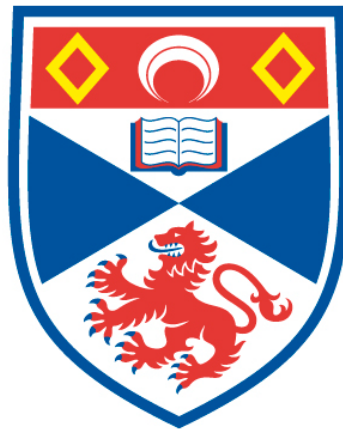


Literary, political and historical approaches to Virgil's Aeneid in early  
modern France

Simon Michael Gorniak Kay

A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD  
at the  
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## Abstract

This thesis examines the increasing sophistication of sixteenth-century French literary engagement with Virgil's *Aeneid*. It argues that successive forms of engagement with the *Aeneid* should be viewed as a single process that gradually adopts increasingly complex literary strategies. It does this through a series of four different forms of literary engagement with the *Aeneid*: translation, continuation, rejection and reconciliation. The increasing sophistication of these forms reflects the writers' desire to interact with the original *Aeneid* as political epic and Roman foundation narrative, and with the political, religious and literary contexts of early modern France. The first chapter compares the methods of and motivations behind all of the sixteenth-century translations of the *Aeneid* into French; it thus demonstrates shifts in successive translators' interpretations of Virgil's work, and of its application to sixteenth-century France. The next three chapters each analyse adaptation of Virgil's poem in a major French literary work. Firstly, Ronsard's *Franciade* is analysed as an example of French foundation epic that simultaneously draws upon and rejects Virgil's narrative. Ronsard's poem is read in the light of Mapheo Vegio's "Thirteenth Book" of the *Aeneid*, or *Supplementum*, which continues Virgil's narrative and carries it over into a Christian context. Next, Agrippa d'Aubigné's response to Virgilian epic in *Les Tragiques* is shown to have been mediated by Lucan's *Pharsalia* and its anti-epic and anti-imperialist interpretation of the *Aeneid*. D'Aubigné's inversion of Virgil is highlighted through comparison of attitudes to death and resurrection in *Les Tragiques*, the *Aeneid* and Vegio's *Antoniad*. Finally, Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas' combination, in *La Sepmaine* and *La Seconde Sepmaine* of the hexameral structure of Genesis with Virgil's narrative of reconciliation after civil war is shown to represent the most sophisticated understanding of and most complex interaction with the *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France.



## Foreword

Where possible, modern critical editions have been used for all early modern texts.

The modern letters are used for u, v and s, f, and ampersands have been resolved.

# INTRODUCTION

The politico-religious conflict of the Wars of Religion in sixteenth-century France influenced literary engagement with Virgil's first-century B.C. epic poem the *Aeneid*. This context gave rise to a range of increasingly sophisticated literary engagements with the *Aeneid*, which re-interpret the poem within a new historical context. This thesis will demonstrate, through an analysis of these different engagements with Virgil's poem, that these engagements are not simply individual reinterpretations of the poem, but that they form an ongoing process of increasingly sophisticated engagement which attempts to intertwine linguistic, political and religious adaptations of the themes found in the original *Aeneid*.

The *Aeneid* itself was intended by Virgil as a national epic which would chart the journey of Aeneas, survivor of the siege of Troy after its fall to the Greeks, to found a new home for himself and his Trojan companions in Italy. This Roman foundation myth was composed by Virgil during the fall of the Roman Republic, and after the war of the Second Triumvirate between 43 and 30 BC. The background of civil war is particularly clear in the poem's depiction of the conflict between the Trojans and the Latins after Aeneas' arrival in Italy. Virgil's poem is also intended as praise for the rule of Augustus, whom Virgil views as being able to impose order in the aftermath of civil war and return Rome to peace. The poem is thus inherently bound up in the political and historical context in which it was created.

In order to examine early modern French engagement with Virgil's poem and the themes contained within it, this thesis will analyse four distinct methods of literary engagement with the *Aeneid*. The first chapter examines the translation of the *Aeneid* from Latin into French, comparing the six translations of the poem into French which appeared during the sixteenth century. The second chapter examines the use of the *Aeneid* as the basis for Ronsard's nationalistic epic poem *La Franciade*, published in 1572. The third chapter focusses on the challenging of this nationalistic epic in d'Aubigné's anti-epic *Les Tragiques*, published in 1616, which also draws on Lucan's anti-epic *Pharsalia*. The fourth and final chapter examines Du Bartas' two epic poems,

*La Semaine* of 1576 and *La Seconde Semaine*, published between 1583 and 1604 which combine the themes of the *Aeneid* with the structure of the Book of Genesis in a Christianization of Virgil's work. Each chapter of the thesis thus analyses a separate approach to the *Aeneid* as a literary text and focusses this analysis around a major sixteenth century French literary work, or, in the case of the translation chapter, a series of sixteenth century translations of the *Aeneid*. Each of the poems studied in the final three chapters of the thesis exhibits a unique approach to engagement with Virgil's poem within the context of early modern France. This structure of the thesis will allow a demonstration of how this increasingly sophisticated engagement with the *Aeneid* is made possible by the structure of Virgil's poem itself. Through analysis of the original Virgilian text, the theoretical approach to Virgil's poem both in sixteenth-century France and in modern scholarship, and of the approach to the *Aeneid* of the authors selected to demonstrate each of the four forms of engagement, it is possible to demonstrate that each successive form adds another layer of complexity to this engagement. The structure of the thesis will therefore demonstrate that this increasing sophistication is an ongoing process that links together the different forms of engagement.

### Virgil in France in the sixteenth century

Alice Hulubei's overview of the reception of Virgil's work in sixteenth-century France charts engagement with Virgil's works as objects of literary interest that are in turn capable of sustaining more varied interpretations within the early modern French literary context.<sup>1</sup> Hulubei explains Virgil's significant status as a model for Renaissance literary imitation:

Enfin, on voyait dans les œuvres de Virgile la prophétie, le miracle, la science; Virgile, magicien, connaissait la formule pour se rendre maître du monde invisible et évoquer les pales ombres des enfers; prophète du Christ, il annonçait la nativité du Seigneur; homme des sciences, il détenait toutes les spécialités: astronomie, sciences naturelles, médecine, mathématiques. Son œuvre constituait une encyclopédie des connaissances de l'antiquité et un excellent modèle à imiter.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alice Hulubei, "Virgile en France au XVIe Siècle", *Revue du Seizième Siècle*, 18, (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1974), pp. 1-77.

<sup>2</sup> Hulubei, "Virgile en France", p. 5.

Hulubei thus places Virgil in a central position in Renaissance French scientific and religious thought. One of the reasons why Virgil is a model worthy of literary emulation is that it was possible to view his work through a Christian lens in which Virgil became a prophet of Christ's message. This marks a significant shift from the attitude of earlier authors, such as Frechulf of Lisieux, who viewed the pagan Aeneas as a model to be avoided. Hulubei also identifies a further major shift from medieval attitudes to Virgil's work in early modern humanist attitudes to the *Aeneid*, in that Virgil could inform the moral and literary development of early modern France:

Les humanistes alors, hantés encore par le Virgile moraliste et raisonneur du moyen âge que le collègue leur avait révélé, le proposent comme le prototype de la vertu et ses œuvres comme la concrétisation de la morale, en même temps qu'il est l'initiateur au secret de la belle latinité, le maître incomparable pour l'élégance du style et pour la subtilité de la pensée. Virgile éduque, catéchise, instruit; c'est le meilleur pédagogue de l'époque.<sup>3</sup>

In light of this attitude to Virgil, whereby he was re-interpreted in a different historical and cultural context, a context which also marked a move away from the attitude of Frechulf, who rejected Virgil's paganism, and towards an acceptance of Virgil as a cultural model to be emulated in the Renaissance. Furthermore, Hulubei identifies Virgil's poetry as a model to emulate, rather than providing characters which should be avoided and it is this shift in the interpretation of the *Aeneid* which made early modern French literary engagement with the *Aeneid* possible from a range of different literary and politico-religious viewpoints.

#### Literature and Politics: Categories of Engagement with the *Aeneid*

David Quint links the composition of the *Aeneid* not only to the contemporary political situation in Rome, but also to the idea of supporting Rome's national history and to the notion of empire and empire building.<sup>4</sup> These considerations, which thus became part of the epic genre, are as applicable to the political situation in early modern France as they were in Virgil's Rome as a result of the context of the Wars of Religion and a political narrative which has turned towards the founding of a French empire. The thesis will therefore explore whether the early modern French authors who interacted with Virgil's work were aware of the challenge that Quint says Virgil laid down to future

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<sup>3</sup> Hulubei, "Virgile en France", p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

writers, and whether they attempted to respond to this challenge and saw their interaction with the *Aeneid* in these terms. Quint's analysis identifies that engagements with the *Aeneid* were engaging with a work which sought both political and literary domination within the context of its creation. Given that the *Aeneid* is at once a literary work and a text bound up in the political context in which it was produced, what happens to the *Aeneid* when it is transferred into the new literary, political and historical context of early modern France? How do individual authors' considerations of the 'political' nature of the text then shape their response to it? If the intention of all successive engagements with the *Aeneid* is to overgo Virgil's original work, as Quint claims, how do authors attempt this task and how are the approaches they choose conditioned by this new political and literary context? Is it possible to distinguish the political context from the literary context or are these two elements intertwined in every re-interpretation of the *Aeneid* because of the inherently political nature of the poem? The structure of the thesis, with each of the four chapters addressing a different category of literary engagement with the *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France, will answer these questions and show that an increasingly sophisticated engagement with the *Aeneid* emerged on both the literary and political level in France during the sixteenth century.

### The *Aeneid* as Political Epic

The inherently political nature of the *Aeneid* is what allows the poem to sustain repeated and differing engagements and forms of interpretation. The political status of the poem, as it tracks the journey of the defeated Trojans, led by Aeneas, from the siege and sack of Troy at the hands of the Greeks until their eventual arrival in Italy, emerges not only from its status as a foundation epic for the Roman state, but also from the political context in Rome at the time Virgil composed his poem. The civil war between Antony and Octavian was ongoing and after Octavian's triumph in 29BC and his installation as Augustus, Rome's imperial project began to be envisaged by Rome's leaders.

Yet the *Aeneid* as a poem was not only a product of the context within which it was created; David Quint points out that it is also an epic which redefined its own poetic genre for subsequent epic poets:

The *Aeneid* had, in fact, decisively transformed epic for posterity into both a genre that was committed to imitating and attempting to “overgo” its earlier versions and a genre that was overtly political: Virgil’s epic is tied to a specific national history, to the idea of world domination, to a monarchical system, even to a particular dynasty.<sup>5</sup>

In characterizing the *Aeneid* as an inherently political work, Quint identifies an element which allowed the poem to be re-interpreted with reference to new political and historical contexts, inextricably linking the literary work with the political conditions surrounding it at the time of its re-interpretation. Furthermore, Quint identifies a process by which each new re-interpretation of the *Aeneid* is in competition with previous re-interpretations of the poem, a process by which each author wishes to overgo his or her forebears in producing a work that better represents the context in which it is being re-interpreted, alongside a literary overgoing of the poem. In this way, literary ‘overgoing’ reflects the political domination which is central to the image of the Roman state. This strategy of ‘overgoing’ will be continued in the early modern French context and will be analysed throughout the thesis as the principal means of approaching the *Aeneid* with increasing sophistication.

Quint explains that poets’ desire to ‘overgo’ their predecessors and the inherently political nature of Virgil’s poem allowed the *Aeneid* to stand apart from other epic poems:

From now on, future epic poets would emulate the *Aeneid* itself along with the Homeric epics; future imperial dynasts would turn for epic inspiration less to Achilles than to Aeneas, a hero deliberately created for political reflection. Epics of the Latin West subsequently took political issues as central subjects, whether they perpetuated the imperial politics of the *Aeneid* or, as in the case of the *Pharsalia*, sought to attack and resist empire.<sup>6</sup>

In Quint’s analysis, Virgil’s creation of Aeneas as a political figure allowed subsequent authors to view the *Aeneid*, and their own re-interpretations of it, as inherently political works and to conceive of epic as a political genre. The character of Aeneas himself allows the *Aeneid* to stand apart from other epic poems because Virgil had deliberately imagined him as a political figure, and reinterpretations of Virgil’s poem can also adopt Aeneas as an inherently political figure. Aeneas is a figure onto whom Virgil is able to project his own image of the Roman state. Michael C. J. Putnam has also commented on the link between the figure of Aeneas and the political significance of a stable and

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<sup>5</sup> David Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 8.

imperial Rome, as Aeneas' character embodies these elements, both of which reappear in the sixteenth century French engagements with the text.<sup>7</sup> Richard Thomas has argued that Virgil uses his poem to praise Augustus and deny political dissent against his rule, showing the work to be intimately linked with the political situation in Rome.<sup>8</sup>

Quint's analysis is useful for the study of the *Aeneid* in the context of early modern France, and of the reactions of early modern French authors to the poem, because it allows for an interaction with the poem within a new context and because it views this interaction, through the reinterpretation of the poem in the political context of the French state during a religious civil war and at the beginning of the formation of its own empire, as the embodiment of competition between successive authors in their engagement with the *Aeneid*. Quint therefore provides a model for understanding how the interactions with the *Aeneid* which will be analysed in the course of this thesis are in conversation not only with Virgil's original poem, but also with one another. In order to understand the reasons behind the early modern French approach to the *Aeneid*, which is similar to that identified by Quint in his analysis of the approach of later authors to Virgil's *Aeneid*, it is necessary to understand the early modern French approach to combining ancient literature with the linguistic and political context of early modern France.

Thomas Greene has charted the importance of imitation in the composition of Renaissance literature. He points to '*imitatio*' as a tool for education, but points out that it is a literary strategy which can lead both to great innovation and sometimes to cultural sterility:

*Imitatio* was a literary technique that was also a pedagogic method and a critical battleground: it contained implications for the theory of style, the philosophy of history, and for conceptions of the self. In practice it led not infrequently to sterility. It led also, if less frequently, to a series of masterpieces.<sup>9</sup>

The early modern strategy of imitating the works of writers such as Virgil was therefore a risky one which might produce mixed results. Yet, for Greene, this process of

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<sup>7</sup> See Michael C. J. Putnam, *Virgil's Aeneid: Interpretation and Influence* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 13-14.

<sup>8</sup> Richard F. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy. Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (Newhaven Conn. and London: Yale University Press, 1982) p. 2.

imitating previous writers also played an important role in allowing writers in the early modern period to distinguish their approach from that of their medieval forebears, as they were using the works they imitated to construct a past for their own society. Greene compares this approach with the figure of Aeneas himself, who is forced to renew his identity after his home is destroyed and he must find a new place in the world:

A civilization discovered its cultural paths by the light behind it of a vast holocaust, and it used this mythical light as the principle of its own energy. It made its way through the ruins by the effulgence cast in their destruction, finding in privation the secret of renewal, just as Aeneas, sailing westward from the ashes of his city, carried with him the flame that had consumed it burning before his Penates.<sup>10</sup>

French writers in the Renaissance must therefore invent their culture's relationship to past cultures in order to define their own literary and cultural identity.

The problem which faces early modern French writers is therefore not only how to create their works, but how to create the context for their creation through reference to the past. Greene goes further by saying that the approach of imitating ancient authors allows the contemporary culture to unblock its links with the past:

Renaissance imitation at its richest became a technique for creating etiological constructs, unblocking – within the fiction of the work – the blockages in transmission which created human pathos. Imitation acts out a passage of history that is a retrospective version or construct, with all the vulnerability of a construct. It has no ground other than the “modern” universe of meanings it is helping to actualize and the past universe it points to allusively and simplifies. It seeks no suprahistorical order: it accepts the temporal, the contingent, and the specific as given. But it makes possible an emergent sense of identity, personal and cultural, by demonstrating the viability of diachronic itineraries.<sup>11</sup>

Greene points out that French authors defined the period that they were living in with reference to the past through their interpretation of previous authors. The early modern works which refer to the *Aeneid* for the source of their inspiration therefore define themselves both in relation to the context in which they are being composed and in relation to earlier literary works.

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<sup>10</sup> Greene, *The Light in Troy*, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Greene, *The Light in Troy*, p. 19.



Greene further points out that even if a work claims to refer to and imitate previous works, these claims may not tell the full story, and other works may also be present in the work even if they are not acknowledged:

It is true that the ostensible allusion, the 'official' allusion, may point to any one of the genealogical lines [...] The unconfessed genealogical line may prove to be as nourishing as the visible, once revealed by a deconstructing analysis. All major works grow from a complex set of origins. But this proliferation must not obscure the special status of that root the work privileges by its self-constructed myth of origins.<sup>12</sup>

This analysis leaves open the opportunity to uncover the differing influences upon engagement with the *Aeneid* in the early modern period. The influences of other works, such as the anti-epic of Lucan's *Pharsalia* and the works of Maffeo Vegio, can be analysed even if they are not explicitly acknowledged by early modern authors. Greene points to the need for the author to create his literary interpretation of the *Aeneid* within the context of early modern France: 'The poetic word achieves its brilliance against the background of a past which it needs in order to signify but which its own emergence is tendentiously and riskily shaping'.<sup>13</sup> In order to uncover how early modern authors attempted to bind together the historical context of the *Aeneid* and the early modern context in their works it is first necessary to define the history of French literary engagement with the *Aeneid* and the French interest in the narrative of the *Aeneid*.

Analysis of the early modern French reaction to the *Aeneid* must investigate the role of the epic genre in France. This has been charted by Henry Weber, who has emphasised the role of imitation in its creation, and particularly in the works of Ronsard and d'Aubigné. The study analyses the way in which these poets combine pagan myth with Christian belief in their poems and their use of style and rhythm in their works. Weber also charts the development of the philosophical beliefs which led to the creation of these two authors' respective works.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Katherine Banks has focussed on the philosophical undercurrents which are influential in the epics of both d'Aubigné and Du Bartas, notably the way in which these authors viewed the

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<sup>12</sup> Greene, *The Light in Troy*, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> Greene, *The Light in Troy*, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Henri Weber, *La Création Politique au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle en France: de Maurice Scève à Agrippa d'Aubigné* (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1956).

relationship between the events of the civil war and God's role in events on earth. Michio Hagiwara has charted the political significance of epic, particularly in linking the ancient past to the roots of the French monarchy, and the reliance of Ronsard in particular on this link. Following on from these studies, this thesis proposes that it is possible to view the epic as the literary genre in early modern France which most clearly exhibits early modern literary engagement with classical texts.

The political role of the epic genre, as analysed by Hagiwara, is particularly relevant to the political and religious context of early modern France. Reception studies of the *Aeneid*, following on from Alice Hulubei's general overview of the reception of all of Virgil's works, have emphasised its political application. David Quint has charted the reception of the *Aeneid* in the sixteenth century, particularly in relation to the composition of epic as the building of empires comparable to the example of the Roman empire, viewing the role of the epic from a wider historical viewpoint than David Maskell, who has charted the structure of the political epic in France specifically and its relationship to the political situation in France during the Wars of Religion. Maskell also focusses on the role of the epic hero in the ancient epics and on how French authors attempted to reconcile the image of Aeneas as a pagan hero with the Christian context of early modern France. Ludivine Goupillaud has charted the continuing evolution of early modern French engagement with the *Aeneid*, showing how translation and adaptation of the work continued throughout the seventeenth century in France. In light of Goupillaud's study, this thesis will show that it is possible to analyse the increasing sophistication of early modern French engagement with the *Aeneid*, demonstrating that this engagement focusses on the combination of the political and religious conflict in early modern France with the epic genre in order to produce a more sophisticated engagement with the *Aeneid* that reflects both the original message of the *Aeneid* itself and the ability of authors to combine this message with the political and religious conflict through which they lived.

The first form of early modern engagement with the *Aeneid* is translation. Translation of the *Aeneid* in France have been analysed separately and compared by various critics. This thesis is the first to compare the entire range of sixteenth-century translations of the *Aeneid* into French. Translation of the *Aeneid* into French has been

charted by Alice Hulubei, while Susan Basnett's overview of translation strategies in the early modern period analyses the theory behind the translation of texts and their relationship to the audience reading them. These overviews have been complemented by studies of individual translations: Dorothy Gabe Coleman analyses the extent to which Du Bellay sought to place himself as translator of the *Aeneid*. Slerca's study of Saint-Gelais' approach to the translation of the *Aeneid* focuses in particular on the way in which he transfers Virgil's language into French. These individual studies all inform the comparative analysis undertaken in the thesis.

Comparative studies of sixteenth-century translations of the *Aeneid* have been undertaken by Thomas Brückner, whose analysis of Octovien de Saint-Gelais's translation compares it with those of Des Masures and Du Bellay, and by Christine Scollen, who focusses particularly on the extent to which Crenne's translation is influenced by that of Saint-Gelais. Valerie Worth Stylianou's comparison of three translations of Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, those by Saint-Gelais, Des Masures and Du Bellay, identifies the similarities between their translation strategies. Véronique Duché has charted the importance of the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular with her comparison of the translations of the *Aeneid* by Du Bellay and Des Masures. Duché also analyses the approach of Saint-Gelais to translating the *Aeneid*. More generally, Glyn Norton has focussed on the theory behind translation of Latin works into French, analysing the role of the autonomy of the translator in composing his translations and the importance of translation in transmission of ancient texts through early modern culture. Thus studies of translation of the *Aeneid* have focussed on comparing one or two translations of the *Aeneid* and the approaches of respective translators. They have not, however, compared all of the translators along with their motivations for translation. The thesis will therefore undertake a comparison of all of the translations of the *Aeneid* produced in France in the sixteenth century in order to view this respective motivations and strategies of translators in full and contrast their approaches.

#### French Engagement with the *Aeneid*

Even before the sixteenth century, the reception of the *Aeneid* in France, and its adaptation to suit French historical and literary interests, proved controversial.

Sarah Spence argues that a fundamental shift occurred between the medieval and early modern interpretation of the *Aeneid* as a foundation myth for the French nation. Spence opines that the original source for the French foundation myth was not Virgil, but the Dares and Dictys legends:

While the direct adaptation of the Dares and Dictys stories is relatively easy to trace, as in the Troilus story, I would argue that the more indirect influence causes the portrayal of Aeneas to provide material for founding tales including, most notably, the *Chanson de Roland*.<sup>15</sup>

The medieval French literary tradition separates Aeneas from Virgil in relying on the Dares and Dictys legends as a source, a work written by Quintus Septimus purporting to be the Latin translation of a Greek account of the Trojan War by Dares the Phrygian.

Yet Spence also identifies the linking of the French nation to Troy as a key element in French interactions with the figure of Aeneas. She argues that this is most apparent in the portrayal of Charlemagne:

Unlike the mythical Brut, founding father of Britain and fictional Trojan who, after the war, reputedly made his way to Great Britain, Charlemagne sees himself as heir to the Roman past and forerunner of the French future. He is the defining force of the nation, the figure who will translate things Roman into what will become France.<sup>16</sup>

Charlemagne therefore imagines himself as the embodiment of the French inheritance from Troy and thus a physical symbol of a real link which exists between France and Troy. This inheritance passes to future rulers of France through his personal identity. Spence here uses the word 'translate' in its most literal sense to describe the process which Charlemagne saw himself as undertaking, in that he is bringing the Roman nation into France and recreating the French nation in the image of Rome. National identity is therefore central to the composition of French epic.

Spence explains that the first literary attempt to link the French nation with a Trojan inheritance is found in the work of Frechulf of Lisieux, although this has little influence over the later *Chanson de Roland*:

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<sup>15</sup> Sarah Spence, "Felix Casus: The Dares and Dictys Legends of Aeneas", in *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*, ed. Joseph Farrell and Michael C. J. Putnam (Chichester; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 133-146 (139).

<sup>16</sup> Spence, "Felix Casus", pp. 138-139.

When we turn, then, to the founding story of the French nation, the *Chanson de Roland*, a story that defines French culture even as it revolves around the figure of Charlemagne, we might well expect to find the Trojan influence explicitly acknowledged. Certainly there is evidence of tying Troy to the founding of France. A Carolingian story specifically links the fall of Troy with the origin of the Frankish nation in the universal history of Frechulf of Lisieux. Here we find an explicit assertion that the Franks are derived from the Trojans.<sup>17</sup>

The *Chanson de Roland* establishes the possibility of a French link to Troy, but it is in the work of Frechulf that the link between Troy and France is explicitly established in French literature and that the character of Aeneas in particular becomes a point of discussion, as Spence explains:

What is striking about [Frechulf's] account, however, is that the French line does not stem from Aeneas, who is identified as a traitor and a scoundrel, suffering a deservedly bad end: Qui ... sacrissimus esset, ac crudelissimus belligerator, et nulli parceret, ob tantam impietatem a Deo ictu fulminis percussis interiit ("He who was the harshest and cruellest of warriors, sparing no body, died, on account of such impiety, struck down by a lightning bolt from God"). Rather, the French line derives from "Phrygas" (a reference, perhaps, to Dares Phrygius?) who is identified as Aeneas' twin (germani fuerunt).<sup>18</sup>

Frechulf is prepared to defame the character of Aeneas in order to make his own story more attractive to the French nation.

Throughout the *Aeneid*, Virgil places much emphasis on Aeneas' 'pietas' or his commitment to the task he faces, an attribute directly and explicitly countered by Frechulf, as Spence explains:

It is striking that the language he uses of the "bad" Aeneas specifically negates terms Vergil uses to describe his hero: rather than being pious and aiming to spare the suppliants, as Anchises advises his son to do in book 6 of the *Aeneid*, this Aeneas is impious and spares no one.<sup>19</sup>

Frechulf is embarking on a defamation of Aeneas, directly undercutting those virtues which Virgil attributes to his ideal hero. This approach is refuted by early modern French engagements with the *Aeneid*, which see the figure of Aeneas as a model for early modern rulers, indicating the development of a different analysis of the role which the literary figure of Aeneas might play in informing later societies as they build their own foundation myths. The fact that Aeneas was rejected as a heroic figure by Frechulf, yet then reintegrated into French foundation methods during the Renaissance, indicates a shift in the French conception of Aeneas.

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<sup>17</sup> Spence, "*Felix Casus*", p. 139.

<sup>18</sup> Spence, "*Felix Casus*", p. 139.

<sup>19</sup> Spence, "*Felix Casus*", p. 139.

Spence highlights the fact that Frechulf makes no explicit connection between his hero, Phrygas, and Virgil's Aeneas:

According to this tale, when Aeneas travelled to Latium, Phrygas journeyed to Phrygia. While Aeneas' line died out in Italy, that of Phrygas thrived, as it made its way *per multas regiones* ("through many lands"), finally choosing a king, much renowned for his prowess in battle, named Francio, *ex quo Franci vocantur* ("from whom the French are named") (Frechulf, *Historiae* 1.2.26).<sup>20</sup>

Frechulf's strategies, firstly of having a relation of Aeneas found a city from which the French nation eventually springs in parallel to Aeneas' founding of Rome and secondly of playing word games with the names of peoples and rulers will later appear in Pierre de Ronsard's *Franciade*. Ronsard has another survivor of the siege of Troy, Francus, found the city which will become Paris, and the links between this foundation narrative and that of the *Aeneid* will be explored in the second chapter of this thesis.

Frechulf and *La Chanson de Roland* both demonstrate that there existed a French tradition of linking the French nation with Rome or Troy, in a strategy similar to that of Virgil's *Aeneid*, but they both reject Aeneas as their protagonist. Furthermore, this tradition also included efforts to distance the French experience from that described by Virgil and from contemporary Italian claims to Roman literary and national inheritance. Frechulf's attitude to the Virgilian hero suggests that Christian France initially had trouble assimilating the moral and religious attributes of a pagan hero into its own culture, but that Frechulf saw this as no impediment to linking the French state with a Trojan ancestry. This rejection of Aeneas, but not of the foundation narrative which Virgil had made him central to, suggests that the figure of Aeneas could be divorced from the narrative which surrounded him, and that narrative continued to be plausible to Frechulf even when he changed the character of Aeneas. Aeneas' renewed influence at the heart of the Virgilian narrative suggests a shift in the way Aeneas himself was viewed by the French audience, and a re-evaluation in the sixteenth century of those attributes that Frechulf had previously scorned so that they became more acceptable to the French audience.

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<sup>20</sup> Spence, "*Felix Casus*", p. 139.

### The *Aeneid* as Christian epic

The medieval and early modern periods saw a change in the conception of the *Aeneid* - as this nominally pagan poem was presented to a Christian audience and represented as containing messages and models relevant to this new Christian context. Three Christian commentators were particularly influential, Fulgentius in the sixth century, Bernardus Silvestris in the twelfth century and Cristorfo Landino in the fifteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Earl G. Schreiber and Thomas E. Mascera identify three ways in which the *Aeneid* is reinterpreted by each of these commentators.<sup>22</sup> Firstly, they are responsible for the idea that in composing his poem, Virgil followed Plato and his doctrine, specifically in believing that the human soul could be separated from the body and that a perfect world existed in heaven. Secondly, they introduce the belief that the narrative of the *Aeneid* essentially presents a process of maturation, a growth in the hero from early heedlessness and sin to understanding and, implicitly, grace. This interpretation thus presented to a Christian audience a path that they might follow in order to reach heaven. Thirdly, they suggest that Book 6 of Virgil's poem represents the most important point in the narrative, as it is in hell that Aeneas achieves understanding of his goal and his needs in order to reach it. They thus read the *Aeneid* as a work that could be interpreted allegorically by a Christian audience as pertaining to the conduct of their own lives. In particular, the voyage of Aeneas from Troy to Italy was interpreted allegorically as revealing a model by which a Christian might lead his own life. Schreiber and Mascera describe the influence of these commentators over later interpretations of the *Aeneid*, particularly in the sixteenth century, by which time Aeneas was understood to have earned his place in heaven through his ability to overcome his own vices in the *Aeneid*. This allegorical interpretation gave rise to the idea that Aeneas and the journey he undertakes could be interpreted within a Christian context.

### Mapheo Vegio's fifteenth-century reinterpretation of the *Aeneid*

The perception of Aeneas as a Christian hero can be seen from the writings of the fifteenth-century Italian poet Mapheo Vegio, in his interactions with the *Aeneid*

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<sup>21</sup> See Bernardus Silvestris, *Commentary on The First Six Books of Virgil's Aeneid*, trans. Earl G. Schreiber and Thomas E. Mascera (Lincoln, [Neb.]; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), p. xi.

<sup>22</sup> Schreiber and Mascera eds., *Silvestris, Commentary*, p. xi.

specifically and with the epic genre more widely. Two of Vegio's works, his 1428 *Supplementum*, also known as the *Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid*, and his 1436/7 *Antoniad*, are particularly useful as models for the literary strategies adopted by Ronsard in the *Franciade* and by d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques*. Vegio's two works demonstrate within one author the shift from literary imitation to adaptation. Vegio initially attempts in the *Supplementum* to continue the *Aeneid* up to the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia and Aeneas' eventual transfer 'into the stars'. This has been seen by Schreiber and Mascera as Vegio's attempt to depict Aeneas as deserving a place in heaven: 'So at least Maphius Vegius (*sic*) understood the poem in the fifteenth century when he wrote a thirteenth book, explicitly giving Aeneas the apotheosis he seems to have earned'.<sup>23</sup> In the *Antoniad*, Vegio adapts the Aeneas story in order to describe St. Anthony's journey through a partially pagan underworld in order to find the Apostle Paul and to introduce the prospect of a conflict, not between the Romans and the Latins, but between the Christian God and Satan.

This interpretation of nominally pagan heroes and works as being capable of bearing Christian messages is central to Vegio's view of the *Aeneid*, as he states in his *De perseverantia religionis* of 1448:

I do not see how the thought could be expressed by any Christian author in holier words or in phrases better fitted to accord with our faith than these. We are here taught to remember the past with joy, to bear the present bravely, to hope for a better future, and, finally, to cultivate perseverance at all times with a hero's might, and buckle it to our souls with closer bands. For if we interpret Scylla's rage and the other perils of the deep as the vexations and revilings of the world and the devils, if we substitute the word *heaven* for Latium and *life* for Troy, why might the passage not have come from the pen of the Apostle Paul?<sup>24</sup>

Arbitrary though Vegio's strategy of word-substitution may seem, the underlying message is that ancient epic can be read as a Christian allegory. Vegio here portrays Aeneas, in continuing his journey in the face of all obstacles, as a fundamentally Christian hero. Yet in his *Supplementum* Vegio goes beyond this simple view of the *Aeneid* as a Christian allegory. His literary strategy in the *Supplementum* is much more sophisticated, as it brings the *Aeneid* into a Christian context that it simultaneously

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<sup>23</sup>Schreiber and Mascera eds., *Silvestris, Commentary*, p. xxviii.

<sup>24</sup>Mapheus Vegius, *De perseverantia religionis* (1448) quoted and translated by Anna Cox Brinton in *Mapheus Vegius and his Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid*, ed. Anna Cox-Brinton (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2002) p. 28.



classicizes. Vegio's work thus forms an early attempt to place the *Aeneid* within a Christian context whilst approaching the work through different literary methods, and thus provides a template against which early modern French approaches to the *Aeneid* can be compared. The full range of literary methods used in France when approaching the *Aeneid* will be shown throughout the course of this thesis.

In discussing the *Aeneid* as a model for early modern French poetry, David Maskell holds up this image of Aeneas as a Christian rather than a warrior hero as a reason why the *Aeneid* came to be the central model for imitation and adaptation by early modern French poets:

The French poets were not the first to feel that the attributes of a successful warrior could be an embarrassment rather than an inspiration. Virgil had shown that a hero needed to be ruthless, and that hesitation was weakness; but that did not prevent compassion for an abandoned lover or a slaughtered opponent. The French poets, in addition, were usually Christians writing for a Christian audience about Christian heroes. This was a further curb on the full-blooded celebration of military prowess.<sup>25</sup>

Maskell highlights the attributes that Vegio focusses on. Aeneas continues his journey in the face of the challenges he encounters; to this extent he must be 'ruthless', i.e. warrior-like, or must 'persevere', in the image of a Christian, as Vegio has it. Thus the warrior-like ruthlessness of ancient epic heroes is translated into an image of Christian perseverance by 16<sup>th</sup> century poets. Yet the military element of what could be seen as Christian perseverance can be converted to the 'Christian' imagery of compassion that Maskell identifies within Virgil's poem. For both Vegio and Maskell's characterisation of the early modern French poets, the ability of Aeneas to continue his journey in the face of every challenge whilst still exhibiting compassion is a key element in interpreting the *Aeneid* within a Christian context, and is as important to the early modern French poets as it was to Virgil.

This reimagining of the character of Aeneas and his symbolism for French society means that it is not only the concept of Aeneas as a literary figure fit for literary interpretation which critics have considered, but also the figure of Aeneas as a model for readers themselves to imitate in their own lives. Michael Putnam opines that Vegio

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<sup>25</sup> David Maskell, *The Political Epic in France, 1500-1700* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 182.

intended the image of Aeneas he presents in the *Supplementum* as a model for future generations to emulate:

There is no question, however, of Vegio's desire to present Aeneas as the noblest of pagans, one accordingly worth even of divinization. Writing some sixteen years later, in *De educatione liberorum* ("On the Education of Children") (1444), he remarks that Virgil "in the character of Aeneas wished to show a man endowed with every virtue now in unfavourable circumstances, now in favorable ones" and there is no reason to believe that his goal in the *Supplement* was any different.<sup>26</sup>

Vegio is thus a useful model for approaches to the *Aeneid* within an early modern French context. He not only sees the possibility of re-interpreting the characterization of Aeneas to fit with the Christian context, but also presents his view of Aeneas as informing a wider cultural and educational context. Vegio's work therefore provides a parallel with French approaches to the *Aeneid* within a Christian context and can help to analyse whether they successfully combine Virgil's text with the early modern context. Maskell sees Ronsard as the early modern French author who presents the closest engagement with Virgil and highlights the *Franciade* as being unique amongst early modern French interactions with the *Aeneid*:

The real contribution of ancient epic, which in practice meant Virgil, was somewhat different from what the theorists or poets with their exaggerated claims might have us believe. Ronsard alone made the ancient epic the substance of his poem and bequeathed the Storm-Shipwreck-Recital structure to his successors. For the most part imitation of the ancients meant borrowing and rearranging topoi from earlier epics. On the strength of a versified historical narrative decorated with a touch of mythology, a few similes, and a pompous invocation, aspiring epic poets might be saluted by indulgent friends as the rivals of Homer and Virgil.<sup>27</sup>

In re-interpreting the *Aeneid* within a new context, Vegio and the later French poets are undertaking a task much more complex than the mere literary imitation that Maskell describes here. This thesis will argue that Maskell's view here does not fully take into account the complexity of the reception of the *Aeneid* in early modern France. Ronsard is not the only poet or author to go further than 'borrowing and rearranging topoi from earlier epics'. This thesis will demonstrate that the *Aeneid* is adopted and adapted through the use of a range of progressively more sophisticated strategies of interaction that amount to far more than 'borrowing and rearranging' and which are exhibited by a much wider range of authors than Ronsard alone. Through

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<sup>26</sup> Mapheus Vegius, *Short Epics*, ed. and trans. Michael C.J. Putnam, with James Hankins, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2004), p. xix.

<sup>27</sup> Maskell, *The Political Epic* p. 31.

understanding the sophistication with which early modern French authors, including Ronsard, engaged with the *Aeneid*, it is possible to track how this engagement developed during the sixteenth- and early seventeenth- centuries and responded to the literary, political and religious context of France at this time.

#### Early modern French literary theory: translation, imitation and originality

Within the literary and political context of early modern France, the use of the vernacular could be interpreted as a sign of increased national confidence and of particular religious adhesions. The suitability of the vernacular as a literary language was confirmed in France by works such as Estienne Dolet's *La Manière de bien traduire d'une Langue en autre* (1540). Dolet states that just as the Greek and Latin languages were sources of great pride for their respective civilizations, the French language should become a source of pride for the French nation:

Mon affection est telle envers l'honneur de mon pais que je veux trouver tout moyen de l'illustrer. Et ne le puis myeulx faire que de celebrer sa langue, comme ont fait Grecs et Romains la leur [...]. Quant aux antiques tant Grecs que Latins, ilz n'ont prinz aultre instrument de leur eloquence que la langue maternelle.<sup>28</sup>

The literary and historical context of early modern France therefore gave rise to two distinct, yet linked, debates. The first of these debates concerned the language in which French literature should be composed. The second debate concerned the literary method through which French literature should be composed, and, most notably, whether French authors should create their own original texts in the French language or whether they should translate ancient texts into French in order to claim them as French texts through the act of translation.

Dolet argues that French writers should write original texts in French rather than simply translating extant texts into French from foreign languages, setting the tone for the theories of translation of Latin or Greek work into French, theories which would later be discussed by Joachim du Bellay in his *Deffense et Illustration de la Langue*

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<sup>28</sup> Estienne Dolet, *La Manière De Bien Traduire d'une Langue en Autre* (Lyon: Estienne Dolet, 1540), pp. 5-6.

*Françoise* (1549). Valerie Worth-Stylianou analyses Du Bellay's response to Dolet's work:

Dolet's treatise was republished some ten times up until 1550-1; hereafter in France, theoretical remarks on translation come to occupy a new terrain. At the end of Part 1 of his *Deffence* Joachim de Bellay commends Dolet's projected *Orateur françoys*, but sweeps aside the needs of the aspiring orator, claiming that Dolet has already met these, so that he can now concentrate on the nascent poet.<sup>29</sup>

Du Bellay's shift in emphasis thus underlines the increasing centrality of poetry to French literary theory and practice in this period. The aim for Du Bellay is that France should produce its own literary works, while oratory becomes a secondary concern. Therefore, French writers engaging with ancient works such as the *Aeneid* should first engage in the translation of these works, but they should then focus on the creation of their own literary works. Du Bellay is thus advocating the adoption of an increasingly sophisticated literary strategy when early modern French authors engage with ancient literary works, and it is this process which will be explored throughout the thesis, moving from the literary strategy of translation to that of adaptations which involve a larger degree of invention on the part of the author engaging with the *Aeneid*.

Dolet lists those ancient authors he feels best embody his own strategy for the creation of new literature:

De la Grecque seront pour temoings Demosthene, Aristote, Platon, Isocrate, Thucydide, Herodote, Homere. Et des Latins je produis Ciceron, Caesar, Salluste, Virgile, Ovide, lesquelz n'ont delaisé leur langue pour estre renommez en une autre.<sup>30</sup>

The listing is imitated by Du Bellay in his *Deffense*, in which he names authors who exemplify the Greek and Latin languages at the height of their excellence: 'Mais qui voudroit dire que la grecque et romaine eussent toujours esté en l'excellence qu'on les a veues du temps d'Homere et de Demosthene, de Virgile et de Ciceron?'<sup>31</sup> Du Bellay develops the point that languages are rendered important through their use in literature, and that it is this use in national literature that confirms the status of a

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<sup>29</sup> Valerie Worth-Stylianou, 'Translatio and translation in the Renaissance: from Italy to France' in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume III, The Renaissance*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 127-135 (130).

<sup>30</sup> Dolet, *De Bien Traduire*, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> Joachim Du Bellay, *La Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Françoise*, ed. S. De Sacy (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 229.

vernacular language as an integral part of national identity. Du Bellay elaborates further on this point by pointing to writers such as Caesar and Cicero who were also involved in the political development of their nation, thereby bridging the gap between literature and national status. Du Bellay and Dolet therefore come to the question of the relationship between language, literature and national identity from different angles, in that Du Bellay extends the influences of the ancient Greeks and Roman writers beyond the literary domain, whereas Dolet focusses on elaborating the French language in its own right. Du Bellay's vision of the author-politician may have been influenced by the involvement in politics of his family and particularly his cousin, Cardinal Jean du Bellay, an important diplomat who composed his own Latin verse.

Through the linking of politics with literature, Du Bellay casts himself and other putative writers in the image of Cicero or Caesar, as a literary figure who is also able to navigate the world of politics and play an active role in public life. By inference, therefore, he is linking together the French and Roman states, as he sees an opportunity to reflect not only Roman attitudes to literature but also a wider cultural vision in which the author can be a politician and vice-versa. This vision goes some way to explaining the popularity of the *Aeneid* as the subject of numerous translations and adaptations during this period of France. Quint's characterization of the *Aeneid* and the figure of Aeneas as vehicles for political reflection extends to Du Bellay's view of French literature more generally, which is that it acts to confirm the emergence of a distinct French state and to inform French cultural superiority over Italy, again reinforcing the link between literature and politics in early modern France. It is thus through an analysis of the different early modern French engagements with the *Aeneid* that it is possible to view the progressively more complex approaches adopted by authors in their engagement with Virgil's text. The nature of literary engagement with and emulation of Virgil's work can be best examined by focussing in turn on each category of engagement and analysing how it treats Virgil's original text.

#### Approaches to Virgilian epic within a new context

These categories of engagement demonstrate an attitude towards the *Aeneid* which constantly re-interprets its application within a new context. The early modern French

authors engaging with Virgil's poem are not explicitly setting themselves up in opposition to one another. Rather, they interpret the *Aeneid* with reference to their individual concerns, be they literary, historical or political. Duncan Kennedy identifies two different ways in which this phenomenon may be expressed:

A 'romance' model [of the interpretation of the *Aeneid*] would see any interpretation (including the author's) as one in an endless series of readings (none of which has a more privileged status than any other *per se*) which make of the text a configuration or allegory of the interpreter's concerns. An 'epic' model would similarly see previous readings as allegories, but within a teleological structure that would foreground the present interpretation as the truth.<sup>32</sup>

The allegory of the interpreter's own concerns Kennedy identifies here is, to an extent, applicable to all of the categories of engagement discussed in this thesis. Each early modern French re-interpretation foregrounds the concerns of the interpreter with each successive interaction with the original text. Kennedy's epic model is particularly appropriate to the early modern French context as the religious application of the *Aeneid* during the Wars of Religion forces each author to hold his own poem as an exclusive representation of the truth, as defined by individual religious beliefs, and not just as an interpretation of equal merit to any other as in Kennedy's romance model. Ronsard proposes his interpretation of the journey of Francus from Troy to Paris as negating Virgil's original narrative of a Roman inheritance from Troy. Both d'Aubigné and Du Bartas seek to challenge the narrative of a Catholic victory and Huguenot defeat in the Wars of Religion and thus foreground their own interpretations of the *Aeneid* as the truth. It is this variation of interpretations which gives rise to the differing literary approaches to the *Aeneid* in early modern France and thus forms the basis for the categories of the thesis. Yet Kennedy's model does not provide a means for connecting the interpretations together, rather viewing them as a series of readings. Quint does however link the interpretations together.

Quint argues that the teleological approach to the epic poem is not merely present across a range of different epics, but an inherent factor in the construction of each poem which draws on the *Aeneid*, and that this approach is conditioned by the political nature of epic:

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<sup>32</sup> Duncan F. Kennedy, 'Virgilian Epic', in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 145-154 (153).

Epic draws an equation between power and narrative. It tells of a power able to end the indeterminacy of war and to emerge victorious, showing that the struggle had all along been leading up to its victory and thus imposing upon it a narrative teleology – the teleology that epic identifies with the very idea of narrative.<sup>33</sup>

Kennedy's epic model of interpretation thus depends on the ability of each new interpreter of the *Aeneid* to define his own teleology within his own poem, whilst also relying on the *Aeneid* to sustain this new interpretation even when the historical and cultural context differ from those of the creation of the original poem. The internal teleology of each poem is separate from the teleology of the model of interpretation described by Kennedy. Kennedy's model can include numerous successive epics which contain their own internal narrative teleology whilst claiming for themselves the foremost interpretation of the *Aeneid*. This means that each new interpreter can apply his own internal teleology regardless of the external teleology, allowing each interpreter to challenge previous interpretations by confirming the teleology of his own interpretation.

Kennedy argues that the ability of Virgil's poem to look beyond the context of its own creation is an attribute that allows the poem fully to demonstrate its status as imperial epic:

Rather than looking back from the age of Augustus to Troy, the poem takes as its narrative 'present' events in the aftermath of the fall of Troy and insistently looks 'forward' from there to the age of Augustus, though not explicitly through the agency of the poet. The poem's supernatural machinery looks beyond the incident with which the narrative ends, the death of Turnus, to the events and personalities of the poet's own time and even beyond, for the prophecy of Jupiter sees the outcome of the events narrated as empire without limits of space or time for the Romans.<sup>34</sup>

The supernatural machinery of the poem thus affords the poem its status as an imperial epic in that it expands the scope of the poem to place it both outside history and outside the space of earth. This capability, which is, according to Kennedy, apparently in the hands of the supernatural machinery which Virgil creates rather than in those of the poet himself, allows the poem to be transferred across contexts and allows re-interpreters of the *Aeneid* to interact with the poem.

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<sup>33</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 45.

<sup>34</sup> Kennedy, "Virgilian Epic", p. 146.

The links between the *Aeneid's* supernatural machinery and its imperial nature are seen as the poem looks forward to the age of Augustus. Richard Tarrant emphasises the importance in this respect of the 'parade of heroes' contained in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*:

The climactic place given to Augustus in the parade of Republican heroes in the Underworld is the poetic counterpart to the Augustan claim that the principate had brought about the restoration and fulfilment of the Republic. In this way Virgil can be said to have fashioned a literary myth to support the political myth of the republic.<sup>35</sup>

Anticipation of the parade of heroes politicizes the poem. Virgil uses the ability of epic to expand beyond the limits of space and time to reflect the contemporary political context. Although the narrative of the poem is set in the distant past, the catalogue allows the poem to interact with Virgil's present.

Kennedy views this transcendence of the poem above space and time not only as an expression of its imperial nature, but also as an attribute which sets it apart from other epics:

Just as Jupiter's vision of empire seeks to place it beyond the boundaries (the *finis*) of space and time and thus give it a transcendent status beyond the contingencies of history as the 'type' of empire, so we might conceive of the *Aeneid* as attempting generically to transcend any definition, any closures, that might be imposed upon it, so as to arrogate for itself the role of norm or type of epic, and thus to assert for itself a privileged position in the structure of literary history analogous to that of Rome's *imperium* within the 'history' the narrative of the poem constructs. Similarly, if the *Aeneid* is viewed from the perspective of its reception (historical, political, or whatever), the theme of legitimacy of succession becomes that of *translatio imperii*.<sup>36</sup>

Kennedy here points out that through its close links with Roman political thought, particularly with the concept of the Roman empire as a boundless entity stretching beyond the limits of space and time, the *Aeneid* expresses this fundamental concept of the 'epic' genre through its own form and narrative, and in doing so, carves out for itself a unique literary status as being an unsurpassable literary epic. The poem thus redefines the epic genre as being unbound by space or time and, in doing so, makes the task of any writer wishing to surpass Virgil more difficult.

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<sup>35</sup> Richard J. Tarrant, "Poetry and Power: Virgil's Poetry in Contemporary Context", in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 169-187 (178).

<sup>36</sup> Kennedy, "Virgilian Epic", pp. 152-153.



Furthermore, Kennedy here identifies this as a case of *translatio imperii*, in that each successive interpretation of the poem claims for itself the inheritance of Virgil's original literary project. The literary context thus mirrors the political context and the epic thus shows itself to be a fundamentally political genre. The exclusive teleological nature of the epic, identified by Kennedy, is thus linked to its imperial nature to produce an all-conquering poem which claims its authority from both its teleological position and through its imperial narrative. These attributes of Virgil's poem allow it to be interpreted within the historical and literary context of early modern France as it is unconstrained by the historical context in which it was created, and the timeless element of the poem allows its transfer across time and across national boundaries. The timeless nature of the poem therefore makes the different forms of interpretation we see in the *Aeneid* possible.

Charles Martindale puts forward the view that the teleological nature of the *Aeneid*, able to exist beyond space and time, is the aspect that allows the work to be Christianized:

The Christianizing interpretation of Virgil is not less historical than any other, it is simply *differently* historical; all historical narratives, it can be claimed, depend on teleological structures, however occluded, as a very condition of their possibility, and all historical narratives involve a simultaneous double reading of the past, looking backwards and forwards at the same time.<sup>37</sup>

This ability of the poem to look simultaneously to the future and the past allows its reinterpretation within new historical contexts. Martindale echoes Quint in placing the epic beyond the limits of time, while emphasising the significance of the historical context, and he views this phenomenon as integral to the imperial nature of the epic and to the *Aeneid* in particular:

Both empire and classic exist within history, but also transcend history, evincing both permanence and change and enabling us to grasp, or at least experience in practice, the relationship between them. This shuttle between the aspect of time and the aspect of the timeless is operative at some level within any act of interpretation, and constitutes, we might say, an organising principle of the *Aeneid* itself.<sup>38</sup>

Martindale therefore sees the position of the *Aeneid* beyond the limits of time as being a key element in its construction because it allows the epic to be linked to empire

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<sup>37</sup> Charles Martindale, "The Epic of all Europe", in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, pp. 1-18 (4).

<sup>38</sup> Martindale, "Epic of all Europe", p. 4.

through the experience of the reader. In effect, the re-interpretation of the poem recalls the empire it represents, but this empire is also re-interpreted in a new context. Thus in the case of re-interpreting the *Aeneid* in early modern France, the poem becomes symbolic of France as an emerging imperial nation. The ability of epic to transcend history in this way, and to carry with it its national and imperial themes, thus allows the *Aeneid* to be repurposed in the context of early modern France. The *Aeneid* is therefore inherently able to support this re-interpretation because of its epic construction.

Timothy Hampton identifies the link between the epic poem and the concept of the 'nation':

Certainly, any discussion of nationhood and genre in the Renaissance invites a consideration of the most imperial of genres, the epic. From the time of Virgil, after all, epic had provided the narrative model for defining new communities and building national identities. However, one of the most distinct features of French literary history in the sixteenth century is that it never produced a secular, Virgilian epic.<sup>39</sup>

Hampton's depiction here of the epic as a response to the need to define new communities and build national identities is built on the influence of Virgil, but Hampton separates early modern French epics from the *Aeneid*. Hampton's analysis supposes that the original Virgilian model could be viewed as 'secular'. This thesis will argue that the use of the epic for the foundation of communities and national identities is inherent to the genre's employment in early modern French literature, but that the concept of a 'secular, Virgilian epic' is an impossibility, because Virgil's epic itself is not secular. The *Aeneid* is, from the outset, an epic whose narrative is conditioned both by the influence of fate, drawing Aeneas towards his goal, and by the pagan gods, who variously act in aid of or against Aeneas during his journey: it thus cannot be a secular poem.

Re-interpretations of the *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France are not secular; they are responses to the religious context of their composition. Indeed, Hampton views d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques* as being intended to displace secular literature:

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<sup>39</sup> Timothy Hampton, *Literature and Nation in the Sixteenth Century: Inventing the French Renaissance* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 29.

Pierre de Ronsard struggled mightily to write such an epic, in his failed, incomplete *Franciade*, and Agrippa d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques*, the only reasonably successful French epic from the period, is aimed specifically at displacing secular literature and nationhood in the name of an international Protestant community.<sup>40</sup>

Hampton's characterization of Ronsard's work as 'failed' is debatable, it is simply unfinished. However, he is right to state that d'Aubigné does indeed claim to be using religious belief as the inspiration for his poem and that the historical context in which he writes demands this religious focus. It is thus necessary to investigate both how the *Aeneid* came to be re-interpreted within the early modern religious context and then within the French national context. Virgil links religion directly to his national foundation narrative for Rome, and this thesis will ask whether religion forms an inherent constituent of the national epic or whether the national and religious elements can exist separately from one another. The epic therefore also carries with it a tension surrounding the role of religion and its part in Aeneas' journey. This tension is as relevant in early modern France, albeit within a different religious context, as it was when Virgil composed his epic.

### The French Context: The Wars of Religion

The Wars of Religion in France broke out in 1562, just three years after the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis had been signed between Henri II and Philip II of Spain, ending the Italian Wars and leaving Spain largely in control of Italy. John Salmon points to this moment not only as the ending of the war between France and Spain, but also as the creation of an anti-Protestant 'compact' in Europe: 'The treaty that reversed the diplomatic alignment of Europe bound the Catholic monarchies in a joint endeavour to crush Protestantism.'<sup>41</sup> Yet even the Catholic monarchies had Protestant subjects; their enemies were internal as well as external. Salmon points to the fact that this more general European endeavour could be seen in the specific example of early modern France: 'In May [1559], when plans were being made to intensify persecution [of the Protestants] for the benefit of the Spanish and Savoyard deputations arriving in Paris to ratify the treaty, the first national synod of the French Calvinist churches met secretly in the capital.'<sup>42</sup> Thus the problem for the Catholic monarchy was clear; at the

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<sup>40</sup> Hampton, *Literature and Nation*, p. 29.

<sup>41</sup> John H. M. Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century* (London, Methuen, 1979), p. 117.

<sup>42</sup> Salmon, *Society in Crisis*, p. 117.

time that Henri II was preparing a crackdown on the French Calvinists, they were ready to organise themselves into a structured group, increasing their ability to confront the government assault.

Adding to this already explosive situation, Henri II died in July 1559, leaving the throne to François II, aged only fifteen. Salmon points out that this change in monarch, in addition to leaving an inexperienced boy on the throne, had important sectarian implications because of the familial relations of the new monarch:

The eldest son, the fifteen-year old king, François II, was married to Mary Queen of Scots, the niece of François de Guise and the cardinal de Lorraine. The ultra-Catholic Guise faction took control of the government, and their enemies within the aristocracy began to marshal the forces of opposition.<sup>43</sup>

Thus the most ingrained sectarian arguments reached into the very heart of the French state. With the royal family having such an ingrained anti-Protestant bias at their very heart, it was unlikely that Protestantism or Calvinism would be tolerated in France.

The rules that governed the French monarchy also put the state on an inevitable collision course with Huguenots, but this also gave rise to tensions around the role of the state, and its need to be seen as protecting its own citizens rather than attacking them:

The advent of Calvinism in France [...] threatened the perception of nation forged by both king and subjects, because the king's own coronation oath required him to protect and defend his realm and his subjects from heresy.<sup>44</sup>

The French state was thus placed from the very outset in a position of conflict with any religious belief other than that espoused by the Catholic Church because of the nature of its legal foundations. An attack on the established church in France was therefore considered as an attack on the secular elements of the state as well. Here Holt demonstrates that the perception of the French state was a matter of increasing importance to both the French king and his subjects. Holt refers to the necessity for the king to be seen to uphold Catholicism as the dominant Christian persuasion in France in the face of the challenge of Calvinism. The nation which had been united

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<sup>43</sup> Salmon, *Society in Crisis*, p. 118.

<sup>44</sup> Mack P. Holt, *Renaissance and Reformation France 1500-1648* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 23.

under Catholicism was now under threat, a threat which concerned not only the church, but also the monarchy. The role of French literature therefore became part of a drive to reassert a single French identity and confirm the power of the French monarchy.

### The epic as representation of historical context

The return to the past in the writing of epic poetry is a process that is influenced by the earlier decisions of Virgil in using the epic form. Virgil turned to Homer's basic concept of the epic hero wandering back towards his homeland, and changed two key elements for the Roman historical context of his poem. The first of these was that the journey homewards for Odysseus became a journey to a new home for Aeneas. Whilst the Greek epic could be seen as a return to the status quo after the Trojan War, the Roman epic has its end in a new beginning. Secondly, Virgil used Aeneas' personal story as a metaphor for the foundation of the Roman state and as an explanation for its contemporary conflicts and their ultimate solutions. In casting Aeneas as the epitome of the Roman hero, Virgil is commenting on the past and current situation of the Roman state with a view to projecting its future resurgence.

Sixteenth-century French writers therefore attempted to claim the inheritance of the Roman state for France at the expense of Italy. Du Bellay calls for the French to enrich their language and culture at the expense of the Italians, as Neil Kenny explains:

Other writers promoted royal expansion in Italy by evoking more aggressively a past defined by humanism. Joachim Du Bellay, in his *Deffence et Illustration de la langue françoise* (1549), argues that French should be enriched by writers imitating ancient Greek and Roman texts, just as Latin had been enriched by Cicero and others imitating Greek. Du Bellay concludes with a violet image: 'Là donq, François, marchez couraigeusement vers cete superbe Cité Romaine: et des serves Depouilles d'elle (comme vous avez fait plus d'une fois) ornez vos Temples, et Autelz.'<sup>45</sup>

This is not merely a metaphorical image of the French writer 'carrying off' the spoils of Rome; it has historic roots: 'He is recalling the brief occupation of Rome by the Gauls in 390 BCE.'<sup>46</sup> Thus any interaction, no matter how fleeting, between French and Roman culture in which the French have managed to gain cultural or historical prestige is seized upon as foreshadowing the French Renaissance. For Du Bellay, France should

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<sup>45</sup> Neil Kenny, *An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century French Literature and Thought: Other Times, Other Places* (London: Duckworth, 2008), pp. 29-30.

<sup>46</sup> Kenny, *Introduction to Sixteenth-Century French Literature*, p. 30.

now take the opportunity to turn the tables on the Italians and claim for herself Rome's cultural and historical inheritance, which is there for the taking. Dorothy Coleman, citing du Bellay's imagery here, affirms that it serves to demonstrate the tone of the work overall: 'The general tone of the *Deffence* is that of a revolutionary manifesto. The last words are like a *Marseillaise*'.<sup>47</sup> Coleman understands that Du Bellay is trying to change the way in which French authors perceive ancient poetry and therefore change the ways in which they might use it. Coleman also points out that although the *Deffence* at times contradicts itself, it principally concerns itself with the issues of the creation of poetry: 'It is a poetic programme and not a rationalist treatise. It is at once patriotic and aware of the status of literature in France.'<sup>48</sup> Du Bellay therefore brings together the political and literary aspects of the creation of a national literature in his appeal to French authors. The bellicose language Du Bellay uses here, with the French marching into Rome and carrying off its spoils, demonstrates that his literary desires extend to the political domain and that the interpretations of ancient texts and of the contemporary political situation were linked. However, behind this lay the politics of contemporary Europe, as Kenny explains:

But it was important for the French, in works like the *Deffence*, to turn their inferiority complex into one of superiority, partly because that provided cultural justification for the military 'transfer of empire' (*translatio imperii*) to France. Rome itself was not a military target, but northern Italy was. Indeed, only a few months earlier (1548) Henri II had paraded around French-controlled Turin.<sup>49</sup>

Thus an inferiority complex which had its roots in cultural jealousy has become a justification for France's vision of sixteenth-century European politics. For Kenny, Du Bellay's text, which is nominally a treatise on the improvement of French literature through the appropriation of ancient literature, is underpinned by contemporary political tensions between France and Italy. The appropriation of the *Aeneid* by French authors and translators is an example of this tension in practice. In claiming for French literature a nationalist Roman literary work, French writers are claiming an equal literary inheritance that makes their national literature equal to Italy's.

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<sup>47</sup> Dorothy Coleman, *The Chaste Muse: a study of Joachim Du Bellay's poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 1980) p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Coleman, *The Chaste Muse*, p. 8.

<sup>49</sup> Kenny, *Introduction to Sixteenth – Century French Literature*, p. 30.

Understanding not only French foreign policy during this period, but also the monarchy's attitude to the internal politics of France is vital to understanding the literary choices made by French authors when interacting with texts that demonstrate elements of this internal and external tension in both their conception and content. Du Bellay's claims that the French language might be enriched through recourse to Latin and Greek texts are misleading as to the status of the French language itself at this time. Salmon tempers the perception of works such as the *Deffence* as influential with his assessment of the status of the French vernacular in the sixteenth-century:

There was still diversity of language, from the Breton of the north-west to the Romance dialects of the Midi and the Basque of the south-west. In 1549 Joachim Du Bellay's *Défense et Illustration de la langue française* might exalt the French tongue as a medium of erudite and poetic communication, but the universities preferred Latin and the humble employed their own patois.<sup>50</sup>

Even though the status of French as the language of the French nation was in dispute, despite the agreements of Villers-Cotterêts of 1539 which had established French as the language of France, Salmon points to the importance of the search for the mythical roots of the French language in both catholic and Protestant polemics:

The growth of national sentiment allowed French polemicists, Protestant and Catholic alike, to create their own myths. Gallican loyalists traced regalian rights to Frankish kings: Calvinists and Leaguers justified resistance to the crown by discovering an original Francogallic constitution at the beginning of time.<sup>51</sup>

National myths became a means employed by either party to further their cause. The fact that the *Aeneid* at its origins is a political poem, coupled with the arguments surrounding the construction of the French state and the religious beliefs of its citizens means that the poem could be employed for political purposes within the early modern French context.

Henry Heller points to the national political tensions between France and Italy as being directly linked to the internal religious conflict in France:

The sharpening of anti-Italian feeling in the sixteenth century was thus closely connected to changes in the nature of Western Christianity. A proper understanding of anti-Italianism must reckon without the fact that the nationalization and territorialization of religion sharply increased in sixteenth-century France as elsewhere in Europe. Religion was more and more seen in national

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<sup>50</sup> Salmon, *Society in Crisis*, p. 23.

<sup>51</sup> Salmon, *Society in Crisis*, p. 15.

terms and, indeed, helped to foster the growth of political nationalism. As a consequence the developing sense of a distinctively Gallican or French church intensified.<sup>52</sup>

Thus the internal divisions of France led both to a more clearly defined and widely shared conception of the French nation and to an awareness of enemies outside France which could also be defined in national terms, as Heller continues:

In particular the conflicting outlook and interests of the French church in contrast to the Catholic Church of Rome and Italy were magnified by patriotic clergy-men and laity. The power of Italian clergy who held benefices in the French church was increasingly questioned by both Gallicans and Huguenots. Hostility towards an Italianized papacy was seen by some as a way of reconciling French Catholics and Huguenots.<sup>53</sup>

Heller is suggesting that although nationalist feelings in France might have trumped religious convictions, they also fed both sides in the Wars of Religion. The creation of a distinct French identity had to be achieved before the internal quarrels over the nature of that identity could be resolved, and this identity could be confirmed by finding common enemies against which French Catholics and Huguenots could unite.

This could also be seen as the beginning of a theme which would run throughout the Wars of Religion on both sides of the conflict, that of painting the enemy as 'foreign', with the Catholics painting the Huguenots as German mercenaries, and the Huguenots alleging that French Catholics were in fact under the control of the Italians and Spanish. Claims levelled by Catholics against the Huguenots were given force by the fact that Calvin did not live in France while claiming to be at the head of the Huguenots; he had been exiled to Geneva. His exile did not mean that he had little influence in France, as he exerted control over the church in France by filling its ranks with the rural gentry, exiled from France to become the bourgeois population of Geneva, as Salmon explains: 'From 1555 many of these men [French bourgeois exiles] were trained by the Genevan Company of Pastors and sent back to France as ministers in answer to the requests of clandestine congregations in the towns'.<sup>54</sup> Calvin thus exerted a direct influence on the situation in France even when he was not in the country. Salmon's description of the Huguenots' grassroots campaign to spread the

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<sup>52</sup> Henry Heller, *Anti-Italianism in Sixteenth-Century France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 13.

<sup>53</sup> Heller, *Anti-Italianism*, p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> Salmon, *Society in Crisis*, p. 118.



reach of the Protestant church in France conforms to their beliefs that faith was a question of personal religious conviction, and that it could therefore be built through the efforts of individual Huguenots. Mark Greengrass points out that it was precisely the success of the Huguenots in spreading their message which led them into conflict with the Catholics: 'But the Huguenots paid a high price for their success. Far from the approaching victory of the New Jerusalem of their dreams, they faced bitter Catholic hostilities'.<sup>55</sup> Religious disagreements in France thus formed part of a wider tension surrounding the status of the French state, and these tensions were represented in early modern French literature. These tensions therefore came together and were combined with the *Aeneid* and used in early modern French engagements with Virgil's poem to highlight the problems which existed at the heart of the French state.

#### Forms of early modern French engagement with the *Aeneid*

The first chapter of the thesis analyses the literary and political motivations for each of the six sixteenth-century French translations of the *Aeneid* and culminates in a comparative analysis of the translation of two sections from Book 4. Such a comparison has not before been attempted across such a range of translations. The motivations for translation will be analysed both from the prefatory statements of these translators and from the way in which they apply the claims of these prefatory statements within their translation. The interactions between the translations will be analysed alongside their interaction with Virgil's original text in order to demonstrate that earlier French translators of the *Aeneid* influenced the decisions of later translators.

There exist six separate translations of the *Aeneid* into French in the sixteenth century which were published between 1509 and 1583.<sup>56</sup> Octovien de Saint-Gelais' 1509 translation is the first translation of the *Aeneid* in its entirety into French verse.<sup>57</sup> This translation, published posthumously by Anthoine Verard, would be republished seven times between 1509 and 1548,<sup>58</sup> and it forms the basis for subsequent French

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<sup>55</sup> Mark Greengrass, *France in the Age of Henri IV: The Struggle for Stability* (London: Routledge, 1984) p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> For a complete overview of the translated editions of Virgil in France in the sixteenth century, see Alice Hulubei, "Virgile en France", pp. 74-77.

<sup>57</sup> Octovien de Saint-Gelais, *Les énéydes de Virgile* (Paris: Anthoine Verard, 1509).

<sup>58</sup> See Hulubei, "Virgile en France", pp. 74-77.

translations during the sixteenth-century. Hélienne de Crenne's 1541 prose translation of the first four books of the *Aeneid* made her the first female translator of the *Aeneid*.<sup>59</sup> This translation, which was not reprinted, remains unique as the work of a female translator and was intended specifically to complement Crenne's earlier work, *Les Angoysses Douloureuses*, published in 1538, which contains an adaptation of Virgil's Dido and Aeneas narrative. Crenne narrative strategy, which seeks to privilege the view of Dido over that of Aeneas can be analysed not only in terms of its relationship with Virgil's original poem, but also in relation to Crenne's other literary works.<sup>60</sup> Crenne inverts the path of increasing sophistication of engagement with the *Aeneid* described in this thesis, as she begins with the more complex task of adapting the *Aeneid* into a new literary and social context in the *Angoysses douloureuses*, and then embarks on the relatively simple task of translation of the *Aeneid*. Yet this thesis will argue that this is a result of the specific social and literary status that Crenne occupies and that her literary approach actually encourages readers to return to the original text of Virgil and to analyse for themselves Crenne's method in adapting the poem's meaning in the *Angoysses Douloureuses*.

Joachim Du Bellay's verse translations of the fourth (1552) and then sixth (1561) books of the *Aeneid* can be analysed in the light of his call in the *Deffence* of 1549 for the creation of a French literature.<sup>61</sup> Louis Des Masures's verse translation of the entire *Aeneid* was initially published in stages between 1547 and 1560, when he completed the task: it became the most successful of all these translations, with at least eight re-impressions before 1606.<sup>62</sup> This did not end translation of the *Aeneid*. Pierre Tredehan translated the first four books of the *Aeneid* into French verse in 1575,

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<sup>59</sup> Hélienne de Crenne, *Les quatre Premiers livres des Eneides du très-elegant Poëte Vergile* (Paris: Denis Janot, 1541).

<sup>60</sup> Hélienne de Crenne, *Les Angoysses Douloureuses qui precedent d'amours* (Paris: Denis Janot, 1538).

<sup>61</sup> Joachim Du Bellay, *Le Quatriesme Livre de l'Énéide de Vergile* (Paris, Vincent Sertenas, 1552) and *Deux Livres de l'Énéide de Virgile, le quatriesme et sixieme* (Paris: Frederis Morel, 1561).

<sup>62</sup> Louis des Masures, *Les Deux Premiers Livres de l'Énéide de Virgile, traduits en rimes françaises par Loys des Mazures tournisien* (Paris: Christian Wechel, 1547); *Les quatre premiers livres de l'Énéide de Virgile, traduits par M. Louis des Masures tournisien* (Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1552); *Les V, VI, VII, VIII livres de l'Énéide des Virgile traduits par L. des Masures* (Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1557); *L'Eneide de Virgile, translátée de latin en francois par Louis des Masures tournisien* (Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1560). See Raymond Lebègue, *La Tragédie Religieuse en France: Les débuts (1514-1573)* (Paris: Champion 1929) p. 332.

while Robert and Anthoine Chevalier d'Agneaux's 1582 verse translation of the entire works of Virgil included the *Aeneid*.<sup>63</sup> In 1578, Pierre de Monchault appends his translation into French of Vegio's *Supplementum* to Des Masures' 1560 translation of the *Aeneid* and provides a case of both awareness of adaptation and continuation of the *Aeneid* in another national literary culture and a willingness to engage with and build upon the work of earlier translators.<sup>64</sup> By appending his work to that of Des Masures, Monchault provides a parallel with Vegio's own approach in continuing Virgil's original poem and again reaffirms Des Masures' central position as a French translator of the *Aeneid* in the sixteenth century.

The second category of engagement with the *Aeneid* is its continuation across linguistic, national and historical boundaries. The Italian writer Maffeo Vegio provides a useful model for analysing this literary process in his 1413 *Supplementum*, which extends Virgil's original narrative into a new religious and historical context. Furthermore, Vegio focusses this extension primarily on the figure of Aeneas, placing him at the centre of his extension of Virgil's original poem. Vegio's literary strategy will be compared to that of Ronsard in his unfinished *Franciade*, published in 1572. This will allow an analysis of how the two writers transfer a pagan epic into a Christian context. Ronsard embarks on a further stage of complexity by using Virgil's work within the national context of early modern France in his attempt to provide a national foundation myth that marks France as having a political and historical inheritance distinct from that of Italy but which still comes directly from Troy and which is centred around the journey of the protagonist, Francus, from Troy to France rather than to Italy.<sup>65</sup>

Ronsard sets up his own poem by referring to Homer and Virgil's accounts of the journeys of Odysseus and Aeneas:

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<sup>63</sup> Pierre Tredehan, *Oeuvres de P. Virgile Maron, traduits en vers héroïques François* (Geneva: Abel Rivery, 1575); Robert and Anthoine Chevalier d'Agneaux, *Les Oeuvres de Virgile Maron*, (Paris: Guillaume Auvray, 1582).

<sup>64</sup> *Les oeuvres de Virgile, traduites de latin en François, les Bucoliques et Georgiques, par Clement Marot et Richard Le Blanc: les XII livres des Eneides, par Loys des Masures, et de nouveau a été adjousté un XIII livre, par Mapheus, ensemble les epigrammes selectes de Virgile, traduites de latin en François par Pierre de Monchault.* (Paris: Claude Micart, 1578).

<sup>65</sup> Pierre de Ronsard, *Les Quatre Premiers Livres de La Franciade* (Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1572).

Bref ce livre est un Roman comme l'Iliade et l'Aeneide, où par occasion le plus brièvement que je puis je traite de nos Princes, d'autant que mon but est d'écrire les faits de Francion, & non de fil en fil, comme les Historiens, les gestes de nos Rois.<sup>66</sup>

Ronsard here makes it clear that in the style of Homer and Virgil, his work focusses on his protagonist, Francion, and it is through this central character that Ronsard is able to link the Trojan and French royal lines. Ronsard's understanding of Homeric and Virgilian epic as fictionalised history informs his blurring of the lines between history and fiction in his own poem.

The influence of the *Aeneid* is central to Ronsard's work and his attempt to provide the French royal family with a line of succession stretching back to the house of Priam. Michio Hagiwara categorizes this element as key to the structure of the poem as a whole:

The association of the Trojan blood with the French royal family had been conceived before the Renaissance. There was much speculation already in the early Middle Ages on the possible Trojan origin of the Franks and the Merovingian kings.<sup>67</sup>

The tradition of drawing links between the Trojan and French royal families was therefore well established and Ronsard's poem uses this tradition in its own structure. Hagiwara points out that the linking of the French royal line with that of Troy is a form of 'learned past' rather than myth or history: 'It is obvious that the Francus legend is not based on a popular myth but rather on some obscure, learned speculations'.<sup>68</sup> Thus the myth promoted by Ronsard does not automatically grow out of previous French foundation myths. Rather, the learned myth is promoted in order that it might serve a specific purpose of convincing Ronsard's readers that the royal line of Charles IX descends from the royal House of Troy, and so a new myth can be created based on this inheritance. Ronsard's poem confirms the authority of the French royal family and highlights the significance of Francus' journey from Troy to France as signifying a cultural inheritance from nation to nation and a denial of the importance of Rome's inheritance (through Aeneas) from Troy.

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<sup>66</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, 'Epistre', p. 7.

<sup>67</sup> Michio Hagiwara, *French Epic Poetry in the Sixteenth Century* (The Hague; Paris: Mouton, 1972) p. 89.

<sup>68</sup> Hagiwara, *French Epic Poetry*, p. 90.

Alice Hulubei identifies elements of the *Aeneid* that inspire the plot and structure of the *Franciade*:

La ressemblance entre les deux œuvres est assez frappante: analogie de situation des héros principaux, analogie du but poursuivi par les deux poètes, sujets du IIe et de IVe livre rappelant le contenu des livres IV et VI de l'*Énéide*: l'amour de Didon et la descente en enfer d'Énée. A cela s'ajoutent les procédés littéraires que Ronsard a pris de son illustre modèle: intervention miraculeuse de divinités, pratique de magie, scènes d'amour, style, figures de style.<sup>69</sup>

The relationship between Ronsard's and Virgil's poems is therefore based in specific links between the content of the poems as well as their respective structures. Ronsard acknowledges the influence of Virgil upon his own poem and uses this link to lay claim to a literary and linguistic authority inherited from Virgil, whilst simultaneously using the narrative of his poem to claim French independence from Rome. Thus, despite Ronsard's efforts to deny Roman inheritance from Rome through the figure of Aeneas, he nonetheless acknowledges Virgil's contribution to the formation of his own poem through his references to the *Aeneid*.

Reaction to the *Aeneid* is further complicated by its status as reconciliation narrative. The *Aeneid* may be read as a reconciliation narrative in the final images of peace between the Romans and the Latins, and therefore as a call for peace in Virgil's contemporary Rome. Ronsard's *Franciade* rejects this reconciliation narrative, and in doing so anticipates anti-epic engagement with the *Aeneid*, which will be explored as the third category of early modern French engagement with the poem through the example of Agrippa d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques* of 1616. D'Aubigné positions his work as a form of engagement not only with Virgil's *Aeneid* as epic, but also with the model of Lucan's *Pharsalia* as anti-epic, one that engages inherently with the *Aeneid*, but does so from a different political standpoint from Virgil's. Lucan's *Pharsalia*, or the *De Bello Civili*, dates from around 61-65 AD and recounts the conflict between Julius Caesar and Pompey Magnus. Its sympathies lie not with the future emperor, but with the republican hero Pompey, defeated at the battle of Pharsalus. The poem is left unfinished with Caesar fighting for his life after a murder attempt in Egypt. Just as Lucan offers an anti-imperialist vision that reflects and challenges Virgil's praise of Augustus, so d'Aubigné is forced, by his position as a Huguenot in France at the end of

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<sup>69</sup> Hulubei, *Virgile en France*, p. 65.

the Wars of Religion, to challenge Catholic victory narratives as demonstrated by Ronsard by presenting the possibility of a Huguenot victory in heaven, beyond the realms of time and space and the national context of France.

In proposing a victory narrative for the Huguenots, d'Aubigné's work questions the narrative of a Catholic victory in the Wars of Religion by suggesting that this victory will prove hollow on the Day of Judgement when the Huguenots' beliefs will be confirmed as correct. In his prophecy of a Huguenot victory on the Day of Judgement, d'Aubigné goes beyond the prophetic strategy of Virgil in Book 6 of the *Aeneid* to present a vision which resides in his own future, and not, as is the case with Virgil, in the future of the protagonist but not of the author. In this way d'Aubigné is also going beyond the vision set out by Lucan in his alternative, yet impossible, retrospective imagination of the outcome of the civil war. The example of *Les Tragiques* reconceptualises the epic by taking the element of prophecy already present throughout the *Aeneid* and adapting it to Huguenot beliefs in a history that is yet to come, but which is already made certain in the minds of the Huguenots through their faith. Mapheo Vegio's *Antoniad*, and particularly its depiction of death and resurrection, will be compared with d'Aubigné's literary strategy in order to show how the two authors use pagan imagery of death and resurrection within a Christian context.

The final, and most sophisticated, category of engagement with the *Aeneid* is that of Biblicization, as evidenced by Guillaume Du Bartas' attempt to combine the themes of Virgil's narrative with the structure and themes of the Book of Genesis in his two epic poems *La Sepmaine ou Création du Monde* (1578) and *La Seconde Sepmaine ou enfance du monde* (1583-1604).<sup>70</sup> Du Bartas combines a vision of the future of the French state, created in God's image, with literary references to Virgil's work. He thus conflates theological imagery of paganism with the Genesis story. Like d'Aubigné, Du Bartas rejects the narrative of a future Catholic victory, but he also foresees a role for Huguenots within the French state on earth as France undergoes a reconciliation after the Wars of Religion, but begins to establish herself as an imperial power. Du Bartas

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<sup>70</sup> Guillaume Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine ou Création du Monde*, ed. Victor Bol (Arles: Actes Sud, 1988) and *La Seconde Sepmaine ou Enfance du Monde, Troisième édition* (Antwerp: Jacques Henric, 1584).

therefore uses his combination of elements of the *Aeneid* and Bible as a means of proposing a rebirth of the reconciled French state in the aftermath of the Wars of Religion. The dual influence of the Bible and the *Aeneid* is not entirely new in the example of Du Bartas, as both of these elements are present in d'Aubigné's work, but Du Bartas combines these elements to further a new purpose. In contrast to d'Aubigné, who imagines a future victory for the Huguenots in an alternate universe, Du Bartas sees the possibility of a reconciliation between the Huguenots and the Catholics in France which is absent in both Ronsard and d'Aubigné and which approaches Virgil's vision of reconciliation in the *Aeneid*.

Du Bartas' text exemplifies the contrasting and competing literary influences that humanist authors encountered and had to mould into a coherent work, whilst also presenting the possibility of reconciliation for the Huguenot faction and a possible imperial future for France in the aftermath of the Wars of Religion. In presenting this vision of possible reconciliation, Du Bartas' work echoes the spirit of Virgil's. Yet his work also combines elements of the Bible and the early modern historical context in order to present this vision of reconciliation. Du Bartas manages to combine the underlying vision of Virgil with a literary strategy that refuses slavishly to follow Virgil, and which presents a vision of France prepared to move on from the Wars of Religion after a reconciliation between the warring parties. This constitutes a much more sophisticated engagement with the *Aeneid* as a literary text that can be used in parallel with the Bible to prove a much more complex political point than that proposed by either Ronsard or d'Aubigné. Du Bartas's must promote his imperial vision whilst combining the literary themes of the *Aeneid* with the message of creation taken from the Bible, and this engagement therefore is the most complex because of the elements which Du Bartas brings together in his poem.

### Conclusion

The progression of the chapters in this thesis is intended to demonstrate an increasingly subtle and sophisticated literary engagement with the *Aeneid* throughout the sixteenth-century in France. All of the forms of engagement outlined in this introduction are intended by their authors to interpret the *Aeneid* in a new context.

The historical and political parallels between the context in which the *Aeneid* was created and sixteenth-century France explain the popularity of the poem as a subject for a range of re-interpretations that was both varied and nuanced. Translation of the *Aeneid* into French is presented here as the least complex of these interpretations, although even within this single form of engagement with the *Aeneid*, there are multiple different approaches. Christian continuations of the *Aeneid*, as found in the examples of Vegio and Ronsard, reveal the next step in complexity of engagement, as the *Aeneid*'s underlying narrative is continued across different historical and national boundaries. This involves an engagement not only with the *Aeneid* as a literary text, but also with the political and historical context of its creation. Anti-epic responses to the *Aeneid*, such as d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques*, engage not only with the original circumstances of the creation of the *Aeneid*, but also with Lucan's challenge to Virgil, in order to mount a similar anti-epic challenge within the literature of sixteenth-century France. Finally, Du Bartas Christianisation of pagan epic presents an image of a France reconciled and prepared to build its imperial project whilst including all of its citizens. In his vision of the future of France as an imperial nation, Du Bartas includes and combines elements from the *Aeneid*, the Bible, and contemporary French history in a work which uses pagan religious symbolism to express a Christian vision of the world. It is this combination of disparate elements that renders Du Bartas' work the most complex of the engagements studied in the course of this thesis. This thesis thus demonstrates French writers' increasing sophistication of engagement with Virgil, which first appropriates, then challenges, and then re-appropriates both the themes and context of the *Aeneid* within the new context of sixteenth-century France. It explores how and why this process takes place and demonstrates the ways in which these engagements build upon one another in their increasingly sophisticated interactions with the *Aeneid*.



# CHAPTER ONE

## APPROACHES TO THE TRANSLATION OF THE *AENEID* IN EARLY MODERN FRANCE

### Introduction

Literary engagement with Virgil's *Aeneid* in early modern France can be viewed as a result of two distinct but equally important processes: those of translation and adaptation. These two processes complement one another and give rise to an increasing sophistication in the way in which French authors respond to ancient texts, including Virgil's *Aeneid*, throughout the early modern period. While further chapters of this thesis will deal with the adaptation of the *Aeneid* more widely, this chapter will concentrate on translation, with particular reference to how Hélienne de Crenne, one of the translators studied and adapted the *Aeneid* before translating it. The process of translation of the *Aeneid* from Latin into French is the most straightforward interaction between sixteenth-century French authors and the *Aeneid* as a literary text, if this process is understood to involve the transfer of the meaning and narrative of the poem from one language into another. Yet this process is subject to different approaches by successive early modern French translators of the *Aeneid*, each of whom brings to the poem his or her own interpretation of Virgil's original text and of the methods to be employed when rendering the text into French. Each translator must go further than commenting on the *Aeneid* in its original language, they must transfer it into the French language. As well as making linguistic choices, translators must also take into account the ways in which the increasingly tense religious and political context of early modern France may influence their own translation. Not only is the *Aeneid* itself a political text, as has been established, but the act of translation is itself political as it involves the transfer of the text from the linguistic context of Rome to that of early modern France.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p.8.

These considerations mean that the process of translation of the *Aeneid* into French becomes more complex throughout the sixteenth century.

This chapter will demonstrate this increasing complexity both through analysis of the claims made by individual translators in the prefatory material to their translations and also through a comparison of the translations of two sections of Book 4 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, in which Dido speaks to her sister Anna of her first impressions of Aeneas upon his arrival at Carthage. Comparison of all the sixteenth-century French translations of these extracts will demonstrate that the variation in the translations is due not only to linguistic choices but also to sometimes radically different interpretations of Virgil's poem. Furthermore, this comparison will show that translation of the *Aeneid* into French in the sixteenth century was an increasingly sophisticated process in which translators' works successively influenced one another as they produced their translations.

The reasons for translating the *Aeneid* were complex and varied. The first of the six sixteenth-century translations (or partial translations) of the *Aeneid* is the word-for-word translation by Octovien de Saint-Gelais (1509). Next is Hélienne de Crenne's translation of Books 1-4 of the *Aeneid* (1542), following her earlier adaptation of the story of Dido in the *Angoysses Douloureuses* (1538), which seeks to narrate her encounter with Aeneas from Dido's point of view. Crenne's two works demonstrate an interaction between adaptation and translation of the *Aeneid* by a single author and a new motivation for translation: Saint-Gelais' literary concern to translate the *Aeneid* accurately into French is replaced with a desire to examine the societal change in attitudes towards female writers.

Glyn Norton has problematized the issue of translation as a method of literary imitation in early modern France by looking at the crossover between translation and rhetoric and seeing this as the reason for the interest in translation in early modern France:

The essential fact ascribed by rhetoric to translation was its autonomy. A translator might well begin by seeking to make his text intersect with the source, but as the translation came to be

appreciated as an act of composition in its own right, motivations toward sameness appeared undermined by factors of differentiation.<sup>72</sup>

Norton thus points to the ability of the translator to assert his independence from the original text, but also to the privileging of the work of the translator above that of the author of the original work. The status of the translator as creator further complicates the analysis of translation, as the translator can now compete with the author of the original work for the right to claim the status of creator. This is also linked by Norton to the fact that texts in this period were seen as capable of adaptation: 'texts, like languages, are living things, replaying for each new culture and reader a constantly shifting parade of problems and enigmas.'<sup>73</sup> This attitude of constantly changing interactions with texts is what allows the increasing sophistication of engagement with the *Aeneid*. Norton proposes that this phenomenon of the constantly changing text cannot be systematically codified as a symbol concept precisely because of the variation inherent within it:

The purpose [of charting the arch-concepts and terminologies through which French Renaissance tradition communicates certain normative models and principles] however, is misleading to the extent that the textual sources, by their very diversity, seem to resist all projects of system and unifying methodology. This is all the more surprising given the heady fascination with method and space logic characteristic not only of the humanist tradition, but also of major movements in sixteenth-century European thought.<sup>74</sup>

This thesis will argue that the increasing sophistication of approaches to translation can be viewed within a context of a wider approach to the *Aeneid* throughout the sixteenth century and that this increasing sophistication can be analysed. It is not so diverse that this overall trend cannot be analysed, even if, as Norton proposes, it cannot be rigidly codified.

Du Bellay's *Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Françoise* (1542) cast translation as only the preliminary means of including ancient texts within the French literary 'canon', yet was nonetheless followed by Du Bellay's own translation of Book 4 (1552) and Book 6 (1560) of the *Aeneid*. The step-by-step publication strategy of Louis Des Masures, whose translations of the successive twelve books were published between 1547 and 1560, demonstrates an approach to translation that both measured itself

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<sup>72</sup> Glyn Norton, *The Language and Ideology of Translation in Renaissance France and Their Humanist Antecedents* (Geneva: Droz, 1984) p 332.

<sup>73</sup> Norton, *The Language of Ideology*, p. 9.

<sup>74</sup> Norton, *The Language of Ideology*, p. 10.

against the reactions of a reading public, and also bridged the translator's personal religious conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism, suggesting that literary interest in the *Aeneid* occupied a position above the factional concerns of the French Wars of Religion.

Pierre Tredehan's translation of the first four books of the *Aeneid*, published in 1575, demonstrates how a later sixteenth-century French translator was influenced by earlier translators as he draws on Des Masures' translation in his own work. Pierre de Monchault's translation of Maffeo Vegio's *Supplementum*, also known as the "Thirteenth Book" was appended to Des Masures' 1560 translation and was published in 1578. It suggests not only that French translators were aware of more complex adaptations of the *Aeneid*, and that these adaptations were popular enough amongst a French audience to be translated and for those translations to be reprinted, but that the possibility existed for authors in sixteenth-century France to adapt the *Aeneid* in ways that were more complex than translation. It also raises the question of the importance of Vegio's work in relation to the *Aeneid* within the sixteenth century context. The Vegio addition suggests an interest in later engagements with Virgil's poem, whilst also demonstrating the view of Des Masures' translation as the definitive early modern French translation of the *Aeneid* given that it was the translation to which the work was attached even eighteen years after the Des Masures translation was first published. In adding the translation of the *Supplementum*, Monchault challenges this definitive interpretation of Des Masures as translator of the *Aeneid* by showing that he is prepared to take the work further by adding the element of the translation of the thirteenth book. Robert and Anthoine Chevalier d'Agneaux's translation of the entire work, published in 1582 and republished in 1583, is the final translation of the *Aeneid* into French during the sixteenth century and again represents a challenge to the status of the Des Masures translation as the definitive early modern French translation of the *Aeneid*.

This chapter will demonstrate that the motives for translating Virgil's *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France evolve from the purely literary to the employment of translations as devices intended to represent wider social and political issues in the country. Comparison between the different translations helps determine the strategies and motives of the translators, both with respect to Virgil's original poem and with

respect to one another's translations, and this chapter will analyse the claims made by the translators for their translations and the political and literary reasons for making these claims. Comparison of the translations will then show to what extent the ideas set out in these translations are put into practice in the translations themselves.

### The First French Translation of the *Aeneid*: Octovien de Saint-Gelais

Octovien de Saint-Gelais' translation of all twelve books of the *Aeneid* into French verse was published in 1509. The work was translated into other European languages and was also the subject of illustrations in the form of woodcuts. Valerie Worth-Stylianou points to Bernadette Pasquier's study of these woodcuts,<sup>75</sup> showing that printers chose to print the translation to take account of the insertion of woodcuts within the translation.<sup>76</sup> Saint-Gelais' translation has been cited by Anna Slerca for its influence both in France and in sixteenth-century Europe more widely:

La traduction de l'*Énéide* par Octovien a influencé la traduction des quatre premiers livres du poème de Virgile, par Hélienne de Crenne (1541), et la traduction de Louis des Masures. Elle a sûrement influencé encore la traduction anglaise du poème de Virgile par Gawin Douglas (*sic*) – et indirectement, par son intermédiaire, la traduction de Henry Howard, comte de Surrey.<sup>77</sup>

Slerca here attributes to Saint-Gelais the status of having begun the tradition of *Aeneid* translation into the vernacular not only in early modern France, but in the rest of Europe as well. Although the *Aeneid* had already been translated into Italian by Ciampolo di Meo degli Ugurgieri between 1313 and 1315, Saint-Gelais' translation was the first in print.<sup>78</sup> Slerca is claiming that European translation of the *Aeneid* is always channelled through French literature after the appearance of Saint-Gelais' translation. However, she advances no evidence to support her theory that the Saint-Gelais' translation influenced Gavin Douglas (who translated the *Aeneid* into Scots rather than English). Saint-Gelais' translation was certainly influential in France. Analysis of the translations

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<sup>75</sup> Bernadette Pasquier, *Virgile Illustré de la Renaissance de nos jours en France et en Italie* (Paris: Jean Touzot, 1992) pp. 226-9.

<sup>76</sup> Valerie Worth-Stylianou, "Virgilian Space in French Translation of the *Aeneid*" in *Virgilian Identities in the French Renaissance*, ed. Philip John Usher and Isabelle Fernbach (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2012) p. 124.

<sup>77</sup> Anna Slerca, "Octovien de Saint-Gelais traducteur de Virgile et d'Ovide, et la néologie", in *Le Moyen Français* 39-41 (1997), pp. 555-568 (556).

<sup>78</sup> See Ronald G. Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), p. 191.

of Crenne and Des Masures will show that they do draw some influences from Saint-Gelais' work, although they also include significant original inventions. Yet the influence of Saint-Gelais' work on both Crenne and Des Masures in their respective translations demonstrates the implicit reliance upon other early modern translators of the *Aeneid*.

In his "Préface", Saint-Gelais sums up his project very succinctly as a translation that attempts to render the nuances of Virgil's Latin into French almost word for word:

Et conclu lors dardant desir, si force au cueur ne me default, icelluy livre translater de son latin hault et insigne de mot à mot et au plus pres, et de le mectre en langue Francoyse et vulgaire.<sup>79</sup>

Saint-Gelais' description of his translation strategy makes no reference to political considerations. Even if he is aware that the *Aeneid* has political importance in France at this time, he still sees his primary goal as being to produce an accurate rendering of Virgil's work into French, by which he means translating word by word. Thomas Brückner describes the success of this strategy in Saint-Gelais' translation:

Un des traits dominants de la traduction de Saint-Gelais consiste dans la restitution fidèle du récit épique: on retrouve chez Octovien tout ce qui se passe dans l'*Énéide*, tout ce que racontent les vers virgiliens. Il est vrai que sa traduction omet un nombre considérable d'éléments, mais c'est l'omission presque toujours d'un seul mot, rarement d'un vers entier et jamais de plusieurs vers successifs. Car c'est dans l'ornement du discours, dans les figures stylistiques, c'est-à-dire dans l'*elocutio* que Saint-Gelais se permet des libertés dans sa version.<sup>80</sup>

Brückner is thus suggesting that Saint-Gelais is primarily interested in the aesthetic qualities of the language he uses in his work and in its proximity to Virgil's original language. This suggests that for Saint-Gelais, as long as the underlying meaning of the *Aeneid* is preserved, his translation is accurate and he can achieve his aims.

Anna Slerca and Christine Scollen respectively discuss the influence of literary and political considerations on Saint-Gelais' translation, underlining the literary and political gaps between Virgil and the early modern French political and historical contexts that had to be bridged in order for the translation to work effectively. Slerca argues that Saint-Gelais changes and improves the French language with the introduction of new vocabulary in order that his translation might better reflect Virgil's literary style:

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<sup>79</sup> Christine M. Scollen, "Octovien de Saint-Gelais' translation of the *Aeneid*: Poetry or Propaganda?", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 39.2 (1977), pp. 253-261 (259).

<sup>80</sup> Thomas Brückner, "Un traducteur de Virgile inconnu du XVIe siècle: Jean d'Ivry", *Lettres Romanes*, 44 (1990), pp. 171-180 (173).

Il faut en conclure que pour sa traduction de l'*Énéide*, Octovien a consciemment employé un niveau de langue très élevé, «sublime», comme Virgile l'avait fait en latin. Le nombre important de virgilianismes et de latinismes en général s'explique donc aisément. A notre avis, loin d'alourdir la langue littéraire, ils ont contribué à la forger. Grâce à la traduction d'Octovien, la langue poétique française a été effectivement enrichie et «illustrée»: ceci, par un travail qui n'est pas seulement linguistique. Sa portée est linguistique, littéraire et culturelle à la fois.<sup>81</sup>

The high number of latinisms Slerca refers to here could be seen either as enriching the French language, a move which Du Bellay would later call for in his *Deffence*, by introducing new words into it, or a sign of Saint-Gelais' inability or reluctance to search for vernacular translations of these words. This strategy reflects Saint-Gelais' solution, highlighted in his own "Préface", to the problem of finding French equivalents for Latin vocabulary. However, in that he is forced to use adaptations of Latin words in order to make the meaning of his translation close to that of Virgil's original poem, Saint-Gelais is changing the French language itself and demonstrating the wider linguistic influence of translating such a work.

Slerca suggests that in addition to the purely linguistic concerns underlying Saint-Gelais methodology, literary and cultural factors which require a more in-depth critical analysis also influenced his translation. Christine Scollen is also of the view that Saint-Gelais' motives are not purely literary, even if this is an element in the translation. Commenting on Saint-Gelais' "Préface", she describes the politically allegorical reading of the *Aeneid* that may lie behind Saint-Gelais' choice of text to translate:

With a stretch of the imagination, never lacking in the late Middle Ages when it came to a fanciful allegorical interpretation of a text, Louis and his subjects could see the French nation, whose Trojan origins were so much in vogue, as the followers of Aeneas, and the king himself as "pius Aeneas" sent by Venus to claim the kingdom of Italy as his own. There was perhaps a difference between the mission of Aeneas, sanctioned at least by some of the gods of Olympus, and Louis XII's somewhat flimsy claims to the Duchy of Milan, but these were mere trifles to a propagandist and diplomat such as Saint-Gelais.<sup>82</sup>

Scollen implies a number of motivations here for Saint-Gelais' choice of the *Aeneid* as a subject for translation. The *Aeneid* is chosen specifically because it can be viewed as an allegory for the current state of France, and Scollen identifies this as the main reason for Saint-Gelais' dedication of his poem to Louis XII. Furthermore, the myth of Trojan Aeneas coming to France instead of to Italy, implying that France is the 'real' Rome (in the sense of the new Troy), as is hinted at in Ronsard's *Franciade*, is implicitly endorsed

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<sup>81</sup> Slerca, "Octovien de Saint-Gelais", p. 568.

<sup>82</sup> Scollen, "Octovien de Saint-Gelais' Translation", p. 258.

by Scollen as a reason for the translation. The third reason is that, according to Scollen, the claims of the French crown to the Duchy of Milan were very weak, but they could be supported through the translation of Latin literature which implies that if France is Troy's literary inheritor, it could also be its political inheritor, and so occupy contemporary Rome. Scollen's analysis relies on the readers of Saint-Gelais' translation performing an interpretative leap in accepting that the *Aeneid* could be read as an allegory for the Italian War, a shift which is perhaps too great to be believed by Saint-Gelais' readers.

In spite of this, Scollen insists that both Octovien and his readers recognise the value of the *Aeneid* as a political symbol:

It is quite obvious that Octovien de Saint Gelais and his readers would have been quite conscious of the propaganda values of the *Aeneid*. Throughout the Renaissance in France one of the most obvious ways of flattering a monarch or other patron, in literature or in the visual arts, was to compare him with a hero or God.<sup>83</sup>

This view highlights the real considerations of the translator within the political climate of sixteenth-century France. Scollen's analysis is that in drawing the comparison between individual real and fictional figures, Saint-Gelais is drawing comparisons between the historic state of Rome and the contemporary state of France without explicitly acknowledging them. Even if Saint-Gelais depicts the conception of his translation as a literary concern, this does not prevent his sixteenth-century French readers from interpreting his approach in political terms, or twentieth-century critics from ascribing such interpretations to these readers, emphasising that the act of translation itself is interpreted as a political process. Saint Gelais' affirmed approach to translation, and the reaction of readers and critics to this affirmation, demonstrates that this reaction is outside the control of the translator. The reaction outlined by Scollen shows the translated text as inherently political, reflecting Quint's view of the epic poem as a political genre.<sup>84</sup>

#### A Female Perspective: Helisenne de Crenne's Translation and Adaptation of Virgil's

##### Dido

Hélisenne de Crenne embarks on both an adaptation and, later, a translation of the *Aeneid*. She adapts the Dido episode found in book 4 of the *Aeneid* in her *Angoysses*

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<sup>83</sup> Scollen, "Octovien de Saint Gelais' Translation", p. 260.

<sup>84</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, see above, p. 10.



*Doulouresuses* in 1538, and she then publishes her translation of the first four books of the *Aeneid* into French prose, with certain additions, in 1547. Crenne's translation is influenced by that of Saint-Gelais, although it is not as closely word-for-word as his earlier translation, as Thomas Brückner, who compares a small selection of lines from both translations, has shown.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, through her adaptation and translation, Crenne provides an example of engagement with the *Aeneid* that grows out of very different intentions from those of Saint-Gelais. In this way, Crenne's work occupies a position which bridges the gap between adaptation and translation.

In the first part of her *Angoysses Douloureuses*, Crenne focusses on the story of Hélienne, who finds herself falling in love at first sight with a man who is not her husband and attempting to conceal her love for this man. In the second part of her work, Crenne provides various short examples of women who have found themselves trapped in impossible and unhappy situations similar to that of Hélienne as they fall in love with unattainable men. As part of this series, Crenne tells a version of Dido's story from Dido's point of view. She uses different characters from Virgil, substituting Elyveba and Guenelic for Dido and Aeneas, and modernises the context of their story. In the *Aeneid*, Virgil presents Dido as a minor character who is quickly abandoned by Aeneas and whose personal feelings are never fully explored. Crenne narrates the first part of her story from the point of view of Elyveba, as she falls in love with Guenelic and attempts to escape from her husband, who eventually confines her in the Château de Cabasus. Elyveba composes her story in the hope that Guenelic will find it. The image of the abandoned Elyveba (representing Hélienne, herself abandoned by her lover), unable to reach the man she loves, recalls the fate of Dido as explained to Aeneas in book 6 of Virgil's poem.

The link to the *Aeneid* relies on this imagery of the abandoned lover, rather than on any specific literary reference, as has been identified by Sharon Marshall. Marshall suggests that this retelling of the Dido episode is central to Crenne's literary project.

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<sup>85</sup> Thomas Brückner, *Die erste französische Aeneis: Untersuchungen zu Octovien de Saint-Gelais' Übersetzung: mit einer kritischen Edition des VI. Buches* (Dusseldorf: Droste, 1987) pp. 215-221.

Marshall casts Crenne's project as an attempt to change the entire Renaissance attitude to classical literature and to undermine its apparently inherent authority:

I suggest that Hélienne uses her translation to mount a twofold attack on the authority of classical literature, questioning both the way in which the Trojan war story is told generally and, more specifically, the portrayal of the character of Dido. In doing so, Hélienne makes a point about the literary manipulation of truth and fiction that both reflects upon the act of writing and simultaneously contributes to the defence of women offered throughout her work. Translation is a vehicle through which Hélienne can aim to reach as broad an audience as possible, since it has the potential to appeal to an audience of humanist scholars and a broader public of readers of vernacular literature.<sup>86</sup>

Marshall highlights the fact that Crenne is attacking the authority of classical literature through her translation, but her choice of text to translate reinforces the very authority her text is challenging. Crenne's manipulation of the meaning of the text serves not only as an attempt to widen the audience for Virgil's *Aeneid*, but to highlight to that audience the possibility for reinterpretation which lies inherent within the text itself.

By telling the Dido story from Dido's point of view, Crenne is able to change the reader's view of her relationship with Aeneas and of her role in the story as a whole without breaking contact with the *Aeneid* itself. Crenne therefore relies on the literary status of the *Aeneid* to heighten the status of her own work, whilst at the same time challenging previous readings of the Dido episode. Virgil's central point in the Dido episode, both in Book 4 and when Aeneas meets her in the Underworld in Book 6, is that Aeneas' abandonment of Dido, which leads to her suicide, is necessary because Aeneas must succeed in reaching Italy and founding the city that will become Rome, no matter what the cost may be. The change in Dido's character between Book 4 and Book 6 is very marked, as she becomes 'quam si dura silex aut stet Marpesia cautes'.<sup>87</sup> She has gone from loving Aeneas to having all the emotions of a rocky crag. Faced with this change in Dido's character as a result of his actions, Aeneas blames his flight on the wishes of the gods, taking no responsibility himself. In Virgil's narrative, Aeneas has no choice but to leave Dido, and Dido's choice to commit suicide represents her final act of free will. Aeneas does not reflect on Dido's fate until he meets her in the Underworld,

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<sup>86</sup> Sarah Marshall, "The Aeneid and the Illusory Authoress: Truth, fiction and feminism in Hélienne de Crenne's *Eneydes*" (PhD Thesis, University of Exeter, 2011) p. 56.

<sup>87</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid Books I-VI*, ed. R. Deryck Williams (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1996), Book 6, l. 471.

and his pity for Dido is not linked to any remorse or consideration of the fact that his actions may partly have led to her death. Crenne challenges Dido's position in Virgil as a secondary character to Aeneas by placing her at the centre of the story, denying that she can be treated as 'collateral damage' in the overarching goal of founding Rome.

Crenne explains in her "Epistre Dédicatoire" to the *Angoysses Douloureuses* that she is writing specifically in order to educate women about the problems they may face in their encounters with love, presenting the characters in her work as examples of the possible outcomes of their conduct, and holding herself up as an example to other women to avoid falling in love:

Les anxietez & tristesse des miserables (comme je peulx penser et conjecturer) se diminuent, quand on les peult declarer à quelque sien amy fidele. Parce que je suis certaine par moy mesmes, que les dames naturellement sont inclinées à avoir compassion. C'est à vous mes nobles dames que je veulx mes extremes doulours estre communiquées. Car j'estime que mon infortune vous provoquera à quelques larmes pitieuses, qui me pourra donner quelque refrigeration medicamente. Helas quand je vins à rememorer les afflictions, dont mon triste cueur a esté, & est continuellement agité, par infinitz désirs & amoureux aguillonemens. Cela me cause une douleur qui excede toutes aultres, en sorte que ma main tremblante, demeure immobile. O trescheres dames, quant je considere que en voyant comme j'ay esté surprinse, vous pourrez eviter les dangereux laqs d'amour en y resistant du commencement, sans continuer en amoureuses pensées. Je vous prie de vouloir eviter ociosite, & vous occuper à quelques honnestes exercices. Et ces considerations je me vins a reverberer & reprendre mes forces, en exorant celle qui est mere & fille de l'altitonant plasmateur, de vouloir ayder a ma triste mémoire, a soustenir ma debile main, pour vous le scavoir bien escrire<sup>88</sup>

Crenne thus appeals directly to the 'compassion' of her readers, implying that she requires their pity in the situations she outlines, but also presenting herself as being concerned with the struggles of her readers in their loving encounters. Crenne's focus is on the emotional response her work might invoke in her female readers, as she suggests they will cry as they read. Yet Crenne also views her poem as an opportunity to teach her readers about the perils of love. Crenne is using her adapted love story as a means of educating female readers about love, and she suggests particularly that they should avoid what she terms the 'dangereux laqs' of love, with her call to her readers to pursue more 'honnestes' pastimes suggesting that she holds Dido up as an example to be avoided and pitied rather than emulated. Crenne finishes her "Epistre" with the image of herself as weak and trying to regain her memory in order to write. This humility

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<sup>88</sup> Hélienne de Crenne, *Les Angoysses Douloureuses qui procedent d'amours* (Paris: Denis Janot, 1538), "Epistre Dédicatoire", pp. 1-2.

on the part of Crenne is intended to show the *Angoysses* as a personal work designed to resonate with Crenne's readers on a personal level. Crenne's inclusion of the adaptation of the Dido story in the *Angoysses* is thus intended to show her readers how they might relate to the most prominent female character of the *Aeneid* by viewing Dido's situation from Dido's point of view. Crenne is thus using the emotions displayed by Dido to educate her female readers about the perils of love.

This appeal to her readers to view the *Aeneid* as instructive in their own lives is identified by Pollie Bromilow as a product of Crenne's unusual situation as a female literary author and her need to attract a readership through a very specific literary strategy:

Crenne was unusual among her female literary peers because she belonged neither to the court nor to the nobility. As an independent woman writer in the capital she needed to capture the attention of her readership through literary trends which were at the height of popularity.<sup>89</sup>

Bromilow identifies a means of success for an unknown female writer in sixteenth-century France as coming from an ability to respond to the demands of readers. Crenne thus plays an active role in forming her own appeal to her prospective audience through her calculated choices regarding the nature of the literary work she undertakes. Leah Chang however affords Crenne a much more passive role with regard to marketing the *Angoysses Douloureuses*, seeing her gender as a form of 'unique selling point' for her publisher Denys Janot:

And yet the presence of Dame Helisenne's name on the 1538 title page and the very existence of the material 1538 volume certainly suggest one thing: that at least one contemporary printer, and at least some of his prospective readers, were interested in the idea of a female author. Janot must have thought that "Dame Helisenne" and the text published in her name had an appeal, perhaps commercial, perhaps intellectual. Given the demands of the early modern book market (and as certainly could be said of the modern book market), Janot must have hoped that in any case "Dame Helisenne" the author figure would sell.<sup>90</sup>

Chang thus implies that Crenne is a literary curiosity, and this fact is emphasised by Janot in order to aid the publication of the *Angoysses*, as Janot felt that the idea of a female author would enhance the appeal of her work to prospective readers.

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<sup>89</sup> Pollie Bromilow, "Reading Women Writing: Female Readers and the *Angoysses Douloureuses Qui procedent d'amours* (1538) by H elisenne de Crenne", *Modern Languages Review*, 108.3 (2013), pp. 763-781 (763).

<sup>90</sup> Leah L. Chang, *Into Print: The Production of Female Authorship in Early Modern France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), pp. 18-19.

Yet Crenne's later translation of the *Aeneid* demonstrates that the translation and the *Angoysses Douloureuses* are connected on a much more sophisticated level than Chang's identification of "Dame Hélisenne" as Janot's proposed commercial construct allows. This is borne out not only in the way in which Crenne adapts literary texts, but in the texts she chooses to adapt. Crenne had experience of adapting classical texts, as Bromilow points out:

In *Le Songe*, a dream-sequence poem based on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, Crenne demonstrates her familiarity with and ability to respond to the most influential humanist texts of the day.<sup>91</sup>

Crenne therefore had demonstrated an ability to respond to ancient texts, but Bromilow also suggests that she was able to respond to contemporary trends. Bromilow analyses Crenne's perception of her role not merely as the translator or adaptor of a single text, but as an active contributor to the wider humanist movement in France. Indeed, Sarah Marshall sees Crenne as being at the forefront of the movement to translate classical literary works into the vernacular:

Hélisenne's *Eneydes* was among the earliest French translations of the *Aeneid* and the first to be written in prose rather than verse, situating her firmly in the forefront of the humanist drive to produce vernacular translations of the Classics. This period of vulgarisation marked the penetration of humanism into vernacular literature aimed at a popular, and no longer merely a learned, public.<sup>92</sup>

Marshall sees Crenne's aim as being not only to put forward a translation of the *Aeneid*, but to lead the humanist movement forward, both through the translation of classical texts into French, but also in expanding the audience for such literary texts. The translation of texts into French, and their dissemination to a wider reading audience, seems to be as important to Crenne as the choice of texts to be translated. Furthermore, the method of translation chosen by Crenne distinguishes her as a translator of Virgil, in that she is willing to change Virgil's style in order to achieve her own literary project.

Marshall also suggests that this vulgarisation is a response to the exclusivity of the French education system, in that such translations allowed an audience which had not benefited from a formal education in classical literature to have access to classical texts,

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<sup>91</sup> Bromilow, "Reading Women Writing", p. 764.

<sup>92</sup> Marshall, "The *Aeneid*", p. 45.

and that Crenne's decision to translate the *Aeneid* was an attempt to respond to the demands of Janot's usual clientele:

Janot's publications were almost exclusively small volumes, both portable and inexpensive to purchase. They were thus likely to have appealed to a popular audience – a literate but not necessarily scholarly audience – that Susan Broomhall describes as “a clientele who wanted romances, poetry and theatre”. Hélisenne's decision to translate books One to Four – with its thematic focus on the tragic love story of Dido and Aeneas – clearly fits the bill in this respect and may, at least in part, be an attempt to appeal to Janot's usual clientele.<sup>93</sup>

There are therefore three factors relating to Janot's position as her publisher at play in Crenne's decision to translate the first four books of the *Aeneid*. These are the physical size of the finished volume, the level of education of the intended reading audience, a consideration previously noted by Chang, and the audience's desire to read a work belonging to a specific literary genre. Broomhall characterises these sought-after genres as ‘romances, poetry and theatre’, and while the *Aeneid* may fit to some extent into the first two of these characterisations, both Broomhall and Marshall are suggesting that the work was presented to Crenne's readers not as part of a wider epic, but rather for the themes of love and tragedy contained within it. Crenne therefore attempts to widen access to the *Aeneid* by translating the text into the vernacular whilst also leading a wider literary trend towards the translation of classical literature. Crenne produces a translation which will simultaneously have appeal to a popular audience and be the starting-point for a wider humanist movement to translate classical texts into French. This approach combines both the publishing and commercial strategies of Crenne as an individual author with a concern for a broader literary movement, a highly unusual combination of strategies.

Just as Scollen questions the motives for Saint-Gelais' choice of text for translation, so Marshall looks to Crenne's “Préface” to her translation of *Aeneid* books 1-4 for clues about her motivations. Marshall suggests that Crenne's allusion to François I is not merely a case of flattery in an attempt to gain favour and recognition at court, but that it shows Crenne's personal dedication to the humanist project. The language used in the “Preface”, Marshall argues, goes beyond the formulaic language used in an address to the king and shows Crenne's engagement with the central ideologies of humanism:

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<sup>93</sup> Marshall, “*The Aeneid*”, p. 74.

Hélisenne reveals here a preoccupation with the idea of a quest for the rediscovery of the past, when she tells François that ancient works are “litées”, “hidden”, and “couvertes”, “covered” by more recent things (*praef.* iii.). Her choice of vocabulary is very significant here. Hélisenne’s description of classical literature in terms of concealment or obscurity implies that she believes her project as a translator to primarily entail bringing ancient works into light, because they deserve to be recorded in eternal memory. The suggestion that classical works are “hidden” and “covered” may also hint at the historical-mindedness of Renaissance humanism that sought not just to rediscover classical texts, but to interpret them with a sensitivity to their original meaning. We can, therefore, take the first sentence of the dedicatory letter as a programmatic statement of Hélisenne’s intent to preserve and disseminate Virgil’s *Aeneid* to ensure its survival and possibly also to recover its meaning.<sup>94</sup>

Marshall here identifies the processes of preservation and discovery of the *Aeneid* in ways that seem to contradict one another. It could be argued that Crenne is not actively attempting to preserve the *Aeneid*, because it is already preserved in its original form, which is precisely why Crenne is able to use the poem as a source of literary inspiration and is then able to translate it into French. Rather, she is preserving for her readers her own interpretation of the *Aeneid*. Crenne’s interpretation of the original meaning of the *Aeneid* and the original meaning of the *Aeneid* are not necessarily the same, even though Marshall identifies her attempt to identify them as such. It could be argued that Crenne’s translation remains sensitive to the original meaning of the *Aeneid*, while nevertheless emphasising the aspects she thinks are most relevant to her audience and presenting them in a way that is appealing to her readership. It is unlikely that her intended readers – for the most part, women - had encountered the *Aeneid* through a formal education, and so she cannot rely on their previous knowledge of the text as a basis with which they might compare her interpretation. Hélisenne is thus trying to emphasize her adaptation of the Dido story in both the *Angoysse*s and later translation of the *Aeneid* whilst maintaining as wide a readership as possible.

Crenne embellishes sections of her translation with elements that are not present in the original text. Virgil’s description of the scene of Dido making a sacrifice to Juno is succinct, and it depicts Dido from an entirely external point of view, as if Virgil wishes to recreate for his audience Aeneas’ own viewpoint:

Ipsa tenens dextra pateram pulcherrima Dido  
candentis vaccae media inter cornua fundit,  
aut ante ora deum pinguis spatiat ad aras,  
instauratque diem donis, pecudumque reclusis  
pectoribus inhians spirantia consulit exta.

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<sup>94</sup> Marshall, “The *Aeneid*”, p. 87.

heu, vatum ignarae mentes! Quid vota furentem,  
quid delubra iuvant? est mollis flamma medullas  
interea et tacitum vivit sub pectore vulnus.<sup>95</sup>

Crenne's rendering of this extract into French is significantly expanded, not only in length, but also in her description of Dido's feelings:

Ce que cognoissant la tresbelle Dido, du tout est studieuse luy faire lors sacrifice, & baisant avec sa bouche coraline ung hanap plein de vin clair & delicieux, doucement l'espand entre les cornes d'une fort blanche vache. Cela fait avec grand & delectable plaisir se soulacioit pres des images devant les sujets posées, & fut consumé ce jour à offrir grandz & sumptueux dons de ses loyaux & admirable richesses. Et ainsi par les entrailles des animaux enqueroit quelle seroit de sa Fortune l'ysse. Helas combien sont vaines, supersticieuses & folles les paroles de plusieurs devins recitées? Mais de quelle utilité peuvent estre les oblatiens en cueur ignare & trop furieux? Ne dequoy sert au temple telle offrande, quand par nulle evidence lon ne veut que l'offrant allement en recouvre? Certes à l'heure flamme molle luy consumoit l'esperit & luy dissipoit le corps de telle sorte, que iusques aux medulles, nerz & os estoit attaincte: & en l'interiorité de sa poitrine vivoit vulneration occulte, qui avec rigueur benigne & langueur acceptable de la puissance du filz de Venus luy faisoit indice.<sup>96</sup>

Crenne's opening three words shift the focus of the passage entirely, as they indicate that Dido is aware of the significance of the development of the love between her and Aeneas, directly showing to the reader Dido's own thought process, rather than watching from afar. Aeneas' misunderstanding of what happens in this ceremony defines the relationship between himself and Dido and ultimately leads to Dido's death. Aeneas does not believe that he has been married to Dido, whilst Dido thinks that the marriage has taken place.

The description of the sacrificial ceremony to Juno, keeper of the bonds of marriage, remains unchanged, yet Crenne shifts the focus onto Dido's feelings, with not only her pleasure but also her relief confirmed by the ceremony. Crenne is also highly sceptical here of the reassurance that the ceremony provides for Dido. Crenne repeats Virgil's scepticism concerning the abilities of priests, 'vatum ignarae mentes', using three adjectives to hammer home this point: 'combien sont vaines, supersticieuses & folles les paroles de plusieurs divins recitées'. Crenne's three adjectives criticize the priests for three separate faults in making their predictions, on the grounds that their words are meaningless, that their predictions are based on superstition, and that these predictions are mad, suggesting not only that the priests are wrong but that they are also illogical.

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<sup>95</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 4, ll. 60-66.

<sup>96</sup> Crenne, *Eneydes*, p. 56.



Crenne's criticism of the priests is much stronger than Virgil's version, reinforcing her depiction of Dido as the logical actor in the situation, and casting the actions of those around her as strange.

Crenne also focuses, like Virgil, on the wound which has now implanted itself in Dido's breast: 'sub pectore vulnus'. Crenne has the wound spread further: 'dissipoit le corps de telle sorte, que iusques aux medulles, nerfz & os estoit attaincte'. Crenne thus suggests that Dido should be seen as a real person, and not just as the object of a poetic love metaphor. She has a physical body through which the wound spreads. Furthermore, Crenne chooses to translate Virgil's 'tacitum' as 'occulte', repeating the image of the hidden love, highlighting that Dido is not fully aware of what is happening and showing the love that has established itself as a sinister link between the two characters that will eventually destroy Dido. Dido's obliviousness to the wound of love contrasts strongly with the opening words of the passage, where she was fully conscious of events.

The overall meaning of the sacrificial ceremony therefore differs between the two texts. For Virgil, the ceremony is superfluous, since Dido has already suffered the 'vulnus' of Aeneas' love and she is therefore bound to the fate that this will later entail. Crenne is making a different point. She is showing that Dido's search for 'allegement' and even 'plaisir' is in vain. Crenne focusses on Dido's emotions at this point, whilst Virgil focusses on the formal bonds of marriage. Virgil and Crenne both show Dido as being trapped by fate, but Crenne's project in her translation of this extract is to show that Dido's misunderstanding of the relationship between her and Aeneas and of the impossibility of its success has an emotional effect on Dido herself, and this effect is almost entirely ignored by Virgil.

Crenne further changes the presentation of Dido's marriage agreement with Aeneas in her translation of lines 191-192 of Book 4. Virgil describes the marriage between Dido and Aeneas here very succinctly:

venisse Aenean Troiano sanguine cretum,

cui se pulchra viro dignetur iungem Dido.<sup>97</sup>

Crenne places Dido in a position of control in her translation of this line:

Eneas avoit en ceste region ses associez reduictz, Et que Dido l'avoit pour unicque seigneur & vray expoux volontairement accepté.<sup>98</sup>

She also adds elements that are not present in Virgil's original line. She makes it clear that Dido enters into the relationship 'volontairement', placing her in a position of self-control, yet she uses much stronger language to describe Aeneas' role in the relationship. He is not only Dido's husband, but her 'seigneur', presenting an image of a relationship in which Aeneas assumes control. Crenne's use of the word 'vray', in describing Dido's view of the relationship becomes ironic when seen in the context of the *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas regards his relationship to Dido as not being a marriage, and therefore considers his actions in leaving Dido to continue his journey as wholly innocent. Crenne's translation thus hints at the betrayal Dido will suffer when Aeneas leaves Carthage and it becomes apparent that in Aeneas' mind, the 'marriage' has no grounds at all.

Crenne is therefore not only attempting to change her readers' view of Dido within the *Aeneid*, she is trying to alter her readers' view of the *Aeneid* itself by ascribing to the relationship between Aeneas and Dido an importance that it does not possess in the original narrative. In shifting the focus of the narrative away from the foundation of a new home for the Trojans and towards considerations of Dido herself, Crenne's translation challenges not only the act of writing but also the conception of the poem itself in its depiction of Dido. This same shift becomes apparent in the *Angoysses Douloureuses* with her introduction of the character 'dame Elyveba'. Janine Incardona comments on the similarities between the narratives surrounding Dido and Elyveba:

L'on se souvient que le livre I de l'*Énéide* commence lorsqu'Énée aborde le rivage de Carthage. C'est-à-dire que le récit entre en matière quatre ans après la prise de Troie. Ce n'est qu'à travers le récit d'Énée à Didon contenu dans les livres II et III que le lecteur apprendra les péripéties de ces années d'errance. Peut-on considérer une coïncidence, que l'on pourrait situer à l'intersection de la structure narrative et de la structure des étapes du voyage des *Angoysses douloureuses*, le fait

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<sup>97</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 4, ll.191-192.

<sup>98</sup> Crenne, *Eneydes*, p. 12.

que le saut de Troie à Carthage dans *l'Énéide* se retrouve en quelque sorte dans le voyage de Guenelic qui, après avoir visité Troie, parvient «au port d'une tres belle cité, qui lors estoit nommée Elyveba» ?<sup>99</sup>

Incardona points out that Crenne follows the narrative path of the *Aeneid*. Just as Virgil employs a flashback technique, by which Aeneas recounts the story of the fall of Troy to Dido after the fact, so Crenne has Guenelic recount his travels from Troy to the princess of Elyveba. Virgil and Crenne adopt similar narrative strategies in order to 'fill in' the background of their heroes, placing the reader in the same position as Dido and Elyveba respectively. In choosing to adopt such a narrative strategy, Crenne is immediately demonstrating that this particular episode is partly informed by the *Aeneid*, both in plot and narrative structure.

Diane Woods suggests that Crenne's engagement with the *Aeneid* through two different literary strategies makes it hard to define these separately within her work:

Her translation of the epic imbues the plot with a style highly reminiscent of her novel and blurs the distinction between these two genres.<sup>100</sup>

Crenne's narrative structure in the *Angoysses* informs the way in which she conceptualises the *Aeneid* in translation. She views the *Aeneid* through the *Angoysses* in her subsequent translation of Virgil's work and thus adopts a different approach to its epic genre. Crenne to an extent 'overgoes' her original interpretation of the *Aeneid* by using translation to emphasize the adaptation that she undertook in the *Angoysses* and to further adapt the *Aeneid* in her translation. The adaptation of the *Aeneid* which is present in the *Angoysses* is present in the later translation of the *Aeneid*, where Dido is again presented differently from her image in Virgil's work.

There are other points in the narrative of the *Angoysses* that try to explore the position of the abandoned lover from her own perspective. At the end of the first book, Elyveba reflects on her feelings:

Mais quant je considère qu'il est impossible que jamais je le veoye, ne luy moy, qu'il ne sesuertue par ung magnamine courage de me iecter de ce captivité, & pour ultime recours iexore & prie le

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<sup>99</sup> Janine Incardona, "Narrativa Sentimental Francesa del Siglo XVI: Estructuras y Juegos Onomasticos Alrededor de Les Angoysses Douloureuses qui Procedent d'amours de Hélisenne de Crenne" (PhD Thesis, University of Valencia, 2005), pp. 179-180.

<sup>100</sup> Diane Woods, *Hélisenne de Crenne: At the Crossroads of Renaissance Humanism and Feminism*, (London: Associated Unviersity Presses, 2001), p. 143.

seigneur cupido, que avec toutes ses forces vueille esmouvoir son cueur pour ne souffrir le nombre de ses adorans diminuer: & soubz ceste esperance de lexaudition de ma priere, je imposeray fin a ma douloureuse complaincte, vous priant mes dames que veuillez considerer quel est ou peut estre mon mal, moy estant prisonniere en la fleure de ma jeunesse.<sup>101</sup>

Elyveba is left at the mercy of the gods, as she implores Cupid to try to change her lover's heart and persuade him to return and to release her from this captivity, echoing Dido's position, as she is prevented by the intervention of the gods from expressing her feelings towards Aeneas. In Virgil's work, Aeneas leaves Dido as a result of divine intervention, whereas Elyveba decries a lack of divine involvement. It should be noted that, unlike Dido who commits suicide blaming Aeneas for the end of their relationship, Elyveba seems to feel that both she and Guenelic are equally eager to see one another: 'jamais je le veoye, ne luy moy'. The irony of Elyveba imagining that Guenelic will come to her rescue is that her husband has placed her in the castle in which she is confined in order to protect her from the advances of other men: like Dido, she is betrayed. However, during their separation, Guenelic and Elyveba converse through letters; they are not pulled apart quite as brutally as Dido and Aeneas are. At the end of the first part of her work, Crenne claims that she is trying to show the values expounded by ancient literary figures that can be adopted by the women reading her work, and amongst these is 'la constance de Dido'.<sup>102</sup> Dido's commitment to Aeneas is so strong that she commits suicide when she can no longer be with him and this forms part of Crenne's warning to her readers of the perils of love. Crenne would like her readers to show the same 'constance' as Dido, but to learn from her example in order to avoid suicide. She does not hope that Aeneas will return to her as Elyveba does, rather, she makes her own decision to commit suicide, giving her life up to Aeneas.

The clearest way to explain this statement of Dido's 'constance' might be to link it to Dido's appearance in front of Aeneas in the Underworld, where she is able to make a final gesture to him of what she thinks of their relationship from beyond the grave. This episode may explain her 'constance' as she is together with Sychaeus again and is very unhappy to see Aeneas again. Crenne chooses neither to include this episode in the story of Elyveba and Guenelic in the *Angoysses Douloureuses*, nor to translate Book

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<sup>101</sup> Crenne, *Les Angoysses Douloureuses*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>102</sup> Crenne, *Les Angoysses Douloureuses*, p.137.

6 of the *Aeneid*. The meeting between Aeneas and Dido in the underworld is an attempt by Virgil to show that Aeneas has not completely forgotten Dido, and that he is capable of feeling compassion for her plight. By excluding this episode from her adaptation and from her translation of the *Aeneid*, Crenne is focussing her readers' attention on Dido's plight rather than on exonerating Aeneas for the emotional damage he has done to Dido.

Crenne and Saint-Gelais advance different justifications for their translations. They each recognise a specific reading public whom they want their works to reach. Crenne looks to a female public as her readers, those women in a similar position to herself who have experienced an education that allows them to access classical texts on some level, but who live in a society whose structure largely shuts them out of the literary scene and denies them access to the Latin language. Saint-Gelais seeks to translate the *Aeneid* into French in order to show that an accurate transfer between the two languages can take place, whilst also modifying the French language in order to attain this goal. Their differing approaches to translation of the same work highlight the tensions implicit in the action of translating Latin works into the vernacular in sixteenth-century France. These two examples make it possible to investigate the process behind translation, showing that the goal of translation is not necessarily to render a text from one language into another as it is for Saint-Gelais, but to use this process of transfer to reflect contemporary concerns about the translator's own society and country, concerns that Saint-Gelais also reflects in his linguistic strategy.

The two translations demonstrate that literary and social considerations on the part of individual translators of the *Aeneid* changed their respective approaches to Virgil's text, with Crenne adding to her work layers of complexity not present in Saint-Gelais' translation. These layers come particularly from the influence of her earlier re-interpretation of the character of Dido in the *Angoysses Douleureuses* and her desire to make the text of Virgil available to female readers through her translation of the first four books into the vernacular. As Scollen points out, 'Octovien's translation follows Virgil fairly closely, but Hélienne allows herself a considerable degree of licence.'<sup>103</sup> Crenne's decision not to translate Book 6 of Virgil's poem, despite the prominence of

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<sup>103</sup> Christine Scollen-Jimack, 'Hélienne de Crenne, Octovien de Saint-Gelais and Virgil', *Studi Francesi* XXVI (1982) pp. 197-210 (206).

Dido and the importance of her reappearance after her death, further reinforces the power of translation as Crenne ignores elements of the *Aeneid* that may have softened her readers' attitude towards Aeneas as he attempts to commiserate with Dido after her death.

These two translations pre-date the Wars of Religion, but later translations in France would take account of a political background of religious civil war. The example of Louis Des Masures' translation of and engagement with the *Aeneid* gives an insight into how an author's personal religious convictions may affect literary decisions with regard to translation of Virgil's work and how this choice was conditioned by the wider religious conflict. Des Masures' more complex approach to translation differs from the approach of both Saint-Gelais and Crenne as the context of translation changes with historical events.

#### Step-by-Step Translation of the *Aeneid*: Louis Des Masures

Des Masures' translation of the *Aeneid* was published in four separate stages between 1547 and 1560.<sup>104</sup> Raised a Catholic, Des Masures converted to Protestantism during the 1550s, shortly before the outbreak of the Wars in 1562. His work on the translation of the *Aeneid* thus straddles his religious conversion, implying that the act of translating the *Aeneid* occupied a space removed from the religious arguments then taking place in France. As with Crenne, Des Masures had literary interests outside those of the *Aeneid*, most of which he developed after finishing his translation of Virgil's work. His three biblical tragedies on the story of David reflect on his own status as a lonely convert and exile. He was not afraid, however, to attack the Catholic Church that he had left behind during his exile in the Protestant stronghold of Metz. His 1564 work *Epître à Madame la Duchesse de Lorraine* vehemently attacks the Catholic Church and the Pope in particular as having been corrupted and no longer adhering to Christianity in its original form.<sup>105</sup> Des Masures thus turns his own conversion into a means of attacking the Catholic faith in order to justify his position, whilst continuing with his project to translate the poem. Des Masures may interpret the journey of Aeneas from the

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<sup>104</sup> See Raymond Lebègue, *La Tragédie religieuse en France: Les débuts (1514-1573)* (Paris: H. Champion, 1929), pp. 327-332.

<sup>105</sup> Louis des Masures, *Epître A Madame la Duchesse de Lorraine* (Lyons: Jean de Tournes, 1564).

destruction of Troy to his new life in Italy and the founding of the state which will become Rome as an allegory for his own 'journey' from Catholicism to Protestantism and from Paris into exile.

In the preface to Des Masures' translation of the first two books of the *Aeneid* (1547), Georges de la Patrière claims that Des Masures is more concerned with the literary consequences of such a translation for the French language, making no mention of any personal religious convictions:

Troia suo multum debet canta Maroni,  
Eriptur Danais dum rediviva rogis.  
At Romae tantum cecinet gentique togata  
Romano infingis carmine Virgilius  
Ignara, & fortis Troia superbatua,  
Ni te Masuri, patrium fit nacta poetam  
Ore iterum cuius Troia superstes erit.

Troye à Virgile doit plus qu'à tous les humains,  
Qui l'a du feu des Grecz recoussue & fait revivre:  
Mais le prouffict en est à Rome & aux Romains,  
Car il a fait parler en leur langue son livre :  
France eust esté toujours ignorante & delivre  
De scavoir l'infortune, & le Troyen meschef,  
Sans toy & ton labeur, qui l'as voulu ensuyvre :  
Par qui Troye sera mise sus de rechef.<sup>106</sup>

De la Patrière is raising a number of points here about both the status of the *Aeneid* in France in the sixteenth century and the effects of the process of translation on any ancient text. De La Patrière claims that Virgil has ensured Troy's fame by resurrecting it in his poem, although it is ironic that Troy will be remembered through a narrative that is conceived from the destruction of the city. De la Patrière therefore contends that the main beneficiary of the writing of the *Aeneid* is Rome and its population, because it is in their language that the work is written. De la Patrière states that control of language indicates control over a literary work, linking the literary and historical status of the literary work with the language in which it is composed and thus claiming for the French nation ownership of an *Aeneid* translated into French. De la Patrière's final remarks contend that it is Des Masures who has uncovered the *Aeneid* for a French readership,

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<sup>106</sup> Louis des Masures, *Les Deux Premiers Livres de l'Eneide de Virgile, translats de Latin en François* (Paris: Chrestien Wechel, 1547), p. 4.

and that he wants to support him in this task. De la Patrière is also demonstrating in the structure of this preliminary eulogy the process on which Des Masures is about to embark, as he composes it in Latin and then translates it into French. His reader is able to read either version, Latin or French, just as he will be able to compare Virgil's Latin with Des Masures' translation of the *Aeneid*.

The translation of the *Aeneid* is for Des Masures as much about demonstrating the humanist principle of bringing ancient literature back to life as it is about transferring the plot or meaning of the *Aeneid* from one language into another, adding a further layer of complexity to the motivations for sixteenth-century French translations of the *Aeneid*. This desire to adhere to humanist principles of making ancient literature relevant to the contemporary cultural and historical context, a desire also present in Crenne's work, relies on an awareness of the contemporary French cultural and historical situation and the parallels with the events described in the *Aeneid* on the part of both translator and reader. Raymond Lebègue explains that the translation of the first book of the *Aeneid* was presented by Des Masures to François I and discussed before him:

Auparavant il avait offert au roi un exemplaire manuscrit de la traduction du premier chant, et, selon La Monnoye et Goujet, les courtisans critiquèrent son ouvrage devant François Ier.<sup>107</sup>

Des Masures explains in his opening dedication to his patron Cardinal Jean du Bellay that he had not had time to review his own work:

vous ne me voulustes permectre de le corriger & limer, plustost qu'ainsi seulement esbauché comme il estoit, le veoir, & faire veoir au feu Roy François, aymé & amateur d'Apollo & ses seurs.<sup>108</sup>

Thus Des Masures states that he had presented the king with an unpolished translation of the start of the *Aeneid* even though he had not finished the entire work, and he makes it clear that he intends to continue to work on Virgil's poem, indicating that he viewed the translation as an ongoing process which might be released to the public through a publication strategy that divided the work into instalments. Des Masures therefore adopts a publishing strategy by which he can publish successive

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<sup>107</sup> Lebègue, *La Tragédie religieuse en France*, p. 329.

<sup>108</sup> Louis Des Masures, *Les deux premiers livres de l'Enéide*, "Epistre", p. 12.



translations of individual books in order to keep the interest of his readers, whilst being able to eventually publish a translation of the entire *Aeneid*.

#### Inspired by Des Masures: Joachim du Bellay

Joachim Du Bellay states that inspiring pleasure in the reader should be the first consideration of the translator, and that considerations surrounding literary and linguistic prestige should be secondary. As he outlines his project of translating Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, he explicitly compares his task to Des Masures' approach to translating the first two books:

Et si je cognoy que si mien labour soit agreable aux lecteurs, je mettray peine (si mes efforts m'en donnent de loysir) de leur faire bientôt voir le sixiesme de ce meme auteur : car je n'en ay pour ceste heure entrepris l'entiere version, que tous studieux de nostre langue doivent souhaicter d'une si docte main, que celle de LOUIS DES MAZURES, dont la fidele, & diligente traduction du premier, & second livre m'ont donné & desir & esperance du reste.<sup>109</sup>

Although Du Bellay sets about the process of translating the *Aeneid* in a different way from that of Des Masures, in that he chooses to start from Book 4 of the *Aeneid* rather than book 1 and explicitly states that he intends only a partial translation, he takes inspiration from the work that Des Masures has already completed. He does not want to start his translation from where Des Masures left off, but rather to translate those books which, as he states earlier, are 'plaisant' and 'profitable'. Du Bellay holds up Des Masures' translation as an inspiration and he identifies Des Masures' future readers as 'tous studieux de nostre langue', casting the translation not only as a means of accessing Virgil in French, but also as a means of improving the French language itself.

Du Bellay is convinced that Des Masure's 'docte', 'fidele' and 'diligente' translation does not in itself need to be improved upon and Du Bellay hopes it will be completed. Du Bellay sees Des Masures' work as being read by those who are studying the French language in addition to wishing to read the *Aeneid*. Du Bellay's decision to translate parts of the *Aeneid* is a product of three literary and marketing strategies: one that promoted Des Masures' work as a model to follow without needing to be improved on; one that saw the translation of the *Aeneid* as an act that could promote the study

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<sup>109</sup> Du Bellay, *Quatriesme Livre*, p.8.

and improvement of the French language itself; and one that selected for Du Bellay's audience the parts of the *Aeneid* they would find most profitable to read.

If the translation of the *Aeneid* is seen by Du Bellay as a means of promoting the French language as a literary medium, he still needs to justify his choice of literary text to translate:

Je diray seulement qu'oeuvre ne trouve en quelque langue que ce soit, ou les passions amoureuses soyent plus vivement depeinctes, qu'en la personne de Didon. Parquoy si ung pöeme, pour estre plaisant, & profitable, doit contenter les lecteurs de bon esprit, je croy que cestuy cy ne leur devra pas desplaire.<sup>110</sup>

Du Bellay singles out Virgil's depiction of Dido as an element of the *Aeneid* particularly worthy of his praise. This stems from the fact that he wants to translate into French for the pleasure of his readers, but also to their profit, and he sees the character of Dido as the aspect of the work to translate in order to best achieve his aims. Du Bellay thus occupies a similar position to Crenne, in that both authors put forward Dido as a didactic example for their audience to learn from, particularly in her attitude to love. The most important reason that Du Bellay gives for translating the story of Dido is that it is this section of the poem that will best please his readers. Du Bellay therefore finds the primary reason for his translation of Book 4 within the plot of Book 4 itself, separated from the surrounding narrative of the journey of Aeneas.

Du Bellay states that word-for-word translation does not allow the translator to do justice to the original work as the meaning cannot be rendered accurately. He differs from the approach of Saint-Gelais in claiming for himself a degree of freedom in his approach to translation:

Quand à la translation, il ne faut point, que je me prepare d'excuses en l'endroit de ceux qu'entendent & la peine, & les loix de traduire: & combien il seroit mal aysé d'exprimer tant seulement l'ombre de son aucteur, principalement en ung oeuvre pöetique, qui voudroit par tout rendre periode pour periode, epithete pour epithete, nom propre pour nom propre, & finalement dire ny plus ny moins, & non autrement, que celui, qui a escrit de son propre style, non forcé de demeurer entre les bornes de l'invention d'autrui.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Du Bellay, *Quatriesme Livre* p. 7.

<sup>111</sup> Du Bellay, *Quatriesme Livre*, p. 7.

The rules of translation thus preclude the translator from developing his own style within a translation, instead requiring him to imitate the style of the original text. It is this requirement that Du Bellay is seeking to challenge in his strategy in the translation of Book 4, both in his selection of a single book to translate and in his methodological approach to translation. Du Bellay thus sees the task facing the translator very differently from Saint-Gelais, who conceived of a word-for-word translation that brought the French as close as possible to Virgil's Latin original. Du Bellay therefore pushes his own translation strategy beyond that of Saint-Gelais to include his own style within his translation, rather than trying to imitate Virgil's style.

In his *Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Françoise* (1549), Du Bellay justifies his scepticism over the ability of translation to match the quality of the original work and do full justice to the original author:

Et ce que je dis des langues latine et grecque se doit réciproquement dire de tous les vulgaires, dont j'alléguerai seulement un Pétrarque, duquel j'ose bien dire que si Homère et Virgile renaissants avaient entrepris de le traduire, ils ne le pourraient rendre avec la même grâce et naïveté qu'il est en son vulgaire toscan<sup>112</sup>.

No matter how gifted in literature the translator is, he can never fully reproduce the style of the original. Du Bellay is emphasizing that any translation by any translator, no matter how skilled, will differ from the original text and can never imitate that text exactly.

Du Bellay claims in the "Préface" to his *Quatriesme Livre* that he is starting with a translation of Book 4 and not with a work of his own invention:

je commenceray non par œuvres de mon invention, mais par la translation du quatriesme livre de l'Eneide, qu'il n'est besoing recommander d'avantage, puis que sur le front elle porte le nom de Vergile.<sup>113</sup>

Du Bellay lays out his case for translation as being that, because he judges Virgil to be a great author, translations of his work do not need to be individually justified. Du Bellay is also however transferring Virgil's literary status to his own translation; Du Bellay's

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<sup>112</sup> Joachim Du Bellay, *La Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Françoise*, ed. S. de Sacy, (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 233.

<sup>113</sup> Du Bellay, *Quatriesme Livre*, pp. 6-7.

translation, like Virgil's original work, will have Virgil's name on the front, and so will recommend itself to readers. Moreover, Du Bellay's own name will be alongside or even above that of Virgil when his *Quatriesme Livre* is published. On the title page of the 1549 edition, only Du Bellay's initials appear alongside Virgil's full name, and Du Bellay's interpretation of Dido's letter to Aeneas, taken from Ovid's *Heroides*, is published in the same edition, making Dido the focus of the work. In this way, Du Bellay equates his own literary standing and literary efforts with those of Virgil and his own French language with Virgil's Latin. By associating himself directly with Virgil's work, Du Bellay hopes to take advantage of the influence of Virgil's work not only on his own work but also on his image as a writer, which he hopes will be elevated as a result of his association with Virgil.

Du Bellay's 1552 translation to some extent reverses the claims in his 1549 *Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Françoise* by using translation as a means of heightening both his own literary profile and that of the French language. Firstly, Du Bellay points out in the *Deffence* that both Ancient Greek and Latin had to develop as languages before they were able to occupy that status which the humanists now ascribe to them:

Mais qui voudrait dire que la grecque et romaine eussent toujours été en l'excellence qu'on les a vues du temps d'Homère et de Démosthène, de Virgile et de Cicéron ?<sup>114</sup>

Du Bellay is pointing out here that the form in which Latin and Ancient Greek have principally come down to early modern authors is a highly stylised literary form which was developed over thousands of years of literary production. It is therefore unfair to call French a barbaric language because it has a much shorter history as a literary language, and it is equally unfair to expect it to be immediately capable of being used in literary works to rival those of ancient authors. Translation of this literary style into French can thus serve as a first step to developing a French literary style.

Yet Du Bellay is also aware of the political context which surrounds the translation of the *Aeneid* in early modern France. Du Bellay resorts to flattery of Henri II, in the same way that Saint-Gelais flattered Louis XII, in order to make his point about the

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<sup>114</sup> Du Bellay, *Deffence*, p. 228.

potential flourishing of the French language. It is at this point that Du Bellay links his translation project to political, as well as literary, motivations:

Le temps viendra (peut-être) et je l'espère moyennant la bonne destinée française que ce noble et puissant royaume obtiendra à son tour les rênes de la monarchie, et que notre langue (si avec François n'est du tout ensevelie la langue française) qui commence encore à jeter ses racines, sortira de terre, et s'élèvera en telle hauteur et grosseur, qu'elle se pourra égaler aux mêmes Grecs et Romains, produisant comme eux des Homères, Démosthènes, Virgiles et Cicérons, aussi bien que la France a quelquefois produit des Périclès, Nicies, Alcibades, Thémistocles, Césars et Scipions.<sup>115</sup>

Like Saint-Gelais, who in his "Prologue" identifies the events recounted in the *Aeneid* as being 'assez conforme au temps moderne voire et aux choses qui ores sont',<sup>116</sup> Du Bellay here links the political situation of France with the status of its language. Yet Du Bellay is linking his work into the wider cultural context of the Renaissance by referring to Greek and Latin writers as models that the French should hope to rival with their own authors. Du Bellay's pun on the name of François I, showing him as synonymous with the French literary renaissance and praising his patronage of the arts is an attempt to ensure the continued patronage, following the death of François I in 1547, of Henri II. Du Bellay uses the metaphor of the growing plant to describe the current situation of both the French state and the French language. Du Bellay is claiming in 1549 that the basis has already been laid for the French language to rival ancient Greek and Latin and that this base has only to be allowed to grow like a plant to make the language even more effective as a literary tool, implying that this linguistic and literary process is an entirely natural one for the French language.

The exemplary writers that Du Bellay chooses to list at this point played similar roles in their own societies to those which he is proposing for French authors. He links the emergence of French military prowess to the production of new French literary works. Pericles and the three Greek generals who follow him here promoted the expansion of the political influence of Athens, through warfare and through a promotion of Greek literature and art. Caesar and Scipio again followed the military route into political careers, and they fought to defend Rome against invading forces, with Caesar

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<sup>115</sup> Du Bellay, *Deffence*, p. 229.

<sup>116</sup> Octovien de Saint-Gelais, *Les énéydes de Virgille, translatez de latin en françois*, (Paris: Antonine Verard, 1509) "Le Prologue", p. 1.

being held up as an important literary figure alongside his military accomplishments. These figures therefore link politics and national status with the creation of celebrated literature, exhibiting in action what Du Bellay is describing in theory here: that a state which is strong politically and historically also creates its own strong literary tradition.

Du Bellay warns in the *Deffence* that translators may not always be effective at their task, depending on how they view and subsequently set about it. Du Bellay supports the concept of translators showing their own style in their translation, but he emphasises that this does not allow them to deceive their readers as to the meaning of the text which they are translating:

Mais que dirai-je d'aucuns, vraiment mieux dignes d'être appelés traditeurs que traducteurs? Vu qu'ils trahissent ceux qu'ils entreprennent exposer, les frustrant de leur gloire, et par même moyen séduisent les lecteurs ignorants, leur montrant le blanc pour le noir.<sup>117</sup>

Du Bellay immediately draws a distinction between those who translate and those who betray. He strongly disapproves of the betrayal of ignorant readers by those who would seek to change the meaning of the original text through their approach to its translation because of their own ignorance of the original language. Du Bellay's main concern seems to be an implicit, rather than explicit, deception of the reader:

Qui, pour acquérir le nom de savants, traduisent à crédit les langues, dont jamais ils n'ont entendu les premiers éléments, comme l'hébraïque et la grecque.<sup>118</sup>

Thus a background knowledge of the original language out of which a work is being translated is essential in Du Bellay's eyes if a translator is to be effective. The inability of a reader to read the original language means that they are relying entirely on the knowledge of the translator to gain an accurate view of the text, even if the translator's knowledge of the original language is incomplete. This proposition is evident in the case of Crenne's work in particular, as her translation of the first four books of the *Aeneid* is intended precisely as a means of giving readers who may not otherwise have access to the original text of the *Aeneid*. This in turn permits them to retrospectively appreciate her adaptation of it in *Les Angoysses Douloureuses*.

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<sup>117</sup> Du Bellay, *Deffence*, pp. 234-235.

<sup>118</sup> Du Bellay, *Deffence*, p. 235.

Du Bellay discusses the considerations specific to the translation of ancient works, implicitly endorsing Saint-Gelais' use of neologisms in his translation of the *Aeneid*:

Ne crains donc, poète futur, d'innover quelques termes, en un long poème principalement, avec modestie toutefois, analogie et jugement de l'oreille, et ne te soucie qui trouve bon ou mauvais: espérant que la postérité l'approuvera, comme celle qui donne foi aux choses douteuses, lumière aux obscures, nouveauté aux antiques, usage aux non accoutumées, et douceur aux âpres et rudes.<sup>119</sup>

Du Bellay argues that because the French language is not rich enough to copy the style of Greek or Roman poets accurately, the French poet wishing to write his own work should be able to invent new words. Ultimately, these words will be accepted into the language, giving French translators more tools to use in the future as the language develops. As seen in the example of Saint-Gelais' translation of the *Aeneid* into French, translation changes the language into which a work is translated.

As if to demonstrate the extent to which Saint-Gelais conforms to Du Bellay's recommendations, Slerca identifies two different categories of Virgilian language in Saint-Gelais' translation; virgilianisms, which are taken from the corresponding passage in the *Aeneid*, or hyper-virgilianisms, which are found elsewhere in the poem:

Compte tenu de l'évidence de certaines données, un bilan n'est pas difficile à dresser: sur les quelques deux mille vers de la traduction du livre V de l'*Énéide*, les néologismes, ou, pour mieux dire, les premières attestations semblent être au nombre de quarante-quatre. Pour la plupart, ces termes sont des virgilianismes, c'est-à-dire qu'il y a une correspondance avec le texte original en latin; ou bien il s'agit d'hyper-virgilianismes, c'est-à-dire, des termes qui font également partie du lexique virgilien, mais qui sont employés dans d'autres lieux du texte de l'*Énéide*.<sup>120</sup>

Slerca presents Saint-Gelais as so strongly influenced by Virgil's language that he recreates it even when he is not quoting directly. This is going even further than what Du Bellay is recommending, since Saint-Gelais is not merely inventing words to replace those with no direct French equivalent, but is reflecting Virgil's own use of neologisms in his work.<sup>121</sup> Saint-Gelais' approach shows an awareness not only of the lack of French equivalents for Virgil's language, and so he must not only take account of Virgil's

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<sup>119</sup> Du Bellay, *Deffence*, pp.270 – 271.

<sup>120</sup> Slerca, "Octovien de Saint-Gelais", p.566.

<sup>121</sup> For more on Virgil's use of neologisms, see Wilkinson, L.P., "The Language of Virgil and Horace" in *Classical Quarterly*, 9.3-4 (1959) pp. 181-192 and Brooks, Otis, *Virgil: a study in civilized Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

neologisms, but also invents his own neologisms to translate words which are not neologisms in Virgil.

For Du Bellay, such invention is key to the French literary enterprise. Translation is a tool which aids the French author towards his primary goal: that of writing his own literature. In explaining the reasoning behind valuing invention over translation, Du Bellay uses a language very similar to that of Saint-Gelais in justifying his own translation of the *Aeneid*:

Tel oeuvre [un poème epique] serait à leur [les poètes français] immortelle gloire, honneur de la France, et grande illustration de notre langue.<sup>122</sup>

This closely mirrors the language used by Octovien in his “Prologue”:

Ung soir tout tard estant en ma petite re traycte tournoyant et virant les feuilletz de meint volume, entre les aultres livres j’avisay les Euvres de Virgile, poete romain le plus loué de tous latins mesment en son Eneyde. Et quant j’eu par quelques heures refraischy ma memoire du haut stille & matiere eloquente dedans traictée, je qui aultrefois avoye pris alyment & nourriture du laict d’icelle où descriptz furent les faits & gestes des aucteurs, premiers fondateurs de l’Ytalie, nobles Troyans, qui non sans peine ains par labeurs extrêmes et batailles fortement intollerables après leurs contrees rebellez exigent hautes murailles et fondemenz de nouvelles cités qui j’usques aoze sont renommées et mesment cette triumpante cité rommaine et autres maintes.<sup>123</sup>

Saint-Gelais pretends here that his choice of the *Aeneid* as a subject for translation came about entirely by chance; however, his image here of the works of Virgil simply lying amongst other books is undermined by the fact that he chooses to translate the *Aeneid* specifically and describes Virgil as the most famous of all Latin authors.

Saint-Gelais’ first preoccupation is the style of the *Aeneid* and then the content. He also describes the *Aeneid* as if it were a form of food, suggesting that the work represents for Saint-Gelais something more than ‘inspiration’; it is a form of literary sustenance. The image of the building of high walls and foundations recalls Aeneas’ observation when he views Carthage for the first time in *Aeneid* Book 1: ‘O fortunati quorum iam moenia surgunt!’<sup>124</sup> Saint-Gelais hopes to engender in the minds of his

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<sup>122</sup> Du Bellay, *Deffence* p. 267.

<sup>123</sup> Saint-Gelais, *Eneydes*, “Prologue”, p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 1, l. 437.



readers as they begin to read his translation the same anticipation that Virgil implanted in the mind of Aeneas by projecting the building of his future home in Italy onto the building of Carthage. Saint-Gelais is therefore attempting in his prologue not only to explain his motivations for translating the *Aeneid*, but also to recreate in his translation the anticipation built up by Virgil in his own poem. Du Bellay discovers in his own translation that a literary strategy akin to that adopted by Saint-Gelais remains necessary if his translation is to be successful in that translation of a literary work improves the vocabulary, and therefore the literary usefulness, of the language into which the work is being translated.

#### Continuing from Des Masures: Pierre Tredehan

Pierre Tredehan's 1575 translation of Books I-IV of the *Aeneid* builds from the translations that had come previously.<sup>125</sup> Like Du Bellay, Tredehan explicitly acknowledges the role that Des Masures' translation plays in his work, particularly in inspiring him to undertake the translation of Virgil's work, during the delay following Des Masures' translation of the first four books of the *Aeneid*. Tredehan himself explains this in his 'Epistre au Lecteur':

Vous pouvez bien souvenir qu'après le susdict des Masures eut mis en lumière les quatre premiers livres de l'Eneide, il demeura beaucoup d'années sans nous faire voir le reste.<sup>126</sup>

Tredehan's first motivation for translating the *Aeneid* is his impatience at being unable to access the translated *Aeneid* in full. Furthermore, in an approach which differs from Du Bellay's, Tredehan is not content to continue from the point in the translation that Des Masures had reached at the time Tredehan began his translation, preferring to start from the beginning of Virgil's poem, as he explains:

& craignant, ou que son traducteur fust mort, ou bien (s'il vivoit) qu'il ne voulust prendre la peine de parachever le reste, pour le peu de profit que ce champ infertile remporte à son laboureur, je me resolu (mais certes avec bien petite consideration & de ma capacité, & de ma faculté), non

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<sup>125</sup>Pierre Tredehan, *Oeuvres de P. Virgile Maron, traduits en vers héroïques françois* (Geneve: Abel Rivery, 1575).

<sup>126</sup>Tredehan, *Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 351.

seulement de continuer l'oeuvre par lui encommencé, ains le reprendre des son commencement.<sup>127</sup>

Tredehan is therefore clear that he is undertaking no easy task, but that, following Des Masures' example, he wishes to make his own translation, ultimately of the entire work, a feat he would never achieve, managing only to translate the first four books of Virgil's poem. Tredehan also employs the trope of modesty here in suggesting that he may not be capable of translating the *Aeneid* and suggesting that this is an altruistic undertaking which will not bring him any personal reward.

Tredehan makes a specific connection in his 'Epistre' between the composition of his work and the Wars of Religion, and in particular the fact that he was forced to go into exile in Geneva:

Au milieu de telles tempestes, estant la petite nasselle de mon esprit rudiment assaillie de Pirates, & Presque par eux surmontée, tant luy fut la bontée favourable qu'en fin (avec le tison brisé et la voile en pièces) elle surgit au seur et tranquile port d'une petite repub. vrayment chrestienne.<sup>128</sup>

Tredehan here places himself in the same position as the journeying Aeneas as the epic hero but with his soul, rather than his body, assailed on all side by storms and enemies, yet his place of shelter is not Italy, but Protestant Geneva. Geneva is the new France, just as Rome became the new Troy following the narrative of the *Aeneid* and the conflict is one of religious belief for Tredehan rather than physical warfare. Tredehan thus casts the publication of his work as a defiant triumph, even if he has been forced out of France.

Tredehan makes this point even more clearly a few lines later:

je voy asiduellement les navires de mes pources frères agitees de si fortes tempestes, qu'estant tout leur navigage cassé, leur seul recours n'est qu'à l'Ancre de nostre Seigneur Jesus.<sup>129</sup>

Here, the image of the voyaging hero is conflated with the image of Jesus as the anchor of the Christian soul, with the sailing metaphors describing a spiritual, rather than physical, voyage. Tredehan sees his work as an act not only of literary triumph but of spiritual defiance and he places both himself and the Huguenots who have fled to

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<sup>127</sup>Tredehan, *Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 351.

<sup>128</sup> Tredehan, *Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 352.

<sup>129</sup> Tredehan, *Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 352.

Geneva in exile in the same narrative position as Aeneas. The flight to Geneva is therefore concerned with the founding of a new state, not for Trojans, but for Protestants, and Tredehan's choice of the *Aeneid* as the subject of his translation reflects this move.

Tredehan is the translator who links his act of translation, and the content of the *Aeneid* itself, most explicitly to the religious and political situation in France at the time. Tredehan categorizes himself in his '*Epistre*' as both a Huguenot exile, and also a triumphant translator of the first four books of the *Aeneid*, and he leaves open the possibility, never realized, of continuing his translation at a later date, again calling on divine help in this endeavour:

Si est ce que si je cognoy qu'ayez prins plaisir en ces quatre premiers livres que je vous presente, agencez & limez, non comme j'ay deu, mais ainsi que j'ay peu, j'espere vous faire vois le reste bien tot avec l'aide de Dieu.<sup>130</sup>

Tredehan thus presents the possibility that his work will continue, in a promise similar to that made by Du Bellay, yet he turns to God to allow this to happen, again reminding the reader of his contention that it is only through finding religious refuge in Switzerland that he is able to produce his translation of the first four books. Tredehan therefore links both the *Aeneid* and the act of its translation very clearly to the religious and political situation in France and casts not only himself, but also the Huguenots more widely as the epic heroes of France, escaping through the storms and attacks of the Catholics in order to arrive at their refuge beyond Catholic control. Tredehan shows the extent to which the act of translation can be seen in political and religious terms, ascribing to the translator the same qualities as those found in the epic hero who is forced to undertake his own voyage, and thereby placing himself on the same level as Virgil's epic hero, in a position of exile from France which mirrors Aeneas' exile from Troy.

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<sup>130</sup> Tredehan, *Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 353.

Translating extensions to the *Aeneid*: Pierre de Monchault and Maffeo Vegio's

*Supplementum*

The consequences of exile are highlighted by Claude Binet's preliminary eulogy of Des Masures, a eulogy that is also attached to Pierre de Monchault's 1577 translation of Maffeo Vegio's continuation of the *Aeneid*, the *Libri XII Aeneidos Supplementum*, now known as *The Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid*, written in 1413. Monchault appends his translation of the *Supplementum* to a reprint of Des Masures translation of the twelve books of the *Aeneid*. Binet's eulogy addresses Des Masures, to whose translation Monchault now appends his own work:

AU SEIGNEUR DES MASURES

Que ne laissois tu là mon docte des Masures,  
Hé que ne laissois tu gesir au port Latin  
La louenge d'Ænee, & le courtoux Matin  
De lunon qui pensoit brider ses adventures ?  
Sans vouloir à ton dam despitant ses injures  
L'enlever hors de là, & pousser son destin  
Iusques au lieu ou seine en son flot argentin  
En deux egalles pars sillone ses eaux pures.  
Car lunon enviant ton discours fortuné  
Ne t'eust d'un long exil de France détourné  
Te rendant vagabond comme elle fist Ænee.  
Combien (pour dire vray) face ce qu'ell' pourra  
Que le meilleur de toy jamais n'exilera  
Lors qu'on oirra parler de Troye ruinée.<sup>131</sup>

Binet links Des Masures' choice of text to translate with his exile from France. Juno, envying Des Masures' skill and success in bringing the *Aeneid* from Italy to France, has exiled him from France, placing him in the same position as Aeneas, exiled from Troy by Juno. Yet Des Masures' work will ensure that he is never fully exiled from France as his readers will continue to discuss his work. This eulogy places Des Masures in the same position as Tredehan placed himself with reference to the *Aeneid*. Huguenot translators of the *Aeneid* are imagined as exiles from France in the same way that Aeneas became an exile from Troy. Although Binet's praise of Des Masures is less explicit than Du Bellay's or Tredehan's translations, his work is praised nonetheless, and the reliance of

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<sup>131</sup> Monchault, *Les oeuvres de Virgile*, « Préface » p. 1.

later translators on Des Masures' work emphasises Des Masures' continuing influence on the translation of the *Aeneid*.

The subtitle given by Monchault to the Latin work of Vegio is: 'Le Trezième Livre: L'Æneide Par Maphéus.'<sup>132</sup> Monchault views the *Thirteenth Book* as being both a separate work composed by Vegio, and also as part of the continuation of the original *Aeneid*. He does not see it as a separate 'supplement', but rather as a text that picks up directly from where the *Aeneid* left off. Monchault reprints Des Masures' translation of the twelve books of the *Aeneid* as they were published in 1560, and adds his own translation of the *Thirteenth Book*. In effect, Monchault treats Des Masures' work in the same way that Vegio treats that of Virgil: the original translation by Des Masures needs no alteration; Monchault simply appends his translation of the *Thirteenth Book*. This translation by Monchault indicates that French translators and authors were aware of the existence and appreciated the value of Vegio's work.

Monchault's translation nevertheless alters Vegio's description of the apotheosis of Aeneas:

At magnum Aenean suadebat ad altum  
Efferi caelum, et voces addebat amicas.  
Tum Venus aërias descendit lapsa per auras,  
Laurentumque petit : vicina Numicius undis  
Flumineis ubi currit in aequora harundine tectus.  
Tunc corpus nati abluere, et deferre sub undas  
Quicquid erat mortale iubet : dehinc laeta recentem,  
Felicemque animam secum super aera duxit :  
Immitisque Aeneam astris, quem Iulia proles  
Indigentem appellat, templisque imponit honores.<sup>133</sup>

There is nothing specifically Christian in these lines. The Monchault translation changes the meaning of the final line:

Ains suadoit toute gratuiteuse & benigne,  
Qu'Ene' fut mis en la troupe divine

Venus toute contente  
Descent du ciel, & s'en vient à Laurente,  
D'où Manici' va coulant en la mer.

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<sup>132</sup> Monchault, *Les Oeuvres de Virgile*, "Préface", p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> Vegio, *Thirteenth Book*, ll.621-630.

Lors elle fait le corps d'Enee laver  
Diligemment, & porter dessous l'onde:  
Ce qu'il avoit de mortel & immonde.  
Puis elle prend l'ame & l'emporte aux cieux  
Et met Enee en la troupe des dieux.<sup>134</sup>

Venus is still the god who transfers Aeneas, but Monchault 'Christianizes' the gods here, omitting the fact that in Vegio, these are described as the private gods of the Julian family, and also removing any reference to the construction of pagan temples. Thus Monchault's translation of Vegio largely follows the meaning of the original text yet the final vision of Aeneas' entry into heaven is subtly altered in such a way that his pagan origins, which Vegio retains, are omitted. Yet Monchault also retains the pagan imagery of 'la troupe des dieux', invoking multiple gods at Aeneas' apotheosis. Monchault thus not only translates Vegio's work into French, but reduces the pagan elements of the *Thirteenth Book*.

Monchault's translation of Vegio's *Thirteenth Book* shows that translation of the *Aeneid* could go beyond the transfer of Virgil's text into French, and that a continuation of the *Aeneid* was also viewed as being worthy of translation alongside the original work. Craig Kallendorf notes that Monchault's translation met with some success after its publication: 'the French edition by Pierre de Monchault (16<sup>th</sup> cent.) was printed repeatedly at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries'.<sup>135</sup> Alice Hulubei notes one reprint in the sixteenth century, which was published in 1580,<sup>136</sup> whilst Alain Cullière lists the full reprints of the work, citing nine reprints of the Monchault translation between 1577 and 1615<sup>137</sup>. Cox-Brinton briefly mentions the Monchault translation, opining that 'the style is antiquated and crabbed', but suggesting that the translation, whilst losing some of Mapheus' style, does try to follow his original meaning as closely as possible.<sup>138</sup> Monchault's translation of the *Supplementum* therefore demonstrates an awareness of an early modern engagement with the *Aeneid*

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<sup>134</sup> Monchault, *Les oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 12, ll.621-630.

<sup>135</sup> Craig Kallendorf, *A Bibliography of the Early Printed Editions of Virgil, 1469-1850*, (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2012), p. 3.

<sup>136</sup> Alice Hulubei, 'Virgile en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle' *Revue du Sezième Siècle*, 18 (1931), pp. 1-77(77).

<sup>137</sup> Alain Cullière, "Bibliographie de Louis des Masures, de 1547 à 1615" *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 47.3, (1985), pp. 637-656.

<sup>138</sup> Anna Cox-Brinton, *Mapheus Vegius and his Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2002), p. 38.

and a desire to present this text to a French audience through translation. This translation demonstrates that Monchault and his publishers viewed the *Supplementum* and its translation as forming part of the literary movement to translate Virgil's *Aeneid*, and the fact that Monchault chose to append his work to that of Des Masures indicates his desire that his work should form a central element of this wider literary movement and confirms Des Masures' translation as the pre-eminent version.

#### Robert and Anthoine le Chevalier d'Agneaux frères: Translation as political connection

In their "Epistre au Roy", the d'Agneaux brothers explain that the goal of their translation of the entire *Aeneid* is to illustrate and enrich the French language, in a strategy that fits with the calls made by Du Bellay in the *Deffence*:

Sire, considerans que plusieurs doctes hommes d'entre voz sujets travailloient à l'ennui, chacun en la science à laquelle il s'est voué, pour illustrer & enrichir vostre langue François: de sorte que souz le bon-heur de vostre florissant regne, elle est montée à son plus haut degré: Nous n'avons voulu estre oiseux spectateurs des labeurs des autres, sans que nousmêmes poussez de l'affection & devoir dont nous sommes obligez au pays, la gloire duquel est la vostre, nous missions la main à l'oeuvre<sup>139</sup>

This direct appeal to Henri III sets the translation up as an attempt by the d'Agneaux brothers to glorify the French language, and also imagines the current monarch as the catalyst behind this flourishing of French literature.

The brothers also recognize that they are part of a wider effort to translate the *Aeneid*. In justifying their recourse to the *Aeneid* as the text that will help them accomplish this aim, the d'Agneaux brothers use imagery similar to that used by Saint-Gelais when he claims simply to have found the book in his library:

Nous avons eu recours à telle librarie, ou de prime face, assis au plus eminent lieu des Poètes Latins s'est offert à nos yeux ce grand Prince de Poesie, dont Mantouë se parle encore et vantera à jamais glorieuse, lequel nous a semblé sur tous digne d'estre entendu en vostre France parler François.<sup>140</sup>

In effect, the d'Agneaux brothers are claiming that their translation will make Virgil speak French, and that it is this which will glorify the French language. By ventriloquizing

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<sup>139</sup> Robert et Anthoine le Chevalier d'Agneaux, *Les Oeuvres de Virgile Maron, traduittes de Latin en François par Robert et Anthoine le Chevalier d'Agneaux freres, de Vire en Normandie* (Paris: Guillaume Auvray, 1582), "Epistre", p. 1.

<sup>140</sup> Chevalier d'Agneaux, *Les oeuvres de Virgile*, "Epistre", p. 2.

Virgil in this way, the d'Agneaux brothers honour the French language above Latin, as it is Virgil whom they wish to prove worthy of speaking French rather than proving that the French language is capable of translating Virgil's words. In effect, Saint-Gelais' original approach has been inverted and the attitude of the d'Agneaux brothers displays a confidence in the French language that Saint-Gelais did not possess, highlighting an evolution of the French language itself as the translations of the *Aeneid* progressed in early modern France. The brothers' decision to present a translation of Virgil to the king further confirms Virgil's continuing status as the foremost of the Latin poets, and thereby confers a literary status on the French language, now that such a poet is deemed worthy of speaking it.

The d'Agneaux brothers also compare Henri III with Augustus, claiming that their translation of the *Aeneid* will honour him to the same extent that Virgil's original work honoured Augustus:

Afin que comme son oeuvre Latin avoit esté dedié à l'honneur & louange du plus grand Empereur de tous ceux qui l'ont precedé & ensuivy: Ainsi rendu François il fust consacré à la souveraineté du plus grand Roy, qui jamais porta sceptre & dont les Heroïques louanges s'égalent à celles, desquelles nostre Virgile honore son Enée, illustre & ancien tige de ce brave Monarque Romain.<sup>141</sup>

The d'Agneaux brothers are therefore making an explicitly political point in their translation, in that they are comparing Henri III with the Emperor Augustus and also with the character of Aeneas. This comparison casts Henri III as a bringer of peace and as ushering in a golden age of French empire. Their depiction of the French monarchy mirrors Virgil's depiction of Augustus. The emphasis is on making the *Aeneid* French in political, as well as linguistic, terms. The language used here thus suggests that the d'Agneaux brothers view the process that they are undertaking with the works of Virgil, including the *Aeneid*, as being a wider and more significant project than translating his poetry from one language into another. In this 'Epistre', the d'Agneaux brothers are suggesting that they can change the nature of the *Aeneid* itself by making it an epic that not only enhances French literature, but also praises French monarchs and the French nation in place of Virgil's Roman equivalents of Augustus and Rome in the aftermath of Roman civil war. Thus this final French translation of the *Aeneid* in the sixteenth-century

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<sup>141</sup> Chevalier d'Agneaux, *Les oeuvres de Virgile*, "Epistre", pp. 2-3.



links the translation of the *Aeneid* explicitly with praise of the French monarchy and with the emergence of French as a literary language.

The brothers nevertheless combine their praise of the monarch with a plea to excuse the roughness of their translation, an approach which Valerie Worth-Stylianou sees as being similar to that adopted by Des Masures:

Similarly, Robert and Anthoine Le Chevalier d'Agneaux (who claimed to have spent only two years on the translation) combine compliments to their dedicatee, Henri III, with an apology for the stylistic imperfections of their vision, notwithstanding the obvious parallel they draw between their celebration of the French monarch and Virgil's celebration of Augustus.<sup>142</sup>

The translation therefore combines the political aspect of praising the monarch with the literary considerations of enriching the French language in an attitude that combines Du Bellay's desire, as expressed in the *Deffence*, to enrich the French language with Des Masures' praise of the monarch, indicating the possibility of a sophisticated approach that combines multiple motivations for the translation of Virgil's work.

#### Comparing the Translations: Book 4 of the *Aeneid*

By comparing these early modern French translations of the *Aeneid*, it is possible to demonstrate how the differing motivations of the translators, evident from the prefatory material of their translations, are manifested in the translations themselves. Some of these differences have also been the subject of critical study. Valerie Worth-Stylianou's valuable comparison of an extract from Book 6 as translated by three of these translators, Saint-Gelais, Des Masures and d'Agneaux brothers, shows that despite changes in printing methods, the three translations stick close to the original texts. Furthermore, her study concludes that Saint-Gelais and the d'Agneaux brothers emphasise the *Aeneid* as a text concerned with expressing political and national identity, whilst Des Masures focusses on the timeless nature of epic, and particularly emphasises the role of the characters of both gods and men in shaping the narrative.<sup>143</sup> Additionally

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<sup>142</sup> Valerie Worth-Stylianou, "Virgilian Space in French Translation of the *Aeneid*" in *Virgilian Identities in the French Renaissance*, ed Philip John Usher and Isabelle Fernbach (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 117-139 (128).

<sup>143</sup> Worth-Stylianou, "Virgilian Space", pp. 117-139.

Thomas Brückner has compared the use of Latinisms in the translations of Saint-Gelais, Des Masures and Du Bellay, showing that Des Masures and Du Bellay are influenced by the choices of Saint-Gelais and the inclusion of Latinisms drawn from Virgil's original text.<sup>144</sup>

However, no critical study to date has compared the work of all six translators. Book 4 of the *Aeneid* is the only book translated in full by Saint-Gelais, Crenne, Des Masures, Du Bellay, the d'Agneaux brothers and Tredehan: an episode that invites comparison is Dido's address to her sister when she sees Aeneas for the first time and Anna's subsequent reply. The episode demonstrates to the reader the reason for Dido's love for Aeneas, and whether this love should be viewed sympathetically. This in turn affects the reader's judgement of Aeneas when he abandons her. This episode, as the comparison of these translations will show, is open to interpretation on both a linguistic and metaphorical level. The translations all present differences, both from one another and from the original Latin poem, but they also demonstrate a progression in the interpretation of the meaning of Virgil's poem and in the understanding of the role of translation.

Virgil has Dido describe Aeneas to her sister after her first encounter with the Trojan:

Anna soror, quae me suspensam insomnia terrent!  
quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes,  
quem sese ore ferens, quam forti pectore et armis!  
credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse deorum.  
degeneres animos timor arguit. heu, quibus ille  
iactatus fati! quae bella exhausta canebat!  
si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet  
ne cui me vinclo vellem sociare iugali,  
postquam primus amor deceptam morte fefellit;  
si non pertaesum thalami taedaeque fuisset,  
huic uni forsitan potui succumbere culpae.  
Anna (fatebor enim) miseri post fata Sychaei  
coniugis et sparso fraterna caede penatis  
solus his inflexit sensus animumque labantem  
impulit. agnosco veteris vestigia flammae.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> See Brückner, *Die erste französische Aeneis*, pp. 236-262.

<sup>145</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 4, ll. 9-23.

Virgil depicts Dido here as uncertain and frightened, with her repeated exclamations throughout the first half of the passage indicating her confusion over her reaction to having met Aeneas. She suffers from fearful dreams about the story Aeneas has told her of his journey, demonstrating her compassion for his suffering. Dido's fixation on Aeneas as a warrior descended from the gods emphasises his heroic status and suggests that Dido already idolises Aeneas. Dido's conviction that the hardships Aeneas has faced have been imposed upon him by the fates elicits feelings of pity towards Aeneas whilst also highlighting his powerlessness over events leading up to this meeting.

In this passage Virgil also emphasises Dido's opposition to marriage ('*animo fixum immotumque*'), which she views as a trap ('*vincolo*'), only to admit that Aeneas alone might persuade her to overcome this opposition ('*huic uni forsan potui succumbere culpae*'). The admission nevertheless reveals a strong feeling of guilt at the prospect of marrying Aeneas, a feeling further emphasised by the mention of her first husband Sychaeus, and the sense that it is the old flames of love that she felt for him that are being rekindled by the appearance of Aeneas ('*veteris vestigia flammae*'). The rekindling shows Dido equating her love for Aeneas directly with that for Sychaeus, and suggesting that she is already contemplating marriage, even as it underlines her simultaneous feelings of love and guilt on meeting Aeneas. Virgil thus depicts Dido torn between her memory of Sychaeus and her love for Aeneas, whilst also emphasising the heroic attributes of Aeneas that herald the failure of their relationship as he will be forced to continue his journey against Dido's wishes. The sixteenth century French translators of this extract must choose how to interpret Virgil's representation of both Dido and Aeneas and how to place Dido's description of Aeneas within the wider context of Book 4 and of the *Aeneid* as a whole.

The two translations that most closely follow Virgil's extract in the matter of word choice are those of Saint-Gelais and Crenne. Saint-Gelais describes the '*divers songes*' ('*insomnia*') experienced by Dido, the fact that Dido felt '*espouventée*' ('*terrent*') by the dreams, and the fact that Aeneas had entered into '*noz terres*' ('*nostris sedibus*') when

he came to Carthage.<sup>146</sup> All of these word choices are repeated by Crenne, who translates Aeneas' arrival in Carthage as 'arrivé'; he has merely come to Dido's land, and she is apparently unsure whether he will stay<sup>147</sup>. In Des Masures' translation, Dido's feelings of uncertainty have softened somewhat, with Dido claiming that the dreams 'm'estonnent' ('terrent') and telling Anna that they inspired in her feelings of 'suspense' ('suspensam') and 'grand effroy' ('terrent').<sup>148</sup> Du Bellay merely has 'Tant des songe(r)s, qui douteuse me tiennent'.<sup>149</sup> Thus the feelings of Dido have progressively been translated more weakly in the later translations, with Saint-Gelais' fearful 'espouventée' lessening to Des Masures' 'suspense' and 'grand effroy', and then to Du Bellay's 'douteuse'. While Du Bellay focusses on Dido's doubt ('suspensam'), in contrast to Saint-Gelais and Crenne who focus on her fear ('terrent'), Des Masures and later translators focus on both. Tredehan cites Dido's dreams 'qui tant m'espouantent en doute', and the d'Agneaux brothers have her ask: 'Hé, quels songes douteux epouvantent mon coeur?'.<sup>150</sup> The d'Agneaux brothers also place the emphasis on the doubt felt by Dido, continuing the pattern established by previous translators, with her rhetorical question indicating confusion rather than fear when Dido is faced by her dreams of Aeneas.

The location of the initial meeting is open to interpretation by successive translators. Virgil's 'sedes' may refer both to a throne as a royal seat of power, and, more domestically, to a home. Saint-Gelais and Crenne retain the royal sense with their translations of 'sedes' as 'terres'; however, Du Bellay has Aeneas 'venuz en noz palais loger', whereas Des Masures renders the Latin as 'venu maintenant / Loger chez nous'. Thus the 'terres' of the first two translations have been downgraded by Du Bellay to the confines of the palace itself, which in Des Masures' translation has almost completely lost its royal connotations and been simply domesticated. Tredehan, like Du Bellay, describes the palace, as he has Aeneas 'dans nos palais entré', yet the inference that Aeneas has merely entered the palace, rather than staying there is closer to Crenne's rendering. The d'Agneaux brothers render the arrival of Aeneas in more hostile terms,

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<sup>146</sup> Saint-Gelais, *Eneydes* p. 67.

<sup>147</sup> Crenne, *Eneydes* p. 3.

<sup>148</sup> Des Masures, *Les Quatres Premiers Livres* p. 172.

<sup>149</sup> Du Bellay, *Quatriesme Livre*, p.18.

<sup>150</sup> Tredehan, *Les Oeuvres de Virgile*, p.215; d'Agneaux, *Les Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 143.

using the word 'aborder'. The d'Agneaux translation is very close to that of Du Bellay as Aeneas stays in the palace ('loger en nos palais'). Thus these later translators have deliberately chosen to downgrade Dido's royal status and power in their choice of translation, with Des Masures going further in almost entirely denying Dido's royal status and domesticating the palace in his imagery.

The translations of both the effect of the arrival of Aeneas upon Dido, and the description of the location where this arrival takes place demonstrate a perceptible progression from the earlier to the later translations. Dido is shown as being less overwhelmed by the arrival of Aeneas, and the palace in which they meet becomes less grand and regal. Dido is at the same rendered less detached from reality, and is increasingly shown as being aware of the events taking place around her, giving her a more active role in the narrative than that assigned by Virgil as the translations progress. These changes in translation demonstrate that translators were influenced by their predecessors in their approach to translating the *Aeneid*, and that once a pattern of interpretation and translation was established, it was continued by later authors, who took into account these translations of the *Aeneid* alongside their reading of the original text.

There also exist significant differences in the translation of Virgil's characterization of Aeneas as seen through the eyes of Dido. Crenne translates Virgil's description of Aeneas at length, adding numerous elements that are not present in Virgil's original:

Il est si prudent & discret en tout cas & en modestie, & gracieux entretien tous aultres excede, & si le iugeroit on par coniecture remply de magnaminité, force & puissance. Certes je croy en consideration des vertuz prealguées, que de la generation des dieux a esté product : car c'est chose indubitable que timeur, travail & fatigue les courages degenez argue. Las à quelz extremes perilz & affaires ardues a il esté exposé ? Quantes furieuses & sanguinolentes batailles, hyer nous dict par luy exterminées ? <sup>151</sup>

Crenne respects many Virgilian details, such as the fact that, as in Virgil, Aeneas is descended from the gods, yet she significantly lengthens Virgil's original description, with her additions relating mainly to Aeneas' internal qualities, particularly his

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<sup>151</sup> Crenne, *Eneydes*, p. 3.

'magnanimité'. Crenne's description of the 'timeur, travail & fatigue' suffered by Aeneas resembles Saint-Gelais' description of 'labeur travail et peine ardue'.<sup>152</sup> Crenne is therefore including both the original text and drawing on other translators whilst adding significantly to the original, combining all three of these elements in her translation.

The translators disagree on how Dido's description of Aeneas' journey should be characterized. In the original, Virgil writes: 'heu quibus ille / iactatus fatis! Quae bella exhausta canebat!'<sup>153</sup> Both Saint-Gelais and Crenne choose to highlight the 'perilz' to which Aeneas has been exposed, suggesting his journey is one of great personal danger.<sup>154</sup> In contrast, Du Bellay translates this as Aeneas' 'estranges destinées', suggesting a voyage that entails significantly less risk than that characterized by the earlier translators.<sup>155</sup> Des Masures translates this line with: 'O de quelz sorts son estrange adventure / L'ha tourmenté'.<sup>156</sup> Here, the danger of the journey is again reduced, with the 'adventure' of Aeneas' voyage suggesting a more exciting undertaking than in Saint-Gelais and Crenne. Aeneas seems in Des Masures to be focussed on the voyage itself, rather than surmounting the obstacles he encounters along his path. Tredehan continues this progression: his 'Las qu'il ha soustenu d'estranges Destinees!<sup>157</sup>' repeats the word choice of Du Bellay, but with the inference that these 'fates' barely troubled Aeneas at all, since he managed to bear them. The d'Agneaux brothers characterize Aeneas as being powerless to control his own fate: 'Helas de quels destins a-t-il esté mené?'.<sup>158</sup> Aeneas is not troubled by his fate, but he also has no control over it, as he is merely swept along in the d'Agneaux translation.

The later translators thus characterise Aeneas as a hero who is progressively less troubled in each translation until the d'Agneaux brothers make no mention of any problems at all. Aeneas finds his journey less and less difficult with each successive evolution of the translation. The shift in the characterization of Aeneas parallels the

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<sup>152</sup> Saint-Gelais, *Eneydes*, p. 67.

<sup>153</sup> Virgil *Aeneid*, Book 4, ll. 13-14.

<sup>154</sup> Saint-Gelais, *Eneydes*, p. 67; Crenne, *Eneydes*, p. 3.

<sup>155</sup> Du Bellay, *Le Quatrieme Livre*, p. 18.

<sup>156</sup> Des Masures, *Les Quatre Premiers Livres*) p. 172.

<sup>157</sup> Tredehan, *Les Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 215.

<sup>158</sup> Chevalier d'Agneaux, *Les Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 143.

same phenomenon in the case of Dido. Just as Dido becomes less regal, so Aeneas conforms less and less to the image of the Virgilian hero with each successive translation. Both figures are seen on a more human level, with their mythical characterizations being stripped away until they are both shown as human beings rather than mythical figures. This process must take place in parallel if the narrative is to continue to make sense within the translations as Dido and Aeneas must remain accessible to each other.

A further point of divergence between the translations comes in the depiction of Dido's husband, Sychaeus. Saint-Gelais has Dido blame her brother, Pygmalion, for the death of Sychaeus:

Après la mort du dolant Sicheus  
Mon feu mary dont tant de maux ay eus  
Et que mon frere eut lors sa main pollue  
Dedans son sang et sa vie tollue.<sup>159</sup>

Saint-Gelais has Pygmalion's hand guiltily polluted by Sychaeus' blood as he takes away his life. This translation is largely unchanged from the Virgilian original, with Saint-Gelais describing no more than the death of Sychaeus and the blame Dido places on her brother. Crenne, however, translates the episode at greater length:

qu'après le deceds de mon mary Sicheus: & que le faulx traditeur mon frère, stimulé d'inveterée avarice, eust en son sang cordial sa cruelle main maculée.<sup>160</sup>

Crenne keeps the image of Dido's brother's blood-stained hands, but she also adds characterisations of Dido's brother that are not present in the Virgilian original, blaming his cruel actions on his greed and calling him a false traitor. As with her depictions of Dido and of Aeneas, Crenne fleshes out the description of the individual characters in her translation. In contrast to the descriptions of Dido and Aeneas, however, Crenne's translation has here moved further away from that of Saint-Gelais, as the vocabulary of Saint-Gelais is not echoed in Crenne's translation in the way that it was in the earlier translation. While Crenne includes some elements of Saint-Gelais translation in her own work, showing that his earlier work had a degree of influence on her translation, her

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<sup>159</sup> Saint-Gelais, *Eneydes* p. 67.

<sup>160</sup> Crenne, *Les Quatres Premiers Livres des Eneydes, Le Quatrieme Livre*, p. 3.

movement away from Saint-Gelais when translating the details of Sychaeus, shows that she is also capable of translating with more freedom.

Du Bellay's translation is different again, and he has wider motives for translating this episode in the way he does. He renders the extract into French as follows:

Depuis que mon pauvre Siché  
Souilla nos Dieux par l'homicide main  
De ce cruel nostre frere germain.<sup>161</sup>

Here, Pygmalion's crime is couched in religious imagery; it is an offence against the gods, the *penates*, as well as against Dido herself. Furthermore, Du Bellay's use of the adjective 'germain' to describe Pygmalion emphasises the familial connection between Pygmalion and Dido. This casts the act of murder inside the family and heightens the betrayal of Dido.

Des Masures' translation interprets the death of Sychaeus in the context of civil strife and also lessens the agency of Pygmalion in Sychaeus' death:

Depuis le jour, que la mort appella  
Mon povre espoux Sichee, & la maison  
Fut teinte en sang fraternel sans raison'.<sup>162</sup>

Des Masures has softened the accusation against Pygmalion. In his rendering, it is death that is the primary agency, calling on Sychaeus, and Pygmalion is nowhere directly accused of the killing. Yet metaphors of civil war exist in Des Masures' version. The fraternal blood depicts the murder as killing between brothers, while the 'maison' stands as a metaphor for the French nation as a whole. Furthermore, the depiction of the killing as being without reason recalls the common depiction of civil war as a form of madness. Des Masures is more circumspect than Du Bellay in apportioning blame for Sychaeus' death. His image of the death of Sychaeus portrays the event as ultimately being a decision taken by the personified figure of death. Des Masures chooses death as the best way to describe this higher power, and, in a Huguenot context, this would be linked to God as the ultimate arbiter of death and of what happens after death.

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<sup>161</sup> Du Bellay, *Eneide*, p. 18.

<sup>162</sup> Des Masures, *Les Quatre Premiers Livres* pp. 172-173.



These four different translations of Dido's account of Sychaeus' death each change elements from Virgil's original in order to use this depiction of Dido for different purposes. While Saint Gelais stays close to the original Latin, Crenne, Du Bellay and Des Masures all add their own interpretations to the original meaning, all going so far as to add words that are not present in the original. Whilst Crenne's additions alter the depictions of the characters themselves, both Du Bellay and Des Masures use translation as an opportunity not only to alter the text itself but also to hint at different interpretations of the extract's meaning. Yet even these two translators, with their differing political and religious convictions, differ in their interpretations of the meaning latent in Virgil's text.

Tredehan's translation is in fact the closest to the original Latin:

Anne (je le confesse) après que mon Siché  
 Pauvre homme fut occy, & dés ce jour extreme  
 Qu'ainsi souilla nos Dieux mon meurtrier frere mesme.<sup>163</sup>

Tredehan states in his 'Epistre' that he had read Des Masures' translation, but he is less explicit than Des Masures about linking the death of Sychaeus with the contemporary context in France. His rendering of 'fut occy' is also much more direct than the renderings of Saint-Gelas, Crenne, or Des Masures. In stating that Sychaeus was killed deliberately, it most closely resembles the 'homicide main' present in Du Bellay's translation. The d'Agneaux brothers' translation is close to that of Tredehan:

Anne depuis le jour, il faut que je te le die,  
 Qu'à mon époux Siché la mort ravit la vie  
 Et du sang fraternel la fraternelle main  
 Eust souillé la maison par un meurtre inhumain'.<sup>164</sup>

This rendering places the emphasis on the Latin 'fatebor enim', highlighting Dido's sense of compulsion in telling her sister that she is in love with Aeneas and is therefore betraying the memory of her husband. The imagery of death is closest to the interpretation advanced by Des Masures, with death actively 'taking away' the life of Sychaeus. The internal rhyme in 'ravit la vie' is echoed in the next line with 'fraternel la

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<sup>163</sup> Tredehan, *Les Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 215.

<sup>164</sup> Chevalier d'Agneaux, *Les Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 143.

fraternelle', a repetition that is rather clumsy and forms an attempt to capture Dido's emotions of worry as she speaks these words, whilst emphasising the fratricidal nature of the killing. The inclusion of 'souillé' and 'meurtre', very similar to both Du Bellay's and Tredehan's translations, is further reinforced by 'inhumain', invoking the strongest condemnation of Pygmalion's actions with its three-fold characterization of the criminal act. Thus as the translations progress, the moral condemnation of Pygmalion becomes stronger and his active involvement in the death of Sychaeus is made increasingly explicit.

It is also possible to compare Anna's reaction to her sister's speech, an episode that is again treated differently by the respective translators of the *Aeneid*. This comparison shows another interpretation of the meeting between Dido and Aeneas as seen from Anna's point of view and therefore provides comparison of a different perspective on the meeting between Dido and Aeneas. Virgil opens Anna's reply by underlining the concerns Anna has for her sister if she rejects Aeneas:

Anna refert: 'o luce magis dilecta sorori,  
solane perpetua maerens carpere iuventa  
nec dulcis natos Veneris nec praemia noris?'<sup>165</sup>

In these three lines, Anna summarises the main considerations that she feels Dido must take into account if she chooses not to marry Aeneas. She worries that she will waste her youth through her unmarried status, and not enjoy the pleasures of having children or love, both of which Aeneas can provide for her.

Saint-Gelais ascribes significance particularly to the lack of children, which he views as a political problem for Dido:

veux-tu mourir sans enfans ou lignee  
Et de ton cueur bannie et eslognee  
La douce joye le Plaisir de Venus.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 4, ll. 31-33.

<sup>166</sup> Saint-Gelais, *Eneydes*, p. 67.

Saint-Gelais makes it clear that the issue of the royal inheritance is foremost in Anna's mind when thinking about Dido's children, and the lack of pleasure in Dido's solitary life is a secondary problem, mirroring Virgil's placing of these issues in order of importance. This issue of inheritance is made even more explicit in Crenne's translation, where Anna questions Dido about the consequences of her actions:

Las as tu determiné que les Parces: lesquelles n'esoargnent personne, rompent le fil de ta vie sans que generation de toy soit produicte? As tu de ton delicieux cuer du tout expulsée & banny la melliflue & suave delectation dont Venus a accoustumé ceulx qui sont dediez à son service remunerer?<sup>167</sup>

The image of breaking the family line and its political inheritance is stronger in Crenne than in Saint-Gelais, and remains the most important problem for Anna, with concern for Dido's lack of enjoyment of life a secondary consideration. Both translations place the considerations in the same order as Virgil, but both give thought to the secondary issues of Dido's own welfare, painting her less as a queen and more as a prospective mother, yet the question of the royal inheritance is still shown as being of primary importance.

The later translations mark a shift from this emphasis on the political consequences of the end of the royal line, with Du Bellay focussing on Dido's refusal to take pleasure in her life:

Voudrois-tu bien d'ung eternal veuvaige  
User ainsi la fleur de ton jeune eage?  
Et ne gouster d'Amour les appetiz  
Ni la douceur de tes enfants petiz?<sup>168</sup>

Du Bellay is the only translator to explore the metonymy of Venus, placing the emphasis on Dido's feelings for Aeneas rather than on the power relations between gods and mortals. For Du Bellay, the royal line is not important, with Anna warning her sister of loneliness rather than of the lack of a royal heir, and this attitude is repeated by Des Masures' translation:

Donques as tu de consommer envie  
Seulette en deuil ceste jeunesse tendre?  
Sans la douceur esprouver, ou entendre,

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<sup>167</sup> Crenne, *Eneydes*, p. 4.

<sup>168</sup> Du Bellay, *Quatriesme Livre*, p. 19.

D'avoir enfant, ne les fruits de Venus?<sup>169</sup>

The imagery of 'seulette en deuil' is particularly strong and shows Dido characterised by her loneliness and grief at the loss of Sychaeus as this status becomes part of her personality. The lack of children is part of this personal unhappiness, rather than a political issue. The language of Tredehan's translation is very close to that of Du Bellay's:

Voudrois-tu pour le seur  
User seule à jamais ton jeune-age en tristesse?  
La douceur des enfans, de Venus la largesse,  
Gouster ne veux-tu point?<sup>170</sup>

The opening is close to that of Du Bellay, placing the emphasis on Dido's freedom to choose her course through life, and Tredehan repeats Du Bellay's choice of 'user' to show Dido wasting her life in Anna's eyes.

The d'Agneaux translation shows another shift, in which Anna is shown to judge Dido more harshly than she does in any of the other translators:

As-tu donc arrêté  
Seule triste ecouler tout ton printanier age?  
Ny n'éprouveras point des enfans, le doux gage?  
Ny les fruicts de Venus?<sup>171</sup>

Anna's direct questioning of Dido is much more negative, as she demands to know why she is watching her life pass by rather than asking her to reflect on her decisions. The children are here seen again as being important: they are a sweet reward for the marriage. There is thus a clear difference between the earlier and later translators of this passage, just as there is between their translations of the earlier passage in which Dido describes her reaction to Aeneas. The earlier translators emphasise the political importance inherent in Anna's warning to Dido, and in the fruits of her marriage to Aeneas. Later translators draw out the personal and domestic concerns involved in the relationship, before the d'Agneaux brothers return to this political message, showing

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<sup>169</sup> Des Masures, *Les Quatres Premiers Livres*, p. 173.

<sup>170</sup> Tredehan, *Oeuvres*, p. 215-216.

<sup>171</sup> Chevalier, d'Agneaux, *Les Oeuvres de Virgile*, p. 144.

that even in a few short lines, the interpretation of Virgil's meaning, and its rendering into French, vary widely and reflect an increasing concern with showing Dido in human terms rather than as a political figure.

This comparison of the translation of two episodes of the *Aeneid*, Dido and Anna's discussions of Aeneas and of his future relationship with Dido, demonstrates that even translators such as Saint-Gelais and Crenne, whose translations are close to one another at certain points in the narrative of the *Aeneid*, can differ radically just a few lines later. Scollen questions whether the two translations are so close that Crenne uses Saint-Gelais, and not Virgil as her source: 'One's first reaction is perhaps to wonder whether Héli-sene had in fact even used Virgil's *Aeneid* to work from, or if she had not perhaps simply worked from of the many editions of Octovien's translation that were available.'<sup>172</sup> Similarly, Du Bellay and Des Masures both translate the *Aeneid* in such a way as to highlight possible allegorical readings of events in the narrative to their readers. Yet these two translators employ different literary strategies in order to accomplish this task. Tredehan returns to producing a French translation that is close to the Latin original, yet he exhibits elements of the decisions made by the translators who have come before him. The d'Agneaux brothers produce an interpretation that is closer to that of Saint-Gelais than those of the intervening translators, returning to an emphasis on the political importance of these two episodes, rather than their characterization of Aeneas, Dido and Anna.

Although there are some significant differences between the six translations, trends can be identified in the approaches of successive translators. The six translations analysed above demonstrate a repeated decision to reduce Dido's status as queen of Carthage, so that the physical representation of her control over her kingdom is reduced and even domesticated, until Tredehan to some extent reverses this movement. Similarly, the concept of Aeneas' journey is repeatedly reduced from an arduous and dangerous voyage to Carthage to a somewhat romanticised adventure, whose ease is emphasized by the d'Agneaux brothers. Furthermore, the disagreement between the

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<sup>172</sup> Scollen-Jimack, *Hélisene de Crenne, Saint-Gelais and Virgil*, p. 205.

translators over how to characterize the death of Sychaeus demonstrates both the differing underlying agendas of the various translators in their approaches to the task of translating the *Aeneid* and also a progression in the characterization of the murder itself towards a stronger moral condemnation. The translation of the reaction of Anna shows an increasing desire to show Dido as a human being, rather than as a pawn in the political game of the founding of Rome. This reflects not only a progression in the complexity of the translations and their understanding of Dido, but also a shift away from Virgil's original presentation of Dido and her role in the *Aeneid* narrative.

#### Conclusion: Translation as an Initial Method of Engagement with the *Aeneid*

Adaptation and translation of the *Aeneid* in France during the sixteenth century are processes that take various forms and are based on various justifications depending on both the methodology and the motivations of individual translators. There is no single reason for translating the *Aeneid* that all of the translators discussed in the course of this chapter agree on when defining the motivations for their task, but there are two common themes running through their justifications for translating the *Aeneid* into French. The first is one of literary emulation of ancient texts through translation into the vernacular, with a view to encouraging the writing of literary equivalents in the French language. The second motivation, which is connected to the first but which is much less literary in its goals, is a desire to paint the historical and political situation of France in this period as being in some way equivalent to the historical and political situation of Rome at the end of the republic, when Virgil composed his work. These two motivations are intertwined when language is seen as a form of status-symbol, through which a country is able to project its political power.

The way in which translators combine these elements within their individual translations defines their approach to translating Virgil's poem. Michio Hagiwara describes the importance of these factors both in the translation of ancient texts and in the creation of epic works in the vernacular:

To an aspiring poet in the sixteenth century, the production of a national epic meant the fulfilment of two goals: it would rank him among such immortals as Homer and Virgil, and it would at the same time glorify his nation and its language. Already in 1542, Hugues Salel, translator of the first

two books of the *Iliad*, lamented the absence of a Homer in France at the time when men of letters were enjoying such a “heureuse et dorée saison” under the enlightened king, François I.<sup>173</sup>

Hagiwara identifies here the movement to translate other Greek and Latin works into French in this period, and the opinion of Salel regarding the translation of the *Iliad* reflects the approaches of Des Masures, Du Bellay and Crenne to the *Aeneid*. Salel would publish his translation of the first ten books of the *Iliad* in 1545, and the first thirteen books in 1570. He therefore adopts a similar strategy to that of Des Masures in successively publishing an increasingly complete translation of the *Iliad*, although he never published a translation of the entire work. Salel links the translation of an ancient epic poem to the reign of François I, suggesting that his reign provided an opportune time for such translations. François, as an ‘enlightened’ king, encouraged the work of men of letters, and encouraging François I to continue his patronage for such authors. Salel thus indicates that his motivation is to become an inspirational figure through his translation of the *Iliad*, which is an attempt to widen the field of translation of ancient epics in early modern France.

The process of using an ancient work to glorify a contemporary political leader was not confined to the work of Saint-Gelais, nor to French literature during this period. Bromilow notes the intriguing example of the ‘warrior’ Pope, Julius II, who was glorified in Italian literature by the link established between him and the vision of a new Golden Age prophesied by Virgil’s Sibyl at Cumae:

The classical myth of the golden age was one of the recurrent metaphors in Renaissance culture, often used for promotional purposes on the part of political authorities.<sup>174</sup>

As Bromilow explains, the view that the world was entering a golden age was linked to interpretations of Virgil’s fourth *Eclogue* and of the Golden Age prophesied by the Sibyl at Cumae in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*. This metaphorical Golden Age was transferred in Italy in the early 1500s to the papacy of Julius II. Bromilow thus identifies some parallels between this Italian view and the situation in France, with the implicit transfer of an ancient context onto a contemporary political situation. The differences between the

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<sup>173</sup> Hagiwara, *French Epic Poetry*, p. 18.

<sup>174</sup> Pollie Bromilow, *Authority in European Book Culture 1400 – 1600* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 102.

Italian and French contexts is that the Italians see their literary works as renewing a situation that had already existed in Italy from the end of the Roman Republic, whereby the *imperium* inherent in the construction of the Roman empire is merely being renewed rather than having to be displaced and created from scratch, as is the case in France.

The translation of ancient epic works and the political, as well as literary, implications of translating such works take on a particular importance in the atmosphere of religious conflict in France in the sixteenth century. A central plank of Huguenot and reformation religious philosophy, was increasing interest in the translation of the Bible from Latin into the vernacular. Luther's German translation of the New Testament was published in 1522, and his collaborator's German translation of the Old Testament was published in 1534. This was followed two years later by the 1536 translation of the Bible into French by Pierre Robert Olivétan, Jean Calvin's cousin. The act of translation of any text from Latin into vernacular therefore became a politically charged act.

This chapter has demonstrated the range of different translations of the *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France and the range of both approaches to and motivations for translation of the *Aeneid*. This range of differing personal, linguistic, and social motivations for translation demonstrates not only that the *Aeneid* was the repeated subject of translation, but that the act of translation of the *Aeneid* gave rise to differing methods. As a means of reception of the *Aeneid*, translation is adaptable to both the politico-religious ideology of each individual translator, and also to the literary and social situation of those translators. Whilst this chapter has shown that translation of the *Aeneid* became an increasingly complex phenomenon, it also remained a relatively limited means of transferring the *Aeneid* into a French, Christian context. It has been shown that both Hélienne de Crenne, whose translation of the *Aeneid* was intended to support her earlier re-interpretation of the Dido and Aeneas story in the *Angoysses Douleureuses*, and Pierre de Monchault, in his translation of Maffeo Vegio's *Supplementum*, use their translations to support adaptations and re-interpretations of the *Aeneid* beyond Virgil's original. The translators therefore use their translations not only to expand the readership of the *Aeneid*, but also to support their own literary interpretations of Virgil's work, adding another layer of complexity to the translation



process. Crenne further complicates this process by explicitly using translation to support a more complex reinterpretation of the *Aeneid*, inverting the progression towards increasing sophistication of engagement with the *Aeneid*.

The translation of the *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France demonstrates an evolution in the approaches of translators. Saint-Gelais' word-for-word translation is superseded by Crenne's translation of Books 1-4, which demonstrates not only a desire to translate the *Aeneid*, but an acknowledgement of the potential readership on the part of both Crenne and her publisher, Denis Janot. Crenne also sets out not with the goal of translating the *Aeneid*, but rather with making her own presentation of Dido linguistically accessible to her readers. Des Masures also demonstrates an awareness of publishing strategies with his step-by-step approach to publication. Des Masures, like Crenne, views the *Aeneid* not as a single monolithic work that can only be published in a single, complete, translation but rather he uses the structure of Virgil's original poem to craft his own publishing strategy which allows him to publish translations of sets of individual books before he is able to publish his translation of the entire *Aeneid*.

Du Bellay's translation of Books 4 and 6 is the first translation to aim to translate individual books of the poem, rather than the entire work. As with Crenne and Des Masures, Du Bellay takes into account not only the act of translating the text itself, but also the reaction of his reading audience to the presentation of Dido. The d'Agneaux brothers' translation of the *Aeneid* is couched in explicitly political terms as a direct appeal to the king to support literary patronage. This again shows a further evolution in the complexity of approaches to translation of the *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France as it links the *Aeneid* with contemporary politics and uses the work as the basis to launch a specific appeal for the support of French authors in this period. A final element of sophistication in the approach to translation is added by Tredehan's rendering into French of the *Supplementum*. This act not only confirms Des Masures' translation as the pre-eminent French translation of the *Aeneid* in this period, but it also extends the remit of French translation of the *Aeneid* beyond Virgil's poem itself, in highlighting later engagements with the *Aeneid* and affording them the same status as Virgil's work in translation.

The evolution of approaches to translation of the *Aeneid* mirrors the wider evolution in engagement with the *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France that will be analysed through the next three chapters of this thesis. Within the approach of translation of the *Aeneid*, the aim of successive translators has been shown to shift from transferring Virgil's language into French, to transferring the meaning of his work to apply to an early modern French. The aim of engagement has thus shifted from analysing the French linguistic and cultural context and deciding how best the *Aeneid* might fit into this context to analysing the context of the creation of the *Aeneid* itself and then deciding how this might be linguistically and culturally represented within an early modern French context. The translation of the *Aeneid* can therefore be seen as a continuously evolving process in early modern France, yet it represents only one form of engagement with the *Aeneid*. In this way, the approach to translation of the *Aeneid* can be viewed as a microcosm of a wider approach of increasing sophistication. Although this process is not entirely straightforward, as has been shown most clearly in the case of Crenne, whose translation of the *Aeneid* into French follows her adaptation and reinterpretation of the text, the progression of the translations process demonstrates a willingness on the part of translators to take into account all possible influences when translating the *Aeneid* into French. An analysis of the approaches to translation of the *Aeneid* therefore not only uncovers the complexity of the translators' differing literary strategies, but can also be used as a model through which to interpret other French engagements with the *Aeneid* as they become increasingly sophisticated throughout the sixteenth century.

The next stage of engagement with the *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France involves the transfer of the *Aeneid* narrative, not between languages, but between political and historical contexts, as evidenced by Pierre de Ronsard's *Franciade*, published in 1572. Ronsard's unfinished epic poem proposes an epic foundation narrative for the early modern French state that takes the *Aeneid* as its underlying narrative model, but then transfers the foundation myth to a new country. This narrative translation, bearing Virgil's narrative concept across into a new context, requires different literary strategies on the part of Ronsard than those adopted by the

sixteenth-century French translators of the *Aeneid*. Ronsard's strategy is closer to that of Maffeo Vegio, whose *Supplementum* provides a supporting example of the desire to have Virgil's original concept of the *Aeneid* foundation myth end in a new location. Whilst Ronsard has his epic end in the new national location of France, Vegio looks for a spiritual ending to the *Aeneid* in heaven in his attempt to recast the ending of the *Aeneid* in implicitly Christian terms and challenge Aeneas' status as an unequivocally pagan hero. Analysis of the literary strategy of Ronsard, with the support of the example of Vegio, will demonstrate the shift by early modern French authors to viewing the *Aeneid* as a work that could be adapted and included within new works of French literature, in a step beyond the translation of the work into French.

## CHAPTER TWO: CHRISTIAN 'CONTINUATIONS' OF THE *AENEID*: RONSARD'S *FRANCIADE* AND VEGIO'S *THIRTEENTH BOOK*

Pierre de Ronsard's *Franciade*, which was started at the request of Henri II and was finally published incomplete in 1572, is an attempt to write a French foundation epic, charting the travels of Francion, a Trojan who, having survived and escaped from the siege of Troy, travels to France and founds the city which will become Paris.<sup>175</sup> It was revised and republished in 1584.<sup>176</sup> Ronsard completed the first four books of his epic poem and reached the point in the narrative where his protagonist begins to see a parade of French kings in the underworld that resembles the parade of Roman emperors that Aeneas saw in Book 6 of Virgil's *Aeneid*.<sup>177</sup> In extending the myth surrounding the fall of Troy into a new geographical and historical context, as Virgil had done before him, Ronsard attempts to create a national myth for the French state, which claims for France the same Trojan roots, and thus the same historical status, as Rome.

Ronsard's work was published just weeks after the St Bartholomew's Day massacre, which began on the night of the 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> of August 1572 in Paris and spread outward into the provinces surrounding the city. Estimates of the number of Protestants killed by the Catholics range from 5,000 to 10,000 in non-partisan sources, and rise to 30,000 in some Protestants sources, although the true number of deaths is impossible to know.<sup>178</sup> The massacre marked a significant escalation in the Wars of Religion. Even though Ronsard had begun to write the *Franciade* in 1560 under François II, showing that he had conceived of the project long before the massacre, the date of publication inflamed Huguenot feelings, as the Protestants felt the work glorified the events of the

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<sup>175</sup> Pierre de Ronsard, *Les Quatre Premiers Livres de la Franciade* (Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1572). Ronsard names his hero as both 'Francion' and 'Francus' throughout his narrative. In order to minimize confusion, this chapter will refer to Ronsard's principal character as 'Francion'.

<sup>176</sup> Pierre de Ronsard, *Les Œuvres de Ronsard* (Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1584). All quotations from *La Franciade* are from this edition unless otherwise stated. The 1584 edition is followed by the editors of the Pléiade: Ronsard, *Oeuvres Complètes; édition établie, présentée et anotée par Jean Céard, Daniel Ménager et Michel Simonin*, (2 vols), (Paris: Gallimard, 1993-4).

<sup>177</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, ed. R. Deryck Williams (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1996), Book 6, ll. 756-853.

<sup>178</sup> See John H. M. Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the sixteenth century* (London: Methuen, 1979) p. 187.

massacre, showing it as part of Ronsard's vision for the creation of the French state. Yet whilst the timing of the publication may have been unfortunate, Ronsard clearly hoped that the Wars of Religion would result in a Catholic victory and in defeat of the Huguenots. By using the foundation myth of Francion, he glorifies the Catholic French monarchy in linking them to an inheritance from Rome.

### Ronsard's *Franciade* as Translation of the *Aeneid*

In *La Franciade*, Ronsard translates the *Aeneid*, not from one language to another, but in a literal sense, transferring Virgil's narrative from the national myth of the foundation of Rome to a national myth of the foundation of France. The concept of *La Franciade* as a translation of the *Aeneid*, in the sense that Virgil's poem has literally been 'borne across' from one context to another, has been identified by Katharine Maynard:

Nevertheless, the *Franciade* does not mimic the *Aeneid*, instead, it serves as a *translation* of the *Aeneid*. For Ronsard, composing the *Franciade* is about movement, about transporting and transferring Virgil's poem into a different realm. To write a Virgilian epic poem is to write a nation. It is therefore about claiming Virgilian territory – aesthetic, cultural and political – for France.<sup>179</sup>

Thus the very act of writing an epic such as the *Aeneid* or the *Franciade* is an imperialist act, since it involves the appropriation of one culture by another, of one author by another, because the text and context of the former are being used as support for the literary or political goals of the latter. Yet while it is useful for Ronsard to appropriate the style and elements of the plot from Virgil's work for his own national goals, he must also ignore other elements in order to make his own work logical.

The sense in which Ronsard, according to Maynard, is translating Virgil echoes Du Bellay's discussion and practice of translation in the *Deffence et Illustration*, according to Hassan Melehy:

Du Bellay is transferring to his own practice of writing what he attributes to the Romans – he takes from Italian what the Romans took from Greek, what the Italians have also taken from Latin and Greek, what he will in a moment advocate that the French take from Latin and Greek [...] Du Bellay transfers or translates the practice he ascribes to the Romans, through this transfer from Speroni to his own text, to the French language, and hence he declares the latter's possibilities. Here it becomes evident that literary production is intimately linked to the production of a French national space, a French culture.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Katherine Maynard, "'Avec la guerre on possède la Terre': The Problem of Place in Ronsard's *Franciade*", in *Virgilian Identities in the French Renaissance*, ed. Philip Usher and Isabelle Fernbach (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, N.Y.: D.S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 237-258 (240-241).

<sup>180</sup> Hassan Melehy, "Du Bellay and the Space of Early Modern Culture", *Neophilologus*, 84 (2000), pp. 501-515 (509).

Melehy thus views Du Bellay's literary strategy as indicative of his wider goal in the *Deffence*. Du Bellay's translation of Speroni is the latest in a series of transfers between cultures. Du Bellay is using the same literary processes used by the ancient Romans and by Speroni to elaborate on the possibilities of the French language. Du Bellay's conception of the purpose of translation is vital to the link between literary production in any language and the production of any national space, and Du Bellay is the latest writer to express this link between his own literature and national space and culture, casting his own work as descended from the literary actions of the Italians and the Romans before them. His work forms the latest iteration of a tradition of literary inheritance which is carried on by Ronsard. Ronsard thus positions himself within this line of inheritance and carves out a place for French literature as the latest iteration of this line.

Philip Usher further underlines Ronsard's desire to promote his own literary reputation in the introduction to his translation of the *Franciade*: 'Ronsard's *Franciade* was [thus] born from a collective desire for a national epic and from a poet's own career goals'.<sup>181</sup> Usher also links Ronsard's ability to compose his epic to his political support from the French state and from the monarchy in particular. Usher underlines the combination of elements which serve to make up Ronsard's epic, pointing out that these considerations were both literary and political:

As father to a new French epic, Ronsard's concerns relate to matters both poetic (selecting the right story, forging beautiful verse) and external (associating the enterprise with a good sponsor). That sponsor being the king of France, the project necessarily enjoys a kind of national gravitas.<sup>182</sup>

Ronsard is thus cast by Usher as having both political backing and his own poetic creativity to consider in his composition of the *Franciade*. That Ronsard had already established his anti-Huguenot stance is made clear in his *Remonstrance Au Peuple de France* of 1563, in which he attacks Calvin personally for his role in the conflict:

La foy (ce dittes vous) nous fait prendre les armes:  
Si la religion est cause des alarmes,  
Es deurtred & du sang que bous versés ici  
He! Qui de telle foy voudroit avoir soucy,  
Si par plomb, & per feu, par glaive, & poudre noyre,

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<sup>181</sup> Philip John Usher, *The Franciad (1572): by Pierre de Ronsard; translated, annotated and with an introduction by Philip John Usher* (New York: AMS Press, 2010) p.xvii.

<sup>182</sup> Usher, *The Franciad*, p. xvii.

Les songes de Calvin nous voulés faire croire?<sup>183</sup>

Ronsard casts the Wars of Religion and the disagreement between Catholics and Huguenots as arising directly from Calvin's personal religious position, reducing the conflict to a personal scope. Ronsard clearly blames Calvin for the conflict even before he comes to composing the *Franciade*. The *Remonstrance* is given urgency as it was written while the Huguenot Prince Louis de Condé was laying siege to Paris in November-December 1562.<sup>184</sup> Ronsard is commenting directly on the events of the Wars and showing that he supports the Catholics and believes that the monarchy will be victorious. Ronsard demonstrates his strident opposition to the Huguenots further in his *Discours des Misères de ce Temps* of 1568, when he chooses as his opening image to present to the Queen Mother the French state on the verge of being shipwrecked and casts her as the helmsman who can save it:

Las! Madame en ce temps que le cruel orage  
Menace les François d'un si piteux naufrage,  
Que la gresle et la pluye, et la fureur des cieux  
Ont irrité la mer de vens seditieux,  
Et que l'astre jumeau daigne plus reluire.  
Prenes le gouvernail de ce pauvre navire,  
Et maugré la tempeste, et le cruel effort  
De la mer, et des vens, conduisés le à bon port.<sup>185</sup>

Ronsard here places the queen mother in the position of the voyaging epic hero, at the helm of the French ship of state. Such imagery of the voyaging hero recurs in the *Franciade* as will be shown later in the chapter. Ronsard's *Discours* contains elements of the imagery he will employ at greater length in his epic work. Furthermore, he criticises the Huguenots again in the second part of the work, which is addressed to the queen:

Et quoy! bruler maisons, piller et brigander,  
Tuer, assassiner, par force commander,  
N'obeir plus aux Roys, amasser les armées,  
Apellez vous cela eglises reformees?<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Ronsard, *Odes, Hymns and other poems, Remonstrance Au Peuple de France*, ed. Grahame Castor and Terrence Cave (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977) ll.491-496.

<sup>184</sup> Castor and Cave eds., *Ronsard, Odes*, p. 276.

<sup>185</sup> Ronsard, *Discours des Misères de ce Temps* (Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1583) pp. 6-7.

<sup>186</sup> Ronsard, *Discours*, p. 14.

This direct appeal to the queen is intended to force her to think of the Huguenots as making personal attack on her state, implicating the queen herself in the fight against the Huguenots. Ronsard here makes it clear that he feels that he has the support of the Catholic monarchy and that he can support them through literary works such as the *Discours*. The monarchy is lauded as a bulwark against Calvinism and as protecting France from the Huguenots, underlining Ronsard's support for the Catholic cause.

The process of imitation, and the role of translation or transference within it, are described by Melehy:

So, in the modernity of the Renaissance, the translation or transference that takes place in imitation involves a multilingual dialogue with the past that at once affirms the impossibility of resurrecting it and allows it to persist in the different creations to which its elements will contribute in the present. Again, the logic of transference involves a paradox, that of the simultaneous rejection and use of translation: the two together constitute a process of intertextuality, where texts, or parts of them, are borrowed, transferred, translated, and integrated according to the demands of the present, and hence contribute to the formation of the present.<sup>187</sup>

Melehy identifies a process of translation which is not literal, but which involves the carrying across of literary concepts from one culture and one language to another, a process which simultaneously looks to the past for inspiration and then rejects that past. This form of translation looks simultaneously backwards and forwards, as it requires an understanding, on the part of the author of the imitation, of the context of the creation of the text which is being imitated and of the context in which the imitation is being created. *La Franciade* is a product of the impossibility that Melehy describes here, in that Ronsard looks to the *Aeneid* as a source to imitate, both in its underlying narrative and in the literal translation of extracts of the original poem, yet denies, through the very conception of *La Franciade*, Rome's claim to be the sole inheritor of the Trojan state and the underlying political and historical narrative of the *Aeneid*. Ronsard thus translates the *Aeneid*, in Melehy's terms, not in order to imitate the poem but rather to challenge the underlying narrative by transferring it into a new national context. Ronsard uses the *Aeneid* to satisfy his own demands of the poem. He borrows elements which support his own argument whilst simultaneously rejecting the concept of the poem as a whole. Ronsard's work therefore relies on his readers' knowledge of classical

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<sup>187</sup> Melehy, "Du Bellay and Space", p. 512.



literature, and in particular of Virgil's *Aeneid*, whilst simultaneously rejecting any explicit link between his own work and Virgil's.

Ronsard is not the first writer to imitate Virgil and translate his work in order to take his narrative in a new direction. Maffeo Vegio's *Supplementum* of 1413 similarly engages in translation, as defined by Melehy, by drawing on Virgil's *Aeneid* directly for literary inspiration and by proposing a crossing of the boundary between paganism and Christianity. The *Supplementum* appends a thirteenth book to the *Aeneid* which brings Virgil's narrative to a definitive close in the form of a quasi-Christian 'translation' of Aeneas into heaven, as Vegio explains in the "Argumentum" to his poem: 'et tandem placida sub pace regentem / Transtulit Aeneam Venus astra in summa beatum'.<sup>188</sup> The translation here is physical; Aeneas is literally borne aloft by Venus, and this image allows a reading of the story of Aeneas as a Christian allegory for saints. Vegio's work is a first demonstration of the early modern perception of the *Aeneid* as capable of crossing cultural and religious boundaries; Ronsard, in turn, brings the *Aeneid* across historical and cultural boundaries in order to form a foundation myth for France. Virgil seeks to give Rome an eternal foundation myth, whilst Vegio attempts to place Aeneas in an eternal position amongst the stars, with both authors not only elevating the status of Aeneas from Trojan refugee to national or religious hero, but using his character as an emblematic expression of their wider project. While Virgil's poem promotes the nationalistic epic of the Roman state rising from the ashes of Troy, Vegio's work promotes the possibility of the apparently pagan being seen as ultimately Christian within a Christian historical context.

Anna Cox Brinton explains that Vegio's desire to see a Christian message in the *Aeneid* was a common fifteenth-century phenomenon:

The turning of men's highest aspirations from the things of sense to another world, and the tendency to see all things with a twofold vision, by the eye of reason and the eye of faith, resulted in a symbolic interpretation of the *Aeneid*. As a parable, however, the poem was ethically incomplete. Not only was there a this-world ending, but the saint's reward was not described. The "Thirteenth Book" found favour because it supplied these two moral demands.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Anna Cox Brinton, *Mapheus Vegius and his Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2002), p. 52.

<sup>189</sup> Brinton, *Mapheus Vegius*, p. 26.

Thus, for the Christian allegory of the *Aeneid* to be complete, and for Aeneas to be viewed as a saint, he has to cross the boundary between this world and heaven in order to receive his reward. Vegio's continuation of Virgil's narrative thus brings closure to the *Aeneid* and confirms its allegorical status. By adding an alternate ending and extending Aeneas' journey into heaven, Vegio thus allows the *Aeneid* to be reinterpreted as a Christian epic and he thereby also allows Ronsard to extend the inheritance from Troy to the genealogy of the Christian kings of France and thus use the work as a French foundation myth.

The extension of the *Aeneid* is Vegio's principal claim to originality, as Michael Putnam explains: 'Vegio's *Supplement* is the first autonomous poetic treatment of events which follow directly, in terms of time and space, upon the concluding moments of the *Aeneid*'.<sup>190</sup> The autonomy Putnam attributes to Vegio's poem is, however, limited: the work is autonomous, in that Vegio invents his own plot for the continuation of Virgil's narrative, but it is also reliant on its relationship with the *Aeneid*. This dependence may be detected in Vegio's fidelity to, and imitation of, Virgil's literary style, even as his continuation responds to the demands of his own literary and historical context, as Putnam explains:

He looks to what he surmises to be incompletions, or even infelicities, in the narrative itself, and sets out both to extend and to modify Virgil's text in ways which we perhaps are meant to imagine might be Virgil's own (such is the poem's illusion) but which are in fact more those of Vegio and of his own time.<sup>191</sup>

The *Supplementum* is a product of Vegio's own context, yet Vegio intends for his poem to be read as part of the original Virgilian poem. Vegio influences his readers' understanding of the original *Aeneid* by adding an alternate ending to the poem whilst composing his poem to satisfy his own fifteenth-century context.

Like Ronsard, Vegio includes within his poem literary elements of Virgil's poem which tie his poem to the *Aeneid*, as Putnam explains:

Suffice it to say that the rhetoric of presentation is also beholden to the master poet, especially, and naturally, to the *Aeneid*. For instance, of the eight similes that dot the text several – the mother

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<sup>190</sup> Maffeo Vegio, *Short Epics*, ed. and trans. Michael C. J. Putnam, (Cambridge, Mass.: I Tatti Renaissance Library, Harvard University Press, 2004), p. ix.

<sup>191</sup> Putnam, *Short Epics*, p. xiii.

hen protecting her brood, the tortoise on its back, unable to escape the approaching fire – are of striking originality, but all, to some degree, owe their inspiration to Virgil.<sup>192</sup>

Vegio is thus able to mark the poetic content of the *Supplementum* as his own whilst simultaneously linking the poetic style and features of his work with those of Virgil. To some extent, Ronsard will do something similar in his *Franciade*, which at once denies the validity of Virgil's narrative of Rome as sole inheritor of Troy, and remains dependent upon that narrative both as a source and for stylistic inspiration. Ronsard is thus also caught between dependence on the *Aeneid* and originality in composing his own work, which is autonomous in its creation, but which is informed by literary elements taken from the *Aeneid*.

Vegio's approach to combining the *Aeneid* with his own context is the product of the tradition of reading the *Aeneid* as a Christian allegory, as Putnam explains:

We must also test Vegio's approach, and response, to a different medieval tradition regarding the *Aeneid* which in this case has its roots in late antiquity, namely the allegorical reading of the epic. This sees the story of Aeneas as emblemizing the journey of man bettering himself as life progresses and, anagogically, of the soul's quest for ethical perfection ending in its claim to a seat with the saints in heaven.<sup>193</sup>

Putnam views Vegio's deification of Aeneas as classicizing rather than Christianizing: 'Vegio chooses not to have Aeneas, in however oblique a manner, suffer the change from paganism to Christianity.'<sup>194</sup> Rather, Vegio uses apotheosis to classicize his poem and to emphasize Aeneas' pagan identity within a Christian context:

There is no reference, in Aeneas's celestial transmutation, to God's eternal grace extended to his mortal soul and every possibility that Vegio wished us to see Aeneas's deification as the result of his notable achievements as ancestor of, and moral paradigm for, future Romans and their Renaissance descendants. In this respect, too, Vegio is inexorably classicizing.<sup>195</sup>

For Putnam therefore, Vegio's Aeneas extends the classical past into the Christian present without Christianizing that past. Vegio's insistence on Aeneas as a moral model for future Romans echoes Virgil's insistence on the inheritance of Aeneas, through his status as progenitor to the rulers of Rome, demonstrated in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*. Vegio's approach to the *Aeneid* thus marks a shift in attitude away from viewing Virgil's

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<sup>192</sup> Putnam, *Short Epics*, p. xxiii.

<sup>193</sup> Putnam, *Short Epics*, p. xiii.

<sup>194</sup> Putnam, *Short Epics*, p. xviii.

<sup>195</sup> Putnam, *Short Epics*, p. xviii.

poem through the lens of Christian allegory and towards a focus on its meaning within its original context and on ways in which to re-interpret it within a new context. Vegio thus reinterprets the *Aeneid* within a new context without imposing a Christian allegorizing interpretation upon it. This tension between reliance upon the *Aeneid* and Vegio's marking out of a new interpretation of the text, a tension which can also be seen in Ronsard's work, demonstrates Vegio's originality in using the *Aeneid* in a different way from those who allegorized it.

### Ronsard's Epic Teleology

David Quint points to the epic genre as being a mode of writing which allowed the author to claim for himself and the faction which he supported in any political contest the complete historical context of his beliefs:

The formal completion of the epic plot speaks for the completeness of its vision of history: telling a full story, epic claims to possess *the* full story. Other accounts that might compete with the victor's version of history are dismissed as mere historical accidents, deviations from the straight line of imperial triumph, opposed to epic's end-directed narrative, these rival narratives appear directionless and beside the point.<sup>196</sup>

Ronsard's *Franciade* can thus challenge the *Aeneid* as the projected end of his epic narrative is the most important reason for its composition. The narrative teleology of the poem establishes its literary authority. By predicting that his hero will complete his journey from Troy to Paris, Ronsard is claiming his own straight line to a French national triumph, whilst also denying Roman and Italian claims to Trojan inheritance. He thus demonstrates what Quint explains by using the epic form to promote his own envisioned end to his epic and thus claims for France a complete history dating back to the fall of Troy in addition to challenging Aeneas' direction towards Rome. Both Ronsard and Vegio are seeking to increase their own literary status through their interpretations of how Virgil's epic model might end when viewed within a new context. Ronsard uses the epic as a genre in order to take exclusive control over the narrative of the fall of Troy and its consequences and thus impose his own narrative teleology.

### Ronsard's Conflation of History and Myth

Ronsard defines the proposed ending to his poem in his "Epistre au Lecteur", included in the 1572 edition, in which he justifies his reasons for drawing on the *Aeneid* story and

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<sup>196</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 33.

the myth of Troy as inspiration for his own epic work. He points to the distinctions between historians and poets when writing about history, acknowledging that the history his work lays claim to is 'vraysemblable' rather than an account of real events:

Encore que l'histoire en beaucoup de sortes se conforme à la Poësie, comme en vehemence de parler, harangues, descriptions de batailles, villes, fleuves, mers, montaignes, & autres semblables choses où le Poëte ne doibt non plus que l'Orateur falsifier le vray, quant à leur sujet ils sont aussi elognez l'un de l'autre que le vraysemblable est esloigné de la verité. L'Histoire reçoit seulement la chose comme elle est, ou fut, sans desguisure ny fard, et le Poëte s'arreste au vraysemblable, à ce qui peut estre, et à ce qui est desja recue en la commune opinion.<sup>197</sup>

Ronsard states that as a poet, he enjoys more licence than a historian in that his narrative of past events may draw on the 'vraisemblable' rather than being confined to the 'vrai'. Ronsard presents the role of the poet as being to show not historical fact, but rather to stretch the truth of history in order to explore imaginative possibilities. Furthermore, he can also use that which has already become commonly accepted knowledge within his own presentation of history, even if this knowledge is untrue. Ronsard is demonstrating to his readers the tensions inherent in his own poem, as he both stretches the historical truth in his poem and relies on sources for French history which are popular but may not be based in fact.

His blurring of history and myth or fiction is a Virgilian tactic. Ronsard's story of the founding of a state descended from Troy in the territory of France mirrors Virgil's conception of the founding of a proposed Roman state in Italy. Ronsard's work, like Virgil's, is constructed with this aim in mind. Ronsard begins his story from the premise that his characters will arrive at their destination in France, and he underlines this in his "Epistre":

Car voyant que le peuple tient pour chose tresassuree selon les Annales, que Françion fils d'Hector, suivy d'une compagnie de Troyens, aborda aux palus Maeotides, & de là plus autant en Hongrie, j'ay allongé la toile, & l'ay fait venir en Franconie, à laquelle il donna le nom, puis en Gaule, fonder Paris, en l'honneur de son oncle Pâris: Or' il est vraysemblable que Françion a fait tel voyage, d'autant qu'il pouvoit le faire, & sur ce fondement de vray semblance, j'ay basti ma Franciade de son nom.<sup>198</sup>

Ronsard here unveils his goal in writing the *Franciade*. He recalls the 'vraysemblance' he has discussed at the very beginning of his "Epistre au Lecteur", making it clear that this elongation of the story of Francion is intended to represent a narrative in which the

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<sup>197</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, pp. 1181-1182.

<sup>198</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, pp. 1183-1184.

fall of Troy will lead to the survivors founding a state in France. Ronsard makes it clear here that the name of Francion is important to the development of the poem's plot and nationalist message. Francion's name is the reason for naming the state of 'Franconie', and Francion's uncle Paris provides the name for the city Francion will found as the capital of this new state in Gaul. The theme of the importance of names is an aspect which Ronsard repeatedly returns to throughout the *Franciade*, and at two points in this passage, names of people are transferred to nations. Both Francion, who gives his name to the Franks, and Paris, who gives his name to the city of Paris, are immortalised in the names of locations to which they give their names. The characters therefore become fundamental not only to the narrative that Ronsard places them in, but also to the identity of the French state that they are creating.

Ronsard makes it clear that his literary strategy in inventing a French foundation epic takes the *Aeneid* as its most important model:

Bref ce livre est un Roman comme l'Iliade & l'Aeneïde, où par occasion le plus brièvement que je puis je traite de nos Princes, d'autant que mon but est d'écrire les faits de Francion, & non de fil en fil, comme les Historiens, les gestes de nos Rois: Et si je parle de nos Monarques plus longuement que l'art Virgilien ne le permet: Tu dois sçavoir Lecteur que Virgile (comme en toutes autres choses) en cette-cy, est plus heureux que moi, qui vivoit sous Auguste second Empereur, tellement que n'estant chargé que de peu de Rois & Césars, ne devoit beaucoup allonger le papier, où j'ay le faix de soixante & trois Rois sur les bras.<sup>199</sup>

As the reference to Virgil's catalogue of kings shows, Ronsard assumes from the outset that his readers will have the detailed knowledge of Virgil's *Aeneid* that is central to their understanding of his poem, and that invites direct comparison between the *Franciade* and the *Aeneid*. The list of the kings of France is presented as necessary, both because of his literary model, and because of his poem's insistence on inheritance through the royal line: the linking of the bloodline of the French monarchy to that of Troy is paramount.

Ronsard extols the excellence of his subject matter: 'fondé sur le bruit commun, et sur la vieille creance des Chroniques de France, je n'ay sceu trouver un plus excellent sujet que cestui-cy.'<sup>200</sup> François Rigolot argues that it is the emulation of previous

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<sup>199</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1182.

<sup>200</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1184.

literary models, rather than the veracity of his account, which is of uppermost importance to Ronsard in his choice of subject, citing as evidence the inclusion of the catalogue of kings:

It matters little to Ronsard that subsequent readers might have doubts about his having chosen Trojan legends to give the French a sense of their natural history. For him the “excellence” of the subject is measured by its ability to emulate a pre-existing imaginary structure, one furthermore guaranteed by the endurance of ancient epics.<sup>201</sup>

Ronsard is therefore using the structure of ancient epic, found both in his focus on the teleology of his poem and in his inclusion of the catalogue, as a literary device to justify the mixing of truth and fiction within his poem. By linking the form of his poem with that of ancient epics, Ronsard is attempting to convince his readers that his work can be viewed as a French equivalent of the works of Homer and Virgil, and can endure the same way as their works have done. Vegio is using the structure of ancient epic differently, by imitating Virgil’s style in order to extend Virgil’s own poem.

#### Vegio’s *Supplementum*: Aeneas in a Christian context

Vegio lays out in his *Argumentum* the route that his own project will take, looking back to the end of the *Aeneid* and forward to the outcome of the journey which he plans for Aeneas:

Turnus ut extremo vitam sub Marte profudit  
Subdunt se Rutuli Aeneae, Troiana sequentes  
Agmina: dehinc superis meriti redduntur honores.  
Congaudet nato ac sociis, memor ante malorum  
Actorum pater Aeneas. Turni inde Latinus  
Morte dolet. Patriae miseranda incendia Daunus  
Eversae, et cari deflet pia funera nati.  
Connubium instaurat natae laetosque hymenaeos  
Rex socer Aeneae genero; gens utraque pacto  
Foedere pacis ovat; tum nomine coniugis urbem  
Instruit, et tandem placida sub pace regentem  
Transtulit Aeneam Venus astra in summa beatum.<sup>202</sup>

This summary of the narrative of the *Supplementum* lays out a clear overview of what the work discusses and how it will end. The poem ends with an image of the translation (‘transtulit’) of Aeneas into heaven, and he is shown as being blessed (‘beatum’) by this movement into the stars. The pagan figure of Aeneas is placed into a Christian context

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<sup>201</sup> François Rigolot, “Ronsard’s Pretext for Paratexts” in *SubStance* 17. 2, Issue 56: *Reading in and Around* (1988), pp. 29-41 (32).

<sup>202</sup> Vegio, *Supplementum*, “Argumentum”, ll. 1-12.

which views the fate of the soul after death as a movement upwards into the sky. Vegio also emphasises the importance of the transfer of names in this passage. His explanation for the name Aeneas chooses for his new city is very similar to Ronsard's account of the naming of the city of Paris, as Aeneas chooses to name it after his wife Lavinia on the advice of Venus, showing the connection and emphasising the importance of family in the founding of nations. For Vegio, Aeneas' marriage to Lavinia is the act which cements the peace between Trojans and Italians, and thus it is fitting for the city to be named after her, whilst for Ronsard, it is Francion's relationship to his uncle Paris which confirms his future offspring's descent from the rulers of Troy, and thus Paris is a fitting name for Francion's new city in France. Vegio's proposed culmination to the *Aeneid* in the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia is a symbolic choice of ending, and, as with the naming of Paris, it enforces the teleology of the poem. The marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia shows representatives of the warring peoples joined in love, signifying the possibility of reconciliation and the entry of Aeneas into the stars puts an end to the narrative of his life. Although Virgil also hints at the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia, he does not explicitly describe the event in his poem. Both poems use the linking of the names of characters with the names of places in order to insist on a teleology which retrospectively links the ending of the poem with the identity of the characters in the narrative.

Although the *Aeneid* is the work being continued by Vegio, it is not the only work which influences the *Supplementum*. Anna Cox Brinton explains that there are other authors upon whom Vegio also draws: 'The plot is based on the latter half of the *Aeneid*, with hints from the early chapters of Livy's history. Two conspicuous episodes, the burning of Ardea and the death of Aeneas, are adapted from the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid'.<sup>203</sup> There are thus other sources for Vegio's poem, but the primary focus remains Virgil's epic. Vegio moves very quickly in his *Argumentum* from the image of Aeneas as a warrior, 'Marte' (l. 1), to a peaceful ruler, 'placida sub pace regentem' (l. 11), before his death, identifying the purpose of this continuation as being to bring the *Aeneid* to a peaceful end, one that differs markedly from the poignant death of Turnus that marks the end of Virgil's *Aeneid*. The teleology of Virgil's poem as a whole is therefore shifted

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<sup>203</sup> Cox Brinton, *Mapheus Vegius*, p. 4.



when it is read with the *Supplementum* as an addition' placing the emphasis on the death of Aeneas rather than that of Turnus, and on the reconciliation of the Trojans and Latins through the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia. Thus Vegio modifies the original meaning of the *Aeneid* in his continuation, through the addition of a hypothetical ending that reinterprets Virgil's work. The literary strategy of Vegio therefore shifts the emphasis of the original *Aeneid* through his continuation of the work, showing that it is possible to provide a definitive ending to Virgil's work which allows for both reconciliation and for closure of Aeneas' story.

#### Ronsard's Literary Strategy: Equating France with Rome

Ronsard's poem attempts to show not just that it is possible to equate France with the glory of Rome, but that in addition to this, France can lay claim to the same mythical roots as Rome. This would mean that France is not inferior to Rome, but that with the arrival of Francion from Troy, Paris has undergone the same process that Rome did with the arrival of Aeneas. This approach negates Italian claims to be the sole true inheritors of the glory and prestige of Troy, because Paris has grown out of the same roots as Rome. Virgil's poem, composed in the aftermath of civil war, praises Augustus as the ruler of a reunified Roman state at peace with itself. Although Ronsard wrote his poem in the midst of the Wars of Religion, he praises Charles IX as the contemporary ruler of France. Ronsard has the same aim as Virgil, in that his vision of the reconciled French state echoes Virgil's praise of the reign of Augustus in the aftermath of the Roman civil war and the fall of the Roman Republic. Ronsard therefore has both historical and contemporary political motivations for his attempt to add another branch to the *Aeneid* and extend the plot of the work into France and he echoes Virgil in his wish for peace and reconciliation.

There are two key elements in the books of the *Franciade* completed by Ronsard that link his work directly with the *Aeneid*. The first of these is the word-for-word translation of important elements of the *Aeneid* in French, episodes which are then included in Francion's own story. The second element revolves around the inheritance of names which link characters in the *Franciade* to their roots in Rome. Ronsard's use of translation bridges the gap between showing that the poem is influenced by Virgil and demonstrating that Ronsard is nevertheless using his own invention. A clear

example of this is Ronsard's translation of the imagery surrounding the death of Priam in the *Aeneid*:

iacet ingens litore truncus,  
Avulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus.<sup>204</sup>

In comparing the body of Priam to a cut-down tree, Virgil emphasises not only the death of Priam, but also the important stature of the man when he was still living and the gap he leaves in death. The juxtaposition of 'iacet ingens' emphasises how hard Priam has fallen. The loss of this stature is further emphasised by the repetition inherent in the nameless and headless nature of the body, as Priam has lost his reputation as well as being reduced in physical stature. Ronsard translates these lines:

Le corps sans nom sans chaleur & sans face  
Comme un grand tronc broncha dessus la place.<sup>205</sup>

Ronsard here mimics the repetition present in Virgil,<sup>206</sup> extending it to the loss of three features, with the lack of heat ('sans chaleur') further emphasising the lifeless nature of the body and the loneliness of the image. Ronsard's translation of 'iacet' as 'brancha' repeats the image of the tree, suggesting again how far the once mighty Priam has fallen. Furthermore, Ronsard chooses to translate 'caput' as 'face', emphasising not only Priam's loss of his head, but his loss of identity now that he is dead. Ronsard thus makes the image of Priam that of an even lonelier figure than that presented by Virgil. Key points of the *Aeneid* do not merely inspire Ronsard's work, but are directly translated into French as part of the Franciad story and certain elements are emphasised by Ronsard above the meaning in Virgil's original. Ronsard employs such direct translations to legitimise his narrative as the readers recognise that they are imported from Virgil, casting Virgil as a literary authority yet deviating from the narrative at the same time. Ronsard thus simultaneously acknowledges Virgil and shows how his narrative changes from that of the *Aeneid*.

Ronsard is however engaged in an adaptation of the *Aeneid* narrative. He confirms that his poem has the same roots in Troy as Virgil's poem, but he also deviates

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<sup>204</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 2, ll. 557-558.

<sup>205</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1023.

<sup>206</sup> See Usher, *The Franciad*, p. 30.

from the *Aeneid* when laying out the future course of Francion's journey. Despite repeating the image of the dead Priam which is present in Virgil, Ronsard significantly alters the manner of Priam's death. Virgil describes Achilles' actions in killing Priam in great detail:

hoc dicens altaria ad ipsa trementem  
traxit et in multo lapsantem sanguine nati,  
implicuit comam laeva, dextraque coruscum  
extulit ac latei capulo tenus abdidit ensem.<sup>207</sup>

The brutality of Achilles' actions is emphasised by their drawn-out nature. The dragging of Priam through his own son's blood both reminds the reader that Priam has already suffered a brutal loss and emphasises that the royal line of Troy will come to an end with the death of Priam. The entwining of Achilles' hand in Priam's hair makes the killing of Priam a very personal act and emphasises the complete control Achilles has over his victim. The act of killing itself is very fast, emphasising the callous nature of Achilles' action.

The callousness and rapidity with which Priam is killed are further emphasised by Ronsard:

Quand il receut en sa gorge frappée  
De l'Achillin le tranchant de l'espée  
Qui d'un grand coup le chef luy decolla:  
Bien loin la teste en sautellant alla!<sup>208</sup>

Ronsard has Priam being killed in the same manner as in Virgil but the violence and focus of the image are significantly altered. Ronsard's narrative focusses on Priam, the victim, rather than on Achilles's actions as he kills him. Priam receives the stroke of Achilles' sword in the throat, showing his powerlessness, and the almost comic image of the head jumping into the air emphasises Achilles' violence.

Ronsard therefore refers to, and even translates, elements of the *Aeneid* in his work. Yet even in the act of direct translation, Ronsard changes elements to suit his own narrative. In this example, both authors depict the death of Priam at length, yet Virgil's image of Priam being stabbed in the side by Achilles has been converted into the much

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<sup>207</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 2, ll. 550-553.

<sup>208</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1023.

more dramatic image of Priam's decapitation through the throat and of his head jumping into the air. In Virgil, the impression is that Priam's head is only severed after his death at the hands of Achilles, yet in Ronsard's version, Achilles' first act is to decapitate the king, creating a much more succinct link with the image of the headless body on the shore. Ronsard's rendering is close to Virgil's, but the alteration of the imagery shows that Ronsard simultaneously wants to demonstrate his move away from Virgil.

### Ronsard's use of names as Roman inheritance

The second way in which Ronsard uses the *Aeneid* in his poem is through the linking of characters with their destiny through names. By renaming the Virgilian figure of Astyanax, son of Hector, as Francion, survivor of the siege of Troy, Ronsard is able to link the story of the fall of Troy with his vision of the foundation of the French state:

Muse, l'honneur des sommets de Parnasse,  
Guide ma langue et me chante la race  
Des ROIS FRANÇOIS yssus de Francion  
Enfant d'Hector Troyen de nation,  
Qu'on appelloit en sa jeunesse tendre  
Astyanax et du nom de Scamandre.  
De ce Troyen conte moy les travaux,  
Guerres, conseils, et combien sur les eaux  
Il a des fois (en despit de Neptune  
Et de Junon) surmonté la Fortune,  
Et sur la terre eschappé de peris,  
Ains que bastir les grans murs de Paris.<sup>209</sup>

Both the roots and the goal of the text are made clear in these first few lines. They identify the narrative itself alongside its political links to the contemporary situation in France, as the country is being destroyed by the Wars of Religion. Ronsard adopts the position of the ancient poet, mirroring Homer and Virgil in asking the muse for poetic inspiration at the opening of his poem.<sup>210</sup> Ronsard is laying out the narrative journey which his poem will take in a similar way to Virgil, whose opening lines cast Aeneas as the founder of the Latin race. The poem is not only a narrative of the dangers that Francion will have to avoid on his journey, but also of the end of the journey itself, whose aim is made explicit before the journey has even started: Francion will build the walls of

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<sup>209</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1021.

<sup>210</sup> See Usher, *The Franciad*, p. 25.

Paris. This recalls the moment in the *Aeneid* when Aeneas remarks that the walls of Carthage are already being built: 'O Fortunati, quorum iam moenia surgunt!'<sup>211</sup> The building of the walls in both the *Aeneid* and the *Franciade* is a symbol for the construction of nations, as the wall delineates the nation around which it can be built and provides a physical incarnation of that nation, an image which is equally relevant in the founding of both the Roman and French nation states.

The figure of Francion is linked directly with the monarchy of France at this stage. The kings are 'yssue de Francion'; Ronsard is proposing a direct bloodline from the Trojan hero to the French royal line, and he thus links the founding of the French state directly with the fall of Troy. This link is much more explicit than Virgil's implicit praise of Augustus. Whereas Virgil simply includes a list of Roman rulers as seen by Aeneas in the underworld, Ronsard immediately links Francion with all the future kings of France. Ronsard must also link the ancient and Christian contexts in outlining the inheritance of Francion and he therefore makes clear reference to the pagan gods in his work. He does not attempt to Christianize the story of Francion, but remains in contact with the pagan roots of the inspiration he draws from Virgil. Ronsard does this in the fourth book of the poem by composing an epic parade of the kings of France, linking Francion's bloodline to that of France's first Christian king, Clovis. He mentions that both Juno and Neptune try to prevent Francion from founding his new nation, and these are exactly the same gods who try to stop Aeneas on his journey to Italy.<sup>212</sup> Thus Francion overcomes no lesser challenges than Aeneas did, and his arrival at the future site of Paris is no less heroic. Francion is thus cast as an epic hero fulfilling the same requirements as Aeneas during his journey.

#### Francion as alternative Aeneas

Ronsard's casting of Francion as the son of Priam allows him to occupy an equivalent role to that of the Trojan Astyanax. The inclusion of Francion within the Trojan royal line is central to Ronsard's claims for the French nation to be viewed as the true inheritors

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<sup>211</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 1, l. 436.

<sup>212</sup> See Usher, *The Franciad*, p. 26.

of Troy, and Bjaï notes that this linking of names is central to the composition of the poem: '*La Franciade* raconte d'abord l'histoire d'un nom.'<sup>213</sup> Having established Francion as an equivalent to Astyanax with a journey parallel to that of Aeneas, Ronsard must allow Francion to escape from Troy in order to found his new city in France. Francion is introduced as a stand-alone character after the scene depicting the death of Priam. Again, Ronsard links his poem to the *Aeneid* through references to the narrative of Virgil's poem. For example, his first description of Francion shows him being hidden by a storm cloud conjured up by Andromache:

Car Francus vit et maugré toute envie  
De ses poumons va respirant la vie  
Dedans Buthrote, en ces Champs, où la vois  
Vit prophétique és chesnes Dodonois,  
Pres Helenin et sa mere Andromache  
Qui sans honneur par les tourbes le cache.<sup>214</sup>

Here, Ronsard's decision to hide Francion in Buthrorum creates a link with Aeneas, who visited Buthrotum after his departure from Troy.<sup>215</sup> By depicting Francion as reliant on the intervention of Andromache in order to survive the siege and fall of Troy, Ronsard is showing him to be a vulnerable hero, who has not yet acquired the honour he will gain from the successful completion of his journey. Francion is thus cast a would-be soldier prevented from fighting by divine intervention in order that he should undertake his journey.

Having outlined Francion's destiny at the very beginning of the poem, Ronsard then has Jupiter tell Juno exactly what Francion's journey will entail. Through Jupiter's speech, Ronsard in effect elaborates in 132 lines the course of his entire poem, from Francion leaving Troy to his founding of Paris, and he updates the evolution of France up to the rule of the present king, Charles IX.<sup>216</sup> Jupiter explicitly states that Francion will undertake the rebuilding of the walls of Paris and will lend his name to the French nation his actions create:

Ayant la gaule & les gaulois vaincuz  
Ores par ruse, & ores par bataille,

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<sup>213</sup> Denis Bjaï, *La Franciade sur le Métier: Ronsard et la Pratique du Poème Héroïque* (Geneva: Droz, 2001), p. 100.

<sup>214</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1024.

<sup>215</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 3, l. 293.

<sup>216</sup> Bjaï, *La Franciade sur le métier*, pp. 7-11.

Rebastira de Paris la muraille  
Et de rempars son mur enfermera:  
La gaule après de Francus nommera  
Chef des François, qui pour la souvenance  
D'un si grand Prince aura le nom de France.<sup>217</sup>

The Gauls are characterized here as the race that Francion will defeat. Ronsard is presenting the Trojans under Francion, rather than the Gauls, as the true forebears of the French. As in the *Aeneid*, where the Latins and Trojans are combined into the future Roman race, the Gauls are here subsumed into the state of France. This emphasis on France's Trojan origins allows Ronsard to avoid the political and historical associations between France and the Gauls as a nation that was subservient to Rome. The image of Francion fighting and defeating the Gauls is an important literary link with the *Aeneid* and it gives Francion an equal status to Aeneas. Aeneas had to fight the Latins in order to set up his new city in Italy, and Francion must do the same to the Gauls in France. Ronsard goes further than Virgil, however, in linking his hero to the city he founds: Francion founds the city of Paris, while the city of Alba Longa founded by Aeneas is only a forebear of Virgil's Rome. The linguistic link between the names of Francion and France associates the country with this son of Troy, and this link with Troy affords it the same mythical and literary status as Rome. The name of the hero is used within the historical context to lend support to Ronsard's theory of the French inheritance of Troy. The linking of names of characters with those of the cities they found represents the French state as a natural progression from Troy, and directly links the French monarchy with its Trojan progenitors.

#### Ronsard's Political Aims in *La Franciade*

Mercury's description, in his account to Helenin, Francion's uncle, of Francion's preservation by the gods for the sake of his final goal could come from the poet himself when he summarises his project:

Je n'ay Francus du massacre sauvé  
Pour estre ainsi de paresse agravé,  
Un fay-neant en la fleur de son âge:  
Mais j'esperoy que d'un masle courage  
Iroit un jour des Gaules surmonter  
Le peuple rude et fascheux à donter,  
Chaud à la guerre, et ardent à la proye,

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<sup>217</sup> Ronsard, *Les Quatre Premiers Livres*, (1572), p. 10. This speech is not included in the 1584 edition.

Pour y fonder une nouvelle Troye,  
Dont la memoire en tous temps floriroit,  
Et par le feu jamais ne periroit.<sup>218</sup>

Mercury's speech links Francion's goal directly with Aeneas's: the foundation of a new Troy. Yet Mercury does not yet view Francion as a hero, describing him as a 'fay-neant' and suggesting that the courage he will need to defeat the Gauls is not yet in evidence. Mercury is advancing the hypothetical theory that Francion will need to change and become warlike in order to defeat his enemies. Mercury looks backwards to the fire which consumed the old Troy and forwards to an image of the new Troy which will be impervious to fire, and which will never die but rather will flourish. Thus Ronsard, through the vision of Mercury, projects his own image of the French state as being able to survive and prosper in contrast to its Trojan forebear and rival Rome.

Mercury to some extent fills the same role in the *Franciade* as he did in the *Aeneid*, acting as the messenger of the gods whilst also predicting the future. Virgil's Mercury intervenes when Aeneas seems to be settling down to a new life with Dido in Carthage, reminding him of the purpose of his journey from Troy:

Si te nulla movet tantarum Gloria rerum  
[nec super ipse tua moliris laude laborem,]  
Ascanium surgentem et spes heredis Iuli  
respice, cui regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus  
debetur.<sup>219</sup>

Virgil here has Mercury try to turn Aeneas' thoughts to Italy and Rome as a gift for his son Ascanius, who is used as a metaphor for future generations of Trojans who will grow up in this new home. Mercury's focus on Ascanius emphasises the central role of family inheritance in the founding of a new home for the Trojans in Italy, linking Italy with Troy through the family of Aeneas. Similarly, Ronsard's Mercury intervenes by foretelling not only the fate of Francion, but also the future power of the kings of France:

L'enfant d'Hector, à qui les Cieux amis  
Ont tant d'honneurs et de sceptres promis:  
Qui doit hausser la race Priamide,  
Doit abaisser la grandeur AEzonide!  
Doit veindre tout, et qui doit une fois,  
Estre l'estoc de tant de Rois François,  
Et par sus tous d'un CHARLES, qui du monde

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<sup>218</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1026.

<sup>219</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 4, ll. 272-276.



Doit en la main porter la pomme ronde.<sup>220</sup>

Ronsard's Mercury here employs exactly the same images and tactics as Virgil's Mercury whilst applying them to a French project. The journey is about continuing Priam's race. Yet it also requires Francion to undermine the grandeur of the offspring of Jason, as Jason and Hercules had destroyed Troy when it was under the rule of Priam's father Laomedon. Mercury gives Francion two roles. The first is to defeat the Greeks, claiming vengeance for Troy, and the second is as the progenitor of the French kings. Both of these roles confirm the identity of France as the new Troy, as Troy is no longer destroyed and French culture and imperial power will out-do those of Greece. France is thus painted as the rival to Greece through its roots in Troy and Roman power is undermined, delegitimizing the Roman foundation of Gaul and claims to Italian power over France.

Ronsard again emphasises Francion's identity as Astyanax, son of Hector. Ronsard equates the two races of Troy and France through their kings, Priam and Charles; the royal blood stands in for national blood and, as in Virgil, contemporary rulers are directly related with the bloodlines of ancient heroes. Ronsard projects his narrative into the future, to the present king, Charles, whose name stands in place of that of Iulus, who is named as the progenitor of the future emperors of Rome in Virgil, equating him with the greatest Roman line of emperors. Thus Virgil's imagery of the Roman republic at its height is augmented with new imagery of a France on the verge of achieving power beyond its own borders, extending across the world which now lies like an apple, ready for consumption, in Charles' hand. The sceptres which complement the orb come from the skies both to Hector's offspring Francion, and, by implication, to Charles and the future kings of France, who held firm to the idea that their power was God-given. This mixing of French, Trojan, and Roman elements allows Ronsard to glorify the kings and people of France without losing touch with his literary roots in the *Aeneid*.

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<sup>220</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1027.

### Comparing the literary strategies of Vegio and Ronsard

The passing on of the symbols of regal power is not an image confined to the *Franciade*. Vegio had previously depicted the handover of power from King Latinus to Aeneas in similar terms:

Et iam compositos felici in pace regebat  
Dardanidas; et iam decedens sceptrum Latinus  
Liquerat; et pius Aeneas successerat, omnem  
Ausoniam lataque potens ditione tenebat.<sup>221</sup>

Vegio here casts Aeneas as the 'pius' hero, an attribute which recurs throughout Virgil's original work. The passing on of the sceptre heralds an era of peace for the new nation under Aeneas, recalling Virgil's implicit praise of the peaceful state of Rome under Aeneas and his descendants, who will eventually close the gates of war at the Temple of Janus in a sign of peace.<sup>222</sup> Just as Ronsard shows Charles IX holding the orb of the entire world in the palm of his hand while he holds the sceptre in the other, Vegio portrays Aeneas' rule as now spread over the whole wide expanse of Italy. The passing on of the sceptre is here a metaphor for the passage of the Aeneas story from an ancient Roman myth to an early modern Italian context, just as in Ronsard it is used to illustrate the political power of early modern France. Yet where Vegio remains reliant on the *Aeneid*, focussing on the inheritance of Aeneas, Ronsard's image of Charles IX displaces that of Virgil's Aeneas. Whilst Vegio depends on Virgil's imagery of Aeneas even when he brings his character into a Christian context, Ronsard does something more complex in that he simultaneously acknowledges and rejects Virgil's imagery of Roman inheritance from Troy in order to create a French national epic.

Katherine Maynard seizes on the image of the French king holding the world in his hand as being indicative of new outlooks on the world as an object and links the image of Charles IX with David Quint's theory 'that the narrative of an epic poem is also a narrative of empire', as she summarises it.<sup>223</sup> Maynard applies Quint's theory to Ronsard's imagery:

As a case in point, the passage which culminates in Charles holding the globe makes reference to the (embellished) past of the Valois dynasty whose ancestors come from "la race Hectoride"

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<sup>221</sup> Vegio, *Supplementum*, ll. 586-589.

<sup>222</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 1, ll. 254-296.

<sup>223</sup> Maynard, "Avec la Guerre", p. 238.

(Hector's race). The narrative of the *Franciade* uses the glorious past as a justification for Charles' rule and implies that such greatness will continue, and even increase, with Charles' descendants.<sup>224</sup>

Maynard points to one of the underlying goals of Ronsard as being that of any epic poet: to justify the construction of empires, a theme shared with Virgil's *Aeneid*. This analysis emphasises the political nature of the epic poem which Ronsard has composed. The teleological interpretation applies to the French monarchy, in that each king is the newest expression of a French political inheritance that began in Troy. By extension, Ronsard's poem mirrors this teleology, as the *Franciade* is the newest expression of the original *Aeneid* and carries as much authority as the original poem. Ronsard's poem therefore not only draws inspiration from the *Aeneid* to confirm the roots of the French state, but the *Franciade* also looks to France's imperial future, just as Virgil's poem envisions the imperial future of the Roman state.

Although Ronsard is not proposing an imperial project for the French state, the Trojan priest, based on Virgil's image of Orpheus, priest of Thrace, who Aeneas depicts singing and playing in the Plains of Joy in the Roman underworld<sup>225</sup>, asks Cybele for exactly this outcome when he invokes her:

Donne qu'un jour quelcun de nostre race  
Refonde Troye, et qu'il repousse encore  
Au ciel natal le noble sang d'Hector:  
Redonne nous un Royaume et r'assemble  
En un monceau tous les Troyens ensemble:  
À fin qu'aimez du destin le plus fort  
Nous revivions heureux de nostre mort.<sup>226</sup>

The repeated 're-' of this passage highlights the Trojans' desire to reconstruct their old home in a new location, where all Trojans can find a new beginning, mirroring the narrative of the *Aeneid*. This is further emphasised by the image of rebirth in the final lines, which show that this plea for a new state is an opportunity for the Trojans not merely to make their home in a new geographical location, but to make a new life for themselves, with their fate having been changed from death to life, suggesting a shift in their national teleology which can only come about with the founding of this new city in France. The final couplet of this passage has been changed from the 1572 edition, which

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<sup>224</sup> Maynard, "Avec la Guerre", pp. 238-239.

<sup>225</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, l. 645.

<sup>226</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1028.

reads: 'Dessus la Grece envoye noz honeurs, / Et nous fais d'elle, & du monde seigneurs.'<sup>227</sup> This image shows the Trojans as the masters of the world, predicting an imperial future for the French nation, and its removal from the later edition thus shifts the emphasis to the founding of the French state rather than its future and shows Ronsard as less confident in the future of France in 1584 than he appears to be in 1572, suggesting that he is now more pessimistic about the outcome of the wars and their impact on France.

### Ronsard's Catalogue of Kings

Ronsard chooses, in the style of Virgil, to include a catalogue of kings in his work, a list which takes up almost all of Book 4 of the *Franciade*. Ronsard sets Francion up for his trip into the underworld in much the same way that Virgil recounts Aeneas' journey there, recalling the *Aeneid* directly. This list forms the end of the extant poem, and discusses the deeds of three monarchs: Charles Martel, his son, Pepin (the short) and Clovis I. The catalogue is set in the underworld, with Francion guided through the kings by his companion Hyante. When Francion reaches the underworld he is addressed by Hyante, who first of all recounts to him the other heroes who have passed into the underworld on their own missions: Hercules, Jason and Theseus. Theseus was imprisoned in the underworld by the Furies, and was rescued by Hercules when he entered the underworld in order to abduct Cerberus. Jason is linked to the underworld through the offerings he gave to Hecate in order to appease her. Mercury had already foretold that Francion would out do Jason's heroism, and so equalling this heroism forms a first step towards this goal. Francion is thus placed within the line of heroes who have entered and escaped the underworld, placing him on an equal stance with these heroes, but he rejects comparison with previous figures, reflecting Ronsard's wider rejection of previous models in *La Franciade*, claiming that his intentions 'Ne semble point à ceux du premier âge / Ces ravisseurs, Hercules et Jason'.<sup>228</sup> Francion pleads with Hyante to guide him through the underworld so that he can see the kings of France who will come after him. He claims that he wishes to 'Voir ces grands Rois qui

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<sup>227</sup> Ronsard, *Les Quatre Premiers Livres* (1572), p. 17.

<sup>228</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*. p. 1117.

naistront de ma race.,<sup>229</sup> This approach differs from that of Aeneas, who is unaware of the parade of kings until Anchises reveals it to him and suggests that Ronsard is acknowledging the influence of the *Aeneid* by having Francion plead for the same opportunity. Francion is therefore linked both to the ancient heroes who had passed through the underworld and to the future of the French state, marking a step in the teleology of Ronsard's epic, which links Troy directly with France. Francion is here a different figure from the one whom Mercury depicted as he left Troy. He is no longer 'fay-neant', but is to be counted amongst the ancient heroes who have preceded him on his journey.

The figure of Aeneas, the Roman mythological hero who entered the underworld, and on whom it could be argued that character of Francion is most closely based, is absent. It is as though Francion has directly replaced Aeneas here. Ronsard makes the narrative and thematic links between the *Franciade* and the *Aeneid* increasingly explicit at this point whilst deliberately avoiding any direct mention of Aeneas. Virgil's influence is therefore present in the *Franciade* even during episodes where such influences are characterized by silence on Ronsard's part. It is left to the reader to recall Aeneas' journey to the underworld. For example, Francion mimics the actions of Aeneas when he offers to build a temple to Hyante if he is successful in his quest and to create a day of celebratory games in her memory:

Je bastiray pour telle recompense  
 Maint temple fait de royale despense  
 En ton honneur: et si je puis jamais  
 Aborder Seine, icy je te promets  
 Par ton Hecate et par ses triples testes,  
 Que tous les ans en solonelles festes  
 À jours certains je te feray des jeux.<sup>230</sup>

This episode recalls the promises made by Aeneas to the Sibyl when he arrives at her cave, as is described in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*:

tuque, o sanctissima vates,  
 praescia venturi, da (non indebita posco  
 regna meis fatis) Latio considerare Teucros  
 errantisque deos agitatque numina Troiae.  
 tum Phoebos et Triviae solido de marmore templum

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<sup>229</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1117.

<sup>230</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1117-1118.

instituum festosque dies in nomine Phoebi.<sup>231</sup>

Here Aeneas promises both a temple to Phoebus and Trivia, and feast days in honour of Phoebus. In Ronsard's version, the offering is proposed to Hyante, in recognition of her role as a guide. Although Francion makes no reference to Phoebus, he does swear his oath by Hecate, who is the second deity to whom Aeneas promises to dedicate his temple, under her Roman name, Trivia. Again, Ronsard recalls a specific passage from the *Aeneid* whilst changing the details of the passage so that Virgil himself is silenced. Virgil's poem thus haunts Ronsard's throughout, with elements of structure being transferred from Virgil into Ronsard's poem without explicit acknowledgement.

Virgil's catalogue is situated after Aeneas has been reunited with his father in the underworld.<sup>232</sup> It forms the end of Aeneas' journey through the underworld and the beginning of his journey towards Italy itself. The catalogue is introduced by Anchises, who leads Aeneas past the different kings. The presentation of the catalogue thus reflects the message contained within it. Just as the inheritance of Rome is passed from ruler to ruler, knowledge of these rulers is passed from father to son. Anchises introduces the catalogue by telling Aeneas that the men he is about to present will inherit his name: 'inlustris animas nostrumque in nomen ituras'.<sup>233</sup> The emphasis, as with the *Franciade*, is on the inheritance of names. Anchises proceeds to recount the deeds of the different rulers of Rome, throughout its history. Virgil thus provides a prophecy of Roman history as well as the list of rulers, and Ronsard does the same in his catalogue.

In his catalogue, Ronsard depicts Charles Martel as a religious warrior, who:

Perdra du tout par mille beaux trofées  
Des Sarrazins les races estouffées  
Et des François le nom victorieux  
Par sa prouesse envoyra jusqu'aux cieux.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, ll. 65-70.

<sup>232</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, ll. 679-758.

<sup>233</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, l. 758.

<sup>234</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1151.

Martel's actions in the religious wars against the Saracens will lead to French glory reaching to the skies. Ronsard thus indirectly suggests that Martel's actions benefit from divine sanction. The reference to Charles Martel provides an implicit model for Charles IX, the current king, to act as a religious hero, defeating the Huguenots, rather than the Saracens. This casts the Huguenots as both foreign and un-Christian, turning the war from a civil conflict into one in which French Catholics unite against a common enemy. The French and Catholic identities are therefore merged to make Catholicism synonymous with French national identity. Similarly, Pepin is mentioned because of his military intervention in Italy on behalf of the Catholic Church. Pepin is shown as the saviour of Rome: 'Rome qui fut tant de fois assaillie, / Sera remise en son premier honneur.'<sup>235</sup> Ronsard puts forward the image of a French king defending Rome, the centre of the Catholic state.

The most important of the three kings Ronsard mentions in his catalogue is Clovis I, the first Christian ancestor of all future French kings:

Sous luy faudra de Clovis la lignée  
Si qu'en perdant le sang tres-ancien  
Des premiers Rois, fera naistre le sien,  
Donnant lumiere à sa race nouvelle  
Par les hauts faits de sa dextre immortelle.<sup>236</sup>

Ronsard thus sees Clovis not only as the father of the French kings, but as the father of a new race, and he is depicted in terms of the Christian imagery of giving light to his people. His existence links the forebears of the French monarchy with those who come after him as the blood he spills in battle is that of his old line, whilst he will give birth to a new royal line. The pagan and Christian kings of France are thus split into two distinct dynasties which are nonetheless unified in the figure of Clovis, whilst his status becomes immortal for his deeds in war which have won the honour he now possesses.

This depiction of Clovis allows Ronsard to push aside any charge that he may be painting the French as having pagan roots and reflects the moral warning given by Hyante at the end of this extract:

» N'espere rien au monde de certain:

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<sup>235</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1151.

<sup>236</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1151.

- » Ainsi que veut tout coule de la main:
- » Enfant d’Hector, tout se change & recharge:
- » Le temps nous fait, le temps mesme nous mange:
- » Princes et rois et leurs races s’en-vont,
- » De leurs trespas les autres se refont.
- » Chose ne vit d’éternelle durée.
- » La vertu seule au monde est assure!<sup>237</sup>

Ronsard wants to impress upon French leaders the idea that only virtue will endure; not the physical empires they wish to create. The appearance of Clovis is central to Ronsard’s poem. The French royal line, and the French nation, may have their roots in ‘la race hectoride’, but they have abandoned elements of this heritage, such as its pagan belief system, and remade themselves as a Christian nation with Christian rulers.

This listing of French kings initially created an argument about whether the work should be considered as narrating history or using an epic poem that Ronsard claims to be writing in his preface as imagining history. Bjaï shows how the inclusion of this long catalogue in such a prominent place led to theories that the writing of the catalogue itself was Ronsard’s true goal in composing the *Franciade*:

Malgré le dénégations de Ronsard, *La Franciade* a bien été lue, dès la Renaissance, comme un livre d’histoire, *opus de Regibus Francorum* suivant Papire Masson, comme si le Catalogue final, long appendice du dernier livre, jetait ses feux sur l’ensemble des quatre chants. Dans ce Catalogue au moins, dont il a formé très tôt le projet, Ronsard ne se montrerait-il pas, effectivement, «Historiographe et non Poète»?<sup>238</sup>

Bjaï is demonstrating that, for some readers, the conclusion to Ronsard’s poem effectively undermined the claims he makes in his introduction, as by devoting such a large part of the work to a history of the Kings of France, the emphasis is placed on narrating history. Yet Ronsard himself denies this view of the poem, and the narrative that he sets out in the preface of the poem puts forward a view of the poem that is of a journey which is much wider than the catalogue itself; the character of Francion is the vehicle through which the epic journey is achieved and this journey allows Francion to give birth to the French royal line.

Virgil’s original catalogue occupies 136 lines of Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, a proportionately short account compared to the length of the poem as a whole.<sup>239</sup> This

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<sup>237</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, p. 1151-1152.

<sup>238</sup> Bjaï, *Ronsard sur le métier*, p. 285.

<sup>239</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, ll. 757-893.



makes comparisons of the two catalogues somewhat unfair, as it is impossible to know how long Ronsard's completed work may have been, and hence the relative size of the catalogue. There have been varying opinions, favourable and otherwise, about the inclusion of the catalogue at this point in the work. Bjaï cites the strongly negative judgement of Levrault:

Au quatrième [livre], l'énumération des rois de la première race est monotone et insupportable. Ronsard n'en oublie aucun et leur attribue presque à tous la même importance [...]; il semble écrire une histoire versifiée pour des enfants de l'école primaire.<sup>240</sup>

Although Levrault's point is made too strongly, he is right to point out that Virgil does not attempt to enumerate the deeds and character of every future ruler of Rome; he chooses those who best fit his vision of a republican Rome, and then those whom he finds it most advantageous to praise. He specifically praises the future kings of Alba Longa, Romulus, the founder of Rome itself, Caesar and Augustus, the current emperor. Other rulers are mentioned only very briefly. Thus Virgil's list of rulers is constructed specifically to suit his literary and political purposes, in a way which is very different from Ronsard's attempt to give a full account of the kings of France up to his present day. Ronsard goes beyond Virgil in his desire to catalogue all of the kings in France down to Charles IX. He must make the link between Francion and the kings of France explicit, but he also uses the catalogue, and his presentation of Clovis in particular, to demonstrate that this direct link can encompass the shift from paganism to Christianity and remain the means by which to link the French kings with Troy.

Yet as Bjaï points out, other commentators have moved away from this opinion, and notably Raymond Lebègue: 'J'ai eu tort de n'y voir qu'une œuvre archéologique et de juger fastidieux, comme le font tous les ronsardisants, le catalogue des rois de France qui allonge le quatrième chant. C'est une episode capitale.'<sup>241</sup> What Lebègue does not specifically state, however, is what precisely this capital episode adds to the work as a whole. One answer might be that the list not only provides a link to Virgil, but demonstrates clearly the intention of Ronsard's work as a whole. It is through this catalogue that Ronsard is able to claim for the French monarchy an inheritance from the

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<sup>240</sup> L. Levrault, *Les œuvres littéraires, L'épopée*, (Paris: Paul Delaplane, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1901), pp. 38-39.

<sup>241</sup> Raymond Lebègue, "Ronsard poète officiel", in *Studi in onore di Vittorio Lugli e Diego Valeri* 2 vols (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1961), vol. 2, pp. 573-587 (584).

rulers of Troy, and therefore claim for France an aetiology equal to that of Rome. The catalogue therefore forms a central element of the project as it brings together the importance of the influence of the *Aeneid* on Ronsard's work and his depiction of the French state as a political entity, particularly in relation to the conflict with Italy.

Quint opines that the inclusion of a catalogue in Homeric and Virgilian epics is central to holding together the epic's own conception of a complete vision of history:

Epic loves a parade, perhaps because the procession that keeps its shape through both space and time resembles its own regular verse schemes – metre, rhyme, stanza, - that similarly spatialize time and join the poem's beginning in interconnected sequence to its end.<sup>242</sup>

Thus, in adopting the catalogue as an element of epic, Ronsard also ensures that he is able to connect his proposed ancient roots of France to the contemporary French monarchy and to the historical context of the Wars of Religion. The inclusion of the catalogue is therefore not merely an imitation of Virgil and Homer; it is a key element, as with these earlier epics, in relating the historical past to the present. The catalogue serves to reinforce the teleology of epic, in that the catalogue prophesies the future consequences of the events described within the epic itself.

### Ronsard's Eternal French State

Ronsard's view of the roots of the French state and its eternal future parallels Joachim Du Bellay's view of the roots of the French language in the *Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Françoise*. Du Bellay uses the metaphor of the growth of plants to explain his thesis: 'que notre langue (si avec François n'est du tout ensevelie la langue française) qui commence encore à jeter ses racines, sortira de terre, et s'élèvera en telle hauteur et grosseur qu'elle se pourra égaler aux mêmes Grecs et Romains'.<sup>243</sup>

Ronsard employs the same imagery as Du Bellay when describing the vision of Renomme, the personification of rumour, when she describes the future French race, with both authors attempting to show a natural progression of the French state from its Greek and Roman roots:

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<sup>242</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 31.

<sup>243</sup> Joachim Du Bellay, *Les Regrets précédé de Les Antiquités de Rome et suivi de La Défense et Illustration de la Langue française*, ed. S. de Sacy (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), p. 229.

Ceste Deesse à bouche bien ouverte,  
 D'oreilles d'yeux et de plumes couverte,  
 Semoit par tout qu'Astyanax estoit  
 Enfant d'Hector, et qu'on luy apprestoit  
 Mainte navire au combat ordonnée,  
 Pour aller suivre ailleurs sa destinée,  
 Prince fatal, et que sa main feroit  
 Que le Troyen du Grec triompheroit:  
 Et qu'il falloit que la jeunesse active,  
 Qui par la Grece est maintenant captive,  
 Suivist Francus futur pere des Rois,  
 Qui s'en alloit dedans le camp Gaulois  
 Replanter Troye et la race Hectorée  
 Pour y regner d'éternelle durée.<sup>244</sup>

The image Renomme promulgates of Gaul as a field and of the Trojans being replanted in it presents this as a natural process. The Trojans will consequently be as French as the Gauls, as both peoples have their roots in the same nation. This link between the two races manifests itself in the character of Francion, as he will give birth to the future royal line of France. Again, Francion is viewed as a direct forebear to the kings of France.

Ronsard is also careful to undermine claims that the Gauls may be the forebears of the French nation in order to legitimize Francion. Here, the 'champ Gaulois' is treated as if it were an empty field into which Troy and Hector's race can be planted. This deliberate obliviousness to the presence of the Gauls resembles Ronsard's attitude to Aeneas, whom he pointedly ignores in his poem whilst nevertheless creating narrative parallels between Aeneas and Francion. This episode demonstrates the difficulty inherent in Ronsard's approach to French history and the teleological nature of the poem. Ronsard is aware that the Gauls inhabit the territory of the French nation which his Trojans have arrived in, but he is equally aware that Gaul was colonised by Rome. Ronsard's narrative permits him to overlook the imperial domination of Gaul by Rome in order for his narrative to function properly, as he wishes to promote his narrative of a French state founded by Trojans. Questions of imperial domination and denial of this domination go to the heart of the *Franciade* and Ronsard must be careful to define to what extent he is moving away from the narrative of Gaul as a precursor to the French nation. For Ronsard to be able to paint his picture of a French nation founded in Troy, he must deny the idea that France was ever a colony of the Roman empire because this

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<sup>244</sup> Ronsard, *La Franciade*, pp. 1028-1029.

fact negates Ronsard's central thesis; that the French state descends directly from Troy. Therefore Francion must conquer Gaul when founding his new state in order to ensure that Ronsard's narrative functions as he envisages.

#### Conclusion: Ronsard and Vegio: between Translation and Adaptation

Ronsard therefore places himself between the ancient and the modern, and between the Christian and the pagan in his *Franciade*. Although the *Aeneid* is geographically transferred to France and, in parts, literally translated, into French, the work is an original French text, which references the kings and peoples of France throughout and situates Paris as the crowning glory at the proposed end of the poem. Ronsard's continuation of the *Aeneid* into France and into a Christian context involves extra layers of complexity when compared to Vegio's *Supplementum*. Vegio can claim the political and cultural inheritance of Rome in his work because of the geographical situation of Italy. However, although Vegio has no need to translate the *Aeneid* across geographical or linguistic boundaries, he decides to depict Aeneas' crossing of a boundary which is not present in Virgil: his entry into heaven. Vegio does not otherwise contradict Virgil's projected narrative. In contrast to Ronsard, who composes an alternative French *Aeneid* with Francion's goal in Paris, Vegio uses Aeneas as the personification of a spiritual, rather than national, message, tackling head on the apparent obstacle of Aeneas as a pagan hero being held up as an exemplar in the early modern context, not simply as an embodiment of national pride, but also as a spiritual example for Vegio's fellow Christians with his translation into the stars, an event which is not explicitly pagan and could be interpreted within a Christian reading of Vegio's poem.

There is however a clear contrast between the literary strategies of Vegio and Ronsard in presenting the future significance of their respective literary protagonists. Vegio depicts Turnus' descent into a pagan hell, and contrasts this with Aeneas's translation to the stars, but describes this translation with imagery that suggests it could be interpreted as a passage into the Christian heaven:

At vero dignum invenit pro talibus ausis  
Exitium, qui te tandem victore momordit  
Nigrantem prostrates humum: nunc improbus aedes  
Tartareas visurus eat, quaeratque sub imo

Nunc alias Acheronte acies, aliosque hymenaeos.  
Tu melior succede bonis Laurentibus haeres.  
In te omnis domus, et fessi inclinata Latini  
Spes iacet: unum omnes Itali super aurea mittunt  
Sidera, et ingentem bello, et caelestibus armis  
Extollunt, et vera canunt praeconia voces.<sup>245</sup>

Firstly, as Aeneas triumphs over Turnus, his status as a Trojan exile gives way to a new status as the first Roman hero. As in the *Aeneid*, political power has now shifted away from Troy to Italy. Secondly, the defeated Turnus is cast into Tartarus and Acheron, whilst Aeneas will be placed, using terms recalling Christian imagery, 'super aurea sidera'. The Italians have become a heavenly race and Aeneas a heavenly figure. These shifts underline the change in authorship, with Vegio simultaneously highlighting the Virgilian influence on his work and his translation of the *Aeneid* narrative into a new historical, religious, and cultural context. The image of the reformed Aeneas as a Christian hero, and of the defeated Turnus as consigned to a pagan fate, could be seen as metaphors for the entire Renaissance project, in which those elements of ancient literature which serve to fit Christian ideals are exploited, whilst explicitly pagan references are played down and used to show the errors of pagan philosophy. Vegio's depiction of Turnus departs from that of Virgil, ignoring Virgil's sympathy for the defeated Latin at the end of the *Aeneid*. With the narrative placed within a Christian context, the death of Turnus can be shown as the just fate of a pagan without the need to lament the death of Turnus as a brave warrior.

This image of the Trojan being converted and elevated into an Italian ruler can be compared with Ronsard's prophecy for the future of the Gauls under Francion. Just as Vegio's Aeneas becomes the father of the future kings of Italy, so Francion becomes the father of the Gallic kings. Vegio portrays the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia as a mutually beneficial relationship for the Trojans and the Italians, and not just a straightforward Trojan takeover:

pater ipse Latinus  
iam senior sola haec longaevae munera vitae,  
Qui natam tibi iungat, habet: generique nepotes

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<sup>245</sup> Vegio, *Supplementum*, ll. 352-361.

Troianos Italo admixtos in saecula mittat.<sup>246</sup>

The marriage of Aeneas to Lavinia is a metaphor for the future relationship between Troy and Italy; they will be forever 'admixtos' because the Trojans will integrate with the inhabitants of Italy and form a single race. This goes much further than Virgil had predicted at the end of the *Aeneid*. This marriage metaphorically describes Vegio's own strategy, as he sees his attempt to continue the *Aeneid* as a mutually beneficial strategy for himself and Virgil. He mixes elements of Virgil's text with his own to provide an ending which he, and some early critics, perceive as lacking in Virgil's text. The imagery of the physical form of the city of Carthage arising, foreshadowing the building of Rome in the *Aeneid*: 'O fortunati / Quorum iam moenia surgunt'<sup>247</sup> is echoed in the words of Vegio's Aeneas describing the construction of his new city in Italy: 'statuentque mei mihi moenia Teucrici, / Et nomen natae Urbis erit.'<sup>248</sup> Thus Vegio's own text refers back to the *Aeneid* in the physical imagery of the city under construction whilst anticipating not a city in Italy, but a final ending in heaven. Vegio adopts a consistent strategy of justifying the continuation and making it seem Virgilian, linking it back to the *Aeneid*. This strategy is similar to that later used by Ronsard in his part-translation, part-adaptation of key moments of the *Aeneid*. Both authors discreetly acknowledge their literary debt to the *Aeneid* by referring to it in this way while altering it in their works and not explicitly acknowledging Virgil.

Vegio's *Supplementum* can therefore play a key role in an analysis of Ronsard's effort to acknowledge the *Aeneid* throughout his epic, yet ultimately reject the concept of the foundation of Rome as a pagan empire which it portrays. Vegio sets up a model for this concept, which involves adopting the *Aeneid* as a source of literary inspiration for the epic hero. Both Vegio and Ronsard propose an alternative ending for the epic, Vegio for Aeneas himself, and Ronsard for his alternative fugitive from Troy who seeks to build a new hope for his Trojan followers. Vegio shifts the final destination of the

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<sup>246</sup> Vegio, *Supplementum*, ll. 368-371.

<sup>247</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 1, l. 437.

<sup>248</sup> Vegio, *Supplementum*, ll. 384-385.

poem to heaven, whilst Ronsard substitutes Paris for Rome as the endpoint for his hero's journey. Both poets thus acknowledge and simultaneously reject Virgil in their poems.

The unfinished nature of Ronsard's poem focusses attention on the catalogue of kings that ends the narrative as it stands. The catalogue for Ronsard serves as a method of glorifying the kings of France and thereby the anticipated victory of his political and religious faction in the Wars of Religion, just as it served Virgil's purposes in glorifying the rulers of Rome, and ultimately Augustus. Nevertheless, Timothy Hampton points out that it was impossible to imagine that the Huguenots could be subsumed by the victorious Catholics, and that the Trojans could end their journey in France when Virgil's narrative also existed and he argues that this contributes to the failure of Ronsard's poem as a national epic:

At one level, Ronsard's failure may be linked to the fact that political conditions in late sixteenth-century France were unfavourable for the production of national epic. Du Bellay considers the Italians as a cultural and moral Other, not as a political rival. Yet epic is always about politics. The epic projects of contemporaries such as Spenser, Camoëns, Ercilla, and even Tasso rely upon a rhetoric of conquest, of an aggressivity towards an Other who could be subsumed into a newly imagined community – whether national or religious. In France, however, the difficulty in defining such a community placed in question the very possibility of epic.<sup>249</sup>

Ronsard's epic is unsuccessful because the political point of the poem is unclear. The *Franciade* is unable to claim victory because the nature of victory in the Wars of Religion is still uncertain. This means that setting the French state up as an alternative to the Italian state is difficult because the nature of the French state is not settled, and therefore hard to praise through an epic poem.

Ronsard's epic presents a single narrative for victory in France and for French inheritance from Troy through the monarchy. His narrative largely ignores those who challenged this outcome, and particularly the Huguenots who fought in the Wars of Religion against the Catholics. This makes Ronsard's victory narrative impossible given the context of the Wars of Religion, and this situation allows Agrippa d'Aubigné to employ anti-epic as an alternative method for defining the aftermath of the Wars of

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<sup>249</sup> Timothy Hampton, *Literature and Nation in the sixteenth century: inventing Renaissance France* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2001) p. 193.

Religion in France. Hampton points to d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques*, published in 1616, as the product of the political and religious circumstances that leads to the failure of Ronsard's model in its attempt to celebrate a unified French nation in the model of the *Aeneid*:

The emerging political crisis of the wars of religion made all but impossible the imagination of a national community that could be unified within a single narrative. Thus Ronsard's epic can only be the epic of the French crown [...] An epic of national conquest on the model of the *Aeneid* would inevitably invoke struggles between Catholics and Protestants, and turn, against itself, into a religious epic of the type seen much later, at the turn of the century, in d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques*.<sup>250</sup>

The next chapter will focus on *Les Tragiques*, which not only use the epic form to celebrate the deeds of the Huguenot faction during the Wars of Religion, but also contains at its heart a catalogue of Huguenot martyrs. D'Aubigné takes the Virgilian catalogue and adapts it to his own ends, in casting the Huguenot martyrs as the heroes of his epic, just as Ronsard used the catalogue to praise the kings of France and Virgil used his catalogue to praise the rulers of Rome. D'Aubigné's poem proposes the glorification and victory of members of the faction opposed to Ronsard's Catholic kings of France – a victory which, in d'Aubigné's eyes, is far greater than any victory on earth. D'Aubigné's anti-epic model owes much to Lucan's *Pharsalia*, while nonetheless retaining the *Aeneid* as a source throughout its alternative victory narrative. D'Aubigné's literary response to the *Aeneid* is thus more sophisticated than that of Ronsard in that he combines anti-epic with epic in his response to Virgil, demonstrating a more nuanced interpretation of the Wars of Religion whilst also claiming for his fellow Huguenots the possibility of vindication of their beliefs beyond the boundaries of space and time on the Day of Judgement.

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<sup>250</sup> Hampton, *Literature and Nation*, p. 193.



## CHAPTER THREE: AGRIPPA D'AUBIGNÉ'S *LES TRAGIQUES* AS HUGUENOT ANTI-EPIC

If Virgil's triumphalist epic provides the model for Ronsard's Catholic victory narrative in the *Franziade*, Lucan's *Pharsalia* – an anti-epic intended as a response to the *Aeneid* – provides a model epic for those on the losing side. Agrippa d'Aubigné adopts Lucan's poem as the primary model for his *Les Tragiques*, published in 1616 but written in 1579 and later revised in the 1620s, which present an epic poem by a Huguenot author writing during the early part of the conflict, although d'Aubigné's revisions took place after the Wars had ended. Frank Lestringant likens d'Aubigné's poem to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, but with the distinction that while Dante models his poem on the *Aeneid*, d'Aubigné models his poem on Lucan:

Le modèle héroïque constamment présent dans *La Divine Comédie* huguenote n'est pas l'*Énéide* mais *La Pharsale*, ce chant de guerre civile et de défaite qui proclame que la vraie Victoire n'est pas de ce monde, mais réside au ciel des idéaux. En choisissant Lucain contre Virgile, la baroque contre le classicisme et la plainte contre l'apaisement du poème fédérateur, d'Aubigné laissait présager l'échec terrestre de son parti, tout en lui ménageant à l'étage supérieur de la Création, une revanche prévisible.<sup>251</sup>

For Lestringant, d'Aubigné must choose between Virgil and Lucan for his epic model, and the choice of Lucan is governed by the nature of his poem itself. Yet any poet choosing Lucan as a model is indirectly influenced by Virgil, as Lucan's poem exists as a response to Virgil. In rejecting the model put forward by Virgil, d'Aubigné acknowledges the influence of just such a poetic model. D'Aubigné is forced, by the events of the civil war, to use Lucan's rejection of the victory epic that Virgil's poem represents in order to paint his own Huguenot heroes in a new light, not as the defeated faction in the Wars of Religion, but rather as the faction whose beliefs will ultimately be vindicated in heaven. In this way, d'Aubigné's model is similar to that described by Quint, in his theory of the 'epic of losers', which allows for the concept that those who lose in war are still keen to write their own representation of events.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, ed. Frank Lestringant (Paris: Gallimard, 1995) p. 32. All quotations of *Les Tragiques* are from this edition.

<sup>252</sup> David Quint, *Epic and Empire* pp. 99-210.

Lucan's *Pharsalia*, or the *De Bello Civili*, dates from around 61 – 65AD and recounts the conflict between Julius Caesar and Pompey Magnus, finally depicting Pompey's defeat at the Battle of Pharsalus<sup>253</sup>. The hexameter poem's nine complete books begin with Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon in 49BC and the tenth, unfinished, book ends with Caesar fighting for his life after a murder attempt in Egypt. The narrative of the poem revolves around three protagonists, Julius Caesar, Pompey Magnus and Cato the Younger, and their respective roles in the Civil War. Lucan presents Caesar as a warrior, capable of martial achievements, yet unable to relate to the other characters on a human level. Although he is at times portrayed in quasi-divine terms, his role is essentially destructive. Furthermore, Caesar is invoked as a figure of monarchy and empire, matched against the republicans Pompey and Cato. In contrast, Pompey is shown as an aging warrior who possesses human qualities of empathy and love towards his wife Cornelia, and who inspires devotion in his followers, but is nonetheless weak and indecisive before his defeat at the hands of Caesar. The third protagonist, Cato, is painted as the embodiment of the hero who puts his duty towards his country before his personal concerns. Whilst embodying this stoic devotion to his country, he demonstrates little in the way of personal qualities. The roles of these three protagonists within the *Pharsalia* will be shown to be of importance to d'Aubigné in *Les Tragiques* as he places them within the context of Huguenot defeat on earth and heavenly vindication.

In his interaction with Lucan's epic, d'Aubigné is, as this chapter will demonstrate, recalling Lucan's work not only in form but also in content. D'Aubigné shares Lucan's narrative aim, in that he proposes an alternative narrative which sees the party that faces defeat in the Wars of Religion vindicated, just as Lucan challenges Caesar's victory in the Civil Wars and vindicates Pompey's actions. D'Aubigné's poem adopts the political challenge that Lucan presents to Virgil's victory epic and applies it to an early modern French context. Yet d'Aubigné goes beyond Lucan's goals in the *Pharsalia*. Lucan contents himself with proposing an alternative, yet ultimately impossible, version of events in which his main characters, Caesar and Cato, are painted

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<sup>253</sup> Lucan, *The Civil War; Pharsalia; with a translation by J.D. Duff* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928).

as adversaries who are both admirable yet flawed, and with Caesar as the victor despite these flaws. D'Aubigné re-interprets the events of the civil war depicted in Lucan and applies them to the French Wars of Religion, in a Christian context that allows a continuation of the story of his Huguenot heroes after their deaths, as they move beyond the realms of Lucan's counter-reality and towards heaven. D'Aubigné's teleology is constructed with the vindication of the Huguenot faith in mind. D'Aubigné's shift in teleology away from Virgil's envisioning of the victory narrative necessitates his engagement with Lucan's *Pharsalia*. This chapter will analyse the interaction between d'Aubigné's poem and Lucan's, demonstrating how this is thereby an interaction with Virgil's poem as well as with Lucan's: it shows that d'Aubigné goes beyond Ronsard in his interaction with Virgil's work as he seeks not to use Virgil's model for his own vision of victory, but to challenge Virgil's vision and show how his conception of an epic victory narrative differs from that of Virgil. As in the case of Ronsard, Maffeo Vegio provides a useful model for d'Aubigné's interaction with Virgil, in which he combines the model of Virgil with Christian subject matter in the *Antoniad*. One way in which D'Aubigné distinguishes himself from Virgil is with reference to the dead: this chapter will specifically analyse attitudes towards death in Virgil, in d'Aubigne and in Maffeo Vegio's *Antoniad*. In engaging with Lucan and going beyond both Virgil and Ronsard in envisioning the possibility that the faction who have been defeated on earth can still achieve a victory for themselves, even if this victory will be beyond the bounds of earth, d'Aubigné is presenting his readers with a Huguenot anti-epic. The poem denies complete victory to the Catholics by depicting the Huguenots as being saved on the Day of Judgement whilst depicting the triumph of the Huguenots. D'Aubigné's anti-epic is thus intended to invert the winners and losers of the Wars of Religion and challenge Catholic victory narratives by doing so, going beyond Ronsard's epic, intended to celebrate Catholic victory as a *fait accompli*.

The *Antoniad*, composed by Vegio in 1436-7, portrays St. Antony Abbot as a Christian hero journeying through a partially pagan world, in which he encounters St. Paul the Hermit. The narrative is divided between four books. At the beginning of the first book, Vegio emphasises the virtues of St. Antony, before depicting God addressing the angels in heaven, after which God charges Antony and his fellow monks with keeping

the peace on earth. At the end of the first book, God sends Gabriel to Antony to tell him to set off on his journey to find Paul. The second book opens with Satan addressing his followers in hell, and describing his intention to prevent Antony from meeting Paul, an event which he thinks will represent his destruction. The third book opens with Antony arriving at Paul's cave and recounts the discussion between the two men. The fourth book begins with Antony being sent away to fetch a cloak for the dying Paul, and his return to the vision of the now dead Paul's ascension into heaven. Antony buries Paul's body with the miraculous intervention of two lions, and then returns to his friends to recount the events he has witnessed.<sup>254</sup>

Vegio's work therefore centres around the image of Antony as the dutiful Christian who is sent by God to see that Paul is correctly buried, an act which drives the poem forward and whose completion provides the ending of the poem. This chapter will compare Vegio's depiction of burial and resurrection with that envisaged in *Les Tragiques* to analyse the importance of these rites in the progression of d'Aubigné's narrative, and will then demonstrate that this phenomenon is also influenced by the central role that the act of burial plays in the narrative progression of the *Aeneid*. Vegio thus provides a model against which to analyse d'Aubigné's focus on burial, and the possibility of resurrection which comes after it. Vegio shows the importance of burial within a Christian context, in contrast to Virgil's emphasis of burial within a pagan belief system. D'Aubigné's inclusion of this theme as a central element of his epic demonstrates that his literary engagement with Virgil differs from that of Ronsard in that he questions Virgil: he questions not only the conception of the victory epic, as Lucan had done, but also the concept of earthly victory itself in a Christian and Huguenot context. In locating his envisioned Huguenot victory beyond the realms of life itself, d'Aubigné questions the nature of the victory that epic claims to celebrate. D'Aubigné's approach in *Les Tragiques*, combining the *Pharsalia's* anti-epic narrative with the Christian vision of the role of death and resurrection, supported by the example of the *Antoniad*, demonstrates his intent to produce an epic poem that celebrates the possibility of Huguenot victory in heaven. D'Aubigné draws on the *Aeneid* for this victory

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<sup>254</sup> For a full plot summary, see Michael C. J. Putnam, *Maffeo Vegio: Short Epics* (Cambridge, Mass.: I Tatti Renaissance Library, Harvard University Press, 2004) pp. xxxvi-xxxvii. All quotes from the text of the *Antoniad* are from this edition.

narrative whilst reducing its status so that the role of the *Aeneid* is much less explicit than it is in the *Françiadé*. *Les Tragiques* engages with the *Aeneid* through Lucan's poem in a much more complex way than the *Françiadé* does whilst simultaneously making this engagement much less explicit. This chapter will therefore chart the elements of this interaction between Lucan, Vegio and d'Aubigné by looking in turn at *Les Tragiques* as anti-epic, at Lucan's role in *Les Tragiques*, and the role of catalogues in d'Aubigné and Lucan. The chapter will also bring in d'Aubigné's use of Christian models in his poem, his depiction of the meeting between God and the Devil to place them in opposition, and his use of resurrection to show the vindication of Huguenot beliefs on the Day of Judgement, a confidently anticipated event that will confirm for d'Aubigné the validity of Huguenot beliefs. The chapter will also compare the role of death in Virgil, Vegio and d'Aubigné and how death forms part of the narrative teleology of the poems. This structure looks at the full range of d'Aubigné's interaction with Lucan and Virgil and the context in which he engages with *Les Tragiques*.

#### *Les Tragiques* as anti-epic

In celebrating what he perceives as a Huguenot victory in heaven, d'Aubigné allows his partisan standpoint to influence the way in which he uses ancient literary works to support his own poem. D'Aubigné forecasts a victory for the heroes of his epic, the French Huguenots. In effect, d'Aubigné describes an alternative perception of the outcome of the Wars of Religion in which both the victor and the means of victory have changed. Victory lies for the Huguenots not on earth, but in heaven. The Huguenots may not defeat the Catholics in battle, but they will be vindicated by God's judgement, confirming their place in heaven and leaving the Catholics to be damned. D'Aubigné's epic remains a victory epic, but the teleology of the poem has changed as it represents a victory which has yet to come to pass. D'Aubigné's poem can thus still be viewed as an epic rather than an anti-epic because it contains many of the elements inherent to the epic poem, as Quint explains:

The losers' epics would all – not so secretly – like to be epics of history's winners. Not only do their poets long for a reversal of history that would put their side on top, but they also long to write with the same concentration of poetic energy that the imagination of power grants to the victors' epic: the poetic power that attracts them to the epic genre itself.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 209.

The epic genre gives d'Aubigné's work a poetic power that confirms the victory he narrates. The teleology of epic, by which the poem's elements drive towards the same end point, allows d'Aubigné's poem to challenge the epics of winners and imbue his poem with an equal poetic power, validating his own message and his own interpretation of the significance of the events which he depicts in his poem. In this sense, d'Aubigné's use of the epic genre as the basis for the form of his poem categorises his poem as an epic rather than an anti-epic.

Quint argues that since the poems of d'Aubigné and Lucan include characteristics typical of the construction of an epic poem, this undermines the implicit claims of their respective authors to be challenging epic:

One such generic expectation is that epic will contain the glorification of a national destiny and conquest, that it will conform to an aristocratic martial ethos, and here Lucan and his Renaissance followers are more Virgilian than they might wish to think themselves. [...] It is also true of the Huguenot d'Aubigné, who hymns the predestined triumphs of an international Protestantism, and of Lucan himself, who, at those points in the *Pharsalia* where Rome's *Imperium* is at stake – her foreign conquests and world domination as opposed to the imperial principate – reveals the contradictions of his anti-Virgilianism.<sup>256</sup>

In adopting Lucan as a literary model, d'Aubigné also implicitly acknowledges the *Aeneid*; both authors reject Virgil as their epic model, but the anti-epic tradition, upon which Lucan bases his poem, is nevertheless inherently Virgilian. The anti-epic must be epic in form in order to emphasise its anti-epic content.

The status of the *Pharsalia* as anti-epic has been proposed by Emmanuele Narducci, who has defined Lucan's poem as an anti-epic because of its direct challenge to the vision of the Roman state presented by Virgil's *Aeneid*: 'il presente del poeta della *Pharsalia* denuncia la propria contemporaneità con i giorni in cui Virgilio invocava per un'Italia devastata il Salvatore Ottaviano.'<sup>257</sup> This double challenge, to Virgil and to his vision of the Roman state under Augustus has also been explored by Sergio Casali, who further defines the *Pharsalia* as an anti-*Aeneid*.<sup>258</sup> Both analyses argue that Lucan is attempting to challenge the world around him and Virgil himself through a double message of political and literary disagreement with the Roman state glorified in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

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<sup>256</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 137.

<sup>257</sup> Emmanuele Narducci, *Lucano: un'epica contro l'impero* (Rome: GLF editori Laterza, 2002) p. 34.

<sup>258</sup> Sergio Casali, "The *Bellum Civile* as an Anti-*Aeneid*" in *Brill's Companion to Lucan* ed. Paolo Asso (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011).

Both writers are trapped by their recourse to epic forms even within their anti-epics. Jacques Bailbé highlights the fact that even in composing anti-epic, d'Aubigné demonstrates his own aptitude as an epic poet:

Ce qui est sûr, c'est que d'Aubigné se sentait la tête épique, et qu'il partageait les idées de son temps sur l'excellence du «poème héroïque», du «grand œuvre».[...] Aussi lance-t-il comme un reproche aux auteurs trop scrupuleux de son époque, qui ont «accourcy la liberté de la Poésie» : «Je demande seulement à ces Législateurs, que pour avoir l'autorité sur le siècle... & qu'ils puissent estre alleguez *exemplo*, que nous voyons de leurs mains des Poèmes epiques, heroïques ou quelque chose qui se puisse appeler œuvre».<sup>259</sup>

Bailbé thus shows d'Aubigné as taking exception to the traditional characterisation of the epic poem in France. In arguing that poetical theorists themselves are artificially limiting the genre of the epic poem in France, d'Aubigné carves out a niche for his own poem to fill, proposing that an epic poem can be defined only by those who engage in writing their own epic, rather than presenting theories of how the epic genre should be defined. The very act of deliberately engaging in the construction of an epic poem renders d'Aubigné's poem an epic. This chapter therefore starts by analysing d'Aubigné's combination of elements of Virgilian and Lucanian epic and anti-epic within his poem, in a literary strategy that is more complex than Ronsard's and that highlights an alternative perception of the outcome of the Wars of Religion and the role of epic in portraying civil war. It then moves on to the comparison with Vegio, which will show that Vegio's use of the theme of resurrection adds a Christian element to Virgilian depictions of death.

#### Echoing Lucan: D'Aubigné's references to the *Pharsalia*

D'Aubigné is prepared to challenge epic convention by composing his own epic, just as Caesar is prepared to fight for the Rome he believes he should control. Lucan opens his poem with an image of Caesar as the victorious villain, obsessed with killing for killing's sake:

Iam gelidas Caesar cursu superaverat Alpes  
Ingentesque animo motus bellumque futurum  
Ceperat. Ut ventum est parvi Rubiconis ad undas,  
Ingens visa duci patriae trepidantis imago  
Clara per obscuram vultu maestissima noctem,  
Turrihero canos effundens vertice crines,  
Caesarie lacera nudisque adstare lacertis

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<sup>259</sup> Jacques Bailbé, *Agrippa d'Aubigné: Poète des Tragiques* (Caen: Association des Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences de l'Université de Caen, 1968), p. 170.

Et gemitu permixta loqui: 'quo tenditis ultra?  
 Quo fertis mea signa, viri? si iure venitis,  
 Si civis, huc usque licet.' Tum perculit horror  
 Membra ducis, riguere comae, gressumque coercens  
 Languor in extrema tenuit vestigia ripa.<sup>260</sup>

Caesar is preparing to cross the Rubicon on his march to Rome, when he is arrested by an image of Rome begging him to go no further. The Rubicon is here contrasted in its physical size to the Alps. The Rubicon is 'parui' (small) whereas the Alps are 'gelidas' (icy), emphasising their size. The act of crossing the Rubicon is therefore belittled on a physical level when compared to the mountains, yet the symbolic act is of huge significance. The Rubicon interrupts not only the physical forward progress of Caesar, but also his thoughts. It is the symbolic significance of the Rubicon that conjures up the personification of Rome as a woman in distress in Caesar's mind. The personification of the Roman state particularly emphasises the fact that Caesar will be embarking on an act of civil war if he crosses the river, since the battle standards of Caesar's army belong to Rome herself, and the soldiers who follow him are the citizens of Rome. Finally, the image of fear running through Caesar's limbs at this vision contrasts with the earlier image of him surmounting the Alps, again emphasising the symbolic effect which the act of crossing the Rubicon has on Caesar, whilst also reminding the reader of the crime which Caesar is committing in his declaration of war against Rome. Lucan emphasises to his reader the gravity of the situation, showing Caesar both as fearful of the consequences of his actions and reckless in his act of crossing the Rubicon, in order to stress to his readers the importance of this event.

The opening of d'Aubigné's poem comes close to a translation of Caesar's terrifying vision at the opening of the *Pharsalia*, as has been pointed to by Jean-Raymond Fanlo:

Je brise les rochers et le respect d'erreur  
 Qui fit douter César d'une vaine terreur.  
 Il vit Rome tremblante, affreuse, échevelée,  
 Qui en pleurs, en sanglots, mi-morte, désolée,  
 Tordant ses doigts, fermait, défendait de ses mains  
 A César le chemin au sang de ses germains.  
 Mais dessous les autels des idoles j'avise  
 Le visage meurtri de la captive Eglise,  
 Qui à sa délivrance (aux dépens des hasards)

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<sup>260</sup> Lucan, *Pharsalia*, Book 1, ll. 183-194.



M'appelle, m'animant de ses tranchants regards.<sup>261</sup>

D'Aubigné here puts himself in the place of Lucan's Caesar, daring to attack Rome, and the Catholic Church, although without Lucan's Caesar's hesitation. D'Aubigné is proud to cross the metaphorical Rubicon even though he is aware of the risk of civil war, since that war might be necessary. D'Aubigné will not be afraid in the same way as Caesar, as he sees that the terrifying image of Rome hides the captive Huguenot church, which must be saved. Lucan's initial image of Caesar believing himself to be the liberator of Rome is ironic: Lucan has Rome plead with Caesar not to be 'liberated'. In contrast, d'Aubigné's is serious: the Protestant Church is in distress, held captive by the Papacy in the city of Rome, and it falls to d'Aubigné and the Huguenots to liberate it from the influence of Rome. D'Aubigné adapts Lucan's anti-epic within his own poem, putting himself in the place of an anti-epic hero, prepared to go further than Caesar and not merely question the authority of epic, but to re-write the epic in his own terms. The poet is therefore cast as the epic hero because he is able, through the composition of his poem, to show that the composition of the text itself represents a journey towards understanding the political and religious situation of the time and a direct intervention in the political and religious conflict.

D'Aubigné's image of crossing the Rubicon is thus symbolic of his own poetic journey as he embarks on a task which has not been undertaken by any previous writer:

Mes desirs sont déjà volés outre la rive  
Du Rubicon troublé: que mon reste les suive  
Par un chemin tout neuf, car je ne trouve pas  
Qu'autre homme l'ait jamais écorché de ses pas.<sup>262</sup>

D'Aubigné thus presents his poem as bravely innovative in daring to invent a new narrative to relate a Huguenot victory, and also as metaphorically military in its attack on Catholicism. D'Aubigné, having been wounded at the battle of Casteljaloux in 1577, moved from physically fighting Catholic soldiers on the field of battle to combatting Catholic victory narratives through poetry. D'Aubigné insists on his poem as beating a new path which will present the events of the Wars of Religion from a new angle, one

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<sup>261</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, 'Misères', ll. 7-16; see Fanlo's comments in his edition of the text: Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, *Édition critique établie et annotée par Jean-Raymond Fanlo* (Paris: Champion, 1995) p. 52.

<sup>262</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, 'Misères', ll. 17-20.

which no other author has yet adopted. D'Aubigné thus takes an image from Lucan and remodels it for his own context and his own message, which is that the Huguenots should not accept defeat, but should fight on to liberate the Huguenot church from the Catholic threat. He thus presents his poem as going beyond the models that d'Aubigné criticizes as being too 'restrictive', both in the shape of Lucan, who cannot predict victory for his anti-epic heroes and those poets who have yet to imagine the kind of alternative victory which d'Aubigné is preparing to depict for the Huguenots in France.

The analogy with Caesar provides d'Aubigné with a direct link between his poem and Lucan's *Pharsalia*. D'Aubigné imagines himself as Caesar, having inverted the image of Caesar hesitating at the Rubicon, or as a victorious warrior and author who is forced to cross a metaphorical Rubicon in composing an alternative interpretation of the Wars of Religion that vindicates the Huguenots, just as Lucan's poem attempts to vindicate not Caesar, the victor, but the actions of Pompey and Cato. D'Aubigné does not only want to invert and adapt Lucan's depiction of Caesar, but his poem also sets out to depict the Huguenots who have been defeated as the winners in the aftermath of the Wars of Religion rather than the losers because of their entry into heaven after death. He thus supports the losers of the war, like Lucan in siding with Pompey and Cato rather than Caesar. In order to accomplish this inversion of the image of the Huguenots, d'Aubigné turns not to Lucan, but to Virgil for the literary structure around which to build his image of triumphant Huguenot martyrs, and he turns specifically to the catalogue of heroes that Virgil includes in book 6 of the *Aeneid* in order to depict these martyrs.

#### D'Aubigné's Huguenot Catalogue

D'Aubigné introduces his catalogue of Huguenot martyrs in the fourth book of his work, 'Les Feux', in terms that partly recall Virgil's catalogue of Roman heroes in the *Aeneid*. Virgil has Anchises introduce Aeneas, while he is in the underworld, to the future rulers and heroes of Rome and emphasise the importance of Aeneas' own family line:

Nunc age Dardanium prolem quae deinde sequitur  
gloria, qui maneant Itala de gente nepotes,  
inlustris animas nostrumque in nomen ituras,

expediam dictis, et te tua fata docebo.<sup>263</sup>

Anchises' vision of the future rulers of Rome looks both forwards and backwards, describing the future generations of Aeneas' family as being both sons of Troy and born of Italy, emphasising reconciliation in the Roman state. Anchises and Aeneas share the name that these men will inherit, emphasising the close family bond, and the very act of Anchises imparting this information to Aeneas symbolises the inheritance that will take place between the generations. Furthermore, Anchises assumes the role of teacher as well as father, again emphasising the transfer of knowledge which is taking place between the generations, whilst the reference to Aeneas' 'fate' shows that this is a necessary stage in his journey towards Italy and that he is pushed forward by his family.

D'Aubigné's imagery at the beginning of his catalogue also looks backwards to the history of France, as well as forward to the triumphal entry of the martyrs he chooses to include in his catalogue into heaven:

Voici marcher de rang par la porte dorée,  
L'enseigne d'Israël dans le ciel arborée,  
Les vainqueurs de Sion, qui au prix de leur sang  
Portant l'écharpe blanche ont pris le Caillou blanc:  
Ouvre, Jérusalem, tes magnifiques portes;  
Le lion de Juda suivi de ses cohortes  
Veut régner, triompher et planter dedans toi  
L'étendard glorieux, l'oriflam de la foi.<sup>264</sup>

Behind the obvious Biblical imagery in this passage is a Virgilian image that allows d'Aubigné to introduce a national element to his catalogue of Huguenot martyrs. The golden gates of heaven recall the Gates of Horn and of Ivory that provide the exit from the Virgilian underworld and back to earth, marking the end of Aeneas' meeting with his father's ghost.<sup>265</sup> The Virgilian image sets up a contrast between d'Aubigné's Huguenot martyrs and those who will carry on Aeneas' name. The Roman figures Aeneas meets in the underworld will contribute to the building of Rome and her empire on earth. In contrast, the French martyrs described by d'Aubigné are about to enter the New Jerusalem in heaven. They are presented not only as martyrs, but also as French patriots, marching beneath the oriflamme as carried in national mythology by Roland,

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<sup>263</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, ll. 756-759.

<sup>264</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, "Les Feux", ll. 1-8.

<sup>265</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, ll. 894-895.

fighting in a religious war against the Saracens, and Joan of Arc, condemned and burnt at the stake in the same fashion as many of d'Aubigné's Huguenot martyrs. The image of the oriflamme directly links faith with the state and moves this traditionally Catholic association into a Protestant realm. D'Aubigné's poem thus glorifies the French nation, as his French heroes plant this symbol of French pride inside heaven itself, elevating the entire nation to this Promised Land thanks to its Huguenot martyrs, and inverts the image of the Huguenot martyrs by characterising them as patriots rather than heretics and therefore traitors. The Huguenots are re-cast in the same way as Caesar was recast in his role at the opening of the poem: saving Rome rather than threatening it. Yet d'Aubigné's martyrs are ordinary people, whose heroism comes from their faith in God, not their social or political status; they are 'Valeureux chevaliers, non de la Table ronde'.<sup>266</sup> It is their faith which makes them 'chevaliers' as they are prepared to die for their beliefs. D'Aubigné thus re-imagines the role of the knight in French literature and makes it clear that his heroes are not the knights of Arthurian legend but the ordinary men and women of France.

D'Aubigné's catalogue contains another favourable analogy with Caesar, again emphasising the inverted link with the *Pharsalia*, when he compares the execution of Lady Jane Gray with Caesar's death. D'Aubigné presents the deaths of both characters as martyrdoms even though neither death is, strictly speaking, anything such:

César, voyant, sentant sa poitrine blessée  
 Et non sa gravité par le fer abaissée,  
 Le sein et non l'esprit par les coups enferré,  
 Le sang plutôt du corps que le sens retiré,  
 Par honneur abrita de sa robe percée  
 Et son cœur offensé et sa grâce offensée:  
 Et ce cœur d'un César, sur le seuil inhumain  
 De la mort, choisissait non la mort mais la main.  
 Les mains qui la paraient la parèrent encore.  
 Sa grâce et son honneur, quand la mort la dévore,  
 N'abandonnent son front: elle prend le bandeau,  
 Par la main on l'amène embrasser le Poteau,  
 Elle demeure seule en agneau dépouillée.  
 La lame du bourreau de son sang fut mouillée:  
 L'âme s'envole en haut, les Anges gracieux,  
 Dans le sein d'Abraham la ravirent aux cieux.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, "Les Feux", I. 9.

<sup>267</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, "Les Feux", II. 265-280.

Caesar's death is described here in purely physical terms and recalls Suetonius' description in his *Life of Caesar*.<sup>268</sup> D'Aubigné has moved his source from that of Lucan, who criticizes Caesar, to Suetonius, who praises Caesar, in order to glorify Caesar as an example of martyrdom at this point in the poem. Although his breast is damaged by his enemies, his spirit is not, and this sets up the divide between the body and the soul that allows d'Aubigné later to claim a victory for the souls of the Huguenot martyrs even when their bodies have been destroyed. Lady Jane Gray is compared here to both Caesar and a Christ-like sacrificial lamb. The comparison with Caesar emphasises Lady Jane's dignity and courage in death. The enjambment of the line 'sur le seuil inhumain / De la mort' reflects her crossing from life into death, the line itself crossing a threshold, while 'inhumain' emphasises the injustice of Lady Jane's death in d'Aubigné's eyes. Lady Jane is described as 'ce Coeur d'un César' and is comparable to Caesar in her courage, embodying this quality herself. As Fanlo notes 'La mort de César n'a rien de commun avec le martyre. Mais le martyre retrouve la noble décence de César'.<sup>269</sup> D'Aubigné views both deaths as unjust, and presents the fate of the Huguenot martyrs as directly comparable to the death of Caesar because of their steadfastness in facing this fate. D'Aubigné's portrayal of Caesar in death once again differs from Lucan's depiction of Caesar in life; d'Aubigné is sympathetic to Caesar in the moment of his death, whilst Lucan harshly criticizes Caesar throughout the *Pharsalia*. Even if d'Aubigné takes Lucan as the model for his own epic, he differs from him in seeing Caesar as a positive model of a martyr's death. D'Aubigné therefore sees in the death of the classical figure of Caesar a model for his own Huguenot martyrs to emulate as death affects Caesar physically, but not spiritually, allowing the soul to continue after death.

Caesar is not the only figure taken from Lucan to be praised by d'Aubigné as an example of the steadfastness shown by the Huguenots in the face of martyrdom. D'Aubigné draws an even more direct link to Lucan's epic when he compares Admiral Coligny to Lucan's hero Cato, both admirably untroubled by death. In "Les Fers" Coligny's ghost returns to describe his own murder:

D'un visage riant notre Caton tendoit

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<sup>268</sup>D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, ed. Fanlo, p. 372.

<sup>269</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, ed. Fanlo, p. 372.

Nos yeux avec les siens, et le bout de son doigt,  
A se voir transpercé; puis il nous montra comme  
On le coupe à morceaux; sa tête court à Rome,  
Son corps sert de jouet aux badauds ameutés,  
Donnant le branle au cours des autres nouveautés.<sup>270</sup>

This image of Coligny as the laughing Cato underlines d'Aubigné's presentation of the martyrdom of these Huguenots as a victory, not a defeat. Catherine Randall Coats shows that d'Aubigné starts with a stock image of martyrology; that of the dismembered body: 'One of the most frequently repeated images in the martyrologies is the torn and bleeding body'.<sup>271</sup> Coligny himself recognises this: his knowing laugh betrays his contemptuous mockery of his assassination, secure in the knowledge that he will be received into heaven because of his faith.

D'Aubigné emphasises this feeling of elation with his detailed visualization of the death of his hero, which mocks the acts of mutilation and desecration of Coligny's corpse, as his soul and his ghost remain apparently intact. Coligny's stare into the eyes of the reader and his pointing finger burrow deep into our own conscience, whilst the animalistic description of the 'badauds ameutés' betrays d'Aubigné's contempt for this pack of Catholic participants as less than human and incapable of independent thought or action. Coligny appears to take a perverse pleasure in his own death, safe in the knowledge that his place in heaven is already secured and showing to other Huguenot martyrs that they have nothing to fear from death. Whilst individual Protestant heroes are singled out for praise, the Catholics remain a baying mob: the image of them using Coligny's body as a toy, intended to debase Coligny, in fact debases the perpetrators themselves. The image of Coligny's head rushing to Rome again lays the blame for his murder with the Catholics. Coligny's body may remain earthbound, his head in the hands of the foreign Catholic Church, but his soul is able to return from heaven with a knowing look in order to reveal the details of his martyrdom. The fact that he is literally able to demonstrate the nature of his death emphasises that his soul is nonetheless still alive, and the imagery here undermines the literary strategy of the Catholics identified by Randall Coats, in which 'The Catholics seek to turn their Calvinist victims into types of

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<sup>270</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, "Les Fers", ll. 831-836.

<sup>271</sup> Catherine Randall Coats, *(Em)bodying the Word: Textual Resurrections in the Martyrological Narratives of Foxe, Crespin, de Bèze and d'Aubigné* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992) p. 7.

reversed relics, who then receive opprobrium rather than veneration'.<sup>272</sup> This process is reversed again by d'Aubigné, throwing the opprobrium back onto the Catholics and giving Coligny, literally, the last laugh.

The image of Coligny's ghost is intended by d'Aubigné to serve as a consolation and encouragement for the Huguenots, showing them that once their souls have entered heaven, what happens to their earthly remains is of no consequence and that their faith will be vindicated in heaven. Randall Coats analyses the Protestant use of martyrological images, such as those of the deaths of Coligny and Lady Jane Gray, as growing out of Protestant conceptions of the Christian faith:

The reader is placed in the text and speaks with the textualized body of the martyr. This process functions to counteract the Catholic reliance on mediation; it makes salvation directly accessible to the reader, through reading. There are no places to visit, no holy bodies to touch or to adore. The Protestant phenomenon also is faithful to the format of Scripture: in the beginning was the Word, and the word was made flesh.<sup>273</sup>

By having Coligny point directly to his readers, d'Aubigné makes his fate clear to the reader. The image of the pointing Coligny is in itself an attack on the Catholic belief in mediation of God's message through the Church, and brings the image of the virtuous Coligny directly to the reader. Randall Coats expands on her analysis by saying that the text itself opens the image of the martyr to discussion: 'the textual recollection of the martyr's body produces an intertextual dialogue among martyr, God, author, author's self and reader.'<sup>274</sup> This analysis demonstrates that d'Aubigné is using the figure of the Protestant martyr not only as a rebuke to Catholics, but is depicting these martyrs in a way which emphasises the Protestant belief in the centrality of faith in God unmediated by the Church.

Coligny thus fills the same role in *Les Tragiques* as Cato does in the *Pharsalia*. Cato's death is acceptable because he led a life devoted to the Roman state, and Coligny's death is virtuous, and therefore in keeping with his life because his faith allows him the possibility of resurrection. Thus, while Lucan views Caesar as hostile to the republic he envisions and paints Cato as one of its champions, d'Aubigné portrays them

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<sup>272</sup> Randall Coats, *(Em)bodying the Word*, p. 75.

<sup>273</sup> Randall Coats, *(Em)bodying the Word*, p. 20.

<sup>274</sup> Randall Coats, *(Em)bodying the Word*, pp.20-21.

both as admirable figures of martyrdom. The act of martyrdom is therefore more important for d'Aubigné than the actions of the martyr in life. D'Aubigné therefore goes beyond Lucan in his conception of anti-epic, in that he shows Coligny as the hero of his poem even in death, and offers Coligny the opportunity of a victory after death. D'Aubigné's anti-epic thus presages victory after apparent defeat, going further than Lucan's depiction of Cato as an honourable figure by according him status as a victor. John O'Brien sees this example of prosopopoeia as forcing the spectator to fully recognize the deeds of the Catholics who have killed Coligny:

[Coligny] sees himself pierced through: he has the authority and function of the prosopopoeia, but he is the only dead Huguenot allowed to see. For the spectator-reader, to see with [Coligny] – to allow [Coligny] to direct our gaze – is to be morally outraged by the spectacle before us.<sup>275</sup>

O'Brien here sees the description of Coligny's headless body turning the gaze of the reader towards the reality of both Coligny's own death and the deaths of his fellow Huguenots. Coligny therefore symbolises the wider atrocity of the Wars of Religion and plays an active role in bringing these events to the attention of the reader. D'Aubigné at this point reclaims the ability for action for the Huguenots despite their deaths, and Coligny interacts directly with d'Aubigné's readership in doing this.

While both Caesar and Cato represent examples of martyrdom for Lucan, their appearance in different books of *Les Tragiques* distinguishes the two different forms of martyrdom they exemplify, a distinction highlighted by Frank Lestringant:

Le poète des *Tragiques* exalte le martyr parce qu'il éclaire le monde, qu'il divulgue aux yeux de tous, hommes et anges, la vérité de la Parole et qu'il irradie vers la foule qui se prend à l'aimer l'élan contagieux du sacrifice. Heureux les temps des Feux, lors que les juges iniques propagent à leur insu, de bûcher en bûcher, devant des foules grandissantes, l'illumination du Message divin. Malheureux au contraire l'âge des Fers qui abolit dans l'obscurité des massacres et des guerres la mémoire des témoins du Christ.<sup>276</sup>

The examples of Lady Jane Gray in 'Les Feux' and Coligny in 'Les Fers' demonstrate this distinction. Both stand out as individual Protestant martyrs, but while Lady Jane's death

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<sup>275</sup> John O'Brien, "Seeing the Dead." *The Gaze as Commemoration' Montaigne Studies* 4 (1992), pp. 97-110 (104). O'Brien attributes these action to Condé: "nostre Caton" in fact refers to Coligny, as the editorial notes in the Lestringant edition (Paris, Gallimard, 1995) make clear.

<sup>276</sup> Frank Lestringant, *La Cause des martyrs dans 'Les Tragiques' d'Agrippa d'Aubigné* (Mont-de-Marsan: Éditions InterUniversitaires, 1991), p. 61.



is isolated in memory by the specificity of her execution, it is only Coligny's fame and status that prevent his assassination on the eve of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacres from being lost among the wholesale slaughter. Both sets of martyrs have a role to play in inspiring Protestants to hold true to their religious beliefs: Lady Jane demonstrates serenity at the moment of her death, while the laughing face of Coligny remains the distinguishing feature of a body torn apart by, and dissolved into, a faceless crowd of persecutors. By isolating Coligny, d'Aubigné is attempting to change the perception of the victims of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacres so that they are viewed as a series of individuals rather than being executed as a group, a central element of the poem's argument. This again reflects the contrast drawn by d'Aubigné between the baying mob of Catholics playing with Coligny's body and the image of Coligny's soul literally rising above these struggles and demonstrating a dignified knowledge of what will happen after death. The combination of these Huguenots dying for their faith, their unjust deaths, in the eyes of d'Aubigné and the Huguenots, and the fact that they are remembered for this act, makes these figures into martyrs. The heroes of both catalogues are immortalized, in the same way that the *Aeneid* immortalises Aeneas, yet Lucan and d'Aubigné are immortalizing heroes whose death is the source of their heroic status, whilst Aeneas is immortalised as a result of his deeds in life.

Lestringant points out that the righteous innocence of the Huguenots, whose deaths are portrayed as unjust, is paradoxically confirmed as they are executed for their beliefs:

Le portrait de cette Justice négative, siégeant en sa cour à Paris, ouvrira donc le catalogue des «martyrs, champions de la foy» qui remplit le livre des "Feux". Leur élection est authentifiée par le decret humain qui les condamne. En revanche les victimes des "Fers" qui ont péri au milieu des batailles ou, lors des massacres de 1572, dans la fureur d'une nuit d'été, n'ont pas reçu cette sanction ou, ce qui revient au même, cette caution juridique.<sup>277</sup>

The state's sanction of the Huguenots who are executed in "Les Feux" paradoxically confirms their status as martyrs and elevates them into heaven in the eyes of the Huguenots rather than bringing about their damnation in either legal or religious terms. Lestringant argues that this categorisation does not extend to the victims in "Les Fers" because they are killed in a night of madness or in battle, not under the sanction of the

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<sup>277</sup> Lestringant, *La Cause des Martyrs*, p. 94.

state. Yet d'Aubigné is elevating both sets of victims to the status of martyrs by including them within his poem and recalling them to the memory of his readers, suggesting that the memory of a death in the name of the Protestant faith is the most important criterion in the formation of a martyr.

These catalogues of martyrs portray Huguenot defeat on earth as leading to victory in heaven, simultaneously presenting the Huguenot martyrs as defeated and victorious, as Quint explains: 'd'Aubigné at once portrays the Huguenots as helpless victims of persecution and as victorious saints accompanying an all-powerful King of Kings at the end of time.'<sup>278</sup> D'Aubigné's catalogue acts to console the Huguenots with the promise that their cause will be vindicated in heaven, whereas Virgil's catalogue is intended to encourage Aeneas to continue his journey, having glimpsed the glory that awaits the Roman state in Italy. The goals of the catalogues are different, but they are both intended to spur their audience on towards those goals. The image of martyrdom is intended to show the Huguenots that their journey is not over, since a future awaits their soul in heaven, and the catalogue extends the possibility of this future to all Huguenots. The image of the martyr had been seized upon by Calvin as a source of religious inspiration for his followers, as Greengrass explains:

Calvin had, of course, taught that the seed of the true church lay in the blood of martyrs and the respect accorded to martyrdom became a vital part of the Huguenot tradition. Jean Crespin (1520-72), a lawyer who had trained in Paris and fled from persecution to become a printer in Geneva, produced his famous *History of the Persecuted Martyrs* in 1554 and it was revised during the civil wars to keep it up to date. Immensely important to French Huguenotism, it stressed the continuity between earlier heresies in the life of the church and Calvinism attempted to demonstrate that God had inspired martyrs to be constant so that their deaths proved the Huguenot Church to be the true one.<sup>279</sup>

Greengrass makes clear here Calvin's vision of the martyr as a figure of constancy, as seen in d'Aubigné's depiction of Lady Jane Gray. Yet in his depiction of Coligny, d'Aubigné goes beyond this, showing Coligny turning the hatred of the Catholics into a source of humour rather than merely enduring their attacks. Virgil is using his catalogue for a different purpose. Within the poem, he uses the catalogue to encourage Aeneas, but within the political and historical context in which the poem was composed,

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<sup>278</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 209.

<sup>279</sup> Greengrass, *France in the Age of Henri IV*, p. 7.

the catalogue confirms the glory of Rome and the legitimacy of Augustus as Roman ruler on earth. The different context of the two poems thus means that Virgil and d'Aubigné use their catalogues to different ends, but that they see the catalogue as a means to make their epic poems relevant to their political and historical context. The catalogue in *Les Tragiques* exists to encourage d'Aubigné's readers to keep faith in Huguenot beliefs, whilst Virgil's catalogue is presented as encouragement for Aeneas himself to complete his journey. Thus the role of the catalogue remains the same in the two contexts, but the intended audience has shifted.

Amy Graves points to d'Aubigné's catalogues as being representations of an act of collective memory which attempt to create a unified opinion amongst Huguenots towards Huguenot martyrs:

In the case of d'Aubigné's texts, the reader witnesses the making of collective memory that crystallizes around potent images in order to symbolise shared experiences. They are *imagines agentes* of the theatre of memory, full of the suggestive power to impress themselves upon the mind. However, they are also the active images of the theatre of history, a set of tableaux frozen at the very moment that they are most evocative of the movement of historical action as it will unfold.<sup>280</sup>

The catalogue is therefore a construct which allows an act of collective memory, allowing d'Aubigné to appeal directly to the Huguenots to remember the martyrs who dies for the Huguenot cause. Graves suggests that this strategy creates a literary work in that the memory of individuals becomes the signifier for a wider remembrance of the entire Huguenot community:

After all, in history, things and places map onto themselves without the mediating step of translating them into an artificial mnemonic shorthand. Although things and events normally correspond to their rightful representatives in the historical text, d'Aubigné deploys conceits of art to impose a spatial and temporal framework where emblematic moments not only detach themselves from the narrative, but bear the burden of encapsulating structures of *pathos* in the work.<sup>281</sup>

To an extent, d'Aubigné is undertaking in the composition of his catalogue the same process as interpreters of the *Aeneid* in early modern France engage in more widely. By placing the images of the martyrs within his catalogue in the way he does, d'Aubigné forces Huguenots to remember their former colleagues in the fight against the Catholics

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<sup>280</sup> Amy Graves, 'Memory, Tragedy and History: The Poetics of Agrippa d'Aubigné's Account of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre' in *Renaissance Journal* 2-4 (2005) pp. 30-48, p 47.

<sup>281</sup> Graves, *Memory, Tragedy and History*, p. 48.

and turns each figure into an object of wider pathos in order to inspire Huguenots to continue their struggle.

### D'Aubigné's Christian Models

D'Aubigné's use of the pagan figures of Caesar and Cato as exemplars for Huguenot martyrs finds a precedent in Vegio's *Antoniad*. The shifting role of the hero and of the poet within Vegio's poem are shown when Vegio's approach is compared with that of d'Aubigné. Vegio's poem opens with a variation on the epic tradition of the invocation of the Muses, denying their influence on his poem and instead tracing the roots of his poetic inspiration back to the Christian God:

non hic Pegasides, non ficta et inania Musae  
nomina, non prisco numen de more vocarim,  
Phoebe, tuum, neque enim regum nunc tristia bella  
aut veterem falsumque lovem turbamve deorum  
incertam lususque leves pompasque tumentes  
ordiri est animus; nunc te, sate virgine, te nunc  
certe Deus, nunc mortales, tua munera, divos  
angelicos dicam in terris hominesque beatos.<sup>282</sup>

The ancient literary tradition of appealing to the Muses is invoked even as Vegio rejects it in order instead to glorify God through praise of His works. Vegio thus acknowledges the classical elements that shape his poem in order to emphasise that his work is promulgating a Christian, rather than pagan, vision of a new society. The opening of the poem thus demonstrates Vegio's combination of the Christian message at the centre of his work with classical influences, not only in the structure of the opening invocation, but also through the use of the classical trope of the voyager hero. Vegio describes the figure of Jesus through the metaphor of the wind that drives his ship forward as he begins his narrative journey:

Ergo, dei magni suboles, pande optime nostris  
Vela secunda lesu placidusque adlabere coeptis'.<sup>283</sup>

Jesus has replaced Aeolus, who in the opening scene of the *Aeneid* is shown controlling the winds that will drive the Trojan fleet on their journey, and becomes the driving force

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<sup>282</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 1, ll. 1-8.

<sup>283</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 1, ll. 9-10.

for Vegio's poem, as Vegio adapts the classical trope of the wind being under the direct control of a god to fit his Christian context.

Vegio specifically outlines a concept of using classical structures to explain Christian ideas in his work *De Perseverantia Religionis*, published after both the *Supplementum* and the *Antoniad* in 1448.<sup>284</sup> In this work, Vegio comments on a passage taken from the first book of the *Aeneid*, and argues that this extract is an example of Aeneas exhibiting Christian perseverance. The lines commented upon by Vegio depict Aeneas at the start of his journey trying to encourage his Trojan followers by telling them that, although their journey may be difficult, it will be worthwhile in the end:

“O socii (neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum),  
o passi graviora, dabit deus his quoque finem.  
vos et Scyllaeam rabiem pentiusque sonantis  
accestis scopulos, vos et Cyclopia saxa  
expertis; revocate animos maestumque timorem  
mittite: forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit.  
per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum  
tendimus in Latium, sedes ubi fata quietas  
ostendunt, illic fas regna resurgere Troiae,  
durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis.”<sup>285</sup>

In these lines Virgil sets Aeneas up as a voyager, able to overcome any obstacle, and the passage is also laden with ancient mythology and pagan religious imagery. It is up to fate to decide where the city will ultimately be founded, and it is the pagan divine law that will see that Troy will rise up again.

Vegio interprets this passage in entirely Christian terms in his *De Perseverantia*, stating that the substitution of a more Christian vocabulary for certain pagan concepts allows the transfer of the passage into a different religious context, in a commentary translated by Anna Cox Brinton:

I do not see how the thought could be expressed by any Christian author in holier words or in phrases better fitted to accord with our faith than these. We are here taught to remember the past with joy, to bear the present bravely, to hope for a better future, and, finally, to cultivate perseverance at all times with a hero's might, and buckle it to our souls with closer bands. For if we interpret the Scylla's rage and the other perils of the deep as the vexations and revilings of the

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<sup>284</sup> Mapheus Vegius, *Mapheus Vegius and his Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid*, edited with introduction, bibliography and commentary by Anna Cox Brinton (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2002), p. 28.

<sup>285</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 1, ll. 198-207.

world and the devils, if we substitute the word *heaven* for *Latium* and *life* for *Troy*, why might the passage not have come from the pen of the Apostle Paul?<sup>286</sup>

Vegio's suggestion that references to ancient cities might be interpreted as allegories for heaven and life is plausible, if clumsy and arbitrary. The obstacles that Aeneas faces throughout his journey are likened by Vegio to the temptations that a Christian hero must resist. Vegio is again placing pagan concepts within a Christian context in a strategy which holds that they are still relevant to a Christian understanding of the epic hero's journey. Vegio thus interprets the *Aeneid* as a Christian allegory whose meaning can be readily understood within the Christian cultural context.

It is this understanding of the concept of the voyager hero that influences Vegio's depiction of St. Antony in the *Antoniad*. Antony's journey through the underworld to find Paul is depicted with the imagery of the voyager hero taken from ancient epic:

Verum quo magni monitu imperioque Tonantis  
accesti loca vasta situque horrentia longo  
sacrum ingressus iter divi sacra limina Pauli  
expediam primamque heremum primosque recessus.  
Haec operis tantum nostri, haec est summa laboris.<sup>287</sup>

Just as Virgil uses Aeneas' sea voyage as a metaphor for the poetic journey of his own narrative, so Vegio use Antony's journey through the desert as a metaphor both for the narrative of his own poem, and for Antony's, and any Christian's, life. Both heroes have a clear goal and they journey through hostile territory, filled with obstacles and dangers, in order to reach it. Antony's journey is originally described as 'sacrum', suggesting that he has the blessing of God in undertaking it. This divine blessing extends to the end of the narrative, when Antony will cross the 'sacra limina' that divide earth from heaven, at the end of his journey, which will also form the end of his life and of Vegio's poem.

Vegio is thus just as sure as Virgil is at the start of his poem that the journey of his hero will ultimately be successful. Furthermore, just as Aeneas' successful founding of Latium represents a greater, more lasting triumph for Rome, so Antony's discovery of Paul is more than simply a worldly victory; it is also the cause of grander celebration in heaven:

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<sup>286</sup> Vegio, *De Perseverantia Religionis*, quoted in Cox-Brinton, *Thirteenth Book*, p. 28.

<sup>287</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 1, ll. 32-35.

Hi quanto augebant olim terrasque iuvabant  
praesidio! Longis demumque laboribus actis  
cernere erit quanto decorabunt lumine caelos,  
quanto illustrabunt sedes splendore beatas,  
in patriam magno iussi remeare triumpho.<sup>288</sup>

The traditional celebration of the Roman triumph has been converted into Antony's triumphal entry into heaven, with the outcome again being both literally and metaphorically higher than what has gone before. A Roman festival of celebration lends the structure for a much grander triumph in a Christian context, again showing that the classical foundations are being used to celebrate Christian concepts. The scale of this triumph reflects the fact that it is part of a wider background of religious conflict. Both Vegio and d'Aubigné choose to represent the wider conflict through a direct confrontation between the factions of good and evil, and they both therefore paint their readers an image of direct conflict between God and Satan that conforms to their religious contexts and that demonstrates to their readers the extent of the conflicts which they are attempting to recount in their works. Classical models are therefore employed by both poets to represent a Christian narrative of confrontation between the ideas and beliefs represented by the figures of God and Satan.

#### D'Aubigné and Vegio: God meets the Devil

The central event of the first book of the *Antoniad* is a speech by God, describing Satan's decision to begin a religious civil war, threatening to undo everything God had hoped to achieve through the sacrifice and martyrdom of His son:

At valere doli multum et nocuere, fatebor,  
humani donec generis commotus amore  
demisi et proprium terreno pondere gnatum  
vestivi, qui nostra libens mandata secutus  
factus homo est, et martyrio tristisque litatus  
supplicio, veteres sublimi sanguine culpas  
purgavit, stirpemque hominum caelestibus oris  
restituens, terri rapuit de faucibus Orci.<sup>289</sup>

This passage recounts the martyrdom of Christ, sent to earth and made into man in order to save his fellow men. Vegio again uses pagan imagery to describe the context when he shows mankind being snatched from the jaws of Orcus, contrasting this with

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<sup>288</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 1, ll. 109-113.

<sup>289</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 1, ll. 76-83.

the religiously neutral imagery of the heavens, and indicating that it is the rightful place of mankind to be in heaven as Jesus has restored them ('restituens') to this status. Here, God himself casts His son as a martyr who died to save mankind. Vegio thus underlines through pagan imagery that grace itself is only possible through Christ's martyrdom and that grace will be achieved by the Christian soul entering heaven in the same way as Antony's soul.

D'Aubigné describes the reverse of this process in *Les Tragiques*, in which the martyrs enter heaven and so cease to be men. Through this reversal, d'Aubigné makes it clear that the martyr does not become a replacement for Christ, as Lestringant emphasises:

Le martyr imite le Christ, mais il ne saurait en renouveler le sacrifice qui, on l'a rappelé, a racheté l'humanité une fois pour toutes. L'efficace de la mort sur la croix n'a nul besoin d'être restaurée ou ranimée, comme l'on voudra, par des sacrifices subsidiaires qui viendraient la relayer au fil des siècles.<sup>290</sup>

Thus the Huguenots are sacrificed in the image of Christ, but their martyrdom does not provide humanity as a whole with salvation; it allows them to enter heaven as saints and provides an encouraging example to other Protestants of stoicism in the face of death and of death as a reward. The image of Christ nonetheless serves as a metaphor for the closeness of the individual martyr to God at the moment of his or her death. Each Huguenot martyrdom is viewed as an individual act because it reflects the individual act of Christ's martyrdom. The catalogues of martyrs in d'Aubigné's work is thus central to the religious message of the poem as each martyr expresses individual faith through death. Each martyr therefore reaffirms the belief that the Huguenots will be vindicated on the Day of Judgement as they reaffirm Christ's message. The role of the martyr is central to the poems of both Vegio and d'Aubigné, with Christ as the figure who allows the martyrs in Vegio to obtain grace and to fully express their faith, while d'Aubigné's martyrs save their own souls.

Vegio nevertheless uses classical imagery and vocabulary for his Christian narrative:

Haec divum pater, et toti mira addita caelo est

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<sup>290</sup> Lestringant, *La Cause des martyrs*, p. 61.



laetitia, haud aliter quam Graium si quis amicas  
vel Danaum ductor placida dum voce catervas  
horatur, magno innumeram cum robore gentem  
venturam auxilio, multa ardua corpora narret.<sup>291</sup>

In comparing God's speech to that of a Greek or Trojan leader, Vegio explicitly evokes the long speeches of the *Iliad* or *Aeneid*, in which Greek or Trojan leaders successfully inspire their men, placing the image of the Christian God within a pagan historical context and casting Him as a character in an epic poem. God is viewed here by Vegio as both an epic and a Christian figure. Rather than comparing ancient military leaders to God, Vegio inverts this imagery, casting God in the same imagery as an epic hero addressing his followers.

This positive image of God's power, which can be viewed through imagery borrowed from pagan epic, is almost immediately offset at the start of Book 2 of the *Antoniad* with another speech, delivered by Satan rather than by God. This speech comes immediately after Antony enters the worldly hell of the desert, trusting in God, and displaying the faith of an exemplary Christian:

et quorum fidens sub numine tendit  
caelicolas mitis caeli regemque precatur.<sup>292</sup>

The change from this image of Antony's hope to Satan's confidence in his failure is immediate and even brutal, as the faithful Antony entrusts his survival to God, just as others are plotting to undo God's vision of the world:

Interea infelix horrendi rector Averno  
convocat infernos, et amaro pectore coetus  
alloquitur, tristi fundens has ore querelas:  
'Hae nostrae en, socii, vires, haec Gloria nostri,  
hoc regni decus? Ingenio taline nocemus?  
Calliditas haec nostra, hi sunt astusque dolique?  
Hae frustratae artes, heu, cassa infractaque nostri  
Consilii vis et nostrorum illusa laborum!  
Quid primos astu captos peccasse parentes,  
quid prodest miseros tot inde luisse nepotes  
facta partum propria, si vitam morte redemit  
omnipotens, proprio si crimine sanguine lavit?'<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 1, ll. 131-135.

<sup>292</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 1, ll. 156-157.

<sup>293</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 2, ll. 1-12.

The opening of Satan's speech shows his awareness of his own defeat following Christ's sacrifice. Antony's faith stands as a challenge to Satan, who is unable to defeat him. To the reader convinced of Antony's faith, the speech sounds like ridiculous bluster on the part of Satan. Again, the role of martyrdom is central to Vegio's narrative, with Satan admitting that his defeat has already been rendered inevitable as Jesus has already been sacrificed to save the sinners. Although Satan's plans at the beginning of Book 2 directly oppose God's at the end of Book 1, and although they appear to threaten the success of Antony's journey, Satan is aware that the sacrifice of Jesus will ensure that Antony will prevail and that he will be foiled by this act of martyrdom. Satan thus does not pose a threat to universal salvation, which has been ensured by Jesus' death, but he can attempt to destroy Anthony if he is weak as an individual. Antony must thus withstand Satan even if Christ has already secured man's salvation as Satan still believes he can tempt individuals like Antony.

The appearance of Satan at the beginning of the second book of the *Antoniad* represents a sophisticated integration of Christian prophecy and pagan mythology. Antony is confirmed as a Christian epic hero because the reader is shown the challenges that lie before him. In effect, a conversation between God and Satan is played out between the two books, placing the two characters in opposition, with the fate of Antony acting as the centre of the argument between two opposing visions of the world. Vegio's use of pagan religious imagery to delineate the personification of Christian good and evil allows this wider conflict to be couched in the language and imagery of the ancient epic poem. Vegio sets up a conversation between God and Satan in the *Antoniad* and bases Antony's fate on the outcome of this debate. This conversation between God and Satan is fundamental to the conception of Vegio's poem and underlines the influence of Virgil, particularly regarding the role of fate in the poem. As with Aeneas' arrival in Italy, the defeat of Satan has already been foretold, and Vegio's poem is built around this outcome. Here, Satan fulfils a role similar to that of Juno in the *Aeneid*, as he attempts to place obstacles in the path of the voyaging hero even though the hero's success has already been foretold.

In comparison with Vegio's Satan, d'Aubigné's Satan demonstrates awareness of his own weakness not through his confrontation with God, but rather through his deception. D'Aubigné's conversation between God and Satan is face-to-face. It comes at the beginning of 'Les Fers', as God is holding court in His ivory palace and identifies the disguised Satan amidst the crowd around the throne. D'Aubigné narrates the scene in which Satan, disguised as an angel, is revealed:

Lors le trompeur trompé d'assuré devint blême,  
L'enchanteur se trouva désenchanté lui-même.  
Son front se sillonna, ses cheveux hérissés,  
Ses yeux flambants dessous les sourcils refrontés;  
Le crêpe blanchissant qui les cheveux lui coeuvre  
Se change en même peau que la porte couleuvre  
Qu'on appelle coiffée, ou bien en telle peau  
Que le serpent mué dépouille au temps nouveau;  
La bouche devint pale: un changement étrange  
Lui donna front de diable et ôta celui d'ange.  
L'ordure le flétrit, tout au long se répand.  
La tête se décoiffe et se change en serpent;  
Le pennache luisant et les plumes si belles  
Dont il contrefaisait les angéliques ailes,  
Tout ce blanc se ternit: ces ailes peu à peu  
Noires, se vont tachant de cent marques de feu  
En dragon africain; lors sa peau mouchetée  
Comme un ventre d'aspic se trouve marquetée.  
Il tomba sur la voûte, où son corps s'allongeant,  
De diverses couleurs et venin se chargeant,  
Le ventre jaunissant, et noirâtre la queue,  
Pour un ange trompeur mit un serpent en veue.<sup>294</sup>

Satan's attempt to disguise himself before the omniscient God has failed. The focus is on the physiological changes which take place as Satan's true identity is revealed, yet it is also evident from his flaming eyes that irrespective of appearance, Satan's character has not changed, and, unlike his mask, his true appearance reflects his character. The image of the snake shedding its skin is both a metaphor for the physical change in Satan and an allusion to the sin that Satan is trying to provoke in Christians and that is unchanging in nature even when it takes different forms. The black colours spreading throughout Satan's body, as his angel's wings slowly change colour and become the wings of a dragon, point to the change taking place in Satan. The true evil in Satan is internal, and the aesthetic disguises which allow him to resemble an angel or a devil are

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<sup>294</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, "Les Fers", ll. 53 – 74.

only skin-deep. Satan's attempt to disguise himself in this way demonstrates both his duplicity and his evasiveness.

D'Aubigné's Satan, although evasive, does accept that he may be proven wrong and so unable to tempt Christians to follow him:

Déchaîne-moi les poings, remets entre mes mains  
Ces chrétiens obstinés qui, parmi les humains,  
Font gloire de ton nom: si ma force est éteinte,  
Lors je confesserai que ton Eglise est sainte.<sup>295</sup>

Satan here admits that he is entirely at God's mercy: even to be able to show his power to lead Christians away from God, he must first ask God to release him from his bonds. As with Vegio's Satan, d'Aubigné's Satan is here aware of the limits of his power and of the possibility that he will lose his fight against God and Christians. Both Vegio and d'Aubigné thus use Satan's presence in order to demonstrate his weakness and God's strength.

For Henry Sauerwein, "Les Fers" is a selective history of the Wars of Religion, poeticized within the total framework of *Les Tragiques* as an earthly reflection of a heavenly battle being waged between God and Satan.<sup>296</sup> The battle between God and Satan is thus both a parallel to, and a metaphor for, the French Wars of Religion. The symbolism present underneath these images of direct conflict is, for Bailbé, one of the elements which sets d'Aubigné's poem apart from Ronsard's war poetry, in that the battle between good and evil that the opposition of God and Satan represents is of much deeper significance than the fighting between Catholics and Huguenots:

Ronsard a dit que le poème épique était «tout guerrier». Mais, à la différence de l'épopée Classique [...] les *Tragiques* nous offrent une perspective moins épique que tragique: la lutte entre deux partis, mais aussi entre deux principes, Le Bien et le Mal.<sup>297</sup>

Bailbé defines the depiction of the opposing camps of good and evil as being drawn from the tragic, rather than the epic, genre. This analysis does not fully encapsulate d'Aubigné's intention in opposing God and Satan in the way that he does. Like Vegio,

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<sup>295</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, "Les Fers", ll. 171-174.

<sup>296</sup> Henry A. Sauerwein Jr, *Agrippa d'Aubigne's 'Les Tragiques': A study in structure and poetic method* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1953) p. 136.

<sup>297</sup> Bailbé, *D'Aubigné: Poète des Tragiques*, p. 186.

d'Aubigné presents Satan as a flawed figure who is already aware that his efforts to tempt Christians away from God will end in failure. D'Aubigné is however placing the confrontation between Satan and God within the context of the Wars of Religion, and this confrontation is key to d'Aubigné's imagination of events after the end of the wars. D'Aubigné is concerned with showing the failure of Satan as inevitable because this event confirms the inevitable victory of good over evil as well as the vindication of Huguenot beliefs. The Huguenots are not only fighting against Catholics in France, but for the future of Christianity, which will be confirmed by their entry into heaven, a possibility that exists as a result of God's sacrifice of his son in order to extend grace to Christians. D'Aubigné's emphasis on Satan not only as flawed, but also as powerless, shows his confidence in the success of the Huguenot cause, and Satan's admission of his own weakness serves further to reinforce d'Aubigné's vision of the vindication of the Huguenot's faith in heaven.

#### The Role of Death and Burial in *Les Tragiques*

The imagery of Satan in Vergil and d'Aubigné shows their differing approaches to the role Satan plays in Christian beliefs of what will happen after death, and the two poets also employ epic constructions when discussing the events immediately following the death of their characters, events which will determine whether they encounter God or Satan at all. In describing the burials of their characters, both poets acknowledge that the act of burial plays a central role in the progression of their respective narratives, and this narrative element is also vital to the progress of Aeneas as he journeys from Troy to Italy. Aeneas is confronted throughout the *Aeneid* with the deaths of both loved ones and friends, and Virgil uses these deaths to mark the progress of Aeneas' journey towards Italy. In the *Aeneid* the proper funeral rites must be performed and the body of the dead character must be buried in order to ensure their soul's progression through the classical underworld. Such burials also ensure Aeneas' progression towards Rome.

The first point at which Aeneas is confronted with the challenge of burying the dead in order to continue his journey comes at the beginning of Book 3, when Aeneas recounts to Dido his encounter, as he was trying to gather branches in order to perform a sacrifice to Venus, with the ghost of Polydorus. Aeneas tells Dido how Polydorus

recounted to Aeneas the circumstances of murder by the king of Thrace and his need to be properly buried. Aeneas then explains that he and his men buried Polydorus so that they might continue their journey:

Ergo instauremus Polydoro funus, et ingens  
aggeritur tumulo tellus; stant minibus area,  
caeruleis maestae vittis atraque cupresso,  
et circum Iliades crinem de more solute;  
inferimus tepido spumantia cymbia lacte  
sanguinis et sacri pateras, animamque sepulcro  
condimus et magna supremum voce ciemus.<sup>298</sup>

Polydorus is given his burial mound not because the other Trojans feel any particular debt to him, but because of the unfortunate consequences that might befall them if they do not bury his body. The burial of the body allows the soul of the dead individual to continue its journey through the underworld, and also allows the narrative to continue for the voyaging protagonists. In the act of burial, Troy is physically left behind, but its memory lives on.

Polydorus is not the only character in the *Aeneid* who finds that his journey through the underworld is obstructed by the fact that he is unburied. Another character who appears directly to Aeneas and again recounts the consequences of lacking a burial is Palinurus, who fell from his ship as he was crossing the sea from Libya, and therefore remains unburied. Aeneas encounters Palinurus in the underworld as Palinurus waits to cross the Styx, but is unable to do so because he remains unburied. When he encounters Aeneas, Palinurus presents the hero with two options to save his soul from being stuck at the bank of the Styx forever:

aut tu mihi terram  
inice, namque potes, portusque require Velinos,  
aut tu, si qua via est, si quam tibi diva creatrix  
ostendit (neque enim, credo, sine numine divum  
flumina tanta paras Stygiamque innare paludem),  
da dextram misero et tecum me tolle per undas,  
sedibus ut saltem placidis in morte quiescam.<sup>299</sup>

Palinurus here presents Aeneas with two options so that his soul can continue his journey through the underworld, but the option of Aeneas carrying Palinurus' soul across the Styx is impossible. The option of burial, rather than Aeneas carrying him over

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<sup>298</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 3, ll. 62-68.

<sup>299</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, ll. 365-371.

the Styx, is thus presented as the easiest way to allow both the journey of his soul to progress and the continuation of Virgil's narrative.

Aeneas is spared from carrying out the burial himself by the Sibyl, who explains that Palinurus' burial will nonetheless be carried out:

'desine fata deum flecti sperare precando.  
sed cape dicta memor, duri solacia casus.  
nam tua finitimi, longe lateque per urbes  
prodigiis acti caelestibus, ossa piabunt  
et statuent tumulum et tumulo sollemnia mittent,  
aeternumque locus Palinuri nomen habebit.'  
his dictis curae emotae pulsusque parumper  
corde dolor tristi; gaudet cognomina terrae.<sup>300</sup>

The Sibyl both warns Palinurus against attempting to cross the Styx and gives him the hope that he will eventually be buried and that his soul will be allowed to continue its journey through the underworld. The fact that she describes the entire process of his burial even though it does not directly affect Aeneas' journey indicates the importance of this event for Virgil's narrative. The Sibyl's confident prediction that Palinurus will be buried guarantees both his passport across the Styx and his place in history. The inevitability of the prediction reinforces the teleology of epic: for the narrative of the *Aeneid* to continue, Palinurus must be buried, so the burial inevitably takes place.

Another point at which the act of burial becomes important for the continuation of the narrative of the *Aeneid* is the burial of Anchises. Although the burial itself is described only retrospectively, the burial mound and altar set up on Anchises' tomb mark the passing of the previous generation.<sup>301</sup> The death and burial of Anchises are also necessary for the continuation of the narrative, as it is he who will lead Aeneas past the parade of heroes in the underworld, laying out to his son and to the readers of the poem the important role that Aeneas will play in securing a glorious future for Rome. Anchises' burial also marks the move away from Troy and towards Rome, with Anchises representing the older Trojan generation, whilst Aeneas represents the possibility of a new beginning in Italy. The act of burial therefore marks the progression of the narrative of the *Aeneid*.

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<sup>300</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, ll. 376-383.

<sup>301</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 5, ll. 46 – 48.

The need for narrative progression, which these three examples of burial in the *Aeneid* highlight, is also a feature of the burial of Paul in the *Antoniad*, although this is not a prerequisite for the entry of his soul into heaven. Yet the burial of Paul does provide closure for the narrative by allowing Antony to move on. Antony is presented with a vision of Paul's ascension even before he is aware of his friend's death:

Tunc forte oculos Antonius altos  
sustollens, miro Paulum candore nitentem  
plaudentes inter divum longasque catervas  
vidit siderei scandentem ad culmina caeli.  
Magnaminos tali Capitolia ad alta triumpho,  
si minima aequare et summis componere fas est,  
Romulidas victo credas ex hoste redisse.<sup>302</sup>

Antony is depicted here by Vegio encountering Paul's ascension as if by chance, yet this image is very important for the narrative of the poem, as it foreshadows the need to bury Paul's body.

Vegio has however inverted the course of events from Virgil. Paul's entry into heaven is not dependent upon his burial, meaning that the entry of his soul into heaven does not require the burial of his body, yet the burial is still necessary for the narrative to continue so that Paul's body can be left in dignity:

Ac demum sacro defuncti corpus amici,  
quem secum tulerat, circumvolvebat amictu  
solemnesque illi antus ec more ferebat  
supremosque simul mortis solvebat honores.  
Tum frustra terram, qua sancta reconderet ossa,  
effodere aggressus, neque enim quo id posset haberet<sup>303</sup>

Antony himself is unable to bury Paul, as the physical act of digging up the ground is too difficult to accomplish. He is left debating what he should do:

quid faceret, staretne, domum tandemne rediret  
divinumque patrem tumuli sine honore iacentem  
linqueret.<sup>304</sup>

The problem revolves around the fact that he is now unable to give Paul honour in death whatever he does, recalling the situation Aeneas found himself in when he was unable

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<sup>302</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 4, ll. 66-72.

<sup>303</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 4, ll. 93-98.

<sup>304</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 4, ll. 100-102.



to personally give Palinurus the required burial. Neither option is acceptable, since Antony neither has the physical strength to bury Paul, nor can he leave Paul's body unburied.

Vegio therefore employs the miraculous intervention of God to ensure Paul's body will be buried. The miraculous appearance of two lions will solve the problem for Antony and allow the narrative to continue, just as the Sibyl reassures Aeneas that the burial of Palinurus will happen:

Olli demissis animis et pectore miti,  
mira fides, petiere senis venerabile corpus  
illiusque pedes circa accubere frementes  
extinctumque prope humana pietate querentes.  
dehinc pedibus tantum terrae scalpuntque ruuntque  
certatim, quantum tumulo satis esset, et ipsum  
eximere(n)t cura patremque levare(n)t egentem.<sup>305</sup>

The burial thus becomes miraculous, and there is no need for Antony to do anything, other than place the body in the grave which has been dug and cover it up: 'corpus tumuloque recondit'.<sup>306</sup> God, in the form of two lions, takes over almost entirely. Vegio again removes the need for agency on the part of the human hero: the powers of God are far beyond anything Antony could undertake.

The burial is thus required even if Paul has already entered into heaven, and this entry is finally confirmed with an epic simile of watering a garden that puts forward an image of rebirth rather than of death:

Sic quando aret holus, arent et prata, nec ullas  
quas infundat habet terries sitientibus undas  
agricola infelix, tunc si praelargus aquarum  
exundet torrens, et rivi et hiantia passim  
prata fluunt laetis et egentes imbribus horti.<sup>307</sup>

The actions of the lions are as miraculous as the watering of the garden and its subsequent rebirth. This simile mirrors the revitalization of Paul, as he will be reborn in heaven despite appearing to be dead on earth. Again, Vegio shows that the narrative will continue even after death and that there is hope for Paul and Christians more widely

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<sup>305</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 4, ll. 106-112.

<sup>306</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 4, l. 128.

<sup>307</sup> Vegio, *Antoniad*, Book 4, ll. 113-117.

after death. The image of rebirth brought about by spiritual water and the need for a correct treatment of the body in order to bring about this rebirth are thus central to the poems of both Virgil and Vegio. The act of burial represents a symbol of honouring and commemorating but ultimately turning away from the past and is a means of propelling the epic narrative forward. By including acts of burial in the poem, Vegio is demonstrating an engagement with Virgil that involves more than mere reference to Virgil's imagery and themes. Vegio paints a better future for Paul after death and the possibility of the resurrection of the soul in the Christian afterlife. This is also the aim of d'Aubigné when he presents his Huguenot heroes as undergoing martyrdom in order to move towards a better future beyond death.

### D'Aubigné's Christian De-Burials

D'Aubigné adopts a different strategy when he depicts the dead in *Les Tragiques*. At the start of the seventh and final book of his poem, "Jugement", d'Aubigné casts himself as a messenger of God, addressing the 'ennemis de Dieu'<sup>308</sup> who have mistreated the Huguenots, calling them:

Maquignons de Satan, qui, par espoirs et craintes,  
Par feintes piétés et par charités feintes,  
Diligents charlatans, pipez et maniez,  
Nos rebelles fuitifs, nos excommuniés<sup>309</sup>

D'Aubigné focusses on the fact that these apostates have mistreated their fellow Christians and have not acted in the spirit of Christianity, and he warns them that there will be consequences for them on the Day of Judgement:

Vos pères sortiront des tombeaux effroyables,  
Leurs images au moins paraîtront venerables  
A vos sens abattus, et vous verrez le sang  
Qui mêle sur le chef des touffes de poil blanc,  
Du poil blanc herissé de vos poltronneries:  
Ces morts reprocheront le present de vos vies.  
En lavant pour diner avec ces inhumains,  
Ces pères saisiront vos inutiles mains,  
En disant: «Vois-tu pas que tes mains fainéantes  
Lavent sous celles-là qui, de mon sang gouttantes,  
Se purgent dessus toi et versent mon courroux  
Sur ta vilaine peau, qui se lave dessous?»<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, "Jugement", l. 72.

<sup>309</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, "Jugement", ll. 99-102.

<sup>310</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, "Jugement", ll. 111-122.

D'Aubigné criticizes the actions of the apostates, Huguenots who have converted to Catholicism, with the image of them washing their hands in the same water that the Catholics have used to wash away the blood of the Huguenots, making them thus guilty of the same crimes as the Catholics by association.<sup>311</sup> Their fathers have been betrayed by their actions, and they are prepared to rise from their graves in order to avenge the wrongs perpetrated during the Wars of Religion. The image of blood is intended to shock the readers and to show that the consequences for the Catholics and those who support them will be passed down through the generations. D'Aubigné's view of the consequences of the Wars of Religion and of resurrection does not only predict a victory for the Huguenots in heaven, but also consequences for the Catholics, and their supporters, brought to them directly by the resurrected dead.

D'Aubigné's vision of the dead advising the living is different in form from that of the *Aeneid* in that it inverts the journey that the two parties, the living and the dead, undertake in order to meet. Instead of the living entering the Underworld, the land of the dead, the dead enter the land of the living. This inversion of the epic journey through the underworld is noted by Bailbé, who compares d'Aubigné's approach with that of Ronsard:

Dans l'univers chrétien des *Tragiques*, il n'y a pas de descente aux enfers. L'enfer païen est évoqué dans l'*Odyssée*, dans l'*Enéide* ou dans *Microcosme* (la descente d'Abel, le voyage du démon en quête de la Mort). Dans la *Franciade*, Ronsard imite Virgile, et imagine une descente aux enfers. [...] Rien de semblable dans les *Tragiques*.

D'Aubigné's approach is different from that of Homer, Virgil, Scève and Ronsard because, in his poem, hell is already present on earth: the poem is therefore preoccupied with the ascent of the Huguenots out of this hell and into heaven. D'Aubigné has no need of a trip to the underworld within his poem because the entire work as a whole aims to imagine just such a reality. His Huguenots must wait for the Day of Judgement in order for their victory, and so they gain nothing from the act of burial, in contrast to Paul and Palinurus whose respective narratives advance with their burials. D'Aubigné's approach to death is thus necessarily different from that of Virgil

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<sup>311</sup> Fanlo links this image with the tradition of the master of the house and his guest washing their hands at the same time. This furthers the sense of betrayal in these lines. See D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, ed. Fanlo, p. 650.

or Vegio, in that burial is less important to the defeated Huguenots than the divine judgement which will allow them to enter heaven.

### Conclusion: The End of the World and the End of the Epic: D'Aubigné's Final Countdown

The terrifying vision at the beginning of 'Jugement' of the dead rising from their graves is contrasted at the end of the book with d'Aubigné's description of the rewards that await them as saints in heaven. This description casts d'Aubigné's work as a victory narrative with the promise of reward after death. The purity of these resurrected saints is contrasted with that of Adam, the symbol of fallen man:

Adam, ayant encore sa condition pure,  
Connut des animaux les noms et la nature,  
Des plantes le vrai suc, des métaux la valeur,  
Et les élus seront en un être meilleur.  
Il faut une aide en qui cet homme se repose:  
Les Saints n'auront besoin d'aide ni d'autre chose.  
Il eut un corps terrestre et un corps sensuel:  
Le leur sera celeste et corps spirituel.  
L'âme du premier homme était âme vivante:  
Celle des triomphants sera vivifiante.  
Adam pouvait pécher et du péché périr:  
Les Saints ne sont sujets à pécher ni mourir.  
Les Saints ont tout; Adam reçut quelque défense,  
Satan put le tenter, il sera sans puissance.  
Les élus sauront tout, puisque celui qui n'eut  
Un être si parfait toutes choses connut.<sup>312</sup>

Unlike Adam, the saints are not at risk of temptation or sin. They go beyond the status of Adam before he fell. The passage focusses on knowledge, and the idea that Adam knew the value of the natural world around him, but that the Saints will have no need to look for help in order to gain this knowledge, suggesting they will be initiated into knowledge beyond the knowledge possessed by man. The comparison of bodies and of souls suggests that, although physically dead, the saints will be more alive than Adam. D'Aubigné also underlines the fact that having died, the saints no longer have to fear death, unlike Adam or man, who are still susceptible to temptation by Satan, even if Satan's efforts will be in vain. D'Aubigné therefore places the emphasis on an initiation

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<sup>312</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, 'Jugement', ll. 1127-1142.

into knowledge and an escape from the trap of sin as the reward for the Huguenots in heaven. These 'élus' will find themselves in a better position than Adam in the Garden of Eden because they have knowledge that he never possessed, and they are also initiated into the truth which the Catholics cannot access.

The judgement of God therefore becomes the climax of the poem, separating the Catholics from the Protestants, and Quint sees this outcome in terms of the epic teleology of the poem:

D'Aubigné's epic indeed goes further than [the *Pharsalia*] by offering, particularly in its last two books, *Vengeances* and *Jugement*, a triumphalist narrative of its own, in which God punishes the Catholic persecutors and, in the ultimate teleology, executes His Last Judgement on humanity, separating the saved from the damned.<sup>313</sup>

By placing the Huguenot victory in heaven, and thus outside the realms of earthly time and space, d'Aubigné negates the possibility of any challenge from the triumphalist epics of his opponents, as Quint explains:

In order to contest the claims that their victorious enemies make to have the last word on history, the poets have to open up and break apart their own poems, to focus on a series of parts rather than the whole – though d'Aubigné's poem also counts such a final verdict by invoking an alternative Last Judgement that is outside of history itself.<sup>314</sup>

Faith, rather than historical fact, justifies d'Aubigné's projected Huguenot victory. D'Aubigné's anti-epic thus goes beyond that of Lucan in that it never admits defeat at all and in its confirmation of Huguenot victory in heaven, it becomes not an anti-epic but an epic in its own right. The predicted victory therefore occupies a position outside of the realms of physical space and also of time, as Henry Sauerwein points out: 'Indeed, when the judgement finally takes place, bodies emerge from the earth and waters and are reborn into the spiritual new life of eternity'.<sup>315</sup> The poem therefore places its own resolution beyond time and so in a position that cannot be challenged by Catholic victory on earth.

In a final mix of pagan and Christian metaphors, d'Aubigné describes how the Huguenots might finally experience peace in heaven:

Il faut qu'en Dieu si beau toute beauté finesse,

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<sup>313</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 189.

<sup>314</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 209.

<sup>315</sup> Sauerwein, *Agrippa d'Aubigné's Les Tragiques*, p. 163.

Et comme ont feint jadis les compagnons d'Ulisse  
Avoir perdu le gout de tous friands appas  
Ayant fait une fois de lotus un repas  
Ainsi nulle douceur, nul pain ne fait envie  
Après le Man, le fruit du doux arbre de vie.  
L'âme ne souffrira les doutes pour choisir,  
Ni l'imperfection que marque le désir.  
Le corps fut vicieux qui renaîtra sans vices,  
Sans tache, sans porreaux, rides et cicatrices.<sup>316</sup>

D'Aubigné's complex reference to both the *Odyssey* and the Bible evokes the rewards that await in heaven. In Book 9 of the *Odyssey*, consumption of the Lotus plant is shown to have led to apathy amongst the Lotus-eaters and left them with no desire for anything else. D'Aubigné presents the classical image of repletion as a false illusion: the following image of the heavenly Manna described in Exodus, provided by God to sustain the Israelites in the desert, is the true source of spiritual nourishment. The Biblical message is the only knowledge that will sustain the Huguenots.

The references to the *Odyssey* and to Exodus both underline d'Aubigné's theme of exile, as the Protestants on earth wait to return to their true heavenly home. This sense of returning to a pure origin is reinforced by d'Aubigné's description of the Manna as 'le fruit du doux arbre de vie', recalling Adam and the act of original sin, leading to the imperfection of man, but now offering fruit that is not forbidden. D'Aubigne thus brings the message of his work full circle, to the original sin that will finally be redeemed as the Huguenots, like Odysseus, return to their true home. Yet whereas Odysseus, on his return, will retain the scar that is key to establishing his identity, the Huguenots' scars, left by the Wars of Religion, will finally be washed away. The combination of classical and religious imagery here allows d'Aubigné to bolster his Christian message through reference to a classical poem. D'Aubigné explicitly places his poem within the epic tradition, but he also shows how the imagery of classical epic can inform Christian belief. He reminds the Huguenots that they must search for and adhere to the true Christian message, the Word of God, if they want to enter heaven, showing that although ancient epics might provide imagery which can be used to map the journey towards this message, it is only the Word itself which will show them the way to heaven.

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<sup>316</sup> D'Aubigné, *Les Tragiques*, 'Jugement', ll. 1171-1180.

Through his interpretation of ancient literary sources, most notably Virgil's *Aeneid* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, d'Aubigné composes an epic poem that provides an alternative version of how victory might be achieved in the French Wars of Religion, namely through the salvation of specific heroic martyrs and, thereby, the entire Protestant community in France and beyond. Whilst accepting that defeat on earth is inevitable for the Huguenots, d'Aubigné nonetheless presents a vision of hope for his fellow Protestants. As Quint surmises: 'The awaited kingdom of heaven may be a displaced version of the hoped-for Huguenot kingship that history has failed to provide'.<sup>317</sup> D'Aubigné thus looks to a victory in heaven as a reason for the Huguenots to retain hope and as the driving force behind the structure of his epic, which begins by describing Huguenot suffering during the Wars of Religion but which culminates in a description of their rewards on the future Day of Judgement.

D'Aubigné's method in combining his classical sources, the *Aeneid* and the *Pharsalia*, and presenting them in a Christian context is highly complex. D'Aubigné's poem uses Christian belief in resurrection to provide the possibility of a Huguenot victory beyond death. Lestringant sees d'Aubigné's poem as reflecting a worsening of the violence of the Wars of Religion as the Huguenots attempted to justify their cause through hindsight:

L'annonce d'un retour à la pureté de l'Évangile a déclenché, contre toute attente, une recrudescence de la violence du sang. Il faut tenir compte de cette résistance obstinée des faits, et adapter, au prix d'un bricolage idéologique, la nouveauté de la doctrine aux exigences tragiques de l'histoire.<sup>318</sup>

D'Aubigné's polemical poem presents a largely, and intentionally, one-dimensional view of the conflict. His combination of imagery from Lucan and Virgil demonstrates his willingness to remake the epic genre for his own poem, and his presentation of the Christian understanding of death and resurrection, as supported by the example of Vergil's *Antoniad*, allows him to claim victory for the Huguenots. D'Aubigné uses Lucan to read Virgil as an epic that represents the victory of a specific faction in civil war, and to say that this version of events, where the Catholics are triumphant can be challenged,

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<sup>317</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 190.

<sup>318</sup> Lestringant, *La Cause des Martyrs*, p. 65.

but he also goes beyond Lucan in showing that another vision of victory, the victory of the Huguenots, can be portrayed beyond the boundaries of space and time.

Since the poem presents an image of the Huguenots finally at rest in heaven, no wider solution to the conflict or approach to its aftermath is presented for a nation emerging from brutal civil war and in which Huguenots still had a role to play despite their defeat. The task of presenting a future for France fell to another Protestant epic poet, Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas, whose two works, *La Sepmaine* and *La Seconde Sepmaine*, provide a universal, all-encompassing vision of the Christian future of France for both Protestants and Catholics, in contrast to d'Aubigné's reliance on victory in the alternative universe of heaven. While d'Aubigné offers Protestants a vision of what is to come, with their saints freed from the all too human constraints that damned Adam, Du Bartas returns to Genesis to offer Huguenots a future France in which they might still play a role, rather than taking comfortable retirement in heaven.



## CHAPTER FOUR: A BIBLICAL EPIC; THE *AENEID* IN DU BARTAS' *LA SEPMAINE, OU CREATION DU MONDE*

Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas' Biblical epic *La Sepmaine, ou Création du Monde*, published in 1578, and his *Seconde Sepmaine*, published between 1583 and 1604, combine the form of the ancient epic hexameter poem with biblical subject matter<sup>319</sup>. Du Bartas' interpretation of the beginnings of the world conforms to the overarching structure of the biblical Creation story but also draws on non-Christian influences. Du Bartas combines pagan and biblical imagery, adopting Virgilian literary motifs, most notably in his *Seconde Sepmaine*, and using the classical figure of the travelling epic hero to describe France's spiritual and political journey towards the state he envisions for it after the Wars of Religion. Victor Bol sees Du Bartas' attempts to reconcile pagan and Christian concepts in literature as evidence of the difficulty of reconciling two conflicting genres: 'De cette confrontation et de l'intégration de la vision biblique, Bartas est un témoin.'<sup>320</sup> Du Bartas' work therefore sets about combining two apparently irreconcilable elements.

Like Bol, Jan Miernowski<sup>321</sup> and Klara Csürös<sup>322</sup> emphasise Du Bartas' project as one which combines a range of elements in an 'encyclopaedic' approach to classical literature. Miernowski particularly stresses the popularity of this approach, a popularity also emphasized by Michel Brasspart, who points to Du Bartas' poem being more popular than the work of Ronsard.<sup>323</sup> Marcel Raymond also views the work as a complex synthesis of multiple literary sources, whilst Georges Pellissier views Du Bartas' work as a belated response to Du Bellay's call for a French epic in his *Deffense et Illustration de la Langue Françoise*.<sup>324</sup> James Dauphiné points to the poem as being a response to a much wider need in French society for an image of reconciliation following the Wars of

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<sup>319</sup> Guillaume Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine ou Création du Monde*, ed. Victor Bol, (Arles: Actes Sud, 1988) and *La Seconde Sepmaine* (1584), ed. Yvonne Bellenger et al. (Paris: STFM, 1991-1992) 2 vols.

<sup>320</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 9.

<sup>321</sup> Jan Miernowski, *Dialectique et Connaissance dans 'La Sepmaine' de Du Bartas* (Geneva: Droz, 1992),

<sup>322</sup> Klara Csürös, "Dans le sillage de du Bartas: l'inventaire épique d'un monde menacé", in *Du Bartas: poète encyclopédique du XVIe siècle*, ed. James Dauphiné (Lyons: La Manufacture, 1988), pp. 109-118.

<sup>323</sup> Michel Brasspart, *Du Bartas, poète chrétien* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1947), pp.18-19.

<sup>324</sup> Marcel Raymond, *L'influence de Ronsard sur la poésie française 1550-1585*, Vol 2, (Paris: Champion, 1927) p.281., Georges Pellissier, *La Vie et les Œuvres de Du Bartas* (Paris: Hachette, 1883).

Religion and a return to an idealised and reunited French state.<sup>325</sup> All of these interpretations emphasize the complex nature of Du Bartas' combination of sources, yet they do not analyse Du Bartas' fundamental shift in the nature of epic, both in imagining the epic on a global scale rather than merely within a national context, and in re-imagining the roles of both the epic hero and the epic author.

In *La Sepmaine*, Du Bartas adopts a biblical foundation narrative and places it within an epic structure. The foundation narrative is global, and is based on the Genesis narrative, which also provides elements of the structure of the poem. In *La Seconde Sepmaine*, Du Bartas presents a much narrower context for the narrative of his poem, confining his vision to the French state itself and focussing on the role that the Huguenots will play within the French state in the aftermath of the Wars of Religion and in the beginnings of a French empire. Although *La Seconde Sepmaine* has a narrower narrative focus than *La Sepmaine*, it exhibits a higher level of sophistication in its engagement with the *Aeneid*. At the beginning of his *Seconde Sepmaine*, Du Bartas explicitly links his work with that of Virgil, imagining himself as a Virgil for Henri IV's Augustus in the aftermath of war:

Puisse-je, tout couvert de poussiere et de sang,  
Fendre l'ost Espagnol, ou forcer quelque ville,  
Et le combat fini, te server d'un Virgile.<sup>326</sup>

Du Bartas here views his *Seconde Sepmaine* as fulfilling the same role as the *Aeneid*, in providing an account of possible reconciliation in the aftermath of civil war.

Du Bartas' work engages with the imagery, structure and ideas of Virgil's epic alongside a Christian message of rebirth and salvation drawn from the Bible. It challenges the narrative of Catholic victory in the Wars of Religion whilst presenting a vision of a future French nation that can conform to the image of a new Creation in the aftermath of civil war. This chapter will therefore analyse how Du Bartas' poem represents the most sophisticated interpretation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Firstly, it considers how Du Bartas combines Christian and pagan elements in order to place Virgil's message of reconciliation within a contemporary context in which Huguenots are able to play an

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<sup>325</sup> James Dauphiné, *La Bibliothèque de Du Bartas* (Paris: Champion, 1994).

<sup>326</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 2.

active part in the French state. Secondly, it considers Du Bartas' positioning of himself as a traveller hero, fundamentally altering the conception of the epic genre and the author's relationship to his poem. Thirdly, it examines Du Bartas' positioning of the Biblical figure of Adam as an alternative epic hero to Aeneas, who redeems mankind through his fall. The chapter will also argue that Du Bartas' interpretation of the *Aeneid* adopts a narrower contextual focus in *La Seconde Sepmaine* than in *La Sepmaine*. Du Bartas reduces the scope of his poem for the creation of the world to the future of the French state and empire, and this move represents a nuancing in the pattern of ever-increasing sophistication which has been charted throughout the thesis.

### Sixteenth Century Reception of Du Bartas' Poems

Michel Brasspart summarises the popularity and success of Du Bartas' work:

Il connu, de son vivant même, un immense succès. Non seulement les monarques et les poètes, Jacques d'Écosse, Henri de Navarre, d'Aubigné, et même Ronsard, apprécièrent ses poèmes, mais il a joui de la faveur publique. «Monsieur, je loue Dieu, lui écrit Duplessis-Mornay, que vous soyez arrivé à la fin de votre *Seconde Sepmaine*. C'est une œuvre aussi avidement attendue que l'autre a été joyeusement reçue»<sup>327</sup>

Brasspart's description indicates the existence of three distinct audiences for Du Bartas' work. The first of these is European monarchs, showing that the poems invited interest at the highest social and political level of the early modern state. The second audience, that of other literary writers, suggests that Du Bartas' fellow poets, including both Ronsard and d'Aubigné, read and appreciated his poems as models with which to compare their own works. The third audience for Du Bartas' work is the readers of the work itself who do not fall into these two groups. Thus the poem is being read by three different audiences, each of whom is interested in the poem for a different reason and the sophistication of the work speaks to all of these audiences.

Du Bartas' audience was not only French, as Jan Miernowski points out:

Dès 1592, l'hexaméron fut traduit en italien, en 1610 en espagnol, en 1631 en allemand, entre 1609 et 1622 il fut traduit et adapté aux Pays-Bas, en 1661 parut sa version danoise. En Angleterre, la poésie de du Bartas eut à la même époque quatre traducteurs dont l'un fut Jacques 1.<sup>328</sup>

The speed with which *La Sepmaine* was translated into other European languages, demonstrates the work's popularity throughout Europe. The fact that these languages

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<sup>327</sup> Brasspart, *Du Bartas: poète chrétien*, p. 19.

<sup>328</sup> Miernowski, *Dialectique et Connaissance*, p. 13.

include Spanish and Italian and at the same time Dutch and English indicates that interest in *La Sepmaine* was not only confined to primarily Protestant countries, but also existed in Catholic-majority countries, where religious reform had been suppressed. This promotion of wider access to the poem indicates a change from the more polarised readership of Ronsard and d'Aubigné, and shows translation as a measure of the political influence of the poem within the early modern context. Du Bartas' popularity, was spread across a wider audience through translation, increasing his success.

Victor Bol also points to the popularity of Du Bartas' work not only as a demonstration of the fact that he had eclipsed writers such as Ronsard, but also as testimony to the fact that praise of Du Bartas' work cast his achievement in Christian terms:

En témoignent les quelques trente éditions de son œuvre majeure, *La Sepmaine ou Creation du Monde*, qui se sont succédées en une quarantaine d'années, et, dans plusieurs d'entre elles, nombre de poèmes laudatifs adressés au «divin», à l'«illustre» Bartas dont la gloire un moment offusqua celle de Ronsard: en témoigne aussi l'extraordinaire travail d'un érudit de l'époque, Simon Goulart de Senlis, qui, dans une dizaine d'éditions successives, s'attache à commenter, à éclairer ce texte pour des lecteurs moins avertis.<sup>329</sup>

Goulart's attempt to widen access to Du Bartas' text reflects Protestant principles of widening access to religious texts and to the 'truth' they contain. This belief in Du Bartas as revealing a religious truth is emphasised by the praise of Du Bartas as 'divin', painting him in religious terms.

This religious influence in the reception of Du Bartas' poem reflects that which influenced its creation, as Miernowski explains:

Vu l'importance de l'Écriture pour Du Bartas, il n'est pas étonnant que la culture romaine et le long exercice laissent place dans son hexaméron à la «sainte fureur». C'est cette force divine, et non le vain artifice de l'homme, qui guide le poète protestant dans sa tâche.<sup>330</sup>

This aspect of Du Bartas' work sets it apart from the poems of both Ronsard and d'Aubigné. It has implications for the classical references included in the poem, as Du Bartas' conception of Christianity as 'encyclopaedic' involves a recognition of the classical world. This approach therefore renders Du Bartas' task more complex than that of Ronsard in that he must go beyond Ronsard's narrative in order to give a much wider

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<sup>329</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 7.

<sup>330</sup> Miernowski, *Dialectique et Connaissance*, p. 118.

scope to his poems, particularly *La Sepmaine*, which will focus on the creation of the world and not only the French state. Miernowski points out that it is the Protestant influence in Du Bartas' poem that leads to differences with Ronsard:

L'auteur de *La Sepmaine* distribue des signes apparents de sa conformité au code idéologique et artistique du protestantisme, rompant par là avec la poétique ronsardienne.<sup>331</sup>

Huguenot poetry is defined by its focus on God and on Huguenot belief, in a move away from the Pléiade, which focusses on the art of poetry itself.

This chapter will study in detail the points in his poem at which Du Bartas combines classical references with his Protestant beliefs, and will analyse Du Bartas' aims in appropriating aspects of the structure and imagery of the *Aeneid*. It will then demonstrate Du Bartas' application of this combination of classical and Christian elements to a projected vision of French reconciliation in the aftermath of the Wars of Religion. Du Bartas' project does not merely reject the idea of Huguenot defeat in the Wars of Religion; rather, he presents an alternative outcome to the wars in which the Huguenots can find a place in the post-war French state, rejecting Ronsard's Catholic victory narrative. This mirrors Virgil's vision of the possibility of reconciliation between the Trojans and the Latins at the end of the *Aeneid* as it places Catholics and Huguenots on the same level at the end of the Wars of Religion.

### Du Bartas' Encyclopaedic Epic

The wide scope of Du Bartas' epic marks a development in the epic genre as a whole. Klara Csürös describes the desire for encyclopaedic knowledge in sixteenth-century epic poetry:

Du Bellay, Ronsard et leurs successeurs exigent [...] un savoir encyclopédique du poète qui veut exercer son talent dans le genre épique.<sup>332</sup>

The encyclopaedic nature of Du Bartas' poem goes beyond purely national or religious considerations and attempts to re-interpret the story of the creation of the whole world. Du Bartas' encyclopaedic subject matter thus extends the sort of encyclopaedic knowledge required on the part of the epic poet by Ronsard, whose *Franciade*,

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<sup>331</sup> Miernowski, *Dialectique et Connaissance*, p. 93.

<sup>332</sup> Csürös, "Dans le sillage de du Bartas", p. 117.

encyclopaedic with regard to history, nevertheless restricts its vision to the foundation of the French state.

Csürös also argues, however, that the concept of the encyclopaedic poem had existed since the emergence of Homer's epics, and was evidenced by the role of description in such poems:

Mentionnons enfin la description, propriété essentielle de l'épopée depuis Homère. Elle est tellement riche d'enseignements qu'on pourrait faire le tour des poèmes encyclopédiques de ce seul point de vue. Elle traduit l'insatiable appétit de la Renaissance.<sup>333</sup>

The context of this desire for a poem with an encyclopaedic scope goes some way towards explaining Du Bartas' inclusion of references to ancient works, and to Virgil in particular, as well as the Bible in *La Sepmaine* and *La Seconde Sepmaine*. The degree of artistry required in Du Bartas' combination of literary sources leads Marcel Raymond to question Du Bartas' claim simply to be following divine inspiration:

Mais comment se fait-il qu'un poète d'une si grande érudition professe ailleurs un beau mépris pour l'«art», et prétende obéir seulement à son inspiration? Car Du Bartas, outre la Bible, feuillette les exemplaires des Anciens.<sup>334</sup>

Raymond sees Du Bartas' poem as being too complex for a single source of inspiration, but he also challenges the modesty in Du Bartas' own claim that the poem is a product of divine inspiration. Du Bartas goes further than Maffeo Vegio in combining classical references with a Christian narrative, in that while he focusses specifically on the historical context of early modern France, he relates his project to the wider question of the foundation of the world. He desires his poems to reflect the encyclopaedic ideal of epic promoted by Homer, and this approach is conditioned both by his faith and the expectations of his audience, both of which demand an all-encompassing work. Although Du Bartas was not the first poet to conceive of an encyclopaedic work, his work is important as that of a Huguenot writer hoping to promote national reconciliation in the aftermath of the Wars of Religion.

Henri Weber points to Du Bartas' combination of different elements in his work as the factor which sets his work apart from those of other early modern poets:

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<sup>333</sup> Csürös, "Dans le sillage de Du Bartas", p. 117.

<sup>334</sup> Raymond, *L'influence de Ronsard*, p. 282.

du Bartas, au lieu de grouper toutes les connaissances humaines dans le monotone catalogue d'un songe ou d'un discours d'Adam, se contente d'illustrer chaque étape de la création, depuis celle du ciel, jusqu'à celle de l'homme, par un exposé des connaissances astronomiques, physiques, naturelles et biologiques qui l'expliquent et en précisent la portée.<sup>335</sup>

Weber sees *La Semaine* as a work which brings together different ways of viewing the creation story and of stratifying the creation into separate stages, mirroring the literary approach of *Genesis*. Yet Weber also points to a major change in Du Bartas' view of the world which sets his work apart from that of his predecessors: 'Le centre du poème n'est plus l'homme, mais Dieu. La connaissance n'est plus l'exaltation du pouvoir humain, elle sert simplement à louer Dieu dans sa création.'<sup>336</sup> In placing God at the centre of his poem, Du Bartas is able to encompass a consideration of the entire creation story in his work, going beyond an analysis which focusses on human beings themselves.

Weber also suggests that Du Bartas's approach of revealing the larger scientific and philosophical questions of the creation story shows that his work can adopt a wider social role within French society by replying to a desire for certain forms of knowledge:

Enfin la matière scientifique qu'il traite dévient par là même, sans aucun doute, beaucoup plus accessible. Pour les lecteurs du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, désireux avant tout de s'instruire et de s'édifier, la lecture de la *Semaine* était plus agréable que celle de n'importe quelle traité encyclopedique or de n'importe quelle apologie religieuse. L'image joue à cette époque le rôle que jouera l'esprit dans la vulgarisation scientifique du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle.<sup>337</sup>

The social role of Du Bartas's poem is to provide French society with access to scientific knowledge. The emphasis is on Du Bartas' epic as a source for the self-education of his readers, and in the access to scientific knowledge mirrors the expanding access to literary texts through their translation into the vernacular. Du Bartas' construction of his poem, combining Biblical and classical elements is intended to bring about this widening of knowledge.

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<sup>335</sup> Henri Weber, *La création poétique au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: de Maurice Scève à Agrippa d'Aubigné* (Paris: Nizet, 1956), p 538.

<sup>336</sup> Weber, *La création poétique*, p. 538.

<sup>337</sup> Weber, *La création poétique*, p. 549.

### Pagan influences in *La Sepmaine*

Du Bartas' combination of Christian and pagan imagery allows his Huguenots to look forward to a rebirth after the end of the Wars of Religion. He compares the divine healing qualities of medicine with the role of the classical gods in reviving the dead in ancient mythology, and also reflects on man's mortality:

L'Éternel non content d'avoir paré de fleurs,  
Enrichi de bons fruits, et parfumé d'odeurs  
Les plantes de la terre, a mesme en leurs racines  
Des humaines langueurs enclos les medecines.  
Vrayment la Parque assault l'homme en tant de façons,  
Qu'il ne verroit jamais sans leurs sucs vingt moissons,  
Ains semblable à la fleur du lin, qui naist et tombe,  
Tout en un mesme jour, son bers seroit sa tombe,  
Son printemps son hiver, sa naissance sa mort.  
Bon Dieu! Combien d'esprits qui jà frayent le bord  
Du fleuve stygien, rappelez par des herbes,  
De l'avare Pluton trompent les mains superbes?  
Jadis le fils barbu de l'imberbe Phoebus  
Dans l'attique palais recolla par leur jus  
Ce corps du jouvenceau, qui, chastement modeste,  
Prefera le supplice aux douceurs d'un inceste.  
Medée avec leurs sucs pour plaire à son Jason,  
Sçavante, rajeunit le gelé corps d'Aeson.<sup>338</sup>

The passage opens with the Biblical image of God creating the flowers, whose medicinal properties help to stave off a fateful death described in pagan terms as 'la Parque'. The classical imagery in this passage continues with the image of the souls almost on the banks of the Styx being able to evade greedy Pluto through the properties of these herbs and plants which have been created by God. Du Bartas then describes how two figures of classical mythology, Hippolytus and Aeson, were brought back to life by the effects of just such medicinal plants and by the intervention of Aesculapius, in the case of Hippolytus, and Medea in the case of Aeson. At the beginning of this passage, the classical world is associated with death ("la Parque", "fleuve stygien", "Pluton"), yet by the end of the passage, Du Bartas is including classical references to resurrection. Whereas d'Aubigné employs elements of the structure of the *Aeneid* in his own discussion of death and resurrection in *Les Tragiques*, as in his catalogue of Huguenot martyrs, Du Bartas refers directly to classical figures and concepts and places them

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<sup>338</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, pp. 88-89.



within a Christian thought process, combining them with his Christian message rather than merely using them for support.

Thus Du Bartas paints these classical, mythical figures as benefiting from the medicinal creation of a Christian God. Du Bartas casts Pluto as a metonym for death and shows Christianity as a source of life, metaphorically triumphing over the death represented by the pagan Pluto. This discussion of the cheating of death and God's power to rejuvenate the dead comes in a poem which purports to depict the creation of life rather than its destruction. It is thus because of God that birth does not automatically become death but presents the opportunity of life. The classical and mythological references serve to reinforce Du Bartas' image of a rejuvenated world, and his combination of these two sources demonstrates that this message can be found in both his ancient and his Christian references. The classical world is thus associated with resurrection in the Christian tradition and this analysis shows the pagans as able to live in and enjoy a world created by a Christian God, even if they were unaware of this fact.

Georges Pellissier suggests that the pervasive inclusion of ancient mythological references in sixteenth-century French poetry can prompt readers to question whether such works are Christian at all:

Quelle parenté aurait-il avec les restaurateurs de l'ancien Olympe, les chanteurs de l'amour et des plaisirs, les «nourrissons de la Muse Télienne?» Ce ne sont pas seulement ses genres poétiques, ses tours et ses formes que le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle emprunte à l'antiquité: il semble parfois, en lisant telle pièce de Ronsard ou d'un de ses disciples, que l'on ait affaire à des païens.<sup>339</sup>

Du Bartas, in contrast, allies his pagan references with Christian images, using pagan mythology to support a Christian creation narrative. Victor Bol sees this mixture of Biblical reference with pagan myth as typical of the humanist struggle present in Renaissance literature.

Mais d'autres difficultés se présentent, car, concurremment à la Bible, une autre source a irrigué son esprit: c'est l'Antiquité gréco-romaine, dont la connaissance a provoqué, on le sait assez, la révolution spirituelle de l'humanisme.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Georges Pellissier, *La Vie et les Œuvres*, p. 60.

<sup>340</sup> Du Bartas, *La Semaine*, p. 9.

Bol's analysis of Du Bartas' humanism is not quite as stark as Pellissier's judgement of the sixteenth century's admiration for antiquity. Bol proposes that the inclusion of Greek and Roman works within Du Bartas' poem is part of a complex literary strategy attempting to reconcile such works with Christian belief. Du Bartas uses classical references in order to present his vision of Huguenot rebirth to his humanist educated readers in terms they might understand. Thus whilst the message of the Bible provides the substance of Du Bartas' work, the classical references are intended to demonstrate Du Bartas' humanist style, through his awareness not only of classical images, but also their capacity to be reconciled with Biblical imagery. This reconciliation further adds to the complexity of Du Bartas' project.

### Humanist influences in Du Bartas

Pellissier portrays Du Bartas as fitting the image of the humanist author that Du Bellay had earlier imagined:

Dans sa *Deffence et Illustration de la langue française*, J. du Bellay fait d'avance appel au poète prédestiné qui consacrera par une grande œuvre la réforme dont lui-même donne le signal. Il sera «doué d'une excellente félicité de nature, instruit de tous bons arts et sciences, principalement naturelles et mathématiques, versé en tous genres de bons auteurs grecs et latins, non ignorant des parties et offices de la vie humaine, non de trop haute condition ou appelé au régime public, non aussi abject et pauvre, non troublé d'afflictions domestiques, mais en repos et tranquillité d'esprit, acquise premièrement par la magnanimité de son courage, puis entretenue par sa prudence et sage gouvernement». Lorsque du Bartas fit paraître ses œuvres, il y avait déjà une vingtaine d'années et plus que du Bellay avait écrit ces lignes, et, malgré tant de productions aimables et gracieuses dont la Renaissance avait enrichi la poésie française, le poète qu'un de ses chefs évoquait n'avait pas encore paru.<sup>341</sup>

The ideal characteristics of the ideal epic poet outlined by Du Bellay concern principally the social standing and education of the writer, rather than the content of his work. Du Bellay sees the ideal writer as a compromise between a series of educational and social elements, and personal qualities that will allow him to compose his work. To some extent, Du Bellay is calling for an encyclopaedic poet, who can combine his classical learning with the natural sciences and mathematics, suggesting that when he was writing his *Deffence*, he felt that this combination of elements had not yet been achieved. Furthermore, Du Bellay is also looking for a poet of a certain social standing within French society, as he is neither too highly placed in French society, nor too lowly.

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<sup>341</sup> Pellissier, *La Vie et les Œuvres*, p. 60.

Pellissier presents Du Bartas as best fitting this call because of his social position, and because of his mixing of ancient literary and scientific elements, and of the relevance of this mixing to the historical context, as Du Bartas seeks to address the role of the Huguenots in the French state at the end of the Wars of Religion. Du Bartas therefore responds to the social and political elements identified by Pellissier whilst also demonstrating the combination of ancient and political elements that Du Bellay calls for.

It is however questionable whether Du Bartas' work is entirely in the spirit of Du Bellay's theoretical demand. Du Bartas is first and foremost undertaking a literary and philosophical enterprise. He shows that the story of the book of Genesis can be retold in terms which relate to the religious imagery of the Greeks and Romans without making the message any less Christian. However, Pellissier demonstrates that Du Bartas was not the first writer, even if he was the first French poet, to conceive of the idea of a *Sepmaine* that included references to classical myth and legends. Pellissier points to the example of George Pisidas, a Byzantine poet of the seventh century, who Pellissier describes:

Georges Pisidas, diacre et chartulaire de la grande église de Constantinople [...], avait composé un vaste poème en vers iambiques, intitulé *Hexahéméron*, que du Bartas, qui n'ignorait pas les poètes latins, ni les grecs, imita en tout et partout, hormis en ses frontispices, en ses invocations et en ses épisodes.<sup>342</sup>

Du Bartas' poem therefore includes an additional layer of complexity, as he draws on the influence of other ancient authors in his own poem. Pisidas' hexameral model influences Du Bartas' structure alongside the Book of Genesis, again broadening the scope of the poem.

Du Bartas is therefore combining elements from at least three separate sources in *La Sepmaine*. His underlying model is the Book of Genesis, from which he takes the overarching structure and basic concept of a work describing the creation of the world, Virgil's *Aeneid*, which provides an epic structure, and the hexameral structure of Pisidas. In addition to these three basic elements, Du Bartas includes in this elements of ancient history and myth, contemporary political and religious references and conflates the

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<sup>342</sup> Pellissier, *La Vie et les Œuvres*, p. 69.

literary genres of epic and hexameron with Christian subject matter. Du Bartas shows that a Christian vision of the world with classical elements and references is possible, and that this can be related to the contemporary political situation in support of a wider message of reconciliation. Neil Kenny sums up this combination of elements in his analysis of Du Bartas' project: '*La Sepmaine* is an extraordinary projection of swathes of ancient learning (mediated by humanism) onto the hexameral framework provided by Genesis.'<sup>343</sup> Du Bartas' ancient references are thus nuanced by his Christian message, and it is the humanist 'mediation' that Kenny identifies that adds to the sophistication of Du Bartas' works as he combines pagan and Christian elements within the poems.

### Du Bartas' Huguenot Message

Du Bartas' *Sepmaine* demonstrates the inherent tension of composing a poem of such a wide scope, especially when it is about the process of Creation. Du Bartas instructs his readers in *La Sepmaine* to follow the path of the cross to God:

Apprenez d'autre part que la croix est l'eschelle  
Qui conduit les humains à la gloire immortelle,  
Et la voye de laict qui, blanchissant les cieux,  
Guide les saincts esprits au saint conseil de Dieu.<sup>344</sup>

The Huguenots will thus ascend into heaven via the cross from which Christ himself ascended. The metaphorical path of the cross is then made visible as the Milky Way, the path to the gods in classical mythology. Du Bartas conflates the metaphorical and religious path of the cross with the physical symbol of the Milky Way. Du Bartas is therefore using a natural phenomenon to represent in concrete terms the metaphorical faith he sees in the Huguenots. This combination of the metaphorical concept of faith with real images such as the Milky Way shows that Du Bartas wishes to inscribe his ideas onto the world around him, making his poem accessible to all, and not just to those who share the Huguenot faith. By writing for a universal readership, Du Bartas is returning to the earliest propagators of the Christian faith, in a return to the origins of Christianity that is in line with the aims of the reformation, as Weber explains: 'Aussi, [...] du Bartas remonte-t-il plus directement, probablement sous l'impulsion de la Réforme, aux Pères

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<sup>343</sup> Neil Kenny, *An Introduction to 16<sup>th</sup>- Century French Literature and Thought: Other Time, Other Places* (London: Duckworth, 2008), p. 154.

<sup>344</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 188.

de l'Église'.<sup>345</sup> By writing for a universal readership, Du Bartas is attempting to link the metaphorical implications of religious faith with the concrete implications of reconciling the Catholics and Huguenots after the Wars of Religion.

Du Bartas is preoccupied with the question of how, and in what condition, the French state will emerge from the Wars of Religion, and he devotes the end of the seventh day of *La Sepmaine* to the subject. The emphasis he places on the power of faith to overcome these troubles, again promotes a strongly Protestant message which defends Protestants under attack in the Wars:

Quand la brillante espee au despourveu menace  
Ou le ventre, ou la gorge, ou la jambe, ou la face,  
La main s'oppose au coup, et d'une peur sans peur  
Reçoit de ses germains la sanglante douleur.  
Et nous parmy l'horreur des sacrileges armes,  
Qui comblent l'univers de sang et de vacarmes,  
Pourrons-nous refuser le secours de nos mains  
A ceux qui par la foy nous sont plus que germains?<sup>346</sup>

Du Bartas believes that the Huguenots must intervene to save their fellow believers through military force; they are more than 'germain', and it is the faith of Huguenots that binds them together and makes them different from the Catholics. Du Bartas thus casts the Wars of Religion as a conflict in which the goal of the Huguenots is not to act as aggressors in killing Catholics, but to defend their fellow Huguenots who have no means of protecting themselves. His project is again shown to be more complex than that of d'Aubigné as he does not rely on his faith in God to predict that the Huguenots can be saved, but relies on concrete actions on Earth itself, applying his vision for the Huguenots to active events, rather than projecting possible outcomes for the Huguenots on the Day of Judgement.

Du Bartas draws a distinction between the metaphorical imagery of the epic and the physical incarnation of the epic poet when he describes his writing of the poem in nautical terms as he appeals to the Muses at the end of the poem to show that his narrative, like Odysseus or Aeneas, has safely completed its journey:

Sus donc, Muses, à bord: jettons, o chere bande,

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<sup>345</sup> Weber, *La création poétique*, p. 538.

<sup>346</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 198.

L'ancre arreste-navire; attachons la commande.  
Icy là tout nous rit, icy nul vent ne bat;  
Puis c'est assez vogue pour le jour du Sabbat.<sup>347</sup>

Du Bartas can drop anchor at this point as he has accomplished his long journey and the Seventh Day is a day of rest, during which the poem can finally pause and the author can reflect on what he has written. Just like the heroes of ancient epic poems, Du Bartas has sailed to his narrative conclusion. However, for Du Bartas, his ideological conclusion is not yet in sight. Although the creation of the world is complete at the end of *La Sepmaine*, the building of a Huguenot France has not yet begun. Du Bartas' aim will shift in *La Seconde Sepmaine* to describing the France in which the Huguenots can survive and thrive.

James Dauphiné sees Du Bartas' poems as demonstrating his readership's desire for a previous era of harmony despite scientific progress and the Wars of Religion:

À la fin du XVIe siècle, en dépit des guerres de religion et des découvertes scientifiques, le public semble avoir le besoin presque nostalgique d'un livre pérennisant le thème de *l'harmonia mundi*.<sup>348</sup>

The main intention of Du Bartas' work is thus not to portray the Huguenots as victorious in the Wars of Religion, but to imagine the fighting as finally over, and France at peace with itself. Peace in France is thus a central goal in *La Sepmaine*. The victory envisaged by Du Bartas therefore includes returning France to a state of peace.

### Du Bartas' Use of Pagan Sources

Pellissier sees *La Sepmaine* as setting an example of a general move away from pagan sources, suggesting that the references to classical deities in the work are simply a mark of respect for the poetic conventions of the period:

Cependant, quelques concessions que le poète ait cru devoir faire au goût et aux usages poétiques de ses contemporains, il ne faut pas oublier que, suivant sa propre expression, il donna le premier l'assaut à la mythologie païenne, d'autres devaient bientôt suivre son exemple.<sup>349</sup>

Du Bartas thus forms a new chapter in Renaissance French epic writing, in which the epic is conceived as a fundamentally Christian, rather than Greek or Latin, construct,

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<sup>347</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 198.

<sup>348</sup> Dauphiné, *La Bibliothèque de Du Bartas*, p. 12.

<sup>349</sup> Pellissier, *La Vie et Les Œuvres*, p. 96.

despite the retention of classical language and imagery. Du Bartas thus represents a move away from Virgil as a source of epic, a move which is made possible by the complexity of his work. Virgil's influence is much less explicit than in Ronsard or d'Aubigné, and the complexity of Du Bartas' engagement with the *Aeneid* therefore represents the ultimate 'overgoing' of Virgil's work. Du Bartas is required to change his strategy from that of Ronsard or d'Aubigné in order to make his poetry spiritually vital.

An example of this spiritual vitality can be seen in Du Bartas' description during the fifth Day of *La Semaine* of the lion in the arena about to attack Christians and cause their martyrdom:

Il resveille son ire et va roide tout droit  
Contre son enemy qui desjà presque boit  
L'onde du glacé Lethe, et les grands dieux reclame  
Non pour sauver sa vie, ains pour sauver son ame.<sup>350</sup>

The lion's enemy is on the verge of a death described in terms of descent into a pagan underworld, as he drinks the waters of Lethe, but his prayer to save not his life but his soul is that of a Christian. This image also evokes other references, notably the Biblical story of Daniel in the lions' den, where he is saved by his faith in God, and Christian martyrdom in the arena. Du Bartas' imagery of martyrdom recalls d'Aubigné's focus on the Huguenot martyrs in *Les Feux*, but Du Bartas employs the imagery here to a different end which reinforces his more complex argument overall. The Christian finds the solution to his predicament in prayer, yet his death is already foretold. In *Les Tragiques*, martyrdom itself represents a Huguenot victory. Du Bartas also represents Christian salvation in heaven after death, reflecting the encyclopaedic nature of his poem as the image taken from the ancient past is used to illustrate Christian views of salvation.

Du Bartas thus uses his classical sources in a different way from d'Aubigné, but he also uses them in a different way from Ronsard. Du Bartas' ancient sources remain foreign to Du Bartas, who demonstrates his independence from them and his ability to use them to support his argument by adapting them to suit his intentions without allowing them

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<sup>350</sup> Du Bartas, *La Semaine*, p. 162.

to completely overtake his argument. Raymond's comparison of the literary strategies employed by the two writers emphasizes this, firstly by noting Du Bartas' similarities with Ronsard:

Il faut remarquer que Du Bartas emprunte surtout à autrui des faits, des idées, des notions précises, et qu'il s'efforce ensuite d'ordonner à sa guise son abondante matière, de la vivifier sans se laisser asservir par ses modèles. Au lieu de paraphraser les textes des Anciens, il les modifie, il se sépare d'eux où il lui plaît, pareil en ceci à Ronsard qui s'exprime lui-même en chacune de ses créations.<sup>351</sup>

Raymond thus attributes to Du Bartas and to Ronsard a capacity for independent action in relation to their ancient sources. Both poets free themselves from their ancient models so that they can better employ them to their own literary ends.

Yet Raymond sees in this strategy an approach which is different from that of Ronsard:

Et voici où diffèrent les deux hommes: tandis que Ronsard assimile le suc de la Grèce et de Rome, se pénètre de l'esprit de ses auteurs et construit avec leur aide sa propre vision du monde, Du Bartas conserve jusqu'au bout, pour son malheur, une indépendance «Barbare», qui ne sait pas gouverner son instinct et ne connut jamais la juste «mesure» des Classiques.<sup>352</sup>

This characterization of Du Bartas' work is very condemnatory on the part of Raymond. He views Du Bartas' 'independence' from his ancient sources as a negative attribute of his writing, whilst this thesis argues that it is this independence that allows his text to be the most complex of all the engagements here discussed. Raymond views Ronsard's 'assimilation' of his ancient sources into his text as being a more perfected literary strategy than Du Bartas' 'barbarian' approach which is unable accurately to reflect and appreciate the true scale of the classical texts he draws on in his poem. This analysis of Du Bartas condemns his work unfairly. It is in his ability to distance his poem from his ancient sources, whilst still employing them to support the ends of his overarching argument, that Du Bartas shows his engagement with ancient sources, including Virgil, to be the most sophisticated. Ronsard allows his work to be governed by Virgil's poem in content, whilst Du Bartas successfully distances his work from that of Virgil whilst nonetheless referring back to the imagery of Virgil's work.

Ronsard's poetry is nonetheless a vital counter-example to Du Bartas' project because it shows what Du Bartas was expressly trying to avoid, as Jan Miernowski explains: 'La

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<sup>351</sup> Raymond, *L'influence de Ronsard*, p. 282.

<sup>352</sup> Raymond, *L'influence de Ronsard*, p. 282.



poétique ronsardienne apparaît comme une instance littéraire importante par le complexe d'admiration, de refus et de fidélité qu'elle inspire à *La Semaine*.<sup>353</sup> Even though Du Bartas has completely different political and religious convictions from Ronsard, he can never fully escape the influence of Ronsard's poetry, in a parallel with Lucan's inescapable Virgilianism and Ronsard's own inability fully to escape the influence of Virgil in *La Franciade*. Miernowski also contrasts Catholic and Huguenot poetry more widely:

Il n'est pas étonnant que les contadicteurs de Ronsard soient des protestants. Une poétique du vraisemblable devait être inadmissible à ceux qui soulignaient fermement l'exigence de la vérité, le jeu littéraire du sens devait paraître futile si l'on demandait à l'artiste de découvrir ses «divines pensées», d'apporter un savoir.<sup>354</sup>

Miernowski highlights the differences between Catholic and Protestant writers in their conception of the epic and its relationship to both reality and Christian belief. Ronsard's insistence on his poem as a representation of the 'vraisemblable' is rendered a moot point by the insistence of Huguenot writers that they are representing the religious truth in their poems. Du Bartas can 'overgo' Ronsard, to use Quint's term, because of the Huguenot emphasis on the truth, rather than the 'vraisemblable', as the only valid subject of literary works – a truth defined as the religious truth of Protestantism. Du Bartas' choice to write in epic verse allows him to challenge Ronsard's interpretation and representation of the conflict and the wider argument that the Catholics hold the religious 'truth' of Christianity. To this extent, Du Bartas' poem overgoes that of Ronsard because he bases his poem around Huguenot beliefs, which in themselves 'overgo' Catholicism by claiming a higher and more effective interpretation of the truth, an interpretation Catholics would see as wrong. Du Bartas combination of Huguenot understanding of Christianity and pagan elements is vital for understanding his interpretation of the conflict, as he retains Virgil's political message of reconciliation in his own poem whilst applying this to the new political and religious context of the Wars of Religion.

### Combining Pagan and Christian Influences within Du Bartas' Political Message

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<sup>353</sup> Miernowski, *Dialectique et Connaissance*, p. 18.

<sup>354</sup> Miernowski, *Dialectique et Connaissance*, p. 88.

Du Bartas does not focus solely upon the Christian God when he describes the creation of the world, although he includes God's first command:

L'immuable decret de la bouche divine,  
Qui causera sa fin, causa son origine.<sup>355</sup>

Du Bartas also calls to mind elements of the narrative of Virgil's *Aeneid* as he outlines the process of constructing his own project:

Tout beau, Muse, tout beau, d'un si profond Neptune  
Ne sonde point le fond: garde-toi d'approcher  
Ce Charybde glouton, ce Capharé rocher  
Où mainte nef, suivant la raison pour son Ourse,  
A fait triste naufrage au milieu de sa course.  
Qui voudra seurement par ce gouffre ramer,  
Sage, n'aïlle jamais cingler en haute mer;  
Ains costoye la rive, ayant la Foy pour voile,  
L'Esprit saint pour nocher, la Bible pour estoile.<sup>356</sup>

Virgil's narrative recounts both a nautical journey and the problems and obstacles Aeneas encounters along the way. Du Bartas here paints the error of following reason alone in a search for the truth as being akin to being trapped in the whirlpools of Charybdis. Rather, Huguenots should stay close to the shore, using Faith as the means to continue their journey, here signified by the image of the sail, and using the Bible as their guiding star. The link between Christian beliefs and the language of Greek and Roman voyager narratives is drawn very clearly here, with the imagery of the sea-voyage being used to illustrate a Christian journey towards the truth. The complex image demonstrates the superiority of Christian epic, which undertakes its sea-voyage narrative under the true guidance of the Bible, over classical epics denied this guide. The reference to the 'Ourse', or to the constellation of the Great Bear, Ursa Major, discovered by the Trojan Nauplius, emphasises the fallibility of being guided by reason, and not by faith.<sup>357</sup> Apollodorus recounts how, when Nauplius' son was killed during the Trojan war, he set up a beacon on the shores of Euboea, in order to wreck the Greek ships as they returned home.<sup>358</sup> A guiding light provided by Nauplius is thus likely to be a dangerous decoy for sailors who foolishly venture far out to sea: in contrast, under the guidance of the Bible, sailors are kept to safer shores, with no need to rely on any such

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<sup>355</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 21.

<sup>356</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 23.

<sup>357</sup> See Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 226.

<sup>358</sup> See Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, ed. James G. Frazer (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 142-145.

false light. Du Bartas thus uses a veiled classical reference, appealing to his learned readers' intellect, to warn them precisely against placing their trust in the reason that such classical learning represents, rather than in faith.

Michel Braspart emphasises the scale of the conflict envisioned within *La Sepmaine*:

Il n'a pas chanté la guerre des Troyens et des Grecs, ni le retour d'Ulysse dans sa patrie, ni la guerre des Huguenots contre les catholiques, mais la guerre éternelle du Rond contre l'Aigu, du Froid contre le Chaud, de la Terre et de l'Air, de l'Eau et du Feu.<sup>359</sup>

Du Bartas' scope is much wider than that of Homer or Virgil, Ronsard or d'Aubigné: he proposes a vision of the world in its entirety at the end of the Wars of Religion. Importantly, this vision is placed above the division between Catholics and Huguenots in order to promote a unified French state in the aftermath of the Wars of Religion. James Dauphiné argues that scope of the text is partly possible through the neutral religious vision that Du Bartas promotes:

*La Sepmaine* est théologiquement un texte d'une assez grande neutralité, ce qui est aussi l'une des raisons de son étonnante réception. Exposer les merveilles de la nature était la façon la plus normale et la plus consensuelle de reconnaître et de proclamer que «ce grand Dieu, qui tient la nature en nature» (V, 107), mérite que l'homme l'exalte et lui rende grâce.<sup>360</sup>

This praise of the natural world does not prevent Du Bartas from implying, through his focus on the creation and the beginnings of the world, that France might return to a new beginning in the aftermath of internal religious conflict. God's greatness is proclaimed through the images of creation in the poem, and this greatness is politically neutral. The wide scope of the poem is occasioned by Du Bartas' desire to show a reconciliation that is all-encompassing, and which therefore stresses that the Huguenots will be reconciled alongside the Catholics.

Braspart identifies Du Bartas' goal as not only describing the creation of the world in a Christian light, but also showing his fellow Christians that their aim must be to find freedom with God rather than searching for it on earth:

L'œuvre de Du Bartas tout entier porte, comme des blessures, les traces de ce mouvement perpétuel qui conduit l'homme chrétien du lieu où l'homme est adoré en celui où Dieu est reconnu

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<sup>359</sup> Braspart, *Du Bartas: poète chrétien*, p. 63.

<sup>360</sup> Dauphiné, *La Bibliothèque de Du Bartas*, p. 63.

et adoré comme Roi – du lieu où l’homme est prisonnier de sa liberté en celui où il est libéré par la loi et la Grâce de Dieu.<sup>361</sup>

The goal of Du Bartas’ epic thus lies not on earth as for Ronsard, nor in heaven, as for d’Aubigné, but in the internal spirituality that can be attained by a Christian: true freedom in God and His mercy. Instead of describing the hero’s physical journey, the poem shifts away from geography and towards metaphysics to describe the individual Christian’s spiritual journey towards God. Virgil proposed the possibility of a new beginning for the Roman state in the aftermath of civil war under the leadership of Augustus. Du Bartas is also proposing a rebirth for the French state through a belief in God’s ability to guide Christians towards a better future, and the Huguenots are uniquely equipped to follow God toward this new beginning because of their belief in His word. Du Bartas’ approach is thus teleological, in that the liberation of Christians will follow directly from their belief in the word of God. Just as Aeneas is driven through his journey and arrives in Italy as a result of the epic teleology of the *Aeneid*, so Du Bartas’ Christians will inevitably arrive at their goal through their belief in God. Du Bartas is thus casting the Huguenots in the place of the epic hero as they are guided forward by their faith.

Just as Du Bartas characterises the Huguenots through his imagery, he also uses imagery to characterise God. Kathryn Banks sees Du Bartas’ use of imagery as being central to his project as he attempts to reconcile imagery of God and the journey to salvation with the concept of Christian faith:

Du Bartas manipulates the poetic and linguistic particularities of his genre and style in order to make a distinctive contribution towards the mass of sixteenth-century thinking about the relationship between the divine and the cosmos, between God and images of him.<sup>362</sup>

This imagery of God in the poem is therefore an inherent part in the belief of the Huguenots to whom Du Bartas is addressing his poem. It is necessary to paint God in the imagery of the epic poem and of the Christian faith in order to demonstrate to the Huguenots their place within the creation and their route to grace.

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<sup>361</sup> Dauphiné, *La Bibliothèque de Du Bartas*, p. 68.

<sup>362</sup> Kathryn Banks, *Cosmos and image in the Renaissance: French love lyric and natural-philosophical poetry* (London: Legenda, 2008) p. 55.

Accordingly, Du Bartas casts God as the narrator of his epic, telling his readers that it is God who will reveal to them the story of the creation of the world:

Le monde est un nuage, à travers qui rayone,  
Non le fils tire-trait de la belle Latone  
Ains ce divin Phoebus, dont le visage luit  
A travers l'espaisseur de la plus noire nuit.<sup>363</sup>

Du Bartas immediately contrasts the classical image of Phoebus, son of Latona or Leto, representing the physical light cast through a physical cloud by the sun, with the image of his own 'Phoebus', the Christian God, who metaphorically gives light, representing life (in the form of salvation) to the entire world. This metaphorical light shines brighter than the sun. Du Bartas once again relies on a classical reference and classical terminology to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity, and shows that not only the individual Christian, but the Christian message itself, can be viewed through pagan imagery.

Du Bartas uses an analogy with painting to reflect on the necessary combination of classical learning and Christian devotion in his poem:

En vain Timanthe eust peint son horrible Cyclope,  
Parrhase son Rideau, Zeuxe sa Penelope,  
Appelle ce Venus, si jamais le soleil  
N'eust pour les faire voir sur eux jetté son oeil.<sup>364</sup>

These classical models of artistic talent are shown to be dependent upon the sun, metaphorically associated through Apollo with divine poetic inspiration, to illuminate their creations in order that they might be seen, admired and preserved. Through this classical image, Du Bartas illustrates his own prayer for the same divine inspiration, approval and blessing from the Christian God for his work.

Du Bartas' analogy in the Second Day in which he compares the creation of the world by God with the moulding of a ball of wax, uses this vision as an analogy for the Wars of Religion:

Quiconque a remarqué comme une seule masse  
De cire peut changer cent et cent fois de face,

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<sup>363</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>364</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 32.

Sans croistre ny décroistre, il comprend aisement  
 De ce bas univers l'assidu changement.  
 La matière du monde est ceste cire informe,  
 Qui prend sans se changer toute sorte de forme.  
 La forme est le cachet, et le grand Dieu vivant,  
 Le juste chancelier, qui, nuict et jour gravant  
 Ses grands et petits seaux dans ce corps si muable,  
 Rend une mesme masse or' vile, or' honorable.<sup>365</sup>

This analogy for the formation of the world presents God as intervening directly to mould the world into the form He desires. Banks points to Du Bartas' use of the imagery of creation as being simultaneously useful for explaining the world and an oversimplification of the reality that images, such as the ball of wax, describe:

Du Bartas reminds the reader of a similarity or image which in late-sixteenth-century France could be perceived as *real* rather than purely conceptual or figurative. The conceptual tool brought to the attention of Du Bartas's reader is one which apparently helps the poet to interpret the world; it is not one which is likely to be understood also to limit and even obstruct his apprehension of it.<sup>366</sup>

In Banks' reading, Du Bartas' imagery allows him better to explain his conception of the world to his readers. The reader is led to understand that comparing the world to a ball of wax is designed to help both the poet and the reader to understand the world, even if the metaphor draws the reader further away from reality. God acts as both narrator and actor in Du Bartas' epic. The image of the ball of wax acts as a means of figuring God, and both God and the world he creates require more imaginative figuring than the world in which the reader and poet live.

Du Bartas emphasises the fact that the matter which makes up the world is not itself changing, but that it is merely formed into a different shape:

Le principal motif de ces evenemens,  
 Est le mortel discord de nos quatre elemens,  
 OQui d'un repos haineux par ordre s'entremangent,  
 Et comme neige et flot l'un en l'autre se changent,  
 Fils et peres d'eux mesme.<sup>367</sup>

Yet, when Du Bartas describes the Wars of Religion and the internal conflict in France, God is absent; it is man who is responsible for these conflicts. God's role stops when civil war breaks out; He is no longer forming the world. The four elements are portrayed

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<sup>365</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 47-48.

<sup>366</sup> Banks, *Cosmos and Image*, p. 64.

<sup>367</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 48.

here as being entirely in control of themselves; they are not influenced by any higher power. God is only able to form these competing elements in the beginnings of the universe when He unites them and makes them all work together.

This description of the warring elements evokes the battle between the contrasting parties during the Wars of Religion and the consequent descent into chaos in France. Du Bartas is suggesting that during these wars the natural family situation and the link between God and humans has been interrupted, as the different elements have become their own sons and their own fathers; they perpetuate themselves. *La Sepmaine*, which describes God imposing order on chaos, shows the role that God can play in the world. Thus the influence of the *Aeneid* is found not only in the structure of Du Bartas' work, but also in the political messages it contains. Virgil implicitly promotes a Roman state united under the emperor Augustus, and Du Bartas, whose work is produced in a similar political context to that of the *Aeneid* despite the ongoing Wars of Religion, similarly promotes re-unification in the aftermath of civil war. Du Bartas thus presents his certain belief that a unified state will emerge out of the war, no matter how divisive the conflict, as Banks suggests: 'Whereas the notion of *concordia discors* demonstrates that cosmic order is maintained in part *because of* war, Du Bartas emphasises more the preservation of order *in spite of* war.'<sup>368</sup> The image of the ball of wax suggests that the world as perceived by Du Bartas always retains the potential for unification. In this way, Du Bartas presents a more sophisticated argument than d'Aubigné when imaging the outcome of the Wars of Religion as he retains in his narrative the possibility of reconciliation.

The expansive subject matter of *La Sepmaine* thus refers to contemporary French politics but goes far beyond the promotion of national glory through literature. Unlike Ronsard's *Franciade*, Du Bartas' work does not focus on the historical roots of France in ancient myth. Miernowski suggests that Du Bartas' religious beliefs meant that considerations of literary style were secondary for him, whereas they assumed much more importance for Ronsard: 'C'est cette force divine, et non le vain artifice de

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<sup>368</sup> Banks, *Cosmos and Image*, p. 85.

l'homme, qui guide le poète protestant dans sa tâche.<sup>369</sup> Du Bartas chooses those elements of ancient works that conform to his Christian project. They merely serve to reinforce his presentation of the biblical creation story, whereas Ronsard sets out with the specific intention of relating the history of France to the Roman national epic. Miernowski is correct in his analysis that Ronsard is more concerned with ensuring his poem's stylistic closeness to the *Aeneid*, whereas Du Bartas is primarily concerned with expounding the message of reconciliation that he finds in Virgil. Du Bartas therefore combines this message of reconciliation with Christian and pagan imagery in order to show a way forward for the French state in the aftermath of civil war.

### La Seconde Sepmaine as French National Epic

The opening of Du Bartas' *La Seconde Sepmaine* intermingles the desire to write a history with a demonstration of Du Bartas' faith. The invocation is addressed directly to God:

GRAND DIEU, qui de ce Tout m'as fait voir la naissance,  
 Descouvre son berceau : montre moy son enfance.  
 Pourmenemon esprit par les fleuris destours  
 Des verers doux-fleurans, où serpenoit le cours  
 De quatre vives eaux : conte moy quelle offense  
 Bannit des deux Edens Adam, et sa semence.  
 Dy moy, qui d'immortel s'estant mortel rendu,  
 Nous apporta du ciel l'antidote attendu.  
 Donne moy de chanter l'histoire de l'Eglise,  
 Et l'histoire des Roys. Permits que je conduise  
 Le monde à son cercueil, allongeant mon propos  
 Du premier des Sabats jusqu'au dernier repos.<sup>370</sup>

Du Bartas' aim is made clear from the start. He combines the history present in the Bible with the history of the Church and of the French state. Du Bartas is seeking divine blessing for his revelation of this history and he thus takes the Bible as his underlying source, referring from the outset not to a pagan epic hero, in the style of the epics of Homer and Virgil, but to Adam, whose actions will lead to the fall of the human race. He thus refers to a fundamentally un-heroic outcome for the actions of the central character of his epic, rather than the rise of any particular national race.

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<sup>369</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 118.

<sup>370</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, pp.21-23.



Yet although Adam falls, man will eventually find his salvation through Christ: Du Bartas predicts a similar outcome for the Wars of Religion, with faith in God redeeming the Huguenots after the wars and securing their future. Du Bartas asks God for permission to drive the world into its coffin, and it is God who controls the fate of the world as he wishes to depict it in his poem. These opening lines indicate Du Bartas' intention to create a project focussing on a global, rather than merely national, renewal.

However, Du Bartas nevertheless indicates his reliance on God to accomplish the poem he is writing, and to express this he again takes up the sailing metaphor with which he ended *La Sepmaine*:

Je sçay que ceste mer est sans fond et sans rive :  
Mais, ô Pilote saint, tu feras que j'arrive  
Au port de mon désir : où, tout moite, je veus  
Celebrer ta faveur, et te payer mes voeus.<sup>371</sup>

Du Bartas here presents the subject that he is navigating in his poem as limitless, comparing it to the sea in order to emphasise the limitless nature of God's creation, and looking to the future. The epic metaphor, as employed in *La Sepmaine*, again places Du Bartas himself in the position of an epic hero during a sea voyage: he casts his desire to praise God as the port at which he eventually wishes to arrive, and hopes that this will earn him divine favour during his voyage, but acknowledges that his poem can never fully encompass all of God's creations. Du Bartas fundamentally changes the characterisation of the author in the epic poem, as he characterises his act of writing as the metaphorical equivalent of the epic hero's physical journey. In this way, he fills the gap that exists in his poem whereby there is no clear central hero by placing himself, as the poet, in this position.

Du Bartas makes an explicit link between his political and literary intentions in his work and Virgil's support of the Roman imperial project in the *Aeneid*:

Ainsi dans Pampeloune  
Puisses-tu quelque jour reprendre ta couronne;  
Ainsi de tes voisins tousjours sois-tu l'honneur,  
L'amour de tes sujets, de tes haineux la peur :  
Ainsi jamais le ciel contre toy ne s'irrite,  
L'Eternel soit ton bras, son esprit ta conduite;

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<sup>371</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 23.

Ainsi le glaive au poing, combattant à ton flanc,  
Puissé-je, tout couvert de poussière et de sang,  
Fendre l'ost Espagnol, ou forcer quelque ville,  
Et le combat fini, te servir d'un Virgille.<sup>372</sup>

Du Bartas is addressing Henri de Navarre, cast as Augustus to Du Bartas' Virgil. Du Bartas sees his future monarch as the hope of the French Huguenots, an epic hero, equal with the figure of Alexander the Great: 'Egax tes verds lauriers aux lauriers d'Alexandre.'<sup>373</sup> Henri is thus set up by Du Bartas not only as a future Huguenot king of France, but also as an imperial ruler, in the manner of Alexander.

This increases the status of Henri, but also outlines the possibility of an outcome to the French Wars of Religion which can encompass Huguenots as well as Catholics in an empire. In the *Aeneid*, Augustus represents the possibility of peace among the Roman people following the end of the civil war. Here, Henri is characterised as doing God's work, with God as Henri's arm and His spirit as Henri's guiding principle. Du Bartas casts Henri as a leader who will expand the influence of the French state beyond its own borders by intervening in the affairs of other countries in contemporary Europe. The reference to 'Pampelonne' is to the dispute over his Kingdom of Navarre, where Henri's Huguenots were fighting French Catholics and the Spanish, themselves synonymous with the Catholic power. Henri is thus shown fighting for a Huguenot France even beyond its own borders, extending the Huguenot cause across Europe. Henri is cast as Du Bartas' epic hero at this point, fighting to defend his nation against foreign enemies. Du Bartas sees himself as the Virgil to Henri de Navarre's Augustus, telling the story of his victory in the civil war through his epic poem, and spreading the empire of Protestantism throughout Europe. The specificity of these aims marks a change from the universal considerations of the first *Sepmaine* and a move towards a much narrower nationalist epic. *La Seconde Sepmaine* therefore represents a retreat from the increasing sophistication of engagement with the *Aeneid* that has been analysed through the thesis.

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<sup>372</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 24.

<sup>373</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 23.

Du Bartas is therefore caught between two writing strategies when composing his second poem. Although he focuses his main efforts on using material from Genesis for his epic, he also uses this material to construct a political allegory. This political allegory can be seen most obviously in the clearest link between *La Seconde Sepmaine* and the *Aeneid*, when Du Bartas, during the 'Deuxième Journée', imagines himself in a hell derived entirely from the underworld described in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Virgil's placing of Aeneas in the ancient underworld has a political point. Virgil uses the context of the underworld to expound his vision of the aftermath of the civil war by parading the future rulers of the Roman Republic before Aeneas and his readers, and looking to the future leadership of Augustus to help Rome emerge from its civil war.

This political message is converted by Du Bartas into a Christian vision of the role of heaven and hell:

Las ! quels spectres hideux? Quels phantosmes horribles?  
 Quels tonnerres? quels cris? quels hurlemens terribles?  
 Suis-je pas sur le bord du bruyant Phlegeton?  
 Tisiphone, Megere, et toy triste Alecton,  
 Quel tan vous fait quitter les antres effroyables  
 De l'enfer tenebreux? Monstres abominables,  
 Ministres de Pluton au renfrogné sourcy,  
 O filles de la nuict, que faites-vous icy?<sup>374</sup>

Du Bartas again places himself in the position of the epic hero, travelling through a metaphorical hell. This passage recalls almost exactly the attitude of Aeneas when he first enters the underworld alongside the Sibyl, unsure of what is happening around him as he approaches the Styx:

Aeneas miratus enim motusque tumultu  
 'dic' ait, 'o virgo, quid vult concursus ad amnem?  
 Quidve petunt animae? vel quo discrimine ripas  
 Hae linqunt, illae remis vada livida verrunt?'<sup>375</sup>

The repeated questions recall Virgil's style almost exactly, yet Du Bartas seems more afraid of what he sees than Aeneas, whose questions reflect simple incomprehension. Yvonne Bellenger cites Simon Goulart's commentary, which suggest that 'bruyant' may have originally been 'brulant', and notes that this image of the fiery Phlegethon is an

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<sup>374</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>375</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 6, ll. 317-320.

imitation of the pagan poets. Bellenger further notes that the September 1584 edition replaces 'Pluton' with 'Satan' mixing Christian and Pagan imagery of the underworld.<sup>376</sup>

Du Bartas has again placed himself in the same position as the epic hero, both in his attitude to and his location in the underworld, where he calls up:

la troupe criminelle  
Qui boit le Styx soulfreux, le Phlegeton brulant,  
Le bourbeux Acheron, le Cocyte sanglant.<sup>377</sup>

He imagines the scene in terms of the classical underworld. For Du Bartas, the Christian vision of hell and the pagan underworld are analogous, and he does not enter into the finer details of Virgil's division of the Elysian Fields from Limbo and Tartarus. What he does do, however, is to place Adam at the centre of this image: 'Adam vous y bastit cent enfers par son vice.'<sup>378</sup> Du Bartas is here referring to the 'Eumenides' or the 'Erinyes', the furies who will now be cast into hell. It is a Christian figure who has created his underworld, described in pagan terms, for sinners on earth. The fall of Adam casts all of mankind into this hell until they are redeemed by God. The epic hero is thus inverted by Du Bartas, with the epic hero creating hell through his vice, the opposite of the epic hero Aeneas, who searches for the ideal home for his Trojan followers. Du Bartas thus not only places a fundamentally biblical figure in the midst of a fundamentally pagan world, he inverts the very conception of the ancient epic hero to fit with his Christian context. Adam's role is heroic only in the sense in which he enacts the fall of man which will lead to man's eventual redemption. In being responsible for original sin, Adam sets up this eventual redemption and forces the Christians to look to God for their salvation.

This is where *La Seconde Sepmaine* reaches its lowest and darkest point. Like Aeneas, Du Bartas and his Huguenots emerge from the underworld; they go on to lead the French state to a Huguenot victory, attaining an imperial goal that again recalls Virgil's *Aeneid*. On the second of the four existing days of the incomplete *Seconde Sepmaine*, Du Bartas states that although his poem may metaphorically travel the world,

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<sup>376</sup> See Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine* pp. 158-159.

<sup>377</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 160.

<sup>378</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 160.

it will always come home to France, again contrasting universalism with specificity and emphasising *La Seconde Sepmaine's* concern with the French nation:

Ha, France, je te voy : tu me tends jà le bras :  
Tu m'ouvres ton giron, et, mere, ne veux pas  
Qu'en estrange pays, vagabond, je vieillisse.  
Tu ne veux qu'un Brasil de mes os s'orgueillisse,  
Un Catay de ma gloire, un Peru de mes vers :  
Tu veux estre ma tombe aussi bien que mon bers.<sup>379</sup>

Du Bartas views France as a divine mother to whom he is always welcome to return. Du Bartas presents himself as unequivocally French; he is not an exile from his own country. The national identity of the French Huguenots is therefore of paramount importance to Du Bartas in *La Seconde Sepmaine* because they are required to create the future French state that Du Bartas envisages.

Du Bartas couches his views of France's imperial future in terms that could be seen as closely imitating Roman imperial expansion at the fall of the Republic:

O mille et mille fois terre heureuse et feconde!  
O perle de l'Europe! ô Paradis du Monde!  
France, jet e salue, ô mere des guerriers,  
Qui jadis ont planté leurs triomphans lauriers  
Sur les rives d'Euphrate, et sanglanté leur glaive  
Où la torche du jour et se couche, et se lève.<sup>380</sup>

As the 'paradis du monde', France has become the new Eden from which an ideal, French-dominated world will be created. This ideal world will outshine all the ancient cultures in their knowledge and learning:

Mere de tant d'ouvriers, qui d'un hardy bon-heur  
Taschent comme obscurcir de Nature l'honneur :  
Mere de tant d'esprits, qui de sçavoir epuisent  
Egypte, Grece, Rome, et sur les doctes luisent  
Comme un jaune esclattent sur les palles couleurs,  
Sur les astres Phebus, et sa fleur sur les fleurs.<sup>381</sup>

Du Bartas here identifies a movement by which the French are trying to outdo even the honour of nature with their poems. This indicates the importance of epic poetry for Du Bartas; the honour of describing the creation of the world can outshine the honour of the creation itself. Du Bartas is therefore promoting his own project. The epic simile

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<sup>379</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 417.

<sup>380</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 417.

<sup>381</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 418.

also highlights the role of the epic poets in not only clarifying the nature of the world for their readers, but also going beyond ancient sources in describing the world. Du Bartas sees the ancient cultures as being unable fully to support the nature of France; French culture goes beyond them because French faith acts in addition to French learning to define a society more advanced than that of these ancient cultures.

Du Bartas appeals directly to God at this point in the poem, asking Him to end the conflict in France and extinguish the fire of war:

O Dieu, qui tiens ouvers  
Tousjours les yeux sur nous, de l'eau de ta Clemence  
Amorti le brasier qui consume la France,  
Balaye nostre ciel : remets, ô Pere doux,  
Remets dans ton carquois les traicts de ton courroux.<sup>382</sup>

Only God's direct intervention, putting out the fire of religious war with His water of mercy, can bring peace to France. The achievement of peace will be the first step in forming Du Bartas' vision of the future French state and requires the direct intervention of God. Frank Lestringant contrasts the imagery of this final plea to God with those at the end of each Book of *Les Tragiques*: 'La prière finale en faver de la paix contraste avec les appels à la vengeance et au courroux de l'Éternel, qui, chez D'Aubigné, concluent chacun des sept livres des *Tragiques*.'<sup>383</sup> This again shows the more sophisticated approach of Du Bartas to the conflict, looking towards reconciliation rather than a continuation of the conflict.

Du Bartas' project in *La Seconde Sepmaine* is thus almost entirely different from that in *La Sepmaine*. The poem is, like the *Aeneid*, an explicitly nationalistic poem and it is concerned with the future imperial ambitions of the French state. The focus of the poem has been narrowed, which brings its engagement with Virgil to the fore, as Du Bartas imitates Virgil's vision of the national state as the basis for a global empire. Virgil's prediction of a global empire comes to lie at the heart of patriotic epic. Even Lucan, in the *Pharsalia*, approves of the Roman imperial project despite his disagreement with Augustan rule in Rome, as Quint explains:

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<sup>382</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 419.

<sup>383</sup> Du Bartas, *La Seconde Sepmaine*, p. 419.

Virgil, following the earlier Roman poets, had decisively transformed Homeric epic into the celebration of the history of national greatness. The *Aeneid* had depicted Rome's history as shaped into a linear and teleological narrative by two interrelated and finally identical principles: the expansion of her empire to world dominion and the establishment of the Augustan monarchy. Lucan's quarrel is with this second historical principle, not the first; he is as much of an imperialist as Virgil. And thus Lucan claims allegiance to the patriotic epic.<sup>384</sup>

To an extent, the same process is taking place in Du Bartas' work. Du Bartas supports the notion of a French empire; he disagrees merely with the idea that it should exist under Catholic rule. Like Lucan, Du Bartas objects not to the concept of empire itself, but rather to the domestic politics that determine the way in which that empire is governed. To this extent, Du Bartas is composing an anti-epic that supports French imperial expansion, but disagrees with the prevailing Catholic opinion of the religious message that should accompany that expansion.

In this respect, Du Bartas recalls the view of d'Aubigné that another France and another French empire are possible, but his solution is more sophisticated than d'Aubigné's. D'Aubigné sees the inclusion of the Huguenots in a French empire on earth, under Catholic control, as impossible. D'Aubigné's Huguenots must seek victory on the Day of Judgement rather than acceptance within a Catholic-controlled French state. Du Bartas' vision expands this state into an empire and combines pagan and Christian influences in a more sophisticated literary strategy than that of d'Aubigné, as Miernowski explains:

En exaltant sa propre œuvre, le poète tente de se comparer, peut-être inconsciemment, à Dieu, le Maître vénéré, inaccessible, jaloué. [...] Impuissante à reproduire le geste fondateur des origines, la création poétique essaye de singer l'Œuvre parfait: la Création divine.<sup>385</sup>

Du Bartas' own work of creation thus resembles that of God. If God has created everything, then He has also contributed to the creation of Du Bartas' epic, which in turn recreates the story of God's creation. The poem thus seems to reflect on itself, making Du Bartas' work in effect a work of God's, and placing Du Bartas within the wider creation process.

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<sup>384</sup> Quint, *Epic and Empire*, pp. 156-157.

<sup>385</sup> Miernowski, *Dialectique et Connaissance*, p. 313.

Banks views Du Bartas' poem as not going as far as d'Aubigné in *Les Tragiques*, particularly in its depiction of the relationship between God and mankind:

Therefore, while both Du Bartas and d'Aubigne perceive the natural world both as an image of God and also (in a non-theological sense) of society, d'Aubigné solves this problem more effectively than Du Bartas does in his depiction of cosmic forces, thanks to the central role played in the *Tragiques* by a narrative of man's sin and God's justice: the image of God has been tarnished through human sin but will be restored.<sup>386</sup>

D'Aubigné solves the problem of the conflict represented by the Wars of Religion by placing Judgement at the end of the poem. But this neat solution does not automatically indicate a more sophisticated argument, moreover, it moves significantly away from the more open-ended resolution presented in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Du Bartas, like Virgil, is arguing that the conflict of the Wars of Religion will have to be resolved in the aftermath of the fighting; Catholics and Huguenots cannot simply wait for the Day of Judgement to arrive and have their problems solved for them. Banks suggests that a strategy closer to that of d'Aubigné's could have resolved the problems of worldly division in Du Bartas' poem:

Furthermore, conflict posed problems for natural-theological endeavours. The cosmic in general, and the elemental in particular, provided images of God, yet were also fraught by division, dissolution, and death. Christian narrative provided an explanation for this but it is one which Du Bartas – privileging images over narrative sequence and theological discussion – uses less than many of his contemporaries, particularly Protestants like d'Aubigné. A greater emphasis upon the Last Judgement and God's future restoration of the world would, in one sense, have solved the problems which seem to seethe under the surface of the *Sepmaine*; yet, instead, the poet is keen to stress that the postlapsarian world still images God, and even to confuse it with the prelapsarian one.<sup>387</sup>

For Banks, Du Bartas's failure to acknowledge or resolve worldly division is problematic within the context of a poem that uses an imperfect world to illustrate a perfect God. However, from a literary and political perspective, worldly division is less a problem in the poem than a subject of sophisticated interpretation. From a political perspective, Du Bartas' work acknowledges, unlike d'Aubigné's, that the political and religious situation in France after the Wars of Religion is too complicated to be solved simply by the Day of Judgement and the elevation of the Huguenots into heaven. From a literary

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<sup>386</sup> Banks, *Cosmos and Image*, p. 97.

<sup>387</sup> Banks, *Cosmos and Image*, p. 99.



perspective, a poem that refuses to disguise either the tensions placed upon national identity by civil war or the responsibility on both sides to act for reconciliation in the aftermath of that war responds much more closely to the conciliatory message of the *Aeneid*. This Virgilian awareness of the need for the French state to move forward from the Wars of Religion is further emphasised by Du Bartas pointing to the emergence of the French empire, which the French state will have to focus upon and in which the Huguenots will have a role to play.

Du Bartas's work also reflects on the political context of the French Wars of Religion, comparing it in *La Sepmaine* with the political context of the end of the Roman republic:

Tant de gouttes de feu que le ciel larmoya  
Dessus les champs lucains, lors que Rome envoya  
La fleur oenotrienne en la riche campagne  
Que l'eau traine-limon du gras Euftrate bagne,  
Presageoit que le fer du Parthe tire-droit  
Presque le nom lucain l'an suivant esteindroit.<sup>388</sup>

Du Bartas here traces the beginnings of the Roman empire to its geographical limits. The reference to 'la fleur oenotrienne' links the Romans back to the *Aeneid* and their original arrival in Italy, as Virgil describes the Oenotriens as the forbears of the Italians:

Oenotri coluere viri; nunc fama minores  
Italiam dixisse ducis de nomine gentem.<sup>389</sup>

Du Bartas links this image with the Euphrates river, the easternmost extent of the Roman empire. Du Bartas is showing the extent of the Roman empire and he wishes a French empire to rival it. Yet Du Bartas is also warning that there will be an end to this imagined French empire, just as all empires have fallen before it, delineating the boundaries of his imperial empire.

Du Bartas does not merely see a French empire as a geographical rival to the former Roman empire; he also adopts a new central figure around which to base the creation of that empire. Adam is a flawed hero; whilst Aeneas is successful in reaching Italy, Adam falls from grace and creates original sin. Adam is powerless to stop the fall

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<sup>388</sup> Du Bartas, *La Sepmaine*, p. 62.

<sup>389</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 3, ll. 165-166.

of the world which he has precipitated. Miernowski points out that the overflowing description of God's creation largely bypasses human beings themselves, as if they are broadly irrelevant in Du Bartas' vision of the world:

Ainsi, pour du Bartas, la Création semble toujours remplie de merveilles qui sont autant de miracles divins. Mais, marqué par le péché, l'homme reste curieusement impuissant face à cette richesse sémantique. C'est la chute qui a irrémédiablement compromis toute tentative d'atteindre l'être des créatures à travers le langage.<sup>390</sup>

Man's fall has left him in a peripheral position to the creation narrative, and it is now impossible to reach God through language.

In *La Seconde Sepmaine*, man occupies a more central position in the narrative, but he is cast in the position of damaging creation rather than aiding it. Sin dogs the figure of Adam in *La Sepmaine* just as Aeneas' constant 'pietas' dogs him throughout his journey; neither hero can escape their respective obligations. Yet the figure of the epic hero is inverted. The Roman hero who rises from the desolation of Troy manages to use his 'pietas' to ensure that he reaches his promised land of Italy, reinstating the glory of his own race, whilst the Christian anti-hero falls from his promised land into the abyss of sin, damning his own race in the process. The identity of the epic hero also shifts throughout Du Bartas' poem. The French Huguenots are to an extent cast as the heroes of the poem, as it is they who will have to rebuild the French state around them in the aftermath of the civil war. Du Bartas himself is cast as the voyaging epic hero, in the imagery of classical epic, because he represents God's creation to his readers so that they might build a better world. Finally, Adam is viewed as the epic hero who brings about the salvation not through his virtue, but through his central flaw of sin against God. Du Bartas questions the nature of the epic hero in presenting all of these options to his reader, unveiling a sophisticated questioning of the nature of the epic hero which is not apparent in either Ronsard or d'Aubigné, or in Virgil's model.

#### Conclusion: Du Bartas as Huguenot Adapter of the *Aeneid*

In both *La Sepmaine* and *La Seconde Sepmaine*, Du Bartas is influenced and inspired by two different, and in parts competing, sources: the Bible and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Du Bartas'

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<sup>390</sup> Miernowski, *Dialectique et Connaissance*, p. 310.

project requires him to balance these competing elements, and, in doing so, construct a French epic poem that depicts the Genesis story whilst also taking into account the literary and political influence that Virgil's work asserts. Du Bartas combines elements of Virgil's historical context with classical theology to paint a picture of a future French state which is at peace with itself and is able to accommodate both Catholics and Huguenots.

This dichotomy of influences reveals a tension within Du Bartas' conceptions of his project, as his work proposes a new start for the French nation and an opportunity to rebuild following the ravages of civil war, whilst relying on a return to the literary models of a more ancient past. This dichotomy is clear in the approach to the two poems, with the universality of the subject matter and scope of *La Sepmaine* being narrowed to an explicitly French nationalist scope in *La Seconde Sepmaine*. There are several parallels that can be drawn between Du Bartas' two poems and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Although Du Bartas initially sets out to write a Christian epic narrating the Creation story, he follows this with an account of man's role in the world in *La Seconde Sepmaine*, which shows the downfall that follows the Creation story, and then presents an opportunity to rebuild this world for the French. Virgil exhibits a similar process in the *Aeneid*, showing a possible return to a newly conceived Troy, even if his vision does not precisely reflect the reality of Rome under Augustus. Both authors see a chance for the internal conflicts of their respective nations to be resolved and thus for a return to a previous ideal state of affairs. Virgil has therefore been brought into an expressly Christian narrative in order to support Du Bartas' political aims in his interpretation of the biblical story of creation and of Adam and the Original Sin.

Du Bartas is able, through his writing of the two poems, to construct his vision of the creation of the world, and then to chart the development of that creation after the fall of man. *La Seconde Sepmaine* allows him to explain fully the national context of France and the aftermath of the Wars of Religion. Du Bartas thus links the creation of the world with the contemporary context of the French state after the Wars of Religion. Du Bartas has fundamentally shifted the concept of the epic in France by writing his two *Sepmaines* in the way he does. He has shifted the epic away from a narrow, self-

centered, nationalistic enterprise and towards a much wider project that questions the future of the French state through a story about the origins, not only of that state, but of the whole of creation, before shifting his focus back to France specifically. The reliance on the biblical creation story is part of a fundamentally different view of the history of France from that of Ronsard, for example. First and foremost, Du Bartas relies on the biblical story to explain how the world came into being and he then uses this same source to justify why France is in a state of civil war and to show how the French nation can emerge from it. Du Bartas' approach overgoes that of Ronsard. By retracing the story of the world back to the beginnings of time, and by considering France's place within it, Du Bartas' longer view overrides the specific question of a French national foundation epic by placing the creation of France within a global context.

By referring to pagan works, such as the *Aeneid*, in his poem, Du Bartas tries to emphasise the role that those works play in explaining the poem. With the descent into hell, the creation of a new empire, and the ever-present influence of God and the pagan gods, Du Bartas is also forming his own distinctive image of the French state within God's creation and within a Huguenot interpretation of God's power. Du Bartas therefore combines non-Christian elements with the Bible in order to elucidate his image of the world, acknowledging that non-Christian ideas have contributed to his readers' understanding of the world just as much as Christian ones. The scope of Du Bartas' project and the sophistication of its construction – including clear reference both to Virgil and to the Bible – represent the height of the reception of Virgil in early modern French epic, in that Du Bartas makes the influence of both of these works clear throughout his own poem, and yet copies neither of them directly. Instead, he defines a new goal for epic poetry in France which does not confine itself to dealing solely with national, religious, or literary concerns, but rather addresses them within a vision of global creation and global construction that surpasses that of the other French epic poets.

Although the Bible and the *Aeneid* both stand as literary sources that had been adapted independently and in varying ways by other writers to reflect the context of the French Wars of Religion, Du Bartas adapts and draws on both texts within the same epic

poem, acknowledging the complexity of the literary and historical context of his reinterpretation of the Christian creation story. Du Bartas uses the *Aeneid* in three distinct ways in *La Sepmaine* and *La Seconde Sepmaine*, changing the role of the *Aeneid* in influencing the two poems. Firstly, throughout the two works, Du Bartas places himself in the position of the voyager hero, mirroring the position of Aeneas. In doing so, Du Bartas changes the conception of epic, and represents himself both as a Virgilian author figure and also as the figure of the epic hero. Secondly, in *La Sepmaine*, Du Bartas combines biblical references with Virgil's political message of reconciliation in order to outline his idealised image of the aftermath of the conflict in France. Thirdly, in *La Seconde Sepmaine*, Du Bartas takes this combination of biblical references and Virgilian politics a step further when he combines the imagery of a pagan underworld with that of Adam as a flawed Christian hero and adds to this a vision of a Huguenot empire, spreading metaphorically throughout Europe and the world.

Du Bartas is not only combining a more complex range of elements than either Ronsard or d'Aubigné, but his aim in proposing this combination is also more complex. Du Bartas not only refutes the prevailing Catholic victory narrative as envisioned by Ronsard, but he also goes beyond the rebuttal of the Catholic victory as proposed by d'Aubigné and proposes that the Huguenots can emerge victorious from the Wars of Religion. They can achieve this both with the help of Henri de Navarre as their monarch, and by envisioning the potential expansion of Huguenot influence on the back of expanding French imperial power. Du Bartas' creation narrative is one that creates a new world for the Huguenots out of the destruction of civil war. It is this move beyond imagining the immediate outcome of the conflict and beyond its effects solely on the French state that makes Du Bartas' poem the most complex of the various different approaches to the *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France. Du Bartas goes beyond both Ronsard and d'Aubigné, who are primarily concerned with the immediate aftermath of the war and its impact in France. Even if d'Aubigné, in *Les Tragiques*, looks forward to the Day of Judgement, he does this in the context of the French Huguenots who have been martyred during the Wars of Religion and not as part of a wider creation narrative. Du Bartas retains clear links to the *Aeneid*, as does Ronsard in *La Franciade*, along with the element of anti-epic present in d'Aubigné's *Les Tragiques*, in order to propose the

re-creation of the French state around a model that will allow the expansion of Huguenot beliefs. It is this combination of elements in the two *Sepmaines* that singles Du Bartas out as undertaking the most sophisticated literary engagement with the *Aeneid* in sixteenth-century France.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has shown that early modern French engagement with the *Aeneid* is a process that becomes increasingly sophisticated throughout the sixteenth century. This thesis is also the first study of the *Aeneid* in early modern France to view the engagement of French authors with Virgil's poem not as a collection of individual engagements, produced in the same century and under broadly similar literary conditions, but as a series of progressively more sophisticated engagements that respond to the literary, historical and cultural context in which they were produced. Each individual interpretation strikes a balance between the literary emulation and adaptation of the *Aeneid*. Furthermore, each of the different forms of engagement provides part of the answer to the research questions posed in the introduction to the thesis. In addressing those questions, this thesis has demonstrated changing attitudes to engagement with the *Aeneid* and has shown how each engagement goes beyond previous interpretations, marking the increasing sophistication of early modern French engagement with the *Aeneid*.

The first of the research questions addressed in this thesis asked what happens to the *Aeneid* when it is transferred to a new literary, historical and political context. This question supposes an awareness on the part of the French authors engaging with the *Aeneid* of the original context of the creation of the poem. The second question concerns how individual authors take into account the inherently political nature of the work. The third question concerns the extent to which each author attempts to 'overgo' previous interpretations of the *Aeneid* in a movement identified by Quint, by which each successive author to engage with the *Aeneid* as a literary work tries to outdo all previous interpretations in sophistication. This conclusion will therefore demonstrate how each method of engagement with the *Aeneid* responds to this wish to 'overgo' previous engagements and will argue that these engagements show the increasing sophistication of literary engagement with the *Aeneid* within the context of early modern France. The three research questions build upon one another, as the answers to the questions establish awareness of the *Aeneid* in early modern France, the challenges inherent in

engaging with a work, and then the extent to which the engagement relate to one another in addition to their relationship to the *Aeneid*.

The analysis, in the first chapter of this thesis, of the motivations for and methods behind the translations of the *Aeneid* shows that there is progression even within this first step in early modern French literary emulation of Virgil. It also demonstrates the wider political implications involved in translating the *Aeneid*. Analysis of the translations demonstrated that each successive translator responded not only to previous translations of the *Aeneid*, but also to the changing demands of readerships and publishers. The changing demands of the readership influenced the successive translations in both their style and content. These demands influence not only the way in which the poem is translated but also which sections of the poem are translated. In the case of Tredehan's translation of Vegio's *Supplementum*, the translation encompasses a work that was not composed by Virgil but is nonetheless included alongside Virgil's *Aeneid* after the act of translation. The demands of readers and publishers therefore influence the translators' approach to Virgil's poem itself and affect how the original poem is presented when it is translated.

Comparison of the successive translations also demonstrates shifts in the interpretation of the *Aeneid* in early modern France. The comparison of the six translations shows the progressive move away from Virgil's original characterisation of Aeneas and Dido, who both acquire more human qualities with each successive translation, and so place less emphasis on the importance of politics within the *Aeneid*. These trends are to some extent reversed by the translations of the Chevalier d'Agneaux brothers, but the comparison nonetheless shows a clear move away from translation's simple aim of rendering Virgil's words directly into French and towards a more nuanced response to publishing strategies and to re-interpretations of Virgil's work by writers such as Vegio and Crenne. The translators attempt to 'overgo' one another's translations in that each successive translation attempts to render Dido more human and show the poem as concerned with personal considerations and less concerned with the politics of the Roman foundation epic. Although the political emphasis of Virgil's epic is reduced by successive translations, the example of the Chevalier d'Agneaux brothers demonstrates a return to viewing the *Aeneid* as primarily a political epic, and



three forms of engagement discussed in the following three chapters all take this conception of the *Aeneid* as their underlying premise. Ronsard, d'Aubigné and Du Bartas all use this political element to different ends in their engagement with the *Aeneid*.

Pierre de Ronsard's engagement with the *Aeneid* in his *Françiad*e, analysed in the second chapter of the thesis, bridges the gap between translation of the *Aeneid* into French and the reinterpretation of the poem. Ronsard brings the narrative of the *Aeneid* across national borders, in a literary strategy subtler than that of a literal translation of the *Aeneid*. Ronsard adopts Virgil's narrative structure and acknowledges Virgil in his translation of lines of the *Aeneid* in the *Françiad*e, but he rejects the model of Virgil in the narrative itself. This simultaneous copying and rejection of Virgil's work as a model is a more complex strategy translation on both a literary and interpretative level.

The clearest example of Ronsard's combination of literary and political elements is the catalogue of kings at the end of Book 4 of the *Françiad*e. This catalogue is the clearest acknowledgement of Ronsard's debt to Virgil, as it simultaneously underlines his ambition to use Virgil as a model and his desire to move away from Virgil's work. Ronsard thus acknowledges Virgil as a model for a foundation epic, but the fact that the French national myth that he creates competes with the *Aeneid* over inheritance from Troy means that he must move away from Virgil's model.

The example of Vegio's *Supplementum* provides a model alongside which Ronsard's poem can be analysed because it involves a 'bearing across' of the *Aeneid* from a pagan religious context to a Christian context. Vegio appends his non-pagan apotheosis of Aeneas to the poem in a way that demonstrates the desire on the part of early modern authors to view the *Aeneid* within a new historical context. It is this shift in historical context which is central to Ronsard's literary aim in the *Françiad*e. Ronsard is aware of the status of the *Aeneid* as a foundation epic for the Roman state and he wishes to transfer this political concept to France. Ronsard 'overgoes' previous engagements with the *Aeneid* by showing that the political and literary elements of the *Aeneid* are intertwined. The combination of these elements in his poem provides a more complex interpretation of the *Aeneid* than can be found in translation of the *Aeneid* from Latin into French.

Whereas Ronsard's adaptation of the *Aeneid* shares the literary and political aims of Virgil's epic but transports them to France, d'Aubigné's response to Virgil takes the form of anti-epic in *Les Tragiques*. D'Aubigné rejects the narratives of Catholic victory in the Wars of Religion and instead, like his anti-epic model Lucan, sympathises with those on the losing side of civil war. In contrast to Lucan, however, d'Aubigné does still envisage vindication and victory for his Huguenots, accorded by God's Judgement, and so places his narrative outside the bounds of space and time. D'Aubigné's poem adds a new level of complexity to early modern French engagement with Virgil's poem in that he shifts both the location and the nature of epic victory.

D'Aubigné comes to the *Aeneid* from a different context to Ronsard's. This context requires a work that 'overgoes' Ronsard's work, in that d'Aubigné must envision a wider context in which a Huguenot victory can take place. Ronsard can combine the foundation narrative of literary and political inheritance from Troy with forecasting Catholic victory in the Wars of Religion in order to confirm his triumphal vision for France. D'Aubigné must adopt a more complex strategy of combining anti-epic, and his sympathy with the Huguenots, with epic, in that he predicts vindication and victory for the Huguenots on the Day of Judgement. D'Aubigné must therefore 'overgo' Ronsard's response to the *Aeneid* in order to provide an alternative vision of the outcome of the Wars of Religion. This strategy involves the inclusion of influences drawn from Lucan in d'Aubigné's poem, rendering d'Aubigné's literary approach significantly more complex than that of Ronsard.

Furthermore, the model of Vegio's *Antoniad* is useful in understanding d'Aubigné's literary strategy. The *Antoniad* is itself a significantly more complex work than the *Supplementum*, and places Christian figures inside an ostensibly pagan context. D'Aubigné's inclusion of Lucan, and his parallels with the *Antoniad* in his combination of the concept of rebirth and the ongoing battle between God and Satan, demonstrates a significantly more complex project than that of Ronsard. Like Ronsard, d'Aubigné demonstrates that the political and literary contexts of the *Aeneid* are intertwined and cannot be separated; however, Lucan provides the model through which d'Aubigné can challenge the sort of victory narrative suggested by the *Aeneid* and emulated by Ronsard and provide an alternative interpretation of Virgil's work.

The final, and most sophisticated, approach to the *Aeneid* studied in this thesis is that of Du Bartas. Du Bartas' *La Sepmaine* and *La Seconde Sepmaine* follows Ronsard's nationalist epic and d'Aubigné's anti-epic claim of victory with the early modern French epic which most closely resembles Virgil's closing imagery of reconciliation. In order to demonstrate the possibility of this epic reconciliation, Du Bartas combines the *Aeneid* with Genesis. Like Ronsard and d'Aubigné, Du Bartas demonstrates his awareness of the political nature of the *Aeneid*, particularly in *La Seconde Sepmaine*, with his depiction of the place of the Huguenots within the political context of the end of the Wars of Religion and the beginnings of the French empire. In doing so, Du Bartas goes further in his engagement with the *Aeneid* than the previous authors in that he both challenges narratives of Catholic victory and provides the Huguenots with a future role in the French state itself. Du Bartas also re-imagines the identity of the voyager-hero in epic, both by viewing the epic poet in similar terms as the hero, and then in his casting of the flawed biblical hero Adam in this role. Du Bartas thus re-imagines the possibilities of epic in a more complex fashion than either Ronsard or d'Aubigné, not only in combining his work with Genesis, but in adapting individual elements of the epic form to serve his own purpose.

The thesis has shown that Du Bellay's call in the *Deffence* for the creation of more sophisticated French poetry is realised in engagements with the *Aeneid* in early modern France. In each of the successive forms of engagement discussed, French translators' and writers' engagement with the *Aeneid* becomes increasingly more sophisticated. Each successive engagement also foregrounds the increasing place of original authorial invention in reaction to Virgil's poem, demonstrating that as each form of engagement becomes more sophisticated, so Virgil becomes less visible than the concerns of the author engaging with his work. Each of the authors' works can be viewed as a response to Du Bellay's call for more complex engagements with classical literature in order to create the basis for a specific French literature.

Engagement with the *Aeneid* throughout the early modern period in France can thus be seen to have become increasingly sophisticated. On the one hand, Virgil's epic has itself become less visible in each successive form of engagement as the work of the early modern French authors is foregrounded. On the other hand, the understanding of

the purpose of the Virgilian epic has become more nuanced with each successive engagement. As each successive writer attempts to 'overgo' previous interpretations, the conception of how the *Aeneid* can be employed in the early modern French context shifts. The Virgilian epic is interpreted as being concerned with building a nation, both through the emergence of a national literature exemplified by the epic form, and also by providing the narrative of nation building upon which can be based the identity of the state. This narrative can be exemplified by the epic itself, as in the case of Ronsard, it can be rejected, as in the case of d'Aubigné, or it can be transformed into an epic concerned with reconciliation, as in the case of Du Bartas. In taking a single ancient work and charting early modern French engagement with it, this thesis has demonstrated that individual responses to a given work can be viewed collectively as a process of engagements, each of which adds a further level of sophistication to that work's interpretation. Taken collectively, these early modern French engagements with Virgil's great national epic show an enduring and increasingly sophisticated appreciation of the valuable parallels to be drawn between the very different historical, religious and political contexts of the *Aeneid* itself and of early modern France.

Following the end of the period of engagement studied in the thesis, French authors continued to interact with the *Aeneid* throughout the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century. Ludivine Goupillaud has pointed to a shift in the way in which approaches to both the translation of epic and to the epic hero as a historical figure were characterized. Later seventeenth-century French authors aimed to paint the epic hero as a model for their readers to follow, rather than viewing the epic as a whole as bearing a political message for the French state:

Les théoriciens de la seconde moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle s'accordent à voir dans le héros épique une incarnation emblématique de la *virtus*, propre à susciter l'admiration du lecteur et à lui présenter un idéal à atteindre. [...] Enée devrait donc apparaître comme une image de perfection, avec laquelle il s'agirait non pas tant de s'identifier que de se mesurer, comme si le prince troyen servait d'étalon dans la quête d'exemplarité menée par le lecteur.<sup>391</sup>

Goupillaud here identifies a change in the role of the figure of Aeneas. He is no longer the vehicle for a national renewal of French identity, but rather a model for individual

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<sup>391</sup> Ludivine Goupillaud, *De l'or de Virgile aux ors de Versailles: métamorphoses de l'épopée dans la seconde moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France* (Geneva: Droz, 2005) p. 55.

improvement. In this sense, the trend of increasing sophistication of engagement with the *Aeneid* has to some extent reversed as the aim of the engagement has narrowed.

The narrowness of this engagement led to a change in the method of engagement with the *Aeneid* itself, as Goupillaud explains:

Aussi voit-on se développer une doctrine de l'imitation sélective qui, guidée par le bon sens et par les leçons de l'histoire littéraire, refuse le transcodage aveugle et inconditionnel du texte virgilien dans le système de valeurs contemporain.<sup>392</sup>

Goupillaud points to an approach not unlike that of Crenne and Du Bellay to the translation of the *Aeneid* in the sixteenth century. The approach to the *Aeneid* is again selective, calculated to best respond to the desires of the contemporary audience just as Du Bellay and Crenne sought to translate those parts of the *Aeneid* which they thought most popular. Goupillaud compares this approach with that of Virgil himself in relation to his own adaptation of Homer:

En somme, la méthode à suivre est celle adoptée par Virgile lui-même à l'égard des épopées homériques dont il s'inspira: ne garder de l'hypotexte grec que les éléments facilement acclimatables aux mœurs romaines, et dédaigner ceux frappés d'obsolescence.<sup>393</sup>

This idea of Virgil keeping only selective parts of what Goupillaud refers to as the 'Greek hypotext' translates into the early modern French context because while authors kept the overarching structure of Virgil in their seventeenth-century reinterpretations of his work, they were willing to omit other elements dubbed as obsolete, such as the pagan religious context in which the work was created.

Yet the reason why seventeenth-century authors reinterpreted the *Aeneid* was different from that given in the sixteenth century. Goupillaud asks how a desire to link the figure of the French king himself with the figure of Aeneas drove these interpretations:

Adossées qu'elles étaient à une connaissance approfondie de l'*Énéide*, comment les épopées qui virent le jour au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle s'efforcèrent-elles de prolonger, de renouveler ou de contenter

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<sup>392</sup> Goupillaud, *De l'or de Virgile*, p. 68.

<sup>393</sup> Goupillaud, *De l'or de Virgile*, p. 68.

l'héritage virgilien notamment en substituant à la gloire d'Auguste, qui sous-tend l'*Énéide*, le culte d'un roi français?<sup>394</sup>

Goupillaud's question demonstrates the shift in the perception of the *Aeneid* in the second half of the seventeenth century in France. Interaction with the *Aeneid* by French authors is now based upon the mapping of the personality of Aeneas onto the king of France, rather than the comparison of two nations and a search for the roots of France itself. Rather than attempting to overgo the Romans, French authors are merely substituting the glory of the French monarchy for the glory of Augustus' reign. The figure of Aeneas had become more acceptable as a model onto which the French kings could project their identity directly, without the need to justify, as in Ronsard, the roots of their relation to Aeneas or their differing religious beliefs.

Another major shift in attitudes in France in the later seventeenth century concerned not the *Aeneid*, but the *Pharsalia*. In 1623, Michel de Marolles translated the *Pharsalia* into French.<sup>395</sup> Georges de Brébeuf published his translation in 1654.<sup>396</sup> Goupillaud points to Quintilian's analysis of the differences between the poems of Lucan and Virgil as the origin of this interest in translating Lucan:

Aux antipodes de l'exemplarité virgilienne, faite de mesure et de sobriété, la *Pharsale* de Lucain fait généralement office de repoussoir aux yeux des poéticiens de la seconde moitié du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui exacerbent, en quelque sorte, la critique de Quintilien.<sup>397</sup>

In the *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian compares the works of Virgil and Lucan as follows: 'Lucanus ardens et concitatus et, ut dicam, quod sentio, magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus'.<sup>398</sup> Quintilian's comparison of orators and authors' strategies is intended to demonstrate that their differing audiences require differing methods to be employed in order that they may communicate their message. The differing styles of Virgil and Lucan led to a divergent approach on the part of French authors and a desire to promote Lucan's more oratorical style. Goupillaud sees this as an attempt to rehabilitate Lucan:

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<sup>394</sup> Goupillaud, *De l'or de Virgile*, p. 141.

<sup>395</sup> Goupillaud, *De l'or de Virgile*, p. 89.

<sup>396</sup> Goupillaud, *De l'or de Virgile*, p.90.

<sup>397</sup> Goupillaud, *De l'or de Virgile*, p. 89.

<sup>398</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, X, 1, 90.

De même, Brébeuf, traduisant à son tour Lucain pour la première fois en 1654, s'applique à redorer le blazon du poète, terni par des passages qui heurtent profondément la beinséance.<sup>399</sup>

Goupillaud points to a shift in emphasis from literary to oratorical imitation, perhaps underlining a confidence in the French language as a means not only of literary communication but of an oratorical meaning.

The shift in attitudes to Lucan as an author at the time of his translation came at the same time as a shift occurred in attitudes to the methodology of translation itself in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Susan Bassnett points to changing concepts of the role of the translator in the eighteenth century as evidence of this shift:

The eighteenth-century concept of the translator as painter or imitator with a moral duty both to his original subject and to his receiver was widespread, but underwent a series of significant changes as the search to codify and describe the processes of literary creation altered.<sup>400</sup>

Bassnett points to the fact that the concept of the translator has changed by the eighteenth century so that the politics surrounding translation had changed. The 'moral duty' Bassnett points to is similar to that expressed by the sixteenth century French translators of the *Aeneid*, both in underlining their faithfulness to Virgil and their duty to allow their readers to access Virgil's work. The shift in the conceptualisation of the creation of texts therefore also changed approaches to translation of those texts.

This shift in attitudes could already be seen amongst French authors in genres outside of epic, such as tragedy. An example is Pierre Corneille's adaptation of the *Pharsalia* in his play *La Mort de Pompée*:

Il ne s'agit plus de remédier à une prétendue *egestas* de la langue française en recourant massivement aux néologismes, mais d'orner le vocabulaire tragique de mots empruntés au genre cousin de l'épopée, afin de conférer à la pièce un surcroît de noblesse et de majesté. Or, c'est sur un modèle linguistique déjà déviant par rapport au latin classique que Corneille fonde son entreprise. À la langue et au style «purs» de Virgile, il préfère les bigarrures et les bizarreries de Lucain: en cela, il constitue une exception notable dans le paysage littéraire français du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle.<sup>401</sup>

Although Goupillaud views Corneille as exceptional in his approach to Lucan, the shift she identifies in his translation strategy recalls the original strategy of Saint-Gelais' use

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<sup>399</sup> Goupillaud, *De l'or de Virgile*, p. 90.

<sup>400</sup> Susan Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies* (London: Methuen, 1980) p. 62.

<sup>401</sup> Goupillaud, *De l'or de Virgile*, p. 90.

of 'neologisms' discussed in the first chapter of the thesis, as both writers are ultimately forced to invent neologisms in order to create new elements of the French language which reflect the meaning of their respective subjects for translation. Engagement with the *Pharsalia* after the sixteenth century in France therefore threw up some of the same problems and possibilities that had been encountered with the *Aeneid* in the sixteenth century. Although the principal subject of literary engagement had changed, the issues remained the same, although Bassnett's analysis indicates that translators and other adaptors of these works arrived at different solutions from those of their sixteenth-century forebears.

As the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century in France progressed, authors sought to engage with Virgil's *Aeneid* in ways which considered the complexity of the religious and political situation in France during the Wars of Religion and literary trends that saw authors, both in theory and in practice, promote the importance of the French language as the medium in which texts should be read and composed, and the French national context as the subject for such texts. The example of Virgil's *Aeneid* specifically allowed a consideration of both national and literary issues, through his poem's status as an inherently political text dedicated to establishing a foundation narrative for the Roman state in the aftermath of civil war and the end of the Republic. The central importance of Virgil's text to European literature and the message of nation building and of the importance of national identity led to its translation into the vernacular, beginning in the early sixteenth century in France. This marks the first stage of engagement with Virgil's work; transferring the meaning of the work into the French language in order to increase the status of the French language and to make the work accessible to French readership. The first chapter therefore analysed how this movement took into account different audiences through differing translation strategies. The second chapter discussed a more sophisticated engagement with the *Aeneid* through Ronsard's *Franciade*, a poem which contains elements of translation but which also moves away from Virgil's original narrative in order to compose a narrative which specifically promotes the idea of a French state with its roots in Troy, rivalling Virgil's foundation narrative for the Roman state. The status of Virgil's text as a poem concerned with the depiction of the aftermath of civil war is further reinforced



by Lucan's challenge to Virgil's epic in the *Pharsalia*, as discussed in the third chapter of the thesis. Just as Lucan proposes a narrative which views the results of the civil war in a way which challenges Virgil's narrative of the victory of Augustus and attempts to show Lucan as the noble loser, d'Aubginé proposes that the Huguenots will be victorious on the Day of Judgement, beyond the bounds of space and time, undermining claims of Catholic victory with a victory which cannot be questioned. The fourth chapter demonstrates that Du Bartas presents the most sophisticated of engagements in his interpretation of both Virgil and Lucan as he both challenges the notion that the Huguenots have been defeated and proposes a future for them within the French state itself as part of an imperial project. These stages of increasing sophistication paved the way for French authors in the eighteenth century to focus on the personal character of Aeneas as Virgil's work has been established as capable of withstanding interpretation within the French state. The move to drawing a personal link between Aeneas and the French monarch in the eighteenth century was made possible by the increasing sophistication of engagement with the *Aeneid*, which confirmed that French authors were confident in seeing the *Aeneid* as a text which contained messages not only for the French nation as a whole, but also for the king himself, suggesting that the text could now be engaged with on a personal level. With the end of the Wars of Religion and a move towards a more centralised French state in the eighteenth-century, along with greater confidence in France's national identity, the method for engaging with the *Aeneid* changed in order to take account of this different context and moved away from an approach unique to the context of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

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