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Traductions
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Three French Cleopatras

Cleopatra Captive
by Étienne Jodelle

Marc Antony
by Robert Garnier

Cleopatra: Tragedy
by Nicolas de Montreux

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

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Introduction

Three French Cleopatras

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The three dramatisations translated here of the inherently sensational story of Antony and Cleopatra amount to a significant sub-genre within the current of sixteenth-century French tragedy generally termed “humanist”—that is, essentially, comprising the deliberate imitation of classical models in the vernacular and applying with more or less rigour the formal strictures derived from Aristotle and Horace, as these were understood at the time. Subjects drawn from the history, legends and myths of antiquity predominate, though not exclusively, with biblical matter running a close second. This is hardly the place to enter into the long-standing debates among specialists regarding the literary (not to say dramatic) merits of this theatre and its place in French cultural history.¹ The main reason for presenting these translations, apart from intrinsic interest, is that there is, to a substantial degree, an English connection. While the conventions associated with such drama widely diverge from the practices of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, at least in its more popular forms, the case can be made that a number of English playwrights engaged with French precedents in originating and developing forms of tragedy for the stage, as well as the page.² The sub-genre illustrated here makes an especially illuminating case in point.

The fundamental features of French humanist tragedy, which by and large was intended for performance, even if evidence of actual performance is sometimes lacking, entail a particular

¹ A sense of these debates (and of their potential for vehemence) may be gathered from Elliott Forsyth, “French Renaissance Tragedy and Its Critics: A Reply to Donald Stone, Jr.,” *Renaissance Drama* ns 2 (1969): 207–22.

² Such is the essential argument of my monograph, *French Origins of English Tragedy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

concept of drama which applies, with variations, to all three plays. It seems important to insist that audiences understood, and responded to, such spectacles as authentically dramatic, however unspectacular they may have been, compared with the medieval mysteries or, for that matter, with contemporary pastorals and tragicomedies. For this is a theatre virtually without onstage action, at this period exclusively in verse, which proceeds through its obligatory five acts, each typically concluding with a Chorus,³ by way of lengthy monologues and limited formal exchanges. The latter are generally restricted to two characters at a time and often modulate into stichomythic debate. The former tend towards repetitive rhetorical structures, adorned with historical and mythological allusions and obviously designed for formulaic styles of declamation—hence, the terms “*recit* [recital]” and “*reciterent* [recited]” used by Nicolas de Montreux to introduce an imagined presentation of his tragedy *Isabelle*.⁴ Rather than interacting in a way tending to development in anything like a psychological sense, the characters—often labelled as “acteurs” or “auteurs”, that is, those who effectively create the dramatic experience—typically present static attitudes, with varying degrees of rationality or emotionality, towards the problematic situations, personal and historical, in which they are placed. Those situations further serve as occasions for opposing and weighing contrary values—almost universally, the competing claims of clemency (or mildness) and rigorous justice (or harshness).⁵ To this theme is conspicuously adjoined, in the present cases, the conflict between amorous self-indulgence and noble heroism—values broadly coded as feminine (or effeminate) and masculine, respectively.

What may be termed the Cleopatra sub-genre—for that character imaginatively dominates even the tragedy that Robert Garnier entitled *Marc Antoine*—was initiated by what is widely accepted as being, as its Prologue claims, the first neo-classical tragedy in French: Étienne Jodelle’s *Cleopatre captive*, which was first performed (with an all-male cast) in Paris before Henri II in 1553, although it was published only posthumously in 1574. Dramatic treatments of the subject would continue into the following century, notably with the tragedies of Isaac de Benserade (*Cléopâtre*, 1634-36) and Jean de Mairet (*Le Marc-Antoine, ou la Cléopâtre*, 1637), whose title stands out for giving equal billing, like Shakespeare’s, to the principal protagonists. The primary interest of the present plays

3 Exceptions include the final acts of the works of Garnier and Montreux included here, in which key characters are allowed a resonant final word.

4 Nicolas de Montreux [Ollenix du Mont-sacré], *Le Quatriesme livre des bergeries de Ivlliette . . . Ensemble la Tragedie D’Isabelle* (Paris: Guillaume Des Rues, 1595), pp. 633-64. The prince before whom the supposed shepherds have recited their tragedy (of over 2,600 verses) is said to have thanked and rewarded them profusely. Montreux likewise appended his *Cleopatre* to romantic pastoral fictions; see below, n. 41.

5 The point is effectively documented by Gillian Jondorf, *Robert Garnier and the Themes of Political Tragedy in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 105-13.

for specialists of English literature, however, is the complex but compelling issue of their contribution to the sequence of early modern English dramas beginning with the 1592 translation of Garnier's tragedy (as *Antonius*) by Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke. That work was supplemented, at the Countess's request, by Samuel Daniel's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* (1594, slightly revised in 1599), which, on the one hand, cleaves more closely in formal respects to the French humanist models (to the point of approximating Alexandrine couplets with iambic pentameter quatrains), and, on the other, is generally taken to have contributed directly to the culminating achievement of Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* (1606-7).⁶ The present volume may help to illustrate the extent to which that achievement is also a composite one.

The resurgence in critical interest in English representations of Cleopatra over recent years is impressive.⁷ All the more evident, in this light, is the relative neglect of the French precursor texts by English-language critics. Even where a specific debt is recognised, one detects a general reluctance to engage with these texts in their own right, as certain Elizabethan and Jacobean authors may be shown to have done.⁸ And if Mary

6 Daniel's use of the plays of Garnier and Jodelle was insightfully exposed some seventy years ago by Joan Rees, "Samuel Daniel's *Cleopatra* and Two French Plays", *Modern Language Review* 47.1 (1952): 1-10, who, however, made no mention of Montreux. For a concise presentation of points of contact between Daniel and Shakespeare, see Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 7 vols, vol. V: The Roman Plays: *Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus* (London: Routledge; New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), Introduction to *Antony and Cleopatra*, pp. 215-53, 231-36. See also Arthur M. Z. Norman, "Daniel's *The Tragedie of Cleopatra* and *Antony and Cleopatra*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 9.1 (1958): 11-18. Bullough, ed., pp. 406-49, reprints the full text of Daniel's tragedy in its 1599 version; this edition will be cited below.

Daniel made substantial revisions to his text for a new edition in 1607, developing sequences of direct action in a way that is widely considered to reflect Shakespeare's play, e.g., by Michael Neill, ed., *Anthony and Cleopatra*, by William Shakespeare, The Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), Introduction, pp. 1-130, 21-22. (This edition is cited throughout, as *Ant.*, and its spelling of the Roman protagonist's name is used in reference to Shakespeare's character.) For a contrary view regarding such influence, see Yasmin Arshad, *Imagining Cleopatra: Performing Gender and Power in Early Modern England*, Arden Studies in Early Modern Drama (London: The Arden Shakespeare, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), pp. 204-5.

7 Witness, e.g., the publication in successive years of Arshad's monograph and the theatrically oriented work of Carol Chillington Rutter, *Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare in Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

8 Thus Arshad's thematically structured work ranges widely and provocatively across issues of "shifting perspectives" and traces considerable "influence and interconnectivity" (p. 12) among authors and genres (including Italian instances from literature and the visual arts), but the French tragedies are kept at arm's length, as is most conspicuous, perhaps, when she takes up Daniel's *Cleopatra* in relation to the tradition of female complaint (pp. 82-87) yet discerns "an original English female voice" (p. 68). Montreux's tragedy receives a single passing mention (p. 11).

On the other hand, scant attention is paid to English drama in an otherwise wide-ranging collection of recent essays surveying Italian and French representations of Cleopatra: Rosanna Gorris

Sidney Herbert's translation of Garnier, the pre-eminent case of direct engagement, has acquired quasi-canonical status within English literary history, this has arguably come at the expense of obscuring its original.⁹

I have elsewhere focused on a number of French-English interrelationships in early modern dramatic treatments of this segment of Roman history, with the objective, at least, of confirming the interest of the French analogues for historians of English theatre.¹⁰ And on the premise that language has sometimes been a barrier, I hope that the full-text translations presented here—accompanied by the first edition of Nicolas de Montreux's tragedy since, it would seem, 1601—may encourage pursuit of the relations involved, even if definitive conclusions must remain elusive. At the same time, the three French plays merit attention both in themselves and in relation to each other, inviting comparative study of their divergent dramaturgical approaches to essentially identical sources.¹¹ It is largely to stimulate and facilitate such comparison that I propose a new

Camos, ed., *Hieroglyphica: Cléopâtre et l'Égypte entre France et Italie à la Renaissance*, Renaissance series (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2021). Each of the French plays translated here is the subject of one or more succinct studies in this extensive interdisciplinary volume; their varied but generally complementary approaches may be gauged by their respective titles: Emmanuel Buron, "Une Cléopâtre 'plus semblable à l'histoire': Représentation poétique et Histoire dans *Cléopâtre captive*" (pp. 295-305); Jean-Claude Ternaux, "Le corps de Cléopâtre dans *Marc Antoine* de Robert Garnier" (pp. 341-47); Dario Cecchetti, "La Cléopâtre di Robert Garnier, paradigma di patetismo: *Marc Antoine*, atto V" (pp. 323-39); Riccardo Benedettini, "La 'passion de l'âme' de Cléopâtre: Sur la tragédie de Nicolas de Montreux" (pp. 349-61). These critics' attention to rhetorical effects is an especially welcome development, and their observations often coincide with my own.

- 9 Tangible evidence of canonical status is the fact that the latest modern edition of *Antonius* lists eleven previous ones; see *Robert Garnier in Elizabethan England: Mary Sidney Herbert's Antonius and Thomas Kyd's Cornelia*, ed. Marie-Alice Belle and Line Cottagnies, MHRA Tudor and Stuart Translations 16 (Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2017), pp. 295-96.
- 10 Richard Hillman, *French Reflections in the Shakespearean Tragic: Three Case Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp. 94-149.
- 11 Those sources are—and were—well known and sometimes openly acknowledged, as in the Argument of Garnier's *Marc Antony*. While occasional minor borrowings from elsewhere may be detected, most important by far were Plutarch's *Life of Antony* (one of the *Parallel Lives of the Greeks and Romans*) and, to a lesser degree, the *Roman History* of Dio Cassius (esp. Bk. 51).

The version of Plutarch's *Life of Antony* most immediately pertinent to early modern English dramatists is, of course, Thomas North's 1579 translation of Jacques Amyot's French rendering, although I have proposed that Shakespeare in at least one instance also drew on Amyot in a French edition with commentary by Simon Goulart (Hillman, *French Reflections*, pp. 138-41). Amyot's translation had not been published at the time of Jodelle's writing, however, and for the sake of both consistency and convenience, it has seemed advisable to refer, in discussing the French plays generally, to a reliable modern English translation. Unless otherwise specified, therefore, references to Plutarch are to *The Parallel Lives: Life of Antony*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 11 vols, vol. IX (London: Heinemann; New York: Macmillan, 1920), ed. Bill Thayer, online at <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Antony*.html> (accessed 10 January 2023). Jodelle may have worked from another French translation in MS.,

translation of Garnier's work—one which, for better or worse (and regardless of anything like literary merit), mirrors the form of the original more closely than does Mary Sidney Herbert's blank verse (used by her for all but the Choruses). My more literal translation also gives definite expression to certain moral and religious resonances of Garnier's text which its Elizabethan rendering tended to blur.¹²

The tragedies of Jodelle and Garnier are generally recognised by French literary historians as significant within the humanist tradition, although that tradition itself, as well as the productions of the “*âge baroque*” of the earlier seventeenth century, has tended to be treated with some condescension by criticism that looks backwards (if not downwards) from the “*tragédie régulière*” of the “*âge classique*”, as epitomised by Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine. Happily, that attitude is now widely subject to revision, but it is still reflected in a somewhat selective and restrictive approach to work of the earlier period. For instance, it is exceptional to find included in the canon the considerable dramatic (or, for that matter, non-dramatic) output, in a variety of genres, of Montreux (1561?-1608?). Montreux, who invariably published under the anagrammatical pseudonym of Ollenix du Mont-Sacré, was a native of Le Mans, where Garnier was principally based, and was, with regard to his tragedies, very much the latter's disciple. The present volume seeks not only to inscribe Montreux's tragedy of *Cleopatre* within the thematic sequence but to assign it the prominent place it merits, especially given its self-positioning in the light (and shadow) of its illustrious predecessors.

Cleopatra Captive (Cleopatre captive), by Étienne Jodelle

Pioneering though it was, the first of Jodelle's two tragedies (it was followed by *Dido sacrificiant* in 1555, which apparently has no documented history of representation) has attracted few editions and relatively little commentary.¹³ It is hard not to relate this

from a Latin version, or from the original Greek: on this question, see Marie Delcourt, “Jodelle et Plutarque”, *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, 42.1 (1934): 36–52, online at <<https://doi.org/10.3406/bude.1934.5952>> (accessed 21 July 2023).

Unless noted otherwise, references to Dio Cassius (the usual form of the name) are to Bk. 51 of Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, trans. Earnest Cary, Loeb Classical Library, 9 vols, vol. VI (London: Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), ed. Bill Thayer, online at <https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/51*.html> (accessed 21 July 2023).

¹² On this point, see Hillman, *French Reflections*, pp. 131–38.

¹³ It is suggestive that its two pioneering modern editors come from outside the French academic tradition: Enea Balmas (Italian) and Kathleen M. Hall (English). The edition of the latter serves as the basis of the present translation: Estienne Jodelle, *Cleopatre captive*, ed. Kathleen M. Hall, *Textes Littéraires*, 35 (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1979). I am also indebted to Hall's judicious and informative Introduction (pp. v–xvi).

fact to the anomalies it presents, despite its declared aim of reviving the antique theatre, when set against the formal features which Garnier would do much to establish as the norms of humanist neo-classicism. Thus Alexandrine couplets (“*vers noble*”), destined to become the obligatory form of tragic dialogue, are replaced in three of the five acts (II, III and V) by decasyllabics (the counterpart of English pentameter, and actually more traditionally “heroic”¹⁴). The versification employed for the Choruses is remarkably varied with respect to line lengths and stanzaic structures.

Jodelle shows a conscious will to have his imitation of antique tragedy seen as conforming to the recently formulated neo-Aristotelian “unities” of time, place and action.¹⁵ Most notably, he contrives to restrict Antony’s role in the story to the retrospective narrative of his neo-Senecan ghost; the latter, moreover, pointedly announces (I.i.158) that Cleopatra must die before the day is out and that he is simultaneously informing her in a dream that she must perform his funeral rites, then destroy herself. The rigorous compression of time and action, anticipated in certain sections of Plutarch’s narrative, is thus effectually signalled and built into the play’s structure. As for setting, a certain shifting between “places” associated with Octavian (“*Octavien*” in the original speech-headings) and with Cleopatra reflects a continuity with medieval practice, which may also have been formalised in the decor.¹⁶ (A distant forerunner may be detected of Shakespeare’s alternation of Roman and Egyptian “worlds”.) In a larger perspective, however, the captured city of Alexandria in itself may be taken to supply “unity of place”.

Nevertheless, Jodelle also takes dramaturgical liberties of a kind that would come to be considered problematic. These begin, perhaps, with the Chorus. Apart from the perennially difficult questions regarding performance (multiple voices? spoken or chanted? musical accompaniment?), this ineluctable feature of early humanist imitations of antiquity was inherently unstable and would eventually disappear from tragic practice. Indeed, already in 1615, the Norman playwright Pierre Troterel would explain as follows (no doubt with some exaggeration) why he did not adopt this formal classical convention together with others in his martyrological drama, *The Tragedy of Saint Agnes*:

14 Hence Ronsard would employ decasyllabics for his unfinished dynastic epic, *La Franciade* (1572), before coming to prefer the Alexandrine. See Pierre de Ronsard, “Préface svr La Franciade, touchant le Poëme Heroïque”, *La Franciade* (1572), ed. Paul Laumonier, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. XVI (Paris: Nizet, 1983), pp. 331–56, 331.

15 Crucial influence on this point, as on others, was exerted by Scaliger’s poetics, first published in Lyons just in time to be available to Jodelle. See Jules César Scaliger, *Poetices Libri Septem*, Intro. August Buck (1561; fac. rpt. Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzboog], 1964).

16 See Hall, ed., Introduction, pp. x-xi.

I have not included any choruses in it—not that I could not have done, but because it would have been useless effort for me, since I have seen over a thousand tragedies represented in different places without ever having seen those choruses recited.¹⁷

Jodelle's Chorus, which is formally structured at times according to Strophe, Antistrophe and Epode, and is nominally composed of Alexandrian women (though doubtless originally performed by male actors, like all the play's roles), varies considerably in function and perspective. Such variability, reflecting differing interpretations of the antique models, is frequent in humanist drama generally and sometimes issues in the form of multiples choruses.¹⁸ Still, Jodelle's treatment stands out as especially free and supple precisely because his Chorus continues throughout as a single entity. It sometimes evokes sympathy for Cleopatra, sometimes speaks for the oppressed people of Egypt, sometimes moralises on the human condition at large. Its function is not restricted to commentary at the ends of acts, and it intrudes into the action, seemingly to "cover" stage business, in Act Three at ll. 867 ff. and 1029 ff., then again at 1117 ff. to engage in dialogue with Seleucus, where its detachment and very collective quality momentarily come under pressure due to fear.

A less equivocal contravention of humanist tragic dramaturgy, which, as it would develop, had no place for comic elements, occurs when Jodelle incorporates, through direct action evocative of farce, the confrontation which, according to Plutarch (83.3-5), was provoked by Seleucus' intervention in Cleopatra's encounter with Caesar. The narrative records that, when her steward showed she had not fully disclosed her wealth, Cleopatra "sprang up, seized him by the hair, and showered blows upon his face", thereby amusing Caesar, but also reassuring him, since he was led to suppose that she wished to

17 Pierre Troterel, *Pièces de dévotion (Hagiographic Plays): La Tragédie de sainte Agnès (1615), La Vie et sainte conversion de Guillaume Duc d'Aquitaine (1632)*, éd. Pierre Pasquier, trans. Richard Hillman, Scène Européenne—Traductions Introuvables (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2023), p. 311 ("Argument of the Present Tragedy").

18 See Hall, ed., Intro., p. xiii. In developing the fluid relation between action and choric interventions, Jodelle extends the potential of the device suggested by Greek tragedies, especially those of Sophocles. It seems probable from such interventions, as well as from the encounter with Seleucus at III.1117, that the Chorus remains on stage in the background during each act.

Garnier, in *Marc Antony*, at once simplifies and functionally differentiates by designating two choruses, as will be seen. Choric roles would evolve in especially complex ways in the late-humanist tragedies of Montchrestien. See *Two Tragedies by Antoine de Montchrestien: The Queen of Scotland, Hector*, trans. and ed. Richard Hillman, Scène Européenne—Traductions Introuvables (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2022), Introductions, pp. 16-17, n. 10, and pp. 133-34; also Françoise Charpentier, *Les débuts de la tragédie héroïque: Antoine de Montchrestien (1575-1621)* (Lille: Service de Reproduction des Thèses, Université de Lille III, 1981), pp. 438, 486 *et passim*.

live. Thus, affirms Plutarch, “he went off, supposing that he had deceived her, but the rather deceived by her.”

Jodelle frankly exploited the farcical potential of this sequence, which begins at Act Three, l. 1051, playing up Octavian’s amused response, and he has Cleopatra, in her next appearance, somewhat defensively confirm Plutarch’s judgement of her behaviour:

And if today in some little measure I feigned,
So that my offspring with their blood should not be
 stained –
What then? Did Caesar suppose that in what I said
My heart and my voice would be perfectly united?

[*Et si j’ay ce jourdhuy usé de quelque feinte,
A fin que ma portee en son sang ne fust teinte.
Quoy? Cesar pensoit-il que ce que dit j’avois
Peust bien aller ensemble et de cœur et de voix?*]
(IV.1235-38)

Yet Jodelle also added an intriguing moralising coda to the Seleucus scene in the form of the character’s unexpected reentrance and interrogation by the Chorus. Seleucus shows himself to be stricken with conscientious guilt at having betrayed his mistress, to the point where death would be preferable.

Apart from the question of decorum, Cleopatra’s confrontation with Seleucus could have no place in Garnier’s play, which omits the encounter with Caesar following Antony’s death. The detail makes, however, a conspicuous omission from the representation of that encounter in the version of Montreux (IV.[ii.]2003 ff.). And it is instructive to compare, on this point, the treatments of Daniel and Shakespeare. The former, writing for the page rather than the stage, and paying homage in effect, as he does explicitly, to Mary Sidney Herbert’s literary programme—“To chace away this tyrant of the North: / *Gross barbarism*”¹⁹—reduces the suggestion of physical confrontation to a single injunction from Caesar: “Holde, holde; a poor revenge can worke so feeble hands” (ed. Bullough, III.ii.675).²⁰ Seleucus is left out of the rest of the scene, and there is nothing to indicate that Cleopatra may be feigning. On the other hand, Daniel seems to take up from Jodelle

¹⁹ Samuel Daniel, “To the Right Honourable, the Lady Marie, Countesse of Pembroke”, *The Tragedie of Cleopatra, Delia and Rosamond Augmented, Cleopatra* ([James Roberts and Edward Allde for] Simon Waterson, 1594), n.p.; STC 6254.

²⁰ Intriguingly, Rees retroactively applies the humanist norm in contrasting Daniel’s “dignity” in treating the Seleucus scene with Jodelle’s “error” in producing “a note out of harmony with the play as a whole” (p. 6).

the novel idea of Seleucus' repentance, which he presents in Act Four along with the equally novel repentance of Rodon, responsible for the death of Caesarion.

By contrast, Shakespeare introduces the confrontation between Cleopatra and Seleucus, who afterwards simply drops out of sight, as initiated by her ("Where's Seleucus?" [*Ant.*, V.ii.140]) in a way that strongly suggests a pre-arranged scenario:

This is my treasurer. Let him speak, my lord,
Upon his peril, that I have reserved
To myself nothing. Speak the truth, Seleucus.
(V.ii.142-44)

Seleucus is thus enlisted to support Plutarch's picture of Cleopatra as putting Caesar off his guard. The self-loathing despair attributed to the personage by Jodelle would then make no sense. (That notion, however, might have proved useful to Shakespeare elsewhere—for instance, in the fatal access of melancholy that follows the treason of Enobarbas.)

The extent to which *Cleopatra Captive*, directly or indirectly, lies behind the works of Daniel and Shakespeare remains uncertain, despite numerous suggestive points of contact. Beyond doubt is its status as the fount and origin of subsequent French dramatic versions of the story, notable for extracting from Plutarch's narrative a triangular dynamic of love and power of a kind susceptible to varying emphases and ambiguous interpretations of its protagonists. Such ambiguities would be more subtly exploited by Garnier and Montreux, but the potential to do so is arguably built into Jodelle's more straightforward dramaturgy.

The undercutting of Octavian as glorious conqueror is effectively, if backhandedly, adumbrated by the Prologue, which, in pulling out the stops of flattery to exalt Henri II as "all the gods' factor [*le commis de tous les Dieux*]" (Pro.54), the very "son of divinity [*le fils des Dieux*]" (61), juxtaposes the "triumph [*triomphe*]" (28) his recent conquest deserves with that avoided by Cleopatra (45). Mixed messages are attached to Octavian's victory, which Henri's (at Metz over Charles V) is said to exceed.²¹ And when the future Augustus appears for the first time at the opening of Act Two, his language recalls at once the notorious hubris of Seneca's gloating Atreus²² and the boasting of a diabolical mystery play tyrant:

21 See Jodelle, Pro.47-54 and nn. 3, 4.

22 Cf. L. Annaeus Seneca, *Thyestes*, ll. 885-88:

*Aequalis astris gradior et cunctos super
altum superbo vertice attingens polum.
nunc decora regni teneo, nunc solium patris,
dimitto superos: summa votorum attigi . . .*

(*Tragoediae*, ed. Rudolf Peiper, Gustav Richter [Leipzig: Teubner, 1921], *The Perseus*

Within the round enfolded by the sky
 To none, I think, can such favour apply,
 Of those whom the gods cherish, as to me:
 For besides my kingship and my mastery
 Of such possessions, it seems that on earth
 The sky which all contains within its girth
 Down from its vault has purposely me sent
 To serve here as its universal agent;

.....

Now I desire, desire more still:
 To join the gods' sacred ranks is my will.

*[En la rondeur du Ciel environnee,
 A nul, je croy, telle faveur donnee
 Des Dieux fauteur ne peult estre qu'à moy:
 Car oure encor que je suis maistre et Roy
 De tant de biens, qu'il semble qu'en la terre
 Le Ciel qui tout sous son empire enserrre,
 M'ait tout exprés de sa voûte transmis,
 Pour estre ici son general commis:*

.....

*Or' je desire, or' je desire mieux,
 C'est de me joindre au sainct nombre des Dieux.]*
 (II.445-52, 463-64)

The regret for Antony's death with which Octavian is immediately seized (an element from Plutarch), and which Agrippa and Proculeus attempt to counter, adds a touch of mildness to the portrait, but only to reinforce its harshness. His thirst for immortal glory is reinforced by a resolution to avenge the loss of his erstwhile companion-in-arms upon the woman ultimately responsible for his destruction:

... the ultimate proof
 Of my honours, thus kept from time aloof,
 Will not appear till she who bears the blame
 For consuming Antony in her flame
 Is in triumph in my city produced.

Digital Library, online at <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>> [accessed 25 July 2023])

[I stalk at the level of the stars and above mankind, attaining the height of the vault with my exalted head. Now I possess the glory of the realm, now the ancestral throne. I dismiss the gods: I have achieved my ultimate wishes ...] (my translation)

[... *mais plus grand tesmoignage*
De mes honneurs s'obstinans contre l'aage,
Ne s'est point veu, sinon que ceste Dame
Qui consumma Marc Antoine en sa flamme,
Fut dans ma ville en triomphe menee.]
 (II.555-59)

Accordingly, the conqueror quite readily accepts Agrippa's injunction to dry his tears:

... Thus he plays the woman
 Who has demolished a womanish man!
 No, no—laments shall yield to cruel harms:
 Let us bathe in blood both our hearts and arms,
 And wish our foes a hundred lives enjoyed,
 Which shall with brutality be destroyed!

[... *Celuy donc s'effemne*
Qui ja du tout l'effeminé ruine.
Non non les plains cederont au rigueurs,
Baignons en sang les armes et les cœurs,
Et souhaitons à l'ennemi cent vies,
Qui luy seroyent plus durement ravies.](II.627-32)

Such ruthlessness explicitly lies behind his tactic of keeping Cleopatra alive and pardoning her: “Power is often reinforced by ruse [*Souvent l'effort est forcé par la ruse*]” (II.639).

Thus, by the time of the encounter with Cleopatra and the interlude of Seleucus, one is prepared to witness the confrontation of two competing ruses, in keeping with Plutarch's comment. One clearly serves the cause of masculine rigour. As for the other, its stereotypical femininity is ostentatious, given Cleopatra's behaviour with Seleucus, as mocked by Octavian,²³ and her plea for her children—indeed, her display of the breasts that suckled them: “these two breasts—/ Which now you see here all shrivelled and torn [*ces*

23

Oh, what a fierce rampage!
 But nothing is more furious than the rage
 Of woman's heart. Well, Cleopatra, will
 That do? Of beating him quite had your fill?

[*O quel grinsant courage!*
Mais rien n'est plus furieux que la rage
D'un cœur de femme. Et bien, quoy, Cleopatre?
Estes vous oint ja saoule de le battre?]
 (III.1087-90)

deux mamelles, / Qu'ores tu vois maigres et dechirees"]) (II.944-45). (That theatrically daring gesture, which backhandedly references the true sex of the actors, is repeated in a radically different key by Shakespeare: "Dost thou not see my baby at my breast, / That sucks the nurse asleep?" [*Ant.*, V.ii.308-9].) But also communicated as the *raison d'être* of her ruse is a deeply grieving love that recasts and transcends the initial declaration of Antony's ghost that he seeks to have her punished in hell along with him for debasing his masculinity.

Already, in her response to her dream of Antony—another motif that Shakespeare perhaps recasts for his conclusion ("I dreamt there was an Emperor Anthony . . ." [V.ii.76 ff.])—Cleopatra had presented her death as a means of freedom, not just from captivity, but from guilt. It amounts to a virtual recuperation of masculine honour on their common behalf, a means to "snatch the victory, / Though vanquished by Caesar and subject to his scorn [*arrachons la victoire, / Encore que soyons par Cesar surmontees*]" (I.ii.160-61). In her final lament, love and honour—feminine and masculine—are combined in terms that Jodelle's powerful rhetoric renders convincingly transformative. Thus Cleopatra vividly imagines their joint epitaph:

Here lie two lovers who, content when they
lived still,
Of happiness, honour, rejoicing drank their fill,
But in the end such trouble they were to meet
That the happiness of both was death soon to greet.
Before Caesar departs, then, receive, oh receive me:
Let sooner my life-spirit than my honour leave me.
For of all my ills, burdens, sufferings intense—
All my sighs, regrets, cares and my infinite
torments—
I count as most grievous that span of time, though
slight,
Since I felt you slipping, Antony, out of sight.

[*ICY, sont deux amans qui heureux en leur vie,
D'heur, d'honneur, de liesse, ont leur ame assouvie:
Mais en fin tel malheur on les vit encourir,
Que le bon heur des deux fut de bien tost mourir.
Reçoy reçoy moy donc avant que Cesar parte,
Que plustost mon esprit que mon honneur s'écarte:
Car entre tout le mal, peine, douleur, encombre,
Souspir, regrets, soucis, que j'ay souffert sans nombre,
J'estime le plus grief ce bien petit de temps
Que de toy, ô Antoine, esloigner je me sens.*] (IV.1377-86)

She then exits, summoning her willing waiting-women to join her in death, which is left to be accomplished by a means that retains the mystery surrounding it in Plutarch (where the asp figures merely as one possibility), while the Chorus sets the seal on her action, solemnly resonating with that of her companions, as proving her “More courageous than a man [*Ayant un cœur plus que d’homme*]” (IV.1603).

Jodelle all but leaves the reaction of Octavian to the imagination, guiding it only by the commentary of Proculeius, who had been sent to forestall precisely the event he discovers. Jodelle makes him sympathetic to Cleopatra in a way anticipating Shakespeare’s Dolabella, but, like Shakespeare (and unlike Daniel), stops the sympathy short of amorousness. Plutarch (86.4) had merely described Caesar as “vexed” but sufficiently impressed by Cleopatra’s “lofty spirit” to have her buried with Antony. Jodelle’s Proculeius, himself intensely moved, is uncertain and fearful as to how Caesar will respond, anticipating his “horror [*horreur*]” (V.1603), along with a realisation that to be thus “spoiled of expected gain [*perdant ce qu’il attend*]” (V.1563) shows that heaven sets limits to human aspirations. Proculeius again evokes the commonplace *exemplum* of the giants who defied the gods (V.1501 ff.), which he had earlier applied to Antony (II.483 ff.), and the hubris of Octavian’s opening speech is now clearly to the point.

If there is any suggestion that Caesar responds to the power of the love he had so vigorously denigrated, it is indirect and ironic. According to Proculeius, it is not the decision of Caesar (as in Plutarch, Shakespeare and, most strikingly, Montreux) that will ensure the union in death of Antony and Cleopatra, but rather love itself: “No separation Love will authorise / Of two bodies he joined by lasting ties [*L’amour ne veut separer les deux corps, / Qu’il avoit joints par longs et longs accords*]” (V.1559-60).²⁴ Caesar’s blood may run cold with “horror” at the turn of events, but then it has been cold from the start, and Jodelle leaves it to a warm-blooded intermediary to intimate the possibility of a response in terms other than those of conquest and power. The latter are the terms of Egypt’s defeat, whose captivity is lamented in the concluding Chorus, but also of Caesar’s own, as effected by Cleopatra’s self-liberation.

Marc Antony (Marc Antoine), by Robert Garnier

The tragedy of Garnier is far better known than Jodelle’s among English literary historians, thanks to Mary Sidney Herbert’s translation, but it has also attracted more attention from French ones. The playwright (c. 1545-1590) is universally credited with the ultimate achievement in humanist drama, whose conventions he was instrumental in

24 Cf. Jodelle, n. 150.

establishing over seven tragedies, all but one of which (*Les Juives*, 1583) have Roman or Greek subjects. The interest he attracts is reinforced by his extensive political engagement over a long period—particularly as a representative of royal authority in Le Mans at the height of tensions with the ultra-Catholic *Sainte Ligue* (Holy League), to which he finally adhered (if apparently with luke-warm conviction). His political engagement is in turn reflected in his drama, especially in the trilogy of plays on the Roman civil wars, of which *Marc Antony* (1574-75, pub. 1578) is the last.

That engagement is, however, reflected indirectly and indistinctly. Certain thematic preoccupations are clear enough, most basically the catastrophe of civil war itself, such as France had been suffering, with intermittent truces, since 1562, and which proliferated concrete occasions for applying the perennial abstract debate between rigorous justice and mercy.²⁵ The danger for the public welfare of governors who are too strong, or too weak, and/or morally corrupt—a commonplace of Renaissance statecraft—is amply illustrated. Yet readings in terms of contemporary political allegory, however tantalising, must remain elusive and partial: this is hardly surprising, given the caution Garnier would have had to exercise. With particular regard to *Marc Antony*, its eponymous protagonist has been seen as a stand-in for Henri III, Cleopatra as a *femme fatale* evocative of Mary, Queen of Scots.²⁶

To juxtapose *Marc Antony* with *Cleopatra Captive* is not necessarily to dampen political resonances accessible to contemporaries, but to emphasise the later text as a conscious supplement to its precursor and highlight its recasting of the dynamic involving love and power which is active in all three tragedies.²⁷ The obvious key point is signalled by the title, which presents Antony as at least the nominal subject of the tragedy. This implies replacing Jodelle's neo-Senecan device of the ghost with an extended treatment, in three sections, of Antony's progression towards suicide.

The whole of Act One consists of a bitter monologue roughly corresponding to that of the ghost in Jodelle and concluding with a declaration of women's inconstancy. This is,

25 See, again, Jondorf, pp. 105-13.

26 See the documentation and astute assessment of such readings in Robert Garnier, *Marc Antoine*, ed. Jean-Claude Ternaux, Théâtre Complet, vol. IV, Textes de la Renaissance, 167 (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2010), Introduction, pp. 7-25, 8-17. Ternaux's edition provides the text for the present translation, and his informative notes will be frequently cited.

It is notable that the tendency to apply Garnier's tragedy allegorically extends to Mary Sidney Herbert's translation, which has been taken to condemn Elizabeth I in the person of Cleopatra for ruining England by her immorality and making it ripe for conquest by Philip II of Spain (figured in Octavian). See Paulina Kewes, "A Fit Memorial for the Times to Come . . .': Admonition and Topical Application in Mary Sidney's *Antonius* and Samuel Daniel's *Cleopatra*", *Review of English Studies* 63, no. 259 (2012): 243-64, as well as Arshad, pp. 47-58.

27 A valuable comparative analysis of the tragedies of Jodelle and Garnier in technical and thematic terms is provided by Ternaux, ed., Introduction, pp. 20-23.

however, ironically undercut both by its Virgilian resonance²⁸ and by Cleopatra herself, when she first appears in Act Two, Scene Two, in company with her waiting-women (here named Eras and Charmion). She indeed takes on herself the blame for Antony's defeat, hence for the disaster befalling Egypt, as powerfully evoked by the preceding monologue of the philosopher Philostrate (a figure mentioned in passing by Plutarch, 80.2-3), but earnestly insists that she loves him loyally—to the death. Her rhetoric anticipates that assigned by Shakespeare to his Cleopatra in an analogous context—except that the latter has Anthony in front of her to convince.²⁹ Garnier varies Plutarch to make even Cleopatra's false message of her death an act of love rather than of fear.

Garnier next develops Antony's own suicidal resolution by adding a philosophically charged exchange with his faithful follower Lucilius, who vainly attempts to dissuade him, as Eras and Charmion do Cleopatra. That personage (whose name recurs as a "ghost" character listed in Act One, Scene Two, of Shakespeare's tragedy) is taken from Plutarch (though from the *Life of Julius Caesar*), but the name also happens to be that of the friend to whom Seneca had addressed philosophical discourses (notably the *Epistulae Morales*) having much to say about the vanity of human existence.³⁰

Finally, Antony's suicide is reported by Dercetaeus to Caesar, as in Plutarch, 78.1, though with the piteous lifting of the dying man into the monument additionally described. And as in Plutarch, this is the occasion for Caesar to react with pity for the death of his erstwhile friend and ally. That scene (the whole of Act Four), which contains the only appearance of Caesar, amounts to a rewriting of Jodelle's Act Two, in which Caesar's lapse into regret has no such triggering occasion. Otherwise, both scenes begin with similar hubristic vaunting on his part, present the competing claims of rigour and clemency (though Garnier has Agrippa advising the latter³¹), and conclude with Caesar's determination to preserve the queen to ornament his triumph.

28 See Garnier, I.145-48 and n. 27.

29 See Garnier, II.ii.533 ff. and n. 72.

30 On further possible implications of this allusion, see Hillman, *French Reflections*, pp. 135-36.

31 "For murders you should not distinguish your empire [*De meurtres il ne faut remarquer vostre empire*]" (IV.1500). Cf. Jodelle's Agrippa in Act II, who exhorts Octavian (speaking of Antony and Cleopatra),

Revel and bathe in their blood far and wide:
Let their children's turn red the countryside.
Scrape out their name, efface their memory—
Pursue, pursue, to total victory.

[*Esjouy toy en leur sang et te baigne,
De leurs enfans fais rougir la campagne,
Racle leur nom, efface leur memoire:
Poursuy poursuy jusqu'au bout ta victoire.*]
(II.545-48)

Garnier's Agrippa, however, adds a distinctly venal touch, urging Caesar to act before Cleopatra can destroy her valuable treasures to keep them out of his hands (IV.1694-99). This is the only trace remaining of the Seleucus episode, and the confrontation of the two "ruses" is thus effectively excised. This enables the fifth act to be devoted entirely, with sustained emotional intensity, to Cleopatra's farewell to her children by Antony (a detail not in Plutarch, and not dramatised elsewhere³²), followed by her lamentation over his body, presented as a prelude to her own death. That death is not anticipated in any detail—this is the only one of the three tragedies that wholly effaces such closure—but foreshadowed as the natural sequel to a grief which causes her to faint, then slightly recover, and finally collapse. The "masculine" element—the conquest of the conqueror, the wresting of freedom from captivity—is quite pushed out of the picture here by Cleopatra's complete absorption in the role of grief-stricken mother and wife.

For, contrary to Plutarch, not to mention the play's Caesar, Cleopatra here lays claim through love itself to a "sacred marriage [*sainct hymen*]" (V.1946), not even summoning "courage" to "prove" her "title" through her suicide, as does Shakespeare's character (*Ant.*, V.ii.287). Indeed, it is striking that Jodelle's by-word "courage", recurrent in affirming Cleopatra's appropriation of manly qualities in defiance of Caesar, is wholly absent from Garnier's portrayal.³³ Finally, even the dismal fate of Egypt is left out of the concluding picture of personal tragedy, or at least displaced to the margins; remarkably, there is no concluding Chorus to maintain that framework in place, or even to comment on the vanity of human existence. The final word belongs, resonantly, to the lamenting Cleopatra.

Such effective validation of meaning within and through the suffering of lost love arguably projects Garnier's tragedy beyond the formal conventions of humanist neo-classicism. Yet in other respects, it observes these more strictly than does *Cleopatra Captive*: its dialogue is uniformly in Alexandrines; its separate choruses (of Egyptians and Caesar's soldiers) are reserved for end-of-act commentary—until, tellingly, the final act renders them redundant; its action is relegated wholly to narrative; comic incursions are rigorously eschewed. It may even be argued that Antony's misapprehension of Cleopatra's

The assignment of contrasting positions to Agrippa by the two playwrights seems quite arbitrary.

32 Daniel's *Cleopatra* has Rodon recounting her farewell to Caesarion (IV.859 ff.), who was subsequently murdered, but the effect is very different.

33 It is associated with Cleopatra only by Dercetaeus, when he describes her as "courageously" (orig. "*courageuse*") exerting her strength to raise Antony's body (IV.1647). And when Eras asks her whether she lacks the "courage" (I.ii.423) of her ancestors to endure her pain, she replies, "My sorrows remain unconquered, and human effort / Cannot overcome them: death is the sole resort [*Mes maux sont indomtez, et nul humain effort / Ne les scauroit combattre, il n'y a que la mort*]" (425-26). Otherwise, "courage" is Antony's word for what he once possessed, what he lapsed from because of Cleopatra, and what he demonstrates again through his act of self-destruction.

feelings for him overshadows her deleterious effect on his heroic qualities and qualifies as a *hamartia* of the kind that Aristotle considered the mainspring of tragedy.

One is left with a particularly strong desire to know how the tragedy's structural constraints and its vivid sense of overflowing human suffering played out in association, or productive tension, when performed. For it has been demonstrated that *Marc Antony* was indeed staged on at least four occasions in different venues, latterly in Paris.³⁴ And it would be particularly gratifying to know more about the performers, beginning with the actor—or actress—who took the part of the Egyptian queen.

Women were well established on the French professional stage by the 1580s, and the question of who played the key female roles arises for productions of all three plays at issue here (apart from the initial representations of *Cleopatra Captive*). It seems especially pertinent in the case of Garnier, however.³⁵ The concluding lament of Garnier's queen gains notable depth when read—or heard—against the generic background of musical and poetic forms of female complaint widespread in sixteenth-century France.³⁶ Such complaints included queens in mourning for their husbands' deaths, as well as women lamenting the losses and crimes associated with civil war, and they often possessed a religious dimension. Such forms of lamentation fuse in the intensely feminine peroration of Garnier's Cleopatra—at once sentimental, spiritual and erotic—to the point of suggesting a metaphorical baring of her breasts, equivalent to that “literally” enacted in Jodelle, similarly to proclaim at once her sex and her loss.

34 See Ternaux, ed., Introduction, p. 23.

35 The issue of actresses as performers in Garnier's works (apart from school representations, which involved only students, who were male) is profitably addressed by Marie-Madeleine Moufflard, *Robert Garnier (1545-1590)*, 3 vols, vol. II: *L'Œuvre* (La Ferté-Bernard: R. Bellanger; La Roche-sur-Yon: Imprimerie Centrale de l'Ouest, 1963), pp. 262-68. See also Virginia Scott, *Women on the Stage in Early Modern France: 1540-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 82-83, who plausibly conjectures female performance as well for Jodelle's tragic heroines when the latter's works were played by the troupe of Valleran-le-Conte in Rouen, Metz, Strasbourg and Frankfurt early in the 1590s, as documented by Raymond Lebègue, “Le Répertoire d'une troupe française à la fin du XVI^e siècle”, *Revue d'histoire du théâtre* 1 (1948): 9-24, 11-12. (The play or plays in those cases are not specified, however.)

As for Montreux's *Cleopatra*, even inferential evidence is lacking. Moufflard, however, observes (p. 262) that the performance referred to in 1595 of his tragedy *Isabelle*, which had existed in some form prior to 1584, as attested by the register of La Croix du Maine, apparently featured a chorus of shepherdesses. (See Montreux, *Le Quatrième livre des bergeries de Ivlliette*, p. 634.)

36 This tradition is extensively documented, though without specific reference to theatrical performance, by Kate van Orden, “Complaintes’: Laments of Venus, Queens, and City Women in Late Sixteenth-Century France”, *Renaissance Quarterly* 54.3 (2001): 801-45.

Cleopatra: Tragedy (Cleopatre tragédie), by Nicolas de Montreux

In the light of the two preceding works, Montreux's appears as a response to both, and a synthetic one. Within his own surviving œuvre, it displays a strong affinity with tragedies of two other noble and virtuous women, outwardly subjected, who effectively defeat their oppressors through courageous suicides: the earlier Isabelle (a paragon of chastity derived from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*) and, in 1601, the Carthaginian Sophonisbe, like Cleopatra a victim of Roman imperialism.³⁷ It is impossible not to relate this thematic predilection of Montreux to his function throughout the 1590s as the resident man-of-letters (and propagandist) of Philippe-Emmanuel de Lorraine, Duke of Mercœur, who, governing Brittany in the name of the *Sainte Ligue*, established a sumptuous court in Nantes with his beautiful and formidable duchess, Marie de Luxembourg. There the couple militantly resisted the accession and hegemony of Henri IV.³⁸ Montreux, who was also a priest, is known to have produced some dramatic works in the ducal palace in their honour, and it seems probable that these included his *Cleopatra*, though there is no evidence to confirm this. There is some, however, that the work was performed in Paris in 1594. That date is also the one assigned to two undated stand-alone editions listed in the Universal Short Title Catalogue.³⁹ Intriguingly, however, the notice of the edition available through Gallica (Bibliothèque Nationale de France) dates

37 Sophonisbe, like Cleopatra, had already featured as the heroine of a French tragedy (by Montchrestien in 1596) and would be taken up again by Mairet and Pierre Corneille.

38 A concise account may be found in Arlette Jouanna *et al.*, eds., *Histoire et dictionnaire des Guerres de religion* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1998), *s.v.* "Mercœur". See also Hillman, *French Reflections*, pp. 97-100.

39 For the USTC entries, see <<https://www.ustc.ac.uk/explore?q=Montreux%20Cl%C3%A9opatre&fq=&fqf=&fql=&fqs=&fqyf=&fqyt=&fqsn=>> (accessed 9 April 2024).

On the dating (and putative Parisian performance) of Montreux's tragedy (as well as *Isabelle*), see Rose-Marie Daele, *Nicolas de Montreux [sic], Ollénix Du Mont-Sacré, Arbitre of European Literary Vogues of the Late Renaissance* (New York: Moretus Press, 1946), pp. 178-79, citing 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. See also Hillman, *French Reflections*, pp. 142-43, n. 16. Daele's work remains the most thorough and authoritative literary biography of the author—a necessary supplement to the imperfect but lively sketch offered by J. Mathorez, *Le poète Olénix du Mont-Sacré, Bibliothécaire du duc de Mercœur (1561-1610)* (Paris: H. Leclerc, 1912).

La Croix du Maine's notice on Montreux is a precious source of information and would seem at least to establish that *Cleopatre*, unlike *Isabelle*, postdates 1584. (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 écrit en françois depuis cinq cents ans et plus jusques à ce jour d'huy, etc.* [Paris: A. L'Angelier, 1584], pp. 350-51.)

it merely posterior to 1592 but adds that the text was first published in that year.⁴⁰ What points to a relatively early stand-alone publication is that all the copies I have been able to see, whether or not combined with other texts, and whatever the dates of the latter, have evidently been reprinted from the same original: they are typographically identical, including pagination, without specification of date or publisher on the separate title page, and without mention in the *privilèges* (licences) accompanying composite volumes.

It is striking in any case that when, in the first of multiple post-1594 reissues, the work was printed in 1595 as an adjunct to a pastoral romance, the volume carried the title of *Œuvre de la chasteté*.⁴¹ While *Isabelle* attests that chastity was a long-standing preoccupation (not to say obsession) of Montreux, associating the Egyptian queen with this virtue seems to confirm that he was now indirectly complimenting his patroness—“*la belle Nantaise*”, famous for combining beauty with virtue, piety and strong will. Certainly, he was effectively signalling his tragedy’s thorough redemption of Cleopatra from the moral opprobrium attached to her in previous versions, not least by the character of Antony himself. Remarkably, this is managed despite the stark acknowledgement in the Argument that Antony had deserted “his lawful wife [*sa legitime femme*]” for her.⁴² From the very outset of the play, the bereaved Cleopatra takes for granted the status of their couple as husband and wife.⁴³ And Caesar’s initial dismissal of her as “an infamous whore [*vne infame putain*] . . . of sheer falseness made, / For whom the loss of honour was her stock-in-trade [*vne femme sans foy, / Qui de perdre l’honneur fist sa commune loy*]” (II.706-10) undergoes a nearly miraculous reversal in the face of what is evoked as her “martyrdom [*martyre*]” (IV.[i.]1954), to whose compelling force his concluding commentary bears astonishing witness.

The spiritual force of martyrdom had already been a key element in the tragedy of *Isabelle*, where the context was Christian; to develop that power to show the pagan and tyrannical Caesar converted by Cleopatra’s example to a virtual religion of love—for that is the keynote of the final lines—is a radical move. Politically speaking, it is tempting to discern a hint of hope in this for the true conversion of Henri IV, the “Caesar” currently

40 BnF NUMM-858295; accessed 9 April 2024. This text, whose provenance is a copy bound with a number of variously printed and dated tragedies grouped under the heading of *Le Théâtre des tragédies françoises. Nouvellement mis en lumiere* (Rouen: Raphaël Du Petit Val, 1606), BnF shelfmark RES-YF-3763, serves as the basis of the current edition and translation.

41 *Œuvre de la Chasteté, qui se remarque par les diverses fortunes, adventures, et fidelles amours de Criton & Lydie. Livre premier. Ensemble la tragedie de Cleopatre. Le tout de l’invention d’Ollenix du Mont-Sacré* (Paris: Guillaume Des Rues, 1595); BnF notice RES-Y2-162-163. This edition was also published by Abraham Saugrain in the same year (BnF notice Arsenal 8-BL-20915).

42 Translation, p. 4; edition, p. 5.

43 See esp. Montreux, I.4, 333, 357; in the latter instance, she straightforwardly lays claim to the “honour of being Antony’s wife [*l’honneur / D’estre espouse d’Antoine*]”.

looming on the local horizon (for the *Sainte Ligue* broadly rejected as a cynical gesture his profession of Catholicism in 1593).⁴⁴

Montreux's fifth act in particular thus presents elements new to the dramatic representation of Antony and Cleopatra in French. At the same time, there are anticipations of both Daniel and Shakespeare. Overall, the treatment of Montreux amounts to a reconstitution of Jodelle's location of heroic tragedy in Cleopatra—to the point where Antony's appears only through narrative and memory. Such is the case, too, in the tragedy of Daniel, conceived, at Mary Sidney Herbert's request, to complement her *Antonius*, as Montreux was evidently providing a supplement to Garnier's original, probably with his own noble patroness in mind. Not only do both Montreux and Daniel take up the story where Garnier left off, but they do so in a way that integrates into the queen's "masculine" victory over Caesar the transcendental and redemptive force of her "feminine" love, which was Garnier's resonant concluding note. This fundamental correspondence is corroborated by some specific parallels—most substantially, the detailed descriptions of Cleopatra's death by Montreux's Epaphroditus and Daniel's anonymous Nuntius.⁴⁵ It can be affirmed with some confidence, therefore, that Montreux's work was accessible, and of interest, to the English playwright in some form by 1594.

Montreux is chiefly known today, when he is noticed at all, as a *passeur* into French culture of a wide range of Italian literary modes.⁴⁶ It is not impossible that his decision to eschew (like Garnier) a final Chorus and conclude his tragedy with a virtual epilogue on the part of Caesar was inspired by the *Cleopatra* of Cesare de' Cesari (1552). There a moved Caesar similarly vows a joint tomb and funeral rites for the lovers, to whose perfect union he pays homage.⁴⁷ Shakespeare, of course, provides a similar ending, with Caesar further admitting that the "pity" deserved by this incomparably "famous" couple encroaches on his own "glory" (*Ant.*, V.ii.356-61). This comes close to the conclusion of Dio Cassius that Caesar "felt both admiration and pity for her, and was excessively grieved on his own account, as if he had been deprived of all the glory of his victory" (14.6).

In fact, Montreux in his fifth act is most closely following—but extensively elaborating—Dio Cassius, as is clear from his introduction of Epaphroditus as

44 On contemporary discourse portraying Henri as a Caesar who would conquer Brittany, see Hillman, *French Reflections*, pp. 97-98.

45 There is also one especially close resemblance in the corresponding scenes of Cleopatra's confrontation with Caesar. See Montreux, IV.[ii.]2149-50 and n. 134.

46 See Richard Hillman, *The Shakespearean Comic and Tragicomic: French Inflections* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), pp. 14 and 69, n. 18, and Nicolas de Montreux, *Diane (1594)*, trans. Richard Hillman, with an edition of the French text, *Scène Européenne—Traductions In-trouvables* (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2019), Introduction, *passim*.

47 See Bullough, ed., vol. V, Introduction to *Antony and Cleopatra*, p. 227.

Caesar's interlocutor. According to Dio Cassius (13.4), Epaphroditus was one of those entrusted with the task of watching over Cleopatra and had been successfully duped into supposing that she wished to live. She then confided to him a sealed message for Caesar, which requested that she should be buried with Antony. Montreux opens the act with Epaphroditus informing Caesar, step by step, of all that occurred from the point where Cleopatra performed Antony's burial rites. The soldier's awe and admiration for her "noble spirit!—too splendid for longer tenure / In a woman's body, to which it did such honour [*genereux esprit ! trop beau pour demeurer / Dans vn corps feminin qui s'en faict reuerer*]" (V.2207-8)—is mingled at first with some trepidation, as is understandable, given his dereliction of duty, which he seeks to excuse in the face of Caesar's anger. But his emotional narrative gathers momentum, spurred by interjections of uneasy impatience from Caesar, to the point of boldly delivering her message—the request to be buried together with "her Antony [*son Antoine*]" (2570)—as if teaching Caesar his moral duty. As in Shakespeare ("She shall be buried by her Anthony" [*Ant.*, V.ii.356]), the possessive pronoun stands out as registering the fact that, in their union, the lovers have slipped out of the grasp of Caesar's glory.

What follows is an extraordinary effusion of over a hundred lines, in which Caesar, grieving and daunted, accepts that obligation and endorses the heroic courage she has displayed in following "her Antony [*son Antoine*]" (2604)—the "virtue [*vertu*]" that has overcome his erstwhile "rigour [*rigueur*]" (2639-40), which he had urged in Act Four against Dolabella's mildness. Further, he takes the blame upon himself, faulting his cruelty in not rendering her kingdom to her and her children. In humbly apostrophising her—"you shall be laid to rest with your Antony [*tu seras enclose avecque ton Antoine*]" (2670)—he goes a rhetorical and imaginative step beyond Shakespeare's counterpart. Most strikingly, he concludes with a vow, presented as a pathetic *pis aller*, to love her children as an extension of his own new-found love for her, indeed in tribute to her love itself: "Your children will I honour—out of love for you / And your own sheer love, as myself loving them too [*Honorant tes enfans, & pour l'amour de toy / Et de ta viue amour, les aymant comme moy*]" (V.2675-76).

It would be far-fetched, given the emotional momentum it rhetorically acquires, to dismiss this conclusion as radically undercut by either an audience's sense of *Realpolitik* generally or its specific knowledge of the grim fate of Caesarion (who was not the couple's child, after all). Rather, Caesar may be seen as, in effect, induced by her tragedy to recreate it as his own—and perhaps in a way that entails characterisation of a precocious kind for Montreux's period. For the playwright would thereby be projecting as a proto-psychological process the mechanisms of the love-power dynamic he inherited from his predecessors. Such translation of source material in the broadest sense is akin to that widely allowed to Shakespeare.

The process is arguably set in motion from the opening of Montreux's text. There the literal dream in which Antony's ghost appears to Jodelle's Cleopatra is virtually internalised in the form of living memorial:

Though Antony is dead, his face, which I love so,
 Alive within my soul creates a constant glow:
 I see him every day; I hear him call to me
 From down below to keep him faithful company,
 As I did here as long as the happy course lasted
 Of our loves full of life, which the great gods
 blasted.

*[Bien qu'Antoine soit mort, son front que i'ayme tant
 Dans mon ame enflammé vit encore pourtant,
 Je le voy tous les iours, ie l'entens qu'il m'appelle
 Pour luy servir la bas de compagne fidelle,
 Comme ie fis icy, lors que duroit le cours
 Ennuyé des grands Dieux de nos viues amours.]*
 (I.103-8)

This brings us close to the dream of Antony related to Dolabella by Shakespeare's queen, complete with embellishment of their mutual past through recollection.

A further point may connect the tragic dramaturgy of Montreux and Shakespeare with particular regard to Caesar's position at the conclusion, and contemporary French poetics may help to make it. The poet Jean Vauquelin de la Fresnaye, in his verse-manual published in 1605 (but according to its editor composed some years previous), analyses the effect produced by tragic events and lays great stress on the power of pity to soften extreme rigour: "*le cœur attendrissant / D'un Tigre furieux, d'un Lion rugissant* [softening the heart of a furious tiger, of a roaring lion]."⁴⁸ The specific link with Montreux comes by way of his example, which is drawn from the same episode of the *Orlando Furioso* which Montreux had made into tragedy—namely, the murder by the barbarian Rodomonte of the chaste Isabella, who tricks him into murdering her to preserve her chastity and prove her faithful love for the noble warrior Zerbino, recently killed. Vauquelin's point is that the savage and guilty murderer is instantly stricken with self-blame in a pitiful way and so drawn into the tragic vortex he has set in motion, which thus expands and indeed takes

48 Jean Vauquelin de La Fresnaye, *L'art poétique de Jean Vauquelin de La Fresnaye: Où l'on peut remarquer la perfection et le défaut des anciennes et des modernes poésies. Texte conforme à l'édition de 1605*, ed. Georges Pellissier (Paris: Garnier, 1885), Bk. 3, ll. 157-60.

on universal proportions. In effect, the pity identified by Aristotle as essential to tragic response is assigned its origin in the mechanism of anagnorisis.

Montreux's tragedy of Isabelle develops this point considerably beyond Ariosto's original, much as his presentation of Caesar figures Cleopatra's self-sacrifice for honour and love of Antony as precipitating, not merely a realisation of defeat in the game of power, but remorse far exceeding what is found in the sources or dramatic precursors. The terms deployed by Montreux in developing the mechanisms of love and power in the case of his Isabelle, Zeobin and Rodomont come especially close to those applied in his subsequent tragedy of Cleopatra. It might reasonably be conjectured, indeed, that his reading of Ariosto inflected his apprehension and exploitation of the tragic potential of the Roman historical sources—or even that previous narrative and dramatic presentations of the Egyptian queen had inflected his conception of Ariosto's noble heroine.

There is a particular parallel between Montreux's Rodomont and Othello,⁴⁹ as I have proposed elsewhere, but the mechanism may be extended, *mutatis mutandis*, to other Shakespearean characters caught up in the tragic results of their actions, perhaps especially when they survive beyond the final act. The pattern is arguably adumbrated in *Romeo and Juliet* (“All are punish'd” [V.iii.295]) and in *Richard II*, when the newly crowned Henry IV laments, “my soul is full of woe / That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow” (*R2*, V.vi.45-46).⁵⁰ Thus, against the background of Montreux's victorious but lamenting Caesar, Shakespeare's perhaps appears as more deeply stricken by the lovers' “story” than a challenge to his hegemonic “glory” in itself would warrant (*Ant.*, V.ii.359-60).

Anthony and Cleopatra prepares for such a response, moreover, most recently by Caesar's emotional reaction to Anthony's death.⁵¹ This entails both a *memento mori* and an invitation to introspection: “When such a spacious mirror's set before him, / He needs must see himself” (V.i.34-35). That the emotional impact extends to a sense of guilt is conveyed by the impulse to rationalise and demonstrate:

Go with me to my tent, where you shall see
How hardly I was drawn into this war,
How calm and gentle I proceeded still
In all my writings. Go with me, and see
What I can show in this. (74-77)

49 “Reverberations of Rodomonte in and around *Othello*”, *Moralising the Italian Marvellous*, ed. Beatrice Fuga and Alessandra Petrina, Anglo-Italian Renaissance Series (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

50 With the exception of *Ant.*, Shakespearean references are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, gen. eds G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

51 See Jodelle, II.473-80 and n. 49, for the first French dramatisation of this element drawn from Plutarch.

There is resonance, too, with the earlier deliberation of Enobarbus, for whom the promise of glory—that is, the notion that absolute loyalty “Does conquer him that did his master conquer, / And earns a place i’th’story” (*Ant.*, III.xiii.45-46)—yields to fatal melancholy, his heart *pitifully* broken “Against the flint and hardness of my fault” (IV.10.16), after the desertion forced on him by his better soldierly judgement. As Anthony himself realises (“O, my fortunes have / Corrupted honest men!” [IV.v.16-17]), Enobarbus is swallowed by the looming tragedy to which he has contributed despite himself. All in all, Caesar’s summary, “High events as these / Strike those that make them” (V.ii.358-59), enfolding “glory” into “pity” (360), carries in concise form an intensely personal weight which Montreux’s effusive precursor intertextually make it easier to feel, if not precisely to measure—as is after all, perhaps, the true measure of the tragic.

Note on the Translations

I have attempted to convey a sense of the formal structures of the originals by reproducing them as faithfully as possible. This means rendering the dominant Alexandrines into hexameter couplets, the hendecasyllabic couplets of much of Jodelle's text into iambic pentameter, and the highly variable stanzaic forms of the different Choruses as exactly as I could manage. The names of characters have generally been normalised to their historical Roman equivalents. Punctuation has been freely modernised and adapted, sometimes necessarily on the basis of conjecture, in the interest of readability. (This has often proved a special challenge in the work of Montreux, given the state of the copy-text.) The occasional additions to the editions of reference are indicated by square brackets, including scene divisions where new character groupings seem to justify them and proposed stage directions where the action is not necessarily self-evident. (There are no stage directions in any of the original texts.) Passages originally signalled by *guillemets* as aphoristic or sententious (a common practice in the period) are placed in italics, although in the case of Montreux it is not always easy to be sure from the text as printed where such passages should begin or end.



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Cleopatra Captive: Tragedy
by Estienne Jodelle, Parisian

Translated, with Introduction and Notes,
by Richard Hillman

Référence électronique

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Translation

Cleopatra Captive

Tragedy by Estienne Jodelle, Parisian

Richard Hillman

CESR - Université de Tours

CLEOPATRA CAPTIVE: TRAGEDY

by

Estienne Jodelle, Parisian

Characters

GHOST OF ANTONY
CLEOPATRA
ERAS
CHARMIUM
OCTAVIAN CAESAR
AGRIPPA
PROCULEIUS
CHORUS OF ALEXANDRIAN WOMEN
SELEUCUS

Prologue

1 Since the earth (O King who strike fear in kings),
 2 Which willingly yields to you in all things,
 3 Quakes at the grandeur of his sacred name,
 4 Inscribed on its twin pillars to his fame;¹
 5 Since the sea, electing you as its Neptune,
 6 Cries out in its waves your felicitous fortune,
 7 And heaven, laughing at your victory,
 8 Sees itself mirrored in your realised glory –
 9 Could the Muses be to you too severe
 10 Their father and their master to revere?
 11 Could your own subjects keep from us your praises,
 12 Which a chorus of foreign peoples raises?
 13 None could deny you and refuse to sing—
 14 Ungratefully—in homage to his King.
 15 Those fine spirits your father caused to thrive,²
 16 And the nine Sisters in France to revive—
 17 How not for son and father voice employ
 18 When both such things were able to enjoy?
 19 When Time for us occasion has created
 20 For the worthiness to be celebrated
 21 Of such a great Prince, and a god whose place
 22 Appears already in his supernal space?
 23 And if this Time, which brings all things to light,
 24 Had offered us your glory at its height
 25 For us to sing before it was too late
 26 And given you now to appreciate,
 27 Nothing from our mouth would you have heard
 28 But sheer triumph, great HENRI our sole word.
 29 Yet given that your glory far-extending
 30 Exceeds the reach of a moment soon ending—
 31 A moment? No, a hundred thousand years,

1 As noted by Hall, ed., n. to l. 4, the allusion is to Henri II's recent victory at Metz over Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor (hence "his sacred name [son saint nom]"), whose armorial bearings featured the "pillars of Hercules" (at the straits of Gibraltar).

2 I.e., François I as patron of the arts in France.

32 Yet no limit to your praises appears!—
 33 We bring you (oh, what a paltry homage!)
 34 This trifling work confected in your language,
 35 And yet such that your language of expression
 36 Has never purloined this supreme possession
 37 From old authors. It is a tragedy,
 38 Which, with plaintive voice and audacity,
 39 With Roman Marc Antony swells the scene,
 40 As well as Cleopatra, Egypt's queen,
 41 Who, after her dear lover Antony,
 42 Having been vanquished by the enemy,
 43 Had killed himself, then, knowing herself captive,
 44 And that it was intended she should live,
 45 Carried in triumph with two maids-in-waiting,
 46 Death preferred. Here the ardour unabating
 47 Of the lovers—of Octavian, too,
 48 What boldness,³ pride and daily care accrue
 49 To the trophy⁴ obtained—you will assay,
 50 And more than his you'll find your own will weigh,
 51 Since it must be that even his successors⁵
 52 Yield for you to those supreme intercessors
 53 Who already the world to your crown vow
 54 And you as all the gods' factor allow.
 55 Look, then, Sire, with a visage humane
 56 On this work of dwellers in your domain
 57 Who both in mind and body labour for you,
 58 And come here at present to kneel before you,
 59 Prepared for you in better style to sing,
 60 And reverently before your eyes to bring,
 61 What has been sung, son of divinity,
 62 By the heavens, the whole earth and the sea.

3 “[B]oldness”: orig. “audace”—a term often carrying connotations of presumption and, together with “pride” (“orgueil”) and “care” (“souci”), preparing for the problematic representation of Octavian as conqueror without seriously impeding the encomium of Henri II.

4 “[T]rophy”: orig. “trophee”—again a slippery term, since both metonymic of Octavian’s (hence Henri’s) triumphant victory and evocative of Cleopatra as a resistant trophy.

5 The “successors” of Augustus, the first Roman emperor, are the monarchs of the Holy Roman Empire (Hall, ed., n. to 51, citing Balmas).

Act I

[Scene i]

Ghost of Antony

63 Into the vale of darkness, where eternal nights
 64 Bring pains to guilty spirits in their endless plights,
 65 Yielding to my destiny, recently I flew,
 66 At once become companion of that ghostly crew—
 67 I, Marc Antony, I say, great Rome's greatest fear,
 68 But most wretched in the sad end of my career.
 69 For an ardent love, the tormentor of my marrow,
 70 Never ceasing me with merciless flames to harrow,
 71 Had been assigned the task, by some fatal decree
 72 Of the gods, in their spiteful jealousy of me,
 73 To see my poor life with pain and misery bounded,
 74 When with happiness, joy and wealth it had abounded.
 75 Oh, what frailty, when my eye in wantonness
 76 Encountered those of Cleopatra's loveliness!
 77 From that instant I felt the wound she had dealt me
 78 Pass through my traitor's eye to my soul still carefree,
 79 But that I had that day received poison extreme
 80 Within my deep core of self, I did not then dream.
 81 But alas, to my loss—alas, at my expense,
 82 That hidden wound was finally in evidence,
 83 Rendering me hateful, trampling my reputation
 84 For loving Cleopatra without moderation;
 85 And like a madman then, as if a hundred furies,
 86 Practising within me all their savageries,
 87 Befuddling my brain and contorting my entrails,
 88 Pursued me with biting pincers in their assails
 89 On me condemned, and so causing to be resumed
 90 My daily torments, as with the liver⁶ consumed

6 “[L]iver”: orig. “poitrine”, whose literal translation as “breast” or “torso” would seem strange in the context. As it happens, returning to the anatomical specificity of the myth restores the notion of ancient medicine that situated sexual passion in the liver. The passage is especially Latinate in its syntax, and the translation aims to render it clearer and more natural.

91 And endlessly renewed of old Prometheus,
 92 As claws clutched it tight⁷ in the frigid Caucasus.
 93 For although she was a queen, and of royal kind,
 94 Like anyone by that fatal ardour made blind,
 95 I give her gifts that wide astonishment created,
 96 And by which my Rome from me was alienated—
 97 With it proud Caesar, who sought the ruin of one
 98 Who could not hope to please as Caesar's companion,
 99 Outraged by a crime unworthy of Antony;
 100 Who wove the web from which my queen could not break
 free,
 101 And who still, in the realm that endless darkness taints,
 102 Renews against me a thousand dire complaints,
 103 Arousing the snakes that replace the Sisters' hair,⁸
 104 Bringing to the most abject state the pains I bear.
 105 For, enveloped in passion's flames, in her spell's power,
 106 My wife Octavienne, of womanhood the flower,
 107 And my tender children I brusquely dispossessed,
 108 Nurturing my death-dealing serpent in my breast,
 109 Who, coiling round me, deceiving my ravished soul,
 110 Poured poison in my bosom which life from me stole,⁹
 111 By her venom's infusion so transforming me
 112 As one by myriad Medusas' sight would be.
 113 Now, so that my most disgraceful crime should be
 punished,
 114 Of spurning my wife and having my children banished,
 115 The gods upon my head directed their dread vengeance
 116 And horrors with their hands¹⁰ began at me to lance,
 117 Whose sacred justice, however it comes belated
 118 (For it is slow-footed¹¹), is never mitigated,

7 "As claws clutched it tight": orig. "[poitrine] empiétée"—the word, used for a falcon gripping its prey (see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, online at <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlf.htm>> [accessed 4 December 2023], s.v. "empiéter"), links the eagle of the myth with the traditional claws of the Furies.

8 According to the traditional iconography of the Furies.

9 On Shakespeare's largely contrary development of Jodelle's serpentine imagery, most strikingly when Cleopatra figures the asp as the "baby at my breast / That sucks the nurse asleep" (*Ant.*, V.ii.308-9), see Hillman, *French Reflections*, pp. 113-15.

10 "[H]ands": orig. "bras", but "arms" in English would be ambiguous.

11 "For it is slow-footed": orig. "Ayant des pieds de laine" (lit. "having feet of wool"). The expression

119 But hour by hour watches each play his part,
 120 Then with a hand of iron casts its flaming dart.
 121 For soon afterwards Caesar, my destruction swearing,
 122 My woeful exile from this world began preparing.
 123 There was I, trusting in my queen, the ruin of me;
 124 There was I, combatting upon the open sea,
 125 When in a fight on solid ground I was far stronger;
 126 There was I, fleeing, mindful of the war no longer,
 127 To follow Cleopatra,¹² making fortune's arms
 128 Yield to the misfortunes of amorous alarms;
 129 There was I in the town, of drink and sex partaking,¹³
 130 Sating myself with pleasures, while Caesar was making
 131 His way towards us, having now the same land-force
 132 That had been mine,¹⁴ and kept with hungry mouth his
 course,
 133 Like the vagabond lion questing in his chase,
 134 Seeking to devour me, and then put in place
 135 His camp before the town, where shortly he refused
 136 To fight singly with me, so that, wretched, I used
 137 A poor wretch's remedy, and, thrusting my sword
 138 Through my bowels with bloody hand, myself I gored,
 139 And by means of that ghastly hurt sweet balm applied.
 140 But before I died, before quite completely I'd¹⁵
 141 Sobbed out my spirit—oh, alas!—what savage man
 142 Would not have wept to see honour's theme in a Roman,
 143 A ruler of the world, an Emperor¹⁶ Antony,

is attested in the sense of “being slow to act” (“être lent à agir”) in Du Bellay (1550), according to *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v. “laine”. See also Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611), Anglistica and Americana, 77 (fac. rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Holms, 1970), s.v. “laineux”, who cites “Marcher avec les pieds laineux” as meaning “To goe softly, tread gingerly”. Hall, ed., n. to l. 118, cites the Latin equivalent in the *Adages* of Erasmus, applied, as here, to divine justice.

- 12** Antony recalls his shameful behaviour at the battle of Actium, as recorded by Plutarch, 66.3-5, and recounted by Garnier's Caesar (IV.1464 ff.). Cf. Shakespeare, *Ant.*, III.xi.
13 “[O]f drink and sex partaking”: orig. “j'yvrongne et putace” (lit. “I get drunk and play the lecher”).
14 Following the desertion of Antony's soldiers to Octavian (Hall, ed., n. to l. 131).
15 Ll. 140-41: the translation imitates the forceful enjambment of the original: “avant que de tout j'aye / Sangloté mes esprits”.
16 “Emperor”: orig. “Empereur”. On the evolution of “*imperator*” from a “generic title for Roman commanders” into a “special title of honour” (a process in which Octavian played his part), see *The*

144 Wounded to death, whom his queen in her misery,
 145 Assisted by two women, hauled up from below
 146 And made enter her royal chamber by the window?
 147 Caesar was not able Cleopatra to see
 148 Cutting her hair, tearing, beating herself for me,
 149 And myself consoling her with words as I might,
 150 My poor soul breathing out, which suddenly took flight
 151 To endure greater torment in dark hell below
 152 Than he who thirsts with water all around could know,
 153 Or he who the wheel's eternal whirling withstands,
 154 Or those pallid sisters whose merciless right hands
 155 Cut their husbands' throats, or he who ever rolls higher
 156 His stone without bringing it where he would aspire.¹⁷
 157 But in my torment I can't stay alone, forlorn:
 158 Before this sun, which has just even now been born,
 159 Completes his day and dives into his aunt's broad
 stream,¹⁸
 160 Cleopatra will die. I am now in a dream
 161 To her presented, commanding that she should do
 162 Fit honour to my tomb, and then herself undo,
 163 And not submit to be in Rome in triumph led—
 164 Having her with a desire for death comforted,
 165 Calling to her to be with me, and her enjoined
 166 To come and endure with our pale troupe to be joined,
 167 Now to keep me company in my sad distress,
 168 As long had been her wont in wanton joyousness.¹⁹

Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), *s.v.* “imperator” (henceforth cited as *OCD*). By Jodelle, Garnier and Montreux the term is used for both Antony and Octavius, with special significance sometimes attaching to its use for the latter after Antony’s death (see below, III.1092). It seems significant that in Shakespeare, *Ant.*, “Emperor” is used exclusively for Anthony until his death, then pointedly for Octavius at his meeting with Cleopatra, when Dolabella announces, “It is the Emperor, madam” (V.ii.113). By contrast, the title does not figure at all in Daniel.

- 17** Conventional evocations of the underworld punishments, respectively, of Tantalus, Ixion, the Danaïdes and Sisyphus.
- 18** “[H]is aunt’s broad stream”—i.e., the encircling Ocean, according to the conventional imagery of sunrise and sunset. The aunt of Phoebus Apollo is the sea-nymph Amphitrite, married to his uncle Poseidon/Neptune, who is cited as such in IV.1279-80 (Hall, ed., n. to l. 159).
- 19** “[W]anton joyousness”: orig. “liesse”, whose neutral sense of fulsome rejoicing carries connotations in this context of self-reproach and sexual licence.

[Scene ii]

Cleopatra, Eras, Charmium

CLEOPATRA

169 What good does it do you, alas, to speak in vain?

ERAS

170 And you, alas, to be to yourself inhumane?

CLEOPATRA

171 But why waste idle efforts, for nothing expended?

CHARMIUM

172 But why such waste of woeful tears, pointlessly shed?

CLEOPATRA

173 What is there that might happen, more horrid to see?

ERAS

174 Who might ever view a woman in such misery?

CLEOPATRA

175 Permit my sobs even the fierce gods to affect.

CHARMIUM

176 Permit the two of us your frailty to correct.

CLEOPATRA

177 Death alone must put an end to my lamentation.

ERAS

178 Death must not be endured before life's termination.

CLEOPATRA

179 Antony calls to me; Antony I must follow.

CHARMIUM

180 Antony does not wish you²⁰ a life merely hollow.

CLEOPATRA

181 O strange vision! O pitiful dream that so haunts!

ERAS

182 O pitiful Queen, O what torment you so daunts?

CLEOPATRA

183 O gods, into what affliction have you tempted me?

CHARMIUM

184 O gods, will your weeping never exhausted be?

CLEOPATRA

185 But what good—O gods!—if today I turn aside?

ERAS

186 Just cease lamenting—let your wishes be your guide.

CLEOPATRA

187 Oh, might I, the woman of most woeful mischance
 188 Able to look upon the heavens' radiance—
 189 Might I restrain myself from lamenting my trouble
 190 When infinite regrets their wounding impacts double?
 191 When my mind dwells on my guilt as the murderess,
 192 By falsely luring him, of one whose proud duress
 193 Caused the earth to give way? Oh, gods, could I extract
 194 From my heart the hurt I did with my wrongful act,
 195 When he gave me Syria, Cyprus and Phoenicia,
 196 Perfumed Judaea, Arabia and Cilicia,

20 The present tense is also used in the original (“ne veut pas”), as if Charmium accepts the reality of Antony’s summons, or at least its vividness in Cleopatra’s mind.

197 Only to incur thereby his own people's hate?²¹
 198 Could I forget my glory and my vain pomp of state,
 199 Which induced him to the evil that dogs our heels
 200 And rewards the wretched with what wretchedness feels,
 201 Just as the fish in the sea are foolishly baited?²²
 202 Ah, pride and laughter, the pearl in drink dissipated,²³
 203 The life of luxury that feminised his forces,
 204 Of our misfortunes were the unsuspected sources!
 205 And how could I forget that blow bound to convulse
 206 That he took, for me, with the Parthians' repulse,
 207 Whom he would have overcome and to his Rome rendered,
 208 If to dreamy loving he had not quite surrendered,
 209 And had not wished sooner from his war to get free
 210 And return to pass the winter in my own country?²⁴
 211 Might I likewise forget that for my greater glory
 212 He drew in triumph, as wages of victory,
 213 In Alexandria Artavade of great might,
 214 King of Armenia, when such a boastful sight
 215 Was the sole privilege of his arrogant town,
 216 Which thus by way of hatred bolstered its renown?²⁵
 217 Could I forget how in many an enterprise
 218 The love with which he looked on me would close his eyes,
 219 And indeed that such love was manifest again
 220 When one saw him abandon his Octavienne?
 221 When for my sake he chose the combat to command
 222 Fatally at sea, though he was stronger by land?

21 Ll. 195-97: these lines closely follow Plutarch, 36.2, recounting Antony's renewal of his relation with Cleopatra and reception of her in Syria, together with his gifts.

22 The first of several indirect evocations of one of the couple's favourite pastimes, as reported by Plutarch, 29-30, with implicit allusion to Cleopatra's use of her attractions as bait to "catch" Antony. The latter point, as part of the "effeminising" of Anthony, is made virtually explicit in Shakespeare, *Ant.*, II.v.10-23.

23 The famous legend of Cleopatra's drinking the pearl dissolved in vinegar to impress Antony is based mainly on Pliny the Elder; for a survey of sources (anecdotally put to the test of popular science), see Berthold L. Ullman, "Cleopatra's Pearls", *The Classical Journal*, 52.5 (1957): 193-201.

24 On the prolonged debacle of Antony's war against the Parthians, cf. Plutarch, 55-56.

25 L. 216: orig. "Qui se rendit alors d'avantage haineuse". The suggestion of Cleopatra's disgust at the Roman practice of triumph anticipates her refusal to become its victim. This treatment of the prince Artavasdes (elsewhere Artabaze or Artavaze), with the resentment of the Romans at the misappropriation of their national custom of triumph, is recorded by Plutarch, 50.4.

223 When he followed my ship as the wind gave it speed,
 224 Deserting his troops at their moment of most need?
 225 When he meekly took the bait with which I dissembled,
 226 While his Caesar took care and all his strength
 assembled?²⁶
 227 When, pretending to be prepared myself to slay,
 228 These pitiful words I made him suddenly say:
 229 “O Heaven, with Cleopatra dead, must it be
 230 That Antony still should live? Come, page,²⁷ comfort me
 231 In sorrow with my death.” And then, seeing his page
 232 Instead his own self kill, “You serve me as a gauge,
 233 O eunuch,” he uttered, “of how I have to die!”
 234 And at once he stabbed himself, pouring forth a cry.
 235 Oh, Ladies, must I not this misery express?
 236 Oh, oh, come hold me up!²⁸ I, I . . .

CHARMIUM

 But what distress
 237 Could be greater than this?

ERAS

 Alleviate your pain,
 238 Try to elevate your spirits.

CLEOPATRA

 Alas!

26 In repeating “took” in ll. 225 and 226, the translation imitates the original’s equally ironic repetitions with different senses: “il prenoit doucement mes amorces”; “Cesar prenoit toutes ses forces”.

27 Eros in Plutarch, as in Shakespeare, by neither identified as a eunuch.

28 “[H]old me up”: orig. “retenez moy”—seemingly the first instance in French tragedy of the visual paradigm of the bereaved heroine fainting, or about to faint, and succored by her female attendants. Cf. Garnier, V.1869 ff.; also Simon Belyard, *The Guisian (Le Guysien)*, ed. and trans. Richard Hillman, publication online, Centre d’Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, Scène Européenne—Traductions Introuvables (<<https://sceneeuropeenne.univ-tours.fr/traductions/guisian>>; accessed 13 April 2022), Tours, 2019, V.1694-95, and Antoine de Montchrestien, *Hector: Tragedy, Two Tragedies by Antoine de Montchrestien*, ed. and trans. Richard Hillman, Scène Européenne—Traductions Introuvables (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2022), V. 2079-85. More immediately to the point, cf. Cleoptra’s reponse to Anthony’s death in Shakespeare, *Ant.*, IV.xvi.70-73.

CHARMIUM

Restrain

239 This poisonous grief.

CLEOPATRA

240 High heaven, what I endure!
Just this last night to have seen yet again his figure!
241 Ah!

ERAS

Ah, nothing but death on grieving shuts the door.

CLEOPATRA

242 Ah, ah, Antony was . . .

CHARMIUM

How was he?

CLEOPATRA

As before . . .

ERAS

243 Before? What do you mean?

CLEOPATRA

As when, with his wound, he . . .

CHARMIUM

244 But raise yourself somewhat, so we may try to free
245 Your throttled voice.

ERAS

246 O Pleasure, you lead in your train
A horrible troupe of displeasures causing pain.

CLEOPATRA

247 . . . As when his wound had his body, now pliant²⁹ quite,
248 Covered in blood all over.

CHARMIUM

249 O dream to affright!
But what did he request?

CLEOPATRA

250 That his tomb I should grace
With the honour he's owed.

CHARMIUM

What else?

CLEOPATRA

251 That I should trace
By my death a passage by which to meet his shade,
252 Telling me, too . . .

CHARMIUM

253 The sombre door below is made
For ease of entry but is closed to all return.

CLEOPATRA

254 For night that lasts eternally they needs must yearn
255 Who by daylight eternal agony suffer.
256 Would you remove the desire to try from her
257 Who, now free, rather than live captive seeks to die?

ERAS

258 Then will not fear of deadly fate³⁰ her terrify

29 “[P]liant”: orig. “tractable”—in both the physical and moral senses, and perhaps with a grim play on words, since the word’s etymology (from “*tractare*”, “drag” or “haul”) would suit the action of drawing his body up the side of the monument (see above, I.[i.]144-46).

30 “[D]eadly fate”: orig. “la Parque” (from the Roman *Parcae*)—a common metonymy for death in all three texts.

259 When, not yet dead, she sees extinction of her glory?

CLEOPATRA

260 No, no, let us die—die, and snatch the victory,
261 Though vanquished by Caesar and subject to his scorn.³¹

ERAS

262 Indeed, could we possibly in triumph be borne?

CLEOPATRA

263 Sooner let this earth within the depth of its entrails
264 Swallow me; let all the pincers with their assails
265 Of the torturing Sisters that fill Styx with dread³²
266 Tear out my bowels; let there fall upon my head
267 A sudden thunderbolt, before to that I yield
268 And my deafness to fear of death shall be repealed.³³

CHORUS OF ALEXANDRIAN WOMEN

269 When Aurora, vermillion,
270 Rising out of the darkness,
271 Leaves her slumbering Titon
272 With a lover's caress,
273 Colour at that same hour
274 Throughout the land appears
275 Beneath the god's gold shower
276 As his chariot veers;
277 And it seems the god's face,
278 Changing to most from least,
279 Makes of this very place

31 "[S]ubject to his scorn": the translation makes explicit what is strongly implied by the text's "surmontees", in conjunction with the reaction of Eras.

32 "[F]ill Styx with dread": orig. "horreur de l'onde basse", in which "onde basse" (lit. "lower wave" or "wave below") is seemingly a variant of "onde noire" as metonymy for the river Styx (see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisée*, s.v. "onde"), hence for the underworld at large, where the Furies administer their punishments.

33 L. 286: orig. "Et que la peur de mort entre dans mon oreille" (lit. "And the fear of death shall enter in my ear"). However tortuous the expression, it seems important to retain in translation the notion of *hearing* of the fear of death.

280 The honour of the East,
 281 And that his self-reflecting
 282 Here more than elsewhere shows
 283 Him this as prize electing,
 284 Whence greatest honour flows,
 285 Whose pompous celebration
 286 Most sweetly recompenses
 287 By resplendent temptation
 288 Humanity's rich senses.
 289 For has one seen a city
 290 In honour, feasts or pleasure
 291 Of more prolixity,
 292 Of long delight so sure?
 293 But as the forceful law
 294 Of the torch celestial
 295 Tries to itself to draw
 296 Light water superficial;³⁴
 297 Just as the magnet sways
 298 Its steel, and as the lyre,
 299 When to the sea it plays,
 300 The dolphins³⁵ can inspire;
 301 Even so our pastimes,
 302 Delights and amusements,
 303 Inducing vicious crimes,
 304 Bring on our discontents.
 305 Why, Troy, to your doomsday,
 306 Of ancient times the flower,
 307 Did you become a prey
 308 Attracting the gods' power?
 309 Why, Medea, did you fail
 310 To keep your Jason? Why,

34 L. 298: orig. "Le plus léger de l'eau". Hall, ed., note to ll. 293-96, finds a reference to the moon's influence on the tides, but the sun's power of evaporation seems more to the point. "Torch" ("flambeau") is commonly used of the sun, as above in l. 275, where the "flambeau supreme" (here "gold shower") expresses the intensity of Apollo's influence, and below in ll. 331 ("divin flambeau").

35 "[D]olphins": orig. "poissons" ("fish"), but the allusion to the legend of Arion deserves to be pointed up. Hall, ed., n. to l. 299, aptly compares ll. 369-72.

311 Did you, Ariadne, sail,³⁶
 312 Your confidence so high?
 313 The vice of keenest pleasure
 314 With both of you first toyed,
 315 Then at its cruel leisure
 316 Itself with you destroyed.
 317 Not so variable
 318 In his time was Proteus;
 319 By no means so changeable
 320 Are the winds that impel us,
 321 Not so much change we see
 322 In Thetis,³⁷ nor so often
 323 The sea's inconstancy
 324 Her laws reflects again,
 325 As our rapture, suddenly
 326 In misery lost,
 327 Vanished from us utterly
 328 To the winds is tossed.
 329 The rosy hue of day,
 330 When the god's torch, brim-full
 331 Of light, shows our way,
 332 The ravishing bull
 333 Causes to be born—birth
 334 Of its first day and last:³⁸
 335 Enjoyment of good on earth
 336 Likewise cannot last.
 337 The son with vengeful will
 338 All efforts once applied
 339 The father's snake to kill,

36 L. 311: orig. "Ariadne guidée" (lit. "guided Ariadne")—highly elliptical (and ironic, given Ariadne's role in actually guiding Theseus through the labyrinth) but apparently with the sense of letting herself be directed by Theseus, who sailed away with her only to abandon her on a deserted island. As the following lines make clear, both she and Medea illustrate the disaster to which the passion for unreliable heroes is liable to lead.

37 Thetis: the marine nymph imagined as causing the "sea's inconstancy" (orig. "l'inconstant [the inconstant one]").

38 An allusion to the zodiacal sign of Taurus as figuring the arrival of spring, with an evocation of the ravishment of Europa by Jupiter in the form of a bull (Hall, ed., n. to l. 332).

340 Then later himself died.³⁹
 341 Joy, which gives birth to grief,
 342 Injures itself, then death,
 343 By means of joy's relief
 344 Likewise robs grief of breath.
 345 The good that is durable
 346 Is a rare sign⁴⁰ Heaven sends,
 347 When its will, favourable,
 348 Gall to honey amends.
 349 If the sacred decree
 350 Of the gods immutable,
 351 Beyond inconstancy
 352 (To them unknowable),
 353 In this base hemisphere
 354 Its man would protect,
 355 When his lot without cheer
 356 Makes him all things reject,
 357 Let it, though danger deters,
 358 Come and close ranks with him,
 359 Despite the steel that stirs
 360 Blood and powder's mixture grim.
 361 One must surely affirm⁴¹
 362 That the man one should prize,
 363 When heaven would confirm
 364 He will to favour rise,
 365 Must never view with fear
 366 Ocean⁴² in fury bold,
 367 When he seems likely to rear

39 Hall, ed., n. to l. 337, identifies the unnamed avenger of his father as Orestes, although corroborating details are lacking. The general point about good turning to ill might also suggest Aesop's widely diffused ironic fable about the good-hearted farmer killed when he warmed a half-frozen viper ("vipere" is the original in l. 335). Cf., in political terms, Montreux, II.663-84.

40 "[R]are sign": orig. "monstre", which here carries the sense of a signifying "prodige" ("prodigy"); see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500)*, online at <<http://zeus.atilf.fr/dmf/>> (accessed 29 December 2023), *s.v.*

41 Hall, ed., n. to l. 361, points out that this stanza begins an "imitation" of Horace, *Odes*, I.22. That well-known poem likewise enumerates the dangers which one who lives virtuously ("*integer vitae*") need not fear (including lions) and adds the extremes of climate he can endure. By contrast, no mention is made of the favour of the gods.

42 "Ocean": identical in original, with a capital letter suggesting personification.

368 As high as the gods' foothold.
 369 If plunged into the waves,
 370 He still is bound to win,
 371 And waits till the back him saves
 372 Of the obliging dolphin.⁴³
 373 War with pitiless power,
 374 To harvest mankind keen,
 375 Fears the terrible hour
 376 His holy hand is seen.
 377 All Medea's sorcery,
 378 Her venoms, her banes, of old,
 379 The beasts in whose custody
 380 Was the prized fleece of gold;⁴⁴
 381 Nor in woods remote and strange
 382 The lion's savagery,
 383 Whose paw to prey can change
 384 The bravest enemy;
 385 Nor the law men revere
 386 Less than fear fills their minds,
 387 Nor the torturer severe
 388 Who his pale victim binds;
 389 Nor the fires that destroy
 390 The tops of tall pine-trees—
 391 None such can him annoy,
 392 Blessed by divinities.
 393 But as with all unsure
 394 He masters in life's course,
 395 Within his strength secure
 396 He also holds death's force.
 397 And despite that band below
 398 Whose spinning never ends,
 399 Till heaven orders so,

43 On the example of Arion, cf. above, ll. 298-300. As with the evocation of fishing, one might suspect Shakespeare of recalling Jodelle's dolphins when his Cleopatra dreams of a godlike Anthony whose "delights / Were dolphin-like" (*Ant.*, V.ii.88-89)—an image, for Neill, ed., of "transcendent intensity" (n. to 88-90), which, in the context, contrasts flagrantly with his mortality.

44 "[T]he prized fleece of gold": orig. simply "la riche toison" ("rich fleece"). The translation makes more explicit the reference to Jason's quest.

400 By no means he descends;
 401 And when his descent comes,
 402 Without the slightest ill,
 403 With a sleep that he welcomes,
 404 Yield to better he will.
 405 And yet if destiny,⁴⁵
 406 The universal judge,
 407 Against felicity
 408 Of someone bears a grudge,
 409 Its sceptre, which makes cower
 410 A whole people on its knees,
 411 Will strike down with its power
 412 Rebellious enemies.
 413 Wealth with its fickle condition
 414 (Worldly bliss's mainstay),
 415 Honour and high position,
 416 Then will fly away;
 417 Not Fortune's obstinacy,⁴⁶
 418 Then, nor Time, which all mows,
 419 His harsh destiny
 420 Is able to oppose.
 421 The high gods' power
 422 Bears witness here below
 423 That our happy hour
 424 Thus to ruin will go.
 425 What was Marc Antony?
 426 And what fit honour came
 427 To our queen's royalty,
 428 From a source of such fame?
 429 Of the two, the first, woeful,
 430 To his destiny bending,
 431 By a death quite pitiful
 432 Has just hastened his ending;

45 If the expression in the following stanzas is elliptical, the contrast between immutable destiny (as figured in the spinning Fates of ll. 397-98) and inconstant fortune is a commonplace; cf. Hall, ed., n. to ll. 405-20.

46 "Fortune's obstinacy": orig. "fortune obstinee"—evidently, in the context, in the sense of good fortune that persists despite Fortune's mutability.

433 The other, still afraid,
 434 Struggling with all her might,
 435 Longs, lest captive she be made,
 436 To die free and upright.⁴⁷
 437 This honourable nation,
 438 This fortune-favoured country—
 439 Alas!—sees slight duration
 440 Of its ruined felicity.
 441 Such is the destiny
 442 Of the heavens eternal;
 443 Such poor objects are we
 444 Of disfavour supernal.

Act II

Octavian, Agrippa, Proculeius

OCTAVIAN

445 Within the round enfolded by the sky
 446 To none, I think, can such favour apply,
 447 Of those whom the gods cherish, as to me:
 448 For besides my kingship and my mastery
 449 Of such possessions, it seems that to earth
 450 The sky, which all contains within its girth,
 451 Down from its vault has purposely me sent
 452 To serve here as its universal agent;
 453 Besides the hope of future memory,
 454 Which to posterity will chant my glory
 455 For having of Antony—yes, the horror
 456 Of the entire world!—struck down the furor;
 457 Besides the honour my Rome holds for me

47 “[F]ree and upright”—orig. “[l]ibrement” (lit. “freely”), which in the context carries both connotations.

458 As reward for that happy victory,
 459 Heaven seems already come to embrace me
 460 With open arms, again in it to place me,
 461 And that the twin-horized globe to bear
 462 Is, for a Caesar, a paltry affair.
 463 Now I desire, desire more still:
 464 To join the gods' sacred ranks is my will.
 465 Never does earth, in perpetual ferment,
 466 Preserve a person perfectly content,
 467 But unhappiness yields to its contrary,
 468 And happiness spawns infelicity.⁴⁸

AGRIPPA

469 But where do those words come from?

OCTAVIAN

Who could have thought

470 That after the honour such victory brought,
 471 The mourning, weeping, care and lamentation
 472 In Caesar's self would have caused desolation?
 473 But I find myself often seized in secret
 474 With grief for Marc Antony, and regret,
 475 Who in honours received within our land
 476 Accompanied me, and in war did stand
 477 My ally, brother-in-law, my blood sharing,
 478 And here in this region the same rank bearing
 479 As Caesar: yet the rancour importune
 480 Of treacherous and variable Fortune,
 481 Showed us his corpse, drenched from his wound that
 day,
 482 Woefully staining the place where it lay.
 483 Ah, my dear friend . . . !⁴⁹

48 Ll. 467-68: Caesar's aphorism ironically echoes the Chorus concluding the previous act, as the following remark by Agrippa almost seems to suggest. The paradoxical effect is to add a down-to-earth dimension to his aspiration to godhead.

49 Plutarch's account of Octavian's reaction to word of Antony's death is especially close here:
 When Caesar heard these tidings, he retired within his tent and wept for a man who had been his relation by marriage, his colleague in office and command, and his part-

PROCULEIUS

His vaunting arrogance

484 Lent Antony a culpable resemblance
 485 To Enceladus,⁵⁰ and, aiming to jolt
 486 The gods, felt, not by a heaven-hurled bolt,
 487 But by your vengeful hand adept at harm,
 488 What power lies in a great god's right arm.
 489 If the arrogant one receives the payment
 490 Arrogance deserves, why should you lament?

AGRIPPA

491 Thus does arrogance requite with misery
 492 Someone whom miserably proud we see.⁵¹
 493 Even so it is with the wave's commotion,
 494 When the north wind stirs it upon the ocean:
 495 Unceasingly it runs ahead and slides,
 496 Tumbles down, rolls, rises and onward glides—
 497 So often that at last, raging⁵² once more,
 498 It gasps out its life on the foamy shore.

ner in many undertakings and struggles. Then he took the letters which had passed between them, called in his friends, and read the letters aloud, showing how reasonably and justly he had written, and how rude and overbearing Antony had always been in his replies. (78.2)

Cf. Shakespeare, *Ant.*, Vi.40-48, where Caesar's reaction is contextualised by the observation of Mecnas—"When such a spacious mirror's set before him, / He needs must see himself" (34-35)—and the justificatory letters are added to the picture (73-77). See also below, ll. 553-59, where Octavian couples his regret with his fear that Cleopatra's death, too, may detract from the completeness of his victory; the initial impression of purely human affection for his "friend" is thereby qualified. But cf. also the reaction of Caesar to Cleopatra's death in Act V of *Montreux*, and see the Introduction, pp. 22-26.

- 50 Enceladus was one of the Giants (*gigantes*) who rebelled against the Olympian gods; he was punished by Zeus with a thunderbolt and buried under Mount Aetna; see *OCD*, *s.v.* "Giants". The mythological episode was frequently deployed in early modern France to figure forms of overweening ambition involving challenges to divinely sanctioned or religious authority. Proculeius' evocation of it here obviously feeds in a flattering way into Octavian's aspiration to divinity; but cf. the Chorus's application of the myth in ll. 699 ff. below, after Proculeius, in soliloquy, has expressed second thoughts.
- 51 Ll. 491-92: the reiteration in "misery . . . miserably" is modelled on the original ("malheur . . . malheureuse").
- 52 "[R]aging": orig. "dépitéux", on whose meaning in the period see Hall, ed., n. to l. 497; she aptly refers to the dictionary of Cotgrave, who gives, amongst other senses, "exceeding angrie" and "full of spleene, or spight" (*s.v.* "despiteux").

499 So humans here whom arrogance betrays
 500 Will never cease themselves high up to raise,
 501 To run, to turn, as roiling winds them seize,
 502 Against bounds set to their felicities.
 503 Antony's sheer arrogance would have been
 504 Enough to destroy him with his poor queen,
 505 Even if lustful love and wantonness
 506 Had not helped them turn downward⁵³ to distress—
 507 Such that one wonders how those degenerates
 508 Had so covered their eyes to their own fates
 509 That they were blind to hundreds⁵⁴ of auguries
 510 Prognosticating future miseries.⁵⁵
 511 The ruin of Pisaurum have we not seen,
 512 Which Antony's defeat was sure to mean,
 513 When that town, by Antony's soldiers founded,
 514 Was swallowed up and in the earth confounded?
 515 Did not, too, in Alba long sweat an image
 516 To his honour? Likewise the storm as presage
 517 Which round the city of Patras did trace
 518 When Antony was staying in that place?
 519 And that the fire bursting in the air
 520 In pieces did the Heracleium⁵⁶ tear?
 521 In Athens, moreover, is it not known
 522 That in a theatre where the pains were shown
 523 The serpent-footed ones for nothing took
 524 When to pile rocks on rocks they undertook,⁵⁷
 525 Winds the image of Bacchus overthrew
 526 And broke, vying in force the more they blew—
 527 Seeing that Bacchus served him as a guide

53 “[T]urn downward”: orig. “rouër”, which Hall, ed., n., explains as an allusion to the common image of the Wheel of Fortune. Cf. Cotgrave, who, *s.v.* “rouër”, gives “Rouër sur les miseres & calamitez. *To turne vpon the wheele of aduerse fortune*”.

54 “[H]undreds”: orig. “cent et cent”.

55 As pointed out by Hall, ed., n. to ll. 509-10, the list of evil omens that follows is mainly drawn from Plutarch, 60.2 (where, however, the details mentioned in ll. 531-37 do not appear).

56 I.e., the temple of Hercules in Patras (or Patrae); see Plutarch, 60.2.

57 Another pointed reference to the futile ambition of the Giants, who were sometimes represented with snakes as legs, and whose attempt to reach heaven by piling Mount Pelion on Mount Ossa made its way into French, as well as English, proverbial lore. See above, n. 50.

528 Whose name Antony to himself applied?⁵⁸
 529 The statues, too, by fatal flame destroyed
 530 Of Eumenes and Attalus, deployed
 531 In Antony's honour there, then many
 532 Voices crying fatally in company—
 533 So many throats,⁵⁹ with many a like marvel;
 534 So many crows, ravens that doom foretell;
 535 All those summits pulverised, smashed asunder:
 536 What did they herald but your future thunder,
 537 Combatting this rock by your soldiership?
 538 What was augured by Cleopatra's ship,
 539 Which she by Antony's own name had styled,
 540 From which some swallows other swallows exiled?
 541 (Though those two having eyes sealed to the light,⁶⁰
 542 That foreboding wholly escaped their sight.)
 543 Pride yourself, then, that their pursuit you ended
 544 As avenger of the great gods offended.
 545 Revel and bathe in their blood far and wide:
 546 Let their children's turn red the countryside.
 547 Scrape out⁶¹ their name, efface their memory—
 548 Pursue, pursue, to total victory.

OCTAVIAN

549 Don't I seek to pursue my victory,
 550 And in the world's eyes give life to its trophy?⁶²

58 On Antony's association with Bacchus, see Plutarch, 26.3 and 75.3-4, and on his supposed descent from Hercules, on whom he modelled his military identity, 4.1-2. In Shakespeare, *Ant.*, IV.iii, Hercules replaces Bacchus as the tutelary god who ominously deserts Anthony; on the implications of this substitution, see Richard Hillman, *Shakespearean Subversions: The Trickster and the Play-text* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 206-29.

59 "[T]hroats": orig. "gesiers"—lit. "gullets", as of fowl, but here with "voices" ("voix") evoking supernatural sounds overlapping with the human.

60 "[H]aving eyes sealed to the light": orig. "se sillant leur lumiere". Especially considering the preceding bird-imagery, it seems reasonable to see a reference to sewing shut the eyes of birds of prey to train them for hunting. The verb "ciller" describing this practice was commonly spelt "siller"; see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v. "siller".

61 "[S]crape out": orig. "racle"—a term especially apt for defacing inscriptions on stone.

62 L. 550: orig. "Et mon trophée au monde faire vivre". The wording suggests a bringing to life of the stone or marble memorials of prizes of victory current in Roman culture; see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v. "trophée", def. III.A. Cf. above, Pro.49 and n. 4.

551 Sooner, sooner the mighty river's force
 552 Will cease to swell the ocean with its course.
 553 That is the concern which, with the lament
 554 I just expressed for that other life spent,
 555 Gnaws at me, too: for the ultimate proof
 556 Of my honours, thus kept from time aloof,
 557 Will not appear till she who bears the blame
 558 For consuming Antony in her flame
 559 Is in triumph in my city produced.

PROCULEIUS

560 But to come to Rome can she be induced,
 561 Given that all she longs for constantly
 562 Is by her death to gain her liberty?
 563 Do you not know that, when we had resort
 564 To ruse—and ladders—to enter her court,⁶³
 565 Suddenly, as I in the court was spied,
 566 One of her women in a loud voice cried,
 567 “O wretched queen, taken while still you live!
 568 Are you condemned to die not free but captive?”
 569 And that those words such desperation bred
 570 She sought at once to sever her life's thread
 571 With the keen blade⁶⁴ about her neck suspended,
 572 If I, by seizing it, had not defended
 573 Her stomach, already threatened with harm
 574 By her uplifted and murdering arm?
 575 Do you not know that from that very day
 576 She has fallen ill in a grievous way,
 577 And that she pretends she cannot take food,

63 For the narration of this episode, Jodelle adapts Plutarch, 126-27. Shakespeare depicts it in *Ant.*, V.ii.9-70, adding the complicating irony that the dying Anthony had enjoined Cleopatra, “None about Caesar trust but Proculeius” (IV.16.50). Cf. Neill, ed., n. Superficially, this confirms Anthony's lack of judgement, but Jodelle's subsequent development of Proculeius' conflicted character, and especially his stricken response to Cleopatra's death, might justify such an estimation.

64 “[K]een blade”: orig. “cimeterre” (cf. English “scimitar”), a short curved oriental sabre (see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé, s.v.*); the blade in this case must be short indeed if worn around the neck. Plutarch speaks of a “dagger” carried “at her girdle” (79.2).

578 A bad death by starvation to make good!⁶⁵
 579 Do you not think that, along with such tricks,
 580 On some shrewd means of dying she will fix?

AGRIPPA

581 We would do well to keep an eye on her—
 582 Question, cajole, pursue, and spy on her:
 583 Let the sight of the shepherd guardian
 584 Not fail in watching his Inochian.⁶⁶
 585 What harm is there in soothing her distress,
 586 With gentle treatment bearing with her weakness?
 587 By such means the desire will take flight
 588 Her life to exchange for death's endless night;
 589 With life thus made agreeable to spend,
 590 She won't envisage her thread at an end.
 591 And so, and so,⁶⁷ to Rome she'll go along;
 592 And so, and so, not dream of any wrong.
 593 And as for grieving, will you grieve for someone
 594 Who to plague you had long ago begun?
 595 Who was born—but for your godlike right arm—
 596 Only for your and our ruinous harm?
 597 Recall: while your war was in preparation,
 598 All in the land viewed you with detestation
 599 And in anger against you mutinied,
 600 Refused your authority to concede,
 601 When you took, to fight against Antony,
 602 One fourth of each citizen's patrimony,
 603 From freedmen an eighth part did confiscate
 604 Of their wealth, and so did alienate

65 L. 578: orig. "Pour par la faim à la fin se renger"; the translation attempts to capture the sardonic flavour of the play on words ("faim [hunger]", "fin [end]").

66 "Inachian": orig. "Inachienne". As observed by Hall, ed., n. to ll. 584-84, the allusion is to the myth of Io, daughter of the river-god Iachos, transformed to a heifer and watched over by hundred-eyed Argos at the behest of the jealous Hera. Agrippa's application of the myth to Cleopatra is part of the wry humour claimed by his discourse here, which actually rings hollow in the pathetic-heroic context.

67 "And so, and so": orig. "Ainsi ainsi" (repeated in the following line)—conveying, I take it, Agrippa's (over)confidence in his stratagem.

605 Nearly all Italy amidst its trouble.⁶⁸
 606 But how was its grievance then rendered double,
 607 With which he sought the Romans to inflame,
 608 When Lepidus was banished in your name?
 609 Do you remember that army so fearsome,
 610 Which he mobilised against us to come,
 611 Followed as he was by many a king—
 612 Were they present there for our well-being?
 613 Was not their intention rather to gore us,
 614 Then after intone a lamenting chorus?
 615 That king Bocchus, the king of Cilicia,
 616 Archelaus, king of Capadocia,
 617 And Thracian Adallas, Philadelphus,
 618 Mithridates⁶⁹—was their threat against us
 619 Anything less than to carry with glee
 620 Our corpses along with their martial booty
 621 As glad trophies to their gods to display
 622 And them with sacrifices homage pay?
 623 Such are the tears a warrior should shed
 624 On hearing that his enemy is dead.

OCTAVIAN

625 O kind Agrippa—or, a better name,
 626 Faithful Achates⁷⁰—then how could he claim
 627 The tears of my eyes? Thus he plays the woman
 628 Who has demolished a womanish man!
 629 No, no—laments shall yield to cruel harms:
 630 Let us bathe in blood both our hearts and arms,
 631 And wish our foes a hundred lives enjoyed,

68 Ll. 601-5 closely versify Plutarch, 58.1: “The citizens were generally compelled to pay one fourth of their income, and the freedmen one eighth of their property, and both classes cried out against Caesar, and disturbances arising from these causes prevailed throughout all Italy.”

69 Cf. Plutarch, 61.1: “Of subject kings who fought with him, there were Bocchus the king of Libya, Tarcondemus the king of Upper Cilicia, Archelaüs of Cappadocia, Philadelphus of Paphlagonia, Mithridates of Commagene, and Sadalas of Thrace.” Jodelle’s form “Adalle” is found in Amyot’s French translation (followed by North’s English), as “Adallas” (*Les Vies des hommes illustres, Grecs et Romains, etc.*, 3rd ed. [Paris: Vascosan, 1567], VI: 3472).

70 Achates: the constant companion of Aeneas in Virgil’s epic, whose name became a watchword for fidelity (“fidus Achates”).

632 Which shall with brutality be destroyed!
 633 Concerning the Queen, she must be appeased
 634 So that her hand will by itself be seized,
 635 Her seditious soul to keep with success
 636 Far from the waters of forgetfulness.⁷¹
 637 Right now myself to that task I'll apply,
 638 Extinguishing her desire to die:
 639 Power is often reinforced by ruse.
 640 Agrippa, with affairs yourself amuse;⁷²
 641 And you, Proculeius, trustworthy envoy,
 642 To sound the depth of all I you employ
 643 Told in Alexandria by winged Fame—
 644 Whatever she spreads, may hint or proclaim,
 645 Or by low muttering may breed sedition,
 646 For she is never far from that condition.

PROCULEIUS

647 So well in all respects I'll do my duty
 648 That my Caesar will have cause to boast of me.
 [*Exeunt Octavian and Agrippa. Manet Proculeius.*]
 649 Oh, what if now I should somewhat erect
 650 My mind and for myself alone reflect?
 651 Most miserable is the state of someone
 652 Who thinks a sure place in this world is won,
 653 And he is far from weary of his life
 654 Who engages Fortune in hopeful strife,
 655 While I, who have no great cause to lament,
 656 At living so long am far from content.
 657 Why delay, then, Death, if prosperity
 658 Beneath the skies is no felicity?
 659 Look at the great, and those who, with their heads,

71 I.e., the river Lethe in the underworld.

72 “[Y]ourself amuse”—orig. “t’amuse”; Hall, ed., n., takes the word as quite neutrally equivalent to “occupe-toi” (lit. “take care of”), but the following usage, signalled by *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé* as literary or obsolete, allows for the range of meanings of modern English “amuse” in a way that suits Octavian’s dismissive high-handedness: “Occuper quelqu’un ou l’esprit de quelqu’un en le détournant des choses importantes par des activités ou des préoccupations secondaires ou futiles” (def. B.1).

660 Seem to defy the storm that round them spreads:
 661 What happiness is theirs for a frail glory?
 662 Countless serpents gnawing their memory,⁷³
 663 Countless cares, with fearfulness intertwined,
 664 Desire without end, no peace of mind:
 665 No sooner does the sky its lightning flash,
 666 Than it seems intended on them to crash;
 667 No sooner does Mars near their land resound
 668 Than they seem already by him uncrowned;
 669 No sooner does the plague their realm infect
 670 Than to take their life seems its only object.
 671 In short, no thought of death can they admit
 672 Without sighs, pale looks or an angry fit,
 673 Seeing that by death they must leave their glory
 674 And oftentimes inter its memory,
 675 Whereas one who, of solitary bent,
 676 With few possessions seeks to be content
 677 Does not turn pale if thinking of the Fates
 678 Conjures the barque that in the end awaits;⁷⁴
 679 Does not turn pale when the sea and the sky
 680 Join, the world's first chaos to multiply.
 681 Such is, such is, the mere banality
 682 Which is the goal of our felicity.
 683 But why in discourse am I pleasure taking,
 684 When my business I should be undertaking?
 685 Too soon, too soon, my message onward flies,
 686 And always too late a man becomes wise.

CHORUS

STROPHE

687 On earth, humble and base,
 688 By the heavens enslaved,

73 Ll. 661-62: the rhyme “glory/memory” is present in the original (“gloire”/“memoire”) and repeated below in ll. 673-74.

74 Ll. 677-78: “Fates”—orig. “la fatal Parque”; “the barque that in the end awaits”—orig. “la dernière barque”, i.e., the boat of Charon, who ferries souls in the underworld.

689 This frail and feeble space
 690 Has nothing more depraved
 691 Than Pride, marked as abhorred
 692 By its celestial lord.

ANTISTROPHE

693 Pride, which to dust will jolt
 694 The rock rising too high,
 695 At which the thunderbolt
 696 From the gods' hands will fly;
 697 And which to its own cost
 698 Comes only to be lost.

STROPHE

699 Has any not heard tell
 700 Of how the Sun's offspring,
 701 Climbed to the clouds to quell
 702 A resplendent gathering,
 703 And mountains heaped up high
 704 Used to attain the sky?⁷⁵

ANTISTROPHE

705 The tempest then down rushing
 706 (The enemy of Pride),
 707 Their foul heads took to crushing,
 708 And so it was they died,
 709 Seeking by death's sharp blow
 710 Their mother's womb below.⁷⁶

75 Another reference to the Giants, supposedly descended from the union of Uranus (sky) and Gaia (earth).
76 Hall, ed., n. to l. 708, points out the irony of the expression. Rejected by the paternal sky, the Giants, by being buried beneath mountains, were welcomed back to their maternal earth. More broadly, the mythical instances of pride are recounted with an ironic tone, bordering on the flip-pant, calculated to insist on their self-destructive futility. The translation sometimes strays from the literal in an attempt to capture this.

STROPHE

711 Who does not know that sage⁷⁷
 712 Who, with a daring plot,
 713 Of fire stole the usage
 714 From heaven's chariot,
 715 Seeking by arrogance
 716 Occasion for repentance.

ANTISTROPHE

717 Go see him pass the hours
 718 On the Scythian mountain,
 719 Where his vulture devours
 720 His liver grown again;⁷⁸
 721 See his entrails each day
 722 Become eternal prey.

STROPHE

723 Is Icarus unknown,
 724 Who gave a sea his name,⁷⁹
 725 Or Patara's god's own
 726 Son,⁸⁰ who set aflame
 727 Beneath his car the world,
 728 And in the waves was hurled?

ANTISTROPHE

729 The ruin with which these ended
 730 Well illustrates the furor
 731 Of the gods they offended,
 732 Which rightly should cause horror

77 I.e., Prometheus.

78 “[L]iver grown again”: orig. “gesier ancien”—an elliptical expression, although “liver” is amply attested as the primary medieval meaning by the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v., def. A.

79 L. 724: orig. “Le nommeur d’une mer”—an epithet wryly evoking Icarus’ overweening, which resulted in his fall into the sea (part of the Aegean) traditionally named after him.

80 I.e., Phaëthon (or Phaëton), son of Apollo (in some versions Helios), a god with a centre of worship in Patara in Lycia (modern Turkey); for a summary of the myth, see William Smith, *Smaller Classical Dictionary*, ed. E. H. Blakeney, and John Warrington (New York: Dutton, 1958), s.v. “Phaëthon” (henceforth cited as *SCD*). Cf. Garnier, II.[i.]357-62 and V.1896-99.

733 To Pride, whose recompense
734 With rigour they dispense.

STROPHE

735 The waves have we not looked on,
736 Making huge highs and lows,
737 When fickle Aquilon⁸¹
738 Tempestuously blows,
739 Almost raising the crests
740 To the source of the tempests?⁸²

ANTISTROPHE

741 At this audacity
742 Phoebus we see take umbrage,
743 With luminosity
744 His chariot enrage;
745 Loosing his golden arrows
746 The high waves he harrows.

STROPHE

747 Is there not in a glade
748 One tree with lush top higher,
749 Or house of marble made
750 Which appears to aspire
751 Haughtily scorn to pour
752 Upon the house next door?

ANTISTROPHE

753 One sees a flame divine
754 At a stroke that tree-top take,
755 While a destructive mine⁸³
756 Makes that grand palace quake:

81 Aquilon: common classical personification of the north wind (also Boreas).

82 L. 740: “tempests” (orig. “tempestes”) similarly echoes l. 738 (“[t]empestuously”) in the original (“tempestueux”).

83 “[D]estructive mine”—i.e., as in siege warfare.

757 The plant punished in the head,⁸⁴
 758 The other's foot targeted.

STROPHE

759 But gods—O gods!—let him come
 760 And see the grief and tears
 761 That flood my poor queen's bosom
 762 Till her pride disappears—
 763 A queen who for her vice
 764 Pays far too steep a price.

ANTISTROPHE

765 There he will see the goddess
 766 Throw herself on her knees
 767 And a slave, once mistress,
 768 Grieve—alas!—her miseries;
 769 Her voice, of one half-dead,
 770 Begg she may be supported.

STROPHE

771 She who, by pride inspired,
 772 The name of Isis bore,
 773 Who, all in white attired,
 774 Richly her clothing wore,
 775 Like Isis in her dress,
 776 Ancient Egyptian goddess.

ANTISTROPHE

777 Now she, with little clothes,⁸⁵
 778 At which she tears, laments;
 779 Herself at the feet she throws

84 L. 757: orig. "La plante au chef punie", seemingly evoking decapitation, the common punishment for nobles deemed to be ambitious above their station. The nearly bathetic effect of the stanza's concluding couplet, which gives way to pathos in the following Strophe, is modelled on the original.

85 "[W]ith little clothes": orig. "presque en chemise".

780 Of her Caesar,⁸⁶ and vents,
 781 With effort from her chest,⁸⁷
 782 Made weak, her vain request.

STROPHE

783 What heart, what turn of mind,
 784 What stubborn cruelty,
 785 Itself unmoved could find,
 786 In this manner to see
 787 The woeful turn so soon
 788 Of ever-changing Fortune?

ANTISTROPHE

789 Caesar: by such confronted,
 790 Seeing her stripped of power,⁸⁸
 791 And seeing her half-dead,
 792 Can you brook at this hour
 793 The strong assaults surprising
 794 Of pity in you rising?

STROPHE

795 A puissant queen you see,
 796 One whose advice directed
 797 Your fellow Antony,
 798 Her word world-wide respected,
 799 Now says she aims no higher
 800 If to kill her you desire.

ANTISTROPHE

801 Alas, Cleopatra, oh,

86 “[H]er Caesar”: orig. “son Cesar”, the possessive pronoun drawing the title towards the sense of “conqueror”.

87 “[C]hest”: orig. “estomac”, whose sense (as a literal translation would hardly convey) was originally much broader physically and figuratively; see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. “estomac”: “Région de l’estomac, poitrine, ventre” (def. B) and “Plus ou moins synonym. de cœur”, “Siège des sentiments et des pensées” (def. C).

88 “[P]ower”: orig. “vertu”—for this obsolete sense, the only one possible here, see esp. *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v.

802 Alas, what misery
 803 Now strikes your joys a blow
 804 That makes them agony?
 805 Alas, Lady, alas,
 806 This pain can you surpass?⁸⁹

STROPHE

807 Wherefore, oh wherefore, Fortune,
 808 Fortune, who your eyes close,
 809 Do you so importune?
 810 Why is there no repose
 811 In Time's uncanny course,
 812 Of strife and change the source?

ANTISTROPHE

813 Who as he flies despoils
 814 Castles that tower high;
 815 Great princes rudely foils;
 816 Whom the proudest we espy,
 817 His prouder scythe's fell pass
 818 Cuts down just like the grass?

STROPHE

819 To none he offers pardon,
 820 Himself destroys and creates,
 821 Earning self-admiration;
 822 Himself congratulates,
 823 But then his work decries,
 824 And rage to it applies.⁹⁰

ANTISTROPHE

825 Against him only virtue
 826 The steel's sharp edge can blunt:

89 L. 806: orig. "Peux tu souffrir ton ame?", i.e., "Can you tolerate your life in its (painful) state?"

90 On this depiction of Time as creator and destroyer, see Hall, ed., n. to 820-24, who cites several instances from Sophocles.

827 Should no such match ensue,
 828 Then all must bear Time's brunt:
 829 The pride which is our bait,
 830 Increases his scythe's weight.

Act III⁹¹

Octavian, Cleopatra, Chorus, Seleucus

OCTAVIAN

831 So you desire your fault to excuse?
 832 But why with idle words yourself amuse?
 833 You tried all means—is that not clear to see?—
 834 To turn Caesar into your adversary,
 835 And you alone, by seducing my friend,
 836 Made him my chief enemy in the end,
 837 By which an endless fearful storm was bred
 838 Which you supposed would make me lose my head.
 839 What's your reply?

CLEOPATRA

 Oh, what blows to stir fears!
 840 Alas, what might I say? For me my tears
 841 Speak amply, which justice do not solicit
 842 But just of pity seek the benefit.
 843 However, Caesar, if the means I know
 844 Of drawing forth from a soul brought so low
 845 This voice all hoarse, intermingled with sighs,
 846 Listen once more to this wretched slave's cries,
 847 Who places, alas, less hope in oration
 848 Than in pity, my only consolation.

91 The outline and various details of this key confrontation sequence, in which Cleopatra convinces Caesar of her desire to live, are drawn from Plutarch, 83.

849 Reflect, Caesar, what power beyond measure
 850 Lies in reckless love, even in its pleasure.
 851 And consider, too, how my feeble spirit
 852 Would not have withstood, but for passion's fit,
 853 Those fights between you that like thunder sounded,
 854 And finally upon my head rebounded.
 855 And yet my love compelled me to endure
 856 Those violent clashes, and all aid assure,
 857 Given the choice the peace to abrogate,
 858 Or Antony and me to separate.⁹²
 859 Separate, alas! That word stops my breath,
 860 That word brings on the fell assault of Death.
 861 Ah, ah, Caesar, ah . . .

OCTAVIAN

Were it not now plain

862 How kindly I am disposed, you could feign
 863 Further sorrows, still to increase my kindness.
 864 Why? Don't I seek my mercy to express?

CLEOPATRA

865 Feign! Oh, alas . . .

OCTAVIAN

So wildly to complain

866 Either brings death itself, or else you feign.

CHORUS⁹³

867 The distress
 868 Ill success
 869 Makes us feel—

92 “[S]eparate”: orig. “separer”; Hall, ed., n. to l. 858, observes that Jodelle tends to use the word in the sense of “éloigner” (“[to] distance”), but a literal translation better suits Cleopatra’s mental state and her highly charged repetitions later in the passage; see esp. ll. 903-4. Cf. also below, IV.1363-66 and V.1559-60.

93 The Chorus’s intervention here seems intended to give the stricken Cleopatra time to recover the strength to speak. Cf. below, ll. 1029-44.

870 Such sorrow
 871 To a foe
 872 Is not real,
 873 Who, exempt,
 874 Has contempt;
 875 But complaint
 876 Higher mounts
 877 When he counts
 878 It mere feint.

CLEOPATRA

879 If the pain which within this heart is pent
 880 Did not extend beyond that last lament,
 881 You would not have your poor slave in this state,
 882 But that huge care I cannot tolerate
 883 Whose infinite troubles inwardly flay me,⁹⁴
 884 Till tears, complaints and ardent sighs betray me.
 885 Are you surprised that the word “separate”
 886 Thus caused my vital forces to abate?
 887 Separate—gods! I saw him separate,
 888 Yet hardly could these broils anticipate.
 889 You would have done better (O ravished captive!⁹⁵)
 890 To separate from him while he could live!
 891 The war and his death I would have prevented,
 892 Some access to my happiness invented,
 893 Seeing I had both the means and the place
 894 To hope I might secretly see his face.
 895 But oh, but oh, what wretchedness was sown:
 896 That detestable war I made my own!
 897 I lost—that strange war made slip from my hand
 898 All that was mine, and my entire land;
 899 And so I saw my life and my mainstay,
 900 My joy, my everything, to death give way,
 901 Whom, all bloody, already pale and cold,
 902 I warmed with tears that from my bosom rolled,

94 “[I]nwardly flay me”: orig. “m’écorce le dedans”—a strained image, perhaps, but the translation is literal.

95 She slips momentarily into self-apostrophe.

903 Myself from half myself then separating,
 904 With my friend by death from me separating.⁹⁶
 905 Oh, gods, great gods, great gods!

OCTAVIAN

When this I see

906 I ask what has become of constancy.

CLEOPATRA

907 Constant I am: I feel my separation,
 908 But it can't be of much longer duration.
 909 By pale Death I will soon be overcome;
 910 Pluto will bid me to his mansion welcome,
 911 Where the very same sting⁹⁷ that brings me blight
 912 Will cause his mouth and mine to reunite.
 913 Should I be killed, the bursting-forth of grief
 914 At the blow will afford me more relief⁹⁸
 915 Than the pain I will have in seeing flow
 916 My purpled blood and my soul with it go.
 917 But occasion for my death you deny
 918 And my strength falters in seeking to die,
 919 Which hour by hour proceeds to languish,
 920 While I must live on in spite of my anguish.
 921 I must: no fear I'll shorten my life's length;
 922 To kill myself I have too little strength.
 923 But since I am bound my life to sustain,
 924 And desire to live is mine again,
 925 At least, Caesar, the poor weak woman view
 926 Who now throws herself at your feet anew;

96 Ll. 903-4: orig. "Me separant de moymesme a demi / Voyant par mort separer mon ami"; the translation allows identical rhyme to point up the repetitive shift from transitive to intransitive use of the verb that mirrors Cleopatra's distraction. (The original has her interjecting cries and lamentations more freely than the translation can accommodate.)

97 "[S]ting": orig. "éguillon" (mod. "aiguillon"), resonating with the medieval dart of death (and its pain). The term is richly polysemous in context, evoking carnal concupiscence, as figured in biblically derived theology, as well as the venomous bite of a serpent. See *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. "aiguillon".

98 As Hall, ed., observes (n. to ll. 913-14), the image evokes the lancing of an abscess.

927 At least, Caesar, by the tears of my eyes
 928 Be softened, my pardon to authorise:
 929 By such liquid hard stone is worn away,
 930 And shall they on your heart exert no sway?
 931 Could not the letters make you something feel
 932 Which lately to your eyes I did reveal—
 933 Letters, I say, from your father received,
 934 Sure witness of the love we had conceived?⁹⁹
 935 Could I not then somewhat your rigour assuage
 936 By showing to you image after image
 937 Of your father to her benevolent
 938 Who from his son would suffer such ill treatment?
 939 He often prematurely bounds his glory
 940 Who forces vengeance in his victory.
 941 Pity! Let swords that in triumph you bear
 942 Over me and Antony children spare!
 943 Could you view the horrified mother's protests
 944 Were you to murder those whom these two breasts—
 945 Which now you see here all shrivelled and torn,
 946 And with a hundred blows would be worse worn¹⁰⁰—
 947 Had suckled? Could you even stand to hear
 948 On both sides the horrid groans in your ear?
 949 No, Caesar, take the father as sole prey;
 950 Let the children and mother go their way
 951 In this woe assigned as the gods now please.
 952 But have we ever been your enemies
 953 So fiercely we would not have pardoned freely,
 954 If we had been allotted victory?
 955 As for me, those faults that I perpetrated,
 956 By Antony alone were instigated,
 957 Who, alas, into such transgression led me:
 958 Could I have resisted my Antony?

99 Octavian was the adoptive son of Julius Caesar, who had been Cleopatra's lover and was taken to be the father of her son Caesarion.

100 L. 946: i.e., in such an appalling circumstance.

OCTAVIAN

959 Like many who, a crime to mitigate,
 960 From gulf to gulf themselves precipitate,
 961 Excusing yourself, though in a good light
 962 You paint yourself, you aggravate your plight
 963 By irking me with a defence uncouth—
 964 I, who am nothing but the friend of truth.
 965 And were this the place myself to amuse
 966 As you feebly try yourself to excuse,
 967 You might of this assure your innocence:¹⁰¹
 968 Who made my sister leave her residence
 969 In Athens, when, lest her spouse Antony
 970 Should, more than with you, with his wife agree,
 971 You fed him with tricks and subtle addresses,
 972 With thousands and ten thousands of caresses?
 973 At times you posed, wasting in bed dejected;
 974 Or else a sickly pallor you affected;
 975 Now your flowing eye washed over your face,
 976 If distant from him a mere bow-shot space—
 977 Your feints and spell-casting in endless motion,
 978 Whether by sheer habit or by some potion:
 979 Even your friends and flatterers appointing,
 980 Antony with poison to keep anointing,
 981 Who with their frivolous complaints abused him,
 982 His welfare melting as their words suffused him.
 983 “What”, they said, “will you be the homicide
 984 Of a poor soul who takes you for her guide?
 985 Must you the noble strain that in you teems
 986 Betray, of whose harshness she little dreams
 987 Who makes you of her thoughts the only object?
 988 Oh, how wrong she is them so to direct!
 989 Octavienne enjoys a spouse’s name,
 990 While the other woman, whose jealous flame
 991 Somewhat impedes the spread of her renown,
 992 Is known as his mistress despite her crown—
 993 That creature divine, to whom render homage

101 What follows is based closely on Plutarch, 53.3-6 and 57.3.

994 So many lands forming her heritage.”
 995 So well did your wiles and simpers prevail
 996 And those protesting flatterers avail,
 997 That Octavienne, my sister and his wife,
 998 Was chased away—and plunged you into strife.¹⁰²
 999 Nothing to say? Do you see no more use
 1000 In trying to soothe me with some excuse?
 1001 What of the wrong to those Romans done
 1002 Who from the hands had secretly to run
 1003 Of your Antony, when your unbridled fury
 1004 Did them injury after injury?¹⁰³
 1005 What would you say of that fine testament
 1006 That Antony had in secrecy sent
 1007 To be kept safe among the Vestal maids?
 1008 These evils proved to be the fatal aids
 1009 To your misfortunes: and now, though less clever,
 1010 To be excused remains still your endeavour.
 1011 Be content, Cleopatra, and reflect
 1012 To pardon is enough, more than correct
 1013 To maintain the spindle of your lives,¹⁰⁴
 1014 Of which no sentence your children deprives.

CLEOPATRA

1015 Now, Caesar, wretched, myself I accuse,
 1016 And for my first excuse myself excuse,
 1017 Recognising that nothing but your pity
 1018 Can serve to bridle your hostility,
 1019 Which already shows toward me such slackening
 1020 That you will not make of me an offering
 1021 To the gods of the shades, nor of my offspring,
 1022 Who in these entrails here had engendering.
 1023 So, for what slight power remains to me,

102 “[A]nd plunged you into strife”: orig. “et dechasser votre heur” (lit. “and chased away your happiness”).

103 On this accusation, which leads into the account of Antony’s will, one provision of which consigned his body to Cleopatra, cf. Plutarch, 58.2-4.

104 The image is the familiar one of the thread of life, which Caesar undertakes not to pre-empt the Fates by cutting—a promise not kept in the case of Caesarion (see Plutarch, 82.1).

1024 I yield, I yield thanks to Your Majesty,
 1025 And as proof to Caesar that for my part
 1026 I am his own, and that with all my heart,
 1027 I wish, Caesar, to disclose all the gold,
 1028 Silver and goods that as treasure I hold.

CHORUS¹⁰⁵

1029 When harsh servitude
 1030 The soft neck confines
 1031 And the yoke is rude,
 1032 A person repines;
 1033 No need for disgrace
 1034 From a scornful frown
 1035 Or strong blows to face
 1036 For the wretch tied down;
 1037 Enough—he'll avow;
 1038 Enough—himself constrain;
 1039 Enough—do it now:
 1040 All for fear of pain.
 1041 Such the wretched nature
 1042 Of a poor slave's place;
 1043 No worse may endure
 1044 One of Japheth's race.¹⁰⁶

OCTAVIAN

1045 The ancient riches and the ample treasure
 1046 You set down here attest to the high stature
 1047 Of your race, and no joy does it afford

105 As in ll. 867-78, a Chorus “covering” stage business—here Cleopatra’s presentation of her accounts, as in Plutarch, 83.3, where the contradiction of Seleucus and her violent reaction likewise follow. Might an audience detect an ironic evocation of Jesus’s injunction, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s . . .” (Mark 12:17; cf. Matt. 22:21, Luke 20:25)? In any case, the choric meditation on hopeless captivity is obviously to the point.

106 L. 1044: orig. “De Iapet le fils”—i.e., humankind, Japheth being one of the sons of Noah by whom the earth was repopulated after the Flood (Gen. 9:18-19, 10:1-5). He came to be figured as the ancestor of European peoples; see *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, gen. ed. David Lyle Jeffrey (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Erdmans, 1992), *s.v.*

1048 To be of all things in the land the lord;¹⁰⁷
 1049 I regret that sudden necessity
 1050 Makes royal heritage a victor's fee.

SELEUCUS [*advancing*]

1051 How, Caesar—if one of such lowliness
 1052 May dare his voice to your grandeur address—
 1053 How can you estimate the treasure's value,
 1054 On what my princess has seen fit to show you?
 1055 Do you truly think (I dare to tell all)
 1056 That her treasure could really be so small?
 1057 The least of the queens who your rule obey
 1058 Can as much wealth and influence display—
 1059 As far from what my Cleopatra wields
 1060 As a mere country cottage in the fields
 1061 Is distant from a haughty grand chateau
 1062 Or frozen peak from some slight mound below.
 1063 She who of all Egypt had the command
 1064 And the fertile waters of the Nile once spanned,¹⁰⁸
 1065 To whom the Jew, as well as the Phoenician,
 1066 Both the Arabian and the Cilician,
 1067 Before your thunder upon us descended,
 1068 Paid customary homage on knees bended—
 1069 She who managed the wealth of Antony,
 1070 Who outdid all in pompous ceremony:
 1071 Could she have this slight treasure she has told?
 1072 Be sure, Caesar, be sure that of her gold
 1073 And all she has the better part concealed.

CLEOPATRA

1074 O false murderer, O false traitor—peeled
 1075 Shall be your scalp from your merciless head!¹⁰⁹

107 L. 1048: orig. "D'estre du tout en la terre seigneur". Cf. the striking reference to Caesar in Shakespeare as the "universal landlord" (*Ant.*, III.xiii.72), when Thidias urges Cleopatra's submission.

108 L. 1064: orig. "Et qui du Nil l'eau fertile franchit".

109 "[P]eeled / Shall be your scalp from your merciless head": orig. "arraché / Sera le poil de ta teste cruelle"; the translation imitates the disjunctive language of her fury.

1076 Would to the gods it were your brains instead!
1077 Take that, traitor, and that!

SELEUCUS

O gods!

CLEOPATRA

How despicable!¹¹⁰

1078 A slave, a mere slave!

OCTAVIAN

But how admirable

1079 This ferocity!

CLEOPATRA

You charge me with theft

1080 As if of my virtue I were bereft

1081 As well as Antony. Traitor!

SELEUCUS

Restrain

1082 Her, mighty Caesar, hold her back!

CLEOPATRA

In vain

1083 All my favours! Ah, my grief and remorse

1084 Infuse my languorous heart with such force

1085 That I could—I feel it—with my fists smash

1086 Your bones, your feeble sides with furrows gash

1087 With blows of my feet.

OCTAVIAN

Oh, what a fierce rampage!

1088 But nothing is more furious than the rage

110 As pointed out by Hall, ed., n., l. 1077 is, anomalously, an Alexandrine, but perhaps Seleucus' interjection (or Cleopatra's repetition) should not be counted.

1089 Of woman's heart. Well, Cleopatra, will
 1090 That do? Of beating him quite had your fill?
 1091 [*to Seleucus*] Fly, my friend, fly!

[*Exit Seleucus.*]

CLEOPATRA

What's this, what's this I sense?

1092 Can it be, Emperor, such care intense
 1093 For the world again to this wretch is due?
 1094 His baseness astonishes even you,
 1095 I believe, when I, the queen of this place,
 1096 Am accused by my vassal to my face,
 1097 While you, Caesar, to visit me have deigned
 1098 And spoken so that my calm I regained.
 1099 Ah, what if I withheld some jewellery
 1100 And clothing that went with my royalty,
 1101 Would this have been for me in my poor state—
 1102 For whom, alas, such things no longer rate?
 1103 But this was the hope I entertained then:
 1104 That to your Livia and Octavienne
 1105 Of these my jewels I would make a present
 1106 And thereby gain their pity as due payment,
 1107 So that, not finding my presents unwelcome,
 1108 My advocates to Caesar they'd become.

OCTAVIAN

1109 Have no fear. Your wealth I wish kept apart
 1110 For your own uses. Therefore now take heart
 1111 And live likewise in your captivity
 1112 As at the height of your prosperity.
 1113 Farewell. Consider that one cannot find
 1114 Things ill, unless they are so in our mind.
 1115 I return.

CLEOPATRA

1116 May you so befriended be
 By Fate as it has been my enemy.

[*Exeunt Octavian and Cleopatra separately.*]

[*Enter Seleucus.*]

CHORUS

1117 Where are you running to, Seleucus, where?

SELEUCUS

1118 To flee from deadly anger is my care.

CHORUS

1119 What anger? O God,¹¹¹ if we're at risk, then . . . ?

SELEUCUS

1120 I'm fleeing neither Caesar nor his men.

CHORUS

1121 What else for us can Fortune have in store?

SELEUCUS

1122 Just an offended woman, nothing more.

CHORUS

1123 You mean our Queen has suffered injury?

111 “God”: orig. “Dieu” (with capital). Such generic references to the deity are not usually felt to be anachronistic in pagan contexts, but the Chorus here does seem to be momentarily carried by excitement out of its fictional time, place and role (“women of Alexandria”). Hall, ed., n. to l. 1119, plausibly adopts the proposition that the Chorus is feigning ignorance in order to mock Seleucus; in any case, their expression of fear depends on their sex, as seems to figure in Seleucus’ reaction in l. 1120. That mingling monotheistic and polytheistic references was not necessarily a casual matter for audiences and readers of humanist drama appears from a justification appended to the address to the reader by Claude Mermet in his translation (from the Italian of Giangiorgio Trissini) of *La tragédie de Sophonisbe, reine de Numidie* (Lyons: Léonard Odet, 1584):

Lon ne trouuera estrange si i’ay parlé en la Tragedie quelquefois d’un Dieu, & quelquefois des Dieux : car telle estoit la coustume des Payens qui en icelle sont representez. Et de fait ie ne pouuoy de moins, que d’imiter & ensuiure la phrase de mon autheur. (sig. a7^r)

[It will not be found strange if in this tragedy I have sometimes spoken of one God and sometimes of the gods, for such was the custom of the pagans represented here. And in fact I could do no less than imitate and follow the expression of my author.] (translation mine)

SELEUCUS

1124 No, but she has been offended by me.

CHORUS

1125 What misfortune, then, procured your offence?

SELEUCUS

1126 What would that matter, or my innocence?

CHORUS

1127 But tell us—telling won't cause any hurt.

SELEUCUS

1128 It would do no good all at large to blurt.

CHORUS

1129 But given that you now have reached the door . . .

SELEUCUS

1130 But given that I was punished before . . .

CHORUS

1131 Having been punished, are you not now free?

SELEUCUS

1132 Having been punished, I feel still more guilty;
 1133 And still in me a fury I contain
 1134 That hounds me with the menace that such pain
 1135 Will constantly pierce my furious soul.¹¹²
 1136 When the Queen—broken-hearted yet heart-whole¹¹³—
 1137 Before Caesar my hair all but tore out,
 1138 And with her fierce fist my face knocked about,
 1139 If she had struck me down to lie there killed,

112 Ll. 1133-35: the repetition “fury”/“furious” is present in the original (“furie”/“furieuse”).

113 “[B]roken-hearted yet heart-whole”: orig. “et triste et courageuse”.

1140 My present longing she would have fulfilled,
 1141 Since death would not have been so hard to bear
 1142 As the eternal sting and biting care
 1143 Which now so deeply wound me with distress
 1144 At having wounded my Queen and my mistress.

CHORUS

1145 Oh, what happiness ordains
 1146 He who over heaven reigns
 1147 For one who accepts his lot,
 1148 Out of greed advancing not
 1149 Beyond his joy in freedom,
 1150 And whose neck does not succumb
 1151 To the yoke and too-tight ropes
 1152 Of that chase for earthly hopes.
 1153 But the caverns wild instead,
 1154 Fair meadows with green carpeted,
 1155 The bushes that with sprouts teem,
 1156 Murmurs of many a stream,
 1157 The throat from which sweet sounds well
 1158 Of chirruping Philomel,
 1159 And expectation of springtime—
 1160 These his goods and such his pastime,
 1161 Without which the soul that yearns
 1162 With greater desire burns,
 1163 Pursues pompous trains unending,
 1164 Then at last, his kings offending,
 1165 The meagre recompense swallows
 1166 Of fire or sword or gallows,
 1167 Or else a thousand regrets,
 1168 Like a thousand deaths, he gets.
 1169 If we find inconstant Fortune
 1170 In the morning opportune,
 1171 It's inopportune at night:
 1172 Time cannot arrest its flight
 1173 At fortunes it may accord,

1174 But will bring to one a cord¹¹⁴
 1175 Whom previously it placed
 1176 High among its friends most graced.
 1177 Whatever of death or pain
 1178 The sun brings us to sustain
 1179 In bringing us a new day,
 1180 Whether it some while will stay
 1181 Or, because of grievous death,
 1182 Linger for a single breath,
 1183 One by ardent longing teased,
 1184 Always feels he has been seized.
 1185 Areius of this same city,¹¹⁵
 1186 Whom foolish cupidity
 1187 Was never able to stir—
 1188 Venerable philosopher,
 1189 Who scorned the pompous profusion
 1190 Comprising this town's illusion¹¹⁶—
 1191 During our great time of woe,
 1192 Good and happiness did know:
 1193 Caesar, entering his conquest,
 1194 At such wisdom manifest,
 1195 The contented happiness,
 1196 The reason and truthfulness
 1197 That good master could command,
 1198 Caused him at his own right hand
 1199 To walk and give us example,
 1200 Among us like a miracle.¹¹⁷
 1201 Seleucus, who for our queen
 1202 Receiver of payments has been

114 I.e., a rope to be hanged with. The rhyme on “accord”/“cord” is present in the original (“accorde”/“corde”).

115 Octavian's great respect for, and deference to, the Stoic philosopher Areius Didymus is recounted by Plutarch, 80.1-3, including the story of the entry into Alexandria as the Chorus adapts it. Cf. Montreux, II.729 ff., where Areius counsels mildness for the Egyptian populace but harsh punishment for Cleopatra. (Jodelle does not, any more than Montreux, take up the detail from Plutarch, 81.2, that Areius counselled the murder of Caesarion as a precaution—in notable contrast with Daniel, III.i.573-86).

116 L. 1190: orig.: “Dont cette ville se trompe”.

117 L. 1200: orig.: “Comme un miracle entre tous”.

1203 In part, and oversaw how
 1204 All was managed, receives now¹¹⁸—
 1205 Besides that woeful misfortune
 1206 Which leaves none of us immune—
 1207 Graver infelicity
 1208 Than our mere captivity.
 1209 But this latest show of courage
 1210 Of my queen may serve as presage
 1211 And impose a change of speech:
 1212 Atropos's deadly reach¹¹⁹
 1213 Rome's triumph will not permit
 1214 For my queen who has such spirit,
 1215 Who her own hands will use
 1216 The Roman race to abuse –
 1217 She who in her constancy
 1218 Took rough vengeance suddenly
 1219 Upon a slave, and whose furor
 1220 Did not fear her Emperor.
 1221 Believe it, sooner her blood
 1222 Will soak a sword in a flood
 1223 Than, somewhat less to suffer,
 1224 She will consent to dishonour.

SELEUCUS

1225 Oh, sacred words! Oh, truth beyond all doubt!
 1226 Like a throw of the dice our lives play out.

118 The ironic play in ll. 1202 and 1204 on positive and negative forms of “receiving” is in the original (“recevait”/“reçoit”).

119 Atropos: of the three Fates, she who cuts the thread of life—hence, death itself.

Act IV

Cleopatra, Charmium, Eras, Chorus

CLEOPATRA

- 1227 Might Caesar then suppose the whole world on his plate?
 1228 Suppose this heart of mine he can adulterate,¹²⁰
 1229 When from hardy ancient stock this strength I derive:¹²¹
 1230 Never to yield while bitter Death¹²² leaves me alive?
 1231 Death, and not Caesar, over me shall have the conquest;
 1232 Death, and not Caesar, to my spirits shall give rest;
 1233 Death, and not Caesar, shall triumph¹²³ over me;
 1234 Death, and not Caesar, shall finish my agony.
 1235 And if today in some little measure I feigned,
 1236 So that my offspring with their blood should not be
 stained –
 1237 What then? Did Caesar suppose that in what I said
 1238 My heart and my voice would be perfectly united?
 1239 Caesar, Caesar, Caesar—a mere matter of course
 1240 For you to subjugate this heart in bonds of force:
 1241 But the pity for my children’s blood that might spill
 1242 Was the cause that my speech triumphed over my will—
 1243 Not pity I might have if I, in misery,
 1244 Myself cut the thread already too long for me.¹²⁴
 1245 Courage, therefore, courage, O sharers of my fate—
 1246 Mere servants of mine once, in death equally great.
 1247 You have acknowledged Cleopatra as your princess;
 1248 From now on only Death acknowledge as your mistress.

CHARMIUM

- 1249 Even if all the evils our queen has endured,
 1250 Even if the heavens (as they against us conjured),

120 “[A]dulterate”: orig. “abastardir”, in the sense of “corrupt”, “enfeeble”.

121 L. 1129: orig. “Veü que des tiges vieux ceste vigueur j’herite”—the image is of her ancestry as well-rooted and vigorous plants.

122 “Death”: orig. “la Parque”.

123 “[T]riumph” (orig. “triumphera”) specifically evokes the Roman victory celebration she will evade; the term is ironically charged in l. 1242 below (“triumphed” [“triumphans”]).

124 Again, the image is of the thread of life, which Atropos would normally cut.

1251 Even if the earth (in anger against us ranged),
 1252 Even if Fortune (from us in folly estranged),
 1253 Even if Antony's death (worse than miserable),
 1254 Even if Caesar's pomp (to him so desirable),
 1255 Even if the pact we three made a while ago
 1256 (That the same day would join us in the world below)—
 1257 Have all enough sharpened the courage of my spirit
 1258 To garner by self-outrage a conqueror's merit,
 1259 This remedy of death, sure antidote to grieving,
 1260 Now comes to appeal more fully in my perceiving.
 1261 For good Dolabella—to our affair as friendly
 1262 As Caesar bears towards us rank hostility—
 1263 Made known to you, O Queen, after the Emperor
 1264 Had left you alone, and after your burst of furor
 1265 Levelled at Seleucus, vigorously and justly,
 1266 It is appointed that in three days this sweet country
 1267 We must leave behind, and, carried within Rome's gates,
 1268 Be made a spectacle for their effeminate.¹²⁵

ERAS

1269 O Death, O gentle Death, the one and only cure
 1270 Of spirits that cruel imprisonment endure,
 1271 Why do you tolerate such wrong done to your rights?
 1272 O gentle, gentle Death, have we offered you slights?
 1273 Why, O slow Atropos,¹²⁶ do you restrain your hand?
 1274 Why will you suffer it that this poor captive band,
 1275 Which soon will be denied the gift of liberty,
 1276 Does not yet have its spirits by your dart set free?
 1277 Hasten, then, hasten, and this boast you may maintain:
 1278 That even from Caesar himself the spoils you gain.

125 L. 1268: orig. "Donner un beau spectacle à leurs effeminees". Hall, ed., n., seems unnecessarily puzzled by this line, which would seem straightforwardly to evoke those Romans not manly enough to have achieved such a conquest, with the noun attracting the feminine gender to make the point.

There is an intriguing possibility that the line stood out sufficiently to inspire the remarkable meta-theatrical reference by Shakespeare's Cleopatra, in the identical context, who anticipates that Rome's "quick comedians" will "stage" her as a "whore" cavorting with a "drunken" (effeminate?) Anthony (*Ant.*, V.ii.216-21). None of the other analogues highlights this fear of theatricalised ridicule.

126 "Death", as named ("mort") in the previous lines, is now re-figured in the familiar form of Atropos (orig. "Parque"), which leads more smoothly into the reference in l. 1281 to the latter's sister.

1279 Do not permit, then, that Phoebus, who for us shines,
 1280 Should be led to his uncle's house when he declines¹²⁷—
 1281 That your sister,¹²⁸ cruel to us, though kindly meant,
 1282 Should draw out still further the thread that brings us
 torment.
 1283 Do not permit that fear of joining the pale band
 1284 An offering to you today should countermand;
 1285 The occasion is sure, and no one can our courage
 1286 Now weaken, to keep us from paying you our homage.
 1287 Caesar truly thinks us ready at his behest
 1288 To go and bear witness to his most fruitful quest.¹²⁹

CLEOPATRA

1289 Let us die, then, dear sisters, to serve more willingly
 1290 Pluto than that Caesar who has defeated me.
 1291 And yet, before dying, first satisfy we must
 1292 The obsequies of Antony; then die we must.¹³⁰
 1293 Caesar I informed, who is willing that the end
 1294 Of my lord (alas!) I may honour—and my friend.
 1295 So descend, therefore, Heaven, and before I die,
 1296 On this hour's last act of mourning turn your eye:
 1297 You might be put off at seeing me in this state,
 1298 Annoyed that strangely I mourn while death I await.
 1299 Come on, then, dear sisters, with tears, weeping and
 wailing
 1300 Let us weaken ourselves, so that in his assailing
 1301 Our neighbour Death may less harshly impose his sway,
 1302 Once we for our spirits have half-opened the way.

127 The sun-god's daily round finishes when Poseidon, his uncle, receives him at the close. (Cf. above, n. 18.) The (somewhat elliptical) wish here is that the cycle will not continue for them, hence that no new day will dawn.

128 Lachesis, as the second of the three Fates, drew out and/or measured the thread of life spun by Clotho and cut by Atropos.

129 “[Q]uest”: orig. “questes”. Hall, ed., n. to 1288, glosses simply as “conquêtes”/“conquests”, which is obviously the gist, but especially in the late-medieval context, the term might well have carried ironic chivalric resonance; certainly, it also had specific application to hunting. See *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v.

130 Ll. 1289-92: the original likewise exploits repetition for rhetorical effect (“Mourons donc”, “avant que mourir”, “puis mourir faudra”).

[*Exit Cleopatra.*]

CHORUS

1303 But tell me where, I pray you, ladies, tell me where
 1304 My queen may be going thus. What soul-bruising care,
 1305 What deathly laments, have tarnished her fair complexion?
 1306 Had the dry fever not sufficient damage done?

CHARMIUM

1307 To the place of entombment her sad paces tend,
 1308 Where Death has relegated the bones of her friend.

CHORUS

1309 Then why do we stay here? Let us follow our mistress.

ERAS

1310 If you would follow her, you must follow Distress.

CHORUS

1311 When hail comes down hurtling
 1312 Upon the roof,
 1313 The wood's green covering
 1314 Is hardly proof;
 1315 Through vineyards it goes rattling
 1316 In its furor,
 1317 And of the farmer baffling
 1318 His hard labour;
 1319 Remains insatiate
 1320 Till darts it shoots
 1321 Eventually frustrate
 1322 All hope of fruit.
 1323 When pain upon us throws
 1324 What pricks and stings,
 1325 All are struck by its arrows
 1326 Or by its slings.
 1327 If our queen must weep,
 1328 Can anyone
 1329 Of us from like tears keep?

1330 No—there is none.
 1331 Afflictions confuse us
 1332 A thousand-fold:
 1333 Just ears of the envious
 1334 May be consoled.
 1335 Let our sad voice to tears
 1336 Give way and be
 1337 A wreck misfortune steers,
 1338 As are these three.
 1339 Near the tomb the queen reclines
 1340 To mourn her fill;
 1341 Now of speech she gives signs:
 1342 Hush, then, be still.¹³¹

CLEOPATRA

1343 Antony, O Antony, O dear half of me,
 1344 If Antony had not had Heaven's enmity;¹³²
 1345 Antony, alas, by misfortune from me torn—
 1346 Hear the feeble voice of a feeble captive mourn,
 1347 Who in this hollow tomb her own hands had employed
 1348 To place your dead limbs¹³³ while freedom she still
 enjoyed,
 1349 But who, held captive, led to infelicity,
 1350 A subject prisoner, guarded in her own city,
 1351 Now does your sacrifice—not without trepidation
 1352 To draw out in this place too long a lamentation,
 1353 Since I am watched lest the sorrow I entertain
 1354 Should by death effect the conclusion of my pain.
 1355 For this my body, which they would of pain deprive,
 1356 Must by its presence make the Roman triumph thrive:

131 The final stanza makes it clear that the Chorus has indeed “followed” Cleopatra, as suggested in l. 1309 and confirmed by l. 1387; in keeping with medieval techniques of staging, the first part of this chorus may therefore accompany the action of “travelling” to a new locale, as is borne out by the sequel.

132 There may be a suggestion of future or virtual marriage here—a point that figures in all three plays; cf. the poignant wish of Cleopatra at the point of suicide in Shakespeare, *Ant.*: “Husband, I come! / Now to that name my courage prove my title” (V.ii.286-87).

133 “[D]ead limbs”: orig. “la cendre”—lit. “ashes”, but it is clear that Antony was not cremated, and the term must be used metaphorically.

1357 Triumph, I say—alas!—they would adorn with me;
 1358 Triumph, I say—alas!—that your disgrace would
 be.
 1359 From this time forward you must not from me expect
 1360 Other offerings or further marks of respect;
 1361 The honour that I do you now the last shall be
 1362 That Cleopatra pays to her dead Antony.
 1363 And although, while you lived, no force and violence
 1364 Could force the fracturing of our most sure
 alliance
 1365 And separate us, strongly, however, I dread
 1366 That we will separate from each other when dead,
 1367 And that Antony in Egypt will make his home,
 1368 Whereas I, though an Egyptian, will die in Rome.
 1369 But if the potent gods have power in that place
 1370 Where you are now, bring it about that some god's
 grace
 1371 Will never allow that, compelled from here to go,
 1372 In my person they triumph over you also;
 1373 But let your burial-box (oh, pitiful sight!)
 1374 Two wretched lovers, the two of us, reunite –
 1375 A tomb to which Egypt will yet due honour pay,
 1376 And perhaps for us make an epitaph some day:
 1377 Here lie two lovers who, content when they
 lived still,
 1378 Of happiness, honour, rejoicing drank their fill,
 1379 But in the end such misery were seen to meet
 1380 That the happiness of both was death soon to greet.
 1381 Before Caesar departs, then, receive, oh receive me:
 1382 Let sooner my life-spirit than my honour leave me.
 1383 For of all my ills, burdens, sufferings intense—
 1384 All my sighs, regrets, cares and my infinite
 torments –
 1385 I count as most grievous that span of time, though
 slight,
 1386 Since I felt you slipping, Antony, out of sight. [*Exit.*]

CHORUS

1387 See, she enters, weeping, where the tombs are confined;

1388 To all of this the sputtering torches are blind.

ERAS

1389 What spirit so firm it would not fly out of reach
1390 Almost with pity at hearing such a sad speech?

CHARMIUM

1391 O body,¹³⁴ truly happy when not on this earth!
1392 Man is unhappy¹³⁵ till a tomb confines his girth.

CHORUS

1393 Would any so desire, then, life to sustain?
1394 Who is there who would not hold this life in disdain?

CLEOPATRA [*re-entering*]

1395 So let us go, good sisters, and gently procure
1396 Of our sorrowful misfortunes the happy cure.

[*Exeunt Cleopatra, Eras and Charmium.*]

CHORUS

STROPHE

1397 Greater is the pain
1398 That outrageous Fate
1399 Makes friends obtain
1400 Than the joy is great
1401 Of the friend who dies,
1402 When to the band he flies
1403 Of spirits now happy—
1404 Spirits who are free
1405 From all brutal blows:
1406 Immune himself he knows

134 “[B]ody”: orig “cendre” (“ashes”); cf. above, n. 133, and Hall, ed., n. to ll. 1391-92.

135 “[H]appy”: orig. “heureux”, likewise repeated from l. 1391 (“heureuse”). The lines echo a classical commonplace associated with Solon and the Greek tragedians. Given the evocation of lamenting Trojan women in ll. 1419-22 below, especially to the point may be Hecuba in Euripides, *The Trojan Women*: “Of all who walk in bliss / call not one happy yet, until the man is dead” (trans. Richmond Lattimore, *Greek Tragedies*, vol. II, ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore [Chicago: Phoenix Books, University of Chicago Press, 1960], ll. 509-10).

1407 From ills endured painfully.

ANTISTROPHE

1408 None of the Charites¹³⁶
 1409 Upon the isle of Cyprus,
 1410 When the boar hot in chase
 1411 With his tusk furious
 1412 To his death did bring
 1413 Myrrha's wretched offspring,
 1414 Shed tears as profusely
 1415 As we for Antony,
 1416 Forced to enter on
 1417 The barque of oblivion
 1418 By raging enmity.

EPODE

1419 The lamentation
 1420 Of Trojan women
 1421 For domination
 1422 By Grecian men¹³⁷
 1423 Did not so rise
 1424 As deathly cries
 1425 For Antony
 1426 In our queen's plea.

STROPHE

1427 Yet now it is my fear
 1428 That we will have to weep
 1429 For our queen on her bier,
 1430 Who life cannot long keep
 1431 Amid this world's ill,
 1432 Which proves fertile still,

136 L. 1408: orig. "Chacune Charite". The singular of "Charites" (i.e., the Graces, imagined as attendants of Venus) would properly be "Charis" ("χαρις"). The allusion is to Myrrha's son Adonis, beloved by Venus, who was killed by the jealous Mars in the form of a boar.

137 In associating themselves with the mourning women of Troy, the Alexandrian women notably extend the motif of lamentation beyond the personal and erotic sphere (as in the death of Adonis) into the political.

1433 Ever propagating,
 1434 New proliferating:
 1435 We see her gladly give
 1436 To life the will to live,
 1437 Countless deaths creating.

ANTISTROPHE

1438 Gay, with green overspread,
 1439 Sometime was the forest;
 1440 The land overspread
 1441 Brought forth Ceres' harvest;
 1442 Flora on the meadow
 1443 Did colours bestow—
 1444 When for all things here
 1445 At once did appear
 1446 What their ruin made:
 1447 Winter, the sickle blade
 1448 And scythe that cut sheer.

EPODE

1449 Already torment
 1450 Spoils happiness,
 1451 Joy and content
 1452 For my princess;
 1453 Her face's hue
 1454 Continues true,
 1455 But death's pale trace
 1456 Will it efface.

STROPHE

1457 Now she has done the rite
 1458 Of honour to the tomb;
 1459 Oh, how she pleased the sight
 1460 And struck it with gloom—
 1461 Pleased it as her roses
 1462 With grace she discloses

1463 Amid the sad cypress;¹³⁸
 1464 Then her lips do press
 1465 Countless times the stone,
 1466 Which seems on its own
 1467 To grant her soul access.

ANTISTROPHE

1468 Pouring forth the dew,
 1469 The heart's distillation
 1470 Her eyes upward drew,
 1471 And next the libation
 1472 To the body owed;
 1473 Then to our hearing flowed
 1474 From her some words forlorn,
 1475 Low sounds scarcely born.
 1476 The rite to conclude,
 1477 Overall she strewed
 1478 Strands from her head torn.

EPODE

1479 Yet we despaired
 1480 Because it seemed
 1481 Of her life shared
 1482 Alone she dreamed,
 1483 And before long
 1484 To us will belong
 1485 For her sake, too,
 1486 Those rites to do.

138 No doubt a funeral tribute of flowers and foliage, as proposed by Hall, ed., n. to ll. 1461-63. As in the original, the Chorus veers into present-tense evocation of the scene just witnessed.

Act V

Proculeius, Chorus

PROCULEIUS

1487 O just heaven!—unless this grievous blow
 1488 May justly make us your injustice know:
 1489 By what fatality by your gods conjured,
 1490 Or by what astral calculation measured,¹³⁹
 1491 Did misfortune steal such a victory
 1492 As could not be believed, did one not see?
 1493 O you gods of the sombre world below,
 1494 Appointed to remove each person's shadow
 1495 From his body, what pale Megaera played
 1496 A part in seeing such rare ruin made?¹⁴⁰
 1497 O proud Earth, fouled with corpses of your brood
 1498 At all hours, and with their blood imbrued,
 1499 Have your sides before this moment sustained
 1500 Furor that greater bravery maintained?
 1501 Not when your sons to Jupiter climbed high
 1502 And dared, in serpent form, combat to try;¹⁴¹
 1503 For they, to be exempt from Heaven's right,
 1504 Sought against the great gods themselves to fight,
 1505 By whom in the end, after fierce assaults,
 1506 They were confined within their mountain vaults.
 1507 But these three here, whose courage, undetected,
 1508 Of such rage would never have been suspected,
 1509 Who are far from Giants of serpent kind,
 1510 By doubling the rage of a woman's mind,
 1511 In order Caesar's will to disobey,
 1512 Their own lives have been willing to betray.
 1513 O Jupiter! O gods! What bitter parts

139 The rhyme “conjuré”/“mesuré” is present in the original.

140 Megaera: the one of the three Furies most closely (and etymologically) linked with envy and its punishment. It may be to the point that Garnier, in *Porcie* (pub. 1568), would make her preside over the punishment of Rome by civil war for its arrogant pretensions to hegemonic greatness.

141 Yet another reference to the war of the Giants, now enlisted to conclude Proculeius' progressive appreciation of the conquest of the conquering Caesar by Cleopatra and her companions.

1514 Do you permit thus to these lofty hearts!
 1515 What horrors with this have you brought to birth
 1516 To be in our descendants' mouths on earth
 1517 As long as your machine¹⁴² is still maintained,
 1518 Turning by balanced counterweights sustained!
 1519 Enlighten me, therefore, you flaming lights,
 1520 Heavenly torches with all in your sights:
 1521 Could you ever find, in this troubled vale,
 1522 A thing more awful your view to assail?¹⁴³
 1523 Accuse yourselves now, O you Destinies!
 1524 Accuse yourselves, heaven's silver-bright bodies!¹⁴⁴
 1525 And Egypt, prey to rivals for worst crimes,
 1526 Curse unjust Destiny a hundred times!
 1527 And you, Caesar, and you Romans besides,
 1528 Lament, for by Death¹⁴⁵ Cleopatra slides
 1529 From your eager grasp at the present hour,
 1530 And thwarts the utmost effort of your power.

CHORUS

1531 Oh, hard—and too hard—this turn of events!
 1532 A thousand-fold hard, exceeding our sense!

PROCULEIUS

1533 Ah, the mere thought of this catastrophe¹⁴⁶
 1534 Cannot arise without offending me,
 1535 Yet if I banish it from my heart's core,

142 “[M]achine”: either the earth or the universe itself; see Hall, ed., n. to ll. 1517-18.

143 The inflated rhetorical turn is sufficiently distinctive to suspect François de Chantelouve of adapting it parodically to his eponymous villain in *The Tragedy of the Late Admiral Coligny* (1574), who apostrophises Aurora at daybreak: “Have you ever seen, using your watchful eyes, / Brave men as unhappy as I beneath the skies?” (I.i.61-62). See François de Chantelouve, *The Tragedy of the Late Admiral Coligny*, and Pierre Matthieu, *The Guisarde*, trans. with Introduction and Notes by Richard Hillman, Carleton Renaissance Plays in Translation, 40 (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 2005).

144 “[S]ilver-bright bodies”: orig. “flambeaux argentins”.

145 “Death”: orig. “la Parque”.

146 “[C]atastrophe”: orig. “crime”—a term which in English seems at once ambiguous and too narrow for the context, even if “catastrophe” risks adding self-reflexivity to the tragic conclusion.

1536 By shunning it I offend myself more.¹⁴⁷
 1537 Therefore, hear me speak, you Citizens, hear—
 1538 And in hearing let your sorrow appear.
 1539 I had come in her distress to support
 1540 Cleopatra, and to offer her comfort,¹⁴⁸
 1541 When I found the guards making a great din
 1542 At her chamber door, at last breaking in:
 1543 On entering that chamber so confined
 1544 I saw—oh rare and wretched sight to find!—
 1545 My Cleopatra, royally arrayed,
 1546 And with her crown, upon a rich bed laid
 1547 (One painted and gilded), she pale and dead,
 1548 Supine, although by no sword was she wounded,
 1549 With Eras, her woman, dead at her feet
 1550 And Charmium alive, whom I did greet
 1551 With these accusing words: “Ah, Charmium,
 1552 Does such a deed nobility become?”
 1553 And she then:¹⁴⁹ “Yes, yes, such nobility
 1554 As witnesses Egyptian royalty
 1555 Of ancient descent.” She swayed, at thin air
 1556 Grasped to stand, and toppled back lifeless there.
 1557 See of those three the end in fearful state;
 1558 See of those three the lamentable fate.
 1559 No separation Love will authorise
 1560 Of two bodies he joined by lasting ties.¹⁵⁰
 1561 Heaven will not everything permit
 1562 Envisaged by an enterprising spirit.

147 Ll. 33-36: Proculeius appears to debate with himself whether to speak, as he does with l. 1537, which is typologically set apart.

148 The narrative is loosely adapted from Plutarch, 85.3-4, where Caesar sends unnamed messengers on learning of Cleopatra's intention, and it is one of them who challenges Charmion in a more neutral phrase, which Amyot translated as “Cela est-il beau, Charmion?” (*ed. cit.*, VI: 3511). Shakespeare's rendering of the scene (*Ant.*, V.ii.318 ff.) is closer to Plutarch, except for the successive arrivals of Dolabella and Caesar.

149 For clarity, the translation, unlike the original, signals the change of speaker.

150 Proculeius' affirmation effectively signals fulfilment of Cleopatra's prayer in IV.1369-74 that “some god's grace” (1370) may assure their burial together. In the light of Plutarch (86.4), the god of love is thus ironically evoked as imposing his power upon Caesar by way of Cleopatra. Arguably, the conclusion of Montreux develops this idea by way of a virtual conversion on Caesar's part; see esp. V.2611-20 and 2677-78, and the Introduction, pp. 23-25.

1563 Caesar will see, spoiled of expected gain,
 1564 That none in the world content may remain;¹⁵¹
 1565 Egypt will be doubled in its distress,
 1566 Losing, after such happiness, its mistress;
 1567 And even I, here present as its foe,
 1568 At that thought am all but fainting from woe:
 1569 My mind gives way, my voice fades to a sigh—
 1570 Oh, what uncertain order reigns on high!

CHORUS

1571 Is there a chance of hearing still
 1572 From you, troupe, a single voice?¹⁵²
 1573 Do you now even have the choice
 1574 Your grief in dirges to distil?
 1575 For, alas, so full of distress,
 1576 To be your strongest support
 1577 Death offers the only comfort—
 1578 Death, alas, now our happiness!
 1579 But borrow, borrow such desire
 1580 From that bird of purest white
 1581 We hear at water's edge recite
 1582 That from life it will retire.¹⁵³
 1583 And as with grief you overflow,
 1584 For all the heavens show disdain,
 1585 For all their gods the like disdain¹⁵⁴—
 1586 Authors of your extreme woe.
 1587 No, no—your bitter agony,
 1588 To think of it, cannot loom
 1589 So large that for hope no room
 1590 Remains within your misery.
 1591 Your Cleopatra, thus cut down,
 1592 To the world will not perish:
 1593 Time will her ever cherish,

151 Proculeius' view of mortal instability in II.651 ff. has thus been corroborated. Cf. also Charmium's affirmation in IV.1391-92.

152 The Chorus (of Alexandrian women) is addressing itself.

153 The allusion, of course, is to the fabulous "swan-song"; see Hall, ed., n. to ll. 1579-80.

154 The translation aims at capturing a rhetorical repetition in ll. 1584 and 1585 of the original.

1594 Who already spreads her renown
 1595 From the vermilion sun we see
 1596 Rising here where now we are
 1597 To his place of sleeping, far
 1598 Opposite in a strange country;
 1599 For contrary to Rome's proud plan
 1600 There to put her on display,
 1601 Here she preferred herself to slay,
 1602 More courageous than a man.

PROCULEIUS

1603 But what shall I tell Caesar? Oh, the horror
 1604 That will be his response to such strange furor!
 1605 What will he say of such death without sight
 1606 Of any wound? Is it not from the bite
 1607 Of an asp of some sort? Could there have been
 1608 Some poison somehow brought to them unseen?¹⁵⁵
 1609 In any case, the hope we entertained
 1610 Must yield to resolution so sustained.

CHORUS

1611 But we in any case must now give way
 1612 To a foreign conqueror's potent sway,
 1613 And humbly in our city henceforth learn
 1614 Never to dare Caesar's ire to earn.
 1615 Often our evils render our deaths happy:
 1616 You see it in these miserable three.

END

155 The speculation about the means of death is based on Plutarch, 86.1-3, as is Shakespeare's dynamic elaboration (*Ant.*, V.ii.335 ff.).



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The Tragedy of Marc Antony
by Robert Garnier

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by Richard Hillman

Référence électronique

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Translation

The Tragedy of Marc Antony

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CESR - Université de Tours

THE TRAGEDY OF MARC ANTONY

by

Robert Garnier

Argument

After the defeat of Brutus and Cassius near the town of Philippi,¹ where Roman liberty breathed its last, Marc Antoine, having travelled in the provinces of Asia, was so taken by the singular beauty of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, when she arrived in Cilicia in royal magnificence, that, without a care for affairs in Rome, or the war with the Parthians which he then had in charge, he allowed himself to be led by her to her city of Alexandria, where he spent the time in all manner of delights and amorous amusements. And although, after the death of his wife Fulvia, he had married Octavia, the young Caesar's sister, a marvellously beautiful and virtuous woman, by whom he had already had handsome children, notwithstanding this, the love of that Queen had so taken hold of him and made such a breach in his heart that he could not tear himself away, whereupon Caesar seized the occasion to take offense and made war against him.

They met with all their forces in a naval battle near the chief town of Actium, where Marc Antony, having in the heat of combat discovered his lady (by whom he was then accompanied) making sail and fleeing with sixty vessels under her command, was so disconcerted that he suddenly pulled back from the middle of his fleet and shamefully followed her, abandoning his men, who, after a perfunctory attempt to do their duty, were put to flight and most of them obliged to surrender to the victor. He withdrew with her to Alexandria, where Caesar pursued him with renewed energy. He set up his camp all around the walls of the city and besieged Antony, who, after a few brave sorties, seeing himself deserted by his men, who constantly every day went over to Caesar, got it into his head that Cleopatra had reached an understanding with him in order to ruin him and by his ruin to come to an arrangement.

She, therefore, fearing his fury and despair, withdrew with two of her women into the magnificent monument which she had built. Then she sent him word that she was dead. This he so thoroughly believed that, after some expressions of grief, he ordered one of his servants to kill him, who, after taking the sword and striking himself in the body, fell dead at the feet of his master. The latter took it up and thrust it into his belly, from which wound, however, he did not die immediately. But, having thrown himself on a bed, when he was informed that Cleopatra was alive, he had himself carried to her to the gate of the sepulchre, which was not open to him.

Nevertheless, she threw down some chains and ropes from the windows in which he was wrapped up, half-dead. And thus he was drawn up all bloody by Cleopatra and her two women, then laid down honourably on a bed and entombed. Meanwhile, one

¹ Philippi: the decisive battle in Macedonia (42 B.C.E.), which allied Antony and Octavian as victors in the civil war following the assassination of Julius Caesar.

of Antony's guards, having kept the sword after he had struck himself with it, carried it, still covered with blood, to Caesar with the news of his death.

That, then, is the subject of this tragedy, amply expounded in the Life of Antony and in Book 51 of Dio Cassius.

*Characters*²

MARC ANTONY

PHILOSTRATE, a philosopher³

CLEOPATRA

CHARMION

and

ERAS, ladies-in-waiting to Cleopatra

DIOMED, secretary to Cleopatra

LUCILIUS, friend of Antony

OCTAVIUS CAESAR

AGRIPPA, friend of Caesar

EUFRON, tutor of Cleopatra's children⁴

CLEOPATRA'S CHILDREN

DERCETAEUS, commander of Antony's guards⁵

CHORUS OF EGYPTIANS

CHORUS OF CAESAR'S SOLDIERS

-
- 2** Characters: orig. "Les Acteurs".
- 3** Philostrate: identified by Ternaux, ed., n. to Act II, as a Roman philosopher associated with Cato and Areius (the latter figuring as Arée in Garnier's *Cornélie*; cf. Jodelle, III.1185 ff. and n. 115, as well as Montreux, Act II). Making Philostrate (in his only appearance in Act II) an Egyptian spokesman for his nation's sufferings is a development of Plutarch, 80.2-3, where he is mentioned as an inhabitant of Alexandria noted for his eloquence, falsely claiming an affiliation with the Academy, and finally pardoned by Caesar for the sake of Areius—a point developed in Daniel's Act III, Scene i.
- 4** Eufron: mentioned (as Euphronius) and so identified by Plutarch, 72.1, but only in the context of an emissary sent to beg Caesar's indulgence.
- 5** Dercetaeus: so in Plutarch (as "Dircet"—cf. Shakespeare, *Ant.*, "Dercetus"); "commander": orig. "archer", a term from Garnier's time and place. Plutarch, 78.1, identifies him merely as one of Antony's guards, who carried the bloody sword to Caesar.

Act I

Antony, Chorus of Egyptians

ANTONY

1 Since cruel heaven against me continues set;
 2 Since all the evils the round machine⁶ can beget
 3 Conspire my harm: mankind and divinity,
 4 Air, land and sea—all seek to do me injury;
 5 And since even my Queen, in whom my life consisted,
 6 My heart's idol, with those against me has enlisted,
 7 To die is fitting for me. I forsook for her
 8 My country, and gave Caesar's enmity a spur
 9 To right the wrong I did my spouse, his sister, thus—
 10 Of whom, to my ill chance, Cleopatra was jealous.
 11 I let for her love, in her flatteries' embrace,
 12 My life go to ruin, my honour to disgrace;
 13 My friends I disdained, the venerable Empire
 14 Of my great city left quite destitute and dire;
 15 The power I disdained which made me held in awe,
 16 To be a slave obeying her false face's law.
 17 Cruel, treacherous, of women the most ingrate,
 18 You betray my life, as well as my heart's true state;
 19 To my ruthless foes you deliver foolish me:
 20 They soon enough will punish your gross perjury.
 21 You first gave up Pelusium within this land,⁷
 22 Then all my ships with the fighters that had them manned,
 23 Such that I have nothing, stripped so thoroughly bare,
 24 But these paltry arms here, which on my back I wear.
 25 You should have had them: that way you'd be free to send
 me
 26 Naked to Caesar's hands with no means to defend me.
 27 For while I have them in my hands, let Caesar not
 28 Dream of me led in his triumphal chariot!

6 “[R]ound machine”: orig. “ronde machine”—a standard locution for the earth. Cf. Jodelle, V.1517.

7 Plutarch, 74.1, records the rumour of Cleopatra's complicity in the surrender of the port-city of Pelusium, a key Egyptian defensive position; Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 9.5, is more direct. Cf. Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 21.

29 No, let Caesar not think to gild with me his glory,
 30 And on me while I live inflict his victory.
 31 Just you, Cleopatra, have triumphed over me;
 32 Your law alone subjected me when I was free.
 33 You alone won me, tamed me—not by forceful harms
 34 (I cannot be forced)—but by the delicious charms
 35 The graces lend your eyes, which so firmly restrained
 36 My liberty that none of it to me remained.
 37 From now on, my dear Queen, no other but you only
 38 Shall boast the glory of commanding Antony.
 39 Caesar may have Fortune, all the gods, on his side;
 40 Jupiter and Destiny may to him confide
 41 The ruling of the earth; yet is he impotent
 42 To render my life to his will obedient.
 43 But after my death, that courageous last recourse,
 44 Of my tumultuous life has ended the course,
 45 When my body, turned ice-cold by a frigid blade,
 46 Within the tomb widowed of its soul shall be laid,
 47 Then as he pleases let him flaunt his mastery;
 48 Then let him do whatever he wishes with me—
 49 Have me dismembered piece by piece, give me a place
 50 Of rest inside the flanks of a she-wolf of Thrace!⁸
 51 O wretched Antony! Ah, how that day distressed you,
 52 The darkly unfortunate day when Love possessed you!⁹
 53 Poor Antony, from that same hour a pale Fury,
 54 Megaera, serpent-haired, wound you in misery!¹⁰
 55 For the flame that burned you came not from Cupid's hand
 56 (For Cupid does not carry such a mortal brand),
 57 But from a Fury, like the brand that once Orestes¹¹
 58 Felt his parricidal soul with dread fire seize,

8 Thrace was in ancient times renowned as a region of savage barbarity. Cf. Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 50.

9 An inversion of the Petrarchan formula celebrating the coming of love, as noted by Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 51-52 (following Lebègue).

10 On Megaera as a ubiquitous figure of vindictive discord in French humanist tragedy, see Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 53. Cf. Jodelle, V.1495-96.

11 Orestes: orig. "Atride", i.e., the descendant of Atreus who revenged the murder of his father Agamemnon by his mother Clytemnestra by killing her and Aegisthus, her lover. The segment of the myth evoked is represented in *The Eumenides* of Aeschylus, the concluding tragedy of the *Oresteia* trilogy.

59 When, wandering wildly, his blood in raging ferment,
 60 He fled from his crime with its unrelenting torment
 61 Imprinted in his marrow, and from the pale shadow
 62 Of his mother, risen from Styx's wave below.
 63 Antony, poor Antony, alas! From that day
 64 Your former happiness turned round and walked away.
 65 Your manhood¹² perished, and your glory, animated
 66 By so many warlike feats, in smoke dissipated.
 67 From that day the laurels, so well known on your brow,¹³
 68 Were disdained for Venus' myrtles, in their place now.
 69 The trumpet gave way to hautbois, the pikes and lances,
 70 The glittering armour, to banquets and to dances.
 71 From that day, wretch, instead of making, as you should,
 72 Fierce war on Arsacid kings¹⁴ who against you stood,
 73 Avenging Roman honour, which Crassus' adventure
 74 Had besmirched,¹⁵ you turn your back on your
 breast-plate armour,¹⁶
 75 Doff your imposing helmet, meekly at her beck
 76 To run to Cleopatra and hang on her neck,
 77 Languish in her arms, abjectly her idolise¹⁷—
 78 In short, your life submit to Cleopatra's eyes.
 79 At last you tear yourself away, as a charmed man
 80 Tears himself from the potent spell of the magician
 81 Which holds him fast:¹⁸ for your primal reason's redress,

12 “[M]anhood”: orig. “vertu” (from Latin “*vir*”), here as often in the period denoting all the qualities associated with the masculine ideal.

13 Ll. 67-70: cf. the rhetorically similar lament of Shakespeare's frustrated warrior Gloucester, in the opening soliloquy of *Richard III*, for the attributes of war supplanted by those of love (*R3*, I.i.5-13). Ironically, Richard is responding to victory, not defeat.

14 “Arsacid kings”: orig. “Arsacides Rois”, with reference to the ruling dynasty of the hostile Parthians. See *OCD*, s.v. “Arsacids”, and Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 71.

15 Ll. 73-74: as triumvir (with Pompey and Caesar), Marcus Licinius Crassus Dives had led the Romans to a disastrous defeat at Carrhae (Harran in modern Turkey) at the hands of the Surenas (a major Parthian clan) in 53 B.C.E. See *OCD*, s.v. “Crassus (4) (Dives)”, and Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 74.

16 The original likewise shifts, for the sake of narrative vividness, into the historical present, in contrast with the parallel recital of Antony's ghost in Act I.[i] of *Jodelle*.

17 “[A]bjectly her idolise”: orig. “*t'en faire l'idolatre*”—lit., “make you her idolater”.

18 Ll. 79-81: orig. “*Tu t'arraches en fin, comme un homme charmé / S'arrache à l'enchanteur, qui le tient enfermé / Par un forçable sort.*” Cf. Shakespeare, *Ant.*, “I must from this enchanting queen break off” (I.ii.128), where “break” is rare evidence of the English playwright's use of the translation of Mary Sidney Herbert; see Hillman, *French Reflections*, p. 117.

82 Dispelling the poisons of your fair sorceress,
 83 Restores your spirits; and then from all the world's
 corners
 84 You cause the earth to be teeming again with soldiers.¹⁹
 85 They cover all Asia; now the Euphrates trembles
 86 At the huge Roman force that on its banks assembles,
 87 Breathing forth horror, rage, and with menacing glances
 88 In massive squadrons straight across its waves advances.
 89 Nothing is seen but horses, weapons scintillating;
 90 Nothing is heard but troops horridly agitating.
 91 Parthian and Mede leave their possessions behind,
 92 In Hyrcania's mountains fearful refuge find,
 93 Dreading your power. Then at a whim you decide
 94 To besiege imposing Phraata, Media's pride.
 95 You camp beneath its walls, which vainly you assault,
 96 Not having brought your siege engines (oh, grievous
 fault!).
 97 While you are encamped, while you profit from your
 rest,
 98 Your love in such conditions, which nourish it best,
 99 Is remade, takes new shape, regains little by little
 100 Its initial power, then becomes greater still.
 101 Your Queen's eyes, her charming graces, her
 blandishments,
 102 Her gentleness, allurements, loving ravishments
 103 Effect your soul's possession, and by day and night,
 104 Both waking and sleeping, that idol²⁰ haunts your sight.
 105 You think of her only; your repentance is boundless
 106 For having, to make war, abandoned such a goddess.
 107 Of Parthian arrows you take no further care,
 108 Of skirmishes, assaults, alarms that fill the air,
 109 Trenches, ramparts, guards and rounds—the routine of
 war:
 110 You seek only to see Canopus' waves²¹ once more,

19 The following narrative of this campaign is based on Plutarch, 37-38.

20 "[T]hat idol": orig. "son idol"—primarily in the etymological sense of "image", but, especially given ll. 77 and 106, the suggestion of delusive worship of a self-created image is strongly present.

21 "Canopus' waves": orig. "les Canopides ondes". Canopus, not far from Alexandria on the Egyptian

111 Along with that belovèd face, whose mocking image,
 112 Straying throughout your marrow, poisons your heart's
 courage.²²
 113 Her absence maddens you, and each hour you spend
 114 In your impatience seems centuries without end.
 115 You think that enough you've conquered, enough praise
 reaped,
 116 If only you soon see again the furrows heaped
 117 High²³ of fertile Egypt, and its exotic shoreline,²⁴
 118 On which your Queen's fair eyes, like Pharos,²⁵ their
 light shine.
 119 Now see you on your return, without glory, scorned,
 120 Lecherously living off a woman suborned,
 121 Wallowing in your filth, and all the while neglecting
 122 Your wife Octavia, together with her offspring:²⁶
 123 Your long disdain for her lends greater sharpness still
 124 To Caesar's arms, as he now bends you to his will.
 125 You lose your vast Empire: many a fine city
 126 That revered your name quits you rebelliously,
 127 Rises up against you, to the banners rallying
 128 Of Caesar, who on all sides surrounds you, conquering—
 129 Confines you in your city, scarcely master now
 130 Of yourself, who once made so many peoples bow.
 131 But still, but still—and it's the greatest source
 of grief,
 132 And of all the mischiefs the culminating mischief,
 133 Alas!—it is just Cleopatra—alas!—she,
 134 She who deals you the pain of utmost cruelty,
 135 Betraying your love and your very life betraying,
 136 Who, to gain Caesar's favour, up to him goes playing,
 137 Thinking to keep her sceptre and Fortune declare

coast, was associated with luxury; see Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 106, and *SCD*, *s.v.*

22 Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 112, aptly compares Jodelle, I.69-70, where Antony's ghost recalls his love as burning in his marrow (orig. "moüelle").

23 "[F]urrows heaped / High": orig. "sillons herissez".

24 "[E]xotic shoreline": orig. "rive estrangere".

25 "Pharos" (orig. "Phar"): the Egyptian island anciently famous for its lighthouse (whence the generic French "phar").

26 Cf. Jodelle, I.[i.]106-7.

138 Your enemy alone, which both of us should share.
 139 If I still felt love for her, and the former flame
 140 Of her lethal love in the tomb to warm me came,
 141 Then I would complain of her lack of loyalty—
 142 That she was far from my equal in constancy—
 143 Consoling my sorrow, and myself not disdainng,
 144 Just as when Heaven its favours was on me raining.
 145 *But what then? Women are by nature changeable,*
 146 *Their hearts proving moment by moment mutable.²⁷*
 147 *Foolish indeed is he who tries himself to tell*
 148 *That loyalty and beauty can together dwell.*

CHORUS [OF EGYPTIANS]²⁸

149 *Not always does the roaring tempest*
 150 *Cause the waves to cast up spray;*
 151 *Aquilon²⁹ does not spoil the rest*
 152 *Of the sea's billows every day.*
 153 *Not always does the ranging merchant,*
 154 *Sailing for his profit and good*
 155 *His hollow ship³⁰ to the Levant*
 156 *See it lost in the wind-tossed flood.*
 157 *Not always does Jupiter fling,*
 158 *His bloody discontent to show,*
 159 *The flaming darts of his lightning*
 160 *Upon the rocks—and us—below.*
 161 *Not always summer's burning comes*

27 As noted by Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 145, the notorious commonplace goes back at least as far as Virgil, *Aeneid*, IV.569-70: “*varium et mutabile semper / femina* [a variable and changing thing is woman always]”. (Cited is Virgil, *The Aeneid of Virgil*, ed. T. E. Page, 2 vols [London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's, 1964]; translation mine.) The context there, however, adds powerful irony undercutting Antony's conclusion: at this point Mercury is urging Aeneas to hasten his departure and abandon Dido because she may turn violently against him; on the contrary, she has just been shown affirming her faithful love, despairing and resolved on suicide. The parallel to the situation of Antony and Cleopatra could not be clearer.

28 This entire Chorus draws on a variety of intertexts, including verses used elsewhere by Garnier but mainly echoing classical and contemporary verses (mainly from Horace and Ronsard, respectively). For thorough documentation of these echoes, see the notes of Ternaux, ed.

29 Aquilon: as often, the north wind, also personified as Boreas (see below, n. 33).

30 “[H]ollow ship”: orig. “navire creux”; if all ships are more or less hollow, there is a pointed recollection of the Homeric epithet, as pointed out by Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 155.

162 *With long months to bake hard the fields;*
 163 *Nor always winter's cold that numbs*
 164 *To them like hardness also yields.*
 165 *But always while we are confined*
 166 *In this base world by circumstance,*
 167 *The ills belonging to mankind*
 168 *Provide our lives with sustenance;*
 169 *Perennial adversities*
 170 *Perch ever above our head;*
 171 *Only at that point one flees*
 172 *When a greater looms in its stead.*
 173 *Nature in giving birth makes us*
 174 *Subject always to feel their force:*
 175 *As our earthly being takes us,*
 176 *They begin with birth their course;*
 177 *And as we grow in mortal age*
 178 *They, grown greater, too, than before,*
 179 *Tear at our flesh³¹ with increased rage*
 180 *And draw us to them more and more.*
 181 *All transitory splendours here*
 182 *Are useless: the higher the state*
 183 *Achieved, the more afflictions rear*
 184 *Their heads, contentment to frustrate.*
 185 *To crowns themselves they attach,*
 186 *Menace them till they hang by threads,*
 187 *Or often with great fury snatch*
 188 *Them from kings' tyrannical heads.*
 189 *In vain we'll distant waters ply*
 190 *In our effort them to shun,*
 191 *With Scythians and Messagetæ³²*
 192 *Seeking northern³³ habitation;*

31 “[T]ear at our flesh”: orig. “vont nous tenaillant”—a strong image evoking the torture of tearing with pincers (“tenailles”).

32 Scythians, Messagetæ: these reputedly barbarous peoples of central Asian origin were often associated as part of Scythian culture. Probably the best-known member of the Messagetæ was their queen Tomyris, who, according to Herodotus, defeated and beheaded the Persian emperor Cyrus II. On Scythia, see *OCD*, *s.v.*; the Wikipedia article on the Messagetæ is exceptionally thorough and well documented (<<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messagetæ>>; accessed 5 December 2023).

33 “[N]orthern”: orig. “sur la Boree”—i.e., the north wind.

193 *In vain upon the burning plains*
 194 *Where Phoebus downward casts his rays:*
 195 *Always their presence shall bring pains*
 196 *In every place where mankind strays.*
 197 *Darkness does not more stubbornly*
 198 *Cling to the oppressive night;*
 199 *The days' brilliance not more closely*
 200 *Follows the sun's all-gilding light;*
 201 *And with no greater doggedness*
 202 *Do shadows chase a moving object,*
 203 *Than the scourges of happiness*
 204 *Pursue the ruin of any project.*
 205 *Happy he who was never alive*
 206 *Or whom from the cradle death*
 207 *Did mercifully of life deprive,*
 208 *In the tomb him swaddled without breath.*
 209 *Happy despite his dire need*
 210 *He who, worn out by hard service,*
 211 *Far from princes his life will lead*
 212 *And refuses every office.*
 213 *When cunningly Prometheus*
 214 *By fraud the sacred fire took,*
 215 *The great gods, angered, down on us*
 216 *The great heap of afflictions shook³⁴*
 217 *And trembling forms of malady*
 218 *Which bring us closer to our end,*
 219 *To punish the bold larceny*
 220 *By which our hands did heaven offend.*
 221 *Ever since then, the human race,*
 222 *Hateful to heaven, does not cease*
 223 *To bear within its breast a case*
 224 *Of evils, piled up piece by piece:³⁵*
 225 *Now anguish wounds as with a thorn,*
 226 *In thousands of hurtful fashions,*

34 L. 216: orig. "A le tas des malheurs esmeu", which similarly omits the intermediary role of Pandora, not to mention the punishment of Prometheus himself, with the effect of drawing the classical myth closer to the Judaeo-Christian one of the Fall and curse of original sin. On Pandora, see *SCD*, *s.v.*

35 "[P]iled up piece by piece": orig. "l'un sur l'autre entassé".

227 Our soul, from its divine source torn,
 228 Which once lived free from passions.
 229 Wars and their bitter consequences
 230 Have for a long time sojourned here,
 231 And of the enemy's offences
 232 Our hearts have constantly more fear.
 233 Greater misery we traverse
 234 Day by day: yesterday's was less
 235 Than now; tomorrow will be worse
 236 In bringing us still more distress.

Act II

Philostrate, Cleopatra, Eras, Charmion, Diomedes, Chorus of Egyptians

[Scene i]

PHILOSTRATE [*alone*]

237 What dread Megaera,³⁶ in whom cruel rage must teem,
 238 Now subjects you, Egypt, to torment so extreme?
 239 Have you by criminal deeds so earned the gods' ire?
 240 Have you committed against them abuse so dire
 241 That their reddened hand, as a warning sign raised high,
 242 Will seek by murder your cleansing blood to apply?
 243 And that their burning wrath, which we cannot appease,
 244 Blasts us without compassion wherever they please?
 245 Of that monstrous mass of plotting Giants no trace
 246 We bear in us,³⁷ nor are we issued from the race
 247 Of Ixion, whose false love-boast was such a blunder,³⁸

36 Megaera: see Jodelle, n. 140.

37 On the rebellion of the Giants against the gods and its applications, see Jodelle, n. 50 *et passim*.

38 Ixion claimed to have seduced Juno; thus, like Salmoneus, who imitated Jupiter, and Tantalus, who put the gods to the test by attempting to get them to feast on his son Pelops (ll. 248-49), he was punished eternally for challenging divine prerogatives. The cannibalistic banquet served to Thyestes

248 Nor proud Salmoneus, producer of false thunder,
 249 Nor cruel Tantalus, nor Atreus, whose banquet,
 250 Brutal vengeance, Thyestes' horror did beget
 251 And horrified the shining Sun, who, at the sight
 252 Of such a meal, reversed direction of his light
 253 And, hastening the horses that convey his flame,
 254 Went plunging in the sea, there hid himself for shame:³⁹
 255 In an instant, sombre Night spread over the world
 256 And her starry robe in the midst of day unfurled.
 257 But whatever we may be, and whatever faults
 258 We may have committed—alas!—with what assaults
 259 And bitterer torments can the gods demonstrate
 260 To both earth and heaven the fullness of their hate?
 261 With foreign soldiers, terrifying with their arms,
 262 Our land is covered, ourselves⁴⁰ with tears, fearing
 harms.
 263 Here nothing but fright, but horror, can one discern,
 264 And instant death threatens us at every turn:
 265 The foe, victorious, is at our ports, our gates;
 266 Our courage fails; our hopes have died to match our fates.
 267 Our Queen is grief-stricken, and that great Emperor,
 268 Formerly (that he were such now!) of men the terror,
 269 Abandoned, betrayed, has only one thing in mind—
 270 To suffocate his woe and early death to find.
 271 And we, the helpless people, grieving constantly,
 272 Sigh and plead in the sacred temples tearfully
 273 To Isis, Argos-born,⁴¹ no longer for defence,
 274 But that Caesar may, from pity, take less offence
 275 In dealing with us, his booty, and in his bounty
 276 Deign to commute our death to mere captivity.

tes by the vengeful Atreus (ll. 249-56) violated a cosmic taboo. For details of all these myths, for which Ternaux, ed., principally cites Garnier's use of *Les Epithetes* of Maurice de La Porte (1571), see *OCD* and *SCD*, s.v.

39 Classical and contemporary French evocations of the sun as similarly horrified are enumerated by Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 252.

40 "[O]urselves": orig. "nos peuples", the plural suggesting population centres and conceivably gesturing towards the multiple ethnic groups inhabiting the territory.

41 "Isis, Argos-born": orig. "Argolique Isis"—a trace of the widespread conflation of the Egyptian goddess with the Greek myth of Io; see *OCD*, s.v. "Io", and cf. Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 273.

277 Oh, strange are the ills that the Fates for us arrange—
 278 But (alas!) the cause of them is even more strange!
 279 A love—to think of such occurring in Love’s name!—
 280 Has laid waste to this realm, set alight by its flame.
 281 Love, which we treat lightly and is said to abound
 282 Only in tender hearts, burns our towns to the ground;
 283 And its honeyed shafts, which are quite harmlessly sped
 284 And can wound nobody, overwhelm us with dead.
 285 Such was the horrid love, with blood and death
 impressed,
 286 Which stole into your heart, son of Priam, fair guest,⁴²
 287 Inflaming you with a torch which then set on fire
 288 The Pergamum of Troy,⁴³ destroyed by Grecian ire.
 289 Because of that love Priam, Sarpedon and Troilus,
 290 Glaucus, Hector, Deiphobus, a thousand more—plus
 291 A thousand that Simois, gurgling round corpses, red,
 292 Thrust in the sea—before their time were cut down dead.⁴⁴
 293 So pestilent it is, so apt to raise a storm,
 294 Cities to burn down, cruel slaughters to perform,
 295 When—uncontrolled, unruly, insolent and blind—
 296 Our senses it maintains in pleasure unconfined.
 297 The all-knowing gods disasters did signify
 298 To us by signs on earth, as well as in the sky,
 299 Which ought to have affected us, if Destiny,
 300 Implacable, had not schemed our calamity:⁴⁵
 301 Comets through the clouds trailing fire in their
 trains,

42 Paris was the guest (orig. “hoste”) of Menelaus when he eloped with the latter’s wife Helen, thereby triggering the Trojan war. A double violation of socio-cultural codes was therefore entailed in producing what served, for the both ancient and early modern worlds, as the ultimate emblem of tragedy. Cf. below, II.[ii.]495-506.

43 “The Pergamum of Troy”—i.e., the citadel. What Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 288, terms the “pluriel poétique [poetic plural]” of the original (“Les Pergames Troyens”), modelled on a usage of Du Bellay, had staying power. Cf. Montchrestien, *Hector, Two Tragedies by Antoine de Montchrestien*, trans. and ed. Hillman, Act I.47 and n. 12.

44 The notable casualties named—all either Trojans or their allies—figure in Homer’s *Iliad*. The Simois is a small river that actually flows into the larger Scamander. Detailed references may be found in Georg Autenrieth, *A Homeric Dictionary for Schools and Colleges*, trans. Robert P. Keep, rev. Isaac Flagg (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), *s.v.*

45 The prodigies enumerated are taken from Dio Cassius, 17.4-5; see Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 301-8.

302 With immense rays of flame resembling plaited manes;
 303 The frightful dragon hissing loudly on the shore;
 304 Our sacred Apis⁴⁶ bellowing with constant roar
 305 We recently saw, and his continual tears;
 306 Blood falling from the sky that like strange rain
 appears;
 307 Images of the gods with frowning brows oppressed;
 308 And the spirits of the dead by night manifest.
 309 And last night,⁴⁷ what is more, with the entire town
 310 From terror, horror and cowardly fear kept down,
 311 And silence over all, then to our ears were present
 312 Sounds of diverse songs and many an instrument,
 313 Wafted on waves of the air, and of a wild dance⁴⁸
 314 Like that with which the crazed Edonides enhance
 315 At Nysa the rites of Bacchus,⁴⁹ and all these folk,
 316 It seemed, were leaving to accept the victor's yoke.
 317 So both gods and men see fit to abandon us;
 318 So we must hope our enemies have mercy on us—
 319 And henceforth to the wishes we are bound to yield,
 320 And to the laws, of him whose power won the field.

CHORUS [OF EGYPTIANS]

321 We must be grieving for our ill;
 322 We must drown it with weeping still.
 323 The sorrows we weep for
 324 A measure of relief receive
 325 And do not us so sorely grieve
 326 As they had done before.
 327 By the sad song we might be eased⁵⁰

46 Apis, i.e., the sacred bull constituting an important object of worship, originally in Memphis, then throughout Egypt; see *OCD*, *s.v.*

47 The phenomenon now described is based on Plutarch, 75.3, though omitting the interpretation of it as marking the desertion of Antony by his tutelary god Bacchus. Cf. Jodelle, n. 58.

48 “[W]ild dance”: orig. “caroles”; see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, *s.v.*

49 With reference to the legendary worship of Bacchus in Thrace. See *SCD*, *s.v.* “Nysa or Nyssa” and “Edoni or Edones”.

50 Ll. 327-38: The allusions are to the myth, recounted in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and elsewhere, of Philomela and her sister Procne, transformed into the nightingale and swallow, respectively, following Tereus’ rape of Philomel and Procne’s vengeance, which involved serving Tereus the flesh of their son Itys. A convenient summary may be found in *SCD*, *s.v.* “Tereus”. Ternaux,

328 With which the sorrow is appeased
 329 Of gracious Philomel,
 330 Who does in the sweet time of spring
 331 Upon a green branch burgeoning
 332 Her ancient grievance tell.
 333 And we need the macabre strain
 334 With which, to soothe its sorrow's pain,
 335 On the Ismarian⁵¹ flood
 336 The chattering Daulian bird
 337 Lamenting its shedding is heard
 338 Of Itys, its child's, blood.
 339 Though Alcyons that the sea fashions⁵²
 340 Forever chant their passions
 341 And for their Ceyx weep,
 342 Whose limbs the ever-rolling billows
 343 Of the pitiless sea enclose
 344 And will for all time keep;
 345 And although the bird that, while dying,
 346 Is heard to be so sweetly sighing
 347 Where Maeander flows,⁵³
 348 He comes close to melting the heart
 349 Of Death with his rigorous dart,
 350 When to take it he goes—
 351 The fact remains that their lamenting
 352 Is far from our woes contenting:
 353 Their most extreme complaint
 354 Is insufficient to the case
 355 Of suffering that now must face

ed., has notes documenting several sources. For Ovid's extended treatment, see *Metamorphoses*, VI.412-676. (Referenced throughout is P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses*, ed. Hugo Magnus, online at *Perseus Digital Project*: <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0029%3Abook%3D6%3Acard%3D587>>; accessed 5 December 2023.)

51 "Ismarian" (orig. "Ismarienne"), like "Daulian" (orig. "Daulien"), evokes the Thracian setting of the legend. See *SCD*, s.v. "Ismarus or Ismara" and "Daulis or Daulia".

52 I.e., the Halcyon birds or kingfishers, whose eggs develop at sea, and which, as Ovid recounts (*Metamorphoses*, XI.410-748), stem from Alcyone, who threw herself into the sea from grief when her husband Ceyx was drowned; see Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 339-44, and *SCD*, s.v. "Alcyone or Halicyone (2)".

53 The legend of the "swan-song" was widespread in ancient times and sometimes associated with the river Maeander in Asia Minor, as by Ovid in the *Heroides* (Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 345-50). Cf. the Chorus in Jodelle, V.1579-82, where the allusion is put to a parallel use.

356 Our souls under constraint.
 357 Neither could the sisters of Phaëthon
 358 Match us in tears they shed upon
 359 Their brother's mortal fall
 360 Into the river Eridan—
 361 Of the bright car that years does span
 362 The driver who dared all;⁵⁴
 363 Nor she whom the gods' potency
 364 Made weeping stone by their decree,
 365 Who remains always thus,
 366 Even now her bereavement showing
 367 By tear-like liquid ever flowing
 368 Upon Mount Sipylus;⁵⁵
 369 Nor aromatic tears one gets
 370 From the weeping tree that regrets
 371 The shame that once was Myrrha's,
 372 Who, her ardours to satisfy,
 373 Was moved the embraces to try
 374 Of her father Cinyras;⁵⁶
 375 Nor all the outcries that maintain,
 376 On Didymus, the sacred mountain,
 377 Cybele's castrated rout,
 378 Calling, with wild furor distracted,
 379 "Attis", their endless shouts protracted,
 380 Which the forest then snuffs out.⁵⁷

54 On this further myth of mourning and transformation, see Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 357-62, and cf. Jodelle, II.726-28 and n. 80. Cleopatra evokes it again below at V.1896-99, naming the Phaëthontides; see n. 168.

55 Mount Sipylon (or Sipylus) in ancient Lydia (modern Turkey) was the mythical site of the killing of Niobe's fourteen children by Apollo and Artemis and her subsequent transformation into weeping stone. For a summary of the myth of Niobe, a commonplace *exemplum* of mourning in the Renaissance, see *SCD*, s.v.; while the accent is usually placed on her murdered children, her husband's death is an integral part of the picture, as in the passage cited by Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 363-67, from Simon Belyard, *Le Guysien* (1592), II.455-58. (For a translation of the latter, see *The Guisian (Le Guysien)*, trans. with Introduction and Notes by Richard Hillman, online publication, Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, Scène Européenne—Traductions Introuvables [Tours, 2019]: <<https://sceneeuropeenne.univ-tours.fr/traductions/guisian>>; accessed 5 December 2023.) Shakespeare's Hamlet, of course, imagines a Niobe "all tears" for husband alone (*Ham.*, I.ii.149).

56 The myth of Myrrha's incest, which explains the origin of myrrh, is elaborated in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, X.298-518. For a summary, see *SCD*, s.v. "Cinyras".

57 On the orgiastic worship of Cybele by self-castrating priests, see *OCD*, s.v. Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 377,

381 Our sorrowing is limitless,
 382 Just as our afflictions are countless,
 383 Abounding beyond measure.
 384 Let those lament moderately
 385 Who suffer no such misery
 386 As what I now endure.

[Scene ii]

Cleopatra, Eras, Charmion, Diomed

CLEOPATRA

387 That I betrayed him—my dear Antony, my life,⁵⁸
 388 My soul, my sun? That ill will was in me so rife?
 389 That I could have betrayed you, my dear lord, my king?
 390 That ever I might dream my faith to you of breaking?
 391 Leave you, deceive you, and to the rage make you prey
 392 Of your strong enemy? My heart so disobey?
 393 Sooner let a thunderbolt blast my head to dust;
 394 Sooner let me into abject distress be thrust;
 395 Sooner let the earth gape and gulp me bodily;
 396 Sooner let a flesh-hungry tiger feed on me;
 397 And sooner, sooner, let there issue from our Nile
 398 To prey on me alive, a tearful crocodile.⁵⁹
 399 Did you then suppose that my spirit, which is royal,
 400 To deceive you nurtured a love that was disloyal,

proposes as a source Ronsard's adaptation of the story of Attis (orig. "Atys") from Catullus, 63. A useful supplement is the introductory note on this poem in *Catullus*, ed. Elmer Truesdell Merrill (1893; rpt. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 119-21.

58 Ll. 387-98: with Cleopatra's indignant affirmations of her loyalty despite appearances, especially given her shift into apostrophe at l. 389, cf. Shakespeare, *Ant.*, III.xiii.159 ff., where Cleopatra actually convinces Anthony in person, using similar rhetoric and imagery.

59 "[T]earful crocodile": orig. "larmeux Crocodil". Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 398, suggests that for the notion that crocodiles weep for their prey Garnier may again be indebted to Maurice de La Porte. The supposition was current from ancient times, however, to the point of becoming proverbial. Shakespeare has several examples, no doubt including an indirect ironic allusion in Anthony's fooling of Lepidus in *Ant.*, II.vii.48 (" . . . and the tears of it are wet"). (See R. W. Dent, *Shakespeare's Proverbial Language: An Index* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981], C831.) Irony at the expense of Garnier's Cleopatra—as perhaps over-protesting—may also hover in her allusion, which suggestively concludes her list of deserved punishments should she be feigning. The preceding Chorus, moreover, has drawn attention to the varying degrees of tearful sorrow.

401 And that, changing my heart as events proved unstable,
 402 I would wish to leave you for one that was more able?
 403 Oh, poor, oh wretched girl! Oh, Fortune too unfair!
 404 And did I not have enough harsh burdens to bear,
 405 Losing first my realm, then losing my liberty,
 406 My tender children, and the sweet light lent to me
 407 By the radiant sun?⁶⁰ And with the loss of you,
 408 My precious Antony, have I not lost now, too,
 409 All that was left to me? Alas, it was your love—
 410 Dearer than throne, children, freedom, light from above.
 411 Thus, when Charon's ferry⁶¹ I am about to face,
 412 I forfeit the pleasure of dying in your grace;
 413 Thus the only comfort of my calamity—
 414 That I might be entombed with you—is stripped from me;⁶²
 415 Thus I among the shades⁶³ alone must sadly cope
 416 And will not be your companion, as was my hope.
 417 Ah, supreme misery!

ERAS

Your cruel suffering

418 Why make more bitter still with such constant lamenting?
 419 Why such tormenting outcries on yourself inflict?
 420 Why do you so rigorously yourself constrict?⁶⁴
 421 Why that fair alabaster with tears do you stain?
 422 Why do you blemish so many beauties with pain?
 423 Cannot your royal blood your courage teach the way,
 424 With spirit and strength enough, this storm to allay?

60 It is common in dramatic language of the period to identify the light of day with life itself, but the reference makes most immediate sense here as a reminder of her self-imprisonment in her mausoleum.

61 "Charon's ferry": orig. "la Carontide nasse". See Jodelle, II.678 and n. 74.

62 Cf. Jodelle, V.1363-77.

63 "[A]mong the shades": orig. "en l'ombreuse campagne"—i.e., in the Elysian fields.

64 L. 420: orig. "Pourquoy vous donnez-vous tant de dures estraintes?". The sense seems to be of grief-induced spasms and contortions, physical manifestations of spiritual pain, though with an anticipation of Cleopatra's beating and tearing of her breasts when Antony is dying, as mentioned by Plutarch (77.3, 83.1) and recounted by Dercetaeus below (IV.1644). Cf. her concluding injunction to her waiting-women at V.1986-89 to join her in physically spoiling their beauty.

CLEOPATRA

425 My sorrows remain unconquered, and human effort
426 Cannot overcome them: death is the sole resort.

CHARMION

427 *Nothing is impossible for someone who tries.*

CLEOPATRA

428 Hope for my sufferings no longer in strength lies.

CHARMION

429 *There is nothing a pleasing beauty cannot vanquish.*

CLEOPATRA

430 My beauty, too pleasing, is the source of our anguish.
431 My beauty subverts us and makes us so oppressed
432 That Caesar with reason credits it with his conquest.
433 Thus it was the cause both that Antony quite broke
434 One army and the other's yielding did provoke,
435 Unable to bear (so his soul, with love replete,
436 Was burning for my beauty) my shameful retreat:
437 For when he saw, as he pressed on in the attack,
438 Valiantly fighting, my fleet to be pulling back,
439 Forgetting then his duty, and as if his soul
440 Were attached to his lady's, and in her control,
441 He abandoned his men, who with such bravery
442 Were abandoning life to give him victory,
443 And caring not for his glory or loss of armies,
444 Turned his own ship round to follow my rowing galleys—
445 Thus wounding, self-made the companion of my flight,
446 By such a cowardly deed, his fame at its height.⁶⁵

65 This account of the debacle at Actium closely follows Plutarch, 66.3-5, but there are two variations which might suggest Shakespeare's supplementary use of Garnier. First, while Plutarch specifies that Antony abandoned his own ship to row after Cleopatra in a small galley, Shakespeare more dramatically, like Garnier in l. 444 (orig. "Suivit de son vaisseau"), has him hoisting sail and turning his ship from the fight (*Ant.*, III.x.17-20). Cf. below, IV.1469. It is also notable that Plutarch's image of Antony (66.4) as being incorporate with Cleopatra (North says "glued unto her", following Amyot's "collé"), and so dragged along, is made more concrete in both later texts: Garnier has his soul "attached" (orig. "attachee") to hers, as if by ropes, while Shakespeare's Anthony expresses him-

ERAS

447 Are you because of that the cause of his defeat?

CLEOPATRA

448 I am the only cause and my guilt is complete.

ERAS

449 A woman's fear his spirit into turmoil threw.

CLEOPATRA

450 With my fear, his loving flame more violent grew.

ERAS

451 He should not have brought a queen to the war, should he?

CLEOPATRA

452 Alas, it was my fault, not that of Antony!

453 Antony—ah, was ever knight so chivalrous?⁶⁶—454 Distanced my hollow ships⁶⁷ from all most dangerous,

455 Preferred I not go with his fleet, but left me, fearful,

456 Sheltered from the hazard of a combat so doubtful.

457 Alas, of Rome's whole empire—had I but known!—

458 Now, at this moment, the command would be our own.

459 All would grant us obedience: Sarmat wanderers,⁶⁸

460 The formidable Germans, the Parthian archers,

461 Numidian nomads, with those burnt more than bronze

462 By the rays of the sun, and distant-dwelling Britons.

self similarly, and even more nautically: "Egypt, thou knew'st too well / My heart was to thy rudder tied by th'strings, / And thou shouldst tow me after" (III.xi.55-57).

66 "[A]h, was ever knight so chivalrous?": orig. "hé qui fut oncq' Capitaine si preux?". "Preux", a term connoting chivalric valour and virtue, makes it clear that Cleopatra's exclamation idealises Antony in these anachronistic terms.

67 "[H]ollow ships": cf. above, I.155 and n. 30.

68 This list of far-flung peoples virtually defines the limits of Roman power and influence, with an emphasis on those presenting particular challenges to Roman military might: see *OCD*, s.v. "Sarmatae", "Parthia", "Numidia". The Parthians most immediately figure as Antony's chief recent adversaries; the Sarmats, for Garnier's audience and readers in 1578, would have been especially associated with contemporary Poland, which Henri III had ruled as king from 1573 to 1575: the term "Sarmat" figures as a watchword for brutality attached to him in propaganda of the ultra-Catholic *Sainte Ligue*; see Matthieu, *The Guisade*, trans. and ed. Hillman, II.i.251 and n. 42, as well as V.2095.

463 But alas I took no notice of this, my soul
 464 Most painfully burning in jealousy's control,
 465 Because I feared my Antony, out of my sight,
 466 Might take his Octavia back and leave me quite.

CHARMION

467 Such was your destiny, implacably severe.

CLEOPATRA

468 Such was my error, and such my obstinate fear.

CHARMION

469 But how might you have acted against the gods' will?

CLEOPATRA

470 The gods are always good, and do not wish us ill.

CHARMION

471 Does not their power rule over human affairs?

CLEOPATRA

472 They do not stoop to intervene in worldly cares,
 473 But leave mortals free their own wills to implement⁶⁹
 474 In things which are mortal beneath the firmament.
 475 What if certain errors we perpetrate in these?
 476 We must not call in question their high majesties
 477 But only ourselves, who, led astray by our passions,
 478 Topple every day into a thousand afflictions.⁷⁰
 479 Then, when we feel our souls subjected to such torments,
 480 We flatter ourselves by claiming that these events
 481 Are willed by the gods, and that no actions by us

69 L. 473: orig. "Ains laissent aux mortels disposer librement"—language evoking philosophical and religious arguments for human free will; see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v. "arbitre²". Garnier gives Charmion a lengthy refutation of this view in terms of Stoic fatalism (ll. 483-533), bolstered by an echo of Seneca's *Oedipus the King* and paralleled by passages from his own *Porcie* and *Hippolyte* (see Ternaux, ed., nn. to ll. 483, 490-94). It is notable that two passages of Charmion's speech (ll. 483-94, 511-22) are marked as sententious and that Cleopatra's personal heroism emerges against this background of conventional (and defeatist) wisdom.

70 Ll. 475-76: the rhyme "passions"/"afflictions" (French words identical) is present in the original.

482 Could possibly prevent them from occurring thus.

CHARMION

483 *Ordained in the heavens are things below on earth*
484 *Before among the human race they come to birth,*
485 *And no diversion can our poor and feeble force*
486 *Effect of Destiny's inviolable course.*

487 *Here all reason, foresight, strength of humanity,*
488 *Pious devotion, noble blood, are vanity;*
489 *And Jupiter himself, of heaven's regimen*
490 *The source, as sovereign commanding gods and men,*
491 *Though all-powerful—and though earth's fertility,*
492 *(Our solid home), the cloud-bearing air and the sea*
493 *Move as he blinks his eyes—could never interpose*
494 *To break the rigid laws these destinies impose.*

495 When the ramparts of Ilium, the work of Neptune,
496 Endured the Greeks encamped before them, and of Fortune,
497 Doubtfully poised throughout ten years, the wheel now
 turned

498 Towards their tents, and now to the Trojans returned,
499 Inspired countless hundreds of times strength and courage
500 In the veins of Hector, inciting him to carnage
501 Among the beaten enemy, who his blows fled
502 Like sheep at the approach of wolves, stricken with
 dread—

503 All to save (but in vain, for he could not do more)
504 The poor Trojan walls at which the foes' fury tore,
505 Which stained them with blood, and upon the ground once
 spread,

506 Loaded them with lifeless bodies bleeding bright red.

507 No, Madam, be sure that if the sceptre of old
508 That from kings of the Canopean waves⁷¹ you hold
509 Is taken from you by force, that is the gods' dictate,
510 Who oftentimes bear princes particular hate.
511 *They have for everything appointed an end;*
512 *To all worldly grandeur a conclusion they send—*

71 “Canopean waves”: orig. “l'onde Canopique”; cf. above, I.110 and n. 21.

513 *Some sooner and some later, whenever they please,*
 514 *And nobody can interfere with their decrees.*
 515 *But what is still more, to us human beings abject,*
 516 *Who above all to their sovereign wills are subject,*
 517 *That outcome is unknown: alive we cannot say*
 518 *How long we must live in the world, or in what way.*
 519 *Yet nevertheless on despair one should not feed*
 520 *And render oneself wretched before there is need.*
 521 *Rather, one must hope till the very end arrives*
 522 *And ensure that no evil from ourselves derives.*
 523 So help yourself, Madam, and in good time desert
 524 Antony's misfortune, lest by it you be hurt.
 525 Distance yourself from him, and from the anger rescue
 526 Of offended Caesar both your kingdom and you.
 527 You see how he is lost, without your poor alliance
 528 Able to bring his ill the least deliverance;
 529 You see how he is lost, and without your support
 530 Being henceforth able to give him any comfort.
 531 Avoid the storm; do not, by a fault of your own,
 532 By remaining obstinate, lose this royal throne:
 533 Seek Caesar's favour.

CLEOPATRA

534 *Sooner the day shining bright*
 Shall be darkened, covered by the veil of the night;
 535 *Sooner the sea's vast floods, which stormy winds have*
 fanned,
 536 *Shall migrate to the sky, and the nocturnal band*
 537 *Of stars shall glitter deep within the foamy sea,*
 538 *Than I shall let you plunge to ruin, Antony.⁷²*

72 As noted by Ternaux, ed., n. to 533-37, the classical rhetorical figure employed here is *impossibilia* (Gr. *adynata*), which typically evokes inversions on a cosmic scale. Cf. Matthieu, *The Guisade*, trans. and ed. Hillman, III.ii(b).1157-60:

Sooner shall sailing ships be carried in the air,
 Sooner shall the heavens of their stars be stripped bare,
 Sooner in the dust our Salic law shall we fling
 Than endure to be ruled by a heretic king.

More immediately to the point is the series of contrary wishes deployed by Shakespeare's Cleopatra to convince Anthony that she is not seeking Caesar's favour and is not "cold-hearted" towards him:

539 I shall follow you, whether your stout soul imparts
 540 Life to your body or, bowed by sorrows, departs,
 541 Traversing the Acheron to dwell in those countries
 542 Destined to lodge men who are half divinities.
 543 Live, Antony, or, if weary, let death swallow you:
 544 You will see, living and dead, your Princess follow you—
 545 Follow you, and your bitter misfortune lament,
 546 Which to me also, with your empire, was sent.

CHARMION

547 What serves this love eternal in soothing his woe?

CLEOPATRA

548 Whether it serves or is futile, it must be so.

ERAS

549 *It is ill done to lose oneself and nothing gain.*

CLEOPATRA

550 It is well done with such a close friend to remain.

ERAS

551 But such affection will not decrease his distress.

CLEOPATRA

552 I would be inhumane were my affection less.

CHARMION

553 *Someone is inhumane who his own death prepares.*

CLEOPATRA

554 *One is not inhumane who leaves behind great cares.*

CHARMION

555 Live for your children!

“Ah, dear, if I be so . . .” (*Ant.*, III.xiii.160 ff.).

CLEOPATRA

It's for their father I perish.⁷³

CHARMION

556 Oh, hard-hearted mother!

CLEOPATRA

Spouse such as one would wish!⁷⁴

ERAS

557 Do you wish to deprive them of their patrimony?

CLEOPATRA

558 I deprive them? No, it's the gods' severity.

ERAS

559 Is it not to deprive them of their heritage
560 To let it fall under an enemy's tutelage,
561 Loath to abandon someone abandoned already,
562 Against whom so many legions stand at the ready?
563 To abandon one on whom all the earth will pour,
564 Aroused with Caesar, the fury of all-out war?

CLEOPATRA

565 With him so beset there is less reason to leave:
566 *A good friend should another in distress relieve.*
567 If when Antony, adorned with grandeur and glories,
568 Led his legions to drink from the distant Euphrates,
569 Followed by so many kings; when his dreaded name
570 Triumphant to the vaulted sky carried his fame;
571 When he could, as master, apportion at his pleasure,

73 Cleopatra here thinks only of her two sons by Antony and leaves out of account Caesarion, of whom Julius Caesar was supposed to be the father; these are the children brought on in Act Five, as is confirmed by V.1854 and 1946-47. Shakespeare, by contrast, focuses her maternal feelings on Caesarion (*Ant.*, III.xiii.163).

74 "Spouse such as one would wish!": orig. "Epouse debonnaire!" Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 556, cites the proposition of certain historians that Antony had divorced Octavia and married Cleopatra. There is no suggestion of this in Plutarch, however, or elsewhere in the dramatic treatments, and she seems rather to be imagining herself in the role, as is also suggested by Charmion's reference below to "conjugal love . . . / Scarcely conjugal at that [un amour conjugal, . . . / Encor' peu conjugal]" (590-91); cf. Jodelle, IV.1343-44 and n. 132.

572 Both of Greece and of Asia the infinite treasure—
 573 And if then I had exchanged such felicity
 574 For Caesar, my heart would merely have been called flitty,
 575 Unfaithful, inconstant: but now the stormy rage
 576 And tempestuous winds are battering his visage,
 577 About to plunge—alas! What tale would they be telling?
 578 What would he say himself when lodged in Pluto's
 dwelling,
 579 If I, who was always above his own life dear,
 580 If I, who was his heart, who was his friend sincere,
 581 Deserted him, rebuffed him (and perhaps in vain),
 582 Basely to flatter Caesar, his ultimate bane?
 583 I would not then be fickle, inconstant, disloyal,
 584 But most wicked, perjured and treacherously brutal.

CHARMION

585 In shunning cruelty you make yourself its object.

CLEOPATRA

586 Because my spouse from cruelty I would protect.

CHARMION

587 Affection in the first place to oneself is due. . . .

CLEOPATRA

588 My husband is myself.

CHARMION

. . . From there it spreads out,

too,

589 To our children, our friends, and to our native country;
 590 While you, because only conjugal love you see—
 591 Scarcely conjugal at that—your homeland will wreck,
 592 Lose your children and your friends, and break your own
 neck:⁷⁵

75 Ll. 591-92: orig. “. . . perdez vostre patrie, / Vos enfans, vos amis, et vostre propre vie”. The translation attempts to convey Charmion's evident exasperation by having her slip into a more colloquial register.

593 So does love trouble our spirits, casting a spell!
594 Such good does that fire do us, kindled too well!
595 If only your misfortune his own would defer . . .

CLEOPATRA

596 He seeks to enclose it in a dark sepulchre.

CHARMION

597 . . . And like Alcestis, model of self-cruelty,
598 You could exempt him from his sure mortality!⁷⁶
599 But his death is certain, and even now his sword-blade
600 May be soaked in the warm blood of the wound it made,
601 Your succour having been unable to defend him
602 From feeling the harsh pangs of death, which soon must rend
 him.
603 Let your love resemble that love of ancient days
604 Of which the heart of Caria's queen fed the blaze,
605 Burning for her Mausolus: such a tomb provide,
606 Which shall count as a new miracle in its pride.⁷⁷
607 Offer him, yes offer him, sumptuous funerals;
608 Cause to be engraved all round⁷⁸ his terrible battles,
609 With enemies lying on the ground in a heap;
610 Let Pharsalus be represented, and of deep
611 Enipeus the watering floods; there display
612 The plain where at Mutina's siege his army lay:⁷⁹
613 Let all his combats and brave feats be illustrated,

76 Alcestis, out of extreme love, offered to die in the place of her husband Admetus; it may be ironically pertinent that she was brought back from the underworld by Hercules, whom Antony claimed an ancestor (see below, III.1064). The myth was famously dramatised by Euripides in *Alcestis*. See *OCD*, *s.v.*

77 Artemisia expressed her extreme love for her dead husband, the Persian satrap Mausolus (d. 353 B.C.E.), by completing a tomb considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world (whence the word "mausoleum"). See *OCD*, *s.v.* "Mausoleum" and "Mausolus".

78 I.e., presumably, on the walls of the tomb, following the example of the Mausoleum.

79 Pharsalus (orig. "Pharsale"), in the region of Pharsalia, Thessaly, near the river Enipeus, saw the decisive victory of Octavian and Antony over Pompey in 48 B.C.E.; by contrast (and strangely, given the context), the siege of Mutina (orig. "Modene", modern Modena) in 43 B.C.E. was an ignoble defeat for Antony and Octavian, despite the killing of the two consuls sent to defend it—a feat of which Antony boasts at one point below (III.948-51) but which he also attributes to Octavian's treachery (III.1102-5).

614 And to his glory games each year be celebrated.
 615 Honour his memory, and with attentive care
 616 Ensure that your children you nurture and prepare,
 617 So that Caesar, generous prince, you satisfy,
 618 And with this happy realm he will them gratify.

CLEOPATRA

619 What blame would then be mine? O gods! What infamy,
 620 In his heyday to have befriended Antony
 621 And to survive him, merely with honour content
 622 To grace a lonely tomb and on it him lament?
 623 Posterity with good reason the claim could make
 624 That I loved him only for the Empire's sake,
 625 For his grandeur alone, and in adversity
 626 I left him for another reprehensibly—
 627 Like those birds which, with fickle transitory wing,
 628 Arrive from far-flung foreign regions in the spring
 629 And live with us as long as warm weather is there,
 630 And food enough to eat, then take their flight
 elsewhere;⁸⁰
 631 And also as one sees hovering, importunate,
 632 A brownish storm of tiny flies that agitate
 633 Over juice of harvested grapes, left to ferment,
 634 And will not depart as long as the must they scent,
 635 Till in the air diffused, like smoke, they lose their
 form,
 636 And nothing more remains of that enormous swarm.

ERAS

637 But of your cruel death what profit will ensue?

CLEOPATRA

638 Neither gain nor profit I consider as due.

80 Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 627-30, compares the simile in Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI.310-12, but the application there is quite different—namely, to the multitude of souls of the unburied awaiting passage by Charon in the underworld. For that matter, Cleopatra's subsequent simile involving a swarm of flies strays far from the theme of ingratitude.

ERAS

639 What glory for future ages will it have earned?

CLEOPATRA

640 With glory and with praise I am not now concerned.

ERAS

641 Then for dying what can possibly be your reason?

CLEOPATRA

642 My sole reason is that my duty will be done.

ERAS

643 Duty must be founded on some basis of good.

CLEOPATRA

644 Mine is upon virtue, sole good here understood.

ERAS

645 What is that virtue?

CLEOPATRA

That which to be right we sense.

ERAS

646 Right to do oneself outrageous harm with violence?

CLEOPATRA

647 I shall stifle my woes by dying honourably.

CHARMION

648 You will acquire fame by dying furiously.

CLEOPATRA

649 Pray, companions, do not deny my senses' plea⁸¹
650 In the hell of pale shades to join my Antony.

81 “[D]eny my senses’ plea”: orig. “revoquez mes sens”.

651 I will die, will die: his life (must it not be so?)—
 652 Both his life and death—my own are bound to follow.
 653 Yet you will live, my dear sisters, and while you live,
 654 Honours to our dismal tombs you will often give,
 655 Strewing them with flowers, and sometimes it may be
 656 The tender memory of your lord Antony
 657 And poor me will move you in tears us to address,
 658 And your voices our consecrated loves will bless.

CHARMION

659 Madam, how can you think of being severed from us?
 660 Can you suppose that death will be exclusive thus?
 661 Can you think of leaving us, and that the same day
 662 Will not on a mournful bier all three of us lay?
 663 We shall die along with you, and pitiless Fate⁸²
 664 With us together the infernal barque will freight.

CLEOPATRA

665 Alas—live, I pray you! The terrible unrest
 666 That tortures my heart is to me alone addressed.
 667 My fate does not touch you, and life subservient
 668 Will not bring you, unlike me, shame or detriment.
 669 Live, my sisters, live, and since I find no repose,
 670 With Antony doubting me, in this sea of woes,
 671 And I cannot live (even had I such desire),
 672 If possible, I would not from this life retire
 673 Widowed of his love: [*to Diomed*] Diomed, be it your care
 674 To ensure no anger towards me he shall bear;
 675 Eradicate from his heart that destructive doubt
 676 That he conceived of me on the day of his rout,
 677 Though wrongly (I call to witness bellowing Apis
 678 And equally swear by venerable Anubis⁸³).
 679 Tell him my impatient soul, not ceasing to pine,
 680 Burning for his lost love, has, as a certain sign
 681 Of its fidelity, my feeble body fled

82 "Fate": orig. "Parque". With ll. 663-64 cf. Jodelle, II.677-68, and see n. 74.

83 Anubis: an Egyptian god both celestial and infernal, not mentioned by Plutarch or Dio Cassius. See *OCD*, *s.v.*

682 And I augment the countless number of the dead.⁸⁴
 683 Go, then, and if missing my love he still should be,
 684 And from his heart breathes forth one single sigh for me,
 685 I shall be pleased indeed, and with heart more content
 686 Shall depart from this world where I endure such torment.
 687 But meanwhile this mournful tomb let us penetrate,
 688 While I wait for death my distress to terminate.

DIOMED

689 I shall obey you.

CLEOPATRA

690 May the high divinities
 One day reward the kind performance of your duties.
[Exeunt Cleopatra, Eras and Charmion; manet Diomed.]

DIOMED

691 And is it not a pity, O good gods on high,
 692 To see stem from love so many reasons to die?
 693 And is it not a pity that this mortal flame
 694 Thus turns quite to ruin Macedonian fame?⁸⁵
 695 Where are those sweet appeals, sweet glances, for whose
 sake
 696 The gods themselves would have been made to suffer
 heartache?
 697 What does that beauty do, rare present of the skies,
 698 Miracle of the earth? Alas, what do those eyes,
 699 And that sweet voice which was throughout all Asia heard
 700 And to black Africa's deserts carried its word?

84 Garnier's adaptation here of Plutarch notably develops Cleopatra's progression towards death across her love and despair prior to Antony's self-wounding. In Plutarch, 76, Cleopatra, already enclosed in the monument, initially sends Antony false news of her death because she fears his angry state; later, when he is dying, she dispatches Diomed to summon him to join her. Cf. below, IV.1570-83. Shakespeare, *Ant.*, follows Plutarch more closely. Cleopatra's first message pointedly recalls her previous manipulations ("word it, prithee, piteously. Hence, Mardian, / And bring me how he takes my death" [IV.xiv.9-10]), while she has Diomedes announce the truth when she realises how Anthony might react (IV.xvi.121-28).

85 "Macedonian fame": orig. "l'honneur Macedon", with reference to the victory of Antony and Octavian at Philippi (Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 694).

701 Have they no more power, their virtue⁸⁶ at an end?
 702 Can they not serve with Octavian to contend?
 703 Alas!—and if Jupiter, in his angry hate,
 704 Lightning in hand a people to annihilate,
 705 Had cast his eyes upon my queen, then suddenly
 706 The punishing bolt from his hand would fall harmlessly:
 707 The fire of his fury into smoke would dwindle
 708 And a far different flame would his breast enkindle.
 709 Nothing alive is so beautiful; Nature seems
 710 To have surpassed its own power by such extremes:
 711 She is wholly heavenly, and none can be found
 712 Who looks on her and does not with passion abound.
 713 The alabaster white upon her holy face
 714 And the vermilion coral lending her lips grace,
 715 The brilliance of her eyes (two suns within this world),
 716 The fine gold radiant on her blonde tresses twirled,
 717 Her statuesque person, the allurements she shows—
 718 Are nothing less than ardent fires, cords and arrows.⁸⁷
 719 Yet that is still nothing to the accomplishments
 720 Of her divine intellect, her sweet blandishments,
 721 Her majesty, her grace, her voice imposing awe,
 722 Whether she is using it to set out her law,
 723 Or when, with sceptred kings who long speeches supply,
 724 To each in his own tongue she chooses to reply.
 725 Yet she does not help herself when she truly needs
 726 With these qualities, so wholly to grief she cedes.
 727 Plunged deep into sorrow, her only occupation
 728 Is moaning, lamenting and seeking isolation.
 729 She takes no care of anything:⁸⁸ her hair is thinning;

86 “[V]irtue”: orig. “vertu”, primarily (as often) in the sense of strength; even the connotation of manliness is paradoxically present.

87 Ll. 709-18: the Petrarchism of the physical description, noted by Ternaux, ed., is so concentrated that it might have served as the basis for the parody served up by the poet Amidor (and the running joke that follows) in *Les Visionnaires (The Visionaries)*, by Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin; see the translation by Richard Hillman, Introd. Michel Bitot, *Scène Européenne—Traductions Introuvables* (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2021), Liv.115-30. The account that follows of the attributes complementing and enhancing Cleopatra’s physical beauty is drawn from Plutarch, 27.2-4, as Ternaux, ed., points out (n. to ll. 719-21).

88 These details are developed from Plutarch, 83.1-2, who describes Cleopatra at her meeting with

730 Her glances' enchanting beams, once fatally winning,
 731 Are changed to streams, which, swollen by incessant
 sorrow,
 732 Wash over the marble of her cheeks as they flow;
 733 Her lovely breast, uncovered, constant sobs effuses,
 734 As she, by beating it, harshly herself abuses.
 735 Alas, to our misfortune! If, instead of weeping,
 736 She now drew on the amorous charms in her keeping
 737 To cause Caesar to offer her his servile duty
 738 (As she might well do by employing well her beauty),
 739 We would be preserved from the present evil menace,
 740 And the sceptre assured for her and for her race.
 741 *Oh, wretched he who may succour himself by trying,*
 742 *And yet, for lack of all succour, ends up by dying.*

CHORUS [OF EGYPTIANS]⁸⁹

743 Sweet and fertile land, I say,
 744 Where the sun animated
 745 The first man formed of clay
 746 That the muddy Nile created;
 747 Where the sciences at first,
 748 Our heavenly ornament,
 749 Acquired their commencement
 750 When our coarse breasts did thirst,
 751 Which for ages dully spent
 752 Had enough of being nursed
 753 With minds unintelligent.
 754 Where the Nile, good father to us,
 755 With aid perpetual
 756 Brings us, ever generous,
 757 Our means of living annual,
 758 The earth visiting every year
 759 And covering with rich silt,

Caesar and states that her charms were not wholly extinguished—a point that may lie behind Diomed's wish that she had exerted them upon Caesar.

89 The concluding tercets of the following eleven-line stanzas exhibit several variations in rhyme-scheme, reproduced here.

760 From his seven arms⁹⁰ spilt,
 761 When the season draws near,
 762 By such fertilising here
 763 Causing at harvest to appear
 764 Abundance making for good cheer.
 765 O undulant princely river,
 766 The Ethiopians' honour,
 767 You must now learn to quiver
 768 In service to a master;
 769 Of the Tiber, which is less
 770 In potency and in fame,
 771 Must see revered the name,
 772 Which makes all streams acquiesce,
 773 Taking pride in the hauteur
 774 Of those who would possess
 775 This round world's total contour.
 776 You must henceforth contribute,
 777 Taxing each tributary stream
 778 Along a maritime route,
 779 New gifts yearly to that regime:
 780 Our crops—your fertility—
 781 Which brigands' hands despoil,
 782 Will leave our own fields' soil
 783 An alien land to see,
 784 Which, proud such prize to acquire,
 785 Will use it to swell the glory
 786 Of its Latin empire.
 787 It must suffice that your sources
 788 Hide themselves underground
 789 And that your waters' forces
 790 Each year far extend their bound;
 791 That a hundred peoples you know,
 792 Coiling, a thousand times winding,
 793 Plains and fields in your folds binding
 794 With many an azure billow,

90 “[S]even arms”: orig. “sept bras”—i.e., the seven mouths of the Nile delta then extant; cf. Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 795.

795 Till, from seven gullets wide,
 796 Weary of your route, you flow
 797 Into the mariners' tide.
 798 *Nothing as much as liberty*
 799 *Joy in this sickly world confers,*
 800 *Or more often nobility*
 801 *Within the spirit stirs.*
 802 *Yet we must henceforth live confined*
 803 *And beneath a yoke be pressed;*
 804 *Always we are more oppressed*
 805 *By a yoke of foreign kind,*
 806 *And a double subjugation*
 807 *Painfully our spirits find*
 808 *Under a foreign nation.*
 809 From now on, instead of a prince
 810 Born and bred in our own air,
 811 Who of his native province
 812 Possessed a natural care,
 813 The austere brow we shall see
 814 Of a Roman full of furor,
 815 Brandishing for sheer terror
 816 The axe proconsuls carry;
 817 And with our kings they will negate
 818 The observance salutary
 819 Of our own laws of state.
 820 *There is within the world no force*
 821 *So potent but that Fate,*
 822 *As with lesser, brings its course*
 823 *To a close, early or late.*
 824 *Time strikes down all that grows:*
 825 *Nothing upright will be left;*
 826 *All by his great scythe is cleft,*
 827 *Like the thin stem of a rose.*
 828 *Only the immortality*
 829 *Of starry heaven can oppose*
 830 *His almighty deity.*

831 A day will be at last produced,⁹¹
 832 By your happiness abhorred,
 833 Which will see your ruins reduced
 834 Beneath a barbarous lord;
 835 And by fierce unsparing flame
 836 On all sides aggravated,
 837 O Rome, will be devastated
 838 The riches your proud boasts claim,
 839 And buildings that gold glorifies,
 840 Whose spires, thirsting for fame,
 841 Pierce the ethereal skies.
 842 As forces range at your command,
 843 Despoiling freely here and there
 844 Whole peoples with a thieving hand,
 845 Actively taking everywhere,
 846 Each, at your catastrophe
 847 Come running, will then essay
 848 To carry off what he may
 849 Of the spoil for all men free:
 850 You will see all commandeered,
 851 With nothing left by which to see
 852 The grandeur that once appeared.
 853 As happened with ancient Troy,
 854 Of your ancestors the homeland,
 855 They will by fire you destroy,
 856 That people with the upper hand.
 857 For within this world which turns,
 858 We daily by observance find
 859 That to the source that lies behind
 860 Everything at last returns—
 861 And that nothing, however great,
 862 Immutability earns,
 863 But change will come to it by Fate.

91 This is the familiar Renaissance motif, formalised by Joachim Du Bellay in *Les Antiquitez de Rome* and taken up by Edmund Spenser, among many others, of Rome as the epitome of transitory pagan grandeur. Du Bellay is echoed here, as observed by Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 839-41; also evoked would seem to be the imperial sack of Rome in 1527.

Act III

Antony, Lucilius, Chorus of Egyptians

ANTONY

864 Lucilius, sole comfort of my bitter fortune,
 865 In whom only I trust, source of hope opportune
 866 For me despairing: alas, is this not the day
 867 When death both my life and love must ravish away?
 868 What more may I expect? Have I any recourse?
 869 I alone remain of all that comprised my force:
 870 Everyone flies from me, abandons me, and none
 871 Who of my greatness the greatest benefit won
 872 Are present at my ruin; they are now ashamed
 873 That in the past I was by them at all acclaimed;
 874 They vanish, having followed me to be false to me,
 875 With no thought of sharing the evil that falls on me.

LUCILIUS

876 *That things of this world can last must not be believed:*
 877 *Who sets his hopes on them is bound to be deceived.*

ANTONY

878 Yet nothing kills me more, with greater pain affects me,
 879 Than to see how my Cleopatra thus rejects me,
 880 Compounds with Caesar, brings my flame him to cajole—
 881 Her love, which was precious to me above my soul.

LUCILIUS

882 You must not believe it—her spirit is too lofty,
 883 Magnanimous and royal.

ANTONY

884 No, it is too crafty,
 Greedy for grandeur, and it always did aspire
 885 To obtain the managing of our great Empire.

LUCILIUS

886 You have long proved her love with ample confirmation.

ANTONY

887 But that happiness proved of limited duration.

LUCILIUS

888 What signs have you had to suggest her love would alter?

ANTONY

889 Actium's defeat and then Pelusium's capture⁹²—
 890 Both losses by her fraud: besides my rowing galleys
 891 And my armed soldiers, of my quarrel devotees,
 892 Whom the cruel woman just incited to yield
 893 To spiteful Caesar, instead of being my shield;
 894 The honour done Thyrsus and his fair entertainment,
 895 Long talks alone without my knowledge or consent;
 896 And of disloyal Alexas the injury—
 897 These suffice to convict her love of perjury.⁹³
 898 But, oh, if any gods over friendship preside,
 899 Their punishment for her treasons will be supplied.

LUCILIUS

900 The mourning that she has worn since our defeat,
 901 Her giving up ground to our people in retreat,
 902 The celebration with such scant festivity
 903 Of her venerable⁹⁴ day of nativity;
 904 By contrast, the preparation and great expense
 905 Since shown to observe your birthday in opulence—
 906 That her heart is not disguised this amply proclaims,
 907 But equally touched by the love that yours inflames.

ANTONY

908 Well, whatever the case, be her love false or true,
 909 With a wound beyond cure she has pierced my soul through.

92 "Pelusium's capture": see above, I.21 and n. 7.

93 The betrayal of Antony by Alexas, who had been Cleopatra's courtier and instrument (as evoked in Shakespeare, *Ant.*, I.ii, iii and v), is recounted in Plutarch, 72.2; this is followed (73.1-2) by an account of Cleopatra's dealings with Caesar's emissary Thyrsus (Thidias in *Ant.*, III.xiii) and Antony's outraged reaction.

94 "[V]enerable": Ternaux, ed., retains, without comment, the reading "reverable"—a word apparently not attested elsewhere and almost certainly a typographical error for "venerable".

910 I love her, or rather in her love's fire stay:
 911 Her false idol⁹⁵ haunts my spirit by night and day;
 912 She fills all thoughts and dreams, always with pain past
 bearing,
 913 Like that of red-hot pincers my flesh ever tearing.⁹⁶
 914 Extreme is my misery, yet felt less intense
 915 Than the fiery-hot coal of my jealous torments:
 916 That pain—rather, that rage—to my soul fiercely
 clings
 917 And sleeping and waking incessantly me stings.
 918 Let Caesar have the victory, my goods, the honour
 919 Of being lord of the world without any partner;
 920 My children, my life of dogged woe let him glean—
 921 All's one, if he takes not Cleopatra, my queen:
 922 I cannot forget, while going out of my mind,
 923 The relief it would give me to be to this blind.
 924 I am like a sick man, whose fever, hot-burning,
 925 Has parched his throat with a thirst violently yearning:
 926 He drinks incessantly, although the very liquid
 927 So desired renders his body still more fervid;
 928 He cannot stop himself—the health being pursued
 929 Yields to the heat proceeding from his thirst subdued.

LUCILIUS

930 Leave off that love, which so intensifies your care.

ANTONY

931 I try hard enough but, alas, cannot get there.

LUCILIUS

932 Think what a soldier you were, with what reputation—
 933 Now fallen only because of that vain relation.

ANTONY

934 The importunate thought of my felicity

95 "Her false idol": orig. "son idole faux", with the suggestion of a spurious object of worship.

96 Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 913, aptly compares Jodelle, I.[i.]85-90.

935 Plunges me further into this adversity.
 936 *For nothing a man in misery so dismays*
 937 *As the recollection of his fortunate days.*
 938 So it is my anguish, my torture and my pain,
 939 Equal to the sufferings that in hell obtain,
 940 To recall the fine days of gratifying power,
 941 Which I had gained for myself by my warlike valour—
 942 To recall the calm contentment that me befriended,
 943 And which my cruel disaster has just now ended.
 944 All the world's peoples I caused to tremble with
 fear
 945 At my mere voice, as rushes on the shore appear,
 946 Moving as the waves dictate: I mastered by arms
 947 Italy and our Rome, so prone to fractious harms;
 948 I sustained, against Mutina's ramparts hard-pressing,
 949 The blows of two consuls come there for my repressing,
 950 By whose deaths, with their own blood liberally smeared,
 951 My strength and skill in fighting notably appeared.⁹⁷
 952 I, avenger of your uncle Caesar—you ingrate,
 953 Octavian—with our foes' blood did irrigate
 954 The shores of Enipeus' reddened waters,⁹⁸ jammed
 955 With a hundred heaps of corpses together crammed,
 956 When Cassius and Brutus, ill-fortuned, came out
 957 Against our legions, which twice inflicted a rout—
 958 Myself sole leader, Octavian my chief thought,
 959 As to overcome both fever and fear we fought.
 960 Everyone knows that well, and knows that all the glory
 961 Was given me alone for such a victory.
 962 There sprung up the friendship, friendship
 immutable,
 963 Which since has made my heart from yours inseparable,
 964 And there, my Lucilius, you brought Brutus rescue,
 965 And instead of your Brutus, Antony found you.⁹⁹

97 On the combat at Mutina, see above, II.612 and n. 79.

98 Antony recalls the battle of Pharsalia; see above, II.610-11 and n. 79.

99 The story recounted by Plutarch, 69.1, is that Lucilius enabled Brutus to escape after the battle of Philippi by assuming his identity and letting himself be captured, in recognition of which courageous act Antony spared his life and gained his everlasting loyalty.

966 It gave me more happiness to gain such a friend
 967 Than to see my enemy Brutus meet his end.
 968 Now my erstwhile manhood¹⁰⁰ abandons me, expunged,
 969 And in a gulf of woe by Fortune I am plunged:
 970 She has quite turned away from me her joyous face
 971 And varying miseries presents in its place.
 972 I am deserted, betrayed, so that of my countless
 973 Followers, Lucilius only I possess:
 974 You alone remain a tower of certitude,
 975 Of sacred love against human vicissitude.
 976 And if by some divinity my voice is heard,
 977 And its sound not in vain throughout the heavens
 scattered,
 978 Such a precious virtue will not be without glory,
 979 And all posterity will boast of it in story.

LUCILIUS

980 *Friendship between men should always remain in tune,*
 981 *Without being shaken variably with Fortune,*
 982 *Who is always on the move, and never agrees*
 983 *Her sphere in one position constantly to freeze.¹⁰¹*
 984 *Thus we must accept that her light nature extends*
 985 *To the volatility of the goods she lends,*
 986 *And not count them as sure, nor on them place hope,*
 987 *As on a good beyond her transitory scope.*
 988 *On the contrary, we must think nothing can last*
 989 *Apart from Virtue alone, our hostess steadfast—*
 990 *Tempering ourselves, so that in prosperity*
 991 *We will not suffer from loss of felicity*
 992 *When it occurs, and not being too much at ease*
 993 *In Fortune's grace, nor distraught when she fails to*
 please.
 994 Don't yield to sorrow.

100 “[M]anhood”: orig. “vertu”.

101 The allusion is to the common emblem representing Fortune as standing on a ball or globe, hence inherently unstable.

ANTONY

It is of too strong a sort.

995 Many a sorrow can be sustained by some comfort,
 996 But this which grips me cannot find a single hope—
 997 (It is so extreme) to enable me to cope.
 998 All I can do is strike my breast a blow forthright,
 999 My slow death with a bitter blade to expedite.

LUCILIUS

1000 Caesar, true inheritor of his father's greatness,
 1001 Will wish to imitate his lenient gentleness
 1002 Towards you, whose blood, he knows, shares his
 derivation,
 1003 Who are his brother-in-law and equal in station
 1004 Within the Roman Empire; who, with him allied,
 1005 The earth of Caesar's murderers have purified.
 1006 You have shared out this world in equitable portions,
 1007 As do inheritors with their rightful successions,
 1008 And by common accord you have for many years
 1009 Governed in tranquillity your respective spheres.

ANTONY

1010 *Alliance and blood-ties are wholly powerless*
 1011 *Against the covetous, who seek all to possess.*
 1012 *The son can barely tolerate his father ruling*
 1013 *In a common realm, nor the brother his own sibling,*
 1014 *So great is the ardent desire to command,*
 1015 *And by it such jealousy in our hearts is fanned:*
 1016 *A rival for one's love may sooner be permitted*
 1017 *Than sharing of the sacred diadem admitted.*
 1018 *All is overturned, every law overridden—*
 1019 *Friendship, relationship—and nothing is forbidden*
 1020 *To violate, however sacred, for sole sway:*
 1021 *And one cares not how, as long as one has one's way.*

LUCILIUS

1022 And if he should be monarch, and this universe
 1023 Should now to two different emperors be averse—
 1024 Rome fearing him alone, he joining Orient

1025 With Occident, combined beneath his regiment—
 1026 Why will he not let you live in oblivion,
 1027 Without empire or office, a private person,
 1028 In lettered Greece philosophising peacefully,
 1029 In Spain, in Asia, or in any other country?¹⁰²

ANTONY

1030 He will never suppose his empire secure
 1031 While Marc Antony may within this world endure.
 1032 *Fear and suspicion, pale mistrust of honesty,*
 1033 *Are constant companions of royal majesty,*
 1034 *Engendered by reports: reports that night and day,*
 1035 *As guests perpetual, from court will never stray.*

LUCILIUS

1036 He did not put to death your brother Lucius,
 1037 Nor shorten the elderly days of Lepidus,
 1038 Although first one, then the other, was at his mercy,
 1039 And both of them had attracted his vengeful fury;¹⁰³
 1040 Yet one, left to his own devices, still commands
 1041 The swarthy peoples of Iberia's broad lands;
 1042 The other, Pontifex Maximus, could retain
 1043 His sacred dignity, thanks to that prince humane.

ANTONY

1044 He does not fear them, with their military weakness.

LUCILIUS

1045 He does not fear one vanquished, filled with
 wretchedness.

102 This suggestion of Lucilius is based on Antony's own request to Caesar, which was refused outright, according to Plutarch, 72.1, 73.1. Cf. Shakespeare, *Ant.*, III.xii.12-16.

103 Lucius Antonius (in conjunction with Marc Antony's then-wife Fulvia) had taken Antony's part against Octavian, to whom he was compelled to surrender at the siege of Perusia (modern Perugia) in 40 B.C.E.; see *SCD*, *s.v.* "Perusia". Marcus Aemilius Lepidus had been the third member of the triumvirate formed with Antony and Octavian, but the latter displaced him when he attempted to take over Sicily; see *SCD*, *s.v.*, and *OCD*, *s.v.* "Lepidus (3)".

ANTONY

1046 Fortune is changeable.

LUCILIUS

1047 An enemy so low
Can hardly ever raise his arm to strike a blow.

ANTONY

1048 I did all I could: as most lately witness bears
1049 That, when everything failed me, I attempted prayers
1050 (Cowardly man that I am!), and, that fallen through,
1051 I challenged him to a combat between us two,
1052 Though he is at the top of his strength, while age
1053 Now saps my strength and nimbleness when I engage;¹⁰⁴
1054 And yet he refused, revealing his craven nature,
1055 Basely afraid to accept a praiseworthy venture.
1056 That is my grievance, wherein myself I accuse;
1057 That is where Fortune is harshly pleased to abuse
1058 My grizzled head;¹⁰⁵ that is where, plunged deep in my woe,
1059 The immortals I blame, who add blow upon blow:
1060 That a man effeminate in body and spirit,
1061 Who in the trade of Mars never acquired merit,
1062 Should have beaten me, tamed me, destroyed me and
chased me—
1063 Should have, after such glory, to this point debased
me¹⁰⁶—

104 Antony's challenge to Caesar despite their difference in age is mentioned by Plutarch, 62.3. Cf. Shakespeare, *Ant.*, III.xiii.20-28.

105 "My grizzled head": orig. "mon chef grison". The precise correspondence with Shakespeare, *Ant.*, III.xiii.17 ("this grizzled head"), is strong evidence that Shakespeare consulted Garnier's original and did not rely exclusively on Mary Sidney Herbert's translation, which has "gray hayres"; see Hillman, *French Reflections*, pp. 117-18.

106 Cf. Shakespeare, *Ant.*, III.xi.35-40:

He at Philippi kept
His sword e'en like a dancer, while I struck
The lean and wrinkled Cassius; and 'twas I
That the mad Brutus ended. He alone
Dealt on lieutenantry, and no practice had
In the brave squares of war, yet now—no matter.

1064 I who am of Hercules' blood¹⁰⁷ and from my childhood
 1065 Embellished my fame by fair feats of hardihood.
 1066 To that Gaul may attest, with its peoples untamed,
 1067 Courageous Spain, and those fields with plaintive grief
 blamed
 1068 By many thousand voices, of harsh Thessaly,
 1069 Now twice washed over with the blood of Italy.¹⁰⁸

LUCILIUS

1070 Proof of that is Africa, and every corner
 1071 Of that land will bear witness to its conqueror,
 1072 For where in territory where people can dwell
 1073 Have you not made war, eager your renown to swell?

ANTONY

1074 You know, fertile Egypt—Egypt for my deeds so
 1075 Fair and shameful responsible—alas, you know
 1076 How I conducted myself, fighting for your prince,
 1077 When I conquered for her again her rebel province,
 1078 Against the enemy showing my bravery
 1079 And to the defeated my compassionate pity.
 1080 If only, to dull my glory and sink it low,
 1081 Fortune had made me combat with a stronger foe,
 1082 More warlike than myself, and had against me steered
 1083 One of those supreme leaders¹⁰⁹ in past times so feared—
 1084 Camillus, Marcellus, African Scipio,¹¹⁰
 1085 That great Caesar, who honoured our republic so,
 1086 Or Pompey who grew old beneath Mars's stark horrors—
 1087 And if, after a mowing down of countless soldiers
 1088 Such as a myriad of deadly fights entails,
 1089 Pierced by the blow of a pike thrust into my
 entrails,

107 See Jodelle, n. 58.

108 Antony alludes to the victims of the civil wars in the battles of Pharsalus and Philippi.

109 “[S]upreme leaders”: orig. “Empereurs”.

110 Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 1084, documents the topos of citing these illustrious defenders of Rome; for details of their exploits, see *OCD*, s.v., respectively, “Camillus (1), Marcus Furius”, “Marcellus (1), Marcus Claudius”, and “Scipio (5), Africanus Major, Publius Cornelius”.

1090 I'd poured forth on the ground my life and blood apace
 1091 With many thousand bodies slaughtered in one place . . .
 1092 No, no—in the midst of combat I should have died,
 1093 Or, having fought a hundred times, new troops supplied
 1094 For further battles, and with me discomfited
 1095 The whole world, sooner than to be to him submitted—
 1096 He who has never seen the inter-lacing pikes
 1097 Bite into his belly's flesh with their bristling spikes,
 1098 Who, terrified of Mars, out of cowardly dread
 1099 Hides so as not to hear the shock of his rough tread.
 1100 Fraud is his manhood,¹¹¹ subtle ruse and cleverness,
 1101 His arms the arts sly Ulysses did once possess—
 1102 As the consuls at Mutina found, both destroyed
 1103 By mortal blows dealt them by men by him employed
 1104 To take their army and make war at his command,
 1105 Contrary to his promise, on his native land.¹¹²
 1106 Of the triumvir Lepidus, come to his rescue,
 1107 Whom he should have honoured, as he was bound to do,
 1108 The position he usurped, when by tempting courses
 1109 He had debauched, corrupted, the bulk of his forces;¹¹³
 1110 And yet he conquers me—a last prize to acquire,
 1111 For with me he conquers all the Latin empire.
 1112 Oh, how miraculous! Disorder at Actium
 1113 Subdued the earth; my glory has obscure become.
 1114 For since, as if afflicted by anger divine,
 1115 As if seized by furor more furious than mine,
 1116 My spirits confused by ill, I no longer aim
 1117 At seeking to recover from my loss or shame:
 1118 *I've ceased resisting.*

LUCILIUS

Many a martial affray

111 “[M]anhood”: orig. “vertu”—again in the primary sense of military prowess.

112 Cf. above, n. 79.

113 Ll. 1108-9 are intriguingly ambiguous, since “forces” (orig. identical) might refer to Lepidus’ soldiers or to his personal weakness; Plutarch is not helpful in resolving the point. Dio Cassius’ account of Octavian’s subornation of Lepidus’ army (Bk. 49, 12.3) would favour the former reading; it seems possible, however, that Shakespeare developed the latter in portraying Lepidus as a ridiculous drunkard in *Ant.*, II.vii.

1119 *And combats of all kinds take place every day,*
 1120 *Sometimes for better, sometimes worse. And although*
 Fortune
 1121 *In all this world's affairs must always call the tune,*
 1122 *And moderates, performs all, with everything*
 1123 *Attached, made mutable, and with her wheel revolving,*
 1124 *Yet still we feel more attention by her is paid,*
 1125 *Compared with other matters, to Bellona's trade,¹¹⁴*
 1126 *And that in this her favour, like the wind inconstant,*
 1127 *More often shows us power more significant.*
 1128 *Hence it is seen that those who at life's early stage*
 1129 *Win honour in it always lose it in their age,*
 1130 *Beaten by someone who at war can merely play,*
 1131 *And who will later yield to one lesser than they.*
 1132 *For to be always propitious is not her practice—*
 1133 *Rather to make us fall, as from a precipice,*
 1134 *When we have climbed up, thanks to her benignity,*
 1135 *To the towering summit of felicity.*

ANTONY

1136 How I am forced to curse, in my offended soul,
 1137 Lamenting night and day, that love out of control
 1138 In which my comely foe ensnared alluringly
 1139 My too-simple reason, which since has not got free!
 1140 It was not Fortune with inconstant accidents;
 1141 It was not Destiny with forceful violence
 1142 That forged my evil: ah, do we not know quite well
 1143 What both of them are, and that nothing they compel?
 1144 *Fortune, whom one adores, abominates and fears,*
 1145 *Is a mere occurrence, whose cause never appears,*
 1146 *Although in many cases the cause is perceived,*
 1147 *Yet the effect proves other than one had believed.*
 Pleasure alone, which plaguing of our lives
 entails—
 1149 Our lives!—and of further plagues a hundred more
 trails,

114 Bellona: Roman goddess of war, the sister or wife of Mars; see *SCD*, s.v.

1150 Has dealt me this disaster, from the champion
 1151 I was at first, turned to a reclusive no-one,
 1152 Not caring for virtue, or any honour higher,
 1153 But like a fleshy hog that wallows in the mire,
 1154 In sordid pleasures weltered to my heart's content
 1155 And trampled underfoot every honest intent.
 1156 Thus I lost myself: for finding that heady drink
 1157 Much to my taste, I filled myself, nor stopped to think;
 1158 So, with the sweetness hiding poison of that kind,
 1159 My former reason I put slowly from my mind.
 1160 I offended my friends, who from me took their distance;
 1161 Those who hated me I pushed to active resistance.
 1162 I pillaged my subjects and, the better to serve me,
 1163 Engaged base flatterers slavishly to observe me.
 1164 My arms, hung up, with spiders' webs were dignified;
 1165 My soldiers strayed in the fields, unidentified.¹¹⁵
 1166 And meanwhile Caesar, who had never dared attempt
 1167 To attack me, suddenly held me in contempt,
 1168 Found the courage to fight, hoping for victory
 1169 Over a man so lost, caring nothing for glory.

LUCILIUS

1170 *Voluptuous sweet pleasure, Cyprian delight,*¹¹⁶
 1171 *Debilitates our bodies, is our spirit's blight,*
 1172 *Deranges our reason, out of our heart quite chases*
 1173 *All the sacred virtues, usurps their rightful places.*
 1174 *As the sly fisherman attracts the fish's look*
 1175 *With treacherous bait that conceals the inward hook,*
 1176 *So pleasure serves as vice's tantalizing meat*
 1177 *To draw our soul, which is all too ready to eat.*
 1178 *That venom is equally mortal to us all,*
 1179 *But to great kings more harmful damage will befall:*
 1180 *They lose their sceptres by it, ruining their lands,*
 1181 *And make them in the end fall into foreign hands;*
 1182 *Their peoples in the meanwhile, bearing heavy millstones,*

115 “[U]nidentified”: this is, I take it, the sense of the original’s “sans enseignes”, i.e., without distinguishing signs, such as banners.

116 “Cyprian delight”: orig. “delices de Cypris”, the island of Cyprus being sacred to Venus.

1183 *Are robbed by flatterers who suck their marrowbones:*
 1184 *They are not governed, but serve the mighty as prey,*
 1185 *While the mad prince, pleasure-drowned, looks the other*
 way,
 1186 *Hears and sees nothing, from royalty quite retired,*
 1187 *Seeming to have a coup against himself conspired.*
 1188 *When even-handed Justice, banished, wanders free*
 1189 *And in its place is planted greedy tyranny,*
 1190 *Confused disorder passes into all estates:¹¹⁷*
 1191 *All crimes and horrors without fear one perpetrates.*
 1192 *Finally, rebellious mutiny we discover,*
 1193 *Which one pretext or other uses as a cover,*
 1194 *Spurring our enemies, who, no sooner afoot,*
 1195 *Enter unresisted and make off with the loot.*
 1196 *These are the deleterious effects of pleasure.*

ANTONY

1197 *Wolves in stables are not dangerous in such measure,*
 1198 *Nor frost to grapes, rain to ripe fruit, such harm*
 evinces
 1199 *As all the miseries that pleasure brings to princes.*

LUCILIUS

1200 *We need only instance that Assyrian king,*
 1201 *Whom that monster deprived both of soul and of*
 reigning.¹¹⁸

ANTONY

1202 *We need only instance myself, wholly destroyed,*
 1203 *Losing honour, life, the empire I enjoyed.*

117 “[E]states”: orig. “estats”, with reference to the three formal components of French pre-modern society—clergy, nobility and commons.

118 Sardanapalus, the legendary last king of ancient Assyria, had from classical times served as an emblem of destructive sensual decadence in princes. For the currency of the model in Garnier’s France, see Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 1200. The “monster” of l. 1201 (orig. “monstre”), is, of course, pleasure (“Volupté” [l. 1196], “plaisir” [1199]), demi-personified.

LUCILIUS

1204 In this the evil possesses still greater force:
 1205 Almost no one is found who against it has recourse.
 1206 Even the demi-gods, who formerly roamed free
 1207 And tamed the universe, failed at that victory.
 1208 Consider famed Alcides¹¹⁹—Alcides, miracle
 1209 Of both earth and heaven, in strength incomparable,
 1210 Who combatted Geryon, Lykaon, Antaeus,
 1211 Who dragged up that monster, three-headed Cerberus;
 1212 Who vanquished Achelous, the Hydra laid low;
 1213 Whose massive shoulders propped up heaven from below:¹²⁰
 1214 Did even he not yield beneath such pleasure's weight?
 1215 Did passion not similarly him subjugate?
 1216 Then, captive of the Maeonian queen,¹²¹ Omphale,
 1217 He burned—like you for Cleopatra, Antony—
 1218 Slept lying in her lap and fondly kissed her breast,
 1219 Bought with vile servitude that love which so obsessed,
 1220 Pulling the distaff, and with hands that did not know
 1221 The craft, winding on the spindle the hempen tow.
 1222 His formidable club among the rafters hung;
 1223 His bow was not bent as formerly but unstrung;
 1224 On his arrows spun the industrious house-spider,
 1225 And moths punctured holes in his heavy leather armour.
 1226 Monsters at will, without fear, during all this time
 1227 Were multiplying, spreading through every clime:
 1228 The suffering peoples disdained his dallying¹²²
 1229 And his love-enchanted heart, a mistress's plaything.

119 Alcides (orig. "Alcide"): the common alternative name of Hercules/Heracles, whose exploits (including the famous "labours") are evoked in the following lines; see *SCD* and *OCD*, *s.v.* "Heracles" (and some individual names). Lykaon (orig. "Lyce") remains a bit of a puzzle, but must refer to a son of Ares (Mars) whom Hercules is said by Euripides (in *Alcestis*) to have killed, perhaps in the course of one of the labours; see the erudite analysis of the slim evidence by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, "Lykaon and Kyknos", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 108 (1995): 38–44.

120 Hercules temporarily took the place of Atlas, father of the Hesperides, when in quest of their golden apples.

121 "Maeonian queen": orig. "Meonienne Royné", using the ancient (and Homeric) name for the kingdom subsequently known as Lydia (in what is now western Anatolia, Turkey).

122 L. 1228: orig. "Les peuples tourmentoyent mesprisant sa mollesse"; contrary to Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 1228, I take "peuples" as the subject of "tourmentoyent", used intransitively. For the intransitive use of the verb "tourmenter", see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, *s.v.*, def. 2.

ANTONY

1230 In that alone to him I display a resemblance;
 1231 In that respect I may claim my inheritance;
 1232 In that I imitate him and after him stray:
 1233 In sum, he is my ancestor in that sole way.
 1234 But come, I must die, and by dying in brave state,
 1235 My infamy and harmful pleasures expiate.
 1236 I must die, I must: I must a death graced with beauty,
 1237 An honourable death, summon to succour me.
 1238 I must efface the shame of my days foully spent;
 1239 I must my lascivious loving ornament
 1240 With a courageous act, so that my supreme ending
 1241 May cleanse my dishonour by my self-punishing.
 1242 Now on, dear Lucilius! Ah, why so lament?
 1243 *This fatal conclusion to all of us is sent.*
 1244 *We must all die: that is due homage we prepare*
 1245 *To the god who had the underworld as his share.*
 1246 Appease your misery, alas, and do not groan,
 1247 For you embitter, by your suffering, my own.

CHORUS [OF EGYPTIANS]

1248 *Alas, how torment is intense*
 1249 *In our desire for existence:*
 1250 *A torturer relentless here,*
 1251 *Who tears and hammers cruelly*
 1252 *With pain perpetually,*
 1253 *Is of the tomb ignoble fear.*
 1254 *Our mortal Fate,¹²³ on the contrary,*
 1255 *Offers us refuge salutary*
 1256 *From all humanity's grave woes,*
 1257 *And opens forever the gate*
 1258 *Through which our spirit must migrate*
 1259 *To flee its incurable sorrows.*
 1260 *What goddess is there more humane*
 1261 *To bury the burden of our pain?*
 1262 *What means more gentle anywhere*

123 “Our mortal Fate”: orig. “La mortelle Parque”.

1263 *To soothe the rancour in our breasts,*
 1264 *That rough torment which never rests*
 1265 *From torturing us—what else is there?*
 1266 *The hope that in an anguished hour*
 1267 *Gives us comfort has not such power,*
 1268 *For afterwards it will deceive,*
 1269 *Promising the sorrow to heal*
 1270 *Of one who always hopes to feel*
 1271 *Vain succour he does not receive.*
 1272 *But death, which in its faith is sure,*
 1273 *Does not with idle show allure*
 1274 *Those sufferers who to him call*
 1275 *But extirpates their souls so well*
 1276 *From the distress in which they dwell*
 1277 *That they then feel no trouble at all.*
 1278 *He who with brave audacity*
 1279 *Stares straight at the opacity*
 1280 *Of the muddy river Acheron,*
 1281 *And, crossing it, feels no shocks*
 1282 *At the sight of the grisly locks*
 1283 *Of its ancient boatman Charon;*
 1284 *Who can see without emotion*
 1285 *The shadows' ghastly unreal motion*
 1286 *As on the silent shores they stray;*
 1287 *Whom Alecto with her torch-light*
 1288 *And serpents does not fright,*
 1289 *Nor Cerberus' barking dismay;*
 1290 *But he who to choose has the power,*
 1291 *When he wishes, the supreme hour*
 1292 *His free days offer without flinching—*
 1293 *He values such fair liberty,*
 1294 *In his heart's magnanimity,*
 1295 *Above the fortune of a king.*
 1296 *The sea, being by north winds churned,*
 1297 *To froth by madding fury turned,*
 1298 *Exerts no force upon his soul;*
 1299 *Nor the turbulent wild tempest*
 1300 *Of a people who, with rage possessed,*
 1301 *Defies the magistrates' control;*

1302 *Nor the fierce face of a tyrant,*
 1303 *Breathing forth threatening rant,*
 1304 *Who must by blood be satisfied;*
 1305 *Nor even the hand thunder-dashing*
 1306 *Of Jupiter, when it is smashing*
 1307 *The rock's impenetrable side;*
 1308 *Nor of carnage-spreading warfare,*
 1309 *The rude blasts laying the earth bare,*
 1310 *And the battalions raising dust*
 1311 *Of ardent soldiers in their arms*
 1312 *And the large squadrons of men-at-arms¹²⁴*
 1313 *Who through the plains with terror thrust;*
 1314 *Nor the sword-blades homicide,*
 1315 *In the moist entrails new-dyed*
 1316 *Of denizens killed randomly*
 1317 *During a major city's sack*
 1318 *After a barbarous king's attack,*
 1319 *Whose rough hands treat them brutally.*
 1320 *Oh, but it is a most vile thing*
 1321 *To feel one's courage is failing*
 1322 *And needful death cannot endure,*
 1323 *Letting fall from a flaccid hand*
 1324 *The very dagger drawn to withstand*
 1325 *The misery one cannot cure.*
 1326 *Happy in misfortune Antony,*
 1327 *And our Queen to keep him company,*
 1328 *Who their lives will suffocate,¹²⁵*
 1329 *The guilty hand to see confounded*
 1330 *Of the victor who them surrounded,*
 1331 *His triumph so keen to celebrate.*
 1332 *Death is the sole means to ensure*
 1333 *That Caesar cannot now them injure:*
 1334 *His scant strength with scorn it transcends*
 1335 *And all that the round world displays,*
 1336 *Of no effect on those it slays*

124 Ll. 1311-12: the rhyme is modelled on the original (“armes”/“gendarmes”).

125 “[S]uffocate”: orig. “estouffer”; the literal translation respects the choice of words.

1337 And down to dark Avernus sends—
 1338 Which now Ahmose’s soul encloses,
 1339 Where the great Psamtek, too, reposes,
 1340 And where repose along with these
 1341 Upon the Elysian plains,
 1342 Free from all mortality’s pains,
 1343 Our unfortunate Ptolemies.¹²⁶

Act IV

Caesar, Agrippa, Dercetaeus, Messenger, Chorus of Caesar’s Soldiers

CAESAR

1344 O great immortal gods, you who everything
 1345 Within your right-hands’ celestial power bring;
 1346 By whom the thunder and the winds, the cold, the heat,
 1347 According to the qualities for each month meet,
 1348 Take their course and being, and who by destinies
 1349 Have limited the powers empires may seize,
 1350 The ages and their times, and who (not changing ever)
 1351 Change all, and from their points of fixity all sever:
 1352 You have raised to the height of the heaven that thunders
 1353 The greatness of Rome by dint of Bellona’s wonders,
 1354 Mastering the universe with frightening pride—
 1355 The universe captive, its liberty denied.
 1356 Yet today this Rome, with its pride of such great span,
 1357 Lacking good and liberty, submits to one man.¹²⁷

126 I give the commonly accepted current forms of the Egyptian Pharaonic names: Ahmose (II) for orig. “Amesit” (Greek form), Psamtek (III) for orig. “Psammatiq”. The Ptolemies, to whom Cleopatra belonged, were the Macedonian ruling dynasty of Egypt at the time of the Roman conquest. For a convenient time-line, summary information and further sources, see the Digital Egypt for Universities website at <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt//Welcome.html>> (accessed 11 October 2022). Cf. Ternaux, ed., nn. to ll. 1338, 1343. It is not clear, however, what sources Garnier was using.

127 The topos of hubristic arrogance which follows evokes prominent classical predecessors, such as

1358 Its empire is mine; its life is in my hands,
 1359 The monarch who the world and the Romans commands;
 1360 I do, and can do, all; my dread word I unroll,
 1361 Like a thunderbolt, from one to the other pole;
 1362 The equal of Jupiter, I dispense reward
 1363 And misery at will, no less than Fortune's lord.
 There is no city but has an idol¹²⁸ of me,
 1364 Where a sacrifice to me is not offered daily:
 1365 Whether where Phoebus harnesses his morning horses,
 1366 Where the night receives them, wearied from their long
 1367 courses,
 1368 Where the flames of heaven burn the Garamantes¹²⁹
 1369 Or where Aquilon's¹³⁰ breath is cold enough to freeze—
 1370 All acknowledge Caesar, tremble when his voice rings,
 1371 And merely to hear him named strikes terror to kings.
 Antony knows that well, whom all the world denies
 1372 To furnish in this war with any princely allies
 1373 Willing to arm against me: the power they fear
 1374 That heaven in me, of all mortals, makes appear.
 Poor Antony, sparked by the fire in his heart
 1375 That the image of a woman's beauty did start,
 1376 Took umbrage with me, who by no means could abide
 1377 My sister's injury, seeing her mortified,
 1378 Seeing her abandoned and her husband, love-sick,
 1379 In Alexandria with Cleopatra frolic
 1380 In disordered pleasures, spending their days and nights
 1381 Merely drowning their spirits deep in love's delights.
 He assembled Asia, joined in conspiracy;
 1382 He sent forth upon the waves of the azure sea
 1383 Countless thousands of vessels, which, with soldiers
 1384
 1385
 1386

Atreus (in Seneca's *Thyestes*) and *Nero* (in the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia*); see Ternaux, ed., nn. to ll. 1359-63. Cf. Jodelle's Caesar at II.445 ff., and see the Introduction, pp. 11-13.

128 "[I]dol": orig. "idole"—a term which, in the context, Garnier's public could hardly take in the more neutral sense of "image" or "statue", especially given "hostie" (Christian "host", here "sacrifice") in the next line.

129 Garamantes: a Berber people, inhabitants of modern Libya, whose ancient civilisation is mentioned by Herodotus and other ancient writers. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica, s.v.*, online at <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Garamantes>> (accessed 12 October 2022).

130 Aquilon: see above I.151 and n. 29.

teeming,
 1387 With their arrows and darts, with their pikes and
 shields gleaming,
 1388 Terrified Neptune and denizens of the seas,
 1389 The Glaucos and Tritons, the Actiades.¹³¹
 1390 But the gods, who unfailingly oppose the side
 1391 Of one who has wrongly another's right denied,
 1392 In a sudden instant caused to melt into mist
 1393 The mighty army none seemed able to resist.

AGRIPPA

1394 His haughty spirit's presumptuous arrogance
 1395 And lustful care for his fond love's continuance
 1396 Have justly ruined him, whose pride inordinate
 1397 Supposed his power could his fortune dominate.
 1398 He thought nothing of us, and as if for diversion
 1399 Set out, quite free from fear, on that fighting
 excursion.
 1400 Thus it was at one time with the earth's savage
 race,
 1401 Who laboured to the sky the gods in fight to face,
 1402 Olympus piled on Pelion, Ossa on these,
 1403 Upon Ossa Pindus,¹³² so mounting by degrees
 1404 To fight them hand-to-hand, and with their clubs' rude
 shocks
 1405 To make them tumble down upon the mossy rocks.
 1406 Then great Jupiter, with fiery anger charged,
 1407 Many well-aimed thunderbolts at Typhon discharged,

131 L. 1389: orig. "Des Glauques et Tritons, hostes Actiades". Obviously, secondary marine deities are meant, and the Tritons pose no difficulty (see *OCD*, *s.v.*); the plural "Glaucos" would seem to derive from the name "Glaucos" (Gr. "Glauke") for one of the Nereids, hence to stand for these sea-nymphs generically (see the website *Theoi* at <<https://www.theoi.com/Pontios/Nereides.html>> [accessed 13 October 2022]); "Actiades" is perhaps similarly extrapolated from "Actaea" (Gr. "Aktaiia"), the Nereid associated with the sea-shore, although this seems less plausible. In any case, Garnier's source or sources here remain obscure.

132 The climbing of the giants upon these mountains in Greece is a standard part of the *gigantomachy*, whose application to Antony here is anticipated by Jodelle's Proculeius and Agrippa, respectively, at II.483 ff. and 522-24; cf. also the more equivocal allusions in Jodelle by the Chorus at II.711 ff. and, again, Proculeius at V.1501 ff.

1408 At Gyges and Briareos,¹³³ blasting their brains,
 1409 On their smashed bodies expending his tempest's pains.
 1410 *For nothing so spites, does to hatred so incline*
 1411 *In men's affairs, as arrogance toward the divine;*
 1412 *Always one too proud, aspiring to do all,*
 1413 *Goes forward only to spectacularly fall.*

CAESAR

1414 It's as with a great palace or some lofty tower,
 1415 Which down upon the nearby houses seems to lour
 1416 Disdainfully, with the stars to associate,
 1417 But after few winters is ruined by its own weight.
 1418 What outrageous arrogance, what impiety
 1419 Gripped him with such reckless impetuosity,
 1420 Flouting the gods' honour, when to those twins, the fruit
 1421 Of adultery, Latonan race¹³⁴ to impute,
 1422 Like Diana and her brother Phoebus, he named
 1423 Them the Sun and Moon? Is that not madness, proclaimed?
 1424 Is that not the wrath of the great gods to provoke?
 1425 Is that not his own unhappiness to invoke?

AGRIPPA

1426 He ordered the beheading, with like insolence,
 1427 Of the Jewish king Antigonus, some offence
 1428 Alleging, to remove from him his ancient kingdom,
 1429 Which Cleopatra coveted to have its balsam.¹³⁵

133 None of the three mythological monsters named was actually among the mutinous giants. On Typhon, see *OCD*, *s.v.*; Gyges and Briareos (also called Aegaeon), sons of Heaven and Earth, called Hecatoncheires for their hundred hands, actually fought on the side of Jupiter/J Zeus: see *OCD*, *s.v.* "Hecatoncheires", and *SCD*, *s.v.* "Aegaeon". Cf. Ternaux, ed., nn. to 1407, 1408.

134 "Latonan race": orig. "Race Latonienne", alluding to Latona (Gr. Leto), the mother (by Jupiter/J Zeus) of the divinities Diana and Phoebus Apollo; see *OCD*, *s.v.* "Leto". The blasphemy thus extends to an exaltation of Cleopatra. Plutarch, 36.3, decries in similar terms this naming of their children ("Alexander Sun" and "Cleopatra Moon") as scandalous and offensive.

135 Cf. Plutarch, 36.2, who claims that no king prior to him had been so punished. Some gifts to Cleopatra enumerated in Caesar's next speech are also specified; for the gifts to his sons by Cleopatra, Alexander and Ptolemy, with the enunciation of their titles, see Plutarch, 54.4. Cf. also Jodelle, I.[ii.]195-97.

CAESAR

1430 He gave her Lydia and Syria, what's more,
 1431 Fragrant Arabia, Cyprus with its gold ore,
 1432 And further gave to his children Cilicia,
 1433 Parthia, Media, Armenia, Phoenicia,
 1434 Designating them in a public declaration
 1435 "Kings of all other kings", as if by proclamation.

AGRIPPA

1436 Then, from his native country ravishing the honour,
 1437 Did he not in Alexandria triumph over
 1438 The Armenian prince, who had to him surrendered
 1439 On his word not to do him harm—a promise perjured?¹³⁶

CAESAR

1440 No, we Romans have not received more injuries
 1441 Since you, Quirinus, with heavenly auguries,
 1442 Built with your own hands the towers of Romulus,¹³⁷
 1443 Than the crazed love of Antony has done to us.
 1444 And never any war so sacred and so just
 1445 Was launched with such firm conviction that fight we must
 1446 As this we have in hand, without which our city
 1447 Was on the point of losing all its dignity—
 1448 Although I feel regret (I call the Sun to witness
 1449 And you, great Jupiter) for its destructiveness,
 1450 And that of Latin blood there is often no dearth,
 1451 Pouring in frequent waves to wash over the earth.
 1452 What ancient Carthage, driven by obstinate hate,
 1453 What Gaul, grumbling at the destiny of our state,
 1454 What rebel Samnite or what Pyrrhus, never tamed,
 1455 Fell Mithridates or Parthian, may be blamed
 1456 For such damage to Rome?¹³⁸ Its form Republican,

136 Cf. Jodelle, I.[ii.]211-16, and n. 25. Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 1438, likewise notes this point of contact.

137 Romulus, mythical founder of Rome, was assimilated to the ancient Sabine god Quirinus; see *OCD*, s.v. "Romulus" and "Quirinus".

138 The list of particularly important enemies of Rome includes the Samnites (a rival Italian people); Pyrrhus, King of Epirus (319-272 B.C.E., allied with the Samnites against Rome at once point); and, more recently (like the Parthians), Mithridates VI ("the Great"), King of Pontus (120-63 B.C.E.). See *OCD*, s.v. "Samnium", "Pyrrhus", "Mithridates (6)" and "Parthians".

1457 Had he prevailed, would soon have been Canopean.¹³⁹

AGRIPPA

1458 Thus the divinities of heaven, who that city
 1459 Have edified to last for all eternity,
 1460 The guardians of the Capitol, who have always
 1461 Shielded us (and so will our race in future days),
 1462 Have granted you victory, that you may renew
 1463 Its honour, which all those past evils overthrew.

CAESAR

1464 Indeed, the wretch, having the Ionian sea¹⁴⁰
 1465 Covered, in order to sink me, with a vast navy,
 1466 Gave battle to me, where Fortune, inclined my way,
 1467 Repulsed his assault and turned it to disarray.
 1468 He himself took flight, when he saw flee in full sail
 1469 His loving friend, stricken with fear that made her pale.
 1470 His men, though at a loss, lacking guidance, leadership,
 1471 Fought forcefully, pressed together, ship against ship,
 1472 Charging and repulsing with their oars and main strength,
 1473 Hurling darts and flame, thrusting spears and pikes at
 length,
 1474 Such that the night's obscurity had spread already
 1475 Its ample starry veil upon the bloody sea,
 1476 While they sustained the combat, then, quitting the fray
 1477 With difficulty, made across the waves their way.
 1478 Everywhere were struggling soldiers washed overboard,
 1479 Who filled the air with cries and sobs as they implored;
 1480 The sea became red with blood, and the shores nearby
 1481 Groaned where the fragments of wrecked vessels came to
 lie
 1482 And the wave-tossed corpses, which swiftly offered feasts
 1483 For the birds, the fish and the savage forest beasts.
 1484 This you know, Agrippa.

139 "Canopean": orig. "Canopique", forming an ironic rhyme with "republique". The point, given the luxury associated with Canopus (see above, I.110 and n. 21), is the moral decadence that would have subverted Roman virtue under Antony's influence.

140 The Ionian Sea: site of the naval battle named for Actium, a Greek coastal promontory.

AGRIPPA

It is appropriate

1485 The Roman Empire itself should regulate
 1486 Like heaven, which, as it above our heads turns round,
 1487 By its example moves what lies upon the ground.
 1488 Now, as one alone of heaven has mastery,
 1489 Ruled by one sole master this world below must be.
 1490 *Two partners in power, equal in their gradation,*
 1491 *Can neither accept nor discharge their obligation:*
 1492 *Always engaged in quarrel, hatred, jealousy,*
 1493 *They let the people suffer from their rivalry.*

CAESAR

1494 Therefore, so that never while I am still alive,
 1495 One seeking to rise may find means to help him thrive,
 1496 Enough blood must accompany our victory
 1497 To be an example for future memory.
 1498 All must be murdered, so that none remain of those
 1499 Likely one day to trouble our common repose.

AGRIPPA

1500 *For murders you should not distinguish your empire.*

CAESAR

1501 *Murders one must employ to secure one's desire.*

AGRIPPA

1502 *By making enemies, one makes nothing secure.*

CAESAR

1503 *I do not make any: their absence I procure.*

AGRIPPA

1504 *There is nothing like severity¹⁴¹ to displease.*

141 “[S]everity”: orig. “rigueur”, in keeping with the “clémence/rigueur [mildness/harshness]” topos as discussed by Jondorf, pp. 105-13, with specific reference to Garnier.

CAESAR

1505 *There is nothing to make me live so much at ease.*

AGRIPPA

1506 *And what has ease has he whom all the world holds in
fear?*

CAESAR

1507 *To be feared and to have made his foes disappear.*

AGRIPPA

1508 *To be feared makes one commonly hatred obtain.*

CAESAR

1509 *Hatred without power is commonly in vain.*

AGRIPPA

1510 *For the death of the prince one fears the people yearn.*

CAESAR

1511 *To the prince not feared one does many an ill turn.*

AGRIPPA

1512 *There is no such guard, nor any so sure defence*
1513 *As to enjoy one's citizens' benevolence.*

CAESAR

1514 *Nothing more uncertain, flimsy and light, we find*
1515 *Than the favour of the people, to change inclined.*

AGRIPPA

1516 *Good gods, how all love a prince on a human scale!¹⁴²*

CAESAR

1517 *The honour paid to one severe will never fail!*

142 “[O]n a human scale”: orig. “debonnaire”.

AGRIPPA

1518 *There is nothing more divine than benignity.*

CAESAR

1519 *Nothing so pleases the gods as severity.*

AGRIPPA

1520 *The gods pardon all.*

CAESAR

For crimes they make mortals pay.

AGRIPPA

1521 *... Give us their benefits.*

CAESAR

Often take them away.

AGRIPPA

1522 *They do not take vengeance, Caesar, for every stroke*
 1523 *By which our failings their righteous anger provoke.*
 1524 *So you must not—and I beseech you to believe me—*
 1525 *With any cruelty sully your victory.*
 1526 *It is a blessing from the gods not to abuse,*
 1527 *But for the good of all with gentleness to use—*
 1528 *And to thank them for it: since they grant you the grace*
 1529 *To govern through you this whole terrestrial space,*
 1530 *Which they desire from now on to pacify,*
 1531 *And its power dispersed in one to unify.*

CAESAR

1532 *But who is this man, breathing hard, who now arrives,*
 1533 *Approaching us, and still to hasten his pace strives?*

AGRIPPA

1534 *I think I see beneath his arm—he seems afraid!—*

1535 Unless I mistake totally, a bloody blade.¹⁴³

CAESAR

1536 What might this mean, then? My longing to hear is great.

AGRIPPA

1537 He is coming, coming towards us—we must wait.

DERCETAEUS [*entering*]

1538 What good god will now enable my voice to mount,
1539 So that to the rocks and the woods it may recount—
1540 To the waves of the sea resounding on this shore,
1541 To the earth and to the sky—my message of horror?

AGRIPPA

1542 What strange occurrence can have brought you here to us?

DERCETAEUS

1543 Something lamentable. O Heaven furious!
1544 O gods too inhumane!¹⁴⁴

CAESAR

What terrible event

1545 Do you want to relate?

DERCETAEUS

Alas, too great the torment!

1546 When I think of the woeful things¹⁴⁵ that met my sight,
1547 My heart's blood freezes, and I am overwhelmed quite:
1548 My state of shock seizes me still; my heaving chest
1549 Keeps stuck within my throat words I would have
expressed.

143 “[B]lade”: orig. “coutelas”—a long and broad knife (or short sword) with a single edge; the English derivative “cutlass” has acquired distracting associations. The weapon is termed a “sword” (orig. “espee”) below at l. 1600, a “knife” or “dagger” (orig. “poignard”) at l. 1607.

144 “[I]nhumane”: orig. “inhumains”—evidently with the common sense of “cruel” quite effacing the literal meaning of “not human”, which would be absurdly tautological in the context.

145 “[W]oeful things”: orig. “pitié”; for this meaning of “pitié”, see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v., def. C.1.

1550 He is dead, he is dead—be certain of that fact:
1551 This broad blade is the means of that murderous act.

CAESAR

1552 Alas! My heart is splitting and pity torments me:
1553 With side-piercing¹⁴⁶ agony that sad news presents me.
1554 So Antony is dead? Alas, I placed him where
1555 He was forced to become the victim of despair.
1556 But tell us, soldier, how he ended—in what way
1557 He finally left behind this fair light of day.¹⁴⁷

DERCETAEUS

1558 Antony, having seen there was nothing to hope for
1559 Further, nor obligation now to combat more,
1560 And when he saw all his men show their treachery
1561 In battles on the land, in battles on the sea—
1562 Who, not content to join those likely to prevail,
1563 Were so brazen as his very gates to assail—
1564 He entered his palace alone, struggling and pained,
1565 Accused Cleopatra, of her rudely complained;
1566 Said that she was disloyal, a traitor, whose wish
1567 Was to deliver him to those she could not vanquish
1568 And have no share in his evil—for her incurred—
1569 Unlike the pleasures his rebel greatness¹⁴⁸ conferred.
1570 But meanwhile she, for her part, now fearing his
 furor,
1571 Withdrew to the site of the tombs, that place of horror,
1572 Caused the doors to be locked, lowered the blocking grate,
1573 Then, overcome with pain, began to agitate—
1574 To vent a thousand laments, forcing sobs and groans
1575 From her weakened trunk, torn away quite to the bones;
1576 Spoke of herself as the most wretched of all dames;

146 “[S]ide-piercing”: orig. “L’estomach pantelant”—lit. something like “stomach-startling”, but the evocation of an emotional blow in physical terms is close to the effect of Edgar’s reaction to the mad Lear: “O thou side-piercing sight!” (Shakespeare, *Lr.*, IV.vi.85).

147 “[T]his fair light of day”: orig. “ceste belle lumiere”—the commonplace metonymy of light for life.

148 “[R]ebel greatness”: orig. “grandeur rebelle”—rebellious, presumably, against Caesar’s hegemonic ambitions and his own obligations.

1599 His servant, him to act on his sworn word commanded¹⁵¹
 1600 To kill him if he had need. Eros took the blade—
 1601 And instantly a wound in his own breast he made;
 1602 He poured out blood and life, then fell dead at his feet.
 1603 Thereupon Antony: “Eros, gladly I greet
 1604 This noble act; unable my life to undo,
 1605 You have given your body what to mine is due.”
 1606 When he had managed, with effort, these words to
 say,
 1607 And picked up the bloody weapon from where it lay,
 1608 Into his belly he plunged it, and then there spilled
 1609 Red blood in a gushing fountain, which the room filled.
 1610 He staggered at the stroke; his visage turned all white;
 1611 Down he sank upon a bed in a feeble plight.
 1612 He fainted from the pain and suddenly went cold,
 1613 As if his fair soul on its home had lost its hold;
 1614 Yet he came to again, and perceiving us all,
 1615 Our eyes flooded with tears, and with blows continual
 1616 Beating ourselves from sheer pity, grief, bitter sorrow,
 1617 To see him thus dissolving in the worst of woe,
 1618 Begged us quickly his lingering death to bring on,
 1619 Which each of us refused, and left him one by one.
 1620 But then he did nothing else but cry out and flail,
 1621 Till Cleopatra’s man arrived and told his tale,
 1622 Saying he had by her express command been sent
 1623 To have him carried to her in the monument.
 1624 At those words the wretched man elation expressed
 1625 To know she was living, urged on us his request
 1626 To bring him to his dame; and then our arms did bear
 1627 Him to the tomb, but we could find no entrance there;
 1628 For the Queen, fearful of being a captive¹⁵² made,
 1629 And being in Rome alive in triumph displayed,

151 “[H]im to act on his sworn word commanded”: orig. “le somme de sa foy”; “somme[r]” carries, I take it, the specific sense of requiring someone to fulfil a promise (see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v. “sommer”, def. B. Cf. Plutarch, 76.4, who, in Amyot’s translation, states that Antony had obtained Eros’s “foy . . . il avoit long temps [faith . . . a long time ago]” (cited by Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 1591-1600).

152 “[C]aptive”: orig. “captive”—a pointed allusion, it would seem, to Jodelle’s title, such as is also found throughout Montreux.

1667 Nor if all were horrid scenes of murder and rape;
 1668 If blood ran like a river throughout the whole place,
 1669 If soldiers killed the child in its father's embrace,
 1670 The father of the child, the husband in the arms
 1671 Of his crazed wife, who rushes into fatal harms.
 1672 Now, stricken to the heart by the town's extreme
 grieving,
 1673 I resolved on taking this sword with me and leaving.
 1674 I picked it up from the ground when I saw his men
 1675 Come from Antony's chamber carrying their burden;
 1676 I brought it to you on purpose, so as to stress
 1677 The fact of his death and vouch for my truthfulness.

CAESAR

1678 O gods, what misfortune! Alas, poor Antony!
 1679 This very sword did you for such a long time carry
 1680 Against enemies, just to make it, in the end,
 1681 By most hateful murder its own master offend?
 1682 O death that I deplore! And wars—so many others
 1683 Have we brought to a conclusion as friends, as brothers,
 1684 Companions and relations, equals in empire:
 1685 And now must it be I that cause you to expire?

AGRIPPA

1686 Why trouble yourself so with sorrows pointlessly?
 1687 Why all this tearful lamenting for Antony?
 1688 Why do you tarnish your victory with regret?
 1689 You seem determined your own glory to forget.
 1690 Let us enter the town and the gods supplicate.

CAESAR

1691 I cannot but deplore in tears his wretched fate,
 1692 Although not I but his arrogance is the cause,
 1693 And that Egyptian's love against all moral laws.

AGRIPPA

1694 But we must try to get into the monument,
 1695 So as not to lose with her in this hectic moment
 1696 The many rich treasures which, as she breathes her last,

1697 She may, despairing, into the fierce fire cast
 1698 To cheat your hands of them and crown her death with
 fame,
 1699 Letting all those jewels be devoured by flame.
 1700 So send to her and arrange to make an attempt
 1701 To keep her alive with a prospect that may tempt,
 1702 Some vain promise, and let us find out with assurance
 1703 Whether by some devious means one may gain entrance
 1704 To those opulent¹⁵³ tombs.

CAESAR

Proculeius let's send,

1705 To her desolate soul the bait of hope to lend,
 1706 To soothe her with speeches, so that we may be sure
 1707 Both her riches and herself wholly to secure.
 1708 For along with all else I ardently desire
 1709 To be able to preserve her till we retire
 1710 From this country, that she may serve to ornament
 1711 The triumph Rome will certainly to us present.

CHORUS OF CAESAR'S SOLDIERS¹⁵⁴

1712 Forever will such war domestic
 1713 Gnaw the vitals of our Republic?
 1714 And, no respite for our hands gained
 1715 From wielding swords with our blood stained,
 1716 And never doffing the cuirass
 1717 (By now become our constant garment),
 1718 Will all our race in the morass
 1719 Remain of murder permanent?
 1720 And where our bosom open stands
 1721 Bathe always our rebellious hands?¹⁵⁵

153 “[O]pulent”: orig. “riches”. Revision to stress the material aspect of Caesar’s motives is suggested by the reading of the first printed text (1578): “tristes [gloomy]” (recorded by Ternaux, ed., textual n.). Plutarch, 78.3, cites Caesar’s interest both in preserving the treasures, which might be destroyed in her funeral pyre, and in having her led in triumph.

154 On the device of such a chorus of soldiers, speaking in octosyllabics, which had been pioneered by Jacques Grévin (in *César* [1561]) and previously employed by Garnier, see Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 1712-92.

155 Ll. 1720-21: orig. “Et toujours dedans nos poitrines / Laverons nos dextres mutines?” The translation struggles with this compact image of civil war as equivalent to self-destruction—a pre-occupa-

1722 And must it be that the eye sees
 1723 Everywhere our wretched trophies,
 1724 Showing all future generations
 1725 With what extreme impiety
 1726 Our brutal arms their depredations
 1727 Direct against their native city?
 1728 Heaven, then, is bound to continue
 1729 Our cruel self-punishment to view
 1730 And find in heaps on every hand
 1731 Our bodies scattered on the land,
 1732 Which serve to fertilise the prairies
 1733 Of far-away foreign regions,
 1734 Made the proud beneficiaries
 1735 Of so many intrepid legions—
 1736 To which wave-bound Neptune appeals
 1737 To fill the maws of errant seals,¹⁵⁶
 1738 So that the sea, in blue inscribed,
 1739 Reddens with all the blood imbibed;
 1740 Even as the conch-shell Tyrian
 1741 Turns red with blood purified
 1742 To make from wool Canusian
 1743 The noble fabric purple dyed.¹⁵⁷
 1744 But now that Rome's great potency
 1745 Is in the hands of one man only,
 1746 Who governs disputed by none,
 1747 Its empire restored to one,
 1748 When it had borne the equal sway
 1749 Of three, each of the others jealous,
 1750 Scourging Italy while it lay
 1751 Under their triple yoke pernicious,
 1752 I hope, the cause present no more
 1753 Of this terrible bloody war,

tion of Garnier, who was pointedly evoking the situation in contemporary France.

156 Ternaux, ed., n. to ll. 1736-37, notes the same image in Garnier's *Hippolyte*, II.420: "Et remplir l'estomac des Phoques vagabondes."

157 The reference to the production from "purified blood" of "Tyrian purple" cloth from the wool of Canusium (modern Canusa di Puglia, a town in the region of Pouilles)—such cloth being a symbol of high (indeed imperial) rank—appears to glance ironically at the bloody origins of power.

1754 And our discords' deadly throes
 1755 Broken by the latest blows,
 1756 That our shore the sight may give
 1757 Of poles that fertile branches raise¹⁵⁸
 1758 Of the blest Palladian olive,
 1759 Instead of showing sterile bays;¹⁵⁹
 1760 And that of our good father Janus
 1761 The temple, which red Mars, to pain us,
 1762 Its doors to open has constrained,
 1763 From now on closed will be maintained,¹⁶⁰
 1764 And the warrior's useless helmet,
 1765 Of its flaunting feathers despoiled,
 1766 Be seen on some hook idly set,
 1767 And the sword with rust be soiled.
 1768 At least if war makes its return,
 1769 May it not among us sojourn
 1770 To slaughter us in mutinies
 1771 With swords meant for our enemies.
 1772 Let our arms their points apply
 1773 Against the bellies of the Germans,
 1774 The Parthians, who feign to fly,¹⁶¹
 1775 And the cruel Cantabrians.¹⁶²
 1776 That is where our forefathers' glory
 1777 Gleams on the brow of Memory;
 1778 There in many triumphs were seen

158 Ll. 1756-57: orig. "On verra dessus nostre rive / Pallir les rameaux norriciers"; the verb "pallir", apparently unattested as such and hardly, in the context, to be confused with "pâir" (to turn pale) complicates translation here. I take it to be related to the noun "palis" (stake, pole, or a fence made of such), from which "palissade" (French and English) derives. "Espalier", a line of fruit trees set against a wall, is another relative. The image is clearly of a row of low trees planted along the shore.

159 The olive is "Palladian" with reference to the image of Pallas Athena which symbolically protected Athens; the "bays", from laurel trees, are symbols of military victory.

160 The passage—not properly a temple—of two-faced Janus was closed in times of peace (therefore rarely), open in times of war to invoke protection against enemies. See *SCD*, *s.v.*

161 I.e., as a cavalry tactic for which the Parthians were notorious. (English still preserves the expression "Parthian shot".) Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 1774, finds a probable source in *Les Epithetes* of Maurice de La Porte.

162 Cantabrians: inhabitants of the area including the northern coastal province of Cantabria in modern Spain. Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 1775, again references Maurice de La Porte: "*Cantabres*. Indontez, belliqueus, inhumains, furieus. *Les Cantabres aujourd'hui nommez Biscains peuple d'Espagne, ont esté fort cruels et qui aimoient mieux la guerre que la paix.*" Cf. English "Bay of Biscay" (Fr. "Golfe de Gascogne").

1779 Our emperors¹⁶³ with laurels green;
 1780 And there our Rome, which none could tame,
 1781 Once for shepherds' a humble station,
 1782 To this great height of grandeur came,
 1783 Queen of every foreign nation,
 1784 Which now seems ready to defy
 1785 Heaven, to which its praises fly,
 1786 Since nothing else in this whole round
 1787 To rise against her can be found—
 1788 So that she need have no more fear,
 1789 Unless it is of Jupiter's ire,
 1790 Whose hand may quell, should he it rear,
 1791 At one stroke the Roman Empire.

Act V

Cleopatra, Eufron, Cleopatra's Children, Charmion, Eras

CLEOPATRA

1792 O cruel Fortune! O disaster cursed and dire!
 1793 O pestilential love! O sweet and hateful fire!
 1794 O unhappy pleasures! O frail and sickly beauties!
 1795 O mortal marks of grandeur, mortal royalties!
 1796 O woeful life! O queen deserving of lament!
 1797 O Antony—whom my fault to the tomb has sent!
 1798 O heavens far too hostile: alas, all the fury
 1799 And spite of the gods teems to do us injury!
 1800 Hapless queen! Oh, that never in this world my sight
 1801 Had encountered the aimless brilliance¹⁶⁴ of the light!
 1802 Alas, of my own I am the poison and pest:
 1803 I lose the old sceptres my ancestors possessed;

163 “[L]eaders”: orig. “Empereurs”, here meaning commanders, generals (cf. Lat. “imperatores”). On the title historically and in the plays, see Jodelle, n. 16.

164 “[A]imless brilliance”: orig. “clairté vagabonde”. The idea seems to reach beyond daylight’s cyclical motion to the absence of meaning.

1804 I subjugate the realm to foreign dominance
 1805 And my children deprive of their inheritance.
 1806 Yet that is nothing, alas! It amounts to naught
 1807 Compared with you, dear spouse, whom in my toils I
 caught—
 1808 You to whom I bring misfortune, at last compel
 1809 To fall by bloody hand, in the dank tomb to dwell;
 1810 You, my precious lord, you to whom I prove so dire—
 1811 Whom I deprive of life, of honour and empire.
 1812 O destructive woman! What life may I still find
 1813 In this spectral vault, where I have myself confined?
 1814 Can I still breathe? My soul in such a frantic state,
 1815 Can it still, can it still, my life perpetuate?
 1816 O Atropos, Clotho—spinners of mortal thread;
 1817 O Styx, O Phlegethon—rivers known to the dead.¹⁶⁵
 1818 O you daughters of Night . . .

EUFRON

Live for your children's sake:

1819 Do not, by dying, such a sceptre from them take.
 1820 Alas, what will they do? Who will see to their care?
 1821 Who will protect you, who royal heritage bear?
 1822 Who will have pity? Already I seem to see
 1823 These little children falling into slavery
 1824 And carried in triumph . . .

CLEOPATRA

Ah, miserable plight!

EUFRON

1825 . . . Their tender arms with an odious rope bound tight
 1826 Against their tender backs.

CLEOPATRA

O gods, how pitiful!

165 Ll. 1816-17: suitably portentous invocations of two of the three Fates (see Jodelle, n. 128) and of the infernal rivers Styx and Phlegethon, metonymic of the underworld (see *SCD*, *s.v.*)

EUFRON

1827 Their poor necks bowed low to the ground—so very
painful!

CLEOPATRA

1828 Never, you great gods, must that evil be allowed!

EUFRON

1829 . . . And with the finger-pointing of the common crowd.

CLEOPATRA

1830 Rather a thousand deaths!

EUFRON

1831 Now the brute hangman lunges,
And now into their childish throats his knife he
plunges . . .

CLEOPATRA

1832 Oh, heart-break! By the shores removed from the light
of day,
1833 The trampled fields where solitary shadows stray—
1834 By the shade of Antony, and that of myself,
1835 I implore you, Eufron: look after them yourself.
1836 Be like a good father to them, and by your foresight
1837 See that they do not fall beneath the unjust might
1838 Of that cruel tyrant. Sooner conduct them where
1839 The black Ethiopians live, with frizzled hair,
1840 Or empty Ocean to the waves' mercy invites,
1841 Or the snowy Caucasus, with its barren heights,
1842 In company of swift tiger, lion and bear—
1843 Sooner, in short, sooner any place, anywhere,
1844 In all lands and seas. For the main source of my fright
1845 Is his furor, which for blood has such appetite.
1846 Now adieu, my children, my dear children, adieu.
1847 May holy Isis to some place of safety guide you,
1848 Where you may be able, far from our enemy,
1849 To let your lives unroll in peace, from his yoke free.
1850 Do not recall, children, your birth of noble race,

1851 And wholly from your memory the fact erase
 1852 That many brave kings, holding Egypt's mastery
 1853 One after another, comprised your ancestry—
 1854 That your father has been this great Marc Antony,
 1855 Who, descended from Hercules, gained greater glory;
 1856 For such a memory would irritate your hearts,
 1857 Having so fallen, with a thousand burning darts.
 1858 Who knows whether your hands, to which false destiny
 1859 Promised the sceptre of the Latin empery,
 1860 Instead by wielding shepherds' hooks will have to thrive,
 1861 And sticks and goads, or carts perhaps will need to
 drive?
 1862 Learn to suffer, children, and labour to forget
 1863 Your glorious birth, with Fates so against you set.
 1864 Adieu, my little ones, adieu—how my heart aches
 1865 With pity, with pain: now death's piercing point me
 takes;
 1866 My breath fails me. Adieu, now, forever and ever.
 1867 Your father and myself you will see again never.
 1868 Adieu, my tender charges, adieu.

CLEOPATRA'S CHILDREN

Adieu, Madam.

CLEOPATRA

1869 Alas, that voice kills me. Good gods, fainting I am
 1870 Already, I can no more; I die. [*She collapses.*]

ERAS

 Now too weak,
 1871 Madam, to bear misfortune? At least to us speak.

EUFRON

1872 Let us go, children.

CLEOPATRA'S CHILDREN

Let's go.

EUFRON

1873 The gods our guides. We will take our chances,
 [Exeunt *Eufron* with *Children*.]

CHARMION

1874 O Fate too rigorous! Sister, what shall we do?
 1875 Whatever shall we do—alas!—if it is true
 1876 Death's lethal dart now pierces her, when a slight
 slumber
 1877 Seemed her body, numb with pain, half-dead, to encumber?

ERAS

1878 Her face is cold as ice.

CHARMION

1879 Do not leave us yet, but a proper farewell take.
 1880 Oh, grieve for Antony: his body do not doom
 1881 To lie without due obsequies in the bleak tomb.
 Ah, Madam, for God's sake,¹⁶⁶

CLEOPATRA

1882 Ah, ah . . .

CHARMION

Madam!

CLEOPATRA

Alas!

ERAS

To cares she will succumb!

CLEOPATRA

1883 My sisters, hold me up—how feeble I've become.

166 “[F]or God’s sake”: orig. “pour Dieu”—the sort of generalised reference to the principle of divinity possible even in a pagan context. Cf. Jodelle, III.1119 and n. 111.

1884 How wretched I am! And was any woman quite
 1885 As much as I so steeped in Fortune's bitter spite?
 1886 Tearful Niobe, alas, though your heart's distress
 1887 With good reason saw itself enveloped in numbness
 1888 For your murdered children, and on Sipylus' height
 1889 You were from your great pain into rock frozen tight,
 1890 Which weeps incessantly¹⁶⁷—yet did you never bear
 1891 So many causes of sorrow as are my care:
 1892 You lost your children, I lose mine—pour soul forlorn!
 1893 And I lose their father, for whom still more I mourn;
 1894 I lose this fair realm, and heaven in its harsh rigour
 1895 Does not change me to a tear-shedding marble figure.
 1896 Daughters of blond Sol, virgin Phaëthontides,
 1897 Weeping for your brother, whom the strong waves did
 seize
 1898 Of proud Eridamus, the gods along its course
 1899 To alders changed your bodies by their mercy's force.¹⁶⁸
 1900 Myself I weep and lament, and sigh without pause,
 1901 And heaven without pity laughs at my sad cause,
 1902 Augments and adds to it, with no means of relief
 1903 (Oh, cruelty!) but violent death to end my grief.
 1904 Then die now, Cleopatra, and no more be absent
 1905 From Antony on that shore where pale shades are sent:
 1906 Go join his waiting ghost, and cease your lamentation,
 1907 Bereft of his love, in these tombs' stark isolation.

ERAS

1908 Oh, let us grieve him still, and death not suddenly
 1909 Deprive him of our tears and the ultimate duty
 1910 We owe his tomb.

CHARMION

Alas, let tears our woe repeat

167 On Niobe, see above, n. 55.

168 Phaëthontides: the sisters of Phaëthon, who had attached the chariot of their father Apollo for their brother. Jupiter struck him with lightning for driving it recklessly, and he fell into the river Eridanus, whereupon they went into intense mourning and were transformed into trees along the river bank.

1911 While yet our eyes have water—then die at his feet!

CLEOPATRA [*mourning over Antony's body*]

1912 Who will furnish my eyes with streaming tears sufficient
 1913 To fittingly lament my sharp and varied torment,
 1914 And to lament for you, Antony? O my heart,
 1915 Alas, alas, what great floods I must needs impart!
 1916 And yet my eyes have thoroughly dried up their veins
 1917 By dint of weeping for my misfortunate pains;
 1918 So in their dryness they must drain out of my side
 1919 All the vital humour, then draw the blood beside.¹⁶⁹
 1920 Out of my double lights, therefore, let the blood run,
 1921 And as it pours, fuming, mix with yours to make one—
 1922 Liquify and warm it, and wet you over all,
 1923 Flowing without cease until the last drop shall fall.

CHARMION

1924 Antony, take our tears, the last rite we shall pay
 1925 To you, for Death is about to ravish away
 1926 Our souls out of our bodies.

ERAS

This sacrosanct duty

1927 May you receive now, Antony, and willingly.

CLEOPATRA

1928 O goddess, you adored in Cyprus and Amathus,
 1929 Paphian Venus, quick to bring hardship upon us
 1930 For the Julian race—if such favour you show
 1931 Caesar, why not also some upon us bestow?
 1932 Antony, by due ancestry, was just the same
 1933 And by an infinite file from Aeneas came,
 1934 Entitled to rule by the self-same destiny,
 1935 And Dardanian blood, the Latin empery.¹⁷⁰

169 L. 1919: orig. “Toute l’humeur vitale, et puis coulent le sang”. In traditional medicine derived from ancient Greek thought, blood counted as one of the four vital humours, but here it is clearly set apart.

170 Ll. 1928-35. Cleopatra complains that Venus, closely associated with the Cypriote cities of Amathus and Paphos, has unfairly favoured the Roman Julian “gens”, or patrician clan, to Egypt’s detriment

1936 Antony, O poor Antony, my precious soul,
 1937 No more now than a trunk, booty a cold blade stole,
 1938 Without life, without warmth, your fair brow colourless,
 1939 While hideous pallor has come you to possess.
 1940 Your eyes, two brilliant suns, where Love was once
 in place,
 1941 In which a warlike daring shone by Mars's grace,
 1942 With their lids closed are now enveloped by the night,
 1943 Like a fair day hidden, which from darkness takes
 flight.¹⁷¹
 1944 Antoine, I pray you, by our loves forever true,
 1945 By our hearts' ardent passion, which from sweet sparks
 grew,
 1946 By our sacred marriage,¹⁷² and out of tender pity
 1947 For our small children, pledges of our amity,
 1948 That my lamenting voice may reach your ears once more,
 1949 And that I may join you on the infernal shore,
 1950 As your wife and your friend: hear, hear, O Antony,
 1951 My sob-mingled sighing, wherever you may be!
 1952 I have lived until now, the wingèd course fulfilled
 1953 Of my years that passed by as destiny has willed;
 1954 I have flourished, I have reigned, I have had my
 vengeance
 1955 For my enemy-brother's scornful arrogance:¹⁷³
 1956 Happy—ah, too happy!—till these shores had to greet

and despite Antony's equal claim. The clan traced its pedigree to the Trojan hero Aeneas, the goddess's son by Anchises, hence ultimately to Dardanus, supposed ancestor of the Trojans. See *SCD*, s.v. "Aeneas", "Caesar", "Dardanus". The myth is central to Virgil's promotion of Augustan imperial destiny in the *Aeneid*: see, notably, I.257-91 and IV.272-76.

171 L. 1943: orig. "Comme un beau jour caché, qui les tenebres fuit". The translation is literal. The image appears less forced if one thinks of the setting sun as fleeing at the approach of nightfall.

172 "[S]acred marriage": "saint hymen". Cleopatra's insistence on her union with Antony in transcendental spiritual terms makes a notable contrast with the view of Caesar (and Plutarch), and becomes the basis of Montreux's treatment; see the Introduction, pp. 18, 21.

173 As was the practice in the Macedonian royal house of Egypt, Cleopatra had been successively married as joint-ruler to her two brothers carrying the name Ptolemy. Ternaux, ed., n. to l. 1955, takes her to be referring here to Ptolemy XIII, who warred against Julius Caesar and was drowned in the Nile in 47 B.C.E. A more probable candidate would seem to be Ptolemy XIV, married to Cleopatra in the following year by Caesar, who had made him King of Cyprus. Cleopatra ordered his murder. See *OCD*, s.v. "Ptolemy XIII", "Ptolemy XIV" and "Cleopatra VII".

1957 The menacing arrival of the Roman fleet.
 1958 Now the specious image of my grandeur shall go
 1959 To bury my troubles with the shadows below.
 1960 But poor, poor Cleopatra! Where am I? What saying?
 1961 Oh, from bitter pain my reason is wildly straying.
 1962 No, I am content in my consuming distress
 1963 To die with you, my dying lips on yours to press,
 1964 My body against yours, my mouth not moist but dried
 1965 With heat of sighing, to your own now to be tied,
 1966 And to both the same tomb, the same casket allowed,
 1967 Both together enveloped in a single shroud.
 1968 What my soul suffers as its very sharpest torment
 1969 Is the little by which, my heart, from you I'm absent.
 1970 I shall die very soon, very soon I shall die,
 1971 And then be a shade that along with you will fly,
 1972 Straying beneath the cypresses on the banks found
 1973 Of broad Acheron with its waters' mournful sound.¹⁷⁴
 1974 But I remain still, and survive, that I may send
 1975 Due honours with your corpse before meeting my end.
 1976 A thousand sobs I shall draw forth from deep inside,
 1977 With a thousand laments your funeral provide;
 1978 You shall have my hair to serve you for your oblations,
 1979 And my gushing tears take the place of all effusions.¹⁷⁵
 1980 My eyes shall be your torches, for from them the flame
 1981 Issued that fired your heart with love for your dame.
 1982 Now you, my companions, weep, weep, and let your eyes
 1983 On him pour a tearful torrent, as from the skies:
 1984 Mine can do so no more, which the dry heat consumes
 1985 That from my breast, as from a blazing furnace, fumes.
 1986 Beat black-and-blue your bodies with infinite blows;¹⁷⁶
 1987 Tear with all your strength your loosened hair where it

174 Acheron: "A river of the lower world, round which the shades hover" (*SCD, s.v.*). Cf. above, III.1280. Cypresses are anciently associated with mourning.

175 The rhyme "oblations"/"effusions" (identical words in French) is in the original, both terms referring, like the "torches" ("feux") in the following line, to the rituals of collective mourning that a public funeral would ordinarily entail. If the promise here of "gushing tears" ("bouillantes pleurs") is contradicted by her statement below, ll. 1984-85, that she can produce no more, one should perhaps understand that she calls on her women to weep for her (l. 1982) when she realises this.

176 Cf. above, I.[ii.]420-22 and n. 64.

grows;
1988 Scratch your faces—ah, for whom in our dying anguish
1989 Would we preserve our beauties that already languish?
1990 Myself, now that the water of my tears he misses,
1991 What shall I do—cried out, alas!—but give him kisses?
1992 Then let me kiss you, fair eyes, of my light last trace;
1993 O brow, seat of honour, your handsome warlike face!
1994 O neck, O arms, O hands, O breast where Death, our foe,
1995 Has just dealt—ah disaster!—his murderous blow!
1996 With a thousand kisses, another thousand, too,
1997 As its final office let my mouth honour you,
1998 And my body—spent, when that duty I fulfil—
1999 Collapse upon your own, and my life and soul spill.

END



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by Nicolas de Montreux

Translated, with Introduction and Notes,
by Richard Hillman

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Translation

Cleopatra: Tragedy
by Nicolas de Montreux

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CLEOPATRA: TRAGEDY

by

Nicolas de Montreux (Ollenix du Mont-Sacré)

Argument

Caesar Augustus was victorious over Antony, and this same Antony was dead, who, during his life, for love of Cleopatra, left Rome and his lawful wife to dwell in Alexandria with that queen. Following his death, Caesar desired to lead Cleopatra as his captive¹ in triumph in Rome and for that reason placed guards on her to prevent her from doing violence to her life. Nevertheless, that courageous queen, preferring an honourable and swift death to a servile and cruel life, as much as to avoid imminent servitude as to follow her Antony, caused an asp to be brought to her in a basket of figs, which she pretended to wish to eat, so that the guards, deceived, let pass the countrymen who was carrying it. And then Cleopatra discovered the snake, which she greeted joyfully, and caused herself to be bitten by that animal, whose biting puts to sleep the vital spirits of men and makes them die gently. Thus she put an end to her life and her miseries, having as companions in her death Carmion and Iras, her two ladies-in-waiting, who followed her in that act courageous and praiseworthy.

1 “Cleopatra as his captive”: orig. “Cleopatre captive”—a pointed allusion to Jodelle’s title.

*Characters*²

CLEOPATRA
 CARMION, lady-in-waiting
 IRAS, lady-in-waiting
 OCTAVIUS CAESAR
 AREIUS, a philosopher³
 DOLABELLA
 EPAPHRODITUS⁴
 CHORUS

-
- 2** Orig.: “Les Auteurs”, in the sense of those who create the drama by enacting it.
- 3** Areius (orig. “Arie”, elsewhere “Aree”) figures in Plutarch, 80.1-3, as a Stoic philosopher favoured by Caesar, not without political considerations. In Dio Cassius, 15.3, he is mentioned as an Egyptian whose wisdom and company Caesar valued and is credited with the conqueror’s leniency towards them, in keeping with his role here. Cf. Jodelle, III.1185-1200 and n. 115.
- 4** Epaphroditus: mentioned immediately prior to Areius in Plutarch, 79.3, as a freedman of Caesar sent to keep a watchful eye on Cleopatra and gratify her desires as fully as possible. Dio Cassius, 11.4-5, has him sent with Proculeius to entrap and secure her. Among the three dramatists, only Montreux gives him an active role.

Act I

Cleopatra, Carmion, Iras, [Chorus]

CLEOPATRA⁵

1 Is this again the sun whose flame bursts into light,
 2 That once caused the sun of my soul to shine so bright?
 3 This again the fire, whose spreading rays we see,
 4 That formerly showed Antony my spouse to me?
 5 Is it again the sun, whose reverend countenance
 6 Looked upon our loves in their blithe continuance,
 7 When happily they flourished by the gods' good grace,
 8 Authors of our friendship, which lit this earthly space.
 9 Is it day or night? And has Dawn eternal sent
 10 To cause me to remember, like her, to lament?⁶
 11 From Tithonus' bed, sister, do you come again,
 12 Reawakening your cries to awake my pain?
 13 "Awake" did I say? Ah, that which no rest can take,
 14 Living always in the mind—does it ever wake?
 15 That pain lives always which my soul in torment keeps:
 16 Then does it truly wake me, since it never sleeps?
 17 Is it you, fair Phoebus, who cause my wretched plight
 18 To discover its grief by the rays of your light?
 19 Do you tinge with gold the sky that was dull just now?
 20 Is she then gone, your sister with the silver brow?⁷
 21 Ah, is it you, bright sun? Already I see showing

5 Cf. the opening monologue of Montreux's Italianate pastoral *La Diane*, in which the love-lorn shepherd Fauste similarly questions the source of the light that illuminates his world—hence his unhappiness; see Montreux, *Diane*, trans. and ed. Hillman, I.[i.]1 ff.

6 Ll. 9-10: the goddess of the dawn (orig. "Aurore") presumably has two reasons to lament—the irreversible ageing of her lover Tithonus, for whom she neglected to ask Zeus for eternal youth to accompany his immortality, and the death of their son Memnon at the hands of Achilles. The former appears paramount here. Still, there seems to be no mythological precedent for the cries of lamentation cited in l. 12 (orig. "tes crys"), and it seems possible that Cleopatra is projecting her own grief upon the goddess as her "sister" (l. 11, orig. "ma sœur"), whose reappearance heralds a new day of suffering. More materially, the sounds of animals and birds waking at dawn may be suggested. Such is the case in Montreux, *Diane*, I.[i.]35-36 ("a thousand cries") and 55-56 ("myriad love-songs").

7 I.e., the moon (Luna), sister of the sun (Phoebus Apollo). It seems just possible that the notorious naming of her children by Antony as Sun and Moon might have come to the mind of a reader or spectator. See Garnier, IV.1418-25 and n. 134.

51 Nothing at his death but these cries do I inherit,
 52 Which I sacrifice for your sake⁹ to his poor spirit.
 53 Queen as I am, I served you all the while that Fortune
 54 Smiled on our desires with a face opportune,
 55 And as Queen at your side I reigned, and had my life,
 56 While Heaven maintained you unconquered in all strife;
 57 And to serve you the grim sacrifices I render
 58 That to the dead, for the peace of their shades, we
 tender:
 59 As a slave these piteous vows I render you,
 60 These holy sacrifices to demi-gods due—
 61 Not pompous, honoured not according to largesse,
 62 As for a king, with prodigal sumptuousness,
 63 And such as to you are owed, but with tears suffused,
 64 And though unhappy, with unhappiness ill-used,
 65 My hair will make you a funeral composition,¹⁰
 66 Strewn about me anyhow, in wretched condition:
 67 Alas, to you it belonged in our golden age,
 68 And for you alone to preserve it I engage;
 69 My violent weeping shall be your sole effusion,
 70 Such as heroes' proud temples receive in profusion;
 71 My sighs and outcries, which in raging furor start
 72 From that fire which love enkindled in my heart,
 73 Will be my incense, and this blood, which I esteem
 74 Cause of your woes, so you its hapless victim seem,
 75 On your altars as sole sacrifice shall be served—
 76 As you alone in this great universe deserved
 77 To cherish Cleopatra, and to render captive¹¹
 78 Her beauty, which, of living beauties, did most live.

9 “[F]or your sake”: she must be addressing (orig. “vous”) all the bounties she has enumerated; in the following lines she apostrophises Antony using the familiar “tu”.

10 “[F]uneral composition”: orig. “tableaux funérables”. (The word “funérable” does not seem to be attested elsewhere; it looks to be Montreux’s coinage, providing a rhyme for “miserables” in l. 66.) Cleopatra’s imaginary enactment of Antony’s funeral ceremony, including the dedication of her hair and of her weeping (as an “effusion” in l. 69), is closely modelled on the character’s concluding monologue in Garnier, V.1976 ff.; cf. esp. V.1978-79 and n. 175.

11 “[C]aptive”: the first of numerous echoes of Jodelle’s title in the dialogue, including the multiple plays below on “captive”/“captivate” in ll. 133 ff.

216 By a sacred duty in your cruel despair,
 217 As your happy fortune you also shared with us,
 218 When, free from adversities, you reigned glorious,
 219 And Antony, transported by your ardent eyes,
 220 Preferred serving you to viewing the victor's prize
 221 Of a thousand kings honouring him and submitting
 222 To his manly valour, as was most right and fitting.
 223 Happy Cleopatra, and from every care free,²¹
 224 At your side, I also lived, ah!, most happily,
 225 Tasting my just portion of your glory, so gay
 226 It should never have proved mortal—alas!—one day;
 227 Savouring some of those pleasures which your sweet crafts
 228 Led you to swallow with Antony in long draughts,
 229 When your spirits, united in one single will,
 230 When your hearts, enkindled with love's liveliest thrill,
 231 When your two loves, touched by desire identical,
 232 Rendered the pleasures of both exquisitely equal—
 233 And that great good which did with good your soul imbue,
 234 Which amorous Hymen²² kept hidden from our view.
 235 Happy as then we were, by no means did we know,
 236 Dazzled by joy, that death is sweet to undergo:
 237 *Atropos angered us, whom now in our distress*
 238 *We call upon as our sole tutelary goddess.*
 239 *But all things alter form, as destiny dictates,*
 240 *Which rolls inconstantly—an end for all awaits.*
 241 *Nothing but death may we count as certain and sure,*
 242 *Which often attacks us when our joy seems secure,*
 243 *Which pierces us when life affords a happy moment,*
 244 *And which, when we were suffering, was cruelly absent:²³*
 245 *For he welcomes death on whom life miseries piles,*
 246 *Unhappy when upon him favourably smiles*

21 “[F]rom every care free”: orig. “franche de soucy” (without following punctuation)—grammatically ambiguous, potentially referring to Cleopatra or to Carmion, though the shift in focus favours the latter.

22 “[A]morous Hymen”: orig. “l’amoureux hymen”. The god of marriage here lends legitimacy to sexual pleasure, presented unequivocally as a “good” (“bien”) in spiritual terms.

23 L. 244: orig. “Et qui durant noz maux cruelle fust de nous”—lit. “And which during our adversities treated us cruelly”; in the context this must mean by letting us suffer, as the sequel confirms, and I have translated so as to make this clear.

247 *Fate's visage, since that sister who deals deadly blows*
 248 *Is only sweet to one whose life no sweetness knows.*
 249 Alas! We feel it, and our pain is of sweet kind
 250 Which comes with Atropos as we leave life behind;
 251 Since without enduring pain stronger, more acute,
 252 Than that which the sharp scythe of death will attribute,
 253 We cannot live—alas!—among humanity,
 254 It follows death from that evil must set us free.
 255 Then, Cleopatra, in royal style let us die
 256 Worthy your ancestors, and that great woe defy
 257 Which, to add to your pains a captive's torment, looms,
 258 If you are still found here alive within these tombs.
 259 *For in dying no pain whatever will he know*
 260 *Who puts an end to existence to end his woe,*
 261 *Exchanging an ill which brings our soul devastation*
 262 *For a trivial one which is of short duration.*
 263 Alas, your early ancestors—do not forget—
 264 Were kings of the country, and with the gods rank yet.
 265 They came from Alexander, splendid was their glory:
 266 Misery must not spoil for you their memory;
 267 You must keep them in mind, and, them to imitate,
 268 Die rather than see a conqueror confiscate
 269 Your royal freedom and the honour of your race
 270 Be drawn in a chariot in Rome's public place.
 271 Remember that your beauty was able to tame
 272 Antony, once triumphant, whom none overcame,
 273 Over the universe's kings; do not agree
 274 To be dragged in servile fashion through that rich city,
 275 Which he has adorned with many a captured prize²⁴—
 276 You who have held him captive, thanks to your fair eyes.
 277 Rather, die, Cleopatra, and grieving Carmion
 278 In that triumphant death will be your brave companion,
 279 As she was in your life, so that a single fate,
 280 Which joined our lives, in death will us associate.

24 “[C]aptured prize”: orig. “despouilles des Preux”; the reference is to so-called “*spolia opima*”, spoils (especially armour) taken from defeated warriors and consecrated by victorious Roman generals; see *OCD*, *s.v.*

CLEOPATRA [*turning to Iras*]

281 *Ah, faithful Iras, how death's arrow is humane*
 282 *When it pierces at once our bodies and our pain!*
 283 *And they are by no means of any hope bereft,*
 284 *As long as that holy remedy is still left,*
 285 *For they can stifle their terrible agony*
 286 *And bravely recover their loss of liberty.*
 287 *They rate as mere weaklings within this base world here*
 288 *Whose cowardly hearts of death have a craven fear,*
 289 *Who are afraid of dying, lacking fortitude*
 290 *To dare by suicide to end their servitude.*
 291 *For their woe does not end: a thousand deaths they*
 face,
 292 *And their bodies' sufferings reveal their disgrace—*
 293 *Captive, bound, beaten, and pitifully constrained*
 294 *To honour the foe by whom they have been so pained,*
 295 *To serve the conqueror they are afraid to see,*
 296 *And who has deprived them of joy and liberty.*
 297 *Oh, miserable state! Far gentler we attest*
 298 *The force that harshly puts the body to the test*
 299 *Than that which tries the spirit: the one does not last,*
 300 *The other still ours when we to the tomb have passed;*
 301 *Oh, merciless pain, when beyond our conscious thought*
 302 *Our soul with the burden of some outrage is fraught!*
 303 *Its suffering more than the body's makes it pine,*
 304 *For while the body is mortal, it is divine.*
 305 *Ah, Iras, do you think Cleopatra will live*
 306 *As a proud conqueror's cruelly tormented captive—*
 307 *She whose blood that very same noble blood evinces*
 308 *Of those kings renowned for valour amongst all princes?*
 309 *Ah, Iras, do you think that an Egyptian queen,*
 310 *Whose descent from so many kings is plainly seen,*
 311 *Whose eye for conquest destined, whose resplendent beauty*
 312 *Ravished from so many kings their lives' liberty,*
 313 *Would serve as pastime, in servitude humbly bowed*
 314 *And led in triumph, to please the uncivil crowd*
 315 *Of haughty Romans? Can you see her slave-like cower*
 316 *When she had once enslaved great kings with all their*
 power?

317 She, who so many warlike souls had tightly bound,
 318 Now bound to a chariot, with abject hearts found
 319 That out of fear of death endure, against best hopes
 320 For their own welfare, the merciless Roman ropes?
 321 No, no, I must die, must attest with certitude
 322 That Fate, subduing me, has not my courage subdued,
 323 That Caesar has not vanquished her who had the honour
 324 Of vanquishing so many excellent in valour.²⁵
 325 And then, Iras, and then, a cruel slab from me steals
 326 Antony, my soul, and still him from me conceals:
 327 Alas, he lives no longer—therefore by what right
 328 Would I live now, who lived for nothing but his sight?
 329 No, no, I must die, with a death sublime which faces
 330 Fittingly my blessed Antony's spirit-traces²⁶—
 331 Cleopatra in dying just as brave allowed
 332 As divine in beauty and in her honour proud!
 333 Antony, my husband, if when love skewed her senses,
 334 Cleopatra a few times committed offences
 335 To your soul in error—if justly you were heard
 336 Sometimes, like me, to utter a complaining word—
 337 She will by her death expiate all such offence²⁷
 338 And prove her claim to your undying²⁸ confidence,
 339 Of her constant love and true faith the measure give,
 340 Which draw her from here so that she with you may live.
 341 *Iras, dear Iras, those whom sacred amity,²⁹*
 342 *Which can never, even by death, extinguished be,*
 343 *Has brought together living, with equal knots plighted,*
 344 *And rendered in like amorous labours united—*
 345 *When in life separated, they endure no absence,³⁰*

25 “[S]o many excellent in valour”: orig. “preux excellens en valeur”, the term “preux” having strong chivalric connotations. Cf. below, l. 498.

26 “[S]pirit-traces”: orig. “les esprits”, ineluctably plural.

27 “Offence”: orig. identical, likewise echoing the rhyming word of l. 334 (“offensee”).

28 “Undying”: the translation aims to convey the ironic effect of repeating “living” (“viue”) in these lines.

29 On the concept of the lovers’ “sacred amity [sainte amitié]” as pivotal in the representation of Caesar, see below, n. 116.

30 “[A]dmit no absence”: orig. “ne souffrent l’absence”—possibly meaning that they cannot endure separation, but, given the claim to union despite death, more probably in the neo-Platonic sense of

346 *And death has not the power to prevent their presence:*
 347 *They follow each other everywhere, for the soul*
 348 *Sees not when its life's object is in death's control.*
 349 *It must run in pursuit—ah, its sweet life lies there,*
 350 *And any lesser refuge³¹ wearies by compare.*
 351 I will follow Antony, then, and him assure
 352 That my love, by the fire of love rendered pure,
 353 Has not been extinguished by his blood but renewed
 354 At the happy thought of love that can both include,
 355 Ravishing from Caesar, ravisher of our joy,
 356 The honour of subjecting her who did enjoy
 357 The honour of being Antony's wife, whom he
 358 Of commanding his soul divine considered worthy.
 359 Ah, my faithful Iras, this view do you not share,
 360 Who know my misery, taste my consuming care?

IRAS

361 *Only those who of any other aid despair*
 362 *May cruel death as a last remedy prepare,*
 363 *For never toward death's house does one precipitate*
 364 *One's course but when opposing destiny and fate,*
 365 *Aroused against us, any expectation thwart*
 366 *Of lending our soul, in its strong desires, comfort;*

being together though absent. Cf. John Donne, "A Valediction forbidding mourning", *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, ed. John T. Shawcross (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967), ll. 13-24:

Dull sublunary lovers love,
 (Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
 Absence, because it doth remove
 Those things which elemented it.

But we by'a love, so much refin'd
 That our selves know not what it is,
 Inter-assured of the mind,
 Care lesse, eyes, lips, and hands to misse.

Our two soules therefore, which are one,
 Though I must goe, endure not yet
 A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to ayery thinnesse beate.

31 "[R]efuge": orig. "salut".

367 *For one must not die except in the case where one*
 368 *Simply does not possess the power death to shun:*
 369 *We mortals, for whom the great gods are responsible,³²*
 370 *Must wait here below to know their ultimate will*
 371 *And not their sacrosanct work, this body, offend,*
 372 *Against their will determining how it should end.*
 373 *To be honoured on this earth where ourselves we find,*
 374 *Distant from the great gods, the gods have made mankind;*
 375 *From us they desire service; against their will,*
 376 *We must not cause our well-being outrageous ill;*
 377 *We may not, then, with cruelty ourselves destroy,*
 378 *Since the gods have need here below us to employ.*
 379 For God's sake,³³ Madam, can you claim to be aware
 380 When the immortal gods might show for us their care?
 381 For all you know, may not still their bountiful hand,
 382 After so many harms, your sorrows countermand?
 383 Potent and good, do they lack the capacity
 384 To transfigure your hope-denying misery
 385 Into happy fortune, as their power could bring,
 386 In the place of your joy, this mortal suffering?
 387 *When we despair of receiving succour from mortals,*
 388 *We have no other recourse but to the immortals.³⁴*
 389 *When we expect no further succour in our pains,*
 390 *It is then their healing touch our anguish attains:*
 391 *They aim to aid us at our troubles' very height*
 392 *To prove to us how much they care about our plight;*
 393 *Being good and potent, they favour us in need,*
 394 *Accept our sacrifices, to our prayers accede;*
 395 *Their power appears when, with rescue prompt and swift,*
 396 *Those who see no relief out of despair they lift;*

32 “[F]or whom the great gods are responsible”: orig. “des grands Dieux tutélaires”. The argument of Iras is cast in much the same terms as the attempted suicide of Gloucester in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, who begs the gods’ indulgence for his inability to endure to his natural end “and not fall / To quarrel with your great opposeless wills” (IV.vi.37-38), then is convinced by Edgar to “Think that the clearest gods, who make them honors / Of men’s impossibilities, have preserved thee” (73-74) and to “bear / Affliction till it do cry out itself / ‘Enough, enough,’ and die” (75-77).

33 “For god’s sake”: orig. “hé Dieu”—the seeming incongruity with the context and content of the lines is not unusual. Cf. Jodelle, III.1119 and n. 111; Garnier, V.1878 and n. 166.

34 The rhyme “mortals”/“immortals” is in the original (“mortels”/“immortels”).

428 Took pleasure in seeing its flames him stupefy—
 429 Languishing, weeping, mournful and begging for mercy
 430 From that beauty whose force crushed his audacity.
 431 Do you not think yourself by that same beauty able
 432 Caesar's fierce cruelty to make malleable?
 433 To vanquish him, compel him, as of Antony
 434 It could melt the proud boldness and ferocity?
 435 No, no, you may be sure that Caesar you will render
 436 As docile to you as Antony once was tender.³⁶

CLEOPATRA

437 *Ah, my faithful Iras! When our destiny*
 438 *Has run its complete course by the great gods' decree—*
 439 *And when to an unhappy fate they us condemn,*
 440 *How horrible to hope for remedy from them!*
 441 *Our feeble potency, our puny strength abject,*
 442 *Too small, on their eternal law has no effect,*
 443 *And it is not up to death's slaves, such as we are,*
 444 *To alter destiny, to snuff our fatal star.*

IRAS

445 *The gods are not the authors of our injuries—*
 446 *Our failings are alone responsible for these.*
 447 *But when we amend, and to their goodness appeal,*
 448 *Then their will changes and our miseries they heal.*

CLEOPATRA

449 *Time makes all things here below to an end*
decline,
 450 *And the law imposing death is a law divine.*
 451 *Happy indeed are they to whom that death arrives*
 452 *When living is mere death and dying saves their lives.*

IRAS

453 *But if one had to die at each grave circumstance*

36 In effect, Iras urges Cleopatra to employ with Caesar blandishments similar to those recounted by Dio Cassius, 12-13, who states, however, that her failure to move him engendered her desire to die. Cf. Cleopatra's confrontation with Octavian in Jodelle, Act III.

454 *That freezes our spirits and clouds our countenance,*
 455 *It would mean constant deaths, a thousand lives to lose,*
 456 *For a thousand times each day some trouble ensues.*

CLEOPATRA

457 *One must not die when any affliction appears,*
 458 *But one must when the expectation disappears*
 459 *Of avoiding our evil, for—alas—one dies*
 460 *Indeed when the evil brings death yet death denies.*

IRAS

461 *Wait now—you still have every hopeful expectation*
 462 *That your sorrows may meet with some alleviation:*
 463 *That rare beauty you often called upon to serve you*
 464 *May still secure your safety and from death preserve you.*

CLEOPATRA

465 *Iras, this beauty, which Fortune unhappily*
 466 *To Antony gave, shall not be shared commonly:*
 467 *Only he shall have it, and if that is not here,*
 468 *Then in the underworld, where no cares interfere.³⁷*

IRAS

469 *But alas, what comfort for your dreadful misery*
 470 *Can you hope to receive from your dear Antony?*

CLEOPATRA

471 *A comfort such as pious memory obtains*
 472 *From those our friendship pleased to count among our*
gains.³⁸

37 L. 468: orig. “Sera dans les enfers affranchis de soucy”. The vision of the underworld as an idyllic haven for lovers thwarted in life is shared at the point of death by Shakespeare’s Anthony (“Where souls do couch on flowers we’ll hand in hand” [*Ant.*, IV.xv.51]) and Cleopatra (“that kiss / Which is my heaven to have” [V.ii.301]).

38 L. 472: orig. “De ceux que l’amitié à nous voulut vnir”, in which I take “ceux” as responding directly to “what comfort” (“quel confort”) in l. 469; the expression is elliptical, but the gist seems clear: her hope is to recollect their past joys in the presence of Antony’s spirit.

IRAS

473 But Antony is dead, hence all power has lost
474 To mitigate the torments in which you are tossed!

CLEOPATRA

475 Ah, there lies my ruin: he having passed away,
476 I must die too, my eyes, his vassals, seem to say;³⁹
477 For he was my life—alas, the fire that used
478 To kindle my strength, and my soul with heat infused.

IRAS

479 But for him, what good will the end of your life bring?

CLEOPATRA

480 To be assured that my love was chaste and unswerving.

IRAS

481 Of that had he not had enough experience?

CLEOPATRA

482 Ah, it is not to love to love only in presence.

IRAS

483 Of love's fidelity death gives no demonstration.

CLEOPATRA

484 Yes, it does, since if true, love brooks no separation.

IRAS

485 If he loves you, to harm yourself will make him sad.

CLEOPATRA

486 To die so I may be with him cannot be bad.

IRAS

487 What then? Thanks to you, will he be resuscitated?

39 L. 476: orig. "A mes yeux ses vassaux faut que ie meure aussi".

CLEOPATRA

488 No, but my way through to him will be liberated.

IRAS

489 Will he accept your death as gentle and humane?

CLEOPATRA

490 Yes, since he knows quite well that it frees me from
pain.

IRAS

491 But death will end your life!

CLEOPATRA

492 Ah, no death is endured
When by a little evil a great one is cured!

IRAS

493 Is anything sweeter than in the world to be?

CLEOPATRA

494 Ah, what more cruel than to die continually?

IRAS

495 But what is causing your death besides your own will?

CLEOPATRA

496 The desire to see myself not in pain still.

IRAS

497 Does not Caesar promise he will your life maintain?

CLEOPATRA

498 She who has given it to heroes⁴⁰ sees no gain
499 In receiving it from another, like one conquered,
500 Whom shameful fear of Atropos has always mastered.

40 “[H]eroes”: orig. “Preux”; cf. l. 324 above and n. 25.

IRAS

501 Must we not accept the evils that we incur?

CLEOPATRA

502 Death, not hardship, is the bleak life of a prisoner.

IRAS

503 Can we oppose our efforts to heaven's just vengeance?

CLEOPATRA

504 Yes—to kill ourselves kills its cruel continuance.

IRAS

505 But always a mischief upon our head reverts.

CLEOPATRA

506 This mischief, so slight, far greater from us diverts.

IRAS

507 From this pale end to being, what gain can you wish?

CLEOPATRA

508 To see my troubles die, my hard destiny vanish.

IRAS

509 Those who go seeking Atropos are in despair!

CLEOPATRA

510 It is the noble heart Fortune would overbear,
511 One unwilling to bend beneath her cruelty,
512 Preferring death by far to loss of liberty:
513 That is the choice I make, and though disaster leaves
514 My happiness destroyed and Cleopatra grieves,
515 She will by no means serve the tyrant, a conqueror
516 Who conquered by a stroke of fate, and not by valour.

IRAS

517 Do not speak like that of an Emperor so wise.⁴¹

CLEOPATRA

518 He can be none who by his courage does not rise.

IRAS

519 Yet Caesar is, all the same.

CLEOPATRA

By mere happenstance.

IRAS

520 Our life and death depend upon his dominance!

CLEOPATRA

521 Not true of death, since this arm of mine is still free.

IRAS

522 But he does not aim to destroy you utterly.⁴²

CLEOPATRA

523 He ravished Antony from me—so ravished all.

IRAS

524 But Antony himself pursued his fatal fall.

CLEOPATRA

525 Yes, so as not in lasting servitude to dwell.

IRAS

526 But Caesar did not cause all that to him befell.

CLEOPATRA

527 Ah, no—Cleopatra did, and to make amends,

41 “Emperor”: cf. above, l. 135 and n. 13, and below, III.1205.

42 Ll. 521 and 522 do not remotely rhyme in the original (“reste”/“perte”). It is possible, of course, that lines are missing.

528 Iras, she must go to honour, as her life ends,
 529 Her Antony below, since, once deprived of breath,
 530 We will have passed beyond to put our pain to death.

IRAS

531 Delay until Caesar consoles you in your care.

CLEOPATRA

532 One whom he satisfies need not go seek elsewhere.⁴³

IRAS

533 But he wants to help you.

CLEOPATRA

Of too majestic strain

534 Is Cleopatra to beg, implore, her life's bane,
 535 And to take her miserable days as a present
 536 From someone who her faithful love in tatters rent!
 537 No, Antony, no! I have no fear that my spirit,
 538 Living in your company, any blame will merit
 539 For honouring that enemy who your life blighted,
 540 Who separated our two hearts, by love united.
 541 She will die first, and you, Antony, to regain,
 542 She will find her death sweet and propitious her pain.

CHORUS

543 How much misery flows
 544 From foolish amity,
 545 For no one even pity
 546 On its harsh pain bestows.
 How vain sensuality
 548 Engenders painful ills,
 549 For a thousand evils
 550 That pleasure accompany.

43 L. 532: orig. "Qui peut assez de luy n'a que faire d'autrui". I translate literally. The referent of "luy" ("he") is unspecified, and Iras in the next line returns to her idea of Caesar, but Cleopatra must be thinking of Antony as her only source of consolation, and she will shortly apostrophise him (ll. 537 ff.).

551 Ah, what steep price we pay
 552 For joy that from love comes,
 553 For by it one becomes
 554 Of misery the prey.
 555 Oh, a soul may blessing claim
 556 That has shunned such dismay!
 557 One needs must love betray⁴⁴
 558 Or perish in its flame.
 559 This, Cleopatra, you know,
 560 Who die with cruelty
 561 When once for all to see
 562 Your joys did overflow,
 563 When once in happiness
 564 One saw you with your beauty
 565 Ravish the liberty
 566 Of souls in love's duress.
 567 But now your misery,
 568 After such days of pleasure,
 569 Needs the desperate measure
 570 Of death, which has no pity.
 571 Sooner die in noble style
 572 Than Fate as a slave to greet,
 573 For death tastes far more sweet
 574 Than life in anguish servile.

44 L. 557: orig. "Faut estre desloyal"—elliptical but referring, I take it, to the unhappy consequences of faithful love, as illustrated by Cleopatra—or perhaps of love itself, given her multiple conquests, evoked in the following stanzas. The Chorus's commentary notably wavers between banal moralising and rueful exaltation of amorous passion.

Act II

Octavius Caesar, Areius the philosopher, Dolabella, [Chorus]

CAESAR

575 To you, great immortals, whom rightly by the name
 576 Of guardians of Rome with one voice we acclaim;
 577 Great gods, authors of laws, who, with order sublime,
 578 Assign honour to virtue, punishment to crime,
 579 And who fittingly reward with welcome avails
 580 Someone who weighs justice equally in the scales;
 581 You who faithfully punish, with your hand immense,
 582 Resplendent with equity,⁴⁵ each human offence—
 583 It is to you, O great gods, that I grant the glory
 584 Of these fortunate wars, of this large victory,
 585 Which by your favour, my strength with your aid replete,
 586 Has been seen to send the enemy to defeat.
 587 *For we are nothing, except as it may you please,⁴⁶*
 588 *Creatures confined, without your sacred deities*
 589 *To work in our hands, in our arms to make strength flow,*
 590 *Acting in us while we are living here below—*
 591 *Authors of all our deeds worthy of memory:*
 592 *To you belongs the honour, to you all the glory,*
 593 *Since, authors of these gains, your equitable hands*
 594 *Bestow them on mankind, as just dessert demands.*
 595 *So the nurturing sun, its grace a common sight,*
 596 *The mother of our seasons, lends to us its light,*
 597 *Warms our vital spirits, causes growth in our bodies,*
 598 *Where each member with the others joins and agrees,*
 599 *For us ripens Mother Pomona's golden fruit,⁴⁷*

45 “[W]ith your hand immense, / Resplendent with equity”: orig. “sous l’effort de vos mains, / Luisantes d’équité”; evoked is the traditional image of lightning-bolts as punishment, as suits Caesar’s presentation of himself as the instrument of divine justice.

46 Ll. 587-602: this passage is rhapsodic in a way recalling the celebrations of divinely informed pastoral bounty in Montreux’s *Diane*. The contrast with Caesar’s military and political purposes is flagrant.

47 “Mother Pomona” (orig. “la mere Poumonne”): Roman goddess of tree-fruit, subject of a tale in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*; see *OCD*, *s.v.*

600 *Which prodigally her prodigal hands distribute*⁴⁸—
 601 *In short, affords us breath to the brink of the tomb,*
 602 *Enriched with feelings which from its rays we consume.*⁴⁹
 603 Thus, great gods, thus, your favours vouchsafed to
 succour us
 604 Often a change from wretched to happy procure us,
 605 Correct our fate and that dire destiny mend
 606 Which out of cruel anger was plotting our end:
 607 These benefits come from you, whose immortal breath
 608 Nourishes our faithful souls in this vale of death;
 609 You are their source—from our own desires arise
 610 Those sins which sometimes bind our souls with harmful
 ties.
 611 I have just had the proof of this, O great gods, named
 612 By our fathers benign, and guardians acclaimed
 613 Of their ancient rights and that living potency
 614 Whose strength above all mortals has been plain to see.
 615 For thanks to your goodness, a thousand times observed,
 616 Rome has from grave danger been happily preserved,
 617 And its glory gleams forth like a radiant sunrise,
 618 Fit for human worship, on the brow of the skies,
 619 Planting pale terror, causing cruelly to fear it,
 620 Like blocks of chilling ice, in the lordliest spirit,
 621 In hearts more removed from those towers high-erected
 622 Which have felt propitiously by the gods protected.
 623 Thus beneath martial Rome's indomitable name,
 624 Which, of all brave titles, by prowess brings it fame,
 625 Trembles the whole universe: Rome can never die,
 626 Preserved by the gods, prompt with rescue from on high.
 627 For its glory and warlike strength to overthrow,
 628 Too feeble is the arm of a barbarous foe,
 629 Too powerless its sword; thus each and every folk
 630 Bends down its conquered neck beneath the Roman yoke,
 631 And Phoebus the divine, in his immortal race,
 632 Sees Rome's eternal praise diffused in every place,

48 “[P]rodigally . . . prodigal”: the repetition mirrors the original (“prodigue . . . prodigement”).

49 L. 602: orig. “Riches du sentiment, aux rais de son flambeau”.

659 Of Rome, by Jupiter's protection fortified,
 660 Guarded by Pallas, she to the Muses allied:
 661 The universe fears it, defeated by its sword;
 662 It is honoured for virtue, for bounty adored.
 663 Only its own offspring do its misery nurture,
 664 With ardent endeavour its misfortune procure;
 665 It is her own children, who sucked milk from her breast,
 666 By whose fell cruelties her bosom is distressed,
 667 Who thwart her joy (men unworthy of memory!),
 668 And seek with their transgression to entomb her glory:
 669 Ingrates, rebels, cruel, who with hearts that deceive,
 670 Wrongly render evil for the good they receive.
 671 *More deserving of death is the ungrateful turncoat*
 672 *Than someone who brutally cuts another's throat:*
 673 *For one, the good obtained, does outrage to a friend,*
 674 *While the other merely brings his foe to an end;*
 675 *One cruelly outrages laws and public weal,*
 676 *While the other's harm one person alone will feel.*
 677 Thus worthy of death, unworthy of heaven's bounties,
 678 Are ingrate children, loathed by the divinities.
 679 This you know all too well, O Rome, whose martial face
 680 Has not seen, to harm you, running from place to place
 681 The barbarous enemy, nor his hand has viewed,
 682 Which trembles at her name, with Roman blood imbrued,
 683 But the hands of her own sons, those viperous offspring
 684 Who have sought their poor mother to her death to bring.⁵²

52 Evoked is the ancient belief that the young of vipers devour their mothers from inside before birth (see notably Herodotus, *Histories*, Bk. III.109). Ll. 665-70 also resonate with Aesop's fable of ingratitude concerning the farmer bitten by a viper he had saved from freezing. (See the site *Aesopica: Aesop's Fables in English, Latin and Greek* at <<http://mythfolklore.net/aesopica/perry/176.htm>>; accessed 21 April 2022.)

The fable is the source of the proverb current in many languages, and contained in the *Adagia* of Erasmus, concerning the nurturing of a viper in one's bosom. (Cf. above, l. 666, where "bosom" translates "sein".) Especially to the point here may be Cicero's application in *On the Responses of the Haruspices*, Ch. 24: "etiamne in sinu atque in deliciis quidam optimi viri viperam illam venenatam ac pestiferam habere potuerunt? [Is it possible that any virtuous men could have cherished in their bosom and have taken pleasure in, that poisonous and deadly viper?]" (ed. Albert Clark, trans. C. D. Yonge [online, *The Perseus Project*, <<https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0014%3Atext%3DHar.%3Achapter%3D24>>; accessed 23 February 2023]). In this oration, where the viper stands for his arch-enemy Clodius Pulcher, Cicero speaks

703 Antony, whom the gods, avengers of offences,
 704 Have drowned in the sweet sea of his riotous senses;
 705 Lost in his debauches and in the foul embrace
 706 Of an infamous whore, they caused him death to face—
 707 He who forsook my sister, his wife ever-faithful,
 708 Virtuous, constant, beyond compare beautiful,
 709 To love Cleopatra, she of sheer falseness made,
 710 For whom the loss of honour was her stock-in-trade,
 711 A woman always for depraved relations⁵⁹ ready,
 712 Who had given herself to my father already,
 713 Then Pompey the Great⁶⁰ (whose heart of treacherous weave
 714 Counted it great honour mere mortals to deceive).
 715 Antony,⁶¹ flouting justice, took arms against me
 716 To render by my death his course of vice more free,
 717 But the gods have punished him, and at their demand
 718 Was forced to kill himself, and did by his own hand⁶²—
 719 And thereby rendered my own⁶³ a plain rich in glory,
 720 Reaping at the camp its rich crop of victory.
 721 *Whatever the crime deserves, and although alive*

ing. It seems possible that “shameful eyes” also evokes the female sex organ, as “eye” certainly does in some Shakespearean contexts, e.g., “stabb’d with a white wench’s black eye” (*Rom.*, II.iv.14); cf. Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare’s Bawdy*, rev. ed. (New York: Dutton, 1969), s.v. I have yet to confirm such a meaning, however, as established in French of the period.

- 59** “[D]epraved relations”: orig. “péché”. It is difficult to choose the term which bears the proper weight of moral condemnation without running into undue anachronism. If “péché” would invariably have meant “sin” for Montreux’s Christian public, the weaker sense in an established expression such as “femme/fille de péché” justifies avoiding the theological specificity of “sin” in this context; see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. “péché”, def. 2c.
- 60** Pompey the Great: orig. “Pompee le grand”. Cf. above I.147 and n. 15. The echo of Pompey’s appellation in the following line (“great honour” [orig. “grand honneur”]) is clearly sarcastic.
- 61** The name is not specified in the original, but Octavius is evidently continuing the narrative of his relation with Antony, after digressing by way of Cleopatra, Julius Caesar and Pompey. The translation clarifies this.
- 62** L. 718: the second part of the line is not necessarily redundant. The point may be that the gods denied his wish to be killed by a loyal servant—the action presented by Plutarch (76.4), followed by Jodelle (I.[ii.]229-34), Garnier (IV.1598-1611), and Shakespeare (*Ant.*, IV.xv.55-103). See esp. Garnier, n. 151.
- 63** “[M]y own”: orig. “ceste main”. Again, the translation seeks to obviate confusion. The image is complex (not to say strained), shifting from Antony’s suicidal hand to the hand of Octavius (“ceste main” presumably designated by a gesture). The latter is envisaged as a rich field whose glory it harvests by sealing his victory, apparently when the news of the suicide is brought to him in his encampment.

722 *In credit here below a long time one may thrive,*
 723 *At last he's punished, since the gods we praise for this*
 724 *Could never rank as gods unless they favoured justice—*
 725 *If crime they did not avenge (and contrariwise*
 726 *Approve of good actions), and wrong-doing chastise.⁶⁴*
 727 But now that in the tomb lies the false Antony,
 728 With him the wretched love that kept him company,
 729 What should I do, Areius? And why should I not
 730 Apply fire, sword and death as the worthy lot
 731 Of this hostile population, which, their faith breaking
 732 In a tyrant's cause, we saw arms against me taking,
 733 To reinforce Antony's vicious appetites
 734 And smooth the pursuit of his infamous delights.
 735 Given that, Areius, tell me what I should do:
 736 Do they deserve to bask in the rays of my virtue,
 737 My mercy's warmth? And Cleopatra—should not she,
 738 Guilty of his evil, feel the same misery?
 739 Come now and counsel me, for amid such uproar
 740 Minerva may moderate Mars's bitter furor.

AREIUS

741 *That law which, by the great gods' most righteous decree,*
 742 *Imposes death by the sword on none but the guilty,*
 743 *Which punishes crime and will never tolerate*
 744 *That the upright should be crushed beneath evil's weight,*
 745 *By the same token, equal force we see it bring—*
 746 *Happily!—to keep the innocent from suffering.*
 747 *For reason's dictates it would scarcely satisfy*
 748 *That one who has not offended justice should die*
 749 *Like an enemy, and the wrong is just as great*
 750 *To strike at innocence as vice to liberate,*
 751 Since the law which promises to punish the vicious
 752 Promises, too, to reward our friends the virtuous:
 753 It must not be that the just, along with the guilty,
 754 Since they have not transgressed, should meet with
 misery.

64 Ll. 725-26: the translation reflects the awkward syntactic structure.

755 *Kings in more sacred manner by equity reign*
 756 *Than by raw power, the father of cruel pain;*
 757 *The strength of the strong a stronger in turn may sway,*
 758 *But equity cannot be harmed in any way:*
 759 *Those empires which have as their happy foundation*
 760 *Divine equity enjoy happily duration,*
 761 *For to time, death, the rage of vice (which brings*
 decline),
 762 *May never be subject that edifice divine;*
 763 *But those reigns that are upon unjust power founded*
 764 *Are very often seen to be by force confounded.*
 765 *For force produces nothing that for long persists,⁶⁵*
 766 *While honourable justice death itself resists.⁶⁶*
 767 *Time wears away strength: the greatest palaces, day*
 768 *By day, temples and rocks, by time are worn away;⁶⁷*
 769 *But justice never, being of immortal birth,*
 770 *Perishes like bodies composed of mortal earth.*
 771 *It must therefore be held in reverence by great kings,*
 772 *Because it does not suffer change like mortal things,*
 773 *And they must rule by it, imparting greater glory*
 774 *To their deeds than many an ample victory,*
 775 *Than many a mortal honour on doubtful fields*
 776 *That the favour of Mars to their strong prowess yields.*
 777 *For the good that from infidel Fortune we gain*
 778 *Is often stripped from us, ravished by her again,*
 779 *And a benefit of Fate that very same Fate,*
 780 *In the midst of peril, may well by death negate.*

65 Political and ethical applications of this principle of Aristotelian physics were common in the period to the point of becoming proverbial. Cf. esp. Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta, Tamburlaine, Parts I and II, Doctor Faustus, A- and B-Texts, The Jew of Malta, Edward II*, ed. David Bevington and E. Rasmussen, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995): "... crowns come either by succession / Or urged by force; and nothing violent, / Oft have I heard tell, can be permanent" (I.i.129-31). For Shakespearean instances, see Dent, N₃₂₁.

66 L. 766: orig. "Comme immortelle on voit la iustice honorable".

67 Ll. 767-68: orig. "Le temps vse la force, & les palais plus grands, / Les temples, les rochers, sont vsez par le temps." The translation aims to point up the couplet's chiasmic structure. The image (especially with its collocation of palaces and temples) supports the commonplace nature of Prospero's vision of the fading material world in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611)—a passage for which a number of analogues have, of course, been adduced; see *Tmp.*, ed. Frank Kermode, The Arden Shakespeare, 2nd ser. (London: Methuen, 1954), Introduction, pp. lxxiii-lxxiv, commenting on IV.i.152-56.

781 To have punished those whose daring criminal urge
 782 Brought death to Caesar in their rage's ardent surge;
 783 To have avenged his blood by the shedding of theirs,
 784 And on all sides procured the ruin of their affairs;
 785 To have punished Antony and thwarted his malice—
 786 These are works of equity, they are acts of justice,
 787 For their crimes had merited that severity
 788 As the righteous vengeance for their impiety.
 789 But to oppress a miserable population
 790 Forced by force to make a show of collaboration
 791 By consenting to the evil of those whose might
 792 Presented to their eyes a terrifying sight—
 793 That is to outrage law, to offer violence
 794 To sacred justice and to gentle lenience:
 795 For how can it be right any person to kill
 796 Who was forced by force, and contrary to his will,
 797 To do evil?⁶⁸ No one but the author is guilty—
 798 There is no forcing menacing authority.
 799 This populace you wish to see, by a rash judgement
 800 (The enemy of reason), to destruction sent—
 801 Did they cause poor Antony to take arms against you?
 802 Did they with that inhuman fury him endue,
 803 When he treated with contempt divine equity,
 804 When he wished to take arms against your majesty?⁶⁹
 805 No, Octavius, no—of all his woes combined
 806 Antony was author, Cleopatra behind:
 807 Only those two have offended, and they alone
 808 With ardent force a cruel judgement must be shown.
 809 Antony is already dead; his soul infidel⁷⁰

68 The original of this passage places an exclamation mark at the end of l. 796 and a comma in the middle of l. 797. That arrangement seems just possible, given the very different (and not necessarily consistent) practices of the period—especially erratic in this text—but logic favours the current repunctuation.

69 “[Y]our majesty”: orig. “ta majesté”. A contemporary audience would presumably have sensed the flattering suggestion of the standard royal title, even if Areius, as an intimate and somewhat paternal counsellor, uniformly addresses Octavius using the familiar “tu”, rather than “vous”. Cf. Jodelle, III.1024, where the title is clearly intended.

70 “[I]nfidel”: orig. “infidelle”. The general sense is obviously “treacherous”, “faithless”, but given the religious framework in which Antony’s conduct is insistently situated—cf. “impiety” (orig. “impi-

839 Sprawled in the rays of your power wrath to abate,
840 Or else, as a ruthless foe, to exterminate.

OCTAVIUS

841 Areius, I so wish it, and to make it clear
842 How greatly your heavenly learning I revere,
843 I wish in its honour, and out of love for you,
844 A pardon for this rebellious people to issue,
845 Although they have deserved to expiate their vice
846 (Enemy of reason) by paying a harsh price.
847 Accordingly, I pardon them: your native city
848 Shall be for your own sake exempt from cruelty.
849 But what to do with Cleopatra? Tell me that.

AREIUS

850 Remember, Caesar, how you were compelled to combat
851 So many enemies, whom once her faithless soul
852 By countless attractions to arm against you stole.
853 *The soul, inhuman, to service of evil given*
854 *Can never, as time passes, from evil be driven,*
855 *And one who against the sacred laws commits crime*
856 *Is capable of offending another time,*
857 *If allowed unpunished to keep his vicious life:*
858 *For licence fosters recklessness where sin is rife.*
859 This your father was forced to know, whose godlike goodness
860 Could not render those twisted men less merciless
861 Who caused his death, inflamed by ardent jealousy,
862 Though they enjoyed their lives on his authority.
863 *He who in full security will reign aright*
864 *Must justice jointly with humanity unite—*
865 *Must be harsh with an enemy, for fear his fury,*
866 *Ardent in unhappiness, may do an injury;*
867 *Must take away his life, thereby stifling the grievance*
868 *From which an ardent fury often takes sustenance,*
869 *As, desperate, and at the cost of his own life,*
870 *His spirits seized with fury and eager for strife,*
871 *He takes revenge on those, wielding death as his arm,*
872 *From whom he supposes he received some great harm.*
873 If your father had killed Brutus, Casca, Cassius,

874 He would now be living still, and reigning among us;
 875 But after pardoning all those wolves inhumane,
 876 He died: their cruel hands by murder dealt his bane.
 877 Take care that, from pardons, such evil does not flow—
 878 That your own end, like Caesar's, does not swiftly
 follow.

879 *We ought to be wise ourselves and make others pay,*
 880 *Since once the harm is done, none will pity display*
 881 *For one who, failing the patent danger to flee,*
 882 *Has felt the evil that he was afraid to see.*
 883 Be wise, therefore, Caesar, and do not nurture those
 884 Who a change from power to anguish can impose:
 885 *For a threat to the great is a numerous band,*
 886 *When justly to one alone the gods give command.*
 887 You know what privilege the just law of Mars yields
 888 To the victor returning from hazardous fields,
 889 And how one should punish the foe's audacity,
 890 With death to be the ordinary penalty,
 891 So that he shall die with the utmost bitter rigour
 892 Who aimed at depriving us of life and of honour.

CAESAR

893 But is not to kill a woman as shameful known?

AREIUS

894 Not when her life poses a danger to our own.

CAESAR

895 But is it not dishonour that sex to aggrieve?

AREIUS

896 Dishonour is sweet when one can revenge achieve.

CAESAR

897 A valiant heart should be endowed with clemency.

AREIUS

898 Is it not mere prudence to kill one's enemy?

- 899 CAESAR
Yes, one, if left alive, we cannot overthrow.
- 900 AREIUS
Who can hope to garner any good from a foe?
- 901 CAESAR
Clemency may often a stubborn spirit sway.
- 902 AREIUS
But is not painful injury a surer way?
- 903 CAESAR
The tiger by tender caresses is placated.
- 904 AREIUS
Nothing is so fierce as a spirit irritated.
- 905 CAESAR
But what can a woman undertake against me?
- 906 AREIUS
Revenge—to set her spirit, consumed by spite, free.
- 907 CAESAR
She cannot.
- 908 AREIUS
She could with cunning language impart
Yielding softness even to great Caesar's brave heart.
- 909 CAESAR
I do not fear the lure of her seductive speech.
- 910 AREIUS
The most resistant soul lies within beauty's reach.
- 911 CAESAR
She being beautiful, is there no cruelty
912 In sending to the death such exceptional beauty?

AREIUS

913 Beauty without honour deserves hard punishment.

CAESAR

914 Pity ought to be in advance of justice sent.

AREIUS

915 Yes, to those whose desire is not inhumane.

CAESAR

916 It is punishment enough to leave her in pain.

AREIUS

917 But some outrage she plots, even as she laments.

CAESAR

918 Greater is the suffering that her soul torments
 919 Than that which from her death she could possibly get,
 920 For that is exactly what we see her regret:
 921 Her utmost desire, dying in her agony,
 922 Is to have herself interred with her Antony.

AREIUS

923 No woman's courage such strong resolution takes.

DOLABELLA

924 Areius, you are wrong, and Cleopatra makes
 925 A thousand prayers to death, its willing aid to bring
 926 To sever the thread of her life of suffering.
 927 Her female sex does not by any means restrain
 928 Her daring courage, which holds dying in disdain.
 929 Her soul is royal, and though woman she may be,
 930 A valiant man's spirit shows in her bravery.
 931 *It is not unlawful for the soul in the dress*
 932 *Of female flesh and blood to harbour manliness;⁷⁵*

75 “[M]anliness”: orig. “vertu”, whose etymology (from “*vir*” [“man”]) is obviously to the point here and in l. 938. When “virtu” recurs below in ll. 943 and 946 with reference to Lucrece, however, the moral sense returns to prominence and calls for the usual English equivalent. Throughout the text,

962 Her mad arrogance has irritated at length;
 963 Her ravished realm made prey to a victor's duress;
 964 And her children killed at the height of her distress⁷⁷ —
 965 Are these not a thousand deaths, the least more rigorous
 966 Than death itself, which render her state piteous?
 967 No, no—keep her alive, and all her days will serve
 968 As torturers to punish as her deeds deserve,
 969 As enemies of any joy that might remain,
 970 Which they divide amongst them as their common gain.
 971 So one sees shared out, when the cold season holds sway,⁷⁸
 972 Among the thirsty hunters, their blood-dripping prey,
 973 When the boar, caught on the run in the sturdy toils,
 974 Is skinned and cut up on the bloody grass as spoils,
 975 And the cloth is apparent, with blood well infused,
 976 In a corner apart, spread out where it was used,
 977 While each of them, quite heated with transports of
 pleasure,
 978 Carries off a large piece, glorying in his treasure.
 979 Just so anguish, pain and her grief that will not cease
 980 Have worked at tearing apart the languishing peace
 981 Of that wretched queen, and weary in her dejection,
 982 She looks to death as her only means of protection.
 983 Let her live thus, Caesar—and do not in the least
 984 Begrudge her her poor existence, which holds deceased
 985 Already her spirit in its griefs; grant her grace
 986 To pass her final days without a change in place—
 987 Not dragged to Rome or in your triumph put on show;
 988 Small lustre on your chariot could she bestow:
 989 She is a dead woman—there is more blame than honour
 990 In being such a feeble creature's conqueror.
 991 Let her remaining years, therefore, be occupied
 992 In her native country, her children at her side.

77 L. 964: a puzzling line (translated literally), unless Dolabella is imagining Cleopatra's anticipation that her children will be killed, and evidently at odds with l. 992 below. Cf. Garnier, Act V, esp. ll. 1822-31. In any case, the children were alive at the historical moment depicted.

78 Ll. 971-78: a notable imitation of an epic simile, syntactically integrated in the original ("Comme on voit . . ."), which seems less otiose because it vividly evokes the callous victimisation of Cleopatra, hunted down and dismembered by her own sorrows.

993 Let her keep her realm. Take your father as your model,
 994 Who was less valiant than easy-going and gentle,
 995 Even if a million mortals he had surmounted:
 996 For his bounty makes him with the immortals counted.

CAESAR

997 That a stroke of the sword should Cleopatra slay,
 998 As our enemies perish in battle array—
 999 That she should feel death, cold iron, brutality,
 1000 Like an enemy surmounted by destiny,
 1001 Would be too cruel, for all women we dispense
 1002 From the fury of Mars and death by violence.
 1003 But after so many crimes to grant her a pardon,
 1004 And not avenge the blood of gallant men undone
 1005 By wickedness of hers, and, more to weigh the balance,
 1006 To leave in flourishing state her chief inheritance—
 1007 That goes against all laws, that shatters equity,
 1008 Which cannot allow to thrive such malignancy.
 1009 Being kind, I do not wish Cleopatra dead,
 1010 While, being just, I cannot wish her still contented,
 1011 Having done such wrong and into enmity thrust,
 1012 By treachery, two friends bound in such perfect trust
 1013 As Antony and Caesar. So I wish that captive,
 1014 By the laws of combat, she should forever live,
 1015 And honour my chariot, when I manifest
 1016 Myself in Rome to thank the great gods for my conquest.
 1017 You see how I wish Cleopatra to survive,
 1018 Though unworthy, for her evil, to stay alive.

DOLABELLA

1019 But by such treatment any benefit you scant her,
 1020 O noble-hearted Caesar, of the days you grant her,
 1021 For little good from a conqueror is received,
 1022 When one is with unending servitude aggrieved.
 1023 *That hardly renders Mars's cruelty more sweet,*
 1024 *Since sweeter is the death that in battle we meet,*
 1025 *Happier life's end, than into long years projected*
 1026 *As slave to misery, to servitude subjected.*
 1027 But if you wish equally humane to appear

1028 As potent in valour and deserving of fear,
 1029 Pardon this queen, and do not your clemency stain,
 1030 After your victory, for such a meagre gain.

CAESAR

1031 *It is not cruel to make appropriate use*
 1032 *Of the means heaven gives us our peace to produce;*
 1033 *It is not inhumane to be pleased by the glory*
 1034 *Just heaven has made the prize of our victory.*

DOLABELLA

1035 *It is, however, cruel, pardon to withhold*
 1036 *From those constrained by fortune in its cruel hold,*
 1037 *And not as victor to accept, by mercy's rays,*
 1038 *To soften the brutal licence of fighting days.*

CAESAR

1039 But will it not do that my word from death preserves
 1040 An enemy vanquished, whose guilt such pain deserves?

DOLABELLA

1041 That is half a pardon, but the glory is best
 1042 In granting it wholly, when he makes the request.

CAESAR

1043 We must beware, if we are prompt to pardon harms,
 1044 Of making someone apt against us to take arms.
 1045 *For mildness when excessive may engender licence,*
 1046 *While equity applied quite buries the offence.*

DOLABELLA

1047 But Cleopatra is a woman, lacking strength.

CAESAR

1048 What force finds out of reach, fraud may obtain at
 length.

DOLABELLA

1049 Oh, how could a feeble woman against you fight?

- CAESAR
- 1050 Some sort of civil war she could again ignite.
- DOLABELLA
- 1051 Antony no longer lives.
- CAESAR
- 1052 Some other she might
Stir up, more ruthless, and against us him incite.
- DOLABELLA
- 1053 Who would now trust in what she might abjectly crave?⁷⁹
- CAESAR
- 1054 Someone whom her beauty had made into a slave.
- DOLABELLA
- 1055 Ah, that eye does not sparkle as it did before!
- CAESAR
- 1056 A woman can contrive her beauty to restore.
- DOLABELLA
- 1057 Hers has been ravished from her by most cruel pain.
- CAESAR
- 1058 Some new-found pleasure can bring it to life again.
- DOLABELLA
- 1059 Her Antony now dead, what is there her to please?
- CAESAR
- 1060 At every turn a woman love and fortune varies.
- DOLABELLA
- 1061 But what can wishes do, impaired by misery?

79 “[W]hat she might abjectly crave”: orig. “son triste langage”.

CAESAR
1062 A devious mind will never lack potency.

DOLABELLA
1063 Cleopatra seeks only her remaining days
1064 To finish in rest and peace.

CAESAR
So every soul says
1065 When overcome but dreaming up some new aggression.

DOLABELLA
1066 But what prevents you from punishing such transgression?

CAESAR
1067 I've no wish to risk a trial at my own expense.

DOLABELLA
1068 Your father showed countless foes his benevolence.

CAESAR
1069 For saving them he was done to death pitifully.

DOLABELLA
1070 That horrible crime the gods have avenged quite fully.

CAESAR
1071 With Caesar dead.

DOLABELLA
Women are unable to do
1072 As great men, who have power their crimes to pursue.

CAESAR
1073 Rulers must not tolerate foes unreconciled.

DOLABELLA
1074 But rulers must equally be seen to be mild.

CAESAR

1075 To those worthy, yes, but not to one's enemy.

DOLABELLA

1076 There one does merely the duty of amity.
 1077 *But to grant a pardon to those whose arrogance*
 1078 *Has moved them to rebel against our governance—*
 1079 *Who have offended us—that is to gain much honour,*
 1080 *For it is to vanquish oneself, repress one's furor.*

CAESAR

1081 Speak no more of it, for I wish that as a captive
 1082 Cleopatra within Rome's empire should live:
 1083 I wish her as captive to follow everywhere
 1084 The chariot that will conquering Caesar bear,
 1085 And to enter Rome as a prisoner and slave,
 1086 Justly to punish her for daring me to brave.
 1087 And so I may for that glorious day her spare,
 1088 I wish with her wretched years to take special care:
 1089 I wish her not to die, so that my victory
 1090 May show more lofty, set against her fallen glory.
 1091 Such is my will.

AREIUS

1092 May the gods see to it that always
 Caesar in his combats obtains the crown of bays.

CHORUS

1093 Punishment ever follows,
 1094 Its course no stopping knows,
 1095 The overreaching crime,
 1096 And ever the offender
 1097 Feels the offensive⁸⁰ terror
 1098 Of the blow biding its time.

80 The translation aims to suggest the effect of the original stanza's repetition of "offense" (as noun, then verb).

1099 The gods, who just are named,
1100 Are they not truly famed
1101 As Justice's origin?
1102 It is but equity
1103 Whenever their deity
1104 Is seen to punish sin.

1105 How wrong our thoughts to bend
1106 So Justice we offend,
1107 Joined with virtue divine,
1108 And not think Heaven, pious,
1109 Without a doubt will spy us
1110 And us to ruin consign.

1111 Though its hand of righteousness,
1112 Its lightning merciless,
1113 A while it may defer,
1114 We surely will be found,
1115 And the culprit is bound
1116 Misery here to incur.

1117 This Cleopatra feels,
1118 Whose languorous appeals
1119 With pity move all ears:
1120 And she who once had been
1121 A most majestic queen
1122 Now miserable appears.

Act III

Cleopatra, Carmion, Iras, [Chorus]

CLEOPATRA

1123 Ah, when, grieving Cleopatra, will come the day
 1124 That sees your trouble, with your life, vanish away?
 1125 When will you see this miserable body die,
 1126 Which feels a thousand bitter deaths that pass it by?
 1127 Ah, when will your soul its happy freedom acquire,
 1128 Which without dying burns in love's tormenting fire?
 1129 Enough, enough, poor girl—long enough is the course
 1130 That the gods on your unfortunate days enforce;
 1131 Long enough your life, the breath that keeps you alive,
 1132 Since heaven will allow your cruel pain to thrive:
 1133 *Wretched the dweller in this earthly entity,*
 1134 *Of both men and gods the object of enmity,*
 1135 *Who still strives to stretch out his life's thread to*
 excess,
 1136 *When all his hope has long been ravished by distress.*
 1137 Sweet is the vivid brilliance of the vivid⁸¹ sun
 1138 To those who darkness's obscurity would shun,
 1139 But unpleasant to one whose sole refuge from harms
 1140 That painfully sting is found in Morpheus' charms.
 1141 Thus he cannot endure alive here to remain
 1142 For whom death alone seems pitifully humane,
 1143 And who, while alive, thinks at every mortal hour
 1144 He feels, of countless deaths, that death of cruellest
 power.
 1145 That bane is mine, and so I may not always be
 1146 Compelled to feel it, for succour I make my plea
 1147 To gracious Death, who sole the power could possess,
 1148 By killing my life-force,⁸² of killing my distress.
 1149 O saviour Death! Ah, why so far behind are you
 1150 In making me experience your divine virtue,
 1151 Your delivering sword and your humanity

81 “[V]ivid”: likewise repeated in the original (“vif”/“viue”).

82 “[L]ife-force”: orig. “vigueur”.

1152 In guiding me close to my faithful Antony—
 1153 Reuniting those spirits you have separated,
 1154 When once they were in perfect amity conflated,
 1155 And with them those bodies, which once shared equally
 1156 Their sacred wills and conjugal fidelity?
 1157 Ah, too courteous Antony! Ah, God, what damage
 1158 Did Cleopatra inflict on your manly courage,
 1159 When, fleeing the battle between Caesar and you
 1160 To fix the Empire, from the clash you withdrew,
 1161 Took flight as she had done, being (alas!) unable
 1162 To stay far from her beauty, which to you was fatal—
 1163 You who had been accustomed to give lively chase
 1164 To your strongest enemy, who, fearing your face,
 1165 Fancied that upon his head he felt, as he swooned
 1166 With mortal terror, your armed hand deal him a wound.
 1167 Yet that time you lost the strength and courage to fight,
 1168 And the Empire, which was your natural birth-right,
 1169 And followed Cleopatra, preferring fair eyes
 1170 To seeing yourself honoured, victory your prize,
 1171 And in possession of an opulent Empire.
 1172 Thus does love's pleasure sweetly lead us to retire;
 1173 Thus Love, triumphing over other gods of conquest,
 1174 Imposes on our proud hearts its charming interest.
 1175 *Love, unlike ordinary thoughts, is far from flighty,*
 1176 *For instead of disappearing, it grows more mighty;*
 1177 *It is a passion that cannot be made to die,*
 1178 *Like the mortal passions which from our bodies fly;*
 1179 *The more it is fulfilled, the more it gains in power,*
 1180 *To invent new bonds of closeness hour by hour,*
 1181 *Whereas mortal desires, with passions replete,*
 1182 *Perish suddenly once their effects are complete.*
 1183 This you know, Antony, who even in your downfall,
 1184 Till death put your Cleopatra's love before all,
 1185 Though she was the origin of your fatal harms.
 1186 Ah, nevertheless you wished to die in her arms
 1187 And see for one last time that eye whose cruel flame,
 1188 Jealous of your good, to your soul long since laid claim.
 1189 Half-dead and bloody, as your spirits forth you spilled,
 1190 Still happily with the feeling of my love filled,

1191 Alas, you appeared a monarch of potent kind
 1192 Amid these vaulted tombs, where death I hope to find:
 1193 You wished to die thus, courageous and undefeated,
 1194 As proof of your fidelity, again repeated,
 1195 And though my love was cause of your calamity,
 1196 Render me the due of a perfect amity;
 1197 And, dying from regret,⁸³ alas, to be leaving me
 1198 A slave and wretched, whereas death's felicity
 1199 Caused you to vanquish the enemy's fierce aggression,
 1200 Although Fate had put your life into his possession,
 1201 You spoke to me these sweet words, at whose mournful
 thought
 1202 With living agony my soul to death is brought:
 1203 "Don't, don't lament, my beauty, at seeing interred
 1204 One on whom warfare has immortal life conferred;
 1205 By no means lament the death of that great Emperor
 1206 Who formerly implanted death with deadly terror⁸⁴
 1207 Within the souls of all whose foolish arrogance
 1208 Made them put to the proof his valour's dominance.
 1209 Antony does not perish by Caesar surmounted,
 1210 For valiant like him was never Caesar counted;
 1211 Fate, which towards heroes harbours a cruel envy
 1212 Of their celebrated lives and triumphant glory,
 1213 Causes him—not veritable worth—to prevail
 1214 Over one who previously made the gods quail.
 1215 My death at this moment by no means brings regret,
 1216 For I die an Emperor, and I am free yet,
 1217 Without the cruel fate that confronts the conqueror
 1218 Vanquishing my courage and my heart's intense ardour;
 1219 I die in liberty, my beauty, at your side,
 1220 Which renders less cruel the pain by which I'm tried;
 1221 I feel no distress, except to see at this hour

83 "[D]ying from regret": orig. "mourant de regret"—a second metaphorical death, seemingly, on top of the literal one.

84 L. 1206: orig. "Qui la [mort] planta iadis avecque la terreur"; his adversaries were at least stricken with mortal terror, it would seem, if not necessarily killed. Antony's essential claim was that death had not vanquished him but, on the contrary, was in his power, since he had transcended it by dealing death to others: "One on whom warfare has immortal life conferred ["Celuy qui vit au monde immortel par la guerre]" (l. 1204).

1222 Yourself deprived of liberty, slave to the power
 1223 Of a proud conqueror, unworthy to keep captive
 1224 My Cleopatra as his wretched prize to live.
 1225 A queen I find you, even if flourishing more⁸⁵
 1226 Was your golden reign, with happy comforts galore,
 1227 When for the very first time that heavenly face
 1228 (Beside which all the world's beauties are mere disgrace)
 1229 Met my eye—oh, too injurious, unjust Fate!
 1230 Must I die and leave you a slave and desolate?
 1231 Once a queen to whom the world's kings honour allowed,
 1232 Whose beauty all lauded, before her graces bowed,
 1233 Now as the captive and slave of a tyrant—one
 1234 Unfit for such fortune⁸⁶—death makes me you abandon.
 1235 Think how this evil makes me of sense lose control,⁸⁷
 1236 For dearer to me was your safety than my soul!
 1237 But the gods so wished it, my beauty, and resist
 1238 Their will we cannot, for as long as we exist;
 1239 We must do their pleasure, with equanimity
 1240 Bear their beneficence and harsh hostility.
 1241 Of so many high honours, so many fine realms,
 1242 And so many joys our misfortune overwhelms;
 1243 Of so many rich treasures, trumpets of my glory,
 1244 I leave you nothing but the dulcet memory
 1245 Of Antony, your dear friend, who, in dying, prays
 1246 You may appease the torment that upon you preys,
 1247 Put an end to mourning, to these tears inhumane,
 1248 Which, as they fall, alas, only renew my pain.
 1249 By no means weep for him who dies victorious,
 1250 Despite cruel Fate, of his glory envious;
 1251 And do not weep for him whose soul, once penetrated
 1252 By your brilliant eye, would not have lived separated

85 L. 1225: orig. “Royne ie te trouue, & florissant encor”. The translation sharpens what seems to be the intended logic of the passage.

86 “Unfit for such fortune”: orig. “Indigne de tel heur”, which might conceivably apply to Cleopatra, if “heur” is understood, not as happiness (the usual sense), but neutrally as good or bad fortune. Cf., however, ll. 1223-24 above: “. . . a proud conqueror, unworthy to keep captive / My Cleopatra as his wretched prize to live [. . . vn superbe vainqueur, indigne que captiue / Il possede en butin ma Cleopatre viue]”.

87 “[O]f sense lose control”: orig. “cruellement me pasme”.

1253 From you, my dear life, whose death to him would have
 been
 1254 More fiercely burning than his present death is keen.
 1255 Then calm these laments, and if, before my life's end,
 1256 You agree to grant me some favours as my friend,
 1257 Alas, do this for me, consolation to bring:
 1258 Please pledge me your faith to solace your suffering,
 1259 And to procure your good, your safety and your glory,
 1260 By asking Caesar to sweeten his victory
 1261 With the warmth of your eyes, which have the force to
 freeze⁸⁸
 1262 The most barbarous hearts and their rage to appease.”
 1263 Alas, you spoke these words to me, then cruel Death,
 1264 With a hand devoid of mercy, stifled your breath,
 1265 Effaced your living spirit, turning coldly pale
 1266 That brow which formerly caused other brows to quail.
 1267 O Death too cruel! If our two lives were only one,
 1268 The scythe that mowed it down to both should have been
 common;
 1269 With the self-same knife you should both of us have
 slain,
 1270 So in the same tomb our two bodies would have lain,
 1271 As when alive they shared one miserable soul,
 1272 Alike in their passions, twin wills that made one whole.
 1273 Meanwhile, Antony, my heart-ache, you live no more,
 1274 Living in Heaven, while here your death I deplore,
 1275 While I mourn for you and wearily count the cost
 1276 Of what remains to me, what with your death is lost.

CARMION

1277 Madam, what good does it do by such constant weeping
 1278 The thought of your misfortunes awake to be keeping?
 1279 Why do you the pain of a cruel loss rehearse,
 1280 Which your intense lamenting never can reverse?
 1281 *All our cries of anguish Death has no pity for,*

88 “[F]reeze”: orig. “trancir”—a word (usually “transir”) whose range of meanings extends to paralysing shock due to strong emotions, but which most basically evokes piercing cold; thus the paradoxical contrast with “warmth” (orig. “ardeur”) seems intentional.

1315 After so many favours, such plentiful fortune
 1316 As gifts from the flattering stars upon you strewn—
 1317 Made to languish beneath the yoke of a proud foe
 1318 Who caused the blood of your friend Antony to flow;
 1319 Then, rather than bear such cruel pains for so long—
 1320 Tormentors of your days that to your years do wrong⁹⁰—
 1321 Die bravely, die, and deep within these tombs of darkness
 1322 Enclose your sufferings, your body, your distress:
 1323 You must either resolve to live unhappily,
 1324 Slave to a foe whose arrogant audacity
 1325 Will make you wish a thousand times that you were dead,
 1326 Or, that evil to avoid, run to death instead
 1327 Without languishing so long, without, maimed by pain,
 1328 Condemning your soul thus constantly to complain.
 1329 For all these sufferings, exceeding death's own sting,
 1330 Will not sweeten the bitterness your woes must bring,
 1331 And all these flowing tears in their distasteful course
 1332 Cannot stem your tormenting evil at its source.
 1333 *Weeping merely attests existence of a heart*
 1334 *In which courage is lax and honour plays no part;*
 1335 *For the courageous man, not shedding tears in vain,*
 1336 *Will pour out all his blood with which to drown his pain.*
 1337 *Afflicted mortals who seek their lot to allay*
 1338 *Have no recourse but patience—or death straightaway:*
 1339 *Rather than lament conditions that keep them down,*
 1340 *They must wait calmly for Fortune to cease to frown;*
 1341 *Or, if they cannot live, awaiting that sweet moment,*
 1342 *Let them with a brisk hand curtail their lives' extent,*
 1343 *For to live while in countless mortal moans one dies*
 1344 *Is, of the cruellest deaths, that which most horrifies:*
 1345 *It is never within one's bones to feel there flows*
 1346 *(Embittered as they are) the least ray of repose.⁹¹*
 1347 Thus too without repose appears the golden plain,
 1348 Which at every season brings forth some tender grain,

90 L. 1320: orig. “Bourelles de vos iours à vos ans inhumaines”, with “ans” (“years”) metonymic for “life”, as often (so used, for instance, in ll. 1292 above and 1342 below). Here, however, it seems important to retain the paradoxical notion of long days of suffering which shorten existence.

91 Ll. 1345-46: the mixed metaphor in “flows . . . ray” is faithful to the original (“couler . . . rayon”).

1349 Deep-furrowed with ploughing; at times, himself dyed red,
 1350 The peasant will freshly squeezed juice upon it spread;
 1351 At times, with iron tool its ripened fruits he harvests,
 1352 Which nurturing autumn's heat with gold tint invests;
 1353 At times, he causes his lambs to cruelly browse
 1354 On the grass which freely to mortals it allows.
 1355 In sum—always in travail,⁹² by the rough plough worn,
 1356 It appears to our sight in ragged pieces torn.
 1357 *Thus does evil ever our days torment⁹³ and finish,*
 1358 *Unless by a prompt death their extent we diminish;*
 1359 *For one cannot hope to live free from agonies*
 1360 *While cruel sorrow our seasons accompanies:*
 1361 *One must resolve to bear the pain, whose heavy blow*
 1362 *Is far more cruel than what cruel death can make us know.*
 1363 But you are not yet destined such woe to deplore,
 1364 Slave to an Emperor who agreed to restore
 1365 Your miserable life, and who may now still further
 1366 Restore to you your children and your golden sceptre.
 1367 Place your hopes in him, and do not allow to last
 1368 The memory of all you have lost in the past.
 1369 *For sad thoughts are as potent in bringing an ill*
 1370 *As its fierce rigueur, which is able us to kill.*
 1371 Hope, therefore, Madam, and let the ill dissipate
 1372 In the strong rays of the sweet outcome you await:
 1373 Caesar seeks to aid you; concern he seeks to show
 1374 For your advancement, and that of your sons also.
 1375 Expect assistance to come from his living mercy,
 1376 And of Antony lose the sombre memory,
 1377 Since this thought of another good that now kills you
 1378 Can hardly afterwards be called upon for rescue.
 1379 Or, if you desire your Antony to follow,
 1380 Abbreviate your days to put to death your sorrow:

92 “[T]ravail”: orig. “trauail”; the overlapping senses of effort and pain, essential to this passage, function in both languages.

93 “[T]orment”: orig. “trance”. The rare verb “trancer” is defined by Huguet, *s.v.*, as “Mettre dans les trances” and illustrated by an apt citation from Pierre Matthieu, *Aman*: “La dure affliction qui me geine et me trance”. On “transe” in the sense of “État de mortelle angoisse, de très vive inquiétude”, see *Dictionnaire de Moyen Français*, *s.v.*, def. B.

1381 For it is better to die than languish and weep,
 1382 When hope for good in the world we choose not to keep.

CLEOPATRA

1383 *You are right, Carmion, death is a precious gain,*
 1384 *Compared with a life subjected to endless pain,*
 1385 *And to live in woe is born of a feeble heart,⁹⁴*
 1386 *A proud death of courage equal to any dart.⁹⁵*
 1387 Though the body of a woman's limbs is composed,
 1388 Yet within it the blood, heart and soul are disposed
 1389 Of a noble victor, who does not fear the stroke
 1390 Of haughty death, a terror to cowardly folk.
 1391 Your view is my own: Cleopatra is too brave
 1392 To see herself as Caesar's miserable slave—
 1393 Caesar, whose jealousy his glory could not stand
 1394 And drove Antony to death, Antony my husband.
 1395 I wish nothing from him—a coward's soul made worse
 1396 By the terrors of death. His hand I do not curse:
 1397 I only wish that he not spin my days out longer⁹⁶
 1398 Who of sweet love deprived them, as their cruel wronger,
 1399 Who cruelly stole from my miserable sight
 1400 That sun which by itself alone made this world bright.
 1401 Cleopatra will not, with lowered countenance,
 1402 Trembling with fear, terrified into suppliance,
 1403 Go to importune Caesar for safety and succour:
 1404 From that she is prevented by her ancient honour,

94 L. 1385: orig. “Et le viure en douleur, part d’vn cœur mal nourry”, where an argument may be made that “part”—rather than the feminine “part”, which would translate simply as “belongs to”—is “le part” in the sense of “offspring”. Cf. *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v. “part”, subst. masc., citing Jacques Amyot (1547) under def. B.2: “produit de l’enfantement, enfant qui vient de naître”. Such a reading, supported by “mal nourry” (“poorly nourished”) would more particularly warrant “born of” and fits with the rejection of feeble femininity as the passage unfolds. In any case, the translation is not materially affected.

95 “[E]qual to any dart”: orig. “d’vn courage aguerry”—evoking literally the bravery of an experienced warrior; the translation aims to combine this image (developed in the following lines) with the traditional iconography of death.

96 Ll. 1395-97: difficult lines in the original, here repunctuated to bring out the gist more clearly; the idea of Cleopatra as leaving feminine weakness behind is counterpointed by an implicit feminisation of Caesar, identified with the Parcae as spinners of the thread of life. The image is quite clear in the original of l. 1397: “Je ne veux que celuy plus long fille mes iours.”

1437 If living, which for mortals is the common object,
1438 Instead is something you now wilfully reject,
1439 Live for your children, and live also for this town,
1440 Which without you will be most cruelly put down
1441 By a merciless conqueror. Do not inter
1442 The public peace with a death your passions incur:
1443 Those who would flee a wretched life for their own sake
1444 Respectful account of the common good must take;
1445 To foster it, they are bound to prolong their days,
1446 If that choice some positive benefit conveys.
1447 For it is not for us but for our country's need,
1448 Our friends, our families, that we have lives to lead:
1449 To them we owe our years, and that abundant force
1450 To which heaven enables us to have recourse.
1451 Live, then, for your sons, who lacking you, in misery,
1452 Will be made the lasting spoils of calamity,
1453 Wretched in the loss of that eye illustrious
1454 Which can recall them from a deep sarcophagus:
1455 Do you wish that by your death so worthy a race,
1456 Revered by the great gods, should vanish without trace?
1457 That those young Caesars, revived Antonies,
1458 To whom must incline the ferocious destinies,
1459 Should suddenly die, and dead from the loss of you,
1460 Should feel their perfect glory's ardour dying, too?
1461 Preserve them, Madam—and indeed, do you not see
1462 That nurturing bird still more ardently, anxiously,
1463 Caring for its young, their welfare and nourishment,
1464 When blood it draws from its own breast, with its beak
 rent,⁹⁸
1465 Than you do for your children? Keep in healthful vigour
1466 That means of re-establishing your name in honour,
1467 Which can resuscitate in the rays of its glory,
1468 So it may never die, your former memory.
1469 To those on whom you lavished pains that they might grow

98 The myth of the pelican feeding its young with its blood was widespread as a type of Christ's sacrifice from the time of the bestiary of Physiologus (probably 2nd cent. C.E.). See Friedrich Lauchert, "Physiologus", *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1913), vol. 12, online at <[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_\(1913\)/Physiologus](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/Physiologus)> (accessed 13 May 2023).

1470 To perpetuate your deeds, that duty you owe,
 1471 Since without you their miserable years will surely
 1472 On the sea of mischance suffer shipwreck cruelly:
 1473 It is a sacred duty which to the blessed shade
 1474 Of Antony, of your chaste spouse, you will have paid,
 1475 If your sons become his immortal progeny,
 1476 Compounded of you two in faithful amity;
 1477 He will be gladdened by the gentle, pious care
 1478 That your continued guidance of them will declare.
 1479 Give up this desire, therefore, to end your life,
 1480 Whose blameworthy rage cuts like a relentless knife:⁹⁹
 1481 For his days preserved immortally one may deem
 1482 Who can, by maintaining them, a whole world redeem.

CLEOPATRA

1483 Ah, of what use are the days of a tearful woman,
 1484 Days that her weary pain has left bereft and barren?
 1485 A woman to death in cruel servitude bound,
 1486 Whose bitter misfortunes all her feelings confound?
 1487 Who quite loses her spirit, blood, heart and assurance
 1488 To think of the harm that causes her sore offence?
 1489 As for my children—ah, just like myself undone!—
 1490 If their days by the fatal sister long are spun,
 1491 If they live long, and, as they age from year to year,
 1492 Their growing ardour and courage likewise appear,
 1493 How could they enjoy seeing without liberty,
 1494 Without a kingdom, possessions, authority,
 1495 Her who in former times a mother's love bestowed,
 1496 While fortune prosperous to her desires showed?
 1497 What misery will it cause them, what burning furor,
 1498 Knowing themselves offspring of a potent emperor
 1499 And a queen in grandeur exceeding all the rest,
 1500 To see her pain thus end, by servitude oppressed?
 1501 Their souls might be swallowed by such a cruel sight
 1502 Or with burning furor their spirits set alight;

99 “[C]uts like a relentless knife”: orig. “sans repos vous poinçonne”—literally, pierces [you] incessantly, as with an awl.

1503 Poor little lost ones of their long-suffering mother—
 1504 That will suffice for all of them with grief to smother!
 1505 No, no, I do not want my unfortunate days
 1506 To bring them that evil, with nothing that allays:
 1507 *For it is better unseeing to feel time flow*
 1508 *Than to regard the things that cause us mortal woe.*

CARMION

1509 To have been a queen once, richly honoured, adored
 1510 Among mortals, as well as the spouse of a lord
 1511 Who commanded kings, and to find oneself abject,
 1512 A tyrant's slave, is an ill of lasting effect,
 1513 Cruel, injurious, and which will never cease
 1514 Until troubles and seasons end with our decease.

IRAS

1515 But we have no reason to expect such harsh treatment
 1516 From one who is pleased to bestow to vast extent
 1517 Upon downcast conquered people a warrior's bounty,
 1518 For he is more humane than full of cruelty.

CARMION

1519 *When one can forego an enemy's gift of pardon*
 1520 *By bravely withdrawing one's life from his dominion,*
 1521 *The chances of his gentleness need not be tried,*
 1522 *For we see his good fortune always matched with pride.*

IRAS

1523 *When the harm of an evil cannot be deterred*
 1524 *Without greater loss than has already occurred,*
 1525 *Better to bear it: for with two scourges at stake,*
 1526 *Mortals are always bound the lesser one to take.*

CARMION

1527 *Is it not the worst evil that to us may come*
 1528 *To be forever languishing in martyrdom,*
 1529 *Enslaved, poor, afflicted, and is it not to die*
 1530 *To languish without rest and no cure to descry?*

IRAS

1531 That evil which frightens you, so vividly chill,
 1532 Cannot come upon you from a prince of good will:
 1533 How to vanquish at all hazards Caesars have known,
 1534 But cruelty to the vanquished they have not shown.

CLEOPATRA

1535 Was it not fierceness, to be by blood satisfied,
 1536 When to live as a mere private man he denied
 1537 The noble Antony,¹⁰⁰ who had countless times fought
 1538 For Caesar, his father, for his death vengeance wrought?

IRAS

1539 By no means cruelty, but rather the pale fear
 1540 That a leader so noble, whose worth all revere,
 1541 Might trouble his peace, made Caesar, however clement,
 1542 Not find his longer life to be expedient.

CARMION

1543 Who may hope for better from his grace in the
 future,
 1544 Since he is so mistrustful and cruel by nature?
 1545 Since he seeks to reign sole and breaches equity,
 1546 Power to possess, and ample authority?

IRAS

1547 What then? Does he not know that a woman distressed
 1548 By a thousand sorrows, violently oppressed,
 1549 Can do him no harm? The heart that is victorious
 1550 To the afflicted vanquished is not injurious.

CLEOPATRA

1551 *It concerns those whose will this paltry life to live*
 1552 *Holds fast the wretched soul within its sweetness captive*
 1553 *Such benefit to request, but not those brave hearts*
 1554 *To whom death the hope of stifling their woes imparts.*

100 Recounted by Plutarch, 72.1 and 73.1; cf. Shakespeare, *Ant.*, III.xii.12-21.

IRAS

1555 *It is no dishonour, when forced¹⁰¹ by adverse fate,*
 1556 *Not prowess,¹⁰² to force one's thought and supplicate*
 1557 *A conqueror, bidding time till the deities*
 1558 *To show again their gracious brows shall please.*

CARMION

1559 *Ah! It's dishonour indeed, for want of bravery,*
 1560 *For one who was a ruler to die in slavery!*

IRAS

1561 *If there is dishonour, it belongs to the army,*
 1562 *Not to the women, who from Mars's yoke are free.*

CLEOPATRA

1563 *To serve as Virtue's lodging, the woman of courage,*
 1564 *Like a great fighter, has a proud soul as harbourage.*

IRAS

1565 *But it is not virtue, for lack of enough spirit*
 1566 *To bear one's evil, to lose all by yielding to it.*

CARMION

1567 *What virtue is there more worthy of memory*
 1568 *Than that which, by our death, assures our lasting glory?*

IRAS

1569 *To die for the public good is worthy of praise,*
 1570 *But not to seek a death which private pain allays.*

101 “[F]orced”: orig. “forcee” (with feminine ending), which is pointedly picked up by “force” (“forcer”) in the following line.

102 “[P]rowess”: orig. “vertu”, whose frequent sense of (manly) physical strength is clearly dominant here. Cf. above, l. 932 and n. 75. From this point of view, Cleopatra’s use of the term in l. 1563, followed by Carmion in l. 1567—and despite Iras’s resistance in l. 1565—is part of a broader assimilation to the concept of a courage in the face of death commonly coded as masculine. The issue is made explicit in ll. 1605-6 below and foregrounded by Areius’ identification of virtue in Act IV with heroic glory, there made the hallmark of Caesar.

CLEOPATRA

1571 *When one can serve the public as mere mockery,*
 1572 *One's death must bring happiness out of misery.*

IRAS

1573 *Ah, one must never such an end to life desire,*
 1574 *As long as one to any good may still aspire.*

CLEOPATRA

1575 Oh, what have I to hope for but a death more dreadful
 1576 Than that which I look for my distress to annul?

IRAS

1577 If you avoided many a shipwreck formerly,
 1578 From this one, too, you will find you way out to safety.

CLEOPATRA

1579 I will seek no cruel dishonourable relief:
 1580 From elsewhere will come the remedy for my grief.

IRAS

1581 Alone, then, you will, by means of a bloody stroke,
 1582 And contrary to all reason, your death provoke.¹⁰³

CLEOPATRA

1583 I prefer myself to triumph over the life I flee
 1584 Than have another take glory and life from me.

IRAS

1585 But who will interrupt your life's vigorous force?

CLEOPATRA

1586 He who opposed my loves in their expansive course.

103 Ll. 1581-82: quite possibly a (rhetorical) question, although not so indicated in the printed text. Indirectly introduced, in any case, is the issue of the means of her suicide.

IRAS

1587 You are not forced, as Antony has been, to die.

CLEOPATRA

1588 His being so forced forces my thought to comply.

IRAS

1589 Can your dying Antony to our world repeal?

CLEOPATRA

1590 No, but Antony can some consolation feel.

IRAS

1591 Oh!—What pleasure from it may be for him procured?

CLEOPATRA

1592 To see himself of my infallible love assured.

IRAS

1593 Without taking that drastic step, does he not know?

CLEOPATRA

1594 As proof of love nothing like death convinces so.

IRAS

1595 If he loves you, will he not at your death feel grief?

CLEOPATRA

1596 No, for he is sure that to me it brings relief.

IRAS

1597 Live to avenge him: your just duty calls you to it!

CLEOPATRA

1598 He well knows I have not enough power to do it.

IRAS

1599 With you dead, who here will preserve his memory?

CLEOPATRA

1600 That duty is well assured by his living glory.

IRAS

1601 But will perhaps your dying extinguish its light?

CLEOPATRA

1602 The death that derives from love forever shines bright.

IRAS

1603 What judgement will be made of your catastrophe?

CLEOPATRA

1604 That fair Cleopatra once showed great bravery.

IRAS

1605 Is not such fierce courage a male prerogative?

CLEOPATRA

1606 Virtue within our souls, as well as theirs, can live.

IRAS

1607 Is it virtue to be to oneself inhumane?

CLEOPATRA

1608 It is not cruelty to remedy one's pain.

IRAS

1609 But it is cruel to make blood flow from one's side
1610 With your¹⁰⁴ own knife.

CLEOPATRA

1611 One must do, when that bloody tide
Washes away our sufferings, cleanses our anguish.

104 The shift from “one’s” (“son”) to “your” (“vostre”) is present in the original.

IRAS

1612 What is there that greater distress than death can
 furnish?

CLEOPATRA

1613 Life—in which death makes its presence felt constantly.

IRAS

1614 But sorrow does not follow us relentlessly.

CLEOPATRA

1615 Yes, it does, when hope turns from us, goes far away.

IRAS

1616 What can prevent it from coming with you to stay?

CLEOPATRA

1617 Fate, which to desert quite often does injury.

IRAS

1618 But is death able to cure your keen misery?

CLEOPATRA

1619 Death brings about the passing of all things that live.

IRAS

1620 Death still retains our spirits to suffering captive.

CLEOPATRA

1621 But it kills those evils when our bodies it kills.

IRAS

1622 If its cruel face the strongest with terror thrills,
1623 Oh, then how greatly will a woman find it terrifying!

CLEOPATRA

1624 One does not find harsh what our soul finds gratifying.

IRAS

1625 Nothing equals death for pitiless cruelty.

CLEOPATRA

1626 Still crueller it is to lose one's liberty.

IRAS

1627 What could make Cleopatra's soul captive and thrall?

CLEOPATRA

1628 The harshness of Caesar and my cruel downfall.

IRAS

1629 Caesar is not cruel.

CLEOPATRA

Caesar's vengeance may be.

IRAS

1630 What honour would he gain from a woman's injury?

CLEOPATRA

1631 To see his heart by cruel vengeance satisfied.

IRAS

1632 Cruelty and clemency cannot coincide.

CLEOPATRE

1633 *It is not cruelty vengeance to take on those*
 1634 *Who once were cruel to us and grave harms did impose;*
 1635 *For strength gives privilege to him who it employs*
 1636 *To revenge himself on those who troubled his joys:*
 1637 *Such may be Caesar's course, and lest it should befall,*
 1638 *I seek with my own life his anger to forestall.*

CHORUS

1639 Nothing may such grief afford
 1640 As in a hopeless state
 1641 For aid to supplicate

1642 The victorious sword.

1643 To lose one's liberty
1644 Is painful beyond measure,
1645 Then to live at the pleasure
1646 Of him who gained mastery.

1647 To die is more glorious
1648 Than to live in such pain,
1649 For that death is humane
1650 Which takes our ills from us.

1651 To serve a conqueror
1652 To whom one did injury
1653 Is to be cowardly
1654 Or of one's woe the author.

1655 But one can disengage
1656 From martyrdom so fell,
1657 For death for us will cancel
1658 That unbearable bondage.

1659 So to die is the wish
1660 Brave Cleopatra makes,
1661 For by dying her heart-aches
1662 She will cause to perish.

1663 This is what she has chosen,
1664 Happiness to achieve,
1665 For the pain will not leave
1666 The heart enslaved and frozen.

1667 Thus Caesar will appear
1668 Deprived of victory,
1669 And Cleopatra's glory
1670 Shine ever bright and clear.

Act IV

Areius, Caesar, Dolabella, Cleopatra, [Chorus]

[Scene i]

AREIUS

1671 Oh, how wretched, unsure and full of cruelty,
 1672 Subject to myriad ills, is mortality!
 1673 The proudest mountains, with their precious veins
 enclosed,
 1674 Are not more liable to see themselves exposed
 1675 To maddening dark strokes of thunder, by Jove hurled
 1676 Down with haughty hand upon the rocks of this world,
 1677 Than subject to evils, to fortune's random mood,
 1678 Are our bodies, given life to serve Death as food.
 1679 Neither that rare virtue, whose celestial flame
 1680 Our soul amidst evils renders worthy of fame;
 1681 Nor the rich knowledge which renders us, among mortals,
 1682 Eternally living, resembling the immortals;
 1683 Nor strength of our right arms, which we so highly
 honour
 1684 In the most valiant heroes, models of our valour;
 1685 Nor sweet alluring beauty, whose deceiving parts
 1686 Do harm to our spirits and overcome our hearts;
 1687 Nor royal grandeur and the towering Empire,
 1688 Where the ambitious soul may with long dreams aspire;
 1689 Nor the honour derived from a tamed enemy;
 1690 Nor those rare trophies viewed, gleaming in majesty—
 1691 Immortal these are, yet cannot turn from our age
 1692 The inhumane design's endless recurrent rage.
 1693 To the cruelty of Fate are equally subject
 1694 The most divine of spirits and the hearts most abject:
 1695 And often Fortune, to enforce the recognition
 1696 Of her manly power on mortals' sad condition,
 1697 Attacks the great spirits, without the trouble taking
 1698 To overcome those whose courage, already quaking,
 1699 Poor, grim, fearful, trembles as pale Death shows its
 pains
 1700 And into coward hearts a thousand terrors rains.

1701 Thus a young lion, who already feels his heart,
 1702 In the flower of his April, with ardour start,
 1703 Who has the scent of blood and goes creating carnage
 1704 Amid the wild forests to satisfy his courage,
 1705 Will never attack those animals weak and fearful
 1706 That scurry before him, but only the brave bull,
 1707 Bear or leopard, over which rapid victory
 1708 May cause to flower for him the sweetness of glory.
 1709 In the same way, Fortune, proud her power to show,
 1710 Delights to flaunt her glory in our times of woe—
 1711 Haughty, ambitious, and whose laden hands are teeming
 1712 With booty taken from heroes, spoils proudly gleaming¹⁰⁵—
 1713 Fights only with brave hearts who do not give a thought
 1714 To cruel horror, to Death with its trembling fraught,¹⁰⁶
 1715 But who outface death and with manly hardihood
 1716 Prefer to kill themselves than pine in servitude.
 1717 It is most often these, whose deeds have gained renown,
 1718 Who by the irruption of Fate feel stricken down,
 1719 Hated by Fortune—she who, with envy grown lean,
 1720 Attacks their welfare, at their lives directs her spleen,
 1721 Harms their whole existence, but not the sacred praise
 1722 Which, despite her furors, reigns over restful days.
 1723 *For the virtuous, one sees, enjoy lasting glory,*
 1724 *And Time throughout its course sustains their memory*
 1725 *To glean honour by it, and Heaven, which retains*
 1726 *Its radiance eternal, ever it maintains.*
 1727 *All dies here below; the things that accumulate*
 1728 *Beneath the sun's course in a moment dissipate:*
 1729 *Empires, living things, and of the great emperors,*
 1730 *Potent in majesty, the magnificent honours;*
 1731 *All, that is, but glory, which may mortals imbue*
 1732 *With godhead—mother of brave deeds, daughter of Virtue,*
 1733 *Living forever.* For a jewel of such wonder,
 1734 Which none, therefore, is able from the tomb to plunder—

105 “[S]poils proudly gleaming”: orig. “de despoilles haultaines”—in the context, seemingly another reference to the Roman custom of “*spolia opima*”, as in l. 1690; cf. above, l. 275 and n. 24. The irony depends on figuring Fortune as victorious over heroic victors.

106 “Death with its trembling fraught”: orig. “*fremissant trespas*” (a transferred epithet).

1769 Of all the conquered world; for his power will die,
 1770 But his rich virtue immortality will buy:
 1771 Immortal his glory, and those high notes of fame
 1772 Which cause the most distant peoples to fear his name,
 1773 Which bear it on the wings of countless acts diverse
 1774 Enrolled in the honour of this vast universe.

CAESAR

1775 Having caused to bend with a powerful right hand
 1776 All mortal rule beneath triumphant Rome's command;
 1777 Increased her power, under her sacred laws ranging
 1778 For all time to come many a majestic king;
 1779 Acquired for her grandeur, dreaded by great princes,
 1780 A hundred potent realms, a thousand rich provinces;
 1781 And put to the sack all regions which, inhumane,
 1782 Sought with her noble blood their bloody hands to stain;
 1783 Defeated Brutus and Cassius, and from Sicily
 1784 Chased Pompey, who kept Rome half in servility;
 1785 Triumphed over the Parthians, from their hands ripped,
 1786 Trembling beneath my sword, the Roman standards stripped
 1787 As spoils from Crassus,¹¹⁰ effacing the memory
 1788 Of those losses in battle which stifled our glory;
 1789 Finally, defeated Antony, whom I took
 1790 To share the Empire—a gift he much mistook:¹¹¹
 1791 Brave, victorious, and through the world spreading
 terror,
 1792 Wherever humans may dwell, of his warlike valour;
 1793 Antony, who formerly emerged victorious
 1794 From thousands of combats cruel and hazardous;
 1795 Emperor of Asia, and of that land the Nile,
 1796 In its flowing course, is known to render more fertile
 1797 Than all others; Antony, who in former days
 1798 As among the boldest garnered my father's praise.
 1799 So that, with the foolish Cleopatra subjected,

110 See *OCD*, *s.v.* "Crassus (4) (Dives), Marcus Licinius"; he was defeated and killed in 53 B.C.E.

111 "[A] gift he much mistook": orig. "et qui m'en à [*sic*] mespris"—lit. "and who [Antony] in that respect wronged me". The translation, including the play on words ("took"/"mistook") seeks to bring out Caesar's bitter irony.

1831 I wish my potent Empire secure to make
 1832 And to justify holding what I sought to take,
 1833 And so appear the successor sacred and just
 1834 To Caesar's honour, which can never turn to dust.¹¹⁶
 1835 Even so, to contend against the waves of blue
 1836 And strong winds, the sailor makes preparation due
 1837 Of his sea-going craft before upon the back
 1838 Of tawny Neptune¹¹⁷ he cleaves the flood with his track,
 1839 For fear lest a sudden accident should do damage,
 1840 For want of careful foresight, during its long voyage,
 1841 And because he chose not its safety to inspect,
 1842 He should see his ship in engulfing waters wrecked.
 1843 Thus the gods, to deserve whose praises I aspire,
 1844 Have put into my hands such a potent Empire,
 1845 That it may not suffer shipwreck for want of knowing
 1846 How to deploy and restrain its power fast-growing.
 1847 One must deliberate and firmly upon justice
 1848 Lay the foundations of this lofty edifice,
 1849 Build with prudence, and for its lasting without date,
 1850 To Pallas its most lofty towers consecrate.¹¹⁸
 1851 Warriors by force of arms a kingdom acquire,
 1852 But sacred prudence needs to maintain it entire:
 1853 To withdraw it from pale Death's all-destroying yoke,
 1854 Knowledge must never its guiding presence revoke.
 1855 For it is little enough by the chance of war
 1856 To take command of castles, with proud walls galore,
 1857 Towers and ramparts, without the knowledge and care

116 Ll. 1833-34: with "sacred" (orig. "saint"), Caesar associates himself with spiritually charged language that ironically anticipates his ultimate acceptance of its application to the love of Antony and Cleopatra, which she from the first has presented as "sacred amity [saincte amitié]" (I.341). Ironically, it is by this route that Octavian finally recuperates an association with the "honour" ("honneur") of his (adoptive) father Julius Caesar, being belatedly converted to the "mildness" of which he had been sceptical. See above, II.690, and below, V.2650-52, where that "clemency" is recognised as "sacred" ("saincte clemence").

117 "[T]awny Neptune": orig. "Neptune bazanné"; why the sea, of which Neptune is metonymic, should change colour from the "blue" (orig. "bleüe") of l. 1835 is not evident, unless the dark tones of a stormy sea are intended.

118 Caesar is effectively evoking himself as Augustus, founder of the Roman Empire, through the reference to Pallas Athena, who was protectress of Rome by virtue of her statue, the Palladium, said to have been brought from the ruins of Troy by Aeneas. See *OCD*, s.v. "Palladium".

1858 Needed to rule advisedly those who live there;
 1859 It means little to have of worldly goods the charge,
 1860 Unless one's soul is made by wisdom amply large
 1861 To regulate those for whom were once designated
 1862 The treasures of the land, now to chance relegated.
 1863 Let us use counsel, therefore, to build this Empire,
 1864 So that unhappiness may far from it retire.
 1865 But I see Dolabella—I must find out how
 1866 Cleopatra bears her distressing torment now:
 1867 Whatever ill she suffers, whatever lingering
 1868 Pity my soul feels for her painful languishing,
 1869 I will have my triumph over her—that is sure—
 1870 And for that purpose her survival will assure.
 1871 So there is no point is seeking to put in doubt
 1872 That firm design,¹¹⁹ which I wish to see carried out.
 [*to Dolabella, entering*]
 1873 Now, then, Dolabella, after her sad display,
 1874 Has Cleopatra dried her tears, wiped them away?
 1875 Is her mind changed? And to follow with all content
 1876 So kind a victor, on living is she not bent?
 1877 Report her words, and whether all those utterances
 1878 From me, humane and full of tranquil assurances,
 1879 Have at all eased her pain, caused her thoughts to
 digress
 1880 From desiring to die in an act of sheer madness.

DOLABELLA

1881 Oh, how difficult it is for those who have been
 1882 Vanquishers in their day, with felicity seen,
 1883 With honour, with pleasure, and whose dulcet existence
 1884 Has flowed without the stings of envy's virulence—
 1885 Happy in its freedom, enjoying to the utmost
 1886 The effects that its happy desire may boast,
 1887 The most delicious fruits of amorous fulfilment,
 1888 And all the pleasures that render one's life

119 “[F]irm design”: orig. “conseil formé”—with ironic repetition of the term he has been using to affirm the need for wise governance.

content . . .

1889 Yes, difficult¹²⁰ all those benefits to forget
 1890 And, seeing those pleasures dead and gone, feel no
 regret,
 1891 The more because that misery whose wretched arm
 1892 Beneath its cruel blow afflicts us with such harm:
 1893 Memories of that pleasure and the luscious fruit
 1894 Of loves that we have lost our days now persecute.
 1895 God, what an almost unbearable alteration—
 1896 From a great monarch, to whom in subordination
 1897 Was Fortune for a certain time, and whose delights
 1898 Were swallowed in long draughts to please the appetites,
 1899 To see oneself made a slave, with no end of pain
 1900 In view but by the help of Death, the inhumane;
 1901 Deprived of the sweet object which Love animated
 1902 To cause it to please our eye, by it captivated.
 1903 For nothing with our poor eye can better agree
 1904 Than that which fosters desire for amity:
 1905 It is, of the famished heart and the spirits burning—
 1906 For such perfection with their own perfection yearning—
 1907 The sole source of content, the only sustenance,
 1908 Which the eye may procure with its every glance.
 1909 The mark with which Love, to signify total conquest
 1910 Of our liberty, our heart has marked¹²¹ and impressed
 1911 Is never effaced, and remains in place vividly,
 1912 Because desire re-inflames it constantly.
 1913 Just so one does not see effaced by Time's strong force,
 1914 By Destiny's stroke, nor by the years in their course,
 1915 Something which one may see into the bark incised
 1916 Of a tree for splendid foliage recognised:
 1917 Instead, with the bark and the part which increase knows,
 1918 With the benefit of years, immortal it grows,
 1919 Even sees itself stronger, from death being saved
 1920 Since in the growing wood it finds itself engraved,

120 The translation recalls the syntactic structure put in place with l. 1881, which otherwise is too tortuous to follow readily.

121 The repetition in “marked” of “mark” in l. 1909 is present in the original (“marque”/“marqué”) and important to the rhetorical effect; evoked is the practice of branding slaves.

1921 Which renders it immortal in its living vigour,
 1922 As its course is refreshed by the course of its verdure.
 1923 With our years likewise the amorous sentiment
 1924 Whose sudden wound decreed our vibrant soul's
 confinement,
 1925 And which engraved its living mark upon our heart,
 1926 Grows normally, and years to it vigour impart:
 1927 Desire feeds it, and sorrow lends it more sway,
 1928 When amorous hopes are frustrated by delay
 1929 And, wild to gain the fruit, with grief we must lament,
 1930 Obligated to despair completely of its enjoyment.
 1931 If Cleopatra loved with faithful amity
 1932 Antony, who loved her then more passionately
 1933 Than his own honour; if for her he abdicated
 1934 The exercise of Mars, which caused him to be rated
 1935 Among all the brave chiefs of war the sole unvanquished,
 1936 And whose name the heroes of the whole world astonished—
 1937 Do you think that so soon her heart might be undone
 1938 From that sore thought, love dismissed to oblivion?
 1939 No, no—of all the woes that feed her misery,
 1940 She feels most acutely the loss of Antony.
 1941 For if he lived still and she looked into his eyes,
 1942 Slight would be her ills, although they might tyrannise
 1943 With fury, rage and ardour, and death's cruelty
 1944 Alone had the power to kill¹²² the agony.
 1945 *For far from intense is the ardour or emotion*
 1946 *Of those worldly afflictions whose furious motion*
 1947 *Touches our bodies alone, provided the soul*
 1948 *That loves enjoys possession of its ardour's goal:*
 1949 *That pleasure softens the hard thoughts such evils bring*
 1950 *And, sweet in its sweetness, spell-bound holds suffering.*
 1951 *But from the time our soul has lost that benefit*
 1952 *And many other ills cut cruelly into it,*
 1953 *And it lacks the object that made happiness grow,*
 1954 *And feels the fell stroke of many another woe,*

122 “[K]ill”: orig. “tuer”, playing, as often in this text, on the notion of the pain of death as the ultimate pain-killer.

1955 *One must not think to any joy it hopes to come*
 1956 *But the succour of death to end its martyrdom.*
 1957 Such is Cleopatra, for whom a happy fate
 1958 Lies rather in death than in life of longer date,
 1959 Who cannot but by dying that turmoil cut short
 1960 Which must while she lives all felicity abort,
 1961 Unable amidst her evils her soul to save,¹²³
 1962 Except by putting herself quickly in the grave.

CAESAR

1963 Have I not promised countless times her life's safe-
 keeping?

DOLABELLA

1964 That life for her is a death that consists of weeping.

CAESAR

1965 What, from a conqueror, could she hope for more gentle?

DOLABELLA

1966 An expeditious death her misery to kill.

CAESAR

1967 Life, of all things in the world, shows most gentleness.

DOLABELLA

1968 True, when it is not the slave of unhappiness.

CAESAR

1969 Fear of the tomb's horror a woman always feels.

DOLABELLA

1970 Death holds no horror when our sufferings it heals.

123 “[H]er soul to save”: orig. “son ame secourir”—Christian language which, here as elsewhere, invites the public at once to distance itself from, and to enter imaginatively into, the (Platonically tinged) pagan metaphysics.

- 1971 CAESAR
What may I give her that would be than life more
precious?
- 1972 DOLABELLA
The means of dying, if living she finds pernicious.
- 1973 CAESAR
It stands to reason that for her crime she must pay.
- 1974 DOLABELLA
Her blood stands quite ready to wash the guilt away.
- 1975 CAESAR
Such punishment for her I do not esteem fit.
- 1976 DOLABELLA
What more than her life can she be called on to forfeit?
- 1977 CAESAR
Cruel is her offence, her crime unjust and great.
- 1978 DOLABELLA
Well, does she not wish it with blood to expiate?
- 1979 CAESAR
I wish her, as punishment, to be sure to live.
- 1980 DOLABELLA
Such will be the cruellest sentence one could give.
- 1981 CAESAR
To render a life, is that an act without pity?
- 1982 DOLABELLA
Yes, for those whose life is perfect calamity.
- 1983 CAESAR
What else for Cleopatra would be opportune?

- DOLABELLA
- 1984 Permit her to die to put to death her misfortune.
- CAESAR
- 1985 She may expect more pleasing aid to come her way.
- DOLABELLA
- 1986 What can she hope for if she dies every day?
- CAESAR
- 1987 To see herself reigning again as her realm's
queen.
- DOLABELLA
- 1988 Possessions do not make the soul's passion serene.
- CAESAR
- 1989 What other passion could source of her sorrow be?
- DOLABELLA
- 1990 Her loss of all hope in seeing dead Antony.
- CAESAR
- 1991 She thinks of it no more, for the same day it kindles
1992 Within her soul, a woman's love to nothing dwindles.
- DOLABELLA
- 1993 A woman loves more faithfully than does a man.
- CAESAR
- 1994 Then that is in the hope that satisfaction can
1995 Appease their ardent desires: that aim once past,
1996 The amity must needs out of her soul be cast
1997 As then of use no longer. A women loves always
1998 Indeed, if she can feel the fruit of her loves always—
1999 Not otherwise, for her love, built exclusively

2000 On the rock of pleasure, shatters all constancy.¹²⁴
 2001 Let us go see Cleopatra and learn at leisure
 2002 What she wishes, what will give her the greatest
 pleasure.¹²⁵
[They journey to and meet with Cleopatra.]

[Scene ii]

CLEOPATRA

2003 Caesar, if pity in your soul has ever dwelt,¹²⁶
 2004 Let its succour by this poor lady now be felt;
 2005 Take pity on my pain, let my sorrowful fate
 2006 Instruct you that wretched is the end of the great,
 2007 With spiteful envy able glory to expose
 2008 As in the actions of their lives it ever flows,
 2009 And with their power subject to Fortune, to chance,
 2010 Which makes death their one true fortunate circumstance.
 2011 You see, wet with tears and forcing lamenting cries,
 2012 Someone whom mortals formerly were wont to prize,
 2013 Whose love by the most outstanding heroes was sought,
 2014 When heaven's bright beams to her days its favour
 brought.
 2015 Your father honoured her with his fair amity;
 2016 Antony was love-struck, and his fidelity
 2017 Such that no other burial might satisfy
 2018 Than with my body, found so pleasing in his eye.¹²⁷

124 Ll. 1999-2000: “built . . . constancy” is a quite literal translation of “*assise / Sur le roch du plaisir, toute constance brise*”; elliptically evoked seems to be the image of a (male) lover’s constancy shipwrecked on the shoals of the woman’s fickle sensuality.

125 The action signalled here is typical of medieval *platea*-and-*locus* staging.

126 It is notable that Cleopatra addresses Caesar using the familiar forms of “you” (“tu”, etc.)—perhaps an attempt to establish intimacy—whereas Caesar replies in formal style; the contrast is thus all the more striking with his own use of “tu” to address the dead queen in apostrophe in the play’s final speech, when he is moved by sympathy and admiration.

127 To have his body given to Cleopatra was, according to Plutarch (58.4), a provision of Antony’s will which had earlier rankled with Octavius:

Caesar laid most stress on the clause in the will relating to Antony’s burial. For it directed that Antony’s body, even if he should die in Rome, should be borne in state through the forum and then sent away to Cleopatra in Egypt.

2019 Now weary with weeping, with self-wounds lacerated,¹²⁸
 2020 You see that beauty, which once was so highly rated,
 2021 And of all her beauty one may now nothing glean
 2022 But a mournful memory of its having been.
 2023 You see her now at your feet, in her grief, to plead
 2024 You will allow her sons their wretched lives to lead,
 2025 And that they will not be punished for the transgression
 2026 Their father made, or for their mother's indiscretion:
 2027 Pardon them, Caesar—their spirits, as children still,
 2028 Have not offended you as rebels to your will;
 2029 Their immortal souls that crime have not perpetrated
 2030 Which to your enemies' ranks has us relegated.
 2031 Alas, they are innocent of their father's forfeit,
 2032 As their poor mother, too, is innocent of it:
 2033 For what could I do, a slave and under the hand
 2034 Of Antony—now kind, now cruel in his command—
 2035 Who by means of force forced¹²⁹ my miserable spirit
 2036 To accept his crime, and to share in its demerit?
 2037 I am a mere woman, ah, Caesar, as you see,
 2038 Who has nothing left but a voice to ask for pity—
 2039 Only tears and wild laments—and whose feebleness,
 2040 Languishing as it dies, is like the brittleness
 2041 Of bark on a lightning-struck oak, black and half-dead,
 2042 Which time will tear away cruelly, shred by shred,
 2043 Changing the fresh verdure, its attraction eroding,
 2044 To a darkened countenance, cruel and foreboding.
 2045 Thus, O Caesar, you see me poor, grieving my ill,
 2046 Who had power enough a thousand kings to kill
 2047 And as many great lords, whom I stirred to the combat,
 2048 Fired them with love of Cleopatra to do that—
 2049 Cleopatra, who from those ancient kings descended

128 “[W]ith self-wounds lacerated”: orig. “du mal offensee”. Cf. Plutarch’s account of the meeting with Caesar (83.1):

After a few days Caesar himself came to talk with her and give her comfort. She was lying on a mean pallet-bed, clad only in her tunic, but sprang up as he entered and threw herself at his feet; her hair and face were in terrible disarray, her voice trembled, and her eyes were sunken. There were also visible many marks of the cruel blows upon her bosom; in a word, her body seemed to be no better off than her spirit.

129 The repetition is present in the original (“force forçoit”).

2050 Whose rule to the Macedonians first extended,
 2051 And who, victorious, gathered within the girth
 2052 Of their manly enterprise¹³⁰ the entire earth.
 2053 Recall that your father Caesar, who was sublime
 2054 Above other mortals for glory in his lifetime –
 2055 As valiant as humane, as courteous as brave,
 2056 And to all whose desires Fortune was a slave—
 2057 Had pity on my lot, and took up arms for me
 2058 Against my brother, who wished the sole king to be,
 2059 Depriving me of my portion of these rich lands,
 2060 Which from my warlike ancestors were in my hands.
 2061 Then your father, fighting for sacred equity,
 2062 Rendered me my realm, along with my liberty.¹³¹
 2063 Alas, render my realm again, for me to leave
 2064 My sons, whose youth is without crime, you may believe,
 2065 But who yet have the honour to belong to you
 2066 (Though the lot of endless languishing woe they drew,
 2067 Poor wretches as they are), that their reign I may witness
 2068 As long as I live¹³² to restore my happiness—
 2069 To make me live happy, for so I am resolved,
 2070 Since I sense your anger towards me is dissolved.
 2071 Caesar, grant me this favour, and do not think guilty
 2072 Someone who always existed miserably
 2073 As the slave of Antony's power, he sole author
 2074 Of the harm from her your grandeur had to deplore.

CAESAR

2075 Madam, set your mind at ease, since only for glory
 2076 Does Caesar amid dangers seek proud victory:
 2077 He combats for honour, not for gains merely mortal,
 2078 Such as cannot one day render our deeds immortal.
 2079 Caesar, rich in honour, with a potent empire,
 2080 To swell his wealth with Egypt's realm does not aspire:
 2081 Your goods he scorns; he hopes for none more glorious

130 “[M]anly enterprise”: orig. “masle vertu”; see above, n. 102.

131 For a summary of these events, see *OCD*, s.v. “Ptolemy XIII”.

132 “As long as I live”: orig. “durant mes iours”—the translation highlighting, though not introducing, the irony that signals her deception of Caesar.

2082 Than to see himself honoured for being generous
 2083 In his kindness and show that he is just as compliant
 2084 In his spirit as his right arm is valiant.
 2085 The fortune of great ones does not lie in display
 2086 Of empires' wealth or potency in their sway,
 2087 For such things recount a wearisome mortal story,
 2088 But in the gain one day of an immortal glory—
 2089 Celestial renown, which, from bodies divided,
 2090 Cannot be interred with the ashes of the dead.
 2091 Such is my desire, and my armed hand irate
 2092 That sole cause has power brusquely to animate.
 2093 Have no fear at all, therefore, that Caesar may wish
 2094 To take your possessions, or the pleasure they furnish.
 2095 Just live still as you are, rid yourself of all worry,
 2096 And bring this long lament to an end in a hurry:
 2097 For Caesar as gracious as brave you will observe,
 2098 Your children treated as his own blood would deserve,¹³³
 2099 Although he is quite aware that you are culpable
 2100 Of the crime that rendered Antony miserable.

CLEOPATRA

2101 To obey under compulsion, not of free will,
 2102 Is not to give consent to the resulting evil.

CAESAR

2103 But one consents to the fault in whose inmost mind,
 2104 By means laid open to view, the plot was designed.

CLEOPATRA

2105 What does he gain by thinking of some dire project,
 2106 And what harm does he do when it has no effect?

133 L. 2098: orig. "Vous enfans l'auront tel, qu'il repute à neveux". The translation points up the irony, accessible to any who knew Plutarch's account (81.2-82.1), that Caesar later had Caesarion killed, on the advice of Areius, precisely because he was supposed to have Julius Caesar's blood in his veins. Nor can the irony be excluded from the concluding vow of the "converted" Caesar (see below, ll. 2677-78). On the contrary, historical knowledge would tend to throw into relief the text's transcendental mechanism.

CAESAR

2107 Once it is conceived, it gives birth to the event,
2108 For means enough ingenious malice will present.

CLEOPATRA

2109 But just for having thought of it must the exaction
2110 Equal that for urging it or lending it action?

CAESAR

2111 The accounting will not be so cruelly strict;
2112 Some penalty, however, one must still inflict.

CLEOPATRA

2113 I need not suffer, then, the same harsh retribution
2114 As he who put the evil scheme in execution?

CAESAR

2115 But the crime of which we have been so well informed
2116 Was your invention—you gave it birth fully formed.

CLEOPATRA

2117 To give birth to crime women are by no means meant.

CAESAR

2118 None is more keen than a woman crime to invent.

CLEOPATRA

2119 Her very soul opposes wrong and viciousness.

CAESAR

2120 No, it is the source of all cunning business.

CLEOPATRA

2121 To perpetrate evil too feeble is her power.

CAESAR

2122 In offending it is seen most proudly to tower.

- 2123 CLEOPATRA
Well, if it is compelled, may it not be excused?
- 2124 CAESAR
The guilty always plead compulsion when accused.
- 2125 CLEOPATRA
Can a simple weak woman stand in a man's way?
- 2126 CAESAR
She can do more because she can assume the sway.
- 2127 CLEOPATRA
A man always retains power over his soul.
- 2128 CAESAR
Man is no more himself when in woman's control.
- 2129 CLEOPATRA
But of Mars's affairs a woman has no notion.
- 2130 CAESAR
Her shrewdness stirs the fighting soldiers into motion.
- 2131 CLEOPATRA
Who has seen a women in battle gain success?
- 2132 CAESAR
One combats well enough who combats with finesse.
- 2133 CLEOPATRA
Has Cleopatra armed and fighting shown her face?
- 2134 CAESAR
Yes indeed, when the combat on the sea took place.
- 2135 CLEOPATRA
Antony, alas, her assent by force obtained!

- 2136 CAESAR
Rather, it was Antony whose mind was constrained.
- 2137 CLEOPATRA
To her, he was frightening at every hour.
- 2138 CAESAR
His misfortune followed from his lack of such power.
- 2139 CLEOPATRA
A woman's repose consists in amorous peace.
- 2140 CAESAR
A woman seeks new ways her greatness to increase.
- 2141 CLEOPATRA
What greater power than my own could I demand?
- 2142 CAESAR
To be able within Rome at will to command.
- 2143 CLEOPATRA
Such desire lives within heroes brave and strong.
- 2144 CAESAR
A woman as well as they—with insolent wrong.
- 2145 CLEOPATRA
Well, what good would the Roman Empire do me?
- 2146 CAESAR
That all the government in your proud hands would be.
- 2147 CLEOPATRA
Such a notion never intruded on my mind.
- 2148 CAESAR
Women for their evil ready excuses find.

2165 Help me, then, Caesar, and, showing yourself humane,
2166 Do not render my hope, in my misery, vain.

CAESAR

2167 Be assured of it, and that your experience
2168 Will give you, of my mercy, concrete evidence.
2169 Live therefore in peace.

DOLABELLA¹³⁶

2170 Thus always, Caesar, may you
Deserve to enjoy the fruits of sacrosanct virtue.

CHORUS

2171 Nothing may longer serve
2172 Against death and time to preserve
2173 Of earthly kings the renown
2174 Than mildness, which makes appear
2175 Their power less severe
2176 To those the yoke weighs down.

2177 Victory is Fate's award:
2178 Blood, death, likewise the sword,
2179 Belong to Fortune's part.
2180 Only in man resident,
2181 Mercy is his ornament,
2182 From the others set apart.

2183 A man may conquered be
2184 And not lose his liberty,
2185 And will not fail his arms
2186 To take when he has the choice,
2187 Yet is subdued by the voice
2188 Of mercy's dulcet charms.

2189 Each conqueror is seen,

136 Conceivably, Dolabella's speech is an aside or a comment delivered after Caesar's exit. In any case, its subjunctive expression ("may you [sois tu]") significantly expresses a wish rather than a simple endorsement.

2190 By mercy divine, serene
 2191 The rebel to maintain
 2192 And so new broils prevent,
 2193 For servitude is torment,
 2194 To die free, release from pain.

2195 Thus is sought by emperors,
 2196 To guarantee their grandeurs,
 2197 Sacred mercy, source of joy,
 2198 For otherwise always
 2199 Their arrogance may their days
 2200 At any moment destroy.

2201 Therefore Caesar has thus styled
 2202 His just and fierce wrath mild,
 2203 When poor Cleopatra citing:
 2204 This much more delights his mind,
 2205 For greater honour we find
 2206 In pardoning than fighting.

Act V

Epaphroditus, Caesar

EPAPHRODITUS

2207 O among noble hearts the most intrepid courage
 2208 That ever was known without Roman heritage!
 2209 O noble spirit!—too splendid for longer tenure
 2210 In a woman's body, to which it did such honour;
 2211 Worthy of a son of Mars or those ancient sages
 2212 Whose deaths preserved their dear Republic from outrages.
 2213 Brave and constant courage! Ah, why ever did you
 2214 Seek to purloin from Caesar the fruit of his virtue,

2260 And that service, that woeful duty, he'd received
 2261 From Cleopatra, mingled with a thousand sighs
 2262 Moistened with tears and heightened with lamenting cries,
 2263 Then upon his tomb, stricken with bitter regret,
 2264 Many a doleful plaint did she sweetly beget,
 2265 Pouring forth these speeches, her sorrows' poor
 offspring,
 2266 Which suddenly were lost in a torrent of weeping:
 2267 "Antony, dear Antony, ah, must the stars so
 2268 Make our disasters to cruel perfection grow—
 2269 After so many ills, such troubles fortune dealt,
 2270 That down on our heads like hail would cruelly pelt?
 2271 After such sore sufferings, merciless pains all,
 2272 Which through my tender marrow like serpents still
 crawl;¹⁴²
 2273 After so many pains, whose cruelty I feel
 2274 As round and round within my senses still they wheel,¹⁴³
 2275 Ah, must, alas, my anguish achieve this degree—
 2276 That Cleopatra lives on after Antony?
 2277 And that I see his bones in Egypt sepulchred—
 2278 He on whom, as a Roman, Rome all praise conferred—
 2279 While she born in the land of Egypt, who evinces
 2280 Descent from a lengthy line of that country's princes,
 2281 Should be interred in Rome, when her long days, made
 frail
 2282 Already, by death their remaining span curtail?
 2283 Antony, dear Antony, of all kinds of pain
 2284 Of which my soul has felt the furors inhumane,
 2285 And of all the evils whose hand struck me a blow,
 2286 None of them more inhumane did I ever know,
 2287 None more fiercely painful, than the terrible anguish
 2288 In which your cruel absence has caused me to languish:
 2289 More cruel I have felt— more piercing in cruelty—
 2290 That time alone when you have been absent from me,
 2291 Without my seeing you, touching your loving face,

142 L. 2272: orig. "Qui serpentent encor dans mes lentes moiuelles". The image prepares ironically for the serpent that will bring joyful release from pain.

143 L. 2274: orig. "Piroëtter encor à l'entour de mes sens".

2292 Than all the pains whose fury offers me no grace.
 2293 Antony, dear Antony, if you still possess
 2294 Some pious thought of the golden time's happiness
 2295 When we witnessed flourishing our twin loves conjugal—
 2296 Alike in their pleasures, in all that they wished
 equal¹⁴⁴—
 2297 With that same thought, receive these vows, with sad
 emotion
 2298 Offered to your spirit from a heart of devotion
 2299 And from a soul that yours, wholly yours, remains still,
 2300 Although your loss this mortal body helps to kill.
 2301 Receive these tears and cries—this final farewell, too,
 2302 Which, Antony, as I leave, I render to you,
 2303 For I am going to Rome, where, grieving and captive,
 2304 Bereaved of your handsome brow, I am bound to live.”
 2305 So spoke Cleopatra, and her tearful lament
 2306 Moved with grief for her miseries all who were present;
 2307 Each man of us felt pity that a queen so brave,
 2308 After knowing such grandeur, had become a slave,
 2309 And each within his heart deplored the course of mortal
 2310 Destiny, whose ending is so cruelly brutal.¹⁴⁵

CAESAR

2311 I know all this quite well, but now recount me all
 2312 The rest of Cleopatra's doings and her downfall.

EPAPHRODITUS

2313 After your courageous valour had duly fought
 2314 With Antony, who to try your virtue had sought,
 2315 And you had vanquished him, so no hope could persist
 2316 That your valiant manhood he could ever resist,
 2317 Then Cleopatra, now of her safety despairing,
 2318 Antony quite crushed, and Caesar the honours wearing
 2319 That Antony in the flowering of his glory

144 Cf. above, III.1272.

145 Ll. 2307-10: the response to Cleopatra registered here, combining “pity” (orig. “pitié”) with fear, virtually qualifies her as a tragic heroine in Aristotelian terms and prepares for Caesar’s assimilation into the experience. See the Introduction, pp. 22-25.

2352 She never ceased to put forward a placid visage,
 2353 To laugh and be pleasant, and countless sports devise
 2354 With Antony, author of her cruel demise:
 2355 She did not wish to have him her intention guess,
 2356 For fear of shocking his spirit into distress.
 2357 Thereby a certain respite from that death she won
 2358 By which she felt the torment of the guilty one;¹⁴⁸
 2359 And that vibrant love in her such force exercised
 2360 As to make her supreme fidelity recognised.

CAESAR

2361 Truly, could that love have claimed legitimacy,
 2362 It would have deserved great praise for its constancy.
 2363 But continue your speech.

EPAPHRODITUS

The wretched Antony,

2364 Meanwhile, drunkenly possessed by inhuman fury,
 2365 Audacity and folly, or rather made numb
 2366 By the wild love by which he had been overcome,
 2367 Could not be bothered to mount the slightest resistance,
 2368 Based on sound advice, to your manly valiance.
 2369 He spent the day in nothing but infinite pleasures,
 2370 And did not put his mind to military measures,
 2371 Meeting dangers with salutary remedies,
 2372 Which might, by combatting, his situation ease.
 2373 He threatened with words, and his voice, without effect,
 2374 Unworthy a hero, his lying did reflect.
 2375 As if he had conquered, he chased delights galore,
 2376 Casting his net of vices wider than before;¹⁴⁹
 2377 He lived joyously, playing a great victor's part
 2378 And never driving any pleasure from his heart.
 2379 Meanwhile you applied yourself, and, lofty in spirit,
 2380 Sought to finish the ruinous work of his demerit;

148 Ll. 2357-58: orig. "Tant elle eut de respit à la mort qui luy fist / Endurer le tourment de celui qui forfist." The expression is elliptical, but the gist is clear—and remarkable for presenting her sympathetically.

149 L. 2376: orig. "Et r'alonge plus fort le fillet de ses vices."

2381 He never understood, but died in consequence,
 2382 For the daughter of carefulness is sober prudence.
 2383 Still, you know in what way, with wild fury distracted
 2384 At being overcome, to take his life he acted:
 2385 Abandoned by his men, who, from well-founded doubt
 2386 About matching your strength, all came and sought you
 out,
 2387 And even thinking Cleopatra, on her side,
 2388 Had opened the door to their double suicide—
 2389 That she had now killed herself, and with nobleness
 2390 Entombed her corpse in the ruins of her happiness—
 2391 He therefore plunged his sword with his right hand,
 addressed
 2392 With mutiny against his welfare, in his breast,
 2393 From which he drew that blood which love had rendered
 hot,
 2394 And over which great Caesar happy triumph got.

CAESAR

2395 Ah, I mourn for his death, and that love, madness-filled,
 2396 Which after so many combats his tongue has stilled.

EPAPHRODITUS

2397 You know that while he was dying, the vital force
 2398 Had not yet ceased through the veins of his heart to
 course,
 2399 That he breathed yet, with an expression that was blithe,
 2400 Awaiting the stroke of Death's injurious scythe,
 2401 When he learned that alive, full of vitality,
 2402 Cleopatra remained, cause of his misery:
 2403 To finish the course of his life, as it expired,
 2404 In her amorous arms he then strongly desired;
 2405 He sought to meet his end as object of her sight,
 2406 Fear of whose absence led him to a tomb sealed tight.
 2407 High up in that tower where, for security,
 2408 Had fled the fearful Cleopatra, seeking safety
 2409 From Antony's threats—Antony, who had been saying
 2410 That poor Cleopatra his glory was betraying—

2411 One now saw, by the very hands of that poor lady¹⁵⁰
 2412 Raised up, already spiritless, the wretched body,
 2413 Which vomited blood and, feeling its rude ascent,
 2414 Was undergoing an indescribable torment.
 2415 But the hope he had of seeing again the face
 2416 Of his lady as he died could those throes efface:
 2417 You know how in the end, lover faithful and noble,¹⁵¹
 2418 He died in his queen's arms, of constancy a model,
 2419 Praying she would wish after his death to survive,
 2420 And would not, by her own death, to follow him strive—
 2421 To set her hopes on you, on your exalted goodness,
 2422 Which might be able to palliate her distress;
 2423 Counting it a blessing¹⁵² to die before her eyes,
 2424 With glory gained sufficient to immortalise,
 2425 Worthy of an Emperor, and as such finishing,
 2426 Since free of servitude he was now perishing.
 2427 The laments of Cleopatra over the body
 2428 Would be long to tell, mourning her calamity—
 2429 Long her sore grieving, too long her expostulation
 2430 On her unseemly love, the source of ruination.
 2431 You know with what attention and reverend honour
 2432 She placed that body in a sumptuous sepulchre,
 2433 With what fervour to his spirit-shadows she prayed
 2434 As, sighing their loves, in Elysium they strayed.¹⁵³

CAESAR

2435 Yes, I know, so go on, and tell me how, instead,
 2436 That cruel woman, despite me, came to be dead.

EPAPHRODITUS

2437 Seeing herself wretched, and without any chance
 2438 Of seeing Antony again; and her appearance

150 “[L]ady”: orig. “Dame”—cf. “his lady” (“sa Dame”) in l. 2416 below. The language implicitly confers on Cleopatra the quality of romance heroine. Cf. also below, l. 2616 and n. 166.

151 “[N]oble”: orig. “sainct” (lit. “sacred”, “holy”)—the word also translated as “exalted” in l. 2421 (“ta sainte bonté”).

152 “Counting it a blessing”: orig. “Se nommant bienheureux”—phrasing that sustains the insistent religious connotations of the presentation.

153 Cf. above, l. 2259 and n. 140.

2468 She deceived all those entrusted with her surveillance,
 2469 Telling them day after day that she had no wish,
 2470 Since she hoped for your succour, her life soon to
 finish,
 2471 That she desired to live, and by her subtlety
 2472 She concealed her ill and her manly¹⁵⁶ constancy
 2473 In going to meet her death; her sad tears she dried,
 2474 And, as it seemed to all, she let her sorrows slide.
 2475 Everyone thought that her manly courage made stronger
 2476 Her resolution firmly taken to live longer:
 2477 No one now bothered with diligence to enquire
 2478 If her days did not along with her grief expire;
 2479 No more did any the heartfelt presence suppose
 2480 Of her mortal wish to bring her life to a close.
 2481 Then, seeing that all quite failed, or nearly, to guess
 2482 The evil her proud heart continued to possess,
 2483 Here is what she did, showing a courage heroic:
 2484 She caused to be brought to her, by a simple rustic,
 2485 Some figs in a hollow basket, plainly revealed,
 2486 Which underneath them a dangerous asp concealed
 2487 In such a manner that it was impossible
 2488 To think a deadly serpent lay invisible
 2489 There among the fruit, which as harmless were regarded,
 2490 Being offered by the peasant to all who guarded.
 2491 He entered in the tower, presented the present,¹⁵⁷
 2492 Alas, to Cleopatra, who waited, content,
 2493 And, yearning to die, accepted it with good cheer;
 2494 It was evident how she held that present dear,
 2495 As the sick person whom terrible pain oppresses
 2496 Is seen to receive with a face that joy expresses
 2497 That which will be a health-restoring remedy
 2498 And appease his illness's savage cruelty:
 2499 He swallows it suddenly, bravely taking
 courage,

156 “[M]anly”: orig. “masle” (mod. “mâle”), repeated below in ll. 2475 and 2567. The term can be applied to women (see *Le trésor de la langue française informatisé*, s.v.) but remains evocative of masculine qualities in a way very much to the point here.

157 “[P]resented the present”: orig. “le present il presente”.

2500 Hoping he will be cured of the tormenting scourge;
 2501 He lives in hope, and not revealing itself vain,
 2502 His hope very often brings the desired gain.
 2503 Thus Cleopatra for her woeful malady
 2504 Received by her demise the joyful remedy.

CAESAR

2505 Conclude in haste: Cleopatra's soul by that deed
 2506 Proclaimed itself fair and perfect, we are agreed.¹⁵⁸

EPAPHRODITUS

2507 Then, as the basket in her steady hand she held
 2508 And discovered the asp, its head with colours speckled,
 2509 Which hissed in frequent bursts, a gentle laugh she gave:
 2510 "Are you", she said, "the remedy for pain I crave?
 2511 I go to see you, Antony—O blessed¹⁵⁹ hour,
 2512 When Cleopatra's love to find you has the power!"
 2513 To the cruel snake, with courage for heroes fit,
 2514 She then stretched out her arm, which suddenly it bit,
 2515 Poisoning her body, which housed, in wretched state,
 2516 A rare soul, one that was incomparably great.
 2517 At once she starts of the venom to make account,
 2518 Which mounts into her nerves, just as fire will mount
 2519 From lighted torches covered with flammable stuff
 2520 And burn incessantly while there remains enough.
 2521 Boldly courageous, laughing at her death, with poison
 2522 She infected also both Iras and Carmion,
 2523 Ladies-in-waiting whose loving fidelity
 2524 Made them choose with courage her death to accompany.
 2525 Then with her richest jewels, fairest ornaments,
 2526 And her most proudly royal and resplendent garments
 2527 She adorned herself, and showing a constant mind,

158 Ll. 2505-6: orig. "Acheue vistement, ie cognois à ce faict / Combien eut Cleopatre vn bel ame par-faict." The translation reflects what seems at first to be Caesar's impatience with both the narrative's length and the narrator's admiration. His subsequent conversion to admiration of his own, however, points rather to a deeper destabilising of his previous assumptions and attitudes.

159 "[B]lessèd": orig. "bienheureuse"—perhaps simply "most happy", but continuing the spiritually connoted language of the narrative.

2528 Not turning pale with fear, on her rich couch reclined,
 2529 Which she'd embellished, with precious ornamentation
 2530 Enriching¹⁶⁰ her gorgeous beauty to admiration.
 2531 Then a gentle slumber, proceeding from the bite
 2532 Of the ferocious asp, extinguished her life's light,
 2533 Gliding into her eyes: she slept, and in sleep pent,
 2534 Death came to seize her with a tender ravishment.
 2535 So the brave lady, far from feeling any harms,
 2536 Fainted mortally away into Death's own arms.¹⁶¹
 2537 And even after death that beauty still appeared
 2538 Whose noble excellence had once been so revered.
 2539 Iras was next to die, to be found coldly laid
 2540 At her feet, and along with her immortal made
 2541 In praise, in honour. Carmion had not as yet
 2542 Arrived at the point where Death she finally met—
 2543 Still capable of speech, and with a loyal hand
 2544 Gently helping the royal headdress upright stand
 2545 Of her dead mistress, as, the ill suspecting then,
 2546 And fearing this dire situation, your men
 2547 Entered the chamber, and with expressions most grave
 2548 That spectacle viewing, as sad as it was brave,
 2549 Saw Cleopatra, and Iras, true to the last,
 2550 Who, already perished, the trial of death had passed;
 2551 Carmion had not yet—for she was still languishing—
 2552 Experienced the trembling rage of Death's fell sting;
 2553 She spoke still, and one man of yours, in front of all,
 2554 Uttered these few¹⁶² words, which bitter anger let fall:
 2555 "Carmion, Carmion, is this a worthy thing,
 2556 This bloody act, this cruel scene of slaughtering?"
 2557 "Most worthy", she said, "and it perfectly pertains
 2558 To a queen with so many kings' blood in her veins."
 2559 In finishing this speech, her life she also finished;
 2560 Along with her sad voice, her soul from her was ravished.

160 "Enriched" sustains the echo in the original ("riche superbement") of the "rich couch"/"riche couche" (l. 2528). Such echoing and repetition, although generally typical of Montreux's style, lends Epaphroditus' discourse a particularly evocative quality to which Caesar is not immune.

161 L. 2536: orig. "Dans les bras de la mort mortellement se pasme".

162 "[F]ew": orig. "quatre" ("four").

2561 She perished gently, happy her death to receive
 2562 Close to her mistress and her sufferings relieve.
 2563 Thus Cleopatra, Caesar, with high-mindedness,
 2564 By ending her days put an end to her distress.
 2565 That is how she died, and her death, in verity,
 2566 By its courage, shall not yield to mortality
 2567 But live eternally, and manly constancy
 2568 An eternal mark of excellence there will see.
 2569 It is your task now of the body to dispose,
 2570 To offer the prayers with which the dead we enclose,
 2571 To have it interred, out of clemency humane,
 2572 In the self-same tomb where her Antony lies slain:
 2573 For that was her desire, pleadingly expressed
 2574 In the woeful missive her hand to you addressed.

CAESAR

2575 Oh, admirable constancy! Oh, excellent!
 2576 A love with a constancy of boundless extent
 2577 To the end of its days! Oh, courage undefeated!
 2578 Too dignified to see its liberty depleted!
 2579 Such a brave death exceeds, to measure souls, the span
 2580 Of an inconstant nature, an inconstant woman:
 2581 The most deeply learned minds and the souls most stalwart
 2582 Are hardly equal to sustaining such an effort;
 2583 Their purpose is blunted,¹⁶³ as one sees a sword-blade,
 2584 Too coldly tempered, and in a weakling hand, made
 2585 Blunt and bent back when struck against iron too hard,
 2586 Although sharp steel has sometimes pierced through such
 a guard.

163 “Their purpose is blunted”: orig. “Ils rebouchent deuant”, with the verb “reboucher” (repeated in l. 2585) used as a synonym for “(s’)émousser” (“dull”)—frequently of weapons, but also in a figurative sense. See *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. “reboucher2”, and especially Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, etc. (1690), vol. III, online at <https://books.google.fr/books/about/Dictionnaire_universel_contenant_g%C3%A9n%C3%A9r.html?id=IYNMAAAcAAJ&redir_esc=y> (accessed 13 July 2023), s.v. (p. 320):

se dit . . . quand la pointe ou le taillant des instruments pointus ou tranchants s’émousse, au lieu de penetrer dans les corps durs & solides. . . . Un fer qui n’est pas bien trempé se *rebouche* contre le marbre, contre le fer.

That a “purpose” may be “blunted” in English is warranted by Shakespeare, *Ham.*, III.iv.111.

2617 So in her death, Cleopatra I cannot blame,¹⁶⁷
 2618 Whom while she was living it pleased me to defame,
 2619 Blaming her cruelly, and as a mere crime deemed
 2620 The love which prompted her, worthy to be esteemed.
 2621 The constancy with which your fair end you maintained,
 2622 The virtue you showed as Destiny you disdained,
 2623 And that proud courage, that spirit magnanimous,
 2624 Have repaired your glory. Then, with you made glorious,
 2625 Your death, so royal, with royalty will endorse
 2626 Your deeds, although once of a thousand ills the source,
 2627 And your death will extinguish in its superb glory
 2628 Of your deeds long ago the cruel memory.
 2629 *Those mortal works that are by Fate for honour bound*
 2630 *Perceive in their endings their glory to be crowned.*
 2631 *For that fair face in the beginning is not shown—*
 2632 *Only at the end is that benefit made known:*
 2633 *So brave it appears that its glory divine, ardent,*
 2634 *Burns away all thoughts of any crime precedent,*
 2635 *Ravishes its memory, and causes to show*
 2636 *The life preceding with the same eternal glow.*
 2637 *But if the end appears the sequel to a crime,¹⁶⁸*
 2638 *So too appears all the good done in one's lifetime:*
 2639 For such an ugly death, with its horrible face,
 2640 All that ample beauty will cruelly efface.
 2641 Happy Cleopatra! Ah, to speak true, your virtue
 2642 Brave victory over Caesar's rigour has brought you;
 2643 It has vanquished my strength and caused me to forego
 2644 My wish to deal you, while you lived, another blow—
 2645 To grant you your days in sweet liberty to use,
 2646 And render you the goods that Mars caused you to lose.
 2647 But I waited too long, erring in my largesse,
 2648 Which should not have had to endure such laziness.
 2649 Since you were a queen, though worthy of punishment,
 2650 I should have honoured you with proper royal treatment,
 2651 Showing myself successor of the graced clemency

167 The repeated variations on “blame” (orig. “blasme”) in the passage combine with similar repetitions in forming the cumulative rhetorical structure.

168 “[T]he sequel to a crime”: orig. “esclau de forfait”, lit. “the slave of crime”.

2652 Of my father Caesar, as of his potency¹⁶⁹ —
 2653 My father Caesar, who, more courteous than that,
 2654 Formerly honoured you, and for you went to combat.
 2655 Ah, I lament my error! My fault I decry,
 2656 And that lack of constancy sufficiently high
 2657 To scorn fear of new evil you might have committed,
 2658 If to enjoy your liberty you were permitted.
 2659 For what dangerous action could initiate
 2660 Against great Caesar a soul in pitiful state,
 2661 A women in mourning, who had just overcome
 2662 Antony, who maintained great kings under his thumb?¹⁷⁰
 2663 Oh, coward that I am! I should have been content,
 2664 Cleopatra, with your fall, glad to see you bent
 2665 Beneath your sorrows, and returned to you your kingdom—
 2666 Left you, not in prison, but to enjoy your freedom
 2667 In your great ancestors' ancient house, a legacy
 2668 For your little children, wretched in your misery.
 2669 Ah, truly I did wrong! But to see rectified
 2670 A fault so cruel, I wish to have edified
 2671 A glorious tomb, a monument grand and lofty,
 2672 Where you shall be laid to rest with your Antony:
 2673 There those duties, splendid and royal, I will pay
 2674 Which I should have proffered in your most dismal day,
 2675 And, heart heavy with grief, your spirits¹⁷¹ supplicate
 2676 Their vengeful anger for my treatment to abate.
 2677 Your children I will honour—out of love for you,
 2678 And your own sheer love—as myself loving them too.

END

169 On this virtual anagnorisis as the culmination of Caesar's progression towards tragic realisation, see above, n. 116. See also the Introduction, pp. 23-25.

170 The point is apparently to emphasise the height from which Cleopatra has fallen into her state of abject "mourning" (orig. "esploree").

171 On the plural form of "spirits" (orig. "esprits"), see above, l. 2259 and n. 140. The second-person singular form of "your" ("tes") confirms that he refers to her alone, as in l. 2677: "[y]our children" ("tes enfans").



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de Nicolas de Montreux

Introduction and Notes
by Richard Hillman

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Nicolas de Montreux
Cleopatre tragedie
Edition (text of c. 1592)

Richard Hillman
CESR - Université de Tours

CLEOPATRE
TRAGEDIE¹

par

Olenix [*sic*] du Mont-sacre,

Gentil-homme du Mayne

¹ For details of the copy-text, as well as questions of dating and performance, see the Introduction, pp. 20-21 and nn. 39-41.

Editorial Principles

The spelling and grammatical forms of the indifferently printed copy-text have been preserved, including the numerous inconsistencies, as in the usage of “a” and “à”, “c’est” and “cest”, and the name Dolabella (sometimes Dolabelle). Apparent typographical errors have been corrected in square brackets, however, with original forms recorded in notes. Punctuation too, has been retained, with the encouragement of scholarly opinion that it often served in theatrical texts of the period as a guide to verse-delivery. Especially frequent here is the use of question marks for emphasis where no actual question is intended, although sometimes the distinction is 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 the ligatures “c-t” and “s-t” and abbreviated speech-headings. Verses divided between speakers have been placed on separate lines. Passages signalled by marginal guillemets as aphoristic or sententious are given in italics. It is not always easy to be sure, given the mediocre 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.

ARGUMENT OV
SVBIECT DE LA
TRAGEDIE

August Cesar victorieux contre Antoine & le mesme Antoine mort, qui durant sa vie amoureux de Cleopatre quitta Rome & sa legitime femme pour demeurer en Alexandrie avec cette Roine. Etant donc mort & Cesar desirant de [mener]², Cleopatre captive en triomphe à Rome, pour ceste cause luy donnant des gardes afin qu'elle ne fit force à sa vie. Ceste Roine courageuse neantmoins & desirant plustost vne mort honorable et courte qu'une vie seruite & cruelle, tant pour euter le seruage prochain & pour suiure son Antoine, se fist apporter vn aspic sous des figues dont elle faisoit mine de vouloir manger, de sorte que les gardes deceües, pensans que dans le panier où l'on portoit ce fruit il n'y eust autre chose, laisserent passer le paysan qui le portoit. Et lors Cleopatre decouure le serpent qui le salue ioyeusement se faisant picquer à cest animal dont la picqueure endort les esprits vitaux des hommes & les faict doucement mourir. Ainsi donc elle mist fin à sa vie & à ses miseres ayant pour compagnes à sa mort Carmion & Iras ses deux Dames d'honneur qui la suiurent en cest acte courageux & loüable.

2 “mener”: my conjecture; the copy-text’s “mourir” makes no sense as the sentence stands (a sign of hasty reading by the typesetter?).

Les auteurs

CLEOPATRE
CARMION, Dame d'honneur
IRAS, Dame d'honneur
OCTAUE CESAR
ARIE³, Philosophe
DOLABELLA
EPAPHRODITUS
CHŒUR

3 “Arie”: the only occurrence of this spelling; elsewhere “Aree”.

Acte premier

Cleopatre, Carmion, Iras

CLEOPATRE

1 Est-encor ce Soleil dont s'allume la flamme
 2 Qui fist luire autrefois le Soleil de mon ame ?
 3 Est ce encore ce feu, qui rayonne sur [n]ous⁴
 4 Qui me fist voir iadis Antoine mon espoux ?
 5 Est ce encore ce Soleil dont le front venerable
 6 Regardoit nous amours en leur course agreable ?
 7 Quand heureux ils viuoyent en la grace des Dieux,
 8 Autheurs de l'amitié, qui reluit sous les Cieux ?
 9 Est il iour ! est il nuict ? & l'Aurore Eternelle
 10 Ma t'elle rappelée à lamenter comme elle ?
 11 Hors du lict de Thiton, ha reuiens tu ma sœur
 12 En reueillant tes crys, reueillir ma douleur ?
 13 Que dis-ie reueillir ! ha ce qui ne sommeille
 14 Tousiours vif en penser, iamais ne se reueille ?
 15 La douleur vit tousiours dont mon ame est espoit,
 16 Elle m'esueille donc puisqu'elle ne dort point ?
 17 Est ce toy beau Phœbus qui fais que ma misere
 18 Decouure son mal'heur, aux rais de ta lumière ?
 19 Reiaunis tu le Ciel n'a gueres sans clarté ?
 20 Ta sœur au front d'argent l'a elle donc quitté ?
 21 Ha ! c'est toy clair Soleil ? & desia ie voy luire
 22 Aux regards de ton œil ces pilliers de Porphire,
 23 Ces panonceaux dorez, ces festes⁵ argentez,
 24 Qui rayonnent au haut de nos Palais voutez,
 25 Ton feu qui met en feu les rochers de la terre,
 26 Flamboye au trauers de ce funeste verre,
 27 Et sus mon front hideux, apally de douleur,
 28 Il imprime desia le marc de sa chaleur,
 29 Il est iour, il est iour, dolente Cleopatre,
 30 Commence avec le iour à plorer ton desastre,
 31 Recommence tes crys, & que le triste cours

4 “[n]ous”: copy-text “n” unclear; an effort has been made to correct by hand.

5 “festes”, i.e., “faîtes”; see *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v. “faîte”.

32 En paroisse aussi long que celuy de tes iours.
 33 Que dy-ie commencer ? ha ! la nuict solitaire,
 34 N'en retrancha iamais la vigueur ordinaire ?
 35 Ils viuent iour & nuict, & leur commencement
 36 Franc de mortelle fin dure eternellement,
 37 *Le regret ne meurt point, Car l'ame qui le porte,*
 38 *Diuine en sa vigueur ne s'enseuelist morte*
 39 *Comme nos corps mortels dans ces tombeaux relants,*
 40 *Qui couure quand & nous le mal'heur de nos ames.*
 41 O regrets ie vous ayme ?⁶ ô cris ie vous caresse,
 42 Puisqu'en naissant helas vous me faictes promesse
 43 D'accompagner mon corps iusqu'au bort du cercueil,
 44 Qui doit avec mes iours terminer vostre dueil.
 45 De ces riches grandeurs, de ces gloires supresmes,
 46 De ce empires saincts, de ces hauts diademes,
 47 De ces sacrez honneurs qu'Antoine remporta,
 48 Et de ce vif amour helas qu'il me porta,
 49 De tous ces doux plaisirs, qui en receurent vie,
 50 Quand mon ame viuoit en la sienne rauye,
 51 Il ne m'a rien laissé en mourant que ces cris,
 52 Que i'immole pour vous à ses piteux esprits,
 53 Royne ie t'ay seruy durant que la fortune
 54 Rioit à nos desirs d'une face opportune,
 55 Et Royne avecque toi, i'ay regné i'ay vescu,
 56 Cependant que le Ciel te maintint inuaincu,
 57 Et serue ie te rends les sacrifices sombres,
 58 Qu'on offre aux trepassez pour appaiser leurs ombres,
 59 Esclaue ie te rend ces lamentables vœux,
 60 Ces sacrifices saincts qu'on offre aux demy dieux,
 61 Non pompeux, honorez non suiuis à largesse
 62 Comme dignes de Roy, de prodigue richesse,
 63 Et tels qui te sont deubs, mais de larmes noyez,
 64 Et bien que malheureux de mal'heur ennuyez,
 65 Mes cheveux seruiront de tableaux funerables
 66 Esparts autour de moy, confus & miserables,
 67 Las ils furent à toy en nostre siecle d'or,

6 The question mark here, as often, is exclamatory.

68 A toy seul cher amy ie les conserue encor,
 69 Mes pleurs viues seront, les effusions amples
 70 Qu'on immole aux heros, en leurs superbes temples,
 71 Mes souspirs & mes cris qui sortent en fureur
 72 De ce feu, que l'amour alluma dans mon cœur,
 73 Me serviront d'encens, & ce sang qui i'estime
 74 Autheur de tes mal'heurs, de cruelle victime,
 75 Tes autels ne seront d'autre hostie couuerts,
 76 Comme seul tu fus digne en ce grand vniuers
 77 De cherir Cleopatre, & de rendre captiue
 78 Sa beauté qui vescu des beautez la plus viue.
 79 Et ce n'est point aymer qu'aymer durant les iours,
 80 *Le subiect qui se rend autheur de nos amours,*
 81 *Car ce mortel amour s'asseure en l'esperance*
 82 *D'emporter de ces maux heureuse recompense,*
 83 *Mais las ! cest bien aymer lors qu'on ayme tousiours*
 84 *Ceux qui n'ont plus pouuoir de nous porter secours,*
 85 *Comme ceux que la mort a priuez de la vie,*
 86 *Dont avecque le sang la puissance est rauye,*
 87 *Car tel amour n'est point nourry d'aucun espoir*
 88 *D'en receuoir le bien qui luy donne pouuoir.*
 89 De ceste viue amour ie te cheris Antoine,
 90 Morte i'honore encor ton amitié hautaine,
 91 I'ayme encore tes yeux, bien qu'un pasle tombeau
 92 En retienne cruel esteinct le vif flambeau,
 93 I'ayme encore ton front, bien qu'une froide lame
 94 En retienne le corps priué de sa belle ame,
 95 La mort n'a pas rauy comme elle a faict ton iour
 96 Par son fer inhumain, mon immortel amour,
 97 *L'amour qui comme l'ame eternellement dure,*
 98 *N'est point comme le corps serf de la sepulture,*
 99 *Heureux le souuenir & rayonnant d'ardeur*
 100 *De l'amant trespasé, demeure en nostre cœur,*
 101 *Car grauez dans l'esprits sont les traits de la face,*
 102 *Et iamais cest esprit immortel ne trespasse ?*
 103 Bien qu'Antoine soit mort, son front que i'ayme tant
 104 Dans mon ame enflammé vit encore pourtant,
 105 Ie le voy tous les iours, ie l'entens qu'il m'appelle
 106 Pour luy servir la bas de compagne fidelle,

107 Comme ie fis icy, lors que duroit le cours
 108 Ennuyé des grands Dieux de nos viues amours.
 109 Antoine cher Antoine ha ! si la mort cruelle
 110 N'offence le penser de l'amour mutuelle ?
 111 Et si la bas encor viuent d'amour esprits
 112 Comme ils firent icy les amoureux esprits,
 113 Pense en ta Cleopatre, en ceste infauste dame,
 114 Qui possedoit ton cœur, dont tu possedois l'ame.
 115 De toutes ces douleurs, de tous ces longs tourments,
 116 Et de ces maux cruels, que sans repos ie sens,
 117 Nul n'a tant offencé mon ame languissante,
 118 Que le temps que sans toy hélas ie fus viuante,
 119 Ce temps est ma douleur, ha ! ce temps est ma mort,
 120 Car sans te voir ie sens le parricide effort
 121 De toutes les douleurs qui detranchent cruelles
 122 Nos esprits asseruis aux angoisses mortelles,
 123 Antoine, pauure Antoine, he failloit-il, hélas !
 124 Que tu vinsse en Egypte endurer le trespas ?
 125 Toy que Rome esleua fils du Dieu de la guerre ?
 126 Pour conquerir vn iour tout le rond de la terre ?
 127 Et faut-il que ton corps, ô malheur inhumain !
 128 Soit gisant en Egypte, ayant esté Romain ?
 129 Il le faut, ô douleur, & de ce fier desastre,
 130 Tu en es seule cause, infauste Cleopatre,
 131 Cleopatre qu' Antoine ayma iadis si fort,
 132 Cleopatre qui meurt pour suiure Antoine mort,
 133 Et pour ne voir trainer piteusement captiue,
 134 Celle qui captiua le plus grand Roy qui viue,
 135 Le plus braue Empereur, & de qui la beauté
 136 Dompta celuy qui fut aux vainqueurs indompté,
 137 Non, non cruel Cesar, pour orner ta victoire,
 138 Pour rendre plus royal ton triomphe de gloire,
 139 Cleopatra viuante esclau ne sera
 140 De ton char inhumain quand il triomphera,
 141 Tu n'auras point l'honneur que Cleopatre viue
 142 Entre mille captifs t[e]⁷ demeure captiue,

7 "t[e]": copy-text "tu".

143 Elle qui captiua tant de Roys, qui iadis
 144 Furent plus que tu n'es courageux & hardis,
 145 Elle qui captiua en l'effort de la flame
 146 Qui sortoit de ses yeux, le cœur, le corps, & l'ame,
 147 Du genereux Pompee, & Cesar, qui vainqueur
 148 Faisoit trembler les boys au bruit de sa valeur,
 149 Elle qui captiua ce valeureux Antoine,
 150 Qui surmonta Cassie en la sanglante plaine,
 151 Où la sang de Cesar laschement outragé,
 152 Se vit par sa valeur heureusement vengé,
 153 Pendant que tu fuyois, & que mort de courage
 154 Brutus faisoit des tiens vn rougissant carnage.
 155 Non, non, Octaue, non, trop superbe est pour toy
 156 L'ame de Cleopatre pour viure sous ta loy,
 157 Auant elle mourra, & ta main inhumaine
 158 Ne regira iamais ce qui regit Antoine,
 159 Antoine qui ie plore, ainsi que triste & las
 160 Lamente le passant eschappé du trespas,
 161 Eschappé mille fois de la fureur des astres,
 162 Eschappé de la mer, & des mortels desastres,
 163 Que le sort inhumain auant que de sortir
 164 De ce mortel seiour, hélas ! nous faict sentir,
 165 Quand retourné chez luy soustenu d'esperance,
 166 D'y trouuer de ces maux la celeste allegeance,
 167 Il trouue au lieu la mort, dont le dard asseu[r]é⁸
 168 L'a de femme & d'enfans cruellement priué.
 169 Ainsi pleint Cleopatre, ainsi viue en misere,
 170 Elle va regretter Antoine sa lumiere,
 171 Elle va lamenter, en luy rendant les vœux
 172 Qui sont aux amys morts equitablement deubs.

CARMION

173 *O combien des mortels la lamentable vie*
 174 *Languist à de malheurs durement asseruie !*
 175 *O combien de malheurs accompagnent le cours*
 176 *Trop long à leur santé de leurs infaustes iours !*

8 "asseu[r]é": copy-text "asseufué".

177 *Ores l'esprit gesné de passions ardantes,*
 178 *Se sent rompre, briser à tenailles sanglantes,*
 179 *Ores bruslé d'amour, qui le va deuourant,*
 180 *Ores de mille honneurs qu'il souhaite en mourant,*
 181 *Ores de cent despits de ne voir point parfaicte*
 182 *Empesché par le sort la chose qu'il souhaite,*
 183 *Ores pressé du soing, & viuant en malheur,*
 184 *Apprehendant tousiours l'esclat de la douleur,*
 185 *Ores bruslant d'ardeur, & ne pouuant parfaire*
 186 *Ce qu'il pense luy estre à guarir necessaire :*
 187 *Ores glacé, saisy d'un desespoir, qui froid*
 188 *En ses froides fureurs aucun bien ne reçoit,*
 189 *Ores plein de souhaits, & leur voyans contraires*
 190 *Ialoux de son repos les Dieux debonnaires,*
 191 *Ores en ses trauaux affamé du repos,*
 192 *Et ne pouuant le voir couler dedans ses os,*
 193 *Ores le deiettant, & d'une ardante rage*
 194 *Cherchant de toutes parts la douleur qui l'outrage :*
 195 *Car durant ses saisons l'homme de rage esprit*
 196 *Vn plus fier ennemy cruel n'esprouue point*
 197 *Que sa fureur alors qu'ennemy de sa ioye,*
 198 *Il se donne luy-mesme à la douleur en proye.*
 199 *Car le mal est sans per, que l'on reçoit de ceux*
 200 *Qui pour nostre salut sont ordonnez des Dieux,*
 201 *Et la douleur qui vient de ceux où l'on espere,*
 202 *Ne remonstre icy bas de pareille en misere :*
 203 *Car nous sentons trompez, & par vn mesme sort*
 204 *De ceux que nous aymons nous receuons la mort.*
 205 *O bienheureux les morts dont la Parque inhumaine*
 206 *En trançonnant la vie a trançonné la peine,*
 207 *Vn petit mal les rend affranchis de ces maux*
 208 *Qui conduisent nos corps iusqu'au fonds des tombeaux*
 209 *Vne courte douleur accourcist, pitoyable,*
 210 *Mainte longue douleur aux douleurs effroyable :*
 211 *Car mille fois le iour nous sentons icy bas*
 212 *Sans mourir par la mort mille angoisseux trespas,*
 213 *D'autant que c'est mourir qu'endurer vne peine,*
 214 *Plus que celle cent fois qui nous tuë inhumaine.*
 215 *Tu le sçais, Cleopatre, & nous qu'un saint deuoir*

216 Nous force d'assister ton cruel desespoir,
 217 Comme nous eusmes part à ta fortune heureuse,
 218 Lors que libre d[u]⁹ mal tu regnois glorieuse
 219 Et qu'Antoine rauy en l'ardeur de tes yeux,
 220 Aymoît mieux te seruir que voir victorieux
 221 Mille Roys l'honorant & rendre obeyssance
 222 Par vn iuste deuoir à sa malle vaillance,
 223 Heureuse Cleopatre & franche de soucy
 224 Pres de toy bienheureuse, ah ! ie viuois aussi,
 225 Goustant ma iuste part de ta gloire, qui belle,
 226 Helas ne deuoit point vn iour estre mortelle,
 227 Sauourant de ces biens que tes mignards attraits
 228 Te faisoyent pres d'Antoine aualler à longs traicts
 229 Quand vos esprits vnis d'une volonté mesme,
 230 Quand vos cœurs allumez d'une amour viue extrême,
 231 Quand vos amours atteints d'un semblable desir,
 232 Vous rendiez iustement esgal vostre plaisir,
 233 Et ce bien qui de bien rendoit vostre ame esmeuë,
 234 Que l'amoureux hymen cachoit à nostre veuë.
 235 Heureuses en ce temps nous ne cognoissions pas
 236 Empeschez par le bien la douceur du trespas,
 237 *La Parque nous faschoit, qu'ore en nostre misere*
 238 *Seule nous appellons Deesse tutelair,*
 239 *Mais tout change de forme, & serue du destin*
 240 *Qui roulle inconstamment toute chose print fin,*
 241 *Rien ne reste assureé que la mortelle Parque,*
 242 *Qui souuent au milieu du bonheur nous attaque,*
 243 *Qui nous transist alors que le iour nous est doux,*
 244 *Et qui durant noz maux cruelle fust de nous :*
 245 *Car heureux de mourir se sent le miserable,*
 246 *Et celui malheureux à qui rit fauorable*
 247 Le visage du sort, d'autant que ceste sœur
 248 N'est douce qu'à ceux-là qui viuent sans douceur.
 249 Hélas ! nous l'esprouons à qui douce est la peine
 250 Dont pour transir nous iours la Parque s'accompagne,
 251 Puisque sans endurer vn mal plus vif, plus fort

9 "d[u]": copy-text "dn" (inverted letter).

252 Que celuy qui prouient de la faux de la mort,
 253 Nous ne pouuons, hélas ! parmy les hommes viure,
 254 C'est raison que la mort de ce mal nous deliure.
 255 Mourons donc Cleopatre, & d'un esprit royal
 256 Digne de tes ayeulx resiste à ce grand mal,
 257 Qui apres tant de maux te gesnera captiue,
 258 Si l'on te trouue encor dans ces sepulchres viue :
 259 *Car celuy ne sent point en mourant de douleur*
 260 *Qui finit ces saisons pour finir son malheur,*
 261 *C'est eschanger son mal, dont nostre ame est outree,*
 262 *Auec vn petit mal de petite duree.*
 263 Hélas ! souuienne toy que tes premiers ayeulx
 264 Furent roys de la terre, & mis au rang des Dieux.
 265 Il vindrent d'Alexandre, & braue fut leur gloire,
 266 Il ne faut que le mal t'en ruine la memoire,
 267 Il faut t'en souuenir, & pour les imiter
 268 Mourir plustost que voir vn vainqueur emporter
 269 Ta liberté royalle, & l'honneur de ta race
 270 Dessus vn char traisné dans la Romaine place,
 271 Souuienne toy d'auoir vaincu par ta beauté
 272 Antoine, qui iadis triomphoit indomté
 273 Des Roys de l'univers : n'endure que seruille,
 274 On te traîne au trauers de ceste riche ville
 275 Que iadis il orna des despouilles des Preux,
 276 Toy qui le tins vn iour captif de tes beaux yeux,
 277 Meurs plustost Cleopatre, & Carmion dolente
 278 Braue accompagnera ceste mort triomphante,
 279 Comme elle a fait tes iours, afin qu'un mesme sort
 280 Qui nos iours assembla, nous assemble à la mort.

CLEOPATRE

281 *Ah ma fidelle Iras ! que la fleche est humaine*
 282 *D'une mort qui transit nos corps & nostre peine !*
 283 *Et celuy-là n'est point priué de tout espoir*
 284 *Qui tient ce saint remede encor en son pouuoir :*
 285 *Car il peut estouffer sa douleur esperduë,*
 286 *Et braue racheter sa liberté perduë,*
 287 *Ceux là tant seulement sont chetifs icy bas,*
 288 *De qui le cœur poltron redoute le trespas,*

289 *Qui craignent de mourir, & lasches de courage*
 290 *N'osent en se tuant racheter leur seruage,*
 291 *Car leur mal ne finist, ils souffrent mille morts,*
 292 *Et leur gloire perist és trauaux de leurs corps,*
 293 *Captifs, liez, battus, & contraincts pitoyables*
 294 *D'honorer l'ennemy qui les rend miserables,*
 295 *De seruir le vainqueur à leur œil redouté,*
 296 *Et qui les a priuez d'heur & de liberté.*
 297 *O miserable mal, bien plus douce l'on trouue*
 298 *La force que le corps forsablement esprouue,*
 299 *Que celle de l'esprit : l'vne ne dure pas,*
 300 *L'autre s'enseuelist en nostre creux trespas.*
 301 *O cruelle douleur ! lors qu'outre sa pensee*
 302 *Nostre ame à supporter quelque outrage est forcee,*
 303 *Son mal plus que le corps elle ressent cruel,*
 304 *D'autant qu'elle est diuine, & nostre corps mortel.*
 305 *Ah, Iras penses tu que Cleopatre viue,*
 306 *D'vn superbe vainqueur cruellement captive !*
 307 *Elle de qui le sang est le sang genereux*
 308 *De ces Roys entre tous les Princes valeureux ?*
 309 *Ah ! Iras penses tu qu'vne Royne d'Egypte*
 310 *Venue de tant de Roys d'vne fidelle suyte,*
 311 *Dont l'œil victorieux, dont la riche beauté*
 312 *Rauit de tant de Roys la viue liberté,*
 313 *Serue de passetemps, cruellement seruile,*
 314 *Et menee en triomphe à la troupe inciuite*
 315 *Des superbes Romains, serue pourras-tu voir*
 316 *Celle qui des grands roys asseruist le pouuoir !*
 317 *Et celle qui lia tant de guerrieres ames,*
 318 *Liee autour d'vn char, parmy ces cœurs infames,*
 319 *Qui de peur de mourir endurent inhumaines*
 320 *A leur propre salut, la corde des Romaines ?*
 321 *Non, non, il faut mourir, faut rendre tresmoignage*
 322 *Que le sort me forçant n'a forcé mon courage,*
 323 *Que Cesar n'a vaincu celle qui eut l'honneur*
 324 *De vaincre tant de preux excellens en valeur,*
 325 *Et puis Iras, & puis vne cruelle lame*
 326 *Me derobe, me cache, Antoine, ma seule ame.*
 327 *Helas il ne vit plus, auroy-ie bien pouuoir*

328 De viure qui viuois seulement pour le voir ?
 329 Non, non il faut mourir, faut qu'une mort hautaine
 330 Face voir aux esprits de mon heureux Antoine,
 331 Cleopatre en mourant, autant braue de cœur,
 332 Que diuine en beauté, & superbe en honneur !
 333 Antoine mon espoux, si d'amour incensee
 334 Cleopatre rendit quelque fois offence
 335 Ton ame en ses erreurs, si d'une iuste voix
 336 On t'a veu comme moy te plaindre quelque fois,
 337 Elle va par sa mort en expier l'offence,
 338 Et te rendre assuré de sa viue constance,
 339 De son fidelle amour, & de sa viue foy,
 340 *Qui la tire d'icy pour viure avecque toy.*
 341 *Irás, chere Irás, ceux qu'une amitié sainte*
 342 *Qui ne peut par la mort se voir iamais esteinte :*
 343 *Viument assembla, lye de nœuds esgaux,*
 344 *Et conforme rendit en amoureux trauaux,*
 345 *Separez sont en vie, ils ne souffrent l'absence,*
 346 *Et la mort ne sçauroit empescher leur presence,*
 347 *Ils se suyuent par tout : car l'esprit ne vit point*
 348 *Quand son obiect de vie est par la mort esteint,*
 349 Il faut qu'il coure apres. ah ! c'est sa douce vie,
 350 Et toute autre salut languissant luy ennuye.
 351 Je veux donc suyure Antoine, & le rendre assuré
 352 Que mon amour au feu de l'amour espuré,
 353 N'est esteint par son sang, ains qu'il se renouuelle
 354 Au bienheureux penser de l'amour mutuelle.
 355 Rauissant à Cesar rauisseur de nostre heur,
 356 L'honneur de captiuer celle qui eut l'honneur
 357 D'estre espouse d'Antoine, & qu'il reputa digne
 358 D'auoir commandement sur son ame divine.
 359 Ah ! ma fidelle Iras n'es-tu de cest aduis
 360 Qui cognois mon malheur, qui gouste mes ennuis.

IRAS

361 Aux seuls desesperez de tout refuge, l'ayde
 362 *De la cruelle mort est le dernier remede,*
 363 *Car l'on ne court iamais au seiour de la mort,*
 364 *Que lors que contre nous le destin & le sort*

403 Ne leur rauissons pas le perdurable honneur
 404 Qu'ils gagnent parmy nous, chassant nostre malheur,
 405 Donnons quelque repos à nostre ardante peine,
 406 Attendant leur secours que la saison ameine,
 407 Et faut à supporter nos maux par la raison,
 408 Helas n'en perdons pas l'entiere guarison.
 409 Et quoy, n'estes vous pas la mesme Cleopatre
 410 Dont les yeux immortels sceurent iadis combattre
 411 Tant de cœurs endurcis, & flechirent sous eux
 412 A l'ardeur de leur trait tant d'esprits orgueilleux ?
 413 Ne vous souuient il pas que ceste belle face,
 414 Qui toutes les beautez parfaitement surpasse,
 415 Peut iadis amollir le Martial courroux
 416 D'Antoine iustement irrité contre vous ?
 417 Bien qu'il eust arresté vostre fatale ruine
 418 Aussi tost qu'il eut veu ceste beauté diuine,
 419 Ce beau front, ces cheueux, ces yeux pleins de clarté
 420 Il appaisa son ire, & se tint surmonté,
 421 Se rendit vostre serf, & de puissant & braue,
 422 Espris en vostre amour, il deuint vostre esclau,
 423 Il se rendit à vous, las au lieu d'offenser
 424 Vn visage si beau, son plus heureux penser
 425 Fut de luy obeyr, estimant sa misere,
 426 Incomparable alors qu'il ne pouuoit luy plaire,
 427 Et se iugeant heureux quand vostre œil gratieux
 428 Se plaisoit à le voir rauy dedans ses feux,
 429 Languissant, exploré, triste, & demandant grace
 430 A ceste alme beauté qui domptoit son audace,
 431 Pensez vous ne pouuoir par la mesme beauté
 432 Adoucir de Cesar l'ardante cruauté ?
 433 Le vaincre, le forcer, comme elle peut d'Antoine
 434 Adoucir la fierté & l'audace hautaine ?
 435 Non, non assurez vous de vous rendre aussi doux
 436 Cesar, qu'Antoine fut autrefois enuers vous.

CLEOPATRE

437 *Ah ma fidelle Iras ? quand nostre destinee*
 438 *En l'arrest des grands Dieux se trouue terminee ?*
 439 *Et qu'ils ont arresté nostre sort malheureux,*

440 *C'est horreur qu'esperer aucun remede d'eux ?*
 441 *Nostre foible pouuoir, nostre debile force*
 442 *Leur arrest eternal trop petite ne force :*
 443 *Et ce n'est pas à nous, esclaves de la mort*
 444 *A changer le destin, à destruire le sort.*

IRAS

445 *Les Dieux ne sont autheurs du mal qui nous outrage,*
 446 *C'est nostre seul forfait qui cause ce dommage,*
 447 *Mais quand nous le quittons, implorant leur bonté,*
 448 *Ils nous aydent alors, changeans de volonté.*

CLEOPATRE

449 *Toute chose icy bas par le temps se termine,*
 450 *Et la loy du trespas est vne loy diuine,*
 451 *Bien heureux ceux qui vont ce trespas endurent,*
 452 *Lors qu'ils meurent en vie, & viuent en mourant.*

IRAS

453 *Mais s'il falloit mourir à toutes les disgraces*
 454 *Qui glacent nos esprits, & ternissent nos faces,*
 455 *Faudroit tousiours mourir, & milles vies auoir,*
 456 *Car mille fois le iour le mal nous fait douloir.*

CLEOPATRE

457 *Il ne faut pas mourir à chacune detresse,*
 458 *Mais il le faut alors que l'attente nous laisse*
 459 *D'euiter nostre mal : car las, c'est bien perir,*
 460 *Quand le mal sans la mort, viuant nous fait mourir.*

IRAS

461 *Mais quoy, vous n'estes pas priuee d'esperance*
 462 *De sentir en vos maux quelque douce allegeance,*
 463 *Ceste rare beauté qui vous fut à secours*
 464 *Peut encor de la mort rendre assurez vos iours.*

CLEOPATRE

465 *Iras ceste beauté, dont l'infauste fortune*
 466 *A Antoine fit don, ne sera point commune,*

467 Seul il en iouyra, & si ce n'est icy,
468 Sera dans les enfers affranchis de soucy.

IRAS

469 Mais hélas quel confort à vostre dure peine,
470 Pouuez vous esperer de vostre cher Antoine ?

CLEOPATRE

471 Celuy qui nous prouient du pieux souuenir
472 De ceux que l'amitié à nous voulut vnir.

IRAS

473 Mais Antoine est sans vie, & partant sans puissance
474 D'apporter à vos maux quelque heureuse allegeance ?

CLEOPATRE

475 Ah, ah, c'est mon malheur ? car puis qu'il est
transsi
476 A mes yeux ses vassaux faut que ie meure aussi,
477 Car il estoit ma vie : hélas, ce fut la flame
478 Qui r'allumoit ma force, & rechauffoit mon ame.

IRAS

479 Quel profit aura-il en la fin de vos iours ?

CLEOPATRE

480 De se voir assuré de mes chastes amours !

IRAS

481 N'en a-il sans cela assez d'experience ?

CLEOPATRE

482 Ah, ce n'est pas aymer qu'aymer en la presence !

IRAS

483 La mort ne peut l'amour plus fidelle assurer ?

CLEOPATRE

484 Si fait, puis que le vray ne se peut separer.

IRAS

485 S'il vous ayme, il sera triste en vostre dommage ?

CLEOPATRE

486 La mort pour le trouuer ne me peut faire outrage.

IRAS

487 Mais quoy, se verra-il par vous resusité ?

CLEOPATRE

488 Non, mais ie le verray en toute liberté.

IRAS

489 Vostre mort luy peut-elle estre douce & humaine ?

CLEOPATRE

490 Ouy, puis qu'il sçait bien qu'elle m'oste de peine.

IRAS

491 Mais vos iours periront ?

CLEOPATRE

492 Ah, ce n'est pas perir,
Que par vn petit mal vn grand mal se guarir ?

IRAS

493 Rien de plus doux que l'estre au monde ne demeure ?

CLEOPATRE

494 Ah, qu'est-il plus cruel que mourir à toute heure !

IRAS

495 Mais qui vous fait mourir outre vostre vouloir ?

CLEOPATRE

496 Le desir de me voir sans suiet de douloir.

IRAS

497 Cesar ne vous rend-il certaine de la vie ?

CLEOPATRE

498 Celle qui la donna aux Preux, n'a pas d'enuie
 499 De la tenir d'autrui, c'est affaire au vaincu,
 500 Qui à tousiours en peur de la Parque vescu.

IRAS

501 Ne faut-il prendre en gré le mal qui nous arriue ?

CLEOPATRE

502 C'est mourir, non souffrir que viuoter captiue.

IRAS

503 Pouuons nous resister au ciel iuste vengeur ?

CLEOPATRE

504 Ouy en nous tuant, pour tuer sa rigueur.

IRAS

505 Mais tousiours le meschef sur nostre chef retourne.

CLEOPATRE

506 Ce meschef si petit vn plus grand en destourne.

IRAS

507 Quel profit aurez vous en vostre palle fin ?

CLEOPATRE

508 De voir mourir mon mal, & transsir mon destin.

IRAS

509 Sont les desesperez qui recherchent la Parque ?

CLEOPATRE

510 C'est le cœur genereux que la fortune attaque,
 511 Et qui ne veut flechir dessous sa cruauté,
 512 Aymant trop mieux mourir que d'estre surmonté,
 513 I'en veux vser ainsi, & bien que le desastre
 514 Ait consommé mon heur, la triste Cleopatre
 515 Ne seruira pourtant au tyran, qui vainqueur

516 A vaincu par le sort, & non par la valleur.

IRAS

517 Ne parlez pas ainsi d'un Empereur si sage.

CLEOPATRE

518 Celuy n'est Empereur qui ne l'est de courage.

IRAS

519 Mais Cesar l'est pourtant ?

CLEOPATRE

Par le bienfait du sort.

IRAS

520 En luy gist nostre vie, en luy gist nostre mort ?

CLEOPATRE

521 Non fait puis que ce bras encor libre me reste.

IRAS

522 Mais il ne cherche pas vostre mortelle perte ?

CLEOPATRE

523 En rauissant Antoine, ah ! il m'a tout rauy.

IRAS

524 Mais Antoine luy mesme à ce mal poursuiuy ?

CLEOPATRE

525 Ouy, pour ne pouuoir demeurer en seruage.

IRAS

526 Mais Octaue [n]'est¹⁰ pas autheur de son dommage ?

10 “[n]’est” : copy-text has inverted “n”.

CLEOPATRE

527 Ha, non c'est Cleopatre, & pour le reparer
 528 Il faut qu'elle meure Iras, & qu'elle aille honorer
 529 Son Antoine és enfers, puis que priez d'haleine
 530 Nous sommes trespassez pour tuer nostre peine.

IRAS

531 Attendez que Cesar console votre ennuy ?

CLEOPATRE

532 Qui peut assez de luy n'a que faire d'autruy.

IRAS

533 Mais il veut vous ayder.

CLEOPATRE

Cleopatre est trop digne

534 Pour prier, requerir l'auteur de sa ruine,
 535 Et pour tenir en don ses miserables iours
 536 De celuy qui faucha ses fidelles amours,
 537 Non, non Antoine non, ie ne crains que mon ame
 538 Viuante auprès de toy reçoïue quelque blàme
 539 Pour auoir honoré l'ennemy de ton iour,
 540 Qui separa noz cœurs assemblez par l'amour,
 541 Elle mourra plustost, & pour te suyure, Antoine,
 542 La mort luy sera douce, & propice sa peine.

CHŒVR

543 Qu'il prouient de misere
 544 D'une folle amitié
 545 Car mesme on n'a pitié
 546 De sa douleur austere.
 547 Qu'une volupté vaine
 548 Engendre de douleurs,
 549 Car de mille malheurs
 550 Ce plaisir s'accompagne.
 551 Ah, que chere est la ioye
 552 Qui de l'amour prouient,
 553 Car par luy lon deuient

554 De la douleur la proye.
 555 O bienheureuse l'ame
 556 Qui n'a senty ce mal,
 557 Faut estre desloyal,
 558 Ou mourir en sa flamme.
 559 Tu le sçais, Cleopatre,
 560 Qui meurs cruellement,
 561 Apres que largement
 562 Chacun a veu t'esbatre.
 563 Apres que bienheureuse
 564 On a veu ta beauté
 565 Raur la liberté
 566 De mainte ame amoureuse.
 567 Mais ores miserable,
 568 Apres tant de beaux iours
 569 Faut que tu ays recours
 570 A la mort implacable.
 571 Plustost meurs genereuse
 572 Qu'estre serue du sort,
 573 Car plus douce est la mort
 574 Qu'une vie angoisseuse.

Acte second

Octave Cesar, Aree Philo[so]phe¹¹, Dolabelle

CESAR

575 A Vous grands immortels, que iustement l'on nomme
 576 D'une commune voix tutelaire de Rome,
 577 Grands Dieux auteurs des loix, qui d'un ordre parfaict
 578 Honorez la vertu, punissez le forfait.
 579 Et qui iustes rendez l'heureuse recompence

11 "Philo[so]phe": copy-text "Philophe".

580 A celuy qui le droict esgalement ballance,
 581 Qui punissez loyaux, sous l'effort de vos mains
 582 Luisantes d'equité, les crimes des humains,
 583 Cest à vous ô grands Dieux à qui ie rend la gloire
 584 De ces heureux combats, de ceste ample victoire,
 585 Que sous vostre faueur, sous vostre ayde parfait,
 586 On ma veu remporter sur l'ennemy defaict,
 587 *Car nous ne sommes rien creatures contrainctes*
 588 *Sinon en tant qu'il plaist à vos deitez saintes,*
 589 *Trauailler en nos mains, labourer en nos bras,*
 590 *Agir en nous, pendant que viuant icy bas,*
 591 *Autheurs de tous nos faicts capables de memoire,*
 592 *L'honneur en est à vous, à vous en est la gloire,*
 593 *Puis qu'autheurs de ces biens, vos equitables mains*
 594 *Par vn iuste deuoir les donnent aux humains,*
 595 *Comme l'alme Soleil d'une grace ordinaire*
 596 *Mere de nos saisons, nous donne sa lumiere,*
 597 *Eschauffe nos esprits, & faict croistre en nos corps*
 598 *Les membres enchesnez de mutuels accords,*
 599 *Meurist ces iaunes fruicts que la mere Poumonne*
 600 *D'une prodigue main prodiguement nous donne :*
 601 *Bref nous faict respirer iuqu' au bord du tombeau,*
 602 *Riches du sentiment, aux rais de son flambeau.*
 603 Ainsi grands Dieux ainsi vos graces secourables
 604 Nous rendent bien souuent heureux de miserables,
 605 Corrigent nostre sort, & changent ce destein
 606 Qui d'un cruel courroux coniueroit nostre fin,
 607 Ces biens viennent de vous, dont nostre ame fidelle
 608 Se repaist icy bas d'une haleine immortelle,
 609 Vous en estes autheurs, nos desirs du peché
 610 Ou nostre ame se tient quelque fois attaché,
 611 Ie l'esprouue à ce coup, ô grands Dieux que nos peres
 612 Ont appellez benins, ont nommé tutelaires
 613 De leurs antiques droicts, & de ce vif pouuoir
 614 Qui puissant par sur tous aux mortels s'est fait voir,
 615 Car sous vostre bonté mille fois esprouuée,
 616 Rome se voit de mal heureuse conseruée,
 617 Et sa gloire reluist comme vn iour radieux
 618 Venerable aux humains, dessus le front des Cieux,

619 Plantant la pasle craincte, & les peurs inhumaines,
 620 A glassons refroidis ez ames plus hautaines,
 621 Ez cœurs plus reculez de ces superbes tours,
 622 Qui des Dieux ont senty propice le secours,
 623 Aussi dessous le nom de la guerriere Rome,
 624 Qu'entre les braues noms la proüesse renomme
 625 Tremble tout l'vniuers, Rome ne peut perir
 626 Conseruee des Dieux : prompts à la secourir,
 627 Pour renuerser son los, & la force guerriere
 628 Trop foibles sont les bras d'un barbare aduersaire,
 629 Trop debile son fer, ainsi tous les humains
 630 Courbent le col vaincu sous le ioug des Romains,
 631 Et le diuin Phœbus en sa cource immortelle,
 632 Voit par tout rayonner sa loüange eternelle,
 633 Voit son los esclairer aux peuples plus peruers,
 634 Qui habitent les bords de ce large vniuers,
 635 Les voit trembler de peur sous ce nom venerable
 636 Aux puissans immortels, aux mortels redoutable,
 637 Pour enseuelir Rome, & pour changer son sort
 638 Rien n'est donc suffisant, rien n'est donc assez fort,
 639 Car par elle vaincus les heros de la terre,
 640 N'osent plus s'esleuer pour luy faire la guerre,
 641 N'osent armer leurs mains, & des cruel combats
 642 Attendre les hazards, pour vuidier leurs debats,
 643 Vn chacun obeist, comme baissent la teste
 644 Les pasteurs estonnez sous la rouge tempeste,
 645 Dont l'esclat & le feu persant d'estonnement
 646 A sacquets¹² furieux leur foible sentiment,
 647 Ils n'osent vers le Ciel leuer la face pasle,
 648 Craignants que sus leur chef cest orage deualle,
 649 Ils tremblent esperdus, & à chacun effort
 650 Qu'ils entendent gronder, ils pensent voir la mort
 651 Le sang glace en leurs nerfs, & halletante l'ame
 652 Tremble au milieu du bruiet de l'esclair de la flamme,
 653 Et poureux comme ils sont à l'entour des cousteaux
 654 Ils regardent trembler les craintifs animaux,

12 "sacquets": the word is rare but attested; see the translation, n. 50.

655 Qui redoutent la mort, & lasche de courage
 656 Fremissent sous le bruit de ce grondant orage,
 657 Ainsi tous les mortels fremissent sous le nom
 658 De Rome consacré au mary de Iunon,
 659 De Rome à Iupiter defenseur dediee,
 660 Gardee de Pallas, des Muses allyee,
 661 Tout l'vniuers la crainct par son fer combattu,
 662 L'ayme pour sa bonté, l'honore en sa vertu,
 663 Sa race seulement, qui d'vne ardante cure
 664 La pauureté esleue, son mal'heur luy procure,
 665 Sont ses propres enfans de son laict alaictez,
 666 Qui remplissent son sein d'horribles cruautez,
 667 Qui raualent sa ioye, indignes de memoire,
 668 Veulent avec leur crime enseuelir sa gloire,
 669 Ingrats, mutins, cruels, qui d'un cœur deloyal
 670 Apres le bien receu, rendent l'iniuste mal,
 671 *Plus digne de la mort est l'ingrat miserable*
 672 *Que celuy qui cruel esgorge son semblable,*
 673 *Car l'un apres le bien outrage son amy,*
 674 *Et l'autre seulement deffaict son ennemy,*
 675 *L'un le public, les loix, cruellement outrage,*
 676 *Et l'autre seulement à vn seul faict dommage.*
 677 Ainsi dignes de mort, & indignes des Cieux
 678 Sont ces enfans ingrats, aduersaires des Dieux,
 679 O Rome tu le sçais dont la guerriere face,
 680 N'a veu pour l'outrager courant de place en place
 681 Le barbare ennemy, & qui n'a veu sa main
 682 Tremblante sous son nom, trempee au sang Romain,
 683 Mais celle de ses fils, ces enfans de vipere,
 684 Qui ont voulu creuer leur pitoyable mere,
 685 Ainsi le fist Silla l'horreur des anciens,
 686 Et celuy qu'il deffist ez champs Pharsaliens
 687 Le saint heureux Cesar, dont l'ame ambitieuse
 688 Ardante eust rendu Rome à jamais mal'heureuse,
 689 Si mon pere eust esté autant vif en rigueur
 690 Comme il voulut paroistre excellent en douceur,
 691 Brute, Cassie apres, & ces autres rebelles
 692 Ingrats enuers Cesar, à leur pays infidelles,
 693 Cruels, audacieux, ennemis de la foy,

694 Qui faisoient du forfait vne immortelle loy,
 695 Mutins, que par la main des grands Dieux equitables,
 696 Ie deffis, ie vainquis, & rendis miserables,
 697 Les forçant se tuer à leur sang inhumains,
 698 Et du fer dont Cesar fut tué par leurs mains.
 699 Apres eux vint Antoine, Antoine de qui l'ame
 700 Deuoit se reposer dans le corps d'une femme,
 701 Pour n'aymer que le vice, & ces infames yeux
 702 Que Venus nous apprint auant qu'aller aux Cieux,
 703 Antoine que les Dieux vengeurs des malefices,
 704 Ont noyé dans la mer de ces douces delices,
 705 Perdu dans ses forfaits, & dans les salles bras
 706 D'une infame putain, fait sentir le trespas.
 707 Luy qui quitta ma sœur, son espouse fidelle,
 708 Vertueuse, constante, & dessus toutes belle,
 709 Pour aymer Cleopatre, vne femme sans foy,
 710 Qui de perdre l'honneur fist sa commune loy,
 711 Vne femme au peché de tous temps adonnee,
 712 Et qui s'estoit auant à mon pere donnee,
 713 Puis à Pompee le grand, d'ont l'infidelle cœur
 714 De tromper les mortels tenoit à grand honneur,
 715 Et s'armant contre moy, ennemy de iustice,
 716 Pour rendre par ma mort plus asseuré son vice,
 717 Mais les Dieux l'ont puny forçant cest inhumain
 718 De se tuer luy mesme, & de sa propre main,
 719 Et rendant ceste main, plaine riche de gloire,
 720 Qu'elle à cueilly au camp de sa riche victoire.
 721 *Quoy qu'attende le crime, & bien que sans trespas*
 722 *Il demeure long temps en credit icy bas,*
 723 Il est en fin puny, car les Dieux venerables
 724 Ne pourroyent estre Dieux, s'ils n'estoyent equitables,
 725 S'ils ne vengeoyent le crime, & d'un contraire sort
 726 S'ils n'aymoient le bienfait, & punissoyent le tort,
 727 Mais ore qu'au tombeau gist le periure Antoine,
 728 Avec l'infauste amour qui tousiours l'accompag[n]e,¹³
 729 Que doy-ie faire Aree ? & quoy ne doy ie pas

13 "l'accompag[n]e": copy-text has "u" for "n" (inverted letter).

730 Faire esprouuer le feu, le fer, & le trespas
 731 A ce peuple ennemy, qui violant sa foy,
 732 Pour defendre vn tyran s'est armé contre moy ?
 733 Pour supporter Antoine en ces infames vices,
 734 Et pour entretenir le cours de ses delices ?
 735 Dy moy qu'en doy-ie faire ? Aree l'estime tu
 736 Digne de s'esiouir aux rais de ma vertu ?
 737 Au feu de ma clemence ? & ne doit Cleopatre
 738 Coulpable de son mal, sentir mesme desastre ?
 739 *Or sus conseille moy. Car parmi les hazards*
 740 *Minerue radouclist l'aspre fureur de Mars.*

AREE

741 *La loy qui d'un arrest aux grands Dieux equitable,*
 742 *Faict mourir seulement par le fer le coupable,*
 743 *Qui punist le forfait, & qui n'endure point*
 744 *Que sous le fais du mal, le bon droit soit esteint,*
 745 *Par vn mesme deuoir, d'une mesme puissance,*
 746 *L'Innocent de tout mal heureusement dispence :*
 747 *Car ce n'est pas raison que celuy qui n'a pas*
 748 *Offencé la iustice, endure le trespas,*
 749 *Comme son ennemy, & c'est mesme inustice*
 750 *D'affliger l'innocent, que pardonner au vice :*
 751 Car la loy qui promet la peine aux vicieux,
 752 Promet aussi loyer aux amis vertueux.
 753 Il ne faut que le iuste avecques le coupable
 754 Pour n'auoir point peché, soit rendu miserable.
 755 *Les Roys plus sainctement regnent par l'equité,*
 756 *Que par le vif pouuoir, pere de cruauté :*
 757 *Car la force peut bien du fort estre forcee,*
 758 *Mais iamais l'equité ne peut estre blessee.*
 759 *Les Empires qui ont pour heureux fondement*
 760 *La diuine equité, durent heureusement :*
 761 *Car au temps, à la mort, à la rage du vice*
 762 *Ne peut estre subiect ce diuin edifice :*
 763 *Mais les regnes bastis sur l'iniuste pouuoir,*
 764 *Par la force forcez bien souuent se font voir :*
 765 *Car la force n'est pas en son cours perdurable,*
 766 *Comme immortelle on voit la iustice honorable.*

767 *Le temps use la force, & les palais plus grands,*
 768 *Les temples, les rochers, sont usez par le temps :*
 769 *Mais iamais la Iustice, en naissant immortelle,*
 770 *Comme les corps mortels ne trespasse mortelle.*
 771 *Faut donc que les grands Roys l'honorent saintement,*
 772 *Puisqu'elle n'est subiecte au mortel changement,*
 773 *Et qu'ils regnent par elle, apportant vne gloire*
 774 *Plus celebre à leurs faits que mainte ample victoire,*
 775 *Que maint honneur mortel qu'au milieu des hazars*
 776 *On leur a veu gagné sous la faueur de Mars :*
 777 *Car le bien qu'on reçoit de Fortune infidelle*
 778 *Nous est le plus souuent osté, rauy par elle,*
 779 *Et le bienfaict du sort est par le mesme sort*
 780 *Au milieu du peril, bien souuent mis à mort.*
 781 *D'auoir puny ceux-là qui d'un felon courage*
 782 *Firent mourir Cesar en l'arde[u]r¹⁴ de leur rage,*
 783 *D'auoir vengé son sang en respendant le leur,*
 784 *Et procuré par tout leur infauste malheur,*
 785 *D'auoir puny Antoine, & destruiect sa malice,*
 786 *Sont œuures d'equité, sont actes de iustice :*
 787 *Car leurs crimes auoyent ce meschef merité,*
 788 *Comme iuste vengeur de leur impieté.*
 789 *Mais d'accabler vn peuple, vn peuple miserable*
 790 *Par la force forcé de se rendre semblable*
 791 *De consentir au mal de ceux dont le pouuoir*
 792 *Se faisoit à leurs yeux espouuantable voir.*
 793 *C'est outrager la loy, c'est faire violence*
 794 *A la sainte Iustice, à la douce clemence :*
 795 *Car pourquoy perira celuy qui a esté*
 796 *Par la force forcé, non par sa volonté !*
 797 *De faire quelque mal, l'auteur seul est coupable,*
 798 *Car on ne peut forcer le pouuoir redoutable.*
 799 *Ce peuple que tu veux d'un soudain iugement*
 800 *Ennemy de raison perdre cruellement,*
 801 *Arma-il contre toy le miserable Antoine ?*
 802 *Alluma-il en luy ceste rage inhumaine,*

14 "l'arde[u]r": inverted "u" in copy-text.

803 Qui luy fist mespriser la diuine equité,
 804 Quand il voulut s'armer contre ta majesté ?
 805 Non, non, Octaue non, mais de tout son desastre
 806 Antoine est seul auteur, & cause Cleopatre,
 807 Ces deux ont offencé, & ces deux seulement
 808 Doiuent sentir l'ardeur d'un cruel iugement.
 809 Antoine est desia mort, & son ame infidelle
 810 Souffre dans les Enfers mainte peine cruelle,
 811 Les grands Dieux l'ont puny, & ta masle valeur,
 812 L'a forcé d'apporter contre luy ce malheur,
 813 Vengé de celuy-là, il ne reste à ceste heure
 814 Que Cleopatre viue, & que [lasse]¹⁵ demeure
 815 Es sepulchres murez, superbes, anciens,
 816 Ornez de cent trophes des Roys Egyptiens,
 817 Si dans ton ame encor heureusement parfaicte
 818 Quelque cruel desir de te venger il reste :
 819 Venge toy dessus elle, elle qui jadis fut
 820 Cause de tout le mal, & qui folle deceut
 821 Le malheureux Antoine, arrachant de son ame
 822 Le legitime amour de sa pudique femme,
 823 En l'armant contre toy, jalouse de se voir
 824 Dans Rome commander, & to[y]¹⁶ veuf de pouuoir.
 825 Punis-la si tu veux : mais, Octaue, fais grace
 826 A ce peuple innocent qui fremist sous ta face,
 827 Qui demande mercy, qui veuf de liberté,
 828 A par force peché, & non de volonté,
 829 Pardonne luy, Cesar, si ton ame diuine
 830 Prist quelque fois plaisir en la douce doctrine
 831 Que ma voix souspira aux rais de ton pouuoir,
 832 Cesar ie te supply par le mesme sçauoir,
 833 Et par ceste amitié que tu me porte ardante
 834 Que ce peuple l'ardeur de ton courroux ne sente,
 835 Qu'Areë en te seruant d'un franc fidelle cœur,
 836 Destourne loing de luy cest infauste malheur,
 837 Fais moy ce bien, Cesar, afin qu'Arrenus¹⁷ die

15 “[lasse]”: copy-text “laissé” ; “lassee” would presumably also be possible. Cf. below, II.981.

16 “to[y]”: copy-text “ton”.

17 “Arrenus”: seemingly an erroneous printing of the Latin “Areius” (used here *metri causa?*).

838 Qu'il a sauué de mort sa dolente patrie,
 839 Aux rais de ton pouuoir, qui peux luy pardonner,
 840 Ou d'vn fier ennemy cruel l'exterminer.

CESAR

841 Aree ie le veux, & afin que tu pense
 842 Qu'à ton diuin sçauoir ie porte reuerence,
 843 Ie veux en son honneur, & pour l'amour de toy
 844 Pardonner à ce peuple esleué contre moy,
 845 Bien qu'il eust merité pour expier son vice,
 846 Ennemy de raison, vn rigoureux supplice :
 847 Ie luy pardonne donc, ta natalle cité
 848 Sera pour ton respect libre de cruauté :
 849 Mais dy moi que ie doy faire de Cleopatre ?

AREE

850 Souuienne toy, Cesar, qu'il t'a faillu combatre
 851 Contre tant d'ennemis que son ame sans foy
 852 Par mille attraits arma n'agueres contre toy,
 853 *L'ame qui sert au mal inhumaine addonnee,*
 854 *Ne peut estre du mal par le temps destournee,*
 855 *Et celuy qui meffaict contre les saintes loix*
 856 *Pourra bien offencer encores vne fois,*
 857 *Si sans punir son vice on luy permet de viure :*
 858 *Car la licence au mal du peché nous enyure :*
 859 Ton Pere l'esprouua, dont la sainte bonté
 860 Ne sceut de ces peruers mollir la cruauté,
 861 Qui le firent mourir, bruslez d'ardante enuie,
 862 Bien qu'ils fussent par luy iouyssans de la vie.
 863 *Celuy qui veut regner en toute seureté,*
 864 *Doit vnir la Iustice avecque l'humanité,*
 865 *Seuere à l'ennemy, & de peur que sa rage*
 866 *Ardante en son malheur ne luy porte dommage,*
 867 *Le priuant de la vie, estouffant le malheur,*
 868 *Qui produit bien souuent vne ardante fureur,*
 869 *Lors que desesperes aux despens de sa vie,*
 870 *Et les esprits saisis d'une rage ennemie,*
 871 *L'on se venge de ceux par l'ayde de la mort,*
 872 *De qui l'on pense auoir receu quelque grand tort.*

873 Si ton pere eust tué Brutte, Casca, Cassye,
 874 Encore parmi nous il regneroit en vie :
 875 Mais ayant pardonné à ces loups inhumains,
 876 Il mourut, massacré par leurs cruelles mains :
 877 Garde qu'en pardonnant vn mesme mal t'arriue,
 878 Que la fin de Cesar la tienne prompte suyue.
 879 *Sages nous devons estre aux despens de l'autruy,*
 880 *Car apres son meschef l'on ne plore celuy*
 881 *Qui pour n'a[u]oir¹⁸ fuy la commune disgrace,*
 882 *A senty le malheur dont il craignait la face.*
 883 Sois donc sage, Cesar, & ne nourris point ceux
 884 Qui peuuent de puissant te rendre malheureux :
 885 Car mauuaise des grands est la nombreuse bande
 886 *Quand vn seul iustement par les Dieux leur commande.*
 887 *Tu sçais ce que permet la iuste loy de Mars¹⁹*
 888 A celuy qui vainqueur retourne des hazards,
 889 Et comme il faut punir l'ennemy temeraire,
 890 De qui le trespas est le supplice ordinaire,
 891 Afin que celuy meure en toute aspre rigueur
 892 Qui nous voulut priuer des iours & de l'honneur.

CESAR

893 Mais tuer vne femme est chose diffamable ?

AREE

894 Non est lors qu'elle vit à nos iours dommageable.

CESAR

895 Mais n'est-ce deshonneur que ce sexe outrager ?

AREE

896 Le deshonneur est doux quand on peut se venger.

CESAR

897 Il faut qu'vn braue cœur soit muny de clemence.

18 "n'a[u]oir": inverted "u" in copy-text.

19 The typographic indication of aphoristic status evidently belonging to ll. 885-86 is misplaced in the copy-text to ll. 886-87.

- 898 AREE
Tuer son ennemy c'est acte de prudence ?
- 899 CESAR
Ouy celuy qui peut viuant nous atterer.
- 900 AREE
Qui peut d'un ennemy rien de bon esperer ?
- 901 CESAR
La clemence souuent brise son fier courage.
- 902 AREE
Mais la douleur au mal l'asseure dauantage ?
- 903 CESAR
Le tigre s'addoucit de l'homme caressé.
- 904 AREE
Il n'est rien si cruel qu'un courage offensé.
- 905 CESAR
Mais que peut contre moy entreprendre vne femme ?
- 906 AREE
Se venger du despit qui luy consume l'ame.
- 907 CESAR
Cleopatre ne peut.
- 908 AREE
Son langage pipeur
Sceut bien du grand Cesar mollir le braue cœur.
- 909 CESAR
Ie n'ay pas peur de me prendre aux accents de sa bouche.
- 910 AREE
La beauté r'adoucit l'ame la plus farouche.

CESAR

911 Puisqu'elle est belle ainsi, ne seroit cruauté
912 Que de faire mourir vne telle beauté ?

AREE

913 La beauté sans l'honneur est digne de supplice.

CESAR

914 Il faut que la pitié deuance la iustice.

AREE

915 Ouy vers ceux qui n'ont inhumain le vouloir.

CESAR

916 C'est assez la punir que la laisser douloir.

AREE

917 Mais en se lamentant quelque iniure elle trame.

CESAR

918 Plus grande est la douleur qui tourmente son ame,
919 Que celle que la mort luy pourroit apporter :
920 Car c'est la mesme mort qu'on luy voit regretter,
921 C'est son plus grand desir que mourant en sa peine
922 Se voir enseuelir avecques son Antoine.

AREE

923 Vne femme n'a pas le courage si franc.

DOLABELLE

924 Aree tu te trompes, & Cleopatre rend
925 Mille vœux à la mort, pour la rendre ennuyeuse
926 De couper le fillet de sa vie langoureuse,
927 Son sexe feminin ne luy desrobe pas
928 Le courage hardy au mespris du trespas,
929 Son esprit est royal, & bien qu'elle soit femme
930 D'un homme valeureux braue elle porte l'ame.
931 *Il n'est pas deffendu à l'esprit reuestu*
932 *De membres feminins de loger la vertu.*

933 *Et la femme se rend de los aussi capable*
 934 *Que le plus grand heraut aux heraux venerables.*
 935 Car elle a mesme esprit & mesme cœur que nous,
 936 Comme nous de l'honneur prodigument ialoux.
 937 He ! combien a l'on veu de genereuses dames
 938 Loger plus de vertu dans leurs pudiques ames
 939 Que les hommes souuent atteints de cruauté,
 940 Et qui cherchent honneur en leur impieté ?
 941 Lucesse de son sang iadis laua de blasme
 942 Venerables aux Dieux & ses iours, & son ame :
 943 La vertu ne fut point languissante en son cœur,
 944 Le courage failly, & morte la vigueur.
 945 Car braue elle mourut par sa main venerable,
 946 Rendant par son trespas sa vertu perdurable.
 947 Porcie fit ainsi, pour esteindre en mourant
 948 La cruelle douleur qu'elle alloit souspirant,
 949 N'eut crainit d'estouffer sa genereuse haleine,
 950 Pour contenter son ame entre toutes hautaine :
 951 Car l'on ne pense pas en se tuant mourir,
 952 Quand on meurt seulement pour son mal secourir,
 953 Pour guarir sa douleur, & rendre tesmoignage
 954 A l'age suruiuant d'vn valeureux courage.
 955 Non, non l'on ne sçauroit punir plus fierement
 956 Cleopatre mourante és lyens du tourment,
 957 Du mal, de la douleur, que la laisser viuante,
 958 Car plus que le trespas le regret la tourmente.
 959 Antoine qu'elle aymoît par la mort emporté,
 960 Son corps du sang royal priué de liberté,
 961 Esclau d'vn vainqueur, dont la folle arrogance
 962 A cent fois irrité la guerriere puissance,
 963 Son royaume rauy en proye d'vn vainqueur,
 964 Et ses enfans tuez au fort de son malheur,
 965 Ne sont-ce mille morts, dont la moindre est plus dure
 966 Que celle de la mort que la pauuette endure.
 967 Non, non, laissons la viure, & ses iours luy seront
 968 Autant de vifs bourreaux qui ses faits puniront :
 969 Seront les ennemis du reste de sa ioye,
 970 Qu'ils ont partie en eux comme commune proye,
 971 Comme on voit partager en la froide saison

972 Aux chasseurs alterez la rouge venaison,
 973 Quand le sanglier happé dans les toilles superbes
 974 Est escorché, couppé sur les sanglantes herbes,
 975 Que la nappe lon voit entremeslee de sang,
 976 En vn coin escarté, estendue en son rang.
 977 Lors chacun eschauffé d'aise qui le transporte,
 978 Glorieux de sa prise, vn lopin en emporte :
 979 Ainsi le mal, la peine, & le regret cuisant
 980 Ont voulu deschirer le repos languissant
 981 De ceste pauure Royne, & lasse en sa misere
 982 Elle cherche la mort pour ayde tutelaire :
 983 Laisse la viure ainsi, Cesar, ne porte point
 984 Enuie à son malheur, qui desia tient esteint
 985 Son ame en ses douleurs, & permets qu'elle passe
 986 Le reste de ses iours sans la changer de place :
 987 Sans la trainer à Rome, & sans en triompher,
 988 Car sa presence peut peu ton char estoffer.
 989 C'est vne femme morte : on reçoit plustost blasme
 990 Qu'honneur d'auoir vaincu vne chetiue femme :
 991 Laisse luy donc passer le reste de ses ans
 992 En son pays natal avecques ses enfans :
 993 Laisse luy son Royaume, & fay comme ton pere,
 994 Qui fut moins courageux que doux & debonnaire,
 995 Bien qu'il ait surmonté vn million de mortels,
 996 Car sa bonté le met au rang des immortels.

CESAR

997 Que Cleopatre soit par le fer outragée,
 998 Comme meurt l'ennemy en bataille rangée,
 999 Quelle sente la mort, le fer, la cruauté,
 1000 Ainsi qu'un ennemy par le sort surmonté,
 1001 C'est estre trop cruel, car la femme est exempte
 1002 De la rage de Mars, & de mort violente :
 1003 Mais de luy pardon[n]er²⁰ apres tant de forfaits,
 1004 Et ne vanger le sang de tant de preux deffaits
 1005 Par sa meschanceté, & mesme d'auantage

20 "pardon[n]er": inverted "n" in copy-text.

1006 Luy laisser florissant son premier heritage,
 1007 C'est faire tort aux loix, c'est briser l'equité,
 1008 Qui n'endurent viuante vne méschanceté.
 1009 Ie ne veux pas, bening, que Cleopatre meure,
 1010 Et, iuste, ie ne veux qu'heureuse elle demeure
 1011 Apres auoir forfait, & rendus ennemis
 1012 Par sa desloyauté, deux si parfaits amis,
 1013 Comme Antoine & Cesar, mais ie veux que captiue,
 1014 Soubs la loy des combats à iamais elle viue,
 1015 Qu'elle honore mon char, lors que victorieux
 1016 Dans Rome on me verra rendre graces aux Dieux :
 1017 Voyla comme ie veux que Cleopatre reste,
 1018 Digne du trespasser au penser de sa pe[s]te²¹.

DOLABELLE

1019 Mais en faisant ainsi, peu sera ton secours,
 1020 O genereux Cesar, fauorable à ses iours :
 1021 Car c'est peu receuoir d'un vainqueur d'auantage
 1022 Que se voir à iamais consommer en seruage.
 1023 *Ce n'est point adoucir la cruauté de Mars,*
 1024 *Car plus douce est la mort au milieu des hazards,*
 1025 *Plus heureux le trespas qu'une plus longue vie,*
 1026 *Esclaue du malheur, au seruage asseruie.*
 1027 Mais si tu veux autant humain te faire voir
 1028 Que puissant en valeur, & hautain en pouuoir,
 1029 Pardonne à ceste Royne, & ta douceur ne souille,
 1030 Apres auoir vaincu, de si pauvre despouille.

CESAR

1031 *Ce n'est estre cruel que d'vser à propos*
 1032 *Des moyens que le ciel donne à nostre repos,*
 1033 *Ce n'est estre inhumain que iouyr de la gloire*
 1034 *Que le ciel iuste à fait prix de nostre victoire.*

DOLABELLE

1035 *Mais c'est estre cruel que ne pardonner point*

21 "pe[s]te": copy-text "perte"; the rhyme confirms the error.

1036 *A ceux là que le sort cruellement contraint,*
 1037 *Et vainqueur ne vouloir aux raiz de la clemence*
 1038 *Adoucir des combats l'outrageuse licence.*

CESAR

1039 Mais n'est-ce pas assez que sauuer de la mort
 1040 Son ennemy vaincu, & coupable du tort ?

DOLABELLE

1041 C'est vn demy pardon, mais la gloire est plus grande
 1042 De pardonner du tout, quand pardon il demande.

CESAR

1043 Il faut en pardonnant pour se monstrier trop doux,
 1044 Ne rendre vn chacun prompt à s'armer contre nous.
 1045 *Car la trop grand bonté engendre la licence,*
 1046 *Ainsi que l'equité enseuelit l'offense.*

DOLABELLE

1047 Mais Cleopatre est femme, & pauure de pouuoir.

CESAR

1048 Ce que par force on n'a, par dol se peut auoir.

DOLABELLE

1049 Hé que peut contre toy vne femme imbecille ?

CESAR

1050 De r'allumer encor quelque guerre ciuile.

DOLABELLE

1051 Anthoine ne vit plus.

CESAR

1052 Elle en peut animer
 Vn autre plus cruel, & contre nous l'armer.

DOLABELLE

1053 Qui croira maintenant en son triste langage ?

CESAR

1054 Quelqu'un que la beauté aura mis en seruage.

DOLABELLE

1055 Ah ! ce n'est plus cest œil si luysant de clarté.

CESAR

1056 La femme peut tousiours reparer sa beauté.

DOLABELLE

1057 La cruelle douleur à la sienne rauie.

CESAR

1058 Quelque nouveau plaisir la peut remettre en vie.

DOLABELLE

1059 Quel plaisir aura ell' son Antoine estant mort ?

CESAR

1060 La femme à tous coups change & d'amour & de sort.

DOLABELLE

1061 Mais que peut le desir que le malheur offense ?

CESAR

1062 Vn esprit cauteleux ne manque de puissance.

DOLABELLE

1063 Cleopatre ne veut qu'acheuer en [repos]²²

1064 Le reste de ses iours.

CESAR

1065 Sont les communs propos
D'une ame surmontee, qui couue la malice.

22 “[repos]”: copy-text “repso.”

DOLABELLE

1066 Mais qui t'empêchera de châtier son vice ?

CESAR

1067 Je ne veux ce remède à mon dam esprouer.

DOLABELLE

1068 Ton père voulut bien mille ennemis sauver.

CESAR

1069 Pour les avoir sauvés il mourut misérable.

DOLABELLE

1070 Mais les Dieux ont vengé ce crime épouvantable.

CESAR

1071 Pendant César est mort.

DOLABELLE

1072 Vne femme ne fait
Ce que peut faire vn grand, puissant en son forfait.

CESAR

1073 Pour régner il ne faut souffrir aucun contraire.

DOLABELLE

1074 Mais pour régner il faut se montrer debonnaire.

CESAR

1075 Aux iustes il le faut, mais non à l'ennemy.

DOLABELLE

1076 On ne fait ce faisant que le deuoir d'amy :
1077 *Mais de faire pardon à ceux dont l'arrogance*
1078 *A voulu s'esleuer contre notre puissance,*
1079 Qui nous ont offensez, c'est gagner maint honneur,
1080 Car c'est vaincre soy-mesme, & forcer sa fureur.

CESAR

1081 Qu'on ne m'en parle plus, car ie veux que captiue
 1082 Soubs l'Empire Romain Cleopatre soit viue :
 1083 Ie veux que prisonniere elle suyue en tous lieux
 1084 Le char qui doit porter Cesar victorieux,
 1085 Et qu'elle entre dans Rome, esclau & prisonniere,
 1086 Pour punir iustement son orgueil temeraire :
 1087 Et pour la reseruer à ce iour glorieux,
 1088 Ie veux auoir soucy de ses ans malheureux,
 1089 Ie ne veux qu'elle meure, à fin que ma victoire
 1090 Paroisse plus hautaine au declin de sa gloire.
 1091 Voila ma volonté.

AREE

Rendent tousiours les Dieux
 1092 Au milieu des combats Cesar victorieux.

CHŒVR

1093 Le peine suyt tousiours
 1094 D'un perdurable cours
 1095 Le trop hautaine offense :
 1096 Et tousiours le pecheur
 1097 Sent le mal dont la peur
 1098 E[n]²³ l'attendant, l'offense.

1099 Les Dieux iustes nommez
 1100 Ne sont ils renommez
 1101 Autheurs de la iustice ?
 1102 C'est suyure l'équité,
 1103 Lors que leur deité
 1104 Va punissant le vice.

1105 C'est erreur que penser
 1106 La iustice offenser,
 1107 Et la vertu diuine :
 1108 Sans penser que les cieux

23 "E[n]": copy-text "Et" – an easy error which renders the text unintelligible.

1109 Ne consentent pieux
1110 Nostre fatale ruine.

1111 Bien que leur iuste main,
1112 Que leur foudre inhumain,
1113 Pour vn temps se differe,
1114 Il nous trouue, pourtant,
1115 Et le pecheur n'attend
1116 Icy bas que misere.

1117 Cleopatre le sent,
1118 Dont le pleur languissant
1119 Est à tous pitoyable :
1120 Et bien qu'elle ait esté
1121 Regnante en maiesté,
1122 On la voit miserable.

Acte troisesme

Cleopatre, Carmion, Iras

CLEOPATRE

1123 He ! quand viendra le iour dolente Cleopatre,
1124 Qu'avec tes iours transsis transsira ton desastre ?
1125 Quand verras tu mourir ce miserable corps
1126 Qui sent sans trespasser laigreur de mille morts ?
1127 Ah ! quand en partira heureusement ton ame,
1128 Qui brusle sans mourir en l'amoureuse flamme ?
1129 Assez pauurete assez, assez long fut le cours
1130 Par les Dieux r'allongé de tes infaustes iours,
1131 Assez longue ta vie, & vifue ton haleine,
1132 Puisque le Ciel consent à ta cruelle peine :
1133 *Mal'heureux qui demeure en ces terrestres lieux,*
1134 *Ayant pour ennemis les hommes & les Dieux,*
1135 *Qui tasche à ralonger le filet de sa vie,*

1136 *Quand l'esperance en est par le mal'heur rauie,*
 1137 Douce du vif soleil est la viue clarté
 1138 A ceux qui n'ayment point la sombre obscurité,
 1139 Mais fascheuse à celuy qui tenoit appaisee,
 1140 Sa picquante douleur ez charmes de Morphee,
 1141 Ainsi fascheux celuy sent le viure icy bas,
 1142 A qui rien n'est humain que le piteux trespas,
 1143 Et qui pense en viuant, à toute heure mortelle
 1144 Sentir de mille morts la mort la plus cruelle,
 1145 L'esprouue ce mal'heur, & pour n'estre tousiours
 1146 Subiecte à le sentir, i'implore le secours
 1147 De la courtoise mort, qui seule a la puissance
 1148 En tuant ma vigueur, de tuer ma souffrance,
 1149 O secourable mort ? he ! pourquoy tardes tu
 1150 A me faire esprouuer ta diuine vertu ?
 1151 Ton secourable fer ? & ta faueur humaine ?
 1152 En me guidant aupres de mon fidelle Antoine ?
 1153 Rassemblants ces esprits que tu as des-vnis,
 1154 Iadis par l'amitié parfaitement vnis,
 1155 Et rassemblant ces corps dont iadis fut esgale
 1156 La sainte volonté, & la foy coniugale,
 1157 Ah trop courtois Antoine ! ha Dieu que de mal'heur
 1158 Apporta Cleopatre à ta masle valleur ?
 1159 Quand fuyant du combat qui departoit l'Empire
 1160 Entre Cesar & toy, du choc tu te retire,
 1161 Comme elle [t]u²⁴ t'en fuis, pour ne pouuoir helas
 1162 Esloigner sa beauté qui ta mis au trespas,
 1163 Toy qui soulois donner iadis la viue chasse
 1164 A plus fort ennemy qui redoutoit ta face,
 1165 Et qui pensoit tousiours dessus son chef pasmé
 1166 De mortelle frayeur, sentir ton bras armé,
 1167 Et pendant tu perdis la force, & le courage,
 1168 Et l'empire, qui fut ton natal heritage
 1169 Pour suiure Cleopatre, aymant mieux ses beaux yeux
 1170 Que l'honneur de se voir grand & victorieux,
 1171 Que se voir iouissant d'un opulent Empire

24 “[t]u”: inverted “t” in copy-text.

1172 Tant le plaisir d'amour doucement nous retire,
 1173 Tant ce Dieu triomphant des autres Dieux vaincuteurs,
 1174 A de riche pouuoir sus nos superbes cœurs,
 1175 *Comme vn autre penser l'amour n'est pas vollage,*
 1176 *Car au lieu de finir il s'accroist d'auantage,*
 1177 *Cest vne passion qui n'est subiecte aux morts*
 1178 *Comme les passions mortelles de nos corps,*
 1179 *Et plus il s'accomplist, plus il croist en puissance,*
 1180 *Pour inuen[t]er²⁵ tousiours quelque neufue allegeance,*
 1181 *Où les desirs mortels, de passions remplis,*
 1182 *Meurent soudainement ez effects accomplis,*
 1183 Antoine tu le sçais, qui durant ton desastre
 1184 Voulus iusqu' à la mort aymer ta Cleopatre,
 1185 Bien que cause du mal qui te mist au trespas,
 1186 Ah ! tu voulus pourtant mourir entre ses bras,
 1187 Et voir encor cest' œil, dont la cruelle flamme
 1188 Ialouse de ton bien, iadis rauist ton ame,
 1189 Demy mort & sanglant, vomissant les esprits
 1190 Heureusement encor de mon amour espris,
 1191 Las tu te fis monter iadis puissant Monarque,
 1192 En ces tombeaux vultez où ie cherche la Parque,
 1193 Tu voulus en mourant courageux, indompté,
 1194 Me rendre preuue encor de ta fidelité,
 1195 Et bien que mon amour fut auteur de ta perte,
 1196 Me rendre les deuoirs d'vne amitié parfaicte,
 1197 Et mourant de regret de me laisser helas
 1198 Esclau & miserable, apres l'heureux trespas
 1199 Qui te rendit vaincueur de la rage ennemie,
 1200 Bien que le sort l'eut faict possesseur de ta vie,
 1201 Tu me dis ces doux mots dont le triste penser
 1202 Faict de viue douleur mon ame trespasser.
 1203 Ne plains belle ne plains de voir porter en terre
 1204 Celuy qui vit au monde immortel par la guerre,
 1205 Ne plore point la mort de ce grand Empereur,
 1206 Qui la planta iadis avecque la terreur
 1207 En l'ame de tous ceux, dont la folle arrogance

25 "inuen[t]er": inverted "t" in copy-text.

1208 Autrefois desira d'esprouuer sa vaillance.
 1209 Antoine ne meurt pas par Cesar surmonté,
 1210 Car vaillant comme luy Cesar n'a point esté,
 1211 Le sort qui des heros cruellement enuie,
 1212 La gloire triomphante, & la celebre vie,
 1213 Non la iuste valeur, le fait victorieux
 1214 De celuy qui iadis fut redoutable aux Dieux.
 1215 Ie n'ay point de regret de mourir à ceste heure,
 1216 Car ie meurs Empereur, & libre ie demeure,
 1217 Sans que le sort cruel qui s'adresse aux vainqueur,
 1218 Ait vaincu mon courage, & l'ardeur de mon cœur,
 1219 Ie meurs en liberté aupres de toy ma belle,
 1220 Dont la presence rend ma peine moins cruelle,
 1221 Ie ne sens point de mal, si ce n'est pour te voir
 1222 Veufue de liberté, & serue du pouuoir
 1223 D'un superbe vainqueur, indigne que captiue
 1224 Il possede en butin ma Cleopatre viue,
 1225 Royne ie te trouue, & florissant encor
 1226 En mille biens heureux estoit ton regne d'or,
 1227 Lors que premierement ceste diuine face
 1228 Qui toutes les beautez de l'univers efface,
 1229 Fut veüe de mon œil, ô trop iniuste sort
 1230 Il faut que ie te laisse esclau apres ma mort ?
 1231 De Royne par les Roys de la terre honorée,
 1232 Illustre en sa beauté, des graces reuerée,
 1233 Captive deuenue, [et]²⁶ serue d'un tyran,
 1234 Indigne de tel heur, ie te laisse en mourant.
 1235 Songe combien ce mal cruellement me pasme ?
 1236 Puis que plus cher me fut ton salut que mon ame,
 1237 Mais les Dieux l'ont voulu, belle nous ne pouuons
 1238 Resister à leur vueil, pendant que nous viuons,
 1239 Faut parfaire leur gré, & d'une mesme face
 1240 Porter avec leurs biens, leur cruelle disgrace,
 1241 De tant de vifs honneurs, de tant d'Empires saincts
 1242 Et de tant de plaisirs en nos malheurs esteints,
 1243 De tant d'amples tresors trompettes de ma gloire,

26 “[et]”: copy-text “est”, which renders the syntax difficult at best; the error would be an easy one.

1244 Ie ne te laisse rien que la douce memoire
 1245 D'Anthoine ton amy, qui te prie en mourant,
 1246 D'appaiser la douleur qui te va deuorant,
 1247 De terminer ce dueil, ces larmes inhumaines,
 1248 Qui en tombant helas renouellent mes peines,
 1249 Ne plore point celuy qui meurt victorieux,
 1250 Malgré le sort cruel de sa gloire enuieux,
 1251 Et ne plore celuy de qui l'ame naurée
 1252 De l'esclat de ton œil, n'eust vescu separée
 1253 De toy ma chere vie, & de qui plus cuisant,
 1254 D'eust estre le trespas que le trespas qu'il sent,
 1255 Appaise donc ces cris, & si durant ma vie,
 1256 Il te plait quelque fois de me complaire amye,
 1257 Helas fais moy ce bien pour consoler mes maux,
 1258 De me donner la foy, d'appaiser tes trauaux,
 1259 Et de chercher ton bien, ton salut, & ta gloire,
 1260 En requerant Cesar d'adoucir sa victoire
 1261 En l'ardeur de tes yeux, qui peuuent bien trancier
 1262 Les plus barbares cœurs, & leur rage adoucir.
 1263 Las tu me dis ces mots, puis la mort inhumaine
 1264 D'vne cruelle main estouffa ton haleine,
 1265 Effça ta vigueur pallisant froidement
 1266 Ce front qui fut iadis des fronts l'estonnement.
 1267 O trop cruelle mort, si nostre vie fut vne,
 1268 Tu deuois la fauscher par vne faux commune,
 1269 Tu deuois nous tuer par vn mesme couteau,
 1270 Affin que nos deux corps n'eussent qu'vn seul tombeau,
 1271 Comme ils n'eure[n]t²⁷ vivans qu'vne ame miserable,
 1272 Esgalle en passions, en volonteze semblable :
 1273 Pendant tu ne vis plus, Anthoine mon soucy,
 1274 Viuant au Ciel pendant que ie te plore icy,
 1275 Pendant que ie te plains, que ie regrette lasse
 1276 Le reste de mon bien, qui en ta mort trepasse.

CARMION

1277 Madame que vous sert par tant de moittes pleurs,

27 "n'eure[n]t": inverted "n" in copy-text.

1278 D'esueiller le penser de vos gauches malheurs ?
 1279 Pourquoi lamentez vous vne cruelle perte,
 1280 Qui ne peut par vos cris iamais se voir refaicté ?
 1281 *La mort n'a point pitié de nos cris angoisseux,*
 1282 *Et nous ne gagnons rien d'importuner les Dieux*
 1283 *Par nos dolentes voix. Car leurs deitez saintes*
 1284 *Coulpables de nos maux, sont sourdes à nos plaintes,*
 1285 Helas que nous sert il de lamenter nos maux,
 1286 Quand le temps est escheu de nos mortels travaux !
 1287 Et que seruent les pleurs à plorer vne vie,
 1288 Que la mort sans espoir de retour à rauie ?
 1289 Ce n'est rien que malheur, cest auant que perir
 1290 Offencez par la mort, se forcer de mourir,
 1291 Assez ce nous sera en ce monde de peine
 1292 De sentir vne mort, à nos ans inhumaine,
 1293 De gouster vn trespas, sans sentir mille morts
 1294 Affligeant de douleurs nos miserables corps,
 1295 Si vostre Antoine est mort, si le mal qui vous pasme
 1296 Ne sçauroit r'appeller hors des enfers son ame,
 1297 Et si vos moites pleurs ne peuuent retirer
 1298 Son corps du froid tombeau, que vous sert de plorer ?
 1299 Que vous sert de gemir puisque le pleur augmente
 1300 La cruelle douleur d'une ame languissante ?
 1301 Non, non changez d'auis, & pensez seulement
 1302 A trouuer le moyen de sortir de tourment,
 1303 A refaire ce front, & ceste face belle,
 1304 Qui iadis sçeut forcer l'ame la plus rebelle.
 1305 Reprenez ce beau teint, qui iadis rougissoit
 1306 Dessus le champ du lys, quand ce front florissoit,
 1307 En parfaicté beauté, & cest œil dont la flame
 1308 A consommé maint cœur & captifué mainte ame.
 1309 Aydez vous à sortir du mal qui vous esteint,
 1310 Des graces dont le ciel orna vostre beau teint,
 1311 De ces riches beautez qui furent sans semblables,
 1312 Au temps que les grands Dieux nous estoient fauorables.
 1313 Ou si braue de cœur vous n'avez volonté
 1314 Apres tant de plaisirs & tant de liberté,
 1315 Apres tant de faueurs & tant d'amples richesses
 1316 Que vous eustes en don des astres flateresses,

1317 De languir sous le ioug d'un superbe ennemy,
 1318 Qui respandit le sang d'Antoine vostre amy ?
 1319 Sans souffrir si long temps tant de cruelles peines,
 1320 Bourelles de vos iours à vos ans inhumaines,
 1321 Mourez braue, mourez, & dans ces noirs tombeaux
 1322 Enfermez vos douleurs, vostre corps, & vos maux :
 1323 Car il vous faut resoudre à viure malheureuse
 1324 Serfue d'un ennemy, dont l'audace orgueilleuse
 1325 Vous fera mille fois le trespas souhaitter,
 1326 Ou courir à la mort pour ce mal euter,
 1327 Sans languir si long temps, sans de douleur atteinte
 1328 Affliger vostre esprit d'une si longue plainte :
 1329 Car toutes ces douleurs plus dures que la mort,
 1330 N'addouciront l'aigreur de vostre infauste sort :
 1331 Et ces coulantes pleurs en leur course relente,
 1332 Ne sçauroit submerger le mal qui vous tourmente.
 1333 *Le pleur ne sert de rien que tesmoigner vn cœur*
 1334 *Amolly du courage & despouillé d'honneur :*
 1335 *Car l'homme courageux au lieu de larmes feintes*
 1336 *Respandra tout son sang pour en noyer ses plaintes.*
 1337 *Aux mortels affligez pour eschanger leur sort*
 1338 *Il faut la patience, ou la soudaine mort.*
 1339 *Faut que sans lamenter le sort qui les repouce*
 1340 *Ils attendent en paix la fortune plus douce :*
 1341 *Ou que ne pouuant viure attendant ce doux temps*
 1342 *Par vne brusque main ils terminent leurs ans :*
 1343 *Car de viure en mourant en cent plaintes mortelles,*
 1344 *C'est la plus dure mort des morts les plus cruelles,*
 1345 *C'est ne sentir iamais couler dedans ses os*
 1346 *Aigri[s]²⁸ de la douleur, vn rayon de repos.*
 1347 Comme sans reposer on voit la iaune plaine
 1348 Qui raporte en tout temps quelque amoureuse graine,
 1349 Detranchee en labeur, ores de rouge peint
 1350 Sur elle le paisant le rude suc estraint :
 1351 Ore aueque le fer ses fruits meurs il moissonne,

28 "Aigri[s]": copy-text "Aigrir", the typesetter having apparently been misled by the infinitives in the previous line.

1352 Qui iaunissent au feu de la nourrice Automne.
 1353 Ores il fait brouter à ses aigneaux cruels
 1354 L'herbe que sans labeur elle aporte aux mortels.
 1355 Bref tousiours en trauail par le soc labouree,
 1356 On la voit se monstrier en morceaux dechiree.
 1357 *Ainsi tousiours le mal trance & finist nos iours,*
 1358 *Si d'une prompte mort nous n'en tranchons le cours :*
 1359 *Car il ne faut penser de viure franc de peine,*
 1360 *Quand le cruel malheur nos saisons accompaigne :*
 1361 *Faut se resoudre au mal de qui le vif effort*
 1362 *Est cent fois plus cruel que la cruelle mort,*
 1363 Mais vous n'estes encor à ce mal destinee,
 1364 Serfue d'un Empereur qui vous a redonnee
 1365 La miserable vie, & qui vous peut encor
 1366 Redonner vous enfans & vostre sceptre d'or.
 1367 Faut esperer en luy, & qu'en vous effacee
 1368 La souuenance soit de la perte passée.
 1369 *Car aussi dur de mal est le triste penser*
 1370 *Que sa fiere rigueur qui nous fait trespasser.*
 1371 Esperez donc, madame, & que le mal s'absente
 1372 Aux rayons rayonnans d'une si douce attente :
 1373 Cesar veut vous ayder, il veut prendre soucy
 1374 De vostre aduancement, & de vos fils aussi.
 1375 Attendez le secours de sa viue clemence,
 1376 Et d'Antoine perdez la triste souuenance,
 1377 Puisque d'un autre bien que vous faire mourir,
 1378 Ce penser ne vous peut par apres secourir.
 1379 Ou si vous souhaitez de suyure vostre Antoine,
 1380 Accourcissez vos iours pour tuer vostre peine,
 1381 Car il vaut mieux mourir que languir & plorer
 1382 Quand lon ne veut au monde aucun bien esperer.

CLEOPATRE

1383 *Tu dis bien, Carmion, vne mort est plus belle*
 1384 *Que la vie subiecte à la peine immortelle,*
 1385 *Et le viure en douleur, part d'un cœur mal nourry,*
 1386 *Et le trespas hautain d'un courage aguerry :*
 1387 Bien que le corps soit fait des membres d'une femme,
 1388 Il loge toutefois le sang, le cœur & l'ame

1389 D'un genereux vainqueur qui ne doute l'effort
 1390 Effroyable aux poltrons de la superbe mort.
 1391 Ton advis est le mien, Cleopatre est trop braue
 1392 Pour se voir de Cesar la miserable esclau :
 1393 De Cesar qui iadis de sa gloire ialoux
 1394 A fait mourir Antoine, Antoine mon espoux :
 1395 Je ne veux rien de luy, d'une ame accoüardie
 1396 Aux frayeurs de la mort sa main ie ne maudie.
 1397 Je ne veux que celuy plus long fille mes iours,
 1398 Qui les priua, cruel, de leurs douces amours,
 1399 Qui cruel desroba à mon œil miserable
 1400 Le soleil qui luy fut seul au monde agreable.
 1401 Cleopatre n'ira d'un visage abbaissé
 1402 Tremblottant de frayeur, & de crainte offensé,
 1403 Mendier de Cesar le secours salutaire :
 1404 Car son antique honneur luy deffend de ce faire,
 1405 Et la propice mort, dont sainte est la douceur
 1406 Aux esprits affligez, luy rauist ce malheur,
 1407 L'exempte de ce mal, & la rend asseuree
 1408 En despit de Cesar de se voir honnoree
 1409 A son mortel trespas & de sa liberté,
 1410 Et du los que le cœur vaillant a merité,
 1411 Je ne veux rien de luy qui me soit necessaire,
 1412 Sinon qu'aupres d'Antoine, Antoine ma lumiere
 1413 Il enterre mes os, afin que nos deux corps
 1414 Qui viuans furent vn, le soyent encore morts,
 1415 Comme dans les Enfers és plaines Elisees
 1416 On verra viuement nos ames assemblees :
 1417 Puisqu' egal fut iadis auant que trespasser
 1418 Leur amoureux desir, & pareil leur penser.
 1419 Voila le seul plaisir qu'en son triste martyre
 1420 Du superbe Cesar Cleopatre desire :
 1421 Et voila le seul bien qu'à sa mort elle attend,
 1422 Pour rendre son esprit heureusement content :
 1423 Car elle a du trespas plus que du iour enuie,
 1424 Et cherit plus la mort que la mortelle vie.
 1425 Iras, veux-tu cruelle à nostre sain repos
 1426 Desconseiller cest heur par tes foibles propos ?
 1427 Et ne veux-tu mourir, comme fait Cleopatre ?

1428 Comme fait Carmion, pour tuer ton desastre ?
 1429 Court est le beau chemin esloigné du desert
 1430 Des miseres d'embas, duquel la mort se sert
 1431 Pour nous guider d'vn vol sous l'ombre de son aisle,
 1432 Au repos eternel de la gloire eternelle.
 1433 Or prenons ce chemin, sans plus auoir soucy,
 1434 Des choses icy bas, partons toutes d'icy.

IRAS

1435 Madame, si pour vous vous n'avez plus d'enuie
 1436 De r'alonger le cours de vostre triste vie,
 1437 Si le viure qui est des mortels souhaitté
 1438 Ne se peut accorder à vostre volonté,
 1439 Viuez pour vos enfans, viuez pour ceste ville
 1440 Qui deuiendra sans vous cruellement seruille,
 1441 D'vn vainqueur inhumain, n'enseuelissez pas
 1442 Le repos du public en vostre ardant trespas,
 1443 Ceux qui fuyent pour eux le viure miserable,
 1444 Doiuent pour le public l'honorer venerable,
 1445 Ils doiuent allonger en sa faueur leurs iours,
 1446 S'il peut en receuoir quelque fauste secours :
 1447 Car ce n'est pas pour nous, ains pour nostre patrie,
 1448 Nos amis, nos parens que nous sommes en vie :
 1449 Nous leur deuons nos ans, & cest ample pouuoir
 1450 Que le ciel fait en nous puissa[n]t²⁹ apperceuoir.
 1451 Viuez donc pour vos fils, qui sans vous miserables
 1452 Seront faicts du malheur les butins perdurables,
 1453 Qui seront malheureux, ayant perdu cest œil
 1454 Qui les peut r'appeller du profond d'vn cercueil.
 1455 Voulez vous en mourant qu'vne si digne race
 1456 Venerable aux grands Dieux, en vostre mort s'efface ?
 1457 Que ces ieunes Cesars, ces nouueaux Antonins,
 1458 Sous qui doiuent ployer les farouches destins,
 1459 Meurent soudainement, & morts en vostre perte
 1460 Sentent mourir l'ardeur de leur gloire parfaicte ?
 1461 Madame sauuez-les, & quoy, ne voyez-vous

29 "puissa[n]t": inverted "n" in copy-text.

1462 Ce nourrisseur oyseau plus ardant, plus ialoux
 1463 De la santé des siens & de leur nourriture,
 1464 Quand il tire son sang de sa poictrine dure,
 1465 Que vous de vos enfants ? conseruez en vigueur
 1466 Ce qui peut restablir vostre nom en honneur ?
 1467 Qui peut resusciter aux rayons de sa gloire
 1468 Pour ne perir iamais vostre antique memoire,
 1469 A ceux que vous auez cherement esleuez
 1470 Pour conseruez vos faicts, ce deuoir vous deuez,
 1471 Puisque sans vous s'en va miserable leur aage
 1472 Dans la mer du malheur faire vn cruel naufrage :
 1473 C'est vn sacré deuoir qu'aux mannes bienheurez
 1474 D'Antoine vostre espoux chaste vous laisserez,
 1475 Si vos fils sont à luy geniture immortelle.
 1476 De vous deux assemblez d'vne amitié fidelle,
 1477 Aggreable il aura le doux pieux soucy
 1478 Que vous aurez encor de les conduire icy.
 1479 Laissez donc ce desir, dont la rage felonne
 1480 De terminer vos iours sans repos vous poinçonne :
 1481 Car celuy dit ses iours immortels conseruer
 1482 Qui peut en les gardant tout vn monde sauuer.

CLEOPATRE

1483 Ah ! que peuuent seruir d'vne femme exploree
 1484 Les iours où la douleur lasse s'est retirée ?
 1485 D'vne femme à la mort serfue cruellement,
 1486 A qui l'aspre malheur trouble le sentiment ?
 1487 Qui pert l'ame, le sang, le cœur & l'assurance
 1488 Au penser du meschef qui viuement l'offence ?
 1489 Ah ! si de mes enfans, comme moy desolez
 1490 Par la fatale sœur les iours longs sont filez,
 1491 S'ils viuent longuement, & qu'avec leur ieune age
 1492 Croissent d'vn mesme sort l'ardeur & le courage,
 1493 Quel plaisir auront-ils de voir sans liberté,
 1494 Sans royaume, sans biens, & sans autorité
 1495 Celle, qui fut iadis leur amoureuse mere,
 1496 Pendant qu'elle eut le sort à ses desirs prospere ?
 1497 Quel malheur leur seroit, quelle ardante fureur ?
 1498 Que se voir engendrer d'vn puissant Empereur,

1499 Et d'une mere Royne entre toutes hautaine,
 1500 Et la voir acheuer en seruage sa peine ?
 1501 Vn si cruel obiet peut leur ame aualler,
 1502 Ou d'ardante fureur leur courage affoller
 1503 Tant que pauurets perdus de leur chetifue mere,
 1504 Commune leur sera la dolente misere,
 1505 Non, non ie ne veux pas que mes infaustes iours
 1506 Leur apporte ce mal priué de to[u]t³⁰ secours :
 1507 *Car il vaut mieux sans yeux sentir couler nostre age*
 1508 *Que voir ce qui mortel cause notre dommage.*

CARMION

1509 D'auoir iadis esté Royne pleine d'honneur,
 1510 Venerable aux mortels, espouse d'un Seigneur
 1511 Qui commanda aux Roys, & se voir miserable,
 1512 Esclau d'un tyran, c'est vn mal perdurable,
 1513 Cruel, iniurieux, & qui ne cesse point
 1514 Qu'en la mort, qui nos maux & nos saisons esteint.

IRAS

1515 Mais vn mal si cruel nous ne deuons attendre
 1516 De celuy qui se plaist prodigument d'estendre
 1517 Sur les tristes vaincuz sa guerriere bonté :
 1518 Car il est plus humain, que gros de cruauté.

CLEOPATRE

1519 *Quand on peut se passer de la grace ennemie,*
 1520 *D'un ame courageux luy desrobant la vie,*
 1521 *Il ne faut ce hazard tenter de sa douceur,*
 1522 *Car on le voit tousiours superbe en son bon heur.*

IRAS

1523 *Quand d'un mal on ne peut sans perdre dauantage*
 1524 *Que la perte qu'il cause euit le dommage,*
 1525 *Il vaut mieux l'esprouuer : car de deux maux cruels*
 1526 *Le moindre doit tousiours estre pris de mortels.*

30 "to[u]t": inverted "u" in copy-text.

CARMION

1527 *De tous les maux humains, celuy n'est-il le pire*
 1528 *Que se voir à iamais languissans en martyre,*
 1529 *Serfue, pauvre, affligée, & n'est-ce pas mourir*
 1530 *Que languir sans repos, & ne pouuoir guarir.*

IRAS

1531 *Ce mal que vous craignez si viuement austere*
 1532 *Ne vous peut arriuer d'un Prince debonnaire :*
 1533 *Les Cesars ont sceu vaincre és hazards indomptez,*
 1534 *Mais non vers les vaincus vser de cruautez.*

CLEOPATRE

1535 *N'est ce auoir l'ame fiere, & de sang assoufuee³¹*
 1536 *Que d'auoir esconduit de la vie priuee*
 1537 *Le genereux Antoine, ayant en cent combats*
 1538 *Seruy Cesar son pere, & vangé son trespas ?*

IRAS

1539 *Non point la cruauté, mais bien la palle crainte*
 1540 *Qu'un chef si genereux, dont la valeur fut sainte*
 1541 *Ne troublast son repos, fit que Cesar clement*
 1542 *Ne le voulut laisser viuvre plus longuement.*

CARMION

1543 *Qui doit mieux esperer de sa grace future,*
 1544 *Puis qu'il est deffiant, & cruel de nature ?*
 1545 *Que seul il veut regner, & briser l'equité,*
 1546 *Pour auoir le pouuoir, & l'ample autorité.*

IRAS

1547 *Mais quoy ? ne sçait-il pas qu'une femme affligée*
 1548 *De cent mille malheurs durement outragée,*
 1549 *Ne luy peut faire mal ? le cœur victorieux*
 1550 *Aux vaincus affligez n'est point iniurieux.*

31 "assoufuee": perhaps related to "assouvir" in the sense of "be satisfied or contented with, full of"? See *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s.v., def. II. Cf. below, IV.1887.

CLEOPATRE

1551 *C'est affaire à ceux-la dont ceste pauvre vie*
 1552 *Tient l'ame miserable en sa douceur rauie,*
 1553 *A requerir ce bien, mais non aux braues cœurs,*
 1554 *Qui veulent par la mort estouffer leurs malheurs.*

IRAS

1555 *Ce n'est point deshonneur, que par le sort forcee*
 1556 *Et non par la vertu, de forcer sa pensee,*
 1557 *Suppliant vn vainqueur, attendant que les Dieux*
 1558 *Nous remonstrent leur front autrefois gracieux.*

CARMION

1559 *Ah ! c'est bien deshonneur que faute de courage,*
 1560 *Après auoir regné trespasser en seruage !*

IRAS

1561 *S'il y a deshonneur il retourne aux soldats,*
 1562 *Non aux femmes qui sont libres du ioug de Mars.*

CLEOPATRE

1563 *Pour loger la vertu, la courageuse Dame*
 1564 *Aussi bien qu'un grand chef porte superbe l'ame.*

IRAS

1565 *Mais ce n'est pas vertu que par faute de cœur*
 1566 *A supporter son mal, tout perdre en son malheur.*

CARMION

1567 *Quelle plus grand vertu est digne de memoire*
 1568 *Que celle qui conserue en mourant nostre gloire ?*

IRAS

1569 *Mourir pour le public est vn acte de los,*
 1570 *Mais non de trespasser pour son priué repos.*

CLEOPATRE

1571 *Quand on ne peut seruir au public que de fable,*
 1572 *Faut mourir pour se rendre heureux de miserable.*

IRAS

1573 *Ah ! on ne doit iamais ceste fin desirer,*
 1574 *Que lors qu'on ne peut plus aucun bien esperer.*

CLEOPATRE

1575 Hé, que puis-ie esperer qu'vne mort plus seure
 1576 Que celle que ie cherche à tuer ma misere ?

IRAS

1577 Si iadis vous auez maint naufrage euité,
 1578 Vous pourrez de cestuy sortir à sauueté.

CLEOPATRE

1579 Ie n'en veux pas chercher l'infame cruel ayde,
 1580 Car d'autre part i'attens à mes douleurs remede.

IRAS

1581 Seule donc vous serez par vn sanglant effort
 1582 Dépouillee de raison, cause de vostre mort.

CLEOPATRE

1583 I'ayme mieux triompher moymesme de ma vie
 1584 Qu'vn autre en face gloire apres l'auoir rauie.

IRAS

1585 Mais qui veut empescher la vigour de vos iours ?

CLEOPATRE

1586 Celuy qui s'opposa au cours de mes amours.

IRAS

1587 Vous n'êtes à la mort comme Antoine forcee ?

CLEOPATRE

1588 Antoine estant forcé, y force ma pensee.

IRAS

1589 Peut vostre mort Antoine au monde r'appeller ?

CLEOPATRE

1590 Non, mais Antoine peut s'en sentir consoler.

IRAS

1591 Hé, qu'en peut recevoir de doux plaisir Antoine ?

CLEOPATRE

1592 De se voir assuré de mon amour certaine.

IRAS

1593 Sans venir à ce mal ne le cognoist-il pas ?

CLEOPATRE

1594 Rien n'assure l'amour que le mortel trespas.

IRAS

1595 S'il vous ayme il aura vostre mort deplorable ?

CLEOPATRE

1596 Non aura : car il sçait qu'elle m'est secourable.

IRAS

1597 Viuez pour le venger par vn iuste deuoir.

CLEOPATRE

1598 Il sçait bien que trop peu m'en reste de pouuoir.

IRAS

1599 Vous morte, qui fera icy de luy memoire ?

CLEOPATRE

1600 Pour faire ce deuoir assez viue est sa gloire.

IRAS

1601 Mais vostre mort, peut estre en esteindra le iour ?

CLEOPATRE

1602 Tousiours claire est la mort qui procede d'amour.

IRAS

1603 Que dira-on de vous apres ce fier desastre ?

CLEOPATRE

1604 Que braue fut iadis la belle Cleopatre.

IRAS

1605 Aux hommes seulement ceste ardeur appartient ?

CLEOPATRE

1606 Nostre ame, la vertu comme la leur retient.

IRAS

1607 Est-ce vertu que d'estre à soy-mesme inhumaine ?

CLEOPATRE

1608 Ce n'est pas cruauté que secourir sa peine.

IRAS

1609 Mais c'est bien cruauté que tirer de son flanc
1610 Le sang par vostre fer.

CLEOPATRE

1611 Il le faut quand ce sang
Laue tous nos trauaux, & nettoiy' nostre angoisse.

IRAS

1612 Qui peut plus que la mort apporter de detresse ?

CLEOPATRE

1613 La vie, en qui la mort sejourne tous le iours.

IRAS

1614 Mais l'infaste malheur ne nous suit pas tousiours ?

CLEOPATRE

1615 Si fait, lors que l'esperoir loin de nous se destourne.

IRAS

1616 Qui le peut empescher qu'en vous il ne seiourne ?

CLEOPATRE

1617 Le sort, qui bien souuent outrage la valeur.

IRAS

1618 Mais peut la mort guarir vostre viue douleur ?

CLEOPATRE

1619 La mort est le trespas de toute chose viues.

IRAS

1620 La mort à la douleur tient nos ames captiues.

CLEOPATRE

1621 Mais ces maux elle tue en tuant nostre corps.

IRAS

1622 Si sa face cruelle effraye les plus forts,
1623 Hé combien sera elle effroyable à la femme.

CLEOPATRE

1624 Lon ne trouue cruel ce qui plaist à nostre ame.

IRAS

1625 Rien d'égale la mort en dure cruauté.

CLEOPATRE

1626 Plus cruelle la perte est de la liberté.

IRAS

1627 Mais qui peut captiuer l'ame de Cleopatre ?

CLEOPATRE

1628 La rigueur de Cesar, & mon cruel desastre.

IRAS

1629 Cesar ne point cruel.

CLEOPATRE

Cesar peut se vanger.

IRAS

1630 Quel honneur aura-il d'une femme outrager ?

CLEOPATRE

1631 De voir son cœur saoullé de cruelle vengeance.

IRAS

1632 La cruauté n'est point compagne de clemence.

CLEOPATRE

1633 *Ce n'est pas cruauté que se vanger de ceux*
 1634 *Qui nous furent iadis cruels iniurieux :*
 1635 *Car la force permet à celui qui l'employe*
 1636 *De se vanger de ceux qui troublerent sa ioye,*
 1637 *Cesar peut faire ainsi, & pour l'en empescher*
 1638 *Je veux avec mes iours son courroux estancher.*

CHŒVR

1639 Il n'est rien si fascheux
 1640 Pour son dernier remede
 1641 Que requerir pour ayde
 1642 Le fer victorieux.

1643 Perdre sa liberté
 1644 Est douleur infinie,
 1645 Plus de tenir la vie
 1646 D'un qui nous a dompté.

1647 Le trespas est plus saint
 1648 Que viure en telle peine,
 1649 Car la mort est humaine
 1650 Qui nostre mal esteint.

1651 De servir vn vainqueur
 1652 A qui lon fit outrage,
 1653 C'est estre sans courage,

1654 Ou de son mal autheur.

1655 Mais destruire on peut bien
1656 Vn si fascheux martyre,
1657 Car la mort nous retire
1658 D'vn si cruel lien.

1659 De mesme veut mourir,
1660 La braue Cleopatre,
1661 Car mourant son desastre
1662 Elle verra perir.

1663 Elle doit faire ainsi
1664 Pour heureuse estre dite,
1665 Car la peine ne quitte
1666 Le cœur serf & transsi.

1667 Ainsi Cesar sera
1668 Priué de sa victoire,
1669 Et Cleopatre en gloire
1670 A iamais reluira.

Acte qvatriesme

Aree, Cesar, Dolabelle, Cleopatre

AREE

1671 Ah ! combien miserable, incertaine, & cruelle
1672 Subite à mille maux est la vie mortelle,
1673 Les plus superbes monts de veines enfillez,
1674 Ne sont point plus subiets de se voir affollez
1675 Du fouldre bazanné, quand Iupin le deserre
1676 D'vne orgueilleuse main sur les rochs de la terre,
1677 Que subicts aux malheurs, à la fortune au sort,
1678 Sont nos corps auiuez pour repaistre la mort,

1679 N’y la rare vertu [dont]³² la celeste flamme
 1680 Au milieu des malheurs rend illustre notre ame,
 1681 N’y le riche sçauoir qui nous rend des mortels
 1682 Eternellement vifs, comme les immortels,
 1683 Ny la force des bras, qui faict qu’en reuerence
 1684 Les heros plus vaillants tiennent, nostre vaillance,
 1685 Ny la douce beauté dont les traits deceueurs
 1686 Offencent nos esprits, & surmontent nos cœurs,
 1687 N’y la grandeur Royale, & ce superbe Empire
 1688 Où l’ame ambitieuse à longs desirs aspire,
 1689 Ny l’honneur qu’on reçoit d’un ennemy dompté,
 1690 Ny ces rares trophes luysans en majesté,
 1691 Ne sçauroit immortels, detourner de nostre age
 1692 Du dessein inhumain la renaissante rage,
 1693 A la rigueur du sort sont aussi bien subiects
 1694 Les plus diuins esprits que les cœurs plus abiects,
 1695 E[t]³³ fortune souuent pour rendre cognoissance
 1696 Aux malheurs des mortels, de sa masle puissance,
 1697 S’attaque aux grands esprits, ne faisant point de cas
 1698 De surmonter ceux la dont le courage las,
 1699 Pauvre, triste, craintif, la mort palle redoubte
 1700 Qui dans les lasches cœurs mille frayeurs degoute,
 1701 Comme vn ieune Lyon qui sent desia son cœur
 1702 En fleurs de son apuril, espoinçonné d’ardeur,
 1703 Qui respire le sang, & cherche le carnage
 1704 Au millieu des forets, pour paistre son courage
 1705 Ne s’attaque iamais aux foibles animaux,
 1706 Qui fuyent deuant luy, mais aux braues toreaux,
 1707 Aux Ours, aux Leopards, dont la brusque victoire
 1708 Luy peut faire fleurir la douceur de la gloire,
 1709 Ainsi fortune ainsi superbe en son pouuoir,
 1710 Qui veut en nos malheurs sa gloire faire voir,
 1711 Hautaine, ambitieuse, & dont les mains sont plaines
 1712 De butins des heros de despoüilles haultaines
 1713 Ne combat que ces cœurs qui ne font pas de cas

32 “[dont]”: my conjecture; copy-text “dans”.

33 “E[t]”: copy-text “En”.

1714 De la cruelle horreur, du fremissant trespas,
 1715 Ains qui forcent la mort & d'vn masle courage,
 1716 Ayment mieux se tuer que languir en seruage,
 1717 Ceux la le plus souuent par leurs faicts honorez,
 1718 Pa[r]³⁴ le sort importun se sentent atterrez,
 1719 Hays de la fortune, & qui maigre d'enuie
 1720 S'attaque à leur santé, s'arme contre leur vie.
 1721 En offence les iours, mais non le sacré los
 1722 Qui malgré ses fureurs regne en heureux repos,
 1723 *Car durable l'on void des vertueux la gloire,*
 1724 *Et le temps en sa cource entretient leur memoire,*
 1725 *Pour s'honorer par elle, & le Ciel qui retient*
 1726 *Eternels ses rayons, durable la maintient :*
 1727 *Tout se meurt icy bas, les choses qui s'amassent*
 1728 *Soubs le cours du Soleil, en vn moment se passent,*
 1729 *Les Empires, la vie, & des grands Empereurs*
 1730 *Puissans en majesté, les superbes honneurs,*
 1731 *Fors la gloire aux mortels diuinement utile,*
 1732 *Mere des braues faicts, & de vertu la fille,*
 1733 *Mais elle vit tousiours. Pour vn si cher ioyau*
 1734 Qui ne peut estre donc depouillé du tombeau,
 1735 Pour vn si saint trespas qui reste venerable,
 1736 Il faut bien trauailler d'vn travail perdurable,
 1737 Non pour ces autres biens, qui ne meritent pas
 1738 Ce non heureux du bien, estans serfs du trespas,
 1739 Dans vn champ espineux dont la mauuaise terre
 1740 Engendre maint caillou, mainte pesante pierre,
 1741 Le sage laboureur, cupide ardant du gain,
 1742 Pour nourrir ses enfans, ne seme pas son grain,
 1743 Dans ce champ espineux son trauail il n'auance,
 1744 D'autant que son labeur seroit sans esperance,
 1745 De r'apporter du fruict, mais on le void m'y las
 1746 Trauailer dans vn champ dont le visage est gras.
 1747 Ainsi non pour ces biens, que la parque fatale
 1748 Tranche avecque nos iours, il ne faut qu'on trauaille,
 1749 Car on le void perir dessous le moindre effort,

34 "Pa[r]": copy-text "Pal".

1750 Mais pour ceux que lon void suruiure à notre mort,
 1751 Que nous n'enfermons point sous vne mesme lame,
 1752 Auec nos corps priuez de sentiment, & d'ame,
 1753 Qui rendent nostre nom viuant heureusement,
 1754 Apres que nos corps sont au fond du monument.
 1755 Ce doux bien est la gloire, & ceste mesme gloire
 1756 S'engendre des beaux faicts dignes d'ample memoire,
 1757 Des actes des heros, qui n'ont peur de mourir
 1758 Ez fureurs des hazards, pour ce bien acquerir,
 1759 Meurent donc tous ces biens de qui lon void rauie
 1760 La mortelle vigueur si tost qu'elle à pris vie,
 1761 Qui meurent en naissant, & qui n'ont icy bas
 1762 Rien de ferme assureé que le mortel trespas,
 1763 *La gloire des prudens & la sainte richesse,*
 1764 *C'est le bien immortel que la vertu leur laisse,*
 1765 *Pour l'auoir honorée, & ce celeste don*
 1766 *A leurs trauaux soufferts sert de iuste guerdon,*
 1767 Auguste en est tesmoin, par sa vertu plus braue
 1768 Que par son vif pouuoir, qui soubs luy rend esclau
 1769 Tout le monde vaincu, car son pouuoir mourra
 1770 Ou sa riche vertu immortelle sera,
 1771 Immortelle sa gloire, & ces amples loüanges
 1772 Qui faict craindre son nom aux peuples plus estranges,
 1773 Qui le transporte au vol de mille actes diuers
 1774 Enchassez dans l'honneur, de ce grand Vniuers.

CESAR

1775 Apres auoir ployé d'vne dextre puissante
 1776 L'Empire des mortels sous Rome triomphante,
 1777 Aggrandy son pouuoir, & rangé sous ses loix
 1778 Diuines à iamais mille superbes Roys,
 1779 Acquis à sa grandeur redoutable aux grands Princes,
 1780 Cent Royaumes puissans, mille riches Prouinces,
 1781 Et saccagé tous ceux qui vouloient inhumains
 1782 Dans son sang genereux ensanglanter leurs mains,
 1783 Deffait Brute, & Cassie, & chassa de Cicile
 1784 Pompee qui tenoit Rome à demy seruile,
 1785 Des Parthes triomphé, retiré de leurs mains
 1786 Temblantes sous mon fer les estandars Romains,

1787 Les despouilles de Crasse, effaçant la memoire
 1788 Des combats qui perduz estouffoyent nostre gloire,
 1789 En fin defaict Antoine, Antoine que ie priz
 1790 Compagnon à l'Empire, & qui m'en à mespris,
 1791 Braue, victorieux, & rendant redoutable
 1792 Sa guerriere valleur à la terre habitable,
 1793 Antoine qui iadis sortit victorieux
 1794 De cent mille combats cruels & hazardeux,
 1795 Empereur de l'Asie, & de la part du monde
 1796 Que le Nil en courant sur toutes rend feconde,
 1797 De cent mille autre pars, Antoine que iadis
 1798 Mon Pere renommoit entre les plus hardis,
 1799 Que seruile ie tiens la folle Cleopatre,
 1800 Dont l'impudique amour enfanta son desastre,
 1801 Et cest alme cité, qu' Alexandre bastit
 1802 Quand l'Empire de Perse heureux il abbatit,
 1803 Ores que dois-ie faire ? encor que la fortune
 1804 Paroisse à nos desirs richement opportune,
 1805 Que no[u]s³⁵ sentions tout l'heur que lon peut desirer,
 1806 Pour des malheurs mortels ses saisons asseurer,
 1807 L'ame ne laisse pas de peiner angoisseuse
 1808 Pour moissonner les fruitcs de sa fortune heureuse,
 1809 L'on dispute comment employer on les doibt,
 1810 En ce trauail d'esprit mille trauaux reçoit.
 1811 Car ce n'est pas assez que sortir des allarmes
 1812 Le bras victorieux, & luysantes les armes
 1813 Du sang de l'ennemy, il faut sçauoir comment
 1814 On doit de sa victoire vser discrettement,
 1815 Car peu le fruitc en vault de petite durée,
 1816 S'y l'on n'en rend la vie à iamais asseurée,
 1817 Et si l'on n'est aussi sage à le gouuerner,
 1818 Qu'on se monstra vaillant & preux à la gaigner,
 1819 La gloire des combats depend de l'assistance
 1820 Du sort humain muable, & de nostre vaillance,
 1821 Mais ceste gloire meurt, la proüesse perit,
 1822 Si prudemment leurs fruitcs pour viure on ne nourrit,

35 "no[u]s": copy-text has inverted "u".

1823 Et tout confusement se perit au desordre,
 1824 Si d'une iniuste main l'on ne ballance l'ordre,
 1825 Des choses d'icy bas, & si des sens parfaicts
 1826 L'on n'asseure sa gloire, & l'honneur de ses faicts,
 1827 Voila pourquoy ie veux apres tant de defaictes
 1828 Des ennemis domptez, et tant d'amples conquestes,
 1829 Tant d'honneur emporté, & tant de los acquis,
 1830 Sur ceux de qui le los sur tous [leur]³⁶ soit exquis,
 1831 Ie veux rendre assure, & mon puissant Empire,
 1832 Et me rendre absous du bien que ie desire,
 1833 Qui s'estend à me voir successeur iuste, & saint
 1834 De l'honneur de Cesar, qui ne peut estre esteinct,
 1835 Comme contre les flots à la bleüe teinture,
 1836 Contre les vents cruels le nautonnier assure
 1837 Sa voyageuse nef, auant que sur le dos
 1838 De Neptun bazanné, il en fende les flots,
 1839 Affin qu'un prompt meschef ne cause son dommage,
 1840 Faulte de meur aduis, durant son long voyage
 1841 Et pour n'auoir voulu son salut estimer
 1842 Il ne voye sa nef dans les flots, s'abismer.
 1843 Ainsi puis que les Dieux dont le los ie souspire
 1844 Ont mis entre mes mains vn si puissant Empire,
 1845 Pour n'en faire naufrage à faute de sçauoir
 1846 Despendre & moderer son florissant pouuoir,
 1847 Faut vser de conseil, & dessus la iustice
 1848 Ietter le fondement de ce haut edifice,
 1849 Le bastir en prudence, & pour durer tousiours
 1850 En sacrer à Pallas les plus superbes tours.
 1851 Le Royaume s'acquiert par la guerriere lance,
 1852 Mais il se garde entier par la sainte prudence :
 1853 Pour le tirer du ioug du pallissant trespas,
 1854 Il faut que le sçauoir ne l'abandonne pas :
 1855 Car c'est peu que se voir par le sort des batailles
 1856 Commander aux chasteaux, aux superbes murailles,
 1857 Aux tours, aux boulleuerts, si l'on ne sçait prudens
 1858 Regir par le conseil ceux qui viuent dedans,

36 “[leur]”: copy-text “luy”, whose uncertain referent would render the passage seriously obscure.

1859 C'est peu que commander à l'humaine richesse,
 1860 Si l'on n'a l'ame assez orné d'ample sagesse,
 1861 Pour commander à ceux pour qui sont destinez
 1862 Les tresors de la terre, au sort abandonnez.
 1863 Vsons donc de conseil à bastir cest empire,
 1864 Afin que le malheur loin de luy se retire.
 1865 Mais ie voy Dolabelle, il faut sçauoir comment
 1866 Se porte Cleopatre en son fascheux tourment,
 1867 Quelque mal qu'elle endure, & quelque pitié lente
 1868 Qu'apporte à mon esprit sa peine languissante :
 1869 Ie veux en triompher, c'est mon ferme desseign,
 1870 Et pour y paruenir de ses iours auoir soing.
 1871 L'on ne gaigne donc rien de vouloir contredire
 1872 A ce conseil formé, dont l'effect ie desire,
 1873 Et bien Dolabella apres tant de douleurs,
 1874 Cleopatre essay-elle ores ses moites pleurs ?
 1875 Change-elle d'aduis ? & pour heureuse suyure
 1876 Vn si courtois vainqueur, ne veut-elle pas viure ?
 1877 Conte moy ses discours, & si tant de propos
 1878 Qu'elle a receu de moy humains à son repos,
 1879 Ont point guary son mal, destourné sa pensee
 1880 Du desir de la mort pour mourir incensee ?

DOLABELLE

1881 Ah ! qu'il est malaisé à ceux qui ont esté
 1882 Iadis victorieux, pleins de felicité,
 1883 D'honneur & de plaisir, & dont la douce vie
 1884 A coulé sans sentir les fleches de l'enuie :
 1885 Heureuse en liberté, iouyssant à plaisir
 1886 Des effects plus aymez de son heureux desir,
 1887 Des fruicts delicieux de l'amour assouuie,
 1888 Et de tous les plaisirs qui contentent la vie !
 1889 D'oublier tous ces biens, & voyant mort, esteint
 1890 Le cours de ces plaisirs, ne le regretter point,
 1891 Autant que le malheur dont le bras miserable
 1892 Sous son effort cruel durement nous accable,
 1893 Le penser du plaisir, & le fruict des amours
 1894 Que nous auons perdus, est cruel à nos iours.
 1895 He Dieu quel changement à porter difficile,

1896 Que se voir du grand Roy, de qui iadis seruile
 1897 Fut la fortune vn temps, dont furent les plaisirs
 1898 A longs traicts aualez, conformes aux desirs,
 1899 Esclaue, sans espoir de terminer sa peine,
 1900 Que par le seul secours de la mort inhumaine ?
 1901 Priué du doux obiect que l'amour animoit,
 1902 Pour le rendre agreable à nostre œil qui l'aimoit :
 1903 Car rien n'est plus plaisant à nostre œil miserable
 1904 Que la chose qui rend l'amitié souhaittable.
 1905 C'est de cœur affamé, & des ardans esprits
 1906 D'un obiect si parfaict parfaitement esprits,
 1907 Le seul contentement, la seule nourriture,
 1908 Que l'œil par ses regards largement luy procure,
 1909 La marque dont l'amour en signe du vainqueur
 1910 De nostre liberté a marqué nostre cœur
 1911 Ne s'efface iamais, & viue elle demeure
 1912 D'autant que le desir la r'enflamme à toute heure,
 1913 Ainsi qu'on ne voit point s'effacer par le temps
 1914 Par l'effort du destin, ny par le cours des ans,
 1915 La chose que l'on voit dans l'escorce taillee
 1916 D'un arbre, dont superbe est la vertu fueillee,
 1917 Ains avecque l'escorce, & le bout qui s'accroist
 1918 Par le bienfaict des ans, immortelle elle croist,
 1919 Mesme se voit plus fort de la mort conseruee,
 1920 Pour se voir dans le bois grossissant engraeue,
 1921 Qui la rend immortelle en sa viue vigueur,
 1922 E[t]³⁷ r'affraichist son cours au cours de sa verueur :
 1923 Avec nos ans aussi l'amoureuse pensee
 1924 De qui nostre ame prompte autrefois fut blessee,
 1925 Et dont le vif crayon a marqué nostre cœur,
 1926 Croist ordinairement, & d'eux prend sa vigueur :
 1927 Le desir le nourrist, & le regret l'augmente
 1928 Lors qu'on se voit punis de l'amoureuse attente,
 1929 Dont son fruct nous enyure & qu'on plaint exploré
 1930 Alors que d'en iouyr l'on est desesperé,
 1931 Si Cleopatre ayma d'une amitié fidelle

37 "E[t]": copy-text "En".

1932 Antoine, qui iadis fut plus amoureux d'elle
 1933 Que de son propre honneur. S'il quitta pour l'aymer
 1934 L'exercice de Mars, qui le fist estimer
 1935 Entre les braues chefs, Inuaincu chef de guerre,
 1936 Dont le nom estonnoit les heros de la terre,
 1937 Pensez vous que si tost son cœur soit deslié
 1938 De ce poignant penser, & l'amour oublyé ?
 1939 Non, non, de tous les maux qui nourrissent sa peine
 1940 Le plus grand qu'elle sent est la perte d'Antoine :
 1941 Car s'il viuoit encor, & qu'elle vist ses yeux,
 1942 Petits seroyent ses maux, bien qu'ils soyent furieux
 1943 Pleins de rage & d'ardeur, & que la Parque fiere
 1944 Toute seule ait pouuoir d'en tuer la misere.
 1945 *Car peu viue est l'ardeur, peu vif le sentiment*
 1946 *De ce trauaux mondains qui touchent seulement*
 1947 *Nos corps de leur fureur, pourueu que l'ame amante*
 1948 *Iouysse de l'obiect qu'elle souhaite ardante,*
 1949 *Ce plaisir assoupist le penser de ces maux,*
 1950 *Et doux en sa douceur enchante ces trauaux :*
 1951 *Mais depuis que ce bien abandone nostre ame,*
 1952 *Et que maint autre mal cruellement l'entame,*
 1953 *Qu'elle a perdu l'obiect qui nourrissoit son heur,*
 1954 *Et qu'elle sent l'effort de maint autre malheur,*
 1955 *Il ne faut pas penser qu'à d'autre heur elle aspire*
 1956 *Qu'au secours de la mort, pour finir son martyre.*
 1957 Telle on voit Cleopatre, & de qui l'heureux sort
 1958 Moins fauste sa rencontre en ses iours qu'en sa mort,
 1959 Qui ne peut qu'en mourant accourir ceste rage,
 1960 Qui ne peut en viuant luy porter que dommage,
 1961 Sans pouuoir en ses maux son ame secourir,
 1962 Sinon qu'en se faisant subitement mourir.

CESAR

1963 Ne l'ay-ie mille fois de la vie assuree.

DOLABELLE

1964 Ceste vie luy est vne mort exploree.

CESAR
1965 Que peut-elle esperer de plus doux d'un vainqueur ?

DOLABELLE
1966 Vne subite mort pour tuer son malheur.

CESAR
1967 Il n'est rien de plus doux au monde que la vie.

DOLABELLE
1968 Non, lors qu'elle n'est point au malheur asseruie.

CESAR
1969 La femme a tousiours peur de l'horreur des tombeaux.

DOLABELLE
1970 Horrible n'est la mort qui guarist nos trauaux.

CESAR
1971 Que luy puis-ie donner de plus cher que la vie ?

DOLABELLE
1972 Le moyen de mourir, si le viure l'ennuye.

CESAR
1973 C'est raison qu'elle endure apres auoir forfait.

DOLABELLE
1974 Son sang est tousiours prest d'en lauer le meffaict.

CESAR
1975 Ie ne veux qu'elle soit de la façon punie.

DOLABELLE
1976 Que peut lon demander de plus cher que la vie ?

CESAR
1977 Cruel est son peché, son crime iniuste & grand.

- 1978 DOLABELLE
He ! ne veut-elle pas l'expier par son sang ?
- 1979 CESAR
Le veux pour la punir que de viure on l'asseur.
- 1980 DOLABELLE
Estre ce sera donc cruel outre mesure.
- 1981 CESAR
De redonner la vie, est-ce vn acte impiteux ?
- 1982 DOLABELLE
Ouy, à ceux qui sont pour viure malheureux.
- 1983 CESAR
He que puis-ie autre bien faire pour Cleopatre ?
- 1984 DOLABELLE
Luy permettre la mort pour tuer son desastre.
- 1985 CESAR
Peut-estre qu'elle attend quelque plus doux secours.
- 1986 DOLABELLE
Que peut-elle esperer s'elle meurt tous les iours ?
- 1987 CESAR
De se reuoir encor de son Royaume Dame.
- 1988 DOLABELLE
Le bien ne guerist pas la passion de l'ame.
- 1989 CESAR
Quelle autre passion la peut faire douloir ?
- 1990 DOLABELLE
Le regret de voir mort Antoine son espoir.

CESAR

1991 Elle n'y songe plus : car l'amour de la femme
1992 S'esteint au mesme iour qu'il s'allume en son ame.

DOLABELLE

1993 La femme plus que l'homme ayme fidellement.

CESAR

1994 C'est doncques sous l'esper d'auoir contentement,
1995 De ses ardants desirs, & cette atteinte morte
1996 Il faut que l'amitié hors de son ame sorte,
1997 Comme inutile alors, la femme ayme tousiours,
1998 Si tousiours elle sent le fruit de ses amours :
1999 Mais non point autrement, car son amour assise
2000 Sur le roch du plaisir, toute constance brise.
2001 Allons voir Cleopatre, & sçachons à loisir
2002 Quelle est sa volonté & son plus grand desir.

CLEOPATRE

2003 Cesar, si la pitié onc logea dans ton ame,
2004 Qu'elle vienne au secours de ceste pauure dame :
2005 Prends pitié de mon mal, que mon triste destin
2006 T'apprenne que des grands miserable est la fin,
2007 Et la gloire subiecte à la despise enuie,
2008 Qui se coulle tousiours és actes de leur vie :
2009 Et leur pouuoir subiect à la fortune, au sort,
2010 Qui les rend seulement fortunez à leur mort.
2011 Tu vois molle de pleurs, & de cris animee,
2012 Celle qui fut iadis des mortels estimee,
2013 Dont les plus grands heros rechercherent l'amour,
2014 Lors que le ciel ardoit fauorable à son iour :
2015 Ton pere l'honora de son amitié belle,
2016 Antoine en fut espris, et son amour fidelle
2017 N'a voulu s'enterrer dans vn autre cercueil,
2018 Qu'en celuy de [m]on corps si plaisant à [s]on œil³⁸ :

38 L. 2018: copy-text "Qu'en celuy de son corps si plaisant à mon œil". Logic strongly suggests inversion of the two possessive pronouns. That Antony's body should be given to Cleopatra was, moreover, a stipulation of his will; see the translation, n. 127.

2019 Ores lasse, exploree, & du mal offensee,
 2020 Tu vois ceste beauté autrefois si prisee,
 2021 A qu'il ne reste plus de toute sa beauté
 2022 Qu'un triste souuenir d'auoir iadis esté.
 2023 Tu la vois à tes pieds, qui dolente te prie
 2024 De laisser à ses fils la depolorable vie :
 2025 Et qu'ils ne portent point le peine du forfait
 2026 Que leur pere a commis, & que leur mere a faict :
 2027 Pardonne-leur, Cesar, leurs ames enfantines
 2028 Ne t'ont point offencé, à ton vouloir mutines,
 2029 Leurs esprits immortels n'ont le crime commis
 2030 Qui nous a mis au rang de tes fiers ennemis :
 2031 Las ! ils sont innocens du crime de leur pere,
 2032 Comme innocente en est leur miserable mere :
 2033 Car que pourroy-ie faire, esclau & sous la main
 2034 D'Antoine ores courtois, & ores inhumain ?
 2035 Qui par force forçoit mon ame miserable,
 2036 D'obeir à son crime, & s'en rendre coupable ?
 2037 Je ne suis qu'une femme, he Cesar tu le vois,
 2038 A qui n'est rien resté que la piteuse voix !
 2039 Que les larmes, les cr[is]³⁹, & dont la foible force
 2040 Languissante en mourant, ressemble à quelque escorce
 2041 D'un chesne foudroyé, qui noircist en mourant,
 2042 Que le temps va cruel par loppins déchirant,
 2043 Qui change sa verdeur autrefois agreable,
 2044 En un teint bazanné, cruel, espouuantable.
 2045 Ainsi pauure & dolente, ô Cesar, tu me vois,
 2046 Qui fus capable assez pour tuer mille roys,
 2047 Et tant de grands seigneurs que fis iadis combattre
 2048 D'un desir enflammé, l'amour de Cleopatre,
 2049 Cleopatre qui vint de ces Roys anciens
 2050 Qui regirent iadis les Macedoniens,
 2051 Et qui victorieux rendirent tributaire
 2052 A leur masle vertu, toute la terre entiere.
 2053 Souuienne toy, Cesar, que ton pere qui fut

39 "cr[is]": copy-text "cru".

2054 La gloire des mortels ce pendant qu'il ves[c]ut⁴⁰,
 2055 Aussi vaillant qu'humain, ainsi courtois que braue,
 2056 Et qui tient la fortune à ses desirs esclaué,
 2057 Eut pitié de mon sort, & combatit pour moy
 2058 Mon frere, qui tout seul vouloit se rendre Roy,
 2059 Me priuant de ma part de ceste riche terre
 2060 Que i'eus de mes ayeux, iadis foudres de guerre.
 2061 Lors ton pere s'armant pour la sainte equité
 2062 Me rendit mon Royaume avec la liberté :
 2063 Las, rends le moy encor, à fin que ie le laisse
 2064 A mes fils, dont tu vois sans crime la ieunesse :
 2065 Qui de t'appartenir ont encore l'honneur,
 2066 Bien qu'ils soyent languissans en eternel malheur,
 2067 Bien que pauvres chetifs, à fin que ie les voye
 2068 Regner durant mes iours, pour refaire ma ioye.
 2069 Pour viure heureusement, à quoy ie me resoulz,
 2070 Puis qu'appaisé ie sens contre moy ton courroux.
 2071 Cesar fay moy ce bien, & n'estime coupable
 2072 Celle qui fut tousiours en viuant miserable,
 2073 Esclaué du pouuoir d'Antoine, seul autheur
 2074 Du peché qu'elle a fait encontre ta grandeur.

CESAR

2075 Madame appaisez-vous, car pour la seule gloire
 2076 Cesar cherche és hazards la superbe victoire,
 2077 Il combat pour l'honneur, non pour ces biens mortels
 2078 Qui ne peuuent noz faits rendre vn iour immortels :
 2079 Cesar riche d'honneur, & d'vn puissant Empire,
 2080 Du Royaume d'Egypte à s'enrichir n'aspire :
 2081 Il reiette vos biens, il ne veut esperer
 2082 Vn bien plus glorieux que se voir honorer
 2083 Par sa douce bonté, & de faire paroistre
 2084 Son ame autant courtois' que vaillante sa dextre.
 2085 La fortune des grands ne gist pas à se voir
 2086 Riches de maint Empire, & puissans en pouuoir,
 2087 Car ces biens ne leur sont qu'vne peine mortelle,

40 "ves[c]ut": copy-text "veseut".

2088 Mais d'acquérir vn iour vne gloire immortelle,
 2089 Vn celeste renom, qui [n'est]⁴¹ comme leurs corps
 2090 Suiect à s'enterrer dans la cendre des morts.
 2091 C'est mon tout seul desir, & ceste main armee
 2092 Pour ce suiect tout seul paroist brusque animee :
 2093 N'ayez donc point de peur que Cesar ait desir
 2094 En rauissant vos biens d'en rauir le plaisir :
 2095 Viuez tant seulement, despouillez toute crainte,
 2096 Et finissez le cours de ceste longue plainte,
 2097 Car vous aurez Cesar aussi courtois que preux,
 2098 Vous enfans l'auront tel, qu'il repute à neueux,
 2099 Encor qu'il scache bien que vous soyez coulpable
 2100 Du crime qui rendit Antoine miserable.

CLEOPATRE

2101 Obeyr par la force, & non de volonté,
 2102 Ce n'est pas consentir à la meschanceté ?

CESAR

2103 Mais celuy consent bien au peché, qui dans l'ame
 2104 A moyens descouuerts cruellement le trame.

CLEOPATRE

2105 Que luy sert de penser en quelque vif forfait,
 2106 Et quel mal commet-il quand il manque d'effet ?

CESAR

2107 Depuis qu'il est pensé, tout soudain on l'enfante,
 2108 Car assez de moyens la malice en presente.

CLEOPATRE

2109 Mais pour l'auoir pensé doit-on souffrir autant
 2110 Qu'en luy donnant vigueur, ou qu'en l'excutant ?

CESAR

2111 La rigueur n'en doit pas estre tant inhumaine,

41 “[n'est]”: copy-text “naist”, which would give a contrary sense (if any).

2112 Mais pendant on n'est pas exempt de quelque peine.

CLEOPATRE

2113 Je ne doy donc souffrir pareille cruauté

2114 Comme celuy qui a le mal executé ?

CESAR

2115 Mais le crime duquel nous auons cognoissance

2116 Est de vous inuenté, de vous a pris naissance.

CLEOPATRE

2117 On ne voit point de crime à la femme enfanter.

CESAR

2118 Rien n'est plus que la femme ardent à l'inuenter.

CLEOPATRE

2119 Son ame est ennemie du forfait & du vice.

CESAR

2120 Plustost ell' est autheur de toute ample malice.

CLEOPATRE

2121 Pour commettre du mal trop foible est son pouuoir.

CESAR

2122 Que trop en offençant superbe il se fait voir.

CLEOPATRE

2123 Hé ! s'il y-est forcé n'est il pas excusable ?

CESAR

2124 La contrainte tousiours sert d'excuse au coupable.

CLEOPATRE

2125 Peut la femme debile à l'homme resister ?

CESAR

2126 Elle peut d'auantage en pouuant le dompter.

CLEOPATRE
2127 L'homme retient tousiours le pouuoir sur son ame.

CESAR
2128 L'homme n'est plus à luy qui est serf d'une femme.

CLEOPATRE
2129 Mais la femme n'entend les affaires de Mars ?

CESAR
2130 Sa malice au combat anime les soldats.

CLEOPATRE
2131 Qui a veu quelque femme excellente en prouesse ?

CESAR
2132 Celuy combat assez qui combat de finesse.

CLEOPATRE
2133 A-on veu Cleopatre & combattre & s'armer ?

CESAR
2134 Ouy, quand le combat se mesla sur la mer.

CLEOPATRE
2135 Helas, elle y fut donc par Antoine forcee !

CESAR
2136 Plustost d'Antoine fut contrainte la pensee.

CLEOPATRE
2137 Vers elle il s'est tousiours redoutable fait voir.

CESAR
2138 Son malheur est venu faute de ce pouuoir.

CLEOPATRE
2139 Le repos de la femme est la paix amoureuse.

CESAR

2140 De nouvelles grandeurs la femme est desiruse.

CLEOPATRE

2141 Que pouuooy-ie plus grand que le mien demander ?

CESAR

2142 Que pouuoir dedans Rome à souhait commander.

CLEOPATRE

2143 C'est és braues heros en qui vit ceste enuie.

CESAR

2144 La femme aussi bien qu'eux insolemment l'enuie.

CLEOPATRRE

2145 Hé que m'auroit seruy l'Empire des Romains ?

CESAR

2146 Que tout seroit regy par voz superbes mains.

CLEOPATRE

2147 C'est chose qui n'entra iamais dedans mon ame.

CESAR

2148 D'excuses à son mal ne manque point la femme.

CLEOPATRE

2149 Ha, c'est la verité qui excuse mon fait.

CESAR

2150 Mais pendant on a veu viuvre vostre forfait ?

CLEOPATRE

2151 O qu'il est bien aisé de rendre vn miserable
2152 Forclos de tout secours, de quelque mal coupable.

CESAR

2153 O qu'il est mal aisé de vouloir par la voix

2154 Estouffer vn forfait qu'on a veu mille fois.

CLEOPATRE

2155 Et bien si i'ay peché i'en veux payer l'amende.

CESAR

2156 Rien rien pour l'amander Cesar ne vous demande,
2157 Sinon que conseruant en leur vigueur vos iours,
2158 Vous n'ayez à mespris son salubre secours.

CLEOPATRE

2159 Je l'honore Cesar, apres ma dure perte,
2160 Hélas c'est le seul bien qui maintenant me reste :
2161 Je n'espere qu'en toy, & pense que ton cœur
2162 Est le cœur de ton pere, autant doux que vainqueur :
2163 Qui se monstra plus doux que braue & redoutable,
2164 Bien qu'il eust surmonté maint peuple espouuantable,
2165 Ayde moy donc Cesar, & te montrant humain
2166 Ne rends pas mon espoir en ma misere vain.

CESAR

2167 Soyez en assuree, & que l'experience
2168 Vous fera voir à l'œil l'effet de ma clemence :
2169 Viuez donc en repos.

DOLABELLE

Ainsi Cesar sois tu

2170 Tousiours digne des fruicts de la sainte vertu.

CHŒVR

2171 Rien n'assure plus long temps
2172 Contre la mort & les ans
2173 Le nom des Roys de la terre,
2174 Que la douceur qui fait voir
2175 Tolerable leur pouuoir
2176 A ceux que le ioug atterre.
2177 La victoire vient du sort,
2178 Le sang, le fer, & la mort
2179 Sont pouuoirs de la fortune :

2180 Mais de l'homme seulement
 2181 La clemence est l'ornement,
 2182 Qui aux autres n'est commune.

2183 L'homme pour estre dompté
 2184 Ne pert pas la liberté
 2185 Et de reprendre il ne laisse
 2186 Ses armes vne autrefois,
 2187 Mais il l'est bien par la voix
 2188 De la douceur charmeresse.

2189 Par la diuine douceur
 2190 On voit tousiours au vainqueur
 2191 Entretenir le rebelle
 2192 Qui recombatautrement,
 2193 Car le seruage est tourment,
 2194 La mort en liberté, belle.

2195 Cherchent donc les Empereurs,
 2196 Pour maintenir les grandeurs
 2197 La sainte heureuse clemence :
 2198 Car sans elle ils sont tousiours
 2199 En hazard de voir leurs iours
 2200 Esteints par leur arrogance.

2201 C'est pourquoy Cesar est doux
 2202 En son iuste & vif courroux
 2203 A la pauure Cleopatre :
 2204 Il en reçoit bien plus d'heur,
 2205 Car on a bien plus d'honneur
 2206 A pardonner qu'à combatre.

Acte cinqviesme

Epaphroditvs, Cesar

EPAPHRODITVS

2207 O des cœurs genereux le plus braue courage
 2208 Qui parut iamais hors le Romain heritage :
 2209 O genereux esprit ! trop beau pour demeurer
 2210 Dans vn corps féminin qui s'en faict reuerer !
 2211 Digne d'vn fils de Mars, [ou]⁴² des sages antiques
 2212 Qui sauuoient par leur mort leurs cheres Republicues.
 2213 Braue & constant courage ? he pourquoy vouluz tu
 2214 Desrober à Cesar le fruit de sa vertu ?
 2215 S'opposer à son veil, à sa pieuse enuye
 2216 De te rendre content, & contente ta vie ?

CESAR

2217 Qui a il de nouveau, que sans te tourmenter
 2218 De nouvelles douleurs, tu ne peux racompter ?
 2219 Quel nouveau changement enflé de quelque orage,
 2220 Semble troubler ton ame, & transir ton courage !

EPAPHRODITVS

2221 Le tort que l'on t'a faict en desrobant l'honneur
 2222 Que le Ciel ordonnoit à ta sainte douceur,
 2223 Et te faisant Cesar au lieu de debonnaire,
 2224 Et de courtois vainqueur, estimer sanguinaire.

CESAR

2225 Qui me peut empescher de comparoistre tel ?
 2226 Puis que la douceur rend nostre los immortal ?

EPAPHRODITVS

2227 Cleopatre qui s'est elle mesme defaicté,
 2228 Pour s'opposer au cours de ta gloire parfaicté :
 2229 Qui contre son serment, sa promesse, & ses vœux,

42 “[ou]”: copy-text “où” — a probable error, given that the text generally (if not infallibly) observes the distinction.

2230 A voulu se tuer d'un ame courageux,
 2231 Pour tuer son malheur, & ta superbe gloire,
 2232 D'auoir esté courtois au cours de ta victoire.

CESAR

2233 Comment ! n'auois-ie pas mille fois defendu
 2234 Qu'aucun fer ne luy fut cruellement rendu ?
 2235 Me doubtant de ce mal ? sus ie veux qu'on regarde
 2236 A punir rudement ceux qui l'auront en garde ?

EPAPHRODITVS

2237 Cesar n'amasse point malheur dessus malheur,
 2238 En doublant par le sang le sort de ta douleur ?
 2239 Car ceux de ce meschef ne se trouuent coupables,
 2240 Que tu cherche en ton ire à rendre miserables,
 2241 Ny le fer, ny le feu, ny le coulant cordeau,
 2242 N'ont point mis inhumains, Cleopatre au tombeau,
 2243 Et ceux qui la gardoyent n'ont point commis de faute,
 2244 Pour les auoir trompez & d'une prudence caute,
 2245 Et pour auoir voulu se choisir vn trespas,
 2246 Dont personne n'eust peu se douter ici bas.

CESAR

2247 Ton langage m'estonne or conte moy la sorte,
 2248 Comme ceste enragée, à mon regret est morte.

EPAPHRODITVS

2249 Pour t'annoncer la fin de ses superbes iours,
 2250 Ie suis icy venu, mais le trop long discours
 2251 Entassé d'accidens, & meslé de merueille,
 2252 Pourra peut estre Auguste ennuyer ton oreille.

CESAR

2253 Non non à t'escouter mon esprit est tendu,
 2254 Car il faut que ce faicte de moy soit entendu,
 2255 Conte donc ie te pry, encor que dommage
 2256 Q'on entend racompter fasche nostre courage.

EPAPHRODITVS

2257 Apres que tu voulus d'un courage pieux,
 2258 Permettre qu'on rendit les sepulchrables vœux
 2259 Aux ombres explorez d'Antoine miserable,
 2260 Et qu'il receut ce bien ce deuoir pitoyable
 2261 Des mains de Cleopatre, avec milles souspirs
 2262 Meslez de moites pleurs, & rehaussez de [c]ris⁴³,
 2263 Que dessus son tombeau d'aspre regret atteincte,
 2264 Elle eut fait doucement mainte dolente plaincte,
 2265 En vomissant ces mots enfans de ses douleurs,
 2266 Qui se perdoient à coup en vn ruisseau de pleurs,
 2267 Antoine cher Antoine ! he faut il que les astres
 2268 Pour parfaire le cours de noz cruels desastres,
 2269 Apres tant de malheurs, apres tant de meschefs,
 2270 Dont ont esté greslez cruellement nos chefs ?
 2271 Apres tant de traueux, & de peines cruelles,
 2272 Qui serpentent encor dans mes lentes moüelles :
 2273 Apres tant de douleurs, que cruelles ie sens
 2274 Piroüetter encor à l'entour de mes sens.
 2275 He ! falloit il helas, pour acheuer ma peine,
 2276 Que Cleopatre fut viuante apres Antoine ?
 2277 Et qu'elle enseuelist en Egypte ses os,
 2278 Luy qui iadis Romain, de Rome fus le los,
 2279 Et qu'elle qui nasquit par vne longue suite
 2280 De Princes enfilez, en la terre d'Egypte,
 2281 Soit enterrée en Rome, apres que par la mort
 2282 Ses longs iours accourcis, accourciron son sort ?
 2283 Antoine cher Antoine ? ha ! de toutes les peines
 2284 D'ont mon ame à senty les fureurs inhumaines,
 2285 Et de tous les malheurs dont i'ay senty la main,
 2286 Ie n'ay point esprouué de mal plus inhumain,
 2287 De plus fiere douleur, que la dure souffrance
 2288 Que m'a rendu le temps de ta cruelle absence !
 2289 Plus cruel i'ay senty, plus vif en cruauté
 2290 Ce temps seul que de toy absente i'ay esté,
 2291 Sans te voir, sans toucher ton amoureux visage,

43 “[c]ris”: copy-text “ris”; cf. above, l. 2039, and below, l. 2301.

2292 Que toutes les douleurs dont i'esprouue la rage.
 2293 Antoine cher Antoine, ah ! s'il te reste encor
 2294 Quelque pieux penser de l'heureux siecle d'or
 2295 Ou nous vismes florir nos amours coniugales,
 2296 Pareilles en plaisir, en volonteze esgales,
 2297 Par ce mesme penser, reçois ces tristes vœux
 2298 Que i'offre à tes esprits d'un cœur deuotieux,
 2299 Et d'un ame qui tien encor tien demeure,
 2300 Bien que ce corps mortel en ta perte se meure,
 2301 Reçois ces pleurs, & cris, & ce dernier adieu,
 2302 Que ie te rends Antoine, en partant de ce lieu
 2303 Pour m'en aller à Rome, où dolente & captiue,
 2304 Veufue de ton beau front, il faudra que ie viue.
 2305 Ansi dit Cleopatre, & ses dolentes pleurs
 2306 Firent aux assistans regretter ses malheurs,
 2307 Tout le monde eut pitié qu'une Royne si braue,
 2308 Apres tant de grandeurs, fut deuenue esclaue,
 2309 Et chacun en son cœur deplora le destin
 2310 Des mortels, dont si fiere est la cruelle fin.

CESAR

2311 Ie sçay bien tout cela, mais conte moy le reste
 2312 Des faicts de Cleopatre, & sa cruelle perte.

EPAPHRODITVS

2313 Apres que ta valler eut braue combatu
 2314 Antoine, qui vouloit esprouuer ta vertu,
 2315 Que tu l'eus surmonté, & priué d'esperance
 2316 De resister iamais à ta masle vaillance,
 2317 Cleopatre voyant son salut deploré
 2318 Anthoine tout defaict, & Cesar honoré
 2319 Des honneurs Antonins qu'en la fleure de sa gloire,
 2320 Il auoit remportez en mainte ample victoire,
 2321 Resolut de mourir, & de choisir vn temps
 2322 Et vn genre de mort propre à finir ses ans,
 2323 Elle qui n'eut iamais riche d'experience
 2324 Defaut d'entendement, n'y de viue prudence,
 2325 Preuoit bien le mal'heur, les peines, les ennuis,
 2326 Et le cruel meschef qu'elle à senty depuis,

2327 Elle preuoit de loing qu'elle auroit à combattre
 2328 Mainte fiere douleur, & maint cruel desastre,
 2329 Desquels pour s'eschapper, seroit forcé son bras
 2330 De luy mesme aduancer son malheureux trespas.
 2331 Elle fist donc des lors en son ame prudente
 2332 Essay de quelque mort qui fust moins violente,
 2333 La plus douce à sentir, dont elle eust volonté
 2334 D'esprouuer au besoing la douce cruauté,
 2335 Comme la laboureur qui n'a pas cognoissance
 2336 Encor de la bonté du champ qu'il ensemece,
 2337 L'esprouue au parauant, enfermant dans son sein
 2338 Enuieux d'enfanter quelque nombre de grain
 2339 De petite valeur, par le fruit qu'il fleuronne,
 2340 Il cognoit si la terre est ou mauuaise, ou bonne,
 2341 Ainsi de mille morts capables de tuer,
 2342 Cleopatre voulut la plus douce esprouuer,
 2343 Ores par le venin, qu'à maints elle faict prendre,
 2344 Et qu'elle void à coup parmy les os s'estendre
 2345 Des esclaves chetifs, & que pour leur forfait
 2346 Enduroient ceste mort, ceste esprouue elle faict,
 2347 Ores ce cent serpens tous diuers de nature,
 2348 Contraires en venin, esprouue la picqueure,
 2349 Regarde de ces morts la plus courtoise mort,
 2350 Afin de l'endurer constante par le sort,
 2351 Parmy tous ces essaiz qui troubloyent son courage,
 2352 Elle le laissoit pas de faire bon visage,
 2353 De rire & de complaire avec cent mille esbats
 2354 A son Antoine, autheur de son cruel trespas.
 2355 Elle ne voulut pas qu'il sceut ceste menee,
 2356 Pour ne rendre son ame en tristesse estonnee.
 2357 Tant elle eut de respit à la mort qui luy fist
 2358 Endurer le tourment de celui qui forfist,
 2359 Et tant ce vif amour eut de pouuoir en elle,
 2360 Qui la faict recognoistre entre toutes fidelle.

CESAR

2361 Vray'ment si cest amour legitime eust esté
 2362 Il eust pour sa constance vn beau los merité :
 2363 Mais poursuis ton discours.

EPAPHRODITVS

Le malheureux Antoine

2364 Enyuré cependant de fureur inhumaine,
 2365 D'audace & de folie, ou plustost insencé
 2366 Par l'amour furieux dont il estoit blessé,
 2367 N'auoit point de soucy de faire resistance
 2368 Par quelque bon aduis à ta masle vaillance,
 2369 Il passoit seulement le iour en mille esbats,
 2370 Au lieu d'auoir l'esprit courant par les combats,
 2371 Disposant des perils, & de l'heureux remede,
 2372 Dont il pouuoit tirer en combattant de l'ayde.
 2373 De parolle il menasse, & sa voix sans effect
 2374 Indigne d'vn heros, trouuer menteur le faict,
 2375 Comme s'il eust vaincu il se plonge en delices,
 2376 Et r'alonge plus fort le fillet de ses vices :
 2377 Il vit ioyusement, & comme vn grand vainqueur
 2378 Il ne chasse iamais le plaisir de son cœur,
 2379 Pendant que tu trauailles, & que fier en courage
 2380 Tu cherches de trouuer la fin de son dommage,
 2381 Il n'apprehende point, mais il perit aussi :
 2382 Car la graue prudence est fille de soucy,
 2383 Pendant tu sçais comment, agitté de furie
 2384 Pour se voir surmonté il se priua de vie,
 2385 Abandonné des siens, qui craignans d'esprouuer
 2386 La valleur de tes bras te vindrent tous trouuer :
 2387 Et mesmes estimant que Cleopatre morte
 2388 Eust la premiere ouuert de leur trespas la porte,
 2389 Qu'elle se fust tuee, & d'vn genereux cœur
 2390 Enseuely son corps és ruines de son heur.
 2391 Il plongea donc son fer d'vne dextre mutine
 2392 Contraire à son repos : dans sa creuse poitrine,
 2393 Dont il tira le sang que l'amour eschauffoit,
 2394 Et dont l'heur de Cesar genereux triomphoit.

CESAR

2395 Ah ! ie plore sa mort, & ceste amour qui folle
 2396 Apres tant de combats luy transist la parolle.

EPAPHRODITVS

2397 Tu sçais que vif encor la mourante vigueur
 2398 N'auoit abandonné les veines de son cœur,
 2399 Qu'il respiroit encor d'une face ioyeuse,
 2400 Attendant de la mort la faux iniurieuse,
 2401 Quand il sceut que viuante & pleine de vigueur
 2402 Sa Cleopatre estoit cause de son malheur,
 2403 De parfaire le cours de sa mourante vie :
 2404 En ses bras amoureux, alors il eut enuie,
 2405 Il voulut trespasser en l'obiet de son œil,
 2406 Dont la peur du deffaut le menoit au cercueil,
 2407 Au plus haut de la tour, où s'estoit retiree
 2408 Cleopatre en frayeur, pour se rendre assuree,
 2409 Des menasses d'Antoine, Antoine qui disoit
 2410 Que Cleopatre, hélas, sa gloire trahissoit.
 2411 Lors on vit par les mains de ceste pauvre Dame
 2412 Monter ce pauvre corps desia despouillé d'ame,
 2413 Qui vomissoit le sang, & se sentant monter,
 2414 Endurant vn trauail qu'on ne peut raconter :
 2415 Mais l'espoir qu'il auoit de voir encor la face
 2416 De sa Dame, en mourant, tous ces tourmens efface.
 2417 En fin tu sçais comment fidelle & saint amant
 2418 Dans les bras de sa Roine il mourut constamment,
 2419 La priant de vouloir apres son trespas viure,
 2420 Et n'entreprendre pas en mourant de le suyure.
 2421 D'auoir espoir en toy, en ta sainte bonté,
 2422 Qui pourroit releuer son infelicité,
 2423 Se nommant bienheureux de mourir deuant elle,
 2424 Apres auoir acquis mainte gloire immortelle,
 2425 Digne comme Empereur, comme tel finissant,
 2426 Puisque franc de seruage il alloit trespasant.
 2427 Longues dessus son corps seroyent de Cleopatre
 2428 Les plaintes à conter, en plorant son desastre :
 2429 Longs ses cruel regrets, & trop long le discours
 2430 *Qu'elle fit du malheur de ses gauches amours.*
 2431 Tu sçais avec quel soing & bienheureuse cure
 2432 Elle posa ce corps en riche sepulture,
 2433 Les vœux qu'elle rendit à ses Ombres errans
 2434 Es champs Eliseens leurs amours souspirans.

CESAR

2435 Ie le sçay, sus, apres, raconte moy la sorte
2436 Comme outre mon desir ceste inhumaine est morte.

EPAPHRODITVS

2437 Se voyant miserable, & sans aucun espoir
2438 De revoir son Antoine, & craignant de se voir
2439 Traisner deuant ton char miserablement viue,
2440 Alors que ton triomphe, esperdument captive,
2441 Ne pouuant satisfaire en ton tardif secours :
2442 Elle se resolut de terminer ses iours.
2443 Aussi comme ie croy qu'elle fut aduertie
2444 Que longue tu voulois entretenir sa vie,
2445 Afin de la traisner contre la sainte foy
2446 Que iadis tu iuras captiue deuant toy,
2447 Elle qui eut tousiours courageuse l'audace,
2448 Encor qu'elle portast d'vne femme la face,
2449 Le cœur braue & hardy, & l'ame d'vn heros
2450 Affamé de l'honneur, & cupide du los,
2451 Voulut couper chemin par vne parque prompte
2452 A ce nouveau malheur, à ceste infame honte,
2453 De Roine qu'elle fut, ayant iadis dompté
2454 Tant de grands Empereurs aux traicts de sa beauté :
2455 Elle ne voulut pas se voir traisner seruile,
2456 Seruant de pasetemps à la troupe inutile
2457 Du Romain populaire. Elle euita ce mal
2458 Mourant heureusement, & d'vn trespas royal.

CESAR

2459 Conte moy donc comment, ton long discours m'ennuye :
2460 Car ie cherche à sçauoir lyssuë de sa vie.

EPAPHRODITVS

2461 Se voyant enfermee, & n'ayant ni cordeau,
2462 Ny venin, ny acier, ny poignard, ny couteau,
2463 Et pendant à la mort obstinément rangee,
2464 Et de peur de mourir estroictement gardee,
2465 Voicy ce qu'elle fait. Car au mal ententif
2466 Est l'esprit de la femme, & du mal inuentif,

2467 Elle trompe tous ceux d'une face gaillarde
 2468 De viure heureusement qui la tenoyent en garde,
 2469 Leur disant tous les iours qu'elle ne vouloit pas
 2470 Esperant ton secours, aduancer son trespas,
 2471 Qu'elle desiroit viure, & par sa contenance
 2472 Elle chachoit son mal & sa masle constance
 2473 D'endurer le trespas, elle essuya ses pleurs,
 2474 Et donna, ce sembloit, relasche à ses douleurs :
 2475 Vn chacun estimoit qu'en son masle courage
 2476 Elle auoit resolu de viure dauantage :
 2477 L'on n'auoit plus soucy de regarder de pres
 2478 Si ses iours mouroyent point avecque ses regrets :
 2479 L'on ne se doutoit plus de la mortelle enuie
 2480 Qu'elle auoit en son cœur de terminer sa vie.
 2481 Lors voyant que chacun point ou peu se doutoit
 2482 Du mal, qui dans son cœur fiere elle portoit,
 2483 Voicy ce qu'elle faict d'un courage heroïque.
 2484 Elle faict apporter par vn simple rustique
 2485 Des figues qu'on voyoit dedans vn panier creux,
 2486 Qui sous elle[s]⁴⁴ cachoyent vn aspic dangereux,
 2487 D'une telle façon, qu'il estoit impossible
 2488 De penser qu'un serpent se rendist inuisible
 2489 Avec ce fruict mortel, qu'on iugeoit sans danger,
 2490 Que le paisan offroit à chacun à manger :
 2491 Il entre dans la tour, le present il presente
 2492 A Cleopatre, hélas, qui l'attendoit contente,
 2493 Qui le prist de bon cœur, ardante de mourir,
 2494 On luy vit ce present euidemment cherir,
 2495 Comme on voit que reçoit d'une face ioyeuse
 2496 Le malade oppressé d'une peine angoisseuse
 2497 Le remede qui peut reparer sa santé,
 2498 Et du mal appaiser la vifue cruauté,
 2499 Il l'aualle soudain, & braue il prend courage,
 2500 Esperant se voir sain du tourment qui l'outrage,
 2501 Il vit en esperance, & sans se trouuer vain,
 2502 Son espoir bien souuent se rencontre certain.

44 "elle[s]": copy-text "elle".

2503 Ainsi ioyeuse fin fit la triste Cleopatre,
2504 Receuant le remede à son fascheux desastre.

CESAR

2505 Acheue vistement, ie cognois à ce faict
2506 Combien eut Cleopatre vn bel ame parfaict.

EPAPHRODITVS

2507 Lors tenant le pannier en sa main assuree,
2508 Descouure de l'aspic la teste coloree,
2509 Qui [s]iffloit⁴⁵ à sacquets, elle rit doucement :
2510 Ha, dit-elle, és-tu là remede à mon tourment ?
2511 Le vay te voir, Antoine, ô l'heure bienheureuse !
2512 Où Cleopatre va te trouuer amoureuse.
2513 Lors du cruel serpent d'vn courage hautain
2514 Elle approche son bras, qui le picque soudain,
2515 Empoisonnant son corps, qui logea, miserable,
2516 Vne ame qui n'eut point en grandeur de semblable,
2517 Soudain qu'elle sentit le poison peu à peu
2518 Glisser dedans ses nerfs, comme glisse le feu
2519 A flambeaux allumez sous vne couuerture,
2520 Qu'il brusle incessamment ce pendant qu'elle dure.
2521 D'vn courage hardy, riant de son trespas,
2522 Elle empoisonne aussi Carmion & Iras,
2523 Ses deux dames d'honneur, qui d'vne amour fidelle
2524 Courageuses vouloyent trespasser avec elle.
2525 Puis de ses beaux atours, de ses plus chers ioyaux,
2526 Et de ses vestements superbement royaux,
2527 Elle pare son corps, & constamment se couche,
2528 Sans pallir de frayeur dessus sa riche couche,
2529 Qu'elle auoit embellie, & d'vn cher ornement
2530 Reparé sa beauté, riche superbement.
2531 Alors vn doux sommeil causé de la picqueure
2532 De l'inhumain aspic, le trespas luy procure,
2533 Se glisse dans ses yeux, elle dort, & dormant
2534 La mort la vient saisir d'vn doux rauissement,

45 “[s]iffloit”: copy-text “fiffloit” (long “s” error).

2535 Sans sentir aucun mal, la courageuse dame,
 2536 Dans les bras de la mort mortellement se pasme.
 2537 Et morte apparoissoit encor ceste beauté,
 2538 Dont le superbe honneur fut iadis si vanté.
 2539 Iras mourut apres froidement estenduë
 2540 A ses pieds, & comme elle immortelle renduë
 2541 En loüange, en honneur, Carmion n'auoit pas
 2542 Encores arrivé sur le bord du trespas,
 2543 Rendant la voix encor, & d'vne main loyalle
 2544 R'adressant doucement le coiffure royalle
 2545 De sa maistresse morte, alors que [se]⁴⁶ doutans
 2546 Les tiens de ce malheur, & ce mal redoutans,
 2547 Entrent dedans la salle, & d'vne face graue
 2548 Regardent ce spectacle autant triste que braue,
 2549 Ils virent Cleopatre, & la fidelle Iras
 2550 Qui ia mortes auoyent esprouvé le trespas,
 2551 Carmion n'auoit pas, encore languissante,
 2552 Esprouvé de la mort la rage fremissante,
 2553 Elle parloit encor, l'vn des tiens deuant tous
 2554 Luy dist ces quatre mots qu'enfanta le courroux :
 2555 Carmion, Carmion, est-ce vne chose belle,
 2556 Que cest acte sanglant, que ceste morte cruelle ?
 2557 Tresbelle, ce dist-elle, & digne mille fois
 2558 D'vne Royne qui vint du sang de tant de Roys :
 2559 Lors acheuant ce mot, elle acheua sa vie,
 2560 Auec sa triste voix son ame fut rauie :
 2561 Elle meurt doucement, heureuse de mourir
 2562 Aupres de sa maistresse, & ses maux secourir.
 2563 Voila, Cesar, comment Cleopatra hautaine
 2564 En terminant ses iours a terminé sa peine.
 2565 Voila comme elle est morte, & vrayment ce trespas
 2566 Pour estre courageux, mortel ne sera pas,
 2567 Ains viuant eternel, & la masle constance
 2568 Eternelle en fera admirer l'excellence :
 2569 C'est à toy maintenant à disposer du corps,
 2570 A luy payer les vœux sepulchrables des morts,

46 “[se]”: copy-text “ce”.

2571 A le faire enterrer par vne grace humaine
 2572 Dans le mesme tombeau où gist mort son Antoine,
 2573 Car ce fut son desir, comme elle t'en pria
 2574 Par le piteux escrit, que sa main t'enuoya.

CESAR

2575 O constance admirable ! ô digne d'excellence !
 2576 Vn amour qui n'eut point de fin à sa constance
 2577 Qu'en la fin de ses iours ! O courage indompté !
 2578 Trop digne pour se voir priué de liberté !
 2579 Vne si braue mort ne tombe point en l'ame
 2580 De nature inconstant, d'une inconstante femme,
 2581 Les plus doctes esprits, & les ames plus forts
 2582 Ne sont trop suffisans d'en porter les efforts,
 2583 Ils rebouchent deuant, comme on voit vne espee
 2584 D'une mollasse main trop froidement trempee,
 2585 Reboucher & ployer contre le fer espois,
 2586 Bien que l'acier aigu l'ait percé quelquefois :
 2587 Ainsi deuant la mort, deuant son fier visage
 2588 Maint esprit genereux, & maint hardy courage
 2589 Ont souuent rebouché : car cruel est le pas
 2590 Qu'il nous faut auancer vers le palle trespas.
 2591 Et bien qu'à nos malheurs la mort soit secourable,
 2592 La face en est pourtant à l'œil espouuantable,
 2593 Le front en est hydeux, & comme de nos iours
 2594 La cruelle ennemie, on la doute tousiours :
 2595 Car cruel est au corps ce dont il voit rauie
 2596 L'ame qui luy donnoit la naturelle vie :
 2597 *Car il n'est rien apres, priué de sentiment,*
 2598 *Que le palle butin d'un obscur monument :*
 2599 *Il souffre mille maux au sortir de ceste ame,*
 2600 *Car le corps perd la force, & de regret se pasme :*
 2601 *Ainsi tousiours cruel est le sanglant trespas*
 2602 *A ceux, qui pleins de peur l'attendent icy bas.*
 2603 Pendant sans le douter, d'un martial courage,
 2604 En l'ardeur de ses iours, en la fleur de son aage,
 2605 Cleopatre à couru brauement au deuant,
 2606 A fin d'aller là bas son Antoine suyuant,
 2607 Sans craindre ce qui peut rendre cruell' atteinte

2608 Des heros plus parfaits, l'ame de froide crainte :
 2609 Elle a franchy ce pas, & d'un bras insensé
 2610 Des fureurs de l'amour son trespas aduancé.
 2611 O fidelle amitié ! si pour t'auoir suyuie
 2612 Cleopatre commit quelque crime en sa vie,
 2613 Qui meritoit du blasme, en l'assistant tousiours
 2614 Fidelle & genereuse à la fin de ses iours,
 2615 Tu repare sa faute, & l'excuse de blasme,
 2616 Car immortel tu rends l'honneur de ceste Dame.
 2617 Morte ie ne puis donc Cleopatre blasmer,
 2618 Que viuante autrefois ie voulus diffamer,
 2619 Blasmer cruellement, en reputant à crime
 2620 L'amour qui l'animoit, digne que l'on l'estime.
 2621 La constance qui a suiuy ta belle fin,
 2622 La vertu qui te fait mespriser le destin,
 2623 Et ce courage fier, ceste ame genereuse
 2624 Ont reparé ta gloire, & faite glorieuse,
 2625 Ton trespas si royal fera trouuer royaux
 2626 Tes faits, bien que iadis autheurs de mille maux :
 2627 Et ta mort esteindra en sa superbe gloire
 2628 De tes antiques faits la cruelle memoire.
 2629 *Les ouurages mortels à l'honneur destinez,*
 2630 *Se sent[e]nt⁴⁷ à leur fin de gloire couronnez,*
 2631 *Car le commencement ce beau front le leur monstre,*
 2632 *C'est en la seule fin que ce bien se rencontre,*
 2633 *Si braue elle paroist, son los diuin, ardent*
 2634 *Efface les pensers du crime precedent,*
 2635 *En rait la memoire, & fait trouuer comme elle*
 2636 *La vie precedente eternellement belle,*
 2637 *Mais si la fin paroist esclau de forfait,*
 2638 *Tel paroist tout le bien qu'en viuant on a fait :*
 2639 Car ce trespas si laid, en l'horreur de sa face
 2640 Toute l'ample beauté cruellement efface,
 2641 Heureuse Cleopatre ! ha, vrayment ta vertu
 2642 La rigueur de Cesar a braue combattu,
 2643 Elle a vaincu ma force, & surmonté l'enuie

47 "sent[e]nt": copy-text "sentant".

2644 Que i'auois de te rendre encor vn coup en vie :
 2645 De remettre tes iours en douce liberté,
 2646 Et te rendre le bien que Mars t'auoit osté :
 2647 Mais i'ay trop attendu, i'en blasme ma largesse,
 2648 Qui ne deuoit souffrir vne telle paresse,
 2649 Puis que Royne tu fus, bien que digne du mal,
 2650 Ie deuois t'honorer d'un traictement royal,
 2651 Paroissant successeur de la saincte clemence
 2652 De mon pere Cesar, comme de sa puissance :
 2653 De mon pere Cesar, qui plus courtois que moy
 2654 Autrefois t'honora, & combatit pour toy.
 2655 Ha, ie plains mon erreur ! ie condamne ma faute :
 2656 Et ceste ame qui n'eut la constance assez haute
 2657 Pour mespriser la peur du mal que tu pouuois
 2658 Remise en liberté, commettre vne autre fois :
 2659 Car que pouuoit brasser de fier & dommageable
 2660 Contre le grand Cesar, vne ame miserable ?
 2661 Vne femme exploree ? & venant de dompter
 2662 Antoine, qui souloit les grands Rois surmonter ?
 2663 O lasche que ie suis ! ie deuois Cleopatre
 2664 Saoullé de tes douleurs, content de ton desastre,
 2665 Te rendre ton royaume, & t'ostant de prison
 2666 Te remettre contente en l'antique maison
 2667 De tes puissans ayeulx, la relaisant entiere
 2668 A tes petits enfans, chetifs en ta misere.
 2669 Ha vrayment i'ay failly ! Mais pour recompenser
 2670 Vn si cruel defaut, ie veux faire dresser
 2671 Vn superbe tombeau, vne tumbé hautaine,
 2672 Où tu seras enclose avecque ton Antoine,
 2673 Te payant les deuoirs, superbes et royaux
 2674 Que ie deuois te rendre en l'ardeur de tes maux :
 2675 Et priant tes esprits, d'un cœur plain de tristesse,
 2676 D'appaiser contre moy leur ire vengeresse,
 2677 Honorant tes enfans, & pour l'amour de toy
 2678 Et de ta viue amour, les ayment comme moy.

FJN