, refuted in various publications, such as the anonymous *Disputatio nova contra mulieres qua probatur eas homines non esse* published in 1593, which, according to Maclean, was known throughout the following century and yet did not '[...] provoke anything but refutation'.[9] Commentators also dealt with the questions of whether women had been made in the image of God and what would be their fate after resurrection: would they be reborn as women or men? Although all commentators subscribed to Augustine's interpretation of Genesis and of the term 'image' proving that women were, like men, made in the image of God, they also followed St Paul in thinking that men were a better version of the image of God. Theologians also accepted that women would be resurrected as women in the after-life. The last theological question which preoccupied commentators was that of the equality of men and women before God. As advanced — relative to the position of the Church on the same matters in the Middle Ages — as their position might have been on the previous points, this debate had important consequences for society which could not be easily overlooked. Granting women's equality to men in the eyes of God would have shaken the foundation of the French patriarchal society, as it would have undoubtedly questioned both the validity of women's subordination to their husbands as well as women's assumed higher propensity to sin. Aquinas and other commentators seemed to agree in their interpretation of the Bible, granting women's equality to men, yet the necessity of their subordination to men persisted under other guises. This questioning nonetheless had some influence on Christian dogma as marriage was completely reassessed during the Council of Trent. Women's greater propensity to

[9] Maclean, *Woman Triumphant*, p. 2.

sin represented less of an issue for commentators as Maclean explains that 'woman's greater mental frailty is generally conceded [...]'[10] by all theologians.

Misogynist propaganda in the sixteenth century was not only voiced in France: Scotland and England were thrown into this early battle of the sexes, as they were successively ruled by women. It is interesting at this stage to compare some of the arguments of the British commentators with regard to female rule and what it reveals about the general condition of women at the time. Robert M. Healey investigates in particular the works of John Knox, a reformed chaplain, in his article 'Waiting for Deborah: John Knox and Four Ruling Queens' and clearly shows that the vision of women as weak and unfit to rule was not the prerogative of French commentators.[11] Mary Tudor's accession to the English throne in 1553 greatly threatened the future of religious Reformation in the country: even under Edward VI, a reformed monarch, she had remained loyal to Catholicism and had made no secret of her religious beliefs. The accession of Marie de Guise to the regency of Scotland the following year was equally threatening for the Reformation, as she came from a family of staunch Catholics who were involved in the religious persecutions against the reformers in France. Besides the direct threat that both queens posed to his faith, Healey suggests that '[t]he factors that entered John Knox's thought on female monarchy included his study of scripture, his era's popular estimate of women's abilities [...]'.[12] Knox consulted Reformation leaders on the question of female rule, to which Calvin moderately answered that:

> ... government by a woman was a deviation from the original and proper order of nature, and therefore among the punishments humanity incurred

[10] Ibid., p. 6.
[11] Robert M. Healey, 'Waiting for Deborah: John Knox and Four Ruling Queens' in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 25, 2 (1994), 371-86.
[12] Ibid., p. 371.

> for original sin. However, Calvin continued, if it had been established by custom, public consent, and long practice that a woman could inherit the rule of a realm or principality, he would not question her right to do so, 'because in my opinion it would not be lawful to unsettle governments which are ordained by the peculiar providence of God.' Bullinger likewise held that rule by a woman was contrary to God's law, but cautioned Knox against using that reason to oppose such rule [...].[13]

Knox remained unsatisfied by Calvin's answer and gradually distanced himself from the Reformation leaders on the particular question of female rule. He published in 1558 a treatise entitled *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, featuring negative portraits of Mary Tudor and Marie de Guise and putting forward his two main arguments against female rule:

> (1) God's commands had made it a virtue for woman to serve man, and (2) God's punishment of Eve had put woman in subjection to man. A woman, therefore, had no natural right to rule any realm, even when the royal line of succession included no male heir.[14]

Knox also argued that God commanded a husband to be 'head' to his wife in all things, which meant that he was entitled to take control of her property and that, if a queen married, she should subsequently subject herself and her realm to her husband's faith and control in every domain. The death of Mary Tudor and accession to the throne of Elizabeth I had hardly any influence on Knox's discourse; although he regarded her as a preferable ruler to Mary Tudor because of her religious beliefs, he wrote to the Queen that 'she had to acknowledge herself unfitted for the throne not only by gender but also by past sins [...]'.[15] The religious convictions of Knox were obviously extremely important, but so was the general contemporary estimate of women's abilities as shown by his attitude towards Elizabeth I. The misogynist discourse of moralist writers was not

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[13] Ibid., pp. 372-73.
[14] Ibid., p. 376.
[15] Ibid., pp. 379-80.

a French prerogative; it prevailed in much of the European moralist writing of the time, especially so in countries ruled by women.[16]

WOMEN IN SCIENTIFIC TEXTS

Science proved helpful for theologians to justify their belief in women's inferiority: the main element working in favour of the theologians was the generally accepted animality of women compared to men who were considered as rational, thinking beings. From the old belief that the womb was an animal in its own right, doctors and theologians concluded that any 'woman is prey to almost boundless lust because of her need to satisfy the cravings of her womb [...]'.[17] Other proofs of women's inferiority included women being not just animals, but monsters, this coming from Plato's *Timaeus*, because they would 'incarnate the souls of men who in a previous life had been debauched [...]';[18] women being imperfect males because they were colder in humours and temperature, or because their genitalia were 'imperfect versions of the male, and have remained internal 'ob caloris debilitatem'.[19] The bias was also obvious in the assertion that, considering women's function is to have children, the fact that they cannot do it without man's sperm indicated to the Renaissance doctors and theologians that women were incomplete on their own. However, part of the medical evidence was put to the test throughout the sixteenth century: the development of medicine showed that there was no difference in body temperature between men and women and the dissimilarities in men's and women's genitalia were also later explained by the differences in the role of the two sexes in the

[16] Apart from France, England and Scotland, the Netherlands had been ruled by a woman too: Margaret of Austria had been regent of the Netherlands between 1507 and 1515 and again intermittently from 1518 until her death in 1530.
[17] Ian Maclean, *Woman Triumphant*, p. 9.
[18] Ibid., p. 8.
[19] Ibid., p. 9.

reproduction process. The evolution of scientific knowledge gradually questioned the validity of woman's inferiority as extrapolated from her physical differences from man, yet while there seemed to be some progress made in the assessment of woman's imperfection, the common-places regarding women as frail-minded imperfect versions of men still seemed to prevail. On the whole, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, women had evolved in the minds of theologian commentators and scientists from an inferior species to an inferior version of the human male species, meaning women still required male tutelage.

WOMEN IN LEGAL TEXTS

From this, the legal position of women in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France can be better understood. Maclean illustrates this point of the very limited rights and prerogatives of women with the justifications given by the jurist Francus and other contemporaries:

> One jurist [Francus] refers to the historical event which is said to have caused the prohibition (Calpurnia's notorious behaviour) [...]. Cagnolus argues that women are inferior to men in the imperfection of their anatomy, in their lack of active virtue, in their dependence on men, symbolized in the manner of their first creation, and in the specific religious injunction: 'vir est caput mulieris' (Eph. 5:23). Women are excluded from public life because they must uphold the modesty of their sex, because they are inconsistent, of poor judgement, prone to emotionalism, and unable to keep secrets. Ferrarius also refers to their imperfect faculties; he then describes woman's desire to govern and dominate in order to compensate for her weakness [...]. References to the *fragilitas*, *imbecillitas*, *inconstantia* of women are everywhere apparent in these commentaries [...].[20]

Modesty appears as the primary female virtue, which must be protected by men, women being too frail-minded to do so themselves; keeping women away from public life is then

[20] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

defined as man's duty to women. Even proto-feminist jurists in the seventeenth century, such as Johannes Ulricus Wolff and Joachimus Eberartus, who both asserted that women were unfairly treated by law and insisted that their treatment was based on custom, rather than on proved discrepancies between men's and women's abilities, were not exempt from the contemporary vision of women as weak beings, as the prerogatives they ascribed to women were based on what Maclean identifies as 'unflattering causes: presumed ignorance of the law and of social custom, lack of common sense, muddle-headedness, rashness, and a tendency to emotionalism'.[21]

THE FAMILY-STATE COMPACT, MARRIAGE AND INHERITANCE

This explains the limited rights women enjoyed in terms of succession and inheritance; for example, unmarried women were considered as minors at least until their twenty-fifth year following the edict of 1556, after which they had some rights to inheritance, yet they still remained under the guardianship of their nearest male kin, whereas married women had to let their husbands administer their properties and assets. However, some protection for lineage property was provided and inheritance restrictions were introduced. Sarah Hanley highlights those restrictions in an article dedicated to family formation and its role in the building of the Early Modern French state through the promulgation of the Family-State compact.[22] According to Hanley, the idea behind the Family-State compact was to:

> ... remold the social body by constructing and consolidating family networks, which required control over family formation. To that end the officeholders in Parlements and in other bureaus promulgated the 'Family-

[21] Ibid., p. 16.
[22] Sarah Hanley, 'Engendering the State: Family Formation and State Building in Early Modern France' in *French Historical Studies*, 6, 1 (1989), 4-27.

> State compact', which was designed to bring family formation under parental (that is, patriarchal) control in the first instance and under the magisterial control of the Parlement of Paris in the second. The Family-State compact regulated family matters (marriage regulations, reproductive customs, inheritance rules, and marital separation arrangements) and instituted civil procedures to register vital statistics and legal procedures to appeal contested cases to the Parlement of Paris.[23]

The introduction of inheritance restrictions in the context of the Family-State compact conformed to the attempt to preserve family property and investment, which in turn helped preserve the patriarchal system. Thus, Hanley points out that:

> ... the lineage property (*propres*) remained linked to the family of origin until the birth of children to whom it would later descend. Should either spouse die without issue, the lineage portion of the deceased person's property (usually a significant sum) ascended back to the bloodline of origin.[24]

Instituting the family as a crucial tool of social engineering made marriage all the more important and put women in an inferior position, as they were, potentially, not in control of the choice of a husband since the Council of Trent's edicts in 1563, and definitely not of their assets and properties which were always meant to be managed either by their husband or their nearest male kin if they were single or widowed.[25] Despite the Family-State compact, married women were unequal to men in the eyes of the law regarding adultery for instance: although in theory adultery was punishable by death for men and life imprisonment for women, in practice women were punished more severely than men. Hanley interprets adultery in the light of the Family-State compact and comes to the conclusion that the reason for the discrepancy in the treatment reserved for unfaithful men and women lies in the gender-based attribution of prerogatives:

[23] Ibid., pp. 8-9.
[24] Ibid., p. 13.
[25] This situation was exacerbated in France by the Salic Law, which should technically have prevented a woman from ever ruling the country.

> When the Family-State compact moved marriage cases from ecclesiastical courts to Parlements and shifted sexual misdeeds from moral to civil arenas, the sexual became socially charged. The gender-specific consequences of sexual misconduct are instructive. For the males who filled quasi-public, quasi-familial offices, sexual misdeeds remained private matters that did not irreparably dishonor families; and male detention was almost always short term. But for the females who reproduced the family itself over time by securing through progeny the new households under construction (as well as the offices attached to them), sexual misdeeds were treated as public misdemeanors that dishonored families; and female incarceration could be quite long - ten years, fifteen years, life. Here it would appear that women executed the civil task which touched the public interest - the reproduction of families over generations - and that female conduct, seemingly private and familial, actually was defined as public conduct that warranted prosecution if faulty.[26]

This theory ties in with the definition of the female's fundamental prerogative - reproduction - from which stemmed all other prerogatives and rights. Excluding women from public life, for instance, allowed men to prevent potential dishonour and to ensure that the female primary function could be accomplished. Adultery, seen as a failure to comply with the social requirements of marriage, had dire consequences for women: confinement — usually in a convent for the upper classes of society, the discretion of which enabled the family to avoid being covered with more opprobrium — and the loss of the dowry. Divorce did not exist, so that the only way out of marriage bonds was annulment, which was seldom granted. Separation arrangements were instituted by the Family-State compact; however, unless the separation was voluntary, in which case the family assets remained intact with both husband and wife having access to them, the separation was granted on grounds of misconduct either by the husband or wife. Hanley maintains that because of social expectations relating to gender prerogatives and rights, it was easier to convict women of misconduct and grant a legal separation to a husband

[26] Hanley, 'Engendering the State', pp. 24-25.

than it was to convict man, so much so that, in order to obtain a legal separation, women had to:

> ... alleg[e] multi-causal charges (adultery, violence, debauchery, dissipation of family funds), because males were not normally convicted for sexual misdeeds alone. In the unusual event that the wife won a separation for cause, she could legally withdraw her dowry (lineage property) from the corporate family investment.[27]

Maclean comes to the conclusion that, therefore, the most enviable state for a woman was widowhood: a widow 'has the wardship of her children and the dispensation of her husband's goods and property [...]',[28] although the latter is not necessarily true, as we have seen.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: FEMALE PATRONAGE

The rights of women in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France were very limited and even the positions of proto-feminist moralist or legal commentators and medical doctors were tainted with the age-old misogynist bias. However, it would be wrong to assert that the rights and prerogatives of women as described above were absolutely prescriptive. Research shows that women enjoyed a certain amount of freedom and were able to go beyond the constraints imposed by society and law, in particular in the case of noblewomen. Thus, Sharon Kettering focused her research on noblewomen's patronage power and asserted that '[t]he actual power of noblewomen can be hard to evaluate because it was hidden behind institutional powerlessness'.[29] The patronage network was divided into various types of relations between individuals: political, artistic, domestic,

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[27] Ibid., p. 14.
[28] Maclean, *Woman Triumphant*, p. 17.
[29] Sharon Kettering, 'The Patronage Power of Early Modern French Noblewomen', in *The Historical Journal*, 32, 4 (1989), 817-841, p. 818.

etc. Only women of the royal family could establish a political patronage network, but noblewomen could establish domestic patronage, which could potentially involve large sums of money, hence a large amount of power eventually. The distribution of positions within a household was usually attributed to women and since noble households in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France were rather large, it can be said that noblewomen's influence and power were not as limited as one might conclude from the reading of contemporary religious, moralist and legal commentaries. Kettering says, for example, that '[t]he household of Catherine de Medici numbered 316 in 1569 and 666 in 1585, and contained 80 ladies-in-waiting', while the households of great noblewomen were smaller but should have still added up to 'a bare minimum of 53 servants' according to Audiger, a former steward at Versailles.[30] Noblewomen were not exclusively responsible for domestic patronage in their household, yet the interference of male relatives clearly shows the importance of this kind of patronage and the intervention of Louis XIII and Richelieu in the appointment process in Anne of Austria's household is described by Kettering as evidence of the influence of the said household and its patron.[31] The close examination of women's role in patronage and the management of family affairs through works regarding specific areas or cities enabled Kettering to describe women's economic sphere of influence and to write that not only had widows played an important part 'as silent partners in seventeenth-century financial investments, tax-farming in particular',[32] but that in some cases married women were also entrusted with the family fortune:

[30] Ibid., p. 820.
[31] Ibid., p. 820.
[32] Ibid., p. 821.

> When councillor Louis Le Masson in 1600 made over the management of his properties to his sons, he cited as one reason, 'the recent death of his wife to whom he had formerly left the larger part of the administration of his affairs.' In a series of notarized acts magistrates entrusted their wives with arranging leases, borrowing large sums of money, examining and collecting accounts. The scale of the transaction could be very large.[33]

Moreover married women could retain, like spinsters and widows, at least part of their fortune after they had married, either as part of a settlement arranged in the marriage contract or precisely because there was no such contract. The properties and assets were then passed on to the woman's children and, failing this, to her nearest male kin. Kettering also explains that the religious wars which raged through sixteenth-century France were responsible for women's relatively extended powerfulness: in the absence of, or even with the death of, family heads, noblewomen had to take control of and manage the family estate as well as assume guardianship of minor children. As legally impaired as she might have been, a woman could still hire lawyers and even be appointed executrix of a man's will as proved by the example of Marie-Madeleine de Vignerot:

> Richelieu named his favourite niece, Marie-Madeleine de Vignerot, duchesse d'Aiguillon, as the executrix of his will; wives were usually appointed to undertake this responsibility. The duchesse defended Richelieu's will energetically and hired prominent lawyers to rebut family challenges to the will. She was determined at the same time to obtain payment of debts owed to the estate, and managed to collect 197,000 livres but was forced to relinquish assets valued at 2.3 million livres. She also attempted to pay off debts owed by the estate, which resulted in several lawsuits before the Parlement of Paris; one lasted until her death in 1675.[34]

From all these seemingly contradictory elements, it may be concluded that, when dealing with women's rights and prerogatives in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France, the difference must be made between theory and practice, as well as between noblewomen

[33] Ibid., p. 821.
[34] Ibid., p. 824.

and women in lower classes of society. The theories about women's medical, moral and legal identity were certainly evolving towards a proto-feminist perspective, whereas practice seemed to tell a different story, in particular with regard to adultery. Yet it must be noted that noblewomen enjoyed much wider freedom of action than theory allowed and this freedom was not necessarily hindered by men — it was even sometimes encouraged — so much so that some noblewomen could have huge economic power and influence. The tension highlighted in theological texts between the necessary evolution of women's rights and status on one hand — which is informed by scientific texts and did inform legal texts — and the danger it represented to patriarchal society on the other hand is played out in moralistic writing.

THE MORALIST CONTROVERSY

Although *Querelle des Femmes* is traditionally considered to occur during the first thirty years of the seventeenth century, Angenot argues that it was in fact 'un moment fort d'une querelle qui perdure pendant quatre siècles et constitue [...] le noyau idéologique des débats de la classe privilégiée sous l'Ancien Régime'.[35] Women were idealised throughout the late Middles Ages and the Renaissance through courtly love and neo-Platonist literature. Chivalry also played an important role in fictive and proto-feminist writing with the introduction of such *topoi* as:

> ... [T]he right of woman to man's homage, respect, and gratitude for her services to him, the demand that fidelity in marriage should be considered as important for husband as for wife, and the plea that woman should be

[35] Marc Angenot, *Les Champions des femmes: examen du discours sur la supériorité des femmes, 1400-1800* (Montreal : Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1977), p. 25.

> allowed to educate herself and perhaps thereby play a more active role in society.[36]

On the other hand the fourteenth century saw the success of a number of treatises such as Eugene Deschamps's *Miroir de Mariage*, the anonymous *XV Joyes du Mariage* or Thierry Lingon's *Speculum Impudicarum mulierum*. Lingon, a doctor in law, provides his reader with a synthesis of medieval misogynist arguments derived from scriptures and the Ancients, drawing on Aristotle's definition of women as ἁμάρτημά, an error of Nature, an imperfect version of man as was highlighted in the study of women in religious texts.[37] Angenot also quotes the *Récollection rimée des mauvaises femmes*, a compilation of misogynistic proverbs and hyperbolic accusations once again based on scriptures and the Ancients. Women are described in this text as stubborn, greedy, a source of dishonour for men, as well as a source of pain, loss and damnation.[38] Dido is not entirely exempt from the typically feminine faults described by anti-feminist moralists: in the context of the *Æneid*, Dido does endeavour to lure Æneas from his duty, potentially resulting in his eternal damnation. In her attempt to keep her lover, Dido prevents the hero from accomplishing his divine mission. In Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant*, Æneas leaves Carthage 'dans un grand désabusement' vis-à-vis the divine order.[39] It is easy to see how anti-feminist moralists could interpret this 'désabusement' as an example of the pain women can cause and their potential to lead men to dishonour, whilst the hero's hesitations in Scudéry's *Didon* shed disgrace on the otherwise 'pius' Æneas.

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[36] Ian Maclean, *Woman Triumphant: Feminism in French Literature, 1610-1652* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), p. 25.
[37] For details, see Angenot, *Les Champions des femmes*, pp. 13-14
[38] Angenot, *Les Champions des femmes*, pp. 14-15.
[39] Charles Mazouer, *Le Théâtre français de la Renaissance* (Paris: Champion, 2002), p. 264.

Proto-feminist and anti-feminist literature flourish in the sixteenth-century with the development of printing. Anti-feminist writers keep drawing on a vast corpus composed of proverbs, common places, scriptures and the Ancients. Angenot explains:

> Éve est la première incarnation catastrophique de la malice féminine et Pandore en est l'équivalent dans la Fable des païens. Les arguments contre les femmes épuisent la liste des péchés capitaux. L'autorité de la Bible couvre les brocards les plus injurieux.[40]

The Bible is used to justify women's inferiority and her necessary submission to men.[41] In his 1534 *Livre des controverses*, Gratien du Pont de Drusac thus evokes the absence of female angels as a divine sign of women's inferiority; for the author, this is also illustrated by the fact that they are excluded from public office and any ecclesiastical function.[42] For Pont de Drusac, women's existence is then allegedly dedicated to torment men:

> Dès lors, il n'est pire sottise que de se marier:
> Qui se marie, il se faict attacher,
> Si fort que puys ne se peult destacher
> D'ailleurs mariage égale cocuage :
> Quand jeune fille, dist-il, épouseras
> Bien tost après plusieurs cornes auras.[43]

And Pont de Drusac concludes that women, unlike men, cannot go to Heaven: made from Adam's rib, come resurrection, Adam will take back his rib, Eve will disappear and, with her, all women.[44] Pont de Drusac's view on marriage points to an anti-feminist *topos*: the vices and pettiness of women, mostly in relation to marriage. This *topos* is also found in Rabelais's 1546 *Tiers Livre*, where the author describes women as

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[40] Ibid., p. 22.
[41] Ibid., p. 23.
[42] Quoted by Angenot, *Les Champions des femmes*, p. 24. Note how reminiscent this discourse is of Knox's.
[43] Quoted by Angenot, *Les Champions des femmes*, p. 24.
[44] See Angenot, *Les Champions des femmes*, pp. 24-35.

> ... un sexe tant fragil, tant variable, tant muable, tant inconstant, & imperfaict, que nature me semble (parlant en tout honneur & reverence) s'estre esguarée [...].Platon ne sçait en quel ranc il les doibve colloquer, ou des animans raisonnables, ou des bestes brutes. Car Nature leurs a dedans le corps posé en lieu secret & intestin un animal, un membre, lequel n'est es hommes [...].[45]

The animality of women — which is a medical fact at the time, as I have mentioned previously — is then used by Rondibilis to explain why cuckoldry is inevitable, as women must assuage the animal desire within them. A small selection of titles of anti-feminist works published later, in the seventeenth century, clearly shows how recurrent these themes are: the anonymous *Recueil des exemples de la malice des femmes et des malheurs venus à leur occasion. Ensemble les execrables cruaultez exercees par icelles,*[46] or the *Aduis salutaire et tres-necessaire aux gens de bien, qui se laissent battre par leurs femmes,*[47] Trousset's *Alphabet de l'imperfection et malice des femmes,*[48] or worse, *Le Purgatoire des hommes mariez, avec les peines et les tourmens qu'ils endurent incessament au subiect de la malice et meschanceté des femmes.*[49]

Proto-feminist and anti-feminist writings took several forms from biographies of famous women, which often found their source in Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus*, to parodies of the opponents' ideas, through mock dialogues.[50] Although most of these works were not meant to be taken too seriously, and did not necessarily bear any resemblance to actual contemporary women, it is fair to say that they enable the modern

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[45] Rabelais, *Tiers Livre*, XXIII. François Bon's edition, consulted online at http://un2sg4.unige.ch/athena/rabelais/rab_tier.html#32

[46] Anonymous work, published in 1596 'chez Pierre Hvry, au mont S. Hylaire, à la Cour d'Albret'.

[47] *Advis salutaire et très-nécessaire aux gens de bien qui se laissent battre par leurs femmes. Dédié aux confrères et sœurs de la haute et basse, pauvre et riche, vieille et nouvelle, noble et roturière confrairie des martyrs, martyrisez par leurs des-honnestes indiscrettes et mal admises femmes, nouvellement installée au lieu appelé mal'encontre*, anonymous work dated 1610 (BnF RES-Y2-2753).

[48] Published under the assumed name of Jacques Olivier in Paris, by Jean Petit-Bas, in 1617.

[49] Anonymous work published in Paris and in Lyon by F. Poyet in 1619.

[50] They generally entail the conversion of one of the speakers to prove the effectiveness of the author's arguments.

reader to have a clearer understanding of what can be expected in Renaissance and Early Modern literature in terms of gender stereotypes. Literary authors could not but be influenced by moralist writings, whether they agreed with them or not.

Ironically, the depiction of the female figure in proto-feminist moralistic writing and in art also reflected this paradox: even when it attempted to make women appear as strong, they still seemed to have weaknesses, they could be described as shrewd but without knowledge or mastery of Reason.[51] A great deal of the moralist writing of the Renaissance and seventeenth century attempted to address, in a positive light, the question of female virtue and of woman's adequacy to the public, male-dominated sphere.

The fact that there was a real interest in the feminine, as a specific gender, is attested by the number of treatises - and their re-editions - dedicated to women and, in particular, to their moral improvement. Through examples and counter-examples taken from the Bible or ancient and contemporary history, authors attempted to help women improve themselves. Dinet, Du Bosc and Le Moyne, for example, offered maxims and reflections for the ladies of their time to contemplate.[52] France having been ruled by women several times in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,[53] it is not altogether surprising that the notion of *femme forte* should have developed at this time in moralistic writing first, and then in the different forms of art that reflected the moralistic

[51] For the ambiguity of proto-feminist moralists, see Joan Kelly, *Women, History and Theory* (Chicago: University Chicago of Press, 1984), pp. 74-75.
[52] We refer to the following works: François Dinet, *Le théâtre françois des Seigneurs & Dames Illustres, divisé en deux parties. Avec le Manuel de l'Homme Sage, & le Tableau de la Dame Chrestienne* (Paris: Nicolas and Jean de la Coste, 1642); Jacques Du Bosc, *La femme heroïque, ou les heroïnes comparées auec les Heros en toute sorte de vertus. Et plusieurs Reflexions Morales à la fin de chaque Comparaison*, 2 vols (Paris: Sommaville and Courbé, 1645); Jacques Du Bosc, *L'Honneste femme diuisée en trois parties, reueuë, corrigée & augmentée en cette quatriesme Edition* (Paris: Le Gras and Bobin, 1658) ; Pierre Le Moyne, *Gallerie des femmes fortes*, in *Les Oeuvres Poetiques du Père Le Moyne* (Paris: Billaine, 1671).
[53] It was ruled officially by Catherine and Marie de Medici as well as Anne of Austria for instance.

views of the artists or of their patrons. The recurrence of the character of Dido throughout literature in Renaissance and Early Modern France suggests that this figure was particularly appropriate to the representation of the *femme forte* or of female power.

Because the notions of *femme forte* and of female power are so tightly linked, it is necessary to study moralist writing, and in particular the types of examples and counter-examples used by moralists, to analyse the character of Dido more accurately. For this purpose, I will be looking very closely at the works of Dinet, Du Bosc and Le Moyne.

The origin of the words *femme forte* is to be found in the first verse of the alphabet of the Good Woman in the Book of Proverbs, where one can read: 'mulierem fortem quis inveniet' (Prov. 31:10). This line was translated and explained by Monsieur de Saint-Gabriel in 1655 as follows: '*Mulierem fortem quis inueniet*, heureux le mary qui trouuera vne femme forte. Voicy les qualitez d'vne femme forte, c'est à dire laborieuse, diligente, industrieuse [...]'.[54] The conception of the *femme forte* in the regency of Anne of Austria is most clear in the two outstanding feminist works of the time, Du Bosc's *Femme heroïque* and Le Moyne's *Gallerie des femmes fortes*.[55] Du Bosc drew comparisons between famous men and women, alternately pagan and Christian, with illustrations and moral reflections. Le Moyne chose to compose a more ambitious work, consisting of a set of twenty engravings (divided into *Fortes Juives*, *Fortes Barbares*, *Fortes Romaines* and *Fortes Chrestiennes*), each of them followed by an 'explication', a eulogy, moral reflections, and modern examples of heroines who excelled in the virtues described and discussed in the preceding section. Dinet's *Théâtre françois* similarly dealt

[54] Monsieur de Saint-Gabriel, *Le mérite des dames* (Paris: Le Gras, 1640), p.107 in the 1660 edition.
[55] It is interesting to note here that in the second publication of the *Femme Heroïque* in 1645, the first volume is dedicated to the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, and the second volume is dedicated to 'La Reyne de Grande Bretagne,' Henrietta-Maria of France, Anne of Austria's sister-in-law and widow of Charles I of England. Although the actual dedications are in no way original, it is important to notice that the first volume is dedicated to a woman in power.

with the qualities a woman was required to possess to be regarded as a good Christian lady, married woman, widow or virgin.

As far as Le Moyne and Du Bosc were concerned, *force* was an amalgam of stoic apathy and *fortitudo*. The three functions of this *force* are justice, control of passions and preparation for death. Le Moyne does not deal with a specific form of courage, but rather with the apotheosis of heroic qualities such as liberality, magnanimity and constancy, which also implies resolution.

2. *Constancy* in *Iconologica*, Cesar Ripa (1611)

The next characteristic of the *femme forte*, chastity, provoked a debate among moralist writers. The question of whether chastity was the most womanly quality and could be considered as heroic virtue divided Le Moyne and Tasso for instance. Chastity is an essential topic in Dinet's work, since he consecrated no less than five chapters of the first three books and the entire last book ('La Vierge') of his *Théâtre françois* to this subject. As chastity was traditionally associated with a form of courage, albeit passive, Le Moyne and other authors concluded that the virtue required to resist the promptings of the flesh and the blandishments and solicitation of men was no less great than that of men on the battlefield. Le Moyne asserts in the *Gallerie des femmes fortes* that '[...] pour faire un

Homme vaillant, il faut moins de force et moins de courage, que pour faire une Femme chaste'.[56] Le Moyne also contested the widely held view that heroic women were often unchaste. In *Woman Triumphant*, Ian McLean explains that the case for chastity was built on the public duties and example of those of high birth, and on the fact that chastity is a virtue 'que la nature elle-mesme a enseignée aux dames'.[57] Du Bosc further pointed out that chastity was closely allied to female independence, which is particularly interesting with Dido in mind. In his *Femme heroique,* Du Bosc wrote:

> L'honneur et la chasteté des Dames font leur veritable liberté. La Dame qui a consenty s'est rendue esclave, elle ne marche pas la teste levée: et celuy qui ravit l'honneur à une femme luy ravit la vraye liberté, mais une liberté qu'on ne peut rendre; la honte de la servitude se peut effacer, cette infamie ne s'efface jamais.[58]

Spiritual independence was an essential attribute of the heroic woman, for it allowed her the necessary freedom of decision to prove her virtue. This is illustrated by the fact that the majority of Du Bosc's and Le Moyne's heroines were either unmarried or widowed, for the constraints of marriage 'ont je ne sçait quoy d'empeschant, principalement pour les vertus Heroïques'.[59] Le Moyne betrayed the same preoccupation with the idea of moral freedom when he wrote about Anne of Austria that:

> Elle garde sa liberté,
> Sous le joug de la Royauté:
> Et sans la captiver le Throsne l'environne.[60]

These lines could aptly describe Dido. In Le Moyne's words, chastity becomes a positive, almost aggressive, quality, whereas in the eyes of the traditional moralists it was passive and introspective. This specific attitude of Le Moyne and Du Bosc towards chastity

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[56] Le Moyne, *Gallerie*, p. 273.
[57] McLean, *Woman Triumphant*, p. 172.
[58] Du Bosc, *Femme Héroïque*, II, 684.
[59] Du Bosc, *Femme Héroïque*, II, 297.
[60] Le Moyne, *Gallerie*, quoted by McLean, *Woman Triumphant*, p. 84.

explains the admiration they expressed for such figures as Lucretia, who committed suicide rather than live in dishonour.

However, there were moral issues to address when praising figures like Lucretia, or even Dido, because suicide is a sin in the eyes of the Catholic Church. Le Moyne and Du Bosc both commented on it. In his *Honneste Femme*, Du Bosc gave a general rule for assessing such cases:

> ... il y a eu des Dames qui ont monstré tant de constance dans leurs plus grandes infortunes, qu'elles pouvoient faire honte à plusieurs de nostre siècle. Mais quelque force d'esprit que les plus resoluës d'entre elles ayent fait paroistre, ce n'a tousjours esté qu'une resignation imparfaitte: tant s'en faut qu'elles ayent esté capables de cette genereuse indifference, que la perfection du Christianisme nous demande.[61]

In conclusion, the *femme forte* cannot give in to men and neither can she commit suicide if she has given in, because this would signify giving in to passion.

The fundamental quality of women, chastity, is an essentially passive virtue, supporting the case for women being confined to the private sphere. Tasso attempts to reconcile this notion with the case of women ruling countries. McLean asks: '[w]hat if moral duties clash with political duties? What if, as a royal person, one is encouraged to be eloquent, liberal, magnificent, and as a woman economical, silent and modest?'[62] Tasso's answer triggers even more questions:

> Tasso argues that the first duty of a princess is to her royal status; it is therefore forgivable, though regrettable, if she neglects her moral virtues such as chastity in the pursuit of her royal virtues, as was the case with historical figures such as Semiramis and Cleopatra. The princess is, as it were, a man by virtue of her birth, and hence the masculine standard of morality applies to her.[63]

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[61] Du Bosc, *Honneste Femme*, III, 396-97.
[62] Ian McLean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*, p. 62.
[63] Ibid., p. 62.

Bestowing masculine virtues on specific women poses a number of questions: are these women exceptional or do they reveal latent qualities present in all women? The revelation of latent masculine qualities in women would reveal flaws in the Aristotelian and biblical theories of women's inferiority. Therefore the more adequate answer must be that these women are exceptional.[64] The *femme forte* is, therefore, a model to emulate, or aspire to, but is in no way common.

The case for studying all of our plays in the light of the notion of *femme forte* is strong in spite of the time issue: Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry wrote their tragedies before the publication of the works of Dinet, Le Moyne and Du Bosc. However the publication of these works was, as previously demonstrated, symptomatic of a general interest in the readership for the issues raised by moralists and their works attempted to offer definitive answers to the debate which had culminated in the *Querelle des Femmes*.

Consequently, the rest of this section will be dedicated to the assessment of the character of Dido in the five tragedies in the light of the aforementioned moralistic criteria defining a *femme forte*.

The following chart will enable the reader to observe quickly whether the figure of Dido as created by Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry, Boisrobert and Montfleury could qualify as a *femme forte*. The column on the left-hand side lists the different qualities of the *femme forte* and the other columns indicate whether there is evidence of these qualities in the tragedies. An asterisk has been added in some cases when the quality was either considered faked or questionable.

[64] For a full discussion of the consequences of Tasso's proposal, see McLean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*, chapter four.

Qualities defining the *femme forte*	1558(?) **Jodelle**	1624 **Hardy**	1637 **Scudéry**	1643 **Boisrobert**	1674 **Montfleury**
Stoic apathy					✓*
Fortitudo: justice					
Fortitudo: control of passions					
Fortitudo: preparation for death	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
Chastity				✓	✓*
Liberality	✓	✓	✓		✓
Magnanimity	✓	✓	✓		✓
Constancy (resoluteness)				✓	
Spiritual independence				✓	✓*

One can see from the chart that the three major functions of *force* as defined by Le Moyne, that is to say control of passions, preparation for death and justice, are not themes often developed in our tragedies.

Montfleury's Dido is the only Queen seemingly to display stoic apathy, as can be seen from the chart. The reason for this is that Dido appears to be stoically apathetic in front of Iarbe: he refers to her 'tranquille froideur' (act I, scene 5) when faced by men proposing to her, especially Iarbe himself. However, there is no longer any expression of coldness from Dido when it comes to Æneas, as becomes obvious in the same scenes where the Trojan prince is said to be leaving Carthage. Dido then says:

> Pour son depart? Hola, Gardes, qu'on cherche Ænée;
> Prévenons la douleur d'en estre abandonnée;
> Dans son éloignement mon cœur prend trop de part,
> Ma mort suivroit de pres ce funeste depart.[65]

The vocabulary (*douleur*, *cœur*, *mort*, *funeste*) clearly indicates the overwhelming emotional relation between the two characters.

[65] Montfleury, *Ambigu comique*, I, 5, 80-83.

In the chart, none of the boxes for 'control of passions' have been ticked. Dido yields to passion, whether it be love or anger, in all the plays, even in Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, which aimed to redeem her character. She privileges love over her state and status in the plays of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury. In *L'Ambigu comique*, for instance, Dido's first two lines go as follows:

> Venez, Prince, il est temps de faire un noble éclat;
> L'Amour doit l'emporter sur les raisons d'Estat;[66]

The antithetic position of *Amour* and *Estat* in the second line underlines the inexorable struggle of the character between love and state, which is a representation of the battle between the private and the public sphere. In the context of the debate over women's position in the public sphere aforementioned, it is interesting to note that it is Dido who struggles most to reconcile the two spheres and who eventually chooses unwisely. Similar clues towards the assessment of the control of Dido's passions are provided by the vocabulary associated with the Queen in the tragedies of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury. For instance, the numerous occurrences of the words, and derivatives of, *feu* and *furie* clearly highlight the Queen's failure to control her love for Æneas and her anger at his departure.[67]

In Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, it is anger which prevails and it is just as blinding as love. This anger culminates in her stubborn refusal to give in to Iarbe and her brother, in spite of the weakness of her armed forces compared to those of the male characters. Anger gradually turns into madness in her speech, as she declares:

> Conspirez tous ma mort, faites-moi tous la guerre,
> Armez conjointement et la mer et la terre,

[66] Ibid., I, 3, 1-2.
[67] This will be analysed further in the fourth chapter.

> Je suivrai d'un cœur ferme, et d'un constant mépris,
> Jusqu'au dernier soupir, le dessein que j'ai pris;
> Que plutôt le tonnerre éclate sur mon crime,
> Que plutôt sous mes pieds la terre ouvre un abîme,
> Que jamais je viole en mes vœux solennels,
> L'honneur de ma promesse, et celui des Autels,
> Et que par une erreur qui me soit reprochée,
> Je trouble le repos des Mânes de Sychée.[68]

The use of natural elements (*mer*, *terre*, *tonnerre*) emphasises the unreasonable character of this statement by the Queen. This can be interpreted as αδυντον or a hyperbolic expression of her refusal: lightening would strike Dido, she would be engulfed by the earth sooner than betraying the vow she has made.[69] The hyperbolic expression of her refusal emphasises the highly emotional rhetoric of the Queen and her lack of constancy.

Concerning 'preparation for death', each box is ticked and starred, because Dido's preparation for death does not actually correspond to what Le Moyne or Du Bosc, for example, were referring to. The moralists speak of a spiritual preparation for a death in relation to the Catholic faith. However, Dido's death is thought of as a last resort and never envisaged in a Christian light. In the case of the plays of Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry, the mention of witchcraft on stage could not have failed to raise the audience's awareness of the Queen's failure to follow Christian dogma.[70] Although the tragedies are not set in Christian times, there are certain expectations of *bienséance*, for instance, which could have led the playwrights to exclude these scenes, especially since they are not essential to the plays. The fact that the three authors chose to include them is then significant. This, combined with the subject of suicide in the five tragedies, which was

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[68] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, II, 2, 557-66.
[69] For more details on αδυντον , see H. V. Canter, 'The Figure Adunaton in Greek and Latin Poetry', in *The American Journal of Philology*, 51 (1930), 32-41.
[70] In Jodelle, Dido states her intention to use witchcraft in IV, 1903-1958 and 1961-2006; in Hardy, Dido states her intention to use witchcraft in IV, 3, 1407-1448; in Scudéry, Dido states her intention to use witchcraft in V, 2, 1544-1567.

very controversial even for the moralist writers, would have created a particular impression of Dido in the audience. This impression is not that of a *femme forte*, let alone of a virtuous queen.

Justice is not a topic the playwrights developed, especially in the first two tragedies: it is only with Hardy that a political conscience starts to be given a voice, in the form of the people represented by the chorus on stage. Since the focus is still on the personal tragedy of the characters, there is no actual space for the expression of a political conscience, let alone debate. Hence there are few references to either Dido or Æneas as monarchs in Jodelle's and Hardy's plays.[71] The references are more frequent in the later tragedies but they are usually used to illustrate Dido's liberality as we will see shortly.

The issue of chastity is dealt with very differently by each playwright. Jodelle alludes to this only once in Dido's lamentation: 'J'ay mon honneur esteint, ma chasteté, mes vœux';[72] yet there is no specific scene within the play to which this comment can refer, as the tragedy starts in *medias res*. Hardy refers to Dido's chastity in several scenes. All the references are negative in that they all serve to highlight the loss of chastity rather than its presence. It is striking that it is always the Queen who alludes to this loss.[73] Scudéry similarly makes it clear that his Dido has given in to Æneas's solicitations.[74] Boisrobert makes a point of following a different literary tradition in which Dido dies to protect her dignity, hence his Queen remains chaste. Montfleury remains quite discreet, focusing on Dido's lack of modesty rather than on her chastity. Montfleury's Dido is a

[71] This will be discussed further in the fifth chapter.
[72] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 622.
[73] See I, 2, 155 and 162-4; III, 1, 692, 714, 720 and 857.
[74] In Scudéry's *Didon*, II, 6, Dido and Æneas are alone in a cave during a storm. This episode, originally found in Virgil, is followed in the next scene by Anne noticing the Queen's embarrassment at the arrival of the rest of her troop (II, 7, 705-8).

seducing queen, using all the weapons in her possession to make Æneas stay, whether it be tears or simply jewels, as we learn from Dido herself in act III, scene 5:

> Et vous que j'appellois, prévoyant tant de larmes,
> Pour plaire à cet Ingrat, au secours de mes charmes,
> *Elle arrache & jette ses perles & diamans.*
> Ornements précieux, au milieu de ma Cour,
> Vos efforts impuissans ont trahy mon amour;
> Allez, de vostre éclat, dans l'espoir qui me reste,
> J'abhorre pour jamais l'usage trop funeste,
> Et ne sçaurois le voir dans mon ressentiment,
> Que comme une Victime à mon emportement.[75]

These differences can be explained by each playwright's intentions as well as by literary trends. Scudéry lays the most emphasis on Dido's lack of chastity, in spite of the rule of *bienséance*; yet, in his *Didon*, the cave scene is not in fact a love-making scene as in Virgil's *Æneid* but a *gallant* conversation referring to the oaths Dido and Æneas swore to each other. On the other hand, Boisrobert, as I have shown in the introduction, answers to very specific accusations of immorality when he writes his *Vraye Didon*, so much so that his heroine's chastity is significant beyond the first level of understanding of the play. Finally, Montfleury succeeds in partially avoiding the issue by concentrating on modesty rather than chastity, thus lessening the moral shortcomings associated with the Queen.

Liberality and magnanimity are apparent qualities in the plays of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury, as the Queen is complimented on various occasions for the help she has offered to the Trojans, often by Achates or Æneas himself.[76] To a certain extent, one could even consider that her offer to share her kingdom with Æneas in these two

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[75] Montfleury, *Ambigu comique*, III, 5, 45-53.
[76] In Jodelle, Dido's *bienfaits* to the Trojans are referred to by Achate in I, 66-67 and by Anne in IV, 1775. In Hardy, Dido's *bienfaits* to the Trojans are referred to by Æneas in I, 1, 35-6 and 123-4 ; in II, 2, 456 ; and by Anne in I, 2, 181-84. In Scudéry, Dido's *bienfaits* to the Trojans are referred to by Æneas in I, 2, 96-120. In Montfleury, Dido's *bienfaits* to the Trojans are referred to by Æneas in I, 1, 22-28.

plays is another proof of her liberality. As the Trojans do not feature in Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, Dido does not have the opportunity to prove her liberality and magnanimity in this play.

As far as constancy and resoluteness are concerned, no queen of Carthage compares with Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*. Her resoluteness is most visible in her distrust of men. She cannot trust her brother, whose motives remain suspicious to her:

> Et l'avare qu'il est s'est peut-être avisé,
> D'enlever mes trésors, pour lesquels ce perfide
> Massacra mon époux de sa main parricide,
> Mais que j'ai tous sauvé avec moi dans ce port [...].[77]

Nor can she trust the peace he has organised with Iarbe on her behalf, as it is dishonourable:

> Je ne veux point de paix, vous m'en parlez en vain,
> Ne la pouvant avoir que honteuse et funeste:
> La guerre est le seul bien et l'espoir qui me reste.[78]

Boisrobert's Dido is as resolute in her distrust of the living men as she is in her faithfulness to the dead man she loved.

To a certain extent, constancy can be considered as one of Dido's main qualities, especially compared with Æneas. In the four tragedies where both of them feature, Æneas can be regarded as the unfaithful, inconstant lover, whereas Dido can be regarded as the ever loving, ever suffering lover.

Spiritual independence is important when one considers the different Dido tragedies, especially with regard to the people in power at the time of their composition. I have explained where the moralist writers stood on that point: they regarded spiritual

[77] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, I, 1, 123-26.
[78] Ibid., III, 3, 796-98.

independence as allied to chastity and considered it the sign of a true *femme forte,* since it is only by being independent that women could prove their *force.*

In Scudéry's *Didon* and Montfleury's *Ambigu comique*, one may regard Dido's attitude towards her people and the local kings as a sign of spiritual independence. If, in the first, Dido ignores the wishes of her people on her sister's advice, in Montfleury's play it is clearly love or lust that make her choose Æneas over her duty:

> Venez, Prince, il est temps de faire un noble éclat;
> L'Amour doit l'emporter sur les raisons d'Estat;
> Des Princes Affriquains c'est trop craindre la plainte,
> Il est temps que nos feux agissent sans contrainte.[79]

On the other hand, spiritual independence in Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon* is completely different, as it reflects her distrust of men and also the fact that, unlike the other Didos, she is rejecting men's help to rule her kingdom. In this case, and in this one only, can one talk of spiritual independence. Yet, one may wonder what conclusion should be drawn from the fact that this spiritual independence leads Boisrobert's heroine to her death.

The analysis of Dido in the light of the notion of *femme forte* highlights the fact that none of the playwrights intended or managed to create a female character who was both legally empowered and successful. This is especially striking in the case of Boisrobert's heroine, since the author's intention is to rehabilitate the Queen of Carthage: in spite of the fact that Dido is not represented as a female character giving in to any man in this play, the total lack of control over passions, such as anger, still emphasises the imperfection of the female character. It is interesting to note at this point that none of the moralist writers have used Dido as an example or counter-example in their works relating

[79] Montfleury, *Ambigu comique*, I, 3, 1-4.

to the *femme forte*. Although Le Moyne does refer to Dido in *Les Fideles Morts*, he still has chosen not to include her in his *Gallerie des Femmes Fortes*. His Dido is nonetheless a positive figure because Le Moyne denied Virgil's version of events described as a mere

> [...] fantosme mis au jour
> Pour relever l'honneur de Rome.[80]

[80] *Les Fideles Morts*, in Le Moyne, *Oeuvres Poetiques*, p. 411. Le Moyne then states that Dido built Carthage in memory of her late husband, Sychaeus. Her faith helped her reject over a hundred rivals. Although there is no mention of how Dido has died, Le Moyne still refers to her body being burnt, a recurring theme.

EXAMPLE OF DISCOURSE: FAMOUS WOMEN USED BY MORALIST WRITERS

Having established a clearer picture of perceptions of women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and of the qualities one could expect to find in a *femme forte*, it is now necessary to look at the more specific category of queens used as examples and counter-examples by moralist writers, such as Dinet, Du Bosc and Le Moyne. This proto-feminist writing is essential as it is to set the standards for the moral value(s) bestowed on women from then on and is going to affect representations of femininity in society and art. Although the study of all the women represented in moralistic writing would be very interesting, the scale of this academic exercise compels us to focus the following analysis on the representation of queens in these writings in order to inform the later analysis of queenship in seventeenth-century tragedy.

Moralist writers use three main sources: ancient history, the Bible and contemporary history. The fact that contemporary examples all have very positive attributes is hardly surprising: the writers were not ready to take any risks by criticizing contemporary women, or even women who were related to people in power. In addition, both the Bible and ancient history offered scores of examples and counter-examples which could be safely used, without taking the risk of offending anyone. Moreover the value imparted to Biblical and classical sources was momentous, not only for moralist writers but for artists in general.

None of the women used by the moralists and whose stories originated in Biblical sources are queens. It is therefore necessary to turn to ancient and contemporary sources to start this investigation. Several queens originating in ancient history and mythology are

used by Dinet, Du Bosc and Le Moyne to illustrate various points in their argument about women, such as Cleopatra, Rodogune, Semiramis, Thomyris, Tanaquil, Camma, Monima and Zenobia. Meanwhile, contemporary sources include such Queens as Anne and Elizabeth of Austria, Queen Clotilde, Isabelle, Princess of Wales, Louise de Lorraine and Mary Stuart. The various examples serve to illustrate different ideas: Dinet dedicates all his examples to arguing that royal widows ought to choose a life of contemplation and ought to give up royal prerogatives. Le Moyne and Du Bosc use queens to illustrate female qualities such as female virtue in battle and government.

Firstly, I will look at Dinet's use of contemporary examples to support his vision of the duty of royal widows to their kingdom. Dinet devoted the entire third book of his *Théâtre françois des Seigneurs & Dames Illustres* to widowhood.[81] In this book, Dinet dedicated fourteen chapters to the description of the qualities of a good Christian widow. In the seventh chapter, entitled 'Pieté merveilleuse de plusieurs Nobles veuves', Queen Clotilde, Queen Bathilde, Elizabeth of Austria, Louise de Lorraine, Philippe de Gueldres and Marie Stuart are used as examples of queens retiring to a life of religious contemplation following the death of their husband in order for them to find solace and consolation.[82] For instance, Elizabeth of Austria, widow of Charles IX, was widowed at the age of twenty. She refused all proposals to remarry and '[elle] s'en alla à Vienne en Austriche, où elle fit bastir un Couvent de Religieuses de sainte Claire, pour s'y retirer

[81] Dinet, François, *Le théâtre françois des Seigneurs & Dames Illustres, divisé en deux parties. Avec le Manuel de l'Homme Sage, & le Tableau de la Dame Chrestienne* (Paris: Nicolas et Jean de la Coste, 1642).
[82] Dinet, *Théâtre françois*. Queen Clotilde, widow of King Clovis, is described as follows: 'Cette illustre Princesse, apres le trespas de son cher Espoux, quitta le gouvernement du Royaume, avec les vanitez du monde; & se retirant dedans un Cloistre.' Queen Bathilde, widow of King Clovis the young, receives a sign from Heaven ordering her to cease wearing somptuous garments and other superficial things and to lead 'une vie retirée, humble & devote, comme estant plus convenable à la viduité' p. 164. Louise de Lorraine, Henry III's widow, also retired from Court and founded a convent, p. 167.

une partie du temps afin de vaquer à son aise aux exercices de pieté'.[83] The story of Philippe de Gueldres, widow of René, King of Sicily and Duc de Lorraine differs only slightly in that the Queen first spent twelve years bringing up her children to become virtuous Christians before retiring to 'un Couvent de Religieuses de Sainte Claire, à Pont à Mousson'.[84]

Mary Stuart, François II's widow, does not provide the reader with the same sort of religious resolution. Hers is a more bitter life following the death of the French King:

> elle ne sçauroit vivre desormais que dans mille amertumes. Certes telle devise fut le presage des miseres qui accompagnerent cette Reine tout le temps qu'elle fut en Angleterre, jusques à la fin de sa vie, qu'elle rendit par le coup injuste & cruel d'un bourreau sur un échaffaut.[85]

There is, however, one serious exception to the argument for queens to retire from public life when they are widowed, that is when their kingdom is in danger. Dinet uses the example of Queen Frenegonde in the first book of the *Théâtre françois des Seigneurs & Dames Illustres* dedicated to the Christian Lady. In the tenth chapter, entitled 'Les Dames ont esté bien souvent profitables à la Republique par leur generosité Martiale. Proüesses signalées de quelques unes', Dinet describes Queen Frenegonde's actions after the death of King Chilperic, her husband. Attacked by Childebert, King of Metz, and to protect the crown of her infant son Clotaire, she raises troops, goes on the battlefield herself, her baby in her arms, and admonishes her people who are about to give in: 'La presence & les paroles de cette belliqueuse Princesse encouragerent tellement les combattans, qu'ils défirent l'armée de Childebert [...]'.[86]

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[83] Ibid., p. 166.
[84] Ibid., p. 165
[85] Ibid., p. 163.
[86] Dinet, *Théâtre françois*, pp. 46-47.

Dinet sees the political role of the queens within the kingdom as extremely limited, whether they are married or widowed. Regarding married queens, there is, once again, one exception, that is when the kingdom is in danger because of its own lawful monarch. In the same chapter, Dinet uses the example of the Queen Isabelle, daughter of Philippe le Bel and wife of Edward II of England. The author explains that, driven away by the excesses of her husband and his minion 'Huë Spenser,' Isabelle came back to England and won over the 'Capitaines de garnison' at the harbour, who eventually let her forces in: 'son entreprise reüssit si bien, qu'en peu de temps elle calma la tempeste qui faisoit trembler toute l'Isle'.[87]

From this analysis it becomes clear that, for the author, queens are not destined to exercise power except in extreme circumstances. It should be noted that Dinet deals with one Greco-Roman Queen separately. Rhodogune is the only ancient Queen to appear in the third book of his *Théâtre françois des Seigneurs & Dames Illustres*.[88] The sixth chapter, entitled 'Exemples memorables de plusieurs jeunes Dames Illustres en continence apres la mort de leurs maris', in which the story of Rhodogune features, describes this Queen's vow to remain disheveled until the murder of her husband is avenged. When her *nourrice* suggests she should remarry, the Queen stabs her.[89] The despair that Dinet's contemporary queens have to face in widowhood never leads them to unnecessary acts of violence. However the introduction of such a violent or unnatural reaction to the proposal to remarry – which is equally rejected by Elizabeth of Austria for example – could make the reader draw parallels between the unnatural act of killing and

[87] Ibid., p. 47.
[88] He also calls her Semiramis.
[89] Dinet, *Théâtre françois*, pp. 158-59.

the self-inflicted reclusion of contemporary queens. This may well be the reason why Dinet deals with his Rhodogune separately.

Unlike Dinet, Du Bosc has chosen his examples solely from ancient history and the Bible. Du Bosc's *Femme Héroïque* and *Honneste Femme* provide the reader with the author's vision of women's ability and even obligation, as seen earlier in this chapter, to practise virtue. I will now concentrate on the cases of the queens used by the author to provide evidence for his point. The *Femme Héroïque* offers the reader a range of examples going from ancient women such as Porcia, Lucretia, Tanaquil or Thomyris, to Biblical characters like Salome, Judith, Susanna or Deborah to illustrate female heroic virtue. I will now focus on Tanaquil and Thomyris, the only queens Du Bosc alludes to in his *Femme Héroïque*. This is how Du Bosc introduces Thomyris to the reader in the third book:

> Comme Cyrus a eu toute la fortune d'un grand Conquerant, aussi peut-on dire que Thomyris en a eu toute la Vertu, & j'avouë sincerement qu'à bien comparer ensemble la vaillance de l'un & de l'autre, celle de nostre Heroïne me semble accompagnée de plus belles circonstances, & en plus grand nombre. Thomyris est la merveille des ames guerrieres & belliqueuses: & ce qui est de plus remarquable, c'est que cette vertu luy estoit comme naturelle; & en voicy la raison, qu'on sera bien aise d'apprendre d'abord.[90]

The comparison between Thomyris and her adversary, Cyrus, turns to the advantage of the Queen. Du Bosc contrasts the use of guile by the two monarchs, insisting on the fact that Thomyris only resorts to this, while still conforming to the rules of engagement, after Cyrus has himself used guile twice, in a questionable manner. In the face of defeat and the death of her son, '*Thomyris ne s'abandonna pas aux pleurs comme eussent fait*

[90] Du Bosc, *La Femme Héroïque*, III, 185-86.

plusieurs hommes, mais elle pensa au remede, & à une juste vengeance'.[91] Thomyris demonstrates a great deal of patience or constancy during her ordeal, a quality of which, comparatively, Cyrus seems bereft.

3. *Thomyris* in *La femme héroïque* Du Bosc (1645)

The case of Tanaquil, Reyne des Romains, in the seventh book, serves to prove a woman's ability to act in the best interest of her country. At the death of King Tarquin, the Queen is faced with a dilemma regarding his succession. Although her sons are the legitimate heirs to the throne, her son-in-law, Servius Tullius, is obviously much more capable than they are. Du Bosc pays tribute to Tanaquil because she has chosen to support Servius Tullius to the detriment of her own sons. In a section dedicated to

[91] Ibid., p. 199, in italics in the text.

'Aymer et employer les grands esprits', her story helps to illustrate the author's idea that: '*La gloire des Rois & des Reynes consiste à eslever & à choisir les plus grands personnages pour le gouvernement & les dignitez*'.[92]

The case for women in government is still strongly limited by Du Bosc's considerations in the fourth chapter of the *Femme Heroique*, entitled 'Vaillance convenable à chaque Sexe. Pourquoy il ne faut pas affecter les vertus d'un autre sexe'. The author explains that, although there are examples of women performing male roles, like ruling a country or heading an army, this is entirely due to exceptional circumstances. The women 'ont paru vaillantes, on les a veuës à la teste des armées; mais il faut considerer, que ce n'a esté que pour la delivrance des Estats entiers, ou pour le salut de la Patrie: ç'a esté ou par inspiration, ou bien par necessité'.[93]

Finally, Du Bosc uses Cleopatra, in the third part of his *Honneste Femme*, as a counter-example. The Egyptian Queen illustrates a section entitled 'La Scandaleuse', in which she is described as the cause of Marc-Anthony's degrading demise:

> Quel plus grand mal peut-on faire que de causer une passion, qui bien souvent est suivy de folie et de rage, & de meurtres? Ne vaudroit-il pas mieux empoisonner? Et qu'importe-t-il avec quelles armes on tuë, puisque toûjours on est meurtriere? qu'importe t'il si c'est avec une espée, ou avec des regards, qu'on fait mourir? Qu'on voye Marc-Antoine dans ses folies: qu'on examine combien de fautes & de laschetez il a commises, depuis qu'il fut amoureux de Cleopatre, jusques à fuir en un combat où il pouvoit esperer la victoire, & jusques à se tuer soy-mesme. Ne doit-on pas dire que jamais il n'eust de plus grand ennemy que cette Egyptienne? Et qu'en luy donnant de l'amour, elle luy donna la cause de la ruyne.[94]

Du Bosc treats Cleopatra's beauty as a sign of lust and sin. He evokes Cleopatra's *regards* as the fatal equivalent of an *espée*. The passion inspired by the Queen leads to

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[92] Ibid, p. 597. In italics in the text.
[93] Ibid, pp. 242-43.
[94] Du Bosc, *L'Honneste Femme*, p. 159.

madness and death, which is illustrated, in the quotation above, by the systematic juxtaposition of negative terms such as *folie*, *rage*, *meurtre* and *ruyne* to the notion of *passion* or *amour*.

Le Moyne gave equal weight in his works to ancient and contemporary queens: from Plutarch and other classical authors, Le Moyne derived the stories of Camma, Monima, Zenobia, Rodogune and Cleopatra, whereas he used contemporary sources to elaborate on the lives of Isabelle, Princess of Wales, Marie Stuart or Anne of Austria. In his *Gallerie des femmes fortes*, Camma, Monima and Zenobia illustrate feminine courage in the face of death. Camma "meurt courageusement, & fait mourir de poison avec soi, le meurtrier de son mari".[95] Having murdered Sinatus, Galatia's tetrarch, Sinorix tries to convince his wife to marry him. After refusing him several times, Camma eventually relents and offers her husband's killer a toast which she shares with him after having poisoned the drink. Le Moyne describes Camma and Sinorix in antithetic terms, thus highlighting Camma's courage and strength:

> D'un genereux dépit, cette Reine animée,
> Le poison à la bouche, & la mort prés du cœur,
> Reproche à Sinorix, dés-ja tremblant de peur,
> Le crime de sa main, au meurtre accoûtumée.

Camma's fortitude and courage contrast with Sinorix's physical reaction to fear and the mention of his past crimes.

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[95] Le Moyne, *Gallerie*, seventh *tableau*: Camma, p. 428. Although Camma and Monima are not actually queens, they were included in this study on the grounds that they are engaged or married to a country's leader.

In the *Gallerie*'s ninth *tableau*, Monima's courage in the face of death is equally constant. To satisfy her jealous husband, Monima 's'étrangle de son diademe',[96] the reaction of a 'noble cœur' to an edict so unnatural that:

> La Nature maudit cette barbare loy;
> Et l'Amour de dépit ses ailes en déchire.
> La Grace échevelée auprés d'elle soûpire:
> Les Filles de sa suite en paslissent d'effroy;
> La Fortune a regret de luy manquer de foy:
> Et d'un mesme regard la traverse & l'admire.[97]

The introduction of allegorical figures such as *Nature*, *Amour*, *Grace* and *Fortune* contrasts with and highlights the unnatural reaction of Monima's husband, thus making her *grandeur d'âme* even more visible.

4. *Zenobia* in *Gallerie des femmes fortes*, Le Moyne (1647)

[96] Le Moyne, *Gallerie*, ninth *tableau*: Monime, p. 428.
[97] Ibid, p. 428.

The tenth *tableau* of the *Gallerie* is dedicated to Zenobia. The main quality which is emphasized by Le Moyne in this part is that of courage in the face of danger whether in battle or while hunting lions. Zenobia's past military exploits are mentioned together with references to the 'feu qui par ses yeux fait luire son courage' and the fiery arrows shooting from her eyes which can take hearts as well as empires.[98] Zenobia is referred to also in Le Moyne's first *Ode* to the *Femme Forte,*[99] alongside other queens, namely Rodogune, Thomyris and Cleopatra. Zenobia, Rodogune and Thomyris are used to illustrate the notion of female courage in battle. The two following strophes offer a justification for women participating in war, and are followed by ten lines alluding to the ancient Queens:

Non pas que l'Esprit de conqueste,
Soit au second Sexe étranger:
Non pas qu'on ne puisse ranger,
Le grand cœur sous la belle teste.
Les plus magnanimes efforts,
Ne font pas des plus rudes corps:
La Grace se peut joindre à la Vertu guerriere.
Les Heros n'estoient pas tout ongles & tout dents:
Et c'est d'un feu tout pur, & non de la matiere,
Du sang & non des os, que se font les Vaillans.

Les Abeilles ses Sœurs volantes,
Qui dans des pavillons de bois,
Tiennent leur camp, gardent leurs Rois,
Sont toutes vierges & vaillantes.
Les graces & la majesté,
La modestie & la beauté,
En la Reine des fleurs s'augmentent sous les armes:
L'esprit, le feu, l'éclair, s'épandent de son cœur:
Ses traits n'empeschent point l'usage de ses charmes;
Et l'audace en son teint, se mesle à la pudeur.

Telle qu'on vit jadis Rodogune,
Vaincre des mains, vaincre des yeux,

[98] Le Moyne, *Gallerie*, tenth *tableau*: Zénobie, p. 428.
[99] Le Moyne, *Hymnes et Eloges poetiques*, in *Œuvres poétiques*; *La Femme Forte*, pp. 364-66.

> Suivie aux perils glorieux,
> Par les Graces & la Fortune.
> Telles aux Perses pris & défaits,
> Par sa force & par ses attraits,
> De Thomyre parut la fameuse victoire.
> Et Zenobie encor fut telle en ses exploits,
> Où brave ambitieuse, elle affecta la gloire,
> De vaincre des Consuls, & d'abatre des Rois.[100]

Rodogune, Thomyris and Zenobia are described as women who are able to win both military battles, thanks to their 'force' or their brave ambition, and the hearts of men, thanks to their beauty. It is interesting to note at this point that female attractiveness is systematically mentioned in parallel with military prowess. This is particularly visible in two lines the structure of which underlines the association of beauty with military competency: Rodogune uses her *mains* to win battles and her *yeux* to win men over, while Thomyris wins over the Persians thanks to her *force* and her *attraits*. This could be interpreted as an attempt by Le Moyne to maintain the feminine aspect of those women performing a male role.

Unlike Rodogune for instance, Cleopatra is dealt with as an extremely negative illustration of women in power, in spite of the fact that all the queens described by the author meet a tragic end and became dramatic characters in Renaissance tragedy as I will show later in this study. Yet, in this respect, Le Moyne follows not only Du Bosc's example, since both authors treat the Egyptian Queen in this light, but also French Renaissance dramatic playwrights who create Cleopatra as a negative character.[101] There is no mention of Cleopatra's individual achievements in Le Moyne's description, and the allusion to her beauty has become negative:

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[100] Ibid, pp. 364-65. It should be noted that Le Moyne uses a different spelling for Thomyris: Thomyre.
[101] Le Moyne is obviously aware of this, since he mentions theatrical representations of Cleopatra in the following quotation.

> Il luy souvient de Cleopatre,
> Dont le celebre desespoir,
> Encor aujourd'huy se fait voir,
> Avec pompe sur le Theatre.
> Elle mit à prix la Beauté ;
> Prostitua la Royauté ;
> Abusa des tresors de la terre & de l'onde :
> Et par un luxe enorme & fatal à sa Cour,
> Ses Ayeux avoient fait les Miracles du Monde,
> A beaucoup moins de frais, qu'elle ne fit l'amour.
>
> De longs & tragiques supplices,
> Furent les fruits de cét amour :
> La saison des pleurs eut son tour,
> Aprés la saison des delices.
> Le Sceptre enfin luy fut osté ;
> Son Phantosme à Rome porté,
> Esclave de parade, entra chargé de chaisnes :
> Et l'Aspic qui luy fit un trépas parfumé,
> A son ame livrée à d'eternelles gesnes,
> Devint dans les Enfers un Serpent enflamé.[102]

Beauty has been corrupted by lust in Cleopatra's case and serves, as a counter-example, to demonstrate Le Moyne's idea about women's necessary 'combats contre les Vices & les Passions',[103] the main topic of his first *Ode* to the *femme forte*. The vocabulary used in association with Cleopatra is that of pleasure, power and its subsequent conversion into enslavement with her loss of its symbolic representation, that is to say the *Sceptre*.

The virtues illustrated by Le Moyne's historical queens differ from those developed previously. There is no more mention of virtue in war or goverment. The first historical Queen to be dealt with in the *Gallerie* is *Isabelle, Princesse de Galles* in the seventeenth *tableau*. Isabelle is alleged to have saved her husband 'Edoüard' from a snake bite thanks to 'un cœur plein des grands cœurs de ses braves Ayeux [...]'. Her love is the remedy to the poison in her husband's veins, together with 'Le feu, le sang, l'esprit,

[102] Ibid, p. 365.
[103] Ibid, p. 364.

qui coulent de [son] Ame'. If the virtue exalted in this *tableau* is of a moral nature, it is distinct from the qualities discussed by Le Moyne through his previous set of examples, as the Queen's *grandeur d'âme* is not displayed through the way she behaves on the battlefield or on the throne, but towards her husband.

The twenty-second *tableau*, dedicated to Anne of Austria and written in the first person, deals with virtues closer to the ones displayed by Le Moyne's ancient queens. In this sonnet, the author contrives to allude to the Queen's noble ancestors, her affable manners, her generosity and her grace. What is striking in this *tableau* is the recurrent comparison between Anne of Austria, as a powerful woman, and kings:

> Et brave des Vertus de mon sexe, & du leur,
> J'en surpasse les uns & les autres j'égale.
> (...)
> Et, pour faire fleurir un Etat sous mes loix,
> Si je n'ay le sexe des Rois,
> J'en ay receu du Ciel, l'Esprit & le Courage.[104]

Although there is no reference to the Queen's military ability, unlike that of Zenobia for example, and although it could be argued that the possibility for the Queen to display such ability is denied,[105] it is still obvious that the Queen is associated with the exercise of power, or at least that her virtues would make her capable of exercising it.

Amongst Le Moyne's contemporary references, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, is the most frequently quoted. She appears in the first ode to the *femme forte*, as well as in the twentieth and twenty-first part of the *Gallerie*. Queen Mary's tragic end is used in the first ode and in the twenty-first *tableau* as an example of feminine courage and constancy in the face of danger and death; in the twentieth *tableau*, it is the courage she shows in an

[104] Le Moyne, *Gallerie*, twenty-second *tableau*: Anne d'Autriche, p. 431.
[105] See line 7: 'Sans armes je sçay vaincre, & forcer sans aigreur'.

attempt to escape her captors that is accentuated. The recurrent use and association of the words *cœur* and *haut* serve to highlight this point, while the systematic juxtaposition of the semantic fields of royalty and death emphasizes her dramatic and unnatural death.[106] Her beauty is also alluded to in the *Gallerie* where she is, for instance, compared to a star.[107] As with Princess Isabelle and Queen Anne, the virtue Le Moyne emphasises through the example of Queen Mary is that of moral constancy. Yet, Queen Mary stands alone amongst Le Moyne's contemporary queens as one who was a ruler in her own right. This is apparent in the recurrent use of the material representation of royal power in both the first *Ode* and the *Gallerie*.[108]

In conclusion, the study of queens in moralist writings suggests that although Dinet, Du Bosc and Le Moyne officially attempt to offer a positive image of womanhood and female heroic qualities, the virtues exalted in their works are not those of powerful, or even active women: they, in fact, try to promote qualities which are befitting to motherhood and marriage. This is the reason why they have to turn to ancient history and biblical sources to find satisfying examples to illustrate qualities such as virtue in war and government. Although it can be argued that Anne of Austria, for instance, had not yet become Queen Regent, hence could not have provided these authors with the appropriate material they needed in order to shower her with praise regarding her virtue in government, there was still enough evidence to be derived from Catherine de Medici's

[106] The words *cœur* and *haut* are associated in the first *Ode* to the *femme forte*, ibid, p. 366, and in the twentieth *tableau*, *Gallerie*, p. 431. The semantic fields of royalty and death are juxtaposed in the first *Ode* to the *femme forte*, ibid, p. 366 ('Sur le Trône & sur l'Echaffaut'), in the twentieth *tableau*, *Gallerie*, p. 431 (Luy fera de son Trône, un tragique échaffaut.') and in the twenty-first *tableau* , *Gallerie*, p. 431 ('la hache mortelle,/ Ne peut faire paslir le sang de tant de Rois').

[107] In *Gallerie*, twentieth *tableau*, p. 431, she is described as 'un Astre si beau', while in the twenty-first *tableau*, *Gallerie*, p. 431, she is described as 'l'Astre des Ecossois'; there are also several references to her eyes and her *grace* in the *Gallerie*'s two *tableaux*.

[108] In the first *Ode*, Le Moyne uses the words 'Trône' and 'Sceptre,' ibid, p. 366. In *Gallerie*, Le Moyne uses the very same words in the twentieth *tableau*, ibid, p. 431.

life, for example, to illustrate contemporary women's virtue in war and government. Moreover, the 1645 edition of Du Bosc's *Femme Heroïque* is dedicated to Anne of Austria, a particularly fitting choice since, by then, she had become Queen Regent. Yet, the *epistre*, which is meant to praise the Queen, remains extremely vague as to the exact actions justifying the author's praises:

> Madame, si j'ai mis vostre Majesté à la teste de ces Heroïnes, ce n'est pas seulement pour employer la protection d'une grande Reyne, c'est aussi pour me servir de l'exemple de vos incomparables vertus. Comme c'est mon dessein de monstrer que les Dames sont capables de la Morale la plus heroïque, j'auray cet advantage, que vos actions & vostre vie me serviront d'une preuve convainquante. Si les merveilles de ces excellentes Femmes que je dépeins, semblent au dessus de la portée de leur sexe, l'Histoire de vostre vie rendra la leur plus croyable: Et comme vostre Majesté nous fait voir tous les jours ce qu'il y a de plus grand & de plus eminent en leurs vertus, elles vous auront une double obligation: puis qu'on croira sans peine leurs plus merveilleuses actions, & que vous les ferez revivre en vostre personne, & en rendrez la memoire plus auguste.[109]

Considering the *epistre* is the only point at which the author could have given specific examples of the Queen's heroic actions or behaviour, since he does not deal with contemporary Queens in his works, it could seem bizarre that Du Bosc does not take this opportunity to do so. Dinet, on the other hand, does include references to more contemporary queens than those I have examined previously, yet they are all in the first book of his *Théâtre françois des Seigneurs & Dames Illustres*, in the chapter devoted to the 'Dames françoises illustres en Science'. The dedication of Catherine de Medici, Marguerite d'Anjou, Marguerite de Valois and Mary Stuart to sciences and learning in general is discussed at length, yet there is no mention of their ability – or inability for that matter – to rule their respective realms.[110] This can lead the modern reader to see

[109] Du Bosc, *La femme héroïque*. These are the first lines of the *epistre*. The pages are not numbered.
[110] Dinet, *Théâtre françois*, pp. 54-60.

moralistic writing not so much as a form of proto-feminist writing, but rather as a re-writing of women's role in French contemporary history. This could also explain to a certain extent Dido's failure as a monarch in Renaissance tragedy: some of the playwrights I will be looking at could have read contemporary moralistic writing; it seems therefore reasonable for them to reproduce the patterns established by the moralists. For the earlier playwrights, the pervading contemporary discourse on women would have undoubtedly been known to them.

Having looked at the cultural context in which the tragedies were written, this study will now concentrate on the historical circumstances regarding female rulers and particular issues related to women in power in France through the lives of Catherine de Medici, Marie de Medici and Anne of Austria.

PRACTICES OF WOMEN IN POWER: CONTEMPORARY QUEENS

In order to provide a complete picture of the context in which the tragedies were produced, it is now necessary to turn to contemporary French Queens, for it is through the understanding of the institutions regulating female power and the actual practice of female power that we can better understand the representation of queenship as it manifests itself in the tragedies under consideration.

I am going to focus on the cases of the three Queens Regent of the period - Catherine and Marie de Medici and Anne of Austria – because they are the closest model of female power that can be associated or compared with Dido as a female ruler: their lives were shaped by the institutions and discourse on women, and their experiences as ruling monarchs are examples of the practice of female power. Moreover, the story of their lives would have provided all audiences of the time with common frames of reference. For instance, the foreign element of Dido can be interpreted as an echo of the Medici's Italian origins or Anne of Austria's Spanish upbringing.

It is important to understand that the foreign origins of the three queens are essential in relation to Dido. The Valois and the Bourbons claimed to descend from Æneas via Augustus, thereby asserting their divine origin; Henry II, Henry IV and Louis XIII, the descendants of Æneas, were married to foreign women. In Dido tragedies, although the action is located in the Queen's realm, she can still be regarded as a foreigner for two reasons: firstly because she is a foreigner in her new country, she has recently arrived from Tyr, founded Carthage, the expansion of which is threatening the local population and causing some disturbance. Secondly, in her relation with Æneas, Dido represents everything that is foreign: Æneas, as the ancestor of their monarchs, is likely to have been

identified as more 'French' by the audience, whereas Dido could more easily be associated with Catherine de Medici, Marie de Medici or Anne of Austria.

For those Queens, the exercise of royal power was by no means the logical consequence of the possession of the royal title at the death of their husbands. In *La Reine de France*, Fanny Cosandey explains that:

> [r]ien, a priori, dans la construction d'un système politique centré sur l'absolutisme, ne désigne les reines pour exercer le pouvoir. Au contraire, écartées du gouvernement, attaquées dans l'argumentation visant à justifier la loi salique, effacées au point de disparaître des écrits politiques, les femmes, les reines du XVIIe siècle semblent résolument exclues de toute activité ayant trait au pouvoir.[111]

In spite of this, Catherine de Medici, Marie de Medici and Anne of Austria all exercised power and enjoyed the royal prerogatives of their respective late husbands during periods of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Catherine de Medici

The life of Catherine de Medici is closely intertwined with French politics and power. Her involvement was not limited to the period during which she was acting as Queen Regent for her son Charles IX between 1560 and 1563. Prior to this regency, Catherine de Medici had already acted as Queen Regent while her husband, King Henry II, was at war in 1548, 1552 and 1557.

On these occasions, she was involved in raising troops and taxes: in the late 1550s, for instance, she helped the King raise 300,000 *livres* from the Parisians to rebuild the royal forces after the battle of Saint-Quentin.[112] Catherine also showed a keen interest

[111] Fanny Cosandey, *La Reine de France: symbole et pouvoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), p. 295.
[112] See Leonie Frieda, *Catherine de Medici* (London: Phoenix, 2005), pp. 124-25.

in internal affairs: for example, she arranged for some Parisian preachers to be silenced discreetly and replaced when she found out they were preaching sedition and were questioning the King's right to tax the Church. The Queen tried to influence the French relations with Italy and, on one occasion, she raised money herself to pay for Piero Strozzi's expedition to defend Sienna.[113] However, Catherine's involvement in the affairs of the kingdom was not a mere *état de fait*: during the regencies, prior to Henry's death, her power was curtailed by the influence of the King's mistress, Diane de Poitiers, whose allies were judiciously given key roles within the Royal Council.[114] After Henry's death, the rise of the Guise family also threatened to diminish her actual powers.

Besides the influence of Diane de Poitiers and the Guises, and the fact that she was a woman, Catherine de Medici also had to contend with the fact that she was a foreigner. This was a critical point several times during her life: first during the reign of Francis I and later with the rise of political and religious unrest in France during her Regency and the reigns of Francis II and Charles IX. Pope Clement VII had arranged Catherine's marriage with Henry in exchange for his support of the French claims in Italy. Knecht explains that after the Pope's death, the election of his successor 'destroyed the *raison d'être* of Catherine's marriage. Her status was immediately reduced to that of a foreigner of relatively modest origins'.[115] Catherine's political status as a foreigner, and a poor one at that, was made worse by the Dauphin's sudden death on 10 August 1536. Francis I now had to reconcile himself with the idea of Henry being heir to the throne. Henry's wife had unfortunately little to offer in terms of political weight to support the

[113] Ibid, p. 124. For Catherine's role within the Italian lobbying at Court, see also De Lamar Jensen, 'Catherine de Medici and Her Florentine Friends', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 9 (1978), 57-74.
[114] For example, Jean Bertrand, the Keeper of the Seals and a close ally of Diane de Poitiers, was given joint presidency of the Council in 1552 and all decisions had to be taken by a majority of councillors. See Frieda, *Catherine de Medici*, pp. 117-18 for details.
[115] Robert Jean Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici* (London: Longman, 1998), p. 28.

future King. Her only hope, or usefulness so to speak, was to produce a male offspring to perpetuate the Valois line, yet the first ten years of Catherine's marriage were childless.

After Henry's death, the Guises managed to get the upper hand over the Royal Council and to keep away their rivals. The Royal Council had an essential role to play in the ruling of the kingdom, because King Francis II was only fifteen when he was crowned. Although he was legally old enough to reign, he lacked both the experience and the physical strength and stamina to be able to rule his kingdom without the advice of the Royal Council. The Queen-Mother tried to strike a balance between the powerful and ambitious Guises, the old nobility, and the unsettled Huguenots for the sake of her sons.

The Queen was thrown again into a power struggle by the death of Francis II on 5 December 1561. Too young to reign, ten-year-old Charles IX needed a regent. Usually this role would have been given to the first prince of the blood, Navarre in this case, yet the latter had already given up his right to this responsibility.[116] The Guises could not pretend to such a high office and the Queen-Mother was appointed Regent by the *conseil privé* on 21 December 1561. Catherine took her role as Queen Regent as seriously as she had when she had been made Regent in the absence of her husband yet, this time, without the constraints imposed by the King and his mistress. She presided over the King's council, controlled both domestic and foreign policy and distributed offices and benefits. She took a particularly keen interest in religious issues, which she attempted to resolve with the organisation of a national council to reconcile Catholics and Calvinists.[117]

[116] Catherine succeeded in making Henry's cousin, Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre and first prince of the blood, renounce his right to be regent.
[117] The colloquy of Poissy opened on 9 September 1561 and started remarkably well, until Théodore de Bèze mentioned the Eucharist. The Catholics and Calvinists never managed to agree and the discussions became more and more acrimonious until the colloquy dissolved itself on 13 October.

Perceptions of Catherine de Medici were not always negative. The tolerance she first displayed towards Calvinists, for instance, made her popular amongst them. However, as the religious tensions intensified and she was left with no choice but to bring into play more coercive legislation, she was vilified by her enemies. The main accusations against the Queen concerned her gender and her nationality. Philip Ford explains in 'La Diabolisation de Catherine de Médicis' that certain traits of her character that had been merely hinted at, at the beginning of her reign, were then amplified and demonised.[118] Brantôme, a Catholic, had described the Queen in laudatory terms, yet not without a clear reference to her as a political entity: 'elle estoit de fort belle et de riche taille, de grande majesté, toutesfois fort douce quand il le falloit [...]'.[119] Théodore de Bèze, a Reformist, was more forthcoming about the Queen's political abilities: 'Regina mater in hoc unum intenta ut quoquo modo summam rerum obtineat, Italicas omnes artes strenue exercet'.[120] The seeds of xenophobia present in this last quotation grew into more serious accusations of anti-patriotism and favouritism towards the Italians. Thirteen years later, Bèze described the Queen as 'mulier extranea et solis suis sceleribus celebrata',[121] while Brantôme alluded to common accusations against Catherine: 'Ses ennemis lui ont mis à sus qu'elle n'estoit pas bonne Françoise',[122] 'D'aucuns aussi ont voulu dire qu'elle n'aimoit point la noblesse de France, et en desiroit fort le sang respandu'.[123] Other

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[118] Philip Ford, 'La Diabolisation de Catherine de Médicis', in *Female Saints and Sinners (France: 1450-1650)*, ed. Jennifer Britnell and Ann Moss (Durham: DMLS, 2002), 79-96.

[119] Pierre de Bourdeille seigneur de Brantôme, *Vies des dames illustres françoises et étrangères*, ed. by Louis Moland (Leyde: J. Sambix le jeune, 1692), p. 40.

[120] 'La reine mère, uniquement attentive à gagner d'une manière ou d'une autre l'essentiel de ses objectifs, déploie avec diligence tous ses arts italiens', translation Philip Ford. Letter to Bullinger, dated 24 May 1561, in Théodore de Bèze, *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze, recueillie par Hippolyte Aubert*, ed. Fernand Aubert and Henri Meylan, 8 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1960), III, 102.

[121] 'une étrangère, célèbre uniquement par ses crimes.' Ibid., 1073, XV. 113.

[122] Brantôme, *Vies des dames illustres*, p. 65.

[123] Ibid., p. 67.

common allegations included belief in superstitions and overspending, the latter being justified by Brantôme as a means to assert the grandeur of France. However, it is with Agrippa d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques* — a work of fiction — that the blame really turns into demonisation, as Catherine is then accused of infanticide, superstitions turn into witchcraft, and the Queen's attempts at reaching a compromise between Catholics and Reformists are labelled disloyalty and treason against the kingdom.[124] An essential part of the criticism emanated from the fact that Catherine was Queen Regent; the misogynist references to a woman in power flourished under her regime as can be seen in Bèze's correspondance. Bèze, put anarchy and female rule on the same level in April 1564: 'Galliae status nunc compositus est partim ex αναρχια, partim ex γυναικοκρατεια'.[125] Later, in a letter to Bullinger, dated 6 July 1567, he also described the state of France as the eternal reign of a woman and a child, which must be unbearable for all.[126] This was the beginning of a four-century-long cabal against the Queen of France, which N. M. Sutherland calls the 'legend of the wicked Italian queen'.[127] In a detailed analysis of the historical works dealing with Catherine de Medici, Sutherland explains that it is not before the 1930s that historians based their evaluation of Catherine's character and achievements on archives and letters of contemporaries as well as Catherine's own correspondence rather than on pamphlets or biased material. In the nineteenth century, a few historical works, such as Henri Martin's *Histoire de France*,[128] Alberi's *Vita di*

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[124] Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, ed. A. Garnier and J. Plattard, 4 vols (Paris: Sociétés des Textes Français Modernes, 1932).
[125] 'Maintenant le gouvernement de la France consiste en partie en anarchie, en partie en la domination d'une femme.' Bèze, *Correspondance*, V, 70.
[126] Ibid, VIII. 135.
[127] N. M. Sutherland, 'Catherine de Medici: The Legend of the Wicked Italian Queen', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 9 (1978), 45.
[128] Henri Martin, *Histoire de France depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'en 1830* (Paris: L. Mame, 1833).

Caterina de' Medici[129] or Capefigue's *Catherine de Médicis, mère des rois François II, Charles IX, et Henri III*,[130] had already started to question the accuracy of the then accepted historical truth. However their work had little influence on a three-hundred year-old legend taken as gospel. Even with the publication of pro-Catherine works, in the 1930s, the legend still had its own momentum. Henri de Maricourt's *Les Valois*[131] and Dodu's article, 'Le Drame conjugal de Catherine de Médicis',[132] for instance, highlighted the bias of previous authors and specifically their 'prejudice against women and foreigners'.[133] However other historians in the same period, who presumably had access to the same resources, were still influenced by the black legend. For instance, Sutherland treats Fisher's *History of Europe* as perfectly representative of this point. Fisher says of Catherine:

> In her contempt for veracity, in her gluttony, and in the remorseless pursuit of private revenge she was an Italian of her age. (...) this fat, agreeable, industrious woman, whose taste in art was so delicate and true (...) was first of all the rulers of France to organize immorality as an instrument of political power, discarded her policy of indulgence and helped to engineer the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.[134]

Sutherland concludes, like Maricourt and Dodu, that:

> It was perhaps inevitable that Catherine should have suffered in this way because her vulnerability was increased by a dual disadvantage. She had the misfortune to be both a woman and of Italian paternity. This invited comparisons with the notorious Machiavelli, with whose undeservedly sinister reputation her name has often been emotively associated.[135]

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[129] Eugenio Alberi, *Vita di Caterina de' Medici* (Firenze: V. Batelli e figli, 1838).
[130] Jean-Baptiste Capefigue, *Catherine de Médicis, mère des rois François II, Charles IX et Henri III* (Paris: Amyot, 1856).
[131] André de Maricourt, *Les Valois (1293-1589): hérédités, pathologies, amours et grandeurs* (Paris: Emile-Paul Frères, 1939).
[132] Gaston Dodu, 'Le drame conjugal de Catherine de Médicis', in *Revue des Etudes Historiques*, 96 (1930), 89-128.
[133] See Sutherland, 'Catherine de Medici', p. 50.
[134] H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1935), p. 380, quoted by Sutherland, 'Catherine de Medici,' p. 51.
[135] Sutherland, 'Catherine de Medici,' p. 46.

The accusations of superstition and disloyalty made against Catherine de Medici, together with the issue of the female ruler, must have been known to Jodelle and quite likely to Hardy as part of the opposition's propaganda. It is, therefore, not impossible to make connections between Catherine de Medici's representation in contemporary writing and Dido as fashioned by Jodelle in the 1550s and possibly Hardy in the early 1600s. Jodelle's awareness of these criticisms would have come from first-hand experiences, as he was a contemporary of Catherine. Yet, the resources used by historians and commentators contemporary to Hardy were in fact quite similar: the memory of Catherine would still have been very much alive as she had only died in 1589, while Sutherland's dismay in the face of the evolution of Catherine's historical reputation, clearly establishes that it had remained unchanged for the first forty years after her death:

> Historians to whom Catherine was still a living memory were mostly aware that, in so far as the crown was to blame for the state of France, the damage had been done before Catherine's emergence from obscurity about 1561. The three most celebrated histories of the age of Catherine appeared during the forty years which followed her death. They were all by men with some personal knowledge of her and with access to much information from those who knew her well. The *Histoire universelle* of de Thou began to appear in Latin in 1604; the *Histoire universelle* of the Calvinist Agrippa d'Aubigné appeared between 1616 and 1620; and the *Historia delle guerre civili di Francia* by the Italian, Davila, appeared in Venice in 1630. The extent to which these works support each other is very striking, considering how different were the lives and sympathies of their authors. They were, for a long while, the principal authorities, and not one of them contributed to the legend.[136]

It is difficult to establish Catherine's direct ascendancy over Jodelle's play or any indirect influence on Hardy's tragedy. If parallels could be drawn between the representation of Dido as a queen in power and Catherine de Medici, there is no historical evidence of the conscious influence of the Queen or her partisans on those literary works.

[136] Sutherland, 'Catherine de Medici', p. 46.

Catherine's patronage essentially touched architecture and court festivals. Knecht describes her literary patronage as 'not particularly distinguished',[137] although he agrees that the Queen had some good poets and musicians at her service, like Ronsard, who was the official Court poet from 1562 to 1574. She favoured Italian literature and admired Tasso to whom she sent her portrait as a token of her appreciation after he had presented his *Rinaldo* to her. As far as the Queen's attitude towards theatre, and more specifically tragedy, is concerned, superstition seems to have played an important part. Knecht explains that:

> [s]hortly before Henry II's death, he and Catherine attended a performance at Blois of *Sophonisba*, a tragedy by Trissino [...]. According to Brantôme, Catherine became convinced after her husband's death that the play had brought him bad luck and refused thereafter to see any more tragedies. Thus it has been said that her conjugal piety inspired a new type of drama: tragicomedy.[138]

If, after these events, the Queen was unlikely to offer her patronage to a tragedy writer, it would nonetheless have been possible for a playwright to include in a tragedy elements which would have satisfied the Queen's tastes or simply have contributed to her glorification as an individual. The rules of the patronage and clientele system were not set in stone: an artist without a patron could, for instance, produce a piece of work likely to please a potential patron in order to obtain his favours, or simply in order to be appreciated without seeking material gratification. An artist could also try to gain the esteem, on their behalf, of someone their patron or a potential patron might want to please. The Queen's personal feelings regarding tragedy seem to have been overcome by her desire to use literature and, in particular, theatre as a political tool: while, for example, the Italian troop *I Gelosi* performed in Paris, having been invited by Henry III

[137] Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici*, p. 244.
[138] Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici*, p. 234.

himself, she saw the artists and their performances as one of the means of keeping the French nobility away from fighting and conspiring.[139] Knecht says that

> [i]n a famous letter of advice to her son, Catherine recalled the court of his grandfather, Francis I. The old king used to say that two things were necessary to live at peace with the French and to retain their love: they needed to be kept happy and occupied with some honest exercise, otherwise they were likely to engage in dangerous pursuits.[140]

Theatre was not only useful as a political tool, it could also convey and illustrate the Queen's passion for astrology and celestial signs through the use of mythological topics for instance. [141] This royal passion was already being exhibited in painting, with such works as the *Astronomers observing an eclipse of the sun* by Caron, and in architecture.[142] Catherine's personal patronage often had as a primary function to give a public expression to her grief over the death of Henry II.

Catherine de Medici's individual achievements do not conform to their perception either by some of her contemporaries, or even most later historians. This re-interpretation of history can be explained by the issues of gender and nationality surrounding Catherine de Medici. However negative the perception of her persona might have been, none of her critics could deny the power she enjoyed until the accession to the throne of her son

[139] Another way to keep the nobility busy at court was provided by the Queen's eighty ladies-in-waiting, also known as the 'flying squadron'. The young ladies, from the noblest families in France, were allegedly used to extract and give information to courtiers.
[140] Knecht, *Catherine de' Medici*, p. 235.
[141] It is striking that this interest in astrology, and signs in general, manifested itself in Elizabethan art as well, as the Queen of England shared a similar fondness for symbols. See, for example, the analysis of the portrait of Elizabeth I attributed to Cornelius Kettel, entitled 'the Siena or 'sieve' portrait', in Diane Purkiss's article, 'The Queen on Stage: Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and the Representation of Elizabeth I', in Michael Burden, ed., *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), pp. 151-167.
[142] See, for example, the construction of the *colonne de l'horoscope*, a tall Doric column in the Hôtel de la Reine in Paris, probably used as an observation post to scrutinise the sky.

Henry III in 1574.[143] The story of her life would have been an inspiring example or counter-example for literary and moralist writers alike, because of its originality.

Marie de Medici

Comparatively, Marie de Medici's life was simpler and less exhilarating. Simpler, because by the time she became Queen Regent, the path had already been traced by Catherine de Medici and Louise de Savoie. The fact that the mother of the future King should ensure the interim until her son could reign had become more or less accepted practice.[144] Less exhilarating, because the obstacles in Catherine's way, such as religious strife and war, were not such major issues by the time Marie was given the throne on a fixed-term basis. Replacing Catherine de Medici's daughter, Marie de Medici married Henry IV in 1600. Catherine and Marie seem to have had quite similar matrimonial destinies, in that they both had to bear their respective husband's blatant infidelity. Yet, Catherine seems to have been the luckier of the two, as Diane de Poitiers at least encouraged Henry II to behave appropriately towards his wife. This was not the case for the marquise de Verneuil who harboured no such feeling of sympathy towards Marie. The marriage was by all accounts a miserable one, to the extent that the Queen is blamed, by some historians, for plotting Henry's murder. In any case, the day before the King's death, Marie was crowned and given a seat on the Regency Council, as the King was

[143] Aged 23, Henry III was unwilling to let his mother have as much influence on affairs of state as she previously had. Her power became gradually more limited as the King preferred to listen to his male favourites and refused to marry in spite of her insistence. His decision to get rid of the duc de Guise seems to have been the last straw for Catherine who fell ill and died a few days later in 1589.

[144] See Cosandey, *La Reine de France*, pp. 328-31.

about to leave for his German campaign. Immediately made Queen Regent,[145] Marie enforced a new set of policies that differed greatly from those of her late husband. Henry had worked to improve and further ties with the Protestants; Marie went to great lengths to further France's ties with the Spanish Catholics, marrying her first born, the future Louis XIII, to the *Infanta*, Anne of Austria, and her daughter Elizabeth of France to the *Infant* Philip.[146] It seems that even though Marie de Medici had expressed little interest in the exercise of power until then, she grew rapidly fond of it when she became Regent. In order to preserve the unity of the kingdom, Marie 'conserve les principaux ministres de son époux, au courant des dossiers, rompus au maniement des affaires'.[147] Queen Marie acts as the sovereign of France until the majority of her son: for instance, she presides over the King's Council, raises money to 'lever une armée contre les factieux, pour financer leur ralliement et, bientôt, pour faire face aux frais du double mariage'.[148] She makes strategic decisions regarding the involvement of French troops abroad on several occasions, deals with internal threats represented by the Princes of the Blood and religious dissension,[149] as well as external threats, primarily embodied by Spain. Her interest in all aspects of government and her distrust of her son's abilities explain, according to Bertière, her decision to keep Louis XIII away from the exercise of power

[145] The immediacy of Marie's accession to power is unwittingly highlighted by one of Rubens's paintings, *L'Apothéose d'Henri IV et la proclamation de la Régence* (14 May 1610), dating approximatively from 1622-1625. The painting, commissioned by the Queen herself, features the death of Henry on the left and Marie on the throne on the right.

[146] For the debate around those marriages and their political implications, see Simone Bertière, *Les Reines de France au temps des Bourbons, 1. Les deux régentes: Marie de Médicis, Anne d'Autriche* (Paris: Fallois, 1996), pp. 94-100.

[147] Ibid, p. 88.

[148] Ibid, p. 102.

[149] See, for instance, her decision not to honour the treaty of Brussol, signed by Henry IV with Charles-Emmanuel de Savoie: the King had offered military support to the Duke to attack Milan. The circumstances having changed since the treaty had been signed, Marie decided to refuse this support to the Duke. For details, see Bertière, *Les Reines de France*, pp. 92-93. For her dealings with the Princes of the Blood and religious tensions, see Bertière, *Les Reines de France*, pp. 84-86 and 89. See also Philippe Delorme, *Histoire des Reines de France: Marie de Médicis* (Paris: Pygmalion/ Gérard Watelet, 1998), pp. 137-38.

even after his majority in 1614.[150] It took three more years for the legitimate heir to the throne to obtain his heritage.

The reign of the Queen Regent was tainted by the rise of the Concinis, Italian upstarts who accumulated titles and wealth with her support. Rumours of an adulterous relationship between the Queen and Concini exacerbated popular unrest and the nobility's anger towards the Queen and her favourites.[151] They also contributed to worsening the already difficult relations of the Queen with Louis XIII. This culminated in the murder of the Queen's favourite, Concini, on 24 April 1617 and the *coup d'état* resulting in the end of the Regency and the first exile of Marie de Medici in Blois. After her exile, the Queen Mother was involved in several plots: she escaped from Blois and threatened to return to Paris with troops twice. Marie de Medici and Louis XIII were later reconciled and she was made Queen Regent again, briefly, during the war in Italy. However, the Queen Mother's difficult relationship with her *créature*, Richelieu, drove her to renounce her seat on the Royal Council. The tensions between the King and his mother were never resolved and the Queen Mother was eventually exiled again in 1631. She never returned to France and died in a state of relative poverty in Germany in 1642.

While Regent, the Queen's *modus operandi* to control internal instability was the distribution of wealth and titles. Her prodigality was famously used to keep the peace at court and was a source of criticism for her detractors. Although she was a foreigner, like Catherine de Medici, she does not appear to have been vilified for her origins. The Concinis bore the brunt of the xenophobic discourse in France. Academic studies of the Regency do not record any particular criticism of Marie on account of her gender, unlike

[150] See Bertière, *Les Reines de France,* pp. 103-04.
[151] Ibid, p. 113.

during and after Catherine's reign. As Queen Regent, Marie de Medici benefited from the relative peace pervading France at the time of her coronation, thus avoiding the harsh criticism Catherine de Medici faced at a time of political and religious strife involving difficult choices. This made Marie de Medici a far less controversial character than her relative had ever been. The main criticism addressed to the Queen Regent concerned her prodigality, a theme that would be developed with the character of Cleopatra in literature.

Marie de Medici's most renowned contribution to art, besides the architectural works she sponsored in Paris,[152] is undoubtedly the commissioned cycle of paintings by Rubens to illustrate her life.[153] These paintings are considered the perfect illustration of art used as propaganda, or as a tool to rewrite history: they systematically represent Marie's regencies in a positive light, while still picturing the Queen's exile and her so-called *Réconciliation pleine et entière* with her son.[154] With hindsight, the works of Rubens appear to be closer to propaganda than reality. However, it is certain that Marie, like Catherine, exercised all royal prerogatives during her Regency, thus perpetuating what had now become almost a tradition of maternal regencies in France. This allowed her daughter-in-law, Anne of Austria, to follow in her footsteps after the death of Louis XIII, in spite of the specific instructions left by the King. During her Regency and after, Queen Marie, like Queen Catherine, had power over both internal and external politics, thus challenging what Cosandey describes as 'un système politique centré sur l'absolutisme',[155] which, in theory, denied access to power to women.

[152] For details, see Delorme, *Histoire des Reines de France*, pp. 234-43.
[153] For more details, see Cosandey, *La Reine de France*, pp. 333-60 and Delorme, *Histoire des Reines de France*, pp. 243-45.
[154] See Cosandey, *La Reine de France*, for the entire cycle; for the regencies, in particular, see annex 4, p. 393: *La Remise de la régence*, *L'Apothéose d'Henri IV et proclamation de la régence* and *La Félicité de la régence*.
[155] Cosandey, *La Reine de France*, p. 295.

Anne of Austria

Anne of Austria was not destined to exercise all the royal prerogatives her mother-in-law had enjoyed during her Regency. In spite of an established tradition, Louis XIII's will specifically ordered the Royal Council to exercise royal authority, leaving his wife the role of mere representative. This stems from the fact that, before the start of her own Regency, Anne of Austria was almost as controversial a character as Catherine de Medici in her own time. Like Catherine, Anne had failed to produce heirs to the throne for a long time, twenty years, to be precise. Like Catherine, she was a foreigner. I have mentioned already how this had not been a source of criticism for Marie de Medici; however, Anne was Spanish, and 'on ne voulait plus de la guerre fratricide qui opposait entre elles les puissances catholiques d'Europe: l'Autriche et l'Espagne des Habsbourg contre la France des Bourbons [...]'.[156] As a Spaniard, Anne of Austria attempted to oppose Louis XIII's and Richelieu's policy regarding her native country. This seems to have been her sole involvement in politics — and an unwelcome one — until the death of both Richelieu and, a few months later, of Louis XIII. Embodying France's old enemy, involved in the scandal of Buckingham's diamonds rendered famous by Dumas, Anne of Austria had a poor reputation until she gave birth to the future Louis XIV, which narrowly avoided her repudiation. However, the seven hours it took for the newly widowed Queen and her sons to reach Paris from Saint-Germain-en-Laye, where the old King lay dead, is a testimony of the popular support she enjoyed after the years of high taxes and war imposed on the

[156] Claude Dulong, *La vie quotidienne des femmes au Grand Siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1984), pp. 192-93.

people by Louis XIII and Richelieu.[157] Bertière adds that Anne then easily manoeuvred Gaston d'Orléans and Henri de Condé, the Princes of the Blood, into agreeing to the annulment of Louis XIII's will. The latter, indeed, made the Queen head of the state but in name only, depriving her of any authority. The Princes agreed, both expecting to be able to manipulate the Queen Regent, because she was only a woman.[158] Invested with all powers by Parliament on 18 May 1643, Anne chose another foreigner to help govern France: Cardinal Mazarin. Anne of Austria was by all accounts a novice in politics and the Queen's biographers tell us how much she relied on Mazarin to rule France. Both interior and exterior politics had emptied the country's coffers, so much so that, in 1648, new taxes had to be levied. The Parlement refused, supported by noble and popular discontent, signalling the start of the Frondes.[159] The foreign origins of the Queen, which had been ignored since the start of the Regency, were used once again as a source of criticism and sarcasm, although Mazarin bore the brunt of most of the xenophobic discourse at the time.[160] The Queen's relationship with Mazarin, like that of Marie de Medici with her favourite Concini in its time, was severely condemned publicly.[161] The *frondeurs* eventually managed to obtain Mazarin's exile and Gaston d'Orléans headed the Royal Council, virtually imprisoning the Queen and her two sons in her residence, the Palais-Royal. The Queen officially kept the Regency only due to the fact that Gaston d'Orléans and Condé were both entitled to the regency and choosing between them would have inevitably ended in a fratricidal struggle. On 7 September 1651, two days

[157] See Bertière, *Les Reines de France*, pp. 428-29.
[158] Ibid, pp. 429-30.
[159] For details, see Claude Dulong, *Anne d'Autriche* (Paris: Perrin, 2000), pp. 330-426.
[160] Ibid, p. 442.
[161] See the Mazarinades and for details on the subject, see Jeffrey Merrick, 'The Cardinal and the Queen: Sexual and Political Disorders in the Mazarinades', in *French Historical Studies*, 18, (1994), 667-99 and Christian Jouhaud, *Mazarinades: la Fronde des mots* (Paris: Aubier, 1985).

after Louis XIV officially reached his majority and had the right to head the Royal Council, he expressed his desire in the *lit de justice* that his mother should remain with him and wished that 'après moi vous soyez le chef de mon Conseil'.[162] The Regency was over, but the Queen's influence was still to be felt in the kingdom. This can be seen first in the return of Mazarin in December 1651 at the invitation of the King. The Queen's minister had been in exile but now returned with troops to support the King and his mother against the *frondeurs*. Unlike her predecessors, Anne of Austria was not necessarily interested in power itself, yet she 'continue d'assister au Conseil et rien n'est fait sans qu'elle en soit avertie. Mais elle se tient en retrait et on ne peut discerner, dans les décisions prises, ce qui relève de son initiative'.[163] The Queen, thus, cunningly organised her son's marriage with the Infanta, Marie-Thérèse. What better spouse to find than the Spanish Princess, who would ensure the Queen would finally achieve the peace between her native and her adopted countries? The 'paix des Pyrénées' was signed in November 1659 and the wedding took place in June 1660. The death of Mazarin in March 1661 signalled the end of an era in many ways. The influence of the Cardinal, who had educated Louis XIV in the art of government and war, was over and so was his style of government. Louis XIV immediately altered the composition of the Royal Council for it to become much smaller, and the King gradually phased out his mother's presence and influence.[164] Anne had maintained herself in power not for her own sake but to preserve her son's interests, unlike Catherine or Marie de Medici. The gradual loss of her influence did not, therefore, arouse the Queen Mother's anger.

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[162] Quoted in Bertière, *Les Reines de France*, p. 545.
[163] Ibid, p. 549.
[164] Ibid, pp. 563-64 and Dulong, *Anne d'Autriche*, pp. 460-61.

Anne of Austria achieved, during her Regency, as much as her predecessors and maybe even more. Preserving her son's kingdom against internal and external threats, with the Frondes and the wars against the Hapsburgs, had been no small accomplishment. Mazarin, undoubtedly, played an essential part in her victory over her enemies, but is the ability to surround oneself with good advisers not a crucial quality for a good sovereign? And the fact that Anne of Austria succeeded in maintaining Mazarin in power for so long, in spite of a great deal of opposition, is definitely a tribute to her determination and possibly to her political vision.[165]

Catherine de Medici, Marie de Medici and Anne of Austria succeeded in ruling France in spite of them being women and foreigners. In times of peace, neither their gender, nor their nationality, were regarded as issues. The fact that they had given birth to the representative of God on earth took precedence over those notions. However, in times of strife, both gender and nationality could potentially come to the fore to explain their incapacity to rule over France both appropriately and rightfully. This explains why in tragedy, as I will now show, both the notions of gender and nationality are so closely associated with the preservation of the realm, whereas the menace to the kingdom represented by men is in fact the reflection of French society and French Court at the time.

[165] See, for instance, how she reacted to so-called past friends when she became Queen Regent in Dulong, *Vie Quotidienne des Femmes*, pp. 197-98.

CHAPTER 3

QUEENS IN CONTEMPORARY TRAGEDIES

Having examined the position of women as potentially powerful actors within society on one hand, and as weak, unreasonable human beings on the other hand, through the moralist controversy and through an examination of contemporary French Queens, in other words through the institutions regulating women's access to power, the discourses about women and the practices of women in power, it is now necessary to focus on the discourse regarding women in power through the representation of queens in French tragedy in order to compare their treatment with that of Dido. It seems logical to limit the comparison to tragic characters in order to reduce the discrepancies originating from genre requirements.[1]

The aim of this section is, therefore, to look at the representation of ruling queens in French tragedies and to determine whether any pattern can be seen emerging from the way in which playwrights deal with this particular type of characters.

A study of Lancaster's extensive listing of plays and other material available had led me to establish a distinction between three categories of queens.[2] The first category, under which Dido should be considered, is that of queens performing an active ruling role within the tragedies. The second category is that of queens, such as Racine's Bérénice, who although they are introduced as actual rulers, are represented outside of their realm, thus denying them the possibility to play the role of an actual

[1] Considering all Dido plays are tragedies, and not tragi-comedies, it seems logical to limit my study of queens to tragedy. Moreover, I have considered as irrelevant plays such as Quinault's *Amalasonte* (Paris: Courbé, 1658) which were first published as tragi-comedies and then later classified as tragedies.

[2] H.C. Lancaster, *A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century*, 5 pts in 9 vols, 1st ed. 1929-42 (NY: Gordian, 1966). For a list of plays used in this chapter, see appendix 1.

ruler. The third and last category is that of queens who have no actual ruling power, that is to say consorts, such as Racine's Phèdre.

The second and third categories are of little interest in terms of comparison with Dido: they cannot enable us to establish patterns of the way female rulers are represented on stage. The limited number of queens fitting in the first category is significant in itself: Cleopatra (she features in at least 6 tragedies between 1553 and 1682), Zénobie, Sémiramis and Thomyris are recurring characters which will be examined further in this section.[3] A number of less recurrent female rulers will also be examined here, amongst whom are historical queens, such as Mary Stuart and Elizabeth I. At this point, it must be remembered that recurrence is not synonymous with similarity, in other words, the treatment of identical sources by different playwrights can, at times, culminate in the creation of very different characters.[4]

Two major patterns appear clearly upon examination of the tragic characters I have selected. Queens are confronted with two types of situation: either their realm is under threat or the people of the kingdom wish and demand a male ruler. I will also distinguish between internal and external threats. The definition of an external threat is not only limited to a military operation threatening the physical boundaries of a kingdom, but can be extended to the endangerment of the realm by the presence of foreign elements within it. It must be noted that a nexus of association links the different patterns, together with the notion of dramatic tension or crisis.

I will first address the notion of critical time and its importance in relation to female rule in four tragedies from the mid-sixteenth century to the 1670s. The fact

[3] Cleopatra and Dido are also the female rulers most frequently represented in paintings over this period of time: Cleopatra appears in at least twenty and Dido in over thirty-five paintings and frescoes. Note also that all these queens feature in the works of the moralist writers: see chapter two.

[4] Appendix 1 highlights the recurrence of each character through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

that most tragic queens accede to power after the death of a male character, regardless of whether this death is included in the play or recorded as a fact in the *expositio*, can serve to create dramatic tension within the tragedy. The introduction of what James Voss names a 'critical' time rests on the assumption that 'the integrity of the state rests upon its ability to reproduce itself in time. [The accession to power of a new monarch] is potentially disruptive, because the bonds that hold society together are to be reforged'.[5] This is particularly problematic in Pierre Corneille's *Rodogune, princesse des Parthes*, in Thomas Corneille's *Laodice, reine de Cappadoce*, Quinault's *Astrate* and, to a certain extent, in Gaspard Abeille's *Argélie*.[6]

Pierre Corneille's *Rodogune* describes a political situation that would have echoed with a contemporary audience with a queen regent in power: Queen Cléopâtre rules over Syria as Queen Regent, after she had had her husband killed.[7] The fragility of regency is highlighted by the Queen's efforts to secure her position: Cléopâtre first tries to have her rival, Rodogune, killed by her sons, Séleucus and Antiochus.[8] Having failed to convince them to murder the princess, Cléopâtre then plays them off against each other and finally poisons Séleucus while she fails to kill Antiochus.[9] In this tragedy, it is the vulnerability of the regency — a power which, in essence, is not meant to last — emphasised by the question of its legitimacy, that creates the dramatic tension. It is not only the accession to power of a new monarch, but also female rule, that disrupt society.

[5] Voss, James, '*Edward II*: Marlowe's historical tragedy', in *English Studies*, 63 (1982), 518.
[6] The references will be taken from the following editions: Pierre Corneille, *Rodogune, princesse des Parthes* (Rouen: Quinet, Sommaville et Courbé, 1647); Thomas Corneille, *Laodice, reine de Cappadoce* (Paris: Barbin et Quinet, 1668); Philippe Quinault, *Astrate, roy de Tyr* (Paris: Quinet, de Luyne et Joly, 1665); Gaspard Abeille, *Argélie, reine de Thessalie* (Paris: Barbin, 1674).
[7] Cleopatre's *confidante*, Laonice, describes the death of King Nicanor at the hands of the Queen, in I, 4.
[8] See II, 3.
[9] Cleopatra plots the murder of Séleucus in IV, 7 and it is a *fait accompli* in the following scene (V, 1). Cleopatra has a poisoned drink given to Antiochus at his coronation in act V, scene 3, but Timagène interrupts the ceremony to announce the death of Séleucus, thus saving Antiochus in V, 4.

Thomas Corneille's *Laodice* presents the audience and reader with a similar setting: Queen Laodice rules over Cappadocia after she has had five of her six sons killed. Her sixth son, Ariarate, true heir to the throne, has disappeared. The tension is created in the play through two plots: the unexpected return of Ariarate following the impending wedding of the Queen's only daughter, Arsinoe, to an emissary of Rome. This wedding represents a threat to the Queen's power, as Arsinoe's husband would then become King of Cappacocia. Laodice is therefore determined to choose her daughter's husband carefully:

> Pour prévenir son [Rome's] ordre elle [Laodice] veut aujourd'huy
> Nous donner seule un maître & s'en faire un appuy,
> Jalouse de l'éclat dont la Couronne brille
> Elle a peine sans doute à la rendre à sa Fille,
> Mais au moins cet Espoux que son choix seul resout,
> Ne tiendra rien de Rome, & va luy devoir tout.[10]

However, this issue quickly becomes secondary at the news of Ariarate's return. After failing to have him killed, Laodice stabs herself in act V, scene five. Once again, the vulnerability of female rule is underlined at the critical time symbolised by the accession to power of a new monarch: regency imposes time limits to the Queen and her legitimacy as a ruler is systematically superseded by the presence of an alternative male ruler.

In Quinault's *Astrate, roy de Tyr*, the question of legitimacy is even more central to the crisis. The accession of Elise to the throne of Tyr happens at the expense of the old King and his sons, whom she has had killed.[11] The acts of violence are of a more selfless nature, to a certain extent, than in the previous tragedies: Elise is seeking to preserve the throne for her lover, Astrate. Moreover, her father had usurped

[10] Thomas Corneille, *Laodice*. These are the words spoken by Alcine, Arsinoe's confidante, in I, 1 (there are no line numbers in the original edition).
[11] Elise's father had usurped the old King's crown and imprisoned him and his sons, but Elise has them all killed on her accession to the throne. The first reference to this is in I, 3, 151-2: 'Depuis qu'Elise règne, & que son injustice / De tout le Sang Royal s'est fait un sacrifice [...].' There is a further reference in I, 5, 282-290.

the throne, hence there is no real sympathy to be had for his character.[12] The dramatic tension arises from the knowledge, by the audience, of Astrate's origin. The latter is, unbeknown to the other characters, the rightful heir to the throne. In this play, power is seized by Elise only to be offered as a gift to Astrate. This is a perilous time for the kingdom: power is changing hands erratically. It seems to have become a mere commodity in the hands of a female character, whose legitimacy is not denied so much by others as by herself. The realisation of Astrate's true identity leads Elise to poison herself in the final scene, in order to restore him to the throne and prevent any opposition from her followers (V, 5, 1626). Accession of new monarchs and legitimacy are combined to create the dramatic tension in this play.

Finally, in Abeille's *Argélie*, the rise of a new monarch and the question of her legitimacy play an equally important role: Argélie has become Queen of Thessaly instead of her sister Ismène, against their father's wishes. The reign of Argélie starts with the massacre of the opposition and the imprisonment of Ismène in the first act. The vulnerability of the Queen's nascent power is expressed by the extreme violence required to preserve it. Considering the usurper and the legitimate heir to the throne are women, the question of female rule seems to be less of an issue here, yet it is worth noting that the resolution of the tragedy lies not only in Ismène getting her throne back, but also in her marrying, Phoenix, her lover. The death of the old King has left the kingdom in a critical situation, which will be resolved by the accession to the throne of the rightful heiress and her husband.[13]

THE REALM UNDER INTERNAL THREAT

Men as an internal threat

[12] Reference is made to the usurpation in I, 3, 145-150.
[13] This will be developed further in this chapter.

This leads us to the first major pattern to be recognised in the corpus of tragedies I have defined earlier: the threat to the kingdom as an essential part of the construction of the tragic female ruler. It is important to consider the relevance of the dynamic of female versus male power in tragedy, not so much as a gender issue but rather as the opposition of two different forces. The realm can be threatened internally or externally: men and the female ruler herself embody internal threats, while men are the sole source of external threat. In any one tragedy, there can be more than one menace to the integrity of the kingdom. I will first concentrate on internal threats to the state and look at men as a source of danger for its integrity.

Earlier plays - where the role of the people is very limited, as seen in the introduction - rely heavily on the individual's moral conflicts.[14] This is the case for instance, in Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant*. In his *Phalante*,[15] Jean Galaut suggests his awareness of the people's growing importance without giving it a major part in the plot.[16] Galaut's tragedy is centred on three main characters: Hélène, Queen of Corinth, Prince Philoxene and a friend of the latter, Phalante. Philoxene is in love with the Queen and sends his friend, Phalante, to woo her on his behalf (I, 3). The Queen falls in love with Phalante. On discovering this, Philoxene attacks Phalante, who, he believes, has betrayed him (IV, 2). Phalante kills Philoxene in self-defence (V, 1). Horrified by his actions, Phalante takes refuge in the deepest part of the forest leaving his weapons behind (V, 2). The Queen finds them and subsquently assumes Phalante to be dead. Grief-striken, she kills herself with Phalante's dagger (V, 4).[17] Coming back to the scene, Phalante finds her lifeless body, takes responsibility for her

[14] This will be developed further in chapter 5.
[15] Jean Galaut, *Phalante*, ed. Alan Howe (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1995). The play was first published, posthumously, in 1611 in Toulouse by the widow of Jacques Colomiez and her son Raymond. However, the tragedy was written before 1611, since Galaut died in 1605.
[16] This is suggested, for instance, by the limited number of characters: besides the three main characters, only two *gentilhommes*, two *Damoiselles*, a ghost and Philoxene's father appear on stage.
[17] The use of the dagger for the suicide is a speculation of the editor, as the text provides no clear evidence.

death and kills himself as well. In this tragedy, although there is a mention of the relation of gender to power (I, 2, 235-250), there is no criticism of Queen Hélène as a female ruler. However, the introduction of male characters in a female kingdom is definitely at the root of the dramatic tension created by Galaut, as it upsets the otherwise peaceful kingdom of Corinth through its monarch. This intrusion of the masculine into a feminine world is not initially perceived as a threat: Melisse, one of "Damoiselles," advises Hélène to get married because:

> Il vous faut entre tous choisir un jeune Prince
> Qui vous puisse deffendre, et dont l'authorité
> Rende par l'univers vostre nom redouté.[18]

Nonetheless, the masculine does play an essential part in the end of the female power, since the Queen's suicide is a direct consequence of the actions of the male characters (V, 4, 1476-92). This clash of male with female power is also clearly illustrated in La Calprenède's *Phalante* (1642), in which the exact same themes are developed.[19] The motivation for the Queen's suicide is different from in Galaut's tragedy, yet it is clearly identified as a result of a male character's actions. Snaith writes that the Queen, 'suffering on her own score from having confessed love to Phalante and seemingly found it refused, has taken poison'.[20] The lies of Phalante's and Philoxène's unrequited love are responsible for the Queen's death, showing the danger embodied by male characters for the female ruler.

Similarly, in Bensérade's *Cléopâtre*,[21] Antoine represents an internal threat to the Empire of Egypt. Although Antoine is, in fact, a foreigner in Egypt, he has sided with Cléopâtre and supported her claim to the throne against her brother, hence can be considered as an internal rather than external threat (IV, 7, 61-68). Antoine endangers

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[18] Ibid, I, 2, 232-4.
[19] Gautier de Coste de La Calprenède, *Phalante* (Paris: Sommaville, 1642).
[20] Guy Snaith, "All for friendship: La Calprenède's *Phalante* and other friends," in *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, 17 (1995), 151.
[21] Isaac de Bensérade, *La Cleopatre* (Paris: Sommaville, 1636).

Egypt, because he fails to display the qualities of a military ruler. The semantic field of shame pervades the entire play and, in particular, in association with the character of Antoine, emphasises Antoine's dishonourable conduct in battle. References to his fleeing the battlefield on his previous encounter with Cesar,[22] together with the fact that he initially obeys Cléopâtre's wish for him to delegate the command of the military forces on the battlefield (I, 2, 91-104), make for the portrayal of poor military leadership. Consequently, Cléopâtre's army defects to the Romans and Antoine is left with no option but suicide to maintain a veneer of dignity.[23] Antoine's failure has dire consequences, not only for him, but for Cléopâtre as well, since the Roman victory eventually leads her to suicide as well (V, 5).

5. *Death of Cleopatra*, Johann Liss (1622-24)

Mairet's *Marc-Antoine, ou la Cléopâtre* presents the audience or reader with a realm threatened by men, by the Queen herself and by Cesar, who represents external

[22] Ibid, the first of the allusions to this episode is in I, 1, 45-56.

[23] Ibid, the army's defection is mentioned in II, 3, 1-39. Antoine commits suicide in III, 2, but only dies in III, 5.

forces.[24] I will focus, here, on the internal threat represented by Marc-Antoine. This menace manifests itself briefly in Cléopâtre's fatalistic discourse in the first act:

> Que ton amour, Antoine, & mon ambition,
> Ont bien change l'estat de ma condition!
> [...]
> Ah! si mes yeux alors, eussent eu moins de charmes,
> Qu'ils m'auroient espargné de souspirs & de larmes!
> Que je serois contente, & qu'il seroit heureux,
> S'il eut veu ma beauté sans en estre amoureux!
> Je regnerois en paix sur l'Egypte feconde,
> Et luy seroit Seigneur de la moitié du monde:
> Mais je ne doute point que nous ne soyons nez,
> Pour nous rendre tous deux l'un l'autre infortunez;
> Suivons donc jusqu'au bout nos destins lamentables,
> Et ne les fuyons plus s'ils sont inevitables.[25]

In this lamentation Marc-Antoine's 'amour' is introduced as one of the reasons for both their unhappiness and the war on Egypt.[26] The responsibility for political instability is, therefore, partly attributed to Cléopâtre's lover. However, the determinist tone of Cléopâtre's lines alleviates this responsibility to a degree.[27]

Gilbert's *Sémiramis* highlights the increasing importance of the people and has a rare story line for seventeenth-century tragedy: Gilbert's Queen does not die and is victorious at the end of the tragedy.[28] However, in *Sémiramis*, the eponymous character is not Queen of Ninive before the final act. Marriage is a central issue in the play: King Ninus is in love with Sémiramis, while his daughter, Sosarme, loves Ménon. However, Ménon is married to Sémiramis and neither of them intends to betray their marital vows. It takes the King's blackmail and lies to convince Ménon to marry his daughter and Sémiramis to become his wife. However, Ménon chooses to kill himself, minutes before the wedding ceremony starts, rather than to betray

[24] Jean Mairet, *Marc-Antoine, ou la Cléopâtre* (Paris: Sommaville, 1637).
[25] Ibid, I, 3, 211-12 and 221-230.
[26] It is also introduced as the cause for the endangerment of Marc-Antoine's half of the world.
[27] See in particular the following lines: 'Mais je ne doute point que nous ne soyons nez, / Pour nous rendre tous deux l'un l'autre infortunez [...].'
[28] Gabriel Gilbert, *Sémiramis* (Paris: Courbé, 1647). See the analysis of Rosidor's *Mort du Grand Cyrus* for comparison.

Sémiramis. The King falls victim to his own passion: on her agreeing to marry him, he had promised Sémiramis she could be Queen for five days, while he would become her subject.[29] Sémiramis takes this opportunity to have the Satraps judge the actions of King Ninus, without revealing the names of those involved (V, 2, 17-57). The Satraps find Ninus guilty and sentence him to death. Sémiramis eventually reveals the identity of the protagonists but, before he can be arrested, Ninus kills himself. Sémiramis benefits from popular support, so much so that she is asked to become Queen by the Satraps (V, 4, 1-4). This popular support, which Ménon also enjoyed, is used to partially explain the actions of the King – he feared Ménon and Sémiramis - together with passion, which is used by Ninus as a justification for all his crimes.[30] It could be argued that there is no conflict between a male world and a female world in this play, firstly because the heroine — who will eventually take the power away from the King — displays qualities which are more masculine than feminine: she is described repeatedly in terms used to describe Ménon, for example, so that she is presented as a female character but also as an extension of the male hero, Ménon. Secondly, the accession to the throne of a female character is never an issue in this play.[31] In Gilbert's play, a legitimate claim to the throne is tightly linked to popular support, rather than gender or birth right. Although there is not necessarily a clash between the masculine and the feminine, it is still obvious that the Empire of Ninive is endangered by men, rather than women: Ménon and Ninus share the responsibility of the kingdom's troubled time. Ménon, indeed, fails to show his wife's stoic heroism in

[29] Ibid, Ninus agrees to it in IV, 1, 97, but Sémiramis only accedes to the throne in V, 2.
[30] Ibid., the danger for Ninus represented by popular support for Ménon and Sémiramis is highlighted in IV, 3, 184-7. Ninus uses love as a justification for his crimes in V, 2, 57-90.
[31] For the masculine qualities of Sémiramis, see I, 3 and II, 1. These qualities give a masculine aspect to Sémiramis because they are the same ones which are displayed by her husband. The tragedy opens with Sosarme and her confidante evoking the former's Regency in the absence of King Ninus (I, 1, 44-6) and the Princess's inheriting of her father's kingdom (I, 1, 5-10).

the face of the King's vile plans,[32] while the King's conduct leaves his reputation blemished.[33] When Ménon chooses to die, he leaves the Empire without his 'Protecteur' (V, 2, 178), in the hands of one he knows to be a 'lasche assassin' (V, 2, 188), 'Un homme sans honneur' (V, 2, 189), and 'Le monstre le plus grand qui soit dans cet Empire [...]' (V, 2, 191).

Desfontaines's *Véritable Sémiramis* is quite different.[34] The author has almost entirely shifted the blame away from the male characters onto Queen Sémiramis. However, King Ninus is not entirely innocent since he gives Sémiramis the opportunity to hatch and implement her dark plans. Indeed, the King consents to his wife's request to be Queen for three days.[35] This is exposed to the Empire's 'Princes' as a small token of his appreciation for the Queen's great courage in battle and wise council in peace. The primary reaction of the Princes is one of total rejection. Merzabane advises the King against giving up his powers, albeit only for a few days, arguing that

> Les revolutions, encore que fameuses,
> En matiere d'Estat, sont toujours dangereuses [...].[36]

His case is strengthened by his shame at becoming 'Esclave d'une Femme' (III, 1, 130). The warnings are ignored by the King, only for him to realise that the retribution for the loss of his sceptre is necessarily the loss of life:

> Merzabane, je meurs, et peris justement;
> [...]
> Puis qu'en perdant le Sceptre, il faut perdre la vie.[37]

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[32] To save his wife's life, Ménon chooses to be unfaithful: 'Il faut, ou qu'elle meure, ou m'estime coupable, / [...] Ah ma vertu succombe à de si rudes coups [...].' (III, 4, 18 and 23).
[33] Ibid., see V, 2, 82-85: 'Pour posseder son coœur il a creu tout permis, / Il s'offence plus qu'elle, il ternit sa memoire, / Avecque son espoux il immola sa gloire, / Ce Prince se couvrant d'un reproche éternel [...].'
[34] Nicolas Mary Desfontaines, *La Véritable Sémiramis* (Paris: Lamy, 1647).
[35] Ibid, Ninus consents in I, 3, 126-33 and his decision is implemented from III, 1 onward.
[36] Ibid, III, 1, 105-6. It should be noted that, in fact, Merzabane is is in collusion with Sémiramis and only voices those concerns to prevent others from doing so.
[37] Ibid, IV, 4, 26 and 28.

Ninus is, therefore, partly responsible for the disruption of the empire because he ignored the conventions ruling both the transfer of power and the eligibility of candidates to his succession. As soon as she sits on the throne, Sémiramis uses this very argument to highlight the failings of Ninus as a ruler, together with his illegitimate claim to a throne, which she considers to be rightly hers.[38] This makes Ninus a great threat to the realm, as both a poor monarch and a usurper, and ultimately leads to his death. Although the motivation of Sémiramis is not virtuous, her actions can still be interpreted as an attempt to rid the kingdom of an unfit ruler, therefore defending it from a male internal threat.

Similarly, in Pierre Corneille's *Rodogune, princesse des Parthes*, the actions of the Queen, Cléopâtre,[39] can be interpreted as a reaction against male threats: she saves the kingdom from the male internal threat. Firstly, the King's murder is described within the play as a defence mechanism against his unreasonable attitude towards the Queen herself, their sons and the kingdom:

> [...] Nicanor vivait; [...] sur un faux rapport,
> De ce premier époux elle avait cru la mort;
> Que, piqué jusqu'au vif contre son hyménée,
> Son âme à l'imiter s'était déterminée,
> Et que, pour s'affranchir des fers de son vainqueur,
> Il allait épouser la princesse sa sœur.
> C'est cette Rodogune, où l'un et l'autre frère
> Trouve encor les appas qu'avait trouvés leur père.
> La reine envoie en vain pour se justifier;
> On a beau la défendre, on a beau le prier,
> On ne rencontre en lui qu'un juge inexorable;
> Et son amour nouveau la veut croire coupable:
> Son erreur est un crime; et, pour l'en punir mieux,
> Il veut même épouser Rodogune à ses yeux,
> Arracher de son front le sacré diadème
> Pour ceindre une autre tête en sa présence même;
> Soit qu'ainsi sa vengeance eût plus d'indignité,
> Soit qu'ainsi cet hymen eût plus d'autorité,
> Et qu'il assurât mieux par cette barbarie,

[38] Sémiramis alludes to Ninus giving up the throne as a crucial failing in III, 2, 17-28. Sémiramis stakes her claim to the throne in the same scene, lines 29 to 58.

[39] It should be noted that this Cléopâtre is not the famous Cleopatra.

> Aux enfants qui naîtraient, le trône de Syrie.
> Mais tandis qu'animé de colère et d'amour
> Il vient déshériter ses fils par son retour,
> [...]
> La reine, au désespoir de n'en rien obtenir,
> Se résout de se perdre, ou de le prévenir.
> Elle oublie un mari qui veur cesser de l'être,
> Qui ne veut plus la voir qu'en implacable maître;
> Et, changeant à regret son amour en horreur,
> Elle abandonne tout à sa juste fureur.[40]

Initially, although her actions are violent, the Queen is described in a positive light, as her main aim is to maintain the state's stability by securing the kingdom for its rightful heirs. The vocabulary associated with Cléopâtre and Nicanor helps build this positive image thanks to the contrast created between the characters. The King gives in to his passions, he is 'piqué jusqu'au vif', 'animé de colère et d'amour'; love blinds him and he wants to believe the Queen is guilty; he proves to be 'un juge inexorable', an 'implacable maître'; his vengeance is described as undignified, a 'barbarie'. Meanwhile, the Queen's actions are solely motivated by 'désespoir', she acts against the King in spite of her love for him and, most importantly, her actions are described as 'juste'. The Queen then appears as the defender of the kingdom against its own King.

In Quinault's *Astrate*, male power is surprisingly limited, whereas female power seems to be an overwhelming force and, yet, the tragedy ends with the death of the female ruler. The unnatural act of regicide performed by the Queen can be interpreted as a reflection or consequence of the unnatural position she occupies as a usurper. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that, although the accession to the throne of the female character is initially secured by the elimination of the representatives of masculine power, this lack of male authority is also the very cause of the kingdom's

[40] Pierre Corneille, *Rodogune*, I, 4, 19-48. It is interesting to note that the King is never referred to as 'roi', but simply by his name or 'il', whereas the Queen is referred to as 'reine' several times. This accentuates the un-kingly actions of Nicanor in contrast with the royal character of Cléopâtre.

instability.[41] The numerous allusions to the lack of popular support for the Queen seem to reinforce this, while the solution presents itself in the form of another male character. The Queen sees marriage as a way to secure the kingdom, her position within it and her life:

> J'ay besoin d'un Espoux Illustre, & Magnanime,
> Qui m'allie à la Gloire, & me tire du Crime;
> Dont la Vertu, pour Moy, calme les Factieux,
> Ecarte la Tempeste, & desarme les Dieux.[42]

This attempt to turn masculine authority into a useful alliance instead of a threat signals, in fact, the end to the reign of the female character. The empowerment of Astrate by Elise necessarily results in the death of the Queen. This is expressed by Elise herself in the final scene:

> Je vous [Astrate] dois trop ma mort pour ne pas l'achever.
> Je ne puis pas moins, Seigneur, pour vous rendre Justice:
> Vostre Sang demandoit de Vous ce Sacrifice;[43]

In Quinault's *Astrate*, the female attempt to use masculine power to its advantage fails, endangers the realm's stability and results in the return of a masculine ruler on the throne. This shows the incompatibility of female power with male power.

In Thomas Corneille's *Laodice, reine de Cappadoce*, several men threaten the reign of Queen Laodice. I have mentioned previously the importance of time in this tragedy, but another essential factor is the intrusion of the masculine in the overwhelmingly female kingdom of Cappadocia: the ruler is female, she has had all her male heirs killed and is left with one single heiress. The most immediate threat to Queen Laodice is her daughter's husband-to-be. This threat is alleviated by the Queen's belief in her ability to find a suitable match for Arsinoe, that is to say a man she will be able to manipulate:

[41] This is clearly alluded to in I, 5, 293-95 and 297-98.
[42] Ibid., I, 5, 299-302.
[43] Ibid., V, 5, 1622-24.

> Si je fais part du Trône, au moins je seray seure
> En y placeant un Roy d'y voir ma Creature,
> Et de rester toûjours pour qui veut m'asservir
> Maistresse du pouvoir qu'on cherche à me ravir.[44]

The second and more serious threat to Laodice's reign is the unexpected return of Ariarate, her presumed-dead son. The disappearance of the young Prince had served the Queen who claimed the Regency until his return. Yet, popular unrest forced the Queen to envisage either her daughter's wedding or her own:

> Le peuple cependant chaque jour fait connoistre
> Qu'attendant qu'il [Ariarate] se montre il veut un second maître
> Qui commande, execute, & puisse avec éclat
> M'ayder à soûtenir le grand poids de l'Estat.[45]

The return of Ariarate, disguised and under the assumed name of Oronte, helps to reveal the deadly intentions of the Queen towards her son. Eventually, the return of the rightful heir to the throne leads to the death of the Queen and to the end of the female rule. This rule is described as an unnatural one, not because it is female, but because it contradicts the law of nature: the Queen is infanticide and the illegitimate ruler of the kingdom. Yet, it is once again the presence of male power which threatens, at least on a superficial level, the stability of the realm.

In Thomas Corneille's *Théodat*,[46] Queen Amalasonte rules over the Goths and gives Théodat the opportunity to gain an increasing amount of power in her kingdom throughout the first two acts of the tragedy. With the third act comes the realisation of her mistake, yet it is already too late as Théodat, with the support of part of the nobility and the Goths, now threatens to usurp the throne. The elevation of one man threatens the female ruler and questions both her legitimacy and *raison d'être*:

> Ah, Ciel ! quelle insolence, & qui l'eust pû penser?

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[44] Thomas Corneille, *Laodice*, II, 1, p. 15. It is interesting to note that this threat is imposed by the Princes of Cappadoce allied to the Romans, whose emissaries require Laodice to wed her daughter to one of them.
[45] Ibid, II, 3, p. 21.
[46] Corneille, Thomas, *Théodat* (Paris: de Luyne, 1673).

> Ay-je, en l'élevant trop, cessé d'estre sa Reyne?[47]

Questioning the Queen's authority is synonymous with questioning her legitimacy. This is also highlighted by the public support enjoyed by Théodat as described by Amalasonte herself:

> Théodat est coupable, & le Peuple l'absout?
> Si je puis l'endurer, je ne suis donc plus Reyne?[48]

This popular backing now gives legitimacy to Théodat's claim to the throne, while it casts doubt on Amalasonte's rights. It is interesting to note that the intellectual questioning is reflected by the punctuation of the printed text and that the construction of line sixteen provides the modern reader with an insight into the growing importance of the people as a force to be reckoned with in seventeenth-century tragedy.[49] The end of the two hemistiches ('coupable', and 'absout') put the 'Peuple' in the position of a god-like being, able to offer absolution. However, the following lines highlight the child-like qualities of the 'Peuple' through their treatment by the Queen:

> Non, pour ce nouveau crime il faut nouvelle peine.
> A d'insolens Mutins faisons tout redouter,
> C'est luy, c'est Théodat qui les fait revolter,
> Ils adorent son nom; pour forcer la tempeste,
> Allez, menacez les de leur porter sa teste,
> Puis qu'il est leur Idole, ils craindront pour ses jours.[50]

Insolent, prone to be influenced ('c'est Theodat qui les fait revolter') and to adore false idols ('Ils adorent son nom'; 'il est leur Idole'), the 'Peuple' has to be physically threatened into respecting their ruler. Yet, Amalasonte fails to restore her legitimacy and eventually loses both her kingdom and her life. Corneille's choice of words to

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[47] Ibid., III, 6, 2-3.
[48] Ibid., IV, 2, 16-7.
[49] It should be noted however that remarks on punctuation are based on the editor's interpretation of the text and not necessarily on the text as it was written by the author.
[50] Ibid., IV, 2, 18-23.

describe the processes which led to the creation of *Théodat* helps us to understand his representation of female and male power in the tragedy:

> Theodat fut associé à l'Empire des Gots par Amalasonte, & traita cette malheureuse Princesse avec tant d'indignité, qu'un peu apres qu'elle l'eut élevé au Trône, il eut la bassesse de l'exiler. Quelques-uns ajoustent qu'il donna ordre qu'on l'empoisonnast dans une Isle où il l'avoit releguée. Ce caractere d'ingratitude m'a paru avoir quelque chose de trop odieux pour pouvoir estre souffert au Theatre. Ainsi j'ay tasché de conserver ce qui regarde la disgrace d'Amalasonte, sans en rendre Theodat coupable, & je me suis conformé pour le genre de sa mort, à ce qu'en écrit Blondus. Il nous apprend dans le troisième livre de sa première Décade, que Theodat consentit que les Enfans de quelques Seigneurs Gots, à qui cette Reyne avoit fait couper la teste, vangeassent le Sang de leurs Peres en la faisant périr elle mesme dans le lieu de son exil. Je ne sçay si en la peignant vindicative dans tout cet Ouvrage, j'ay affoibly les grandes qualitez que les Historiens luy donnent; mais il semble assez naturel qu'une Reine à qui une illustre naissance a eu donner beaucoup de fierté, ne se puisse voir méprisée d'un Sujet qui abuse de la connoissance qu'elle luy a donnée de son amour, sans s'en faire un outrage d'autant plus sensible [...].[51]

The fact that Corneille chooses to shift the blame away from Théodat without entirely attributing it to Amalasonte enables the playwright to create characters who are not 'odieux' or one-dimensional and to respect the *bienséances*. This also allows Corneille to create a tension between the danger represented by male authority and female authority within the kingdom, without condemning either of them.

Finally, we will focus our study of male internal threats to the realm on the case of historical Queens. We will start with Montchrestien's *Reine d'Escosse*.[52] This tragedy features two queens: Elizabeth I, identified in the play as 'La Reine d'Angleterre', and Mary Stuart, identified as 'La Reine d'Escosse'. At the beginning of the tragedy, Mary Stuart is Queen in name only, after she has fled from Scotland. A prisoner in Elizabeth I's realm, Mary Stuart is depicted as a pathetic character, whose

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[51] Ibid. Au lecteur. There are no page numbers in this edition.

[52] Antoine de Montchrestien, *La Reine d'Escosse*, in *Two Tragedies: Hector, La Reine d'Escosse*, ed. by C.N. Smith (London: Athlone Press, 1972). *La Reine d'Escosse* was first published in 1601, in Rouen, by J. Petit.

unfortunate life can but inspire the audience's pity. The biais of the author, French and Catholic, accounts for this perspective and the fact that 'England exerted diplomatic pressure on the French authorities to ban performances of *L'Escossoise* [...]'.[53] However, the depiction of Elizabeth I certainly could have been much more ferocious. Smith says that Montchrestien's Elizabeth 'is not shown as a bloodthirsty virago, but as a woman who despite her scruples finally has no option. She gradually is won over and accepts the advice she is given [...]'.[54] Being easily influenced by poor advisers is, however, a significant failure for the Queen of England. This is a pattern that will later be developed by other authors dealing with Elizabeth I as a tragic character. The first act of the play is dedicated to the exposition of Elizabeth's perilous position at the head of her realm because of the numerous menaces threatening both her life and her country:

> Jusques à quand vivray-je exposée au danger
> Du poison domestique et du glaive estranger?[55]

To the obvious internal and external threats is added the bad advice of her *conseiller*, identified by Smith as William Cecil.[56] The latter argues in favour of Mary's execution in spite of his Queen's reluctance. The *conseiller* can then be said to be instrumental to Mary's death and, subsequently, as an internal threat, to be responsible for endangering the kingdom, since the divine retribution for this unnatural regicide can only be formidable.

Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart feature in another two seventeenth-century tragedies, both entitled *Marie Stuard*, by Regnault and Boursault.[57] In these tragedies,

[53] Ibid, p. 2.
[54] Ibid, p. 15.
[55] Ibid, I, 3-4.
[56] Ibid, note 1, p. 145.
[57] Charles Regnault, *Marie Stuard, reine d'Ecosse* (Paris: Quinet, 1639); Edmé Boursault, *Marie Stuard, reine d'Ecosse* (Paris: Guignard, 1691); it was first performed in 1683. For Boursault's tragedy, see the edition of Chloé Le Vaguerès, under the direction of Georges Forestier, at the Centre de Recherche sur l'Histoire du Théâtre at http://www.chrt.org. For a comparison of Montchrestien,

the Queen of England faces the same dilemma between passion and duty as she does in the three *Comte d'Essex* — with which we will deal shortly. Regnault and Boursault both use the same dramatic device to introduce male threats to the kingdom: the character of Morray, Mary Stuart's step-brother, seeks to alter negatively the Queen's perception of Mary and of Elizabeth's own favourite, Norfolc, in order to rule over Scotland first and eventually over England too. Boursault emphasises, more than Regnault, the unsuitability of women to power in his tragedy, putting the following lines in Morray's mouth:

> L'Angleterre exceptée en tous les autres lieux
> Le regne d'une femme est un regne odieux:
> [...]
> Un Sceptre ne sied bien que dans la main des Rois;
> Et le Trône chancelle à moins qu'il n'ait son poids.[58]

Although Morray's death seems to signify the end of the male threat to the kingdom, it must be noted that it is accompanied by the death of Norfolc, the only character truly faithful to Queen Elizabeth, and the death of Mary Stuart, which, as we will see later, symbolises the victory of another threat: that represented by the Queen herself.

Elizabeth I also features in the three *Comte d'Essex* by La Calprenède, Claude Boyer and Thomas Corneille.[59] Although these three tragedies have strong links and similarities,[60] they have also been composed from quite different perspectives. The Comtes of La Calprenède and Boyer are characters created to arouse only a limited amount of sympathy in the audience, whereas Corneille gave his Comte the role of 'victime calomniée' by his nemesis Cécile and of 'amant parfait' to the Duchesse

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Regnault and Boursault, see Michael G. Paulson, ed., *The Fallen Crown: Three French Mary Stuart Plays of the Seventeenth-Century* (Washington: University Press of America, 1980).

[58] Boursault, *Marie Stuard*, I, 3, 253-8.

[59] La Calprenède, *Le Comte d'Essex* (Paris: Quinet, 1639); Boyer, *Le Comte d'Essex* (Paris: Osmont, 1678); Thomas Corneille, *Le Comte d'Essex*, ed. Wendy Gibson (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000). Boyer claims in his Au Lecteur to have composed his play a few weeks before the first performance of Corneille's version, see Gibson, p. xv.

[60] For details of sources and cross-fertilisation, see Gibson's introduction to her edition of Thomas Corneille's *Le Comte d'Essex*.

d'Irton.[61] La Calprenède's protagonist, like Boyer's, embodies unredeeming hubris which threatens the kingdom through its sovereign. The attitude of Essex towards the Queen is quite simply shocking and rude.[62] La Calprenède's Comte is also an unfaithful lover, betraying both the Queen and Madame Cécile, the adulterous *Secrétaire d'Estat*'s wife.[63] The lack of respect shown by Essex, as well as his potential political betrayal, dangerously threaten the integrity of Elizabeth's realm. Boyer's protagonist also represents a menace to the kingdom: this can be seen through the binary opposition of the natures of the ruler, Elizabet [sic], and Essex. Whereas the female ruler is associated with the expression of emotions, the male character is systematically associated with glory and honour. The confrontation of the two notions through the characters first takes place in act I:

> Respectant peu les loix que nostre sexe donne,
> Tu me croyois peut-estre indigne de regner.
> Ce sexe toutefois que tu veux dédaigner,
> A fait souvent honneur à la grandeur supréme.
> Sans porter une épée on porte un diadême,
> La vertu, la raison font la grandeur des Rois,
> Sans répandre du sang on peut donner des lois,
> L'art plûtost que la force écarte la tempeste
> Et le bras sur le Thrône agit moins que la teste [...].[64]

The rejection by the male character of the female rule ('Tu me croyois peut-estre indigne de regner.') is equivalent to the rejection of the ruler and of her realm. The confrontation results in the death of the hero, whose incapacity to respect the rules of the female kingdom makes him a danger to its preservation.

In *Jeanne, reyne d'Angleterre*,[65] La Calprenède shows again his interest in English history and dedicates a tragedy to three women who have all been or will be

[61] Thomas Corneille, *Comte d'Essex*, p. xii.

[62] See La Calprenède, *Comte d'Essex*, I, 1, 132, sq: Essex takes and simply tears apart a letter held by the Queen as proof of his collusion with the Irish.

[63] In an almost comical sequence of scenes, Essex first complains about the Queen's wavering affections (II, 4), before receiving his mistress in his prison cell and swearing his undying love for the latter (II, 5).

[64] Claude Boyer, *Le Comte d'Essex*, I, 7. Quoted by Wendy Gibson in her edition of Thomas Corneille's *Comte d'Essex*, p. xvi.

queens: Jane Grey, Mary Tudor and Elizabeth I. In the play, Jane has been deposed, Elizabeth is at court, and Mary Tudor reigns over England. This tragedy is in fact similar to those dedicated to the death of Mary Stuart: the central theme is the death of a deposed queen, here Jane Grey; the Catholic Queen, Mary Tudor, is ill-advised but well-intentioned, while Elizabeth already presents the evil characteristics which will later be developed by other authors, such as Boursault. There are two male threats to the kingdom. First 'Northbeland', who has organised the usurpation of the throne by Jane Grey, and Norfolc, who reappears on stage as one of the key characters. This time, Norfolc is not the Queen's favourite, but the president at Jane Grey's trial and the main menace to the kingdom. If, indeed, Mary Tudor is represented as a peaceful character and, as rightful heiress to the throne, in seeking reconciliation with the usurper, Norfolc plays the role of the blood-thirsty adviser. Norfolc is held responsible both for the execution of Jane and the rise of Elizabeth's influence. Crucially, it is Queen Mary who identifies this male threat to the English throne in this play.

The Queen as an internal threat

When a female ruler is faced with internal threats, playwrights ultimately lay at least part, if not all, of the blame at her door. There are four types of flaws displayed by queens in the tragedies studied here: they can be more concerned by their own feelings than by their duty as monarchs, they can be usurpers, they can reject men altogether — to the detriment of their realm — or they can choose inadequate partners. In some cases, queens even display a combination of these flaws.

Emotions over duty

[65] La Calprenède, *Jeanne, reyne d'Angleterre* (Paris: Sommaville, 1638).

Hélène, Queen of Corinth, in both Jean Galaut's and La Calprenède's *Phalante*, is the only queen whose sole flaw is to choose emotions over duty. In these two tragedies, the importance of the people is extremely limited, as I have previously explained, so much so that the mention of the kingdom and of its endangering is not clear. Yet, the Queen's failure is inherent in her decision to kill herself, thereby prioritising her personal feelings in the aftermath of her lover's death over her duty as Queen: she is not an exceptional woman bound by the masculine standard of morality, but a very emotional human being.

Usurpers

Four queens in the corpus of plays studied here are usurpers: Semiramis in Desfontaines's *Véritable Sémiramis*, Elise, Queen of Tyr in Quinault's *Astrate*, and the eponymous heroines of Thomas Corneille's *Laodice* and Abeille's *Argélie*. Desfontaines's heroine is undoubtedly utterly different from Gilbert's Semiramis. The characters are far more ambiguous and, in that sense, Desfontaines has achieved a much more interesting tragedy, where imminent death makes the characters aware of his or her failings. Sémiramis plays an essential role in the destabilisation of the empire: not only is she responsible for the death of its ruler — she has usurped the throne —, but her motivations are significantly less righteous than those of Gilbert's character: these include love and vengeance. Love must be secured through the offer of the throne to Melistrate, while vengeance must be had for the murder of her father, the appropriation of her kingdom, her forced marriage to Ninus and her rape by the same character.[66] The trigger for her organising the King's death is the wavering

[66] In Desfontaines's *Véritable Sémiramis*, the Queen plans to satisfy Melistrate's ambitions, thus securing his love, in I, 2, 1-7. This is followed by the long list of her personal grievances against Ninus from line 8 to 19.

affection of the man she loves, Melistrate. I will come back to the queen's relation with Melistrate in the next section dedicated to queens rejecting men.

For very different reasons, Quinault's Queen Elise is also a usurper in his *Astrate*. Here, the usurpation, the very premise of the queen's reign, is clearly presented from the *expositio* as a threat to the kingdom of Tyr. Her accession to the throne is described, by the Queen herself, in the following terms:

> Le Crime, en ma Famille, a mis le Diadéme;
> L'ayant ainsi receu, je l'ay gardé de méme.
> Mon Pere fût injuste, & le fut moins que Moy:
> Mon Regne commença par la mort du vray Roy:
> Apres quinze ans entiers de prison, & de peines,
> N'ayant plus nul espoir qu'on pût briser ses chaînes,
> Son Party réveillé voyant mon Pere mort,
> Crût que contre une Fille il seroit assez fort.
> Mais j'osay, dans le trouble, où je me vis reduite,
> En détruisant la source, en arrester la suite;
> Et du danger pressée, enfin je me défis
> De ce Roy malheureux, & de Deux de ses Fils.[67]

Usurpation and murder have severely damaged Elise's image in the eyes of the people of Tyr. The lack of confidence in the ruler results in popular unrest. This manisfests itself, in particular, in the discourse of Sichée to Agénor, in which Sichée tries to convince Agenor to seize power either by marrying Elise or by overthrowing her with the support of the people of Tyr, the army and the Court:

> [...] Elise, apres son Pere,
> Du Pouvoir Souverain n'est que dépositaire:
> La Cour qui veut un Maistre, à regret suit ses Loix;
> Le Peuple est irrité du meurtre de ses Roys,
> Les plus braves Soldats sont mécontents dans l'ame;
> Un Roy sied mieux enfin au Trône qu'une Femme;
> Et malgré ses refus, il est doux de pouvoir
> Vous couronner Vous-méme, & ne luy rien devoir.
> [...]
> Mais plustost, contre Vous [Agenor], qui pouroit la defendre?
> Tout est pour Vous, le Peuple, & l'Armée, & la Cour.
> Rien n'est pour Elle.[68]

[67] Quinault, *Astrate*, I, 5, 279-90.
[68] Ibid, I, 3, 159-70.

The illegitimacy of the Queen's claim to the throne creates popular discontent, leading to a potential popular revolt to overthrow her and, in this respect, it can be said that the Queen represents the most significant threat to the preservation of her realm.[69]

Thomas Corneille's *Laodice, reine de Cappadoce* deals with the same *topos* of usurpation. The illegitimacy of the Queen Regent is exposed from the beginning of the play: Laodice is immediately identified as responsible for the murder of her sons. Having murdered all her sons, save one, she rules as queen regent in the absence of the one son she has failed to kill and who has disappeared. The persistent negation of her children's right to the throne is further illustrated by her determination to choose her daughter's husband carefully (I, 1 and II, 1). A sign of the Queen's failings is the lack of support from her people. The expression of popular concern is, in fact, introduced on stage by the Queen herself:

> Le peuple cependant chaque jour fait connoistre
> Qu'attendant qu'il se montre il veut un second maître
> Qui commande, execute, & puisse avec éclat
> M'ayder à soûtenir le grand poids de l'Estat.[70]

Laodice, like Elise, is faced with popular discontent because of the question of her legitimacy. Unlike Elise, she does not reject men in her realm, yet her consent to their presence in her realm and, more specifically, at the head of her state is not as straightforward as it may appear as I will explain in the next section.

Finally, the last usurper in the corpus of tragedies studied here is Argélie. Interestingly, though, she has usurped a woman's throne, not a man's. In Gaspard Abeille's *Argélie, reine de Thessalie*, the queen, like Elise and Laodice before her, is represented from the beginning as a ruthless murderess, whose thirst for power cannot

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[69] Popular revolt is only narrowly avoided thanks to Agenor. This character is in love with Elise and refuses to usurp her throne (I, 3, 170-8).
[70] Ibid, II, 3.

be quenched. She has risen to power against her father's wishes and usurped her sister's throne. Like Laodice, Argélie is faced with the necessity to get married, because of growing popular concern: 'Donnons un Roy du moins à ce Peuple volage' (I, 1). Eventually, it is her murder, the restauration to the throne and the marriage of her sister, Ismène, which bring peace to the kingdom. Argélie's excesses, and her 'cœur du rang supréme uniquement jaloux' had led her to endanger her kingdom and were the trigger for popular unrest and finally for her own death.

Rejection of men

Most queens who are usurpers also reject the presence of men in their realm. In Desfontaines's *Véritable Sémiramis*, the *expositio* is dedicated to the idea of Melistrate's wavering affection towards the Queen and is followed, in the second scene, by the account of Sémiramis's intentions and motivations in killing the King. Besides her lack of honourable intentions in overthrowing Ninus, as seen in the previous section, the Queen is also guilty of poor judgement as a ruler: the decision to rid the kingdom of Mélistrate — the last significant male figure in the kingdom — because her love is unrequited, is a political and strategic error. Mélistrate is one of her best generals, whose value has been proved and introduced from the very first scene. By comparison, Gilbert's Sémiramis, who is presented as an extremely fierce warrior, is able to provide the empire with a feared and respected ruler to replace the one she had had killed. This is not quite the case in the *Véritable Sémiramis*: the tragedy contains descriptions of the Queen as a valiant combatant (III, 1, 31-58), yet the description of her exploits is much less detailed and the vocabulary never allows the audience or reader to associate Desfontaines's Sémiramis directly with Tasso's

masculine standard of morality.[71] In this way, Desfontaines's heroine not only deprives the empire of its ruler and best soldier, she also fails to provide an adequate replacement. Furthermore, the issue of gender, especially regarding the choice of ruler for the empire, is much more relevant in this play than in Gilbert's. It is present in two distinct scenes: it is first introduced in act II, scene 1 by Merzabane and then by Oronclide in the following scene. Although this is a limited number of occurrences, it is significant in comparison with its total absence from Gilbert's play.[72] These flaws are partially compensated by the Queen's rightful claim to the throne, but still leave her an inadequate ruler for the empire and a threat to its stability.[73] This is ultimately resolved by the revelation of the identity of the legitimate heirs and the foreseen and desired death of the Queen in the final scene. The empire is then shared between Oronclide, now known as the son of the Emperor, and Melistrate, now recognised as Sémiramis's son, who inherits her kingdom, misappropriated by Ninus. Power is restored to male characters, after the failure of the one-day-long reign of the female character.

In Quinault's *Astrate*, Queen Elise is also guilty of rejecting male characters. The Queen's attempt at addressing popular discontent involves, as I previously mentioned, an alliance with Astrate. However, in refusing this alliance, she throws her kingdom into turmoil and proves once again that the Queen is the true threat to the realm.

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[71] Sémiramis is described as a 'si rare' and 'si charmant' object (III, 1, 43 and 45), her 'bras' is 'aussi craint qu'admiré' (III, 1, 56), but there is only one reference to actual fighting: 'couverte et de sang et de poudre' (III, 1, 53). This is substantially less than in Gilbert's play, as I have shown previously.

[72] For allusions to gender see, for example, II, 2, 33-34. where Oronclide says: 'Elle est femme, il est vray, mais femme genereuse, / Invincible, prudente, adroitte, & valeureuse', thus underlining women's usual failings.

[73] This is also symbolised by the help received by Oronclide, the rightful heir to Ninus's empire, from a soldier (V, 1), the equivalent to the marks of popular support received by legitimate heirs in other tragedies.

In Thomas Corneille's *Laodice*, the rejection of the masculine presence in the realm and at the head of the state is more subtle than in Quinault's *Astrate*. Laodice is ready to accept a husband either for her daughter or for herself. The degree of the male influence is, however, severely restricted by the Queen's determination to maintain her own power over the kingdom of Cappadocia. This restriction leads to popular unrest, the death of the usurper and, eventually, the restoration of the rightful heir to the throne.

Similarly, there is no doubt that, in Pierre Corneille's *Rodogune*, Cléopâtre is determined to restrict or control any man who hopes to rule her kindom. In the second act, Cléopâtre arrives on stage and describes her motivations:

> Je te dirai bien plus. Sans violence aucune
> J'aurais vu Nicanor épouser Rodogune,
> Si, content de lui plaire et de me dédaigner,
> Il eût vécu chez elle en me laissant régner.
> Son retour me fâchait plus que son hymenée,
> Et j'aurais pû l'aimer s'il ne l'eût couronnée
> [...]
> Ne saurais-tu juger que si je nomme un roi,
> C'est pour le commander, et combattre pour moi?
> J'en ai le choix en main avec le droit d'aînesse,
> [...]
> On ne montera point au rang dont je dévale,
> Qu'en épousant ma haine au lieu de ma rivale:
> Ce n'est qu'en me vengeant qu'on me le peut ravir;
> Et je ferai régner qui me voudra servir.[74]

This quotation offers a constant reminder of the Queen's motivation as every single line contains at least one pronoun in the first-person. This highlights the Queen's thirst for power and her determination to rule over her kingdom, even in the presence of a male monarch.

Significant male characters are also systematically rejected by Zénobie in D'Aubignac's eponymous tragedy. The Queen is introduced and repeatedly identified

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[74] Pierre Corneille, *Rodogune*, II, 1, 37-71.

as a recently widowed Queen.[75] This is important because it is the premise for the construction of a feminine world — the Queen's realm — which male characters, namely King Aurélien and, to a lesser extent, by the Queen's generals, will try to penetrate both literally and figuratively. The outcome of their attempts is not necessarily representative of each gender's ability to govern or fight, but rather of individual actions: both male and female characters are flawed, but it is Aurélien's own actions that will lead to his demise. Thus, beyond the war waged against her by King Aurélien, there are recurrent mentions of the Queen's own failure to preserve the integrity of her realm or to stop the literal penetration of its physical boundaries. In act I, scene two, the Queen refers to the loss of her 'heritage' to Aurélien, that is to say the kingdom itself — her realm is limited to the city of Palmyre when the tragedy starts — and all financial assets. In the same scene, Aurélien's prior proposal and her refusal are introduced by the Queen herself, thus giving the audience or reader yet another example of female rulers rejecting marriage. The defence of the realm relies on Zénobie's generals, Zabas and Timagéne. Their loyalty depends partly on their love for Zénobie. However, the Queen is prompt to reject their love too, arguing that they are inadequately suited to her status: 'Et si la nature oblige nostre sexe à fleschir, il faut que cent qualitez eminentes authorisent & reparent la necessité de ce malheur' (I, 3, p. 24). The generals attempt to figuratively penetrate the female kingdom, as they reveal their love to the Queen. Female resistance against male influence eventually leads the Queen to military defeat. Once captured, Zénobie is convinced by Marcellin, Aurélien's general, that there is more honour in dying than in living a

[75] Abbé d'Aubignac, *Zénobie* (Paris: Courbé, 1647). For references to Zénobie as a widow, see for instance I, 2 and III, 6.

captive (V, 6).[76] This scene can be interpreted as the defeat of female resistance against male power.[77]

By contrast, in Abeille's *Argélie*, the queen does not only reject men, she claims she has dispatched hundreds of them to their death:

> En vain par mon hymen cent ont prétendu l'estre.
> Mon cœur du rang supréme uniquement jaloux,
> A traité d'Ennemis ces prétendus Epoux;
> Et de l'Amour alors ignorant les surprises,
> J'ay dans leur propre sang éteint leurs entreprises [...].[78]

Marriage is absolutely rejected as the Queen desperately clings to royal power. However, Argélie, like her sisters, pays the ultimate price for rejecting male characters in her kingdom and dies.

Poor choice of partners and advisors

The final and most frequent flaw displayed by queens in the corpus of tragedies studied here is their inability to select an appropriate or adequate partner or suitable advisers. Cleopatra and Elizabeth I are systematically plagued by this, but this *topos* is also found in Jobert's *Balde*, Quinault's *Mort du Grand Cyrus* and Thomas Corneille's *Théodat*.

In Jobert's *Balde*,[79] the failings of the Queen seem to bring about her own demise as well as the fall of her kingdom. Balde fails her realm on several levels, because although there is not as systematic a resistance against male characters in the tragedy, the choice of an inadequate male partner still leads to insurrection and betrayal on the part of the kingdom's male subjects. All these elements are introduced in the first act: in the first scene, the audience or reader is made aware of King

[76] Zénobie subsequently commits suicide.
[77] It can also be interpreted as the final imposition of a masculine act on a female character.
[78] Abeille, *Argélie*, I, 1.
[79] F. Jobert, *Balde, Reyne des Sarmates* (Paris: Courbé, 1651).

Trasonte's proposal, of Balde's refusal and of the subsequent war. In the second scene, Queen Balde is seen to offer her crown to her lover, Voltare. Finally, in the fifth scene, Adolphe and Rutile, two of Balde's subjects, are seen to plot the fall of their own city in order to avoid the dishonour brought by Balde's marriage to Voltare, her 'subjet' (I, 5, 4). The dramatic tension is introduced by Balde's vow to sacrifice to the Gods what she holds dearest in exchange for Voltare's safety in the battle against Trasonte. The realisation that this means sacrificing Voltare himself is at the heart of the dilemma faced by Queen Balde and highlights more than ever the inadequacy of her choice. Balde's subsequent betrayal of her vows offers the audience or reader a clear example of the Queen's failure to preserve her realm. In acts III and IV, there is a constant opposition between the semantic fields of love and duty, where love clearly surpasses the importance of duty in the Queen's speech:

> Que j'esprouve plustost & les fers & les feux,
> Perisse mon Estat, & s'il faut à mes vœux
> Immoler un Espoux de qui je tiens la vie,
> Perdons tout, je crains plus d'estre ingrate qu'impie.[80]
>
> Deust le Ciel me punir par un coup de Tonnerre;
> Deust souffrir mon Estat, peste, famine & guerre;
> Deust mon Peuple enragé m'immoler à ses Dieux,
> Comme il fit autrefois un Roy de mes ayeux,
> Plustost que...[81]
>
> Dieux, perdez mon Païs, brisez mon Diadème,
> Si vous sauvez le Roy, je ne perds rien que j'aime [...].[82]

These quotations highlight not only the Queen's choice but also its degree of inadequacy: beyond individual pain, the fatal end of her realm, together with the suffering of her people have become legitimate options for Balde. There is a certain irony pervading the final act: the gods, through the oracle, have designated Balde as the person to be sacrificed. In spite of the fact that the Queen previously chose her

[80] Ibid, III, 6, 7-10.
[81] Ibid, III, 6, 74-8.
[82] Ibid, IV, 3, 13-4.

lover over her kingdom, she now claims her sacrifice is brought upon her by the fact she is a female ruler.[83] In the same tirade, Balde's subjects are called 'ingrats' (V, 2, 2), and 'Perfides' (V, 2, 4). If the words of the Queen in acts III and IV absolve her people and lay the blame at her door, they also absolve the author. Indeed, her poor choice of lover leads the Queen to her suicide, yet her defeat is not formally related to her gender, but to her individual failings: there is no mention of her being a poor ruler because she is female, but because of her actions. Only Balde refers to herself as a female ruler in the context of her demise, whereas for all the other characters, it is her actions, not her gender, that are an issue.

A female ruler failing to choose an appropriate partner is one of the main topics in Quinault's version of the story of Queen Thomiris as well.[84] Quinault's *Mort de Cyrus* offers the reader the picture of a queen extremely similar to Dido. The *expositio* presents the Queen as a widow dealing with the threats of King Cyrus, yet the Queen has fallen in love with her enemy, who loves her too. In act I, scene 1, Thomiris hesitates to make her feelings known because, like Dido, she has sworn not to marry again after her late husband's death. She eventually decides to marry Cyrus, yet her people, agitated by Odartise, a jealous lover, reject the foreign King as their ruler.[85] The theme of the foreign prince as an inadequate choice continues throughout the play, culminating in the confrontation between Odartise and Thomiris in act III, as the Queen realises Odartise has been the *agent provocateur* responsible for her people's discontent:

> **Thomiris**
> Odartise, on m'apprend que mon Camp se mutine,
> Qu'il refuse le Roy que mon soin luy destine:
> Qu'il ose insolemment examiner mon choix,

[83] Ibid, V, 2, 4-5: 'Perfides, vous croyez qu'il vous seroit infame / De suivre plus longtemps les ordres d'une Femme [...].'
[84] Philippe Quinault, *La Mort du Grand Cyrus* (Paris: Courbé et de Luyne, 1659).
[85] Ibid, I, 5, p. 17.

Et qu'au lieu d'obeyr, il veut faire des Loix.

Odartise
Madame, assurement les Scithes auront peine
A voir au Throsne un Roy qu'ils ont mis *à la chaine*,
Au seul nom de Cyrus tout le Camp a fremy,
C'est un Roy brave & Grand: mais c'est un enemy;
Et vos meilleurs Soldats treuvent trop d'*infamie*,
A *se mettre au joug* d'une main ennemie.[86]

Although, in this tragedy, the abilities of the Queen as a monarch are not questioned, it is her choice of an adequate partner, in other words her choice of ruler for her country which is problematic. Popular unrest is undoubtedly worsened by Odartise's actions, nonetheless it is justified logically in his rhetoric. The construction of the following alexandrine emphasises the unsuitability of Cyrus, with the association of 'Roy' and slavery ('chaine') at the end of each hemistitch: 'A voir au Throsne un Roy qu'ils ont mis à la chaine'. The semantic field of slavery, highlighted in italics in the previous quotation, is continued throughout Odartise's speech and serves to stress the inadequacy of the Queen's choice which will eventually lead to the suicides of both Cyrus and the Queen herself in the final act.

Thomas Corneille's tragedy *Théodat* follows an identical pattern. The original failing of the Queen — the selection of an inappropriate partner — leads to her losing popular support and, finally, to her death. Queen Amalasonte allows Théodat to accumulate an increasing amount of power for the simple reason that she loves him; this jeopardises her own status and influence within her realm until it is too late and she exclames:

Ah, Ciel! quelle insolence, & qui l'eust pû penser?
Ay-je, en l'élevant trop, cessé d'estre sa Reyne?[87]

The subsequent popular show of confidence for Théodat in act IV illustrates the Queen's failure to maintain her authority over her people, hence her failure to

[86] Ibid, III, 3, p. 37. My italics.
[87] Thomas Corneille, *Théodat*, III, 6, 2-3.

preserve the integrity of her realm; this is all brought about by her choice of an unworthy or inadequate partner. There is no mention of gender issues in this tragedy, which reinforces the point we made about Corneille's *Laodice*: the defeat of the female ruler, whose world clashes with male power, is not identified as a gender-specific failure, but rather as an individual one: like Laodice, Amasalonte does not lose popular support because she is a female ruler, but because of her failings as a queen, that is to say here, her inability to choose an adequate partner and to treat him appropriately.

Finally, Cleopatra is repeatedly and systematically associated with the topos of the inappropriate partner. Thus, in Garnier's *Marc-Antoine*,[88] Egypt is clearly threatened by its own ruler, Cléopâtre. The first two acts are dedicated to setting out the shared responsibilities for the war waged against the Egyptian kingdom by Cesar. The fist act sees Marc-Antoine lament the misconstrued loss of Cléopâtre's love but also serves to show the Queen's powers and responsibility in her kingdom's unfortunate fate:

> [...] J'ay pour elle [Cleopatra] quitté
> Mon païs, et Cesar à la guerre incité,
> Vengeant l'injure faicte à sa sœur mon espouse,
> Dont Cleopatre estoit à mon malheur jalouse:
> J'ay mis pour l'amour d'elle, en ses blandices pris,
> Ma vie à l'abandon, mon honneur à mespris,
> Mes amis dedaignez, l'Empire venerable
> De ma grande Cité devestu miserable:
> Dedaigné le pouvoir qui me rendoit si craint,
> Esclave devenu de son visage feint.
> Inhumaine, traistresse, ingrate entre les femmes,
> Tu trompes, parjurant, et ma vie, et mes flammes:
> Et me livres, mal-sage, à mes fiers ennemis,
> Qui bien tost puniront ton parjure commis.[89]

[88] Robert Garnier, *Marc-Antoine*, in *Œuvres Complètes de Robert Garnier*, Coll. Textes Français (Paris: Société des Belles Lettres, 1974). The tragedy was first performed in 1578 and published by Mamert Patisson in Paris, in 1580.
[89] Ibid, I, 7-20.

Having established the Queen's influence over Marc-Antoine and her ensuing responsibility in the war waged against them by Cesar, Garnier moves on to provide more proof of the Queen's guilt in act II. In this act, first the philosopher, Philostrate, and then Cléopâtre herself, highlight the consequences of her love for the Roman general. Philostrate describes Egypt, following Cesar's arrival, as covered with 'soudards estrangers, horribles en leurs armes' (II, 261), while the Egyptian people are filled with 'Rien que d'effroy, d'horreur' (II, 263). The rationale behind the Roman invasion is swiftly put forward:

> Un amour un amour (las qui l'eust jamais creu!)
> A perdu ce Royaume, embrasé de son feu![90]

Cléopâtre follows this description with both her own admission of guilt and a more fatalistic explanation for her destiny. The first part of Cléopâtre's discourse is dedicated to the love she feels for Marc-Antoine and what she is ready to give up for him: his love is 'Plus cher que sceptre, enfans, la liberté, le jour' (II, 410). Power, children, liberty and even life come second to Marc-Antoine, emphasising the Queen's passion and its fatal interference with her role as a political leader. Choosing to pursue her personal interests over her duty to preserve her kingdom is what will eventually lead Cléopâtre to her death. A more fatalistic tone then pervades the Queen's words as she reasons that:

> Ma beauté trop aimable est notre adversité:
> Ma beauté nous renverse et accable de sorte
> Que Cesar sa victoire à bon droit lui rapporte.
> Aussi fut elle cause et qu'Antoine perdit
> Une armée, et que l'autre entiere se rendit [...].[91]

Her beauty is her own downfall and that of Marc-Antoine, yet the Queen can hardly be held accountable for her physical appearance and its effect on men. Cléopâtre's *demoiselle d'honneur*, Eras, also argues against the Queen that Antoine is responsible

[90] Ibid, II, 279-80.
[91] Ibid, II, 430-4.

for his own actions but faces a stubborn denial from Cléopâtre,[92] leaving no doubt in the mind of the audience or reader that the Queen has, indeed, been the most significant threat to her own country. The depiction of Cléopâtre, therefore, draws a lot on the anti-feminist moralists: unsuitable to public office, she leads men — here Antoine — to pain, loss, damnation and dishonour. Antoine lost his empire, is dishonoured in battle and kills himself. Cléopâtre's stubbornness and 'beauté [...] trompeuse'[93] are responsible for Antoine's downfall.

In his *Cleopatre*, Bensérade, like Garnier, lays the emphasis on the threat represented by the Queen more than on that represented by men. Antoine's wavering faith in Cléopâtre leads, at least momentarily, to a shift in blame from him to her for his dishonourable downfall and the endangering of Egypt (I, 1, 33-56), while Lucile highlights Cléopâtre's power over his friend, thus further exculpating him (II, 2, 83-84). As in most tragedies concerned with Cléopâtre,[94] the Queen's primary failing is to have chosen an inadequate partner, namely Marc-Antoine, before her duty to her Empire. However, by choosing him, Cléopâtre once again leads Antoine to pain, loss, damnation and dishonour. The first example of this appears in act I, when Cléopâtre orders:

> [...] laissez au fourreau vostre fer inutille,
> Que sans vous nostre armée acheve son dessein,
> Et soyez en le chef sans en estre la main.[95]

Depriving her army of Antoine is synonymous, in Lucile's words, with depriving 'un corps' of its 'teste' (I, 2, 120) and the symbolic castration evoked in the previous lines eventually leaves Antoine emasculated, dishonoured and powerless to rally his troops

[92] See II, 448, 450 and 452-66.
[93] Marc Angenot, *Les Champions des femmes*, p. 23.
[94] I say 'most' rather than all, because Charles Chaulmer's *Mort de Pompée* (Paris: Sommaville, 1638) and Pierre Corneille's *Pompée* (Paris: Sommaville and Courbé, 1644) also feature Cleopatra, yet the action takes place before the beginning of her reign, whereas in Jodelle's *Cléopâtre Captive* (in Enea Balmas, ed., *Etienne Jodelle: Œuvres Complètes*, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), the action takes place after Cesar's victory and Cléopâtre's loss of power).
[95] Bensérade, *Cleopatre*, I, 2, 88-90.

against Cesar.[96] This poor strategic decision on the part of Cléopâtre is followed by the admission that everything comes second to Antoine, including her Empire. Rather than betray her lover, Cléopâtre would rather:

> Que Cesar triomphant brulé, sacage, pile,
> Qu'il soit victorieux jusques sur ma famille,
> Qu'il prenne, qu'il usurpe, et qu'il ravisse aux miens
> La puissance, et l'espoir de rentrer dans leurs biens.[97]

Poor tactical decisions combined with an irresponsible choice of priorities serve to draw the portait of Cléopâtre as a failing Queen, whose defeat and death come as an inevitable consequence.

In Mairet's *Cléopâtre*, the Queen is equally accountable for her kingdom's fall at the hands of the Romans. Besides Marc-Antoine's love, Cléopâtre's 'ambition' is also singled out as one of the two motivations for the Romans attacking Egypt (I, 3). Interestingly, marriage is depicted both as the reason for the fall of Egypt and as a means to put an end to the threats to Cléopâtre's kingdom: in act V, scene four, Cesar asks Cléopâtre to marry him. Cléopâtre agrees, but only to give herself time to organise and commit suicide (V, 6). Moreover, Cléopâtre's conduct as a ruler is portrayed as flawed by her confidante, Iras, and Egypt's High Priest, Aristée. The former raises the audience or readers' awareness of the Queen's lavish profligacy to the detriment of her country (III, 1, 29-42), while the latter emphasises the Queen's hubris, and highlights the danger inherent in irritating the gods in this way (III, 1, 17-28). Iras concludes:

> Je ne m'estonne pas si le Ciel offensé,
> Punit visiblement son orgueil insensé,
> Et suivant ce penser, mon esprit s'imagine,
> Que c'est d'où nos malheurs ont pris leur origine.[98]

[96] It can be argued that Cleopatra's demand that Antoine's sword stay in its sheath, in other words her demand that he does not use his sword - a symbol of power and masculinity - is paramount to an act of emasculation.
[97] Ibid, I, 3, 49-52.
[98] Ibid, III, 1, 38-42.

The Queen's responsibility in her country's downfall is consequently clearly established by Mairet, as by his predecessors. Mairet's Cleopatra, like Garnier's or Bensérade's, is not an exceptional woman then: she is a flawed woman, unfit to hold a public office. Male power is consequently restored and maintained with the suicide of Cléopâtre and the victory of the Romans.

Finally, I will focus this study of queens threatening their realm with the case of Elizabeth I in Montchrestien's *Reine d'Escosse*, the two *Marie Stuard* by Regnault and Boursault, as well as the three *Comte d'Essex* by La Calprenède, Claude Boyer and Thomas Corneille. Elizabeth I is guilty of selecting poor advisers in all the plays. It is important to deal with Elizabeth I as a separate issue because, as a historical figure the audience and reader would have heard of, she would have stirred up very specific emotions: Montchrestien's play was published in Elizabeth I's lifetime and even the ones published in the 1630s were published at a time when Elizabeth I and Marie Stuart are likely to have still been remembered. This means that the fictional Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart were probably less likely to invite comparisons with French queens regent, and more with their actual selves. Yet, all these plays, do feed into the same trend, that is to say the representation of failing ruling queens in seventeenth-century tragedy. Failure is brought about in these tragedies by the Queen's poor choice of advisers, a sign of her incompetence as a monarch. In Montchrestien's tragedy, for instance, Elizabeth listens to the advice of her *conseiller* against her better judgment and finally agrees to have Queen Mary Stuart executed:

> **Reine**
> Combien qu'elle fust telle [homicide], elle est hors de nos loix:
> De Dieu tiennent sans plus les Reines et les Rois.
> **Conseiller**
> C'est pieté d'occire une femme meschante
> Aussi bien qu'un Tyran: de tous deux on se vante.
> **Reine**

Considerez la bien; elle est mere d'un Roy,
L'espouse de deux Roys, et Reine comme moy.
Conseiller
Considerez la bien; c'est une desloyale:
Qui dément par ses moeurs la majesté Royale.[99]

The discourse of the *conseiller* is inherently flawed because it fails to take into account the specificity of royalty. However, in accepting the argument of her *conseiller*, Queen Elizabeth endangers herself as she opens the door for kings and queens to be treated like their subjects. Regnault and Boursault also created royal characters whose incapacity to distinguish good from bad advice leads them to perform unnatural acts. In Regnault's play, following Morray's lies, Queen Elizabeth is, thus, led to have her faithful favourite, Norfolc, and her cousin, Mary Stuart, executed. La Calprenède also leaves little doubt concerning Queen Elizabeth's responsibility in the kingdom's endangerment with, from the very first scene, the mention of the abnormal amount of royal favours bestowed on the comte:

Donc apres tant de biens ton ame desloyale
Abuse laschement d'une bonté Royale,
Et ce degré superbe où ma faveur ta [sic] mis
Te rend le plus cruel de tous mes ennemis.
N'ay-je avec un sujet partagé ma puissance
Ne l'ay-je relevé par dessus sa naissance
N'ay-je soulé son cœur de gloire & de grandeurs.
Et ne l'ay-je honoré de mes propres faveurs,
Pour aymer un ingrat ne me suis-je haye,
Que pour me voir de luy si laschement trahie.
Et tout ce que j'ay fait n'a pas eu le pouvoir
De tenir un vassal dans son premier devoir.[100]

The favours given to Essex to compensate for his lower birth ('relevé par dessus sa naissance') fail to make him an appropriate partner for the Queen, while weakening her position. These favours have, in turn, given ideas of grandeur to Essex, who now threatens Elizabeth and England. The rest of Elizabeth's subjects are aware of the Queen's weakened position as can be seen from Cécile's declaration to his Queen:

[99] Montchrestien, *Reine d'Escosse*, V, 167-74.
[100] La Calprenède, *Comte d'Essex*, I, 1, 1-12.

> Ah Ciel! qu'est devenu cet esprit de clairté
> Cet esprit plein de flame & de vivacité?
> Cette rare prudence, & la haute pratique
> De la plus grande Reine & la plus politique
> Qui jamais ait porté le diademe au front?[101]

The questioning of the Queen's powers is inevitably followed by the questioning of the Queen's ability to rule her kingdom, thereby showing the audience that the Queen is equally as responsible for the endangering of England as Essex. In Corneille's *Comte d'Essex*, the hero arouses the sympathy of the audience, so much so that the fault must inexorably lay with the Queen. Her failings as a ruler lie in her poor choice of advisers and her capacity to be influenced: in Essex's absence, Cécile's words are enough for the Queen to believe that Essex has been in collusion with the Irish rebels and wishes to overthrow her. However, Essex is confident that a conversation with the Queen will be sufficient to convince her of the contrary (I, 3, 353-60). Gibson adds that 'Ayant échoué dans son projet, il préfère se laisser décapiter plutôt que de vivre en proie à son désespoir personnel et aux tendresses exigeantes d'Elizabeth'.[102] The inability of the Queen to see through her advisor's agenda and to show clemency until it is too late is a major flaw for a sovereign.[103] The tragedy ends with the preparation of grand funerals for Essex and the prediction that Elizabeth will soon join him in death, thus ridding the kingdom of an unfit ruler. Claude Boyer's *Comte d'Essex* is similar to Corneille's tragedy in that the Queen is poorly advised and especially fails to notice Coban's hidden agenda until the final act. Boyer's Queen also fails to match her lover's moral standards, as the antithetical notions of love and glory or honour are systematically oppposed in the language of the Queen and Essex.[104] This highlights

[101] Ibid, II, 1, 23-7.
[102] Thomas Corneille, *Le Comte d'Essex*, p. xii.
[103] Elizabeth finally sees through Cécile's agenda in V, 3, 1479-92. She orders the execution of Essex to be stopped, thus showing clemency, in V, 2, 1433-45, but it is in fact too late.
[104] See Gibson's edition of Corneille's *Comte d'Essex* for a more detailed analysis of this opposition.

again the fragility and even the dangerous nature of the female rule represented on stage.

The 'Peuple' as an internal threat

In three seventeenth-century tragedies, the 'peuple' express a desire to be ruled by men rather than women.

In Quinault's *Astrate*, Queen Elise is definitely lacking popular support. I have explained how the Queen was a significant threat to her own kingdom and how this was reflected by the lack of public support she enjoyed. What is interesting to note is that Sichée, the *agent provocateur*, has plenty of ammunition against the Queen – she has after all murdered the old King and his sons – and yet, Quinault feels the need to add in his character's diatribe that 'Un Roy sied mieux enfin au Trône qu'une Femme [...]' (I, 3, 164). This statement seems to reflect the anti-feminist literature of the time: added to the popular discontent previously mentioned by Sichée, it shows the audience or reader that popular desire for a male ruler is not to be disregarded.

In Thomas Corneille's *Laodice* there is an apparent contradiction, in the Queen's words, between her determination to be the sole ruler of Cappadocia and her concern for her people's reaction. In fact, the conflict between male and female power is partly introduced in this tragedy by the people's impatience to be ruled by a male monarch, which is at odds with Laodice's wishes. The Queen highlights the conflict of interests in the second act:

> D'un peuple audacieux l'impatience éclate,
> [...]
> Maistresse du pouvoir qu'on cherche à me ravir.[105]

[105] Thomas Corneille, *Laodice*, II, 1.

'Maîtresse du pouvoir' and yet concerned with her 'peuple audacieux,' Laodice is unable to impose her will without their support. The growing popular unrest and demand for a male ruler reappears as a major concern in the third scene of this act:

> Le peuple cependant chaque jour fait connoistre
> Qu'attendant qu'il [Ariarate] se montre il veut un second maître
> Qui commande, execute, & puisse avec éclat
> M'ayder à soûtenir le grand poids de l'Estat.[106]

The importance of the people is once again emphasised by the final scene of the play dedicated to Laodice's death and the accession of the male ruler. Laodice's last words are ones of contempt towards her own people (V, 6, 1728-32). The fact that the Queen's last words, albeit furious ones, should be dedicated to the people gives their role a great deal of weight.

Similarly, in Abeille's *Argélie*, the Queen displays the same concerns and determination as Queen Laodice, while Argélie's resolve is also contradicted by the will of her people. This contradiction is displayed from the *expositio*:

> Car enfin, tu le sçais, le Peuple veut un Maistre,
> [...]
> Mon cœur du rang supréme uniquement jaloux,
> A traité d'Ennemis ces prétendus Epoux;
> [...]
> Donnons un Roy du moins à ce Peuple volage [...].[107]

The desire of the people for a male ruler ("le Peuple veut un Maistre") is identical to that which we saw in Corneille's *Laodice* and the determination of the female ruler to maintain her power is also the same as that in Corneille's play. The fragility of the Queen's power is highlighted in this quotation by the use of the adjective 'volage' associated with 'Peuple', which seems to demonstrate the power the people actually have over their sovereign. In Abeille's play, the desire of the 'peuple' is assuaged by

[106] Ibid, II, 3. Ariarate is Laodice's son.
[107] Abeille, *Argélie*, I, 1.

the return of the rightful heiress to the throne, Ismène, who provides them with a male ruler in the person of Phoenix, her lover and soon-to-be husband.

The three tragedies that have been discussed in this section pose the question of the importance of the people as an entity rebelling against their sovereign at a time when Louis XIV rules France as an absolute monarch. A possible explanation for this phenomenon might be that the sovereigns the people rebel against are in fact illegitimate: all three queens are usurpers whose death allows the return of the rightful heir to the throne. A second explanation is that they are all female and in Quinault's words, a man is better suited to the throne than a woman: they are all replaced by men on the throne. This means that absolute monarchy is not threatened in these plays; if anything, it strengthens Louis XIV's position as a legitimate male ruler.

THE REALM UNDER EXTERNAL THREAT: MEN IN FEMALE REALMS

Having examined the cases of female rulers facing internal threats, I will now turn to those female rulers who face external threats. I have already mentioned the fact that external threats were solely masculine. Queens are only depicted in the act of defending themselves within these plays, never as attacking. The source of external male threat is either emotional or purely political, and marriage is often at stake in either case.

In Garnier's *Marc-Antoine*, Cesar is the most obvious manifestation of an external threat to Cléopâtre's kingdom. Although this threat is alluded to several times in the first three acts and through vivid images, Cesar actually appears on stage in only one act (IV). The pattern of the foreigner living in the realm and underming the female monarch is identical to that developed in the Dido tragedies. Marc-Antoine is a foreigner in Cléopâtre's realm and the cause of the war waged by Cesar against Egypt. Marc-Antoine has abandoned his first wife, Cesar's sister, for Cléopâtre. The

Queen's lover thus turns from an internal support into an external threat. Jondorf suggests that the choice of subject by Garnier would have been particularly relevant at a time when

> Admiral Coligny was planning an expedition to liberate the Low Countries, supporting his scheme with various arguments, one of which (and probably his main motive) was that foreign war united a country and put an end to civil dispute.[108]

Jondorf therefore seems to see Cesar and Marc-Antoine as foreigners as she emphasis the fact that the war was foreign.

In Bensérade's *Cleopatre*, Cesar is also the expression of external threat to the realm of Cléopâtre. The Roman triumvir has a much more physical presence in this play, appearing in no less than ten scenes.[109] The fourth act, in particular, is dedicated to Cesar and presents a colder approach to the situation at hand. The previous acts had seen the expression of Cléopâtre's and Antoine's passion for one another and the semantic field of emotion is present throughout. The introduction of Cesar in the fourth act is accompanied by a change of semantic field, where honour, duty and cold political strategies have replaced passion.[110] Thus, the external threat represented by Cesar and his army can be seen, not so much as a masculine entity threatening an otherwise overwhelmingly female power, but as the threat represented by reason and good government to the realm of passion. Marc-Antoine still represents an external threat to Egypt, since his role as an internal support is, again, altered to make him an external threat because of his foreign origins.

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[108] Gillian Jondorf, *Robert Garnier and the Themes of Political Tragedy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1969), p. 36.

[109] Bensérade, *Cleopatre*. Cesar is present in II, 1, in IV, scenes 1,2,3,4 and 7 and in V, scenes 3, 4, 6 and 8.

[110] See for instance IV, 2, in which Cesar explains why Cléopâtre will be treated honourably both in Egypt and in Rome: beyond duty to a fellow ruler, there is also the cold reality of politics which call for a fair treatment of the Queen to avoid popular uprising.

In Mairet's *Cléopâtre*, the external threat manifests itself again in the form of Cesar. Cesar's menace, supported by all the might of the Roman Empire, is the trigger for the chain of events, which eventually will lead to Cléopâtre's suicide.

In the case of Jobert's *Balde*, Rosidor's *Mort du Grand Cyrus*,[111] and the tragedies of Jodelle, Hardy and Boisrobert, the rejection of a suitor's love is clearly established as the reason for the male attack on the queendom.[112] Aside from Rosidor's play, all the tragedies mentioned above provide the audience or reader with a valid explanation for male physical aggression. Trasonte and Iarbe are never presented as merely bitter rejected lovers, but also as a logical alternative for a Queen who leans towards an inappropriate partner. In Balde's case, Trasonte is made to express this thought in the second act:

> Adolphe, croyois-tu ce sexe raisonnable?
> Ce sexe aime tousjours, mais jamais rien d'aimable;
> Souvent il est aveugle avec tous ses beaux yeux,
> Qui par fois ne sont pas ceux qui voyent le mieux.
> Toute aveugle qu'elle est, Balde me plaist encore,
> Et son indigne Espoux est le seul que j'abhorre.[113]

The Queen's inability to choose an adequate partner serves to justify the male character taking this decision for her: Balde is not 'raisonnable', she is rendered 'aveugle' by love.

Dido faces similar external threats in Carthage. A common feature among the five tragedies we will examine in more detail in the following chapters is that they all present Iarbe as a spurned lover. Although there is some mention of the political logic behind a marriage between Dido and Iarbe, especially in Boisrobert's tragedy, it seems nonetheless secondary to the passion of King Iarbe for Dido.

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[111] Jean de Rosidor, *La Mort du Grand Cyrus ou la vengeance de Tomiris* (Cologne: Henry Streel, 1662). For more details, see Lancaster, III, 2, 456-57.
[112] Balde is attacked by King Trasonte of Danzig, Tomiris is attacked by Cyrus, while Dido is attacked by Iarbe.
[113] Jobert, *Balde*, II, 3, 30-35.

The case of Rosidor's *Mort du Grand Cyrus* is quite different because Queen Tomiris is one of the extremely rare queens to survive at the end of the tragedy. In this respect, Rosidor follows the historical sources and writings of the moralists, unlike Quinault.[114] Cyrus is introduced as a spurned lover who will make several gestures throughout the play to obtain the Queen's hand. Firstly, Cyrus attempts to blackmail the Queen into marrying him by threatening to kill her son, Spargapise, if she refuses.[115] This is the first layer of confrontation between male and female power in the play. The characters of Spargapise, Tomiris's son, and his lover, Talestris, introduce the second layer of the confrontation, as well as its potential resolution. The intrusion of the female character into the masculine world sees a partial resolution of the conflict: Talestris, pretending to be Tomiris, goes to the enemy camp and demands that Spargapise be released. In order to please Tomiris, Cyrus agrees. However, the subterfuge is discovered and Talestris is captured, but not before Spargapise has escaped. The female intrusion is short-lived as Cyrus, in a gesture of good will towards Tomiris, releases Talestris. The Queen continues to spurn the King's advances. The final clash between male and female powers climaxes in the battle, in which Talestris is killed, Spargapise kills himself and Cyrus is captured. Male power is defeated in this battle and in the play; the defeat is symbolised by Cyrus's execution and the Queen's vow never to marry again, thus ensuring the preservation of the female world.

Other queens refuse marriage proposals, but these are not presented as the result of an emotional attachment on the part of male characters. This is the case for D'Aubignac and Magnon's *Zénobie*.[116] D'Aubignac introduces Aurélien's marital intentions in the first act: Zénobie refers to his proposal, which was made just after

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[114] For moralist interpretation of this character, see chapter 2.
[115] For details, see Lancaster, *History of French Dramatic Literature,* III, 2, 456-7.
[116] Jean de Magnon, *Zénobie, reyne de Palmyre* (Paris: Christophe Journel, 1660).

her husband had died (I, 2). The proposal was turned down and there is no mention of any emotional attachement on the part of either character within the play. There is little ambiguity in Magnon's *Zénobie* concerning Aurélien's motivations. His Aurélien proposes to Zénobie in the first act (I, 3), then proposes to her daughter, Odénie, after Zénobie has turned him down (II, 1). Odénie turns him down as well and, subsequently, Aurélien gives up on the idea of marrying either of them. The victory of masculine power is therefore achieved with the suicide of the Queen and symbolised by the last female character, Odénie, being included as a slave in Aurélien's triumphant parade (V, 7).

Anne de Bretagne, by Jean Bourdichon, 1457-1521.

I will finally focus my analysis on historical Queens in tragedy. In Ferrier's *Anne de Bretagne, reine de France*,[117] Queen Anne struggles with external masculine threats and the necessity of an alliance with a male power in order to be able to combat this threat. The eternal threats are personified by La Trimoüille en Béarn, the Maréchal de Gié and King Charles V.[118] Although the latter seems the most obvious threat, with his army already deployed to invade Brittany, it is in fact an unlikely

[117] Louis Ferrier, *Anne de Bretagne, reine de France* (Paris: Ribou, 1679).
[118] Ibid, I, 2, 1, 3 and 5.

external threat in the form of the duc d'Orléans, the Queen's lover, who is the most serious menace to the kingdom. The talks of the royal Council regarding the Queen's marriage to a suitable partner highlight the importance of this marriage not just for the Queen herself but for her entire kingdom (II, 2). From this choice depends the size and capability of the military support Brittany will enjoy to fight Charles V. Several suitors are considered, including Anne's favourite, yet eventually it is the *raison d'état* which prevails, and Anne accepts to marry Charles V himself:

> La nuit & la raison m'ont renduë à moi-même.
> Je haïssois, j'aimois. Je ne hai, ni je n'aime.
> D'un autre œil j'envisage & le Prince & ma sœur.
> Le changement de rang a fait changer mon cœur.
> Il n'est plus le joüet d'une vaine tendresse,
> Je regne, & suis enfin de moi-même maîtresse.[119]

In a rare move in seventeenth-century tragedy, the Queen embraces the force threatening her kingdom, silencing her personal feelings, or individual interests, to ensure the preservation of her realm.

6. *Dido*, Dosso Dossi (1520-23)

DIDO

Dido as a threat

[119] Ibid, V, 1, 17-22.

All the tragedies dealing with Dido feature a common pattern showing Dido mistaking an external force for an internal support, and thus being responsible for her own demise and that of her realm. This misconception reveals Dido to be a poor ruler and is reflected in the language and structure of the plays. In this section, we will concentrate solely on the narrative and structural aspects of this misconception.[120]

In Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant*, Dido's inaccurate perception is clearly introduced in the second act. Here, Æneas denies having made any promise of alliance, nuptial or political:

> Je n'ay jamais aussi pretendu dedans moy,
> Que les torches d'Hymen me joignissent à toy.
> Si tu nommes l'amour entre nous deux passee,
> Mariage arresté, c'est contre ma pensee.
> [...]
> Quant à la foy que tant on reproche: jamais
> T'ay-je donné la foy, que ce lieu desormais
> Emmurant ma fortune, ainsi que tu t'emmures,
> Finiroit des Troyens les longues avantures?[121]

The inaccuracy of Dido's interpretation is further highlighted by the reminder of the role Æneas has to play for his own people:

> Ce n'estoit ce n'estoit [sic] dedans ta court royale,
> Où les Troyens cherchoient l'alliance fatale [...].[122]

The mention of the sovereign's duty to his people is at odds with Dido's passionate plea for Æneas to stay and her disregard for her own people's discontent:

> J'ay mesprisé l'amour en tous autres éprise:
> L'amour trop mise en un, comme je l'ay dans toy,
> Est la haine de tous, et la haine de soy.
> J'ay pour t'avoir aimé la haine rencontree
> Des peuples et des Rois de toute la contree:
> Mesmes les Tyriens de ton heur offensez
> Couvent dessous leurs cœurs leurs desdains amassez.[123]

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[120] The following chapters will deal with the linguistic and symbolic aspects of the misconception.
[121] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 709-12 and 769-772.
[122] Ibid, II, 719-20.
[123] Ibid, II, 610-6.

Dido's scorn for foreign suitors ('Des peuples et des Rois de toute la contree') and for her people's feelings ('les Tyriens [...] offensez') tells the tale of endangering Carthage and introduces the notion of external threat and internal unrest. This is further illustrated in the final act, with Dido's admission of her responsibility:

> Que dis-tu? ou es tu, Didon? quelle manie
> Te change ton dessein, pauvre Roine, ennemie
> De ton heur? Il falloit telle chose entreprendre
> Quand tu donnois les loix, tes forfaits t'ont peu rendre
> Toymesme sans pouvoir, et ton peuple sans crainte.[124]

Dido's loss of power is then associated with her people's change of attitude: they are now 'sans crainte'.[125] The responsibility for Dido's unhappiness and, through that, for the kingdom's disintegration, is ultimately attributed to Dido herself ('tes forfaits'), thus showing that the most destructive threat to Carthage is in fact its ruler.

Similarly, in Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant*, Æneas denies having made any promises. Hardy is more ambiguous than other authors regarding the question of marriage. There is, indeed, no straightforward denial, in the words of Æneas, of his marriage to Dido:

> D'avoir voulu brasser un partement fuitif,
> Ne l'imagine point: onc je ne fus captif;
> Onc je n'ay pretendu le nœu de mariage,
> Quand bon me semblera, restraindre mon voyage.[126]

However, any further involvement or promise is firmly denied. No plans have been made for the Trojans to stay in Carthage or not to resume their quest for the new Troy. In fact, the only clarification of this matter is to be found at the end of act IV. The chorus of Tyrians, indeed, specify that:

> Surprise d'une letargie,
> Elle [Dido] n'a senty qu'à la fin
> Que ce Duc venu de Phrygie

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[124] Ibid, V, 2133-7.
[125] For Dido's loss of power see the use of past tense in the following lines: 'Il falloit telle chose entreprendre/ Quand tu donnois les loix [...].'
[126] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1, 709-12.

> S'accommode au tems le plus fin,
> Qu'abusant de sa chaste couche
> En titre de futur époux,
> C'est attendant qu'un ciel plus doux
> Le chemin des flots luy debouche [...].[127]

Unlike Jodelle, Hardy does substantiate Dido's claims against Æneas: 'En titre de futur époux' clearly establishes the existence of a promise or understanding that Æneas will marry Dido and this explains the Queen's willingness to consent to a sexual relationship. This would have been significant for an early seventeenth-century audience: in *Le Sexe et l'Occident,* Jean-Louis Flandrin explains that: 'Les promesses de mariage, certes, existent toujours, au XVIIe siècle, et elles doivent toujours, pour être valables, être réciproques [...]'.[128] Moreover, written proof is required to make the promise official only from 1639 with the *Déclaration sur les formalités du mariage*.[129] This suggests that any promise made by Æneas would have been legally binding in the eyes of Hardy's audience. However, in the third act, the scene of the confrontation reveals the extent of Dido's deliberate misconception as Æneas repeats he must obey the divine injunction:

> Paravant que te voir j'ay sçeu leur volonté,
> Comme aussy tu l'as sçeus, l'esclandre raconté [...].[130]

Hardy goes further and adds that, left to his own devices, the Trojan Prince would choose to rebuild Troy on its ruins, rather than in Carthage:

> Ailleurs je ne voudrois une ville planter,
> Et le sort vagabond des Troyens arrester.[131]

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[127] Ibid, IV, 3, 1651-8.
[128] Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Le Sexe et l'Occident* (Paris: Seuil, 1981), p. 71.
[129] See Flandrin, *Le Sexe et l'Occident*, p. 72 and Wendy Gibson, *Women in Seventeenth-Century France* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 53. Hardy's play was published in 1624.
[130] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1, 761-2.
[131] Ibid, III, 1, 813-4.

As in Jodelle's tragedy, the responsibility for Dido's demise is eventually laid at her feet, with the admission of guilt in the two final acts. Dido briefly recovers from her fury in the fourth act to incriminate herself:

> Que dy-je? où suis-je? et quelle excessive manie
> Pipe d'un fol espoir ma misere infinie
> Didon, pauvre Didon, ne sens, ne sens-tu point
> De tes impietez le remors qui t'époint?
> Qui ne s'apaisera paravant que Sichée
> Voye couler ton sang sur sa couche tachée?[132]

The introduction of the themes of guilt ('le remors'), symbolised by the stain ('sa couche tachée'), and adultery follows through into the final act with Dido's allusion to her 'forfait adultere' (V, 1, 1738). The fusion between Dido and Carthage, depicted as a mother-child relationship, is emphasised in the final act to highlight the similarity of their respective fates. The Queen addresses her 'child' as follows:

> Combien des envieux de ta grandeur prospere
> Tu auras à soufrir, opheline étrangere!
> Combien de maux à coup t'environnent le chef!
> Je l'aprehende plus que mon propre méchef.
> Mais Junon supléra de sa toute-puissance
> Au dommage que peut apporter mon absence.[133]

This quotation stresses the bond between Carthage and its creator and the inevitability of the city's fate that will be the consequence of the death of its ruler. Committing suicide is clearly identified as an act endangering Carthage and reveals Dido to be the most treacherous threat to her own realm.

In Scudéry's galant *Didon*, the Queen receives the enamoured vows of Æneas mostly off stage,[134] yet Æneas is openly identified as a culprit. Although there is no

[132] Ibid, IV, 3, 1335-40.
[133] Ibid, V, 1, 1739-44.
[134] Scudéry, *Didon*, in act II, between scenes 2 and 6.

reference to a specific promise made by Æneas, there is no denial of a promise being made either.[135] In fact, Æneas admits to betraying Dido:

> Oui, Madame, il est vrai, je manque de promesse;
> Je ne vous cèle point que je suis criminel,
> Et que mon cœur mérite un supplice éternel,
> J'ai trop de cruautés, et trop d'ingratitude:
> Elle devait avoir un traitement moins rude;
> L'amour qu'elle a pour moi me devait obliger,
> A n'acquérir jamais le titre de léger
> [...]
> Appelez-moi perfide, appelez-moi volage,
> Je saurai l'endurer, si cela vous soulage:
> Je vois qu'elle a raison, et que je la trahis,[136]

The treachery of the Trojan Prince, which is highlighted by the semantic field of crime and sin in the previous quotation, is, however, excused first by the divine command (IV, 2, 1097-1145 and 3, 1308. 1249-1272), and then by the Trojans' demands to their leader (IV, 3, 1249-72). The fact that the Prince obeys the divine decree, thus performing his moral duty, serves to accentuate Dido's failings and leads to her own admission of guilt at the end of act IV:

> Ne pouvais-je pas vivre exempte de tous blâmes,
> Comme ces animaux qui n'ont jamais deux flammes?
> Et par là, me sauver du céleste courroux,
> Gardant la foi promise aux cendres d'un époux?
> Oui, oui, je le pouvais; mais mon âme trop coupable,
> D'un sentiment d'honneur ne fut jamais capable;
> Et de quelque discours que mon cœur puisse user,
> Ce sont prétextes faux, rien ne peut l'excuser.[137]

Both lovers refer to past promises, yet Æneas has to break his to obey the gods, whereas Dido has broken hers for the pleasures of the flesh, making her worth less than animals, which are more faithful to their partners; the comparison creates, in the mind of the reader or audience, a vilified image of Dido. The rest of Dido's discourse

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[135] See IV, 2, 1097-1145: the source of this tirade is Virgil's *Æneid*, IV, 333-361. In the *Æneid*, this is where Æneas denies having made any promises. This is translated and incorporated in Jodelle and Hardy's version of Dido's story. Scudéry did not, however, include the denial in the tirade of his Æneas.
[136] Ibid, IV, 3, 1294-1307.
[137] Ibid, IV, 7, 1385-92.

in the final act is centred on death: firstly the death of Æneas, his men and eventually the destruction of the city he is destined to found (V, 2, 1450-1567), and finally, her own death which is performed on stage (V, 6, 1692). The discrepancy between the fates of the two characters is obviously justified by the reason behind the breach of their respective oaths and shows that Dido is by far the most threatening force for her own realm.

Equally, in Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, Dido is eventually depicted as the most dangerous threat to Carthage, as her strategic decisions are based less on reason than on passion. However, Boisrobert's aim was undoubtedly to rehabilitate the character of Dido and this explains why the dilemma faced by the Queen is different to and more complex than both past and future tragic Didos. The complexity of the dilemma is exposed in the confrontation scene involving Dido, Anne, Iarbe and Pygmalion.[138] Iarbe's amorous passion is met with Dido's stern refusal. However, this rebuttal is represented as not only based on the oath made to Sychée's ashes, but also as a necessity for the good of the Carthaginians.[139] This allows Dido's rejection of Iarbe to be justified not only on the grounds of her love or passion for her late husband, but also because it would lose her the support of her people, while setting them a bad example. Dido's dilemma has therefore shifted: from having to choose between duty and passion, Dido must now make an impossible choice between war and subsequently endangering her people or peace, breaking an oath and endangering her people as well. What eventually dooms the Queen is her hubris, the passion with which she deals with the masculine intrusion into her realm. For, indeed, if Boisrobert did manage to fashion a righteous Dido, he also created a character driven by her passion for duty and honour. This is particularly visible in the language attributed to

[138] Boisrobert, *Vraye Didon*, II, 2.

[139] Dido mentions her oath and the fact that 'tous nos Tyriens n'en ont jamais douté' (II, 2, 492), thus making the breach of her oath a sin not only in the face of the gods but also in the face of her people.

Dido,[140] but also in terms of the narrative. Dido's righteousness becomes a necessary standard by which other characters, including her brother, and their actions are evaluated (IV, 5, 1249-54). Considering the importance placed on honour and duty by the Queen, the audience can interpret Pygmalion's betrayal not only as predictable, but also as avoidable: Pygmalion's motives have been questioned from the very first scene. Dido's error is therefore blatant in that she wrongly trusted her brother to be an internal support. This error of judgement results in the loss of the war, the sacking of Carthage and the death of Dido, thus making the Queen responsible for the downfall of her city.

Montfleury returned, with his *Ambigu Comique*, to the age-old dilemma of passion against duty. The exposition of the external threats menacing Carthage is a prime example of Dido's passion overruling her duty to preserve the realm. When Æneas enumerates the growing list of enemies Dido will have to face if he stays, the Queen's answer is devoid of reason:

> Quand je ferme les yeux sur ce que je hazarde,
> Que j'immole à mes feux la peur de les aigrir,
> Est-ce Ænée, est-ce luy qui me les doit ouvrir?
> Laissez, laissez armer tous les Princes d'Affrique;
> L'Amour, quand il est fort, est-il si Politique?
> [...]
> [...] Et si mon amour m'a caché le danger
> Où mon choix & ma main me peuvent engager,
> J'aime mieux que toûjours il le cache à ma veuë,
> Que d'en voir ma tendresse alterée, ou vaincuë.[141]

Line forty illustrates the dichotomic nature of Dido, who is both a queen and a woman and who, as such, must strive to reconcile 'Amour' and 'Politique'. The inability to resolve this dichotomy appropriately, that is to say the fact that she chooses Æneas over Carthage, is symbolised by the fact that she resorts to using force to control her

[140] This will be developed further in chapter 4.
[141] Montfleury, *Ambigu comique*, I, 3, 36-40 and 52-56.

people (II, 2, 16-21). This weakens the position of the Queen, because passion has, then, obviously turned her into a tyrant. Dido's overwhelming passion is further illustrated in the tragedy by the fact that the last words associated with Dido in the final scene are 'fureur' and 'emportement' (III, 7, 1 and 3). With the departure of Æneas and the death of Dido, Carthage is finally left in the hands of Iarbe, highlighting the Queen's failings once again: not only does she willingly endanger her realm, but she ultimately abandons it.

External threats in Dido tragedies

In Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant*, an obvious external threat is mentioned, yet remains faceless. King Iarbe is alluded to as the main menace threatening Dido's city, but never appears on stage. Jodelle introduces the notion of spurned love as the motivation for Iarbe's menace of Carthage:

> L'autre mal la [Dido] troubla, lors que Iarbe le prince
> Des noirs Getuliens, luy offroit sa province,
> Et son sceptre et sa gent, si par les torches sainctes
> Du mariage estoyent leurs deux ames estreintes,
> Sans qu'elle au vieil amour de Sichee obstinee,
> Se peut faire flechir sous le joug d'Hymenee:
> Tant que ce Roy luy couve au fons de l'ame, pleine
> D'un immortel courroux, une implacable haine.[142]

Those are the only lines dedicated at length to Iarbe.[143] Jodelle also mentions Pygmalion, although his role in the tragedy is even more limited than that of Iarbe. There are several short allusions to Dido's brother, but no explanation of the actual danger he represents for Carthage.[144] This suggests that Jodelle was not so much interested in the external threats to the realm as in the internal conflict of his main characters, Dido and Æneas. However, the role played by the Trojan Prince can be

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[142] Ibid, I, 41-48.
[143] There are another two short allusions to Iarbe: in II, 639 ('Roy Getulien') and IV, 1833-34 ('Iarbe le Roy / De nos peuples voisins').
[144] Ibid, I, 32 and 35; II, 636; IV, 1649 and 1829; V, 2238.

interpreted as an external threat as well, because he is a foreigner in Dido's realm. The initial role attributed to Æneas and his men is to support Carthage against external threat: for instance, Dido calls Æneas the 'seul support / De ma Carthage' (II, 629-30). Yet the foreign nature of the Trojans prevents them from being integrated within the realm and reveals their threatening quality. This is highlighted by the vocabulary: Æneas is refered to as a foreigner on numerous occasions, and his status as a host of Dido's is also mentioned several times.[145] The foreign identity of Æneas is part of the problematic surrounding his suitability as a potential partner for the Queen and as ruler of Carthage. What is striking is that even Achate identifies his King as a menace equivalent to that posed by Iarbe. Achate's first words offer a long description of Dido's misadventures. These are introduced within the text by similar expressions: 'Sa peine...' introduces the story of Dido's husband's death; 'L'autre mal la troubla...' starts the story of Iarbe's unrequited love and subsequent hatred for Dido; finally 'Plus estrange malheur encor...' signals the beginning of the story of Æneas, whose eyes 'De cent traits venimeux blesserent l'effrenee'. The text substantiates the identification of the Trojans as a danger for Dido. The departure of the Trojans both reaffirms their fundamentally foreign nature and their status as an external threat. Their intrusion within the realm of Carthage has allowed them to destroy the kingdom from within, like the Trojan horse. On another level, it is interesting to note that the group of Trojans is entirely composed of male characters.[146] This leads us to interpret the presence of the Trojans in Carthage as the irruption of a male dominated world – the rulers of Troy descended from paternal

[145] There are nine references to Æneas as a foreigner, five as a host and four as a Trojan, thus defining this character as definitely foreign to Carthage and Dido. This will be analysed in detail in chapter five.
[146] This is true in all Dido tragedies.

lineage – in a female world. Carthage is not only ruled by a woman, but was founded by one, in an act assimilated to procreation.[147]

In Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant*, the external threat manifests itself in the form of King Iarbe, as in Jodelle's tragedy. Hardy did not keep the foreign prince off the stage, but he limited his presence to one scene.[148] Iarbe poses an imminent but not immediate threat to the kingdom. The King's intentions and motivations are clearly laid out in act II:

> [Didon] Mesprise mes bien-faicts, mon nom, ma royauté,
> Leur prefere, indiscrette, un vagabond de Troye,
> [...]
> Deux peuples estrangers, nos communs ennemis,
> Periront pour le rapt de mes amours commis.
> [...]
> J'iray de fond en comble (entreprise trop vile!),
> Ces Troyens sagmentez, exterminer sa ville;
> Et quant à l'impudique, en des fers vergogneux,
> Le supplice borner d'un refus desdaigneux.[149]

Iarbe subsequently withdraws from Carthage and leaves a spy, Therodomante, to verify that Dido is, indeed, marrying Aeneas, and to determine when he will attack Carthage. Hardy is the only playwright until Boisrobert, to give Iarbe a role on stage. Although this role is limited, it still serves to create in the mind of the audience or reader a more tangible threat to Dido and her kingdom. However, Hardy, like Jodelle, is still very much focused on personal or individual conflicts, which explains why Iarbe does not reappear on stage after act II. Yet, as in Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant*, Æneas poses a threat to Dido's kingdom. His status as a foreigner is highlighted in exactly the same way, through the vocabulary, and the same conclusions must be reached regarding the Trojan Prince's natural identification as an external threat.

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[147] There are several references to Carthage as Dido's child. I will develop this further in chapter four.
[148] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 1.
[149] Ibid, II, 1, 296-97, 315-16 and 357-60.

Scudéry introduces numerous faceless external threats to Carthage in the very first scene of his *Didon*. In the *expositio*, Anne portrays the numerous dangers faced by Carthage as follows:

> Et en songez-vous point entre quels ennemis,
> Dans ce nouveau climat, votre sort est soumis?
> Les Gétules vaillants, ces hommes invincibles,
> Les Numides hautains, les Syrtes insensibles,
> Peuples fiers et cruels, regardent d'un côté
> Cet Asile qui reste à notre liberté;
> De l'autre, les déserts de l'ardente Lybie;
> La ville de Barcé, dont la rage ennemie
> Ne voit qu'avec regret votre Empire naissant,
> S'afflige de son heur, et le va menaçant.
> Vous dois-je encor parler de l'appareil de guerre,
> Que le peuple de Tyr fait par toute sa Terre?
> Et du frère cruel, qui s'arme contre vous
> D'un fer, qui fume encor du sang de votre Epoux?[150]

The enumeration of enemies threatening Carthage is reinforced by the words 'd'un côté' and 'De l'autre' suggesting that Dido's realm is surrounded by fierce adversaries and a desert, leaving the Queen and her subjects no potential escape route. However, none of those enemies actually appear on stage. It is Dido's inability to integrate the Trojans in her kingdom that turns Æneas from an internal support into an external threat, just as in the previous tragedies. Æneas brings about the disintegration of the kingdom with the rise of popular dissention regarding Dido's choice of partner (IV, 1, 1071-72). It is interesting to note, however, that Scudéry introduced only one clear allusion to Æeneas as a potential support for Carthage against external threats, unlike Jodelle or Hardy. In the first act, Æneas is described by Dido as a Prince:

> [...] qui vient de m'ôter de la peine où j'étois,
> Vu qu'il est trop civil pour mépriser mes larmes,
> Lorsque j'implorerai le secours de ses armes
> Contre un frère cruel [...].[151]

[150] Scudéry, *Didon*, I, 1, 51-64.
[151] Ibid, I, 4, 188-91.

The introduction, in this scene, of the notion of external threat, embodied by Pygmalion, is a mere echo of the allusion to Dido's brother in the first scene of the play. The rest of Dido's accusations in the tragedy are centred on the individual relationship of the characters, the ungratefulness Æneas shows in abandoning her and the breaking of his promise to her. The transformation of Æneas into an external threat happens in the last two acts and is reflected in the vocabulary: most of the references to Æneas as a foreigner appear in the final acts.[152]

In Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, there is no doubt that Iarbe is the most obvious manifestation of external threat to the city of Carthage, as the battle between the Carthaginians and the Getulians is about to take place at the beginning of the play (I, 1, 5-24). Like Jodelle and Hardy, Boisrobert has introduced the notion of the King's spurned love as his main motivation in attacking Dido:

> Amour qui m'a soumis au pouvoir de ses charmes,
> Et qui m'a obligé seul à prendre les armes,
> Prends ici ma défense, Amour inspire-moi
> Des raison pour la vaincre et la soumettre à toi,
> Comme tu m'as donné l'audace criminelle
> De déclarer la guerre à cette âme cruelle [...].[153]

The failed repeated attempts of Iarbe to seduce the Queen eventually lead his love to turn into fury (IV, 2, 1004 and sq), resulting in the sack of Carthage in the final act. The character of Iarbe is given a more essential role in Boisrobert's tragedy than in any other tragedy before, as he is present on stage in a total of nine scenes. If he appears roughly as frequently on stage as Pygmalion (eight scenes), it should be noted that the two most important male characters are less frequently on stage than their female counterparts — Dido (eleven scenes) and Anne (thirteen scenes) — and even than Forbante (ten scenes). However, Forbante is the brother of Iarbe and his role is mainly to offer a sounding board for the King's feelings, as well as to act or speak on

[152] See, IV, 1, 1075; 2, 1169; 7, 1355; V, 4, 1586 and 1594.
[153] Ibid, II, 1, 353-58.

his behalf.[154] This makes Iarbe's presence felt on stage even without his actually being there. The same is not true of Astart, Pygmalion's *lieutenant général*, who is present in eight scenes, but these are the scenes in which Pygmalion features.

We must now turn our attention to the character of Pygmalion. Dido's brother is given, by Boisrobert, the same role, structurally speaking, as Æneas in the other Dido tragedies. His initial show of intent gives him, like Æneas, the role of internal support to Carthage against external threats. The 'grand secours de Tyr' (I, 1, 24) is, however, questioned from the start by the Queen who describes Pygmalion as

> [...] ce frère barbare,
> Qui feint d'avoir pour nous une amitié si rare.[155]

Indeed, this initial support turns into an external threat when Pygmalion, who is after all a foreigner on the shores of Libya and in his sister's realm, offers his help to Iarbe in the first act:

> [...] je vous offre mon aide;
> [...]
> Faites-moi voir en quoi je puis vous être utile;
> Il n'est rien de si grand, rien de si difficile,
> Qu'aujourd'hui je ne tente, afin de faire voir,
> Que sur Pygmalion vous avez tout pouvoir.[156]

Pygmalion finally joins forces with Iarbe and even takes part in the sack of Carthage:

> [...], il pille vos trésors,
> Nos cris sont superflus, et cet inexorable,
> Qui sent qu'il a le vent et la mer favorable,
> Enlèvera dans peu le tout à son plaisir,
> Si quelque prompt effort n'arrête son désir.[157]

This is where the roles of Pygmalion and Æneas differ: if the role of Æneas can be interpreted as that of an external threat disguised as an internal support, at least Æneas does not loot Carthage.

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[154] This is the case in III, 5 and 6, where Forbant is on stage, while Iarbe is not.
[155] Ibid, I, 1, 69-70.
[156] Ibid, I, 4, 329 and 333-36.
[157] Ibid, V, 2, 1296-1300.

In Montfleury's *Ambigu Comique*, Iarbe is also present but does not represent a particulary strong external threat. Present in five scenes,[158] Iarbe is the embodiement of external forces. These are first described in general terms, as 'Princes Affriquains', then the menace becomes more specific in the words of Æneas:

> Carthage sous vos loix, secondant vostre espoir,
> A rendu mille Rois jalous de son pouvoir,
> Madame. Quand je vois contre mes feux timides,
> Les Getules armez pour se joindre aux Numides,
> Le fier Pigmalion préparer contre vous
> Un fer qui fume encor du sang de vostre Epous,
> Iarbe dans ces lieux réduit par cette offence
> A regler sur ce choix celuy de sa vangeance;
> [...]
> Ces rois, vous le sçavez, ne cherchent qu'à vous plaire;
> L'espoir de vostre main retient seul leur colere.
> Si mon bonheur m'éleve au rang de vostre Epous,
> Que n'attenteront point leurs mouvemens jalous?
> Vostre Estat est un bien que leur orgüeil regarde...[159]

A general external threat is mentioned again in act II and act III.[160] Pygmalion is mentioned as well, in the final act (III, 4, 17-8). All these references are short and none of these characters can be said to represent a particularly threatening external force, even more so since none of them appear on stage. Iarbe plays an obviously more crucial role in the tragedy. Although he does not pose a direct threat to Carthage, Iarbe facilitates the departure of the Trojans and, in that sense, can be considered to precipitate the fall of Carthage with the fall of its Queen.[161] However, it should be noted that, unlike the four previous authors, Montfleury does not make Iarbe a violent or negative character in any way. The Prince is, in fact, offering to take his leave from Carthage after his love is spurned by Dido (I, 5, 1-27), and the Queen is described as the mistress of Iarbe's fate at the end of the first act (I, 6, 7-10). The

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[158] Montfleury, *Ambigu comique*, I, 5 and 6; III, 3, 6 and 7.
[159] Ibid, I, 3, 21-35.
[160] Ibid, II, 2, 14-15 and III, 3, 5.
[161] Iarbe agrees to help Æneas in III, 3.

role of Æneas is once again that of an internal support turning into an external threat. The notion of internal support is introduced by Dido in the first act:

> Ænée est un Héros fameux par mille exploits,
> Qu'à seconder son bras, vostre valeur s'apreste;
> Sa main, en ma faveur, à s'armer toute preste,
> Deviendra de mon Trône un si puissant appuy...[162]

It should be noted that the identity of the Trojans as an internal support is immediately deconstructed by Iarbe, as he announces their departure to Dido in the lines following the previous quotation: it is the foreign or external identity of the Trojans that is then highlighted. The unsuitability of Æneas as a partner for Dido is further emphasised by the rise of popular discontent evoked by the Queen in the second act:

> Mes Sujets irritez de me voir engager
> A soûmettre Carthage aux loix d'un Etranger,
> Ont joint insolemment le murmure à la plainte.
> Ce scrupule à mes feux n'a point donné d'atteinte;
> *J'ay forcé*, vous rendant plus cher, & moins *suspect*,
> Leur murmure au silence, & leur zele au *respect* [...].[163]

The popular rejection of the Prince undoubtedly stems from what the text stresses through the use of the rhymes: *suspect* and *respect*. The contrast lies in the natural suspicions of the Carthaginians towards the Trojans, suspicions which are forcibly turned into respect by Dido. The use of *J'ay forcé* at the beginning of the line highlights how unnatutal this respect is for the Carthaginians and, to a certain extent, the dictator-like attitude of the Queen. The initial association of the Queen with the Prince is meant to weaken popular objection ('vous rendant plus cher') and fears. The Queen's efforts are, however, vain, since the Trojans leave, dealing Dido 'un si rude coup' (III, 5, 74). This blow, dealt by now external forces, is equivalent to a death

[162] Ibid, I, 5, 63-66.
[163] Ibid, II, 2, 16-21. My italics.

sentence for both the Queen and the kingdom she embodies, preceding her death and the premonition of the Punic wars which will seal the unfortunate fate of Carthage.[164]

In conclusion, I argue that the introduction in tragedy of a threat to the realm is not a theme exclusive to those tragedies where rulers are female, but that the systematic use of this notion to sustain the dramatic tension in those plays is significant. Whether the threat is male or female, the female sovereign is systematically in danger and so is her realm. This is altogether logical considering the historical and social circumstances in which tragedies were produced at the time, as can be understood from the earlier social and historical contextualisation.

The first three chapters of this thesis have aimed to provide the reader with an appropriate contextualisation of the forthcoming analysis: the examination of the authors, of their time and of contemporary institutions and discourse regarding women, since women play such a central role in the plays, is crucial to shed light on the choices made by Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry, Boisrobert and Montfleury. Their choices are also best understood if they are put in parallel with the works of fellow contemporary playwrights who chose to represent queens in power in their plays as well. The similarities, as much as the differences, highlight individual choices and provide clues to understand them, while they help us to forge a more precise picture of the influence of the institutions and practices surrounding women on the theatrical production, which constitute part of the institutionalised discourse on women. The next two chapters will be dedicated to a detailed analysis of the five plays on several levels. Chapter four is dedicated to gender and the expression of power. In this

[164] The Punic Wars are foreseen by Dido in III, 6, 38-41.

chapter, the linguistic and structural analysis of the plays will allow a reassessment of genders within the plays and will be followed by an assessment of the role of subverted genders in relation to power. This will lead also to a close examination of the issue of marriage within the plays. The following chapter will narrow down the analysis to the linguistic and symbolic representations of power within the play.

CHAPTER 4

A LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO THE NOTIONS OF POWER AND GENDER IN DIDO TRAGEDIES

The power of words is particularly worthy of consideration in the study not only of literary texts, but also of political texts. In literature, power is given to a character's words to illustrate their domination over specific characters or objects. In many ways, this can be regarded as a metonymy of the potential power of literary texts over the readership and audience; it implies a conscious decision on the part of the author to engage with the recipient. Similarly, the power bestowed on specific objects comes from the reproduction of codes understood by the readership or audience contemporary to the composition of a text.

Power can be defined as the ability to convince, to achieve a goal, a force or authority, but it is also political power. In the five tragedies studied here, the power dynamic in Carthage — that is political power — is disrupted both by the holder of royal power, Dido, and by the presence of pretenders to her throne. This disruption is complicated by the issue of the legitimacy both of the present sovereign of Carthage and of those pretenders: Æneas and Iarbe, as well as Pygmalion in Boisrobert's tragedy.[1] The question of legitimacy is not a purely legal issue, as it refers to the interpretation of Salic Law in the case of French queens regent. In the plays, the assessment of the legitimacy of one's claim to the throne is also based on one's abilities, that is to say the capacity to resist passions and choose duty over emotions. This individual ability to exercise power

[1] It should be noted that Æneas does not actually make any claim to Dido's throne, but is nonetheless in a position to obtain it from Dido herself as will be explained in the next chapter.

is the necessary corollary to legitimacy and royal power, which then takes a different meaning. My analysis of this power dynamic endeavours to establish the legitimacy of each character's claim to the throne; it also attempts to describe the ways chosen by the playwrights to express the notion of power and its opposite: powerlessness.

Power is not only defined in the five tragedies as the ability to govern or rule the city of Carthage, it is also defined as the ability of the characters to govern their passions. These two areas of the definition of power find their expression both in the language attributed to each character by the playwrights, and also in the possession and exchange by the same characters of symbolic objects, which can be designated as attributes of power.

The study of the power dynamic in the story of Dido as told by Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury, that is to say as based on Virgil's version of the Dido myth, may seem straightforward: Dido is the sovereign of Carthage, Iarbe rules over the neighbouring country and Æneas is a king in a transitional phase: he has lost his kingdom, since the destruction of Troy, and is on his way to found another on the order of the gods. The primary power struggle lies between Dido and Iarbe. The role conferred to Æneas is to provide Dido with the military support, or at least the military experience, to defeat Iarbe. However, the greatest threat to Dido's power in these four plays does not appear to be Iarbe: his role is very limited within the tragedies, when he is not simply absent from the stage altogether.[2] The real threats appear, in fact, to be Æneas and ultimately Dido.[3] Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon* deals with a different and evolving power struggle, involving first Dido against Iarbe, then Dido and Pygmalion against Iarbe and

[2] Iarbe is referred to, but he is not part of the cast in Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant* and Scudéry's *Didon*; he only appears in the first scene of the second act in Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant* and in five scenes of Montfleury's *Ambigu comique* (I, 5 and 6 — where he is alone —, III, 4, 6 and 7).

[3] The fact that Æneas is a sovereign without a realm in comparison with Iarbe and Dido, who have their own realms, could be significant in terms of the power dynamic: the presence of Æneas in those plays can then be seen as a threat to both Dido and Iarbe for the control of their kingdoms.

finally Dido against Iarbe and Pygmalion.[4] Yet, once again, the greatest threat to Dido's power seems to be Dido.

Power struggles over Carthage take on more meaning because of the nature of the power that is being fought over: royal power. In Early Modern France, this means that the empowered person or character has been chosen by God. This makes the recipient of royal authority an earthly representative of God, hence to defy royal authority is to defy God. This is an important point regarding the question of the justification for the usurpation of the throne by Pygmalion and Iarbe in Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*; this is also important with regard to Dido's use, or misuse, of power in the other four plays.

The issue of the sovereign's legitimacy is complicated by the fact that the five plays are primarily dealing with a female ruler, the implications of which have been discussed in chapter two. The idea that the question of the female ruler should be taken into account as a relevant factor when analysing the power dynamic is sustained, for example, by the numerous studies showing how an actual female ruler, Elizabeth I, constantly strove to reassert her legitimacy through art.[5] The reign of the English Queen, which is partly contemporary to the plays examined in this thesis, saw the development of a cult of her person or persona, focused on the idea of the Virgin Mary.[6] This idea was

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[4] Pygmalion is himself the ruler of his own city, Tyr. Dido has been struggling with Iarbe on her own for some time when Pygmalion's arrival is announced in act I, scene 1. Pygmalion then tries to negotiate a peace between Dido and Iarbe, until act II, scene 3, when he agrees to help Iarbe kidnap Dido. Pygmalion finally loots Carthage in act V, scene 2.

[5] See Philippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London: Routledge, 1989); Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (NY: Saint Martin's Press, 1995); Roy Strong, *Gloriana, the Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987); Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

[6] See for instance John N. King, 'Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen', in *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43, 1 (1990), 30-74; Louis A. Montrose, 'Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I', in *Representations*, 68 (1999), 108-161, and Patricia Parker and David Quint, eds, *Literary Theory / Renaissance Texts* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986).

reproduced both in literature and in pictorial art.[7] The constant representation of Elizabeth I as the Virgin Queen could not fail to make associations with the Virgin Mary, hence with God, very obvious, thus re-enforcing the divine aspect of royal authority and of the Queen. Elkin Wilson concludes that:

> ... from 1558 to 1603 the virgin queen of England was the object of a love not dissimilar in quality to that which for centuries had warmed English hearts that looked to the virgin Queen of Heaven for all grace.[8]

This is why the representation of a monarch on stage is significant and worth analysing as the product or reproduction of contemporary *topoi* and symbols associated with royalty and more specifically, in our five tragedies, with female authority and its legitimacy. An analysis of power, and especially royal power, thus needs to consider the religious aspects inherent to this issue. However, it should be noted that if there is a similar association of French queens regent with Marian symbolism, it is nonetheless an association with different aspects of it, the French queens concentrating on the maternal figure of Mary, rather than on her virginal identity. A survey of the objects used as symbols of royal power is all the more pertinent as those items were symbolic on several levels: on the one hand, at the performance of the plays, they would refer to royal power and help establish the royal status of specific characters. On the other hand, as actual symbols of royal authority, they would also perpetuate the representation and belief in monarchy by divine right. This stems from the fact that all these items were originally symbols related to divinity.[9]

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[7] See the analysis of Elizabeth I's Siena or 'sieve' portait attributed to Cornelius Ketel: Diane Purkiss, 'Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and the Representation of Elizabeth I', in Burden, *A Woman Scorn'd. Responses to the Dido Myth*, pp. 151-167.

[8] Elkin Wilson, *England's Eliza* (London: Cass, 1939), p. 217, quoted in King, 'Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen', p. 31.

[9] Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, pp. 262-66, p. 834 and pp. 998-1000; Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, pp. 121, 403 and 465.

THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

The story of Dido and Æneas, on several levels, is the story of the power of the Word, because power appears to be linked to the ability to turn one's wishes – expressed in words – into actions. In her analysis of theatre dialogue, Anne Ubersfeld explains that

> … le théâtre est d'abord action, même et surtout par la parole, le *locutoire* comporte tout ce que le spectateur reçoit, non pas émotionnellement, mais, si l'on peut dire, intellectuellement, tout ce qu'il «apprend» par le moyen du dialogue. Les connaissances que le spectateur reçoit, l'ensemble des informations qui lui sont fournies par l'échange parlé, comprennent des éléments extrêmement divers.[10]

These various elements include the information that can be extracted from the semantic meaning of the dialogue, as well as information which can be inferred such as actions, moods, the presence of objects on the stage and so on.

In this context, the use of *récit* allows the authors to give information about what cannot be seen on stage. Dominique Bertrand explains that

> [d]ans le récit, la puissance de la parole, devant suppléer la représentation des faits, impose une rhétorique très forte […]. La charge pathétique confiée au récit le constitue un point d'orgue de l'écriture dramatique: loin d'être accessoire, il s'impose comme l'un des ornements les plus attendus du spectacle tragique.[11]

The pathos evoked by Bertrand is formulated in the *récit* with the use of classical rhetoric,[12] which can be divided into five parts: '(1) *inventio*, or the discovery of arguments; (2) *dispositio*, or the arrangement of these arguments; (3) *elocutio*, or style; (4) *memoria*, or memory; (5) *pronuntiatio*, or delivery'.[13] The last two parts are concerned with the oral delivery of the *récit*, *memoria* regarding the actor's act of remembering his or her lines and *pronuntiatio* regarding the actor's act of pronouncing the text on stage. This leaves the first three parts in the domain of the author and I will

[10] Anne Ubersfeld, *Lire le théâtre III. Le dialogue de théâtre* (Paris: Belin, 1996), p. 103.
[11] Dominique Bertrand, *Lire le théâtre classique* (Paris: Dunod, 1999), p. 132.
[12] For details on rhetoric knowledge and teaching in Early Modern France, see Bertrand, *Lire le théâtre*, pp. 132-33.
[13] Richard Griffiths, *The Dramatic Technique of Antoine de Montchrestien: Rhetoric and Style in French Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), p. 32.

now therefore focus on the rhetoric of key characters, starting with that of Æneas in his *récit* of the fall of Troy.

Male rhetoric: Æneas

In four of the five plays examined in this thesis, Æneas, as the main male protagonist, has the most developed rhetoric of all male characters. This section will be dedicated to the use of *récit* in the plays, as well as to the issue of marriage to determine the characteristics of male rhetoric and its efficacy. There are essentially two parts to Æneas's rhetoric: the first is the *récit* that will have a definite effect on the rest of the characters and narration. The second part is the justification for his departure when faced with Dido. I will start by examining the *récit* of the fall of Troy and its success as rhetoric.

Énée racontant à Didon les malheurs de la ville de Troie, Pierre Narcisse Guérin (1819)

Guérin's painting above depicts a central scene of the story: the *récit* by Æneas of the fall of Troy and his continuing misfortune. This has a profound effect on the

listeners, provoking pity for and empathy with the sons of Troy. In Virgil's *Æneid*, the effect on Dido is devastating: by the time Æneas has finished his story,

> ... the queen had long since been suffering from love's deadly wound, feeling it with her blood and being consumed by its hidden fire. Again and again there rushed into her mind thoughts of the great valour of the man and the high glories of his line. His features and the words he had spoken had pierced her heart and love gave her body no peace or rest.[14]

In the tragedies, the pitiful story of Æneas is used at different points and for various purposes.[15] In the *Didon se sacrifiant* of Jodelle and Hardy, the story of the fall of Troy is not recounted in the presence of Dido. It serves to highlight the plight of Æneas who has to leave Dido and fears her reaction. In both cases, there is a strong contrast established between the stoic courage shown by the hero in war and strife, and the fear and anguish caused by Dido's potential reaction to his departure.[16] The *inventio* in Æneas's *récit* is simple: all the terrible, frightening events leading to Troy's destruction and its aftermath were less frightening than the prospect of facing Dido's disappointment and wrath.

Jodelle's *elocutio* and *dispositio* highlight how frightening the events were: firstly, he uses amplification with enumerations to recall the murders and massacres following the fall of Troy. The enumerations, beyond the sheer number of deaths they refer to, are vivid because they are more personal - the names of many of the participants are mentioned – and the exact way in which they either killed or died is described. The enumerations are interspersed, first, with repetitions which work in pairs and, then, with rhetorical questions.[17] The repetitions and questions systematically emphasise the

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[14] Virgil, *Æneid*, ed. David West (London: Penguin Books, 1991), IV, 1, 1-6.

[15] The following analysis does not, of course, apply to Boisrobert's play, since it is not based on Virgil's text.

[16] Jodelle creates this contrast in I, 181-270. Hardy follows the same pattern with the story being told in II, 2, 365-93.

[17] The rhetorical questions are in I, 239-41, 259-261, 267 and 270.

unwavering courage of Æneas in the face of the terrible events.[18] The scenes of carnage contrast with the stoic calm of Æneas. However the repetition, at the end of the *récit*, of the verbs 'effroyer' and 'troubler' - which were employed in the negative form to highlight the Trojan's valour and are now used in the positive form lines 272 and 278 - suggest that Dido is to be feared more than Achilles, Ajax, Ulysses, the Harpy (as seen below) and the Cyclops put together.

Énée et ses compagnons combattant les Harpies, François Perrier (1646-47)

Hardy was substantially shorter on this subject than his predecessor: whereas Jodelle had dedicated eighty-nine lines to the *récit*, Hardy condensed it in twenty-eight lines. It is easy to see why: Jodelle could afford the long *récit* since his protagonists expressed themselves in long soliloquies or tirades throughout the play. This was not the case for Hardy, who had different imperatives. A number of similarities are to be found, down to the use of identical expressions,[19] but Hardy's *récit* is altogether less frightening and the contrast between the unwavering courage of Æneas in the face of the sack of Troy and his fear at confronting Dido suffers greatly from this.

[18] See appendix 2.
[19] See appendix 2.

9. *Æneas carrying Anchises*, Carle Van Loo (1729)

Although it is implied that Dido is aware of both the glorious and unfortunate past of Æneas,[20] neither Jodelle nor Hardy made this tale instrumental to the creation of the love of Dido for Æneas. One reason for this is that both plays start *in medias res*, at a moment in time when Dido and Æneas already know and love each other. What then is the point of referring to the fall of Troy? It serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it allows the authors to give their hero some heroic qualities. As I have mentioned earlier, the story of Dido and Æneas is not particularly adapted to the tragic genre, because of its lack of action and because the hero does not really have the opportunity to be heroic in the play. Secondly, it contributes to creating, in the audience and readership, the feelings of pity and horror deemed necessary to reach catharsis, or at least could have created a feeling of complicity between the author and the part of the audience or readership who knew the *Æneid*.

Scudéry followed Virgil's narrative more closely in his *Didon*: at the beginning of the play, Dido and Æneas have met, but are not yet in love. The story of the fall of Troy is introduced at the end of act I, on an evening, at Dido's request.[21] Scudéry dedicates one hundred and sixty-two lines to the *récit*, and focuses both on the ruse of

[20] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1215-22 and Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 2, 953-58.
[21] Scudéry, *Didon*, I, 5, 232: 'ce soir'. The fall of Troy is described in I, 5, 257-419. In the *Æneid*, Dido also asked Æneas to tell his story at a banquet; see *Æneid*, I, 748-56.

the Greeks (the Trojan horse) and the ensuing massacres.[22] The *inventio* in Æneas's *récit* is quite different: this is merely the sad tale of the Trojans falling for Ulysses's ruse and Troy's subsequent destruction. The *elocutio* and *dispositio* used by Scudéry are possibly not as striking as those used by Jodelle, as Scudéry is not attempting to create the same contrast as Jodelle or Hardy and because *Didon* is a gallant tragedy, the creation of horrific scenes in the mind of the audience is not necessarily the desired effect. What is, however, interesting, in terms of *dispositio*, is that the *récit* is divided into two parts but that these parts are not equal: the first part, devoted to the Greek ruse is far longer. Considering that the *récit* of the sack of Troy is very much a set piece for any playwright dealing with Dido and Æneas, I would argue that Scudéry was attempting to delay the inevitable, possibly in an attempt to avoid repetitions and clichés and create suspense, but also because scenes of carnage would hardly have suited his precious audience. Moreover, in terms of *elocutio*, in the description of the actual fall of Troy, Scudéry focuses on Æneas and his heroic deeds.[23] Most of the other participants remain nameless.[24] The effect of Æneas's long speech on Dido is almost immediate: the next scene in which both characters feature sees the Queen reveal her love for Æneas.[25] Moreover, the reasons given for her love for him are that he is a 'grand Guerrier' with 'rares vertus' (II, 2, 527), qualities that Æneas has not been able to show on stage and which are, therefore, attributed to him on the basis of the story he told at the end of act I. Æneas thus appears to be not only an excellent story-teller, but a master at performative language, since his words have turned into actions in the mind of the Queen. This long tirade by Æneas does, however, raise two questions. The first regards its usefulness:

[22] I, 5, 257-356 is dedicated to the ruse of Ulysses and the indecision of the Trojans. I, 5, 357-414 consists of the description of the actual fall of Troy.
[23] Æneas saves his son and his father, I, 5, 385-90.
[24] Very few other characters are referred to by name: Priam is mentioned in I, 5, 306 and 413, Achilles is mentioned in I, 5, 279 and 343; Diomede is mentioned once in I, 5, 343, Ulysses is mentioned in I, 5, 300, 309 and 328. Each mention is short and, save for Ulysses, they seem to be attributed secondary roles in the events which unfolded.
[25] Scudéry, *Didon*, II, 2, 527-28.

considering little is said of the final battle of Carthage, Æneas is given little opportunity to appear heroic. The only heroic deed is the saving of Anchises and Ascanio, a scene made famous by painters and sculptors alike (see above and below). Yet, there is no reference to any feat of arms that could explain why Dido then calls Æneas a 'grand Guerrier'.

Secondly, the length of the tirade is unusual in Scudéry's tragedy. If Jodelle could include such a long *récit*, because it fitted in with the style of his play, the same cannot be said of it in Scudéry's tragedy. I would argue, therefore, that Virgil's text has become a hindrance in this case: there is an obvious desire, on the part of Scudéry, to remain faithful to the *Æneid*, but he did so to the detriment of the dramatic quality of his play.

Æneas carrying Anchises, Gian Bernini (1618-19)

In *L'Ambigu comique*, Montfleury returns to the model established by Jodelle and Hardy of beginning *in medias res*. Because of the form chosen by Montfleury, the *tragédie à l'espagnol*, there is, in fact, little choice for the author but to follow this model: his tragedy is considerably shorter than the others, as I have explained in the introduction, and he must concentrate the action into three acts. This is why he makes

scarce reference to the fall of Troy. In fact, the only clear reference is in line eleven of act I, scene 1. The rest of the scene concentrates more on the opportunities that lie ahead for the Trojans, opportunities that are threatened by their prolonged stay in Carthage. As in the two *Didon se sacrifiant*, there is an assumption that both the characters and the audience are aware of the fall of Troy and continuing misfortune of the Trojans.[26] Thus, in *L'Ambigu comique*, the power of language does not lie with Æneas. Does this mean that language is a less powerful tool in Montfleury's play? In fact, it is less a question of whether language is powerful, than a question of who is capable of using such powerful language, which I will examine later.

I would now like to analyse the second part of Æneas's rhetoric, which consists of the justification for his departure. The interest of this analysis lies not so much in the similarities that arise from a comparison between the four plays, but rather from the discrepancies. The similarities are easily explained by the fact that all four authors have the same source texts and are also aware of their predecessors' work. The main argument in Æneas's speech is that his departure is prescribed by the gods.[27] He has been reminded of his mission by a number of portents: the visit of Mercury,[28] the visit of the ghost of Anchises,[29] his father, and the head of his son, Ascanio, appears to be on fire.[30]

One the most significant differences in his speech is the question of marriage. It is a contentious issue because of the nature of the bond that links Dido and Æneas: if

[26] The assumption is generated by the use of vocabulary in relation to Æneas, as I will explain in the next chapter.

[27] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 741-51; Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1, 757 and 761-64; Scudéry, *Didon*, IV, 2, 1123-24; Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*, II, 2, 44-51.

[28] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 831-40; Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1, 815-18; Scudéry, *Didon*, IV, 2, 1133-36.

[29] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 827-29; Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1, 823-28; Scudéry, *Didon*, IV, 2, 1125-28; Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*, III, 2, 11-27: Anchises comes on behalf of the Gods, allowing Montfleury to concentrate two portents into one.

[30] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 788-89. Hardy adapted this claim and turned it into the moral duty Æneas had towards his son to provide him with a new kingdom (III, 1, 829-31). Scudéry followed suit (IV, 2, 1129-31), as did Montfleury, although he extended the moral duty of Æneas to what he owed to the Trojans in general (II, 2, 44-51).

they were married, then the Trojan Prince would hardly appear heroic in abandoning his wife. The four authors deal with the question differently. Jodelle remained faithful to Virgil's text, in which Æneas denies making any promise of marriage.[31] Hardy, however, was more ambiguous: seeming not to deny that there was a marriage, or at least a marriage proposal. The argument of his Æneas is that he never considered that the ties of marriage bound him to Carthage. Table 3 in appendix 2 shows clearly that Scudéry avoided the problem altogether: the passage from the *Æneid* has been truncated, and where one might expect to find Æneas's denial, Scudéry has already moved on to the following passage, a gallant adaptation of Virgil's text.[32] Montfleury, who does not have the gallant preoccupations of his predecessor, is less embarrassed by the issue: the author freely adapted Virgil's text and set the scene of his tragedy on the wedding day of the protagonists. His Æneas is most definitely guilty of abandoning the bride at the altar. However, this option did spare him the trouble of deciding whether the characters were actually married or not before Æneas left.

The other discrepancies between the tragedies can be explained by the authors' problem with Æneas' heroism, or lack thereof. Virgil could get away, in book IV, with Æneas seeming heartless, because he had constructed the heroic status of his character in the previous three books. Of course, the four playwrights did not have this luxury. They could rely on part of their readership and audience to know the *Æneid*, but could not rely on it entirely. They, therefore, had to give characteristics to Æneas that were not clearly apparent in this episode of the *Æneid*. Jodelle thus attempted to make his hero seem more human and included a superficial admission of guilt in Æneas' speech (II, 815-24). Hardy followed suit (IV, 2, 1268-69), but went further, as his Æneas promises to come

[31] See appendix 2 for the following analysis.
[32] In the *Æneid*, as in the two *Didon se sacrifiant*, the hero explains that, left to his own devices, he would have rebuilt Carthage on its ruins, rather than in Italy, where the Gods are sending him, but that in any case, he never had any desire to settle in Carthage. In Scudéry's *Didon*, Æneas gallantly explains that, left to his own devices, he would have never set foot in Carthage, so that he would never have hurt Dido.

back once his mission has been accomplished (IV, 2, 1263-69). Later, gallantry influenced Scudéry into including the required official taking of leave from a monarch and, to make his hero seem more human, he added the notion that Æneas is leaving in an attempt to protect Dido who, as responsible for his prolonged stay in Carthage, could incur divine wrath (IV, 2, 1114 and 1139-42). Montfleury followed suit and used the same argument as Scudéry, but developed it in sixteen lines (II, 2, 100-116). This is noteworthy because, as I have explained previously, Montfleury needed to concentrate five acts into three. The fact that he extended Scudéry's idea is therefore significant and the idea takes a more prominent role in Æneas' short justification. But Montfleury's truly original contribution lies in the result of his hero's rhetoric: following Virgil, his predecessors all agreed that his rhetoric was insufficient to convince Dido, but that Æneas was equally unconvinced by her rhetoric. Here, not only does the hero's rhetoric fail to convince Dido, it even fails to convince the hero himself: he changes his mind and decides to stay and marry Dido after all (II, 2, 138-61). It is in this tragedy that Æneas appears more disadvantageously: there is no more doubt in the mind of Montfleury's audience that his hero is, at the very least, easily influenced. In all cases, I would argue that Æneas' rhetoric is based on rational arguments, such as the mission given by the gods or what is owed to his son and his people. There are a limited number of references to his emotions and this is the main difference between his rhetoric and that of Dido, which I will now examine.[33]

The rhetoric of Dido

Dido's rhetoric is based on emotions and uses classical techniques such as invocation, supplication, lamentation and imprecation. The authors also add a gendered element to

[33] References to the hero's emotional status can be found in Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 699; Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1, 799-801; Scudéry, *Didon*, IV, 2, 1097-1110, 1144 and 1161; Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*, II, 2, 32-35, 74-75, 77-83, 110-11

her rhetoric: tears. I will first concentrate on Dido's rhetoric in the plays of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury, where it aims to convince Æneas to stay, before turning to the rhetoric used in Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, where it aims, firstly, to convince Iarbe to abandon his claim on Carthage and Dido and, secondly, at convincing Pygmalion to help save Carthage.

Dido's speech can roughly be divided into two parts: the first is a mixture of invocations, supplications and lamentations, whereas the second part, focused on the Queen's *furor*, is filled with imprecations, the last resort of an inefficient rhetoric.[34] Both parts have an intensely emotional content, which is expressed both by words and actions, namely crying.

Nevertheless, some of Dido's rhetoric is not based on emotions: reminding Æneas of their marriage and his oath is not meant to tug at his emotional strings, but rather at his sense of honour. This, Dido does in all four plays, as can be seen in the appendix, but she does so also in Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon* with Pygmalion: on two separate occasions she counts on her brother's sense of honour to convince him to help her. In both cases, however, this fails. Let us consider the reasons for this failure. In the case of Dido calling on Æneas' sense of honour, the failure can be explained by the fact that there has been, according to the Prince, no oath or, at the very least, in Hardy's play, the marriage was never binding him to stay. In the case of Dido and Pygmalion, the Prince acts dishonourably in accordance with his identity as a traitor, an identity that is revealed throughout the play by specific semantic fields, as I will show in the next chapter.

The invocations in Dido's speech refer to past and future events, as can be seen in appendix 3, table 1. The memory of his oath and of their marriage is meant to appeal

[34] *Furor* will be examined separately in the next section of this chapter.

to Æneas' sense of honour. However rational an argument it may seem, it must be remembered that there was in fact no such oath in the plays of Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry.[35] Montfleury's play presents a different situation altogether and only in this play can Dido's argument be deemed rational: Æneas had agreed, on stage, to marry her (II, 2, 147). Calling on the gods to witness his crime, as Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry do, also suggests that Dido is using a rational argument, since the possibility of disobeying the gods would be avoided at all costs by the pious Æneas. However, in appealing to the gods, Dido is deceiving herself, since they are the driving force behind Æneas' departure. This is something that is known to Dido; there seems, therefore, to be little rationality behind her argument. The invocation of Dido's tears and foreseeable death, on the other hand, are meant to appeal to the Prince's pity, there is no rational reaction expected from Æneas and, as I will explain later, tears are an essential part of Dido's rhetoric.

The second part of Dido's rhetoric is composed of supplications. Supplications in the plays of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury are centred on the memory of the pleasures provided by Dido for Æneas: by reminding him of what had seduced him, Dido hopes her charms will overwhelm the pious hero again. Here, the dichotomy between worldly delights and piety, which underscores the entire relationship of Dido and Æneas, is expressed clearly in the plays of Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry: what Dido has to offer Æneas are the pleasures of the flesh, but what he aspires to is piety. There is, therefore, no possible understanding or successful communication between the two characters as they operate on different planes. Jodelle also tries to inspire pity by reference to the weakness of Dido's family and Carthage in the event of the Trojans'

[35] Yet, it must be kept in mind that Hardy was rather ambiguous on the subject of the marriage.

departure. This is skilfully articulated in order to involve Æneas in the future of Dido's city:

> Je te pry prens pitié d'une pauvre famille,
> Que tu perdras au lieu d'achever une ville,
> Comme nous esperions, et d'assembler en un
> Deux peuples asservis dessous un joug commun.[36]

Æneas is reminded, with the use of *nous*, of his intention to bring together the Trojans and the Carthaginians, or at least Dido attempts to make him see this idea as his own. The union of their two people is an obvious metaphor for the union of the two protagonists. Here the political and the private spheres collide in an attempt to rationalise Dido's argument.[37] Hardy chose to appeal to Æneas' sense of duty to his own people by making Dido and Anne argue that leaving Carthage in the current weather would be extremely hazardous. This claim is, however, not convincing as it is systematically opposed to the wishes of the gods and because Æneas has already explained that climate is not a consideration in a heroic quest.[38] Finally, Montfleury suggests that Æneas and Dido should share her kingdom.[39] It is inherently impossible and inappropriate for Dido to offer this to Æneas because of the nature of royal power: as explained in chapters two and three, royal power as understood by seventeenth-century audiences and readers is identified with monarchy by divine right. This means that the monarch is the representative of God on earth and that power has been bestowed on the monarch by God. It is, therefore, not a monarch's privilege to give away this divine gift. Thus Dido's proposition is null and void, because she is offering something that is not hers to give and her claim then remains irrational.

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[36] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 593-96
[37] There is also a very short reference to saving Carthage in Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1, 797-98.
[38] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, IV, 2, 1175-76. There is also a very short allusion to this in Montfleury, *Ambigu comique*, II, 2, 68.
[39] See table 1, appendix 3.

It could be argued that the debasement of Dido that occurs through the use of supplication is strengthened by such actions as her kneeling in front of her lover. For example, in Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant*, Dido begs Æneas to stay:

> Tu me vois à tes piez, tienne plus que jamais,
> T'adorer comme un Dieu; je jure desormais
> D'esclave te servir, je me repute heureuse.[40]

The supplications take a physical form, as Dido is put in a literally inferior position to Æneas and she claims the title of slave. Interestingly, enslavement is a notion used by Boisrobert as well, although it is not only used as claim, but also as a threat: Iarbe warns Dido he will make her his slave if she should refuse him.[41] However, Iarbe also willingly offers himself as a slave to Dido.[42]

Finally, Dido turns to lamentations. There are obviously no more attempts at rationality, since lamenting aims to arouse pity. Thus the evocation of everything that has been irremediably lost highlights the ineluctability of Dido's fate. If the evocation of Dido's losses may serve to arouse pity, it may also serve to shift part of the blame from her to Æneas, by arguing that it is his departure that brings about potentially terrible consequences. Jodelle deals with this issue cleverly by ensuring that the subject of most verbs in Dido's evocation of her losses is *je*:

> Je t'ay cogneu pour tel, que justement surprise
> J'ay mesprisé l'amour en tous autres éprise:
> L'amour trop mise en un, comme je l'ay dans toy,
> Est la haine de tous, et la haine de soy.
> J'ay pour t'avoir aimé la haine rencontree
> Des peuples et des Rois de toute la contree:[43]

In this quotation, no responsibility can be attributed to Æneas, as Dido is the subject of most verbs, therefore, she is the one making the decision to love him and scorn other

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[40] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1, 777-79.
[41] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, IV, 2, 1017. He also threatens to make her kneel in front of him in IV, 2, 1022.
[42] Ibid, IV2, 996. He also offers to kneel in front of her as a sign of submission in IV, 2, 1132-34.
[43] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 609-14.

Kings. Hardy followed a different pattern: Dido is the subject of only one verb and all other subjects represent the internal and external forces she has to contend with.[44] This suggests that although Æneas might not be to blame in Hardy's tragedy, Dido is partially exculpated as well. Scudéry chose to use Dido as the subject of the main verbs, while highlighting the reaction of both internal and external forces by making them subjects of other verbs. Montfleury, on the other hand, seems to attribute the entire responsibility of her own fate to Dido:

> Mes refus pour des Rois, de qui l'amour s'explique,
> Ont armé contremoy tous les Princes d'Affrique:
> Mes Sujets irritez de me voir engager
> A soûmettre Carthage aux loix d'un Etranger,
> Ont joint insolemment le murmure à la plainte.[45]

Dido is the subject of the verbs *armer* and *engager*: this lays the emphasis on her actions rather than those of her lover and shows that she has brought upon herself the subject of her lamentations. The evocation of the dangers lying ahead, namely Iarbe and Pygmalion, serves the same purpose: showing the audience and readership where the responsibilities lie.

The final remark to be made about Dido's lamentations concerns the mention of the absence of a child. The idea originally comes from Virgil (IV, 327-30) and is reproduced in the tragedies of Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry. It should nevertheless be noted that there is a major distinction between Jodelle and Hardy on one side and Scudéry on the other: the earlier authors follow their Virgilian model rather faithfully, whereas Scudéry introduces extra characters in his tragedy, including Technis and Zertine, Dido's daughters. This means that the absence of a child does not have the same significance and impact in all the plays. For Jodelle and Hardy, Dido is a childless woman, with all the implications this can have: she can be interpreted as incomplete,

[44] See table 1, appendix 3 for references.
[45] Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*, II, 2, 14-18.

imperfect, lacking in womanly qualities. It can also be interpreted as a sign that Dido and Æneas are not meant to be together. However, with Scudéry, the implications of the absence of a child are much more limited: having already given birth to two daughters, his Dido cannot be interpreted as incomplete or imperfect. Yet, she has given birth to a girl twice, but never to a son, therefore she has not given birth to a legitimate heir. Dido's inability to sustain her lineage on the throne is subsequently as undermined in Scudéry's play as it is in the others. It may also be interpreted as a sign of the incompatibility of the lovers, as they cannot procreate together. I think it is important to remember that the idea originates from Virgil and that his bias did inform a lot of his choices. When he is writing about the city of Carthage, from a Roman point of view, it does not make sense to diminish the greatness of one's enemy: this would be counter-productive as it would imply that Rome was weak too. However, more subtle attacks, like suggesting the infertility of their legendary founder, insinuating something inherently wrong with her, work better and are part of what could be considered as a form of proto-psychological warfare.

To conclude this section on Dido's rhetoric, it is important to turn to Dido's tears which are undeniably her most powerful weapon. As the physical expression of grief, crying is also very strongly charged emotionally and the act of crying is the most irrational part of Dido's rhetoric. As can be seen from table 2, appendix 3, Jodelle makes very few references to Dido's crying. He does, however, refer on numerous occasions to Dido's change of complexion and the state of her hair, another physical and irrational part of Dido's rhetoric.[46] Hardy, although less frequently than Jodelle, also emphasises the physical consequences of unhappiness, referring to changes in Dido's complexion

[46] Jodelle refers to Dido's complexion in II, 1073; IV, 1593; IV, 1672; IV, 1943. He refers to her hair in II, 1074; IV, 1669-70; IV, 1942 and V, 2258.

twice.[47] On the other hand, tears are evoked nine times, as can be seen in table 3, appendix 3. What is interesting here is that Dido's tears are mentioned more often by other characters, mostly Anne, than by Dido herself. This is explained by the fact that Anne is repeating Dido's words to Dido, then Æneas, when she is sent to convince him to stay. Æneas, who provoked the tears and for whom they are intended, is only directly confronted with them twice (III, 1, 667 and 752). The rest of the time, tears are only evoked, not enacted. This could be interpreted as one of the reasons for their failure to convince Æneas to stay: the mention of tears is undoubtedly less likely to arouse pity than their actual presence. This could also be seen as an attempt to save Dido's dignity: Anne, as her confidante, is used by the author to express the Queen's emotions without necessarily involving Dido's presence on stage, thus preserving the Queen's pride.

In Scudéry's *Didon*, seven of the eight references to Dido's tears are located in Dido's lines, as can be seen in table 4, appendix 3. It should be noted that the mentions of Dido's tears in act I are not in fact imputable to Æneas: those tears were shed long ago, for Sychaeus. Consequently, the number of references to tears shed for Æneas is limited to five, all emanating from Dido. Once again, Æneas is only confronted with Dido's tears twice.[48] This can, as mentioned above, explain the inefficiency of their power to convince. However, in Scudéry's play, it could also be interpreted as an attempt to limit as much as possible the image of a humiliated queen.

There is evidently no such attempt in *L'Ambigu comique*, for it is in this play that crying is most openly described as a tool to convince or rather manipulate. This is most apparent when Dido explains how she herself used her tears on Æneas:

> Mon bonheur, il est vray, m'a cousté bien des larmes;
> Mais quand à nostre amour tout nous force à ceder,
> Les pleurs ont des appas que l'on peur hazarder;
> Il est doux quelquesfois de voir par leur usage,

[47] Ibid, IV, 2, 1151 and V, 1, 1793-94.
[48] Scudéry, *Didon*, IV, 1155 and V, 2, 1453.

Jusqu'où va le pouvoir d'une ardeur qu'on partage;
Et malgré la fierté qui s'oppose à leur cours,
De devoir son bonheur à ce tendre secours.
Quelque ennuy qui les verse, on trouve mille charmes
Dans la douceur de voir à travers de nos larmes
Jusques au fonds d'un cœur sensible à nos douleurs,
Le trouble d'un Amant attendry par nos pleurs.

Barsine
Ces pleurs vous ont rendu la tendresse d'Ænée,
Malgré ce que son bras doit à sa destine [...].[49]

What is interesting in this quotation is that it reveals the dichotomy between what Dido and Æneas respectively represent: Barsine's lines clearly separate tears and love on one side and duty and the gods on the other. Montfleury gives more power to Dido's tears than any other author before him, as they do manage to convince Æneas to stay. However, this is a short-lived victory, since Æneas eventually leaves anyway. Compared to the few occurrences of the word in the plays by Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry, the number of references in *L'Ambigu comique* is disproportionate. It is obvious that Montfleury deliberately uses tears throughout his shorter text for a reason. Out of the twenty-seven mentions of *pleurs* and *larmes*, fifteen originate from Dido.[50] The combination of this fact with the open acknowledgement by Dido of the role tears play in the female rhetorical arsenal supports the notion that Dido's rhetoric is based on emotions, rather than rational arguments.

Unsurprisingly there are very few references to Dido's tears in Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*: arousing pity is never the intention of the Queen.[51] Both references are located in Dido's lines in the final act, as she reflects, alone, on her fate: she first offers her tears to Anne, then she recalls the tears she shed at her husband's death. Boisrobert does not attempt to utilise crying as a tool to convince other characters, although he does obviously try to arouse the audience's pity. If we consider that tears are the privilege of

[49] Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*, III, 4, 4-16.
[50] See table 5, appendix 3.
[51] See table 6, appendix 3.

female characters, a gender-specific part of their rhetoric, Boisrobert's decision not to use them in the construction of his character must be considered as significant. I would contend that Boisrobert's Dido is the most masculine version of this character created in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

POWER AND POWERLESSNESS

The control of passions: *furor*

In the four plays based on Virgil's *Æneid*, it is obvious that the ability to control one's passions is essential in asserting one's power. Passion, or *furor*, should be understood here in the classical sense: it is not necessarily linked to love, but designates an extreme emotion that one is under the influence of or endures. *Furor*, as expressed by the five authors, finds its source in Virgil's text and it should be noted that, although in the *Æneid*, Æneas is described as furious,[52] he does not succumb to the same passion as Dido. Dido's *furor* is representative of what was identified as a gender-specific passion according to Harris:

> In the imagination of Greek and Roman men, women – like barbarians and children – are especially susceptible to anger. It is emphatically not a stereotype that is confined to the famous misogynistic or misogamic writers such as Semonides of Amorgos, Juvenal, and so on. It is virtually pandemic, from Homer onwards. Just as women were liable to give in to other passions and appetites, so they easily surrendered to the angry emotions, and their anger was seldom, if ever, justified.[53]

If Virgil acknowledged Dido's *furor* as part of a wider inability to resist passions and appetites, it might be reasonable to expect our five playwrights to express the same idea in their plays. Jodelle and Hardy, in particular, remained so close to the *Æneid* that Virgil's ideas would have been quite easily transmitted through their tragedies. The later playwrights, on the other hand, had distanced themselves sufficiently to offer their audience and readership a more contemporary understanding of *furor*.

Æneas is the epitome of control since he resumes his quest for Rome, leaving behind the temptation embodied by Dido. By the time he has left Carthage, Dido has already succumbed to her passion, which expresses itself through inappropriate,

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[52] See Debra Hershkowitz, *The Madness of Epic: Reading Insanity from Homer to Statius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 68-124.

[53] W. V. Harris, 'The Rage of Women' in Susanna Braund and Glenn W. Most, eds, *Ancient Anger: Perspectives from Homer to Galen* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), p. 130.

debasing supplications, which I have examined in the previous section, and uncontrollable rage. In Boisrobert's play, there is a re-adjustment of the characters' roles, and *furor* as the expression of passion is still very much present. However, in this play, *furor* is not the prerogative of Dido only, but also of Iarbe. I will now examine the expression of *furor* in the five plays, starting with the four plays based on the *Æneid*. In each play, recurrent lexical fields will be examined and compared.

In Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant*, *furor* is described at different stages: there is love, madness and wrath. Passionate love is depicted as a fire throughout the play. This is hardly innovative, but is effective in conveying Dido's passion to both audience and readers. *Flame* and *feu* are used five times, *brasier* once, verbs such as *embraser*, *flamber* and *bouillir* are also used several times.[54] The majority of references are located in act II, which is not surprising: Dido only appears on stage for the first time in act II, so that the audience and readership are only confronted with her burning passion for Æneas then. Noticeably, only a minority of these references emanate from Dido and these are mostly located in the last two acts, whereas a number of mentions emanate from Æneas and his men describing his lover's passion for him.[55] The most striking example of this is in act I, where Achates describes the effect Æneas has had on Dido:

> [...] les yeux d'Enee
> De cent traits venimeux blesserent l'effrenee,
> Lors que son hoste Amour de ses flammes mordantes,
> Peu à peu devoroit ses entrailles ardentes,
> Braisillant dans son cœur, comme on voit hors la braise
> Les charbons s'allumans saillir dans la fournaise:
> Ou comme l'ardant corps dont se fait le tonnerre [...].[56]

This suggests that Æneas and his men have a greater awareness of the passion endured by Dido, than she does herself: this is logical since passion is something that cannot be helped and to which one can be blind. There is also a metaphor of love as a wound, as

[54] See appendix 3, table 7 for detailed references.
[55] See appendix 3, table 7 for detailed references.
[56] Ibid, I, 51-57.

can be seen in the previous quotation, although this metaphor is used less frequently than the first one.[57]

Dido's madness is mentioned in the first four acts and the occurrences are relatively evenly distributed throughout.[58] In act I, the occurrences originate from Æneas and Achates as they are contemplating Dido's potential reaction to their departure. They are proved right in act II, when Dido does express in her own words, and in theirs, the madness she will fall into if Æneas leaves.[59] The diagnosis is later confirmed by Anne and Barce and Dido's own admission in act IV.

Finally, Dido's fury is apparent in the text. Twelve of the twenty-five references originate from Dido, and are mostly located in acts II and III.[60] It is interesting to note that wrath is considered less frequently than madness by Æneas and his men in act I. Dido's *courroux* and *ire* or anger are considered on six occasions, whereas her *fureur* is mentioned twelve times and it is particularly striking that anger does not feature in the final two acts: only fury and rage are mentioned, showing an evolution in Dido's degree of passion.

Overall, references to Dido's passion evolve throughout the tragedy: they start with references to her passionate love and gradually turn into anger and, finally, its passionate form: fury. There is, therefore, no doubt in the mind of the audience and readers that Dido has fallen victim to her passion, she has given in, and this is probably a greater sin than that of giving in to Æneas.[61]

The same themes are treated by Hardy: love, madness and wrath. As can be seen from table 10, appendix 3, fire remains the most common metaphor of love. A noticeable

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[57] The metaphor of love as wound can also be found in IV, 1974

[58] See appendix 3, table 8.

[59] Note how *forcener* is used by both Achates and Dido.

[60] See appendix 3, table 9.

[61] It should be noted though, that the issue of whether of Dido has actually given in to Æneas remains ambiguous in Jodelle's play.

difference between Jodelle's and Hardy's plays is that, in the later play, the majority of references emanate from Dido. The metaphor is used only once by Achates, never by Æneas. Iarbe uses it twice and so does Anne. Therefore, Hardy seems to grant a greater awareness of her condition to Dido. It should also be noted that there is a gradual increase in the mentions of passionate love from acts I to III, which corresponds with the changes operated by Hardy in the content of each act: Hardy has postponed the scene of confrontation between Dido and Æneas until the first scene of act III. Like Jodelle, Hardy uses the metaphor of love as a physical wound: in acts III and IV, Dido herself identifies her passion for Æneas as a deadly wound. The first reference highlights how completely passion overwhelms Dido:

> Mais mon amour n'a rien que de grand, que d'étrange,
> Fiché dedans le cœur, dans le sang, dans les os [...].[62]

Passion has spread from her heart to her blood and her bones. The physical expression or consequences of her love for Æneas are further emphasized in the following act:

> Fortune injuste à pris l'usure de mes jours,
> Une playe endurant qui saignera toujours.[63]

The metaphor stresses the extent of Dido's passion by giving it a seemingly material existence. It also helps the author give indications to his audience and readership as to the fate of his heroine.[64] The excess of passion is further brought to light by the vocabulary used by Dido to describe Æneas: to her, he represents *l'Aurore et l'Occident*, half her soul, a venom, an insatiable rage, she is willing to worship him like a God and he is dearer to her than her own eyes and soul.[65] The excesses of passion clearly affect Dido's vision of the world and of herself as they both make her fail to recognize Æneas for what he is and make her undermine her own status.

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[62] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1, 740-41.
[63] Ibid, IV, 3, 1505-06.
[64] The theme of the wound is further illustrated by the use of the word *blesseure* in III, 2, 1000 and IV, 2, 1211.
[65] See appendix 3, table 10.

Hardy refers to Dido's madness almost as often as Jodelle had before him, as can be seen from table 11, appendix 3. Dido is responsible for four of the references to her own madness and it is also acknowledged by Anne, the chorus of Tyrians, Iarbe and Mercury. Deprived of reason, Dido falls into madness and is depicted as a Maenad. Madness explains her attempted blind revenge. It should be noted that it seems to be solely the intervention of the gods alone that can counter this madness, as Mercury's speech, in which Dido is depicted as mad and bent on revenge, is the key factor in Æneas' decision to leave.

Dido's wrath is evoked in very similar terms in both plays and roughly the same number of references can be found for each adjective or noun.[66] However, what is interesting in Hardy's play is the evocation of the horrors Dido plans to inflict on her unfaithful lover. The first reference emanates from Mercury:

> Toy, dernier des Troyens, ronfles-tu, cependant
> Que la flote, exposee au suprême accident,
> Verra, tardant icy tant soit peu d'avantage,
> De fer, de feu, de sang couvrir tout le rivage;
> Que d'amour forcenée et proche de mourir,
> Elise à la vengeance aveugle veut courir,
> Veut méler en son sang celuy de l'adversaire,
> Vous veut ensevelir dans son feu bustuaire,
> Expier son honneur des Phrygiens détruis?[67]

As the events described are attributed to a God, their meaning takes on an authenticity that cannot be denied. It is later confirmed by Dido herself, as Hardy amplifies on the same topic:

> … le tems de se venger,
> Ensevely son corps démembré sous les ondes,
> Charogneuse pasture aux fouques vagabondes,
> Fait de ses compagnons un carnage absolu,
> Une entiere hecatombe à mon honneur polu,
> Bruler toutes ses naux, et à ce detestable
> Son Ascaigne en morceaux presenter sur la table?[68]

[66] See appendix 3, table 12 for references.
[67] Ibid, IV, 1, 1069-77.
[68] Ibid, IV, 3, 1342-48.

The bloodshed evoked by Mercury and desired by Dido is, however, not enough: the Queen even proposes to make Æneas eat his own son. This highlights the excess of Dido's *furor*: there is nothing reasonable in the pain she suffers and, consequently, there is nothing reasonable in the pain she wants to inflict. Dido's *furor*, which is first expressed in the form of passionate love, soon turns into a destructive force, when her love is rejected. Eventually, with the departure of the object of her passion, this destructive force turns inwards and brings about Dido's death.

In Scudéry's *Didon*, the metaphor of love as fire is mentioned slightly more frequently than in previous plays. What is striking is that out of the eleven references to this metaphor, not one emanates from Æneas or any of the other male characters as can be seen from table 13, appendix 3. Seven of the references originate from Dido and four from Anne. This is a complete reversal compared with Jodelle's play: whereas Jodelle had emphasised Æneas' awareness of Dido's passion, Scudéry emphasised Dido's and Anne's awareness of her condition, but his Æneas seems totally oblivious to it. I would argue that the reason for this reversal can be understood if we keep in mind the context in which Scudéry's play was written. As I have explained earlier, Scudéry's Æneas is a gallant hero. In order to create this identity for his character, the author has had to make choices; one of them is that his hero is in love with Dido but unaware of the extent of the Queen's passion for him. This means that his guilt is partially alleviated in the eyes of the audience and readership.

The metaphor of love as a wound also appears in Scudéry's text, with the reference to the Queen's heart as being wounded,[69] while Hardy's *excessive manie* reappears in a slighted altered form: Scudéry speaks of Dido's *excès de manie.*[70] Dido's obsession is further identified as a moral weakness by Scudéry: the word *faiblesse*

[69] Scudéry, *Didon*, I, 3, 162 and table 13, appendix 3.
[70] Ibid, IV, 7, 1366. See also the occurrence of the word *passion* in II, 7, 708.

appears three times, always emanating from Dido. Although three occurrences might seem a small number, as it is one of the very few words to be recurrent, it can still be considered as relevant. The term is skilfully used so as to make the audience and readership single out Dido as the morally weaker character: by attributing this word to Dido, the author clearly identified the guilty party and alleviated once again Æneas' guilt.

Scudéry, like his predecessor, is interested in the physical expression of Dido's passion and alludes twice to her changing complexion: the Queen blushes in the presence of Æneas on two occasions and remarks on this herself (II, 2, 511-12). Inasmuch as blushing is an unconscious and unintended physical reaction to one's state of mind, the fact that it is mentioned by the character who is blushing shows a willingness on her part to acknowledge this reaction in the presence of Æneas, who has provoked it. Dido's conscious and intentional remarks can therefore be interpreted as an example of her moral weakness: she expresses openly emotions which she is supposed to keep quiet.

Madness is alluded to less frequently in Scudéry's play than it was in the previous ones. The allusions are centred on three words: *raison*, *folle* and *Furie*, and they can all be found in Dido's speech.[71] Dido first refers to her *faible raison*, then to her reason as gone, then describes herself as *folle* until she compares herself to a *Furie*. One of the final references can be interpreted as an eventual understanding of her situation as she wonders:

> ... par quelle manie
> Ma débile raison se voit-elle bannie?[72]

Here, Dido realises both that she is under the influence of *furor* and that her reason is consequently considerably weakened.

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[71] See appendix 3, table 14.
[72] Ibid, V, 1, 1461-62.

The expression of Dido's wrath is extremely limited in Scudéry's tragedy, as can be seen in table 15, appendix 3. The words *colère* and *courroux* only appear twice each in the play, and there is only one occurrence of *fureur*. All of these words can be found in Dido's speech, with one exception: Æneas refers once to her *courroux*, as he is debating whether he should stay or leave. At this stage in the play, however, Dido's anger is only evoked as a possibility, not a certainty. Dido is the only one to speak of her wrath as a fait accompli. Dido's excessive love is transformed into excessive rage when she loses the object of her passion, as can be seen in the following lines:

> Mais ne pouvais-je pas encor le retenir?
> Le tailler en morceaux, afin de le punir?
> Et jeter dans la mer un corps si détestable,
> Un corps qui fait mouvoir une âme si coupable?
> M'était-il pas aisé de perdre par le fer
> Ceux qui suivent les pas de ce Monstre d'enfer,
> D'étouffer son fils même, et pleine de courage,
> Le lui faire manger dans l'excès de ma rage?
> Mais la fin du combat eût dépendu du sort!
> Et que devais-je craindre, étant près de la mort?
> J'eusse porté le feu jusque dans son Navire,
> Embrasé ses vaisseaux, par celui de mon ire,
> Et perdant fils et Père en cet événement,
> J'en eusse exterminé la race entièrement;
> Et pour m'ôter après son image de l'âme,
> Je me fusse jetée au milieu de la flamme.[73]

Scudéry copies Hardy when he uses the image of cannibalism and clearly shows that the destructive force that leads Dido to wish to destroy the object of her passion then turns inwards once the object is gone: Dido thus plans to kill herself once she has butchered her lover. Her *furor*, or *excès de manie*, finds a way to express itself one way or another: excessive love or excessive rage.[74] One could, therefore, argue that, even in the case of Æneas staying, Dido would still be consumed by her *furor*, thus making her relationship with Æneas inherently doomed.

[73] Ibid, V, 2, 1471-86.

[74] Note for example how *feu* is used to describe both love (see above) and wrath (V, 2, 1481-82)

Looking at the first three tragedies, there are already some important similarities and discrepancies emerging: all three authors use the conventional metaphors of the period for love, that is to say fire and wound, however Scudéry refers little to Dido's wrath and madness in comparison to his predecessors. This can be explained by the historical context in which the plays were written: Scudéry wrote his play at a time when royal power asserted itself through art as well as politics, a fact of which the author was acutely aware because of his connection with Cardinal Richelieu. I would contend that there are fewer references to the Queen's madness and wrath in the play because they offered a negative image of monarchy. Although Scudéry could not make them disappear altogether, he could at least limit their presence. The fact that Dido's madness and wrath are only mentioned by herself is also significant: the author never shows public discontent or gives the people the opportunity to criticise their monarch. He goes even further in scenes four and six of act V, where he puts Dido's angered subjects on stage. At no point is there any reference in the mouth of Hermon and Arbase to the Queen's moral weakness: they only come to take their leave and ask her permission to go after the Trojans. The people are therefore represented in an act of loyalty that helps maintain a fairly positive image of royalty.

In Montfleury's *Ambigu comique*, passionate love is expressed, primarily, through the use of the words *feu* and *flame*. However, the lexical field of the metaphor of love as fire is limited to those two words. They appear repeatedly in the three acts, through which they are distributed evenly, as can be seen from table 19, appendix 3. Nineteen of the twenty-six references emanate from Dido, five from Iarbe and two from Æneas. The small number of mentions originating from Æneas can be explained by the numerous references to his own *feu* and *flame*: in Montfleury's play, the audience and readers are thus left in no doubt as to the strength of the Prince's feelings for Dido. The

excess of Dido's passion appears more clearly in her attempt to impose her love on both destiny and the universe at large. In act I, Dido thus declares to her *confidante* Barsine:

> Dûssay-je, apres ce choix, pour croistre mes alarmes,
> Voir aux pieds de mes murs tout l'Univers en armes,
> Dût le Lit nuptial devenir mon tombeau,
> Un tel Epous rendra mon destin assez beau;
> Et mon amour sçaura braver ma destinée,
> Si Didon peut mourir Femme du grand Ænée.
> Ne m'offre point des maux que je me veux cacher [...].[75]

Nothing, it seems, can stand in the way of Dido's passion: war, death, *destinée* are all consciously ignored to the benefit of her passion.[76] Passion blinds Dido to the fact that she has no control over her destiny: her attempt to impose her wishes on Fate reveals the extent of her *furor*, which is further accentuated by a loss of the sense of propriety. Dido thus demands in act II that the exterior signs of mourning decorating both her palace and the temple be replaced immediately by those of marriage (II, 2, 164). Although there is no indication of how long Dido has been mourning her late husband, it is not the length of time that is at stake here, but rather the abrupt end her mourning comes to and the fact that it is to be immediately replaced by marriage. This extremely swift change seems hardly proper. Montfleury, like Jodelle, also refers to Dido's *ardeur*, but there are only a limited number of references to it.[77] These all originate from Dido. Ardour is supplanted, in *L'Ambigu comique*, by the evocation of Dido's *tendresse* for Æneas: mentioned nine times in the play, mostly in act I. There is only one mention in act II, as it is the act of the eventually-aborted confrontation. It should be noted that the author seems to grant to Dido some awareness of how badly she is affected by her passion, since she refers to *l'excés de mon amour* (III, 5, 41).[78] Finally, the attentive reader will note the versatile use of the noun *transports* in Montfleury's play: used twice to describe Dido's

[75] Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*, I, 4, 5-11.
[76] Dido later tries to impose her wises on Destiny again in II, 2, 170-71
[77] See table 19, appendix 3.
[78] This can be compared to Hardy's 'excessive manie' (IV, 3, 1335).

passionate love, it is also used three times to depict the expression of Dido's unhappiness.[79]

Montfleury touches on the idea of madness only fleetingly: the word *raison* is used twice and these two occurrences obviously work as a pair although they are in different scenes.[80] Æneas is the first to discuss the possibility of Dido turning mad in the final act:

> Un tel coup va trouver sa raison sans effort [...].[81]

The possibility is later confirmed by Dido after the departure of her lover:

> Contre un si rude coup ma raison n'a point d'armes [...].[82]

Dido's madness, introduced or foretold by Æneas, is skillfully expressed by Montfleury: by using identical vocabulary, the author creates an artificial echo in the mind of his audience. It could be argued that dramatic irony also accentuates the power of Æneas compared to that of Dido: what he predicts becomes true, whereas what Dido predicts, like her wedding to Æneas, does not become true.

Finally, Montfleury evokes Dido's *fureur* six times in the play: three of the occurrences emanate from Dido, two from Iarbe and one from Æneas, as can be seen from table 21, appendix 3. Unsurprisingly, most of the occurrences appear in the final act, when Æneas decides to leave and after his departure. Once again, the prophetic nature of Æneas' words should be highlighted: although both Iarbe and Dido mention the Queen's *fureur*, it is only evoked as a mere possibility and reaction to Æneas potential departure. It is only in act III, that Æneas mentions Dido's *fureur* and its consequences with certainty:

> L'amour qu'elle a pour moy, me répond de sa mort,
> Et sa fureur sçaura m'en faire une victime.[83]

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[79] Ibid, I, 6, 1; III, 3, 33 and III, 6, 16.
[80] See table 20, appendix 3.
[81] Ibid, III, 2, 50.
[82] Ibid, III, 5, 74.

Fureur is established as a destructive force by Æneas and there is an obvious awareness in these lines of the fact that, when *furor* is deprived of its object, it turns inwards to destroy its subject. Aside from the word *fureur*, very few words are used repeatedly to express Dido's *furor*: *colere* and *rage* are both used twice, while *agiter*, in various forms, appears three times. *Furor* is more clearly apparent in Dido's excessive threats. Confronted with the news of her lover's departure, Dido laments, pleads and then threatens him to make him stay:

> Hé bien, puis que de moy rien ne te peut toucher,
> Perfide, souviens-toy que Didon méprisée
> Peut trouver dans ses murs jusqu'à ta perte aisée;
> Du sang de tes Troyens faire rougir nos eaux;
> Mettre en cendre, d'un mot, à tes yeux, tes Vaisseaux;
> Réduire dans ce cœur, où je n'ay plus de place,
> Ton orgüeil impuissant, au besoin de ma grace;
> Aux yeux de tout mon Peuple, & de toute ma Cour,
> Punir ta perfidie, & vanger mon amour;
> Mettre, malgré le Sort, ton espoir, tes Oracles,
> Entre le Tibre & toy, d'invincibles obstacles,
> Et malgré tous les Dieux armez en ta faveur,
> Disposer de tes jours au defaut de ton cœur.
> Apres m'avoir vante les Loix que tu t'imposes,
> Trahis-moy, si tu peux, & me fuis, si tu l'oses.[84]

Here, Dido predicts bloodshed and fire to Æneas, should he decide to leave her. Two remarks must be made: firstly, unlike Æneas, Dido fails to make her words come true. Despite the departure of the Trojans, no revenge is exacted against them. The only prophetic speech made by Dido regards the Punic wars, which Carthage eventually lost, but what is interesting is that, for her prophecy to become a reality, Dido has to die, since a hero will rise from her ashes. Secondly, Montfleury is far less sadistic here than Hardy and Scudéry, who had evoked the possibility of killing and eating Æneas' son. Thus, although Dido is obviously constructed as a character suffering from *furor*, it seems clear that the author used some restraint in the expression of this *furor*. This can be partly

[83] Ibid, III, 2, 51-52.
[84] Ibid, II, 2, 118-31.

explained by the fact that Hardy was writing before the rules of classical theatre were in place, whereas, after 1630, authors were unlikely to employ such shocking images.

Finally, this analysis will focus on Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*. Although the author chose other sources than his predecessors and successor, *furor* is still an important theme in his play. It is not however Dido's prerogative anymore, or at least not in the same form. *Furor* as we have seen it previously is here the prerogative of Iarbe, who plays the role of the scorned lover. Subsequently, the metaphor of love as fire does not describe Dido's feelings, but Iarbe's, as can be seen in table 16, appendix 3. Boisrobert uses this metaphor less frequently than all the other authors, choosing to emphasise Iarbe's *ardeur* instead: the references are distributed fairly evenly throughout the five acts and emanate, in their majority, from Iarbe, although the final act sees more references from Dido than from him. This can be explained by the fact that, at this stage in the play, Iarbe's excessive love has turned into excessive rage. The word *passion* appears twice in the tragedy, confirming that both Pygmalion and Dido are aware of Iarbe's condition, leading Dido to describe Iarbe as a *Monstre d'amour*.

Wrath is expressed in both Dido and Iarbe's speech, but there are far more references to it in Iarbe's speech as can be seen from tables 18a and 18b in appendix 3. The same words are used to describe Dido's and Iarbe's wrath: *colère*, *courroux*, *rage* and *fureur*. What is noticeable is that Dido and Iarbe are not the ones who refer most to their own wrath, with the exception of *colère* and *courroux*, that are used more often by Iarbe than by any other character to describe his anger. The distribution of the references is different for each character: most of the fifteen references to Dido's wrath are located in act III, whereas most of the forty references to Iarbe's wrath are located in acts IV and V. This can be explained by the fact that act III sees the attempt by Pygmalion to reconcile Dido with the idea of marrying Iarbe, which she furiously rejects, and acts IV

and V see the reaction of Iarbe to this rejection. It can, therefore, be concluded that Boisrobert attempted to create two characters influenced by *furor*, although Dido seems less affected by it than Iarbe, based on the number of occurrences of words relating to their wrath. This is logical if we bear in mind that Boisrobert was attempting to rehabilitate Dido. Yet, a comparison of the number of occurrences of the same words in Scudéry's *Didon* shows that it was possible to allude less frequently to Dido's excessive anger. This might be explained by the fact that Scudéry also alluded frequently to Dido's excessive love. Those references are obviously absent from Boisrobert's tragedy and are compensated for by an increased number of references to her excessive anger. This increase is necessary in order for the author to craft Dido as a character ruled by *furor*, while the disproportionate number of references to Iarbe's excessive love and rage enable the author to offer his audience and readership an alternative character to blame: although Dido is not exempt from *furor*, hence not totally innocent, Iarbe is, by comparison, far more guilty. Another indication that Iarbe is playing the role of the character most influenced by *furor* is that Boisrobert recycled the threats made by Dido in previous plays and attributed them to Iarbe. Where Dido was planning to kill Æneas and his men and even to make Æneas eat his son, a scorned Iarbe declares:

> Enfin le désespoir ayant éteint ma flamme,
> Et s'étant rendu maître absolu de mon âme,
> N'en attendez plus rien que des saccagements,
> Que des meurtres cruels, que des embrasements.
> Je jure des grands Dieux la puissance infinie,
> Que je serai vengé, qu'elle sera punie,
> Et qu'il n'est point de Dieu, ni là-haut ni là-bas,
> Qui puisse divertir la fureur d'Hyarbas.[85]

Iarbe's furious rage is expressed in very similar terms to those of Dido's in previous plays: bloodshed and fire are present in both descriptions. As in Dido's case, the

[85] Ibid, IV, 2, 1025-32.

corollary of the loss of the object of the furious character's passion is the turning of the destructive force inwards. After Dido's death, Iarbe thus proclaims:

> Non, non, il faut mourir pour suivre sa fortune;
> Mais il me faut souffrir dix mille morts pour une,
> Il faut que déchiré, que battu, qu'outragé
> De mille corps mortels je périsse enragé.[86]

Having destroyed the object of his passion, Iarbe is left with no choice but to kill himself, which he subsequently does with the dagger Dido had used on herself. There seems to be no redeeming feature in Iarbe until this last scene: the admission of guilt and the comparison with the only monarch left standing, the traitor Pygmalion, mean that the audience and readership can empathise somewhat with this character, while he laments his inability to avenge Dido, in the same way that Dido laments her inability to avenge herself in the other plays.

There are no references to madness as such in Boisrobert's tragedy.[87] In the first scene of the play, Anne questions Dido's interpretation of her own dreams and wonders what can possibly *troubler votre raison* (I, 1, 4). Here, it seems more likely *raison* is employed in reference to Dido's mood rather than in reference to her ability to think coherently. All doubts are however lifted at the end of act III, when Dido's initial weariness towards Pygmalion is eventually justified by his betrayal.

With the exception of Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, all the tragedies examined here present the audience and readership with the same *topos*: a female character wrecked by passion, overwhelmed by *furor*. *Furor* takes the form of a destructive force: Dido is thus willing to endanger her kingdom to have Æneas and when Æneas has gone, the destructive force turns inwards and destroys Dido. In the plays of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury, none of the male characters exhibits signs of passion. Even if Æneas loves Dido, his feelings for her are reasonable and are often associated with the

[86] Ibid, V, 5, 1465-68.
[87] See appendix 3, table 17.

debt of gratitude he owes her. Boisrobert, on the other hand, set out to rehabilitate Dido and, with this perspective in mind, attributes to Iarbe most of the characteristics of the furious Dido. The same destructive force has the same effects: after the disappearance of the object of passion, Boisrobert turns Iarbe's *furor* inwards and the King eventually commits suicide. However, in spite of his effort to rehabilitate Dido, Boisrobert still crafted Dido as a victim of *furor*, even if to a lesser extent than her male counterpart: Dido's wrath is thus expressed in exactly identical terms to Iarbe's. Therefore, the primary difference between Boisrobert's play and the other four is that *furor* is no longer only ascribed to a female character. If one considers the ability to control one's passions as a sign of power, it can be concluded that Dido is constructed as a powerless character in all five plays.

The expression of guilt and innocence

This analysis will now focus on the expression of guilt and innocence. Dido, Æneas and Iarbe claim both their innocence and guilt in all five plays, therefore what is at stake is the effect of those claims on the audience and readership.

In Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant*, Dido claims her innocence in acts II and III, supported by Anne. The words *innocence* and its derivatives are used three times, while the word *incoupable* appears once as can be seen in table 1 in appendix 4. However, Dido later claims she is guilty from act III to act V. On the other hand, if Æneas is the only one to claim his innocence, his guilt is evoked by both Dido and Anne. Æneas himself admits in act II that he is not *en tout incoulpable*.[88] Yet what he describes as his crime is not what Dido refers to:

> Je ne dy pas qu'en tout incoulpable je sois,
> Un seul deffaut me mord, c'est que je ne devois

[88] See table 2, appendix 4.

> Arrestant si long tems dans ceste estrange terre,
> Te laisser lentement prendre au laqs qui te serre:
> Mais prens t'en à l'Amour, l'amour t'a peu lier:
> Et l'Amour m'a peu faire en ta terre oublier.[89]

Guilt is deflected in Æneas' speech and redirected towards the gods: Cupid is to blame, not Æneas, and since he considers that there was no promise of marriage, nor actual marriage either, Æneas can assert his innocence more convincingly. The fact that Dido herself admits her guilt leaves the audience and readership in no doubt as to which of the two characters is guilty.

In Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant*, Dido does not claim her innocence, as can be seen in table 3, appendix 4. From act I onwards, she evokes her guilt: most of the references do, in fact, emanate from her, with the exception of two references in act II appearing in Iarbe's and Therodomante's lines.[90] The most remarkable feature of Hardy's treatment of guilt is the recurrent image of the stain, a metaphor of Dido's crime, in act IV.[91] Interestingly, Hardy develops this metaphor after the departure of Æneas in the play. This may be because until the departure of the hero, the audience and readers might still believe that there is a chance of redemption for the heroine. However, this seems unlikely since Dido asserts her own guilt from the first act. Once Æneas has left, the metaphor clearly foretells Dido's end. The case of Æneas is more complex in this play, as there are essentially two sins of which he stands accused: abandoning Dido and abandoning his divine mission. The second justifies the first, hence the case for the innocence of Æneas is argued by Achates from the first scene of the tragedy:

> Tu as payé d'amour ce que tu luy devois.
> Et pour sauver les tines autrement ne pouvois,
> Si que la pieté, de contrainte suivie,
> Te dispense de coulpe, et de peine ta vie.[92]

[89] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 815-20.
[90] Therodomante is Iarbe's spy in Carthage.
[91] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, IV, 3, 1303-08 and IV, 3, 1337-40.
[92] Ibid, I, 1, 135-38.

There is no guilt to be felt, since Dido has been repaid and Æneas' piety has more value than his love and respect for the Queen.[93] Æneas hopes to convince Dido of this and to leave Carthage an innocent (II, 2, 469). However, unlike Jodelle's hero, Hardy's Æneas is not claiming his innocence beyond act II, in fact he evokes his *coupable congé* in act II and later *l'offense commise*.[94] The rest of the references to his guilt are located, unsurprisingly, in the lines of Dido and the Carthaginians.

Hardy treats the notions of guilt and innocence very differently from his predecessor: Dido is systematically constructed as a guilty character, whereas Æneas is more ambiguous. This ambiguity is made possible by the fact that Dido is always identified as guilty, thus leaving the audience and readers with, once, again, no doubt as to which of the two characters is guilty.

In Scudéry's *Didon*, the issue of guilt and innocence becomes more ambiguous because of the context in which the tragedy was written. Aiming to offer a positive image of monarchy, the author could not overly emphasise the guilt of either character. This is why, for example, the issue of marriage is carefully avoided. This explains why the first reference to Dido's innocence can be found in lines attributed to Æneas.[95] Dido's guilt, on the other hand, is solely evoked by the Queen and, as I have mentioned previously, is never mentioned by her people, who show indefatigable loyalty to her. The guilt of Æneas is evoked first by Æneas himself, but the sin that is alluded to is that of ingratitude.[96] Dido's first mention of his guilt is weakened as she calls him both innocent and guilty in the same line. While Æneas reflects on his responsibility in act V, the same expression, *âme coupable*, is used to describe him by Dido as was used to describe Dido by herself at the end of act IV.

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[93] The guilt felt because of their prolonged stay in Carthage is also evoked by Iule in II, 3, 498.
[94] See table 4, appendix 4.
[95] See table 5, appendix 4.
[96] See table 6, appendix 4 for reference.

Scudéry's main protagonists are both defined as guilty and innocent, they both accept their responsibility, although it should be noted that there are more references to Dido's guilt than to Æneas'. The overall impression for the audience and readers is still more positive than in the two previous plays: the sins seem less wicked, because the author skilfully avoids the issue of marriage and limits the number of references to the protagonists' guilt.

In Montfleury's *Ambigu comique*, there is no clear mention of Dido's innocence, yet she does describe her laments as fair after Æneas' departure.[97] This suggests that Æneas is guilty, yet Dido does admit her own guilt on several occasions after this. The guilt of Æneas is first mentioned by the Prince himself, but is introduced as a sacrifice in order to protect the Queen, thus alleviating his guilt.[98] The mentions of his infidelity come from him as well and, as has been explained previously, it is difficult to see how Æneas would not appear guilty in this play, since he leaves Dido on their wedding day. All other references to his crime are located in Dido's lines.

Montfleury is similar to Scudéry in the way he treats the notions of guilt and innocence: both protagonists are defined as innocent and guilty by themselves and by others. There is, nonetheless, an important discrepancy between the two plays regarding Æneas who seems more fickle and more guilty in the later play, since he leaves on his wedding day. While his predecessor had avoided the issue of marriage, Montfleury was obviously not preoccupied with this question. This can be explained by the fact that, unlike Scudéry, Montfleury did not have to deal with imperatives concerning the image of monarchy.

In Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, the adjective *innocent* is, ironically, never used to describe Dido, but is used in reference to both Pygmalion and Iarbe. There are, however,

[97] See table 7, appendix 4 for reference.
[98] See table 8, appendix 4 for reference.

references to fairness: Iarbe describes Dido's feelings as fair, she asserts her anger is fair and she claims that Pygmalion and Iarbe waged an unfair war against her.[99] Allusions to Dido's guilt are deceiving. The mention of Dido's *crime* is not meant to make her look guilty in the eyes of the audience and readership, on the contrary: she mentions the sin Iarbe and Pygmalion wish her to commit, that is to marry Iarbe. Thus, guilt is attributed to the male characters rather than to Dido. The Queen later refers to her *repentir* and this suggests that she has committed a sin. Yet, in context, it becomes obvious that Dido does not repent a hypothetical sin, but rather that she pretends to do so in order to save her city. This is, once again, an attempt by the male characters to impose sin on her which fails and makes them look guilty, while Dido remains innocent in the eyes of the audience and readers.

Pygmalion, on the other hand, although described as innocent by Anne in the first act, looks guilty throughout.[100] Boisrobert uses the opposite process to the one he used with Dido: the references to his innocence are contradicted by the outcome of the play and the ambivalence of the character is established from the first scene of the play: when Anne calls him *innocent*, Dido recalls his *forfait* and the murder he has committed. Even the mention of his *juste courroux* is annulled: what Forbante takes for a fair reaction to his sister's unreasonable stand turns out to be a ploy to rob her. There is, therefore, no doubt in the mind of the audience and readers that all the accusations against Pygmalion are true.

Finally, the treatment of Iarbe by Boisrobert is similar to that of Æneas in the other plays: Iarbe claims to be both innocent and guilty. At the beginning of the play, he is referred to as *innocent* and Pygmalion calls his intentions *justes desseins*.[101] Dido also alludes to his *justes souhaits*, yet, like her *repentir*, she is deceiving him in order to save

[99] See table 9, appendix 4 for references.
[100] See table 10, appendix 4 for references.
[101] See table 11, appendix 4 for references.

Carthage.[102] In the final scene, it is Iarbe himself who refers to his guilt, while maintaining a certain ambivalence:

> Il est juste, il est juste, en ce mal infini,
> Hyarbe a péché seul, il est seul puni.
> Souffre donc, Roi cruel, sans reproche et sans blâme,
> Ce Vautour éternel qui déchire ton âme.
> Souffre, et n'impute plus ce spectacle d'horreur
> Qu'au brutal mouvement de ta noire fureur.[103]

Iarbe accepts his responsibility, he does acknowledge his *furor*, yet he is still described as *sans reproche et sans blâme*, as if the *furor* was a force outside of him which does not affect his inherent innocence.

In *La Vraye Didon*, the expression of guilt and innocence clearly establishes Pygmalion as the main culprit. Iarbe seems to be spared to a certain extent, because he is a victim of *furor*, while Dido comes out as the least guilty of all. However, as the analysis of the notion of *furor* showed previously, Dido is not entirely innocent as she is affected by *furor* as well.

The analysis of the rhetoric of the main protagonists of the five tragedies examined here, together with the analysis of *furor*, guilt and innocence, shows that the power dynamics in Carthage is strongly influenced by the emotional state of the characters. Those affected by *furor*, namely Dido and Iarbe, are rendered unable to rule their kingdoms. This is reflected in the five plays by the lexical field of *furor* and, consequently, by the expression of guilt. Although guilt does shift somewhat between the three main protagonists, the one constant is Dido's culpability: even Boisrobert who attempted to rehabilitate her could not help but make his heroine guilty.

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[102] Note also that the metaphor of the stain, introduced by Scudéry, reappears here, but this time in association with Iarbe (IV, 2, 1057).
[103] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, V, 5, 1451-56.

As can be seen from table 22 in appendix 3, misery is mostly expressed, in Boisrobert's play, through the use of the words for pain, unhappiness, torment and despair, while there is also a great number of references to the physical manifestation of Dido's misery, that is to say tears. What is interesting in Montfleury's play is that tears are not just alluded to: the author clearly indicates, with stage directions, that tears are to be apparent to the audience (II, 2, 33). The perception of Dido by the audience is undoubtedly more affected by the tears they can see than by their evocation, making Montfleury's character potentially the most pathetic looking Dido out of the five examined here.[104] Dido's pain is alluded to slightly more often than in Hardy's play: there are twelve occurrences of the word *douleur*, nine times by Dido, twice by Barsine and once by Iarbe. *Malheur* and its derivatives appear five times in the play, only in Dido's speech. From this, it can be concluded that there is no acknowledgement by Æneas of the pain and unhappiness he provokes by leaving. He does, however, concede that he is the cause of Dido's *ennuy*, as two of the mentions of that word are to found in his speech. Yet, it must be noted that *ennuy* sounds much milder than *douleur* or *malheur*. There seems therefore to be an effort on Montfleury's part to limit the scope of Æneas' responsibility: the difference between *ennuy* and *douleur* or *malheur* can be explained by Dido's *furor*. Her heightened sensibility turns what Æneas considers as grief into something worse. Dido's despair is alluded to seven times in the play, five times by Dido, once by Barsine and once by Æneas. Although Dido's despair seems to be recognized by her lover, the mention of her feelings is however weakened in his speech:

Quelque affreux desespoir que le vostre me cause[...].[105]

[104] This is obviously something which would affect an audience more than readers.
[105] Ibid, II, 2, 110.

The fact that it is his despair that is mentioned first and that his is *affreux*, whereas no adjective qualifies her despair, immediately weakens the strength of her feelings compared to his. Montfleury thus swiftly humanises his hero, while dismissing the value of Dido's emotions.

The examination of male and female rhetoric and *furor* establishes the stark contrast set up by the playwrights between Æneas and Dido, the rational and the irrational, the control of passions and uncontrollable love and rage. This contrast is further supported by the expression of guilt and innocence in the plays, as Dido is systematically identified as guiltier than Æneas. Boisrobert was the only author to provide his audience and readership with a passionate, irrational male character, Iarbe. However, even in this play, the author failed to identify Dido as entirely innocent or rational.

CHAPTER 5

MATERIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF POWER

SYMBOLIC OBJECTS

The construction of a fictional character's identity is based on many elements, all of which can be found in the text. In the main, theatre plays are meant to be performed and seen/listened to. Hence the information is delivered in a very different way to an audience member than it would be to a reader. In *Performance and Identity in the Classical World*, Anne Duncan explains that the conception of identity in theatre relies on notions such as the necessary consistency of character identity, its unity and homogeneity to enable the suspension of disbelief:

> [t]he body [of the actor] is the most obvious candidate for the source of a sense of identity, whether identity is defined by the qualities of integrity, coherence, continuity, consciousness, or use of language [...] The body thus seems to present a reasonable ground for an essential, stable identity, and in particular, the ground of a sexed identity.[1]

More specifically, in a text, theatrical or not, the author can give an identity to a character in terms of gender, age, nationality / ethnic origin with the mere choice of a name; in a novel, various aspects of the same character can be explored with descriptions, which will give clues to the reader about his or her social background or physical appearance. The narrative voice in the novel is a provider of information, about characters or about the setting. The absence of the narrative voice in theatre is compensated, to a certain extent, by scenes of exposition and the use of objects on the stage.[2]

[1] Anne Duncan, *Performance and Identity in the Classical World* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), p. 7.
[2] Ideally, this study would incorporate an analysis of theatre decor as well, yet the scarcity of available documents makes it impossible.

In the case of theatre characters, we deal both with the written word and the visual arts; this enables playwrights to use both text and visual elements, such as stage props, costumes or make-up to establish the identity of a character in the eyes of the audience: what remains unsaid does not necessarily remain unseen and unknown. The use of stage props can be indicated by the playwright either directly with stage directions, or indirectly within the text itself; it can also come from the director's interpretation of the text and/or personal intentions.[3] Several studies have been dedicated to theatrical objects; the research published by Vuillermoz, for example, has established the limited number of objects used on the French stage between 1625 and 1650: an average of six objects can be found in the plays of Corneille, Mairet, Rotrou and Scudéry during this period.[4] This limited number suggests that the presence and use of these objects are significant. Vuillermoz explains that:

> [o]utre son rôle strictement utilitaire qui fait de lui le complément obligé d'une gestuelle — un duel exige la présence scénique de deux épées —, l'objet théâtral peut conditionner une partie, voire la totalité d'une intrigue, ou au contraire, interrompre son cours en créant un 'divertissement', ou encore amplifier, influencer, contraindre le discours des personnages. En pareil cas, l'objet, qui ne renvoie qu'à lui-même, ou plus exactement à son référent fictionnel, se trouve engagé dans un procès dynamique auquel nous réservons le terme de 'fonction'. Il peut par ailleurs servir à caractériser efficacement un lieu, un moment de l'action, un personnage, ou figurer un sentiment, une notion abstraite. Pris dans un réseau statique d'équivalences, l'objet se transmue en signe. Il vaut alors moins pour son sens premier, *littéral*, que pour son sens *figuré*.[5]

Moreover, theatrical objects are part of a system of repetitions (textual and visual) aiming to make the reception of the play easier, while trying to preserve the dramatic illusion: '[...] la redondance de signes élémentaires est censée servir

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[3] See for example Vuillermoz, Marc, *Le Système des objets dans le théâtre français des années 1625-1650: Corneille, Mairet, Rotrou, Scudéry* (Paris: Droz, 2000), p. 31, and Anne Ubersfeld, *Lire le théâtre II. L'école du spectateur* (Paris: Belin, 1996), p. 11.
[4] Vuillermoz, *Système des objets*, p. 9, and annexe 3.2, pp. 284-85.
[5] Ibid, p. 63.

l'expressivité des comédiens et accroître la lisibilité de la représentation [...]'.[6] Vuillermoz also underlines in his research what he sees as the two defining factors of theatrical objects: their manipulation by the actors and their perception by the spectators.[7]

To analyse the theme of power in our five tragedies, and especially to address the question of which character(s) is or are empowered by the playwrights, it seems particularly relevant to study both the use of material representations of power, in other words objects symbolic of authority, and the language used to confer on the main protagonists titles and attributes of power. It is, therefore, essential to study the possession and use of these objects by both Dido and male characters, but also to examine descriptive elements such as the possession and use of names, titles and epithets in order to understand the power dynamic that structures the plays.

In the case of Dido and her different male counterparts, the texts (including the stage directions) of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry, Boisrobert and Montfleury give some indications as to the use of stage props, in particular jewels and swords.[8] Crowns, sceptres and thrones, which are visible symbols of royal power,[9] are mentioned on several occasions, but there is no stage direction indicating their actual presence on stage, nor does the text suggest they are necessarily visible to the audience. Their presence, therefore, depends on the troupe's or possibly the author's decision. On stage they would provoke in the audience an immediate identification of the characters possessing them as

[6] Ibid, p. 134.
[7] Ibid, p. 29.
[8] Jewels are referred to in the stage directions given by Montfleury in *L'Ambigu comique*, III, 5, 46-47. The presence of a sword on stage can be, at least, inferred from the text, since Dido kills herself on stage, in Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry's plays. Boisrobert and Montfleury also refer to the sword in stage directions (*La Vraye Didon*, V, 4 and *L'Ambigu comique*, III, 4, 47-48 and III, 6, 44-45).
[9] See Vuillermoz, *Système des objets*, p. 19: '[...] dans l'univers tragique, les grands pôles de la vie du héros trouvent systématiquement une expression figurée matérielle: la mort est invariablement désignée par l'épée, la lame ou le fer, suivant le degré de focalisation choisi; le pouvoir royal par le trône, le sceptre, la couronne ou le diadème'.

kings or queens. Their recurrence in the plays I analyse can be explained by the fact that their presence is required at a key moment within Dido's reign:

> ... [l]es emblèmes de la royauté ne sont mobilisés activement qu'à l'occasion de certains actes symboliques (investiture, adoubement, destitution, renversement,...) où le pouvoir est amené à être redistribué. [...] [D]ans la tragédie, ce moment de passage où l'autorité royale change de main et les circonstances qui l'amènent (soulèvements populaires, assassinats, batailles) sont relégués dans un monde invisible, qui ne parvient à la scène qu'à l'état de rumeur [...].[10]

The possession of these objects is, thus, significant: Dido's endangered kingdom and people need to be provided with either reassurance that Dido is a suitable monarch or with the assurance that there is an appropriate replacement for her. Legitimacy is symbolised by the handling and ultimately the possession of the objects. These, according to Ubersfeld, will fulfil three functions: *index*, as they identify the possessor as the monarch; *icône*, when they are actually present on stage; symbolic, in that they represent the power struggle occurring on stage.[11]

Although jewels and swords, or daggers, are not obvious symbols of power, this analysis aims to show that they should be taken into account as they are part of a gender-specific arsenal to keep or obtain power. Jewels were by no means the prerogative of women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, yet they are associated specifically with women in the plays, as there are only references to Dido's jewels.[12]

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[10] Ibid, p. 57. On the symbolism of these objects, see also Laurence Grove, *Emblematics and Seventeenth-Century French Literature: Descartes, Tristan, La Fontaine and Perrault* (Charlottesville, Va: Rookwood Press, 2000) and Cesar Ripa, *Iconologia: or Moral Emblems* (London: P. Tempest, 1709).
[11] See Ubersfeld, *Lire le théâtre II*, pp. 112-15.

Symbols of royal power

Crowns

The crown is 'related to the Head, which it surmounts and symbolises [...]'[13]: as heads of a state, sovereigns wear a crown to symbolise their position within the state. The crown is associated with wisdom. As a royal attribute, it embodies dignity, judgement and renown but also responsibility;[14] its circular form implies perfection and as such makes the crown the attribute of the gods, a sun emblem. In a negative context, it can be associated with ambition, pride, tyranny, vanity or material success.[15]

In Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant*, there are few references to royal symbols. Dido's crown is mentioned once, in act III, by the Trojan chorus. It is a negative reference: it is associated with what Dido has abandoned for Æneas:

> Malheureuse cent fois celle qui abandonne
> A l'estranger son cœur, son lict, et sa couronne [...].[16]

The fact that it is mentioned by the Trojan chorus and in a context that suggests that Dido has willingly abandoned her crown means that this royal symbol cannot be seen as empowering Dido.

In Hardy's play, there is also only one reference to Dido's crown. This time it is referred to by Dido herself, but still fails to be used in a positive context:

> Me cuidois-tu sujette à [...]
> T'apeller en mon lit, t'offrir mon diadême,
> Affin qu'à ton plaisir te fust loisible apres,
> Volage, d'échanger notre Mirthe en Cyprés?[17]

Associated once again with Dido's bed, the notion of impudicity cannot fail to affect the symbol of royal power and does not help to create, in Dido, a powerful character.

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[12] For all references to symbolic objects in the five plays, see appendix 5.
[13] Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, p. 121.
[14] De Vries specifies that responsibility is not necessarily to be seen in a positive light and quotes: 'Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown', p. 121.
[15] Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, p. 121.
[16] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1583-84.

In his *Didon*, Scudéry uses Dido's crown for various purposes, none of which are meant to cast a positive light on Dido as a good monarch.[18] The first allusion to Dido's crown is in her sister's suggestion that Dido should use the attributes of royalty in order to impress and seduce Æneas.[19] There are two more allusions to the crown: they are made by the Queen and highlight the inextricable link between the human side and the royal side of the identity of this character:

> Il méprise sa foi, mon cœur, et ma Couronne;
> [...]
> Hélas! que dois-tu faire, Amante méprisée,
> Puisque tu connais bien que tu sers de risée
> Au superbe étranger, qui te fait un affront,
> Et qui croit ta Couronne indigne de son front?[20]

The systematic juxtaposition of Dido's heart or status as a lover with her crown suggests that being a lover and being a queen are put on the same level and, therefore, that by rejecting Dido's love, Æneas also intends to spurn her royal powers. In spite of the fact that, in Scudéry's tragedy, there is no mention of Dido abandoning her crown, the allusions to this symbol of royal power still fail to create the image of a powerful queen.

In Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, there are only two references to Dido's crown.[21] The first helps create a very different picture of the Queen than in Scudéry's play. This time, the crown is not associated with Dido's heart:

> Non, m'en dût-il coûter la couronne et la vie [...].[22]

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[17] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1, 717-22.
[18] The character of Æneas also refers to a crown, as a symbol of royal authority, only to complain about the overwhelming responsibilities of kingship and, in particular, the impossibility of loving someone (III, 4, 921).
[19] Scudéry, *Didon*, I, 1, 75.
[20] Scudéry, *Didon*, IV, 1, 1002 and IV, 7, 1353-56.
[21] There are also references to Iarbe's crown, sceptre and throne, see appendix 3. Considering there are as many references to these royal symbols belonging to Dido and Iarbe, yet, none referring to Pygmalion, it can be concluded that the latter is the real villain of the tragedy. The audience or informed reader cannot help but draw parallels between previous Didos and Boisrobert's Iarbe, since they all try and fail to give away the symbols of their royal authority.
[22] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, I, 1, 149.

The juxtaposition of crown and life suggests a different identity for Boisrobert's character: his Dido does not have to face the dichotomy between the human and the royal aspects of her identity. Here, royal power is so totally central to her identity that there is no life without it. If this reference to the crown does not have the negative connotations that the aforementioned references had, it should still be noted that, here, the royal symbol appears in a context of death, which is unlikely to conjure up an impression of power. The second reference to Dido's crown is also unlikely to convey a sense of authority as Iarbe explains:

> Je viens pour affermir sa couronne tremblante [...].[23]

The assessment of Dido's power by Iarbe is uncompromising: it is shaky and requires help from him to be perpetuated. The two mentions of Dido's crown fail again to provide the audience with a picture of a powerful queen.

Finally, in Montfleury's play, the references to Dido's crown shed, once again, a negative light on their owner. The first allusion debases the value of the crown as a symbol of royal authority, as Dido is disappointed to have only a crown to offer her future husband:

> Mon cœur, pour s'acquiter, ne voyoit qu'à regret,
> Que la main de Didon à l'hymen toute preste,
> N'avoit qu'une Couronne à mettre sur sa teste [...].[24]

The second and third references to Dido's crown associate it, once again, with her heart or love, thereby highlighting the dichotomy between the human and royal aspects of her identity.[25] This dichotomy remains unresolved as Æneas rejects both her love and her crown to found his own realm.

[23] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, I, 3, 238.
[24] Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*, I, 5, 99-101.

Sceptres

Sceptres were originally 'connected with vegetation, as symbols of the (re)generative powers with which their bearers were connected',[26] thus they also stand for fertility. A sceptre is also 'an attribute of all those in the service of the Secret of Absolute Life (birth, growth, death and resurrection)' such as gods, kings or priests.[27] A sceptre can also refer to different powers, such as the Creative power of the Word,[28] the power of chastity[29] or simply royal power, thus meaning that it could be handed down to anyone in a position of authority or dignity through the sovereign. A sceptre is also an essentially male, phallic symbol.

In Jodelle's *Didon se sacrifiant* and in Montfleury's *Ambigu comique*, there are no references to Dido's sceptre.[30] In Hardy's play there are three references to the Queen's sceptre.[31] The first two mentions are negative in that they suggest Dido is willingly giving it away, thus relinquishing her powers. Æneas explains, in act I, that:

> La naissante Carthage et sa Princesse, amis,
> Leur fortune, leur sçeptre, au choix nous ont remis [...].[32]

This suggests that Dido is voluntarily abandoning power to the benefit of Æneas. This is confirmed in the third act by the Phoenician chorus:

> Maintenant une rage
> Possede ses espris:
> Son sçeptre et son courage

[25] Ibid, II, 2, 174-75 and III, 5, 37-40.
[26] Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, p. 403.
[27] Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, p. 403.
[28] Greek speakers in the Senate had to hold the sceptre, Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, p. 403.
[29] Connected with Hestia, Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, p. 403.
[30] There is however a reference to Iarbe's sceptre in Jodelle, I, 43: Achates alludes to Iarbe offering his sceptre to Dido if she would marry him. This can be interpreted as a voluntary emasculation.
[31] There are also three mentions of Æneas' sceptre (see appendix 3 for references); the fact that is it an equal number to that of the references to Dido's sceptre suggests that the royal status of the Trojan Prince is as important as Dido's. It should be noted that all his references have positive connotations — they allude to his future sceptre.
[32] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, I, 1, 35-36.

Luy tombent à mépris [...].[33]

Here, after her last meeting with Æneas, Dido is described as a queen showing contempt for the very symbol of her power. Logically, the next mention of Dido's sceptre, in act V, allows the author to elaborate on this theme: close to her death, Dido now abandons her sceptre to her sister (V, 1, 1769). As a male symbol, the willing offering of her sceptre to Æneas can also be interpreted as a relinquishing of a power largely considered to be male.

In Scudéry's *Didon*, sceptres are never referred to as a positive symbol of power: Anne suggests an alternative use of the sceptre (I, 1, 75),[34] or that Dido should give it up altogether to enable her to seduce Æneas more easily (I, 1, 88). This could be explained by the fact that when Dido possesses a sceptre, a male symbol, she is less attractive to Æneas, because she is more masculine. Her femininity is reinforced by the loss of the sceptre. Æneas refers to a virtual sceptre, which he will obtain once in Italy, but it is already causing him great pain, it might even kill him (III, 3, 832). Achates refers to the sceptres of all the kings the Trojans have defeated (hence probably destroyed and killed). Hermon, a member of Dido's court, refers to the sceptre as the object scorned by Æneas (V, 4, 1592). As for Dido, who is the main user of the word, her first reference to the sceptre is to give it away in exchange for her lover's soul (II, 6, 686), then to doubt the ability of Æneas ever to obtain another one if he refuses hers (IV, 1, 1004), and finally she complains bitterly about having given up her sceptre to Æneas.[35] Even though a 'sceptre' is a symbol of royal authority and power, it gradually loses its significance as a symbol of power in the play at the hands of two women: Anne and Dido misuse it and give it away.

[33] Ibid, III, 1, 919-22.
[34] To attract Æneas.
[35] Ibid, IV, 1, 1072; IV, 2, 1172 and V, 2, 1452.

In Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, there is only one mention of Dido's sceptre, by Dido herself. Although a sceptre is a symbol of power, here it is described in a context which does not empower Dido:

> Pour arrêter le cours de ce mal si pressant,
> Arrête la fureur de ce Roi trop puissant,
> Et sauve, en apaisant cette colère extrême,
> Ton Sceptre, tes trésors, et ta sœur, et toi-même.[36]

Set in a context of grave danger, where both her kingdom and her life are seriously threatened by Iarbe, the mention of the sceptre does help create the picture of a powerful monarch.[37]

Thrones

As originally the 'seat of a deity (or his earthly substitute)',[38] a throne has become a symbol of stability, and synthesis, authority and justice, hence the seat of royal power. There are no references to Dido's throne in Jodelle's and Boisrobert's plays.[39] In Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant*, there are two references to Dido's throne, yet neither of these is capable of imbuing the Queen with power. In act III, Dido refers to 'un trône d'ivoire' she could have acceded to had she not lost her honour to Æneas (III, 1, 680). Later in the same scene, Dido recalls what she did for Æneas:

> En ma couche pudique, en mon trône receu [...].[40]

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[36] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, V, 2, 1315-18.
[37] Interestingly, there is also one mention of Iarbe's sceptre (see appendix 3), where Iarbe tries to force Dido to accept his sceptre, which is similar to what Dido tries to do in earlier Dido tragedies; Iarbe meets the same fate as Dido in those tragedies, having committed the same error: he kills himself with the same sword that Dido has just used to commit suicide (V, 5). This suicide may also be interpreted as a voluntary emasculation — the sword is another obvious phallic symbol —, while Iarbe's attempt to give his sceptre to Dido can be interpreted as a subversion of traditional gender roles.
[38] Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, p. 465.
[39] There is, however, one mention of Iarbe's throne (see appendix 3), which, like his sceptre, he is willing to give Dido.
[40] Ibid, III, 1, 857. The juxtaposition of Dido's bed and throne, combined with the reference to 'un trône d'ivoire', create an impression of impurity, as the contrast between putiry ('ivoire') and royal authority on one hand, and lust on the other hand, becomes more apparent.

The juxtaposition of the loss of honour and the offer of her throne emphasises the strong link between honour and power for Dido. Both are lost at the same time and references to this symbol of royal power fail to create the picture of an adequate queen.

In Scudéry's *Didon*, there are two relevant references to the royal throne, first by Anne who suggests Dido misuse it (I, 1, 74) as with her sceptre and crown; the second reference is made by Æneas (III, 3, 851), in a context that does not empower Dido — since even though she is supposed to be all powerful, she is losing the battle against the divine mission bestowed on Æneas and cannot convince him to stay. Worse still, he rejects her offer of the throne and subsequently to share her power.

In Montfleury's *Ambigu comique*, there are six references to Dido's throne. Three of these allude to the fact the Dido has given away her throne, like her sceptre and her crown.[41] Two mentions hint at the weakness of Dido's power.[42] Finally, the last mention highlights both Dido's weakness and her delusion regarding Æneas:

> Ænée est un Héros fameux par mille exploits;
> Qu'à seconder son bras, vostre valeur s'apreste;
> Sa main, en ma faveur, à s'armer toute preste,
> Deviendra de mon Trône un si puissant appuy...[43]

The expression of the need for support highlights Dido's military weakness. Iarbe's subsequent announcement that Æneas is, in fact, leaving reveals Dido's delusion when it comes to Æneas. Thus, the mention of this symbol of power is, again, unable to create the image of a powerful monarch.

Altogether, symbols of royal power are not used in the five plays to create the image of Dido as a powerful monarch. In all the plays based on the *Æneid*, they are traded for the promise of love: Dido abandons them into the hands of an unsuitable substitute for herself, Æneas, and the symbols are generally degraded by their

[41] Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*, I, 1, 67-68; II, 2, 22-23 and II, 2, 142-43.
[42] Ibid, I, 3, 41-42 and II, 4, 34.
[43] Ibid, I, 5, 63-66.

associations with lust and love.[44] In Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, their association with the weakness of Dido's kingdom fails again to empower the Queen. It should be noted that the number of occurrences of these symbols increases steadily with time, with the exception of *La Vraye Didon*. I will discuss later how this increase can be explained, but I think it is important here to discuss the case of Boisrobert's exception. In this play, Dido is not trying to relinquish her power, which accounts for the fact that there are fewer allusions to those symbols; yet these are still at stake, and they operate here in a different way. In *La Vraye Didon*, Pygmalion tries to help Iarbe to marry Dido — and subsequently take over her kingdom — however Iarbe's motives are supposed to be purely passionate and not material, so it is more about possessing Dido as a human being than as a queen. Does this, then, mean that her identity is here less constructed as a royal character than as a woman? Not necessarily, her fate might be related to the dichotomy in the way she is perceived: she sees herself as a queen only, whereas Iarbe and, to a certain extent, Pygmalion both see her mainly as a woman. Is this the point of view of the author too? This could explain why Dido is depicted as a character ruled by her passions, rather than by reason. But then again, the male characters are not painted in a more positive light: Pygmalion is shown as a greedy traitor and Iarbe is as much ruled by his passions as is Dido.[45] Another interpretation relates to the issue of the marriage of widows. This should be considered in the light of the *dédicace* of the play to the 'comtesse de Harcourt', Richelieu's niece, who was widowed and had married her second husband, the Comte d'Harcourt, in 1639. Both her marriages were political alliances. It is then very unlikely that Boisrobert would have attempted to depict the marriage of a widow in a negative light — on the contrary. Thus Dido's stern refusal to

[44] See in particular the association of symbols of royal power with jewellery and make-up in Scudéry, *Didon*, I, 1, 74-80.

[45] This is symbolized by the fact that he endures the same fate as Dido: he kills himself with the very sword she had used.

remarry can possibly be read as unnatural, as can be seen in Dido's answer to Anne's interpretation of the dream that Pygmalion might give Dido another husband. Here is Dido's answer:

> Je suis trop constamment à mes vœux attachée,
> Les serments solennels que j'ai faits devant tous,
> De ne subir jamais les loix d'un autre Epoux,
> Ne me permettent pas au deuil qui me transporte,
> De pouvoir expliquer mon songe de la sorte.[46]

Boisrobert's Dido, rehabilitated, is therefore guilty of two sins: she is ruled by her passion, her *furor*, and she commits an unnatural act, as a widow, in refusing to remarry. This explains why the author does not focus on the material representations of royal power.

Gendered objects

Although jewels and swords or daggers are not obvious symbols of power, this analysis intends to show that they should be taken into account as they are part of a gender specific arsenal.

Swords

The sword and dagger on stage will immediately be identified as weapons, 'the symbol of the warrior caste',[47] and be redolent of physical violence, war and death.[48] It should be noted that in seventeenth-century theatre, the words *épée*, *poignard* or *fer* could be synonyms, so that the differences between the plays in the use of those words are not

[46] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, I, 1, 62-66.
[47] Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 959.
[48] See Vuillermoz, p. 19.

significant.[49] In my analysis, I have associated the sword and dagger with masculinity because the playwrights, with the exception of Montfleury,[50] clearly identify the weapons as belonging to men, for the benefit of the spectator or reader.[51] Besides the affiliation of these objects with masculinity based on ownership, it is also necessary to refer to the Freudian interpretation of the sword and dagger as phallic symbols, hence supporting the case for their association with masculinity.[52] Chevalier and Gheerbrant suggest that

> ...the sword is the symbol of the warrior caste, its virtues — valour — and its office — power. Power possesses a dual aspect. It is destructive, but what it destroys may well be injustice, crime and ignorance and it thereby becomes positive. As a constructive element, the sword establishes and maintains peace and justice. All these symbols apply literally to the sword as an emblem of kingship [...]. As a symbol of solar strength it also possesses phallic significance. However, phallic symbols are not necessarily sexual, and it denotes the powers of generation.[53]

Symbol of power and masculinity, the sword is also a symbol of destruction and, as such, Doubrovsky associates the presence of a sword on stage with the 'le risqué réel' of death.[54] Objects being rare on stage, they necessarily take on added or more intense meanings. Possessing or lacking a sword could, therefore, be interpreted either as a metaphorical rape or as a metaphorical castration. Æneas leaves his sword behind, but the readership or audience never get to see the hero in this awkward position. It is always assumed, until he leaves, that he has a sword. It is therefore difficult to see any metaphorical castration in the four plays. It could be argued, however, that the fact that

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[49] See Vuillermoz, p. 47.

[50] Montfleury only refers to 'un Poignard' in the stage direction in III, 4, 47.

[51] Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry follow Virgil and attribute the sword/dagger used by Dido to commit suicide to Æneas. In the case of *La Vraye Didon*, the ownership of the dagger is attributed metaphorically to men by Dido: she accuses Pygmalion and Iarbe of having put the sword in her hand, of raising her arm and stabbing her (Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, V, 4, 1395-1400).

[52] This can be concluded from the manner in which Dido uses the sword and the symbolism of her act, which will be discussed later.

[53] Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 959-60.

[54] Serge Doubrovsky, *Corneille et la dialectique du héros* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 108.

Æneas has left his sword by the bed he shared with Dido is significant:[55] as long as he was in Carthage, Æneas did not use and did not need to use his sword. His 'Grand guerrier' status was supplanted by his status as Dido's lover. This is where, possibly, the metaphorical castration lies.

Where Dido is concerned, it is necessary to make a distinction between the authors using Virgil as their main source and Boisrobert. In the case of Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry all references to a sword are references to Æneas's sword and in all cases they are mentioned, not in a context that empowers its owner, but as an instrument of death, Dido's death to be more specific.[56] Montfleury is the only playwright who fails to specify where the dagger used by Dido comes from. This may seem strange because, although Montfleury had to concentrate five acts into three, attributing the sword to Æneas would probably not have been difficult to fit in. This is all the more surprising as this attribution of the sword to Æneas allows the other playwrights to create a circle that reaches full completion: it symbolises the role played by Æneas in Dido's death, she destroys herself with his help and because of him. A number of commentators have found some dignity in this act, because it could be read as an admission of guilt by Dido;[57] other commentators even saw this as a means to interpret Dido's suicide as a murder by the male characters in the play.[58] In *L'Ambigu comique*, however, there seems to be no such admission, but rather the physical expression of the contempt felt by Dido for Iarbe.[59]

In Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, the sword used by Dido does not belong to anyone in particular. The first reference to its presence on stage is in the stage direction at the

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[55] References to swords and beds are also usually very close within the texts of Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry: see appendix 3 for details.

[56] There is one exception in Scudéry's *Didon*, IV, 7, 1377, where the 'fer' is used as a generic term, with no specific owner. See appendix 3 for additional references.

[57] Jean-Michel Poinsotte, 'L'image de Didon dans l'antiquité tardive', in *Énée et Didon*, ed. Martin, p. 47.

[58] See Delmas, *Didon à la scène*, p. lxvi.

beginning of the fourth scene of act five. Dido picks up the dagger and kisses it (V, 4, 1372), then attributes it to Pygmalion and Iarbe:

> Traître Pygmalion, frère dénaturé,
> Et toi cruel tyran contre moi conjure,
> Voyez où vos fureurs dans leur rage inhumaine
> Ont réduit le destin d'une si grande Reine.
> C'est vous qui m'avez mis ce poignard à la main,
> Et qui levez mon bras, et qui percez mon sein.[60]

In his attempt to rehabilitate Dido, I would contend that Boisrobert made a mistake here. He deprives his Dido of a last chance to reclaim some power over her fate, by shifting the responsibility of her death away from her and onto Pygmalion and Iarbe. The author also fails to use symbols of royal power in a way that would allow him to create the image of a powerful monarch and he failed to create a rhetoric for Dido which would not reflect the same *furor* as in previous plays. Thus his attempt at rehabilitating the Carthaginian Queen is rather disappointing.

The sword used by Dido in the plays of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Boisrobert is clearly identified as a male attribute.[61] The fact that Dido chooses to impale herself on this sword could have been interpreted in various ways by contemporary readers and audiences. Firstly, it could be read as a gesture reminiscent of a Roman soldier's honourable death. Dido thus reclaims some of her lost sense of honour by admitting her guilt and choosing to die rather than live a shameful life.[62] Secondly, this suicide could be read as the ultimate victory of male power over female power: the impalement a metaphorical rape, especially in Boisrobert's play, where Dido has refused herself to Iarbe. It could even serve to justify the contemporary interpretation of the Salic Law

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[59] This contempt is also expressed verbally in Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon,* III, 6, 49.
[60] Ibid, V, 4, 1395-1400.
[61] As it was in Virgil, who clearly identified the sword as belonging to Æneas.
[62] This interpretation would be adequate for Montfleury's play as well and is reminiscent of Lucretia's death. Note that Virgil also had Dido throw herself on the pyre after impaling herself on the sword, an ultimate act of purification, which was not reproduced in the tragedies considered here, except possibly Hardy's, see Howe's interpretation in Alexandre Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, ed. Alan Howe, pp. 78-79.

which forbade women to reign over France, by showing the inadequacy of a female ruler. Thirdly, considering the historical context and, more specifically the Valois's claim to descend from Æneas via Augustus,[63] thereby asserting their divine origin, the death of Dido was necessary to perpetuate the myth surrounding the monarchy by divine right.

Jewels

Jewels constitute the symbolic female equivalent of the sword and connote wealth. They are used to conquer. There are limited references to jewellery in the five tragedies, yet their occurrence is significant in Scudéry's and Montfleury's plays. Not only would they be recognisable as feminine attributes by the audience, but they can be interpreted as examples of a specifically female arsenal, since, with make-up, they are used by Dido to fight the pious conscience of her lover.

In Scudéry's *Didon*, Anne advises Dido to use jewels and make-up to seduce Æneas (I, 1, 76), adding that Dido should take advantage both of her beauty and of whatever else is likely to fuel Æneas's desire for her.[64] Seducing Æneas is described by Anne in similar terms to those used to describe a battle:

> Faites armes de tout; mettez tout en usage;
> La Majesté du Trône en ajoute au visage;
> Le Sceptre et la Couronne ont droit d'assujettir;
> Mêlez l'or de Sidon à la Pourpre de Tyr:
> Le noir de ce grand deuil offusque votre gloire;
> Pour avoir aisément cette illustre victoire,
> Servez-vous des attraits que le ciel vous départ,
> Et mêlez pour le prendre et la nature et l'art.[65]

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[63] This claim would have extended to the Bourbons since the two families descended from the Capetians. This interpretation would, therefore, be adequate for all five tragedies.
[64] Anne suggests the use of gold and 'pourpre' in line 76, but also of make-up in lines 79-80. Ideally an analysis of costumes and other stage props would be included here; however, the lack of relevant documents makes it impossible.
[65] Ibid, I, 1, 73-80.

The semantic field of war (*armes*, *assujettir*, *victoire*, *prendre*) added to that of power (*Majesté*, *Trône*, *Sceptre*, *Couronne*, *assujettir*, *gloire*) turn the seduction strategy set up by Anne into a military campaign aiming to overthrow the pious conscience of Æneas. Scudéry clearly uses jewels and make-up as the feminine equivalent of Æneas's sword in the battle for supremacy in Carthage: the ability of the Queen to make her wishes come true, that is to convince Æneas to stay, must be read as an assertion of Dido's control over her kingdom.

Chevalier and Gheerbrant characterise jewels as symbols of the drive of the libido and of the 'vanity of human possessions and wishes':[66] the manner in which Scudéry uses jewels in his play is the perfect illustration of this definition. These feminine weapons are used to satisfy the Queen's libido by enticing Æneas to obey his passion rather than his reason and duty. The negative connotation linked to the use of jewellery and make-up as weapons is emphasised by the ridicule of the situation: jewels and make-up are not *de facto* weapons; by using them to this purpose, Anne and Dido debase or 'devirilise' war, highlighting the inadequacy and inappropriateness of the Queen's wishes.

Finally, royal attributes lose some of their intrinsic value as a result of their association with the feminine arsenal: the throne, sceptre and crown are used to seduce a man and are consequently put on the same level as mere jewels and make-up; they lose their grandeur in Anne's mouth and through Dido's actions.

In Montfleury's *Ambigu comique*, jewels are only referred to in the final act, because the seduction of Æneas by Dido has occurred before the beginning of the play.[67] Montfleury seems to give more weight to the feminine aspect of the jewellery's

[66] Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 554.
[67] In the first scene where Dido and Æneas appear together — act I, scene 3 — Dido and Æneas are planning on getting married, which shows that the relationship between the two characters is already fully developed.

symbolic value than to its potential military significance. Dido is the only character who alludes to her jewels: in the final act, she literally rejects them as ineffective, together with her physical charms, in convincing Æneas to stay:

> **Didon**
> Vains & foibles appas, dont l'éclat tant vanté
> A sçeu de tant d'espoir soûtenir ma fierté;
> Et vous que j'appellois, prévoyant tant de larmes,
> Pour plaire à cet Ingrat, au secours de mes charmes,
> Ornemens précieux, au milieu de ma Cour,
> Vos efforts impuissans ont trahy mon amour,
> Allez, de vostre éclat, dans l'espoir qui me reste,
> J'abhorre pour jamais l'usage trop funeste,
> Et ne sçaurois le voir dans mon ressentiment,
> Que comme une Victime à mon emportement.
> **Barsine**
> Madame...
> *Elle arrache & jette ses perles & diamans.*[68]

The association of jewels with the theme of war and power (the semantic field of war is much more limited in this play) is less clear here than in Scudéry's *Didon*. The difference between the two plays can be explained by the fact that, in the final act of Montfleury's *Ambigu comique*, the power struggle has already been lost by Dido. The literal rejection of the jewels symbolises the failure of the character to achieve what she had set out to do with their help, that is to convince her lover to stay and marry her.

On another level, the dismissing of the jewels can be interpreted as the final breaking down of the character by the playwright. The feminine value attributed to the jewels, combined with the possession of such significant objects as the royal attributes, allows Montfleury to build or reinforce Dido's identity as a female ruler. Once she has lost or devalued the attributes of royal authority, as I have explained previously, her identity is limited to that of an alluring woman. Once her powers of seduction have failed, the character of Dido has to disappear because she has no identity or *raison d'être*. The loss of Dido's allure is illustrated by her failure to implement her wishes in

the next scene: as she has neither authority nor powers of seduction, she cannot persuade Iarbe to carry out her orders (III, 6, 1-29). Death is the logical end to the intrinsic loss of identity of her character. The dagger then used by Dido to commit suicide allows her to retrieve power to a limited extent: since the vengeance she demanded to be carried out on Æneas could not be obtained, she carries it out on herself, thus depriving Iarbe of his wish (III, 6, 20-25).[69]

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[68] Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*, III, 5, 43-53.
[69] Iarbe agrees to marry her but refuses to avenge her.

TITLES, NAMES AND OTHER DESCRIPTIVE ELEMENTS

As well as the body of the actor and the presence and use of objects, epithets also contribute to the construction of the identity of the characters in the five tragedies. A character's identity can be defined for the audience and reader by means of self-assertion, recognition by others — which one might call reciprocity — or confirmed by actions: emphasising specific elements such as royal status versus humanity, for example. In this way, the five authors build the image or identity of their characters. However, these elements can be controversial: validation by the voice of other characters can make them more convincing in the eyes of the audience and readers, as can other elements outside the discourse, such as actions.

An analysis of the use of specific nouns, or titles, in the Dido tragedies of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry, Boisrobert and Montfleury can help us to determine which character or characters actually are in power. It is, therefore, essential to examine the names, titles, and epithets of male characters to compare them to those of Dido. In order to achieve this, I have selected Dido and Æneas as characters who could potentially be in power in the Dido plays of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury. For Boisrobert's *Vraye Didon*, Dido, Pygmalion and Iarbe were selected as the characters most likely to be in power. The following analysis is based on the use of titles and names — such as *reine* or *roi*, *prince* or *princesse*, *majesté*, *Didon* and *Énée* for instance — to refer to the different characters. It should be noted that the relevance of this analysis does not lie in the use of names and titles by the playwrights as such, but rather in the repetition of those names and titles. To facilitate the reader's understanding, tables have been provided that detail the number of occurrences of the most significant names and titles in appendix 6.

Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*

Jodelle's tables clearly show the preponderance of the names Didon and Elyse as the principal means of addressing or talking about Dido: the queen's first names appear forty times in the play, against only eighteen references to her royal status, including *roine*, *Princesse*, *majesté* and *chere Dame*.[70] The most significant title then attributed to Dido is that of sister: *sœur* is used eleven times in the play. The next most relevant word used to describe Dido is that of lover: the word *amante* appears seven times in the play; it should be noted, however, that *amante* is never used by Æneas, and only twice by Dido herself, both times in a negative light as it is used in combination with the adjective *pauvre*.[71] Dido is also described as a hostess,[72] a woman,[73] a mother[74] — or rather as a woman deprived of children — and a wife.[75]

From these figures, it can be concluded that the accent is not so much on the royal status of the character, but more on her mortal condition: Dido is not so much the Queen of Carthage, as a miserable lover, a sister, a betrayed hostess and a childless woman. This stems from the fact that Jodelle is the founder of the French *tragédie à l'antique*, in which the characters symbolise a situation. Madeleine Lazard explains:

> La tragédie consiste alors à mettre en scène une longue déploration, tandis que se déroule le cérémonial tragique qui accompagne cette inéluctable marche à la mort, et doit proposer un enseignement moral.[76]

The human condition represented on stage is more important than the social status of the characters. This is equally reflected in the use of names and titles associated with Æneas.

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[70] Although 'chere Dame' does not refer directly to Dido's royal status, it has been included in this section as it is used as a mark of respect.

[71] II, 869 and III, 1228.

[72] Four occurrences, all in a negative context: III, 1235; IV, 1770 and 1775; V, 2126.

[73] Three occurrences, laying the emphasis either on her physical appearance (I, 183) or weak moral constitution (IV, 1773 and 1990).

[74] Two allusions made by Anne, referring to Dido being potentially pregnant (III, 1448 and 1453); the allusions are meant to persuade Æneas to stay.

[75] One reference made by Barce, in a negative context: Barce predicts the death of Dido, grief-stricken by the loss of Æneas.

As far as Æneas is concerned, his name appears thirty-two times in the play, while references to his royal status and leadership skills are limited to four occurrences: he is referred to as *chef* twice and once each as *Prince* and as *Roy*.[77] Jodelle lays the emphasis on his divine origin, with thirteen allusions to his ascendants, especially Venus, and half-brother, Cupid;[78] it is interesting to note that only four[79] of the thirteen references to his divine origin issue from Æneas and his men, all other references are made by Dido, Anne and the chorus. The fact that Dido, Anne and the chorus refer to his divine origin serves to authenticate his status. The divine identity of Æneas is confirmed by what Doubrovsky calls 'reciprocity':

> La première relation des consciences sera donc une *relation de réciprocité*, où l'une des deux consciences ne pourra s'affirmer comme telle pour l'autre qu'à la condition d'être reconnue par elle, et vice-versa. [...] Le rapport de reconnaissance est donc le double mouvement simultané par où chaque conscience voit l'autre faire la même chose que ce qu'elle fait et fait elle-même ce qu'elle exige de l'autre.[80]

The identity of Æneas is, then, more significantly established by Dido and Anne than by the Prince himself. Æneas is also described as a father[81] and as a husband several times. All references to Æneas as a husband have negative connotations: the first mention of the word 'mari' in II, 634 is made by Dido, who suggests he was her husband but is, now, no more than a guest. Anne is the second character to refer to Æneas as a 'mari', this time to blame him for the death of his first wife (III, 1454), and the final occurrence of the word is by the chorus, blaming Dido for having given up her kingdom in favour of a foreign husband who, at this stage, is abandoning her (III, 1586). Finally, Æneas is

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[76] Madeleine Lazard, 'Didon et Enée au XVIe siècle: la *Didon se sacrifiant* de Jodelle', in *Enée et Didon*, ed. Martin, p. 91.
[77] He is called 'chef' by Palinure in I, 90 and by Achate in IV, 1743. The chorus refers to him as 'Prince' in III, 1577 and as 'Roy' in II, 999.
[78] Venus, mother of Æneas, is mentioned six times (III, 1272, 1294, 1352, 1358, 1526-7 and V, 2149); Cupid, his brother, is alluded to in III, 1259.
[79] Achate alludes to his divine origins in I, 7 and 13, as well as III, 1526-27; Æneas speaks of his 'parents les Dieux' (II, 850).
[80] Doubrovsky, *Corneille*, pp. 93-94.
[81] Æneas is called 'père' six times in I, 76, 164 and 178; II, 643 and V, 2144 and 2149.

referred to merely as a man five times in the play, four of which have negative connotations introduced by adjectives such as *lasche*, *inhumain* and *mechant*.[82]

I will now look at the most significant negative adjectives and nouns used to describe Æneas in the tragedy. The most recurrent are *trompeur*, *traistre*, *méchant*, *cruel*, *inhumain, parjure*, *ingrat*, *lasche* and *estranger*. *Trompeur* and more generally the semantic field of deceit are recurrent in the play. For example, *trompeur* and its derivatives appear six times, always spoken by Dido and her people, while *feinte* and its derivatives appear four times, *ruse* appears twice, *menteur* and *decevance* once.[83] Only one reference to *feinte* and *ruse* emanates from Æneas, when he denies having made promises of marriage (II, 702-03). Every other mention originates from Dido and her people, with a concentration of references in act II. This is hardly surprising as it corresponds to the scene of confrontation, where most of Dido's wrath is expressed.

Traistre and its derivatives are mentioned twelve times. Ironically, the first mention originates from Æneas himself in act I, as he contemplates announcing his departure to Dido. Abandoning Dido is described as making Æneas

Moymesme estre envers moy, de trahison coulpable [...].[84]

The betrayal is, however, not identified as a betrayal of Dido but of himself. This is the only reference emanating from Æneas or the Trojans. The majority of the other references originate from Dido, Anne, Barce or the Phoenician chorus, and are concentrated in the fourth act, after Æneas's departure.[85]

The word *mechant* and its derivatives are used ten times in relation to Æneas, exclusively by Dido and her people, with a majority of mentions located in acts II and

[82] *lasche* appears in II, 481 and V, 2080; *inhumain* is in II, 526 and *mechant* in II, 766.
[83] Dido makes references to deceit in II, 853; III, 1095 and 1185-88; IV, 2125 and V, 2138 and 2225. Anne makes references to it in II, 759 and 764; III, 1179; IV, 1712 and 1762. The chorus of Phoenicians makes references to it in II, 1001 and IV, 2063.
[84] Ibid, I, 280.

V.[86] Nicot's 1606 *Thresor de la langue francoyse* explains that *meschanceté* has connotations of impropriety, indignity and impurity, used here to reinforce Dido's moral criticism of Æneas's actions.[87] *Cruel* and *cruauté* are used ten times in association with Æneas. All mentions emanate from Dido with the exception of one reference by Anne in act III.[88] Most references can be found in act II, in the scene of confrontation.[89] Moreover, Dido associates Æneas three times with tigers.[90] A tiger, according to the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* of 1694, is a 'beste feroce' and when the epithet is used in relation to a man, it means that 'Il est cruel, & impitoyable'.[91] The three mentions of tigers used as metaphors for Æneas can therefore be counted as references to his cruelty

The noun *estranger* is used eight times to designate Æneas. All mentions emanate from Dido and her people, with one exception, but what is interesting is that they are all set in a negative context. This highlights the foreign identity of the Trojans. Also, the fact that the majority of these references are located in the fourth act, therefore towards the end of the play, and not in the second act, like most other negative terms used to describe Æneas, but also after the Trojans have actually gone, shows that the real threat represented by the Trojans probably lies there. They symbolise an external force at odds with Dido and her Carthaginians. The fact that the Trojans refer to themselves as foreigners allows the validation of their status as non-Carthaginians.[92] Moreover, it is

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[85] Dido's references to Æneas as a traitor are in II, 435 and 853; III, 1234; IV, 1980; V, 2226. Anne's references are in IV, 1599, 1602, 1741 and 2078. Barce's reference is in V, 2309. The references by the chorus are in II, 1021 and IV, 2078.

[86] Dido refers to Æneas as *mechant* in II, 480, 482, 603 and 860; V, 2107, 2123 and 2160. Anne does so in II, 766. Barce does so in IV, 1696 and the chorus of Tyrians does so in V, 2302.

[87] Jean Nicot, *Thresor de la langue francoyse tant ancienne que moderne*, p. 404, consulted online at http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos/ on 10/04/2007 at 14:00.

[88] Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, III, 1443.

[89] Dido refers to Æneas as *cruel* in II, 487, 530, 562, 856, 860, 877, 888 and 892 and III, 1186.

[90] Ibid, II, 857, 888 and 930.

[91] *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 1st edition (1694), p. 562, consulted online at http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/ARTFL/projects/dicos/ on 10/04/2007 at 14:00.

[92] The chorus of Trojans refers to Æneas as an *estranger* in III, 1584.

striking that it is less Dido than the rest of the Carthaginians who identify Æneas as a foreigner: Dido only describes him as such on three separate occasions, but Barce and Anne call him *estranger* four times.[93]

The adjective *inhumain* and its derivates are used five times in the play to describe Æneas. All references originate from Dido, with the exception of one mention made by the chorus of Phoenicians, and almost all references are located in act II.[94]

The noun *parjure* is used five times in the play, solely by Dido and her people, however the mentions are fairly evenly distributed throughout the play: there are two references in act II, two more in act IV and one in act V.[95]

Cowardice is also evoked in relation to Æneas, and it is systematically brought up by Dido and her people. *Lasche* and its derivatives are mentioned twice in act II, then once in each of the following acts.[96]

The adjective *ingrat* is used four times in relation to Æneas, twice by Dido in act II, once by Dido again in act III and once in act IV by Anne. Again, it is not unexpected to find slightly more references in act II, which features the confrontation.[97]

In terms of names and titles, it can thus be said that the description and perception of Æneas by the female characters in the tragedy is that of a cruel, inhuman and ungrateful man and husband, but also of a demigod, whereas Æneas himself and his men focus on the leadership skills and royal status of the Prince, as well as on his role as a father figure. Overall the author emphasises, as with Dido, the human nature of the character, while his divine ascendance could be seen as his main contrast with Dido. It should also be noted that there is no real political conscience represented, as can be seen

[93] Dido refers to Æneas as estranger in II, 476; III, 1199 and IV, 1904. Anne does so in IV, 1736 and 1768. Barce does so in IV, 1692 and 1694.

[94] Dido refers to Æneas as *inhumain* in II, 487, 526 and 887; V, 2190. The chorus does so in IV, 2064.

[95] Dido refers to him as *parjure* in II, 448 and 466. Anne does so in IV, 1601 and 1743 and eventually Barce does so in V, 2313.

from the limited use of the chorus in Jodelle's play: they merely amplify the lamentations of other characters.

Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*

In Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant*, the same trends are visible: there is still a preponderance of references to Dido and Æneas as human beings rather than to their royal status. Dido is referred to as *Didon* and *Elise* thirty-one times, while the words *Reyne* and *Princesse* are used on only sixteen occasions. Significantly, ten of these sixteen occurrences are uttered by Dido, Anne and the two choruses representing the Carthaginians, and in the last two acts, where nine of these occurrences occur, only one allusion to Dido as a queen is made by Æneas. The number of references to Dido as a queen made by herself and her people outweigh those made by Æneas and his people. The identity of Dido as a monarch is, therefore, not substantiated by the Trojans: she is seen as a woman more than as a monarch by the male protagonists.

Dido's identity is mainly built on four other aspects: she is referred to as wife, sister, mother and lover. Although the word *épouse* is never used, there are numerous references to her marriage: five of these can be found in the first act, three in the second and three in the third.[98] In the first act, all these mentions are made by Dido and the chorus of Phoenicians, while in the second act they are all made by Iarbe. Finally, in the third act, two are made by Dido and one by Æneas. This is significant, because the only mention of Dido as a married woman made by Æneas is one that denies the strength of the marital links between them. Therefore, Dido's identification is again not validated by outside views. There are no more such mentions in the fourth and fifth acts: this can be

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[96] Dido calls Æneas a coward in II, 479 and 481 and V, 2113. Anne does so in III, 1458 and the chorus of Phoenicians does so in IV, 2080.
[97] Dido calls Æneas ungrateful in II, 478 and 502 and III, 1149. Anne does so in IV, 1777.
[98] There are also two mentions of Dido as wife of Sychaeus, spoken by Dido (I, 2, 158 and V, 1, 1838).

explained by the fact that Æneas leaves Carthage at the beginning of act four, thus rendering null and void any attempt at establishing a marital link between the two characters. The endeavour to partly base Dido's identity on marriage has failed on two levels: there is no reciprocity from the characters concerned and, even worse, the potential husband has disappeared altogether.

There are eleven allusions to Dido as a sister, nine of which are situated in the fourth and fifth acts. The first two references can be found in the first act. Unsurprisingly, all references, excepting the last one, are pronounced by Anne.[99] It is interesting to note that the pattern of usage for the word *sœur* is the reverse of the pattern of usage for references to *wife*: as mentions of Dido as a married woman stop, the references to her as a sister increase. This is explained by the fact that, as I mentioned before, there can be no more references to Dido as a wife after the departure of the Trojans. Dido's identity can no longer be based on marriage, so there is an effect of compensation and her identity shifts towards another aspect: that of sister.

Dido is also twice referred to as a mother but, in both cases, the status of mother is not a real one: in the first act, the chorus of Phoenicians prays to the Gods that Dido may have a child by Æneas and, in the third act, Dido laments that Æneas leaves her childless. There are no actual grounds for her to be considered as a mother, since there is no child. Finally, Dido is also referred to as a lover twice in the play: the word *amants* is used to describe the couple by the chorus of Phoenicians in act one. In act II, Achates also refers to Dido as a lover, but with negative connotations, since she is described as *une amante irritée*. Interestingly, neither of the lovers describes either themselves or each other as lovers.

[99] The last one is pronounced by the chorus of Tyrians begging Anne to rule over Carthage, now that Dido has died.

The discrepancy between the royal and the human status appears even more clearly in the case of Æneas. He is referred to by his name sixteen times throughout the play, whereas there is only one reference to his royal status: he is called *Prince* by Anne, as he is about to leave.[100] The fact that this one occurrence is uttered by Dido's sister is significant: it validates his identity as a monarch, although, interestingly, he never makes this claim himself. He is later metaphorically dethroned by the chorus of Tyrians who name him *Duc.*[101] If the royal aspect of his identity is almost ignored, his aspect as a leader is not: he is referred to as *chef* four times. Again, this title is validated by Anne and Dido, who call him *chef* three times, whereas the chorus of Trojans only refers to him as *chef* once.[102]

The most numerous mentions, after those alluding to his leadership skills, are those regarding his ethnic origin. Most of the twenty-two mentions originate from Dido and her people, as well as from Iarbe. Æneas himself only refers to his Trojan roots four times,[103] while the chorus of Trojans refers to it once (III, 2, 1044). This is hardly surprising, since Æneas is a foreigner in Dido's kingdom and he is a foreigner in Iarbe's eyes too. The foreign part of his identity is, therefore, reinforced by the other characters' outlook. Another part of Æneas's identity is built around his divine origins. There are fifteen references to it in the play, six of which stem from Æneas and his men. But the majority of the mentions, again, come from Dido and her people. This validates the divine identity of Æneas. So much so, in fact, that when Dido attempts to deny his divine

[100] Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, IV, 2, 1112.
[101] Ibid, IV, 3, 1653.
[102] Dido refers to him as chef in III, 1, 665 and IV, 3, 1369; Anne does so in IV, 2, 1186; the chorus of Trojans does it in II, 2, 582. More references to his leadership skills can be found in the play, without a specific noun or adjective being used. In total, there are twenty-nine references to Æneas as a leader.
[103] Ibid, III, 1, 808, 814 and 818; IV, 1, 1092.

origins (III, 1, 843), she fails and later recants herself, invoking his mother Venus, while her people constantly refer to his heavenly connections.[104]

The most recurrent epithet associated with Æneas, after these, is that of *époux*. Although the word itself only appears twice,[105] the number of additional references to his marriage amounts to eleven. It should be noted, however, that Æneas never refers to himself as *époux*, nor do his men. The only time the Prince mentions marriage, as I have explained earlier, it is to deny the strength of the ties binding him to Dido. Æneas is not claiming the name of *époux* for himself, but neither was he claiming the title of *Prince*: both are imposed on him by Dido and her people. If the Trojans could compensate for this by calling their leader *chef*, thus validating his leader status, there is obviously no compensating name in the case of *époux*, as it is a hindrance to their quest. The word *amant* is used even more rarely to qualify Æneas: it only appears once, uttered by the chorus of Phoenician women. As it is only used by Dido's people, it fails to convince.

Æneas is also called *père* or *géniteur* four times in the play: Dido is the first to describe him thus in act I. Then Palinure, one of Æneas's men and Iule, Æneas's son, refer to him as father in act II.[106] The presence on stage of his son allows for fewer references to be made to Æneas as father: every time Iule is on stage or mentioned, the audience and reader are reminded that he is a father.[107]

Hardy uses the same vocabulary as Jodelle to describe Æneas: the semantic fields of deceit, betrayal, indignity, cruelty, inhumanity, faithlessness, ingratitude and cowardice reappear in his play, but Hardy also added the notion of barbarity and a comparison of Æneas with a pirate.

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[104] Dido recants in III, 2, 1004-05; Anne mentions his divine origins in IV, 2, 1113 and 1135.

[105] Dido calls him *époux* in III, 1, 682 and the chorus of Tyrians does it IV, 3, 1656.

[106] Dido does so in I, 2, 210, Palinure in II, 3, 535 and Iule in II, 3, 553 and 555.

[107] Iule or Ascaigne (Hardy uses both names) is present in II, 3. His name is mentioned most frequently in act IV by Dido and Anne: Anne mentions it in IV, 2, 1201-02; Dido refers to it in IV, 3, 1348 and 1373.

Deceit is mentioned once by Anne and thrice by Dido, whereas it is denied by Æneas once. The first occurrences are located in act III, scene 1, the scene of confrontation between Dido and Æneas. The Trojan denies ever pretending he would stay and Dido calls him a *Trompeur*.[108] The next two references to deceit are situated in act V: first Dido, then Anne recalls the duplicity of Æneas.[109] Altogether the semantic field of deceit is far more limited in this tragedy than it was in Jodelle's.

Allusions to the theme of betrayal are also less numerous in Hardy's play. The six references are concentrated in acts II and III. What might be surprising is that two of the mentions emanate from Æneas himself and are not part of a circumvoluted attempt to deny his betrayal as in Jodelle's play. Because Hardy concentrates more on the dilemma faced by Æneas in delaying the decision as much as possible, the audience or reader witness Æneas's inner struggle with his decision as well as his admission of guilt, even if this is largely compensated for by the reasons for his departure.[110] Betrayal is, of course, also evoked by Dido: she refers to it twice in the scene of confrontation and once more in the final act.[111] Iarbe also calls Æneas a *traistre* in the only scene in which he features. What is interesting in this particular case is that Æneas bears the brunt of Iarbe's jealousy as can be seen from the following line:

> De l'hymen de ce traistre avecque sa Princesse [...].[112]

Although Iarbe expresses his disapproval for Dido's behaviour, he seems to attribute the fault mostly to Æneas, contrasting the traitor with the Princess. In effect, Iarbe is the first character to identify Æneas as a traitor in this play. It should however be noted that the betrayal he is referring to is not Æneas's departure. Iarbe is more concerned with the fact

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[108] Æneas denies the betrayal in III, 1, 710-12 and Dido's reply contains two references to deceit in III, 1, 649 and 713.
[109] Ibid, V, 1, 1804 and 1993-95.
[110] Ibid, II, 2, 451 and 456.
[111] Ibid, III, 1, 646 and 649-50.
[112] Ibid, II, 1, 334.

that Æneas has usurped the place that he considers to be his by right and highlights at the same time the unsuitability of the Trojan as a partner for Dido, thereby foretelling both Æneas's future betrayal and its consequences.

Æneas is described as *meschant* in the final two acts. Two of the mentions emanate from Dido in act IV, immediately after the departure of the Trojans from Carthage.[113] The chorus of Tyrians repeats Dido's word at the end of the same act and eventually Anne uses it after Dido's death.[114] Æneas is, therefore, not accused of cruelty until his departure, when Dido's situation is truly hopeless. There is apparently a certain amount of reluctance on the part of Hardy to condemn his hero, which can be seen both in his decision to show the audience or reader the dilemma faced by Æneas as well as to keep accusations of cruelty limited and delayed as much as possible. This can be seen also in the fact that there is only one occurrence of the noun *cruauté* in the play and that it is used by Æneas himself:

> L'aveugle affection t'empesche de comprendre
> Pourquoy je suis contraint à regret de méprendre,
> D'user de cruauté vers l'objet gracieux
> Auquel certes je doy la lumiere des Cieux.[115]

With another admission of guilt (*méprendre*), Æneas concedes that he is cruel, but that his motives, however constraining, are good.

There is no occurence of the word *estranger* in the play. However, as I have earlier explained there are numerous allusions to Æneas's ethnic origins which, in effect, have the same effect on the definition of the protagonist as foreign, especially since, whereas in Jodelle's play there had been references to Æneas as a foreigner, in Hardy's play, there is a reinforcement of the identity of Dido and Carthage. Confronted with the announcement of her lover's decision to leave, Dido laments:

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[113] Ibid, IV, 3, 1299 and 1379.
[114] Ibid, IV, 3, 1663 and V, 1, 1997.
[115] Ibid, IV, 2, 1119-22.

> Carthage, monument de ma constance rare,
> Carthage, que malgré les Astres rigoureux,
> Je consacray, Sichée, à tes manes heureux [...].[116]

Carthage is Dido's city; it is consecrated to her late husband Sychaeus; Æneas does not have a place there. The contrast between Æneas, strongly identified as a Trojan, and Dido, strongly identified as Tyrian and creator of Carthage, alienates the two characters just as much as the use of the word *estranger* to describe Æneas.

There is one occurrence of the adjective *inhumain* in the play. It originates from Dido in act III and describes Æneas's desire to leave, rather than Æneas himself (III, 1, 672-74). As it is the only occurrence and since it is not corroborated by any other character, Dido's accusation remains unconvincing. Moreover, Hardy is careful not to use the adjective to describe Æneas himself, but his project. This allows him to maintain the somewhat positive aspect his character.

The noun *parjure* appears four times in the play, but, as with *traistre*, Hardy attributes two of the mentions to Æneas and the chorus of Trojans. Both these occurrences are situated in act II, as Æneas contemplates announcing his departure to Dido. Æneas calls himself a *parjure impieux* and the chorus of Trojans compares their leader, at the end of the act, to *un parjure Thesée*.[117] Dido and the chorus of Tyrians only accuse Æneas of perjury after he has left: Dido vows revenge against this *parjure infidelle* and the chorus, at the end of the act, repeats her words partially as they describe Æneas as a *parjure ingrat*.[118] Once again, there is an obvious admission of guilt from Æneas and Dido's accusations only appear when all hope is gone.

Ingrat and its derivatives are the only words Hardy uses more often than his predecessor, possibly because the accusation is less serious than some of the others. There are, altogether, eight occurrences of *ingrat* and *ingratitude*, but only seven are

[116] Ibid, III, 748-50.
[117] Ibid, II, 2, 400 and II, 3, 593.

relevant to this study.[119] Hardy uses the same pattern of attribution of occurrences, whereby three emanate from Æneas himself in act II as he faces his dilemma,[120] while three originate from Dido and one from the chorus of Tyrians. In act III, Dido pleads with Æneas and calls him an *Hoste ingrat* (III, 1, 681), however most of the references occur after Æneas's departure: Dido calls him *âme ingrate* and the chorus of Tyrians repeat this word at the end of the act.[121] Finally Dido calls for revenge in the final act against *cet ingrat* (V, 1, 1803).

Lasche and *lascheté* both appear once in the play, yet neither of them is used in reference to Dido. The first mention originates from Æneas who denies staying in Carthage out of cowardice, to avoid the difficulty of his mission, as has been suggested to him by Palinure (I, 1, 117-19). The second occurrence, spoken by Iule, relates to the same issue, but does not describe Æneas, it describes the prolonged stay of the Trojans in Carthage (II, 3, 481). There is consequently no actual reference to Æneas as a coward.

Hardy uses three extra words to describe Æneas. The first one, *perfide*, is employed six times throughout the tragedy. Its usage follows the patterns I have established previously: it is used by Æneas in act II as he contemplates his own guilt, and is used later by Dido on one occasion in act III (III, 1, 652), then it is used respectively by Anne, the chorus of Tyrians and Barce, after the departure of the Trojans.[122] Æneas's fault is thus minimized by his own admission of guilt.

Barbare is the second word employed specifically by Hardy and it appears twice. The chorus of Tyrians utilizes it at the end of act IV as they call out for Æneas (IV, 3, 1675). Dido then uses it in the final act, as she accuses the *barbare impiteux* of being responsible for her death (V, 1, 1846). Both occurrences are situated after Æneas's

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[118] Ibid, III, 3, 1315 and III, 3, 1663.
[119] Achates refers to *l'humaine ingratitude* towards the gods in I, 1, 73-74.
[120] Ibid, II, 2, 425, 449 and 453.
[121] Ibid, IV, 3, 1396 and 1663.

departure and serve to highlight once more the foreign identity of Æneas: by definition, what is barbarous is what is unknown or strange to oneself, which is a perfect definition of the Trojans in relation to the Carthaginians.

Finally, Dido refers to Æneas as a pirate. The first mention occurs before the departure of Æneas in act III (III, 1, 617). This is unusual, because most of the negative references, unless they are counterbalanced by an admission of guilt by Æneas, are located after his departure. The final mention occurs in act IV, after Æneas's departure, thus following Hardy's usual pattern (IV, 3, 1395).

Comparatively, Jodelle and Hardy are similar: the occurrences of *Didon* and *Ænée* are by far more numerous than the occurrences of *Reyne* and *Prince*. There are, however, more references to the Prince's leadership skills in Hardy's play and an obvious attempt to establish his identity as that of a foreigner. The overall impression is the same: the readers and audience are likely to see the two protagonists as representing situations and to assess the play as a slow walk towards death. However, in Hardy's play, there are several admissions of guilt from Æneas. The effect of these on the audience or readership seems to me to be positive: Hardy's Æneas appears to be more humane than Jodelle's and although the eventual result is the same, the fact that we witness how difficult the dilemma is for him makes us empathise with him much more.

Scudéry, *Didon*

With Scudéry's *Didon*, there is a major shift from the human to the royal as can be seen in the tables of appendix 4: Dido is only referred to as *Didon* or *Elise* thirteen times, whereas the number of allusions to her royal identity amounts to thirty. Interestingly the

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[122] Ibid, IV, 2, 1283; V, 1, 1668 and V, 1, 1863.

occurrences of *Reine*, *Princesse*, *Madame* or *Majesté* are fairly evenly distributed throughout the five acts and the majority – eighteen out of thirty – of the references are pronounced by Æneas and his men. In terms of identity, this means that her identity as queen is validated and asserted by Æneas.[123]

There are very few other nouns used to define Dido: she is identified as a *femme* twice, by Anne in act I and by Ilionée, Æneas's son, in act III. Anne's qualification is associated with that of mother on the same line, as Anne advises her sister to enjoy, with Æneas:

> [le] plaisir d'être femme, [le] plaisir d'être mère.[124]

Although Dido agrees, considering there are no more references to her as a mother, and only one to her as a woman, it can be concluded that the attempt to change the focus of her identity away from royalty and towards the more human has failed. The second mention of Dido as a woman is not flattering and evokes the image of a sorceress: Ilionée wonders whether his father is

> Séduit par les plaisirs, enchanté d'une femme?[125]

In fact, the image of the sorceress is first used by one of the Trojans, Sergeste, who describes Dido as a beautiful and powerful witch:

> Cette belle sorcière a des attraits puissants.[126]

Dido is, therefore, more royal than human, more queen than woman or mother in the eyes of both her people and Æneas's.

Dido refers to herself once as a lover, but in a negative context: she is an *Amante méprisée* (IV, 7, 1353). Abandoned would be more accurate a description of her at this

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[123] Dido and her people were responsible for the majority of references to her as a queen in Jodelle (twelve out of eighteen) and Hardy's (thirteen out of twenty) plays.
[124] Scudéry, *Didon*, I, 1, 38.
[125] Ibid, III, 1, 809.
[126] Ibid, III, 1, 755.

point in the tragedy, as this coincides with the moment when Æneas leaves Carthage.[127] There is no reference to Dido as a happy or contented lover within the play, nor is there of Æneas, as the one mention of the word *amant*, used by Æneas himself, is also set in a negative context, when he decides to leave Dido (III, 4, 920).

Similar patterns can be seen in the case of Æneas, whose name appears seven times, while there are twenty-four references to his royal status. What is striking is that the references to him as *Prince*, *Roi* and *Seigneur* are concentrated in the first three acts. But there are almost the same number of mentions originating from Æneas and his people as from Dido and her people.[128] His identity as a royal figure is validated by the Carthaginians, but what is more striking is that, as the occurrences of royal titles decrease, the occurrences of his name increase. It can, therefore, be concluded that his identity as a monarch is no longer validated in the final two acts, which corresponds with his departure from Carthage. Abandoning Dido seems to have deprived him of his royal status, which could suggest that there is a moral judgement of the author on the actions of his hero. This is further supported by the fact that there are no more references to Æneas as a hero or warrior after the third act,[129] and that the three references to his divine ascendance are also located in the first three acts.[130]

There are only three allusions to Æneas as a father: he refers to his son Ascanius in acts I and IV.[131] Yet, for the first time, Ascanius is not amongst the characters of the play, so that Æneas is not seen as a father on stage, even if his paternal concerns are expressed. Dido does use the word *père*, but not in connection with Ascanius. It is, however, ineffective in altering the identity of the Prince, as the occurrence emanates

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[127] He prepares to leave in the next scene (V, 1) and actually does so in the following scene.
[128] Eleven mentions stem from Dido and her people and thirteen from Æneas and his people.
[129] He is called a *héros* in III, 1, 746 by his lieutenant Cloanthe and in III, 1, 788 by his lieutenant Ilionée. He is called *grand Guerrier* by Dido in II, 2, 527.
[130] Dido calls him *demi-dieu* in I, 4, 195 and *fils de Vénus* in I, 5, 420. Ilionée calls him *fils de Vénus* in III, 2, 804.

from Dido's speech in which she wishes he had not left without impregnating her (IV, 1, 1085-90). Fatherhood thus remains very much in the realm of fantasy. However, in a rather strange reversal of roles, Dido has two daughters in Scudéry's play, Thecnis and Zertine, who do appear on stage. Virgil is not the source for these characters and one can only speculate as to the reasons behind their creation. One possibility, I would contend, is that, in an attempt to produce a *gallant* tragedy, Scudéry tried to smooth out the most salient flaws of the main protagonists. One of Dido's flaws could be her inability to procreate; in giving her two daughters, presumably from her marriage with Sychaeus, Scudéry thus side-stepped the issue. However, at no point is Dido called *mère*. This could be explained by the fact that Dido has daughters but no son, so that she is able to procreate but unable to provide her kingdom with a legitimate heir to the throne. The image of the queen as mother to all her subjects — an image privileged by French queens, as I mentioned in chapter two — is one that would appeal to readers and audiences alike, as would the image of a queen unable to provide a legitimate heir to the throne. This was a contemporary issue as, when Scudéry's play was published (1637), Anne of Austria had as yet been unable to carry a pregnancy to term: her first child, the future Louis XIV, was only born in 1638, twenty-three years after her marriage to Louis XIII.

Scudéry uses the same nouns and adjectives as his predecessors to further describe Æneas. The theme of deceit is barely touched on, with one occurrence of the word *trompeur*. Dido uses this word in act IV, before the scene of confrontation, but not before the audience and readers are made aware of his decision to leave (IV, 1, 1006). It is important to note that this is the only reference to deceit in the play, which is

[131] Ibid, I, 5, 385 and IV, 2, 1129.

considerably fewer than in the previous tragedies. This can be explained by the fact that a gallant hero, such as the one Scudéry is trying to create, is unlikely to be deceptive.

There are three mentions of Æneas as a traitor and all of them emanate from Dido. The first occurrence precedes the scene of the confrontation, the second is employed during this scene, while the final occurrence is located in act V.[132] The fact that the references to deceit and treachery originate solely from Dido means that her accusations against Æneas seem unreasonable, since even the Carthaginians do not corroborate their Queen's words.

There are, on the other hand, numerous references to Æneas's cruelty. Firstly, with the three occurrences of *méchant*: the first appears in the scene of confrontation and, of course, emanates from Dido (IV, 1, 1197). Anne then repeats her sister's word, after the departure of Æneas, and Dido employs it again in the final act.[133] The adjective *cruel* is used also — four times, in act IV — when Æneas's betrayal becomes apparent to Dido. The first two occurrences precede the scene of confrontation and one is included in it.[134] What is striking is that Scudéry reapplied Hardy's model and included one occurrence by Æneas himself. About to sail away, the Trojan Prince admits:

> Je ne vous cèle point que je suis criminel,
> Et que mon cœur mérite un supplice éternel.
> J'ai trop de cruautés, et trop d'ingratitude:
> Elle devait avoir un traitement moins rude;
> [...]
> Mais les Dieux, après tout, veulent être obéis.[135]

Scudéry, like Hardy, employs an admission of guilt to make the audience and reader empathise with his hero and juxtaposes it with the higher reasons justifying his departure. The empathy is thus increased as Æneas seems truly moved by the pain Dido will suffer because of him, while he remains nonetheless strong enough to do his duty.

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[132] Ibid IV, 1, 1001; IV, 2, 1192 and V, 3, 1580.
[133] Ibid, IV, 5, 1315 and V, 3, 1578.
[134] Ibid, IV, 1, 1045 and 1095 and IV, 2, 1210.

The set piece of Dido's recriminations also contains the reference to the animal symbol of cruelty, the *tigresse*, which I have mentioned in connection with the previous plays.[136] Nevertheless, it should be noted that the main difference between Hardy and Scudéry regarding the theme of cruelty is that there are substantially more references in the later play.

There are two references to Æneas as a foreigner in this play. The first one, in act I, is set in a positive context: Dido exposes the principles a good sovereign should respect. She declares:

> Mais entre les moyens qu'une âme libérale
> Trouve pour exercer cette vertu Royale,
> Je crois que la pitié des peuples étrangers,
> Qu'un utile secours retire des dangers,
> Obtient le premier rang; et je suis fortunée
> D'avoir pu l'exercer en la faveur d'Enée [...].[137]

Æneas and his men are immediately identified as foreigners in the play, but they do not represent a threat in this act; on the contrary, since Dido then goes on to express her thanks for the help they have brought to Carthage against Pygmalion. The second mention of Æneas as a foreigner is, however, no longer positive: at the end of act IV, after the departure of the Trojans, Dido describes her lost lover as a *superbe étranger*. (IV, 7, 1355). Æneas is further described as a *vagabond* and an *homme sans pays* by Dido's man, Hermon.[138] These words, used as insults, are only used once the Trojans have left. This is easily understandable: as the Trojans have left Carthage, they assert their identity as foreigners.

[135] Ibid, IV, 3, 1295-1308.
[136] It should be noted that tigers, and cruelty, are also associated with Pygmalion in I, 4, 192.
[137] Ibid, I, 4, 181-86.
[138] Ibid, V, 4, 1586 and 1594. Hermon repeats here one of the words used by Dido herself: she had already called Æneas a *vagabond* in IV, 1, 1169.

The adjective *inhumain* is used twice in the play: Dido uses it in the scene of confrontation and Anne repeats it at the end of act IV after the Trojans have left.[139] This is one of the few words used more frequently by Scudéry than Hardy to describe their male protagonist.

There is only one occurrence of *parjure* in *Didon*, used by Dido herself. This may be explained by the fact that this is an inappropriate quality for a gallant hero. As I have explained earlier, there is no denial on the part of Æneas that he is at fault: he is definitely not respecting the vows or promises he has made. However, the author can hardly highlight this particular point if he wishes to convince his audience and readership that Æneas is the epitome of gallantry. Scudéry could have avoided using the adjective altogether, however it offered particular oral effect in the following lines that *perfide*, for example, would have failed to achieve:

> Non, parjure, Vénus ne fut jamais ta mère,
> Ni Dardan ton Aïeul, mais le Caucase affreux [...].[140]

Using *parjure* allowed Scudéry to create alliterations in [r], [j] and [u] in the first line and the sounds [a] and [r] are repeated in exactly the same place at the beginning of the two lines, in an almost anaphoric effect. This allows the lines to flow, but also to be remembered by the actors more easily. This could explain why Scudéry decided to use the adjective, in spite of its meaning.

There are three references to Æneas's ingratitude in the text, but interestingly two of them emanate from Æneas himself. Dido is the first to mention it and the initial reaction of the Trojan Prince is to deny it.[141] However, he later recants and admits to Anne that he is ungrateful, but for reasons beyond his control (IV, 3, 1297).

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[139] Ibid, IV, 2, 1219 and IV, 7, 1352.
[140] Ibid, IV, 2, 1146-47.
[141] Ibid, IV, 1, 1040 and IV, 2, 1099.

Cowardice is mentioned three times in the play. This very non-heroic quality is used by Dido and Anne to describe Æneas in acts IV and V.[142] It is, however, never used by Æneas and the rest of the Trojans, even when Æneas is hesitating about leaving. This accusation seems to stem from the passion of a spurned lover rather from fact or reason.

Scudéry, like Hardy, uses the noun *barbare* to describe Æneas twice. The two lines in which this noun is used are strikingly similar:

> Le barbare s'en va, rien ne peut l'en distraire,
> [...]
> N'est-il pas vrai ma Sœur, qu'un barbare me quitte?[143]

These lines are ironic if the reader bears in mind that what is *barbare* is what is most foreign to oneself, and Dido uses the word precisely when Æneas reveals himself to be most foreign, that is when he leaves. Dido is thus shown to misunderstand entirely the identity of her lover.

The comparison of Æneas to a pirate, which was already present in Hardy's tragedy, is used here again with two occurrences. In the scene of confrontation, Dido calls her lover a *Pirate* and then a *Corsaire* (IV, 2, 1149 and 1158). Of course, these terms are never used by Æneas, nor his men; and they reflect a lover's spurned passion rather than reasonable accusations.

Finally, the substantive most commonly used to describe Æneas in Scudéry's play is *perfide*. It appears eight times and is used by Æneas twice in two passages dedicated to his admission of guilt.[144] The first occurrence emanates from Dido, who uses the word twice more.[145] Anne, who only uses *perfide* after Dido has done so herself, will use it three times altogether.[146] Here the admission of guilt juxtaposed with the

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[142] Dido first uses it in IV, 1, 1038; Anne then repeats it in IV, 5, 1315 and V, 7, 1711.
[143] Ibid, IV, 1, 1009 and IV, 6, 1349.
[144] Ibid, IV, 3, 1305 and V, 1, 1423.
[145] Ibid, IV, 1, 1038; IV, 2, 1160 and 1213.
[146] Ibid, IV, 2, 1205; IV, 5, 1320 and IV, 7, 1352.

higher mission Æneas has committed himself to neutralises the negative impact of *perfide*.

With Scudéry's *Didon*, therefore, the audience and readership are presented with, essentially, the same qualities and flaws in Dido and Æneas, as in the previous works. There is, nonetheless, a notable change in the balance between the human and the royal, as the protagonists are referred to and addressed for the most part by their titles. As far as Æneas is concerned, most of the flaws attributed to him by Hardy appear less frequently in this play, with the exception of his cruelty, his inhumanity, his cowardice and his perfidy.

Montfleury, *L'Ambigu comique*

For the sake of an efficient comparison, I will now examine Montfleury's tragedy. In *L'Ambigu comique*, royal status is still emphasised through the recurrence of *Reyne, Princesse, Madame, Roy, Prince* and *Seigneur*. The identity of Dido and Æneas as monarchs is mentioned respectively forty-three and thirty times. Dido's regal standing is evoked fairly evenly throughout the three acts. In addition, it is mentioned ten times by Iarbe and twenty-four times by Æneas and his people, showing that her identity as a monarch is accepted by all. In comparison, her name is mentioned only thirty-two times.

The state most commonly associated with Dido, besides that of royalty, is that of widowhood. Although there is only one mention of the word *veuve*,[147] there are six references to her late husband and her first marriage. It should be noted that only two of these references stem from Dido herself, two others emanate from Iarbe and two from Æneas and his men. This suggests that widowhood is a notion that is more important to the male characters than to Dido herself. This is also representative of the fact that Dido

[147] The word is used by Achates in I, 1, 82.

is ready to break the vows she made to her late husband and seems to regard herself less as a widow than as a lover or even a future wife.[148] Dido is also referred to as an *amante* once in the tragedy. As she is the only character to define herself as such, it does not seem to be a defining trait of her identity. Moreover the mention is set in a negative context: in act II, Dido warns Æneas, as he announces his intention to leave:

> Traistre, crains la fureur d'une Amante outragée [...].[149]

As in Scudéry's tragedy, there is no reference to Dido as a happy or contented lover. However, as I have explained earlier, the premises of *L'Ambigu comique* are quite different from those of the previous plays: in Montfleury's tragedy, Dido and Æneas are lovers and the play is set on their wedding day. The small number of occurrences of *amante* are, therefore, to be analysed in this context: the word's scarcity does not jeopardise her identity as a lover, but rather it is not necessary for the term to be used much, since it is obvious to the audience or reader that the characters are, indeed, lovers.

In *L'Ambigu comique*, Æneas, like Dido, is overwhelmingly identified by his regal status. He is alluded to or addressed as *Seigneur*, *Prince*, *Monarque* and *Roy* thirty times in the play, whereas there are only twenty occurrences of *Énée*. His royal standing is mentioned eleven times by Dido and her people and four times by Iarbe, making it clear that his identity as a king is recognised by all. Most of the mentions can be found in the first act, there is no even distribution as there was in Dido's case. This phenomenon is not compensated for by an increase of occurrences of his name, as it had been in previous plays: here, occurrences of *Énée* are evenly distributed throughout the three acts. It cannot be satisfactorily explained either by his departure, since he only leaves Carthage, and the stage, at the end of the third scene of act III.

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[148] Dido describes herself as a lover in II, 1, 26 and II, 2, 91. She also describes herself as *Femme du grand Ænée* in I, 4, 10.

[149] Ibid, II, 2, 91.

Æneas is also defined by his heroic prowess, especially in the eyes of the Carthaginians, as can be concluded from the twelve repetitions of the word *Héros*: the word is used eight times by Dido and once by Barsine, her *confidante*. It should be noted that the hero himself never claims this title and that it is only used once by his second in command, Achates. All the other mentions emanate from either the Carthaginians or Iarbe. The same pattern can be observed as with the mentions of the character's royal status: the majority of references can be found in act I.[150] It is interesting that Montfleury should use this noun so often: I explained earlier that Æneas appears more disadvantageously in this play than in any other, if only because he agrees to marry Dido and abandons her at the altar. The repetition of *Héros* could, therefore, be construed as an attempt by the author to rehabilitate his character or at least to maintain a veneer of respectability that would, otherwise, be sorely lacking.

Unsurprisingly, there are more mentions of Æneas as an *époux* here than in any other play.[151] Dido calls him husband twice in act I, then once in acts II and III.[152] Æneas describes himself as *époux* twice in act I.[153] Both Dido and Æneas see Æneas as a husband, thanks to the attitude adopted by Montfleury regarding the issue of marriage. It also ensues that only one of these references is set in a negative context. In act II, after Æneas has expressed a desire to leave, Dido associates the adjective *cruel* and the noun *époux* in the same line:

> Vous le sçavez, cruel, l'espoir d'un tel Epoux
> Ne m'a laissé de cœur, ny des yeux que pour vous [...].[154]

Even in a state of despair, Dido refers to her lover as *un tel Epoux*, which suggests admiration and respect. Shortly after, Æneas changes his mind and decides to stay,

[150] Six occurrences: I, 1, 10; I, 3, 10; I, 4, 18; I, 5, 63 and 75; I, 6, 21.
[151] There are thirteen mentions of Æneas and Dido's marriage in Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant*, but only one mention of the word *époux*.
[152] Ibid, I, 3, 6; I, 4, 8; II, 2, 12; III, 4, 55.
[153] Ibid, I, 3, 18 and 33.

which explains that the next occurrence of *épous* is set in a positive context. Yet, it should be noticed that most mentions occur in act I, so that even after Æneas has changed his mind and decided to stay, there is only one mention of him as a husband, as if to foretell his next and, this time, definitive change of mind.

The noun most often associated with Æneas, after that of husband, is *amant*. There are four mentions of the noun. One of them emanates from Iarbe and highlights Æneas's flight (III, 6, 14). Three of them originate from Dido and only one is set in a positive context (III, 4, 14). The one positive reference is counterbalanced by two references to Æneas as, once, a *perfide Amant*, and once as an *Amant sans foy*.[155] The majority of references are situated in act III, the opposite to the pattern of usage of *épous*. This can be interpreted as representing the evolution of Æneas's status in Carthage: as we get closer to his departure, the audience or reader knows that he cannot be a husband anymore, and this is signalled to them, partly, by the vocabulary used to describe Æneas. As I have explained earlier, this could be explained by Montfleury's presentation of the relationship of the protagonists, but it could also signal his intention to show Dido's awareness of the situation: since she is the one who most often refers to Æneas as a lover, this illustrates her gradual understanding of the situation.

Finally there are two allusions to the divine origins of Æneas. Both emanate from Dido and replicate Virgil's original text, albeit in a concise manner for obvious reasons. The first mention is a positive one and establishes the divinity of the male protagonist:

> Aussi jamais le Ciel, témoin de sa victoire,
> N'a produit un Héros couvert de tant de gloire.
> Je crois, & son aveu ne dément point nos yeux,
> Qu'il est formé du sang des Héros ou des Dieux.[156]

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[154] Ibid, II, 2, 12-13.
[155] There is one positive reference in III, 4, 14. The two negative references are respectively located in I, 5, 110 and III, 5, 37.
[156] Ibid, I, 4, 17-20.

Æneas looks divine and acknowledged his divine origin to Dido. However, there is no specific mention of Venus, which may seem strange. Much had been made of his maternal lineage in the previous plays and in Virgil, so one can but wonder why Montfleury rejected this symbolic connection. With the next mention of his divine ascendants, Montfleury follows again in Virgil's footsteps, as in the scene of confrontation between the lovers, Dido exclaims:

> Non, Traistre, tu ne fus jamais du sang des Dieux;
> Pour se mesler au tien, la source en est trop pure,
> Ta vanité, Perfide, en soûtient l'imposture [...].[157]

This scene had been used by Virgil, Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry to reiterate that Venus was Æneas's mother, yet again Montfleury chooses not to mention the fact. That his tragedy had to be a concentrated version of his predecessors' versions cannot satisfactorily explain his decision, because, in spite of this, he still mentions *Didon*, her royal status, *Énée* and his royal status more often than any of his predecessors.[158] Therefore, the fact that he does not mention Venus is a significant choice. A simple explanation might be that Montfleury assumed that his audience would know the story of Dido and Æneas sufficiently well for them to make the connection themselves. Another explanation might arise from his slant on the relationship of the protagonists: it could be argued that previous authors referred to Venus to justify how Dido fell in love with Æneas in spite of herself and of what she owed herself and her people, even when the action of their play started *in medias res*, as is the case for Jodelle and Hardy, and perhaps, especially, as the play started *in medias res*, since it would have been more difficult to justify putting on stage a monarch so overwhelmingly ruled by passion, without explaining how it was possible. There seems to have been no such preoccupation for Montfleury: the gods play a much smaller part in the characters'

[157] Ibid, II, 2, 85-87.

decisions. They are represented less as human beings used as toys in the hands of the gods than as human beings responsible for their own fate, which can then also account for the very small number of references to the divine origins of Æneas.

Montfleury uses most of the adjectives and nouns that his predecessors employed, with the exception of *méchant*, *inhumain* and *corsaire* or *pirate*: he privileges the themes of deceit, betrayal and ingratitude instead. Deceit is expressed through the use of *feindre* and *cacher* and their derivatives that are used seven times. Two of the occurrences emanate from Æneas and they seem to contradict themselves. In act II, Æneas declares to Dido, who has learnt of his project to leave:

> Et je n'ay prétendu, Madame, dans ce jour,
> Vous cacher mon depart, non plus que mon amour.[159]

But this is later at odds with Æneas's statement to Achate:

> Sans hazarder vos jours, puis-je cacher ma fuite?[160]

Although there is no evidence that Æneas is lying in act II, the attentive reader may wonder whether the recycling of the verb *cacher* might be used by the author to emphasise a certain fickleness. It should also be noted that, while Montfleury's predecessors have made their hero use negative adjectives or nouns to describe himself, it was part of an admission of guilt, which allowed the audience or reader to empathise with him, but that is not the case here. In *L'Ambigu comique*, Æneas claims not to be hiding his departure in act II, then tries to conceal it in act III, which shows not guilt, but rather inconsistency. All the other occurrences of *cacher* and *feindre* emanate, unsurprisingly, from Dido.[161] She also refers to Æneas's divine origins as an *imposture* (II, 2, 87). The association of deceit with part of Æneas's intrinsic identity, his divinity,

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[158] With two exceptions: Jodelle used *Didon* and *Ænée* more often than he did. I am excluding Boisrobert's play from this comparison.
[159] Ibid, II, 2, 28-29.
[160] Ibid, III, 2, 61.
[161] Ibid, I, 5, 95; II, 1, 6 and 39; II, 2, 2 and III, 5, 26.

combined with the fact there are so few references to his divinity and that this trait of identity is not corroborated by other characters, as I have explained earlier, accentuate the perception of Æneas as less of a god-like character, than a flawed human being.

The theme of betrayal is preponderant with no less than eighteen mentions in this play, which is substantially more than in all the preceding tragedies: there are only three mentions in Scudéry's *Didon* and six in Hardy's *Didon se sacrifiant*, for example. Seven of the eighteen mentions originate from Æneas and what is interesting in this play is that Montfleury has established a conflict between two betrayals faced by his hero: Æneas has to choose between betraying Dido and betraying the gods.[162] The use of identical terms to describe his betrayal of Dido and the gods suggests that both parties have equal weight in his mind.[163] Montfleury, like his predecessors, also emphasises the fact that betraying Dido is inevitable and independent of Æneas's will, because he has a higher mission to accomplish:

> Mais loin de vous trahir, pour me charger d'un crime,
> Aux volontez des Dieux je me livre en victime;
> [...]
> Jugez si mon amour aspire à vous trahir:
> Des Decrets des Destins instruit par tant d'Oracles,
> Que pourrois-je opposer...[164]

However, Montfleury goes further in describing his hero's departure as a measure to save Dido:

> Cet hymen, sur le Trône, où vostre amour me place,
> Vous va livrer aux coups du Sort qui me menace;
> Et peut-estre, à mes yeux, les Dieux mal obeïs,
> Me puniront en vous, de les avoir trahis.[165]

Usually, staying in Carthage is described by the playwrights as undesirable and even dangerous for the Trojans, but here the roles are inverted by Æneas and the menace of

[162] Betraying Dido is mentioned in I, 2, 4 and 7; II, 2, 42; II, 2, 49 and II, 2, 80. Betraying the gods is mentioned in I, 2, 21 and II, 2, 145.
[163] The verb *trahir* is used in each mention.
[164] Ibid, II, 2, 42-51.

the gods now looms over Dido. It is interesting to see that, after this brief concern for his lover's safety, Æneas then changes his mind and chooses to betray the gods, thus endangering Dido. All the other mentions of betrayal emanate from Dido and the majority of them are located in acts II and III from the moment Dido is aware of Æneas's potential departure.[166] Æneas sees himself as a traitor as much as Dido sees him as one. However it should be noted that Dido is partly responsible for this element of betrayal in her lover's identity since she encourages him to perpetrate a betrayal, albeit not of her. If betraying the gods is admissible, it naturally ensues that betraying one's equals is admissible too, hence betraying Dido is really ineluctable.

References to cruelty are scarce in Montfleury's play. Dido calls Æneas *cruel* twice only and the author has not used the symbol of the tiger nor the adjective *méchant* (II, 2, 12 and 94). The two occurrences of *cruel* are located in the scene of the confrontation, but because the outcome of this scene is so very different from in the other plays Dido's accusations remain unconvincing, which in turns reflects poorly on the Queen, making her sound unreasonable.

Æneas is described as an *Etranger* on three occasions by three characters: Barsine,[167] Iarbe and, eventually, Dido. Both Barsine and Dido refer to the foreign identity of Æneas in a negative way: they both reveal the reluctance of the Carthaginians to be ruled by a foreigner should Æneas marry Dido.[168] Iarbe identifies the Trojan Prince as foreign in a jealous fit of rage:

> Quoy, lors qu'elle a besoin, méprisant tant de Rois,
> Du secours de ses pleurs pour soûtenir son choix:
> Quand nostre aveuglement, malgré toute sa haine,
> La rend de nostre sort Arbitre souveraine,
> Un Etranger pourra, séduisant ses desirs,

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[165] Ibid, II, 2, 142-45.
[166] Ibid, I, 5, 102; II, 1, 2; II, 1, 40; II, 2, 95; II, 2, 91; II, 2, 131; III, 5, 18; III, 5, 28; III, 5, 37; III, 6, 6 and III, 6, 36.
[167] In *L'Ambigu comique*, Barsine is identified as Dido's confidante.
[168] Ibid, I, 4, 3 and II, 2, 17.

Joüir impunément du fruit de nos soûpirs?[169]

However, as Iarbe turns his rage into lamentation, he reverts back to the nouns *Prince* and *Héros* to describe Æneas. This suggests that the issue lies not so much with the ethnic origins of the Prince but merely with Iarbe's jealousy.

The term *parjure* is used twice, by Dido, in relation to Æneas (III, 5, 19 and 62). Both occurrences are located after the departure of the Trojans. However, here again, the fact that Æneas has remained faithful to the gods rather than Dido makes her accusations unreasonable and reflects badly on her as she seems to place herself before the gods.

Ingratitude is the second most important theme developed by Montfleury in terms of the number of occurrences. Of seventeen mentions, fourteen originate from Dido, mostly in the second act.[170] The first mention appears at the end of act I, when Dido is confronted for the first time with the news that her lover might be leaving.[171] In the final act, Æneas himself uses the word *Ingrat*, but in a context that does not include Dido:

> L'ombre d'Anchise mort s'est offerte à mes yeux;
> [...]
> Puis d'un ton plein d'effroy rompant ce long silence,
> Fuis, Ingrat, m'a-t-il dit; l'objet de tes amours
> Ne te peut couronner qu'aux despens de tes jours [...].[172]

Æneas thus never seems to consider his ingratitude towards Dido, only the gods. Barsine and Iarbe also refer to Æneas as an *Ingrat* after the departure of the Trojans.[173] The fact that characters other than Dido only use this term after the Trojans have left suggests that Æneas does not deserve to be called ungrateful.

There are four occurrences of the word *lâche* in this play. Two of them emanate from Æneas; however, they do not refer to his intention to abandon Dido: on the

[169] Ibid, I, 6, 7-12.
[170] Ibid, II, 1, 5; II, 1, 15; II, 1, 21; II, 1, 34; II, 1, 44; II, 2, 2; II, 2, 25; II, 2,65; II, 2, 97; II, 2, 132; II, 2, 137.
[171] Ibid, I, 5, 94. There are also two references in III, 5, 46 and 62.
[172] Ibid, III, 2, 11-19.

contrary, they refer to the possibility he might not perform his duty and highlight the contrast between the two aforementioned betrayals he must choose between (I, 2, 16 and 23). This contrast is further emphasised when Dido calls his intention to leave *lâches desseins* (II, 1, 13). Finally, once the Trojans have left, Dido demands from Iarbe that he brings her Æneas's *lâche cœur, percé de mille coups* in exchange for her hand in marriage (III, 6, 12). Although Montfleury seems, at first, to use the same technique as Hardy and Scudéry in attributing some of the negative references to Æneas, it is clear that his intention is not to have his hero to admit guilt as freely as his predecessors have done. Instead of an admission of guilt, Montfleury systematically presents the audience and reader with the greater duty Æneas has to perform.

Barbare, like *parjure*, is only used twice at the end of the play: after the departure of the Trojans, Dido uses *barbare* twice to describe Æneas, whereas the references to him as foreign no longer appear (III, 5, 34 and 72). This can be explained by the fact that while *étranger* can be used in a positive or negative context, *barbare*, which means essentially the same, has extremely negative connotations. Thus, once the foreigner has left, he is transformed into something barbarous.

Finally *perfide* is the third most frequently used word to describe Æneas. It is used solely by Dido, from the end of act I, when she discovers her lover's intention to leave, until the end of the play.[174] In Montfleury's play, Dido has grounds to call her lover *perfide*: he has agreed to marry her and this probably accounts for the numerous occurrences of the adjective. However, the overall the situation remains unchanged: by leaving her Æneas obeys the gods, which then gives less weight to Dido's accusations.

Overall, Montfleury follows the pattern established by Scudéry: his protagonists are referred to or addressed more frequently by their royal title than by their name. It

[173] Ibid, III, 5, 58 and III, 6, 25.
[174] Ibid, I, 5, 86 and 110; II, 1, 47; II, 2, 87; II, 2 118; II, 2, 125; III, 5, 5; III, 5, 62 and III, 6, 11.

shows an increasing understanding of royal prerogatives and power and the need to reflect this on stage. Although Montfleury's play can hardly be categorised as classical, it is nonetheless influenced by some of the principles of classicism and does provide the audience with characters whose status is appropriate in classical tragedy. They are, however, very human characters who seem far less influenced by the gods than in the tragedies of Jodelle and Hardy. The flaws of Æneas, mainly his deceit, betrayal and ingratitude are almost systematically explained by the necessity to accomplish one's duty and this also explains why the guilt which was visible in the Æneas created by Hardy and Scudéry is now barely evident.

Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*

I will now focus on Boisrobert's tragedy. Because Æneas does not feature in this play and because the author allegedly does not use Virgil as one of his primary sources, the interest of a linguistic comparison with the other four plays might seem limited. However, I intend to show that, despite these differences, there is, in fact, a striking number of similarities between the five plays. I will first look at Dido and the nouns and titles most commonly used to describe her, then I will look at how Boisrobert deals with Pygmalion and Iarbe: the analysis will reveal that, although Boisrobert does use most of the words his predecessors employed to describe Æneas, there is a split in their distribution, not just between Pygmalion and Iarbe but Dido as well.

Firstly, the trend regarding the use of titles rather than names continues in *La Vraye Didon*: Dido is thus referred to as *Didon* nineteen times, whereas she is described as a royal character on fifty-two occasions. Twenty-five of these mentions originate from Dido and her people and are evenly distributed throughout the play.[175] Iarbe and his

[175] Except in the very short second act.

brother Forbante refer to her regal standing seventeen times, mostly in the fourth act. Pygmalion and his general Astart refer to it ten times, but only in the first three acts of the play. The principle of reciprocity corroborates Dido's royal identity and the fact that it is acknowledged by both Iarbe and Pygmalion suggests that the identity of Dido as a Queen is accepted by all. Yet, by the fourth act, there are no more mentions arising from Pygmalion or Astart: this is indicative of Dido's change of status in the eyes of her brother and foretells his subsequent change of attitude towards her.

There are three occurrences of the noun *sœur*, none of them used by Dido and, interestingly, neither are they used by Anne: two are used by Pygmalion and one by Iarbe. Dido is identified by Pygmalion as his sister, rather than Anne's sister, thus emphasising the kinship between the two monarchs.[176] It is important to note that Pygmalion does not refer to their parentage anymore after act III, neither does he refer to her royal status, thus preparing the audience and reader for his forthcoming actions, which are not worthy of a brother. Iarbe, on the other hand, identifies Dido as Anne's sister, thereby disassociating Dido and Pygmalion (III, 7, 947).

Dido is described as a widow three times in the play, twice by herself and once by Iarbe; however, Iarbe is only repeating Dido's words (I, 4, 272). The first two references appear in act I, and Dido is the first to establish her identity as that of a widow, her words are then reiterated by Iarbe, and are thus corroborated. The term *veuve* is used again in the final act (V, 4, 1390), as Dido is about to kill herself, in what seems a desperate attempt to re-establish the identity she has chosen for herself, as opposed to the one Pygmalion and Iarbe attempt to impose on her, that of a wife. Dido is never identified as a mother or a lover and, although the aim of Pygmalion and Iarbe is to get

[176] Ibid, I, 4, 236 and III, 5, 860.

her to marry, she is only referred to as a wife twice. Iarbe describes for Anne the consequences Dido will have to endure, should she keep on refusing him:

> Je la possèderai comme un esclave infâme,
> Puisqu'elle a dédaigné la qualité de femme.[177]

Anne then repeats his exact words to Dido (IV, 4, 1226), who remains unmoved and still refuses to give in. By refusing Iarbe and by not using the word wife herself, Dido signals the failure of Iarbe's attempt to change her identity into that of a wife.

Dido is described as a woman eight times. She is mostly depicted as a woman by Iarbe and his brother Forbante.[178] Pygmalion uses the word *femme* and, shortly after, ceases to refer to Dido's royal status (III, 4, 825). All the mentions of the word *femme* are set in a negative context, with two exceptions. Firstly, Iarbe describes Dido to his brother in these terms:

> Cette femme n'est pas une femme ordinaire [...].[179]

If, in Iarbe's eyes, Dido is an extraordinary woman, Dido describes herself in what could be seen, on the surface, in unflattering terms: she is *une femme débile* (III, 3, 812). Yet, put in context, she is clearly not weak, since she proposes to resist the willpower and military force of two kings, thus identifying herself as an extraordinary woman. Considering that Iarbe corroborates this statement, Dido's identity is consequently changed.

Some of the words used to describe Æneas in the previous plays are used here to depict Dido. For example, cruelty, which is used in reference to both Pygmalion and Iarbe, is mostly employed in relation to Dido. There are nine occurrences of the adjective *cruelle*, distributed evenly throughout the five acts. With one exception, they all

[177] Ibid, IV, 2, 1017-18.
[178] Iarbe uses the word *femme* in IV, 2, 990 and 1006 IV, 3, 1145. Forbante uses it in III, 7, 882 and 909 and IV, 3, 1142.
[179] Ibid, IV, 3, 1145.

originate from Iarbe and his brother Forbante.[180] Anne uses it once to describe her sister after her death (V, 5, 1435). In *La Vraye Didon*, Dido's behaviour towards Iarbe is not defined as cruel by anyone apart from Iarbe himself and his brother. Even Pygmalion, who eventually sides with Iarbe, does not describe his sister as cruel. It is not surprising that most mentions emanate from Iarbe, the spurned lover, but they make these allegations of Dido's cruelty less believable or at least only believable in the specific context of the relationship of these two characters.

The theme of ingratitude, which was associated with Æneas, is partly associated with Dido in Boisrobert's play. There are eight mentions of Dido as *ingrate*, which all emanate from the male characters and are located in acts III and IV.[181] Again, most of the references emanate from Iarbe, Dido's spurned lover, and so seem to stem from his passion rather than from reason.

Lastly, amongst the words used in association with Æneas, *parjure* and *perfide* are employed in Boisrobert's play in relation to Dido. There is only one mention of each and they both emanate from Dido. However, they are mentioned in a list of things that Dido accuses Iarbe of attempting to impose on her:

> Quoi! me contraindrez-vous d'être parjure aux Dieux,
> Infidèle à Sychée, impie envers les Cieux?
> Voudrez-vous, Hyarbas, que Didon, pour vous plaire,
> Commette un sacrilège avec un adultère?
> Que pour flatter vos maux, et pour rompre vos fers,
> Je sois perfide au Ciel, à la terre, aux Enfers?[182]

Here, Iarbe's attempt to alter Dido's identity into that of a *parjure* and *perfide* character is shown to fail. The heroine's identity is threatened by Iarbe, but fiercely protected by Dido, who will choose death over alteration. Iarbe's attempt can be said to backfire on

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[180] Iarbe uses it in I, 4, 273 and 305; II, 1, 358; II, 2, 472; III, 7, 894; IV, 2, 998 and IV, 3, 1181. Forbante uses it in III, 7, 917.
[181] Pygmalion uses *ingrate* in III, 4, 825. Iarbe uses it in III, 7, 885 and 925; IV, 1, 961; IV, 2, 1006 and 1013; IV, 3, 1198. Forbante uses it in III, 6, 877.
[182] Ibid, II, 2, 503-08.

him, since by rejecting the identity he wants to impose on her, Dido lays it back at his feet.

The single most frequently used semantic field in relation to Dido, which is used to describe neither her nor Æneas in previous plays, is that of pride. Dido's *orgueil* and *fierté* are mentioned nineteen times, systematically by the male characters Iarbe, Forbante and Pygmalion. The majority of these occurrences are located in the fourth act and, throughout the entire tragedy, they are mostly attributed to Iarbe and his brother.[183] There are also six mentions emanating from Pygmalion.[184] Dido is never described as proud by herself, her sister or by her generals. Only the male protagonists she resists describe Dido as proud, which suggests a rather biased assessment on their part. It is interesting to note that the semantic field of pride turns into that of arrogance and insolence in their mouths, especially in act III, after Dido has refused the peace offered by Iarbe. Pygmalion and Forbante refer to her arrogance once each,[185] while Iarbe describes as a *belle arrogante* (IV, 2, 1021). The addition of the adjective *belle* seems to suggest that, even though Iarbe acknowledges her arrogance, her beauty is still an integral part of her identity.[186] Yet, it is her insolence that prevails in the discourse of both Iarbe and his brother as they prepare to wage the final battle against Dido and her troops,[187] as if there was an effort to justify this war by the inappropriateness of Dido's conduct: she is not so much proud as insolent, and this, according to the two brothers, can be dealt with by military retaliation. Pride has, therefore, some rather negative connotations in Boisrobert's tragedy.

[183] Iarbe mentions it in I, 4, 249 and 297; II, 3, 584; IV, 2, 988; IV, 2, 1014; IV, 2, 1020 and IV, 2, 1024. Forbante mentions it in III, 5, 580; III, 7, 909; IV, 1, 957; IV, 3, 1162 and 1164 and 1171-72.
[184] Ibid, I, 4, 342; II, 3, 580; II, 3, 582; II, 2, 624; III, 4, 816 and III, 5, 833.
[185] Ibid, III, 4, 816 and III, 5, 854.
[186] I will come back to the important theme of physical attraction later in this section.
[187] Iarbe refers to it in III, 7, 950 and 928; V, 2, 1014. Forbante does so in III, 5, 583.

Possibly one of the most surprising dramatic choices made by Boisrobert is his decision to lay the emphasis on the Queen's beauty or physical charms: these are referred to in thirty separate occurrences. In a play that aims to represent the character of Dido as 'chaste et généreuse qui [...] aima mieux se donner la mort que de manquer à la fidélité qu'elle avait promise aux cendres de son époux',[188] one could wonder why there would be the need for such an emphasis. The explanation does not lie in the character of Dido, but rather in that of Iarbe, and it is not surprising that twenty-three of the thirty references are made by Iarbe himself. The construction of the latter character relies heavily on the notion of unruly passion, the very same passion Dido was victim to in previous plays: in order to inspire such passion, Dido had to be created as a character capable of inspiring the ardent desire of Iarbe. The recurrence of the theme of Dido's beauty then serves to indicate to the readers/spectators the drive behind the actions of Iarbe.

I will now look at Pygmalion. Firstly, he is the only royal character who is not referred to or addressed significantly more often by his title than by his name. He is called by his name eleven times, whereas there are only twelve clear references to his royal status, mostly in the first three acts, before his betrayal. It should be noted that Dido never refers to his royal status. Only Anne and Narbal, one of Dido's generals, call him *Prince* on five occasions.[189] The remaining occurrences are shared between Iarbe and Pygmalion, as well as his general, Astart.[190] This discrepancy can be explained by two arguments: firstly, Pygmalion is introduced from the scene of exposition onwards as a potentially evil character; hence references to his royal status are bound to be limited to

[188] See *dédicace* to the Comtesse de Harcourt, in Delmas, *Didon à la scène*, pp. 81-82.
[189] Anne does so in I, 1, 78. Narbal does so in III, 2, 659; III, 2, 668; III, 2, 734; IV, 5, 1240.
[190] Iarbe refers to Pygmalion as Prince in I, 4, 219; I, 4, 323; I, 4, 347; II, 3, 590 and 607. Pygmalion does so in III, 4, 817 and Astart does so in III, 4, 813.

avoid creating a negative image of royal power.[191] Indeed, until his betrayal, there is serious doubt as to whether he is even guilty of the murder of Sychaeus, of which Dido accuses him. The numerous unsubstantiated and gradually more unreasonable accusations of Dido tend to make the audience and reader believe that Pygmalion is innocent. However, once the betrayal is undeniable, Pygmalion's royal status is only mentioned once in the fourth act and not at all in the fifth act, thereby preserving the image of royalty in the play.[192] The second explanation of the discrepancy in the treatment between Dido and Pygmalion may stem from the fact that he is the most foreign sovereign in the play, and in this respect he is very much like Æneas. Both foreign kings have a destabilising function in the power dynamic of Carthage: Æneas because he does not have a kingdom to rule, represents a threat to Dido, while Pygmalion represents a threat too, because his intentions are not as innocent as the audience and readership are first led to believe. The scene is situated on the battlefield outside Carthage, between the tents of Dido and Iarbe. The geographical situation of the play accentuates the foreign origins of Pygmalion, whose means are limited, by his own admission, by the geographical distance from his own kingdom (III, 3, 780-95).

Pygmalion is alluded to as a brother twenty-six times. Twenty-three of the occurrences emanate from Dido, Anne and Narbal, Dido's general. Out of these, seventeen occurrences emanate from Dido and not one of them is set in a positive context: each occurrence is either uttered in anger or the word *frère* is associated with negative adjectives such *barbare*, *inhumain* or *dénaturé*.[193] Anne only refers to Pygmalion as her own brother five times, and only in the first act, she never describes

[191] See Dido's words in I, 1, from line 27 onwards.
[192] Pygmalion is called *Prince* in IV, 5, 1240, by Argal, an officer in Dido's army.
[193] Ibid, I, 1, 30; I, 1, 33; I, 1, 46; I, 1, 69, I, 2, 203; II, 2, 374; III, 2, 660; III, 2, 661; III, 2, 670; III, 3, 755; III, 3, 803; IV, 5, 1253; V, 1, 1283; V, 4, 1361; V, 4, 1365 and V, 4, 1372.

him as Dido's brother.[194] All of Anne's mentions attempt to defuse the negative image of Pygmalion created by Dido. Narbal, Dido's general, refers to Pygmalion as a brother once, but this occurrence is set in a negative context, as Narbal comes to announce her brother's betrayal to Dido (III, 2, 659). Three more occurrences emanate from Iarbe and Forbante and it should be noted that they only allude to his kinship with Dido once Pygmalion has defected.[195] This might be explained by the fact that they are no longer referring to his royal status after the betrayal, and this is compensated for by the use of brother instead, thereby limiting his political treachery to a fraternal feud.

All the other words used to describe Pygmalion are used in previous plays to describe Æneas. Deceit is mentioned in association with Pygmalion: one occurrence originates from Dido, but is then questioned by Anne, therefore it remains inconclusive.[196] The semantic field of betrayal is mentioned nine times from act III onward: Dido calls Pygmalion a *traître* six times.[197] Anne refers to his *trahison* once, but refuses to believe it (III, 2, 719). Finally Barcis, an officer in Dido's army describes Pygmalion as a *traître* once, after the betrayal has occurred (V, 2, 1293), while Iarbe is the last character to use this term in relation to Dido's brother, after Dido's death (V, 5, 1474). The fact that even Pygmalion's political ally, Iarbe, identifies him as a traitor, albeit rather late, corroborates Dido's assessment.

Cruelty is mentioned in relation to Pygmalion as well as Dido in *La Vraye Didon*. Both references originate from Dido: the first one alludes to her husband's murder, but because her accusations are, at this stage, unsubstantiated, Pygmalion's cruelty remains unproved. The final occurrence is situated in the final act, in Dido's final speech, where she equates Pygmalion and Iarbe, as regards the harm they have done her

[194] Ibid, I, 1, 5; I, 1, 24; I, 1, 105; I, 1, 129 and I, 1, 175.
[195] Ibid, III, 6, 669; III, 7, 934; IV, 1, 997.
[196] Dido mentions Pygmalion's deceit in III, 2, 676 and Anne questions it in III, 2, 717.
[197] Ibid, II, 1, 640; III, 2, 670 and 672; IV, 5, 1245; V, 4, 1363 and 1395.

and their responsibility for her death.[198] As Pygmalion's betrayal is by now undeniable, this gives more weight to Dido's accusations in both acts.

Pygmalion is also described by Dido as *inhumain* three times.[199] The first occurrence is situated before Pygmalion's betrayal is verified. In a fit of rage, Dido calls her brother a *monstre inhumain* when she suspects he might betray her (III, 2, 748). At this stage, dramatic irony allows the audience and readers to empathise with Dido as we know that Pygmalion does indeed intend to betray his sister and let Iarbe abduct her. Therefore, the acts of betrayal of Pygmalion can seem inhumane to audience and readers alike.

Dido also calls her brother *ingrat* twice in the play. The accusation is not corroborated by any other character and the audience and readers might wonder what Pygmalion is supposed to be ungrateful for. He has, in effect, given more to Dido since his arrival in Carthage than she has to him.

After Pygmalion's defection, Dido calls him *lâche* twice.[200] As this word is systematically associated with flight and abandonment and is substantiated with the actual flight of the character, Pygmalion is easily associated with cowardice by the audience and readers.

The adjective *barbare* is used once with reference to Pygmalion by Dido (I, 1, 69). It could hardly have been used more, as the connotations associated with it, that of being foreign, would alienate Dido just as much as Pygmalion: although Dido reigns over Carthage, she does come, like her brother, from Tyre, and if one of them is associated with being foreign in a negative way, it is difficult to see how the other would not automatically be associated with it too.

[198] Ibid, I, 1, 96 and V, 4, 1360.
[199] Ibid, III, 2, 748; III, 3, 803 and V, 4, 1397.
[200] Ibid, III, 3, 805 and IV, 5, 1249.

The words *perfide* and *perfidie* are used five times in relation with Pygmalion, four times by Dido, unsurprisingly, and once by Narbal.[201] Although there are no references emanating from characters other than Dido and her general, the actual betrayal of Pygmalion seems to legitimise the use of these words. In several cases, in fact, although the accusations are not corroborated by other characters, the actions of Pygmalion speak louder than words: the audience and readers understand that the judgment of the other characters is valid.

Finally I will focus on Iarbe. Unlike Pygmalion, Iarbe is referred to and addressed by his title more frequently than by his name: *Hyarbas* is pronounced twenty-four times, whereas *Roi*, *Prince*, *Monarque* and *Seigneur* appear fifty-one times in the play. The occurrences are shared fairly evenly between the three monarchs and their people, thus establishing Iarbe's identity as regal.

Iarbe, like Æneas, is referred to as *amant* in *La Vraye Didon*. Dido never uses this term but it is used once by Anne. It is, however, an unusual lover that is described by Anne, as she speaks of Iarbe as *un Amant armé* (III, 1, 652). Thus, there are no positive mentions of Iarbe as a lover emanating from Dido or her people. The rest of the mentions originate from either Pygmalion or Iarbe himself: neither of them is able to provide Iarbe with the reciprocity he needs to alter his identity into that of a lover.[202]

Iarbe, like Æneas again, is called *époux* twice in this play. The first occurrence emanates from Anne who advises Dido to reconsider Iarbe's proposal:

> De votre propre gré faites-en votre époux,
> Et tâchez d'obliger ce Prince redoutable
> Par une affection et franche, et véritable.[203]

[201] Dido refers to him as *perfide* in I, 1, 125; III, 2, 674; V, 4, 1363 and to his *perfidie* in III, 3, 810. Narbal refers to it in III, 2, 742.
[202] Pygmalion calls Iarbe *Amant* in I, 4, 233 and 328 and II, 2, 377. Iarbe refers to himself as a lover in I, 4, 228; II, 2, 384; II, 2, 393; II, 2, 475; II, 3, 604; III, 7, 887.
[203] Ibid, I, 1, 136-38.

Marriage is considered mostly from a political point of view by Anne: Iarbe is *redoutable*, therefore it makes sense to marry him and not make an enemy of him anymore. This fairly cold and pragmatic outlook contrasts greatly with the emotional descriptions of Sychaeus by Dido and is subsequently unlikely to convince her. Iarbe speaks of himself as an *époux* as well, but only to report Dido's stern refusal (I, 4, 268). The identity of Iarbe as a husband is consequently never really considered.

Iarbe's divine origins, like those of Æneas in previous plays, are mentioned twice. In fact, Hardy had already mentioned Iarbe's divine ancestors briefly, so that Boisrobert does not offer anything particularly original here.[204] The two references emanate from Iarbe himself. The first one is used by Iarbe to swear that he never meant to wage war on Dido, but was forced to do so by her rebuttal: hardly a convincing argument (I, 4, 290). The second occurrence is used by Iarbe to remind Dido of his personal glory and standing, when he is trying in vain to convince her once more to give in to him (II, 2, 463-64). Overall, the evocation of Iarbe's divine ascendants is, therefore, unable to deliver the expected result.

Iarbe's cruelty, like that of Dido and Pygmalion in this play, is mentioned. Iarbe, in a fit of rage, refers to his own forthcoming cruelty after Dido's renewed rebuttal:

> N'en attendez plus rien que des saccagements,
> Que des meurtres cruels, que des embrasements.[205]

Having established himself that he is capable of cruelty, it is then logical that other characters should acknowledge this part of his identity. Thus, Anne refers to him later as a *cruel Monarque*, while Dido refers to Pygmalion and Iarbe as *cruels* and responsible for her death.[206]

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[204] See Hardy, *Didon se sacrifiant*, II, 1, 287-89 and corresponding note.
[205] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, IV, 2, 1027-28.
[206] Ibid, V, 1, 1278 and V, 4, 1360.

Iarbe is also called *inhumain* in this play. Although one of the three occurrences emanates from him, as well as two from Dido, there is no reciprocity: Iarbe uses *inhumain* as he denies to Pygmalion that he has ever wanted to harm Dido (I, 4, 303). Dido's use of this word remains, therefore, ineffective, as it is not corroborated by any other character.[207]

Finally, Iarbe's cowardice, like that of Æneas in previous plays, is mentioned. The first occurrence originates from Anne as she admonishes Iarbe who has expressed his intention to destroy Carthage in a bloody massacre. Iarbe is reminded of his royal standing by Anne who qualifies his reaction as *une lâche faiblesse* (IV, 2, 1050). Dido further describes the fall of Carthage as Iarbe's *vengeance lâche* (V, 4, 1377). Finally, Iarbe's cowardice is corroborated by Iarbe himself in the final scene in an admission of guilt that is reminiscent of Æneas in Hardy's or Scudéry's plays. Iarbe wonders:

> Dois-je sortir du gouffre où j'ai précipité
> Par mes lâches projets cette chaste beauté?
> Non, non, il faut mourir pour suivre sa fortune [...].[208]

This admission of guilt is followed by Iarbe's suicide, as if the acknowledgement of his true identity, that of a coward, at least partly, fatally clashed with the idealised identity of this character.

In *La Vraye Didon*, Boisrobert does not use the *Æneid* as the main source for his storyline but it should now be obvious to the reader that he knew both the works of Virgil and his predecessors: the similarities, down to the exact words, are too numerous to be coincidental. There is a lot to say for Boisrobert's choice: by changing the story, he avoided boring his audience, but he also proved himself an excellent translator and interpreter. If the words are identical, they are nonetheless reorganised and attributed to different characters in order to create a different power dynamic, while attempting to

[207] Ibid, II, 2, 416 and V, 4, 1397.
[208] Ibid, V, 5, 1463-65.

respect a certain vision of royal power. Whether this allowed him to truly rehabilitate Dido remains to be seen.

Dido, as represented by Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry, Boisrobert and Montfleury, and the other female rulers discussed in chapter three are not the extraordinary women moralists thought could exceptionally rule a country. Dido, like the other tragedy queens, is not a *femme forte*: she is flawed and deeply human; she succumbs to passion, αδυνατον, wrath and madness. Is this to say that, for all playwrights, a man is more suited to the throne than a woman? It is unlikely, since Dido's male counterparts are flawed too: Pygmalion succumbs to greed and cruelty, Iarbe succumbs to cowardice, cruelty, wrath and madness. Nor is Æneas exempt from fault: he seems as *variable*, *muable* and *inconstant* as the women described by Rabelais, especially in *L'Ambigu comique*, where he does agree to marry Dido before abandoning her at the altar. However, the hero's redeeming feature is that he is justified in leaving: he has made a promise to the gods and this supersedes any promise he might have made — which he actually denies having made in the plays of Jodelle, Hardy and Scudéry — to Dido who is only a mortal. Worst of all, enticing Æneas to stay and give up his divine mission makes Dido the source of dishonour, as well as the source of pain and damnation evoked in the *Récollection rimée des mauvaises femmes*.[209]

From Scudéry's play onwards, there are increasingly frequent references to the royal status of Dido and her various male counterparts. The increase in references to the characters' royal status may be explained by the increased importance of hierarchies in French society. Elmarsafy argues that

> ... [t]he hierarchisation of the stage and the division of the characters into agents and objects of manipulation clearly reflects the hierarchies that

[209] Angenot, *Les Champions des femmes*, pp. 14-15.

> were hardening into the social structures of seventeenth-century France. [There are] two principal processes in the operation of this society: first, the importance of rank (or order), and second, the extent to which power translated into authority, the power to manipulate those who were not as powerful. The society of orders was structured so as to allow identity to depend, in the first place, on rank.[210]

The flaws of male and female characters are present both in their actions and discourse. Talking about objects on stage, Vuillermoz explained that 'la redondance de signes élémentaires est censée servir l'expressivité des comédiens et accroître la lisibilité de la représentation [...]'.[211] The references to material symbols are limited and the symbols are systematically squandered by Dido leaving her the shell of her initial self: by shedding the attributes of her royal power, she abdicates as a monarch. To an extent, the same can be said of the use of names and titles in the five tragedies studied here. Their importance is evident not so much from their repetition but in their variation within each play and from one play to another. Names and titles, like symbolic objects, allow the playwright to express the power struggles between the characters: as Dido loses or subverts the attributes of her power – crown, sceptre and throne – she loses her identity as a queen, which is in turn reflected in the names and titles used to refer to her. The loss of royal symbols equates to the loss of royal status for Dido and the only thing left is a human being who, like her male counterparts, is flawed.

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[210] Ziad Elmarsafy, *The Histrionic Sensibility: Theatricality and Identity from Corneille to Rousseau* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2001), pp. 34-35.
[211] Vuillermoz, *Système des objets*, p. 134.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Passion plays an essential part in the story of Dido as it helps playwrights define her while altering her identity: introduced as a good monarch, using her power to build Carthage and rule her new-founded city, Dido remains, nonetheless, a controversial figure. As a woman in power, Dido is part of a long-standing tradition, in French tragedy, of unsuccessful queens: up until 1647, the models of queens produced by French playwrights are negative. This partly explains why even Boisrobert's tragedy, which allegedly rehabilitates Dido, fails to provide a positive image of her.

Dido succumbs to a passion for Æneas in the plays of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury. This passion takes various forms: the use of rhetoric and the themes of *furor*, guilt and innocence in the four plays show that the intentions of the four playwrights are different. Most of Dido's rhetoric is based on emotions, in contrast with the rhetoric of Æneas which is based on logic. Supplications and tears are used to debase the figure of the Queen, while Dido's own words suggest she is an unsuitable monarch as her inability to provide her kingdom with a legitimate heir is evoked. Montfleury uses tears most frequently and, while his Dido might appear less debased by these tears than in previous plays (tears are described as part of a specifically feminine arsenal, a proactive way to convince her lover to stay), she is constructed as a woman concerned more by her passion than her duty. In the four Dido tragedies, the reader finds similar vocabulary and metaphors, yet they are used differently: the semantic fields of love, madness and rage are used by all authors, but Jodelle attributes to the Trojans most of the references to

Dido's state of mind, whereas Hardy tends to attribute these to Dido. The effect is that Hardy's Dido seems guiltier, because she seems more aware of her condition. This tendency is confirmed in Scudéry's play: all references to love and madness emanate from Dido or Anne. On the other hand, rage is scarcely alluded to in this play, which can be explained by the fact that Scudéry is writing a gallant play in which rage would be inappropriate.

Boisrobert's effort to rehabilitate Dido, or to transmit the 'historical' model, failed. His Dido is not exempt from blame, even if she does choose to remain faithful to the vow she made at the death of her husband. Iarbe and Pygmalion are assigned a more negative image than Æneas in the other plays, but still fail to make Dido look entirely innocent: *furor* is expressed by both Dido and Iarbe in this play. The amorous *furor* of Dido is partly transferred to Iarbe, but the Queen still displays rage. Furthermore, the 'historical' model preferred by Boisrobert did not inspire later authors, thus it can be said that the transmission of the model failed. This is probably partly because the construction of a positive image of female power is problematic for Boisrobert. His understanding of royal power is reflected in the masculinisation of Dido. Constancy and resoluteness, for example, are two of Dido's qualities that are emphasised by Boisrobert. Her resoluteness and sense of honour offer an inverted reflection of the behaviour of Iarbe and Pygmalion. Thus, the peace organised by the two men is rejected by the Queen as dishonourable[1] — and this fear of dishonour is one that anti-feminist moralists attributed to men. Sheer determination and the importance given to one's name are also central notions associated with Boisrobert's Dido, as can be seen from one of her speeches, when she realises she is surrounded by traitors (II, 2, 557-66). Boisrobert's Dido is very much created to contrast

[1] Boisrobert, *La Vraye Didon*, III, 3, 796-98.

with the male characters who represent royal power, so that the qualities attributed to Dido, constancy, sense of honour, determination, are those that are lacking in her male counterparts. They are, therefore, not typically feminine qualities, but masculine qualities. Dido's fate is intrinsically linked with these qualities, which are taken too far, turn to hubris and therefore herald the end of the Queen of Carthage. In all five tragedies, *furor* is used by the authors to translate a destructive force: when the object of Dido's passion is gone, this force turns inwards and brings about the demise of the Queen.

Material representations of royal power, such as crowns, sceptres and thrones also contribute to paint a negative picture of Dido in the plays of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury. Either associated with lust or willingly abandoned, these symbols of royal authority fail to confer their expected grandeur on to Dido. Swords and sceptres, as phallic symbols, help the playwrights voice their anxieties concerning the gender of Carthage's monarch, anxieties that reflect contemporary fears regarding female regencies. There are two ways of interpreting swords and sceptres: either Dido is usurping masculine symbols — and, when Iarbe gives her his sceptre, this usurpation can be read as a symbolic emasculation — or masculine symbols are inappropriate in her realm. This stems from the fact that Dido cannot be said to usurp a man's throne as such, since she created her own 'queendom': it is an essentially female realm, reminiscent of the realm of the Amazons. In this 'queendom', masculine symbols are inappropriate. Epithets, which contribute to the construction of the identity of the characters, are used to show the power dynamic in the five plays. For example, Dido's inability to enforce the title of *époux* on Æneas in the texts of Jodelle, Hardy, Scudéry and Montfleury, shows the weakness of her ability to convince. Similarly, the lack of validation for the negative

epithets used by Dido to identify her lover confirms her powerlessness. The discrepancies as regards the use of titles — such as *roy*, *reyne*, *prince*, *princesse* — in the different plays, can be explained by the evolution of social structures in seventeenth-century France, where 'rank and social role were synonymous'.[2] In his attempt to restore Dido's reputation, Boisrobert uses the same epithets as his predecessors on a number of occasions, but transfers some of the negative epithets employed to describe Æneas onto Dido and some of the negative epithets employed to describe Dido on to Iarbe. In the case of Dido, the lack of validation by other characters means that the nouns and adjectives cannot alter negatively the image of the queen. The transfer is more successful with Iarbe, who retains some of the traits previously associated with Æneas. Nonetheless, as explained above, the image of Dido remains overall negative, even in Boisrobert's play.

In the light of the preceding analysis, it is interesting to look at the Dido tragedies in the wider context of tragedies dealing with women in power. A quick glance at appendix seven shows a preponderance of these characters in the 1630s and 1640s. A wide range of women in power appear on stage: from legendary queens — the two Cleopatras, Dido, Helen of Corynth, Zenobia, Semiramis — to British queens — Jane Grey, Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots. This can easily be explained by the fact that Marie de Medici was Queen Regent from 1610 to 1617 and that she remained present on the political scene until the beginning of the 1630s. Her involvement in politics, which I have described in chapter two, was extremely controversial and can account for the increased number of tragedies dealing with women in power in the 1630s. The representation on stage of people's fears and anxieties related to the threat embodied by

[2] Elmarsafy, *The Histrionic Sensibility*, p. 35.

Marie de Medici in a time of political uncertainty, would have been a wise choice on the part of playwrights. The enactment of these fears would have attracted wider audiences who could identify with the issues raised in the plays. It is no coincidence that none of these plays features a successful queen. The sustained interest in women in power throughout the 1640s can be explained by the conspicuous absence of Marie de Medici from France and the Regency of Anne of Austria (1643-1651). The anxieties aroused by Marie de Medici would have gradually decreased with her final exile in 1631, but she only died in 1642. During this time, she plotted against her own son, even engaging in outright sedition against him in 1632.[3] It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that people's anxieties would not have diminished because of her absence. To make matters worse, she took refuge with the enemies of France and lived in Holland and England.[4] Her continuous plotting against Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu — with the help, until 1633, of her youngest son, Gaston d'Orléans —[5] represented an actual external threat to France. When Anne of Austria became Queen Regent in 1643, a year after the death of her mother-in-law, the image of women in power was consequently a negative one. It is no coincidence that Louis XIII expressly ordered that the Royal Council, and not his wife, should exercise power during his son's minority.[6] The Queen's reputation was poor and, as a Spaniard, she represented both an internal and external threat, as she moved France towards a rapprochement with Spain. Over the period of her Regency, almost all tragedies featuring women in power present a negative image of queens.[7] In 1647, Gilbert was the first playwright to offer an alternative view on the subject with his *Sémiramis*. In

[3] See Delorme, *Histoire des reines de France*, pp. 286-87.
[4] Ibid., pp. 292-321.
[5] Ibid., pp. 289-90.
[6] See chapter two.
[7] This is further demonstrated by the number of *mazarinades* published against her.

this play, Sémiramis becomes Queen of Ninive and, with popular support, vanquishes King Ninus, who is a poor monarch.[8] It is striking that in the same year, Nicolas Desfontaines had his *Véritable Sémiramis* published, a tragedy on the same topic as Gilbert's, but with a completely different outlook: a return to the traditional negative view of women in power. Rosidor, in 1662, is the second playwright to present a queen vainquishing an inadequate king in his *Mort du Grand Cyrus, ou la vengeance de Tomiris*. However, his Tomiris is represented as a blood-thirsty, vengeful queen.

Out of thirty-eight plays considered in this thesis, fifteen feature men as internal threats, twenty-six queens as internal threats, three the 'peuple' as an internal threat. Thirteen tragedies have queens facing external threats, which are always embodied by men. This shows two things: firstly women are considered as unsuitable rulers more easily than men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Secondly, that aggressive expansionist behaviour is seen as a male prerogative: all external threats are represented by men. However, the involvement of an external threat does not systematically exculpate the female sovereign: in the tragedies dedicated to Dido, Cleopatra, Zenobia and Thomyris,[9] the queens appear to be just as guilty as their attackers.

As a member of small group of ancient queens who did actually rule their kingdoms, Dido was one of a very few possible characters that could allow playwrights to enact contemporary fears and anxieties towards female regencies. These playwrights, except for Boisrobert, contributed to the dissemination of the 'mythical' Dido, while French moralist writers still held the 'historical' model as true. Le Moyne, for instance, wrote in a section of his works published in 1671 and entitled 'The Faithful Dead':

[8] Gabriel Gilbert, *Sémiramis*. See chapter three for details.

[9] Thomyris is more clearly labelled guilty in Quinault's *Mort de Cyrus* than in Rosidor's play.

Didon ne vid jamais cét Homme ;
Et la fable de son amour
N'est qu'un fantosme mis au jour,
Pour relever l'honneur de Rome.
Sichée entra seul en son cœur :
Tout seul il en fut le vainqueur,
Tout seul il fit sa destinée :
Et jamais feu n'u pût toucher,
Après son premier Hymenée,
Que la flame de son bucher [...].[10]

This dichotomy of Dido's identity is still valid nowadays. The survival of the 'historical' Dido now lies with African and particularly Tunisian artists. Several films and telefilms were produced in the 1970s and 1980s, which are unfortunately not available, at least not at this time, for viewing in Europe.[11]

The reasons for Dido's African success are obvious: as a national figure of positive power, resistance against the destructive forces of the West — not represented by Æneas anymore, but by the Romans in general —, her struggle against the Roman Empire has connotations of the struggle of David and Goliath, which are flattering for the Tunisian construction of a national identity. I would go further and suggest that projecting this strong, moral female figure as a symbol of their identity and their great history onto the rest of the world is going against Western prejudices with regard to the treatment of women in North Africa and the Middle East. Thus, Dido, as a literary and aesthetic model has evolved into a political tool of national, and possibly international, propaganda.[12] However the 'mythical' Dido still prevails in the Western world with a number of novels

[10] Pierre, Le Moyne, *Œuvres poétiques*, p. 411.
[11] See Alya Baccar, 'Survie d'Elissa-Didon dans la Tunisie contemporaine', in Martin, *Enée et Didon*, pp. 241-49.
[12] See Azzedine Guellouz, 'Une interprétation géo-politique du mythe: l'*Elégie à Carthage* de L. S. Senghor', in Martin, *Enée et Didon*, pp. 163-72.

having been published since the 1980s.[13] The plays of Jodelle and Hardy have recently been reedited, but this is perhaps simply a testament to academic interest in them, making Purcell and Marlowe the sole valid depositories of Dido's myth in Europe and America. The 'historical' Dido will probably remain confined to Africa and, more specifically Tunisia, where they have a vested interest in keeping her alive. In Europe and America, the *Æneid* is still so influential, as is the quality of some of the works which used it as their main source, that it is difficult to see the 'historical tradition' being revived.

[13] See Claude Aziza, 'Les visages de Didon dans la fiction contemporaine', in Martin, *Enée et Didon*, pp. 157-62.