John Dryden (1631-1700) needs no introduction as one of the finest English translators of poetry in an age famous for its translation. In the middle of the eighteenth century Samuel Johnson paid tribute both to his performance and to his critical discussions of translation by calling him the "Lawgiver of Translation" (The Idler Essay 68 - 69 (1758)). Charles II had appointed Dryden Poet Laureate in 1668 and Historiographer Royal in 1670. His relations with the Stuart kings placed him at the centre of the controversies over religion and kingship in England. His two major prose translations were done in obedience to Royal Command. Largely because they had a political purpose, they had an unfortunate publication history and are largely ignored. In fact the only modern edition of them is in the University of California edition of Dryden's works in the 1970s. The History of the League (1684) from L'Histoire de la Ligue (1683) by the then fashionable French Historian, Louis Maimbourg (1610-1686), is Volume 18. The Life of Saint Francis Xavier (1688) from the French of the Jesuit man of letters, Dominique Bouhours (1628-1702), is Volume 19. The third of his political translations, his version of Tacitus, Annales I, largely from the French of Amelot de la Houssaye, was published as part of a group translation of Tacitus in 1698, ten years after the fall of James II.

Translators took an extremely active part in the propaganda wars that were such a feature of Puritan and Restoration England. History lends
itself to propaganda very easily – and in any case the boundary between history and folklore in the ordinary world tends to be tenuous. The seventeenth century believed very firmly that one learns from parallels in the Past. Indeed the Past was more present to the people of that time than it is to us in the twentieth century. And the sense that the individual and his society were largely constituted by historical forces was accepted long before Gianbattista Vico (1668-1744) made a theory out of it in the early eighteenth century. The question of Monarchical rule and the Divine Right of Kings was bitterly controverted during the seventeenth century – and not only in England. The focus of the argument was Augustus Caesar, the first of the Roman Emperors. In an age in which as much creative and scholarly work, if not more, was done in Latin as in the vernaculars Augustus suffered from as mixed a reputation as he had among his contemporaries and their immediate descendants. The seventeenth century knew Augustus's own accounting of his career, the Monumentum ancyranum, a consummate piece of propaganda carved in both Latin and Greek on the walls of temples in Ancyra (modern Ankara) and Antioch. During the last days of the Roman Republic Cicero had praised Octavian in Phillipic V as one who would bring peace to Rome after the ravages of the Civil Wars. After Octavian had taken control and assumed the name of Caesar Augustus, Velleius Paterculus, Livy and Dio Cassius were on the roll of Augustus's contemporaries who had praised him as the one who brought peace to the Roman republic, who had established the rule of law, and who was an assiduous and discriminating patron of the arts. On the opposite side were the later Roman historians, Tacitus, Suetonius and Appian, who had much to say about his sexual exploits and the brutality of his rise to power. They depict him as a tyrant, lecher and perverter of the Roman constitution.

Charles II might have found his role easier had he not been hailed as the new Augustus: the strong ruler who restored constitutional and religious forms to an England recovering from Civil War and misrule. He was, as his patronage of the Royal Society shows, a patron of the arts and sciences, and his own political behaviour remained well within the law. However, he was at constant loggerheads with Parliament and an important section of the political establishment. Like Augustus he deserved his reputation for philandering, and many looked at the death of his father, Charles I, and his own exile in the light of expert knowledge of Livy's account of the fall of the Tarquins in about 500 BC. But then the Tarquins had never regained the kingship in Rome. It was often remarked that the first
two books of Livy detail with some relish the expulsion of the Roman Kings and the anti-tyranny measures taken in the constitution of Brutus and his fellow-patriots. The lesson for England seemed obvious to some.

The Restoration of Charles II in 1661 had not silenced the Puritans and there remained an undercurrent of anti-Royalist sentiment in the country. Even among Royalists there was some disquiet about the fact that the King had married a Catholic, and that the immediate heir to the throne was his brother, the Catholic Duke of York. The leader of the anti-Stuart party was the Earl of Shaftesbury who aimed to secure the succession for Charles's eldest, illegitimate and Protestant son, the Duke of Monmouth. Shaftesbury fought on two fronts, the streets and Parliament. To take the streets first. 1678 saw the Popish Plot with its attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament. The failure of the Plot occasioned heightened agitation against the King and a witchhunt for Catholics and Jesuits. This part of the campaign against the Stuarts was fought with mob violence and a constant flow of pamphlets. In Parliament there were constant challenges to the King's authority, like the 1680 attempt to exclude the Duke of York from the Royal succession and frequent attempts to deny the King money. Yet in 1681 the King was beginning to win the propaganda war, and the next year even the Duke of York was in popular favour. Shaftesbury met this setback with the Rye House Plot. In March 1683 he attempted to ambush the King and his brother at Rye House, Ware, on the way back to London and to kill as many of the Royal party as possible. The plot failed and the sweep that followed picked up almost all the conspirators. Shaftesbury fled to Holland and died in exile. Many of the others were executed, some committed suicide, and some were pardoned. Among those executed was the Duke of Monmouth, who was Charles's favourite son. His mixed severity and clemency had its reward. On 12 July 1683 the University of Oxford made a public statement supporting the Divine Right of Kings and denying that the People had the right to remove their rulers. There seems to have been wide agreement. But the King and those close to him thought that something more accessible was needed in the wake of the Rye House Plot.

One of the paradoxes of the translation relationship between France and England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was the French Catholic religious writers had a certain vogue among the Protestant English. Maimbourg, a fashionable and controversial historian in France, was an ex-Jesuit who had begun by attacking Jansenism
during the late 1660s. He had then turned his fire on Calvinism in 1670 and had gone into Church history in the 1670s. His *Histoire de la ligue* was relatively well known in Britain. Indeed the King’s enemies cited the League during the Exclusion Crisis of 1680 as worthy precedent for their action, and the issue surfaced again after the Rye House Plot. The Royalist party cited the League as a model of Royal firmness and clemency in the face of an intolerable political situation. The parallelism between the troubles in France attendant on the foundation of the *Ligue* in 1577 and the problems faced by Charles II and his father, Charles I, were quite obvious to contemporaries. In France the first threat to Royal power had come from the Huguenots, in England from Cromwell and his Roundheads; in France the second threat to the King had come from the *Ligue*, a Catholic party founded by the Duc de Guise in 1577 to defend the Kingdom against the Huguenots, but which then turned on the King when he refused to share their rigorist ideas. In Charles II’s England, it was the Whig party under Shaftesbury which rose up against Charles’s attempts to tolerate Catholics and took his strong links with Catholicism as a threat to the country. One could therefore expect Charles II to commission Dryden, the Historiographer Royal, to translate *L’histoire de la ligue* and have it published as soon as possible.

Dryden had already taken considerable interest in the personalities involved in the constitutional troubles of Britain. His play, *The Duke of Guise* (1679), written in collaboration with Nathaniel Lee, had revolved around the League. There were attempts to suppress it, which Dryden turned to good advantage. His preface to the play comments on the attempts to suppress it, and the verse prologue makes its political prologue very clear:

> Our Play’s a Parallel: The Holy League  
> Begot our Cov’nant: *Guisards* got the Whigg  
> Whate’er our Hot-brained Sheriffs did advance,  
> Was, like our Fashions, first produc’d in *France*....

His satire, *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), is far more direct. It uses the Old Testament Books of Samuel to pillory the Duke of Monmouth and the Earl of Shaftesbury. As the favourite son of King David who had rebelled against his father, Absalom was an easily recognisable figure for the Duke of Monmouth. Shaftesbury is the traitorous Achitophel, whose counsel to David could not be trusted.

This background interest colours Dryden’s translation of Maimbourg. His version includes Maimbourg’s dedication to the French King, Louis
XIV, and his address to the reader. Dryden prefaces his translation with a dedication to Charles II and follows it with a detailed analysis of the lessons to be drawn. It is relevant to Dryden's case that he translated by Royal Command: His Majesty's command of French and consequent ability to check the translation is a guarantee of accuracy which enhances the importance of this imprint. In this dedication Dryden draws a number of important conclusions. First he contrasts the persistence of the rebels with the "Royal Clemency". The public needed reminding that apart from pardoning some of his enemies, Charles had placed himself at some disadvantage by playing according to constitutional rules against an enemy with no scruples at all. The second issue addressed is the need for vigilance and firm action in the face of treason:

... our Associators and Sectaries are men of Commonwealth principles, and though their first stroke was onely aim'd at the immediate Succession, it was most manifest that it wou'd not there have ended; (Dryden 1684: 5)

There is a double comparison here: the obvious one is with the evil days of Cromwell, but Dryden precedes it by comparing Charles with "Henry the Fourth, Your Royal Grandfather, whose Victories, and the Subversion of the League, are the main Argument of this History." He does not point out another parallel, for which there is ample evidence in the book, the fondness of the two kings for beautiful women. The third issue is the King's fortunate victory over a turbulent Britain and ungovernable Parliament, and the last is a lesson to the King on the absolute rightness of exercising mercy to enemies and of the need for discretion in using it.

Maimbourg's Dedication to Louis XIV teaches the same general lessons. Dryden places it so that it seems to flow naturally from Dryden's dedication to Charles II and to reinforce the Royalist message. Maimbourg's address to the reader also does double duty. While discussing how Maimbourg's use of sources guarantees the truth of what he has to say, it is made to imply that Dryden has been just as careful:

As for the end which I propos'd to my self, in conceiving it, I may boldly say, that it was to give a plain understanding to all such, as shall read this History, that all sorts of Associations which are form'd against lawfull Soveraigns, particularly when the Conspiratours endeavour to disguise them, under the specious pretence of Religion and Piety, as did the Huguenots
and Leaguers, are at all times most criminal in the sight of God, and most commonly of unhappy and fatal Consequence to those, who are either the Authours or Accomplices of the Crime (Dryden 1684: 17).

Thus prepared the Reader can profitably read the body of the book.

Every lesson requires revision and follow-up; Dryden was a good teacher. His "Postscript" takes up the contentious issue of the Divine Right of Kings. Dryden argues that because a King assumes his responsibilities under Oath at his Coronation, his responsibilities come from God. Because "the several Orders of Men under him" swear allegiance to him, the people are not "Judges of good or ill administration in their King." There is a quick reference to the problems of the succession in the times of King Stephen (1097-1154) and Henry IV (1367-1413), both of whom Dryden characterises as usurpers and whose descendants were quite rightly dispossessed. Then follows close argumentation on the parallels between the problems in France with the Huguenots and the Holy League and the exploits of the Puritans, Presbyterians and the Whig conspirators in England. The Duc de Guise is mentioned here without going into details. Dryden compares the Holy League with the Catilinarian Conspiracy which sought to overthrow the Roman Republic in 63 B. C. Precedents from Roman and French historians, like Sallust and de Commines are briefly referred to as if everybody knew them by heart. Dryden emphasises that the Histoire de la Ligue was one of the French documents eagerly studied by the makers of the Popish Plot and by Shaftesbury's conspirators. The second to last paragraph of this postscript (Dryden 1684: 414) then brings all the threads together in the malignant figure of the Earl of Shaftesbury. Dryden's summary of his crimes and miscalculations take us back to the French Leaguer, the Duc de Guise, and to that unfortunate Roman, Lucius Sergius Catilina. Dryden completes his Postscript with a paragraph on his author, Louis Maimbourg, laying emphasis on his approval of the French kings' resistance to the power of the Papacy on his departure from the Society of Jesus. Last of all Dryden points out that both original and translation were written by Royal Command to show the evil the error of their ways.

Ironically this translation came too late to serve any purpose: Charles II had already triumphed, the public did not have to be persuaded to like the king, and Charles had no further need of literary support. The next year he died and was succeeded by his brother, the Duke of York, who took the
name of James II. Consequently Dryden's translation was no longer relevant and it was forgotten.

It was not long before his services were needed again. On June 10, 1688 a son was born to James II's wife, Mary of Modena. In mid-July 1688 Jacob Tonson, the London bookseller who had handled The History of the League, advertised Dryden's translation of The Life of Saint Francis Xavier from the French of the Jesuit grammarian and rhetorician, Dominique Bouhours. Dryden by now had become a Catholic and was still close to the Royal household. It seems that this translation had been commissioned by Mary of Modena early in 1688. Mary had already had a string of pregnancies, and those children who were not still-born had all died young. Much to the consternation of the Protestant party this pregnancy was going well, and the translation was commissioned to sweeten the birth of an heir who would secure the succession for the Catholic Stuarts. The public were well aware of the medical history of Mary of Modena, and were not too pleased at the appearance of a Catholic heir who seemed healthy. The story spread that the child was not hers or the King's, but some male baby who had been smuggled in to the palace at a convenient time.

Both child and book appeared at a stormy time. James II had neither the tact nor the common sense of his brother, and he pushed the Catholic cause in Britain with far too much gusto. Even James II was aware that he could not reverse the Reformation, but he had attempted to enforce toleration of Catholics and a lightening of the penalties against them. His reign was marked by a furious pamphleteering campaign, of which this translation is a part. Bouhours had already figured in the campaign through a translation of his life of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. Though ascribed very early to Dryden, it does not seem to have been his work. But it was the first shot in a series of doctrinal arguments carried on with wit and polish in particular by the Catholic, John Gother, who kept updating his The Papist Represented and Misrepresented (1685). These arguments covered practically every aspect of difference between Protestant and Catholic, ranging from the Mass to clerical celibacy. It seems to have been accepted that the serious aspects of the controversy were debated in prose; the less serious were left to the verse satirist. As he had under Charles II, Dryden took part in the pamphleteering as both historian and satirist: his poem, The Hind and the Panther, came out in 1687.

Dryden's dedication of his Bouhours to the Queen draws a parallel with Anne of Austria, the mother of the French King, Louis XIV, who had
waited twenty years for a child. Louis XIV was born after his mother had prayed to Saint Francis Xavier. Mary of Modena likewise had a devotion to Saint Francis Xavier. Dryden then goes on to praise Saint Francis Xavier as a great and holy missionary, a notable thing given that his dislike of Jesuits in general had survived his conversion to Catholicism. Lastly, he hopes that England will become Catholic again. Dryden's Bouhours was meant to show the power of prayer and the intercession of the saints, that great Catholics were not all monsters and that miracles could happen:

The honourable Testimonies which are cited by my Author, ..., and one of them in particular from a learn'd Divine of the Church of England, though they slur over the mention of his Miracles, in obscure and general terms, yet are full of Veneration for his Person. Farther than this I think it needless to prepossess a Reader; let him judge sincerely, according to the Merits of the Cause, and the Sanctity of his Life, of whom such wonders are related, and attested with such Clouds of Witnesses; For an impartial man can not but of himself consider the Honour of God in the publication of his Gospel, the Salvation of Souls, and the Conversion of Kingdoms, which follow'd from those Miracles; the effects of which remain in many of them to this day (Dryden 1688: 5).

To a mind that does not accept miracles, Dryden's story of divine intervention only confirmed the popular story. Pamphleteering and satire reached a higher pitch. But the whole thing became irrelevant early in November 1668 when William of Orange, the husband of James's niece, Mary, invaded England and James II fled to France with his family.

The Tacitus had been in the planning since 1693, it seems, and we have little information on how Dryden became involved. The later Tacitus, the Tacitus of the Annales, is noted for a sinuous and violent style which makes its points quickly and memorably. Little of this appears in Dryden's English, so it is obvious that he translated from the French of Amelot de la Houssaye, but with his eye on the Latin. The translation was published with Amelot de la Houssaye's notes with their noted skepticism about Royal power. It is not unlikely that this was a respectable way of protesting against the accession of William of Orange to the throne of the Stuarts.

A word on translation. The editors of the California text note that according to Dryden's own typology his prose translations are Metaphrase. This is a fair comment except that Dryden's prose style in translation is heavily
influenced by his original. In the Postscript to Maimbourg Dryden remarks that Maimbourg's style is "rather Ciceronian, copious, florid and figurative; than succinct". His dedication to the King promises to "give the same Beauty in our Language which they had in the Original". A somewhat tall order, especially as Dryden had made no bones about his dislike of translating prose. In Dryden's hands Maimbourg's ornateness becomes a rather clumsy sprawl:

If I intended to follow the example of Livy, the Prince of Latine Historians, who never suffers a Prodigy to escape him, and describes it perhaps with as much superstition as exactness; I shou'd here make long narrations how the Sun was obscur'd on a sudden, without the interposition of any Cloud appearing in the Sky, with a flaming Sword shooting out from the Centre of the Body; palpable darkness like that of the Egyptians at noon-day; extraordinary Tempests, Earthquakes, Fiery Phantasms in the Air, and an hundred other Prodigies, which are said to have been produc'd and seen in this unhappy year of one thousand five hundred eighty-eight, and which were fansi'd to be so many ominous presages of those horrible disorders that ensued in it (History of the League Lib. III (page 183))

Si je voulois suivre l'exemple du Prince des Historiens Latins, qui ne laisse échaper aucun prodige qu'il n'expose à la veüe de son Lecteur avec autant de superstition peut-estre que d'exactitude; je produirois icy le Soleil obscurci tout-à-coup sans aucun Nuage, une épée flamboyante sortie du centre de cet astre, des ténèbres palpables comme celles de l'Egypte en plein midy, des tempestes extraordinaires, des tremblemens de terre, des fantasmes de feu en l'air, & cent autres prodiges qu'on dit qui arriverent en cette malheureuse année mil cinq cens quatre-vingts-huit, & qu'on prétend avoir esté tout autant de présages des horribles desordres qu'on y vit. Histoire de la Ligue Lib. III

On the other hand Bouhours wrote a very chastened prose which shared many of the Senecan characteristics of Dryden's English. Dryden does not comment on Bouhours's French, and the Plain Style of Dryden's version reflects Bouhours extremely well:
Japan was ancienly one Monarchy. The Empereur, whom all those Isles obeyed was called the Dairy: and was descended from the Camis, who according to the popular Opinion, came in a direct line from the Sun. The first Office of the Empire was that of the Cubo, that is to say Captain General of the Army. For the raising of this dignity, which in itself was so conspicuous, in process of time, the name of Sama was added to that of Cubo; for Sama in their language signifies Lord. Thus the General of Japan, came to be call'd Cubosama. (The Life of Saint Francis Xavier, Book 5, page 240)

Anciennement le Japon étoit une monarchie. L'empereur à qui toutes ces iles obéissoient, se nommoit le Dayri, et tiroit son origine des Camis, qui, selon l'opinion du peuple, descendoient en droite ligne du soleil. La première charge de l'empire étoit celle du Cubo, c'est-à-dire du capitaine général des armées. Pour relever une dignité si éminente d'elle-même, omn ajouta avec l' temps, au nom de Cubo, celui de Sama, qui signifie Seigneur, et ainsi le chef de la milice japonaise s'appella Cubo-Sama.

Though the differences between his handling of Maimbourg and of Bouhours are obvious, an analysis of Dryden's translation techniques is not to our purpose. Dryden was sensitive to differences in register, or to put it in a way he would recognize, different styles are appropriate to different subjects. Though Quintillian does speak of historiae ubertas ("the richness of history"), Cicero (De oratore II.54 & 58) and Pliny (Ep. V.viii.10) felt that the historian in drafting his narrative should eschew the tricks of the orator. And yet by his behaviour Dryden does show up the difference between Maimbourg, who tried to write history in the grand style, and Bouhours who adopted the anti-rhetorical principles of Cicero and Pliny.

What is important here is the role these translations were meant to play and the place Dryden sought for them. The editors of the California edition see a parallel between three types of history and Dryden's typology of translation. Dryden's "metaphrase" corresponds to an objective history in which one relates the facts of the matter in as unbiassed a way as possible. Dryden's "imitation" in which the translator takes an active hand in radical transformation of his original is history as propaganda. Between these two is history which avoids bias but which includes a certain amount of
interpretation. They claim that Dryden is aiming at the compromise between objectivity and propaganda, which corresponds to his "paraphrase". If this theory is to hold any water at all, attention must be focussed away from the literality of the translated texts to their polemical introductions. It is obvious that Dryden was an eager propagandist, but his style of prose translation in these three works is clearly metaphrase. Given his connections it may even owe something to the stylistic ideas of the Royal Society, who, as Thomas Sprat tells us in *The History of the Royal Society* (1666), made a moral and intellectual virtue out of the plain style. Thus any attempt to bias the translation itself in an age when the English were more at home in French than they are now would have immediately discredited Dryden, his Royal patrons and the case he was making. But, as we have seen, such strictures on bias did not apply to dedications, introductions and postscripts.

I had already implied that the Anglican Church had played a vital role in the recall of Charles II in 1660. The Church was not completely homogeneous. Alongside the High Church tendencies of the Laudian section of the Church was the Latitudinarian Tory. Some of them, like John Wilkins and Sir James Petty (who were both members of the Royal Society, had been Cromwell's men. The fact that Charles's Queen and his heir were Catholic and that he himself was inclined to be tolerant led to considerable unease amongst Anglicans and the old Puritans as well. Yet this unease had to be balanced against the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings: Charles II was, after all, the proper heir to Charles I. Second, the new science espoused by both Royalist and Puritan had become a social philosophy: the inherent order and harmony within Nature, which it was the task of the scientist to find and describe, included a social order which depended on virtue and the right things in the right place. In this ordered world virtue brought prosperity and social calm. As a member of this society Dryden shared this view. Yet in Restoration England the wrong people seemed to be prospering (Jacob 1976: 66). Further the social turmoil under Charles II clearly indicated that things were not going as they should. Dryden's preface to Maimbourg was at pains to show Charles II as a reasonable virtuous man whose final triumph over the forces of evil, in the shape of Shaftesbury and the mob followed all the rules of Latitudinarian virtue. It was a lesson the general population seemed to have learnt.

*The nature of belief made Dryden's task in the Bouhhours more difficult. The opening arguments in his preface are unfortunate. He begins with Anne of Austria, the mother of Louis XIV. Louis XIV was not a popular*
figure in Britain: and many Englishmen would have regarded a divine intervention which facilitated his conception and birth as an unfortunate indiscretion on God’s part. Particularly after the excesses of Puritanism, religion tended towards the rationalistic. Human affairs did depend on God’s Providence, but He had created a perfect machine which ran smoothly: “the World moved along on its own hinges”, and God did not intervene. Therefore the exploits ascribed to Francis Xavier were neither credible nor necessary. Thus a book which made the case for miracles in favour of an unpopular Catholic Monarch had to contend not only with English chauvinism, but also with the new science and with Anglican theology. Thus while Dryden, if Charles II had lived a little longer, could have got away with his Maimbourg, he could not get away with the Bouhours. Indeed, even if William of Orange had not invaded England within nine months of publication, he could not have succeeded in selling the legitimacy of either the young prince or the sanctity of a Jesuit. In the view of many the accession of James II showed a glitch in the workings of Providence. Likewise Dryden’s open belief that sooner or later England would become Catholic again would not have endeared the book to the general public. But I suspect that Dryden knew one fact that was very carefully kept secret: that there were desultory talks going on with Rome about some sort of reconciliation. If so, this book was an attempt to help them along.

The Tacitus is a special case. It has no interpretative preface by Dryden, but Dryden does use the French translator’s notes, which do not seek to reverse the Tacitus’s anti-Royalist tone. It may be that Dryden, who, as a supporter of Charles II and James II, was out of favour with the Court of William III, reluctantly accepted the new régime and was content to let other people speak for what doubts he may have had. In public, however, he kept his peace. I wonder whether the intertextuality of his Tacitus includes his preface to Sir Henry Sheere’s translation of Polybius (1693), with its praise of Polybius’s use of evidence and theories on the rise and fall of states and forms of government. Ironically, of Dryden’s three political translations this is the one that survived.

Dryden’s prefaces to both Maimbourg and Bouhours show that he was dealing with both hostile and friendly intertextuality, a not unusual situation. I have already mentioned the intertext created by Dryden himself, his play, The Duke of Guise, and the satires, Absalom and Achitophel and The Hind and the Panther. Dryden mentions The Duke of Guise in the Postscript to The History of the League. It is significant for the pamphleteering and
legal action it gave rise too. Dryden singles out the pamphlet by a prominent gentleman called Hunt advocating that by right citizens have their say on City charters. Charles II had revoked a large number of City charters after a series of anti-Royalist riots. Dryden makes his mention of Hunt more piquant by a reference to Phillipes de Commines who remarked that when the Dukes of Burgundy had controlled the elections of the Sheriffs in the City of Ghent, all was quiet and well behaved:

... but when they were elected by the people, nothing but tumults and seditions follow'd (Dryden 1684: 410).

Apart from the original itself and the French documents it spawned, the rest of the contemporary intertext of Dryden's translation consists of the accounts of the Popish Plot, the proceedings of Parliament and the reports of the treason trials which followed the arrest of the conspirators. Much of it is broadsheets and pamphlets, largely untraceable these days. The original French is made part of the intertext by translating the Author's preface and placing it where a careful reader will associate it with Dryden's preface. *The Life of Saint Francis Xavier* has to deal with a friendly intertextuality that was so openly derided by his Protestant critics that it was harmful to his case; in particular it included an English translation of Bouhours's life of Ignatius Loyola, Xavier's religious superior.

It will already be clear that the classical and the modern are inextricably mixed, particularly in the figure of the Earl of Shaftesbury. One almost has the situation of *figura* as described by Erich Auerbach: ancient events are treated as precedents for the modern, and the likeness is so close that ancient precedent illuminates modern events. To take the hostile intertext first. Much as Dryden avoids discussing the legitimacy of the Stuarts, the doubts on this question are a constant presence that damages the dedicatees of both his books. And he is well aware that the enemies of the King used it, and read material on the League in this hostile light:

But they have not only rummag'd the French Histories of the League, for Conspiracies and Parricides of Kings: I shall make it apparent that they have studied these execrable Times, for the Precedents of undermining the lawful Authority of their Soveraigns (Dryden 1684: 409).
The other material in constant view, although Dryden does not mention it here, are the anti-Augustan authors, in particular the Silver Latin historians, Suetonius and Tacitus.

One can expect that the critical material in both books uses Biblical echoes to considerable purpose. As Dryden himself points out, religious splinter groups all over Europe:

... assum'd to themselves a more particular intimacy with God's Holy Spirit; as if it guided them, even beyond the power of the Scriptures, to know more of him than was taught therein; (Dryden 1684: 397)

In England the immediate target was the Latitudinarian Tory and the Presbyterians, but behind them were the ghosts of Cromwell and his men who had executed Charles I. But unlike the Puritans Dryden does not argue from Scripture, he refers to it expertly. Thus the continental Anabaptists are placed in the Book of Exodus:

... they entred into a League of Association amongst themselves, to deliver their Israel out of Egypt; to seize Canaan, and to turn the Idolaters out of possession (Dryden 1684: 398).

The attack then focusses immediately on the Presbyterians, Buchanan and John Knox, who taught that the people can overthrow Kings and other civil powers "if Princes be Tyrants against God and his Truth", and the Jesuits some of whom preached in favour of the League. Robert Bellarmine comes in for particular censure for having repeated the principle that if a "Christian Prince should depart from the Catholick Religion", his people may legitimately overthrow him (Dryden 1684: 400). This was of particular sensitivity after Papal pronouncements on the legitimacy of Elizabeth I the century before. The last echo, a quote from one of the conspirators, is a short reference to the Book of Judith, in which Judith kills a sexually aroused invader with his own sword (Judith 13.8):

... to assassinate the King, was only to take away another Holophernes (Dryden 1684: 408).

The Bible makes two spectacular appearances in the dedication of the Bouhours. The first is an appropriation of the Annunciation scene in Luke 1.26-38. Mary is an example to Mary of Modena in the joyful acceptance of a son (there is no hint that the baby could be a girl):

Be it to thy Hand-Maid, according to thy word (Luke 1.38) (Dryden 1688: 4).
Is it by accident that this quote is more like the King James version than the Catholic Douay-Rheims? The second echo is a comparison of Saint Francis Xavier, the great modern missionary, to Saint Paul, the earliest travelling missionary:

We scarcely have a less Idea than of a Saint Paul, advising a Timothy or a Titus (Dryden 1688: 5).

Like Paul, Francis wrote voluminously and often to his colleagues: Timothy and Titus were two of Paul's closest associates.

There are no secular classical echoes in the Life of Saint Francis Xavier, as one might expect. In The History of the League Dryden's major classical echoes revolve around the Earl of Shaftesbury who has a double resonance, first with the Roman, Catiline, and then with the Duc de Guise. While Dryden had placed the Duc de Guise before the public with his play. Catiline was the subject of a play (1611) by Ben Jonson which had been played constantly during the seventeenth century. So that even if one's Latin was somewhat rusty, the point was clear. Lucius Sergius Catilina had come within a whisker of overthrowing the Roman Republic in 63 BC by armed insurrection. By implication the Duc de Guise and Shaftesbury have both the attractiveness and the profligacy that so characterises the accounts of Lucius Sergius Catilina in Cicero (Pro Caelio vi 13) and Sallust (Bellum catilinarium v). Cicero was fascinated by the figure of Catiline, a noble Roman, an attractive man with an incredible fund of evil in him. Sallust, from whom Jonson had drawn much of his material, makes the point of Catiline's Manichean qualities even more clearly. Both Cicero and Sallust emphasise that Catiline surrounded himself with wastrels and failed men, most of them upper class. This last is the point that was seized on by Dryden in relation to both Shaftesbury and the Duc de Guise:

No Government was ever ruin'd by the open scandal of its opposers. This was just a Catiline's Conspiracy, of profligate, debauch'd and bankrupt men. The wealthy amongst them were the fools of the Party, drawn in by the rest whose fortunes were desperate:....

Neither Cicero nor Sallust could have said it better. Dryden does not show himself at all susceptible to Shaftesbury, but it is clear that like Cicero he was fascinated by his enemy all the same.

But to a readership that knew its ancient history the presence of Catiline evoked Cicero as Cicero the Consul rather than Cicero the advocate. The
Parallelism with Charles II was not very far to seek, particularly as both Cicero and Charles II made much of their reliance on constitutional form. Like Charles II Cicero was extremely careful to stay within the forms of law. This was essential to one of Cicero's most important aims: remaking the legendary *concordia ordinum* that tradition ascribed to the beginnings of the Roman republic. A similar reestablishment of constitutional stability had been one of the goals of Charles II. But Shaftesbury had done his best to prevent it ever coming about, just as Catiline had shattered Cicero's illusions by his attempted coup.

Dryden's dedication of the Maimbourg to the King mentions Antaeus, the giant killed by Hercules. Antaeus was the son of the Earth, and every time Hercules threw him down, he gained strength by contact with his Mother Earth. Hercules finally held him up off the ground. Dryden uses this figure to argue that all conspirators against Royalty be hanged:

> These Sons of Earth are never to be trusted in their Mother Element: They must be hoysted into the Air and Strangled (Dryden 1684: 4).

Clemency only returns them to the earth from which they get their strength. Ovid, Martial, Propertius and Seneca are among the Roman poets who mention Antaeus. However the most telling passage was probably Lucan *Pharsalia* (iv.590 et seq.), in which an old African living near the ancient site of Carthage relates the legendary wrestling match between Hercules and Antaeus to Curio, the general in command of Caesar's army. The climax of the story (iv.650-653) has Hercules holding Antaeus aloft until he weakens and dies. There is also an intriguing mention of a Carthaginian general named Antaeus in Silius Italicus, *Punica* 3.264. Again an interesting parallel for Shaftesbury, given the Carthaginian threat to the Roman state.

Here is one of Dryden's other roles as a translator: the controversialist. Dryden was still working at a time when the translator was not neutral. True, in front of a text the translator felt himself subordinate to his author, and indeed responsible to his text. But few doubted that the public needed guidance in reading the author. In this respect, the Past was the most powerful aid to reading the present aright. Dryden is in a controversialist tradition which began with Cicero's famous preface to Aeschines and in some respects is still with us. But firm as his position is, he has only a shadow of the pugnacity of the generation before him. George Steiner remarks that some translations do not survive because they have no
purpose. This remark was paralleled some years later by Neubert and Shreve who speak of the need a translation fulfils. Dryden's prose translations are interesting cases in which the need felt by part of his society fitted in well with the customary method of arguing a controversial case in public. But in the case of his Life of Saint Francis Xavier, the battle was lost before it was even fought. The very urgency of the need felt by the Stuarts destroyed the case before the public. In the case of the History of the League, the book came out in a favourable climate. But the death of Charles II and the accession of James II destroyed the public need for the book. The case was made worse by James's behaviour in office. Of the three translations discussed here the most effective was the Tacitus: the other two came out of season.

Texts


References
