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Intimations of Dido and Cleopatra in Some Contemporary Portrayals of Elizabeth I

by Clifford Weber

WHEN Aeneas, shipwrecked and concealed in a mist, first beholds Queen Dido in book 1 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, a simile compares the queen to the virgin goddess Diana. This encounter with a queen who resembles Diana is the last in a series of three encounters between Aeneas and a virgin who, in one way or another, is not quite real. The first of these quasi-virgins is, truth to tell, the goddess of love and Aeneas' own mother, who incongruously assumes the disguise of a virgin huntress as she accosts her son in the wilderness outside Carthage. The second in the series is Penthesilea, virgin queen of the Amazons. She, to be sure, is genuinely chaste, but Aeneas does not meet her in the flesh. Rather, he sees her depicted in a painted tableau adorning a wall in Dido's new temple of Juno. Finally, the third virgin in the triad is, as already mentioned, the goddess Diana. She is not quite real either, for Aeneas beholds not the goddess herself but a mortal queen who resembles her.

The affinity between Diana and Dido is clear and undeniable, for a simile states explicitly that Dido resembles this virgin goddess. Beyond this, however, a number of studies published over the past thirty-five years have established that both the fraudulent virgin huntress and the virgin queen of the Amazons are implicitly linked to Dido no less than the virgin goddess to whom she is compared is linked to her explicitly. Indeed, R. W. B. Lewis, writing in 1961, went so far as to say that the Penthesilea passage is an implicit simile likening Dido to the Amazon queen.¹ From the outset, then, Dido is linked to a trio of Artemisian

¹ R. W. B. Lewis, "On Translating the *Aeneid*: Yif that I can," *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 10 (1961): 7-15; reprinted in *Virgil: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Steele Commager (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 41-52.

figures consisting of Venus disguised as a virgin huntress; Penthesilea, the virgin queen of the Amazons; and Diana herself, a virgin goddess.

In the pages that follow, I will aim to show that in the verse, panegyric, and iconography of the late sixteenth century in England, artists and writers of the period identify Elizabeth I with the same three virgins with whom Virgil associates Dido. In making this connection, moreover, the Elizabethans commonly quote or imitate the Virgilian passage that either asserts or implies the same link with Dido. In turn, if Virgilian language is employed to associate Elizabeth with the same three virgins with whom Dido is connected in the *Aeneid*, this would tend to suggest that there may be a closer connection than is usually recognized between Virgil's Dido and sixteenth-century portrayals of Elizabeth I.²

For evidence, I will confine myself to the primary sources that are cited in two modern studies. The first of these studies is an article by Winfried Schleiner on representations of Elizabeth as an Amazon.³ The second is a recent book by Helen Hackett entitled *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen*.⁴ The sources cited in these two studies alone have a somewhat longer tale to tell than the scholars who cite them would appear to have realized. Secondly, since I propose to elucidate the degree to which a few contemporary portrayals of Elizabeth borrow from Virgil's representation of Dido, it will make sense to follow Virgil's ordering and so to begin with Venus's masquerade as a virgin huntress in *Aeneid* 1.314–417. For the sake of convenience, I will adopt Hackett's nomenclature and will refer to this pseudo-virgin as "Venus Virgo." Still following Virgil's sequence, I will turn next to Penthesilea, whose painted image is described in *Aeneid* 1.490–93, just before Dido enters the poem for the first time. Finally, I will leave for last, as Virgil does, the comparison of Dido to Diana in *Aeneid* 1.497–502, which comes immediately after Dido's aforementioned entrée.

To begin, then, with Venus Virgo in *Aeneid* 1.314–417, a consensus now exists to the effect that, as E. L. Harrison once phrased it, Venus Virgo "acts as a kind of stand-in for Dido."⁵ To mention only the most

² For the relationship between Elizabeth and Marlowe's Dido, see Diana E. Henderson, *Passion Made Public: Elizabethan Lyric, Gender, and Performance* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 146–51, 153.

³ Winfried Schleiner, "Divina virago: Queen Elizabeth as an Amazon," *Studies in Philology* 75 (1978): 163–80.

⁴ Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995).

⁵ E. L. Harrison, "Why Did Venus Wear Boots? Some Reflections on *Aeneid* 1.314f."

obvious among the considerations that support this conclusion, both Venus Virgo and Dido resemble Diana (*Aeneid* 1.329, 498–504), and both at different times appear in the guise of a huntress (*Aeneid* 1.318–20, 4.136–39). This link between Venus Virgo and Dido as Diana-like huntresses extends as well, of course, to Elizabeth I, whose connection both with Diana and with hunting is too well known to require documentation.

This attribute that Dido and Elizabeth share becomes salient when Virgilian language used in connection with Venus Virgo is transferred to Elizabeth. A case in point is the two-line inscription accompanying the engraving of Elizabeth that is dated to 1603–4 and cited on page 167 of Schleiner's article. The first four words of this inscription are a virtually exact quotation of the line (*Aeneid* 1.315) in which Venus Virgo enters the scene "wearing the countenance and the look of a virgin" (*virginis os habitumque gerens*, with *gerens* changed to *geris* ["you wear"] in the inscription).

Next we may turn to Edmund Spenser and the double simile that compares Belphoebe first to Diana and then to Penthesilea in *Faerie Queene* 2.3.31. The first two lines of this simile imitate the corresponding lines (*Aeneid* 1.498–99) of the Virgilian simile that compares Dido to Diana, but there the resemblance ends. Virgil's Diana is surrounded by a thousand mountain nymphs, but in Spenser, "all the Nymphes have her unawares forlore," and Diana herself "wandreth alone with bow and arrowes keene."⁶ This detail of the huntress Diana wandering alone without her nymphs is not to be found in Virgil's Diana simile. It rather derives from the episode with Venus Virgo, who approaches Aeneas to inquire whether he has seen any of her "sisters," as she calls them, wandering in the neighborhood or hunting boar (*Aeneid* 1.321–24).

Proceedings of the Virgil Society 12 (1972–73): 15. The fullest discussion of the passage in question is Kenneth Reckford, "Recognizing Venus I: Aeneas Meets His Mother," *Arion*, n.s., 3 (1995–96): 1–42, to whose citations add Gail C. Polk, "Virgil's Penelope: The Diana Simile in *Aeneid* 1.498–502," *Vergilius* 42 (1996): 38–49, and M. K. Thornton, "The Adaptation of Homer's Artemis-Nausicaa Simile in the *Aeneid*," *Latomus* 44 (1985): 618–22. The most recent discussion of the dialogue between Aeneas and his mother is Eleanor W. Leach, "Venus, Thetis, and the Social Construction of Maternal Behavior," *The Classical Journal* 92 (1996–97): 368–70.

⁶ It is odd that this inversion is not included among the Spenserian innovations mentioned in Harry Berger, Jr., *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's "Faerie Queene"* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1957), 124, cited in Schleiner, "*Divina virago*," 176. For confirmation of Berger's suspicion (125) that the Dido-Diana simile is connected with the description of Penthesilea that precedes it (there is more than their proximity linking these two passages), see the article of Jakub Pigoń cited in n. 10 below.

In reply, Aeneas surmises that the huntress standing before him must be a goddess, though her precise identity eludes him. "Whom am I to call you, maiden?" he asks. "Your countenance is not mortal, and your voice does not have a human ring. You who are surely a goddess. . . ." The Latin text here (*Aeneid* 1.327–28) reads as follows:

o quam te memorem, virgo? namque haud tibi vultus
mortalis, nec vox hominem sonat. o dea certe. . .

The beginning and the end of these lines are quoted as an emblem at the conclusion of the eclogue for April in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*. In this eclogue, Elizabeth is celebrated as "queene of shepherdes all," but the concluding quotation, as others have remarked,⁷ serves rather to identify Elizabeth with Virgil's Venus Virgo. The manner of this identification left its mark, for the words of Virgil that Spenser quotes also appear in altered form in the manuscript frontispiece to the *Regina Fortunata* of Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton. According to Helen Hackett, this was written "around 1576–80,"⁸ that is, at the latest, in the year after the *Shepherd's Calendar* was licensed.

In the double simile cited above, Spenser compares Belphoebe to Penthesilea as well as to Diana. He would thus seem to have perceived a connection between the Diana simile that immediately follows Dido's debut and the passage about Penthesilea that immediately precedes it.⁹ Standing as they do on either side of Dido's entrée, the Diana simile and the Penthesilea passage share a clear structural correspondence. There are also other connections linking the two passages, as the Polish scholar Jakub Pigoń has cogently demonstrated in an excellent article.¹⁰ For our purposes, however, the only point of contact that matters lies in the fact that Dido resembles Penthesilea and Diana in equal measure, even though she is explicitly compared to the goddess alone. In the article that is cited above, and on which Pigoń relies, R. W. B. Lewis recognized this decades ago, and it is now generally taken for granted.¹¹ Thus, in comparing Belphoebe to the Amazon queen with whom Dido too is linked when she makes her first appearance in the *Aeneid*, Spenser differs from Virgil only insofar as he makes the com-

⁷ E.g., Hackett, *Virgin Mother*, 108.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ For this intuition of Spenser's, see Berger, *Allegorical Temper*, 125.

¹⁰ Jakub Pigoń, "Dido, Diana, and Penthesilea: Observations on the Queen's First Appearance in the *Aeneid*," *Eos* 79 (1991): 45–53.

¹¹ Lewis, "Translating the *Aeneid*." For the same view in later criticism, see especially Pigoń's article cited in the previous note, but also the citations *ibid.*, 48, n. 8^o.

parison explicit. The precedent for the comparison per se, however, he found in Virgil's portrayal of Dido.

Winfried Schleiner mines other texts as well for comparisons of Elizabeth to an Amazon. One of these is as obscure as Spenser's poem is the opposite. It consists of poems competently written in Latin and Greek by one "Eleutherius" and published in 1589 under the title *Triumphalia de victoriis Elizabethae . . . contra classem illustrissimam Philippi Hispaniarum regis* ("Epinicians Concerning the Victories of Elizabeth . . . against the Most Renowned Fleet of Philip, King of the Spains"). In this collection, there are three passages in which the pseudonymous poet¹² compares Elizabeth to an Amazon. In two of these, he echoes, even more obviously than Spenser does, Virgil's implied comparison between Dido and Penthesilea.

As it is transcribed in Schleiner's article,¹³ the first of these two passages reads as follows, with the colometry altered to fit the Alcaic meter:

De gente forti qualis Amazonum
armata concurrat Maeotis
Penthesilea viris virago.

Heic dura virtus se et grave brachium
exsertat, heic vis aspera Numinis
et maior humanis et altis
altior ingeniis Tyrannum.

This is the text of the four hexameters that describe Penthesilea in *Aeneid* 1.490–93:

Ducit Amazonidum lunatis agmina peltis
Penthesilea furens mediisque in milibus ardet,
aurea subnectens exsertae cingula mammae
bellatrix, audetque viris concurrere virgo.

Eleutherius replaces Virgil's epic meter with Horatian Alcaics (more on this below), and yet he faithfully reproduces Virgil's language in

¹² If there is any connection between his pseudonym and his surname, the latter might have been Freeman or, conceivably, Fry. According to a spurious Roman tradition recorded in the *Liber Pontificalis* (early sixth century), the first Eleutherius to be known in Britain was a pope of that name (ca. 175–89), who, it was said, communicated with the British king Lucius and encouraged his pro-Christian inclinations. (For this datum, I am indebted to my colleague, Prof. Jean Blacker.) There would appear to be no mention of Eleutherius' *Triumphalia* in J. W. Binns's comprehensive *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990).

¹³ "Divina virago," 171, n. 17. There is also a translation of the passage on the same page.

spite of the different meter. Specifically, the two verbs *exsertae* ("exposed") and *concurrere* ("to do battle") both reappear in Eleutherius, although the Elizabethan has decorously transferred the first of these verbs from Penthesilea's exposed breast to Elizabeth's signal prowess and stout right arm. In the collocation *viris virago*, he has also imitated Virgil's play on the nouns *viris* and *virgo*.

The second passage in which Eleutherius echoes Virgil's lines on Penthesilea is written in hexameters and transcribed by Schleiner as follows:¹⁴

Haud procul a pugna Tamesino in litore virgo
splendet ELISA armis, et centum septa catervis;
pro caris non illa Anglis patriaeque salute
tarda subire acies pectusque offerre periclis:
qualis apud gelidi vaga flumina Thermoöontis
aut ripas super, Hebre, tuas, Tanaimque nivalem
Penthesilea viris bello concurrat Amazon,
peltigeras ducens in proelia saeva sorores.

In these lines, the borrowings from Virgil's Penthesilea passage are concentrated at the end.¹⁵ Specifically, Penthesilea's name is put in the same line-initial position that it occupies in Virgil. It could just as well have gone in the fourth and fifth feet, or even in the second and third. The phrase *viris . . . concurrat* reproduces *viris concurrere* in Virgil. Virgil's *lunatis . . . peltis* is transformed into the epic compound *peltigeras*.¹⁶ The finite verb *ducit* ("leads") in Virgil reappears in Eleutherius as the participle *ducens* ("leading"). It is conceivable that *bello* in Eleutherius may owe something to Virgil's *bellatrix*. The two alliterative pairs (an epic mannerism) in Eleutherius' final line could be modeled on the same number of such pairs in the Virgilian passage. In the same line in Eleutherius, the five-word pattern¹⁷ consisting of two nouns, two adjectives, and a participle (a scheme favored by neoterics like Catullus) reproduces the same pattern in the penultimate line of the Virgilian passage.¹⁸ Finally, in Eleutherius' penultimate line, two proper nouns refer-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 171–72, n. 18. The passage is translated on p. 171.

¹⁵ The catalogue of rivers, however, is a pastiche of Virgilian tags culled from *Georgics* 4.517 (*Tanaimque nivalem*) and *Aeneid* 11.659 (*flumina Thermoöontis*) and 12.331 (*qualis apud gelidi cum flumina*).

¹⁶ Here Eleutherius exhibits a certain willful independence. He could have written *peltiferas*, for which there was precedent in Statius. Perhaps he intended to reproduce Statius' neologism with one of his own.

¹⁷ The prepositional phrase *in proelia* constitutes a single word.

¹⁸ For this pattern of words, see L. P. Wilkinson, *Golden Latin Artistry* (Cambridge:

ring to Penthesilea are the first and the last words. This further instance of neoteric artifice is also found in Virgil, whose final line is similarly framed by two common nouns denoting the same Amazon queen.¹⁹

Taken by itself, the fact that Dido and Elizabeth are both compared to Penthesilea is not necessarily significant, for the virgin queen of the Amazons would seem a natural prototype for an unmarried queen whose navy defeated the Spanish Armada. What does make this fact significant, however, is the further consideration that when Edmund Spenser and Eleutherius make this comparison, they do so in a manner that recalls in particular Virgil's implied comparison of Dido to Penthesilea. Thus, comparisons of Elizabeth both to Penthesilea and to Venus Virgo bring Dido to the reader's mind. In turn, this persistent recall of Dido leaves the impression that Dido is meant to serve as a precedent of sorts for Elizabeth.

The representation of Elizabeth as Diana is extremely well known, and for this as well, a model is to be found in Virgil's portrayal of Dido as Diana's mortal counterpart. Virgil's linking of Dido with Diana is perhaps best illustrated by the three similes that compare Dido first to Diana herself (*Aeneid* 1.498–502); then to Diana's animal, the deer (*Aeneid* 4.69–73); and finally to Diana's celestial manifestation as the moon (*Aeneid* 6.453–54). As Viktor Pöschl has written concerning the interrelationship among these similes, which he was the first to notice, "such delicate connections are the hallmark of Virgil's art."²⁰

Pöschl also recognized that the linkage between Dido and Diana does not depend solely—or even primarily—on direct comparisons in similes. Indeed, as a general rule, Dido is only implicitly associated with Diana and her attributes. Pöschl was the first to observe, for example, that when Dido's minstrel Iopas sings of the sun and the moon at the conclusion of *Aeneid* 1, his song is summarized in terms that apply as well to Aeneas and to Dido respectively.²¹ A further con-

Cambridge University Press, 1963; reprint, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 215–17.

¹⁹ For lines framed by a noun and its modifier, see *ibid.*, 217.

²⁰ Viktor Pöschl, *The Art of Vergil: Image and Symbol in the "Aeneid,"* trans. Gerda Seligson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), 153. For the hypothesis that Dido as Diana is a controlling metaphor for "Dido's psychological progression," see Gloria S. Duclos, "Dido as *Triformis Diana*," *Vergilius* 15 (1969): 33–41.

²¹ Pöschl, *Art of Vergil*, 151–52. Duclos, "*Triformis Diana*," 40, n. 11 (N. B. 6.451 misprinted as 4.451), agrees with Pöschl. So does M. Owen Lee, "*Per Nubila Lunam: The Moon in Virgil's Aeneid*," *Vergilius* 34 (1988): 10–12. As far as I know, no one except Lee has noted in print that what is said of the sun in *Aeneid* 1.745–46 can be applied as well to Aeneas hastily putting to sea in the dead of winter in book 4. Nevertheless, stubborn

nection between Dido and the moon is found in the passage describing Dido's analogue Penthesilea, whose Amazon troops carry moon-shaped shields (*Aeneid* 1.490).²² Finally, an association between Dido and the moon would also be implicit in the complementary association of Aeneas with the sun that Pöschl detects in the song of Dido's minstrel. Others have observed the same association not only in *Aeneid* 4.143–49, where a simile explicitly compares Aeneas to the sun god Apollo, but elsewhere in the same book as well.²³

The role of presiding over the hunt also falls within Diana's sphere. It is related to Diana's particular association with the deer, which itself comes to the fore when a simile compares Dido to a wounded doe in *Aeneid* 4.69–73. Her role as huntress Diana shares with Dido. In *Aeneid* 4.136–39, dressed for the hunt, Dido is described in terms that suggest Diana, and, immediately thereafter, a simile likens Aeneas to Diana's twin brother Apollo.²⁴ In book 1, Dido is prefigured by another huntress, Venus Virgo, whom Aeneas initially mistakes for Diana or one of her nymphs. There he also refers to Diana as the sister of Apollo (line 329). Indeed, earlier in the same book, Aeneas complements the huntress Venus Virgo as he later complements the huntress Dido: in lines 184–94, Aeneas goes hunting and kills seven deer.

Virginity is one attribute that the facts of Dido's life will not allow her to share with Diana; yet she comes very close to doing so nevertheless. She has no children, and she has remained celibate ever since her husband was murdered in her homeland. Indeed, as Gloria Duclos has pointed out,²⁵ Dido speaking to her sister in *Aeneid* 4.15–16 sounds more like a virgin determined not to marry at all than like a widow resolved never to marry again. In addition, not only is Dido compared directly to a virgin goddess, but she is prefigured by two women—

scepticism persists in some quarters, e.g., Antonio La Penna, "Towards a History of the Poetic Catalogue of Philosophical Themes," in *Homage to Horace: A Bimillenary Celebration*, ed. S. J. Harrison (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 321. "Let the credulous believe," protests La Penna, "that *solis labores* ['the toils of the sun'] in the *Aeneid* [1.742] . . . foreshadows Aeneas' and Dido's tragedy, even if in this case the credulous is a well-known German colleague."

²² Lee, "Per Nubila Lunam," 11–12.

²³ Viz., *Aeneid* 4.82, for which see *ibid.*, 11, and Clifford Weber, "Some Double Entendres in Ovid and Vergil," *Classical Philology* 85 (1990): 212–13. For moon imagery in connection with Elizabeth I, see Hackett, *Virgin Mother*, 295, s.v. "Elizabeth I and moon-imagery." Corresponding to the solar imagery connected with Aeneas is the comparison of James I to the sun, for which see *ibid.*, 220. Hackett's index nonetheless contains no entry s.v. "Dido."

²⁴ See Wendell Clausen, *Virgil's "Aeneid" and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 22–23.

²⁵ "Triformis Diana," 34.

Venus Virgo and Penthesilea—who are both explicitly said to be virgins (*Aeneid* 1.315, 327, 336, 493).

A final similarity between Dido and Diana consists in the fact that they both have twin brothers either actually (Diana) or metaphorically (Dido). The connection between Diana's twin and the sun has already been mentioned, as has the fact that this complements Diana's own association with the moon. Analogously, as was also observed above, Aeneas is associated with the sun in the song of Dido's minstrel and elsewhere. This complements the linkage between Dido and the moon that is found in the minstrel's song and, later, in the simile that compares Dido to the moon in *Aeneid* 6.453–54. Moreover, when similes liken Dido and Aeneas to Diana (*Aeneid* 1.498–504) and to Apollo (*Aeneid* 4.143–50) respectively, the similes are themselves paired²⁶ and so reflect in their form the resemblance between the twin deities who figure in them. Finally, it bears mentioning parenthetically that the imaging of Dido and Aeneas as the twins Diana and Apollo is based on the reality that they resemble each other in manifold ways, of which the most fundamental is arguably their shared status as Orientals and as potentates.

Somewhat less apparent than their mutual association with Diana is the connection that Dido and Elizabeth share with Cleopatra. To be sure, opinions differ concerning the precise degree to which Virgil modeled his Dido on the historical Cleopatra of his own day; but few readers of the *Aeneid* will agree with Pöschl's extreme view that, with one trivial exception, "the . . . interpretation of Dido as an allegory for Cleopatra is untenable."²⁷ Much closer to the consensus prevailing nowadays is Jasper Griffin's moderate view that "through the figure of the foreign queen who tries to seduce the Roman from his destiny and his home, we feel [in Dido] a certain vibration of the unforgettable Cleopatra."²⁸ Now the Cleopatra whom Elizabethans knew was Plutarch's Cleopatra, and her resemblance to Virgil's Dido is remarkable, as C. B. R. Pelling has shown in some detail.²⁹ It need not concern us here whether Plutarch was drawing upon the *Aeneid* specifically, or

²⁶ See Clausen, *Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry*, 23, 134; also Lewis, "Translating the *Aeneid*," 9–10 (pp. 44–45 in Commager's anthology).

²⁷ Pöschl, *Art of Vergil*, 189.

²⁸ Jasper Griffin, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 194. For a documented list of similarities between Dido and Cleopatra, see Arthur S. Pease, ed., *Publi Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber quartus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 24–26.

²⁹ C. B. R. Pelling, ed., *Plutarch: Life of Antony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 17.

whether he was rather indebted to an inherited conception to which Virgil's Dido had contributed her share. What does deserve emphasis, though, in the present connection is the fact that Elizabethans were equally familiar both with Virgil's Dido and with Plutarch's Cleopatra,³⁰ and hence they would likely have been aware of the ways in which these African queens resemble each other.

Nevertheless, it would seem unlikely *prima facie* that a comparable similarity could have been perceived between Elizabeth and Cleopatra, except to the extent that Cleopatra's connection with Dido might suggest a corresponding connection with Dido's English epigone. Indeed, in every conceivable respect, Elizabeth, rejecting all suitors foreign and domestic, represents the polar opposite of the Egyptian queen who, after marrying and outliving both of her younger brothers, then sought to promote the prosperity of her kingdom by seducing a foreign dynast and becoming his consort. Thus, if any link should exist between Elizabeth and Cleopatra, it would derive not from their mutual resemblance but, on the contrary, from the consistently antithetical relationship that prevails between these two queens.

The pseudonymous Eleutherius would appear to have regarded Elizabeth and Cleopatra in just this light. That is, he aimed to represent Elizabeth as Cleopatra's antithesis. That is the conclusion that emerges from the seven-line passage transcribed on page 131 above. The language of that passage is Virgilian and indebted extensively and unmistakably to the four lines that describe Penthesilea and her Amazons in *Aeneid* 1.490–93. Eleutherius also adopts Virgilian phraseology in the eight lines quoted on page 132, but there he employs Virgil's meter as well. Here in the passage on page 131, Virgilian language is cast not in Virgilian hexameters but rather in Horatian Alcaic stanzas. This striking conflation of Virgilian language with Horatian meter would have been obvious to any reader able to cope with Eleutherius' Latin. Such a reader might even have paused to ponder the implications, and so should we.

Whoever Eleutherius may have been, he knew his Virgil and his Horace well enough to imitate both of them. He was also adequately sophisticated as a poet to be able, as will presently be seen, to use imitation for expressive ends in much the same way as Virgil himself

³⁰ For Virgil in the school curricula of sixteenth-century England, see T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944), 2:456–65 ("next to Ovid in grammar school favor came Virgil"). Plutarch, of course, was widely known in North's translation.

famously did. The manner in which his Virgilian echoes bring Dido to mind has already been elucidated above. The queen whom his Horatian Alcaics evoke, however, is not Dido but Cleopatra. The reasons why deserve to be considered in some detail.

Alcaic stanzas are the Horatian lyric meter *par excellence*. Horace was the first Latin poet to use them, and no other meter is employed so often in his lyric poetry. Of all the Horatian lyrics written in Alcaics, moreover, few if any are now better known or more highly regarded than *Odes* 1.37. That this was also the case in Elizabethan times is, however, extremely unlikely. Among Roman lyric poets, Catullus stood highest in the Elizabethans' esteem,³¹ and Horace was read for the sake of his moral precepts, not because he was widely admired as a poet.³² Accordingly, no English translation of the *Odes* was published in the sixteenth century.³³ That had to wait until, in 1621, one John Ashmore published a translation of selected odes, among which, however, 1.37 was not included. It is hardly any wonder, then, that I have turned up no reference or allusion to *Odes* 1.37 in any sixteenth-century English text whatever. Indeed, such continues to be the case for the first half of the following century as well. Finally, in Robert Herrick's *Hesperides*, published in 1648, we find poem 201 beginning with a twofold echo of the first line of *Odes* 1.37.³⁴ This is followed not many years later by Andrew Marvell's monumental "An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland," which some regard as modeled on *Odes* 1.37.³⁵

Nevertheless, it is also abundantly clear that beginning at an early age, members of the Elizabethan elite possessed a detailed familiarity with the Latin text of Horace in general, and of the *Odes* in particular. The curricula of English grammar schools of the sixteenth century usually specify Horace and prescribe the *Odes* more often than any other Horatian text.³⁶ As for students at university, inventories of books

³¹ L. P. Wilkinson, *Horace and His Lyric Poetry*, 2d ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 167.

³² Valerie Edden, "The Best of Lyric Poets," in *Horace*, ed. C. D. N. Costa (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 135.

³³ In *Tottel's Miscellany* of 1557, however, there are three translations of *Odes* 2.10. One is by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, but the other two are anonymous. Sir Philip Sidney's translation of the same ode was published in 1598, and *Tottel's Miscellany* also includes a translation of *Odes* 4.7 written by an anonymous hand. See D. S. Carne-Ross and Kenneth Haynes, eds., *Horace in English* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 5–6, 67–73.

³⁴ See Gordon Braden, *The Classics and English Renaissance Poetry: Three Case Studies* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 245–46.

³⁵ See William H. Race, *Classical Genres and English Poetry* (London, New York, and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1988), 194–205.

³⁶ Baldwin, *Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, 2:497–98.

owned by Cambridge undergraduates enrolled in the four-year arts course in the sixteenth century establish that Horace was one of only five classical Latin texts that most students owned.³⁷ Accordingly, in a letter written when she was only seventeen, Elizabeth quotes a maxim of Publilius Syrus and erroneously ascribes it to Horace. The nature of this mistake implies that she knew in detail the contents of *Odes* 1.24.³⁸

A similarly precise acquaintance with the text of Horace's *Odes* is evident even in the plays of the relatively Latin-poor William Shakespeare. To be sure, when Chiron reads aloud the first two lines of *Odes* 1.22 in *Titus Andronicus* 4.2.18–24, this proves nothing about Shakespeare's familiarity with the *Odes*. He could have known the lines in question from Lily's Latin grammar, where they are quoted twice. Nevertheless, the detailed study undertaken by Baldwin led that scholar to conclude that there are at least four other passages on which the *Odes* of Horace have left their imprint. Indeed, more of the parallels between Shakespeare and Horace come from the *Odes* than from any other of Horace's works. In two instances, moreover, Shakespeare would also seem, remarkably, to be borrowing material from Lambinus' edition with commentary, which, as published by the Aldine press in 1567, was the text most widely used in the final third of the sixteenth century.³⁹

Therefore, it is demonstrably not the case that Eleutherius' readers would have been ill-equipped to recognize the allusion to Horace's *Odes* that his choice of meter effects. Indeed, his readers might even have perceived an allusion to *Odes* 1.37 in particular. Not only does this ode share the same meter with Eleutherius' poem, but its subject and Lambinus' comment on that subject are conspicuously relevant to the event that Eleutherius was moved to honor.⁴⁰ Horace's "Cleopatra Ode," as *Odes* 1.37 is often called, celebrates Cleopatra's defeat (Antony goes unmentioned) in the decisive naval engagement off Actium that left Octavian uniquely in control of Rome and her empire.

³⁷ L. Jardine, "Humanism and Dialectic in Sixteenth-Century Cambridge: A Preliminary Investigation," in *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 1500–1700*, ed. R. R. Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 153.

³⁸ See J. S. Carberry, "Queen Elizabeth Quotes Horace," *The Classical Weekly* 28 (1934–35): 24.

³⁹ For echoes of the *Odes* in Shakespeare's plays, see Baldwin, *Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, 2:497–500, 505–12. For the magisterial commentary of the Frenchman Lambinus (1520–72), and for traces of it in Shakespeare, see *ibid.*, 2:503, 508–9, 511–12.

⁴⁰ Had I succeeded in obtaining the complete text of Eleutherius' poem, that might conceivably have yielded one or more *verbal* reminiscences of *Odes* 1.37 and Lambinus' commentary on it.

Thus, written in the aftermath of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, Eleutherius' poem would celebrate Elizabeth's naval *victory* by alluding to Cleopatra's naval *defeat* in a comparably momentous engagement.⁴¹ Elizabeth would thus emerge as the antithesis of her ancient Egyptian counterpart. She is a queen whose command over a navy as mighty as Cleopatra's led not to defeat but to victory in the decisive naval engagement of her time.

Even if Eleutherius had failed to perceive on his own initiative a similarity between the Battle of Actium and the victory over the Armada, Lambinus' commentary on Horace's ode would likely have nudged him in this direction. According to Lambinus' note on *Odes* 1.37.3, the poem urges Horace's fellow citizens to celebrate the victory at Actium, and to do so in a manner closely resembling the celebration that Elizabeth's subjects had themselves observed only months before Eleutherius' poems were published. Lambinus' note, translated, reads as follows:

When an enemy had been defeated or public affairs had in some other way been managed well and the common danger repulsed, the Romans used to decree a thanksgiving at all the *pulvinaria* [ritual couches] of the gods, and to proclaim several days as holidays, to be celebrated with public merry-making. . . . In this ode, Horace exhorts his comrades to make merry on account of the victory at Actium.⁴²

Remarkably similar to this Roman custom as described by Lambinus are the celebrations actually held in honor of the Armada victory. These Christopher Hibbert has colorfully described as follows:

On the afternoon of 9 August the Queen returned to London, where the citizens crowded the streets, shouting for joy. She announced that next St. Elizabeth's

⁴¹ A straightforward example of the same procedure in Virgil can be seen in *Aeneid* 6.692, which echoes poem 101 in Catullus but inverts the Catullan context. In Catullus, a living poet who has traveled from Italy to Troy addresses his dead brother; in Virgil, a dead father addresses a living son who has traveled to Italy from Troy. See J. E. G. Zetzel, "Catullus, Ennius, and the Poetics of Allusion," *Illinois Classical Studies* 8 (1983): 254–55. For Virgil's inversions of Lucretius, see Bonnie A. Catto, "Vergilian Inversion of Lucretius in Anchises' Exposition of the Soul," *Vergilius* 35 (1989): 60–69 and the sources cited there in nn. 5–7.

⁴² Dionysius Lambinus, ed., *Quintus Horatius Flaccus . . . opera* (Venice: Paulus Manutius Aldi filius, 1566), 68^o. Lambinus' Latin is as follows:

Solebant Romani, vel devictis hostibus vel quovis alio modo republica bene gesta et periculo communi propulsato, ad omnia pulvinaria deorum supplicationem decernere atque aliquot dies festos laetitia publica celebrandos indicere. . . . Hac oda autem Horatius sodales suos ad laetitiam exhortatur ob victoriam Actiacam.

Day, 19 November, would . . . be a public holiday; and on that day, and for three days thereafter, there were festivities and pageants throughout the country, bear-baitings and cockfights, dancing and tug-o'-wars, plays and tableaux. In London on Sunday 24 November the Queen went in procession to a service of thanksgiving in St. Paul's Cathedral, riding in a chariot drawn by two white horses, like the Goddess of Victory.⁴³

The congruence between recent history and Roman custom as described by Lambinus could well have prompted Eleutherius to associate Actium and the Armada, and to perceive an antithesis between the two queens whose navies fought in each of those conflicts. If Eleutherius was influenced by Lambinus' commentary on Horace, he had distinguished company in this regard in none other than William Shakespeare. If he saw a connection between Octavian's victory at Actium and the momentous events of his own day, he was not the last to do so. Andrew Marvell did likewise when, decades later, he too looked back at Horace's ode and found in Actium a precedent for contemporary history.

In this Latin ode of Eleutherius, then, the victorious Elizabeth is implicitly contrasted with the same historical queen whom Virgil's Dido is made to resemble. There is a further connection linking both Dido and Elizabeth to Cleopatra, but it derives from similarity rather than from contrast. This is the lunar and Artemisian symbolism that Dido and Elizabeth share with Cleopatra as well as with each other. Elizabethans would have known from their Plutarch that Cleopatra's twin daughter by Antony was named "Cleopatra Moon." This implied analogy between her and Diana was clinched, moreover, when her twin brother was assimilated to Diana's twin and called "Alexander Sun." Indeed, it is not inconceivable that the lunar and Artemisian symbolism surrounding Cleopatra's daughter could have induced Virgil to adopt the same imagery for Cleopatra's mythical analogue, Dido. As is clear from Octavian's diatribe against Antony's un-Roman ways in *Dio Cassius* 50.25.3-4 (written some 250 years after the event), these names conferred on Cleopatra's twins were notorious.

Thus, the link that binds both Dido and Elizabeth to Cleopatra constitutes another element that these two queens have in common. Their shared linkage with Cleopatra extends to their sea power as well. Like

⁴³ Christopher Hibbert, *The Virgin Queen: Elizabeth I, Genius of the Golden Age* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1991), 224. I am indebted to the kindness of the current publisher, Perseus Books (New York), for permission to quote this passage.

Elizabeth and Cleopatra, Dido too possessed a formidable fleet, as Virgil continually reminds us.⁴⁴ Therefore, when Elizabeth's Armada victory was commemorated on coins inscribed with the phrase (*dux femina facti*) that Venus Virgo uses of Dido escaping from Tyre in ships in *Aeneid* 1.364, this implied comparison between Elizabeth and Dido was apt and grounded in fact.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, surely the most salient connection uniting Dido with Elizabeth resides in their shared nomenclature. At her birth, Dido was called "Elissa," and when this name appears for the first time in *Aeneid* 4.335, its unfamiliarity suggests the estrangement that has suddenly opened up between the royal lovers. According to Ronald B. McKerrow, Elizabethans considered "Elissa" and "Eliza" to be the same name. Thus, Gabriel Harvey, for example, writing in Latin, could denote Elizabeth with the name "Elissa" that Virgil had given Dido.⁴⁶ Conversely, in Charles Stephanus' *Dictionarium historicum* of 1595, which Stephen Orgel calls "a standard source book for the age," Dido's name at birth is given as "Eliza."⁴⁷ One writer may even have referred to Elizabeth as "Dido,"⁴⁸ which would follow naturally enough from her being called "Elissa."

In an article now more than half a century old, Celeste T. Wright argued that Amazons had a bad press in the Renaissance, and that writers among Elizabeth's subjects therefore refrained from explicitly comparing their queen to an Amazon. This premise and the conclusion drawn from it were eventually refuted by Winfried Schleiner.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Wright's thesis might still be tenable had it rather been applied

⁴⁴ *Aeneid* 1.362–64, 1.427, 4.87, 4.544–46, 4.566, 4.593–94.

⁴⁵ See Schleiner, "Divina virago," 180, citing William Camden's history of Elizabeth's reign, written in Latin and published in London in 1615.

⁴⁶ Ronald B. McKerrow, ed., *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 5 vols. (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1904–10; reprint ed. by F. P. Wilson, Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), 4:300, where the relevant lines of Harvey are quoted.

⁴⁷ Stephen Orgel, "Shakespeare and the Cannibals," in *Cannibals, Witches, and Divorce: Estranging the Renaissance*, ed. Marjorie Garber (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 60–62.

⁴⁸ Eleanor G. Clark, *Raleigh and Marlowe: A Study in Elizabethan Fustian* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1941; reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), 92; but Clark's citation of Ashe's *Elizabeth's Farewell to the Army* I have not been able to confirm. The same claim is advanced by Orgel, "Shakespeare and the Cannibals," 60–62, but there documentation is lacking entirely.

⁴⁹ Wright's article is "The Amazons in Elizabethan Literature," *Studies in Philology* 37 (1940): 433–56. Schleiner collects literary comparisons of Elizabeth with Amazons in "Divina virago," 170–80.

to comparisons of Elizabeth to Dido. To be sure, there were clear parallels between Elizabeth and the chaste Elissa who resembled Diana and, like Penthesilea, was fully a match for men. In other respects, however, Dido would have been an inexact and even embarrassing prototype for Elizabeth. Especially with regard to the question of Elizabeth's marriage, it simply would not do to compare her overtly to a mythical queen who rejected all suitors in defense of a vow of chastity, only to break that vow and openly live in sin with a foreign prince newly arrived from distant shores. Next to this, the awkward details of Dido's suicide and dereliction of her duties as queen would have paled by comparison. Even more than the example of the mythical Dido, the precedent of the historical Cleopatra would have been, quite simply, intolerable. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that Elizabethan literature is apparently devoid of overt comparisons between Elizabeth and either Dido or Dido's Egyptian epigone. At least I have found none cited in the secondary literature. There, indeed, the names of Dido and Cleopatra are conspicuous for their absence from indices.⁵⁰ Thus, it is hardly any wonder that when Constance Jordan examined the vignettes from the Dido story that decorate a column in the so-called Siena Portrait of Elizabeth, Jordan assumed that the queen and the vignettes are connected, but Elizabeth's analogue she found not in Dido but in Aeneas.⁵¹

Nevertheless, even if direct comparisons were impossible, indirect allusions were quite another matter. As I have argued, the affinities among Dido, Cleopatra, and Elizabeth were simply too numerous and too salient to be suppressed entirely. Therefore, even when we limit our attention to the primary sources cited by Schleiner and Hackett, we find unmistakable suggestions of a resemblance between Elizabeth and her antecedents in ancient Africa. This being the case, intimations of the same resemblance are only to be expected in other sources as well. One of these, in Diana E. Henderson's opinion, is Marlowe's play *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, which was produced in 1587, two years before Eleutherius' *Triumphalia* were published. "In Marlowe's rendering," writes

⁵⁰ See n. 23 above, for example. A conspicuous exception is John Watkins's recent book, *The Specter of Dido: Spenser and Virgilian Epic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995). Regrettably, this study came to my attention too late to be taken into account.

⁵¹ Constance Jordan, "Representing Political Androgyny: More on the Siena Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I," in *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, ed. Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 168–69.

Henderson, "the compelling . . . associations are . . . between Elizabeth and Dido."⁵² Whatever the truth in this matter may ultimately prove to be, the least that can be said in favor of Henderson's view is that it has plausibility to recommend it.⁵³

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⁵² Henderson, *Passion Made Public*, 148.

⁵³ I am indebted to Fr. M. Owen Lee for a contrasting anecdote concerning Elizabeth's twentieth-century namesake. In a letter dated 9 October 1997, Fr. Lee writes that when a televised tribute to Covent Garden showed Elizabeth II entering that venerable house, "the entire company sang, in English, Dido's entrance from *Les Troyens*." Even for those sufficiently knowledgeable to recognize Dido's music and its transference to Elizabeth II, the nature and the events of the latter's reign will have dispelled any nascent thoughts of further connections between Dido and Elizabeth II.