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Dido: Power and Indulgence in *Le Roman d'Eneas*

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Figure 1: Dido and Aeneas[1]

Section I: Classical Revival and *Le Roman d'Eneas*

During the twelfth century, medieval Western Europe experienced a revival of interest in classical literature. Key Greek and Latin texts had been preserved in Rome's public and private libraries during the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West. In the sixth and seventh centuries, monastic Christian scholars such as Cassiodorus (born ca. 485 AD) and Benedict of Nursia (480 – 547 AD) established scriptoria, places for copying manuscripts, in their monasteries. There they transcribed and stored classical collections.[2] In the late eighth and ninth centuries, the Frankish King and Emperor of the Romans, Charlemagne (742-814 AD) renewed the preservation and dissemination of ancient literature as part of his intellectual and cultural revival, known today as the Carolingian Renaissance. Charlemagne sponsored the copying of classical manuscripts, mainly by monks in monasteries, and helped to establish a standard form of handwriting, called Caroline Minuscule.[3] Then, in the eleventh century, cathedral schools and budding universities began to replace monasteries as centers for classical texts. Clerics and scholars alike began to take a great interest in this classical literature.[4] At first, they simply copied these texts as had been done in previous centuries. Eventually, however, these "classical Latin mythological and historical accounts were plagiarized and treated as legend."[5]

Initially, twelfth century writers adapted these classical narratives into Latin. Soon, however, they began to write them in *romanz*, or the vernacular language.[6] The earliest known vernacular work is *Le Chanson de Roland* (The Song of Roland) (ca. 1040-1115), a story about a French knight. It is written in an Old French dialect by various unidentified authors. Vernacular writers did not see their efforts as theft from

ancient authors nor as an attempt to directly translate classical works. Rather, they saw themselves as spreading the classical legacy through new literary forms.[7] As adapted works became more widespread, the term "romance" became applied to a specific type of adapted story – that which included the honor and glory found in epic poems and the ideas of "adventures, knightly quests, love, and psychological analyses of nascent love."[8]

A classic work of interest to authors in twelfth century Europe was the *Aeneid* by the Roman author Virgil (70-19 BC). Virgil spent most of his life writing poetry. He wrote the *Aeneid*, a mythological history of Rome's founder Aeneas, after Augustus (63 B.C.-14 AD) won the civil war against Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, thus establishing the *Pax Romana* under his new imperial rule. Virgil modeled the *Aeneid* after two famous Greek epics – the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. By the Middle Ages, Virgil was believed to be a prophet of Christianity (his famous *Fourth Eclogue* celebrates the birth of a baby boy who will usher in a new age) and an all-knowing sage; manuscripts of the *Aeneid* were consulted as oracles and prophecies of the future (the *Sortes Vergilianae*).[9] This resulted in the *Aeneid* often being used as a textbook in clerical education.[10]

Circa 1160 AD, an anonymous cleric took the story of the *Aeneid* and adapted it into *Le Roman d'Eneas* (The Book of Aeneas) written in a French vernacular dialect. Scholars often attribute the work to the French poet Benoit de Sainte-More, the author of *Le Roman de Troie* (ca. 1165), because *Le Roman de Troie* seems to form a logical sequel to *d'Eneas*.[11] However, a modern editor of *Le Roman d'Eneas*, J.J. Salverda de Grave, claims that the phonetics and declensions used by the cleric linguistically link it to an Anglo-Norman literary school.[12] Others take this a step further and argue that the cleric was under the patronage of Henry II of England (1133-1189).[13] Henry's reign was

marked by an attempt to spread literary culture through works such as the Arthurian legend and Celtic epics.[14] However, despite the various theories put forth by scholars, the true background and education of the writer of *Le Roman d'Eneas* remains unverified.

Along with the identity of the author of *Le Roman d'Eneas*, many scholars also debate how the text was adapted from the *Aeneid*. The majority hypothesize that there must have been an intermediate text between the *Aeneid* and *Le Roman d'Eneas* which the cleric used.[15] This intermediate text, whether just one work or a compilation of several adaptations, would have drawn from classical authors and incorporated developing romantic themes.[16] While the editor Salverda de Grave does not entirely refute the idea of an intermediary text, he does suggest that it would be possible for the *d'Eneas* author to independently adapt the work directly from the *Aeneid*. He asserts, "*Si, pour notre "roman", on postule un intermédiaire, c'est qu'on se refuse a admettre qu'un traducteur du XIIe siècle a pu posséder une érudition et une force d'invention assez grandes pour imaginer les changements qu'a subis l'épopée latine* (if, for our "romance," we postulate an intermediary, then we refuse to admit that the translator of the twelfth century was able to possess an education and a force of intervention great enough to imagine the changes submitted to the Latin epic)."[17]

Le Roman d'Eneas closely follows the structure found in the *Aeneid*. However, as an adaptation, the cleric made several significant textual changes. First, the work is written in octosyllabic rhyming couplets of an Old French literary style instead of dactylic hexameters of late Republican Latin.[18] Second, the narrative is simplified in terms of both size (10,000 Virgilian lines to 5,000 Old French), and content.[19] For the most part, the intervention of the gods is removed and the characters become less

complex.[20] However, the author adds several new dialogues, monologues, and narrative details.[21] Third, terminology and themes are updated to fit a twelfth century audience. Themes about romance, women, feudalism, and Christianity are especially apparent.[22] In conjunction with these contemporary themes, commentary is subtly interjected, hinting at the cleric's own biases.

While the actual motives behind the clerical adaptation of the *Aeneid* remain uncertain, scholars have a range of theories. In the context of the growth of cathedral schools and universities in the twelfth century, the scholar Raymond Cormier conjectures that "as a 'classic' text used in teaching, it may be said that, from a pedagogical viewpoint, a translation of the *Aeneid* was felt necessary."[23] In relation to the origins of the writer, the author Marilynn Desmond claims that *Le Roman d'Eneas* was "part of a cultural program designed to legitimate the Plantagenet dynasty."[24] My argument, however, is that the cleric adapted *Le Roman d'Eneas*, and in particular the story of Dido, from the *Aeneid* in order to make a warning to the aristocratic women of the twelfth century who were seeking power through "courts of love." In order to make this argument, in the next two sections I will further explore the state of women in twelfth century Europe and how they sought to gain power.

Section II: Feudalism and Women

In twelfth century Europe, feudalism was the underlying political and social structure. Feudalism was a symbiotic relationship between the King and his vassals in which the King granted land or fiefdoms to a vassal in return for military service. This bond was formalized by a verbal oath of loyalty which, if either side were to break,

released the other side from his obligations.[25] The main participants in these feudal oaths were nobles.[26] The aristocracy constantly fought or allied with one another over power and land. Women were the link between them, or the "object of exchange" that ensured loyalty to oaths and the transition of property.[27] According to the scholar Marilynn Desmond, "aristocratic women […] were the conduit by which the power relationships between noble men were formed and maintained."[28]

For women, this role of as an object of exchange was performed predominantly through marriage. For most noble women, marriages would be arranged for them around the age of thirteen, or when they reached puberty, by their closest male relative.[29] In determining whom they would marry, women "were valued according to property and possible political alliances they might bring with them. Sentiment, affection, and romantic attachment rarely played a part."[30] Women were expected to accept the choice of their proposed spouse without question. The consequences for those who refused ranged from a heavy fine on her family to punishment equivalent to adultery.[31] After marriage, adulterous women faced severe punishment while men could have extramarital affairs without chastisement.[32] If either side was not satisfied with the marriage, divorce, for the most part, was not sanctioned by the Catholic Church. However, a man had the option to send his wife back if they "mutually agreed" upon it. Both men and women could claim consanguinity, meaning they were too closely related and thus committing incest, and annul the marriage.[33]

Many women, finding themselves caught in a double-standard, felt a "lack of autonomy and scope for independent action."[34] Noblewomen wanted to have power and an ability to indulge in their sexual desires like their male counterparts. Many found ways

to exert their influence through "endow[ing] religious foundations by granting income from their estates to a church or monastery […] and helping to negotiate suitable marriage partners [for relatives]."[35] Land was usually passed from father to son, or closest male relative. A few women were able to inherit land if they were childless and their male relatives of consequence were deceased.[36] However, in order to gain further influence as well as to gratify their sexual desires, many women turned towards romance literature and "courts of love."

Section III: The Individual and Courtly Love

Amid the conventions of feudalism and a classical literature revival, several social changes were occurring in twelfth century Europe. In terms of the arts, the effects of the Carolingian Renaissance and the rising cathedral schools allowed a greater amount of literature to permeate society. This resulted in "a growing distinction between reality and 'pure literary escape.'"[37] Meanwhile, the expansion of the middle class and the Crusades led to greater commerce and wealth. Consequently, this allowed more people to reflect upon their emotions and the concept of the individual.[38] The author FFiona [sic] Swabey eloquently states that "in part this awareness [of human emotions and the individual] and cultivation of self-knowledge, self-examination, and the refinement of expression found a focus in a wish to understand relationships, best expressed in the relationship between men and women."[39]

The themes associated with romantic relationships, namely love, started to be dispersed by the troubadours who were wandering poet-musicians. Troubadours originated during the eleventh century from the less-sophisticated jongleurs in the

Occitan region of southern France. They performed their works in the courts of nobles, often singing them with the accompaniment of an instrument like the lute. Their works were most likely an imitation of the Arabic poets and song-writers encountered during the *Reconquista* of Spain from the Muslims.[40] However, there are speculations that their poems contain Celtic elements.[41] Others claim that their themes on love were drawn from Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (The Art of Love).[42] The word troubadour itself was possibly derived from the Arabic word *tarab*, meaning music or song.[43] The troubadours' writing touched on many subjects in specific genres which often followed a set poetic form. The most popular genres were the *canso*, a love song, and the *tenso*, a debate about love.[44]

The first documented troubadour was William, IX Duke of Aquitaine, VII Count of Poitou (1071-1127). William's kingdom covered most of southern France, known as Occitan, to the Pyrenees. As the Muslims were encroaching further north through Spain, William took part in a crusade against them. During the *Reconquista*, William encountered many Hispano-Arabic songs. After the campaign, William brought several Arabic singers back to his court in Poitou. Drawing from their influence as well as his own creativity, he was able to take the ideas behind their songs and adapt them to his own writings.[45]

As the prestige of the troubadours grew, noblewomen were able to increase their own influence by acting as patrons to these poets and establishing "courts of love." A "court of love" mirrored the judicial power a Lord had over his land. However, a "love court" administered over the issues of affection, with the women acting as judges. Usually, a case concerning love was brought before the court. After the noblewomen debated over the issue at hand, they passed a judgment.[46] From these tribunals,

troubadours came to greatly admire and respect their lady patrons.[47] Thus, through "courts of love," women were able to find power outside of their exchange role as well as an opportunity to examine sexual pleasures.

The most well-known patroness of troubadours was Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204), the granddaughter of William of Aquitaine and the wife of the English King, Henry II. While Eleanor may have held a "court of love" as early as 1152, her most famous and influential court was in Poitiers, located in northern France, in the 1170's.[48] There she housed numerous poets and musicians and sanctioned debates surrounding love and marriage.[49] The mysterious Marie de France, author of the *Lais*, a series of short vernacular love narratives, may even have resided there for a time. While the exact identity of Marie de France remains unknown, the boldness of her work in a male-dominated world shows the influence women could gain through romance literature.[50]

Marie Countess de Champagne (1145-1198), the daughter of Eleanor and Louis VII, participated in the Poitiers "court of love" and later established her own court. She acted as patroness for the poet Chrétien de Troyes (fl. 1165-1180 AD.), best known for *Lancelot, le Chevalier de la Charrette* (Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart), as well as the famous Andreas Capellanus, author of *De Amore Honeste Amandi* (Treatise on Love), written between 1186-1196, which lays out a code of love. Although *De Amore* has now been rejected by scholars as a serious essay on love,[51] many admit that "Andreas's work is evidence that ideas about courtship, marriage, and sexuality were considered worthy of examination and debate at this time."[52]

The main concept explored in these "courts of love" was that of *fin d'amor* or courtly love.[53] The idea of courtly love took the already present feudal model and

followed it thus: a knight saw a lady, oftentimes the wife of his Lord, and desired to serve her like he did his Lord. Although the lady became an "object of desire" to the knight, he had to demand of the lady what deeds he could perform in order to win her love. [54] The lady, consequently, gained control of the relationship by demanding deeds, which could range from military service to character building, of the knight.[55] In return for his deeds, the lady gave the knight small rewards which inspired him to do further deeds in order to receive more favors. As the prizes became more intimate, the lady's purity, however, was strictly guarded.[56] Thus, the lady could indulge in gratifying her adulterous desires without fear of rebuke.[57]

Although courtly love was extensively discussed in "love courts" and the literature produced from them, scholars debate whether it was actually practiced or not. Some suggest that it existed as "an idealized game which helped lessen the anxiety arising from dilemmas around concepts of loyalty, honor, love, and obedience inherent in the institution of the feudal bond."[58] Others, however, claim that the concept of courtly love began in literature and eventually did shift to actual practice among the aristocracy, made manifest in the shift toward "courting" rather than arranged marriages.[59] Either way, the fact that the idea of courtly love existed demonstrates the growing awareness of the individual and the desire to understand romantic relationships.[60] For women especially, courtly love and "courts of love" were a way to increase power by becoming "Lords of love" and to have control over their intimate relationships.[61]

Section IV: The Story of Dido

…..“pro Iuppiter! ibit

hic," ait, "et nostris inluserit advena regnis?
non arma expedient totaque ex urbe sequentur,
ferte citi flammas, date tela, impellite remos!
quid loquor? aut ubi sum? quae mentem insania mutat?
infelix Dido, nunc te facta impia tangunt?

(IV. 590-596) [62]

("By Jupiter! Will he go?" she says, "Will the foreigner even mock our realm? Will they not fetch arms and chase him from the whole city? Quickly! Bring flames, get weapons, drive oars! What am I saying? Or where am I? What insanity alters my mind? Unhappy, Dido, now do your impious deeds strike you?")

While romance authors began to add new themes, such as courtly love, to their works, they consistently reached back to classical literature. In Benoit de Saint-More's *Le Roman de Troie*, he uses the characters Troilus, Briseis, and Diomedes from the *Iliad*. In Andreas Capellanus' *De Amore Honeste Amandi*, he attempts to imitate the Roman poet Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (The Art of Love) and *Remedia amoris* (Cures for Love).[63] Similarly, the cleric who wrote *Le Roman d'Eneas* adapted his story from Virgil's *Aeneid*. The audiences for these adaptations were aristocratic, the majority of them being noblewomen who examined the concept of love in "courts of love." With this in mind while adapting *Le Roman d'Eneas* from the *Aeneid*, I argue that the cleric saw these noblewomen as a threat to the male-dominated feudal system. Consequently, he used the story of Dido in particular to warn them that their attempts to mimic men's judicial power and sexual liberty would ultimately lead to their ruin.

According to Vergil's *Aeneid*, Dido was the mythical queen of prosperous city, Carthage, located in northern Africa near to the Mediterranean Sea. At the end of the

Trojan War (ca. 1200 B.C) between the Greeks and the Trojans, the Trojan Aeneas escaped the burning city of Troy. After having set sail, he and his crew landed at Carthage. Dido received them with a warm welcome and immediately fell in love with Aeneas.[64] Dido, however, had sworn an oath that she would never love another after the murder of her husband, Sychaeus. Nevertheless, their relationship soon grew intimate, and Dido, stricken with her love, neglected her city. Eventually, though, the gods sent a messenger to Aeneas to remind him of his duty to found a new Troy, to be called Rome. Aeneas consequently decided to resume his journey. Overcome and full of agony at her loss, Dido committed suicide.[65]

In accordance with traditional Roman values, Dido, after the death of her husband and as a good widow, should remain true to her former husband.[66] However, in Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dido succumbs to her desire for Aeneas and attempts to cover the breaking of her oath by saying she is married to Aeneas. The Virgilian Dido can be analyzed on two levels – literary and historical. In a literary context, Dido becomes a tragic victim. First, the unfolding story is told from Dido's point of view, allowing the reader to sympathize with her. Second, Aeneas' actions in the relationship closely align to the behavior in a Roman marriage, giving Dido every reason to believe they are really married.[67] In a historical context, Dido alludes to the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra whom Augustus defeated in the civil war against Mark Anthony. Dido also reaches back to the longstanding hatred, made manifest in the Punic Wars, between Rome and Carthage.[68] Consequently, Dido is associated with femininity, sexuality, and the East – all "that constitute a threat to Roman culture."[69] My argument is that the author of *Le Roman d'Eneas* took the concept of Dido as a threat and transferred it to the issues of the twelfth

century.[70] He links Dido to powerful women who use "courts of love" to further their influence and who indulge in intimate desires that put them outside their exchange role, thus posing a threat to the male dominated feudal system. According to the *d'Eneas* poet, however, through his comments made in the story of Dido, this very act will prove to be their downfall.

The writer of *Le Roman d'Eneas* first establishes Dido as being in an authoritative position:

> Li mesagier ont tant tenu
> Lo grant chemin, qui larges fu,
> Cartage virent, la cité,
> Dont Dido tint la fermeté.
> Dame Dido tint le païs ;
> Miaus nel tenist quens ne marchis ;
> Unc ne fu mais par une feme
> Mielz maintenu enor ne regne.
>
> The messengers kept on the main road,
> Which was very wide, until they saw
> The city of Carthage,
> Whose fortress Dido controlled.
> Lady Dido ruled the country;
> She ruled it better than count or marquis;
> Never was there a feudal state or kingdom
> Better governed by a woman.
>
> (Lines 374-381)[71]

As a consequence, "Dido as ruler," and a good one at that, puts her outside of the normative role of a medieval woman. Virgil, in the *Aeneid*, similarly addresses the adeptness of Dido's kingship:

> Iura dabat legesque viris, operumque laborem
> Partibus aequabat iustis aut sorte trahebat.

(I. 507-508)

(She gave laws and statues to men, she distributed work and labor in equal parts or assigned by lot.)

Moreover, the cleric shows that Dido is a ruler seeking wealth rather than a female fulfilling her exchange function in a man's world.[72] After the assassination of her husband, Dido had fled Tyre, but not without first stealing loads of gold and treasure. Then, when Dido arrived to the area surrounding Carthage, she made an agreement with a local prince that he would give her as much territory as the skin of a bull would contain. In order to gain as much land as possible, Dido used a clever plan. She cut a bull's hide into strips and laid them end to end in a circle. Then, she conquered the rest of the land and forces the other rulers to submit to her.[73] Virgil recounts a similar story in the *Aeneid*, emphasizing the fact that a woman was at the head of these endeavors.[74] The cleric, however, casts Dido's deeds in a negative light, proclaiming them to be "trickery."

Along with being a ruler and trickster, the *d'Eneas* cleric shows how Dido is further ostracized from the feudal system:

D'icel païs n'ert mie nee,
Ainz ert de Tire la contree ;
Sicheus ot a non ses sire,
Uns suens frere lo fist occire,
En essil chaça sa seror,
Por ce qu'il volt avoir l'enor.

She was not born in that country,
But was from the country of Tyre;
Sicheus was the name of her husband.
One of her brothers had had him killed,

Chased his sister into exile,
Because he wanted to control the feudal estate.

(Lines 382-387)

Not only is she foreign, but she is a female without male overseers. Consequently, Dido "is disruptive to the social order."[75] She is independent and, therefore, not useful in a feudal context of productive exchanges, but a means unto herself.[76] The clerical rendition of Dido's background draws from Virgil's in the *Aeneid*. Virgil, however, goes into much greater detail:

…sed regna Tyri germanus habebat
Pygmalion, scelere ante alios immanior omnis.
Quos inter medius venit furor. Ille Sychaeum
Impius ante aras atque auri caecus amore
Clam ferro incautum superat, securus amorum
Germanae.

(I. 346-351)

(But her brother Pygmalion held the kingdoms of Tyre, more savage in crime than all others. Anger came between them. He, impiously before the altars and blinded by love of gold, secretly stuck down the unprotected Sychaeus with a sword, careless of his sister's love.)

Although Dido is a strong and clever ruler, the cleric shows how she lets her desire for power and personal sexual gratification get the best of her. Consequently, Dido's yearnings threaten the feudal submissive and repressed female role. Desmond comments that "Dido's status in the *Eneas* illustrates the dangers of socially unregulated female desire."[77] Initially, Dido refuses to admit her passion for Aeneas. Her sister Anna,

however, persuades her of the power and security she can achieve by such a marriage, especially against her enemies and in maintaining her territory. She encourages her to forget her dead husband and to not deny her love:[78]

> Vos ne poëz ancontre Amor.
> Se cestui prenez a seignor,
> Molt en croistra vostre barnage,
> Esçauciee an ert Cartage.
>
> You cannot do anything against love.
> If you take him as your lord,
> Your followers will increase greatly;
> Carthage will be raised up by it.
>
> (Lines 1373-1376)

However, at the same time, the cleric accentuates the idea that a proper feudal order, with a man in charge, needs to be created:

> Ne puet ester longue par fenne
> Bien maintenu enor ne regne ;
> Pou fait an son comandement,
> S'il n'a altre maintenement.
>
> A feudal state or kingdom cannot be for long
> Well maintained by a woman;
> She accomplishes little with her commands,
> If they have no other weight behind them.
>
> (Lines 1349-1352)

While the Virgilian version of Anna's speech touches upon Dido forgetting her dead husband and the glory that Carthage can achieve through a union with Aeneas, it does not mention the idea that a female ruler, out of necessity, needs a man to give her commands

authority, like *Le Roman d'Eneas* does. Rather, it goes on at length about the many enemies that surround Dido:

> Nec venit in mentem, quorum consederis arvis?
> Hinc Gaetulae urbes, genus insuperabile bello,
> Et Numidae infreni cingunt et inhospita Syrtis;
> Hinc deserta siti regio lateque furentes
> Barcaei.
>
> (IV. 39-43)

(Does it not come to your mind, whose land you have settled in? From here the Gaetulian cities, a race unconquerable in war, and the unrestrained Numidians encircle you and the inhospitable Syrtis; on this side lies a region deprived of water and the Barcaeans rage far and wide.)

Despite the hope Anna's speech creates for Dido, the cleric demonstrates that gratification and influence cannot properly be combined for a woman in feudalism. When Dido finally gives in to her love, her relationship with Aeneas is not sanctioned in the appropriate bonds of marriage exchange.[79] She chose to "marry" him for her own personal and political benefit, mirroring a kind of courtly love, rather than under the direction of a male overseer. Thus, her "marriage" to Aeneas is only a fiction of her mind:

> Ele disoit qu'ele ert s'espose,
> Ensi covroit sa felenie ;
> Ne li chalt mes que que l'an die ;
> An dasriere et an devant
> Fait mes de li tot son talant.
>
> She announces that she will be his wife;

Thus she covers her crime.
She doesn't care any longer what anyone says;
Coming and going,
She does with him all she desires.

(Lines 1518-1538)

A similar scene takes place in the *Aeneid* which emphasizes A similar scene takes place in the *Aeneid* which emphasizes Dido's soon-to-be descent from socially appropriate to inappropriate behavior. However, it does not mention, like the *d'Eneas* version does, Dido's indulgence and attempt to maintain authority in her relationship with Aeneas by "doing with him [Aeneas] as she desires" like a lady in courtly love would with her knight:

Ille dies primus leti primusque malorum
Causa fuit, neque enim specie famave movetur
Nec iam furtivum Dido meditatur amorem:
Coniugium vocat; hoc praetexit nomine culpam.

(IV. 169-172)

(That day was the first day of death, the first cause of evils; for Dido is not moved by appearance or reputation; she no longer contemplates a secret love: she calls it marriage; with that name cloaks her crime.)

The cleric reveals that as Dido seeks for power and personal indulgence with Aeneas, she is moving toward personal destruction (both emotionally and as a ruler) as well as toward the decline of Carthage. Consequently, the cleric makes the point that medieval women likewise pose a threat to themselves and feudal society if they forget their correct exchange role and seek sexual liberty through courtly love:

Tot pert le sens et la parole,
Amor l'a fait de sage fole;
Molt soloit bien terre tenir
Et bien soloit guerre baillir,
Or a tot mis an nonchaloir
Et an obli par non savoir.
Amors li a fait oblïer
Terre a tenir et a garder.

She completely loses her sense and her words.
Love has made a fool out of her wisdom.
She used to rule her land well
And to wage war well;
Now she has put all this completely aside
And has forgotten it in her idiocy.
Love has caused her to forget
To preserve and protect her land.

(Lines 1407-1414)

In the *Aeneid*, Virgil also speaks of how Dido becomes unhinged. However, unlike the cleric, he does not outright blame love as the cause:

…Est mollis flamma medullas
Interea et tactium vivit sub pectore vulnus.
Uritur infelix Dido totaque vagatur
Urbe furens, qualis coniecta cerva sagitta.

(IV. 66-69)

(The subtle fire of love is devouring her inner marrow, and meanwhile a silent wound lives in her breast. Unhappy Dido burns and wanders throughout the city raving, like a deer pierced by an arrow.)

According to the cleric, Dido has sinned. Not only has she broken her oath to her former husband, but she has also foolishly sought to retain power while indulging in her love. Now she has little hope of returning to her proper role in feudalism because the

male leaders will are ashamed of her. In a detailed passage, the cleric makes a clear warning to women who act outside of the feudal structure and participate in courtly love:

Molt ert la dame defame
Par tote Libe la contree,
An mal ont essaucié son nom.
Quant l'oënt dire li baron,
Li duc, li prince, li contor,
Qu'ainçois ne volt prendre a segnor,
Molt se tienent por vergondez,
Qu'ele les a toz revelez
Por un home de plus bas prois,
Qui ne estoit ne cuens ne rois.
Antr'els dïent, et si ont droit,
Molt par est fous qui feme croit :
Ne se tient prou an sa parolle :
Tel tient l'en sage qui est fole ;
Ele disoit que son seignor,
Qui morz estoit, promist s'amor,
Ne li toldroit a son vivant ;
Or an fait autres son talant,
Or est mantie la fïence,
Trespassee est la convenance
Qu'a son seignor avoit plevie.

The lady is much defamed
All over the country of Libya;
Her name has been exalted in evil.
When the barons hear what's being said,
The dukes, the princes, the counts,
Whom she was previously unwilling to take as lord,
Consider themselves very much shamed,
Since she has completely rejected them
For a man of the lowest status,
Who was neither a count nor a king.
Among themselves they say--and they are right--
It is only a great fool who believes a woman:
She does not keep her word.
Such a woman considers wise what is foolish;
She said that she had promised her love
To her lord, who is dead,
And she would not take it back during his life;
Now another has had his way with her,

Now she has betrayed her promise,
Has trespassed the agreement
That she had pledged to her lord.

(Lines 1579-1599)

Thus, the cleric links Dido's and Aeneas' relationship to that in courtly love which was often between a lady and a man of lower status. He claims that a woman who participates in a courtly love liaison should rightly be shamed because she is a fool for going outside her feudal role. In the *Aeneid*, Rumor spreads the news of Dido's sin. However, it does not elaborate upon the shamed suitors nor Dido's agony at breaking her vow to her husband. Most importantly, it does not out rightly condemn Dido alone for her submission to her passion, but chides both Dido and Aeneas:

Haec tum multiplici populos sermone replebat
Gaudens, et pariter facta atque infecta canebat :
Venisse Aenean, Troiano sanguine cretum,
Cui se pulchra viro dignetur iungere Dido:
Nunc hiemem inter se luxu, quam longa, fovere
Regnorum immemores turpique cupidine captos.

(IV. 189-194)

(Then she [Rumor] filled the nations with twisted words, and sang of fact and falsehood alike: Aeneas had come, born of Trojan blood, to him as husband beautiful Dido deigns to join herself: now as long as winter lasts they live in luxury, forgetful of their realms and captive to their disgraceful love.)

The result of Dido's attempts to seek wealth, authority, and personal gratification are slander, her city's decline, and shame. Consequently, the cleric illustrates that for a woman in such a position, if she is unable to decently reintegrate herself back into the

feudal system and her role as an “object of exchange,” then her only option is suicide. Consequently, Dido has a bonfire prepared in her room. She takes the sword that Aeneas gave to her as a gift and stabs herself in the breast. She then jumps onto the fire and laments:

A grant contraire m’est torné.
Sor ces dras voil fenir ma vie
Et sor lo lit ou fui honie ;
Ci lais m’enor et mon barnage,
Et deguerpis sanz soir oir Cartage,
Ci perc mon nom, tote ma glore,
Mais ne morrai si sanz memore
Qu’en ne parolt de moi toz tenz,
Vials non antre les Troiens.
Molt fui ancois et pros et sage,
Que me donast amor tel rage,
Et molt fusse buene euree,
Se ne venist an ma contree
Li Troiens qui m’a traie,
Par cui amor ge perc la vie.
Il m’a ocise a molt grant tort ;
Ge li pardoins ici ma mort ;
Par nom d’accordement, de pais,
Ses garnemenz an son lit bais.
Gel vos pardions, sire Eneas.”

I have been brought to a very evil end.
On these clothes I want to finish my life
And on this bed where I was brought to shame;
Here I leave my honor and my high position,
And abandon Carthage without an heir.
Here I lose my name, all my glory,
But I will not die out of memory so much
That people will not speak of me forever--
At least among the Trojans.
Once upon a time I was very noble and wise,
Before love moved me to such passion;
And I would have been very happy indeed,
If the Trojan who betrayed me--
For whose love I lose my life--
Had not come into my country.
He has killed me most unjustly indeed.

Here I pardon him for my death;
In the name of reconciliation, of peace,
I kiss his fine gifts on his bed.
I give you my pardon for it, lord Eneas.'

(Lines 2042-2067)

According to the cleric, during her suicide, Dido openly admits that her lustful actions, fashioned after a courtly love manner, have been the cause of her shame and subsequent death. However, the cleric allows her to redeem herself to a degree by pardoning Aeneas. Thus, she brings herself back into feudalism, by admitting her subservient role to men, and Christianity, by admitting her sin.[80] Dido's death speech in *Le Roman d'Eneas* is very similar to the one in the *Aeneid*.[81] A key difference, however, is that, instead of forgiving Aeneas, Dido curses him and desires for him to suffer:

…Sequar atris ignibus absens
Et, cum frigida mors anima seduxerit artus,
Omnibus umbra locis adero. Dabis, improbe, poenas.

(IV. 384-386)

(Although absent, I will follow with malevolent fires and, when cold death has separated my body from my soul, my shade will be present everywhere. You, wicked one, will pay the penalty.)

The cleric ends the story of Dido in *Le Roman d'Eneas* with a summary of his viewpoint:

Un epitaife I ont escrit;
La letre dit que : "Iluec gist
Dido qui por amor s'ocist ;
Onques ne fu meillor paiene,

S'ele n'eüst amor soltaine,
Mais ele ama trop folemant,
Savoir ne li valut noiant.

They inscribed an epitaph there;
The letters read: "Here lies
Dido, who killed herself for love;
Never was there a better pagan,
If she had not had a secretive love;
But she loved too foolishly,
And her intelligence did her no good.

(Lines 2138-2144)

Thus, the author reaffirms that a woman who seeks power and personal gratification will ultimately end up dead. Although Dido was a good ruler, despite having no male overseers, she foolishly allowed herself to be swayed by love, an imitation of courtly love in particular, and sought after influence and fulfilling her desires. She was overstepping her feudal role as an object of exchange. Consequently, unable to return to the proper feudal system, she had to kill herself. This is in stark contrast to the ending of Book IV in the *Aeneid*. In the *Aeneid*, Juno intervenes over the Dido's dead body in order to ensure her spirit goes to the underworld:

Tum Iuno omipotens, longum miserata dolorem
Difficilisque obitus, Irim demisit Olympo,
Quae luctantem animam nexosque resolveret artus.

(IV. 693-695)

(Then almighty Juno, pitying the long pain and difficult dying, sent Iris from Olympus, who released her struggling soul from her binding body.)

Section V: Conclusion

As a revival of interest in classical texts swept Europe in the twelfth century, writers took these ancient works and adapted them into new vernacular stories. Following this trend, an anonymous cleric of the Anglo-Norman tradition took Virgil's *Aeneid* and reworked it into *Le Roman d'Eneas*. The world of this poet was dominated by feudalism – a system of oaths that maintained political and economical stability. Women, in particular, were the commodity for these alliances. During the twelfth century, however, a number of noblewomen felt restricted by this male controlled world. As a result, they sought to acquire influence while seeking personal fulfillment through "courts of love" and the model of courtly love. In response to this phenomenon, the cleric wrote *Le Roman d'Eneas* as a reprimand to those women. In particular, he used the myth of Dido to show that women who acted outside their feudal role and followed conduct similar to courtly love would have to suffer the emotional and physical consequences. Through his work, the author of *Le Roman d'Eneas* left an important legacy about the literary movements and gendered view points of twelfth century Europe.

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[1] "Didon et Enée," *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* (Paris, XIVe s.), 60 fol. 148. Online version at http://www.ac-nancy-metz.fr/enseign/Lettres/LanguesAnciennes/Textes/Virgile/eneas.htm
[2] L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974) 70-75.
[3] Dennis Sherman and Joyce Salisbury, *The West in the World* 2nd Ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2006).240.
[4] Raymond J. Cormier, *One heart one mind: the rebrith of Virgil's hero in medieval French romance* (Spain: Romance Monographs, 1973), 24. Cormier comments that "it appears almost natural that clerics, anxious to appeal to a wider audience, should turn from chronicles to the classics. The whole spirit of the 1150's and early 1160's points to an intense period of enthusiastic renovation."
[5] Ffiona [sic] Swabey, *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Courtly Love, and the Troubadours* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 23.
[6] Patricia Ranft theorizes in *Women in Western Intellectual Culture, 600-1500* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008), 71-72 that the growth of vernacular literature was due to the rise of nations.
[7] Debora B. Schwartz, "Medieval Attitudes Toward Vernacular Literature," *Medieval Literature*, 2003, http://cla.calpoly.edu/~dschwart/engl203/vernacular.html (accessed 15 December 2009).
[8] Cormier, 65. Cormier further elaborates upon the origins of romance: "the rise of literacy and the increasing importance of the vernacular; a growing distinction between reality and 'pure literary escape,' along with a developing desire to reflect on human affairs; the increase social role and opportunity of woman, whose distaste for violence and predilection for plausible tales must be assumer" (pg. 66).
[9] Gian Biagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. Joseph B. Solodow (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 286-87.
[10] Cormier, 22-23 and 30.
[11] Cormier, 20-21.
[12] J.-J. Salverda de Grave, ed., *Eneas Roman du XIIème Siècle* (Paris : Librairie Honoré Champion, 1973), XIX-XX.
[13] See Marilynn Desmond, *Reading Dido: gender, textuality, and the medieval Aeneid* (University of Minnesota, 1994), 105 and Jean Markale, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen of the Troubadours* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2007), 152.
[14] Markale, 131 and 146.
[15] Desmond asserts, "This narrator also acts in places as a *compilator* who collects writings from sources, both classical and contemporary, which are inserted into the narrative under production" (pg. 107).
[16] F.M. Warren, "On the Latin sources of Thèbes and Enéas," *The Modern Language Association of America* XVI, no. 3 (1901): 375.
[17] Salverda de Grave, XXII.
[18] For further discussion on the dialect and rhyming scheme used by the cleric, see: Salverda de Grave, VII-XIX.
[19] Cormier, 81-82.
[20] Penny Schine Gold in *The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985) comments that *Le Roman d'Eneas* "is in its essence a story of an individual on his own, a story on a personal level of a man's development as he comes to understand goals and attain them. Thus in the *Eneas*, as in all medieval romances, the gods – whether pagan or Christian – have no place. We witness only an individual's struggle to attain his personal goals" (pg. 34).
[21] Cormier, 84. Salverda de Grave argues that these elements were added by the cleric to improve clarity, make the story livelier, and to personalize the work (pg. XXV-XXVI).
[22] Cormier elaborates, "The *Eneas* is, at one, a "completion" of Virgil in medieval terms and a vehicle for ideas prevailing in its time. Needless to say, when the author imitates the Aeneid directly, he is probably at once restoring the masterpiece (though often with new meaning) and respecting the authority of Virgil; put crudely and positivistically, wherever the *Eneas* author diverges, he is adapting for his audience" (pg. 14).
[23] Cormier, 23. Cormier elucidates that "To the medieval mind, the cult of the antique meant not so much a revival of things which had dies as the removal of obstructions which impaired the maintenance of things extant" (pg. 31).
[24] Desmond, 105.

[25] Swabey, 6-7. On a lower level, there existed manoralism: the bond between a Lord and his vassals, usually peasants, in which the Lord let the peasants farm his land and gave them protection in return for a part of the crops and military service.
[26] In the broader prospective of medieval class conflict, Markale explains that the "twelfth century consisted of three groups fighting for supremacy: the nobles trying to maintain the privileges they had acquired through strength of arms; the clergy trying to seat its spiritual power on a material foundation; and one part of the people, the *bourgeosie*, trying to gain recognition for the economic weight it represented" (pg. 122).
[27] Gayle Rubin describes this phenomenon as the "traffic in women" in his book "The Traffic of Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex," in Rayna R. Reiter, ed., *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York, 1975), 157-210.
[28] Desmond, 99.
[29] Swabey, 78.
[30] Ibid., 13.
[31] Lisa M. Bitel, *Women in Early Medieval Europe* 400-1100 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 171.
[32] Swabey, 79.
[33] Régine Pernoud, *Women in the Days of the Cathedrals* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 151-155.
[34] Swabey, 79.
[35] Ibid., 14.
[36] For a full discussion on women's inheritance of property see Gold, 116-144.
[37] Cormier, 66.
[38] Swabey, 15. Swabey terms this growing awareness "The Twelfth Century Awakening."
[39] Ibid., 59.
[40] "The Troubadours," *Languedoc*, http://www.languedoc-france.info/1904_troubadours.htm (accessed October 26, 2009). However, Markale refutes this. He states, "Some have claimed that fine amor was of Muslim influence. Examples of this tie are certainly not lacking […] yet this connection takes either too literally or too superficially the Muslim love poems of this era. In fact, a good many of these poems are actually poems of mystic love in which the symbolic love language seemingly referring to woman in fact designates worship of a hidden deity who can be known only through human experience" (pg. 137).
[41] Markale, 138.
[42] Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, introduction and translation by John Jay Parry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 4-7.
[43] Swabey, 55.
[44] Swabey, 60 and Markale, 148.
[45] Swabey, 58. For more information on William and his works, see: "William, 1071 - 1127, Count of Poitou, Duke of Aquitaine," *Languedoc*, http://www.midi-france.info/190401_guilhem.htm.
[46] Pernoud, 101. However, some scholars have debated over the seriousness of these "courts of love," claiming that they were held as mere "parlor games" to entertain noblewomen.
[47] Ibid., 107.
[48] Markale, 118 and 147. Marion Meade in *Eleanor of Aquitaine* (New York: Hawthorn Bookds, 1977) states that "in the harsh authoritarian world of masculine kinship…the court at Poitiers stood as an oasis where a woman of independence and imagination might fine the freedom to invent a milieu suitable to her own taste…in which women might reign as goddesses or at the least mistresses of their own destinies" (pg.250-251).
[49] Markale, 118-119. Markale elaborates that "in short, at a time when justice was exclusively in the hands of men, this was a means of creating 'antitribunal' in which could play the feminine sensibility that was officially too far removed from the business of the kingdom" (pg. 151).
[50] Ibid., 118. Markale claims that Marie de France was possibly the half-sister of Henry II. In terms of a female writer, Bitel explains that Marie "deemed herself worthy and able to do the kind of work reserved for male scholars trained in monasteries and, by the time she was writing, the urban schools for theologians and philosophers" (pg. 291).
[51] Schwartz, "Backgrounds to Romance: 'Courtly Love.'" Schwartz states that *De Amore* is "not a serious treatise but a satire mocking the conventions of courtly love, written within a university milieu hostile to the conventions of courtly literature."

[52] Swabey, 72.
[53] The term "courtly love" was invented in the nineteenth century by the French medieval scholar, Gaston Paris. See Pamela Porter, *Courtly Love in Medieval Manuscripts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 5.
[54] Schwartz, "Backgrounds to Romance: 'Courtly Love.'"
[55] Pernoud, 98-99.
[56] Markale, 144-145. Markale explains that "the lover might also lie in bed with the woman who granted him his long-awaited reward, but while this love play often ended in orgasm, never, at least in the context of strict fine amor, did coitus take place."
[57] In response to sinful adulterous tendencies of courtly love, the Catholic Church founded the Cult of the Virgin Mary in which women strove to emulate Mary who was a model of virtuous behavior (Gold, 68-69).
[58] Swabey, 76.
[59] "Troubadour Conventions and Favourite Themes," *Languedoc*, http://www.languedoc-france.info/1904_troubadours.htm#conventions (accessed 17 Dec. 2009).
[60] Swabey, 81-82.
[61] Markale asserts that "the courts of love were a manifestation of women's desire for independence in the suffocating, androcratic framework imposed upon them." As a result, "these women found ways to use literature, poetry, music, and amusements to claim a status that they felt had been lost to them for several centuries" (pg. 119-120).
[62] All subsequent Latin text taken from Virgil, Aeneid I-VI, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).
[63] Swabey, 72.
[64] *Aeneid*, Book I.
[65] *Aeneid*, Book IV.
[66] Desmond declares that "in medieval literary traditions, Dido is essentially characterized by her sexuality – ….by her tendency to succumb to sexual desire in the Virgilian tradition. The misogynous strain in medieval literatures reflects the extent to which the institution of marriage was a building block of secular society, and marriage required the regulation of female sexuality" (pg. 57-58).
[67] For discussion on "Dido as a victim," see: Sarah Spence, "*Varium et Mutabile*: Voice of Authority in *Aeneid* 4" in *Reading Vergil's Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide*, ed. Christine Perkell (University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 80-87. For discussion on how Dido and Aeneas view their relationship, see: Richard C. Monti, *The Dido episode and the Aeneid: Roman social and political values in the epic* (Leidan, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1981), 30-69.
[68] Spence, 89-90.
[69] Desmond, 33.
[70] Desmond comments that "within the social context of twelfth century courtly culture, grounded as it is in the feudal exchange in women, the *Eneas* poet brings a specific set of perceptions based on gender and agency to the authorial task of reading Dido" (pg. 107).
[71] All Old French passages are taken from J.-J. Salverda de Grave, ed., *Eneas Roman du XIIème Siècle* (Paris : Librairie Honoré Champion, 1973). All English translations come from *Roman d'Eneas*, trans. Miceál F. Vaughan, June 1999, http://faculty.washington.edu/miceal/lgw/dido/Eneas(trans).html (accessed November 16, 2009).
[72] Desmond reiterates this: "Dido enters the text as a female leader; this introductory acknowledgement of her political role - noted as a transgression of standard gender roles - makes it difficult for Dido to be placed in the conventional status of 'object of exchange.' In this respect, Dido's stature essential defines the nascent generic conventions of romance that often relegate women to a (perhaps idealized) silent, central absence. Her anomalous agency elicits the scriptural comments of the narrator, who implicitly acknowledges the difficulty of recuperating Dido as dux to a feudal vision" (pg. 108-109).
[73] *Le Roman d'Eneas*, 391-406.
[74] *Aeneid*, I. 357-369.
[75] Desmond, 101.
[76] Desmond explains that "Dido's agency suggests the dangers inherent in a situation in which a woman does not circulate within the prescribed limits of exchange and kinship" (101).
[77] Desmond, 108.
[78] *Le Roman d'Eneas*, 1326-1382.

[79] Desmond elaborates "the structure of the *Eneas* opposes the destructive, basically unreciprocated desire of Dido (a desire not reinforced by or reinforcing a marriage settlement) to the constructive desire of Lavinia [the daughter of an Italian tribal leader] (a desire that becomes fully reciprocated by Eneas and is reinforced by the entire system of vassalage and kinship that the marriage of Lavinia and Eneas represents)" (pg. 108).
[80] Cormier, 88.
[81] *Aeneid*, IV. 651-662.