

DIDO, QUEEN OF ENGLAND

BY DEANNE WILLIAMS

To Carthage then I came
Burning burning burning burning
O lord thou pluckest me out

—T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (1922)

I am no man's Elizabeth.

—Cate Blanchett in Shekhar Kapur's film *Elizabeth* (1998)

From Sir Philip Sidney to Sir Roy Strong, Queen Elizabeth I's observers have been fascinated by the topic of marriage.¹ Elizabeth managed to avoid it for decades, maintaining, when pressed, that she considered herself wedded to England. Her prevarications generated a discourse of courtship, and of courtiership, that defined the terms of Elizabethan politics as well as theatricality.² Only with hindsight do the tangle of invitations, courtships and suitors, and the hedging and equivocation that did not cease until Elizabeth was long past menopause, appear to be a coherent foreign and domestic policy. Ultimately, Elizabeth's ability to leave doors open to possible matches without shutting any of them, and to facilitate a series of propitious alliances without relinquishing her own power, resolved itself in the myth of the Virgin Queen.

Dido, Queene of Carthage, written by Christopher Marlowe in collaboration with Thomas Nashe sometime between 1585 and 1588, dramatizes the symbiotic relationship between Elizabeth's virginity and her political power. Earlier in her reign, Elizabeth had been entertained by theatrical performances that urged her to choose a mate. However, as the queen entered her fifties, the selection of a husband and production of an heir were no longer likely: Elizabeth's final engagement with the Duke of Alençon had reached its inevitable stalemate, and ended with his death in 1584. Like William Gager's *Dido*, performed on 12 June 1583, at Christ Church, Oxford,

and the Siena Sieve portrait of Elizabeth, painted in the early 1580s, Marlowe's *Dido, Queene of Carthage* uses the figure of Dido, Aeneas's jilted paramour, to praise the queen's *de facto* decision to remain single. By depicting Dido as a negative example of enslavement by erotic love and the desire for marriage, *Dido, Queene of Carthage* offers a sophisticated theatrical compliment to the queen.

For centuries, Virgil's *Aeneid* provided a model for Britain's self-fashioning as a "second Troy," founded by Brutus.³ However, *Dido, Queene of Carthage* illustrates the kinds of revisions that were necessary when centuries of Virgilian exemplarity confronted the reality of female sovereignty in Elizabeth. As the play reworks its Virgilian source, it highlights both the problem and the potential of using Dido as a counterpart to Elizabeth.⁴ For Dido was a highly contested figure, her salubrious pre-Virgilian reputation compromised by her self-annihilating passion in the *Aeneid*. To a certain extent, Dido's potent blend of avowed chastity and charged sexuality made her a perfect choice for Elizabeth. Yet her unstable reputation—is she a canny seductress or a hapless victim? African or European? Occidental or Oriental?—reinforced as much as assuaged anxieties about having a female sovereign. Paradoxically, Elizabeth was the marker for England's national identity, while her identification with Dido constructed her as the quintessential Other: exotic and eroticized, because different, and dangerous, because female.

By showing Dido as, at once, colonizer and colonized, predator and victim, eastern and western, *Dido, Queene of Carthage* reveals the intensely labile roles that Queen Elizabeth I chose and was expected to perform. At a time when Elizabeth was beginning to focus her energies on expansion, supporting Sir Walter Raleigh's expeditions to Virginia, and the travels of John Newbery and Ralph Fitch to India, it celebrates a ruler known for her chastity and her empire. Yet the play also dramatizes the loss of sovereignty that Elizabeth (and England) avoided by resolving the question of marriage, characteristically, by refusing to resolve it at all. And after Marlowe and Nashe were finished with it, the *Aeneid* was never the same. As *Dido, Queene of Carthage* transforms Virgil, it undermines the stability of racial and geographical hierarchies and categories, demonstrating the flexibility of the interpenetrating discourses of gender and colonialism in the early modern period.

The popularity of Elizabeth's association with Dido can be explained, in part, by her name. Dido was first known, in history and legend, as Elissa. As the Dido story became important in representations of Elizabeth, this ancient Elissa was mixed up with Eliza, a short form of Elizabeth's name that Spenser associates with Dido in *The Shepheardes Calendar*.⁵ According to classical sources, Dido/Elissa was a descendant of Phoenicians who left Egypt and founded settlements in Syria.⁶ Her brother, Pygmalion, the King of Tyre, had Dido's husband, Sychaeus, killed. Sychaeus also happened to be their uncle. Dido committed suicide rather than accept the second marriage to Iarbas, the North African King of Gaetulia, that Pygmalion forced upon her. According to a related tradition, Sychaeus visited Dido in a dream, informing her that he had been murdered by Pygmalion. Dido immediately fled Tyre, sailing the Mediterranean with a band of loyal followers who, according to some sources, abducted and raped the women of Crete and Cyprus. They proceeded to northeast Africa, where Dido founded Carthage. When Dido arrived in Africa, she told the inhabitants that she did not wish to establish a major settlement on the land, and persuaded them to sell her only as much land on the beach as a cowhide could enclose. As soon as the Africans agreed to this, Dido sliced up the cowhide into the thinnest strips possible, connecting them together to enclose a very large piece of land. Then she unpacked her bags and built Carthage, naming its highest tower, Byrsa, in honor of the cowhide.

Reflecting her reputation for intrepid wanderings and intelligence as a political leader, Elissa's name shifted to Dido, the valiant one. According to Christine de Pizan, the name *Dido* is equivalent to the Latin *virago*, a woman who has all the strength of a man.⁷ Charles Estienne's 1670 *Dictionarium historicum* describes Dido as "*vagam, seu erraticam*," tying her, etymologically, to the *errores*, geographical and moral (even sexual), of Aeneas himself.⁸ Indeed, as the founder of an ambitious and expansionist city state, Dido has a great deal in common with Aeneas. Her Carthage supplies a model of empire that preceded Rome, as it grew from a simple trading post to a major Mediterranean power, controlling much of northwest Africa, southern Spain, Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. During the Punic wars, when Carthage represented a major obstacle to Roman expansion, Hannibal (whom many considered to be an agent of Dido's revenge) made military history when he led the Carthaginian army and its elephants through the Alps and into Italy.

However, Virgil departed from the tradition of Dido as faithful wife and fearless leader. No longer the founder of an empire that rivals Rome, Virgil's Dido is merely a scorned mistress, rejected by the gods as an insufficient, inappropriate consort to Aeneas, and no more than a foil for Aeneas's genealogical destiny with Lavinia. In the *Aeneid*, Dido's fidelity to the memory of her husband is a mere pretense, and she falls eagerly into Aeneas's arms after having heard (and, like Shakespeare's Desdemonda, pitied) the story of the dangers he had passed. She expects her relationship with Aeneas to be permanent, believes, in fact, that they exchanged marriage vows, and is devastated by her lover's departure. According to Virgil, Dido is inflamed by love. Fire metaphors predominate in his handling of her character, anticipating her funeral pyre: "[H]e alone has swayed my will and overthrown my tottering soul. I recognize the traces of the olden flame."⁹ Virgil also implies that Dido is limited by her passions: raging, like a fire out of control, they identify her as a histrionic Other from whom Aeneas must separate himself.

Virgil thus transforms Carthage from expansionist rival and military opponent into the inferior geography of the colonized, tying Aeneas's sexual domination of Dido to his political and imperial ascendancy. He makes Dido powerless when confronted with the exigencies of empire: as Aeneas leaves to found Rome, she is burning with desire. Dido's curse on Aeneas at the end of book four takes as its model the curse of Polyphemus, the Cyclops, who calls out for revenge on Odysseus for tricking him and blinding him at the end of book nine of the *Odyssey*.¹⁰ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno regard this Homeric moment as paradigmatic of the ideological opposition between the civilized Greek and the inferior barbarian that informs the discourse of colonialism.¹¹ Similarly, in the *Aeneid*, Dido's irrepressible sexuality anticipates an Orientalist stereotype anatomized by Edward Said:

that impossible creature whose libidinal energy drives him [or her] to paroxysms of over-stimulation—and yet . . . a puppet in the eyes of the world, staring vacantly out at a modern landscape he can neither understand nor cope with.¹²

David Quint describes Virgil's Dido in the following terms: "once aroused . . . her passion for Aeneas will transform the Carthaginian queen from chaste consort and ruler into a monster . . . but perhaps she has been a monster all along."¹³

Virgil's portrayal of Dido engendered a dynamic literary discussion on the subject of Dido's virtue that went on for centuries. Often the best that Dido's supporters could do was to bestow upon her the charmless role of the wronged woman. Ovid, who memorializes Dido as a heroine of erotic longing, highlights the connection between Aeneas's sails, moving swiftly towards Rome, and the rapid evaporation of the promises that he made to her as a lover: "Are you resolved, Aeneas, to break at the same time from your moorings and from your pledge, and to follow after the fleeting realms of Italy, which lie you know not where? . . . What is achieved, you turn your back upon; what is to be achieved, you ever pursue. One land has been sought and gained, and ever must another be sought, through the wide world."¹⁴ Dido's final wish is to die, which would restore her reputation and undo the wrongs she has done to her husband, Sychaeus. Ausonius offers a nice little epigram on Dido's conundrum: "Ah, luckless Dido, unhappy in both husbands: this, dying, caused thy flight; that, fleeing, caused thy death."¹⁵

When Christian readers such as Bernardus Silvestris glossed Virgil, they transformed the *Aeneid* from a story about the travels of a hero to a paradigm for the travails of the Christian soul.¹⁶ Dido and Carthage were identified with the realm of the flesh, of decadence, of concupiscence: the worldly snares from which the soul must disentangle itself.¹⁷ This produced the sinful yet seductive Dido for whom Augustine wept tears of pity (when he really should have been dwelling upon God): "to bewail dead Dido, because she killed herself for love; when in the mean time (wretch that I was) I with dry eyes endured myself dying towards thee, O God, my life." Augustine sharply rejects the dangerous sexual indulgence that he associated with Carthage: "a whole frying-pan full of abominable loves."¹⁸ The quotation from T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* that supplies the first epigraph to this essay draws upon Augustine's reading of Carthage as a burning city, a lost city, and the demonic antithesis of his own subject, the *City of God*.¹⁹ However, Carthage was not just a typological and doctrinal concept for Augustine: it was also his hometown. Identifying Dido with his mother, Monica, Augustine transforms her into a figure of great love and human frailty. His impassioned and conflicted reading of Dido's tragedy makes her impossible to repudiate and easy to sympathize with, even to love.

Medieval and early modern authors handling the subject of the *Aeneid* may have had some criticisms of Dido from a moral standpoint, but they could not help but pity her. Ovid's followers call

attention to the divergent paths that Dido had taken at the hands of Ovid and Virgil, respectively, and place blame on Aeneas for behaving badly. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* explains that Aeneas was a cad, and that Dido's error was to believe that he would consider himself bound by the vows they exchanged: "O sely [foolish, but also meaning open, trusting] wemen, ful of innocence, / Ful of pitee and trouthe and conscience, / What maked yow to men to trusten soo?" Chaucer concludes by pointing his reader to Dido's complaint in the *Heroides*: "But whoso wol al this letter have in mynde, / Rede Ovyde, and in him he shal hit fynde."²⁰ In John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Genius the Confessor recalls the Virgilian Dido when he concedes, "Dido sche was hote," and observes that Aeneas, whom he treats as an example of the sin of Sloth, just didn't have the emotional energy to keep up with her: "he, which hadde hise thoughtes feinte / Towardes love and full of Slothe." In the long run, Aeneas may have been better off to conserve his energies for Rome, but his callous treatment of Dido did little to gain him a spot in the pantheon of great lovers: "tariinge upon the nede, / In loves cause is forto drede."²¹ For John Lydgate, the lines between victim and malefactor are very clear. In *The Temple of Glass*, the dreamer encounters "Dido the queen so goodly of visage / That gan complayne her auenture and caas / How she deceyued was of Eneas / For all his hestes and his othes sworne."²² It is Aeneas, not Dido, who transgresses the laws of love.

Over time, Dido proved to be much more interesting than Aeneas. The *Aeneid* became at least as much a tale of a tragic heroine as a narrative about the foundation of Rome. Gavin Douglas makes use of Virgil's fire imagery when he describes Dido and Carthage as "birnyng carnale hete delite" in the prologue to his translation of book four of the *Aeneid*. According to Douglas, however, Dido has only herself to blame: "Throw fuliche lust, wroucht thyn awin undoing," and he offers the following "admonition to gentilwomen": "Be war with strangearys of uncouth natyoun / Wirk na sic wounderys to thare dampnatyoun / Bot til attayne wylde amouris, at the thay lere / Thy lusty pane, begouth on thys manere."²³ Yet Douglas's comments, like Augustine's, encourage the reader to identify with Dido rather than Aeneas: his strict moralization urges his readers to fear and to shun a rude, foreign Other who is identified, in this case, with Aeneas. Similarly, Gianbattista Cinzio Giralaldi's tragedy, *Didone*, written in the 1550s, follows the Aeneadic narrative to explore the tragic psychology of Dido. According to Giralaldi, Aeneas sought the

pleasures of the moment—what Chaucer would call “synguler profit.”²⁴ However, as one of the chosen few, he ultimately abandons Dido, along with his childish doctrine of immediate gratification, and turns instead toward his homeland. Consequently, Dido is driven insane: her tragedy tied to the fact that she did not fully understand her own role in the teleological narrative.

This turn to Dido informs the humanist campaign to distinguish between Virgil’s character in the *Aeneid* and the high-powered founder of Carthage who lived hundreds of years before Aeneas.²⁵ Seeking to redress the wrongs done to Dido by Virgil as much as by Aeneas, Petrarch’s *Trionfo della Pudicitia* is careful to highlight the differences between the two. Lord Morley’s translation reads: “Not that Dydo that men doth wryte / That for Eneas wyth death was dyte / But that noble Lady true and juste.”²⁶ Giovanni Boccaccio carefully uses both names, Dido and Elissa, in the title of his chapter in *De claris mulieribus* in order to draw a distinction between the “historical” and the fictional Dido.²⁷ According to Boccaccio, Aeneas was arriving at Carthage at precisely the time that Dido was busy building herself a funeral pyre, choosing self-immolation over marriage to a local. Yet Boccaccio’s rather overwrought defense of Dido’s decision to preserve her fidelity to her husband rather than marry again did not endear itself to many readers: “What glory there is in inviolate chastity! O Dido, venerable and eternal model of unsullied womanhood! I wish that women who have lost their husbands would turn their eyes to you and that Christian women in particular would contemplate your strength.”²⁸ Chaucer and Gower cite Boccaccio obediently, but they find little in his account that they wish to repeat.

Thus, by the sixteenth century the romance of Dido and Aeneas had become not only a sentimental saga, but a compelling intellectual problem. Joachim du Bellay’s single-volume French translation of book four of the *Aeneid* and Ovid’s *Heroides* ostensibly celebrates the poetic texture of Virgil’s vivid depiction of amorous passion: “I would only say that you will never find, in any work, in any language that exists, the amorous passions so vividly depicted, as in the character of Dido.” Du Bellay excerpts these accounts of Dido from their original contexts in order to redress “the injury that she received by Virgil.”²⁹ The *mise-en-page* of his translation of Dido’s final lines in Ovid’s *Heroides* demonstrates his sympathy with her. These lines appear in capital letters, supplying a textual equivalent to the epitaph that, in Ovid, she orders for her tomb:

ENÉE A DE CESTE MORTE
 À GRAND TORT
 DONNÉE LA CAUSE, ET L'ÉSPÉE:
 LA MISERABLE DIDON
 DE CE DON
 A SA POITRINE FRAPÉE.³⁰

However, du Bellay concludes with a translation of Ausonius's epigram, "Sur la Statue de Didon," which distinguishes between the two Didos: "I had this body, and not the shameless spirit, which is fictitiously described by Virgil." Here, Dido carefully explains that she had never brought shame upon herself, and wonders why Virgil had wanted to do her ill: "Who, then, O Virgil, incited you / To be desirous of my shame?" Dido even exhorts readers to distinguish between historical fact and literary fiction: "Believe, readers, that which the histories / Have said of me, not the notorious fables / Of these liars, who, with laborious art, / Sing of the love of the shameless Gods."³¹ As du Bellay seeks to rescue Dido from an embarrassing sexual past, his efforts to rescue Dido's reputation are acts of scholarly recovery as much as Christian charity.

II.

As Dido eclipsed Aeneas in the hearts and minds of readers, her story was invoked frequently to comment on current affairs. For example, Giraldi's 1541 *Didone* uses the story of Dido's adventures with Aeneas to address doctrinal issues having to do with the question of free will versus predestination (a hot topic in counter-Reformation Ferrare). Etienne Jodelle's 1558 *Didon se sacrifiant*, written immediately before the French civil wars, expresses support for the French monarchy by arguing that it represents a purer strain of the Trojan line than the current Holy Roman Empire. In Elizabethan England, the long tradition of contested interpretations of Dido lent itself to the ongoing and unresolved discussion of the queen's marital status. As Elizabeth's private affairs became a public discourse, providing an opportunity for national and cultural self-definition, Dido became a touchstone for the larger question of the relationship between sexual virtue and political power raised by Elizabeth's marriage negotiations.³² In Gager's *Dido*, a Latin entertainment performed for the Polish Prince Albertus Alasco, Aeneas's arrival interrupts Dido as she is debating with her counselors the best strategy to ensure the stability of Carthage.³³ In another scene, the Carthaginian courtiers,

Maharbal and Hanno, consider the political implications of Dido marrying Aeneas. Touching upon anxieties concerning England's vulnerability to a foreign invasion, and revealing an increasing association between the queen's chastity and England's imperial power, Gager's diplomatic *Dido* dramatizes the reasons the queen will not be marrying any time soon.

The Siena Sieve portrait of Elizabeth, attributed to Quentin Massys the Younger, forms part of a group of portraits, produced through the 1580s, which establish a connection between Elizabeth's virginity and England's military, and specifically naval power.³⁴ In order to illustrate, as Strong puts it, "the interchangeability of the queen and her realm," the Sieve portraits draw upon an emblem of chastity made popular in Petrarch's *Trionfo delle pudicizia*, in which a Roman vestal virgin, Tuccia, carries water in a sieve from the Tiber to her temple without spilling a drop.³⁵ The earliest example is the Plimpton Sieve Portrait by George Gower, dated 1579, now at the Folger Shakespeare Library. In this portrait, the sieve appears joined to Elizabeth's dress, where a little pearl substitutes for the Henrician codpiece. Here, an emblem of discernment, more than tumescence, provides the key image of political power. As Strong points out, the sieve represents the ability to tell good from bad: a message also borne out by the motto inscribed on the globe, "tutto vedo e multo manca" [I see everything but much is lacking]. The portrait also includes a motto from Petrarch's *Trionfo d'amore*, "*stancho riposo e riposato affano*" [wearied rest and rested weariness], Lord Morley's translation characterizes erotic love in extremely negative terms that recall Augustine's stark structures of sin and redemption:

And, briefly, whosoeuer thyther did pas
Is there bounde in hote and in colde,
In darkneses euerlastynge in that holde;
Holden and tyed and kept by forse,
Crying for mercy tyll that he be horse.³⁶

The implication is that Elizabeth has been correct to avoid marriage. Petrarchan imagery that had once urged Elizabeth to choose a mate now praises her for remaining a virgin.

Unknown until 1895, when it was discovered in the attic of a former Medici palace, the Siena Sieve portrait expands upon the theme of imperial chastity (figure one). The pillar to Elizabeth's right depicts scenes from the *Aeneid*: Dido's first meeting with Aeneas at Juno's temple, their idylls in the cave, and, ultimately, Dido's self-



Figure 1. Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I of England, (known as the Sieve Portrait), c. 1575. Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, Italy. Scala / Art Resource, New York.

immolation. These are images of Dido the sensualist, Dido the seduced. They provide visual reminders of the stings of love and eros that Elizabeth has repudiated for herself, and on her country's behalf. Although the portrait clearly engages with the subject of female sexuality and its relationship to power, most discussions of it emphasize the connection between Elizabeth and Aeneas, not Dido. For Strong, the painting casts "Elizabeth as this century's Aeneas," and for Frances Yates and Constance Jordan, the allegory dwells upon the more androgynous aspects of her political identity.³⁷ The portrait depicts Elizabeth sweeping towards the viewer, inspired by paintings of Aeneas moving forward, toward the viewer, as he leaves the burning Troy. It contains a number of images of conquest and expansion. The pillar to Elizabeth's right depicts Aeneas's ships setting sail from Carthage. Note the merry troupe of courtiers, which Elizabeth appears to be leading in a kind of forward procession, and the globe, on which the coasts of Africa and the New World flank England and her industrious ships. Nevertheless, as Stephen Orgel explains, "the epic iconography here ingeniously provided the queen with both her heroic ancestor and the prototype of her chastity. The sieve, emblem of the Roman vestals and thus symbolic of Elizabeth's virginity, declares that this Dido will resist the temptations of any modern Aeneas."³⁸

It is "this Dido," or the question, "which Dido is this?" that is the portrait's main theme. If the sieve praises Elizabeth's discernment, which makes her a better version of Aeneas, it also invites the viewer to discern between Virgil's tragic Dido and the Dido of the alternative non-Virgilian tradition: the solitary and mighty ruler whose chastity is symbolized by the sieve, and who chooses suicide over the indignity of an enforced marriage. Unlike the Virgilian Dido, and even Aeneas, this Dido has made the right choice. By identifying Elizabeth with "this Dido," the portrait presents the imperialistic binaries of triumph and defeat as well as the erotic and moral distinctions between discernment and profligacy. Just as Aeneas's foundation of Rome takes place at the expense of the passionate Dido, so, too, does an embracement of the true, historical Dido come at the expense of a rejection of the false, fictional one. Virgil's Dido is necessary to the tradition, and, hence, to the portrait, insofar as she represents what Elizabeth/Elissa is not: taken and then abandoned, like the ardent Dido, burning in Carthage.

By incorporating the Virgilian as well as Augustinian binary of Rome versus Carthage, the Sieve portrait illustrates the profound instability of the Dido tradition. This binary has more in common

with the apparently unwise choice of a sieve to carry water than with the structural integrity of a pillar. For although it is used, ultimately, to suggest that Elizabeth is one Dido and not the other, it nevertheless aligns her with a dizzyingly unstable set of identities: English and Carthaginian, European and African, and, to place the binary within the context of contemporary international politics, English and Ottoman. Contemporary Italian or English viewers would have read in the portrait's depiction of Dido an allusion to the ongoing contention between the Ottoman and Holy Roman Empires over Tunis, the city near the ruins of Carthage built by Arabs in the seventh century.³⁹ Throughout the sixteenth century, this Tunis shifted between Hapsburg and Muslim rule, and it was finally, definitively, claimed by the Ottomans in 1574. In the early 1580s, at the time of the Sieve portrait, Elizabeth was supporting the Ottoman claim to Tunis by virtue of England's longstanding and escalating enmity with the Holy Roman Empire, and, in particular, with Spain. The portrait contains an image of the crown of the Holy Roman Empire at the foot of the pillar, which is tilted precariously to convey instability.

The process of discernment that the portrait requires thus extends from the sexual and literary to the geopolitical. If the Dido of the *Aeneid* depicted on the pillar is aligned with the Holy Roman Empire identified at its foot, then the chaste Dido, invoked by the image of Elizabeth with the sieve in her hand, remains independent from (and undefiled by) Rome and its imperial tradition: a tradition that Elizabeth, by rejecting suitors such as the Archduke Charles and the Duke of Anjou, has avoided. The Siena Sieve portrait implies that an English/Ottoman victory over the Hapsburgs could transform the Holy Roman Empire into the image of the distant and defeated Carthage supplied by its own founding narrative, the *Aeneid*. If Elizabeth's military and political support of the Ottomans makes her a Dido and a queen of Carthage, it makes her the Dido and the Carthage that were Rome's formidable opponents, and its forerunners in the project of empire. By representing these warring traditions of Dido, the Siena Sieve portrait shows how Elizabeth's Ottoman associations align her with an entirely different version of the story of empire than that proposed by Virgil.

III.

As the author of Latin speeches, the patron and audience of Latin plays, and an avid participant in Latin conversations, Elizabeth would

have been familiar with the ongoing learned debate about Dido. The challenge of interpreting visual and dramatic representations of her story would have also appealed to her superb humanist education. However, the language of Virgilian allegory and exemplarity had fallen out of fashion by the time Marlowe was rediscovered in the nineteenth century, which celebrated him more as an outsider and a rebel than for his Latin erudition. This explains, in part, why *Dido, Queene of Carthage* has been relegated to the margins of the Marlovian canon. The play's status as juvenilia (it was probably written while Marlowe was at Cambridge) and as the product of some kind of collaboration with Nashe (the quarto title page states that it was written "by Christopher Marlowe" and, in small italics, "Thomas Nash. Gent"), along with its association with the undervalued genre of translation, have contributed to its marginalization. It has been no favorite of the critics: George Saintsbury dismissed this play as "the worst thing he ever did," and A. C. Swinburne described it as "generally feeble and incomposite."⁴⁰ Recent scholarship, however, has begun to challenge traditional critical judgments of the play's inferiority. It has been found to offer a frank treatment of erotic relations between men, of colonialist narratives of domination, of intersecting ideologies of race and gender, and a trenchant critique of heterosexuality.⁴¹

However, the play's close relationship to Elizabeth and to the marriage question has received relatively little attention.⁴² Like the Siena Sieve portrait, *Dido, Queene of Carthage* reworks its Virgilian source material, and the Dido tradition that precedes it, into a negative example of the ruinous effects of love and the desire for marriage upon an otherwise competent (and glamorous) queen. According to the play, Dido's troubles begin when she becomes the unwitting victim of a spell that compels her to replace her string of adoring suitors with a husband. The masterful (and masculine) *sangfroid* she maintains with her minions topples into a kind of intense, desperate (and feminine) desire that seeks marriage, and procreative sexuality, as the ultimate goal. Marlowe and Nashe's treatment of the seduction of the queen of Carthage and her abandonment by a feckless suitor calls attention to the extent to which Dido's desire to marry Aeneas opens herself and her country up for exploitation by a foreigner. *Dido, Queene of Carthage* thus transforms Virgil's apologia for masculine prerogative into praise for a queen who, by avoiding marriage, preserved the liberty and prosperity of her people.

The play opens by juxtaposing the playful, theatrical eroticism of Jupiter and Ganymede with the heartfelt violence of Juno's antagonism.⁴³ Jealous that Ganymede, "that female wanton boy," should enjoy the preferment that she feels should be reserved for her daughter, Hebe, Juno boxes young Ganymede's ear so hard it makes "the blood run downe."⁴⁴ However, the true conflict in this scene is not so much the opposition between hetero- and homosexuality, but the distinction between sexual enjoyment that falls outside marriage, characterized in this scene by "feathers" (Q, 1.1.39), "gems" (42), and "slumbers" (37), and the savage realities of the conjugal imperative, identified by Juno's "blowes" (4), "blood" (8), and binding "cordes" (14). Jupiter and Ganymede's love banter runs counter to the possessive, commitment-oriented love of Dido for Aeneas. Like Jupiter and Ganymede, Elizabeth enjoyed amorous relationships outside the conjugal norm. The power imbalance in their relationship is consistent with the one between Elizabeth and her minions: although she sometimes played the coquette, Elizabeth, like her father before her, preferred to take the dominant role. Like Jupiter, Elizabeth enjoyed "dandling" (Q, 1.1.stage dir.; from the Italian *dandolo*, or doll) her attendants, cupbearers, and boy toys. They addressed her (as Ganymede addresses Jupiter) in tones of abject adoration, and sought to win from her and to present to her tokens of affection, such as "linked gems" (Q, 1.1.42) and jewels for their ears. Minions, more than marriage, were the reality of Elizabeth's sexuality.

Placing the lassitude of Jupiter, stupefied by desire, against the backdrop of the maternal watchfulness of Venus, *Dido, Queen of Carthage* dramatizes a conflict Elizabeth experienced throughout her reign: the rival claims of what her father called "pastime with good company" and the pressing need to oversee the affairs of state. Like Venus, Elizabeth was often forced to interrupt these courtly dalliances when duty called and to send her men, as Venus sends Mercury, off to the "disquiet seas" to look after her interests abroad (Q, 1.1.122). Elizabeth was frequently identified, in word and image, with the goddess Venus. As the mother of Aeneas and great-grandmother of Brutus, Venus is Elizabeth's legendary ancestor.⁴⁵ She is also the embodiment of desire who remains, nevertheless, elusively detached from it: a role Elizabeth was used to playing with her courtiers. In *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, Venus recalls the queen as a single girl, implying that by avoiding marriage, Elizabeth has remained forever young. The inclusion of Venus within the indulgent

world of Jupiter and Ganymede also carves out a space for female eroticism apart from the expectations and demands of Juno, or what Aeneas later calls "female drudgerie" (Q, 4.3.55). Venus's appearance in a leopard-skin, murmuring "now is the time for me to play my part," also recalls Elizabeth's enthusiastic participation in dramatizations of her own iconography (Q, 1.1.182).⁴⁶ Leading the shipwrecked sailors to her "sister" Dido, who is also dressed with "a quiver girded to her side, / And cloathed in a spotted Leopards skin" (Q, 1.1.185–86), Venus could just as easily be directing them to Elizabeth's court.

While Venus's disguise alludes to Elizabeth's involvement in court masques and spectacles, Aeneas's ability to see through it—he insists, "I know her by the movings of her feete" (Q, 1.1.241)—transforms a moment of filial pathos in Virgil into an acknowledgement of an essential quality of queenship that cannot be obscured by costume. Venus's account of how the "Tyrian maids" (recalling Dido's birth-place) cast off their "bowe and quiver in this modest sort, / And suite themselves in purple for the nonce / That they may trip more lightly ore the lawnds, / And overtake the tusked Bore in chase" (Q, 1.1.205–8) brings together Elizabeth's great love of hunting (she took particular pleasure in the kill) and her pleasure in the chase of love. When the play conflates the amorousness of Venus with the chastity of Diana (a sisterly connection confirmed by the appearance of Venus as one of Diana's nymphs in the *Aeneid*) it draws upon the mythology of Astraea, the goddess from Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*, adopted at Elizabeth's accession. Aeneas's uncertain nomenclature, "But whether thou the Sunnes bright Sister be / Or one of chaste Dianas fellow Nimphs" (Q, 1.1.193–94), highlights Elizabeth's simultaneous identification with Diana, a virgin huntress aloof to men, and Venus, the goddess of love who liked nothing better than to steal them from their wives.

Certainly the last thing Dido has on her mind is marriage. Wives are absent from Marlowe's Carthage, just as they were banished from Elizabeth's court. Elizabeth discouraged marriage among her attendants, was notorious for exiling married ladies-in-waiting (occasionally sending them to the Tower), and restored married courtiers to her good graces only if their wives kept their distance. Dido is depicted gloating over her collection of distinguished suitors, Greeks and Trojans, orators and musicians, princes and warriors, and bemused by her capacity to remain, ultimately, unmoved by them: "I was as farre from love as they from hate" (Q, 3.1.166). When Iarbus (the quarto spelling of Iarbas, the name of the suitor Pygmalion

picked out to replace the murdered Sychaeus) begs, "How long faire Dido shall I pine for thee?" (Q, 3.1.7), he ventriloquizes the plaintive terms of Elizabethan courtier poetics. When he realizes the hopelessness of his suit, Iarbus wouldn't dream of taking his anger out on Dido, "that were to warre gainst heaven" (Q, 3.3.71), just as Elizabeth's courtiers were expected to swallow their pride and anger when their time in the sun was over. Dido's relationship with Iarbus, a small detail in Virgil greatly magnified by Marlowe, may allude to the special relationships Elizabeth maintained with favorites such as Leicester, which produced rumors about the nature of their intimacy. Dido is similarly conscious of her reputation. In her relationship with Iarbus, she takes refuge behind a persona of virginal purity which places her beyond desire: "I feare me Dido hath been counted light / In being too familiar with Iarbus / Albeit the Gods doe know no wanton thought, / Had ever residence in Didos breast" (Q, 3.1.14-17). As Juno rages, rehearsing her complaints against Jupiter and Paris, and plotting the murder of Ascanius, the married woman is shown to be jealous, murderous, crazed with fury, and, most importantly, a serious threat to the course of empire: with little Ascanius dead, Juno cackles, "Troy shall no more call him her second hope" (Q, 3.2.8).⁴⁷

Dido's responses to Aeneas dramatize an alternative perspective on a foundational narrative of western masculinity. The "wealthie robes" (Q, 2.1.65) that she bestows on Aeneas's sailors gives them the mark of her ownership as much as favor. Dido's first words to Aeneas call attention to his status as an alien in Carthage: "[W]hat stranger art thou that doest eye me thus?" (Q, 2.1.74). Addressing Aeneas in an imperious tone, as if she were interrogating one of her own men, just returned from abroad, Dido proceeds to weigh the narratives she has heard before arriving at her own judgment. She couches her questions in the terms of humanist collation: "May I entreate thee to discourse at large / And truely to how Troy was overcome? / For many tales goe of that Cities fall, / And scarcely doe agree upon one poynt" (Q, 2.1.106-9). In this scene, Marlowe turns one of the most famous passages from the *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas's magisterial verbosity anticipates his sexual mastery of Dido, into a scene of queenly condescension. Marlowe's Aeneas is neither pious nor golden-tongued but "warlike" (Q, 2.1.78). He presents himself with "humilitie," a breach of princely manners for which he is sharply chastised by Dido, who enjoins him, "Remember who thou art" (Q, 2.1.99, 100). Remembering the troubles he faced, Aeneas describes himself as

"miserable" (Q, 2.1.102). He is not moved to eloquence; rather, he sinks into a faint.

When Aeneas finally manages to speak he does so with "Achilles tongue" (Q, 2.1.121), identifying himself with his enemy, a notorious hothead and sulk, a man of silent, savage rages, rather than seductive prolixity. Marlowe's Aeneas is unable to reproduce the oratorical performance of his Virgilian counterpart: he reduces the enthralling narrative of his predecessor into a few simple words, transforming high-toned Virgilian seriousness into comic pastiche: "Sometime I was a Troian, mightie Queene, / But Troy is not, what shall I say I am?" (Q, 2.1.75-76). Far from Virgil's breathless listener, Marlowe's Dido responds with frequent interjections. Her responses produce a female-oriented version of the fall of Troy. Seeing the weak spots in Aeneas's tale of military humiliation and personal loss, Anna and Dido ask questions such as "O what became of aged Hecuba?" and "How scapt Helen?" (Q, 2.1.290, 292), thus calling attention to the places in Aeneas's narrative in which he inexplicably leaves women behind, such as his wife Creusa, and Cassandra, who beg to be taken with him. The interest Dido and Anna show in the fates of the women Aeneas deserted undermines the pretensions of Trojan manhood, overshadows the fates of Laocoon, Priam, and Hector, and anticipates Aeneas's betrayal of Dido. No longer a hero, Aeneas becomes, instead, the stranger, whose bloody, barbarian speech upsets rather than attracts the queen. After his account of the death of Priam she begs, "O, end, Aeneas! I can heare no more!" (Q, 2.1.243).

Resisting the proto-Orientalism implied by the story of Aeneas's brief dalliance with an African queen, *Dido, Queene of Carthage* transforms Aeneas into a silenced and ill-at-ease Other. What is, in Virgil, a forward-looking mandate of expansion and duty becomes the lame excuse of one afraid to commit: "How loth I am to leave these Libian bounds, / But that eternall Jupiter commands" (Q, 5.1.81-82). What makes Aeneas an especially unattractive figure in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* is his exasperating submission to religious authority.⁴⁸ Aeneas explains his departure in terms which invoke a higher power, such as "Jove wils it so; my mother wils it so" (Q, 4.3.5) and "Fates doe bid aboutd" (Q, 4.3.21). Here, qualities that, in Virgil, reflect filial obedience and a sense of duty are redefined as determinism, even superstition, and a slippery abdication of personal responsibility. Some may be inclined to read this characterization of Aeneas's faith as an expression of Marlowe's distance from orthodox structures of belief. Yet its primary effect is to diminish Aeneas's claim to the status

of Ur-imperialist and protocolonizer, presenting him instead as the simple chattel of Fate and unquestioning vessel of the gods. At a time when England was supporting exploration and settlements in North America, Africa, and India, Marlowe's Aeneas leaves open the grand Virgilian themes of divine right and colonialist expansion for Elizabeth, herself neither marriage-minded nor particularly pious, to appropriate as she saw fit.

By characterizing Dido as an imperious queen and Aeneas as her insipid inferior, the play accentuates its heroine's fall. Dido becomes the victim of a spell that invests her with stereotypically "wifely" qualities: weakness, dependence, and obsession with commitment. Expressing her love for Aeneas in repeated requests that he marry her, take part in the running of the kingdom, and give her a son "that I might see Aeneas in his face" (Q, 5.1.150), it is not only Dido's loss of composure that makes her absurd, but also her appreciation of virtues that, as Marlowe makes clear, this Trojan simply does not possess: "Is he not," Dido asks, "eloquent in all his speech?" (Q, 3.1.65). Dido also engages religious vocabulary, in voluptuous lines that look forward to Faustus's "her lippes sucke forth my soule": "If he forsake me not, I never dye / For in his looks I see eternitie / And heele make me immortall with a kisse" (Q, 4.4.121-23).⁴⁹ Confirming how low the mighty queen has fallen, the suggestion that a mere mortal could appropriate God's power to extend life, that another's gaze is like the face of God, that a kiss can bestow the grace of everlasting life, are of a piece with the secular religion of love that provided the terms of lyric poetry and defined much of the political discourse of the Elizabethan court. But the problem with Dido's speech is not that the queen is speaking like an idolatress, but that she is not speaking like a queen. By taking Aeneas as her "Lord" (Q, 4.4.84), Dido has started to speak like a minion.

When Iarbus realizes that he has lost out to Aeneas, he resorts to familiar rhetoric: "Scorning our loves and royall marriage-rites, / Yeelds up her beautie to a stranger's bed; / Who having wrought her shame, is straight way fled" (Q, 4.2.16-18). As his words recall the eulogistic verses that were composed to commemorate Dido's tragedy, they also repeat the arguments made against Elizabeth's marriage to a foreign king or prince. Iarbus adopts Elizabeth's argument against marrying the Archduke Charles (she did not wish to have an absent husband) as well as arguments made by Sir Philip Sidney and others against Elizabeth's marriage to the Duke of Alençon, which was felt to be tantamount to another Norman Conquest.⁵⁰ This issue

was evidently in Elizabeth's mind as well: the stipulations to her engagement to Alençon included the reinstatement of English territorial holdings in Calais.

Although the courtship of Alençon never materialized into a marriage, Elizabeth retained a great affection for him. Like Dido and Aeneas, Elizabeth and her "dear Frog" had enjoyed a kind of pretend marriage: during their marriage discussions, they even went so far as to exchange rings (although Elizabeth, characteristically, commented afterward that what she had done could just as easily be undone).⁵¹ In 1584, when Alençon died, Elizabeth ordered her entire court into mourning. When Dido, sick of Aeneas's violent war stories, interrupts, "Come let us thinke upon some pleasing sport, / To rid me from these melancholly thoughts" (*Q*, 2.1.302–3), she is doing more than diverging powerfully, and comically, from her enthralled Virgilian counterpart. She is referring to Marlowe's play itself as a "pleasing sport" to rid its queen from "melancholy thoughts." As the Children of Her Majesty's Chapel performed a play that complimented and reinforced Elizabeth's refusal to wed, Elizabeth considered herself to be, like Dido, a widow.

IV.

Published in quarto in 1594, and performed by the Lord Chamberlain's men in 1597, *Dido, Queene of Carthage* informs Shakespeare's revisionist and subversive reworkings of the *Aeneid*'s themes of love and empire, for it made the *Aeneid* look quite different. By telling the other side of the story, the play raises questions concerning the humanity of the colonized (not to mention the colonizer): sympathetic yet tragic, or monstrously Other? Pious or faithless, Aeneas is no longer an attractive hero, and Troy is no longer the undisputed model of empire. Dido, moreover, has been dignified by her association with Elizabeth.

Marlowe and Nashe's revisions and additions lie behind Shakespeare's handling of erotic love and especially the vagaries of forbidden love and cross-cultural attraction. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, written in 1594 (the year *Dido, Queene of Carthage* appeared in quarto), Lucentio makes the following comment to his chum Tranio, when he sees Bianca for the first time: "Thou art to me as secret and as dear, / As Anna to the Queen of Carthage was: / Tranio, I burn, I pine, I perish, Tranio / If I achieve not this young modest girl."⁵² Lucentio recalls the active role that Marlowe and Nashe's

Dido plays in seducing Aeneas. By placing himself in the role of Dido, and Tranio in the position of Dido's sister Anna, Lucentio identifies himself with the Virgilian thread of ardent female passion.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, composed a year later, Shakespeare preserves the love quadrangle established in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* with the development of the roles of Anna and Dido's suitor, Iarbus. As Aeneas and Iarbus both love Dido, Dido loves only Aeneas, and Anna hopelessly loves Iarbus; so, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Lysander and Demetrius love Hermia, Hermia loves only Lysander, and Helena somewhat less hopelessly loves Demetrius. Hermia alludes to the inspiration behind this arrangement when she aligns herself with Ovid's anti-Virgilian reading of the tale in her vow to Lysander: "And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen, / When the false Trojan under sail was seen, / By all the vows that ever men have broke."⁵³ Moreover, while Titania's status as Queen of the Faeries recalls the codification of Elizabeth's mythic role as Spenser's Faerie Queen, her love for Bottom, viewed through the lens of *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, is cast in the same absurd mold as Dido's love for Aeneas: "thou art as wise as thou art beautiful."⁵⁴

Couples such as Othello and Desdemona, and Anthony and Cleopatra, have similar debts to *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. While such biracial or bicultural pairs look back, ultimately, to Virgil, it is *Dido, Queen of Carthage* that provides the model for creative shifts in the equations of gender, race, and power. Desdemona's name plays upon that of Dido, and Othello is, like Aeneas, "from men of royal siege," yet homeless. Othello's story, moreover, has the same effect on Desdemona as Aeneas's does on Dido: "[S]he loved me for the dangers I had passed, / And I loved her that she did pity them."⁵⁵ In this case, however, the European Dido/Desdemona is moved to love by the experiences of the North African wanderer Aeneas/Othello, whose name recalls or plays on his ethnic connection, as a Moor, to the Ottoman Empire. Othello provides a powerful antitype to Marlowe's Aeneas, with his fierce self-defined passion, his grandiloquent magnetism, and, most importantly, his unwavering commitment.

Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* has an even closer relationship to Virgil's *Aeneid*, which was conceived in praise of Octavian and Lepidus, with Aeneas's rejection of Dido implicitly critiquing the subordination of Antonius, the third member of the triumvirate, to Cleopatra. Anthony's words as he prepares to kill himself signal this intertextual relationship. Believing Cleopatra is dead, Anthony wants to follow her to Elysium: "Where souls do couch on flowers we'll

hand in hand, / And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze. / Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops, / And all the haunt be ours." Suggesting that his willingness to die for love would make him more popular with the Elysian "troops" than Aeneas, Anthony undermines not only the Virgilian Aeneas, with his epic mandate, but also the more spineless Marlovian Aeneas. Anthony thus becomes the husband Dido wanted all along, when, by falling on his sword, he does sympathetic homage to her motivation for (and means of) death: "I will be / A bridegroom in my death, and run into't as to a lover's bed."⁵⁶

The curiously aimless "widow Dido" scene in *The Tempest* (2.1.1–180) best illustrates the impact of Marlowe's *Dido, Queene of Carthage* on the Elizabethan discourse of love and empire. Composed when the heady atmosphere of courtship that prevailed at the Elizabethan court had been replaced by the patriarchal structures of the Jacobean court, *The Tempest* is rife with Aeneadic subtexts which many scholars have tied to the rise of English colonialism under James I.⁵⁷ From the Mediterranean place-names and the motif of the shipwreck to the marriage of the princess of Naples to the king of Tunis, *The Tempest* is in constant conversation with its Virgilian predecessor. The "widow Dido" scene participates in this conversation. When fresh garments magically appear for the shipwrecked sailors on Prospero's island, Gonzalo observes, "methinks our garments are now as fresh as when we put them on first in Afric, at the marriage of the King's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis."⁵⁸ The subject of Claribel (of whose marriage no one seems to approve) prompts Adrian to muse, "Tunis was never graced before with such a paragon to their queen," and Gonzalo replies, "Not since widow Dido's time" (*T*, 2.1.72, 75). Adrian corrects, "She was of Carthage, not of Tunis," and Gonzalo makes the connection between contemporary Tunis and ancient Carthage: "[T]his Tunis, sir, was Carthage" (*T*, 2.1.81, 82).

Gonzalo's connection invokes Dido, who supplied Aeneas's men with fresh garments when they arrived at Carthage. It implies, moreover, that Claribel's marriage to the Tunisian king is a kind of mirror image of the hot and heavy Trojan dalliance with Carthage, bringing together a North African and a European.⁵⁹ By joining ancient Carthage with contemporary Tunis, Gonzalo highlights the play's multiple temporalities. On the one hand, the Aeneadic material of *The Tempest* places it in a classical context, while on the other, its references to the New World place it firmly within the Jacobean present. Yet Gonzalo's comments about Dido and the Tunis/Carthage

connection also look back upon a more recent Elizabethan past, memorializing Elizabeth as well as Elizabethan court culture. The scene's obsessive circling around the idea of "widow Dido" and its wistful references to Claribel—a "queen," a "paragon" (*T*, 2.1.96, 72)—bring up the old tradition of a wise and valiant Dido, faithful to the memory of Sychaeus, as well as England's own "widow Dido" and the larger-than-life culture and flamboyant personalities of the 1580s. In 1613, when *The Tempest* was performed for the wedding celebrations of James I's daughter, Elizabeth, and Frederick, king of Bohemia and Elector Palatine, Gonzalo's reference to Dido would have recalled an Elizabeth who did not marry, for the benefit of an audience assembled to celebrate an Elizabeth who is getting married. Gonzalo's garments, which "hold notwithstanding their freshness and gloss," and his doublet, "as fresh as the first day I wore it" (*T*, 2.1.62–63, 100), might even constitute a joking reference to the aristocratic cast-offs, the fashions of a previous generation (now dead) that costumed the actors. In any case, to members of a scoffing younger generation represented by Sebastian and Antonio, Gonzalo's "widow Dido" casts an eye back to the glory days that, by 1610 or 1611, had taken place a generation ago.

When Antonio dismisses Dido's literary reputation as a widow ("How came that widow in?" [*T*, 2.1.76]), recognizing, instead, the Virgilian Dido, Sebastian makes a flip comment about "widower Aeneas" (*T*, 2.1.78). Their comments return the fresh garments, the Tunis/Carthage of the wedding, and the "widow Dido" conversation, to Prospero's island. To a certain extent, the shipwrecked group plays out the narrative of the *Aeneid*. Francisco aligns Ferdinand with Aeneas when he recalls how he "trode the water . . . and breasted / The surge most swoll'n that met him" (*T*, 2.1.13–15). Ferdinand's words upon meeting Miranda reinforce this connection, as "Most sure, the goddess" (*T*, 1.2.422) translates Aeneas's response to Venus upon reaching dry land: "O dea certe."⁶⁰ Yet there are variations: Miranda has no intentions of repeating Dido's ill-fated love affair. Marriage is on the table from the beginning, and Miranda's cool appraisal of the situation during the chess game ("Sweet lord, you play me false" [*T*, 5.1.172]), as well as Prospero's withering injunction against pre-marital sex, place her relationship with Ferdinand in an entirely different register.

Variations on a theme by Virgil, Shakespeare's intertextual echoes are not limited to a one-for-one correlation. Sebastian's idea of "widower Aeneas" gestures, not to Ferdinand, but to widower Prospero, who, like Aeneas, sailed the Mediterranean to find a new

home. If Prospero's arrival on the island makes him a "widower Aeneas," this makes Sycorax, who claimed the island first, a kind of Dido. Yet the arrival of the shipwrecked sailors, and Prospero's provision of fresh garments to them in the "widow Dido" scene, also make Prospero a Dido, and the island a site of empire. Like Dido, Prospero fled his home and a treacherous brother to establish a successful, expansionist settlement on the Mediterranean coast. Prospero's association with Dido is developed when he draws upon the words of Ovid's *Medea* at the moment when he drowns his book: "Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves" (*T*, 5.1.33). Like Dido, *Medea* is a cultural Other: Colchis, like Dido's Tyre, is in the far eastern reaches of the Mediterranean. Like Dido, she is betrayed by her "western" lover: in her case, it is the Greek Jason. Prospero, the quintessential patriarch, is now framed as a female enchantress; and Dido serves not only as a figure for Elizabeth, but also, by her association with Prospero, as a figure for her male successor, James (whose fascination with female enchantresses was well known). Thus Marlowe's defamiliarization has come full circle: Prospero has become "so rare a wondered father *and* a wife" (*T*, 4.1.123; my emphasis).⁶¹

The Tempest demonstrates how the dichotomy between the passionate Virgilian Dido, ready and willing to give it all up for love, and the pre-Virgilian character Dido, a martyr to chastity, supplies a crucial point of contact for Elizabeth's personal and political life. It illustrates the extent to which Elizabeth's reign is viewed through the lens of empire, just as British imperialism is, itself, traced to Elizabeth. However, the foundational role that Elizabeth and her reign play in our own narratives of British imperialism must be understood with reference to Elizabeth's identification with Dido in her infinite variety. Their association highlights the difference a female sovereign makes to England's articulation of empire, and reveals a dialogue between England and Africa, the East and the New World, that is more fluid and less hierarchical than is usually recognized. This dialogue calls into question widespread assumptions as to the fixed status of racial and sexual (as well as geographical) hierarchies, which are often treated as if they remained unchanged from classical times to the present. Finally, the dual nature of Dido herself, for whom there exists not only a narrative of victimhood but also an alternative tradition that celebrates her powerful and vigorous sovereignty, demands a reconsideration of the fantasy that it is possible to locate in some "other" historical, geographical, cultural, or

even gendered sites, an alternative, pre-colonial space that can rebut or even replace the colonial histories to which modernity is consistently and persistently tied.

York University, Toronto

NOTES

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¹ See Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Iconography* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977); and Sir Philip Sidney, "A Letter Written By Sir Philip Sidney to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur," in *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 33–58.

² On Elizabeth's marriage negotiations, see Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London: Routledge, 1996). On the cultural impact of Elizabeth's courtships, see Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993); Phillippa Berry, *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (London: Routledge, 1989); and Katherine Eggert, *Showing Like a Queen: Female Authority and Literary Experiment in Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000). On Elizabeth's virginity, see John N. King, "Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen," *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990): 30–74.

³ On literary appropriations of the *Aeneid* in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, see Christopher Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995); Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982); David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993); and Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics and the Translation of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997).

⁴ From the beginning of her reign, Elizabeth and her observers looked to classical and biblical literature for models of queenship. These models often came from the "Orient." Anne Bradstreet's "In Honour of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth, of Most Happy Memory" (1643), in *The Complete Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Joseph R. Elrath, Jr. and Allan P. Robb (Boston: Twayne, 1981), provides a retrospective catalogue of the heroic women to whom Elizabeth was most often compared, including Dido: "Dido first Foundresse of proud Carthage walls / (Who living consummates her Funerals), / A great Eliza, but compar'd with ours, / How vanisheth her glory, wealth, and powers (lines 59–62).

Edmund Spenser's November eclogue in *The Shepheardes Calendar* (London: Hugh Singleton, 1579) contains the memorable lyrical elegiac of "some mayden of great bloud, whom he calleth Dido" (44r).

⁵ Entries on Dido in late sixteenth-century and later editions of Charles Estienne's dictionary reveal the slippage between "Elisa" and "Eliza." See "Dido, sive Eliza" in *Dictionarium Historicum, Geographicum, Poeticum* (Geneva: J. Stoer, 1594; rpt. ed. Stephen Orgel [New York and London: Garland, 1976]), 184v. Joachim du Bellay's

translation of Ovid also uses the "Eliza" spelling in references to Dido. See *Le Quatriemes Livre de l'Eneide de Vergile, traduit en vers Francoys. La Complaincte de Didon à Énée, prinse d'Ovide. Autres Ouvvres de l'invention du translateur* (Paris: Vincent Certenas, 1552), 88. See Orgel's discussion of Dido in the introduction to his edition of *The Tempest* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 39–43, and in "Shakespeare and the Cannibals," in *Cannibals, Witches and Divorce*, ed. Marjorie Garber (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 40–66. On Elissa/Eliza, see also James, *Shakespeare's Troy*, 18–19.

⁶ See *Timaeus of Tauromenium*, ed. Truedell S. Brown (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1958); and Justin, *Epitome of Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, trans. J. L. Yardley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). For an overview, see the discussions of Dido in Estienne, *Dictionarium Historicum* and Giovanni Boccaccio, *De claris mulieribus*. For further discussion of the Dido tradition, see Mary Louise Lord, "Dido as an Example of Chastity: The Influence of Example Literature," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 27 (1969): 22–44, 216–32; Marilyn Desmond, *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality and the Medieval Aeneid* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1994); and *A Woman Scorned, Responses to the Dido Myth*, ed. Michael Burden (London: Faber and Faber, 1998).

⁷ Christine de Pizan, *Le livre de la cite des dames* (Paris, 1405), 1.46.

⁸ Estienne, *Dictionarium historicum* (Oxford: William Hall, 1670), 340.

⁹ Virgil, *Aeneid*, in Virgil, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, rev. ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1935), 1:4.22–23. "[S]olus hic inflexit sensus animumque labantem / impulit. adgnosco veteris vestigia flammae."

¹⁰ See Virgil, 4.622–29.

¹¹ See Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 43–69. For discussion see Quint, 107–11.

¹² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 312.

¹³ Quint, 109.

¹⁴ Ovid, *Heroides*, ed. and trans. Grant Showerman; rev. ed. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978), 7.7–14. "[C]ertus es, Aenea, cum foedere solvere naves, / quaeque ubi sint nescis, Italia regna sequi? . . . facta fugis, facienda petis; quaerenda per orbem / altera, quaesita est altera terra tibi."

¹⁵ Ausonius, [Works], ed. Hugh G. Evelyn White, The Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1921), 2:289. "Infelix Dido, nulli bene nupta marito: / hoc pereunte fugis, hoc fugiente peris."

¹⁶ See *The Commentary on the First Six Books of the Aeneid of Virgil Commonly Attributed to Bernardus Silvestris*, ed. and trans. Julian Ward Jones and Elizabeth Frances Jones (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1977).

¹⁷ Macrobius's *Saturnalia* establishes Dido's connection with the barbarian Other by comparing her passion for Aeneas with Medea's for Jason (*Macrobii Aurelii Theodosii Viri Consularis et Illustris Saturnaliorum* [Venice: Johann Rubeu de Vercellis, 1492], lxvii.r).

¹⁸ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. William Watts, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1957–72), 1.13 ("et plorare Didonem mortuam, quia se occidit ab amore, cum interea me ipsum in his a te morientem, deus, vita mea, siccis oculis ferrem miserrimus") and 3.1 ("sartago flagitiosorum amorum"). Augustine also identifies his mother, Monica, as a Dido figure, as she weeps for him when he leaves Carthage. See *Confessions*, 1.12.

¹⁹ T. S. Eliot's association of Elizabeth with Carthage is illustrated by the lines that precede "To Carthage then I came" in which he describes "Elizabeth and Leicester / beating oars" (*The Waste Land*, in *Collected Poems 1909–1962* [London: Faber and Faber, 1963], lines 279–80).

²⁰ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women*, lines 1254–56, 1366–67; see also his *The House of Fame*, line 200 and following, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

²¹ John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, in *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, EETS es 81, 82 (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1900; rpt. 1969), 4.118–19, 4.139–40.

²² John Lydgate, *Here begynneth the temple of glas* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1506), unpaginated.

²³ Gavin Douglas, *Virgill's Aeneados* (London: William Copland, 1553), lxxi.v, lxxv.r, lxxv.v.

²⁴ Chaucer, *House of Fame*, 1:310. See *Tragedia de M. Gio. Battista Giraldi Cinthio* (Venice: Giulio Cesare Cagnacini, 1583).

²⁵ George Sandys says that "it is more than probable, that Dido arrived in Africa, two hundred eighty and nine yeares after the destruction of Troy, being supposed to bee the Neece of Jezabell" (*Ovid's Metamorphosis, Englished, Mythologized, and Represented in Figures*, ed. Karl K. Hulley and Stanley T. Vandersall [Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1970], 647).

²⁶ Petrarch, *The Tryumphes of Fraunces Petrарcke, Translated out of Italian into English by Henrye Parker, Knyght, Lord Morley* (London: John Cawood, 1555), fi.v.

²⁷ For William Langland, a "dido" is a word for a silly tale, a worthless fiction: "[I]t is but a dido' quod this doctour, a discours tale!" See Langland, *Piers Plowman: The B Version*, ed. G. Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson (London: Athlone Press, 1975), passus 13, line 172.

²⁸ Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, ed. and trans. Virginia Brown, The I Tatti Renaissance Library (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001), 174–75. "O pudicitie inviolatum decus! O viduitatis infracte venerandum eternumque specimen, Dido! In te velim ingerant oculus vidue mulieres et potissime christiane tuum robur inspiciant."

²⁹ Du Bellay, 7 ("Je diray seulement qu'oeuvre ne se trouve en quelque langue que ce soit, ou les passions amoureuses soyent plus vivement depeinctes, qu'en la personne de Didon") and 8 ("l'injure qu'elle a receu par Vergile"); my translation. This return to the classics constitutes a reversal of his earlier opinions concerning the legitimacy of French as a medium for poetic invention that were so strongly expressed in his 1549 *La Deffense de la Langue Françoyse*.

³⁰ Du Bellay, 89. See also *Poems of Various Occasions; and Translations from Several Authors. By Mr. John Dryden* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1701), 224. "Unhappy Dido lies in quiet here. / The cause of death, and Sword by which she dy'ed, / Aeneas gave: the rest her arm supply'd."

³¹ Du Bellay, 91. ("I had this body") "Tel corps j'auoy, non l'impudique esprit, / Qui feintement par Vergile est descript"; (Who then) "Qui t'avoit donq', ô Virgile, incité / D'estre envieux sur ma pudicité?" ("Believe, readers") "Croyez lecteurs, cela que les histoires, / Ont dict de moy: non les fables notoires, / De ces menteurs, qui, d'art laborieux, / Chantent l'amour des impudiques Dieux." Sandys's 1632 commentary on Ovid juxtaposes Ausonius's and Virgil's accounts:

Me Troys Aeneas never saw; nor bore,
The Ilian ships unto the Lybian shore:
But flying outrage and Iarbas; I

By death secur'd my spotlesse chastity.
 This thrust the sword through my undaunted brest:
 Not rage, nor injur'd love, with grieve opprest.
 So fell unforc'd: liv'd undefam'd, (bely'd)
 Reveng'd my husband, built a citty, dy'd.

(647)

³² Etienne Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, in *Les oeuvres et meslanges poetiques d'Estienne Jodelle, Sieur de Lymodin* (Paris: Robert le Fizelier, 1583), wrenches Dido out of the allegorical Christian context in which Augustine and Sylvester (among others) had placed her, in order to make an anti-Trojan argument that establishes Dido as a classical heroine, whose status as an unlucky victim of arbitrary and unforgiving circumstances aligns her with characters such as Oedipus or Phaedra. Dido's harsh critique of the future Rome uses Dido's curse from Virgil to imagine a legacy of political tyranny tied to the "religion" that Aeneas is following: "Que sans fin dans ses murs la sedition regne, / Qu'en mille et mille estats elle change son regne, / Qu'elle face en la fin de ses mains la ruine, / Et qu'à l'envi chacun dessus elle domine, / Se voyant coup sus coup saccagée ravie, / Et a mille estrangers tous ensemble asservie" (269). [Sedition reign for aye within her walls, / And change her empire to a thousand states, / And wreak her final ruin singlehanded; / Let all and any master her at will, / And let her find herself, by turns, first sacked, / Then raped, then slave to a thousand foreigners.] Thanks to Roger Kuin for this translation. See also Barbara J. Bono, *Literary Transvaluation: From Virgilian Epic to Shakespearean Tragicomedy* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984), 93, 109–10; and P. R. Horne, "Reformation and Counter-Reformation at Ferrara: Antonio Musa Brasavola and Giambattista Cinthio Giraldi," *Italian Studies* 13 (1958): 62–82.

³³ See William Gager, *Dido*, in vol. 1 of William Gager: *The Complete Works*, ed. Dana F. Sutton (New York: Garland, 1994).

³⁴ See Roy Strong, *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 157 and *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 101. The painting was attributed to Quentin Massys the Younger in 1988. See Constance Jordan, "Representing Political Androgyny: More on the Siena Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I," in *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print. Counterbalancing the Canon*, ed. Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 157–76.

³⁵ Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 107.

³⁶ Petrarch, *fi.v.*

³⁷ Strong, *Gloriana*, 99. He continues: "She too is of imperial descent, she too is destined to found a mighty (British) empire and in order to achieve it she too has spurned the wiles of human passion" (99). See also Jordan, "Representing Political Androgyny"; Walter Oakshott and Jordan, "The Siena Portrait of Elizabeth I," *Apollo* 124 (1986): 306–9; Doris Adler, "The Riddle of the Sieve: the Siena Sieve Portrait of Elizabeth I," *Renaissance Papers* (1978): 1–10; and Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 114–20.

³⁸ Orgel, "Shakespeare and the Cannibals," 62.

³⁹ For a discussion of this contested territory, see Jerry Brotton, "'This Tunis, sir, was Carthage': Contesting Colonialism in *The Tempest*," in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, ed. Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (London: Routledge, 1998), 23–42.

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⁴⁰ Saintsbury's remark, originally offered in his *A History of Elizabethan Literature* (1887), is reprinted in *Marlowe: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Millar MacLure (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 163. Swinburne put these failings down to the "attempt at once to transcribe what is essentially inimitable and to reproduce it under the hopelessly alien conditions of dramatic adaptation." Betraying a prejudice against both the theater and translation, Swinburne acknowledges that there exists in the play "one really noble passage." Though he refuses to let on which one, I suspect it is the account of the fall of Troy, the "unattainable model" for which, as he points out "the dramatists have been only too obsequious in their subservience" (*Marlowe: The Critical Heritage*, 181).

⁴¹ Important recent discussions include Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries. Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1992), 126–43; Emily Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness. Imperialism, Alienation and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 29–52; and Margo Hendricks, "Managing the Barbarian: The Tragedy of *Dido Queen of Carthage*," *Renaissance Drama* 23 (1992): 165–88.

⁴² See Donald Stump, "Marlowe's Travesty of Virgil: *Dido* and Elizabethan Dreams of Empire," *Comparative Drama* 34 (2000): 261–76, which focuses upon the play's relationship to international politics. Patrick Cheney, *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession. Ovid, Spenser, Counter-nationhood* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1997), focuses upon Marlowe's relationship to Spenser and Spenserian poetics; and Diane Purkiss, "Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and the Representation of Elizabeth I," in *A Woman Scorned*, 151–68, regards the play as an extended complaint against the queen.

⁴³ For some the opening scene is irrelevant and perverse. H. J. Oliver expresses doubt whether "much is gained" by the Jupiter-Ganymede relationship. See his introduction to Christopher Marlowe, *Dido Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris. The Revels Plays* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968). William Leigh Godshalk, in "Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*," *ELH* 38 (1971), argues that the play emphasizes "unnatural" (8) and "perverted" (7) forms of love (both homosexual and adulterous) only to prove, by negative example, the virtue of "the fruitful passion of a man for a maid and the contentment of marriage" (18).

⁴⁴ Marlowe, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, in vol. 1 of *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Roma Gill (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 1.1.51, 1.1.8. Hereafter abbreviated Q and cited parenthetically by act, scene, and line number.

⁴⁵ See Orgel's introduction to *The Tempest*, 40–42.

⁴⁶ George Peele's *Araygnment of Paris* reworks the story of the judgment of Paris in such a way that Diana decides to award the golden apple, not to Venus (who doesn't seem to mind at all), but to Elizabeth, "this peereles nymphe" (5.1). See *The Dramatic Works of George Peele*, ed. Charles Tyler Prouty, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1970), 1:111–12. The climax of Peele's play occurs when Diana steps into the audience, and places the ball in the queen's hands. Sir Walter Raleigh alternately addressed Elizabeth, in his beseeching letters, as Venus or Diana.

⁴⁷ Jupiter's preference for Ganymede over Hebe, and for Venus over Juno, may recall Henry VIII's preference for the infant Elizabeth over the teenaged Mary, and the youthful ("minion") Anne over Catherine, his aged wife. See Juno's line, "Fair queen of love, I will divorce these doubts" (3.2.85).

⁴⁸ On Marlowe's atheism, see David Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), 29–31.

⁴⁹ Marlowe, *The tragicall history of D. Faustus* (London: V. Simmes for Thomas Bushell, 1604), F2v.

⁵⁰ See, for example, John Stubbes, *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf Whereinto England is like to be Swallowed by an other French marriage, if the Lord forbid not the banes* (1579) (London: H. Singleton for W. Page, 1579); and Sidney's "A Letter Written By Sir Philip Sidney to Queen Elizabeth."

⁵¹ *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 244.

⁵² William Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 1.1.153–56.

⁵³ Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *Riverside*, 1.1.173–75.

⁵⁴ Shakespeare, *Midsummer*, 3.1.140.

⁵⁵ Shakespeare, *Othello*, in *Riverside*, 1.3.22, 166–67.

⁵⁶ Shakespeare, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, in *Riverside*, 4.14.51–54, 99–100.

⁵⁷ See especially Barbara Mowat, "'Knowing I loved my books': Reading *The Tempest* Intertextually," in *The Tempest and its Travels*, ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 27–36; Orgel, introduction to *The Tempest*; and Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London: Methuen, 1986). Important recent work on *The Tempest* and colonialism includes Goldberg, *Tempest in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2004), which emphasizes the interrelationships between gender, race, and sexuality in Caribbean appropriations of *The Tempest*, and Chantal Zabus, *Tempests after Shakespeare* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), which discusses the important place of rewritings of *The Tempest* in the development of postcolonial, feminist, and postmodern literature and theory.

⁵⁸ See *The Tempest*, ed. Orgel, 2.1.68–70. Hereafter abbreviated *T* and cited parenthetically by act, scene, and line number.

⁵⁹ On the Dido traditions and "widow Dido," see Brotton, "'This Tunis, sir, was Carthage'" and "Carthage and Tunis: *The Tempest* and its Tapestries," in *The Tempest and its Travels*, 132–37; John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 49; David Norbrook, "'What Cares These Roarers for the Name of King?': Language and Utopia in *The Tempest*," in *The Politics of Tragicomedy*, ed. G. McMullan and J. Hope (London: Routledge, 1992), 21–54; Richard Wilson, "Voyage to Tunis: New History and Old World in *The Tempest*," *ELH* (1997): 333–57; Orgel, introduction to *The Tempest*, 41, and "Shakespeare and the Cannibals"; and Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, 108–115.

⁶⁰ Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.328.

⁶¹ On the "wife" and "wise" variant, see Jeanne Addison Roberts, "'Wife' or 'Wise': *The Tempest*, 1.1786," *University of Virginia Studies in Bibliography* 31 (1978): 203–8, and Orgel, "Prospero's Wife," *Representations* 8 (1984): 1–13.