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# The Dedication of Tragedies to Women, 1658-1689

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## Résumé

While working on the above period, I have been surprised by the number of tragedies dedicated to women (between 25% and 36%). These dedications serve multiple purposes. Frequently the author is asking the dedicatee to protect his work, thereby casting her in a position of power. When this is to dispel adverse criticism, she is praised for her intelligence and enlightenment. Several plays that were not performed deal with religious topics, and either their instructive aspects are emphasised, or the similarities between the subject saint and the dedicatee are highlighted. The dedication is a stylised form and various conceits are employed to diversify the fare. But above all, the identities of the dedicatees, the descriptions of them and the justifications given for their selection offer an interesting perspective on the place of some women in the society of the time and the scope of their influence.

**Mots-Clés:** théâtre, tragédie, dédicaces, femmes, pouvoir, religion

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