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Isabelle: Tragedy

by Nicolas de Montreux

Translated, with Introduction and Notes,
with an Edition of the French Text of
Nicolas de Montreux by Richard Hillman

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Isabelle: Tragedy

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Richard Hillman

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Contact : agathe.piotrowski@univ-tours.fr

Introduction

Literary histories, French as well as English, have almost completely ignored Nicolas de Montreux's early tragedy *Isabelle*—to the point where it has attracted no modern edition, not to mention translation, despite its seemingly wide diffusion in its own time. The reasons are not difficult to fathom. Most basic, no doubt, is the relative obscurity to which the author has himself been consigned—again, despite his extensive publications in a wide variety of genres over the last two decades of the sixteenth century. That anomaly was duly remarked on by Donald Stone, Jr., the only modern editor of the last of his three surviving tragedies, *La Sophonisbe* (1601): “*La diversité des œuvres des Montreux est si grande et si signiicative qu'on comprend mal pourquoi il est toujours peu connu* [The diversity of Montreux's works is so great and so significant that it is hard to understand why he is still so little known]”.¹ At the same time, Stone provided explanations of sorts, citing, most basically, the “*valeur littéraire . . . très modeste* [very slight literary value]” of many of Montreux's compositions and, with particular regard to *La Sophonisbe*, his problematic

¹ Donald Stone, Jr., Introduction, *La Sophonisbe: Tragédie*, by Nicolas de Montreux, Textes Littéraires Français (Geneva: Droz, 1976), pp. 1-24, p. 4. The most thorough and authoritative literary biography of the author remains that of Rose-Marie Daele, *Nicolas de Montreux* [sic] (*Ollenix Du Mont-Sacré*): *Arbiter of European Literary Vagues of the Late Renaissance* (New York: Moretus Press, 1946).

management of mise-en-scène, the commonplace nature of his themes and political ideas, and his inferiority to Robert Garnier (Montreux's most immediate model for tragedy), notably in the matter of versification.²

While these qualitative judgements may undoubtedly be defended, juxtaposition of *Isabelle* with Montreux's *Cleopatre*, composed around 1592 (therefore between *Isabelle* and *La Sophonisbe*),³ not only reveals striking specific correspondences, which will be duly noted, but suggests a further intrinsic reason for neglect of Montreux—namely, the difficulty of fitting his tragic compositions into the very genre to which they most obviously belong: so-called “humanist” tragedy, of which Garnier is widely considered the supreme practitioner.⁴ That genre itself, moreover, has tended to suffer depreciation by French literary historians, compared with the more polished (formally “regular”) productions of the *âge classique*, as these came to dominance in the mid-seventeenth century. Nor, on the other hand, can Montreux's *Isabelle* or *Cleopatre* (unlike *La Sophonisbe*, which features onstage suicides) now claim attention for practising the freer forms of theatricality and audience engagement found in a number of sixteenth-century plays, forerunners of the dramaturgy typified by Alexandre Hardy and Jean de Rotrou.⁵ *Isabelle*

² See Stone, Introduction, esp. pp. 1, 14–15, 15–17.

³ Montreux's *Cleopatra* is now available in *Three French Cleopatras: Cleopatra Captive, by Étienne Jodelle, 1563; Marc Antony, by Robert Garnier, 1578; Cleopatra: Tragedy, by Nicolas de Montreux, c. 1592. With an Edition of the French Text of Montreux*, trans. and ed. Richard Hillman, Scène Européenne—Traductions Introuvables (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2024). Subsequent references will be to this translation/edition.

⁴ For a thorough and perceptive survey of the genre, with due attention to its many variations, see Donald Stone, Jr., *French Humanist Tragedy: A Reassessment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1974).

⁵ Some sense of the scope of such production may be gathered from the notably “irregular” texts assembled in the pioneering anthology by Christian Biet, ed., *Théâtre de la cruauté et récits sanglants: en France (XVI^e-XVII^e siècles)* (Paris: R. Laffont, 2006), as well as from the volume of *Diverses tragédies saintes, de plusieurs auteurs de ce temps* compiled by the active Rouen publisher Raphaël Du Petit Val in 1606 (available through Gallica, BnF NUMM-70710). The latter are “saintes” (sacred) works only in being based for the most part, however loosely, on biblical material, while the indefinite meaning of “tragédies” in the title may be gathered from the inclusion of Montreux's own play of *Joseph le Chaste* (1601), which is separately identified as a comedy.

Other “irregular” texts from the period might obviously be cited. While translations of such are hard to come by, I am responsible for three—two specimens of dramatic propaganda and one tragedy derived from an English pastoral romance: Fronton Du

might have tended in this direction, based as it is on a contemporary Italian verse-romance rather than classical or biblical material, yet its formal features unmistakably reflect an aspiration, however imperfectly realised, to observe the conventions of humanist tragic drama associated with high literary style.

In fact, as *Isabelle* itself attests, such plays, though for the most part conceived with performance in mind, are hardly dramatic at all in the ordinary current understanding: while often constructed around sensational situations, with few exceptions (such as the Nurse's suicide in Garnier's *Porcie*) they follow Greek and Roman precedent in eschewing onstage action in favour of declamatory rhetoric structured in formal patterns. Yet a case can be made that Montreux's management of this technique not only produces a form of tightly-woven drama in itself—indeed, sometimes verging on meta-drama by calling attention to its devices, notably repetition with variations—but actually pushes towards a form of proto-psychological tragic characterisation, thereby expanding the confines of the genre beyond what is found, for instance, in the precursor tragedies of Garnier. This it does by, in effect, turning inward, opening an ironic space between the protagonists' designated functions within the intrigue, which remain as static as is normally the case, and their modes of self-presentation, which can become remarkably fluid, even suggestive of inward transformation. Concomitantly, in both *Isabelle* and *Cleopatra*, a basic triangular pattern inherited from the source material—it involves Isabelle, Zeobin and Rodomont in the first case, Cleopatra, Antony and Octavius Caesar in the second—is rendered dynamic through an exaltation of “true” earthly love elevated to a sacred, indeed transcendental, force: it is more than formulaic that Montreux follows the text of *Isabelle*, in the volume of pastoral entertainments in verse and prose (“*bergeries*”) where it is preserved, with the motto “*Nec morte moritur amor . . . LOVANGE A DIEU* [Nor does love die

Duc, *The Tragic History of La Pucelle of Domrémy, Otherwise Known as The Maid of Orléans* (1580), trans. Richard Hillman, Carleton Renaissance Plays in Translation, 39 (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 2005); Simon Belyard, *The Guisian* (1592), trans. Richard Hillman, Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, Scène Européenne - Traductions Introuvables, Tours, 2019, online publication: <<https://sceneeuropeenne.univ-tours.fr/traductions/guisian>> (accessed 8 June 2024); Jean Galaut, *Phalante* (c. 1598), *Sidney's Arcadia on the French Stage: Two Renaissance Adaptations: Phalante, by Jean Galaut; The Shepherds' Court, by André Mareschal*, trans. Richard Hillman, Scène Européenne—Traductions Introuvables (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2018).

with death . . . Praise be to God]”⁶ The result in both tragedies is that the *de facto* agents of death who have opposed such love—Rodomont, Caesar—are finally inscribed under its auspices, willy-nilly, and so achieve tragic status in their own right. In view of this dynamic, the points of contact which I have elsewhere proposed between Montreux’s work and Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*, as well as *Othello*, arguably acquire organic significance.⁷ I will be proposing, with due diffidence, some further Shakespearean connections here.

Date, Textual History and Origins, Performance

All the surviving copies of *Isabelle* appear to derive from the text appended in 1595 to the fourth and latest volume in Montreux’s series of *bergeries*. The latter generally enjoyed wide popularity, to judge from the number of volumes produced (five, seemingly beginning in 1581, with multiple reissues⁸) and copies extant, while the subsequent separate issues of *Isabelle* extracted from the 1595 volume attest to its independent interest for contemporaries. Moreover, the text first included in 1595, although framed by introductory and concluding statements alluding to a supposed performance in pastoral circumstances, is evidently of prior origin, having separate pagination and typographical characteristics, as in other cases where Montreux’s dramatic works had been issued

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- 6 *Le Quatriesme Liure des Bergeries de Iuliette. Auquel comme aux trois premiers, sont traictez les diuers effects d’amour: Avec pareils enrichissemens de diuerses Poësies & Discours. Ensemble la Tragedie d’Isabelle* [The fourth book of Juliet’s pastoral diversions. In which, as in the first three, the various effects of love are presented. Similarly enriched with various poems and discourses. Together with the Tragedy of Isabelle] (Paris: Guillaume Des Rues, 1595), p. 96. (All translations are my own.)
- 7 For *Antony and Cleopatra*, see *Three French Cleopatras*, trans. and ed. Hillman, Introduction, pp. 31–35; for *Othello*, see Richard Hillman, “Reverberations of Rodomonte in and around *Othello*”, *Moralizing the Italian Marvellous in Early Modern England*, ed. Beatrice Fuga and Alessandra Petrini, Anglo-Italian Renaissance Series (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2025), pp. 113–32.
- 8 See the *Universal Short-Title Catalogue*, online at <<https://www.ustc.ac.uk/explore?q=Montreux%20Bergeries>> (accessed 15 May 2024); the 1581 volume, which evidently included the comedy *La Joyeuse*, is lost. All were soon translated into German (see Daele, Bibliography). There was also an English translation of the fifth volume, without naming the author: *Honours Academie. Or The Famous Pastorall, of the Faire Shepheardesse, Iulietta. . . . Wherein Are Many Notable Discourses, as Well Philosophicall, as Diuine. . . . With Diuers Comicall, and Tragicall, in Prose, and Verse, of All Sorts*, trans. R[obert] T[oft] (London: Thomas Creede, 1610); STC 18053.

by themselves before being incorporated in collections.⁹ Certainly, there is nothing to contradict the independent evidence that *Isabelle* figured among the earliest of Montreux's tragedies. Definitive authority for this is the 1584 bibliography of La Croix du Maine, where its contemporary existence in print is apparently taken for granted.¹⁰

The present discussion supports the likelihood of such publication, for, by way of the playwright's modifications of his primary source, I will be offering reasons to suppose that the work was accessible to Shakespeare in a pre-1595 edition, and perhaps to Robert Greene prior to 1588, when the latter's popular prose romance *Pandosto* (destined to furnish the basic plots of *The Winter's Tale*) was first published. Montreux's direct source, as he confirms in the "Argument of the Tragedy", was Ludovico Ariosto's monumental—and monumentally popular—epic romance *Orlando Furioso* (pub. in final form 1532), particularly Canto XXIX, which recounts the noble death of Isabella, daughter of the King of Galicia. There the beautiful and virtuous heroine, taken prisoner by the Moorish king Rodomonte after the death of her beloved husband Zerbino, and threatened with loss of chastity, devises a ruse by which her captor is tricked into cutting off her head in the guise of proving a magical formula for invulnerability.¹¹

The modifications in question involve significant details, as well as extensive amplifications and additions adapting Ariosto's brief narrative to the basic conventions of humanist tragedy as then understood: Alexandrine couplets ("vers noble") as the standard form of expression; long monologues, regularly giving way to dialogue in debate form, thanks to the protagonists' confidants; a messenger to relate off-stage action; moralising choruses. Needless to say, these elements are not accounted for by John Harington's essentially faithful translation of the *Orlando Furioso* into English verse, which appeared in 1591

9 On this practice of double publication, with respect especially to Montreux's pastoral *Athlette* and tragedy *Cleopatre*, see also Nicolas de Montreux, *Diane* (1594), *With an Edition of the French Text*, trans. and ed. Richard Hillman (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2019), Introduction, pp. 9-22, 11-12.

10 See François Grudé, sieur de La Croix du Maine, *Premier volume de la bibliothèque du sieur de La Croix Du Maine, qui est un catalogue général de toutes sortes d'auteurs qui ont escrit en françois depuis cinq cents ans et plus jusques à ce jour d'huy, etc.* (Paris: A. L'Angelier, 1584), pp. 350-51.

11 References throughout are to Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, ed. Lanfranco Caretti, Nuova Universale Einaudi, 75 (Turin: Einaudi, 1966).

and which Shakespeare may have known.¹² (This was a landmark achievement in its own right, perhaps not incidentally published by Richard Field, the first printer of Shakespeare's narrative poems in 1593-94 and probably his acquaintance from younger days in Stratford.)

La Croix du Maine's notice testifies to the remarkable poetic precocity and prolixity of Montreux (1561?-1608?), who was already publishing under his anagrammatic *nom de plume* of Ol[I]enix du Mont-Sacré. It also confirms his predilection for nobly suicidal female subjects, which would carry into *Cleopatre* and *La Sophonisbe*. Besides a (lost) tragedy of Paris and Oenone,¹³ he drew still more widely on the *Orlando Furioso*, of which he had also composed a continuation (unpublished). In addition to taking from it the essential material for *Isabelle*—besides Canto XXIX, he drew principally on Canto XXIV, for Zerbino's death, and adapted key details of other plot-lines—he was probably inspired by it for his lost tragedy of Camma. That work presumably featured a heroine who commits murder to punish the lust-driven man who had killed her husband, then kills herself.¹⁴ The sensational tale was originally recounted in Plutarch's *Moralia* (*De Mulierum Virtutibus*, 20; *Amatorius*, 22), but Ariosto had retold it in Canto XXXVII, using the name Drusilla.¹⁵

¹² Lodovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse*, trans. John Harington (London: Richard Field, 1591; STC 746). (References are to this edition.)

¹³ This seems likely to have been in the same mould, to judge from the common accounts of the myth, according to which the nymph Oenone was the first wife of Paris, who abandoned her for Helen. When he was wounded at the siege of Troy, he appealed to her for succour, which she refused, but after his death was stricken with remorse and committed suicide. For a convenient summary, detailing the principal sources, see the site *Theoi Greek Mythology*, <<https://www.theoi.com/Nymphe/NympheOinone.html>> (accessed 26 June 2024). That Thomas Heywood composed an epyllion on the subject (1594), and would later produce a tragedy of *The Rape of Lucrece* (1608), offers an intriguing glimpse into the ferment of classical and Italianate texts in which Shakespeare, Spenser and other English authors were immersed in the 1590s. The phenomenon is effectively evoked by Joseph M. Ortiz, "Epic Oenone, Pastoral Paris: Undoing the Virgilian *rota* in Thomas Heywood's *Oenone and Paris*", *Elizabethan Narrative Poems: The State of Play*, ed. Lynn Enterline, The Arden Shakespeare State of Play Series (London and New York: The Arden Shakespeare, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 71-94.

¹⁴ For a distinctive detail that Montreux may have borrowed from the story of Drusilla to embellish *Isabelle*, see the translation, V.2415-18 and n. 149.

¹⁵ The story would also be recast by Castiglione in *Il Cortegiano* (1528); see Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Thomas Hoby, intro. W. H. D. Rouse, Notes by Drayton Henderson, Everyman's Library (London: Dent; New York: Dutton, 1928), pp. 208-9 (Bk. III).

Moreover, La Croix du Maine, speaking ambiguously in the plural, intriguingly attributes to Montreux “*les Tragedies d’Isabelle & de Fleurdelys prises de l’Arioste*”,¹⁶ and it is certainly possible that Montreux’s character of Fleurdelys—Ariosto’s Fiordeligi (so Francised in the first translations from Italian to French), whom the playwright transforms into Isabelle’s sister and confidante—was the subject of a separate tragedy, now lost. While Fiordiligi never encounters Isabella in the *Orlando Furioso*, she desperately searches for her beloved husband Brandimarte (Montreux’s Brandimart) through many adventures, only to discover him killed in the climactic combat on the island of Lampadusa (Cantos XLI-XLIII). Following a plaintive lament (XLIII.161-64), she withdraws to mourn in a cell within his tomb, where she finally expires (183-85). The broad parallel with the tragic trajectory of Isabella is evident, hence the potential for similar dramatic development. Moreover, such a tragic ending for Fleurdelys is actually foreshadowed in latter’s lament at the conclusion of *Isabelle* (V.2555-96). Still, given that the fit with Ariosto’s narrative is imperfect in this respect,¹⁷ as in others, while the evocation of Fleurdelys’s devastation is especially vivid, one might suspect La Croix du Maine of thinking instead of the twin “tragedies” of Isabelle and Fleurdelys as combined within a single work.

La Croix du Maine concludes by mentioning Montreux (originally from Le Mans) as thriving (“*florist*”) in Paris in 1584, and while he says nothing about performance of the tragedies in question, there is some evidence that *Isabelle*, as well as *Cleopatre*, was played to acclaim at the Hôtel de Bourgogne during the 1590s.¹⁸ Early in that decade, however, Montreux had established himself in Nantes as the resident man-of-letters and encomiast of the Duke and Duchess of Mercœur, who until 1598, with Spanish military support, defended the ultra-Catholic cause of the *Sainte Ligue* against the royal claims of Henri IV, whose conversion to Catholicism in 1593 the *Ligue* disallowed. Both *Isabelle* and *Cleopatra* were then clearly suited to serve the politico-religious cause, if not directly enlisted in it, with the link between the virtue of chastity

¹⁶ La Croix du Maine, p. 351.

¹⁷ See the translation, nn. 162 and 164.

¹⁸ See Daele, pp. 178-79, relying on Joseph Dedieu, ed., Pierre de Laudun d’Aigaliers, *L’art poétique français, essai sur la poésie dans le Languedoc, de Ronsard à Malherbe* (1909; fac. rpt. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1969), pp. 34-35, and Paul Lacroix, *Le Théâtre: étude illustrée, d’après les ouvrages de M. Paul Lacroix sur le Moyen Âge, la Renaissance, le XVII^e et le XVIII^e siècles*, L’ancienne France, 8 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1887), pp. 58-59.

and heroic femininity implicitly adapted, it seems likely, to exaltation of the famously beautiful, pious and strong-willed Duchess, Marie de Luxembourg.

In any case, it is clearly in the context of edifying courtly diversion that the text of *Isabelle* was appended to the 1595 volume of Montreux's *bergeries*, published in Paris. The volume was prefaced with an effusive dedicatory epistle "*A son Tres-illustre Prince, Seigneur & Mæcene*", obviously Mercœur, and, given the documented staging of other dramatic works of Montreux in the ducal palace in Nantes, inferential evidence of such performance is the textual frame provided for *Isabelle* at the volume's conclusion.¹⁹ This states that the "*Pasteurs & Bergeres* [shepherds and shepherdesses]" of this supposed pastoral world persuaded the visiting "*grand Prince*" to hear "*l'une de leurs tragedies* [one of their tragedies]," which they "*reciterent* [recited]" in an "*ample* [spacious] *theatre*," set up and decorated for the occasion. Not surprisingly, the Prince and all the other auditors are said to have been very pleased. Notable is the seeming involvement of women as well as men in the representation, with the choruses singled out as "*prononcez à viue voix* [pronounced resoundingly]" by "*les Bergeres, destinees à ce faire* [the shepherdesses appointed to do so]".²⁰ Whatever the actual conditions of representation of this "*triste* [mournful]" tragedy, embedded here are rare indications of presumptive performance practice and acting style.

As the following discussion aims to demonstrate, considerable innovation may be seen, despite his broad adherence to humanist conventions, in Montreux's transformation of the succinct but thematically fraught plot and characters found in the *Orlando Furioso*. His weaving of Rodomont into the tragic fabric is especially noteworthy and also stands out against two prior texts which he may have found suggestive, as well as a third which almost certainly reflects his own influence.²¹ In 1535 there appeared a poetic sequel (itself

¹⁹ *Le Quatriesme Liure des Bergeries*, pp. 633-34.

²⁰ This point is taken as evidence for the participation of actresses more generally in humanist drama by M. M. Mouflard, *Robert Garnier (1545-1590)*, 3 vols, vol. II (La Ferté-Bernard: R. Bellanger; La Roche-sur-Yon: Imprimerie Centrale de l'Ouest, 1963), p. 262, although it is unclear on what basis she assigns this putative performance to 1578, when Montreux would have been around 17 years old (perhaps an error for 1587?).

²¹ An illuminating comparison of these three works, though without reference to Montreux, is furnished by Laura Rescia in the Introduction to her edition of Charles Bauter, *La Rodomontade*, Labirinti, 100 (Trent: Università degli studi di Trento, 2007), pp. 7-20, 9-15. See also Marion Bracq, "Catabase et esthétique des passions dans 'La Mort de Rodomont et sa descente aux Enfers' de Philippe Desportes", *Atlante: Revue d'études romanes* 9 (2018): 179-193.

unfinished) to Ariosto's epic by Pietro Aretino, entitled *Marfisa*. One section of this poem represents, in highly fanciful terms verging on the burlesque, the spirit of Rodomonte, assimilated to a virtual *miles gloriosus*, descending to a pagan underworld after his death in battle. There he wreaks havoc and finally returns as a ghost to haunt the scene of his offence against Isabella. This work was in turn imitated (without acknowledgement) by the French court-poet Philippe Desportes in "La Mort de Rodomont, et sa descente aux enfers" (1572), where Aretino's furious boaster is rendered more complex, if not melowered, by a posthumous amorous obsession—to the point where his terrifying ghost endlessly cries, "*Rodomont, Rodomont, Ysabelle, Ysabelle*".²² Already in place, then, before Montreux wrote was the characteristic vainglorious boasting which gave rise to the term "*rodomontade*",²³ and which Montreux would develop well beyond Ariosto's original, extending his villain's bluster to challenges absurdly directed against the gods. The conclusion of Desportes's poem, moreover, actually sounds notes of exaltation in praise of Isabelle that Montreux adopts for his heroine:

... au ciel victorieuse,
 Pour auoir par sa fin faict preuue glorieuse
 De foy, de chasteté, d'un cœur constant & fort,
 Et que la vraye amour se monstre apres la mort.²⁴

[... victorious in heaven, for having, by her
 end made glorious proof of faith, of chastity, of a heart constant and strong, and that true love shows itself after death.]

With respect to Rodomonte, Montreux's most obvious innovation involves restoring elements he may have found in Aretino and Desportes to

Montreux would doubtless also have known Garnier's recently published *Bradamante* (1582), which, although a tragicomedy, would at least have offered recent encouragement for dramatically adapting the *Orlando Furioso*. Garnier had taken up parts of Ariosto's narrative, beginning with Canto XLIII, and added his own continuation; his play mentions neither Rodomonte nor Isabelle.

22 Philippe Desportes, "La Mort de Rodomont, et sa descente aux enfers", *Les Imitations de l'Arioste par Philippe Desportes, suivies de poésies inédites ou non recueillies du même auteur*, ed. Jacques Lavaud (Abbeville: F. Paillart; Paris: E. Droz, 1936), fol. 167^v.

23 See below, n. 37.

24 Desportes, fol. 167^v.

a character left still living at the end of the tragedy—one who undergoes a virtual, not a literal, spiritual transformation, and whose spirit is tormented, not merely by frustrated love, but by remorse. The prevalence of the latter, in turn, strongly suggests the influence of Montreux on the 1605 tragedy, *La Rodomontade*, by Charles Bauter (1580?-1630?), a dramatist now even more obscure than his predecessor but himself responsible for several theatrical adaptations of material from Ariosto. In *La Rodomontade*, the adaptation comes chiefly by way of Desportes, whose final line—the cry of Rodomonte’s ghost—Bauter appropriates outright, along with the essence of the plot. The immediately preceding verses, however, add a dimension that points to Montreux as intermediary, similarly producing a figure, not of anger, but of repentance and veneration for the true lovers Isabelle and Zeobin:

*Je recognois le pont, la tour, et le tombeau,
Où sont ensevelis ce couple saint et beau.
Parangon des vertus, ô miroir où se mire
Mesmement la vertu, que tout chacun admire,
La même chastete regarde les douleurs
Que je souffre t’aimant, considere les pleurs
Que je verse pour toy, et ores ne desdaigne
Qu’en ce ieu desormais Rodomont t’accompagne,
Je veux d’oresnavant habiter dans ces bois,
Visitant ton tombeau chaque jour mille fois,
Et on oyra tousjours un Rodomont fidelle,
Crier autour de toy, Rodomont, Isabelle.²⁵*

[I recognise the bridge, the tower and the tomb where lie enclosed that couple sacred and beautiful. Paragon of virtues, O mirror where is indeed reflected the virtue all admire: chastity itself looks upon the pains I suffer in loving you, considers the tears which I shed for you, and now does not disdain that Rodomont should accompany you henceforth in this place. I wish from now on to live in these woods, visiting your tomb a thousand times each day, and always a faithful Rodomont will be heard to cry in your proximity “Rodomont”, “Isabelle”.]

25 Bauter, ed. Freschia, V.2.491-2502.

In choosing to remain near the tomb and visit it constantly, this Rodomont almost seems to forget his ghostly status and to take up the penitential future assigned him by Montreux.

Chastity and Martyrdom

One aspect of Ariosto's tale of Isabella that clearly attracted Montreux was its resonance, not only with pagan *exempla* of women who heroically kill themselves to escape forms of sexual and/or political oppression—Camma (given a Christian veneer as Ariosto's Drusilla²⁶), Lucrece, Sophonisbe and, indeed, Cleopatra—but also with the strong Christian tradition of female martyrdom in the cause of sexual purity. As had already been recognised by Simon Fónari, the mid-sixteenth century commentator on Ariosto, who was actually cited by Harington (p. 239), behind the story of Isabella lay that of Brasilla of Durazzo, whose source, in turn, was Francesco Barbaro's fifteenth-century treatise *De re uxoria*.²⁷ The religious dimension is indispensable to the overall context of Ariosto's romantic-chivalric epic—a massive and sustained Saracen invasion of Christian Europe—and it is carried to both negative and positive extremes in this episode. On the one hand, Rodomonte's brutish behaviour, which extends beyond lustfulness to drunkenness and, of course, cruelty—with an admixture of sheer stupidity—is insistently linked to his reprobate condition as a Moorish barbarian, although technically a royal one (as King of Sarza and Algiers). On the other hand, Isabella's martyrdom, effected in such a way as to obviate any taint of actual suicide, makes her a paragon at once of faithful love

²⁶ As Drusilla dies, having accomplished her murderous revenge, she prays that God may allow her to enter paradise with her slain husband as a reward for eliminating a sinful villain (Canto XXXVII.74).

²⁷ See Pio Rajna, *Le Fonti dell'Orlando Furioso: Ricerche e Studii* (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1876), pp. 404–8, who further traces the motif through a series of female Christian martyrs. The treatise of Barbaro is available in translation: Francesco Barbaro, *The Wealth of Wives: A Fifteenth Century Marriage Manual*, trans. and ed. Margaret L. King, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series, 42 (Toronto: Iter Academic Press; Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2015). I pursue some further ramifications through a number of French and English analogues in "Reverberations of Rodomonte", where the discussion tends to call in question the affirmation of Anthony Mortimer that Shakespeare "probably knew Ariosto's epic in Harington's translation, but left little or no trace in his work" ("Shakespeare and Italian Poetry", *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare's Poetry*, ed. Jonathan F. S. Post [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013], pp. 116–33, p. 116).

(for her lost Zerbino) and perfect chastity—to the point where she is personally welcomed into heaven by God himself.

Montreux does not go quite so far, although Fleurdelys, herself about to withdraw to an existence of reclusive mourning, elevates her sister to “saintly [*saincte*]” (V.2548) status—“dwelling in heaven, glorious, / While [her] pure soul lives on in blessedness above us [*tu vis dans le ciel glorieuse, / Pendant que ta belle ame est là haut bien-heureuse*]” (2553-54). Even so, the eschatology of sainthood is not simply, or indeed narrowly, Christian in Montreux’s treatment, and it is imbricated with the idea of a transcendental fusion of love and virtue as conferring glorious immortality through memory—a Neoplatonically tinged mysticism that Montreux would later apply in effectively sanctifying the love of Antony and Cleopatra.

Such is indeed announced by the opening monologue of Zeobin’s ghost, which illustrates the tendency of neo-Senecan revenants in the period (including English ones) to straddle with insouciance Christian truth and pagan fantasy.²⁸ (That Ariosto’s work lent itself to supernatural embellishment would have been confirmed, for Montreux, by the precedents of Aretino and Desportes.) Zeobin, addressing Isabella as if he comes to her in a dream, though he does not say so—unlike, notably, Étienne Jodelle’s ghost of Antony in *Cleopatra Captive*, who declares his simultaneous appearance to the Egyptian queen—enjoins her to provide for imminent death by making her soul “suitable close at God’s side to sit [*propre pour estre assise auprès de Dieu*]” (I.[i.115). At the same time, he himself rises out of (and must redescend into) a nebulously hybrid underworld. It is vaguely purgatorial, even eternally punitive (“the gloom of the guilty souls’ habitation [*les obscurs manoirs des ames criminelles*]” (I.[i.53), featuring among its “hideous rivers [*fleuves hideux*]” (1) that of oblivion (“*le fleuve oublieux*” [52]), as well as Acheron. Yet the latter is improbably “pleasant [*plaisant*]”, its banks “ever lush and green [*tousiours vertes & viues*]” (130). There he will occupy a traditional sector of the Elysian fields, “among those spirits to be / Who are still with feelings of love possessed, like me [*viure entre les esprits, / Qui sont encor d’amour comme ie suis espriz*]” (131-32). The immortality of which he assures Isabella, moreover, is apparently as accessible to vir-

28 On the mingling of Christian and pagan metaphysics in the period’s drama, see Richard Hillman, *French Origins of English Tragedy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 33-61 *et passim*.

tuous pagans, such as Lucrece, Cassandra and Portia, for it consists in inspiring the replication of their glorious examples:

Death cannot injure them, nor cruel destiny;
 Alive in the hearts and faithful spirits their place is
 Of those who follow them in their immortal traces.

[*La mort ne leur peut rien, ny le cruel destin,
 Ils vivent dans les cœurs, dans les ames fidelles,
 De ceux qui vont suyuant leurs traces immortelles.*]
 (68-70)²⁹

The naming of Lucrece proves richly significant as the drama unfolds, for her precedent repeatedly serves to focus the victimisation of Isabelle in terms of a thwarted rape. Ariosto's original merely relates in a few lines the resolution of Isabella to act because of Rodomonte's growing impatience with her rejection of his advances: he has lost his former "*cortesia*" (XXIX.13). And when Isabella's sacrifice is achieved, God declares it more praiseworthy than the deed of the Roman wife, though without actually naming her (Canto XXIX.28).³⁰ In Montreux's treatment, not only does Lucrece recover her name, but the courage and loyalty of both women are equally exalted by the Chorus concluding Act One (ll. 634-38), as also by Rodomont's squire Sicambros (the confidant and counsellor figure indispensable in humanist dramaturgy), when he attempts to deter Rodomont by warning him that Isabelle will follow Lucrece's example (IV.1861-62). One already knows this from an extended dialogue between Isabelle and Fleurdelys in Act Two ([ii.]949-86), in which the latter counters her sister's preference for death over dishonour with the argument that Lucrece, being guiltless, would not have been dishonoured had she chosen to live. That view notably accords with the chief sources of Lucrece's story—Livy's *Historia* and Ovid's *Fasti*. So, however, does Isabelle's insistence that

²⁹ Commonplace though Lucrece and Portia are as exemplars of female virtue, it is notable that Montreux exalts them in similar terms, through the voice of the sympathetic Dolabella, in his *Cleopatra*, II.941-50.

³⁰ Harington, in a note to his translation (p. 239), makes a point of concurring with the divine preference for Isabelle, on the grounds that Lucrece killed herself only after she was violated.

only death enabled Lucrece to escape her suffering, which followed from a loss of chastity entailing infidelity, however involuntary, to her beloved husband.³¹

Fleurdelys's argument that "the fault rebounds and attaches to the culprit [*la faute retourne à celui qui l'a faite*]" (II.[i.]977) can hardly mitigate Isabelle's determination, therefore. It does, however, serve to anticipate Rodomont's own sense of guilt, which in turn is prepared for in Montreux's representation. For, in sharp contrast to Ariosto's straightforwardly lustful Saracen, Montreux's Rodomont is made from the first to debate with himself defensively about the degrading shame of his predicament and his prospective crime, which he can envisage committing only by convincing himself of the need to relieve his suffering. There is, then, a notable point of contact with the inward conflict of Shakespeare's Tarquin in *The Rape of Lucrece*—itself an element developed beyond any precedent in the recognised sources of that story and anticipating Shakespeare's later tragic protagonists (most notably Othello and Macbeth).³²

Rodomont is threatened and haunted by his loss of dominance:

I have lost bravery:
A woman holds me languishing in slavery;
I, who from my combats always returned untamed,
Today by the beams of a lovely eye am tamed.

31 Isabelle's understanding of her heroic precursor's moral position and state of mind is not essentially incompatible with the reading of Laura G. Bromley, "Lucrece's Re-Creation", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34.2 (1983): 200–11, allowing for the latter's modern terms and concepts.

32 Critics have generally agreed, whatever their particular approaches, in recognising such anticipation; see notably Harold R. Walley, "The Rape of Lucrece and Shakespearean Tragedy", *PMLA* 76.5 (1961): 480–87. On the poem's sources, see esp. T. W. Baldwin, *On the Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Poems and Sonnets* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950), pp. 97–153, and Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. I (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), Introduction to *The Rape of Lucrece*, pp. 179–83. I have elsewhere proposed extending the sources beyond Ovid, Livy and Chaucer (*The Legend of Good Women*) to include the narrative of John Gower in *Confessio Amantis* (Richard Hillman, "Gower's Lucrece: A New Old Source for *The Rape of Lucrece*", *The Chaucer Review* 24 [1990]: 263–70).

In view of the parallels suggested here between *The Rape of Lucrece* and Montreux's heavily rhetorical drama, it is notable that the editor of the 2nd Arden edition deems the poem a failure precisely on account of its "semi-dramatic, semi-rhetorical manner" (F. T. Prince, ed., *The Poems*, by William Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare, 2nd ser. [London: Methuen, 1960], Introduction, pp. xi–xlv, p. xxxvi).

[i'ay perdu le courage
 Vne femme me tient languissant en seruage,
 Je qui hors des combats retournois indompté,
 Par les traitz d'un bel œil, suis aujourd'huy dompté.]
 (I.[ii.]257-60)

Such is the self-reproach of Tarquin—"A martial man to be soft fancy's slave!" (*Luc.*, 200)³³—which, by a psychological dynamic all too familiar in the mechanism of rape, impels his act as a reassertion of masculine power; having used his sword (that emblematic weapon) to strike sparks to light his torch, he concludes: "As from this cold flint I enforced this fire, / So Lucrece must I force to my desire" (181-82). Rodomont likewise establishes a train of logic leading to the same conclusion: "Therefore, I may force her! [*Je puis donc la forcer*]" (I.385)—"force" being also the recurrent term used by Montreux. There are further specific parallels. When Tarquin asks himself, "What win I if I gain the thing I seek? / A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy" (*Luc.* 211-12), he echoes a point that Isabelle makes directly to Rodomont: "Such a slight pleasure will away from you soon fly [*Vn plaisir si leger vous sera peu durable*]" (IV.2099). And Isabelle's appeal to "that sacred faith-keeping / Which must be the honour and fame of a great king [*ceste sainte foy, / Qui doit estre l'honneur & le los d'un grand Roy*]" (IV.2057-58) essentially matches Lucrece's rebuke: "Thou seem'st not what thou art, a god, a king: / For kings like gods should govern everything" (*Luc.*, 601-2). Apart from the possibility of outright influence, which I believe should be admitted, given the cumulative evidence, to recognise Rodomont as a partial prototype of Shakespeare's Tarquin is to throw into relief the fundamental transformation effected by Montreux of his Italian original.

The Tragedy of Rodomont

Perhaps most remarkable in the metaphysical gallimaufry of Zeobin's opening monologue is the place reserved for Rodomont, "that King of Shame [*infame Roi*]" (I.[i.]92)—not, as one might expect, eternal damnation in either Christian terms or those of those egregious pagan sufferers latterly evoked as

33 *The Rape of Lucrece*, as well as *Venus and Adonis*, is cited from Katherine Duncan-Jones and H. R. Woudhuysen, eds, *Shakespeare's Poems: Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece and the Shorter Poems*, The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd ser. (London: Thomson Learning, 2007).

his desert by Fleurdelys (V.2525-26). Here again, Aretino and Desportes might have suggested further possibilities, but Montreux—no doubt out of partial deference to the dramatic unities—refuses recourse to such machinery. Rather, his Rodomont, through repentance and belated conversion to Isabelle's virtuous cause, including her sacred love for her husband, will actually serve as an unwitting instrument of her glory. It will crown her happiness, Zeobin's ghost assures her,

To see your body dashed by one who does you honour,
 Who more ardently will burn for your murdered virtue
 Than as he lives now when your eyes' flames him subdue;
 Who, by many a vow and silent sacrifice,
 Your shades to pity his suffering will entice,
 Who with the armour of a thousand vanquished knights
 Will beautify your tomb to rank with famous sights.
 Thus your glory, dear to my sacred love, shall be
 Renowned and honoured even by your enemy.

*[De voir ton corps meurdry du cruel qui t'honore,
 Qui morte sera plus ardent de ta vertu,
 Qu'il n'est viuant du feu de tes yeux combattu,
 Qui rendra mille vœux, mille sourds sacrifices,
 A tes ombres pour estre à sa douleur propices,
 Qui de mille harnois de maint preux surmonté,
 Rendra de ton Tombeau, celebre la beauté,
 Ainsi que ton los sera, los qui saintement i'ayme,
 Honoré, célébré par ton ennemy mesme.](I.[i.]118-26)*

Thus to be converted from desire for Isabelle's beauty to love of her virtue takes Rodomont considerably beyond the superficial repentance of Ariosto's Moorish barbarian. Rodomonte likewise erects a magnificent tomb for Isabella and Zerbino, but in a blatantly superstitious attempt to appease her offended spirit, while the offerings of armour with which he adorns it attest to his continuing savage hostility towards Christian knights. His role in Ariosto's exotic romance universe continues essentially unchanged, as indeed the continuations of Aretino and Desportes confirm. Montreux, moreover, adds the striking detail that Rodomont would have killed himself, had his companions not disarmed him—a point which I have taken to affiliate Rodomont with

the disillusioned and guilt-stricken Othello.³⁴ All in all, Montreux expands Ariosto's spare narrative into tragedy conceived as universally inclusive, to the point where even the instrument of the heroine's martyrdom is pitifully humanised, drawn into the suffering he has created. Montreux thereby anticipates his striking adaptation of Plutarch in *Cleopatra*, whereby the figure of Octavius Caesar finally emerges as repentant and tragedy-stricken for, in effect, violating the sacred bond of love between Antony and the Egyptian queen.³⁵ And there, too, significantly, the conversion turns on a recognition of "error [*erreur*]", while the impulse to redress it issues in a resolution to unite the lovers in a sumptuous tomb, honouring them and asking their spirits for pardon.³⁶

Endowing Rodomont, the villainous victimiser, with a potential for suffering that includes him in the mechanism of victimisation requires largely detaching him from his original role as a pagan enemy of Christendom. This is effected in part by enfolding him, on the model of Aretino and Desportes, within the well-established theatrical type of the *miles gloriosus*. Despite the early entry into both French and English of the character's name (by way of "rodomont" and "rotomontade") as a byword for such a figure,³⁷ Ariosto's original (like the latter's original in Matteo Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*) is less vainly boastful than he is truly warlike and savage. Rodomonte certainly vaunts his martial capacities, but he generally possesses the strength and bravery to match deeds to his words. One might suspect Montreux's treatment of helping to lend the name its currency in the scornful sense. In any case, when the French playwright chose to develop that stereotype and attach it to the

34 See Hillman, "Reverberations of Rodomonte", p. 127, and *French Origins of English Tragedy*, p. 76.

35 See *Three French Cleopatras*, trans. and ed. Hillman, Introduction, p. 32, and, for the concept of tragedy entailed, "Reverberations of Rodomont", pp. 113-14.

36 Cf. Montreux, *Cleopatra*, V.2655 ("Ah, I lament my error! My fault I decry [*Ha, ie plains mon erreur ! ie condamne ma faute*]", and 2669-76.

37 Cotgrave's 1611 French-English dictionary defines "Rotomontade" as "A brag, boast, cracke, vaine glorious brauadoe"; see Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611), Anglistica and Americana, 77 (fac. rpt. Hildenheim: Georg Holms, 1970), s.v. The first usage recorded by *OED* is from Gabriel Harvey's *Pierce's Supererogation* (1593), a satirical pamphlet mocking as ineffectual bluster the attacks on him by Thomas Nashe: "Where such an other Rodomont, so furious, so valorous, so redoutable?"; see *The Oxford English Dictionary online*, s.v. (<<https://www.oed.com>> [accessed 12 January 2024]). The terms "*fureur*", "*furie*" and "*furieux*" are regularly associated with Montreux's character.

attempted seduction of a beautiful captive, he would arguably have triggered ironic resonances with another paradigm influential in the period. For the situation and dynamic are likely also to have evoked for contemporaries the biblical episode of the barbarous conqueror Holofernes, whose pseudo-seduction by Judith ends in a mirror-image of Isabella's decapitation ploy.³⁸

A basic function of this skewing of Ariosto's Rodomonte by Montreux is obviously to lend his character dramatic interest, such as is quite lacking in Ariosto's crudely outlined figure. In the context, even the extreme boasting of Montreux's Rodomont serves by its very excess, comically absurd at times, to convey an inner conflict between his compulsive erotic passion, constantly pushing him towards the violence of rape, and his conscientious better knowledge—to the point where his resolution is palpably arrived at despite himself and requires rationalisation. The conflict is chiefly presented in his extensive soliloquies and those monologues in which he expounds his desperation to Sicambres, who counters with the moderating voice of reason, as Fleurdelys tries to deter Isabella's attraction to death in the first part of Act Two. In the presentation of Rodomont, the point of greatest intensity is fittingly reached in his rant in Act Four, which issues in his resolution and final confrontation with Isabella. Act V is then devoted to the Messenger's report of the climactic action, unrepresentable in Montreux's theatre, followed by Fleurdelys's pathetic peroration.

In the ferocious, ridiculous, yet tormented monologue opening Act Four (ll. 1671-1788), Rodomont's previous rhetoric pitting himself against the gods themselves reaches a climax—or anti-climax. From the first, he had boasted of being able to gain the love of any goddess he might choose: "Of Juno, Venus, fair Diana— would one goddess / Show cruel disdain in the face of my distress? [*De Iunon, de Venus, & Diane la belle, / Chacune paroistroit à mes desirs cruelle ?*]" (I.[ii.]393-94). Now he dismisses all threat of divine retribution for his intended crime—which, moreover, is none: he will cite for Isabella "Mars's law [*la loy de Mars*]" as "the only law soldiers know [*seule loy des soldats*]" (IV.2097-98). In any case, even Mars once put himself in a woman's power and, like the other gods, is no match for his own manhood:

38 I have elsewhere ("Reverberations of Rodomonte", pp. 119-21) associated the story of Rodomonte and Isabella with the narrative of Holofernes and Judith, notably as presented in *La Judit* of Guillaume de Salluste, sieur Du Bartas (1574), where Holofernes' boasting and drinking are made his salient characteristics. On the biblical paradigm more generally as an intertext for English dramatic depictions of confrontations between warriors and seductive women, see Hillman, *French Origins of English Tragedy*, pp. 62-96, *passim*.

What is impossible for valiant Rodomont?
 Who has enough power to mount a counter-force
 To his manly desire in its mighty course?
 Could Jupiter do so, or that god bold in strife,
 The minion of Venus, the limping one's wife?
 Could Pallas do so, or that goddess, source of riches,
 Who mortals with magnificence freely enriches?
 No, none of them could. For this arm of great renown
 Can drag them out of the sky and hurtle them down.

*[Est-il rien impossible au vainqueur Rodomont ?
 Qui peut assez pouuoir pour opposer sa force
 A son masle desir, qui toute chose force ?
 Iupin le peut-il faire, & ce Dieu vailleureux
 Le mignon de Venus, la femme du boiteux ?
 Pallas le pourroit-elle ? & la riche Deesse
 Qui prodigue aux mortels la superbe richesse :
 Non, ils ne sçauroyent tous. Car ce superbe bras
 Peut les tirer du ciel, & les ietter en bas.]*
 (IV.1698-1706)

Evidently, in order to present such top-heavy hubris in suitable classical terms—for Rodomont's vaunted power extends to avenging the Giants, whom he claims as his ancestors, by destroying the gods (IV.1707-16)—room must be made by downplaying his specifically Saracen identity and the cultural threat it poses in Ariosto's epic. The only direct reference made to Rodomont's religion is hardly distinctive: mingling ecumenism with flattery, Isabelle begs him to spare her chastity "[b]y that God whom you serve [*Par ce Dieu que tu sers*]" (IV.2057). A further oblique detail is perhaps more telling. Ariosto makes a great point of showing Rodomonte, prior to the fatal encounter, fuddling his brain by carousing with his men on captured wine, which affected him all the more because his religion forbade and condemned alcohol ("*perché la legge sua lo vieta e danna*" [Canto XXIX.22]). The pagan ("*pagano*") is not even faithful, then, to his own professed principles and, being "*incauto, e vinto anco dal vino forse*" [reckless and probably overcome, too, by the wine]" (Canto XXIX.25), proves the more susceptible to Isabella's deception.³⁹ Montreux wholly effaces

39 This is a point on which Harington's translation of Ariosto, reinforced by his commentary, insists with particular moralistic fervour. See Hillman, "Reverberations of Rodomont",

the night of drinking and commentary, but speaks (through the Messenger) of Isabelle's long boiling of the cauldron as "having rendered Rodomont drunkenly gay, / Greedily anticipating his lovely prey [*ayant fait yurer Rodomont plein de ioye, / Auidement glouton d'une si belle proye*]" (V.2432-33). The verb "yurer" (i.e., "ivrer") is attested in the rare transitive sense of "make drunk" by the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* only with a figurative meaning, as in to make drunk with enchantment,⁴⁰ and, in isolation, such is almost certainly the usage here. Still, the choice of the word carries an indelible trace of its literal sense and thereby signals, in effect, the suppression of the sectarian dimension. Rodomont's susceptibility to Isabelle, despite his brutal behaviour, is neither artificially enhanced nor stigmatised as at once specifically Muslim and hypocritical. Accordingly, it dovetails with his susceptibility to feelings of guilt.

If this suggests an undercurrent of spirituality within, even despite, the warrior's obsessive lust, it is not the only such hint. From the first, his suffering is presented as cutting deeper than its obvious (related) sources in sexual frustration and the threat to his dominance. It bears an evident resemblance to the Petrarchan convention of love-sickness as a melancholic matter of life or death, with the lover at the mercy of his beloved. Isabelle is obviously right to reject his claim that he is in her power, not the other way round, but his rejoinder and claim to spiritual pain nevertheless ring true in familiar amorous terms:

Ah, that is all backwards, for you hold as ravisher
My soul within your beauties, and my life prisoner.
Love, stronger than Mars, alas, renders me your slave,
And into your power wholly my freedom gave.

pp. 118-19.

Incidentally, the issue of alcohol as a source of debility, physical and moral, for medieval Muslim warriors recurs throughout the history of Amin Maalouf, *Les croisades vues par les Arabes* (Paris: J. C. Lattès, 1983), pp. 116-17 *et passim*; e.g., the great warrior Imadeddin Zinki was "[s]ouvent ivre mort [often dead drunk]" (p. 135) and was killed in a drunken sleep (pp. 163-64), while his son and successor Nouredin gained respect by observing religious precepts, renouncing alcohol and forbidding it to his army (p. 169).

⁴⁰ "[I]vrer d'enchantement" [*sic*]; see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* (1330-1500), online at <<http://www.atilf.fr/dmf/definition/ivrer>> [accessed 16 January 2024], *s.v.* Even the Argument's reference to Rodomont as "*iuvre*" (lit. "drunk", is equivocal by itself, since the word commonly referred to various forms of loss of contact with reality, as under the influence of passion (<<http://www.atilf.fr/dmf/definition/ivre>>, defs. C and D); hence the translation's "intoxicated".

But alas, have mercy on my long-drawn-out woe!
 I am your kind conqueror—now be a kind foe
 To my soul, dying in the flames of your fair eyes.

[*Ah ! cest tout au rebours, car vous tenez rauie
 Mon ame en vos beautez, & captiue ma vie,
 L'amour plus fort que Mars, vostre esclau me rend,
 Et de vous seule belas ! ma liberté depend.
 Mais las ! ayez mercy de ma longue misere,
 Je vous suis doux vainqueur, soyez douce aduersaire
 A mon ame, qui meurt au feu de vos beaux yeux.*]
 (IV.1991-97)

Familiar, too, is the enlistment in the erotic cause of pastoral motifs, which Montreux subtly deploys so as to sustain the ambiguity attached to Rodomont's sentiments and responses. Thus, when Isabelle feigns to accept his advances and proposes to go in search of the herbs and flowers required for her magic bath, he seizes the occasion to practise this romantic pastime "together [*ensemblement*]"—the word is repeated—and a genuine sense of wanting her company is conveyed, and allowed to conclude Act Four on a nearly idyllic note:

... Together let us go
 And seek all those flowers that in the valleys grow.
 Together let us clamber up each grand hillside
 To gather up those roots and all those herbs provide.

[... *ensemblement allons
 Chercher toutes ces fleurs au dessous des vallons,
 Allons ensemblement sur les costeaux superbes,
 Ces racines cueiller, & amasser ces herbes.*]
 (IV.2141-44)

The Messenger, when he refers to this excursion in Act V, will retroactively supply Rodomont with an ulterior motive—namely, to prevent Isabelle from committing suicide, as Drusilla, though not Isabella, attempts to do in Ariosto—but the previous impression is not wholly erased.⁴¹

⁴¹ Montreux's heroine does indeed evoke a fatal leap, among other suicidal measures, in an early soliloquy expressing her desperate resolution. This is recalled by the Messenger,

Even the ultimate image employed by the Messenger to characterise Rodomont's access of sheer bestiality, the "cruel fury [*fureur cruelle*]" (V.2360) which inspires Isabelle to invent her ruse, is mitigated by the context of the amorous rites of spring imposed by sacred nature ("the Sacrocanct Lady" [*la dame sacree*]) on the beasts of the field:

Like the furious bull that in the field runs free,
Heated with force of love, when the Sacrosanct Lady
Causes return of spring: he charges through the meadows,
Having had his heart transfixed by Love's potent arrows;
He bellows madly, and the heifer, though quite cold,
Seems as she flees to fear the force that makes him bold.

[*Comme on voit furieux le taureau dans la pree,
Eschauffé de l'amour, quand la dame sacree
Rameine le Prin-temps, il court de toutes parts,
Ayant dedans le cœur d'amour fiché les dards,
Il mugist insensé, & la froide genisse
Semble mesme en fuyant redouter sa malice.*]
(2361-66)

As for "Love's potent arrows", as tradition warrants, they are both irresistible and the cause of much human folly and pain. So much has been established by Regnault's extensive account in Act Three of the reversible relation between himself and Angelique. This is an adaptation of Ariosto's presentation in Canto I.77-79 (itself adapted from the *Orlando Innamorato* of Boiardo) of the two magic fountains, one of love and one of hate, from which Rinaldo (Montreux's Regnault) and Angelica alternately drink.⁴² Thus at first she pur-

who subsequently makes clear, however, that the idea is superseded by the deception she contrives. See the translation, II.[i.]777-86, V.2319-24 and 2411-18, and n. 149.

The Messenger's account intriguingly corresponds to the narrative of Epaphroditus in Act V of Montreux's *Cleopatra*, when he informs Caesar of the clever scheme devised by the Egyptian queen, who, like Isabelle, had persuaded her captive that she had chosen to live despite the death of her beloved. Indeed, so close is the resemblance that one might suspect Montreux's representation of Isabelle of being influenced by existing narrative and/or dramatic accounts of Cleopatra.

⁴² One of the few commentators to bring to bear on *Venus and Adonis* the "ludicrous, distorted passion" portrayed in *Orlando Furioso* is John Roe, ed., *The Poems: Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece, The Phoenix and the Turtle, The Passionate Pilgrim, A*

sues him desperately and he flies, while afterwards the situation is abruptly and radically reversed. In Regnault's rendition, the mysterious force comes instead from Love's golden and leaden arrows, which caused Angelique at first madly to pursue him, then violently to reject him: "She recognised her grievous fault and blamed her error / In being so long for me in a state of furor [*Elle accusoit sa faute, & blasmoit son erreur, / D'auoir esté pour moy si long temps en fureur*]" (III.[i.]1259-60).

Towards a Tragedy of Errors: Back (and Forward) to Shakespeare

In altering the mechanism of falling in and out of love from the magical fountains of Boiardo and Ariosto to the contrary arrows of Cupid—the latter current as a frank allegory for human irrationality at least since the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*⁴³—Montreux was arguably enacting a transformation in the mode of representation itself. Within the universe of neo-medieval romance, a magic drink, in being imbibed, applies an external force—literally a *source*—to a passive object, incorporating it within a system of metonymically interrelated signifiers. By contrast, Cupid's arrow cannot be taken literally: it is understood to stand metaphorically for an inwardly experienced shock, which sets in motion an emotional dynamic associated, by a further metaphor, with the heart.

Lover's Complaint, by William Shakespeare, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, Updated Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Introduction, pp. 1-80, p. 18. His point might have been further developed, including the observation that "[i]n the Renaissance, all epic tended towards the metaphysical, seeking to understand and explain the relationship of things through the actions depicting them", had he been aware of the mediation of the theme and its mechanisms effected by Montreux.

- 43** From the story of Daphne and Phoebus, I.466-76, explaining the god's passion and the nymph's rejection; see P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses*, ed. Hugo Magnus, 1892, *Perseus Project*, online at <<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:latinLit:phi0959.phio06.perseus-lat1:1.452-1.524>>; accessed 6 March 2024). Love's golden arrow was familiar enough to serve as symbolic short-hand for erotic process in Christopher Marlowe's Ovidian *Hero and Leander* (c. 1592), as noted by Hallett Smith, *Elizabethan Poetry: A Study in Conventions, Meaning, and Expression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 82. On Shakespeare's "principal interest" in the "psychology of desire", as he adapted Ovid in both narrative poems, see Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 48-82, p. 67.

Such a shift accompanies the emergence in certain pre-modern literary discourses of subjectivity in a precociously modern sense. The process has usefully been formulated in psycho-linguistic terms as a semiotic shift from symbol to sign, the former a concrete transmitter of fixed meaning, the latter an arbitrary signifier inevitably subject to slippage in relation to the signified.⁴⁴ The romance universe, its components proceeding from and receding into the transcendently marvellous, thus opens into a discourse endlessly self-destabilising and therefore, with respect to character, destabilising the self—that is to say, producing the illusion of its existence.

Thereby enabled is tragedy of a multidirectional and inward kind, as opposed to the linear medieval concept of a fall from high to low condition. The notion of error then comes into its own as carrying, with the support of its etymological connection with wandering, an implication of *going wrong* in any number of possible ways, not merely *getting it wrong* superficially, as in the duping of Rodomont by Isabelle—or, in a narrow reading, of Othello by Iago. Strangely, perhaps, such a concept may recuperate the notion of *hamartia* in Aristotle's *Poetics*, whose essential function, after all, is indissolubly to bind tragic plot and character.⁴⁵

Certainly, error wends its way through the discourse of Rodomont and, via the counsel of Sicambras, around it: "Rather than do wrong, the wise will from life desist [*Plustost qu'errer, le sage eslira le trespas*]" (IV.1930). It is all the more deeply marked and fraught by the villain's transparently futile attempt to appropriate it:

No, no—it is sheer error by reason to seek
To make a captive find one's reason mild and meek.
It is an error men-at-arms to seek to sway

44 An especially clear and concise exposition of the basic idea may be found in Julia Kristeva, "From Symbol to Sign," trans. Seán Hand, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 62–73. For an extensive exploration of the implications for the development of English drama, see Richard Hillman, *Self-Speaking in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama: Subjectivity, Discourse and the Stage* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's, 1997).

45 The principle of error as a dramatic (and quasi-dramatic) function in the period as developed here may usefully be set against the background richly delineated by François Rigolot, "The Renaissance Fascination with Error: Mannerism and Early Modern Poetry," *Renaissance Quarterly* 57.4 (2004): 1219–34, whose discussion extends to Aristotelian *hamartia* (pp. 1221–23).

By the law, or by right, which to their arms give way.

*Where force is in charge, no other law is required
But what proceeds from oneself and what is desired.⁴⁶
[Non non c'est pure erreur, que vouloir par raison
Faire au captif trouver courtoise sa raison,
C'est erreur que vouloir combattre les gens d'armes,
Par la loy, par le droict, qui cedent à leurs armes,
Où la force commande, il ne faut d'autre loy
Que celle qu'on desire, & qui prouient de soy.] (1893-98)*

The potential for human suffering and remorse—the basic stuff of tragedy—to emerge by way of error in the larger sense is implicit in Regnault's vivid evocation of Angelique's affliction in the face of his cold rejection, before the situation was reversed and his own suffering took the place of hers. A substantial citation from a passage that might too casually be dismissed as a rhetorical exercise is useful in illustrating this point. It begins, significantly, by grounding the speaker's pain in the consciousness of irrevocably lost time, for he must now *wander* hopelessly, despite himself, in search of a fulfilment which might have been his, but for his fatal *error*:

Alas, where has that time gone when I was adored
By Angelique—yes, more hotly than was enamoured
The heart of Venus when with Adonis, her treasure,
She came down from the sky to take her fill of pleasure?
Angelique with desperate love for me then burned:
My face was joy, my eyes the clouds to sunshine turned;
One saw her in a maddened state, at any price,
Chase after me, whose bosom was as cold as ice;
Her eyes burned for mine, with scorn for honour replete;
Decent restraint could not cool her audacious heat.
Her vows she offered, and sweet prayerful entreaties
Importuned my soul to succour her miseries:
I was her good, her all, me alone she desired,
And only by my influence her soul respired.

.....

⁴⁶ As mentioned in the Note on the Translation below, italics are used for lines marked as sententious or aphoristic by *guillemets* in the original.

The more her love for me, with ardent love infected,
 The more her love and her fierce pleading I rejected;
 Nothing so much as she was hated, mocked by me:
 I fled her fair face, her faith held up to mockery,
 Making her know feelingly, at her own expense,
 How cruel were the pain and the fury intense
 Of many knights, who, seeing her their love despise,
 Languished, consumed by beams that issued from her eyes.
 Thus often Love, angered by our audacity,
 Suppresses our arrogance, effaces our glory,
 To our cost with the selfsame torments us afflicts
 As our disdain on our woeful lovers inflicts.
 In the same way faithless Cyprine⁴⁷ formerly felt
 The anguish which cruelly to lovers she dealt:
 Enkindled in her flame, she was compelled to learn
 How cruel are the pains in which poor lovers burn.

*[Helas, où est le temps que d'Angelique aymé,
 Voir & plus ardemment que ne fut enflammé
 Le cœur saint de Venus, quand d'Adon idolatre,
 Elle venoit du ciel avecque luy s'esbatre,
 Angelique brusloit alors en mon amour,
 Mon front estoit son heur, & mes yeux son beau iour,
 On la voyoit courir follement insensee
 Apres moy, dont estoit la poitrine glatee,
 Ses yeux brusloyent aux miens, peu soigneuse d'honneur
 Le respect ne pouvoit refroidir sa chaleur,
 Ses vœux [m'estoyent] offerts, & ses douces prieres
 Importunoyent mon ame à guarir ses miseres,
 L'estois son tout, son bien, seul elle m'adoroit,
 Et par moy seulement son ame respiroit.*

.....

*Autant qu'elle m'aimoit, d'amour ardante atteinte,
 Autant ie mesprisois son amour & sa plainte,
 Et rien tant qu'elle estoit hay, moqué de moy,
 Je fuyois son beau front, me mocquois de sa foy,
 Luy faisant esprouuer à son propre dommage,
 Combien cruel le mal, & cruelle la rage*

47 Cyprine: i.e., Venus.

*Estoyent de tant de preux, qui sans se voir aimez
 Languissoient par les traits de ses yeux consommez.
 Ainsi souuent amour, fasché de nostre audace,
 Estouffe nostre orgueil, & nostre gloire efface,
 Nous faict à nos despens esprouuer les tourmens
 Que nous faisons souffrir à nos tristes amans.
 Ainsi sentit iadis Cyprine l'infidelle,
 La peine qu'aux amans elle apporte cruelle,
 Esprise dans son feu, elle esprouua comment
 Cruel est le trauail du miserable amant.] (III.[i.]1199-1240)*

The extract given here, lengthy as it is, does not do full justice to the emotional affect attributed to the victims of both attraction and aversion. Nothing of the kind is conveyed in the original Italian treatments of the situation, and it serves as rich background to the relation of Isabelle and Rodomont, as he pursues and she flies—both to their doom, which represents their mutual tragic fulfilment, nonetheless pitiful for being more-or-less exalted.

The lengthy citation is pertinent, moreover, because Regnault's recreation of Angelique's passion and his own icy indifference is bracketed by references to Venus herself as an authoritative precedent for amorous error. For she, too, was once afflicted with ungovernable love—explicitly for Adonis (II. 1200-2). Regnault had earlier introduced Venus's mourning for Adonis as a model of sorrow (I.[iii].579), and the moralising Chorus of Act One, before arriving in its turn at the salutary example of Lucrece,⁴⁸ had assimilated the goddess's passion, consequently her grief, to the "error" (*"erreur"*) inflicted by her son's "redoutable flames [*flammes fieres*]" (I.Cho.627): "No whit that cruel god spares / Grief his mother Venus bears [*Ce cruel Dieu ne reuere / Venus sa dolente mere*]" (621-22).

This allusion is an element added to Ariosto's picture by Montreux, and if the allusions to Lucrece present suggestive points of contact with Shakespeare's narrative tragedy of 1594, it is equally difficult not to connect Regnault's evocation of the amorous Angelique with the *Venus and Adonis* of 1593. Venus's lustful wooing there is similarly ardent to the point of shameless indecency, and several passages are closely parallel to Regnault's narrative. With Montreux, III.[i.]1207-10, one may particularly compare the following:

Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,

48 "Faithful Lucrece knew it well [*Lucrese le sçait fidelle*]" (I.Cho.636).

And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage,
 Planting oblivion, beating reason back,
 Forgetting shame's pure blush and honor's wrack.
 (*Vén.*, 555-58).

At the same time, Regnault's "bosom . . . as cold as ice [*la poitrine glacee*]" makes a counterpart to the insistent unresponsiveness of Shakespeare's Adonis (a "cold and senseless stone" [*Vén.*, 211]), which has proved a special challenge for source-hunters, for it has no obvious precedent elsewhere—certainly not in Ovid's originating narrative in Book X of the *Metamorphoses*, nor even in the often-cited tale of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis from Book IV.⁴⁹

In Shakespeare, of course, the outcome is a double tragedy, his and hers—the more palpably so for emerging from what Prince terms the "spirit of [Shakespearean] comedy" as applied to the Ovidian raw material.⁵⁰ And for the latter transformation, too, Montreux's elaboration of Ariosto's narrative, combining absurd exaggeration with a sense of human suffering, may be seen as fur-

49 For a survey of conjectured sources for Shakespeare's portrayal and a further proposal, see M. A. Palmatier, "A Suggested New Source in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 24.2 (1961): 163-69. Palmatier's derivation from Ovid of the notion of the punishment of Venus is to the point, but to attribute the "new theme" of "Adonis' scorn and hardness of heart" (p. 168) to his mythical lineage as offspring of Myrrha's incest is less convincing. Bate, p. 55, more persuasively discerns "an ironic, darkening pre-text for the tale of Venus and Adonis, which points to the perverse origins of desire." Such perversity certainly matches the presentation of desire as arbitrary and destructive in both Ariosto and Montreux.

On Shakespeare's originality in representing Adonis, there is a broad critical consensus. Thus Mortimer, who identifies limited parallels in certain Italian models, including an Adonis who is "initially timid and ignorant" (p. 117), concurs that the outright refusal of Shakespeare's Adonis constitutes a "crucial innovation". Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen, eds, affirm that Shakespeare was "never bolder than when adapting the received version of the Venus and Adonis myth" by making Adonis "unresponsive"—"[t]o the amazement, surely, of his earliest readers" (Introduction, pp. 1-124, p. 57). That Cupid is omitted from the story might have seemed less anomalous to those readers than it does to Duncan-Jones and Woudhuysen, given the god of love's implicit responsibility—that is, behind the scenes (or within the heart)—for both his mother's uncontrollable desire and Adonis's resistance. Relevant to this point may be the instances assembled by Baldwin, pp. 88-91, as part of his exploration of "Platonic Love" as opposed to physical desire (Ch. III, pp. 73-93).

50 Prince, ed., Introduction. On this point, too, there is broad critical consensus—witness Roe, ed., whose reading develops the point that "Venus and Adonis is both a tragic and a comic poem" (Introduction, p. 5).

nishing a concise precedent. In sum, the Italian romance's through-line of the pursuit of Angelica is adapted as the dramatic framework for Isabelle's self-sacrifice in defence of chastity: on the level of allusion, the paradigm of Venus and Adonis serves as structuring background to that of Tarquin and Lucrece, with the motif of error mediating the transition from comedy to tragedy.

Error for Shakespeare is most conspicuously a comic theme and mechanism. It is proclaimed as such in *The Comedy of Errors*, where the cure for those "[s]moth'r'd in errors" (*Err.*, III.ii.35) is to "entertain the [offer'd] fallacy" (II.ii.186), and attached, also by way of amorous reversals, to the operations of Cupid's arbitrary agent in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Oberon's antidote to the love-juice Puck has mistakenly applied can "take from [sight] all error" (*MND*, III.ii.368).⁵¹ So he says after enjoining his underling to keep Demetrius and Lysander from doing each other deadly harm. And this makes a salutary reminder that love-driven comedy in Shakespeare is always redeemed by the skin of its generic teeth from the tragedy latent within it. The "biting error" (*Ado*, IV.i.170) of Hero's misidentification at the core of *Much Ado about Nothing* is another salient instance, while the errors of several later comedies (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*) are ostentatiously retained in the safe-keeping of internal manipulators. The consequences of removing the generic safety net, with error allowed full play, are made starkly evident in *Romeo and Juliet*. Even in *Venus and Adonis* the hint is given that error may swing both ways, when the goddess attempts to convince her fearful senses, intuiting Adonis's death, that they present "a causeless fantasy, / And childish error" (*Ven.*, 897-98), only to be precipitated into an *errant* dash through the wood, which (like the error-propelled women in

51 Shakespeare's plays are cited from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, gen. eds G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

On the relation between *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Montreux's pastoral comedy *Diane* (*La Diane*), see Richard Hillman, *The Shakespearean Comic and Tragicomic: French Inflections* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), pp. 11-33. The recurrence of "error [*erreur*]" as a central term and concept in that work is very much to the point: Love itself is imagined as "error-strayed [*errant*]" (I.309) within the wood; Diane, having been misled by her lover's transformation, wonders whether she is still enshrouded by "error [*erreur*]" (III.3238); the magician-figure likewise intervenes to reveal the "erreurs [*erreurs*]" (III.3287, 3741) which have led the rivals to the point of fighting; finally, Diane herself recants her "error [*erreur*]" (III.44771) in rejecting Fauste's true love, thereby saving his life and effecting their happy union. (References are to my translation and edition.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream) “madly hurries her she knows not whither” (904)—in the event, towards tragedy. Tragedy she then figures as the antithesis of Adonis’s being love-stricken by her son—presumptively, with a comic outcome: “Love’s golden arrow at him should have fled, / And not Death’s ebon dart, to strike him dead” (947-48).

In *Romeo and Juliet*, of course, the fatal errors are as extraneous to their primary victims as in the comedies. But Shakespearean error, especially by way of jealousy, as in *Othello*, *The Winter’s Tale* and *Cymbeline*, can also assume an internal impetus akin to that embodied in Montreux’s Rodomont, whereby *going wrong* and *getting it wrong* converge. For that matter, so strong is the force of jealousy for Rodomont that Isabelle’s incessant naming of Zeobin, which for her takes on the quality of a charm to keep her pursuer at bay, becomes for him a defiant flaunting of chastity, an error (“*erreur*”, here translated as “diversion”) that catalyses his own, driving him over the edge:⁵²

Upon her lips was Zeobin’s name ever present,
Which the fierce barbarian heard with sad resentment—
Until, being angered by such lengthy diversion,
His love into furor underwent a conversion.

[*Tousiours estoit le nom de Zeobin en sa bouche.
Nom triste & desplaisant au Barbare farouche,
Barbare qui fasché d’une si longue erreur,
Commençoit à changer son amour en fureur.*] (V.2305-8)

Regnault’s lines regarding Angelique—“She recognised her grievous fault and blamed her error / In being so long for me in a state of furor”—are notably recycled for the once-furious Rodomont, when he can finally react to the death of Isabelle; the slippery “error” he had sought to control now reveals itself as a virtual coiling serpent that turns to strike him, mocking his fantasy of invulnerability by way of what has effectively been established as an “Achilles heel”—namely, in the broadest sense, his conscience:⁵³

He cursed his heedless folly, blaming his gross error,

52 Bullough, ed., vol. I, p. 180, observes that Shakespeare particularly insists on Lucrece’s vaunted chastity as exciting Tarquin (ll. 8-9).

53 On Montreux’s adaptation of Ariosto to suggest this, see the translation, V.2385 and n. 145.

And now sought against himself to convert his furor,
 Using the same blade that to the fair one proved fatal
 To pierce his bloody breast, guilty and criminal.

[*Il maudit sa folie, il blasme son erreur,
 Et vouloit contre luy conuertir la fureur,
 Perçant d'un mesme fer qui fit mourir la belle
 Sa poitrine sanglante, iniuste, & criminelle.*]
 (V.2451-54)

The impulse to turn the blade against himself confirms that his *anagnorisis*, anticipating that which Montreux would recreate for his Caesar, entails recognition of his error at the deepest level and manifests the sheer attractive force of the tragedy he has procured.⁵⁴ The martyrdom is effectively doubled.

In Rodomont's case, the destabilising consequences extend to the universe itself. By way of pathetic fallacy, nature itself is turned tragic in the epic simile deployed to present his immediate reaction to his bloody deed. With frank sympathy, he is compared to a poor farmer deprived, through no fault—error?—of his own, of the crop on which he has counted for the sustenance of life. Embedded in the image is a remarkable kinetic effect, whereby Rodomont, hitherto presented as a kind of perpetual motion machine, is jolted to a halt by the shock:

As the grief-stricken ploughman stands stock-still,
 astonished
 To see his wheat, which the lightning-storm's hail
 demolished
 In its blazing fury—wheat of which he had need
 His body and his hungry family to feed—
 And then, with arms crossed, takes in the pitiful view
 Of his wheat in the field, half broken and cut through,
 Thus stood Rodomont—Rodomont who, without power,
 Without strength to move, remained still more than an
 hour.

54 For a historical perspective on the relation between *anagnorisis* and *hamartia* by way of commentaries on Aristotle, see Terence Cave, *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 67-72.

*[Comme reste esperdu le dolent laboureur
 Qui voit son bled greslé de l'ardante fureur
 Du foudre rougissant, bled qu'il iugeoit vtile
 Pour soustenir son corps, & sa maigre famille,
 Lors il croise les bras, il regarde en pitié
 Son bled gisant au champ, couppé par la moitié.
 Ainsi fut Rodomont, Rodomont qui demeure,
 Sans force, sans pouuoir le cours de plus d'une heure.]*
 (V.2443-50)

Given the cosmic consequences rippling outward from the inward cataclysm, is not even the moral template assigning sainthood and anathema to Isabelle and Rodomont, respectively, not subject to a certain slippage?

Not only does Ariosto's Rodomonte deem his penance sufficiently performed by providing the tomb and its trophies, but he proves an egregious recidivist. At the instigation of Fiordiligi, the female knight Bradamante challenges him to avenge Isabella's death, whereupon he declares that if he defeats her, he will seek her love, conquered by her beauty (Canto XXXV.46). It is his humiliating defeat at her hands that induces him to purge his shame in isolation for over a year (Canto XLVI.102-3) before resuming his activity as a warrior against the Christians. He finally meets his end in a prolonged duel at the hands of Ruggiero (Canto XLVI.140), and, as he dies, blaspheming, his soul, so scornful and proud in life, descends to the banks of Acheron, which for him are "dreary [*squalide*]"—hardly "pleasant", as Montreux's Zeobin found them. In effect, this is to issue the invitation to project a sequel which Aretino and Desportes successively took up.

By contrast with this ongoing career of miscreant mayhem, Montreux leaves Rodomont virtually frozen in time and place after his deed:

He remained there weeping: he pitied the chaste dame;
 He valued her virtue, esteemed her sacred fame.
 Dead he wished to honour her, whom, while she did live,
 He sought to force, defame, render dishonour's captive.

*[Il demeure exploré, la chaste dame il plaint,
 Il prise sa vertu, estime son los saint :
 Morte il veut l'honorer, qu'il auoit voulu viue
 Forcer, diffamer, rendre au deshonneur captiue.]*
 (V.2459-62)

Four subsequent lines (2463-66) cover his expiatory gestures of building the tomb and adorning it with trophies, as if the “shame [*honte*]” (2466) of the vanquished warriors might diminish his own profound remorse. Yet the hollowness of those gestures is built into the eternal present of suffering that stretches indefinitely into his future: “Weeping, he remained in that tomb’s vicinity, / Treating Isabelle as a great divinity [*Autour de ce tombeau il demeure à plore[r], / Et veut comme vn grand Dieu Isabelle honorer*]” (2467-68).⁵⁵

As for Rodomont’s virtual worship of Isabelle, certainly Montreux pulls out all the pathetic stops in making the virtue of chastity resound to the heavens, notably through the Chorus concluding Act Four, while Fleurdelys likewise imagines her “at God’s side [*aupres de Dieu*]” (V.2535), where “she will, fair and chaste, / Serve as an eternal lamp, high in heaven placed [*elle va chaste & belle / Servir dessus le ciel d’une lampe eternelle*]” (2533-34). Even in celebrating such transcendent glory, however, which may render her tomb eternally green and flourishing, Fleurdelys consigns the pitiful yet contemptible penitence of her murderer to the human and psychological sphere. For in contrast to the homage foreseen from the first by the ghost of Zeobin—“And on your tomb those spirits who virtue profess / As to some great god their chaste prayers will address [*Et dessus ton tombeau les esprits vertueux, / Comme à quelque grand Dieu rendroit leurs chastes vœux*]” (I.[i.]79-80)—the projection of “divinity” by the egregiously unvirtuous and unspiritual Rodomont appears a pathetic attempt to compensate for loss of the self-constructed identity that had lent meaning to his existence. For he has now been truly conquered by the previous emblem of his conquering force, as he had once spuriously claimed. So Fleurdelys insists in her bitter apostrophe:

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- 55 It is hard to exclude the possibility that Montreux was backhandedly responding to Desportes, who concludes as follows with regard to the ghost of Rodomont, which takes pleasure in *wandering* (“*errer*”) about the tomb:

Et pource que des corps priuez de sepulture
Les Esprits sont errans cent ans à l’aduanture,
L’esprit de Rodomont qui doit errer autant,
Erre autour du tombeau tout ioyeux & content. (fol. 167^v)

[And because the spirits of bodies deprived of a tomb wander aimlessly for a hundred years, the spirit of Rodomont, which must wander for so long, wanders near the tomb, quite joyful and contented.]

Happy was she the furor of your blade to know,
 Disgracing you among the living here below;
 Happy was she her virtue with this proof to crown,
 By having your fierce pride courageously struck down,
 While on your face one starts the bitter shame to read
 That comes of not dying for an ignoble deed.
 Have you really the heart till death shall you inter
 To be known as the bloodthirsty executioner
 Of a lady of honour—a dame more courageous
 Than your hand in its combats is injurious?

*[Heureuse elle a senty la fureur de ta lame,
 Te laissant icy bas entre les vifs infame :
 Heureuse elle a rendu preuue de sa vertu,
 Ayant ton fier orgueil brauement abbatu,
 Pendant que sur ton front la depiteuse honte
 D'un pas deshonoré pour ne point mourir, monte :
 Auras tu bien le cœur iusques à ton tombeau
 D'endurer qu'on t'appelle le carnassier bourreau
 D'une dame d'honneur ? Dame plus courageuse
 Que n'est pas és combats ta main iniurieuse.]*
 (V.2509-18)

At the same time, the wobbly eschatology initially put in place at by Zerbino's ghost, along with a conclusion less forthright than Isabella's welcome into heaven in Ariosto's original, leaves room for the cautious suggestion that even the beauty of chastity is in the eye of the beholder and that sanctity resides in its capacity to inspire imitation—that is, in its reception by the living. It might follow that virtues generally, hence conceivably vices, are less absolute than contingent—that is, that their value is a function of human application or neglect. There is at least a fleeting glimpse here of a dramatic universe more complex and variegated than one that rigidly reproduces a moral template in stark black-and-white.

Finally, to return briefly to Shakespearean tragic errors, the idea of living with such remorse as Rodomont's is obviously precluded by suicide in the case of Othello—another warrior whose “occupation's gone” (*Oth.*, III.iii.357), who, for Iago, and doubtless other Venetians, qualifies as a boastful “erring barbarian” (I.iii.355-56), and who likewise destroys the very incarnation of faithful love and chastity. A partial model does exist for such a projection, however, in the Leontes of *The Winter's Tale*, whose responsibility for the death of the innocent Hermione (and their son) propels him into a tragic future which

only the mechanisms of generic reversal will transform, thanks to a notably artificial extension of the confines of time—one effected by the choric personage of Time, “that makes and unfolds error” (*WT*, IV.i.2), thereby performing the restorative function whose perversion by Opportunity is deplored by the lamenting Lucrece:

Time’s office is to fine the hate of foes,
To eat up errors by opinion bred.
.....
Time’s glory is to calm contending kings,
To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light.
(*Luc.*, 936-40)

Pending the “Triumph of Time” that will duly realise the subtitle of Greene’s *Pandosto*, along with the motto on its original title-page, *Temporis filia veritas*, the focus of that future will be, for Leontes as for Rodomont, a tomb:

Prithce bring me
To the dead bodies of my queen and son.
One grave shall be for both; upon them shall
The causes of their death appear (unto
Our shame perpetual). Once a day I’ll visit
The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there
Shall be my recreation. So long as nature
Will bear up with this exercise, so long
I daily vow to use it. Come, and lead me
To these sorrows. (*WT*, III.ii.234-43)

Tellingly, the eventual transformation of tragedy into comedy will be effected, and symbolised, by another error, this one involving the mistaking of life for death, when Leontes is confronted by Hermione’s supposed statue. And the same mechanism of reversing an erroneous supposition of death proves the key to generic transformations in the other late tragicomedies. The victims of shipwreck in *The Tempest* mutually discover their survival; the false belief in the death of *Cymbeline*’s Imogen is dispelled both for the jealous husband who thought he had killed her and for her unknown brothers, who thought they could not save her: “My boys, / There was our error” (*Cym.*, V.v.259-60).

When Leontes is first plunged into the tragedy he himself has scripted, Shakespeare is closely following *Pandosto* (except that Pandosto’s queen has actually died). Suggestively, however, the playwright omits a detail common to Greene and Montreux—perhaps because he had already adapted it in lending Othello a resemblance to Rodomont. When Greene’s eponymous protagonist

first feels the weight of his murderous error, before reconciling himself to an existence of penitent sorrow, his instant impulse, like that of Rodomont, is to sacrifice his “guilty blood”:

And with that he reached at a rapier to have murdered
himself, but his peers being present stayed him from such a
bloody act.⁵⁶

Given the parallel contexts, the account might well be modelled on the Messenger’s reply to Fleurdelys, who hopes to hear that Rodomont has killed himself: “Ah, no! For all rushed the sword from his grasp to seize, / Leaving him unarmed, alone, his wrath to appease [*Ha non ! car vn chacun le fer des poings luy tire, / Sans armes on le laisse acoisier seul son ire*]” (V.2457-58). That Greene had some acquaintance with Ariosto is obvious from the scrambled scraps of plot and character which he cobbled together in dramatic form and labelled *Orlando Furioso*. (Angelica figures there, as does, briefly, an arrogant but cowardly Rodomont, fancifully identified as “King of Cuba”, but there is no trace of an Isabella.) This extravagant phantasmagoria, though published posthumously in 1594, is usually dated *circa* 1590—that is, prior to Harington’s translation. Neither the translation nor the original mentions the Moor’s attempted suicide, however, so if Greene was indeed drawing on Rodomont’s tragic error to enhance that of Pandosto, he must have taken it from Montreux—further inferential evidence that Montreux’s tragedy was known in English literary circles.

Shakespeare is likely to have been aware of such an association with the name Isabella when he used it (uniquely) for the heroine of *Measure for Measure*, whether or not he had noticed that a certain “Madam Isabella” is mentioned as narrator of the prose version of George Whetstone’s tale of Promos and Cassandra, one of a considerable number of analogues, none of which actually feature the name.⁵⁷ Apart from Montreux’s portrayal and the *Orlando Furioso*

56 Robert Greene, *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time*, ed. J. H. P. Pafford, *The Winter’s Tale*, by William Shakespeare, The Arden Shakespeare, 2nd ser. (London: Methuen, 1963), pp. 181-225, p. 198.

57 George Whetstone, “The rare Historie of Promos and Cassandra, reported by Madam Isabella”, *An Heptameron of Ciuill Discourses, etc.* (London: Richard Iones, 1582), n.p. (“The Fovrth Dayes Exercise”). Shakespeare evidently drew eclectically on a number of sources for this widespread story, including Whetstone’s own dramatic version and

itself, where God indeed blesses all future Isabellas (Canto XIX.29)—a clear compliment to Ariosto's patroness, Isabella d'Este—the name had been given special prominence in Harington's translation by way of a quaintly personal commentary celebrating its virtuous resonance with that of his own mother, whom he presents to the reader as an exemplar of perfect womanhood.⁵⁸ Yet Shakespeare notoriously deploys the name within a "problem comedy" darkened by tragic shadows and in a way that problematises exemplarity itself.

The Isabella of *Measure for Measure* is an uncompromising defender of her chastity (though not necessarily that of others), whose would-be aggressor, ironically named Angelo, wields the power of blackmail in a way analogous to Rodomont's power of captivity. She is the only heroine in the known versions of the story who aspires to a celibate religious life, craving indeed "a more strict restraint" (*MM*, I.iv.4), but also the only one who refuses to yield in order to save a prospective victim from execution—as it happens, for a sexual offence, and by beheading, in a context where innocent and guilty heads are very much at issue. "More than our brother is our chastity" (II.iv.185), she resolves, and the readiness for martyrdom she professes—"O, were it but my life, / I'd throw it down for your deliverance / As frankly as a pin" (III.i.105-5)—hints at flirtation with the idea in a way hardly mitigated by the quasi-erotic attraction she has previously expressed:

... were I under the terms of death,
Th'impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death, as to a bed

Epitia, by G. B. Gherardi Cinthio, which likewise existed in both narrative and dramatic forms. See Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. II, The Comedies, 1597–1603 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 399–416 (Introduction to *Measure for Measure*), as well as Richard Hillman, *William Shakespeare: The Problem Plays*, Twayne's English Authors Series (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), esp. pp. 102–10. I have recently made a case for the French version of Claude Roillet's tragedy *Philanire* (1577) as supplying significant generic counterpoint to Shakespeare's comedy (*The Shakespearean Comic and Tragicomic*, pp. 120–26).

- 58** Ariosto, trans. Harington, p. 239. Isabella is a fairly common name in early modern English drama, sometimes mandated by sources, for characters of various stripes. Still, it is hard not to see John Marston, with his flair for the satirical grotesque, as flagrantly flouting the idea of Isabellas as epitomising pure virtue, especially chastity, when he chose the name to replace that of his source (Bianca Maria—itself ironic in retrospect) for the debauched protagonist of *The Insatiate Countess* (c. 1608).

That longing had been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame. (II.iv.100-105)

On the one hand, the martyrdom of her namesakes seems bound to obtrude itself intertextually when Shakespeare's Isabella is addressed in these terms: "I hold you as a thing enskied, and sainted, / By your renouncement an immortal spirit" (I.iv.34-35). On the other hand, the term "renouncement" by itself undercuts the moral position of the speaker. Lucio is of course further discredited as a cynical advocate of debauchery and a slanderer, his interpretations at once shedding light, as befits his name, and preaching darkness—one who arguably becomes the voice of relativism raised, until it is forcibly silenced, in the face of moral absolutes.

The menace to this Isabella's chastity is averted, and the shadow of martyrdom dispelled, by the playwright exercising his generic prerogative, in effect, as *deus ex machina*. Vienna's Duke, himself in holy disguise, conspicuously intervenes—"like pow'r divine" (V.i.369), or Time in *The Winter's Tale*, but by devising his own down-to-earth ruse—to supplant the mechanisms of tragedy by a comic conclusion. Yet, as has often been observed, that conclusion is also made disturbingly inconclusive. Isabella's prospective surrender of virginity to the Duke under "honourable" controlled conditions will technically save her chastity, but it makes an improbable substitute for the "sacred" mutual bond of Isabelle and Zeobin. Meanwhile, "true" love is displaced onto the pathetic infatuation of Mariana with the scornful Angelo ("I crave no other, nor no better man" [V.i.426])—a reprise of the obsession of Venus with Adonis, or the alternating flights and pursuits of Angelique (herself equivocally named). As for Angelo, both pursuer and pursued, he is virtually subsumed, like Rodomont, into the tragedy he has instigated, a veritable living martyrdom of shame, despite (or because of) the "merciful" pardon he receives.⁵⁹

Far-fetched as the hypothesis might seem, what the instances of *The Rape of Lucrece*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Othello*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Measure for Measure* collectively suggest is an especially complex response to Ariosto's episode of Rodomonte and Isabella, together with its framing intrigue of amorous pursuit, as these are mediated by Montreux.⁶⁰ By their Shakespearean reflec-

59 See Hillman, *Shakespeare: The Problem Plays*, pp. 111-29.

60 It is notable that no such mediation is discernible in the case of Marlowe's presumptive borrowing of Isabella's ruse for the menaced captive Olympia in *Tamburlaine*. See

tions, in turn, the most fundamental innovations of the French playwright appear more distinctly. He had effectively adapted Ariosto's plot device, with the moral and religious contexts which firmly contained it, to exploration of proto-psychological and generic issues. While obviously not questioning the ruling polarity of virtue and vice—on the contrary—he had effectively destabilised aspects of that framework. Such may well have been far from his intention, although his later tragedy of Cleopatra arguably advances along the same innovative lines—the more conspicuously by diverging from precursor treatments of its well-known classical subject. Willy-nilly, Montreux had opened opportunities for a relativistic approach to the interrelations of love, sexuality and power, even sanctity and perdition. Most basically of all, within the conventions of highly rhetorical humanist dramaturgy, he had invited interrogation of the nature of tragedy itself—and thereby extended its boundaries.

Note on the Translation

As with my previous translations, I have attempted to reproduce the formal structures of the original by reproducing them as faithfully as possible. The Alexandrine couplets of the monologues and dialogue are rendered as hexameters, while the highly variable lines and stanzaic forms of the Choruses as preserved as accurately as I could manage. Punctuation has been freely modernised and adapted, sometimes necessarily on the basis of conjecture, in the interest of clarity and readability. The occasional additions to the copy-text are indicated by square brackets, including scene divisions where new character groupings seem to justify them and proposed stage directions in rare cases where the action is not necessarily self-evident. (There are no stage directions in the original.) Passages signalled by *guillemets* in the copy-text as aphoristic or sententious (a common practice in the period) are placed in italics, although it is not always easy to be sure from the text as printed where such passages should begin or end.

Regardless of the variable practice in the copy-text, abstract entities such as “fate”, “death” and “heaven” are capitalised only when clearly personified

Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great* (part II), ed. J. S. Cunningham, The Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), IV.ii and the editor's Introduction, p. 18. In any case, the availability of other analogues suggests that Marlowe may not have drawn the idea from Ariosto, whether directly or by way of Harington: Cunningham also points out (n. 50) that the resemblance is not especially close.

or invested with numinosity. Exclamatory (and/or vocative) “O” (or “ò”) has sometimes been represented as “Oh” (or “oh”) where a more nuanced expression of personal feeling seems called for.

Isabelle: Tragedy

by

Nicolas de Montreux (Ollenix du Mont-Sacré)

Gentleman of Maine

Argument of the Tragedy

Roland, having gone mad for love of Angelique, throws his arms away in all directions. Zeobin, his friend, gathers them up and hangs them high in an oak tree, resolved to defend them. Mandricard arrives, intending to carry off Roland's sword, and is opposed by Zeobin. They come to blows, whereby Zeobin is killed. Isabelle, his dear friend, who had always accompanied him, wishes to kill herself upon her friend's dead body.¹ A hermit arrives who prevents her and lifts the body of Zeobin onto his shoulders to carry it to be entombed. Isabelle follows. On the way, they meet with the fierce Rodomont, who becomes enamoured of Isabelle and leads her off with him. The lady, afraid of being forced and unable to kill herself because closely watched by the Moor, makes him believe that she can concoct a bath in which, once bathed, his body will be harder than iron and wholly invincible. Rodomont believes her. He goes with her to gather herbs of a thousand kinds; she brews the bath and washes herself in it first, inciting Rodomont, intoxicated,² to try the virtue of the bath on her neck by striking her with a sword. The besotted barbarian strikes Isabelle with all his might and separates her head from her body: as it falls, it pronounces the dear name of Zeobin. This subject is taken from the ingenious and learned Ariosto.

1 The text immediately establishes that Zeobin and Isabelle are husband and wife; see I.13-14.

2 "[I]ntoxicated": orig. "enyuré"; cf. (below) "besotted": orig. "yure". In the context, these terms, referring literally to drunkenness, register a displacement to the metaphorical level of the actual inebriation, which is a key moral and religious issue in Ariosto's portrayal of Rodomonte; see the Introduction.

Actors

The Ghost of Zeobin
Rodomont
Sicambras, his squire
Regnault
Isabelle
Fleurdelys
Brandimart
Messenger
Chorus

Act I

Ghost of Zeobin, Rodomont, Sicambas (his squire), Renault

[Scene i]

GHOST OF ZEOBIN

1 Far from the hideous rivers where fear sojourns,
 2 Far from hell's sorrowful depths, upward he returns;
 3 Far from the Father of Care's most sulphurous kingdom,
 4 Pluto the ravisher,³ back here, alas, I come.
 5 I come back up here, where once I enjoyed the glory
 6 Of seeing Mars's face portray my memory,
 7 When, burning to fight combats and greedy for fame,
 8 Upon it with my sword's point I carved my fair name:
 9 I was named Zeobin, son of the king of England,
 10 Both slave of love and at the god of war's command;
 11 Zeobin my name, who a hundred combats saw
 12 Against the pagan enemies of our faith's law;
 13 Zeobin my name, the faithful spouse in time past
 14 Of chaste Isabelle, constant husband to the last;
 15 Isabelle, daughter of that great king who today
 16 Over the people of Scotland holds lawful sway.
 17 How our delectable loves did teem then with beauty—
 18 Our minds a perfect match, our wills in harmony;
 19 In two bodies enclosed, our two hearts were united;
 20 By the same chaste flame our burning soul was ignited;
 21 One desire we had, and our sacred relation
 22 Held that baseness called feigning as rank profanation;
 23 I belonged to Isabelle, as she did to me;
 24 Our love was something holy, our faith likewise holy;⁴

3 Pluto was most notoriously the ravisher (orig. "rauisseur") of Proserpina, but the attribute seems here to extend to his seizing of mortal lives generally.

4 "[O]ur faith likewise holy": orig. "& sainte nostre foy"; the infusion of fidelity in love with transcendent spirituality draws the religious resonance already present in Ariosto's original towards Montreux's ultra-Catholic politics in a way anticipating his treatment of Cleopatra's

25 My life served to give her pleasure in countless ways;
 26 To love me and to please me she prolonged her days.
 27 But alas, cruel Fate, put out at seeing us
 28 So long sublime,⁵ with one sole will harmonious,
 29 Jealous of our love, of so rare a pair of hearts,
 30 Brutally broke us into two separate parts—
 31 Not that our two hearts, into one consolidated,
 32 Could ever be by death's obstruction separated,
 33 But it parted our bodies, put mine underground,
 34 Killed by Mandrigard, who good fortune in war found,
 35 And left behind it that of my heart Isabelle,
 36 As slave of misery still on the earth to dwell.
 37 Alas, poor Isabelle! What bitter tears you render
 38 Constantly ever since my eyelids, soft and tender,
 39 Came to be closed, at the stroke of a cruel blow dealt,
 40 Coldly deaf to your cries, as death's horror was felt!
 41 How many woeful complaints you were forced to vent
 42 (Laments which will not cease until your days are spent),
 43 Alas, I know well, and those with many a moan,
 44 Although my eye might be far distant from your own.
 45 I know that to this day, with vigour just the same,
 46 There burns in your pure soul our loves' most blessed
 flame;
 47 I know you still love me, and that your chaste love's
 strength
 48 Will be strong as long as your life's entire length.
 49 I know you still have wretched Zeobin in mind;
 50 I know that pleasure in the thought of him you find.
 51 Alas, chaste Isabelle, you too may be assured:
 52 Oblivion's river⁶ has not my love obscured,

heroism; with Zeobin's evocation of the inseparability of the lovers' souls, cf. Cleopatra's exaltation of the "sacred amity [amitié sainte]" between her and Antony in *Cleopatra*, I,341-50.

5 "[S]ublime": orig. "consommez"; the verb "consommer" (in the sense of achieving perfection) here avoids its common confusion with "consumer" (in the sense of using up). (See Gaston Cayrou, *Dictinnnaire du français classique. La langue du XVII^e siècle*, 2nd ed. ([Paris]: Klincksieck, 1924), *s.v.* "consommer".)

6 "Oblivion's river": orig. "le fleuve oublieux"—i.e., Lethe, on the mingling of Christian and pagan elements here (and indeed elsewhere in the text), see the Introduction, pp. 11-13 *et*

53 Nor has the gloom of the guilty souls' habitation
 54 In my love's steadfast faithfulness made alteration:
 55 No, no, I love you still, and your approaching tomb,⁷
 56 Alas, now makes me the sight of sunlight resume;
 57 For you I return here, from love faithful and true,
 58 To warn you of the cruel loss awaiting you:
 59 Isabelle, the time is coming when you must die,
 60 As I have had to do, to take your flight on high—
 61 On high, where you the happy recompense will see
 62 Due to your chaste virtue, your manly constancy.⁸
 63 You will die to keep your chastity safe and clean,
 64 But such a death sacred freedom for you will mean:
 65 That death will give your memory a life sublime,
 66 Will preserve your glory from envy and from time.
 67 *The end of the virtuous brings divinity:*
 68 *Death cannot injure them, nor cruel destiny;*
 69 *Alive in the hearts and faithful spirits their place is*
 70 *Of those who follow them in their immortal traces.*
 71 Lucrece lives still, although her body in its paleness
 72 In the ranks of the tomb's pale⁹ corpses slumbers
 lifeless;
 73 Cassandra lives still, even as Portia the chaste,
 74 Though bereft of daylight, with the living is placed.¹⁰
 75 In short, the good are living, even if their sight
 76 Now lacks the sun's fair face with its radiant light.
 77 Likewise, O Isabelle, O dame holy and chaste,

passim.

7 “[A]pproaching tomb”: orig. “proche tombeau”—obviously, a metonymy for death, which I translate literally.

8 “[M]anly”: orig. *masle*” (mod. “*mâle*”). The term may be applied to women (see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, online at <<http://www.atilf.fr/tlfi>> [accessed 22 May 2024], s.v.) but remains evocative of masculine qualities, not least when denoting the courage by which a woman thwarts the power of a male captor. Thus the heroine of Montreux’s *Cleopatra* defeats Caesar and secures her eternal memory by her “manly constancy [masle constance]” (V.2567).

9 The repetition of “pale” (“palle[s]”) is in the original.

10 Numerous sources present Lucrece, Cassandra and Portia as *exempla* of female virtue, of which chastity is traditionally the crowning glory. All three, for instance, figure in Giovanni Boccaccio's fourteenth-century *De Mulieribus Claris*.

78 Your honour will survive your body steel lays waste;
 79 And on your tomb those spirits who virtue profess
 80 As to some great god their chaste prayers will address.
 81 Rodomont, who cruelly seeks to ravish your glory,
 82 Shall be a chisel to engrave your memory;
 83 He shall kill your fair body, although amorous—
 84 To obtain your embraces ardently desirous—
 85 But instead his sword shall transport your eulogies
 86 As far as the monstrous¹¹ Nile and swift-flowing Ganges,
 87 Shall make them Heaven's ever-shining ornament,
 88 As is the sun, the honour of the firmament.
 89 You shall die by his hand, far preferring to choose
 90 To suffer a cruel death than your praise to lose—
 91 To see your chastity, your faith and honoured name,
 92 Profaned and violated by that King of Shame.¹²
 93 Alas, to my regret I announce this decree;
 94 To bid you from this upper world now falls to me,
 95 But for your honour's sake, since your life's chaste
 conclusion
 96 Will yield lasting praise—sacred, divine—in
 profusion:
 97 Your death will immortality for you engender;
 98 A woman rich in honour always ends in splendour.
 99 Alas, though I pity your death, which I deplore,
 100 I do your actual troubles and woes still more;
 101 For freedom from miseries by dying one gains,
 102 But while alive you feel a thousand bitter pains.
 103 And what renders even more bitter my own sorrow
 104 Is that you bear them, alas, for loving me so.
 105 It is for my amity you have without mercy
 106 Sustained for so long that devouring agony;

11 “[M]onstrous”: orig. “monstreux” (mod. “monstrueux”), here perhaps meaning “filled with monsters,” notably crocodiles, or merely enormous, outlandish or otherwise extraordinary. On the broad range of possible meanings, see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v. “monstreux.”

12 “King of Shame”: orig. “infame Roy”; at least in the text as published (and performed?) in the 1590s under Holy League auspices, the reference to Henri IV as violator of both faith and women’s chastity would seem hard to miss.

107 It is for loss of me, your woes occasioning,
 108 That your eyes with such tearful rivers have been
 flowing.
 109 Ah, it is to keep chaste and whole your faith to me
 110 That you resist so well the cruel adversary
 111 Of your modesty, the cruel foe of your fame—
 112 Of your very life—who of friend usurps the name.
 113 Go and prepare your soul, therefore, O noble girl,
 114 To leave your body by the ill chance of a churl;¹³
 115 Render it suitable close at God's side to sit,
 116 Happy at once this terrestrial place to quit
 117 And its bitter pains—and yourself even happier
 118 To see your body dashed by one who does you honour,
 119 Who more ardently will burn for your murdered virtue
 120 Than as he lives now, when your eyes' flames him subdue;
 121 Who, by many a vow and silent sacrifice,
 122 Your shades to pity his suffering will entice;
 123 Who with the armour of a thousand vanquished knights
 124 Will beautify your tomb to rank with famous sights.
 125 Thus your glory, dear to my sacred love, shall be
 126 Renowned and honoured even by your enemy,
 127 By all the virtuous; indeed the very heavens,
 128 Seized with ardent love, shall hold it in reverence.
 129 But adieu, I depart now to regain the scene
 130 Of pleasant Acheron's banks, ever lush and green;¹⁴
 131 I return below among those spirits to be
 132 Who are still with feelings of love possessed, like me;
 133 There, as I have done, I shall watch out for your glory,
 134 And I shall keep you, as I have, in memory.
 135 But adieu, I embark on my sudden descent:

13 “[T]he ill chance of a churl”: orig. “le malheur seruite”; the notion of servility is seemingly attached both to the base deed itself and the barbarian who perpetrates it and incurs the consequences.

14 L. 130: orig. "les riuex / Du plaisant Acheron, tousiours vertes & viues" (ll. 129-30). Even if crossing the river Acheron (in Charon's boat) may lead to the Elysian fields, where love may still flourish, to term it a "pleasant" still seems at odds with the "hideous rivers [fleuues hideux]" of l. 1. The *locus classicus* variously adapted for descriptions of the underworld was Bk. VI of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

136 May Heaven, chaste Isabelle, spare your days unspent.

[Scene ii]

RODOMONT

137 Far from the curving shores of Thetis the inconstant,¹⁵
 138 Phoebus ties his chariot, with flame radiant;
 139 Already with bold paces his impulsive horses
 140 Begin to bend up to the heavens' vault their courses;
 141 I see him begin to tinge with gold the near ledges
 142 Of the towering rocks with their storm-blunted edges;
 143 All becomes golden beneath his light's vivid ray;
 144 With flaming torches darkness is driven away;
 145 Vapours of the earth no longer embrown the sky;
 146 The night's fair glassy time has already passed by;
 147 The dawn, at its teary waking,¹⁶ causes to rise
 148 Those of whom the night with idle sleep charmed the eyes.
 149 Well, then, the fair day shines again! With it resumes
 150 With violent force that flame which my soul consumes.¹⁷
 151 O day too harsh! Though a god, the right dare you claim,
 152 Along with heaven's light to renew this hot flame,
 153 Whose haughty love, kindled by a lovely girl's eyes,
 154 My culpable soul consumes, burns and mortifies?
 155 O haughty Phoebus! What? Have you no fear at all
 156 Of spiting Rodomont, who does all men appal?
 157 Of spiting Rodomont, who curses Heaven freely,
 158 Of whom Paris still holds in fear the martial fury,

15 Thetis, the sea-nymph, is no doubt "inconstant" (orig. "infidelle") because metonymic (as often elsewhere) for her changeable element—and with the encouragement, perhaps, of her shape-changing during the wrestling match by which Peleus won her as his bride. See *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), s.v. "Peleus" (henceforth cited as *OCD*).

16 "[T]eary waking": orig. "pleureux reueil", presumably evoking the morning dew.

17 Such an adaptation of the conventional *aubade* to daylight as bringing outward animation and beauty but inner misery would be recycled by Montreux in both pastoral and tragic contexts. Cf. his *Diane*, I.15-64, and *Cleopatra*, I.9-36. Further versions appear below in the self-introductory laments of Isabelle, esp. II.[i.]675-80, and Brandimart, II.[ii.]1043-54.

159 When, high-leaping, impelled by a murderous itch,
 160 Vanquishing he vaulted over her wall and ditch,
 161 Chasing the French like a keen she-wolf who has spied
 162 A helpless flock of sheep without shepherd or guide—
 163 Cutting them down just as a sudden thunderbolt
 164 Blasts a rocky overhang to shards with a jolt,
 165 Knocking their bodies, stark dead, on the bloody ground,
 166 Like fragile ears of wheat the whistling hail has downed.
 167 Charles could tell the tale, as well as those knights who
 then
 168 Stood in the first rank among his most stalwart men;
 169 Charles could tell the tale, and his warriors, defeated,
 170 Who there before my bloody blade with trembling fled;
 171 Charles could tell the tale, and thousand corpses
 beside,
 172 Which enrich the city's soil, within and outside;¹⁸
 173 Charles could tell the tale, is able to serve as
 witness—
 174 Charles, who once had been for courage and valour
 peerless;
 175 Not just Charles, but all whom the heavens glorify
 176 With victory the universe to beautify!
 177 Jove, ruler of the sky, by whom lightning is hurled,
 178 Is not, although immortal, more feared in the world
 179 Than terrible Rodomont—Rodomont whose valour
 180 Forced the haughty Roland his head humbly to lower,
 181 Brought sweat to the brow of Aymon's son,¹⁹ with bravery
 182 Kept many a knight beneath his sword in slavery,
 183 Fought with Roger, and countless times in single fight
 184 Struck down cruel Mandricard, and all but tamed him
 quite,

18 The account of Rodomont's feats at the siege of Paris is given mainly in Cantos X and esp. XVI, the source of some of Montreux's imagery; see also Canto XXVII.

19 Rodomont's boasting rings with considerable irony here, given the sequels to the episode of Isabelle in Ariosto: at the end of Canto XXIX, his confrontation with Roland ends with both tumbling into a river; he is destined to be killed by Roger (Ruggiero) in Canto XLVI. The son of Duke Aymon (Amone) intended here is probably Richardeo (Ricciardetto), who is saved by enchantment from Rodomont in Canto XXVI.

185 When fervent love of lovely Doralice, our prize,
 186 Fired our hearts to cause cruel²⁰ hatred to arise.
 187 But now Rodomont, Rodomont, the very same
 188 Whose brow is imprinted with his valorous fame,
 189 Rodomont unvanquished, ready all foes to dare,
 190 Now feels himself vanquished by a face that is fair,
 191 The beams of a fair eye, a fair eye new to see,²¹
 192 Whose force of splendid love has served to vanquish me.
 193 No more surprise I feel if that god all observe²²
 194 Once conquered Mars and forced him his mother to serve;
 195 No more surprise I feel if the heart he pierced through
 196 Of Phoebus as well, who ferocious Python slew,²³
 197 Since he could overcome Rodomont, more capable,
 198 Courageous in combatting, than that abject rabble
 199 Of gods, whom he has already in combat vexed—
 200 Gods of whom he is not afraid on any pretext!
 201 But what renders more bitter still my sufferings
 202 Is that coward Phoebus, who to my eye light brings—
 203 To my eye, which night could with soft repose divert
 204 From the sight of those eyes by which my heart is hurt;
 205 To my eye, which, fooled by a thousand forms in vain,
 206 Hoped to anchor in the port of solace for pain;
 207 To my eye, which, charmed by a benevolent slumber,
 208 Likewise held charmed the sorrows that my life encumber;
 209 To my eye, which tasting sleep as it calmly flows,
 210 By the same token caused my soul to taste repose.
 211 But O coward Apollo—weak, effeminate –
 212 Unworthy that heaven destined you to instate
 213 With the other gods! What at this moment restrains
 214 This hand in which the sword invincible remains—

20 “[C]ruel”: orig. “cruelle”; the (indispensable) term is repeated in close proximity (“cruel” [l. 184]), as is often the case.

21 “[N]ew to see”: orig. “descouvert” (lit. “discovered”).

22 I.e., of course, Cupid, responsible for Mars’s notorious affair with his mother Venus and other exercises of power over both gods and mankind. See also the Introduction.

23 “Python”: the monstrous serpent of Mount Parnassus killed by Apollo, for this surnamed “Pythius”. See William Smith, *Smaller Classical Dictionary*, ed. E. H. Blakeney and John Warrington (New York: Dutton, 1958), s.v.; hereafter cited as *SCD*.

215 This arm, this rigid arm—from tumbling down for me
 216 You, your chariot, your horses of long way weary?
 217 Braver than you, keen to win and quick to give knocks,
 218 I wish into countless shreds to tear your gold locks,²⁴
 219 To break your arrows, then your bow, and bit by bit
 220 Your chariot, your torch, at last your horses split,
 221 Spurn you beneath my feet and make you understand
 222 That nothing is stronger than this mighty right hand.
 223 Rodomont, unvanquished²⁵ in his thousands of fights,
 224 Has vanquished both the mortals and the hellish sprites;²⁶
 225 Rodomont, unvanquished, with a hand blood has tainted,
 226 On the visage of the heavens pale fear has painted;
 227 Rodomont, unvanquished, made the gods quake with fright
 228 And, never once vanquished, has vanquished every knight;
 229 Rodomont is the only one in whom pale fear,
 230 As in mere mortals, does not with trembling appear;²⁷
 231 In brief, Rodomont is sole issue of that race
 232 Who once scaled the high heavens to take the gods' place:
 233 As doughty as they, many a deed of mine tells
 234 It is with Rodomont that true valiancy dwells—
 235 That he has no equal and, in his victories,
 236 After all mortals, must vanquish divinities.
 237 *No single conquest can the warrior content:*
 238 *Ever more to gain glory becomes his intent;*
 239 *To vanquish one foe is nothing, but great renown*
 240 *Is purchased by striking the bravest heroes down.*
 241 I must vanquish the gods, therefore, since my valiance
 242 Has caused mortals, all vanquished, to lose their

24 “[L]ocks”: orig. “perruque”—i.e., the golden tresses, emblematic of sunlight, which characterised Apollo.

25 “[U]nvanquished”: orig. “inuaincu”; the passage’s repetitions of the term, with variations, are obviously essential to the blustering effect.

26 “[H]ellish sprites”: orig. “esprits d’embas”—the idea being, presumably, that only heaven remains to be conquered.

27 Rodomont’s virtual claims to immortality clash ironically with his susceptibility to Isabelle’s spurious promise, while to compare himself to the rebellious giants rides roughshod over their dismal fate. More generally, his display of “rotomontade” carries the stereotype of the *miles gloriosus* squarely into caricature.

assurance,

243 Since none is so daring as to fight hand to hand,
244 Since Roland flees me, the strongest of his strong band:
245 As on the battlefield, where, for a long time, keen
246 With rage and with furor, two armies have been seen
247 Which, closely clashing, leave the camp behind them sown
248 With rotting corpses, armed with corselets overthrown,²⁸
249 The horse, broken loose and freed from its master's sway,
250 Recognising nobody, flees lightly away,
251 Astonished, terrified, beside itself completely—
252 So Roland, defeated, flees like a coward from me!
253 Up, then, to the sky!... What am I saying? A maid
254 Has vanquished my furor, as her captive dismayed
255 My strength, my virtue, and I am now a mere nothing,
256 Imprisoned, entangled helplessly in love's string.
257 No, no—myself no more, I have lost bravery:
258 A woman holds me languishing in slavery;
259 I, who from my combats always returned untamed,
260 Today by the beams of a lovely eye am tamed;²⁹
261 Vanquisher vanquished! Force too divine to eschew!
262 That which, immortal, forces heaven, forces you;
263 O potent Cupid, I may rightly you accord
264 The title of king of mortals, of great gods lord.
265 Cruel one! With fair eyes your only wherewithal,
266 You now cause this cruel blade from my hand to fall,
267 Which, a hundred times with the bravest blood made red,
268 Earned me proud laurel bays to encircle my forehead.
269 What then? I am not the sole paragon of prowess
270 Whom that fierce Love has stripped of arms, left
weaponless.

271 Hercules went that route, besides the son, most brave,

28 Ll. 247-48: the imagery of this surprisingly evocative epic simile depends on the grotesque notion of the ground being seeded ("semē") with corpses ("charoignes de morts") and armed ("armē") with the armour of the slain. "[C]amp" in l. 247 translates the identical word in the original, which might, however, be an error for "champ" ("field").

29 Ll. 259-60. The identical rhyme is present in the original ("indompté"/"dompté"), as are the repetitions that follow.

To whom divine Thetis, with Peleus, life gave.³⁰
Thus Roland runs quite mad, while Regnault, France's
honour,
On a hundred occasions has perceived love's power.³¹
So I am not alone. If any conquers me
By force, at least a great god curbs my liberty.
Well, I shall go offer a pious sacrifice
To that great god, his help for my pain to entice. [Exit Rodomont.]

SICAMBRAS [*entering*]

279 Oh, it is truly said that the immortals' hand
 280 With a slight move may mortal glory countermand;
 281 The merest glance from Jupiter's thundering face
 282 Can put the haughtiest knight in a humbler place.
 283 This truth, like countless warriors, the Titans learned,
 284 When once their arms against the younger gods they
 turned.³²
 285 Rodomont, you feel it, who, lofty in your glory,
 286 Thought heaven within compass of your victory;
 287 Rodomont, you know it, who, with Mars's valiance,
 288 Merely mocked at perils, met hazards with defiance;
 289 And now, when a simple young girl's eyes you disarm,
 290 Divested of your fierce pride, you regret your harm.
 291 The smallest of the gods has overcome your rage—
 292 You who thought that Heaven was no match for your
 courage:
 293 The battle-axe tumbles from your hands by his might;

30 Ll. 271-72 allude to Hercules' submission to his mistress Omphale, and to Achilles, born of the marriage of Peleus with the sea-nymph Thetis. Various post-Homeric narratives (like Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida*) present Achilles' love for the Trojan princess Polyxena as undermining his bellicosity in the Greek cause; cf. below, ll. 309-10. Others have her causing his death after learning the secret of his vulnerable heel. In the *Iliad* itself, however, it is the quarrel with Agamemnon over Briseis that causes Achilles to withdraw from the fighting. Cf. below, l. 413 and n. 42.

31 Regnault, i.e., Renaud de Montauban (Ariosto's Rinaldo di Montalbano), like Roland (Orlando) is enamoured of Angélique (Angelica), whom he hopelessly pursues through a number of adventures. He will be appearing shortly to tell his own story (I. [iii.], III. [i.]).

32 On the Titans as the older generation of gods, see *OCD*, *s.v.*

294 He revokes from your fair name the rank of great knight,
295 Snuffs out your fighting force, and makes you seem none
other
296 Than the valiant Hector's effeminate brother;³³
297 Shatters your ferocious pride, as one sees the tempest
298 Split apart a pine-tree which was raising its crest
299 Bare against the lightning, and of its branches boasted,
300 Whose soft and sheltering shade the young shepherds
hosted.
301 So Rodomont, vanquished, is not that brave prince now
302 Who with his dread sword used the whole of France to cow;
303 No longer that Rodomont who combatted then
304 Roland, Regnault, Roger, and countless as bold men.
305 *What Mars cannot do is, using a living lure,*
306 *Often done by Venus, with strength divinely sure:*
307 *Love vanquishes that which Mars could not overthrow*
308 *Yet, with all his outrage, could not to love say no.*
309 Achilles' strength vanquished Hector, and by her
beauty's,
310 The girl Polyxena vanquished that brave Achilles.
311 *Nothing like a rare beauty so pleases the eye;*
312 *Nothing seems so close to the deities on high;*
313 *Nothing over our souls may gain such dominance:*
314 *Women were created to break our arrogance.*
315 Jupiter, Mars, Phoebus—all the divinities—
316 Have not refused to seek the love of mortal beauties;
317 They have quite often had women as mistresses;
318 Many men, too, have been caressed by goddesses:
319 Thus this proud Love, puffed up with power he
directs,
320 Unvanquished, makes us see a thousand strange effects.
321 Thus from brave and strong, superb, with daring replete,
322 Rodomont he makes cold, void of menace and heat.
[spying Rodomont]
323 But see where he comes, his spirits hampered by passion,

33 I.e., Paris, whose susceptibility to Helen caused the Trojan war. In combat, moreover, he had to be rescued by Aphrodite, to whom he had given the apple of discord. See *SCD*, *s.v.*

324 His eyes fixed firmly on the ground in shamefast fashion;
 325 He drags along pensively—oh, the bitter sorrow
 326 To see oneself, vanquisher vanquished, full of woe!
 327 He bears himself, and casts his glances, differently—
 328 As he walks, no longer swaggers furiously.
 329 O Love, how lofty hearts' hallowed and precious glory
 330 You often abuse in your brilliant victory!
 331 You well know how to dampen the spirits of those
 332 Who could not you the master of the gods suppose.
 333 O poor Rodomont, the hard proof lies in your pain:
 334 *Punishment by a god is torment inhumane.*³⁴
 335 Nothing, superb Rodomont, is left to you now
 336 Of a noble warrior but the stance³⁵ and brow,
 337 Merely the arms, the clothes, the aspect and the visage,
 338 For you have no more pride, are quite lacking in courage;
 339 You resemble a beech-tree which the years have stripped
 340 Of its rich foliage and lightning-bolts have clipped,³⁶
 341 And now, a trunk without vigour and force, stands stark,
 342 Supporting pitifully its languishing bark.
 343 See, he is coming towards me—let us hear his speech:
 344 *Happy is he who can wise consolation teach.*
 345 May the good Jupiter aid my tongue to convey
 346 Something able his great suffering to allay.

RODOMONT [*entering*]

347 Well, then, dear friend of mine, will you see me always,
 348 Instead of fighting, lost pensive in love's pathways?
 349 Will you see me always dreaming, no longer bold,
 350 And care flowing over my face pallid and cold?
 351 Ah, Sicambres, I am dying! Love makes me die.
 352 No cure could be performed by all the gods on high!
 353 Isabelle is killing me, and in the fierce rays

34 “[I]nhumane”: orig. “inhumaine”, which resonates with grim humour, given that the gods are inherently beyond humanity.

35 “[S]tance”: orig. “port”—also the word, however, used to mark his altered bearing in l. 327 above.

36 “[C]lipped”: orig. “affollé”, doubtless in the archaic sense of mutilated, deformed. See *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. “Affoler 1”.

354 Of her fair eyes, my soul, I feel, on fire stays.
 355 Isabelle is killing me—oh, hard cruelty
 356 To die for merely loving an ungrateful beauty!
 357 Isabelle is killing me, and, no succour looming,
 358 I feel, little by little, all my hope consuming.
 359 My furor is quite gone, put to death cruelly,
 360 As a flash of lightning flickers out suddenly;
 361 I lack the force of life: instead, within my veins
 362 With hasty paces run a thousand cruel pains.
 363 In short, I am now nothing, bound as a mere slave
 364 To the laws of faithless Love—I, formerly brave
 365 Enough to conquer countless heroes, capture cities,
 366 And ornament my altars with submission's trophies.³⁷
 367 In short, I am nothing—O cruel alteration!
 368 Thus perished Hercules, of heaven the sensation.³⁸
 369 A beauty inhumane, spurning my painful passion,
 370 To her law binds me fast, enslaved in such a fashion
 371 That I live only at the pleasure of her will,
 372 And her will's pleasure is to see me suffer still.
 373 O cruel Isabelle, unworthy of your beauty,
 374 If your beauty taints with cruel inhumanity!
 375 What then? Shall I be long a slave, as now appears,
 376 Of a proud-hearted beauty who consumes my years?³⁹

37 "[S]ubmission's trophies": orig. "despouilles serviles"—a reference anticipating the captured armour with which Rodomonte adorns the tomb (transformed from a church) for Isabella and Zerbino in Ariosto (XXIX.39), but which also evokes (rather than Rodomonte's nominal religion) the so-called "*spolia opima*" consecrated by victorious Roman generals; see *OCD*, s.v. Montreux recycles the notion in its proper classical context in *Cleopatra* (see I.275 and n.).

38 L. 368: orig. "Ainsi perit Hercul des Cieux l'estonnement"; Rodomont seems to confound Hercules' enslavement to Omphale with his death, which was caused (unwittingly) by the poisoned shirt of Nessus given him by his wife Deianira. The obvious common element is women's destruction of susceptible heroes.

39 Rodomont's transition from conventional *maladie d'amour* to a resolution to rape anticipates the trajectory of Martius in *The Tragedy of Saint Agnes* by Pierre Troterel (1615); see Pierre Troterel, *Pièces de dévotion (Hagiographic Plays): La Tragédie de sainte Agnès (1615), La Vie et sainte conversion de Guillaume Duc d'Aquitaine (1632)*, ed. Pierre Pasquier, trans. Richard Hillman, *Scène Européenne—Traductions Introuvables* (Tours: Les Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2023), I.iii. There, however, the protagonist's companion, Censorin, is complicit with his desire, unlike Sicambros.

377 Must I endure forever that a feeble slave
 378 Saps my lively ardour, my power to be brave?
 379 Shall I always be a slave to her whom I could
 380 Compel, pleasing myself, to do my illness good?
 381 Isabelle is mine, and I may take for my uses,
 382 By the common law of arms, that which she refuses;
 383 She is my serf, and conquest does to me award
 384 True possession of her as her natural lord.⁴⁰
 385 Therefore, I may force her! Better it should be done
 386 Than let myself by pain be cruelly undone.
 387 Rodomont no longer can stand himself to see
 388 Captive of that girl, whom he keeps from liberty:
 389 *The vanquisher treats as he likes those he vanquishes;*
 390 *The master with his serf can do all that he wishes;*
 391 I will do as much, weary of enduring thus!
 392 For even were I of proud Pallas amorous—
 393 Of Juno, Venus, fair Diana—would one goddess
 394 Show cruel disdain in the face of my distress?
 395 Rodomont, despite the gods, is hardly too weak
 396 To ravish from those what desire makes him seek.
 397 On, then! I must ravish, whether by force or ruse,⁴¹
 398 What her harshness makes her to amity refuse.
 399 It shall be so. Do you not, trusty friend, agree,
 400 Who are privy to the sad cares that trouble me?

SICAMBRAS

401 *A person cannot love who from love turns aside:*
 402 *Force may by no means with love's gentleness abide.*
 403 *For it is not love to force, not pitying pain,*
 404 *Her whose true amity one is seeking to gain.*
 405 *Rather, that is for pleasure to violate thought:*
 406 *A faithful and true love with force is never fraught.*
 407 *From one's dame to ravish something her heart denies*
 408 *Is, instead of loving, madly to brutalise;*
 409 *The happy lover feeling a sacred love's flame*

40 Ll. 383-84: the language of power here (orig. "serfue", "naturel seigneur") is pointedly feudal.

41 His susceptibility to her ruse is ironically foreshadowed.

410 *Will prefer to die before displeasing his Dame;*
411 *Otherwise, he cannot lay claim to amity:*
412 *He who forces someone is a fierce enemy.*
413 *Briseis was not forced, though a slave to one strong;⁴²*
414 *Love can never dispose the mind to doing wrong.*
415 *Neither the force nor the right that combats engender*
416 *May dispense us from being courteous and tender;*
417 *The more powerful we are, the greater our glory*
418 *In tempering with mildness our fair victory;*
419 *To do harm to one's fame for a trivial pleasure*
420 *Is to follow, like a brute, an urge without measure.*
421 *How much honour in forcing a woman is there,*
422 *Whose only arms are tears, and who faints with despair?*
423 *You, who have honourably defeated in fights*
424 *All those the earth raises to the ranks of brave*
425 *knights—*
426 *Ah, will you not render hateful your memory*
427 *For doing, not Mars, but a woman injury?*
428 *The law permits deployment of force⁴³ and of furor*
429 *Against a strong man who wishes to prove his valour:*
430 *Forcing the stalwart strong is with glory repaid,*
431 *But a blameworthy fault to force a simple maid,*
432 *A girl without force, with nothing but tearful pleas*
433 *To oppose and resist such cruel miseries.*
434 *Ajax was blasted by flame divine, dashed to cinder,*
435 *For outraging Cassandra, whom he took prisoner.⁴⁴*

42 Briseis was Achilles' "slave-concubine," introduced early in the *Iliad* as a cause of dissension between him and Agamemnon, but he later (IX.334-43) expresses a spouse's affection for her; see *OCD*, *s.v.*

43 The double meanings of “force,” repeated as noun and verb (orig. “force,” “forcer”) throughout this passage, insist on conquest and rape as analogous forms of subjection. More generally, Montreux’s rhetoric develops considerable power and subtlety by way of repetition with variation.

44 The reference is to the so-called lesser Ajax, son of Oileus, so punished by Pallas for the crime committed in her temple during the sack of Troy. The probable immediate source is the opening of the *Aeneid*, where Juno complains about Athena's greater efficacy in vengeance:

Pallasne exurere classem

Argivum atque ipsos potuit submergere ponto,
unius ob noxam et furias Aiakis Oilei?

435 He lost his honour. Do not likewise jettison
 436 Your own, now flourishing, *For wretched is someone*
 437 *Who has with great effort bid for glory sublime,*
 438 *Only to lose it suddenly by one foul crime.*
 439 Reconsider, therefore, that you may be esteemed
 440 As courteous in vanquishing as valiant deemed.
 441 If, without forcing sad Isabelle thus cruelly,
 442 You may one day become by her loved ardently,
 443 I would not preclude the goal of your hot desire
 444 *From that common pleasure to which lovers aspire,*
 445 But to wish to force her is simply to lack courage:
 446 *A valiant man does not do the helpless outrage.*
 447 So leave this desire, give your amorous force,
 448 To keep yourself praiseworthy, a less shameful course.
 449 *For force may well impose on fortune violence,*
 450 *But not on the will, which remains beyond offence,*
 451 *And he is not vanquished, but has his freedom still,*
 452 *Who only obeys when forced, and not with his will.*
 453 So talk to me no more of forcing Isabelle:
 454 It may be that with time she will become less cruel;
 455 You must wait for Time, who, as a wise manager,
 456 Knows how to range things below in their proper order;
 457 You must wait for Time, who, measuring always truly,
 458 According to reason apportions all things duly.

ipsa, Iovis rapidum iaculata e nubibus ignem,
 disiecitque rates evertitque aequora ventis,
 illum expirantem transfixo pectore flammis
 turbine corripuit scopuloque infixit acuto.

(Virgil, *Aeneid*, ed. T. E. Page, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan; New York, St. Martin's, 1894 [1967]), Bk. I.39-45; and see n. to l. 41)

[Was not Pallas able to burn to ashes the fleet of the Argives and sink them in the sea because of the crime and frenzy of Oilean Ajax? She herself, having hurled the swift fire of Jove from the clouds, scattered the ships and heaved up the sea with winds, seized him with a whirlwind and fixed him on a sharp rock, breathing out flames from his pierced breast. (translation mine)]

Other accounts have the shipwrecked Ajax drowned by an angry Poseidon.

459 Change your wilful purpose, then, surmount your desire:
 460 Cease, at others' expense, to rate your pleasures higher.

RODOMONT

461 Do you deem it, Sicambas, cruelty outrageous
 462 To seek to remedy the ill that tortures us?
 463 Is it a cruel act, with imminent death sure,
 464 To seek to soothe one's evil and one's pain to cure?
 465 Nothing is so precious as life, by us so relished;
 466 It does not return to us once it has been ravished;
 467 One cannot be blamed who sometimes is forced to be,
 468 In order to save it, of laws the adversary.

SICAMBRAS

469 But he does not deserve in the world any glory
 470 Who, from fear of death, brings shame on his memory.

RODOMONT

471 It is no dishonour in prison to seek still
 472 One's sweet liberty, or remedy for one's ill.

SICAMBRAS

473 But it is indeed dishonour, from lack of courage
 474 To support one's ill, to do one's fame a gross outrage.

RODOMONT

475 Is it wrong to wish in Love's ranks to go along?

SICAMBRAS

476 It is not to serve him to wish to do him wrong.

RODOMONT

477 One does not outrage Love when one enjoys his pleasure.

SICAMBRAS

478 One who gains, then loses, his fame mistakes his treasure.⁴⁵

45 "[M]istakes his treasure": orig. "faict sa proye mauuaise".

RODOMONT

479 Is it to lose one's fame to make love to a beauty?

SICAMBRAS

480 No, as long as one allows her full liberty.

RODOMONT

481 But if my amity she cruelly disdains?

SICAMBRAS

482 You must wait for Time, who everything obtains.

RODOMONT

483 And if one dies meanwhile?

SICAMBRAS

484 Such death would one not wish,
Not choose in dishonour's arms for all time to perish?

RODOMONT

485 There is no dishonour in forcing a mere slave.

SICAMBRAS

486 Forcing her will hardly make your force appear brave.

RODOMONT

487 War allows it.

SICAMBRAS

488 Its laws true justice violate,
For right is extinguished beneath an armour's weight.

RODOMONT

489 Many others have forced many slaves wholly servile.⁴⁶

SICAMBRAS

490 To do wrong like others shows a soul that is vile.

46 "[S]laves wholly servile": the tautology is in the original ("esclaves servile").

RODOMONT

491 But what against such passions can offer resistance?

SICAMBRAS

492 Justice, which must for all our actions furnish guidance.

RODOMONT

493 No power can resist love's formidable sway.

SICAMBRAS

494 Reason does resist it, and makes it pass away.

RODOMONT

495 The gods did not so.

SICAMBRAS

Then into faults they were lured.

RODOMONT

496 He who takes their road against straying is assured.

SICAMBRAS

497 Between what gods and men may do is placed a bar.

RODOMONT

498 Yet have they not behaved like the mad fools we are?

SICAMBRAS

499 It was for some good cause.

RODOMONT

This is for one as well.

500 How I long to succour my woe with Isabelle!

501 For either I must die, or else, by her possessing,

502 Stifle the agony cruelly me oppressing.

SICAMBRAS

503 Without dying can you find relief from your passion?

RODOMONT

504 Yes, but by forcing her to treat me with compassion.

SICAMBRAS

505 What pleasure from forcing a woman can you claim?

RODOMONT

506 To see my pain extinguished, extinguished my flame!

SICAMBRAS

507 Then you do not love her.

RODOMONT

508 Ah, more than I can say,
For I feel death for love of her often each day!

SICAMBRAS

509 You would not force her if that love had force in you!

RODOMONT

510 That is what the lady always wants one to do.

SICAMBRAS

511 A chaste lady is concerned to preserve her honour.

RODOMONT

512 A lady likes Venus, her eyes and sweet demeanour.⁴⁷

SICAMBRAS

513 But Isabelle cherishes her modesty so!

RODOMONT

514 Then she is unique among women here below.
515 For even the sky's great gods in love have delighted:
516 With the flames of love are goddesses' hearts ignited.

SICAMBRAS

517 But she is not willing to lapse by their example!

47 L. 512: presumably as a model of sexual seduction; the translation is literal.

RODOMONT

518 That's all one, it's what I want. My glory is ample
 519 Enough to repair her own, when, to serve my needs,
 520 She has incurred some blame upon her life and deeds.
 521 No more talk of this, then, since I will her enjoy,
 522 Whether gentleness or cruel force I employ. [Exeunt.]

[Scene iii]

REGNAULT

523 Over a hundred times has Phoebus, sweating, tired,
 524 Already sleepily to the chaste arms retired
 525 Of chilly Thetis, and Aurora just as often
 526 Has wept for her son killed, sighing as she did then,⁴⁸
 527 Since the day when I departed from that great city
 528 Where Charles in solemn style dispenses equity⁴⁹—
 529 Paris, the dwelling-place of glory, of valiance—
 530 To seek my kinsman, the honour of our France,
 531 Unequalled Roland, whose mighty hand in a flood
 532 A thousand times has bathed, spilling the savage blood
 533 Of our forefathers' faith's most cruel enemies,
 534 His hand the pale terror⁵⁰ of pagan adversaries:
 535 Roland, by God for defence of His law elected,
 536 The sceptre of the great King Charles to see protected;
 537 Roland, who has no peer for valour or for courage,⁵¹
 538 Who bears force in his heart and daring in his visage;
 539 Roland, unvanquished Prince of paladins of France,

48 Phoebus, driving the chariot of the sun, was supposed to sleep in the sea, for which Thetis is once again metonymic, at the end of each day. Aurora, goddess of the dawn (Gr. *Eos*) was the mother, by Tithonus, of the Trojan warrior Memnon, and her raising of his body after his slaying by Achilles was a popular artistic subject. See *OCD*, s.v. "Memnon (1)". Aurora's weeping evokes the morning dew.

49 "[I]n solemn style dispenses equity": orig. "sied au lict de la graue equité", referring to the parliamentary occasion known as the "*lit de justice*".

50 "[P]ale terror": orig. "palle terreur", a common transferred epithet.

51 "[F]or valour or for courage": orig. "en valeur, ny courage"—not simply redundant, "courage" in the context being a broader and deeper quality.

Pillar of our honour, our laws' strong sustenance;
 Roland, who, full of honour, for glory revered,
 Today by the very spirits of hell is feared;
 Roland, whom more than myself I love, my dear cousin;
 Roland, my faith's companion, fellow paladin—
 But alas, I have searched in vain—O misery!
 I have been told he is mad, in the grip of fury,
 Out of his mind with love, quite naked, armour-less,
 Running among fields, through meadows and woods,
 regardless.
 O cruel disaster! He in whose prowess lies
 The security of France is no longer wise:
 The ornament of heroes, the honour of knighthood,
 Now without his senses runs wildly through the wood.
 O France, what a loss, with consequence so abject
 You run the risk of being eternally shipwrecked!
 You lose all in losing him who was your salvation,
 Whose strength assured your unvanquished fame
 preservation.
 Thus in old times perished Priam, his sons, his town,
 When Hector by the proud Achilles was struck down;
 Thus perished Rome beneath the yoke of men perverse,
 Having lost Caesar, honour of the universe:⁵²
 Loss of a good head⁵³ means the loss most piteous
 Of the grieving members, whose death is hideous;
 A head is the head of order, order the source
 Of the public peace, henceforth left without resource.⁵⁴

52 Ll. 559-60: the reference is obviously to the ensuing civil wars generally, but the “men perverse” (orig. “peruers”) more particularly evoke the triumvirs Octavius, Antony and Lepidus, who had a bad reputation, in part thanks to Robert Garnier and to Huguenot propaganda linking them to contemporary French counterparts. See Richard Hillman, *French Reflections in the Shakespearean Tragic: Three Case Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp. 94-95.

53 “[H]ead”: orig. “chef,” whose double meaning is key to this familiar metaphor, although at other points “chief” seems a preferable translation.

54 “[H]enceforth left without resource”: orig. “qui tomboit en mal’heur”. The imperfect tense indicates that the speaker is still developing the effect of Caesar’s loss, and the translation attempts to make this clear, punctuating accordingly.

565 Without order, all mingles: unfounded⁵⁵ things tumble
 566 By thousands within a chaos of murky jumble.
 567 Thus if Roland is lost to us, Roland our chief,
 568 France will not be rendered any tranquil relief;
 569 There will be only weeping: men-at-arms will shed,
 570 Not the thick blood of foes, but their own tears instead;
 571 There will be only weeping, and our stricken hearts
 572 A thousand mournful sighs will render in all parts;
 573 There will be only weeping, as in her tears drowned,
 574 The woman bereft of husband, and joy, is found.⁵⁶
 575 Even so once wept those sisters, wretched in sorrows,
 576 Upon the river's bank, for their disastrous woes,
 577 As Niobe still on the mountain of Sipylon
 578 Laments, by the gods transformed to immobile stone.
 579 Even so wept Venus for her loving Adonis;
 580 Even so wept cruel Cupid, wounded amiss;
 581 Even so wept Phoebus for Daphne, rich in glory,
 582 Whose verdure revives brave conquerors' victory.
 583 Wherever you are, in my search I'll persevere,
 584 Roland—my all, my life, and my kinsman most dear;
 585 Whatever ill you feel, fury sharp in your head,
 586 I will either find you or end my life instead.
 587 For without you I cannot last from day till night—
 588 Even though several times, by love set alight
 589 For beautiful Angelique, in the same flame caught,
 590 The two of us peer to peer, soul to soul, have fought.

55 "[U]nfounded": orig. "iniustes"; for this sense, see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v. "injuste".

56 The following series of mythological bereavements, somewhat curiously in the context, privileges female emotion until it arrives at Cupid and Apollo in ll. 580-82. The latter more clearly prepare for the denigration of amorous passion that follows and is confirmed in the act's concluding Chorus.

The sisters of ll. 575-76 must be grieving for their brother Phaëton after his abortive driving of Phoebus' chariot and fall into the river Eridanus. Niobe was a stock figure of mourning (most often for her children) in classical antiquity and the Renaissance. Venus's ill-starred love for Adonis will later be evoked again by Regnault; see also the Introduction. Cupid wounded himself accidentally with the arrow meant for Psyche. Daphne, transformed into a laurel tree to escape from Apollo, provided conquerors with crowns of victory. On all these myths, see *OCD*, s.v. (among numerous other sources).

591 *But love disputes lightly upon the wind are borne,*
592 *Most generally dying before they are born;*
593 *No endless contention, no fierce quarrel infernal,*
594 *Should among paladins be inscribed as eternal—*
595 *Except what for the faith and Empire may grow,*
596 *For to God, our land and our law ourselves we owe.*
597 Then let our youthful quarrels from memory fade—
598 May Angelique never again our minds invade.
599 I will speak of her no more and am only bent
600 On finding you, my Roland, France's ornament.
601 But if, in searching for you, Rodomont I meet,
602 Or Gradasse or Farragut⁵⁷ should come me to greet,
603 Then with a spring in my step, Flamberge⁵⁸ in my hand,
604 I will be seen marching where the savage may stand.
605 Then Regnault shall be seen to try his valiance
606 Against the Saracens, the enemies of France:
607 Farragut, Sacripant and the fierce Rodomont
608 Shall learn to their great dismay the courage of
Clermont.⁵⁹

CHORUS

609 When comes the amorous flame
610 Reason from our soul to claim,
611 When we feel its burning joys,
612 Rank injustice is the price,
613 For Love, the father of vice,
614 All duty in us destroys.

615 He to extinction will draw
616 The Eternal's sacred law:
617 It gives way to his error.
618 Reason suffers banishing;

57 Gradasse (Gradasso) and Farragut (Ferraù), like Sacripant (Sacripante) and of course Rodomont (Rodomonte) himself, are fierce Saracen warriors in the *Orlando Furioso*.

58 “Flamberge”: Regnault’s name for his sword (subsequently a type of duelling sword).

59 Regnault, like his sister Bradamante (so in Ariosto), belongs to the house of Clermont (Chiarmonite).

619 O what a senseless thing
620 Is that amorous furor!

621 No whit that cruel god spares
622 Grief his mother Venus bears,⁶⁰
623 Nor Mars unconquered still:
624 All grant his privilege;
625 Both those of arms and knowledge
626 Live according to his will.

627 His redoubtable flames
628 At armed warriors he aims,
629 And at knowledge divine;
630 The brave soldier falls to love
631 And the sage, struck from above;
632 Both to one end decline.

633 But such inhuman rage
634 Could not force the courage
635 Fixed by sacred loyalty:
636 Faithful Lucrece knew it well;
637 You know it, chaste Isabelle,
638 Who die—not your chastity.

639 Iron, steel and threatening
640 May well force the bold daring
641 Of the bravest heart alive,
642 But they have no potency
643 Over modest constancy,
644 Which will despite furor thrive.

645 Loss holy, divine esteemed,
646 Which is by death redeemed,
647 One cannot evil call:
648 Dying preserves our glory,
649 Voiding the sword's victory

60 Cf. l. 579 above.

650 Over souls chaste and loyal.
 651 That is how—glorious,
 652 Modest and victorious—
 653 Isabelle will shine bright;
 654 Rodomont's rage gains force
 655 But chaste courage cannot force,
 656 Which will survive death's night.

Act II

Isabelle, Fleurdelys, Brandimart

[Scene i]

ISABELLE

657 Why, my eyes, why—you authors of my doleful woe⁶¹—
 658 Will you yet again open your tender lids so?
 659 Why do you still regard the brilliance of the skies,
 660 If your precious sun no longer shines for your eyes?
 661 What makes you sparkle still, O my exhausted pupils,
 662 When you ought to be drowning in your baleful ills?
 663 Alas, why am I here? Close, eyes, let sight be banned,
 664 Since violent death has ravished away their husband!⁶²
 665 For him alone—to follow him, fond glances give,
 666 To adore his eyes—do you wish, my eyes, to live.
 667 Your lustre served only that you might view his brow:
 668 Alas, he lives no more; then why do you live now?
 669 Close, O my eyes, as beneath the tomb-stone enclosed
 670 The body lies cold, of warm life⁶³ and soul deposed;

61 Her eyes are most obviously so-called because they show her desolate situation, but implicitly also because they have attracted Rodomont, as his love-sick complaints have made clear; see above, I.[ii.]191-92 *et passim*.

62 "[T]heir husband": orig. "leur espoux"—the momentary shift from directly addressing her eyes, if not merely accidental, may suggest her distraction.

63 "[W]arm life"—presumably the sense here of the original's "corps".

671 Close, O my eyes, to be closed as were formerly
 672 Hero's, by her Leander loved adoringly;
 673 Close, O my eyes, by the terms of Death's brusque
 decree,⁶⁴
 674 As formerly were closed the eyes of grieving Thisbe.⁶⁵
 675 Alas, gleam no longer, O miserable eyes:
 676 Your sun is dead, the radiant light of your skies;
 677 The light which shines in heaven seems to you mere
 darkness,
 678 Phoebus' rays conveying death's horror and distress.
 679 Nothing to you seems beautiful: the sky shows black,
 680 For what you possessed and gave you hope you now lack.
 681 Nothing to you seems beautiful: nothing that lives
 682 Is as Zeobin was, or joy or pleasure gives.
 683 Perfection here below Zeobin incarnated:
 684 To please the gods was my dear Zeobin created;
 685 And so they have ravished him, like their former prey,
 686 Troy's fair child, whom they in their ardour took away.⁶⁶
 687 Zeobin was the only one whose special beauty
 688 Subjugated my heart, ravished my liberty;
 689 Zeobin, he alone, was of Isabelle worthy
 690 For beauty, bravery, faith and nobility.
 691 O Zeobin, my Zeobin, even as tears
 692 By thousands roll from my eyes amid pain that sears,
 693 As a thousand cries I exclaim with grief intense
 694 To see myself—O sorrow!—deprived of your presence.
 695 You live on high, divine; your spirit, glorious,

64 "[B]y the terms of Death's brash decree": orig. "sous la Parque eshontee", with "la Parque" (from Lat. "*Parcae*") used metonymically for death, as often.

65 According to these famous instances of women loving faithfully unto death, Hero killed herself after Leander's death (by drowning), as did Thisbe after finding the corpse of Pyramus, who had mistakenly supposed her dead. It is worth comparing the similar discourse of another roughly contemporary heroine in discovering her lover dead: Hélène of Corinth in Galaut, *Phalante*, trans. Hillman, V.iv.1471-84.

66 The allusion, though uncertain, is most probably to Hector, an outstanding champion like Zeobin. Montreux's public might also think of Astyanax, the son of Hector and Andromache, who in *La Franciade* of Ronsard (under the name of Francus), is saved by Jupiter during the sack of Troy and goes on to found the French monarchy.

696 Shines forth there, like the twins,⁶⁷ as a torch luminous.
697 Alas, no longer do I love passionately
698 Your beautiful eyes; your glory I do not envy,
699 Nor regret that with the immortals as a spirit
700 You dwell, my dear Zeobin: their altars you merit.
701 But I weep for my fate, which to live on constrains me—
702 That fate which, alas, from following you restrains me.
703 Ah, that the self-same sword, so cruel to our passion,
704 Which mowed your fair youth down without the least
 compassion—
705 That the very blade which I was forced to see ravish
706 Your warlike vigour, my life also did not finish!
707 When, as you were striving, of Roland, your fast friend,
708 The honour, with his arms and armour, to defend,
709 His fierce foe, mad Mandrigard, stripped your body's
 soul,
710 From me your eyes, from you your dear lady, he stole!
711 Alas, I wished to die, for death ardently yearned,⁶⁸
712 Wished to kill myself, but from that purpose was turned
713 By you, dazed in my arms—as still, taken aback,
714 The field-flower injured⁶⁹ by thunderstorm attack
715 Languishes in pallor, enslaved to death already,
716 Loses ruddy hue and beauty, cannot stay steady,
717 And, since it is no longer prized, in cruel style,
718 All with a negligent foot round about it file.
719 Thus, my dear Zeobin, as my arms held you fainting,
720 I watched your face as it grew pale with death's grim
 painting;
721 I watched your eye, to me the most resplendent light—
722 An eye that still as prisoner holds my soul tight—
723 As, wheeling slowly around death, life lost possession,

67 “[T]wins”: the heroic brothers Castor and Pollux, deified and stellified as Gemini; see *SCD*, s.v. “Dioscuri”.

68 The scene of Zeobin's death is faithfully recreated from Ariosto, Canto XXIV.78-85.

69 “[I]njured”: orig. “diffamee”—presumably by extension of the basic sense of an attack on reputation to quasi-physical “atteint à l’image de qqn ou de qqc” (*Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. “Diffamer”, def. I.B).

724 Your face now quite pale, without colour or expression.
 725 O piteous spectacle! O inhuman pain!
 726 Might I possibly find breath enough to explain?
 727 Could enough courage by you, my tongue, be acquired
 728 To tell how my dear Zeobin at last expired?
 729 Alas, you could not—too cruel!—pain so intense
 730 Inflict on me by rehearsing those sad events.
 731 Alas, you could not! My heart finds too much agony
 732 In sadly thinking of such crass calamity!
 733 Thinking, did I say? I think of no other thing,
 734 For to Zeobin all my thoughts are bound to cling:
 735 My fame, my happiness, the peace I should so prize⁷⁰
 736 Already live with him in the vault of the skies,
 737 For, as site of those rich blessings, did he not raise
 738 My soul—my soul in his blood washed—with his own
 rays?⁷¹
 739 I live, and live no more, like any corpse, no doubt,
 740 Whose spirit by the sword, alas, is driven out;
 741 I live, and live no more, alert to meet the hour
 742 When, languishing, I perish by some happy power,
 743 To leave this place and go to you, to live with you,
 744 O Zeobin, my husband, who to me was true.
 745 Faithful to you will be the dying Isabelle,
 746 As to your faithful dame you used to be as well:
 747 She will die, by a hand that knows nothing of pity,
 748 Before offending ever our chaste amity.
 749 Rodomont the cruel, who holds her prisoner,
 750 To shake that first amity has no power on her;
 751 Despite him, my Zeobin, Isabelle persists
 752 As your faithful half-self, as long as she exists:
 753 For to this hand's force her life shall subjected be
 754 Before she shall feel ravishment of chastity;
 755 By a thousand deaths she will be seen life to fly

70 “[P]ease I should so prize”: orig. “mon repos gracieux”.

71 The unmistakable Christic imagery here anticipates Isabelle's translation to virtual sainthood through martyrdom, in keeping with the *Orlando Furioso* (XXIX.27-30), where God personally effects her reunion with Zerbino.

756 Before she shall feel both her faith and body die—
 757 Happy that in dying proof she will render you
 758 That, as her soul is yours, her loyalty is, too;
 759 Happy that in dying her faith to you she gives
 760 That although you are dead, alas, in you she lives;
 761 Happy that in dying the whole world she will show
 762 That Isabelle had no less loyalty than sorrow.
 763 Alas, cruel Zeobin! Why did you negate
 764 The longing I felt your virtue to imitate?
 765 Why did you prevent me from dying happily
 766 When the soul flew from your body gloriously?
 767 Why did you choose, in leaving, to leave me behind
 768 Without pleasure, languishing, in turmoil of mind,
 769 Slave of that cruel one, whose flagrant impudence
 770 Constantly threatens my modesty with offence?
 771 Slave of that tiger, true offspring of cruelty,
 772 Who seeks to violate my sacred chastity!
 773 But cruel Rodomont, though with furor your face
 774 Is painted, and of flaming rage bears every trace—
 775 And even though your heart with blood and terror boils—
 776 Yet you shall not, for all that, have me in your toils.
 777 This modest hand, already by injuries scathed,
 778 Shall first in my own blood a thousand times be bathed:
 779 Sooner shall I be seen eager to feel the shock
 780 Of tumbling from the dread height of a lofty rock;
 781 Sooner shall I be seen drowned in waves turbulent,
 782 Or by a fierce tiger in a hundred parts rent;
 783 Sooner buried alive as deeply as may be,
 784 Sooner dead from hunger, from pain and misery—
 785 Than Rodomont shall ever of Isabelle outrage
 786 The faith, sacred love, and chastity firm and sage.
 787 No, no, I wish to die, nor can I my life bear
 788 Any longer enslaved to such manifold care.
 789 I wish, I wish to die, so that my cries of anguish
 790 Together with my days, I may gently extinguish;
 791 I wish, I wish to die, alas!, so that my ending
 792 New sight of my blessed Zeobin may me bring—
 793 Zeobin, who has my sighs (O Zeobin!), tears,
 794 Lamenting cries and pity, until death appears
 795 To take this ill-treated body, which once was his,

796 And now, alas, tomb-less,⁷² the merest nothing is.
 797 Zeobin, if Isabelle you still have in mind—
 798 Isabelle, who was as your faithful spouse assigned—
 799 Receive these sorrowful tears, and for solemn prayers
 800 Take these cries, moans and abject utterance of cares.

FLEURDELYS [*entering*]

801 Sister, what good do they do you, these long laments,
 802 Which rekindle your half-extinguished discontents?
 803 What good is the gloomy recital of your woe,
 804 If of your virtuous life it makes you the foe?
 805 What good do these tears do you, if their lively course
 806 Does nothing but give your fiery pain fresh force?
 807 *Be appeased, sister. Equally as in our joy,*
 808 *When we suffer, the same bold front we must employ,*
 809 *For one cannot be taken wisdom to possess*
 810 *Who lapses in strength and courage when in distress;*
 811 *He is hardly constant who lacks a stable state*
 812 *To combat the adversity imposed by Fate.*
 813 *Heaven in our misfortunes tries our constancy,*
 814 *For it is never found in honour's company;*
 815 *Amidst our hardships is our virtue's lustre found:*
 816 *The chief who has not fought at all is not renowned.*
 817 *Happy is he who such afflictions can endure*
 818 *With manly constancy: his prudence is thus sure.*
 819 Bright Phoebus⁷³ makes himself admired in our eyes
 820 By the thick mass of clouds that obfuscate the skies;
 821 Without the gloom of night, his golden gleam restored
 822 Would never be by mortals, as it is, adored.
 823 Thus, sister, even thus, across and through our woes,
 824 Amid the pallid horror of our bitter throes,
 825 Our virtue shines forth—virtue rendered luminary

72 “[T]omb-less”: orig. “Depouillé d’un tombeau”—ironic, given the elaborate tomb which the guilt-stricken Rodomont will erect, as well as the vanity of that exercise.

73 “Phoebus”: orig. “Phœbe”, but the masculine agreements (“Le clair Phœbe”) confirm that Phoebus (the sun), and not Phoebe (the moon), is meant. Cf. the original’s “Phebe” in II.[ii.]1047 and 1070, where the reference is unequivocal.

Thanks to the pain which is its eternal contrary.
 If once you kept your sacred faith without surcease
 To your dear Zeobin, who reposes in peace
 Among the immortals, and who, worthy of glory,
 On all good people's hearts engraves his memory,
 Let your fair virtue equally steadfast remain:
 Let not your strong spirit be beaten down with pain.
 The greater the peril, the more doubtful the chance,
 The more proof the brave commander gives of his valiance.
 The most assured means of marking our fortitude
 Possessed by wingèd Time is danger's magnitude:
 The more the sea mounts up—treacherous, insolent,
 Horribly whistling, by the winds made turbulent—
 The greater the risk of striking a rock is known,
 The more prudent the faithful helmsman will be shown.
 The good, in their affliction, one may wise declare
 Only when their harms with impassive brow they bear:
For as gold demonstrates in the fire its value,
Likewise tribulation puts to the test our virtue.
 One must endure before hoping to merit glory:
 Otherwise virtue would suffice for victory.
By suffering is gained honour sacred, immortal:
 Hercules' labours made him a god from a mortal.
 Therefore, sister, mollify this cruel complaint;
 The honour of Isabelle it threatens to taint:
 The child of no account⁻⁷⁴ is permitted to weep;
The wise, with prudence, to themselves their hurt must
keep:
 Do so with your own, and do not in this way pine
 To sadden Zeobin's soul, holy and divine—
 A soul which, seeing you turn pale in tearful plight,
 Will have no further thought of his divine delight.
 For the lover's soul suffers when she he loves so,
 Wrongly feeling pain, laments for him in her sorrow;
 They have but a single will, share one selfsame longing,
 Make one whole together, to one body belonging.

74 “[O]f no account”: orig. “sans valeur”.

861 If, while here below, Zeobin lived through his years,
 862 He had concern for your life, for your harm knew fears;
 863 If your happiness was his source of joy alone,
 864 If your ill he judged not so much yours as his own,
 865 Don't you suppose that today, when he lives in glory,
 866 He still retains you and your deeds in memory?
 867 Death does not ravish, together with our sad days,
 868 Our sacred loves' chaste memory, which with us stays,
 869 *And the blessed spirits, whose dwelling now is higher,*
 870 *To know our secrets still continue to desire;*
 871 *Alas, they do not fail, for being in the sky,*
 872 *To recall those who in these lower regions lie.*
 873 *Rather, they are rendered, by the sacred bestowing*
 874 *Of the holy Word divine, more divine in knowing:*
 875 *Before the Immortal Presence all is revealed;*
 876 *No torment of the spirit is suffered concealed.*
 877 Your Zeobin is there, so his fidelity
 878 Of his dear Isabelle retains the memory:
 879 He sees you, your woeful miseries he sustains,
 880 For your trouble is his, your troubles are his pains.
 881 Just think, if seeing you puts him in wretched state,
 882 What ill he feels, how his pitiful pain is great;
 883 Alas, by comforting your tearful plaints and woes,
 884 Appease his sufferings, put an end to his sorrows:
 885 Though you may be to your own relief disinclined,
 886 Do not towards him be so cruelly unkind.⁷⁵
 887 So I beg you, sister, keeping your spirit tranquil,
 888 Patiently to await the great God's sacred will.
 889 He knows what we need, for His hand never abates
 890 In prudent knowledge, as the world He regulates.
 891 Await His bounty, which, in the midst of our night,
 892 In our dark sorrows, with favour to us gleams bright.

ISABELLE

893 Ah, it is very truly said: those whom harsh pain,

75 "[C]ruelly unkind": orig. "cruellement cruelle"—a paroxysm of pleonism highlighting the ubiquitous term.

894 With burning torches, does not cruelly constrain,
895 Who are free of distress, whom reason can assure,
896 Who, being healthy, have no need to seek a cure,
897 Who do not bear the burden of cruel lament,
898 Whose soul is not afflicted with merciless torment,
899 And who are quite exempted from our tribulations—
900 They can well offer the sufferers consolations!
901 But no—only let them, tortured similarly,
902 Suppose they can act as they counsel readily!
903 For he knows nothing of pain's power or extent,
904 Who beneath its relentless weight has never bent,
905 And none of martyrdom can judge the awful value
906 Who has not breathed as many sighs as now I do.
907 Sister, if, as with me, heaven had claimed your heart,
908 Your whole life's welfare, your beloved Brandimart;
909 If wounded in a thousand places you were left,
910 With countless griefs, like me of Zeobin bereft—
911 Slave of a tyrant, type of infidelity,
912 Enemy of my fame and of my chastity—
913 How much more than mine, mortified with deadly anguish,
914 Would your poor spirit for your faithful husband
 languish?
915 How many chill tears would roll, those eyes to annoy
916 Which, free of my misery, now sparkle with joy?
917 What hot sighs would your soul pour forth without
 restraint,
918 Which feels not the pain always pressing me to faint?
919 How many sad cries would you disperse with all freedom—
920 You who don't know how searing is my martyrdom?
921 To speak, one must first know: only experience,
922 *Queen of the universe, is the mother of science.*
923 Someone who upon the back of Neptune, the swarthy,⁷⁶
924 Has never yet, because too fearful, ploughed the sea,
925 And has not seen how cruelly it leaps and mounts,
926 Though an orator, cannot render real accounts:

76 “[S]warthy”: orig. “bazané”; apart from the seeming tradition of portraying Neptune-Poseidon with dark beard and complexion, evoked is the dark and angry aspect of a stormy sea.

927 *One must know the evil before one can be fit*
 928 *To judge the ease of vanquishing or changing it.*
 929 One must have sighed, as well as from a bitter source
 930 A deep river of cold tears have poured with great force,
 931 Before judging, alas, with what, if any, ease
 932 One may mollify one's woe, one's mourning appease.
 933 Sister, my chaste sister, no one is capable
 934 Of knowing how much the losing is deplorable
 935 Of a dead spouse, unless she has, as I have done,
 936 Lost hers, and one who was, as much as mine, perfection—
 937 Unless she has, as I have done, known loyal, holy,
 938 Beautiful, a most faithful husband's amity.
 939 *To lament a thing worth little, few cries suffice;*
 940 *But many for the loss of something of great price.*
 941 Alas, I have lost all. Can you be mystified
 942 If day and night in weary weeping I abide?
 943 No, no, dear sister mine, until these pallid eyes
 944 Are sealed with welcome slumber when this body dies,
 945 While I am still able to utter scattered fragments,
 946 I want no one to soothe my complaints and laments,
 947 For my tears, troubled terms and tragical discourses⁷⁷
 948 Must survive as long as my very life's resources.
 949 Nothing but death alone will still my lamentations,
 950 Nothing but end of life my cruel declamations.

FLEURDELYS

951 But triumphant over hardships we hardly call
 952 Someone who seeks out death to put an end to all.

ISABELLE

953 *But one afraid of it must be by nature frail:*
 954 *For death does not make the prudent with fear turn pale.*

FLEURDELYS

955 *But if death is sweet, do mortals acquire fame*

77 "[T]ragical discourses": orig. "tragiques discours"—an exceptional metadramatic effect, which the translation echoes with "declamations" (orig. "complaintes") in l. 950.

956 *By hanging themselves in immortality's name?*

ISABELLE

957 *One must not fear the sea when it appears propitious:*
 958 *Happy he whose happiness can be expeditious.⁷⁸*

FLEUDELYS

959 But if, to effect our death, God does not yet please,
 960 Should we exert ourselves to put to death our bodies?

ISABELLE

961 *Never will God with harsh rigour a death decry*
 962 *Endured one's honour and one's soul to sanctify.*

FLEURDELYS

963 But if with cruel hand one must advance its course?

ISABELLE

964 Better advance it than be the victim of force.

FLEURDELYS

965 That is to act as one's own cruel enemy!

ISABELLE

966 But to preserve one's honour with fidelity.

FLEURDELYS

967 She who takes her own life no praise has merited.

ISABELLE

968 Yes, she has, if to live meant chastity forfeited!

FLEURDELYS

969 The soul which does not consent is hardly culpable.

ISABELLE

970 The spirit once forced is always miserable.

78 The translation here can only gesture towards the word-play of the original: "Heureux qui à cest heur peut de bonne heure atteindre."

FLEURDELYS

971 Lucrece, although raped, is enthroned in highest honour.

ISABELLE

972 Lucrece required death to extinguish her horror.

FLEURDELYS

973 Had she lived, she would have been wholly without blame.

ISABELLE

974 But regret would have tortured her soul all the same.

FLEURDELYS

975 What regret for one holy, with sin unacquainted?

ISABELLE

976 Because her offended soul with pain had been tainted.

FLEURDELYS

977 But the fault rebounds and attaches to the culprit.

ISABELLE

978 But to feel its loss the offence does not permit.

FLEURDELYS

979 That is no reason why one ought oneself to kill.

ISABELLE

980 One ought to attempt to withdraw oneself from ill.

FLEURDELYS

981 But one can without dying succour any pain.

ISABELLE

982 Not so, if it is too ruthlessly inhumane.

FLEURDELYS

983 One is guilty of one's own death in acting so.

ISABELLE

984 Far better die than have nagging remorse bestow

985 Its harsh suffering on our spirit; *better lifeless*

986 *Than to see dishonour our memory oppress.*⁷⁹
 987 So that is my choice. For, O sister dear to me,
 988 A gracious death my misery will remedy.
 989 Isabelle will perish before her telltale face
 990 Shows shame upon her brow, the sign of her disgrace;
 991 Isabelle will die, sword or fire will her quell,
 992 To follow her Zeobin to heaven or hell—
 993 Wherever she may need to go to have him found:
 994 Across a thousand deaths to seek him I am bound.
 995 It is not so easy the thought to set aside
 996 Of one's defunct beloved, whom one saw as he died;
 997 It is not so easy to lose the memory
 998 Of him who was the very author of our glory.
 999 That thought ravishes all thoughts from me, except one
 1000 Which goads me to live with him and to death to run.
 1001 I think of nothing else, and my sorrowful thought
 1002 Is by no other wretched agony distraught.
 1003 I have resolved to die with utmost bravery
 1004 Before Rodomont's forcing of my chastity.
 1005 But while awaiting that day which must make me joyous
 1006 In your fair soul's company, soul victorious—
 1007 Awaiting that sweet day when my body, acquitted
 1008 Of my mournful pains, to those men shall be committed
 1009 Who must bear it to lie beneath the heavy stone—
 1010 I wish always to weep, my soul's sorrow bemoan.
 1011 Do not even think, sister, of thwarting my will:
 1012 *One afflicted bounds pleasure by his tears that spill.*

FLEURDELYS

1013 *But one afflicted becomes yet more miserable*
 1014 *By dwelling on his ill, if it proves incurable.*

ISABELLE

1015 *But one afflicted avenges himself by weeping,*
 1016 *For without tears, without cries, his woes remain sleeping.*

79 The italicised segment is probably that intended as sententious; cf. the edition.

FLEURDELYS

1017 *The more one thinks of pain, the more cruel it feels.*

ISABELLE

1018 But who enduring it his thought from it repeals?

FLEURDELYS

1019 Those who to cure themselves are well prepared with
reason.

ISABELLE

1020 In spite of the physician, quite often a poison⁸⁰
1021 Causes our body's death, whatever careful cures
1022 To work its preservation the body procures.
1023 Likewise when hopeless pain languishes by the hour,
1024 Reason exerts upon it neither force nor power.

FLEURDELYS

1025 But what we do in life falls under reason's sway.

ISABELLE

1026 Not so, from the moment when love comes into play.

FLEURDELYS

1027 Love without reason errs in its excessive ardour.

ISABELLE

1028 A love strong and vital must be mingled with furor.

FLEURDELYS

1029 By furor it is from all decency released.

ISABELLE

1030 To love without furor is the love of a beast.

FLEURDELYS

1031 What does furor bring but many a bitter wrong?

80 The rhyme "reason [raison]" / "poison" is in the original.

ISABELLE

1032 Not so—a lover's feelings cannot be too strong.

FLEURDELYS

1033 What regulates love? Reason, sacred and mature.

ISABELLE

1034 Who knows what love is who does not love beyond measure?

FLEURDELYS

1035 All things are in need of being measured and weighed.

ISABELLE

1036 Not loving amity, where no laws are obeyed.

1037 Sister, no more of this. I yearn to end my life,

1038 My Zeobin, alas, to follow as his wife.

1039 Nothing can compel me this longing to abjure

1040 Unless Zeobin lived, my one and only pleasure,

1041 For I cannot live, seeing myself so bereft,

1042 Slave of a cruel man, in captivity left.

[*Exeunt.*]

[Scene ii]

BRANDIMART

1043 Sun, nurturing sun, you who with a round of light

1044 Kindle the sky with countless beauties for our sight;

1045 Sun, nurturing sun, who with a torch burning bright

1046 Gild on every side this earth made damp by night⁸¹—

1047 Fair Phoebus, who renders you propitious to all

1048 Except to me, on whom you let your anger fall:⁸²

1049 Alas, each beneath your vivid light except me

1050 Opens his eyes on that which pleases him to see:

1051 Each sees his own happiness; each sees, thanks to you—

81 “[M]ade damp by night”: orig. “relante”—a doubtful meaning, but the most suitable here; see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. “Relent”.

82 As suits this Christian universe blended with pagan mythology, the question implies the subordination of Phoebus (the sun) to a higher divine principle.

1052 Except me!—what pleases his eyes, contents his view.
1053 Except me!—who am without that fair lady's sight
1054 Whose eyes have ravished my soul by their cruel might:
1055 Fleurdelys, alas, whose blushing cheeks frequently
1056 I courted, as I languished for her, honourably;
1057 Fleurdelys, alas, of beauties most beautiful,
1058 Who occupies the foremost rank of dames most faithful;
1059 Fleurdelys, alas, whom, in many thousand places,
1060 Infinite times I have seen charmed by my eyes' graces.⁸³
1061 But alas, where is she, and what peaceable country
1062 Gives you harbourage today, O my most dear lady?
1063 What land feels the gleams of your brilliant
 magnificence?
1064 What earth breathes the rays of your beauty's
 beneficence?
1065 All the while that I have suffered grief for your
 absence,
1066 A thousand cruel darts have done me cruel offence.
1067 Alas, all light flees from me, your eye out of sight:
1068 The brightest day appears to me eternal night.
1069 Thus paces fearfully someone who makes his way
1070 Through woods apart, when Phoebus fails light to convey
1071 To the sky overhead, pressed on his round to go,
1072 Brilliantly illuminating things here below.
1073 This amorous flame, this faith trustworthy and whole
1074 Which fastens my heart to yours, my soul to your soul;
1075 This splendid amity, which makes one body's substance
1076 Of our two, united by mutual alliance;
1077 And this ardent love, which nothing can from us ravish
1078 Till our lives are ravished when fierce death makes us
 perish,
1079 Brings me death without you, as, without moisture
 drying,
1080 One sees the yellow flower languishing, then dying—
1081 Brings me death without you, and a permanent state
1082 Of dreaming of you, my life, as death I await.

83 “[C]harmed by my eyes’ graces”: orig. “*idolâtrer mes yeux*”.

How strongly in our hearts is modest love alive,
When honour and true faith in its company thrive!
With faith its prisoner,⁸⁴ how sacred amity,
In two loving hearts keeps trust and vitality!

Nothing more sacred than Love: at Cupid's command
Mars yields armour to arrows, axe to flaming brand;
Jupiter respects him; likewise the Muses even
Are Love's captives, joyful when love to them is given.
Thus this sacred Love, jealous of my honour gained,
Wished to take me captive and have my heart constrained,
So that I might partake of the immortal glory
The lover deserves who is faithful to his lady.

Faithful to you I am, and while I must drag through
These half-dead days, just as faithful I shall continue,
My dear Fleurdelys, invoking every hour
The great God's grace that you may remain, by His power,
Here below still, while, as the first Heaven to greet,
I may prepare, contented, our glorious seat.

*The lover faced with death is a hundred times happy
Whose life is ravished from him a single time only,
Who does not die twice—oh, what heart-breaking
distress!—*

By seeing her die who had lived as his heart's mistress.

For it is death indeed to see one's lady perish—
To remain in a body and have one's soul vanish:
The lover's dame does both soul and vigour impart;
He will carry her always pictured in his heart;
He is left lifeless when she is taken away,
For her untroubled safety is his life's mainstay.

Then may the great God grant that I the cruel blow
Of death, before that great misfortune, undergo,
And that my body, pierced and dragged into the tomb,
Does not see its dear lady borne to that same room.

Meanwhile, my sun, in whatever place you may be,
Wherever your eyes may send forth their rays of beauty,
Alas, be mindful of your lover ever faithful,

84 “[P]risoner”: orig. “captiue”—here a willing captive, evidently.

1118 Of your dear Brandimart, who, with lament most mournful,
 1119 Heavily drags his coffin, feels his sad demise,
 1120 By the rigour of fate deprived of your fair eyes.
 1121 But I will search for you at nearly any cost:
 1122 Let my blood, my pulse, my breath willingly be lost,
 1123 Pleasure and repose, or, alas, let me find you,
 1124 Beauty, whose lovely eyes make my death overdue.
 1125 Not fear of finding a barbarous infidel,
 1126 Who with a fierce voice may summon me to a duel—
 1127 Neither of mortal men, nor fierce beasts, any fear—
 1128 With my labour of seeking you can interfere.
 1129 Therefore, wherever the sun spreads his tranquil glow,
 1130 To seek you now, O Fleurdelys, my dame, I go,
 1131 Sure that a glorious death will not come amiss,
 1132 As long as one more time your fair eyes I may kiss.

CHORUS

1133 No virtue in holiness higher
 1134 Can be than chastity;
 1135 All things in this base world expire,
 1136 But it has proved well worthy
 1137 To live forever—happy, holy, fair—
 1138 Because its glory can death overbear.
 1139 It covers up in the chaste dame
 1140 All faults that one could cite,
 1141 As the sun renders by its flame
 1142 The clouds glowing and bright.
 1143 Thus one sees chastity, when it is faithful,
 1144 Making of vice a virtue most beautiful.
 1145 By it one sees to be protected
 1146 Faith sacrosanct and blest;
 1147 As well as the lady subjected
 1148 To law's fiery test:
 1149 For never does one see a woman chaste
 1150 Condemned to be by ugly blame disgraced.
 1151 Better she should her life forsake
 1152 Than that nurturing flower;
 1153 Death all strength from her will take,
 1154 But the sacred honour
 1155 Issued with joy from that virtue sublime

1156

Lives on beyond the end of mortal time.

Act III

Regnault, Brandimart, Isabelle

[Scene i]

REGNAULT

- 1157 O plague that turns mortals pale, makes them
miserable!
- 1158 Love, who drew from the great gods godhead redoubtable—
- 1159 Love, father of evils, author of water-courses
- 1160 That flow from our eyes, which are our miseries’
sources!⁸⁵
- 1161 Ah, why did your shameless mother not meet her death,
- 1162 In love with Mars as she was, in giving you breath⁸⁶—
- 1163 Your mother, who, no less than we, feelingly knows
- 1164 Your bitter anger by dint of your poisoned arrows?
- 1165 Your mother, whom (as you do us) you have inflamed—
- 1166 Now by a fair shepherd’s,⁸⁷ now by a god’s love tamed;
- 1167 Your mother, who so often has complained of you
- 1168 As a child lacking feeling, faith and friendship, too.
- 1169 O Love too cruel! How many virulent pains
- 1170 Have you long since planted in the depths of my veins?

85 “[S]ources” (orig. identical): the play on words evokes the common conceit of the eyes as receiving and transmitting the force of love for both better and worse, as first expressed here by Rodomont (I.[ii.]153-54).

86 The union of Venus and Mars participates in a long symbolic tradition implying love’s ambivalence; see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, enl. and rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books with Faber and Faber, 1967), pp. 86-96. It is hard not to find an ironic reflection on the character’s distorted vision in his notion that Venus might have died in childbirth.

87 “[F]air shepherd” (orig. “beau pasteur”): the only one of the loves of Venus-Aphrodite regularly so described was Anchises, the father of Aeneas; see the site *Theoi Greek Mythology*, <<https://www.theoi.com/Olympios/AphroditeLoves2.html>> (accessed 26 June 2024). Although mentioned in ll. 1201-2 below, Adonis would not really qualify.

How many lengthy torments have you made me see?
Since Angelique's eyes burned to be the death of me?
Since for her both my native land I left behind
And Charles, now to the danger of that war consigned
That the pagan princes, blood-red with cruelty,
Kindled as far as to the base of his great city—
Even as far as Paris, which, by me defended,
Much great glory to my valorous feats appended.
How many times have I, burning on every side,⁸⁸
Travelled across cold seas, deserts remote and wide,
Overcome brave knights, and endured adversities
To find Angelique, cruel to my miseries?
Beautiful Angelique, who captive as her own
Holds the hearts of all those knights who themselves have
shown,
Beneath Mars's banner, countless times invincible—
Heroes who daunt the gods of heaven and of hell.
How many times, in our love for her ever ardent,
Both nights and days entire have we either spent,
My dear Roland and I, with each other in fight,
Or in seeking through all the world to have her sight?
O potent Cupid! Mars's courage has its flaws,
And dangers are bound to give the doughtiest pause,
But those who bear the stamp of your mark invisible
Can all things endure, are in combat invincible.
The weakest lover supposes he has more might
Than Roger or Roland in the midst of the fight—
Such power potent Love exerts upon our state,
Which makes our valour come alive in spite of Fate.
Alas, where has that time gone when I was adored
By Angelique—yes, more hotly than was enamoured
The heart of Venus when with Adonis, her treasure,
She came down from the sky to take her fill of pleasure?
Angelique with desperate love for me then burned:
My face was joy, my eyes the clouds to sunshine turned;

88 “[B]urning on every side”: orig. “bruslant de tous costez”—presumably referring to the common military tactic; see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. “Brûler”.

1205 One saw her in a maddened state, at any price,
 1206 Chase after me, whose bosom was as cold as ice;
 1207 Her eyes burned for mine, with scorn for honour replete;
 1208 Decent restraint could not cool her audacious heat.
 1209 Her vows she offered, and sweet prayerful entreaties
 1210 Importuned my soul to succour her miseries:
 1211 I was her good, her all—me alone she desired,
 1212 And only by my influence her soul respired.
 1213 As the frozen flower that again feels the zephyr
 1214 Raises its fair face, senses its breath softly stir,
 1215 Recovers its red colour, its beauty repairs,
 1216 And responds to the return of summer's sweet airs,
 1217 Just so, on seeing me, breath came to Angelique —
 1218 Angelique for rare beauty here below unique.
 1219 She loved only me; none but myself might be able
 1220 To appease her ardour, soothe her turmoil unstable.
 1221 But being then enemy of my future glory,
 1222 Unworthy of enjoying the brave victory
 1223 That Love had granted me to master such a beauty,
 1224 Hardened I remained, quite frozen with cruelty.
 1225 The more her love for me, with ardent love infected,
 1226 The more her love and her fierce pleading I rejected;
 1227 Nothing so much as she was hated, mocked by me:
 1228 I fled her fair face, her faith held up to mockery,
 1229 Making her know feelingly, at her own expense,
 1230 How cruel were the pain and the fury intense
 1231 Of many knights, who, seeing her their love despise,
 1232 Languished, consumed by beams that issued from her eyes.
 1233 Thus often Love, angered by our audacity,
 1234 Suppresses our arrogance, effaces our glory,
 1235 To our cost with the selfsame torments us afflicts
 1236 As our disdain on our woeful lovers inflicts.
 1237 In the same way faithless Cyprine⁸⁹ formerly felt
 1238 The anguish which cruelly to lovers she dealt:
 1239 Enkindled in her flame, she was compelled to learn
 1240 How cruel are the pains in which poor lovers burn.

89 "Cyprine": i.e., Venus.

Thus at that period I caused that lovely dame
To suffer the rigour of the amorous flame—
That flame with which she set the valiant heart alight
Of many a manly conqueror and proud knight.
But Love, offended by a posture so severe—
Potent Love, who wishes that all should him revere—
Punished me by making me subject to that pain
Which Angelique for me had been forced to sustain.
Of Love's two arrows, one is sharp, the other blunt:
One kindles love, while the other repels its brunt;
That of gold lights fire, snuffed out by that of lead.
My heart by the former was in base manner wounded:
Then I loved Angelique, but she, quite contrary,
By the second arrow newly stricken, unwary,
Scorned my love now, and was seized with astonishment
That, blind, she so much time in love with me had spent.
My face seemed ugly to her, which she had thought
pleasant;
Hers seemed to me lovely, which I had held unpleasant;
She recognised her grievous fault and blamed her error
In being so long for me in a state of furor.
I sought her then, while she, moved by contrary sense,
Evaded my eyes, disdainfully shunned my presence.
Alas, like hers before, my love was now as keen;
And her heart with hate was armed, just as mine had been:
So I became slave to her whom, in my bravery,
I was accustomed proudly to keep in slavery.
Such a slave at one time was the great son of Thetis
To his slave, his very heart, the lovely Briseis.⁹⁰
But that divergent love, with its varying sum,
Concluded with the strangest conceivable outcome:
God freed me from it, doing me more good thereby
Than to my cousin Roland, whom that cruel tie
Still so tightly binds it does his reason surmount,
And, mad, of his honour he makes no more account.
But I will go search for him and do what I may

90 On the relation of Achilles and Briseis, see above, n. 42.

1276 To make his furor, with his troubles, pass away.
[*Enter Brandimart; manet Regnault.*]

BRANDIMART

What have I heard since that city I left behind
Enclosed by fertile lands as the Seine's courses wind,
When beyond rich Paris's sacred walls I journeyed,
My arms on my back, and did on the road proceed?
Alas, what did I hear? Good God, good God, I dare not
Let my mouth pronounce what such woe in me begot.
Shall I say that Roland, of my friends most trustworthy,
Injured by love, transformed to his own enemy,
Little caring for his fame, or for France's welfare,
Is running through the woods, of all things unaware?
Alas, I dare not speak, but I think of it only:
I sigh, I die, and do so indeed most cruelly.
Not speak of it, then. But what? Does not my shame lie
In hiding a misfortune no one would deny?
Therefore I will tell how, subjected to love's pain,
After so much suffering, he became insane.
Since first to Paris came that lady wondrous fair
Who to Gallafron's⁹¹ throne was the infidel heir,
Angelique, with those green eyes of hers, whose rare
 beauties
Had the power so many hearts, and wills, to seize,
Roland felt that in his very soul had been lighted
A flaming brazier, by that lady's eyes ignited:
He resolved to hold those fair eyes in adoration,
Which like two suns illumined by their radiation.
As when night spreads its fearful darkness here below,
One sees amongst its lights the pale moon brightly glow,
Which appears by contrast worshipful in our eyes
And to resemble the sacred torch of the skies,
Thus beautiful amongst all shone forth Angelique:
She stood out in beauty like a Phoenix unique.
Roland adored her, therefore, but on the same day,

91 Ariosto's Galafrone, ruler of Cathay ("*Cataio*"), fancifully located "*in India*" (Canto I.43).

Love's dart struck Regnault in the identical way
With love for Angelique—like many a brave knight
Surmounted by Love, though victorious in fight.⁹²
As two young stags which Love's fiery heat suborns,
Furious with frustration, and armed with their horns,
Combat each other in front of the antlered hind,
Sole object of their fight, to both by Love assigned;
They struggle and, in giving hurts, are agile found;
Their bodies both are pierced, are seen to fall to
ground,
All bloodied here and there, half-dead and without
strength,
Yet striving to return to the duel at length:
Just so Roland and Regnault, those knights amorous,
Each more daring than the other, each more courageous,
To possess Angelique were in their hearts intent
On combatting, and deadly injury they meant.
Then Charles, that great king—and none is greater than
he—
Prevented that grave outcome by a wise decree,
Ordaining that, of the two knights, the one whose sword
Should kill more foes would win the dame as his reward.
But that happy hope was vain, being shunned by her,
And Charles was defeated, Agramont his vanquisher.
From that time, Roland ever since has loved that lady,
Although she set no value on his amity:
A thousand seas he crossed, attempting her to spy,
And to gain her amity did not fear to try
The valour of Regnault, Gradasse's potent prowess,
That of Ferragut or Sarce's king, famed for fierceness.⁹³
But though countless pains, trials and cares he came
to know,

92 Ll. 1307-8: confusing syntax, not assisted by punctuation, blurs the relation of these lines to the passage as a whole. The translation attempts what seems the most plausible solution.

93 Of the three Saracen warriors mentioned, most obviously to the point is the King of Sarce (Sarza), i.e., Rodomont. The confrontation of Roland (Orlando) with Gradasse (Gradasso) and Farragus (Ferraguto) takes place in Ariosto, Canto XII.

1336 The lady still no mercy toward him would show,
 1337 But rather, mocking him while holding him in thrall,
 1338 Enjoyed seeing his life languish beneath a pall.
 1339 For a long time he loved her, in hope ever tending
 1340 To figure for his woeful love a happy ending,
 1341 But anguish instead to ruin did him consign,
 1342 Destroying his peace of mind and reason divine.
 1343 For one day Angelique, who had done nothing more
 1344 Than laugh at love, happened on the handsome Medor⁹⁴:
 1345 Medor, fairest of all, whose hue of reddish brown
 1346 And sandy hair, which over his ears dangled down,
 1347 His mouth, his fair forehead, incomparable seemed,
 1348 As never in the sky appeared two suns that gleamed—
 1349 Medor approaching death, the quarrel's consequence,
 1350 His cruel wound spouting bright blood with pulse intense.
 1351 Then that heart of stone, with that soul of adamant,
 1352 Angelique, long accustomed her lovers to scant,
 1353 Felt herself soften and go cold like melting ice
 1354 At Medor's fair eyes, his fair face, apt to entice;
 1355 She fell in love and was determined him to heal,
 1356 Even if healing him the death of her should seal.
 1357 O Medor most happy, to whom such chance befell
 1358 Above so many great heroes, who forced to dwell
 1359 In bondage that thankless beauty, able to touch
 1360 Her face, when no other dared to venture as much!
 1361 So Medor in marriage had fair Angelique's hand,
 1362 And Angelique was true spouse of Medor, her husband.
 1363 Amidst fearful deserts, within a rocky hollow,
 1364 Those most delightful pleasures they greedily follow
 1365 For which Cupid grants permission to loving souls,
 1366 When he their strong desire in his cause enrolls.
 1367 Roland one day to that ill-omened place resorts,
 1368 Where the lovers had invented so many sports:
 1369 He sees their names written on the lofty rock ledges,

94 "Medor": Medoro in Ariosto; for Angelica's encounter with him after his wounding and its amorous sequel, see Canto XIX.17-36.

1370 One laced within the other, close to the spring's⁹⁵ edges,
 1371 A thousand love-knots in prettiest style inscribed;
 1372 He sees in verses all their silly games described.
 1373 Then of his dauntless spirit furor seized control;
 1374 Spiteful rage coursed overwhelmingly through his soul;
 1375 Madly, he supposed his eyes could not be believed:
 1376 Love, which had fooled him once, had him again deceived.
 1377 At last, quite furious, he gave the spring a shock,
 1378 Broke in a thousand pieces both the cruel rock
 1379 And the wood surrounding it, wood which likewise bore
 1380 The fair names interlaced of Angelique and Medor.
 1381 He cursed that waste land, and his foot with cruel pride,
 1382 Constantly stamping, the earth and grass vilified,
 1383 Where formerly the lovers, his most bitter foes,
 1384 Had found, in the heat of the day, their sweet repose.
 1385 He threw down his sword, his cuirass to bits he battered;
 1386 All around the place his arms in fury he scattered;
 1387 He stripped himself naked, and, his rage to assure,
 1388 For three days and three nights, no food would he endure.
 1389 At last he went mad, and indeed in such a way
 1390 That ardent furor carried him wholly away.
 1391 His reason is gone; each hour to death I sink
 1392 A hundred times, when of these misfortunes I think;
 1393 I weep for his disaster, for his loss I sigh—
 1394 A loss that must, alas, loss of our France imply.
 1395 But Regnault I spy: it is he—alas!—I see,
 1396 Languishing for this sad misfortune just like me.
 1397 I must address him. O you, the honour of France,
 1398 Regnault, who vanquish by mere mention of your valiance
 1399 All knights of the universe! Ah, what brings you here,
 1400 Pallid as I am, with aspect troubled and drear?

REGNAULT

1401 Dear Brandimart, I seek in this vicinity
 1402 Roland, who—not Mars—is war's great divinity.

95 “[S]pring’s”: plural in orig. (“fontaines”), but only one is specified in l. 1377 below, as is certainly easier to visualise.

1403 Love, alas, the unjust, his reason from him stole,
 1404 And a burning furor has imprisoned his soul.

BRANDIMART

1405 O valiant paladin, the same impulse and woe,
 1406 Desire like yours, have made me this country know:
 1407 I want to find Roland, his miseries to end,
 1408 Or else to die at his side as his faithful friend.

REGNAULT

1409 Oh, but it is hard the mind's disease to allay,
 1410 When cruel Love causes it senselessly to stray;
 1411 All sickness may be cured but that which Love has sent,
 1412 Which lastingly within our souls is resident.

BRITOMART

1413 The malady of love may just as well be cured,
 1414 When reason's dominance of folly is assured.

REGNAULT

1415 But before Love conquers us, our reason he conquers,
 1416 Which any hope of remedy, alas, inters.

BRANDIMART

1417 But reason, stronger than he, bears more potent sway:
 1418 He who follows it is never carried away.

REGNAULT

1419 But under Love's dominion, reason cannot act,
 1420 For even the great Jupiter he can distract.

BRANDIMART

1421 Why is he followed, then, if such harm he produces?

REGNAULT

1422 Because he is potent, and with pleasure seduces.

BRANDIMART

1423 Has man not learnt from nature himself to direct?

REGNAULT

1424 When one is surprised it scrambles the intellect.

BRANDIMART

1425 So those who commit evils are to be excused?

REGNAULT

1426 Indeed, if they are forced, they cannot be accused.

BRANDIMART

1427 To ward off evil have we not ample defences?

REGNAULT

1428 We do not, when rude furor has troubled our senses.

BRANDIMART

1429 What then is man here below but a person dead?

REGNAULT

1430 Man is the slave of Love, by him often transported.

BRANDIMART

1431 But has not man the power to surmount this Love?

REGNAULT

1432 Man cannot conquer what conquers Heaven above.

BRANDIMART

1433 Then lovers must be of all men most miserable.

REGNAULT

1434 Those are to whom their ladies are not favourable.

BRANDIMART

1435 Do they not gladly with a cruel dame dispense?

REGNAULT

1436 Alas, true lovers stay in love at their expense.

BRANDIMART

1437 Are they not fools to honour such a source of strife?

REGNAULT

1438 A poor captive has no power over his life.

BRANDIMART

1439 A thousand lovers have left their first loves behind.

REGNAULT

1440 Something we meet with once we do not always find.

BRANDIMART

1441 But who can force us to give our own ruin affection?

REGNAULT

1442 Quite simply, a beauty who is divine perfection.

BRANDIMART

1443 But all men are not subject to love's influence.

REGNAULT

1444 If not, then they are blessed with happiness intense.

BRANDIMART

1445 But must every lover be perturbed by fury?

REGNAULT

1446 That is the danger when Love does him injury.

BRANDIMART

1447 I am a lover yet am not touched by that illness.

REGNAULT

1448 All do not benefit from the same happiness.

BRANDIMART

1449 So Roland, whose strength breaks all others, is but
frail?

REGNAULT

1450 None rates as happy on whom furor can prevail.

BRANDIMART

1451 But who is more courageous and valiant than Roland?

REGNAULT

1452 Valour does not happiness in this world command.

BRANDIMART

1453 Is he then happy who possesses divine glory?

REGNAULT

1454 Only one who gains over himself victory.

BRANDIMART

1455 Does he conquer himself who overcomes his fate?

REGNAULT

1456 No, not as long as Love his heart can dominate.

BRANDIMART

1457 Love has conquered me but without changing my form.

REGNAULT

1458 That means she you love does to your wishes conform.

BRANDIMART

1459 Why is such love, alas, not shown by every lady?

REGNAULT

1460 Beauty is not often in reason's company.

BRANDIMART

1461 But is not clemency with beauty in alliance?

REGNAULT

1462 No, for beauty rather engenders arrogance.

BRANDIMART

1463 Is not each beauty with kind courtesy endowed?

REGNAULT

1464 Each beauty is replete with cruelty, and proud.

BRANDIMART

1465 My lady is not so.

REGNAULT

1466 The haughty Angelique,
Who formerly was mine, for rigours is unique.

BRANDIMART

1467 Alas, could it be she who Roland's mind confuses?

REGNAULT

1468 The lover not loved his whole understanding loses.

BRANDIMART

1469 O what cruel beauty!

REGNAULT

Rather, proud, inhumane.

1470 Mere beasts that lack reason give solace to our pain.⁹⁶

BRANDIMART

1471 I will avenge on her such a cruel misdeed!

REGNAULT

1472 To injure a woman is an offence indeed.

BRANDIMART

1473 But she is injuring the pearl of men-at-arms!

REGNAULT

1474 Everyone as needed may use his—or her—arms.⁹⁷

1475 She did not either force Roland in love to fall

1476 Or him in utter madness for her love enthrall.

BRANDIMART

1477 No matter. That Medor, the cause of all this damage,

1478 Shall feel my furor, my mighty hand and my courage:

1479 He shall die, if ever I can find him one day,

1480 And for Angelique's harm—and Love's⁹⁸—be made to pay!

[*Exeunt.*]

⁹⁶ “[G]ive solace to our pain”: presumably by acting on sheer animal instinct— an echo of the rationalisation of Rodomonte.

⁹⁷ Ll. 1473-74: the repetition of rhyme-sounds mirrors the original (“gensdarmes”/“ses armes”). The translation aims to convey the ambiguous referent of “ses”.

⁹⁸ A rare instance where “Amour” is capitalised in the original, clearly signalling the personification.

[Scene ii]

ISABELLE

1481 As long as, oh poor wretch, there still remains to spy
 1482 A certain pale glimmer for your pitiful eye,
 1483 As long as your lungs their half-dead vigour retain
 1484 Sufficiently, alas, to breathe abroad your pain,
 1485 And as long as your voice, though exhausted and hoarse,
 1486 May still reveal your wild sorrow with feeble force,
 1487 Weep, complain, lament, and with all determination
 1488 Be ever ardent in your chaste love's lamentation!
 1489 But do I say lament? Alas, the springs are arid
 1490 Now with weeping and have dried up my tears once liquid!
 1491 Alas, I have no more; nothing is left to me
 1492 But the blood I wish to sacrifice honourably
 1493 To Zeobin, presenting to the welcome blade⁹⁹
 1494 My body, a faithful offering to be made!¹⁰⁰
 1495 Ah, Zeobin, my Zeobin, now, as my eyes
 1496 With weeping blind themselves, you reign up in the skies.
 1497 Alas, you live no more—no more I see your face,
 1498 Where plenteous beauty formerly had its place;
 1499 No more I see your eyes, your brow—alas, too fair
 1500 To serve as a trophy for the pale tomb¹⁰¹ to bear.
 1501 Zeobin, you live no more, and I remain lonely,
 1502 Languishing here below and waiting to die only;
 1503 Zeobin, you live no more, and the very moment
 1504 Your fair days ended, our chaste loves were also spent;
 1505 Zeobin, you live no more, alas—I may say
 1506 That Death from me has cruelly taken you away;

99 "[B]lade": orig. "lame"—intriguingly ambiguous here, since the word's alternative sense in the period, "tomb(stone)", is also apposite. The translator must choose, and in favour of "blade" here is the mention of blood-as-sacrifice in l. 1492 and as the monologue's concluding note in l. 1621. Thus a sort of momentum building towards the climactic bloody event conveys the suggestion that she has already conceived her scheme.

100 Isabelle thus sacrifices her blood to prevent its pollution; cf. Shakespeare, *Luc.*, 1028-29: "The remedy indeed to do me good / Is to let forth my foul-defiled blood."

101 "[P]ale tomb": orig. "pallisant tombeau"—a common use of the verb (mod. "pâlier") to evoke a quality of light; see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v.

1507 Zeobin, you live no more—to the pallid dead
 1508 Has Atropos¹⁰² (O heart-break!) your chaste body led;
 1509 Zeobin, you live no more, and just as you wish,
 1510 I am still living here and sighing out my anguish.
 1511 For it was not your will, for it was not your will,¹⁰³
 1512 To permit me (O cruel man!) myself to kill,
 1513 When from your body, with your lady holding you—
 1514 Isabelle, your heart—your lovely soul far off flew;
 1515 For, although pressed by death, your eyes still opening,
 1516 Which languished on the verge of your glorious parting—
 1517 Opening pitifully your mouth, which, too lovely,
 1518 Pressed on the lips of Isabelle so tenderly—
 1519 You spoke to me, weeping to see my lamentation,
 1520 These verses, which once more evoke my recitation:¹⁰⁴
 1521 “Appease, appease, alas!, O faithful soul of mine—
 1522 Appease your cruel pain, do not for evils pine;
 1523 Drive far off that despair and by no means lament
 1524 For him who to die in your arms dies quite content.
 1525 Alas, cease those cries and allow that cruel grief,
 1526 If you still love me, to give way now to relief.
 1527 I suffer no distress, unless in seeing you
 1528 My happy passing as a source of grief construe.
 1529 Happy a hundred times to die, I have great pleasure
 1530 Dying before you do, who were my utmost treasure.
 1531 Will my blissful end infect you with jealousy?
 1532 Alas, will you be jealous of Zeobin’s glory?
 1533 Ah, if you have loved him, sure proof let him obtain
 1534 Of your chaste amity by appeasing your pain,
 1535 So that before he dies he may have time to know
 1536 That you desired dearly his pure will to follow.
 1537 Double you render my woe, my death doubly cruel

102 Atropos: orig. “La Parque”.

103 L. 1511: this repetition goes beyond others in the speech, more strictly rhetorical, in highlighting her distraction.

104 A metadramatic effect is produced by the literary self-referentiality: “verses” (orig. “vers”), “recitation” (“racompter”). Isabelle’s account of Zeobin’s dying words and wishes (ll. 1521-77) is substantially recycled by Montreux in *Cleopatra*, III.1203-62, where the heroine recalls those of Antony.

1538 In seeing you suffer, O my dear Isabelle;¹⁰⁵
 1539 Only too much regret, alas, my life cuts short
 1540 At losing your lovely eyes, where our loves held court—
 1541 At leaving you, my life, and at my poor soul's feeling
 1542 The loss of its most precious dame, whom death is
 stealing—
 1543 Without your plenteous tears urging me to go,
 1544 Without your dire pain pressing me down below.
 1545 Fair one, if your Zeobin sometimes gained the glory
 1546 Of serving your beauty and merits memory,
 1547 And if you loved him, as in dying he believes,
 1548 Do not martyr your spirit more because he leaves:
 1549 Appease your regrets. Ah, what more lovely death ever
 1550 The thread of my mortal forces could gently sever
 1551 Than to die close to you—my face against yours pressed,
 1552 And our souls with a like bond into one compressed?
 1553 Do you fear that once below on the sacred river's
 1554 Pleasant bank, that place most favourable to lovers,
 1555 I might forget your face? That the stream which flows on
 1556 Softly grumbling there, whose waters bring oblivion,
 1557 Might alter all my senses, drowning the remembrance
 1558 Of your soul, which held mine beneath its dominance?
 1559 No, no, do not imagine such great ill of me—
 1560 You doubt my faith, if you think that could ever be.
 1561 I will always be yours, and my love in its ardour,
 1562 In spite of destiny, is bound to live forever.
 1563 Isabelle has become, for all eternity,
 1564 Zeobin's modest half in his fidelity,
 1565 And that same Zeobin of the chaste Isabelle
 1566 Will ever be the faithful spouse, even in hell.
 1567 Nothing can separate our spirits purified,
 1568 Nor our hearts by love's bonds together closely tied.
 1569 But adieu, I go now among those shades to stray
 1570 Who, captive in his dark caverns, Pluto obey:
 1571 It is Death's will that further sight of you I lack;
 1572 The colours I can see are changing, fade to black.

105 Ll. 1537-38: the original rhymes “cruelle” and “Isabelle”.

1573 Adieu, my beauty, adieu. Ah, grant me this much—
1574 That your mouth, before I die, once more I may touch.
1575 It is done, I am content. Fair one, close my eyes,
1576 Entomb my body, place my hair in decent guise.
1577 Adieu, adieu, I die.” Then your beautiful face
1578 Turned as cold as ice, as pallor moved into place;
1579 Your brow began to chill, and your eyes, once alight
1580 With so many sparkling glances, remained shut tight.
1581 Your mouth became pallid and did forever close—
1582 Your mouth, which had been vermilion, just like a rose;
1583 Your red and white complexion took a deathly tint,
1584 Changed, with your aspect,¹⁰⁶ as force continued to
stint.
1585 So there, stretched out, without strength, without
breath, you stayed
1586 In my arms, which pain helpless and feeble had made.
1587 Then I fainted, and after would have been quite
happy
1588 If I had felt severed the vigour of my body.
1589 And when at last sorrow allowed me speech to find,
1590 When I could breathe, trembling and half out of my mind,
1591 I tore out my hair—that hair of which you were fond,
1592 Hair from which was created our amorous bond;¹⁰⁷

106 “[A]spect”: orig. “port”, lit. “carriage”, “bearing”—terms harder to fit with the next lines. Overall the reminiscence bespeaks distraction.

107 The ritualistic acts of mourning enumerated here resemble those attributed to Cleopatra at the death of Antony, as extrapolated from the account of Plutarch. In *Three French Cleopatras*, trans. and ed. Hillman, see Jodelle, who in *Cleopatra Captive* has the ghost of Antony recall her “Cutting her hair, tearing, beating herself for me” (1.148), and Garnier, Montreux’s more immediate dramaturgical model, who in *Marc Antony* elaborates as follows in the queen’s address to Antony’s corpse:

A thousand sobs I shall draw forth from deep inside,
With a thousand laments your funeral provide;
You shall have my hair to serve you for your oblations,
And my gushing tears take the place of all effusions.
My eyes shall be your torches, for from them the flame
Issued that fired your heart with love for your dame.
Now you, my companions, weep, weep, and let your eyes

I scratched my face, which to you had been agreeable,
A face which now, deprived of yours, is miserable;
I beat to bruises that body¹⁰⁸ you did so prize,
And importuned Heaven with a thousand sad cries;
With my tears I washed off your blood, which, quite warm
still,
From all parts of your body continued to spill—
That honoured body, which heard not my loving sighs,
That body which, now lifeless, was deaf to my cries.
Zeobin alone did not hear as I complained,
His eyes being closed and his vital forces drained;
Zeobin alone in my voice had no interest,
Resounded by Echo and the rocks of the forest;¹⁰⁹
Zeobin alone, alas, was in no condition
To take pity on my woe, lacking all cognition;
Zeobin alone, who was as cold as a rock,
Of no piteous pang, alas, could feel the shock;
Zeobin alone could no apprehension gain
Of my abundant tears, no more than of my pain.
Alas, all the rocks were affected by my sorrows;
The animals sighed to feel my affliction's blows;
The sky a thousand tearful testimonies sent;

On him pour a tearful torrent, as from the skies:
Mine can do so no more, which the dry heat consumes
That from my breast, as from a blazing furnace, fumes.
Beat black-and-blue your stomachs with infinite blows;
Tear with all your strength your loosened hair where it
grows;
Scratch your faces—ah, for whom in our dying anguish
Would we preserve our beauties that already languish?
(V.1976-89)

108 “[B]ody”: orig. “estomach,” whose sense was originally much broader, physically and figuratively, than mod. English “stomach”; see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. “estomac”: “Région de l’estomac, poitrine, ventre” (def. B). Cf. the expression “breast-beating”.

The enlistment of Echo marks the participation of Isabella's mourning in the convention of pastoral dirge, whereby all nature joins in sympathetic sorrow. Cf. Galaut, *Phalante*, trans. Hillman, V.v.1335-44, where the trope recalls a precedent in the *Arcadia* (1590 ed.); see *Sidney's Arcadia on the French Stage*, Introduction, pp. 22-24.

1614 The grasses withered at the sound of my lament.
1615 Thus all in my anguish had their pitiful share,
1616 But Zeobin, who of Isabelle had no care.
1617 O Zeobin, if there below you still possess
1618 Any pure idea of our loving blessedness,
1619 If you have remembrance of me, then may you welcome
1620 My body, which as sacrifice from me will come:
1621 Receive my chaste blood, and permit that in repose
1622 My spirit may dwell with you, set free from its throes.

CHORUS

There is nothing that resembles
Love's amity here below;
Two hearts in one it assembles,
Life in spite of death to know:
For death, however cruel and merciless,
A faithful amity cannot suppress.

Those whom a perfect amity
United during their days
See after death's calamity
Their chaste loves living always.
The soul does not die which such love
contains,
So amity ever alive remains.

1635 No danger is so extreme
1636 That true amity is chilled,
1637 And it's a lover's proud theme
1638 To be for his half-self killed:
1639 For he whose love is sufficiently strong
1640 Does not to himself but to her belong.

If in loving he discovers
At times unpleasant things,
The bliss of love he recovers
When the wished-for gain it brings
Makes him forget that first experience,
So full is that sweet fruit of excellence.

1647 But it is chaste love I mean,
 1648 Child of honour and faithfulness,
 1649 For furious love is seen
 1650 Only to stir great distress:
 1651 And any love outside of sacred marriage,
 1652 Instead of love is merely burning rage.

1653 Amity must beauty show,
 1654 Nothing above as sacred:
 1655 If it is not always so,
 1656 Then human beings are wicked,
 1657 Whom hot desires unjustly entice
 1658 To make good of evil, of virtue vice.

1659 Thus love is not disallowed
 1660 When retained in lawful bounds,
 1661 Such as here we see it vowed
 1662 By Isabelle, whose faith abounds,
 1663 By whom loss of mortal life is preferred
 1664 To having her pure chastity interred.

1665 But still after death alive
 1666 To our hearts she will be led;
 1667 Olive-green garlands will thrive,
 1668 Crowning there her lovely head:¹¹⁰
 1669 For by her death she happily preserves
 1670 The glorious glory¹¹¹ honour deserves.

110 This is the traditional martyr's crown, adapted from the garland of victory awarded in Roman triumphs, which figures in the vision of Rev. 2:10 and pervades hagiographic iconography.

111 "[G]lorious glory": orig. "gloire glorieuse"—not simple pleonasm, perhaps, but in contradiction to earthly glory, which is less truly glorious.

Act IV

Rodomont, Sicambres, Isabelle

RODOMONT

1671 Will you languish forever in your ardent flame?
1672 Will you languish forever as slave to a dame?
1673 Unconquered Rodomont, will you always be feeling
1674 The regret of a do-nothing upon you stealing?
1675 Ah, this wait is far too long, and your warlike valiance
1676 Is not used to such protracted begging and dalliance.
1677 If you can force heaven, if the spirits of hell
1678 Tremble at the gleaming of your fierce blade as well,
1679 And if all mortals fear you as fierce and as brave,
1680 Do you not know how you can force a weakling slave?
1681 A weakling girl, who has nothing but tears alone,
1682 Poor little thing, your manly efforts to postpone?
1683 No, no, this is too long to put off the remedy,
1684 To delay the cure which can hope to succour me –
1685 Too much consuming oneself, without seeking aid,
1686 In one's own brazier, for death's coming too much prayed.
1687 I must escape pain: one does not deem lamentable
1688 One who has willingly made himself miserable.
1689 Who will pity me, then, when I accept my woes?
1690 And when I might, if I so wished, subdue my throes?
1691 Rodomont, all-conquering, must count it great shame
1692 To be mastered today when a woman's eyes flame:
1693 There is hardly so much contempt, blame and dishonour
1694 In seeing oneself beaten by a great conqueror,
1695 Accustomed to vanquishing and rich in victory,
1696 As by a feeble foe lacking valour and glory
1697 But who makes me suffer for so long this affront.
1698 What is impossible for valiant Rodomont?
1699 Who has enough power to mount a counter-force
1700 To his manly desire in its mighty course?
1701 Could Jupiter do so, or that god bold in strife,

1702 Precious darling of Venus, the limping one's wife?¹¹²
1703 Could Pallas do so, or that goddess, source of riches,
1704 Who mortals with magnificence freely enriches?¹¹³
1705 No, none of them could. For this arm of great renown
1706 Can drag them out of the sky and hurtle them down.
1707 And although my ancestors, those Titans terrible,
1708 Who sought to climb to the heavens so formidable,
1709 United in determination and affection,
1710 Piling rock upon rock, Ossa upon Pelion,
1711 Were vanquished¹¹⁴ by Jupiter wielding thunderbolts,
1712 And crushed and dashed into powder with sudden jolts,
1713 Rodomont their descendant can reverse that fate,
1714 Repair their ruin, avenge their doom to death's pale
state.

1715 He can destroy the gods, and this sword he holds fast
1716 In his warlike hand to earth below can them cast.
1717 Then who can forbid him his passion to fulfil?
1718 Who can hinder his pleasure and compel his will?
1719 Jupiter, lesser than he, his flame to extinguish,
1720 For his pleasure's sake did many a woman ravish.
1721 He hardly hesitated the law to transgress,
1722 To put himself at ease and get free of distress.
1723 Mars did the same thing; in most cruel manner also
1724 Lovely Proserpina was once ravished by Pluto.
1725 If those gods, who are not undefeated, like me,
1726 No reason to respect law or honour could see,

112 In Rodomont's litany of disparagements, the failure to name Mars stands out as supremely contemptuous, dismissal of the cuckolded "limping one" ("boiteux")—i.e., Vulcan/Hephaestus—as only slightly less so.

Rodomont is getting caught up in his own rhetorical momentum in a way assimilating him to the stereotype of the *miles gloriosus*. His cosmic pretensions are so comically extreme as to suggest a possible source for Artabaze in *Les Visionnaires* of Jean Desmarests de Saint-Sorlin; see that character's opening monologue in *The Visionaries*, trans. Richard Hillman, Intro. Michel Bitot, Scène Européenne—Traductions Introuvables (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2021), I, i, ff.

113 Ll. 1703-4: the word-play on “rich” is present in the original (“riche Deesse”, “superbe richesse”). The allusion must be to Fortune.

114 “Were vanquished”: orig. “Ayants esté” (lit. “having been”); the translation supplies a missing principal verb.

Esteeming no other law than their will's quick prompting,
To act like them—can that be held a shameful thing?
No, no, the wait has been only too long extended,
With only too much idle verbiage expended
In telling my trouble. From pain I must break free,
Since I have strength and power, and lively should be.
What would be said of me, then, if one came to know
Rodomont, who conquers, conquest would undergo,
Overcome by a girl? O too unjustly blamed!
He who tames the gods to be by a woman tamed!
No, it shall not be! Let the gods in their proud height,
The underworld spirits, and every brave knight
Who has a hundred times felt my furious blade—
Let them all seek to have my soul's desire stayed:
I shall have my will! There is neither law nor reason
That can within prison retain for longer season
My soul, which languishes, for want of any comforts,
In fire that consumes it, torment it supports.
This is too much to be my own health's enemy,
Too much to honour claims of right and equity,
Too much by a mere girl's weeping to be made tender,
Too much to another's will one's own to surrender,
Too much to do injury to one's manly valour,
Too much to do damage to one's glory and honour,
Too much to suffer pain, to cherish one's own ending
And refuse the sweet medicine's promise of mending.
Come, I will cure myself. I can—I must, indeed!
Nothing now lacks that for recovery I need.
For too long that beauty in prison has detained me;
I have languished too long close to her who has pained
me:
My strength fades with age—I who more honour
await;¹¹⁵
I am like Paris, already effeminate,¹¹⁶

115 “I who more honour await”: orig. “à l’honneur destiné”. The suggestion of defensiveness squares with his sudden spasm of self-doubt.

116 Paris was often considered less of a warrior because of his infatuation with Helen. The

1759 My young promise losing, as snow melts without trace
 1760 On mountain rocks beneath the rays of the hot face
 1761 Of the nurturing Pythian,¹¹⁷ and as the flower,
 1762 Once bright red, dries near a fire hour by hour;
 1763 As one avaricious dries up from care, obsessed
 1764 With keeping safe his gold and endlessly distressed;
 1765 As on a banquet table the torch, lit when new,
 1766 Consuming slowly as time passes one may view—
 1767 And that since, as the poor slave of proud Isabelle,
 1768 My manhood¹¹⁸ she retains confined beneath her spell,
 1769 And since I am bereft of all my liberty,
 1770 Held fast by her eye's ardour in captivity.
 1771 I would have vanquished Roger, beaten Bradamante,
 1772 Killed, undone, destroyed that Marphire so arrogant!
 1773 I would have vanquished Roland, and fierce Rodomont
 1774 Would have done to death Regnault, the glory of Clermont,
 1775 Brandimart, Olivier, and with a cruel face
 1776 Dragged old Charlemagne out of his Parisian place!
 1777 Thus, having conquered all, great with booty and praise,
 1778 I'd be back in my land with honour and calm days,
 1779 Served by a hundred kings, a thousand wealthy princes,
 1780 Coming to offer submission—and their provinces.
 1781 There, then—see how much evil, ruin and misery
 1782 Love commonly causes to those whose bravery
 1783 Can daunt the universe and, all-victorious,
 1784 Inscribe with their foes' blood their name as glorious.
 1785 But this is putting it off: it is time for cure,
 1786 To save oneself when one can no longer endure.
 1787 Right, then! I will go force that beauty inhumane
 1788 To accomplish my will and extinguish my pain.

SICAMBRAS [*entering*]

1789 What makes your eyes turn pale with menace and with

117 notion of virile heroism as incompatible with obsessive love is, of course, commonplace.

Pythian (orig. "Phitien")—i.e., Apollo; see above, n. 23.

118 "[M]anhood": orig. "vertu"—obviously used here, as often, in the common narrow sense of virility, but with ironic evocation of the moral contradiction.

horror?

1790 Where are you running to that way, stirred up by furor?

1791 What accounts for those broad eyebrows, bristling with
rage,

1792 And for those stern paces, if not some cruel courage?

1793 What sort of furor directs you? And what emotion,

1794 In troubling your senses, troubles your body's motion?

1795 Where running to so? What puts that boldness in place,

1796 And that cruel anger so reddening your face?

1797 Where does the furor come from that masters your eyes

1798 And their fire, cruelty and fury supplies?

1799 Is such furor needed for your disgraceful plan,

1800 Fatal to your name and fame, of forcing a woman?

1801 No, no—remember how you have earnestly learned

1802 To overcome knights, and with the desire burned

1803 By supremacy in arms to acquire honour

1804 And, undefeated, the bravest champions conquer.

1805 Do not forget the name of valiant Rodomont,

1806 The terror and scourge of the great heroes of Clermont;

1807 Let your noble feats be recalled to memory;

1808 Remember, furthermore, the splendour of your glory,

1809 Your brave combats, replete with honour and with praise,

1810 When you dealt brave knights galore the end of their
days.

1811 Let that warn you that in reverence should be held

1812 Your honour, which is in the world unparalleled;

1813 Let that warn you not to commit a violation

1814 Able to defame your former high reputation.

1815 *To perfect a building, to start does not suffice:*

1816 *Only the end may cleanse it of error and vice;*

1817 *He who begins well, if badly his work is finished,*

1818 *Deserves, far from honour, for his fault to be punished.*

1819 Follow along, therefore, your sacred glory's thread,

1820 And do not permit it to perish, forfeited

1821 By a cowardly misdeed which you can forestall.

1822 *He who cannot curb himself is no man at all.*

1823 What honour can you from forcing a girl expect

1824 Whom chance has put into your hands and rendered subject?

1825 *He who injures one whom fate has pleased to subdue*

1826 *Is undeserving of honour: death is his due;*

1827 *But greater shame and blame merits the reprobate*
 1828 *Who would seek a modest lady to violate,*
 1829 Whom nature has deprived not just of active valour
 1830 But of a strong champion to preserve her honour.
 1831 Roland, driven wild by love for fair Angelique,
 1832 With her in his power, his pleasure did not seek;
 1833 The same with Regnault. One has seen acting pursuant
 1834 To that sacred law both Roger and Sacripant.
 1835 Do you wish alone to be of such vice accused?
 1836 Would you be alone in having justice abused?
 1837 Do you wish alone to be a ravisher named?
 1838 Would you be as the unrighteous possessor famed
 1839 Of something which cannot, by the scale just and true
 1840 Of sacred equity, at all belong to you?
 1841 No, no, do not profane your good name in that manner.
 1842 *He also loses peace of mind who loses honour,*
 1843 *And he is unworthy of joy and memory*
 1844 *Whose motive in all is not desire for glory.*
 1845 You should trust what I counsel—and others like me,
 1846 To whom harmful evil does not do injury.
 1847 For someone crazed, whom desire carries away
 1848 Beyond the bounds of what is right, can in no way
 1849 Counsel himself: the sick man will attempt in vain
 1850 To mollify the ill which causes his own pain.
 1851 Then trust my counsel: let her suffer patiently,
 1852 As one whom heaven cruelly hurts sufficiently—
 1853 Bereft of her husband, without hope or support—
 1854 Without seeking her death for the sake of your sport.
 1855 For any worthy lady will always prefer
 1856 Death to a long life with others reviling her;
 1857 And the lady¹¹⁹ would rather see transfixed her breast,
 1858 Stomach and heart, by a barbarous hand oppressed,
 1859 Than let her glory to dishonour be committed,
 1860 For she no longer lives whose memory is dead.

119 “[T]he lady”: orig. “la dame”—ambiguous, strictly speaking; it might refer to “any worthy lady” (l. 1855) but obviously implies Isabelle particularly, so that the “barbarous hand” (orig. “barbare main”) of l. 1858 indirectly casts an aspersion on Rodomont.

1861 Lucrece did so, and it will be seen that so, too,
 1862 If one intends to force her, Isabelle will do.
 1863 I know her will. *Every lady who is faithful*
 1864 *Is not only in body but in mind beautiful.*
 1865 Yet the wise ones often have least felicity:
 1866 At the foolish the gods wink in complicity.
 1867 Come, then, pacify yourself and preserve that dame,
 1868 In order to preserve your glory free from blame.
 1869 Otherwise, both heavenly anger from the sky,
 1870 Avenger of our crimes, with arms will you defy,
 1871 And righteous mortals against you will fiercely strive
 1872 As unworthy to be on this just earth alive,
 1873 For the gods with strict equity our actions weigh:
 1874 Our virtues they love, our crimes with rigour repay.

RODOMONT

1875 Fool, what do you think? Do you think I am afraid
 1876 Of gods or the sky, which may a coward dissuade?
 1877 All the gods up above cannot keep me in awe;
 1878 Much less are mortals able to impose their law!
 1879 Regardless of the gods (those creators of vice!),¹²⁰
 1880 Despite all virtue, right, justice—at any price,
 1881 I shall do what I want: I'm not bound to fulfil
 1882 Any service to any, but to my own will,
 1883 And my masterful will alone shall do me service
 1884 As reason, absolute authority and justice.
 1885 Is Rodomont not sufficiently brave and strong
 1886 To do what he wants if misfortune comes along?
 1887 Is Rodomont not sufficiently proud and brave
 1888 To keep reason in its place as his valour's slave?
 1889 Is not Rodomont's strength, with his furious mind,
 1890 Enough to command by conquest gods and mankind?
 1891 Is Rodomont's power not sufficiently strong

120 L. 1879: orig. "En depot, malgré eux, qui sont auteurs du vice". As the translation clarifies, "eux" ("they") must refer, not to the mortals just mentioned, but to the gods, whom vicious men such as Rodomont notoriously accuse, in self-justification, of responsibility for evil, notably by setting the example.

1892 To free his name and fame, should he commit some wrong?
 1893 No, no—it is sheer error by reason to seek
 1894 To make a captive find one's reason mild and meek.
 1895 It is an error men-at-arms to seek to sway
 1896 By the law, or by right, which to their arms give way.
 1897 *Where force is in charge, no other law is required*
 1898 *But what proceeds from oneself and what is desired.*
 1899 Let Heaven be made angry, or subject to blame
 1900 Let me make my memory; let some me defame
 1901 As possessed by fury and rage; let the immortals
 1902 Take arms against me together with all the mortals:
 1903 No matter what, I will have ingrate Isabelle
 1904 Extinguish my pain and my immortal¹²¹ flame quell!
 1905 Talk to me no more of it—to a corpse you preach,
 1906 And sow your futile seed on the treacherous beach
 1907 Of the faithless sea: for no power can distract
 1908 My thoroughly fixed mind from its intended act.

SICAMBRAS

1909 But you will be unjust if you should behave so;
 1910 Much blame eternally will all on you bestow:
 1911 You must guard that honour to which the brave aspire.

RODOMONT

1912 One must rather one's soul from martyrdom retire.

SICAMBRAS

1913 He cannot suffer who lives as reason assigns.

RODOMONT

1914 He is far from happy whom a prison confines.

SICAMBRAS

1915 But it is not prison to live as law demands.

121 “[I]mmortal”: orig. “immortelle”, the hyperbole adding another dimension to his enmity vis-à-vis the gods.

RODOMONT

1916 One lives in prison when a harsh master commands.

SICAMBRAS

1917 But who can compel you a crime to perpetrate?

RODOMONT

1918 Love, to whom my heart is enchained in servile state!

SICAMBRAS

1919 Nothing can conceal one's vice, if wise counsel fails.

RODOMONT

1920 Nothing can stop one doing whatever avails.

SICAMBRAS

1921 Better to force oneself than violate equity.

RODOMONT

1922 All do whatever they can to have liberty.

SICAMBRAS

1923 Liberty means freedom from blame for any man!

RODOMONT

1924 Liberty means not being the slave of a woman!

SICAMBRAS

1925 Why become such a slave?

RODOMONT

We are constrained thereto.

SICAMBRAS

1926 Then we must constrain our senseless desires, too.

RODOMONT

1927 Who can do that, if Love controls our hearts with force?

SICAMBRAS

1928 Force always serves to excuse the most foolish course.

RODOMONT

1929 Neither the wise nor the foolish do him resist.

SICAMBRAS

1930 Rather than do wrong, the wise will from life desist.

RODOMONT

1931 But if one, without dying, one's wish may obtain?

SICAMBRAS

1932 To possess against reason is more loss than gain.

RODOMONT

1933 A lover does what he can to cure his distress.

SICAMBRAS

1934 A faithful and true lover uses only kindness.

RODOMONT

1935 What if he cannot otherwise his end achieve?

SICAMBRAS

1936 Then he must by patience his martyrdom relieve.

RODOMONT

1937 But the longer wait one has, the less hope it brings.

SICAMBRAS

1938 Time causes us to see the ending of all things.

RODOMONT

1939 Why should I wait, when of the means I am possessed?

SICAMBRAS

1940 Something well deliberated is always best.

RODOMONT

1941 But in the school of love, what counsel need be used?

SICAMBRAS

1942 Not to render your name as infamous abused!

RODOMONT

1943 Do lovers' faults not always meet with toleration?

SICAMBRAS

1944 Not when by force they exercise intimidation!

RODOMONT

1945 Jupiter laughs at them and at their idle swearing!¹²²

SICAMBRAS

1946 But if they ravish, his punishment is unsparing!

RODOMONT

1947 Against my strong right hand, can Jupiter do much?

SICAMBRAS

1948 God¹²³ will always be strong and will be known as such!

RODOMONT

1949 Until that time, one must one's desire fulfil!

SICAMBRAS

1950 Often from vain pleasure issues manifold ill!

RODMONT

1951 *There is no pain so cruel that it would translate*
 1952 *To cruelty a fulfilled lover's happy state.*¹²⁴

122 L. 1945: orig. "Jupiter se rit d'eux, & de leur vain serment". Jill L. Levenson, ed., *Romeo and Juliet*, by William Shakespeare, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), n. to II.i.135-36 ("At lovers' perjuries, / They say Jove laughs"), cites the proverbial status of the notion and its ultimate derivation from Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, I.633 ("Iuppiter ex alto periuria ridet amantum"); there, as in Rodomont's appropriation, it implies "complicity", but Sicambras, like Juliet, supplies an admonitory context.

123 "God": orig. "Dieu"; in thus implicitly (if momentarily) transcending the machinery of pagan mythology in the moral cause, Sicambras makes the most explicit reference to the supreme deity by a nominal Muslim in a work which broadly, and certainly by comparison with Ariosto, downplays the distinction between Islam and Christianity. The distinction will reemerge, however, as Isabelle approaches her martyrdom: see below, ll. 2047-50, 2057, 2074-75.

124 Ll. 1951-52: as often, repetition (orig. "cruelle" / "Cruel") is essential to the rhetorical effect.

SICAMBRAS

1953 *To no pleasure so rich and sweet could one pretend*
1954 *That it ought to move us the great gods to offend!*

RODOMONT

1955 But this debate drags on. I wish to be obeyed,
1956 Though my will may be against all justice arrayed!
1957 So speak no more of it! Rodomont shall possess
1958 Proud Isabelle today or death cure his distress!
1959 [*spying Isabelle*] But I see her coming, weary, with tears
 galore:
1960 She looks like a body languishing at death's door.
1961 I will go and accost her, and with oaths and vows
1962 Appease her rigorous will, if my skill allows,
1963 For before using force I wish her to implore,
1964 So that none can try to call into doubt my honour.
1965 [*to Isabelle, as she enters*] May Jupiter preserve you, O
 you cruel beauty,
1966 Who please to keep in servitude my liberty.

ISABELLE

1967 I hold nothing captive, captive myself I am –
1968 Now dead from fear, now with a life that is mere sham.
1969 Alas, permit me full freedom of lamentation
1970 For the evil that numbs my heart to all sensation.

RODOMONT

1971 You must weep no more, for the tears that one lets fall
1972 Have no power a thing that was done to recall;
1973 You must weep no more: countless tearful streams may
flow
1974 But never drown the slightest portion of our woe.

ISABELLE

1975 She must weep who languishes without expectation
1976 Of ever from languishing seeing liberation;
1977 She must weep indeed whom all peace of mind disowns,
1978 And who feels fierce despair coursing throughout her
 bones;
1979 She must weep indeed whom implacable war's ill

1980 Renders the sorrowful slave of another's will.

RODOMONT

1981 But she must by no means deem hers a wretched state
 1982 Who holds the valour of Rodomont subjugate,
 1983 Who keeps him, as you do, Isabelle, in duress,
 1984 Of his peace of mind sole inhumane torturess.

ISABELLE

1985 Why, in crass mockery of my unjust condition,
 1986 Will you by your words bring still closer my perdition?
 1987 You are my lord, although it is your arrogance
 1988 That has given you that unrighteous dominance.
 1989 I have no power on you, but yours controls me:
 1990 You are sole cause of my tormented misery.

RODOMONT

1991 Ah, that is all backwards, for you hold as ravisher
 1992 My soul within your beauties, and my life prisoner.
 1993 Love, stronger than Mars, alas, renders me your slave,
 1994 And wholly into your power my freedom gave.
 1995 But alas, have mercy on my long-drawn-out woe!
 1996 I am your kind conqueror—now be a kind foe
 1997 To my soul, dying in the flames of your fair eyes:
 1998 *To render good for good the gods' precepts advise.*
 1999 You, Isabelle, to the glory have earned the right
 2000 Of Rodomont vanquished by the rays of your sight;
 2001 It is you who with a mere glance that heart could tame
 2002 Which despite countless hazards always overcame.
 2003 I yield myself to you, and your eyes make me do
 2004 What all other mortals could not have brought me to:
 2005 See how much power has the brilliance of your eye—
 2006 An eye to rouse a corpse which on the bier did lie.
 2007 I am your captive, my imprisonment more rude
 2008 Than that which a slave endures in his servitude;
 2009 For he always expects, by payment of his ransom,
 2010 To leave prison one day and be accorded freedom.
 2011 That which by gold, by riches, may be remedied
 2012 Is not rare or divine but of small worth indeed;
 2013 But no sum of gold could redeem my misery,
 2014 If it does not please you, alas, to pity me.

2015 I depend wholly on you, I breathe by your grace;
 2016 Nothing I seek but your amity in this place.
 2017 Alas, promise me that, so that I shall not be
 2018 Compelled myself to advance my mortality;
 2019 Alas, promise me that: make it that hopeful ardour
 2020 Does not abandon me together with my valour.
 2021 But come—give me your response with full liberty:
 2022 You may assure me of your will with certainty. [*He stands aside.*]

ISABELLE

2023 Ah, am I never to see the end of the day
 2024 And with it my pallid destiny pass away—
 2025 My days, my seasons—and in that single day's course
 2026 See both my life and my love cut off at the source?
 2027 Must I always languish, woeful eternally?
 2028 Must my sadness go on and on unchangingly?
 2029 O wretched Isabelle—ah, why did death not take you
 2030 When valiant Roland, prompted by his manly virtue,
 2031 Found you in the hands, within the benighted cave,
 2032 Of the brigands who sought your honour to deprave.¹²⁵
 2033 Happy you would be, whereas now, alas, you languish,
 2034 Ardently desiring, and unable, to perish.
 2035 Ah, must it be that I feel, because still alive,
 2036 This risk of ravishing my chastity arrive?
 2037 Shall I see without dying that flower cut down
 2038 Whose excellence does the rosebush with honour crown?
 2039 In short, my body violated, fame disgraced,
 2040 Because within a hollow tomb I am not placed?
 2041 Alas, shall I see this? But my very hand first,
 2042 For want of a sharp cutting blade, my breast shall burst!
 2043 Before that, though, I wish to try a softer way;
 2044 Before such fierce outrage, alas, I must essay
 2045 To soften the heart, the willful ferocity,
 2046 Of this Moor, so cruel to my chaste modesty.
 2047 Help, help me, great God, and vouchsafe me the grace

125 The episode, foreshadowing the present threat to Isabelle's chastity, is recounted in Ariosto, Canto XIII.33-41.

2048 I need his heart to soften and boldness efface.
2049 O Zeobin, my Zeobin, husband, help me,
2050 For I defend the faith that binds us equally!¹²⁶
2051 But whatever happens, O Zeobin, I swear
2052 That I will die before any can that impair.

RODOMONT [*advancing*]

2053 Well, then, proud beauty, can you be reluctant still
2054 To grant me my desire, to perform my will?
2055 Speak, and—wait now—be sure that you bear well in
mind¹²⁷
2056 My kind treatment, which craves a recompense as kind.

ISABELLE

2057 By that God whom you serve, by that sacred faith-keeping
2058 Which must be the honour and fame of a great king;
2059 By that valour of yours, which is incomparable,
2060 By your unconquered sword, to conquerors so fearful;
2061 By your fame and happy fortune, which can escape
2062 The unjust ink of Time¹²⁸—do not resort to rape,
2063 Do not ravish from me what can kill me with weeping;
2064 *Something taken by force will not endure long keeping.*¹²⁹
2065 Let me remain, alas, till the end of my life
2066 Faithful, chaste and sanctified as Zeobin's wife.

126 “[T]he faith that binds us equally”: orig. “nostre commune foy”—surely a deliberate amalgam of their marriage vows and religious faith. The prayer to God for “grace” (French identical) in l. 2047 above likewise functions on two levels, combining spiritual inspiration with terrestrial persuasiveness.

127 L.2055: orig. “Dites, & en vous mesmes ha ayez sououenance”; the translation attempts to capture the monitory inflection.

128 Ll. 2061-62: on the possible ambiguity in the text, see the edition, n. 40. In the event, Rodomont's virtual damnation by Time in justly eternising his shameful memory will be pronounced by Fleurdelys in V.2501 ff.

129 L. 2064: Montreux deploys the same commonplace, ultimately derived from Aristotelian physics and become proverbial, in his *Cleopatra*: see II.765 and n. 65. There, as more usually, the context is political, but cf. the caution against heedless pursuit of amorous pleasure dispensed by Friar Lawrence in Shakespeare, *Rom.*, II.vi.9–11: “These violent delights have violent ends, / And in their triumph die, like fire and powder, / Which as they kiss consume.” Isabelle insists on the short duration of the pleasure he seeks in l. 2099.

2067 By these tears which you see drowning my frozen face;
2068 By the pity for cruel harm justly due my case;
2069 By my burning sighs, by my harsh adversity—
2070 Have mercy, I pray, on my shamefast modesty.
2071 I am far from requesting you my life to give me;
2072 Your rich treasures do not pique me with bitter envy;
2073 I want nothing of yours: only, I pray, relent,
2074 And seek not to ravish what serves to ornament
2075 My immortal soul; do not without pity claim
2076 What belongs to me but to worshipful fame,
2077 What touches honour, for whose harm there is no cure
2078 If one could quite as long as the heavens endure.
2079 [*kneeling*] By these trembling knees, held fast by my
body's weight;¹³⁰
2080 By Zeobin's death, which renders me desolate;
2081 And by that same love for me that you say you feel—
2082 Do not seek with cruelty my honour to steal.
2083 Alas, I implore that of you! Or, if you wish
2084 To see of my dismal life the deathly-pale finish,
2085 Give me the use of that steel blade,¹³¹ and you will see
2086 How, to keep my honour safe, I will kill my body.
2087 Alas, have mercy on me, and avoid the blame
2088 For forcing a woman which will fix to your name—
2089 A feeble woman, and one who has only weeping,
2090 Cries, sobs and the signs of miserable suffering
2091 To preserve her honour, to champion her glory,
2092 And over brutal fortune bring her victory.
2093 Accord my prayer, and promise me in faithful fashion
2094 My honour you will save, and have on me compassion.

130 [H]held fast by my body's weight": orig. "qui me tiennent collée". She probably kneels in supplication at this point, though perhaps earlier; she is clearly on her knees when he orders her to rise at l. 2095 below.

[S]teel blade”: orig. “acier,” without precision as to knife or sword. The device of a grief-stricken victim (typically female) begging for death in a similar way is ultimately traceable to Seneca, and there are analogues in both French and English drama of the period. See Belyard, *The Guisian*, trans. Hillman, Introduction, pp. 15-16.

RODOMONT

2095 Madam, get up. Your cries, your woeful elocution,
2096 Will not make me change my feelings or resolution.
2097 I will have from you what by ravishment you owe
2098 Under Mars's law—the only law soldiers know.

ISABELLE

2099 Such a slight pleasure will away from you soon fly.

RODOMONT

2100 No pleasure is slight that can our rescue supply!

ISABELLE

2101 To obtain one's good one must not justice offend.

RODOMONT

2102 Everyone does his best for his good to contend.

ISABELLE

2103 Is it a good thing to force a defenceless female?

RODOMONT

2104 Yes, when not to enjoy her will one's death entail!

ISABELLE

2105 From love which is forced the pleasure of love is absent!

RODOMONT

2106 There is no force where ardent desire is present!

ISABELLE

2107 But, alas, I have no desire for such evil!

RODOMONT

2108 I do, and hold you as a slave, bound to my will.

ISABELLE

2109 You would force my body—my will would not relent.

RODOMONT

2110 That is all one—I would then have my heart's content.¹³²

ISABELLA

2111 But my cruelly lamenting heart would die away.

RODOMONT

2112 The vanquished is of the victor the mortal prey.

ISABELLE

2113 From the violence of Mars our sex is exempt.

RODOMONT

2114 No fair woman captured will resistance attempt.

ISABELLE

2115 She is not to be forced.

RODOMONT

2116 That is just as he pleases
Who in his hands, reduced to slavery, her seizes.

ISABELLE

2117 But say what good, what pleasure, from such force he
gains.

RODOMONT

2118 He appeases his will, his desire obtains.

ISABELLE

2119 Then modest dames, alas, are doomed to wretchedness.

RODOMONT

2120 But I hold lovely dames supreme in happiness
2121 Who can the most cruel conquerors captivate.
2122 But that is talk enough. Those tears of yours abate;
2123 Banish those sighs, all signs of sorrow that defy me,

132 "I would then have my heart's content": orig. "mon cœur sera lors contenté"; the translation risks a touch of irony, given the usual sentimental connotation of "heart's content" in English.

212.4 Your fearful pallor: it is time to satisfy me.
212.5 Come, I am resolved—it pleases me, I so wish;
212.6 Nothing can my furious desire diminish.

ISABELLE

Since the thing for you is fixed with such firm intent
That I cannot hope the evil to circumvent,
I am willing to love you, though I think your eye
Might choose a thousand beauties lovelier than I.
But first, I would like to acquaint you with a mixture
Which to make you immortal, free from wounds, is sure.
I will go gather far and wide all sorts of flowers,
Herbs in abundance, possessing vigorous powers.
With these a special bath I'll brew, and, cleansed
therein,
Will so become that steel will fail to pierce my skin.
The trial in full you'll see, for, although strong, your
arm
Will be unable with its sword my flesh to harm.
Then, having seen that bath's wondrous effect on me,
You will bathe to gain invulnerability.

RODOMONT

214.1 I like it—I so wish. Together let us go
214.2 And seek all those flowers that in the valleys grow.
214.3 Together let us clamber up each grand hillside
214.4 To gather up those roots and all those herbs provide.¹³³

CHORUS

2145 O how happy the perishing
2146 Of the dame with courage brimming
2147 Who for her chastity dies!
2148 Her praise takes life from her blood;
2149 Glory follows in a flood,

133 Rodomont's sudden susceptibility to romantic pastoralism is striking—witness his repetition of “together” (orig. “ensemblément”)—and highly ironic in the context. The Messenger, however, will subsequently suggest a more cynical motive for his close attention; see below, V.2415–17.

2150 Made the brilliance of the skies.
 2151 She lives quite beyond death's reach—
 2152 Sacred, lovely—in the speech
 2153 Of all those who value honour.
 2154 Virtue profits from such strength,
 2155 The more one extends its length,
 2156 The fuller it grows in vigour.
 2157 Happy one who can consign
 2158 Glory to Minerva's shrine
 2159 For his posterity's honour.
 2160 Though death by nature must quell,
 2161 Still wherever virtues dwell
 2162 Glory will pour forth its splendour.
 2163 That precious treasure always
 2164 Should each one worthy of praise
 2165 Have within the soul instilled;
 2166 All things are transitory
 2167 But the sacred memory
 2168 Of persons with virtue filled.
 2169 The sky all its light shall lack
 2170 Without the accustomed track
 2171 Of the sacred radiant sun
 2172 Before the bright glory dies
 2173 Of those in whom honour lies,
 2174 Which virtue for them has won.
 2175 Gaining thus by chastity
 2176 Heaven's immortality,
 2177 Fair Isabelle is at rest;
 2178 It shall be said courageously
 2179 She died, and with valiancy,
 2180 Of her perfect fame possessed.
 2181 All ladies of choicest spirit
 2182 Will dedicate to her merit
 2183 Countless vows and prayers upraised:
 2184 Always such an end is sure
 2185 For the lady fair and pure,
 2186 Who is in all seasons praised.
 2187 Even as our tears are flowing
 2188 For her passing, thereby showing
 2189 Our sorrow for her, comfortless—

2190 But wait! We should be ashamed
 2191 To weep for one who has tamed
 2192 By her death Death's very fierceness.

Act V

Messenger, Fleurdelys

MESSENGER

2193 O woe most woeful!¹³⁴ O disaster lamentable!
 2194 O death too cruel! O loss deeply deplorable!
 2195 Ah, my eye, what have you seen? Happy if no light,
 2196 Alas, had brought this dire evil to your sight!

FLEURDELYS

2197 O God, what is that man saying? What sad news surges
 2198 To torture his poor soul with such blistering scourges?
 2199 Alas, what has happened? O good God, might it be
 2200 My dear Brandimart whom death has taken from me?

MESSENGER

2201 O most cruel loss! O occurrence untoward!
 2202 Now, alas, she can never be to us restored!
 2203 O virtue divine! Was there, alas, any need
 2204 For such a brutal hand your perishing to speed?

FLEURDELYS

2205 The loss for which he sighs is momentous and great—
 2206 His heart is moved by it, his soul in anguished state.
 2207 It is Roland who is dead, or Roger, or Regnault,
 2208 Or Charles, whom Agramont with fury threatened so.¹³⁵

134 The translation must reflect the pointed pleonasm of the original: "O malheureux malheur!"

135 The determination of Ariosto's Agramante to seek revenge on Charles ("*re Carlo imperator romano*") informs the central conflict from the very outset of the poem (Canto I.1).

MESSENGER

2209 Ah, must it be that a tomb today has the glory
 2210 Of holding your fair body, which gained victory
 2211 Over the tyrant who sought your pure chastity
 2212 To spoil, Isabelle, flower of honour and beauty?
 2213 Alas, my voice forsakes me when I call to mind
 2214 How, to save her fame, nobly she chose death to find.

FLEURDELYS

2215 He speaks of Isabelle: is it you, then (oh, anguish!)—
 2216 Is it you, then, O my chaste sister, who did perish?
 2217 O pitiless fate, O stroke too cruel and strong!
 2218 After your Zeobin, your life did not last long.
 2219 But I wish all the manner of your death to know:
 2220 *A virtuous death helps the living soothe their woe.*

MESSENGER

2221 O worthy to be with immortal glory graced,
 2222 With living honour, Isabelle, holy and chaste:
 2223 Rather by far you preferred your death to pursue
 2224 Than let a fierce tyrant's power dishonour you.

FLEURDELYS

2225 But, alas, tell me how such a thing took effect.
 2226 The friendship of Isabelle and myself was perfect:
 2227 I was all to her, her soul was the half of me;
 2228 Thus of substance divine was our pure amity.
 2229 Then recount to me, alas, her death, since her merit
 2230 Will grace glory divine with flowers of her spirit.

MESSENGER

2231 Madame, I cannot—my soul is too sorely seized
 2232 With pity's pain, my heart cannot of sighs be eased;
 2233 My voice in the very midst of my tale would falter:
 2234 Ah, I would die with shame not to be dead like her!

FLEURDELYS

2235 For God's sake, do not, by refusing this petition,
 2236 Entice my own death, dependant on her condition;
 2237 Tell, tell of that enfeebling loss in words most ample,
 2238 So that I may prove to be wise by her example.

MESSENGER

2239 Give me a moment to recover my voice first
 2240 And to appease my mind; bear with my urgent thirst
 2241 For solace of that ill which a death of such woe
 2242 Causes by its rigour my anguished soul to know.

FLEURDELYS

2243 Take the time you need, but give me, alas, assurance
 2244 Not to deceive me and so my distress enhance.

MESSENGER

2245 Prepare your eyes to cause a thousand tears to flow,
 2246 Your sad heart a thousand wrenching sorrows to know.
 2247 I myself without weeping, without pangs of pity,
 2248 Could not tell you of such a strange calamity.

FLEURDELYS

2249 To pity, to sigh, alas, myself I prepare,
 2250 All the more to pity a sad loss that I share.
 2251 But come, recount it, and do not make further yearn
 2252 A mind so eager the facts of that death to learn.

MESSENGER¹³⁶

2253 You know that Zeobin, while protecting from harms
 2254 The arms of Roland, chief knight among men-at-arms
 2255 (Arms that in fury, his mind by rage made unsound,
 2256 He had madly scattered here and there on the ground),
 2257 Had been overcome, indeed of his life despoiled,
 2258 By fierce Mandrigard, who with jealous longing boiled
 2259 To gird himself with Durandal, Roland's own sword,¹³⁷
 2260 To wear at his jaunty side as valour's reward.
 2261 Isabelle wished from that moment herself to kill,
 2262 But Zeobin, her spouse, to that opposed his will,
 2263 Prayed her to appease the anguish of her distress

136 The first part of the Messenger's narrative is drawn from Ariosto, Cantos XXIII-XXIV; the encounter anticipated there of Isabelle and the hermit with Rodomonte is developed at the end of Canto XXVIII and beginning of Canto XIX.

137 In Ariosto, Orlando's sword is named Durindana.

And live on still without him in true faithfulness.
All those wishes of Zeobin, his urgent prayer,
Would not have prevented Isabelle's dying there,
Who, hating her life, in order to pierce her breast
Of some cruel blade was going about in quest,
Except that a hermit came along, whose wise language
Appeased her furor, softened her desperate courage.
He embalmed the corpse of Zeobin, fair and chaste,
Carried it on his back in the tomb to be placed
Beneath the sacrosanct roof of his holy chapel,
Still accompanied by the grieving Isabelle.
But alas, as they travelled, adverse fate, to gore them,
Placed the cruel Rodomont on the road before them—
Rodomont who, by Isabelle's eyes captivated,
Resolved to take her, and would have her violated.
The hermit opposed, was seized by the cruel one,
Who would have carved him up, but for Heaven's
protection.

Then Isabelle together with him he conveyed—
Isabelle, on whom keen distress now doubly weighed.

FLEURDELYS

2283 Alas, so pain upon pain she then had to bear—
2284 Misfortune upon misfortune, care upon care!

MESSENGER

2285 After, seeing herself that barbarian's slave –
 2286 One whose constant custom was to show himself brave
 2287 By killing, by threatening both the gods and men,
 2288 Now wounded by love, now seized by fury again—
 2289 She solemnly resolved her span of life to finish.
 2290 Yet nothing seemed to favour her virtuous wish,
 2291 For Rodomont, who knew that that was her intention,
 2292 Accompanied her always, paying close attention
 2293 So as not to allow her hand to seize upon,
 2294 In her sad state, fire or sword or other iron.
 2295 And all the while in forceful terms he pressed his suit
 2296 To let him pluck, of his passionate love, the fruit—
 2297 To give him leave, by taking his pleasure with her,
 2298 To extinguish his cruel torment and his ardour.

2299 But, alas, some cold stone he might have been entreating
 2300 Or attempting with fierce fire a friendly meeting,
 2301 For the lovely one was not moved by his advances,
 2302 Was not even willing to cast on him her glances.¹³⁸
 2303 She wept all the time, hoping for no other thing
 2304 But a cruel blade to bring closer her perishing.
 2305 Upon her lips was Zeobin's name ever present,
 2306 Which the fierce barbarian heard with sad resentment —
 2307 Until, being angered by such lengthy diversion,¹³⁹
 2308 His love into furor underwent a conversion.

FLEURDELYS

2309 Oh, how I pity the sad lot of that chaste dame,
 2310 Although her virtue clears her of the slightest blame!
 2311 But continue, messenger.

MESSENGER

Give me a short rest
 2312 To catch my breath and ensure my tale's well expressed.¹⁴⁰
 2313 Rodomont, then, raging in a furious state,
 2314 Determined that Isabelle he would violate
 2315 And prepared to use force against her chastity,
 2316 When she again appeased his savage cruelty
 2317 By means of tears and cries, and managed to assuage
 2318 For a little while yet that wild ferocious rage.
 2319 Meanwhile, as the key to her tomb, it was her hope
 2320 To come upon some blade or length of frigid rope,
 2321 Or to hurl herself down from some steep mountain side,
 2322 But always brash Rodomont his presence supplied:
 2323 He never left her, afraid, from what she was doing,
 2324 Of her harming her body and herself undoing.

138 Beginning with l. 2299 (“*alas [helas]*”), the Messenger indirectly evokes the feelings of the frustrated lover.

139 “[D]iversion”: orig. “*erreur*”, which combines the idea that she was delaying with the notion that, from Rodomont’s point of view, she was wrong to do so. See also the Introduction.

140 Might this request signal a pause in the performance for practical reasons, perhaps even a change of actor?

2325 Oh, what cruelty, oh, what cruel martyrdom,
 2326 To desire to die and yet not have that freedom—
 2327 To have neither weapon nor the strength here below
 2328 To escape from pain and death on oneself bestow!

FLEURDELYS

2329 Conclude, messenger—alas, my patience is ending:
 2330 Isabelle's anguish my heart is painfully rending.

MESSENGER

2331 Ah, to be sure! Alas, sometimes it makes me die—
 2332 Causes feeling, firmness and voice from me to fly.
 2333 All this while Rodomont, consuming in his flame,
 2334 Sought more and more pressingly to enjoy his dame:
 2335 He was all on fire, and both by night and day
 2336 He felt himself in love's furnace burning away.
 2337 The more the face of modest Isabelle he viewed,
 2338 The more her love he sought and his pleasure pursued;
 2339 She, quite the opposite, detested him the more,
 2340 Viewing his face, his eyes, and how himself he bore.
 2341 Thus their two wills were found absolute adversaries,
 2342 Contrary their humours, their natures plain contraries:
 2343 Chaste was Isabelle, and likewise chaste her desire;
 2344 Rodomont dishonest, filthy his lustful fire.
 2345 He resolved to ravish by brute force, in the end,
 2346 The honour the poor girl was trying to defend:
 2347 He would wait no longer, crudely the thought effaced
 2348 Of Isabelle's pangs; forward with swift steps he paced,
 2349 Incensed with furor, his visage with rage turned pale,
 2350 To force in his wild state her chaste courage to quail.
 2351 Then that beauty, nearly dying of fear and woe
 2352 At seeing her fame ravished, with her honour also,
 2353 Perceiving fierce Rodomont's boldness, in a trice
 2354 Was seized by confusion and went as cold as ice.

FLEURDELYS

2355 After losing Zeobin, too much pain it cost
 2356 To see her honour in danger of being lost!

MESSENGER

2357 Listen to what she did: she came up with a ruse,

2358 Seeing that her woe would not serve her to excuse,
2359 And that nothing could Rodomont's purpose efface,
2360 Showing as he did cruel fury in his face—
2361 Like the furious bull that in the field runs free,
2362 Heated with force of love, when the Sacrosanct Lady¹⁴¹
2363 Causes return of spring: he charges through the meadows,
2364 Having had his heart transfixed by Love's potent arrows;
2365 He bellows madly, and the heifer, though quite cold,
2366 Seems as she flees to fear the force that makes him bold.
2367 Just so was Rodomont maddened furiously
2368 By the cruel wound Love had dealt him treacherously.¹⁴²
2369 Isabelle, who saw she could not with her poor force
2370 Arrest the cruel man's violence in its course,
2371 Who saw her chastity wavering in grave peril,
2372 And who was unable to die, as was her will,
2373 Pretended she would to Rodomont's wish consent,
2374 Put on a cheerful face, a look of calm content.

FLEURDELYS

2375 Ah, what great risk the modest lady must incur
2376 To rebuff a cruel man who would violate her!

MESSENGER

Then, with a welcoming smile and an air composed,
Hear what to the pagan infidel she proposed:
“Since I see that your heart feels faithful love for
me,¹⁴³
That your soul in my eyes’ fire burns constantly,
That your love for me is loyal, neither profaning
Holy amity¹⁴⁴ nor, I believe, false or feigning,

141 “Sacrosanct Lady”: orig. “dame sacree”—undoubtedly Nature, according to the common personification.

142 L. 2368: orig. “De l’infidelle amour cruellement blessé”—Love, by nature treacherous, here *naturally* inspires an unfaithful love, which Isabelle pretends to find “faithful” in l. 2379.

143 At this point, Isabelle pointedly begins to address Rodomont (necessarily by way of the Messenger's reported speech) using the familiar "tu," as would suit her seductive strategy.

144 “Holy amity”: orig. “amitié sainte” (l. 2381). In first applying this key expression to the

I wish to love you, too, and, all doubt to allay,
I will honour you with a precious gift today—
A gift to make you, like Achilles, invincible.¹⁴⁵
For cruel steel to hurt you will be impossible:
Your body will be harder than drawing adamant,¹⁴⁶
Impervious to darts, to all metal resistant.
You will never die.¹⁴⁷ And so that you will suppose
My words are true and valid potency disclose,
Prudently on my body you will make a test—
My body, which your sword, though strong among the
 strongest,
Will not be able to harm or wound any way,
Even if your valour does all others outweigh.
But to achieve this one must gather countless flowers,
Herbs in barren places of all possible colours,
Certain roots of green plants which in high mountain
 ground,
Where the soil is stony, in quantity abound.
With these a bath, half-cold, half-hot, I shall next
 brew,
Into which I must plunge not just one time but two;

relation of Zeobin and Isabelle (I.[i.]21, “sacred relation” in the translation), the ghost contrasted it, as Isabelle does here, with love that is “feigning [feinte]” (22), the rhyme “sainte/feinte” reinforcing the point. Isabella’s enlistment of the expression in service to her ruse is thereby made all the more ironic, and the irony extends to Rodomont’s romantic susceptibility.

145 L. 2385: a flaw in her promise corresponding to the notorious “Achilles heel” is thereby hinted at—and lost on the gullible Rodomont. In Ariosto, it is Rodomont who longs to become invulnerable like Cynus and Achilles (“*qual fu già Cigno e Achille*” [Canto XXIX.19]). The irony is built-in, given the fatal ends of both. Cynus, son of Poseidon, was killed in the Trojan War by Achilles, who got round his invulnerability by strangling him, according to Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XII.83–145, whereupon he was changed into a swan; see *OCD*, s.v. “Cynus [2]”. Montreux sharpens the irony by focusing on the more famous case of Achilles and attributing the allusion to Isabelle.

146 At this period, the magnetic lodestone was habitually confounded with the mineral deemed to be the hardest substance. Cf. love-stricken Helena reproaching the indifferent Demetrius in Shakespeare, *MND*: "You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant; / But yet you draw not iron, for my heart / Is true as steel" (II.i.195-67).

147 “You will never die”: orig. “Tu ne mourras jamais”—blatant pandering to his fantasies of divinity.

2.401 Then, at my throat, which in that warm bath I did soak,
 2.402 Aiming with your sword your fiercest, mightiest stroke,
 2.403 You will see that your sword can never do me hurt,
 2.404 Though it has struck a thousand knights into the dirt.
 2.405 After, in the same bath, to be invulnerable,
 2.406 Twice you will plunge your body, proud and formidable,
 2.407 Which quite as hard as my own will in its turn issue:
 2.408 Yes, harder than steel my knowledge will render you.”

FLEURDELYS

2.409 O honourable scheme! O what a clever ruse!
 2.410 O virtue to sap my strength, my senses confuse!

MESSENGER

2.411 Rodomont, exultant, by the thought overcome
 2.412 That he had won Isabelle and was to become
 2.413 Harder than iron and steel, hastened her to thank,
 2.414 Would certainly try her bath, from no peril shrank.¹⁴⁸
 2.415 But fearing she might seek from his hands to break free
 2.416 Or from the steep rocks throw herself mercilessly,
 2.417 He followed always, kept on her heels, at her side,
 2.418 While with her flowers she was gladly occupied.¹⁴⁹
 2.419 After she had gathered herbs in great quantity,
 2.420 Roots and flowers, and prayed with humble piety
 2.421 That it might be the great God's will her soul to claim,
 2.422 She kindled a great fire, built a blazing flame
 2.423 And on it set the cauldron, put the herbs in it,
 2.424 All mixed up, and a long while boiling let it sit.
 2.425 Then, having rendered Rodomont drunkenly gay,¹⁵⁰

148 L. 2.414: orig. “Veut esprouver son bain au peril de sa vie”. The expression suggests indirect discourse reflecting Rodomont's eagerness and boasting manner, as the translation attempts to convey.

149 Rodomont thus seeks to prevent a suicidal leap such as Ariosto's Drusilla attempts, without success, in order to escape the lustful Tanacro, who has murdered her husband and taken her captive; see Canto XXXVII.56-57. It obviously enhances the irony of the deception that Rodomont remains residually suspicious but is blinded to the mechanism of the ruse by his susceptibilities.

150 L. 2.425: orig. “Puis ayant fait yurer Rodomont plein de ioye” (lit. “Then, having made Rodomont drunk with joy”); on the significance of drunkenness as a metaphor here, as

2.426 Greedily anticipating his lovely prey,
 2.427 She plunged her body twice as deep as there was room—
 2.428 A body too noble to enclose in the tomb.

FLEURDELYS

2.429 What happened next? My frantic heart to me is sending
 2.430 Tremors of fear to learn of chaste Isabelle's ending.

MESSENGER

2.431 Isabelle, having bathed to prepare for the test,
 2.432 Revealed her beautiful neck, displayed her chaste
 breast,¹⁵¹
 2.433 Said to the cruel More: "Now let the trial be made
 2.434 If something harder than I could meet your steel blade!"¹⁵²
 2.435 Strike my neck and you will see—your steel will be
 found
 2.436 Rigidly in your hand at the touch to rebound;
 2.437 Therefore, strike without fear, and the experience
 2.438 Will cause you acknowledge my bath's excellence."
 2.439 Rodomont, besotted,¹⁵³ his sword then extricated
 2.440 And struck her neck—which from the trunk he separated
 2.441 Of the chaste Isabelle, who died reverently,
 2.442 Pronouncing her Zeobin's name lamentably.¹⁵⁴

also, therefore, below in l. 2.439, see the Introduction.

151 In evoking Isabella as bathing in front of the excited Rodomont, then displaying her lovely neck and breast, Montreux tendentiously skews the encounter towards erotic seduction—hence towards the paradigm of Judith and Holofernes, in which literal drunkenness plays a major role; see the Introduction and n. 38. The sequence in Ariosto (Canto XXIX.15-16, 2.4-25) is neutral by comparison: Rodomonte has been drinking with his men while Isabella decocts the liquid which she then applies to herself; only her neck is bared ("*il collo ignudo*"). (It is notable that Harington [XXIX.25] inserts a request on her part to send his men away before trying the experiment.)

Equally to the point, Isabella differs from Isabelle in not promising Rodomonte to yield to his desire, much less to return his love; Ariosto's villain is merely induced to prefer the gift of invulnerability and to promise (without intending to keep his word) that he will not dishonour her (Canto XXIX.17-18).

152 L. 2.434: the ironic double meaning is notable, as in ll. 2.437-38 below.

153 "[B]esotted": orig. "enyuré", lit. "drunken", but the figurative application is important to bring out. Cf. above, l. 2.425 and n. 150.

154 The dying Drusilla's address to her dead husband figures also, with anticipations of their

2.443 As the grief-stricken ploughman stands stock-still,
astonished
2.444 To see his wheat, which the lightning-storm's hail
demolished
2.445 In its blazing fury—wheat of which he had need
2.446 His body and his hungry family to feed—
2.447 And then, with arms crossed, takes in the pitiful view
2.448 Of his wheat in the field, half broken and cut through,
2.449 Thus stood Rodomont—Rodomont who, without power,
2.450 Without strength to move, remained still more than an
hour.
2.451 He cursed his heedless folly, blaming his gross error,
2.452 And now against himself sought to convert his furor,
2.453 Using the same blade that to the fair one proved fatal
2.454 To pierce his bloody breast, guilty and criminal.

FLEURDELYS

2455 Oh, cruel pain I feel! Yet it will be comforted
2456 And eased somewhat by knowing Rodomont is dead.

MESSENGER

2.457 Ah, no! For all rushed the sword from his grasp to seize,
2.458 Leaving him unarmed, alone, his wrath to appease.
2.459 He remained there weeping: he pitied the chaste dame;
2.460 He valued her virtue, esteemed her sacred fame.
2.461 Dead he wished to honour her, whom, while she did live,
2.462 He sought to force, defame, render dishonour's captive.
2.463 Then, his dishonest injury to expiate,
2.464 A grand tomb for Isabelle he chose to create,
2.465 Which he adorned with arms of those he overcame
2.466 And, by that same gesture, thereon displayed their shame.
2.467 Weeping, he remained in that tomb's vicinity,
2.468 Treating Isabelle as a great divinity.¹⁵⁵

reunion in heaven, in Ariosto's version of her story (Canto XXXVII.73-74)—a development from Plutarch likewise found, despite the pagan context, in Castiglione.

155 L. 2468: orig. “Et veut comme vn grand Dieu Isabelle honorer”—phrasing which implies both a worthy impulse to deify Isabelle and a residual limitation of understanding. “[G]rand Dieu” is the term used elsewhere, as in l. 2421 above, for the (true) Christian God.

2.469 Such was the sad end that on chaste Isabelle loured,
 2.470 Who still more in modesty than in beauty flowered;
 2.471 Such her meeting with pale Death, her fate and her woes,
 2.472 For which from my eyes many a tearful stream flows.

FLEURDELYS

2.473 O cruel disaster, calamity malign!
 2.474 O, of all the virtues, that which is most divine!
 2.475 O Fate too distressful, Destiny inhumane!
 2.476 Were you not content Zeobin's loss to ordain—
 2.477 Zeobin most beautiful to chaste Isabelle—
 2.478 Without making her forever in sorrow dwell?
 2.479 Bereft of your husband, long in captivity,
 2.480 You have traversed your years of misery, chaste beauty,
 2.481 Borne a barbarous infidel's countless assaults,
 2.482 Your chaste fidelity, alas, to keep from faults.¹⁵⁶
 2.483 Rare instance of honour, worthy to shine on high
 2.484 As a sacred sun, forever to glorify,
 2.485 You have marked out for us by your blood the right way
 2.486 To die when our glory risks to be made a prey;
 2.487 You serve us, gleaming torch-like through eternity,
 2.488 To conduct our spirits to immortality.
 2.489 Alas, what eye in all this world will be capable
 2.490 Of tenderly weeping for your loss deplorable?
 2.491 What sighs will be strong enough for your death to sigh?
 2.492 What cries strident enough your sad lot to decry?
 2.493 Alas, what loss we suffer in losing your presence!
 2.494 Nothing remains to us that harbours excellence:
 2.495 With you lies dead the honour of the universe;
 2.496 With you lies glory buried face-down and perverse.¹⁵⁷
 2.497 Barbarous Rodomont, could your soul truly stand
 2.498 The sight of such a fair lady killed by your hand?

156 The play on “infidel” and “fidelity” is modeled on the original (“infidelle”/“fidelle”). Fleurdelys extends Isabelle’s tribulation in time, at least imaginatively, well beyond the situation as presented previously (or, for that matter, in Ariosto).

157 L. 2.496: orig. “Auecque toy la gloire est gisante à l'enuers”. The image evokes, with grotesque inversion, the “gisants” of noble figures affirming their glorious virtue.

2499 Could you kill her, alas—you, accustomed to boast
 2500 That your sword overcame the strongest and the foremost?
 2501 Infamous Rodomont, how vile is your memory
 2502 For having a modest girl's blood thus spilled wantonly—
 2503 A girl without bodily strength yet one whose virtue
 2504 Successfully your raging fury overthrew!
 2505 Infamous Rodomont, your swarthy face go hide:
 2506 Speak no more, insolent, of your courage with pride—
 2507 Of your deeds, of your fame, for you have all forfeited
 2508 By having the lovely blood of Isabelle shed.
 2509 Happy was she the furor of your blade to know,
 2510 Disgracing you among the living here below;
 2511 Happy was she her virtue with this proof to crown,
 2512 By having your fierce pride courageously struck down,
 2513 While on your face one starts the bitter shame to read
 2514 That comes of not dying for an ignoble deed.
 2515 Have you really the heart till death shall you inter
 2516 To be known as the bloodthirsty executioner
 2517 Of a lady of honour—a dame more courageous
 2518 Than your hand in its combats is injurious?
 2519 Ah, cruel enemy of decent modesty,
 2520 Of that Greek baron you deserve the penalty
 2521 Who blasting fire from the sky could not escape,
 2522 Reduced to ashes for divine Cassandra's rape.¹⁵⁸
 2523 Whatever ill strikes you, whatever bitter torment
 2524 May torture you with more terrible punishment
 2525 Than Tantalus, or him who furnished bitter meat
 2526 For Jupiter's vulture incessantly to eat,¹⁵⁹
 2527 You never could feel pain sufficiently intense:
 2528 No sanction for false wickedness is too immense.
 2529 And meanwhile we shall be, by your rage harsh and base,

158 The reference to the rape of Cassandra confirms the fulfilment of Sicambra's warning to Rodomont, in closely similar terms, of the consequences of his intended crime. See above, I.[ii.]433-35 and n. 44.

159 Ll. 2525-26: the two traditional underworld punishments of Tantalus and Prometheus, suffered eternally, notably comprise the opposing extremes of inability to eat and being eaten alive.

2530 Deprived forever of Isabelle's lovely face.
 2531 No, we shall never see her more! Oh, cruel woe!
 2532 Her loss, alas, increases our ferocious sorrow;
 2533 We shall never see her more: she will, fair and chaste,
 2534 Serve as an eternal lamp, high in heaven placed;
 2535 We shall never see her more: she is at God's side,
 2536 Too worthy in this base world longer to abide;
 2537 We shall never see her more: instead there appear
 2538 By thousands rueful complaints, regrets, pale bursts of fear
 2539 To dazzle our eyes; an eternal fearful pall
 2540 Will spread more and more our dolefulness over all.
 2541 Alas, who will afford your splendid memory,
 2542 O Isabelle divine, enough honour and glory?
 2543 Who can enough your praises with elation chant?
 2544 Who can enough your noble death recite and vaunt?
 2545 But no more can praise enough of you be expressed
 2546 Than anyone could convey how I am distressed:
 2547 None may tell of my cries, nor of my grief for you,
 2548 For you, saintly Isabelle,¹⁶⁰ in whom faith was true,
 2549 Honour and chastity alive, with constancy—
 2550 Constancy which broke the outrageous effrontery
 2551 Of cruel Rodomont, to your good name unkind,
 2552 Assailant of your honour and your peace of mind.
 2553 Now, while you have your dwelling in Heaven, glorious,
 2554 While your pure soul lives on in blessedness above us,
 2555 And while all vie with each other in celebration
 2556 Of your splendour, famous name and glorification,
 2557 To weep for your death in a rocky cell I go:
 2558 Into moist tears transformed, myself with them shall flow;¹⁶¹
 2559 Words for nothing but your sad ending I shall find;
 2560 Only you, with your Zeobin, will fill my mind,
 2561 Until a happy death comes our two souls to tether—
 2562 Two souls which once lived for such a long time together,

160 "[S]aintly Isabelle": orig. "sainte Isabelle"; the translation preserves the ambiguity of the French, which hints at but need not denote canonisation.

161 The image evokes the myth of Niobe, turned to stone and weeping, current from ancient times as an emblem of mourning; see *OCD*, *s.v.*

2563 While the force of life within your body resided
 2564 And it remained still free of the laws of the dead.
 2565 Nothing else can I render to your memory;
 2566 I have no other prayers to offer to your glory;
 2567 However imperfect, receive from me this present:
 2568 Be mindful, however, of me who have it sent.
 2569 *Not for what it has cost a present one cherishes:*
 2570 *Its value is imparted by the giver's wishes.*
 2571 *Gifts from feeble humans hardly swell the gods' coffers,*
 2572 *Yet they hold in esteem whatever mankind offers.*
 2573 So take, chaste sister, these laments of little price,
 2574 These cries which to your sacred beams I sacrifice;
 2575 Receive my sad tears, with them the faith of my heart:
 2576 You cannot hope for greater bounty on my part.
 2577 With you gone, chaste sister, after your sad perishing,
 2578 Whatever can become of Fleurdelys, poor thing—
 2579 Fleurdelys now orphaned, both of you, my dear sister,
 2580 And of her Brandimart, immortal in his valour?¹⁶²
 2581 Alas, I feel alone, abandoned here below—
 2582 Like a heifer in some wild place, which, wearied so
 2583 By having run through woods, among banks of streams wandered
 2584 And twisted rocks, finds she has strayed far from the herd
 2585 And lacks a guide, when a famished she-wolf emerges
 2586 From a hideous cave, with hungry furor surges
 2587 To strangle and devour her, at her breast flies,
 2588 On her soft flesh its craving fiercely satisfies.¹⁶³
 2589 Thus quite alone, pale, bereft of joy here below,

162 “[I]mmortal in his valour”: orig. “immortel en valeur”—an ambiguous phrase, which effectively exposes the adaptation of Ariosto here as combining narrative compression and prolepsis. Given his appearance in Act III, the audience would hardly suspect Brandimart of being dead, and in fact, as the *Orlando Furioso* unfolds from this point, Fiordiligi will shortly be pleading to Rodomonte for his life after their combat (Canto XXXI.73-74). When he is eventually killed by Gradasso, Fleurdelys’s vision of her reclusive mourning will indeed be realised. On the possibility that Fleurdelys was also the subject of a separate tragedy by Montreux, see the Introduction, p. [xxx].

163 Although a she-wolf (orig. “louue”) is specified, the description vividly suggests a violent sexual attack, in keeping with the context. Cf. the image of Rodomont and Isabelle as bull and heifer at ll. 2361-66 above.

2590 I feel myself to be the living prey of woe—
 2591 Woe which is killing all possible sweet repose
 2592 And the hollow of my bones with chill horror sows;
 2593 The pain stays with me, abandoned to misery:
 2594 It seems that sheer suffering is my destiny.
 2595 But no end of pitiful sorrows can I find,
 2596 For Isabelle has left earthly regions behind—
 2597 For I am deprived of her face, so beautiful,
 2598 And of my Brandimart, to my love ever faithful.
 2599 May manna forever pour down upon your tomb,
 2600 Wise Dame, dead in your age's time of fairest bloom;
 2601 May the rose flourish there, and may no lightning bolt,
 2602 Trailing crimson fire, strike the place with a jolt;
 2603 May the plants all around it be exempt always
 2604 From the lamb's cutting tooth, from combats and harsh frays;¹⁶⁴
 2605 May a thousand sweet birds perch there reverently;
 2606 May the poor there find refuge in their misery.
 2607 In sum, remain immortal, O tomb illustrious—
 2608 Ever green, ever holy, fair and felicitous.

END

164 An ironic wish, given Rodomont's use of the tomb to display his spoils from nearby combats (cf. above, ll. 2464-66), and especially so because one of Rodomonte's encounters, according to the *Orlando Furioso*, will be with Brandimarte in Fiordeligi's presence (Canto XXXI.64-76); at her request Rodomonte will spare his life but take him prisoner.

Isabelle: Tragedie

par

Ollenix du Mont-Sacré, Gentil-homme

du Mayne

Editorial Principles

On the origin and diffusion of the copy-text, see the Introduction. I have been able to collate two typographically identical copies available in digital form, as identified below, and so to remedy occasional problems of legibility stemming from imperfect reproduction and damage to the originals:

- 1) Gallica, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris: Abraham Saugrain, 1595), NUMM-1090243, online at <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k10902433>> (accessed 26 May 2024);
- 2) Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Münchener Digitalisierungszentrum, Digitale Bibliothek, in *Le Quatriesme Liure des Bergeries de Iulliette* (Lyon: Veyrat, 1595), shelf-mark Res/P.o.gall. 1601, online at <<https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb10207703?page=,1>> (accessed 26 May 2024).

The spelling and grammatical forms of the fairly well-printed copy-text have been preserved, including the numerous inconsistencies, notably in the use of accented letters and apostrophes, as well as in orthography, including the spelling of names. Apparent typographical errors have been corrected in square brackets, however, with original forms recorded in notes. Punctuation too, has been retained, except in a few cases of incoherence, with the encouragement of scholarly opinion that it often served in theatrical texts of the period as a guide to verse-delivery. Common here is the use of question marks for emphatic affirmations, although the distinction is sometimes difficult to draw with confidence.

Modern French typographical practice has been applied to spacing of punctuation marks, while superfluous full stops after speech-headings, etc., have been omitted as distracting and typographical layout has not been exactly reproduced. Long “s” and double “s” (ß) have been modernised and contractions expanded, as have ligatured “ct” and “st” and abbreviated speech-headings. Verses divided between speakers have been placed on separate lines. Passages signalled by marginal *guillemets* as sententious, aphoristic or otherwise notable are given in italics. It is not always easy to be sure from the printing of the copy-text where such passages should begin or end, and at various points the marked section clearly needs to start earlier or continue longer than indicated for the sake of coherence. I have attempted to allow for this in the translation, but the edition follows the original indications as precisely as possible.

Argvment de la tragedie

Roland deuenu fol pour l'amour d'Angelique, iette ses armes de toutes parts. Zeobin son amy les ramasse & pend au haut d'un chesne resolu de les deffendre, Mandicard arriue qui veut emporter l'espee de Roland, à quoy Zeobin s'oppose. Ils viennent aux mains ou Zeobin est tué. Isabelle sa chere amie qui l'auoit tousiours accompagné, veut se deffaire sur le corps mort de son amy. Vn hermite arriue qui l'en empesche & charge le corps de Zeobin sur ses espauls, pour le porter en sepulture. Isabelle le suit, en leur chemin ils rencontrent le fier Rodomont qui deuiet amoureux d'Isabelle, & l'emmeine avecque luy, la Dame craignant d'estre forcee, & ne pouuant se tuer pour estre de pres regardee du Maure, luy fait croire qu'elle peut faire vn bain où baigné son corps sera plus dur que fer, & du tout indomptable. Rodomont la croit va serrer avecque elle mille sortes d'herbes, elle faict le bain & se laue la premiere dedans, incitant Rodomont enyuré, d'esprouuer sur son col, en la frappant de son espee, la vertu du bain. Le Barbare yure frappe de tout son pouuoir Isabelle, & luy separe le chef du corps : qui tombant prononça le beau nom de Zeobin. Ce sujet est pris de l'Ingenieux & docte Arioste.

Les acteurs

L'ombre de Zeobin
Rodomont
Sicambras son Escuyer
Renault
Isabelle
Fleurdelys
Brandimard
Messager
Chœur

Acte Premier

L'ombre de Zeobin, Rodomont, Sicambas, son Escuyer, Renault

L'OMBRE DE ZEOBIN

1 Loing des fleuves hideux ou la frayeur seiourne,
2 Loing des tristes Enfers icy haut il retourne,
3 Loing du regne ensouffré du pere de soucy,
4 Du raisseur Pluton, las ie reuiens icy,
5 Ie reuiens icy hault ou iadis i'euz la gloire
6 De voir au front de Mars, pourtraite ma memoire,
7 Quand ardant des combats, & goulou de renom,
8 Par la pointe du fer j'y grauois mon beau nom,
9 Ie fus nommé Zeobin, fils du Roy d'Angleterre
10 Qui fut serf de l'amour, & du Dieu de la guerre,
11 Zeobin ie fus nommé, qui combatis cent fois
12 Les payens ennemis de nos fidelles loix,
13 Zeobin ie fus nommé iadis espoux fidelle
14 Immuable mary de la chaste Isabelle,
15 Isabelle qui fut fille de ce grand Roy
16 Qui au peuple Escossois donne aujourdhuy la loy,
17 Belles furent iadis nos amours delectables,
18 Conformes nos esprits, nos volontez semblables,
19 Nos deux cœurs estoient qu'un en deux cors enflamé,
20 D'un mesme feu nostre ame ardoit chaste enflammé :
21 Nos desirs n'estoient qu'un, & nostre amitié sainte
22 Ne pouuoit endurer l'iniuste nom de feinte,
23 J'estois a Isabelle, & elle estoit à moy,
24 Notre amour estoit saint, & sainte nostre foy,
25 Ie viuois seulement affin de luy complaire,
26 Elle allongeoit ses iours pour m'aymer & me plaire,
27 Mais las le sort cruel depité de nous voir
28 Si long temps consommez en un mesme vouloir,
29 Ialoux de nostre amour, d'une amitié si rare,
30 Par un gauche malheur en deux partz nous separe,
31 Non que nos cœurs ensemble estroitement serrez,
32 Puissent estre iamais par la mort separez,
33 Mais separe nos corps, mettant le mien en terre,
34 Tué de Mandrigard, par le sort de la guerre,
35 Et laissant celuy là d'Isabelle mon cœur

36 Viuant encor en terre, esclau du malheur.
 37 Helas pauure Isabelle, ô que de pleurs amers,
 38 Tu as ietté depuis que mes tendres paupieres
 39 Vindrent à se fermer par vn cruel effort,
 40 Inhumain à tes cris, soubz l'horreur de la mort,
 41 Combien as-tu lancé de piteuses complainctes,
 42 Pleinctes qui ne seront qu'avec tes iours estainctes,
 43 Combien as tu gemy helas ie le sçay bien
 44 Encore que mon œil fust esloigné du tien,
 45 Ie sçay que vifue encor dedans ta pudique ame
 46 Brusle de noz amours la bienheureuse flamme,
 47 Ie sçay qu'encor tu m'ayme, & que ton chaste amour
 48 Aura vigueur autant qu'aura vigueur ton iour,
 49 Ie sçay qu'il te souuiet de Zeobin miserable,
 50 Ie sçay que son penser, t'est encore agreable.
 51 Helas chaste Isabelle, assure toy aussi
 52 Que le fleuve oublieux n'a mon amour transi,
 53 Que les obscurs manoirs des ames criminelles,
 54 N'ont changé le penser de mes amours fidelles,
 55 Non non ie t'ayme encore, & ton proche tombeau
 56 Helas me faict reuoir mon Soleil de nouveau,
 57 Tu fays qu'encor icy ie retourne fidelle,
 58 Affin de t'aduertir de ta perte cruelle
 59 Isabelle le temps approche qu'il de faut
 60 Mourir comme i'ay faict, pour t'en voller la haut,
 61 La haut pour receuoir heureuse recompense
 62 De ta chaste vertu, de ta masle constance,
 63 Tu mourras pour garder saine ta chasteté,
 64 Mais telle mort sera ta sainte liberté,
 65 Telle mort donnera à ta memoire vie,
 66 Affranchira ton los du temps & de l'enuie,
 67 *Sainte des vertueux est la diuine fin,*
 68 *La mort ne leur peut rien, ny le cruel destin,*
 69 *Ils viuent dans les cœurs, dans les ames fidelles,*
 70 *De ceux qui vont suyuant leurs traces immortelles,*
 71 Lucesse vit encor, bien que son palle corps
 72 Dorme soubz le tombeau au rang des palles mortz,
 73 Cassandra vit encor, & la chaste Porcie
 74 Bien que veufue de iour, se trouue encore en vie,
 75 Bref les bons sont viuants, bien que leurs yeux

76 Soyent priez du beau front du Soleil radieux,
 77 De mesme ô Isabelle, ô sainte & chaste dame
 78 Ton honneur suruiuera ton corps mis soubz la lame,
 79 Et dessus ton tombeau les esprits vertueux,
 80 Comme à quelque grand Dieu rendroit leurs chastes
 vœux,
 81 Rodomont qui cruel cherche à rauir ta gloire,
 82 Seruira de burin à grauer ta memoire,
 83 Il tuera ton beau corps dont il est amoureux,
 84 De tes embrassements ardamment desireux,
 85 Mais au lieu son estoc portera ta loüange,
 86 Iusques au Nil monstreux, & iusqu'au roide Gange,
 87 La fera dans le ciel luire eternellement,
 88 Comme y luist le soleil, l'honneur du firmament,
 89 Tu mourras de sa main aymant trop mieux eslire
 90 Vne cruelle mort, que voir ton los destruire,
 91 Que voir ta chasteté, ton honneur, & ta foy,
 92 Prophanez, & viollez, par cest infame Roy.
 93 Helas à mon regret c'est arrest ie t'annonce
 94 Ie te fays de sortir de ces haults lieux semonce,
 95 Mais cest à ton honneur, car de ta chaste fin
 96 Il sortira durable vn los saint & diuin,
 97 Ta mort te fera viure à iamais immortelle,
 98 De la dame d'honneur, la fin est [tousiours]¹ belle.
 99 Helas ie ne plains tant ta deplorable mort,
 100 Que ie fais tes ennuys, le malheur de ton sort,
 101 Car on est en mourant quitte de ses miseres,
 102 Mais tu sens en viuant mille douleurs ameres,
 103 Et ce qui rend encor mon tourment plus amer,
 104 C'est que tu les endure helas pour trop m'aymer,
 105 C'est pour mon amitié que tu sens inhumaine
 106 Si long temps t'offenser la deuorante peine,
 107 Cest pour m'auoir perdu propice à tes malheurs,
 108 Que tes yeux vont roullant tant de ruisseaux de pleurs.
 109 Ah cest pour me garder ta foy chaste & entiere,
 110 Que tu resiste tant au cruel aduersaire

1 “[tousiours]”: copy-text “toulleurs”.

111 De ta pudicité, au cruel ennemy
 112 De tes iours, de ton los, qui prent tiltre d'amy.
 113 Appreste donc ton ame ô genereuse fille,
 114 A sortir de son corps par le malheur seruire,
 115 Rends la propre pour estre assise auprès de Dieu,
 116 Heureuse de quitter & ce terrestre lieu,
 117 Et ses aspres douleurs, toy plus heureuse encore
 118 De voir ton corps meurdry du cruel qui t'honore,
 119 Qui morte sera plus ardant de ta vertu,
 120 Qu'il n'est viuant du feu de tes yeux combattu,
 121 Qui rendra mille veux, mille sourds sacrifices,
 122 A tes ombres pour estre à sa douleur propices,
 123 Qui de mille harnoys de maint preux surmonté,
 124 Rendra de ton Tombeau, celebre la beauté,
 125 Ainsi ton los sera, los qui saintement i'ayme,
 126 Honoré, célébré par ton ennemy mesme,
 127 Par tous les vertueux, les cieux mesme en seront
 128 Espriz d'un chaud amour, & le reuereront,
 129 Mais adieu ie m'en vois retourner sur les riués
 130 Du plaisant Acheron, tousiours vertes & viues,
 131 Ie retourne la bas viure entre les esprits,
 132 Qui sont encor d'amour comme ie suis espriz,
 133 Là ainsi que i'ay faict i'auray soing de ta gloire,
 134 Et là i'auray de toy comme i'ay eu memoire :
 135 Mais adieu ie m'en vois y descendre soudain,
 136 Le Ciel chaste Isabelle à tes iours soit humain.

RODOMONT

137 Loing des riuages torts de Thetis l'infidelle,
 138 Desia le clair Phebus, son char ardant attelle,
 139 Ià les brusques cheuaux d'un pas audacieux
 140 Commencent à grimper sur la voute des cieux,
 141 Ie le voy qui commence à dorer le visage
 142 Des superbes Rochers, escornez par l'orage,
 143 Tout iaunist soubz les raiz de sa viue clarté.
 144 A flambeaux esclaircis chasse l'obscurité,
 145 Le ciel n'est plus bruny des vapeurs de la terre,
 146 La nuict à ia passé le beau siecle de verre,
 147 L'aurore va leuant à son pleureux reueil,
 148 Ceux que la nuict charmoit d'un paresseux sommeil,

149 Bref le beau iour reuiust ? Auecque luy la flamme
 150 Se r'allume à randons qui consomme mon ame.
 151 O iour trop depiteux, oze tu bien que Dieu,
 152 En ralumant le ciel, ralumer ce chaut feu,
 153 Dont le superbe amour, par les yeux d'une belle
 154 Brusle, consomme, & ard mon ame criminelle,
 155 O superbe Phebus ? & quoy ? ne crains tu point
 156 D'offenser Rodomont que tout le monde craint ?
 157 D'offenser Rodomont : qui le Ciel iniurie,
 158 De qui Paris encor redoubte la furie :
 159 Lors que d'un saut hardy au meurtre disposé
 160 Il trauersa vaincueur son mur & son fossé,
 161 Chassant tous les François, comme vne louue aide
 162 Vn troupeau de moutons, sans pasteur & sans guide,
 163 Les hachant tout ainsi, comme vn tonnerre prompt
 164 Le sourcil d'un rocher, esclatte, brize, & rompt,
 165 Les poulçans ioides morts sur la terre sanglante,
 166 Comme sont les espiez par la gresle sifflante,
 167 Charles en sçait que dire, & ces preux qui iadis
 168 Tenoyent le premier rang entre les plus hardis,
 169 Charles en sçait que dire, & sa bande domptee,
 170 Qui fuyoit en tremblant ma lame ensanglantee,
 171 Charles en sçais que dire, & mille dont les corps,
 172 Engraissent la Cité & dedans & dehors,
 173 Charles en sçait que dire, il en rend tesmoignage,
 174 Charles iadis sans per en valleur & courage,
 175 Mais non point Charles, seul, ains tous ceux que les
 Cieux
 176 Pour orner l'vniuers couurent victorieux,
 177 Iuppin maistre du Ciel, le lanceur de tonnerre,
 178 N'est point, bien qu'immortel, plus douté sur la terre,
 179 Que le fier Rodomont, Rodomont qui vaillant
 180 A faict ployer le col au superbe Roland,
 181 A fait suer le front au fils d'Aymon, qui braue
 182 Tenoit dessous son fert maint cheualier esclau,
 183 A combattu Roger, & cent fois à l'escart
 184 Terrassé, my vaincu le cruel Mandrigard,
 185 Quand la viue amitié de Doralice belle,
 186 Allumoit dans nos cœurs vne haine cruelle.
 187 Mais ores Rodomont, ce mesme Rodomont

188 Qui porte la valeur empreincte sur le front,
189 Rodomont inuaincu, Rodomont plain d'audace,
190 Se sent ores vaincu par vne belle face,
191 Par les traicts d'un bel œil, d'un bel œil descouuert
192 Dont le superbe amour pour me vaincre se sert,
193 Je ne m'estonne plus si ce Dieu qu'on reuere
194 Iadis surmonta Mars, fist serf de sa mere,
195 Je ne m'estonne plus s'il transperça le cœur
196 Du superbe Phebus, du fier Pithon vaincœur,
197 Puis qu'il à peu dompter Rodomont plus habile,
198 Plus vaillant aux combats, que ceste tourbe vile
199 De Dieux, qu'il à iadis au combat irritez,
200 Dieux qui ne sont de luy nullement redoutez ?
201 Mais ce qui rend encor ma douleur plus amere,
202 C'est ce lasche Phebus, qui à mon œil esclaire,
203 A mon œil qui la nuit d'un doux repos pressé,
204 Ne voyoit point ces yeux dont mon cœur est blessé,
205 A mon œil qui trompé de mille formes vaines,
206 Pensoit ancrer au port propice de ses peines,
207 A mon œil qui charmé d'un sommeil gracieux,
208 Tenoit aussi charmez mes trauaux soucieux,
209 A mon œil qui goustant le sommeil coullant calme,
210 Faisoit gouter aussi le repos à mon ame,
211 Mais ô lasche Apollon, couard, effeminé,
212 Indigne que le Ciel t'ait un lieu destiné
213 Entre les autres Dieux ? qui retient à ceste heure,
214 Ceste main ou le fer, inuincible demeure,
215 Ce bras, ce roide bras, qu'il me renuerse en bas,
216 Toy, ton char, tes cheuaux, de tant cheminer las ?
217 Vaillant plus que tu n'es, victorieux & brusque,
218 Je veux en mille parts deschirer ta perruque,
219 Briser tes traits, ton arc, & en mille morceaux,
220 Escarteler ton char, ta torche, & tes cheuaux,
221 Te fouller soubz mes pieds, & te faire paroistre
222 Que rien ne peut forcer ceste puissante dextre,
223 Rodomont inuaincu en cent mille combats,
224 A vaincu les mortels, & les esprits d'embas,
225 Rodomont inuaincu, d'une main de sang teinte,
226 Sur la face des cieux à peinct la palle crainte,
227 Rodomont inuaincu à faict trembler les Dieux,

228 Et sans estre vaincu, à vaincu tous les Preux,
 229 Rodomont est tout seul, sur qui la frayeur palle
 230 Comme sur les mortels, tremblante ne deualle,
 231 Bref Rodomont est seul yssu de ces ayeux,
 232 Qui voulurent iadis escheller les hauts cieux,
 233 Aussi braue comme eux, i'ay rendu mainte preuue,
 234 Qu'avecques Rodomont, la vaillance se treuue,
 235 Qu'il n'a point de pareil, & que victorieux,
 236 Apres tous les mortels il doit vaincre les Dieux.
 237 *La victoire d'un seul le guerrier ne contente,*
 238 *Plus il acquiert de los, à plus de los il tente,*
 239 *Vaincre un seul n'est rien, mais celebre est le los*
 240 *Qu'on acquiert en domptant les plus braues heros.*
 241 Faut donc vaincre les dieux, puisque soubz ma vaillance
 242 Tous les mortels vaincuz ont perdu l'assurance,
 243 Que nul n'est si hardy que luit corps à corps
 244 Que Roland fuit de moy, fort entre les plus fortz,
 245 Comme parmy le champ, ou long temps animees
 246 De rage & de fureur, ont paru deux armées,
 247 Qui se chocquants de pres, laissent le camp² semé,
 248 De charoignes de morts, de corcelets armé,
 249 Le cheual eschappé de la main de son maistre,
 250 S'enfuit legerement sans aucun recoignoistre,
 251 Estonné tout craintif, paoureux, & hors de soy,
 252 Ainsi Roland vaincu, couard s'enfuit de moy ?
 253 Sus donc montons au ciel, que dis-ie vne pucelle
 254 A vaincu ma fureur, tient captiue sous elle
 255 Ma force, & ma vertu, & ie ne suis plus rien,
 256 Emprisonné, lié dans l'amoureux lyen,
 257 Non non ce n'est plus moy, i'ay perdu le courage
 258 Vne femme me tient languissant en seruage,
 259 Je qui hors des combats retournois indompté,
 260 Par les traitz d'un bel œil, suis aujourd'huy dompté,
 261 Vaincueur ie suis vaincu, ô trop diuine force
 262 Ce qui force le ciel, immortelle te force,
 263 O puissant Cupidon, iustement ie te peux

2 "camp": "champ" would better fit the imagery, and the error would be an easy one.

264 Nommer Roy des mortels, & seigneur des grands dieux,
 265 Cruel, sans estre armé que des yeux d'une belle,
 266 Tu fais choir de ma main ceste lame cruelle,
 267 Qui cent [f]ois³ rouge au sang des plus braues guerriers,
 268 Entortilloit mon front de superbes lauriers.
 269 Mais quoy ? ie ne suis seul entre les preux gensdarmes,
 270 A qui ce fier amour à depouillé les armes
 271 Hercule passa ce gué, & ce vailleureux filz
 272 Qu'enfanta de Pelé, la Deesse Thetis,
 273 Roland en est tout fol, Regnaut l'honneur de France,
 274 A cent fois esprouué l'amoureuse puissance,
 275 Ie ne suis donc pas seul, si ie suis surmonté
 276 Au fort cest vn grand Dieu qui tient ma liberté,
 277 Pendant ie vois offrir vn pieux sacrifice
 278 A ce grand Dieu, pour estre à mes douleurs propice.

SICAMBRAS

279 O qu'il est bien vray dit, la main des immortels
 280 Brise d'un mouement la gloire des mortels,
 281 Iuppin d'un seul regard de sa tonnante face,
 282 Des plus superbes preux peut atterrer l'audace,
 283 Les Titans l'ont senty, & cent mille autres preux,
 284 Qui s'armerent iadis contre les i[e]unes⁴ Dieux,
 285 Rodomont tu le sens, qui superbe en ta gloire,
 286 Pensois faire le Ciel borné de ta victoire.
 287 Tu le scais Rodomont, qui braue comme Mars,
 288 Mesprisois les perils, te mocquois des hasards,
 289 Ores vaincu des yeux d'une simple fillette,
 290 Veuf de ton fier orgueil ton meschef tu regrette,
 291 Le plus petit des Dieux à dompté ta fureur,
 292 Toy qui pensois le Ciel trop faible à ta valeur,
 293 Il a fait de tes mains tomber la hache d'armes,
 294 Efface ton beau nom du rang des preux gens d'armes,

3 “[f]ois”: copy-text “sois” (with long “s”).

4 “i[e]unes”: copy-text “iaunes”, which gives no clear sense here; the status of the Titans as the older generation of gods, rebelling against the younger, imposes “ieunes” as the natural reading.

295 Esteinct ta braue force, & faict semblable encor
 296 Au frere effeminé du valeureux Hector,
 297 Brisé ton fier orgueil, comme on voit la tempeste
 298 Escarteler vn pin, qui esleuoit la teste
 299 Contre la foudre nue, & fier en ses rameaux,
 300 Seruoit d'ombrage moux aux jeunes Pastoureux.
 301 Bref Rodomont vaincu, n'est plus ce Prince braue,
 302 Qui tient dessous son fer toute la France esclaué,
 303 Il n'est plus Rodomont, qui combattit iadis
 304 Roland, Regnault, Roger, & mille aussi hardis,
 305 *Ce que Mars ne peut faire, est d'une viue amorce*
 306 *Souuent faict par Venus, dont diuine est la force,*
 307 *L'amour vaincq ce que Mars ne sçauroit surmonter,*
 308 *Mais outrageux na peu à l'amour resister*
 309 Achil vainquit Hector, & Polixene fille,
 310 Vainquit par sa beauté ce courageux Achille :
 311 *Rien si plaisant à l'œil qu'une rare beauté,*
 312 *Rien qui semble si pres à la diuinité,*
 313 *Rien qui puisse si fort commander sur nos ames,*
 314 *Pour briser nostre orgueil furent faictes les femmes,*
 315 Iupiter, Mars, Phebus, toutes les deitez
 316 [N]'ont⁵ refusé d'aymer des mortelles beautez,
 317 Ils ont eu bien souuent des femmes pour maistresses,
 318 Maints hommes ont esté caressez des Deesses,
 319 Ainsi ce fier amour, superbe en son pouuoir,
 320 Mille estranges effects inuaincu nous fait voir.
 321 Ainsi de braue & fort, superbe & plain d'audace,
 322 Il rend Rodomont froid, veuf d'ardeur & menace.
 323 Mais le voicy venir, ses esprits empeschez,
 324 Ses yeux contre la terre honteusement fichez,
 325 Il se traîne pensif, ô la tristesse amer
 326 Que se voir de vaincœur, vaincu, plain de misere
 327 Il a changé son port, le regard de ses yeux,
 328 Son pas comme autrefois ne branle furieux,
 329 O des superbes cœurs amour la sainte gloire
 330 Tu abuses souuent de ta belle victoire,

5 "[N'ont]": copy-text "M'ont".

331 Tu sçais bien rabaisser le courage de ceux
 332 Qui ne t'ont recogneu pour le maistre des Dieux,
 333 O pauure Rodomont, tu l'espreue en ta peine,
 334 *Estre puny d'un Dieu, cest douleur inhumaine*
 335 Il ne te reste plus superbe Rodomont,
 336 D'un genereux guerrier que le port & le front,
 337 Que les armes, l'habit, la mine, & le visage,
 338 Car tu n'as plus d'orgueil, tu manques de courage,
 339 Tu ressemble au foulteau par le temps despoillé
 340 De ses riches rameaux, & du foudre affollé,
 341 Qui n'a plus que le tronc, sans vigueur, & sans force
 342 Porte piteusement languissante l'escorce.
 343 Voicy qu'il vient à moy escoutons le parler,
 344 *Heureux qui l'affligé peut sage consoler*
 345 Face le bon Iuppin que ma langue profere
 346 Quelque chose de bon pour aider sa misere.

RODOMONT

347 Et bien mon cher amy me verras tu tousiours
 348 Au lieu d'estre aux combats, pensif en mes amours,
 349 Me verras tu tousiours resueur, priué d'audace,
 350 Et la pale soucy deualant sur ma face.
 351 Ha Sicambras ie meurs ! L'amour me faict mourir,
 352 Tous les Dieux de la hault ne me sçauroyent guerir !
 353 Isabelle me tue, & aux rais de la flamme
 354 Qui sort de ses beaux yeux ie sens brusler mon ame.
 355 Isabelle me tue, ô dure cruauté
 356 De mourir pour aimer vne ingratte beauté,
 357 Isabelle me tue, & priué d'allegeance,
 358 Ie me sens peu à peu consommer l'esperance,
 359 Ma fureur a passé, morte cruellement,
 360 Comme vn esclair esteinct, passe legerement,
 361 Ie n'ay plus de vigueur, au lieu dedans mes vaines
 362 Courent à pas hastifs mille cruelles peines.
 363 Bref ie ne suis plus rien, esclau sous les loix
 364 De l'infidelle amour, ie braue qui soulois
 365 Vaincre tant de heros, captiuer tant de villes,
 366 Et parer mes autels de despouilles seruiles,
 367 Bref ie ne suis plus rien, ô cruel changement.
 368 Ainsi perit Hercul des Cieux l'estonnement,

369 Vne belle inhumaine à ma douleur cruelle,
 370 Me tient de telle sorte esclau dessous elle,
 371 Que ie vis seulement au gré de son vouloir,
 372 Et son vouloir se plaist à me faire douloir,
 373 O cruelle Isabelle, indigne d'estre belle
 374 Si ta beauté se rend inhumaine & cruelle.
 375 Mais quoy ? seray ie donc esclau si long temps
 376 D'une fiere beauté qui consomme mes ans ?
 377 Doy-ie tousiours souffrir, qu'une chetive esclau
 378 Brise ma viue ardeur, & ma vaillance braue ?
 379 Seray-ie tousiours serf de celle, que ie puis
 380 Contraindre en me plaisant de guarir mes ennuis.
 381 Isabelle est à moi, & ie puis raurir d'elle
 382 Par la loy des combats, ce dont elle est rebelle.
 383 C'est ma serfue, & ie suis par la loy du vainqueur,
 384 La tenant en ma main, son naturel seigneur,
 385 Ie puis donc la forcer ? Il vaut mieux ainsi faire,
 386 Que me laisser cruel à la douleur deffaïre,
 387 Rodomont ne peut plus endurer de se voir
 388 Captif sous celle la qui vit en son pouuoir,
 389 *Le vainqueur du vaincu à son vouloir dispose,*
 390 *Le maistre sur son serf, peut & veut toute chose,*
 391 I'en veux vser ainsi de tant endurer las ?
 392 Car quand bien amoureux de la fiere Pallas,
 393 De lunon, de Venus, & Diane la belle,
 394 Chacune paroistroit à mes desirs cruelle ?
 395 Rodomont peut assez pour en despit des Dieux
 396 Raurir d'elles le bien, dont il est enuieux,
 397 Sus donc il faut raurir, ou par force ou par ruse
 398 Ce que par amitié sa rigueur me refuse,
 399 Il sera faict ainsi, n'en es tu pas d'aduis
 400 Fidelle secretaire à mes tristes ennuis

SICAMBRAS

401 *Celuy ne peut aimer, qui d'amour se destourne,*
 402 *Avec le doux amour la force ne seiourne,*
 403 *Car ce n'est pas amour, que forcer sans pitié*
 404 *Celle de qui l'on veut rechercher l'amitié,*
 405 *Mais cest pour son plaisir outrager sa pensee,*
 406 *D'un vray fidelle amant, l'amour n'est point forcee,*

407 *A sa Dame raur chose contre son cœur,*
 408 *Cest au lieu de l'aimer, forcener de fureur,*
 409 *L'amant qu'un saint amour heureusement enflamme,*
 410 *Aimera mieux mourir que desplaire à sa Dame,*
 411 *Ou s'il faict autrement, il n'est point son amy,*
 412 *Celuy qui force aucun, est son fier ennemy,*
 413 *Brisays ne fut point bien que serue forcee,*
 414 *L'amour ne peut au mal disposer la pensee,*
 415 *La force ny le droict que l'on trouue aux combats,*
 416 *D'estre doux & courtois ne nous dispensent pas,*
 417 *Plus nous sommes puissans, plus nous auons de gloire*
 418 *D'employer doucement nostre belle victoire,*
 419 *Faire tort à son los pour un maigre plaisir,*
 420 *Cest brute n'auoir point de borne à son desir.*
 421 *Quel honneur aurez vous de forcer vne femme*
 422 *Sans armes que les pleurs, que la tristesse pasme ?*
 423 *Vous qui auez l'honneur d'auoir forcé tous ceux*
 424 *Que la terre esleuoit au rang des braues preux ?*
 425 *Hé ne rendrez vous pas vostre memoire infame*
 426 *D'auoir au lieu de Mars, outragé vne femme ?*
 427 *La loi permet d'vser de force & de fureur,*
 428 *Contre le fort, qui veut esprouuer sa valeur,*
 429 *Forcer les roides forts, cest vne gloire belle,*
 430 *Mais blasme de forcer vne simple pucelle,*
 431 *Vne fille sans force, & qui na que les pleurs*
 432 *Pour pleindre & resister à ces cruels malheurs,*
 433 *Ajax du feu du Ciel fut broyé, mis en cendre,*
 434 *Pour auoir outragé la captiue Cassandre,*
 435 *Il perdoit son honneur, ne perdez comme luy*
 436 *Le vostre florissant. Car malheureux celuy⁶*
 437 *Qui s'est a grand trauail quis vne gloire haute,*
 438 *Et qui la pert soudain par vne seule faute.*
 439 *Changez donc de conseil, & soyez estimé*
 440 *Aussi courtois vainqueur, que valeureux armé,*
 441 *Si sans forcer cruel la dolente Isabelle,*

6 L. 436: a case where the typographic convention of designating sententious lines shows its limitations, since only the second hemistich would qualify.

442 Vous pouuez estre aimé vn iour ardammant d'elle,
 443 Ie n'empesche la fin de vostre chaut desir,
 444 *De l'amour mutuel, s'engendre le plaisir,*
 445 Mais vouloir la forcer, cest estre sans courage,
 446 *Le vaillant ne faict point aux infirmes l'outrage.*
 447 Quittez donc ce desir, donnez à vos amours
 448 Afin d'estre loué vn plus pudicque cours,
 449 *Car la force peut bien violenter la fortune,*
 450 *Mais non la volonté qui reste tousiours vne,*
 451 *Et celuy n'est vaincu, ny hors de liberté,*
 452 *Qui de force obeist, & non de volonté,*
 453 Ne me parlez donc plus de forcer Isabelle,
 454 Peut estre que le temps la rendra moins cruelle,
 455 Faut attendre le temps, qui sage mesnager
 456 Scait les choses d'en bas en leur ordre ranger,
 457 Faut attendre le temps, lequel d'une aulne seure,
 458 Auecque la raison, toute chose mesure
 459 Changez donc de vouloir, surmontez vos desirs
 460 Du dommage d'autrui ne faictes vos plaisirs.

RODOMONT

461 Que dis tu Sicambras, est ce chose cruelle
 462 Que chercher le remede au mal qui nous bourrelle ?
 463 Est ce vn acte inhumain, que proche de mourir,
 464 Vouloir aider son mal & sa peine guerir ?
 465 Rien n'est si pretieux que cette douce vie,
 466 Elle ne reuient plus depuis qu'elle est rauie,
 467 Celuy n'est point blasmé, qui se rend quelquefois
 468 Afin de la sauuer, aduersaire des loix.

SICAMBRAS

469 Mais celuy ne merite au monde aucune gloire,
 470 Qui de peur de mourir, faict honte à sa memoire.

RODOMONT

471 Ce n'est pas deshonneur que chercher en prison
 472 Sa douce liberté, ny au mal guarison.

SICAMBRAS

473 Mais c'est bien deshonneur que faute de courage
 474 A supporter son mal, faire à son los outrage.

RODOMONT

475 Est ce mal que vouloir sous l'amour se ranger ?

SICAMBRAS

476 Ce n'est pas luy ceder que vouloir l'outrager.

RODOMONT

477 L'on n'outrage l'amour, iouyssant de son aise.

SICAMBRAS

478 Qui gaigne, & pert son los, faict sa proye mauuaise.

RODOMONT

479 Est ce perdre son los qu'aimer une beauté ?

SICAMBRAS

480 Non pourueu qu'on la laisse en pure liberté.

RODOMONT

481 Mais si mon amitié cruelle elle desdaigne ?

SICAMBRAS

482 Faut attendre le temps qui toute chose ameine

RODOMONT

483 Et pendant si l'on meurt ?

SICAMBRAS

Ne vaut il mieux mourir,

484 Qu'es bras du deshonneur à tout iamais perir ?

RODOMONT

485 Ce n'est pas deshonneur que forcer vne esclaue.

SICAMBRAS

486 Ce n'est de la forcer auoir la force braue.

RODOMONT

487 Le guerre le permet.

SICAMBRAS

Iniustes sont ses loix,

488 Car esteint est le droict sous le fais des harnois.

RODOMONT

489 Maint autres ont forcé mainte esclau seruire.

SICAMBRAS

490 Faire mal comme autruy c'est auoir l'ame vile.

RODOMONT

491 Mais qui peut resister à telles passions ?

SICAMBRAS

492 La Iustice, qui doit guider nos actions.

RODOMONT

493 Rien ne peut resister à l'amour redoutable.

SICAMBRAS

494 La raison luy resiste, & le rend perissable.

RODOMONT

495 Les Dieux ne l'ont pas fait.

SICAMBRAS

Aussi ont ils erré.

RODOMONT

496 Qui chemine en leur voye, est hors d'estre esgaré.

SICAMBRAS

497 Ce que peuuent les Dieux n'est pas permis aux hommes

RODOMONT

498 Pendant ils ont esté forceneurs⁷ comme nous sommes ?

SICAMBRAS

499 C'estoit pour quelque bien.

7 "forceneurs": the form is apparently undocumented but is clearly to be assimilated to "forceneux"; see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v.

RODOMONT

C'est pour vn bien aussi.

500 Que ie veux qu'Isabelle apaise mon soucy,
 501 Car il faut que je meure, ou que iouyssant d'elle
 502 l'estouffe la douleur qui me presse cruelle,

SICAMBRAS

503 Sans mourir vous pouuez appaiser vostre esmoy ?

RODOMONT

504 Ouy en la forçant d'auoir pitié de moy ?

SICAMBRAS

505 Quel plaisir aurez vous de forcer vne femme ?

RODOMONT

506 De voir mon mal [esteinct]⁸ & esteincte ma flamme ?

SICAMBRAS

507 Vous ne l'aymez donc pas.

RODOMONT

508 Helas ie l'ayme trop,
 Car ie sens pour l'aymer cent fois le iour la mort ?

SICAMBRAS

509 Vous ne la forceriez si l'amour estoit forte ?

RODOMONT

510 Tousiours la Dame veut qu'on la prenne en la sorte ?

SICAMBRAS

511 La chaste Dame veut conseruer son honneur.

RODOMONT

512 La Dame aime Venus, ses yeux, & sa douceur,

8 “[esteinct]”: copy-text “esteincts”.

SICAMBRAS

513 Mais Isabelle veut rester tousiours pudique ?

RODOMONT

514 Des femmes d'icy bas elle seroit vnique,
515 Car mesme dans le Ciel les grands Dieux ont aimé,
516 Des Deesses le cœur est d'amour allumé,

SICAMBRAS

517 Mais elle ne veut pas tresbucher par exemple ?

RODOMONT

518 C'est tout vn ie le veux ? ma gloire est assez ample
519 Pour reparer la sienne, ayant pour mon secours
520 Taché de quelque blasme, & ses faicts, & ses iours,
521 Ne m'en parle donc plus, car ie veux iouyr d'elle
522 Ou par douce amitié, ou par force cruelle.

REGNAULT

523 Desia plus de cent fois Phebus suant, my las,
524 A dormy sommeilleux dans les pudiques bras
525 De sa froide Thetis, plus de cent fois l'aurore
526 A ploré son fils mort, qu'elle souspire encore,
527 Depuis que i'ay party de la grande Cité,
528 Où Charles sied au lict de la graue equité,
529 De Paris, le seiour, du los, de la vaillance,
530 Pour chercher mon parent, l'honneur de nostre France
531 Ce nompareil Roland, dont la superbe main,
532 A nagé mille fois dans le sang inhumain
533 Des cruels ennemis de la foy de nos peres,
534 Main, la palle terreur des payens aduersaires,
535 Roland esleu de Dieu pour deffendre sa loy,
536 Pour conseruer le sceptre à Charles le grand Roy,
537 Roland qui n'a son per en valeur, ny courage,
538 Qui porte au cœur la force, & l'audace au visage,
539 Roland Prince inuaincu des palladins François,
540 Pilier de nostre honneur, defenseur de nos loix,
541 Roland qui gros d'honneur, de gloire venerable,
542 Est aux Esprits d'Enfer aujourd'hui redoutable,
543 Roland mon cher cousin, que i'ayme plus que moy,
544 Roland mon frere d'arme, & compaignon de foy,

Mais las l'ay beau chercher, ô douleur infinie
 L'on m'a dit qu'il est fol, & pressé de furie,
 Insencé par l'amour, & tout nud, sans harnois
 Courant parmy les champs, par les prez, par les boys
 O desastre cruel ? celuy dont la proïesse
 Est le salut de France, est priué de sagesse :
 L'honneur des Paladins, des Heros l'ornement,
 Va courant par les bois priué de sentiment.
 O France que tu perts, vn si triste dommage
 Peut te faire courir vn eternal naufrage,
 Tu perts tout en perdant celuy qui te sauuoit,
 Qui ton los en la force inuaincu conseruoit,
 Ainsi iadis perit Priam, ses fils, sa ville,
 Hector estant tué par le superbe Achille,
 Ainsi Rome perit sous le ioug des peruers,
 Ayant perdu Cesar l'honneur de l'vniuers,
 La perte d'vn bon chef est la perte piteuse
 Des membres explorez, dont la mort est hideuse,
 Vn [chef]⁹ est chef de l'ordre, & [cest]¹⁰ ordre est
 auteur
 Du repos du public, qui tomboit en mal'heur,
 Sans l'ordre tout se mesle, & mille iniustes choses
 Dans vn Cahos espois se rencontrent encloses,
 Ainsi si nostre chef, si Roland est perdu
 Nul repos ne sera à la France rendu,
 Ce ne seroit que pleurs, & parmy les gensd'armes
 Au lieu de sans espoix, decouleront les larmes,
 Ce ne seront que pleurs, & nos cœurs atristez,
 Mille tristes souspirs, rendront de tous costez,
 Ce ne seront que pleurs, comme en [larmes]¹¹ se noye
 La femme qui se voit sans espoux & sans ioye,
 Comme ploroyent iadis ces lamentables sœurs
 Sur le bord du ruisseau, leurs desastreux mal'heurs,

9 “[chef]”: copy-text “chest” (with long “s” + “t”), the compositor having apparently misread the “f”.

10 “[cest]”: copy-text “c’est”.

11 “[larmes]”: copy-text “l’armes”.

577 Comme lamente encor sur le mont de Cipille
 578 Niobé, par les Dieux faicte roche immobile.
 579 Comme ploroit Venus son amoureux Adon,
 580 Comme ploroit blessé, le cruel Cupidon,
 581 Comme Phebus ploroit Daphné, pleine de gloire,
 582 Qui des braues vaincueurs reuerdist la victoire.
 583 Quelque part que tu sois si veux ie te chercher
 584 Roland mon tout, ma vie, & mon parent plus cher,
 585 Quelque mal que tu sente, & quelque aspre furie,
 586 Ie veux ou te trouuer, ou bien finir ma vie,
 587 Car sans toy ie ne puis durer vn petit iour,
 588 Encor que quelquefois embrasez de l'amour
 589 De la belle Angelique, ars d'une mesme flamme,
 590 Nous ayons combattu, per à per, l'ame à l'ame,
 591 *Mais les discords d'amours legers comme le vent,*
 592 *Auant que de nasquir meurent le plus souuent,*
 593 *Nul debat immortel, nulle chaude querelle,*
 594 *Ne doit parmy les preux, rester perpetuelle,*
 595 *Que celle qui prouient pour l'empire, & la foy,*
 596 *Car nous sommes à Dieu, au pays, à nostre loy,*
 597 Meure donc le penser de nos ieunes querelles,
 598 Qu'Angelique iamais ne brouille nos ceruelles,
 599 Ie n'en veux plus parler, ie veux tant seulement
 600 Te trouuer mon Roland des François l'ornement.
 601 Mais si en te cherchant Rodomont ie rencontre,
 602 Gradasse, ou Ferragut, qui me vienne à l'encontre,
 603 Alors d'un pied gaillard, flamberge dans la main,
 604 On me verra marcher contre cest inhumain,
 605 Lors on verra Regnault esprouuant sa vaillance
 606 Contre ces Sarrazins, ennemis de la France,
 607 Ferragut, Sacripa[n]t,¹² & le fier Rodomont,
 608 Cognoistront à leur dam la valeur de Clermont.

CHŒVR

609 Lors que l'amoureuse flamme
 610 Priue de raison nostre ame,

12 "Sacripa[n]t": copy-text "Sacripaut" (inverted "n" error).

611 Qu'en nous son feu se faict voir,
612 Ce n'est plus rien qu'iniustice,
613 Car l'amour pere de vice,
614 Esteint en nous tout deuoir.

615 Sous luy languist morte, esteincte
616 De l'Eternel la loy sainte,
617 Elle cede à son erreur :
618 La raison en est chassee,
619 O que cest chose insensee
620 Que l'amoureuse fureur?

621 Ce cruel Dieu ne reuere
622 Venus sa dolente mere,
623 Ny le grand Mars indompté :
624 Tout flechist sous sa puissance,
625 Les armes, & la science
626 Viuent sous sa volonté.

627 Il darde ces flammes fieres
628 Parmy ces armes guerrieres,
629 Parmy le sçauoir diuin,
630 Le soldat courageux ayme,
631 Et le sage faict de mesme,
632 Tous deux courant mesme fin.

633 Mais telle inhumaine rage,
634 N'a peu forcer le courage,
635 De la sainte loyauté,
636 Lucretse le sçait fidelle,
637 Tu le sçais chaste Isabelle,
638 Qui meurs, non ta chasteté.

639 Le fer, l'acier, la menace
640 Peuuent bien forcer l'audace,
641 Du plus braue & vaillant cœur :
642 Mais ils n'ont pas de puissance
643 Sur la pudique constance,
644 Qui vit malgré leur fureur.

645 La sainte & diuine perte,
 646 Qui par la mort se rachepte
 647 Ne peut estre dicte mal :
 648 Mourant on sauue sa gloire,
 649 Le fer n'a donc la victoire
 650 D'un ame chaste & loyal.

651 Voila comme glorieuse,
 652 Pudique & victorieuse,
 653 Isabelle reluira :
 654 Rodomont force la rage,
 655 Mais non son chaste courage,
 656 Qui vif à sa mort sera.

Acte Second

Isabelle, Fleurdelys, Brandimart

ISABELLE

657 Pourquoi mes yeux pourquoy, auteurs de ma misere
 658 Decouurez vous encor vostre tendre paupiere,
 659 Pourquoi regardez vous la lumiere des Cieux,
 660 Si vostre cher soleil ne luist plus à vos yeux ?
 661 Qui vous faict luire encore ô mes lasses prunelles,
 662 Puisqu'il faut vous noyer en vos douleurs mortelles ?
 663 Helas que fay ie plus ! ô mes yeux fermez vous,
 664 Puisque la fiere mort à raui leur espoux ?
 665 Pour luy tant seulement pour le voir, pour le suiure
 666 Pour adorer ses yeux, mes yeux vous voulez viure,
 667 Vous luisiez seulement affin de voir son front,
 668 Helas ! il ne vit plus, pourquoy vivez vous donc ?
 669 Fermez vous ô mes yeux comme dessous la lame
 670 S'enferme le corps froid, vuidé de corps & d'ame.
 671 Fermez vous ô mes yeux, comme iadis fermez
 672 Furent les yeux d'Hero, de son Leandre aymez,
 673 Fermez vous ô mes yeux sous la Parque eshontee,
 674 Comme iadis fermez furent ceux de Tisbee,
 675 Helas ! ne luysez plus ô miserables yeux,
 676 Vostre soleil est mort, vostre iour radieux,

677 Le iour qui luist au Ciel vous semble des tenebres,
 678 Les rayons de Phœbus vous sont horreurs funebres,
 679 Rien ne vous semble beau, le Ciel vous semble noir,
 680 Car vous auez perdu vostre bien, vostre espoir,
 681 Rien ne vous semble beau, nulle chose viuante
 682 N'est comme fust Zeobin, ny belle ny plaisante,
 683 Zeobin estoit tout seul en ce monde parfait,
 684 Pour plaire aux Dieux du ciel mon cher Zeobin fut faict,
 685 Aussi l'ont ils rauy, comme iadis en proye
 686 Ils rauirent ardants le bel enfant de Troye,
 687 Zeobin estoit tout seul dont la rare beauté,
 688 Assubiecit mon cœur, raut ma liberté,
 689 Zeobin estoit tout seul qui digne d'Isabelle,
 690 Estoit beau, courageux, genereux, & fidelle.
 691 O Zeobin mon Zeobin pendant que mille pleurs
 692 Vont roullant de mes yeux, au sain¹³ de mes douleurs,
 693 Pendant que mille cris piteusement i'élance,
 694 Pour me voir ô douleur, priué de ta presence,
 695 Tu vis la haut diuin, ton esprit glorieux
 696 Comme ces iumeaux sert de flambeau sur les cieux.
 697 Helas ! ie ne suis pas ardamment amoureuse
 698 Encor de tes beaux yeux, de ta gloire enuieuse.
 699 Las ! ie n'ay pas regret qu'avec les immortels
 700 Tu sois mon cher Zeobin, digne de leurs autels,
 701 Mais ie plore mon sort, qui me force de viure,
 702 Sort qui m'empesche hélas ! ô Zeobin de te suiure,
 703 Ah que le mesme fer cruel à nos amours
 704 Qui sans compassion moissonna tes beaux iours,
 705 Que le mesme couteau, par qui ie vis rauie
 706 Ta guerriere vigueur, ne finit il ma vie ?
 707 Quand pour garder l'honneur de Roland ton amy,
 708 Ses armes, son armoiries son cruel ennemy
 709 L'outrageux Mandrigard rendit ton corps sans ame,
 710 Me priua de tes yeux, toy de ta chere dame ?
 711 Las ! ie voulus mourir ardante de trespas,
 712 Je voulus me tuer, mais tu ne voulus pas,

13 The spelling "sain" for "sein" is attested: see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. "sein".

713 Quand pasmé dans mes bras, comme reste pasmee
 714 La fleur dedans le pré du foudre diffamee,
 715 Qui languissante & pasle, esclau de la mort,
 716 Pert sa rouge beauté, sa couleur & son port,
 717 Sans qu'on la prise plus, d'une façon cruelle,
 718 D'un pied iniurieux, chacun passe aupres d'elle,
 719 Ainsi mon cher Zeobin, pasmé dedans mes bras,
 720 Je regardois ton front pallissant du trespas,
 721 Je regardois ton œil, ma plus viue lumiere,
 722 Oeil qui retient encor mon ame prisonniere,
 723 Qui rouoit doucement à l'entour de la mort,
 724 Ton visage appally, sans couleur & sans port,
 725 O spectacle piteux ! ô douleur inhumaine ?
 726 Puis-je pour te conter auoir assez d'aleine ?
 727 Peux tu ma langue auoir le courage assez fort,
 728 Pour raconter comment mon cher Zeobin est mort ?
 729 Helas ! tu ne sçauois ! trop cruelle m'offence
 730 D'un si piteux meschef, la triste souuenance,
 731 Helas tu ne sçauois ! trop cruel à mon cœur
 732 [Est]¹⁴ le triste penser d'un si gauche malheur ?
 733 Ah que dy-je penser ? ie ne pense autre chose,
 734 Car avec Zeobin mon pensement repose,
 735 Ma gloire, mon bonheur, mon repos gratieux,
 736 Viuent avec luy dans la voulte des cieux.
 737 Car siege de ces biens n'a il pas enleuee
 738 Mon ame avecque luy, ame en son sang lauee ?
 739 Je vis, & ne vis plus; semblable à quelque corps
 740 Dont l'Esprit par le fer las est poulcé dehors,
 741 Je vis, & ne vis plus ; aguettant tousiours l'heure
 742 Que par quelque bonheur languissante ie meure,
 743 Pour m'en aller à toy, pour viure avecque toy,
 744 O Zeobin, mon espoux, qui m'as gardé ta foy,
 745 Fidelle te sera la mourante Isabelle,
 746 Comme tu fus iadis à ta dame fidelle,
 747 Elle mourra deuant, d'une main sans pitié,
 748 Qu'elle offence iamais nostre chaste amitié,

14 "[Est]": copy-text "Et".

749 Rodomont le cruel qui la tient prisonniere,
 750 Ne sçauroit esbranler ceste amitié premiere,
 751 Malgré luy, mon Zeobin, Isabelle sera
 752 Ta fidelle moitié, pendant qu'elle [viura]¹⁵,
 753 Car ceste main auant fera force à sa vie,
 754 Qu'elle sente iamais sa chasteté rauie,
 755 Auant de mille morts on la verra perir,
 756 Qu'elle sente sa foy comme son corps mourir,
 757 Heureuse qu'en mourant elle te rende preuue
 758 Qu'avec son ame tien, la loyauté se [treuue]¹⁶,
 759 Heureuse qu'en mourant elle te face foy,
 760 Que bien que tu sois mort, las elle viue en toy,
 761 Heureuse qu'en mourant tout le monde recite
 762 Qu'Isabelle ne fut moins loyalle que triste.
 763 Helas ! cruel Zeobin ? pourquoy t'opposois-tu
 764 Au desir que i'auois d'imiter ta vertu,
 765 Pourquoy m'empeschois tu de mourir bienheureuse,
 766 Quand l'ame de ton corps s'en volla glorieuse ?
 767 Pourquoy me voulois tu relaisser apres toy,
 768 Vefue de tout plaisir ? languissante en esmoy ?
 769 Serue de ce cruel, qui bouillonnant d'audace
 770 Mon pudicque vouloir à toute heure menasse ?
 771 Esclaue de ce Tygre enfant de cruauté,
 772 Qui tasche de violer ma sainte chasteté,
 773 Mais cruel Rodomont, bien que sur ton visage
 774 Soit peincte la fureur, soit flambante la rage,
 775 [Bien]¹⁷ que ton cœur bouillonne, & de sang, & deffroy,
 776 Si n'auras tu pourtant aucun pouuoir sur moy,
 777 Ceste pudicque main, aux malheurs esprouuee,
 778 Mille fois dans mon sang auant sera lavee,
 779 Plustost on me verra ardante tresbucher
 780 Du feste¹⁸ iniurieux d'un superbe rocher,

15 “[viura]”: copy-text “luira”, a reading which is just possible but improbable in the context.

16 “[treuue]”: copy-text “tienne”, which, apart from the difficult sense, would produce a couplet without rhyme; cf. above, I.233-34.

17 “[Bien]”: copy-text “Rien”.

18 “feste”: a possible archaic spelling of “faîte”; see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v. “faîte”.

781 Plustost on me verra dans les ondes noyee,
 782 Ou par vn Tigre fier en cent parts deschiree,
 783 Plustost viue sous terre enfermee à souhait,
 784 Plustost morte de faim, de douleur & regret,
 785 Que iamais Rodomont offense d'Isabelle
 786 La foy, le saint amour, la chasteté fidelle,
 787 Non non, ie veux mourir, aussi bien ie ne puis
 788 Viure plus longuement serue de tant d'ennuis,
 789 Ie veux ie veux mourir, car affin que mes pleinctes
 790 Auecque mes saisons, soient doucement esteinctes,
 791 Ie veux ie veux mourir, las ! affin que ma fin
 792 Me face encor vn coup voir mon heureux Zeobin,
 793 Zeobin [que]¹⁹ ie souspire, ô Zeobin que ie pleure,
 794 Que ie lamente & plains, auparauant que meure
 795 Ce corps outré de mal, ce corps qui iadis sien,
 796 Depouillé d'un tombeau, las ! hélas n'est plus rien.
 797 Zeobin s'il te souuient encore d'Isabelle,
 798 D'Isabelle qui fut ton espouse fidelle,
 799 Reçois ces tristes pleurs, & pour celebres vœux
 800 Prens ces cris ces douleurs, & ses regrets piteux.

FLEVRDELYS

801 Ma seur que vous sert il par tant de longues pleinctes,
 802 R'allumer vos douleurs, à demy presque esteinctes ?
 803 Que vous sert de vos maux le funeste discours,
 804 S'il se rend ennemy de vos pudiques iours ?
 805 Que vous seruent ces pleurs ? si leur cource animee
 806 Ne faict que raffraichir vostre peine enflammee ?
 807 *Ma sœur appaisons nous, aussi bien qu'au bonheur*
 808 *Il faut qu'un mesme front nous assiste au malheur,*
 809 *Car celui ne sçauroit estre réputé sage,*
 810 *Qui pert en sa douleur, la force & le courage :*
 811 *Celui n'est point constant, qui ne reste arrêté,*
 812 *A combattre le sort de son aduersité,*
 813 *Le Ciel en nos malheurs nostre constance esprouue,*
 814 *Car iamais la constance avec l'honneur ne se treuue,*

19 "[que]": copy-text "qui".

815 *Cest durant nos trauaux qui luist nostre vertu,*
 816 *Renommé n'est le chef qui n'a point combattu,*
 817 *Heureux celui qui peut d'une masle constance*
 818 *Endurer ces malheurs, il est plein de prudence.*
 819 Le clair Phœbe se rend admirable à nos yeux,
 820 Par les espoirs nuaux qui noircissent les cieux,
 821 Sans l'horreur de la nuit, sa clarté redorée
 822 Ne seroit des mortels, comme elle est reuérée.
 823 Ainsi ma sœur ainsi, au trauers de nos maux,
 824 Par la palle horreur de nos aspres trauaux,
 825 Reluist nostre vertu, vertu qui se rend claire,
 826 Par la douleur qui est son immortel contraire,
 827 Si fidelle iadis fut vostre sainte foy
 828 Vers vostre Zeobin, qui repose à recoy
 829 Parmy les immortels, & qui digne de gloire
 830 Es cœurs des gens de bien engraue sa memoire,
 831 Que ferme soit aussi vostre belle vertue,
 832 Que vostre esprit ne soit de regret abattu,
 833 Plus le peril est grand, plus douteuse la chance,
 834 Plus fait le braue chef preuue de sa vaillance,
 835 La grandeur du peril, est le crayon plus seur
 836 Par qui le temps aislé marque nostre valleur.
 837 Plus la mer se grossit, infidelle eshontee,
 838 Sifflant horriblement par les vents agitée,
 839 Plus le peril est grand de chocquer un rocher,
 840 Plus se monstre prudent le fidelle Nocher :
 841 Les [bons]²⁰ seuls affligez peuuent estre dictz sages,
 842 Quand d'un front asseuré ils portent leurs dommages :
 843 *Car comme l'or au feu esprouue sa valleur,*
 844 *Aussi nostre vertu s'esprouue en la douleur,*
 845 Faut endurer auant que meriter la gloire,
 846 D'autre par la vertu eut de soy la victoire.
 847 *Par le trauail s'acquiert l'honneur saint immortel,*
 848 Hercule par ses labeurs fut fait Dieu, de mortel.
 849 Appaisez donc, ma sœur, ceste plainte cruelle,
 850 Qu'elle ne face tort à l'honneur d'Isabelle,

20 "[bons]": copy-text "tons".

851 A l'enfant sans valeur est permis de plover,
 852 *Le sage doit son mal prudemment endurer,*
 853 Portez ainsi le vostre, & par vostre complainte,
 854 N'attristez de Zeobin l'ame diuine & sainte,
 855 Ame qui vous voyant blanchissante de pleurs,
 856 N'aura plus souuenir de ses diuins bonheurs :
 857 Car l'ame de l'amant endure quand l'amante
 858 Coulpable de douleur, tristement se lamente,
 859 Ils n'ont qu'un mesme vueil, que mesme volonté,
 860 Ils ne sont qu'un ensemble en un corps arresté.
 861 Si pendant qu'icy bas Zeobin passoit son age,
 862 Il eut soin de vos iours, craignit vostre dommage,
 863 S'il pensa que vostre heur fust son unique bien,
 864 S'il iugea vostre mal, non tant vostre que sien,
 865 Pensez-vous qu'aujour d'huy qui est viuant en gloire,
 866 Qu'il n'ait encor de vous & de vos faicts memoire ?
 867 La mort ne rauist pas avec nos tristes iours,
 868 Le chaste souuenir de nos saintes amours,
 869 *Et les heureux esprits qui la haut sont en vie,*
 870 *De sçauoir nos secrets ont encores enuie :*
 871 *Las ! ils ne perdent pas pour estre dans les cieux*
 872 *La memoire de ceux qui sont en ces bas lieux,*
 873 *Au contraire il sont faicts par la sain[c]te²¹ presence*
 874 *Du Verbe saint[,] diuin²², plus diuins en science,*
 875 *Rien deuant l'Immortel ne demeure caché,*
 876 *L'esprit d'aucun malheur ne trauaille empesché*
 877 Vostre Zeobin y est, il n'a donc pas, fidelle,
 878 Perdu le souuenir de sa chere Isabelle,
 879 Il vous voit, il se sent de vos tristes malheurs :
 880 Car vostre mal est sien, vos maux sont ses douleurs,
 881 Songez, si vous voyant pour son faict miserable,
 882 Combien il sent de mal, de peine lamentable,
 883 Helas ! en consolant vos pleurs & vos trauaux
 884 Appaisez ses douleurs, faictes mourir ses maux,
 885 Encor que vous soyez à vostre aise rebelle,

21 "sain[c]t": copy-text "sainste".

22 "sainct[,] diuin": copy-text "sainct.diuin".

886 Ne soyez contre luy cruellement cruelle,
 887 Ma sœur, ie vous en pry', & d'un ame arresté,
 888 Attendre du grand Dieu la sainte volonté,
 889 Il sçait ce qu'il nous faut, car d'une main feconde
 890 En prudence & sçauoir il modere le monde.
 891 Attendons la bonté, qui durant nostre nuist,
 892 En nos sombres malheurs fauorable nous luist.

ISABELLE

893 Ah! qu'il est bien vray dict, ceux que la dure peine
 894 A flambeaux allumez ne trauaille inhumaine,
 895 Qui sont libres de mal, capables de raison,
 896 Qui n'ont que faire sains de chercher guarison,
 897 Qui ne sentent l'effort d'une cruelle plainte,
 898 Qui n'ont point de douleur l'ame mortelle atteinte,
 899 Et qui sont affranchis de nos cruels malheurs,
 900 Peuent des affligez consoler les douleurs.
 901 Mais non, qu'estant gesnez de pareille disgrace
 902 Ils pensent accomplir ce qu'il veulent qu'on face :
 903 Car celui ne cognoist l'effort de la douleur
 904 Qui n'a iamais flechy sous sa fiere rigueur :
 905 Et nul ne sçait que vaut le rigoureux martyre,
 906 Qui ne l'a souspiré comme ie le souspire.
 907 Ma sœur, si comme à moy le ciel t'auoit ravy
 908 Ton aymé Brandimart, par qui saine tu vy,
 909 Qu'il t'eust comme ie suis de Zeobin delaissee,
 910 De cent mille regrets en mille parts blessee,
 911 Esclau de'un Tyran plein d'infidelité,
 912 Ennemy de mon los & de ma chasteté :
 913 Combien plus que le mien sous la peine mortelle
 914 Languiroit ton esprit à ton espoux fidelle ?
 915 Combien de froides pleurs rouleroyent de ces yeux
 916 Qui libres de mon mal, vont esclairs ioyeux ?
 917 Combien de chauds souspirs sortiroyent de ton ame,
 918 Qui n'a senty le mal, qui sans repos me pasme ?
 919 Combien de tristes cris iras-tu respendant,
 920 Toy qui ne sçais combien mon martyre est ardent ?
 921 Faut sçauoir, pour parler, la seule experience,
 922 *Royne de l'vniuers, est mere de science,*
 923 Celui qui sur le dos de Neptun bazané

924 N'a point, craignant, la mer encore seillonné,
 925 Et qui n'a veu combien elle bondist cruelle,
 926 Bien qu'Orateur ne peut proprement parler d'elle,
 927 *Faut cognoistre le mal auant que de iuger*
 928 *S'il est aisé de vaincre, & facile à changer.*
 929 Faut auoir souspiré, & d'une source amere
 930 Ietté de froides pleurs vne creuse riuiera,
 931 Auant que de iuger, hélas ! s'il est aisé
 932 De rendre doux son mal, & son dueil appaisé.
 933 Ma sœur, ma chaste sœur, aucune n'est capable
 934 De cognoistre combien la perte est déplorable
 935 D'un mary trespassé, qui n'a, comme i'ay faict,
 936 Perdu le sien, autant comme le mien parfaict,
 937 Qui n'a comme i'ay faict cogneu loyalle, belle,
 938 Est sainte l'amitié d'un espoux tresfidelle,
 939 *A plaindre peu de cas, il faut bien peu de crys :*
 940 *Mais beaucoup à plorer vne chose de pris.*
 941 Hélas ! i'ay tout perdu, trouues-tu donc estrange
 942 Si lasse iour & nuit à plorer ie me range ?
 943 Non, non, ma chere sœur, tant que ces palles yeux
 944 Soyent en mourant sillez d'un sommeil gracieux,
 945 Tant que i'auray loisir d'esclatter ma parole,
 946 Je veux plaindre & plorer sans qu'aucun me consolle,
 947 Car mes pleurs, mes ennuis, mes tragiques discours
 948 Ne sçauroyent trespasser sans que meurent mes iours,
 949 Rien que la seule mort n'appaisera mes plaintes,
 950 Rien que le seul trespas, mes cruelles complaints.

FLEVRDELYS

951 Mais celuy n'est point dict inuincible aux trauaux,
 952 Qui recherche la mort pour terminer ses maux.

ISABELLE

953 *Mais celuy qui la craint est de nature molle,*
 954 *Car la mort, les prudents de palle peur n'affolle.*

FLEVRDELYS

955 *Mais si la mort est douce, est-ce los aux mortels*
 956 *De se pendre à son col, pour se faire immortels ?*

ISABELLE

957 *Si la mer est courtoise, il ne faut pas la craindre,*
958 *Heureux qui à cest heur peut de bonne heure atteindre.*

FLEVRDELYS

959 *Mais s'il ne plaist à Dieu nous rendre encore morts,*
960 *Deuons-nous faire effort de tuer nostre corps ?*

ISABELLE

961 *La mort n'est point à Dieu cruellement infame,*
962 *Qu'on souffre pour sauuer son honneur & son ame.*

FLEVRDELYS

963 Mais s'il faut de sa main cruelle l'aduancer ?

ISABELLE

964 Il vaut mieux l'aduancer que se sentir forcer.

FLEVRDELYS

965 C'est estre de soy-mesme ennemie cruelle ?

ISABELLE

966 Mais c'est de son honneur estre garde fidelle.

FLEVRDELYS

967 Celle qui se defaict n'a nul los merité.

ISABELLE

968 Si-a, si elle pert viuant sa chasteté ?

FLEVRDELYS

969 L'ame qui n'y consent n'est nullement coupable.

ISABELLE

970 L'esprit qui est forcé est tousiours miserable.

FLEVRDELYS

971 Lucesse viollee est regnante en honneur.

ISABELLE

972 Lucesse par la mort esteignit son malheur.

FLEVRDELYS

973 Quand elle auroit vescu elle seroit sans blasme.

ISABELLE

974 Mais tousiours le regret auroit gesné son ame.

FLEVRDELYS

975 Quel regret à celui qui saint ne peche point ?

ISABELLE

976 Que son ame offensé est de douleur espoint.

FLEVRDELYS

977 Mais la faute retourne à celui qui l'a faicte.

ISABELLE

978 Mais l'offense ne laisse à ressentir sa perte.

FLEVRDELYS

979 Ce n'est pas pour cela qu'il doie se tuer.

ISABELLE

980 De se tirer du mal il doit s'esuertuer.

FLEVRDELYS

981 Mais l'on peut sans mourir secourir toute peine.

ISABELLE

982 Non faict, si elle est trop durement inhumaine.

FLEVRDELYS

983 Ainsi faisant l'on est coupable de sa mort.

ISABELLE

984 Il vaut bien mieux mourir, qu'un importun remord

985 *Traueille nostre esprit, vaut mieux estre sans vie,*

986 *Que voir au deshonneur sa memoire asseruie,*²³

23 While ll. 985-86 are marked as sententious, this would obviously apply only to the segment "vaut... / ... asseruie".

987 I'en veux vser ainsi : car, ô ma chere sœur,
 988 Vne courtoise mort guarira ma douleur.
 989 Isabelle mourra auant que son visage
 990 Porte la honte au front, signe de son dommage :
 991 Isabelle mourra par le feu, par le fer,
 992 Pour suyure son Zeobin au ciel, ou en enfer,
 993 En quelque part qu'il soit il faut qu'elle le treuve,
 994 Il faut pour le chercher que mille morts i'esprouue,
 995 Il n'est pas si aisé de perdre le penser
 996 De son amy defunct, qu'on a veu trespasser,
 997 Il n'est pas si aisé de perdre la memoire
 998 De celui-là qui fut autheur de nostre gloire.
 999 Ce penser me rauist tout penser, fors celui
 1000 Qui me poingt de mourir pour viure avecque luy,
 1001 Le ne pense autre cas, & ma triste pensee
 1002 N'est d'un autre malheur miserable offensee,
 1003 I'ay resolu mourir d'un courage indompté,
 1004 Auant que Rodomont force ma chasteté,
 1005 Mais attendant ce iour qui me doit rendre heureuse
 1006 Aupres de ta belle ame, ame victorieuse,
 1007 Attendant ce doux iour, où mon corps deliuré
 1008 De mes tristes douleurs, à ceux sera liuré
 1009 Qui le doiuent porter sous la pesante lame,
 1010 Je veux tousiours plorer, & affliger mon ame.
 1011 Ma sœur ne pense pas empescher mon desir
 1012 *En ses pleurs l'affligé borne tout son plaisir.*

FLEVRDELYS

1013 *Mais l'affligé se rend de plus fort miserable,*
 1014 *Plus il songe en son mal, s'il se trouue incurable.*

ISABELLE

1015 *Mais l'affligé se venge en plorant de ses maux :*
 1016 *Car sans larmes, sans cris ne vont point les trauaux.*

FLEVRDELYS

1017 *Plus l'on pense en sa peine, & plus elle est cruelle.*

ISABELLE

1018 Mais qui peut l'endurant ne penser point en elle ?

FLEVRDELYS

1019 Ceux qui pour se guarir sont armez de raison.

ISABELLE

1020 Malgré le medecin bien souuent le poison
1021 Faict mourir nostre corps, quelque soigneuse cure
1022 Que pour se conseruer luy mesme se procure.
1023 De mesme quand le mal languist sans nul espoir,
1024 La raison dessus luy n'a force ny pouuoir.

FLEVRDELYS

1025 Mais la raison conduit les faicts de nostre vie.

ISABELLE

1026 Non faict lors que l'amour se met de la partie.

FLEVRDELYS

1027 L'amour sans la raison est vne iniuste ardeur.

ISABELLE

1028 Il faut qu'un vif amour soit meslé de furor.

FLEVRDELYS

1029 La fureur rend la chose à iamais deshonneste.

ISABELLE

1030 Aymer sans la fureur, c'est vn amour de beste.

FLEVRDELYS

1031 Qu'apporte la fureur que maint forfaict amer ?

ISABELLE

1032 Non faict, car en amour on ne peut trop aymer.

FLEVRDELYS

1033 Qui corrige l'amour ? la raison sainte & meure.

ISABELLE

1034 Qui sçait que c'est qu'amour, qui n'ayme outre mesure ?

FLEVRDELYS

1035 Faut qu'il y ait par tout la mesure & le poix.

ISABELLE

1036 Non pas en l'amitié qui ne suit nulles loix,
 1037 Ma sœur, n'en parlons plus : car ardante de suiure
 1038 Mon Zeobin mon espoux, las ie ne veux plus viure,
 1039 Rien ne me peut forcer de changer de desir,
 1040 Si Zeobin ne viuoit, Zeobin mon seul plaisir,
 1041 Car ie ne puis sans mort me voir de luy priuee,
 1042 Esclaue d'un cruel, qui me tient captiuee[.]²⁴

BRANDIMART

1043 Soleil, alme soleil, qui d'un cerne allumé
 1044 Rends de mille beautez ce beau ciel enflammé :
 1045 Soleil, alme soleil, qui d'une torche ardante
 1046 Dorés de toutes parts ceste terre relante,
 1047 Beau Phebe qui te fait estre propice à tous,
 1048 Fors à moy, dessus qui tu lance ton courroux ?
 1049 Helas, chacun fors moy sous ta viue lumiere
 1050 Voit à yeux descouuerts ce qu'il pense luy plaire,
 1051 Chacun voit son bonheur, chacun voit dessous toy
 1052 Ce qui plaist à ses yeux, chacun aise, fors moy,
 1053 Fors moy qui suis priué de ceste belle dame,
 1054 Dont les yeux ont rauy cruellement mon ame,
 1055 De Fleurdelys helas, dont cent fois languissant
 1056 J'ay pressé sous l'honneur, le coral rougissant,
 1057 De Fleurdelys helas, qui belle entre les belles,
 1058 Est size au premier rang des dames plus fidelles :
 1059 De Fleurdelys helas, qu'en mille & mille lieux,
 1060 J'ay veu cent mille fois idolatrer mes yeux.
 1061 Mais helas, où est elle, & quelle terre calme
 1062 Te soustient aujourd'huy, ô ma plus chere dame ?
 1063 Quel pays sent les rayons de ta belle clarté ?
 1064 Quelle terre respire aux rays de ta beauté ?
 1065 Pendant que le regret qu'apporte ton absence
 1066 A mille dards cruels cruellement m'offense.
 1067 Helas, sans voir ton œil toute clarté me fuit,
 1068 Le plus clair iour me semble vne eternelle nuit.

24 "[.]": comma in copy-text.

1069 Ainsi marche en frayeur celuy la qui chemine
1070 En vn bois escarté, quand Phebe n'illumine
1071 La voute de ce ciel, qui tournoye à grands pas,
1072 Et qui rend la clarté aux choses d'icy bas.
1073 Ceste fidelle foy, ceste amoureuse flamme
1074 Qui list mon cœur au tien, & mon ame à ton ame :
1075 Ceste belle amitié, qui ne fait qu'un seul corps
1076 De noz deux composez de mutuels accords,
1077 Et ceste ardante amour qui ne sera rauie
1078 Tant que la fiere mort ruisse nostre vie,
1079 Font que sans toy ie meurs, comme faute d'humeur
1080 On voit en languissant mourir la iaune fleur,
1081 Font que sans toy je meurs, & me font à toute heure
1082 Songer en toy, ma vie, attendant que ie meurs.
1083 *Que puissant en nos cœurs vit la pudique amour,*
1084 *Quand l'honneur & la foy avec luy font seiour.*
1085 *Qu'une sainte amitié, qui tient la foy captiue*
1086 *Dans deux cœurs amoureux, reste fidelle & viue.*
1087 Rien plus saint que l'amour, Mars cede à Cupidon
1088 Son harnois à ses traicts, sa hache à son brandon,
1089 Iupiter le respecte, & les Muses sont mesme
1090 Captiues de l'amour, ioyeuses qu'on les ayme.
1091 Ainsi ce saint amour, ialoux de mon honneur,
1092 A voulu captiuer & rendre sien mon cœur,
1093 A fin que j'eusse part à la gloire immortelle,
1094 Que merite l'amant à sa dame fidelle :
1095 Fidelle ie te suis, & tant que j'vseray
1096 Ces iours à demy morts, fidelle te seray
1097 Ma chere Fleurdelys, inuoquant à toute heure
1098 La grace du grand Dieu, à fin que tu demeure
1099 La derniere icy bas, & que premier aux cieux
1100 Je prepare content nos sieges glorieux,
1101 Heureux cent fois l'amant dont une fois rauie
1102 *Auant que de mourir est seulement la vie,*
1103 *Qui ne meurt point deux fois, voyant ô creue-cœur,*
1104 *Mourir celle qui fut maistresse de son cœur :*
1105 Car las cest bien mourir que voir mourir sa dame,
1106 C'est rester en un corps, & n'auoir aucun ame :
1107 La dame est de l'amant & l'ame & la vigueur,
1108 Il la porte tousiours peinte dedans son cœur,

1109 Il demeure sans vie alors qu'elle est rauie,
 1110 Car son heureux salut est sa plus chere vie :
 1111 Face donc le grand Dieu que ie sente l'effort
 1112 Auant ce grand meschef, de la cruelle mort,
 1113 Et que mon corps transsy trainé dessous la lame,
 1114 Ne voye au mesme lieu porter sa chere dame,
 1115 Pendant en quelque part, mon soleil, que tu sois,
 1116 Quelque part que tes yeux eslancent leurs beaux rais
 1117 Hélas ! souuienne toy de ton amant fidelle,
 1118 De ton cher Brandimart, qu'une plainte mortelle
 1119 Traine sous le cercueil, pour se voir malheureux,
 1120 Par la rigueur du sort, priué de tes beaux yeux.
 1121 Mais ie veux te chercher, sans pardonner à peine,
 1122 Ie veux perdre le sang, & le poux, & l'haleine,
 1123 Le plaisir, le repos, ou te trouuer helas,
 1124 Belle, dont les beaux yeux retardent mon trespas,
 1125 La crainte de trouuer vn barbare infidelle,
 1126 Qui d'une fiere voix à la iouste m'appelle,
 1127 La crainte des mortels, ny des fiers animaux,
 1128 Ne peut pour te trouuer empescher mes trauxaux,
 1129 Partant où le soleil rend sa lumiere calme,
 1130 Or ie te veux chercher, ô Fleurdelys madame,
 1131 N'ayant point de regret de mourir glorieux,
 1132 Pourueu qu'encor vn coup ie baise tes beaux yeux.

CHCEVR

1133 Il n'est point de vertu si sainte
 1134 Comme la chasteté,
 1135 Toute chose au monde est esteincte,
 1136 Mais elle a merité
 1137 Viure à iamais, heureuse, sainte & belle,
 1138 Puis que sa gloire est tousiours immortelle.
 1139 Elle couure en la chaste dame
 1140 Tous forfaits & tous maux,
 1141 Comme vn soleil rend par sa flame,
 1142 Ardants, clairs, les nuaux :
 1143 Ainsi l'on voit la chasteté fidelle
 1144 Faire du vice vne vertu tresbelle.
 1145 Par elle se voit conseruee
 1146 La sainte heureuse foy,

1147 Par elle la dame esprouuee
 1148 Dans le feu de la loy,
 1149 Car on ne voit iamais de chaste femme
 1150 Estre suiette à la laideur du blâme.
 1151 Il vaut mieux qu'elle soit sans vie
 1152 Que sans ceste alme fleur,
 1153 La force est par la mort rauie,
 1154 Mais le diuin honneur
 1155 Qui sort heureux de ceste vertu belle,
 1156 Est vif encor apres la vie mortelle.

Acte Troisième

Regnault, Brandimart, Isabelle

REGNAULT

1157 O des palles mortels la peste miserable,
 1158 Amour tins²⁵ des grands Dieux pour vn Dieu redoutable,
 1159 Amour pere de maux, autheur de tant de pleurs,
 1160 Qui coulent de noz yeux, sources de nos malheurs ?
 1161 Hé ! pourquoy ne mourut ton impudique mere,
 1162 Amoureuse de Mars, en te donnant lumiere ?
 1163 Ta mere qui n'a pas ressenti moins que nous
 1164 Les traits enuenimez de ton aspre courroux,
 1165 Ta mere que tu as comme nous enflammee
 1166 Ores d'un beau pasteur, ores d'un Dieu aymee :
 1167 Ta mere qui cent fois [s'est]²⁶ complainte de toy,
 1168 Comme enfans sans douleur, sans amitié, sans foy.
 1169 O trop cruel amour ! combien de dures peines
 1170 As tu iadis semé au profond de mes veines ?
 1171 Combien de longs traux m'as tu fait esprouuer ?

25 “tins”: emendation to “tenu” is tempting, but the line as it stands, although difficult, is not impossible, on the premise that Love is being reminded of the origins of his own divine power; see the translation.

26 “[s’est]”: copy-text “c’est”.

1172 Quand les yeux d'Angelique ardoient pour me tuer ?
1173 Quand ie quittois pour elle & ma natalle terre,
1174 Et Charles exposé au peril de la guerre,
1175 Que les Princes payens rouges de cruauté,
1176 Allumoyent iusqu'au pied de sa grande cité,
1177 Iusqu'au pied de Paris, qui par moy deffendue,
1178 A mainte belle gloire à ma valeur rendue,
1179 Combien ay-ie de fois, bruslant de tous costez
1180 Couru de froides mers, de deserts escartez,
1181 Vaincu de braues preux, & supporté de peine
1182 Pour trouuer Angelique à mes maux inhumaine ?
1183 Angelique la belle, & qui tient captiuez
1184 Les cœurs de tous ces Preux, qui se sont esprouuez
1185 Sous l'enseigne de Mars mille fois indomptables,
1186 Heros aux Dieux du ciel, & d'enfer redoutables ?
1187 Combien de fois pour elle ardants en nos amours
1188 Auons nous consommé & de nuicts & de iours
1189 Mon cher Roland & moy, ore à nous faire guerre,
1190 Ores à la chercher parmy toute la terre ?
1191 O puissant Cupidon, le cœur deffaut à Mars,
1192 Et les plus valeureux redoutent les hazards,
1193 Mais ceux qui sont marquez de tes coings inuisibles
1194 Sont vainqueurs aux combats, aux trauaux inuincibles,
1195 Le plus foible amoureux se pense plus vaillant
1196 Au milieu du combat, que Roger, ou Roland,
1197 Tant ce puissant amour à sur nous de puissance,
1198 Qui rend malgré le sort viue nostre vaillance.
1199 Helas, où est le temps que d'Angelique aymé,
1200 Voire & plus ardemment que ne fut enflammé
1201 Le cœur saint de Venus, quand d'Adon idolatre,
1202 Elle venoit du ciel auecque luy s'esbatre,
1203 Angelique brusloit alors en mon amour,
1204 Mon front estoit son heur, & mes yeux son beau iour,
1205 On la voyoit courir follement insensee
1206 Apres moy, dont estoit la poitrine glacee,
1207 Ses yeux brusloyent aux miens, peu soigneuse d'honneur
1208 Le respect ne pouuoit refroidir sa chaleur,

12.09 Ses vœux [m'estoyent]²⁷ offerts, & ses douces prieres
12.10 Importunoyent mon ame à guarir ses miseres,
12.11 I'estois son tout, son bien, seul elle m'adoroit,
12.12 Et par moy seulement son ame respiroit,
12.13 Comme la fleur glacee au retour de zephire,
12.14 Releue son beau front, & doucement respire,
12.15 Refait son rouge teinct, repare sa beauté,
12.16 Et commence à sentir le retour de l'esté,
12.17 De mesme en me voyant respiroit Angelique,
12.18 Angelique icy bas en beauté rare vnique,
12.19 Elle n'aymoit que moy, rien ne pouuoit que moy
12.20 Appaiser son ardeur, consoler son esmoy,
12.21 Mais alors ennemy de ma future gloire,
12.22 Indigne de iouir de la braue victoire,
12.23 Que l'amour me donnoit d'une telle beauté,
12.24 Le restois endurcy, glacé de cruauté,
12.25 Autant qu'elle m'aimoit, d'amour ardante atteinte,
12.26 Autant ie mesprisois son amour & sa plainte,
12.27 Et rien tant qu'elle estoit hay, moqué de moy,
12.28 Le fuyois son beau front, me moquois de sa foy,
12.29 Luy faisant esprouuer à son propre dommage,
12.30 Combien cruel le mal, & cruelle la rage
12.31 Estoyent de tant de preux, qui sans se voir aimez
12.32 Languissoient par les traits de ses yeux consommez.
12.33 Ainsi souuent amour, fâché de nostre audace,
12.34 Estouffe nostre orgueil, & nostre gloire efface,
12.35 Nous faict à nos despens esprouuer les tourmens
12.36 Que nous faisons souffrir à nos tristes amans.
12.37 Ainsi sentit iadis Cyprine l'infidelle,
12.38 La peine qu'aux amans elle apporte cruelle,
12.39 Esprise dans son feu, elle esprouua comment
12.40 Cruel est le trauail du miserable amant :
12.41 Ainsi lors ie faisois à ceste belle dame
12.42 Esprouuer la rigueur de l'amoureuse flame,
12.43 Flame dont elle alloit bruslant les braues cœurs
12.44 Des plus superbes preux, des plus masles vainqueurs,

27 "[m'estoyent]": copy-text "n'estoyent".

12.45 Mais l'amour depité d'une mine si fiere,
 12.46 L'amour qui veut puissant que chacun le reuere,
 12.47 Me punit me rendant au mal assuietty,
 12.48 Qu'Angelique pour moy auoit iadis senty.
 12.49 Des deux fleiches d'amour l'une pinct, l'autre est

mousse,

12.50 L'une allume l'amour, & l'autre le repousse,
 12.51 L'une d'or fait le feu, l'autre de plomb l'esteint,
 12.52 Mon cœur fut laschement de la premiere atteint,
 12.53 J'aymay lors Angelique, elle tout au contraire,
 12.54 Atteinte de nouveau de la fleiche derniere,
 12.55 Desprisoit mon amour, & s'estonnoit comment
 12.56 Aueugle elle m'auoit aymé si longuement :
 12.57 Mon front luy sembloit laid, qui luy fut agreable,
 12.58 Le sien me sembloit beau, que j'eus desaggreable,
 12.59 Elle accusoit sa faute, & blasmoit son erreur,
 12.60 D'auoir esté pour moy si long temps en fureur,
 12.61 Je la cherchois alors, d'une contraire chance,
 12.62 Elle fuioit mes yeux, dedaignoit ma presence,
 12.63 Las ie l'aimois autant qu'elle m'auoit aimé,
 12.64 Comme ie fus son cœur, estoit de haine armé :
 12.65 Ainsi ie deuins serf de celle la que braue
 12.66 Je soulois orgueilleux retenir comme esclau.
 12.67 Ainsi iadis fut serf le grand fils de Thetis
 12.68 De sa serue son cœur, la belle Brisais,
 12.69 Mais cest amour diuers en ses faits variable,
 12.70 A finy par vn sort entre tous admirable :
 12.71 Dieu m'en a deliuré, me faisant plus de bien
 12.72 Qu'à Roland mon cousin, que ce cruel lien
 12.73 Serre encor si estroit, que sa raison il dompte,
 12.74 Et fol, de son honneur il ne fait plus de conte :
 12.75 Mais ie vay le chercher, & faire si ie puis
 12.76 Que sa fureur se passe, avecque ses ennuis.

BRANDIMART

12.77 Qu'ay-ie entendu depuis que hors de ceste ville,
 12.78 Que la Seine, renclost d'un cerne doux fertile,
 12.79 Que hors les murs sacrez de la riche Paris,
 12.80 Les armes sur le dos, par le chemin je suis ?
 12.81 Helas qu'ay-ie entendu ! bon Dieu bon Dieu ie n'ose

1282 Prononcer de ma bouche vne si triste chose,
1283 Diray ie que Roland mon plus fidelle amy,
1284 Offencé par l'amour, à luy mesme ennemy,
1285 Peu soigneux de son los, & du bien de la France,
1286 S'encourt par les forests, veuf de toute prudence ?
1287 Las ie n'ose le dire, y pensant seulement,
1288 Le souspire, ie meurs, voire & cruellement,
1289 Le n'en diray donc rien, que dy ie cest ma honte
1290 Que celler vn malheur que tout le monde conte ?
1291 Le diray donc comment par l'amour offensé,
1292 Apres tant de trauaux il deuint insencé,
1293 Depuis que dans Paris arriua ceste belle,
1294 Qui fust de Gallafron l'heritiere infidelle,
1295 Angelique aux yeux verts, dont les rares beautez,
1296 Ont rauy tant de cœurs, & tant de volonteiz,
1297 Roland sentit deslors s'allumer dans son ame,
1298 Vn brazier qui sortoit des yeux de ceste dame.
1299 Il resolut deslors d'adorer ces beaux yeux,
1300 Qui comme deux soleils esclairoient radieux,
1301 Comme lors que la nuict expand sa frayeur brune,
1302 On voit parmy les feux luire la palle Lune,
1303 Qui se monstre au prix d'eux venerable à nos yeux,
1304 Et ressemble estre lors le saint flambeau des Cieux,
1305 Ainsi belle entre tous reluisoit Angelique,
1306 Elle estoit en beauté comme vn Phenix vnique.
1307 Roland l'adoroit donc, mais en ce mesme iour
1308 Regnault d'un mesme traict fut frappé par l'amour,
1309 Amoureux d'Angelique, & mille preux gendarmes
1310 Surmontez par l'amour, victorieux par les armes,
1311 Comme deux ieunes Cerfs de l'amour enflammez,
1312 De fureur de depit, & de cornes armez,
1313 Se battent au deuant de la Biche rameuse,
1314 Subiect de leur combat, & leur seule amoureuse,
1315 Ils luicent, & legers quand ce vient au toucher,
1316 Ils se percent le corps, on les voit tresbucher,
1317 Cà & là tous sanglants, demy morts, & sans force,
1318 Chacun de reuenir à la iouste s'efforce,
1319 De mesme ces deux preux de Roland & Regnault,
1320 Chacun le plus hardy, chacun le plus vaillant,
1321 Pour auoir Angelique auoient en leur courage

1322 De venir au combat, & s'entrefaire outrage.
 1323 Quand Charles le grand Roy qui n'a point de pareil,
 1324 Empesche ce malheur, par vn prudent conseil,
 1325 Ordonnant que des deux, celui de qui la lame
 1326 Tueroit plus d'ennemis, emporteroit la dame,
 1327 Mais ce bonheur n'aduint, car la dame euita,
 1328 Et Charles fut vaincu, Argamont le dompta,
 1329 Depuis Roland tousiours à ceste dame aymee,
 1330 [Bien]²⁸ que son amitié ne fut d'elle estimee,
 1331 Il courut mille mers affin de la trouuer,
 1332 Et pour son amitié ne craignit d'esprouuer
 1333 La valeur de Regnault, la force de Gradasse,
 1334 Celle de Farragut, & du fier Roy de Sarce.
 1335 Mais apres mille maux, maint trauail, maint soucy,
 1336 La dame ne voulut auoir de luy mercy,
 1337 Ains se moquant de luy & s'en estant seruie,
 1338 Prenoit plaisir de voir languissante sa vie,
 1339 Longuement il l'ayma, en esperant tousiours
 1340 Vne fin bienheureuse à ses tristes amours :
 1341 Mais au lieu le malheur acheua sa ruine,
 1342 Acabla son repos, & sa raison diuine,
 1343 Car Angelique vn iour qui ne faisoit encor
 1344 Que rire de l'amour, trouua le beau Medor,
 1345 Medor beau dessus tous dont la couleur vermeille,
 1346 Et les cheueux cendrez, pendant sur son oreille,
 1347 Sa bouche, son beau front, n'auoient point de pareils,
 1348 Comme on ne peut au Ciel voir luire deux soleils,
 1349 Medor pres de la mort que la discorde attraine,
 1350 Qui pissoit le clair sang d'une playe inhumaine,
 1351 Lors ce cœur de rocher, & cest ame d'aymant,
 1352 Angelique qui eust à desdain maint Amant,
 1353 Se sentit amollir & froidir comme glace,
 1354 Aux beaux yeux de Medor, aux beaux traits de sa face,
 1355 Elle en fut amoureuse & voulut le guarir,
 1356 Encore qu'il la fist en guarissant mourir,
 1357 O bienheureux Medor d'auoir cest aduantage

28 "[Bien]": copy-text "Rien".

1358 Sur tant de grands heros, qui retint en seruage
1359 Ceste ingratte beauté, que d'auoir peu toucher
1360 Son front, aupres duquel nul s'osa s'approcher.
1361 Medor fut donc espoux d'Angelique la belle,
1362 Angelique à Medor fut espouse fidelle,
1363 Sous l'horreur des deserts, au ventre des rochers,
1364 Ils cueilloient affamez les plaisirs les plus chers
1365 Que Cupidon permet aux ames amoureuses,
1366 D'un semblable plaisir ardemment desireuses.
1367 Roland vn iour arriue en ces funestes lieux,
1368 Ou ces amants auoyent inuenté tant de ieux,
1369 Il voit leurs noms escripts dans les roches hautaines,
1370 L'un dans l'autre enlassez, sur le bord des fontaines,
1371 Grauez mignonement mille neuds amoureux,
1372 Il voit escrits en vers tous ces follatres ieux,
1373 Lors la fureur saisit son inuaincu courage,
1374 Dans son ame coula la depiteuse rage,
1375 Il deuint forcené, il ne croit ce qu'il voit,
1376 L'amour qui la trompé encore le deçoit :
1377 En fin tout furieux il brise la fontaine,
1378 Il coupe en mille parts & la roche inhumaine,
1379 Et les bois d'alentour, bois qui portoient encor
1380 Les beaux noms enlassez d'Angelique & Medor.
1381 Il maudit ces deserts d'un pied cruel, superbe,
1382 Il foule à mille sauts, la terre molle & l'herbe,
1383 Où iadis les amants, ses cruels ennemis,
1384 S'estoient au chaud du iour doucement endormis,
1385 Il iette son espee, il brise sa cuirasse,
1386 Il seme furieux de ses armes la place,
1387 Il se depouille nud, & affin d'enrager,
1388 Il est trois iours, trois nuicts sans vouloir rien
manger,
1389 En fin il deuient fol, voire & de telle sorte,
1390 Que l'ardante fureur hors de luy le transporte.
1391 Il est veuf de raison, cent fois l'heure ie meurs,
1392 Quand ie viens à penser en ces gauches malheurs,
1393 Ie plore son meschef, sa perte ie souspire,
1394 Perte qui pert helas nostre François Empire.
1395 Mais i'aduise Regnault, las cest luy que ie voy
1396 Pour ce triste malheur languissant comme moy,

1397 Il faut le saluer : O l'honneur de la France,
1398 Regnault, qui rend vaincus au bruict de ta vaillance
1399 Les preux de l'vniuers : he ! qui t'ameine icy,
1400 Pallissant comme moy, de peine & de soucy ?

REGNAULT

1401 O mon cher Brandimart, ie cherche en ceste terre
1402 Roland au lieu de Mars le grand Dieu de la guerre,
1403 Helas l'inuste amour la priué de raison,
1404 Et l'ardante fureur tient son ame en prison.

BRANDIMART

1405 O vaillant Palladin, mesme sang, mesme peine,
1406 Et semblable desir en ce quartier m'ameine,
1407 Ie veux trouuer Roland affin de le guarir,
1408 Ou son fidelle amy aupres de luy mourir.

REGNAULT

1409 O qu'il est mal aysé de guarir la pensee,
1410 Que le cruel amour faict errer insensee,
1411 Tout mal se peut guarir, fors celuy de l'amour,
1412 Mais celuy faict tousiours dans nos ames seiour.

BRANDIMART

1413 La peine de l'amour peut bien estre guarie,
1414 Quand lon veut preferer raison à la folie.

REGNAULT

1415 Mais auant que nous vaincre amour vainc la raison,
1416 Qui nous empesche helas de trouuer guarison.

BRANDIMART

1417 Mais la raison est plus, qu'il n'est puissante, & forte,
1418 Celuy la qui la suit iamais ne se transporte.

REGNAULT

1419 Mais où l'amour regit, raison n'a point de lieu,
1420 Car mesme il faict errer Iupiter le grand Dieu ?

BRANDIMART

1421 Pourquoi le suit lon donc estant si dommageable ?

REGNAULT

1422 D'autant qu'il est puissant, & qu'il semble agreable.

BRANDIMART

1423 L'homme a de se guider de la nature appris ?

REGNAULT

1424 L'homme pert tout esprit alors qu'il est surpris ?

BRANDIMART

1425 Ceux qui commettent mal seroient donc excusables ?

REGNAULT

1426 Voire s'ils sont forcez, non d'eux mesmes coupables ?

BRANDIMART

1427 Pour resister au mal ne sommes nous puissants ?

REGNAULT

1428 Non quand l'aspre fureur nous a troublé le sens ?

BRANDIMART

1429 Qu'est donc l'homme icy bas qu'une personne morte ?

REGNAULT

1430 L'homme est serf de l'amour, qui souuent le transporte ?

BRANDIMART

1431 Mais l'homme ne peut il cest amour surmonter ?

REGNAULT

1432 Ce qui dompte le Ciel, l'homme ne peut dompter ?

BRANDIMART

1433 Les amants seroient donc entre tous miserables ?

REGNAULT

1434 Ceux le sont qui n'ont pas leurs dames fauorables ?

BRANDIMART

1435 Si leur dame est cruelle, ils la quittent heureux ?

REGNAULT

1436 Helas les vrais amants aiment en depit d'eux ?

BRANDIMART

1437 Ils sont fols d'honorer vne chose ennemie ?

REGNAULT

1438 Celuy qui est captif ne peut rien sur sa vie ?

BRANDIMART

1439 Mille [amants]²⁹ ont quitté leurs premieres amours ?

REGNAULT

1440 Ce qui arriue vn coup n'arriue pas tousiours ?

BRANDIMART

1441 Mais qui nous peut forcer d'aymer nostre ruine ?

REGNAULT

1442 Vne beauté qui est parfaitement diuine.

BRANDIMART

1443 Mais tous hommes ne sont [subiects]³⁰ d'estre amoureux ?

REGNAULT

1444 Ceux qui ne le sont point sont saintement heureux.

BRANDIMART

1445 Mais tout amant n'est pas agitté de furie ?

REGNAULT

1446 Il en est en hazard, quand l'amour l'iniurie.

BRANDIMART

1447 I'ayme, & ne suis pourtant touché de ce malheur !

29 "[amants]": copy-text "amant".

30 "[subiects]": copy-text "subiect".

REGNAULT

1448 A tous n'est pas esgal le bon vouloir de l'heur.

BRANDIMART

1449 Roland est donc chetif qui toute force brise ?

REGNAULT

1450 Nul ne se trouue heureux que la fureur maistrise.

BRANDIMART

1451 Mais qui plus que Roland est braue & valeureux ?

REGNAULT

1452 La valeur ne rend l'homme en ce bas monde heureux.

BRANDIMART

1453 Celuy est il heureux dont diuine est la gloire ?

REGNAULT

1454 Celuy seul est heureux qui a sur luy victoire.

BRANDIMART

1455 Celuy peut se dompter qui du sort est vainqueur ?

REGNAULT

1456 Non faict, lors que l'amour a pouuoir sur son cœur.

BRANDIMART

1457 L'amour ma bien dompté, mais non changé de forme.

REGNAULT

1458 Celle que vous ayez à vos vœux se conforme.

BRANDIMART

1459 Pourquoi toutes hélas n'ayent de la façon ?

REGNAULT

1460 D'autant que la beauté peu hante la raison.

BRANDIMART

1461 Mais avec la beauté sejourne la clemence ?

REGNAULT

1462 Ains plustost la beauté engendre l'arrogance.

BRANDIMART

1463 Toute belle est tousiours courtoise humainement ?

REGNAULT

1464 Toute belle est tousiours fiere cruellement.

BRANDIMART

1465 Ma dame ne l'est point.

REGNAULT

La superbe Angelique

1466 Qui iadis fut la mienne, ez rigueurs est vniue.

BRANDIMART

1467 Las rendre à elle peu Roland sans sentiment ?

REGNAULT

1468 L'aymant qui n'est aymé, pert tout entendement ?

BRANDIMART

1469 O crelle beauté !

REGNAULT

Plustost fiere, inhumaine,

1470 Les bruttes sans raison soulagent nostre peine.

BRANDIMART

1471 Je veux venger sur elle vn si cruel meffaict ?

REGNAULT

1472 Offencer vne femme est commettre forfait.

BRANDIMART

1473 Mais elle offense bien la perle des gensdarmes ?

REGNAULT

1474 Chacun à son besoin peut s'ayder de ses armes,

1475 Elle n'a pas forcé ny Roland de l'aymer,

1476 Ny pour son amitié en fol se transformer.

BRANDIMART

1477 C'est tout vn, ce Medor seul cause du dommage,
 1478 Sentira ma fureur, ma main, & mon courage,
 1479 Il mourra, si ie puis le trouuer quelque iour,
 1480 Vengeant sur luy le mal d'Angelique, & d'Amour.

ISABELLE

1481 Pendant qu'il reste encor, ô pauvre miserable !
 1482 Quelque palle clarté à ton œil lamentable,
 1483 Pendant que tes poulmons d'une morte vigueur
 1484 Peuvent encore, hélas, respirer ta douleur,
 1485 Et pendant que ta voix toute lasse & cassee
 1486 Peut encor deceller ta douleur insensee,
 1487 Plore, plains, & lamente, & demeure tousiours
 1488 Ardante à lamenter tes pudiques amours ?
 1489 Que dis-le lamenter ? las les sources arides
 1490 Ont en plorant tary de mes larmes humides ?
 1491 Hélas ie n'en ay plus, rien ne m'est demeuré
 1492 Que le sang que ie veux, afin d'estre honoré
 1493 Immoller à Zeobin, & sur la lame belle
 1494 Presenter de mon corps vne offrande fidelle ?
 1495 Ah ! Zeobin, mon Zeobin, ce pendant que mes yeux
 1496 S'aueuglent de plorer, tu regnes dans les cieux.
 1497 Hélas ! tu ne vis plus, ie ne voy plus ta face,
 1498 Où la riche beauté tenoit iadis sa place,
 1499 Je ne voy plus tes yeux, ny ton front, las trop beau !
 1500 Pour seruir de trophée au pallissant tombeau !
 1501 Zeobin tu ne vis plus, & seule ie demeure
 1502 Languissante icy bas attendant que ie meure :
 1503 Zeobin tu ne vis plus, & quand & tes beaux iours
 1504 Ont cessé, ont finy nos pudiques amours.
 1505 Zeobin tu ne vis plus, hélas ! puis-je bien dire
 1506 Que la mort loing de moy cruelle te retire ?
 1507 Zeobin tu ne vis au rang des palles morts
 1508 La Parque, ô creue-cœur, a mis ton chaste corps.
 1509 Zeobin tu ne vis plus, & afin de te plaire
 1510 Je vis encore icy souspirant ma misere,
 1511 Car tu ne voulus pas, car tu ne voulus pas
 1512 Me permettre, ô cruel, d'aduancer mon trespas,
 1513 Lors que loing de ton corps, dans les bras de ta dame,

1514 D'Isabelle ton cœur s'enuolla ta belle ame :
 1515 Car pressé de la mort, ouurant encor tes yeux
 1516 Languissants, & voisins du trespas glorieux,
 1517 Ouurant piteusement ta bouche, qui trop belle
 1518 Pressa si tendrement les léures d'Isabelle,
 1519 Tu me dis en plorant, de me voir lamenter
 1520 Ces vers qu'encor vn coup ie m'en vois racompter.
 1521 Appaise, appaise, hélas, ô mon ame fidelle !
 1522 Appaise tes douleurs & ta peine cruelle,
 1523 Chasse ce desespoir, & ne lamente pas
 1524 Celuy qui meurt heureux de mourir en tes bras.
 1525 Hélas, cesse ces crys, que ces cruelles plaintes[,]³¹
 1526 Si tu m'aymes encor, soyent maintenant esteintes,
 1527 Ie ne souffre aucun mal, si ce n'est pour te voir
 1528 A mon heureux trespas cruellement douloir :
 1529 Heureux ie meurs cent fois, la mort m'est agreable,
 1530 Puisqu' auant toy ie meurs, qui me fus tant aimable,
 1531 Veux-tu porter enuie à mon heureuse fin ?
 1532 Las veux-tu enuier la gloire de Zeobin ?
 1533 Ah, si tu l'as aymé, rends luy preuue certaine
 1534 De ta chaste amitié, en appaisant ta peine,
 1535 Auant que de mourir il cognoisse à loisir
 1536 Que son chaste vouloir fut ton plus doux desir :
 1537 Double tu rends mon mal, double ma mort cruelle,
 1538 En te voyant souffrir, ô ma chere Isabelle,
 1539 Que trop de regret, las, vient auancer mes iours,
 1540 Pour perdre tes beaux yeux, siege de noz amours,
 1541 Pour te quitter ma vie, & pour sentir mon ame
 1542 Priuee par la mort de sa plus chere dame,
 1543 Sans que tes moites pleurs aduancent mon trespas,
 1544 Et sans que ta douleur me deualle la bas.
 1545 Belle si ton Zeobin eut quelquefois la gloire
 1546 De seruir ta beauté, de viure en ta memoire,
 1547 Et si tu l'as aymé comme il croit en mourant,
 1548 Ne va plus ton esprit pour sa mort martyrant,
 1549 Appaise tes regrets, hé quelle mort plus belle

31 “[,]”: a blot in the copy-text resembles a full stop, which could not be intended.

1550 Eust peu couper le fil de ma vigueur mortelle,
1551 Que mourir pres de toy ? mon front contre le tien,
1552 Et noz ames pressez d'un semblable lien.
1553 Crains-tu qu'estant la bas sur la riuë agreable
1554 Du fleuue saint, aux amans fauorable,
1555 Que i'oublie ton front ? & que la coulante eau
1556 Qui gronde doucement dans l'oublieux ruisseau,
1557 Puisse alterer mes sens, noyer la souuenance
1558 De ton ame, qui eut le mien en sa puissance.
1559 Non, non, ne pense pas ce grand meschef de moy :
1560 Si tu le pense, hélas ! tu doutes de ma foy :
1561 Ie seray tousiours tien, & mon amour ardante
1562 En despit du destin sera tousiours viuante,
1563 Isabelle sera à iamais & sans fin
1564 La pudique moitié du fidelle Zeobin,
1565 Et le mesme Zeobin de la chaste Isabelle
1566 Sera dans les Enfers, tousiours l'espoux fidelle :
1567 Rien ne peut deslier nos esprits espurez,
1568 Ny nos cœurs par l'amour estroitement serrez :
1569 Mais adieu ie m'en vois errer parmy les ombres
1570 Que Pluton tient captifs dans ses cauernes sombres :
1571 La mort ne me veut plus permettre de [te]³² voir.
1572 Mon œil change son teint, en vn teint tout de noir.
1573 Adieu ma belle adieu, las permets que ie touche
1574 Auant que de mourir, encore vn coup ta bouche :
1575 C'est faict, ie suis content, belle ferme mes yeux,
1576 Mets mon corps au tombeau, arrange mes cheueux.
1577 Adieu, adieu, je meurs, alors ta belle face
1578 Deuint en pallissant aussi froide que glace,
1579 Ton front vint à froidir, & tes yeux allumez
1580 De tant de vifs regards demeurèrent fermez,
1581 Ta bouche se pallit, elle demeura close :
1582 Bouche iadis vermeille ainsi comme vne rose,
1583 Ton teint blanc & vermeil deuint vn teint de mort,
1584 Tu perdis la vigueur, changeas de teint, de port,
1585 Tu restois estendu sans force, sans haleine,

32 "[te]": copy-text "le".

1586 En mes bras desarmez & affoiblis de peine :
1587 Alors ie me pasmay, heureuse si deslors
1588 I'eusse senty trancher la vigueur de mon corps.
1589 Et lors que la douleur m'eut rendu la parolle,
1590 Que ie peux respirer, tremblante & demye folle,
1591 L'arrachay mes cheueux, cheueux qui furent tiens,
1592 Cheueux dont furent faicts nos amoureux lyens :
1593 I'esgrattignay mon front, qui te fut agreable,
1594 Front qui priué du tien est ores miserable :
1595 Ie me bats l'estomach que iadis tu cheris,
1596 L'importune le ciel de mille tristes cris,
1597 Ie laue de mes pleurs ton sang, qui chaud encore
1598 Couloit de toutes parts de ton corps que i'honore,
1599 Corps qui n'entendoit point mes amoureux souspirs,
1600 Corps qui priué de vie estoit sourd à mes cris.
1601 Zeobin estoit tout seul, qui n'entendoit ma plainte,
1602 Ayant les yeux fermez, & la vigueur esteinte
1603 Zeobin estoit tout seul, qui n'escoutoit ma voix,
1604 Que respondoit l'Echo, & les rochers des bois,
1605 Zeobin estoit tout seul, las qui ne pouuoit prendre
1606 Pitié de ma douleur, à faute de l'entendre,
1607 Zeobin estoit tout seul, qui froid comme vn rocher,
1608 D'aucune pitié, las, ne se sentoit toucher,
1609 Zeobin estoit tout seul qui ne prenoit soucy
1610 De mes coulantes pleurs, ny de mon mal aussi.
1611 Helas ! tous les rochers se mouuoient à mes plaintes,
1612 Les bestes souspiroyent de ma douleur atteintes :
1613 Le ciel en degouttoit mille larmeuses pleurs,
1614 Les herbes fennissoient au son de mes douleurs.
1615 Bref tout auoit pitié de mes douleurs cruelles,
1616 Fors Zeobin qui n'auoit plus soucy d'Isabelle.
1617 O Zeobin si là bas il te reste tousiours
1618 Quelque chaste penser de noz saintes amours,
1619 S'il te souuient de moy, lors reçois pour propice
1620 Mon corps, que ie te vois offrir en sacrifice :
1621 Reçois mon chaste sang, & permets qu'à recoy
1622 Mon esprit deslié seiourne aupres de toy.

CHŒVR

1623 Il n'est chose qui ressemble
1624 À l'amitié d'icy bas,
1625 Deux cœurs en vn elle assemble
1626 Viuans malgré le trespas :
1627 Puisque la mort inhumaine & cruelle
1628 Ne peut forcer vne amitié fidelle.

1629 Ceux qu'une amitié parfaite
1630 A liez durant leurs iours,
1631 Voyent viure apres leur perte
1632 Encor leurs chastes amours,
1633 L'ame ne meurt où l'amitié demeure,
1634 L'amitié donc est viuante à toute heure.

1635 Il n'est peril si estrange,
1636 Qui froidisse l'amitié,
1637 Et l'amant faict sa louange
1638 De mourir pour sa moitié :
1639 Car celui là dont l'amour est extreme
1640 N'est plus à luy, ains à celle qu'il ayme.

1641 Si quelquefois il se treuve
1642 En aymant du desplaisir,
1643 Le bien d'amour qui s'espreuue
1644 Louyssant de son desir,
1645 Faict oublier ceste premiere chance,
1646 Tant ce doux fruit est remply d'excellence.

1647 Mais d'un chaste amour ie parle,
1648 Fils de l'honneur & la foy,
1649 Car iamais d'une amour folle
1650 Il ne sort que maint esmoy :
1651 Et tout amour, hors le saint mariage,
1652 Au lieu d'amour est vne ardante rage.

1653 L'amitié est tousiours belle,
1654 Rien n'est si saint dans les cieux,
1655 Si elle n'est tousiours telle
1656 Sont les hommes vicieux,

1657 Dont les desirs eschauffez d'iniustice
 1658 Font bien du mal, & de la vertu vice.
 1659 L'amour n'est donc deffenduë
 1660 Qui se faict selon la loy,
 1661 Telle on voit que la renduë
 1662 Isabelle, par sa foy :
 1663 Qui ayme mieux le deffaut de sa vie,
 1664 Que le trespas de sa pudique enuie.

 1665 Mais apres son trespas viue
 1666 Dans noz cœurs elle sera,
 1667 Maint chapeau de verte olive
 1668 Son beau chef couronnera :
 1669 Car par sa mort elle conserue heureuse
 1670 De son honneur la gloire glorieuse.

Acte Qvastriesme

Rodomont, Sicambre, Isabelle

RODOMONT

1671 Languiras-tu tousiours en ton ardante flamme ?
 1672 Languiras-tu tousiours esclau d'une femme,
 1673 Inuaincu Rodomont ? veux-tu tousiours sentir
 1674 D'un paresseux tarder le cruel repentir ?
 1675 Ah ! c'est trop attendu, & ta valeur guerriere
 1676 N'est pas de tant attendre & prier ordinaire.
 1677 Si tu forces le ciel, si les esprits d'embas
 1678 Tremblent à la lueur de ton fier coutelas,
 1679 Et si tous les mortels te craignent fier & braue,
 1680 Ne scaurois-tu forcer vne chetive esclau ?
 1681 Vne chetive fille, & qui n'a que les pleurs
 1682 Pour resister, pauurette, à tes malles valleurs ?
 1683 Non, non, c'est trop long temps differer le remede,
 1684 Tarder la guarison qui me peut estre en ayde :
 1685 C'est trop se consumer sans vouloir se guarir,
 1686 Dans son propre brazier c'est trop vouloir perir.
 1687 Il faut sortir de peine, on ne plaint lamentable

1688 Celuy qui de son gré s'est rendu miserable.
 1689 He ! qui me plaindra donc, qui consents à mes maux ?
 1690 Et qui puis en voulant estouffer mes travaux ?
 1691 Rodomont qui tout vaincq doit tenir à grande honte
 1692 Qu'une femme aujourdhuy par ses yeux le surmonte.
 1693 Ce n'est tant de mespris, de blasme & deshonneur,
 1694 Que se voir surmonter d'un genereux vainqueur,
 1695 Accoustumé de vaincre, & riche de victoire,
 1696 Que d'un foible ennemy sans valeur & sans gloire[,]³³
 1697 Mais qui me faict souffrir si long temps cest affront.
 1698 Est-il rien impossible au vainqueur Rodomont ?
 1699 Qui peut assez pouuoir pour opposer sa force
 1700 A son masle desir, qui toute chose force ?
 1701 Iupin le peut-il faire, & ce Dieu valleuroux
 1702 Le mignon de Venus, la femme du boiteux ?
 1703 Pallas le pourroit-elle ? & la riche Deesse
 1704 Qui prodigue aux mortels la superbe richesse :
 1705 Non, ils ne sçauroient tous. Car ce superbe bras
 1706 Peut les tirer du ciel, & les ietter en bas.
 1707 Et bien que mes ayeulx ces Titans effroyables
 1708 Qui voulurent monter dans les cieux redoutables,
 1709 Vnis en volonte & en affection,
 1710 Mettant roc dessus roc, Osse sur Pellion,
 1711 Ayants esté vaincus de Iupin lance-foudre,
 1712 Et d'un subit effort froissez, broyez en poudre[,]³⁴
 1713 Rodomont leur nepueu peut d'un contraire sort
 1714 Reparer leur malheur, venger leur palle mort,
 1715 Il peut ruiner les Dieux, & cest estoc qu'il serre
 1716 Dans la guerriere main peut les ietter par terre,
 1717 Qui peut donc l'empescher d'accomplir son desir ?
 1718 Qui peut forcer son vueil, & troubler son plaisir ?
 1719 Iupin moindre que luy, pour esteindre sa flamme,
 1720 Pour auoir du plaisir à rauy mainte femme,
 1721 Il n'a point differé de violer la loy,

33 "[,]": full-stop in copy-text.

34 "[,]": full-stop in copy-text.

1722 Pour se mettre en repos, & se tirer d'esmoy.
1723 Mars en a fait ainsi : d'une façon cruelle
1724 Pluton ravit iadis Proserpine la belle.
1725 Si ces Dieux qui ne sont indomptez comme moy,
1726 N'ont porté nul respect à l'honneur à la loy,
1727 N'estimant autre loy que leur volonté prompte,
1728 De faire ainsi comme eux, ne peut il estre à honte ?
1729 Non non, ce n'est que trop longuement attendu :
1730 Ce n'est que trop auoir de propos despendu
1731 A conter mon malheur, faut sortir de souffrance,
1732 Puis que i'en ay, gaillard, la force & la puissance :
1733 Que dira-on de moy alors que l'on scaura
1734 Que Rodomont vainqueur, vaincu forcé sera
1735 Surmonté d'une fille : ô trop iniuste blâme,
1736 Celuy qui vainc les Dieux, est vaincu d'une femme,
1737 Non il n'en sera rien. Quand les superbes Dieux,
1738 Quand les esprits d'embas, & tous ces braues preux
1739 Qui ont cent fois senty la fureur de ma lame,
1740 Voudroyent tous s'opposer au desir de mon ame,
1741 Je feray mon vouloir. Il n'est loy ny raison
1742 Qui puissent plus long temps retenir en prison
1743 Mon ame, qui languit à faute d'allegeance
1744 Au feu qui la consomme, au tourment qui l'offense.
1745 C'est trop estre ennemy de ma propre santé,
1746 C'est trop porter d'honneur au droict, à l'équité,
1747 C'est trop estre attendry de larmes d'une fille,
1748 C'est trop au vueil d'autruy rendre son vueil seruille,
1749 C'est faire trop d'iniure à sa masle valeur,
1750 C'est trop endommager sa gloire & son honneur,
1751 C'est trop souffrir de mal, trop cherir sa ruine,
1752 Et c'est trop refuser la douce medecine :
1753 Sus ie veux me guarir, ie le puis. Il le faut,
1754 Rien propre à mon salut ores ne me default,
1755 Trop long temps en prison me retient ceste belle,
1756 Je languis trop long temps pres de ceste cruelle,
1757 Ma force se vieillit, à l'honneur destiné,
1758 Je suis comme Pâris ia tout effeminé,
1759 Ma promesse se pert, comme se font la neige
1760 Sur le front d'un rocher, aux rais du chaud visage
1761 De l'alme Phitien, & comme aupres du feu

1762 La vermeillette fleur se seiche peu à peu.
 1763 Comme seiche de soin l'auare, qui ne songe
 1764 Qu'en son or, dont la garde immortelle le ronge,
 1765 Comme on voit peu à peu en vn festin nouveau
 1766 Sur la table allumé, consommé le flambeau,
 1767 Depuis que triste serf de la fiere Ysabelle
 1768 Elle a tins³⁵ ma vertu captiue dessous elle :
 1769 Et depuis que ie suis veuf de ma liberté,
 1770 Par l'ardeur de son œil, en seruage arrêté,
 1771 I'eusse vaincu Roger ? surmonté Bradamante,
 1772 Tué, deffait, ruiné, Marphire l'arrogante :
 1773 I'eusse vaincu Roland, & le fier Rodomont
 1774 Eust fait mourir Regnaud, la gloire de Clermont,
 1775 Brandimart, Oliuier, d'une face inhumaine
 1776 Tyré hors de Paris le vieillard Charlemaigne,
 1777 Bref i'eusse tout conquis, gros de butin, de los,
 1778 Je serois en mon pays en honneur, en repos,
 1779 Cent Roys à me servir, & mille riches Princes
 1780 Me venants faire ioug, & offrir leurs provinces.
 1781 Voila combien de mal, de perte, & de malheur
 1782 L'amour cause souuent, à ceux dont la valeur
 1783 Peut forcer l'vniuers, & en mainte victoire,
 1784 Par le sang ennemy grauer leur nom, leur gloire.
 1785 Mais c'est trop differé : il est temps de guarir,
 1786 Il est temps de soy mesme au besoin secourir.
 1787 Sus ie m'en vois forcer cette belle inhumaine
 1788 D'accomplir mon vouloir, & d'esteindre ma peine.

SICAMBRAS

1789 Qui fait pallir vos yeux de menasse & d'horreur ?
 1790 Où courez vous ainsi, agité de fureur ?
 1791 De qui sont ces sourcils, espoy, & gros de rage,

35 "a tins": cf. l. 1158 above; "tins" is equally puzzling here: if from "tenir", one would expect "tenu", which would give good sense. The expectation of present tense following "depuis" in l. 1767, however, might point to an error for "atteint", from "atteindre" in the sense of "seize", "arrest", "afflict", etc. See *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. "atteindre", def. 2. This seems a possible case of orally induced error on the compositor's part.

1792 Et de qui sont ces pas, que d'un cruel courage ?
 1793 Quelle fureur vous guide ? & quelle passion
 1794 En vous troublant les sens, trouble vostre action ?
 1795 Où courez vous ainsi, d'où prouient ceste audace,
 1796 Et ce cruel courroux qui rougist vostre face ?
 1797 D'où vient que la fureur maistresse de voz yeux
 1798 Les rend rouges de feu, cruels & furieux ?
 1799 Faut il tant de fureur, à fin de rendre infame
 1800 Sa memoire & son los, en forçant vne femme ?
 1801 Non, non, souuienne vous, que vous auez appris
 1802 A surmonter les preux, d'un chaut desir espris,
 1803 D'acquérir de l'honneur, sous la faueur des armes,
 1804 Et de vaincre indompté les plus braues gens d'armes.
 1805 Souuienne vous du nom du braue Rodomont,
 1806 La terreur & l'effroy des heros de Clermont,
 1807 Que vos faits genereux vous viennent en memoire,
 1808 Souuienne vous encor de vostre belle gloire,
 1809 De vos braues combats, riches d'honneur, de los,
 1810 Où sont morts sous vos mains tant de braues heros.
 1811 Que celle³⁶ vous semonde à garder venerable
 1812 Vostre honneur, qui n'a point au monde de semblable,
 1813 Que cela vous semonde à ne commettre rien
 1814 Qui puisse diffamer vostre los ancien,
 1815 *Car le commencement ne parfait l'edifice,*
 1816 *La seule fin le laue, & d'erreur, & de vice,*
 1817 *Celuy qui bien commence, & mal finit son fait,*
 1818 *Merite au lieu d'honneur, peine de son forfait,*
 1819 Poursuiuez donc le fil de vostre gloire sainte,
 1820 Et ne permettez pas qu'elle trespasse esteinte
 1821 Par vn lasche meffait que pouuez euiten.
 1822 *Celuy n'est homme vray qui ne peut se dompter.*
 1823 Quel honneur aurez vous de forcer vne fille,
 1824 Que le sort à rendue entre vos mains seruile ?
 1825 *Celuy qui fait iniure au vaincu par le sort,*
 1826 *Est indigne d'honneur, il merite la mort,*
 1827 *Mais plus a merité de vergoigne & de blasma,*

36 "celle": perhaps an error for "cela" (cf. l. 1813), otherwise referring to "gloire" (l. 1808).

1828 *Celuy qui veut forcer vne pudique dame,*
1829 *Que la nature priue & de viue valeur,*
1830 *Et de fort champion, pour garder son honneur.*
1831 *Rolland outré d'amour d'Angelique la belle,*
1832 *L'ayant en son pouuoir n'a voulu iouyr d'elle :*
1833 *Regnault à fait de mesme, on a veu se ranger*
1834 *A ceste sainte loy Sacripant & Roger,*
1835 *Voulez vous estre seul qu'on accuse de vice ?*
1836 *Voulez vous estre seul coupable d'iniustice ?*
1837 *Voulez vous estre seul appellé raiisseur ?*
1838 *Voulez vous estre dit iniuste possesseur*
1839 *D'une chose qui est par la iuste balance*
1840 *De la sainte equité hors de vostre puissance ?*
1841 *Non non ne profanez de sorte vostre los,*
1842 *Celuy qui pert l'honneur, pert aussi le repos :*
1843 *Et celuy est indigne & d'heur & de memoire*
1844 *Qui n'est point esbranlé du desir de la gloire.*
1845 *Vous croirez mon conseil : il faut croire tous ceux*
1846 *Que le mal comme nous n'offense iniurieux,*
1847 *Car celuy qui est fol que le desir transporte*
1848 *Hors les barres du droicte, ne peut en nulle sorte*
1849 *Soy-mesmes conseiller : le malade ne peut*
1850 *Luy mesmes consoler le mal dont il se deult.*
1851 *Croyez donc mon conseil, laissez en patience*
1852 *Celle qu'assez le ciel cruellement offense,*
1853 *Veufue de son espoux, sans espoir, sans support,*
1854 *Sans vouloir, la forçant, estre autheur de sa mort.*
1855 *Car toute dame sage aura tousiours plus chere*
1856 *La mort, que les long iours remplis de vitupere :*
1857 *Et la dame plustost verra percer son sein,*
1858 *Son estomach, son cœur d'une barbare main,*
1859 *Que permettre estre fait deshonneur à sa gloire,*
1860 *Car elle ne vit plus dont morte est la memoire.*
1861 *Lucretse fit ainsi, & de mesme on verra*
1862 *Si l'on veut la forcer, qu'Isabelle fera.*
1863 *Je scay sa volonté. Toute dame fidelle,*
1864 *Non seulement de corps, mais de l'esprit est belle :*
1865 *Mais les sages souuent sont les plus malheureux,*
1866 *Les fols mieux œilladez de la grace des Dieux.*
1867 *Sus donc appeaisez vous, conseruez ceste dame*

1868 A fin de conseruer vostre gloire de blasme,
 1869 Autrement & du ciel le celeste courroux
 1870 Vangeur de nos forfaits, s'armera contre vous,
 1871 Et les iustes mortels, vous feront dure guerre,
 1872 Indigne d'habiter ceste equitable terre,
 1873 Car les Dieux sont loyaux balanceurs de nos faicts,
 1874 Ils ayment nos vertus, punissent nos forfaits[.]³⁷

RODOMONT

1875 O fol que penses-tu ? penses-tu que ie doute
 1876 Ny les Dieux, ny le ciel, que le couard redoute ?
 1877 Tous les Dieux de la haut ne peuuent rien sur moy,
 1878 Moins les mortels pourront me prescrire la loy ?
 1879 En depit, malgré eux, qui sont auteurs du vice,
 1880 Malgré toute vertu, tout droict, toute iustice,
 1881 Ie veux faire mon vueil, ie ne suis arresté
 1882 Au seruice d'aucun, ains à ma volonté,
 1883 Ma seule volonté me servira hautaine
 1884 De raison, de iustice, & de reigle certaine.
 1885 Rodomont n'est-il pas assez braue, assez fort,
 1886 Pour faire ce qu'il veut malgré l'iniuste sort ?
 1887 Rodomont n'est-il pas assez superbe & braue,
 1888 Pour tenir la raison sous sa valeur esclaué ?
 1889 Rodomont n'est il pas assez fort, furieux,
 1890 Pour commander, vainqueur, aux hommes & aux Dieux ?
 1891 Rodomont n'a il pas la puissance assez forte
 1892 Pour desgager son los, s'il faisoit quelque faute ?
 1893 Non non c'est pure erreur, que vouloir par raison
 1894 Faire au captif trouuer courtoise sa raison,
 1895 C'est erreur que vouloir combattre les gensd'armes,
 1896 Par la loy, par le droict, qui cedent à leurs armes,
 1897 *Où la force commande, il ne faut d'autre loy*
 1898 *Que celle qu'on desire, & qui prouient de soy,*
 1899 Soit que le ciel se fasche, ou que serue de blasme
 1900 Ie rende ma memoire, ou soit qu'on me diffame,
 1901 De fureur, & de rage, & que les immortels

37 “[.]”: comma in copy-text.

1902 S'arment encontre moy auec tous les mortels,
1903 Quoy que s'en soit, ie veux que l'ingrate Isabelle
1904 Esteigne ma douleur, & ma flamme immortelle ?
1905 Ne m'en parle donc plus, tu remonstre à vn mort,
1906 Et tu seme ton grain sur le pariure bort
1907 De l'infidelle mer : Car rien ne peut distraire
1908 Mon esprit arresté de ce qu'il pense faire.

SICAMBRAS

1909 Mais en faisant ainsi, iniuste vous serez,
1910 Maint blasme d'un chacun à iamais vous aurez,
1911 Faut garder cest honneur, où le vaillant aspire.

RODOMONT

1912 Mais plustost retirer son ame de martyre.

SICAMBRAS

1913 Celuy ne peut souffrir qui vit selon raison.

RODOMONT

1914 Celuy n'est point heureux qui languist en prison.

SICAMBRAS

1915 Mais ce n'est pas prison que selon la loy viure ?

RODOMONT

1916 C'est bien estre en prison qu'un cruel maistre suiure ?

SICAMBRAS

1917 Mais qui vous peut forcer de commettre peché ?

RODOMONT

1918 L'amour qui tient mon cœur en seruage attaché ?

SICAMBRAS

1919 Rien si le sage faut, qui peut couurir son vice.

RODOMONT

1920 Rien peut empescher d'estre à soymesmes propice.

SICAMBRAS

1921 Il vaut mieux se forcer que forcer l'équité.

RODOMONT

1922 Chacun fait ce qu'il peut pour estre en liberté.

SICAMBRAS

1923 Libre c'est n'estre pas que se voir serf du blâme ?

RODOMONT

1924 Libre c'est n'estre pas qu'estre serf d'une femme.

SICAMBRAS

1925 Pourquoi s'en rend-on serf ?

RODOMONT

Nous y sommes forcez.

SICAMBRAS

1926 Faut donc forcer aussi nos desirs insensez ?

RODOMONT

1927 Qui le peut si l'amour a forcé nos courages ?

SICAMBRAS

1928 La force sert tousiours d'excuse aux plus mal sages.

RODOMONT

1929 Le sage ny le fol ne luy resistant pas.

SICAMBRAS

1930 Plustost qu'errer, le sage eslira le trespas.

RODOMONT

1931 Mais si on peut sans mort [a]uoir³⁸ ce qu'on souhaite ?

SICAMBRAS

1932 Auoir contre raison cest moins proffit, que perte.

RODOMONT

1933 L'amant fait ce qu'il peut pour guarir sa douleur.

38 “[a]uoir”: copy-text “tuoir”.

SICAMBRAS

1934 L'amant fidelle & vray n'vse point de rigueur.

RODOMONT

1935 Qui ne peut autrement auoir ce qu'on desire ?

SICAMBRAS

1936 Faut par la patience alleguer son martyre.

RODOMONT

1937 Mais tant plus on attend, & moins on a d'espoir.

SICAMBRAS

1938 Le temps nous fait la fin de toutes choses voir.

RODOMONT

1939 Qu'ay-ie affaire d'attendre, en pouuant à toute heure ?

SICAMBRAS

1940 La chose consultee est tousiours la meilleure.

RODOMONT

1941 Mais quel conseil faut-il en l'escolle d'amour ?

SICAMBRAS

1942 De ne rendre son nom indigne du beau iour ?

RODOMONT

1943 Les fautes des amants sont tousiours tollerables ?

SICAMBRAS

1944 Non sont, quand par la force ils se font redoutables ?

RODOMONT

1945 Iupiter se rit d'eux, & de leur vain serment ?

SICAMBRAS

1946 Mais Iupiter punit leur rapt cruellement ?

RODOMONT

1947 Mais que peut Iupiter sur ma puissante dextre ?

SICAMBRAS

1948 Dieu sera tousiours fort, tel il faut le cognoistre ?

RODOMONT

1949 En attendant ce temps faut faire son desir ?

SICAMBRAS

1950 Souuent mille douleurs sortent d'un vain plaisir ?

RODOMONT

1951 *Il n'est point du douleur si cruelle, qui rende*
 1952 *Cruel l'heur de l'amant, qui a ce qu'il demande.*

SICAMBRAS

1953 *Il n'est point de plaisir si doux & sauoureux*
 1954 *Qui nous doiue esmouuoir d'offencer les grands Dieux.*

RODOMONT

1955 Mais cest trop disputé, ie veux qu'on m'obeisse
 1956 Encor que mon vouloir soit contraire à iustice ?
 1957 Ne m'en parle donc plus, Rodomont iouyra
 1958 D'Isabelle la fiere, ou ce iour il mourra :
 1959 Mais ie la voy venir, toute esploree & lasse,
 1960 Elle semble à vn corps qui languissant trespasse,
 1961 Ie m'en vois l'acoster, & de serments & vœux
 1962 Appaiser si ie puis son vouloir rigoureux,
 1963 Car ie veux la prier auant qu'vser de force,
 1964 Affin que de blasmer mon los nul s'efforce.
 1965 Iupiter vous conserue ô cruelle beauté,
 1966 Qui te plaits à tenir serue ma liberté.

ISABELLE

1967 Ie ne tiens rien captif, moymesme suis captiue,
 1968 Ores morte de peur, ores à demy viue,
 1969 Helas permettez moy de plaindre librement
 1970 Le mal, qui rend mon cœur priué de sentiment.

RODOMONT

1971 Il ne faut plus plorer, car les pleurs que lon iette
 1972 Ne scauroyent rapeller vne chose ia faicte,
 1973 Il ne faut plus plorer, mille ruisseaux de pleurs

1974 Ne peuuent submerger vne de nos douleurs.

ISABELLE

1975 Celle doit bien plorer qui languist sans attente
 1976 De voir iamais sa vie autre que languissante,
 1977 Celle doit bien plorer, qui veufue de repos,
 1978 Sent le fier desespoir fureter dans ses os,
 1979 Celle doit bien plorer, que la guerre implacable
 1980 Rend du vouloir d'autrui esclau miserable.

RODOMONT

1981 Mais celle ne doit point penser estre en malheur,
 1982 Qui tient de Rodomont esclau la valeur,
 1983 Qui commande sur luy, comme vous Isabelle,
 1984 Seule de son repos l'inhumaine bourelle.

ISABELLE

1985 Pourquoi en vous mocquant de mon inique sort,
 1986 Aduancez vous encor par vos propos ma mort,
 1987 Vous estes monseigneur, encor que l'arrogance
 1988 Vous ait donné sur moy ceste iniuste puissance,
 1989 Je ne puis rien sur vous, ains vous pouuez sur moy,
 1990 Vous estes seul autheur de mon piteux esmoy.

RODOMONT

1991 Ah ! cest tout au rebours, car vous tenez rauie
 1992 Mon ame en vos beautez, & captiue ma vie,
 1993 L'amour plus fort que Mars, vostre esclau me rend,
 1994 Et de vous seule hélas ! ma liberté depend.
 1995 Mais las ! ayez mercy de ma longue misere,
 1996 Je vous suis doux vainqueur, soyez douce aduersaire
 1997 A mon ame, qui meurt au feu de vos beaux yeux,
 1998 *Rendre bien pour le bien nous commandent les Dieux,*
 1999 Isabelle cest vous à qui la gloire est deuë
 2000 De Rodomont vaincu, aux rais de vostre veuë,
 2001 Cest vous qui d'un regard auez dompté ce cœur,
 2002 Qui parmy cent hazards resta tousiours vainqueur,
 2003 Je me soubmets à vous, & vos yeux me font faire
 2004 Ce que tous les mortels ne m'eussent fait parfaire.
 2005 Voyez combien puissant est l'esclair de vostre œil,
 2006 Oeil qui peut rappeler un corps mort du cercueil,

2007 Je suis vostre captif, ma prison est plus dure
 2008 Que celui qu'une esclauue en seruitude endure,
 2009 Car il attend tousiours en payant sa rançon
 2010 De sortir desgaigé quelque iour de prison,
 2011 Ce qui peut se guarir par l'or, par la cheuance,
 2012 N'est rare, ny diuin, ains de peu d'excellence,
 2013 Mais tout l'or ne sçauroit rachepier mon esmoy,
 2014 S'il ne vous plaist helas d'auoir pitié de moy,
 2015 Je despend tout de vous & par vous ie respire
 2016 Rien que vostre amitié icy ie ne desire,
 2017 Las promettez la moy, affin de n'estre pas
 2018 Forcé de m'aduancer moy mesme le trespas.
 2019 Las promettez la moy, faictes que l'esperance
 2020 Ne m'abandonne point non plus que la vaillance,
 2021 Mais sus respondes moy en toute liberté,
 2022 Vous pouuez m'asseurer de votre volonté.

ISABELLE

2023 Ah ne verray-ie point la fin d'une iournee
 2024 Quand & elle emporter ma palle destinee ?
 2025 Mes iours, & mes saisons, & en vn mesme iour
 2026 Verray-ie point finir ma vie & mon amour ?
 2027 Doy ie tousiours languir à iamais miserable,
 2028 Mon mal doit il durer sans changer variable ?
 2029 O chetifue Isabelle ! he que ne mourois tu,
 2030 Quand le vaillant Roland par sa masle vertu
 2031 Te trouua dans les mains, dans la cauerne obscure
 2032 Des brigands, qui vouloient faire à ta gloire iniure,
 2033 Heureuse tu serois, où tu languis helas,
 2034 Ardante de mourir, & ne le pouuant pas,
 2035 Ah faut il que ie sois faute d'estre sans vie
 2036 En hazard de sentir ma chasteté rauie,
 2037 Verray-ie sans mourir moissonner ceste fleur
 2038 Qui boutonne excellente au rozier de l'honneur ?
 2039 Bref mon corps violé, ma gloire diffamee,
 2040 Faute qu'un creux tombeau ne me tient enfermee ?
 2041 Helas ie le verray ? mais aussi tost ma main
 2042 Ira faute de fer brisant, rompant mon sein,
 2043 Auant ie veux tenter une plus douce voye,
 2044 Auant ce fier meschef las il faut que ie voye

2045 Si ie pourray mollir le cœur, la volonté
 2046 De ce more cruel à ma pudicité,
 2047 Ayde ayde moy grand Dieu, & me donne la grace
 2048 Que ie puisse amollir son cœur & son audace.
 2049 O Zeobin mon Zeobin, mon espoux ayde moy,
 2050 Car ie vay disputer nostre commune foy,
 2051 Mais quoy qu'il en arriue, ô Zeobin ie te iure,
 2052 Que je mourray deuant que lon luy face iniure.

RODOMONT

2053 Et bien voulez vous point ô [superbe]³⁹ beauté,
 2054 Accorder mon desir, faire ma volonté,
 2055 Dictes, & en vous mesmes ha ayez souuenance
 2056 Du bien que ie vous fait qui vaut bien recompense.

ISABELLE

2057 Par ce Dieu que tu sers, par ceste sainte foy,
 2058 Qui doit estre l'honneur & le los d'un grand Roy,
 2059 Par la tienne valleur, qui na point de semblable,
 2060 Par ton fer inuaincu aux vainqueurs redoutable,
 2061 Par ton los, par ton heur, [que]⁴⁰ ne peut effacer
 2062 L'ancre iniuste du temps, ne me vueilles forcer,
 2063 Ne ravis ce qui peut me tuer exploree,
 2064 *Vn bien qu'on a par force est de peu de duree,*
 2065 Permet que ie demeure hélas iusqu'à ma fin
 2066 Fidelle, chaste, & sainte, à mon espoux Zeobin,
 2067 Par ces pleurs que tu vois noyer mon froid visage,
 2068 Par la iuste pitié de mon cruel dommage,
 2069 Par mes ardants souspirs, par mon aduersité,
 2070 Pardonne ie te prie à ma pudicité,
 2071 Ie ne te requiers point de me donner la vie,
 2072 De tes riches thresors ie ne m'aigris d'enuie,

39 “[superbe]”: copy-text “super”; the typesetter has been misled by the following “beauté”.
 40 “[que]”: copy-text “qui”, which might be construed as giving acceptable sense, despite the singular verb; more decisively, the notion of glory and honour as transcending time is so pervasive in the text, and so natural an argument here, as to warrant the emendation. Further corroboration is the ironic anticipation of Rodomont's fate: see the translation, n. 128.

2073 Je ne veux rien du tien, ie te pry seulement
 2074 De ne vouloir raurir ce qui sert d'ornement,
 2075 A mon ame immortel, ne m'oste impitoyable
 2076 Ce qui n'est pas à moy, ains au los venerable,
 2077 Ce qui est à l'honneur qu'on ne peut reparer
 2078 Quand on pourroit autant que tous les Cieux durer.
 2079 Par ces nerueux genoux qui me tiennent collee,
 2080 Par la mort de Zeobin qui me rend desolee,
 2081 Et par ce mesme amour que tu dis me porter,
 2082 Ne vueilles mon honneur cruellement m'oster,
 2083 Helas ie t'en supplye, ou si tu as enuie
 2084 De voir la palle fin de ma dolente vie,
 2085 Preste moy cest acier, & tu verras alors,
 2086 Pour sauuer mon honneur que ie tueray mon corps,
 2087 Helas fay moy mercy, & ne consents au blasme
 2088 Que chacun te donra de forcer vne femme,
 2089 Vne femme debile, & qui na que les pleurs,
 2090 Que les cris, les sanglots & les tristes douleurs
 2091 Pour garder son honneur, pour deffendre sa gloire,
 2092 Et pour auoir du sort inhumain la victoire,
 2093 Accorde ma priere, & me donne ta foy
 2094 De sauuer mon honneur, d'auoir pitié de moy.

RODOMONT

2095 Madame leuez vous, vos cris, vostre langage,
 2096 Ne me feront changer d'ame ny de courage,
 2097 Je veux auoir de vous ce que la loy de Mars
 2098 Me permet de raurir, seule loy des soldats.

ISABELLE

2099 Vn plaisir si leger vous sera peu durable !

RODOMONT

2100 Nul plaisir n'est leger qui nous est secourable ?

ISABELLE

2101 Il ne faut pour son bien la iustice offencer.

RODOMONT

2102 Chacun faict ce qu'il peut pour son bien aduancer.

ISABELLE

2103 Est ce bien que forcer vne simple femelle.

RODOMONT

2104 Ouy, quand on ne peut viure sans iouyr d'elle ?

ISABELLE

2105 L'amour qui est forcé est amour sans plaisir ?

RODOMONT

2106 Il ny a point de force où est l'ardant desir ?

ISABELLE

2107 Mais vn si grand malheur hélas ie ne desire ?

RODOMONT

2108 Ie le veux qui te tiens serue sous mon empire.

ISABELLE

2109 Vous forceriez mon corps, mais non ma volonté.

RODOMONT

2110 Cest tout vn, car mon cœur sera lors contenté.

ISABELLE

2111 Mais le mien perira d'une plainte cruelle.

RODOMONT

2112 Le vaincu du vainqueur est la proye mortelle.

ISABELLE

2113 De la fureur de Mars nostre sexe est exempte.

RODOMONT

2114 Iamais la belle dame acquise ne se rend.

ISABELLE

2115 On la force pas.

RODOMONT

Cela gist en l'enuie

2116 De celui qui la tient sous sa main asseruie ?

ISABELLE

2117 Mais quel bien la forçant a il, & quel plaisir ?

RODOMONT

2118 Qu'il appaise son vueil, contente son desir.

ISABELLE

2119 Helas chetiues donc sont les pudiques femmes.

RODOMONT

2120 Mais heureuses sur tout ie tiens les belles dames
 2121 Qui se rendent captifs les plus cruels vaincueurs,
 2122 Mais cest assez parlé, qu'on appaise ces pleurs,
 2123 Qu'on oste ces souspirs, sans plus estre exploree,
 2124 Sans pallir de soucy, il est temps qu'on m'agree,
 2125 Sus i'y suis resolu, il me plaist, ie le veux,
 2126 Rien ne peut amollir mon desir furieux.

ISABELLE

2127 Puisque cest chose en vous tellement arrestee,
 2128 Que ie ne puis me voir de ce mal exemptee,
 2129 Ie veux bien vous aymer, bien qu'en ayez pouuoir
 2130 Plus belle que ie suis, mille beautez auoir,
 2131 Mais ie vous veux auant vne recepte apprendre
 2132 Qui vous peut immortel, & sans blesseure rendre,
 2133 Ie veux cueillir par tout mille sortes de fleurs,
 2134 Des herbes à foison, puissantes en valleurs,
 2135 I'en feray certain bain, & dedans luy lauee,
 2136 Ma peau contre l'acier tiendra ferme esrouuee,
 2137 Tou[t]⁴¹ en verrez l'essay, car vos bras bien que forts,
 2138 Ne pourront de leur fer endommager mon corps,
 2139 Lors ayant veu l'effect de ce bain admirable,
 2140 Vous baignerez dedans pour estre inuulnérable.

RODOMONT

2141 Ie le veux il me plaist, ensemblement allons

41 "Tou[t]": the last letter is poorly legible in the copy-text but more probably "s", which gives little sense in the context.

2142 Chercher toutes ces fleurs au dessous des vallons,
 2143 Allons ensemblement sur les costaux superbes,
 2144 Ces racines cueiller, & amasser ces herbes.

CHŒVUR

2145 O que la mort est heureuse
 2146 De la dame courageuse,
 2147 Qui meurt par sa chasteté :
 2148 De son sang, son los prend vie ?
 2149 De la gloire elle est suiuyé,
 2150 Les Cieux en font leur clarté.
 2151 Elle demeure immortelle,
 2152 En la bouche sainte & belle
 2153 Des amateurs de l'honneur :
 2154 La vertu a telle force
 2155 Que plus l'estendre on s'efforce,
 2156 Plus elle croist en vigueur.
 2157 Heureux qui laisse sa gloire
 2158 Dans le temple de Minerue,
 2159 Pour l'honneur à ses nepueux :
 2160 La mort est bien naturelle,
 2161 Mais la gloire ne suit belle
 2162 Que les esprits vertueux.
 2163 C'est le thresor venerable,
 2164 Dont doit tout homme loüable
 2165 Auoir l'ame reuestu,
 2166 Toute chose est transitoire,
 2167 Fors la diuine memoire
 2168 Des hommes pleins de vertu.
 2169 Le ciel sera sans lumiere,
 2170 Et sans son cours ordinaire
 2171 Le saint Soleil radieux :
 2172 Auant que la gloire meure
 2173 De ceux où l'honneur demeure,
 2174 Que la vertu pousse en eux.
 2175 De mesme chastement belle,
 2176 Comme le ciel immortelle,
 2177 Isabelle est en repos :
 2178 On dira que courageuse
 2179 Elle est morte valleuruse

2180 Pour conseruer son beau los.
 2181 Toutes les Dames d'eslite
 2182 Offriront à son merite
 2183 Mille vœux, mainte oraison :
 2184 Mais tousiours la fin est telle
 2185 De la dame chaste & belle,
 2186 Louëe en toute saison.
 2187 Pendant noz larmes coulantes,
 2188 Par son trespas ondoyantes
 2189 La regrettant sans confort :
 2190 Que dis-ie ? c'est à nous honte
 2191 De plorer celle qui dompte
 2192 Par sa mort, la fiere mort.

Acte Cinquiesme

Messenger, Fleurdelys

MESSAGER

2193 O malheureux malheur ! ô meschef lamentable !
 2194 O trop cruelle mort ! ô perte déplorable !
 2195 Ah mon œil, qu'as-tu veu ? heureux si sans clarté
 2196 Pour ne voir point ce mal, hélas, tu eusse esté ?

FLEVRDELYS

2197 He Dieu, que dict cestuy, quelle triste nouuelle
 2198 A fouëts si cuisants sa pauure ame bourelle ?
 2199 Las qu'est-il arriué, las bon Dieu est-ce point
 2200 Mon amy Brandimart que la mort ait esteint ?

MESSAGER

2201 O l'estrange accident ! ô la cruelle perte !
 2202 Hélas elle ne peut estre oncques recouuerte !
 2203 O diuine vertu ! he failloit-il, hélas !
 2204 Qu'vne si fiere main aduançast ton trespas ?

FLEVRDELYS

2205 La perte qu'il souspire est grande & precieuse,

2206 Son cœur en est esmeu, & son ame angoisseuse :
 2207 C'est Roland qui est mort, ou Regnault, ou Roger,
 2208 Ou Charles qu'Argamont menaçoit d'outrager.

MESSAGER

2209 He faut-il qu'un tombeau ait aujourd'hui la gloire
 2210 De courir ton beau corps, corps qui eut la victoire
 2211 Du Tyran, qui vouloit rair la chasteté,
 2212 Isabelle, la fleur d'honneur & de beauté ?
 2213 Helas le voix me faut quand ie pense en la sorte
 2214 Que pour sauuer son los, genereuse elle est morte.

FLEVRDELYS

2215 Il parle d'Isabelle, es tu donc ô malheur
 2216 Es tu donc trespassee ô ma pudique sœur ?
 2217 O sort trop rigoureux ! ô trop cruelle enuie !
 2218 Longue apres ton Zeobin n'a pas esté ta vie :
 2219 Mais si veux-ie sçavoir la sorte de ta mort,
 2220 *La fin des vertueux aux vifs sert de confort.*

MESSAGER

2221 O digne d'une gloire à iamais immortelle,
 2222 Digne d'un vif honneur, chaste & sainte Isabelle,
 2223 Tu as voulu mourir plustost que d'endurer
 2224 Qu'un Tyran outrageux te peut deshonor.

FLEVRDELYS

2225 Mas, las, dy moy comment telle chose s'est faicte,
 2226 D'Isabelle & de moy l'amitié fut parfaicte,
 2227 J'estois son tout, son ame, elle estoit ma moitié,
 2228 Ainsi diuine estoit nostre chaste amitié.
 2229 Helas, conte moy donc sa mort, puisqu'elle est digne
 2230 De fleurir à iamais une gloire diuine.

MESSAGER

2231 Madame, ie ne puis, trop mon ame est espris
 2232 De cruelle pitié, trop mon cœur de souspirs,
 2233 La voix me defaudroit au milieu de mon conte,
 2234 De n'estre mort comme elle, ah ie mourrois de honte.

[FLEVRDELYS]⁴²

2235 He Dieu ne vueille pas, me refusant ce bien,
 2236 Addoucir mon trespas, qui dependoit du sien :
 2237 Conte moy, conte moy ce languissant dommage,
 2238 Afin qu'à son patron i'espreeue d'estre sage.

MESSAGER

2239 Permettez moy deuant de refaire ma voix,
 2240 D'appaiser mon esprit, endurez que ie sois
 2241 Plus allegé du mal, qu'une mort si piteuse
 2242 Faict sentir inhumaine à mon ame angoisseuse.

FLEVRDELYS

2243 L'attendray ton loisir, mais las assure moy
 2244 De ne me decevoir pour croistre mon esmoy.

MESSAGER

2245 Preparez à vos yeux mille larmes coullantes,
 2246 A vostre triste cœur mille peines cuisantes,
 2247 Moy mesme sans plorer, & sans mainte douleur,
 2248 Ne scaurois vous conter vn si gauche malheur.

FLEVRDELYS

2249 A plaindre, à souspirer, las ie suis toute faicte,
 2250 Mais plus encor à plaindre vne si triste perte :
 2251 Mais, sus conte le moy, & n'afflige plus fort
 2252 Mon esprit desireux d'entendre ceste mort.

MESSAGER

2253 Vous sçavez que Zeobin en deffendant les armes
 2254 Du Palladin Roland, l'honneur des preux gendarmes,
 2255 Armes qui furieux par la rage blessé
 2256 Il auoit çà & là respandu insensé,
 2257 Auoit esté vaincu, mesme priué de vie
 2258 Par le fier Mandrigard, qui bouillonnoit d'enuie
 2259 De ceindre durandal, l'espee de Roland,

42 Copy-text "Brandimart": there is otherwise no indication that the character figures in the act.

2260 A son gaillard costé, à son costé vaillant.
 2261 Isabelle voulut dés l'heure se deffaire,
 2262 Mais Zeobin son espoux l'empescha de ce faire,
 2263 La pria de vouloir appaiser son esmoy,
 2264 De le suruiure encor, & luy garder la foy.
 2265 Tous ce vœux de Zeobin, sa priere eslancee,
 2266 N'eussent pas de mourir Isabelle empeschee,
 2267 Qui cruelle à ses iours, pour offenser son sein
 2268 Cherchoit de toutes parts quelque fer inhumain,
 2269 Sans qu'un Hermite vint qui d'un prudent langage
 2270 Appaisa sa fureur, addoucist son courage :
 2271 Il embausme le corps de Zeobin chaste & beau,
 2272 Le porte sur son dos pour le mettre au tombeau,
 2273 Dessous le toict sacré de sa sainte chapelle,
 2274 Ayant aupres de luy la dolente Isabelle :
 2275 Mais, las ! en leur chemin le sort iniurieux
 2276 Le cruel Rodomont fist trouuer deuant eux,
 2277 Rodomont qui bruslé des beaux yeux d'Isabelle,
 2278 Resolut de la prendre, & voulut iouyr d'elle :
 2279 L'Hermite s'y oppose. Ah le cruel le prent,
 2280 Le veut mettre en morceaux, mais le ciel le deffend,
 2281 Pendant avecque luy Isabelle il emmeine,
 2282 Isabelle dont double estoit l'ardante peine.

FLEVRDELYS

2283 Las ! pour elle ce fut douleur dessus douleur,
 2284 Meschef dessus meschef, & malheur sur malheur.

MESSAGER

2285 Depuis en se voyant de ce Barbare esclau,
 2286 Barbare qui faisoit à toute heure du braue,
 2287 Qui tuoit, menassoit les hommes & les Dieux,
 2288 Ores blessé d'amour, & ores furieux :
 2289 Elle se resolut de terminer sa vie :
 2290 Mais rien ne faisoit ayde à sa pudique enuie :
 2291 Car Rodomont sachant qu'elle auoit ce desir,
 2292 L'accompagnoit tousiours, regardant à loisir
 2293 A ne permettre pas qu'en sa main desolee,
 2294 Il tombast quelque fer, quelque feu, quelque espee,
 2295 Pendant à vifs propos il la pressoit tousiours

2296 De luy laisser cueillir le fruit de ses amours,
 2297 De luy donner congé, faisant son plaisir d'elle,
 2298 D'esteindre son ardeur & sa peine cruelle :
 2299 Mais, hélas, il parloit à quelque froid rocher,
 2300 C'estoit vn feu bruslant qu'il taschoit d'approcher,
 2301 Car la belle n'estoit de ses propos esmeü,
 2302 Mesme ne vouloit pas sur luy ietter la veüe :
 2303 Elle ploroit tousiours, ne cherchant autre cas
 2304 Qu'un fer qui peut, cruel, aduancer son trespas,
 2305 Tousiours estoit le nom de Zeobin en sa bouche.
 2306 Nom triste & déplaisant au Barbare farouche,
 2307 Barbare qui fâché d'une si longue erreur,
 2308 Commençoit à changer son amour en fureur.

FLEVRDELYS

2309 O que je plains le sort de ceste chaste dame,
 2310 Encor que la vertu l'ait affranchy de blâme :
 2311 Mais poursuis Messenger.

MESSAGER

Laissez moy en repos,

2312 Ayant repris haleine, arranger mes propos :
 2313 Rodomont donc outré de fureur et de rage,
 2314 Se resoluoit de faire à Isabelle outrage,
 2315 S'apprestoit de forcer sa chaste volonté,
 2316 Quand elle apaise encor sa fiere cruauté,
 2317 Par ses pleurs, par ses cris, & faict tant que differe
 2318 Encore quelque peu la rage sanguinaire,
 2319 Elle esperoit pendant pour la mettre au tombeau
 2320 Rencontrer quelque fer, ou quelque froid cordeau,
 2321 Ou se lancer du haut d'une creuse montagne,
 2322 Mais tousiours Rodomont outrageux l'accompagne,
 2323 Il ne la quitte point, craignant, comme elle fist,
 2324 Qu'elle offensa son corps, & qu'elle se deffist :
 2325 O quelle cruauté, ô quel cruel martyre !
 2326 Que ne pouoir mourir alors qu'on le desire,
 2327 De n'auoir ny le fer, ny la force icy bas
 2328 Pour sortir du malheur, & trouuer son trespas.

FLEVRDELYS

2329 Acheue Messenger, las ! ie pers patience,

2330 Le malheur d'Isabelle à traicts cuisants m'offence.

MESSAGER

2331 Ah ie n'en doute point ! hélas i'en meurs par fois,
 2332 I'en pert le sentiment, la constance, & la voix,
 2333 Rodomont cependant bruslé dedans sa flamme,
 2334 Cherchoit de plus en plus à iouyr de sa dame :
 2335 Il estoit tout en feu & la nuict & le iour,
 2336 Il se sentoit brusler dans ce brazier d'amour,
 2337 Plus il voyoit le front de la chaste Isabelle,
 2338 Plus il vouloit l'aymer, plus vouloit iouyr d'elle :
 2339 Elle tout au rebours le detestoit plus fort,
 2340 Plus elle regardoit son front, ses yeux, son port.
 2341 Ainsi leurs volontez se trouuent aduersaires,
 2342 Contraires leurs humeurs, leurs natures contraires,
 2343 Chaste estoit Isabelle, & chaste son desir :
 2344 Iniuste Rodomont, & salle son plaisir :
 2345 En fin il se resout de luy raurir par force
 2346 L'honneur, que conseruer la pauurette s'efforce,
 2347 Il ne veut plus attendre, & ne faict plus de cas
 2348 Des peines d'Isabelle, il chemine à grands pas,
 2349 Insensé de fureur, le front palle de rage,
 2350 Pour forcer furieux son pudique courage.
 2351 Lors la belle qui meurt de crainte & de soucy,
 2352 De voir raurir son los, & son honneur aussi,
 2353 Qui du fier Rodomont apprehende l'audace,
 2354 Deuient toute confuse, & froide comme glace.

FLEVRDELYS

2355 Ayant perdu Zeobin, c'estoit trop de malheur
 2356 Que de voir en hazard de perdre son honneur.

MESSAGER

2357 Voicy ce qu'elle faict, elle aduise vne ruse,
 2358 Voyant que son malheur le luy seruoit d'excuse,
 2359 Et que rien ne pouuoit appaiser Rodomont,
 2360 Qui portoit la fureur cruelle sur le front,
 2361 Comme on voit furieux le taureau dans la pree,
 2362 Eschauffé de l'amour, quand la dame sacree
 2363 Rameine le Prin-temps, il court de toutes parts,
 2364 Ayant dedans le cœur d'amour fiché les dards,

2365 Il mugist insensé, & la froide genisse
 2366 Semble mesme en fuyant redouter sa malice.
 2367 Ainsi fut Rodomont furieux insensé,
 2368 De l'infidelle amour cruellement blessé,
 2369 Isabelle qui voit que toute sa puissance
 2370 Ne peut de ce cruel briser la violence,
 2371 Qui regarde en hazard flotter sa chasteté
 2372 Et qui ne peut mourir selon sa volonté,
 2373 Fait mine de vouloir à Rodomont complaire,
 2374 Elle monstre vn front gay, vne face prospere.

FLEVRDELYS

2375 Ah ! & qu'à grand peril la sage Dame peut
 2376 Repousser vn cruel, qui violer la veut.

MESSAGER

2377 Lors d'un front assuré, & d'une face belle,
 2378 Voicy ce qu'elle dict au Payen infidelle,
 2379 Puisque ie voy ton cœur fidellement m'aymer,
 2380 Puisque ie voy ton ame en mes yeux consommer :
 2381 Que tu m'aymes loyal, que ton amitié sainte,
 2382 N'est point, comme ie croy, infidelle ny feinte :
 2383 Je veux t'aymer aussi, & pour t'en asseurer
 2384 Je te veux aujourd'huy d'un cher don honorer,
 2385 D'un don qui te fera comme Achil inuincible,
 2386 Sans que l'acier cruel te puisse estre nuisible,
 2387 Ton corps sera plus dur que l'attirant ayman,
 2388 Inuulnérable aux dards, & à tout ferrement :
 2389 Tu ne mourras iamais, & à fin que tu pense
 2390 Que mes propos sont vrais, & remplis de puissance,
 2391 Sage tu en feras espreuue sur mon corps,
 2392 Sur mon corps que ton fer fort entre les plus forts,
 2393 Offenser ne pourra, mesme blesser en sorte,
 2394 Encor que ta valeur entre toutes soit forte,
 2395 Mais pour y paruenir faut cueillir mille fleurs,
 2396 Des herbes aux deserts de toutes les couleurs,
 2397 Racines au pied vert, dont les roides montaignes
 2398 Fertilles en cailloux, abondent toutes pleines,
 2399 I'en feray lors vn bain, vn bain tiede & mi chaut,
 2400 Où par deux fois plonger coup sur coup il me faut,

2.401 Lors ruant sur ma gorge, en ce chaud bain trempee
 2.402 De tout ton fier pouuoir vn coup de ton espee,
 2.403 Tu verras que ton fer ne me pourra blesser,
 2.404 Encor que mille preux il ait peu terrasser,
 2.405 Apres au mesme bain pour estre inuulnerable,
 2.406 Deux fois tu plongeras ton corps fier redoutable,
 2.407 Qui dur comme le mien coup sur coup deuiendra,
 2.408 Ains plus dur que l'acier mon scauoir te rendra.

FLEVRDELYS

2.409 O dessein honorable ! ô bien heureuse ruse !
 2.410 O vertu qui me rend languissante & confuse !

MESSAGER

2.411 Rodomont bien ioyeux pensant desia tenir
 2.412 Isabelle en sa main, & plus dur deuenir
 2.413 Que le fer & l'acier, cent fois la remercie,
 2.414 Veut esprouuer son bain au peril de sa vie :
 2.415 Mais craignant qu'elle vueille eschaper de ses mains,
 2.416 Ou se precipiter des rochers inhumains,
 2.417 La tallonne tousiours, la suyt, & la costoye,
 2.418 Pendant que mille fleurs elle assemble à grand ioye.
 2.419 Apres qu'elle eut cueilly des herbes à foison,
 2.420 Des racines, des fleurs, & fait son oraison
 2.421 Au grand Dieu, de vouloir à luy tirer son ame,
 2.422 Elle allume vn grand feu, vne bruslante flame,
 2.423 Met la poille dessus, & ses herbes dedans,
 2.424 Meslees confusement les fait boullir long temps.
 2.425 Puis ayant fait yurer Rodomont plein de ioye,
 2.426 Auidement glouton d'une si belle proye,
 2.427 Elle plonge son corps deux fois au fond de l'eau,
 2.428 Corps trop digne pour estre enclos dans le tombeau.

FLEVRDELYS

2.429 Qu'arriua-il apres ? mon pauure cœur pantelle
 2.430 Craignant d'ouyr la fin de la chaste Isabelle.

MESSAGER

2.431 Isabelle s'estant baignee dans ce bain,
 2.432 Decouure son beau col, monstre son chaste sein,
 2.433 Dit au More cruel : Or maintenant espreuue

2.434 Si rien plus dur que moy à ton acier se treuve :
 2.435 Frappe dessus mon col, tu verras au toucher
 2.436 Ton acier dans ta main roidement reboucher :
 2.437 Frappe donc, & ne crains, alors l'experience
 2.438 Te fera de mon bain cognoistre l'excellence.
 2.439 Rodomont enyuré tire son fer alors,
 2.440 En frappe sur le col qu'il separe du corps
 2.441 De la chaste Isabelle, & mourant venerable
 2.442 Prononça son Zeobin d'une voix lamentable.
 2.443 Comme reste esperdu le dolent laboureur
 2.444 Qui voit son bled greslé de l'ardante fureur
 2.445 Du foudre rougissant, bled qu'il iugeoit vtile
 2.446 Pour soustenir son corps, & sa maigre famille,
 2.447 Lors il croise les bras, il regarde en pitié
 2.448 Son bled gisant au champ, couppé par la moitié.
 2.449 Ainsi fut Rodomont, Rodomont qui demeure,
 2.450 Sans force, sans pouuoir le cours de plus d'une heure,
 2.451 Il maudit sa folie, il blasme son erreur,
 2.452 Et vouloit contre luy conuertir la fureur,
 2.453 Perçant d'un mesme fer qui fit mourir la belle
 2.454 Sa poitrine sanglante, iniuste, & criminelle.

FLEVRDELYS

2.455 O cruelle douleur ! Encor quelque confort
 2.456 Adoucira mon mal, si Rodomont est mort.

MESSAGER

2.457 Ha non ! car vn chacun le fer des poings luy tire,
 2.458 Sans armes on le laisse acoiser seul son ire,
 2.459 Il demeure exploré, la chaste dame il plaint,
 2.460 Il prise sa vertu, estime son los saint :
 2.461 Morte il veut l'honorer, qu'il auoit voulu viue
 2.462 Forcer, diffamer, rendre au deshonneur captiue.
 2.463 Alors pour amender son iniuste forfait,
 2.464 Vn superbe tombeau à Isabelle il fait,
 2.465 Qu'il pare de harnois, de ceux la qu'il surmonte,
 2.466 Et par vn mesme bras y attache leur honte :
 2.467 Autour de ce tombeau il demeure à plorer,
 2.468 Et veut comme vn grand Dieu Isabelle honorer.
 2.469 Voila la triste fin de la chaste Isabelle,

2470 La fleur de chasteté, plus pudique que belle,
 2471 Voula la palle mort, son sort, & ses malheurs,
 2472 Qui tirent de mes yeux mille ruisseaux de pleurs.

FLEVRDELYS

2473 O desastre cruel ! ô miserable ruine !
 2474 O sur toutes vertus vertu la plus diuine !
 2475 O sort trop importun ! ô trop cruel destin !
 2476 Hé, n'estois tu content d'auoir rauy Zeobin ?
 2477 Zeobin beau dessus tous à la chaste Isabelle,
 2478 Sans rendre sa douleur par le temps immortelle ?
 2479 De ton espoux priuee, & captiue long temps,
 2480 Tu as, chaste beauté, passé tes tristes ans,
 2481 Endurant mille efforts d'un barbare infidelle,
 2482 Pour conseruer hélas ta chasteté fidelle,
 2483 Rare exemple d'honneur, digne de luire aux cieux
 2484 Comme vn sacré soleil à iamais glorieux,
 2485 Tu nous as par ton sang la droite voye marquee
 2486 De mourir, en voyant nostre gloire attaquée :
 2487 Tu nous sers de flambeau d'éternelle clarté,
 2488 Pour guider nos esprits à l'immortalité :
 2489 Hélas quel œil sera en ce monde capable
 2490 Pour plorer tendrement ta perte déplorable ?
 2491 Quels souspirs assez forts pour souspirer ta mort ?
 2492 Quels cris assez cuisans pour lamenter ton sort ?
 2493 Hélas que nous perdons, en perdant ta presence,
 2494 Rien ne nous reste plus qui soit plein d'excellence,
 2495 Auecque toy gist mort l'honneur de l'univers,
 2496 Auecque toy la gloire est gisante à l'enuers,
 2497 Barbare Rodomont, las, à bien peu ton ame
 2498 Voir morte par ton fer vne si belle dame ?
 2499 As tu peu la tuer ? qui te vantois iadis
 2500 De vaincre par ton fer les plus forts & hardis ?
 2501 Infame Rodomont, que ta memoire est vile,
 2502 D'auoir espars le sang d'une pudique fille.
 2503 D'une fille sans force, & de qui la vertu
 2504 Auoit heureusement ta fureur combatu.
 2505 Infame Rodomont, cache ton noir visage,
 2506 Ne parle plus mutin, de ton braue courage,
 2507 De tes faits, de ton los, car tu as tout perdu,

2508 Pour d'Isabelle auoir le beau sang respandu.
2509 Heureuse elle a senty la fureur de ta lame,
2510 Te laissant icy bas entre les vifs infame :
2511 Heureuse elle a rendu preuue de sa vertu,
2512 Ayant ton fier orgueil brauement abbatu,
2513 Pendant que sur ton front la depiteuse honte
2514 D'vn pas deshonoré pour ne point mourir, monte :
2515 Auras tu bien le cœur iusques à ton tombeau
2516 D'endurer qu'on t'appelle le carnassier bourreau
2517 D'vne dame d'honneur ? Dame plus courageuse
2518 Que n'est pas és combats ta main iniurieuse.
2519 Ah ! cruel ennemy de la pudicité,
2520 Tu as du Baron Grec le tourment merité ?
2521 Qui pour auoir forcé la diuine Cassandre,
2522 Se veit du feu du ciel broyer, reduit en cendre :
2523 Quelque mal qui t'arriue, & quelque aspre tourment
2524 Qui te puisse gehenner plus inhumainement
2525 Que Tantale, & celuy qui sert d'aspre viande
2526 Au vautour de Iupin, qui sans fin le gourmande.
2527 Tu ne scaurois sentir iamais assez de mal :
2528 Trop puny ne peut estre vn meschant desloyal,
2529 Et pendant nous serons par ta rage cruelle
2530 Priuez à tout iamais du beau front d'Isabelle :
2531 Mais ne la verrons plus ! ô trop cruel malheur !
2532 Sa perte accroist, hélas ! nostre fiere douleur.
2533 Nous ne la verrons plus, elle va chaste & belle
2534 Seruir dessus le ciel d'vne lampe eternelle :
2535 Nous ne la verrons plus, elle est aupres de Dieu,
2536 Trop digne pour passer ses iours en ce bas lieu.
2537 Nous ne la verrons plus : au lieu mille complaints,
2538 Mille piteux regrets, & mille palles craintes
2539 Esblouyront nous yeux, vne eternelle peur
2540 Croistra de plus en plus nostre triste douleur.
2541 Hélas, qui fournira à ta belle memoire,
2542 O diuine Isabelle, assez d'honneur, de gloire ?
2543 Qui peut assez ton los heureusement chanter ?
2544 Qui peut ta chaste mort assez dire & vanter ?
2545 Mais non plus qu'on ne peut ta louange assez dire,
2546 Non plus nul ne scauroit exprimer mon martyrre,
2547 Nul raconter mes cris, ny le regret de toy,

2548 De toy sainte Isabelle, où viue fut la foy,
2549 L'honneur, la chasteté, & viue la constance,
2550 Constance qui brisa l'outrageuse arrogance
2551 Du cruel Rodomont, ennemy de ton los,
2552 Meurtier de ton honneur, & fier à ton repos.
2553 Or pendant que tu vis dans le ciel glorieuse,
2554 Pendant que ta belle ame est là haut bien-heureuse,
2555 Et pendant que chacun celebre à qui mieux mieux
2556 Ta gloire, ton beau nom, & ton los glorieux,
2557 Je vois plorer ta mort dans vn roc enfermee,
2558 Je veux en moites pleurs decouler transformee,
2559 Je ne veux plus parler que de ta triste fin,
2560 Je ne veux plus penser qu'en toy, qu'en ton Zeobin,
2561 Tant qu'une belle mort nous deux ames assemble,
2562 Ames qui ont vescu si longuement ensemble,
2563 Pendant que la vigueur hostelloit dans ton corps,
2564 Et qu'il estoit franc de la loy des morts :
2565 Je n'ay rien que cela pour rendre à ta memoire,
2566 Je n'ay point d'autres vœux pour offrir à ta gloire :
2567 Prens ce present de moy, bien qu'il soit imparfait,
2568 Souuienne toy pourtant de moy qui te l'ay fait.
2569 *La richesse ne rend le present venerable,*
2570 *La seule volonté le rend recommandable :*
2571 *Les Dieux reçoient peu des infirmes humains,*
2572 *Ils estiment pourtant ce qui part de leurs mains.*
2573 De mesmes, chaste sœur, reçois en don ces plaintes,
2574 Et ces cris que i'immole à tes lumieres saintes,
2575 Reçois mes tristes pleurs, avec elles ma foy,
2576 Tu ne peux esperer vn plus grand bien de moy.
2577 Apres toy, chaste sœur, apres ta triste perte,
2578 Que pourra deuenir Fleurdelys la pauurette ?
2579 Fleurdelys orpheline, & de toy chere sœur,
2580 Et de son Brandimart immortel en valeur :
2581 Helas ie me sens seule icy bas delaissee,
2582 Comme par les deserts la genisse lassee
2583 D'auoir couru les bois, les bords moites de l'eau,
2584 Et les rochers tortus, se voit loin du troupeau
2585 Esgaree & sans guide, vne louue affamee,
2586 Sort d'un antre hideux, qui de fureur armee
2587 L'estrange, la deuore, ardante sur son sein,

2588 De sa tendrette chair va repaissant sa faim.
2589 Ainsi seule icy bas, palle, veufue de ioye,
2590 Ie me sens du malheur estre la viue proye,
2591 Malheur qui va tuant mon plus heureux repos,
2592 Et qui seme l'effroy au dedans de mes os,
2593 La peine me demeure, au mal abandonnee,
2594 Il semble que ie sois à souffrir destinee :
2595 Mais ie ne puis souffrir assez de maux piteux,
2596 Puis qu'Isabelle est hors de ces terrestres lieux,
2597 Puis que ie suis priuee & de sa face belle,
2598 Et de mon Brandimart à mes amours fidelle,
2599 Que la Manne à iamais coule sur ton tombeau,
2600 Sage Dame qui meurs en ton aage plus beau,
2601 Que la rose y florisse, & qu'un rouge tonnerre
2602 A brandons allumez ne le iette par terre :
2603 Que les herbes d'autour soyent exemptes tousiours
2604 De la dent des aigneaux, des combats, des estours,
2605 Que mille doux oiseaux y perchent venerables,
2606 Qu'il serue de refuge aux pauvres miserables,
2607 Bref demeure immortel, ô celebre tombeau,
2608 Tousiours verd, tousiours saint, tousiours heureux &
beau.

FIN