SHAKESPEARE AND THE

RENAISSANCE RECEPTION OF EURIPIDES

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the Renaissance reception of Euripides, arguing that Greek tragedy had a direct and important influence on Shakespeare. Euripides, I demonstrate, was both more widely accessible and more culturally significant than has generally been recognized. Beginning with Erasmus and ending with Milton, I establish the foundation of a detailed and historically specific understanding of how Euripides' works were being read and understood. Paying close attention to the materiality of Euripides' textual appearances across a variety of dramatic and non-dramatic texts and contexts, I set Shakespeare's relationship to Greek tragedy within a more precise framework.

The first three chapters set the reception of Euripides in the context of sixteenth-century European humanism. Chapter 1 argues that Erasmus established modes of reading Euripides that were enduringly influential, examining Euripides' place in humanist curricula and teaching materials, followed by the translations of Euripides by Erasmus and Buchanan. Chapter 2 considers the material forms in which Euripides appeared before the Renaissance reader, especially the paratexts which shaped (or attempted to shape) the reader's experience of Euripides. Chapter 3 turns to look at the two surviving translations of Euripides into English.

The next two chapters focus in on Shakespeare. Chapter 4 briefly surveys the critical landscape, examining parallels between specific plays, but also opening out the discussion to include genre. Chapter 5 examines Shakespeare's most extensive engagement with Euripides, offering a fresh reading of *The Winter's Tale* as a meaningful reception of *Alcestis*.

Finally, Chapter 6 traces Milton's receptions of Euripides in relation to sixteenth-century trends, arguing that *Samson Agonistes* stands on the brink of a turn towards Sophocles that was beginning to occur as Aristotle's *Poetics* gained a new kind of dominance over the interpretation of tragedy. But Milton's poetic instincts remain Euripidean, gesturing to a chain of receptions leading back to Erasmus.

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A NOTE ON THE TEXT

The Greek texts of Euripides' works are quoted from James Diggle's Oxford Classical Texts, with the exception of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, for which I use Christopher Collard and James Morwood's Aris & Phillips edition. All other Greek and Latin texts are quoted from the Loeb Classical Library editions where available. Translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

ABBREVIATIONS

Allen	Allen, P.S., ed. *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*. 12 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1906-58.
ASD	Waszink J.H., et al., ed. *Erasmi Opera Omnia*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1969-.
CM	Patterson, Frank et al., eds. *The Works of John Milton*. 18 vols. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1931-38.
OW	Hale, John K., and J. Donald Cullington, eds. *The Complete Works of John Milton*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008-present.
YP	Wolfe, D.M., ed. *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. 8 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958-82.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. Some of the material from Chapter 3 is currently under peer review to be published as 'Iphigenia in English' in *Acquisition Through Translation*, edited by Alessandra Petrina and Federica Masiero. All sources are acknowledged as References.

INTRODUCTION

> Against all the odds…there is a real affinity between Greek and Shakespearean tragedy. What there is not is any 'reception' in the ordinary sense: any influence of Greek tragedy on Shakespeare; any Shakespearean 'reading' of the Attic drama. There is no reason to suppose that Shakespeare ever encountered any of the Greek tragedians, either in the original language or otherwise.[1]

Michael Silk's conclusion, in a chapter entitled 'Shakespeare and Greek Tragedy: Strange Relationship', is typical of critical writing on the subject in a number of ways. On the one hand, it is accepted – regretfully, but decisively – that Shakespeare was completely cut off from the riches of Greek tragedy. On the other, a mysterious 'affinity' between the two is nonetheless detected; A.D. Nuttall similarly concludes that 'Shakespeare had a faculty for driving through the available un-Greek transmitting text to whatever lay on the other side'.[2] This 'strange relationship' is one for which we lack a precise critical vocabulary, but at the same time we seem unable to let it go.

It is this critical lacuna that this thesis seeks to address, by undertaking an extensive investigation of the Renaissance reception of Euripides, the most popular of the Greek tragedians in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and the one whom Shakespeare is most likely to have encountered.[3] Despite Euripides' popularity, there has so far been no study devoted to his reception in this period. While interest in Shakespeare's relationship to Greek tragedy has been growing, therefore, research has been hampered by the lack of a detailed, historically specific understanding of how Euripides' works were read and understood. This thesis establishes this foundation, beginning with Erasmus' translations of Euripides at the start of the sixteenth century and finishing with Milton's *Samson Agonistes* in 1671. Along the way, it examines how and where Euripides was published,

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[1] Michael Silk, 'Shakespeare and Greek Tragedy: Strange Relationship,' in *Shakespeare and the Classics*, ed. Charles Martindale and A.B. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 241-57 (41).

[2] A.D. Nuttall, 'Action at a Distance: Shakespeare and the Greeks,' in *Shakespeare and the Classics*, ed. Martindale and Taylor, 209-22 (14).

[3] I use the term 'Renaissance' rather than 'early modern', because it expresses something closer to the humanists' sense of their own project in terms of classical literature.

circulated, and extracted across a variety of dramatic and non-dramatic texts and contexts, paying close attention to the materiality of Euripides' textual appearances, and demonstrating that he was both more widely accessible and more culturally significant than has generally been recognized. This allows Shakespeare's relationship to Greek tragedy to be set within a more precise framework.

A number of specific links between Shakespeare's works and various Greek tragedies have been proposed, with gathering momentum in recent years. In 1971, Martin Mueller argued that '[t]he general structural resemblance of the final scenes in *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale* makes [Shakespeare's] acquaintance with Euripides' play likely, although there are no parallels sufficiently concrete to clinch the argument'[4]; his work has been developed by Sarah Dewar-Watson.[5] In 1977 Emrys Jones proposed that 'Shakespeare's Titus is in essence nothing else than a male Hecuba', and suggested that the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius in Act 4 Scene 3 of *Julius Caesar* is modelled on the equivalent scene between Agamemnon and Menelaus in *Iphigenia in Aulis* (lines 317-542).[6] Louise Schleiner argued in 1990 that *Hamlet* was influenced by an abridged Latin version of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, as well as Euripides' *Orestes*.[7] Tanya Pollard has further suggested that *Hamlet* is indebted to *Hecuba*, and links have been drawn between Medea and Lady Macbeth, and *Medea* and *The Merchant of Venice*.[8] Kathleen Riley, comparing the awakening scene in *King Lear* (4.7) with the *Herakles/Hercules Furens* plays, finds it 'remarkable' for 'its Euripidean rather than Senecan substance'.[9]

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[4] Martin Mueller, 'Hermione's Wrinkles, or, Ovid Transformed: An Essay on *The Winter's Tale*,' *Comparative Drama* 5, no. 3 (1971): 226-39 (230).
[5] Sarah Dewar-Watson, 'The *Alcestis* and the Statue Scene in *The Winter's Tale*,' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (2009): 73-80.
[6] Emrys Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 101.
[7] Louise Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*,' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1990): 29-48.
[8] Tanya Pollard, 'What's Hecuba to Shakespeare?,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (2012): 1060-93; Inga-Stina Ewbank, 'The Fiend-Like Queen: A Note on *Macbeth* and Seneca's *Medea*,' in *Aspects of Macbeth*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 53-65; Zachary Hutchins and Amy Lofgreen, 'More Greek Than Jonson Thought? Euripides' *Medea* in *The Merchant of Venice*,' *Shakespeare* 11, no. 4 (2015): 388-407.
[9] Kathleen Riley, *The Reception and Performance of Euripides' Herakles: Reasoning Madness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 143. Even Robert Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical*

Shakespeare is an important focal point for work on the reception of Greek tragedy in English Renaissance literature in general. As Charles Martindale puts it, this 'is partly because he is the dramatist who – rightly – matters most to us'.[10] But it is also important that if Shakespeare, whose education did not extend to university level, can be shown to have engaged directly with Greek tragedy, this would be grounds for re-evaluating the extent of the influence of the Attic dramatists on the development of English drama in the latter part of the sixteenth century. The most significant recent development in this area is Pollard's new book, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages*.[11] She argues that Renaissance writers paid particular attention to the 'mother-daughter dyad' of grieving mothers and sacrificial daughters, in Euripidean tragedy especially, but also in the self-sacrifice of Antigone in Sophocles' play. Her scope is thus both broader and narrower than my own; hers is not a reception history of Euripides, but of Greek tragic women. Her focus is on English works, so she spends less time on the European framework, whereas understanding the reception of Euripides in Latin humanism is foundational to my project.

Pollard's important contribution to the field appeared too late to be taken fully into consideration in my thesis, but her approach is complementary to my work and further confirms a number of my conclusions. In particular, her invaluable appendices listing editions of Greek plays in Greek, Latin, or both, and vernacular translations, establish beyond doubt just how widely available these texts were, and finally lay to rest the misconception which Adrian Poole could express as late as 2010, that it was not 'until the end of the 18th century' that the works of Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus 'became available to the Greekless reader in their entirety'.[12]

Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), whose title is telling, finds that in its insistence on 'the great and unbridgeable gap between the human and divine, the end of Lear presents a Euripidean, not Senecan, scepticism' (170-171).

[10] Charles Martindale, 'Afterword,' *Classical Receptions Journal* 9, no. 1 (2017): 166-76 (169).

[11] Tanya Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[12] Adrian Poole, 'Euripides,' in *The Classical Tradition*, ed. Antony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and Salvatore Settis (Cambridge: Belknap, 2010), 346-47 (347).

Where Pollard's book is broadly thematic, my work aims to establish a detailed, historically specific understanding of how Euripides and his works were read and understood during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the interests of keeping the scope of this study manageable, I have restricted my focus to Euripides because he was by far the most popular of the Greek tragedians during this period, and because his plays are most pertinent to Shakespeare's works. Extending the time-frame to examine the reception of Euripides well into the seventeenth century allows me to use Milton's undisputed engagement with Euripides to draw together threads running through the sixteenth century as well as identifying shifts in the way Greek tragedy was being analysed and perceived. I take, in part, a book-history approach, paying particular attention to the paratextual materials surrounding and shaping Euripides' textual appearances, most of which have largely been ignored until now. Donald Mastronarde's online edition and translations have been vitally important in increasing the accessibility of Stiblinus' commentaries, with the result that recent criticism has begun to pay more attention to them.[13] However, so far there has been no attempt to bring together the available evidence in order to explore what the Renaissance experience of reading Euripides was typically like. Outlining this context establishes the framework against which any 'parallels sufficiently concrete' between Euripides and Shakespeare must appear.

I am not primarily concerned with how widespread the study of Greek was at this time,[14] or with whether or not particular writers could read Greek, though these are, of course, important debates. Much critical ink has been spilled over Ben Jonson's attribution of 'small Latin, and less Greek' to Shakespeare; most recently Colin Burrow has revived the argument that the line – 'though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek' – could potentially mean 'even supposing (counterfactually)

[13] Donald Mastronarde, ed. *Stiblinus' Prefaces and Arguments on Euripides (1562)*, accessed April 17, 2018, http://ucbclassics.dreamhosters.com/djm/stiblinus/stiblinusMain.html; see Hannah Crawforth, 'The Politics of Greek Tragedy in *Samson Agonistes*,' *The Seventeenth Century* 31, no. 2 (2016): 239-60.

[14] A subject ably taken up by Micha Lazarus, 'Greek Literacy in Sixteenth-Century England,' *Renaissance Studies* 29, no. 3 (2015): 433-58.

that you had only a little bit of Latin and even less Greek'.[15] But in order to read every single one of Euripides' plays, neither Shakespeare nor anyone else needed a word of Greek: Pollard lists sixty-eight editions of translations of works by Euripides into Latin published during the sixteenth century.[16] While all of these were printed in continental Europe, the evidence, as this thesis demonstrates, shows that they made their way to England quickly, efficiently, and in considerable numbers.

Renaissance readers, like modern ones, frequently encountered Euripides in translation. Behind the sluggishness of mainstream criticism to appreciate the full extent of Euripides' presence in the Renaissance seems to lie a persistent tacit assumption that reading Euripides in Latin is somehow less valid, or less interesting, than reading the Greek directly. It is an important contention of this thesis that responses to Euripides in Latin translation have just as much claim to be taken seriously: after all, it would be absurd to argue that Christopher Logue's *War Music* does not constitute a meaningful engagement with the *Iliad*, simply because he worked from English translations. I thus find the idea of 'reception' to be most useful in conceptualising the relationship between Euripides and his Renaissance readers, not least because our own responses to Euripides have inevitably been shaped by the development of English drama in the period, and above all by Shakespeare.

This is not to deny that there is a difference between reading a play in Greek and reading it in a translation. One of the key questions asked by this thesis is: what did Euripides look like in Latin? The evidence suggests that different translators used different techniques to attempt to convey something of what they perceived to be the flavour of Euripides. Importantly, Euripides was not simply viewed as a

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[15] Ben Jonson, 'To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author Mr. William Shakespeare', 31, quoted from Martin Butler, Ian Donaldson, and David Bevington, eds., *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Colin Burrow, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2, following Brian Vickers, ed. *English Renaissance Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 539 n.5: 'Here "had'st" is the subjunctive: "Even if you had little scholarship" – which was not the case'.

[16] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 242-59.

Greek Seneca, though the more Senecan aspects of his works certainly contributed to his popularity. Rather, successive translators made concerted efforts to differentiate their Latin versions of Euripides in various ways from the dominant shadow of Seneca.

Studying the reception of Greek literature in the Renaissance is inevitably complicated by the fact that it is almost always (whether literally – in translation – or conceptually) at one remove. English writers approached Greek texts through a Latin lens, even when they were actually reading the Greek itself. This was a natural consequence of the grammar school system, in which boys were not simply taught Latin, but were taught *in* Latin. They left school with the ability to read Latin quickly, in some cases effortlessly, in many cases carelessly. Greek, on the other hand, was read with the help of a dictionary. Educational practices such as double translation (in which the student was given a passage of Latin to translate into English, and then back into Latin again) embedded Latin at the heart of the grammar school boy's writing practice.[17] Small wonder, then, that Latinity is woven into the fabric of the writing produced in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Latin textures form the surface pattern; Greek threads tend to be hidden underneath.[18] Separating them out is frequently impossible, if indeed desirable; after all, it is the 'blended experience' of Greek and Latin that exemplifies the reception of Greek, including Euripides, in this period.[19] Even when we come to Milton, whose 'direct borrowing from Greek' in 'both diction and syntax' can be identified, this is still 'briefer and more subdued to interlingual effect than was the case with his Latin'.[20]

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[17] On Latin in the grammar school system, see Burrow, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*, esp. pp.30-45; Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities* (London: Duckworth, 1986); T.W. Baldwin, *William Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1944).

[18] Kenneth Haynes, *English Literature and Ancient Languages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 104, finds that in contrast to Latin, 'even when [Greek] has been influential, the nature of its influence is hard to pin down'.

[19] To borrow the phrase of Patricia Demers, 'On First Looking into Lumley's Euripides,' *Renaissance and Reformation* 23 (1999): 25-42 (38).

[20] John K. Hale, *Milton's Languages: The Impact of Multilingualism on Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 121.

When attempting to identify Greek threads, it is important to recognise that they may not look quite as expected. Modern views of Greek tragedy – and indeed tragedy in general – are influenced by the fact that Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* went on to 'become one of the most important [plays] in cultural history'.[21] But the most influential Greek tragedy in the Renaissance was Euripides' *Hecuba*. A surprise second is his *Iphigenia in Aulis*, judging by numbers of editions and translations, followed by *Medea*, *Alcestis*, and *Phoenician Women*. The first Greek tragedy learners of Greek encountered was likely to be *Orestes*, thanks to the inclusion of the opening section of it in the most popular Greek grammar book of the period. All of these except *Orestes* (not counting the grammar books) were reprinted more frequently than *Oedipus Tyrannus*, which was not even the most popular of Sophocles' plays; this honour was decisively held by *Ajax*. The core 'canon' of Greek tragedies, then, looked rather different, and this reflects the fact that they were valued according to different criteria as well. Euripides was admired above all for his richly sententious and rhetorical style, which lent itself particularly well to the practice of commonplacing, a theme which recurs throughout my thesis.

A notable feature of editions of Euripides in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is the inclusion of printed commonplace marks in the margins. These are not exclusive to Euripides, but are associated most strongly with the printed forms of Greek drama, of which Euripides was the dominant representative. It is possible to draw a direct line from this visual feature of printed editions of Greek tragedy through to the presentation in Q1 of what Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass call 'the first literary *Hamlet*'.[22] Printed commonplace marks were closely related to the practice of commonplacing, which was an important pedagogical tool, and extended far beyond the classroom. Ann Moss goes so far as to argue that it was 'one of the most important factors contributing to [the]

[21] Edith Hall, *Greek Tragedy: Suffering under the Sun* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 302.

[22] Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, 'The First Literary *Hamlet* and the Commonplacing of Professional Plays,' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (2008): 371-420.

intellectual paradigms' of Renaissance thought.[23] The interactions of readers with printed texts of Euripides offer opportunities to examine whether texts were being approached as a series of potential *sententiae* to be extracted, as some critics contend, or whether the reality was somewhat more complex.

The benefits of commonplacing were strongly urged by Erasmus in his influential pedagogical works, and he further encouraged the practice by including printed commonplace marks in his own translations of Euripides. The significance of Erasmus for the Renaissance reception of Euripides can hardly be overstated. His translations of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* established them as the most popular Greek tragedies for over a century; his comments on the value and style of Euripides established the criteria by which he was judged for at least as long; and his frequent quotation of Euripides in the best-selling *Adages* helped to spread an awareness of the Greek dramatist beyond those who had read his works. It is with Erasmus, then, that I begin. The reception of Euripides in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England is inextricably bound up with the European humanist context, not least because almost all texts had to be imported. My first three chapters engage with this context in some detail, progressively coming to focus in on England, with the two extant sixteenth-century English translations of Greek tragedies: Jane Lumley's *Iphigeneia* (c.1557) and Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* (1566). With the exception of Dolce's *Giocasta*, because of its significance to *Jocasta*, I restrict myself to Latin rather than vernacular European translations, on the grounds that their reach was wider.

My second section turns to Shakespeare, looking at some of the specific parallels that have been proposed, but also taking a wider view of the reaches of reception, with an examination of Euripides' significance to the emergence of the highly-contested new genre of tragicomedy around the turn of the seventeenth century. I then offer a fresh reading of the relationship between *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale*, in light of an exploration of the popular reception of the Alcestis story

[23] Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 134.

in English sources. My final chapter turns to Milton, arguing that in his reception of Greek tragedy he looks both back over the sixteenth century and forwards to the triumph of the neo-Aristotelians. Aristotle's *Poetics* was far from unknown in the sixteenth century, but it did not dominate interpretations of Greek tragedy in the way that it would come to by the end of the seventeenth century. With the rise of Aristotle came the rise of Sophocles, whose *Oedipus Tyrannus* is Aristotle's model tragedy.

CHAPTER 1

'WHO COULD READ THESE?':

EURIPIDES AND SIXTEENTH-CENTURY HUMANISM

If all the books written by ancient authors had survived, the Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives wrote in 1531, 'we would have nothing in our houses other than books; we would have to sit on books, walk on books, look at nothing but books'.[1] As it is, there are now so many books that the sheer volume is enough to terrify students, or cast them into despair: 'miserably, they complain amongst themselves, "Who could read these?"'[2] During the sixteenth century, 'the discovery of new worlds, the recovery of ancient texts, and the proliferation of printed books' led to a sense of 'information overload on a hitherto unprecedented scale'.[3] The works of Euripides are a case in point: before 1495 they were available only to those who had access to manuscript copies and could read Greek; by 1602 all nineteen of Euripides' extant works were available in Greek and Latin. There had been seven printed editions of the collected works in Greek, four in Latin translations, and three Greek/Latin parallel text editions, not to mention numerous editions and translations in Greek, Latin, and vernacular languages of individual plays. Since the *editio princeps* of the complete works in 1503, the number of extant works had actually increased with the exciting rediscovery of *Electra* by pupils of Piero Vettori in 1545.

Who could read Euripides, who did, and how, are the central questions addressed by this thesis. It has generally been assumed that Euripides' readership during the sixteenth century was restricted to a select coterie of elite humanists, with the result that the possibility of anything like a wider 'reception' of Euripides

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[1] Juan Luis Vives, *Opera Omnia*, 8 vols. (Valencia: Benedict Monfort, 1782-90; repr. London: Gregg Press, 1964), VI, 266-67: *nihil esset nobis aliud habendum domi quam libri, in libris fuisset sedendum, libri fuissent calcandi, incurrere in aliud non possent oculi, quam in libros*. My translations are indebted to Foster Watson, ed. *Vives: On Education* (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1971).

[2] Vives, *Opera Omnia*, VI, 267: *miseri intra se queruntur, Quis leget haec?*

[3] Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 11. Even this sense of 'overload' had ancient roots; see Glenn W. Most, 'Canon Fathers: Literacy, Mortality, Power,' *Arion*, Third Series, 1, no. 1 (1990): 35-60.

in the Renaissance has been critically neglected. This chapter begins with the significance of Euripides in humanist educational programmes. Central to the early transmission and reception of Euripides' works is the great Dutch humanist, Desiderius Erasmus, who published the earliest printed Latin translations of two plays, *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*, in 1506. His works give an important insight into modes of reading Euripides, which have wider implications for theories of reading in the period. They also inspired another influential humanist, George Buchanan, to produce two Latin translations of his own, of *Medea* and *Alcestis*, performed by his students in the 1540s. Buchanan perceived in Euripides an anti-tyrannical stance which appealed to his own political instincts. Apart from being widely influential themselves, not least in England, these Latin translations illustrate a range of distinctive modes of engagement characteristic of receptions of Euripides throughout the sixteenth century.

Euripides and Education

Humanism in the sixteenth century was essentially a question of reading. Paul Kristeller's definition of humanism as the 'broad concern with the study and imitation of classical antiquity'[4] indicates that in the first place it was a question of *what* was being read – humanism represents a 'self-conscious commitment to return to the classics'[5] along with a powerful sense of the novelty of that endeavour. By the beginning of the sixteenth century there was a perceived need for the codification of a humanist educational programme. Vives' comments on the immense numbers of books come in a lengthy work on education, *De tradendis disciplinis* ('On the Transmission of Knowledge'); he continues: 'in each art and science books should be assigned, some to be expounded in schools, others to be taken out and read in private study'.[6] In offering guidelines for the selection of books to be read by the

[4] Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Humanism,' in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* ed. Charles Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 113.
[5] Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature, 1430-1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.
[6] Vives, *Opera Omnia*, VI, 267: *in unaquaque arte ac peritia libri debent assignari, qui enarrandi sunt in scholis, qui secreto studio legendi ac evolvendi*.

humanist student, Vives was following in the footsteps of his friend and mentor Erasmus.

In the genre of humanist educational manuals, as so often, Erasmus provides one of the earliest and most influential examples. *De ratione studii* ('On the Method of Study') was printed in 1512, along with *De copia* ('On Abundance'). *De ratione studii* outlines a programme of study designed to produce an exemplary humanist. Euripides appears early on, while the student is still acquiring 'an ability with language, if not ornate, certainly pure' (*sermonis facultate, si non luxuriosa, certe casta*).[7] Erasmus emphasizes that 'a true ability to speak faultlessly' (*vera emendate loquendi facultas*) will be aided 'by the assiduous reading of eloquent authors, among which the ones which should be imbibed first are those whose diction, besides being very correct, also entices learners with a certain charm of subject-matter.'[8] For Greek poetry, the authors he places in this category – valued for refinement of style and charm of subject-matter – are Aristophanes, Homer, and Euripides.

Erasmus later outlines how he envisages tragedy being taught, probably with Euripides in mind, as the only tragedian among his core texts. The teacher introduces an author by praising him briefly, 'to win over his listeners' (*ad conciliandos auditores*), followed by an indication of 'the enjoyment and benefit of the argument' (*argumenti iucunditatem utilitatemque ostendat*).[9] When dealing with tragedy, the teacher draws attention to

> the emotions aroused, and especially, indeed, to the more acute ones. He will show briefly how these things are stirred. Then the arguments [of the speakers], as if they were rhetorical exercises. Finally, the delineation of places, times, and

[7] ASD I-2, 116. Latin texts are quoted from J.H. Waszink et al., eds. *Erasmi Opera Omnia* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1969-), referred to as 'ASD'. My translations are indebted to R.J. Shoeck et al., eds. *Collected Works of Erasmus*, multi-volume (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974-).
[8] ASD I-2, 115: *ex eloquentium auctorum assidua lectione, e quibus ii primum sunt imbibendi, quorum oratio, praeterquam quod est castigatissima, argumenti quoque illecebra aliqua discentibus blandiatur*.
[9] ASD I-2, 137.

> sometimes events, and the incidence of lively altercations, which are brought off now in couplets, now single lines, now half-lines.[10]

The focus is primarily on the functioning of language in tragedy: how language is capable of exciting emotion, how speeches are constructed to argue and persuade, how stichomythia and related effects increase dramatic intensity. The student may also be required to construct arguments based on scenarios taken from Euripides: Erasmus advocates exercises in which 'themes are gathered from Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Virgil, or even sometimes from the historians'; for example, 'Menelaus demands Helen back at the Trojan assembly'.[11]

Vives' *De tradendis disciplinis* is on a greater scale than Erasmus' treatise, and differs in its interest in the vernacular and in a prioritisation of Latin as opposed to Erasmus' preference for Greek. Nevertheless, Euripides' place in the curriculum is very similar. When the student is ready for poetry, Vives, like Erasmus, recommends some Homer, followed by

> one or another play by Aristophanes, and some by Euripides, who are very elegant authors, and among the few Attic writers. Aristophanes is funny, Euripides through the gravity of his *sententiae* equal to even the greatest philosophers, as Quintilian says.[12]

Later, the student will read the rest of the works by these poets. Vives elsewhere lists Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, and the fragmentary Menander as being the 'best of the [Attic] poets, and those whom it is most rewarding to read' (*ex Poetis quoque optimi, et quos operaeprecium [sic] sit legere*), and highlights Euripides and Seneca as the models for tragic style.[13] In Vives, then, Euripides again features

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[10] ASD I-2, 142-43: *In tragoedia praecipue spectandos affectus, et quidem fere acriores illos. Hi quibus rebus moveantur, paucis ostendet. Tum argumenta veluti declamantium. Postremo descriptiones locorum, temporum, rerum aliquoties, et argutas altercationes incidere, quae nunc distichis, nunc singulis versibus, nunc hemistichiis absoluantur.*

[11] ASD I-2, 135: *ex Homero, Sophocle, Euripide, Vergilio, aut etiam ex historiis aliquando legantur themata. Puta, ut Menelaus apud Troianam concionem repetat Helenam.*

[12] Vives, *Opera Omnia*, VI, 334: *Aristophanis primam et alteram fabulam, Euripidis aliquot; qui auctores elegantes sane sunt, et inter paucos Attici, Aristophanes festivus, Euripides gravitate sententiarum etiam maximis philosophis par, ut Quintilianus ait.*

[13] Vives, *Opera Omnia*, VI, 301; 364. Erasmus does not include Seneca in his list of Latin poetry for beginners (ASD I-2, 115).

relatively early in the Greek curriculum, along with Homer and Aristophanes, valued for his elegance of style and the seriousness of his maxims.

Though these educational manuals are somewhat idealistic, a popular textbook illustrates in practical terms a beginner's introduction to Greek. Nicolas Clenardus' Greek grammar first appeared in 1530, and was a major international success, reprinted over three hundred times.[14] From 1554, it was regularly printed in an edition by Pierre Davantès, professor of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew at Lyon, who added a collection of passages from Greek texts, graded according to difficulty. Five short and familiar prayers are followed by the opening of Euripides' *Orestes* (and subsequently passages from Aristophanes, Hesiod, Homer, Theocritus, and Pindar).[15] The texts are accompanied by interlinear Latin translations and helpful notes. Davantès introduces each passage with a brief argument or hypothesis, in Greek and Latin. Editions of Euripides printed three hypotheses for *Orestes*; Davantès chooses the second for its succinct plot summary ('Orestes, suffering from terrors both because of his murder of his mother and by the agency of the Erinyes, and condemned to death by the Argives, intended to murder Helen and Hermione, in retaliation for Menelaus' failing to help him although he was present, but he was stopped by Apollo').[16] It goes on to note that 'the story does not occur in any other author',[17] impressing the student with Euripides' originality. Davantès adds a sentence introducing the passage: 'Electra speaks the prologue, lamenting as the sister of Orestes concerning Tantalus'.[18]

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[14] See Federica Ciccolella, *Donati Graeci: Learning Greek in the Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 129.

[15] Placing Euripides before Homer and Aristophanes (*contra* Erasmus and Vives) reflects the fact that Euripides' language is easier for the beginner than Homer's archaic dialect, or Old Comedy.

[16] Pierre Davantès, 'Praxis,' in Nicholas Clenardus, *Institutiones Linguae Graecae* (Lyon: Matthias Bonhomme, 1554), 193-222, translates: *Orestes propter matris caedem, simul et a Furiis perterritus, et ab Argivis condemnatus morte, interfecturus Helenam et Hermionem, eo quod Menelaus praesens non tulit opem, prohibitus est ab Apolline* (199).

[17] *Apud nullum autem ponitur fabula* (Davantès, 'Praxis,' 199).

[18] *Praefatur vero Electra ut soror Orestis miserabili oratione utens propter Tantalum* (Davantès, 'Praxis,' 200).

The passage consists of the first 45 lines of Electra's prologue, in which she rehearses her genealogy from Tantalus onwards, covering Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon and Orestes' revenge, and finishing by describing his madness. Davantès comments: 'most of Orestes' crimes are contained in this drama, so that from it and from Electra's speech you will be able to gather them',[19] indicating that the mythological content is an important part of what the student is to take from the passage. The copious notes give help with grammar and vocabulary; almost every word is parsed or explained in a way that is relevant to the immediate context ('ὡς has various meanings: here it stands for *ut*, *utpote*').[20] Other notes explain or expand upon the mythological context ('Argos was the most famous city in the Peloponnese, not far from Mycenae, where Agamemnon, Orestes' father, had been king').[21]

While the purpose is not to comment on Euripides' style or qualities, certain elements of the passage might shape a student's perception of Euripidean tragedy. The first lines are gnomic: 'There is no word so terrible to say, no suffering, no god-sent disaster, of which the human race might not have to bear the burden' (οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν δεινὸν ὧδ᾽ εἰπεῖν ἔπος / οὐδὲ πάθος οὐδὲ ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος, / ἧς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιτ᾽ ἄχθος ἀνθρώπου φύσις, 1-3). Davantès highlights the double negatives, explaining that οὐκ οὐδὲν means *non nullum, id est, non ullum vel nullum*, with a reminder that two negatives in Greek are emphatic (*duae negationes Graecis magis negant*).[22] Euripides, the 'philosopher of the stage',[23] was associated in the biographical tradition with Socrates and acquired a reputation for religious scepticism (for which Aristophanes was partly responsible[24]). Electra asks: 'Why should Phoebus be accused of wrongdoing?' (Φοίβου δ᾽ ἀδικίαν μὲν τί δεῖ

[19] *Maxima Orestis facinora in hac fabula continentur, ut ex eius argumento ac ex Electrae oratione poteris colligere* (Davantès, 'Praxis,' 199).
[20] ὡς *varia significat: hic sumitur pro, ut, utpote* (Davantès, 'Praxis,' 200).
[21] *Argos, clarissima civitas Peloponnesi, non procul a Mycenis, ubi Agamemnon Orestis pater regnaverat* (Davantès, 'Praxis,' 199).
[22] Davantès, 'Praxis,' 200.
[23] So designated by Athenaeus (*Deipnosophistae*, 4.48) and Vitruvius (*De architectura*, 8.1) among others.
[24] In *Thesmophoriazusae*, a garland-seller complains that no one is buying her wares because Euripides has persuaded people that there are no gods (450-51).

κατηγορεῖν; 28), while relating that he persuaded Orestes to kill his mother (29-30). She qualifies her mythological genealogy with ὡς λέγουσι (5), and ὡς μὲν λέγουσιν (8), 'so they say'.

T.W. Baldwin has demonstrated that for most of the sixteenth century Clendardus was the standard Greek grammar used in English grammar schools; in 1612, John Brinsley was still recommending Davantès' *Praxis* as a supplement.[25] Baldwin finds Clenardus at Shrewsbury, St. Paul's, St. Bees, Blackburn, and Bangor.[26] We can assume that Davantès' edition is meant; this is specified at St. Paul's, and again in a list of books given to the ten-year-old James VI in 1576 (who later acquired a copy of Euripides' works).[27] An edition of the Davantès-Clenardus grammar was printed in London in 1582 by Thomas Marsh, with further editions in 1588 (John Windet), 1590 and 1594 (Robert Robinson), and 1599 (Richard Bracock). The opening lines of *Orestes*, then, will have been the first impression of Euripides for generations of students. In the final forms of some grammar schools, such as St. Paul's, Rivington, and Norwich, the boys read more Euripides.[28] Those who went on to university could expect to study him further, since his works were regularly lectured upon and formed 'part of the preliminary arts course common to almost all undergraduates'.[29]

Reading Euripides with Erasmus

In later years, Erasmus reported that he began translating Euripides at the beginning of the sixteenth century to improve his Greek, due to the difficulty of obtaining a teacher.[30] The subsequent spread of Greek teaching and learning throughout Europe was to a considerable degree thanks to the efforts of Erasmus himself, who 'tirelessly performed his role of demanding, cajoling, teaching,

[25] John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius* (London: Thomas Man, 1612), 241. See Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine*, II, 618.
[26] Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine*, II, 618; I, 174-78.
[27] Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine*, I, 422, 535.
[28] Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine*, I, 348, 417, 422.
[29] Lazarus, 'Greek Literacy,' 50.
[30] P.S. Allen, ed. *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, 12 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906-58), Ep.I.4, 29-31. Henceforth 'Allen'.

stimulating knowledge of Greek in cities across Europe, often in the face not just of apathy but of organized and extended opposition'.[31] Erasmus' zeal for Greek was nothing short of religious, since the ultimate goal was a better understanding of Scripture. In the dedicatory epistle to *Hecuba*, he establishes that he began translating Greek authors to further the cause of theology, hinting that this is preparation for a greater work, his Latin translation of the Greek New Testament.[32]

Erasmus' engagement with Euripides has tended to form no more than a footnote to larger stories such as these (the Greek revival, the Reformation, Erasmus' own life and works). But from the perspective of the reception and transmission of Euripides, Erasmus is crucial. His Latin translations of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* made Euripides available in print to a Greekless readership for the first time.[33] Moreover, his reputation and stature as 'the type and figure of the humanistic man of letters'[34] and the popularity of his works helped to establish Euripides as the preeminent Greek tragedian, which he remained for more than a century. As an early and influential Renaissance reader of Euripides, Erasmus both displays and establishes modes of reading the dramatist which persist throughout the period. Reading Euripides with Erasmus is revealing not only concerning the reception of Euripides in the sixteenth century, but about reading practices more generally.

Critics have become increasingly interested in uncovering Renaissance reading practices. From a modern perspective, reading is an essentially private, individual, and intangible experience, which 'like other acts of consumption – like eating, looking, or listening – seems to deny its material premise', since '[o]nce we have finished holding the book in our hands, we remove our body from the act and

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[31] Simon Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek? Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15.
[32] ASD I-1, 216.
[33] They were printed in September 1506 (Paris: Josse Bade); that July another Latin translation of *Hecuba* by Giorgio Anselmi appeared (Parma: Francisco Ugoleto). On earlier manuscript translations see ASD I-1, 204-205; Erasmus knew Francesco Filelfo's translation of Polydorus' speech.
[34] Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 7.

the event vanishes without a trace'.[35] But the experience of reading is not a universal constant; on the contrary, it is always historically contingent. Fortunately, many Renaissance readers did leave traces, and there have been some illuminating studies of manuscript marginalia.[36] Along with paratextual features which attempt to influence a reader's engagement with a text, these may, as Sasha Roberts puts it, 'go some way to reconstructing possible reading strategies in the period: the ways in which a text made available, encouraged or bears witness to particular readings, and the ways in which a reader might have responded to the text'.[37] In this case, a heavily-annotated copy of Erasmus' translations owned by Gabriel Harvey (1550-1630) offers insights into how one later English reader responded to the readings encouraged by the text.[38]

In attempting to recover historical reading practices, recent criticism has focused on differences between sixteenth-century approaches to texts and our own. Roberts, speaking of the Renaissance reception of Shakespeare's poems, is illustrative:

> Typicality and function may not be the qualities by which we have become accustomed to approaching Shakespeare's works, but they were precisely what mattered to early modern readers. And as useful textual commodities, Shakespeare's poems were invariably treated by their readers as a series of parts. While modern literary criticism is so often intent on elaborating the text as a whole, discovering its overall narratives, meanings and significances, early modern readers were often drawn to its fragmented local observations.[39]

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[35] Steven Zwicker, 'The Reader Revealed,' in *The Reader Revealed*, ed. Sabrina Alcorn Baron (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2001), 11.
[36] See e.g. Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy,' *Past and Present* 129, no. 1 (1990): 30-78; William Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).
[37] Sasha Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare's Poems in Early Modern England* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 5.
[38] Currently at Harvard, Houghton Library GEN EC.H2623.Zz507e.
[39] Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare's Poems*, 11. See also Laura Estill, *Dramatic Extracts in Seventeenth-Century English Manuscripts: Watching, Reading, Changing Plays* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2015).

This practical approach to reading is epitomized in the practice of commonplacing. This, Moss has demonstrated, became 'one of the most important factors contributing to [the] intellectual paradigms' of the Renaissance.[40] In *De copia*, Erasmus gives detailed instructions on compiling a commonplace book. Topic headings (e.g. *fides*, or 'faith') are subdivided into smaller topics (e.g. 'faith in God's works, human faith, faithfulness towards friends, faithfulness of servants to masters, good faith towards enemies').[41] *Sententiae* and similes are collected under the appropriate heading or headings, since the same example may be used in different and even contradictory ways. Under *inconstantia aut morum inequalitas* ('inconstancy or inconsistent behaviour'), he suggests 'from tragedy' the case of 'Phaedra changing her mind, now willing, now unwilling; Medea likewise before the murder of her children, tossed by different emotions'.[42] The student thus prepared will be able to dip into his commonplace book to find material suited to any occasion.

Erasmus combined theory with practice. His *Adages*, first published in 1500 and continually expanded throughout his lifetime, is effectively a form of printed commonplace book. The first edition contained eight hundred entries, which grew over time to over three thousand. Each entry takes a proverb or phrase as its title, usually from a classical source, which it expounds upon and illustrates using further classical sources, making a wealth of classical – and particularly Greek – learning available to anyone who could read Latin. Some are very brief; others turn into extensive essays on politics or religious questions. It was something of a sixteenth-century publishing sensation; in fact, it has 'been termed the most popular work of the entire period'.[43] Its influence was considerable: Jessica Wolfe finds that

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[40] Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books*, 134.

[41] ASD I-6, 258-59: *est fiducia erga Deum; est fides humana, est fides in amicos, fides servorum in dominos, fides in hostes.*

[42] ASD I-6, 265; 267-68: *E tragoediis mutuabor Phaedram variatis secum sententiis, nunc volentem, nunc nolentem, Medeam item ante filiorum caedem, diversis agitatam affectibus.* Both women feature in tragedies by Seneca as well as Euripides.

[43] Deno Geanakoplos, 'Erasmus and the Aldine Academy of Venice: A Neglected Chapter in the Transmission of Graeco-Byzantine Learning to the West,' *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 3 (1960): 107-34 (25).

'[e]arly sixteenth-century readers of Homer encounter the texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* through the lens of Erasmus'.[44]

A reader of the *Adages* would come away with little sense of any of Euripides' works as a whole (with the important exception of *Alcestis*, discussed below), or indeed as plays. Erasmus quotes from all of Euripides' extant tragedies (except *Electra*, which was not re-discovered until after his death), as well as many fragments. At their briefest, they consist of a Greek quotation, a Latin translation, and a citation of the source; for example, 'Euripides in *Bacchae*: Μῶρα γὰρ μῶρος λέγει, Fools speak foolishly' (1.1.98).[45] Sometimes Erasmus gives details of who speaks the line, where he feels it is significant, as in 1.1.28 where he quotes *Orestes*, 99: ὀψέ γε φρονεῖς εὖ, τότε λιποῦσ' αἰσχρῶς δόμους ('Your prudence is late, since you left your house shamefully back then'), explaining that 'the words are Electra's to Helen' (*verba sunt ad Helenam Electrae*).[46] Similarly, his policy is to give just enough context as necessary for understanding the application of a reference ('Hence in Euripides Hecuba orders Polyxena to imitate the nightingale and try out every song, in case she can persuade Ulysses that she should not be killed', 1.1.93).[47] Though many are one or two lines, he quite frequently quotes three or more lines together, and sometimes more substantial passages, the longest being twelve lines from *Phoenician Women* (534-46) in 1.9.95. Here, he breaks off with 'and the rest' (*et reliqua*), directing the conscientious student back to consult Euripides.[48]

In her analysis of Erasmus' sources, Margaret Mann Phillips finds 200 uses of Euripides, making him the sixteenth most quoted classical author in the work. Cicero is the most quoted with 892, and of the Greek poets Euripides also falls behind Homer (666) and Aristophanes (596). However, he is by far the most quoted

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[44] Jessica Wolfe, *Homer and the Question of Strife from Erasmus to Hobbes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 61.

[45] ASD II-1, 208: *Euripides in Bacchis, Μῶρα γὰρ μῶρος λέγει, id est Nam stulta stulti oratio est.*

[46] ASD II-1, 142.

[47] ASD II-1, 202. *Unde et apud Euripidem Hecuba Polyxenam imitari lusciniam iubet seseque in omnem vocem vertere, si quo modo queat Ulyssi persuadere, ne perimatur.*

[48] ASD II-2, 406.

of the Greek tragedians, with Sophocles at 115 and Aeschylus at 36.[49] This makes Euripides the primary representative of tragedy in the *Adages*, since Seneca's tragedies are quoted only eight times.[50] In the frontispiece of Froben's 1515 edition, Euripides is the only tragedian represented. But in his dismembered state he becomes more a dispenser of wise and finely-turned phrases than a playwright, an effect enhanced by the fact that quotations are generally attributed to him rather than his characters.

The majority of the references to Euripides in the *Adages* were added for a significantly expanded version printed in 1508. In the meantime, Erasmus had composed and published his translations of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*.[51] He translated *Hecuba* in 1503 or 1504 while in Louvain, and *Iphigenia in Aulis* during his stay in England in 1506.[52] He used the 1503 *editio princeps* of Euripides' complete works, printed by Aldus Manutius in Venice.[53] The translations were printed together by Josse Bade in Paris in 1506. This first edition had apparently sold out by the end of October 1507, but Erasmus was not satisfied with it, complaining that it was riddled with errors, and applied instead to Aldus to take charge of the second edition.[54] Aldus consented, and his edition appeared in December 1507.

The publication of his translations by the Aldine press represents something of a coup for Erasmus. By 1507, it 'ranked as the leading publishing house in Europe'; its goal was 'to print systematically and for the first time all the major Greek classics of the ancient world'.[55] The Euripides translations acted as a passport into the elite scholarly ranks of the Aldine circle; the following year, Erasmus was

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[49] Margaret Mann Phillips, *The 'Adages Of Erasmus: A Study with Translations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 393-403. Philips identifies the most cited authors as: Cicero (892), Homer (666), Plutarch (618), Aristophanes (519), Horace & Plautus (475).
[50] *Agamemnon* three times; *Oedipus*, *Hercules Oetaeus*, *Hercules Furens*, *Medea*, and *Phaedra* once each.
[51] In the *Adages*, Erasmus refers to these two plays more frequently than any of Euripides' other works, reflecting his intimate knowledge of them.
[52] Allen Ep.I.4: 29-31.
[53] Erasmus gives signature references for the Aldine edition (Allen Ep.209: 11, 13), which printed *Hecuba* for the first time.
[54] Allen Ep.207: 26-30.
[55] Geanakoplos, 'Erasmus and the Aldine Academy,' 113.

invited to stay with Aldus in Venice, during which time he revised and expanded the *Adages*. This Aldine edition, printed in 1508, 'was responsible for establishing Erasmus' reputation throughout Europe'.[56] Thus the prestigious dolphin-and-anchor device of the Aldine press on the title page of the Euripides translations represents Aldus' valuable stamp of approval. Aldus' brief prefatory epistle likewise endorses Erasmus as 'a man most learned in Greek and Latin' (*homo et Graece et Latine doctissimus*), who has translated Euripides faithfully (*fideliter*) and skilfully (*erudite*).[57]

This edition, printed in Aldus' famous italic type, was the one acquired by Harvey; the names of at least three previous owners are inscribed on the title page. Harvey's annotations, in his best secretary hand, represent a display of conspicuous reading. He certainly approaches the text with an eye to typicality and functionality, declaring: 'as with comedies, so with tragedies; he who knows three or four intimately, essentially knows them all. Such is the value of this golden book' (*Ut comoedias, sic tragoedias; qui tres, aut quatuor intime novit, novit fere omnes. Tanti valet hic aureus libellus*).[58] Harvey also offers carefully-considered thoughts on reading for commonplaces:

> It is a task for politic judgement, to distinguish the most prudent *sententiae* from the rest. A tyrant is not always barbarous, nor a poet or philosopher always wise: it will show skilful judgement, to look at not who is speaking, but what is said, and to select the best from everywhere.[59]

Someone who cannot do this is reading tragedies to no purpose (*inutiliter tragoedias legit*).[60]

On the opposite page, Harvey makes a related note: *Ecce Gnomae Selectae, hac notulae insignitae* ('look at the *sententiae* selected, marked with this sign'), with a little

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[56] Geanakoplos, 'Erasmus and the Aldine Academy,' 109.
[57] ASD, I-1, 215.
[58] Sig.7v.
[59] *Politico opus est iudicio, ad distinguendum prudentissimas sententias a reliquis. Nec semper tyrannus barbarus: nec semper poeta, aut philosophus sapiens: solertis iudicii fuerit, non quis dicat, sed quid dicatur, respicere, et undique optima seligere* (sig.8v).
[60] Sig.8v.

illustration (›).[61] He is referring to another Aldine innovation: the printed commonplace mark. These appeared first in 1495 and had since featured in the Aldine Sophocles (1502) and Euripides (1503).[62] Whether their inclusion here was down to Aldus, or at Erasmus' request, they certainly align with Erasmus' practice. In *De ratio studii* he recommends that as they read students note 'remarkable words, archaic or novel diction, cleverly devised or aptly woven arguments, brilliant flashes of style, adages, examples, and *sententiae* worth committing to memory'; these 'should be marked with some appropriate little sign'.[63] Harvey not only pays attention to the marked passages; he absorbs these specific signs into his own annotation practices, adding them throughout the text.

Valuing Euripides for the utility of his *sententiae* was encouraged by Quintilian, the Roman author of the rhetorical handbook *Institutio Oratoria*. Quintilian identifies three aspects of Euripides for praise (10.1.68). In the phrase we saw quoted by Vives, he is 'full of striking thoughts (*sententiae*), and almost a match for the philosophers in expressing their teaching' (*sententiis densus, et in iis quae a sapientibus tradita sunt paene ipsis par*).[64] Practically speaking, Euripides will be 'more useful' (*utiliores*) than Sophocles to those undertaking legal training, since 'his technique of speech and debate is comparable to that of anyone who has been famous for eloquence in the courts' (*in dicendo ac respondendo cuilibet eorum qui fuerunt in foro diserti comparandus*). Lastly, 'he is marvellous at expressing any emotion, and far and away the supreme master of the power to arouse pity' (*in adfectibus vero cum omnibus mirus, tum in iis qui miseratione constant facile praecipuus*). Quintilian's judgement was highly influential, and echoes will be heard in Erasmus' own evaluations of Euripides. James Parente even speculates that Erasmus' 'initial attraction to Euripides was probably aroused, as it doubtless may have been for

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[61] Sig.A1r.

[62] See Chapter 2.

[63] ASD I-2, 117: *observabis, si quod incidat insigne verbum, si quid antique aut nove dictum, si quod argumentum aut inventum acute aut tortum apte, si quod egregium orationis decus, si quod adagium, si quod exemplum, si qua sententia digna quae memoriae commendetur. Isque locus erit apta notula quapiam insigniendus.*

[64] Translations of Quintilian are by Donald A. Russell, from *Quintilian: The Orator's Education*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

Euripides' Quattrocento admirers in Italy, by Quintilian's praise of the tragedian's practical rhetorical skills'.[65]

Practical rhetorical skills are not what we now value in tragedy. Nor would *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* seem obvious selections from a modern perspective. But within the Euripidean corpus, *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, and *Phoenician Women* had 'emerged as the Euripidean triad, that is, as the plays most likely to be read and studied in the Byzantine "system" of higher education'[66]; this was the context inherited by the early humanists. Modern criticism has found two main aspects of *Hecuba* problematic: its structure ('it contains two unconnected, or loosely connected, actions – the sacrifice of Polyxena and the avenging of Polydorus'[67]), and its language, which is 'persistently and defiantly rhetorical'.[68] Erasmus, however, was untroubled by neo-Aristotelian concerns about unity, since he was translating before the *Poetics* had become available in print.[69] Malcolm Heath demonstrates that even after the *Poetics* became more widely known, Renaissance commentators did not see unity of plot as incompatible with *varietas* (certainly valued by Erasmus, author of *De copia*). Heath cites Julius Caesar Scaliger, who in his *Poetices* (printed in 1561) used *Hecuba* to show that 'the argument should be very concise and also constructed with the greatest variety and multiplicity'.[70] Thus, Heath concludes, Renaissance readers 'could construe the Polyxena action as an "episode" diversifying and ornamenting the unified sequence of events involving Polydorus

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[65] James A. Parente, *Religious Drama and the Humanist Tradition: Christian Theater in Germany and in the Netherlands 1500-1680* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 17. Russell notes that 'the Quintilianic ingredient' is 'pervasive' in Erasmus' educational writings (*Quintilian* I, 24). Erasmus acknowledges his debt to Quintilian in *De Copia* (ASD I-6, 27).

[66] Donald Mastronarde, *The Art of Euripides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7.

[67] Malcolm Heath, '"Jure Principem Locum Tenet": Euripides' *Hecuba*,' *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 34 (1987): 40-68 (62).

[68] Judith Mossman, *Wild Justice: A Study of Euripides' Hecuba* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 3.

[69] Aldus produced the first printed text in 1508; when compiling his previous edition of Aristotle's works in the 1490s he could not obtain a manuscript copy, so Erasmus is unlikely to have had one.

[70] *Argumentum…brevissimum accipiendum est idque maxime varium multiplexque faciundum*. Luc Deitz et al., eds. *Julius Caesar Scaliger: Poetices Libri Septem*, 6 vols. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1994-2001), II, 30.

and Polymestor, an episode which, being materially related to the plot and formally interwoven with it, is unobjectionable despite its structural superfluity'.[71]

The 'persistently and defiantly rhetorical' nature of *Hecuba* was certainly an important part of its appeal for Renaissance readers. Erasmus draws attention to this as a distinctively Euripidean feature in his preface to *Hecuba*: Euripides 'is so abundant and clever in the employment of rhetorical arguments, that he seems to be making declamatory speeches throughout' (*in tractandis locis rhetoricis tam creber sit, tam acutus, ut passim declamare videatur*).[72] The same idea recurs in the preface to *Iphigenia in Aulis*, where he describes its 'density of themes and a certain declamatory skill in proposing and opposing arguments' (*argumentorum densitate quasique declamatoria quadam suadendi ac dissuadendi facultate*) as characteristically Euripidean.[73] Harvey, a close reader of all the paratextual material, cross-referenced these passages to each other.[74] *Iphigenia in Aulis* is an even more unexpected choice from a modern perspective than *Hecuba*. Euripides' final play, it was incomplete at the time of his death, and finished by another hand; 'its text is uniquely problematic'; 'only 200 or so of its 1629 lines have not been suspected or deleted by somebody'.[75] Erasmus, however, evidently selected it as a companion-piece to *Hecuba*. The two plays neatly book-end the Trojan Wars, and both feature the heroism of sacrificial daughters. In addition, the Christian resonances of Iphigenia's willing sacrifice appealed to Erasmus, as we shall see.

Heath also suggests that *Hecuba*'s Renaissance popularity was due to its Senecan features: 'Those who read the play had previously read attentively and admiringly Seneca's tragedies; and they found in it familiar and welcome features: a ghost, vengeance, horrific bloodshed, rhetoric and pointed sententiousness'.[76]

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[71] Heath, 'Euripides' *Hecuba*,' 46.
[72] ASD, I-1, 217.
[73] ASD, I-1, 271-72.
[74] Sig.2r; sig.D1r.
[75] Christopher Collard and James Morwood, eds., *Euripides: Iphigenia at Aulis* 2 vols. (Liverpool: Aris & Phillips, 2017), I, ix.
[76] Heath, 'Euripides' *Hecuba*,' 43-44.

Erasmus, however, seems keen to differentiate the play and its author from Seneca. In the preface to *Hecuba*, he writes:

> Although nowhere here will they hear the grandiloquence of Latin tragedy, the bombast and enormous words (as Horace says),[77] they should not blame me if, discharging the office of translator, I have been inclined to reproduce his concise purity and elegance rather than an inflation alien to it, and which does not please me particularly anyway.[78]

The 'concise purity and elegance' (*pressam sanitatem elegantiamque*)[79] of Euripides' style is contrasted with the 'grandiloquence, bombast, and enormous words' (*grandiloquentiam, ampullas, et sesquipedalia verba*) of Latin tragedy, which, for the Renaissance as for us, essentially means Seneca.

Elsewhere in the epistle, Euripides is described as 'admirably concise, delicate, and exquisite in style' (*mirum in modum presso subtili excusso*).[80] The repeated word 'concise' (*pressus*) clearly expresses something important about Euripides for Erasmus.[81] Erasmus was attracted, he says, by Euripides' 'speech sweeter than honey' (*suaviloquentia plus quam mellita*).[82] He perceives a difference in the style of *Iphigenia in Aulis* compared to *Hecuba*: it has 'a different flavour of language, and a separate quality of verse' (*alium quendam orationis gustum, diversamque carminis indolem*).[83] But this style too is by no means Senecan: 'For (if I am not mistaken) it has a little more naturalness and its style is more flowing'.[84]

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[77] Horace, *Ars Poetica* 97, not of course referring to Seneca, who had not yet been born. Quintilian criticizes Seneca, though not in these terms (*Inst.Or.*10.2.127-31).

[78] ASD I-1, 218: *quod Latinae tragoediae grandiloquentiam, ampullas et sesquipedalia (ut Flaccus ait) verba hic nusquam audient, mihi non debent imputare, si interpretis officio fungens eius quem verti pressam sanitatem elegantiamque referre malui quam alienum tumorem, qui me nec alias magnopere delectat.*

[79] C.O. Brink, ed. *Horace on Poetry: The 'Ars Poetica'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 344: 'In that sense [of 'healthy balance'] sanitas in rhetoric is presumed to be characteristic of the Attic style or its imitators', as in Quintilian 10.1.44, 'healthy and genuinely Attic manner' (*sana et vere Attica*).

[80] ASD I-1, 217.

[81] Quintilian uses *pressus* as an antonym for *abundans*: *laete an severe, abundanter an presse* ('luxuriantly or severely, abundantly or concisely', 8.3.40). He does not use it to describe Euripides but finds Homer *idem laetus ac pressus* ('at the same time luxuriant and concise', 10.1.46).

[82] ASD I-1, 218.

[83] ASD I-1, 271.

[84] *Nam (ni fallor) et plusculum habet candoris et fusior est dictio* (ASD I-1, 271).

Interestingly, Erasmus views these features as being more Sophoclean than Euripidean, but concludes that its rhetorical nature suggests that it is by Euripides.[85]

Harvey's annotations reveal an interest in Erasmus' comments on the comparative styles of Euripides, Sophocles, and Seneca. By the passage comparing Euripides to Seneca he wrote *nota*, and added underneath: *sententiarum gravitas, sed decora: stili maiestas, sed inaffectata* ('gravity of *sententiae*, but decorous: majesty of style, but unaffected').[86] Another summary of Euripides' characteristics earlier on is clearly inflected by Erasmus' comments: 'Not one of the most excellent Athenians was either more sagacious than Euripides, or more acute, or more elegant' (*Nec excellentissimorum Atticorum ullus, vel prudentior Euripide, vel argutior, vel etiam elegantior*).[87] Above the epistle to *Iphigenia in Aulis*, he notes that it discusses the *propria vena* ('individual qualities') of Euripides and Sophocles.[88] He had read Thomas Watson's Latin translation of *Antigone*, to which he refers several times in this volume, and was naturally familiar with Seneca. Clearly, he valued insights into the distinctive styles of these tragedians, as well as their 'typicality' of the genre.

Erasmus' methodology in translating reflects his desire to communicate Euripides' particular style:

> I try, as far as possible, to represent the shape and (as it were) texture of the Greek poetry, and I strive to render verse for verse, and almost word for word, and I study everywhere to mete out the force and weight of the meaning with fidelity for Latin ears.[89]

Erika Rummel has demonstrated that in *Hecuba* Erasmus does indeed translate 'verse for verse, and almost word for word'; his *Hecuba* runs to 1378 lines, less than a hundred lines longer than the Greek text.[90] His minor expansions 'are rarely the

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[85] ASD, I-1, 271-72.
[86] Sig.3r.
[87] Sig.1v.
[88] Sig.D1r.
[89] ASD I-1, 218: *conor, quoad licet, Graecanici poematis figuras quasique filum representare, dum versum versui, dum verbum pene verbo reddere nitor, dum ubique sententiae vim ac pondus summa cum fide Latinis auribus appendere studeo*.
[90] Erika Rummel, *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 33.

result of whim, of a subjective delight in *copia*, or an inability to devise a translation close to the Greek wording'; rather '[t]hey usually reflect Erasmus' consideration for Latin idiom and represent his effort to avoid obscurity'.[91] He relaxes his methods somewhat for *Iphigenia in Aulis*, in response to a difference in style. He finds that 'the style is more flowing' (*fusior est dictio*): 'Therefore I have translated *Iphigenia* a little more freely and expansively, but again in such a way that I was by no means abandoning the duty of the translator'.[92]

Erasmus is clearly interested in producing the effects of Euripidean *suaviloquentia* as opposed to Senecan *grandiloquentia*. He largely avoids Senecan borrowings, a rare exception being the adjective *inauspicatus* ('unfortunate'), used three times in *Iphigenia in Aulis* (475, 887, 1011).[93] There are few obvious echoes of any Latin poets, with occasional exceptions including Horace (e.g. *Prece sollicita*, 'anxious prayers', *Hecuba* 162, from Horace's *Odes* 1.35.5) and slightly more frequently Virgil (e.g. *demittier Orco*, 'sent down to Orcus', *Hecuba* 230, from *Aeneid* 2.398).[94] As J.H. Waszink points out, Erasmus 'has in his poetry a very considerable number of late Latin words…especially words peculiar to Christian authors and late Latin poetisms', and his translations have this slight inflection.[95] In places, he creates a specifically Greek vocabulary. In *Hecuba* he translates the Greek compound ποντοπόρους ('sea-faring', 111) as *pontigradas* (124), which Waszink considers 'is almost certainly a new formation by Er[asmus] himself'; he uses it again at line 487 (Euripides 445) to translate the same word.[96] Likewise, he translates ὀρεστέρου ('of the mountains', 1057) as *montigenae* (1117), and ἀνδροφόνους ('man-slaying', 1061) as *viricidis* (1120).[97] The overall effect of Erasmus' diction, then, is far from Senecan.

However, this is not to say that Erasmus intended to create what might be termed foreignizing translations; on the contrary, he was at some pains to produce

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[91] Rummel, *Erasmus as Translator*, 33.
[92] ASD I-1, 272: *Proinde Iphigeniam paulo tum fusius tum copiosius traduximus, at ita rursum, ut ab interpretis fide neutiquam recederemus*.
[93] See ASD I-1, 292.
[94] See ASD, I-1, 229; 231.
[95] ASD, I-1, 224. E.g. *advector* (*Iphigenia in Aulis* 533) from St. Augustine (ASD I-1, 294).
[96] ASD, I-1, 228.
[97] See ASD, I-1, 228.

naturalised Latin versions ('for Latin ears'). He avoids overly literal translations, rendering θείαν Ἑλένου ψυχὰν (87), as *divina Helenum mente* (96); Waszink comments: 'Er[asmus] avoids the literal translation *divinam Heleni mentem* which metrically would have been equally possible; evidently he felt this as a too strong Grecism'.[98] Similarly, in 1518 he revised *Thraces* (*Hecuba*, 82) to *Thracibus*, replacing a Greek form with a Latin one.[99] His translations frequently show a high degree of sensitivity to the nuances of the Greek, and considerable skill in rendering them in idiomatic Latin. In *Hecuba*, Euripides has Polyxena tell Odysseus: μ'ἀμφιθεὶς κάραι πέπλους ('put my robe around my head', 432), implicitly suggesting a bridal veil in the context of a young virgin going to death as to a marriage bed. Erasmus translates this as *flammeo obvolens caput* (473); a *flammeum* is a red bridal veil.[100]

In *Hecuba*, Erasmus attempted to replicate where possible the Greek metres of the choral odes. His first choral stasimon begins *Aura, pontica aura,* an exact rendering of the Greek αὔρα, ποντιὰς αὔρα (444); this is also achieved in lines 507-10 and 516-19. This was a difficult task; he complains that the choruses 'are so obscure, that it is a task for some Oedipus or Delian prophet rather than a translator' (*adeo obscuros, ut Oedipo quopiam aut Delio sit opus magis quam interprete*).[101] When it came to *Iphigenia in Aulis*, he opted 'to differ from the author' (*ausi dissentire*) in reducing the metrical complexity of the choruses.[102] Rummel notes that this was due to more than their technical difficulty: 'Erasmus' aversion to the extravagance and concomitant obscurity of the choral parts' made it 'as much an emotional as a practical decision to deviate from the original form, which was alien to his spirit, and to impose a new form that was more congenial to his own taste'.[103] He even declared that should he translate another Greek tragedy, he would 'not be

[98] ASD, I-1, 226.
[99] See ASD, I-1, 226.
[100] See ASD, I-1, 239.
[101] ASD, I-1, 217.
[102] ASD, I-1, 272.
[103] Rummel, *Erasmus as Translator*, 32.

afraid to change the style and contents of the choruses entirely' (*non vererer chororum et stilum et argumenta commutare*).[104]

As we have seen, in response to the 'freer' (*fusior*) style, Erasmus translates 'more freely' (*fusius*). *Fusius* and *fusior* are from *fundere*, which literally means 'to pour', and so 'copious, diffuse, flowing, free'. Erasmus' creation of new words occurs exclusively in *Hecuba*, and often in lyric passages; the self-imposed restraints of his methodology evidently required a vocabulary that reflected the Greek very directly in places. With the new freer style, Erasmus feels more able to prioritise the demands of the target language. The result is considerably greater amplification, with his *Iphigenia in Aulis* over 700 lines longer than Euripides'. This is particularly noticeable in the choruses, where in moving away from strict reproduction of Euripides' metres, Erasmus takes Seneca as a model to some extent, observing that Seneca did not emulate the metrical complexity of Greek choruses.[105] However, Erasmus also uses metres derived from Prudentius, and in the parodos Waszink finds 'the use made of the components of the Alcaic strophe…surprising, since such a use of this strophe is entirely absent from the choruses of Seneca'.[106] While Erasmus finds Senecan precedent helpful, he is clearly not intending to produce a Senecan effect.

Harvey perceived a strong connection between the willing sacrifices of Polyxena and Iphigenia, which he clearly admired. Next to Iphigenia's self-sacrificing speech (1368-1401), he wrote: 'great-spirited and glorious virgin' (*magnanima et gloriosa virgo*), and drew a link to the 'noble spirit of Polyxena' (*generosus Polyxenae spiritus*).[107] The sacrifice of Iphigenia, especially, invited Christian allegorical readings for a Renaissance reader. The story of a father sacrificing a daughter inevitably recalled the biblical story of Jephtha, while the substitution of a deer for Iphigenia on the altar finds a pattern in Abraham and Isaac; the white hart is also a symbol for Christ. Harvey shows an interest in this

[104] ASD, I-1, 272.
[105] ASD, I-1, 272.
[106] ASD, I-1, 281.
[107] Sig.H3v.

detail, underlining *eius loco cerva supposita est* ('in her place a hind was substituted') in Erasmus' argument, and writing underneath: *Cerva pro Iphigenia* ('a hind for Iphigenia').[108]

Erasmus extends the messenger speech describing Iphigenia's sacrifice considerably, from Greek 72 lines to 107 lines of Latin, and 'renders the Greek with implicitly Christian diction'.[109] In the Greek, the messenger concludes with 'this day saw your daughter dead and seeing [the sun]' (ἦμαρ γὰρ τόδε / θανοῦσαν εἶδε καὶ βλέπουσαν παῖδα σήν, 1611-12). Erasmus' messenger declares: 'this one day has seen your daughter both dead and alive', (*hic unus filiam, mulier, tuam / Et mortuam conspexit et vivam dies*) in phrasing which, as Beilin points out, echoes Revelation 1.17-18 in the Vulgate (and in Erasmus' translation), *ego sum… et vivus et fui mortuus*.[110] Similarly, Erasmus chooses to translate the Greek ῥύσομαι ('save') with *redimam* ('redeem'), so that Iphigenia says: *Haec profecto cuncta redimam morte, si cadam, mea* ('All these things indeed I shall redeem by my death, if I die', 1969) for the Greek ταῦτα πάντα κατθανοῦσα ῥύσομαι ('All these things I shall save by dying', 1383).

Erasmus established modes of reading Euripides which were enduringly influential, not least his high valuation of *sententiae*, in theory and practice. Rebecca Bushnell has observed that '[t]he early sixteenth-century image of the text as a garden from which the reader harvests material for "fruit" suggests a lack of appreciation of complete texts'.[111] In *De copia,* Erasmus uses it for the creation of a commonplace book: 'that student, like a busy little bee, will flit through the whole garden of literature, and alight on every blossom, collecting a little nectar from each which he carries away to his hive'.[112] Bushnell identifies the changing use of metaphor as reflecting changing reading practices: 'by the end of the sixteenth

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[108] Sig.D1r.
[109] Elaine V. Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 156.
[110] Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*, 314 n.13.
[111] Rebecca Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching: Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 119-20.
[112] ASD I-6, 262: *studiosus ille velut apicula diligens per omnes autorum hortos volitabit, flosculis omnibus adsultabit, undique succi nonnihil colligens quod in suum deferat alvearium.*

century, a concern for argument and structure, or the "body" of the text…created a potential conflict' with the earlier attitude.[113] But already in 1506 Erasmus wrote in the preface to *Hecuba* that in Euripides 'there is nothing superfluous, nothing which you can either remove or change without injury' (*nihil ociosum, nihil quod vel adimere vel mutare citra flagitium queas*)[114] – the text is conceptualised in the same terms as the body, as 'a unified structure from which no element could be removed without injuring the others'.[115] Harvey underlined this passage, labelling the whole page 'a sensible and authoritative judgement of Euripides' (*prudens, et authentica de Euripide censura*).[116] Elsewhere, he seems to echo Erasmus' judgement that there is 'nothing superfluous' or 'idle' (*nihil ociosum*) in Euripides, with 'there is nothing trifling in him' (*nihil in eo nugarum*).[117] In Erasmus' Euripides, then, these two somewhat contradictory models of reading already seem to coexist, complicating current theories of sixteenth-century reading practices.[118]

Extending Euripides

In 1544, Erasmus' translations were being printed for at least the nineteenth time. This edition, however, which was printed by Michel de Vascosan in Paris, also included another work: Buchanan's Latin translation of *Medea*. Visually, Buchanan's text is assimilated to those of Erasmus through the inclusion of printed commonplace marks. In his preface, Buchanan specifically acknowledges Erasmus' achievements in translating Euripides: 'I was not unaware,' he says, 'that this task, attempted previously by many, had yielded to Erasmus alone, such that the failure of those men and the success of Erasmus ought to have deterred me from right near

[113] Bushnell, *Culture of Teaching*, 120.
[114] ASD I-1, 217.
[115] Bushnell, *Culture of Teaching*, 138.
[116] Sig.2v.
[117] Sig.1v.
[118] It is worth noting that marginalia would naturally seem suited to local observations, while imitations often tell a different story. Raphael Lyne, *Ovid's Changing Worlds: English Metamorphoses 1567-1632* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), for example, argues that 'Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* are both…imitations of the totality of Ovid's work, in that they attempt to harness the structural features of the *Metamorphoses* for their own ends' (1).

the beginning'.[119] Furthermore, P.G. Walsh observes that Buchanan's prosody indicates that '*Medea* was composed…after close study of Erasmus'.[120] Buchanan later wrote that his initial motivation for translating *Medea* was to practice his Greek[121] – precisely the reason given by Erasmus for beginning his translation of *Hecuba*.

Buchanan's *Medea*, then, was apparently originally drafted in Paris in the 1520s.[122] He later revised it while he was teaching at Bordeaux in the early 1540s, where it was performed by his pupils in 1543.[123] Buchanan's contract with the school required him to provide a play each year for the boys to perform[124]; as well as *Medea*, he translated *Alcestis*, and composed two original Latin dramas, *Baptistes* and *Jephthes*, both of which were influenced by *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (*Jephthes* especially so). The exact order is not clear, but it seems that *Baptistes* preceded *Medea* and *Alcestis* and *Jephthes* followed it.[125] Though *Medea* was printed soon after it was performed, *Alcestis* did not appear until 1556, a couple of years after *Jephthes* in 1554 (*Baptistes* was not published until 1577).

Both *Medea* and *Alcestis* had been included in a volume printed in 1495 by Janus Lascaris in Florence; this constituted Euripides' very first appearance in print (it also contained *Hippolytus* and *Andromache*). Exactly why Lascaris chose these four plays to print is unclear; possibly his intention was to expand the selection of Euripides' works that was readily available beyond the Byzantine triad of *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, and *Phoenician Women*, which were the most copied in manuscript form.

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[119] *[N]on ignorarem hanc a plerisque rem prius tentatam uni Erasmo ita successisse ut iuxta ab incepto me deterrere debuerit illorum casus atque huius felicitas* (7-9). The Latin text of Buchanan's translations, including prefaces, is quoted from Peter Sharratt and P.G. Walsh, eds., *George Buchanan: Tragedies* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1983).

[120] P.G. Walsh, 'Buchanan and Classical Drama,' in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Sanctandreani*, ed. I.D. McFarlane (Binghamton, NY: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1986), 99-112: in 'a hundred lines of *Medea* there is no diaeresis between the two halves of the line. Both Euripides and Seneca regularly observe the diaeresis', but Erasmus does not (100).

[121] See I.D. McFarlane, *Buchanan* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 119.

[122] Walsh, 'Buchanan and Classical Drama,' 99.

[123] At the end of the first edition is printed: *Acta fuit Burdegalae an.M.D.XLIII* (sig.D8v).

[124] See Sharratt and Walsh, eds., *Buchanan: Tragedies*, 4.

[125] See Sharratt and Walsh, eds., *Buchanan: Tragedies*, 2-4.

The volume seems to have stimulated interest in these plays. François Tissard translated *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, and *Alcestis* into Latin while in Bologna, not later than April 1507.[126] These were never printed, but survive in a beautiful presentation manuscript dedicated to the future François I. Tissard seems to have used Lascaris' volume, apparently checking the text against the Aldine edition.[127] Greek texts of *Medea* were printed in 1539 and 1545 by Jean Loys in Paris, and a Latin translation by Petreius Tiara was printed in 1542 and again in 1543. Another unpublished manuscript, which 'is most probably Parisian and seems to have been written around 1530', contains 'the text and translation of the *Medea* up to line 1.763'.[128] Buchanan is unlikely to have been influenced by any of these texts; rather, they reveal a concentration of interest in the play at around the time he was preparing it for a school production.

Interest in *Medea* may have been stimulated by the existence of Seneca's version. However, like Erasmus, Buchanan seems to be actively attempting to differentiate Euripides from Seneca. Seneca is conspicuously absent from Buchanan's preface to *Medea*; he chooses instead to name the fragmentary Ennius as a previous translator of the play (14-17). Unfortunately, he does not articulate what he perceived to be Euripidean rather than Senecan in the play, though he does note 'the utmost obscurity in the choruses' (*summam in choris obscuritatem*, 13), which he considers 'so characteristic of this writer that he seems to have pursued it on purpose' (*huic scriptori adeo familiaris est ut eam de industria sectatus esse videatur*, 13-14), with a similar touch of humour to Erasmus' claim that Euripides' choruses need an Oedipus to interpret them.

Like Erasmus, Buchanan constructs a tragic diction for translating Euripides which is deliberately non-Senecan. Jean-Frédéric Chevalier has demonstrated that

[126] The dedicatory epistle is dated April, and Tissard was back in France later in 1507.
[127] See Pierre de Nolhac, 'Le premier travail français sur Euripide: la traduction de François Tissard,' in *Mélanges Henri Weil*, ed. A. Fontemoing (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Thorin et fils, 1898), 299-307 (301).
[128] Sharratt and Walsh, eds., *Buchanan: Tragedies*, 6.

in *Medea*, 'Buchanan's debt to Seneca's tragedies is relatively small'.[129] On the scene between Creon and Medea (179-300), he comments: 'It is surprising that the vocabulary or the imagery used by Seneca…had so little influence on Buchanan when certain lines from Seneca are so close to those in Euripides'.[130] Instead, Chevalier shows that Buchanan draws on a range of Latin authors including Cicero and Virgil. We might also add that several passages seem to echo Ennius, in accordance with his prominence in the dedicatory epistle.[131] Furthermore, like Erasmus, Buchanan directly replicates Greek compound words on occasion (e.g. *pulchriflui*, 880, for καλλινάου, 835, 'fair-flowing').[132] Chevalier considers that Buchanan's aim in avoiding Senecan borrowings was 'to enrich the diction suitable for Latin tragedies by translating from the Greek'.[133] But it might just as well be said that he was attempting to construct a tragic vocabulary to convey Euripides' particular qualities in Latin.

Although, as we have seen, the translation and publication of *Medea* was in many respects an Erasmian endeavour, Buchanan's choice of play is not one likely to have been made by Erasmus himself. Erasmus seems to have disapproved to some extent of the subject matter: in the *Adages* (2.10.98) he briefly recounts Medea's murder of Jason's new bride and her father using a poisoned robe. He cites Euripides (not Seneca), before adding, 'if I was not afraid that I might seem to the insufficiently learned to have omitted them through carelessness, since they are found in popular collections, I would never have added these kinds of fables'.[134] Buchanan's next choice, *Alcestis*, on the other hand, might have met with approval;

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[129] Jean-Frédéric Chevalier, 'Buchanan and the Poetics of Borrowing in the Latin Translation of Euripides' *Medea*,' in *George Buchanan: Poet and Dramatist*, ed. Phillip Ford and Roger Green (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2009), 183-96 (183).
[130] Chevalier, 'Poetics of Borrowing,' 185. Interestingly, Medea starts to use Senecan vocabulary when she discusses her crime (e.g. *nefas*, 1127; *furor*, 1128). See Zoé Schweitzer, 'Buchanan, helléniste et dramaturge, interprète d'Euripide (*Medea* et *Alcestis*)," *Études Épistémè* 23 (2013), paras 1-28 (9-10).
[131] Cf. lines 8, 267, 527 and notes *ad loc.* in Sharratt and Walsh, eds. *Buchanan: Tragedies*.
[132] Sharratt and Walsh, eds., *Buchanan: Tragedies*, note that 'this is not a Classical form' (305).
[133] Chevalier, 'Poetics of Borrowing,' 93.
[134] *Huiusmodi fabellas…nisi vererer, ne parum eruditis viderer incuria praeterisse, cum in vulgatis collectaneis habeantur, nequaquam asscripturus eram* (ASD II-4, 337-38).

Alcestis is the only play by Euripides for which Erasmus gives a full plot description (2.6.22).

Erasmus' preferences in this case are quite opposite to modern tastes. As Edith Hall observes, '[t]he emotional motor of Euripides' *Medea* renders it one of the more apparently "timeless" of ancient tragedies: the despair, humiliation, and vindictiveness of a woman traded in by her man in favour of a younger model speak loud across the centuries'.[135] By contrast, *Alcestis* fell out of favour in the twentieth century as 'the implicit assumption that a woman's life is worth less than a man's' became unpalatable.[136] In addition, its perceived generic peculiarity – it is the only extant Greek tragedy which was originally performed in the fourth position in place of a satyr play – and happily resolved ending preclude its being considered a great tragedy. In the early 1540s, however, Alcestis' self-sacrifice was praiseworthy rather than problematic, and ideas about tragedy had not yet coalesced into strict neo-classical rules. In this context, translating *Alcestis* does not seem so eccentric; as well as Tissard's Latin, Giovambattista Parisotti composed an Italian translation in 1525 (not printed until 1735).[137]

Zoé Schweitzer has seen Buchanan's pairing of *Alcestis* with *Medea* as a deliberate selection of two contrasting models for tragedy, in response to Erasmus' canonizing of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*.[138] Like Erasmus, Buchanan selects two plays which overlap in theme: both might be termed 'domestic' tragedies, since each focuses on a discrete family unit – husband, wife, and children – which is threatened by internal rather than external forces. To some extent, Buchanan's choices extend a tendency already present in those of Erasmus: where *Hecuba* and *Medea* end with murder and revenge in a somewhat Senecan vein, the final substitution of Iphigenia for a deer mitigates the tragic effects of *Iphigenia in Aulis* somewhat, particularly from a Christian perspective, while *Alcestis* concludes

[135] Hall, *Greek Tragedy*, 244.
[136] Hall, *Greek Tragedy*, 238.
[137] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 260-61.
[138] Schweitzer, 'Buchanan, helléniste,' para.17.

happily. Thus Buchanan's choice of plays can be seen as deliberately extending the possibilities of the two tragic models offered by Erasmus.

Buchanan's preface to *Alcestis* reveals that he did conceive of it in terms of difference, though this difference is articulated in terms of content, rather than structure: 'of parricides and poisonings and other crimes of which other tragedies are full, there is absolutely no mention here, no trace whatsoever' (*parricidii…et veneficii et reliquorum quibus aliae tragoediae plenae sunt scelerum nulla prorsus hic mentio, nullum omnino vestigium*, 10-13). Instead, it represents 'conjugal love, piety, humanity and other duties' (*coniugalis amoris, pietatis, humanitatis et aliorum officiorum*, 13-14). Of course, being full of crimes did not disqualify *Medea* from being considered suitable in a pedagogical context by Buchanan; but clearly its exemplarity is of a different kind. This conception of *Alcestis*' difference in terms of content appears to have been persistent; in 1642 Milton placed it (along with Sophocles' *Trachiniae*) in a sub-category of tragedies 'that treat of Household matters', differentiated from other '*Attic* Tragedies of stateliest and most regal argument'.[139]

Buchanan finds the content of the play so exemplary, he says, 'that I am not afraid to compare this play with the books of those philosophers who expressly handed down the precepts of virtue' (*ut non verear hanc fabulam comparare cum libris eorum philosophorum qui ex professo virtutis praecepta tradiderunt*, 14-16). In fact, he goes on to assert the superiority of this tragedy over 'those philosophers' as a tool for teaching morality using the standard humanist justification often invoked in favour of teaching Terence in schools:

> For when the action has been brought to life, almost, with speech and breath, it impresses the senses more sharply than the bare precepts, and flows into the

[139] YP II, 398; 400-401. Milton's English prose works are quoted from D.M. Wolfe, ed. *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958-82), referred to as 'YP'.

> mind and is absorbed more easily; and where it has been absorbed, it sticks more firmly and takes root, as it were.[140]

It is not just the content, then, but the form that is important for Buchanan. He also values the specific qualities of Euripides: Greek tragedy in general is 'smooth and balanced' (*est enim orationis genere leni et aequabili*, 9), and Euripides in particular is 'sweet' (*et, quod Euripidis proprium est, suavi*, 9-10), recalling Erasmus' praise of Euripides' *suaviloquentia*.

Beyond the pedagogical context, in emphasizing the wholesomeness of the content, Buchanan is giving this as a reason for his hope that the dedicatee, Marguerite de France, will enjoy it. This dedicatory preface has rightly been called 'an astute piece of flattery'.[141] Buchanan aligns Marguerite's virtues with those of Alcestis:

> *habet enim haec fabula, quantum ego quidem iudicare possum, earum virtutum quas in te non minus libenter agnoscimus quam in Alcestide legentes miramur adeo expressam imaginem, ut quoties eam in manus sumas toties tuarum tibi virtutum in mentem veniat necesse sit.* (30-34)
>
> For this play has, as far as I indeed am able to judge, no fewer of those virtues which we gladly recognize in you than which, in reading *Alcestis*, we admire so much that whenever you take her in your hand, so often must the distinct image of your virtues come into your mind.

The physical text, which Marguerite holds in her hand, is vividly conjured by the passage; the word *expressus* is used figuratively here ('distinct'), but in Renaissance usage commonly meant 'printed'; it could also mean 'translated'. Buchanan neatly exploits the ambiguity enabled by the fact that *fabula*, 'play', is feminine, like Alcestis. The pronoun *ea* silently slips between referring to *Alcestis* the play and Alcestis the character: in the next sentence, Buchanan tells Marguerite that 'when you hear her being praised, you may consider it a judgement on your morals' (*eam cum laudari audies, de tuis moribus iudicium fieri existimes*, 34-35). This association

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[140] *[A]ctio enim rerum sermone et spiritu paene animata acrius quam nuda praecepta sensus impellit, et facilius in animos influit et illabitur; atque ubi illapsa fuerit, firmius haeret et quasi radices agit*, 17-20.

[141] McFarlane, *Buchanan*, 183.

between *Alcestis*, Alcestis, and Marguerite produces the impression that Marguerite is reading herself.[142]

Schweitzer identifies Buchanan's use of the word *imago* ('image') here as central to his conception of the work.[143] *Alcestis* involves a series of substitutions: Alcestis substitutes herself for Admetus in dying in his place; Admetus says that he will have a statue of Alcestis made as an inadequate substitute for her; Heracles makes Admetus receive another woman who looks just like Alcestis. In the final twist, this last substitution turns out not to involve a substitute at all, but the real Alcestis. When Admetus declares: 'your image, portrayed by the skilful hand of craftsmen, shall be laid out in my bed' (σοφῆι δὲ χειρὶ τεκτόνων δέμας τὸ σὸν / εἰκασθὲν ἐν λέκτροισιν ἐκταθήσεται, 348-9), Buchanan translates this as: *periti dextera artificis tua / in lecto imago ficta collocabitur* (359-60), representing the Greek word δέμας with *imago*. The *imago* of the virtuous Alcestis is linked linguistically to the *imago* of Marguerite's virtues represented by *Alcestis*. Schweitzer even goes so far as to suggest that Buchanan saw his translation as an *imago* of the Greek original, relating this to his choice of a close and literal translation practice, rather than the greater freedom that Erasmus moved towards.[144] Clearly, Admetus' striking statue image was perceived to be of thematic significance by at least one Renaissance reader, and readers of Buchanan, in turn, might be primed to notice it by his prefatory epistle.

Elsewhere, Schweitzer has suggested that *Medea* and *Alcestis* explore themes that resonate with Buchanan's political writings. She observes that in both plays, the behaviour of the heroine does not only have consequences within the domestic sphere, but spills over into the political arena with the result that it raises questions about monarchical authority and the powers of the prince (though this is more

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[142] This is precisely the kind of slippage that occurs in Chaucer's prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, between the daisy, the lady, and Alceste (see Chapter 6). Chaucer imported the figure of the daisy from French marguerite poetry; given the name of Buchanan's dedicatee it is interesting that he makes no use of this connection.

[143] Zoé Schweitzer, 'La traduction d'*Alceste* par Buchanan, l'imago retrouvée?,' *Anabases* 21 (2015): 113-24.

[144] Schweitzer, 'L'*imago* retrouvée?,' 122.

pronounced in *Medea* than *Alcestis*, where the domestic context predominates).[145] Though Schweitzer does not go into details, her argument can be supported and developed further.

At *Medea* 119-21, the Nurse has the lines: δεινὰ τυράννων λήματα καί πως / ὀλίγ᾽ ἀρχόμενοι, πολλὰ κρατοῦντες / χαλεπῶς ὀργὰς μεταβάλλουσιν ('the wilfulness of rulers is terrible, and since they are rarely ruled, but often command, they change their tempers dangerously'). Buchanan translates this as:

> *gravis est regum fastus, et irae*
> *nimium memoris, qui dare leges*
> *sunt soliti aliis, lege soluti*
> *ipsi.*
>
> (126-29)[146]

'The arrogance of kings is terrible, and their passions too vindictive, who are accustomed to make laws for others, unbound by laws themselves'. Buchanan's translation of λήματα, which can have a more neutral or positive meaning ('spirit', 'courage'), as *fastus* ('arrogance') opts for its most negative sense. He also introduces the idea that kings are (or might consider themselves to be) above the law. Euripides' Nurse continues: τὸ γὰρ εἰθίσθαι ζῆν ἐπ᾽ ἴσοισιν / κρεῖσσον ('for it is better to be accustomed to live on equal terms', 122-23). Buchanan expands this to: *Iudice me libertas / par et vitae aequatio praestat, / seque adsuescere legibus aequis* ('In my judgement equal liberty and parity of life are better, and to accustom oneself to equal laws', 129-31). In Euripides there is no mention of liberty or laws, and 'equal terms' hardly approaches Buchanan's insistence on political equality (*libertas par*, *vitae aequatio, legibus aequis*).

Buchanan's original Latin dramas further support the idea that he responded to political elements that he perceived in Euripides, above all his anti-tyrannical stance. *Baptistes* was published, in England (Thomas Vautrollier, 1577), 'as a warning to the young James the Sixth, and as a more general contribution to the contemporary discussion about kingship and tyranny'.[147] Steven Berkowitz

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[145] Schweitzer, 'Buchanan, helléniste,' para.19.
[146] The first line has commonplace marks in the 1544 edition.
[147] Sharratt and Walsh, eds., *Buchanan: Tragedies*, 5.

observes that in ignoring the Senecan five-act structure, *Baptistes* (and *Jephthes*) are modelled on looser Euripidean structures. He also suggests specific indebtedness to *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*: Agamemnon, a 'king whose tyranny is a result of his weakness, may be a model for Buchanan's Herod', while, '[t]he extremity of Hecuba's desire for revenge may recall that of Herodias, especially when she exults over John's death'.[148] *Jephthes* is closely modelled on *Iphigenia in Aulis* – Buchanan even christens Jephthes' daughter 'Iphis' – though it also draws on *Hecuba*, including 'verbal echoes' of Erasmus' translations.[149] Mary Nyquist has argued that the fact that his characterisation of Iphis is so 'significantly and consistently' modelled on Iphigenia 'indicates Buchanan's willingness to embrace Greek political values in his drama'.[150]

One English Renaissance reader certainly perceived the links between Buchanan's plays and Erasmus' translations of Euripides. By the argument to *Hecuba* Harvey writes: *Huc Buchanani Baptista, sive Calumnia*, and by the argument to *Iphigenia in Aulis*: *Huc Buchanani Jephthes tragoedia*.[151] Harvey also read the plays by Euripides with an interest in their political implications. Along with his remarks on commonplace marks, he expresses the opinion that 'he reads tragedies uselessly, who does not know how to distinguish philosophical *sententiae* from tyrannical ones. The first are the doctrines of scholars: the others the disciplines of kings' (*Inutiliter tragoedias legit, qui nescit philosophicas sententias, a tyrannicis distinguere. Alia scholarum doctrina: alia regnorum disciplina*).[152] András Kiséry argues that Harvey is using *tyrannos*/*tyrannicus* in the neutral Greek sense, but even so his terminology clearly frames the utility of tragedy in political terms.[153]

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[148] Steven Berkowitz, ed. *A Critical Edition of George Buchanan's Baptistes* (New York, NY: Garland, 1992), 214; 16.
[149] See Walsh, 'Buchanan and Classical Drama,' 109; 107.
[150] Mary Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 100.
[151] Sig.4v; sig.O8r.
[152] Sig.8v.
[153] András Kiséry, *Hamlet's Moment: Drama and Political Knowledge in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 66 n.95.

There is another instance in which Buchanan uses Euripides directly to make an anti-tyrannical point. *Baptistes* was printed in 1577, just a couple of years before *De jure regni apud Scotos* in 1579, leading Peter Sharratt and P.G. Walsh to call it 'a dramatic counterpart' to the treatise.[154] In its printed form, *De jure regni* was dedicated to James VI, though it was initially written in 1567 in defence of the revolt against James' mother Mary. In it, Buchanan insists upon the subordination of the monarch to laws, and argues that the source of his or her power is the people, who have the right to depose an unjust ruler. He uses the scenario of Euripides' *Helen* as an analogy: 'Our kings', his speaker says,

> are so weakened by the allurements of pleasure and deluded by the deceitful semblance of honour that I think they do almost what some of the poets say happened to the Trojans who sailed with Paris. After the real Helen had been left in Egypt with Proteus…they struggled for ten years over her likeness with such stubbornness that the end of that most destructive of wars marked also the end of the wealthiest kingdom of those times.[155]

'Headstrong tyrants', he continues, 'cling to that false semblance of kingship, and can neither retain it without resorting to crime nor give it up without their own destruction'.[156] The 'likeness' (*simulacrum*) of Helen is linked to the 'deceitful semblance of honour' (*falsa specie honoris*) and the 'false semblance of kingship' (*falsam…regni speciem*), and the fate of Troy serves as a warning of the consequences of such dangerous infatuation. So powerful is the tyrannical delusion that 'if anyone were to tell them that the real Helen over whom they think they are fighting is hidden away somewhere else, they would regard him as mad'.[157]

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[154] Sharratt and Walsh, eds., *Buchanan: Tragedies*, 13.

[155] Text and translations from Roger A. Mason and Martin S. Smith, eds. *A Dialogue on the Law of Kingship among the Scots: A Critical Edition and Translation of George Buchanan's De Iure Regni apud Scotos Dialogus* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004): *reges nostri…[a]deo enim voluptatum illecebris fracti sunt et falsa specie honoris decepti ut idem propemodum eos facere existimem quod Troianis qui cum Paride navigarunt quidam poetarum evenisse narrant. Vera enim Helena in Aegypto aput Protea…relicta, de simulacro eius per annos decem ita pertinaciter contenderunt ut idem finis belli perniciosissimi et regni illorum temporum opulentissimi fuerit.* (78-79).

[156] Mason and Smith, eds., *Law of Kingship*, 78-79: *Tyranni enim impotentes, falsam istam regni speciem amplexi…nec sine scelere eam tenere nec sine pernicie amittere possunt*.

[157] Mason and Smith, eds., *Law of Kingship*, 78-79: *si quis eos admoneat veram Helenam, de qua se dimicare putant, alicubi absconditam celari, pro insano eum haberent*.

Buchanan's translations of Euripides, then, clearly engage with and respond to Erasmus' influential precedent. His choice of plays appears calculated to expand ideas of Euripidean drama – and therefore Greek tragedy – in new and deliberately diverse directions. As with Erasmus, Buchanan seems to have been influenced by Greek tragic practice, rather than by Aristotle. In his own statements about the nature of Euripides' works, Buchanan essentially reiterates Erasmus' earlier judgements: the choruses are particularly difficult, Euripides' style is remarkable for its sweetness. If for Erasmus, on the eve of the Reformation, reading Greek was 'politically charged',[158] Buchanan seems to have been sensitive to the possibilities of using Euripides to think through some of the political issues uppermost in his mind, surrounding issues of tyranny and absolute rule.

Conclusion

Erasmus' translations of Euripides remained popular and influential throughout the sixteenth century, appearing in at least twenty-eight editions by 1600, as well as in editions of Erasmus' complete works. *Hecuba* was subsequently translated into Italian, French, Spanish, and Croatian; *Iphigenia in Aulis* into Italian, French, English, and German.[159] Some later translators mention Erasmus, such as Giambattista Gelli in his Italian translation of *Hecuba* (c.1519) and Thomas Sebillet in a poem prefaced to his French translation of *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1549).[160] Erasmus' *Hecuba*, at least, was not only read and studied but also performed, at the Collège du Porc in Louvain (probably 1514), and at Wittenberg, directed by the great scholar and teacher Philip Melanchthon (1525).[161] At the end of Harvey's copy (not in his hand) are listed 'the names of the actors at a performance of "Hecuba" (probably at the end of the 16th century)'.[162] If parody is any indication of popularity, Waszink reports that Georgius Macropedius' *Asotus* contains 'a song in praise of dissolute love, which is an exact

[158] Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?*, 15.
[159] See Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 260-69.
[160] See ASD I-1, 208-209.
[161] ASD I-1, 207. Waszink also demonstrates that Melanchthon's translations of Euripides (Basel: Oporinus, 1558), show Erasmus' influence (ASD I-1, 207-208).
[162] James Tregaskis, *The Caxton Head Catalogue* (London: James Tregaskis & Son, 1922), no. 141.

parody of the beginning of Erasmus' translation (*Iph. Aul.* 696-702) of the praise of chaste love in Euripides'.[163] Although Waszink noted a sharp decline in interest in Erasmus' translations from the beginning of the seventeenth century,[164] in the early years they were still going strong, in Germany at least: his *Iphigenia in Aulis* was printed by Katharina Dietrich in Nuremburg in 1600; a text of his *Hecuba* printed in 1605 bears witness to a performance in Strasbourg in July of that year; and Heinrich Rump had both texts printed in 1617 (*Hecuba*) and 1618 (*Iphigenia in Aulis*) to accompany his lectures in Hamburg.

Buchanan's translations, though not approaching the extent of Erasmus' success, were also popular and reprinted multiple times. During the sixteenth century, his *Medea* was printed twice by itself, and three times along with *Alcestis*; *Alcestis* appeared four times by itself, and once with *Jephthes*.[165] In 1604, his *Alcestis* was printed alongside the Greek text and a German translation (Strasbourg: Johann Carl). The edition of his *Medea* with the Greek text which was printed in Strasbourg in 1598 accompanied a production that had taken place that July, with music for the choruses composed by Christophe Thomas Walliser[166]; it was printed again in Hamburg in 1620, accompanying Rump's lectures. The extent to which the translations of Erasmus and Buchanan became canonical is demonstrated by the fact that in Henri Estienne's *Tragoediae Selectae* (Geneva, 1567), the plays representing Euripides are *Hecuba*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Medea*, and *Alcestis*, with the Latin texts of their famous translators.

Both Erasmus' and Buchanan's translations of Euripides had particular links to England. Buchanan became the tutor of James VI of Scotland, subsequently I of England; he 'was widely read in England', and was particularly influential among the Sidney circle.[167] Erasmus, who had a foundational and enduring influence on the

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[163] ASD I-1, 208.
[164] ASD I-1, 210.
[165] See McFarlane, *Buchanan*, 498-99; Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 246-59. Both texts also appeared in larger collections of Buchanan's works in 1597 and 1609 (see McFarlane, *Buchanan*, 500).
[166] See McFarlane, *Buchanan*, 120.
[167] Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 38.

English education system, dedicated both *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* to William Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and composed the latter during his second stay in England. These connections promoted the visibility of the translations (and therefore Euripides) in England and Scotland; an edition of *Hecuba* in Erasmus' translation was edited by another Scotsman, Archibald Hay, and printed with notes in Paris in 1543 by Guillaume Bossozel. What is more, these editions, though printed on the continent, were clearly available in England, as we shall see in the next chapter. The testimony of Jasper Heywood, in his preface to his English translation of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* (1561), offers a suitable final reflection on the significant and long-lasting influence of Erasmus' translations in England:

> The most excellent and famous learned clearke Erasmus of Rotterdam among so many learned volumes whiche he in hys lyfe tyme wrote, with such excellency, that they yet do and ever shal preserve the name and renowne of so worthye a man, even for that onlye thyng woon not the least praise among learned men, nor deserved least thanke of posteritie, that he so well and truelye translated oute of Greeke into latin twoo tragedies of Euripides, wherof the one is named Hecuba, and the other Iphiginia.[168]

[168] Jasper Heywood, *The First Tragedie of Lucius Anneus Seneca, Intituled Hercules Furens* (London: Henry Sutton, 1561), sig.A1v-A2r.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONSTRUCTION OF EURIPIDES IN PRINT: TEXTS AND PARATEXTS

In the early years of the sixteenth century, readers across Europe eagerly devoured travellers' accounts of voyages to the recently-discovered countries of the New World. In one such account, which appeared in an elegant Latin volume published in 1516, it is specified that a certain traveller brought with him a substantial library of Greek books. Among these was an edition of Euripides, which fortunately escaped the fate of Theophrastus' *On Plants* (mutilated by a mischievous monkey *en route*) and arrived intact. It was the edition printed by Aldus Manutius in Venice in 1503; in 1516 this was not just the first but the only printed edition of the complete works of Euripides. It includes the eighteen complete tragedies by Euripides that were available at the time (the nineteenth extant tragedy was rediscovered later in the century). In addition, it includes a 'Life' of Euripides and a short essay attributed to the Byzantine scholar Manuel Moschopoulos, another 'Life' by Thomas Magister, a series of epigrams on Euripides, and a prefatory letter from Aldus to the renowned Greek scholar Demetrias Chalchondyles. It is a beautiful edition, printed in Aldus' famous Greek type and in his new, smaller octavo format (so-called because each sheet of paper was folded to produce eight leaves), which he had premiered just two years before – highly portable, and ideal for a traveller with limited space.

The traveller, of course, is Raphael Hythloday, and the land to which he journeys is Utopia, as imagined by Thomas More in the entertaining Latin work which founded the genre of utopian fiction. But while the traveller and the country may be fictional, the books are very real, and very revealing. Hythloday's Greek books offer important insights into the circumstances of reading Euripides in sixteenth-century England. The European dimension is key: the English More is not only familiar with these Aldine editions, but expects his readers to be aware of them also. As well as Euripides and Theophrastus, Hythloday takes a copy of Hesychius' dictionary, first printed in 1514 (again by Aldus) only a year or so before More was

writing *Utopia*.[1] These books not only reached England, then, but were not slow to arrive from the continent. It is worth noting that More chose to have *Utopia* itself printed by Thierry Martens in Louvain, and he was clearly envisaging an English as well as a European market for it. The Aldine Euripides set a standard for future editions, which regularly reproduced not only the text (usually with corrections), but also the prefatory material (frequently with additions) and the design introduced by Aldus.[2] When the Utopians encountered Euripides, they were not faced with a bare text, as in the earlier 1495 printing of four plays, but one mediated by its paratextual material. This chapter, therefore, will not only ask how readers in sixteenth-century England had access to Euripides, but also investigate how their perceptions of the dramatist and his works might be shaped by paratextual accumulations.

Even Thule is hiring a teacher of rhetoric: Greek books in England

In the prefatory epistle to his 1507 edition of Erasmus' translations of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Aldus lifts a joke from Juvenal: 'Thule now speaks of hiring a teacher of rhetoric' (*de conducendo loquitur iam rhetore Thyle*, Satire 15, line 112). 'Thule' in Latin thought represented the extreme north, located somewhere north of Britain[3]; the implication is that even so backward a place as Thule is now *talking* about hiring someone to teach the sophisticated art of rhetoric. Aldus modifies the line, so that 'Thule is now dealing with hiring a teacher of rhetoric' (*ut de conducendo tractet iam rhetore Thule*) – in these even more enlightened times, Thule has at last finished talking about it and is now in the process of actually hiring someone to teach a humanist programme of rhetoric.[4] Erasmus' translations, as we have seen, were closely linked to England, and Aldus' joke plays into stereotypes of England as an intellectual backwater at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

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[1] George M. Logan, Robert M. Adams, and Clarence H. Miller eds. *Thomas More: Utopia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 180-83.
[2] The Aldine text was prepared by John Gregoropoulos; see Nicholas Barker, *Aldus Manutius and the Development of Greek Script and Type in the Fifteenth Century* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1992), 18.
[3] See e.g. Strabo, *Geographica* 1.4.
[4] ASD I-1, 215.

But times, as the joke itself indicates, were changing. The efforts of the early Greek reformers associated with the Erasmus-More circle have been well-documented, from William Grocyn (More's tutor and the first lecturer in Greek at Oxford) and John Cheke (first Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge) at the universities, to John Colet's foundation of St Paul's school with Greek on the curriculum. Erasmus himself was hired to teach Greek at Cambridge from 1511 to 1514.[5] However, this 'early impetus given to Greek studies by Erasmus, More, Linacre, and their circle, is thought to have petered out by the middle of the century'[6]: according to M.L. Clarke, 'on the whole both in Oxford and in Cambridge the promise of the first half of the century was hardly fulfilled, and whatever other achievements may have made Elizabeth's reign glorious, it was not noted for Greek scholarship'.[7] Thule, in this view, had not come so far after all.

Knowledge of Greek certainly remained less widespread than knowledge of Latin, and most English readers may not have lived up to the diligence and enthusiasm of More's Utopians. But Micha Lazarus has mounted a significant challenge to the conventional view, based on two important points: first, Greek scholarship (itself a subjective category) is not the same as being able to read Greek; and second, the fact that we find fewer vocal advocates for Greek in the second half of the sixteenth century could actually be testament to the success with which it had become an established part of the curricula in the universities and many grammar schools.[8] He presents evidence that by 1540 Greek was well-established at the universities; after about 1560 we can reasonably assume that '[e]very sixteenth-century schoolchild from a high-end grammar school…had both more and better Greek than a just-matriculated Classics undergraduate does today'.[9] Inevitably, this represents an ideal, since in reality variable teaching and aptitude would have

[5] He had already been asked to take up this post in 1506, the year the first edition of his Euripides translations was printed; if Aldus was aware of this, the joke becomes even more specific.
[6] Lazarus, 'Greek Literacy,' 434.
[7] M.L. Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain, 1500-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 29.
[8] Lazarus, 'Greek Literacy,' 445.
[9] Lazarus, 'Greek Literacy,' 456.

affected the achievements of individual students. Still, the 'tacit assumption…that Greek had little impact on English writing in the late sixteenth century'[10] clearly needs to be re-examined.

Making a case for the impact of Euripides on English writing, however, does not depend upon a widespread ability to read Greek. In 1541 Robert Winter, a printer based in the Swiss publishing hub of Basel, printed all eighteen extant tragedies in a line-by-line Latin translation by Dorotheus Camillus (a pseudonym for Rudolph Collinus, professor of Greek in Zurich). This was reprinted by Johann Oporinus, also in Basel, in 1550. In 1558 Oporinus published a new Latin edition, consisting of translations by Melanchthon, 'stitched together, edited, and supplemented' by William Xylander, Professor of Greek at Heidelberg; a 'somewhat revised' version appeared in 1562, printed in Frankfurt by Ludwig Lucius.[11] Oporinus, meanwhile, was busy with another new edition, with translation and commentaries by the German scholar Gasparus Stiblinus (Caspar Stiblin), which also appeared in 1562. This was the first parallel-text edition of Euripides' complete works, with the Greek and Latin in adjacent columns on each page. Hieronymus Commelinus followed suit in 1597 (Heidelberg) with another parallel-text edition, this time with Willem Canter's Greek text and Aemilius Portus' translation on facing pages. The 1602 Geneva edition reprints Portus' translation underneath the Greek text; these bilingual editions are thus characterized by constant design innovations. This was the last edition of the complete works of Euripides until the English classical scholar Joshua Barnes published his at Cambridge in 1694.

By the early seventeenth century, there had been seven editions of Euripides' complete extant works translated into Latin, representing four different Latin translations. There had also been six Greek-only editions printed since the Aldine in 1503.[12] And these are only the complete works. Pollard lists seventeen additional editions of one or more works in Greek between 1495 and 1599, covering

[10] Neil Rhodes, 'Marlowe and the Greeks,' *Renaissance Studies* 27, no. 2 (2013): 199-218 (199).
[11] Mastronarde, *Art of Euripides*, 9-10.
[12] Basel: Hervagius (1537, 1544 & 1551), Frankfurt: Braubach (1558 & 1560), Antwerp: Plantin (1571).

eleven different tragedies (*Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Hecuba*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Orestes*, *Electra*, *Cyclops*, *Phoenician Women*, and *Trojan Women*) – over half of Euripides' extant works, and more in total than all the extant works of Sophocles.[13] She lists sixty-two Latin (or Greek-Latin) editions covering the same eleven plays, representing the work of at least sixteen different translators.[14] Finally, she lists twenty-six printed editions of vernacular translations of the five most popular plays, *Hecuba*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Phoenician Women*, *Medea*, and *Alcestis*, appearing in Italian, French, English, German, and Spanish.[15]

Of all the Latin and Greek editions of Euripides published during the sixteenth century, just one was printed in England. This was *Trojan Women*, printed in Greek by the well-connected master-printer John Day in London in 1575, and surviving in a single copy in the British Library.[16] It might seem to exemplify Kirsty Milne's observation that '[t]o a classicist, the range of works [printed in England] is likely to appear eccentric.[17] She considers that 'the most plausible explanation as to why a London stationer might take on a classical Greek text, as opposed to a money-spinning dictionary or textbook, is that a patron made it worth his while'.[18] Day also produced several Anglo-Saxon texts for a patron, so it is possible that his *Trojan Women* represents the personal interests of someone with deep pockets. Equally, it might have been produced for students, linked to a lecture programme.[19] However, it is striking that *Trojan Women* represents one of the plays never to have received an individual edition up to this point, in a European market which was producing an increasing range of Euripidean texts. It is clearly modelled on continental editions, complete with commonplace marks, and a clear, simple text. It also features some of the same events and characters as *Hecuba*, the century's most

[13] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 232-41.
[14] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 242-59.
[15] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 260-69.
[16] British Library G.8570.
[17] Kirsty Milne, 'The Forgotten Greek Books of Elizabethan England,' *Literature Compass* 4, no. 3 (2007): 677-87 (680).
[18] Milne, 'Forgotten Greek Books,' 682.
[19] Neither Oxford nor Cambridge had a university press by 1575.

popular Greek tragedy. From this perspective, it begins to look like a calculated choice, aimed at staking a claim in the well-established continental market.[20]

Tania Demetriou and Tanya Pollard have pointed out that viewed in the domestic rather than European context, Day's edition of *Trojan Women* 'seems not late but in fact notably early'.[21] Moreover, this was the first separate edition of *Trojan Women* to be printed anywhere in Europe, making it seem earlier still. David McKitterick observes that '[n]ot until the 1570s did the London trade feel confident enough of its market to print even Latin classical texts in any great quantities'.[22] Latin texts of Seneca's tragedies were not printed in England until 1589, fourteen years after Euripides, and even Ovid did not appear until 1570. Neither interest nor market was lacking for these authors; nor was technical expertise or expensive equipment a problem for printing Latin. What this reveals is not the weakness of the English market for classical texts but the strength of the European one, which was such that 'for several generations the [English] trade was content simply to import what was needed'.[23] However, as Milne points out, the majority of Greek books printed in sixteenth-century England were not entered into the Stationers' Register, so no independent record of them survives other than the books themselves.[24] The single surviving copy of *Trojan Women* illustrates the precariousness of our knowledge, and might also suggest that the edition was used to death as a student text.

Probate inventories from Oxford and Cambridge offer invaluable insights into the availability of continentally-printed texts in sixteenth-century England.[25]

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[20] In the 1570s and 1580s a handful of English booksellers were beginning to sell at the Frankfurt book fairs; see David McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 86. Day's *Trojan Women* might have prompted a bilingual edition printed in Strasbourg by Nikolaus Wiriot in 1578.
[21] Tania Demetriou and Tanya Pollard, 'Homer and Greek Tragedy in Early Modern England's Theatres: An Introduction,' *Classical Receptions Journal* 9, no. 1 (2017): 1-35 (16).
[22] McKitterick, *Cambridge University Press*, 44.
[23] McKitterick, *Cambridge University Press*, 44.
[24] Milne, 'Forgotten Greek Books,' 679.
[25] For Oxford, see Robert Fehrenbach and Elisabeth Leedham-Green, eds., *Private Libraries in Renaissance England: A Collection and Catalogue of Tudor and Early Stuart Book Lists*, vol. 1-5 (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992-1998), supplemented by https://plre.folger.edu/books/php (henceforth PLRE). For Cambridge, see Elisabeth

These document the books in the possession of various associates of the universities at the time of their death, including undergraduates, fellows, masters, and sometimes booksellers. Inventories of stationers' stock can indicate which books were in demand, frequently showing multiple copies of popular texts. In Cambridge, John Denys (d.1578), held a copy of Euripides' complete works in Greek, along with three copies of *Alcestis*,[26] perhaps indicating that it was being taught at this time. One of these survives in the British Library, and is a Greek edition by Theodosius Rihel in Strasbourg in 1570, 'printed separately', the title declares, 'for the use of students' (*in usum scholarum seorsim excusa*).[27] A second is labelled 'Euripidis tragedia alcistis', and is likely to be Buchanan's Latin translation, probably in one of Vascosan's editions of 1556 or 1557. The third is simply recorded as 'alceste'.

Denys' Greek *Alcestis* seems to have been sold, unbound, alongside the same printer's edition of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (also in Greek) from 1567.[28] *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*, predictably, represent the most frequently owned separate editions. In Cambridge, there are entries for 'hecuba et Iphigeneia euripidis', and 'Euripidis Iphigena [sic]' (probably representing an edition of both plays, though there were also French, Italian, and German translations of *Iphigenia in Aulis*); three other inventories list volumes of two unspecified tragedies, likely to be *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*.[29] One was in Greek and Latin, potentially one of Froben's editions (1524 or 1530). Oxford inventories add two entries for 'Euripidis Thecuba' and 'Euripedes Hecuba'.[30] There is also a single-text edition of *Phoenician Women*.[31] The 1562 Oporinus edition of the complete works appears in two inventories, and was

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Leedham-Green, ed. *Books in Cambridge Inventories: Book-Lists from Vice-Chancellor's Court Probate Inventories in the Tudor and Stuart Periods*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), henceforth BCI.

[26] BCI Denys 260, 416, 446, 483b.

[27] BL 999.b.16(1) (Denys 446).

[28] The texts are bound together today, and the manuscript indicates that the lot included two other (unspecified) works along with *Alcestis*.

[29] BCI Bullar 55, Perne 165, Porter 20 (Greek and Latin), Raven 97, Hawes 122 (Latin).

[30] PLRE 70.30, 148.83. These might represent single-text editions of *Hecuba*, but probably included *Iphigenia in Aulis*.

[31] BCI Thompson 113.

purchased for St. Paul's school in 1582-83.[32] The 1571 Plantin edition was also popular; it appears in three Cambridge inventories and was purchased for James I in 1576.[33] We also find Henri Estienne's *Tragoediae Selectae Aeschyli, Sophoclis, Euripidis* (1567), Michael Neander's *Aristologia Euripidea* (1559), and three editions of the scholia.[34]

The Oxford and Cambridge inventories each contain several texts identified as 'Rhesus' (three in Cambridge, three in Oxford).[35] No single-text edition of *Rhesus* is known to have been printed during the sixteenth century. Elisabeth Leedham-Green finds: 'scope for speculation that the play enjoyed a brief and never to be repeated popularity as a teaching text'.[36] A lost edition is not out of the question given that Day's *Trojan Women* only survives in a single copy. However, these entries more probably refer to the second volumes of editions of the complete works, which start with the title page for *Rhesus*. In all cases except one, they appear in lists which also contain an edition of the complete works. Roger Soresby's inventory seems to clinch the matter; item 86, 'tragedie euripidis', is bracketed together with item 87, 'Rhesus eiusdem', and the two are valued together at 2s.[37]

The prices given for the separate 'Rhesus' texts (ranging from 10d to 16d) generally seem too high for single text editions.[38] Of course, as Leedham-Green reminds us, '[t]he values of the books were…determined very largely by their bindings,'[39] but nevertheless no individual texts are valued at more than 8d, while editions of the complete works could cost substantially more. The most expensive edition of Euripides listed is a nearly-new copy of the bilingual 1562 Oporinus, a large folio volume, valued at 6/8d (the inventory is from 1565).[40] The mean price for

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[32] BCI Layton 6, Perne 164. Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine*, I, 422.
[33] BCI Denys 260; Anon.19 58; Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine* I, 540.
[34] BCI Perne 77; PLRE 123.70; BCI Perne 167, PLRE 67.68, 144.9. An entry for 'tragedie quedam in vno volumine' (at 6d) will have been a smaller selection than the two-volume *Tragoediae Selectae* (20d), perhaps compiled by the owner (BCI Hawes 107).
[35] BCI Soresby 87, Greenwood 35, Cowell 15; PLRE 67.12, 121.19, 143.43.
[36] BCI, xxiii n.28.
[37] BCI Soresby 86 & 87.
[38] Of the three in Oxford, one does not have a price listed, one is 10d, and the other is 4d.
[39] BCI, xiii.
[40] BCI Layton 6.

Greek editions is 20d, though they frequently reach two shillings or higher; the cheapest, apparently in poor condition (labelled *vetus Imperfectum*) is listed at 9d.[41] Latin editions are generally cheaper, ranging from 6d to 16d.[42] Smaller editions or selections, bound more cheaply or unbound, sold for less, and booksellers clearly sold second-hand books alongside new ones (which might be, though were not necessarily, cheaper, depending on binding and condition).[43] In 1578, Denys held a single-text edition bound in parchment valued at only a penny, and an apparently unbound single-text edition at 2d.[44] This aligns a text of Euripides aimed at students with the cheaper end of popular literature: at the end of the sixteenth century you could buy an almanac for two pence, or a pamphlet by Robert Greene for three.[45]

Overall, Cambridge inventories list sixty entries for works related to Euripides between 1540 and 1599, representing at least fifty-five texts, owned by thirty-seven different people. Oxford inventories add another twenty items between 1552 and 1613, representing at least seventeen texts owned by twelve different people. These are mostly editions of the complete works, and it is common for the same inventory to contain both a Latin and a Greek copy. However, a significant minority of single-text editions and selections are also represented. The reach of these texts will have been much wider than the owners featured on the probate lists; as Leedham-Green points out, '[i]t would be an absurd blunder…to suppose that any undergraduate's reading was confined to the books in his own possession'.[46] Rooms, or sets of rooms, were frequently 'shared between a tutor and his charges', resulting in a kind of communal library, and some fellows built up 'libraries

[41] BCI Bridges 197.
[42] BCI Bateman 139, Hall 16, Raven 31 & Perne 166, Parkinson 129 & Anon.19 58; PLRE 73.30 & 143.31.
[43] BCI, xvii.
[44] BCI Denys 416, 483b.
[45] See Sandra Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers: Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580-1640* (London: Athlone Press, 1983), 25; she points out that 2d could also buy you 'two visits to the theatre at the cheapest rate or a pound of beef'.
[46] BCI, xx.

apparently designed to fulfil more than their own personal needs', presumably to lend books to their students.[47]

Booksellers in Oxford and Cambridge clearly had an effective system in place for providing their customers with continentally-printed texts, often hot off the press. The channel, evidently, was no obstacle, and England's engagement with Euripides is inseparable from the European context. The idea that, when it came to Greek at least, England was an isolated intellectual backwater has proven very persistent. The stereotype implied by Aldus' joke about Thule may partly explain why English printers initially declined to print Greek (and indeed Latin) classical texts – English scholars did not want 'home-grown' editions, but prestigious continental ones which would enable them to participate in Europe-wide conversations in a way that had only become possible since the advent of print. A strong industry therefore grew up around importing books to fill this gap in the market. Examining these imported books more closely reveals some of the material forms which shaped (or attempted to shape) the Renaissance reader's experience of Euripides.

Euripides in the Paratexts

In his seminal work, which introduced the term 'paratexts' into critical discourse, Gérard Genette famously described the paratext as a 'threshold', a 'zone not only of transition but also of transaction', which aims to exert 'an influence on the public' in 'the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it'.[48] The paratext plays a vital role in constructing the book: in practical terms, as Helen Smith and Louise Wilson observe, the Renaissance book-binder 'relied heavily on paratexts, particularly the signatures and catchwords that appear at the foot of early modern pages, to guide him or her in constructing the book'.[49] More conceptually, it is the paratextual features which 'both make it a book, rather than a text or

[47] BCI, xx.
[48] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2.
[49] Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, 'Introduction,' in *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 4.

fragment, and allow it to present or announce itself as such'.[50] Genette insists that the paratext 'is characterized by an authorial intention', designed to 'ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author's purpose'[51] – an assertion which Smith and Wilson challenge from a Renaissance perspective, since 'textual production was a substantially more collaborative process than is assumed by post-Romantic notions of the solitary genius'.[52] When it comes to the production of editions of a long-dead classical author, it is clearer than ever that the book produces the author rather than the other way around. Paratexts reveal some of the ways in which Euripides was constructed in print.

Euripides' print debut, however, contained minimal paratextual material, lacking even a title-page. This was the 1495 edition of four tragedies printed by Janus Lascaris and Lorenzo di Alopa in Florence, which was idiosyncratic in both content (as we have seen) and presentation. The text of each play is preceded by a hypothesis (or argument) and a character list, as was standard practice in the manuscript tradition. In a striking deviation from manuscript presentation, however, the entire volume is printed in capital letters. Greek, with its breathings, accents, and ligatures, presented some difficulties to a printing process designed around the greater regularity of Latin. Lascaris considered that previous efforts in this area had been both unsuccessful and unsightly; his solution was to revive Greek inscriptional letters.[53] However, to a Greek-reading public used to the cursive script of scribal handwriting, reading capitals did not come naturally; hence his paratextual addition of the entire Greek alphabet in capital letters, including diphthongs, running across the top of the first page. Genette identifies one of the primary functions of prefatory materials as 'to get the book read',[54] and Lascaris' alphabet performs this function on the most basic level.

[50] Smith and Wilson, 'Introduction,' 4.
[51] Genette, *Paratexts*, 8; 407.
[52] Smith and Wilson, 'Introduction,' 8.
[53] See Barker, *Aldus Manutius*, 16.
[54] Genette, *Paratexts*, 2.

It was Aldus Manutius' *editio princeps* of the complete extant works of Euripides, printed in Venice in 1503, which established the most enduring model for Euripides in print. He returned to the familiar cursive, using the fourth instantiation of his innovative lower-case Greek type, which had premiered in his Sophocles the previous year.[55] This had been simplified somewhat in comparison to previous versions, and was attractive, clear, and easy to read. Both the Sophocles and the Euripides formed part of one of Aldus' most famous innovations: the classical library in the portable octavo format. The Aldine octavos were not necessarily cheaper than larger volumes[56]; a catalogue from 1503 with Aldus' manuscript additions including prices (dated to 1505) indicates that the two-volume Euripides sold for 1 ducat 3 lire, which H. George Fletcher estimates might be a week's salary for a secretary or teacher, still a luxury item.[57] But the smaller format took books out of the library and into the world; these texts, presented by themselves without learned commentaries, were aimed not at cloistered academics but at the educated gentleman, perhaps holding a political office, and the travelling scholar. Many of these editions are dedicated to teachers of Greek (including the Euripides, to Demetrius Chalcondyles), suggesting that Aldus also envisaged them playing a role in education. Where previously students had been reliant on what a lecturer told them about a text, now they were encouraged to have their own copies, as is reflected in the many references to students in the prefatory materials.

Contrary to Genette's paradigm, Smith and Wilson argue that 'the history of the paratext is as much one of obstacles and communicative failures as it is one of clarity and reader-management'.[58] The Aldine title-page promises seventeen tragedies, but the volume delivers eighteen; *Heracles* evidently became available after the title-page had already been printed. It also declares that commentaries for some of the tragedies are included, which is not in fact the case. Aldus' prefatory

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[55] Barker, *Aldus Manutius*, 62.
[56] See Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), 142-46.
[57] H. George Fletcher, *New Aldine Studies: Documentary Essays on the Life and Work of Aldus Manutius* (San Francisco, CA: Bernard M. Rosenthal, Inc, 1988), 90.
[58] Smith and Wilson, 'Introduction,' 4-5.

epistle was printed after the completion of the rest of the volume, and sets the record straight, specifying that eighteen tragedies are included, and promising that commentaries on the first seven will follow soon.[59] Analogously to the lists of *errata* which appear at the end, the title-page and the prefatory epistle produce an impression of the text as a work-in-progress which has a particular result in this context: seventeen tragedies turn into eighteen as we read; the excitement of discovery is transmitted (para)textually.

Practically speaking, the preservation of this textual moment is down to the fact that re-printing a thousand title-pages was evidently not felt to be cost-effective.[60] But the rhetoric of the prefatory epistle is constructed to create a similar sense of the precariousness of preservation and the pathos of loss. Aldus laments 'the great and deplorable losses' of Athenian literature 'that took place a thousand years ago and are continuing all the time', in particular the destruction of the library of Alexandria.[61] As Pollard comments,

> The Alexandrian fire…acquires the poignance of the exile from Eden; before it, classical plays and their meanings were blissfully within reach, but since then readers are beset with labour, strife, and unfulfillable longing. This rhetoric of hope and sorrow framed the plays with a prelapsarian authority, and elevated those working to restore and transmit them.[62]

Following this emotive introduction, Aldus provides a selection of paratexts which 'serve to promote and define the playwright'.[63] First comes a sequence of five Hellenistic epigrams, which appear in the same order in the Planudean Anthology,

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[59] Reprinted in N.G. Wilson, ed. *Aldus Manutius: The Greek Classics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 115.

[60] According to the prefatory epistle, 'we issue every month from our Academy a thousand and more copies of some good author' (*mille et amplius boni alicuius autoris volumina singulo quoque mense emittimus ex Academia nostra*), Wilson, ed. *Aldus Manutius*, 115. 1,000 copies is generally taken to indicate the usual Aldine edition size, which could reach 3,000 in the case of very popular authors such as Virgil and Catullus. 1,000 is a large print-run for the period, indicating that substantial demand from private consumers was anticipated.

[61] Wilson, ed. *Aldus Manutius*, 113: *deflerem…bonorum librorum et factam abhinc mille annos et fieri assidue iacturam plurimam et miserabilem*.

[62] Tanya Pollard, 'Greek Playbooks and Dramatic Forms in Early Modern England,' in *Formal Matters: Reading the Materials of English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Allison K. Deutermann and András Kiséry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 99-123 (108).

[63] Pollard, 'Greek Playbooks,' 107-108.

first printed by Janus Lascaris in 1494, and subsequently in an Aldine edition in 1503. The first epigram compares Euripides to Homer:

> Χαῖρε μελαμπέπλοις Εὐριπίδη ἐν γυάλοισιν
> Πιερίας, τὸν ἀεὶ νυκτὸς ἔχων θάλαμον·
> ἴσθι δ' ὑπὸ χθονὸς ὢν ὅτι σοι κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται
> ἶσον ὁμηρείαις ἀενάοις χάρισιν.[64]
>
> Greetings, Euripides, in the dark-robed hollows
> of Pieria, where you have a chamber of eternal night;
> know that though you are underground your fame shall be immortal
> equal to the everlasting Homeric graces.

In the Hellenistic period, just as epic poetry was the highest genre of literature, Homer was the prince of poets; the comparison serves to elevate Euripides and his works to the highest level. The early humanists inherited this view; Homer had been in print since 1488, so the epigram could still capitalize on his greater reputation to reflect glory onto a lesser-known Greek poet. This glory, indeed, is explicitly Homeric – the epigram invokes the linguistic texture of Homer, most notably with κλέος ἄφθιτον ('immortal fame', line 3).[65]

In the second epigram, the contrast between the dead Euripides and his immortal fame is sharpened through details of his violent end:

> Εἰ καὶ δακρυόεις Εὐριπίδη εἷλέ σε πότμος,
> καί σε λυκορραῖσται δεῖπνον ἔθεντο κύνες,
> τὸν σκηνῇ μελίγηρυν ἀνδόνα κόσμον ἀθηνῶν,
> τὸν σοφίῃ τραγικὴν μιξάμενον χάριτα,
> ἀλλ' ἔμολες πελλαῖον ὑπὴρίον, ὡς ἂν ὁ λάτρις
> Πιερίδων νάῃς ἀγχόθι πιερίδων.
>
> Even though a tearful fate took you, Euripides,
> and wolf-worrying dogs made a feast of you,
> the honey-voiced nightingale of the stage, Athens' glory,
> who mixed the charm of tragedy with wisdom,
> still you went to a tomb in Pella so that as the servant
> of the Pierian Muses you might dwell near the Pierians.

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[64] The epigrams are reproduced in David Kovacs, ed. *Euripidea* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); however, I use the texts from the Aldine edition (sig.A2r), since there are variants.
[65] See Ranja Knobl, 'Biographical Representations of Euripides: Some Examples of Their Development from Classical Antiquity to Byzantium' (Unpublished thesis, Durham University, 2008), 102-03.

Rather than focusing on the comparison with Homer, this epigram turns to the particular characteristics of Euripides, calling him 'the honey-voiced nightingale of the stage', and saying that he 'mixed the charm of tragedy with wisdom'. The *suaviloquentia plus quam mellita* ('speech sweeter than honey') identified by Erasmus, who used the Aldine edition, appears to translate μελίγηρυν ('honey-voiced'). The term σοφία can mean 'cleverness' as well as 'wisdom', and perhaps even 'philosophy', highlighting Euripides' reputation for engagement with contemporary intellectual movements.

The third and fifth epigrams express similar ideas, concentrated on Euripides' μνῆμα ('tomb', or 'memorial'). In the third:

> Μνῆμα μὲν Ἑλλὰς ἅπασ' Εὐριπίδου· ὀστέα δ' ἴσχει
> γῆ Μακεδών ἥπερ δέξατο τέρμα βίου·
> πατρὶς δ Ἑλλάδος Ἑλλάς, Ἀθῆναι. πλεῖστα δὲ Μούσας
> τέρψας ἐκ πολλῶν καὶ τὸν ἔπαινον ἔχει.
>
> All of Greece is the memorial of Euripides; but the Macedonian earth
> Holds his bones, into which he was accepted at the end of his life;
> His fatherland, however, is the Greece of Greece, Athens.
> He delighted the Muses enormously and holds the praise of many.

A strong contrast is drawn between the physical location of Euripides' bones in Macedonia, and Greece which is his μνῆμα ('memorial', line 1). Ranja Knobl points out that combining the first and last words of the epigram produces μνῆμα ἔχει, 'he has a memorial'.[66] The epigram itself, therefore, is set up as a true μνῆμα, more significant than the physical tomb. The fifth epigram is more succinct:

> Ἅπασ' Ἀχαιΐς μνῆμα σὸν Εὐριπίδη·
> οὔκουν ἄφωνος ἀλλὰ καὶ λαλητέος.
>
> All Greece is your monument, Euripides;
> therefore you are not voiceless but spoken of.

The dead are traditionally seen as ἄφωνος ('voiceless', line 2), but instead Euripides is λαλητέος ('spoken about', line 2), given voice in the Hellenic context 'as his tragedies are re-performed and learned by heart throughout the Greek-speaking world'.[67]

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[66] Knobl, 'Biographical Representations of Euripides', 95.
[67] Knobl, 'Biographical Representations of Euripides', 94.

The conceit of the fourth epigram is that it is an epitaph inscribed on Euripides' tomb, or μνῆμα:

> Οὐ σὸν μνῆμα τόδ' ἔστ', Εὐριπίδη, ἀλλὰ σὺ τοῦδε·
> τῇ σῇ γὰρ δόξῃ μνῆμα τόδ' ἀμπέχεται.
>
> This is not your memorial, Euripides, but rather you are its;
> for by your glory this memorial is surrounded.

But in reality it is not connected to a concrete object at all - μνῆμα signifying more generally 'memorial, remembrance'. The epigram, therefore, constructs a literary tomb around Euripides (whose name occupies the central position in the first line) through the chiastic structure achieved through the anaphora of μνῆμα. The final word, ἀμπέχεται ('surrounded'), achieves a deft manoeuvre; Euripides, having been placed at the centre of the concentric circle formed by the epigram, turns out to surround the epigram itself in turn with his glory (δόξῃ). In its original Hellenistic context, this gestured to 'the ubiquity and popularity of Euripidean drama',[68] so that the epigram and Euripides' fame are mutually reinforcing. In the new context of the first printed complete works in 1503, the epigram instead serves to construct a reputation for Euripides. The epigram is 'surrounded' by Euripides' works, encased physically within the covers of the book. Euripides' works are thus positioned as his glory, surrounding the epigram; the imaginary tomb has become the material text, and the Hellenistic epigram has become the perfect Renaissance advertisement.

The Biographical Tradition: Lives and Letters

Mary Lefkowitz has shown that the ancient biographical tradition for Euripides was 'made up of anecdotes created in or soon after the poet's lifetime, which derive from his own works or comic poetry about him'.[69] The historical usefulness of the 'Lives' in this sense is therefore limited; but texts like these shaped and reflected sixteenth-century readers' conceptions of Euripides in important ways. The Aldine edition prints not one, but two Greek 'Lives', the first attributed to the Byzantine scholar Manuel Moschopoulos, and the second by Moschopoulos' contemporary, Thomas Magister. The first 'Life', however, is actually much earlier; it was extracted

[68] Knobl, 'Biographical Representations of Euripides', 90.
[69] Mary Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 102.

by Moschopoulos from the Suda, the tenth-century classical encyclopaedia, and attached to manuscript editions of Euripides' works.

There is considerable overlap between the two 'Lives'. They agree, for instance, that Euripides was born on the day that the Greeks defeated the Persians, that he studied with the philosophers Anaxagoras and Prodicus, that he was at some point a painter, that he married twice and had three sons but found his wives unchaste, that he was sullen by nature, that at the end of his life he left Athens for the court of king Archelaus of Macedon, and that he was reportedly torn apart by the royal hounds. Some details are found in one but not the other; so Moschopoulos says that he was a disciple of Socrates in ethics and philosophy, and that 'he was regarded as a hater of women' (μισογύνης ἐδοξάσθη).[70] Magister adds that when he died 'all the Athenians mourned, and that Sophocles even wore a dark-grey cloak himself and brought on his actors without their garlands' (τοὺς μὲν Ἀθηναίους πάντας πενθῆσαι, Σοφοκλέα δὲ αὐτον μὲν καὶ φαιὸν ἐνδεδύσθαι χιτῶνα).[71] He also identifies Euripides as an innovator, who 'made many advances over his predecessors in the art' (πολλὰ γὰρ εἰς τὴν τέχνην ἐξεῦρεν), including introducing prologues which outline the plot.[72] Familiar features emerge, in 'the clarity and breadth' (σαφήνειαν καὶ πλάτος) of Euripides' speeches, his 'rhetorical arguments' (ἑρμηνείαν… ἐπιχειρήσεσί), and 'introduction of frequent aphorisms highly germane to the subject' (γνώμας εἰσάγειν συνεχεῖς καὶ μάλα τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ προσφόρους).[73]

Over one detail the two 'Lives' disagree pointedly. This is the matter of Euripides' parentage. Magister reports that Euripides' mother was a vegetable-seller (λαχανόπωλις), which Moschopoulos' account categorically denies: 'It is not true that his mother was a vegetable-seller' (οὐκ ἀληθὲς δέ, ὡς λαχανόπωλις ἦν ἡ μήτερ αὐτοῦ), going on to claim that she was 'very noble' (σφόδρα εὐγενῶν).[74] The

[70] Kovacs, ed. *Euripidea*, 10-11. Texts and translations of the 'Lives' and letters are from Kovacs, ed. *Euripidea*.
[71] Kovacs, ed. *Euripidea*, 14-15.
[72] Kovacs, ed. *Euripidea*, 12-13.
[73] Kovacs, ed. *Euripidea*, 12-13.
[74] Kovacs, ed. *Euripidea*, 10-11.

fact that these contrasting statements occur in the first couple of lines of each 'Life' sets them in immediate opposition to each other, as competing, as well as complementary, voices. Aldus' two 'Lives' exhibit a Renaissance tendency towards accumulation and proliferation, which in this case leaves readers to come to their own conclusions. The height of the Renaissance proliferation of *Lives* come in the 1541 Latin edition, which prints a third in addition to the original two, substantiating Smith and Wilson's description of the Renaissance paratext as 'an ever-expanding labyrinth, as likely to lead to a frustrating dead-end as to a carefully built pathway, or to deposit the reader back outside the building rather than guide him or her into the text'.[75]

The disputed claim that Euripides' mother was a vegetable-seller derives from Aristophanes, whose works show something of an obsession with Euripides: 'Every extant comedy of Aristophanes from Euripides' lifetime mocks him except *Birds*, and even that play – along with the two other Aristophanic comedies produced after Euripides' death that do not mention him, *Ecclesiazusae* and *Wealth* – still contains unattributed quotations from and references to Euripides' tragedies'.[76] Three of Aristophanes' extant comedies feature Euripides as a character (*Acharnians*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, and *Frogs*). Though Erasmus' particular fondness for Aristophanes may have been unusual, his works were available in Greek and Latin, and as we have seen he was often mentioned along with Homer and Euripides as a core Greek author.[77] Stephanie Nelson provides a helpful summary of the picture of Euripides that emerges from Aristophanes, highlighting his 'atheism', 'lowlife characters', sexual perversion', 'notorious lines', 'his mother the vegetable seller',

[75] Smith and Wilson, 'Introduction,' 6.
[76] Donna Zuckerberg, 'Branding Irony: Comedy and Crafting the Public Persona,' in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Aristophanes*, ed. Philip Walsh (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 148-71 (165).
[77] Richard Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theatre, 1599-1639: Locations, Translations, and Conflict* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 366-67, argues that Heywood took a particular interest in *Frogs*, and notes that Thomas Dekker also mentions it specifically in *The Wonderfull Yeare* (London: Thomas Creede, 1603), sig.A3v.

'heroes dressed in rags', 'immoral women', 'trickery and disguise', 'cleverness and sophistry', and 'encouragement of idle talk'.[78]

Even before all of Euripides' works had been printed, interested parties had been able to read a short sequence of letters attributed to Euripides which appeared in a large volume of letters advertised as being by 'various philosophers, orators, and rhetoricians' (*Epistolae diversorum philosophorum, oratorum, rhetorum*), published by the Aldine press in 1499. These pseudo-Euripidean letters are now considered to have been produced during the late second century A.D.,[79] but for centuries were taken to be genuine. At the end of the seventeenth century, the English classicist Joshua Barnes, in his 1694 edition of Euripides' works, could still declare: 'I do not know who could be so bold-faced, or diminished in judgement, as either to pronounce that [the letters] are unworthy of our Euripides, or to suspect that they were written by another Euripides, or fabricated by some other Author of a less pure Age' (*nescio quis adeo sit perfrictae frontis, aut Judicii imminuti, qui illas vel Euripide hos nostro indigna pronuntiet, vel ab alio Euripide scriptas, vel ab ullo alio Aetatis minus purae Authore, confictas suspicetur*).[80] Barnes was being disingenuous; he knew exactly who this bold-faced person was. The authenticity of Euripides' letters was the subject of a serious scholarly squabble between Barnes and Richard Bentley, another giant of English classicism. Bentley responded by setting out his reasons for believing them to be the work of a 'little Sophist',[81] and scholarly opinion has gone the way of Bentley.

However, as Barbara Graziosi argues of ancient Homeric biographical material, the pseudo-Euripidean letters 'ultimately derive from an encounter between the poems [or plays] and their ancient audiences'.[82] From a reception perspective, then, they reflect an ancient encounter with Euripides, and played a

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[78] Stephanie Nelson, *Aristophanes and His Tragic Muse: Comedy, Tragedy and the Polis in 5th Century Athens* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 271.
[79] See Knobl, 'Biographical Representations of Euripides', 193.
[80] Joshua Barnes, ed. *Euripidis quae extant omnia* (Cambridge: Richard Green, 1694), 523.
[81] Richard Bentley, 'A Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris, and Others,' appended to William Wotton, *Reflections Upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (London: Peter Buck, 1694), 127.
[82] Barbara Graziosi, *Inventing Homer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3.

role in shaping later encounters. Two key features of the letters are especially significant: first, they represent a deliberate engagement with and revision of the dominant biographical tradition, and secondly they constitute a sustained representation of Euripides as the 'philosopher of the stage'. The sequence of five letters create what Johanna Hanink refers to as an 'epistolary short story'.[83] The first, to Archelaus, depicts Euripides rejecting a gift of money from the Macedonian king, before going on to plead for the release of certain young men from Pella whom he has imprisoned for reasons unstated.[84] The second is to Sophocles, commiserating with him on a recent shipwreck, and assuring him that his affairs are being looked after according to his instructions. The third, to Archelaus again, thanks him for releasing the young men as requested. The fourth, also to Archelaus, contains advice on being a good ruler. The final letter is to Cephisophon, one of Euripides' tragic actors; Euripides has now moved to Macedon to Archelaus' court, in 'a complete reversal of the original circumstance (now Euripides writes from Macedon home to Athens, whereas his first letter had been dispatched from Athens to Macedon)'.[85]

This final letter consists mostly of a defence of Euripides from accusations that his move to Macedon was motivated by greed, completing the process set in motion by his rejection of money at the beginning of the first letter. 'Euripides' also comments on his relationship to Sophocles, claiming that they were originally hostile, but that ever since the latter proposed a reconciliation they have loved one another. Hanink suggests that this is the result of the writer of the sequence trying 'to make sense of an otherwise unruly and inconsistent anecdotal tradition',[86] which at different times depicts the two tragedians variously as enemies and as friends. The fact that the letter is addressed to Cephisophon, and implies that they are on the best of terms, deliberately overwrites the suggestion in the 'Life' that

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[83] Johanna Hanink, 'The *Life* of the Author in the Letters of "Euripides",' *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 50, no. 4 (2010): 537-64 (544).

[84] This may related to 'the story that Euripides won forgiveness from Archelaus for a group of Thracians fined a talent for accidentally eating one of the king's Molossian hounds' (Hanink, 'Letters of "Euripides",' 545).

[85] Hanink, 'Letters of "Euripides",' 546-47.

[86] Hanink, 'Letters of "Euripides",' 563.

Cephisophon committed adultery with Euripides' wife. Altogether the Euripides of the letters is presented as 'considerate, noble, and uninterested in money, caring for the freedom and happiness of others, as respectful towards the king and amiable and self-reliant with his friends',[87] with no trace of the misogynist and misanthrope of the 'Lives'. He is also, above all, a philosopher, as is indicated by the fourth letter, which falls into the genre of 'ancient hortatory and paraenetic epistle collections in which philosophers and sages offer advice to the king'.[88] This explains why Euripides is the only poet to be included among the Aldine collection of letters of philosophers, orators, and rhetoricians, alongside the likes of Demosthenes, Plato, Aristotle, and Hippocrates.

The fact that the pseudo-Euripidean letters orientate Euripides as a philosopher undoubtedly stems from a perception that his plays were particularly philosophical in a way that others were not. In turn, his inclusion among the philosophers, orators, and rhetoricians of the Aldine *Epistolae* will have encouraged sixteenth-century readers to read his tragedies in these terms. The letters also offered a 'deliberate counterpart to the main literary tradition',[89] as transmitted in the Lives, though they never achieved the currency of the latter, which were reprinted in some form in almost every edition of Euripides' complete works throughout the century. The letters do not seem to have appeared in Latin translation until the beginning of the seventeenth century. In 1606, the Greek text and a Latin translation were printed in a peculiar volume published by Pyrrhus Caldoraeus in Geneva. In the preface, Caldoraeus spins an elaborate story that the edition was based upon a manuscript by the French humanist Jacques Cujas (who had died in 1590), which had been copied for him by another Frenchman, Pierre Pithou (who had died in 1596).[90] None of this was true; the Greek text, according to Charles Brunet, is taken directly from the 1499 Aldine *Epistolae*, while the claim also

[87] Knobl, 'Biographical Representations of Euripides', 205.
[88] Hanink, 'Letters of "Euripides",' 553.
[89] Oliver Poltera, 'The Letters of Euripides,' in *Epistolary Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature*, ed. Owen Hodkinson, Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, and Evelien Bracke (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 157.
[90] *Epistolae Graecanicae Mutuae* (Geneva: Caldoraeus, 1606), sig.A0r.

made by the title page that the Latin translations were the work of Cujas is likewise found to be nothing more than a publicity stunt.[91]

Guiding Readers: Themes and commonplaces

While the letters were never printed directly alongside Euripides' works, another significant Aldine paratext also invited readers to place his works in an intellectual context. Slipped in between the two *Lives* is a short essay also attributed to Moschopoulos,[92] on the subject of the *eidolon* (περὶ εἰδῶλου in Greek; *De Idolo* in later Latin translations).[93] As in the case of his *Life*, Moschopoulos appears to have extracted the essay and attached it to Euripides' plays. It is taken from a longer piece by the Byzantine scholar Michael Psellos,[94] who in his theological writings typically took 'a problem [of scripture] and elucidate[d] its philosophical background by drawing on his immense knowledge' of the Greek philosophers, particularly Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonists.[95] In Moschopoulos' extract, Psellos discusses the concept of the *eidolon*, pointing out that 'sometimes (on the one hand) we say that souls are *eidola* of physical bodies' (πῇ μὲν γὰρ εἴδωλα τῶν σωμάτων φαμὲν τὰς ψυχάς, 110-11), but on the other, *eidola* are said to be 'the inferior [images] of superior things' (τὰ χείρωνα, εἴδωλα τῶν κρειττόνων φασίν, 113-14), so that (for example) a bronze statue can be called an *eidolon* of Herakles. The reason that the soul is often called an *eidolon* of the body is because 'when [they] are made visible, they are modelled on corporeal forms according to the ability of those seeing, though indistinct and blurry, and entirely shadowy' (ἐπεὶ δὲ αἱ ψυχαὶ φανταζόμεναι, σωματικοῖς τυποῦνται μορφώμασι πρὸς τὴν τῶν ὁρώντων δύναμιν, ἀσαφέσι μέντοι καὶ συγκεχυμένοις, καὶ τὸ ὅλον σκιώδεσι, 124-26). The

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[91] Charles Brunet, *Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur de livres*, 6 vols. (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1860-1865), II, col.1022.

[92] These three items in the same order with the same attributions could be found prefixed to manuscript editions of Euripides; see e.g. British Library Arundel MS 522, ff 62v-65v.

[93] Sig.A3r-v. *Eidolon* might be translated as 'phantom', 'image', 'likeness'; as it is precisely the nuances of this nexus of meanings that the essay discusses, I leave it untranslated.

[94] Reproduced in L.G. Westerink and J.M. Duffy, eds. *Michael Psellus: Theologica Volume II* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2002), 50-51, to which I refer for convenience. Moschopoulos' version as printed by Aldus has minor textual variations.

[95] Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West: The Church Ad 681-1071* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), 341.

example he gives is the ghost of Polydorus, who appeared to Hecuba 'dim, and like the darkness, and hard to make out' (ζοφερὸν, καὶ σκιᾷ παρόμοιον, καὶ δυσείκαστον, 131)[96]; he also quotes Plato's *Phaedo*. However, really it is bodies which are the *eidola* of souls, because the mind and the ability to reason are to the soul what the senses are to the body; and just as the intellectual faculties are superior to the physical senses, so the soul is superior to the body.

Psellos' essay clearly appealed to Moschopoulos in this context because of the reference to *Hecuba*, but the paratextual work it performs goes beyond the explicit example. The context it establishes is one of nuanced intellectual and philosophical discussion; the works of Euripides, it is implied, participate in such debates. Psellos' approach, too, is explicitly Christian, encouraging the plays to be read in this light, and perhaps implicitly defending the suitability of the material. But a focus on the *eidolon* in relation to Euripides also serves to highlight his notable interest in interrelating themes of identity, appearance, and reality, explored most overtly in *Helen*, which exploits a version of the story in which an *eidolon* of Helen was sent to Troy while the real Helen remained in Egypt throughout the Trojan Wars; this, as we have seen, interested Buchanan. These themes also coalesce in Euripides' recurrent statue imagery – a statue, Psellos reminds us, is an *eidolon* of its subject – including Admetus' proposed statue, which also caught Buchanan's attention.

Of course, there is no guarantee that every Renaissance reader of the Aldine Euripides would have diligently read through all the prefatory material before turning to the plays. But one form of paratext would have been inescapable, since it is literally printed alongside the text: commonplace marks. These take the form of two semi-circular marks, like a double comma (‚‚),[97] in the left margin pointing

[96] In *Hecuba* the ghost of Polydorus is labelled Πολυδώρου εἴδωλον both in the *drammatis personae* and on his appearance to speak the prologue. Though she does not use the term *eidolon*, at 67-72 Hecuba describes being visited in the night by apparitions and black-winged dreams; at 703-706 she connects her dream-visions to Polydorus.

[97] Or to the modern eye like quotation marks, into which they would eventually develop. See Arrigo Castellani, *Nuovi saggi di linguistica e filologia italiana e romanza, 1976-2004*, ed. Valeria Della Valle et al., 2 vols. (Rome: Salerno, 2009), I, 79-81.

towards lines of text which are considered notable in some way. Aldus seems to have been responsible for the introduction of these marks into printed texts.[98] He did not invent the concept; similar marks go back at least as far as Aristarchus, the librarian at Alexandria in the 2nd century B.C., who used the *diplē* (a single arrowhead pointing to the relevant passage: >) to indicate 'any noteworthy point of language or content'.[99] In the medieval period, the *diplē* was used to indicate citations from scripture in religious writings, as the 6th/7th century scholar and archbishop Isidore of Seville explained in his treatise on critical markings.[100] Significant passages in medieval manuscripts could be highlighted using a bewildering array of different signs, symbols, and techniques, including manicules (illustrated hands with pointing fingers), differently coloured inks, and numerous permutations of the *diplē*.[101] The particular form used by Aldus can be found in manuscripts written by Marcus Musurus, a Greek scholar closely involved with the Aldine press.[102]

Aldus' use of printed commonplace marks in his 1502 Sophocles followed by the 1503 Euripides established an influential model for the printed format of classical plays which was so widely imitated that it quickly became conventional. Lesser and Stallybrass show how printed commonplace marks migrated from

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[98] The earliest text to contain printed commonplace marks to be identified so far is Aldus' *Grammatica Introductiva* (Venice, 1495), which includes Theodore of Gaza's Greek grammar and his treatise *De mensibus*; the commonplace marks appear in the latter. See Castellani, *Nuovi saggi*, I, 84.

[99] L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 11; Aristarchus used this system of symbols for editing Homer; in Alexandrian editions of Greek tragedy '[m]arginal signs to guide the reader were much more sparingly used', and '[t]he commonest was probably the letter chi, which indicated a point of interest in much the same way as the *diplē* in the Homeric text', 14-15.

[100] Isidore, *Etymologiae* I, xxi, 13.

[101] Patrick McGurk, 'Citation Marks in Early Latin Manuscripts,' *Scriptorium* 15, no. 1 (1961): 3-13, finds 'many corrupt varieties' of the diplē, including 'the commas, the s and r shapes, the wavy lines' which 'derive from the correct arrowhead' (7).

[102] See e.g. British Library Harley MS 5577, dated to the last quarter of the 15th century, which contains works of Dionysius Periegetes and Eustathius of Thessalonica. Double rounded commonplace marks are found in Eustathius, ff 28-125. The same marks are found in manuscripts copied by other scholars with whom Aldus is known to have associated in Venice, such as Manuel Gregoropoulos (BL Harley MS 5597). On Aldus' associates see Barker, *Aldus Manutius*, 11-20.

classical texts to translations and closet drama (including Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta*, for which see Chapter 3), subsequently becoming 'central to early seventeenth-century attempts to forge a culture of literary drama and poesy in the vernacular'.[103] In this context, they examine the first quarto of *Hamlet*, the first of Shakespeare's plays to include printed commonplace marks (in a speech by Shakespeare's most sententious character, Polonius, or Corambis in this text), which, they argue, identify it as a 'literary drama'.[104] The first commercial drama to be printed with commonplace marks was the classically-minded Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* in 1600,[105] only a few years before the publication of Q1 of *Hamlet* in 1603. The practice was still relatively new in printing vernacular plays, and so retained strong associations with classical texts. Q1 presents *Hamlet* in a format which provides a visual link to the way in which Greek tragedies were customarily presented – the form in which an early seventeenth century reader might have encountered *Orestes*, or *Hecuba*.

Nunc primum in lucem edita: Euripides after Aldus

Aside from the appearance of all the plays in Latin translation in 1541, the major developments after the Aldine Euripides were the printing of the Greek scholia for seven plays in 1534, the rediscovery of *Electra* in 1545, and the publication of Stiblinus' commentaries in 1562. As we have seen, Aldus had intended to print the Greek scholia himself. But when they were finally printed in 1534, it was by the Giunta press, the greatest Venetian rival to the Aldine establishment. They had been collected by Arsenius Apostolius, a Greek scholar from Crete and the Archbishop of Monemvasia. Arsenius was in Venice between 1494 and 1495 working for the Aldine press in its early days.[106] The scholia which he eventually published were on the same seven plays that Aldus had promised (*Hecuba*, *Orestes*, *Phoenician Women*, *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Alcestis*, and *Andromache*); it is possible that he had begun

[103] Lesser and Stallybrass, 'The First Literary *Hamlet*,' 376.
[104] Lesser and Stallybrass, 'The First Literary *Hamlet*,' 376.
[105] Lesser and Stallybrass, 'The First Literary H*amlet*,' 395.
[106] Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas B. Deutscher, eds., *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, 3 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985-1987), I, 68.

working on them as early as this. The project may have been scuppered by a serious falling-out between the two men in 1499 over the repayment of a loan.[107]

The title page advertises that they have been gathered from various ancient manuscripts (ἐκ διαφόρων παλαιῶν βίβλιων / *ex antiquis exemplaribus*), and are *nunc primum in lucem edita* ('now printed for the first time').[108] In his prefatory epistle, Arsenius corroborates that he used 'ancient books' (βίβλοις τῶν παλαιῶν) which he found in Knossos, Venice, and Florence.[109] He uses the familiar simile of the bee to describe his activities in gathering materials from different books, and indeed incorporates scholia by the Byzantine scholars Demetrius Triclinius, Thomas Magister, and Maximus Planudes, with some of his own additions.[110] They are predominantly linguistic, but can also offer metrical, mythological, or historical explanations. The scholia for *Hecuba*, for example, begin with a note on the metres of the *prologos*, followed by an indication that the speaker is the ghost of Polydorus, son of Hecuba, who tells the audience about his murder and his sister Polyxena's plight. There is then a little explication of Euripides' theatrical methods: 'The poet made this explanation, so that the affairs of Polydorus in the work would be clear to everyone' (ἐποίησε δὲ τοῦτο ὁ ποιητὴς ἐξεπιτὴδες, ἵνα δῆλα πᾶσι ποιήσῃ τὰ κατὰ τὸν Πολύδωρον); 'he was accustomed to do this at the beginning of all his plays' (ὅ καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ παντῶν τῶν αὐτοῦ δραμάτων ποιεῖν εἴωθεν).[111] After this the commentary on the main text begins, noting that the first word, ἥκω ('I have come'), is an Attic form of the more familiar ἦκον. We are then informed that σκότου (darkness) can be either neuter (τὸ σκότος) or masculine (ὁ σκότος), and that Hades is the same as Pluto.

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[107] See Deno Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice: Studies in the Dissemination of Greek Learning from Byzantium to Western Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 173-76.

[108] Arsenius Apostolius, *Scholia in Septem Euripidis Tragoedias* (Venice: Giunta, 1534), sig.*1r.

[109] Reprinted in Emile Legrand, *Bibliographie héllenique*, 4 vols. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1885-1906), I, 220-24 (223).

[110] On Arsenius' sources see G. Dindorf, *Scholia Graeca in Euripidis Tragoedias*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1863), I, xxi-xxiii; Alexander Turyn, *The Byzantine Manuscript Tradition of the Tragedies of Euripides* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1957), 19, 66ff., 158.

[111] Quoted from Dindorf, *Scholia Graeca*, for ease of reference, altered where necessary.

More sensational was the expansion of the canon with the rediscovery of *Electra*. In 1545, two students of Piero Vettori in Florence were leafing through ancient manuscripts of Euripides' works, having been set the task of collating manuscripts to correct some of the errors in the texts which had been printed to that date. Instead, they found themselves reading something entirely new: the text of Euripides' *Electra*, which neither Aldus, nor subsequent printers, had been able to include. They brought the manuscript to Vettori, who tells the story with considerable dramatic flair in the preface to the first printed edition of the text. He describes how *Electra* 'until now has lain hidden in the darkness, and was almost buried, and consumed by rot' (*adhuc in tenebris latuit, ac situ pene, carieque confecta erat*) – *situ* is commonly used of corpses in epitaphs.[112] His students, however, 'dug it up from the darkness' (*E tenebris…eruerunt*), and, the title page advertises, it is 'now brought to light [published] for the first time' (*nunc primum in lucem edita*).[113] This discovery generated enough interest that the very next year it was reprinted, this time with a Latin translation by Vettori, with a title page announcing 'the *Electra* of Euripides, a tragedy very much desired thus far by the educated, and recently at last brought to light [published]' (*Euripidis Electra, valde quidem hactenus ab eruditis desiderata tragoedia, ac nuper demum in lucem edita*).[114] The Latin translation, the title page also explains, has been added for the benefit of students.

The discovery of *Electra* came too late for it to be included in Johannes Herwagen's second edition of the complete works in Greek, which had been printed in 1544. It had to wait for his third edition, which he printed in 1551[115]; here, he also reproduced Vettori's prefatory letter and Latin argument. From this point, it appeared in all subsequent editions in both Greek and Latin, and although the next

[112] Piero Vettori, ed. *Euripidis Electra* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1545), sig.A2r.
[113] Vettori, ed. *Euripidis Electra* (1545), sig.A2r; A1r.
[114] Piero Vettori, ed. *Euripidis Electra* (Basel: s.n., 1546), sig.A1r.
[115] Herwagen's first edition was printed in 1537 (the first since the Aldine in 1503). He thus published an edition of Euripides' works in Greek every seven years between 1537 and 1551. In between were two Latin editions using the translations of Dorotheus Camillus: Robert Winter's 1541 original, and a 1550 reprint (printed by Mathias Apiarius in Bern, but financed by Oporinus who, like Winter, was based in Basel). As a reprint of the 1541 edition, this did not contain *Electra*.

dropped Vettori's letter and argument, the title page for *Electra* still reads *nunc primum in lucem edita*.[116] After the initial excitement had died down, however, it did not receive any more single-text editions. Vettori had argued that there could be no doubt that *Electra* was by Euripides, not just because it had been found in an ancient codex of his plays, but also because of the 'elegance of its language' (*elegantia sermonis*).[117] Stiblinus, writing over a decade later, agreed in his preface to *Electra* that 'the language can be seen to be entirely typical of this author' (*oratio omnino eius auctoris germana esse videri possit*).[118] However, he reports that some critics have doubted *Electra*'s authenticity due to its structure: the 'arrangement…is sometimes stiffer and coheres less [well]' (*oeconomiam, quae aliquando frigidior est ac minus cohaeret*). Stiblinus himself leaves his readers to decide, noting that it could be Euripides on an off day or someone deliberately imitating him; either way, *Electra* clearly does not measure up to the expected Euripidean standard.[119] The Italian humanist and bishop Coriolano Martirano, who translated five other plays by Euripides,[120] turned instead to Sophocles for the first and only time for his *Electra*.

Stiblinus' commentaries, as Mastronarde notes, 'offer the earliest particular assessments of all the plays in the corpus'.[121] They represent an important mediation between Euripides' Greek and the sixteenth-century reader, between the culturally and religiously distant world of Greek tragedy and the Renaissance Europe of Stiblinus and his contemporaries. Arsenius' scholia, though clearly useful (they were reprinted in the next Greek edition of the works in 1544), were only accessible to those with Greek. Stiblinus himself drew on the scholia, probably making use of Arsenius' work. Mastronarde, for example, notes that Stiblinus' comment on *Hecuba*

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[116] *Euripidis tragoediae octodecim* (Frankfurt: Braubach, 1558), 1139. Braubach's edition was published seven years after Herwagen's final one in 1551, suggesting that the market was stable and required a new Greek edition of Euripides every seven years.
[117] Vettori, ed. *Euripidis Electra* (1545), sig.A2v.
[118] The text of Stiblinus' commentaries is taken from Mastronarde's digital edition of *Stiblinus' Prefaces*; my translations are indebted to those given on the site.
[119] Stiblinus does acknowledge that it contains 'common topics, and not a few very weighty *sententiae*' (*Habet…locos communes, et sententias gravissimas non paucas*).
[120] *Medea, Hippolytus*, *Bacchae*, *Phoenician Women*, and *Cyclops* printed in a volume of his collected works in 1556 (Naples: Giovanni Maria Simonetta).
[121] Mastronarde, *Art of Euripides*, 10.

1276, where he relates a version of Hecuba's death in which 'she annoyed the Greeks so much with her insults and curses that they threw her from the mast into the sea' can be found in the Greek scholia collected by Arsenius.[122] But Stiblinus' commentaries go much further than the scholia, offering a coherent approach to Euripidean tragedy founded in contemporary dramatic theory.

Stiblinus' commentaries

Stiblinus' commentaries first appeared in the 1562 edition of Euripides' works printed by Oporinus. This volume differs from previous editions of the complete works in several significant ways. It was the first to include both the Greek text and a parallel Latin translation, printed in adjacent columns on each page.[123] To accommodate two columns of text per page, Oporinus opted for the larger folio format; all previous editions had been octavos, following the Aldine precedent. This is not a portable edition for the travelling gentleman, but a text prepared for serious study. Printed marginal notes give linguistic aid: for *Hecuba* line 71, μελανοπτερύγων μᾶτερ ὀνείρων, which is translated as *Obscurorum ac nigricantium mater somniorum*, the note reads 'μελανοπτερύγων, *id est nigras alas habentium*' ('μελανοπτερύγων, that is having black wings').[124] While lines are not numbered, on each page sections are labelled A, B, and C, which together with the page number allows the reader to negotiate the text with accuracy. Printed commonplace marks feature in both the Latin and Greek columns (not always in identical places); these do not correspond directly to the Aldine text. The plays are divided into acts, with act divisions inserted in capital letters and followed by the names of the participating characters. The plays are preceded by their hypotheses and *dramatis personae* as we have come to expect, but to the end of each play is

[122] Mastronarde, *Art of Euripides*, 10 n.31.
[123] The first parallel-text edition of individual plays was Froben's 1524 Basel edition of Erasmus' translations.
[124] Gasparus Stiblinus, *Euripides Poeta Tragicorum Princeps* (Basel: Johann Oporinus, 1562), 15.

appended a new feature: a Latin 'preface' (*praefatio*) and act by act 'arguments' (*argumenta*) and 'annotations' (*annotationes*) by Stiblinus.[125]

In the prefaces, Stiblinus introduces and briefly discusses each tragedy. The act-by-act commentaries which follow summarise the action for the most part, though they also include critical evaluation. As Mastronarde observes, Stiblinus' 'approach is in line with the tendency of sixteenth-century writers on poetics (for example, Scaliger, Castelvetro, Sir Philip Sidney) to attempt a reconciliation of Platonic and Aristotelian views of poetry by insisting that poets both delight and instruct, and that representations of morally suspect behaviour edify by providing a model of what is to be avoided.'[126] In the preface to *Orestes*, he outlines his view of the moral function of Greek tragedy:

> This belief about the punishment of the wicked the ancient guardians of wisdom strenuously studied to impress upon the uncultivated minds of the common people through terrifying examples, so that through fear of punishment they might deter mortals from bad deeds, and rouse them to the observances of virtue with the hope of reward. For the dull minds of the common people could not grasp the subtle disputations and refined arguments of the philosophers about morality and the virtues. Representations so clear of horrible things penetrate the minds of even the hardest men.[127]

Moreover, these benefits are equally applicable to his own Christian age. Tragic representations offer 'a method for life' (*uitae rationes*): 'let us impress on our minds an image of human affairs, emotions, virtue, fortune, and consider how heavily God punishes malefactors' (*effigiemque humanarum rerum, affectuum, virtutis, fortunae, animis imprimamus cogitemusque quam graviter Deus in malefactores animadvertat*). Euripides, he comments on *Cyclops*, 'wants not only to delight and to charm the ears with empty noise of words, but to be useful, and Tragedy is very much engaged in

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[125] Stiblinus drew his act divisions and analytic terms from the commentaries of Donatus on Terence. See Mastronarde, *Art of Euripides*, 10.

[126] Mastronarde, *Art of Euripides*, 10.

[127] *Hanc de sceleratorum poena opinionem prisci sapientiae praesides rudibus vulgi animis inculcare per horrenda exempla obnixe studuerunt ut metu supplicii a malefactis deterrerent mortales et praemii spe ad virtutis officia excitarent. Crassae enim vulgi mentes non poterant subtiles philosophorum de honestate ac virtutibus disputationes καὶ λεπτολογίας capere. Penetrant durissimorum quoque hominum animos tam evidentes rerum horribilium imagines*.

the didactic mode' (*non solum delectare et inani verborum strepitu aures delenire, sed prodesse vult, et plurimum in genere διδακτικῷ versatur Tragoedia*).

Related to this aim, Stiblinus recognises that the mutability of fortune is a major tragic theme. He comments in the preface to *Orestes* that through the example of Hecuba Euripides 'delineated the inconstancy of fortune and the varied vicissitudes of human affairs' (*fortunae inconstantiam variasque rerum humanarum vices…delineavit*); this is something that 'Tragedy pursues pretty much throughout' (*fere passim agit Tragoedia*). In the preface to *Hecuba*, he explains that the 'careful and repeated contemplation of these representations is useful, in which one can quite clearly discern the fickleness of fortune' (*Utilis admodum est harum imaginum contemplatio diligens et crebra, in quibus fortunae levitatem non obscure cernere licet*). He goes on to synthesise the tragic view of fortune with Christian teachings about divine providence ('This power, inverting all things, which we attribute to divine providence, the ancients believed not without reason to have dominion over human affairs'; *Hanc omnia invertentem vim, quam nos divinae providentiae tribuimus, veteres non temere in rebus humanis dominari crediderunt*).

In terms of virtue, Stiblinus sees Greek tragedy as exhorting citizens to the highest form of patriotism. Menoeceus' self-sacrifice in *Phoenician Women* reminds us 'that no danger for our country, to which we owe life, descent, and everything, should be avoided' (*nullum periculum pro patria, cui vitam genus ac omnia debemus, fugiendum esse*). For Stiblinus, such patriotism is decidedly male. In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Iphigenia's action in sacrificing herself is merged with Agamemnon's in sacrificing her: for our country, 'we should expend not only our things and our abilities, but our children, and our own life' (*non solum res et facultates, sed liberos, propriamque vitam…impendere debemus*). Similarly, it is not Polyxena's noble behaviour that attracts Stiblinus' commentary, but the behaviour of the Greeks in sacrificing her to Achilles: this 'shows that states should honour the memory of outstanding men as if sacrosanct: so that others too, inflamed by hope of reward, may aspire to splendour' (*docet, ut civitates praestantium virorum memoriam ceu sacrosanctam colant: ut et alii praemiorum spe accensi, ad claritatem aspirent*). Female

agency and experience, given such unprecedented prominence in Euripidean tragedy, are here all but elided. The treatment of Agamemnon's behaviour in *Iphigenia in Aulis* also illustrates the ease with which sixteenth-century readers could extract contradictory moral interpretations and hold them simultaneously; earlier in the same passage Stiblinus had considered Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter due to 'that frenzy for obtaining supreme power' (*illa obtinendi imperii rabies*). It is presented consecutively as a power-mad atrocity (to be avoided) and a supreme act of patriotism (to be imitated).

Greek tragedy, of course, is more inclined to represent terrible deeds than virtuous ones, and Stiblinus is indefatigable in pointing out the morals to be learned from these negative examples. The example of Polymestor warns against greed, the Cyclops against drunkenness. Capaneus, struck by lightning mid-boast in *Phoenician Women*, 'offers an eminent instance of insolence punished' (*egregium vindicatae insolentiae praebet documentum*); Orestes and Electra show that one crime leads to another. The fact that the chance discovery of Polydorus' body leads to Polymestor's punishment suggests that there is a divine agent 'which punishes savage crimes with harsh penalties, but is a generous rewarder of deeds done honourably' (*quae horrendis suppliciis atrocia scelera vindicet, honeste autem factorum munifica sit praemiatrix*). Stiblinus saw Euripidean tragedy as being particularly concerned with the downfall of tyrants, which can be both a moralistic warning to the private citizen (on the mutability of fortune/pride comes before a fall), and a political warning to rulers on the exercise of legitimate power.[128]

For Stiblinus, then, the moral messages of the plays and their political concerns are fundamentally connected. As Hannah Crawforth has shown, his prefaces 'repeatedly emphasize the most political aspects of the drama, and insist upon a connection between the events depicted onstage and those of the dramatist's contemporary society'.[129] So in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, he suggests that through the barbaric human-sacrificing Taurians Euripides 'perhaps indirectly reprehends the

[128] Stiblinus and the anti-tyrannical stance of Athens are discussed in Chapter 6.
[129] Crawforth, 'Politics of Greek Tragedy,' 242.

superstitions of men of his times' (*fortasse oblique sui saeculi hominum superstitiones… reprehendit*). Moreover, the political examples of Euripides have wider implications for Stiblinus' Christian present. He considers that in *Bacchae* Euripides 'wanted to exhort the men of his times to cultivate piety: when this is neglected, impiety, indiscretion, self-will, and other plagues of the same type follow, which undermine republics' (*sui saeculi homines hortari voluit ad colendam pietatem: cui neglectae subeunt impietas, temeritas, αὐθάδεια aliaeque eiusdem generis pestes quae respublicas subvertunt*). He contrasts such ancient zeal for a false religion with contemporary society: we should be ashamed, he says, for neglecting 'the true religion, consecrated with the blood of Christ' (*veram religionem, sanguine Christi consecratam*).

If human deeds form the material for tragic plots, Stiblinus recognises that the emotional impact of tragedy is key to its aims – to both delight and instruct. He continually draws attention to the capacity of the plays to move their readers/audiences: 'whom', he asks, 'would [Hecuba] not move?'[130] *Phoenician Women* is 'full of violent passions' (*plena vehementibus affectibus*) which 'the poet handles with such great skill that they can stir and move even a heart of iron or steel' (*tanto artificio poeta tractat ut etiam ferreum aut adamantinum pectus concutere ac mouere queant*). Euripides' greatest skill, for Stiblinus, lies in his capacity to arouse and depict emotions. It is frequently the realism of Euripides' depiction of extreme emotional states that draws Stiblinus' attention: in *Orestes*, 'the impatient fussiness and character of those who are sick is described admirably' (*mire describitur aegrotantium fastidium impatientia καὶ ἦθος*). Phaedra, in *Hippolytus*, is shown 'raging with love and confused in her mind and inconsistent: in which thing it is possible to see the foolishness and insanity of those who are lost to love' (*furiosa amore et perplexae mentis et inconstans: in qua re licet videre nugas ac dementiam perdite amantium*).

Stiblinus, as Mastronarde observes, 'frequently points to the rhetorical skill of particular speeches, in line with Quintilian's advice about the utility of

[130] *[Q]uem non commoveret?* Discussed by Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 8.

Euripides'.[131] In *Orestes*, for example, he recommends 'the opposing speeches of Tyndareus and Orestes, which, prepared for the forum, rapid, firm, filled with *sententiae* and rhetorical arguments, contend vigorously between themselves' (*commendo orationes contrarias Tyndarei et Orestis, quae foro paratae, concitatae, solidae, sententiis et locis rhetoricis refertae, inter se fortiter collidunt*). But his appreciation of Euripides' skill goes beyond practical utility. Hecuba's lament over Polyxena contains 'an admirable expression of the helplessness of human concerns and the inconstancy of fortune' (*mira expressio imbecillitatis rerum humanarum et fortunae inconstantiae*); in *Bacchae* he calls attention to 'a very beautiful speech' (*pulcherrima oratione*) by Tiresias; in *Orestes* he finds 'a skilful description of the diverse characters and different inclinations of the crowd' (*artificiosam diversarum personarum et disparis vulgi studii descriptionem*). He also maintains a sense of the plays as plays; on *Children of Heracles*, he comments that a scene has been inserted 'so that the stage is not unoccupied until the messenger comes who narrates the event of the battle' (*ne otiosa scena esset donec veniat nuntius qui eventum pugnae narret*). Though his main concern is with the moral effects that the emotional impact of the tragedies should have, Stiblinus remains aware of the delight that Euripides' style can bring. 'But who', he asks in his preface to *Orestes*, 'could pursue every single thing in an author so brilliant, rich, sublime, a poet and a Greek?' (*Sed quis singula in auctore tam luculento, uberi, sublimi, poeta et Graeco persequi queat?*).

The Best Euripidean Sayings in Greek and Latin

In 1559, three years before Stiblinus' commentaries were published for the first time, a volume entitled *Aristologia Euripidea Graecolatina* ('The best Euripidean sayings in Greek and Latin') was printed in Basel by Oporinus. The author was Michael Neander, who had been teaching in Germany since 1551.[132] On the title page Neander explains that by *aristologia* he means 'that which, in Euripides (prince of tragedians) is worthy of memorizing: the weightiest *sententiae*, and principles concerning the entirety of virtuous life and expedient governing, about all things

[131] Mastronarde, *Art of Euripides*, 10.
[132] Neander also produced an *Aristologia Pindarica Graecolatina* (Basel: Wetterau, 1556).

which can happen in the life of man'.[133] For each play, he gives an argument, and a list explaining who the *dramatis personae* are in Latin, followed by a selection of passages from the text in Latin and Greek; prefaced to the whole is a 'Life' of Euripides.[134] In his preface, Neander specifies that it is aimed at students, explaining that 'we have not only transcribed the Greek from Euripides, but also added Latin next to it on the opposite page, so that in this way even a boy who has been moderately instructed in the first elements of the Greek language may also, without a teacher, read Euripides' works with pleasure and profit'.[135] He hopes that, 'captivated and charmed by these few pearls' (*captos et delinitos*[136] *paucis istis margaritis*), the student will be inspired 'to read the whole of Euripides' (*ad legendum totum Euripidem*).[137] Neander's collection, then, offers a unique opportunity to see sixteenth-century reading practices at work on Euripides.

Neander's use of the phrase 'pleasure and profit' (*cum voluptate et utilitate*) may seem conventional, but it is central to his project. In pursuit of this double objective, he alters the standard order of the tragedies established by the Aldine edition. He explains that he has put first the ten tragedies which deal with the Trojan wars, followed by *Phoenician Women* and *Suppliant Women*, which concern the Theban wars, and then the remaining seven plays in no particular order. This will help students to learn the histories of the Trojan and Theban wars – an important function of reading Greek tragedy. Neander clearly also thinks that plays featuring wars will be most appealing to boys: 'There are many other sad and horrible things in these histories,' he assures us, 'which are of such kinds as young people will easily understand'.[138] He himself seems to take a certain bloodthirsty

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[133] *Hoc est, quicquid in Euripide, Tragicorum principe, memorabile est: Sententiae gravissimae, et doctrinae de totius vitae honesta et utili gubernatione, de omnibus quae in hominum vita accidere possunt.* Michael Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea Graecolatina* (Basel: Oporinus, 1559), sig.A1r.
[134] Extracted from Giglio Gregorio Giraldi's *Historiae Poetarum Graecorum ac Latinorum* (printed 1545).
[135] *[N]on tantum Graeca ex Euripide descripsimus, sed etiam Latina mox e regione addidimus, ut ita vel puer mediocriter etiam in primis linguae Graecae elementis institutus, sine praeceptore, in Euripidaeis cum voluptate et utilitate versari posset*. Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 5-6.
[136] Alternative form of *delenio*.
[137] Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 5.
[138] *Sunt multa alia tristia et horrenda in ea historia…qualia sint facile cogitabunt adolescentes* (Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 7).

delight in these 'sad and horrible' events, which he enumerates at considerable length. He is convinced, however, of the moral efficacy of reading these narratives, which 'would easily bring it to pass that young people rejoice in honourable things and moreover are troubled by shameful things, and voluntarily do of their own accord things which are right'.[139]

The first play is predictably *Hecuba*. Taking a closer look at Neander's presentation of it illustrates several key features of his practice. He begins with a Latin argument (Erasmus', in this case), providing a pithy summary of the key points in the margin, with a decided focus on the gory details ('Achilles' ghost demands that Polyxena, daughter of Priam, be sacrificed to him'; 'Polymestor was blinded by Hecuba, once his children had also been slaughtered'[140]). Where relevant, he adds other supplementary material; for *Hecuba*, a passage from Dictys Cretensis' *History of the Trojan War*, giving an alternative version of Polydorus' death in which Polymestor hands him over to the Greeks, where he is later stoned to death following a failed hostage exchange. Dictys Cretensis was a legendary participant in the Trojan wars, whose 'diary' was translated into Latin in the 4th century A.D., along with an elaborate framing narrative describing how the original, written in Phoenician on wooden tablets, had been buried with the author but was exhumed following an earthquake and translated into Greek and subsequently Latin. From late antiquity well into the Renaissance Dictys' history was taken seriously. Neander, therefore, includes it because it demonstrates 'how poets select their arguments from true histories' (*quomodo Poetae sua argumenta ex veris historiis desumpserint*).[141]

After this, Neander includes a helpful note that 'the action of this play is set in the Chersonese opposite Thrace. The Chorus is constituted of captive Trojan

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[139] *[F]acile sint effectura, ut adolescentes honestis gaudeant, turpibus vero angantur, et iniussi ultro quae recta sunt faciant* (Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 9).
[140] *Achillis umbra postulat sibi mactari Polyxenam, Priami filiam*; *Polymestor ab Hecuba excaecatus, trucidatis una quoque ipsius liberis* (Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 28-29).
[141] Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 29.

women, Hecuba's aids'.[142] His list of characters gives supplementary detail (not found in Erasmus); for example, 'the ghost of Polydorus, son of Priam, killed by Polymestor king of Thrace, after the destruction of Troy, and thrown into the sea' (*Umbra Polydori, filii Priami, interfecti a Polymestore rege Thraciae, post destructam Troiam, et abiecti in mare*).[143]

The main body of the *Aristologia* is a kind of commonplace book dedicated exclusively to Euripides – though the *sententiae* are arranged by play rather than by theme, the extensive indices enable the reader to search the collection by topics such as 'absence less sad than presence' (*absentia minus tristia quam praesentia*).[144] Neander does not simply extract the passages indicated by commonplace marks in the Aldine and later editions, or in Erasmus' translations. His first passage, lines 16-27, is unannotated in previous texts. Polydorus' ghost describes how he was treated well while Troy prospered, but as soon as it fell he was murdered for his gold. Neander indicates the moral message in a note quoting four lines of Ovid: *dum iuvat et vultu ridet Fortuna sereno, / indelibatas cuncta sequuntur opes: / at simul intonuit, fugiunt, nec noscitur ulli, / agminibus comitum qui modo cinctus erat* ('While Fortune aids us and a smile is upon her calm face, all things follow our unimpaired resources. But at the first rumble of the thunder they flee, and nobody recognizes him who but now was encircled with troops of comrades').[145] The fact that Aldus, Erasmus, and Neander all highlighted a slightly different range of passages for their readers indicates that a system of reading for commonplaces was less rigid and restrictive than we might assume. Readers, faced with the selections of others, felt free to make their own choices.

While Neander presents the text as a series of parts, he is at constant pains to make the context available to the reader. In the margin of the parallel Latin

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[142] *Actio huius fabulae, proponitur in opposita Thraciae Cherroneso. verum Chorus ex captivis mulieribus Troianis constituitur, auxiliaturis Hecubae.* Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 35. Erasmus has an almost identical note, based upon part of Aristophanes of Byzantium's hypothesis.

[143] Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 35.

[144] Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 392.

[145] *Tristia*, 1.5.27-30, trans. Arthur Leslie Wheeler, *Ovid: Tristia/Ex Ponto* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

translations, he notes who the speaker is, and (if relevant) whom they are addressing. So for the second passage (lines 55-8 in the Greek), his note reads: 'The words are of the same person [as the previous passage], about his mother Hecuba, who was captured by the Greeks, and lead into slavery'.[146] This is not merely a case of understanding what is going on; in his preface Neander observes that while it is true that 'no speech or advice should be spurned or rejected' (*nullius seu sermonem seu consilium aspernandum aut reiiciendum esse*), still 'for the most part a wise man speaks wisely, a stupid man stupidly', (*plerunque sapiens sapienter, stultus vero stulte loquatur*).[147] It is important to know who is speaking, and under what circumstances, in order to be able to come to a suitable evaluation of their words.

Neander gives 66 passages from *Hecuba* in total, substantially above the average of 56. Although the number of passages extracted from a play is not conclusive evidence for its level of popularity either with Neander or in general (apart from anything else it does not consider the length of the passages),[148] we might hypothesise a rough correlation between how sententious a play was perceived to be, and how popular it was. This does indeed seem to broadly be the case: the plays with the fewest passages are *Cyclops* (25), *Rhesus* (32), *Bacchae* (36), and *Iphigenia in Tauris* (39). Neither *Rhesus*, *Bacchae*, nor *Iphigenia in Tauris* was issued in any separate editions during the sixteenth century. *Cyclops* is a slightly different case; Neander's collection falls prior to the main development of interest in the play, which focused on its genre. The plays to receive the largest number of extracts are *Orestes* (81), *Phoenician Women* (80), and *Hippolytus* (71). *Orestes* and *Phoenician Women*, as members of the ever-popular 'Byzantine triad', are unsurprising, and *Hippolytus* was among the first four of Euripides' plays to be

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[146] *Eiusdem verba sunt, de matre sua Hecuba, quae a Graecis capta, in servitutem abducebatur*. Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 37.

[147] Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 6.

[148] Quotations can be a single line. Neander (92-95) quotes 62 lines from Clytemnestra's speech *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1146-1208), which provided him with much material on the proper relations between husband and wife. He adds commonplace marks to 1162-23 (unusual in a volume that already consists of extracts): σπάνιον δὲ θήρευμ᾽ ἀνδρὶ τοιαύτην λαβεῖν / δάμαρτα: φλαύραν δ᾽ οὐ σπάνις γυναῖκ᾽ ἔχειν ('It is rare for a man to catch such a wife; but it is not rare to have a bad woman').

printed. The plays translated by Erasmus and Buchanan also fare well, with 66 (*Hecuba*), 64 (*Iphigenia in Aulis*), 69 (*Medea*), and 58 (*Alcestis*).

Helen, which Neander places second, is an interesting case. *Helen* receives no individual editions in the period, and Neander takes from it a below-average 49 extracts. His interest seems to be due to its unique perspective on the central event of the Trojan Wars, the rape (or not) of Helen. As well as the argument, Neander provides an extract from Herodotus (2.1.113-21), giving a similar version of the story to Euripides, in which Helen and Paris were shipwrecked in Egypt *en route* to Troy, where Helen remained under the protection of the Egyptian king, to be retrieved after the wars by Menelaus.[149] Herodotus concludes that this version is most likely, because if the Trojans had had her, they would surely have given her back to prevent the destruction of their city. Neander also includes as a kind of appendix to the whole volume a piece by Isocrates (Oration 10) in praise of Helen in which, Neander says, 'many things are said, illustrating the narrative of the history of Troy' (*in qua plurima dicuntur, argumentum historiae Troianae illustrantia*).[150]

Neander and Stiblinus offer significant insights into how Euripides' works were interpreted by sixteenth-century readers. In turn, there is evidence for the continuing influence of their works in England. Although the *Aristologia* does not appear to have been reprinted, as we have seen a copy appears on an Oxford probate list from 1577. Two copies of the 1562 edition of Euripides' works with Stiblinus' commentaries are found in Cambridge inventories, and another at St Paul's. Their inclusion in the 1602 Geneva edition, which was owned and annotated by John Milton (see Chapter 6), ensured their continued influence well into the seventeenth century.

Conclusion

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, readers had access to a plethora of Euripidean material that More's Utopians could never have dreamed of. The Aldine

[149] Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 57-60.
[150] Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 369.

edition brought by Hythloday, however, had been vastly influential in establishing significant and lasting conventions for the printing of Euripides, and indeed for the printing of classical drama in general. In addition, the Aldine text 'remained the acknowledged vulgate on which later printed editions were based and with which other texts were compared until at least the end of the eighteenth century'.[151] This did not mean that the text was accepted uncritically; on the contrary, subsequent editions consistently claimed to be presenting a new and improved version. The rhetoric of novelty instigated by the Aldine edition was continually re-inscribed by subsequent editions, translations, and paratextual material. Meanwhile, Latin translations increasingly came equipped with commentaries and other aids to accessing and interpreting the texts, and from 1562, there was an increasing trend towards printing Greek/Latin parallel text editions.

Burrow has said that 'writers who have no recognized identity and no familiar, characterizing epithets tend to remain unread, or, if they are read, their influence remains shadowy and informal'.[152] In the case of Euripides, the frequent reproduction and re-packaging of biographical material contributed to creating an identity for him. The entry for Euripides in Thomas Cooper's popular Latin-English dictionary gives a compressed version drawn mainly from the Suda, making this information widely accessible. In fact, 'Euripides' as a character here subsumes Euripides as tragedian, since through an unfortunate error the entry claims that he wrote comedies rather than tragedies:

> A famous poet, that lived in the time of Archelaus king of Macedonie, who had him in passing great estimation. He wrote 75 comedies, and was of so chaste life, and so much abhorring the companie of women, that he was for that occasion surnamed Mysogynes, that is, enemie to womankinde. He was by misfortune slaine of Archelaus hys dogges: for which thing the king was verie sorie, and commaunded his bones to be gathered togither, and honourably to bee entered in the citie Pella, repelling the Ambassadors of the Atheniens, which (for honors sake) made great sute to have his bones translated to his native Citie of Athens.[153]

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[151] L.P.E. Parker, *Euripides: Alcestis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), lxv.
[152] Burrow, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*, 27.
[153] Thomas Cooper, *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae & Britannicae* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1565), s.v. 'Euripides'.

Euripides is here given an identity and an epithet ('Mysogynes') for English readers; by contrast, Sophocles' entry simply (though accurately) reads: 'A writer of tragedies'.[154] The English interest in, and access to, Euripides is further attested by two surviving English translations, which are the subject of the next chapter.

[154] Cooper, *Thesaurus*, s.v. 'Sophocles'.

CHAPTER 3

EURIPIDES IN ENGLISH

In his *Defence of Poesie* (composed c.1579, though not printed until 1595), Philip Sidney instructs English tragedians that 'they must not (as Horace saith) begin *ab ovo*, but they must come to the principal point of that one action which they will represent'.[1] The example he chooses to illustrate the point is Euripides' *Hecuba*:

> I have a story of young Polydorus, delivered for safety's sake, with great riches, by his father Priam to Polymnestor, king of Thrace, in the Trojan war time. He, after some years, hearing the overthrow of Priam, for to make the treasure his own, murdereth the child. The body of the child is taken up by Hecuba. She, the same day, findeth a sleight to be revenged most cruelly of the tyrant. Where now would one of our tragedy writers begin, but with the delivery of the child? Then should he sail over into Thrace, and so spend I know not how many years, and travel numbers of places. But where doth Euripides? Even with the finding of the body, leaving the rest to be told by the spirit of Polydorus.[2]

Though Sidney mentions Horace, this passage owes more to Aristotle's *Poetics* (1451a 25-27), where he explains that in the *Odyssey* Homer did not include every detail of Odysseus' life (such as his hunting wound, or feigned madness).[3] As we have seen, Scaliger, demonstrating that 'the argument should be very concise and also constructed with the greatest variety and multiplicity', had used *Hecuba* briefly as a positive model ('Hecuba is in Thrace, her return forbidden by Achilles, Polydorus already murdered; the slaughter of Polyxena, the blinding of Polymestor').[4] But Sidney, like Aristotle, demonstrates the poet's skill by describing what an inferior author might have done in his place.

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[1] Geoffrey Shepherd and R.W. Maslen, eds., *An Apology for Poetry, or, the Defence of Poesy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 111.

[2] Shepherd and Maslen, eds., *Defence of Poesy*, 111.

[3] Horace, *Ars Poetica* 147-48 merely states: *nec gemino bellum Troianum orditur ab ovo; / semper ad eventum festinat et in media res / non secus ac notas auditorem rapit*. 'Nor does he begin the Trojan war from the double egg; always he hurries to the outcome, and carries his audience into the middle of the story, as if known already'. Micha Lazarus, 'Sidney's Greek *Poetics*,' *Studies in Philology* 112, no. 3 (2015): 504-36, has shown that Sidney read Aristotle's *Poetics* thoroughly and in Greek.

[4] *Argumentum ergo brevissimum accipiendum est idque maxime varium multiplexque faciundum. Exempli gratia Hecuba in Thracia prohibente reditum Achille Polydorus iam interfectus est; caedes Polyxenae, exoculatio Polymestoris*. Deitz et al., eds. *Scaliger: Poetices*, II, 30.

In the process, Sidney reveals his own familiarity with Euripides' play, drawing details from Polydorus' prologue.[5] There is nothing, as Kenneth Myrick has observed, to indicate whether Sidney was reading *Hecuba* in Greek or Latin,[6] but his Greek was good enough (and his interest in it strong enough) to read Aristotle. He may well have used both: 'Reading thus in parallel – accessing one language through and alongside another, rather than in place of it – was second nature to sixteenth-century readers'.[7] Either way, he interpreted *Hecuba* as an exemplary structural model that contemporary playwrights would do well to follow. In lamenting that Euripides' tragedy has not had more influence on contemporary dramatic practice, Sidney anticipates the assumptions of much modern criticism, even as he testifies that he, at least, was reading it. Similarly, Lawrence Ryan has seen 'an effort to suggest better models than the main classical source to which native tragedians were looking for inspiration' in Roger Ascham's declaration that 'Sophocles and Euripides far over match our *Seneca*, in Latin, namely in οἰκονομίᾳ *et Decoro*, although *Senecaes* elocution and verse be verie commendable for his tyme' (*The Scholemaster*, 1570).[8] Ascham apparently reached this conclusion through 'comparing the preceptes of *Aristotle* and *Horace de Arte Poetica*, with the examples of *Euripides*, *Sophocles*, and *Seneca*'[9]; Aristotle introduces the concept of οἰκονομία (*Poetics* 1453a 30) and Horace uses the word *decor* (*Ars Poetica* 157).

Though Greek tragedy, tested against classical poetic theory, offers a superior model for dramatic construction, Seneca is 'our *Seneca*', absorbed into the native tradition. Howard Norland concludes that '[f]or all of his adulation of Greek authors and Greek dramatic theory, Ascham cannot escape his Latin critical

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[5] Shepherd and Maslen, eds., *Defence of Poesy*, 236, note that 'for safety's sake, and with great riches', and 'to make the treasure his own', 'seem to be taken from this speech'. Sidney also picks up on Polydorus' description of himself as the 'youngest' (νεώτατος, 13) of Priam's sons.

[6] Kenneth Myrick, *Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 107.

[7] Lazarus, 'Sidney's Greek *Poetics*,' 534.

[8] Lawrence Ryan, *Roger Ascham* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1963), 271; William Aldis Wright, ed. *Roger Ascham: English Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 276.

[9] Wright, ed. *Ascham: English Works*, 284.

background nor Seneca, the dominant model of tragedy'.[10] But Ascham had no desire to 'escape' his Latin critical background; on the contrary, he clearly viewed the precepts of Aristotle and Horace as being complementary (as was typical of synthesizing Renaissance approaches to classical literary theory). Nor did he wish to 'escape' Seneca, but instead advocates comparing Seneca's 'imitation[s]' directly to their Greek (in practice Euripidean) counterparts.[11] The dominance of Seneca as a tragic model has generally been taken to preclude any significant influence of Greek tragedy, and to explain the preference for Euripides, 'the most Senecan of the Greeks'.[12] The two works examined in this chapter, Jane Lumley's *Iphigeneia* and George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta*, both overtly signal their relationship to Euripides, but even these have rarely been taken seriously as Euripidean receptions.[13] The presence of intermediary texts (Erasmus' *Iphigenia in Aulis* and Dolce's *Giocasta*) is frequently taken to negate their claims to be translations of Euripides.[14] I argue, however, that it is precisely these intermediary texts which demonstrate that both works are engaging seriously with European humanist receptions of Euripides. Furthermore, both texts challenge the assumption that Euripides, in this period, is inevitably or exclusively 'Senecan'.

Lumley's *Iphigeneia*

In the summer of 1559, six months after her coronation, Queen Elizabeth visited Nonsuch Palace, a beautiful residence in Surrey originally built by her father but by this time in Lord Arundel's possession. She was received lavishly, with

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[10] Howard B. Norland, *Neoclassical Tragedy in Elizabethan England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 23.
[11] Wright, ed. *Ascham: English Works*, 276.
[12] H.B. Charlton, *The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1946), xxxi.
[13] Tanya Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, and Sarah Dewar-Watson, '*Jocasta*: "A Tragedie Written in Greeke",' *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 17, no. 1 (2010): 22-32 are notable exceptions.
[14] Frank D. Crane, 'Euripides, Erasmus, and Lady Lumley,' *The Classical Journal* 39, no. 4 (1944): 223-28: 'Her Euripides is purely and simply a translation of Erasmus, and a poor one at that' (228). Robert Miola, 'Euripides at Gray's Inn: Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta*,' in *The Female Tragic Hero in English Renaissance Drama*, ed. Naomi Conn Liebler (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2002), 33-50: Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh 'present a "Euripides" three hands and three tongues removed from the original Greek' (33).

entertainments including 'a play of the chyderyn of Powlles and ther master Se[bastian], master Phelypes, and master Haywod'.[15] It has been suggested that this play was *The Tragedie of Euripides called Iphigeneia translated out of Greake into Englisshe* by Lady Jane Lumley, Arundel's daughter. This work, which survives in a single manuscript copy in the author's hand,[16] is not only the first known English translation of a Greek tragedy (Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*), but also the first known English dramatic work by a woman. If Elizabeth saw it performed on 7th August 1559, it would have been a historic moment indeed. The Paul's Boys performed a tragedy called *Iphigenia* at court on 28th December 1571, now lost.[17] Could this have been Lumley's *Iphigeneia*, adopted into their repertoire, or revived a decade later?[18] Alison Findlay suggests that a 1571 revival might have been prompted by the involvement of John Lumley, Jane's husband, in a Catholic plot to assassinate Elizabeth and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots. Sebastian Westcott, the master of the Paul's Boys and a fellow recusant, may have staged the play 'as a reminder to Elizabeth of the Arundel family's loyalty'.[19]

Attractive as this theory is, it seems highly unlikely that a drama written in plain, simple English prose by a young woman with no literary credentials would have been selected for her majesty's audience in 1559, especially since Arundel at this stage had some hopes of Elizabeth's hand, and was spending a fortune on the entertainments in order to impress her.[20] In proposing such a prestigious performance occasion, critics have been pushing back against the earlier tendency to view Lumley's work as a mere school-room exercise, largely devoid of either

[15] John Gough Nichols, ed. *The Diary of Henry Machyn* (London: Camden Society, 1848), 206.
[16] British Library MS Royal 15.A.ix.
[17] 'Effiginia A Tragedye showen on the Innosent*es* daie at nighte by the Children of powles', Albert Feuillerat, ed. *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth* (Vaduz: Kraus Reprint, 1963), 145.
[18] The possible connection was pointed out by E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 14.
[19] Alison Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 75.
[20] Leo Gooch, *A Complete Pattern of Nobility: John, Lord Lumley (c.1537-1609)* (Sunderland: University of Sunderland Press, 2009), 21.

poetry or accuracy.[21] *Iphigeneia* was virtually unknown until the twentieth century, and ever since its publication in 1909 it has posed something of a conundrum to critics.[22] When was it written? Why was it written? Was it really 'translated out of Greake'? Is it any good? Earlier critics explained what they perceived as a lack of literary merit by positioning it as a piece of juvenilia, an exercise in translation; more recently critics have shifted the date later and stressed the likelihood that it was intended (and well-suited) for performance. After addressing these issues, which are key to understanding the nature of Lumley's enterprise, I turn to the material texts she used to illuminate her participation in the wider context of humanist receptions of Euripides in the first half of the sixteenth century. Lumley's experience of Euripides was shaped not only by the Greek and Latin words she read, but also by the traces left by previous readers. She was encouraged to read Euripides in certain ways by Erasmus, whose comments on the style of *Iphigenia in Aulis* may have influenced her own choice of stylistic register.

Earlier critics were encouraged in their propensity to view *Iphigeneia* as a piece of juvenilia by placing its composition as early as 1550, when Lumley was only about thirteen. But in fact, the earliest that she could have begun her translation is 1553, since this is when the only copies of both the Greek text of the play and Erasmus' Latin translation in the family library were acquired by Lord Arundel. Marion Wynne-Davies has persuasively argued for an even later date, based on the watermark of the paper Lumley was using; this was official paper that she is only likely to have had access to after Arundel's acquisition of Nonsuch Palace in 1556.[23] She demonstrates that a date of 1557 makes sense in the context of the other material contained in the same volume, which H.H. Child designated a

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[21] David H. Greene, 'Lady Lumley and Greek Tragedy,' *The Classical Journal* 36, no. 9 (1941): 536-47, considered that she demonstrated a 'total lack of taste and critical ability' (542). Crane, 'Euripides, Erasmus, and Lady Lumley,' 228, concluded that she 'shows no knowledge of Greek, and none of poetry in any language'.

[22] H.H. Child, ed. *Iphigenia at Aulis, Translated by Lady Lumley* (London: Malone Society, 1909).

[23] Marion Wynne-Davies, 'The Good Lady Lumley's Desire: *Iphigeneia* and the Nonsuch Banqueting House,' in *Heroines of the Golden Stage*, ed. Rina Walthaus and Marguérite Corporaal (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 2008), 111-28 (121).

common-place or rough copy book.[24] *Iphigeneia* is preceded by five orations of Isocrates (1-4 and 8) translated into Latin, along with two dedicatory letters to her father, which Wynne-Davies identifies as New Year's gifts going up to 1557.[25] It is followed by a couple of Latin *sententiae* and an excerpted description of the medical properties of the 'eaglestone' for pregnant women; Wynne-Davies relates this to the fact that in 1557 her younger sister Mary was pregnant, and following delivery died in late August that year.[26]

Lumley, then, was at least sixteen, and perhaps as old as twenty at the time of composition, suggesting that *Iphigeneia* was less a school-room exercise and more a pursuit of scholarly interests. What is more, the text itself is hardly characteristic of an exercise in translation. Marta Staznicky, examining 'the theory and techniques of humanist translation' and its role in education, finds that 'Lumley displays little attempt to conform to an academic model'.[27] She translates from Greek to English and from verse to prose, cutting the text substantially in the process. By contrast, the translations of Isocrates which she produced as gifts for her father demonstrate her linguistic proficiency much more conventionally: she translates from Greek prose into Latin prose, staying close to the original.[28] This is the kind of translation exercise recommended by Ascham, who mentions Isocrates in this context: as tutor to Elizabeth, he had her translate Isocrates and Demosthenes from Greek into Latin and back every morning 'for the space of a yeare or two'.[29] During this time, Lumley's husband, brother, and step-brother all studied at court with Edward VI under John Cheke, Ascham's friend and colleague; though Jane and Mary were taught at home, their education was clearly along the same lines.[30] Reportedly,

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[24] Child, ed. *Iphigenia at Aulis*, vi.
[25] Wynne-Davies, 'The Good Lady Lumley's Desire,' 119.
[26] Wynne-Davies, 'The Good Lady Lumley's Desire,' 120.
[27] Marta Staznicky, *Privacy, Playreading, and Women's Closet Drama, 1550-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 20; 33.
[28] See Jaime Goodrich, 'Returning to Lumley's Schoolroom: Euripides, Isocrates, and the Paradox of Women's Learning,' *Renaissance and Reformation* 35, no. 4 (2012): 97-117.
[29] Wright, ed. *Ascham: English Works*, 246.
[30] See Staznicky, *Women's Closet Drama*, 21ff.

Elizabeth herself also 'translated one of the Tragedies of *Euripides* from the original *Greek* for her own Amusement', though unfortunately this does not survive.[31]

Pollard considers that this translation was the work of the 'young' Elizabeth, and 'probably dated from the late 1540s when she studied Greek with Roger Ascham'.[32] However, Elizabeth continued to produce classical translations into adulthood, and in fact a large proportion of those extant are from the 1580s and 1590s.[33] The idea that Elizabeth translated Euripides 'for her own Amusement' suggests that it was not a school-room exercise set by Ascham, so there is no reason to prefer an earlier date. We have no way of knowing which play she might have translated, or what her version might have looked like, though we do still have her translation of a hundred lines of Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus* from Latin into English verse.[34] She quotes Euripides three times in her collection of *Sententiae*, twice making use of Melanchthon's Latin translation (*Suppliants* 564-65 and *Children of Heracles* 722) and once either translating directly from the Greek or consulting Stiblinus, whose Latin came with a parallel Greek text (*Phoenician Women* 721).[35] Staznicky argues that the 'paradox' of Lumley's humanist education, 'whose intended deployment in the public sphere was categorically unrealizable', resulted in her 'unique reading of Euripides'.[36] Elizabeth's very similar education, of course, *was* deployed in the public sphere; her own reading of Euripides might have been very different, if only we had access to it.

Though it is unlikely that Lumley's *Iphigeneia* received a full-scale performance in front of Elizabeth, Staznicky has convincingly argued that it seems to have been written with something like a staged reading in mind. Lumley's *dramatis personae* lists 'The Spekers' in the tragedy, emphasizing the oral dimension, and Staznicky shows that Lumley (unlike her Greek or Latin texts) visually

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[31] William Rufus Chetwood, *A General History of the Stage* (London: W. Owen, 1749), 15-16, on the authority of Sir Robert Naunton (1563-635), who chronicled Elizabeth's reign.
[32] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 45.
[33] See Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations, 1544-1589* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 7-8.
[34] Printed in Mueller and Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations*, 447-56.
[35] See Mueller and Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations*, 359-60; 372; 389.
[36] Staznicky, *Women's Closet Drama*, 23.

highlights distinctions between speakers in a variety of ways.[37] She also demonstrates that Lumley keeps an eye on the logic of the staging: in Euripides, Clytemnestra and Achilles exit to make room for the third choral ode, and Clytemnestra then re-enters after it to talk to Agamemnon. But Lumley cuts the ode completely, so she invents some dialogue between Clytemnestra and Achilles which would be entirely unnecessary unless she was thinking about the characters as physical presences.[38] The later date proposed by Wynne-Davies places Lumley at Nonsuch at the time of composition, a residence which featured a range of potential performance spaces, from the purpose-built banqueting house where Elizabeth watched the Paul's Boys to 'the Privy Chamber, where Henrietta Maria subsequently had a fixed stage erected in 1632', 'other extremely well-lit indoor rooms, and the two courtyards'.[39] Even before Arundel acquired Nonsuch, the family clearly had some interest in theatricals: in a letter from Henry and John to Thomas Cawarden from 1554 they are preparing a performance of some kind, possibly as part of the celebrations for Mary's marriage to Thomas Howard.[40]

Whether her text was ever actually performed in any sense or not, then, Lumley's manuscript clearly conveys her sense of *Iphigeneia* as a play. Imagining a staged reading in an informal family setting makes the best sense of the formal features of the text as we have it. It also suits Lumley's notable inclination to adapt the play to suit the domestic context of a sixteenth-century household.[41] But in concentrating on its performance qualities, recent criticism has been less interested in investigating how Lumley's text interacts with the Latin and Greek texts she was working with, either on a linguistic level or more broadly. Stephanie Hodgson-Wright does note that *Iphigenia in Aulis* was the model for John Christopherson's

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[37] For example, she separates speech prefixes from the indented main text with a slash (/), and leaves a slight gap whenever the speaker changes. Staznicky, *Women's Closet Drama*, 44.
[38] Staznicky, *Women's Closet Drama*, 41.
[39] Gweno Williams, 'Translating the Text, Performing the Self,' in *Women and Dramatic Production 1550-1700*, ed. Alison Findlay, Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, and Gweno Williams (London: Routledge, 2000), 15-41 (23).
[40] See Wynne-Davies, 'The Good Lady Lumley's Desire,' 113.
[41] Demers, 'Lumley's Euripides,' 38, notes Lumley's 'domestic idiom'. Lumley's Senex is not a slave but Agamemnon's 'servante'; Euripides' Chorus consists of young women of Chalchis, but Lumley simply has 'a companie of women'.

Jephthah (c.1544), which is the only sixteenth-century play in Greek by an English author, and for George Buchanan's Latin *Jephthes*, produced for performance by his pupils in Bordeaux in the 1540s.[42] Christopherson's *Jephthah* may have been performed at Cambridge around 1554, and both John Lumley and Jane's brother Henry matriculated at Cambridge in 1549, at a time when academic performances were on the rise: this, Hodgson-Wright concludes, 'could have alerted her to the theatrical possibilities of her own text'.[43]

To look at it from a different angle, Lumley's sensitivity to the dramatic qualities of *Iphigenia in Aulis* aligns her with contemporary humanist activities. Paying closer attention to the texts she was working with reveals how closely the reception of Euripides in England was bound up with the European humanist context. Although it is often repeated that she was using a single edition which contained both the Greek texts and Erasmus' Latin translations of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*, this was not in fact the case.[44] The Greek text she used was the 1520 edition printed by Thierry Martens in Louvain. It is now bound together with Erasmus' translations (Latin only) printed in 1519 by Konrad Caesar in Cologne, but when they reached Arundel's library in 1553 they were bound in separate volumes, and remained so in 1609.[45] The fact that these two editions of the same plays, one in Latin, one in Greek, were printed so close in date suggests that they were intended as companion pieces. Even in the fifteenth century Louvain and Cologne were considered close enough that, when the University of Louvain was founded in 1426, it was not allowed to have theology faculty to avoid competition with the

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[42] Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, 'Jane Lumley's *Iphigenia at Aulis*: Multum in Parvo, or, Less Is More,' in *Readings in Renaissance Women's Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance, 1594-1998*, ed. S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (London: Routledge, 1998), 129-41 (137). On the *Jephtha* plays of Buchanan and Christopherson, see Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule*, 92-122.
[43] Hodgson-Wright, 'Lumley's *Iphigenia*,' 138.
[44] Most recently by Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 77 n.48.
[45] British Library 999.d.1. Sears Jayne and Francis R. Johnson, eds., *The Lumley Library: The Catalogue of 1609* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), no. 1736, specifies that the Greek text was bound with Plutarch's *Education of Children* and two more works by Erasmus, which accords with a manuscript list of contents in the first owner John Toker's hand on the verso of the title page. The Latin text was bound with Perseus' *Satires* (no. 1591). See also David Selwyn, *The Library of Thomas Cranmer* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1996), nos. 474-75.

University of Cologne,[46] so communication between printers in these two cities is highly plausible. Caesar may have contacted Martens about a joint project, knowing that Martens had expertise in printing Greek which he lacked; or perhaps Martens got hold of a copy of Caesar's text and spotted an opportunity. Either way, these two texts came to England as part of a transnational Euripidean project.

Their first owner was John Toker, who writes on the verso of the title-page of the Greek text: 'The book of John Toker, Cardinal College, Oxford' (*Liber Ioannis Toker / Collegij Card. in Oxonij*).[47] Cardinal College was the precursor to Christ Church, founded by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525, and Toker was among its first canons.[48] It only existed until 1531, so he must have acquired the Greek text at least between 1525 and 1531, indicating that it made its way to England fairly quickly. He also helpfully gives the price he paid for it: 6s 4d. The relatively high price suggests that he bought it new, imported from the continent, and probably along with other texts. Toker annotated the Greek text heavily, correcting the Greek, and frequently copying out short extracts of Erasmus' translations, with the source indicated, into the margins. Erasmus' text itself is notably clean, indicating that neither Toker nor Lumley felt the need to annotate it. Neither the Greek nor the Latin edition features printed commonplace marks; Toker has added his own throughout the Greek text. Lumley's own interest in *sententiae* has been noted by several critics, but it has not been recognized that she inherited a text which visibly advertises its interest in *sententiae*.[49] A manuscript from some twenty years later containing a transcription of the *sententiae* painted on the walls at Gorhambury which was 'sent to the Good Ladye Lumley at her Desire' indicates that this was an interest Lumley shared.[50] It certainly seems to be reflected in her translation of *Iphigeneia*; her 'pithy prose'[51]

[46] Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters*, 20.
[47] Sig.A1v.
[48] See Selwyn, *Library of Thomas Cranmer*, lxiv.
[49] For example, Hodgson-Wright, 'Lumley's *Iphigenia*,' 138.
[50] British Library MS Royal 17.A.xxiii, fol. 3r. Jane's sister Mary translated a whole book of sayings from Greek and English into Latin dedicated to their father, suggesting that this was a family interest and one certainly encouraged by their education.
[51] Hodgson-Wright, 'Lumley's *Iphigenia*,' 138.

allows for the clear expression of moral maxims, and in cutting the text she rarely loses the opportunity to include one of Toker's highlighted passages.

Toker's annotations also pointed her in the direction of Erasmus, if she needed any encouragement. Early criticism established beyond a shadow of a doubt that Lumley made use of Erasmus' Latin translation of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, from the translation of his 'Argumentum' as 'The Argument of the Tragadie [sic]' (the Greek text does not include a hypothesis for this play) to many instances in which her phrasing notably echoes Erasmus, most obviously where he deviates from the Greek text.[52] Though some critics have felt that she might have used the Greek text as well, limited evidence has been forthcoming so far. Child considered that Lumley's spelling of 'Iphigeneia' reflects the Greek Ἰφιγένεια[53]; in Latin (and throughout Erasmus) it is *Iphigenia*. Though sixteenth-century spelling might seem rather too volatile to be a reliable guide, Lumley is remarkably consistent in using either Iphigeneia or Iphigeneya throughout the manuscript. Pollard adds that Lumley's 'Truly, it is a uerie troblesome thinge to haue children: for we are euen by nature compelled to be sorie for their mishappes' (831–33) reveals an 'emphasis on the terrible passions intrinsic in maternity' which 'is strikingly Euripidean'; Erasmus, by contrast, 'emphasizes strength'.[54]

In the simplicity of her diction she often seems closer to the Greek than to the Latin, though it is difficult to isolate conclusive examples because English and Greek syntax can naturally fall into some patterns that are alien to Latin. However, sometimes Lumley clearly seems to be following the Greek. She translates line 463 (Ὦ πάτερ, ἀποκτενεῖς με;), for example, very directly as 'O father will you kill me?' (305), whereas Erasmus expands to *O pater, me occidere / Paras?* ('O father, are you preparing to kill me?', 596-97). Line 343 (κᾆτ᾽, ἐπεὶ κατέσχες ἀρχάς μεταβαλὼν ἄλλους τρόπους) she translates as 'But as sone as you had obtained this honor,

[52] See Greene, 'Lady Lumley and Greek Tragedy'; Crane, 'Euripides, Erasmus, and Lady Lumley.'
[53] Child, ed. *Iphigenia at Aulis*, vii.
[54] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 52. Euripides: δεινὸν τὸ τίκτειν καὶ φέρει φίλτρον μέγα, / πᾶσίν τε κοινόν ἐσθ᾽ ὑπερκάμνειν τέκνων (917–18); Erasmus: *Res efficax peperisse, vimque maximam/ Amoris adfert omnibus communiter, / Uti pro suis summe adlaborent liberis* (1259-61).

~~withe~~ you began to change your condicions' (204-205). Erasmus' translation, *Ast ut imperio es potitus, non es iisdem moribus*, is literally 'But when once you obtained the power, you are not of the same disposition' (437). Lumley thus follows the Greek (literally, 'Then when you obtained the command, [you began] changing your manners'), which aligns more easily with English syntax. As a conjunction, μετα commonly means 'with', possibly explaining Lumley's initial 'withe', subsequently deleted. Given that her language skills were strong enough to translate Isocrates from Greek into Latin, and that she had in her possession both the Greek and Latin texts, it would be very strange if Lumley was not using both, as her humanist education had trained her to do. The result is that Lumley's text, as Patricia Demers rather nicely puts it, conveys 'the blended experience of the Greek and Latin texts'.[55] She is not approaching Euripides' Greek in isolation, but through the lens of Erasmus' Latin, which is literally written into the margins of the text she was using.

In reading Euripides with Erasmus Lumley was highly typical of her age. Certain modes of reading Euripides encouraged by Erasmus find expression in Lumley's translation. As we have seen, in his preface to *Iphigenia in Aulis* he validated an approach which privileged the target language, and indeed the target audience, licensing some degree of creativity with regard to the source text to that end, particularly concerning the choruses, which he contemplates altering entirely.[56] Correspondingly, Lumley cuts the choral odes completely, while retaining the chorus as a stage presence. As Hodgson-Wright points out, she 'obviously recognised their crucial function in the play, and retained them to provide exit and entrance lines and to speak the occasional piece of moral commentary'.[57] She was happy to add cue lines whenever necessary (including their first line, 'What is this? Me thinks I see Menelaius strivinge withe Agamemnons servante', 133-34). The chorus lines at 366-72 in Lumley's text neatly demonstrate her attitude towards them: the choral ode is omitted, and in its place she supplies a suitably general maxim: 'Truly we may see nowe, that they are mooste happie, whiche beinge

[55] Demers, 'Lumley's Euripides', 38.
[56] ASD I-1, 272.
[57] Hodgson-Wright, 'Lumley's *Iphigenia*,' 130.

neither in to hye estate, nor yet oppressed with to moche povertie, may quietly enjoye the companie of their frindes'. They then take up with Euripides and Erasmus once again, announcing the entry of Clytemnestra and Iphigeneia.

Erasmus also encouraged a strong tendency to read the potential for Christian allegory into Greek tragedy. As we have seen, his messenger's phrasing (*Et mortuam…et vivam*, 2326) echoes Revelation 1.17-18 (*et vivus et fui mortuus*). Lumley reverses the order she finds in the Greek and in Erasmus, translating the lines as 'this daie your daughter hath bene bothe alive and deade', aligning the syntax even more closely to the biblical phrasing. Most significantly, she makes a subtle alteration to the description of the deer which is substituted for Iphigenia. In the Greek, it is an ἔλαφος ('deer', 1587), which agreement in the rest of the passage genders female. Erasmus thus translates it as *cerva*, or 'hind' (2288). But Lumley goes further, identifying it as 'a white hart' (942). Changing the gender of the deer from female to male at first appears to be an odd decision, lessening its suitability as a substitute for Iphigenia. But when we remember that the white hart was a symbol of Christ, her meaning becomes clear.

Lumley's simple prose style, so deficient in the eyes of earlier commentators, has been defended by more recent critics in terms of its dramatic efficacy.[58] What has not, so far, been considered, is that it may be a response to what Erasmus identified in his prefatory epistle as the *candor* (simplicity, naturalness) of Euripides' style in *Iphigenia in Aulis*. One highly influential English reader, William Tyndale, believed that 'the Greeke tounge agreeth more with the English, then wyth the Latin', and developed a prose style that has been described as 'simple, terse, idiomatic, and homely' in order to translate it[59] – terms which could be applied equally well to Lumley's prose (Agamemnon, for example, complains that 'this renowne is verye brickle', 24). Of course, the differences between the language of the Greek New Testament and Euripides' verse are considerable, and Tyndale's Protestantism is not likely to have appealed to the Catholic Lumley. But her

[58] Especially Hodgson-Wright, 'Lumley's *Iphigenia*'.
[59] G.E. Duffield, ed. *The Work of William Tyndale* (Appleford: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1964), 326; xxvi.

translation of Euripides is about as far from Senecan as it is possible to get; instead, she uses a register that could well reflect a sense of the *candor* of Euripides' Greek.

Critics have often noted the striking resonances between Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia and Arundel's own involvement in the betrayal and eventual execution of Lady Jane Grey, his niece and Jane Lumley's cousin. As Hodgson-Wright points out, 'the similarities between the cousins make the connection even more unsettling: Jane Lumley and Jane Grey shared a Christian name, were virtually the same age and had received a very similar education'.[60] In fact, Diane Purkiss has argued that *Iphigeneia* could not have been written after Jane Grey's execution in February 1554, since that would have made it 'very uncomfortable reading for Arundel, and raised questions about just who had been sacrificed and how willingly'.[61] But this is to underestimate the dimensions of translation, coupled with 'the polyphonic nature of drama', which render it 'impossible to equate character with author, let alone character with translator'.[62] Hodgson-Wright has observed that the Greek and Latin texts of *Iphigenia in Aulis* used by Lumley were among the 'books which her father had acquired as an indirect result of betraying Jane Grey'.[63] They were previously owned by Thomas Cranmer, who had been on the wrong side of the Jane Grey affair and whose library Arundel had acquired in 1553 when he was arrested after the accession of Mary. It is worth adding that on the title-page of the Greek text, 'Thomas Cantuariensis' or Thomas of Canterbury is inscribed in Cranmer's hand. Thus Lumley was using a text which physically bore witness to her father's ambition at another's expense. In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Lumley found a play which examines complex interactions between the personal and the political; translating Euripides seems to have allowed her to explore connections to these tumultuous events, within the respectable and safely polyphonic framework of Classical translation. As we shall see, the decision of Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh

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[60] Hodgson-Wright, 'Lumley's *Iphigenia*,' 134.
[61] Diane Purkiss, ed., *Three Tragedies by Renaissance Women* (London: Penguin, 1998), xxv.
[62] Deborah Uman, '"Wonderfullye Astonied at the Stoutenes of Her Minde": Translating Rhetoric and Education in Jane Lumley's *The Tragedie of Iphigeneia*,' in *Performing Pedagogy in Early Modern England: Gender, Instruction, and Performance*, ed. Kathryn Moncrief and Kathryn McPherson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 53-64 (55).
[63] Hodgson-Wright, 'Lumley's *Iphigenia*,' 134.

to translate *Jocasta* also seems to have been prompted by its applicability to contemporary political affairs, indicating that this was an important facet of how Euripides was read in sixteenth-century England.

Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta*

George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* was staged at Gray's Inn for the Christmas revels of 1566, in the first documented performance of a Greek tragedy in English. Their play is in many ways the opposite of Lumley's. It is in verse rather than prose, a collaboration rather than a solo enterprise, and designed for a public rather than a domestic audience. Where Lumley's policy in translation is reduction, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's is amplification. Where Lumley keeps to Euripides' limited cast list and shows little interest in spectacle, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh add dumb shows with musical accompaniments between acts, and an extravagant number of non-speaking parts. The contrast between these approaches can be seen in the words of the old servants in the first scenes. Kinwelmersh:

> Then if my life or spending of my bloude
> May be employed to doe your highnesse good,
> Commaunde (O queene) command this carcasse here
> In spite of death to satisfie thy will,
> So, though I die, yet shall my willing ghost
> Contentedly forsake this withered corps,
> For joy to thinke I never shewde my selfe
> Ingratefull once to suche a worthy Queene.
>
> (1.1.25-32)[64]

Lumley's servant, more prosaically, says,

> What is the matter, O kinge, what is the matter? If you will shewe it me, you shall tell it to a trustie man and a faithefull: for thou knoweste me to be one that Tindareus thy wives father sente with hir as parte of hir dowrie, because he thoughte me to be a messenger mete for suche a spouse. (39-43)

Compared to Kinwelmersh's verbosity, Lumley has a touching simplicity. Her prose is not artless – here she uses two of the same techniques as Kinwelmersh, with

[64] Quoted from G.W. Pigman III, ed. *George Gascoigne: A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). The text attributes Acts 1 and 4 to Kinwelmersh, and 2, 3, and 5 to Gascoigne.

almost identical phrasing using repetition (where 'Command, O queene, command' has a pompous ring, 'What is the matter, O king, what is the matter?' has a sincerity about it), and alliteration (shaping the almost lyrical rise and fall of the final cadence, 'messenger mete for such a spouse'). Kinwelmersh, however, is presenting Euripides in a garb fit for the English stage.

Like Lumley, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh used an intermediary translation: an adaptation of *Phoenician Women* by the Venetian writer Lodovico Dolce (1506-1568), a significant figure in the sixteenth-century reception of Euripides. He produced five works which were translations or adaptations of Euripides into Italian: *Hecuba* (1543), *Giocasta* (1549), *Ifigenia* (1551), *Medea* (1557), and *Le Troiane* (1567). He also translated all of Seneca's tragedies, and adapted *Thyestes* as *Tieste* (1543). The consensus is that he 'knew little or no Greek',[65] and so accessed Euripides through Latin translations: as well as Erasmus for *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*, all of the tragedies were available in Collinus' translations in Robert Winter's 1541 edition.[66] The appeal of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* to a sixteenth-century dramatist steeped in Seneca is explained easily enough, since they had been popularised by Erasmus and offered plots with no direct equivalents in Seneca. *Phoenician Women* (the model for *Giocasta*), *Medea*, and *Trojan Women* (the model for *Le Troiane*), however, all feature in the Senecan canon as well. Dolce, it seems, must have perceived something in Euripides which was distinct enough from Seneca that these works were worth adapting in addition to his Senecan translations.

Euripides' *Phoenician Women* had a distinct advantage for the Renaissance dramatist over its Senecan counterpart in terms of form. Seneca's *Phoenician Women* (known in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as *Thebais*) is the shortest of his surviving tragedies at only 664 lines, has no choruses, and seems to break off rather

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[65] Ronnie H. Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce: Renaissance Man of Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 93.

[66] Renzo Cremante, 'Appunti sulla grammatica tragica di Ludovico Dolce,' *Cuadernos de Filología Italiana* 5 (1998): 279-90, also suggests that Dolce made use of Coriolano Martirano's Latin translations (81), consisting of *Medea, Hippolytus*, *Bacchae*, *Phoenician Women*, and *Cyclops* printed in a volume of his collected works in 1556 (Naples: Giovanni Maria Simonetta).

abruptly, leading most critics to assume that it is incomplete.[67] It begins with Oedipus and Antigone outside Thebes (not in Euripides), followed by Jocasta's attempts at reconciling her warring sons, Eteocles and Polynices. Euripides' version, on the other hand, is one of his longest plays at 1766 lines. It declines to exhibit any sense of Aristotelian unity, and has been much criticised on these grounds.[68] More recently, Mastronarde has helpfully identified it as exhibiting an 'open' form of composition, as opposed to a 'closed' (Aristotelian) form: 'The open structure is not to be viewed as a failed effort at closed structure, but rather as a divergent choice that consciously plays against the world-view of closure and simple order'.[69]

The negative view of *Phoenician Women*'s structural disunity can be found as far back as an ancient hypothesis for the play, according to which

> The drama is fine as regards visual stage effects; but it is overfull. Antigone looking from the walls is not a part of the play. Polyneikes comes under truce for no reason and, on top of all, Oidipous' going into exile with babbling lyric is stitched on to no purpose.[70]

This hypothesis, the third of three, was transmitted in the manuscript tradition; all three (the first a description of the plot, the second a positive evaluation, and the third more negative evaluation) were printed from the Aldine *editio princeps* onwards. However, this dim view of the play was by no means universally shared; as we have seen, it formed one of the enduringly popular 'Byzantine triad'.[71] The second hypothesis better reflects the prevailing view. It comments that the play is

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[67] Though R.J. Tarrant, 'Senecan Drama and Its Antecedents,' *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 82 (1978): 213-63, disagrees (229-30).

[68] For example, H.D.F Kitto, *Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study* (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble, 1961), 356, calls it 'a dramatic pageant, scene after scene for the sake of their immediate and cumulative effect, but not for the sake of an inner drama'.

[69] Donald J. Mastronarde, ed. *Euripides: Phoenissae* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3.

[70] Τὸ δρᾶμά ἐστι μὲν ταῖς σκηνικαῖς ὄψεσι καλόν, ἔστι δὲ καὶ παραπληρωματικόν· ἥ τε ἀπὸ τῶν τειχέων Ἀντιγόνη θεωροῦσα μέρος οὐκ ἔστι δράματος, καὶ ὑπόσπονδος Πολυνείκης οὐδενὸς ἕνεκα παραγίνεται, ὅ τε ἐπὶ πᾶσι μετ' ᾠδῆς ἀδολέσχου φυγαδευόμενος Οιδίπους προσέρραπται διὰ κενῆς. Trans. Elizabeth Craik, *Euripides: Phoenician Women* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1988).

[71] See R. Cribiore, 'The Grammarian's Choice: The Popularity of Euripides' *Phoenissae* in Hellenistic and Roman Education,' in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, ed. Yun Lee Too (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 241-60; J.M. Bremer, 'The Popularity of Euripides' *Phoenissae* in Late Antiquity,' *Actes de VIIe Congrès de la FIEC* 1 (1985): 281-88.

'highly emotional' (Περιπαθεῖς ἄγαν), listing the deaths of Menoeceus, Eteocles, Polynices, Jocasta, and the attacking Argive army, as well as Polynices' lack of burial and the exile of Oedipus and Antigone, and concluding approvingly: 'The drama has a large cast and is full of many fine sayings' (ἔστι δὲ τὸ δρᾶμα καὶ πολυπρόσωπον καὶ γνωμῶν μεστὸν πολλῶν τε καὶ καλῶν).[72]

Phoenician Women continued to be valued in the sixteenth century for its wealth of gnomic sayings and for its emotive qualities. Stiblinus' extensive treatment of the play contains no suggestion of structural disunity, but rather elaborates at some length along the lines of the second hypothesis:

> The play is highly tragic and full of violent passions: that is what the savageness of the present argument requires. For what is more horrible and bloody than the mutual slaughter of two brothers? Which their mother's intervention and voluntary death rendered more grievous. What is more bitter than that destruction and the annihilation of so many heroes and leaders? What, moreover, is more miserable than Antigone seeing her twin brothers along with their mother writhing in their mingled blood and wrestling with death? Along with these things are the very sad message brought to Oedipus about the very miserable destruction of his sons and wife Jocasta; the life of Menoeceus expended for the salvation of his country; the exile of Oedipus, old and blind; Polynices unburied and unwept, exposed to birds and beasts. The poet handles all these things with such great skill that they can stir and move even a heart of iron or steel.[73]

Dolce was translating *Phoenician Women* a decade or so before Stiblinus' comments were printed, but he could have found all three hypotheses in Latin in his 1541 edition. His choice of *Phoenician Women* suggests that he, like Stiblinus, was more in sympathy with the second hypothesis. However, he was writing for performance; appended to the first (1549) edition of *Giocasta* is a letter to Dolce from a friend who

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[72] Trans. Craik, *Euripides: Phoenician Women*.

[73] *Est autem admodum tragica ac plena vehementibus affectibus: id quod praesentis argumenti atrocitas postulat. Quid enim horribilius ac cruentius quam duorum fratrum mutua caedes? quam funestiorem reddidit matris interventus et ultroneus casus. Quid acerbius clade illa et interitu tot heroum et ducum? Quid porro miserabilius quam Antigonen geminos fratres una cum matre confuso in sanguine se volutantes ac cum morte luctantes aspicere? Accedunt his tristissimum nuntium Oedipo allatum de filiorum et coniugis Iocastae interitu miserrimo: Menoecei vita pro patriae salute impensa: Oedipi senis et caeci exilium: Polynices insepultus et infletus volucribus ac bestiis obiectus. Quae omnia tanto artificio poeta tractat ut etiam ferreum aut adamantinum pectus concutere ac mouere queant.*

expresses his regret at being unable to attend the production.[74] And adapting a Greek tragedy to be staged in mid sixteenth-century Venice required the implementation of some structural changes.

These changes were in the service of adapting Euripides' play to the demands of contemporary Italian theories of tragic construction. Euripides, Baldwin points out,

> was so inconsiderate of sixteenth century theories of structure as to let the chorus speak five times in this play, whereas in order to preserve the five divisions it should have spoken only four times. It is chiefly to remedy this oversight on the part of Euripides that Dolce makes his changes.[75]

Dolce identifies Tiresias' prophecy to Creon requiring his son Menoeceus' death to save the city as 'the impediments and the perturbation' required by contemporary theory to fall in the third act, and thus extends the scene to ensure 'sufficient perturbation'.[76] Since the beginning of 'a way of giving remedy to the troubles' should be reserved for the fourth act, Dolce omits Menoeceus' speech describing his resolution to sacrifice himself for his city despite Creon's orders, so that 'the announcement of his resolve and death is held to the end of the fourth act': 'Euripides', Baldwin concludes, 'has been forced into the five-act formula'.[77]

Dolce was far from alone in finding the Greek chorus problematic, as we have seen. He had used Erasmus' translation of *Hecuba* for his Italian adaptation in 1543, so must have been aware of the Dutch humanist's comments on the chorus. Thus he felt free to exercise a good deal of freedom in the choruses of *Phoenician Women*, even translating them into Thebans rather than Phoenicians. Naming the play *Giocasta* rather than after the reconstituted chorus reflects a Renaissance inclination towards greater unity: as Stefano Giazzon observes, Jocasta is the character most closely linked to all the others (as Oedipus' mother/wife, mother of

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[74] Lodovico Dolce, *Giocasta* (Venice: Aldine Press, 1549), 53v.
[75] T.W. Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1947), 262.
[76] Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure*, 262.
[77] Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure*, 262-63.

Eteocles, Polynices, and Antigone, Creon's sister, and Menoeceus' aunt).[78] The chorus become Giocasta's attendants, and Dolce's choice of name places greater emphasis on the suffering of the single female tragic figure as the locus for tragedy.[79]

Robert Miola has called *Giocasta* a 'Senecan adaptation'[80] of Euripides, and at first glance there is some justification for this epithet. Though Seneca's *Phoenician Women* has left little trace on the play, Dolce imports the sacrifice scene from *Oedipus* by way of expanding his third act.[81] In *Oedipus* the sacrifice is made and the entrails examined by Tiresias and his daughter Manto (who has a speaking part here but is silent in Euripides' *Phoenician Women*). Dolce begins 3.1 with Tiresias' entry as in Euripides, but subsequently has a priest enter to conduct the sacrifice and the examination of the entrails with the help of Tiresias and Manto. At this point Seneca indulges in a gruesome and extended description of the signs of corruption exhibited by the sacrifice. 'The heart', for example, is 'diseased and wasted throughout, and deeply hidden; the veins are discoloured; a great part of the entrails is missing' and '[t]he liver is rotten and oozing with black bile' (356-58).[82] The passage goes on to describe the presence of an unnatural foetus (373-76), appropriate to the incestuous story of Oedipus. Dolce, however, is concerned with the prophecy concerning Menoeceus, and transforms the passage accordingly. In *Giocasta*, the entrails are

> Ben formate e belle
> Son per tutto. Il fegato è puro, e 'l core
> Senza difetto. È ver ch'egli non have
> Più ch'una fibra, appresso cui si vede
> Un non so che, che par putrido e guasto.
> Il qual levando, ogn'intestino resta

[78] Stefano Giazzon, 'La *Giocasta* di Lodovico Dolce: Note su una riscrittura euripidea,' *Chroniques italiennes web* 20 (2011): paras. 1-47 (6), accessed 28 April 2018, http://chroniquesitaliennes.univ-paris3.fr/numeros/Web20.html.
[79] See Pietro Montorfani, '*Giocasta*, un volgarizzamento euripideo di Lodovico Dolce (1549),' *Aevum* 80 (2006): 717-39 (28-33).
[80] Miola, 'Euripides at Gray's Inn,' 33.
[81] See Montorfani, '*Giocasta*,' 733-36.
[82] *[C]or marcet aegrum penitus ac mersum latet, / liventque venae. magna pars fibris abest / et felle nigro tabidum spumat iecur*. Trans. John Fitch, *Seneca: Tragedies, Volume II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Intatto e sano.

(3.1.108-14)[83]

This is translated by Gascoigne as:

Faire and welformed all in every point,
The liver cleane, the hart is not infect,
Save loe, I finde but onely one hart string
By which I finde somewhat I wote nere what,
That seemes corrupt, and were not onely that,
In all the rest, they are both sounde and hole.

(3.1.108-13)

Dolce injects his prophecy with a considerable amount of irony, since Menoeceus, the element whose removal will purify the whole, is (as events will prove) the most perfect in intention and action of all the characters in the play.

Dolce's transformation of the sacrifice also drastically reduces the Senecan flavour of the scene. As Pietro Montorfani explains, in *Giocasta* Dolce takes some suggestions for scenes from Seneca but avoids re-creating a Senecan atmosphere.[84] Since elsewhere Dolce fully embraces the Senecan aesthetic,[85] this clearly indicates an attempt to reflect a perceived difference between Euripidean and Senecan tragedy. For *Phoenician Women*, Dolce relied on Collinus' Latin for a sense of the flavour of the original Greek. Collinus had produced a close line for line translation, trying where possible to keep to the word order and grammatical construction of the Greek, as the opening lines of Jocasta's prologue (1-6) demonstrate:

Ὦ τὴν ἐν ἄστροις οὐρανοῦ τέμνων ὁδὸν
καὶ χρυσοκολλήτοισιν ἐμβεβὼς δίφροις
Ἥλιε, θοαῖς ἵπποισιν εἰλίσσων φλόγα,
ὡς δυστυχῆ Θήβαισι τῇ τόθ' ἡμέρᾳ
ἀκτῖν' ἐφῆκας, Κάδμος ἡνίκ' ἦλθε γῆν θεῶν
τήνδ', ἐκλιπὼν Φοίνισσαν ἐναλίαν χθόνα.

O eam quae per astra peragitur coeli secans viam,
Et ex auro conglutinatos qui conscendisti currus
Sol, cum velocibus equabus rotans flammam,

[83] Quoted from John W. Cunliffe, ed. *Supposes and Jocasta* (Boston, CT: D.C. Heath & Co., 1906).

[84] 'Certo i modi del veneziano sono meno estremi di quelli senechiani, recuperando della tragedia latina soltanto qualche suggestione scenic ma non tutta l'atmosfera dell'originale' (Montorfani, '*Giocasta*,' 737).

[85] For example, in *Tieste* (1543). See Montorfani, '*Giocasta*,' 737-38.

Quam infaustum Thebis eo tum die
Radium immisisti, Cadmus cum venit terram deorum
Ad hancce, relinquens Phoeniciam maritimam regionem.[86]

This is indeed 'line for line, and almost word for word'; more so than Erasmus, since Collinus abandons metrical considerations in favour of reproducing the word order. In its attempt to register the linguistic differences of the Greek text, this might be termed a 'foreignizing' translation.[87] Montorfani has demonstrated that Collinus' Latin has left its imprint on Dolce's tragic diction in *Giocasta*. Where Collinus has *Ego enim augurandi artem vituperavi* (724), for example, Dolce has 'Alcune volte vituperai quest'arte' (2.2.116-17).[88]

Aside from Collinus, Dolce constructs his tragic register from the already-established canon of Italian vernacular tragedians, with occasional touches from Petrarch and Dante.[89] Montorfani finds particularly strong echoes of Trissino's *Sofonisba* and Rucellai's *Rosamunda* (both performed in 1515) and Giraldi's *Orbecche* (1541). Dolce uses entire lines verbatim from the first two (e.g. 'Perchè si sfoga ragionando il cuore', *Sofonisba* 57 / *Giocasta* 1.1.10; 'morte è fin de le miserie umane', *Rosamunda* 58 / *Giocasta* 1.1.127). Montorfani observes that both of these lines are themselves variations on Petrarch, illustrating the complex tissue of textuality at play.[90] The fourth chorus, which departs considerably from Euripides, is modelled on *Orbecche* as well as *Sofonisba*; Montorfani comments that Giraldi's less mythologically dense choruses will have appealed to Dolce, whose general practice is to simplify and smooth over complex or obscure references to avoid confusing a non-specialist audience.[91] To label *Giocasta* as Senecan, then, is to obscure the complexities of Dolce's practice. There are Senecan elements, certainly, but these

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[86] Rudolphus Collinus, trans., *Euripidis…tragoediae XVIII* (Basel: Robert Winter, 1541). 'Cutting your path among the stars of the sky and mounted on a chariot inlaid with gold, Sun, with swift horses whirling flame, how unlucky the beam you sent to Thebes on that day when Cadmus came to this country, leaving the Phoenician land by the sea'.
[87] See Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995), 15.
[88] See Montorfani, '*Giocasta*,' 722-23.
[89] See Montorfani, '*Giocasta*,' 723-7; Giazzon, 'La *Giocasta*,' 27.
[90] Montorfani, '*Giocasta*,' 723.
[91] Montorfani, '*Giocasta*,' 727.

form part of a broader tapestry in a way that is typical of sixteenth-century encounters with Euripides. This is not simply a Senecan adaptation of Euripides; it is a Renaissance adaptation of Euripides, written for and responding to the context of mid-century Italian tragic performance.

For the Christmas revels of 1566-67, Dolce's *Giocasta* was transposed to an English performance context. The English *Jocasta* follows Dolce closely for the most part, and a large part of the appeal for Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh must have been that it had already been prepared for the Renaissance stage. Dolce, apparently, 'enjoyed some popular currency at the Inns of Court at around this time',[92] but his English translators did not consider this currency worth exploiting, either in the title or anywhere else. Their title, 'Jocasta: a Tragedie written in Greeke by *Euripides*', is not simply a translation of Dolce's, since in the 1549 edition they used the title-page makes no reference to Euripides at all, but reads: 'Giocasta: Tragedia di M. Lodovico Dolce'. Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh have deliberately displaced Dolce and inserted Euripides instead.

Although it is generally assumed that Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh worked only from the text of *Giocasta*, Dewar-Watson has shown that they supplemented their primary source with details from elsewhere.[93] She observes that the stage directions in *Jocasta* consistently specify that characters enter or leave through either 'the gates called Electrae' or 'the gates called Homoloydes' (or the central entrance, representing the palace). Dolce, who typically omits such details, does not name either of these. The names of these gates could have been found elsewhere (e.g. Pausanias 9.8.4-7), but they certainly also feature in Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, and in Collinus' translation. All seven gates are named in the first messenger speech, and while Gascoigne follows Dolce in omitting them in the text itself, this may be the origin of the stage directions. Dewar-Watson concludes that the use of

[92] Dewar-Watson, 'Jocasta,' 23. See also Max Förster, 'Gascoigne's Jocasta: A Translation from the Italian,' *Modern Philology* 2, no. 1 (1904): 147-50 (150).
[93] Dewar-Watson, '*Jocasta*,' 30-31.

'supplementary detail from other texts' may have been intended 'to enhanc[e] the status of the *Jocasta* as "A Tragedie Written in Greeke"'.[94]

Visually the text of *Jocasta* exhibits a notable desire to associate itself with classical tragedy, through its use of marginal commonplace marks. The fact that these appear in the manuscript as well the printed texts suggests that they are of authorial origin. They are not, however, to be found in Dolce. Printed commonplace marks were not yet strongly associated with Seneca; the first printed text of his tragedies to feature them seems to be the edition printed at Leipzig in 1566 (the year *Jocasta* was performed). By the same date they had featured in all eleven editions of Euripides' complete works and numerous single-text editions, particularly of Erasmus' translations. Lesser and Stallybrass identify the second edition of *Gorboduc* (1570) as the earliest printed play in English to feature commonplace marks.[95] Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh imitated the practice of *Gorboduc* in their addition of dumb shows between the acts. But the manuscript of *Jocasta* is dated 1568, two years before the second edition of *Gorboduc*. This may indicate cross-fertilization; Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh modelled features of their play on *Gorboduc*, and Norton and Sackville imported commonplace marks from presentation copies of *Jocasta* to add to the second, corrected edition of *Gorboduc*. John Day, the printer of this edition of *Gorboduc*, would go on to print Euripides' *Trojan Women* in 1575, again featuring commonplace marks. The desire to evoke Euripides specifically, it would seem, was behind this important moment in which printed commonplace marks were translated from classical tragedy into English playbooks.

The dumb shows and the commonplace marks both contribute to an interpretation which values Euripides for the moral lessons offered by his works. The first dumb show presents 'a king with an Imperiall Crowne upon his head, very richely apparelled, a Scepter in his right hande, a Mounde with a Crosse in his left hande, sitting in a Chariote very richely furnished, drawne in by foure kings in their Dublettes and Hosen, with Crownes also upon their heades'; this is explained as

[94] Dewar-Watson, '*Jocasta*,' 31.
[95] Lesser and Stallybrass, 'The First Literary *Hamlet*,' 385.

'representing unto us Ambition, by the hystorie of *Sesostres* king of *Egypt*, who…did in lyke maner cause those Kinges whome he had… overcome, to drawe in his Chariote like Beastes and Oxen, therby to content his unbrideled ambitious desire' (1.0.5-16). This theme of ambition is applied above all to Eteocles, about whom the servant comments: 'Oh thunbridled mindes of ambicious men' (1.1.170). Commonplace marks highlight Jocasta's words on ambition:

> In princely palace and in stately townes
> It creepeth ofte, and close with it convayes,
> To leave behind it damage and decayes:
> By it be love and amitie destroyed,
> It breaks the lawes and common concord beates,
> Kingdomes and realmes it topsie turvie turnes.
> (2.1.404-409)

In the 1575 edition, a marginal note beside the passage reads: 'Ambition doth destroye al'. At least one sixteenth-century reader was paying attention: in his printed commonplace book *Englands Parnassus* (1600), Robert Allott prints it under the heading 'Ambition'.[96]

Many of the changes which Gascoigne and Kinwelmarsh make to Dolce's text serve to enhance moral or sententious aspects. Gascoigne on several occasions alters the Italian original to create an impersonal construction. So at 2.1.440-42, Gascoigne has 'Alas howe farre he wanders from the truth / That compts a pompe, all other to command, / Yet can not rule his owne unbridled wil', whereas Dolce's *Giocasta* uses the second person ('Ahi, che non ben istimi…', 2.1.410). A few lines later, Gascoigne inserts an extra commonplace for good measure: 'Who seekes to have the thing we call inough, / Acquainte him first with contentation, / For plenteousness is but a naked name' (446-8). Again, at 5.5.234-35 Gascoigne 'turns a personal remark into a sententia'[97] ('Who once hath sit in chaire of dignitie, / May shame to shewe himselfe in miserie' from 'Acciò felici chi ci vide un tempo, / Hor non ci vegga miseri e mendichi', 5.5.241-42). Earlier, Gascoigne also found the rhyming couplet congenial to expressing such moral wisdom: he expands Dolce's

[96] Charles Crawford, ed. *Englands Parnassus, Compiled by Robert Allot, 1600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 13.
[97] Pigman, ed. *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, 547.

'Un dì mi fe' felice, un dì m' ha ucciso' (5.5.153) into 'One happy day did raise me to renowne, / One haplesse day hath thrown mine honor downe' (5.5.154-5). Kinwelmersh too shows this tendency, as is demonstrated by the final lines of the scene between Antigone and Bailo/the tutor. In Euripides 'he concludes with four lines about the pleasure women take in maligning each other'; Dolce 'doubles the length while amplifying the threat to women's chastity' and then Kinwelmersh 'doubles them again, turning them into a lecture on proper female behaviour'[98]: the marginal note comments 'A glasse for yong women'. All of these passages are highlighted by commonplace marks.

In *Giocasta*, then, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh found a tragedy full of sententious and moralistic wisdom, which they emphasised through their linguistic and visual choices: visually on the page through commonplace marks, and visually on the stage (and transcribed onto the page) through the addition of the dumb shows. But they also found a tragedy with political resonances, and it is this aspect which determined their choice of *Giocasta* rather than any of the other plays by Euripides or Seneca which had been translated or adapted by Dolce by the 1560s (including *Hecuba*, *Ifigenia*, *Medea*, and all the tragedies of Seneca). Marie Axton has placed *Jocasta* in the context of other theatrical entertainments from the 1560s which openly or allegorically exhorted Elizabeth to marry, including *Gorboduc* (1561/2) and the *Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587/8); all three show countries torn apart by civil war due to an uncertain succession. A masque staged along with *Gorboduc* included 'a tapestry depicting the miseries brought to Thebes by Oedipus' unnatural marriage', and a letter from Thomas Cooper to the Earl of Leicester in 1569 describes 'a playe or shew of the destruction of Thebes, and the contention between Eteocles and Polynices for the gouernement thereof', to be staged at Oxford for his pleasure.[99]

Critical analyses of Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* have taken for granted claims about the 'Senecan' nature of Dolce's *Giocasta*, from which they were primarily working. However, while Dolce was certainly steeped in Seneca, he

[98] Pigman, ed. *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, 515.
[99] Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), 54.

distinguished his translation of Euripides' *Phoenician Women* from the Senecan version by utilizing a predominantly non-Senecan tragic poetics. This blended text was then selected by Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, who could have chosen to translate Dolce's *Thebaide* or Seneca's *Phoenician Women*, because of its connection to Euripides. There are indications that Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh drew information from an edition of Euripides, and Gascoigne certainly knew that the original play was not called *Jocasta*, because in *The Glasse of Government* he reports that 'as *Euripides*, in his tragedy called *Phoenissae*, doth teache, prudence will not be gotten with few dayes seeking for'.[100] Presumably they saw that Dolce had already done most of the work in preparing Euripides for the Renaissance stage, and took full advantage of his efforts. But they clearly saw Dolce as a conduit for Euripides, and took some pains to associate their work with the Greek originating text. The collection, *An Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, in which *Jocasta* was printed, advertises itself on the title page as 'Gathered partely (by translation) in the fyne outlandish Gardins of Euripides, Ovid, Petrarke, Ariosto, and others': this should not, after all, be dismissed as false advertising.

Conclusion

When Lumley and Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh signal their works' Euripidean connections, they are telling us something important both about how they perceived their work and how they wanted it to be perceived by others. To downplay this aspect of these texts because they are not Euripidean enough is to impose a modern conception of what it means to be Euripidean, at the expense of what the works themselves are telling us; acknowledging the contingency of our own receptions makes this clear. This is essentially the argument briefly sketched out by Jones: what seems 'Senecan' to us may not have seemed 'Senecan' to early audiences; '[t]hey may well have taken for granted the qualities we call "Senecan", but have been all the more alert to those other qualities which were unfamiliar to them – the "Greek" ones'.[101] Jones acknowledges the possibility that 'they may even

[100] John W. Cunliffe, ed. *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907-10), II, 32.
[101] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 106.

have been closer to the spirit of the original play than we can be'.[102] In this, he anticipates one of the central tenets of reception theory, that reception can shed light on the ancient text as well as the receiving one.[103] Our Renaissance translators might have something to tell us about Euripides.

The *candor* of Lumley's prose, for example, might convey something about Euripides' style that is lost in a literal modern translation loaded with explanatory footnotes. Her work exhibits the lasting influence of Erasmus on the English reception of Euripides, and though it is not known to have circulated in any form, it testifies to the fact that *Iphigenia in Aulis* enjoyed considerable popularity in sixteenth-century England. As well as Lumley's translation, the St. Paul's Boys' production, and the Jephthah plays of Christopherson and Buchanan, it was also translated by George Peele (c.1582), as we shall see in the next chapter. This interest does not seem to have been matched in continental Europe, where *Hecuba* tended to receive more attention.

Similarly, while we do not go to Euripides for his sententious qualities, these were appreciated by Renaissance readers. The printer's epistle to *Jocasta* recommends that 'he which wold have good morall lessons clerkly handled, let him smell to the Tragedie translated out of Euripides'; Gabriel Harvey called it 'a statelie Tragedie', which he thought 'excellent'.[104] Arthur Hall, in the preface to *Ten Books of Homers Iliades* (1581) notes 'the pretie and pythie conceites of M. George Gascoyne', apparently referring to *Jocasta* and *Supposes*.[105] In *Englands Parnassus*, Allott printed forty-five passages extracted from Gascoigne, of which half (twenty-three) come from *Jocasta*. The Inns of Court plays, as Darryll Grantley has argued, 'provided models' which were influential in the development of commercial drama, bringing

[102] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 106.
[103] See Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray, 'Introduction: Making Connections,' in *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, ed. Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 1-9 (4).
[104] Pigman, ed. *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, 4; G. C. Moore Smith, ed. *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia* (Stratford-Upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1913), 165.
[105] Arthur Hall, *Ten Books of Homers Iliades* (London: Ralph Newbery, 1581), sig.A3v.

Euripides another step closer to the public stage.[106] Jones points out that in Marlowe's *2 Tamburlaine* (written in 1587 or 1588, shortly after *Jocasta* was reprinted a third time), the 'tableau of Tamburlaine in his chariot drawn by two kings was based on the opening dumb-show of *Jocasta*'.[107] The works examined in this chapter offer important insights into how Euripides was read and interpreted in sixteenth-century England, and participate in the wider reception of Euripides and his works that had a place in the literary and dramatic circles in which Shakespeare moved.

[106] Darryll Grantley, *Wit's Pilgrimage: Drama and the Social Impact of Education in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 76.
[107] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 123.

CHAPTER 4:
'IT WAS GREEK TO ME':
SHAKESPEARE'S EURIPIDEAN STRUCTURES

On the point of death, Shakespeare's Julius Caesar suddenly switches to Latin to deliver his most famous line: '*Et tu, Brute?* Then fall, Caesar!' (3.2.77).[1] It is spectacularly theatrical – Caesar's final words are a stage direction addressed to himself, which he promptly carries out. The Latin words spoken at such a highly-charged theatrical moment are at once intimate and distancing, even dislocating. Alexander Leggatt comments that Caesar's Latin transforms him 'from a character from an English play into a figure from Roman history'.[2] In Plutarch, the instant of Caesar's death is also significantly multilingual. In Thomas North's translation, Caesar and Casca 'both cried out, Caesar in Latin: O vile traitor Casca, what doest thou? And Casca in Greeke to his brother, brother, helpe me'.[3] Casca distances himself from Caesar emotionally by distancing himself linguistically: he refuses even to speak the same language. The source for Shakespeare's *Et tu, Brute?* however is not Plutarch but Suetonius, where once again Caesar's death is marked by linguistic difference. Instead of speaking in Latin, Suetonius' Caesar switches to Greek, asking Brutus: καὶ σὺ τέκνον; ('And you, child?', *Divus Iulius* 82.3). Shakespeare translates the moment of linguistic difference using an implied equivalence: Latin is to English as Greek is to Latin.

Shakespeare's Latin tag conceals as it translates the Greek that lies behind it. Elsewhere in *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare altogether refuses to translate some Greek. The conspirators have met to discuss whether Caesar's theatrics with the crown are an indication that he is going to make a bid for absolute rule. When Cassius asks, 'Did Cicero say anything?' (1.2.277), Casca irritatingly replies: 'Ay, he spoke Greek'

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[1] Quoted from David Daniell, ed. *Julius Caesar* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1998).
[2] Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Political Drama: The History Plays and the Roman Plays* (London: Routledge, 1989), 156.
[3] English translations of Plutarch's *Lives* are by Thomas North, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (London: Richard Field, 1579). Plutarch, *Caesar*, 66.5: ἅμα δέ πως ἐξεφώνησαν ὁ μὲν πληγεὶς Ῥωμαϊστί· 'Μιαρώτατε Κάσκα, τί ποιεῖς;' ὁ δὲ πλήξας Ἑλληνιστὶ πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφόν 'Αδελφέ, βοήθει'.

(278). Being pressed, he continues: 'those that understood him, smiled at one another, and shook their heads; but for mine own part, it was Greek to me' (281-3). Greek is figured as divisive, comprehensible to some but impenetrable to Casca, and therefore to the audience (and Cassius) who are relying on his report. Cicero's use of Greek makes him impossible to read: is he for the conspirators or against them? Casca cannot say. Or, perhaps, will not say. In his previous line, he declared: 'Nay, an I tell you that, I'll ne'er look you i'th'face again' (280-81). As Steve Sohmer points out, 'the implication of Shakespeare's passage is that Caska understood what Cicero said but dared not repeat a remark so unflattering to Caesar',[4] and Plutarch, as we have seen, makes it very clear that Casca did know Greek. His claim that 'it was Greek to me' may be somewhat disingenuous.

Concealed behind Casca's avowal of ignorance are two lines of Euripides. Earlier in Suetonius' *Life of Julius Caesar*, Caesar's long-standing desire to seize power is discussed. Suetonius reports that 'some are of opinion' that Caesar 'took the occasion and opportunitie to usurpe that absolute dominion, which in the verie prime of his years he aspired unto' (30).[5] He continues: 'of this mind, it seemeth Cicero was, who in his 3. book of duties writeth, that Caesar had always in his mouth, these verses of Euripides' (30). Most Renaissance editions included the Greek lines as well as Cicero's Latin translation, displaying them prominently as part of the main text.[6] The lines are from *Phoenician Women*, 524-25: εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι / κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν, τἄλλα εὐσεβεῖν χρεών ('for if we must do wrong, to do wrong for the sake of tyranny is finest, but for the rest one should act piously'); in Cicero's translation, *Nam si violandum est ius, regnandi gratia / Violandum est; aliis rebus pietatem colas*. The reference is to Cicero's *De Officiis* (which

[4] Steve Sohmer, 'What Cicero Said,' *Notes and Queries* 44, no. 1 (1997): 56-58 (57).
[5] English translations of Suetonius are by Philemon Holland, *The Historie of Twelve Caesars* (London: Matthew Lownes, 1606); sig.C1v.
[6] J.C. Rolfe, *Suetonius: Lives of the Caesars* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), n.20 ad loc.: 'after *habuisse* the mss. have the gloss, *est in Phoenissis*: εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος πέρι κάλλιστον ἀδίκημα· τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα εὐσεβεῖν χρεών'. Most sixteenth-century editions incorporated this into the text, correcting ἀδίκημα to ἀδικεῖν, using the text of *Phoenician Women*. Holland, *Twelve Caesars*, includes Greek, Latin, and English translation: 'For if thou must do wrong by breach, / Of lawes, of right and equitie, / Tis best thereby a Crowne to reach, / In all things els keepe pietie'.

Shakespeare would have known[7]) in which Cicero makes his own position very clear, calling Caesar a tyrant who deserved to die (3.21). Suetonius therefore quotes Cicero quoting Caesar quoting Euripides to demonstrate that Caesar aspired to tyranny all along.

These lines, as George Pigman demonstrates, 'were well known, doubtless because of Cicero, in sixteenth-century England'.[8] Interestingly, however, it is the attribution to Euripides which sticks. In Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta*, the lines are translated as 'Desire of rule within a climbing brest / To break a vowe may beare the buckler best' (2.1.392-93), and highlighted by commonplace marks.[9] In George Pettie's *Pallace of Pleasure* (1566-67), 'Euripides makes it in a manner lawful for a kingdom's sake to transgress the limits of law, nature, and honesty'.[10] In John Lyly's *Euphues* (1578) a character is 'in this poyunt of Euripides his minde, who thinkes it lawfull for the desire of a kingdome to trangresse the bounds of honestie'.[11] George Whetstone in *The English Myrror* (1586) has: 'And (as Euripides saith) to gaine a kingdome, the breach of lawes are halfe priviledged'.[12] Euripides' Greek lines are Latinized in Cicero and Suetonius, and subsequently Englished to the point of becoming proverbial; Nuttall's confidence that 'Shakespeare knew the words that eluded Casca'[13] seems justified. Shakespeare, in a way, restores the Greekness to Euripides: words which were comprehensible to Shakespeare,

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[7] See Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare's Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sources* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 87.
[8] Pigman, ed. *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, 531.
[9] A marginal note reads, rather misleadingly, 'Tullyes opinyon'. Pigman, ed. *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, 531.
[10] Israel Gollancz, ed. *A Petite Pallace of Pettie His Pleasure*, 2 vols. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1908), I, 101-102.
[11] Leah Scragg, ed. *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit; and, Euphues and His England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 79.
[12] George Whetstone, *The English Myrror* (London: G. Seton, 1586), 86. See also Pierre de La Primaudaye, *The French Academie*, trans. Thomas Bowes (London: Edmund Bollifant, 1586), 239: 'if right (say ambitious men) may be violated, it is to be violated for a kingdom'. Pierre Charron, *Of Wisdome*, trans. Samson Lennard (London: Edward Blount, 1608), 78, seems to be quoting Cicero from memory (*Si violandum est ius, regnandi caussa violandum est, in caeteris pietatem colas*). Elizabeth I wrote to an advisor: 'You knowe a Kingdome knows no Kindered, *Si violandum jus regnandi causa*' (quoted in Pigman, ed. *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, 531).
[13] A.D. Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 190.

Shakespeare makes incomprehensible to Casca. Nuttall calls this 'another piece of buried learning'.[14]

Nuttall and other critics have taken Casca's words to be expressing something important about Shakespeare's relationship to Greek. Baldwin concluded that they might just as well have been spoken by Shakespeare himself; Greek, to Shakespeare, was essentially illegible.[15] More recently, Demetriou and Pollard have argued that 'Shakespeare's sensitivity to Plutarch's interest in Rome's languages suggests that the cultural complexities hovered in his mind as he composed his first play based on a Greek text', indicating that '[w]hat Greek was – under Rome, or in Elizabeth's England – was a question of some significance for him'.[16] The 'buried' Euripidean quotation also establishes the minimum possible awareness of Euripides that Shakespeare could have had: quotations from Euripides appear frequently in popular Latin authors like Suetonius and Cicero. Gordon Braden points out that the 'strongest justification…for thinking that Shakespeare might have read a quotation from Greek tragedy is its presence in Plutarch'.[17] Plutarch includes numerous quotations from Greek tragedy in both the *Moralia* and the *Lives*, showing a decided preference for Euripides; of sixty-one Greek tragic quotations in the *Lives*, thirty-two are from Euripides.[18] Then there are the 'Euripidean' qualities exhibited by Ovid (who also wrote a *Medea*, now lost) and influential Greek prose romances such as Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*.[19]

These are all channels of reception that deserve further attention. This chapter, however, is primarily concerned with the reception of Euripides' works as

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[14] Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker*, 190.
[15] Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine*, II, 661.
[16] Demetriou and Pollard, 'Homer and Greek Tragedy,' 2.
[17] Gordon Braden, 'Classical Greek Tragedy and Shakespeare,' *Classical Receptions Journal* 9, no. 1 (2017): 103-19 (115).
[18] See Braden, 'Greek Tragedy and Shakespeare,' 115.
[19] Stephen Hinds, 'Medea in Ovid: Scenes from the Life of an Intertextual Heroine,' *Materieli e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* 30 (1993): 9-47, calls Euripides Ovid's 'favourite fifth century tragedian' (45 n.79). On Heliodorus, see Tanya Pollard, 'Romancing the Greeks: *Cymbeline's* Genres and Models,' in *How to Do Things with Shakespeare: New Approaches, New Essays*, ed. Laurie Maguire (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 34-53; James Pletcher, 'Euripides in Heliodorus' *Aethiopika* 7-8,' *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* 9 (1998): 17-27.

plays, rather than as extracts or echoes in non-dramatic texts. The strongest indication that Shakespeare had directly encountered Euripides comes in *The Winter's Tale*, which can meaningfully be interpreted as a significant reception of *Alcestis*; this is the subject of the next chapter. The current chapter examines some of the most convincing connections that have been proposed between Euripides and Shakespeare's other works. Though ranging in scale from a single scene to an entire genre, these examples demonstrate certain shared characteristics. Shakespeare repeatedly appears to find in Euripides a structural model through which an intense emotional effect is achieved; Euripides, we remember, was celebrated by Aristotle as the 'most tragic' of the Greek dramatists (τραγικώτατος, *Poetics* 1453a). But he was also strongly associated with the emergent – and highly contested – genre of tragicomedy, in which Shakespeare was demonstrably interested. The Shakespearean texts which can most persuasively be associated with Euripides are notably concerned with the aesthetic and emotional effects of tragedy and tragicomedy.

A Quarrel Between Brothers: *Julius Caesar* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*

In *The Origins of Shakespeare*, Jones argued that *Julius Caesar* and *Titus Andronicus* were influenced by *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Hecuba* respectively.[20] In both cases, he proposes that Shakespeare learned from Euripides a distinctive structure which produces a particular emotional effect. His *Titus*/*Hecuba* comparison has attracted some critical attention, but his reading of *Julius Caesar* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* has been relatively neglected. Jones notes the popularity of Erasmus' Latin translations of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*, and the existence of English translations of the latter by Lumley (c.1557) and by George Peele (c.1582).[21] As we have seen, interest in *Iphigenia in Aulis* was marked in England; the Jephthah plays of Christopherson and Buchanan were also modelled on it, and the St. Paul's Boys had it in their repertoire in 1571. If Shakespeare might be expected to have encountered any Greek tragedy, *Iphigenia in Aulis* would be the prime candidate. In light of this, Jones'

[20] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 85-118.
[21] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 117-18.

contention that the quarrel scene between Brutus and Cassius in *Julius Caesar* is modelled on that between Agamemnon and Menelaus deserves further attention.

Jones provides compelling evidence that Euripides' quarrel scene was admired in the later part of the seventeenth century for its distinctive structure. In *The Tragedies of the Last Age* (1678), Thomas Rymer identified it as an excellent dramatic model for this very reason: 'For a quarrel betwixt two friends, with the *turn* and *counter-turn*: let me commend that Scene in the *Iphigenia* in *Aulide*'.[22] In the first half of the scene, Menelaus and Agamemnon take opposing positions: Menelaus needs Agamemnon to sacrifice his daughter, and Agamemnon resists. They are interrupted by a messenger, delivering news that Iphigenia has arrived in Aulis. At this, Agamemnon and Menelaus both capitulate, switching positions, and end up in complete sympathy with each other. Jones terms this the scene's 'surprising, but convincing, change of movement', which Rymer identifies as 'the *turn* and *counter-turn*'.[23] Furthermore, Jones adds that another seventeenth-century reader directly compared Euripides' scene with *Julius Caesar*. In John Dryden's preface to his *Troilus and Cressida* (1679), he responds to criticisms that his quarrel between Hector and Troilus 'is an imitation of the Scene betwixt *Brutus* and *Cassius*' by countering that '*Euripides* had furnish'd me with an excellent example in his *Iphigenia*, between *Agamemnon* and *Menelaus*: and from thence indeed, the last turn of it is borrow'd'.[24] He describes how the scenes by both Shakespeare and Euripides are 'grounded upon Friendship: and the quarrel of two virtuous men, rais'd by natural degrees to the extremity of passion, is conducted…to the declination of the same passion; and concludes with a warm renewing of their Friendship'.[25] It is the structure of the scene, and its emotional progression, which the two plays have in common.

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[22] Curt A. Zimansky, ed. *The Critical Works of Thomas Rymer* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971), 74.
[23] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 116.
[24] Maximillian Novak, et al., ed. *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vols. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), XVIII, 227. Noted in Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 111.
[25] Novak, ed. *Works of John Dryden*, XIII, 227.

Plutarch relates a meeting between Brutus and Cassius in which 'they began to pour out their complaints one to the other, and grew hot and loud, earnestly accusing one another, and at length fell both a-weeping' (*Life of Brutus*, 34.3). Suggesting an important model for Shakespeare's imagination at work, Jones speculates that 'Shakespeare brought to his narrative source…a scenic idea latent in his mind which was then summoned into consciousness by a suggestive passage'.[26] Euripides' scene maps rather neatly onto Plutarch's, with an initial dispute punctuated by an interruption which results in a reconciliation: in Plutarch the quarrel is interrupted by an acquaintance who forces his way in and recites some lines of poetry which, Plutarch specifies, 'old Nestor said in Homer' (34.3). Though Jones does not press this further, it is perhaps worth noting that the lines (*Iliad*, 1, 259ff.) point to another famous quarrel involving Agamemnon, this time with Achilles. Shakespeare gives his interrupting poet the Homeric lines from Plutarch.[27] David Daniell considers that Shakespeare was sensitive to their implications: he 'picks up on Plutarch's unspoken point, that such a quarrel between Brutus and Cassius will bring long-range disaster'; if, as Daniell suggests, Shakespeare 'also [saw] Cassius as the self-regarding Achilles',[28] that would align Brutus with Agamemnon.

Jones puts together a convincing case for structural parallels between the quarrel scenes in Euripides and Shakespeare, but his argument is weakest when it comes to specific details. He does note that Shakespeare has Brutus and Cassius refer to each other as 'brother' repeatedly, aligning their relationship more closely with that of Agamemnon and Menelaus, and that where Plutarch sets the episode indoors, the scenes in Shakespeare and Euripides both take place in or outside tents in a military camp – 'just the sort of circumstance which a dramatist might be expected to remember'.[29] However, I believe that revisiting the scenes can add

[26] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 110.
[27] Plutarch, *Life of Brutus*, 34.3: 'My Lords, I pray you harken both to mee, / For I have seene more yeares than suchye three'; Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 4.3.129-30: 'Love and be friends, as two such men should be / For I have seen more years, I'm sure, than ye'.
[28] Daniell, ed. *Julius Caesar*, n. to 4.3.129-30.
[29] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 118.

further details to consolidate Jones' argument. Each quarrel is provoked by letters being mistreated, and begins with a commotion stemming from an attempt to expose hidden wrongdoing. Menelaus' scuffle with the messenger over Agamemnon's letter causes a θόρυβος or uproar (317); he declares that he has 'exposed the mischief you were secretly doing' (ἀνοίξας ἃ σὺ κάκ᾽ ἠργάσω λάθρᾳ, 326). Cassius similarly tells Brutus, 'this sober form of yours hides wrongs' (4.2.40), while Brutus tells him to be quiet and not to 'wrangle' (45) in front of the armies; the 'wrongs' Cassius complains of are due to his 'letters' being 'slighted off' (4-5).

Euripides varies the lengths of the speeches from stichomythia to rhetorical set pieces, creating a strong contrast between the lofty register of the formal speeches and the petty squabbling to which the stichomythic exchanges can descend (as at 321-24, where they almost come to blows over the letter). Shakespeare exploits a similar variation in tone, from Brutus' grandiose 'Remember March, the Ides of March, remember' (4.3.18) to:

CASSIUS: I am a soldier, I,
Older in practice, abler than yourself
To make conditions.
BRUTUS: Go to, you are not, Cassius.
CASSIUS: I am.
BRUTUS: I say you are not.
(30-4)

Brutus and Agamemnon, whose moral stances are distinctly dubious, express their sense of outraged superiority in the same terms. Agamemnon asks, 'Shall I, a son of Atreus, fear to raise my eye?' (μῶν τρέσας οὐκ ἀνακαλύψω βλέφαρον, Ἀτρέως γεγώς; 321); Brutus exclaims: 'Must I give way and room to your rash choler? / Shall I be frighted when a madman stares?' (39-40). Correspondingly, Cassius adopts Menelaus' tactic of excessive self-victimization. Menelaus cries: 'Aiai, I have no friends then, wretched me!' (αἰαῖ, φίλους ἄρ᾽ οὐκ ἐκεκτήμην τάλας, 404). Cassius tells Brutus to stab him, 'For Cassius is a-weary of the world: / Hated by one he loves, braved by his brother, / Checked like a bondman' (94-96). Earlier Menelaus too declared 'I am not your slave' (σὸς δὲ δοῦλος οὐκ ἔφυν, 330). Each pair of 'brothers' clasps hands (Cassius: 'Give me your hand', 4.3.116; Menelaus:

'give me your hand to grasp', δός μοι δεξιᾶς τῆς σῆς θιγεῖν, 471), lending the scenes further symmetry.

As Jones argues, Shakespeare's handling of the 'declination of passion' leading up to the final 'warm renewal of friendship' comes strikingly close to the Euripidean structure. But though he notes the brief interruption of the quarrel in each play, he overlooks the fact that in both cases it is the emergence of a new piece of information following the interruption that is the key to the emotional resolution of the scene. Agamemnon and Menelaus have reached an impasse, when the messenger announces the arrival of Iphigenia, which changes everything, bringing about the final reconciliation. Shakespeare's reconciliation begins before the interruption, but it is not complete until Cassius learns of Portia's death, and his sympathy and remorse enable the full renewal of their friendship. The stages by which Shakespeare and Euripides manage the emotional development of their scenes, then, involve closely similar dramaturgical strategies. Given the popularity of *Iphigenia in Aulis* at the time, it is certainly plausible that Shakespeare found in Euripides a model for the dramatic progression of the scene to combine with Plutarch's narrative.

The Thracian Tyrant in His Tent: *Titus Andronicus* and *Hecuba*

One contemporary of Shakespeare's who was certainly familiar with *Iphigenia in Aulis* was George Peele. Two commendatory verses by William Gager, a contemporary writer of Latin dramas, entitled 'On George Peele's Translation of *Iphigenia* into English Verse',[30] testify to an otherwise lost work, probably composed in 1582.[31] Whether Shakespeare might have seen a performance or manuscript of

[30] 'In *Iphigeneiam* Georgii Peeli Anglicanis Versibus Redditam'. Dana Sutton, ed. *William Gager: The Complete Works*, 4 vols. (New York: Garland, 1994), III, 120-23. We can be confident that this was *Iphigenia in Aulis* rather than *Iphigenia in Tauris* due to the substantially greater popularity of the former.

[31] David Horne, *The Life and Minor Works of George Peele* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1952), 43, proposes a performance at Christ Church in Oxford while Peele was undertaking his M.A. (1579), but Martin Wiggins, *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), II, 306, argues for the later date and points out that 'a translation from Greek into English is far likelier in a non-academic context'.

Peele's translation is indeterminable, but he certainly knew Peele. In fact, the editors of the New Oxford Shakespeare are confident that they collaborated on *Titus Andronicus*, early in Shakespeare's career.[32] *Iphigenia in Aulis*, of course, was regularly paired with *Hecuba*, so that Peele's intimacy with one strongly implies familiarity with the other.[33] Peele's potential involvement in *Titus Andronicus*, then, offers further support to Jones' proposal that the tragic structure of the play is modelled on *Hecuba*.

Tiffany Stern explains that '"[s]tructure", in this period, was created before the rest of the play was, and was called in its initial formation "the plot"'.[34] Plots were especially important for plays that were written collaboratively, since they 'allowed the simultaneous co-writing of plays by two different writers'.[35] Stern cites a manuscript poem which describes Beaumont and Fletcher hashing out the plot of a tragedy together; they cannot agree on the precise details of the king's murder. Jeffrey Masten has objected to the tendency of collaboration studies to seek to 'reverse a collaborative process of textual production' by splitting plays into scenes or passages attributable to individual playwrights[36]; this sketch of co-authors 'working minutely on the internal structure'[37] of a play supports his position. It also accords with Brian Vickers' opinion that the sustained use of the Ovidian story of Philomela throughout *Titus Andronicus* indicates that 'both dramatists had shared the planning of the whole play'.[38] It is easy to see how the structure of *Hecuba* could

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[32] Gary Taylor et al., eds., *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works: Modern Critical Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 186.
[33] *Iphigenia in Aulis* was never printed without *Hecuba*; they appeared together in more than twenty-five individual editions during the sixteenth century. See Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 232-43.
[34] Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 10.
[35] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 23.
[36] Jeffrey Masten, 'Playwrighting: Authorship and Collaboration,' in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), 297-382 (372). See also Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[37] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, 17.
[38] Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 161. See also Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 109, who finds echoes of Peele's *Battle of Alcazar* in scenes attributed to Shakespeare.

have been written into the plot for *Titus Andronicus*. Furthermore, printed texts of *Hecuba* were always prefaced by the 'argument', and Stiblinus offered a more detailed act-by-act breakdown, presenting the play's structure in a format that conveniently resembles Stern's plots.

Jones similarly observes that sixteenth-century discussions of *Hecuba*, including those by Scaliger, Minturno, and Sidney, tend to consider the play 'from a structural point of view – the aspect most useful perhaps to a practising playwright'.[39] He argues that the distinctive structure that *Titus Andronicus* learns from *Hecuba* is a 'two-part movement of feeling', the 'intensification of tragic grief until it is converted into the ferociously gleeful pleasure of wrath spending itself in a hated victim'.[40] Euripides constructs *Hecuba* so that she learns of the deaths of Polyxena and Polydorus in quick succession, and 'it is the close proximity of the two blows that precipitates her into madness (if madness it is)'; Shakespeare similarly 'expose[s] Titus to a rapid succession of calamities…precipitating him into vengeful insanity'.[41] Additionally, '[t]he moment of change, during which Hecuba and Titus make the decisive move from passivity to activity, is dramatized in each case by a short interval of silent self-communing and withdrawal', so that 'the psychological and emotional processes involved are closely similar'.[42] Meanwhile, Pollard's work has highlighted the fact that Greek tragedy was 'widely recognized as the genre's origin', and that Hecuba stood as a 'synecdoche' for Greek tragedy.[43] She becomes a figure through which the workings of tragedy itself can be explored; *Titus Andronicus*, Pollard argues, uses Hecuba 'to reflect on the transmissions of sympathy at the heart of the tragic genre'.[44]

As Pollard's reading suggests, *Titus Andronicus* is very concerned with emotional responses to tragedy. But where Pollard focuses on sympathy, I argue that *Titus Andronicus* and *Hecuba* share a marked interest in probing varied

[39] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 96.
[40] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 90.
[41] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 99-100.
[42] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 100.
[43] Pollard, 'What's Hecuba to Shakespeare?,' 1064-65.
[44] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 100.

responses to tragedy and the aesthetics of tragic violence. These issues coalesce around the mutilated body of Lavinia, whose sufferings self-consciously and insistently surpass those of Ovid's Philomela.[45] The crimes committed against Lavinia and Philomela are literally unspeakable, as their assailants ensure by cutting out their tongues. Just as the characters find alternative ways to communicate their stories, their texts search for ways to express the unspeakable. Ovid gruesomely describes the root of Philomela's tongue moving in her mouth while the rest of it writhes on the ground like a snake (6.557-60); the grotesque effect is compounded by his incorporation of the registers of the epic simile and love elegy.[46] Tereus' response is to be aroused by the effects of his own violence (561-62), with uncomfortable implications for Ovid's linguistic indulgence and the reader's consumption of it. Many audiences and critics have found a similar discomfort in Marcus' extended and lyrical use of the language of the Petrarchan blazon to describe Lavinia (2.4.11 ff.), in a 'passage that imitates a typically Ovidian mingling of the erotic with the grotesque'.[47] Lynn Enterline has shown that *Titus Andronicus* 'consciously endeavors to bring the violated Ovidian body to the stage while rivalling his self-reflexive word play and rhetorical inventiveness'.[48] But, as Hester Lees-Jeffries observes, it is precisely in the staging of Lavinia's body that the inadequacy of Marcus' Ovidian rhetoric is exposed: 'What might be possible on the page is unthinkable on the stage, because the bodies get in the way'; Ovid, she

[45] Marcus guesses that 'a craftier Tereus' (2.3.41) must have raped Lavinia; in fact she was raped by two men, not one, and Demetrius and Chiron cut off her hands as well as cutting out her tongue. Titus' response is 'worse than Philomel you have used my daughter, / And worse than Progne I will be revenged' (5.2.206-207). This is very Senecan; cf. Seneca, *Thyestes*, 272-74, where Atreus resolves to make his banquet worse than that of Procne and Philomela (by serving up two sons to their father instead of one).

[46] Ingo Gildenhard and Andrew Zissos, 'Barbarian Variations: Tereus, Procne and Philomela in Ovid (*Met*. 6.412-674) and Beyond,' *Dictynna* 4 (2007): paras. 1-42, accessed 28 April 2018, https://journals.openedition.org/dictynna/150: 'The severed tongue', which 'would be at home on the Homeric battlefield', murmurs (*immurmurat*, 558) into the black earth in a perversion of 'the erotic ideal' of lovers murmuring to each other (para. 28).

[47] Emma Smith, *Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004). See Hester Lees-Jeffries, *Shakespeare and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 48, for a discussion of 'moral and aesthetic complicity' in *Titus Andronicus*.

[48] Lynn Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8.

concludes, is 'no longer enough'.[49] *Hecuba*, as a dramatic text, shares an interest in staging responses to tragic violence and extremes of grief with *Titus Andronicus* in a way that complements but exceeds the concerns of Ovidian narrative.

The stories of Philomela and Hecuba are linked in several ways. Charles Segal notes that Ovid's 'Tereus episode resembles the *Hecuba*…closely because it combines the motif of a conspiracy of women…with the motif of bacchantic rage and collective violence'.[50] Ovid tells both stories in the *Metamorphoses*, and 'links Tereus and Polymestor by shared use of the epithet *Odrysius* ['Thracian'] (6.490 and 13.554, the only two occurrences in the poem)'.[51] In *Titus Andronicus*, Hecuba is described as taking 'sharp revenge / Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent' (1.1.136-37)[52]; Jones notes that the detail of the tent appears only in Euripides, and proposes that *Titus Andronicus* effects 'a fusion of two stories each involved with Thrace: the rape of Philomel by the Thracian tyrant Tereus and the revenge of Hecuba on another Thracian tyrant Polymestor'.[53] We might add that Thracian wickedness was proverbial; Erasmus includes *Thraces foedera nesciunt* ('The Thracians do not know the rules') as adage 2.6.89, using *Hecuba* 1247-8 ('perhaps amongst you it is easy to kill guests; / but to us Greeks at least it is shameful'; τάχ᾽ οὖν παρ᾽ ὑμῖν ῥᾴδιον ξενοκτονεῖν· / ἡμῖν δέ γ᾽ αἰσχρὸν τοῖσιν Ἕλλησιν τόδε) as illustration. In *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), Philomela and Hecuba are sources of tragic inspiration for Lucrece, and in *Titus Andronicus* Young Lucius brings up Hecuba in response to Lavinia's alarming behaviour:

> For I have heard my grandsire say full oft
> Extremity of griefs would make men mad,
> And I have read that Hecuba of Troy
> Ran mad for sorrow.
>
> (4.1.18-21)

[49] Lees-Jeffries, *Shakespeare and Memory*, 49.
[50] Charles Segal, 'Philomela's Web and the Pleasure of the Text: Reader and Violence in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid,' in *Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature*, ed. Irene J.F. de Jong and J.P. Sullivan (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 257-80 (274).
[51] Gildenhard and Zissos, 'Barbarian Variations', 18.
[52] Quoted from Jonathan Bate, ed. *Titus Andronicus* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2003).
[53] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 107.

She, however, immediately corrects him by pointing to 'the tragic tale of Philomel' (4.1.47) in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Lavinia embraces the role of Ovid's victim-turned-revenger; instead, it is Titus, Young Lucius' 'grandsire', who will (apparently) run mad for sorrow, and who will convert his 'extremity of griefs' to 'sharp revenge', following Hecuba's example.

In the first scene, Titus specifies that he had 'five-and-twenty valiant sons, / Half of the number that King Priam had' (1.1.82-3); this number has clearly been determined to introduce the parallel with the famous fecundity of Priam and Hecuba.[54] The play is interested in establishing the same pre-conditions for tragedy as in *Hecuba*: Titus, as a parent, is subjected to a piling-up of griefs through the loss and suffering of his many children. Before Titus and Hecuba are brought to the point of revenge, they move through a series of other responses to these extremities of parental grief. When Hecuba is told that Polyxena is to be sacrificed, she casts around for the right response: 'What shall I say? What kind of cry, what kind of lamentation…?' (τί ποτ᾽ ἀπύσω; / ποίαν ἀχώ, ποῖον ὀδυρμόν…, 154-5). Faced with the mutilated Lavinia, Titus asks her how he should respond: 'Shall thy good uncle and thy brother Lucius / And thou and I sit round about some fountain' (3.1.123), he begins, his questions building in intensity as the speech continues:

> Or shall we cut away our hands like thine?
> Or shall we bite our tongues and in dumb shows
> Pass the remainder of our hateful days?
> What shall we do?
>
> (131-34)

When the report of her daughter's death is brought to her, Hecuba spends some time meditating sententiously on whether nobility stems from nature or nurture; as with Marcus' speech, some critics have questioned the appropriateness of this response.[55] Hecuba finally dismisses her philosophical musings, saying: 'these things indeed my mind shot forth in vain' (ταῦτα μὲν δὴ νοῦς ἐτόξευσεν μάτην,

[54] The number of Titus' children is not specified in the chap-book sometimes thought to be a source for the play (though Bate, ed. *Titus Andronicus*, 83-85, demonstrates that the play is earlier).

[55] Expressed, in this case, by the frequent deletion (including by Diggle) of lines 599-602, purely on aesthetic grounds.

603), implying that rational analysis is useless in the face of emotional suffering. The primary meaning of the verb τοξεύω is 'shoot with a bow'; the real arrows that Titus shoots in 4.3 literalize Hecuba's powerful image of an overcharged mind releasing itself to no effect.[56] For Titus, justice is absent and the heavens are empty. Hecuba likewise asks, 'where is any god or divinity to help me?' (ποῦ τις / θεῶν ἢ δαίμων ἐπαρωγός; 163-4), and receives no reply.

The next blow for Hecuba is the discovery of Polydorus' body; for Titus it is the delivery of the heads of two more sons. The appropriateness of their responses to this development is questioned by those around them: Agamemnon asks, 'Why do you turn your back on my face, weeping, and do not say what has happened?' (τί μοι προσώπῳ νῶτον ἐγκλίνασα σὸν / δύρῃ, τὸ πραχθὲν δ᾽ οὐ λέγεις; 739-40), while Marcus objects: 'Now is a time to storm. Why art thou still?' (3.1.264).[57] Titus laughs in reply, which according to Marcus 'fits not with this hour' (266). But Titus argues that sorrow will blind him, so that he cannot 'find Revenge's cave' (271); at this moment too Hecuba turns her thoughts to revenge (τιμωρεῖν, 750). In the absence of justice, human or divine, Titus and Hecuba must act for themselves. But neither is an isolated avenger. Rather, in both plays the revenge plots are enacted as a communal response to suffering. Hecuba acts with the aid of the 'crowd of Trojan women' (Τρῳάδων ὄχλον, 880) in the camp, who participate in the blinding of Polymestor and the murder of his children. Her offstage collaborators function as an extension of the chorus, also comprised of captive Trojan women, who do not directly intervene in accordance with dramatic convention. Titus, meanwhile, tells his family: 'You heavy people, circle me about, / That I may turn me to each one of you / And swear unto my soul to right your wrongs' (277-79), visually creating a choric circle around himself.

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[56] I am indebted to Richard Rowland for drawing this to my attention.

[57] Jones (*Origins of Shakespeare*, 100) also compares Titus' 'I have not another tear to shed' (3.1.267) to Hecuba: 'My heart is dead now; there is no heart left to suffer' (784), as translated by Phillip Vellacott, *Euripides: Orestes and Other Plays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972). But the Greek is ὄλωλα κοὐδὲν λοιπόν…κακῶν, literally 'I am destroyed and no evils are left [to come]' (likewise Erasmus: *'Perii, nec ullum restat…malum*', 822).

Tzachi Zamir has called *Titus Andronicus* 'a tragedy about tragedy', because of its exploration of 'the moral reservations that tragic pleasure raises', since tragedy 'involves (to some extent *is*) the aestheticization of pain'.[58] When Marcus asks 'O, why should nature build so foul a den, / Unless the gods delight in tragedies?' (4.1.59-60), the metatheatrical resonances clearly implicate the audience, for whose delight this tragedy is being staged. There is a comparable moment when Hecuba instructs Agamemnon: 'pity me, stand back like a painter and look at me, and examine the misfortunes I suffer' (οἴκτιρον ἡμᾶς, ὡς γραφεύς τ᾽ ἀποσταθεὶς / ἰδοῦ με κἀνάθρησον οἷ᾽ ἔχω κακά, 807-808). It is the action of contemplating Hecuba as if she were a work of art which will arouse pity in Agamemnon. Segal recognizes that this 'simile of the painter beholding at a distance a scene of suffering' aligns Agamemnon with the audience of the play[59]; Edith Hall sees it as 'remind[ing] the spectators that they are colluding in the theatrical process precisely by gazing upon anguish and atrocity'.[60]

Greek tragedy invokes the visual arts to consider the workings of its own tragic effects, and *Hecuba* is a play which, in Hall's words, 'makes its audience consciously meditate upon the tragic aesthetics of pity.'[61] Most strikingly, Polyxena in the moments prior to her sacrifice is described as tearing her clothing to 'reveal her breasts and chest like a statue's' (μαστούς τ᾽ ἔδειξε στέρνα θ᾽ ὡς ἀγάλματος, 560). Segal elucidates the effects of the passage:

> Euripides' rhetoric here disturbs by shifting between the distanced aesthetic contemplation of a beautiful object and the emotional involvement of pity and pathos. In harsh contrast to this generalized beauty of Polyxena's form are the specific parts of the body into which Neoptolemus thrusts his weapon in the next lines: throat, windpipe, blood, and breath. The details bring home to us the corporeal reality of Polyxena; she is not a statue but a human sacrificial victim.[62]

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[58] Tzachi Zamir, 'Wooden Subjects,' *New Literary History* 39, no. 2 (2008): 277-300 (281, 286).
[59] Charles Segal, *Euripides and the Poetics of Sorrow: Art, Gender, and Commemoration in Alcestis, Hippolytus, and Hecuba* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 178.
[60] Hall, *Greek Tragedy*, 257.
[61] Hall, *Greek Tragedy*, 256. Hall explains that 'Greek tragedy did not use "metatheatrical" figures of speech', 'perhaps because its authors were attempting to avoid anachronism in their portrayal of a Bronze Age world when theatre had not yet been invented', instead using 'analogies with the visual arts' (256-57).
[62] Segal, *Poetics of Sorrow*, 178.

The poetic strategies of *Titus Andronicus* might be similarly described. And Titus too responds to Lavinia's violated body by conjuring the image of a work of art:

> Had I but seen thy picture in this plight,
> It would have madded me; what shall I do
> Now I behold thy lively body so?
> (3.1.104-6)

A picture of Lavinia, in other words, would be able to provoke sufficient extremity of grief to make Titus mad. His next lines shift, as in Euripides, from the distancing effect of the imagined picture to an insistence on Lavinia's corporeal reality ('Thou hast no hands to wipe away thy tears, / Nor tongue to tell me who hath martyred thee', 107-108). *Titus Andronicus* and *Hecuba* ask similar questions about tragedy, responses to tragic grief, and the aestheticization of pain, and they do so at times in remarkably similar terms.

Full-Fledged Tragedy in the Greek Spirit: *Hamlet*, *Hecuba*, and *Orestes*

If *Titus Andronicus* was a tragedy about tragedy, *Hamlet* constitutes 'Shakespeare's most self-conscious exploration of tragedy and its effects'.[63] The amateur theatrics of *Titus Andronicus* are replaced by professional players, whose craft takes centre stage in the Player's speech and the play 'to catch the conscience of the king' (2.2.540). Pollard has demonstrated that in *Hamlet*, Hecuba emerges once again as a figure through which to think about tragedy.[64] Pollard notes that the emphasis in the Player's speech when Hamlet urges him to 'come to Hecuba' (2.2.439) is on her capacity to rouse emotion in spectators. Any who 'had seen the mobled queen' would have been moved to rail ''Gainst Fortune's state' (2.2.440, 449); even the gods, 'unless things mortal move them not at all', would have responded: she 'Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven / And passion in the gods' (454-56).[65] The Player is physically affected – he has 'turned his colour and has tears in's eyes' (457) – and Polonius in sympathy cries 'Prithee no more!' (458). Hamlet himself is moved to reflect upon his own shortcomings. Thus, through the Player's

[63] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 124.
[64] Pollard, 'What's Hecuba to Shakespeare?'; *Greek Tragic Women*.
[65] Quoted from Neil Taylor and Ann Thompson eds., *Hamlet* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006).

invocation of Hecuba, Hamlet is reminded that '[r]eal emotions…may be aroused by fictions',[66] and is prompted to devise a play of his own.

Hamlet's play conceals another piece of 'buried learning' which points to Euripides. Pollard also draws attention to a connection that has been perceived by a number of critics between the play-within-the-play and an anecdote about Alexander of Pherae told twice by Plutarch.[67] In the *Moralia*, Plutarch relates how the 'tyrant' Alexander, 'whiles he beheld one day an excellent plaier acting in a tragedy, was so much moved' that 'he suddenly left the theater' to avoid being seen weeping 'in compassion of the miseries and calamities of queene *Hecuba* or lady *Polyxena*'.[68] In the *Life of Pelopidas* (29.5), he gives an alternate version in which the play is 'the tragedy of *Troades* of *Euripides*,' featuring 'the miseries of *Hecuba* and *Andromacha*'. Though the *Lives* might be the more obvious inspiration for Hamlet's play, D.M. Gaunt sees Hamlet's 'muddy-mettled' (2.2.502) as 'a verbal reminiscence' of the image of Alexander's heart 'melt[ing] like a peece of iron in the furnace' found in the *Moralia*.[69] Philip Sidney used the story to illustrate that 'Tragedy maketh…tyrants manifest their tyrannical humors': 'how much [tragedy] can move, Plutarch yieldeth a notable testimony of the abominable tyrant Alexander Pheraeus, from whose eyes a tragedy, well made and represented, drew abundance of tears', so that he 'withdrew himself from hearkening to that which might mollify his

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[66] Patricia S. Gourlay, 'Guilty Creatures Sitting at a Play: A Note on *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene 2,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1971): 221-25 (224).

[67] Tanya Pollard, 'What's Hecuba to Shakespeare?,' 72-73; D.M. Gaunt, 'Hamlet and Hecuba,' *Notes and Queries* 16, no. 4 (1969): 136-37; Gourlay, 'Guilty Creatures'; James A. Freeman, 'Hamlet, Hecuba, and Plutarch,' *Shakespeare Studies* 7 (1974): 197-202.

[68] Plutarch, *De Alex*. 334a-b. Holland's translation, quoted here, was slightly too late for *Hamlet*, at least in its printed form (*The Philosophie, Commonlie Called the Morals*, London: Arnold Hatfield, 1603). But the highly popular *Moralia* was available in Latin, or Jacques Amyot's French (1572).

[69] Gaunt, 'Hamlet and Hecuba,' 136. Shakespeare may well have known both versions. Accounts of Priam's death in his other sources pay scant attention to Hecuba. But in *Trojan Women* (473-510) she vividly describes her own anguish, with the intention of inspiring pity. She mentions the 'excellent children' she has brought forth (ἀριστεύοντ᾽ ἐγεινάμην τέκνα, 475), and sees herself 'wearing worn-out rags of cloth around my worn-out body, unseemly for the prosperous to wear' (τρυχηρὰ περὶ τρυχηρὸν εἱμένην χρόα / πέπλων λακίσματ᾽, ἀδόκιμ᾽ ὀλβίοις ἔχειν, 496-97). Compare *Hamlet* 2.2.444-47: 'a clout upon that head / Where late the diadem stood and, for a robe, / About her lank and all-o'erteemed loins, / A blanket in the alarm of fear caught up'.

hardened heart'.[70] Wherever Shakespeare found the episode, Gourlay suggests that, while his 'attention might first have been caught by the dramatic effectiveness of Plutarch's anecdote: the wicked tyrant "making a scene," walking out on a performance', his real interest lay in 'that element in the story which often engages his imagination, the paradoxical power of dramatic fiction to produce real responses'.[71] Thinking about the effects of tragedy in *Hamlet* always seems to lead back to Hecuba.

The importance of the idea of Hecuba, as 'a privileged symbol for a genre defined especially by its power to move audiences' emotions',[72] to *Hamlet's* probing of the emotive power of tragedy, is clear. But I believe that it is also significant that as Hamlet asks, 'What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba / That he should weep for her?' (494-95), he is revisiting the contrast between art and life that Titus, the successful revenger patterned (as has been suggested) on Euripides' Hecuba, articulated. Titus imagines the effects of a picture of Lavinia only to dismiss it immediately: her 'lively body', it is implied, is far more potent (perhaps implying that theatre, which uses lively bodies, is capable of more powerful emotional effects than the visual arts). Hamlet, listening to the Player's speech, makes the same point. If the Player, 'But in a fiction, in a dream of passion', turns pale, with 'Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect, / A broken voice…' (490-91), the implication is that Hamlet's own response, given his 'motive' (496), should be proportionately greater. But where Titus asks, 'What shall I do?', Hamlet's question is conditional, and at one remove: 'What would he do, / Had he the motive and that for passion / That I have?' (495-97). He imagines that the player

> would drown the stage with tears
> And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
> Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
> Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed
> The very faculties of eyes and ears.
> (497-501)

[70] Shepherd and Maslen, eds., *Defence of Poesy*, 98.
[71] Gourlay, 'Guilty Creatures,' 222.
[72] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 117.

What Hamlet describes is merely another performance, albeit one that is capable of having a profound emotional effect on the spectators. Hamlet, unlike Titus, does not learn how to take revenge from the example of Hecuba, but rather discovers the power of theatre from the example of the player.

Hamlet's 'fiction' that is opposed to the reality of his own grief is theatrical rather than visual. But the 'picture' imagined by Titus is displaced rather than erased. Earlier in the Player's speech comes a curious moment just before Pyrrhus kills Priam:

> For lo, his sword
> Which was declining on the milky head
> Of reverend Priam seemed i'th' air to stick.
> So as a painted tyrant Pyrrhus stood
> Like a neutral to his will and matter,
> Did nothing.
>
> (2.2.415-20)

Here, it is the aggressor rather than the victim who is momentarily frozen into a work of art. Mueller considers that '[t]he Player's speech exists for the sake of the moment of hesitation that is marked with all the devices of ekphrastic art, is captured in a Vergilian half-line, and establishes a partial identity of Hamlet with Pyrrhus as "the revenger who pauses"'.[73] Mueller observes that this crucial pause is not present in Virgil, but Pyrrhus is reported to be 'not willing and willing' (οὐ θέλων τε καὶ θέλων, 566; *volensque et non volens* in Erasmus' translation) at the point of bringing his sword down upon Polyxena in *Hecuba* – 'or, as Shakespeare has it, "like a neutral to his will and matter"'.[74] The question posed by Titus is dismembered and re-examined in *Hamlet*, resurrecting the concern with the workings of tragic affect found at key moments in *Hecuba*.

If Titus was, as Jones put it, 'nothing else but a male Hecuba',[75] this is precisely what Hamlet is unable to become. By contrast, Schleiner has argued that he comes dangerously close to emulating another Greek tragic protagonist: Orestes.

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[73] Martin Mueller, 'Hamlet and the World of Ancient Tragedy,' *Arion*, Third Series, 5, no. 1 (1997): 22-45 (37).
[74] Mueller, 'Hamlet and Ancient Tragedy,' 38.
[75] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 101.

Schleiner's main argument is that *Hamlet* is indebted to Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, via an abbreviated Latin translation, though she also finds some traces of Euripides' *Orestes*. The bibliographical evidence, however, indicates that the case for *Orestes* is much stronger than for Aeschylus. Schleiner draws attention to a Latin translation of the *Oresteia* (by Saint-Ravi, printed in 1555), consisting of 'a much truncated *Agamemnon* coalesced with the near-complete *Libation Bearers* into one play called *"Agamemnon,"* and then the complete *Eumenides*'; this, she says, was 'widely disseminated in the late sixteenth century'.[76] Without disputing this, it is clear that Euripides' *Orestes* was far more widely available. Saint-Ravi's was the only Latin translation of *Agamemnon* and *Eumenides* printed during the sixteenth century, and it received just one edition.[77] By contrast, Euripides' *Orestes* was printed in five separate editions, one with a Latin translation, not to mention in the thirteen sixteenth-century editions of Euripides' complete works (six in or including Latin). Wolfgang Waldung, a teacher at the Altdorf Academy who was responsible for producing annual Latin plays, composed an *Orestes* in 1597 using Seneca, Sophocles, and Euripides, but does not mention Aeschylus. The opening scene of *Orestes* was also printed as an appendix to Clenardus' Greek grammar, meaning that it was probably the first piece of Greek tragedy many students ever encountered. As Bruce Smith puts it, '[w]hen Renaissance scholars thought about Orestes, they thought about Euripides'.[78]

Schleiner proposes that a handful of entries in Henslowe's *Diary* for 1599 relating to *Agamemnon* (earnest and full payment to Thomas Dekker and Henry Chettle; licensing fee to the Master of the Revels) and *Orestes Fvres* (advance of five shillings paid to Chettle), should be interpreted as referring to two plays based on

[76] Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama,' 35; 31.
[77] Thus it was not even the most popular of Aeschylus' works. *Prometheus Bound* was printed separately three times, once with Latin (1548, 1559, 1575), and represented Aeschylus in Henri Estienne's *Tragoediae Selectae* (1567); *Seven Against Thebes* was printed in both Latin and Greek by Stephan Möllemann (1581, 1582) and Fédéric Morel (1585). Saint-Ravi's translation appeared again in 1614, owned by Ben Jonson, but too late for *Hamlet*.
[78] Bruce Smith, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage, 1500-1700* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 35.

Saint-Ravi's *Agamemnon* and *Eumenides*.[79] This depends upon her reading of 'fvres' as 'furies', producing a play called *Orestes' Furies*. But a more natural reading would seem to be 'furens', since it was common practice to omit -n in this way; the play would then be *Orestes Furens*, recalling the *Hercules Furens* plays by Euripides and Seneca. This shifts the emphasis from the furies to Orestes' madness, more closely reflecting the scenario of *Orestes* than *Eumenides*. A production entitled *Orestes* had been staged at Whitehall Palace at Christmas 1567 or early in 1568.[80] The greater accessibility of *Orestes* is indicated by the fact that several English writers cite it directly; I have found no such references to the *Oresteia* plays in the same period.[81] If a play called *Orestes Furens* was performed in 1599, then, it is likely to have been more closely related to Euripides than Aeschylus.[82] And if such a play was performed, there is every chance that Shakespeare could have seen it.

Even if he did not, he might still have been prompted to think of Orestes by his main source, the so-called *Ur-Hamlet*. Mueller considers that '[t]he choice of Amleth as an Orestes equivalent accounts for several features of the Hamlet drama in which it follows the contours of the ancient model'.[83] Furthermore, he demonstrates that 'some contemporary readers thought of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as an Orestes play',[84] noting Thomas Heywood's inclusion of a closet scene between Orestes and Clytemnestra in *The Iron Age* (1611) and the fact that Thomas Goffe's *Tragedy of Orestes* (1616), 'while full of Shakespearen echoes in general, reads at

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[79] See R.A. Foakes, ed. *Henslowe's Diary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 119; 21.

[80] See Wiggins, *British Drama 1533-1642*, II, 21.

[81] See John Woolton, *The Castell of Christians* (London: Thomas Sturrup, 1577), sig.B6v; Thomas Scott, *A Godlie Sermon of Repentaunce* (London: Thomas Purfoote, 1585), 3[v]; John Stockwood, *A Bartholomew Fairing* (London: John Harrison, 1589), 70; Nicholas Gibbons, *Questions and Disputations* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1601), 195; Ben Jonson, *Masque of Blackness* (1605), printed in Butler, Donaldson, and Bevington, eds., *The Works of Ben Jonson*, II, 526.

[82] Inga-Stina Ewbank, '"Striking Too Short at Greeks": The Transmission of *Agamemnon* to the English Renaissance Stage,' in *Agamemnon in Performance 458 BC to AD 2004*, ed. Fiona Macintosh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 37-52, points out that in Chettle's *Tragedy of Hoffman* (1602), 'the only classical gesture is to Seneca's *Agamemnon* and *Thyestes*' (41 n.21); this suggests that Chettle and Dekker's *Agamemnon* is more likely to have been inspired by Seneca than Aeschylus.

[83] Mueller, 'Hamlet and Ancient Tragedy,' 24.

[84] Mueller, 'Hamlet and Ancient Tragedy,' 27.

times like a *Hamlet* cento'.[85] In Mueller's view, though, Shakespeare need not have been thinking about Orestes at all, since he simply inherited the 'contours' of the story from his source. But although Orestes, unlike Hecuba, is never directly named in *Hamlet*, the figure of Pyrrhus provides an intriguing link between all three plays. As well as being the executioner of Priam (as in the Player's speech in *Hamlet*) and Polyxena (as in Talthybius' speech in *Hecuba*), Pyrrhus was also known for being killed by Orestes. Cooper's entry for Orestes recounts how '[a]fterward also he killed Pyrrhus in the temple of Apollo, for that he had maryed the Lady Hermione that was before to him betrothed'.[86] Caxton gives this ending to Pyrrhus' story in the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, likely to be a source for the Player's speech: 'As source of the supposed "rugged Pyrrhus" play with its "total gules" and "coagulate gore," Shakespeare doubtless had in mind Caxton's account of Pyrrhus slaying "kynge pryant tofore the hyghe awter whiche was all bebledd of his blood" with the intermingled Orestes story'.[87] Thinking about Pyrrhus, apparently, might well bring Orestes to mind, or indeed vice versa.

Though Schleiner focuses predominantly on Aeschylus, she does also propose several parallels between *Hamlet* and Euripides' *Orestes*.[88] Orestes, tormented by fits of madness following his murder of Clytemnestra, imagines speaking 'face to face' (κατ᾽ ὄμματα, 288) with his dead father, who would beg him not to kill his mother (288-91). This is exactly what the ghost of Old Hamlet does, warning Hamlet: 'Taint not thy mind nor let thy soul contrive / Against thy mother aught' (1.5.85-86). In the closet scene, when Hamlet comes closest to committing Orestes' crime, on seeing his father's ghost again he cries out, 'Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings, / You heavenly guards!' (3.4.103-4). Orestes (674-76) urges Menelaus to 'imagine that the one who is dead beneath the earth is listening, hovering over you' (τὸν κατὰ χθονὸς / θανόντ᾽ ἀκούειν τάδε δόκει, ποτωμένην /

[85] Mueller, 'Hamlet and Ancient Tragedy,' 27.
[86] Cooper, *Thesaurus*, s.v. 'Orestes'. Also reported s.v. 'Pyrrhus' and 'Hermione'.
[87] Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama,' 29-48 (38).
[88] She finds 'concrete theatrical similarities between the Shakespearean and Aeschylean graveyard scenes' (Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama,' 30), but Ewbank ('Transmission of *Agamemnon*,' 41 n.21) does not find this convincing, since 'the truncated abruptness of the Saint-Ravy text…make[s] the entry of Orestes more confusing than theatrically striking'.

ψυχὴν ὑπὲρ σοῦ). Schleiner also notes that 'Hamlet's avenger-double, Laertes, leaps into the grave to join a beloved sister in the realm of death to which murderous avengers are consecrated'.[89] She compares 'this moment of desire for mutual entombment and embrace of the sister's corpse ("Hold off the earth a while, / Till I have caught her once more in mine arms" [5.1.249-50])' to 'Orestes and Electra embracing, thinking they are about to die [at 1047-49]'.[90] Electra's wish for 'the same sword' (ξίφος…ταὐτόν, 1052) to kill them both, and for them to be buried in 'a single tomb' (μνῆμα δέξαιθ᾽ ἕν, 1053), mirrors Laertes' leap into Ophelia's grave, demanding 'Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead' (5.1.240).

But Schleiner's most compelling connection is the role of Pylades/Horatio. She compares Hamlet's sudden digression into praise of Horatio in 3.2.61-70 to Orestes' praise of Pylades at 1155-62. Hamlet starts to speak in commonplaces ('blest are those / whose blood and judgement…', 63-4), sounding rather like the kinds of passages that were regularly excerpted from Euripidean tragedy. Orestes begins:

> There is nothing better than a sure friend,
> not wealth, nor kingship; incalculable in
> amount is the value of a true friend.[91]
>
> (1155-56)

Both speeches contain praise of the stalwartness of the specific friend (3.2.61-64; 1158-11), a generalisation or two on true friends (3.2.64-69; 1155-57), and finish with a distinctive anxiety about having said too much – Hamlet concludes: 'Something too much of this' (3.2.70), while Orestes says: 'I shall stop praising you, since there is a kind of burden even in this, being praised too much' (παύσομαί σ᾽ αἰνῶν, ἐπεὶ / βάρος τι κἀν τῷδ᾽ ἐστίν, αἰνεῖσθαι λίαν, 1161-62). Finally, Schleiner notes that Pylades declares: 'One thing…I hold you to blame for, if you thought that I wanted to live after you are dead' (ἓν μὲν…σοι μομφὴν ἔχω, / εἰ ζῆν με χρῄζειν σοῦ θανόντος ἤλπισας, 1069-70), while to Hamlet's statement 'Thou livest' (5.2.323),

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[89] Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama,' 42-43.
[90] Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama,' 43.
[91] οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν κρεῖσσον ἢ φίλος σαφής, / οὐ πλοῦτος, οὐ τυραννίς· ἀλόγιστον δέ τοι / τὸ πλῆθος ἀντάλλαγμα γενναίου φίλου.

Horatio replies, 'Never believe it' (324), and attempts to drain the poisoned cup; it falls to Hamlet/Orestes to persuade Horatio/Pylades to carry on living.[92]

Schleiner notes in passing that Orestes' praise of Pylades' friendship was 'known in sixteenth-century commonplace books',[93] but this point is worth expanding. Orestes and Pylades were proverbial symbols of friendship – they appear in Cooper's dictionary under 'Amicitia' (as an example of 'Perfect and sure friendship, as was between Pylades and Orestes'), and the entry for 'Orestes' reads: 'In all his troubles and adversities he had a faithful friende named Pylades, that did always accompanie and helpe him, and beloved him so entirely that he woulde have given his life for him'.[94] Erasmus mentions Pylades as an emblem of the exemplary friend twice in the *Adages* (once in his prefatory epistle and again at 1.9.22), and Milton describes 'true friends', with whom he 'may hold the dialogue of Pylades and Orestes', quoting *Orestes* 795: Or. ἕρπε νυν οἴαξ ποδός μοι ('walk slowly now, steering my feet'); Py. φίλα γ᾽ ἔχων κηδεύματα ('leading my dear friend').[95] Neander's *sententiae ex Oreste* in his *Aristologia Euripidea* include Orestes' praise of Pylades, featuring lines 1155-57, on which his marginal comment reads: 'A sure friend is superior to riches, and all the kingdoms of the world'.[96] The next passage is 1161-62, with the comment: 'To be praised too much is often unpleasant and troublesome, especially by friends'.[97]

The *Aristologia* offers an illuminating insight into what *Orestes* looked like to a sixteenth-century reader, bringing out major themes, and especially noteworthy passages. And looking at it in conjunction with *Hamlet* suggests further resonances between Shakespeare's play and *Orestes*, which have not yet received any attention. As well as the emphasis on friendship, interwoven themes of sleep, death, and

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[92] Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama,' 41.
[93] Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama,' 41.
[94] Cooper, *Thesaurus*, s.v. 'Amicitia'; 'Orestes'.
[95] Milton, *Defensio secunda* (CM VIII, 72-75): *nonnulli sunt, quibuscum Pyladeas…alternare voces verorum amicorum liceat*.
[96] *Certus amicus superat divitias, et omnia mundi regna*. Michael Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea Graecolatina* (Basel: Oporinus, 1559), 152.
[97] *Nimium laudari, saepe ingratum et molestum est, praesertim ab amicis*. Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 152.

oblivion emerge strongly. Orestes addresses sleep as 'Lethe' (213), spirit of oblivion, but his peace does not last for long, and in his madness he sees terrible visions (259). When Hamlet ruminates, 'to die: to sleep - / To sleep, perchance to dream – ay, there's the rub, / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come' (3.1.63-65), he imagines being pursued by visions like those which make Orestes' life a living death (387). Orestes is in just such a 'sleep of death' at the beginning of the play; in a passage not in the *Aristologia*, the chorus is unsure whether Orestes is asleep or dead, asking Electra to check that he has not died without her noticing (209).

A surviving fragment of an ancient Greek comedy refers to *Orestes* as Euripides' 'cleverest play'.[98] Euripides in general has often been perceived as a peculiarly 'intellectual' playwright, and accused variously of sophism, nihilism, and atheism. Matthew Wright elucidates the play's repeated 'self-conscious and paradoxical wordplay' which has the effect of confusing illusion and reality.[99] This is reflected in the *Aristologia*, which highlights Orestes' sufferings as being intellectual. The dialogue between Orestes and Menelaus is reproduced, in which in answer to Menelaus' question, 'What is wrong with you? What disease is destroying you?' (τί χρῆμα πάσχεις; τίς σ᾽ ἀπόλλυσιν νόσος; 395), Orestes replies: 'Understanding: I know that I have done terrible things' (ἡ σύνεσις, ὅτι σύνοιδα δείν᾽ εἰργασμένος, 396). Orestes questions the gods, and on the appearance of Apollo as *deus ex machina*, admits that 'a fear entered me, that I heard the voice of an avenging spirit when I thought I was hearing yours' (μ᾽ ἐσῆει δεῖμα, μή τινος κλύων / ἀλαστόρων δόξαιμι σὴν κλύειν ὄπα, 1668-69; not in the *Aristologia*). This is precisely Hamlet's fear over whether the ghost is a 'spirit of health or goblin damned' (1.4.40). Finally, Hamlet's famous image of the 'sea of troubles' (3.1.58) is found in *Orestes* too: the Chorus describes how human prosperity is 'deluged' by the divine, 'in waves of terrible troubles, like the sea' (341-44).[100] All of this is not to suggest that Shakespeare had read the *Aristologia* specifically – though he might

[98] See Matthew Wright, *Euripides: Orestes* (London: Duckworth, 2008), 116.
[99] Wright, *Euripides: Orestes*, 129
[100] ἀνὰ δὲ λαῖφος ὥς τις ἀκάτου θοᾶς / τινάξας δαίμων κατέκλυσεν δεινῶν / πόνων ὡς πόντου λάβροις ὀλεθρίοι- / σιν ἐν κύμασιν.

have done. Rather, it reveals that *Orestes*, read through sixteenth-century eyes, has strong correspondences to *Hamlet* on both a thematic and linguistic level. However Shakespeare found his way to *Orestes*, *Hamlet* gives some persuasive indications that he did.

As Schleiner writes, '[i]t is commonly said that in *Hamlet* [Shakespeare] reinvented full-fledged tragedy in the Greek spirit'[101]; the particular Greek spirits of Orestes and Hecuba may have had more to do with that than has generally been appreciated. But neither *Hecuba* nor *Orestes* are straight-forward representatives of what from a modern perspective we might think of as 'full-fledged tragedy in the Greek spirit'. Shakespeare's experience of Greek tragedy was a Renaissance one. Wright identifies one reason for the 'troubled reception' of *Orestes* in the modern period as its failure to adhere to our concept of 'tragedy', as shaped by 'Seneca, Shakespeare, Racine, Corneille, Dryden'.[102] Rather than 'a prevailing atmosphere of misery and terror', *Orestes* in places 'even comes close to being quite funny, and many other passages are marked by a peculiarly self-conscious, ironical, even playful tone'.[103] The very features which have alienated modern readers might well have appealed to Shakespeare: Wright's description could apply equally well to *Hamlet*. If *Hecuba* was seen as representing the emotional heights of Greek tragedy, in which the origins of the genre lay, *Orestes* represents another kind of tragedy altogether, which was also particularly associated with Euripides: tragedy with a happy ending.

Shakespeare, Euripides, and the genre of tragicomedy

Euripides is habitually named in discussions of the genre of tragicomedy, Renaissance and modern.[104] Among his extant tragedies not only *Orestes*, but also *Ion, Helen, Iphigenia in Tauris*, and *Alcestis*, feature happy or mixed endings, and

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[101] Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama,' 45.
[102] Wright, *Euripides: Orestes*, 18-19. Silk, 'Shakespeare and Greek Tragedy,' 246, on Shakespeare's influence on Greek tragedy.
[103] Wright, *Euripides: Orestes*, 20.
[104] Some of the material in this section originates from my M.St. dissertation at the University of Oxford, entitled 'This "mungrell Tragy-comedie": Shakespeare and the Influence of Euripides', supervised by Fiona Macintosh.

Cyclops is the only more or less complete satyr play to have survived from antiquity. Aristotle's comment that Euripides was the 'most tragic' of poets (τραγικώτατος, *Poetics* 1453a) seems to have been taken as a general endorsement, even though Aristotle explicitly prefers tragedies that end badly for everyone.[105] Recently, critics have become increasingly interested in the Greek influences on Renaissance tragicomedy.[106] At the same time, Shakespeare's engagement with the genre of tragicomedy in his so-called 'problem plays' (particularly *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well*) and 'late romances' (*Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*) has received significant attention.[107] Tragicomedy, then, might be thought of as a site where Shakespeare and Euripides meet. Because the question of the validity of tragicomedy as a dramatic genre was so controversial, it offers a particularly clear example of how thinking about how plays could or should be written was closely tied up with thinking about Greek models, and especially Euripides.

The controversy over tragicomedy in the late sixteenth century was provoked by Giambattista Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*, which was performed for the first time in 1581, and circulated in manuscript form until it was printed in Venice in 1589.[108] The play advertises itself as a 'Tragicomedia Pastorale', or pastoral tragicomedy. This designation prompted fierce opposition, on the grounds that neither pastoral nor tragicomedy was sanctioned by Aristotle. Guarini answered

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[105] See Sarah Dewar-Watson, *Shakespeare's Poetics: Aristotle and Anglo-Italian Renaissance Genres* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018), 57.

[106] See especially Tanya Pollard, 'Tragicomedy,' in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature Volume 2: 1558-1660*, ed. Patrick Cheney and Philip Hardie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 419-32; Dewar-Watson, *Shakespeare's Poetics*.

[107] Verna A. Foster, *The Name and Nature of Tragicomedy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 53: '"Problem play" and "romance" are clearly misnomers for Shakespeare's tragicomedies'. See also Barbara Mowat, 'Shakespearean Tragicomedy,' in *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics*, ed. Nancy Klein Maguire (New York, NY: AMS Press, 1987), 80-96; Gordon McMullan, '"The Neutral Term?": Shakespearean Tragicomedy and the Idea of The "Late Play",' in *Early Modern Tragicomedy*, ed. Subha Mukherji and Raphael Lyne (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), 115-32.

[108] See Matthew Treherne, 'The Difficult Emergence of Pastoral Tragicomedy: Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido* and Its Critical Reception in Italy, 1586-1601,' in *Early Modern Tragicomedy*, ed. Mukherji and Lyne, 28-42 (30).

these attacks in his *Compendio della Poesia Tragicomica* (1601),[109] in which he argues that in fact his practice is entirely in line with Aristotle, properly interpreted. Due to this Aristotelian approach, a reader of the *Compendio* comes away with a strong sense of tragicomedy's Greek roots. He repeatedly uses Euripides, whom he (like Aristotle) calls 'tragichissimo',[110] to defend his own tragicomic practices. He points out that the *Cyclops* (which elsewhere he explicitly calls a tragicomedy) features Odysseus, a tragic character in grave danger, alongside the drunken and comedic Cyclops.[111] He uses *Hecuba*, the 'best known' of Euripides' works, to answer criticisms that *Il Pastor Fido* lacks unity: *Hecuba* has two completely separate plots, the sacrifice of Polyxena and the revenge for Polydorus; by comparison, the plots of *Il Pastor Fido* are so closely interwoven that removing one would damage the whole.[112] His recognition scene, he says, is modelled closely on *Iphigenia in Tauris*, which is praised for this feature by Aristotle.[113] And just as Euripides brought out the corpses of Eteocles and Polynices in *Phoenician Women* to increase the spectators' horror (the proper end of tragedy), he brings out the happy lovers to increase their joy (the proper end of tragicomedy, achieved through contrast with earlier misfortune).[114]

Guarini was not the first dramatist to link Euripides to tragicomedy. In Cinthio's prologue to *Altile* (1543), claiming – like Plautus' prologue to *Amphitryon*, in which the term *tragicomoedia* was coined (line 59) – to see his audience frown at the name of tragedy, he reassures them that there will be a happy ending. He continues: 'Tal'è l'*Ion* de Euripide e l'*Oreste* / *Helena*, *Alcesti* con l'*Iphigenia'* ('Such was the *Ion* of Euripides and his *Orestes*, *Helen*, and *Alcestis*, and also *Iphigenia*', 51-

[109] The *Compendio* merged two earlier defences, printed in 1588 and 1593.
[110] Laurence Giavarini, ed. *Giambattista Guarini: Il Compendio della poesia tragicomica* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2008), 330.
[111] Giavarini, ed. *Guarini: Compendio*, 202; 247.
[112] Giavarini, ed. *Guarini: Compendio*, 228.
[113] Giavarini, ed. *Guarini: Compendio*, 328.
[114] Giavarini, ed. *Guarini: Compendio*, 330. He comments on this feature of *Phoenician Women* elsewhere (224), and mentions Iphigenia's self-sacrifice as having a positive moral effect on audiences twice (230, 234).

52).[115] From tragedies with happy endings, he makes the leap to tragicomedy: 'Ma se pur vi spiacesse ch'ella nome / Avesse di Tragedia, a piacer Vostro / La potete chiamar tragicommedia' ('But if it should displease you to call it a tragedy, you may, at your pleasure, call it a tragicomedy', 54-56). In *Measure for Measure* (1604) Shakespeare made use of both *Hecatommithi* (1565) and *Epitia* (1585), another tragicomedy, which he read in Italian.[116] Dewar-Watson considers that he might also have read some of Cinthio's theoretical writing[117]; certainly, he seems to have taken an interest in Cinthio's work, perhaps including *Altile*.

Il Pastor Fido quickly made its way to England, where demand was so high that an edition in Italian was printed in London in 1591, followed by an English translation in 1602. The impact of Guarini's work and the controversy which surrounded it on English drama was considerable. It was quoted in John Marston's *Malcontent* (c.1603), emulated in Samuel Daniel's *Queen's Arcadia* (1605), and name-dropped in Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (1606).[118] John Fletcher (a fellow-member of Shakespeare's company, and one of his collaborators) composed his own pastoral tragicomedy inspired by Guarini, *The Faithful Shepherdess* (performed 1608). He must have had access to the *Compendio*, as he produced a version of Guarini's tragicomic theory in his address to the reader (1610):

> A tragie-comedie is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is inough to make it no tragedie, yet brings some neere it, which is inough to make it no comedie: which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kinde of trouble as no life be questiond, so that a God is as lawfull in this as in a tragedie, and meane people as in a comedie.[119]

Tragicomedy, then, was under discussion in dramatic circles in London in the early years of the seventeenth century. Though Fletcher's tone is prescriptive, his preface shows that the generic properties of tragicomedy invited or required definition.

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[115] Text from Giovanni Battista Giraldi Cinthio, *Le Tragedie* (Venice: Giulio Cesare Cagnacini, 1583). Translation from Michael J. Sidnell and D.J. Conacher, eds., *Sources of Dramatic Theory: Volume 1, Plato to Congreve* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[116] See Gillespie, *Shakespeare's Books*, 93-95.
[117] Dewar-Watson, *Shakespeare's Poetics*, 41.
[118] For details see Dewar-Watson, *Shakespeare's Poetics*, 43.
[119] Florence Ada Kirk, ed. *The Faithful Shepherdess by John Fletcher: A Critical Edition* (New York, NY: Garland, 1980), 15-16.

What tragicomedy could or should look like was a subject for debate, and it was a debate in which Shakespeare appears to have taken an interest.

In a sense, all of Shakespeare's dramatic works might be seen as 'modally tragicomic', to borrow Robert Henke's terminology.[120] Samuel Johnson recognized in 1765 that his plays 'are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind', and as a result of this his 'mingled drama…approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life'.[121] But certain of his works seem to be engaging more specifically with tragicomedy as a genre. Barbara Mowat has argued that Shakespeare's earlier 'problem plays' should also be seen 'as interesting experiments in Guarinian tragicomedy'.[122] She demonstrates that the careful handling of the opening of *All's Well That Ends Well*, for example, in which 'the sad talk of death and separation yields quickly to the bawdy exchanges between Parolles and Helena', seems designed to comply with Guarini's requirement that the dramatist juxtapose the comic and the tragic in order to inform the audience that the play is a tragicomedy; this mixed tone is sustained throughout the play.[123] Noting that the 'problem plays' deviate from the conclusively happy endings which Guarini considered appropriate, she concludes that perhaps 'Shakespeare disagreed with Guarini's concept that "the architectonic end [of tragicomedy] is exclusively comic"', recognizing 'that tragicomedy could have an architectonic end proper to itself'; 'tragicomedies need not burst into joyful endings, but might remain tragicomic throughout'.[124] Furthermore, Stuart Gillespie observes that the King's final words before the epilogue ('All yet seems well; and if it end so meet, / The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet') describe Guarini's theory and practice pretty exactly, and echo the final lines of *Il Pastor Fido*:

> Non e sana ogni gioia,
> ne mal cio che v'annoia.

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[120] See Robert Henke, *Pastoral Transformations: Italian Tragicomedy and Shakespeare's Late Plays* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1997), 16-17.
[121] Henry Woudhuysen, ed. *Samuel Johnson on Shakespeare* (London: Penguin, 1989), 125-56.
[122] Mowat, 'Shakespearean Tragicomedy,' 93.
[123] Mowat, 'Shakespearean Tragicomedy,' 88.
[124] Mowat, 'Shakespearean Tragicomedy,' 93.

Quello e vero gioire,
che nasce da virtu dopo il soffrire.

All is not joy
That tickles us: Nor is all that annoy
That goes down bitter. True joy is a thing
That springs from Vertue after suffering.[125]

The King's conditionals pull against the conclusive rhyme, perhaps enacting Shakespeare's disagreement with Guarini.

If Shakespeare found Guarinian tragicomedy unsatisfactory, he might have found an alternative model in Euripides. Laurie Maguire has made a general case for the correspondences between *All's Well* and Euripides' *Helen* (one of Cinthio's examples of happy-ending tragedy) to 'be seen not as coincidence but as influence'.[126] Her argument is suggestive, though the brevity of her account means that some of the most convincing points are not developed as far as they could be. In particular, she discusses the *eidolon* in Euripides as 'foregrounding an issue which has always been latent in the Helen story: the gap between language and reality, the relation between truth and metaphor', concluding that 'the eidolon is the name but not the thing'.[127] But when she actually quotes Helena's lines – ''Tis but the shadow of a wife you see, / The name and not the thing' (5.3.297-98) – it is in the context of Stesichorus rather than Euripides.[128] Setting *Helen* in the context of its Renaissance paratexts, I shall suggest some developments of Maguire's reading.

Helen was not one of the most widely read of Euripides' plays during the Renaissance, though Maguire brings together some evidence that it was being read with interest in England.[129] One aspect in particular was highlighted for an early seventeenth-century reader's attention. The entire premise of Euripides' re-working

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[125] Gillespie, *Shakespeare's Books*, 176. Gillespie quotes Richard Fanshawe's 1647 translation.
[126] Laurie Maguire, *Shakespeare's Names* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 109.
[127] Maguire, *Shakespeare's Names*, 95.
[128] Maguire, *Shakespeare's Names*, 108. Stesichorus was said to have gone blind after abusing Helen in his work; after writing a recantation, his sight was restored.
[129] She cites William Vaughan's *The Golden Grove Moralized* (1600), Ben Jonson's *Masque of Beauty* (1608), Thomas Gataker's *The Joy of the Just* (1619) and *The Spiritual Watch* (1623), and George Buchanan's *De Iure Regni apud Scotos Dialogus* (1579); the last three show an interest in Helen's *eidolon*. Maguire, *Shakespeare's Names*, 101.

of the story is that Helen was never at Troy at all; instead, Hera gave Paris an 'image', or εἴδωλον (line 34), of her. Of the fourteen editions of Euripides' complete works, in which *Helen* exclusively appeared, between 1503 and 1602, ten printed the essay by Moschopoulos discussing the *eidolon* (see Chapter 2) which primes the reader to connect the *eidolon* to Euripides' works.[130] Segal has analysed the complex interrelated functions of the *eidolon* in *Helen*. It initiates an obsession with doubling, in plot and in language, and it introduces the fundamental epistemological antithesis between appearance and reality, which 'ramifies into another antithesis between outward reality and inward, "body" (*sôma*) and "mind" (*phrenes*)'.[131] It is interwoven 'with a parallel antithesis of death and life', and also 'introduces the theme of war, the pettiness of its causes', 'the emptiness of its goals and victories, the suffering of its victims'.[132] These functions of the *eidolon*, I suggest, resonate throughout *All's Well*, a play which culminates in a bed trick in which one woman is substituted for another.

When Helen declares: ''Tis but the shadow of a wife you see, / The name and not the thing' (5.3.297-98), her phrasing literally describes the Euripidean *eidolon*, which is also described as a νεφέλη, or shade (707). In a scene obsessed with the evidence of sight, Euripides' Helen asserts that she is not a phantom (νυκτίφαντον, 570), but Menelaus will not believe her; she asks, 'will you leave me, and lead away an empty wife?' (λείψεις γὰρ ἡμᾶς, τὰ δὲ κένʼ ἐξάξεις λέχη; 590). At the beginning of *All's Well*, the Countess reprimands Helena for excessive grief ('Go to, no more, lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow than to have', 1.1.40-1), to which Helena replies: 'I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too' (42). At the beginning of *Helen*, too, the heroine has recently lost a father-figure, and is grieving over her hopeless situation. Both Helen and Helena are urged to moderate their grief in conventional terms: 'Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead, excessive grief the enemy to the living' (1.1.43-44); 'it is best to bear the necessities of life as lightly as possible'

[130] The exceptions are Basel: Oporinus, 1558; Frankfurt: Wetterau, 1562; Heidelberg: Commelinus, 1597; Geneva: Stephanus, 1602.
[131] Charles Segal, 'The Two Worlds of Euripides' *Helen*,' *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 102 (1971): 553-614; 564.
[132] Segal, 'Two Worlds,' 564-65.

(σύμφορον δέ τοι / ὡς ῥᾷστα τἀναγκαῖα τοῦ βίου φέρειν, 253-54). The symbolic death and rebirth of Menelaus in *Helen* is paralleled in the symbolic death and rebirth of Helena in *All's Well*. Euripides' Helen also undergoes a period of symbolic death during her time in Egypt: she was conveyed there by Hermes, the god who conducts spirits to the underworld, and at the beginning of the play has taken refuge at a tomb.[133]

The epic tradition of the Trojan Wars is distinctly problematized in both plays. The fact that they were fought not over Helen but over an *eidolon* explicitly calls the glory of Troy into question. At 707, for example, the Messenger asks: 'So we suffered in vain for the sake of a cloud?' (νεφέλης ἄρ᾽ ἄλλως εἴχομεν πόνους πέρι;), and having heard the story declares that 'the city was sacked in vain' (πόλις ἀνηρπάσθη μάτην, 751). The wars in *All's Well* are overwhelmingly arbitrary – the King cares nothing for the outcome and tells his subjects that 'freely they have leave / To stand on either part' (1.2.14-15). Scene 3.1 fleetingly 'raise[s] moral/political issues' concerning the wars; as Susan Snyder observes, 'to bring up and then suppress the causes of the hostilities creates a different effect from just omitting them'.[134] The contrast between the heroic pomp and splendour of the military parades and the reality, which is characterised by confusion and unheroic accidents (3.6.48-53), is emphasized. Segal notes that '[e]nding with battle and war enables Euripides to keep a certain bitterness of mood' in *Helen*.[135] In her final speech, Helen and the (now departed) *eidolon* seem to merge. She cries: 'Where is the glory of Troy?' (Ποῦ τὸ Τρῳκὸν κλέος; 1603), demanding to be fought over in a miniature replay of the Trojan Wars. Using a trick, the armed Greeks slaughter their unarmed enemies – Helen's question has the effect of radically calling into question the value of victory purchased in such terms, whether in Egypt or at Troy. At the end of *All's Well*, Helena attempts to merge the name and the thing, casting off the 'shadow of a wife'. But Bertram's persistent conditionals ('If she, my liege, can make

[133] See Helene Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 313.
[134] Susan Snyder, ed. *All's Well That Ends Well* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 15.
[135] Segal, 'Two Worlds,' 609.

me know this clearly, / I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly', 5.3.305-306) suggest that the shadow lingers.

The editors of the New Oxford Shakespeare give a date range for the composition of *All's Well* between 1603 and 1606, settling on 1605 as most likely.[136] This places it just before the group of plays composed between about 1607 and 1611, consisting of *Cymbeline*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, plays which not only experiment with the possibilities of tragicomedy but also engage with tragicomic theory. *The Tempest*, for example, adheres to Fletcher's assertion that a tragicomedy 'wants deaths, which is inough to make it no tragedie, yet brings some neere it, which is inough to make it no comedie' in a peculiarly self-conscious manner. Prospero assures Miranda (in such terms that he might be Shakespeare reassuring the audience):

> I have with such provision in mine art
> So safely ordered that there is no soul –
> No, not so much perdition as an hair
> Betid to any creature in the vessel…
> (1.2.28-31)[137]

In the same scene Ariel assures Prospero: 'Not a hair perish'd; / On their sustaining garments not a blemish, / But fresher than before' (218-20). Later Gonzalo wonders: 'our garments, being, as they were, drenched in the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness and glosses, being rather new-dyed than stained with salt water' (2.1.66-69). With such close repetition of ideas, Shakespeare is not merely following Fletcher's 'rule'; he is telling us that he is following it.

The insistence on the clothing being 'new-dyed', and 'fresher than before', underlines the transformative power of the sea, which functions in *The Tempest* as the tragicomic version of the comic 'greenwood'. In fact, the sea functions in interestingly tragicomic ways in all four of Shakespeare's romantic tragicomedies. Sara Hanna has argued that in Shakespeare's imagination the idea of Greece was strongly linked to the sea. She observes that Shakespeare's 'Greek works' – by

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[136] Taylor et al., eds., *New Oxford Shakespeare*, 2274.
[137] Quoted from Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan, eds., *The Tempest* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2011).

which she means *Venus and Adonis*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Two Noble Kinsmen* - 'range throughout the Mediterranean world', as befits 'a nation whose center is the sea'.[138] Most importantly, the Greek works 'offer the dramatist the opportunity to explore worlds of fable, myth, and fantasy; to escape the more severe constraints of verisimilitude; and to experiment with genre'.[139] Hanna gives a compelling account of how numerous examples of Greek thought on the sea influenced Shakespeare's conception of Greece, but glosses quickly over Greek tragedy, concluding that it did not 'have much bearing on Shakespeare's Greek "tragedies"'.[140]

However, Wright has drawn attention to the significance of the sea in two of Euripides' happy-ending tragedies, *Helen* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* (which he terms Euripides' 'escape-tragedies'). Wright sensitively analyses their 'unusual sense of place': they share 'a richly drawn landscape consisting of the sea, with its coasts and caves, and the sky'.[141] This 'imaginary landscape of sea, coast and sky' is not incidental but 'fits into a system of ideas and meanings, gaining interpretative significance', observing that '[t]he sea's significance lies in its capacity to bear multiple levels of meaning and symbolism'.[142] Euripides himself was strongly associated with the sea in the biographical tradition, presumably because of its marked presence in his works. The Greek sea offers a suggestive model for the more diffuse reception of Euripides too, since it also plays an important role in Greek prose romances, which in turn are deeply inflected by Euripides; Homer's *Odyssey*, of course, lies somewhere behind all later Greek literary oceans. I suggest that we might identify a Euripidean strand to the combination of generic experimentation,

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[138] Sara Hanna, 'Shakespeare's Greek World: The Temptations of the Sea,' in *Playing the Globe: Genre and Geography in Renaissance Drama*, ed. John Gillies and Virginia Mason Vaughan (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), 113, 110.
[139] Hanna, 'Shakespeare's Greek World,' 114.
[140] Hanna, 'Shakespeare's Greek World,' 115.
[141] Matthew Wright, *Euripides' Escape-Tragedies: A Study of 'Helen', 'Andromeda', and 'Iphigenia among the Taurians'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 203.
[142] Wright, *Euripides' Escape-Tragedies*, 204-205.

the sea, and an idea of Greece which come together in Shakespeare's romantic tragicomedies.[143]

The sea is conceptually tragicomic in ways that permeate this group of plays. In *Pericles* (set in Greece) the sea is equally the cause of Pericles' troubles and the agent of salvation and reunification for Pericles, Thaisa, and Marina.[144] As in the escape-tragedies the metaphor of the 'sea of troubles' is literalized[145]: at 1.2.96 Pericles first describes his troubles as 'this tempest', an image which is embodied in the tempests which later affect him; it is then elaborated into a figure for Marina's life (so named 'for she was born at sea', 3.3.12) – she complains: 'Born in a tempest when my mother died, / This world to me is as a lasting storm' (4.1.16-17).[146] In *The Tempest* the functioning of the sea as a theatrical device for bringing about the required tragicomic dangers and rescues is rendered more explicit, as Prospero's control of the sea allows him to take on the role of tragicomic dramatist. The vagaries of the sea facilitate another key tragicomic plot device: the recognition scene. Guarini, as we have seen, modelled his recognition scene on *Iphigenia in Tauris*, which was praised by Aristotle for this feature. The happy endings of both *Helen* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* depend upon recognition scenes between estranged family members (brother and sister, husband and wife), a convention that proliferates in Shakespeare's romantic tragicomedies.

The sea creates a privileged space for the workings of tragicomedy. In *Cymbeline*, the Queen describes how twice Caesar's invading ships 'on our terrible seas / Like eggshells moved upon their surges, cracked / As easily 'gainst our rocks' (3.1.27-29).[147] As a result, she has confidence in

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[143] I find Foster's term apt (*Name and Nature of Tragicomedy*, 53).
[144] The shipwrecked Pericles, like the shipwrecked Menelaus, is concerned with his loss of status (2.1.9; 417-19). Helen asks Menelaus whether he was begging for food; he equivocates: 'That was the deed, but it did not have that name' (τοὔργον μὲν ἦν τοῦτ', ὄνομα δ' οὐκ εἶχεν τόδε, 792). Pericles' initial comment to the fisherman, 'He asks of you that never used to beg' (2.1.61), is expanded into a joke based on just Menelaus' equivocation: the fisherman teases, 'You said you could not beg?', and Pericles replies 'I did but crave' (2.1.83-85).
[145] Wright, *Euripides' Escape-Tragedies*, 207: 'When Orestes says to Pylades that they are fellow travellers on a sea of troubles, he is speaking literally as well as metaphorically'.
[146] Quoted from Suzanne Gossett, ed. *Pericles* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004).
[147] Quoted from Valerie Wayne, ed. *Cymbeline* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2017).

> The natural bravery of your isle, which stands
> As Neptune's park, ribbed and paled in
> With oaks unscalable and roaring waters,
> With sands that will not bear your enemies' boats,
> But suck them up to th'topmast.
>
> (18-22)

Similarly, in *Iphigenia in Tauris* it is related that 'The lord of the sea watches over Troy / Holy Poseidon, enemy to the Pelopids' (πόντου δ' ἀνάκτωρ Ἴλιόν τ' ἐπισκοπεῖ / σεμνὸς Ποσειδῶν, Πελοπίδαις ἐναντίος, 1414-15). Of course, just as Troy could not ultimately be protected by Poseidon, in *Cymbeline* England's supposed status as 'Neptune's park' will not protect it. But this is in aid of the tragicomic conclusion, which uses invasion by sea to bring Posthumus back to be reunited with Imogen. The shipwreck on the coast of Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale* marks the turn of the action to pastoral, and eventually the tragicomic resolution. It may be a joke (apparently 'references to the Bohemian coast are used to characterize a particularly foolish or ignorant speaker'), though if so it was one that Ben Jonson missed.[148] But whatever the intention, it has the effect of removing 'the action from the world of literal geographical space as it is removed from historical time'.[149]

Pastoral, as we have seen, was strongly associated with tragicomedy, and Henke outlines the ways that the pastoral mode negotiates between tragedy and comedy in all of Shakespeare's romantic tragicomedies.[150] Furthermore, he identifies the figure of the satyr as tragicomic, suggesting that the chorus of satyrs in *The Winter's Tale* 'provides a faint but intriguing hint of the classical tradition', via Ben Jonson.[151] Jonson's *Masque of Oberon* (1611) featured a chorus of satyrs, which he evidently connected to Euripides' *Cyclops*, to which he refers twice in his notes to the masque; he also refers to Isaac Casaubon's treatise *De Satyrica* (in which he argued that Roman satire developed independently of the Greek satyr play), which

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[148] Stephen Orgel, ed. *The Winter's Tale* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 38-39. Jonson complained that 'Shakespeare in a play brought in a number of men saying they had suffered shipwreck in Bohemia, when there is no sea near by some 100 miles' (C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson, eds., *Ben Jonson, Vol.1: The Man and His Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), 138).
[149] Orgel, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 37.
[150] Henke, *Pastoral Transformations*, 97.
[151] Henke, *Pastoral Transformations*, 118.

was printed in 1605 along with a Latin translation of *Cyclops* by Florent Chrétien. In his notes to the play, Chrétien pondered its genre: 'I do not know if I should call this play a tragedy: for it does not, according to the common definition (not however certain or always true), have a sad ending', as things end happily for Ulysses.[152] Even Polyphemus' misfortunes are not tragic, and it mixes high and low characters. He concludes, therefore: 'as Plautus said in preface to *Amphitryon*, I consider that this play can be called a tragicomedy' (*Tragico comoedia*).[153] Henke suggests that Jonson might have 'conceived the antimasque to function as a satiric complement to the masque proper, somewhat in the manner of the Greek satyr play relative to tragedy', and that Shakespeare was sensitive to these facets of Jonson's satyrs, casting Caliban as a satyr-like 'pastoral anti-hero' in *The Tempest* and re-using the chorus of satyrs in *The Winter's Tale*.[154] Once again, Shakespeare seems to be interested in the dramatic machinery of tragicomedy, which finds its origin in Euripides.

Conclusion

Shakespeare's tragicomic satyrs, as we have seen, come through Jonson. His collaborator George Peele translated *Iphigenia in Aulis* and may well have introduced him to *Hecuba* while writing *Titus Andronicus*. He might have seen a play called *Orestes Furens* in 1599, and could well have been led to think about Orestes through the *Ur-Hamlet*. Euripides certainly had a presence in the dramatic circles in which Shakespeare moved, and was invoked in theoretical discussions about the possibilities of tragicomedy as a genre. In a number of the classical texts which we know that Shakespeare read, Euripides is quoted and translated; he is also mentioned in a substantial number of English vernacular texts. If Shakespeare's interest was aroused, it would not have been difficult for him to get hold of any of Euripides' extant plays in an accessible Latin translation. Jonson certainly owned all

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[152] *Hanc fabulam nescio an tragoediam vocare debeam: neque enim ex illa vulgari (non tamen certa aut semper vera) definitione exitum habet tristem, imo laetum in rebus Ulysseis quae principio turbidae*. Florent Chrétien, *Cyclops Euripidae Latinitate Donata* (Paris: Drouart, 1605), 32.
[153] *Itaque quod praefatus est Plautus in Amphitruone, arbitrer posse hanc fabulam dici Tragico comoediam.* Chrétien, *Cyclops*, 32.
[154] Henke, *Pastoral Transformations*, 118.

of Euripides' works, and is known to have loaned books to his acquaintances. The most compelling evidence that his interest was engaged is offered by *The Winter's Tale*, as the next chapter will demonstrate. But taken together, the Euripidean echoes that have been traced here are also suggestive. They imply that for Shakespeare, Euripides offered important ways of thinking about revenge tragedy and tragicomedy. Above all, Shakespeare seems to respond to the power of Euripides' dramatic structures to produce emotional effects. This, in fact, is at the heart of the relationship between *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale*, which constitutes Shakespeare's most extensive engagement with Euripides.

CHAPTER 5

''TIS AS EASY TO MAKE HER SPEAK AS MOVE':

THE WINTER'S TALE AND *ALCESTIS*

In the final scene of the first production of Ted Hughes' *Alcestis* – staged by Northern Broadsides in 2000, two years after the poet's death – the actress playing Alcestis 'preserve[d] a touching statue-like stillness as she awaits her husband's reclamation'.[1] Michael Billington, reviewing for *The Guardian*, considered this an appropriate staging decision, recognising the paradigmatic importance of *The Winter's Tale* for Hughes, who was 'consciously tapping into the great Shakespearean reconciliation-myth as the silent Alcestis is restored to her husband'.[2] Hughes viewed *The Winter's Tale* as the pinnacle of Shakespeare's art, the fulfilment of the 'ultimate phase in the evolution of the Tragic Equation'.[3] He described the later plays in terms of the growth of a strange insect, hatching in *Cymbeline* and developing in *Pericles*, until in *The Winter's Tale* it was finally ready to take flight: 'in this drama', he wrote, 'the whole Tragedy of Divine Love culminates'.[4] From a biographical perspective, it is easy to see why Hughes might be drawn to the *Winter's Tale*'s fantasy of transformative suffering, and why he chose (in his only non-commissioned dramatic translation) to turn his attention to *Alcestis*.

Like Shakespeare, Hughes was not as highly trained in the classical languages as some of his contemporaries. While he had sufficient Latin to pass the Cambridge entrance exam, he apparently had no Greek at all. John Talbot considers this an important feature of Hughes' idiosyncratic classicism, noting his 'habit of

[1] Michael Billington, review of *Alcestis*, by Ted Hughes, directed by Barry Rutter, in *The Guardian*, 20 September 2000, paras. 1-6 (4), accessed 17 February 2018, http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2000/sep/20/artsfeatures3.
[2] Billington, review of *Alcestis*, para. 4.
[3] Ted Hughes, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being* (London: Faber, 1992), 355.x
[4] Hughes, *Goddess of Complete Being*, 360.

absorbing classical topics through the mediation of Shakespeare',[5] which offers a helpful way of understanding Hughes' *Alcestis*. The strong correspondences between the ending of Euripides' *Alcestis* and the statue scene of *The Winter's Tale*, which will be explored further in this chapter, make it difficult to isolate any one instance of Shakespearean mediation in Hughes' translation. But his rendering of lines 1124-25 (in Philip Vellacott's translation, 'Is it true? / I see my wife, her very self! – Or is this joy / Some mockery sent by the gods to drive me mad?'[6]) as 'Heracles, have you hypnotised me / To see what I cannot believe?'[7] is telling. The idea of hypnotism suggests Paulina's (and Shakespeare's) masterful manipulation of the on- and off-stage audiences' perceptions (Heracles' tactics are much blunter), while the following line hints at Paulina's crucial requirement that the onlookers (particularly Leontes) 'awake [their] faith' (5.5.95).[8]

It may seem natural, almost inevitable, for modern poets, directors, and critics to hold the endings of *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale* in a kind of stereoscopic vision, layering them onto each other in this way. But is this a peculiarly modern way of looking, unrecognisable to previous centuries? Unfortunately, Shakespeare's earliest audiences left no evidence of whether Hermione's return evoked visions of Alcestis. There is a hint, however, that at least one seventeenth-century writer saw a connection: Milton's 'Sonnet 23', which begins 'Methought I saw my late espoused saint / Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave'.[9] Helen Faucit, the nineteenth-century actress who had herself played Hermione, suggested that Milton must have had the passage in which Hermione's ghost appears to Antigonus in a dream in his

[5] John Talbot, '"I Had Set Myself against Latin": Ted Hughes and the Classics,' review of Paul Keegan ed., *Ted Hughes: Collected Poems*, in *Arion*, Third Series, 13, no. 3 (2006): 131-62 (56).
[6] Euripides, *Alcestis/Hippolytus/Iphigenia in Tauris*, trans. Philip Vellacott (London: Penguin, 1974), 78. Hughes used Vellacott, according to Daniel Weissbort, ed. *Ted Hughes: Selected Translations* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 187.
[7] Ted Hughes, *Alcestis* (London: Faber, 1999), 81.
[8] Quotations from *The Winter's Tale* are from John Pitcher, ed. *The Winter's Tale* (London: Arden, 2015).
[9] Milton's poetry is quoted from John Carey, ed. *Milton: The Complete Shorter Poems*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Pearson, 2007).

mind when composing the sonnet.[10] Antigonus reverently describes his dream-vision of Hermione:

> I never saw a vessel of like sorrow,
> So filled and so becoming. In pure white robes,
> Like very sanctity, she did approach…
> (3.3.20-22)

Similarly, Milton's dream-vision of his wife

> Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
> Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight,
> Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shined…
> (Sonnet 23, 9-11)

Apart from the sense of 'sanctity' that pervades Milton's sonnet, the vision of the woman dressed in white, and the deft transference of the adjective 'pure' from the robes to her mind, we might hear an auditory echo in 'vessel'/'vested'. As Milton wakes at the end of the sonnet, the vision of his wife disappears suddenly, unlike Alcestis but like Antigonus' Hermione, who 'melted into air' (3.3.36).

This connection has attracted little critical attention. But Milton's own writings provide almost as much evidence for an interest in *The Winter's Tale* as those of Hughes. Two documents which name Milton's father as a trustee of the Blackfriars playhouse (used by Shakespeare's company, the King's Men, from 1608) indicates that he 'had grown up in a home with closer connections to the playhouses than has hitherto been assumed'.[11] In *L'Allegro* (c.1630) he pictures going 'to the well-trod stage' (131) to hear 'sweetest Shakespeare fancy's child, / Warble his native wood-notes wild' (133-4). John Pitcher opines that he 'surely saw [*The Winter's Tale*] in the 1620s', pointing to his poem 'On Shakespeare', printed in the prefatory material for the 1632 Second Folio, which contains the lines:

> Thou in our wonder and astonishment
> Hast built thyself a live-long monument
> […]
> Then thou our fancy of itself bereaving,

[10] Helena Faucit Martin, 'Shakespeare's Women: By One Who Has Impersonated Them,' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 149 (1891): 1-37 (21).
[11] Gordon Campbell, 'Shakespeare and the Youth of Milton,' *Milton Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1999): 95-105 (103-104).

Dost make us marble with too much conceiving.
(7-8; 13-14)

Pitcher comments: 'The word-play here – in which Shakespeare frees himself from a marble tomb by transforming readers into marble statues (punning on 'marble' and 'marvel') – probably alludes to the statue in *The Winter's Tale* and to Apollo's oracle in Act 3' (the 'Delphic lines' of line 12 also point to Apollo).[12] More speculatively, he adds '[t]he sixteen lines may allude to the gap of time between Acts 3 and 4, and the words 'wonder and astonishment' to the end of the play'.[13] Pitcher considers that Milton later remembered the catalogue of flowers from 4.4.118-27 in Book 9 of *Paradise Lost* (1039-41).[14]

In Sonnet 23, Milton seems to focus *Alcestis* through the lens of *The Winter's Tale*, in a similar manner to Hughes. But is it possible to take the connection even further back, to Shakespeare himself? And what are the implications if we do? In William Batstone's formulation, '[t]he point of reception is the ephemeral interface of the text; it occurs where the text and the reader meet and is simultaneously constitutive of both'.[15] Texts construct readers as much as, and at the same time as, readers construct texts. For us, of course, 'Shakespeare' is constructed entirely of texts – the texts of his plays and poetry, some texts by his contemporaries, a handful of texts which offer biographical clues. On a deeper level, too, lie the texts that he himself read, which can offer glimpses of ephemeral moments in which Shakespeare and (say) Euripides met and formed each other. If Shakespeare was drawing on *Alcestis* in *The Winter's Tale*, then we have an example of what this play by Euripides 'meant' in this instance to a Renaissance reader who was by no means average, but whose insights are not the less worth having for that.

Critics have long noted some striking correspondences between *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale*, particularly in the final scenes. However, the general consensus

[12] Pitcher, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 107.
[13] Pitcher, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 107.
[14] Pitcher, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 107.
[15] William W. Batstone, 'Provocation: *The Point of Reception Theory*,' in *Classics and the Uses of Reception*, ed. Charles Martindale and Richard F. Thomas (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 14-20 (17).

(with a few notable exceptions) has been that 'there are no parallels sufficiently concrete to clinch the argument'.[16] This chapter will reassess the evidence, and offer a fuller reading of the interactions between the two plays than has yet been attempted. But Shakespeare was not operating in a vacuum, and his understanding of Euripides' *Alcestis* will have been shaped by other intervening receptions. Through tracing the non-Euripidean appearances of Alcestis from classical antiquity onwards it will become clear what Shakespeare could (and could not) have read in other sources. We shall see, for example, that during the sixteenth century Alcestis was frequently invoked as the epitome of the good wife in texts which involve themselves in the Renaissance controversy over women. Shakespeare's engagement with the story of Alcestis is undoubtedly informed by these receptions, but his real interest lies in the dramatic and emotional process of staging the return of a wife from the dead to her husband. To achieve this, he characteristically combines his sources, enlisting Ovid's tale of Pygmalion from the *Metamorphoses*, his reception of which is also atypical. But the dramaturgy, as we shall see, can only be found in Euripides.

The Ancient Alcestis

The story of Alcestis tends to be strongly associated with Euripides, because his play is the only major version to have come out of classical antiquity. *Alcestis* was first performed at the City Dionysia in Athens in 438 BC, making it his earliest surviving work.[17] Tragedians usually presented three tragedies followed by a satyr play; *Alcestis* was performed in this fourth slot, placing it in an unusual generic situation. The play focuses on the day of Alcestis' death: in the *prologos*, Apollo explains that, as a favour to Admetus (whose flocks he has been tending as a punishment from Zeus for killing the Cyclopes in revenge for the death of his son Asclepius), he has tricked the Fates into agreeing to postpone his death if someone could be found who would willingly take his place. In the event, the only person prepared to die for him was his wife Alcestis. After her death, Heracles arrives

[16] Mueller, 'Hermione's Wrinkles,' 30.
[17] See Parker, ed. *Euripides: Alcestis*, xix.

seeking hospitality, which Admetus provides even though his house is in mourning. Blissfully unaware, Heracles gets drunk and behaves rowdily, until a servant tells him how inappropriate his behaviour is. Filled with remorse, he makes it up to Admetus by bringing Alcestis back from the underworld. It is unclear how innovative Euripides was being in his treatment of the story. Homer mentions Alcestis briefly, but only in relation to her son, Eumelus, 'born to Admetos by the beauty among women / Alkestis, loveliest of all the daughters of Pelias' (τὸν ὑπ᾽ Ἀδμήτῳ τέκε δῖα γυναικῶν / Ἄλκηστις, Πελίαο θυγατρῶν εἶδος ἀρίστη, *Iliad* 2.714-15).[18] An account of the events resulting in Apollo's period of servitude by Hesiod and an earlier *Alcestis* play by Phrynichus are both lost.[19]

Though Euripides came second to Sophocles in the year that *Alcestis* was produced, there is evidence for its continued popularity. Aristophanes was certainly familiar with it, and if parody is any indication of popularity, *Alcestis* was a big hit. In *Acharnians* (produced in 425 BC, thirteen years after *Alcestis* was first performed), Aristophanes parodies the death scene, in which instead of mourning the death of a wife Dicaeopolis is celebrating the death of an eel which he is looking forward to eating (885-94). He calls in his children to witness the eel, creating a visual tableau imitating Admetus and the children surrounding Alcestis. A year later, *Knights* (424 BC) has Paphlagon reluctantly saying farewell to his garland in the words of Alcestis' farewell to her marriage bed (1251-52). Another line, in which Admetus' father Pheres justifies his refusal to die on behalf of his son (*Alcestis* 691), is parodied in both *Clouds*, line 1415 (originally performed in 423 BC but extant in a revised version from 419-17) and *Thesmophoriasuzae*, line 194 (411 BC), suggesting that it was particularly famous or controversial. Oliver Taplin cites two pots depicting scenes which seem to be related specifically to Euripides' play, rather than the story in general.[20] The play survives as one which was selected for reproduction and transmission, rather than in the accidentally-preserved 'alphabetical' group. The

[18] Trans. Richmond Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1961).
[19] See Parker, ed. *Euripides: Alcestis*, xv-xvi.
[20] Oliver Taplin, *Pots & Plays: Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase-Painting of the Fourth Century B.C.* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Museum, 2007), 111-12.

evidence suggests that Euripides' *Alcestis* 'was highly likely to have been the best-known narrative of the story'.[21]

Many later accounts of the Alcestis story show evidence of being indebted to Euripides' play, or refer to it directly.[22] However, there are also some post-Euripidean accounts which give versions of the story which are independent of, conflict with, or simply do not appear in the Euripidean representation. The main components of the Alcestis story, which may be mentioned together or separately, are: (1) role as daughter of Pelias; (2) marriage to Admetus; (3) Apollo's servitude to Admetus; (4) death on behalf of Admetus; (5) resurrection. The daughters of Pelias, mentioned by Homer, were convinced by Medea to kill their father thinking that he would be rejuvenated; Diodorus of Sicily (writing c.60-70 BC) singles out Alcestis as the virtuous daughter who does not participate in the murder due to her piety (*Bibliotheca Historica*, 4.52.2).[23] According to Diodorus, Jason promised to give all the daughters of Pelias in marriage to good men as reparation for the death of their father; Alcestis he gave to Admetus (4.53.3). In (pseudo) Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*, however, Pelias promised his daughter's hand to anyone who could yoke a lion and a boar to a chariot, which feat Apollo performed on Admetus' behalf (1.9.15). A significant alternative explanation for Apollo's servitude has Apollo as Admetus' lover; this is the version given in Plutarch's dialogue *On Love*, (c.100 AD). Plutarch also has Heracles as a lover of Admetus, attributing his rescue of Alcestis to this (761e). When, either out of love or gratitude, Apollo arranges for a death substitution, even Admetus' parents refuse to die on his behalf, but crucially Alcestis agrees. Because of this, she becomes a type of wifely love, and is mentioned

[21] Taplin, *Pots & Plays*, 111.
[22] E.g. Eratosthenes, *Catasterismi*, Epitome 29.
[23] Pausanias describes a temple frieze featuring Alcestis as the only named daughter of Pelias (*Description of Greece*, 5.17.11), suggesting that she was frequently singled out in this way.

by many authors in passing in this role.[24] When the focus is on Alcestis' wifely devotion, accounts sometimes end with her sacrifice.[25]

Nonetheless, the climax of Euripides' play, and the key element of the story, is Alcestis' return from the underworld. In Euripides, Heracles describes how he fought with Death to bring her back (1140), and this version is frequently found elsewhere,[26] but there are variants. In *On Love*, Plutarch records an alternative in which Heracles heals Alcestis from a mortal disease (761e). In Plato's *Symposium* (c.385-370 BC), Alcestis is sent back from the underworld by the gods, as a reward for her noble deed (179c). Apollodorus mentions Heracles' rescue of Alcestis in his account of the labours, but elsewhere reports that 'the Maiden [Persephone] sent her up again, or as some say, Heracles brought her back to him having fought Hades'.[27] Lucian appears to combine these alternatives, as Protesilaus reminds Pluto that he 'sent back my relative Alcestis as a favour to Heracles'.[28] One final version is constructed by Palaephatus as a rationalization of the story in *On Unbelievable Tales* (*Peri Apiston* 40, 4th century AD). He ingeniously suggests that Admetus was captured during a siege, and Alcestis agreed to exchange herself as a hostage for him. Heracles rescued and returned her, giving rise to the tale that she had come back from the dead.

The Greek sources, then, show a distinct interest in the story of Alcestis, frequently holding her up as an example of wifely devotion. While Euripides' play remains the fullest and best-known version, it is supplemented by details from other sources which are not always mutually compatible. Zenobius (sometimes known as Zenodotus, 2nd century AD) gives a summary of the story in his collection of proverbs. He noticeably follows the Euripidean storyline, with Apollo's servitude

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[24] E.g. Plutarch, *Mulierum Virtutes* 243d: οὐδ᾽ Εἰρήνη φίλανδρος ὡς Ἄλκηστις ('nor was Eirene devoted to her husband in the same way as Alcestis').
[25] E.g. Gaius Musonius Rufus, *Lecture XIV*, who uses her to demonstrate that the love of a wife for a husband exceeds the love of parents for their children.
[26] E.g. Agatharchides, *On the Erythrean Sea* (1.7).
[27] *Bibliotheca* 1.9.15: καὶ αὐτὴν πάλιν ἀνέπεμψεν ἡ Κόρη, ὡς δὲ ἔνιοι λέγουσιν, Ἡρακλῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνεκόμισε μαχεσάμενος Ἅιδῃ.
[28] *Dialogues of the Dead*, 23.3: τὴν ὁμογενῆ μου Ἄλκηστιν παρεπέμψατε Ἡρακλεῖ χαριζόμενοι.

as a punishment, and an emphasis on dirges and mournful songs being sung in the house of Admetus after Alcestis' death which derives from *Alcestis*, though he does include the variant in which Alcestis is sent back by Persephone as well as the Heracles version (in fact the latter part of the account is taken almost verbatim from Apollodorus). Zenobius' account will prove to be highly influential in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, ending up in a best-selling reference book via Erasmus' *Adages*, as we shall see.

Classical Latin sources show considerably less interest in Alcestis. No retelling of the story by a Roman author is extant, though she is still occasionally held up as an example. Ovid mentions Alcestis a couple of times as the model of an ideal wife. Perhaps it is a sign of her reduced status that in *Ex Ponto* he refers to her only as 'Admetus' wife' (*Admeti coniunx*, 3.1.106). Here, Ovid also compares his wife to Penelope, Andromache, Laodamia and Evadne; Alcestis appears again in the same company in *Tristia* (5.5.55-56), where Ovid praises virtue schooled in adversity. Here again, the other women are named, while Alcestis is not: he writes, 'When Pelias had so many daughters, why is only one famous? / Surely because only she was the wife of an unfortunate man'.[29] It is as though Alcestis' extreme act of self-abnegation is being reflected in the avoidance of her name: her identity is reduced entirely to her relations to her husband and father.

Revealingly, 'the closest that any Roman writer comes to telling the story'[30] consists of an attack on Admetus' behaviour rather than a paean to that of Alcestis. In his *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* (*Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*, 1st century AD), under the heading 'On Conjugal Love' (*De amore coniugali*, 4.6.1), Valerius Maximus writes:

> Ah, Admetus king of Thessaly, found guilty before that great judge, posterity, of a cruel and callous deed! You allowed your wife's death to be substituted for your own and when she had perished by a voluntary end to save you from

[29] *[C]um Pelia genitae tot sint, cur nobilis una est? / nempe fuit misero nupta quod una viro*.
[30] Parker, ed. *Euripides: Alcestis*, xxv.

> extinction you could look upon the light of day. And to be sure you had earlier made trial of your parents' affection.[31]

This negative attitude towards Admetus may explain why, as L.P.E. Parker puts it, 'for the poets of the late Republic and the Augustan Age Alcestis seems to have had little attraction as a romantic heroine'.[32] While Alcestis' action apparently affirms her husband's life as worth more than her own, her superior moral fibre simultaneously calls this into question.

By contrast, Latin authors are more interested in the section of the story which deals with Apollo performing the role of Admetus' shepherd, and especially the Hellenistic development in which he is Admetus' lover. In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid mentions the time Apollo wore a shepherd's cloak, and let the cattle stray because he was distracted by love (2.680-81). And in *The Art of Love* (2.239-40): 'Apollo is held to have pastured Admetus of Pherae's cattle, and sheltered in a little hut' (*Cynthius Admeti vaccas pavisse Pheraei / Fertur, et in parva delituisse casa*).[33] In Tibullus' *Elegies* (2.3.11), for love 'even lovely Apollo fed Admetus' cattle' (*pavit et Admeti tauros formosus Apollo*). Virgil refers to Apollo as the 'shepherd of Amphrysos' (*pastor ab Amphryso*, *Georgics* 3.2); Lucan describes how 'with pure stream the Amphrysos waters the pastures where Apollo served' (*flumine puro / inrigat Amphrysos famulantis pascua Phoebi*, *Civil War* 6.367-68); Statius (*Thebaid*, 5.432-35) mentions Apollo's servitude under Admetus. Apollo-as-shepherd offers an alternative, apparently more palatable, model of devoted love to the potentially subversive heroism of Alcestis.

Three later Latin sources contain brief accounts of the Alcestis story, which played an important role in its transmission through to the Renaissance period. Hyginus' *Fabulae* ('Alcestis', probably 2nd century AD) and Fulgentius' *Mythologies* 1.22 (probably 6th century AD) both relate the contest set up for Alcestis' hand by

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[31] *[O] te, Thessaliae rex Admete, crudelis et duri facti crimine sub magno iudice <posteritate> damnatum, qui coniugis tuae fata pro tuis permutari passus es, eaque, ne tu extinguerere, voluntario obitu consumpta lucem intueri potuisti! et certe parentum prius indulgentiam temptaveras.* Trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Valerius Maximus: Memorable Doings and Sayings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[32] Parker, ed. *Euripides: Alcestis*, xxv.

[33] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.122-24 also refers to Apollo as a shepherd, discussed below.

Pelias, and how Apollo helped Admetus to yoke a lion and a boar to a chariot and thus win her, followed by Apollo's arrangement of the death-substitution and Alcestis' volunteering her life for his, and finally how she was brought back by Hercules. They 'are sufficiently similar to imply a common source', though Leslie Whitbread does not consider it a case of direct influence.[34] In structure and essentials, both accounts are similar to Apollodorus, but the fact that both Latin authors omit certain elements such as the alternative ending in which Persephone returns Alcestis suggests that there was a different mutual source.[35] Fulgentius also adds an allegorical reading, interpreting the lion as strength of mind and the wild boar as strength of body, and prefaces the whole with a homily on women.

Probably due to his more overtly Christian stance, Fulgentius appears to have largely eclipsed Hyginus. Pierre Bersuire drew heavily on Fulgentius in his *Ovidius Moralizatus* (1340), as the verbal echoes between the two passages on Alcestis illustrate:

> *Admetus rex Greciae…Alcestam in coniugio accepit. Cumque in infirmitatem Admetus decidisset et mori se conperisset, Apollinem deprecatus est; ille vero dixit se ei aliquid [in infirmitate] non posse praestare, nisi si quis se de eius propinquis ad mortem pro eo voluntarie obtulisset.*[36] (Fulgentius)

> *Admetus rex graeciae: [A]lcestam accepit uxorem: qui cum infirmaret et mori deberet rogavit Apollinem ut ei parceret et quod ei vitam concederet. Respondit [A]pollo hoc nullo modo posse fieri nisi aliquis de amicis eius mori pro eo vellet.*[37] (Bersuire)

Bersuire also reproduces the detail that Hercules rescues Alcestis on his way back from fetching Cerberus from Fulgentius. He abbreviates Fulgentius' moralization upon women to an explanation that Alcestis is an example of 'the devotion of good women who love their husbands completely, such that through love of those very

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[34] Leslie George Whitbread, *Fulgentius the Mythographer* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1971), 22.

[35] And Apollodorus may not predate Hyginus.

[36] 'Admetus, king of Greece…took Alcestis as his wife. When Admetus fell into illness and realized that he was going to die, he begged Apollo to escape it: but Apollo said that he could not do anything for him in his illness, unless he obtained someone among those close to him to go to death for him voluntarily' (1.22).

[37] 'Admetus, king of Greece, took Alcestis as his wife; who when he fell ill and was sure to die, asked Apollo to spare him and grant him life. Apollo replied that this could in no way be unless someone among his friends was willing to die for him.' Pierre Bersuire, *Metamorphosis Ovidiana Moraliter Explanata* (Paris: Bade, 1509), Liber XV, XCIII[v].

husbands they would lay themselves open to death' (*de affectu bonarum mulierum quae viros suos perfecte diligunt ita quod amore ipsorum: se morti exponerent*) and continues with a more explicitly Christian reading, equating Hercules with Christ, rescuing the souls of the worthy from hell, or purgatory.[38]

An even more influential neo-Latin writer, Giovanni Boccaccio, also used Fulgentius in his *Genealogia Deorum Gentilium* (c.1360-74). Again, we have Admetus falling ill, and the Fulgentian formulation *non posse…nisi* (neither of which occur in Hyginus): *cum infirmaret Admetus implorassetque Apollinis auxilium, sibi ab Apolline dictum est eum mortem evadere non posse, nisi illam aliquis ex affinibus atque necessariis suis subiret* ('when Admetus fell ill and prayed for Apollo's help, he was told by Apollo that he could not escape death, unless someone from those near and dear to him would undergo it', 13.1.31). But Boccaccio also drew on another late Latin source, Lactantius Placidus' commentary on Statius (5th or 6th century AD), which he owned.[39] Fulgentius makes no mention of Admetus' grief, but Boccaccio specifies that 'pitying his wife he prayed so much to Hercules that he rushed to the underworld to recall her spirit to the world above' (*plurimum uxori compatiens Herculem oravit ut ad inferos vadens illius animam revocaret ad superos*, 13.1.31). This is one of the sparse details given by Lactantius, commenting on *Thebaid* 6.380-1, who was possibly influenced (directly or indirectly) by Zenobius. Lactantius records that 'when [Alcestis] was dead, since Admetus grieved unbearably, it is said that she was brought back from the underworld by the labours of Hercules' (*cum exstinctam Admetus impatienter doleret, Herculis laboribus ei reducta ab inferis dicitur*).[40] Parker considers that Boccaccio's account suggests that he did not know Euripides' play, since it preserves the non-Euripidean details of his sources (such as Admetus' illness), and does not mention Admetus' parents ('It is hard to believe that

[38] Bersuire, *Metamorphosis Ovidiana Moraliter Explanata*, Liber XV, XCIII[v].
[39] See Parker, ed. *Euripides: Alcestis*, xxv.
[40] R.D. Sweeney, ed. *Lactantii Placidi in Statii Thebaida Commentum*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1997), I, 413.

Boccaccio could have omitted them, had he known Euripides' play').[41] The Alcestis who was transmitted to the Medieval period, then, was distinctly non-Euripidean.

Alcestis in Middle English

Many of the classical sources which seem obscure to us were well-known to the Renaissance, receiving renewed attention as part of the humanist project. But the Alcestis story also experienced an unexpected flowering in Middle English literature. Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia* (1598) cites England's 'three auncient poets, Chaucer, Gower and Lydgate' as being parallel to the classical tradition, and recent work has stressed the extent to which 'the early modern was constructed through or in negotiation with the medieval', challenging 'the standard assumption of a distinct caesura between medieval and early modern texts'.[42] All three poets mentioned by Meres refer to Alcestis more than once, and all three are known to have been read by Shakespeare. Furthermore, the two plays that explicitly refer to medieval poets neatly frame *The Winter's Tale*, demonstrating that Shakespeare was engaged with this material at the time of its composition. In *Pericles*, a collaboration between Shakespeare and George Wilkins, 'ancient Gower' (1.0.2) appears as the Chorus, in what Richard Hillman calls 'the most sustained literary allusion to be found in Shakespeare'.[43] In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a collaboration between Shakespeare and Fletcher, the Prologue states that the 'story' is taken from 'Chaucer, of all admir'd' (13).

This 'story' is *The Knight's Tale*, which does not contain any references to Alcestis; Chaucer refers to her in *The Franklin's Tale*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, and *The Legend of Good Women*. *Troilus and Criseyde* is generally accepted as an important source for Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (1602), and there is evidence that he used *The Legend of Good Women* in *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), *Antony and Cleopatra*

[41] L.P.E. Parker, 'Alcestis: Euripides to Ted Hughes,' *Greece & Rome* 50, no. 1 (2003): 1-30 (5).
[42] Gordon McMullan and David Matthews, 'Introduction: Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England,' in *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, ed. Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-14 (14).
[43] Richard Hillman, 'Shakespeare's Gower and Gower's Shakespeare: The Larger Debt of *Pericles*,' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (1985): 427-37 (428).

(1606-7), and for Pyramus and Thisbe in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (written between 1590 and 1597).[44] J.H.P. Pafford cites *The Franklin's Tale* 1136 ('Anon for joye his herte gan to daunce') in a note to *The Winter's Tale* 1.2.110-11 ('my heart dances, / But not for joy – not joy'), though he considers that this was probably 'common usage'.[45] Lydgate's *Troy Book* has been seen as another influence on *Troilus and Cressida*, and a number of his minor poems were included in editions of Chaucer's works, first printed in 1532, and going through six editions by 1602.[46] A story in Book 8 of Gower's *Confessio Amantis* provides the plot for *Pericles*, and features one of the work's two retellings of the story of Alcestis. The interest in Alcestis in these works, then, merits further attention.

Euripides, like most other Greek sources, was largely unknown in fourteenth-century England, so the Fulgentius-Lactantius-Boccaccio and Fulgentius-Bersuire traditions were the primary sources for English writers for the details of the Alcestis story. But another significant influence was Jerome's catalogue of virtuous women in *Against Jovinian* (393 AD), amongst which 'fables relate that Alcestis died willingly for Admetus' (*Alcestin fabulae ferunt pro Admeto sponte defunctam*, 45). *The Franklin's Tale* includes a long speech modelled on Jerome, with 'Lo, which a wyf was Alceste' at 1442.[47] Though the allusion to Jerome is of primary significance here, the fact that Chaucer includes only her name, omitting Jerome's brief explanation, rather suggests that he expected readers to be familiar with the essential point. In Jerome, Alcestis appears in the same sentence as Penelope, and this pairing is persistent. In *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer claims that he would rather write about 'Penelopeës trouthe and good Alceste' (5.1777-78). This may look ahead to *The Legend of Good Women*; in *The Man of Law's Prologue* there is a more explicit reference to the *Legend* (the 'Seintes Legende of Cupide', 61) in which, the

[44] See Ann Thompson, *Shakespeare's Chaucer: A Study in Literary Origins* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978), 220-21.
[45] J.H.P. Pafford, ed. *The Winter's Tale* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2008), ad loc.
[46] See Kathleen Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha: A Counterfeit Canon* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001), 45-80.
[47] Chaucer's works are quoted from Larry Dean Benson and F.N. Robinson, eds., *The Riverside Chaucer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Man of Law declares, 'O Ypermystra, Penelopee, Alceste, / Youre wifhod he [Chaucer] commendeth with the beste!' (75-76).

A reader of *Troilus and Criseyde* would come away with a better sense of Alcestis' story than Jerome's passing reference offers. In Book 5, in response to Cassandra's prophecies of Criseyde's future infidelity, Troilus protests:

> As welt how myghtest lien on Alceste,
> That was of creatures, but men lye,
> That evere weren, kindest and the beste!
> For whan hire housbonde was in jupertye
> To dye himself but if she wolde dye,
> She ches for hym to dye and gon to helle,
> And starf anon, as us the bokes telle.
> (5.1527-33)

Once again, 'Alceste' is rhymed with 'beste', her status commensurate with her sacrifice and suffering. Troilus omits her resurrection; it is ominous that even his positive example of fidelity within a relationship ends in death. However, it is in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*[48] that Chaucer engages most creatively with Alcestis, assigning an importance to her which 'is otherwise without parallel in medieval art and literature'.[49]

The Prologue purports to describe the genesis of the *Legend*: Chaucer, after meditating on the daisy and a woman associated with it, falls asleep and dreams of meeting 'The god of love, and in his hand a quene' (213).[50] The god is angry with him for writing *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Romance of the Rose*, but the queen intercedes on his behalf and eventually he is commanded to write the *Legend of Good Women* in reparation. From the beginning the queen is also strongly associated with the daisy: she is dressed 'in real habit grene', with 'a whit corowne' with 'flourouns

[48] There are two versions of the Prologue from different manuscripts (F and G); I use F since this was the one printed in Renaissance editions.
[49] V.A. Kolve, 'From Cleopatra to Alceste: An Iconographic Study of *the Legend of Good Women*,' in *Signs and Symbols in Chaucer's Poetry*, ed. John P. Hermann and John J. Burke (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1981), 130-78 (172).
[50] Chaucer draws on the French genre of poetry which utilized the imagery of the daisy (or marguerite) in praise of a lady; in the Renaissance, Chaucer's lady was identified as Lady Margaret, daughter of Edward III, e.g. in Thomas Speght, ed. *The Workes of Our Antient and Learned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer* (London: various, 1598), sig.B4v.

smale', looking 'For al the world, right as a dayesye' (214-18). The green and white colour scheme of the daisy recurs repeatedly (241-42, 302-303, 341). The poet does not recognize her; her name is withheld until she names herself in her appeal to the god of love on Chaucer's behalf ('I, your Alceste, whilom quene of Trace, / Y aske yow…', 432-3). Even after this, when the god of love asks him if he knows who she is, he replies: 'Nay, sire, so have I blys, / No moore but that I see wel she is good' (505-506). This exchange initiates an important climax within the Prologue, as Chaucer comes 'to understand the true significance of the lady dressed like a daisy'.[51] This is not simply a case of learning her name or her story, which, the god of love points out, he already knows:

> Hastow nat in a book, lyth in thy cheste,
> The grete goodnesse of the quene Alceste,
> That turned was into a dayesye;
> She that for hire housbonde chees to dye,
> And eke to goon to helle, rather than he,
> And Ercules rescowed hire, parde,
> And broght hir out of helle agayn to blys?
> (510-16)

Chaucer is finally ready to appreciate the overlapping significances of the daisy, his lady, and Alcestis. Florence Percival observes that his reply demonstrates the experience of 'a profound insight',[52] represented syntactically by the bringing together of the three figures: 'Yis, / Now knowe I hire. And is this good Alceste, / The dayesie, and myn owene hertes reste?' (517-19).

The 'book' that lies in Chaucer's chest is less straightforward than Troilus' 'bokes' that tell the story of Alcestis. No book before the *Legend* related that she was turned into a daisy. The real Chaucer builds a literary history of Alcestis for the fictional Chaucer to 'remember': in honour of Alcestis 'Cibella maade the dayseye and the flour / Ycrowned al with whit' (531-32). He invents a citation for Alcestis' purported stellification: 'No wonder ys thogh Jove hire stellyfye, / As telleth Agaton, for hire goodnesse!' (525-26). Plato's *Symposium* was known in the Middle

[51] Florence Percival, *Chaucer's Legendary Good Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 49.
[52] Percival, *Chaucer's Legendary Good Women*, 54.

Ages as *Agato's Feast*; it does mention Alcestis, though says nothing about stars.[53] In Ovid several women are made into constellations; this development was probably suggested to Chaucer by the star-like appearance of the daisy. The daisy serves as the central linking motif because of what Chaucer describes as 'the resureccioun / Of this flour, whan that yt shulde unclose / Agayn the sonne' (110-12), just as Alcestis was brought 'out of helle agayn to blys' (516). Chaucer intended Alcestis' story to be told in full as the final piece in the *Legend*, which unfortunately remains incomplete.[54] V.A. Kolve considers that 'Chaucer was attracted to the legend of Alcestis chiefly in its typological dimension'; her centrality is due to the fact that of all the twenty stories originally intended, 'she alone…points toward Christ'.[55]

Chaucer's treatment of Alcestis clearly inspired a later work, the anonymous *Court of Love* (c.1535).[56] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this was included in printed editions of Chaucer's works from Thynne onwards, and even 'considered among Chaucer's greatest achievements', consequently having 'a reception history that far surpasses any of Chaucer's authentic minor poems'.[57] In it, the protagonist Philogenet comes to the court of love, where he meets the King and Queen of love – Admetus and Alceste. The debt to the *Legend* is clear. Chaucer's daisy motif appears again: the castle of love is described as 'Withynne and oute depeynted wonderly, / With many a thousand daisy, rede as rose, / And white also' (101-102). With a sideways glance at the failure of Chaucer's narrator to identify Alceste, the author claims: 'whate tho the deyses might do signifie, / Can I not tell' (103-104), even as in the same breath he ensures that the reader has made the connection ('sauf that the

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[53] See Percival, *Chaucer's Legendary Good Women*, 54: 'It is not known how Chaucer could have been aware that Alcestis' story was related in Plato's *Symposium*'; he may have heard about it 'on one of his journeys to Italy, where there is manuscript evidence that the work was known at the time.' Martial's epigram 4.75 reads *nec minor Alcestin fama sub astra ferat*; 'let no lesser fame carry Alcestis to the stars' (6), trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Martial: Epigrams* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 319.

[54] Cf. the God of Love's command at 548-50.

[55] Kolve, 'From Cleopatra to Alceste,' 173; 74. How genuine Chaucer's praise of good women is in the *Legend* is debated, but the treatment of Alcestis seems to be unironic. See Kolve, 'From Cleopatra to Alceste,' 177; Percival, *Chaucer's Legendary Good Women*, 59.

[56] Quoted from Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha: A Selection* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2005).

[57] Forni, *Counterfeit Canon*, 12-13.

quenes floure, / Alceste yit was', 104-105). But no mention is made of Alceste's self-sacrifice; here the focus is all on outward appearance. This Alceste has eyes that shoot darts, and hair like gold, and is wearing purple and a crown set with jewels – the costume of a queen – but there is no substance underneath. Perhaps the point is that these daisies, unlike Chaucer's, really do signify nothing. There is no moral allegory to discover beneath the surface – these are not real daisies, but painted ones.

The pseudo-Chaucerian *Court of Love* is not the only work to pick up on Chaucer's introduction of the daisy motif. It seems to have appealed to Lydgate, who uses it explicitly in two poems, 'A Poem Against Self-Love' and *The Temple of Glass*, and implicitly in another, 'The Churl and the Bird'.[58] In *The Temple of Glass*, she comes in a catalogue of virtuous women, after Penelope and before Griselda:

> And aldernext was the fresh[e] quene,
> I mene Alceste, the noble trew[e] wyfe,
> And for Admete hou sh[e] lost hir life,
> And for hir trouth, if I shal not lie,
> Hou she was turnyd to a dai[e]sie.
>
> (70-74)

The story is compressed in 'A Poem Against Self-Love' to the point that the daisy is described as 'Alcestis flower, with white, with red and greene', which 'Displaieth hir crown geyn Phebus bemys brihte' (13-14). Using 'Alcestis flower' as a circumlocution for 'daisy' surely indicates the familiarity of the device. Similarly, in 'The Churl and the Bird', Lydgate uses 'at the rising of the Queene Alceste' (68) to mean 'at dawn', referring to the etymology of daisy (day's eye) and its association with resurrection due to opening every morning to the sun, both mentioned in the *Legend*. Once again, knowledge of these connections is expected on the part of the reader if Lydgate's cryptic formulation is to be intelligible.

More straightforwardly, Lydgate refers briefly to Alcestis in several other catalogues of female virtue. In 'The Flour of Curtesy' the lady is described as

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[58] Lydgate's works are quoted from H.N. MacCracken and Merriam Sherwood, eds., *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934) and J. Schick, ed. *Lydgate's Temple of Glas* (Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint, 1975).

'Kynde as Alcest' (198); 'Wicked Tungue' invokes 'of Alcest the trewe affeccioun' (117); and in 'A Ballade of Her that hath All Virtues' the lady is said to have the 'bounte, beaute' and 'excellence / Of queene Alceste' (11-12).[59] *Reason and Sensuality* contains a slightly longer passage on the example of Alcestis, which, like Troilus', omits her resurrection in order to focus on her sacrifice. Alcestis 'mekely…ches to goon vn-to hir grave / Wilfuly' (6829-11) to save her husband, making her 'Merour and patronesse, / To yive example of stedfasteness' to 'wyfes al[le]' (6833-36). The description of Alcestis as 'meek' and 'steadfast', fits well with the semantic field she has accrued already – 'excellence', 'kynde', 'trewe affeccioun', 'noble trewe wyfe', 'trouth'. The idea of 'trouth', also strongly associated with Penelope, will emerge as being central to Gower's conception of Alcestis in his *Confessio Amantis*.

The fourteenth-century poet John Gower, friend of Chaucer and author of *Confessio Amantis*, remained a 'widely read and greatly admired figure who was part of a living tradition of English poetry'[60] well into the seventeenth century, with considerable 'cultural capital in early modern England'.[61] In the *Confessio Amantis*, first printed by William Caxton in 1483 (and subsequently by Thomas Berthelette in 1532, reprinted in 1554),[62] Alcestis is of considerable thematic importance. Book 8 features a brief retelling of the story of 'Alceste',

> Which whanne Ametus scholde dye
> Upon his grete maladye,
> Sche preide unto the goddess so,
> That sche recyveth al the wo
> And deide hirself to give him life:
> Lo, if this were a noble wif.
> (8.2641-46)[63]

[59] *The Flower of Courtesy* and *Wicked Tongue* were among several poems by Lydgate printed in editions of Chaucer's *Workes* from Thynne's edition in 1535 onwards. They were unattributed in Thynne's edition; Stow's 1561 edition attributed them to Lydgate.
[60] Hillman, 'Shakespeare's Gower,' 428.
[61] Edward Gieskes, '"Chaucer (of All Admired) the Story Gives": Shakespeare, Medieval Narrative, and Generic Innovation,' in *Renaissance Papers 2009*, ed. Christopher Cobb (New York, NY: Camden House, 2010), 85-110 (95).
[62] See Siân Echard, 'Gower in Print,' in *A Companion to Gower*, ed. Siân Echard (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), 115-35 (115-17).
[63] Quoted from Russell Peck, ed. *John Gower: Confessio Amantis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

This synopsis comes in the context of a lengthy catalogue. Alceste herself, however, does not form one of the crowd, but is set apart in an important sub-section of 'foure wyves' who are the 'essample of alle goode / With mariage' (2615; 2617-18). Kurt Olsson argues that these 'foure wyves' are of crucial significance both to Amans' spiritual journey and to Gower's conception of love and marriage. They are deliberately placed here, 'in the last major episode of the work, the vision that occasions Amans's conversion', because '[b]y their example and in their suffering, these women not only teach fidelity in marriage, but also teach what intimacy, in individual and relational aspects, should be'.[64] The 'foure wyves', in other words, represent Gower's creative response to that 'paradox of medieval ideals concerning marriage, which was supposed to be *both* egalitarian *and* hierarchical'.[65] In offering her own life as the ultimate sacrifice for her husband's, Alceste simultaneously demonstrates her own female capacity for bravery, nobility, and generosity, and reaffirms the greater value of her husband's life over her own.

Earlier in the *Confessio*, the story is told at greater length (7.1917-43): 'the duke Ametus' (1917) lying sick, 'Alceste his wif' (1920) goes to pray 'With sacrifice unto Minerve' (1922). At last a voice tells her that if she will take his illness upon herself and die from it, he will live. Since this 'Sche ches with al hir hole entente' (1935), the story concludes: 'And thereupon withinne a throwe / This goode wif was overthowe / And deide, and he was hool in haste' (1941-3). Here, the story does not come as part of a catalogue, but in a tale-within-a-tale. Genius tells Amans the story of 'King, Wine, and Women', in which King Darius summons three advisors to determine which is mightiest. The third advisor, Zorobabel, argues for women, telling the story of how the concubine Apemen held complete sway over the tyrant Cyrus. He continues: 'A womman is the mannes bote, / His lif, his deth, his wo, his wel' (1912-13), and demonstrates 'that women ben goode and kinde' (1915) through the example of Alcestis. There is no mention of Alcestis in Gower's sources[66]; this is

[64] Kurt Olsson, 'Love, Intimacy, and Gower,' *The Chaucer Review* 30, no. 1 (1995): 71-100 (86).
[65] Olsson, 'Love, Intimacy, and Gower', 80.
[66] See Linda Burke, 'The Sources and Significance of The "Tale of King, Wine, Women, and Truth" in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*,' *Greyfriar* 21 (1980): 3-15.

a deliberate addition, which significantly shifts the terms of the debate. Zorobabel concludes by arguing that, after God, what is 'myhtiest' (1949) is the 'trouthe of women' (1945); this quickly shifts to 'Truth' in the abstract, so that 'Truth comes as an unexpected candidate, outside the original bargain'.[67] This prefigures the pattern of the ending of the entire work, in which 'our "*confessio amantis*" ends on an unexpected turn: charity displaces cupidity; Truth, the unannounced candidate, claims the field'.[68] The fact that, as Olsson argues, 'Alcestis exemplifies truth' puts her at the heart of the concerns of the *Confessio Amantis*.

In *Pericles*, Shakespeare and Wilkins resurrect the poet of the *Confessio Amantis*: 'From ashes ancient Gower is come' (1.0.2). Perhaps the reunification of Pericles with the wife he thought was dead in 5.3 also reflects the spirit of the story of Alcestis,[69] but if so it is not the one told in the *Confessio*: Gower's Alceste remains dead. In fact, the medieval Alceste seems to leave little trace in Shakespeare, or in Renaissance literature in general. Chaucer's popular daisy motif seems to simply disappear so completely as to imply a deliberate rejection of an obsolete tradition. Lucy Munro has argued that archaism is used in *Pericles* to 'resist obsolescence, insisting…that Gower still [has] an active place in modern literary culture and that [its] authors will likewise survive the passage of time'.[70] But resurrecting Gower does not mean reproducing Gower, and the medieval Alceste, it seems, is sacrificed to the passage of time. What the medieval tradition can reveal are the modes of reading and interpreting the story which were familiar to the early humanists, forming an unconscious framework for future receptions. Two major elements were cemented in the medieval tradition: a strong sense of Alcestis as the epitome of the ideal wife, familiar from catalogues of good women, and the interpretation of her story as a moral and Christian allegory. Both features will leave their mark on Renaissance receptions of the story, Shakespeare's not excluded. But first we must

[67] Russell Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit in Gower's Confessio Amantis* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), 144.
[68] Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit*, 144.
[69] Suggested by Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 187.
[70] Lucy Munro, *Archaic Style in English Literature, 1590-1674* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 9.

turn to the primary port of call for anyone wishing to look up a classical reference in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: the dictionary.

Renaissance Dictionaries

Thomas Cooper's *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae* (1565) was one of the most popular and influential reference books in England in the latter part of the sixteenth century. It was reprinted in 1573, 1578, 1584, and 1587, and was 'the recognized authority in the schools and among scholars generally in the last quarter of the sixteenth century'.[71] Moreover, 'a copy of Cooper had been in the common library at Stratford-Upon-Avon since 1565',[72] and Baldwin has demonstrated that Shakespeare 'pretty clearly used Cooper constantly as his Latin-English reference dictionary'.[73] Renaissance students, DeWitt Starnes and Ernest Talbert illustrate, might 'become familiar…with the proper-noun entries' of the dictionaries in their school libraries through being set exercises in Latin (or Greek) composition based on them.[74] The entry for Alcestis in Cooper's *Thesaurus* is based on a passage in Erasmus' *Adages*, which in turn is based on Zenobius. But the transmission of the Alcestis story in the sixteenth century was by no means as unilateral as this implies. Tracing the history of Cooper's reference book produces a comprehensive map of the most prominent strands of the story as they were available to sixteenth-century readers.

Cooper's *Thesaurus* evolved out of the *Bibliotheca Eliotae*, which was first printed in 1538 as *The Dictionary of Syr Thomas Eliot Knyght*. This was the first Renaissance Latin-English vernacular dictionary, and the first reference book printed in English to refer to itself as a dictionary. In Elyot's initial draft, neither Alcestis nor Admetus were included, but he reports in his preface that following Henry VIII's encouragement and offer of the use of the royal library he 'caused the

[71] DeWitt Starnes and Ernest Talbert, *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 4.
[72] Starnes and Talbert, *Classical Myth*, 18.
[73] Baldwin, *Shakspere's Small Latine,* I, 715.
[74] Starnes and Talbert, *Classical Myth*, 20-21.

printer to cesse', so that he could make additions.[75] One of the books he found in the King's library was evidently Herman Torrentinus' *Elucidarius Poeticus* (1498), which was the first classical dictionary exclusively of proper names. Here, Elyot found an entry for 'Alceste, vel Alcestis', which he translated fairly closely:

> Alceste, seu Alcestis, the wyfe of Admetus the kinge of the people callid Pherei, who being sicke, and hauing answere of the goddis, that he shuld escape dethe, if any of his kynne or frendes wold die for him willingly, whan all men and women refused it, only Alceste his wife consented therto, and willyngly dyed.[76] (Elyot)

> *Alcesta vel Alcestis fuit uxor [A]dmeti regis thessaliae, quae pro viri salute se morti tradidit. Nam rege aegrotante responsum fuit ab oraculo quod brevi moreretur nisi quis amicorum pro eo morti se traderet, quod cum omnes recusarent, ipsa promptissimam se obtulit.*[77] (Torrentinus)

However, Elyot substitutes 'the kinge of the people callid Pherei' for *regis Thessaliae*, which suggests that he was aware of the story from another source as well.

Torrentinus' entry ultimately derives from Boccaccio, via the *Cornucopia Lingua Latina* (1489) of Niccolò Perotti (Nicholas Perottus). Perotti's *Cornucopia*, the first Renaissance-authored reference book to feature Alcestis, is an encyclopaedic commentary on Martial's epigrams, with an alphabetical index which allows it to function like a dictionary. In Book 4, epigram 75, Martial briefly alludes to Alcestis' death[78]; however, Perotti's index directs those looking for 'Alceste' to his commentary on *De Spectabilis* 8 (6B in modern editions). It comes under a lengthy section on the labours of Hercules; the 1489 edition helpfully indicates the relevant passage with 'Alceste' printed in the margin. Perotti clearly found the story in Boccaccio, who also includes it among the labours of Hercules. The close verbal echoes in the core of the account are plain:

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[75] Thomas Elyot, *The Dictionary of Syr Thomas Eliot Knyght* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1538), sig.A3r.
[76] Elyot, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'Alceste'.
[77] 'Alcesta or Alcestis was the wife of Admetus king of Thessaly, who for the health of her husband consigned herself to death. For the king being sick and having answer from the oracle, that he would shortly die, unless any of his friends would consign themselves to death for him, which when all refused, she very willingly offered herself.' Herman Torrentinus, *Elucidarius Poeticus* (Deventer: Richard Pafraet, 1498), s.v. 'Alceste'.
[78] See n.55 above.

> *Hercules Alcesten quoque ab inferis ad virum retraxit. Alceste Admeti regis coniunx fuit, et filiarum Peliae Thessaliae regis formosissima. Haec virum suum usque adeo dilexit, ut in gravi morbo cum oraculo Apollinis didicisset, non posse eum aliter mortem evadere, nisi aliquis pro eo moreretur, voluntariam ipsa pro salute viri mortem subierit.*[79] (Perotti)

> *Alchistam Admeti regis Thessalie coniugem retraxit ad virum. Dicunt enim quod, cum infirmaret Admetus implorassetque Apollinis auxilium, sibi ab Apolline dictum est eum mortem evadere non posse, nisi illam aliquis ex affinibus atque necessariis suis subiret. Quod cum audisset Alchista coniunx non dubitavit vitam suam pro salute viri concedere.*[80] (Boccaccio)

In his address to the reader, Torrentinus records 'Perrotus' as one of his sources,[81] and it does seem that he is paraphrasing Perroti rather than Boccaccio. Where Boccaccio simply states that Admetus asked for Apollo's help, Perroti introduces the idea of the oracle (*oraculo*), a detail reproduced by Torrentinus. Certain resemblances to Lactantius aside from brevity (Torrentinus: *Alcestis fuit uxor Admeti*, Lactantius: *Alceste Admeti uxor fuit*; Torrentinus: *se obtulit*, Lactantius: *sese obtulit*) may indicate influence.

Torrentinus' *Elucidarius* was revised and reissued several times by the Estienne printing dynasty, eventually evolving into Charles Estienne (Carolus Stephanus)'s *Dictionarium Historicum ac Poeticum* of 1553. The entry for 'Alceste' is directly based on Torrentinus, in slightly condensed form.[82] This is followed by a quotation of Juvenal's reference to Alcestis in Satire 6 (*spectant subeuntem fata mariti /*

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[79] Niccolò Perotti, *Cornucopia Lingua Latina* (Venice: Paganino Paganini, 1489), 204[r]: 'Hercules also brought back Alcestis from the underworld. Alcestis was the wife of king Admetus, and the most beautiful of the daughters of Pelias, king of Thessaly. She loved her husband so much that when he was seriously ill and had learned from the oracle of Apollo that he could not otherwise avoid death, unless someone would die for him, she voluntarily underwent death for the health of her husband.' Translation adapted from Parker ed., *Euripides: Alcestis*, xxv.

[80] Boccaccio, *Geanealogia*, 13.1.31: 'He brought back Alcestis, wife of Admetus king of Thessaly, to her husband. For they say that when Admetus was ill and had begged the aid of Apollo, he was told by Apollo that he could not avoid death, unless someone else from those near and dear to him would undergo it. When his wife, Alcestis, heard this, she did not hesitate to give her own life for the health of her husband.'

[81] Torrentinus, *Elucidarius*, sig.A1v.

[82] Charles Estienne, *Dictionarium historicum ac poeticum* (Paris: Estienne, 1553), s.v. 'Alceste': *uxor Admeti regis Thessaliae, quo aegrotante, responsum fuit ab oraculo, quod brevi moreretur, nisi quis amicorum pro eo morti se traderet. Quod quam omnes recusarent, ipsa promptissimam se obtulit*.

Alcestim; 'they watch Alcestis undergo the fate of her husband', 652-3), probably suggested by Perotti, who cited the same passage. Estienne, who was evidently familiar with Euripides, finishes with a note directing readers to find further detail *apud Euripidem in Alceste*.[83] The Boccaccio legacy, then, was preserved in Estienne's *Dictionarium*, which was reprinted numerous times throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries both in Europe and in England, and was, according to Starnes and Talbert, 'especially cherished by English poets and dramatists in the Renaissance'.[84] There is some justification, then, for Parker's claim that Boccaccio's version 'proves almost the standard' for the Renaissance.[85] However, Elyot's revised dictionary of 1542, renamed the *Bibliotheca Eliotae*, contains an entirely re-written version of the Alcestis story, from an entirely different source. Gabriele Stein reports that in revising his dictionary for the second edition, one of Elyot's 'major preoccupations was an augmentation of the encyclopedic entries providing biographical and historical sketches of people, events, countries, and cities, and of legendary beings, beliefs, and customs'; another was 'proverbs and their exposition'.[86] In the case of Alcestis, Elyot both augments his entry and manages to relate it to a proverb; he found his new material in Erasmus' *Adages*.

Erasmus takes the adage *Admeti naenia* ('Admetus' lament', 2.6.22) and the account of the story from Zenobius, and Elyot in turn took them from Erasmus, with some editing. The new source explains the new emphasis on Admetus; in Elyot's revised edition, looking up 'Alceste, seu Alcestis' produces the instruction to 'loke before in Admetus', where we find:

> Admetus, was kynge of a people callyd Pherei, unto whome Apollo (beynge exiled oute of heauen by Jupyter) came for reliefe, and kepte his cattelle, and by his crafte, caused euery cowe to brynge forthe two calues, whyche thynge Admetus thankefullys takinge, entertayned hym honourably. That beynge welle

[83] The Estiennes specialised in editions of classical texts. Charles' nephew Henri published *Tragoediae Selectae Aeschyli, Sophoclis, Euripidis* in 1567, which included *Alcestis* in Greek and in Buchanan's Latin translation; Henri's son Paul produced the 1602 Geneva edition of Euripides' works (see Chapter 6).
[84] Starnes and Talbert, *Classical Myth*, 9.
[85] Parker, 'Alcestis: Euripides to Ted Hughes,' 5.
[86] Gabriele Stein, *Sir Thomas Elyot as Lexicographer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 346-47.

> considered of Apollo, he opteined of the destenies callyd Parcae, that whan the day of the deathe of Admetus shulde be wounde upon theyr spyndels, he shuld escape death upon this condition, that yf he coulde fynde any other, that wold wyllyngely dye for hym, he hym selfe shoulde escape deathe at that tym. Whan the day was come that Admetus shulde fynysshe his lyfe, all men and women (yea the father and mother of Admetus) refused to dy, only Alceste his wife preferred the lyfe of her husband before her owne, who beyng dead, there was in the palayce of Admetus contynual waylyng and heuynesse, untyll Proserpina moued with compassion, sente Alceste agayne out of Helle untylle her husbande. Of this fable came the sayde prouerbe Admeti naenia.[87]

The entry directly above is for 'Admeti naenia': 'a prouerbe which signifieth an heuy or sorowfull songe, or a lamentable complaynte'.[88] In the margin, there is a symbol which marks it out as a proverb, and a citation: 'Eras.chil.2.cent.6'. Elyot's revision ensured that the Zenobius-Erasmus version was at least as influential in England as that of Boccaccio. After the 1542 *Bibliotheca*, Elyot himself produced one more edition in 1545. Three more editions were released in 1548, 1552, and 1559 under Thomas Cooper's editorship. In all of these the entries for Admetus and Alcestis remained essentially the same. When Cooper published his own *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae & Britannicae* in 1565, Admetus and Alcestis were carried over into it unaltered.[89]

The dictionaries were an important resource for writers and readers alike. No knowledge of Euripides was required to understand (or make) a reference to Alcestis; all you needed was a dictionary. However, the use of a dictionary entry as a source does not preclude a knowledge of Euripides' play. Indeed, some sources direct the reader's attention to Euripides, while Cooper/Elyot cites Erasmus, who cites Euripides. As we shall see, the influence of the dictionaries, particularly (but not exclusively) Cooper, is clear from the fingerprints they have left in the accounts

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[87] Thomas Elyot, *Bibliotheca Eliotae* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1542), s.v. 'Admetus'; reproduced in Cooper, *Thesaurus*, s.v. 'Admetus'.
[88] Elyot, *Bibliotheca*, s.v. 'Admeti naenia'.
[89] Subsequent dictionaries appear less interested in Alcestis than the Cooper/Elyot family. Thomas Thomas, *Dictionarium Linguae Latinae & Anglicanae* (London: John Legat, 1589), s.v. 'Admetus': 'King of Thessalie, whose cowheard Apollo was a yeere, being exiled out of heaven for killing the Cyclopes'. Henry Cockeram, *English Dictionarie* (London: Edmund Weaver, 1623), s.v. 'Admetus': 'King of Thessaly, Apollo was his cowheard: Alceste his wife for him did dye'.

of various sixteenth-century writers. References to Alcestis in literary works tend to cluster in places where discussions of female virtue form important contexts, particularly in the popular genre of prose romance.

Alcestis, Women, and Popular Literature

Prose romances often presented themselves as non-elite literature written for the middle-class 'gentleman', or indeed 'gentlewoman', so the number of references to Alcestis in these works suggests that the story had a relatively wide currency. They frequently included 'dedicatory prefaces and incidental narrative asides which specifically addressed "gentlewomen" readers'.[90] As a result, '[b]y the early seventeenth century, foolish female readers of romance had become favourite subjects for satirists and moralists'.[91] In 1615, a satirical sketch featured a chambermaid who 'reads Greenes workes over and over, but is so carried away with the *Myrrour of Knighthood*, she is many times resolv'd to run out of her selfe, and become a Ladie Errant'.[92] The subject-matter, too, it has been suggested, is particularly female-centric, featuring 'protofeminist narrative ingredients, like frankness about sexual matters, and the centrality of independent female characters'.[93] Helen Hackett considers that 'ideas of a large Elizabethan female readership for romance are exaggerated', and that earlier romances were still written for a largely male audience; what is significant is that 'these authors wished their works to be *perceived* as directed at gentlewomen'.[94]

While the chambermaid may not represent the average reader of the genre, Hackett affirms that '[i]n Munday's translations the Iberian romances were already aiming at an audience less aristocratic than that addressed by the French translations or by recent original English romances like the *Arcadia*', and that this

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[90] Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4.
[91] Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, 4.
[92] Thomas Overbury et al., *New and Choise Characters of Severall Authors*, 6th ed. (London: Laurence Lisle, 1615), sig.¶4v.
[93] Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, 5.
[94] Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, 9-10.

'slide down the class scale continued'.[95] Whoever else was reading them, one confirmed reader of prose romances was Shakespeare. Robert Greene's *Pandosto* is famous as the primary source for *The Winter's Tale*; the name 'Mamillius' may have been suggested by *Mamillia*, and Shakespeare may have taken details for Autolycus' exploits from Greene's cony-catching pamphlets.[96] Gary Schmidgall has proposed Antony Munday's *Primaleon* (1595) as a source for *The Tempest*[97] in which it is said that the heroine

> would willingly have done that for [her lover] (to save him from death) which Alceste whilom Queene of Thessalie, would only have enterprised for Admetus her husband, after she understood by the Oracle, that any one of his friends, who would die in his stead, might save his life, which else in no wise might be preserved.[98]

The most significant re-telling of the story, however, comes in George Pettie's *A Petite Pallace of Pettie His Pleasure* (1576), featuring the story of 'Admetus and Alcest'.[99] Critics who see the figure of Alcestis as significant for *The Winter's Tale* but are wary of claiming Euripidean influence point out that Shakespeare would have known the story through Pettie.[100]

Pettie's tale bears little resemblance to Euripides.[101] Admetus is 'son to Atys, King of Lybia', and Alcest is 'daughter to Lycabas, King of Assur'; their love is opposed by their parents, but they run away and marry secretly. After the death of Admetus' father he becomes king, and finally (in Pettie's summary), '[t]he destinies grant him a double date of life if he can find one to die for him, which Alcest herself performeth; for whose death Admetus most wofully lamenting, she was eftsoons by

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[95] Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, 65.
[96] On evidence for *Pandosto's* early readership, see Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), 86-87.
[97] Gary Schmidgall, '*The Tempest* and *Primaleon*: A New Source,' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (1986): 423-39.
[98] Antony Munday, *The First Booke of Primaleon of Greece* (London: Cuthbert Burby, 1595), 26.
[99] Gollancz, ed. *Petite Pallace of Pettie*, I, 169-97.
[100] E.g. Susan Snyder and Deborah T. Curren-Aquino, eds., *The Winter's Tale* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 71 n.195.
[101] Pettie does emphasize Admetus' hospitality, mentioned only in passing in Cooper and other sources, but central to *Alcestis*.

Proserpina restored to life, and lover again'.[102] Starnes and Talbert demonstrate that Cooper is the primary source for the classical elements of the story,[103] which Pettie combines with a plot taken from William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566), and some invented business with love letters. Pettie's *Pallace* was highly popular, going through at least six editions by 1613.[104] In Greene's *Gwydonius*, written almost a decade later,

> Whenas the bloody wars between Atys, the king of Libya, and Lycabas, the prince of Assur was most hot, young Admetus, being sent ambassador into Libya, was so stricken in love with Alcest, only daughter to his father's foe, and she repaying his liking with such loyalty as death itself could never dissolve their amity.[105]

Greene, as we shall see, also knew the more familiar shape of the story, but Pettie's version is entirely suited to the circumstances of Greene's speaker here. Thersandro has been sent to Leucippa's father's court as an ambassador for peace between their countries – a mission which has failed – and has fallen in love with her. Pettie's invention has become enshrined as myth within another fiction.

The year after Pettie's *Pallace*, John Grange's early prose romance, *The Golden Aphroditis* (1577) featured the story of Admetus and Alcestis as part of a 'discourse of chaste Matrones'.[106] Again, Grange's primary source is Cooper, though he calls Admetus 'kynge of Thessalia' rather than 'kynge of a people callyd Pherei'[107]; perhaps he had read Lodowick Lloyd's 1573 compilation, *The Pilgrimage of Princes* ('penned out of sundry Greeke and Latine aucthours'), which describes 'Alcestes' (highlighted in the margin) as 'a noble Queene of *Tessalie*, at what time King Admetus hir husbande shoulde die, having by an Oracle given an aunswere, that if

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[102] Gollancz, ed. *Petite Pallace of Pettie*, I, 169.
[103] Starnes and Talbert, *Classical Myth*, 33. Compare Cooper: 'obteyned of the destinies'; Pettie: 'of the destinies of death [Apollo] obtained…'; 'which he [Apollo] obtained of the destinies for you'. Cooper: Proserpina, moved with compassion, sent Alceste again out of hell unto her husband'; Pettie: 'Proserpina…especially pitying the parting of this loving couple…put life into his wife again, and with speed sent her unto him'. Gollancz ed. *Petite Pallace of Pettie*, 192; 195.
[104] See Arthur Kinney et al., ed. *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Tudor England* (New York, NY: Garland, 2001), 544.
[105] Robert Greene, *Gwydonius: The Card of Fancie* (London: William Ponsonby, 1584), 51[v].
[106] John Grange, *The Golden Aphroditis* (London: Henry Bynneman, 1577), sig.F2r.
[107] Grange, *Golden Aphroditis*, sig.F2r. See Starnes and Talbert, *Classical Myth and Legend*, 41.

any woulde die for the King he should live: which when all refused, his wyfe Queene *Alcestes* offred hir selfe to die to save her husbands life'.[108] Allott seems to have lifted his entry for 'Alcestes' under 'Of Marriage' in his compendium or commonplace book *Wits Theater of the Little World* (1599) straight from Lloyd, a little condensed.[109]

These examples illustrate that the Alcestis story, as it appears in sixteenth-century prose, exists in a multiplicity of continually evolving forms. It is excerpted, transformed, and re-excerpted by prose writers, who alter and extemporise freely. The core element of the story which does not change is that Alcestis died to save her husband's life; writers frequently appear to assume that this fundamental point is known to their readers already, needing no explanation. Although no other writer gives the story such prominence as Pettie, references to it are common enough that Alcestis as a self-sacrificing wife might be said to have entered the vocabulary of prose romance. In Greene's *Alcida* (subtitled *Greene's Metamorphosis*, 1617), for instance, Eriphilia tells her lover: 'Be thou but Admetus, and I will be Alcest',[110] though in the event it is her lover who proves constant and Eriphilia who is unable to live up to the ideal of Alcestis. The irony, which Greene does not explain, can only be appreciated with a knowledge of the essential point.

It is not incidental that the satirized chambermaid was reading Greene. His works have been identified as having a particularly strong 'focus on female characters', which Steve Mentz considers to be at least in part a marketing strategy, aimed at setting himself apart from other writers of prose fiction through 'his resistance to the masculine force idolized by chivalric romance'.[111] Correspondingly, references to Alcestis appear in four separate works by Greene: not only *Gwydonius*

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[108] Lodowick Lloyd, *The Pilgrimage of Princes* (London: William Jones, 1573), sig.GG3r. Lloyd's account appears to be from Torrentinus (cf. Lloyd 'having by an Oracle given an aunswere'; Torrentinus: *responsum fuit ab oraculo*).
[109] Robert Allott, *Wits Theater of the Little World* (London: Nicholas Ling, 1599), 109[r-v].
[110] Robert Greene, *Alcida: Greenes Metamorphosis* (London: George Purslowe, 1617), sig.G3v. See also Nicholas de Montreux, *Honours Academie*, trans. Robert Tofte (London: Thomas Creede, 1610), 24; 94; 124; 80.
[111] Steve Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England: The Rise of Prose Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 42.

and *Alcida*, but also *Mamillia, The Second Part of the Triumph of Pallas* (1593), and *Philomela, The Lady Fitzwater's Nightingale* (printed 1592 but probably composed in the 1580s). *Alcida* and *Philomela* both position themselves explicitly in the context of debates over women's virtues. *Alcida* purports to be Greene's account of 'a sophistical disputation' that 'fell out among…gentlewomen about their own qualities', which he happened to be privy to,[112] while the dedicatory epistle to *Philomela* claims that it was 'penned at the request of a countess in this land to approve women's chastity'.[113] In *Philomela*, the eponymous heroine uses Alcestis as an example of wifely virtue to inspire her own behaviour, asking herself: 'Why else did Alcest die for Admetus…if it were not that wives ought to end their lives with their loves?'[114]

The second part of *Mamillia*, similarly, is subtitled: 'Wherein with perpetual fame the constancy of gentlewomen is canonized, and the unjust blasphemies of women's supposed fickleness (breathed out by divers injurious persons) by manifest examples clearly infringed', and presents a debate over the nature of women within the fiction. A digression in the narrative voice argues 'that for inconstancy men are far more worthy to be condemned than women to be accused', and gives the catalogue of virtuous women we have come to expect – except that it isn't.[115] While some examples are straightforward ('Who [was] so affectioned to his wife as Cornelia was to Gracchus?'), others contain obvious errors; Portia did not swallow burning coals 'for Cato', as Greene has it, but for Brutus. This misleading list is inaugurated by the narrator asking whether any man ever 'offered to die for his wife as Admeta did for her husband Alcest?'[116] The narrator's earnest defence of women is undermined by his numerous errors, but the specific gender-switch in the

[112] Greene, *Alcida*, sig.A2r.
[113] Robert Greene, *Philomela: The Lady Fitzwaters Nightingale* (London: Edward White, 1592), sig.A3r.
[114] Greene, *Philomela*, sig.I3v.
[115] Robert Greene, *Mamillia: The Second Part of the Triumph of Pallas* (London: William Ponsonby, 1593), sig.B3v-B4r.
[116] Greene, *Mamillia: The Second Part*, sig.B4r.

case of Admeta and Alcest may also hint at the confusion of typical gender roles implied in Alcestis' heroism and Admetus' passivity.

Though authors frequently drew details of Alcestis' story from dictionaries, the meaning that it acquired cannot be explained by reference books. A key feature of the group of texts examined so far has been their intertextuality, so that Alcestis seems to accumulate meanings in travelling between them. But the network of references to Alcestis that develops arises from her presence in a wider discourse around the nature of women. This was partly inherited from the classical tradition, including Jerome's catalogue of virtuous women, and the medieval tradition, also influenced by Jerome, and including Chaucer's *Legend*. The Renaissance version of the controversy over women found expression in a wide variety of texts, from formal rhetorical set pieces to attacks and defences of women in a range of literary genres.[117]

Erasmus, as usual, provides an early and influential example. His epistle on marriage, first printed in 1518, was translated into English by Richard Taverner in 1536, and became widely known through its inclusion as an exemplum in Thomas Wilson's highly successful handbook, *The Art of Rhetoric* (1560). It was one of the most re-printed texts on marriage in sixteenth-century England,[118] and 'provided the "source material" for the first seventeen of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*'.[119] Admonishing his addressee for dwelling on jealous and vengeful women, Erasmus produces a catalogue of virtuous women which initially corresponds to the one in Valerius Maximus; both mention Cornelia, Alcestis, Julia, Portia, Artemisia, and Hypsicratea, in that order. Though Parker considers that despite Valerius' general popularity in the period, in the case of Alcestis 'his account seems to have passed unnoticed',[120] Erasmus' description here of Alcestis as *non optimi mariti coniunx optima* (Taverner: 'so good a wyfe of nat so good an husbond'; Wilson: 'most worthy

[117] See Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620* (Brighton: Harvester, 1984).
[118] See Valerie Wayne, ed. *The Flower of Friendship: A Renaissance Dialogue Contesting Marriage* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 5.
[119] Vickers, ed. *Renaissance Literary Criticism*, 32.
[120] Parker, ed. *Euripides: Alcestis*, xxv.

wife of that most unworthy man')[121] expresses a moral condemnation of Admetus clearly coloured by Valerius. Erasmus, of course, was intimately familiar with Euripides, and his judgement of Admetus may also reflect his reading of the play.

In *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* (1523; translated by Richard Hyrde as *The Education of a Christen Woman*, printed 1528/29), Vives draws on several different sources for material on Alcestis. Like Erasmus, he uses Valerius' catalogue of virtuous wives; his comment that he gives these examples 'that women that be nowe a dayes may be ashamed, whiche wyll nat endeavour them selfe to perfourme other more easye thynges' stems from Valerius (4.6.init.).[122] However, he omits any condemnation of Admetus, replacing Valerius' account with a version based on the Boccaccio-Perotti-Torrentinus tradition: 'Admetus, the kynge of Thessaly, havynge a dysease raynynge upon hym, whiche coude never be healed, without the dethe of an other body, coude fynde none, that wold gladly dye for his sake, but his wife Alcest'.[123] Later, Vives brings up Alcestis again in the context of suffering 'adversitie paciently', this time using a passage from the *Economics* attributed at this time to Aristotle:

> …neither quene Alcest shulde have had so great honoure nor quene Penolepe [sic] so great prayse if they had lyved in prosperitie with their husbandes. For by the adversitie of kyng Admetus and Ulysses caused the eternall memory. For in thadversites of theyr husbandes they optayned and that well worthy eternall glorye for kepynge faythe and truthe towarde theyr husbandes.[124]

For the second edition, printed in 1538, Vives completely revised the story of Alcestis in his catalogue of good wives, replacing it with a summary of Palaephatus' distinctive version.[125] Presumably he had decided that Palaephatus' rationalization made the story more plausible and therefore a better example for real women.

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[121] ASD I-2, 423; Richard Taverner, *A Ryght Fruteful Epystle Devysed by the Moste Excellent Clerke Erasmus in Laude and Prayse of Matrymony* (London: Robert Redman, 1536), sig.D3r; Peter E. Medine, ed. *Thomas Wilson: The Art of Rhetoric (1560)* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 95.

[122] Juan Luis Vives, *The Instruction of a Christen Woman*, trans. Richard Hyrde (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 96.

[123] Vives, *Instruction of a Christen Woman*, 95.

[124] Vives, *Instruction of a Christen Woman*, 108-109.

[125] Charles Fantazzi, ed. *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 189, cites Jerome, *Against Jovinian* 1.45 and

Both Vives and Erasmus appear as characters in Edmund Tilney's 1571 *Flower of Friendship* ('*A briefe and pleasant discourse of duties in marriage, called the flower of friendshippe'*), which not surprisingly features another catalogue of virtuous women, including Alcestis. But his version of the story is markedly idiosyncratic. He bases his account on Perotti, as his reference to Martial indicates, along with the details of the oracle and Admetus' illness: 'Martiall also writeth, howe that Alcesta, the wyfe of king Admetes, underst[ood] by the Oracle of Apollo, that hir husbandes grievous disease, wherewith he was sore payned, coulde not be cured, but by the bloude of a dear friend'.[126] But he clearly anticipated criticism of Admetus' behaviour along the lines of Valerius Maximus and Erasmus, because he takes pains to exonerate him from any charges of moral cowardice by re-writing the ending of the story so that both Alcestis and Admetus commit suicide: she 'kylled hir selfe, saying, that Admetes had not a dearer friend than she was, which thing when the king heard, he finished his lyfe, wyth the like death, supposing it more better to couple themselves togyther by one ende, than separated, in teares to bewayle the lack of so true harted, and loving spouse'.[127] Furthermore, Tilney draws attention to his revisionary activities, implying that his (imagined, female) reader will be familiar with the common version of the story in which Admetus and Alcestis are reunited in life rather than death: a printed marginal note reads, 'If Alcest be deade, good Ladie revive hir not againe'.

While Alcestis was consistently enlisted in defence of women, Euripides himself, in his pseudo-biographical character as misogynist, was frequently depicted as being on the other side of the question. Where Euripides is mentioned in Greene's works, it is always in this stereotypical role. Pharicles, the inconstant object of Mamillia's affections, admits that 'the railing Mantuan in his eglogues, the exclaiming of Euripides in his tragedies, the taunts of Martial and prime quips of

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Valerius Maximus 4.6.1, but the source is clearly Palaephatus, *Peri Apiston* 40. This was also the source for a 1550 play by Hans Sachs (see Parker ed., *Euripides: Alcestis*, xxvi-xxvii).

[126] Wayne, ed. *Flower of Friendship*, 131-32.

[127] Wayne, ed. *Flower of Friendship*, 131-32. Tilney's version may have influenced La Primaudaye, *French Academie*, 519: 'When king Admetus his wife sawe hir husband very sicke, and heard the answere of the oracle, which was, *That he could not recover except one of his best friendes died for him, she slewe hir selfe*'.

Propertius are more of course than cause, and rather enforced by rage than inferred by reason'.[128] This passage is echoed in a prefatory poem by Richard Stapleton attached to the volume, entitled 'to the courteous and courtly ladies of England', in which he celebrates Greene as a champion of women, declaring: 'He first calls out Euripides, / Which your reproach assigned'.[129] A male character in the first part of *Mamilia* (1583) resists proclaiming 'himselfe open enemie to womankinde' like Euripides, while a female character complains:

> *Euripides* in his tragedies doth greatly exclaim against that sexe, yet it was in his choller, and he inferred a generall by a particular, which is absurd. He had an euyll wife, what then?[130]

In *Greenes Farewell to Folly* (1591), Euripides is cited as calling love 'a furie', and in *Planetomachia* (1585) he is credited with deriving Aphrodite's name from the Greek word *aphron* ('senseless'), because those people are 'of an imperfect mind, that suffer themselves to be overcome by Venus allurements'.[131]

These last two examples suggest that Greene (or an intermediary source) was familiar with the Melanchthon/Xylander translation of Euripides' *Trojan Women*, which had been printed in 1558 (Basel) and 1562 (Frankfurt). There, lines 989-90 (τὰ μῶρα γὰρ πάντ᾽ ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη βροτοῖς, / καὶ τοὔνομ᾽ ὀρθῶς ἀφροσύνης ἄρχει θεᾶς; 'all sexual indiscretions among mortals are Aphrodite, and the name of the goddess rightly begins with "foolishness"') are translated as: *Suus cuique furor est hominibus Venus / Et nomen Veneris recte a stulticia incipit*.[132] This explains Greene's 'love, which rightly Euripides calleth a furie' (*furor* suggesting 'furie' and *recte* suggesting 'rightly'). In *Planetomachia*, Greene is not interested in the Venus/Veneris pun of the Latin translation, but in the Greek Aphrodite/*aphrosunē* putative etymology. The Melanchthon/Xylander translation has a printed marginal note explaining: *Aphrodite, aphron autem stultus est* ('Aphrodite is *aphron* or foolish').

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[128] Greene, *Mamillia: The Second Part*, sig.N3v.
[129] Greene, *Mamillia: The Second Part*, sig.A4r.
[130] Robert Greene, *Mamillia: A Mirrour or Looking-Glasse for the Ladies of England* (London, Thomas Woodcocke, 1583), sig.B1r; sig.I1r.
[131] *Greenes Farewell to Folly* (London: Gubbin & Newman, 1591), sig.F4v; *Planetomachia* (London: Thomas Cadman, 1585), sig.F4v.
[132] William Xylander, ed. *Euripidis tragoediae*, 2 vols. (Basel: Oporinus, 1558), II, 78.

Brian Melbancke, whose *Philotimus* (1583) also contains a reference to Alcestis,[133] indicates in the same passage that he was aware of at least one tragedy by Euripides (and one which was often paired with *Alcestis*):

> had *Medea* suspected that before, whiche too late experience taughte her, that *Jasons* voyage had bene undertaken for the lucre of goodes, not the love of her goodwill, hee had hopte shorter, and shee had sped better, and *Euripides* had wanted some matter subject, to underproppe his bloudie stile upon the mounting Stages.[134]

These two writers at least seem likely to have read works by Euripides. However, neither Euripides the dramatist nor Euripides the misogynist are directly linked in these texts to the story of Alcestis. Other writers, though, whether or not they themselves had read *Alcestis*, refer their readers to Euripides directly. Robert Allott mentions 'Alcesta, the wife of Admetus' under the heading 'Of Wemen', along with a reference to '*Euripides*'.[135] Similarly, Gryffith Williams includes a marginal pointer to 'Euripides in Alceste' in *Seven Goulden Candlesticks* (1624).[136]

References to Alcestis in poetic texts are by no means as numerous as in prose. George Turberville mentions her three times in his *Epitaphs, Epigrams, Songs and Sonnets* (1567), all in the context of the praise or blame of women; the collection itself is dedicated to Anne Russell, the Countess of Warwick. Turberville focuses exclusively on Alcestis' virtue and beauty; he refers to her twice as 'good Alcest', and in a poem 'In praise of Lady P.' remarks:

> …if Admetus darling deere
> Were of so fresh a face,
> Though Phoebus kept Admetus flock
> It may not him disgrace.[137]

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[133] Brian Melbancke, *Philotimus* (London: Roger Warde, 1583), 126. The heroine writes to her former lover: 'If I might haue *Alcests* lucke, that dying for her husband *Admetus* was restored to life by *Proserpina*, I would shewe thee favour for so litle harme'.
[134] Melbancke, *Philotimus*, 124. Euripides also features in an anecdote about a man who makes his servants learn to recite portions of Homer's *Iliad*, Sophocles, and Euripides, to appear more learned himself (59).
[135] Allott, *Wits Theatre*, 106[r].
[136] Gryffith Williams, *Seven Golden Candlesticks* (London: Nathaniel Butter, 1624), 424-25.
[137] George Turberville, *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets* (London: Henry Denham, 1567), sig.L1v.

The Renaissance tendency to identify Apollo's beloved with Alcestis or her daughter (rather than Admetus, as in the classical tradition) stems from a medieval misunderstanding.[138] Although Turberville brings up Alcestis in an elegy on the death of Elizabeth Arundel, it is solely to compare their virtue; he ignores her resurrection completely. For Isabella Whitney, on the other hand, in a poem entitled 'Lamentation of a Gentlewoman upon the Death of her Late-Deceased Friend, William Gruffith, Gentleman',[139] it is the fantasy of resurrection that draws her attention.

Whitney writes in the hope that the gods will 'have remorse of lady's linked love' (105), and bring Gruffith back to life, 'As once they did for good Admetus' sake' (106). She continues: 'So should I then possess my former friend, / Restored to life, as Alcest was from hell' (109-10). Thus Whitney significantly aligns herself with Admetus, rather than with Alcestis. The context of grief and mourning could serve to legitimate female self-expression, but in writing about a man to whom she was neither married nor related Whitney was being decidedly unconventional. Her use of the Alcestis story demonstrates an interest in the gender politics at work in a way that is unprecedented in male-authored texts. Compared to Alcestis, Admetus plays a distinctly passive, even feminized role in the story; she acts, while he is left to respond with tears and lamentations. But Admetus' grief is effective, since it results in Alcestis being restored to life. So Whitney's grief, as it finds its expression in verse, is able to shift from the acceptably feminine to the actively masculine. Though she may not be able to resurrect the dead, Whitney's poetry can immortalise its subject by transforming him into a poem/flower, just as the gods turned Narcissus into a flower (lines 107-8). By contrast, a poem on the death of Philip Sidney by the anonymous 'A.W.' chooses to erase Alcestis altogether, instead invoking Apollo's intervention with the fates on behalf of Admetus as his example

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[138] For details see Gilbert Tournoy, 'Apollo and Admetus: The Forms of a Classical Myth through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,' in *Forms of the 'Medieval' in the 'Renaissance': A Multidisciplinary Exploration of a Cultural Continuum*, ed. George Hugo Tucker (Charlottesville, VA: Rookwood Press, 2000), 175-204.

[139] Printed in Thomas Proctor, *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (London: Richard Jones 1578); reproduced in Marie Loughlin et al., ed. *The Broadview Anthology of Sixteenth-Century Poetry and Prose* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2012), 395-97.

of mortal life being extended through divine intervention.[140] This refusal to associate Sidney with Alcestis suggests that the unstable gender dynamics embraced by Whitney and hinted at by Greene's gender-swapped 'Admeta' and 'Alcest' were perceived to be latent in the story; 'A.W.' is careful not to activate them.

Shakespeare could hardly have avoided coming across the story of Alcestis in various forms, as it appears in Ovid and Plutarch, Chaucer and Gower, Greene and Pettie. The only direct reference to Alcestis in a contemporary dramatic text is in Mary Sidney's *Tragedie of Antonie* (published in 1592), a translation of Robert Garnier's *Marc-Antoine* (1578); John Wilders finds 'enough verbal similarities to show that the countess's tragedy lingered in Shakespeare's mind' when he was composing *Antony and Cleopatra* (c.1607).[141] These sources might easily be supplemented by the account given in Cooper's dictionary. The Alcestis who emerges from these texts is the idealized wife who dies for her husband and is subsequently brought back to life, in a resurrection particularly amenable to Christian allegory. But Shakespeare could not have found in his general reading anything like the dramaturgy of Euripides' final scene, the structural and emotional progression by which a husband is led to recognize in a silent, veiled figure, the wife who had apparently died because of him. Only Euripides could offer that.

The Winter's Tale and *Alcestis*

The first source to draw an explicit connection between *The Winter's Tale* and Euripides' *Alcestis* is not textual but visual.[142] In a painting by Johann Zoffany (c.1780), the actress Elizabeth Farren[143] as Hermione leans against a pedestal which 'shows putti performing two scenes from Euripides' *Alcestis*, Herakles leading the

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[140] Printed in Francis Davison, *A Poetical Rapsody* (London: John Baily 1602), sig.I10r.
[141] John Wilders, ed. *Antony and Cleopatra* (London: Routledge, 1995), 62.
[142] Some of the material in this section originates from my undergraduate thesis at the University of Oxford, entitled 'Veiled in Silence: *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale*', supervised by Laurie Maguire and Felix Budelmann (2011).
[143] Farren played Hermione in Garrick's version of *The Winter's Tale* at Covent Garden in the 1770s, which made considerable alterations to Shakespeare's text but maintained the statue scene. See Dennis Bartholomeusz, *The Winter's Tale in Performance in England and America 1611-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 31-39.

queen back from the dead, and the reuniting of Alcestis and Admetus'.[144] She wears a veil, as does Alcestis in the final scene of the play (whereas Hermione is initially concealed by a curtain). Hermione's curtain – by the eighteenth century also holding the signification of a stage curtain – is draped around the edges of the painting. This is representative of the early stages of an impulse towards re-situating the play in a 'classical' setting rather than a contemporary or English historical one, culminating in Kean's 1856 production, which created a visual world 'derived from the palpable evidence of vase paintings and ancient artefacts'.[145] The portrait places the focus of the comparison onto the final scenes of the two plays, where it has largely remained.

In 1856, W.W. Lloyd produced the first written comparison of the two plays. He does not claim direct influence, but is interested in the 'many points of analogy' between the two, in terms of both 'treatment and incident'.[146] Beyond observing that both Alcestis and Hermione die onstage, he focuses on the final scenes. He notes the equivalent roles of Heracles and Paulina (Heracles 'draws from [Admetus] expressions soothing to the revived queen, as those that Paulina draws from the penitent Leontes'), and the similar reactions of Leontes and Admetus (each husband 'looks till the force of the resemblance raises him to the highest pitch of agitation').[147] Crucially, he observes the equivalence of the processes by which the husbands are led to recognise their wives, 'by gradation'.[148] Above all, Lloyd is concerned with the characters of Alcestis and Hermione as noble, suffering wives (with distinctly inferior husbands): the 'dignity' of Alcestis and Hermione leads to 'the vindication of the self-devoted womanhood from the selfish neglect of a stronger power, but an inferior nature'.[149] Finally, he finds that '[t]he silence of Alcestis is not more satisfactory and expressive than the circumstance that, in the single short speech of Hermione, her words recognize and address alone her recovered daughter'.[150] Lloyd

[144] Orgel, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 67.
[145] Orgel, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 71.
[146] Horace Furness, ed. *The Winter's Tale* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1898), 357.
[147] Furness, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 358.
[148] Furness, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 358.
[149] Furness, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 358.
[150] Furness, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 358.

thus notes some of the key themes to which later criticism has returned, while the loose terminology he employs ('points of analogy', 'parallels') has also proved enduring.

The *Alcestis* connection made its way into two editions of *The Winter's Tale* in the 1890s.[151] Horace Furness reproduced Lloyd's comparison in his 1898 variorum edition, and Israel Gollancz actually placed the Greek text of lines 1121-34 (Admetus receives Alcestis) directly after the frontispiece in 1894.[152] Gollancz adds that '[t]he Greek element in Shakespeare's list of names is striking, and should perhaps be considered in connexion with the Alcestis *motif* of the closing scene of the play'.[153] In calling for a 'comparison with the "tragi-comedy" of Euripides', Gollancz becomes the first to suggest that this might be a case of direct influence: 'One cannot but think that, by some means or other, directly or indirectly, Shakespeare owed his *dénouement* to the Greek dramatist, – certainly to the Greek story'.[154] With one notable exception, modern editions have reflected the hesitancy of Gollancz's syntax rather than the boldness of his ideas. At worst, *Alcestis* is not mentioned at all (as in the Penguin editions[155]); at best, it merits a couple of sentences and a footnote. The Arden 2 and Oxford World Classics editions (first printed in 1963 and 1996 respectively) both briefly mention 'parallels' and

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[151] The *Alcestis*/*Winter's Tale* connection seems to have been in the air in the late nineteenth century. A.E. Haigh, *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), 285, mentions 'the curious resemblance [of *Alcestis*] to the conclusion of *The Winter's Tale*, where Leontes is taken to see, as he imagines, the statue of his dead wife and finds instead the living Hermione'. H.R.D. Anders, *Shakespeare's Books* (New York, NY: AMS Press, 1904), 286: 'The striking resemblance in the closing scene of *The Winter's Tale* where Hermione reappears as a statue, to the last of Euripides' *Alcestis* has often been noticed. I have no doubt but that the story of Admetus and Alcestis was known to Shakespeare'. William Theobald, *The Classical Element in the Shakespeare Plays* (London: Robert Banks, 1909), 163: 'It is impossible to avoid the conviction that the restoration of the dead wife to her husband is based on the pathetic incident of the revival of *Alcestis*, either as told by Euripides, or through the Latin version of the play by Buchanan'.

[152] Israel Gollancz, ed. *Shakespeare's Comedy of a Winter's Tale* (London: Dent, 1894).

[153] Gollancz, *Winter's Tale*, viii.

[154] Gollancz, *Winter's Tale*, viii.

[155] Ernest Schanzer, ed. *The Winter's Tale* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969). Reissued with a new introduction by Russ McDonald (London: Penguin, 2005). Though these editions are aimed at a general reader, Christopher Hardman, *The Winter's Tale* (London: Penguin, 1988), for the Penguin Critical Studies series also makes no mention of *Alcestis*.

silences[156]; the Arden and the New Cambridge Shakespeare (2007) acknowledge 'several' Latin translations of *Alcestis* prior to 1611.[157] The Cambridge edition, in which Alcestis is entirely relegated to a footnote on Ovid, importantly points out that 'Shakespeare would have known [the story] through Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, and George Pettie's *Palace of Pleasure*'.[158]

The testimony of these editions suggests that *Alcestis* remains very much in the margins of criticism on *The Winter's Tale*, despite a handful of articles making the case for closer attention. In the earliest of these, Mueller argued that the statue scene 'is not a *creatio ex nihilo*', but 'a conflation of the two well-known classical myths of Alcestis and of Pygmalion's statue'; furthermore, '[i]n this conflation the dominant myth is that of Alcestis'.[159] In support of this reading, he draws attention to Admetus' reference to having a statue of his soon-to-be deceased wife made (*Alcestis* 349); this, he considers, may have suggested the Ovid motif. Like Lloyd, he compares the 'staggering' of the final reunions, and on the silences of Alcestis and Hermione crucially adds that Shakespeare 'not only delays Hermione's first words but draws attention to this delay through Paulina's remark'.[160] He also points out that Leontes' vow not to marry again is a feature of *Alcestis* but not *Pandosto*. Although he cites Buchanan's translation as a probable channel of transmission, Mueller's conclusions are cautious: while the 'general structural resemblance of the final scenes' makes Shakespeare's 'acquaintance with Euripides' play likely', ultimately 'there are no parallels sufficiently concrete to clinch the argument'.[161]

Earl Showerman has been far more confident in assigning the correspondences between *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale* to direct influence.[162] Rather

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[156] Pafford, ed. *Winter's Tale*, lxii; Orgel, ed., *Winter's Tale*, 77.
[157] Pafford, ed. *Winter's Tale*, xxxiv n.5; Snyder and Curren-Aquino, eds., *Winter's Tale*, 71 n.195.
[158] Snyder and Curren-Aquino, eds., *The Winter's Tale*, 71 n.195.
[159] Mueller, 'Hermione's Wrinkles,' 29.
[160] Mueller, 'Hermione's Wrinkles,' 231-32.
[161] Mueller, 'Hermione's Wrinkles,' 230. All Mueller's comments about specific connections between the two plays are noticeably in the conditional.
[162] Earl Showerman, '"Look Down and See What Death Is Doing": Gods and Greeks in *the Winter's Tale*,' *The Oxfordian* 10 (2007): 55-74.

than citing Latin translations, however, he considers that the author of *The Winter's Tale* read *Alcestis* in Greek, and therefore adduces it as evidence for the Earl of Oxford's authorship of Shakespeare's works. This is on the grounds that '[t]here was but one Latin translation of *Alcestis* [Buchanan's] published before or during Shakespeare's lifetime', so that '[t]o accept *Alcestis* as a Shakespeare source, one would have to postulate that the playwright either had access to one of these rare Latin editions of Euripides published in France, or to someone who possessed a Greek edition of *Alcestis* and was capable of translating it'.[163] However, after its initial publication in Paris in 1556, Buchanan's translation was reprinted in Paris (1557), Strasbourg (1567, possibly 1568, and 1604), Barcelona (1577), Valencia and Wittenberg (both 1581). It featured in the 1567 *Tragoediae Selectae*, printed in Geneva (which also included the Greek text and a line-for-line parallel Latin translation), and in collections of Buchanan's poetry from Basel (1568), Geneva (1584), and Heidelberg (1609). *Alcestis* was also translated into Latin by Dorotheus Camillus (Basel: 1541 and 1550), Phillip Melanchthon/William Xylander (Basel: 1558; Frankfurt: 1562), Gasparus Stiblinus (Basel: 1562), and Aemilius Portus (Heidelberg: 1597; Geneva: 1602), in editions of Euripides' complete works. An Italian translation was printed in Genoa in 1599.[164] We need not look far to find someone who owned a copy of *Alcestis* either in Greek or Latin: Ben Jonson certainly had at least one copy of Euripides' complete works. We know he possessed Arsenius' scholia; Henry Woudhuysen considers it likely that these were as printed in the bilingual 1602 (Geneva) edition.[165] A catalogue from 1874 lists a copy of the 1551 (Basel) edition of the complete works in Greek as being 'Ben Jonson's copy, with his autograph notes'[166]; Jonson, of course, was eminently able to translate the Greek.

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[163] Earl Showerman, 'Shakespeare's Many Much Ado's: *Alcestis*, Hercules, and *Love's Labour's Wonne*,' *Brief Chronicles* 1 (2009): 138-77 (144).
[164] For sixteenth century editions and translations, see Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 232-69.
[165] Henry Woudhuysen, 'Jonson's Library: Euripides,' *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson Online*, accessed 21 February 2018, http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/benjonson/k/library/McPherson-0060/.
[166] *Catalogue of the Second and Concluding Portion of the Extensive and Valuable Library of Herbert N. Evans*, (London: Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 1874), 51.

A few specific links to Buchanan's translation have been proposed. Douglas Wilson notes the presence of the word *umbra* in his translation of line 349, perhaps suggesting the various invocations of Hermione's 'ghost' in *The Winter's Tale*, and speculates that Shakespeare might have seen a school performance of Buchanan's *Alcestis*.[167] Dewar-Watson adds that Buchanan interpolates the word *statura* into the recognition scene itself (1139), which she considers 'provides a clear model for the device in the equivalent scene in Shakespeare', while his translation of line 1065 (μή μ᾽ ἕλῃς ἠρημένον) as *neve perdas perditum* (1141) 'provides a likely source for Perdita's name'.[168] But as she herself notes, Admetus' statue speech has close links to the recognition scene, so that even without Buchanan's interpolation Shakespeare's source of inspiration seems clear.

In recent years, then, critical momentum in this area has been gathering. John Pitcher's introduction to the Arden 3 edition of *The Winter's Tale* (2010) is influenced by but goes beyond these individual studies. Far from being a footnote or a passing reference, Euripides' *Alcestis* is integral to his conception of the play, and his is the first edition to include extracts from Buchanan's translation of *Alcestis* in an appendix on sources (lines 359-72 and 1194-212); he finds Dewar-Watson's arguments conclusive. Pitcher importantly recognises Euripides' connection to the genre of tragicomedy, and its significance for *The Winter's Tale*. He offers a sophisticated interpretation of Shakespeare's use of sources: the 'whole is made up of three strands of Greek writing and mythology' – the story of Pygmalion, as found in Ovid, the story of Alcestis, found in Euripides, and the genre of Greek romance, found in *Pandosto* and elsewhere.[169] Most recently, Pollard has dedicated a chapter to 'Shakespeare's Alcestis', in which she focuses on the emphasis on Hermione's maternity as a key facet of 'Shakespeare's longstanding engagement with the ghosts of Greek tragic women'.[170]

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[167] Douglas B. Wilson, 'Euripides' *Alcestis* and the Ending of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*,' *Iowa State Journal of Research* 58, no. 3 (1984): 345-55.
[168] Sarah Dewar-Watson, '*Alcestis* and the Statue Scene,' 78.
[169] Pitcher, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 93-94.
[170] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 188.

However, in arguing that Shakespeare had direct knowledge of Euripides' *Alcestis* in any language, these critics still represent a minority view; the general consensus is still that 'parallels sufficiently concrete' have yet to be demonstrated. So far, this chapter has demonstrated that Shakespeare could hardly have avoided encountering the story of Alcestis as featured in numerous texts of different genres which he is known to have used as sources. These texts held up Alcestis as the paradigm for a noble, suffering wife, who dies on behalf of her husband and is rewarded with resurrection. But *The Winter's Tale* reveals an interest in Alcestis which goes beyond any brief account of the story in prose or verse, and which points strongly to an encounter with Euripides. There is evidence for Shakespeare's active engagement with Euripides' *Alcestis* not only in the statue scene but, I suggest, throughout the linguistic and thematic patterning of *The Winter's Tale*.

As we have seen, in *Alcestis*, Admetus promises that after Alcestis' death, 'your image, portrayed by the skilful hand of craftsmen, shall be laid out in my bed' (σοφῇ δὲ χειρὶ τεκτόνων δέμας τὸ σὸν / εἰκασθὲν ἐν λέκτροισιν ἐκταθήσεται, 348-49). The word translated here as 'image' is *demas*, which suggests a physical shape or form but nothing more; Buchanan translates it as *imago*. Dewar-Watson comments:

> This speech is pivotal in developing the theme of substitution in the play. It looks back to the substitution of Alcestis for Admetus in Hades, and it foreshadows the arrival of the veiled woman (in fact, Alcestis herself) whom Heracles offers as an apparent substitute for Alcestis.[171]

Linguistically, the Greek text makes the link between Admetus' imagined statue and the final recognition scene, since at line 1063 Admetus uses the same word, *demas*, to describe the veiled woman's likeness to Alcestis: 'You, lady, whoever you are, know that you have the same form as Alcestis and you resemble her *demas*' (σὺ δ᾽, ὦ γύναι, / ἥτις ποτ᾽ εἶ σύ, ταὔτ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽ Ἀλκήστιδι / μορφῆς μέτρ᾽ ἴσθι, καὶ προσήϊξαι δέμας, 1061-63). Buchanan renders line 1063 '*modo et statura corporis simillima*' (1139)[172]; Dewar-Watson considers that the use of the word *statura* may

[171] Dewar-Watson, '*Alcestis* and the Statue Scene,' 78.
[172] At the equivalent moment Leontes notes Hermione's 'natural posture' in the statue (5.3.23).

have prompted Shakespeare's use of the statue deception in the final scene of *The Winter's Tale*.[173]

Even without a specific linguistic prompt, Admetus' Pygmalion-esque fantasy is very striking, and could easily have inspired the idea of a living statue, particularly to one so well-acquainted with Ovid. Once he has had the statue made, Admetus continues,

> ᾧ προσπεσοῦμαι καὶ περιπτύσσων χέρας
> ὄνομα καλῶν σὸν τὴν φίλην ἐν ἀγκάλαις
> δόξω γυναῖκα καίπερ οὐκ ἔχων ἔχειν·
> ψυχρὰν μέν, οἶμαι, τέρψιν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως βάρος
> ψυχῆς ἀπαντλοίην ἄν. ἐν δ᾽ ὀνείρασιν
> φοιτῶσά μ᾽ εὐφραίνοις ἄν· ἡδὺ γὰρ φίλους
> κἀν νυκτὶ λεύσσειν, ὅντιν᾽ ἂν παρῇ χρόνον.
>
> I will fall upon it, and enfolding it in my arms
> and calling your name, I will imagine that I hold
> my dear wife in my embrace, though I do not;
> a cold pleasure, I think, but nevertheless I might
> lighten my heavy soul. For it is sweet to see loved
> ones even at night, however long it is allowed.
>
> (350-56)[174]

Wilson, as has been noted, drew attention to Buchanan's translation of 354-55 as '*umbra me per somnia / utinam reversa oblectet*' ('If only your ghost might come back and delight me in my dreams'), relating it to Hermione's appearance to Antigonus as a ghost in a dream reported in 3.3.[175] Where Admetus finds 'cold pleasure' to 'lighten my heavy soul' in his statue, Leontes speaks of 'good comfort' (5.3.33), even as his statue (which 'coldly stands', 36) is 'piercing to my soul' (34).

It is worth noting that for a reader as fond of Ovid as Shakespeare, Admetus' statue fantasy could hardly fail to suggest the story of Pygmalion, the 'archetype for the animation of a statue' to the Renaissance mind.[176] In this story, Shakespeare finds a means of exploring ideas around the opposition of nature and art, the subject of the debate between Perdita and Polixenes in Act 4. As Charles and

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[173] Dewar-Watson, '*Alcestis* and the Statue Scene,' 79.
[174] Perhaps Milton had this last line in mind in his sonnet.
[175] Wilson, 'Euripides' *Alcestis*,' 345-55.
[176] Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 233.

Michelle Martindale point out, 'Shakespeare's sense of the story, as one about nature and art, is unusual for his time' – Renaissance readers tended to favour either salacious (as in John Marston's *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image*, 1598) or moralistic (as in Arthur Golding's translation, first published in 1567) interpretations.[177] *The Winter's Tale*'s insistence on the 'statue' as a work of art, down to the false claim of the very real 'Giulio Romano' as its creator, together with Leontes' 'what fine chisel / Could ever yet cut breath?' (5.3.78-79) seems to encourage the audience to remember Pygmalion. On a linguistic level, Burrow feels that the word '*reverentia*, which in Ovid prevents the statue from moving, and which leaks out into the relationship between the statue, its creator, and its observers, colours the whole scene, which is enacted in a chapel',[178] while Jonathan Bate persuasively describes how 'Ovid shows Shakespeare that the way to evoke this leap of faith is through pinpricks of sensation':

> The progression is both precise and sensuous: blood pulses through the veins, the lips respond, the ivory face flushes. Correspondingly, Leontes contrasts the warm life his queen once had with the coldness of the statue, but then he seems to see blood in the veins and warmth upon the lip. And when she descends and embraces him, she *is* warm.[179]

Shakespeare enacts on the stage an Ovidian metamorphosis, and one that surpasses even Ovid: this is 'a metamorphosis of a wholly new kind, a kind never envisaged by Ovid, the original master of the field'.[180]

And yet critical readings of this kind frequently seem to reach a point where Ovid is not quite enough. Burrow opines that '[t]his isn't just a moment where Shakespeare winks at the more learned members of his audience and congratulates them on their ability to identify his source in Ovid's story of Pygmalion'; rather '[t]he "allusion" is all wrong and should come as a profound surprise, since the

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[177] Charles Martindale and Michelle Martindale, *Shakespeare and the Uses of Antiquity: An Introductory Essay* (London: Routledge, 1994), 79.
[178] Burrow, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*, 126.
[179] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, 236.
[180] A.D. Nuttall, '*The Winter's Tale*: Ovid Transformed', in *Shakespeare's Ovid: The Metamorphoses in the Plays and Poems*, ed. A.B. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 135-49 (143).

whole story is in a sense the wrong way round'.[181] I would suggest that the Pygmalion 'allusion' does not come as a surprise, and does not feel 'all wrong', because the 'morally queasy' elements of the vivification of Ovid's statue are being counterbalanced by the moral weight of Euripides' story of grief and redemption. Charles and Michelle Martindale suggest something rather similar when they note that '[t]he dramaturgy of the scene is…unique in Shakespeare', and conclude that 'on occasion [Shakespeare] was able to use Ovid's sophisticated literariness as a gateway to a different and more elemental treatment of myth',[182] though they reject the possibility that Shakespeare might have read *Alcestis* in a Latin translation. But since we are entertaining the possibility, it is worth noting that the combining of two sources based on the striking image of an eroticized statue-wife would be typical of what Miola calls Shakespeare's 'synthetic imagination'.[183]

There is one passage which suggests that Shakespeare had the story of Alcestis and Admetus in his mind at least at one point while composing *The Winter's Tale*, and which has not been examined in this context before. Florizel, trying to reassure a dubious Perdita that there is nothing wrong with a prince dressing up as a pauper in order to woo his beloved, enlists a series of mythological examples to help his case:

> The gods themselves,
> Humbling their deities to love, have taken
> The shapes of beasts upon them. Jupiter
> Became a bull and bellowed; the green Neptune
> A ram and bleated; and the fire-robed god
> Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,
> As I seem now.
>
> (4.4.25-31)

This catalogue of three is taken from Greene's *Pandosto*, where Dorastus (talking to himself rather than Fawnia) says: 'The heavenly gods have sometime earthly thoughts: Neptune became a ram, Jupiter a bull, Apollo a shepherd'.[184] As Bate

[181] Burrow, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*, 127.
[182] Charles Martindale and Michelle Martindale, *Shakespeare and the Uses of Antiquity*, 80; 82.
[183] Robert Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 86.
[184] Pitcher, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 431.

points out, the 'ultimate source' for this list is Arachne's tapestry in book 6 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[185] Amongst a much longer catalogue (and not consecutively), Ovid describes how 'Europe was by royall Jove beguilde in shape of Bull' (127), Neptune 'in the shape of Ram / Begetting one Theophane Bisalties ympe with Lam' (144-45), and Apollo 'in a shepeherdes shape was practising a wile / The daughter of one Macarie dame Issa to beguile' (154-55).[186]

Shakespeare's re-expansion of Greene's bare list is worth examining. Neither Greene nor Ovid invests the example of Apollo with any particular significance. Christopher Hardman draws attention to the variation in treatment of the gods which Shakespeare introduces: Jupiter and Neptune are treated 'with some humour', with their bellowing and bleating, 'while the third, Apollo, is treated more seriously'[187] – and, we might add, at greater length. Shakespeare causes the final position of the Apollo example to become climactic in a way it is not in Greene. Hardman suggests that this is due to 'the importance of Apollo in the play', which is undoubtedly a prominent factor[188]; Bate adds that 'Florizel's assumption of the same disguise as Apollo suggests that his wooing of Perdita is part of the pattern that will eventually lead to the fulfilment of Apollo's oracle'.[189] But there may be more to it than that. However familiar Shakespeare and his audiences were with Ovid, the story of Issa and Apollo is an obscure one. It is referred to only this once by Ovid, and hardly anywhere else as far as I am aware, either in classical or Renaissance literature.[190] The story never seems to be told more fully, and is not mentioned in Renaissance classical dictionaries at all.

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[185] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, 230.
[186] Arthur Golding, *The XV Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis* (London: William Seres, 1567).
[187] Hardman, *Winter's Tale*, 86.
[188] Hardman, *Winter's Tale*, 86.
[189] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, 229-30.
[190] Pausanias (10.38.4) derives the name of the city of Amphissa from the daughter of Macareus and mentions that Apollo was her lover, but says nothing about shepherds. Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia*, trans. Robert Dallington (London: Simon Waterson, 1592), sig.Aa3v, refers to '*Issa* the daughter of *Machareus* with hir shepheard'.

By contrast, anyone with access to Cooper's *Thesaurus* would have found the story of Apollo's period serving as Admetus' shepherd not only under 'Admetus', but also under 'Apollo' and even 'Amphrysus' ('A ryver in Thessaly, by whiche Apollo kept the sheepe of Admetus').[191] Whenever Admetus is mentioned without Alcestis in contemporary literary sources, it is in relation to this episode. Thus it is reasonable to conclude that, if a reference to Apollo disguising himself as 'a poor humble swain' meant anything at all to an early seventeenth-century audience, it would remind them of Admetus. As we have seen, the dominant version of the story was the one given by Cooper, in which Apollo 'beinge exiled oute of heaven by Jupyter…kepte [Admetus'] cattel',[192] which goes back ultimately to Euripides (via Erasmus and Zenobius). But as we have seen, an alternative tradition also existed in which Apollo was in love with either Admetus or his daughter or Alcestis herself. Therefore, even with a new primary signification (pointing to the story of Admetus rather than the obscure Issa), the reference does not lose its relevance to the context (gods adopting disguises to woo their beloveds).

This reference, of course, points to the story but not necessarily to Euripides. Where the Euripidean influence most clearly emerges is in Shakespeare's dramaturgy in the final scene of *The Winter's Tale*, which draws on aspects of the *Alcestis* which are entirely absent from summaries, retellings, and references. And it is not only *The Winter's Tale*: the final scene of *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598-99) presents the 'resurrection' of another veiled woman, suggesting that Shakespeare's dramatic imagination was caught by Euripides' staging of the return of Alcestis. As with *The Winter's Tale*, the final scene of *Much Ado* finds no equivalent in any of the accepted sources.[193] Bate has called Alcestis 'a powerful mythic prototype' for the final scene of *Much Ado*, resorting to the almost mystical vocabulary familiar in

[191] Cooper, *Thesaurus*, s.v. 'Amphrysus'.
[192] Cooper, *Thesaurus*, s.v. 'Admetus'.
[193] 'Bandello's Timbreo marries an unveiled Fenicia without consciously recognizing her, and Ariosto's Ginervra, who never claimed to be dead, is defended and won in a duel' (Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 177).

critical discussions of the relationship between Shakespeare and Greek tragedy.[194] But several critics have addressed the correspondences in more concrete terms. Showerman notes the frequency of references to Hercules in *Much Ado*, given his prominent role in Euripides' play, and argues that the funerary ritual in Act 5 has its source in a chorus of *Alcestis*, concluding that 'the final scenes of *Much Ado* and *The Winter's Tale* are specifically and directly indebted to Euripides' representation in *Alcestis*'.[195] Claire McEachern writes that 'like Admetus, Claudio must accept his second bride without seeing her face, a stipulation that reverses the terms of his initial error (in which he identified a woman by outward signs rather than inner conviction), and forces him to have faith where once he lacked it'.[196] Pollard links the Friar's speech at 4.1.224-30 to Admetus' statue fantasy: 'The Friar's sensually resonant image of Hero's "lovely organ" creeping in to Claudio's study in precious apparel suggestively recalls Euripides' deliberately erotic depiction of a man falling onto a simulacrum of his wife's body in bed'.[197] She also adds that Hero's lines at 5.4.60-61 ('And when I lived, I was your other wife: / And when you loved, you were my other husband') 'bear an uncanny similarity' to Admetus' words at 328-30: ἐπεὶ σ᾽ ἐγὼ / καὶ ζῶσαν εἶχον, καὶ θανοῦσ᾽ ἐμὴ γυνὴ / μόνη κεκλήσῃ, which she translates as 'And when I held you living, and in dying, my wife alone you will be called'.[198]

In *The Winter's Tale*, the interplay with *Alcestis* is much more sustained and complex, though it too finds its ultimate fulfilment in the climactic final scene, where Shakespeare's Euripidean dramaturgy is enacted, to a large degree, by Paulina, who takes on the role of Heracles. However, prior to this she has been acting as a kind of double for Hermione: she 'effectively stands in for the Queen

[194] Jonathan Bate, 'Dying to Live in *Much Ado About Nothing*,' in *Surprised by Scenes: Essays in Honor of Professor Yasunai Takahashi*, ed. Yasunari Takada (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1994), 69-85 (81).
[195] Showerman, 'Shakespeare's Many Much Ado's,' 145.
[196] Claire McEachern, ed. *Much Ado About Nothing* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 21.
[197] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 176.
[198] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, 177.

during her long absence'.[199] In this role she elicits the promise not to remarry from Leontes, aligning him with Admetus. This function is necessitated by the major difference between Alcestis and Hermione – Hermione does not know that she is going to 'die' – but it also allows Shakespeare to displace the more difficult aspects of Alcestis' character onto Paulina, enabling Hermione to retain only the positive, self-sacrificing ones. Alcestis is fully aware of the great value of her sacrifice, and uses this knowledge very effectively as a bargaining tool to achieve her end – to make Admetus promise not to marry again. Such a request is problematic, because it 'threatens to sabotage the very *oikos* she dies to protect'; 'the consequences of her death, the erosion of the well-being of the household, show up the problems that would spring from the permanent absence of a wife'.[200] Having reminded her husband of the voluntary nature of her sacrifice and her agency, as well as the fact that no one else was prepared to die for him (282-98), she continues: 'You remember the gratitude you owe me for this' (σύ νύν μοι τῶνδ᾽ ἀπόμνησαι χάριν, 299), and requires him not to 'marry again, a stepmother over our children' (καὶ μὴ 'πιγήμῃς τοῖσδε μητρυιὰν τέκνοις, 305). Admetus, of course, promises never to substitute another woman for her: 'no Thessalian bride will ever call me husband in your place' (κοὔτις ἀντὶ σοῦ ποτε / τόνδ᾽ ἄνδρα νύμφη Θεσσαλὶς προσφθέγξεται, 330-31).

Hermione too elicits this promise from her husband, through the person of Paulina. Leontes begins a fantasy about Hermione's reanimated corpse objecting to his remarriage (he imagines no ghost, but that her spirit might 'Again possess her corpse', 5.1.58 – in the twisted physicality we might we see another echo of the 'cold pleasure' Admetus imagines taking in his statue). Paulina extends it, playing the part of the dead Hermione:

> Were I the ghost that walked, I'd bid you mark
> Her eye, and tell me for what dull part in't
> You chose her; then I'd shriek, that even your ears
> Should rift to hear me, and the words that followed

[199] Tony Tanner, *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 770.
[200] Nancy Rabinowitz, *Anxiety Veiled: Euripides and the Traffic in Women* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 79.

Should be 'Remember mine'.

(5.1.63-67)

Paulina's version of Hermione is wrathful and concerned with Leontes remembering her and not remarrying for her own sake. But the earlier vision seen by Antigonus in a dream recounted in 3.3 is concerned, like Alcestis (313-19), above all with the fate of her daughter. He says of her: 'I never saw a vessel of like sorrow'; she tells him to leave her child in Bohemia, and name her Perdita. This is an altogether different vision (though like Paulina's it departs 'with shrieks'), and as Hermione is not actually dead we can never see how her own apparition would have behaved, if she had been presented on stage in the style of Old Hamlet. Antigonus, concerned with the baby, imagines a sad maternal Hermione; Paulina depicts a jealous, even vengeful figure (ghosts asking for revenge, including Old Hamlet, are apt to use the word 'remember'), which is calculated to achieve her desired effect.

This effect is achieved: to Paulina's subsequent question ('Will you swear / Never to marry but by my free leave?', 5.1.69-70), Leontes replies: 'Never, Paulina, so be blessed my spirit' (71). Admetus' promise, of course, was made to be broken, or to appear to be broken. From the amount of emphasis placed on Leontes' equivalent promise – 'No more such wives, therefore no wife' (56), 'fear thou no wife; / I'll have no wife, Paulina' (68-69) – it might seem that a similar outcome is dramatically almost inevitable. Although Leontes never actually breaks his promise, Shakespeare plays with the expectation, as though teasing us with glimpses of the Admetus behind his Leontes. As soon as she has elicited the promise, Paulina abruptly changes tack, declaring that he must promise to marry whoever she picks out for him (76-81). This marks the beginning of her transition from Hermione's ventriloquist to her Heracles. Directly after this, a servant enters with the news that Florizel has arrived 'with his princess – she / The fairest I have yet beheld' (86-87), immediately providing Leontes with a potential temptation. Leontes even goes so far as to say 'I'd beg your precious mistress / Which he counts but a trifle' (222-23), provoking Paulina to rebuke him, reminding him of Hermione (224-26). Of course,

he is speaking of his own daughter; the shadow of incest from Greene's *Pandosto* is raised only to be suppressed.

When it comes to the final scene, Paulina orchestrates the reunion of Hermione and Leontes just as Heracles orchestrates that of Alcestis and Admetus. They each construct an elaborate story for why they have a veiled woman/statue to present. Heracles explains that he won the woman as a prize in some games (even describing what the prizes for the other events were), and that he needs Admetus to look after her while he kills the king of the Bistonians and brings back the Thracian mares (1019-37). Paulina has initiated a rumour that she has had an artist working on a statue of Hermione for many years (her crowning detail is to give the name of the artist, 'Giulio Romano', 5.2.95), and she uses the excuse that it is 'newly performed' (5.3.94) to explain why they must not touch it: 'O patience- / The statue is but newly fixed; the colour's / Not dry' (47-48). Paulina and Heracles proceed to manipulate their audiences, both internal and external, in a remarkably similar way. They plant the idea they are in fact leading up to, but in terms which suggest that it is impossible. So Heracles begins: 'If only I had such great power as to bring your wife to the light from the halls below' (εἰ γὰρ τοσαύτην δύναμιν εἶχον ὥστε σὴν / ἐς φῶς πορεῦσαι νερτέρων ἐκ δωμάτων / γυναῖκα, 1072-74). Paulina, meanwhile, deliberately foreshadows in her own language the two stages by which Leontes (and the audience) will be led to recognise Hermione: 'No longer shall you gaze on't, lest your fancy / May think anon it moves' (5.3.60-61), and 'I'll draw the curtain. / My lord's almost so far transported that / He'll think anon it lives' (68-70). At the critical moment, both champions insist that the husband extend his hand to receive the woman - Heracles: 'Undertake to hold out your hand and touch the stranger' (τόλμα προτεῖναι χεῖρα καὶ θιγεῖν ξένης, 1117); Paulina: 'Nay, present your hand' (107). Finally, both are concerned that their handiwork should not be mistaken for witchcraft – Heracles: 'The man you have made your guest-friend is no necromancer' (οὐ ψυχαγωγὸν τόνδ᾽ ἐποιήσω ξένον, 1128); Paulina: 'but then you'll think, / Which I protest against, I am assisted / By wicked powers' (89-91).

Paulina and Heracles also share a similar status as partially comic, partially tragic or heroic. Heracles is a comic character possibly bringing in an element from the satyr-play, the glutton who is oblivious to the mourning status of the household he enters and proceeds to drink and be merry; but he is also the great hero, able to wrestle with death and win. Paulina is 'Dame Partlet' (2.3.74), characterised as a strong-minded, loquacious woman (perhaps even a shrew) who will not be ruled by her husband or take no for an answer, but it is her courage, intelligence, and eloquence which produce the relatively happy conclusion. The difference in gender, however, is significant. Alcestis ends up as the voiceless unit of exchange between two males, as in a 5th century Athenian marriage.[201] But Hermione, with a female advocate tirelessly fighting for her, is a far less isolated figure than Alcestis. Rather than a male-dominated final scene, we end with Paulina speaking to Hermione, and Hermione speaking to Perdita; none of them reply to Leontes' final speech. Hermione has explicitly preserved herself, for her daughter, not her husband (5.3.125-28). Alexandra Gilbreath found exactly this when playing Hermione: 'for me the statue scene was not about the reconciliation of Hermione and Leontes, but the meeting of a mother and daughter'.[202]

The emphasis in both plays on the mother-daughter relationship finds its pattern in the story of Demeter and Persephone. The myth of Persephone's abduction by Hades has obvious parallels with the stories of *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale*, in which women are temporarily taken by death, to be returned at the end. There are no overt references to the myth in *Alcestis*, but Helene Foley argues that it forms an underlying paradigm: 'Alcestis' disappearance, like Persephone's, makes life in the upper world barren, whereas her return brings life and a new toleration of death'; furthermore, she observes that 'the mother-daughter bond so powerfully celebrated in the Kore myth continues to play an important secondary role'.[203] Alcestis shows far greater concern for her daughter than for her son, who

[201] See Rabinowitz, *Anxiety Veiled*, 21: it was a system in which 'men exchange women to institute culture, which then excludes them'.
[202] Alexandra Gilbreath, 'Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*,' in *Players of Shakespeare 5*, ed. Robert Smallwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 88.
[203] Foley, *Female Acts*, 326.

will have his father to protect him. She laments the fact that she will be unable to guide her daughter through the rites of passage in a woman's life – marriage, childbirth. Hermione's 'death', like Alcestis', puts her in the position of Persephone with relation to her husband, but she also loses her daughter. Because Shakespeare's play features two lost women, Hermione is in the curious position of being both Demeter and Persephone simultaneously.

As I have shown, the Alcestis story was associated in Renaissance sources with the Persephone myth, as they frequently give the alternate ending found in Apollodorus (*Bibliotheca* 1.9.15) in which it is Persephone who returns Alcestis rather than Heracles. This version appears in Erasmsus' *Adages*, in the dictionaries of Elyot and Cooper, and is expanded in Pettie's *Pallace of Pleasure*:

> And Proserpina the goddess of hell especially pitying ye parting of this loving couple (for that she her selfe knew the paine of parting from friends, being by Dys stollen from her mother Ceres) put life into his wife againe, and with speed sent her unto him.[204]

That this connection was important to Shakespeare is demonstrated by a direct reference to the myth in *The Winter's Tale* by Perdita herself. At 4.4.116-18 she exclaims: 'O Proserpina, / For the flowers now that frighted thou letst fall / From Dis' wagon…'. In wishing to have Persephone's flowers, Perdita is in a way wishing to be Persephone herself – to be a daughter lost who has not yet been found, to have flowers worthy (or to be worthy) of the prince she is addressing. Bate puts it beautifully: 'Perdita is saying that she is not like Proserpina, because she lacks the flowers, but in realizing the flowers linguistically she becomes Proserpina'.[205] The dramatic irony is increased, because the audience knows that she *is* in these respects a Persephone figure. But the irony extends still further, because at this stage the (original) audience presumes that Hermione is dead. For the story to be complete, and Perdita to be a true figure of Persephone, she must be returned in the end to her mother. This is the only way in which spring and summer can return, the proper

[204] Gollancz, ed. *Petite Pallace of Pettie*, 195.
[205] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, 231-32.

ending to *The Winter's Tale*. The Persephone/Demeter story is of course a myth of the seasons.

Not all critics have been convinced of the significance of this myth for *The Winter's Tale*; Hardman, for example, considers that '[i]f Shakespeare remembered the story here he certainly did not make any serious use of it'.[206] His objections, however, are based on a rather pedantic focus on the literal details of the myth – Hermione does not search for Perdita like Demeter, Bohemia is not like the underworld – which do not detract from its broader significances. Bate, who observes that for the Renaissance, 'the fundamental myth of spring's return was that of Proserpina', offers a detailed and convincing reading of the 'economy of the seasons' evoked by the play's language, and its association with Perdita as Persephone.[207] This myth may also lie behind Shakespeare's relocation of Leontes' court to Sicily, since as Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 5) describes, this was where Persephone was abducted from and returned to: '[i]f Shakespeare took the Proserpina story as an underlying fable for the play, rather than as a mere local allusion, it would explain why he switched the locations he found in *Pandosto*'.[208] This certainly seems to be a more convincing explanation than that offered by Schanzer, who suggests that it was because Shakespeare thought the presence of a bear would be more appropriate in Bohemia than in Sicily.[209]

The thematic importance of mothers and daughters in these plays is considerable. But both Alcestis and Hermione also have, or had, sons. Carol Rutter offers a reminder that while '[c]riticism of *The Winter's Tale*…habitually starts with the adults', '[t]heatre knows the play starts with the child'.[210] Mamillius has a curious way of disappearing from readings of *The Winter's Tale* as a text; in performance the impact of his physical presence, and then absence, must be greater than the sum total of his lines. The same thing might be said of the children of

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[206] Hardman, *Winter's Tale*, 33.
[207] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, 220-33.
[208] Orgel, ed. *Winter's Tale*.
[209] Schanzer, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 18.
[210] Carol Rutter, *Shakespeare and Child's Play: Performing Lost Boys on Stage and Screen* (London: Routledge, 2007), 110.

Alcestis. Featuring young children on stage might be said to be a characteristic of Euripidean tragedy; '[b]y comparison with Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides makes remarkable use of young children in his tragedies'.[211] No one who has ever witnessed a production of *Medea* will be able to deny the efficacy of this dramatic strategy. In *Alcestis*, having the children on stage to witness their mother's death inevitably increases the pathos, and the fact that the son (called Eumelus in Renaissance editions, on the authority of Homer) is assigned a singing part in order to lament her is unusual in extant Greek tragedy.[212] In addition, it is vitally important to establish Alcestis 'as a mother as well as a wife', in order to show that '[i]n meeting the ultimate demands of wifehood she must set aside those of motherhood'.[213] Admetus' acceptance of her sacrifice indicates his implicit approval of a wife prioritising her husband over her children. Leontes likewise prioritises the importance of the role of wife over that of mother: in punishing Hermione for her supposed violation of her role as wife, he violently forces her out of her role as mother. But while the lost daughter can be found, the lost son becomes a textual absence as poignant as Eumelus' song.

In Pettie and other Renaissance sources, Persephone returns Alcestis because she is moved by pity or compassion. Euripides' version is significantly different. Rather than being returned peacefully by a sympathetic female, his Alcestis is returned by a male *xenos* (conventionally translated as 'guest-friend') who wins her back in a fight with Death for the sake of his friendship with her husband. It is notable that the initial crisis of *The Winter's Tale* takes place against a backdrop of male friendship and hospitality, in the midst of which the presence of a woman becomes problematic. Curren-Aquino sees the 'overall movement' of the play as being 'from hospitality understood in terms of reciprocity…to a sense of gift-giving as purely selfless, i.e. non-reciprocable'.[214] Michael Bristol offers a more detailed reading of the opening scenes, revealing that 'the dispute between Sicily and

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[211] M. Dyson, 'Alcestis' Children and the Character of Admetus', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 108 (1988): 13-23 (13).
[212] The other instance is in Euripides' *Andromache*.
[213] Dyson, 'Alcestis' Children,' 15.
[214] Snyder and Curren-Aquino, eds. *Winter's Tale*, 32 n.54.

Bohemia over the question of Polixenes's departure must be understood as something much more than a routine exchange of courtesies'; if hospitality is seen in terms of reciprocity, then the 'honor and prestige' of both giver and receiver are at stake.[215] Bristol observes that '[t]he Bohemian courtiers are already somewhat anxious about this because Leontes's exorbitant generosity may compromise their ability to offer adequate compensation'; thus, the 'affective and ethical complexities of the guest-friend bond are a central preoccupation of the opening scenes'.[216] In *Pandosto* much is made of Leontes' hospitality, but there is no equivalent to the debate over the length of Polixenes' stay which introduces the themes of reciprocity and reputation, which are so central to the *Alcestis*.

Bristol's choice of the term 'guest-friend' to apply to *The Winter's Tale* is striking, since it is a common translation of the Greek *xenos*. The play can be seen as moving from a quintessentially Greek system of 'hospitality understood as reciprocity', to a system in which gifts are non-reciprocal (made possible, Bristol implies, by a shift to a capitalist economy as represented by the sheep-shearing, Autolycus, and the statue as a representative of luxury goods). Through this shift, the fundamental issue at stake in *Alcestis* is resolved. This issue is the conflict between *xenia* and *philia* which faces Admetus. Barry Goldfarb explains that *philia* (represented by Alcestis) 'exists between members of the same social unit', while *xenia* (represented by Heracles) 'establishes relations between social units'.[217] When Heracles asks Admetus to break his promise to Alcestis never to touch another woman in order to receive the veiled female as a favour to him, he is asking him to privilege the bonds of *xenia* over the bonds of *philia*. Though, in doing so, Admetus of course receives his wife again, and so within the fiction the dramatic plot is resolved, this ending refuses to resolve the conflict of ideas so easily: 'In order for

[215] Michael Bristol, 'In Search of the Bear: Spatiotemporal Form and the Heterogeneity of Economies in *The Winter's Tale*,' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42, no.2 (1991): 145-67 (155-56).
[216] Bristol, 'In Search of the Bear,' 155-56.
[217] Barry Goldfarb, 'The Conflict of Obligations in Euripides' *Alcestis*,' *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 33 (1992): 109-26 (120).

obedience to the demands of *xenia* to restore the vows of *philia*, a feat is required that only Heracles can accomplish'.[218]

Given the importance of *xenia* to *Alcestis* (the word itself and its cognates are repeated numerous times), it is worth at this point mentioning the name 'Polixenes'. The mere fact that Shakespeare chose to replace Greene's distinctly un-Greek names with very Greek alternatives is significant, as has already been pointed out. Polixenes in particular perhaps deserves more attention as a name than it has yet received. Murray Levith has associated it with the Greek word *polyxenos*, which he translates as 'hospitable and much visited'.[219] Shakespeare had already mentioned a character called Polixenes in *Troilus and Cressida*, for the Greek hero Polyxenos. The fact that he recalled it here suggests that he was aware of (and interested in) its Greek meaning. If Shakespeare was using a Greek/Latin parallel text edition of the play, so that his eye might occasionally slip over to the Greek, it just might be significant that at *Alcestis* line 569 the chorus address the house of Admetus as πολύξεινος.

It is because of Admetus' (male) virtue of hospitality, as we have seen, shown to Heracles at the expense of proper respect to his recently deceased wife, that Alcestis is brought back to life. The *kleos* which she is promised for dying is overcome by her return to life – and her return to life is due to her husband's virtues, not her own. The happy ending, and Alcestis' return to life, depend upon her own wishes being explicitly ignored: Admetus must agree to receive what he believes to be another woman, before she is revealed as his wife. In a sense, Leontes passes the test which Admetus fails, by refusing to take the advice of the courtiers urging him to remarry. Even though Admetus protests, 'may I die if I betray her, even if she is no more' (θάνοιμ᾽ ἐκείνην καίπερ οὐκ οὖσαν προδούς, 1096), he ultimately gives in to Heracles' insistence. The danger in Alcestis' powerful usurpation of male *kleos* and action, and Admetus' corresponding emasculation, must be thoroughly eradicated before the threatening woman can be reduced

[218] Goldfarb, 'Conflict of Obligations', 125.
[219] Murray Levith, *What's in Shakespeare's Names* (North Haven, CT: Archon Books, 1978), 109.

enough to be accepted into society again. But the play does not merely dramatize this process, it also questions it, by leaving the prominent silence of Alcestis unbroken.

As most critics who have compared *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale* have indicated, 'it is the silence of the central female character which provides the most suggestive point of similarity'; as Dewar-Watson notes, 'the protracted silence of Alcestis lends her a statuesque demeanour and thus links the plays in terms of dramatic technique'.[220] But she interprets the silence of Alcestis as 'a manifestation of virtue and piety, which is consistent with the way she is characterized throughout the play', while 'Hermione's reticence toward Leontes renders the mood of the scene awkward'.[221] However, the silence of Alcestis is far from unproblematic, and in fact (like Hermione's) effectively unsettles the 'happy ending': as Mueller observes, '[t]he staggering of the reunion is not merely intended to draw out the suspense inherent in the event. It expresses the insight that long separations create psychological distances that cannot be overcome in a flash'.[222]

In the *Alcestis*, the heroine's final silence elicits one comment, twenty lines before the end of the play (she has been standing silent for nearly 140 lines). Admetus asks: 'Why ever does this woman stand speechless?' (τί γάϱ ποθ᾽ ἥδ᾽ ἄναυδος ἕστηκεν γυνή; 1143). He is given a ritual reason – she cannot speak until she is purified after three days have passed (1144-46) – which he accepts without question, as presumably the audience is meant to do as well. But acceptance of this explanation does not lessen the unsettling effect of Alcestis' silence.[223] Admetus'

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[220] Dewar-Watson, '*Alcestis* and the Statue Scene,' 76.
[221] Dewar-Watson, '*Alcestis* and the Statue Scene,' 76.
[222] Mueller, 'Hermione's Wrinkles,' 231. He finds the same effect in the recognition sequence between Odysseus and Penelope in *Odyssey* 22-3. Though the separation between Admetus and Alcestis has not been long in this sense, in the meantime she has died, entering (though temporarily) a realm beyond the bounds of Admetus' comprehension and experience.
[223] D.J. Conacher, ed. *Euripides: Alcestis* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1998), 198, claims that 'the veiled figure of Alcestis would be enacted by a mute (the actor originally playing the part of Alcestis would now be acting Heracles' role) and so cannot, of course, speak', but James Morwood, *The Plays of Euripides* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2004): 8, counters: 'at this stage of the development of the Greek theatre it would have been perfectly possible for Euripides to use a third speaking actor'.

question draws attention to it, even as Heracles' answer explains it away. Furthermore, the ritual undertones of the scene contribute to the sense that her silence leaves the ending incomplete. Wedding rituals are deliberately evoked visually by the stage business: Admetus takes a veiled woman by the wrist, who is then ceremonially unveiled. Foley's argument that the *anakaluptēria* (unveiling) was the first time the husband exchanged words with his bride as well as the first time he saw her ('The wedding gifts presented at the *anakaluptēria* were called both *optēria*, *theōrēta* and *athrēmata*, gifts of the look, and *prosphthengktēria*, gifts of addressing one another') is relevant to line 1131.[224] Unveiling is linked to speech – in the context of the marriage ceremony this is positive, but outside it the ideal Athenian woman should be veiled and silent (this is 'the paradox of the veil: an invisible woman may deceive and her veil represents the danger of the unfamiliar'[225]). The ritual of the (re-)marriage is left incomplete, precluding a complete sense of closure.

Even before this, Admetus has been concerned (typically) with his own ability to speak to her and touch her: 'May I touch her, and speak to her as my living wife?' (θίγω, προσείπω ζῶσαν ὡς δάμαρτ᾽ ἐμήν; 1131). Having been given permission, he addresses her, though it takes him another ten lines to notice that she has not replied. Heracles' answer is particularly telling: 'Speak to her; for you have everything that you wish for', (πρόσειπ᾽· ἔχεις γὰρ πᾶν ὅσονπερ ἤθελες, 1132); perhaps what Admetus actually wants is exactly this, a silent woman. Pitcher argues that the statue

> had always been there, as an image, long before it appeared in the chapel scene. The king had created a simulacrum of Hermione in his imagination, an idol of an unyielding stony lady elevated above him.[226]

This is exactly what, in Rabinowitz's view, both Admetus and *Alcestis* itself do: Alcestis, 'veiled and silent', is 'like a statue about to be unveiled and, like the earlier

[224] Foley, *Female Acts*, 316.
[225] Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2003): 241.
[226] Pitcher, ed. *Winter's Tale*, 47.

statue, a fetish object',[227] glorified for the very qualities which render it inanimate and powerless, and thus negate it as a threat. Both plays to some extent expose this ideology, as we, the audience, register the unsettling effects of the silence, even as they escape Admetus and Leontes.

The Winter's Tale inherits this concern with speech and silence. Although Mueller notes in passing that Shakespeare 'not only delays Hermione's first words but draws attention to this delay through Paulina's remark, "but it appears she lives, though yet she speak not. Mark a while" (V.iii.117-18)',[228] the full significance of the obsession with Hermione/the statue's speech or lack of it has yet to be recognised. In 5.2 the Third Gentleman introduces the fantasy that the statue might come to life in lines 98-100 ('He so near to Hermione hath done Hermione that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of an answer'), even though it is denied in 95-6, in the hypothetical lines about the craftsman: 'had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work…' (making it clear that a statue made by him is doomed to silence). In 5.3, apart from Paulina's line, we have Leontes: ''tis as easy / To make her speak as move' (93-94), and Camillo: 'If she pertain to life, let her speak too!' (113). In light of all the other connections to Euripides' *Alcestis*, the fascination with Hermione's silence can be recognised as a direct engagement with the tragedy. Shakespeare is playing with his source material, particularly in the comments of Leontes and Camillo – because of course Alcestis does move, does 'pertain to life', but does *not* speak. And, in true Shakespearean form, he cannot resist ultimately trumping his source. Paulina's trick beats Heracles' strength, and Hermione finally does speak – but only to her daughter. The unsettling quality of Alcestis' silence is not sacrificed, because Leontes receives not a word – he is embraced, but while in production this can be played positively, the fact that the silence towards him remains unbroken is still problematic.[229]

In any case, the fairy-tale resurrection of Hermione is shadowed by the ghost of Mamillius, who cannot be resurrected; some productions underline his

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[227] Rabinowitz, *Anxiety Veiled*, 87-88.
[228] Mueller, 'Hermione's Wrinkles,' 231.
[229] The contrast to the end of *Much Ado*, in which Hero does speak, is considerable.

exclusion by bringing him onstage in the final scene.[230] *The Winter's Tale* moves through tragedy and pastoral comedy to arrive at a tragicomic conclusion. *Alcestis*, performed in place of a satyr play, likewise begins with the tragedy of Alcestis' death and Admetus' grief, then turns to the comic revelry of Heracles, before enacting the final resurrection. Coming amongst a group of plays which show a decided interest in the workings of tragicomedy, *The Winter's Tale* finds a generic model in *Alcestis*. In finding in the figure of Alcestis a model for the suffering, resurrected wife, Shakespeare was far from alone. In *The Winter's Tale*, he characteristically combined the Euripidean fantasy of a woman brought back from the dead with the Ovidian fantasy of a statue brought to life. While linguistic and thematic resonances extend throughout the play, it is the dramaturgy of the final scene which demonstrates Shakespeare's interest in the structural and emotional progression of Euripides' example. *The Winter's Tale*, I believe, could only have grown into its present shape through a constitutive encounter with Euripides' *Alcestis*.

[230] See Rutter, *Shakespeare and Child's Play*, 153.

CHAPTER 6

MILTON AND THE 'SPIRIT AND VIGOR' OF EURIPIDES

In 1634, the twenty-six-year-old Milton purchased a copy of the complete works of Euripides for 12s 6d. Over the course of the next eighteen years, before he lost his sight completely, he read and annotated it thoroughly and repeatedly.[1][2] According to his daughter Deborah, Euripides was not only Milton's favourite tragedian, but his second-favourite poet (after Homer, and along with Ovid).[3] Milton's own works bear ample witness to the significance of his reading of Euripides, particularly from *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle* – written in the year he bought the complete works – onwards.[4] References and allusions appear in poetry and prose works, in political and theological writings, in English and in Latin. Nor are these allusions merely decorative or incidental; recent criticism has begun to appreciate the depth of Milton's intellectual engagement with Euripides, particularly in terms of ideas about democracy and *parrhesia*. In many ways, his reading of Euripides is rooted in the patterns of interpretation emerging from the sixteenth century, beginning with Erasmus. In *Samson Agonistes*, Milton's translation of Greek tragedy into English, Euripidean effects emerge alongside a Sophoclean structure. Against the backdrop of the sixteenth-century preference for Euripides, *Samson Agonistes* stands on the cusp of a turn towards Sophocles arising partly from increasing attention to Aristotle's *Poetics*.

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[1] Milton's copy of Euripides is now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, shelf mark Arch. A d.36. The date and price are recorded on the flyleaf in Milton's hand.

[2] See Maurice Kelley and Samuel D. Atkins, 'Milton's Annotations of Euripides,' *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 60, no. 4 (1961): 680-87.

[3] 'Milton's daughter Deborah, who used to read to him, related, that he was most delighted with Homer, whom he could almost entirely repeat; and next, with Ovid's Metamorphoses and Euripides', Thomas Warton, ed. *Poems…by John Milton* (London: James Dodsley, 1785), 584.

[4] David Quint, 'Expectation and Prematurity in Milton's *Nativity Ode*,' *Modern Philology* 97, no. 2 (1999): 195-219, considers that 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity', written in 1629, makes use of a choral ode from *Iphigenia in Tauris*.

1634: The Geneva Euripides

The Renaissance reception of Euripides owes an enormous amount to Erasmus, as we have seen, not only through his translations, but also through the *Adages* and his tireless promotion of Greek. In Milton, the Erasmian project bears its last and arguably greatest fruit. He attended St Paul's school, which had been established by John Colet on humanist principles in 1509; Erasmus' *De Copia* (1512) was written as a text book for it at Colet's request. While there, he certainly read some Euripides – perhaps for the first time, unless his private tutors had given their hard-working student a taste of Greek tragedy already.[5] He presumably deepened his acquaintance with Euripides while at Cambridge, and when he left in 1632 he retired to Hammersmith and immersed himself in further study.[6] Looking back on this period, he describes how 'being perfectly at my ease, I gave myself up entirely to reading the Greek and Latin writers; exchanging, however, sometimes, the country for the town…for the purchase of books.'[7] One of the books he purchased was the Euripides.

This was the 1602 edition printed by Paulus Stephanus (Paul Estienne) at Geneva. This compendious volume collects elements from several previous editions of the complete works. Like the 1562 and 1597 editions, it prints the Greek text alongside a Latin translation. For the first seven plays, Stephanus squeezes Arsenius' Greek scholia (untranslated) around the text. He prints the Greek text prepared by Canter (along with his *Prologomena* and brief linguistic notes), and the Latin translation and notes by Portus, both of which had appeared in the 1597 edition.[8] He also includes *annotationes* by Joannes Brodaeus and Stiblinus' extensive

[5] See Barbara Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography* (Malden: Blackwell, 2001), 10.

[6] Lewalski, *Life of John Milton*, 20; 16.

[7] *[E]volvendis Graecis Latinisque scriptoribus summum per otium totus vacavi; ita tamen ut nonnunquam, rus urbe mutarem…coemendorum gratia librorum* (CM VIII, 120-21). Text and translations from Milton's Latin prose works are from Frank Patterson et al., eds. *The Works of John Milton*, 18 vols. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1931-38), referred to as 'CM'.

[8] Stephanus' title page (¶1r) erroneously claims that the translation is Canter's. Canter had prepared his text and notes for his 1562 Greek edition (Basel: Oporinus).

commentaries at the end of the volume. At the beginning, he prints Thomas Magister's 'Life' of Euripides in Latin, followed by the epigrams in Greek.

There are, as usual, printed commonplace marks throughout, but a new feature is an extensive index which facilitates the location of passages on commonplace themes. An entry for *Beatus mortalium nemo* ('No mortal is happy'), for example, directs the reader to θνητῶν δ᾽ ὄλβιος ἐς τέλος οὐδεὶς ('no mortal is happy in the end', *Iphigenia in Aulis* 161), which is highlighted with commonplace marks. Milton's edition of Euripides, then, was very much in the sixteenth-century tradition, but simultaneously represents the most up-to-date scholarly resources available in 1634. Stephanus' dedicatory epistle likewise describes the Euripides who was already familiar, calling him 'that woman-hater', whose works are 'filled with so many *sententiae*'; he also calls him 'prince of tragic poets', and offers him to young and old as an example of purity, and a pious life.[9] Milton read his copy of Euripides closely, as his annotations show: according to Maurice Kelley and Samuel Atkins, 'Milton went through his Euripides at least twice, once before and once after 1638, with the variations in color of ink, pen point employed, and size of script further suggesting that within these two periods Milton worked intermittently'.[10] They also show that he made use of the commentaries appended to his text.[11] Both the text and its paratextual framework would prove highly influential in the development of Milton's thought and literary output.

The fact that he wrote his only performed dramatic work, *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, the same year he bought the Euripides invites comparison between the two, and indeed there are noteworthy echoes. In the Spirit's epilogue,

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[9] *Euripidis tragoediae quae extant*, 2 vols. (Geneva: Stephanus, 1602), sig.¶iir: *Euripides est, μισογύνης ille, poeta tot sententiis refertus: Euripides ille, tragicorum poetarum princeps, et quem possunt iuvenesque senesque castis auribus legere, imo et ab hoc ipso castitatis et piae vitae exempla petere.*

[10] Kelley and Atkins, 'Milton's Annotations of Euripides,' 684.

[11] In 100 cases he cites them directly, and in 48 more he 'offers, without acknowledgement, readings that appear in the commentaries'. Kelley and Atkins, 'Milton's Annotations of Euripides,' 685 and 685 n.22.

All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree[12]

represents a fusion of two Euripidean Choruses, *Hippolytus* 741-42 and *Heracles* 394-97. Where the Spirit began: 'To the ocean now I fly' (975), the Chorus in *Hippolytus* began its ode by wishing it might be turned into a bird, to soar over the sea (732-38). It continues: Ἑσπερίδων δ᾽ ἐπὶ μηλόσπορον ἀκτὰν / ἀνύσαιμι τᾶν ἀοιδῶν ('I would reach the apple-sown shore of the Hesperides, the singers', 742-43). The Chorus of *Heracles* relate how Heracles

came to the singing
maidens, to the western grove,
to pluck from golden leaves the apple-bearing
fruit with his hand

ὑμνῳδούς τε κόρας
ἦλυθεν ἑσπέριον ἐς αὐλάν,
χρυσέων πετάλων ἄπο μηλοφόρον
χερὶ καρπὸν ἀμέρξων
(394-97).

The Greek lines already gesture towards Milton's 'golden tree' and 'gardens of Hesperus', and Portus' Latin makes both points even more explicit: he expands 'golden leaves' to 'golden leaves *and branches*' (*[a]ureis a foliis, ramisque*), and clarifies that 'the Hesperian [western] grove' (*aulam Hesperiam*) refers to 'the Hesperian gardens' (*hortos Hesperios*).[13]

Other correspondences are more general. *Hippolytus* 106, οὐδείς μ᾽ ἀρέσκει νυκτὶ θαυμαστὸς θεῶν ('I do not like a god [Aphrodite] worshipped at night') may have inspired:

Night hath better sweets to prove,
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come let us our rites begin,
'Tis only daylight that makes sin
Which these dun shades will ne'er report
Hail goddess of nocturnal sport
(123-28).

[12] Quotations from *A Masque* are from Carey, ed. *Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*.
[13] Portus' explanatory expansions are italicised in Milton's edition, differentiating them typographically from the direct translation.

In both *A Masque* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, a stichomythic exchange about the significance of two young men between a lady and a shepherd (as the Lady calls Comus) or herdsman gives way to a description by the latter of his earlier discovery of them. The herdsman sets the scene when they were driving the cattle (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 260); in *A Masque* it was the 'time the laboured ox / In his loose traces from the furrow came' (290). The youths are mistaken for deities as they sit in *Iphigenia in Tauris* (267-68), while in *A Masque* 'Their port was more than human, as they stood' (296). Seeing them, a pious herdsman was moved to pray (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 268-69); Comus says that 'as I passed, I worshipped' (*A Masque* 301).

More specifically, Matthew Steggle notes that the Lady's gnomic 'none / But such as are good men can give good things' (701-702) echoes *Medea* 618: κακοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δῶρ᾽ ὄνησιν οὐκ ἔχει ('the gifts of a bad man have no benefit'); printed commonplace marks highlight this line in Milton's edition, and it is cross-referenced in the index under *[i]nimicorum dona suspecta*, 'the gifts of enemies are suspect'.[14] Steggle further demonstrates convincingly that on a structural level *A Masque* is modelled on Greek, and specifically Euripidean, tragedy. He identifies 'five structural devices in *A Masque*' – the prologue, stichomythia, *agon*, *deus ex machina*, and epilogue – which 'show that the structural background of *A Masque* is taken from Greek tragedy'.[15] The epilogue, as noted above, contains lines inspired by two Eurpidean choruses; the re-working of Medea's sententious phrase comes in the *agon* – and Steggle adds that 'the parallel is not merely verbal, but extends to the context', since 'Medea, like the Lady, is declining (within the format of the agon) an offer of assistance from a man who is seeking to deceive her sexually'.[16] The stichomythia between Comus and the Lady shares some situational parallels with a similar exchange in *Iphigenia in Tauris*; Steggle illustrates Milton's Eurpidean technique through comparison to *Ion*, where 'a long stichomythia between two strangers' is used not 'as primary exposition' but rather 'to establish a relationship

[14] Matthew Steggle, 'The Tragical Part': Milton's *Masque* and Euripides,' *Classical and Modern Literature* 20, no. 1 (2000): 18-36 (31).
[15] Steggle, 'Tragical Part,' 25.
[16] Steggle, 'Tragical Part,' 31.

between the two characters'.[17] Milton imitates the elliptical and at times cryptic syntax of Greek stichomythia to such an extent that Steggle finds it reminiscent of A.E. Houseman's parody of a Greek tragedy.[18]

Milton's *Masque*, then, shows signs of Euripidean influence not only in verbal reminiscences but also on a structural level. He does not imitate any one tragedy but even at this stage blends and combines Greek tragic effects to produce something quite new. This strategy anticipates his methods in *Samson Agonistes*, to which we will return at the end of the chapter. But Milton's reading of Euripides can also be seen in his non-dramatic works, which reveal some of the key features which Milton perceived and responded to in his favourite tragedian.

The 'spirit and vigor' of Euripides

In 1642, Milton was thinking hard about genre. In the preface to the second book of his fourth antiprelatical tract, *The Reason of Church Government*, he meditates on the poet's duty – to write 'to Gods glory by the honour and instruction of my country' – and on his desire to 'leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die'.[19] He then considers whether the epic genre is most suited to fulfilling these aims, '[o]r whether those Dramatick constitutions, wherein *Sophocles* and *Euripides* raigne shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a Nation'.[20] At around the same time, he was drawing up an outline for a tragedy to be called 'Adam Unparadiz'd'[21]; this was never written, but represents early experimentation with some of the material that would eventually become *Paradise Lost*. The instructive properties of Greek tragedy are highlighted once again in *Of Education* (1644). Here, Milton recommends 'the choise Histories, *Heroic Poems*, and *Attic* Tragedies of stateliest, and most regal argument, with all the famous Politicall orations', since 'if they were not only read; but some of them got by memory, and solemnly pronounc't with right accent, and grace, as might be taught', this 'would

[17] Steggle, 'Tragical Part,' 28.
[18] Steggle, 'Tragical Part,' 27-28.
[19] YP I, 810.
[20] YP I, 814-15.
[21] This survives in the Trinity MS (Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.3.4).

endue [the student] even with the spirit and vigor of *Demosthenes* or *Cicero*, *Euripides*, or *Sophocles*'.[22]

In *De ratione studii* (1512), Erasmus had recommended Euripides as an example of refined diction to teach students to speak correctly.[23] But Milton goes further: by reading, memorizing, and pronouncing the words, the student will actually take on the 'spirit and vigor' of Euripides (or Sophocles, or Demosthenes or Cicero). The aim of his proposed academy is to '[fit] a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices both private and publike of peace and war'.[24] In 1643 and 1644 the parliamentary forces suffered severe losses, and Martin Dzelzainis argues that *Of Education* reflects Milton's 'deep anxiety about the malaise afflicting the parliamentary cause and a conviction that the only cure for it was, in effect, a New Model education'.[25] *Of Education*, therefore, 'represents something very close to a "republican moment" for Milton'[26]: that the graduates of his academy will be imbued with the 'spirit and vigor' of the great writers of democratic Athens and republican Rome is crucial to Milton's vision.

In classical Athens, attending dramatic festivals such as the annual City Dionysia was considered a citizen's duty. As well as being enjoyable, it had religious and political (concerning the *polis*, or city-state) dimensions. In Aristophanes' *Frogs* (which Milton knew[27]), the question 'what should a poet be admired for?' (τίνος οὕνεκα χρὴ θαυμάζειν ἄνδρα ποιητήν; 1008) is answered (by Euripides): 'For our skill and advice, because we make men better in the cities' (δεξιότητος καὶ νουθεσίας, ὅτι βελτίους τε ποιοῦμεν / τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν, 1009-10). So Milton prescribes reading Euripides and Sophocles to produce an educated class fit to rule a commonwealth, and finds in the Greek tragedians a potential model for a poet who aspires to write works that are

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[22] YP II, 401.
[23] ASD I-2, 115.
[24] YP II, 379.
[25] Martin Dzelzainis, 'Milton's Classical Republicanism,' in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. David Armitage, Armand Himy, and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3-24 (11).
[26] Dzelzainis, 'Milton's Classical Republicanism,' 14.
[27] He mentions it in *Prolusion 6* (YP IV.1, 592).

'doctrinal and exemplary to a Nation'. In Sonnet 8 ('Captain or colonel', 1645), Milton aligns himself as a poet with Euripides. He urges the imagined enemy to spare his house and person because of the value of his poetry, finishing with a reminder that

> the repeated air
> Of sad Electra's poet had the power
> To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.
> (12-14)[28]

The allusion is to a story related in Plutarch (*Lysander* 15.3): when the Spartans and Thebans were about to raze Athens to the ground, a man from Phocis singing the first chorus from Euripides' *Electra* changed their minds, since they did not want to destroy the city that had produced such greatness. Milton, in typical Renaissance fashion, uses an anecdote from a later author to look back at the significance of Euripides. In this case, Euripides' poetry quite literally has the power to save the city.[29] This is the power that Milton imagines for his own work, as the inheritor of the 'spirit and vigor' of Euripides, both within and beyond the civil war context.

Euripides and *parrhesia* in *Areopagitica* and *Tetrachordon*

Areopagitica and *Tetrachordon* were published within six months of each other, in November 1644 and March 1645 respectively. Both arose from the negative reaction to *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643): *Tetrachordon* responds directly to criticisms of it, while *Areopagitica* was prompted by Milton's persecution by the Stationers' Company for publishing it without a license. As well as epigraphs from Euripides, both sport conspicuously Greek titles (*Areopagitica* being a reference, via Isocrates, to the high court of Athens, and *Tetrachordon* meaning 'four-stringed'). In both cases, the use of Greek on the title pages interacts in complex ways with the anxieties Milton displays elsewhere stemming from the hostile public reception of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. Milton's use of Euripides in these epigraphs

[28] Quoted from Carey, ed. *Milton: The Complete Shorter Poems*.
[29] Peter Goldstein, 'The Walls of Athens and the Power of Poetry: A Note on Milton's Sonnet 8,' *Milton Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (1990): 105-108, observes that in Plutarch the city was spared but the walls were destroyed. He thus opts for an ironic reading, but surely the point is that Milton's own lines of verse have the power to save the Athenian walls by altering the story.

has frequently been seen as typical of the Renaissance practice of extracting passages without regard for context: Nicholas McDowell, for example, considers that in these instances 'Milton treats Euripides's work not as tragic drama, with characters and plot, but as a textual locus of moral, political, and theological truth from which he can extract quotations from their context to clinch an argument'.[30] However, in *Defensio prima* (1651) Milton reproves his opponent for doing just that, arguing (concerning Greek tragedy) that

> we must not regard the poet's words as his own, but consider who it is that speaks in the play, and what that person says; for different persons are introduced, sometimes good, sometimes bad, sometimes wise men, sometimes fools, and they speak not always the poet's own opinion, but what is most fitting to each character.[31]

Context, then, should not automatically be dismissed.

The title page of *Areopagitica* features a quotation from *Suppliants* (438-441) given in Greek, followed by an English translation:

> Τοὐλεύθερον δ' ἐκεῖνο, εἴ τις θέλει πόλει
> Χρηστόν τι βούλευμ' εἰς μέσον φέρειν, ἔχων.
> Καὶ ταῦθ' ὁ χρήζων, λαμπρός ἐσθ', ὁ μὴ θέλων,
> Σιγᾷ, τί τούτων ἔστιν ἰσαίτερον πόλει;[32]
>
> This is true Liberty when free born men
> Having to advise the public may speak free,
> Which he who can, and will, deserv's high praise,
> Who neither can nor will, may hold his peace;
> What can be juster in a State than this?

The lines are spoken by Theseus, in a speech defending democracy in response to a foreign messenger, who had asked to see the τύραννος, or absolute ruler (399; translated as *tyrannus* in Milton's edition). Informed that Athens is not ruled by one man, but by the people in succession on a yearly basis (404-407), the messenger

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[30] Nicholas McDowell, 'Milton's Euripides and the Superior Rationality of the Heathen,' *The Seventeenth Century* 31, no. 2 (2016): 215-37 (226).

[31] *[N]on quid poeta, sed quis apud poetam quidque dicat, spectandum esse: variae enim personae inducuntur, nunc bonae, nunc malae, nunc sapientes, nunc simplices, non semper quid poetae videatur, sed quid cuique personae maxime conveniat loquentes* (CM 306-307). This point is made by Plutarch, *How a Young Man Should Listen to Poetry*, 19a ff.

[32] Modern editions print: τοὐλεύθερον δ᾽ ἐκεῖνο· Τίς θέλει πόλει / χρηστόν τι βούλευμ᾽ ἐς μέσον φέρειν ἔχων; / καὶ ταῦθ᾽ ὁ χρήζων λαμπρός ἐσθ᾽, ὁ μὴ θέλων / σιγᾷ. Τί τούτων ἔστ᾽ ἰσαίτερον πόλει;

expresses the view that monarchy is superior; the mob is at the mercy of self-serving orators, and incapable of forming correct judgements (409-26). Theseus counters that 'nothing is more inimical to a city than a *tyrannus*' (οὐδὲν τυράννου δυσμενέστερον πόλει, 429). *Tyrannus* does not mean 'tyrant' in the modern sense; Theseus is not arguing that 'tyrants are bad', but rather that rule by a single individual is incompatible with justice, equality, and freedom of speech. *Areopagitica* is concerned with countering the tyranny of censorship, which assumes the negative view of the capacities of the common people expressed by the messenger. Though the quoted lines do not themselves refer to the autocracy versus democracy debate, the wider context is clearly significant for Milton's project in *Areopagitica*; David Norbrook argues that 'Milton's Greek allusions…make the text an early manifesto of English republicanism'.[33]

Milton's special interest in *Suppliants* is unusual; the play does not seem to have been printed outside the complete works during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. But within editions of the complete works, this exchange between Theseus and the messenger did receive some attention. It represents an exemplary if brief *agon*, during which two opposing views on a subject are debated, which was highly congenial to the humanist mind. Xylander's edition includes printed marginal notes identifying the messenger's speech as a 'criticism of democracy' (*Democratiae vituperatio*), and Theseus' response as a 'criticism of *tyrannis* [tyranny, arbitrary rule] and praise of democracy' (*Tyrannidis vituperatio, et laus Democratiae*).[34] Neander similarly extracted and summarized both speeches in his *Aristologia Euripidea*.[35] All Renaissance editions, including Xylander's and the 1602 Stephanus owned by Milton, highlighted almost the entirety of both passages with printed commonplace marks.[36] An exception to this academic delight in the

[33] David Norbrook, '*Areopagitica*, Censorship, and the Early Modern Public Sphere,' in *British Literature 1640-1789: A Critical Reader*, ed. Robert DeMaria (Malden: Blackwell, 1999), 13-39 (23).
[34] Xylander ed., *Euripidis tragoediae* (1558), I, 424-25. Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 127 n.101, notes Xylander's annotations.
[35] Neander, *Aristologia Euripidea*, 226-29.
[36] See e.g. *Euripidis tragoediae* (1602), 24-26.

debate itself, however, can be found in Stiblinus, whose commentaries are printed at the end of Milton's edition.

Stiblinus, as Norbrook observes, 'glossed [lines 438-41] by a reference to the Greek concept of *parrhesia* or open, bold speech'.[37] Stiblinus writes: 'This *parrhesia* and license of the common people, to make speeches in the assembly, and to speak out about civil matters in the law courts' is condemned by Xenophon and Aristotle, whom he calls 'very serious authors'.[38] This is because *parrhesia* puts the city in the hands of 'demagogues, that is (as Aristotle explains) the flatterers of the people, the kind of men most ruinous to public affairs'.[39] He explains Theseus' words by pointing out their obvious anachronism: they 'should be interpreted as specifically concerning the city-state of Athens, of which this play contains praise'.[40] In his summary of the play, he reads Theseus as an ideal prince rather than associating him with democracy. Theseus is an example of 'wonderful humanity, justice, piety, and magnanimity', whose 'virtues have been consecrated to everlasting remembrance through the well-deserved agreement of all writers'.[41] This leads into a lengthy comparison praising the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, to whom the volume is dedicated. Theseus' praise of democracy apparently sits uneasily with Stiblinus' praise of Charles.

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[37] Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 127. For further discussion of *parrhesia* in the seventeenth century, see David Colclough, *Freedom of Speech in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[38] *Euripidis tragoediae* (1602), 116: *Hanc* παρρησιαν *& licentiam plebis, concionandi, ac de rebus civilibus pro arbitrio declamitandi, & Xenophon & Aristoteles, gravissimi autores, damnant*.

[39] *Euripidis tragoediae* (1602), 116: *[E]o quod* δημαγωγοις, *id est του δημου (ut Aristoteles interpretatur)* κολακας, *genus hominum rebuspub. exitiosum, haec res parere soleat*. See Aristotle, *Politics*, 5.1313b.

[40] *Euripidis tragoediae* (1602), 116: *[H]aec verba accipi debent proprie de Atheniensium civitate, cuius haec fabula encomium continet.*

[41] *Euripidis tragoediae* (1602), 109: *Unde miram humanitatem, iustitia, pietatem, magnanimitatem in Theseo uidere est, cuius uirtutes merito omnium scriptorum consensu aeternae memoriae consecratae sunt*. The Renaissance view of Theseus was not always so positive: Thomas Cooper, *Thesaurus*, s.v. 'Theseus', relates that he 'was muche defaced by breaking his faith, whiche he had promised to Ariadne the daughter of Minos king of Creta, whome hee lefte in a deserte yle called Naxus: for the which (as Virgile writeth) he is perpetually tormented on a wheele in hell'.

On the other hand, Stiblinus finds much to admire in the Athenian city-state. Elsewhere, he comments: 'not only is Athens the inventor of all learning, but it also produced many other divine and excellent things for the life of man, such as laws, proper systems for public affairs, customs for living properly'.[42] This praise of Athenian laws and systems seems at odds with Stiblinus' professed mistrust of *parrhesia*, which was fundamental to Athenian political identity, and his praise of Charles. Stiblinus also wrote a utopian work, *De eudaemonesium republica commentariolus*, which offers some clues to unravelling these apparent contradictions. His ideal state is neither a democracy nor a monarchy, but is ruled by an oligarchy formed of 'a small minority of virtuous and learned aristocrats'.[43] Meanwhile, his 'attitude to society was that of a schoolmaster towards a group of unruly, wicked children who must be constantly watched, reprimanded, and instructed'.[44] *Parrhesia*, clearly, is not considered appropriate for the general populace.

Crawforth writes that Stiblinus' praise of Athens 'reads like an inventory of Milton's key ideological commitments',[45] but on the vital subject of *parrhesia* they come into conflict. Milton chooses his epigraph for *Areopagitica* from exactly those lines of Theseus' speech which make Stiblinus uncomfortable. Norbrook describes how the 'fortunes [of the term *parrhesia*] had declined with the decline of Greek democracy: the more conservative Romans had often translated *parrhesia* as *licentia* or *contumacia*'; it is this negative view of *parrhesia* that Stiblinus, who equates it with *licentia plebis* ('license of the common people'), inherited.[46] Thus, '[i]n choosing democratic Athens rather than conservative Rome as his model', Milton embraces the Athenian conception of *parrhesia*, and 'urges [his] readers to translate the values

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[42] *Euripidis Tragoediae* (1602), 108: *Non enim solum omnium doctrinarum inuentrices Athenae sunt, sed etiam alia multa diuina ac eximia hominum uitae pepererunt, ut leges, rectas rerum publicarum rationes, recte uiuendi instituta*.
[43] Miriam Eliav-Feldon, *Realistic Utopias: The Ideal Imaginary Societies of the Renaissance, 1516-1630* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 22.
[44] Eliav-Feldon, *Realistic Utopias*, 22.
[45] Crawforth, 'Politics of Greek Tragedy,' 243.
[46] Norbrook, '*Areopagitica*,' 26.

of the polis into the England of the 1640s'.[47] But, as Stiblinus' references to Xenophon and Aristotle indicate, conflicting interpretations of *parrhesia* were in operation in classical Greek thought too. A closer look at *parrhesia* in Euripides and Isocrates illuminates Milton's engagement with the idea in *Areopagitica* and beyond.

The concept of *parrhesia* – from πᾶς, 'everything', and ῥῆσις, 'act of speaking' – has been analysed by Michel Foucault, who is interested in the role of '[t]he one who uses *parrhesia*, the *parrhesiastes*', whom he defines as 'someone who says everything he has in mind: he does not hide anything, but opens his heart and mind completely to other people through his discourse'.[48] He associates the word *parrhesia* particularly closely with Euripides, whom he identifies as the first extant writer to use it; it appears in *Phoenician Women*, *Hippolytus*, *Bacchae*, *Electra*, *Ion*, and *Orestes*. In the first five cases, *parrhesia* 'was presented as having only a positive sense or value'; in *Orestes*, on the other hand, 'there is a split within *parrhesia* itself between its positive and negative senses',[49] where one of the speakers in a public assembly is described in the messenger's speech as θορύβῳ τε πίσυνος κἀμαθεῖ παῤῥησίᾳ, or 'reliant on bluster and ignorant *parrhesia*'.[50]

This divide between positive *parrhesia* and *parrhesia* as *licentia* is also found in the writings of Isocrates.[51] Isocrates repeatedly characterises himself as the right kind of *parrhesiastes*, the 'trustworthy orator who speaks only in the best interests of Athens'.[52] On the other hand, in *Areopagiticus* he argues that in the current state of Athenian democracy, the citizens mistake *parrhesia* (meaning *licentia*) for equality (ἰσονομία, *Areopagiticus* 20). Milton's subtitle, 'A Speech of Mr. John Milton for the liberty of unlicens'd printing, to the Parlament of England', underlines the connection advertised by his title. Like Milton's, Isocrates' work was written as a

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[47] Norbrook, '*Areopagitica*,' 26.
[48] Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2001), 12.
[49] Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 72.
[50] Modern editors – e.g. M.L. West, ed. *Euripides: Orestes* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1987), 245-46 – have questioned the authenticity of these lines, but this is a relatively recent development.
[51] See Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 80-83.
[52] Maria Gisella Giannone, 'The Role of *Parrhēsia* in Isocrates,' *Antesteria* 6 (2017): 95-108 (100).

speech which was never intended to be delivered. In justification of his subject, Milton says, 'I could name him who from his private house wrote that discourse to the Parlament of *Athens*, that perswades them to change the forme of *Democraty* which was then establisht',[53] avoiding naming Isocrates with a coy conditional. Some critics have argued that Milton's invocation of Isocrates is ironic,[54] but Blair Hoxby offers a persuasive alternative: 'In Milton's day Isocrates' *Areopagiticus* was widely interpreted as an attempt to demonstrate how "true liberty" might be preserved by avoiding the two plagues that always beset republics', tyranny and anarchy.[55] Thus 'Milton invokes Isocrates in *Areopagitica*, not just because he wants to announce that he is publishing a written oration but because he wishes to promote a "true liberty" that will not degenerate into licence'.[56] The concept of *parrhesia* promoted by Milton in *Areopagitica* is not the complete license of speech which Isocrates condemns in *Areopagiticus*, but the positive *parrhesia* represented by Isocrates himself as author-orator speaking up for the public good.

This is reflected in Milton's title-page translation of the lines from *Suppliants*. Where the Greek simply has 'the one who wants to is renowned, the one who does not wish to is silent' (καὶ ταῦθ' ὁ χρήζων, λαμπρός ἐσθ', ὁ μὴ θέλων, / σιγᾷ, 440-41), Milton translates: 'Which he who *can*, and will, deserv's high praise, / Who neither *can* nor will, may hold his peace' (my italics).[57] Milton's *parrhesiastes*, then, is qualified by his abilities for the role. At the same time, the issue of freedom of speech in *Areopagitica* slides into freedom of reading. Rhetorically, *Areopagitica* presents 'two conceptions about audience capabilities – slow and dull or quick and ingenious'.[58] He writes in English, opening up his pamphlet to a broad readership, and resoundingly rejects Latin, as the language of papism and censorship. His title

[53] YP II, 489.
[54] See e.g. Joseph Wittreich, 'Milton's *Areopagitica*: Its Isocratic and Ironic Contexts,' *Milton Studies* 4 (1972): 101-12.
[55] Blair Hoxby, '*Areopagitica* and Liberty,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 218-37 (234).
[56] Hoxby, '*Areopagitica* and Liberty,' 234.
[57] Noted by Hoxby, '*Areopagitica* and Liberty,' 237.
[58] Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 60.

page citation is given in Greek and English, with no mediating Latin. Even the attributions transliterate the Greek rather than giving the Latinate title (*Hicetid[es]* rather than *Supplices*). Greek and English are brought into alignment, just as Milton tries to map contemporary London onto classical Athens rather than Rome.

However, Milton offers no translation or explanation of the title itself, and in refusing to name Isocrates directly in his text he actively withholds the requisite information from those who do not know it already. This represents an 'elitist strategy' in which he 'addresses an audience sympathetic to' – and, we might add, with an understanding of – 'the classical polis over the heads of more conventional figures'.[59] Likewise, his translation of the lines of Euripides is not direct but interventionalist; in the very act of translating, a supposedly inclusive action, Milton simultaneously restricts access to *parrhesia* to those who are qualified by ability to use it. This qualification of *parrhesia* was one that Milton found in Euripides' *Orestes*, and more explicitly in Isocrates' works including *Areopagiticus*.

These contradictory gestures – towards opening out *parrhesia* on the one hand, and restricting it on the other – are intensified on the title page of *Tetrachordon*. The title itself is even more impenetrable than that of *Areopagitica*: Isocrates was widely available in Latin translation, so that the reference might have been recognised by some readers with no Greek. *Tetrachordon*, meanwhile, requires a knowledge of Greek to decipher: it means 'four-stringed', and refers to his project of bringing together four bible verses on divorce and making them resonate in harmony. Similarly, the four lines of Greek from *Medea* on the title page of *Tetrachordon* remain untranslated. Like *Areopagitica*, *Tetrachordon* is written in English, thus opening up its readership to include those lacking a classical education, and yet on the title page itself he deliberately excludes exactly this subset of readers from the meaning of his epigraph. Looking back on *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (of which *Tetrachordon* was a defence) a decade later, he was to reflect in *Defensio secunda* (1654) that perhaps he had made a mistake in writing in

[59] Norbrook, '*Areopagitica*,' 33.

English, and his subject-matter would have been better received if written exclusively for the more highly educated:

> I could wish only that I had not written in the vernacular tongue; for I had not fallen upon vernacular readers, with whom it is usual to be unconscious of their own good fortune, and to ridicule the misfortune of others.[60]

With *Tetrachordon*, although he continues to write in English, he separates his readers from the outset into those who could read the Euripidean epitaph and those who could not.

Correspondingly, Medea's lines to Jason (though referring to herself) explicitly comment on the dangers of being misunderstood:

> Σκαιοῖσι καινὰ προσφέρων σοφὰ[61]
> Δόξεις ἀχρεῖος, κοὐ σοφὸς πεφυκέναι·
> Τῶν δ'αὖ δοκούντων εἰδέναι τι ποικίλον,
> Κρείσσων νομισθεὶς ἐν πόλει, λυπρὸς φανῇ.
> (298-301)

Judith Mossman's translation runs: 'offering strange new wisdom to the foolish you will seem to be inept and not wise; and again being thought more powerful than those who think they have some subtle knowledge you appear troublesome in the city'.[62] Sara J. van den Berg and W. Scott Howard contrast the unpunctuated final line as it appears in modern editions (in which ἐν πόλει, 'in the city', hovers ambiguously between κρείσσων νομισθεὶς, 'being thought more powerful', and λυπρὸς φανῇ, 'you appear troublesome') to Milton's text, in which the 'comma emphasizes the link to those with reputation in the community'.[63] A key aspect of the *parrhesiastes* was that he spoke the truth to the city in the face of danger to himself; this guaranteed that he was not speaking for personal gain. Medea's lines, I would suggest, evoke the position of the *parrhesiastes*.

By remaining untranslated, the Greek lines enact the exclusion of the foolish, or at least the unlearned, who might misunderstand the wisdom they convey. At

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[60] *[V]ellem hoc tantum, sermone vernaculo me non scripsisse; non enim in vernas lectores incidissem; quibus solemne est sua bona ignorare, aliorum mala irridere* (CM VIII, 114-15).
[61] σκαιοῖσι μὲν γὰρ καινὰ προσφέρων σοφὰ in modern editions.
[62] Judith Mossman, *Euripides: Medea* (Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2011).
[63] Sara J. van den Berg and W. Scott Howard, eds., *The Divorce Tracts of John Milton: Texts and Contexts* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2010), 478 n.2.

the same time, the main body of Milton's text accepts the role of the *parrhesiates*, offering strange new wisdom to the city despite the personal risk involved. For those readers who could access the meaning of the quotation, the simple act of comprehension was symbolic: in demonstrating that they are able to read Milton's complaint that cleverness is not appreciated by the stupid, the reader is enlisted into the ranks of the clever (or at least educated) who, it is implied, will not make that mistake. But do the lines from *Medea* resonate beyond their immediate sense – does it matter that they are from *Medea* specifically, as opposed to anywhere else?[64]

Purkiss argues that Milton himself did not intend them to: 'Milton is using the quotation humanistically and aphoristically, as an argument from authority that supports his vision of the world that scorns him'.[65] These exact lines had frequently been extracted from their original context, for example in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (2.21), and in Milton's own *Art of Logic* (8.387), as Sharon Achinstein points out.[66] Purkiss goes on to make a case that 'the title-page reference to *Medea* is in fact emblematic of issues the divorce tracts evade', predominantly the potential fate of women and children under the system Milton proposes.[67] Her argument highlights the unintended consequences of citation, as the supplementary text inevitably carries with it a wide range of connotations and suggestions that are ultimately uncontrollable by the plundering author.

But given his insistence on context elsewhere, it is worth considering whether Euripides' play offers any connotations that Milton *did* intend to be accessible to the privileged reader. Achinstein offers just such a reading. Rather than being 'a breathtaking act of repression' of the more challenging aspects of Medea's drama, she reads the citation as being 'an assertion of deviance that hides

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[64] As *Areopagitica*'s epigraph resonates with the context in *Suppliant Women*; see further Paul Hammond, *Milton and the People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 78.
[65] Diane Purkiss, 'Whose Liberty? The Rhetoric of Milton's Divorce Tracts,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. McDowell and Smith, 186-99 (187).
[66] Sharon Achinstein, 'Medea's Dilemma: Politics and Passion in Milton's Divorce Tracts,' in *Rethinking Historicism from Shakespeare to Milton*, ed. Anne Baines Coiro and Thomas Fulton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 181-208 (192).
[67] Purkiss, 'Whose Liberty?,' 188.

nothing'.[68] Medea's overpowering passions 'provide for Milton a means of exploring the positive contribution the emotions make to ethical deliberation, both personal and public'.[69] The central argument of *Tetrachordon*, as illustrated by the story of Paulus Emilius' shoes, is that '[o]ne must acknowledge the inner life of the other; one simply cannot know the pain others feel'.[70] For Milton, 'the figure of Medea is a means by which to explore the nexus between broken marriage, effective political speech, and the experience of the passions', allowing 'a space for him to argue with, not against, emotions'.[71] Ventriloquizing Medea, it seems, means more to Milton than the borrowing of an appropriate aphorism.

Milton had referred to Medea already in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, but this is a more accessible Medea, less Greek, more familiar: 'The Sorceress *Medea* did not approve her owne evill doings, yet lookt not to be excus'd for that'.[72] Though Achinstein shows a link to Euripides' divided Medea,[73] the epithet 'Sorceress' rather evokes Seneca and Ovid; Euripides, conversely, deliberately suppresses Medea's supernatural abilities. Thus, while Milton's comment implies a certain admiration at least for Medea's honesty, it does not approach the potentially radical nature of her inclusion on *Tetrachordon*'s title page. This does appear to be a 'risky' move, as Norbrook says, 'for a writer trying to appeal to a godly audience'.[74] Norbrook considers that 'Milton continues the risk…when he compares his adversaries to Pentheus in Euripides's *Bacchae* who destroyed lawful worship – the worship in Euripides' case being the cult of Dionysus, which of course was hardly godly by Puritan standards'.[75] Achinstein has shown that to defend Medea was a radical position, citing Hobbes' more usual

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[68]Achinstein, 'Medea's Dilemma,' 187.
[69] Achinstein, 'Medea's Dilemma,' 185.
[70] Achinstein, 'Medea's Dilemma,' 201. '*Paulus Emilius*, being demanded why he would put away his wife for no visible reason, *This Shoo*, saith hee, and held it out on his foot, *is a neat shoo, a new shoo, and yet none of yee know where it wrings me*', *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, 2.21 (YP II, 348).
[71] Achinstein, 'Medea's Dilemma,' 190.
[72] YP II, 314.
[73] Achinstein, 'Medea's Dilemma,' 193.
[74] David Norbrook, 'Euripides, Milton, and *Christian Doctrine*,' *Milton Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1995): 37-41 (39).
[75] Norbrook, 'Euripides, Milton, and *Christian Doctrine*,' 39. YP II, 640.

seventeenth-century reading of the play.[76] But by refusing to offer a translation of the Greek text, Milton attempts to restrict access to this intertext to those readers who, by virtue of their educational standard (and interest in/access to resources for following it up), are considered more likely to understand its subtleties.

Milton's anti-tyrannical Euripides

Already in *Areopagitica* and *Tetrachordon*, Euripides has become associated with liberty, and specifically with the practice and principle of *parrhesia*. As we have seen, for Norbrook the lines from *Suppliants* contribute to making *Areopagitica* 'an early manifesto of English republicanism'.[77] When Milton comes to write in defence of the execution of Charles I, in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (c. Feb 1649), *Eikonoklastes* (c. Oct 1649), and *Defensio prima* (1651), the vision of Euripides that emerges is strongly and explicitly anti-tyrannical. The triumvirate of texts to which Milton returns in this context is formed of *Children of Heracles*, *Suppliants*, and *Orestes*. The first two were already connected by Stiblinus in his preface to *Children of Heracles*: 'as far as the arrangement and the purpose of the poet are concerned, [it] seems to fit with *Suppliants*, which, as we have said above, tends toward praise of the Athenian republic' (*quod ad oeconomiam et consilium poetae attinet, cum Supplicibus colludere videtur, quas supra diximus pertinere ad laudem Atheniensis reipub[licae]*).[78] He notes that *Suppliants* showed Theseus, the ruler of Athens, extending protection to suppliants, while *Children of Heracles* shows Demophon, the son of Theseus and likewise ruler of Athens, doing the same. This connection did not escape Milton.

In one of very few classical references in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, he quotes Demophon from *Children of Heracles* as saying, in his own translation: 'I rule not my people by Tyranny, as if they were Barbarians, but am my self liable, if I doe unjustly, to suffer justly'.[79] The lines are 423-4 (οὐ γὰρ τυραννίδ᾽ ὥστε βαρβάρων ἔχω· / ἀλλ᾽, ἢν δίκαια δρῶ, δίκαια πείσομαι); in an alternative translation: 'I do not have a *tyrannis* like that of the barbarians; but, if I do what is

[76] Achinstein, 'Medea's Dilemma,' 188.
[77] Norbrook, '*Areopagitica*,' 23.
[78] Stiblinus, preface to *Heraclidae*, trans. Meghan Bowers (with minor alterations).
[79] YP III, 205.

just, I will be treated justly'. The Greek is compressed: the word *tyrannis* flexibly invokes both the negative sense (i.e. 'tyranny') and the neutral usage ('monarchy'). Demophon is saying, 'I do not have a bad *tyrannis*, like the barbarians do; I have a good *tyrannis*, in which I am held accountable for my actions'. But in Milton's interpretation, 'Tyranny' can only be negative. The word 'liable', perhaps suggested by the semantic field of δίκαια, is not in the Greek, and implies that the power of the king is legally circumscribed, an important feature of Milton's argument in the treatise. He changes the hypothetical circumstances so that if his monarch behaves unjustly, he will suffer (interpreting πείσομαι in a negative sense) justly, rather than behaving justly/being treated justly as in the Greek. This makes the situation analogous to the issue with which Milton is concerned: Charles I behaved unjustly, so those who punished him behaved justly.

In *Eikonoklastes*, Milton introduces the example of Orestes, referring to the scenario from Euripides' play: 'In Greece, *Orestes* the Son of *Agamemnon*, and by succession King of *Argos*, was in that Countrey judg'd and condemn'd to death for killing his Mother'.[80] The message is clear: no man, not even a king, is above the law. The examples from *Orestes* and *Children of Heracles* are brought together with *Suppliants* in a passage in *Defensio prima* (or, to give it its original title, *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*, 'Defence of the English People'), written in answer to the *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I* (1649) by Claude Saumaise (Salmasius):

> The same conclusion appears from the story of Euripides' Orestes, who being after his father's death himself king of the Argives, was yet brought to trial by the people for the slaying of his mother, pleaded his own cause, and by the people's vote was condemned to die. That at Athens the kingly power was subject to the laws, the same Euripides also bears witness in his play called *The Suppliants*…[81]

Milton then gives the words of 'Theseus, king of Athens' (*Theseus Athenarum Rex*) in Greek (οὐ γὰρ ἄρχεται / ἑνὸς πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἀλλ᾽ ἐλευθέρα πόλις, / δῆμος δ᾽

[80] YP III, 589. Milton continues with the events of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, in which Orestes is judged by the Areopagus.

[81] *Idem etiam docet Euripidis Orestes, qui, mortuo patre, Argivorum ipse Rex, ob caedem matris a populo in iudicium vocatus, ipse causam dixit, et suffragiis populi capite damnatus est. Athenis Regiam potestatem legibus obnoxiam fuisse testator idem Euripides etiam in Supplicibus*…(CM VII, 310-11).

ἀνάσσει, 404-406), followed by a Latin translation: *Non regitur / Ab uno viro, sed est libera haec civitas, / Populus autem regnat* ('Not ruled by one man, but free is this city; indeed, the people reigns').[82] He continues with 'his son Demophoon, likewise king of the Athenians' (*eius filius Demophoon Rex item Atheniensium*) in *Children of Heracles*: οὐ γὰρ τυραννίδ᾽ ὥστε βαρβάρων ἔχω, / ἀλλ᾽ ἢν δίκαια δρῶ, δίκαια πείσομαι (423-24). His Latin translation is *Non enim iis tyrannice tanquam barbaris impero, / Sed si facio iusta quae sunt, iusta mihi rependuntur* ('For I do not rule them by tyranny, as if they were barbarians, but if I do things which are just, I am repaid with justice').[83]

These examples follow Milton's refutation of Salmasius' claim that 'Aeschylus by himself is enough to inform us…that kings in Greece held a power not liable to any laws or any judicature; for in the tragedy of *The Suppliants* he calls the king of the Argives ἄκριτον πρύτανιν, a ruler not subject to judgement'.[84] Milton rebuts this with an analysis of the scene: first, the line quoted by Salmasius is spoken by the chorus of banished Egyptian women, not by a Greek; secondly, their motive is to guarantee their own safety, so they are using flattery as a persuasive technique; and thirdly, the king's own reply is that he cannot do anything without the people's consent, so the outcome is that the people are consulted. After the examples from Euripides, he finishes with two references to Sophocles, citing the bold replies of Tiresias and Creon to Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus* (410, οὐ γάρ τι σοὶ ζῶ δοῦλος, 'I am not your slave'; 630, κἀμοὶ πόλεως μέτεστιν, οὐχί σοι μόνῳ, 'I too have a share in the city, not you alone'), and Haemon to Creon in *Antigone*: πόλις γὰρ οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ἥτις ἀνδρός ἐσθ᾽ ἑνός ('That is no city which belongs to one man', 738).[85]

From this lengthy section, then, Greek tragedy emerges as ideologically anti-tyrannical, with three examples from Euripides, two from Sophocles, and one from Aeschylus. Of the three, Euripides appears to have provided the most fertile ground

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[82] CM VII, 310-11.
[83] CM VII, 310-11.
[84] *Potestatem nullis legibus, nullis iudiciis obnoxiam in Graecia reges obtinuisse vel unus…Aeschylus potest docere; qui in tragoedia, Supplices, Regem Argivorum ἄκριτον πρύτανιν vocat, non iudicabilem rectorem* (CM VII, 306-7). Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 371.
[85] CM VII, 310-11.

in terms of anti-tyrannical, pro-democratic language for Milton. Neither Sophocles nor Aeschylus is cited again in the treatise, but he returns to *Suppliants* later with more detail:

> Theseus in Euripides was of the same opinion; for he, though king of Athens, yet to his great honour restored the Athenian people to liberty, and advanced the power of the people above that of the king, and left the regal power in that city none the less to his posterity.[86]

He quotes Theseus' words in *Suppliants* 352-53: δῆμον κατέστησ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐς μοναρχίαν / ἐλευθερώσας τήνδ᾽ ἰσόψηφον πόλιν,[87] and translates them as *Populum constitui ipsum in Monarchiam, / Liberans hanc Urbem aequale ius suffragii habentem* ('I placed the people itself in sovereignty, freeing this city through having an equal right to vote'). He then brings up the same passage from *Suppliants* that he quoted in the *Defensio prima*, in a slightly extended version (403-406):

> πρῶτον μὲν ἤρξω τοῦ λόγου ψευδῶς, ξένε,
> τύραννον ἐνθάδ᾽· οὐ γὰρ ἄρχεται
> πρὸς ἀνδρός, ἀλλ᾽ ἐλευθέρα πόλις,
> δῆμος δ᾽ ἀνάσσει
>
> *Primum incoepisti orationem falso hospes,*
> *Quaerens tyrannum hic; non enim regitur*
> *Ab uno viro, sed est libera haec civitas,*
> *Populus autem regnat.*[88]

This time Milton adds the opening lines of Theseus' reply to the Theban messenger ('First you begin your speech falsely, stranger, asking for the tyrant here'), re-using his earlier Latin translation of the rest of the passage ('for not ruled by one man, but free is this city; indeed, the people reigns'). He concludes: 'These were his words, though in that city he yet both was, and was called, king' (*Haec ille; cum tamen rex in illa civitate et esset et dictus esset*).[89]

Milton's particular familiarity with Euripides, along with his strong association of the tragedian with the anti-tyrannical and parrhesiastic discourse of

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[86] *Idem sensit Theseus Euripideus, qui cum Athenarum rex esset, populo tamen Atheniensi in libertatem cum magna sua gloria vindicato, et potestatem popularem extulit supra regiam, et regnum nihilo secius in illa civitate suis posteris reliquit* (CM VII, 350-1).
[87] Modern texts print line 352 as καὶ γὰρ κατέστησ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐς μοναρχίαν.
[88] CM VII, 350-51.
[89] CM VII, 350-51.

classical Athens, is further underlined by the evidence of a very different work, *De Doctrina Christiana* ('On Christian Doctrine', on which he seems to have worked from the late 1640s up until 1660).[90] Unlike *Defensio prima*, which has densely-packed classical allusions woven into its very fabric, *De Doctrina Christiana* contains very few literary references. Norbrook observes that '[t]his restraint is appropriate to the decorum of a theological discourse', observing that 'William Ames, a major authority for *Christian Doctrine*, had specifically criticized excessive appeals to heathen authorities in sermons'.[91] As a result, he finds it significant that 'the majority of the treatise's remaining allusions come from one author, Euripides' – in fact, he uses this as evidence for Milton's authorship.[92] In one instance, a cluster of citations from Euripides is given as evidence that the Greek word δεσπότης ('lord')

> is commonly so used with plural number but singular meaning, presumably to show respect and give honour. Thus in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, we read λίαν δεσπόταισι πιστὸς εἶ, for δεσπότῃ, and again εὔκλεές τοι δεσποτῶν θνήσκειν ὑπέρ for δεσπότου. Similarly with the messenger in *Rhesus* and in *Bacchae*.[93]

This is the densest cluster of citations from a classical author in the tract, and the only instance that approaches the way Milton piles on biblical examples; he cites Euripides 'with the ease of drawing in breath'.[94] As evidence for this use of the plural implying respect, Norbrook notes that 'the Euripides quotations are not… very convincing – better examples could have been found in Aeschylus'.[95] Euripides, for Milton, clearly springs to mind most readily.

In a revealing analysis of the contexts of these references, Norbrook shows that they all involve the delivery of messages under circumstances which draw

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[90] See John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington, eds., *The Complete Works of John Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008-present), VIII.I, xxvi. Henceforth 'OW'.
[91] Norbrook, 'Euripides, Milton, and *Christian Doctrine*,' 37.
[92] Norbrook, 'Euripides, Milton, and *Christian Doctrine*,' 37.
[93] Text and translation (sometimes modified) from *De Doctrina Christiana* are from OW. *Nam et apud Graecos vox δεσπότης, id est Dominus, numero itidem plurali, sensu singulari reverentiae nimirum et honoris causa usurpari solet. Sic apud Euripidem Iphigen. in Aulid. λίαν δεσπόταισι πιστὸς εἶ, pro δεσπότῃ, et rursus, εὔκλεές τοι δεσποτῶν θνήσκειν ὑπέρ pro δεσπότου. Sic nuntius in Rheso et nuntius in Bacchis* (OW VIII.I, 166-67). *Iphigenia in Aulis* 304 and 312; *Rhesus* 264; *Bacchae* 1028.
[94] OW VIII.I, liv.
[95] Norbrook, 'Euripides, Milton, and *Christian Doctrine*,' 38.

attention to questions of who has the right to speak, and under what circumstances. The lines from *Iphigenia in Aulis* come in the scene in which Menelaus intercepts Agamemnon's slave carrying a letter which he refuses relinquish; their dialogue debates 'how far the lower orders may legitimately be outspoken when there is a conflict of loyalties'.[96] In the passage from *Rhesus*, the shepherd bringing the message is initially rebuked for inappropriate speech, but is then vindicated. In *Bacchae* 1027-28 the messenger 'draws attention to his lowly status but declares that loyal servants are touched by the fates that befall their lord(s)'.[97] Norbrook concludes that the references 'look like the work of someone familiar with the linguistic details of Euripides' canon and with a particular interest in a rather specific kind of dramatic context'.[98]

The other major reference to Euripides in *De Doctrina Christiana* is, once again, to *Suppliants*. This time, however, it is to a different part of the text (lines 532-34):

> ὅθεν δ᾽ ἕκαστον εἰς τὸ σῶμ᾽ ἀφίκετο,
> ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἀπῆλθε, πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα,
> τὸ σῶμα δ᾽ ἐς γῆν[99]
>
> [let] each thing return to the place from which
> it came to the body, spirit to air,
> and body to earth.

Although the content of these lines is not directly related, as we have seen *Suppliants* is the play most strongly associated by Milton with an anti-tyrannical and parrhesiastic context. There is perhaps some indication, too, that at a couple of moments in *De Doctrina* Milton had the lines which he had quoted on the title page of *Areopagitica* in mind, either consciously or subconsciously. In the same chapter in which this quotation from *Suppliants* appears, Milton uses the phrasing *[q]uid enim iustius esse potuit*, which the editors of the Oxford edition connect to the *Areopagitica*

[96] Norbrook, 'Euripides, Milton, and *Christian Doctrine*,' 38.
[97] Norbrook, 'Euripides, Milton, and *Christian Doctrine*,' 38.
[98] Norbrook, 'Euripides, Milton, and *Christian Doctrine*,' 38.
[99] I use the text given in CM XV, 238, which corresponds to Milton's Geneva Euripides. OW VIII.I, 454 prints Diggle's text: ὅθεν δ᾽ ἕκαστον εἰς τὸ φῶς ἀφίκετο / ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἀπελθεῖν, πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα, / τὸ σῶμα δ᾽ εἰς γῆν.

passage (*Suppliants* 441, τί τούτων ἔστιν ἰσαίτερον / 'What can be juster?').[100] Though the context is quite different, this suggests that this Euripidean formulation had been absorbed by Milton to become part of his rhetorical vocabulary. Another example from earlier on in *De Doctrina* is strikingly resonant of the Euripidean (and Areopagitican) context: *Quid est aequius quam ut permittant alteri…sedulo inquirendi, libereque disserendi partes obtinere* ('What is fairer than that [Milton's opponents] should allow another person…to play his own individual part in diligent research and free discussion?').[101] Euripides, once again, offers Milton a useful framework for presenting himself as a *parrhesiastes*.

Euripides, scripture, and authority

The act of citation simultaneously confers and appropriates authority on/from the cited text. The citing author at once disclaims the quoted words by means of the attribution, and claims them as his own by literally inscribing them as part of his work. Regina Schwartz has perceptively analysed the politics of citation at work in the fabrication of *De Doctrina Christiana* from a tissue of biblical quotations. In 'most systems of theology…a biblical verse was cited, and then it was glossed by the theologians'; however, 'Milton reverses this relation, placing his own system of divinity in the authorized position, and turning the Bible into a gloss – on Milton'.[102] Milton both denies and affirms his own authority: on the one hand, he declares, 'I have preferred that my pages' space should overflow with scriptural authorities assembled from all parts of the Bible, even when they repeat one another, and that as little room as possible be left for my own words, though they arise from the weaving together of the passages'.[103] On the other, he recognises that scripture 'has often been liable to corruption, and has actually been corrupted', so that 'each

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[100] OW VIII.I, 442-43; 464.
[101] OW VIII.I, 126-27; 230. Portus' translation in Milton's edition (*Euripidis Tragoediae*, 1602) is *quid est aequabilius* (I, 773).
[102] Regina M. Schwartz, 'Citation, Authority, and *De Doctrina Christiana*,' in *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose*, ed. David Loewenstein and James Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 227-40 (228).
[103] *[S]atius duxi mearum quidem paginarum spatia confertis undique autoritatibus divinis etiam eadem ingerentibus redundare, meis verbis, ex ipso licet contextu scripturaram natis, loci quam minimum relinqui* (OW VIII.I, 8-9).

person has the internal authority, and likewise the supreme and pre-eminent one: the spirit itself'.[104] Schwartz explains that

> Milton's twin claims for his own authority and scriptural authority are hopelessly entangled for a good reason. The relation between these two authorities is not simply contradictory; rather, it is interdependent. Because Milton authorizes the Bible, the Bible in turn authorizes Milton.[105]

But it is not only scripture which Milton cites in *De Doctrina*. Schwartz' analysis of the complex exchange of authority which emerges from Milton's practice of scriptural citation has important implications for his citations of Euripides in this text and elsewhere, and can be brought to bear on McDowell's recent contention 'that Milton is willing (on occasion, at least) to assert the truth of classical literature *over that* of the Bible'.[106]

In *De Doctrina*, Milton argues against 'those who affirm that the soul, exempt from death, after divesting itself of the body travels directly to the places marked out for reward or punishment'; rather, in his view, 'the soul goes down with the body into the grave', to be redeemed at the resurrection.[107] His opponents cite Ecclesiastes 12:7: *when the spirit returns to God, who had given it*, but Milton argues that '*to return to God* must be taken very broadly, since indeed at death the wicked depart not *to* God, but far *from* God'.[108] After a few more scriptural citations, he offers the passage from Euripides' *Suppliants* (532-34) as the best gloss on what 'when the spirit returns to God, who had given it' really means:

> How much more accurately has Euripides, though unknowingly, interpreted this passage in the *Suppliants*:
>
> > [let] each thing return to the place from which
> > it came to the body, spirit to air,
> > and body to earth…

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[104] *[S]criptura…saepe corrumpi potuit, et corrupta est* (OW VIII.II, 810-11); *interna vero cuique, adeoque summa atque suprema, est ipse spiritus* (OW VIII.II, 810-11).
[105] Schwartz, 'Citation, Authority, and *De Doctrina*,' 230.
[106] McDowell, 'Milton's Euripides,' 215-37; 16.
[107] *[Q]ui animam mortis expertem ad loca praemio aut poenae destinata, exuto corpore, recta commeare…verum hic potius arguitur animam cum corpore sepulchrum subire* (OW VIII.I, 452-53).
[108] *[A]d Deum enim redire, late admodum necesse est accipi; quandoquidem improbi non ad Deum, sed a Deo in morte procul abscedunt* (OW VIII.I, 452-53).

That is, each dissolved part returns into its own origins, into its own elements.[109] McDowell observes that the insertion by the Oxford editors into their translation ('How much more accurately [than my opponents] has Euripides…') is 'presumably to make clear that Milton could not mean Euripides to be a more accurate guide to the nature of human mortality than the Bible itself'.[110] McDowell questions this assumption, arguing that '[t]he point is that even though Euripides is not consciously glossing the Old Testament texts, he still offers a more certain guide to their meaning than those texts themselves'.[111]

It is not particularly controversial to suggest that scripture requires interpretation. But in *De Doctrina*, as Schwartz argues, scripture is not the starting point, which is then glossed. Rather, Milton cites scripture to authorize his own theological position, in this case on corporeal death. He cites Euripides to authorize the correct interpretation of the scriptural citation. His final step is to interpret Euripides ('[t]hat is, each dissolved part returns into its own origins, into its own elements'), bringing us full circle back to Milton's own theological position. In this cycle of citation, interpretation, and authorization, expected hierarchies of authority are profoundly disrupted. What Schwartz describes as 'the ceaselessly ongoing exchange of authority' between biblical and Miltonic authority[112] here expands to include Euripides. It is not only that Euripides is elevated to the status of (the most accurate) biblical commentator. The passage from Euripides participates in the exchange of authority with Milton and scripture, authorizing and authorized by both.

With the citation of *Suppliants* in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, the exchanges of authority between Milton, scripture and Euripides actually function to deny scriptural authority in one particular instance. Milton is here refuting those

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[109] *Quanto recitus Euripides vel insciens hunc locum interpretatus est in Supplicibus: [for Greek text, see above, n.98] Hoc est, Soluta pars quaeque in sua redit principia, in sua elementa* (OW VIII.I, 454. With McDowell ('Milton's Euripides,' 226) I take *vel insciens* to mean 'though unknowingly' rather than 'perhaps unwittingly' (OW VIII.I, 455).
[110] McDowell, 'Milton's Euripides,' 226.
[111] McDowell, 'Milton's Euripides,' 226.
[112] Schwartz, 'Citation, Authority, and *De Doctrina*,' 231.

who say that 'Kings are accountable to none but God'.[113] He complains that 'some would perswade us, that this absurd opinion was King *Davids*; because in the 51 *Psalm* he cries out to God, *Against thee onely have I sinn'd*; as if *David* had imagin'd that to murder *Uriah* and adulterate his Wife, had bin no sinn against his Neighbour', suggesting that David really meant 'either that the depth of his guiltiness was known to God onely, or to so few as had not the will or power to question him, or that the sin against God was greater beyond compare then against *Uriah*'.[114] But he then implies that what David actually meant is not important, since the mode of expression (psalm) must be taken into account:

> What ever his meaning were, any wise man will see that the pathetical words of a Psalme can be no certaine decision to a point that hath abundantly more certain rules to goe by. How much more rationally spake the Heathen King *Demophoon* in a Tragedy of *Euripides* then these Interpreters would put upon King *David, I rule not my people by Tyranny, as if they were Barbarians, but am my self liable, if I doe unjustly, to suffer justly*.[115]

In McDowell's analysis, '[i]n a reversal of convention, Milton turns to Euripidean tragedy for a rational guide to ethical behaviour and as a free-standing locus of political wisdom, while treating the Bible as a text to be interpreted rhetorically and contextually'.[116]

Milton's own rhetoric disguises this process, since his explicit point of comparison is the superiority of Demophon's speech to the incorrect interpretation forced upon David's words – Euripides is superior to the 'Interpreters' of David, not to David himself. His point is that the interpreters make David speak less rationally than a heathen, which is of course absurd. Thus Euripides authorizes Milton's argument that David's words must have an alternative interpretation. But Milton is not particularly interested in uncovering the correct interpretation; on the contrary, he dismisses David's actual meaning as irrelevant in this context based on the relation of form to meaning. There are two implications worth highlighting here: first, Milton is perfectly happy to bypass scripture in this case, finding sufficient

[113] YP III, 204.
[114] YP III, 205.
[115] YP III, 205.
[116] McDowell, 'Milton's Euripides,' 224.

authority in Euripides for his anti-tyrannical argument. This is symptomatic of the fact that Milton's anti-tyrannical thought was structured by his reading of classical texts, especially those associated with democratic Athens, and not least Euripides. Second, while the form of the psalms disqualifies their content from conferring authority in political debate, the form of Greek tragedy clearly does not. On the contrary, as *Samson Agonistes* demonstrates, Milton saw the form of Greek tragedy as essential to its political function.

In his preface to *Samson Agonistes*, Milton writes that '[t]he Apostle *Paul* himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of *Euripides* into the Text of Holy Scripture, I *Cor*. 15.33'.[117] This was clearly an important idea for Milton; he had made the same observation years earlier in *Areopagitica* (St Paul 'thought it no defilement to insert into holy Scripture the sentences of three Greek Poets, and one of them a Tragedian'[118]). Russ Leo demonstrates that Milton's attribution of the verse to Euripides 'is, by seventeenth-century standards, idiosyncratic'.[119] Erasmus had attributed it to Menander, which was 'the prevailing critical consensus circa 1671'.[120] But Milton chooses to follow Socrates of Constantinople in assuming a Euripidean origin. This 'untimely insistence on Euripides' authority'[121] reveals what is at stake for Milton here. It is important to him that St Paul should cite Euripides, because in so doing he furthers – indeed, authorises – the exchange of authority between Euripides and scripture. Euripides, in fact, has *become* scripture; St Paul gives no indication that it is a quotation at all. This is more than simply a justification for Milton's own frequent citation of Euripides. It is a methodology, even an ideology, which allows Milton to perceive Euripidean insights into the divine, and to recognise that, as Schwartz puts it, 'to compose one's own words out of another's is to make them one's own'.[122]

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[117] Quotations from *Samson Agonistes* and its prefatory material are from Carey, ed. *Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*.
[118] YP II, 508.
[119] Russ Leo, 'Paul's Euripides, Greek Tragedy and Hebrew Antiquity in *Paradise Regain'd*,' *The Seventeenth Century* 31, no. 2 (2016): 191-213 (194).
[120] Leo, 'Paul's Euripides,' 196.
[121] Leo, 'Paul's Euripides,' 196.
[122] Schwartz, 'Citation, Authority, and *De Doctrina*,' 232.

Euripides in the 17th century: Grotius, Heinsius, and Vossius

On his way to Italy in 1638, Milton had stopped off in Paris. There, he was introduced to the Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius.[123] Milton was evidently impressed. In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, he refers to him as '*Hugo Grotius*, a man of these times, one of the best learned', and in *Tetrachordon* as '*Grotius* yet living, one of prime note among learned men'.[124] Milton collected a number of Grotius' works in his library, and the influence of the Dutch scholar's political thought, as well as his poetry, has been detected in Milton's works.[125] Grotius wrote a biblical drama called *Adamus Exul* (1601), which has long been linked to *Paradise Lost*.[126] Another, *Christus Patiens* (1608), has been seen as a shaping influence on *Samson Agonistes*.[127] Milton and Grotius also shared a particular appreciation for Euripides; perhaps this was one of the things they talked about during their Paris meeting. Grotius translated *Phoenician Women* into Latin in 1630; he also translated *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Suppliants*, but the last two were never printed and are now lost.[128]

Grotius is firmly rooted in the sixteenth century tradition of reading Euripides. In the dedicatory epistle to his *Phoenician Women*, he declares that poetry is the highest form of speech; that tragedy is the highest form of poetry; that Euripides is pre-eminent among the tragedians; and that *Phoenician Women* is the best of Euripides' works. *Phoenician Women* is outstanding because 'the structure is so full of artistry, the action so varied, and the *sententiae* so close-packed'.[129] Grotius' strong appreciation for Euripides' *sententiae* is further attested by an earlier project, his *Excerpta ex tragoediis et comoediis graecis* ('Excerpts from Greek tragedies and

[123] CM VIII, 122-23.
[124] YP II, 238; 715.
[125] See e.g. Elizabeth Oldman, 'Milton, Grotius, and the Law of War: A Reading of *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*,' *Studies in Philology* 104, no. 3 (2007): 340-75.
[126] Cf. Francis Barham, *The Adamus Exul of Grotius; or the Prototype of Paradise Lost* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1839).
[127] Russell M. Hillier, 'Grotius' *Christus Patiens* and Milton's *Samson Agonistes*,' *The Explicator* 65, no. 1 (2006): 9-13.
[128] Henk J.M. Nellen, *Hugo Grotius: A Lifelong Struggle for Peace in Church and State, 1583-1645* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 464.
[129] *[A]deo hic artis plena structura est, casus varii, densae sententiae*. Hugo Grotius, *Euripidis Tragoedia Phoenissae* (Paris: Jacob Ruart, 1630), sig.A5r.

comedies', 1626), in which 281 pages are devoted to Euripides. The *Excerpta* gives extracts from each play in Greek with a parallel Latin translation (rather as in Neander's *Aristologia*), and includes an index of topics (as in the 1602 Geneva Euripides). However, there is a significant difference between Grotius' approach to *Phoenician Women* and Stiblinus' nearly seventy years earlier. Where Stiblinus' preface and annotations to the play do not mention Aristotle at all, for Grotius he is a constant reference point. In his *Prolegomena* he takes it upon himself to demonstrate that *Phoenician Women* exhibits unity of time, unity of place, and reversals of fortune.[130]

Grotius' concern to show that *Phoenician Women* succeeds by Aristotelian standards is symptomatic of the accumulating weight of importance being attached to the *Poetics* in the seventeenth century. Grotius' colleague from his student days, Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655), was influential in promoting this trend. His treatise on tragedy, *De Tragoediae Constitutione* ('On the constitution of tragedy'), was first printed in 1611 alongside his edition of the *Poetics*, and was designed as an explanation and expansion of Aristotle's work. Its widespread appeal arose from the fact that it allowed readers to 'turn to the much simpler Heinsius text instead of to Aristotle himself, and feel they were absorbing authoritative Aristotle in intellectually superior form'.[131] Heinsius is clear about his preference for Sophocles: 'no one afterwards has come near to the majesty of Sophocles, to my mind indeed' (*nemo…postea ad maiestatem Sophocleam, meo quidem animo, accessit*).[132] Sophocles is 'divine' (*divinus*); 'he bestowed the splendour, which is the virtue of Tragedy' (*splendorum dedit, quae Tragoediae est virtus*); his discourse is 'splendid and full of majesty' (*splendidam plenamque maiestatis*).[133] Following Aristotle, he frequently uses

[130] Grotius, *Phoenissae*, sig.A7r-C6v.
[131] Daniel Heinsius, *On Plot in Tragedy*, trans. Paul R. Sellin and John J. McManmon (Northridge, CA: San Fernando Valley State College, 1971), xvi.
[132] Anne Duprat, ed. *Daniel Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae* (Geneva: Droz, 2001), 112.
[133] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 230; 246; 288.

Oedipus Tyrannus as an example, though he also cites *Ajax* far more extensively than Aristotle, reflecting the lingering influence of sixteenth-century preferences.[134]

Euripides, meanwhile, receives much more mixed treatment, again reflecting Aristotle, and in particular his judgement that 'Euripides, even if he does not arrange other details well, is at least found the most tragic of the poets'.[135] Hence Heinsius: 'Aristotle commends Euripides, because certainly, while he sometimes arranges things more carelessly, he brilliantly maintains that which is most proper to tragedy' (*Euripidem commendat Aristoteles; quod nimirum, cum interdum negligentius disponat, id quod maxime Tragoediae est proprium, praeclare tueatur*).[136] Similarly, 'often Euripides transgresses in one place and stands out in another through his abundance and attention to detail' (*Saepe Euripides, alibi quae peccat, alibi plenissime et accurate praestat*).[137] The idea that Euripides is careless when it comes to structure, in comparison to the exemplary Sophocles, emerges strongly. Where Sophocles is almost exclusively held up as a positive example, Euripides, as in Aristotle, is more frequently a negative one (though *Iphigenia in Tauris* comes in for significant praise for its recognition scene). When Heinsius criticizes the use of a *deus ex machina* to resolve the plot, all of his tragic examples are taken from Euripides: 'Apollo (in Euripides' *Orestes*), Minerva (in *Ion*), Diana (in *Hippolytus*)' all 'resolved the argument which, because it had been badly tied together by the poet, is untangled by divine power, for this is the cure for a badly constructed action'.[138] Likewise Medea's chariot should have been unnecessary, since 'the subject might have been portrayed in such a way that there was no need for contrivance' (*ita res deduci poterat, ut nec opus esset machina*).[139]

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[134] See Blair Hoxby, *What Was Tragedy? Theory and the Early Modern Canon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 111-17.

[135] 1453a 29-31: ὁ Εὐριπίδης, εἰ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα μὴ εὖ οἰκονομεῖ, ἀλλὰ τραγικώτατός γε τῶν ποιητῶν φαίνεται. Translations of Aristotle's *Poetics* are from Stephen Halliwell, *Aristotle: Poetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[136] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 208.

[137] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 114.

[138] *[I]n Oreste Euripidis Apollo, in Ione Minerva, in Hippolyto Diana, solvunt argumentum. Quod cum male intricatum a poeta fuerit, a numine extricatur; id enim actioni male constitutae remedium est.* Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 222.

[139] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 226.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Heinsius confesses his bewilderment that Quintilian reserves judgement over whether Euripides or Sophocles is better, since to him the answer is clear. Sophocles is 'splendid, serious, correct, grand, and sublime; then he preserves decorum in his practices, vigour in his passions, and majesty in both' (*splendidus, severus, castigatus, grandis ac sublimis; tum decorum in moribus, vim in affectibus, in utroque autem servat maiestatem*).[140] Euripides, meanwhile, is praised in familiar terms because he is 'abundant in details, subtle in *sententiae*, profuse in arguments, a rhetorician in the theatre' (*alter multus in parvis, subtilis in sententiis, creber in argumentis, Rhetor in theatro*), and 'must be studied thoroughly [or "learned by heart"] particularly by students of eloquence' (*ediscendus eloquentiae praesertim studiosis*).[141] However, he is 'sometimes little more than a comedian on stage' (*nonnunquam paulo plus quam Comicus in scena*), and is criticized for his depiction of morally objectionable or low characters, and for destroying the suspense by announcing the plot in his prologues.[142] Once again, 'in arrangement he is often careless, as in *Phoenician Women*, and elsewhere more than once' (*neque in Constitutione raro supinus est sicut in Phoenicibus, et alibi non semel*).[143] Heinsius' use of *Phoenician Women* as his example of one of Euripides' poorly-constructed plots makes it clear that Grotius' defence of the play in Aristotelian terms is an attempt to rebut such criticisms.

Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577-1649), author of the much longer *Poeticae Institutiones* ('Institutes of Poetics', first published in 1647), owned a copy of Heinsius' edition of Aristotle's *Poetics* with *De Trageodiae Constitutione*. He refers to it '[s]everal times, especially in the marginal notes', though Jan Bloemendal demonstrates that his use of it extends further than this suggests.[144] Vossius was also influenced by Grotius' translation of *Phoenician Women*, which he obviously

[140] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 322.
[141] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 324.
[142] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 322; 324.
[143] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 324.
[144] Jan Bloemendal, ed. *Gerardus Joannes Vossius: Poeticae Institutiones Libri Tres / Institutes of Poetics in Three Books*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), I, 25; 23-24. Text and tranlsations are taken from this edition.

admired and refers to explicitly twice.[145] He seems to have rated Grotius more highly than Heinsius – Bloemendal notes that he 'always refers to Heinsius as *eruditissimus vir*, apparently ironically', speculating that 'Heinsius may have been too flamboyant and capricious in Vossius' view'.[146] Accordingly, Vossius is more equivocal on the subject of Euripides versus Sophocles, landing somewhere between Grotius and Heinsius. He uses many of the same examples as Heinsius and Aristotle to illustrate his pronouncements on tragedy, with the result that once again Euripides is frequently invoked as failing to adhere to Aristotelian precepts, as opposed to the positive model of Sophocles and *Oedipus Tyrannus*. But Vossius also uses an unusually large number of examples from *Phoenician Women*, testifying to his particular familiarity with it.

Like Heinsius, Vossius also dedicates a section to comparing Euripides and Sophocles directly, but unlike Heinsius, he prefers to follow Quintilian (whose passage on the subject he quotes) in hedging his bets. The two tragedians have different strengths: Sophocles likes hyperbaton (φιλυπέρβατος), while Euripides likes compounds (φιλοσύνθετος); Euripides prevails in the stirring of emotions and gravity of *sententiae*, Sophocles in sublimity of diction and arrangement (*Hic ciendis affectibus et sententiarum gravitate, ille vincit sublimitate dictionis et οἰκονομίᾳ*).[147] Elsewhere, he repeatedly characterizes Sophocles' style as 'sublime' and 'splendid'. He recycles the comparison of Euripides' style to comedy, whereas he finds Sophocles' diction sublime (*sublimis*), splendid (*splendida*) and restrained (*castigata*).[148] However, Vossius does have some reservations about the Sophoclean style. In another section he warns that 'by studying for too much splendour the language becomes obscure' (*Nimio…splendoris studio oratio fit obscura*).[149] Hence he describes Euripides as *perspicuus* ('lucid'), while 'Sophocles pursues splendour so

[145] Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Institutiones*, I, 250-51; 478-79.
[146] Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Institutiones*, I, 23 n.73.
[147] Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Institutiones*, I, 476-77.
[148] Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Institutiones*, I, 536-77.
[149] Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Institutiones*, I, 526-77.

much that he often neglects to be lucid' (*Sophocles vero splendorem ita consectatur ut saepe perspicuitatem negligat*).[150]

The other area in which Sophocles surpasses Euripides is οἰκονομία, which Vossius glosses here as *[d]ispositione fabulae*. He goes on to quote the passage of Aristotle's *Poetics* from which the word is extracted (1453a 29-31), and refers to it in several other places.[151] He notes twice that according to Aristotle, Euripides μὴ εὖ οἰκονομεῖν, translated both times as *[n]on bene disponere*.[152] He also specifically names Euripides as guilty of producing what Aristotle calls 'episodic' plots, which Vossius explains as being 'if the episodes are not connected by necessity or probability either with the argument or with each other' (*[q]uod si episodia non necessario vel probabiliter aut cum argumento vel secum cohaereant*): 'Inept poets often make this mistake, and sometimes good ones too, among them Euripides' (*[s]aepe hac in re inepti poetae peccant, quandoque et boni, in his Euripides*).[153]

Even though Grotius preferred Euripides, Heinsius favoured Sophocles, and Vossius chose a middle way, what is clear from all three is that there has been a distinct shift in the terms of analysis. Where previously the default position had been the pre-eminence of Euripides, which Aristotle might be brought in to support, writers in the seventeenth century are starting from a neo-Aristotelian perspective, and demonstrating how Euripides does or does not conform to his precepts. Of course, within this changing landscape there had always been space to acknowledge that Sophocles and Euripides might each be pre-eminent in different areas: Sophocles being sublime and stately, Euripides being rhetorical and sententious. And our seventeenth-century writers still praise Euripides for the same qualities that had cemented his popularity in the previous century. But it was the view of Heinsius that would ultimately triumph, establishing Sophocles as the figurehead for Greek tragedy. Milton was aware of the work of all three Dutch scholars; against this backdrop he composed *Samson Agonistes*, in which a turn to

[150] Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Institutiones*, I, 526-27.
[151] Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Institutiones*, I, 476-77.
[152] Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Institutiones*, I, 160-61; 492-93
[153] Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Institutiones*, I, 218-19.

Sophocles begins to make itself felt alongside Milton's long-standing preference for Euripides.

Samson Agonistes

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton refers to the Old Testament hero as 'Herculean Samson' (9.1060). To us, the epithet primarily indicates superhuman strength, but to a Renaissance reader the resonances might extend considerably further. In the exegetical tradition, numerous parallels were traced in the careers of Samson and Hercules besides their great strength: 'both opened their heroic careers with the slaying of lions; both were brought to ruin at last by women; both died voluntarily', among other things.[154] In fact, 'throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as in the Middle Ages, writers thought of Samson as the counterpart of Hercules and associated the two in their minds so regularly that they seldom named one without being reminded of the other'.[155] Moreover, both Samson and Hercules were frequently read as prefigurations of Christ.[156] Given Milton's deep and sustained engagement with Euripides, when he came to compose a biblical drama about Samson, the obvious classical model to turn to would seem to be *Heracles*. This is the position taken by Joseph Wittreich, who argues that it is 'not *Philoktetes*, and not Prometheus and Oedipus, but instead Euripides' Heracles' who 'is the most obvious counterpart to Milton's Samson'.[157]

But Wittreich's discussion of Samson and Heracles is entirely circumstantial. He cites no verbal parallels, no equivalent dramaturgical strategies, and most tellingly his analysis of the structure of *Heracles* demonstrates precisely that it does not map directly onto *Samson Agonistes*.[158] Rather, Wittreich finds that '[t]he

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[154] F. Michael Krouse, *Milton's Samson and the Christian Tradition* (New York, NY: Octagon Books, 1974), 44.
[155] Krouse, *Milton's Samson*, 78.
[156] On Samson as a type of Christ in the Renaissance, see Krouse, *Milton's Samson*, 68-70. On Hercules, see Riley, *Reasoning Madness*, 94-95.
[157] Joseph Wittreich, *Shifting Contexts: Reinterpreting Samson Agonistes* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2002), 12.
[158] Wittreich (*Shifting Contexts*, 38) argues that the Hercules plays fall into three movements: 'Hercules hybristes', 'Hercules furens or agonistes', and 'Hercules triumphans': 'The first two movements, with the heavy accent falling upon the second, are subsumed by *Samson*

Hercules plays of Euripides and Seneca afford an illuminating perspective as well as an unexpected analogy'.[159] What he is really interested in highlighting is not so much a specific source as the general 'Euripidean' (and Senecan) nature of Milton's treatment of the Samson story: Euripides and Seneca are 'models for Milton's interrogations' in *Samson Agonistes*.[160] He aligns the restoration of the Euripidean context to the revisionist line of criticism; alongside privileging Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* as models, following William Riley Parker (who 'minimizes its Euripidean context'), 'regenerationist' criticism has been concerned with '[i]mproving the fit of *Samson Agonistes* with Christian orthodoxy and, in the process, diminishing its enquiring spirit, its interrogative element'.[161] While I agree that Milton's thought and practice is in some respects crucially Euripidean, dividing Sophocles and Euripides along the ideological fault lines of modern criticism tells us relatively little about the intermingling of the two in *Samson Agonistes*. I propose that placing Milton's practice in the context of seventeenth-century discussions of the relative merits of Sophocles and Euripides in relation to Aristotle can offer a fresh perspective on the well-worn subject of the relationship of *Samson Agonistes* to classical tragedy.

In his prefatory essay to *Samson Agonistes*, entitled 'Of that sort of dramatic poem which is called tragedy', Milton himself invokes 'Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides' as 'the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write tragedy' (54-56). And indeed, *Samson Agonistes* represents, undeniably and very successfully, 'a distillation…of the prototypical Greek drama'.[162] Yet critics have persistently attempted to dissect Milton's tragedy into its constituent Greek parts. Wilmon Brewer argued for the predominance of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, along with *Oedipus at Colonus*, a combination which

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Agonistes, while the third movement…finds its counterpart in the climax of *Paradise Regain'd*.'

[159] Wittreich, *Shifting Contexts*, 35.

[160] Wittreich, *Shifting Contexts*, 4.

[161] Wittreich, *Shifting Contexts*, xiii; 200. William Riley Parker, *Milton's Debt to Greek Tragedy in Samson Agonistes* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1937).

[162] John T. Shawcross, *The Uncertain World of Samson Agonistes* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 38.

was also emphasized by Parker, and has continued to be influential.[163] For Watson Kirkconnell, 'the characterization of Delilah and Harapha is Euripidean; the bare majesty of the treatment is Aeschylean; while Sophocles, especially in the *Oedipus Coloneus*, stands behind the characterization of Samson, the role of the chorus, and the riddle of human misery seen against a universe of mystery'.[164] Holly Sypniewski and Anne MacMaster have taken up Wittreich's call to 'shift the accent to Euripidean models', highlighting the importance of *Medea*.[165] Hoxby, meanwhile, has observed that as a simple pathetic tragedy, *Samson Agonistes* can helpfully be compared to Sophocles' *Ajax* (the model for this form of tragic plot in Aristotle, Heinsius, and Vossius) and *Philoctetes*.[166] While I will focus on *Oedipus at Colonus* and, later, *Hippolytus*, I do not mean to suggest that these models exclude or occlude any others. Rather, I use these as case studies to demonstrate how Milton's use of Sophocles differs qualitatively from his use of Euripides in *Samson Agonistes*.

The paratextual material with which Milton introduces *Samson Agonistes* (as printed in 1671)[167] presents the work as an engagement with Aristotelian poetics. Its title page features a quotation from a key moment in Aristotle's *Poetics*:

Aristot. Poet. Cap. 6.

τραγωδία [sic] μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας, &c.

Tragoedia est imitatio actionis seriae, &c. Per misericordiam & Metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.[168]

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[163] Wilmon Brewer, 'Two Athenian Models for *Samson Agonistes*,' *Publications of the Modern Languages Association* 24, no. 4 (1927): 910-20; Parker, *Milton's Debt*.

[164] Watson Kirkconnell, *That Invincible Samson: The Theme of Samson Agonistes in World Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 180-81.

[165] Holly M. Sypniewski and Anne MacMaster, 'Double Motivation and the Ambiguity Of "Ungodly Deeds": Euripides's *Medea* and Milton's *Samson Agonistes*,' *Milton Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2010): 145-67.

[166] Hoxby, *What Was Tragedy?*, 140-45.

[167] Dates of composition are uncertain. It was traditionally considered to post-date *Paradise Regained* (composed 1667-70), and a late date is upheld by Mary Ann Radzinowicz, *Toward Samson Agonistes: The Growth of Milton's Mind* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 387-407. This was first challenged by William R. Parker, 'The Date of *Samson Agonistes*,' *Philological Quarterly* 28 (1949): 145-66, who puts it as early as 1646-48. No consensus has been reached; Carey, ed. *Milton: The Complete Shorter Poems*, 349-50, considers 1665-67 most probable.

[168] John Milton, *Paradise Regain'd a Poem in IV Books: To Which is Added Samson Agonistes* (London: John Starkey, 1671), sig.I1r.

This represents the beginning (in Greek and Latin) and the end (Latin only) of the passage in which Aristotle introduces the idea of catharsis (1449b, 24-29), which in a modern text and translation (with square brackets indicating the text omitted on the title page) runs:

> [ἔστιν οὖν] τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας [καὶ τελείας μέγεθος ἐχού σης, ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ χωρὶς ἑκάστῳ τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις, δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι᾽ ἀπαγγελίας, δι᾽ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν.]
>
> Tragedy [then] is mimesis of an action which is elevated, [complete, and of magnitude; in language embellished by distinct forms in its sections; employing the mode of enactment, not narrative; and] through pity and fear accomplishing the catharsis of such emotion.

Over the page comes Milton's prefatory essay on tragedy, which begins with his interpretation of what Aristotle meant by catharsis: 'Tragedy, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, moralist, and most profitable of all other poems: therefore said by Aristotle to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such-like passions, that is to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated' (1-6).

Leo has demonstrated that Milton's engagement with Aristotle also involves an engagement with the work of Heinsius and Vossius as contemporary interpreters of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Milton, Leo writes, 'would no doubt have consulted the most celebrated and innovative Greek edition of the Poetics published during the first half of the seventeenth century, at least in the Anglo-Dutch world – that being the work of Daniel Heinsius', alongside which was printed Heinsius' *De tragoediae constitutione*.[169] Leo shows that '[s]tylistically, the preface to *Samson Agonistes*…bears close resemblance to Daniel Heinsius's commentary on the *Poetics*'.[170] On the other hand, Milton's translation of Aristotle's παθημάτων κάθαρσιν as *affectuum lustrationem* comes 'closer to Vossius's "affectuum

[169] Russ Leo, 'Milton's Aristotelian Experiments: Tragedy, *Lustratio*, and "Secret Refreshings" in *Samson Agonistes* (1671),' *Milton Studies* 52 (2011): 221-52 (224).
[170] Leo, 'Milton's Aristotelian Experiments,' 225.

[purgationem]"'.[171] Leo contends that '*Samson Agonistes* is no mere application of Aristotelian formal principles; Milton, rather, actively and imaginatively engages with Aristotle and Aristotle's early modern editors and commentators' in order to 'demonstrate and indeed dramatize the intimate and often illegible work of the Spirit'.[172]

Parker has a chapter devoted to a detailed comparison between *Samson Agonistes* and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, which highlights extensive 'parallels of thought and structure'.[173] He includes a table quantifying the respective structural elements of each play by numbers of lines; while Milton was certainly not counting lines, Parker's table illustrates the degree of structural parallelism:

	Samson Agonistes		*Oedipus Coloneus*	
prologos	1-114	(114)	1-116	(116)
parodos	115-175	(61)	117-137	(21)
'kommos'	176-325	(150)	138-253	(116)
epeisodion	326-651	(326)	254-667	(414)
stasimon	652-709	(58)	668-719	(52)
epeisodion	710-1009	(300)	720-1043	(324)
stasimon	1010-1060	(51)	1044-1095	(52)
epeisodion	1061-1267	(207)	1096-1210	(115)
stasimon	1268-1299	(32)	1211-1248	(38)
epeisodion	1300-1426	(127)	1249-1555	(307)
stasimon	1427-1440	(14)	1556-1578	(23)
exodos	1441-1758	(318)	1579-1779	(201)
kommos	1660-1758	(99)	1670-1750	(81)[174]

Milton, of course, was not counting line numbers. But Parker's table expresses in quantitative terms the fact that the basic patterning of the two plays is remarkably similar.

[171] Leo, 'Milton's Aristotelian Experiments,' 228.
[172] Leo, 'Milton's Aristotelian Experiments,' 222.
[173] Parker, *Milton's Debt*, 175.
[174] Parker, *Milton's Debt*, 168 n.2.

Mueller has a helpful summary of what he calls the 'fairly extensive use of plot elements from *Oedipus at Colonus*' in *Samson Agonistes*:

> The beginning and end of the play cast Samson in the role of Oedipus: the blind beggar in rags sitting down in the grove of the Eumenides is the model for the Samson whom the Chorus find 'carelessly diffused' – as indeed the entire approach of the Chorus is based on the comparable scene in *Oedipus at Colonus*. The bath and fresh clothes that Samson receives recall the similar transformation of Oedipus, and the handling of Samson's exit and report of his death also follows Sophocles.[175]

We might add that the beginning and end of both plays are linked by the respective heroes receiving a succession of visitors, some friendly, some hostile, who attempt to comfort or influence them (or both).[176]

Looking a little more closely at the opening of *Samson Agonistes* illustrates the way that the Sophoclean and Euripidean elements combine. On the one hand, it is clearly modelled dramaturgically speaking on the opening of *Oedipus at Colonus*. The blind Oedipus is led onstage by his daughter Antigone, who sets him down on a rock to rest, just as Samson is led onstage and asks to be taken to 'yonder bank' (3) where he is 'wont to sit' (4); 'here leave me to respire' (11), he says. But having used Sophocles for the general shape, it is Euripides who provides the linguistic detail. Tiresias' lines as he enters in *Phoenician Women* are: 'Lead on, daughter; for you are the eye to my blind feet' (ἡγοῦ πάροιθε, θύγατερ· ὡς τυφλῷ ποδὶ / ὀφθαλμὸς εἶ σύ, 834-5). This is a close analogue for Samson's 'A little onward lend thy guiding hand / To these dark steps' (1-2), particularly the 'blind feet' / 'dark steps'. The structural model is Sophocles, but the scenario cannot help but recall to Milton a similar scene in Euripides.

There are a number of direct linguistic echoes of particular phrases from various Greek tragedies in *Samson Agonistes*, which similarly point to Milton's extraordinary familiarity with Euripides's works. The striking turn of phrase of 'heaven's fiery rod' (*Samson* 549) is from Euripides' *Suppliants*, where the sunlight is described as a κανὼν σαφής, or 'bright rod' (650). When Manoa is attempting to

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[175] Martin Mueller, *Children of Oedipus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 197.
[176] This is not a Euripidean structure, but is associated with both Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*; see A.D. Nuttall, 'Action at a Distance,' 17.

comfort Samson with the suggestion that there might be a remedy for his situation, he offers 'healing words' (605), just as the Nurse proposes 'λόγοι θελκτήριοι' (also 'healing words') to the similarly suicidal Phaedra in *Hippolytus* 478. Samson's 'presage in the mind' (1387) recalls the πρόμαντις θυμὸς, 'prophetic heart (or mind)' in *Andromache* 1073, which similarly comes directly before the crisis is reported. Strikingly-phrased images from Euripides come readily to Milton's mind, often suggested by the dramatic situation.

There is one direct verbal echo of Sophocles, but it is of a rather different nature. When the messenger in *Samson Agonistes* announces: 'Then take the worst in brief; Samson is dead' (1570), a footnote in Carey's edition points to *Electra* 673: 'Orestes is dead; I say it briefly put' (τέθνηκ᾽ Ὀρέστης· ἐν βραχεῖ ξυνθεὶς λέγω).[177] Here, it is the dramatic technique rather than the image that Milton is concerned to reproduce. It is worth noting that Heinsius draws particular attention to this moment as an example of a praiseworthy dramatic technique: 'Sophocles and Seneca, when they have a narration to deliver, sometimes disclose the subject in a word, narrating afterwards' (*Sophocles et Seneca narraturi, interdum verbo rem expediunt, mox narrant*).[178] He quotes *Electra* 673, and continues: 'and afterwards that divine and perfect narration follows' (*ac mox divina illa et perfecta subsequitur narratio*).[179] In fact, Sophocles uses this technique in *Oedipus at Colonus* as well, though somewhat less pithily; the messenger takes two lines to announce: ἄνδρες πολῖται, ξυντομωτάτως, μὲν ἂν / τύχοιμι λέξας Οἰδίπουν ὀλωλότα ('Citizens, most briefly, I might say that Oedipus is dead', 1579-80). Perhaps recalling Heinsius, Milton condenses his messenger's announcement into one line, following the *Electra* example ('in brief' suggesting ἐν βραχεῖ).

Of the chorus, Aristotle says: 'The chorus should be treated as one of the actors; it should be a part of the whole and should participate, not as in Euripides but as in Sophocles' (τὸν χορὸν δὲ ἕνα δεῖ ὑπολαμβάνειν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, καὶ μόριον εἶναι τοῦ ὅλου καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι μὴ ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδῃ ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ

[177] Carey, ed. *Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*, 407 (note to line 1570).
[178] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 246.
[179] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 246.

Σοφοκλεῖ, 1456a 25-27). Heinsius interprets the chorus being 'part of the whole' as requiring the choral material to be 'sought from the argument, so that it coheres with the rest, and is like part of the Tragedy' (*ex rebus petitur, ita ut cohaereat cum reliquis, et pars quasi sit Tragoediae*).[180] Vossius, likewise, states that the chorus 'used to sing not anything, but an *embolimon* or some insertion to the narrative or connected with it'; this 'should be about something about which the actors speak, not about something which is separate from the narrative'.[181] He also deals with Aristotle's requirement 'that the chorus should *sunagonizesthai*' (join in the action); in this, 'Sophocles should be imitated rather than Euripides'.[182] Vossius gives *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Electra* as examples of involved choruses, and concludes that 'Euripides sometimes errs here'.[183]

Milton's Chorus is designed to fulfil these requirements. Its entrance is modelled on *Oedipus at Colonus*: as Parker explains, '[b]oth protagonists hear the Chorus on its approach, and suspect hostility'; 'the first utterance of the Chorus, therefore, is in both plays like a soliloquy'.[184] Furthermore, 'the Chorus in each play forces the protagonist to explain something of the past; it is impressed by what it hears, and there is much wondering about the ways of God with men'.[185] The choral odes in *Samson Agonistes* follow the specifications of Heinsius (Erasmus would have approved). Its reluctance to 'run into danger's mouth' on hearing the noise of the catastrophe (1522) should not be taken as a failure to *sunagonizesthai*, though here the chorus begins to sound more Euripidean. Parker concludes by observing that '[t]he Chorus has the last word in both plays, and the words which Sophocles puts into its mouth might easily serve as an ending for Milton's play'.[186] Perhaps they

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[180] Duprat, ed. *Heinsius: De Constitutione Tragoediae*, 340.
[181] *Canebat autem non quidvis, sed* ἐμβολίμον *sive quiddam fabulae insertum seu cum ea coniunctum. Debet enim esse de re de qua loquuntur actores, non de re quae a fabula separetur*. Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Poeticae Institutiones*, 398-99.
[182] *Unde idem Aristoteles ait debere chorum συναγωνίζεσθαι…Atque ait in eo potius imitandum esse Sophoclem quam Euripidem.* Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Poeticae Institutiones*, 398-99. See Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1456a 26-27.
[183] *Euripides…hic interdum peccat*. Bloemendal, ed. *Vossius: Poeticae Institutiones*, 398-99.
[184] Parker, *Milton's Debt*, 171.
[185] Parker, *Milton's Debt*, 172.
[186] Parker, *Milton's Debt*, 176.

might; but they do not. Instead, Milton puts the sentiments of Euripides into the mouth of his Chorus:

> All is best, though we oft doubt,
> What the unsearchable dispose
> Of highest wisdom brings about,
> And ever best found in the close.
> Oft he seems to hide his face
> But unexpectedly returns…
>
> (1746-48)

These lines are inspired by the choral 'tag' used by Euripides to close *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Bacchae*, *Helen*, and (with a different first line) *Medea*:

> πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων,
> πολλὰ δ᾽ ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί·
> καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ᾽ οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,
> τῶν δ᾽ ἀδοκήτων πόρον ηὗρε θεός.
> τοιόνδ᾽ ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα.
>
> Many are the forms of the divine;
> Many things unhoped for the gods accomplish.
> And what is expected is not fulfilled,
> But god finds a way for the unexpected.
> So ended this matter.

As Anne Baines Coiro points out, '[r]eadings of the Chorus's last verse stanza (beginning "All is best, though we oft doubt" [1745]) are at the heart of virtually all interpretations of *Samson Agonistes*'.[187] Do we accept the judgement of the chorus as an adequate summation of events – that God 'to his faithful champion hath in place / Bore witness gloriously' (1751-52)? Or do we question their ability to read the play correctly, raising doubts about the origins of Samson's 'rousing motions' (1382)?

These are exactly the issues raised by the re-use of the choral tag at the end of five different tragedies by Euripides. Many critics consider it 'probable that the formulaic passages have been added in most or all of these places by actors or book-editors'; '[e]ven if the final tag is accepted as Euripidean…it is probably emptied of

[187] Ann Baines Coiro, 'Milton's Essay of Dramatic Poesy: *Samson Agonistes*,' in *Milton in the Long Restoration*, ed. Blair Hoxby and Ann Baines Coiro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 97-120 (118).

deep significance by its formulaic nature.'[188] It is worth noting that Milton may not have agreed that the formulaic nature of these lines empties them of any deep significance. Years earlier, he quoted the first line in a letter to Charles Diodati in 1637: *Nec tanto Ceres labore, ut in Fabulis est, Liberam fertur quaesivisse filiam, quanto ego hanc τοῦ καλοῦ ἰδέαν, veluti pulcherrimam quandam imaginem, per omnes rerum formas et facies: (πολλαὶ γαρ μορφαὶ τῶν Δαιμονίων).*[189] The English translation from the Yale edition of Milton's prose works - 'Not so diligently is Ceres, according to the Fables, said to have sought her daughter Proserpina, as I seek for this idea of the beautiful, as if for some glorious image throughout all the shapes and forms of things ("for many are the shapes of things divine")'[190] – obscures the significance of Milton's use of Greek. The 'idea of the beautiful', or 'ideal form of the beautiful', for Milton, is Greek (τοῦ καλοῦ ἰδέαν).[191] 'Many are the shapes of things divine' here expresses Milton's conviction that some divine shapes can be found in the literature of the Greeks.

Given the importance of Greek form to *Samson Agonistes*, it is worth taking a closer look at the formal function of the Euripidean choral tag. Francis Dunn argues that it represents one of several 'closing gestures' employed by Euripides in distinctively self-conscious forms.[192] The other characteristically Euripidean closing gestures are the *deus ex machina* and the aetiology, both of which Milton also employs to some extent. Euripides' use of the *deus ex machina*, of course, had been criticized by Aristotle as well as Heinsius and Vossius, and so Milton's use of it is in a submerged and altered form. Leo has explored the idea that Samson's 'rousing motions' which 'dispose / To something extraordinary my thoughts' (1382-83) represent a creative response to these criticisms: 'Rather than make it explicit to the audience, he asks his readership to decide whether or not it is necessary to supplement the immanent causal relationships among the affects and actions

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[188] Donald Mastronarde, ed. *Euripides: Medea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 386; *Art of Euripides*, 106.
[189] John Milton, *Epistolarum familiarum liber unus* (London: Brabazon Aylmer, 1674), 18-19.
[190] YP I, 326.
[191] ἰδέα is the word used in Platonic philosophy for the 'ideal form' or 'archetype'.
[192] Francis M. Dunn, *Tragedy's End: Closure and Innovation in Euripidean Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), *passim*.

depicted in *Samson Agonistes* with God's inspiration'.[193] But the aetiology and the choral 'tag' are both used by Milton in strikingly Euripidean form; in reproducing these closing gestures, Milton raises the same issues of the relationship of closure to meaning found in the Euripidean corpus.

The closing aetiology, or *aition*, is especially favoured by Euripides, who uses it in almost all his extant works.[194] It involves a prediction, usually by a divinity, of future cult-worship resulting from the events of the tragedy that has just been witnessed. In Euripides, the functioning of this closing gesture is characteristically ambivalent: 'Placed at the end of the play, spoken by a deus or similar figure, and making an explicit connection between the past enacted in the drama and the present of the spectators, the aition draws attention to the gap or divide that it attempts to bridge'.[195] The *aition* in *Hippolytus* is unique among Euripides' works, because it is the only play in which it is the climactic death of the protagonist which is commemorated beyond the conclusion of the play. Here, Artemis predicts the future hero-cult of the dying Hippolytus at Trozen:

> …κόραι γὰρ ἄζυγες γάμων πάρος
> κόμας κεροῦνταί σοι, δι᾽ αἰῶνος μακροῦ
> πένθη μέγιστα δακρύων καρπουμένῳ·
> ἀεὶ δὲ μουσοποιὸς ἐς σὲ παρθένων
> ἔσται μέριμνα, κοὐκ ἀνώνυμος πεσὼν
> ἔρως ὁ Φαίδρας ἐς σὲ σιγηθήσεται.
>
> unyoked girls before marriage
> will cut off locks of their hair for you, who will enjoy
> over a long time the fruits of the greatest mourning of their tears.
> Always the maidens will be inspired to sing songs
> about you, and Phaedra's love for you will not
> fall away nameless and be kept silent.
> (1425-30)[196]

The cult-worship of Hippolytus at Trozen, a small town near Athens, which probably went back to the Bronze Age, was still current when Euripides' play was

[193] Leo, 'Milton's Aristotelian Experiments,' 245.
[194] The exceptions are *Trojan Women* and *Alcestis*; the endings of *Bacchae* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* are problematic.
[195] Dunn, *Tragedy's End*, 52.
[196] Translations of *Hippolytus* are from Michael R. Halleran, ed. *Euripides: Hippolytus* (Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 1995).

first performed in 428 BC.[197] Within the scope of the play, Artemis' promise 'must remain unfulfilled'[198]; only by exiting the world of the tragedy and re-entering their present moment can the spectators bring about the fulfilment of the prediction. Artemis' words enact a moment of double-vision in which the real world is layered on top of the play-world, preparing for the imminent recession of the latter to make way for the former.

Something remarkably similar happens at the end of *Samson Agonistes*. Just before the final chorus, Manoa predicts that Samson will be remembered in 'sweet lyric song' (1737), and that virgins

> shall on feastful days
> Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing
> His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
> From whence captivity and loss of eyes.
> (1739-44)

Howard Jacobson has noted some points of comparison between these final scenes in *Hippolytus* and *Samson Agonistes*: '[e]ach hero shall in the future be the subject of honorific and commemorative song'; 'virgins shall make ritualistic offerings to each'; and '[b]oth shall be remembered with tears'.[199] It should be added that the curious insistence on the subject-material of the girls' songs in *Hippolytus* being Phaedra's illicit love is reproduced in the virgins 'bewailing' Samson's unfortunate choice of Dalila. Jacobson also outlines some broader parallels:

> Like Theseus, Manoa is a bereaved father whose son has just died (or, in the case of Hippolytus, is moribund), as part of a divine plan. In each case a loving woman has played a significant role in the hero's ruination. We hear of violent death and bloodied bodies.[200]

Jacobson does not pursue the implications of this connection any further, but if we consider this as another Euripidean closing gesture, it is notable that once again the effects produced by Milton and by Euripides are remarkably similar.

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[197] See Halleran, ed. *Euripides: Hippolytus*, 21-22.
[198] Dunn, *Tragedy's End*, 53.
[199] Howard Jacobson, 'Some Unnoticed Echoes and Allusions in Milton's *Samson Agonistes*,' *Notes & Queries* 29, no. 6 (1982): 501-502 (502).
[200] Jacobson, 'Unnoticed Echoes,' 502.

On the one hand, the rites for Hippolytus have been interpreted as a satisfactory resolution of the issues raised by the play, lending significance and meaning to his death. Segal, for instance, identifies 'the appropriateness in the fact that this figure whose place has been in the margin of the city should be involved in the rite of passage which civilized the "untamed" or "unyoked" maidens'.[201] However, other critics have drawn attention to the tensions and even violence inherent in Artemis' pronouncement. Pietro Pucci argues that the text makes it 'plain that neither the immortal song, nor the ritual offering can really compensate for the loss of Hippolytus'.[202] Artemis herself shows her recognition of this in that as well as cult worship, she also promises revenge. This promised violence against another is mirrored in the conceptual violence through which Hippolytus, 'who has rejected marriage and sex throughout his life and who dies for this rejection', is forced to become 'the object of worship by young Trozenian women in preparation for their weddings'.[203] The significance of Samson's posthumous rites is equally contested. Mary Ann Radzinowicz has seen Manoa's speech as representing an important 'stage of insight…when he raises the question of what action is appropriate for those remaining alive'.[204] Wittreich, meanwhile, argues that Samson, 'having failed in his divine mission, is returned publicly, by "funeral train / Home to his Fathers house" (1732-33) where he is crowned not with immortal but with earthly fame, not with amaranthus but with laurel, and thereupon built an earthly monument'.[205]

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[201] Charles Segal, 'Pentheus and Hippolytus on the Couch and on the Grid: Psychoanalytic and Structuralist Readings of Greek Tragedy,' *The Classical World* 72, no. 3 (1978): 129-48 (139).
[202] Pietro Pucci, 'Euripides: The Monument and the Sacrifice,' *Arethusa* 10, no. 1 (1977): 165-95 (185).
[203] Halleran, *Euripides: Hippolytus*, 266.
[204] Radzinowicz, *Toward Samson*, 63-64.
[205] Joeseph Wittreich, *Interpreting Samson Agonistes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 356. See also Victoria Kahn, 'Aesthetics as Critique: Tragedy and *Trauespiel* in *Samson Agonistes*,' in *Reading Renaissance Ethics*, ed. Marshall Grossman (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 104-27 (119). The fact that Artemis leaves Hippolytus at the moment of his death (1437-39) might be viewed in relation to Manoa's insistence that Samson died 'With God not parted from him, as was fear'd' (1719).

A peculiar feature of *Hippolytus* is that the *aition* described by Artemis in the role of *deus ex machina* is mirrored by another aetiology given by another goddess at the beginning of the play. In the *prologos*, Aphrodite explains that Phaedra, struck with love for her stepson Hippolytus, had erected a temple to Aphrodite at Athens in his name, and predicts that 'in the future people will name the goddess as established there because of Hippolytus' (Ἱππολύτῳ δ᾽ ἔπι / τὸ λοιπὸν ὀνομάσουσιν ἱδρῦσθαι θεάν, 32-33). The play opens with a closing gesture, and this 'premature ending' results in the sense that Hippolytus, from the very beginning, is effectively dead already.[206] Aphrodite foretells the action of the play to come – though in distinctly misleading terms – and she tells us immediately before the entrance of Hippolytus that 'he does not know that the gates of Hades lie open and that this is the last light he sees' (οὐ γὰρ οἶδ᾽ ἀνεῳγμένας πύλας / Ἅιδου, φάος δὲ λοίσθιον βλέπων τόδε, 56-57). As Dunn comments, '[a]s the play begins, he is about to pay the penalty, poised on the threshold of death – and this is exactly where we find him at the end'.[207] The messenger announces that 'Hippolytus is no more, nearly so; yet, though precariously balanced in the scales, he sees the light' (Ἱππόλυτος οὐκέτ᾽ ἔστιν, ὡς εἰπεῖν ἔπος· / δέδορκε μέντοι φῶς ἐπὶ σμικρᾶς ῥοπῆς, 1162-63), and Hippolytus himself says 'I'm dead, and indeed I see the gates of the dead' (ὄλωλα καὶ δὴ νερτέρων ὁρῶ πύλας, 1447). The syntax of both reflects this odd sense of carrying on beyond the finish – a firm statement of 'he is/I am dead', which should surely be final, and yet the lines continue.

Samson, like Hippolytus, is the subject of prophecy. In the *prologos*, he refers to the portents surrounding his birth ('from heaven foretold / Twice by an angel', 23-24), and he claims: 'Promise was that I / Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver' (38-39). Once again, the relationship between prophecy and the events of the play is problematic. And just as *Hippolytus* 'begins and ends with the death of Hippolytus',[208] Samson begins by declaring that he is

> …exiled from light;
> As in the land of darkness yet in light,

[206] Dunn, *Tragedy's End*, 89.
[207] Dunn, *Tragedy's End*, 88.
[208] Dunn, *Tragedy's End*, 90.

To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried; but O yet more miserable!
Myself, my sepulchre, a moving grave,
Buried, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From worst of other evils…
(98-105)

In *Hippolytus*, there is no reference to the physical interment of the hero's remains: Artemis 'makes no mention of death or burial and makes no allusion to the famous tomb in Trozen'.[209] It is as though the concrete presence of the tomb and temple in contemporary Trozen and Athens remove the necessity for their presence in the play – or rather, the audience is invited to read their own experience of Hippolytus in the landscape into the gaps in the tragedy. Samson's tomb, however, is entirely textual, just as *Samson Agonistes* is designed to take place in a theatre of the mind rather than being physically embodied. Milton thus constructs Samson's 'sepulchre' and Manoa's 'monument' for the reader in the text.

The monument imagined by Manoa is explicitly textual. He describes his intention to

build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song
(1733-37)

Michael Spiller proposes a very appealing reading of this passage: 'The textual features of the monument that Manoa proposes, shaded with the laurel of poetic fame, prompt the thought that we, the readers, are now visiting Samson's monument in the text before us, where under the laurel of Milton's poetry Samson's deeds are hung, and his acts enrolled or inscribed in copious legend (the narrative parts of *Samson Agonistes*) and sweet lyric song (the choric songs)'.[210] Milton thus enables Samson's monument to perform the same function that the reminders of

[209] Dunn, *Tragedy's End*, 93.
[210] Michael Spiller, 'Directing the Audience in *Samson Agonistes*,' in *Of Poetry and Politics: New Essays on Milton and His World*, ed. P.G. Stanwood (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), 121-29 (125).

Hippolytus' cult worship do in Euripides' play. In the latter, the reminder of the actual city-scape of Athens bridges the gap between reality and the world of the play. On the other hand, Samson's monument has its reality within a literary text, so by drawing attention to the 'acts enrolled / In copious legend' (1736-37) Milton provides a step between the poetic and the material text.

That these closing gestures are an important part of what Milton perceived to be the workings of catharsis is evident when we turn back to the final words of the chorus:

> His servants he with new acquist
> Of true experience from this great event,
> With peace and consolation hath dismiss'd,
> And calm of mind, all passion spent.
> (1755-58)

Spiller considers that with these lines the chorus transcends its role within the play, showing 'a sophisticated awareness of how tragedy operates, derived from Aristotle and Minturno', which 'is so much a literary reflection on the theory of catharsis that it moves the Chorus very definitely into metapoetic space'.[211] The insight which Milton gains from Euripides, I suggest, is that formal closing gestures can enact the cathartic end even as they resist it. As Parker observes, the final lines of the chorus are more than simply an expression 'of the doctrine of catharsis'; 'they are the very instrument of it'.[212] In his interpretation, the Chorus 'beautifully and quietly brings us down to earth,' as '[t]he grand style fades imperceptibly into the simple'.[213] Whether we agree with the chorus' construction of the meaning of the drama or not, we are carried along by the language itself. The strong rhyme scheme offers Milton an equivalent 'closing gesture' to the anapaestic metre spoken to signal the end of many Greek tragedies (including in the Euripidean choral tag). And yet, Coiro has drawn attention to the fact that Milton's use of rhyme in *Samson Agonistes* conflicts

[211] Spiller, 'Directing the Audience,' 126.
[212] Parker, *Milton's Debt*, 70.
[213] Parker, *Milton's Debt*, 71.

with his rejection of it in his note added to *Paradise Lost* in 1668.[214] The very formal feature that does most to enforce closure also calls its validity into question.

Conclusion

As we have seen from the references in his prose works, Milton conceived of the 'spirit and vigor' of Euripides as being importantly linked to the ability to participate actively as a citizen in the affairs of the state. Moreover, he saw Euripides as a model for the role of the politically engaged poet which he himself wished to emulate. The (qualified, limited) democracy which is debated and praised in Euripides, coupled with the strong condemnation of tyranny, appealed strongly to Milton. In *Samson Agonistes*, Milton's literary instincts are frequently Euripidean, as can be seen in his 'closing gestures', and in the ending which, as in *Hippolytus*, finds its emotional power and resonance in the human rather than the divine. But it is fundamental to the very core of Milton's thinking that *Samson Agonistes* is also Sophoclean, Aeschylean, Senecan, influenced by 'the ancients and Italians' (39) and the tradition of scriptural drama, all of which are specifically mentioned in the preface. Its multi-vocal texture can be read in ideological terms: as Crawforth puts it, '[i]f delegating one's democratic right to a single representative is shown to be morally dubious…then in literary terms privileging any single textual precursor (even one Milton esteems as greatly as Euripides) is similarly vexed'.[215] In his preface to *Samson Agonistes*, Milton distances his 'dramatic poem' from the contemporary tragedies being performed on the Restoration stage, which have become inextricably associated with the return of monarchical rule. His insistence that 'this work never was intended' for the stage (47-48), represents an attempt to (re)construct an intellectual rather than physical space for tragedy, in which it could perform the social and civic functions which were of such importance in the ancient Greek polis, and which Euripides above all represented for him.

In his reception of Euripides, Milton can be seen as the inheritor of a tradition stretching back through the sixteenth century (notably via Stiblinus) to

[214] Coiro, 'Milton's Essay,' 97-120.
[215] Crawforth, 'Politics of Greek Tragedy,' 251.

Erasmus. At the same time, his conceptualization of Euripidean tragedy as a democratic space entwined with the principle of *parrhesia* goes beyond previous interpretations. In *Samson Agonistes*, Milton brings a multiplicity of voices into play, including Sophocles and Aeschylus as well as Euripides. His use of Sophoclean structures is symptomatic of a turn towards Sophocles that was beginning to occur as Aristotle's *Poetics* gained a new kind of dominance over the interpretation of tragedy. By the turn of the eighteenth century, Sophocles, and *Oedipus Tyrannos* in particular, would be established as the pre-eminent representatives of Greek tragedy. *Samson Agonistes* stands on the verge, looking forward to the reign of Sophocles, and backwards to the golden age of Euripides.

CONCLUSION

When Hythloday sailed to Utopia in 1516, he made sure to bring the most up-to-date humanist texts with him, including the 1503 Aldine Euripides. The exemplary dedication and facility with which the Utopians took to Greek was not, perhaps, always replicated by their less fictional European counterparts. But already by 1506 two of Euripides' works were available in Latin translations by the great Erasmus himself. Erasmus' translations did a huge amount to popularize Euripides, and established foundations for the reception of his works that would remain influential for more than a century.

From his print debut in 1495 to the Geneva edition of 1602, Euripides appeared in print in a variety of forms at least 120 times. By the seventeenth century, you could buy his complete works, a single text, or a selection. You could read him in Greek, Latin, Italian, French, German, or Spanish. You could invest in a compendious and lavishly-bound folio, or opt for a cheap pocket octavo. You could read his *Life* and his letters, the ancient scholia and helpful humanist commentaries. You might struggle through the opening of *Orestes* at the end of your Greek grammar, or you might find everything you needed to know in Neander's *Aristologia*. You might be encouraged by Erasmus' *Adages* or by the ubiquitous commonplace marks to collect notable Euripidean *sententiae* in your commonplace book.

There can be no doubt of the easy availability of these texts in England. They clearly made their way across the channel quickly and frequently, and once there could (and did) continue to circulate at second hand. Euripides and his characters appeared in digested form in dictionaries and reference books, and he crops up in a wide variety of texts, from sermons and political treatises to poetic miscellanies and prose romances. Even without ever reading Euripides directly, anyone with any literary pretensions whatsoever could hardly have avoided him completely.

More vexed is the question of how a specifically 'Euripidean' influence might make itself felt in the English vernacular, and how we are to recognize it

when it does. It is important to be sensitive to the fact that Euripides did not have exactly the same meanings for Renaissance readers as for us; while individual reading practices will have varied idiosyncratically in ways that are unrecoverable, certain trends can be observed in terms of which plays were read, and why, and how.

There is also a wider issue with identifying the influences of Greek in general in this period; the linguistic detail of Latin is easy to trace in a way that Greek is not. But perhaps the best comparison is not with Latin, which a good humanist education ingrained into the thought and writing practices of its recipients. Ann Thompson found that even Chaucer's 'linguistic remoteness' means that his verbal fingerprints are difficult to trace, where those of Ovid, for example, are manifest.[1]

The linguistic remoteness of Greek is still more pronounced, so that even in a writer as steeped in Greek as Milton his Latinity is far easier to pin down. In the absence of the concrete marks of influence favoured by traditional source-study, even where Renaissance writers tell us that they are reading Euripides, we have been inclined to disbelieve them. But reading Euripides in translation is still reading Euripides – or if it isn't then very few people read Euripides today. And Euripides in translation did not simply or inevitably sound like Seneca, as has sometimes been assumed, showing that Renaissance readers and translators were sensitive to differences in style between the two classical tragedians.

Just how productive Renaissance encounters with Euripides could be is illustrated by Shakespeare, whose transformative reading of *Alcestis* is fundamental to *The Winter's Tale*. It is through developing a deeper understanding of the wider receptions of Euripides from Erasmus to Milton that we can gain an insight into this moment at which Shakespeare and Euripides met, and helped to construct each other.

[1] Thompson, *Shakespeare's Chaucer*, 10.

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