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## Cultural and Technological Revolutions in William Caxton's *Eneydos* (1490)

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## **Cultural and technological revolutions in William Caxton's *Eneydos* (1490)**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1874, an event celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of printing in England was celebrated in London. In a quite laudatory speech, Anthony Trollope sang the praises of William Caxton and of the benefits that the printing press had on England:

Let them [the event's detractors] think for one moment what printing had done for us; let them think of the ignorance and misery into which men were plunged in the pre-Tudor times, from not knowing whether they were treated with justice or injustice, of the tyranny which had necessarily existed when no common thoughts as to government could be made known throughout the world. [...] The growth of intelligence which it was now our glory to see through the length and breadth of the land had been impossible until Caxton had introduced his great gift.<sup>1</sup>

Anthony Trollope depicts William Caxton as a saviour-like figure who, thanks to his "great gift", prompted a literary and a civilizational revolution. To most French people, a proper revolution has to end with a good beheading, and as the 150-year-old statue of William Caxton in

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<sup>1</sup> "Caxton Anniversary," *The Times*, March 27, 1877, 6.

Hertford was beheaded in March 2016,<sup>2</sup> I decided to analyse how the readers of *Eneydos*, one of the books Caxton translated and printed, related to the said "great gift." *Eneydos*, published in 1490, is a translation of a French, anonymous text entitled *Le Livre des Enéydes* (1483) – an indirect translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* (29-19 BC).<sup>3</sup> William Caxton translated this piece into English at a time of revolutions, both technological and literary. Indeed, William Caxton developed the market of the printed book in England<sup>4</sup> and, although *Eneydos* is one of the last books he printed – he is believed to have died c. 1491 – the printed book was still a new media in England. The end of the fifteenth century was also a period of revolution on the literary scene as well – a moment when the *Querelle des Femmes*, a literary debate which took the form of pamphlets, poems or treatises denouncing the condition of women, was raging throughout Europe. Revolution can also be analysed through the prism of its Latin etymology – *revolvere* – which implies a circular movement, a return to the point of origin or at least a similar trajectory. This leads me to analyse the reception

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<sup>2</sup> "Video: The moment a 150-year-old statue was 'beheaded' by thugs," *Yorkshire Evening Post*, May 10, 2016, <https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/offbeat/video-the-moment-a-150-year-old-statue-was-beheaded-by-thugs-1-7903243> (accessed 23.10.18).

<sup>3</sup> Quotes from Caxton's *Eneydos* are transcribed from the facsimile available on EEBO: William Caxton, *Eneydos*, Westminster: printed by William Caxton, 1490, STC (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) / 24796. I used the copy of the *Livre des Enéydes* held at the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, which has been digitised and is accessible via Gallica. *Le Livre des Enéydes compilé par Virgille, lequel a esté translaté de latin en françois* (Lyon: printed by Guillaume Le Roy, 1483).

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/Search?ArianeWireIndex=index&p=1&lang=FR&q=le+livre+des+e+neydes>

<sup>4</sup> See, in particular, William Kuskin, ed., *Caxton's Trace: Studies in the History of English Printing*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006; William Kuskin, *Symbolic Caxton: Literary Culture and Print Capitalism*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008; Anne E. B. Coldiron, "Caxton, translation, and the Renaissance reprint culture" in *Printers without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 35-106.

of the text, both by Caxton and his readers, and draw conclusions on the extent to which *Eneydos* can be read and considered as a revolutionary book. I will therefore examine how readers of *Eneydos* related to the book, whose material form and content are inherently revolutionary.

This paper will first question whether *Eneydos* is more of an evolution than a revolution. As a new commodity requires new customers, we will try to learn more about who some of Caxton's readers might have been, through the study of two specific copies of *Eneydos*, and determine the type of audience that Caxton was targeting. We shall then analyse how the readers of the two copies I have selected related to the content of the narrative in relation to the materiality of the printed book.

## **EVOLUTION AND/OR REVOLUTION**

In the *Livre des Enéydes* and *Eneydos*, two different versions of the life of Dido are juxtaposed. The first account is inspired by Boccaccio's *De Casibus virorum illustrium* and describes how Dido, Queen of Carthage, kills herself to stay true to her vow of chastity. This narrative is directly followed by a description of Dido's life drawn from Virgil's *Aeneid IV*. The two Dido sections in the *Livre des Enéydes* and *Eneydos* are not verbatim translations of the *Aeneid* and *De Casibus*: they bear the mark of various processes of "transformissions"<sup>5</sup> and some elements, borrowed from other texts, have been incorporated into these accounts. The most relevant example to this paper is the insertion of a passage drawn from Boccaccio's *De Casibus* into the account of Dido's life inspired by Virgil, so that it

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<sup>5</sup> This concept was coined by Randall McLeod writing as Random Cloud, who defined "transformission" as a portemanteau word which reflects the dynamic ways in which '[a text] was *transformed* as it was *transmitted*.' Random Cloud, "Information on information," *TEXT 5*, (1991): 241–281.

appears twice in the *Livre des Enéydes* and *Eneydos*. This anecdote, which links the character of Dido to the creation of writing, appears in Laurent de Premierfait's *Cas des Nobles*,<sup>6</sup> a 1409 French translation of Boccaccio's *De Casibus virorum illustrium*.<sup>7</sup> This particular episode also appears in the *Fall of Princes* (1431-38), John Lydgate's English rendition of *De Casibus* (Lydgate used Laurent de Premierfait's translation as one of his sources)<sup>8</sup>. Both de Premierfait's *Cas des Nobles* and Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* embed the narrative of the birth of writing within the Dido story and through the prism of Cadmus and his brother "Fenix". According to these accounts, Cadmus devised the alphabet when Fenix invented the red colour. The anecdote reads as follows in Laurent de Premierfait's *Cas des Nobles*:

Fenice est une province ou pays de surye. Et en celle province entre les aultres y a une cite appellee sydoine en laquelle anciennement regna fenix. Un des freres Cadinus [sic] roy de thebes en egypte. Cestui cadmus frere du dict fenix aps [sic] la creation du monde trois mille. sept cens. quatre vins et quatorze ans trouva la forma des lettres. et les donna aux grecs qui encores navoient certaines figures de lettres pour escripre. Fenix son frere trouva la maniere de faire le vermeillon dont len fait les grosses lettres. Et si trouva la mesure du

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<sup>6</sup> Laurent de Premierfait, *Des Cas des nobles hommes et femmes*, manuscript kept at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* (Département des manuscrits, Français 226. Call number MF 17383). Digital facsimile accessible via the Gallica website: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9009520k> (accessed 08.08.2018). Only one digital copy of the printed book is available on Gallica: Laurent de Premierfait, *Boccace des nobles maleureux. Imprimé nouvellement à Paris* (Paris: printed by Guy Marchant ? for Antoine Vérard, 1494), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k111270q> (accessed 08.08.2018). I chose not to use this edition because it postdates *Eneydos*'s publication.

<sup>7</sup> Laurent de Premierfait's two translations of Boccaccio's *De Casibus virorum illustrium* are analysed in Guyda Armstrong, *The English Boccaccio: A History in Books*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013, 42-91. On the changes that Laurent de Premierfait made in his second translation of *De Casibus*, see Nigel Mortimer, *John Lydgate's Fall of Princes: narrative tragedy in its literary and political contexts*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005, 34-onwards.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed comparison between the two works see Nigel Mortimer, "The French context of the *Fall of Princes*" in *John Lydgate's Fall of princes: narrative tragedy in its literary and political contexts*, 25-50.

compas. En ceste fenice qui est surnommee du dict fenix est une aultre cite appelee thyr qui fut fondee deux cens et quarante ans devant que salomon edifiast le merueilleux et riche temple de jherusalem. Car len apportoit au dict salomon le fin or pour lors quil edifoit le temple. En la cite de thyr [f]ut trouve lart et la maniere de taindre la fine pourpre. Et de ceste cite de thyr qui est en la province de fenice fut la royne dido et de puiz que le peuple de fenice eut prins et choysi pour habiter le rivage de surie il fut repute noble pour ses merueilleux ouvraiges dont il estoit lo[u]e<sup>9</sup> par tout le monde (fol.43).

Fenix's contribution to the shaping of writing is narrated at length in the *Cas des Nobles*: Fenix, Cadmus's brother, found out the way to produce the "vermillion" colour and how to use a compass. The link between Cadmus, Fenix, Phoenicia and Dido is also explained and put forward ("En la cite de thyr [f]ut trouve lart et la maniere de taindre la fine pourpre. Et de ceste cite de thyr qui est en la province de fenice fut la royne dido"). John Lydgate, in his *Fall of Princes*, keeps the reference to Fenix but his description is more concise and to the point:

Hir [Dido] fadir Belus, falle into gret age, / Kyng off Tire, and she  
queen off Cartage. / And it is rad in bookis that be trewe, / How first  
in Tire was founde purpil hewe. / Cadmus fond first lettres for to  
write, / Gaff hem to Gerkis, as maad in mencion, / Whos brother  
Fenix, as clerkis eek endite, / Fond firste the colour off vermelion. /  
And off Cartage, the famous myhti [sic] toun, / This said[e] Dido, hir  
story doth expresse, / How she was bothe queen and founderesse [...]  
(II.1901 - 1911).<sup>10</sup>

The genesis of writing as well as its genealogical link are still present in the English translation, and Fenix actively contributed to it. This etiological

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<sup>9</sup> Orig. "loe".

<sup>10</sup> John Lydgate, *Lydgate's Fall of Princes*, ed. Henry Bergen, Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1923.

episode appears twice in both the *Livre des Enéydes* and *Eneydos*, first in the account of Dido's life inspired by Boccaccio's *De Casibus* and a second time in the account drawn from Virgil's *Aeneid*. Both excerpts relate how Dido – and not "Fenix" – was involved in the creation of the alphabet and the subsequent development of writing. In the account of Dido's life inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid IV*, the narrator explains how writing was invented, both in the *Livre des Enéydes*:

mays en fine de ce que les premieres lectres dont il fut inventeur vindrent de fenice equiparee et apourpree de couleur pour ce que en celle part premierement les pourpres furent faitz et la couleur trouvee nous escrivons encoires en nos calendriers les haultes festes en lectre rouge de couleur pourpree Et les grans lectres et chappitres ens en noz livres en sont toutes parees [sig. F3 – F3v].

and *Eneydos* :

But in token of this, that the first lettres wherof he [Cadmus] was inventour, came out of Fenyce equypared, to purple coloure, by cause that in that countrey, were the pourpre clothes fyrst made and the coloure founde, | we wryte yet in oure kalenders the hyghe festes wyth rede lettres of coloure of purple | and the grete capitalle lettres of the bygynyng and pri[n]cypal of the psalmes and chapytres wythin oure bookes ben alle mayde fayre ther wythall [sig. F5v]<sup>11</sup>.

This short anecdote can be read as a concise history of the evolution of writing. Just before this passage appears in the narrative, it is explained that Dido is also called "Fenyce" which links her to Phoenicia and the Phoenician people. Through "transmissions" of texts, Fenix becomes "Fenyce"/ Phoenicia (as a reference to both the people and the land – Fenix

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<sup>11</sup> I used the vertical bars (|) to transcribe the *virgula suspensiva* that Caxton uses to avoid any misunderstanding: later in this article, I use the slash (/) to indicate that the readers who wrote in the margins started a new line. Double slashes (//) imply that a blank space has been left between words or sentences.



and Phoenicia were different spellings for Phoenix) and ultimately Dido, so that Dido herself, and not Cadmus's brother, becomes associated with the origin of writing. It is hard to know at what stage this "transmission" was made – the French compiler may have borrowed that passage from another source in which the character Fenix had disappeared from the narrative in favour of the Fenix/Phoenicia correlation; it might even be the result of misreading of translations of *De Casibus*. But the reappropriation of such a passage in texts such as the *Livre des Enéydes* and *Eneydos* can only contribute to the positive characterisation of the Queen of Carthage and the slight pro-Dido stance that *Eneydos* takes, as the third section of this article further explains.

The reference to the invention of writing is then followed by an anachronistic reference to contemporary, printed books, through the mention of "kalendars" – probably almanacs, which were really popular at the time – and finally to "our books". The allusion to the red letters also works as a reference to the initials inherited from manuscript culture. William Kuskin suggests in *Symbolic Caxton* that this passage should be read as an opportunity for William Caxton to create a new market for the printed book,<sup>12</sup> since the excerpt underlines a sense of continuity between past and present in the way that the printed book can reproduce the traditions of the past (of manuscript culture) into the present (in printed books). This passage therefore mirrors some of the fundamental steps through which the evolution of writing went through – writing, manuscript, printed book; emphasising the fact that although the printing press can be

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<sup>12</sup> William Kuskin, *Symbolic Caxton: Literary Culture and Print Capitalism*, Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008, 245.

considered as a technological revolution, it is first and foremost a natural evolution of writing.<sup>13</sup>

In his prologue, William Caxton explains how he chose to translate this text; a process which highlights how much handwriting is at the core of book production: "I delybered and concluded to translate it [*Le Livre des Enéydes*] into englysshe, And forthwyth toke a penne and ynke, and wrote a leef or tweyne | whyche I oversawe agayn to corecte it" [sig. A1]. Caxton's comments here reflect his dual role in the composition of the book: he first acts as an author-cum-translator as he translates the French source text into English with a "penne". He explains that he translated a leaf or two, before he takes on the role of an editor-cum-printer, as he "over[sees] [his translation] again and correct[s] it." The prologue therefore highlights writing and editing as crucial parts of translation and printing. In a prologue mainly dedicated to underlining how much the British language was changing at the time, one might think that printing would imply stabilisation of language or ideas. But, towards the end of his prologue, William Caxton addresses John Skelton, poet laureate, and invites him to "oversee" and "correct" his presumably defective translation: "But I praye mayster John Skelton, late created poete laureate in the vnyversite of oxenforde, to oversee and correcte this sayd booke, And

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<sup>13</sup> Lindsay Ann Reid came to the same conclusion in her study of Caxton's epilogue to the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*: "early printed books were profoundly shaped by the established practices and organizational structures of the manuscript book. Although the printing press mechanized production, it did not fundamentally alter the conventions or the established iconic resonances of the codex." See Lindsay Ann Reid, *Ovidian Bibliofictions and the Tudor book: Metamorphosing Classical Heroines in Late Medieval and Renaissance England*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, 37-38.

taddresse and expowne<sup>14</sup> where as shalle be founde faulte to theym that shall requyre it" [sig. A2]. Caxton invites Skelton to take the quill, scratch the book and amend the ink of the printed word with his pen – and maybe to write another book responding to this one. This passage then underlines the fact that the printed book is not a finished, fixed commodity but a product that can be subject to change even after the printing press has inscribed words onto paper. It is not the first time that Caxton has expressed his way of relating to the printed book and encouraged his readers to react to the text in a physical way. The *Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophres*<sup>15</sup> is an Arabic text originally entitled *Mukhtar al-hikam*. Anthony Woodville translated the book into English and asked Caxton to read over his translation and to print it.<sup>16</sup> Caxton realised that Woodville had left out several misogynistic passages and decided to translate one by himself and to put it at the end of the volume, "to thentent that yf my sayd lord or ony other persone what someuer he or she be that shal rede or here it, that If they be not well plesyd with alle that they wyth a penne race it out or ellys rente the leef oute of the booke" [sig. K6v].<sup>17</sup> Caxton then urges his readers

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<sup>14</sup> Expound: "To explain, interpret. *gen.* To explain (what is difficult or obscure); to state the signification of; to comment on (a passage or an author)." (OED, 2a).

<sup>15</sup> Al-Mubashshir ibn Fatik, *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, trans. Anthony Woodville, ed. William Caxton, Westminster: printed by William Caxton, 1477, STC (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) / 6828.

<sup>16</sup> In his epilogue to the *Dictes and Sayings*, Caxton explains: "Thenne my said lord [Anthony Woodville] desired me to oversee it and where as I shold fynd faute to correcte it wherein I answerd unto his lordship, that I coude not amende it But yf I sholde so presume I myght apaire it For it was right wel & connygly made and translated into right good and fayr englissch, Not withstondyng he willed me to oversee it & shewid me dyverce thinges whiche as him semed myght be left out as diverce lettres missives sent from Alisander to darius & aristotle and eche to other" [sig. K4].

<sup>17</sup> Anne Coldiron analyses the transmissions and transformations of the *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* in "Caxton, translation, and the Renaissance reprint culture," Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 35-106.

to 'read actively' and to respond to what they read by tearing out a page or removing a whole section in a book, therefore altering the reception of a volume.

Therefore, although the printing press is in many aspects a technological revolution (although Caxton does not promote it as one) it is also a revolution in the sense of *revolvere*. The need to take the pen to amend a printed book implies, at least in *Eneydos*, a return to Caxton's rough paper – a return to the world of handwriting. Caxton's comments imply that the printed book is an extension of the manuscript and a natural form of evolution. Although the printed book is the result of a technological revolution, it is advertised as a natural evolution of the book, both in the narrative of the *Livre des Enéydes* and *Eneydos*, as well as in Caxton's prose. The marketing of a new product – here, the printed book – implies new readers, as Caxton made books more accessible to a broader readership.

### **NEW MEDIUM: NEW MARKET?**

In his prologue, Caxton explains how difficult it is to translate a text because the English language was changing quickly and radically, so much so that Caxton compares old English to Dutch: "it was wreton in suche wyse that it was more lyke to dutche than englysshe; I coude not reduce ne bryng it to be understonden / And certaynly our langage now used varyeth ferre from that whiche was used and spoken whan I was borne" [sig. A1v]. In order to better illustrate the transformation that language was undergoing, Caxton narrates a short anecdote about a mercer called

Sheffield, who is thought to be from Suffolk and who, along his travels, goes to a public house and orders eggs. Yet, the goodwife doesn't understand him:

[Sheffield] cam into an hows and axed for mete; and specially he axyd after eggys; And the goode wyf answered, that she coude speke no frenshe. And the merchaunt was angry, for he also coude speke no frenshe, but wolde have hadde eggs / and she understode hym not / And thenne at laste a nothr sayd that he wolde have eyren / then the good wyf sayd that she understood hym wel [sig. A1v].

According to Caxton, English was evolving regionally as well, making Caxton's task as a translator and purveyor of culture even more difficult. He expresses his puzzlement as a conclusion to the anecdote and addresses the reader: "Loo, what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte, eggys or eyren / certainly it is harde to playse every man / by cause of diversite and change of langage" [sig. A1v]. Caxton's prologue to *Eneydos* reflects that the difficulty in translating a book in the vernacular does not necessarily arise from switching from one language to another but in how to translate a text, knowing that English changed considerably over the preceding decades and that it evolved differently in each region.

The great change in language that Caxton refers to entails choices in terms of vocabulary and wording and therefore in terms of targeted readership. Indeed, Caxton was trying to develop a new market for the printed book through the production of vernacular versions of famous, classical pieces of literature (like Lefebvre's *Recueil des histoires de Troyes* or Virgil's *Aeneid* – interestingly, his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is never printed). If Caxton's books broadened access to

literature and knowledge, the printer-cum-translator nonetheless targeted an elitist readership as he clearly specifies in his prologue that "this present booke is not for a rude uplondyssh<sup>18</sup> man to laboure therin / ne rede it / but onely for a clerke and a noble gentyman that feleth and understondeth in faytes of armes, in love, and in noble chyvalrye" [sig. A2]. He states it again a few lines down: "For this booke is not for every rude [and] unconnyng<sup>19</sup> man to see / but to clerkys and very gentylnes that understande gentylnes and scyence" [sig. A2]. Although, according to Caxton's prologue, the whole country was experiencing a significant change in language, technological revolution only targeted a relatively small portion of the population.

But in practice, who were Caxton's readers? 21 copies of Caxton's 1490 *Eneydos* have survived.<sup>20</sup> I have consulted 6 of them.<sup>21</sup> Some of them contained marginalia – I will mention here the inscriptions that are not directly related to the content of the book. The study of these inscriptions revealed more information about the type of readers who owned these

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<sup>18</sup> Uplandish: "Upland: Living out in the country; rustic, rural" (OED, B1).

<sup>19</sup> Uncunning: "Of persons: Ignorant, unlearned, unskilful" (OED, 1a).

<sup>20</sup> To the best of my knowledge, *Eneydos* has never been republished. The only and latest edition, *Caxton's Eneydos, 1490: Englysh From the French Livre Des Enéydes, 1483*, dates back from 1890 and was edited by W. T. Culley and F. J. Furnivall. It consists in a retranscription of Caxton's text with a critical introduction, notes and an index as well as a collation to the French source text. *Caxton's Eneydos, 1490*, ed. W.T. Culley and F.J.Furnivall, London: Early English Text Society, 1890.

<sup>21</sup> Glasgow University Library - Sp Coll Hunterian Bv.2.10 ; Oxford University Bodleian Library - Arch. G d.7, S.Seld. d.14, Douce 162 ; Harry Ransom Centre, University of Texas, Austin - PFORZ 1026 PFZ - I would like to thank Elizabeth L. Garver, French and Italian Collections Research Associate at the Harry Ransom Centre, for her generous help in accessing the marginalia and for providing me with more information on this copy. I also used the EEBO facsimile of the copy held at the British Library - General Reference Collection IB.55135 – as my copy of reference.

copies – or at least, who read them and left a mark. One of the owners of the Arch. G d.7 copy was probably a judge, as the margin on [sig. F3v] contained the inscription: "your louing husband / till death // Richard Harte Iurid[icus?] [juge?]." Two copies actually contain what can be read as rough drafts of legal documents, such as "The condit[i]on of this present obligation is such that yf the above bonnden Thomas Perkinis his heires executors administrators or assignes or eyther of them for and in good consideration him movinge" (Glasgow University Library, Sp Coll Hunterian Bv.2.10 [sig. A2v]) (Thomas Perkinis being one of the owners of the copy).<sup>22</sup> Another reader might have been a member of the clergy as a handwritten rough draft of what looks like a sermon appears on [sig. H4v] of Arch. G d. 7: "let noe man <braue?> in his sinnes / and tak a delight there in [therein] lest / godes wroathe bee <kendled?> [kindled?] / against hym and soe god cut / him of in his miserable corse [corpse] / for <in ye ye man I sin?>." The following one may be a call for chastity: "Be sobere as a maidene oughte speke lit<sup>^</sup>t<sup>^</sup>le and be wiffe have / great regard of saffetie [chastetie??] and all vn lawfull love / disespise" ([sig. C6]).

Some of the copies, and this is particularly true for the copy held at the Glasgow University Library, contain quotations in Latin from other classical texts, which testifies that the readers-owners of the books had a deep knowledge of classical literature, or at least that they were literate in Latin. The quotations that the readers wrote in the margins are probably pieces that they learnt during the course of their studies. The writings

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<sup>22</sup> According to the information provided by the Glasgow University library website, <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/incunabula/a-zofauthors-j/bv.2.10/>, Accessed 20.10.2018.

include excerpts from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *Tristia*, *Fasti* and *Ex Ponto*, Horace's *Satires* as well as yet unidentified sentences in Latin.

## **BRINGING THE REVOLUTION HOME**

Other inscriptions which I found in the copies that I consulted seem to have a link with the diegesis and may have been written as a reaction to the text. It is important to state that the following study is tentative – it is impossible to know what the readers had in mind when they inscribed their thoughts onto the paper. But when interpreted through the prism of the literary context, this study offers a partial, intimate view of how readers engaged with the narrative.

Indeed, *Eneydos* was published in the revolutionary literary context of the *Querelle des Femmes* – a European literary debate that stretched over several decades and which originated in Christine de Pizan's reaction to Jean de Meun's negative depiction of women.<sup>23</sup> As part of my PhD, I have completed a partial edition of *Eneydos* (I focused on the Dido chapters) and drawn a comparison between the French source text and William Caxton's English translation. This work concluded that Caxton made few but significant changes over the course of his translation. The relationship between Dido and Aeneas has been a point of debate over

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<sup>23</sup> Several expressions are used to refer to the debate over the condition of women, such as "Querelle des Femmes," "Querelle de la Rose" or "Querelle des Dames." I chose to use 'Querelle des Femmes' so that my work follows the research undertaken by the SIEFAR (*Société Internationale pour l'Étude des Femmes de l'Ancien Régime*). The SIEFAR suggests that the expression "Querelle des Femmes" emphasises the unity of the debate, which is considered as a coherent whole rather than a succession of different debates which occurred over several centuries. See Armel Dubois-Nayt, Nicole Dufournaud and Anne Paupert, "Revisiter la Querelle des Femmes: Retour aux Origines" in *Revisiter la "querelle des femmes": Discours sur l'égalité des sexes, de 1400 à 1600*, Saint Étienne: publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2013, 7-19.



centuries; this debate comprising of two main opposing points of view. One originates from Virgil's *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas is depicted as a pious, magnanimous character who saved his father and his child when Troy was attacked. In the epic poem, according to Aeneas in contrary to Dido, the protagonists do not get married during the cave scene – a polemical scene narrated as an ellipsis so that what happens in the cave is intentionally left unclear. Aeneas is still depicted as an honourable hero when he leaves Carthage and whereas Dido is portrayed as a mad, unfortunate lover and a puppet of the gods: Juno and Venus made the cave scene happen because a union between Dido and Aeneas would have benefited them. Other versions contradict this depiction of Dido and Aeneas: Ovid's *Heroids* 7 (a letter from Dido to Aeneas, written from Dido's perspective) is the most emblematic one. Lydgate's *Troy Book* (1412-20) was quite influent too. This tradition depicts Aeneas as a treacherous, perfidious character who lied about his flight from Troy and abandons his lovers (Dido, but also Creusa, his former wife whom he left behind when he fled Troy)<sup>24</sup>. In *Eneydos*, some of Caxton's amendments are pro-Dido modifications in the way that they depict the character of Dido under a more favourable light – or at least they shift the blame away from Dido and onto Aeneas. By doing so, Caxton slightly alters the reception of the character of Dido, surreptitiously taking part in the *Querelle des Femmes* and endowing the English readership with a slightly more pro-Dido text. The fact that *Eneydos* was published in the overarching context of the *Querelle des Femmes* also shows that Caxton may have seen this as an opportunity to

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<sup>24</sup> For a detailed analysis on how the character of Aeneas has been subverted and reworked over centuries and transmissions, see Emma Buckley, "'Live false Aeneas!' Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and the limits of translation,' *Classical Receptions Journal* 3, no. 2 (2011): 129-147.

relate to a contemporary issue and to fuel the debate in order to boost sales. In *Ovidian Bibliofictions*, Lindsay Ann Reid highlights the plasticity of the book through the study of the representation of Ovidian figures in Early Modern England. She draws a link between female heroines and the book in its material form, especially in a misogynistic context: "women, like books, were treated as objects whose meanings could be endlessly (re)formulated and (re)interpreted."<sup>25</sup> Caxton's treatment of both *Eneydos* as a material object and the character of Dido perfectly supports and feeds this theory: Dido, often portrayed as an unfortunate lover, is being remodelled as the mother of writing the same way that the book is being reshaped. Gender issues, marketing and the evolution of the book therefore go hand in hand in *Eneydos* and sixteenth or seventeenth century readers related to these matters in the margin of some surviving copies.

In the Arch. G d. 7 copy of *Eneydos*, held at the Oxford University Library, some readers seem to relate to the issue of marriage. A reader underlined two references to the gods of wedlock. First, in the account of Dido's life drawn from Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dido, infatuated with Aeneas, and her sister Anne perform a sacrifice in the hope of a wedding. They offer the sacrifice to Ceres, Apollo and Bacchus, "and specially unto Juno the goddess of wedlocke" [sig. D3] (underlined in the copy, most probably by a 16<sup>th</sup> century hand).<sup>26</sup> A few pages down, the infamous episode of the cave

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<sup>25</sup> See Lindsay Ann Reid, "if all the yearth Wer Parchment scribable:' Ovidian heroines in the *Querelle des Femmes*" in *Ovidian Bibliofictions*, 37-68.

<sup>26</sup> As dated by the Bodleian Library (<http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/record/V-109>). The notes are written in secretary hand which, Mark Blands tells us, was used in various contexts: "The first alphabet taught at school was secretary hand because, as Billingsley noted, "it is the onely usuall hand of England, for dispatching of all manner of businesses." Those who had no need for a business hand (including some aristocrats and

scene is narrated, an episode during which Dido and Aeneas have sexual intercourse and supposedly get married. Juno is once again mentioned, as well as her son, "hyemen which is named the god of weddyng" [sig. D6] (underlined in the text by a 16<sup>th</sup> century reader).

These underlined references to Juno and Hymen, the divinities of wedding, need to be analysed in line with comments that have been written in the margins: this copy contains endearing messages that a husband and his wife wrote to each other. On [sig. F3v], a female reader wrote the following note to her husband: "To my most lovung and loyall wyfe husband / [smudged] william humfrey at [smudged] wife to william / Homfre." William Humphrey's answer appears on the following page ([sig. F4]): "To my most loving and loyall / Wife William Homfrey at / <Ashomth?> / <Kenda?> neare to Chafforde." The copy, which contains a fair number of inscriptions, is peppered with other love messages. What seems to be another reader wrote a similar message: "Siv[e] [or:] Younge and kind wife Joane Baunbry / all health and happinesse atend you / hopinge of your good healthe / and welfare hopinge / that the heauenes / will soe ouer / shadow you that / you in short tim[e] / may bringe forth / a sonne of comfort" [sig. F2v]. Or the one I quoted earlier: "your louing husband / till death // Richard Harte Iurid[icus?] [judge?]" [sig. F3v]. Other shorter messages have been written, such as "To my mistris and kindest" [sig. D2v]; "To my most kind loving and [lo]yall husband // H [smudged]"

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many women) wrote, and were presumably first taught, italic; similarly, from the mid-sixteenth-century, italic was practised at university. Otherwise, secretary hand is found throughout a vast range of documents, from parish registers and wills to private papers and accounts." Mark Bland, *A Guide to Early Printed Books and Manuscripts*, Malden (MA): Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 89. See also Ronald B. McKerrow, "Appendix Eight: A Note on Elizabethan Handwriting," in *An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928, 341-350.

[sig. D4v]; "most Reverant S // Syr all health and hapy[ness]" [sig. F7v]. Although the readers may not have underlined or scribbled these messages in direct relation to the text, their writing nevertheless brings, to some extent, the debate of the *Querelle des Femmes* into the intimacy of the home. The married couple(s) appear to be using the space of the book to assert their love for each other, offering some personal resolution to the conflict (which arises from the printed book), through handwriting.

Other inscriptions in the copies that I consulted had to do with the book in its material form. As pointed out earlier, in both the *Livre des Enéydes* and *Eneydos* (and in the *Aeneid* as well), Dido is linked to the colour crimson ("purple" in the text) – which, as the narrative reminds us, was used to design initial letters in manuscripts. None of the copies that I have consulted contained any coloured initial letters, but one reader of the Glasgow copy coloured some of them with a red pencil. Whether the reader was bored or daydreaming, this colouring testifies that he or she might have been reacting to the narrative and was engaging with the material book. The fact that William Caxton already knew how to print letters in red when *Eneydos* was printed (he uses them in the *Recuyell of the Hystories of Troye*,<sup>27</sup> for instance) suggests that the reader performed something that Caxton could have done but chose not to do – especially since *Eneydos* is a sort of hapax: it was never republished, unlike some of Caxton's other publications.<sup>28</sup> The colouring of the letter also enhances the link between

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<sup>27</sup> Raoul Lefèvre, *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, trans. William Caxton, Bruges: printed by William Caxton and probably Colard Mansion, 1473 or 1474, STC (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) / 15375.

<sup>28</sup> The most contrasting example is that of the *Recuyell of the Hystories of Troye*: "[...] Caxton's first Troy story, the *Recuyell*, was reprinted by de Worde in 1502 (STC 15376)

manuscript culture and print culture which I developed in my first part: here, a sixteenth or seventeenth-century reader coloured an initial letter, recalling the way in which manuscripts were hand-illuminated – the printed book therefore rolls back to the state of manuscript. This idea is further supported by a number of hand drawn reproductions of printed letters (particularly in the Arch. G d. 7 and Glasgow copies): despite the technological and literary revolutionary aspects that are intertwined in *Eneydos*, it is after all the reception of the book that matters and how readers dealt with it. As my case studies tend to show, the reading of *Eneydos* implies a movement of revolution, of rolling back to a point close to the origin, thanks to the appropriation of the book through handwriting.

Technological, linguistic and literary revolutions are therefore embedded in *Eneydos* – both in the narrative of the book itself – which may explain why Caxton chose to translate this text – and in its paratextual elements. But despite its inherent revolutionary aspect, *Eneydos* can be considered as a simple, natural evolution of the book and of writing as a general rule, as the printed book reproduces the codes of manuscript culture and as handwriting seems to always prevail over the printed word and offer alternatives or solutions to the problems raised by the printed book.

As Anthony Trollope's above-cited speech shows, William Caxton's legacy usually has to do with his role as a merchant as he brought the printing press to England and developed a whole market for the printed

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and 1503 (*STC* 15377), by Copland in 1553 (*STC* 15378), and by one of Shakespeare's own publishers, Thomas Creede and Valentine Simmes, in 1597 (*STC* 15379). Caxton's name appears in all these editions. Overall, the *Recuyell* was reprinted no fewer than twelve times through the seventeenth century, and Shakespeare in fact drew on it for his *Troilus and Cressida*." William Kuskin, *Symbolic Caxton*, 287.

book. But the study of his prose in his prologues as well as the direct reception of the book by the readers-owners who left notes in the margins of their copy, reflects the complexity of the reception of a book such as this one and highlights Caxton's role as a prominent cultural figure who made fundamental texts accessible to a new portion of society.