EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES

Translation and Ovid as diplomatic tools in William Caxton's *Eneydos* (1490)

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In 1490, in Westminster, William Caxton published *Eneydos* – the first printed translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* in vernacular English.[1] *Eneydos* is an English translation of an anonymous French text called *Le Livre des Énéydes compille par Virgile, lequel a esté translaté de latin en François*.[2] Although the source text describes itself as a French rendering of *Aeneid*, *Le Livre des Énéydes* is not a *verbatim* translation of Virgil's epic poem: Tudor translation practices tended to create dialogue between sources through comparisons between texts, the incorporation or dismissal of elements from a specific episode, as well as digressions. As a result, *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*, although read as one unified version of Virgil's *Aeneid*, borrow from different source texts and offer diverging readings of certain mythological figures and episodes. Two accounts of Dido's life are told in *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*: a rewriting and translation of Boccaccio's depiction of Dido's life in *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium* (1355-73) – according to which Dido kills herself in protest as she refuses to marry a neighbouring king in order to stay true to her vow of chastity – is followed by a rewriting and translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* 4, in which Dido falls in love with Aeneas and commits suicide out of love and despair when he eventually leaves Carthage.

The juxtaposition of these two conflicting and opposing versions of Dido's life introduces a well-known debate into the text. Indeed, the French compiler brings together two accounts that are representative of two of the three traditions that surround the figure of

[1] Craig Kallendorf, *A Bibliography of the early printed editions of Virgil, 1469-1850* (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2012), p. 220.

[2] Quotes from the *Livre des Enéydes* are from Anon., *Le Livre des Énéydes* (Lyon: Guillaume Le Roy, 1483). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Rés. g-Yc-313. Three copies have come down to us in printed form. Yet, the study of palaeographical errors reveals that Caxton probably translated from a manuscript source text. I would like to thank Florence Bourgne for her insightful comments on that point.

Dido (Virgil's misogynistic rendition of Dido's life, and Boccaccio's historic, arguably pro-Dido digest), putting a greater emphasis on the mythological figure and thereby stirring up debate on the Queen of Carthage. There is a basis for this, as for many centuries, Aeneas' supposed cowardice and Dido's arguable virtue have been discussed in literature.[3] The third tradition – the Ovidian angle – depicts Dido under a favourable light and condemns Aeneas for his dubiousness. It is introduced into the narrative by William Caxton, who added pro-Dido elements to his translation. And yet, Caxton does not openly defend Dido's plight: the changes he makes in his translation are fairly subtle. *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* reactivate the debate and directly take part in the *Querelle des Femmes* (sometimes translated as the Battle of the Sexes), a literary debate on the condition of women which was then raging throughout Europe.

The argument over the condition of women in *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* happens on different levels: on the editorial level, as selected episodes are interpolated apparently to stir up debate; on the level of translation, as Caxton makes changes in his edition; on a diegetic level, as several scenes of debates are added to the Virgilian poem; and on a stylistic level, as women use a specific type of rhetoric to discuss matters and reach an agreement through noble means. That this dispute seems to permeate throughout *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* might be because tensions were inserted to better reach a form of balance between men and women. The fact that the episodes of Dido's death and the question of her legacy are greatly emphasised in *Le Livre des Énéydes* and even more so in *Eneydos* is perhaps telling. In *Fictions of Embassy*, Timothy Hampton considers the role of memory and memorialisation in Guicciardini's *Ricordi* (1530). Hampton explains that memorialisation was used as a diplomatic tool in political negotiation, since memory acts as 'the repository of the rituals and stories that mediate the relationships between rival groups'. Memory is thus a powerful element in negotiation, 'a kind of rhetoric aimed at the construction of a story shared by different communities'.[4] If the figure of Dido has sparked off debates for centuries, then using the two opposing accounts of her death and their aftermaths could be seen as an efficient way of reaching truce.

This article therefore aims at examining how the act of translation and how the Ovidian intertext are part of a proto-feminist rhetoric of appeasement of violent misogyny. I shall first tackle how the *Querelle* is directly introduced into the two texts' narratives and

[3] For a detailed account of the evolution of the figure of Dido, see Marylinn Desmond, *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality, and the Medieval Aeneid* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 23-73.

[4] Timothy Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 27-8.

explore how *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* stage women as active agents of diplomacy. I shall then analyse Caxton's silent modifications as he adds an Ovidian perspective to Dido's story, using Ovid as a 'balancing instrument' to appease tensions. We shall see how appeasement is also reached through digressions – some of them borrowed from Ovid – at times marginalising Aeneas from the narrative, and even turning Aeneas's case as *exemplum in malo*.

Introducing the *Querelle des Femmes* into the narrative

The narratives of *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* are composed of direct sources and subtly interwoven intertexts ranging from classical literature (among which are Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and *Heroides*) to medieval texts both in French (such as Laurent de Premierfait's *Des Cas des Nobles*, a French translation of Boccaccio's *De Casibus*; or *L'Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, a French thirteenth-century chronicle) and in Latin (Boccaccio's *De Casibus*). As such, *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* therefore offer a wealth of perspectives on Aeneas' epic quest. Moreover, the cultural and social environments in which the *Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* were produced play a major part in the reception and interpretation of these intertexts.

Unlike Virgil's *Aeneid*, *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* do not open on Aeneas' shipwreck onto the shores of Carthage and his encounter with Dido. Both rewritings follow *ordo naturalis* instead and events are narrated chronologically. The figure of Dido thus arrives much later in the narrative – after Aeneas' flight from Troy and his consecutive hardships. Dido's appearance in the account is further delayed by a comment made by the French compiler directly before her introduction. He explains that he recently read Boccaccio's '*le cas des nobles*' – the '*Fall of Noblys*' in *Eneydos* – as a reference to *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*. Caxton's translation of this passage is fairly close to the source text and reads thus:

> I fonde the falle of Dido, somtyme quene and fou*n*dresse of the noble cyte of Carthage, the whiche, in redynge, I was abasshed and had grete merveylle / how Boccaccio, whiche is an auctour so gretly reno*m*med, hath transposed, or atte leste dyversifyed, the falle and caas otherwyse than Virgil hath in his fourth booke of *Eneydos*, / in whiche he hath not rendred the reason / or made ony decysion to approve better the his than that other. And yf ony wolde excuse hym and saye that he hadde doon hit for better to kepe th*e h*onour of wymmen, and wolde not treate ne saye thynge of theym dyshoneste, but that myghte be to theyr avau*n*cemente, this reason hath noo place, for he hath putte in many places other grete falles

> overmoche infamous of some quenes and ladyes, / and hath not suffyced to hym to speke alle in generall but hath made expresse chapytres / in blamynge the complexions of theym, by the whiche partyculerly he sheweth the dyssolucyons and perverse condycyons that ben in the sexe femynyne (sigs. B7r-B7v).[5]

The French compiler is astonished that Boccaccio wrote an account of Dido's life that differs from that of Virgil, and he regrets that the poet did not share his thoughts as to why he would adopt such a point of view. His digression follows the lines of a prolepsis – a rhetorical device which sees a speaker anticipate possible answers to a hypothetical reader's statements in order to negate them.

At the outset, the French compiler draws attention to the fact that Boccaccio did not explain why he contradicts Virgil, and instead introduces a statement that negates any contradictory response ('and yf only wolde excuse hym'). He then anticipates potential arguments that readers could make: how Boccaccio wanted to preserve the honour of women, or how he intended to improve their condition. The compiler then offers counterpoints the hypothetical reader's points ('this reason had no place') and specifies that Boccaccio has written some texts disparaging women and blaming their perverse condition. He then proposes a solution, which relies on analogic demonstration, as he offers to compare the two accounts so that readers can see for themselves. But his rhetorical display reveals more than meets the eye and hints quite overtly at the *Querelle des Femmes*; he dismisses in advance any proto-feminist argument that could be applied to Boccaccio's works[6] (therefore implying that he sees Boccaccio as a misogynistic poet) and eventually refuses to take sides. Although his intentions here are unclear, since he only mentions one side of the argument but nevertheless includes Boccaccio's pro-Dido account, the compiler provokes controversy before settling it. He ends up juxtaposing a medieval moral story with a classical poem and linking them both to the *Querelle*.

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[5] Quotations from Caxton's *Eneydos* are from Virgil, The Book of *Eneydos*, trans. by William Caxton (Westminster: William Caxton, 1490). STC 24796. Names of characters have been harmonised. I partially edited the text as part of my PhD dissertation, which is currently being transformed into a full semi-diplomatic edition of *Eneydos*.

[6] Dido appears in medieval collections of lives of famous women such as Boccaccio's *De Mulieribus Claris* (1374), which was printed shortly after his *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium* (1355-73). For the French compiler, this is at odds with the misogynistic statements that Boccaccio makes in his other works, such as *Il Corbaccio* (1354-5) and, up to a certain point, in the *Decameron* (1349-53). For an in-depth analysis of Boccaccio's ambivalent representations of women in his works, see Marilyn Migiel, 'Boccaccio and Women', in *The Cambridge Companion to Boccaccio*, ed. by Guyda Armstrong, Rhiannon Daniels, Stephen J. Milner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 171-184; and Guyda Armstrong, *The English Boccaccio: A History in Books*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

The same technique (introducing a moot point and proposing a solution) is incorporated into the whole of *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*, and more particularly at the beginning and at the end of the Virgilian-inspired account of Dido's life. The transition between the Boccaccian-inspired digest of Dido's life and the Virgilian-inspired one is rather short and to the point, and it is directly followed by a digression:

> But for to shewe the difference that I fynde of the deth of the sayd Dido, / I shall reherce here after now in a nother maner, whiche is to be presupposed was moeved of the grete hate and evil wyll that Juno the goddesse co*n*ceyved ayenst Paris, / his fre*n*dis, parents / and alyes, and by cause of over sodayn jugeme*n*t that he made / whan he gaaf th*e a*pple to Venus as the most fayrest of theym all, / and to him holden and moost dere, bycause of whiche hate / whan Aeneas, sone of Venus and nygh kynnesman of Paris, wold departe from Troy / after the siege of the same (sig. C6v).

This account of Dido's story begins with a reminder of how Juno and Venus played a part in the Judgement of Paris which resulted in the Trojan war. The passage implies how women, through the depiction of Juno and Venus, can create chaos in human lives. The Judgement of Paris is here linked with Dido's story as both goddesses are responsible for Dido's falling in love with Aeneas, as depicted in the Latin poem:

> quin potius pacem aeternam pactosque hymenaeos
> exercemus? habes, tota quod mente petisti:
> ardet amans Dido traxitque per ossa furorem.
> communem hunc ergo populum paribusque regamus
> auspiciis; liceat Phrygio servire marito
> dotalisque tuae Tyrios permittere dextrae.[7]

Juno and Venus seek reconciliation and a political alliance through a union between Dido and Aeneas. The link between the Judgement of Paris and the affair between the two lovers directly embeds Dido's story within conflict, therefore implying how women as a

[7] 'Why do we not rather strive for an enduring peace and a plighted wedlock? What you sought with all your heart you have; Dido is on fire with love and has drawn the madness through her veins. Let us then rule this people jointly with equal sovereignty; let her serve a Phrygian husband and yield her Tyrians to your power as dowry!' All references to Virgil's *Aeneid* from Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1-6*, trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, ed. by G.P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 4. 99-104.

rule (in this case, Helen of Troy, Dido, Juno and Venus) are responsible for chaos.

Yet, in the *Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*, the denouement of the Virgilian account of Dido's life is supplemented with an episode that has been added by the French compiler and which, this time, aims at seeking appeasement. When Dido kills herself and is stuck between life and death, Virgil's *Aeneid* specifies that Iris, and not Proserpina, has to release Dido's soul by cutting a lock of her hair:

> Tum Iuno omnipotens, longum miserata dolorem
> difficilisque obitus, Irim demisit Olympo,
> quae luctantem animam nexosque resolveret artus.
> nam quia nec fato, merita nec morte peribat
> sed misera ante diem subitoque accensa furore,
> nondum illi flavum Proserpina vertice crinem
> abstulerat Stygioque caput damnaverat Orco.
> ergo Iris croceis per caelum roscida pinnis,
> mille trahens varios adverso sole colores,
> devolat et supra caput adstitit.[8]

This disagreement is quickly settled in *Aeneid,* whereas *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* show the two goddesses quarrelling over Dido's soul. The dispute starts with a plea by Iris and Juno:

> Wherof Juno, the noble goddesse conservatyve of yongthe, that hadde pyte of the longe sorowe mortalle in whiche was constytuted the fayr Elissa or Dido, / sente towarde hir, for to brynge atte an ende hir immense trystesse, hir noble messager named Iris, / whiche, as some saen, is the rayen bowe, wyth hir fayr cote of dyverse fygures, for to unbynde the rotes of the spyrite vytalle from the membres of hir body, whiche were thenne in grete opposicyon and debate one ayenste another, / by cause that the humydyte radycalle and other complexcyons in proporcyon convenable, coencly[n]ed togyder, dyde receyve the gooste soo that it coude not goo there from by hitselfe wythoute ayde of other; / also, that hir deth naturalle

[8] 'Then almighty Juno, pitying her long agony and painful dying, sent Iris down from heaven to release her struggling soul from the prison of her flesh. For since she perished neither in the course of fate nor by a death she had earned, but wretchedly before her day, in the heat of sudden frenzy, not yet had Proserpine taken from her head the golden lock and consigned her to the Stygian under-world. So Iris on dewy saffron wings flits down through the sky, trailing athwart the sun a thousand shifting tints, and halted above her head' (*Aeneid*, 4. 693-702).

> oughte not to haven comen yet of longe tyme, / but by accydente and harde fortune, / whiche is gladly evyll and dyverse to theym that she byholdeth awrye, was broughte in to suche dysperacyon, / not for noo crymynalle cause, nor for noon other thynge wherof she oughte to suffre dethe / nor to endure ony peyne or sufferaunce / that she slewe her self (sig. H2v).

Proserpina's answer follows:

> Alwayes, she wolde force herself to have for her part the soule of Elissa, / sayenge that she hadde slayn herself by dysperacion, as for cause of furye and of rage, whiche is a thinge inhumayne, dependynge of the operacyons and wodnesses of helle that she herself hathe enprynted in her persone, wherunto she hathe subdued and submytted herself. Wherfore by reson she oughte to abyde under her, / as we see by example famyler whan som body hathe submytted hymself by oblygacion to the jurisdicyon of some juge, the said juge is capable for to have the knowlege therof, how be it that to fore the oblygacyon was made, / the persone was exempt of his juridicyon (sigs. H3v-H4r).

Iris' defence speech and Proserpina's prosecution follow the lines of judicial rhetoric as detailed in Pseudo-Cicero's *Rhetorica ad Herenium*. The discussion does not centre on Dido's 'crime' in itself (her suicide), but rather on what leads her to perform such an act. Iris' argument borrows from 'Comparison', which relies on showing that the defendant opted for the best, most advantageous option:[9] Dido simply killed herself to put an end to her suffering. Her death is not a criminal but a desperate act. In judicial rhetoric, the prosecutor is expected to deny that the defendant has chosen the best option but will emphasise that they acted with 'wilful fraud'.[10] Here, Proserpina alludes to Iris' mention of 'desperation' in order to redefine it. According to Proserpina, Dido's despair grew out of 'fury' and 'rage', two inhuman passions that are engrained in her. Iris' judicial rhetoric also borrows from 'Acknowledgement', which is a 'plea for pardon' and includes a stage called 'exculpation'. 'Exculpation' consists in denying that the act was performed with intent. Iris argues that Dido's death happened by 'accident' and 'hard fortune', further emphasising the queen's innocence. Proserpina's answer endeavours to prove that by 'submitting herself' to these passions, she is not innocent of her crime.

[9] Pseudo-Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. By Harry Caplan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 2.21-4.

[10] Ibid, 2.21.

Le Livre des Énéydes and *Eneydos* do not mention an explicit agreement between the goddesses: Iris simply ignores Proserpina's claim and cuts the hair that maintains Dido's life. Yet, this original episode sees two female characters ending a dispute through the use of classical rhetoric. If Iris and Proserpina's disagreement is briefly alluded to in Virgil's *Aeneid*, the fact that this episode is developed to the advantage of two female figures modifies the reception of the classical poem. By introducing a *Querelle des Femmes* within the narrative, the French compiler and Caxton allow female figures to end a dispute and find appeasement through noble means (classical rhetoric) and reassess the statement made by the opening episode on the Judgement of Paris. Therefore, although this rewriting opens on an arguably misogynistic reference to war and to women being the roots of evil, it ends on a call for legal compromise between two goddesses – thereby allowing for a more positive representation of Dido's death, as I shall demonstrate. To a medieval reader, this episode could also be reminiscent of the active role of noble women in politics and diplomacy. These women also resorted to classical rhetoric in order to settle diplomatic issue.[11]

Moreover, this specific passage is reminiscent of curial or clergial style, the prose of court administrators. Diane Bornstein explains it is the 'style of the chancery of the Middle Ages' which derived from Latin and vernacular French and was defined by the use of 'formulaic expression, terms of reference (*dussusdit*, *le dit*, *cette dit*), introductory phrases, Latinate words, elaborate explanation, legal phrases, synonyms (particularly doublets), reliance on the passive voice, and use of a grave, ceremonious tone'.[12] Bornstein adds that clergial style was seen as a 'rhetorical ornament' in the fifteenth century.[13] As evidenced in many studies, Chaucer translated and used such style into English and more particularly in his 'Tale of Melibee' from the *Canterbury Tales*.[14] Caxton's text offers another example of the translation of the clergial style into English.[15]

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[11] For a discussion of women's use of rhetoric in the Middle Ages, see Shawn D. Ramsey, 'The Voices of Counsel: Women and Civic Rhetoric in the Middle Ages', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 42.5 (2012), 472-89.

[12] Diane Bornstein, 'French Influence on Fifteenth-Century English Prose as exemplified by the translation of Christine de Pisan's *Livre du corps de policie*', *Medieval Studies* 39 (1977), 369-86 (p. 370). This concept was originally defined by Jens Rasmussen, *La Prose Narrative Française du XVe siècle: Étude Esthétique et* Stylistique (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1958), pp. 22-44.

[13] Bornstein, 'French influence on Fifteenth-Century English Prose', 372.

[14] Diane Bornstein, 'Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee* as an Example of the *Style Clergial*', *Chaucer Review* 12 (1978), 235-54 (p. 237).

[15] See Sara M. Pons-Sanz, *The Language of Early English Literature: From Caedmon to Milton* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 10, 50; and Malcolm Richardson, 'The Dictamen and its

The presence of synonyms and doublets ('peyne or sufferaunce', 'opposition and debate ou ayenste another', 'by hitselft without ayde of other'), terms of reference ('wherunto', 'wherfore', 'how be it'), as well as elaborate explanation and the use of a ceremonious tone 'by cause that the humydyte radycalle and other complexcyons in proporcyon convenable', for example) are representative of his adoption of a clergial style. Dido's judgement scene therefore showcases women figures using classical rhetoric as well as clergial style (inherited from French vernacular practice) to depict a medieval mythographic episode. Although the judgement scene was adapted to suit a medieval French readership in the *Livre des Énéydes*, Caxton chose to keep the French flavour in his translation. Even if clergial style was on the decline in English diplomatic writings as the fifteenth century was drawing to a close,[16] Caxton's translation and import of this episode allow English readers to reassess the role of feminine figures in peacemaking and to take part in a European debate. Yet, Caxton's *Eneydos* is not a *verbatim* translation of the *Livre des Énéydes*: when he encountered conflicting visions in the French source that were in contradiction to his own interpretation of the classical matter, he used the opportunity to offer a more positive representation of women and to introduce changes in the course of his translation.

Caxton's Ovidian reading of the figure of Dido

Eneydos offers different accounts of the life of Dido, which descend from three main traditions: historic, Virgilian and Ovidian. If the French compiler juxtaposes the Boccaccian and Virgilian versions for didactic purposes, he appears to omit an important and well-known Ovidian source: *Heroides 7*. Nonetheless, the Ovidian *materia* is omnipresent in the *Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*, as passages borrowed from the *Metamorphoses* have silently been incorporated into the narrative, probably at an earlier stage of composition. Ovid's presence is even more prominent in *Eneydos* since Caxton modifies the French source text as he inserts a direct reference to the poet's name and makes subtle changes to his translation, revealing his Ovidian reading of the figure of Dido. Indeed, if Caxton's translation is fairly close to the French text, he amended some passages, altering thus the reception of the Virgilian epic.

Influence in Fifteenth-Century English Prose', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 2.3 (1984), 207-26.

[16] The court favoured the use of vernacular English in letter-writing from the 1420s onwards, see Richardson, 'The Dictamen', 212.

The collation work I carried out between the *Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* reveals that Caxton made small but meaningful pro-Dido changes during the course of his translation. In *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*, when Fame spreads rumours about Dido and Aeneas, Iarbas – who made overtures to Dido in the past – complains to the gods. Chapter headings that precede Iarbas' protests are different in *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* (emphasis mine):

Le Livre des Énéydes (sig. D3r)	Comment yarbas se complaignit a Jupiter **de dydo** qui ediffioit la cite de cartaige	Et comment Jupiter ma*n*da soudainement mercure a enee pour le faire retourner en la **cite de troie**
Eneydos (sig. E2v)	How Iarbas complayned hym to Jupiter **of Aeneas**, that edefyed the cyte of Carthage,	/ and how Jupiter sente sodaynly Mercury towarde Aeneas for to make hym to retorne in **the country of Italy**'

Caxton translates 'cite de troie' (city of Troy) by 'country of Italy', which is a coherent alteration in line with the Virgilian ur-text. But he also replaces 'dydo' by 'Aeneas'. In this version, Iarbas is not complaining about Dido's dismissal of his suit, but about Aeneas for seducing Dido. Chapter headings have an explanatory function as well as a proleptic one: if the content of the chapter does not change in *Eneydos*, the way readers interpret it may be influenced by Caxton's amendments: they now expect Aeneas to be blamed, not Dido.

In *Aeneid*, Dido organises a hunt for Aeneas and their attendants. Juno and Venus create a storm and the two lovers take refuge in a cave. What happens there is quite elliptic in the Latin poem. It is acknowledged that Dido and Aeneas engage in sexual intercourse, but the meaning of such an act[17] – since Aeneas later denies the fact that a wedding occurred[18] – is problematic. The matter is intentionally left unclear in *Aeneid*. However,

[17] 'The narrative of *Aeneid* 4 plays on the indeterminacy of the cave scene and the audience's uncertainty, not so much about the events themselves… but about the social significance of the events in the cave… Although many scholars assume that Dido is deluded – perhaps understandably deluded – in her belief that a wedding has occurred, some assert that a wedding did in fact occur'; see Desmond, *Reading Dido*, pp. 29-30.

[18] 'Neque ego hanc abscondere furto / speravi (ne finge) fugam, nec coniugis umquam / praetendi taedas aut haec in foedera veni'– 'I did not hope – think not that – to veil my flight in stealth. I never held out a bridegroom's torch or entered such a compact' (*Aeneid*, 4. 337-9).

in *Eneydos*, Caxton introduces a chapter heading and states things quite clearly. He adds: 'Of the grete tempest storme atte maryage of them' (Chapter 15, sig. D6r). The fact that the term 'mariage' is explicitly mentioned in a title heading modifies the reception of this otherwise controversial episode: *Eneydos* plainly states that a wedding is going to take place; there is no room for misunderstanding. This addition alters the depiction of the cave scene as it now becomes an argument in favour of Dido: she has been fooled by Aeneas – he is the one who is being insincere.

In Virgil's *Aeneid* 6, Aeneas descends to hell in order to visit his father Anchises. On his way to the Elysian Fields, Aeneas encounters Dido's shadow as she committed suicide when he left Carthage. Yet, *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* both dismiss this event.[19] *Le Livre des Énéydes* explains: 'mais ce fut mensonge et qui la vouldra trouver quiereon romant de eneas ou en virgille' (sig. I3v). *Le Roman d'Énéas* was one of the most famous *Romans d'Antiquité* ('Romances of Antiquity') in medieval Europe. It is an account of Aeneas' epic journey inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid* and was published around 1160. Caxton translates this chapter heading as follows: 'but this mater I leve, for it is fayned, and not to be bylevyd who that will knowe how Aeneas wente to helle, late hym rede Virgil, Claudian, or the pistelles of Ovid…' (sig. H8v). Caxton thus dismisses the reference to *Le Roman d'Énéas* and instead advises his readers to read three classical sources to supplement their knowledge on this specific episode: Virgil's *Aeneid*, Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae*, which narrates Proserpina's brutal descent to hell, and Ovid's *Heroides*. In Dido's letter in *Heroides* 7, however, there is no direct mention to the underworld. Dido, though, does mention her impending death as she threatens to kill herself.[20] Aeneas' guilt is clearly stated in her epistle as she expresses her wish to have

[19] Aeneas' visit to the underworld does not feature either in *Le Livre des Énéydes* nor *Eneydos*, yet the procession that Aeneas witnesses in this episode in *Aeneid* appears at the end of *Le Livre des Énéydes* (sigs. M3v-M5v) and *Eneydos* (sigs. L6-L7).

[20] Si minus, est animus nobis effundere vitam;
in me crudelis non potes esse diu
adspicias utinam, quae sit scribentis imago!
scribimus, et gremio Troicus ensis adest,
perque genas lacrimae strictum labuntur in ensem,
qui iam pro lacrimis sanguine tinctus erit.
['If you yield not, my purpose is fixed to pour forth my life; you cannot be cruel to me for long. Could you but see now the face of her who writes these words! I write, and the Trojan's blade is ready in my lap. Over my cheeks the tears roll, and fall upon the drawn steel – which soon shall be stained with blood instead of tears. How fitting is your gift in my hour of fate! You furnish forth my death at a cost but slight. Nor does my heart now for the first time feel a weapon's thrust; it already bears the wound of cruel. Over my cheeks the tears roll, and fall upon the drawn steel – which soon shall be stained with blood instead of tears'] (*Aeneid*, 7.181-6).

the following epitaph engraved on her tombstone: 'Praebuit aeneas et causam mortis et ensem; / Ipsa sua dido concidit usa manu' (7.195-6).[21] So either Caxton made a mistake, or he deliberately chose to refer to a famous pro-Dido text, or perhaps to a different version of the episode. Through this reference – since his readers were most probably familiar with these texts – Caxton once again subtly choses Dido's side. More importantly, he directly introduces Ovid into the narrative and into the debate on the condition of women, as this reference to the Latin poet evidently places direct sympathy for Dido at the fore.

Caxton does not openly defend Dido's plight in his translation: only a very careful examination of the text and comparative work allowed me to uncover such changes. As Caxton directly introduces Ovid into the debate and makes pro-Dido modifications to his translation, *Eneydos* displays a dialogue between the three main traditions that surround the figure of Dido (historical, Virgilian, Ovidian). By siding with Dido, Caxton probably expected to arouse debate and may well have used this as a strategy to sell more books. Anne Coldiron highlights how complex Caxton's literary output is when it comes to gender issues. She takes the example of *The Dictes and Sayinges of the Philosophres* (1477), in which it seems that Caxton chose to insert misogynistic passages into the text in order to provoke reaction among his readers, no matter their gender.[22] And yet, the Ovidian intertext in *Eneydos* is used as a 'balancing instrument'[23] in the Aristotelian sense of the mean: the reference to Ovid counterbalances the misogynistic nature of *Aeneid* in order to reach a state of equilibrium. Instead of confronting an opinion by clearly stating an opposite point of view, Caxton's translation aims at reaching the Aristotelian 'golden mean' and offering a more 'vertuous' representation of women.[24]

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[21] 'From Aeneas came the cause of her death, and from him the blade; from the hand of Dido herself came the stroke by which she fell' (*Heroides*, 7. 195-6).

[22] Anne Coldiron, 'Women in early English print culture', in *The History of British Women's Writing, 1500-1610*, ed. by Caroline Bicks and Jennifer Summit (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 60-83.

[23] I borrow the term from Tania Demetriou, 'Periphrōn Penelope and her early modern translations', in *The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500–1660*, ed. by Tania Demetriou and Rowan Tomlinson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 89. See also Nathalie Rivère de Carles's concept of the 'middling disposition' in 'Subtle weavers, mythological interweavings and feminine political agency: Penelope and Arachne in early modern drama', in *Interweaving Myths in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, ed. by Janice Valls-Russell, Agnès Lafont and Charlotte Coffin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 173-194 (p. 174).

[24] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by Harris Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 2.1107a. On the importance of the 'Golden Mean' in Aristotelian ethics, see also Marie-Hélène Gauthier-Muzellec, *Aristote et la juste mesure* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998).

If Caxton's amendments may originate in a desire to stir up the debate and reflect his personal reception of the figure of Dido, *Eneydos* is nevertheless the result of a series of transmitted texts. Translation practices and fifteenth-century understandings of classical texts also contribute to an indirect dismissal of Aeneas from the narrative, thus offering a more positive representation of Dido.

Fifteenth-century strategies and reception of the figure of Aeneas

Le Livre des Énéydes and *Eneydos* are the result of the French compiler's and Caxton's personal receptions of the Latin poem. The two texts bear the trace of previous interpretations from the compilers or translators of the sources and intertexts they borrowed from. The figures of Aeneas and Dido and the question of who was to be blamed in their relationship were central to this debate and medieval translations of *Aeneid* tended to depict Aeneas as a traitor, following the Ovidian angle.[25] The study of translation practices in *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* reveals that compilers and/or translators used strategies to rewrite some passages to their likings – and all tended to marginalise Aeneas.

For instance, the use of digressions serves the figure of Dido well. In both rewritings of her story, an episode dealing with the invention and evolution of writing has been introduced into the narrative. These episodes, which directly link Dido to the creation of the alphabet, contribute to the positive representation of the queen. The first digression that links Dido to the invention of writing appears at the beginning of the Boccaccio-inspired account of Dido's life. It opens on a comment specifying that Dido was also called 'Elysse or Fenyce', referring to both Dido and her people, the Phoenicians. From the first lines onwards, Dido is connected to the invention of writing through a metonymic process: 'by cause the Fenyces were the first inventours of caracteris' (sig. B8). This idea finds an echo in a second digression, which links Dido to the invention of the alphabet and which has been inserted into the account of Dido's life inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid*. The anecdote appears shortly before Dido commits suicide and after Aeneas expresses

[25] This tradition of depicting Aeneas as a false traitor lasts until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For later representations of Aeneas as a traitor, see Emma Buckley, '"Live false Aeneas!" Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and the limits of translation', *Classical Reception Journal*, 3.2 (2001), 129-147 and Agnès Lafont, 'Multi-layered conversations in Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*', in *Interweaving Myths in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, ed. by Valls-Russell, Lafont and Coffin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 195-215.

his refusal to dwell in Carthage longer. Dido is then compared to Pentheus and is suffering from hallucinations: she sees two of the three Parcae and two suns – two Thebes (in *Aeneid*, she is compared to Pentheus too, but there he is the one who sees to suns [4.469-470]). This allusion aims at reminding readers that there is only one city of Thebes, the one that Cadmus built. Cadmus, it is specified, also invented the alphabet, and he is linked to Phoenicia, both in the *Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*:

> Of another syde, she sawe also to her semynge two sonnes shynynge one by another that presente hemself by symulacyon wythin the fantasme of her entendement, alle troubled in grete confusyon of dysplaysures and sorowes excessyve, alle dyverse in contrary qualyte. | And the two Thebes, grete citees merveyllouse, that appieren in advysion to be bifore her eyen, | whiche, to her semyng, are bothe prope[r]ly one lyke another. | How be it that there was never but one, whiche *a k*yng of Greece called Cadmus made so*m*tyme, that fou*n*de first the lettres and the arte of writyng, whiche he sent in to diverse cou*n*trees, and pryncipally in the land of Fenyce, where he made scriptures, grete bokes and cronicles… But in token of this, that the first lettres wherof he was inventour, came out of Fenyce (sigs. F5-F5r-v).

This quite long passage links Dido to the invention of writing and, more importantly, highlights that writing entails transmission: ‘he made scriptures, grete bokes and cronicles, / lerned the folke to rede and to write’, ‘men may doo knowe all his wille and notyfie it to whome he will by one simple lettre… without to departe from his place’. Such aspects are also made explicit in the equivalent gloss in the account of Dido’s life inspired by Boccaccio’s *De Casibus*.

These episodes on the birth of writing further emphasise Dido’s central part in *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* (in a quantitative way) and endow her with new, positive attributes that also have gender implications. They also contrast with digressions linked to the figure of Aeneas, which contribute to a negative representation of the Trojan hero as they tend lead him to the margin of the narrative. This applies to the whole of *Eneydos* and is not limited to the Dido/Aeneas story. The most striking example of this takes place after Dido’s death – *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* switch to a transcription of *L’Histoire ancienne* at that point. As such, after Dido’s death, Aeneas resumes his epic quest, shipwrecks in Sicily and decides to leave the island and sail to the Latium. Aeneas and his men eventually arrive in Italy, in ‘Thetys’ more particularly (‘thatis’ in *Le Livre des Énéydes*). The mention to this city serves as an argument to insert a detailed commentary on Daedalus who, as it happens, has taken refuge in this exact same city.

Both *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* clearly draw attention to the fact that they are excluding Aeneas from the narrative:

> I have broughte this cyte to memorye. by cause that many have harde speke of Dedalus that fleded for fere of the kynge Mynos of Crete that wolde slee hym
> I shalle telle you the cause why and shalle leve awhyle to speke of Eneas / The wyffe of kynge Mynos of Crete was named Pasyfa... (sig. H6v).

Both vernacular translations offer a particularly long digression on the whole mythographic episode of the Minotaur. A new chapter starts at that point: 'How kynge Egeus lete falle hym selfe in to the see, for *the* deth of his sone Theseus' (sig. H8). This chapter tells how Aegeus put an end to his life as he thought his son died. The myth of Icarus is then developed at length. The narrative switches back to the 'main' plot ('Now I shalle telle of Eneas and of his werkes' [sig. H8]) after an exceedingly lengthy digression that stretches over two chapters. This digression does not feature Aeneas at all and has nothing to do with his quest. The Minotaur story does feature in Virgil's *Aeneid*, but it is mentioned in a decidedly succinct manner (6.23-33). In *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*, the digression is sewn into the narrative in such a way that the story-within-the-story silently sets Aeneas's story aside. The smooth transition and the detailed description of Theseus' quest are exceptionally well-developed, making it easy to forget about the Trojan hero.

Moreover, all the figures used in digressions (Theseus, Icarus and the Minotaur) are problematic male ones that reflect dubious morals and become mirrors of Aeneas as *exemplum in malo*. The Minotaur is a violent monster that feeds on human flesh. Theseus' and Icarus' failures to listen to instruction or warnings cause deaths: Icarus does not listen to his father and flies too close to the sun; Theseus forgets his father's request to hoist white sails should his mission be successful, and so Aegeus kills himself thinking that his son did not survive his quest. These episodes also seem to be indirect references to Dido's threats to commit suicide in Ovid's *Heroides* 7 as mentioned above.[26] Moreover, in *Heroides* 10 and in *Metamorphoses* 8, Theseus abandons Ariadne on an island while she is sleeping, leaving her to die (in *Metamorphoses*, she is saved by Bacchus). Therefore, the Minotaur, Theseus and Icarus are figures of abandonment and death – just like Aeneas, according to the Ovidian reading of the figure.

There is also a stark contrast in the representation of the deaths of Dido on the one hand and of Aeneas on the other. The descriptions of the deaths of Dido are revealing. To begin

[26] See also Coldiron, 'Women in Early English Print Culture', 60-83.

with, her death is narrated twice in *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*: once in the rewriting and translation of Boccaccio's *De Casibus*, and a second time in the rewriting and translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Both deaths though are portrayed under a positive light and are depicted as a step for Dido to reach the status of goddess. Although the two accounts recount different versions of Dido's tragic end, both agree on how triumphant Dido is at the time of her death. The rewriting inspired by Virgil even introduces a contrast between the representation of Dido before and after her death. Before she dies, Dido is compared to a corpse: 'Dido kept herself still, without eny wordes more to speke, all pale and discoloured as a body *that* is take*n* out of the erthe or fro some grete and sodaine peril' (sig. F7v); 'Her tendre chykes and vysage, that afore was playsaunt and debonnayre of sangwyne coloure, tournyng upon white, / becam alle pale sodaynly in hydouse manere, and all mortyfied for the cruelle deth' (sig. G7v). Dido, who used to have a flushed complexion, is now as pale as an exhumed body. Just before her death, Proserpina's actions over ageing and dead bodies are detailed: '[Proserpina] maketh theym dystrybucyon by the temples and in the face of grete ryveles and fromples that putte oute the beaulte of the playsaunte vysage that she sheweth all wyth cordage a*s w*elle in the nek as aboute the temples' (sigs. H3r-H3v). Yet, Dido's body does not undergo these deteriorating effects. In *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*, in both rewritings of Dido's life, Dido is praised for her beauty. In the rewriting inspired by Boccaccio, she is beautiful until the moment of her death: 'The cou*n*trey is in surety, delyverd from bataylle by thy ryght dolorouse deth, which hath quenched the playsau*n*t fygure of thy grete beaulte by thy fruytful deth' (sig. C6r). In the account of Dido's life inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid*, death brings about a metamorphosis that is described at great length in Iris' *descriptio* (in *Eneydos*: [sigs. H4r-H4v]). The messenger of the gods details each part of Dido's body, which is now described as an ideal of elegance and proportion. Dido's beauty culminates in the closing sentence which provides the account of her death: 'plaisau*n*t for to see and replenysshed of all good condicyons; like as it were one *the* wymen best accomplished *that* nature had produced syth her begynnyng unto that tyme' (sig. H4v). Thus, Dido is a product of nature and differs from humankind. Iris also offers a chromatic description of the queen – which contrasts with the marmoreal skin of the Virgilian Dido. Her eyes are green, her lips are red, her teeth are white, her hair fair and her complexion rosy and fresh. The whole *descriptio* forms a hypotyposis and Dido's pictorial representation turns the queen into a mythological figure that already belongs to the past. Her life and her actions are already inscribed into her citizens' memories as she is now fully part of history.

Dido's legacy is also at the forefront of the narrative: she will be remembered by her people and, as she is linked to the world of writing, her story will be passed on from one generation to the next. These two aspects clearly contrast with the depiction of Aeneas' death in *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*. Indeed, and contrary to Virgil's *Aeneid*, which

closes on Aeneas' victory over Turnus, *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* offer a supplementary ending to the epic poem. As Aeneas dies, an epideictic piece or a funeral oration (as it was the case for Dido) could be expected, as Aeneas is, after all, the eponymous hero of the book. Yet, a few lines only are dedicated to his death, and his people do not mourn over his passing away:

> After this [Turnus's death and Aeneas' and Lavinia's wedding] abode not lo[n]ge. but that the kynge Latinus deyed / and deceassed oute of this mortalle worlde / Thenne heelde Aeneas all the royame But werres ynoughe he hadde there. For Mezentius that heelde Cecylle werred ayenst hym / But Aeneas vaynquysshed hym not / By cause that dethe toke hym sooner than he wende [...] (sigs. L5v-L6r).

The fact that there is no separate chapter dealing with the death of Aeneas, when two chapters narrated in length the two deaths of Dido, could be explained by the fact that these accounts have not been adapted and translated from the same source texts. One of the main differences between Virgil's *Aeneid* and *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos* lies in the conflicting representations of the character of Mezentius. Indeed, Aeneas kills Mezentius on the battlefield in *Aeneid* (10.896-908). In *Le Livre des Enéydes* and *Eneydos*, this episode is displaced at the end of the narrative. Instead of fighting Aeneas in Italy, Mezentius attacks Aeneas' new realm and subsequently kills the Trojan hero.

The passage that follows Aeneas' death then portrays him negatively. His demise is characterised by uncertainty: Aeneas was either struck by lightning (this death is epic in some way, since Jupiter is the god of lightning), abducted by gods (a death that also holds an epic grandeur), or drowned (a more evhemerist interpretation):

> whan Aeneas had brought the l*an*de in peas, and had delyvered it from grete myserye / the dethe that noo body spareth, ranne hym upon in suche a manere/that noo body coude nevere knowe how he loste his lyffe / Some sayen that he was slayne wyth the thonder bolte; the other sayen that the goddes had ravyshed hym / the other sayen hys body was founde wythin a ponde or a water that is nyghe the tonyre is called Munycum of theym of the countreye / Aeneas lyved but thre yere after that he hadde wedded Lavinia, the doughter of kynge Latinus, thus as we have saide (sig. L6).

Aeneas' death quickly becomes a blurred memory as his people cannot clearly remember the cause of his passing away. Through time, his disappearance becomes a mystery: the various versions of his death highlight how there is never one single version of myths, but in the context of *Le Livre des Énéydes* and *Eneydos*, these versions act as a negative

diptych to the queen's death. Dido, who upon her death, is glorified by her subjects, who (partly) died to protect her realm, and who is deified, passes on a positive message in both accounts of her death, a message that allows her to achieve posterity. Contrary to Dido's story, which would be passed on from generation to generation, Aeneas' story becomes more and more inconsistent over the course of time.

This passage can be read through the prism of Timothy Hampton's point on memory as a diplomatic tool, mentioned in the Introduction.[27] The memory of Dido and her story which, as the text explicitly mentions, will be retold to future generations, is used as a method of reconciling misogynist and proto-feminist sides of the argument. The French compiler's and Caxton's treatments of the deaths of Dido and Aeneas can be read as another balancing act: Aeneas' dubiousness needs to be forgotten while Dido's virtue is something to be recorded and built upon.

Conclusion

Le Livre des Énéydes and *Eneydos* display an array of techniques that were used to comment on the ongoing debate on gender, and as such underline the political and diplomatic dimensions of translation. Additions, digressions, and subtle modifications reveal that translation can be used as an effective instrument in reaching appeasement. Although the French compiler and Caxton might have intended to brew controversy in taking one side or another, their translation practices and their desire to adapt to a contemporary audience's tastes (through the use of classical rhetoric and clergial style) have the effect of restoring balance in a dispute. The pro-Dido, Ovidian elements that Caxton adds find an echo in other silent Ovidian intertexts that had been inserted at a previous stage of composition. The introduction of diplomatic and negotiation tools into mythological matter tend to conciliate a social debate on the condition of women, but also spark an entirely new one, of a literary kind this time. Gavin Douglas, who translated *Aeneid* into Scots a few decades later, criticised Caxton's translation, thus rekindling the tension that *Eneydos* had tried to appease: 'Me list not schaw, quhow the storie of Dido / Be this Caxtoun, is hale peruertit so / That besyde quhare he fenis, to follow bochace / He rynnys so fer fra Virgill, in mony place [...]' (sig. 3v).[28] Yet, perhaps Douglas is missing the point. It is not so much that Caxton 'rynnys so fer fra Virgill', but that he gravitates towards Ovid in order to achieve a different goal: to reframe the story of Dido in order to

[27] Timothy Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 27-8.

[28] Gavin Douglas (trans.), *Eneados* (London: William Copland, 1553). STC 24797.

address the ongoing debate in gender discourse that until that point had been woefully imbalanced.