

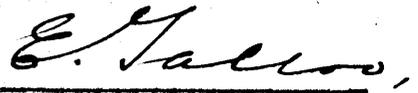
THE SOPHONISBA STORY
IN
FRENCH AND ENGLISH DRAMA

by

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INTRODUCTION

The story of Sophonisba is one which has attracted dramatists of many ages. It is the story of a Carthaginian princess who, betrothed to Masinissa, king of the Massylians, was married to Syphax, a Numidian king, in order to insure the latter's loyalty to Carthage. A conflict resulted between these rivals in which Masinissa captured the princess and married her. He was forced to send her a nuptial gift of poison to save her from Rome, his ally.

On this theme, and in various countries, tragedies have been written from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the present day.

Although Sophonisba is at least mentioned in most histories of Rome, the most complete account of her story is found in Livy. Yet he omits entirely the betrothal which is given as a fact by Appian of Alexandria and accepted by nearly all dramatists. Polybius, a contemporary historian, also mentions the betrothal, but stresses the great influence which Sophonisba exerted upon her husband, Syphax, and claims that it was she who prevented his remaining an ally of Rome. (1)
Dio Cassius repeats the story and emphasizes the great beauty and charm of Sophonisba. (2) Without varying from Livy, Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch devote a few lines to Sophonisba. (3)

(4)

Petrarch treats this story twice and in entirely different spirit. In his great Latin epic poem, "Africa", the fifth canto of which he devotes to the episode of Sophonisba and Masinissa, he apparently knew nothing of Appian, and his heroine is but the enemy of Rome. Ricci says, "Il suit Tite-Live, mais développe, brode des variations sur les motifs historiques"⁽⁵⁾. His later treatment of Sophonisba in the "Trionfo d'Amore" pictures her as influenced by love rather than by patriotism.

(6)

In Italy in 1502 Galeotto del Carretto produced a religious drama on the subject of Sophonisba, but the first Italian tragedy of mark⁽⁷⁾ was Trissino's presented in 1515.⁽⁸⁾

"Le Trissin le traita selon toutes les règles et les habitudes des tragiques grecs de telle sorte qu'on a dit souvent avec raison que la Sophonisbe était à la fois la première des tragédies régulières du théâtre italien de la Renaissance, et en même temps la dernière de l'antiquité"⁽⁹⁾.

During the eighteenth century Saverio Pansuti, Alessandro Pepoli and Alfieri, who is inspired by the hatred of governmental authority,⁽¹⁰⁾ compose dramas on the subject of Sophonisba.⁽¹¹⁾

(12)

Two tragi-comedies and some fifteen operas for which Sophonisba furnished the material, were written in Italy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which period was closed with an historical drama by Girolama de Rada,⁽¹³⁾ an Albanian poet.

None of these works have any great intrinsic value,

but they show by their number the attraction which the
subject continued to exercise. (14)

In France as well as in Italy this story has many times appeared in dramatic form from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Voltaire says, "Il est très remarquable qu'en France aussi qu'en Italie l'art tragique ait commencé par une Sophonisbe" (5).

The first French tragedy on this theme was written by Melin de Saint-Gelays and was but a "traduction libre, abrégée en certains endroits, et tout le mérite de la pièce revient à l'auteur italien". During the sixteenth century there were five or six authors who translated or paraphrased (17) the tragedy by Trissino of which the Frères Parfaict mention Melin de Saint-Gelays, (18) Montchrestien, (19) Mermet (29) and Montreux. (21)

Then follows Mairet's master-piece "Sophonisbe" which has won the well-deserved title of the first classic tragedy in France, by the interest which the author shows in the "états d'âme" of his characters rather than in plot, and the fact that he first in Sophonisbe applies the famous unities of Aristotle. (22) "L'oeuvre de Mairet", says Lancaster, "fait date dans l'histoire de la littérature française. Sa "Sophonisbe est considérée comme la première tragédie tout à fait classique. On ne peut pas comprendre l'évolution de la tragédie classique sans

étudier les pièces de cet auteur qui a montré le chemin
(23)
à Corneille".

The "Sophonisbe" of Corneille is characteristic of his later manner and was the second tragedy produced after his return to play writing. "Les défauts de Corneille s'étaient exagérés. De plus en plus on le voit multiplier les intrigues amoureuses et les entretiens galants; dans les incidents d'une action antique par le cadre, choisir et mettre en lumière de préférence ceux qui peuvent éveiller des souvenirs modernes et provoquer des comparaisons piquantes par des allusions plus ou moins voilées; incarner une idée dans un personnage et donner au drame un caractère tout abstrait".
(24)

La Grange Chancel, "un de ces auteurs qui servent
(25)
de transition entre Racine et Voltaire" composed a Sophonisbe near the beginning of the eighteenth century.
(26)
It was presented but four times and was not printed.

Voltaire bases his Sophonisbe upon Mairet's and says in the Épître Dédicatoire à M. le duc de la Vallière, "Je crois donc vous présenter une image digne de vous, en ressuscitant la mère de toutes les tragédies françaises, laissée depuis quatre-vingts ans dans son tombeau".
(27)
(28)
Parisset and Dalban follow with their variations of the Sophonisbe story.

To Alfred Poizat, a contemporary French poet, belongs

the honor of producing the only twentieth century version of this oft-repeated theme.

But this subject has not been the exclusive property of Italy and France and several other nations have contributed dramas on ^{this theme.} Sophonisbas written during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first of these was "The Wonder of Women or The Tragedy of Sophonisba" by John Marston whose interest in things Italian, due perhaps to the fact that his mother was an Italian, was so great as to make Swinburne say, "Marston is in more points than one the most Italian of our dramatists."⁽²⁹⁾⁽³⁰⁾

The English taste for Romanticism is the prevailing note in this drama as also in Lee's "Sophonisba or Hannibal's Overthrow", which followed in 1676, while, on the contrary, James Thomson's "Sophonisba" is "sternly classical in the simplicity of its plot and heaviness of its inflated rhetoric."⁽³¹⁾

To this long list of tragedies must be added Almeida Garrett's Portuguese drama which he calls "Sophonisba o Amor da Patria" and Geibel's ⁽³²⁾ in Germany. "A. Andrae in an essay on the treatment of Sophonisba in French and other literatures, mentions a Spanish drama 'Las Amantes de Cártago', which resembles Marston's in several respects, but is of uncertain date."⁽³⁴⁾

Most of these plays, the French and the Italian

at least, are classical, as is to be expected from a subject
which is in itself ideal for classical treatment. (35) In
England, however, "tragedy was, from the first, wild and
popular entertainment allied to the mediaeval farce rather
than to anything of Aristotle. The classical play which had
enjoyed so overwhelming a success in Italy and France
had been glanced at by English poets, gingerly touched
and rejected as inappropriate and unsympathetic". (36)

SOURCES

It is the purpose of this study to examine the French and English versions of the Sophonisba story, showing, as far as possible, which incidents are drawn from history and whether those added by each successive dramatist have been accepted and used by those who followed. It will therefore be necessary to analyze, in detail, the story as recorded by Livy, and the events added by other historians, which will present the basic material used in the tragedies.

The story of the marriage and death of Sophonisba is found in Livy's "History of Rome", Book XXX, 11-15; but as, on the one hand she and Syphax, her husband, are representing Carthage, and on the other, Scipio and Masinissa, who, to quote Livy, "was by far the greatest king of his age, and rendered most essential service to the Romans",⁽³⁷⁾ stand for the Roman empire, it is natural that incidents which lead up to the catastrophe should be found all along through the last part of the Second Punic War as recorded in Livy, Books XXVII to XXIX.

At the time that the events in the life of Sophonisba were unfolding in Africa, Carthage had been suffering reverses. Hannibal had been repulsed in Italy while, in Spain, Hasdrubal

and Masinissa had been attacked and defeated by Scipio, who, upon finding among the prisoners a young Numidian prince, nephew of Masinissa, bestowed gifts upon him and sent him back to his uncle. This incident is introduced by Lee and this same kindness of Scipio's is applied to a friend of Masinissa by Thomson.

Syphax had previously sent for and entertained at Cirta, his capital, the rival generals, Hasdrubal and Scipio, and so charmed was he by the pleasing personality and cultured manner of the latter that he entered into an alliance with Rome that very day.

This news soon reached Carthage and, realizing the danger in having so close a neighbor as Syphax bound to their enemy, Rome, the Carthaginians sent Hasdrubal back to Cirta with his daughter, Sophonisba, whom he gave in marriage to the king. The former agreement between Syphax and Rome was not mentioned, but Hasdrubal, knowing the inconstancy of the barbarians, added to the joys of the occasion by a public oath, "in confirmation of an alliance between the Carthaginian people and the king, and faith reciprocally pledged that they would have the same friends and the same enemies".

Now while this was taking place in Africa, Masinissa,

in Spain, had sought an interview with Scipio and suggested an alliance with Rome to which Scipio gladly agreed. Being informed of the death of his father Masinissa returned to Africa to take possession of his kingdom which had come under the control of Syphax, and the small army which Masinissa had hastily gathered together was soon defeated by the older king. Masinissa himself, wounded, was fortunate to escape with a few friends to a cave where he awaited assistance from Scipio to whom he had appealed.

This message reached Scipio just as he was experiencing the great disappointment of the break with Syphax. Therefore, anxious for an opportunity to enter Africa, he was all the more ready to respond. With Scipio's aid conditions were soon reversed so that Syphax at one time even considered making peace, but was dissuaded from so doing by his wife's appeal to his love for her.

Syphax was driven back several times and at last he himself was captured and taken to Laelius. The people of Cirta, on seeing their king in chains, lost hope and opened the gates to the conqueror, Masinissa, who rushed on to the palace to capture the queen. She, however, came to meet him at the threshold, and appealing to him

as one of the same blood, to rescue her, the daughter of Hasdrubal, from the power of any Roman, implored him to save her by death if no other means were available. Livy adds that "her language assuming the character of amorous blandishments rather than entreaty, the heart of the conqueror not only melted with compassion, but, as the Numidians are an excessively amorous race, he became the slave of his captive".⁽³⁹⁾

Having pledged himself to save her from the Romans, Masinissa set about to find a way to keep his promise. As the wife of a captive king she was, of course, Roman booty, but he judged that she would be safe as the wife of the conqueror, and consequently married her that very day before Laelius or Scipio could learn of his plan and prevent it. Laelius, having learned of the marriage, would still have taken her as a captive along with Syphax, but Masinissa persuaded him to leave to Scipio the decision as to whose wife she should be.

Unfortunately Scipio learned of the marriage first from Syphax who told him that the one source of satisfaction to him in his condition lay in the fact that Masinissa, his greatest enemy, had married

Sophonisba and that she would, no doubt, turn this second husband from Rome as she had already done in his own case. As a consequence Scipio had reached a decision before Masinissa had an opportunity to present his plea.

When Scipio met Masinissa he complimented him on his success in taking Cirta but demanded that Sophonisba be given up as Roman booty. He urged him to subdue his passions and not mar so splendid a record with one misdeed.

Masinissa, at this, burst into tears, but promised to submit to Scipio's decision and retired to his tent where amid sighs and groans he laid his plans. Then calling a faithful servant, one in whose custody the poison was kept, he had some mixed in a cup and sending it to Sophonisba he assured her that since he had been deprived of the power to keep his first promise to her, his wife, he now performed the second so that she need not come alive into the power of the Romans. He called upon her to think of her glorious ancestry and of the two kings to whom she had been married and to take such measure as she considered proper.

Without any show of feeling, Sophonisba received this cup and drank it saying that it was not unwelcome to her since her husband could offer her no better present, but that she would have died more happily had she not been

married "so near upon her death".

Scipio, as soon as he learned of the event, sent for Masinissa and "at one time attempted to solace him, at another gently rebuked him for expiating one act of temerity with another, and rendering the affair more tragical than was necessary".⁽⁴¹⁾ The next day he called an assembly at which time he saluted Masinissa as king and proceeded to shower rich rewards upon him.

In addition to the story as given by Livy, Appian of Alexandria, in BookVIII, 2-5 of his Roman History, mentions several incidents which dramatists have been inclined to include in their tragedies of Sophonisba. The most important of these is the record of the betrothal of Sophonisba to Masinissa which is as follows:

Hasdrubal, before going to Spain, promised his daughter, Sophonisba, to Masinissa, son of the king of Massylia. At this Syphax, a rival suitor, became jealous and took his revenge by pillaging the Carthaginian territory and planning an alliance with Rome. The Carthaginians then, ignoring her father's promise to Masinissa and unknown to either of them, gave Sophonisba to Syphax to win him by her charms and hold him loyal to Carthage.

When Hasdrubal and Masinissa, fighting against Scipio in Spain, learned of this treachery, Masinissa,

became very angry and entered into an agreement with Scipio. On the other hand, Hasdrubal, though grieved at the outrage to his daughter and to his friend, "thought that it would be an advantage to the country to make away with Masinissa", ⁽⁴²⁾ and when the young prince went back to Africa, at his father's death, to take possession of his kingdom, Hasdrubal "sent a navalry escort with him and told them to put him to death secretly in whatever way they could" ⁽⁴³⁾. Masinissa learned of the plot and managed to escape, remaining hidden until Scipio's arrival in Africa, when, desirous of regaining Sophonisba, and his kingdom which Syphax had seized, he joined with Scipio.

This betrothal puts the hasty marriage of Masinissa and Sophonisba in a somewhat different light and has been accepted by nearly all dramatists.

Appian also mentions that when Syphax found the war was not going in his favor he determined to make peace, promising Masinissa to "establish him firmly in his kingdom and give him in marriage whichever of his three daughters he should choose" ⁽⁴⁴⁾. Syphax also gave his messenger money with which to bribe a servant to kill Massinissa if he did not accept the proposition. The message was delivered, but the servant who accepted the money carried it to Massinissa, revealing the plot. Inflamed all the more by this treachery, Masinissa pressed on to Cirta.

Again there is found in Appian an incident which Livy does not mention that Sophonisba, on learning that Masinissa had succeeded in taking Cirta, sent a messenger who told him of her forced marriage. Masinissa gladly accepted this explanation and married her, but left her at Cirta when he returned to Scipio, to whom Syphax had already accused Sophonisba of being the cause of his disloyalty.

According to Appian's record it was Masinissa who captured Syphax and he himself carried the poison to Sophonisba. Then, after "explaining the circumstances and telling her that she must either drink it or go into voluntary captivity to the Romans, without another word he mounted his horse"⁽⁴⁵⁾.

While Livy does not mention the nurse, Appian says that Sophonisba "told her not to weep for her as she died gloriously, and drank the poison"⁽⁴⁶⁾. The record continues, "Masinissa showed her dead body to the Romans who had now come up, then gave her a royal funeral; after which he returned to Scipio"⁽⁴⁷⁾.

The account of Dio Cassius adds nothing to the stories of Livy and Appian except a more detailed description of the beauty and charms of Sophonisba.⁽⁴⁸⁾

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Polybius, ⁽⁵⁰⁾ Plutarch and Diodorus Sicellus mention the story but do not add to the incidents.

From Lucan's "Pharsalia" Marston has drawn his
(51)
scene in the temple of Eryctho.

This completes the list of sources of the Sophonisba story used as a basis for the various French and English dramas on this theme, a discussion of which will now follow in chronological order.

MELIN DE SAINT-GELAYS

In France the first tragedy of "Sophonisbe" is that of Melin-de Saint-Gelays which appeared in 1560. (52) It is written in prose except the chorus, an "assemblée de dames de Cirthe", which is generally in verse. This is the only French version of Sophonisbe in prose. The chorus is due to the Greek influence upon Trissino of which this play "n'est en réalité qu'une traduction libre abrégée en certains endroits". (53) It is not divided into Acts and Scenes, but has four "Intermedies".

As the play opens Sophonisbe with her faithful companion is anxiously awaiting the outcome of a battle between Massinisse and Syphax. Sophonisbe feels that she is really the cause of the battle since it was only after the Carthaginians gave her to Syphax to regain his favor, that Massinisse, to whom her father had previously promised her, became the tireless enemy of Syphax. A messenger rushing in begs her to flee, telling her that Syphax is captive, Cirta has fallen and Massinisse is advancing toward the palace.

Livy does not mention the messenger nor the nourrice who are found in Appian; perhaps he takes them for granted. In any case they appear in all the dramas. The betrothal, too, found only in Appian, is

taken over without change by all the dramatists but two, and one of them adapts it.

Sophonisbe's appeal to Massinisse to save her, and his attitude, the marriage, with Lelie's demand that Sophonisbe be given up and Massinisse's refusal, follow Livy, in the first speeches almost literally. From his record also is drawn the character of Cato, who never appears elsewhere.

Syphax, in reply to Scipion's question as to the cause of his disloyalty says, as in history, that it was his love for Sophonisbe, a Carthaginian. He is not so revengeful as in Livy. Scipion's command on seeing Syphax in chains, "Le Roy Syphax demeurera icy avec moy", (54) is typical of the gentler side of his nature which most dramatists have stressed.

Massinisse is entirely subject to Scipion and on learning the Roman's decision sorrowfully sends the cup of poison to Sophonisbe who receives and drinks it and, still as in Livy, lets the messenger carry her reply back to Massinisse, all with perfect composure. It is only as she entrusts her small son, a character introduced by Saint-Gelays, to her companion, that she shows any emotion.

Contrary to history Massinisse regrets sending the

poison and rushes to the palace with plans for flight only to arrive too late. But after a brief outburst of grief he, with much composure, as in Appian, plans ^{her} for a royal funeral.

In this drama much of the story is told by the chorus even such incidents as the sending of the poison, its receipt by Sophonisbe and her death.

MONTCHRESTIEN

Another French version of Trissino's "Sophonisba" was written by Montchrestien who in 1596⁽⁵⁵⁾ published a much-changed second edition of his own play and called it "La Cartaginoise ou la Liberté".

Unlike the earlier translation by Melin de Saint-Gelays, it is divided into acts, but at the close of each one the chorus appears with an effect similar to the older poet's "Intermedies". Instead of dwelling upon the story as it sometimes did in the previous tragedy, the chorus here speaks of sentiments and of abstract subjects vaguely related. The action of the play is slow for there are many long speeches, some of them not even related to the theme.

As will be noticed from the title, Sophonisbe is guided by a desire for liberty rather than by love or patriotism.

The plot is presented in the same manner as by Melin de Saint-Gelays; Sophonisbe is in Cirta, the battle is taking place between Syphax and Rome, the messenger brings news of the fall of Cirta. No one seems to notice that the fate of Syphax is not mentioned, so interested are they all in the fact that Massinisse has regained his kingdom.

The whole second act is taken up with long speeches of Sophonisbe and Massinisse. The latter, first, in a monologue, expresses righteous satisfaction at overcoming Syphax who had usurped his throne and says,

"Or le Ciel tout-puissant mon Throne a restabl
Mon propre deshonneur m'a de gloire anobli"

(56)

"Tout se fait par destin comme le Ciel ordonne".

Excepting for the stress upon "Destiny", thus far the play follows Livy's account, and it continues to do so.

Sophonisbe tries her "amorous blandishments" on Massinisse, pleading with him not to let her fall into the hands of any Roman, to which he replies in his very first real speech by asking her to marry him and is as promptly accepted without the least inquiry on her part as to the fate of Syphax, her husband. There is no pretense of affection by either of them. Massinisse is won by beauty and by pity for the captive queen as he later explains to Lélie, while Sophonisbe's whole purpose is "liberté".

It is a great surprise to Lélie to learn that such a warrior has been captivated by a pretty face, but Massinisse assuring him that he has lost the desire to be free, urges Lélie to intercede for him with Scipion, who

has been informed by Syphax of Sophonisbe's influence, as recorded in Livy. This seems to have been the only purpose for which Syphax was introduced, as he does not even ask for a speedy decision as to his fate as he did in the previous play.

The poet fails to allow Massinisse to express the emotion which he no doubt felt, but has him, in the conversation with Scipio, readily accede to the latter's demand that he give up Sophonisbe, only requesting to be allowed to keep his promise to her, "de luy oster la vie".⁽⁵⁷⁾ At first Scipion refuses, not because of the moral side of the question, but because of the feeling which her death would arouse in Cirta. Yielding at last he says,

"C'est tout un, neantmoins que Sophonisbe meure:
Nous perdon l'ennemie et l'ami nous demeure". (58)

According to Livy Scipion did not approve nor even know of the plan for her death.

Massinisse deploras his powerlessness to save her or to die with her and says,

"Tel est le sort cruel qui me donne la loy,
Que ie ne puis mourir ou vivre avecques toy". (58)

He then sends her the poison with this message and, as in Livy, proceeds to forget the incident.

Sophonisbe gladly drinks the poison and replying

to the messenger's explanations she says,

"La personne qui meurt, gardant sa liberté,
Trouve dedans la mort son immortalité".(60)

Montchrestien's variations from Livy are very slight and in the characters rather than in the action. Omitting the betrothal found in Appian, as he does, Massinisse's purpose in the war is to regain his kingdom; in marriage he is influenced by Sophonisbe's beauty, not by an earlier love or a desire to save her. Her appeal is for liberty instead of for Carthage although Syphax blames her patriotism for his break with Rome. Massinisse and Scipion are both more cold-blooded than Livy pictures them.

The one change in incident is that of the death of the nourrice. This does not occur in any other play although in the tragedy by Melin de Saint-Gelays and one later dramatist she begs her mistress to let her die and lives only because of Sophonisbe's insistence that she care for her child.

MARSTON

After the strictly classical treatment of the story of Sophonisba by Melin de Saint-Gelays and Montchrestien, it is somewhat surprising to find the next in chronological order the most romantic of all. It was written in 1606⁽⁶¹⁾ by an English poet, John Marston, "a harsh and strident satirist in the first decade of the seventeenth century,"⁽⁶²⁾ and is called "The Wonder of Women or The Tragedy of Sophonisba".

As to the choice of subject Thorndike says, "The majority of subjects of popular tragedy after 1570 were from classical or Italian subjects, many from Livy"⁽⁶³⁾ and well characterizes this play when he adds "whether history or fiction, the more marvelous the better, ending in death and probably romantic love".⁽⁶⁴⁾

Marston, who excelled, if at all, in the "depiction of the abnormal excesses of contemporary manners",⁽⁶⁵⁾ treats this story in a very different manner from any other author. Accepting the betrothal as found in Appian, he goes farther and makes it the point about which the whole drama unfolds.

After a preliminary scene in which Syphax, a disappointed lover, vows vengeance upon Carthage and all connected with it, the music and congratulations of the marriage of Massinissa and Sophonisba are heard. Into this rejoicing bursts the voice of a messenger with the announcement that

a fleet bearing Scipio and his army has arrived. Then Gelosso, an old Carthaginian patriot, in the name of the Senate, calls for Massinissa to lead out his soldiers in defense. He quickly responds, leaving, in the care of the Senate, Sophonisba who says,

"I will not stay my lord".
"Fight for our country".

and Massinissa replies,

"Wondrous creature". I, 2.

The second act is a development of Appian's record of the Carthaginian Senate's action in breaking up the marriage by giving Sophonisba to Syphax, and of their effort to dispose of Massinissa. In this case the plot is made by the Senate but Hasdrubal consents to it with the understanding that Massinissa's kingdom will come to him. Sophonisba, although she insists that the deed is unworthy of Carthage, at last yields saying,

"Lords of Carthage, thus:
The air and earth of Carthage own my body;
It is their servant; what decree they of it? II, 1.

Gelosso alone contends for keeping faith with Massinissa and cries,

"Carthage must fall;
Jove hates all vice, but vows' breach worst of all". II, 1.

Whereupon, disguising himself, he goes to Massinissa and, after warning him of the plot, advises him to push forward

and join Scipio while Syphax is taken up with the idea that Sophonisba is to be his.

The next scene is at Cirta where Syphax, no longer mindful of the battle, greets Sophonisba on her arrival with a report that Massinissa has been killed and insists that she accept his suit at once. In order to gain time she insists on first performing rites in memory of Massinissa according to a previous vow. Syphax consents and leaves her guarded only by a servant whom she drugs, after which she escapes through a vault to a forest and might have been safe but for her confidant, who, bribed by Syphax, delays her until he arrives with a guard who takes her back to Cirta.

Although it is hardly worth while to mention history in connection with any part of this narrative, the betrayal of Sophonisba by her confidant is not historical and in no other play is there anything but the greatest of devotion shown. In several the companion threatens to kill herself at the death of Sophonisba and, as has been seen, does so in the tragedy of Montchrestien.

When Massinissa learned through his nephew, an historical character though changed as to incident, the trend of affairs at Carthage, he accepted the advice of Gelloso, the one Carthaginian senator loyal to him, allied

himself with Scipio and rushed on to Cirta to regain his bride.

At this point Marston drops any idea of the classical treatment of an historical subject and introduces the incident of the visit of Syphax to the temple of Erictho which he borrows from Lucan's Pharsalia ⁽⁶⁶⁾ and describes it in the "realistic spirit habitual to his age" ⁽⁶⁷⁾.

The purpose of Syphax is to learn from the enchantress whether or not Sophonisba will ever be his. Erictho, in order to serve her own purposes, answers what she knows will please him, and then disguising herself as Sophonisba proceeds to make good her prophecy. Recognizing that he has been duped, Syphax falls before an altar "sacred to black powers", ⁽⁶⁸⁾ whereupon, a second use of the supernatural, the ghost of Asdrubal appears to him. Again Syphax fails to receive any answer to his question, the spirit merely confessing his own misdeeds and their punishment.

Returning, Syphax meets Massinissa, who, with Scipio's consent, is advancing toward the palace but with such haste that he has outdistanced the men. A duel is fought "For Sophonisba", V, 2, and Syphax, fallen, is about to be killed when, learning that Sophonisba is safe in the palace, Massinissa leaves the prisoner with Scipio who has come up by this time and he rushes on.

Here Marston shows a curious bit of inconsistency in putting into the mouth of Syphax the speech as found in Livy that the cause of his disloyalty to Rome was Sophonisba's patriotism when, according to the play, he never had a conversation with her except to urge her to marry him.

Into the two remaining short scenes Marston crowds all of the record which furnishes the material for most of the plays: the arrival of the messenger with news of the fall of Cirta, the appeal to Sophonisbe to "fly", as in Melin de Saint-Gelays, and the coming of Massinissa to the palace ending with the death of the queen.

Sophonisba begins her appeal, as in history, to Massinissa whom she does not recognize although parting such a short time before, but, as he raises his visor and she sees that it is her husband, she faints from joy and relief.

Another variation is that it is Sophonisba herself who suggests her death in order that Massinissa may keep his two conflicting promises. Much relieved, he prepares the poison for her. As she drinks it she turns to Massinissa and asks him not to weep. This speech is from Appian and Melin de Saint-Gelays and was said to the faithful companion, but it is most unnecessary here since nothing seems farther from his intention. Sophonisba dies saying,

"I die of female faith the long-lived story;
Secure from bondage and all servile harms,
But more - most happy in my husband's arms". V, 3.

Just as Lelius is describing to Scipio Massinissa's
grief at the idea of giving up his bride and Syphax is
gloating over the idea that she will suffer the Roman
triumph with him, Massinissa appears, clad all in black,
and presenting to them her dead body, as in Appian, says,

"Here, take, I yield her thee;
And Sophonisba, I keep vow, thou'rt still free". V,4.

Scipio hastens to reward him wishing to make him
forget his disappointment but with the gifts he turns and
adorns Sophonisba saying,

"On thee, loved creature of a deathless fame,
Rest all my honors!"
"Women's right wonder, and just shame of men". V,4.

MAIRET

"En 1629 Mairet donna son chef-d'oeuvre, la Sophonisbe, qui obtint un véritable succès d'enthousiasme" (69) and "se peut vanter d'avoir tiré des soupirs des plus grands coeurs, et des larmes des plus beaux yeux de France". (70)

Lancaster says "L'oeuvre de Mairet fait date dans l'histoire de la littérature française. On lui attribue l'introduction des trois unités et sa "Sophonisbe" est considérée comme la première tragédie tout à fait classique". (71)

Mairet says of his tragedy of "Sophonisbe" that the subject, "est dans Tite-Live, Polybe, et plus au long dans Apian Alexandrin. Il est vray que i'y ay voulu adiouster pour l'embellissement de la pièce et que i'ay mesme changé deux incidents de l'Histoire assez considérables", (72) the death of Syphax and of Massinisse. The incidents which he takes from Appian are somewhat adapted. Instead of a nourrice he supplies two faithful companions, and the betrothal seems to have been an agreement on which Massinisse put little stress. Sophonisbe remembers it and confides to him later that although her love for him began when she first saw him standing fearless before the gates of Carthage, her interest in him dated much farther back: to the time when she was betrothed to him by her father.

To Syphax, who seems to have loved his young wife, this early promise although never fulfilled, was a source of great jealousy. Mairet is the first author who makes this point in the character of Syphax. To the others he simply embodies revenge.

In the opening scene a letter which Sophonisbe has written and endeavored to send to Massinisse, has been intercepted and has fallen into the hands of Syphax who, jealous and hurt, reproaches her for her disloyalty.

Sophonisbe, herself, though she defends her action on the strength of an appeal to a fellow-countryman for aid for herself and Syphax, admits to her companion that her deception of her husband is all the more unpardonable since he is devoted to her.

So overcome is Syphax by this deception that he forgets the battle until reminded by one of his officers and then, in a fit of bitterness wishing on Massinisse the curse of Sophonisbe as wife, he rushes out hoping to perish in battle and succeeds, contrary to history. This death Mairet explains saying that since the idea of Sophonisbe's having two living husbands is distasteful, he "pense à s'en débarrasser tout à fait en le faisant tomber dans la lutte".
(73)

The messenger appearing tells of the heroic death

of Syphax, who had plunged into the thickest of the fight, the probable fall of Cirta, and the approach of Massinisse, whereupon Sophonisbe calls on her loyal companions to save her by death. It is then that they, insisting that death is a last resort and always possible, urge her to exert her charms to save herself and them by winning Massinisse, promising that if unsuccessful she shall not be allowed to fall, living, into the power of Rome.

During the dramatic scene of Sophonisbe's appeal to Massinisse, the confidants stand by to see the outcome and, as if watching the progress of a game, remarking to each other on the effect of her words, they anxiously wait to see her come out a winner, as she does.

Massinisse, instead of appearing as the haughty young Roman ally, humbly regrets the necessity which Destiny thrusts upon him of coming to her for such a purpose as taking her prisoner, assuring her that she shall be spared every humiliation possible, bids her make any request which she may wish. Sophonisbe in reply says that she would not have conditions otherwise and would surrender to him her scepter if restored to her, but as he insists she says,

Massinisse again since he had left her at Scipion's summons, and sends a messenger to Massinisse asking that if he cannot save her he will at least keep his promise to her, his wife, which he does by sending her poison, all as in Livy, but also adding that he will not delay long in following her. Sophonisbe, receiving the cup, and asking her companions not to dishonor her death with weeping, drinks it, happy in knowing that Massinisse can be with her at least in death.

Massinisse, coming in, mourns over her body and as in Appian showing it to the Romans who have come up, he becomes so inflamed against Rome that Scipion, feeling that their presence irritates him, suggests that they leave him. Whereupon Massinisse after praising Sophonisbe and cursing Rome, draws a dagger and ends his life.

LEE

Nathaniel Lee, whose "Sophonisba or the Downfall of Hannibal" appeared in 1676, ⁽⁷⁴⁾ "exhibits a soaring delight in magnificent and imposing historic themes", ⁽⁷⁵⁾ and was under the influence of the French stage perhaps even more in other plays than in Sophonisba ⁽⁷⁶⁾ "'Praecipitandus est liber Spiritus' is the characteristic motto of this tragedy; but the spirit that moves it is compounded of artificiality and extravagance"...."None of the later poets has dwelt so persistently on images of lust and wantonness. Lee had in him some genuine fire of passion but it burnt with an impure flame" ⁽⁷⁷⁾.

In Lee's drama is found the whole story of Sophonisba as recorded by Livy, and from Appian the character of the nourrice and the betrothal idea which is used simply as an earlier love. The affairs of Hannibal and Scipio play an important part in Lee's tragedy and the characters, according to the tendency of the times, are all so greatly influenced by love that the historical incidents of Sophonisba's life form truly a minor part of the drama.

Hannibal, who does not appear in any other play on this theme, feeling that his efforts in Italy have not been appreciated, is tempted to turn against Carthage but is prevented from so doing by his love of his native city and

by the fact that Rosalinda, Hannibal's Capuan love, is held captive by Scipio.

Disappointed love, too, is the cause of Massinissa's alliance with Rome against Syphax whom Sophonisba married while Massinissa

" for Carthage followed war's alarm,
Forgetting all her vows". I,2.

Scipio makes light of Massinissa's passion for Sophonisba as unworthy of a warlike spirit and says that since she is the wife of Syphax he will

"use her as a Roman enemy". I,2.

Massinissa becomes very angry, but finally controls himself and swears by the gods, that

"Whatever this your likeness shall command,
Though Sophonisba from my trembling hand,
I will obey". II,1.

And leaving as a pledge his nephew, Massina, a character taken from Livy, at Scipio's command he advances toward Cirta. Following his desire for vengeance, in the battle he hunts out Syphax and kills him, (this is the only play in which he is slain by Massinissa), after which the city opens its gates and Massinissa approaches the palace wishing to let Sophonisba see

"how unconcerned he is". III,4.

Sophonisba, foreseeing the downfall of Syphax and his kingdom, asks her confidants to end her life, but they,

protesting, suggest that she try her charms on her former lover, Massinissa, promising to give her death rather than allow her to become a Roman slave. Therefore when Massinissa reaches the palace, Sophonisba, whom he greets as

"Prisoner of War", III,5.

tells him that she gladly resigns to him her crown, and that, although forced by her father to marry Syphax, she has always been faithful to her first love; she finally insists,

"You shall not go, till you have left me dead"
III,5.

At this Massinissa whom the confidants, according to remarks made aside, had begun to think invulnerable, suddenly announces,

"This is our wedding day", III,5

and despite Sophonisba's protests as to the impropriety of marrying the same day her husband died, he kisses her saying,

"The God of Marriage seal our vows with this",
and

"She was my Mistriss, and shall be my queen".
III,5.

Meanwhile Rosalinda, seeking Scipio to demand of him her freedom, meets Massina who, despite her protestations of

devotion to Hannibal, falls desperately in love with her and accompanies her to Hannibal's camp when Scipio finally consents to allow her to go.

An evidence of the non-historical treatment of these characters is, that Scipio, the hardened warrior who, as he boasts in Livy, XXX, 14, "had not allowed himself to be influenced by the beauty of any captive", says when Rosalinda has gone from his sight,

"She's gone, and now I am as heretofore". III, 1.

Arriving at Hannibal's camp Massina refuses to leave Rosalinda, is seized by the order of jealous Hannibal, but later released on the strength of Rosalinda's plea; disappointed in love and feeling disgraced, he stabs himself. Whereupon Rosalinda, offended that Hannibal's jealousy should have caused the death of this innocent young man, leaves his camp.

Like Marston, Lee introduces a bit of the supernatural in a visit to Bellona's temple by Hannibal who, seeking to know the outcome of the battle between Rome and Carthage, gets but an uncertain answer and says

"Shall Romans fall by Carthaginian swords,
And Carthage sink? What mean these mistick words?"
"More I must know"; IV. 1.

and will not leave until he learns the fate of Rosalinda who appears to him, a dagger wound in her breast. This vision comes true in the last act when, disguised as a boy, she

takes part in the battle and is killed.

But to return to Sophonisba, Scipio, being informed by Lelius of the Marriage, sends Trebellius whom Massinissa kills when he insists on taking her. Scipio, himself, then demands the queen from Massinissa,

"For Rome, not for your sake, this war was waged,
You only as a volunteer engaged:
Therefore whatever towns or captives, fall
Into your hands, they are the Romans all". IV, 2.

but is met only with threats from her defender. Sophonisba herself then appears and, daring Scipio to kill her, taunts him that thus he might gain the honor of having killed a woman.

A short time is then granted Massinissa in which to yield her to the Romans, and after unsuccessful pleading he is convinced that she must die. Resolved that if he cannot save her neither will he live without her, he takes the two bowls of poison which have been prepared by his faithful servant and, sending him to bear the news to the Consul, Massinissa and Sophonisba drink to each other.

Scipio, much disturbed at the loss of Massinissa, determines to make peace with Hannibal, which he had previously refused to do, and returning to Rome, to retire to some small village,

"And study not to live, but how to dye". V, 6.

CORNEILLE

The tragedy of "Sophonisbe" by Corneille, which appeared in 1663, is "une oeuvre de réaction. Mairet avait gravement péché contre l'histoire. Corneille se propose de ramener Sophonisbe à ses sources historiques".⁽⁷⁹⁾ He has, however, added to the historic theme of the patriotic heroine who suffers a tragic death, a second "intrigue romanesque", which is not in any way connected with the record in Livy nor with any other tragedy.

"S'étant proposé de reproduire fidèlement le récit historique, il a fini par le transformer complètement, atteignant quand même son but de faire autrement que Mairet. Il ne lui a rien emprunté et ne s'est guère souvenu de ses autres prédécesseurs".⁽⁸⁰⁾

He himself says in the foreword, "Cette pièce m'a fait connaître qu'il n'y a rien de si pénible que de mettre sur le théâtre un sujet qu'un autre y a déjà fait réussir", adding that, in the changes made he had "le seul dessein de faire autrement, sans ambition de faire mieux".⁽⁸¹⁾

While keeping her hatred of Rome and loyalty to Carthage, as in Livy, Corneille's Sophonisbe has undergone a change of which he himself says, "Je lui prête un peu d'amour".⁽⁸¹⁾

Early in the play, on receiving from Syphax word of the progress of the battle in which he is engaged against

Rome, and a loving message to her, his wife, Sophonisbe replies that he should think

"A sa gloire encor plus qu'à l'amour". I, 1.

But turning to "une dame d'honneur", the nourrice in Appian, she confesses that, although, for the sake of Carthage she married Syphax, giving up Massinisse to whom she was formerly betrothed by her father, it is nevertheless pleasant to hope that he secretly adores her and that any other bride would be distasteful to him, even Éryxe, queen of Gétulie, to whom he owes gratitude for her care of him while sick, wounded, and driven from his kingdom.

The first act closes with the return of Syphax, who bears terms of peace offered by Rome, and who, anxious to satisfy Sophonisbe, comes for her approval. Having married Syphax to prevent such an alliance, she feels it would be an insult to Carthage, and for her sake he rejects the proposal and continues the battle.

It is Éryxe, now a captive at Cyrthe, who, telling her companion the news of the capture of Syphax and the fall of Cyrthe, both of which are historical, adds that, since hearing Massinisse promise to save Sophonisbe from Roman chains when,

"Elle prioit bien moins qu'elle ne commandait", II, 1.
she herself can no longer hope that he, a victor, will give

her his heart along with the restoration of her liberty and her crown. Not being satisfied with the loveless marriage which Massinisse offers her in return for the hospitality she had shown him, Éryxe suggests the wisdom of making plans to enable him to keep his promise to Sophonisbe, which he admits was made somewhat hastily.

As Sophonisbe again implores that he rescue her, he replies that his first purpose in attacking Cyrthe was to regain her; that she is no longer bound to Syphax, now captive, and that he can find no way to save her except by making her his wife. This is rather surprising coming, as it does, immediately after his offer of marriage to Éryxe. Sophonisbe expresses her surprise at the offer but, after telling him that she will never consent to give up her hatred of Rome and her love of Carthage, which first made her willing to sacrifice her feelings and marry Syphax, she cannot hurry him off too quickly to prepare for the marriage of which she says,

"Peut-être avec le temps j'en aurai l'avantage
De l'arracher à Rome, et le rendre à Carthage". II, 5.

She is driven also by pride and jealousy, as shown by the excuse which she gives for accepting Massinisse,

"C'était la folle ardeur de braver ma rivale". V, 1.

Éryxe, still a friend in spite of her unrequited

affection for Massinisse, warns him and Sophonisbe also of the Roman power which makes slaves of its allies, until Sophonisbe pleads again with Massinisse never to let her be sent to Rome.

At this opportune moment Syphax, though in chains, is allowed to come back to bid Sophonisbe farewell. Having thought her faithful to him he is indeed shocked to learn of her broken vows, and marriage to Massinisse. In his humiliation he had cherished the idea that his fate was at least but a sacrifice for her. But Sophonisbe blames him for having lived to be taken prisoner and says that she would gladly have followed him in death, would still be his if he could snatch her from Rome,

"Toute ma passion est pour la liberté
Et toute mon horreur pour la captivité", III, 6.

and that she has resolved to live and die a queen.

Laelius, acting for Scipio, who does not appear in this play, receives Syphax in the manner befitting his rank and has his chains removed. Grateful, the latter explains that his disloyalty was not of his own choice, but due to his love for his Carthaginian wife, and deliberately adds that he foresees the same fate for Massinisse, who has now married her, adding that while the kingdom of Massinisse is not so large, nevertheless with him lies the

balance of power between Rome and Carthage.

Reminding Syphax that marriage vows are easily broken, Laelius tells Massinisse that Sophonisbe, as wife of a Roman captive, must be relinquished, but agrees to delay until Scipio can be consulted. Massinisse, thinking to save her from bondage, suggests that she try her charms on Scipio to whom he would release her in order to insure her safety. Haughtily Sophonisbe calls upon him to remember her lineage and, intimating that her change of husbands was but to avoid the sight of Rome, she sends him off to plead with Scipio. Sophonisbe, has little faith that Massinisse will succeed in saving her:

"Je sais qu'il est Numide.
Toute sa nation est sujette à l'amour;
Mais cet amour s'allume et s'éteint en un jour", V, 2.

hence is not surprised to receive by a messenger the poison by which she may, in a manner worthy of her rank, avoid the sight of the Capitol. But scorning

"Un secours dont lui-même a plus besoin que-moi", V2 she returns it to Massinisse with the message that she will follow the Roman triumphal chariot in order to humiliate him. To Éryxe she says that she returns him to her but false to his vows and a slave of Rome and Éryxe, agreeing with her,

feels that Massinisse is no longer worthy of her.

Meantime Laelius, regretting the grief which he has caused Massinisse, his ally, sends a messenger to express the hope that Scipio will intercede for Sophonisbe at Rome. At the very sight of the messenger, without waiting to learn whether he brings hope or cause for despair, Sophonisbe has had recourse to poison and saying,

"Je meurs toute à Carthage",

she dies in his presence. Here the historical narrative ends.

Massinisse has simply faded away as if, not being able to make of him an admirable character, Corneille had tried to let him be forgotten.

Laelius praises Sophonisbe's bravery saying,

"Une telle fierté devait naître romaine". V,7.

Then turning to Éryxe adds,

"Allons consoler un prince généreux,
Que sa seule imprudence a rendu malheureux". V,7.

THOMSON

After the various conceptions of the Sophonisba story which have been discussed so far, there appeared in 1729 the tragedy by James Thomson, an English poet who confines himself to history more exactly than Mairet and almost as faithfully as did Melin de Saint-Gelays. "It were an affront to the age", he himself says, "to suppose such a character out of nature; and I had destroyed her character entirely, had I not marked it with that strong love to her country, disdain of servitude, and inborn aversion to the Romans, by which all historians have distinguished her".⁽⁸²⁾

These characteristics and "le culte passionné de la gloire, voilà les sentiments dont le dramaturge veut pétrir l'âme de sa Sophonisbe. Thomson est à cet égard plus cornélien que Corneille lui-même, dont l'héroïne est amoureuse au moins autant qu'elle est patriote".⁽⁸³⁾ "Il n'a rien inventé, rien ajouté, le drame lui sert de cadre pour exprimer des sentiments élevés, nobles, et surtout patriotiques".⁽⁸⁴⁾ As Thorndike says, this, "Sophonisba" is sternly heroic in its subordination of love to patriotic hate of Rome in the character of its heroine and sternly classic in the simplicity of its plot".⁽⁸⁵⁾

As in the tragedy by Melin de Saint-Gelays, in the opening scene, Sophonisba and her companion, who is like a sister to her, are waiting for word from the battle in which Syphax is engaged against Rome. The queen, who had married him for Carthage's sake, recalls that in the enemy's camp is Massinisse, whose love, once dear to her, she had cast aside only on his becoming a slave to Rome and therefore unworthy of the daughter of Asdrubal.

There follows the arrival of the messenger who, escaping from the battle, though wounded and bleeding—in this play only is he so described—brings her word of the capture of the king and the approach of victorious Massinissa. As in Mairet and Lee, Sophonisba is dissuaded from taking her life by the entreaties of her companion who, insisting that death is the last resort and promising to save her from Roman chains, urges her first to try her charms on her former lover. Overcoming her distaste for the idea Sophonisba consents,

"for thee
My sinking country, and again to gaul
This hated Rome, what would I not endure?"¹³

Syphax, in chains, is brought to his own palace, and into the presence of Massinissa, whom he remembers as his rival for Sophonisba's hand. He then experiences

his greatest torment in the pity of the conqueror, and the thought that his own wife will fall into the latter's hands. Syphax warns Massinissa not to think of her for himself, whereupon the latter recalls her breaking her vows to him, but admits that it was from a worthy cause - her patriotism, and says that now, becoming the prize of Rome whom she hates

"she never will endure it". I,4.

The character of Massinissa is far different from that of the cold-blooded victor in history and in the earlier tragedies.

From this time Massinissa becomes very anxious to see Sophonisba again. Narva, his companion, who is afraid that love for her may be revived in the young king's heart, recalls Scipio's kindness to himself when a hostage in Spain, that

"When the man heard
How I to thee belonged, he with large gifts
And friendly words dismissed me". II,1.

which incident is taken from Livy's record concerning Massinissa's nephew. Narva then tells how Scipio released to her lover a beautiful maiden, a captive, adding

"From Scipio learn the temperance of heroes". II,1.

Yet, in spite of his friend's protests, Massinissa is glad

when Sophonisba approaches him.

As in Livy she hopes the omens may be better for him than they were for Syphax, and pleads with him for safety or death. At first he is firm, and calls her

"the fairest but the falsest of her sex", II, 2. but as she continues to implore his mercy, asking only that she may be a slave to him instead of to the Romans, he yields, and, realizing that he has mistaken his heart, he pledges that she shall be safe, and flees.

To Narva he boasts that he has come away untouched by love, but, in his admiration for her, it is clear that he is mistaken. Recognizing, at last, the hold which she has gained upon his heart, he confesses his fall to Narva who replies that she is Roman booty. This fact inflames Massinissa who feels that as his queen she will be spared.

As he is going to find her, Sophonisba returns to plead for Syphax. This is the only play in which she is at all concerned as to his fate and gives her character quite a different appeal. Massinissa, becoming angry, blames Syphax first, then Carthage, for his loss of kingdom and bride, whereupon Sophonisba

upholds her country, and a quarrel ensues, in which love finally wins and Massinissa says that they

"For Rome and Carthage suffer'd much too long",
and asks

"Let this immediate night exchange our vows". III,3.
After again asking mercy for Syphax, she agrees saying, aside,

"This is alone for Carthage". III,3.

Syphax, who is more bitter than in any other play, hearing of her marriage, returns to blame her for his fate. Refusing to acknowledge that she has wronged him she first tries to soothe him, but when unsuccessful she explains in these words,

"All love but that of Carthage I despise.
I formerly to Massinissa thee
Preferr'd not, nor to thee now Massinissa,
But Carthage to you both". IV,2.

Becoming more and more incensed Syphax tells her that he has come back to stab her, but not having courage to carry out his plan he taunts her saying,

"Now I bethink me, Rome will do me justice.
Yes, I shall see thee walk the slave of Rome".
"Be that my best revenge". IV,2.

To Laelius Syphax gloats, very much as in the tragedy by Saint-Gelays; over the fact that Massinissa is marrying the Carthaginian that night and, since Syphax is himself suffering from his break of faith with Rome caused by her

influence, he feels sure that Massinissa's similar downfall will soon satisfy his desire for revenge.

Laelius, pretending ignorance of the entire affair, goes to the palace to receive the queen as prisoner and, refused by Massinissa, threatens to seize her. The conversation is very similar to one in the tragedy of Saint-Gelays except that there it assumed the proportions of a quarrel and Caton, intervening, suggested that Scipio be arbiter of Sophonisba's fate.

Sophonisba is very much incensed that she should seem to be asking mercy of a Roman and disdains freedom if gained from Scipio, and after Massinissa's promising again that they shall not touch her as long as he lives, she still insists

"If thy protection fails
Of this at least be sure, be very sure,
To give me timely death". IV,5.

"Gentle Scipio" IV,4,

as a devoted friend, praises Massinissa and when the latter confesses his weakness, cites the case of Hannibal at Capua and his subsequent failure. Massinissa admits his mistake but feels that he cannot do otherwise, at which Scipio calls upon the young man to rouse himself and, as Livy says, not

"in one weakness all thy virtues lose".IV,2.

In Thomson's play Massinissa's love for Sophonisba is his whole plea both to Laelius and to Scipio, and although he submits to the latter it is with such grief that Scipio says afterwards,

"I wish I had not urg'd the truth to rigour!
There is a time when virtue grows severe,
Too much for nature, and almost even cruel". V,3.

Massinissa, then, seeing no other way, sends Sophonisba some poison and a note, just as in Livy, and adds, as does Mairet,

"I will not long survive thee". V,7.

Drinking it, with an unaltered smile Sophonisba tells her companion, as in Appian and Mairet, not to weep and thereby dishonor her.

As in Melinde Saint-Gelays the king appears with a message of hope from Scipio, which Saint-Gelays and Corneille also mention. Sophonisba again pleads for Syphax, another instance of the concern which she manifests for his fate, this being the only play in which it occurs. Then blaming Rome for all their unhappiness, she dies.

In the presence of the Romans who have just come up, mentioned also in Appian and Melin de Saint-Gelays, Massinissa stabs himself, as he does in Mairet's tragedy, and falls beside her.

As in Corneille's play, Laelius says,

"She had a Roman soul; for everyone
Who loves, like her, his country, is a Roman".
V, 9.

VOLTAIRE

In 1769 there appeared a "Sophonisbe" by Voltaire, "la tragédie de Mairet, refaite", as he himself said. "Il n'y a pas à la vérité un seul vers de Mairet dans la pièce; mais on a suivi sa marche autant qu'on l'a pu, surtout dans la première et dans la dernière scènes". "Voltaire a fait à la pièce de Mairet des changements fort heureux". (88)
"Cette pièce ne manque pas d'intérêt ni de vigueur". (89)

In a letter to d'Argental, Voltaire says, "la 'Sophonisbe' de Corneille ne vaut rien et la mienne pas grand' chose", and adds, "Ce qu'il y a de mieux dans "Sophonisbe", c'est qu'elle est la plus courte des tragédies, et si elle a ennuyé de belles dames auxquelles il faut des opéras comiques, elle ne les a pas ennuyées longtemps". (90)

As in Mairet's tragedy, the opening scene shows Syphax holding in his hand Sophonisbe's letter to Massinisse, who had been a rival of Syphax for Sophonisbe's hand, in which letter she asks mercy for herself and her husband if Cirthe falls, as it seems likely to do. While Mairet pictures Sophonisbe as somewhat ashamed of deceiving a loving husband, Voltaire has her prove, to her own satisfaction at least, that she has not been disloyal to him, and beg to follow him to death. All that she asks is safety from Rome, and in reply to his bitter accusations of affection for Massinisse and unfaithfulness

to him, her husband, she answers,

"Massinisse m'aimait et j'aimais ma patrie
Je vous donnai ma main, prenez encore ma vie", I, 2.

but he, ordering her from his sight, rushes out into the battle to end it all.

Nevertheless it is the king who, in spite of his anger, as he is dying on the battlefield, sends back a messenger to close the barrier between the palace and Cirthe, thereby taking all possible precautions for Sophonisbe's safety. This messenger, after telling her of the death of Syphax and the fall of Cirthe, gives a favorable report on the young conqueror who is advancing toward the palace, and suggests,

"Fléchissez Massinisse", II, 2.

as Sophonisbe's companion had advised in Voltaire's model and also in the tragedies by Lee and Thomson.

Knowing that he is an ally of Rome she fears him at first and flees from him, then returns at a most auspicious moment, just after Massinisse has received from a soldier her letter found on the battle-field near where Syphax fell.

Massinisse is gratified that she considered him worthy of such an appeal and, as she is about to fall to her knees asking that she may never come into the power

of the Romans, he will not allow her to kneel to him, and assures her that since he is now conqueror of Cirthe,

"Sophonisbe en tous lieux est toujours souveraine".

II,5.

In reply to the urging of her companion who hopes for the marriage of her mistress and Massinisse, she says that, though her pride and love could thus be satisfied and she might,

"Arracher aux Romains l'appui de leur grandeur",

II,6.

yet she cannot bring herself to yield to any such idea.

At this point she is interrupted by the announcement of the arrival of Lélie to take her as prisoner of Rome. Massinisse, having become her defender, refuses to relinquish Sophonisbe, and Lélie consents to let the decision rest with Scipion. Thinking it over, Massinisse decides that he can save her only by making her his wife, but she, though confessing enduring affection for her former suitor, refuses, even at the risk of her own safety, to consider his proposal, saying that, as a niece of Hannibal, she shares his enmity toward Rome and therefore cannot accept Massinisse, an ally of that hated empire. Thereupon Massinisse, becoming more and more conscious of the power which Rome exerts upon her allies, expresses his hatred of that empire. This is the only play in which Massinisse turns against Rome before Sophonisbe is

claimed as a captive. Sophonisbe is persuaded to agree to the marriage for the sake of Carthage, to which city Massinisse plans to carry her. This idea of flight does not appear in Mairet's tragedy but in the play by Melin de Saint-Gelays Massinisse, coming with such plans, arrives just after the death of Sophonisbe.

Voltaire "a su motiver la précipitation avec laquelle Sophonisbe se remarie, par l'idée que le mariage est indispensable pour prévenir sa captivité. Cette princesse ne vient plus", as in Mairet, "avec l'intention de faire les doux yeux à Massinisse".⁽⁹¹⁾ -

Massinisse is more deeply impressed with Rome's power when, appealing to his trusted soldiers in his plan to rescue Sophonisbe, he finds that they dare not obey him, and later that he himself is disarmed at Lélie's command. In most of the plays Lélie is friendly and sympathetic to Massinisse although they quarrel in the tragedy of Saint-Gelays, and almost do so in Thomson's. In Lee's version of the story Lélie draws his sword but it is to defend Scipio, who later himself has Massinisse disarmed.

In all of these plays just cited, as well as Voltaire's, Scipio is more gentle and kindly than Lélius who is more

strictly a Roman soldier influenced by duty alone, whereas in the others, except Corneille's in which Lélie replaces Scipion entirely, it is Lélie who intercedes with Scipion for Massinisse his friend.

Turning to Scipion, as a last resort, Massinisse pleads for Sophonisbe, reminding him of the captive maiden whom he freed in Spain; then Massinisse implores mercy upon her for his own sake and his great love for her.

But Scipion replies that he can only obey the will of the senate, and urges him to remember his dignity and be worthy of it, so that Massinisse, while still protesting, agrees that he will relinquish her if he may but see her for the last time.

Already bitter against Rome, Massinisse now regrets the day he broke faith with Carthage and became a friend to Scipion, but it is too late now, and the fate of Sophonisbe rests between bondage and death, of which she gladly chooses the latter.

As Lélie rejoices for Scipion in the splendid triumph which the latter is to have in Rome, Massinisse rushes in distraught exclaiming,

"La victime par vous si longtemps désirée
S'est offerte elle-même: Elle vous est livrée.
Scipion, j'ai plus fait que je n'avais promis". V, 3.

Scipion receives the news gladly and would congratulate Massinisse on having overcome his weakness but the latter refuses him his hand.

Just then the door is opened and Sophonisbe is seen, a dagger in her breast, whereupon Massinisse, as in Mairet's tragedy, curses Rome and even Scipion:

"Détestable Romain, si les dieux qui m'entendent
Accordent les faveurs que les mourants demandent;
Je vois dans l'avenir Sophonisbe vengée", V, 3.

But Voltaire evidently was not satisfied that the play should end, as did Mairet's, with Massinisse left, by the Romans, alone before the body of Sophonisbe, but has Massinisse, in their presence, fall beside her, as in Thomson's drama, dying from poison which he had previously taken. And Scipion, admiring the courage of both Massinisse and Sophonisbe says,

"Ils sont morts en Romains.
Grands dieux! puissé-je un jour, ayant dompté
Carthage,
Quitter Rome et la vie avec même courage!" V, 3.

POIZAT

A further evidence of the popularity of the Sophonisba theme is that, even after its many variations during the Renaissance and the later period of reversion to the classical, as recently as in 1913 the Comédie-Française presented a "Sophonisbe" by Alfred Poizat, a modern French poet who, as Lalou says "compose encore des tragédies selon le modèle classique".⁽⁹²⁾

Deploring the discontinuation of the use of the chorus, found in Greek tragedy, Poizat says, in "Le Symbolisme", "Notre tragédie, dépourvue d'un élément essentiel à la tragédie, je veux parler du chœur restait un genre bâtard",⁽⁹³⁾ and proceeds to make use of it in his own play as did Melin de Saint-Gelays and Montchrestien in the sixteenth century.

It is quite interesting to note that, though the latest in appearance, Poizat's "Sophonisbe" resembles in several particulars these oldest French versions of the story, and that in the use of the chorus he has accomplished something which in no intervening "Sophonisba", has been attempted.

Judging from the great similarity in the incidents of the earliest and most recent "Sophonisba", and from the fact

that in neither of them does the chorus confine itself to those "sujets plus vagues et plus généraux"⁽⁹⁵⁾ which are typical of the chorus in Montchrestien's drama, but assists in carrying the thread of the story, it seems very probable that, in this tragedy, Poizat has been largely influenced by Melin de Saint-Gelays and by Greek tragedy, the latter's model.

Poizat has used the Livy story with not only the additional incidents which Melin de Saint-Gelays borrowed from Appian but also those which he himself has devised, often developing them more fully.

For example, the opening speech in the play is an inquiry by Sophonisbe about her son. This character, invented by Melin de Saint-Gelays is, however, mentioned by him only once when Sophonisbe feeling that death is near entrusts to her faithful nourrice that which is dearest to her heart, her child.

Not until we come to Poizat do we again find Sophonisbe a mother. In this play the author has introduced into the character of Sophonisbe more conflicts of passions and of duties by making her at once faithful to her youthful love, a devoted mother, and a wife more considerate of the king, who is her husband and the father of her child.

The scene then continues, as in Saint-Gelays, with

the conversation between Sophonisbe and her confidant showing their anxiety over the outcome of the battle against Rome in which Syphax is engaged, when the king himself returns, as in *Corneille*, with news that, although practically defeated in battle, he has been most fortunate in receiving an offer of peace and an alliance with Rome. Sophonisbe, while willing, as in *Voltaire*, to die with him in a final defense of Cirta, finds the very idea of such an alliance with the enemy of Carthage repugnant. The king, accusing her of wishing his death and the success of Massinisse, his former rival, whose love she admits having sacrificed in marrying for Carthage's sake, pleads in vain for her love, then rushes out saying,

"Adieu! Ne craignez plus de me revoir vivant". II, 2.

Sophonisbe feels guilty that she cannot give to Syphax the love he so much craves since her feeling for him has become most kindly and, in spite of their political differences, as she has told Syphax before,

"
"son coeur attendri
Ne sait plus distinguer le père du mari.
Et trouvant en mon fils plus d'un trait de
vous-même
Ne peut haïr en vous tout ce qu'ailleurs il
aime". I, 2.

But, while faithful to her husband, her love for Massinisse

has never ceased.

Just then a messenger arrives and, breathless, tells them that Syphax, attempting to attack Massinisse himself, has been surrounded and, though fighting bravely,

"plonge et disparaît
Comme un nageur sans force au sein de l'eau
profonde" I,4.

A second messenger brings word of the fall of Cirta and urges them to fly, but it is impossible to escape.

At first unaffected by her companion's urging that she appeal to Massinisse, the idea of slavery, of having her child torn from her, and the possibility that by winning Massinisse she might better the fortune of Carthage, finally persuade Sophonisbe to attempt to win him.

Meanwhile Massinisse confides to his companion that not the love of power nor the desire to regain his kingdom, but the love of Sophonisbe has driven him to enter this war and ally himself with Rome, and he is loth to believe his companion who assures him that Rome will not yield, but will demand Sophonisbe as a captive. Almost convinced, Massinisse feels hope nearly gone and is about to leave, when Sophonisbe timidly approaches him, pleading not to let her come into the Romans' power.

Massinisse protests his undying love for her, to which she replies that she is unworthy of his love, having previously been unfaithful to him and now, by admitting her affection, is breaking faith with her husband. As cries of

"Vive Scipion", II,3,

are heard, he insists that in order to save her,

"Je ne vois qu'un moyen qui me serait très doux,
Ma Sophonisbe, il faut que je sois votre époux". II,2.

And calling his soldiers as witnesses, he vows that, choosing Sophonisbe as his wife, he will defend her against all odds.

In the meantime Scipion has learned of the marriage and, after praising Massinisse and marvelling at the speed with which he has pushed the battle before Cirta and occupied the city, he sarcastically compares with it the success of his attack upon the heart of the queen.

Massinisse, however, is in no joking mood and, having sworn to defend Sophonisbe, is ready to do so even against

Scipion. He reviews his services to Rome and pleads that he be granted Sophonisbe for his reward. She,

having overheard their conversation, herself appeals to Scipion, reminding him of his reputation for kindness

to captives, and asks that she be ^{not}snatched from Massinisse

a second time. Whereupon Scipion, first, saying that

he is bound to act in accordance with the wishes of the

senate, summons Syphax, in chains, news of whose death had previously been brought to her.

Poizat, while not making Syphax fall in battle, as do Mairet, Lee, and Voltaire, no doubt has introduced the false report in order that, as Mairet suggests, "le peuple ne trouvât point estrange que Sophonisbe eût deux maris vivants".⁽⁷²⁾ Spared the odium of marrying a second time without an inquiry as to her husband's fate, as she does in the earlier plays, Sophonisbe's character is more in accord with modern feeling. The same may be said of Massinisse who no longer demands that the wife of Syphax at once become his bride.

Although Poizat has Syphax live to return, as in the tragedies by Corneille and Thomson, in the latter with bitter hatred, now differently he has treated him. Admitting that the king's first impulse was, as in all previous plays, to cause Sophonisbe to suffer with him, he does not hesitate to pardon her when, astonished at his return and overcome with shame, she stands speechless before him. But Syphax, ennobled by his self-sacrifice says,

"Vivez heureuse avec Massinisse", III, 4,
entreating her only to see that their child suffer no lack of affection because of her second marriage, then adds in farewell,

"Je cède à mon destin et vous, suivez le vôtre?"

III, 4.

This slight but happy change is an instance of Poizat's endeavor to humanize the oft-repeated story and thus make it more acceptable to a modern audience.

Poizat, like Melin de Saint-Gelays and Montchrestien, mentions the influence of Destiny, while Mairet, stressing it even more, makes it the controlling force.

Before Syphax, a captive for her sake yet pardoning her, Sophonisbe realizes that she has misjudged him and says,

"Mon coeur n'a pas pu s'empêcher de l'aimer".
IV, 2.

And, although she admits to her companion that she adores Massinisse, she sees that, except by death, she cannot fail to be disloyal to one of them.

In reply to Massinisse, who comes intending to carry her to safety, a course which he plans in Melin de Saint-Gelays and in Voltaire, arriving too late in the first, in the second being prevented by the Romans, she suggests,

"Je connais une voie obscure et souterraine
Qui m'assure un départ plus digne d'une reine",
IV, 2.

but he is so preoccupied that he does not catch the full intent of her words.

After he leaves the chorus seeks to know her plans and finally cries,

"O ciel! vous songeriez a boire la ciguë!"
IV, 2.

Then entrusting her child to the nourrice who, in spite of her desire to die with her mistress, must carry him to Carthage, Sophonisbe drinks poison leaving for Massinisse the message that,

"Dans la tombe, où tout s'idéalise",
Je pourrai le revoir et l'aimer sans
remords". IV, 3.

Arriving in haste, to carry her to safety, Massinisse finds himself too late, just as in the tragedy of Melin de Saint-Gelays, and Scipion who has come up, as in both Appian and Melin de Saint-Gelays, says that his army shall form her escort to the tomb for,

"Elle méritait d'épouser un Romain". IV, 5.

CONCLUSION

Of the Sophonisba story which Faguet says is "peut-être le sujet de tragédie le plus exploité sur tous les théâtres", ⁽⁹⁶⁾ it is interesting to note that in all the dramas studied, except two English plays, the treatment is much the same, with occasional addition of incidents and the emphasis sometimes on one character and then again on another.

Six French tragedies on this theme are included in this study, two from the sixteenth century, those of Melin de Saint-Gelays and Montchrestien, one by Mairet which, after a very different version by Corneille, was remade by Voltaire, and, finally, one, in the twentieth century, by Poizat, in which the chorus, found in the sixteenth century dramas, reappears.

In addition three English plays by Marston, Lee, and Thomson have been studied.

All of these dramas, both French and English, except those by Marston and Lee, which show the romantic tendency prevailing in England, are strictly classical.

The variations in the character of Sophonisba occur according as stress is placed on love or patriotism. Influenced by the latter, in the plays by Saint-Gelays,

Montchrestien, Corneille, Thomson and Voltaire, in the last even more fiercely patriotic than in history, she struggles against love in the tragedies by Marston and Mairet in both of which she finally sacrifices all for her country; whereas Lee and Poizat make love completely control her actions,-the latter adding mother love-makes her a somewhat more complex character.

The test with Massinissa is his reaction to Rome's demand that he give up his wife. He changes from a submissive ally of Rome in the plays by Saint-Gelays, Montchrestien, Corneille, Marston, and Poizat, yielding in the two earliest with scarcely a struggle, to the more noble lover in the tragedies by Mairet, Lee, Thomson and Voltaire in which, turning against Rome, in the last even embracing the cause of Carthage, despairing he dies. Poizat's twentieth century drama pictures Massinissa, a faithful and self-sacrificing lover, becoming under the influence of the sixteenth century tragedies, a submissive Roman subject.

The character of Syphax, a jealous husband, varies from the embodiment of revenge, in the earlier plays, to magnanimity in the twentieth century drama. In the tragedies by Mairet, Lee, and Voltaire he is killed in

battle whereas, in all the others, he is made prisoner and takes his revenge by warning the Romans of Sophonisba's influence, in all except in Poizat's, where, pardoning Sophonisbe, he sacrifices himself for her happiness.

Scipio, who in Corneille's drama is replaced by Lelius, is the embodiment of a Roman general and varies but slightly. Somewhat kindly in the plays by Saint-Gelays, Corneille and Thomson, in the last called "gentle Scipio", he is stern and pitiless in the tragedies by Montchrestien, Marston, Lee, Mairat, Voltaire and Poizat, although in the last, he is somewhat remorseful over the sorrow he has caused his friend, a development which is quite modern.

The history of Sophonisba, embodying a struggle between passion and patriotism, has undergone a gradual change as it has been treated by dramatists from the sixteenth to twentieth century. Excepting in Corneille's tragedy, — and even there love dominates the subordinate characters, — love has gradually superseded the patriotic element. The greatest change has been, however, that the characters, which, in the earlier dramas, are like puppets acting in response to the jerk of a string, have been humanized, until, with mother love and consequent respect for conjugal vows added to the conflict between passion and patriotism, the twentieth century version has become

a much more complex problem of passions and duties.

Thomson gives as the reason for selection of this subject the great simplicity of the story. (97) In spite of his choice and that of other such authors as Corneille and Voltaire, the story of Sophonisba, so famous for her patriotism, to which she sacrificed her lover, her husband, and even life itself, "n'a pu fournir et ne fournira peut-être jamais à la tragédie une héroïne vraiment digne d'elle-même sous l'influence de cette fatalité qui pèse (98) si lourdement sur sa triste et glorieuse existence."

NOTES

1. cf. Polybius, *Histories*, XIV, 7, p. 131.
2. cf. Dio's Roman History, Vol. 2, p. 223.
3. cf. Ricci, *Sophonisbe dans la Tragédie Classique Italienne et Française*, p. 10.
4. cf. *ibid*, p. 25.
5. *ibid*, p. 27.
6. cf. *ibid*, p. 1.
7. cf. Morley, *English Writers*, Vol. 8, p. 88.
8. cf. Larousse, *Dictionnaire Universelle du XIX siècle*, Tome 14, p. 885.
9. Molinier, *Mellin de Saint-Gelays*, p. 490.
10. cf. Ricci, *op. cit.* p. 1.
11. cf. Larousse, *op. cit.*, Tome 14, p. 886.
12. cf. Ricci, *op. cit.* p. 1.
13. cf. *ibid*, p. 1.
14. cf. *ibid*, p. 5.
15. Voltaire, *Épître Dédicatoire à M. le duc de la Vallière*, *Œuvres Complètes*, Tome 7, p. 38.
16. cf. Prosper Blanchemain, *Preface of Sophonisbe, Melin de Saint-Gelays, Œuvres Complètes*, Tome III, p. 159.
17. cf. Ricci, *op. cit.* p. 1.
18. cf. *Histoire du Théâtre*, Tome p. 319.
19. cf. *ibid*, Tome 3, p. 518.
20. cf. *ibid*, Tome 3, p. 471.

21. cf. *ibid*, Tome 4, p. 44.
22. cf. Petit de Julleville, *Histoire de la Langue et de la Littérature Française*, Tome 4, p. 280.
23. Lancaster, *Introduction, Chryseide et Arimande* p. 7.
24. Hémon, *Cours de la Littérature*, Tome 1, (4) p. 15.
25. Ricci, *op. cit.* p. 2.
26. cf. *Histoire du Théâtre Français*, Tome 7, p. 32.
27. Voltaire, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
28. cf. Ricci, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
29. cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 17, p. 776.
30. Swinburne, "The Age of Shakespeare", p. 118.
31. Thorndike, *English Tragedy*, p. 299.
32. cf. Almeida Garrett, *Obras Posthumas, I.* (This is merely one act and a very boyish effort. The date is uncertain being given as 1814 or 1819. Although similar to Voltaire's in character and action, Garret in the "Advertencia" insists that his play is entirely original.)
33. cf. Ricci, *op. cit.* p. 3.
34. Ward, *History of English Literature*, Vol. 2, p. 480, note.
35. cf. Ricci, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
36. Garnett-Gosse, *History of English Literature*, Vol. 2, p. 307.
37. Livy's *History of Rome* XXIX, 29.
38. *ibid* XXIX, 23.
39. *ibid*, XXX, 13.
40. *ibid*, XXX, 16.
41. *ibid*, XXX, 16.
42. Appian's *History of Rome*, VIII, 2.

43. *ibid*, VIII, 2.
44. *ibid*, VIII, 3.
45. *ibid*, VIII, 5.
46. *ibid*, VIII, 5.
47. *ibid*, VIII, 5.
48. Dio's Roman History, Book XVII, Vol. 2, p. 223.
49. Polybius Histories, XI-XV.
50. Ricci, *Op. cit.*, p. 9.
51. Lucan, Pharsalia, p. 223.
52. cf. Œuvres de Melin de Saint-Gelays, Tome 3, p. 161.
53. Pierre Branthôme, Preface, Sophonisbe, Saint-Gelays, *Op.cit.*, p. 159.
54. Melin de Saint-Gelays, Tome III, p. 204, *Op. cit.*, p. 127.
55. cf. Larousse, *Op. cit.*, Tome, 11, p. 493.
56. Montehrestien, La Cartaginoise ou la Liberté, II, p. 127.
57. *ibid*, IV, p. 147.
58. *ibid*, IV, p. 148.
59. *ibid*, V, p. 152.
60. *ibid*, V, p. 156.
61. Encyclopædia Britannica, Vol. 17, p. 776.
62. Gosse, Modern English Literature, p. 117.
63. Thorndike, *Op. cit.*, p. 70.
64. *ibid*, p. 74.
65. *ibid* Gosse, *Op. cit.*, p. 117. See Note 99.
66. cf. Lucan *Op. cit.*, p. 223.
67. Ward, History of English Literature, Vol. 2, p. 479.

68. Marston, Op. cit., V. 1, L. 29.
69. Bizos, Vie et Œuvres de Jean de Mairet, p. 176.
70. Mairet, Sophonisbe Épître Dédicatoire.
71. Lancaster, Op. cit., p. 7.
72. Mairet, Op. cit., Au Lecteur, p. 6.
- 73 Ricci, Op. cit., p. 89.
74. cf. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 16, p. 361.
75. Ward, Op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 408.
76. cf. Engel, History of English Literature, p. 273.
77. Ward, Op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 408. See Note 99.
78. Nichol, Hannibal, A Historical Drama, p. 280, n. 33.
79. Ricci, Op. cit., p. 100.
80. *ibid*, p. 108.
81. Corneille, Théâtre, Tome 3, Sophonisbe, Au Lecteur, p. 314.
82. Thomson's Works, Vol. 3, p. 6.
83. Charlanne, L'Influence Française en Angleterre, p. 244.
84. Larousse, Op. cit., Tome 14, p. 886.
85. Thorndike, Op. cit., p. 300.
86. Voltaire, Œuvres Complètes, Tome 7, Avertissement de
Beuchot, p. 34.
87. *ibid*, p. 34, note 1.
88. *ibid*, Avertissement sur les Tragédies de Sophonisbe, p. 32.
89. Larousse, Op. cit., p. 886.
90. cf. Ricci, Op. cit., p. 125.
91. Voltaire, Op. cit., p. 32.

92. La Petite Illustration, Aug. 1913.
Revue des Deux Mondes, p. 925. La Comédie Française est rentrée chez elle La soirée de rentrée, uniquement consacrée au repertoire classique, fut triomphale; Comme premiers spectacles, la Comédie a donné.... et la "Sophonisbe" de M. Alfred Poizat qui nous arrive du théâtre d'Orange. Oct. 1913.
93. Lalou, Histoire de la Littérature Française Contemporaine p. 529.
94. Poizat, Le Symbolisme, p. 23. and appendix.
95. Poizat, Op. cit., p. 166.
96. Revue des Deux Mondes, Revue Dramatique, p. 925.
97. Thomson, Op. cit. p. 6.
98. Ricci, Op. cit., p. 208.
99. Very different in treatment from the classical dramas, the plays by Marston and Lee are gross and filled with licentiousness. Of all the plays studied this is true of these two only.
- Ward, Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 479. The whole proceedings of Syphax are as grossly painted as they could be without the picture being powerful even as one of purely bestial passion.
- Moulton, Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 736. It is Marston's misfortune that he can never keep clear of the impurities of the brothel.
- Ward, Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 403. None of the later poets has dwelt so persistently on images of lust and wantonness. Lee had some genuine fire of passion but it burnt with an impure flame.

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APPENDIX

Racine se proposa, avec son sens exquis et sa connaissance profonde de l'art et de la poésie antiques, d'en imprégner une poésie qui doit un de ses principaux charmes au sentiment du romanesque. Le Français est incorrigiblement romanesque. C'est sa marque.....

Cependant son idée première avait été d'adapter le théâtre grec à la scène française et s'il dut abandonner quelque temps ce projet pour venir combattre Corneille sur son propre terrain, celui de l'Histoire romaine, il y revint le plus vite qu'il put avec Iphigénie et Phèdre.....

Notre tragédie, dépourvue d'un élément essentiel à la tragédie, je veux parler du chœur constitué à la fois par l'ambiance lyrique qu'il crée et la présence de la foule, restait un genre bâtard. Quelque dix ans après, Racine tenta, dans Athalie surtout, de restaurer la tragédie intégrale, enveloppée par les ondes lyriques du chœur et rendue à son sens religieux.