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**The Reception of Sophocles' *Antigone*
in Early Modern English Drama**

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in early modern English drama in the form of translation and adaptation. It focusses on the only two extant texts that can be defined as a translation or an adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone* by English authors in the early modern period: *Sophoclis Antigone* (1581), a Latin translation by Thomas Watson, and *The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princesse* (1631), an English adaptation by Thomas May. Opting for the historicist strand within reception studies, I argue that these two English *Antigones* intersect at a crossroads of contexts – theoretical, cultural, literary, and political. Only within these perspectives can these plays be fully understood and their value reassessed. Combining Sophocles' tragedy both with other classical sources and contemporary models, the two texts challenge the traditional understanding of the early modern compositional approaches of 'translation' and 'adaptation'. Moreover, by potentially alluding to contemporary events, Watson's and May's versions of *Antigone* partly align with, partly destabilize modern interpretations of the Sophoclean original. As direct and declared engagements with the Sophoclean play, Watson's and May's *Antigones* are ideal case studies for the flexible conception of the practices of translation and adaptation and for the close relationship between politics and drama in the early modern period.

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Abbreviations

- Arist.Poet.* Aristotle, 1995, *Poetics*, translated by Stephen Halliwell, in Aristotle, Longinus, Demetrius, *Poetics, On the Sublime, On Style*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, pp. 28-141.
- Brill's New Pauly* Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, and Manfred Landfester (eds.), 2006-, *Brill's New Pauly*, translated by Christine F. Salazar and Francis G. Gentry, Online edition: Brill. [accessed at <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-pauly>]
- ESTC* English Short Title Catalogue
- Eur.Phoen.* Euripides, 1912, *The Phoenician Maidens*, in Euripides, *Euripides*, translated by Arthur S. Way, 4 vols., vol. 3, London: William Heinemann.
- GA* Robert Garnier, 1997, *Antigone ou La Pieté: tragedie*, edited by Jean-Dominique Beaudin, Paris: Honoré Champion.
- LSJ* Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, 2011, *The Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon*, revised by H. Stuart Jones and edited by Maria Pantelia, Online edition: Thesaurus Linguae Graecae [TLG]. [accessed at <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ljsj/#eid=1>]
- Luc.* Lucan, 1928, *The Civil War, Books I-X (Pharsalia)*, London: William Heinemann.
- MA* Thomas May, 2016, *The Tragedy of Antigone, 1631*, edited by Marco Pangallo, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- ML* Lucan, 1627, *Lucan's Pharsalia, or the Civill Warres of Rome between Pompey the Great and Iulius Caesar. The whole ten Bookes. Englished by Thomas May. Esquire*, London: Printed [by Augustine Mathewes] for Thomas Iones and Iohn Marriott.
- NA* Sophocles, 1558, *Antigone*, in Sophocles, *Sophoclis tragoediae septem, Latino carmine redditae et Annotationibus illustratae, per Thomam Naogeorgum Straubingensem*, Basileae: Per Ioannem Oporinum.
- ODNB* David Cannadine (ed.), 2004-, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online edition: Oxford University Press. [accessed at <https://www.oxforddnb.com/>]
- OED* J. A. Simpson, et al., 2010-, *Oxford English Dictionary*, online edition: Oxford University Press. [accessed at <https://www.oed.com/>]

- Quint.*Inst.* Quintilian, 1920-1922, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian in Four Volumes*, translated by H. E. Butler, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- RCC Brenda Hosington *et al.*, 2010-, *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads*, The University of Warwick. [accessed at <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk>].
- Sen.*Ag.* Seneca, 2004, *Agamenon*, in Seneca, *Oedipus, Agamemnon, Thyestes, Hercules on Oeta, Octavia*, edited and translated by John G. Fitch, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sen.*Med.* Seneca, 2018, *Medea*, in Seneca, *Hercules, Trojan Women, Phoenician Women, Medea, Phaedra*, edited and translated by John G. Fitch, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sen.*Oct.* Seneca, 2004, *Octavia*, in Seneca, *Oedipus, Agamemnon, Thyestes, Hercules on Oeta, Octavia*, edited and translated by John G. Fitch, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sen.*Oed.* Seneca, 2004, *Oedipus*, in Seneca, *Agamemnon, Thyestes, Hercules on Oeta, Octavia*, edited and translated by John G. Fitch, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sen.*Phae.* Seneca, 2018, *Phaedra*, in Seneca, *Hercules, Trojan Women, Phoenician Women, Medea, Phaedra*, edited and translated by John G. Fitch, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sen.*Phoen.* Seneca, 2018, *Phoenician Women*, in Seneca, *Hercules, Trojan Women, Phoenician Women, Medea, Phaedra*, edited and translated by John G. Fitch, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sen.*Thy* Seneca, 2004, *Thyestes*, in Seneca, *Oedipus, Agamemnon, Thyestes, Hercules on Oeta, Octavia*, edited and translated by John G. Fitch, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Soph.*Ant.* Sophocles, 1994, *Antigone*, in Sophocles, *Antigone, Women of Trachis, Philoctetes, Oedipus at Colonus*, edited and translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Soph.*OC.* Sophocles, 1994, *Oedipus at Colonus*, in Sophocles, *Antigone, Women of Trachis, Philoctetes, Oedipus at Colonus*, edited and translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Soph.*OT.* Sophocles, 1994, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, in Sophocles, *Ajax, Electra, Oedipus Tyrannus*, edited and translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Stat.*Theb.* Statius, 1928, *Statius in Two Volumes*, edited and translated by J. H. Mozley, London: William Heinemann.
- WA Thomas Watson 1581, *Sophoclis Antigone, Interprete Thoma Watsono I. U. studioso*, Londini: Excudebat Iohannes Wolfius.

0. Introduction: Modern Ideas of Reception

5. Every reading of a classic is in fact a rereading. [...]

7. The classics are the books that come down to us bearing the traces of readings previous to ours, and bringing in their wake the traces they themselves have left on the culture or cultures they have passed through [...].

13. A classic is something that tends to relegate the concerns of the moment to the status of background noise, but at the same time this background noise is something we cannot do without.

Italo Calvino, 1981, *Why Read the Classics?*

0.1. Aims, scope, and structure

This thesis examines the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in early modern English drama in the form of translation and adaptation. It focuses on the only two extant texts that can be defined as translations or adaptations of Sophocles' *Antigone* by English authors in the early modern period: *Sophoclis Antigone* (1581), a Latin translation by Thomas Watson, and *The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princess* (1631), an English adaptation by Thomas May. Opting for the historicist strand within reception studies and combining it with intellectual history, I argue that these two English *Antigones* intersect at a crossroads of contexts – theoretical, cultural, literary, and political. In so doing, Thomas Watson's and Thomas May's *Antigones* pose two challenges. First, by combining Sophocles' tragedy with other classical sources and contemporary models, they defy the traditional understanding of the processes known as 'translation' and 'adaptation' and thereby showcase the more flexible conception of these practices in the early modern period. Second, by touching on topical debates or by potentially alluding to contemporary events, the two plays deploy the intrinsic political implications of Sophocles' *Antigone* in a way that partly aligns with, partly destabilizes contemporary, post-Idealist interpretations of the tragedy. Therefore, as direct and declared engagements with the Sophoclean play, Watson's and May's *Antigones* are ideal case studies for the practices of translation and adaptation as well as for the close relationship between politics and drama in early modern England.

This work intends to contribute to the history of reception of Sophocles in early modern Europe. Recently, scholars have traced the revival of Sophocles in early modern Italy, France, and Germany;¹ however, to my knowledge no other study has yet been devoted to the reception of Sophocles, and in particular of *Antigone*, in early modern England.² Additionally, the analysis of Watson's *Antigone* is particularly relevant to the burgeoning field of Neo-Latin studies. The project equally reassesses two highly disregarded texts by minor authors and seeks to restore them within the literary history of translation and adaptation and, more significantly, to the history of classical reception in England.

While my thesis aims to contribute to reception studies, my approach belongs to the historicist strand within this lively field. In my project, I contextualize Watson and May's *Antigones* in theoretical, cultural, literary, and political terms: more specifically, I set out to read the two texts in the light of early modern theories on translation, imitation, and tragedy (theoretical contexts); the history of Greek studies in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England (cultural contexts); the reception of *Antigone* in European drama as a whole (literary contexts); and the contemporary political debates on concepts such as Natural Law or specific topical events (political contexts). Hence, my historicist approach combines with intellectual history. By contextualizing the texts within these frameworks, I aim to read them through historicist lenses, without superimposing anachronistic interpretative categories. Rather, the survey of then-contemporary critical tools is meant to problematize, sharpen, and ultimately illuminate our understanding of the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in early modern English drama.

However, this does not mean that I renounce modern hermeneutical tools altogether. I am aware that, as Mark Griffith has put it, it is impossible to 'transport [ourselves] [...] into the mind-sets of the original audience' and, although there is no perfect historical reconstruction, historicism is an 'unattainable yet desirable goal'.³ A 'pragmatic historicism' is what enables us to get the imperfect, yet best possible knowledge of the horizon of expectations of early modern audiences.⁴ As a combination of historicism, reception studies, and intellectual history, my approach shares with Neo-Historicism some of its methods but not its aims; nor do I consider the implications that the

¹ For the early modern reception of Sophocles in Italy, see Elia Borza, 2007, *Sophocles Redivivus: La survie de Sophocle en Italie au début du XVI^e siècle*, Bari: Levante; in France, Michele Mastroianni, 2004, *Le Antigoni sofoclee del Cinquecento francese*, Firenze: L. S. Olschki; in Germany, Anastasia Daskarolis, 2000, *Die Wiedergeburt des Sophokles aus dem Geist des Humanismus: Studien zur Sophokles-Rezeption in Deutschland vom Beginn des 16. bis zur Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen: M. Niemeyer.

² Robert Miola provides a synoptic overview of diverse translations and adaptations of *Antigone* in early modern Europe including England in one recent article; see Robert S. Miola, 2014, 'Early Modern Antigones: Receptions, Refractions, Replays', *Classical Reception Journal*, 6, 2, pp. 221-244.

³ Mark Griffith, 1999, 'Preface', in Sophocles, *Antigone*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. viii.

⁴ Tim Whitmarsh, 2006, 'True Histories: Lucian, Bakhtin, and the Pragmatics of Reception', in Charles Martindale and R. F. Thomas (eds.), *Classics and the Uses of Reception*, Oxford: Blackwell.

figure of Antigone possesses for feminist theories. What I am interested in is the interaction of the two texts under discussion with contextual factors. By assuming that literary texts cannot be read independently of their contexts of production, my approach is partly reminiscent of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism, which is hardly surprising, considering the sweeping influence that these two strands have had on the study of the early modern period. As Andrew Hadfield has observed, ‘the notion that we ought to regard culture as an interactive whole, rather than seeing contexts as background information (sometimes) necessary for the proper study of the literary (or artistic) object, has transformed our understanding of early modern literature’.⁵ However, in studying the reception of *Antigone*, particularly by two minor authors such as Thomas Watson and Thomas May, I do not assume that their familiarity with Sophocles was common in early modern England, nor do I intend to generalize and extend the results of this thesis to early modern English literature as a whole. Watson’s and May’s engagements with Sophocles cannot but represent two specific responses to elite topical concerns.

These methodological issues are further addressed in the remnant of this introduction, in the following subsections. I have felt it imperative to spend a few pages discussing them: therein, I clarify the historicist stance of my work vis-à-vis reception studies, offering an overview of such studies as the appropriate background to my approach. First, I will survey the major critical contributions to the study of the afterlife of classical works in the twentieth century up to the recent discussion on classical reception, focussing on terms such as ‘tradition’ and ‘the classic’. Then, I will problematize some crucial notions of reception theory, arguing that concepts such as ‘the transhistorical’ and ‘chain of receptions’ can mislead into unhistorical and flattening readings. As a solution, I justify the adoption of a more historicizing approach than reception studies seem to allow and propose a set of concepts that could integrate current discussions on reception such as the ideas of ‘cluster’ and ‘network’: these are presented as alternative notions to account synchronically for the complexity of diachronic relationships between texts.

The main body of the thesis is divided into two parts: ‘Contexts’ and ‘Texts’. The first part, which includes Chapter 1 and 2, considers the theoretical, cultural, and literary contexts of Watson and May’s *Antigones*. In accordance with a more marked historicism, Chapter 1 considers how the two major forms of Sophocles’ reception in early modern English drama – translation and adaptation – were theorized in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. In my discussion on adaptation, I opt for the less anachronistic term ‘imitation’, an early modern partial analogue of ‘adaptation’, to refer to adaptive practices of the time. Albeit reasoning within a pan-European framework, I here devote a greater attention to theorizations by English writers, particularly Laurence Humphrey, who authored

⁵ Andrew Hadfield, 2005, *Shakespeare and Republicanism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 8.

the Latin treatise *Interpretatio linguarum* (1559). By comparing English and Continental treatises, I challenge the existence of an exclusively English translation theory in the Renaissance and I argue that the theories of translation and imitation in England can be fully understood and their potential specificity be verified only from a pan-European perspective. Such specificity – or lack thereof – can be measured also against the terminology employed by early modern theorists and practitioners of translation and imitation; finally, I take into account the rhetorical category of *dispositio* in early modern discussions of imitation and its potential to facilitate the understanding of imitative practices. The interdependence of Renaissance theories of translation, as confirmed by the overall continuity in their terminology, points to a European framework in which ideas on translation and imitation were not nationally confined but rather circulated within Europe's *respublica litteraria*.

Chapter 2 sets Watson's and May's versions of *Antigone* within the context of the reception of Greek tragedy in early modern English drama. The chapter is articulated into three sections. In the first, since both Watson and May attended grammar school and university, I trace the origins and the developments of Greek studies in England from the mid sixteenth to the mid seventeenth century, in order to establish whether and how Sophocles was studied in English educational institutions. The second section concentrates on the material transmission of Sophoclean drama through manuscripts, editions of the original, Latin and vernacular translations in Europe as a whole but particularly in England. The chapter also considers the modes of reception of Sophocles' plays in early modern England: these modes range from the reading of the original with edifying purposes and the selection of sentences and themes for academic composition to translation and imitation/adaptation for drama, either performed or not, either in academic Neo-Latin or in English. This survey reveals that, while not featuring in grammar school syllabi nor in pedagogical treatises, Sophocles was read, translated, and performed in England in an academic environment. In the third section, I enlarge the scope to Europe as a whole in order to take into account the history of the interpretation of Sophocles, which emerges from the paratextual material in the printed editions of his tragedies, the commentaries to the plays, and theoretical writings; all of them contributed to the shaping of an early modern theory of tragedy. The vast majority of early modern criticism insists on the political implications of Sophocles' plays; this confirms that a close interplay between politics and drama in the early modern period was common, if not expected. The third section also considers English vernacular engagements with Greek tragedy in order to see how the ancient tragedians interact with other dramatic traditions, particularly with Seneca's tragedies. Unlike close vernacular translations such as Lady Lumley's *Iphigenia*, George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* depends on Seneca in various ways which can hardly be simply defined as 'influence'. By analysing the way in which Greek tragedy is filtered by other dramatic traditions, I argue that the notions of network and cluster could be

alternative ways to account for the layering of sources which characterizes *Jocasta* as well as Watson's and May's *Antigones*.

The second part of the thesis ('Texts') zooms in on to these two English *Antigones* in Chapter 3 and 4 respectively. For both texts, I investigate the authors' stances towards the practices of translation and imitation and then offer a philological and comparative analysis of the two versions of *Antigone* in order to establish their relationship with their respective sources. For Watson's play, the aim of this analysis is to retrieve its contacts with the Sophoclean play, either in the original or in previous Latin and vernacular translations. The results point to Watson's conception of translation as a form of competition with previous versions. For May's play, the textual analysis considers the relationship with classical sources other than Sophocles, such as Seneca, Lucan, and Statius, and also May's debts to contemporary authors, displaying what I call 'functionalized reception', i.e., the presence of a multiplicity of sources performing different functions within the target text.

Furthermore, I consider how the two texts under discussion are shaped by both structural and thematic criteria typical of early modern theories of tragedy. On the one hand, I examine how Watson's and May's *Antigones* exploit tragic structural elements such as the chorus, the five-act structure, and the insertion of sub-plots. On the other hand, I assess to what extent the two texts are informed by two kinds of thematic criteria according to which Sophoclean drama was read and interpreted in the early modern period, i.e., theoretical and topical. Theoretical criteria are genre-related features of tragedy, like the structural elements mentioned above, but unlike them, are less formal than thematic aspects of tragedy; theoretical criteria include the Aristotelian concepts of *hamartia* and *pathos*. Topical criteria refer to concerns related to the contemporary cultural and political background, to which both texts arguably allude. Contemporary thinking on Natural Law is particularly illuminating for Watson's and May's interpretation of *Antigone*. Such topicality prevents us from dismissing these two English *Antigones* as mere erudite exercises. Overall, by surveying the contexts in which these two texts developed, I intend to shed light on how Sophocles' *Antigone* was read through contemporary theoretical frameworks and flexibly deployed by Watson and May to reflect on topical issues of their time.

As its title suggests, my thesis falls within the remit of reception studies, notably the study of classical reception. In the following preliminary remarks, I shall compare the term 'reception' with its once dominant equivalent of 'the classical tradition'. Then, I will focus on five 'ideas of reception', i.e. five notions amongst the numerous that have shaped the debates of reception theorists over the past few decades: horizon of expectation, the transhistorical, *différance*, chain of receptions, and fusion of horizons. In this second section, which by no means aspires to be a comprehensive survey,

I will reflect on whether these concepts can be effective hermeneutical tools for the methodology informing this work.

0.2. From the classical tradition to reception

The term ‘reception’ was first applied to literary criticism at the end of the 1960s in a lecture at the University of Constance held by Hans Robert Jauss, the father of reception theory or, as he himself defines it, of ‘the aesthetics of reception’ (‘Rezeptionsästhetik’).⁶ Since then, ‘reception’ has come to qualify those studies with the aim to investigate the afterlife of texts in later historical periods. However, ‘reception’ should not be simply seen as a byword for ‘tradition’, ‘heritage’ or ‘legacy’.⁷ Its use entails a change of perspective or, in Thomas Kuhn’s terms, of ‘paradigm’.⁸ reception-based studies involve a shift from text-centred or author-centred approaches to a reader-centred one; as such, this strand of studies is equally indebted to the reception theory (‘Wirkungstheorie’) of Wolfgang Iser, another member of the Constance School.⁹

Amongst the disciplines falling within the purview of reception studies, classical reception has increasingly been finding recognition as a full academic branch of classical studies. Charles Martindale’s *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (1993) laid the theoretical foundations of this discipline by applying reception theory to the classics. Contextually, this text triggered a series of debates around the status of reception and its validity as an approach to the afterlife of classical texts. By and large, the majority of these debates concerns the difficult balance between traditional positivistic readings – centred around historicism and philology – and presentist ones – which tend to read classical texts anachronistically, only insofar as they are relevant to

⁶ The lecture was held in 1967 at the University of Constance and was entitled ‘Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft’ [‘Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory’]. The original German version was first published in a 1970 collection of essays; see Hans Robert Jauss, 1970, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. An English partial version of this lecture appeared the same year in the translation of Elizabeth Benzinger; see Hans Robert Jauss, 1970, ‘Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory’, *New Literary History*, 2, pp. 7-37. For the full English text of the lecture and other essays by Jauss, see Hans Robert Jauss, 1982, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, translated by Timothy Bahti, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

⁷ Charles Martindale and Lorna Hardwick, 2014, ‘Reception’, in Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*, online edition: Oxford University Press.

⁸ For Kuhn’s concept of ‘paradigm’, see Thomas Kuhn, 1996, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

⁹ Wolfgang Iser, 1978, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; see the original in Wolfgang Iser, 1976, *Der Akt des Lesens: Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung*, München: Fink. Iser’s reception theory is sometimes translated as ‘reader-response theory’ but the two terms do not entirely correspond; see Ian Buchanan, 2010, *A Dictionary of Critical Theory*, online edition: Oxford University Press.

contemporary issues. One of the major theoretical questions is whether reception actually achieves the aim of being a suitable *via media* between the extremes of positivism and presentism.¹⁰

Before the concept of ‘reception’ was introduced by Jauss into literary criticism, the relation of newer texts with past works was described in hierarchical terms, with the ‘source’ or ‘original’ considered as more authoritative and aesthetically superior to the ‘target’ or derivative work. This was the stance of scholars working from the perspective of source criticism, a dominant approach in literary studies at least until the first half of the twentieth century. Only from the second half of the century onwards did critics start to problematize the term ‘source’:¹¹ Shakespearean critics identified subcategories of sources and adopted alternative definitions such as ‘origin’, ‘echoes’, ‘influence’ etc.¹² Since the rediscovery and imitation of classical texts was the driving force of the Renaissance, it comes as no surprise that a whole reconsideration of the methods and terminology of source criticism originated from Renaissance studies. Such epistemological rethinking has eventually led to the total rejection of source studies: Stephen Greenblatt even famously decreed their death by labelling them as ‘the elephants’ graveyard of literary history’¹³ and, apart from recent innovative reassessments of the field,¹⁴ source criticism has otherwise become identified with the mere individuation of sources, dismissively defined as ‘source-spotting’ or ‘influence-spotting’.¹⁵

In the first sixty years of the twentieth-century, German and Anglophone scholarship alike were marked by a rising interest in the afterlife of classics; in these early works predating reception studies, the critical terminology reveals a similar reverence for the original that characterizes source criticism, ranging from ‘afterlife’, ‘influence’, ‘tradition’ to ‘heritage’, ‘legacy’, and ‘debt’. These terms, appearing in the titles and prefaces of scholarly works of the period, are all markers of a reverential attitude towards classics, the ‘sources’, sometimes to the detriment of the literary output

¹⁰ On the main theoretical issues related to reception, see J. I. Porter, 2008, ‘Reception Studies: Future Prospects’, in Lorna Hardwick and Stray (eds.), *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 474.

¹¹ By contrast, ancient history has been reflecting on historiographic sources and their credibility since the inauguration of the field with August Boeckh in the first half of the nineteenth century; see Peter Kuhlmann and Helmuth Schneider, 2014, ‘Classical Studies from Petrarch to the 20th Century’, in *Brill’s New Pauly Supplements I - Volume 6: History of classical Scholarship - A Biographical Dictionary*, edited by Kuhlmann und Helmuth Schneider, online edition: Brill.

¹² Laurie Maguire and Emma Smith, 2015, ‘What is a Source? Or, How Shakespeare Read His Marlowe’, *Shakespeare Survey* 68, pp. 16-17.

¹³ Stephen Greenblatt, 1985, ‘Shakespeare and the Exorcist’, in Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, London; New York: Methuen, p. 163.

¹⁴ Source studies have been recently reignited by integrating the mere process of source identification with interdisciplinary theoretical approaches: Maguire and Smith use trauma studies and hauntology to describe Shakespeare’s relation to Marlowe in *The Tempest*; see Maguire and Smith, 2015, pp. 24-31.

¹⁵ ‘Source-spotting’ has been employed by Julie Sanders to define the intense study of Shakespeare’s sources in the early twentieth century; see Julie Sanders, 2006, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, London; New York: Routledge, pp. 46-47. ‘Influence-spotting’ is labelled as possibly ‘misleading’ by Felix Budelmann and Johannes Haubold in their analysis of the reception and tradition of the poems inspired by Anacreon, the *Anacreontea*; see Felix Budelmann and Johannes Haubold, 2008, ‘Reception and Tradition’, in Hardwick and Stray (eds.), p. 18.

of subsequent periods.¹⁶ In *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (1954), R. R. Bolgar even posited the superiority of classical authors as an indisputable fact:

At first, the modern world was vastly inferior to the ancient. [...] By the end of the Renaissance, however, the steady efforts of centuries had reaped their reward. The new culture was no longer noticeably inferior to its Graeco-Roman model.¹⁷

Contemporary literary criticism has not renounced such terminology: in a recent work such as *The Classical Tradition* (2010) by Anthony Grafton, G. W. Most, and Salvatore Settis, the authors employ expressions such as the ‘continuing influence’ of antiquity, ‘the ancient heritage’, ‘cultural heritage’. However, these scholars also point out that the moderns’ attitude to antiquity has not always been one of subservient assent and passive imitation – as some of the prefatory statements quoted above seem to suggest – but also of critical opposition and, sometimes, of deliberate and programmatic ‘forgetfulness’ of ancient models.¹⁸

The term ‘tradition’ deserves a separate reflection. Within classical studies, ‘tradition’ generally refers to ‘the classical tradition’, the most common umbrella term to indicate engagements with classics before ‘reception’ became more fashionable. Grafton, Most, and Settis, who have chosen ‘the classical tradition’ as the title for their volume, seem to use it rather interchangeably with ‘reception’: in the preface, they present the book as a ‘guide to the reception of classical Graeco-Roman antiquity in all its dimensions in later cultures’.¹⁹ However, classical tradition and reception are not usually treated as synonyms. In their thorough study on the classical tradition (2014), Michael

¹⁶In 1944, Bruno Snell founded the journal *Antike und Abendland: Beiträge zum Verständnis der Griechen und Römer und ihres Nachlebens* (‘Antiquity and the West: contributions to the understanding of the Greeks and the Romans and their afterlife’) with the aim of ‘showing the changing afterlife of antiquity in the most significant steps of the development of the West’ and ‘how strong and important was the influence of antiquity for the European thought’ (‘[D]as sich wandelnde Nachleben der Antike an den bedeutungsvollen Etappen der abendländischen Entwicklung aufzeigen’); see Bruno Snell, 1945, ‘Vorwort des Herausgebers’, *Antike und Abendland: Beiträge zum Verständnis der Griechen und Römer und ihres Nachlebens*, 1, p. 7; ‘wie stark und wie wichtig die Wirkung der Antike ist für das europäische Denken’; see Bruno Snell, 1946, ‘Vorwort des Herausgebers’, *Antike und Abendland*, 2, p. 7. Wolfgang Schadewaldt’s *Hellas und Hesperien* (‘Hellas and the Hesperian land’, 1960) includes manifold in-depth studies in which the author – as Ernst Zinn, the editor of the collection, explains – has dealt with ‘the ongoing influence of antiquity on the West’; see Ernst Zinn, 1960, ‘Nachwort’, in Wolfgang Schadewaldt, *Hellas und Hesperien*, Zürich: Artemis, p. 1047. In England, two books published in 1923 investigated the ‘legacy’ of Greece and Rome respectively; see R. W. Livingstone, 1923, *The Legacy of Greece: Essays*, Oxford: Clarendon Press; see also Cyril Bailey (ed.), 1923, *The Legacy of Rome: Essays*, Oxford: Clarendon Press. Later, Gilbert Highet authored a bulky volume entitled *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature* (1949), an ambitious study on how ‘Greek and Latin influence has moulded the literatures of western Europe and America’; see Gilbert Highet, 1949, *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. vii. The American series *Our Debt to Greece and Rome*, published between 1922 and 1948, was animated by the purpose to ‘show the influence of virtually all of the great forces of the Greek and Roman civilizations upon subsequent life and thought’; see Hadzsits and Robinson 1922, ‘Editors’ Preface’, in Grant Showerman, *Horace and His Influence*, Boston: Marshall Jones Company, p. x.

¹⁷R. R. Bolgar, 1954, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 3.

¹⁸Anthony Grafton, G. W. Most, and Salvatore Settis, 2010, *The Classical Tradition*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p. vii.

¹⁹Grafton, Most, and Settis, 2010, p. vii.

Silk, Ingo Gildenhard, and Rosemary Barrow attempt to distinguish this notion from reception applied to classics by defining the respective domains of the two fields as follows:

What definite forms does the tradition take? Reception, though itself a broad category, is only one such; and any answer to the question must take account, also, of reflexes [...], of archetypes [...], and [...] of engagements with earlier engagements.²⁰

Here reception is treated as a subcategory of the classical tradition, although, as we have seen, the reception of antiquity is not usually subsumed within it. It is not clear why for the three authors the study of ‘engagements with earlier engagements’ should fall within the exclusive competence of the classical tradition but not within that of reception. The scholars exemplify this by classifying an essay of T. S. Eliot on John Milton as a contribution to the classical tradition but not as an act of reception in the way Milton’s engagement with Virgil is.²¹ To be sure, Eliot’s (derogatory) essay on Milton does not refer to any specific classical text: this would have made this essay an example of classical scholarship, a field that counts as a form of reception itself. The lack of any ‘reference to antiquity’ leads the authors to deny the essay the status as act of reception; however, Eliot’s engagement with classics in other works of his does make this essay relevant for the understanding of his stance towards the classical tradition.²²

Nonetheless, it would be misleading to exclude any kind of ‘engagement with earlier engagements’ from the remit of reception studies. Reception does not take into account only direct responses to classical antiquity: as we shall see in the next section, the foundational text of reception theory applied to classics, Martindale’s *Redeeming the Text*, is centred around the notion of ‘chain of receptions’, according to which no reading of a classical text can go back to the original and supposedly most reliable interpretation without considering the intervening engagements with this text. Therefore, since their inauguration, reception studies were conceived as a fully historicized approach that looks at the whole spectrum of a text’s receptions, direct as well as indirect. Indeed, it

²⁰ Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow, 2014, p. 7. The term ‘reflex’ – declaredly borrowed from historical linguistics – refers to ‘a fact of descent without any implication of purposeful transmission or adjustment’; see Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow, 2014, p. 4, n. 3. The key term is here ‘purposeful’: with ‘reflex’ the authors seem to mean a relation to classical antiquity which cannot be traced back to any intentional, clearly identifiable act of reception; for them, this is best exemplified in the traces of Latin and ancient Greek in Romance languages and modern Greek; see Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow, 2014, pp. 4-5. The authors devote an entire section to ‘archetypes’ intended ‘not specifically in the Jungian sense’ but as a term referring to ‘universals’ that are such only within the culture informed by the classical tradition; such archetypes are for instance the notion of hero and word-genres such as epic, tragedy, or comedy; see Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow, 2014, pp. 251-252.

²¹ T. S. Eliot, 2017, ‘Milton I’, in *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition: Tradition and Orthodoxy 1934-1939*, edited by Iman Javadi, Ronald Schuchard, and Jayme Stayer, online edition: John Hopkins Press, pp. 371-379. This essay was first published in 1936.

²² Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow, 2014, p. 5. Eliot also partook in the history of classical reception: several works of his do engage with classical texts as Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow themselves underline in another chapter of their book; see Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow, 2014, p. 418.

might be argued that the majority of the engagements studied by reception are indirect, since a reception of a classical text usually presupposes if not the study, at least the knowledge of some of the earlier engagements with it: every later reading than the first is therefore potentially mediated. Martindale exemplifies this as follows:

since Virgil, no reading of Homer, at least in the West, has been, *or could be*, wholly free of a vestigial Virgilian presence – not even one given by an interpreter not directly familiar with Virgil’s poems – because the Homer-Virgil opposition is so deeply inscribed, both in the exegetical tradition and in the wider culture.²³

Far from being a criterion of exclusion, the mediated character of readings is a programmatic aspect of reception studies. Not only does reception deal with indirect responses as much as the classical tradition does; sometimes their respective object of study may overlap and no distinction is seemingly applicable: Virgil’s *Aeneid* is arguably part of both the classical tradition and reception. This is a case in which the classical tradition subsumes reception, as theorized by Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow.

However, these observations are based on the premise that the classical tradition and reception indicate corpora of products. While the classical tradition is usually thought in such quantitative terms – as an extensive body of works sharing a direct or indirect connection to classical antiquity – reception is a critical term that captures a process instead. In truth, in literary criticism the meaning of both terms has been fluctuating along the semantic spectrum between ‘product’ and ‘process’, though in different degrees. We have already seen that, if the respective meanings of the classical tradition and reception are placed at the extremity of ‘product’, Virgil will belong to both collections of products. At the other extremity, the two critical terms will describe the cultural processes that have generated these very products. With reference to the example of Virgil, the classical tradition will concentrate on the compliance with – and the possible deviations from – classical conventions, formal as well as ideological, by which we judge the *Aeneid* as a work of epic poetry initiated by Homer. Reception will rather consider Virgil’s poem in its individuality, as an act of reception, giving equal weight to both communalities with and differences from its source.

However, the most appropriate way to conceptualize the classical tradition and reception is to restore them to their dominant meanings in the product-process spectrum. The critical term of the classical tradition has historically served as an umbrella word to identify the whole repertoire of cultural products that can be traced back to the literary, artistic, and ideological legacy of Greece and Rome, whilst reception indicates the processes intervening in the creation of such products. In their study of the relationship between tradition as a whole and reception, Felix Budelmann and Johannes

²³ Martindale, 1993, p. 8.

Haubold associate tradition with ‘a chain of influence’, ‘an imaginary context’, and ‘continuity’.²⁴ The metaphor of the ‘chain of influence’, previously used also by Lorna Hardwick, evokes Martindale’s notion of the ‘chain of receptions’ but does not correspond to it:²⁵ tradition is seen as the collective frame in which ‘individual moments of reception’ take place.²⁶

Therefore, the two categories are by no means mutually exclusive: the innovation brought by reception studies as a theoretical framework does not put an end to the classical tradition but rather revitalizes it. The opposite is also possible: Budelmann and Haubold have shown how the return to ‘tradition’ as a critical concept in reception studies can be illuminating. Rather than seeing ‘tradition’ and ‘reception’ as irreconcilable categories, the two authors have investigated the possible relationship between them. Their conclusion is that tradition and reception can integrate each other in the interpretation of a text’s relation to a classical work.

A parameter that well exemplifies the mutual contribution between the two approaches is the way in which the classical tradition and reception relate to the very idea of ‘the classic’. Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow argue that ‘the classical’ – which can be equated to ‘the classic’²⁷ – is a criterion used by the classical tradition but not by reception studies:

whereas ‘classical’ and ‘tradition’ tend to prompt considerations of value, ‘reception’ does not. In a nutshell, the ‘classical’ of ‘the classical tradition’ tends to imply canonicity, even when the post-antique engagement with the antique is anti-canonical.²⁸

Whilst acknowledging that it is precisely a text’s status as ‘classical’ that has ensured its manifold receptions throughout history, the authors insist that reception as a critical approach is not interested in assessing texts according to parameters such as ‘value’ and ‘canonicity’. However, any study of a text’s reception cannot but benefit from a consideration of the place a text has in the classical tradition, i.e., of its status as ‘classical’ or deliberately ‘anti-classical’. The way in which a society establishes its canon of classical texts – the classics – is an important marker of that society’s ‘horizon of expectations’, i.e., the set of conventions according to which a given audience judges a text.²⁹

To define ‘the classic’ (or ‘the classical’) is a no less challenging task than to define ‘tradition’. As famously written by Aulus Gellius in his *Noctes Atticae* (159 AD), ‘classicus’ originally indicated the higher class by census of the five established by the Roman king Servius Tullius. Furthermore, Gellius reports what is the first recorded use of the term with reference to literature: his master Marcus

²⁴ Budelmann and Haubold, 2008, pp. 16-18.

²⁵ Hardwick, 2003, p. 2. For Martindale’s concept, see section 0.2 below.

²⁶ Budelmann and Haubold, 2008, p. 17.

²⁷ Alexandra Lianieri and Vanda Zajko mostly use the two adjectives interchangeably; see Alexandra Lianieri and Vanda Zajko (eds.), 2008, *Translation and the Classic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 2, n. 2.

²⁸ Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow, 2014, p. 5.

²⁹ On the concept of horizon of expectations, see section 0.2 below.

Cornelius Fronto, while explaining the proper usage of some lexical items, defines as ‘classic or authoritative’ (‘classicus adsiduusque’) the writer that can be considered a reliable model for correct linguistic usage as opposed to any writer belonging ‘to the common herd’ (‘proletarius’).³⁰ Now, the *OED* defines ‘classic’ (when used as a noun) both as a ‘work of literature, music, or art of acknowledged quality and enduring significance or popularity’ and as

[a]n ancient Greek or Latin writer or literary work, of the first rank and of acknowledged excellence; any one of a body of ancient Greek or Latin writers or texts traditionally considered as the model for all literary endeavour. In later use usually in *plural*. With *the*. The canon of ancient Greek and Latin literature.³¹

These definitions capture the two major meanings of this highly polysemic word: on the one hand, it identifies a product of any culture in time and place which, thanks to its supposedly universal value, has become fundamental reading outside its historical context of appearance; the very label ‘classic’ is usually attributed retrospectively, only to texts of the past. On the other hand, ‘classic’ is used to refer exclusively to the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome; in this meaning, a series of aesthetical requisites such as formal balance and proportion add to the idea of universality.

These two meanings occupy different places in the ‘semasiological history’ of the concept of ‘the classic’.³² The first acceptance dates back to as early as the sixteenth century: in *Art poétique françois* (1548) Thomas Sebillet defined the best French medieval poets as ‘classic’.³³ The second meaning asserted itself only at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the foundation of ‘the study of classical antiquity’ (‘klassische Altertumswissenschaft’) in Germany.³⁴ The concept of the

³⁰ Aulus Gellius, 2014, *Attic Nights*, translated by J. C. Rolfe, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, vol. 3, XIX.VIII.15, pp. 376-377.

³¹ ‘classic, adj. and n.’, in *OED*.

³² Merio Scattola, 2014, ‘Introduzione. Per una storia del classico’, in Scattola, Calgaro, and Porreca, p. 5.

³³ Salvatore Settis, 2004, *Il futuro del classico*, Torino: Einaudi, p. 67. Sebillet recommends ‘the reading of the good and classic French poets’ (‘la lecture de bons et classiques poètes françois’); see Thomas Sebillet, 1548, *Art poétique françois*, Paris: L’Angelie, p. 7.

³⁴ Settis, 2004, pp. 61, 67, 70. An important landmark in this regard is the appearance of *Darstellung des Alterthumswissenschaft* (‘Depiction of ancient studies’, 1807) by F. A. Wolf, a leading classicist of his time who had a major role in establishing the status of classical philology as a university discipline. In this text, which he develops from the ideas of Wilhelm von Humboldt’s early essay *Über das Studium des Alterthums* (‘On the study of antiquity’, 1793), Wolf brings to the fore the study of the Greeks and the Romans to the detriment of other ancient cultures; see F. A. Wolf, 1833, *Darstellung des Alterthumswissenschaft*, edited by S. F. W. Hoffmann, Leipzig: Lehnhold, p. 14; see also Sotera Fornaro, 2013, ‘Wolf, Friedrich August’, in Peter Kuhlmann and Helmuth Schneider (eds.), *Brill’s New Pauly Supplements I – Volume 6: History of Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Dictionary*, Leiden: Brill. [consulted online on 28 August 2018 http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2066/10.1163/2214-8647_bnps6_COM_00759]. However, the term ‘classic’ is here still used in a hybrid way, not exclusively referred to Greeks and Romans: neither in the expression ‘the classical authors of antiquity’ (‘d[ie] klassischen Autoren des Altertums’) nor in ‘classic learnedness’ (‘classische Gelehrsamkeit’) is it clear whether ‘classical’ is used in the first or second meaning illustrated above; see Wolf, 1833, pp. 4, 9. It is interesting to note that the editor of Wolf’s 1833 edition does use the term ‘classic’ with exclusive reference to Greek and Roman antiquity, which testifies to the stabilization of this meaning in the space of almost twenty-five years: ‘the classics, both the Greeks and the Romans’ (‘d[ie] Klassiker, sowohl d[ie] Griechen als Römer’); see S. F. W. Hoffmann, 1833, ‘Zusätze zur F. A. Wolf’s Vorlesungen über die Altertumswissenschaft’, in Wolf, 1833, p. 183.

classic has not only had a semasiological development, with new meanings accruing to or substituting the original signified, but has changed also at an onomasiological level:³⁵ before ‘the classic’ became the most stable form for the concept, the signifier of the term had undergone a certain diachronic variation, too. The second meaning seen above, i.e., ‘classic’ indicating Greek and Roman antiquity, used to be conveyed by the Latin word ‘antiqui’ (‘ancients’), as opposed to moderns in multiple battles or ‘querelles’.³⁶

Whether or not realized in the signifier ‘the classic’, the ideal of atemporal perfection embodied by the Greeks and Romans is omnipresent in the cultural history of Europe, resurfacing in the shape of various renaissances and classicisms. With its subsequent re-appearances, the classic has punctuated the development of European culture: as Settis puts it, borrowing Ernst Howald’s terms, ‘the rebirth of the classic is the very “rhythmic form” (‘Rhythmusform’) of Europe’s cultural history’.³⁷ In this light, the classic not only qualifies the heritage to be handed down, i.e., the classical tradition distinguished from the other traditions; the classic also informs and conditions the very way in which this heritage is received: it is its rhythmic re-emergence that sets the pace of each phase of European culture.

The classic is therefore a subterranean presence that, in each of its rebirths, realizes itself in the classical tradition, the immense repository of texts, values, and artworks with which Western culture identifies itself. However, the classical tradition is no exclusive property of the West: it has been used – consciously but sometimes even unconsciously – in other traditions of the world.³⁸ Similarly, as Settis points out, to describe a cultural history as a cycle of deaths and rebirths is a common pattern, recognizable in other global mythologies.³⁹ According to Settis, what distinguishes the presence of the classic in Western culture is that ‘in the Western tradition (and probably only in it) the historical time is grafted onto the mythical time, or rather substitutes it’.⁴⁰ The repeated and cyclic return of the classic is not only the pattern of development of Western history: it has become part of this same history:

³⁵ Scattola, 2014, p. 5.

³⁶ Settis, 2004, pp. 61-65.

³⁷ Settis, 2004, p. 84. Howald uses the term ‘rhythmic form’ with reference to humanism: ‘Die europäische Rhythmusform ist der Humanismus’ (‘The rhythmic form of Europe is humanism’); see Ernst Howald, 1948, *Die Kultur der Antike*, Zürich: Artemis, p. 9. Considering that humanism is one example, the most prominent, of rebirth of the classic, Settis has reasonably extended this definition to any such rebirth.

³⁸ Settis, 2004, pp. 6; see also Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow, 2014, pp. 6-7. For an example of an unconscious and paradoxical use of the classical tradition, see Settis, 2004, pp. 120-121. The study of classical reception in world literatures is a branch that has been recently thriving. In a collection of essays on the classical tradition several chapters focus on extra-European countries; see C. W. Kallendorf (ed.), 2007, *A Companion to the Classical Tradition*, Oxford: Blackwell. The series ‘Classical Presences’ edited by Hardwick and J. I. Porter has devoted a good number of volumes to this subject; for a general overview, see Lorna Hardwick and Carol Gillespie (eds.), 2007, *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

³⁹ Settis, 2004, p. 103.

⁴⁰ Settis, 2004, p. 107: ‘nella tradizione occidentale (e probabilmente solo in quella) il tempo storico si innesta sul tempo mitico, anzi si sostituisce ad esso’.

it has not happened anywhere else that the mythical model of the cyclic return is embodied in history, itself becoming the object of historical investigation.⁴¹

Thus, in the Western tradition the classic historicizes itself continually, in different space-time frameworks. As we have seen, this adaptability has not been restricted to Greek and Roman texts only; in the first meaning of the *OED* quoted above, ‘classic’ applies to ancient as well as modern ‘work[s] of literature, music, or art of acknowledged quality and enduring significance or popularity’.

The classics in this broadest meaning have become the breeding ground for the birth and subsequent burgeoning of reception studies. Philosophical hermeneutics, the very root of reception theory, reflected precisely on the multiplicity of interpretations of the classics as well as the idea of the classic and their relation to history. The following section will focus precisely on the historicized view of the classic(s), which is a major change of perspective determined by the breakthrough of reception theory in the study of the classical tradition.

0.3. Five concepts in search of a method⁴²

Scholars have already pointed out the discrepancy between theory and practice in reception studies and have tried to put a remedy to it by gradually substituting theoretical sophistications with a greater attention to practicable methods: this change can be generalized, in J. I. Porter’s terms, as a shift from the speculative ‘high theory’ to the ‘re-emergence of history’.⁴³ This section is meant to contribute to such reappraisal of history within reception by looking at how historicism has been recently reconsidered as a valuable methodology for reception studies. Accordingly, I will measure the validity of the five concepts of ‘horizon of expectation’, ‘the transhistorical’, ‘*différance*’, ‘chain of receptions’, and ‘fusions of horizons’ within such a historicist frame. I will next consider five other concepts that could helpfully integrate ongoing discussions on reception, i.e., ‘pragmatic historicism’, ‘multiple distancing’, ‘cluster’, ‘network’, and ‘functionalized reception’.

The return to a historicist approach is detectable in a recent study on the early modern reception of ancient tragedy, Blair Hoxby’s *What Was Tragedy?: Theory and the Early Modern*

⁴¹ Settis, 2004, p. 122: ‘non è accaduto altrove che il modello mitico del ritorno ciclico si sia incarnate nella storia, diventando esso stesso oggetto di indagine storica’.

⁴² The subtitle to this section invokes Charles Martindale’s chapter ‘Five concepts in search of an author’ in his study *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception*, which in turn echoes Luigi Pirandello’s book *Six Characters in Search of an Author* [*Sei personaggi in cerca d’autore*]; see Charles Martindale, 1993, *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. However, Martindale does not specify which concepts he means.

⁴³ Porter, 2008, p. 469.

Canon (2014). In this book, Hoxby analyses how tragedy was conceived between the 1550s and the 1790s; his historicist perspective clearly emerges in the following methodological statement:

Because I confine myself to a historical period with a coherent poetics of tragedy, [...] I can outline an alternative description of tragedy that, just as surely as the post-Kantian philosophy of the tragic, rests on crucial assumptions, makes value judgments [...]. Rather than redefine tragedy in trans-historical terms, in other words, I aim to reconstruct a horizon of expectations that flourished for two and a half centuries and that deserves to be acknowledged on its own terms and set in dialogue with rival ideas that have existed in other historical moments.⁴⁴

Hoxby aims at ‘reconstructing [the] horizon of expectations’ of the early modern period and distances himself from ‘transhistorical’ definitions of tragedy. The notion of ‘horizon of expectation’ (‘Erwartungshorizont’)⁴⁵ was developed on the basis of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology by Jauss, who first applied this concept to literary studies in his lecture ‘Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory’ (1967) to refer to the conventions of ‘genre, style, or form’ that characterize a specific audience.⁴⁶ As Jauss specifies, this set of conventions is not to be confused with the parameters used by individuals to express a subjective aesthetic judgement on a literary work; nor are they a form of ‘a simple sociology of taste’.⁴⁷ Such conventions constitute the ‘transsubjective horizon of understanding’, which precedes, contains, and enables any subjective – individual or collective – response.⁴⁸ In *Redeeming the Text*, Martindale explicitly endorses many aspects of Jauss’ reception theory but he also points out some of its contradictions:⁴⁹

Jauss’s historicized version of reception theory is not without its defects. It exaggerates the knowledge which we can have of earlier readers, thereby reverting to a positivism which it supposedly rejects. It over-emphasizes the conformity of reading practices within designated ‘periods’.⁵⁰

In a later study (2006), Martindale himself summarizes these criticisms in the ‘objection to historicism’ of being ‘not historical enough’.⁵¹ Albeit in different terms, Graham Bradshaw expresses a similar stance in relation to the attempts to reconstruct Shakespeare’s original audience:

⁴⁴ Blair Hoxby, 2015, *What was Tragedy: Theory and the Early Modern Canon*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 40-41.

⁴⁵ The original has ‘expectation’ in the singular form.

⁴⁶ According to Jauss, each horizon is doomed to be supplanted by another horizon thanks to the destructive force of those innovative ‘works that evoke the reader’s horizon of expectation, formed by a convention of genre, style or form, only in order to destroy it step by step’; see Jauss, 1982, p. 24; see the original in Jauss, 1970, p. 132: ‘[...] Werke, die den durch eine Gattungs-, Stil- oder Formkonvention geprägten Erwartungshorizont ihrer Leser erst eigens evozieren, um ihn sodann Schritt für Schritt zu destruieren’.

⁴⁷ Jauss, 1982, pp. 21-22; see the original in Jauss, 1970, p. 130: ‘eine simple Soziologie des Geschmacks’.

⁴⁸ Jauss, 1970, p. 13; see also Jauss, 1970, p. 132: ‘transsubjektive[r] Horizont des Verstehens’.

⁴⁹ Martindale, 1993, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁰ Martindale, 1993, p. 9.

⁵¹ Charles Martindale, 2006, ‘Introduction: Thinking Through Reception’, in Martindale and Thomas (eds.), p. 4.

even if we were so perverse as to want to read Hamlet as though Goethe and Mackenzie, Turgenev and Freud had never existed we still could not do so [...] – the intervening writers have shaped the sensibilities we bring to Hamlet. Trying [...] to cut out the intervening commentary by seeing the play in strictly ‘Elizabethan terms’ is unhistorical as well as aesthetically impossible.⁵²

What Martindale and Bradshaw question is the reconstruction of the first audience’s horizon of expectation; so does Simon Goldhill, when he claims that ‘there is no “first” and no “total” reading [...], no originary moment, only multiple and continuing engagements with a script which exceeds each of its (historically contingent) readings’.⁵³

However, this criticism applies not only to the first reading of a classical text but, potentially, also to the audience’s response in a specific ‘point of reception’⁵⁴ of the text’s afterlife. Reading classical texts through the lenses of a specific audience – whether the first or any other audience in a text’s reception history – becomes, in Martindale’s terms, yet another attempt to ‘establish the-past-as-it-really-was’.⁵⁵ In a recent article (2013), Martindale retrospectively assesses some conclusions of *Redeeming the Text* and points out precisely the risk of ‘unhistoricized’ reconstruction, thereby reconsidering the prominence he had attributed to a historicist approach:

the main theoretical stress was on the historical situatedness of both texts and interpretations of texts, on the proposition that to understand is always to understand historically. In the early 1990s it was certainly necessary to underline the importance of such historicism in relation to literary interpretation, but the results could too easily become just another version of traditional (unhistoricized) historical method (where the historian stands as it were at an Archimedean point ‘outside’ or ‘above’ historical process).⁵⁶

For Martindale, when a critic focusses on a specific point of a text’s reception history, he/she might easily fall into the trap of a ‘traditional (unhistoricized) historical’ method. In other words, there is the risk that the critic temporarily suspends his/her own embeddedness in history, acting as if he/she were “‘outside” or “‘above” historical process’. In this perspective, a study such as Hoxby’s or mine – both interested in a specific point of reception, i.e., the early modern horizon of expectation – is arguably liable to this risk, thereby becoming as ‘unhistoricized’ as any study aiming at the reconstruction of the first audience.

⁵² Graham Bradshaw, 1987, *Shakespeare’s Scepticism*, Brighton: Harvester, p. 96. Similarly, Stephen Greenblatt invokes ‘an acceptance of the impossibility of fully reconstructing and reentering the culture of the sixteenth century, of leaving behind one’s own situation’; see Stephen Greenblatt, 1980, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 5.

⁵³ Simon Goldhill, 2012, *Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 263.

⁵⁴ Martindale, 1993, p. 9.

⁵⁵ Martindale, 2006, p. 2.

⁵⁶ Charles Martindale, 2013, ‘Reception – a New Humanism? Receptivity, Pedagogy, the Transhistorical’, *Classical Reception Journal* 5, 2, pp. 172-173.

The solution Martindale proposes for this impasse is the notion of the ‘transhistorical’. Martindale recuperates this concept from *Redeeming the Text* but gives it more prominence: in his 2013 article, he defines it not as ‘a version of crude universalism’ – the kind of ‘transhistorical’ Hoxby refers to in the quotation above – but rather ‘the seeking out of often fugitive communalities across history’.⁵⁷ Although it is not clear how this rephrasing should make the notion of transhistorical less universal, what is relevant to our present concerns is that this concept is grafted onto Martindale’s overall view of reception as a dialogue, which is partly indebted to Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories.⁵⁸ As in *Redeeming the Text*, reception is still ‘figured dialogically, as a two-way process of understanding, backwards and forwards, which illuminates antiquity as much as modernity’.⁵⁹ This dialogic nature is what distinguishes reception from both historicism and presentism. However, in the 2013 article, Martindale puts a greater emphasis on the multiplicity of readings and recognizes in each of them an equal importance:

With both historicism and presentism there are, so to say, only two points involved (‘now’ and ‘then’, differently privileged). With reception there are always at least three and generally many more (ourselves reading Milton reading Virgil...), where all the points also include the mediating texts subsumed within them (‘ourselves’ reading ‘Milton’ reading ‘Virgil’ . . .), and texts can speak to texts on a basis of equality, without a hierarchy necessarily being imposed on any of the points.⁶⁰

Martindale justifies his vision of reception as a transhistorical dialogue by having recourse to Jacques Derrida’s notion of *différance*. In truth, as Derrida explains in *Margins of Philosophy* (1972), *différance* is ‘neither a word nor a concept’ but a ‘sheaf’ (‘faisceau’):

the word *sheaf* seems to mark more appropriately that the assemblage to be proposed has the complex structure of weaving, an interlacing which permits the different threads and different lines of meaning – of the force – to go off again in different directions, just as it is always ready to tie itself up with others.⁶¹

Différance is the main tool of Derrida’s deconstructionist attack on structuralist conceptions of language. For Derrida, *différance* is what makes any process of conceptualization possible: it is ‘the

⁵⁷ Martindale, 2013, p. 173.

⁵⁸ Martindale, 1993, pp. 32-33. On reception as a dialogue, Martindale is influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin’s concepts of dialogism and polyphony; see Martindale, 1993, pp. 30-34. On Bakhtin and reception, see also Whitmarsh, 2006, pp. 104-115.

⁵⁹ Martindale, 2013, p. 171.

⁶⁰ Martindale, 2013, p. 172.

⁶¹ Jacques Derrida, 1982, *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 3; see the original in Jacques Derrida, 1972, *Marges de la philosophie*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, pp. 3-4: ‘ni un mot ni un concept’, ‘faisceau’; ‘[L]e mot *faisceau* paraît plus propre à marquer que le rassemblement proposé a la structure d’une intrication, d’un tissage, d’un croisement qui laissera repartir les différents fils et les différentes lignes de sens – ou de force – tout comme il sera prêt à en nouer d’autres’. Here and in the following quotations, the italics are authorial.

possibility of conceptuality, of conceptual process and system in general'.⁶² At least as I understand it, this term ultimately refers to the system of possible relations between meanings, which the image of the sheaf well illustrates. The polysemy attached to *différance* – which the purposely misspelt 'a' is meant to signal – has many other implications that are not relevant to our purposes. What is significant here is its use by Martindale for his vision of classical reception. In *Redeeming the Text*, Martindale describes his application of *différance* to reception theory as follows:

In this book [...] I shall explore a historicized version of reception theory, associated above all with Hans Robert Jauss; but it will be one of a less positivistic character, which will concede rather more than he does to the operations of *différance*, the key term of Derrida's, which combines the idea of difference (meaning is an effect of the contrast between signs) and deferral (meaning always resists closure, a final – or originary – meaning, because signs never stand still).⁶³

By 'deferral' and 'difference' Martindale translates Derrida's 'temporization' ('temporisation') and 'spacing' ('espacement'), terms by which the French philosopher identifies two kinds of relations within the conceptual system of *différance*. 'Temporization' (or 'deferral') stands for the idea that the meaning of signs is suspended through time and is never fully realized; 'spacing' (or 'difference') refers to the idea that meanings come to exist only in force of their differences with other signs.⁶⁴ Martindale shifts these two aspects of *différance* from the level of signs to the upper level of texts in order to account for the ever-changing and inexhaustible meaning of ancient works. Since *différance* sheds light on the historical development of meaning, Martindale uses this concept as a corrective to Jauss' positivism, thereby proposing a 'historicized version of reception theory'.⁶⁵ This is the basis for what Martindale calls his 'strong thesis', which he illustrates by means of the image of the 'chain of receptions':

our current interpretations of ancient texts, whether or not we are aware of it, are, in complex ways, constructed by the chain of receptions through which their continued readability has been effected. As a result we cannot get back to any originary meaning wholly free of subsequent accretions.⁶⁶

However, as Miriam Leonard points out, Martindale's use of Derrida's *différance* may be counterproductive:

Martindale's recourse to Derrida, as I understand it, performs two functions. On the one hand the operation of *différance* makes any return to an 'originary meaning' distanced from its reception

⁶² Derrida, 1982, p. 11; see also Derrida, 1972, p. 11; 'la possibilité de la conceptualité, du procès et du système conceptuels en général'.

⁶³ Martindale, 1993, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁴ Derrida, 1972, p. 8; see also Derrida, 1982, p. 8.

⁶⁵ Martindale, 1993, p. 6.

⁶⁶ Martindale, 1993, p. 7.

impossible. [...] On the other hand, in the Martindale reading *différance* also acts to destabilize the possibility of establishing any secure understanding of the historical context of this reception. In other words, not only is it impossible for us to establish a historical context for understanding an ‘original’ Horace, it is equally impossible for us to establish a historical reading of Marvell’s reading of Horace.⁶⁷

For Leonard, Martindale’s application of *différance* to reception leads to the conclusion that it is impossible to establish any ‘historical reading’ whatsoever, be it the reading of the first, contemporary interpreters of an author (Horace’s first audience) or the one of his subsequent interpreters (Marvell). Instead of correcting Jauss’ positivism, Martindale seems to go back to it when he proposes an all-comprising look at interpretations: his conception of a text’s afterlife as a ‘chain of receptions’ does not seem to account for the distinctive aspects of each link of this chain but rather to level them, eventually leading to a collapse of ‘historical distance’:

In this proliferation of uncertainties the historical distance which separates the Horatian composition from its Marvellian reading, like the historical distance which separates the Marvellian Horace from his later reinterpretation by T. S. Eliot, is collapsed. The reception of the classical text becomes a conversation between poets across the ages.⁶⁸

This tendency to disregard the historical distance between readings is only partly due to Martindale’s particular declination of Derrida’s *différance*. As hinted above, this unhistorical approach is also determined by Martindale’s debt to Bakhtinian dialogism, in which – as Julia Kristeva put it – ‘[d]iachrony is transformed into synchrony’.⁶⁹ Most crucially, however, Martindale’s tendency to obliterate historical distance is the side-effect of the last of the five concepts guiding this survey, i.e., the ‘fusion of horizons’. This notion was introduced by the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method* (1960), from whom Jauss’ reception aesthetics took origin. Gadamer uses the idea of ‘fusion of horizons’ as a hermeneutical tool for explaining the processes of understanding and interpreting. However, Gadamer himself questions the existence of individual horizons, admitting that ‘the closed horizon that is supposed to enclose a culture is an abstraction’.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Miriam Leonard, 2006, ‘The Uses of Reception: Derrida and the Historical Imperative’, in Martindale and Thomas (eds.), p. 119.

⁶⁸ Leonard, 2006, p. 119.

⁶⁹ Julia Kristeva, 1980, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, edited by Leon S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 65; see the original in Julia Kristeva, 1967, ‘Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman’, *Critique*, 239, p. 439. This sentence is derived from Kristeva’s essay ‘Word, Dialogue, and Novel’, in which she not only discusses Bakhtin’s synchronic approach but also introduces the influential concept of ‘intertextuality’. The essay was originally published in French as ‘Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman’ in 1967 and first translated into English by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez in Kristeva, 1980, pp. 64-91. In this overview, I have not taken into account Kristeva’s intertextuality because it is not invoked by reception theorists as much as the other concepts here surveyed.

⁷⁰ Gadamer, 2004, p. 303; see also Gadamer, 1990, p. 309: ‘der geschlossene Horizont, der eine Kultur einschließen soll, [ist] eine Abstraktion’. On the negation of one single horizon, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, 2004, *Truth and Method*, translated by Joel Weinsheimer and D. G. Marshall, London: Continuum, p. 303: ‘Are there really two different horizons there – the horizon in which the person seeking to understand lives and the historical horizon within which he places himself? [...] Are there such things as closed horizons, in this sense?’; see the original in Hans-Georg Gadamer, 1990,

Nonetheless, while acknowledging that the existence of multiple historical horizons is merely posited, Gadamer still uses them as theoretical instruments to illustrate the process of understanding:

There is no more an isolated horizon of the present in itself than there are historical horizons which have to be acquired. *Rather, understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves.*⁷¹

Although less frequently evoked in literary criticism than the concepts so far discussed, also Gadamer's notion of 'historically effected consciousness' is particularly relevant to reception theory. As Gadamer explains in his introduction to his second edition of *Truth and Method* (1965), this notion is ambivalent:

there is a certain legitimate ambiguity in the concept of historically effected consciousness (wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein) as I have employed it. This ambiguity is that it is used to mean at once the consciousness effected in the course of history and determined by history, and the very consciousness of being thus effected and determined.⁷²

The first meaning, i.e., 'the consciousness effected in the course of history and determined by history', seems to correspond to the idea of 'historical horizon' discussed above, which Gadamer also invariably terms 'hermeneutical situation' or 'historical standpoint'.⁷³ The second meaning, i.e., 'the very consciousness of being thus effected and determined', corresponds to one of the main tenets of Martindale's reflections on reception: the insistence on the awareness of one's standpoint in relation to history is a major aspect of the reception theory applied to classics inaugurated by Martindale, who refers to it as the awareness of being '*within* history'.⁷⁴ Therefore, Martindale transposes the two Gadamerian notions of the fusion of horizons – albeit actually standing for a single, all-comprising horizon – and the idea of historically effected consciousness into his reception theory, and, starting

Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode, in *Gesammelte Werke 1*, Tübingen: Mohr, p. 309: 'Gibt es den hier zwei voneinander verschiedene Horizonte, den Horizont, in dem der Verstehende lebt, und den jeweiligen historischen Horizont, in den er sich versetzt? Gibt es überhaupt in diesem Sinne geschlossene Horizonte?'

⁷¹ Gadamer, 2004, p. 305; see also Gadamer, 1990, p. 311: 'Es gibt so wenig einen Gegenwartshorizont für sich, wie es historische Horizonte gibt, die man zu gewinnen hätte. *Vielmehr ist Verstehen immer der Vorgang der Verschmelzung solcher vermeintlich für sich seiender Horizonte*'.

⁷² Gadamer, 2004, p. xxx; see also Gadamer, 1993, *Hermeneutik II: Wahrheit und Methode. Ergänzungen, Register* in *Ibid., Gesammelte Werke 2*, Tübingen: Mohr, p. 444: 'Von da aus rechtfertigt sich eine gewisse Zweideutigkeit in dem Begriff des wirkungsgeschichtlichen Bewusstseins, wie ich ihn gebrauche. Die Zweideutigkeit desselben besteht darin, dass damit einerseits das im Gang der Geschichte erwirkte und durch die Geschichte bestimmte Bewusstsein, und andererseits ein Bewusstsein dieses Erwirkt- und Bestimmtheits selber gemeint ist'.

⁷³ Gadamer, 2004, pp. 301, 302; see also Gadamer, 1990, pp. 305, 309: 'hermeneutische Situation', 'historische[r] Standpunkt'.

⁷⁴ Martindale, 1993, p. 7.

from them, he elaborates his view of reception as a transhistorical dialogue ‘within’ and ‘across history’.⁷⁵

At this point, we should gauge the validity of such a vision of reception in terms of inner coherence and methodology. As we have seen, Martindale uses all the notions here discussed to corroborate his project of a more ‘historicized version of reception theory’ but, as his own re-assessment has shown, some of them are not in line with this undertaking. For example, do the fusion of horizons of expectation and the ensuing ideas of both the transhistorical and the chain of receptions not entail a risk of presentism? It appears that in Martindale’s reception theory the operation of historical reconstruction is somewhat problematic: the notions of fusion of horizons and reception as transhistorical dialogue tend to conflate historical distance in favour of the reader’s awareness of his/her standpoint in history. How can then a study of the reception of classical texts in a specific point of reception be possible and, if so, theoretically justifiable?

If we analyse the operations implied in a study of a given horizon of expectation, it is clear that such a study involves the historical horizon of at least three levels of readership or audience – in a word, interpreters: in the case of this work, the first interpreters of Sophocles, those of early modern England, and those of the present day. To be sure, reception theory has the merit of stressing that our present horizon of expectation is always implicated, even when we set out to consider another point of reception. As Gadamer puts it:

When our historical consciousness transposes itself into historical horizons, this does not entail passing into alien worlds unconnected in any way with our own; instead, they together constitute the one great horizon that [...], beyond the frontiers of the present, embraces the historical depths of our self-consciousness. Everything contained in historical consciousness is in fact embraced by a single historical horizon. [...] Understanding tradition undoubtedly requires a historical horizon, then. But it is not the case that we acquire this horizon by transposing ourselves into a historical situation.⁷⁶

In theoretical terms, our horizon is the result of the fusions of many, and any historical reconstruction of another horizon is hence impossible. As we have seen earlier and as this passage confirms, for Gadamer there is only one single horizon, which he divides up into many for clarity’s sake. Gadamer thus posits such individual horizons as heuristic tools and considers them as ‘supposedly existing’. In

⁷⁵ Martindale, 2013, p. 172. Martindale actually makes a distinction between ‘within’ and ‘across’ history but it is not relevant to our purposes. As far as I understand it, this distinction is already contained in the ambivalent meaning of Gadamer’s historically effected consciousness: ‘within history’ refers to a hermeneutical stance in which critics are more historically self-conscious, i.e., they are aware of their own historical standpoint; ‘across history’ stresses the fact that this stance is the result of all previous interpretations and is in constant dialogue with them.

⁷⁶ Gadamer, 2004, p. 303; see also Gadamer, 1990, pp. 309-310: ‘Wenn sich unser historisches Bewusstsein in historische Horizonte versetzt, so bedeutet das nicht eine Entrückung in fremde Welten, die nichts mit unserer eigenen verbindet, sondern sie insgesamt bilden einen großen, [...] Horizont, der all das umschließt, was das geschichtliche Bewusstsein in sich enthält. [...] Eine Überlieferung verstehen, verlangt also gewiss historischen Horizont. Aber es kann sich nicht darum handeln, dass man diesen Horizont gewinnt, indem man sich in eine historische Situation versetzt’.

practical terms, if we focus on one of these individual historical horizons, this has to come to the fore by definition, to the detriment of our own present standpoint. The guiding question informing this work is how Sophocles' *Antigone* was received in early modern England; to infuse the early modern conception with our own, on the basis of modern readings of the Sophoclean tragedy, would be counterproductive. Hence, the operation described by Gadamer – the acquisition of another horizon 'by transposing ourselves into a historical situation' – may well be theoretically unacceptable or, in Bradshaw's terms 'aesthetically impossible',⁷⁷ but it is nonetheless methodologically necessary.

Historical reconstruction is a necessary step for a fuller understanding of a specific point of reception but, being part of the much deprecated 'combination of historicism and philology',⁷⁸ it does not easily coexist with reception theory. A solution to this impasse is to look at historical reconstruction as a necessary hermeneutical and heuristic tool, which requires the temporary suspension of one's own historical standpoint in order to have a better understanding of another. As mentioned above, this is exactly the operation that Griffith envisages in his preface to his edition of Sophocles' *Antigone*:

In interpreting the play, I have tried to keep two unattainable yet desirable goals constantly in view: on the one hand, to transport myself and my readers as completely as possible into the mind-sets of the original audience in the Theatre of Dionysos; and on the other, to explore to the fullest range of meanings that this text can yield to us now.⁷⁹

Amongst the critics that have interrogated themselves about the relation between reception and historicism, Tim Whitmarsh proposes a similar strategy when he refers to a 'pragmatic' form of historicism:

Understanding Lucian 'historically' (and, to reemphasize, I am speaking of a pragmatic not an absolutist historicism) is a crucial point of entry into the later reception of this text.⁸⁰

Here Whitmarsh emphasizes the importance of historicism for the understanding of what we have referred so far as 'the first reading'. However, as we have seen, this historicist approach can be equally applied to later receivers: if we are interested in Thomas More's reception of Lucian, we also need to understand More 'historically', since both Lucian and More are authors being received by present-day interpreters. Therefore, such 'chains of receptions' require a 'double-distancing'⁸¹ or, more generally, a 'multiple distancing'. Whenever we deal with a reading of a classical text, the idea of a

⁷⁷ Bradshaw, 1987, p. 96.

⁷⁸ Martindale, 2006, p. 2.

⁷⁹ Griffith, 1999, p. viii.

⁸⁰ Whitmarsh, 2006, p. 114.

⁸¹ Martindale attributes the coinage of this term to Michael Ann Holly; see Martindale, 2006, p. 8.

‘two-way process of understanding’, with the past and the present ‘mutually illuminat[ing] each other’,⁸² is not sufficient to describe the multiple receivers involved. As Whitmarsh puts it, ‘reception should not be seen simply as the prerogative of the chronologically latest interpreter’.⁸³ Also, Martindale’s image of the chain of receptions well illustrates how ‘there are always at least three and generally many more’⁸⁴ points at stake between the two poles of past and present. Depending on how many readings we take into account, then, we latest receivers of a given text are asked to perform a double or multiple distancing from all the horizons of expectation considered. Similarly, while zooming in early modern readings of Sophocles’ *Antigone*, this work will not disregard other interpretations altogether; they will remain in the background and, on occasion, also be brought to the fore when required.

So far we have been implying that the readings considered in addition to the main one are selected according to a chronological criterion; Martindale’s very metaphor of the chain does convey such a linear idea of reception. To be sure, the task of the ‘reception historian’ – as Ralph Hexter puts it – is to ‘find a way to calibrate the reception’, to establish the relevant ‘historical connections [...] between subsequent readings of a given work (or subsequent readers of an author’s works)’.⁸⁵ In the case in point, the early modern horizon of expectation functions as the pivot around which previous and later readings of Sophocles’ *Antigone* are hinged and may be relevant to the understanding of the pivot horizon itself. However, readings should not be conceived merely as chronologically replacing each other in a linear timeline, as in the instances mentioned above. A text has usually more than one reception history, more than one chain of receptions. What is more, each receiver in a single chain of receptions does not need to be directly connected with the immediately preceding link in the chain; there might be concomitant readings in different places and cultures, all stemming from the same work but not necessarily related to each other. Hexter observes this same plurality in relation to Ovid’s reception history:

are separate instances of Ovidian reception part of the same history, and if so, how? Some are clearly hard to link historically in any meaningful way. What has, for instance, Maximus Planudes’ Greek paraphrasis of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* to do with Caxton’s English version? And in other cases where there are clear linkages, there are inevitably complex doublings of reception histories, crossings and amplifications, that one would also need to take into account. How does one, for instance, sort out and distinguish, for, say, French readers from the later fourteenth century onwards, the impact of the *Ovide moralisé* [...] from direct encounters with the Latin *Metamorphoses* [...] in subsequent readings and renderings of Ovid’s poem, in French and many other European vernaculars?⁸⁶

⁸² Martindale, 2013, p. 171.

⁸³ Whitmarsh, 2006, p. 114.

⁸⁴ Martindale, 2013, p. 172.

⁸⁵ Ralph Hexter, 2006, ‘Literary History as a Provocation to Reception Studies’, in Martindale and Thomas (eds.), p. 29.

⁸⁶ Hexter, 2006, p. 29.

As in a *stemma codicum*, each receiver may become the departure point of a group of texts, a group which we might define as a ‘cluster of receptions’.⁸⁷ The criteria defining these clusters vary: the texts may be grouped according to a geographical, thematic, generic or other focuses; furthermore, all clusters are not closed but may be interdependent. For instance, we may opt for the two criteria of genre and geography, looking only at translations of a classical text into European vernacular languages.⁸⁸ As we will see in the Chapter 2, the translation history of Sophocles may well exemplify this operation: in the Renaissance, Sophoclean drama was translated into Latin and from Latin into vernacular languages. The cluster of Latin translations develops into as many clusters as the vernacular languages involved. However, not even the genealogy of the kind of *stemmata codicum* is completely exhaustive: modern translations go back to the Greek text, thus creating a new cluster stemming directly from the original text and bypassing the Latin one.

How can we account for the multiple cross-relationships between texts and clusters of texts? A key hermeneutical aid may come from network theory. Franco Moretti has recently applied it to plot analysis in order to account for the interplay between characters in drama: ‘A network is made of vertices and edges; a plot, of characters and actions: characters will be the vertices of the network, interactions the edges’.⁸⁹ In a recent lecture he has also added a further element that enables to identify the directions of the interaction, namely one-way or double-headed arrows, standing for a one-way or mutual interaction.⁹⁰ If the vertices were texts and the edges their one-way or mutual influence, networks could suitably represent both the cross-fertilization between texts and the interplay that each text establishes with multiple sources. The flexibility of the cluster and the network systems thus seems to give a more accurate representation of the ‘complex doublings of reception histories, crossings and amplifications’ than the linearity of the chain-image does.⁹¹

However, while such combination of networks and clusters may well help convey the complexity of the relations between a text with its sources at a quantitative level, it does not suitably account for the typology of such relations. Authors use multiple sources simultaneously and often with different purposes: a source may supply themes and characterization, another a series of lexical borrowings, yet another only the setting. In order to contribute to such qualitative perspective, in

⁸⁷ Clusters are a system of classification used in a variety of disciplines such as social sciences, ecology etc.; see B. S. Everitt, Sabine Landau, Morven Leese, and Daniel Stahl, 2011, *Cluster Analysis*, Chichester: Wiley.

⁸⁸ Translation in itself is less a genre than a process; here translation is considered a genre insofar it identifies ‘translation products’, texts that share the feature of being the result of a translation process; on the distinction between ‘translation products’ and ‘translation process’, see Susan Bassnett, 2002, *Translation Studies*, London; New York: Routledge, p. 13.

⁸⁹ Franco Moretti, 2011, ‘Network theory, plot analysis’, *Literary Lab*, 2 [accessed on 11 May 2019 at <https://litlab.stanford.edu/LiteraryLabPamphlet2.pdf>], p. 3.

⁹⁰ On 17 October 2018, Franco Moretti presented his project at the University of Padua in his *lectio magistralis* ‘Simulare reti drammatiche. Un esperimento a metà strada tra quantificazione e teoria letteraria’.

⁹¹ Hexter, 2006, p. 29.

section 4.2.2 I will introduce the concept of ‘functionalized reception’, a term by which I refer to the coexistence of different sources each performing a different function within the same target text.⁹²

Alongside the five concepts on which reception theories have traditionally focussed, a set of another five – ‘pragmatic historicism’, ‘multiple distancing’, ‘cluster’, ‘network’, and ‘functionalized reception’ – may also represent valid hermeneutical tools for a study of reception. As I have argued, most of the notions of the first group tend to be too detached from practice: Martindale’s transhistorical is hardly applicable within a conception of reception that purports to avoid presentist readings; Derrida’s *différance* and Gadamer’s fusion of horizons, from which the very notion of transhistorical stems, also partake in the risk of presentism; Martindale’s chain of receptions does not fully account for the complexity of the reception histories of classical texts. Jauss’ horizon of expectation, however, seems to be a valuable hermeneutical tool for historicist approaches: although Gadamer questions the validity of individual horizons, the concept is still used profitably in recent studies of reception such as Hoxby’s analysis of early modern conception of tragedy. On the other hand, the second group of tools introduced here may well lack the authority of a philosophical background but is at least more in line with the recent return of historicism within reception studies described above. This thesis will be equally informed by a historicist methodology: the following chapters will make use of methods such as historical reconstruction, philological analysis, and comparative reading of texts, which are derived from historicist disciplines within classics. Despite their difficult balance in theoretical terms, historicism and reception can thus be reconciled on the ground that traditionally historicist tools can integrate the methodological spectrum of reception studies.

⁹² Angelica Vedelago, 2018, ‘The Interplay Between Aeschylus and Seneca in James Thomson’s *Agamemnon*’, *The International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, p. 22.

I. CONTEXTS

1. Early modern ideas and forms of reception

The aim of the previous chapter was to lay the methodological foundations of this work, by problematizing the ‘ideas of reception’ of modern theorists. In this chapter, I intend to look at the forms that the reception of Sophocles’ *Antigone* took in early modern English drama. Reception includes a wide spectrum of operations, which I have termed in the title of this chapter ‘forms of reception’, and critics have variously attempted to distinguish and systematize them. Martindale and Hardwick have defined the ‘studies of reception-history (Rezeptionsgeschichte) [as] studies of the reading, interpretation, (re)fashioning, appropriation, use, and abuse of past texts over the centuries’.¹ Robert Miola provides a tripartite classification into ‘receptions’, ‘refractions’, and ‘replays’.² Hubert Cancik has classified the manifold terms used for reception according to the ‘type of chronological progression’, the ‘mode’, the ‘intensity of the appropriation’, and the ‘authority of the model [...] which is to be adopted, imitated, renewed, exceeded’.³ Since the two works under analysis are a translation and an adaptation, this chapter will focus on these two operations and on the interplay between them.

In Chapter 1, I have asserted the need to adopt a historicizing approach. In compliance with this principle, great attention will be paid to how translation and adaptation were theorized in the early modern period, and particularly in England; hence, the first part of the title, i.e., ‘early modern ideas’. In so doing, I hope to ‘avoid some of the anachronisms’ – as Sheldon Brammall puts it – ‘that come from taking modern theories as points of departure’.⁴ One such anachronism could be traced in the very definition of May’s *Antigone* as an ‘adaptation’. This term has been used with its now frequent meaning of ‘altered or amended version of a text, [...] adapted for filming, broadcasting, or production on the stage from a novel or similar literary source’ (*OED*) since 1700. Accordingly, from now onwards the practice known as ‘adaptation’ will be referred to with the pre-1700, early modern critical term that is partly equivalent to it, i.e., ‘imitation’. I refer to imitation as ‘partly equivalent’ to adaptation because the two practices differ in two ways. First, early modern imitation was a far

¹ Charles Martindale and Lorna Hardwick, 2014, ‘Reception’, in Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*, online edition: Oxford University Press.

² Robert S. Miola, 2014, ‘Early Modern Antigones: Receptions, Refractions, Replays’, *Classical Reception Journal* 6, 2, pp. 221-244. Miola borrows the term ‘refraction’ from André Lefevere in his article on ‘translated literature’; see André Lefevere, 1981, ‘Translated Literature: Towards an Integrated Theory’, *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 14, 1, pp. 68-78.

³ Hubert Cancik and Hubert Mohr, 2006, ‘Reception, Modes of’, in *Brill’s New Pauly*.

⁴ Sheldon Brammall, 2015, *The English Aeneid: Translations of Virgil 1555-1646*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 8.

broader category than adaptation but, amongst its various meanings, imitation included also adaptive processes. Second, as Cécile Dudouyt has pointed out, while ‘the technique and even the result of adaptation and imitation may be comparable [...] the implied hierarchy between old and new is reversed’: ‘an imitation aspires at sameness’ with the model; ‘an adapter’s aim is to make changes’ to the source text.⁵ Imitation relies on the authoritativeness of the imitated text as a springboard to success, whereas adaptation

presupposes that the text as it is does not fit a particular audience or medium, and adapting is the process that will give it what it lacks for its reception to be a successful one.⁶

A reconstruction of how translation and imitation were conceived in the early modern period in England has to start from two observations, which will be respectively addressed in the two sections below. First, there is no history of translation or imitation in early modern England that can be disjointed from contemporary developments in other European countries. Second, early modern conceptions of these two practices were founded on a shared terminology, but these seemingly stable words underwent both diachronic and diatopic variations.

1.1. England and European culture

1.1.1. A common book market and shared theories of translation and imitation

Aldus Manutius, Erasmus, Isaac Casaubon, and many other prominent sixteenth-century humanists referred to the community of the learned, who were in dialogue across Europe either directly or through epistolary correspondence, as *respublica litteraria*.⁷ The formation and the subsequent cohesion of this community was ensured by a common linguistic and literary culture founded on the rediscovery and dissemination of the classics, i.e., humanism. England had belatedly entered the Republic of Letters but, as confirmed by its book history, in the sixteenth-century the country was

⁵ Cécile Dudouyt, 2016, ‘Aristophanes in Early-Modern Fragments: Le Loyer’s *La Néphélocogie* (1579) and Racine’s *Les Plaideurs* (1668)’, in Philip Walsh (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Aristophanes*, Leiden; Boston: Brill, p. 178.

⁶ Dudouyt, 2016, p. 178.

⁷ For the use of the phrase in Aldus and Erasmus, see Marc Fumaroli, 2015, *La république des lettres*, Paris: Gallimard, pp. 37, 40; in Casaubon, see for instance his letter to Joachim Camerarius the Younger (Letter 996); see Casaubon, 1709, *Isaaci Casauboni epistolæ [...]. Curante Theodoro Janson. ab Almelooven*, Typs Casparis Fritsch et Michaelis Böhm: Roterodami, p. 939. However, the first occurrence of the phrase is to be found in a letter addressed to Poggio Bracciolini by the Venetian patrician Francesco Barbaro (1417); see Fumaroli, 2015, pp. 24, 37-39. Although Barbaro proves to be referring to Europe as a whole, Fumaroli points out that it was Aldus Manutius who explicitly referred this phrase to England, France, and Germany; see Fumaroli, 2015, p. 41.

fully partaking in the cultural context of the *litterae humaniores* revival.⁸ In that century, England's book market was vitally dependent on the importation of volumes from the Continent. This exchange enabled the circulation of classical works, which were fundamental to the formation of a theory canon on the practices of translation and imitation. Before analysing this shared background, however, we need to consider in more detail how classical culture reached England from Europe. As Warren Boutcher has recently argued, it is no longer

sufficient just to compare source and target texts and to ask questions about theories and ideologies of translation and pedagogy via prefaces and treatises. Larger patterns of mobility and migration, whether of books or of people, and broader networks of actors, in various roles, need to be considered.⁹

An instrument to explore such 'networks' is book history, which over the past few decades has been shedding light on the otherwise unexplored transnational book trade. As hinted above, England's book circulation history in the early modern period is inextricably linked to Europe. According to James Raven, national histories of the book are flawed from the start:

although there are several national 'history of the book' projects in progress, in many ways the nation state is a misleading geographical unit for such research. The political (not always language) unit is the obvious enabler for retrospective national bibliographies [...], but books circulating within that unit were and are international commodities.¹⁰

A glaring example of this intense European exchange is the Frankfurt Book Fair, one of the venues of a growing international market, which bypassed the restrictions of local censorship.¹¹ In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, England took part in these international networks mainly as an importer of foreign texts from the Continent. If there are any specific aspects to English book history, one such element can then be surely recognized in England's initial dependence on the Continent's transnational book trade. From the invention of printing to the end of the sixteenth century, the country was a 'market receiving books, not exporting them'.¹² This trend remained almost unaltered through the seventeenth century up to the 1740s; by then, the import/export ratio of books had

⁸ According to A. G. Chester, *litterae humaniores* or *litterae bonae* is the phrase which early modern authors used to refer to classical learning. Alongside this phrase, also 'new learning' has long been thought to refer to the study of Greek or to the doctrine of the Reformation; these are also the meanings registered in the *OED*. However, Chester has argued that in the English Renaissance the phrase 'new learning' was used only in the latter, religious meaning; see A. G. Chester, 1955, 'The "New Learning": A Semantic Note', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 2, pp. 139-147.

⁹ Warren Boutcher, 2015, 'From Cultural Translation to Cultures of Translation?: Early Modern Readers, Sellers and Patrons', in Tania Demetriou and Rowan Tomlinson (eds.), *The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500-1660*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 23-24.

¹⁰ James Raven, 1993, 'Selling Books Across Europe, c. 1450-1800', *Publishing History*, 34, p. 5.

¹¹ Helen Hackett, 2015, 'Introduction', in Hackett (ed.), *Early Modern Exchanges: Dialogues Between Nations and Cultures 1550-1750*, Farnham: Ashgate, p. 13.

¹² Raven, 1993, p. 14.

gradually reversed, with England exporting more than it imported.¹³ Nonetheless, it must be noted that also in the sixteenth and seventeenth century English printers did export books to the Continent but in a quantity that is comparatively negligible; exported material included books that were surreptitiously printed with a misleading indication of the printer's location and are yet to be all identified.¹⁴

The culture of the Continent, especially classical and humanist works, arrived in England in three major ways: the importation of foreign books (in the vernacular as well as in Latin), their printing in England or their translation either into Latin or into English. The *English Short Title Catalogue* online (*ESTC*) records 3,150 books published abroad (i.e., not in England, Scotland, Ireland, or Wales) out of all those printed in the period 1473-1640 (37,167). Although for the early modern period the *ESTC* is mainly based on A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave's *Short-Title Catalogue*, which includes only English books printed abroad,¹⁵ the 3,150 books mentioned above comprise not only works in English but also in Latin as well as in other vernacular languages. The countries that give the largest contributions to this figure are France (881 entries), the Netherlands (640 entries), and Belgium (330 entries). Although we have no information as to when each of these books actually reached England, these data nonetheless help us gauge the number of foreign books potentially present in the country in the early modern period. Amongst imported books, the huge majority were Latin works of humanist scholarship, which became a substantial slice of the market

¹³ James Raven, 2006, 'Libraries for Sociability: The Advance of the Subscription Library', in Giles Mandelbrote and K. A. Manley (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 243.

¹⁴ In his ground-breaking study, Denis B. Woodfield has shed light on the practice of some English printers such as John Wolfe and Richard Field to print foreign works with false information on the location or the printer's name and, in some cases, even using a false imprint; see Denis B. Woodfield, 1973, *Surreptitious Printing in England 1550-1640*, New York: Bibliographical Society of America. Woodfield registers sixty-five works that have been printed surreptitiously in England before 1640, but he notes that the list is by no means definitive given the difficulty to identify these books; see Woodfield, 1973, pp. vii, ix. As Alessandra Petrina has pointed out, surreptitious printing was first noted by Adolph Gerber in his tripartite, 1907 essay on John Wolfe's printed copies of Machiavelli and Pietro Aretino; see Alessandra Petrina, 2009, *Machiavelli in the British Isles: Two Early Modern Translations of The Prince*, Farnham: Ashgate, p. 27, n. 98, and Adolph Gerber, 1907, 'All of the Five Fictitious Italian Editions of Writings of Machiavelli and Three of those of Pietro Aretino Printed by John Wolfe of London (1584-1588)', *Modern Language Notes* 22, pp. 2-6, 129-135, 201-206. Surreptitiously printed works, which were obviously written in a foreign language (French, Italian, Spanish, and Dutch), were distributed both within the English borders and in the rest of Europe; some of them were about politically and religiously controversial issues at the time, or at least topical, hence commercially appealing issues; see Woodfield, 1973, pp. vii-ix. For instance, the printing of Machiavelli's works was a commercial success for John Wolfe: they appealed not only to English but also to the Italian market, since their printing was banned by the Pope in the *Index librorum prohibitorum*; see Woodfield, 1973, p. 9. Controversial in religious terms, Henri Constable's *Examen pacifique de la Doctrine de Huguenots* (1589) was printed by Wolfe with the indication of Paris as location: this work, a defense of French Protestants accused by Catholics of heresy, was a palatable work for those Huguenots that were in exile in England, even more so since it claimed to be printed in Catholic France; see Woodfield, 1973, p. 9, 74.

¹⁵ A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, 1976-1991, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1473-1640*, first compiled by A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave; second edition revised and enlarged by W. A. Jackson and F. S. Ferguson, completed by K. F. Panzer, 2 volumes, London: The Bibliographical Society.

known as ‘the Latin trade’.¹⁶ For instance, more than one fourth of the Latin books printed in France that were potentially already circulating in England, Scotland, and Ireland before 1641 were in Latin (246 entries).

Foreign books were also directly printed in England, either regularly or surreptitiously, but the quality of these products was infamously inferior to that of Continental editions.¹⁷ If we concentrate on England alone, the printing of vernacular books is far less prominent than importation.¹⁸ However, one should bear in mind that the *ESTC* is rather dated and biased towards England and is often contradicted by other databases and individual studies.¹⁹ In any case, more than one tenth (3,519) of the books printed in the country between 1473 and 1640 registered in the *ESTC* (32,976) is written in Latin, significantly outnumbering the figures of the other vernacular languages and Ancient Greek alike.²⁰ Moreover, according to the *ESTC*, England printed more Latin books than it imported them: more than eighty per cent of the Latin books published before 1641 (4,313) were printed in England (3,519), followed by France (246) and Scotland (244).²¹

Finally, translation was a fundamental vehicle of Continental culture for England as well as the British Isles as a whole. Such an impact can be gauged thanks to the newly-created tool of the *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads (RCC)* catalogue, which covers ‘all translations out of and into all languages printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland before 1641’ as well as ‘all translations out of all languages into English printed abroad before 1641’ (*RCC*). The catalogue lists almost 6,000 (5,983) records of translation into English (printed either in England, Scotland, and Ireland or abroad before 1641), among which roughly one third (2028) are from Latin, either directly or via an intermediary language; Latin is equally a prominent intermediary language itself for translations from other languages into English (280 records). Moreover, there are 216 translations into Latin printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland before 1641; fifty of these are direct translations from English into Latin.²² This figure is utterly inferior to that of translations into English mentioned above; however, if compared to other vernaculars, it confirms that Latin was the most frequent target language after English, thus surpassing French (58 records), Scots (40 records), Dutch (25 records), Italian (22 records), German (15 records), Spanish (14 records), and Ancient Greek (10 records).

¹⁶ A. B. Farmer, 2007, ‘Cosmopolitanism and Foreign Books in Early Modern England’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 35, pp. 58-65.

¹⁷ On the worse quality of English editions, see Farmer, 2007, pp. 58-59.

¹⁸ French (95 records), Italian (57), Welsh (41), Dutch (33), Spanish (14), Middle French (11), Scots (9), German (1).

¹⁹ For instance, the figures provided by Soko Tomita in a recent study on Italian books printed in England differ from those of the *English Short Title Catalogue* online: Tomita’s catalogue lists 291 Italian books in 451 editions printed in England in the period of Queen Elizabeth I’s reign alone; Soko Tomita, 2009, *A Bibliographical Catalogue of Italian Books Printed in England 1558-1603*, London: Routledge, p. 1.

²⁰ See n. 18; Ancient Greek (21).

²¹ Latin books printed in England 3,519 out of 4,313.

²² The *RCC* catalogue features no records of translations into Latin with English as an intermediary language nor of translations into Latin with Scots, Welsh, or Irish as their source languages.

In this context, England absorbed classical notions of translation and imitation mainly from Latin sources, particularly from the works of Cicero, Horace, Quintilian, and from the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.²³ Their theoretical formulations on translation and imitation were made widely available either directly, in printed editions of their original works, or indirectly, in the pedagogical treatises of Continental humanists such as Erasmus, Philip Melanchton, and Peter Ramus, who contributed to the formation of a common educational and intellectual background. Not only the circulation of books but also that of people facilitated this process of absorption: Erasmus as well as other foreign scholars from the Continent such as Martin Bucer, Juan Luis Vives, Giordano Bruno, Alberico Gentili, Isaac Casaubon, and Gerardus Joannes Vossius spent a portion of their life in England lecturing and writing, mostly constrained by contemporary religious conflicts.

Early modern pedagogy was founded on the disciplines of the *trivium* – grammar, rhetoric, and logic – which regulated the production and reception of any kind of text, be it written or spoken, literary or non-literary, religious or secular. The cultural centrality of these three arts was subsequently transmitted throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern period thanks to the re-workings of classical views on translation and imitation by humanists on the Continent. Alongside Roman ideas and structures of power, also Roman theoretical allusions to these two practices as well as learning and writing methods in general were being transferred. *Translatio imperii* entailed a *translatio studii* in its medieval twofold meaning of both ‘displacement’ and ‘translation’:²⁴ classical culture was both physically distributed via manuscripts and later also via printed editions and translated into vernacular languages. In the light of the complexity of the process usually identified as *translatio imperii*, Stephen Greenblatt has reconceptualised the phenomenon as ‘categorical mobility’, i.e., ‘the mobility of Roman codes, structures and definitions’.²⁵ Thanks to the circulation of books and people, from the Continent England imported exactly this structured pattern of ‘cultural mobility’. Only from a pan-European perspective, then, can theories of translation and imitation in England be better understood.

²³ *Rhetorica ad Herennium* was ‘the most successful rhetoric text’ at least until 1570, when Ciceronian and pseudo-Ciceronian rhetoric started to wane; see Peter Mack, 2011, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380-1620*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 13-14.

²⁴ Karlheinz Stierle, 1996, ‘*Translatio Studii* and Renaissance: From Vertical to Horizontal Translation’, in Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (eds.), *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 56.

²⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, 2009, ‘Cultural Mobility: An Introduction’, in Stephen Greenblatt, Ines Županov, Reinhard Meyer-Kalkus, Heike Paul, Pál Nyíri, and Friederike Pannewick, *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 11.

1.1.2. Grammar, translation, and Laurence Humphrey's *Interpretatio linguarum*

Within this cultural context, pedagogical theories of classical derivation were the basis for the acquisition of reading, writing, speaking, and interacting skills in the Renaissance. In such classical theories, the pillars of discourse were grammar and rhetoric, which from the eleventh century onwards became associated with logic (or dialectics) to form the arts of the *trivium* or *artes sermocinales* as opposed to the arts of the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy).²⁶ Although logic has a long-established and undiscussed supremacy in medieval and early modern university syllabi,²⁷ grammar and rhetoric are more relevant to our purposes. As Frederick M. Rener has amply demonstrated, translation was heavily dependent on grammar and rhetoric: in medieval and early modern Europe, translators and theorists on translation were so familiar with the Roman notions of grammar and rhetoric that the terminology they employed remained mostly stable.²⁸ Also, although grammar gradually became the structuring principle of both secular and religious disciplines, its centrality in the Middle Ages was largely due to its embeddedness to religion: grammar offered the instruments for the interpretation and the glossing of scriptural texts.²⁹ Thanks to its function as *ante litteram* semiotics and hermeneutics, grammar preserved its privileged status throughout the early modern period, concretizing Martin Luther's *sola scriptura* approach and serving as a tool for the spread of the Reformation.³⁰

The undiscussed function of grammar was transferred to and absorbed by translation. In the first treatise on translation produced in England as well as 'the longest and most comprehensive' in Renaissance Europe,³¹ *Interpretatio linguarum* (1559), the Oxonian theologian Laurence Humphrey (1525/27-1589) considers translation a process underlying any form of understanding and learning:

²⁶ On a general introduction to liberal arts, see J. H. J. Schneider, 2006, 'Artes Liberales', in *Brill's New Pauly*. The sixth-century Latin author Aurelius Cassiodorus devoted the second of the two books of his *Institutiones* to what were to become the seven liberal arts; see Michael Silk, Ingo Gildenhard, and Rosemary Barrow, 2014, *The Classical Tradition: Art, Literature, Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 41. The division into *trivium* and *quadrivium* was introduced later, in a scholium to Horace's *Ars Poetica* in the MS Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 223; see Joseph Zechmeister (ed.), 1877, *Scholia Vindobonensia ad Horatii Artem Poeticam*, Vienna, Carl Gerold's Sohn Verlag, p. vii. Zechmeister attributed the scholia to Alcuin, a prominent figure in the Carolingian Renaissance; see Zechmeister, 1877, p. viii. However, scholars have then ascertained that the marginal notes date back to a later period, i.e., the second half of the eleventh century; see Karsten Friis-Jensen, 1997, 'Medieval Commentaries on Horace', in Nicholas Mann and Birgen Munk Olsen (eds.), *Medieval and Renaissance Scholarship. Proceedings of the Second European Science Foundation Workshop on the Classical tradition in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (London, The Warburg Institute, 27-28 November 1992)*, Leiden: Brill, p. 53; see also K. M. Fredborg, 2014, 'The *Ars Poetica* in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: From the Vienna Scholia to the *Materia Commentary*', *Aevum*, 88, 2, pp. 402-403.

²⁷ Peter Mack, 2011, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380-1620*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 6.

²⁸ Frederick M. Rener, 1989, *Interpretatio: Language and Translation from Cicero and Tytler*, Amsterdam, Rodopi; see also section 1.2.1 below.

²⁹ Brian Cummings, 2002, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 20-21.

³⁰ Cummings, 2002, pp. 20-22.

³¹ Sheldon Brammhall, 2017, 'Laurence Humphrey, Gabriel Harvey, and the Place of Personality in Renaissance Translation', *The Review of English Studies*, 69, 288, p. 56.

If the knowledge of languages is useful, their translation is most useful. There is not a briefer and apter way to learn than by translating. This art of translating cannot be absent in any aspect or activity of life, whether you are instructing the people as a demagogue or you are interpreting the Scriptures as a theologian or you are handing down the arts as a professor or you are educating the youth as a schoolmaster, and even more if you are learning, this art is always useful and never tedious. In brief, translation will benefit the translator and others alike. The talent of the translator is enhanced, his capacity for discernment is increased and his eloquence enriched.³²

The process of translation is here presented not only as a form of understanding but also as a way of learning, of interpreting difficult texts such as the Scriptures, of improving one's discerning skills ('iudicium') and eloquence ('oratio'), with the additional advantage of not being tedious ('otiosa'). This is not a far cry from what Philemon Holland would have to say about his translation of Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia* (1601):

Now, albeit my intention and only scope was to do a pleasure unto them that could not read these authors in the original, yet needs I must confesse, that even myselfe have not only gained thereby increase of the Latin tongue (wherein these works were written), but also grown to further knowledge of the matter and argument therein contained.³³

In *The Schoolemaster* (1570), Roger Ascham shares Humphrey's vision of translation as a most effective method for a variety of purposes.³⁴ However, for him translation is most importantly the best way to teach grammar without tiring students: instead of spending 'foure or five yeares, in tossing all the rules of Grammer' as happened in most schools of his day, Ascham saw in translation – especially in the form of 'double translation', i.e., translating from Latin into English and then back into Latin – a far more effective way to teach grammar rules.³⁵ As Ascham underlines, double translation was the method used for the education of Queen Elizabeth herself (see section 2.1.1 below).³⁶ This practice was suggested also by Vives as early as 1531 in *De tradendis disciplinis* and by Humphrey himself in the *Interpretatio linguarum*.³⁷

Throughout the *Interpretatio*, Humphrey shows a marked attention to the translation of the Scriptures, both into Latin and into vernacular languages. This concern comes as no surprise in the post-Reformation period, particularly if one considers the circumstances of the treatise's composition.

³² Laurence Humphrey, 1559, *Interpretatio linguarum seu de ratione convertendi*, Basel: Froben, sig. a5^{r-v}: 'si linguarum utilis sit cognitio, interpretari utilissimum. Nec enim illae brevior aut commodior via discuntur, quam interpretando. [...] [N]ulla vitae pars aut functio hac interpretandi arte vacare potest: sive populum doceas ut concionator, sive Scripturas interpreteris ut Theologus, sive tradas artes, ut Professor: sive iuventutem informes, ut Ludimagister: imo si te ipsum erudias, haec semper utilis est, nunquam otiosa. Breviter et interpretanti profuerit et caeteris. Interpretantis ingenium acuitur, iudicium augetur, locupletatur oratio'.

³³ Philemon Holland, 2013, *The History of the World [Pliny]* (1601), in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), p. 379.

³⁴ Roger Ascham, 1967, *The Schoolmaster*, Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, pp. 83-85.

³⁵ Ascham, 1967, pp. 14, 83-85.

³⁶ Ascham, 1967, p. 87.

³⁷ Juan Louis Vives, 1997, 'Practice in Writing', in Douglas Robinson, *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche*, Abingdon: Routledge, p. 92; see Humphrey, 1559, sig. K6^r.

Humphrey wrote the *Interpretatio* while he was still in exile in Basel, where it was printed by Froben in 1559. At that time, as Eleanor Merchant has observed, the English Geneva Bible (1560) was being completed by a group of scholars, including Humphrey's associates Thomas Sampson and Anthony Gilby.³⁸ Since Humphrey is known to have been in Geneva in 1558, 'it is likely that he spent time with this group of scholarly English Protestants as they compiled their important work'.³⁹ The interest in religious translation is equally dictated by Humphrey's personal activity as a theologian and as a translator of patristic works.⁴⁰ A staunch reformer and fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, he moved to Switzerland in 1554, formally on leave but actually fleeing from the purge which his fellow theologians at Oxford had suffered since the reinstatement of the Catholic faith with Mary I's accession to the throne. While still receiving a stipend from Magdalen, he matriculated at the university of Basel; when the Oxonian college suspended his stipend, Humphrey began a close collaboration with the printers Johann Froben and Johannes Oporinus. During his time at Basel (1554-1560), interrupted by a brief stay in Geneva, he Latinized the commentary to the book of Isaiah by Cyril of Alexandria (1563)⁴¹ and three dialogues attributed to Origen (published much later, in 1571); he then wrote an anti-Catholic treatise, *De religionis conservatione et reformatione vera* (1559), in which he also countered John Knox's dismissal of female rule as unnatural; in the same year he penned his treatise on translation, the *Interpretatio linguarum*. Once it became clear that the new Queen would reintroduce a Protestant regime, he returned to Oxford, where in 1560 he became Regius Professor of theology and in 1561 president of Magdalen College, an office which he held until his death in 1589. A leader of the Vestiarian controversy, Humphrey was also vice-chancellor of Oxford (1571-76) and became dean of Winchester in 1580. Humphrey's polemical writings testify to his firmly anti-Catholic stance: in the 1580s, he penned three treatises against Catholicism (*Jesuitismi pars prima*, *Jesuitismi pars secunda*, *A View of the Romish Hydra and Monster*). His literary achievements also include what has been defined as an 'important milestone in the development of English biography',⁴² namely the life of bishop John Jewel, which is modelled on Plutarch's biographical collection.

Humphrey's *Interpretatio* stands out as the first systematic treatise on translation in Renaissance England. As Merchant's study has shown, Humphrey insists on the pedagogical function of his treatise, which is conceived not only as a manual on translation but also on the 'teaching and

³⁸ Eleanor Merchant, 2013, '*Doctissimus pater pastorum*': Laurence Humphrey and Reformed Humanist Education in Mid-Tudor England, PhD dissertation, Queen Mary University of London, p. 111.

³⁹ Merchant, 2013, pp. 73-74.

⁴⁰ On Humphrey's life and works, unless otherwise stated, I am indebted to Thomas S. Freeman, 2004, 'Humphrey, Laurence (1525x7-1589)', in *ODNB*.

⁴¹ James Wallace Binns, 1990, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age*, Leeds: F. Cairns, 1989, p. 225.

⁴² Freeman, 2004.

learning of languages' in general, a manual addressing 'the noble, reformed, scholarly household, including its educated women'.⁴³ The pedagogical function of this text is also confirmed by the affinity of the *Interpretatio* with the Renaissance English style manuals appearing in the following decades.⁴⁴ Although Gordon Braden has argued that 'there is no reason to think that the work circulated at all widely' on the grounds that 'it was written in Latin, published in Basle, and never reprinted',⁴⁵ the influence of the *Interpretatio* seems to have gone beyond the scholarly circles of Switzerland. While the lack of any later edition may well be a symptom of little circulation, the fact that it was published in Basel and written in Latin did not necessarily affect its circulation in England. As we have seen, England was a massive importer of volumes and, in any case, Humphrey may have carried copies on his return from exile. Indeed, one copy certainly reached England and was in the hand of no less a personality than Gabriel Harvey, who left copious annotations on it.⁴⁶ The use of Latin would be an even minor obstacle to its circulation on English soil, considering that, as mentioned above, one in ten of the books printed in England in the period between 1473 and 1640 were in Latin, which confirms the status of the language as international *lingua franca* at the time. The *Interpretatio* thus probably enjoyed a greater success than it has often been admitted, both in England and abroad,⁴⁷ and today functions as an invaluable litmus test, since it captures the major ideas on translation that were circulating at the time on the Continent. As well as being a pedagogical manual and a methodological treatise on translation, Humphrey's *Interpretatio* engages with the views of various Continental theorists and can be read as a contribution to contemporary debates over Ciceronianism.⁴⁸ Also, Sheldon Brammall has persuasively argued that Humphrey's ideas may have influenced the translation practice of Edmund Spenser through Harvey.⁴⁹

As announced in its full title (*Interpretatio linguarum, seu de ratione convertendi et explicandi autores tam sacros quam prophanos, libri tres*), the treatise is divided into three books: the first is about translation, focussing on its usefulness, on its kinds and virtues, and on the duties of good translators; the second considers imitation and its relationship to translation; the third is the most practical section, offering examples and detailed discussions on how tropes and rhetorical figures should be translated. The inclusion of a wide range of examples from many languages, particularly from Greek and Hebrew, is the feature that most distinguishes the *Interpretatio* from contemporary

⁴³ Merchant, 2013, pp. 92-93.

⁴⁴ Merchant, 2013, p. 102.

⁴⁵ Gordon Braden, 2010, 'Translating Procedures in Theory and Practice', in Gordon Braden, Robert Cummings, and Stuart Gillespie (eds.), *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English, Volume 2: 1550-1660*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 89.

⁴⁶ Braden, 2010, p. 89; see also Brammall, 2017, pp. 56-75.

⁴⁷ On a reassessment of Humphrey's diffusion, see Brammall, 2015, pp. 9-10 and Brammall, 2017, pp. 72-75.

⁴⁸ Brammall, 2015, p. 9; see also Brammall, 2017, pp. 56-69.

⁴⁹ Brammall, 2017, pp. 72-75.

treatises such as *La manière de bien traduire d'une langue en autre* (1540) by Etienne Dolet.⁵⁰ Humphrey's treatise contains other significant novelties, which Brammall has recently brought to light: first, as we have seen, the usefulness (*utilitas*) of translation but also its role as the informing principle of the work; second, the distinction between translation and imitation on the basis of the decisive factor of emulation (*aemulatio*; see section 1.2.2 below); and finally, an innovative conception of the classically derived criterion of aptness (*aptitudo*).⁵¹ For Brammall, Humphrey's originality lies in his setting *utilitas* as 'the organizing principle of his work' and in the specific 'social and political' declination of this idea.⁵² However, the idea that translation is useful is not only a *topos* in many prefaces but can be found also in contemporary vernacular treatises. In *The Boke Named the Governor* (1531), Sir Thomas Elyot was among the first in England to assert the benefit that translation brings to a country such as England, which was belatedly importing 'lernynges and wisdomes' of the Greeks and Romans, 'an enterprise' which 'hath ben taken by Frenche men, Italions and Germanes' to England's 'no little reproche for [its] negligence and slouth'.⁵³ In *Art poétique françois* (1548), Thomas Sebillet regards translation as useful on the grounds that it conveys knowledge otherwise bound to remain a hidden treasure ('thesor chaché') and enriches the French language, an idea expressed also in a French preface mentioned below (section 1.1.3). In *Dialogo del Fausto da Longiano del modo de lo tradurre d'una in altra lingua secondo le regole mostrate da Cicerone* (1556), an Italian discussion on translation in dialogic form, the polygraph Sebastiano Fausto da Longiano similarly underlines the role that translation has for the circulation of knowledge.⁵⁴ The second feature, namely emulation, is the aspect of competition which usually characterizes imitation; G. W. Pigman defines it as 'eristic imitation'.⁵⁵ In Humphrey, emulation is the feature that at the same time unifies and differentiates translation and imitation: it unifies them because, like imitation, translation has to have some kind of model to compete with; it differentiates

⁵⁰ Valerie Worth-Stylianou, 1999, 'Translatio and Translation in the Renaissance: From Italy to France', in G. P. Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 129.

⁵¹ On utility and emulation, see Brammall, 2015, pp. 11-14; on Humphrey's conception of aptness, see Brammall, 2017, pp. 63-69.

⁵² Brammall, 2015, p. 11.

⁵³ Sir Thomas Elyot, 1531, *The Boke Named the Governor*, Londini: in edibus Tho. Bertheleti, sig. 94^v. An earlier claim of the usefulness of translation can be found in John Trevisa's *Dialogue Between the Lord and the Clerk on Translation* (1387). In the dialogue, the Lord argues for the importance to translate Greek and Latin works into English: in this way, 'the moo men shuld hem understonde and have thereof kunnyng, informacioun and lore'. Furthermore, he draws a parallelism with English preaching: 'siche Englissh prechyng is gode and needful; thanne Englissh translacioun is gode and nedeful'; see John Trevisa, 1999, *Dialogue Between the Lord and the Clerk on Translation (Extract) and Epistle to Thomas, Lord Berkeley, on the Translation of Higden's Polychronicon*, in Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans (eds.), *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520*, University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 132, 134..

⁵⁴ On Sebillet, see Renier, 1989, pp. 54-55; see Thomas Sebillet, 1548, *Art poétique françois pour l'instruction des ieunes studieus et encor peu avancez en la Poesie Françoise*, A Paris: [Gilles Corrozet], f. 73^{r-v}. On Fausto da Longiano, see Brammall, 2015, p. 11; see Sebastiano Fausto da Longiano, 1556, *Dialogo del Fausto da Longiano del modo de lo tradurre d'una in altra lingua secondo le regole mostrate da Cicerone*, In Vinegia: per Gio. Griffio, sigg. 7^{v-9^f}.

⁵⁵ G. W. Pigman, 1980, 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33, 1, p. 4.

them because it is not the same emulation. As we shall see in section 1.2.2, for Humphrey translators have to emulate and thus compete with other translators, not with the author they are translating in order to surpass him.

With reference to the last aspect, namely *aptitudo*, according to Humphrey a good translator should not translate any author regardless, but should choose the authors that best fit his own ‘nature’:

Just as actors do, who do not act in the best stories but in the ones that are most suited to themselves, so those [translators] choose the books that are most appropriate for them to translate.⁵⁶

This selection can be properly made only if the translator knows himself. In his discussion on the vices of bad translators towards the end of Book 1, Humphrey appeals to the ‘nosce te ipsum’ principle to stress that the good translator should be aware of his limitations and should ‘not undertake’ works that are ‘beyond his strengths’.⁵⁷ As Brammall has shown, this insistence on self-knowledge is derived from Cicero and Erasmus: the former theorizes self-knowledge in relation to ethics in *De officiis*; the latter applies it to imitation in rhetorical composition in *Ciceronianus* (1526).⁵⁸ Humphrey in turn applies it to the practice of translation, conceiving the translator’s self-knowledge as a necessary requirement to get a good translation. Also, Brammall has rightly pointed out that in stressing the need for ‘interpersonal bonds’ between the translator and the source author Humphrey is probably ‘a forerunner of later English theorists’.⁵⁹ Augustan translators such as Sir John Denham, John Dryden, and Wentworth Dillon, earl of Roscommon reflect on such ‘congeniality’ in terms of ‘transfusion’ (Denham), ‘Soul congenial’ (Dryden), and ‘sympathetic bond’ (Roscommon).⁶⁰ This contribution, potentially trailblazing, is the most innovative aspect amongst those mentioned above.

Apart from these original developments of previous reflections, Humphrey’s *Interpretatio* is otherwise mostly a recapitulation of previously established principles circulating in Europe, leading critics to define the treatise as a ‘cumulative and recapitulatory’ work, ‘an encyclopaedia of doctrine on translation’, or ‘one of the summarizing statements in the history of translation’.⁶¹ The four criteria, which Humphrey defines as ‘virtutes’, for a good translation (*plenitudo*, i.e., comprehensiveness;

⁵⁶ Humphrey, 1559, p. 124: ‘ut histriones faciunt, qui fabulas agunt non optimas sed aptissimas, sic illi libros sibi ad interpretandum deligant accommodatissimos’; my translation is based on Brammall’s, see Brammall, 2017, p. 68.

⁵⁷ Humphrey, 1559, p. 199: ‘nec ultra vires sumat’.

⁵⁸ Brammall, 2017, pp. 67-68.

⁵⁹ Brammall, 2017, p. 69.

⁶⁰ David Hopkins, 2005, ‘Dryden and His Contemporaries’, in Stuart Gillespie and David Hopkins (eds.), *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English, Volume 3: 1660-1790*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 63-64.

⁶¹ The first definition is by Neil Rhodes; see Neil Rhodes, Gordon Kendal, and Louise Wilson (eds.), 2013, *English Renaissance Translation Theory*, London: Modern Humanities Research Association, p. 263. The second is by Glyn P. Norton; see Norton, 1984, *The Ideology and Language of Translation in Renaissance France and their Humanist Antecedents*, Geneva: Droz, p. 11. The last is by George Steiner; see George Steiner, 1998, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 277.

proprietas, i.e., appropriateness; *puritas*, i.e., attractiveness or elegance; and *aptitudo*, i.e., aptness) are not only ‘rooted in Aristotelian and Augustinian language theory’⁶² but also in Cicero’s and Quintilian’s conventional vocabulary on translation; unsurprisingly these concepts are employed by many Renaissance theorists on translation.⁶³ The fifth virtue Humphrey adds at the end of this discussion, namely clarity (‘*perspicuitas*’), is equally based on previous theorizations by Aristotle and Quintilian.⁶⁴ Likewise, the four requirements for a good translator (‘*natura idonea*’, i.e., ‘right natural gifts’; ‘*doctrina elegans*’, i.e., ‘fine learning’; ‘*religiosa fides*’, i.e., ‘religious fidelity’; ‘*singularis diligentia*’, i.e., ‘outstanding application to the work’) were treated fragmentarily by previous theorists, although Humphrey has the merit of laying them down schematically.⁶⁵

Humphrey also proves to be very familiar with the scholarly debates of his age, especially the Ciceronian controversy. Humphrey’s stance is certainly Ciceronian but he is more moderate than other staunch defenders of Ciceronianism such as Joachim Périon, whom Humphrey praises but also criticizes (see section 1.2.2 below).⁶⁶ Humphrey is well acquainted with the ideas of many near-contemporary and contemporary humanists alongside Périon, as confirmed by the ‘catalogue of quoted authors’ (‘*Autorum catalogum qui cintantur*’), included at the end of Book 1.⁶⁷ With reference to the controversies over imitation, in the second book he names other Continental humanists such as Angelo Poliziano and Pietro Bembo;⁶⁸ elsewhere he mentions Guillaume Budé and Melanchton.⁶⁹ Humphrey’s long stay on the Continent made him receptive to recent developments in literary criticism. He subscribes to the French comparative method of scholarship, i.e., the process of editing Latin texts more by comparing them with their Greek sources than by collating manuscripts as Italian scholars would do.⁷⁰ As Brammall has pointed out, Humphrey’s embracing of this editorial method leads him to argue for a foreignizing method of translation: for instance, in his discussion on the translation of the Bible, he insists that Hebrew should be still perceived between the lines in a Greek

⁶² Merchant, 2013, p. 95; see Humphrey, 1559, pp. 32, 202.

⁶³ On the the last three criteria, see Rener, 1989, pp. 38-58, 167. *Plenitudo* is not the commonest criterion in contemporary treatises but it can be found at least in Julius Caesar Scaliger’s *Poetices libri septem* (1561); see Julius Caesar Scaliger, 1561, *Iulii Caesaris Scaligeri, viri clarissimi, Poetices libri septem*, [Lyon]: apud Antonium Vincentium, p. 185. In any case, by *plenitudo* Humphrey means the comprehensiveness of ‘subject matter and meaning’ (‘*res atque sententiae*’), phrasing, i.e., ‘the way the words are structures and applied’ (‘*forma et figura*’), the rhythm (‘*numeros*’); see Humphrey, 1559, pp. 32-33; translation by Kendal in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), 2013, p. 269. These aspects can all be found in previous theorists on translation, particularly Cicero quoted by Humphrey himself.

⁶⁴ Rener, 1989, p. 218.

⁶⁵ Humphrey, 1559, pp. 115-116; translation by Kendal in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), 2013, p. 273. On previous references to the requirements of translators, see Rener, 1989, pp. 314-325. On the schematic quality of Humphrey’s discussion, see Norton, 1984, pp. 11-14.

⁶⁶ Humphrey, 1559, p. 4, pp. 28-29.

⁶⁷ Humphrey, 1559, pp. 204-205. The catalogue includes authors such as Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus, Périon, Vives, Theodore Beza (1519-1605), and contemporary translators – Christophe de Longueil and Sébastien Castellion.

⁶⁸ Humphrey, 1559, p. 211.

⁶⁹ Humphrey, 1559, pp. 22, 532.

⁷⁰ Brammall, 2017, pp. 61, 65.

translation.⁷¹ Humphrey also displays an up-to-date knowledge of translation into English and names many renowned translators of the time.⁷²

Another seeming novelty in Humphrey is his classification of translation into three kinds. The first is an excessively literal translation, which he defines as ‘rather crude and lacking in refinement, since there is no distancing in it from the actual words’ (‘rudior et crassior, quum verbis nihil recedit’) and ‘overscrupulous or unduly restrained’ (‘ea superstitiosa sane vocent et astrictior’); the second is the opposite, namely an exceedingly free translation: ‘The next method, favoured by some translators nowawadays, has the opposite fault. It is freer and looser and allows itself too much licence’ (‘[a]ltera ratio, qua nonnulli interpretes hodie utuntur, in contrariam partem offendit, liberior et solutior, quae nimium sibi permittit licentiae’).⁷³ With a pun on words, Humphrey thus summarizes the faults of both methods: ‘[t]hese two methods are both faulty, either to translate too timidly or too tumidly’ (‘[h]aec duo in vitio esse, vel nimis timide vertere, vel nimis tumide’).⁷⁴ The solution to this impasse is the third way, which combines the two in an unattainable ideal mixture: ‘it remains to discuss the third method, the “middle way”. This has features in common with both of the preceding. It is straightforward but learned, elegant but faithful’, (‘Superest ut de tertio genere, id est, media via dicamus, quae utriusque particeps est, simplicitatis sed eruditate, elegantiae sed fidelis’).⁷⁵ Although Humphrey was amongst the first to introduce a tripartite division,⁷⁶ the description of each kind is based on the reflections of previous authors ranging from Cicero to Jerome to Dolet. The opposition between literal and free translations – or ‘word for word’ and ‘sense for sense’ – cannot be strictly associated with a specific, isolated author, let alone a historical period; in Susan Bassnett’s terms, it is more reasonable to talk about ‘*lines of approach* that may or may not be easily locatable in a temporal context’.⁷⁷

Humphrey’s treatise thus condenses and partly develops the most important and authoritative ideas on translation that were circulating on the Continent and is clearly open to the most recent innovations in scholarship. Although the *Interpretatio* does not seem to have circulated widely, many English scholars shared Humphrey’s condition as an exile and could be equally familiar with the Continental culture after their stays abroad. In any case, also those who did not travel could easily

⁷¹ Humphrey, 1559, p. 343; Brammall, 2017, p. 66.

⁷² He mentions Henry Howard, Thomas Wyatt, Sir Thomas Chaloner, Richard Eden (whom he calls ‘Ioannes’), Sir Thomas Elyot, Thomas Cooper, Nicholas Udall, and many others; see Humphrey, 1559, pp. 517-529.

⁷³ Humphrey, 1559, p. 14, 22-23; translation by Kendal in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), 2013, pp. 266-267.

⁷⁴ Humphrey, 1559, p. 29.

⁷⁵ Humphrey, 1559, p. 30; translation by Kendal in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), 2013, p. 268.

⁷⁶ In his treatise *Apologeticus* (1450s), also Giannozzo Manetti envisages a ‘middle and safe road’ (‘medium et tutum [...] iter’) as alternative to literal and free translations; Hosington, 2014; see Paul Botley, 2004, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti, and Desiderius Erasmus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 112.

⁷⁷ Susan Bassnett, 2002, *Translation Studies*, New York: Routledge, p. 50.

access that culture and be involved in the *respublica litteraria* centred on the Continent through epistolary correspondence and the circulation of books.

1.1.3. Translation theory in England: between English specificity and adherence to European conventions

Can there be distinctive traits in the theories of translation and imitation in a country which was so embedded in Europe's book trade as well as in its humanist culture? This section will answer this question mainly focussing on translation theory, as this field has lent itself to discussion on the possible existence of an English specificity more explicitly than theory of imitation has. In the second half of the twentieth century critics tended to focus on imitation in Europe as a whole or in France and Italy.⁷⁸ According to J. T. Knight, only three studies helped retrieve some peculiarities in English imitation in comparison to their Continental counterpart.⁷⁹ Stephen Orgel underlined the delayed beginning of an English Renaissance and hence the belated perception in England of concepts such as originality and plagiarism.⁸⁰ Mary Thomas Crane worked on the peculiar declination of commonplacing in early modern England and the effects it had on reading as well as writing.⁸¹ Thomas M. Greene drew attention on how pedagogical handbooks and treatises such as Ascham's *Schoolemaster* insisted on classical imitation in line with the Continental trend but this did not result in the hoped-for close and specific imitation in English literature, meant as 'the actual poems, plays, and prose fiction of the mature Renaissance'.⁸² Before Ben Jonson, 'the first great English theorist and practitioner of neoclassicism',⁸³ the response to the theoretical insistence on classical imitation was perceived by Greene as a 'diffused rather than specific' presence of classical references.⁸⁴ However, all these scholars reflect less on the theory than on the practice of imitation, whereas translation theory in Renaissance England has been increasingly attracting interest amongst critics.

Neil Rhodes argues that it does make sense to speak of 'English Renaissance Translation Theory' – the title of the ninth volume of the MHRA Tudor & Stuart Translation Series – for at least

⁷⁸ J. T. Knight, 2013, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 90-92.

⁷⁹ Knight, 2013, pp. 92-94.

⁸⁰ Stephen Orgel, 1981, 'The Renaissance Artist as Plagiarist', *English Literary History*, 48, 3, pp. 484-487.

⁸¹ Mary Thomas Crane, 1993, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁸² Thomas M. Greene, 1982, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance*, New Haven; London: Yale University Press, p. 270.

⁸³ Douglas Bush, 1962, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 107.

⁸⁴ Greene, 1982, p. 270.

two reasons.⁸⁵ One is that Renaissance English theorists included reflections on translation from the perspective of their own language, both as source or target text. For instance, in *Interpretatio linguarum*, Humphrey mainly illustrates his observations by means of examples from Latin, Greek, and Hebrew – languages which then enjoyed a higher status than that of vernaculars – but he does frequently include examples involving English.⁸⁶ The second and more important reason is linked to the country’s religious history, which was marked by the Reformation and the accompanying controversy over Bible translation. While the Bible had already been translated into vernacular all over Europe long before the Catholic Church associated vernacular translations with heretical positions even in Germany, the cradle of the Reformation, the first printed scriptural text in English appeared as late as 1525-1526, when William Tyndale published his translation of the New Testament.⁸⁷ The importance of the vernacular translation of the Bible for the spread of Protestantism in England has been brilliantly summed up by Patrick Collinson: ‘In effect, the English Bible was English Protestantism’.⁸⁸

These two factors – the use of examples from English and the religious implications of translation – seem to constitute sufficient ground to explore some specifically English features at least in the theories of translation. However, the examples of translations from or into English in treatises written by Englishmen do not always stand out as ‘specifically English’, since – to Rhodes’ own admission – those examples often deal with problems that ‘are common to other vernaculars’.⁸⁹ Also, Rhodes is certainly right in arguing that English Renaissance translation theory heavily depends on England’s religious history and that it has ‘significant points of connection between the religious and the secular’.⁹⁰ However, to say that ‘the principle that connects secular translation to the greater and more comprehensively demanding task of translating the work of God’ is the ‘faithfulness to the original’,⁹¹ can be misleading if no further qualification is supplied. Since Jerome’s *Letter to Pammachius* (also known as Epistle 57 to Pammachius or *De optimo genere interpretandi*), the principle of faithfulness functioned differently not only according to whether the text was religious

⁸⁵ Rhodes, 2013, ‘Introduction’, in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), 2013, p. 5.

⁸⁶ For examples with English, see for instance Humphrey, 1559, p. 455.

⁸⁷ Ian Green, 2001, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 45. On the relation between religion and vernacular translation in other European countries, see Andrew Gow, 2005, ‘Challenging the Protestant Paradigm: Bible Reading in Lay and Urban Contexts of the Later Middle Ages’, in T. J. Heffernan and T. E. Burman (eds.), *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 161-189; see also Élise Boillet, 2015, ‘Vernacular Biblical Literature in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Universal Reading and Specific Readers’, in Sabrina Corbellini, Margriet Hoogvliet, and Bart Ramakers (eds.), *Discovering the Riches of the Word: Religious Reading in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 213-233.

⁸⁸ Patrick Collinson, 2003, ‘Literature and the Church’, in David Loewestein and Janel Mueller (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 377.

⁸⁹ Rhodes, 2013, in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), p. 5.

⁹⁰ Rhodes, 2013, in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), p. 5.

⁹¹ Rhodes, 2013, in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), pp. 39-40.

or secular but also according to the type of religious text to be translated. In this letter, Jerome treated the translation of scriptural texts differently from that of non-scriptural ones:

Indeed, I not only admit, but freely proclaim that in translation from the Greek – except in the case of the Sacred Scripture, where the very order of the words is a mystery – I render not word for word, but sense for sense.⁹²

While the proscription of literal approaches to translation is valid for non-Scriptural writings, this principle does not hold for translations from the Bible. Jerome is here arguing against literalism in translation because it hinders the understanding of meaning, which is thought of as an inherently stable signified, unaffected by the change of its multiple signifiers.⁹³

Secular translations also feature such a rejection of literalism both in theory and practice but in a way that is not compatible with religious literature, whether scriptural or non-scriptural. As Massimiliano Morini has noted with reference to the Tudor period, many ‘translators continued to claim faithfulness to their original’ in theory, whereas in practice they were ‘cut[ting] or add[ing] significant portions of the text, alter[ing] original details in order to further their own interest, and employ[ing] their own metaphors, vocabulary, and prosody’.⁹⁴ This ‘contradiction’ can be explained only if one takes those frequent appeals to ‘faithfulness’ as exhortations to reproduce the meaning of the original. This kind of semantic faithfulness should be confused neither with the literalism invoked for translation from the Scriptures nor with Jerome’s exclusive interest for meaning in non-scriptural texts. The rejection of literalism is different even in the second case because, while being concerned with the content, secular translation requires also another kind of faithfulness, i.e., faithfulness to the author’s rhetorical strategies.

The idea that translation should reproduce the rhetorical aspects of the source dates back to the mid-first century BC, when Cicero first established the principle of translating ‘non verbum pro verbo’ (‘not [...] word for word’) in his treatise *De optimo genere oratorum*:

I did not translate them [Aeschines and Demosthenes] as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and the forms, or as one might say, the ‘figures’ of thought, but in a language which conforms to our usage. And in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I

⁹² Jerome, 2012, ‘Letter to Pammachius’, translated by Kathleen Davis, in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, Oxford: Routledge, p. 23; see the original in Jerome, 1996, *Epistulae 1-70*, edited by Isidorus Hilberg, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 54, online edition, Brepols [accessed on 22 October 2018 at <http://clt.brepols.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=PHIER0620>]: ‘ego enim non solum fateor, sed libera voce profiteor me in interpretatione graecorum absque scripturis sanctis, ubi et uerborum ordo mysterium est, non verbum e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu’.

⁹³ Rita Copeland, 1989, ‘The Fortunes of “non verbum pro verbo”’: Or, Why Jerome is not a Ciceronian’, in Roger Ellis (ed.), *The Medieval Translator: The Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, p. 29.

⁹⁴ Massimiliano Morini, 2017 [2006], *Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice*, Abingdon: Routledge, p. 4.

preserved the general style and force of the language. For I did not think I ought to count them out to the reader like coins, but to pay them by weight, as it were.⁹⁵

In the light of Cicero's conception of translation aiming at reproducing 'the general style and force of the language' ('genus omne verborum vimque'), rhetoric became the central concern of humanistic theorists of translation: hence, scholars have coined definitions such as 'rhetorical translation'⁹⁶ and 'oratorical translation'.⁹⁷ One of the earliest revivals of Cicero's views on translation is a letter by Lino Coluccio Salutati to his friend Antonio Loschi dating back to 1392.⁹⁸ This letter is considered one of 'the earliest attempts at establishing a humanistic theory of translation'⁹⁹ concerned with its rhetorical effects. However, it was the treatise *De interpretatione recta* (c. 1426) by Leonardo Bruni, the 'first specialized treatise on translation',¹⁰⁰ which marked a real development in the rhetorical conception of translation: rhetoric was brought together with the latest techniques of humanistic philology.¹⁰¹ For Bruni, the achievement of rhetorical effects had to be coupled with a philological approach to the original. Bruni's combination of rhetoric and philology in translation spread in Europe, and his views were shared by Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus in their prefaces.¹⁰² Erasmus's adherence to the principle of translating 'as an orator' ('ut orator') can be inferred both in theory and in practice,¹⁰³ although he was well aware of the difficulty of reproducing Greek's 'crystal-clear springs and rivers that run with gold'.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁵ Cicero, 1949, *De optimo genere oratorum*, in *De inventione; De optimo genere oratorum; Topica*, edited and translated by H. M. Hubbell, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 364-365: nec converti ut interpres, sed ut orator, sentiis isdem et earum formis tamquam figuris, verbis ad nostram consuetudinem aptis. In quibus non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omne verborum vimque servavi. Non enim ea me adnumerare lectori putavi oportere, sed tamquam appendere'.

⁹⁶ Morini, 2017, p. 21.

⁹⁷ Boucher, 2015, p. 29.

⁹⁸ Erika Rummel, 1985, *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics*, London: University of Toronto Press, p. 28.

⁹⁹ Morini, 2017, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Brenda Hosington, 2014, 'Translation and Neo-Latin', in Craig Kallendorf (ed.), *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World* [accessed on 29 January 2018 at <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2066/10.1163/9789004271296_enlo_B9789004271012_0011>].

¹⁰¹ Morini, 2017, p. 9. According to Brenda Hosington, it was the Spanish theologian Alfonso de Madrigal (1400?-1455) who first made explicit 'the link between philology and translation' in two prefaces to his commentary on St Jerome's translation of Eusebius (1506-1507); see Hosington, 2014.

¹⁰² Hosington, 2014; Rummel, 1985, p. 28.

¹⁰³ Erasmus did not write treatises on translations but his adherence to the principle of translating 'ut orator' can be inferred from his occasional remarks on translation: for example, in the dedicatory letter of his translation of Libanius, he explicitly endorses Ciceronian views on translation by quoting the passage from *De optimo genere oratorum* reported above; see Erasmus, 1969, 'Libanii aliquot declantiunculae per Erasmum', edited by R. A. B. Mynors, in *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterdami recognita et adnotatione critica instructa notisque illustrata, ordinis primi tomus primus*, Amsterdam: Huygens instituut/Brill, pp. 181, 184; translation by R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson in Erasmus, 1975, '177/To Nicholas Ruistre', in *The Correspondence of Erasmus, Letters 142 to 297*, translated by R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson, Toronto: University of Toronto, pp. 71, 74. Also his practice testifies to this; see Rummel, 1985, pp. viii, 27.

¹⁰⁴ Erasmus, 1975, '149 / To Antoon van Bergen', in *The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters from 142 to 297*, p. 25; see the original in Erasmus, 1906, *Opus epistolarium Des. Erasmi Roterodami, Tom. I, 1484-1514, denuo recognitum et auctum per P. S. Allen et H. M. Allen*, Oxonii: in typographaeo Clarendoniano, p. 352: 'fontes purissimi et flumina aurum volventia'.

Bruni's views reached England thanks to Vives, Dolet, and Erasmus himself, whose influence on the country can hardly be overstated.¹⁰⁵ Englishmen familiarized themselves with rhetorical views of translation also in prefaces of 'pivot' or intermediary translations.¹⁰⁶ While translating Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* via Jacques Amyot's French translation (1559), Thomas North could read in its preface the French scholar's statement that he had tried to reproduce Plutarch's 'sharped, learned, and short' style, even to the detriment of clarity. This is North's translation of Amyot's relevant passage:

if it so fortune that men find not the speech of this translation so flowing, as they have found some other of mine [...]: I beseech the reader to consider, that the office of a fit translator, consisteth not onely the faithfull expressing of his authors meaning, but also in a certain resembling and shadowing out of the forme of his style and the maner of his speaking: unless he will comit the error of some painters, who having taken upon them to draw a man lively, do paint him long where he should be short, and grosse where he should be slender, and yet set out the resemblance of his countenance naturally. For how harsh or rude soever my speech be, yet am I sure that my translation will be much easier to my countrymen, than the Greeke copie is, even to such as are best practised in the Greeke tonge, by reason of Plutarques peculiar maner of inditing, which is rather sharpe, learned, and short, than plained, polished, and easie.¹⁰⁷

In the preface to his translation of Cicero's *De officiis* (1556), Nicholas Grimald proves to be conscious of the importance of preserving the rhetorical effects of the original, albeit in a somehow superficial manner.¹⁰⁸ Most importantly, Humphrey's treatise confirms that attention to rhetorical effects in translation had become a central concern also in England, at least theoretically, more than it has been allowed.¹⁰⁹ Although he does not mention Bruni in his catalogue of quoted authors, Humphrey is particularly concerned with the rhetorical aspects of translation, even the rhythm ('numeros').¹¹⁰

It should not be concluded that, since rhetorical aspects were highly attended to in secular translation, translators of religious texts did not consider them altogether. Examples can be found

¹⁰⁵ On Vives and Dolet, see Morini, 2017, pp. 15-16; on Erasmus' influence in England, especially in religious beliefs, see G. D. Dodds, 2009, *Exploiting Erasmus: The Erasmian Legacy and Religious Change in Early Modern England*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

¹⁰⁶ On intermediary translations, see Tania Demetriou and Rowan Tomlinson, 2015, 'Introduction: "Abroad in Mens Hands": The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France', in Demetriou and Tomlinson (eds.), *The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500-1660*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-21.

¹⁰⁷ Amyot, 'Amiot to the Readers', trans. by North, in Plutarchus, *Lives*, sig. *viii^r; see the original in Jacques Amyot, 1574, 'Aux Lecteurs', in Plutarch, *Les vies des hommes illustres grecs et romains*, translated by Jacques Amyot, Lausanne: François Le Preux, sig. Avii^v: 'si, peut estre, on ne trouve le langage de ceste translation si coulant, comme on a fait de quelques autres mienes, [...], je prie les lecteurs de vouloir considerer, que l'office d'un propre traducteur ne gist pas seulement à rendre fidelement la sentence de son auther, mais aussi à représenter aucunement & à adombrer la forme du style & maniere de parler d'iceluy, s'il ne veut commettre l'erreur que feroit le peintre, qui ayant pris à peindre un homme au vif, le pendroit long, là où il seroit court, & gros, là où il seroit gresse, encore qu'il le fist nayvement bien ressembler de visage. Car encore puis-je bien asseurer, quelque dur ou rude que soit le langage, que ma traduction sera beaucoup plus aisee aux François, que l'original Grec à ceux mesmes qui sont les plus exercez en la langue Grecque, pour une façon d'escrire plus aigue, plus docte & pressee, que claire, polie ou aisee, qui est propre à Plutarque'.

¹⁰⁸ Morini, 2017, p. 18.

¹⁰⁹ Morini, 2017, p. 18.

¹¹⁰ Humphrey, 1559, pp. 204-206. On Humphrey's attention to the translator as an orator and his debt to Cicero, see Rhodes, 2013, in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), pp. 38-39. On his specific reference to rhythm, see Humphrey, 1559, p. 33.

amongst translations from the Scriptures, both in theory and practice. In theory, Valla and Erasmus were the first to reflect upon the possibility of reproducing stylistic effects by comparing the original text of the New Testament with the Vulgate.¹¹¹ When discussing the rules for translating the Scriptures, Humphrey suggests that the translator should not change ‘figures of speech and metaphors’ (‘figurae et metaphorae’) and should not ‘diminish their elegance by changing words’ (‘ut figurae gratiam aliis verbis non imminuit’).¹¹² As for practice, Sébastien Castellion’s Latin version of the Bible, which was much admired by Humphrey himself, is written in a Ciceronian style.¹¹³ However, Castellion’s Latin is far less Ciceronian than that of Christophe de Longueuil, whose version of the Gospel Humphrey criticizes for its use of pagan words in lieu of Christian ones.¹¹⁴ The difference between secular and religious translation was in terms of priorities. The first of Humphrey’s rules reveals that the primacy of content over stylistic preoccupations in scriptural translation is still intact:

The first rule is to express correctly and truly the meaning, even if the propriety of language is not always scrupulously maintained in every aspect.¹¹⁵

In order to find elements of English specificity in translation theory, it may be then more fruitful to consider the relationship between translation and the formation of a national identity. It is very common to find expressions of cultural nationalism in the paratexts of English translators, who frequently see translation as a tool to enrich their mother tongue. However, this was a widespread thought. In his dedicatory letter to King Henry II of his *Vies*, Amyot expresses his national pride by presenting his translation of Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* as a contribution to the enrichment of the French language: fostered by the royal programme of translation from classical authors initiated by Francis I, French was destined to surpass any other European language ‘in usage’ at the time thanks to a wider availability of texts in the vernacular:

Our tongue is going to become so much more embellished and enriched day by day that neither the Italian nor the Spanish nor any other tongue in usage today in Europe will be able to boast about surpassing it in quantity and quality of the instruments of wisdom, i.e., the books.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Hosington, 2014.

¹¹² Humphrey, 1559, p. 331.

¹¹³ Peter Burke, 2007, ‘Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe’, in Burke and R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 28; see also Binns, 1990, p. 524, n. 4. Humphrey’s praise of Castellion is in Humphrey, 1559, p. 496.

¹¹⁴ Humphrey, 1559, pp. 51-55; see Binns, 1990, pp. 282-84.

¹¹⁵ Humphrey, 1559, p. 330: ‘Primum, ut sententia recte et vere exprimat, et etiamsi verborum proprietates semper et anxie non serventur in omnibus’.

¹¹⁶ Jacques Amyot, 1559, *Les vies des hommes illustres grecs et romains*, Paris: De l’imprimerie de Michel de Vascosan, sig. aiii^r: ‘Notre langue va tous les jours de plus recevant tel ornement et enrichissement, que ny l’Italienne, ny l’Hespagnole, ny autre qui soit aujourd’huy en usage par l’Europe, ne se pourra vanter de la surmonter en nombre, ny en bonté des outils de sapience, qui sont les livres’.

An alternative route to detect a specifically English culture of translation could be the analysis of the metaphors used with reference to translation, and how they may be related to a nationalist perception. Many authors have noted how metaphors used for translation as well as imitation are not only powerful rhetorical means but also significant instruments to theorize translation.¹¹⁷ As such, they are revealing of the translator's stance to both the source and target culture. The metaphors that best reflect England's growing perception of a national identity are those of conquest and appropriation. In his translation of Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis historia*, Philemon Holland presents his English version as a 'payback for the Roman conquest of Britain':¹¹⁸ in his preface to the reader, he famously blames detractors of translation into English for preventing their 'native country' from 'triumph[ing] now over the Romans in subduing their literature under the dent of the English pen, in requital of the conquest sometime over this island'.¹¹⁹ The use of conquest metaphors in translating is probably not a prerogative of early modern England since it can be traced back as early as Jerome's *Letter to Pammachius*.¹²⁰ Also, as Theo Hermans points out,

it is very unusual to see the relation of power between source text and target text turned upside down in statements made by the translators themselves. [...] [I]t is only the laudatory poems which emphatically invert the hierarchy between original and translation.¹²¹

Holland's letter seems therefore to be less a typical English paratext than the exception proving the rule.

Other translators of the time used, if not Holland's bold imagery of revengeful conquest, at least the ideas of partial submission of and control over the translated text or author. This conception of the relationship between the translator and his translation came after a period in which English translators had regarded themselves as inevitably inferior to the original author; Morini sets 1575 as the watershed date for this change of attitude towards the activity of translation.¹²² As Matthew Reynolds has pointed out, '[t]here are historical reasons why some metaphors flourish more at some

¹¹⁷ On the theoretical relevance of metaphors in translation, see Yehudi Lindeman, 1981, 'Translation in the Renaissance: A Context and a Map', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 8, 2, p. 206; Morini, 2017, p. 35 and Matthew Reynolds, 2011, *The Poetry of Translation: From Chaucer & Petrarch to Homer & Logue*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 6. On the same concept in imitation, see G. W. Pigman, 1980, 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly* 33, 1, p. 9; Hermans, 2014, p. 105. Greene exemplifies this approach in his analysis of Ben Jonson's imitation: to Greene Jonson's recurring references to acceptance and receptivity in his poems function as 'emblem[s] for Jonson's relationship with the authors of his subtexts'; see Greene, 1982, p. 285.

¹¹⁸ Stuart Gillespie, 2011, *English Translation and Classical Reception*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 37.

¹¹⁹ Holland, 2013, p. 381.

¹²⁰ A. E. B. Coldiron, 2010, 'Commonplaces and Metaphors', in Gordon Braden, Robert Cummings, and Stuart Gillespie, *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English: Volume 2: 1550-1660*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 113.

¹²¹ Theo Hermans, 2014 [1985], 'Images of Translation: Metaphor and Imagery in the Renaissance Discourse on Translation', in Hermans (ed.), *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*, Abingdon: Routledge, p. 110.

¹²² Morini, 2017, p. 51.

times than at others'.¹²³ The use of metaphors of submission not *to* but *of* the source author does not seem an exception if one considers two contextual factors: England's overseas explorations and the increasingly higher prestige of the English language.

From the 1560s England had resumed its oceanic expeditions, which had started in the fifteenth century but had lacked royal funding since the 1490s, and intensified them over the 1570s, when the notion of a British empire was first suggested.¹²⁴ In this context, translation into English was sometimes seen not only as a form of cultural conquest paralleling colonising ventures but was also deployed as a tool for 'advancing the colonisation enterprise' itself.¹²⁵ If in Holland's letter to the reader, conquest is just a metaphor for translation, for the voyager-translators Richard Eden and Richard Hakluyt conquest is more than a metaphor: it is the very political cause for which they translate. In their paratextual material, they both express the hope that their translation will contribute to support England's process of colonization.¹²⁶ Similarly, in his translation of the accounts of the French navigator Jacques Cartier, John Florio conceives his translation as an aid to English voyagers to emulate 'the Spaniardes, the Portugales, and the Venetians', expecting his fellow Englishmen not only to establish commercial relationship with other countries but also found colonies.¹²⁷ The new attitude of some English translators paralleled by England's ventures overseas was reflected in their choice of 'less humble, more forceful and even "violent"' metaphors,¹²⁸ which signalled the newly-acquired awareness of the potential of the English language.

However, while Morini regards this set of metaphors as a new trend settling in at the turn of the century,¹²⁹ many examples could be drawn which testify to the persistence of *loci communes* such as the translator's humility and enslavement or service to the source author. In the dedicatory epistle to his translation of Michel de Montaigne's *Essays* (1603), the 'resolute' Florio, as he signs himself in the letter to the reader, presents himself as 'a foundling foster-father, having transported it [Montaigne's *Essays*] from *France* to *England*, put it in English clothes; taught it to talke our tongue (though many times with a jerke of the French *Iargon*)'.¹³⁰ To be sure, his attitude may sound

¹²³ Reynolds, 2011, p. 7.

¹²⁴ David Potter, 2004, 'Britain and the Wider World', in Robert Tittler and Norman Jones (eds.), *A Companion to Tudor Britain*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 192-193.

¹²⁵ Brenda Hosington, 2015, 'Translation as a Currency of Cultural Exchange in Early Modern England', in Helen Hackett (ed.), *Early Modern Exchanges: Dialogues Between Nations and Cultures 1550-1750*, Farnham: Ashgate, p. 40.

¹²⁶ Richard Eden translated Martin Cortés's *Breue compendio de la sphere u de la arte de navegar* (1561) and Richard Hakluyt an account of Ferdinando de Soto's voyage in Florida (1609); see Hosington, 2015, pp. 38-39.

¹²⁷ John Florio, 1580, *A Shorte and Briefe Narration of the Two Navigations and Discoveries to the Northwest partes called Newe Fraunce*, imprinted at London: by H. Bynneman, sigg. Aii^r, Bi^v: 'not onely [...] fall to some traffique wyth the Inhabitants, but also to plant a Colonie in some convenient place'. Florio used an intermediary Italian translation; the *RCC* catalogue classifies Jacques Cartier's authorship as dubious.

¹²⁸ Morini, 2017, p. 54.

¹²⁹ Morini, 2017, p. 54.

¹³⁰ John Florio, 1603, *The Essayes, Or Morall, Politike and Millitarie Discourses*, Printed at London: By Val. Sims for Edward Blount, sig. A2^r; see Morini, 2017, p. 55. For Florio's signature as 'resolute', see Florio, 'To the Courteous Reader', in Montaigne, 1603, sig. A6^r.

patronizing if this statement is considered in isolation but the rest of the epistle confirms that Florio is in many ways still faithful to established conventions such as self-deprecating statements: he regards his translation as ‘defective [...] since all translations are reputed femalls, delivered at second hand’, thus implying that he is standing in a ‘position subservient to the (male) author’.¹³¹ Florio uses other gender metaphors to insist on his role as ‘mid-wife translator’, as Coldiron puts it, when he presents himself ‘serv[ing] but as *Vulcan*, to hatchet this *Minerva* from that *Iupiters* bigge braine’.¹³² Such metaphor is echoed in what could be considered ‘an apology of translation’, namely Florio’s letter to the reader, in which he asks why he should ‘apologize translation’, why learning should be ‘wrapt in a learned mantle’, why ‘the best [should] be barred’, and answers by saying that learning is ‘to be unwrapt by a learned nurse’, presumably meaning the translator.¹³³ Another stable convention amongst translators is the reverence towards the author. In his translation of Tacitus (1598), Richard Grenewey pre-empts any criticism by appealing to ‘the worthiness of this Author’ which ‘putteth [him] in some hope of pardon for [his] presumption’.¹³⁴ Two years before publishing his complete version of the *Iliad*, George Chapman published the poem *Euthymiae Raptus* or *Tears of Peace* (1609). In a dream-vision scene of belated poetic investiture, Homer appears to him as a god-like figure, like the Muses had done with Hesiod.¹³⁵ If this was not enough, he repeatedly refers to Homer as ‘the Prince of Poets’, as he is defined in the title page of his 1609 partial translation of the *Iliad*.¹³⁶

Though later than other Continental vernaculars, English had been gradually gaining a higher status and prestige amongst Englishmen, who displayed an increased awareness of the potential of their language. As symptom of this growing prestige, there were attempts to assert its superiority not only in comparison to other vernaculars but even in comparison to Latin. Holland rejects Latin’s obscurity as opposed to the clarity of English: for him the translator provides the young student with ‘the light of the English’ in contrast to ‘the darke phrase and obscure construction of the Latine’.¹³⁷ Shifting the argumentation to the domain of grammar, Holland thus turns a supposed flaw into a quality: the simplicity of English grammar. In *The Defence of Poesie*, Sir Philip Sidney equally regards this simplicity less as a sign of inferiority than as a source of pride

¹³¹ Florio, 1603, sig. A2^r; see also Coldiron, 2010, p. 113.

¹³² Florio, 1603, sig. A2^r; see also Coldiron, 2010, p. 115.

¹³³ Florio, 1603, sig. A5^r.

¹³⁴ Richard Grenewey, 1598, ‘To the Right Honourable Robert Earle of Essex [...]’, in Tacitus, *The Annales of Cornelius Tacitus: The Description of Germanie*, Printed at London: By Arn. Hatfield, for Bonham and Iohn Norton, no signature.

¹³⁵ George Chapman, 1609, *Euthymiae Raptus, Or the Tears of Peace*, At London: Printed by H[umphrey] L[ownes] for Rich. Bonian, and H. Walley, sig. A4^{r-v}. In 1618 Chapman translated Hesiod’s *Works and Days* as *The Georgicks of Hesiod*.

¹³⁶ Chapman, 1609, *Homer Prince of Poets: Ttranslated According to the Greeke, in Twelue Bookes of His Iliads*, At London: Printed [by Humphrey Lownes] for Samuel Macham, title page.

¹³⁷ Holland, 2013, p. 380.

I know some will say it is a mingled language: And why not, so much the better, taking the best of both the other? Another will say, it wanteth grammar. Nay truly it hath that praise that it wanteth not grammar; for grammar it might have, but it needs it not; being so easy of itself, and so void of those cumbersome differences of cases, genders, moods, and tenses, which I think was a piece of the Tower of Babylon's curse, that a man should be put to school to learn his mother-tongue.¹³⁸

Also, English had already been set in opposition to Latin with ideological implications by reformers in the first half of the sixteenth century. In *Obedience of a Christen Man* (1528), William Tyndale accused Latin of being the language of sophistry and conflict.¹³⁹ As Brian Cummings puts it, '[g]rammar became one more field in the arena of incipient nationalism'.¹⁴⁰

However, Tyndale's, Holland's, and Sydney's dismissal of Latin in favour of English should not mislead us into thinking that Latin writing was disappearing. As we shall see in section 4.1.3, during the reign of Elizabeth I and James I, Latin still permeated English culture, and Neo-Latin writing as well as the fruition of Neo-Latin literature are crucial factors ensuring England's connection to the Continent. Despite occasional outbursts of nationalistic pride such as Holland's, English Renaissance translation theory appears to be very much in line with European conventions and trends.

1.2. Early modern terminology for translation and imitation

1.2.1. *Translation*: interpretatio(n), traductio(n), translatio(n)

As Renier has abundantly shown, early modern translation theories generally shared a terminological system derived from classical authors and maintained also by their subsequent interpreters in the Middle Ages. For instance, many medieval and early modern authors re-employed Cicero's *non verbum pro verbo* principle and Horace's contempt for the 'fidus interpres' ('slavish translator').¹⁴¹ However, despite its onomasiological immobility, translation terminology displays a considerable semasiological development across history.¹⁴² Rita Copeland has demonstrated that Jerome and Augustine nominally embraced the *non verbum pro verbo* and the *fidus interpres* notions only to

¹³⁸ Sir Philip Sidney, 2002, *An Apology for Poetry (Or The Defence of Poesy)*, edited by Geoffrey Shepherd and revised by R. W. Maslen, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 115.

¹³⁹ William Tyndale, 1848, *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures*, edited by Henry Walter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 174.

¹⁴⁰ Cummings, 2002, p. 25.

¹⁴¹ Horace, 2014, *The Art of Poetry*, in *Satires; Epistles; The Art of Poetry*, edited and translated by H. R. Fairclough, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, pp. 460-461. All subsequent quotations from and translations of Horace's *Ars Poetica* are taken from this edition.

¹⁴² For the onomasiological and semasiological levels of concepts, see section 0.2.

denaturalize them in substance: they uprooted these stances from their inherently rhetorical context.¹⁴³ For Cicero and Horace, a literal translation had to be avoided because a passive transposition into another language would have flattened the rhetorical qualities of the source text, thus defusing the rhetorical potential of the target text. The two Church Fathers did not share this concern with rhetorical effects: rather than seeing the signifier as an ally to the signified in line with the Horatian topos of ‘*utile dulci*’ (‘profit and pleasure’, Hor. *Ars.* 343), they saw a profound rift. For Jerome and Augustine, literal translations tended to prioritize the signifier over the signified, whereas the former had to be at the service of the latter: in patristic theory, meaning was seen as immanent and ‘supra-textual’.¹⁴⁴ The terminological continuity in theories of translation can thus lead us to underestimate, if not to miss, how the same terms and phrases were declined to serve different purposes depending on the historical context.

The opposite is also true: the same practice, translational or imitative, was defined with different words without significant variations of meaning. In his essay *Volgarizzare e tradurre* (1991), Gianfranco Folena surveys the terms used to refer to translation from antiquity to fifteenth-century humanism, and what emerges from his analysis is not only a plethora of words to distinguish different kinds of translation but also a diachronic succession of synonyms, with the substitution of formerly dominant terms with new ones without meaningful semantic changes. For instance, in ancient Rome *transferre*, *traducere*, and their deverbal nouns *translatio* and *tractio* were not used to refer to translation but possessed a technical meaning in rhetoric: for Cicero, *translatio* indicated a metaphor, *tractio* a metonymy.¹⁴⁵ Only in Late Antiquity did *transferre* acquire the specific meaning of ‘translate’, and *traducere* even later, in Italian humanism.¹⁴⁶ In the passage from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, the most common terms such as *transferre* and *interpretari* gave way to *traducere* and its derivatives in the major Romance languages to refer to the process of translation.¹⁴⁷ According to Folena, this substitution was gradually introduced by Bruni in his prefaces, letters, and his treatise *De interpretatione recta* (c. 1426), and entails a fundamental theoretical significance: the term *traducere* not only still conveyed the idea of ‘crossing’ (‘attraversamento’) like *transferre*, but also stressed ‘the “individuality” or subjective causativity’ ([‘] “individualità” or causatività soggettiva’) of the translator.¹⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the subsequent

¹⁴³ Copeland, 1989, pp. 15-35.

¹⁴⁴ Copeland, 1989, p. 20.

¹⁴⁵ Gianfranco Folena, 1991, *Volgarizzare e tradurre*, Torino: Einaudi, p. 71.

¹⁴⁶ Folena, 1991, pp. 9-10.

¹⁴⁷ Folena, 1991, p. 71.

¹⁴⁸ Folena, 1991, pp. 72-76.

fortune of *traducere* seems to be due less to a substantial semantic difference than to Bruni's authoritative influence on Italian contemporary humanists.¹⁴⁹

Bruni was not only the main responsible for the 'technical and theoretical *reductio ad unum* of the varied synonymic terminology of classical and medieval tradition', a reduction which resulted in the promotion of *traducere*.¹⁵⁰ He also contributed to the 'separation between *translatio* and *traductio*' in Romance languages.¹⁵¹ In these languages, the vernacular terms deriving from *translatio* referred to the 'displacement of material objects or symbols incorporated in objects' such as holy relics, whereas *traduction* and *traduzione*, deriving from *traductio*, became specialized terms for translating between languages.¹⁵²

Traductio and *traducere* reached also the English language in the forms 'traduction' and 'traduct' via Latin, Neo-Latin, or also thanks to the mediation of vernacular Romance languages. However, in England, 'traduction' did not specialize in opposition to other words as happened in Romance languages, nor did it ever supersede 'interpretatio' in Neo-Latin and 'translation' in the vernacular. One of the earliest occurrences of forms of *traducere* in the vernacular can be found in the first English translation of Erasmus's dialogue 'Funus' ('The Funeral', 1534): in the prefatory letter, the anonymous translator explained that Erasmus' exaltation of religious men prompted him to 'traduct this matter in to our englysshe tongue'.¹⁵³ 'Traduction' had also a technical-rhetorical meaning: while 'translation' retained the meaning that it had in ancient Roman and Neo-Latin rhetoric, i.e., 'metaphor' (*OED*),¹⁵⁴ 'traduction' has no trace of Cicero's use of the term as 'metonymy' but rather identified a kind of polyptoton.¹⁵⁵ In mid-sixteenth century, 'translation' and

¹⁴⁹ Folena, 1991, pp. 70-75. The date for the composition oscillates between 1420 and 1426; see Folena, 1991, p. 61 and Botley, 2004, p. 42 n. 173.

¹⁵⁰ Folena, 1991, p. 71.

¹⁵¹ Karlheinz Stierle, 1996, 'Translatio Studii and Renaissance: From Vertical to Horizontal Translation', in Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (eds.), *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*, Stanford: Stanford California Press, p. 56.

¹⁵² Stierle, 1996, p. 56.

¹⁵³ Anon., 1534, [*Ye dyaloge called Funus*], London: Robert Copland, sig. A2^v. In this dialogue, Erasmus is rather satirizing the clergy, and the translator seems to be aware that his interpretation is quite uncommon; see Anon., 1534, sig. A2^v. See also A. F. Allison and H. M. Nixon, 1961, 'Three Sixteenth-Century English Translations of Erasmus in a Contemporary Binding', *The British Museum Quarterly*, 23, 3, pp. 59-63.

¹⁵⁴ For the use of *translatio* as metaphor in the early modern period, see for instance Erasmus, 1978, *Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings 2: De copia, De ratione studii*, edited by Craig R. Thompson, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 333: 'Another kind of variation is provided by metaphor, for which the Latin term is *translatio* "transference"'; see the original in Erasmus, 1989, *De copia verborum ac rerum*, edited by Betty I. Knott, in *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami [...], ordinis primi tomus sextus*, Amsterdam: Huygens instituut/Brill, p. 62: 'Alia vero varietatis ratio ex metaphora nascitur, quae Latine translatio dicitur'.

¹⁵⁵ In the second edition of Richard Sherry's *Treatise of the Figures of Grammer and Rhetorike* (1555), 'traduction' occurs 'when al one woorde repeted in another case, not onely is not tedious, but also maketh [the] oration more trimme, thus. Suffer riches to belonge to riche men, but preferre thou vertue before riches. For if thou wilt compare riches with vertue, thou shalte thinke riches scarce mete to bee handmaydens to vertue'; see Richard Sherry, 1555, *A Treatise of the Figures of Grammer and Rhetorike*, Londini: in aedibus Ricardi Totteli, fol. xxx / sig. D6^v. Francis Bacon uses the term in this meaning while drawing a parallel between compositional techniques and rhetorical devices; see Francis Bacon, 1627, *Sylva sylvarum; or, A Naturall Historie*, London: J. H. for W. Lee, § 113 / p. 38: 'The Reports, and Fuges, have an Agreement with the Figures in Rhetorick, of Repetition, and Traduction'.

‘traduction’ and their related verbs with reference to translation were still used interchangeably, in England as well as in France, in Latin as well as in the vernacular. Erasmus used both *traducere* and *transferre*.¹⁵⁶ In 1559, Humphrey invariably employed *transferre* or *traducere* as verbs and *translatio* or *interpretatio* as nouns.¹⁵⁷ In the same year, Amyot used both ‘translater’ and ‘traduire’ as verbs, ‘traduction’ and ‘translation’ as nouns.¹⁵⁸ In 1561, Henry Bennet, who translated Philip Melanchton’s biographies of the earliest reformers, alternated ‘traduction’ with ‘translation’ / ‘translacion’.¹⁵⁹ Twenty years later, however, in 1579, Thomas North translated Amyot’s version of Plutarch into English and renders the French nouns ‘traduction’ and ‘traslation’ with ‘translation’.¹⁶⁰ Meanwhile, in 1565, the lexicographer Thomas Cooper had registered no use of the term *traductio* with reference to the field of translation and had rather associated it with its etymological meaning of ‘passing over’ or its specific application to ‘defamyng: a bryngyng to open punishment and shame: a setting on the pillorie’;¹⁶¹ this latter meaning was absorbed by the English word ‘traduction’ from the mid-seventeenth century (*OED*). In his definitions of *interpretor* and *interpres*, Cooper uses many English synonyms but not a single word deriving from *traducere*:

Interpretor [...] To interpret: expounde: to declare: to translate: to judge: to esteeme. [...] Interpres [...] An intreprouer: an expounder: a translatour: a stickler between two at variance: a mediatour: a meane: a truchman: a southsaier: a divinour.¹⁶²

The English noun *traduction* meaning ‘translation’ did occasionally re-emerge throughout the seventeenth century: in 1609, Chapman employed it in his preface to the reader,¹⁶³ in 1632, Henry Holland, son of Philemon, edited his father’s translation of Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, and in the dedicatory Epistle to Charles I, he used ‘traduction’ to refer to Philemon’s works along with the words

¹⁵⁶ Erasmus, 1906, ‘Epistula 261’, in *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami, Tom. 1: 1484–1514, denuo recognitum et auctum per P. S. Allen et H. M. Allen*, Oxonii: in typographaeo Clarendoniano, p. 512. Erasmus, 1933, *Ratio seu compendium uerae theologiae per Des. Erasmus Roterodamum – In Testamentum Novum praefatio*, in Hajo Holborn and Annemarie Holborn (eds.), *Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus Ausgewählte Werke*, Munich: C. H. Beck, p. 267.

¹⁵⁷ For the alternation between *interpretatio* and *translatio*, see for instance Humphrey, 1559, sig. a4^r. As for the verbs, Rhodes registers many other verbs than *transferre* and *traducere*; see Rhodes and Gordon Kendal, 2013, ‘Lawrence Humphrey, *Interpretatio Linguarum*’, in Rhodes, Kendal, and Wilson (eds.), p. 263.

¹⁵⁸ Amyot, 1559, sigg. aiii^r, aviii^r.

¹⁵⁹ Henry Bennet, 1561, ‘To the Right Honorable and His Syngu: Good Lord, Thomas Lord Wentworth’, in Philip Melanchthon, *A Famous and Godly History Contaynyng the Lyues a[nd] Actes of Three Renowmed Reformers of the Christia[n] Church, Martine Luther, Iohn Ecolampadius, and Huldericke Zuinglius*, imprinted at London: by Iohn Awdely, sigg. Aii^v-A3^r.

¹⁶⁰ Jacques Amyot, 1579, ‘Amiot To the Readers’, in Plutarch, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes, compared together by that grave learned philosopher and historiographer, Plutarke of Chaeronea*, London: Thomas Vautroullier, sig. *vii.

¹⁶¹ Thomas Cooper, 1565, *Thesaurus linguae Romanae & Britannicae tam accurate congestus, vt nihil penè in eo desyderari possit, quod vel Latine complectatur amplissimus Stephani Thesaurus, vel Anglice, toties aucta Eliotae Bibliotheca: opera & industria Thomae Cooperi Magdalenensis. [...]*, Excusum Londini: In aedibus quondam Bertheleti, cum priuilegio Regiae Maiestatis, per Henricum Wykes, sig. HHHhhh6^v.

¹⁶² Cooper, 1565, sig. Viii2^v.

¹⁶³ Chapman, 1609, ‘To the Reader’, sig. A4^v.

‘translation’ and ‘version’.¹⁶⁴ However, in the English language ‘translation’ and ‘translate’ eventually overshadowed any concurring word.

Nicholas Udall’s partial translation of Erasmus’s *Apophthegmatum opus* (1542) confirms that the predominance of ‘translate’ and partly also of ‘interpret’ was an early phenomenon. In his letter ‘To the Reader’, he referred to himself as a ‘translatour’, whose duty was ‘to interprete and tourne the Latin into Englishe’.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, in his translation of Erasmus’s *Epistula nuncupatoria*, Udall had to tackle the author’s distinctions within translational practices:

Either of theim mynded to bee nothing els but a plain translator of the greke into latine, but I for many causes have thought better the saied Plutarchus to foloe, then to translate, to expoune at large, then woorde for woorde out of greeke onely to enterprete.¹⁶⁶

Here Erasmus is comparing his version of Plutarch’s *Apophthegmata* to those of its previous translators, the two Italian humanists Francesco Filelfo and Raffaele Regio. It is worth reading Erasmus’ original Latin version because it lets emerge the semantic nuances between seemingly synonymic terms to refer to translation:

uterque nihil aliud esse voluit quam interpres, nos Plutarchum multis de causis sequi maluimus quam interpretari, explanare quam vertere.¹⁶⁷

Erasmus is particularly keen in distinguishing his translation as an operation of ‘sequere’ and ‘explanare’ (‘foloe’ and ‘expoune’ in Udall’s version) from the mere ‘vertere’ of his predecessors, who are dismissed as ‘interpret[es]’ with Horatian and Ciceronian echoes (‘fidus interpres’; ‘nec converti ut interpres, sed ut orator’). In order to convey Erasmus’ disparaging nuance in ‘interpres’, Udall feels the need to qualify ‘translatours’ with the adjective ‘plain’. The same amplifying strategy is adopted for ‘vertere’, which Udall renders as ‘woorde for woorde out of greeke onely to enterprete’.

¹⁶⁴ Henry Holland, 1632, ‘To the Most High and Mighty Monarch, Charles’, in Xenophon, *Cyrupaedia The institution and life of Cyrus, the first of that name, King of Persians. Eight bookes. [...] Written in Greeke by the sage Xenophon. Translated out of Greeke into English, and conferred with the Latine and French translations, by Philemon Holland of the city of Coventry Doctor in Physick. Dedicated to his most excellent Maiesty*. London: Printed by I[ohn] L[egat] for Robert Allot [and Henry Holland], sigg. ¶¶7^r- ¶¶8^v. For other occurrences of the usage of ‘traduction’ as ‘translation’, see ‘traduction’ in the *OED*.

¹⁶⁵ Nicholas Udall, 1542, ‘Nicolas Udall Unto the Gentle and Honeste Herted Readers Well to Fare’, in Erasmus, *Apophthegmes that is to saie prompte, quicke, wittie and sentencious saynges [...]. First gathered and compiled in Latine by the ryght famous clerke Maister Erasmus of Roterodame. And now translated into Englyshe by Nicolas Vdall*, [London]; Excusum typis Ricardi Grafton, sig. *ii^v.

¹⁶⁶ Udall, 1542, *viii^r.

¹⁶⁷ Erasmus, 1533, *Apophthegmatum opus cum primis frugiferum, vigilanter ab ipso recognitum autore, e Graeco codice correctis [...]*, Parisiis: Excudebat Christianus Wechelus, sig. Aiii^r.

Clearly, then, at least for an English author, Erasmus' words 'interpretari' and 'vertere' indicate a faithful, slavish translation.¹⁶⁸

Udall's amplification strategies to render Erasmus' distinctions testify to the lack in the English language of an internal differentiation within the spectrum of translation. This was happening in 1542 and it is not surprising that at that stage the English language did not have such a technical vocabulary, especially if one considers that both Neo-Latin and vernacular authors were also juggling with many alternatives. There seems to be no agreement as to which term should identify a faithful translation as opposed to a free translation. As we have seen, in 1559, Humphrey himself admits that more than just three kinds of *interpretatio* could be distinguished:

Broadly speaking, there are three kinds of translation. (It is possible to imagine a variety of different ways of translating, just like ways of speaking, but I want at present to distinguish them briefly in this way.)¹⁶⁹

He then goes on to describe the three forms as follows:

The first kind is rather crude and lacking in refinement, since there is no distancing in it from the actual words. We might say it is overscrupulous or unduly restrained. To this category belong those who have rendered word for word Homer, Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, and other poets. [...] The next method, favoured by some translators nowadays, has the opposite fault. It is freer and looser and allows itself too much licence. [...] It remains to discuss the third method, the 'middle way'. This has features in common with both of the preceding.¹⁷⁰

Translations of the Greek poets, a category which at the time comprised also playwrights since drama was considered a form of poetry, were then usually very literal; as we shall see, the sixteenth-century Latin translations of Sophocles' *Antigone*, including Watson's, generally follow this pattern. Unlike Humphrey, Fausto da Longiano, whose treatise helps us reassess the Englishman's apparent novelties (see section 1.1.2), does not regard the different kinds of translation as internal variations of the same practice:

¹⁶⁸ With reference to their usage in the Latin of Roman antiquity, Folena identifies a distinction also between *interpretator* and *verto* with its compounds. *Interpretator* stands for a strong dependence on the content of the original, as opposed to *exprimere*, which indicates faithfulness at the level of form; *vertere* and its compounds indicate rather a kind of literary translation, often in verse; see Folena, 1991, pp. 8-9. In Erasmus's letter, *vertere* has lost its nuance of poetic translation and has instead become a synonym for *interpretator*.

¹⁶⁹ Translation by Gordon Kendal in Rhodes, Kendal, Wilson (eds.), 2013, p. 266; see the original in Humphrey, 1559, p. 14: 'Triplex omnino est interpretandi ratio: etsi enim variae species interpretandi fingi possint, ut etiam dicendi, sic tamen nunc partiri summatim libet'.

¹⁷⁰ Translation by Kendal in Rhodes, Kendal, Wilson (eds.), 2013, pp. 266-268; see the original in Humphrey, 1559, pp. 14, 21,30: 'Prima rudior et crassior, quum a verbis nihil recedit: ea superstitiosa sane vocet et astrictior. Eiusmodi sunt qui Homerum, Euripidem, Sophocles, Aristophanem, ceterosque poetas ad verbum conversos dederunt. [...] Altera ratio, qua nonnulli interpretes hodie untuntur, in contrariam partem offendit, liberior et solutior, quae nimium sibi permittit licentiae. [...] Superest ut de tertio genere, id est media via dicamus, quae utriusque particeps est'.

With reference to the whole knowledge of translation, before we define it, it is first necessary to know the difference between metaphrasis, paraphrasis, epitome, explanation, and translation.¹⁷¹

Fausto da Longiano particularly insists on the difference between ‘metafrasi’ and ‘tradottione’. He regards it as unacceptable that many early modern writers who radically transform the source text dare present their work as ‘tradottione’ rather than ‘metaphrasis’:

Metaphrasis can be into the same or into a foreign language. You will find examples thereof amongst the Greeks. Today, many practice it under the name of translation: metaphrasis works as long as it conveys the meaning, or a shadow of it, closely or loosely, and achieves its goal without translating rigorously but rather distancing itself [from the source] as it best wishes. It needs not convey the meaning nor the words faithfully but, if she wishes so, it amplifies, diminishes, confounds, transfers, disturbs, adumbrates in such a way that the original author would not recognise his work as his own [...]. I am not criticizing metaphrasis but nonetheless I cannot accept that those practicing it pass it off as translation.¹⁷²

Also Ascham distinguishes translation from *metaphrasis*, *paraphrasis*, and *epitome* when discussing the ‘six ways appointed by the best learned men for the learning of tongues’: ‘1. Translatio linguarum, 2. Paraphrasis, 3. Metaphrasis, 4. Epitome, 5. Imitatio, 6. Declamatio’.¹⁷³ Fausto da Longiano’s *paraphrasis* and *metaphrasis* are not totally corresponding to Ascham’s homonymous notions: for instance, for the Italian, ‘metafrasi’ ‘can be both in the same or in a foreign language’, whereas for the Englishman ‘metaphrasis’ is only an intralingual translation from verse into prose or vice versa, or from one metre into another.¹⁷⁴ However, both conceive ‘metaphrasis’ as a free translation¹⁷⁵ and as a practice distinct from translation itself, not as one of its subcategories. Moreover, like Ascham, Fausto da Longiano treats translation and imitation as completely separate.¹⁷⁶ However, while Fausto da Longiano explicitly renounces to discuss imitation: ‘Now it’s not the right time and place to deal with imitation’,¹⁷⁷ Ascham seems to do so only for clarity’s sake. In the section devoted to *metaphrasis* in *The Schoolemaster*, Ascham reports two texts for comparison, one of Homer and one

¹⁷¹ Fausto da Longiano, 1556, sig. 12^r: ‘Ma per venire a l’intiera conoscenza de la tradottione, nanti che si definisca conuensi prima sapere, che differenza sia tra Metafrasi, Parafraasi, compendio, ispianazione e tradottione’; ‘Metaphrasis’, ‘paraphrasis’, and ‘epitome’ are in Latin because I borrowed the terminology employed by Ascham to refer to similar practices in his *Schoolemaster*; see Ascham, 1967, p. 83.

¹⁷² Fausto da Longiano, 1556, sig. 12^r: ‘Metafrasi può essere in una medesima et in istrana lingua. Appresso i Greci ne trouuerete. Hoggidi è da molti usata, ma sotto il nome di tradottione: sua virtù è, purch’ella in qualche modo riferisca il senso, od ombra di senso, presso o lontano: senza stare nel rigore de le parole, vagando come le piace il meglio, ha fatto l’ufficio suo. Non è obligata a la purità del senso, ne de le parole: e però se voglia le viene, amplifica, sminuisce, confonde, traspone, disturba, adombra di maniera tale, che l’autore principale non riconoscerebbe il suo per suo [...]: pure io non la biasimo, ma io non m’appago del giudicto di coloro, che si vagliano in questo del nome di tradottione’.

¹⁷³ Ascham, 1967, p. 83.

¹⁷⁴ Ascham, 1967, pp. 84, 98.

¹⁷⁵ More than a century later, in 1680, John Dryden would use this term to refer to faithful translation, defined as ‘metaphrase, or turning an author word by word, and line by line’; see John Dryden, 1961, *Essays of John Dryden, Volume I*, edited by W. P. Ker, New York: Russel & Russell, p. 237.

¹⁷⁶ Fausto da Longiano, 1556, pp. 17^r, 24^v, *passim*.

¹⁷⁷ Fausto da Longiano, 1556, p. 17^r: ‘Hora non è tempo, ne luoco di trattare de la imitatione’.

of Plato indebted to the Homeric passage and underlines that Plato's reception of the Homer is defined as *imitatio* in Plato's very text because it was meant 'for others to follow'.¹⁷⁸ However, he adds that 'for teaching's sake, [he] will name it *metaphrasis*, retaining the word that all teachers in this case do use'.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, the operations that for Longiano are not pertaining to translation, i.e., when the author 'amplifies, diminishes, confounds, transfers, disturbs, adumbrates in such a way that the original author would not recognise his work as his own', reappear in Ascham's discussion of *metaphrasis*, where he recommends that the 'schoolmaster weigh[s] well together Homer and Plato and mark diligently these four points: what is kept, what is added, what is left out, what is changed either in choice of words or forms of sentences'; *metaphrasis* entails not only a different metre or the lack thereof but also omissions, additions, and changes, all aspects that would nowadays relate to modern theories of adaptation.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, unlike Fausto da Longiano, Ascham sees imitation and translation as distinct only 'for teaching's sake' and many authors including Humphrey see the two practices as interdependent. The following section will address the question whether and how imitation relates to translation with a focus on the terminology used by early modern English authors.

1.2.2. Imitation: from *imitatio* to *allusio* and the importance of *dispositio*

In the Renaissance, which can be considered 'the era of imitation',¹⁸¹ the Latin term *imitatio* was used in two major senses: *imitatio naturae*, i.e., the imitation of nature, and *imitatio auctorum*, i.e., the imitation of authors.¹⁸² These two meanings are interrelated: according to some early modern writers, the imitation of model authors entails the indirect imitation of nature since model authors themselves imitate nature in the first place.¹⁸³ The former is based on Platonic and Aristotelic conceptions of μίμησις (*mimesis*) as the imitation of 'extra-textual, referential' elements; the latter meaning, developed since the Hellenistic period and in Roman antiquity, refers to a kind of imitation which does not involve 'extralinguistic' elements but happens at an 'intratextual' level.¹⁸⁴ Also, the former sense, *imitatio naturae*, particularly after the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics*, included not only visual and poetic but also dramatic arts, which imitate actions (in Aristotle's words from his famous

¹⁷⁸ Socrates discusses poetic imitation and the passage that Ascham quotes is Socrates' way to exemplify it; see Plato, 1937, *The Republic*, edited by Paul Shorey, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 228-229.

¹⁷⁹ Ascham, 1967, p. 99.

¹⁸⁰ Ascham, 1967, pp. 101-102.

¹⁸¹ Greene, 1982, p. 1.

¹⁸² Franz Penzenstadler, 2006, 'Imitatio', in *Brill's New Pauly*.

¹⁸³ Ann Moss, 1999, 'Literary Imitation in the Sixteenth Century: Writers and Readers, Latin and French', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume III: The Renaissance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 107; Greene, 1989, p. 1.

¹⁸⁴ Klaus Müller-Richter, 2006, 'Mimesis', in *Brill's New Pauly*.

definition of tragedy, μίμησις πράξεως, ‘mimesis [imitation] of an action’, Arist.*Poet.*1449b24).¹⁸⁵ However, early modern authors would know *mimesis* as theatrical imitation also from Plato: in *The Schoolemaster* (1570), Ascham mentions him in his discussion on imitation, which he conceives as ‘faire livelie painted picture of the life of everie degree of man’.¹⁸⁶

In this section, I will focus only on *imitatio auctorum*, because both texts under analysis in various ways imitate other authors either explicitly or implicitly, and because it is this kind of imitation that interacts and even merges with translation. It is beyond the scope of this work to trace a comprehensive onomasiological history of the concept of imitation during the Renaissance. In accordance with the previous section and the whole chapter, I will rather consider the English theoretical responses to this concept in comparison to the contemporary Continental framework, particularly with reference to the relationship between imitation and translation. Also, I will grant a greater attention to some of the terms used by Watson, who unlike May bequeathed to us some reflections on the practice of imitation (and translation too). In fact, in Watson’s verse sequence *The Εκατομπαθία, Or Passionate Centurie of Love* (1582), poetry is interspersed with prose passages, wherein he explains the compositional process of each poem and describes in detail how he reworked his sources (see Chapter 3).

The previous section closed by asking the question of how the relationship between translation and imitation was conceived in early modern England as well as in Europe. ‘[T]he precise point at which translation stops and imitation begins is often very hard indeed to discern’:¹⁸⁷ thus Glenn Most admits the difficulty to draw a boundary between translation and imitation with reference to classical literature. However, this holds true also for sixteenth-century English literature. Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard’s debts to Petrarch are described both in terms of imitation and translation: in 1589, George Puttenham regards their poetry as ‘in all imitating very naturally and studiously their Master *Francis Petrarcha*’; two years later, in 1591, John Harington, translator of Ariosto, defines the two poets as ‘translators out of Italian’.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, humanists such as Dolet, Sebillet, Peter Ramus, and Andreas Schottus establish a hierarchy between the two practices, subsuming translation into imitation.¹⁸⁹ However, most theorists, including the influential Bruni, rather reflect on the relationship

¹⁸⁵ Penzenstadler, 2006.

¹⁸⁶ Ascham, 1967, p. 116. For *mimesis* as a literary representation and theatrical imitation as well as all its other meanings in Plato, see Stephen Halliwell, 1986, *Aristotle’s Poetics*, London: Duckworth, p. 121.

¹⁸⁷ Glenn W. Most, 2003, ‘Violets in Crucibles: Translating, Traducing, Trasmuting’, *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 133, 2, p. 388.

¹⁸⁸ Morini, 2017, p. 30, n. 2. George Puttenham, 1589, *The Arte of English Poesie*, [London]; Printed by Richard Field, p. 50. John Harington, 1591, ‘A Preface, or Rather a Briefe Apologie of Poetrie and of the Author and Translator of this Poem’, in Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, Imprinted at London: By Richard Field dwelling in the Black-friers by Ludgate, 1591, sig. ¶viii^r.

¹⁸⁹ On Dolet, see Worth-Stylianou, 1999, p. 129; Glyn P. Norton, 1974, ‘Translation Theory in Renaissance France: Etienne Dolet and the Rhetorical Tradition’, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 10, 1, p. 6. On Sebillet, see Sebillet, 1548,

between the two practices usually from the perspective of translation: they consider which authors and how translators should imitate. In *Interpretatio Linguarum* (1559), Humphrey devotes one of the three books that make up the treatise precisely to imitation on the grounds that translation necessarily entails some kind of imitative practice:

Here I will deal with imitation insofar as it relates to our subject [i.e., translation] and to the imitation done by the translator. [...] I think it is necessary to provide the translator with someone to imitate. [...] Therefore, imitation is necessary to the would-be translator.¹⁹⁰

The fact of including a whole book on imitation in a treatise on translation is in itself revealing of Humphrey's belief that there is an interplay between the two practices. As hinted above in section 1.1.2, the point of contact between translation and imitation is emulation, albeit of a different kind from that of imitation alone. In assessing Périon's translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Humphrey accuses him of 'improper imitation' ('prava imitatione') and complains about the excessive Ciceronian flavour of his version, included in the treatise *De optimo genere interpretandi* (1540): according to Humphrey, Périon translated Aristotle 'in a way that is more Ciceronian than Aristotelian'.¹⁹¹ Périon's reliance on a Ciceronian style is a symptom of the emulative character of his version of Aristotle: for Humphrey, Périon 'has beautifully emulated but he did not intend to translate' Aristotle.¹⁹² As we have seen above, in Humphrey's methodological system, emulation is acceptable in translation only insofar as it involves previous translators:

Emulation is a great spur and incitement for us to translate correctly and to compete with others who translated something before us, so that we contend for the victory with them.¹⁹³

Considering this passage in isolation, however, it is not clear which translators one should emulate. The reference to 'others who translated something before us' without context leaves open the possibility that Humphrey is suggesting that the would-be translator should imitate any good translator, not necessarily those translating the same work he has decided to render. This view is the one held by Sebillet in his *Art poétique françois* (1548), in which he specifically recommends some translated works by contemporary French translators:

sig. 74^r: 'la version n'est rien qu'une imitation' ('translation is nothing but an imitation'). On Ramus and Schottus, see Hosington, 2014.

¹⁹⁰ Humphrey, 1559, pp. 212-213: 'Tantum enim hic de imitatione dicam, quantum erit cum hoc argumento nostro, et cum Interpretis imitatione coniunctum. [...] interpreti aliquem ad imitandum proponi censeo oportere. [...] Est igitur necessaria Interpreti futuro imitatio'.

¹⁹¹ Humphrey, 1559, p. 28: 'Ciceroniane magis quam Aristotelice'.

¹⁹² Humphrey, 1559, p. 252: 'pulchre aemulatus est, sed non voluit transferre'.

¹⁹³ Humphrey, 1559, p. 536: 'Æmulatio magnum calcar est et incitamentum ut recte vertamus, contendamusque cum aliis qui ante nos quippiam verterunt, ut cum illis de palma certemus'.

Since translation is nothing but a form of imitation, how can I better introduce you to it than with imitation? Imitate then [Clément] Marot in his *Metamorphoses*, in his Musaeus, in his Psalms; [Hughes] Salel in his *Iliad*; [Antoine] Héröet in his *Androgyne*; [Louis] Des Masures in his *Aeneid*; [Jacques] Peletier in his *Odyssey* and *Georgics*.¹⁹⁴

However, if one considers Humphrey's suggestion in its context, it is clear that his idea of emulation is far broader than his statement shows. The examples he provides reveal at least three different nuances of the notion of emulation. He first mentions two Greek authors of the third century BC, Idaeus of Rhodos and Timolaus from Larisa, who produced an expanded version of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* respectively;¹⁹⁵ with reference to the latter, Humphrey specifies that Timolaus added and subtracted lines from Homer, 'in order to equal his magnificence or even to surpass it'.¹⁹⁶ This is not emulation between translators but competition with the source. Second, Humphrey refers to Pigres, a fifth century author, who reportedly also expanded Homer's hexameters 'imitating and emulating him';¹⁹⁷ in this case, the competition is again with the source. It is only in introducing his third example that Humphrey finally considers the competition between translators and envisages the possible outcomes: defeat, draw, and victory.

Then competition may arise with another expert in this art of translating: either with a most excellent and learned one so that, albeit defeated, you will learn; or with one with similar abilities to yours so that you are equal to him; or with one even worse than you so that you will triumph in victory.¹⁹⁸

Humphrey goes on then to exemplify the first case of emulation between translators, i.e., defeat inflicted by better translators, by referring to Cicero's translation of Plato's *Timaeus*: a comparison with his version will help the would-be translator become aware of his faults and improve his skills.¹⁹⁹ He then mentions Cicero's lost translation of Plato's *Protagora*, of which only few lines quoted in Priscian are now extant,²⁰⁰ and compares it to the version of Marsilio Ficino. Predictably, Cicero comes out the winner, but what is more crucial to Humphrey in that passage is the comparison between Ficino and the would-be translator, who, measured against a worse model than Cicero, will appear 'if not superior, at least no longer inferior'.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁴ Thomas Sebillet, 1910, *Art poétique françoys (1548)*, edited by Félix Gaiffé, Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition, p. 190: 'Mais puis que la version n'est rien qu'une imitation, t'y puy je mieus introduire qu'avec imitation? Imite donc Marot en sa Metamorphose, en son Musée, en ses Psalms: Salel, en son Iliad: Héröet, en son Androgyne: Désmasures, en son Eneide: Peletier, en son Odyssee, et Géorgique'; see Sebillet, 1548, sig. 74^r.

¹⁹⁵ Humphrey, 1559, p. 536; see Manuel Baumbach, 2006, 'Timolaus', in *Brill's New Pauly*.

¹⁹⁶ Humphrey, 1559, p. 536: 'ut illius maiestatem aequaret aut etiam vinceret'.

¹⁹⁷ Humphrey, 1559, p. 537: 'illum [...] vel imitates vel etiam aemulatus'; see Ewen Bowie, 2006, 'Pigres', in *Brill's New Pauly*.

¹⁹⁸ Humphrey, 1559, p. 537: 'Itaque certamen suscipiatur cum alio artifice in hoc transferendi artificio, vel praestantissimo et sciente, ut victus discas, vel cum aequali ut par sis, vel cum deteriori etiam ut victor triumphes'.

¹⁹⁹ Humphrey, 1559, p. 537.

²⁰⁰ Vittorio Hösle, 2008, 'Cicero's Plato', *Wiener Studien*, 121, p. 148, n. 14.

²⁰¹ Humphrey, 1559, p. 539: 'ut si non superior, saltem non longe inferior'.

Emulation in translation is therefore conceived by Humphrey as a form of competition between translators, whereas the emulation aiming to surpass the source author – either by imitating him as in the case of Timolaus and Pigres, or by imitating another author as in the case of Périon imitating Cicero in his translation of Aristotle – breaks the boundaries of translation and falls within the remit of imitation. Even so, the inclusion of the first two examples of imitators of Homer in his discussion of emulation in translation reveals that the distinction between translation and imitation is not always consistently and clearly maintained throughout Humphrey’s treatise.

Humphrey’s discussion on imitation in his second book is nonetheless extremely useful as it captures manifold terms that were in use at the time to refer to imitative practices. Two such terms are *adumbratio* and *adumbrare*. In the 1542 edition of the dictionary by Thomas Elyot, whom Humphrey himself mentions,²⁰² the lexicographer gives the following definition of *adumbro*:

to make or gyue shadowe, to represent or expresse, as peynters doo, that do shadowe ymages in playn tables, to make them shewe imboced or round. Some do suppose that it signifieth, to trycke a thyng, or drawe it grossely, as paynters doo at the begynnyng. It signifieth alsoo to feyne or dissemble a thyng.²⁰³

Some twenty years later, in Cooper’s 1565 dictionary, *adumbrare* has still the literal meaning of ‘to cover in shadow a thing; to give shadow unto’ and the more nuanced one of ‘to portray a thing grossely’ but includes also one that is explicitly associated to imitation: ‘to represent; to counterfaite; to imitate or follow; to expresse in imitation’.²⁰⁴ Unlike Elyot’s lemma for *adumbratio* (‘loke in Adumbro’),²⁰⁵ Cooper provides an autonomous definition of the deverbial noun as ‘a shadowing; also an imitation or expressing of an other thing, somewhat to the likenes and nature of the same’.²⁰⁶ From now onwards, I will use the last of these meanings, namely ‘imitation’, to translate *adumbratio*. Humphrey generally uses *adumbrare* as a synonym for *imitor* and frequently contrasts it to *interpretor*. When discussing Cicero’s translations of Plato, Humphrey explains that Cicero mingled ideas from many authors with his own ‘not by translating but by imitating’ (‘non interpretando, sed adumbrando’).²⁰⁷ In another passage, under the section ‘Cicero’s imitation in his philosophical books’ (‘Ciceronis in libris de Philosophia Imitatio’), Humphrey specifies that

one thing is to imitate, another to translate: imitation is obscure and hardly appears, except to those who are experienced in both languages and compare them diligently. Translation is explicit and a more

²⁰² Humphrey, 1559, p. 528.

²⁰³ Sir Thomas Elyot, 1542, *Bibliotheca Eliotae, Eliotis Librarie*, Londini: In officina Thomae Bertheleti typis impres, sig. Bi^r.

²⁰⁴ Cooper, 1565, sig. D4^v.

²⁰⁵ Elyot, 1542, sig. Bi^r.

²⁰⁶ Cooper, 1565, sig. D4^v.

²⁰⁷ Humphrey, 1559, p. 244.

visible rendition of the author. The former is obtained through the faculty of judgement, reading, and diligence; the latter is recognized and is immediately evident at first sight by the name of the author by signs clearer than light.²⁰⁸

Here Humphrey recuperates the etymological meaning of *adumbrare*, i.e., in Cooper's dictionary 'to give shadow', and conceives *adumbratio* as an interlingual operation involving both the source and target language ('utramque linguam'). Furthermore, Humphrey associates *adumbratio* with the changing of the word order, a technique Cicero uses in order to achieve *varietas* in his reworking of Aristotle and other philosophers, a reworking which is alternatively and quite confusingly defined as a form of translation and imitation.²⁰⁹ He also discusses with detailed examples the way in which Cicero has 'embellished and amplified' Aristotle.²¹⁰ Comparing Latin and Greek sentences from the two authors, he focusses on Cicero's amplificatory techniques with meticulous comments such as 'expanding paraphrastically', 'this is the splendid and exaggerated method of speaking and translating, which Aristotle defines as ὄγκος [loftiness, majesty]'.²¹¹

Realizing that this continuous oscillation between imitation and translation may be confusing to the reader,²¹² Humphrey draws a further distinction in order to limit the imitation allowed to a translator based on his discussion of Cicero's embellishment and amplification of Aristotle: 'let's establish a distinction between translator and amplifier: that we imitate without damage and skillfully'.²¹³ In a way, Humphrey reorients the discussion to the main purpose of the second book of the treatise mentioned above, dealing with imitation insofar as it relates to translation. The same applies to *adumbratio* and *amplificatio*, which Humphrey sees as instrumental to the task of the translator. This view is not shared by Fausto da Longiano, for whom operations such as *adumbratio* and *amplificatio* do not pertain to translation but to what he defines as *metaphrasis*, a form of loose translation. In a passage quoted above, Fausto da Longiano employs the Italian verbs *adombrare* and *amplificare* with reference to *metaphrasis*, which to him should not be considered as a form of 'tradottione' at all (see section 1.2.1). Although it is unlikely that Fausto da Longiano's treatise enjoyed a wide circulation in Europe, it is nonetheless representative of how Italian humanist works

²⁰⁸ Humphrey, 1559, p. 301: 'aliud esse adumbrare, aliud interpretari: adumbratio obscura est, et vix apparet, nisi his, qui utramque linguam callent, et diligenter conferunt. Interpretatio expressa est, et apertior autoris translatio. Interpretatio expressa est, et apertior autoris translatio. Illa iudicio, lectione, diligentia elicitur: haec ex autoris nomine, signisque luce clarioribus statim prima fronte intelligitur et eminet'.

²⁰⁹ Humphrey, 1559, p. 304.

²¹⁰ Humphrey, 1559, p. 306: 'expoliendi et amplificandi'.

²¹¹ Humphrey, 1559, p. 305: '(paraphrasticè dilatans'; 'haec est splendida et exaggerata illa dicendi et transferendi ratio, quae ὄγκος dicitur ab Aristotele'. The translation of the term ὄγκος is taken from *TLJ* (*The Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon*); Aristotle uses it in this sense in the *Rhetoric*.

²¹² Humphrey, 1559, p. 307: 'These suggestions are most useful to imitation in writing and are no little help also for the translator; however confusion should be avoided' ('Quae in scribendo ad imitandum sunt perutilia, et Interpretem quoque non mediocriter adiuvant: sed [...] confusio evitanda').

²¹³ Humphrey, 1559, p. 307: 'inter translatores et amplificatores hoc discrimen statuamus: quo inoffense et dextre imitemur'.

in the vernacular were particularly receptive to contemporary controversies on imitation and translation and, most importantly to our purpose here, how the use of the same terms differed from one country to another.

Two other terms are worth considering in the cluster of words designing imitative practices: *accommodatio* and *allusio*. *Accommodatio* and *accommodare* usually have religious implications. In *Interpretatio linguarum*, Humphrey uses *accommodare* with reference to the need to make ‘Christ’s speech’ as elegant as ‘Cicero’s eloquence’: ‘Christ’s speech should not be distorted according to Cicero’s eloquence but it is the eloquence of the latter that should be accommodated and inflected to the speech of the former’.²¹⁴ *Accommodatio* has a specific meaning in Christian rhetoric as God’s adaptation to the limitedness of man: it is ‘a divine response whereby God reacts to his creatures in a manner informed by and adapted to their capacity’.²¹⁵ Alongside this specific nuance in Christian rhetoric, *accommodatio* possesses two other meanings: a broader rhetorical significance as ‘adaptation of linguistic expression to its subject matter, purpose, and audience’; and a specifically ‘missiological’ meaning, i.e., a meaning related to the theology of missions, as ‘adjustment (and adaptation) of the gospel to the particular culture in which it is proclaimed’.²¹⁶ In the early modern period, the Jesuit missionaries ‘accommodated’ their dogmas to other peoples across the world, also by adapting Catholic teachings to the drama and music of the receiving cultures.²¹⁷

Allusio and *alludere* are not common terms in imitative theories but, since Thomas Watson frequently uses their corresponding English versions (‘allusion’ and ‘allude’) in his *Hekatompathia*, I shall briefly hint at some of its usages in the sixteenth century. Julius Caesar Scaliger treats *allusio* only as a similarity of sound between words with different meanings.²¹⁸ In *De arte poetica* (1527), Marco Girolamo Vida admits that he ‘often enjoy[s] playing with phrases from the ancients and, while using precisely the same words, to express another meaning’.²¹⁹ Ralph G. Williams’ translation

²¹⁴ Humphrey, 1559, p. 378: ‘Non torquenda est ad Ciceronis eloquentia Christi oratio, sed ad orationem huius elegantia illius est accommodanda et inflectenda’.

²¹⁵ Jon Balsarak, 2006, *Divinity Compromised: A Study of Divine Accommodation in the Thought of John Calvin*, Dordrecht: Springer, p. 14. However, *accommodatio* and *accommodari* were not the only terms used to refer to the idea that God adapted to the limited intellectual capacities of man; see Balsarak, 2006, pp. 15-16.

²¹⁶ Volker Küster, 2007, ‘Accommodation’, in Hans Dieter Betz, Don S. Browning, Bernd Janowski, and Eberhard Jüngel (eds.), *Religion Past and Present, Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion, Volume I: A-Bhu*, Leiden: Brill, p. 29; see also Peter Burke, 2007, ‘Culture of Translation in Early Modern Europe’, in Burke and R. Po-Chia Hsia (eds.), *Cultural Translation and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 9.

²¹⁷ John W. O’Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, T. Frank Kennedy (eds.), 2006, *The Jesuits II, Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, *passim*. On drama, see Ananya Chakravarti, 2014, ‘The Many Faces of Baltasar da Costa: *imitatio* and *accommodatio* in the seventeenth century Madurai mission’, *Etnográfica*, 18, 1, p. 148. On music, see David Crook, 2006, ‘A Certain Indulgence: Music at the Jesuit College in Paris, 1575-1590’, in O’Malley, Bailey, Harris, Kennedy (eds.), p. 463.

²¹⁸ Scaliger, 1561, pp. 200-201.

²¹⁹ Marco Girolamo Vida, 1976, *The ‘De Arte Poetica’ of Marco Girolamo Vida*, edited and translated by Ralph G. Williams, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 103, 180, n. 35: ‘antiquis alludere dictis, / Atque aliud longe verbis proferre sub iisdem’.

unfolds the etymology of *alludere*: the verb stems from ‘ludus’ (in Cooper’s dictionary ‘play in actes: mirth in woordes: sport: game: pastime’).²²⁰ Vida – who is also the author of a mythological poem on the game of chess, *Scacchia ludus* (1525) – must have been particularly fond of the polysemy of the word *alludere*. In Cooper’s dictionary, *alludere* is defined as follows: ‘to speake that hath some respect or resemblance to a thyng: to speake merely: to scoffe at privily and merily: to smile upon: to favour’; while referring to mirth in speaking, this definition seems to lack any reference to playing, let alone the kind of playful imitation described by Vida. However, as we shall see in section 3.1.2, there are some factors that, if Watson did not explicitly retain the etymological value of *alludere*, at least he did conceive the *Hekatompathia* as a kind of compositional game or exercise.

The discussion on imitation and its related theoretical terms has so far presupposed that the objects of the imitative process are the content or ideas (*res*) and the style or the words (*verba*) of a model author. In Quintilian’s words, ‘all speech expressive of purpose involves also a *subject* and *words*’.²²¹ According to Cicero – Quintilian goes on to point out – these two domains are respectively governed by *inventio* (‘invention’, Quint.*Inst.*3.3.7) and *elocutio* (‘expression’, i.e., choice of words, Quint.*Inst.*3.3.7). *Inventio* and *elocutio* are just two of the steps necessary to the ‘art of oratory’:

The art of oratory, as taught by most authorities, and those the best, consists of five parts: *invention*, *arrangement*, *expression*, *memory*, and *delivery* or *action* (the two latter terms being used synonymously).²²²

Quintilian considers these both as the ‘duties of the orator’ and ‘parts of rhetoric’ (Quint.*Inst.*3.3.11-14). Early modern scholars reflecting on imitation usually focus on the first three steps, the more relevant to literature, but *dispositio* is usually dismissed hastily, if not disregarded altogether. In *Deffence et illustration de la Langue Francoyse* (1549), Joachim Du Bellay explicitly relegates *dispositio* to matters of ‘discretion and good judgement’ (‘la discretion, & bon iugement’), unsuitable to ‘rules and precepts’ (‘reigles, & preceptes’), and declares he will rather focus on *inventio* and *elocutio*.²²³ This is probably due to the fact that Quintilian devotes *inventio* and *elocutio* three and two books of his *Institutio* respectively (IV, V, VI to *inventio*; VIII and IX to *elocutio*), whereas the discussion is centred on *dispositio* only in the first section of one book (VII.1). Despite humanists’ little attention for this feature, *dispositio* (‘order’, ‘arrangement’), which Quintilian theorizes with the forensic context in mind, is a fundamental aspect for the productions of any text and hence for

²²⁰ Cooper, 1565, sig. CCcc2^r.

²²¹ ‘omnis vero sermo, quo quidem voluntas aliqua enuntiatur, habeat necesse est rem et verba’ (Quint.*Inst.*3.3.1-3.3.2).

²²² ‘Omnis autem orandi ratio, ut plurimi maximeque auctores tradiderunt, quinque partibus constat, inventione, dispositione, elocutione, memoria, pronuntiatione sive actione, utroque enim modo dicitur’ (Quint.*Inst.*3.3.1).

²²³ Paul J. Smith, 2007, *Dispositio: Problematic Ordering in French Renaissance Literature*, Leiden: Brill, p. 5. Joachim Du Bellay, 1549, *La deffence, et illustration de la Langue Francoyse*, Paris: pour Arnoul L’Angelier, sig. b1^{r-v}.

imitation in literature, which he discusses in Book X. Quintilian divides it in three aspects: *division* or ‘the division of a group of things into its component parts’, *partitio* or ‘the separation of an individual whole into its elements’, and *ordo* or ‘the correct disposition of things in such a way that what follows coheres with what precedes’.²²⁴ *Dispositio* or ‘arrangement’ is managing all these aspects according to ‘expediency’, according to the needs of the moment:

arrangement is the distribution of things and parts to the places which it is expedient that they should occupy. But we must remember that *arrangement* is generally dependent on expediency.²²⁵

Dispositio is related to *invention*: both are concerned with *res* (‘the subject’): as Quintilian puts it, *dispositio* is nothing ‘else than the marshalling of arguments in the best possible order’.²²⁶ Likewise, Ascham, who explicitly connects both *dispositio* and *inventio* to the ‘right imitation’, sees the former as the order of ‘matter’: ‘the right imitation – to invent good matter, to dispose it in good order, to confirm it with good reason’.²²⁷ However, it would be reductive to see it only as the arrangement of contents. As Quintilian points out quoting Dion, *invention* and *arrangement* ‘were twofold in nature, being concerned with words and things’.²²⁸

Paul J. Smith similarly distinguishes two levels of applicability of *dispositio*: ‘the macro level of the whole and the micro level(s) of its constituent parts’.²²⁹ I shall refer to these two kinds as ‘outer *dispositio*’ and ‘inner *dispositio*’ respectively. In *Poetices libri septem* (1561), Scaliger focusses only on the second level since he is mostly concerned with metrical aspects of *dispositio* within the same line or the same rhythmic unit.²³⁰ Humphrey is equally interested in *dispositio* with reference to ‘rhythum’ (‘numeros’).²³¹ In Smith’s classification, the inner *dispositio* does not include only ‘the lower strata of syntactic sentence structure (*compositio* in classical rhetoric)’ but also ‘the structure of the constituent text, for instance a sonnet in a cycle or collection’.²³² This is exactly the kind of inner *dispositio* that is relevant to works such as Watson’s *Hekatompathia, Or the Passionate Centurie of Love* (1582), a poetry cycle of mostly eighteen-line poems on the suffering caused by love (see section 3.1.2). In Smith’s view, the outer level of *dispositio* rather refers to the order of the

²²⁴ ‘divisio rerum purium in singulas’ (Quint.*Inst.*7.1.1); ‘singularum in partes discretio’ (Quint.*Inst.*7.1.1); ‘recta quaedam collocatio prioribus sequentia adnectens’ (Quint.*Inst.*7.1.1).

²²⁵ ‘dispositio utilis rerum ac partium in locos distribution. Sed mimerimus ipsam dispositionem plerumque utilitate mutari’ (Quint.*Inst.*7.1.1-2).

²²⁶ ‘aliud sit disposition quam rerum ordine quam optimo collocatio’ (Quint.*Inst.*3.3.8)

²²⁷ Ascham, 1967, p. 94.

²²⁸ ‘utramque duplicem, rerum et verborum’ (Quint.*Inst.*3.3.8)

²²⁹ Smith, 2007, p. 7.

²³⁰ Scaliger, 1561, pp. 210-212.

²³¹ Humphrey, 1559, p. 33.

²³² Smith, 2007, p. 7.

constituents in a ‘collection of poems, letters, anecdotes, adages, etc.’ and can sometimes be ‘genre-specific’ in the case of letter-writing and theatre.²³³

Nonetheless, in Chapter 3 I will try to apply the criterion of inner and outer *dispositio* to the two dramatic texts that this project sets out to analyse. What I will argue is that even alongside a ‘genre-specific’ *dispositio* with ‘age-old prescriptions and theorizing’,²³⁴ dramatic texts can display other, less regulated forms of *dispositio*. As we shall see, Watson’s and May’s *Antigones* can be fruitfully read on different levels and degrees as the result of reordered material from various sources. Although early modern theorizing on the macro level of *dispositio* is hard to find in general, let alone with reference to drama,²³⁵ the idea of *dispositio* is helpful and not anachronistic to describe the kinds of imitation that takes place in the two texts under discussion. In classical rhetoric, particularly in Quintilian, *dispositio* was associated with the structure of orations: in *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian points out that

[i]n all forensic cases the speech consists of five parts, the *exordium* designed to conciliate the audience, the *statement of facts* designed to instruct him, the *proof* which confirms our own propositions, the *refutation* which overthrows the arguments of our opponents, and the *peroration* which either refreshes the memory of our hearers or plays upon their emotions.²³⁶

Such a framework explicitly conceived for oratorical writing enjoyed a much broader diffusion in other contexts. It was used as a hermeneutical tool to interpret Greek tragedy. Joachim Camerarius explicitly connects issues of *dispositio* to tragedies in his commentary to Sophocles’ Theban plays (1534). In his introduction to *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Camerarius paraphrases Aristotle’s comment in his *Poetics* that ‘Euripides, even if he does not arrange other details well, is at least found the most tragic of the poets’²³⁷ as follows: a certain Aristotle, the author of that book dealing with poetics says that Euripides was the most tragic, even if he used disposition in a way that is often reproachable’.²³⁸ While it is surprising that a scholar of the calibre of Camerarius had doubts about the authorship of the *Poetics* after printed versions of the *Poetics* had been already been circulating in Greek since 1508 and in Latin since 1498,²³⁹ what is relevant here is Camerarius’ use of the technical word *dispositio*

²³³ Smith, 2007, p. 7.

²³⁴ Smith, 2007, p. 7.

²³⁵ Smith, 2007, p. 7.

²³⁶ ‘In omni porro causa iudiciali quinque esse partes, quarum exordio conciliari audientem, narratione doceri, probatione proposita confirmari, refutatione contra dicta dissolvi, peroratione aut memoriam refici aut animos moveri’ (Quint.*Inst.*7.Proemium.11).

²³⁷ ὁ Εὐριπίδης, εἰ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα μὴ εὖ οἰκονομεῖ, ἀλλὰ, τραγικώτατος γε τῶν ποιητῶν φαίνεται (Arist.*Poet.*1453a28-30).

²³⁸ Camerarius, 1534, *Commentarii in tragoedias Sophoclis argumenti Thebaidos*, in Sophocles, *Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίαί ἐπτά, Sophoclis tragoediae septem cum commentariis interpretationum argumenti Thebaidos Fabularum Sophoclis, authore Ioachimo Camerario*, Haganae: ex officina Seceriana, sig. B3^r: ‘quem [Euripides] Aristoteles quispiam, author libri eius qui de poetica circumfertur, τραγικώτατος fuisse dicit, etsi dispositione saepe reprehendenda usum’.

²³⁹ The first Latin translation was that of Giorgio Valla (d. 1500) and appeared in 1498 in Venice; the editio princeps of the Greek text was printed by Aldo Manuzio in 1508; see Micha Lazarus, 2013, *Aristotle’s Poetics in Renaissance*

to render εὖ οἰκονομεῖ (Arist.*Poet.*1453a28). In Weit Winshemius's Latin translation of Sophocles' tragedies (1546), some notes in the margin mark some passages as sections of *narratio*, *conclusio* as well as other technical terms used by Quintilian such as *insinuatio*.²⁴⁰ In Watson's and May's *Antigones*, there is not such explicit use of Quintilian's terms of the specifically oratorical *dispositio*, i.e., the one to be used in judicial orations. However, as we shall see in Chapters 3 and 4, the attention to the order of constituents, whether of single words or whole sections of lines, which I have now termed as 'inner' and 'outer' *dispositio*, is a fundamental aspect of the two authors' imitation of their sources.

This chapter has considered how the two major forms of Sophocles' reception in early modern English drama – translation and adaptation – were theorized in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe, particularly in England. However, a more appropriate term to refer to imitative practices at the time is 'imitation', an early modern partial analogue, which albeit not a proper equivalent, is at least less anachronistic than 'adaptation'. Amongst contemporary theories on translation and imitation, Humphrey's *Interpretatio linguarum* (1559) stands out as the most comprehensive and systematic treatise on translation produced by an English author in the early modern period and offers one of the richest reflections on the relationship between translation and imitation. Nonetheless, Humphrey's views need to be set against his contemporary European framework: the circulation of ideas on the practices of translation and imitation cannot be seen as nationally confined in Europe's *respublica litteraria*, where books were increasingly exchanged and humanists travelled, often due to their religious beliefs.

Only an enlarged perspective enables us to have a better understanding of theories of these practices in England and test their potential specificity. Such specificity or lack thereof can be measured also against the terminology employed by early modern theorists and practitioners of translation and imitation. By reviewing the terms used for translation (*interpretatio*, *traductio*, and *translatio*) and those for imitation (*imitatio*, *aemulatio*, *adumbratio*, *accommodatio*, and *allusio*), we can draw two opposite but complementary conclusions. On the one hand, we cannot but register, in

England, PhD dissertation, University of Oxford, pp. 28-30. See also Micha Lazarus, 2016, 'Aristotelian Criticism in Sixteenth-century England', *Oxford Handbooks Online*, online: Oxford University Press [accessed on 13 November 2018] and Micha Lazarus, forthcoming, 'Tragedy at Wittenberg: Sophocles in Reformation Europe', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 73, 2.

²⁴⁰ Sophocles, 1546, *Interpretatio tragoediarum Sophoclis, ad utilitatem iuventutis, quae studiosa est Graecae linguae, edita a Vito Winshemio*, Francoforti: excudebat Petrus Brubachius, sigg. H3^r, O3^v, O4^v, O8^r. For 'insinuatio', see Quint.*Inst.*4.1.42, 48 and Sophocles, 1546, sig. O7^v.

Stuart Gillespie's words, an 'impossibility of taxonomy'.²⁴¹ As we have seen, early modern critical stances to translation and imitation display a stable terminology, which is not always accompanied by a semantic continuity, or alternatively the same concept is expressed by means of a variety of synonymic terms. Also, while some internal distinctions between different kinds of translations have been proposed, the same can hardly be said for imitative practices. The terms reviewed for imitation are mostly synonymic and do not substantially display any attempt to distinguish the different relationships between texts as much as modern theories of adaptation try to do.²⁴² Therefore, early modern terminology does not help define the respective internal nuances of translation and imitation. Nor does it consistently account for a clear distinction between translation and imitation in the first place. Early modern theories of these processes thereby confirm what most texts already display in practice: there exist no clear-cut boundaries between translation and imitation but rather a spectrum of possibilities where the two processes cohabitate, interact, and overlap. As we shall see, Watson's and May's *Antigones* make no exception and rather represent ideal case studies for the interplay between translation and imitation.

On the other hand, this insight into Renaissance translation and imitation theory significantly reveals how early modern authors, albeit at pains in tracing a coherent taxonomy, were nonetheless struggling to provide one. In doing so, they mostly relied on classical sources such as Cicero and Quintilian, thus laying down a shared intellectual background for European humanists employing the same interpretive tools. England was no exception in this context. Translation and imitation were conceived not only as necessary steps to a good writing proficiency: these practices were first of all analytical and interpretive instruments to read texts. Translation and imitation were equally engrained in both the hermeneutical processes of reading and the compositional techniques of writing: there was in effect 'a unity of the critical and creative acts', which characterized many pedagogical programs of the time.²⁴³ It should come as no surprise, then, that such challenging texts as Sophocles' tragedies as well as the rest of Greek drama were so extensively translated as soon as the original texts appeared in print. After a survey of the origins and development of Greek studies in England, the following chapter will briefly reconstruct the transmission of Sophoclean drama and its circulation in print in the sixteenth century. Also, while Chapter 1 has looked at the pan-European context of the theories of translation and imitation, i.e., the forms of reception of the two English *Antigones*, the next chapter will re-contextualize the two texts within another frame, that of the English reception of Greek tragedy as a whole, both in Latin and in the vernacular.

²⁴¹ Stuart Gillespie coined this phrase in his plenary lecture at the conference 'Translating Greek Drama in Sixteenth-century Europe' held at St Hilda's College, Oxford, on 14 December 2018.

²⁴² See for instance Linda Hutcheon with Siobhan O'Flynn, 2013, *A Theory of Adaptation*, London: Routledge; Julie Sanders, 2006, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, London: Routledge.

²⁴³ Greene, 1982, p. 267.

2. Greek and Sophocles in England and on the Continent

In order to have a fuller understanding of the reception of *Antigone* in early modern English drama, this chapter outlines three relevant contexts: first, it charts the development of Greek literacy in England from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century; second, it traces the transmission and the various modes of reception of Sophocles in England; and finally, it enlarges the scope of analysis both thematically, considering other engagements with Greek tragedy in England, and geographically in order to include the interpretation of Sophocles and the reception of *Antigone* in early modern Europe as a whole.

The first section tries to answer to these questions: when and where did ancient Greek started to be taught in England? How did the study of Greek in England develop? Was Sophocles among the authors in the curricula of grammar school and universities? These documents as well as educational treatises are rich in information as to how Greek was studied and which classical texts should be read.¹ Both Thomas Watson and Thomas May attended grammar school and university. Watson entered Winchester College in 1567, as confirmed by the registers of the school, and, before going to Europe, he spent some time at Oxford in the early 1570s without obtaining a degree; after his travels in Italy and France, he probably spent some time at the Inns of Court, if not as a proper member, at least as a *literatorus* who was allowed to stay there.² Although there are no surviving records of May's early education, he must have had the typical grammar school training to enter university: in 1609 May enrolled as a fellow-commoner at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and, after obtaining his BA in 1613, he pursued his legal studies at Gray's Inn but stayed there no more than a year.³ A survey

¹ Peter Mack, 2005, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 12-14; see also Mack, 2015, 'The Classics in Humanism, Education, and Scholarship', in Patrick Cheney and Philip Hardie (eds.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in England Vol. II: 1558-1660*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 33-35. The pioneering work within the remit of the study of grammar schools' curricula is Thomas Whitfield Baldwin's *Small Latin and Lesse Greeke* (1944); see Thomas Whitfield Baldwin, 1944, *Small Latin and Lesse Greeke*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press. Despite being dated, Baldwin's work still proves useful for a study as recent as Mack's *Elizabethan Rhetoric* and Luca Iori's *Thucydides Anglicus* on the authors' own admission; see Mack, 2005, p. 4; see also Luca Iori, 2015, *Thucydides Anglicus: Gli Eight Bookes di Thomas Hobbes e la ricezione inglese delle storie di Tucidide (1450-1642)*, Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, p. 20, n. 76.

² Mark Eccles, 1982, 'Brief Lives: Tudor and Stuart Authors', *Studies in Philology*, 79, 4, p. 130; see also Albert Chatterley, 2004, 'Watson, Thomas (1555/6-1592)', in *ODNB*; Dana Ferrin Sutton, 1996, 'General Introduction', in Thomas Watson, *The Complete Works of Thomas Watson (1556-1592)*, vol. 1, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, pp. xiii-xiv; Ibrahim Alhiyari, 2006, *Thomas Watson: New Biographical Evidence and His Translation of Antigone*, PhD dissertation, Texas Tech University, p. 40.

³ David Northbrook, 2004, 'May, Thomas (b. in or after 1596, d. 1650)', in *ODNB*; see also Gerald Eades Bentley, 1956, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stages: Plays and Playwrights*, volume IV, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 830. 'Commoners' were those students who paid for tuition, board, and lodging, as opposed to 'scholars'. Many were 'gentleman commoners' or 'fellow commoners', sons of the nobility such as Philip Sidney; Thomas May was also one of them since his father was knighted in 1603; see Northbrook, 2004. On the distinction between 'scholars' and 'commoners', see also

of Greek studies in English institutions is therefore instrumental to gauge Watson's and May's potential knowledge of Greek.

The second section addresses 'the material histories of literary and learned transmission'⁴ of Sophocles: which were the forms in which the ancient scripts of Sophocles' plays reached England? Apart from one manuscript coming from Italy, Sophoclean texts were usually imported from Europe in the form of printed editions of the original text and/or Latin translations. The guiding question will then be: how were Sophoclean texts received in England? The modes of reception of Sophocles in early modern England range from the reading of the original with edifying purposes to the selection of sentences and themes for academic composition. However, most importantly for our purposes, two other modes were translation and imitation/adaptation for drama, either performed or not, in academic Neo-Latin or in English.

The last section widens the scope of the analysis in order to include early modern responses to Greek tragedy across Europe. First, I consider an alternative mode of reception than those considered in the preceding section. Alongside the now canonical field of "'productive" reception', Michael Lurje has recently identified the 'history of interpretation' of Greek tragedy as a specific research area of reception studies.⁵ In this section, I accordingly offer a survey of the interpretation of Sophocles which emerges from the paratextual material in the printed editions of his tragedies, the commentaries to the plays, and theoretical writings on tragedy. In so doing, I refer to Europe as a whole since the majority of these writings on Sophocles are by Continental authors. An equally pan-European approach informs the final part of the chapter devoted to an overview of the Continental versions of *Antigone* such as Luigi Alamanni's *Tragedia di Antigone* (1533) and Robert Garnier's *Antigone ou la Piété* (1580); also, I briefly look at the English reception of Euripides such as George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* (performed in 1566; published in 1573) in order to compare Watson's and May's *Antigones* with contemporary English engagements with Greek tragedy.

Elizabeth Russell, 1977, 'The Influx of Commoners into the University of Oxford before 1581: An Optical Illusion?', *English Historical Review*, 92, 365, pp. 721-745; see also James McConica, 1974, 'Scholars and Commoners in Renaissance Oxford', in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *The University in Society, Vol. 1: Oxford and Cambridge from the 14th Century to the Early 19th Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 151-182.

⁴ Rita Copeland, 2016, 'Introduction: England and the Classics from the Early Middle Ages to Early Humanism', in Rita Copeland (ed.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature, Vol. 1: 800-1558*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 6.

⁵ Michael Lurje, 2006, 'Misreading Sophocles: Or Why Does the History of Interpretation Matter', *Antike und Abendland*, 52, p. 1.

2.1. Greek studies in England from 1450 to 1650

2.1.1. From the onset of English humanism to the mid-sixteenth century

The revival of Greek learning, a most prominent manifestation of European humanism, penetrated England quite late in comparison with the rest of the Continent and ushered it into the Renaissance when in other countries it was already waning. Scholars conventionally set the time boundaries of the English Renaissance between 1558, the accession of Queen Elizabeth I to the throne of England, and 1660, the return of Charles II as king after the Interregnum.⁶ However, since Roberto Weiss' seminal work *Humanism in England During the Fifteenth Century* (1957), the beginning of the circulation of Greek literature has been set much earlier than 1558, thus laying the foundations of English humanism as early as the fifteenth century.⁷ The affirmation of Greek as a stable university subject in the 1540s is but the culmination of a long process of importation which has its origins in the mid-fifteenth century, when England saw the earliest forms of Greek teaching.⁸ Weiss does not altogether exclude 'the possibility that some Greek may have been known in England during the fourteenth century'⁹ but also remarks that a renowned Greek émigré, Manuel Chrysoloras, whose teaching in Italy had been crucial,¹⁰ did not 'find opportunity of teaching' in his diplomatic mission to England in 1409.¹¹

The second half of the fifteenth century saw some occasional forms of Greek learning at Oxford:¹² John Farley, an Oxonian fellow and scribe, active until his death in 1464, was certainly

⁶ Some literary historians have proposed different dates for the English Renaissance, for instance the years between 1485, the beginning of the Tudor dynasty, and 1674, the publication of John Milton's final version of *Paradise Lost*; see Patrick Cheney and Philip Hardie, 2015, 'Introduction', in Cheney and Hardie (eds.), p. 1.

⁷ Roberto Weiss, 1957, *Humanism in England During the Fifteenth Century*, Oxford: Blackwell. Although Weiss's is a seminal work for any study of humanism in England, Daniel Wakelin has recently traced the new developments in this field thereafter. In his contribution, Wakelin sheds light on the results of post-Weiss research, which has revealed how the passion for classics was shared by other, less prominent figures. In particular, he points to 'the danger of "magnate attraction"', quoting David Rundle's definition of the tendency to regard English humanism as a phenomenon limited to circles of royal or noble lineage and important churchmen; see Daniel Wakelin, 2012, 'England: Humanism Beyond Weiss', in David Rundle (ed.), *Humanism in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, p. 270. Therefore, humanist activity was not restricted to these exclusive coteries but equally manifested itself in more 'hybrid and dispersed' forms: it involved people of 'lesser rank' and is testified in unexpected material such as 'terse wills and inventories, letters in English, conventional obituaries, cathedral records'; see Wakelin, 2012, pp. 270-272.

⁸ In this respect, I will be taking into account the renewed interest for Greek literature only from 1400 onwards; for the presence of Greek in England before that date, see M. R. James, 1927 'Greek Manuscripts in England Before the Renaissance', *The Library*, 7, 4, pp. 337-353 and Roberto Weiss, 1958, 'The Private Collector and the Revival of Greek Learning', in Francis Wormald and C. E. Wright (eds.), *The English Library Before 1700*, London: The Athlone Press, pp. 112-135. Micha Lazarus, 2015, 'Greek Literacy in Sixteenth-century England', *Renaissance Studies* 29, 3, p. 437.

⁹ There is some suggestion that the language was taught in Norwich at that time; see Weiss, 1957, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰ Manuel Chrysoloras not only taught Greek in Florence between 1397 and 1400, which John Monfasani defines as 'transformative three years', he also wrote an influential textbook, *Erotemata*; see John Monfasani, 2012, 'The Greeks and Renaissance Humanism', in Rundle (ed.), pp. 34, 47.

¹¹ Weiss, 1957, p. 11.

¹² Another centre of Greek studies was Canterbury; see Weiss, 1957, p. 147.

studying Greek at Oxford at the Grey Friars on manuscripts belonging to Robert Grosseteste's donation to the Franciscan convent;¹³ two Byzantine scribes, Emanuel of Costantinople and John Serbopoulos, may have taught Greek as private teachers in Oxford and elsewhere in England pursuing their scribal activity.¹⁴ A major contribution is to be attributed to the patron of Emanuel of Constantinople, Archbishop George Neville, whose role as *maecenas* facilitated the penetration of Greek into England.¹⁵ Englishmen could also learn Greek elsewhere, namely in Italy: in the 1450s the English humanists Robert Flemmyng, John Free, and John Gunthorpe learned Greek in Ferrara from Guarino da Verona, whose reputation as a teacher of classics had already been known in England thanks to his first English pupil, William Grey.¹⁶ However, none of them was able to play a significant part in the revival of Greek studies after their return to England: they saw humanism merely as 'a leisured pursuit'.¹⁷ The Italy-England exchange of Greek knowledge occurred also the other way round, with the Italian Cornelio Vitelli going to England and teaching the ancient language in 1482-1486 at the University of Oxford,¹⁸ where he had amongst his pupils William Grocyn and Thomas Linacre. They both pursued their Greek studies in Italy, where they profited from the expertise of the most renowned scholars of the discipline at the time: the Italian humanist Angelo Poliziano and the Byzantine scholar Demetrius Chalcondyles. Linacre as well as other brilliant Oxonian students in turn contributed to Italy's thriving humanist community, particularly in Padua, where they became leading figures in the field of medicine within the strand of English medical humanism.¹⁹

The authoritativeness of Linacre, Grocyn, and other English humanists of the time was later called upon by a humanist of the calibre of Erasmus in three of his letters. In one (1499), he describes his surprise at finding in England an unexpectedly vibrant and active environment for the *studia humanitatis*. To him England is 'not only accomplished in the science of law but also fluent in Latin and in Greek' with 'such a quantity of intellectual refinement and scholarship, not of the usual pedantic and trivial kind either, but profound and learned and truly classical, in both Latin and Greek, that I have little longing left for Italy'; he then goes on listing the accomplishments in Greek of some

¹³ Weiss, 1957, p. 137. However, not all Greek émigrés enjoyed an equal success: Andronicus Callistus and George Hermonymous did not find any teaching opportunity during their stay in England; see Weiss, 1957, pp. 145-146.

¹⁴ Weiss, 1957, p. 147.

¹⁵ Weiss, 1957, pp. 142-148.

¹⁶ For Robert Flemmyng, see Weiss, 1957, pp. 85-98; for John Free, see Weiss, 1957, pp. 101, 107-112; for John Gunthorpe, see Weiss, 1957, pp. 122-123.

¹⁷ Weiss, 1957, p. 127.

¹⁸ Oren Margolis and David Rundle, 2012, 'Biographical Appendix of Fifteenth-century Italian Humanists' in Rundle (ed.), p. 346. Weiss reports that Vitelli's arrival at Oxford (around 1490 for Weiss, but in 1482 according to the more recent study of Margolis and Rundle) has been associated with the beginning of Greek studies there; however, the critic questions this view, pointing to the fact that already humanists in the Neville circle had been spreading the study of Greek in Oxford much earlier; see Weiss, 1957, pp. 147, 173. Perhaps Vitelli could be considered the first to teach Greek within the system of the University of Oxford, as opposed to the forms of private teaching provided by John Serbopoulos and Emanuel of Costantinople. J. B. Trapp, 2004, 'Vitelli, Cornelio (*d.* in or before 1554)', in *ODNB*.

¹⁹ Lazarus, 2015, pp. 438-439.

of his remarkable friends including John Colet, Grocyn, Linacre, and Thomas More.²⁰ It is also to them that Erasmus is probably thinking when in another letter (1505?) he praises the learnedness of ‘five or six men in London profoundly versed in Latin and Greek’ and ‘doubts if Italy itself contains such good ones at this moment’.²¹ In the other (1507), addressed to Aldo Manuzio in order to persuade him to print his translations from Euripides, Erasmus points out that Linacre, Grocyn, Latimer, and Tunstall ‘have a very high opinion’ of his translations and ‘these men are too scholarly to be at sea in their judgment’.²²

Between 1490 and 1520, Greek gained an increasing recognition as an academic discipline. More than Vitelli’s activity at Oxford, which can be considered the first example of Greek teaching going beyond the private endeavours of previous humanists, it was Grocyn who marked the entrance of Greek studies at the University of Oxford: between 1491 and 1493 he gave the first Greek public lectures at Exeter College;²³ ten years later, in London, he would have Thomas More among his pupils.²⁴ In 1511, Erasmus was invited by Bishop John Fisher to teach Greek at the college which the martyr had contributed to found, i.e., St John’s, Cambridge.²⁵ The presence of such a prestigious figure was made possible by the mother of King Henry VII, Lady Margaret Beaufort, who assigned to Erasmus the first Lady Margaret professorship of Divinity.²⁶ In the second decade of the sixteenth century Greek achieved the status of a regular taught subject at an academic level. At the end of the 1510s, Oxford and Cambridge created stable posts for Greek lecturers. At Oxford, Richard Fox, Bishop of Westminster, founded Corpus Christi College, which was the first to introduce a stable public lecturer in Greek in England since its foundation in 1517.²⁷ Cambridge, where Erasmus had taught between 1511 and 1514 on Fisher’s invitation without any retribution, introduced its first salaried Greek lecturer in 1518, when the post was assigned to Richard Croke at St John’s; the statutes

²⁰ Erasmus, Desiderius, 1974, *The Collected Works of Erasmus, Volume 1: The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 1 to 141, 1484 to 1500*, translated by R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 235-236 [letter n. 118]; see the original in Erasmus, 1906, *Opus epistolarium Des. Erasmi Roterodami, Tom. 1: 1484-1514, denuo recognitum et auctum per P. S. Allen et H. M. Allen*, Oxonii: in typographaeo Clarendoniano, p. 273: ‘Anglia non modo iureconsultissimum, verum etiam Latine Graeque pariter loquacem’, ‘tantum autem humanitatis atque eruditionis, non illius protritae ac trivialis, sed reconditae, exactae, antiquae, Latinae Graeque, ut iam Italiam nisi visendi gratia haud multum desyderem’.

²¹ Erasmus, Desiderius, 1975, *The Collected Works of Erasmus, Volume 2: The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 142 to 297, 1501 to 1514*, translated by R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 99 [letter n. 185]; see the original in Erasmus, 1906, p. 415: ‘Sunt enim Londini quinque aut sex in utramque lingua exacte docti; quales opinor ne Italia quidem ipsa impraesentiarum habet’.

²² Erasmus, 1975, p. 132 [letter n. 207]; see also Erasmus, 1906, p. 438: ‘magnopere probarunt; quos ipse nosti doctiores esse quam ut iudicio fallantur’.

²³ Trapp, 2004.

²⁴ Lazarus, 2015, p. 438.

²⁵ Iori, 2015, p. 7; see also James McConica, 2004, ‘Erasmus, Desiderius (c. 1467–1536)’, in *ODNB*; Richard Rex, 2004, ‘Fisher, John [St John Fisher]’, 2004, in *ODNB*.

²⁶ Tanya Pollard, 2017, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 47.

²⁷ Iori, 2015, p. 8; see also Thomas Fowler, 1893, *The History of Corpus Christi College with List of Members*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 38.

of this college prescribed the studies of the three ‘sacred languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Latin)’, aiming to imitate ‘the model of the *collegium trilingue*’ abroad.²⁸ In the same decade, humanists were rethinking the educational principles of grammar schools and for the first time Greek started to be taught at a school level in one of these institutions, St Paul’s: re-founded by John Colet in 1512, the school stands out as a ‘pioneering institution’ not only for introducing Greek writers in its curricula but also for adopting the most cutting-edge educational programme at the time, the one set out in Erasmus’s *De copia* (1512) and *De ratione studii* (1511-1512).²⁹

According to many historians of scholarship, the thirty years between the 1490s and the 1520s where the period in which the study of Greek in England enjoyed an intense but ephemeral success, bound to decline in the following decades.³⁰ However, as Luca Iori points out, if the study of Greek had been seen as a contribution to a ‘better religious education, from the 1520s onwards – after the radical upheaval caused by Lutheranism – the projects that aimed at the integration of Greek in the educational system coalesced more and more organically with doctrinal principles’.³¹ As hinted in Chapter 2, vernacular Bibles were a fundamental agent in the spread of Protestantism in England but their appearance was obviously conditioned by a thorough knowledge of Greek by its translators. The study of Greek became inevitably involved in controversy: in the 1520s Oxford saw the formation of a faction who passed under the name of ‘Trojans’ and fiercely countered Greek studies.³² After the Reformation, not only Greek scholarship but also Greek literacy at its more basic levels was meant to be instrumental to religious and devotional life along with higher theological pursuits.³³ In his seminal study on sixteenth-century education in England, Thomas Whitfield Baldwin reports the testimony of a contemporary Italian soldier, Petruccio Ubaldini, who explicitly accounts for the inclusion of Greek (as well as Latin and Hebrew) in the nobility’s educational programmes on religious grounds: ‘The rich cause their sons and daughters to learn Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, for since this storm of heresy has invaded the land they hold it useful to read the Scriptures in the original tongue’; as Baldwin puts it, ‘Greek was first Reformation, and only in its upper stages, if at all, Renaissance’.³⁴ The subservience of Greek studies to theology was also an Erasmian legacy: in the prefaces to his earliest translations from Greek, Erasmus frequently avers that Greek should be studied with the primary aim of achieving a better understanding of the Scriptures (see section 3.2.1).

²⁸ Lazarus, 2015, pp. 440-441; see also J. P. Carley and Agnes Johasz-Ormsby, 2016, ‘Survey of Henrician Humanism’, in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature Vol. 1: 800-1558*, p. 522; Iori, 2015, p. 7; Jonathan Woolfson, 2004, ‘Croke, Richard (1489–1558)’, in *ODNB*.

²⁹ Carley and Johasz-Ormsby, 2016, pp. 518-519.

³⁰ Lazarus, 2015, p. 442.

³¹ Iori, 2015, p. 10.

³² Lazarus, 2015, p. 442; see also Pollard, 2017, p. 47.

³³ On the need to distinguish between Greek literacy and Greek scholarship in the history of scholarship, see Lazarus, 2015, p. 437.

³⁴ Baldwin, 1944, vol. 2, p. 617.

Alongside theology, the Greek language was thought as a means to many other fields such as philosophy, medicine, and history.³⁵ Greek also received attention as a subject in itself when the pronunciation of the language triggered a controversy at Cambridge: in the 1540s, prominent scholars such as Thomas Smith, John Cheke and John Redman endorsed Erasmus' theories on Greek pronunciation, provoking a reaction from the conservative Stephen Gardiner.³⁶ However, it was mainly thanks to its interdisciplinary polyvalence that Greek was increasingly recognized in England, as reflected by the development of Greek studies at Oxford and Cambridge in the 1520s and 1540s. In these decades, Greek became more and more institutionalized, as confirmed by two important reforms introduced at the two universities. First, colleges, at least the wealthiest, started to provide daily public lectures in Greek to undergraduates.³⁷ While at the beginning this measure was taken at Oxford only by Corpus Christi on the initiative of Bishop Richard Fox in 1528, after the first Royal Visitation in 1535 the college provision of Greek teaching was extended to a large number of colleges.³⁸ In 1535, Thomas Cromwell, who had been entrusted the visitation, sent deputies to both universities in order to enforce some royal injunctions directly affecting academic curricula: the foremost change was precisely that fourteen colleges at Cambridge and probably as many at Oxford were required to provide daily Latin and Greek lectures for free.³⁹ Moreover, at Corpus Christi, which was trailblazing in this regard, Greek teaching was no longer confined to public lectures: since the end of the 1520s, Greek started to be offered also in the form of personal tuition to undergraduates; these intramural classes as well as the daily public lectures were mandatory for scholars.⁴⁰ Second, in 1540 Greek was assigned a Regius professorship both at Oxford and at Cambridge. This recognition was equally a consequence of the 1535 royal visitation: the Regius professorships were a natural prosecution of the so called 'King Henry VIII lectures' established by the injunctions.⁴¹ The first Regius Professor at Cambridge was John Cheke, who in the 1530s had made St John's 'the centre of mid-century English humanism'.⁴² As Tanya Pollard observes, it was again 'royal patronage, extending Lady Margaret Beaufort's early support' that ensured the Greek's fortunes.⁴³

³⁵ Lazarus, 2015, p. 447.

³⁶ James Bass Mullinger, 1884, *University of Cambridge: From the Royal Injunctions of 1535 to the Accession of Charles I*, Cambridge: at the University Press, pp. 54-57.

³⁷ Lazarus, 2015, pp. 442-443.

³⁸ James McConica, 1986, 'The Rise of the Undergraduate College' in James McConica, (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford, III: The Collegiate University*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 27; see also F. Donald Logan, 1991, 'The First Royal Visitation of the English Universities, 1535', *The English Historical Review*, 106, 421, pp. 865-866.

³⁹ Logan, 1991, p. 865.

⁴⁰ Lazarus, 2015, p. 450; see also McConica, 1986, p. 27.

⁴¹ Lazarus, 2015, p. 443; see also Logan, 1991, p. 884.

⁴² Lazarus, 2015, p. 444.

⁴³ Pollard, 2017, p. 48.

The efforts of the early Tudors to foster Greek studies at university were the reflection and the expansion of their commitment to educate the royal nobility, both male and female, to the *studia humanitatis*. Both Tudor princes and princesses received an excellent classical education. Princess Mary had the privilege to be tutored by Linacre and Juan Luis Vives, who both composed educational programmes on the basis of their experience as royal tutors.⁴⁴ In *De officio mariti* (1529) Vives explicitly suggested that women should learn Greek and Latin authors; the Greek authors recommended for women are Plato, Aratus, and Plutarch.⁴⁵ In *De disciplinis* (1531) Vives explains that ‘Greek makes a man cultured and well-stored’ not only because ‘Greek increases and adorns the knowledge of Latin itself’ but also because ‘many matters are handed down to memory in Greek literature, history, in nature-knowledge, private and public morals, medicine, piety’.⁴⁶ He then suggests that the youth should study Greek in concomitance with Latin and read Homer, Aristophanes, and Euripides; he also specifies that those who aim to hold public offices should be able to read these authors but do not need to aspire to the erudition of grammarians and philologists.⁴⁷ Prince Edward was educated by John Cheke, Regius Professor of Greek, who was asked by Henry VIII to join Edward’s tutor Richard Cox.⁴⁸

Elizabeth owes the foundations of her life-long classical learning to Roger Ascham, who supervised her education while she was tutored by his pupil William Grindal and became her tutor himself in 1548, when Grindal died, until 1550.⁴⁹ With Ascham, Elizabeth studied Greek in the mornings, reading the New Testament, Isocrates, Demosthenes, Sophocles, and patristic authors;⁵⁰ reportedly she also translated one of Euripides’ plays.⁵¹ Ascham’s tutorage lasted only two years and was intermittently resumed during Mary’s reign, while he was serving as Latin Secretary despite his Protestant sympathies, but the meetings with Elizabeth were all too sporadic and irregular to enable Ascham to continue his educational programme with his pupil.⁵² During her reign, Elizabeth could spend time with Ascham more regularly, reading Latin and Greek with her former master. In his *Schoolmaster*, Roger Ascham informs us that he read Demosthenes with her and that even as a Queen ‘she readeth here now at Windsor more Greek every day than some prebendary of this church doth

⁴⁴ Carley and Johasz-Ormsby, 2016, p. 524.

⁴⁵ Vives, Juan Luis, 1912, *Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women*, edited by Foster Watson, London: Edward Arnold, pp. 204-205.

⁴⁶ Vives, Juan Luis, 1913, *Vives: On Education*, edited and translated by Foster Watson, Cambridge: at the University Press, p. 94.

⁴⁷ Foster, 1913, ‘Introduction’, to Vives, p. cxxxviii; see also Vives, 1913, pp. 143, 145, 152.

⁴⁸ Dale Hoak, 2014, ‘Edward VI (1537–1553)’, in *ODNB*.

⁴⁹ Patrick Collinson, 2004, ‘Elizabeth I (1533-1603)’, in *ODNB*; see also Rosemary O’Day, 2004, ‘Roger Ascham (1514/15-1568)’, in *ODNB*; Stephen Wright, 2004, ‘William Grindal (d. 1548)’, in *ODNB*.

⁵⁰ O’Day, 2004; Baldwin, 1944, vol. 1, p. 275; see also Lawrence V. Ryan, 1967, ‘Introduction’, in Roger Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, p. xvii.

⁵¹ Pollard, 2017, p. 20; the source of this information is ‘a secretary of state under James I, William Chetwood’; see Pollard, 2017, p. 40, n. 121.

⁵² Ryan, 1967, pp. xx-xxi.

read Latin in a whole week'.⁵³ Ascham also gives more details on his educational techniques, claiming that he used Demosthenes and Isocrates for her exercises of double translations, i.e., from Greek into English and then from English back into Greek (see section 1.1.2 above).⁵⁴

Sir Anthony Cooke attended to the education of his four sons and his five daughters, who probably received a better education than their brothers.⁵⁵ Four of Cooke's daughters – Mildred Cecil, Anne Bacon, Katherine Killingrew, and Elizabeth Hoby Russell – were praised for their erudition in ancient languages; Mildred distinguished herself for her outstanding knowledge of Greek: she not only translated from and wrote in Greek but she reportedly even spoke it fluently.⁵⁶ The linguistic skills of Cooke's daughters and particularly those of Mildred Cecil are mentioned by Laurence Humphrey in his preface to the *Interpretatio linguarum* along with the names of other brilliant noblewomen such as Thomas More's daughters, the claimant to the throne and Protestant martyr Lady Jane Grey Dudley, and Queen Elizabeth herself.⁵⁷ Ascham gives us an idea of Lady Jane Grey Dudley's visceral passion for classics, particularly for Greek literature: he reports that on a visit to her household in 1550 he 'found her in her chamber reading *Phaedon Platonis* in Greek, and that with as much delight as some gentleman would read a merry tale in Boccaccio'.⁵⁸ Two other learned sisters in the mid-sixteenth century are Henry Fitzalan's daughters, Jane Lumley and Mary Howard, who both translated from Greek.⁵⁹ Jane translated from Isocrates and produced what is not only 'the first English translation of a Greek play' but also 'the first extant English play by a female writer', *The Tragedie of Euripides called Iphigeneia* (1557) (see section 3.3.2 below).⁶⁰ Finally, another prominent female translator is Mary Bassett, granddaughter of More, who produced a manuscript translation of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* from Greek into English by the years 1553-1554, when the same work had already been translated into Latin by John Christopherson, her former tutor.⁶¹

⁵³ Roger Ascham, 1967, *The Schoolmaster (1570)*, Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, pp. 7, 56.

⁵⁴ Ascham, 1967, p. 87.

⁵⁵ Donn L. Calkins, 2010, 'Cooke, Sir Anthony (1505/6–1576)', in *ODNB*.

⁵⁶ Caroline M. K. Bowden, 2014, 'Cecil [*née* Cooke], Mildred, Lady Burghley (1526–1589)', in *ODNB*.

⁵⁷ Humphrey, 1559, sig. a4^v.

⁵⁸ Ascham, 1967, pp. 35-36; Alison Plowden, 2014, 'Grey [*married name* Dudley], Lady Jane (1537–1554), in *ODNB*.

⁵⁹ Pollard, 2017, p. 49.

⁶⁰ Pollard, 2017, p. 49; Allyna E. Ward considers it 'an imitation rather than a translation'; see Allyna E. Ward, 2013, *Women and Tudor Tragedy: Feminizing Counsel and Representing Gender*, Plymouth: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, p. 54

⁶¹ Eugenio M. Olivares Merino, 2009, 'Some Notes About Mary Roper Clar(c)ke Bassett and Her Translation of Eusebius', *Moreana*, 46, 2-3, pp. 146-180. Christopherson's translation of Eusebius was published in 1569 but it was already circulating in manuscript by the time Mary finished her English version; see Olivares Merino, 2009, p. 163.

2.1.2. *From the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century*

It has frequently been assumed that Greek studies started to wane from the 1540s. By contesting the assumption that more surviving evidence necessarily corresponds to a more intense and widespread study of Greek, Micha Lazarus has recently reconfigured the decade of the 1540s as the ‘the point after which Greek became routine at the universities’:

the absence of a committed diarist or epistolographer is no index of the decline of Greek in England. Rather, it reflects the changing condition under which Greek studies developed: we know so much about England’s early Greek scholars not because there were so many of them, but because there were so few. Their numbers and achievements do not bespeak widespread Greek, but insurgent Greek at the hands of a small circle of fellow-workers in the inexhaustible epistolary and (tutorial) orbit of Erasmus. [...] As the century wore on, Greek became a professional fixture and ceased to be the work of a small and motivated coterie; it is no coincidence that the history of Greek in England seems to lose its lustre as their memoirs tail off, and to dull entirely after the 1540s.⁶²

After the 1540s, thanks to the college provision of Greek to undergraduates and the institution of the Regius professorships, the study of Greek was not restricted to the achievements of distinguished individuals but became more and more standardized: ‘after this point [...] we should expect a student, commoner or scholar, to have gained from any substantial time spent at university robust working Greek’.⁶³

The reigns of Henry VIII and of his son Edward VI were decisive for the grafting of Greek at the two levels of teaching offered by Oxford and Cambridge: both in ‘university lecturing’ and in collegiate ‘intramural’ tutoring to undergraduates and graduates alike.⁶⁴ However, there was no comparable attention for Greek teaching at a school level: although Colet’s statutes for St Paul’s ideally required the master to be learned in Greek ‘if such may be gotten’ as early as 1512, schools rarely complied with this criterion.⁶⁵ School statutes under Edward VI did foresee Greek⁶⁶ but university had ‘to cover grammar and syntax’, which, as Joan Simon observes, is ‘an indication that Greek had not yet taken root in the grammar schools’.⁶⁷ In this regard, Lazarus pinpoints a crucial and relatively rapid development in 1560: this date marks the beginning of a more sustained presence of Greek in the curricula of grammar schools.⁶⁸ In that year two schools, Eton and Westminster,

⁶² Lazarus, 2015, p. 445.

⁶³ Lazarus, 2015, p. 453.

⁶⁴ McConica, 1986, pp. 64-65; see also Iori, 2015, pp. 15-16.

⁶⁵ One early exception was William Lily’s appointment as master at St Paul’s; see Lazarus, 2015, p. 440.

⁶⁶ Baldwin considers the one of Bury St. Edmund’s School in 1550; see Baldwin, 1944, vol. 1, pp. 296-298.

⁶⁷ Joan Simon, 1966, *Education and Society in Tudor England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 253.

⁶⁸ Lazarus, 2015, p. 454.

prescribed Greek in their institutes for their upper classes.⁶⁹ Although Greek seems to have been first taught at Eton and Winchester at the end of the fifteenth century, it was formally introduced in school statutes by Colet at St Paul's School only in 1512, with William Lily as its first master.⁷⁰ However, 'the first substantial evidence we have of Greek being taught at school' dates back to 1543, when Alexander Nowell, would-be dean of St Paul's Cathedral, was appointed master of Westminster School while studying at Oxford as a graduate student.⁷¹ However, this was still an isolated experience which became norm only twenty years later when other university graduates like Nowell started to teach Greek at school.⁷² This 'percolation of Greek' from university to schools was guided by the educational principles of Quintilian but also of near contemporary and contemporary humanists such as Erasmus, Vives, Thomas Elyot, and Johann Sturm.⁷³ After Eton and Westminster revised their statutes to include Greek, many other schools followed suit.⁷⁴

Although the reading of the Greek New Testament, which was envisioned at Westminster's School and its followers, was probably suspended under the reign of Mary, the Queen 'could not completely undo what had been done'.⁷⁵ During Elizabeth's reign, Baldwin registers an insistence on the New Testament and assumes that

by Shakspeare's day practically all grammar schools on regular foundations, as was that at Stratford, would at least hope to teach some Greek. It is equally clear that one principal use for the Greek was in connection with the Greek New Testament.⁷⁶

Amongst the most read works, the New Testament was followed by Isocrates, Homer, Demosthenes, Hesiod, Aesop, and Euripides, which are also the authors 'most recommended by theorists'.⁷⁷ The records of books purchased by school libraries partly confirm this set of authors: the 1582-83 list of books purchased by a master of St Paul's includes editions of Isocrates and Euripides.⁷⁸ However, St Paul's statutes are an exception and, as Mack warns, 'some of the statuses are probably too ambitious

⁶⁹ Lazarus, 2015, p. 454; see also Kenneth Charlton, 1965, *Education in Renaissance England*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 117.

⁷⁰ On Greek teaching at Eton and Winchester, Michael Van Cleave Alexander is doubtful about the reliability of this information, saying that 'the evidence is far from conclusive'; see Michael Van Cleave, 1990, *The Growth of English Education, 1348-1648: A Social and Cultural History*, p. 188; on St Paul's and William Lily, see Lazarus, 2015, p. 453.

⁷¹ Lazarus, 2015, p. 453.

⁷² Lazarus, 2015, pp. 453-454.

⁷³ Lazarus, 2015, p. 454; see also Charlton, 1965, pp. 123-124.

⁷⁴ Lazarus, 2015, p. 454; see also Charlton, 1965, p. 117.

⁷⁵ Baldwin, 1944, vol. 1, p. 320 and vol. 2, p. 625. On educational policies during Mary's reign, see Simon, 1966, pp. 302-304.

⁷⁶ Baldwin, 1944, vol. 2, p. 626.

⁷⁷ Baldwin, 1944, vol. 2, pp. 626-627.

⁷⁸ William Barker, 2006, 'School libraries (c.1540 to 1640)', in Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Vol. 1: To 1640*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 439; see Baldwin, 1944, vol. 1, p. 422.

in the list of texts proposed for pupils' reading'.⁷⁹ While Sophocles does not appear in the curricula of grammar schools, some theorists do mention him (see section 3.2.2 below). Alongside the texts of prescribed authors, grammar-school students had also a series of grammars and dictionaries at their disposal.⁸⁰ At St Paul's there is confirmation of regular purchase of Greek dictionaries and grammars: the same 1582-1583 list mentioned above contains the grammar by Nicholas Clénard, *Institutiones in linguam graecam* (1531), which dominated Greek teaching in most European schools until the end of the sixteenth century, when it was superseded by William Camden's grammar in 1595.⁸¹

A comparison of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century syllabi reveals a growing presence of Greek in the latter. In grammar schools, this trend is to be attributed if not entirely, at least partially to the Protestant tendency to come to grips with the original text of the Bible, also confirmed by the attendant appearance of Hebrew in these programmes.⁸² It can be argued that the 'sometimes Utopian'⁸³ principles of Erasmus' treatises on education, imitated in England by Roger Ascham in his *Schoolmaster* (1570), began to be concretized and spread also in smaller centres only in the following century. Charles Hoole's *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole* (1660), albeit equally ambitious in its goals, registers a new prominence given to Greek grammar and authors.⁸⁴ Despite minor developments in the texts adopted and the time assigned to Greek, the core of grammar school curriculum in England remained by and large unaltered until the late eighteenth century.⁸⁵ Universities equally saw an increasing presence of Greek in their statutes, which can be explained partly as the result of the advancement in the teaching of Greek in grammar schools, partly as the consequence of the emphasis laid by Oxford and Cambridge on the learning of the Aristotelian logic with a humanist approach, i.e., by recovering and studying the original text; the shift from scholastic to humanist methods was enforced since Cromwell's injunctions in the first royal visitation of 1535.⁸⁶

However, Mary's reinstatement of Catholicism resulted in a brief revival of Scholasticism to the detriment of the study of classics, as Roger Ascham complains in his *Schoolemaster*. Ascham, who studied under Cheke at St John's, Cambridge, laments 'the grievous change that chanced *anno*

⁷⁹ On St Paul's, see Barker, 2006, p. 439; on the ambitious character of statutes, see Mack, 2015, p. 33.

⁸⁰ Lazarus, 2015, p. 450; Barker, 2006, pp. 438-439; Baldwin, 1944, vol.1, p. 422.

⁸¹ W. H. Herendeen, 2008, 'Camden, William (1551-1623)', in *ODNB*; Paul Botley, 2010, 'Learning Greek in Western Europe, 1396-1529: Grammars, Lexica, and Classroom Texts', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 100, 2, pp. xii-xiii; see also Watson, 1908, pp. 500-501.

⁸² Mack, 2015, pp. 34-35.

⁸³ Mack, 2015, p. 31.

⁸⁴ Mack, 2015, p. 34.

⁸⁵ Ian Green, 2009, *Humanism and Protestantism in Early Modern English Education*, Farnham: Ashgate, p. 83.

⁸⁶ Mack, 2015, p. 43; Mack, 2005, p. 56.

1553 when more perfect scholars were dispersed from thence [St John's] in one month than many years can rear up again'.⁸⁷ The 'grievous change' affecting his beloved Cambridge was all-pervasive:

judgment in doctrine was wholly altered; order in discipline very sore changed; the love of good learning began suddenly to wax cold; the knowledge of the tongues (in spite of some that therein had flourished) was manifestly contemned; and so the way of right study purposely perverted, the choice of good authors of malice confounded. Old sophistry (I say not well), not old, but that new rotten sophistry, began to beard and shoulder logic in her own tongue; yea, I know that heads were cast together and counsel devised that Duns [Scotus], with all the rabble of barbarous questionists [scholastic philosophers], should have disposed of their place and rooms Aristotle, Plato, Tully, and Demosthenes, whom good Master [John] Redman and those two worthy starts of that university, Master Cheke and Master [Thomas] Smith, with their scholars, had brought to flourish as notable in Cambridge as ever they did in Greece and in Italy, and for the doctrine of those four, the four pillars of learning, Cambridge then giving no place to no university, neither in France, Spain, Germany, nor Italy.⁸⁸

Ascham's retrospective condemnation is inevitably prejudiced and should not lead us into thinking that Greek literacy disappeared from universities under Mary.⁸⁹ Mary's Catholic revival cannot be seen as a thorough and radical return to the late medieval Catholic church, nor can it be assimilated to the Counter-Reformation impulse on the Continent: 'the Marian Church belonged to neither of these traditions': rather, 'the ideology it propounded had its roots in Christian humanism'.⁹⁰ One prominent proof of the continuity with the previous Tudor reigns can be measured against the importance that Scriptural scholarship continued to hold during Mary's reign: 'it was [...] with the printed word that the Marian Church sought to revivify and define its faith'; also, Lucy Wooding reminds us that 'the Queen was herself a fairly formidable scholar and one with impeccable humanist credentials'.⁹¹ One change did occur, albeit temporarily: the old pronunciation of Greek was restored and 'probably for a time more successfully enforced' but the previous statutes underwent only 'few innovations'.⁹² Also, the new statutes planned after visitations by the Catholic clergy for the universities were never implemented because Reginald Pole, who was vice-chancellor of both Oxford and Cambridge, was deprived of his legatine powers by the Pope before he could enforce any real change.⁹³

Under Elizabeth, the requirement for undergraduates to study Greek was maintained in university statutes.⁹⁴ At Oxford, the new statutes of 1564-1565 prescribed a return to medieval

⁸⁷ Ascham, 1967, p. 134.

⁸⁸ Ascham, 1967, pp. 135-136.

⁸⁹ Martin Lowther Clarke, 1959, *Classical Education in Britain, 1500-1900*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 28. On Ascham's partiality on Mary's reign, see also Mullinger, 1884, pp. 152-153.

⁹⁰ Lucy E. C. Wooding, 2000, *Rethinking Catholicism in Reformation England*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 115.

⁹¹ Wooding, 2000, p. 117.

⁹² Mullinger, 1884, pp. 154, 157; see also George Peacock, 1841, *Observations on the Statutes of the University of Cambridge*, London: John W. Parker, p. 40.

⁹³ T. F. Mayer, 2008, 'Pole Reginald (1550-1558)', in *ODNB*.

⁹⁴ Neil Rhodes, 2011, 'Marlowe and the Greeks', *Renaissance Studies*, 27, 2, p. 208.

programmes based on the trivium and quadrivium and including philosophy but excluding Greek;⁹⁵ however, the revised statutes of 1576 made daily Greek lectures compulsory also for licensed bachelors, not only for undergraduates.⁹⁶ At Cambridge the new statutes issued in 1570 displayed a greater continuity with Edwardian statutes.⁹⁷ During Elizabeth's reign, distinguished Greek scholars were Andrew Downes, who taught Greek at Cambridge for forty years from 1585 and was an expert in Attic orators, and John Raynolds, who lectured on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in the 1570s at Oxford. Nonetheless, some historians have tended to see the Elizabethan age as a mediocre period for Greek studies, in line with the overall decline from the 1540s mentioned above.⁹⁸ According to Anthony Walker, the seventeenth-century biographer of the biblical translator John Bois, 'besides himselfe [Bois] there was but one in the college [who] could write Greek' at St John's, Cambridge.⁹⁹ Both Martin Lowther Clarke and Lazarus downsize and contextualize this statement: Greek was regularly taught at the college and the distinction drawn by Walker only reveals the 'skill in composition' of two students out of the rest but does not detract anything from the reading skills of the majority.¹⁰⁰ As Lazarus observes, '[t]he history of Greek *literacy* in England [...] overlaps but is not the same as the history of Greek *scholarship*'.¹⁰¹

Greek in Europe was not only studied through lectures and on texts but also thanks to theatrical performances. In this regard, England had a particularly prominent role: as Pollard observes,

[i]n the arena of print, England's engagement with Greek drama lags behind that of the continent, but England's recorded performances of Greek or Greek-inspired plays during the sixteenth century outpace those of any other European country, suggesting both that performance was an important medium for English encounters with Greek plays, and that the educational institutions that typically produced them had an especially important shaping role.¹⁰²

Another English specificity is the venue of such performances, namely, 'almost exclusively' academic institutions.¹⁰³ The educational contribution of the theatre was so recognized that performances of Latin and Greek plays were institutionalized in the statutes of some colleges.¹⁰⁴ In an academic context, it was required that drama be useful in two ways: both technically, as rhetorical training, and morally, providing didactic messages. The first function – rhetorical exercise – was no secondary aspect of academic drama: in a famous letter to his Oxonian colleague John Raynolds,

⁹⁵ Clarke, 1959, p. 31.

⁹⁶ McConica, 1986, p. 196.

⁹⁷ Clarke, 1959, p. 31.

⁹⁸ On this view amongst historians, see Lazarus, 2015, p. 434.

⁹⁹ Anthony Walker quoted in Lazarus, 2015, p. 453, n. 107.

¹⁰⁰ Clarke, 1959, p. 28-29; see also Lazarus, 2015, p. 453.

¹⁰¹ Lazarus, 2015, p. 437.

¹⁰² Pollard, 2017, p. 59.

¹⁰³ Pollard, 2017, p. 59.

¹⁰⁴ Pollard, 2017, p. 59.

William Gager famously defended university drama precisely on account of the rhetorical training it provided.¹⁰⁵ The rhetorical training was also linguistic: the majority of plays were written in Latin and, considering that they were performed by students, plays were also an occasion to improve the proficiency in the language. A similar function had also the only extant Greek play written by an Englishman in the Renaissance, *Jepthah* (c. 1544), now surviving only in manuscript: this play was clearly meant to offer both moral teaching and linguistic training in three dialects of Greek, namely Homeric, Attic, and *koiné* Greek.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, academic drama was an ideal exercise for the delivery or *pronuntiatio* of a speech and the rhetorical skills required in *disputationes* (academic disputations) such as the humanist technique of arguing *in utramque partem* (on both sides of the question);¹⁰⁷ as we shall see in section 3.3.1, this technique partly informs the appendices integrated to Watson's translation of *Antigone*. To see a problem from two opposed perspectives was a central feature shaping early modern educational programmes as a way to train students to 'speak equally persuasively for diametrically opposed position'.¹⁰⁸ Renaissance pedagogists derived this approach from Latin authors, who in turn inherited it from the Greek sophists.¹⁰⁹ This practice, however, was present also in medieval scholastic pedagogy¹¹⁰ and remained a cornerstone of university learning, notably at the Inns of Courts, which were responsible for the formation of lawyers and royal administrators.¹¹¹ In early modern England, pupils were trained in the *utramque partem* perspective since grammar school, by means of both writing exercises such as composition tasks known as *progymnasmata* ('preliminary exercises') and the declamation of *suasoriae* or *controversiae*, i.e., deliberative and judicial orations.¹¹² The idea that drama could be a useful training for disputations

¹⁰⁵ Gager's letter is conserved in a manuscript at Corpus Christi College, Oxford (MS. 352, ff. 41-65); see Boas, 1914, p. 166 and Streufert, 2008, pp. 45, 60.

¹⁰⁶ J. W. Binns, 1990, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age*, Melksham: Francis Cairns, p. 218. For a detailed philological analysis and the historical implications of the play, see Paul D. Streufert, 2008, 'Christopherson at Cambridge: Greco-Catholics Ethics in the Protestant University', in Jonathan Walker and P. D. Streufert (eds.), *Early Modern Academic Drama*, Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 45-63.

¹⁰⁷ David Marsh, 1999, 'Dialogue and Discussion in the Renaissance', in G. P. Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism Volume III: The Renaissance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 265; see also Neil Rhodes, 2004, *Shakespeare and the Origins of English*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 90.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, 1980, *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 231.

¹⁰⁹ Rhodes, 2004, p. 90. However, as Rhodes points out, there was also a 'more direct route from the Greek sophists to Renaissance rhetoric': the translation of the *Progymnasmata* by the fourth-century Greek rhetorician Aphthonius first into Latin by Giovanni Maria Cattaneo (1507) and by Rudolph Agricola (1532) and then also in an English version by Richard Rainolde (1563); see also Rhodes, 2004, p. 91; L. D. Green and J. J. Maurphy, 2006, *Renaissance Rhetoric: Short-Title Catalogue 1460-1700*, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 7, 28, 362.

¹¹⁰ Steven J. Williams, 2013, 'Aristotle in the Medieval Classroom: Students, Teaching, and Educational Change in the School of Paris in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century', in Juanita Feros Ruys, John O. Ward, and Melanie Heyworth (eds.), *The Classics in the Medieval and Renaissance Classroom*, Turnhout: Brepols, pp. 232, 234.

¹¹¹ Sarah Knight, 2015, 'University', in Sarah Knight and Stefan Tilg (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 234.

¹¹² Rhodes, 2004, pp. 89-91. *Suasoriae* and *controversiae* were exercises of declamation meant to enhance forensic abilities as orators arguing for a given cause: the former trained the deliberative rhetoric, i.e., the rhetoric applied to 'speeches advising for or against a particular course of action', and were attributed to a historical or mythical figure; the

takes origin in Quintilian; many humanists relying on him also associated these declamation exercises with drama.¹¹³

It should therefore come as no surprise that Tudor academicians of the calibre of Gager defended the educational value of university drama on account of the fact that it represented an effective form of rhetorical training. In the letter to Reynolds mentioned above, Gager thus redeems academic theatre from the attacks it had endured from royal as well as university authorities, who tended to put it on the same level of commercial theatre:

We contrarywise doe it [come upon the stage] to recreate owre selves, owre House and the better part of the *Universitye*, with some learned Poëme or other; to practyse owre owne style eyther in prose or verse; to be well acquaintyed with *Seneca* or *Plautus*; honestly to embolden owre pathe; to trye their voyces and confirme their memories; to frame their speche; to conforme them to convenient action; to trye what mettell is in evrye one, and of what disposition thay are of; wherby never any one amongst us, that I knowe was made the worse, many have byn muche the better.¹¹⁴

In his 1914 foundational study on university drama, Frederick Boas pointed out that this letter is ‘in effect a pamphlet on behalf of academic plays and players’, and his wish that it ‘deserve[d] to become a *locus classicus* on the objects of the academic drama’ has since been fulfilled.¹¹⁵ In this letter, Gager insists on the twofold benefit that pupils get from the inclusion of playing in the curriculum: in line with the Horatian *utile dulci* topos,¹¹⁶ they both take pleasure (‘we [...] recreate owre selves, owre House and the better part of the *Universitye*’) and learn from it, since acting is an effective practice of one’s rhetorical skills, especially delivery or *pronuntiatio*, which Cicero in his *De inventione* defined as ‘the control of voice and body in a manner suitable to the dignity of the subject matter and the style’.¹¹⁷ Academic plays such as Watson’s *Antigone* were therefore a good instrument to practise not only the ability to argue *in utramque partem* but also the actual performance of one’s oratorical, especially because, as Gager’s arguments remind us, academic plays were authored by ‘schoolmasters, fellows, and lecturers to be performed by their students’; also, some of the plays were

latter were forms of judicial rhetoric aimed at the ‘prosecution and defense in fictitious court cases’; see Rhodes, 2004, p. 92.

¹¹³ Rhodes, 2004, pp. 95-96. On drama as a component of early modern educational programs and the related controversies, see Frederick Boas, 1914, *University Drama in the Tudor Age*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; see also Jonathan Walker, 2008, ‘Introduction: Learning to Play’, in Walker and Streufert (eds.), pp. 2-3; Streufert, 2008, pp. 45-46.

¹¹⁴ Gager quoted in Boas, 1914, pp. 235-236.

¹¹⁵ Boas, 1914, pp. 235-236.

¹¹⁶ Horace, 2014, *Ars Poetica*, in Horace, *Satires, Epistles, The Art of Poetry*, edited by H. R. Fairclough, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 478-479: ‘He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader’ (‘Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci / Lectorem delectando pariterque monendo’ [343-344]).

¹¹⁷ Cicero, 1949, *De Inventione; De optimo genere oratorum; Topica*, translated by H. M. Hubbell, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 20-21 [Cic.Inv.1.9]: ‘Ex rerum et verborum dignitate vocis et corporis moderatio’.

even written by the students.¹¹⁸ The interpretation of dramatic texts as oratorical exercises is evident in Veit Winsheim's 1546 edition of Sophocles' plays (see section 2.2.1 below): some of its marginal notes refer now to a part of an oration such as 'narratio' and 'conclusio', now to a rhetorical figure such as 'captatio benevolentiae'.¹¹⁹ As Robert Miola nicely puts it with reference to Winsheim's translation of *Antigone*, 'this entirely typical adoption of rhetoric as guiding hermeneutic atomizes the play into a series of individual and transferable figures, lessons, and arguments'.¹²⁰

Academic drama was not meant to serve only as an occasion for such technical training: its pedagogical function consisted also in conveying moral teachings to the youth. The view that drama could be a vehicle of moral instruction had been repeatedly held by various authors, from the late 1550s by Martin Bucer, a reformer from Strasbourg who held the post of Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1549-1551,¹²¹ up to the early 1580s by Philip Sidney. In his second book of *De regno Christi* (1557), a treatise on the reform of various aspects of English society which he dedicated to King Edward VI, Bucer devoted a section to school and academic drama, 'De honestis ludis'.¹²² Also alluding to Horace's mixture of pleasure and profit, Bucer starts by insisting on the need for rest and entertainment which 'games and plays'¹²³ can provide. In a paragraph entitled as 'Comoediae et tragoediae dignae Christianis', he praises the moralizing effect of plays because they are 'a useful form of entertainment, honourable and contributing toward an increase of piety' and they 'contribute toward a correction of morals and a pious orientation to life'.¹²⁴ Sidney insisted on the didactic value of drama in his *Defence of Poesie* (first published in 1595 but composed between 1582-1583), probably as a response to Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse* (1579), in which he figures as dedicatee.¹²⁵ Throughout the treatise, he repeatedly asserts the instructive value of poetry in general: the poet strives not 'to tell you what is, or is not, but what should or should not be'.¹²⁶ Sidney's defence did not encompass any theatrical manifestation: in one passage, he implicitly endorses the anti-theatrical attitudes of some of his contemporaries but also defends drama's habit of depicting

¹¹⁸ Walker, 2008, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ Sophocles, 1546, *Interpretatio tragoediarum Sophoclis: ad utilitatem iuventutis, quae studiosa est Graecae linguae*, Francofurti: Petrus Brubachius, sigg. O3^v, O4^v, O6^v.

¹²⁰ Robert S. Miola, 2014, 'Early Modern Antigones: Receptions, Refractions, Replays', *Classical Reception Journal*, 6, 2, p. 229.

¹²¹ Paul Whitfield White, 1993, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 101; see also N. Scott Amos, 2004, 'Bucer, Martin (1491-1551)', in *ODNB*.

¹²² Martin Bucer, 1557, *De regno Christi Jesu servatoris nostri libri II*, Basileae: per Ioannem Oporinum, pp. 206-213.

¹²³ Bucer, 1557, p. 206; 'Iocis et ludis'.

¹²⁴ Bucer, 1557, pp. 208-209: 'Ad augendam pietatem non inutilis exhiberi oblectatio'; 'ad certam morum correctionem, et piam conferat vitae institutionem'; translation by Wilhelm Pauck in Wilhelm Pauck (ed.), 2006 [1969], *Melanchthon and Bucer*, Louisville, KY: The Westminster John Knox Press, p. 349.

¹²⁵ On Gosson's dedication of his work to Sidney, see Robert Matz, 2000, *Defending Literature in Early Modern England: Renaissance Literary Theory in Social Context*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 62.

¹²⁶ Sir Philip Sidney, 1595, *The Defence of Poesie*, London: Printed for William Ponsoby, sig. G4^v.

vice on the ground that it allows spectators to learn how to avoid wrongdoing, an argument that Thomas Heywood would reintroduce in his *Apology for Actors* (1612).¹²⁷

Although academic drama was certainly the most receptive to Greek tragedy, commercial theatre was certainly alert to this dramatic tradition. As Pollard observes, a long list of commercial playwrights, particularly the University Wits, could access Greek tragedy in the original thanks to their sound classical education:

We know, then, that commercial playwrights including Lyly, Peele, Greene, Marlowe, Kyd, Nashe, Lodge, Watson, Jonson, Chapman, Field, Heywood, and Webster read Greek, and that Peele, Marlowe, Watson, and Chapman translated Greek literature.¹²⁸

As Baldwin long ago established, Shakespeare must have had some Greek, although perhaps limited to the New Testament.¹²⁹ However, as Pollard observes, Shakespeare may have had an indirect contact with Greek tragedies thanks to the ‘collective and collaborative nature of commercial theatres’, which exposed him to ‘the effects of Greek dramatic influence through contemporary friends, rivals, and colleagues including Marlowe, Peele, Jonson, and Chapman’.¹³⁰

In Elizabethan grammar schools, in which the learning of English became more and more a priority, Greek still continued to be studied but mainly for religious purposes.¹³¹ In 1573 Alexander Nowell’s popular Latin catechism, *Catechismus sive prima institutio* (1570) was translated into Greek by William Whitaker, after an English translation had already been produced by Thomas Norton in 1570.¹³² In 1575 Edward Grant published *Graecae linguae spicilgium*, the first Greek grammar by an Englishman since Richard Croke’s 1516 tables (*Tabulae Graecas literas compendio discere cupientibus*).¹³³ Richard Mulcaster, who taught both at Merchant Taylors’ school (1561-1586) and at St Paul’s (1596-1608) and had Edmund Spenser amongst his pupils, is known for the excellent quality of his teaching of classical languages, not only Latin and Greek but also Hebrew, and for engaging boys’ acting, especially before the court.¹³⁴ In one of his two educational writings, *Positions Concerning the Training up of Children* (1581), Mulcaster repeatedly insists on the importance and value of English, a central aspect of his second book (*The First Part of the Elementarie Which Entreateth Chiefly of the Right Writing of Our English Tongue*, 1582) but he also explicitly states that

¹²⁷ Sidney, 1595, sigg. I4^v-K1^r; see also Thomas Heywood, 1612, *An Apology for Actors*, London: Printed by Nicholas Okes, sigg. F3^v-F4^r; White, 1993, pp. 172-173.

¹²⁸ Pollard, 2017, p. 70. I do not share Pollard’s classification of Watson as a ‘commercial playwright’.

¹²⁹ Baldwin, 1944, vol. 2, pp. 648-649, 671.

¹³⁰ Pollard, 2017, p. 70.

¹³¹ Simon, 1966, pp. 316, 379, 400. Simon’s fifteenth chapter is devoted to what she calls ‘the triumph of the vernacular’ during the Elizabethan age; see Simon, 1966, pp. 369-403.

¹³² Van Cleave Alexander, 1990, p. 189.

¹³³ Van Cleave Alexander, 1990, p. 188.

¹³⁴ William Barker, 2004, ‘Mulcaster, Richard (1531/2-1611)’, in *ODNB*.

the teacher should be able to teach Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and recommends the recitation of Greek orations;¹³⁵ contemporary statutes of grammar schools also require from masters the knowledge of Greek.¹³⁶ In some cases, even under the supervision of teachers not as gifted as Mulcaster, pupils could reach a relatively good level of Greek: according to the records of Christ's Hospital school in London, David Baker, a Benedictine monk of Welsh origins, was sent as a boy to the school to perfect his mastery of English but he contextually learnt to 'read and understand Greek in some reasonable manner, and make a Greek verse'.¹³⁷ The sixteenth century closed with Camden's *Institutio Graecae grammatices compendiaria in usum regiae scholae Westmonasteriensis* (1595) mentioned above: this was the standard text adopted by grammar school until 1663.¹³⁸

In the first half of the seventeenth century, the study of Greek did not undergo remarkable changes at grammar school nor at university. In *Ludus literarius or The Grammar Schoole* (1612), John Brinsley prescribes the study of Greek on the language of the New Testament.¹³⁹ There is evidence that Greek was taught even in local schools, although Brinsley defined them as 'common country schools' or 'our meaner and ruder schools'.¹⁴⁰ In 1609, such a local school as Wolverhampton taught Greek to his older boys, aged between fourteen and eighteen.¹⁴¹ However, grammar schools did not always provide a sound foundation on Greek grammar: at Oxford, college tutors had to fill the gaps in the first years of the undergraduate course.¹⁴² Greek teaching was offered in three forms: training by college tutors and courses by college lecturers, whereas the Regius Professor 'came to offer specialized, more advanced' lectures.¹⁴³ William Laud's 1636 revision of the statutes of Oxford displayed a 'conservative character', requiring attendance of Greek lectures by all students from their second year.¹⁴⁴ Before as well as after Laud's statutes, Oxonian colleges continued to provide tutoring and lectures in Greek. Unlike Latin, which was taught as 'a living language', Greek was studied only for the purpose of 'erudition'.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, while students were expected to be fluent in Latin, fluency in Greek was not 'commonly expected' but only 'allowed for [...] to substitute for Latin in public conversation'.¹⁴⁶ At Cambridge, Elizabethan statutes were not revised until the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁷

¹³⁵ Richard Mulcaster, 1888, *Positions Wherein Those Primitive Circumstances Be Examined*, edited by Robert Hebert Quick, London: Longmans, Green, pp. 58, 235.

¹³⁶ Van Cleave Alexander, 1990, p. 194.

¹³⁷ *Christ's Hospital Book* (1953) quoted in Simon, 1966, p. 364

¹³⁸ Van Cleave Alexander, 1990, p. 189.

¹³⁹ John Brinsley, 1917, *Ludus Literarius: Or, The Grammar Schoole*, edited by Ernest Trafford Campagnac, London: Constable, p. 226.

¹⁴⁰ Brinsley quoted in Simon, 1966, p. 375.

¹⁴¹ Simon, 1966, p. 378.

¹⁴² Mordechai Feingold, 1997, 'The Humanities', in Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume IV: Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 257.

¹⁴³ Feingold, 1997, pp. 256, 260.

¹⁴⁴ Clarke, 1959, p. 61.

¹⁴⁵ Feingold, 1997, p. 256.

¹⁴⁶ Feingold, 1997, p. 256.

¹⁴⁷ Clarke, 1959, p. 61.

Until 1625 the Regius Professor of Greek was still Downes, who as we have seen had been holding the office since 1585: his lectures impressed Simond D'Ewes, who in his diary remembers Downes' outstanding erudition.¹⁴⁸ The impressions contained in other biographical accounts differ: Seth Ward, astronomer and bishop, complained that in the 1630s, when he was studying at Sidney Sussex College, he could not find anyone able to help him read old texts on mathematics in Greek, whereas the mathematician and theologian Isaac Barrow, who studied with the new Regius Professor James Duport, left an enthusiastic account of Greek studies at Cambridge in the 1640s-1650s.¹⁴⁹ When Barrow became Regius Professor of Greek himself in 1660, he lectured on Sophocles and Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.¹⁵⁰ However, the seventeenth century generally saw a constant decline of the study of Greek, which was no longer seen as a requisite of erudition for gentlemen but rather an aspiration of 'professed scholar', as John Locke put it.¹⁵¹ Such decline culminated in a 'deterioration of the level of Greek studies at both Oxford and Cambridge by the latter part of the seventeenth century'.¹⁵² A certain dismissal of Greek studies seems to be registered already in the first half of the century by James I. In *Basilikon Doron* (first printed in 1599 and reissued in 1603), James advises his first-born Henry to

write in your owne language: for there is nothing left to bee saide in Greek and Latin already; and ynewe of poore schollers would match you in these languages: and besides that, it best becommeth a King to purifie and make famous his owne tongue.¹⁵³

These suggestions should not mislead us into thinking that James saw Greek and Latin as useless sports. Like his Tudor predecessors, James was tutored by a humanist of international repute, George Buchanan, translator of Euripides' *Medea* and *Alcestis* (both printed in 1544): the sound classical education received under the supervision of Buchanan manifested itself in James' enthusiasm for Greek mythology in his *The Essayes of a Prentisse* (1584).¹⁵⁴ What James is saying is that writing proficiency in Greek (and Latin) is surpassed. As in the case of the biographer of Bois mentioned above, one should not conflate Greek scholarship with Greek literacy. James' comment is relevant insofar as it highlights the paucity of people who could 'match' the classical erudition of his son; while it may be a sign of fatherly pride, this assertion is certainly true if the whole body of the subjects is considered.

¹⁴⁸ Elisabeth Leedham-Green and N. G. Wilson, 2009, 'Downes, Andrew (c. 1549-1628)', in *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁹ On Ward, see Charlton, 1965, p. 160; on Barrow, see Clarke, 1859, pp. 62-63.

¹⁵⁰ Mordechai Feingold, 2007, 'Barrow, Isaac (1630-1677)', in *ODNB*.

¹⁵¹ John Locke quoted in Feingold, 1997, p. 261.

¹⁵² Feingold, 1997, p. 261.

¹⁵³ King James I Stuart, 1603, *ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΟΝ ΔΟΡΟΝ, Or His Maiesties Instructions to His Dearest Sonne, Henrie the Prince*, At London: Imprinted by Richard Field, p. 119.

¹⁵⁴ Sarah Knight, 2009, "'Goodlie anticke apparell'?: Sophocles' *Ajax* at Early Modern Oxford and Cambridge', *Shakespeare Studies*, 37, p. 33.

In assessing the achievements of Elizabethan and Jacobean England in Greek scholarship, modern scholars have generally tended to dismiss it as utterly inferior in comparison with ages to come, such as that of Richard Bentley.¹⁵⁵ However, as Mordechai Feingold points out, the negative assessment of classical scholarship in pre-Bentley England rests on the ‘anachronistic’ application of ‘modern standards of classical scholarship’ to early modern classical scholarship:

Any evaluation of quality, however, is encumbered by a long tradition of scholarship that has anchored all assessment almost exclusively in terms of priorities that inform modern criteria of erudition – namely the commitment to a dispassionate examination (and publication) of ancient documents.¹⁵⁶

Alongside this critical mismatch, contemporary evidence seems to substantiate further the claim that the quality of Greek scholarship in England was poor. Between 1612 and 1613 both Hugo Grotius and Isaac Casaubon complained about the state of Greek studies in England.¹⁵⁷ From their letters it emerges that Casaubon felt compelled to tune with the priority given to theology and controversy. Casaubon ‘could have found no place in England as a man of learning’, so Grotius, and ‘he was compelled to assume [the role of] the theologian’.¹⁵⁸ Casaubon had to shelve his textual criticism projects such as his commentary on Polybius and to reject Daniel Heinsius’ proposal to produce an edition of Aristotle’s works with royal funds.¹⁵⁹ Such negative view of Greek studies in England should be reassessed in the light of Casaubon’s personal circumstances: he was having troubles in settling since his arrival in October 1610 and his judgement are almost always biased from his stance as a philologist.¹⁶⁰ Also, as Feingold points out, Casaubon himself reconsiders his stance towards England in a 1612 letter to Claude de Saumaise:

You must not suppose that this people is a barbarous people; nothing of that sort; it loves letters and cultivates them, sacred learning especially. Indeed if I am not mistaken, the soundest part of the whole reformation is to be found here in England, where the study of antiquity flourishes together with the zeal for truth.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ Feingold, 1997, pp. 261-263.

¹⁵⁶ Feingold, 1997, p. 261.

¹⁵⁷ Feingold, 1997, p. 262.

¹⁵⁸ The original text is quoted in Iori, 2015, p. 3, n. 1: ‘Ne huic quidem locus in Anglia fuisset ut literatori; induere theologum debuit’; English translation by Feingold in Feingold, 1997, p. 262.

¹⁵⁹ Feingold, 1997, p. 263.

¹⁶⁰ John Cosidine, 2015, ‘Casaubon, Isaac (1559–1614)’, in *ODNB*.

¹⁶¹ Isaac Casaubon, 1709, *Isaaci Casauboni epistolæ [...]. Curante Theodoro Janson. ab Almeloveen*, Roterodami: typis Casparis Fritsch et Michaelis Böhm, p. 489: ‘Sed falleris, si ita putas: haec gens nihil minus est quam barbara; amat & colit Literas, praefertim autem Sacras. Quod si me conjectura non fallit, totius Reformationis pars integerrima est in Anglia. Ubi cum studio veritatis viget stadium Antiquitatis’; English translation by Feingold in Feingold, 1997, p. 264-265.

Therefore, ‘the marked theological propensity of English learning’ should not mislead us into thinking that Greek was not studied but was rather instrumental to other pursuits such as theology.¹⁶² Moreover, as we have seen, the curricula of grammar schools and universities did envisage the study of Greek literature along with religious authors. Although these documents did not mention him as frequently as Homer or Euripides, Sophocles was read in grammar schools and studied at university, and his plays were staged in academic venues. Aldo Manuzio’s *editio princeps* of Sophocles’ plays (1502) triggered a series of receptions across Europe, ranging from Latin translation to performances in academic venues. However, the European history of transmission of Sophocles in the Renaissance begins long before Manuzio’s editions: manuscripts ensured the first reception of Sophocles in Italy. It is indeed in Italy that the English history of the transmission of Sophocles begins, when an Englishman acquired a Sophoclean manuscript and brought it to England.

2.2. Sophocles in England

2.2.1. *The transmission of Sophocles: from Italy to England*

As Paul Botley has noted, ‘Greek flourished in Italy without the printing press, while north of the Alps it was almost entirely dependent upon it’.¹⁶³ The history of the transmission of the Sophoclean corpus aligns with this general pattern. In Italy, Sophocles’ works appeared for the first time in Western Europe much before the invention of the printing press, whereas they entered England and the rest of the British Isles mainly in the form of printed editions. Italy’s – and the West’s – first contact with Sophocles dates back to the end of the thirteenth century, when his plays were copied by scribes in regions of southern Italy, where Greek was still spoken.¹⁶⁴ However, even if Sophoclean drama was copied and read there, the manuscripts did not enjoy a wide diffusion due to the isolation of the south from the rest of Italy.¹⁶⁵ In the mid-fourteenth century, two scholars, who had both connections with the southern region of Calabria, are known to have owned manuscripts of Sophocles’ plays: Simon Atumano, who possessed two manuscripts, and Leonzio Pilato, who owned

¹⁶² Feingold, 1997, p. 264.

¹⁶³ Botley, 2010, p. xiii.

¹⁶⁴ P. J. Finglass, 2012, ‘The Textual Transmission of Sophocles’ Drama’, in Kirk Ormand (ed.), *A Companion to Sophocles*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 15; see Nigel G. Wilson, 1996, *Scholars of Byzantium*, London: Duckworth, p. 268.

¹⁶⁵ Leighton D. Reynolds and Nigel G. Wilson, 1991, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 146.

what is now considered a most valuable witness for Sophocles.¹⁶⁶ Only from the fifteenth century onwards, however, did the plays start to circulate and be taught in the peninsula: the use of Sophoclean drama as school subject is first recorded in Ferrara, where the Byzantine grammarian Theodore Gaza lectured on Sophocles between 1446 and 1449; however, ‘the first Western student’ to study Sophocles had been the Italian Giovanni Tortelli during his two-year stay in Constantinople in 1435-37.¹⁶⁷ In 1492, another preeminent Byzantine émigré from Constantinople, Janus Lascaris, held lectures on Sophocles in Florence, which in all likelihood, as Botley surmises, were connected to a private production of *Electra* in its original language, one of the earliest recorded performances of a Sophoclean play.¹⁶⁸

In England, Sophocles’ corpus circulated through printed editions from the mid sixteenth century onwards. However, the potentially first Sophoclean text brought into the country was a manuscript acquired by an Englishman in Italy: this manuscript, now belonging to the collection of Duke Humfrey’s Library at Oxford (Auct.F.3.25), contains the Byzantine triad (*Ajax*, *Electra*, and *Oedipus Tyrannus*) with scholia.¹⁶⁹ Alongside the three Sophoclean plays, the manuscript also features the Byzantine triad of Euripides (*Hecuba*, *Orestes*, and *Phoenician Women*), all with their respective scholia, some idylls of Theocritus’, Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, and Pindar’s *Olympic Odes*. The volume belonged to John Free, who acquired it in Italy between 1456 and 1465, probably for his studies of Greek,¹⁷⁰ and, according to a note in the manuscript, the volume was subsequently bought by William Worcester from a relative of Free’s.¹⁷¹

Sixteenth-century English scholars would read Sophocles’ original text in printed editions from 1502, when Aldo Manuzio published the *editio princeps* of the seven extant plays in Venice.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ Botley, 2010, pp. 106, 223, n. 476; see also Wilson, 1996, pp. 207, 269. Atumano’s manuscripts are Florence, Laurentian Library, MS 31.8 [Za] and MS 32.2 [Zg]. Pilato’s manuscript (Florence, Laurentian Library, MS 31.10 [K]) dates back to the second half of the twelfth century; see Wilson, 1996, p. 206. When applicable, manuscripts symbols have been indicated; see Alexander Turyn, 1952, *Studies in the Manuscript Tradition of the Tragedies of Sophocles*, Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, pp. 5-9.

¹⁶⁷ Botley, 2010, p. 106.

¹⁶⁸ Botley, 2010, p. 107. The performance took place in a private house of a pupil of Janus Lascaris, Alessandra Scala; see Giuseppe Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini e le origini dell’umanesimo: III, Demetrio Calcondila*, Firenze: Le Monnier, p. 79 and Giovanni Pesenti, 1925, ‘Alessandra Scala: Una figurina della rinascenza fiorentina’, *Giornale Storico Della Letteratura Italiana*, 85, 255, p. 250.

¹⁶⁹ Botley, 2010, pp. 107, 221, n. 449; see also Bodleian Library, 1970, *Duke Humfrey and English Humanism in the Fifteenth Century*, compiled by Tilly de la Mare and Richard Hunt, Oxford: Bodleian Library, p. 50, record n. 85.

¹⁷⁰ Free studied Greek first in Ferrara under Guarino da Verona, later in Padua and possibly in Rome, too, where he died; see Botley, 2010, pp. 107, 221, n. 449.

¹⁷¹ Weiss, 1957, p. 111; see also Nicholas Orme, 2006, ‘Worcester [Botoner], William (1415–1480x85)’, in *ODNB*.

¹⁷² Sophocles, 1502, *Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίαί ἐπτὰ μετ’ἐξηγήσεων. Sophoclis tragaediae [sic] septem cum commentariis*, [Venice: Aldo Manuzio]. Borza suggests that the editor of the Greek text may have been the Greek humanist Marcus Musurus; see Elia Borza, 2007, *Sophocles Redivivus: La survie de Sophocle en Italie au début du XVI^e siècle*, Bari: Levante, pp. 41-42; on Musurus, see also Anja Wolkenhauer, 2014, ‘Musurus, Marcus’, in *Brill’s New Pauly: Supplements I – Volume 6: History of Classical Scholarship - A Biographical Dictionary*, edited by C. M. Schroeder, online edition: Brill [accessed on 10 September 2018 at http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2066/10.1163/2214-8647_bnps6_COM_00503]. This edition was based on manuscript Y (Vienna phil.gr.48) and was immediately used by

Between 1522 and 1547 the Aldine text was republished, sometimes with amendments.¹⁷³ Meanwhile, some plays were published individually in Greek-only editions, too: the first was the *Ajax* printed in 1530 in Paris by Gerard Morrhy.¹⁷⁴ The old scholia to Sophocles were edited by the Byzantine scholar Lascaris, the dedicatee of Aldo's edition of the plays, and were first published in 1518 in Rome on the basis of the oldest surviving manuscript.¹⁷⁵ However, this manuscript, which is now considered the most reliable, was not used for the texts of Sophocles' plays until its rediscovery by Peter Elmsley at the Laurentian Library in Florence as late as 1818-1819.¹⁷⁶ The sixteenth century saw three new editions of Sophocles' drama: one printed by Adrien Turnèbe (1552/1553), one by Henri Estienne (1568), and one by Willem Canter (1579).¹⁷⁷ Canter's contains only the Greek text with annotations in Latin and is the first to print the lyrical sections in responding units.¹⁷⁸ All of them – Turnèbe's, Estienne's, and Canter's – were reprinted in copies with amendments across Europe.¹⁷⁹

Like any other major ancient Greek author, Sophocles was first translated into Latin. At the beginning, translators attempted to Latinize individual plays. After the fifteenth-century manuscript versions of *Ajax* and *Electra*,¹⁸⁰ the first printed Latin translations were published in the first half of the sixteenth century: in 1533 Johannes Lonicer, a German scholar, authored the first printed Latin translation of a Sophoclean play, a Latin version of *Ajax* printed at Basel with the Greek text on the

Demetrius Chalcondyles, a Byzantine scholar from Athens, for his Greek lectures in Milan; see Turyn, 1952, p. 175; see Botley, 2010, p. 107.

¹⁷³ The Aldine text was republished with some amendments in 1522 by the Giunti family (Florence), in 1528 by Simon de Colines (Paris), in 1534 by the heirs of Johannes Setzer, with a commentary to the Theban plays (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Antigone*, *Oedipus Coloneus*) by the German scholar Joachim Camerarius (Hagenau), in 1544 by Peter Braubach (Frankfurt), and in 1547 by Bernardo Giunta (Florence), who re-published the 1522 version as revised by the two Italian humanists Pietro Vettori and Vincenzo Borghini; see Botley, 2010, pp. 108, 225, n. 509; see also Borza, 2007, pp. 61, 64-65.

¹⁷⁴ Sophocles, 1530, *Αἴας μαστιγοφόρος*, *Ajax flagellifer*, Parisiis: apud Collegium Sorbonae. For the other plays printed individually in the original, see Pollard's appendix of editions of Greek plays in print; Pollard, 2017, pp. 232-241.

¹⁷⁵ The manuscript is the one known as L (Florence, Laurentian Library, 32.9); see Borza, 2007, p. 46; see also Finglass, 2012, p. 16.

¹⁷⁶ Finglass, 2012, p. 17.

¹⁷⁷ Sophocles, 1552/1553, *Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίαι*, Parisiis: apud Adrianum Turnebum. Some of the copies of Turnèbe's editions print the same date (1553) both on the title page and at the end of the book; others, however, have 1553 on the title page and 1552 *ad calcem*. Hence the oscillations between these two dates amongst critics. Finglass indicates the date 1552; see Finglass, 2012, p. 15. Elia Borza and Pollard date Turnèbe's edition to 1553, instead; see Borza, 2007, p. 264 and Pollard, 2017, p. 233. The *Karlsruhe Virtual Katalog* gives editions classified as dating back either to 1552 or to 1553. Sophocles, 1568, *Σοφοκλέους αἱ ἐπτὰ τραγωδίαι*, *Sophoclis tragoediae septem*, [Paris: Henry Estienne]. Sophocles, 1579, *Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίαι*, *Sophoclis Tragoediae VII [...] opera Gulielmi Canteri*, Antwerpiae: Ex officina Christophori Plantini. These three editions were all based on the same manuscript, i.e., manuscript T (Paris gr.2711); see Turyn, 1952, p. 74. Manuscript T contains Demetrius Triclinius' amendments as well as his *scholia recentiora* dating back to the first half of the fourteenth century; see Finglass, 2012, p. 16; see also Ioannis Vassis, 2006, 'Demetrius V [43] D. Triclinius Philologist and textual critic of the early Palaeologian period', in *Brill's New Pauly*; Manfred Landfester, 2011, 'Sophocles' in *Brill's New Pauly Supplements I – Volume 2: Dictionary of Greek and Latin Authors and Texts*, edited by: Manfred Landfester in collaboration with Brigitte Egger, online edition: Brill.

¹⁷⁸ Finglass, 2012, p. 16.

¹⁷⁹ For a complete list of the extant editions of Sophocles in Greek, see Pollard's 'Appendix 1: Editions of Greek Plays in Greek', in Pollard, 2017, pp. 232-241; see also Borza, 2007, p. 264.

¹⁸⁰ Borza registers an anonymous manuscript translation of *Ajax* and *Electra* in Bologna and one of *Ajax* by Pietro da Montagnana in Venice; see Borza, 2007, p. 265.

parallel page; in 1541, the French humanist Gentien Hervet translated *Antigone*.¹⁸¹ Nonetheless, manuscript translations continued to be produced.¹⁸² The first complete Latin translation in print of Sophocles' tragedies appeared in Venice in 1543 in the version of Giovanni Battista Gabia, an Italian professor of Greek.¹⁸³ This edition presents the plays in the order that will be followed by all subsequent complete translations in the sixteenth century: *Ajax*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Antigone*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Trachiniae*, and *Philoctetes*. In this way, *Antigone* is clearly seen as forming with *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Oedipus at Colonus* what was considered a trilogy, the Theban cycle.¹⁸⁴ That the three plays were perceived as a trilogy is confirmed by a 1534 two-volume edition of the plays which featured Joachim Camerarius' commentary on the Theban cycle defined in the title 'Thebaidos fabularum'; in this commentary, however, the plays come in a different order: *Antigone* is the last play, following *Oedipus Coloneus*.¹⁸⁵ Gabia's extremely literal version was followed by four complete Latin translations of all extant tragedies: Philip Melancthon and Winsheim's edition (1546), which was republished in 1597; Jean Lalemant's (1557); Thomas Kirchmeyer Naogeorgus' (1558), which was certainly used by Watson for his *Antigone*; and George Rataller's (1570), reprinted in 1576, 1584, and 1594.¹⁸⁶ Meanwhile, Latin translations of individual plays or of a small number of plays appeared throughout the Continent: a translation of *Ajax*, *Electra*, and *Antigone* by Rataller (1550); a version of *Electra* by the Italian bishop Coriolano Martirano (1556); a literal version of *Ajax* and a prose version of *Electra* by Camerarius (1556), republished in Estienne's edition of the Greek text (1568); a bilingual recollection of selected Greek tragedies from Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides in Paris (1567) featuring the Sophoclean tragedies of *Ajax*,

¹⁸¹ Johannes Lonicer, 1533, *Sophoclis tragici Ajax flagellifer. Callimachi Cyrenaei hymni in Iouem & Apollinem. Ioanne Lonicerio interprete. Genetliacon divo Vilhelmo iuniori Cattorum principi sacrum. Ioanne Lonicerio autore*, Basileae: ex officina Hervagiana [Johannes Herwagen]; see also Gentien Hervet, 1541, *Sophoclis Antigone, tragoedia a Gentiano Herveto Aurelio traducta e Graeco in Latinum*, Lugduni: Apud Stephanum Doletum.

¹⁸² Borza, 2007, pp. 255-266.

¹⁸³ Giovanni Battista Gabia, 1543, *Sophoclis tragoediae omnes, nunc primum Latinae ad uerbum factae, ac scholijs quibusdam illustratae, Ioanne Baptista Gabia Veronensi interprete*, Venetiis: apud Io. Baptistam a Burgofrancho Papiensem.

¹⁸⁴ Nowadays scholars exclude that the three plays were a trilogy because they were not performed together and in sequence at the same festival; however, as Edith Hall observes, the first two plays are 'at least consistent with one another, whereas *Oedipus at Colonus* contains one important factual difference. *Antigone* assumes that Oedipus died ingloriously at Thebes, whereas *Oedipus at Colonus* brings him to a beatific death at Athens'; see Edith Hall, 2010, *Greek Tragedy: Suffering Under the Sun*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 301.

¹⁸⁵ Sophocles, 1534, *Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίαί ἑπτὰ, Sophoclis tragoediae septem cum commentariis interpretationum argumenti Thebaidos Fabularum Sophoclis, authore Ioachimo Camerario*, Haganoae: ex officina Seceriana, title page.

¹⁸⁶ On the authorship of the 1546 translation, see section 2.3.1 below. On the details of these translations, see section 3.2.2

Electra, and *Antigone*.¹⁸⁷ Two other Latin translations of the century were Joseph Scaliger's *Ajax* (1574) and Watson's *Antigone* itself (1581).¹⁸⁸

How and to what extent did Continental editions of Sophocles, either in the original or in Latin or in both languages, reach England? As Pollard points out, the humanist project of 'excavating Greek texts was a transnational enterprise', with editions and performances on the continent 'cross[ing] national borders'.¹⁸⁹ Also, as we have seen in section 2.1.1, it is difficult to look at the material circulation of any classical text throughout England in isolation. However, some data can give us a partial sense of the distribution of the Sophoclean corpus in England's foremost cultural capitals: Cambridge inventories register forty-three copies of Sophocles – either in Greek or in Latin or in both languages – from the sixteenth to the early eighteenth century.¹⁹⁰ Pollard counts fifteen copies of Sophocles at Oxford in Robert Fehrenbach and Leedham-Green's catalogue of the inventories of private libraries in Renaissance England.¹⁹¹ One remarkable private collection that possessed an edition of Sophocles is the Lumley library, which according to its 1609 catalogue held the 1534 edition of the seven plays with Camerarius' commentary on the Theban plays.¹⁹² Another notable private library that included a volume of Sophocles' plays is Jonson's 'well-furnisht' library:¹⁹³ McPherson's annotated catalogue registers a two-volume edition of Greek poetry printed by Pierre de la Rovière: the first volume, published in two parts in 1606 and edited by Jacques Lect, is devoted to epic poets ('heroici scriptores'); its companion piece, also in two parts, published in 1614, is edited by de la Rovière himself and is devoted to 'tragedians, comedy writers, lyric poets, and composers of epigrams' ('tragici, comici, lyrici, epigrammaticarii').¹⁹⁴ The first part of the second volume contains

¹⁸⁷ George Rataller, 1550, *Sophoclis Ajax Flagellifer, et Antigone. Eiusdem Electra. Georgio Rotallero interprete*, Lugduni: apud Seb. Gryphium. Coriolano Martirano 1556, *Electra*, in Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, *Tragoediae VIII [...], Comoediae II [...]*, Neapoli: Ianus Marius Simonetta, sigg. 32^r-59^r; see also Joachim Camerarius, 1556, *Commentatio explicationum omnium tragoediarum Sophoclis*, Basel: Johannes Oporinus, pp. 107-174, 257-312. Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, 1567, *Tragoediae selectae Aeschyli, Sophoclis, Euripidis. Cum duplici interpretatione latina, una ad verbum, altera carmine*, [Geneva]: Henr. Stephanus.

¹⁸⁸ Joseph Scaliger, 1574, Σοφοκλέους Αἴας μαστιγοφόρος, *Sophoclis Ajax Iorarius, carmine translatus per Iosephum Scaligerum Iulii filium*, Parisiis: Apud Iohannem Bene natum; see also Thomas Watson, 1581, *Sophoclis Antigone Interprete Thoma Watsono*, Londini: Excudebat Iohannes Wolfius (from now onwards *WA*).

¹⁸⁹ Pollard, 2017, p. 6.

¹⁹⁰ On Cambridge, see Elisabeth S. Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories: Book Lists from Vice-Chancellor's Court Probate Inventories in the Tudor and Stuart Periods*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 711-712. Leedham-Green's lists are based on H. M. Adams's 1967 catalogue; on Sophocles, see Herbert Mayow Adams, 1967, *Catalogue of Books Printed on the Continent of Europe, 1501-1600 in Cambridge Libraries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 222-223.

¹⁹¹ Pollard, 2017, n. 26; see Robert Fehrenbach and Leedham-Green, 1992-2004, *Private Libraries in Renaissance England*, Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies.

¹⁹² Sears Jayne and Francis R. Johnson (eds.), 1956, *The Lumley Library: The Catalogue of 1609*, London: Trustees of the British Museum, p. 250.

¹⁹³ Definition by the scholar John Selden quoted by David McPherson; see David McPherson, 1974, 'Ben Jonson's Library and Marginalia: An Annotated Catalogue', *Studies in Philology*, 71, 5, p. 5.

¹⁹⁴ Jacques Lect (ed.), 1606, *Οἱ τῆς ἡρωικῆς ποιήσεως παλαιοὶ ποιηταὶ πάντες, Poetae graeci veteres carminis heroici scriptores qui extant omnes*, Aureliae Allobrogum [Geneva]: Excudebat Petrus de la Rovière. Pierre de la Rovière (ed.), 1616, *Ἑλληνες ποιηταὶ παλαιοὶ [...], Poetae graeci veteres, tragici, comici, lyrici, epigrammaticarii*, Coloniae Allobrogum [Geneva]: Typis Petri de la Rovière; see also McPherson, 1974, p. 57. As far as I can tell, de la Rovière nowhere indicates

the three tragedians, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus, followed by Aristophanes. The Sophoclean plays are presented in the 1546 Latin translation of Winsheim with the Greek text on the parallel page. Jonson could certainly read Greek since he had studied at Westminster with Camden, the author of the Greek grammar that was to be adopted as standard in Britain for the following century (see section 2.1.2 above). Thomas May, being a close friend of Jonson's, could have had access to his library or bought books from him; in either case, he may have well have looked at this edition.¹⁹⁵

2.2.2. *The modes of reception: Sophocles at university, in treatises, in letters, and in performance*

As mentioned above, grammar school curricula do not feature Sophocles; only Euripides surfaces in the curricula of the schools of Westminster, Norwich, and St Paul's but he never receives as many mentions as Isocrates and Homer.¹⁹⁶ Likewise, the 1555 statutes of St John's, Oxford, and Trinity College, Cambridge, include Euripides but not Sophocles.¹⁹⁷ However, as the inventories mentioned above confirm, Sophocles was indeed studied at university. At Oxford, Sophocles was meant to be taught together with Euripides at Corpus Christ College since its foundation in 1517.¹⁹⁸ At Cambridge in the 1540s, Cheke lectured on Sophocles as well as on Euripides while first Regius Professor; in the 1550s, his successor in the same post, Nicholas Carr, taught Sophocles alongside Aeschylus, an author that was hardly known in the period.¹⁹⁹ In a 1542 letter to a friend, Ascham, who had studied with Cheke in the 1530s, thus describes the effects of his master's zealous commitment for the study of Greek literature at Cambridge in the space of five years:

Aristotle and Plato are read by the young men in the original, but that has been done among us at John's for the last five years. Sophocles and Euripides are here better known than Plautus used to be when you were up. Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, are more on the lips and in the hands of all now than Livy was then. What you used to hear about Cicero you now hear about Demosthenes. There are more copies of Isocrates in the hands of young men than there were of Terence then. Meanwhile we do not despise the Latin authors, but we cherish the best of them, who flourished in the golden age of literature. The labours

the translator; however, by comparing the Latin versions of the plays with the Winsheim's translations it is evident that they are the same.

¹⁹⁵ On Thomas May's friendship with Jonson, see Ben Jonson, 1963, *Ben Jonson: 11: Commentary; Jonson's Literary Record; Supplementary Notes; Index*, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 443. On Jonson's habit to sell and lending books, see McPherson, 1974, p. 6; see also Louise Schleiner, 1990, 'Latinized Greek Drama in Shakespeare's Writing of *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 41, 1, pp. 32-33.

¹⁹⁶ Baldwin, 1944, vol. 1, pp. 350, 359-360, 417, 423; see also Baldwin, 1944, vol. 2, p. 649.

¹⁹⁷ Baldwin, 1944, vol. 1, pp. 105-106.

¹⁹⁸ Fowler, 1893, p. 38.

¹⁹⁹ Alan Bryson, 2004, 'Cheke, Sir John (1514-1557)', in *ODNB*; see also Michael H. Crawford, 2004, 'Carr, Nicholas (1522/3-1568)', in *ODNB*.

and example of our friend Cheke lit and fanned this zeal for letters. Twice he publicly read through the whole of Homer, the whole of Sophocles, the whole of Euripides, and almost all of Herodotus, and that without taking any fee.²⁰⁰

According to Ascham's account, such enormous progress in a short span of time included also Sophocles' plays. Sophocles' authoritativeness was in effect sanctioned by the presence of his name in treatises on education from Erasmus to Hoole. Erasmus recommends both Sophocles and Euripides in *De ratione studii* (1511-1512) as good authors from which suitable themes can be selected.²⁰¹ Vives includes Sophocles along with Euripides in *De ratione studii puerilis* (1523), a work written on Queen Catherine's request for the education of her daughter Mary but Sophocles is mentioned only in the section devoted to boys.²⁰² In *De disciplinis* (1531), he recommends Sophocles together with Euripides, Aristophanes, and Menander for the learning of the Attic dialect but later he adds that Euripides is generally 'preferred to' Sophocles.²⁰³ In *Adagiorum Chiliades*, Erasmus reports at least sixty quotations from Sophocles, either directly from his tragedies or indirectly via other authors such as Plutarch and Atheneus; amongst those taken directly from the tragedies, the quotations from *Antigone* are certainly the majority²⁰⁴ and are mainly related to the figure of Creon and the issues that political power entails.²⁰⁵ Erasmus' practice of anthologizing gnomic sentences, i.e., *sententiae*, from classical texts informed the reception of Greek tragedy for the rest of the century: many sixteenth-century editions and translations of Greek plays contain an apparatus devoted to *sententiae* and, as we shall see in section 3.3, Watson's *Antigone* also has one such apparatus. Although Erasmus does not mention her in his *Apophthegmata* (first published in 1531), *Antigone* is mentioned by Nicholas

²⁰⁰ Roger Ascham, 1967, 'Roger Ascham to John Brandesby, Cambridge 1542', in C. H. Williams (ed.), *English Historical Documents, Volume V: 1458-1558*, London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, p. 1070; see the original in Roger Ascham, 1865, *The Whole Works of Roger Ascham*, edited by J. A. Giles, 3 vols, vol. 1, London: J. R. Smith, pp. 25-26 [letter n. XII]: 'Aristoteles nunc et Plato, quod factum est etiam apud nos hoc quinquennium, in sua lingua a pueris leguntur. Sophocles et Euripides sunt hic familiariores, quam olim Plautus fuerit quum tu hic eras. Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, magis in ore et minibus omnium terentur, quam tum Titus Livius. Quod de Cicerone olim, nunc de Demosthene audires. Plures Isocrates hic in minibus puerorum habentur, quam tum Terentii. Nec Latinos interim aspernamur, sed optimos quosque et seculo illo aureo florentes arditissime amplexamur. Hunc literarum ardorem et incendit et fovit Checi nostri labor et exemplum. Qui publice gratis praelegit totum Homerum, totum Sophocles, et id bis: totum Euripidem, omnem fere Herodotum'.

²⁰¹ Erasmus, Desiderius, 1978, *Collected Works of Erasmus, Vol. 24: Literary and Educational Writings 2: De Copia; De ratione studii*, edited by Craig R. Thompson, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 681. Themes are, by Erasmus' own definition, 'rhetorical propositions [...] which are demonstrated to be true by the exposition of arguments'; see Erasmus, 1978, p. 595.

²⁰² The volume comprises two letters, one dedicated to Charles Mountjoy, son of William, the Queen's chamberlain, the other to the Queen herself with instruction on Mary's education; see Vives, 1912, p. 249; Baldwin, 1944, vol. 1, p. 192.

²⁰³ Vives, 1913, pp. 95, 160.

²⁰⁴ The edition I have used is the following: Desiderius Erasmus, 1540, *Chiliades adagiorum, opus integrum et perfectum D. Erasmi Roterodami, locupletatum et recognitum, quemadmodum in extremis conatibus auctori visum est*, Coloniae: ex officina Ioannis Gymnici. This edition is based on the last edition published while Erasmus was still alive, in 1536. There are sixteen direct quotations from *Antigone*: Erasmus, 1540, pp. 26, 54, 148, 182, 219, 285, 381, 414, 463, 577, 846, 865, 867.

²⁰⁵ Anastasia Daskarolis, 2000, *Die Wiedergeburt des Sophokles aus dem Geist des Humanismus: Studien zur Sophokles-Rezeption in Deutschland vom Beginn des 16. bis zur Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, p. 48.

Udall in his translation of the third and fourth books of Erasmus' *Apophthegmata* (1542):²⁰⁶ Udall adds a long gloss to the name *Oedipus* in which he summarizes the whole Theban saga.²⁰⁷ His synopsis reveals that he is relying on a different version of the myth from the Sophoclean one. In Sophocles' and in Seneca's versions of *Oedipus*, Jocasta kills herself as soon as she realizes that Oedipus is her son and the killer of her husband (Soph.*OT*.1235; Sen.*Oed*.1024); in Udall's summary, she is still alive after Oedipus' discovery of the truth and vainly strives to reconcile her two sons Eteocles and Polynices, as in Euripides' and Seneca's versions of *Phoenician Women* as well as Statius' *Thebaid*.

In *The Schoolemaster* (1570), Ascham argues that

in tragedies (the goodliest argument of all, and for the use of either of a learned preacher or a civil gentleman more profitable than Homer, Pindar, Virgil, and Horace, yea, comparable in mine opinion, with the doctrine of Aristotle, Plato, and Xenophon) Sophocles and Euripides far overmatch Seneca in Latin, namely in *oikonomiā et decoro*.²⁰⁸

These two criteria '*oikonomiā et decoro*', which Lawrence V. Ryan translates as 'arrangement and fitness', reflect Ascham's familiarity with Aristotle's *Poetics* and Horace's *Ars poetica*. The first, *oikonomia* (*oikonomiā*), may have been derived from Aristotle's comment in his *Poetics* on Euripides' faults in arrangement, which as we have seen in section 2.2.2 above, Camerarius has explicitly connected to matters of *dispositio* (Arist.*Poet*.1453a28-30). Although Aristotle presents Euripides as defective in arrangement, Ascham sees him in any case better than Seneca in this regard. The second, *decorus*, is related to a typically Horatian word, *decor*, occurring also in his *Ars poetica*, referring to the poet's task of portraying characters with inconstant natures that are proper to their age: 'You must note the manners of each age, and give a befitting tone to shifting natures and their years' ('*aetatis cuiusque notandi sunt tibi mores, / mobilibusque decor naturis dandus et annis*', 156-157).²⁰⁹ It is Ascham himself who relates how he and his associates at Cambridge such as John Cheke and Thomas Watson, Bishop of Lincoln – not the translator of *Antigone* under analysis here²¹⁰ – would have

many pleasant talks together in comparing the precepts of Aristotle and Horace *De arte poetica* with the examples of Euripides, Sophocles, and Seneca. Few men in writing of tragedies in our days have

²⁰⁶ Tineke L. ter Meer, 2010, 'Introduction', in Desiderius Erasmus, *Apophthegmatum libri I-IV*, edited by Tineke L. ter Meer, in *Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami, ordinis quarti tomus quartus*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 31, 33.

²⁰⁷ Nicholas Udall, 1542, 'Oedipus (as the fables of poetes maken relacion) [...]', in Desiderius Erasmus, *Apophthegmes that is to saie prompte, quicke, wittie and sentencious saynges [...]*. *First gathered and compiled in Latine by the ryght famous clerke Maister Erasmus of Roterodame. And now translated into Englyshe by Nicolas Vdall*, [London]; Excusum typis Ricardi Grafton, 1542, pp. 91^v-92^v. Udall's translation was republished in 1564; see Erasmus, 1564, *Apophthegmes* [...], Imprinted at London: By Ihon Kingston.

²⁰⁸ Ascham, 1967, pp. 129, 139; Baldwin, vol. 1, p. 262.

²⁰⁹ Horace, 2014, pp. 462-463.

²¹⁰ On the confusion between Thomas Watson the bishop (1513-1584) and Thomas Watson the poet (1555/6-1592), see L. G. Clubb, 1966, 'Gabriel Harvey and the Two Thomas Watsons', *Renaissance News*, 19, 2, pp. 113-117.

shot at this mark. Some in England, more in France, Germany, and Italy, also have written tragedies in our time, of the which not one, I am sure, is able to abide the true touch of Aristotle's precepts and Euripides' examples, save only two that ever I saw: Master Watson's *Absalom* and Georgius Buchananus' *Jephtha*.²¹¹

From the account of these conversations, which should be dated back to the years 1539-1540 and represent 'a remarkably early application of Aristotle's *Poetics*' in whole Europe,²¹² it is clear that Ascham regularly read ancient as well as contemporary tragedies by the 'precepts' of Aristotle and Horace. This passage and others reveal that Euripides was held as the best tragic author, in line with Aristotle's comment quoted above: for Ascham, while Sophocles is only one of the two best tragedians, Euripides is also one of the two best poets together with Homer.²¹³ This is how Ascham seems to interpret Aristotle;²¹⁴ however, in so doing, Ascham actually distorts Aristotle's own comparison between epic and tragic poetry: while Ascham compares Homer with Euripides, Aristotle compares the epic poet with Sophocles: 'in one respect, Sophocles could be classed as the same kind of mimetic artist as Homer, since both represent elevated characters'.²¹⁵ Alongside the combined allusion to Aristotle and Horace, a clearer echo in Ascham's comment is the one to Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*: here economy and decorum are presented together amongst the content that a *grammaticus*, i.e., 'the teacher of literature', should convey to his pupils:

Above all he [the teacher of literature] will impress upon their minds the value of proper arrangement, and of graceful treatment of the matter in hand: he will show what is appropriate to the various characters, what is praiseworthy in the thoughts or words, where copious diction is to be commended and where restraint.²¹⁶

As Kathy Eden has observed, '*oeconomia* belongs to arrangement as the second of the five rhetorical *partes*', namely *dispositio*.²¹⁷ It is clear that Quintilian conceives of economy as a good example of *dispositio*, the standard level that *dispositio* should reach: as H. E. Butler's translation makes clear, 'economy' here does not simply mean 'arrangement' but rather 'proper arrangement'. In *The*

²¹¹ Ascham, 1967, p. 139.

²¹² Lazarus, 2014, p. 224.

²¹³ Ascham, 1967, pp. 144, 149

²¹⁴ Ryan, 1967, p. xxxviii. According to recent criticism, however, Aristotle's comment on Euripides reported above has validity only in reference to tragic endings and the avoidance of happy endings; see Enrico Magnelli, 2017, 'Introduction: Ancient (and Byzantine) Perspective on Sophocles' Life and Poetry', in Rosanna Lauriola and Kyriakos N. Demetriou (eds.), *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Sophocles*, Leiden: Brill, p. 7, n. 30. In another passage Aristotle is very clear about the fact that Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* presents the best plot structure with a combination of reversal and recognition (Arist.*Poet.*1452a31-32; 1452a36-37) and that Sophocles has 'created characters as they ought to be', while Euripides 'as they really are' (Arist.*Poet.*1460b33-34); see John Davidson, 2012, 'Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides', in Ormand (ed.), p. 45.

²¹⁵ τῆ μὲν ὁ αὐτὸς ἄν ἔη μιμητὴς Ὀμήρω Σοφοκλῆς, μιμοῦνται γὰρ ἄμφω σπουδαίους (Arist.*Poet.*1448a25-26).

²¹⁶ 'Praecipue vero illa infigit animis, quae in oeconomia virtus, quae in decore rerum, quid personae cuique convenerit, quid in sensibus laudandum, quid in verbis, ubi copia probabilis, ubi modus' (Quint.*Inst.*1.8.17).

²¹⁷ Kathy Eden, 1995, 'Economy in the Hermeneutics of Late Antiquity', *Studies in Literary Imagination*, 28, 2, p. 13.

Schoolemaster, Ascham also quotes passages from three Sophoclean plays, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and finally *Antigone*; the last quotation is presented as an example of *metaphrasis*, i.e., intralingual translation (see section 2.2.1), showing Sophocles' reception of a passage of Hesiod's *Work and Days* in Haemon's speech to his father Creon (Soph.*Ant.*720-723).²¹⁸

Ascham quotes Sophoclean passages or refers to the tragedian also in his correspondence and in *Toxophilus* (1545). In a letter to William Cecil (1567), he compares Queen Elizabeth to Orestes and himself to Electra, as he was in despair because of his debts and his impending death; in the same letter, Ascham quotes a line from *Oedipus at Colonus*.²¹⁹ Ascham quotes the very same line in another letter to Cecil (1561).²²⁰ In a letter to Sturm (1568), Ascham recommends Sophocles and Euripides for 'for all explanations of political knowledge' and 'particularly for what concerns the morals, the decisions, the habits, and the events of those who spend their lives in courtly pomp'.²²¹ In *Toxophilus*, Ascham simply refers to or quotes lines in English translation from Sophocles' *Ajax*, *Antigone*, and *Philoctetes*.²²² As Ian Lancashire surmises, Ascham's English quotation from *Philoctetes* is based on his lost Latin translation of the play (ca. 1543), to which he refers also in a letter to his patron Edward Lee, archbishop of York.²²³ In this letter, Ascham asks the prelate if he can dedicate his translation of *Philoctetes* to him and gives us more details about it:

I have just taken in my hands Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, a tragedy which I translated by imitating Seneca as much as I could and with the same iambic lines and almost every chorus that Sophocles has used; it will be published under your name.²²⁴

We learn that this translation was the result of an interplay between Senecan and Sophocles: it was written in imitation of Seneca and in accordance with Sophocles' metrical patterns, both in the dialogues and in the choruses.

In *The Defence of Poesie*, when arguing for the superiority of imaginative literature over philosophy, Sidney mentions Sophocles' *Ajax* as a much more effective explanation for anger – a 'speaking picture of Poesie' – than the 'wordish description[s]' and 'learned definitions' of moral philosophers: just as Virgil's Anchises gives us a clearer idea of 'love of our country' than Cicero

²¹⁸ Ascham, 1967, pp. 10-11, 79, 102-103.

²¹⁹ Ascham, 1865, *The Whole Works of Roger Ascham*, edited by J. A. Giles, 3 vols., vol. 2, London: John Russell Smith, p. 151.

²²⁰ Ascham, 1856, vol. 2, p. 48.

²²¹ Ascham, 1865, vol. 2, p. 189: 'omni civilis cognitionis explicatione'; 'praesertim quod attinet ad eorum mores, consilia, instituta, et eventa, qui in splendore aulico vitam suam traducunt'.

²²² Ascham, 1865, vol. 2, pp. 29, 56, 58-59, 92.

²²³ Ian Lancashire, 1984, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain: A Chronological Topography to 1558*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 23.

²²⁴ 'Statim enim in manus sumpsi SOPHOCLIS *Philoctetem*, quae tragoedia ad imitationem quantum potui SENECAE versa, et versibus eisdem iambicis atque choricis fere omnibus, quibus usus est Sophocles, reddita, in tuo nomine divulgata apparebit'; see Ascham, 1865, vol.1, p. 32 [letter n. XVI]; see also Ascham, 1865, vol. 2, p. 59.

‘without Poeticall helps’, so Sophocles’ *Ajax*, ‘killing or whipping sheepe and oxen’, provides ‘a more familiar insight into Anger’ than the theories of the Stoics.²²⁵ Much later, in the pamphlet *Of Education* (1644), John Milton prescribes the reading of Sophocles and Euripides along with the two orators Demosthenes and Cicero and sees the two tragedians as particularly fitting to the education of the ruling class.²²⁶ In *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole* (1660), Hoole – highly indebted to sixteenth-century programmes – equally recommends Sophocles for the higher forms of grammar schools.²²⁷ Also sovereigns read Sophocles or at least there is the chance that they did. In 1546, Winsheim dedicated his Latin translation of Sophocles to prince Edward, addressing him as ‘to the illustrious king of England and France Edward’;²²⁸ it is still unresolved why even the copies formally printed in 1546 contained this dedication, when Edward had not become king yet.²²⁹ However, the fact that Edward owned this book does not necessarily mean that he read Sophocles,²³⁰ whereas it is certain that Queen Elizabeth did so as a princess. As noted above, she read Sophocles with Ascham: in a 1550 letter to Sturm, Ascham explains that he made her read Sophocles together with Isocrates because he hoped that ‘from those sources she might gain purity of style, and her mind derive instruction that would be of value to her to meet every contingency of life’.²³¹ In seventeenth-century Oxford, Sophocles is mentioned in several reading-lists, book accounts, and manuals of advice drafted by tutors.²³²

At grammar school and university, Greek was studied also through theatrical performances of ancient Greek drama. Of Sophocles’ seven surviving complete tragedies – *Ajax*, *Antigone*, *The Women of Trachis*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Philoctetes*, and the posthumously staged *Oedipus at Colonus*²³³ – only five were translated and adapted in England during the early modern period; there is no record of any declared engagement with either *Oedipus at Colonus* or *The Women of Trachis* at

²²⁵ Sidney, 1595, sig. D3^v.

²²⁶ John Milton, 1959, *Complete Prose Works of John Milton: 1643-1648, Vol. 2*, edited by D. M. Wolfe, D.M., New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 401; Carla Suthren, 2018, *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Reception of Euripides*, PhD dissertation, University of York, pp. 230-231.

²²⁷ Baldwin, 1944, vol. 1, pp. 450, 457.

²²⁸ Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. A2^r: ‘Inclyto regi Angliae et Franciae Eduardo’.

²²⁹ Micha Lazarus has suggested as possible explanation that the book was printed with an old-style dating, although Frankfurt, where the book was printed, had already aligned with new-style dating by then; see Micha Lazarus, forthcoming, ‘Tragedy at Wittenberg: Sophocles in Reformation Europe’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 73, 2.

²³⁰ Baldwin, 1944, vol. 1, p. 245.

²³¹ Translation by Baldwin in Baldwin, 1944, vol. 1, p. 259; see the original in Ascham, 1865, vol.1, p. 192: ‘Hinc namque illius et linguam purissima diction, mentem aptissima praeceptione, et reliquam eius excelsae vitae conditionem, ad omnem fortunae vim recte instruendam esse existimavi’.

²³² Feingold, 1997, pp. 258-259.

²³³ Sophocles’ plays were all performed between the 450s and 401 BC. *Ajax*, *Antigone* and *The Women of Trachis* are the oldest ones, dating back to the years between 450s-440s BC; see Davidson, 2012, pp. 49-50; see also P. J. Finglass, 2012, ‘*Ajax*’, in Andreas Markantonatos (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to Sophocles*, Leiden: Brill, p. 59. *Electra*’s date of performance is uncertain, *Oedipus Tyrannus* was probably produced between 436 and 433 BC; see Bernhard Zimmermann, 2006, ‘Sophocles’ in *Brill’s New Pauly. Philoctetes* dates back to 409 BC, *Oedipus at Colonus* to 401 BC; see Paul Woodruff, 2012, ‘The *Philoctetes* of Sophocles’ in Ormand (ed.), p.126; Thomas Van Nortwick, 2012, ‘*Oedipus at Colonus* and the End of Tragedy’ in Ormand (ed.), p. 141.

the time. Records register performances of texts, now lost, produced in schools and colleges: a planned performance of a Latin text of *Ajax*, entitled *Ajax Flagellifer*, to be held at King's college, Cambridge, in 1564 in honour of Queen Elizabeth I;²³⁴ a 1571 play, *Ajax and Ulysses*, staged by the Windsor's Boys at Whitehall Palace before the Queen;²³⁵ finally, a Latin play entitled *Ajax Flagellifer*, performed at Christ Church, Oxford, dating back to 1605 on the occasion of a royal visit to the College paid by King James I.²³⁶ The latter is more indebted to Seneca than to Sophocles.²³⁷ Ascham's Latin translation of *Philoctetes* mentioned above may have served as script in a performance in England in the 1540s.²³⁸ Between the 1540s and the 1560s another Latinized *Philoctetes* seems to have been performed at Cambridge.²³⁹ In his *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytanniae catalogus* (1557), John Bale attributes to Cheke some Latin translations from Sophocles that are now lost,²⁴⁰ considering Cheke's role at the University of Cambridge – he was Regius Professor of Greek – and the importance that academic plays had for linguistic and rhetorical training (see section 3.1.2 above), he may well have conceived his translation for performance. Christopherson's Greek play *Jephthah* (c. 1544) draws its subject from the Bible but it is reminiscent of classical models as well: while the subject echoes Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*, with a father sacrificing his daughter, the text also contains an allusion to Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* (Soph.OT.616).²⁴¹

The first extant English translations from Sophocles are probably the ones in Ascham's *Toxophilus* (1545). As noted above, Ascham quotes lines from various plays, including *Antigone*: the quotation from this play is one of Ismene's attempts to dissuade Antigone from going against Creon's edict ('But to begin with it is wrong to hunt for what is impossible', ἀρχὴν δὲ θηρᾶν οὐ πρέπει

²³⁴ The performance was cancelled as the Queen was indisposed; see APGRD, 'Ajax Flagellifer [a planned performance] (1564)', *APGRD Database*, [accessed at <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/production/1199> on 6 November 2017]; see also A. H. Nelson (ed), 1989, *Records of Early Modern English Drama: Cambridge*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 970.

²³⁵ Martin Wiggins with Catherine Richardson, 2012, *British Drama: A Catalogue 1533-1642, Vol. 2: 1567-1589*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 67; see also APGRD, 'Ajax and Ulysses (1571)', *APGRD Productions Database* [accessed at <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/production/6265> on 6 November 2017].

²³⁶ John R. Elliott, Alan H. Nelson, Alexandra F. Johnston, and Diana Wyatt (eds.), 2004, *Records of Early Modern English Drama: Oxford: Volume 2: Editorial Apparatus*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 825. E. K. Chambers excludes any affiliation to the Sophoclean *Ajax*: 'not apparently a translation from Sophocles, but an independent play'; see E. K. Chambers, 1951, *Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols., vol. 1, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 130. See APGRD, 'Ajax Flagellifer (Oxford)', *Lost Plays Database* [accessed at [https://www.lostplays.org/index.php?title=Ajax_Flagellifer_\(Oxford\)](https://www.lostplays.org/index.php?title=Ajax_Flagellifer_(Oxford)) on 6 November 2017]; see also APGRD, 'Ajax Flagellifer (1605)', *APGRD Productions Database* [accessed at <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/production/4517> on 6 November 2017].

²³⁷ Knight, 2009, pp. 29-30.

²³⁸ Bruce R. Smith, 1988, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage: 1500-1700*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 201; see also APGRD, 'Philoctetes (1540-1549)', *APGRD Productions Database* [accessed at <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/production/8084> on 6 November 2017].

²³⁹ Edith Hall, 1999, 'Sophocles' *Electra* in Britain', in Jasper Griffin (ed.), *Sophocles Revisited: Essays Presented to Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 262; see also APGRD, 'Philoctetes (1540-1560)', *APGRD Productions Database* [accessed at <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/production/8840> on 6 November 2017].

²⁴⁰ John Bale, 1557, *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytanniae catalogus*, Basel: Johannes Herbst [Oporinus], p. 699.

²⁴¹ Streufert, 2008, p. 55.

τῶμύχανα, *Soph.Ant.*92), which Ascham translates as ‘A fool is he that takes in hand he cannot hand’; before the quotation, Ascham gives a positive assessment of Ismene, defining her as ‘wise maid’.²⁴² A longer passage from *Antigone* in English translation appears in the version of three of Demosthenes’ orations (1570) by the humanist Thomas Wilson (1523/4–1581), a member of Cheke’s circle at Cambridge: Wilson translates into English the lines that Demosthenes himself quoted in his oration *De falsa legatione*, namely a portion of Creon’s first speech (*Soph.Ant.*175-190).²⁴³

The extant dramatic reception of Sophocles in early modern English drama is represented by a very limited corpus. If we limit ourselves to ‘announced’ engagements with Sophocles’ tragedies, i.e., with those works that explicitly refer to Sophocles by mentioning him as their source or at least by preserving the title of one of its plays,²⁴⁴ there are only four surviving texts that comply with this criterion in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English drama: Thomas Watson’s Latin translation *Sophoclis Antigone* (1581) and Thomas May’s English adaptation *The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princesse* (1631), the two versions of *Antigone* which will be analysed in detail in the next chapter; an English translation of *Electra*, Christopher Wase’s *Electra of Sophocles* (1649); an English adaptation of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee’s *Oedipus, A Tragedy* (1679). There exists also a non-dramatic adaptation of *Oedipus Rex*: the epic poem *Oedipus* in iambic pentameter quatrains, dating back to 1615 and subtitled *Three Cantoes wherein is contained 1) His unfortunate Infancy 2) His execrable action 3) His Lamentable End* composed by Thomas Evans, a clergyman educated at Cambridge.²⁴⁵ The year 1671 saw the publication of two texts that both display the use of Sophocles: William Joyner’s *The Roman Empress* (performed in 1670 at Lincoln’s Inn Field), which scholars consider an ‘indirect engagement’ with or ‘distant relative’ to Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus*,²⁴⁶ and John Milton’s verse drama *Samson Agonistes*, indebted to Sophocles’

²⁴² Ascham, 1865, vol. 2, p. 92.

²⁴³ Thomas Wilson, 1570, *The Three Orations of Demosthenes Chiefe Orator Among the Grecians*, Imprinted at London: by Henrie Denham, sig. Aii^v. Demosthenes quoted the lines as a criticism against his enemy Aeschines, who happened to have played the role of Creon in a performance of the play. Demosthenes accuses him of not living by the moral principle expressed by the very lines he himself recited as an actor: according to Demosthenes, as an ambassador, Aeschines did not put Athens’ interests first but decided to favour Philip II to his own advantage; see Demosthenes, 1926, *Orations Volume II: Orations 18-19: De corona, De falsa legatione*, translated by C. A. Vince and J. H. Vince, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 403-405.

²⁴⁴ I am here indebted to Linda Hutcheon’s definition of adaptation as ‘an extended, deliberate, announced revisitation of a particular work of art’, which I use more broadly extending it to translation, too; see Linda Hutcheon with Siobhan O’Flynn, 2013, *A Theory of Adaptation*, London: Routledge, p. 170.

²⁴⁵ Thompson Cooper, 2004, ‘Evans, Thomas (d. 1633)’, in *ODNB*. William Gager wrote a short play *Oedipus*, which is indebted to Seneca, not to Sophocles; see R. H. Bowers, 1949, ‘William Gager’s *Oedipus*’, *Studies in Philology*, 46, pp. 141-153. On Thomas Evans’s and William Gager’s *Oedipus*, see also Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, 2005, *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre 1660-1914*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 8-9.

²⁴⁶ The first definition is provided by Hall and Macintosh; see Hall and Macintosh, 2005, p. 10. The second definition is the classification the play receives in the APGRD database; see APGRD, ‘The Roman Empress (1670)’, in *APGRD Productions Database* [accessed at <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/production/6736> on 16 March 2019].

Oedipus at Colonus in structural and dramaturgical terms, while turning to Euripides for lexical borrowings.²⁴⁷

Continental dramatic traditions likewise engaged with Sophocles' plays. However, as hinted above, early modern reception of Sophocles was not confined to "productive" reception' but also encompassed the 'history of interpretation' of Greek tragedy.²⁴⁸ Before looking into the canonical dramatic reception of Sophocles in the rest of Europe, in what follows I will provide an overview of early modern contributions to Sophoclean criticism.

2.3. Greek tragedy in England and on the Continent

2.3.1. A survey of the history of the interpretation of Sophocles in early modern Europe

The earliest piece of 'modern Sophoclean criticism' is Camerarius' 1534 commentary to the Theban plays.²⁴⁹ Camerarius' judgement of Sophocles is reliant on traditional views passed down from antiquity. He reports the common definition of the poet as 'attic bee' (μέλιτταν ἀττικὴν) and Plutarch's association of Sophocles with 'anomaly' or 'uneven quality of writing' (ἀνωμαλία), as opposed to Euripides' 'chitchat' (λαλιά).²⁵⁰ In comparing Sophocles with Euripides, Camerarius draws from two additional classical sources: Aristotle's *Poetics* and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*. When he compares Sophocles and Euripides on the basis of their realism or lack thereof, he implicitly quotes Aristotle: 'Sophocles claimed, so they say, that he represented actions and events as they should be, Euripides as they are'.²⁵¹ This is based on Arist.*Poet.* 1460b.33-34: 'Just as Sophocles said, he created characters as they ought to be, Euripides as they really are'.²⁵² Aristotle's influence on Camerarius' commentary is not limited to this quotation but informs Camerarius' interpretation as a

²⁴⁷ Suthren, 2018, pp. 264-267. On the structural analogies between Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, see William Riley Parker, 1937, *Milton's Debt to Greek Tragedy in Samson Agonistes*, Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, p. 175.

²⁴⁸ Lurje, 2006, p. 1.

²⁴⁹ Lurje, 2006, p. 3.

²⁵⁰ Joachim Camerarius, 1534, *Commentarii in tragoedias Sophoclis argumenti Thebaidos*, in Sophocles, *Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίαί ἐπιτά*, sig. A8^v. The nickname of bee for poets and prose writers was very common in antiquity; see Magnelli, 2017, p. 9. On Plutarch's association of Sophocles with anomaly and Euripides with 'chitchat', see Stephan Radt (ed.), 1999, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, Vol. 4: Sophocles*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, p. 77; see also Magnelli, 2017, p. 9; Carla Castelli, 2000, *Μήτηρ σοφιστῶν: La tragedia nei trattati greci di retorica*, Milano: Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economia Diritto, p. 55.

²⁵¹ Camerarius, 1534, sig. B3^{r-v}: 'Sophoclem ferunt dixisse, se quidem representare actiones rerum, quales esse conveniat, Euripides quales sint'. I say that Camerarius quotes Aristotle 'implicitly' only with reference to this sentence. However, Camerarius quotes him explicitly in the preceding sentence, which reports Aristotle's unflattering judgement on Euripides' skills in disposition; see section 2.2.2 above.

²⁵² καὶ Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη αὐτὸς μὲν οἴους δεῖ ποιεῖν, Εὐριπίδην δὲ οἷοι εἰσὶν, ταύτη λυτέον (Arist.*Poet.* 1460b.33-34).

whole: as Lurje has demonstrated, this commentary displays a marked ‘tendency towards Aristotelisation’.²⁵³

Sophocles is often compared to Euripides by Renaissance critics. Camerarius’ and other Renaissance critical assessments of Sophocles are influenced by the *Institutio Oratoria*, particularly the passage in which Quintilian sees Euripides as more relevant to his manual of oratory: for Quintilian,

Euripides [is] of far greater service to those who are training themselves for pleading in court. For his language [...] has a closer affinity to that of oratory, while he is full of striking reflexions, in which he rivals the philosophers themselves, and for defence and attack may be compared with any orator that has renown in courts. Finally, although admirable in every kind of emotional appeal, he is easily supreme in the power to excite piety.²⁵⁴

Camerarius remarks that ‘of the two poets, Sophocles is considered the more serious and purer, Euripides the more skilled and more eloquent’.²⁵⁵ A similar view is expressed by the illustrious reformer Philip Melanchthon in his introduction to his translation of Euripides’ *Phoenician Women* (1558):

Two are the major tragedians amongst the Greeks, Sophocles and Euripides [...]. However, Sophocles is generally considered the more sublime; Euripides is rather more rhetorical and has more speech figures.²⁵⁶

While assimilating Euripides to philosophers and orators, Quintilian reports that ‘the dignity, the stately stride and sonorous utterance’ (‘gravitas et cothurnus et sonus’, Quint.*Inst.*10.1.68) of Sophocles were generally considered ‘more sublime’ (‘sublimior’, Quint.*Inst.*10.1.68). Quintilian’s word ‘cothurnus’ (‘stately stride’ in H. E. Butler’s translation, but also ‘solemn style’ or simply ‘tragic style’²⁵⁷) appears also in the title page of Camerarius’ commentary – ‘Musa Sophocleao iuncta Euripideae Cothurno’ (‘Euripides’ muse joined with the solemn style of Sophocles’) – which echoes

²⁵³ Lurje, 2006, p. 3.

²⁵⁴ ‘[I]is, qui se ad agendum comparant utiliore longe fore Euripidem. Namque is, et sermone [...] magis accedit oratorio generi, et sententiis densus, et in iis quae a sapientibus tradita sunt paene ipsis par, et in dicendo ac respondendo cuilibet eorum qui fuerunt in foro disertis comparandus, in affectibus vero cum omnibus mirus, tum in iis qui miseratione constat facile praecipuus’ (Quint.*Inst.*10.1.67-69).

²⁵⁵ Camerarius, 1534, sig. A6^r: ‘Quorum ille gravior simpliciorque putatur, hic versutior et disertior’.

²⁵⁶ Philip Melanchthon, 1558, ‘Euripidis Phoenissae’, in Euripides, *Euripidis tragoediae, quae hodie extant, omnes, Latine soluta oratione redditae*, Basileae: Apud Ioannem Oporinum, p. 122: ‘Duo sunt praecipui apud Graecos tragoediae scriptores, Sophocles et Euripides [...]. Sed vulgo Sophocles iudicator grandior: aliquanto magis Rhetoricus est Euripides, et plus habet ornamentorum’.

²⁵⁷ Rino Faranda and Piero Pecchiura translate ‘cothurno’ into ‘tragicità’, meaning ‘sense of tragedy’; see Quintilian, *L’istituzione oratoria di Marco Fabio Quintiliano*, edited by Rino Faranda, and Piero Pecchiura, vol. 2, Torino: UTET, p. 419.

also Virgil's line in *Eclogae*.²⁵⁸ More crucially, however, Camerarius shares Aristotle's preference for *Oedipus Tyrannus*. For Camerarius, this tragedy stands for any play that shows 'a good man who cherishes honesty and virtue' being afflicted by undeserved punishments.²⁵⁹ However, in so doing, he slightly distorts Aristotle's view: for Aristotle, the ideal protagonist is not morally irreprehensible as the one described by Camerarius but is rather a 'person in-between these two cases' ('ὁ μεταξύ ἄρα τούτων λοιπός), i.e. between 'decent' (ἐπιεικεῖς) and 'depraved' (μοχθηρούς) (Arist.*Poet.*1452b.27-1453a.15).²⁶⁰ Other examples of Aristotelian reading of tragedy can be found among Italian humanists such as Pietro Vettori, who in his *Argumenta in Euripidis et Sophoclis tragoedias* (1540-1550) enacts an 'experimental' application of Aristotle's categories to Sophocles (and Euripides) plays.²⁶¹

Another fundamental piece of Sophoclean criticism is the dedicatory letter to the complete translations published in Wittemberg in 1546 under the name of the German humanist Winsheim, a pupil of Melanchthon.²⁶² However, scholars generally attribute the translation to Melanchthon himself since Winsheim's edition incorporates much of Melanchthon's lectures as reported by another pupil of his in a manuscript, now conserved in Zwickau, Germany.²⁶³ However, Melanchthon is also considered the author of two Latin versions of a passage from Creon's first *rhexis* in *Antigone* (Soph.*Ant.*175-190) but these bear no resemblance with the corresponding lines in the 1546 translation.²⁶⁴ The latter are either his master Melanchthon's work or the result of a collaborative

²⁵⁸ Camerarius, 1534, title page; Virgil, 1916, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid 1-6*, translated by H. Rushton Fairclough, London: William Heinemann, pp. 54-55: 'sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna coturno' (alone worthy of the buskin of Sophocles', Verg.*Ecl.*8.10).

²⁵⁹ Camerarius, 1534, p. 11: 'At ubi vir bonus et honestatis virtutisque amans, indignum in malum impellitur quasi fatali vi, aut peccata vel non voluntate, vel ignoracione quoque commissa, poenas extremas sustinent, tum et metus et misericordia talibus ab exemplis homines invadit, et lamenta horroresque excitantur. Haec igitur fabula merito laudem prae omnium aliis habet' (But when a good man who cherishes honesty and virtue is hurled against an undeserved evil by an almost fatal power or, after committing crimes either unintentionally or unconsciously, endures supreme punishments, then, with such examples, men are overcome with fear and pity, which trigger laments and horrors. For this reason, this play [Oedipus Tyrannus] is deservedly praised in comparison with others amongst all [sic]).

²⁶⁰ This is the passage containing the discussion on *hamartia* (ἁμαρτία, 'error'), which Camerarius translates as 'peccatum'. On the complex reception of this concept in the early modern period, see Michael Lurje, 2004, *Die Suche nach der Schuld: Sophokles' Oedipus Rex, Aristoteles' Poetik und das Tragödienverständnis der Neuzeit*, München: K. G. Saur.

²⁶¹ Lurje, 2012, p. 442; see also Marco Pratesi, 1985, 'Gli "Argumenta in Euripidis et Sophoclis Tragoedias" di Pier Vettori', *Rinascimento*, 25, p. 139. However, Vettori's *Argumenta* are extant only in manuscript and circulated only amongst a limited circle of friends; see Pratesi, 1985, p. 143; see also Borza, 2007, p. 74.

²⁶² Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546. Lurje attributes it entirely to Philip Melanchthon, see Lurje, 2006, p. 6, n. 19. For subsequent complete editions, see Pollard's 'Appendix 2: Editions of Greek Plays in Latin (or Bilingual Greek-Latin)' in Pollard, 2017, pp. 242-259.

²⁶³ Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546. On the authorship of the translations, see Lurje, 2006, p. 6, n. 19. Micha Lazarus argues that it is the result of a collaborative effort between Melanchthon and Winsheim; see Lazarus, forthcoming. For subsequent complete editions, see Pollard's 'Appendix 2: Editions of Greek Plays in Latin (or Bilingual Greek-Latin)' in Pollard, 2017, pp. 242-259.

²⁶⁴ Melanchthon, 1842, *Philippi Melanthonis opera quae supersunt omnia*, in Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider (ed.), *Corpus Reformatorium X*, Halis Saxonum: apud C. A. Schwetschke et filium, p. 542. Melanchthon also Latinized a passage from Haemon's dialogue with Creon (Soph.*Ant.*712-714) but it has no correspondence with the 1546 corresponding passage; see Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. P8^v; Melanchthon, 1850, *Epitome philosophiae*

effort between master and pupil.²⁶⁵ In line with Camerarius' commentary, Melanchthon and Winsheim insist on the sublime style as the feature that distinguishes Sophocles from Euripides.²⁶⁶ However, Melanchthon and Winsheim's 'epistola nuncupatoria' differs from Camerarius' commentary in two fundamental aspects. First, Melanchthon and Winsheim inaugurate the reading of Sophocles as a political author: for them, Sophocles' plays engage with political issues and thus offer moral edification for would-be politicians. Second, the underlying logic in Melanchthon and Winsheim is Christian, not Aristotelian, thus affecting the interpretation of tragic events and the moral responsibility of the characters.

Ancient plays are seen as relevant for contemporaries also prior to this edition: this is also a concept which can be retrieved in Melanchthon's previous reflections. In his preface to Camerarius' edition of Terence's comedies, *Epistola Phil[ippi] Mel[anchthonis] de legendis Tragoediis et Comoediis* (1545), also known as *Cohortatio ad legendas tragoedias et comoedias*, Melanchthon reads comedies as politically relevant. He explains that the aim of tragedies is 'to lead raw and wild souls to moderation by making them consider fierce examples and events', while the equally moralizing effect of comedies on individuals has an impact on the whole citizenship and rule of a state.²⁶⁷ Melanchthon chooses the Theban saga to exemplify the emotional and somatic effects of Sophocles' and Euripides' plays on himself, although the summary of the scene of Jocasta failing to reconcile the two brothers and dying on their corpses is evidently drawn from Euripides' version of the myth in *Phoenician Women* (Eur.*Phoen.*1455-1459).²⁶⁸ After establishing that comedies reflect the good and evil in states, Melanchthon explicitly argues for the topical relevance of comedies:

There are and there has always been impious, unlearned, bustlers, who move either in courts or in clerical meetings and pass laws in similar ways on governments and on doctrine. The criticism of these characters in comedies both teaches a lot about human life and at the same time leads to eloquence. We can easily apply these very examples to our present concerns and, after reading them, we can think of similar situations ourselves.²⁶⁹

moralis, in Heinrich Ernst Bindseil (ed.), *Corpus Reformatorium XVI*, Halis Saxonum: apud C. A. Schwetschke et filium, p. 78.

²⁶⁵ Lurje, 2012, p. 444. I will henceforth refer to the author of the prefatory material and the Latin translation as Melanchthon and Winsheim, in line with Lurje's 2012 article; see Michael Lurje, 2012, 'Facing Up to Tragedy: Toward an Intellectual History of Sophocles in Europe from Camerarius to Nietzsche', in Ormand (ed.), p. 459.

²⁶⁶ Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. A5^v: 'hoc etiam addam, eloquentiae causa valde appetendam esse Sophoclis et Euripidis lectionem. Sed omnium iudicio non solum grandior et splendor est Sophocles, sed etiam gravior' ('I will add also the fact that one should certainly desire to read Sophocles and Euripides for eloquence's sake. However, everyone agrees that Sophocles not only is more sublime and splendid but also more serious').

²⁶⁷ Philip Melanchthon, 1838, *Philippi Melanthonis opera quae supersunt omnia*, in Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider (ed.), *Corpus Reformatorium V*, Halis Saxonum: apud C. A. Schwetschke et filium, p. 567: 'ut rudes et feros animos consideratione atrocium exemplorum et casuum flecterent ad moderationem'.

²⁶⁸ Melanchthon, 1838, p. 567.

²⁶⁹ Melanchthon, 1838, p. 570: 'Ita semper multi sunt et fuerunt profani, indocti, πολυπράγμονες, qui alterum pedem in aulis, alterum in Ecclesiastica concione habent, ac pariter leges ferunt de Imperiis et de doctrina. Harum figurarum in Comoediis animadversio, simul et de vita hominum multa monet, et conducit ad eloquentiam. Possumus enim et haec ipsa exempla ad praesentia negotia apte transferre, et his lectis multa ipsi excogitare similia'.

Tragedies are equally useful to the improvement of eloquence and at the control of passions but employ ‘more illustrious examples’ than those of comedies.²⁷⁰ While he does not openly connect tragedies with topical issues in the *Cohortatio*, Melanchthon explicitly does so with reference to Euripides’ *Suppliants* in an undated letter:

Tomorrow, with God’s will, I am starting the critical analysis of one play entitled Ἰκέτιδες [*Suppliants*], which is full of commonplaces and is very suitable to our present times. The main theme is that nations should help one another. Now nations should decide to join against the Turkish state. Moreover, the play discusses on the best constitution for a state, whether it is better monarchy or aristocracy. To consider such issues is useful to students.²⁷¹

Here Melanchthon is probably referring to one of the lectures on Euripides he gave at Wittemberg; this would date the letter back to 1537.²⁷² This confirms that Sophoclean plays were not the only ones that were read politically: in his preface to Euripides’ *Hecuba* (1562), Kaspar Stiblin underlines the political shrewdness of Odysseus in exploiting the favour of the masses.²⁷³ Albeit in more general terms, also Melanchthon and Winsheim’s preface to their 1546 edition of Sophocles points out the universal validity of tragedies as mirrors of contemporary distressful events:

The world is set to fire by almost constant wars, in which people are forced to large wanderings, many are massacred, couples are divided, children are torn away from the arms of their parents, churches are destroyed, the remaining masses are oppressed by slavery. This is the everlasting tragedy of whole mankind, in which everyone is distraught with sundry sufferings.²⁷⁴

A clearer connection of Sophocles with political issues comes in Melanchthon and Winsheim’s summary of *Ajax*: ‘Sophocles is plainly a political writer, so each of his plays deals with some notable themes of public life’.²⁷⁵ The introduction to *Antigone* is equally clear as to the political implications of this play:

²⁷⁰ Melanchthon, 1838, p. 569: ‘exempla sunt illustriora in Tragoediis, quam in Comoediis’.

²⁷¹ Melanchthon, 1842, p. 89: ‘Cras, Deo volente, inchoabo enarrationem *fabulae*, cui titulus est Ἰκέτιδες, quae et ipsa referta est locis communibus et est apta his temporibus. Principale enim argumentum est, quod civitates se mutuis auxiliis iuvare debeant. Ita hoc tempore respublicae adversus Turcam coniungi optandum est. Disputat etiam de optimo statu reipublicae, praestetne monarchia an aristocratia. Harum rerum consideratio utilis est studiosis’.

²⁷² Russ Leo, 2019, *Tragedy as Philosophy in the Reformation World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 23-24; Daskarolis, 2000, p. 72.

²⁷³ Tanya Pollard, 2013, ‘Greek Playbooks and Dramatic Forms in Early Modern England’, in Allison K. Deutermann and András Kiséry (eds.), *Formal Matters: Reading the Materials of English Renaissance Literature*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 109.

²⁷⁴ Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. A5^{r-v}: ‘Ardeat orbis terrarum fere adsiduis bellis, in quibus magnae gentium dissipationes fiunt, multi trucidantur, distrahuntur coniuges, avelluntur liberi a complexu parentum, Ecclesiae vastantur, reliqua plebecula servitute opprimitur. Talis est Tragoedia perpetua totius generis humani, in qua singuli variis doloribus excruciantur’.

²⁷⁵ Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. B1^r: ‘Sophocles plane politicus scriptor est, quare singulae eius Fabulae aliquem insignem locum communem ex vita politica tractat’.

Sophocles' plays are some representations of discussions and politics; any of his plays contains some notable disputations on important and serious issues, which affect the government of states. For example, in *Antigone* the major question is whether one should obey religion and piety, even if this is forbidden by sovereigns or magistrates. The question is discussed on both sides of the question most appropriately and most serious arguments are adduced. Of the two sisters, Ismene discusses the greatness of the danger and the obedience towards magistrates, whereas *Antigone* discusses due piety and religion.²⁷⁶

Melanchthon's *Cohortatio* lays the foundation for what Lurje has defined as a 'Christianisation' of tragedy.²⁷⁷ Melanchthon stresses that the moralizing action of tragedies is in line with that of the Church; therefore, a Christian should be facilitated in the reception of the moral messages conveyed by tragedies:

'Be warned: learn to know Justice and not to scorn the Gods'. This is the main subject of every tragedy. They want to impress this idea on everyone's mind, i.e., that there is an eternal intelligence which always punishes with notable examples heinous crimes, whereas it grants a generally peaceful life to the moderate and upright. And although fortuitous events oppress even the latter at times – there are many mysterious causes – nonetheless that manifest rule is not abolished because of this, it is evident that the Furies and cruel calamities accompany heinous crimes. This idea leads many to moderation, which must prompt us all the more, us who know that this very idea is expressed by the clear voice of the Church of God.²⁷⁸

Here Melanchthon distances himself from readings of tragedy as a display of the 'changeability of unpredictable *Fortuna*'.²⁷⁹ One of the earliest explicit associations of tragedy with fortune can be retrieved in Boethius' *Consolatione philosophiae* (first half of the sixth century AD), which is informed by Seneca's tragedies: a personification of *Fortuna* herself declares: 'What else does the clamor of tragedies bewail but Fortune overthrowing happy kingdoms with an unexpected blow?'.²⁸⁰ Boethius' *Consolatio* has a long reception history in England, including two translations attributed to

²⁷⁶ Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. O1': 'Eius fabulae imagines quaedam sunt consultationum et rerum politicarum, quarum una quaelibet continet aliquas insignes disputationes de reb[us] magnis et gravibus, quae in gubernatione Rerumpublicarum incidunt. Ut in *Antigone* praecipua quaestio est, Utrum religioni et pietati obediendum est, etiamsi id Tyranni vel Magistratus prohibeant. In utramque vero partem honestissime disputatur, et afferentur gravissima argumenta, dum altera ex sororibus Ismene disputat de magnitudine periculi, et de obedientia erga Magistratus, Altera *Antigone* de pietate debita, et de religione'.

²⁷⁷ Lurje, 2006, p. 4.

²⁷⁸ Melanchthon, 1545, p. 568: "Discite Iustitiam moniti et non spernare divos". Ita Tragoediarum omnium hoc praecipuum est argumentum. Hanc sententiam volunt omnium animis infigere, esse aliquam mentem aeternam quae semper atrocia scelera insignibus exemplis punit, moderatis vero et iustis plerunque dat tranquilliores cursum. Et quanquam hos etiam interdum fortuiti casus opprimunt, sunt enim multae arcanae causae, tamen illa manifesta regula non propterea aboletur, videlicet semper *Erinnyas* et saevas calamitates comites esse atrocium delictorum. Haec sententia multos ad moderationem flectebat, quae nos quidem magis movere debet, qui scimus eam et Ecclesiae clara Dei voce saepe traditam esse'. The first sentence is a quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid*; see Virgil, 1916, pp. 548-549 [Verg.A.6.620]; in this edition 'spernere' reads 'temnere'. Translation of the Virgilian sentence by Leo; see Leo, 2019, p. 23.

²⁷⁹ Lurje, 2006, p. 4.

²⁸⁰ Translation by Henry Ansgar Kelly and Latin text in Henry Ansgar Kelly, 1993, *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 33: 'Quid tragoediarum clamor aliud deflet nisi indiscreto ictu Fortunam felicia regna vertentem?'. On the theme of *fortuna* in Seneca's tragedies, see G. W. M. Harrison, 2014, 'Themes', in Gregor Damschen and Andreas Heil (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Seneca: Philosopher and Dramatist*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 627-628.

King Alfred, a translation by Chaucer, and one by Queen Elizabeth I.²⁸¹ Also, references to fortune in definitions of tragedy were still persistent in the first half of the sixteenth-century.²⁸² Rejecting this tradition, Melanchthon offers a Christian reading of tragedy, in which there is an alternative power above men: neither fate nor fortune, but divine providence. In his prefaces to Euripides (1562), Stiblin aligns with this Christianizing reading of fortune.²⁸³

This Christian reading, however, has not clear-cut Lutheran contours, as one would expect from one of the theologians who firmly supported Luther at the onset of the Reformation. In the passage quoted above, ‘this idea (‘haec sententia’) could be unfolded as ‘the idea that divine punishment for the evildoers and reward for the good is guaranteed’: as Lurje explains, Melanchthon thinks that tragedies show that ‘it is not the unpredictable fate but divine providence that rules the world, that there is an eternal spirit, which always punishes wrongdoings and protects and defends the upright’.²⁸⁴ Also, referring to the punishment for ‘heinous crimes’ (‘atrocia scelera’), Melanchthon betrays his distancing from Lutherans’ radical rejection of good works as a way to obtain grace, a distancing which can be already perceived in his 1535 and 1543 editions of *Loci communes* (first published in 1521).²⁸⁵ Fearing that the denial of any human contribution to salvation may lead to moral decadence, Melanchthon revised his position on the issue, thus provoking a division within the Lutheran movement and contributing to the Synergist Controversy in the 1550s; the controversy ended in 1580 with the Formula of Concord, which rejected Melanchthon’s theses on a cooperation (*synergía*, συνεργία) between God and man for salvation.²⁸⁶ Melanchthon’s theodicy informs also the prefatory material in the 1546 edition of Sophocles. Using almost the same words of the *Cohortatio* – an aspect which confirms that it is probably the result of a collaborative effort – Melanchthon and Winsheim believe in the existence of a ‘mens aeterna’ guaranteeing the reward of the upright and the punishment of the evildoers.²⁸⁷ In a similar fashion – again often borrowing from the *Cohortatio* – Melanchthon and Winsheim underline the usefulness of Sophoclean tragedies, both for the individuals and as a corollary for the state. In the dedicatory letter to King Edward VI, Melanchthon and Winsheim explain that all tragedies are meant to spur men to justice and that the decision to translate Sophocles’ tragedies stemmed from ‘this very sadness of the times’:

²⁸¹ Ian Cornelius, 2016, ‘Boethius’ *De consolatione philosophiae*’, in Rita Copeland (ed.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 269-298.

²⁸² Lurje, 2006, p. 4.

²⁸³ Suthren, 2018, p. 82.

²⁸⁴ Lurje, 2004, p. 51: ‘nicht das unberechenbare Schicksal, sondern göttliche Vorsehung die Welt regiere, dass es einen ewigen Geist gebe, der Misstaten immer bestrafe, die Gerechten aber beschütze und behüte’.

²⁸⁵ Luther D. Peterson, 2005, ‘Synergist Controversy’, in Hans J. Hillebrand (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, online edition: Oxford University Press.

²⁸⁶ Peterson, 2005.

²⁸⁷ Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. A3^v.

It was indeed this very sadness of the times that led me to analyse critically Sophocles' tragedies: they offer many splendid images of human calamities, which is useful to consider both as a warning and as a consolation.²⁸⁸

In his 1558 complete translation – the one which Watson certainly used for his version of *Antigone* – Naogeorgus traditionally praises Sophocles on account of his style: he praises his 'excellent erudition' ('summa eruditione'), 'outstanding eloquence' ('eloquentia singulari'), 'the sweetness of the language' ('orationis dulcedine'), his 'solemnity' ('gravitate'), his 'matchless disposition and arrangement of things' ('inimitabili rerum dispositione ac ordo'), and his 'figures and finest sentences' ('figuris pulcherrimisque sententiis'); in brief, 'certainly Sophocles was superior in solemnity' ('Certe Sophocles gravitate praestat').²⁸⁹ Naogeorgus also confirms Quintilian's view that Sophocles has 'a greater sublimity of style' ('styli [...] sublimitate').²⁹⁰ However, as he promptly underlines, Naogeorgus openly disagrees with Quintilian in another aspect:

However, I do not entirely agree with Quintilian when he claims that reading Euripides is more useful to the political man than Sophocles. The latter was involved in state affairs and held a public office, whereas we do not read this about Euripides. Hence Sophocles was certainly expert in dealing with such issues, could know and talk about political matters, and set them forth in drama better than any private man: and he could do all this notwithstanding the sublimity of his language, which seems to be equally appropriate to the political man.²⁹¹

Naogeorgus thus endorses Melanchthon and Winsheim's reading of Sophocles as 'a political writer', as confirmed by 'the themes of his plays, which can be defined as truly political' ('fabularum argumenta, quae vere politica dici queant').²⁹² However, Naogeorgus goes a step further: he presents Sophocles' personal political engagement as a confirmation of the political implications of his plays. Sophocles actively participated in the public life of Athens: he was elected *Hellenotamias*, i.e., Treasurer of the Greeks, in 443-442 BC; *strategos*, i.e., general, in 441-440 BC; perhaps *proboulos*, i.e., urban magistrate, after 411 BC and possibly held other offices.²⁹³ Camerarius also mentions

²⁸⁸ Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. A3^{r-v}: 'Me vero haec ipsa temporum tristitia movit, ut nunc Sophoclis Tragoedias enarrarem, in quibus imagines multae illustres humanarum calamitatum proponuntur, quas considerare, tum ad commonefactionem, tum ad consolationem utile est'.

²⁸⁹ Thomas Naogeorgus, 1558, *Sophoclis tragoediae septem, Latino carmine redditae et Annotationibus illustratae, per Thomam Naogeorgum Straubingensem*, Basileae: Per Ioannem Oporinum, pp. 6-8.

²⁹⁰ Naogeorgus, 1558, p. 8.

²⁹¹ Naogeorgus, 1558, p. 8: 'Quanquam ne in eo quidem usquequaque Quintiliano assentior, politico homini magis Euripidis quam Sophoclis lectionem prodesse. Versatum enim et ipse in republica, magistratum gessit: quod de Euripide non legimus. Unde certe ipso rerum usu doctus, politica melius et sapere et dicere potuit, atque actione repraesentare, quam quisquam privatus: nihil obstante orationis sublimitate, quae politicum virum etiam decore videtur'.

²⁹² Naogeorgus, 1558, p. 8.

²⁹³ The office of *Hellenotamias*, entrusted to ten magistrates, primarily consisted in the supervision and administration of the tributes paid by the cities belonging to the Delian League; see William Blake Tyrrell, 2012, 'Biography', in Markantonatos (ed.), pp. 25-26; Magnelli, 2017, p. 2.

Sophocles' political commitment but, unlike Naogeorgus, does not draw any inference from Sophocles' biography as to the content of his plays.²⁹⁴

Naogeorgus introduces another significant interpretive innovation. After listing the powerful and edifying images of the Sophoclean plays, he clearly reads Sophocles through Protestant lenses: for Naogeorgus, Sophocles 'shows [...] that human events do not happen by chance but depend on divine will; that honest and upright people are generally afflicted in this world, whereas villains flourish and fare happily'.²⁹⁵ The phrase 'divine will' ('divino [...] arbitrio') evokes Erasmus and Luther's controversy over free will (1524-1525): by asserting that human events are determined by God's will, Naogeorgus is endorsing Luther's idea that man's will is enslaved to God's. Before turning to Calvinism, which in any case shares Luther's view on enslaved will, at the beginning of his ecclesiastic career Naogeorgus had strong sympathies for Luther: in 1538 Naogeorgus dedicated his anti-Catholic play *Pammachius* to Luther.²⁹⁶ Naogeorgus' overall adherence to the foremost Lutheran ideals is also evident in his depiction of the mundane world as an unjust world, with the good suffering while the wicked live in happiness. This unsettling scenario is in line with the Protestant rejection of good works as a way to obtain salvation, an idea that Lutherans and Calvinists had in common, whereas it clashes with Melancthon's idea of a divine providence ensuring the punishment of evildoers seen above.²⁹⁷ For Naogeorgus, the awareness of the lack of any justice in this world is a fundamental prerequisite for any would-be political man: 'The knowledge and the consideration of all this', Naogeorgus argues, 'can be useful to the political man and prepare him to any event or action'.²⁹⁸

The appeal to Sophocles' biography as a guarantee of his primacy amongst the tragedians resurfaces in Pierre de la Rovière's edition of the Greek tragedians (1614) mentioned above. Pierre de la Rovière assigns to Sophocles the highest rank amongst tragedians and also gives greater credit to him than to Socrates on account of his holding public offices:

It seems fair that Sophocles is the first. [...] At the same time Socrates was teaching such things in his academy, Euripides did the same at theatre; however, Sophocles is more sublime than both and also much

²⁹⁴ Camerarius, 1534, p. 8.

²⁹⁵ Naogeorgus, 1558, p. 8: 'ostendit [...] res humanas non temere ferri, sed ex divino pendere arbitrio; probos ac integros in hoc mundo fere affligi, et contra florere sceleratos, et feliciter agere'.

²⁹⁶ Volker Janning, 2015, 'Naogeorg, Thomas', in Wilhelm Kühlmann, Jan-Dirk Müller, Michael Schilling, Johann Anselm Steiger, and Friedrich Vollhard (eds.), *Frühe Neuzeit in Deutschland: 1520-1620: Literaturwissenschaftliches Versasserlexikon: Band 4*, Berlin: De Gruyter, p. 565.

²⁹⁷ In this respect, I disagree with Lurje, who rather sees a continuance between Melancthon's and Naogeorgus' positions; see Lurje, 2004, p. 52.

²⁹⁸ Naogeorgus, 1558, p. 9: 'omnibus cognitis et expensis, vir politicus iuvari potest, et ad omnes casus atque actiones erudiri'.

more effective: he was a public personality, as a commander and a magistrate of the Athenians; he showed his valour truly everywhere, a leader both at home and abroad.²⁹⁹

De la Rovière's edition testifies to the persistence of interpretative canons on Sophocles which were formulated in the previous century and which reached also England. English humanists could access the majority of the Sophoclean editions and commentaries surveyed here. Jonson owned de la Rovière's edition along with Theodore Goulston's Latin translation of the *Poetics* (1619).³⁰⁰ As we have seen, in a 1568 letter Ascham points out the edifying relevance of Sophocles' plays for public life, albeit attributing the same to Euripides. Watson relied on Naogeorgus' Latin translation and had therefore access to his paratextual material as well; Watson probably consulted many other Latin translations.

Alongside Latin or bilingual editions of the plays, Greek editions also contained prefatory material; however, apart from commonplaces on Sophocles' style, such paratexts generally account for editorial choices on the Greek text and on metric issues.³⁰¹ In this section, I have looked at commentaries and paratexts which are significant for the reconstruction of the history of the interpretation of Sophocles. However, as the most common Latin term for translation, *interpretatio*, suggests, translation is also a form of interpretation; as we have seen, Humphrey himself underlines the intrinsically hermeneutical power of translation. The early modern translation history of Sophocles' *Antigone* or any other Sophoclean play is by no means comparable to Euripides' *Hecuba*, the first Greek play to be translated and performed but also the most frequently printed and translated Greek play in the sixteenth century.³⁰² Nor are imitations of Sophoclean plays as widespread as those of Euripidean plays; Euripides was far less influential than Seneca, whose all-pervading presence in Renaissance tragedy can hardly be overstated.³⁰³ Such translations and imitations of Greek tragedies were not immune from Seneca's influence: Seneca's tragedies function as one of the most prominent links in the 'chain of receptions' of Greek tragedy. However, Seneca interacts with other sources; also, Seneca's tragedies have their own reception history and thus activate what I have called a 'cluster of reception' on their own (see section 0.2). As we shall see in the following sub-section, most English versions of Greek tragedies do display Seneca's direct or indirect influence (one exception is Jane Lumley's *Iphigenia*).

²⁹⁹ Rovière, 1614, 'Poetarum graeconum studiosis lectoribus', in Rovière (ed.), sigg. (:)3^r, (:)4^r: 'Sophocles principatum tenere videtur. [...] Haec eodem tempore in academia Socrates, in teatro Euripides docebat: sed sublimius utroque Sophocles, et plaerunq̄ue efficacius: ut qui in Republica personam egit, Dux Atheniensium et pretor: vere ubique magnus: domi imperator et foris'.

³⁰⁰ McPherson, 1974, pp. 26-27.

³⁰¹ See for instance Willem Canter, 1579 'Gulielmi Canteri in Sophoclem prolegomena', in Sophocles, *Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίαι*, pp. 6-10.

³⁰² Pollard, 2017, p. 8.

³⁰³ Helen Slaney, 2016, *Senecan Aesthetic: A Performance History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Gordon Braden, 1985, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition*, London: Yale University Press, p. 203.

2.3.2. Greek tragedy in the vernacular: English versions and Continental Antigones

The three major ancient Greek tragedians had a different reception in early modern drama in English. As we have seen, Sophocles did not have a wide reception in sixteenth-century English drama and the only extant sixteenth-century engagement is a Neo-Latin translation, Watson's *Antigone*. The first English translation of a Sophoclean play appeared as late as 1649, the year in which Christopher Wase's *Electra* was published;³⁰⁴ May's *Antigone* counts as a translation neither in the early modern nor in the modern sense, since it is the result of complex interplay of sources. For Aeschylus, it is difficult to identify a specific English version of one of his plays before James Thomson's *Agamemnon* (1738).³⁰⁵ Dana Ferrin Sutton has detected an Aeschylean influence in the structure of Thomas Legge's *Richardus Tertius* (performed in 1579), the first history play written in England: according to Sutton, by dividing the play into three *actiones* (each divided into five acts), Legge 'superimposes the structure of an Aeschylean trilogy on his ostensibly Senecan models'.³⁰⁶ In England, sixteenth-century vernacular engagements with Greek tragedy were only with Euripidean plays. Euripides' influence on early modern English drama is not limited to academic translations and imitations but, as many scholars have demonstrated, 'ghosts' and 'shadows' of Euripidean plays can be recovered and perceived in commercial plays, too.³⁰⁷

The most popular Greek plays in sixteenth-century England were Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*. This is largely due to Erasmus' influential translations of the plays in 1503

³⁰⁴ Hall and Macintosh, 2005, pp. 163-164.

³⁰⁵ There are at least five or six dramatic engagements with Aeschylus in England before 1738 but none of them uses Aeschylus' texts as directly as Thomson. The first is a 1584 stage play performed before Queen Elizabeth at Oxford and is based on both the Senecan and Aeschylean version of *Agamemnon*. Two others are lost adaptations of the same play, both dating back to 1599 (*Agamemnon* and *Orestes' Furies*); see Gordon Braden, 2015, 'Tragedy', in Cheney and Hardie (eds.), p. 376. Inga-Stina Ewbank argues that these could be the same play, hence the tentative indication of the plays in the list above as being 'five or six'; see Inga-Stina Ewbank, 2005, "'Striking too short at Greeks": the transmission of *Agamemnon* to the English Renaissance stage', in Fiona Macintosh, Pantelis Michelakis, Edith Hall, and Oliver Taplin (eds.), 2005, *Agamemnon in Performance 458 BC to AD 2004*, Oxford, Oxford University Press p. 42. Thomas Goffe's *The Tragedie of Orestes* (1609-19) – which features *Agamemnon* in two scenes in Act 1 and as a ghost, reminiscent of that of Hamlet's father, in Act 4 – shows a greater influence of contemporary texts, especially Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, than any classical source; see Ewbank, 2005, pp. 48-9. The last two theatrical engagements with Aeschylus before 1738 are both classified as 'distant relative' to Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* in the APGRD database: one is Thomas Heywood's *The Second Part of the Iron Age* (1612-1613), the first act of which he uses the story of *Agamemnon* as available in English 'narrative sources' such as Lydgate's *Troy Book* and Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*; the other is Gervase Markham and William Sampson's *The True Tragedie of Herod and Antipater* (1619-1622), in which *Agamemnon* makes his appearance only in a 'dumb show' and lines of Seneca's *Agamemnon* are quoted; see Ewbank, 2005, pp. 43-44. For all these antecedents in general, see APGRD productions database and Amanda Wrigley, 2005, 'Appendix: *Agamemnons* on the APGRD database', in Macintosh, Michelakis, Hall, and Taplin (eds.), pp. 363-4.

³⁰⁶ Dana Ferrin Sutton, 1993, 'Introduction', in Thomas Legge, *Richardus Tertius*, in *Thomas Legge: The Complete Plays*, edited by Dana Ferrin Sutton, vol. 1, New York: Peter Lang, p. xi. The play is extant only in manuscript.

³⁰⁷ After Louise Schleiner, who has been among the first to note Euripidean and Aeschylean traces in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* via Latin translations of the tragedians, many other scholars have investigated the presence of Euripides in commercial theatre; see Schleiner, 1990, pp. 29-48; Pollard, 2017, p. 16. The terms 'ghosts' and 'shadows' are Pollard's; see Pollard, 2017, p. 71.

(*Hecuba*) and 1506 (*Iphigenia in Aulis*).³⁰⁸ The figure of Hecuba resurfaces in many plays such as Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville's *Gorboduc*, Shakespeare and Peele's *Titus Andronicus*, and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.³⁰⁹

Iphigenia is the first play to be translated into English. As hinted in section 2.1.1 above, Jane Lumley produced a manuscript version of *Iphigenia* in about 1557, entitled *The Tragedie of Euripides called Iphigeneia*; Lumley significantly drew on Erasmus' version but some of her syntactical choices indicate that she also looked at the Greek original.³¹⁰ The play has usually been thought to be the first piece of English closet drama.³¹¹ However, recent criticism has reconsidered its performability – also on the basis of textual clues – and has argued for the possibility that it was performed in 1559, in Lumley's banqueting house in Nonsuch, before a restricted 'household audience' which may have included no less than Queen Elizabeth.³¹² As noted above, a secretary of state under James I reports that Elizabeth herself translated a play from Euripides 'for her own Amusement', thus suggesting that it was not an exercise set by her tutor Ascham.³¹³ Lumley's translation equally appears a work by a young educated noblewoman, less willing to impress a master than to produce an autonomous work not only probably intended for performance but, as Carla Suthren has argued, also imbued with Erasmian ideas on translation.³¹⁴ Lumley considerably cuts the original play, eliminating the choruses altogether, but she decides to preserve 'the chorus as a stage presence', useful to convey gnomic sentences.³¹⁵ The play also contains Christian references and a plausible topical allusion to the Protestant martyr Lady Jane Grey, who was executed on the charge of treason in 1554; if present, this allusion would have been particularly embarrassing for Lumley's father, Henry Fitzalan, twelfth Earl of Arundel, who was a prominent actor in the events that led to the proclamation of Mary I and the execution of Lady Jane.³¹⁶ Marion Wynne-Davies has defined Lumley's manuscript as 'a commonplace book', a use which is confirmed by presence of Latin *sententiae*.³¹⁷ In the 1570s, Peele translated one of Euripides' *Iphigenia* plays into English while he was a student at Christ Church, Oxford; Gager wrote a praise poem on this translation, 'In *Iphigeniam* Georgii Peeli Anglicanis

³⁰⁸ On the paratextual material of the joint edition of this play, see section 3.2.1 below.

³⁰⁹ Pollard, 2017, pp. 8, 100.

³¹⁰ Suthren, 2018, pp. 103-104. Jane Lumley's manuscript is now at the British Library (MS Royal 15.A.ix).

³¹¹ Catherine Burroghs, 2019, 'Introduction: "Closet Drama Studies"', in Catherine Burroghs (ed.), *Closet Drama: History, Theory, Form*, Abingdon: Routledge, p. 16.

³¹² Pollard, 2017, pp. 54-55, 61; see also Suthren, 2018, p. 99.

³¹³ Pollard, 2017, p. 40, n. 121; see also Suthren, 2018, p. 99.

³¹⁴ Suthren, 2018, pp. 104-106.

³¹⁵ Suthren, 2018, p. 104.

³¹⁶ Suthren, 2018, p. 106. Lumley's father had a very 'duplicitous' conduct between the death of Edward VI and the ascension of Mary I: he pretended to support the Duke of Northumberland's plan to make Lady Jane Grey the new queen but he actually acted in favour of Mary's claim behind the scenes; see Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, 1998, 'Jane Lumley's *Iphigenia at Aulis: Multum in parvo*, or, less is more', in S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (eds.), *Readings in Renaissance Women's Drama: Criticism, History, Performance 1594-1998*, London: Routledge, p. 133.

³¹⁷ Marion Wynne-Davies, 2008, 'The Good Lady Lumley's Desire: *Iphigeneia* and the Nonsuch Banqueting House', in Rina Walthaus and Marguérite Corporaal (eds.), *Heroines of the Golden Stage*, Kassel: Reichenberger, p. 119.

Versibus Redditam’, a title which informs us that Peele translated into English verse.³¹⁸ Considering the ‘widespread popularity of *Iphigenia in Aulis* in the period’ and ‘the near-invisibility of *Iphigenia in Tauris*’, Pollard argues that Peele most likely translated the former.³¹⁹

Though less popular than *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Euripides’ *Phoenician Women* was adapted into English by the two poets George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh with the title of *Jocasta: A Tragedie Written in Greke by Euripides, Translated and Digested into Acte* (1566). Although the title boasts a direct affiliation to Euripides, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh are much indebted to an earlier adaptation of the same Euripidean play, namely Ludovico Dolce’s Italian version *Giocasta* (1549), in turn based on a Latin translation of Euripides. Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh’s play was staged at Gray’s Inn in 1566 – the same year in which Dolce’s collected tragedies including *Giocasta* appeared – and first published in 1573.³²⁰ Unlike Lumley’s translation, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh’s version is divided into five acts, as the title underlines.

The genealogy of the five-act structure is not clear but Henry Lawrence Snuggs and Thomas Whitfield Baldwin have managed to reconstruct its first appearance both in theory and in practice and its adoption in English theatre. The earliest reference is contained in Horace’s *Ars poetica*: ‘Let no play be either shorter or longer than five acts’.³²¹ Without any reference to Horace’s authority, Aelius Donatus (IV century AD) applied the five-act rule to Terence’s comedies and his divisions held a considerable influence on the first printed editions in the Renaissance; in 1500, Ioannes Baptista Pius applied the rule to Plautus’ comedies.³²² Although the theoretical statements of Donatus and other critics circulating at the time applied the rule only to comedies, almost all sixteenth-century editions of Seneca’s tragedies divide each play into five acts, except for *Phoenician Women*, which is incomplete and is divided into four *actus* instead; the first edition displaying such division dates back to 1491.³²³ The structure of Seneca’s tragedies, with choruses framing and dividing the dialogues, lends itself to a five-act structure, although this is not signalled in the manuscripts: for instance, the Codex Etruscus, a manuscript that explicitly presented the plays as tragic poems, discovered by Lovato de’ Lovati in the late thirteenth century does not mark off acts.³²⁴ As Snuggs observes,

³¹⁸ William Gager, 1888, ‘In *Iphigeniam* Georgii Peeli Anglicanis Versibus Redditam’, in George Peele, *The Works of George Peele*, edited by Arthur Henry Bullen, London: John C. Nimmo, pp. xvii-xviii.

³¹⁹ Pollard, 2017, p. 24, n.2.

³²⁰ Dolce relied on the Latin translation of Euripides’ plays by Rodolphus Collinus (1541); see Sarah Dewar-Watson, 2010, ‘*Jocasta*: “A Tragedie Written in Greeke”, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 17, 1, pp. 22-23.

³²¹ Horace, 2014, pp. 466-467: ‘Neve minor neu sit quinto productior actu / fabula’ (Hor. *Ars*.189-190).

³²² Henry Lawrence Snuggs, 1960, *Shakespeare and Five Acts: Studies in a Dramatic Convention*, New York: Vantage Press, pp. 20-23.

³²³ Snuggs, 1960, p. 36; see also Thomas Whitfield Baldwin, 1947, *Shakspeare’s Five-act Structure: Shakspeare’s Early Plays on the Background of Renaissance Theories of Five-act Structure from 1470*, Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, pp. 150-159.

³²⁴ MS Plutei.37.13, Biblioteca Medicea Laureanziana, Florence (dating back to 1100-1200). On the features of this manuscript, see Werner Schubert, 2013, ‘Seneca The Dramatist’, in Damschen and Heil (eds.), p. 77.

Seneca's tragedies are 'the only corpus of extant ancient drama in which the playwright himself almost regularly followed a five-act rule, probably that of Horace. [...] Seneca is thus the only playwright who himself contributed to the establishment of the five-act convention'.³²⁵ In line with the editions of the original, Thomas Newton's collection of Seneca's tragedies in English translation, *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies Translated into English* (1581), has division into acts. As for Greek tragedians, there is no theoretical statement in relation to act-division for ancient Greek tragedies.³²⁶ Neither sixteenth-century printed editions of the tragedians in the original nor the Latin translations present any act division; however, as we shall see, Watson's *Antigone* is divided into five acts. In Italy, the division became a matter of debate: Gian Giorgio Trissino, Giovanni Rucellai, Alessandro Pazzi de' Medici, and Lodovico Martelli, whom Marvin T. Herrick has defined as the 'Grecians', adopted the Greek dramatic structure (prologue, episodes divided by choruses, and exodus) in their tragedies and rejected the five-act Senecan model, which was to be endorsed by Giambattista Giraldi Cinthio.³²⁷ The choice between Senecan and Greek structure depended also on patrons: as Giraldi relates in *Lettera sulla tragedia* (1543), he was obliged by the patrons of the second performance of his *Orbecche* to omit the divisions into acts and adopt the Greek structure instead.³²⁸ The first English play displaying what was to become the canonical division into five acts is Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc* (performed at Inner Temple during the Christmas Revels between 1561 and 1562; published in 1565), usually considered the first 'neoclassical' or 'regular' English tragedy for its classical partition as well as for its use of blank verse.³²⁹

Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* closely follows *Gorboduc* not only in the five-act structure but also in two other structural aspects: the presence of choruses and the insertion of dumb shows, namely, short dumb performances or plain processions of characters accompanied by music. *Gorboduc* features a dumb show before each act and a chorus at the end of the first four acts. *Jocasta* also contains five dumb shows, one before each act, but a greater number of choruses, one at the end of each act and one after scene 4.2, for a total of six choral odes. Unlike *Gorboduc*, in *Jocasta* the chorus is also a character engaging with the other figures of the play. The end of Act 4 is indicated both at the end of scene 4.3 and after the concluding chorus of the act: as Sarah Dewar-Watson has

³²⁵ Snuggs, 1960, pp. 26-27.

³²⁶ Baldwin, 1947, pp. 158-159.

³²⁷ Salvatore Di Maria, 2005, 'Italian Reception of Greek Tragedy', in Justina Gregory (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, p. 429; see also Francesca Schironi, 2016, 'The Reception of Ancient Drama in Renaissance Italy', in Betine van Zyl Smit (ed.), *A Handbook to the Reception of Greek Drama*, Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, p. 135. For the definition of 'Grecians', see Marvin T. Herrick, 1965, *Italian Tragedy in the Renaissance*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, p. 69.

³²⁸ Giambattista Giraldi Cinthio, 1970, 'Lettera sulla tragedia', in Bernard Weinberg (ed.), *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, vol. 1, Bari: Laterza, p. 480.

³²⁹ A. R. Braunmuller, 2013, 'The arts of the dramatist', in A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 82.

noted, this ‘points to a wider uncertainty about the function of the Chorus in the play: is it there to break up the action, or to help it cohere?’.³³⁰ This uncertainty is not surprising since even Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which started to be widely known across Europe since the 1530s, devotes little space to the discussion of choral odes.³³¹ However, whereas ‘within ancient Greek contexts, the chorus requires no explanation’ since ‘choral song and dance were familiar from other realms of existence’, in the societies ‘that do not share this choral culture [...], the dramatic chorus appears as an anomaly demanding justification’.³³² In *Poetices libri septem* (1561), Scaliger tries to do so by discussing the chorus more in detail than Aristotle does but he is mostly reliant on the *Poetics*.³³³ What emerges in both Scaliger and Aristotle is a rather ‘functionalist’ approach to the chorus, as distinguished from the ‘conceptual explanation[s]’ that German Idealists and many others after them will provide.³³⁴ In *Lettera sulla tragedia* (1543), Giraldi explicitly rejects the Greek version of choruses, a ‘dumb and useless’ presence onstage, and prefers the Roman type of chorus, entering only at the end of an act, as more fitting to the criterion of the ‘plausible’.³³⁵ Overall, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh’ choruses perform a moralizing function which perfectly tallies with Horace’ precepts:

Let the Chorus sustain the part and strenuous duty of an actor, and sing nothing between acts which does not advance and fitly blend into the plot. It should side with the good and give friendly counsel; sway the angry and cherish the righteous. It should praise the fare of a modest board, praise wholesome justice, law, and peace with her open gates; should keep secrets, and pray and beseech the gods that fortune may return to the unhappy, and depart from the proud.³³⁶

Horace’s notion of the chorus informs also other Renaissance dramatic traditions on the Continent.³³⁷

One passage of Scaliger’s discussion on the chorus is particularly interesting in relation to Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh’ *Jocasta*. Translating almost *verbatim* from Aristotle, Scaliger distinguishes between two kinds of chorus: ‘one moving, one stable’ (‘alteram mobilem, alteram

³³⁰ Dewar-Watson, 2010, p. 27.

³³¹ Stephen Halliwell, 1998, *Aristotle’s Poetics*, London: Duckworth, pp. 238-241. On the wider circulation of the *Poetics* since the 1530s, see Lazarus, 2016. Lazarus pinpoints particularly Alessandro Pazzi’s 1536 Latin translation as the beginning of a ‘mainstream’ circulation of the *Poetics*.

³³² Joshua Billings, Felix Budelmann, and Fiona Macintosh, 2013, ‘Introduction’, in Billings, Budelmann, and Macintosh (eds.), *Choruses, Ancient and Modern*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 6.

³³³ Scaliger, 1561, pp. 18-19.

³³⁴ Billings, Budelmann, and Macintosh, 2013, p. 6.

³³⁵ Giraldi, 1970, p. 478: ‘muta e senza necessità’, ‘verisimile’.

³³⁶ Horace, 2014, pp. 466-467: ‘Actoris partis chorus officiumque virile / defendat, neu quid medios intercinat actus / quod non proposito conducat et haereat apte. / ille bonis faveatque et consilietur amice, / et regat iratos et amet peccare timentis; / ille dapes laudet mensae brevis, ille salubrem / iustitiam legesque et apertis otia portis; / ille tegat commissa deosque precetur et oret / ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis’ (Hor.*Ars.*193-201).

³³⁷ Roger Savage, 2013, ‘Something like the Choruses of the Ancients’: The Coro Stabile and the Chorus in European Opera, 1598-1782’, in Billings, Budelmann, and Macintosh (eds.), p. 118. In *Art poétique* (1555), Jacques Peletier translates almost *verbatim* Horace’s definition of the chorus; see Sabine Lardon, 2015, ‘L’importance des préfaces des premiers traducteurs pour la codification de la tragédie à la Renaissance’, *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 52, 3, p. 286.

stabilem’), corresponding to Aristotle’s distinction into *parodos* and *stasimon* (Arist.*Poet.*1452b.16);³³⁸ Scaliger’s distinction gained currency in Italy as ‘coro mobile’ and ‘coro stabile’.³³⁹ The prose description of the first dumb show gives details as to the composition of Jocasta’s retinue as follows: ‘Jocasta the Queene issueth out of hir pallace, before hir twelve Gentlemen, following after hir eight Gentlewomen, whereof foure be the *Chorus* that remayne on the Stage after hir departure’.³⁴⁰ Later in the play, a stage direction indicates Jocasta’s exit and specifies that ‘*the foure Chorus also follow hir to the gates of hir pallace. After, comming on the stage, take their place, where they continue to the end of the tragedie*’.³⁴¹ Jocasta’s retinue at her entrance is larger than the four women of what is defined as the ‘Chorus’ and the remaining figure forms a kind of ‘silent sub-chorus’.³⁴² The presence of two choruses, one dumb and one speaking, might suggest that Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh are here misapplying Scaliger’s – and hence Aristotle’s – distinction into a stable and a moving chorus. By distinguishing two groups within the retinue of *Jocasta*, one remaining on stage and the rest leaving, the two authors anticipate the devices of ‘coro stabile’ and ‘coro mobile’ of early Italian operas.³⁴³ While there is probably no direct relation between the two traditions, what is certain is that Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh are familiar with the notion of the regular chorus as a constant presence during the play, as other stage directions confirm.³⁴⁴

Unlike Lumley’s *Iphigenia*, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh’s *Jocasta* are indebted to Seneca but not in a direct way, namely, through the intermediary translation of Dolce’s *Giocasta*. Whether mediated or not, the influence of Seneca is perceivable both at the level of style and at the level of plot. The former kind of influence pertains to what Helen Slaney has termed ‘senecan aesthetic’, i.e., ‘the group of recurring tropes, motifs, stylistic or dramaturgical features, and thematic preoccupations which have been derived from [Seneca’s] corpus but whose usage may not necessarily constitute direct allusion’.³⁴⁵ The second kind of influence, evident in plot resonances with Seneca’s plays, rather falls into what Slaney defines as “‘Senecan” (upper case)’, an adjective she uses with reference to the ‘deliberately restricted corpus of Latin source-texts’.³⁴⁶ Applying Slaney’s categories, it can be

³³⁸ Scaliger, 1561, p. 19. In his commentary to the *Poetics* (1570), Lodovico Castelvetro is clearer about the fact that the chorus is the same and that the *parodos* is the first song uttered by the chorus ‘entering’ (‘entrante’, i.e., the *parodos*), whereas the remnant songs are delivered by the same chorus members singing in-between episodes; see Lodovico Castelvetro, 1978, *Poetica d’Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposta*, vol. 1, edited by Werther Romani, Bari: Laterza, pp. 339-340.

³³⁹ Savage, 2013, p. 132, n. 5.

³⁴⁰ George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh, 1906, *Jocasta: A Tragedy Written in Greeke by Euripides*, in Gascoigne, *Supposes and Jocasta*, edited by John William Cunliffe, London: D. C. Heath, p. 135.

³⁴¹ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 155.

³⁴² Dewar-Watson, 2010, p. 28.

³⁴³ Savage, 2013, pp. 119-120.

³⁴⁴ Dewar-Watson, 2010, p. 28; see also Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 337: ‘*Jocasta with Antigone and all hir traine (excepte the Chorus) goeth towards the campe by the gates Homoloydes*’.

³⁴⁵ Slaney, 2015, p. 6.

³⁴⁶ Slaney, 2015, p. 6.

argued that both Dolce's and Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's versions exhibit 'Senecan' as well as 'senecan' features. In neither play, however, is Seneca the exclusive factor of influence but rather interacts with other sources, thereby revealing a complex 'network' of influences: as we have seen, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh absorbed contemporary innovations such as *Gorboduc*'s dumb shows; Dolce was steeped in the tragic fashion of contemporary Italian dramatists such as Trissino, Rucellai, and Giraldi Cinthio.³⁴⁷ Considering their close relation to Dolce's *Giocasta*, it is difficult to isolate with certainty the passages in which Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh imitate Seneca independently of their Italian source. The idea of influence is therefore unsuitable to account for Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's relationship to Seneca, either direct or mediated. By applying the notion of 'cluster', one might argue that *Jocasta* interacts with a 'Seneca cluster' grouping what would traditionally be defined as direct and indirect sources, i.e., his tragedies and adaptations such as Dolce's *Jocasta*. The features that these texts share are what Slaney calls 'senecan aesthetics'.

Nonetheless, there are cases in which Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's interventions are visible: one of them particularly shows how the two authors emphasize Dolce's senecan stylistic features. Dolce's Tiresias describes the impending fratricidal war between Eteocles and Polyneices with a cumulative asyndeton, a figure of speech which Slaney classifies as typical of senecan excess: 'with flames, murders, robberies, and dead' ('con fochi, uccision, rapine, e morti').³⁴⁸ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh extend Dolce's asyndeton as follows: 'with famine, flame, rape, murder, dole and death'.³⁴⁹ Dolce's version also displays Senecan imitation, i.e., the imitation of Senecan plots, but of an unexpected sort: although the story of *Jocasta* should recall Seneca's *Phoenician Women*, Dolce's most Senecan scene, namely the sacrifice performed by Tiresias, is derived from *Oedipus* (Sen. *Oed.* 288-402). Although clearly modelled on the corresponding scene in *Oedipus*, Dolce as well as Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh radically transform the outcome of the *extispicium*, i.e., the inspection of an animal's entrails with prophetic purposes: while in Seneca the result is ominous, in the two early modern versions the aspect of the entrails is described as healthy and regular.³⁵⁰ The 'Senecan' echo of *Oedipus* is paradoxically not 'senecan'. The tone is not as gloomy and as macabre as the Senecan source; this leads us to relativize Robert Miola's definition of Dolce's *Giocasta* as a 'Senecan adaptation'.³⁵¹ A similarly unexpected use of Seneca characterizes the 1605 performance

³⁴⁷ Pietro Montorfani, 2006, '*Giocasta*, un volgarizzamento euripideo di Lodovico Dolce (1549)', *Aevum*, 80, pp. 723-727; see Suthren, 2015, p. 112.

³⁴⁸ Slaney, 2015, p. 17.

³⁴⁹ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, pp. 282-283.

³⁵⁰ On the sacrifice scene in Dolce and Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, see Dewar-Watson, 2010, pp. 24-25.

³⁵¹ Suthren, 2018, pp. 112-113; Robert S. Miola, 2002, 'Euripides at Gray's Inn: Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta*', in Naomi Conn Liebler (ed.), *The Female Tragic Hero in English Renaissance Drama*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, p. 33. Richard A. McCabe agrees with Miola: 'Although it has been argued that Dolce did not Senecanise his source, the overall effect is of Roman rather than Greek tragedy'; see Richard A. McCabe, 1993, *Incest, Drama and Nature's Law*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 120.

of Sophocles' *Ajax* at Oxford (see section 2.2.2 above). The Sophoclean chorus of the sailors of Salamis disappears and is substituted by 'the recognizable Senecan device of a ghost who comments on the play's action'.³⁵²

In the English version, this scene contributes to fulfil contemporary expectations of spectacle. By having the performer of the sacrifice, the Sacerdos, 'accompanied with xvi Bacchanales and all his rites and ceremonies',³⁵³ Gascoigne – indicated as the author of Act 3 – clearly emphasizes the visual impact on the audience, an aspect playing an important role in early modern responses to dramatic performances, particularly academic ones. An account of Queen Elizabeth's visit at the University of Cambridge in 1564 gives details on the preparations for a performance of Sophocles' *Ajax*: reportedly, the scenery included 'arms of war, clothes shining in splendour, and all the rest of the gear from London and other very remote places'.³⁵⁴ As we shall see, Gabriel Harvey also bestows great importance on spectacle in his assessment of Watson's *Antigone*. In Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta*, the dumb shows are also meant to meet the expectations of visual splendour, thus anticipating the 'poetics of spectacle' of courtly masks.³⁵⁵ The Latin production of Sophocles' *Ajax* for the 1605 visit of James I at Oxford was performed on a newly-constructed stage designed by Inigo Jones and, according to a contemporary account by Isaac Wake, the performance enthralled 'both eyes and ears' thanks to 'the variety of the matter, the whole fabric of the stage and the artful apparatus of the embroidered hangings', which 'were renewed again and again to the amazement of all'.³⁵⁶ Bruce Smith regards the deployment of such array of costumes and scenery as an example of the '*amplitude*' and '*granditas*' that early modern audiences expected and that were meant to lead to a '*heightening* of emotion'.³⁵⁷ However, in an academic context, this splendour inevitably attracted criticism. In the sermon *De fermento vitando* (1582), Laurence Humphrey, the author of *Interpretatio linguarum* discussed in Chapter 2, in his capacity of Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, voices his disappointment with academic performances which, being 'lavishly equipped' ('apparatissima') failed to meet the expectations of moral edification and distracted from the attainment of 'truth' ('veritas'):

Listeners, we have entertained our ears and eyes enough, enough by now, with theatrical spectacles: we have seen, we have heard enough of spectres and ghosts; we have indulged enough both in comic and tragic lamentation. [...] So we should pass from silly to serious things, from comedy to hairshirt,

³⁵² Knight, 2009, p. 29.

³⁵³ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 277.

³⁵⁴ The translation by Abigail Ann Young and the original are quoted in Knight, 2009, p. 27: 'arma namque bellica vestes splendore illustres apparatusque omnem reliquum Londino aliis remotissimis locis'.

³⁵⁵ Stephen Orgel, 1971, 'The Poetics of Spectacle', *New Literary History*, 2, 3, pp. 367-389.

³⁵⁶ The translation by Patrick Gregory and the original are quoted in Knight, 2009, pp. 26, 29: 'et aures et oculos'; 'pro materiae varietate, tota Scenae fabrica, et artificiosus peripetasmatum apparatus, iterum atque iterum, mirantibus omnibus, innovaretur'.

³⁵⁷ Smith, 1988, pp. 216-217.

from tragedy to ashes, from the profane to the holy, from plays to that self-examination and discipline of truth: for although our image of truth is more radiant than all stages, even the most lavishly equipped, Christian truth is both more beautiful and more loveable than the Helen of the Greeks.³⁵⁸

Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Antigone* has been seen as 'a conventionally pious girl' and as 'an educated daughter on the model of notable aristocratic women of the period such as Lady Lumley and Lady Jane Grey'.³⁵⁹ Her first appearance is in scene 1.3, in which she interacts with Bailo, her tutor; a stage direction identifies him as *Antigone's* 'governour' and Bailo himself declares that he has been her 'faithfull governour'.³⁶⁰ In the moment of *Antigone's* request to 'guide [her] up / into some tower' in order to behold the battle field where her brothers were about to fight, neither Dolce nor Kinwelmersh (the author of Act 1) decides to keep the Euripidean *teichoskopia* (τειχοσκοπία), i.e., the scene in which *Antigone's* pedagogue illustrates all the members of the Argive army to *Antigone* who is looking down from a terrace of the royal palace (Eur.*Phoen.*88-201).³⁶¹ Unlike their Euripidean counterpart, Dolce's and Kinwelmersh's *Antigone* explicitly admits that her sisterly love for Polyneices is greater than to Eteocles. Bailo's request that *Antigone* retreats within the palace gives Dolce and Kinwelmersh the occasion to provide gnomic sentences on the topic of the damage that 'vulgar tongues' may cause to 'vertues dames' with imagery echoing the Virgilian 'Fama' of Book IV of the *Aeneid*.³⁶² The deleterious effects of Fame – a theme embedded to English 'literary consciousness in the sixteenth century' also thanks to Geoffrey Chaucer's *The House of Fame* (1370s)³⁶³ – are underscored by Kinwelmersh, who expands the passage and clarifies its didactic purpose with a note in the margin ('a glass for yong women').³⁶⁴

Antigone reappears only in scene 4.2: after learning from the messenger that her sons are about to fight a duel, Jocasta summons *Antigone* and wants her to go with her to the Greek camp. As in Euripides, *Antigone* is ashamed to go outside the palace amid 'throngs' (ὄχλον, Eur.*Phoen.*1276) but, in contrast with the ancient source, one motive of hesitation is also the fear of dying, although *Antigone* mentions it only to deny it: 'Alas, how can I go, unles I go / In danger of my life, or of good

³⁵⁸ Laurence Humphrey, 2004, 'Lawrence Humphrey's Ash Wednesday Sermon', in John H. Elliott *et al* (eds.), *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford*, Oxford: University of Toronto Press / British Library, vol. 1, pp. 177-178: 'Satis iam saits (Auditores) Theatricis spectaculis aures et oculos oblectavimus: satis larvarum ac lemorum vidimus, audivimus: saits et risui Comico, et luctui Tragico indulsumus [...] ut a ludicris ad seria, a socco ad saccum, a Cothurno ad Cineres, a prophanis ad sacra, a fabulis ad ipsam veritatis investigationem et disciplinam transeamus: quandoquidem omni quantumnis apparatissima scena nostra veritatis imago est illustrior, et Graecorum Helena pulchrior et amabilior est Christianorum veritas'; translation by Sarah Knight in Sarah Knight, 2016, 'A fabulis ad veritatem: Latin Tragedy, Truth and Education in Early Modern England', in Jan Bloemendal and Nigel Smith (eds.), *Politics and Aesthetics in European Baroque and Classicist Tragedy*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 239-240.

³⁵⁹ Miola, 2014, p. 232; see also Dewar-Watson, 2010, pp. 28-29.

³⁶⁰ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 161.

³⁶¹ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 165.

³⁶² Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, pp. 175-177; see also Virgil, 1916, pp. 406-409 [Verg.*A.4.*173-218].

³⁶³ Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 2015, 'Early Reception of Chaucer's *The House of Fame*', in Isabel Davis and Catherine Nall (eds.), *Chaucer and Fame: Reputation and Reception*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, p. 97.

³⁶⁴ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 177.

name?'.³⁶⁵ After manifesting her concerns about shame, the Euripidean Antigone accepts to join in Jocasta's plan and even urges her to hurry ('We may tarry not'; οὐ μελλήτέον, Eur.*Phoen.*1279), her Renaissance counterpart displays a vacillating and cowardly attitude which we would rather expect from the Sophoclean Ismene:

Come then, lets go, good mother, lets go;
But what shall we be able for to doe –
You a weake old woman foworne with yeares
And I, God knows, a silly simple mayde?³⁶⁶

Jocasta answers by explaining her strategy:

Our wofull wordes, our prayers and our plaintes,
Pourde out with streames of overflowing teares,
Where nature rules, may happen to prevayle,
What reason, power and force of armes do fayle.³⁶⁷

Jocasta plans to leverage her sons' compassion for the grief of their mother and daughter: this is the strength of 'nature' as opposed to 'reason, power and force of armes'.

Nature is frequently appealed to in Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's version. After Jocasta has revealed her intents to Antigone, the fourth act is interrupted by an internal chorus between the second and the third scenes. Absent in the Euripidean play, this chorus is devoted to the maternal love of Jocasta, afflicted by the impending duel of her two sons.³⁶⁸ The English version expands Dolce's chorus by reflecting on the violation of 'the lawes of nature':

Where are the lawes of nature nowe become?
Can fleshe of fleshe, alas! Can bloud of bloud
So far forget it selfe, as slay it selfe?³⁶⁹

In the very first scene, which turns the Euripidean monologue by the Queen into a dialogue with a servant, the English Jocasta reviews the distressful events that cause her sufferings. In particular, she brands Laius' decision to kill his son Oedipus as an act against the 'lawes of natures love', expressions which Kinwelmersh, the author of Act 1, uses to render Dolce's 'native devotion' ('pietà natia').³⁷⁰

In Act 2, Polyneices connects nature to the love for one's country:

³⁶⁵ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 333.

³⁶⁶ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 335.

³⁶⁷ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 335.

³⁶⁸ On the theme of maternal love in this play, see Pollard, 2017, pp. 61-67.

³⁶⁹ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, pp. 336-337.

³⁷⁰ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, pp. 140-141.

nature drawes (wether he will or nill)
Eche man to love his native countrey soyle.³⁷¹

Euripides' idea of necessity ('all men are constrained / to love their fatherland'; ἀναγκάίως ἔχει / πατρίδος ἐρᾶν ἅπαντας, Eur.*Phoen.*358-359) is associated by Polyneices to an inescapable natural drive. In scene 1.1, Dolce's idea of the maternal love as an irresistible power is also rendered with nature-related expressions: 'A pitifull mother / Whom nature binds to love hir loving sonnes' ('Come pietosa e sconsolata madre, / che non può non amar sempre i figliuoli'; 'as a pitiful and unconsolated mother, who cannot but always love her sons').³⁷² In the chorus of Act 4, an invocation and praise to 'Concordia' ('concord'), Dolce refers to nature's law' ('la legge di natura'):

Ma senza te la legge di natura
Si solverebbe; e senza
Te le maggiori Città vanno a ruina.
Senza la tua presenza
La madre col figliouli non è sicura,
È zoppa la ragion, debole, e china.³⁷³

But without you the law of nature would disappear; without you the major cities would go to ruin. Without your presence, mothers with their children are not safe, reason is lame, weak, and subdued.

The English version, which, as we have seen, has references to nature without any equivalent in Dolce, shifts the nature vocabulary from 'law' ('legge') to 'child' ('figliouli'):

But if thou faile, then al things gone to wrack;
The mother then doth dread hir naturall childe,
Then every towne is subject to the sacke,
Then spotlesse maids, then virgins be defilde,
Then rigor rules, then reason is exilde.³⁷⁴

The phrase 'naturall childe' appears in another passage, in which Dolce only has 'my children' ('figli miei'); also, the English Jocasta defines Eteocles and Polyneices as Oedipus' 'unnaturall fruite', whereas Dolce has 'a seed from an evil conception' ('mal concetto seme').³⁷⁵ Kinwelmersh, the author of Act 1, is not here simply employing a recurring adjective: by emphasizing the natural relationship between mother and son, and by modifying the meaning of the original, Kinwelmersh possibly depicts a far worse scenario than the one envisaged by Dolce. While in the Italian version it is clear that a mother 'is insecure' ('non è sicura') because of external threats, in the English version

³⁷¹ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 197.

³⁷² Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, pp. 152.153.

³⁷³ Dolce in Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 350.

³⁷⁴ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 351.

³⁷⁵ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, pp. 136-137, 148-149.

the syntax and the polysemy of the verb ‘dread’ open three possibilities of meaning: that she fears for her child, that she fears her child or, less probably, that she scares her child (see *OED*). The use of ‘natural’ here reinforces the monstrous consequences that discord can potentially have on mother-child relationships. Moreover, in both versions, without concord, reason is disempowered. Unlike Dolce, however, Kinwelmersh points to what usurps the power of concord and reason: ‘rigor’; as we shall see in section 3.3.2, rigour is one of the allegories featuring in Watson’s additional poems of his *Antigone*. In the ‘Epilogus’, the disastrous effects of ambition, which not even ‘natures power’ has been able to restrain, include parricide:

Thambitious sonne doth oft suppress his sire:
Where natures power unfained love should spread
There malice raignes and reacheth to be higher.³⁷⁶

Nature is thus connected to familial ties (motherly, fatherly, brotherly, filial love) and patriotic devotion. All these references to nature can be explained in the light of Natural Law thinking, which must have been particularly familiar to two members of Inns of Court such as Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, who were both enrolled at Gray’s Inn at the time in which their *Jocasta* was performed in the Inn’s hall,³⁷⁷ as I shall argue in section 3.3.2, Natural Law thinking also informs Watson’s *Antigone*.

Antigone makes her final appearance on stage in the last three scenes of act 5 (5.3-5.5), which are very close to the Euripidean version. She delivers her lamentations after her mother’s death: she has lost a mother, two brothers, and the possibility to become a wife and a queen. She then tells her father Oedipus what happened and implores the new king Creon to let her bury her brother Polyneices and not to exile her father Oedipus. As in the Sophoclean version, Creon prohibits the burial but, unlike the Sophoclean Creon, he wants Antigone to marry his son Haemon. As a reaction, she threatens to kill Haemon if forced to marry him and declares that she will follow her father in exile. After Creon has harshly dismissed her, Oedipus praises Antigone’s filial devotion, which is underlined by a marginal note (‘the duty of a child duly performed’).³⁷⁸ Oedipus asks to touch Jocasta’s and her sons’ corpses, then looks back with nostalgia to the days in which he was flourishing and solved the Sphynx’ enigma. The Renaissance versions inserts senecan imagery, which may also have a Sophoclean ascendancy:

³⁷⁶ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 417. The printed editions attribute the authorship of the epilogue to ‘Chr. Yelverton’, i.e., Sir Christopher Yelverton, a judge and a speaker at the House of Commons, who was also a member of Gray’s Inn.

³⁷⁷ Gillian Austen, 2008, ‘Kinwelmersh [Kinwelmershe, Kindlemarsh], Francis (*hap.* 1538)’, in *ODNB*.

³⁷⁸ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 403.

So that remaynes of Oedipus no more,
As nowe in mee, but even the naked name,
And lo! This image that resembles more
Shadowes of death than shape of Oedipus.³⁷⁹

In the English version, the final chorus and the Epilogue make sure that the central moral messages – Fortune is fickle and ambition is deleterious – are effectively conveyed but, throughout the play, other devices contribute to highlight these moral lessons. As Suthren puts it, these devices are ‘visual’ in two senses: not only ‘visual on the stage’, i.e., the dumb shows, but also ‘visual on the page’, i.e., marginal notes and commonplace marks.³⁸⁰ According to Smith, the former contribute to turn each act into ‘a dramatic emblem’: partly reworking Smith’s comparison with the tripartite structure of the emblem, one could identify the dumb shows with the emblem’s *pictura* or picture, the action in-between and the chorus closing the act works as both corresponding to an emblem’s *subscriptio*, i.e., the final epigram carrying ‘the moral of the whole’.³⁸¹ Suthren argues that the latter may indicate a potential ‘cross-fertilization’ between Norton and Sackville’s *Gorboduc* and Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh’s *Jocasta*: the second edition of *Gorboduc* (1570), ‘the earliest printed English play to feature commonplace marks’, may have derived this practice from the 1568 manuscript version of *Jocasta*, which also exhibits them.³⁸² These two tragedies represent a turning-point in the history of English para-texts, showcasing the transition of commonplace marks ‘from classical tragedy into English playbooks’.³⁸³ The first Shakespearean printed play to feature such marks was Q1 *Hamlet* (1603), which is the first professional play to have been performed ‘also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford’.³⁸⁴ According to Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, the presence of the commonplace marks enhances the connection with the academic world, with ‘the ancient centers of English learning’, associating the play with ‘a distinguished literary tradition for commonplacing classical drama’.³⁸⁵

³⁷⁹ Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, 1906, p. 409; Soph.*OC*.109-110: ‘Take pity on this miserable ghost of the man Oedipus, for this is not the form that once was mine’ (οἰκτίρατ’ ἀνδρὸς Οἰδίποθ τόδ’ ἄθλιον / εἴδωλον· οὐ γὰρ δὴ το γ’ ἀρχαῖον δέμας); Sen.*Oct*.70-71: ‘Now surviving solely to mourn, / I am left, the shadow of a mighty name’ (‘nunc in luvtus servata meos / magni resto nominis umbra’).

³⁸⁰ Suthren, 2018, p. 118.

³⁸¹ Smith, 1988, p. 223. On the tripartite structure of emblems, see Peter M. Daly, 1998, *Literature in the Light of the Emblem: Structural Parallels between the Emblem and Literature in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 7.

³⁸² Suthren, 2018, p. 118.

³⁸³ Suthren, 2018, p. 118.

³⁸⁴ Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, 2008, ‘The First Literary Hamlet and the Commonplacing of Professional Plays’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 59, 4, pp. 372, 376; see William Shakespeare, 1603, *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*, London: [Valentine Simmers] for N[icholas] L[ing] and John Trundell, title page.

³⁸⁵ Lesser and Stallybrass, 2008, p. 376.

Scholars agree on identifying a 1506 edition of Seneca's plays printed by Filippo Giunta as the first printed edition featuring commonplace marks.³⁸⁶ However, this edition does not have any. The misunderstanding seems to originate from G. K. Hunter's elusive statement that the Giunta edition is 'the earliest printed book in which I have found *sententiae* marked'.³⁸⁷ The way in which this edition actually marks *sententiae* is by printing the first words of a gnomic passage in capital letters.³⁸⁸ According to Suthren, the first printed edition of Seneca's plays featuring commonplace marks is one dating back to 1566.³⁸⁹ These marks appear also in the *editiones principes* of the Greek tragedians, in most subsequent Greek editions, and in most Latin translations.³⁹⁰ As we shall see, Watson's *Antigone* equally displays this convention; Watson could see it applied in his main source, Naogeorgus' translation. They were then introduced in vernacular versions of classical plays: along with Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta*, Jean-Antoine de Baïf's French version of *Antigone* (1573) and Robert Garnier's *Antigone ou la Piété* (1580).³⁹¹ The former, published with other plays in de Baïf's *Euvres en rime*, is the only play of the collection featuring commonplace marks, which seems to indicate that in France they were perceived as distinctive of classical tragedy.

These two French *Antigones* are but two of the numerous vernacular translations and imitations of Sophocles which appeared in sixteenth-century Europe. As we have seen in section 3.2.1, Sophocles was first translated into Latin. The earliest translations, extant only in manuscript, date back to the fifteenth century but the first printed Latin version, namely, Lonicer's *Ajax*, dates back to 1533. The same year saw the publication of the first vernacular translation of a Sophoclean play, Luigi Alamanni's Italian translation of *Antigone* (*Tragedia di Antigone*, 1533), which even pre-dates by almost a decade the first extant Latin translation of the same play, Gentien Hervet's Latin *Antigone* (1541).³⁹² A few years later, Lazare de Baïf published his verse French translation of *Electra*

³⁸⁶ Lesser and Stallybrass, 2008, p. 376; see also Ann Moss, 1996, *Printed Commonplace Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 211, n. 28.

³⁸⁷ G. K. Hunter, 1951, 'The Marking of Sententiae in Elizabethan Printed Plays, Poems, and Romances', *The Library*, 6, p. 171, n. 1.

³⁸⁸ See for instance Seneca, 1506, *Senecae tragoediae*, Florentiae: impensa Philippi de Giunta, sigg. cv^v-cvi^r.

³⁸⁹ Suthren, 2018, p. 116.

³⁹⁰ Sophocles, 1502; Euripides, 1503, *EYPIΠHΔOY TPAGΩΔIAI HEITAKAIAEKA*, *Euripidou tragodiarum septemdecim*, Venetiis: Apud Aldum; Aeschylus, 1518, *AIXYIAOY TPAGΩΔIAI EZ*, *Aeschyli tragoediae sex*, Venetiis: In Aedibus Aldi Et Andreae Soceri. With reference to Sophocles, Hervet's *Antigone* (1541), Melancthon and Winsheim's complete translation (1546), and Rotaller's 1550 translation do not feature commonplace marks.

³⁹¹ Jean-Antoine de Baïf, 1573, *Antigone, tragédie de Sophocle*, in Jean-Antoine de Baïf, *Euvres en rime de Ian Antoine de Baif*, Paris: Pour Lucas Breyer, sigg. 57^r-88^v; Robert Garnier, 1580, *Antigone ou La Piété*, Paris: Par Mamert Patisson.

³⁹² Scholars mention the Italian versions of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Antigone* and *Electra* by the physician Guido Guidi; see for instance R. R. Bolgar, 1974, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 525. The version of *Oedipus* was reportedly published in 1532; see Enrica Zanin, 'Early Modern Oedipus: A Literary Approach to Christian Tragedy', in Arthur Cools, Thomas Crombez, Rosa Slegers, and Johan Taels (eds.), *The Locus of Tragedy*, Leiden: Brill, p. 68. I have not been able to consult any printed edition of Guido Guidi's translations. However, a 1746 catalogue claims that Guidi's three translations are kept 'in the original version' ('tutte originali') in the Biblioteca Strozzi di Firenze, a definition which may allude to their manuscript form; see Angelo Calogera, 1746, *Raccolta d'opuscoli scientifici e filologici*, 35, Venezia: Appresso Simone Occhi, p. 405.

(*Tragédie de Sophocles intitulée Electra*, 1537).³⁹³ Meanwhile, also manuscript versions appeared in France since 1542 and Italy since 1525.³⁹⁴ The first Spanish translation of a Sophoclean play was Hernán Pérez de Oliva's *La venganza de Agamenón* (1528): based on a Latin *Electra*, this prose translation served as intermediary text itself for a French and Portuguese version.³⁹⁵ Italy saw five plays on the Oedipus myth from 1565 to 1590 and one of *Electra*.³⁹⁶ *Electra* was also translated into Hungarian (1558) by the Protestant preacher Péter Bornemisza, who translated from the original Greek and was highly influenced by Melanchthon's Christianizing conception of Greek tragedy.³⁹⁷

Sophocles is usually considered the first Greek tragedian to have been performed in Renaissance Europe: the 1585 staging of Orsatto Giustiniani's *Edipo tiranno* at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza is hailed as the first performance of a Greek tragedy on European stages.³⁹⁸ However, apart from the possible Florentine performance of a Sophoclean *Electra* at the end of the fifteenth century (see section 2.2.1 above), Europe saw other performances of Greek tragedy before 1585. Dolce's *Jocasta* was performed in Venice in 1549, the year in which it was published; Giovanni Andrea Dell'Anguillara's *Edippo* (written in 1556; first published in 1565), based on Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos* but also on Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, was performed in 1560 in the house of the writer Alvise Cornaro in Padua.³⁹⁹ While there is no evidence that Lumley's *Iphigenia* was staged, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* was performed in 1566 and Watson's *Antigone* before 1581, both on academic stages (see section 3.3.1). Hellmut Flashar's description of Giustiniani's *Edipo tiranno* as 'the first performance of a Greek tragedy in a modern translation on a public stage' is therefore much more accurate.⁴⁰⁰ The production was meant to inaugurate the Teatro Olimpico, designed by Andrea Palladio and completed by his pupil Vincenzo Scamozzi on the commission of

³⁹³ Lazare de Baïf, 1537, *Tragedie de Sophocles intitulée Electra*, Paris: Louis Cyaneus.

³⁹⁴ Borza, 2007, pp. 266-267.

³⁹⁵ The French is by Nicolas de Herberay des Essarts; see Borza, 2007, p. 267. The Portuguese version is Aires Vitoria's *Tragédia del Rei Agamenom* (1536); see Joaquín Pascual Barea, 2013, 'Neo-Latin Drama in Spain, Portugal and Latin America', in Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland (eds.), *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe*, Leiden: Brill, p. 548

³⁹⁶ The five plays on Oedipus are Giovanni Andrea Dell'Anguillara's *Edippo* (1565), Orsatto Giustiniani's *Edipo tiranno* (1585), Giovanni Paolo Trampolini's *Edipo Tiranno* (1581), Pietro Angeli Bargeo's *Edipo Tiranno* (1588), and Girolamo Giustiniano's *Edipo il re* (1590); for details on these editions, see Borza, 2007, p. 266. Borza dates Anguillara's version back to 1563 but I have not been able to find any edition with this date. The play from *Electra* is Erasmo di Valvasone's *Elettra tragedia di Sofocle* (1588); see Erasmo di Valvasone, 1588, *Elettra tragedia di Sofocle, fatta volgare dall'illustre signor Erasmo delli signori di Valvasone, academico Vranico*, Venetia: appresso i Guerra fratelli.

³⁹⁷ Ágnes Juhász-Ormsby, 2017, 'Classical Reception in Sixteenth-Century Hungarian Drama', in Zara Martirosova Torlone, Dana LaCourse Munteanu, and Dorota Dutsch (eds.), *A Handbook to Classical Reception in Eastern and Central Europe*, Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 233-244.

³⁹⁸ Peter Burian, 1997, 'Tragedy Adapted for Stages and Screens: The Renaissance to the Present', in P. E. Easterling (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 228; see also Francesco Puccio, 2018, *Drammaturgia dello spazio: il teatro greco tra testo e contesto della rappresentazione*, Padova: Padova University Press, p. 98.

³⁹⁹ Schironi, 2016, pp. 139-141.

⁴⁰⁰ Hellmut Flashar, 1991, *Inszenierung der Antike: Das griechische Drama auf der Bühne der Neuzeit 1585-1990*, München: C. H. Beck, p. 27.

the Accademia Olimpica founded in 1555. Giustiniani's version is a very close 'translation' ('tradottione') of Sophocles' original into 'vernacular verse' ('versi volgari'), as he himself defines it in the dedicatory epistle, in which he also justifies his choice of *Oedipus Tyrannos*: this 'tragedy, as you know, [is] considered by everyone to be the most beautiful and Aristotle himself used it as an example for his *Poetics* in that part in which he discusses tragedy'.⁴⁰¹ On the occasion of the 1585 performance, choruses were accompanied by the music of the Venetian composer Andrea Gabrieli.

Like this Italian performance of *Oedipus Tyrannos*, other early performances of Greek drama in Europe foresaw the presence of musical accompaniment, either vocal or instrumental. The first stagings of Cinthio's *Orbecche* (first performed in 1541) featured 'entr'acte music' composed by Alessandro Viola.⁴⁰² The dumb shows of Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* equally featured instrumental music. In 1587, a school in Strasbourg put up a performance of Joseph Scaliger's Latin translation of *Ajax*. The printed edition not only contains anonymous additions, namely two further scenes framing Scaliger's translation ('Iudicium graecorum ducium', meant to be performed before the first act, and 'Funus Aiacis' at the end of the play) and one interrupting it ('Nuncium de morte Aiacis'), but also the scores of the songs for the choruses, sung by four voices and written by the composer Johannes Cless.⁴⁰³ The Strasbourg version also included an allegorical show called 'Fuga', equally set to music by Cless, as a support to the play's moralizing interpretation: four pupils of the school were meant to impersonate 'Quietas' ('peace'), 'Sanctitas' ('holiness'), 'Veritas' ('truth'), and 'Fides' ('loyalty'), and address a laudatory song to 'Iustitia' ('justice'), embodied by another pupil.⁴⁰⁴ In this context, Watson's allegorical poems added at the end of the translation seem less an idiosyncratic choice than a common approach to Greek tragedies, also outside England.

European dramatic traditions not only exhibit similar patterns in the reception of Greek tragedy such as musical accompaniment and allegorical shows but also display a preference for certain plays. Erasmus' translations of *Iphigenia at Aulis* and *Hecuba* had a lasting influence on translators and playwrights all over Europe, including England (see section 3.3.2 below). Although less successful than these Euripidean plays, also *Antigone* triggered a series of responses in sixteenth-century Europe. In Italian drama, apart from Alamanni's close translation, *Antigone* is also loosely echoed in two of the first Italian tragedies, Trissino's *Sofonisba* (written in 1514-1515; published in

⁴⁰¹ Orsatto Giustiniani, 1585, *Edipo tiranno di Sofocle, In lingua volgare ridotta dal Calariff. Signor Orsatto Giustiniano, Patrio Veneto. Et in Vicenza con sontuosissimo apparato da quei Signori Academici recitata l'anno 1585. Con privilegio*, In Venetia: Appresso Francesco Ziletti, sig. *2^r: 'tragedia, come sapete, stimata da ogn'uno bellissima sopra tutte l'altre; et della quale Aristotele istesso in quella parte, ov'egli ragiona della Tragedia, si valse per essemplio nel formar la sua Poetica'.

⁴⁰² Smith, 1988, p. 224.

⁴⁰³ Joseph Scaliger, 1587, *Sophoclis Ajax Lorarius, stylo tragico a Iosepho Scaligero Iulii F. translatus et in Theatro Argentinensi publice exhibitus*, Argentorati: Excudebat Antonius Bertramus, sigg. ai^v-cvii^r; see also Daskarolis, 2000, pp. 291-292.

⁴⁰⁴ Scaliger, 1587, sig. cviii^r; see also Daskarolis, 2000, p. 297.

1524) and Rucellai's *Rosmunda* (written in 1515; published in 1525).⁴⁰⁵ Alongside Ludovico Martelli's *Fulvia* (1533), *Sofonisba* and *Rosmunda* exemplify a practice typical of the so called 'Grecians' mentioned above, those sixteenth-century Italian dramatists who wrote original tragedies 'modelled on ancient mythical archetypes': *Fulvia* draws from Sophocles' *Electra*; *Sofonisba* is mainly based on Euripides' *Alcestis* and partly on Sophocles' *Antigone*; *Rosmunda*'s plot exhibits overt correspondences with *Antigone*.⁴⁰⁶ In 1581, there appeared an Italian adaptation of *Antigone* by Giovanni Paolo Trapolini, who, while acknowledging his debt to Sophocles, extensively relied on Seneca as well; although Trapolini's version was published at the beginning of the year in which Watson's *Antigone* was published, it is unlikely that Watson knew it.⁴⁰⁷

Watson's choice of this tragedy – and, to a lesser extent, also May's – is more probably linked with the dramatic reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in France. The two French *Antigones* mentioned above, Baïf's *Antigone* (1573) and Garnier's *Antigone ou La Pieté* (1580), were published in France some time before Watson's translation appeared. The Continent, and particularly France, had seen other *Antigones* over the sixteenth century: as we have seen, the first is the Italian version of Luigi Alamanni (1533), followed by Gentien Hervet's 1541 Latin translation and the 1542 French manuscript version by Calvy de La Fontaine,⁴⁰⁸ alongside the Latin versions of the play published in the complete editions of Melanchthon and Winsheim (1546), Lalemant (1557), Naogeorgus (1558), and Rattaller (1570).

This chapter has explored the cultural, material, and literary contexts of which Watson's and May's *Antigones* partook. It has traced the history of Greek literacy in England from the mid sixteenth to the mid seventeenth century, with the aim of establishing the place of Greek studies in the typical education that men like Watson and May might have received. Considering that most grammar schools provided a rudimentary knowledge of Greek and that, though progressively in decline, Greek was studied at university and was a mandatory subject, both Watson and May must have had a contact

⁴⁰⁵ Francesco Spera, 1997, 'Nota critica', in Luigi Alamanni, *Tragedia di Antigone*, Torino: Edizioni RES, p. 92; see also Schironi, 2016, p. 143.

⁴⁰⁶ Schironi, 2016, pp. 143-144.

⁴⁰⁷ At the end of the dedicatory epistle, Giovanni Paolo Trapolini indicates the exact date, namely 1 January 1581; see Giovanni Paolo Trapolini, 1581, *Antigone. Tragedia del Trapolini ultimamente impressa*, Padova: per Lorenzo Pasquati, sig. 7^r. This version, endowed with choruses and a five-act division, includes characters from Seneca's *Oedipus* such as Tiresias' daughter Manto and the ghost of Laius.

⁴⁰⁸ This is a verse translation from an earlier prose vernacular version, now lost: François (?) Calvy de La Fontaine, 1542 *La quatriesme tragedie de Sophoclés, poete grec, intitulee Antigone, traduite en vers françoys*, MS Soissons, Bibliothèque Municipale, 201 [189 A], ff. 60^r-93^v; see Michele Mastroianni, 2013, 'La lettera proemiale dell' *Antigone* di Calvy de La Fontaine (1542)', *Corpus Eve: Edizioni di testi o presentazioni di documenti legati al volgare*, [accessed on 13 September 2018 at <http://journals.openedition.org/eve/695>]. The first printed edition of the text is [François (?)] Calvy de La Fontaine, 2000, *L'Antigone de Sophoclés*, edited by M. Mastroianni, Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.

with Greek texts in the original. Also, albeit remaining an elite, more people than it is generally thought had the instruments to appreciate Watson's and May's erudition.

I have then zoomed in on the reception of Sophocles in England: an inevitably partial reconstruction of the material transmission of his plays, coupled with the evidence of performances of Sophocles' drama in academic venues and his occasional presence in educational treatises, shows that Sophocles was not widely read but was studied and revived in the English centres of learning and competed with Euripides for the title of best tragedian. A similar competition emerges in Continental commentaries and fragmentary critical responses to Sophocles. Many humanists underline the solemn and political quality of his plays, which are considered repositories of universal moral teachings condensed in reusable gnomic sentences. This moralizing approach is not limited to Sophocles but is common to Renaissance readings of classical texts, visible in printed editions of the classical tragedians and in the engagements with their plays.

The chapter closes with a survey of the performance and translation history of Greek tragedy in the European vernaculars, with a particular focus on English drama and Continental versions of Sophocles' *Antigone*. These engagements exhibit various paratextual and structural devices to fulfil Renaissance moralizing expectations: not only do they feature the typically humanist habit of commonplace marks but they also deploy choruses and additional dramatic elements such as dumb shows to convey a clear moral message, mostly with political overtones. Additionally, these versions of Greek tragedy share other structural and stylistic patterns: alongside the presence of choruses and the insertion of dumb shows, the division into acts and the interplay with Seneca are helpful criteria to trace the ways in which Renaissance authors accessed, filtered, and read Greek texts. In the next chapter, we shall see to what extent Watson's and May's *Antigones* align with the modes of reception of Greek tragedy in contemporary dramatic traditions. For each author, however, we shall first see the way in which he conceives of the processes of translation and imitation.

II. TEXTS

3. Thomas Watson's *Sophoclis Antigone*

3.1. Thomas Watson

3.1.1. *The student and the lyricist*

Thomas Watson (1555/6-1592) is listed by Dana Ferrin Sutton, the editor of his complete works, amongst 'important Elizabethan University Wit[s]'.¹ Sutton's claim seems rather an overstatement for Watson's stay in Oxford as a student was never recorded and was anyway all too brief to leave any remarkable trace. Besides, the University Wits – usually considered a group of six playwrights, the Oxonian alumni John Lyly, George Peele, and Thomas Lodge, and the Cambridge graduates Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Nashe – exerted a crucial role for the development of English drama between the 1580s and 1590s,² but the same cannot be said of Watson. According to a letter by William Cornwallis, one of Watson's employers, it seems that Watson wrote also comedies, which are now lost.³ In any case, with the exclusion of lost plays, his extant dramatic production is confined to the Neo-Latin translation under discussion.⁴

However questionable, the identification of Watson with a University Wit is nonetheless helpful to set him in the context in which Watson was active, namely an environment of literary associations that he could resume and build on his return to England in 1581, after almost ten years abroad in Italy and in France.⁵ After attending Winchester College, which provided him with a sound classical education, Watson seems to have studied law at Oxford without obtaining a degree, although there are no records of his matriculation.⁶ Between 1571, when he left Oxford probably because of the plague that ravaged the city in the same year, and 1581 he spent many years in Italy and France. He stayed in Italy probably from 1572 to 1576. Then, he went to the College of Douai, in north-

¹ Dana Ferrin Sutton, 1996, 'Preface' and 'General Introduction', in Watson, *The Complete Works of Thomas Watson (1556-1592) Volume I*, edited by Dana Ferrin Sutton, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, pp. v, xv. Also Tanya Pollard includes him amongst the University Wits; see also Tanya Pollard, 2017, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 69.

² R. A. Logan, 2016, 'University Wits (*act. c.* 1590)', in *ODNB*.

³³ William Cornwallis quoted in Martin Wiggins with Catherine Richardson, 2012, *British Drama, 1533-1642: A Catalogue, Volume II: 1567-1589*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 398: '[Watson] could devise twenty fictions and knaveries in a play which was his daily practice and his living'.

⁴ Albert Chetterley, 2004, 'Watson, Thomas (1555/6-1592)', in *ODNB*.

⁵ Sutton, 1996, 'General Introduction', p. xv.

⁶ Sutton, 1996, 'General Introduction', p. x.

eastern France but then belonging to the Spanish Netherlands,⁷ to pursue his law studies in what was an institution founded and run by Catholic exiles. This fact has often been read as a further symptom of his ‘Catholic sympathies’ in addition to his connection with Catholic noblemen later in his life or alternatively as a hint suggesting that he was working for the government as a spy against Catholics.⁸ Watson stayed in Douai until August 1577 with an interruption between October 1576 and May 1577, when he was in Paris, probably to take additional courses.⁹ The Douai records register him with the title ‘Mr’ or alternatively with ‘D.’ standing for ‘Dominus’;¹⁰ since the latter title was attributed to students holding a bachelor degree, M. J. Hirrel hypothesizes that Watson could have earned a degree from an Italian university.¹¹ From August 1577 to April 1580 he was back in England, reportedly to study at the Inns of Court.¹² According to Hirrel, Watson’s time in Oxford should be located during these years rather than the early 1570s.¹³ Watson left again for Paris probably in April 1580 and there he met Sir Francis and Thomas Walsingham, maybe starting to work for the former as a spy.¹⁴ In August 1581, he settled back in England, this time permanently.¹⁵ These biographic details will be useful in the attempt to clarify the vague circumstances of the composition and the performance of Watson’s *Antigone*.

His three years back in England from 1577 and 1580 must have been the time in which Watson was particularly active in the literary scene of the time. Although he may not have been one of the University Wits, he certainly knew almost all of them, as many commendatory poems and references confirm. Lyly wrote a commendatory poem to Watson’s *The ‘Εκατομπαθία, Or Passionate Centurie of Love* (1582), Peele to both this poem sequence and to the *Antigone*; Watson wrote a laudatory poem to Robert Greene’s *Ciceronis Amor* (1589).¹⁶ Thomas Nashe mentions Watson both in Greene’s

⁷ M. J. Hirrel notes that Watson’s reference in the dedication of his *Antigone* to ‘Italia’ and ‘Gallia’ should be read only in geographical terms, which explains the inclusion of Douai in France; see M. J. Hirrel, 2014, ‘Thomas Watson, Playwright: Origins of Modern English Drama’, in David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (eds.), *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England*, Basingstroke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 206, n. 20.

⁸ S. K. Heninger, 1964, ‘Introduction’, in Thomas Watson, *The Hekatompathia, or Passionate Centurie of Love* (1582), Gainesville, Florida: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, p. v.

⁹ Sutton, 1996, ‘General Introduction’, p. ix-xii.

¹⁰ T. F. Knox *et al* (eds.), 1878, *The First and Second Diaries of the English College, Douay*, London: David Nutt, pp. 112, 121.

¹¹ Hirrel, 2014, p. 196.

¹² Ibrahim Alhiyari, 2006, *Thomas Watson: New Biographical Evidence and His Translation of Antigone*, PhD dissertation, Texas Tech University, p. 40.

¹³ Hirrel, 2014, p. 196.

¹⁴ C. B. Kuriyama, 2001, ‘Second Selves: Marlowe’s Cambridge and London Friendships’, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 14, p. 94; Cesare G. Cecioni, 1964, *Primi studi su Thomas Watson*, Catania: Università di Catania, p. 50; Sutton, 1996, ‘General Introduction’, p. xxi.

¹⁵ Chatterley, 2004; Sutton, 1996, ‘General Introduction’, p. xii; see also Dana Ferrin Sutton, 2016, ‘Oxford Drama in the Late Tudor and Early Stuart Periods’ in *Oxford Handbooks Online*, online edition: Oxford University Press, p. 20 [accessed at <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935338-e-99> on 29 October 2017]; see also Alhiyari, 2006, pp. 36, 40-41, 47.

¹⁶ Sutton, 1996, ‘General Introduction’, pp. xv-xvi; see also Heninger, 1964, p. xiii.

Menaphon (1589) and in *Have with you to Saffron-Walden, an attack to Gabriel Harvey* (1596).¹⁷ Watson was also a close friend of Marlowe, for whom he got involved in a brawl and eventually ended up in prison for months between 1589 and 1590. Also, the fact that he studied at Winchester under William Camden ‘indirectly connect[s]’ him to Jonson.¹⁸ Francis Meres numbers Watson with Marlowe, Kyd, Shakespeare and Jonson as the ‘best for Tragedie’.¹⁹ Thomas Dekker also associates Watson with the activity of Kyd, which has even led to the hypothesis that *The Spanish Tragedy* was the result of their collaboration.²⁰ However, if we consider the influence of the University Wits as affecting ‘all three literary modes’,²¹ i.e., prose, poetry, and drama, Watson’s right to be included in this group would derive less from his contribution to drama, which is now hardly gaugeable, than from his achievements in lyric poetry, both in Neo-Latin and in the vernacular.

In the light of his contribution to the lyric genre, Watson does deserve further attention than has usually been paid. He certainly enjoyed a higher reputation amongst his contemporaries than in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²² In the poem prefacing Watson’s translation of *Antigone*, the German jurist and humanist Stephan Brölmann adds to his own praises the fact that Watson ‘ha[s] been pronounced a learned poet by learned men’.²³ Thomas Nashe and Francis Meres extolled his mastery of Latin,²⁴ which Watson was to display in his Neo-Latin works: the ten verse lamentations in *Amyntas* (1585); the treatise on memory *Compendium memoriae localis* (1585); the pastoral verse epistles and eclogues in *Amintae Gaudia* (1592), a sort of prequel to the 1585 *Amyntas*; and another pastoral eclogue, *Meliboeus* (1590), an allegorical and elegiac dialogue on the death of Sir Francis Walsingham. Again Nashe reports that Gabriel Harvey, who seems to have attended a performance of Watson’s *Antigone*, included Watson amongst ‘the famous Schollers of [their] time’ and so does in a letter published in *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets* (1592), numbering Watson with Nashe himself, Sidney, Spencer, and Daniel.²⁵

¹⁷ Thomas Nashe, 1589, ‘To the Gentleman Students of both Universities’, in Robert Greene, *Menaphon*, London: Printed by T[homas] O[rwin] for Sampson Clarke, sig. A1^r; see also Thomas Nashe, 1596, *Have with You to Saffron Walden, Or, Gabriell Harvey’s Hunt is Up*, Printed at London: by John Danter, sigg. T3^v-T4^r.

¹⁸ Hirrel, 2014, p. 203.

¹⁹ Francis Meres, 1598, *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury Being the Second Part of Wits Common Wealth*, London: P. Short, sig. 283^r. As Wiggins notes, Meres could have meant Bishop Watson here but ‘this Watson is placed in the section of the list devoted to commercial playwrights’; see Wiggins, 2012, p. 398.

²⁰ Frank Ardolino, 2016, ‘Thomas Watson’s Influence on *The Spanish Tragedy*’, *Notes and Queries*, 63, 3, p. 388.

²¹ Robert Maslen, 2015, ‘University Wits’, in Michael Dobson, Stanley Wells, Will Sharpe, and Erin Sullivan (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, online edition: Oxford University Press.

²² Cesare G. Cecioni, 1964, ‘Introduzione’, in Thomas Watson, *Εκατομπαθια (1582)*, edited by Cesare G. Cecioni, Catania: Università di Catania Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, pp. 11-16.

²³ Stephan Brölmann, 1581, ‘Versus aliquot descripti ex epistola quadam ad Thomam Watsonum’ in Thomas Watson, *Sophoclis Antigone*, Londini: Excudebat Ionannes Wolfius, sig. A4^v; translation by Sutton in Thomas Watson, 1996, p. 19: ‘a doctis doctus dicere poeta’.

²⁴ Nashe, 1589, sig. xx4^v; see also Meres, 1598, sig. 280^r.

²⁵ Nashe, 1596, sig. V2^r; see also Gabriel Harvey, 1592, *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets*, London: Imprinted by John Wolfe, p. 48. These two testimonies undercut L. G. Clubb’s hypothesis that in his annotations Harvey mistook Thomas Watson, poet and translator, with his namesake, the bishop of Lincoln and Neo-Latin dramatist who lived from 1513 to

Recent literary histories mainly remember Watson for his contribution to English lyric poetry, in particular the verse sequence *The Ἑκατομπαθία, Or Passionate Centurie of Love* (from now on *Hekatompathia*) published in London by John Wolfe in 1582.²⁶ Watson was a key figure in the importation of Italian poetic genres. The Italianate vogue of sonnet writing had its roots in the Henrician period, when Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, translated and imitated some sonnets of the *Canzoniere* by Petrarch, which mostly included sonnets.²⁷ The 1557 *Tottel's Miscellany*, an anthology of poems drawn together from multiple authors such as Wyatt, Howard, and few others, contributed to spread this Italianate trend. However, while Wyatt had the merit of importing the poetic form of the sonnet and Surrey that of creating the English version of it on the basis of the Italian one, it was Watson who first measured himself with the genre of the poetry sequence. Not only did Watson introduce the Italian sonnet cycle by authoring *Hekatompathia* but, prior to this, he also translated Petrarch's *Canzoniere* from Italian into Latin in his early twenties. Albeit not extant, his translation of Petrarch's collection testifies to Watson's life-long interest in Italian poetry, which accompanied him throughout his career up to one of his last works, *The First Sett of Italian Madrigals Englished, not to the Sense of the Original Dittie, but after Affection of the Noate*. Published in 1590, this collection of madrigals is not a proper translation from Italian into English: as hinted by the subtitle, the sort of operation enacted by Watson was rather to write English *contrafacta* upon the music which Luca Marenzio composed for madrigals originally written in Italian, not conforming to the 'sense of the original ditty' but trying to reproduce the 'affection of the note' instead.²⁸ Also, Watson is often identified with the author – known as 'T. W.' – of another sonnet sequence, *Tears of Fancie, Or Love Disdained* (1593).²⁹

Watson's experiment in *Hekatompathia* was new to England. *Hekatompathia* has been considered the first one-author 'English sonnet sequence',³⁰ paving the way for the huge success of this genre in the following decade: amongst the poetry sequences that followed Watson, there are

1584; surely, Harvey refers to the latter in one annotation by calling him 'episcopo' and attributing to him a translation of *Antigone* but, as Clubb herself speculates, it might well be that also the Bishop of Lincoln produced a translation of the play, which is not extant nor recorded anywhere; see L. G. Clubb, 1966, 'Gabriel Harvey and the Two Thomas Watsons', *Renaissance News*, 19, 2, p. 117.

²⁶ Harold Love and Arthur F. Marotti, 2002, 'Manuscript Transmission and Circulation', in David Loewestein and Janel Mueller (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 66; see also Michael Hattaway, 2005, *Renaissance and Reformations: An Introduction to Early Modern English Literature*, Oxford: Blackwell, 165.

²⁷ Sutton, 1996, 'Preface', p. v.

²⁸ Chatterley, 2004.

²⁹ Chatterley, 2004; Kuriyama, 2001.

³⁰ A. E. B. Coldiron, 1996, 'Watson's "Hekatompathia" and Renaissance Lyric Translation', *Translation and Literature*, 5, 1, p. 3. As Cecioni has explained, the definition of 'sonnet sequence' is improper because only one poem is a sonnet, a Petrarchan one, namely the introductory composition that precedes the numbered ones; see also Cecioni, 1964, 'Introduzione', pp. 18-19; Thomas Watson, 1582, *The Ἑκατομπαθία, Or Passionate Centurie of Love*, London: Imprinted by John Wolfe, sig. *4^v. The majority of the poems are not proper sonnets, neither of the Italian nor of the English tradition, but are actually eighteen-line compositions in iambic pentameter.

Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* (1591), Samuel Daniel's *Delia* (1592), Thomas Lodge's *Phyllis* (1593), Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti* (1595), Michael Drayton's *Idea's Mirror* (1594), and several others up to 1599.³¹ The first of these sequences, namely, Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, appeared almost a decade later than Watson's. However, we should not think that Watson's endeavour was isolated and took many years to set in. Sidney probably started to write his sequence in 1581 and, as has been demonstrated by H. R. Woudhuysen, Sidney's works first circulated in manuscript within a close circle of family and friends as well as among other poets³² but probably also amongst the so-called 'Sidney alliance', a group of noblemen and noblewomen engaged in the political and religious issues of the time.³³ Watson's *Hekatompathia* may have not been at the basis of *Astrophil and Stella* and, being printed only once, was surely not as successful as Sidney's cycle, which was reprinted many times. However, being published nine years earlier, *Hekatompathia* can, if not exclusively claim, at least rightfully share the title of 'progenitor of the many sonnet cycles of the 1590's' with *Astrophil and Stella*.³⁴

3.1.2. *The translator and the imitator: Hekatompathia*

Like many of Sidney's works, Watson's *Hekatompathia* took part in the manuscript culture of the period before its publication. There is a partial manuscript copy entitled *A Looking Glasse for Loovers*, now at the British Library (Harley MS 3277), which may well have been a presentation copy for the dedicatee of the printed version, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford,³⁵ Sidney's worst enemy for personal and religious reasons.³⁶ Watson's allegiance to Oxford was far from exclusive: although there is no evidence that Watson belonged to Sidney's circle, in the Latin poem 'Authoris ad libellum suum protrepticon' ('The Author's Exhortation to His Little Book') printed amid the prefatory

³¹ Cecioni, 1964, 'Introduzione', p. 21.

³² H. R. Woudhuysen, 1996, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640*, Oxford: Clarendon Press; see also H. R. Woudhuysen, 2004, 'Sidney, Sir Philip (1554-1586)', in *ODNB*.

³³ Julie Crawford, 2014, *Mediatrix: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 8.

³⁴ Sutton, 1996, 'Introduction' to *The 'Εκατομπαθία*, in Watson, vol. 1, p. 135. Sutton actually attributes this merit only to Watson and implicitly downplays the role of Sidney's collection. However, as Woudhuysen notes, Sidney's is the first cycle to frame the sonnets within a story, thus setting a pattern for later sequences; see Woudhuysen, 2004. Watson does provide a common theme to the cycle, the sufferings caused by love of an unidentified lover and his decision to renounce to it (from the poem LXXX onwards), but only the poems XI-XVII are clearly linked to one another by a sort of ongoing story.

³⁵ Carlo Bajetta, 1998, *Sir Walter Raleigh: poeta di corte elisabettiano*, Milano: Mursia, p. 146. The manuscript contains only seventy-eight poems.

³⁶ On Sidney and Oxford's sour relationship, see A. H. Nelson, 2004, 'Vere, Edward de, seventeenth earl of Oxford (1550-1604)', in *ODNB*. Their enmity started in 1571, when Sidney got engaged to Anne Cecil, Oxford's former fiancée; it was renewed in 1579, when Oxford insulted Sidney, which almost led to a duel prevented by the Queen's intervention. In the following year, Sidney accused Oxford of Catholic sympathies.

material of the printed edition of *Hekatompathia*, Watson praises Sidney and one of his closest friends, the courtier-poet Sir Edward Dyer, and hopes that they will eventually read his book, probably in an attempt to seek patronage from them.³⁷ In any case, the manuscript copy of the work is probably the one to which Watson himself refers in the dedicatory letter to the Earl of Oxford, who ‘had willinglie vouchsafed the acceptance of this worke, and at convenient leisures favourable perused it, being as yet but in written hand’ and who reportedly was the one who convinced Watson to ‘put it to the presse’.³⁸ S. K. Heninger sets the year 1581 as *terminus ante quem* since it does not allude to Watson’s *Antigone* as the printed edition does;³⁹ Carlo Bajetta further anticipates the date of composition to 1579, i.e., when Watson is known to have been back in England from France.⁴⁰ Watson was very close to other poets belonging to the Earl’s circle: as we have seen, his Oxonian fellow student Lily, who wrote a commendatory letter prefacing *Hekatompathia*, and possibly also Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618).⁴¹ As Bajetta has noted, the influence of Watson’s *Hekatompathia* on the members of this circle can be registered in the circulation of an innovative theme in English poetry, the direct attack against love.⁴²

Hekatompathia is crucial to the understanding of Watson’s conception of translation and imitation. Surely, it is not openly presented as a work of translation, as is the case with Watson’s other translations, both into Latin and English. Along with Sophocles’ *Antigone* and the lost translation from Petrarch mentioned above, Watson also Latinized the hexameter poem *Raptus Helenae* (*The Abduction of Helen*) by the late antique Greek poet Colluthus in 1586 and is known to have translated into English the first dialogue of Bernard Palissy’s 1580 *Discours Admirables*, under the title *A Learned Dialogue of Bernard Palissy* (1590), a version now lost.⁴³ Watson also translated his own Latin *Meliboeus* into English in 1590 with the explicit intention of avoiding what had happened three years earlier with his *Amyntas*:⁴⁴ in 1587, Abraham Fraunce had published it ‘paraphrastically translated’ into English – as announced in the title-page – without acknowledging Watson’s authorship.⁴⁵

³⁷ Watson, 1582, London, sig. *2^r.

³⁸ Watson, 1582, sig. A3^r(?).

³⁹ Heninger, 1964, p. xi; see also Watson, 1582, sig. K4^r.

⁴⁰ Bajetta, 1998, p. 146.

⁴¹ Bajetta, 1998, p. 145.

⁴² The origin of this theme can be traced also in five compositions (‘complaints’) written by the earl of Oxford himself probably earlier than the appearance of the *Ἑκατομπαθία*; however, Watson’s sequence and Lily’s play *Sapho and Phao* (1584) were the works that truly contributed to the spread of this theme; see Bajetta, 1998, pp. 139-140.

⁴³ Chatterley, 2004; Sutton, 1996, ‘General Introduction’, p. xxiii.

⁴⁴ Thomas Watson, 1590, *An Eglogue Upon the Death of Right Honourable Sir Francis Walsingham*, London: Printed by Robert Robinson, unnumbered page.

⁴⁵ Thomas Watson, 1587, *The Lamentations of Amyntas for the Death of Phillis, Paraphrastically Translated out of Latine into English Hexameters by Abraham Fraunce*, London: Printed by John Wolfe.

However, it is in *Hekatompathia* that we can best gather Watson's ideas on translation and its relation to imitation. Almost every numbered poem is prefaced by an explanatory prose headnote: therein Watson usually summarizes the content of the poem, mentions authors that dealt with the same theme or used similar images or rhetorical tropes, and accounts for the relationship with his sources, which range from classical authors to French and Italian poets to his own past works. Although these headpieces are written in the third person singular, scholars have generally considered it very unlikely that another person wrote them in his stead; as Mary Thomas Crane put it, Watson probably acts and thinks of himself as 'both author and editor'.⁴⁶ Of the roughly one hundred 'annotations', as he calls them, only thirty do not make reference to a source. In some of these cases, there are at least marginal notes with quotations: for instance, number LXXXIII lacks a proper headnote but has a quotation from Sophocles' *Ajax* as a side note.

Despite its title, *Hekatompathia* contains 102 poems;⁴⁷ of these, seven poems are in Latin (the 'Proprepticon', VI, XLV, LXVI, XC, 'Quid Amor?', and the 'Epilogue') and seven are explicitly translations, three into English (V, XXII, XL) and four into Latin (VI, LXVI, XC, 'Epilogue'). The collection also includes other translated passages, either in the headnotes prefacing each poem or within other poems presented as imitations. The expressions Watson uses to talk about translation in the headnotes are the following: 'All this Passion (two verses only excepted) is wholly translated out of *Petrarch*' (V); 'This passion is a translation into latine of the selfe same sonnet' (VI); 'The substance of this passion is taken out of *Seraphine* [...]. But the Author hath in this translation inverted the order of some verses of *Seraphine*, and added the two last of himself' (XXII); 'It is almost word for word taken out of *Petrarch*' (XL); 'faithfully translating' (LXVI); 'In this Latine passion, the Author translatheth, as it were, paraphrastically the Sonnet of *Petrarch*' (XC); the 'Epilogue' is 'faithfully translated out of *Petrarch*'.⁴⁸ There are also many poems that are expressly presented as

⁴⁶ Mary Thomas Crane, 1993, *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 181. On the headnotes and their authorship, see Sutton, 1996, 'Introduction' to *Hekatompathia*, p. 133. Heninger has argued that Watson himself wrote them on the grounds that he was following a vogue for self-commentary such as that of Dante Alighieri in his *Vita Nova* and Girolamo Parabosco in *Lettere amorose* (1545); see Heninger, 1964, pp. ix-x. However, in both these works the poet's commentary is in the first person singular. Another model for such self-commentary quoted by Heninger is George Gascoigne; in his *Posies* (1575), Gascoigne does include some introductory notes in the third person singular; see for instance George Gascoigne, 1575, *The Posies of George Gascoigne Esquire*, London: Richard Smith, p. xxxviii. However, in his case this use was derived by the fiction Gascoigne used in the first edition of the posies, *A Hundreth Soundrie Flowres* (1573), to promote his search for patronage: in this work, Gascoigne pretended that this work was published without his consent and that many of the poems contained were not his own; see Felicity A. Hughes, 1997, 'Gascoigne's Poses', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 37, 1, pp. 1-19; see also Susan C. Staub, 2011, 'Dissembling His Art: "Gascoigne's Gardnings"', *Renaissance Studies*, 25, 1, pp. 95-110.

⁴⁷ To the allegedly one hundred numbered poems we should add the four unnumbered ones – the Latin 'Proprepticon' mentioned above, the introductory Petrarchan sonnet, the Latin poem 'Quid Amor?' between the poems XCVIII and XCIX, and a final 'Epilogue' at the end. Also, two poems (LXXXI and LXXXII) are identical, differing only in their layout, and one number is assigned to a prose section (LXXX).

⁴⁸ Watson, 1582, sigg. A3^{r-v}, C3^v, E4^v, I2^v, M2^v, N4^v.

imitations (VII, XXI, XXVII, XXVIII, XXXIV, LV, LVI, LXI, LXX, LXXVIII, LXXXIII, XCIX); some poems contain only a few lines translated or imitated from another author (XXXVIII, XLVII, LI, LIII, LIV, LXV, LCI, XCVI), and others ‘allude’, in Watson’s terms, to myths, especially those told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* (VIII, LXVIII, XCVI); the verb ‘allude’ is used also for sententious quotations by Sophocles (LXIII, XCIII). Imitative practices are referred either with the verb ‘imitate’ (VII, XXI, XXVII, XXVIII, XXXIV, XXXVIII, LI, LIV, LVI, LXVI, LXX, LXXVIII, LXXXIII, XCI, XCIII, XCVI) or the noun ‘imitation’ (XLVII, LIII, LV, XCIX). The verb ‘borrow’ is used both with reference to what he considers a translation (LXVI), an imitation (VI, LXVI), or for details (XXIV). Sometimes, he distinguishes between ‘translating paraphrastically’ and ‘translating word for word’; he even specifies when the order of some lines is inverted. (XXII)

Zooming in the single headnotes, we find that Watson presents imitation and translation as coexisting within the same poem (for instance LXVI). In these cases, it is impossible to provide a clear-cut definition of the dominant practice at work, translation or imitation. Facing a similar impasse in her study of two cases of early modern French reception of Aristophanes, Cécile Dudouyt proposes a change of perspective: ‘in order to understand what kind of reception is at work here, it may be more telling to focus on the technique, rather than try to label the result’.⁴⁹ Such a change of approach may well facilitate the understanding of Watson’s experiment in *Hekatompathia* as a crossroads of techniques within the same text.

The prose sections display Watson’s self-consciousness in moving between the two practices in a way that is rarely found in other lyric collections and makes *Hekatompathia* an exceptional specimen of the coexistence between theory and practice, totally deserving Heninger’s definition of a ‘scrapbook of experiments’.⁵⁰ Also, Watson’s care in distinguishing the processes activated in each poem testifies to his willingness to account for the genesis and the compositional operations he activates. As we have seen, Watson recurrently talks about *translation*, *imitation*, and *allusion*. As pointed out in the conclusion of section 1.2.2 above, it is impossible to draw stable distinctions between what was classified as *translation* and as *imitation*, let alone between *imitation* and *allusion* in the case of Watson. Nonetheless, *allusion* and *allude* are far from frequent terms in imitative theory; this is why it is worth considering which implications *allusion* and *allude* might have had for Watson. In the same section of this work, I have quoted the definition of *alludere* in Cooper’s dictionary (1565), which conveys nothing of the idea of playing with meaning, as Mario Girolamo Vida suggested in *De arte poetica* (1527). However, Watson, who certainly did not need the

⁴⁹ Cécile Dudouyt, 2016, ‘Aristophanes in Early-Modern Fragments: Le Loyer’s *La Néphélocogie* (1579) and Racine’s *Les Plaideurs* (1688)’, in Philip Walsh (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Aristophanes*, Leiden; Boston: Brill, p. 179.

⁵⁰ Heninger, 1964, p. xi.

mediation of Latin-English vocabularies, may have been aware of the etymological meaning of *alludere* from his sound mastery of Latin. As we have seen, Watson was also well versed in Italian: in John Florio's Italian-English dictionary *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598), the definition of *alludere* does retain a reference to the idea of playing: 'to allude, to have reference unto, to dallie or plaie with';⁵¹ similarly, in the first edition of the *Vocabolario dell'Accademia della Crusca* (1612), *allusione* and *alludere* are mostly used with evident playful innuendos.⁵² Although Watson does not employ *allude* with such a playful tone, his way of playing with his sources and of changing their meanings according to his needs in his poems does suggest that Watson may have used *allusion* and *allude* with the awareness of the etymology of *allusio*. The whole genesis of *Hekatompathia*, therefore, may be read as a 'ludus', a compositional exercise involving previous texts at the disposal of the author-compiler.

Watson's prose headpieces do even more: as J. T. Knight puts it, 'approaching a poem embedded in outside reading, and a narrative of its own construction, the reader is compelled to experience the content of *Hekatompathia* as a work of material (re)arrangement'.⁵³ Watson often reproduces an excerpt of the original work which he claims to be translating or imitating or just alluding to. Therefore, he explicitly invites a comparison with his sources and points at how he has reused and reorganized pre-existing material, not only in terms of elocution but also in terms of disposition within the new text. In so doing, Watson displays a crucial attention to the aspect of *dispositio*, which was already evident in the macrostructure of the cycle. The title page announces that 'outer *dispositio*' of the cycle, divided into two parts: 'the Authors sufferance in Loue' and 'his long farewell to Loue and all his tyrannie'.⁵⁴ Watson's headnotes enable the reader to reflect upon the inner *dispositio* of some poems, by showing how and in which order he has recombined his sources. Watson's process of composition is thereby laid open: in Knight's words, 'creative work [...] is figured as transparent, a kind of "open-source" model of writing verse' and the headnotes function as 'documents of a process of reading as writing'.⁵⁵ '*Hekatompathia* narrates, in large and small details, the process of its own becoming'.⁵⁶

Watson's activity as a translator thus informs his original production as a lyricist. His talent for translation was most probably developed thanks to the classical education he received first at

⁵¹ John Florio, 1598, *A Worlde of Wordes, Or Most Copious, and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English*, London: Arnold Hatfield, p. 14.

⁵² See for instance the definitions of 'culattario', 'culiseo', 'enigma', 'nasetto', 'piaggia', and 'piantaggine', Accademia della Crusca, 1612, *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*, Venezia: Appresso Giovanni Alberti, pp. 142, 315, 550, 621, 623.

⁵³ Jeffrey Todd Knight, 2013, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 106.

⁵⁴ Watson, 1582, title page.

⁵⁵ Knight, 2013, pp. 109, 111.

⁵⁶ Knight, 2013, p. 113.

Winchester College and later at Oxford, where he studied law without obtaining a degree. Also his travels across Europe mentioned above might have prompted him to translate during his youth. Although Watson authored several translations, it is in *Hekatompathia* that his polymorphic conception of translation is best expressed in theoretical terms, not in his actual works of translation. However, since the scope of this research is his Neo-Latin translation of *Antigone*, I shall now look at how other authors translating from Greek into Neo-Latin conceived of translation; this survey may help us have a fuller picture of the specific motives behind Watson's choice to translate Sophocles' *Antigone* and to translate it into Latin.

3.2. Neo-Latin translation

3.2.1. Latin Translations from Greek: Latinized Greek Tragedy in the Renaissance

In his monumental study *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age* (1990), J. W. Binns has traced the history of Neo-Latin writing in England during the reign of Elizabeth I and James I, and has shown how Latin was all-pervading in English culture, being employed for both literary and non-literary purposes.⁵⁷ According to the *ESTC* online, Latin writings in England between 1473 and 1640 amount to one tenth of the overall output, and to one ninth if we restrict the search to the time-span 1558-1625, covering the reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and James I. This figure may seem relatively negligible; however, as Binns observes, this low percentage would probably be far higher if one took into account several factors such as 'the Latin works by Englishmen printed or reprinted abroad' and the quality of the English printed items registered in the *ESTC*.⁵⁸

Even so, if we limit the query further, considering decade by decade the printing of Latin works in England, the results point to a peak between 1572 and 1601 (Table 1). The figure of the decade 1582-1590 (13.3%) slightly surpasses that of fifty years earlier, i.e., the decade 1532-1541 (13%), when Latin was just starting to wane after a period of starker competition with English.⁵⁹ Watson's *Antigone*, published in a quarto edition in 1581, belongs to the twenty years of a relative upsurge in Latin production (1572-1601). If we concentrate on the decade including Watson's *Antigone*, the

⁵⁷ James Wallace Binns, 1990, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age*, Melksham: Francis Cairns.

⁵⁸ For instance, Binns notes that many items recorded in the catalogue are 'statutes, declarations, visitation articles and so on, rather than books'; see Binns, 1990, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁹ In 1522-1531 Latin works amounted to 32% to the overall output, English ones to 62.4%; in 1512-21 Latin works corresponded to 44%, English ones to 53.6%.

years from 1572 to 1581, the number of translations into Latin amounts to 11.6% of the overall Latin output, with thirty-one translations out of 266 Latin works printed in England. Also, according to *RCC*, Latin is the target text of almost half of the translations into Greek published between 1473 and 1641 in England, Ireland, and Scotland, with 100 translations from Greek out of the 215 into Latin.

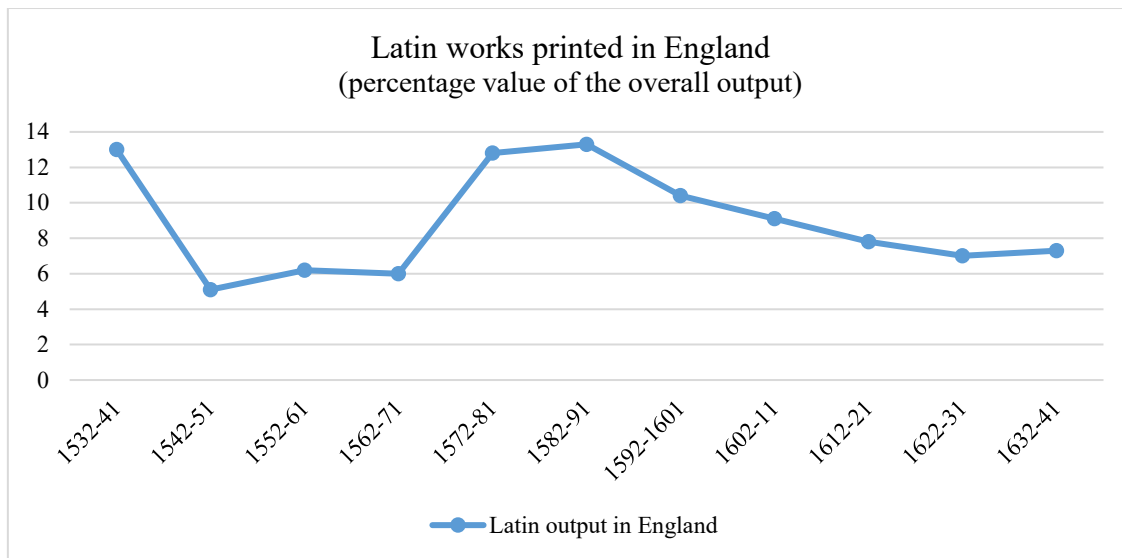


Table 1. Latin output in England between 1532 and 1641 by decade.

Therefore, Watson’s choice to translate into Latin is not isolated. Nor can it be dismissed only as a scholarly exercise like the rare contemporary and near-contemporary translations into Greek, which Binns has rightly defined as mere ‘academic sports’.⁶⁰ The translation of Greek works into Latin has a long established and prestigious tradition in European humanism; more specifically, the practice of translating Greek tragedy into Latin can boast Erasmus amongst its very initiators. However, of the 100 translations into Greek registered by *RCC*,⁶¹ more than half are religious texts, being translations either from the Scriptures (forty-nine) or from Patristic works (five).⁶² The remaining forty-six Latin translations are from classical or late antique authors;⁶³ twenty-three records

⁶⁰ Binns, 1990, p. 216. The *RCC* records only 10 translations with Greek as a target language printed in England between 1473 and 1641, and of these four are editions of the same work, i.e., William Whitaker’s Greek version of Alexander Nowell’s *Cathechismus parvus*.

⁶¹ *RCC* registers 101 translations from Latin into Greek printed in England, Scotland and Ireland before 1641; however, one (record S121486 in *ESTC*) is a translation from Greek into Latin, since it contains Whitaker’s Greek translation of the Latin catechism by Nowell mentioned above.

⁶² The number of translations from patristic works actually amounts to eight. *RCC* does not include two translations by Patrick Young: one printed 1633, *Clementis ad Corinthios epistola prior* by Pope Clement I, who lived in the first century A. D., and one printed in 1637, the translation of Nicetas of Heraklea’s ‘catena’ biblical commentaries; see Binns, 1990, pp. 226-228. Nor does it include a translation by Roger Ascham of a miscellany of commentaries by the Church Fathers; this translation has been appended to Ascham’s *Apologia pro caena dominica*, posthumously printed in 1577; see Binns, 1990, p. 227. Binns discusses three other translations from Greek into Latin which are not included in *RCC*; these works by less known writers are on religious topics but they cannot be considered patristic works; see Binns, 1990, p. 228.

⁶³ *RCC* does not include Watson’s translation of *Raptus Helenae* (*The Abduction of Helen*) by the late antique Greek poet Colluthus in 1586, and at least thirteen other literary translations from Greek poets. Amongst these, one is a manuscript

are all translations from Aesop's *Fables*.⁶⁴ To this scenario, one should also add the Latin versions by English translators which were published on the Continent and which are not included in the *ESTC* nor in *RCC*, for example the Latin translations of Church Fathers by John Christopherson, tutor of Thomas More's granddaughter Mary Bassett (see section 2.1.1 above) and Catholic exile under Edward VI and an influential figure under Mary I, and by Humphrey, the author of *Interpretatio linguarum* (see section 1.1.2).⁶⁵

In his 'Prooemium interpretis', Christopherson explicitly underlines the superiority of his translation in comparison to those from poetical works on the grounds that he is translating 'true and proved histories' and 'the admonitions of the faithful disciples of Christ', not 'lying stories' nor 'the dreams of mad philosophers'.⁶⁶ However, the criteria he lays out in his proem, 'a miniature treatise on the Art of Translation',⁶⁷ are considerably indebted to those usually formulated with reference to literary translation, in particular to the kind of translation defined above as 'rhetorical' (see section 1.1.3). Along with 'a true explanation of sense and meaning' ('vera sensus sententiaeque explicatio') and 'perspicuity of speech' ('sermonis perspicuitas'), which are meant to ensure 'fidelity' ('fide[s]') to the meaning and the 'understanding' ('intelligentia') of the content, Christopherson's criteria include also 'good latinity' ('latinitas') and 'harmony' ('numeros'), which are relevant for 'delight' ('delectatio') and 'judgement of the ears' ('aurium iudicium').⁶⁸ A similar attention to rhetorical-stylistic issues is visible when he claims to have translated 'in order to express truly the sense and meaning of the author, and to adumbrate its form of speech and harmony by imitating them'.⁶⁹ Like Humphrey (see section 1.1.3), however, Christopherson also prioritizes meaning over style, 'res' over 'verba', or, in Christopherson's own words, 'wisdom' ('sapientia') over 'eloquence' ('eloquentia'): '[f]or if you take away wisdom, the death of eloquence will follow'.⁷⁰

Such concerns for the priority of religious over literary works haunt also one of the first humanist translators of Greek tragedy, Erasmus. On many occasions, Erasmus declares that he has embarked on translations of secular works for his first forays into translations from Greek only as a

version of the *Batrachomyomachia* by William Gager now British Library, Additional MS. 22583, and one is Nicholas Carr's 1571 translation of three orations by Demosthenes; see Binns, 1990, pp. 229-230. The Demosthenes translation is registered in *RCC* but is not included amid those into Latin; see Binns, 1990, pp. 229-238.

⁶⁴ Aesop's *Fables* is 'historically one of the most widely read texts after the bible'; see Edith Hall, 2008, 'Putting the Class into Classical Reception', in Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray (eds.), *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 391-392.

⁶⁵ Binns, 1990, pp. 218-228.

⁶⁶ Translation by Binns in Binns, 1989, p. 219; see the original in John Christopherson, 1569, *Historiae ecclesiasticae pars prima [...] Ioanne Christophorono Anglo Cicestrensi Episcopo interprete*, Lovanii: Excudebat Servatius Sassenus, sig. †6^v: 'rectas probatasque historias'; 'fidelium Christi discipulorum monita'; 'commentitias fabulas'; 'philosophorum delirantium somnia'.

⁶⁷ Binns, 1990, p. 220.

⁶⁸ Binns, 1990, p. 220; see also Christopherson, 1569, sig. ††1^v.

⁶⁹ Binns, 1990, p. 220; see also Christopherson, 1569, sig. †8^v: 'ut tum authoris sensum et sententiam vere exprimerem, tum dicendi formam et numeros [...] imitatione adumbrarem'.

⁷⁰ Binns, 1990, p. 221; see also Christopherson, 1569, sig. ††2^r: 'Tolle enim sapientiam, eloquentiae sequitur interitus'.

necessary preparation to higher tasks: translating from the Scriptures but, more broadly, studying theology. In the dedicatory letter to his first translations from Greek, three works by the fourth-century rhetorician Libanius (translated in 1503 but published in 1519), Erasmus regards ‘the whole exercise [as] somewhat trivial’ but he nonetheless decided ‘to attempt [his] first ventures in this kind of work, in order of course, to avoid “learning the potter’s art on a great jar”, as the Greek proverb has it’; his primary aim is to test his knowledge of Greek as well as of Latin, because ‘nothing is harder than to turn good Greek into good Latin’.⁷¹ In a 1504 letter to John Colet, Erasmus again makes it clear that translating from Greek is instrumental to other, theological purposes.⁷²

Two years later, in the dedicatory epistle to his version of Euripides’ *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (1506), Erasmus repeats that he decided ‘to translate Greek authorities in order to restore or promote [...] the science of theology’ and, reusing the potter metaphor, he underlines the ancillary nature of his literary translations from Euripides:

I determined first to test whether the labour I had spent on Greek and Latin had been wasted by experimenting on a subject which, though very taxing, was secular in nature; one that was hard enough to afford me good practice, while any mistake I made would be at the cost of my intellectual reputation alone, causing no harm to Holy Writ.⁷³

According to his preface, then, Erasmus translated Euripides’ tragedies only because they could allow him to test his knowledge of Greek and Latin on a tough but at the same time safe ground. Working ‘on a subject which, though very taxing, was secular in nature’, Erasmus could acquire the linguistic dexterity in both the target and source languages necessary to deal with the Scriptures without incurring any unpardonable translation ‘mistake’, here explicitly assimilated to a religious sin by using the term ‘peccatum’.

However, the mere preparatory linguistic exercise is only one of the reasons why Erasmus translated two Euripidean tragedies. Although Erasmus stresses the subservience of these translations to his theological studies, his preface to his version of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* contains some interesting observations that point to additional motives behind his decision to translate Euripides.

⁷¹ Translation by R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson in Erasmus, 1975, ‘177 / To Nicholas Ruistre’, in R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson (eds.), *The Correspondence of Erasmus, Letters 142 to 297*, Toronto: University of Toronto, pp. 71, 74; see the original in Erasmus, 1969, ‘Libanii aliquot declamatiunculae per Erasmus’, edited by R. A. B. Mynors, in *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi [...], ordinis primi tomus primus*, Amsterdam: Huygens instituut/Brill, pp. 181, 184: ‘res tota levicola’; ‘in hac [...] primam huius laboris aleam experiiri, ne videlicet iuxta Graecam paroemiam ἐν τῷ πῖθῳ τὴν κεραμείαν, id est, In dolio figulariam’; ‘nihil es[t] difficilius quam ex bene Graecis bene Latina reddere’.

⁷² Erasmus, 1975, ‘181/To John Colet’, in Mynors and Thomson (eds.), pp. 86-89.

⁷³ Erasmus, 1975, ‘188 / To William Warham’, in Mynors and Thomson (eds.), p. 108; see also Erasmus, 1969, ‘Euripidis Hecuba et Iphigenia’, in *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi [...], ordinis primi tomus primus*, p. 216: ‘in animo statuissem [...] vertendis Graecis autoribus rem theologicam [...] vel restituere vel adiuuare’; ‘visum est mihi prius periculum facere, quam non luissem operam in utriusque linguae studium insumptam, idque in re difficillima quidem illa, sed tamen profana, quo pariter et negotii difficultas ad meditationem conduceret, et, si quod esset peccatum, citra sacrarum scripturarum iniuriam solius ingenii periculo peccaretur’.

First, he underlines the difficulty of Euripides' 'various and so unfamiliar' metres, 'remarkably succinct, delicate, exquisite' style and 'obscure' choruses.⁷⁴ It should then come as no surprise, he adds, that 'even in the present fortunate age no Italian has ventured to embark on the task of translating any tragedy or any comedy'.⁷⁵ A few lines later, however, partly contradicting himself, Erasmus mentions one of the previous translators of *Hecuba*, namely, Francesco Filelfo, who produced only a partial Latin version of the tragedy.⁷⁶ Erasmus contradicts himself only partly because he specifies that Filelfo translated just the first scene of the play and insists in defining his translation 'a task unattempted hitherto';⁷⁷ his statement that no Italian had attempted the task of translating Greek drama should then be read as meaning that no Italian had ever produced a complete translation of any play. Alongside Filelfo, other Italians had measured themselves against Greek drama and specifically against Euripides' *Hecuba*: the play was partially translated also by Leontius Pilatus and Pietro da Montagnana.⁷⁸

Although couched in terms of conventional self-effacement, Erasmus' reference to Filelfo is quite relevant as to the purposes behind his translation of Euripides. According to Erasmus, Filelfo translated 'in such a fashion that I, usually bashful to a fault, was considerably encouraged by this great scholar's performance'.⁷⁹ As Carmel McCallum-Barry has pointed out, '[w]hile he refers modestly to himself, Erasmus at the same time implies that he is worthy to compete with the famous humanist'.⁸⁰ That Erasmus was motivated by competition with Filelfo's version is also confirmed by another letter in which he writes that 'Filelfo provoked [him] to this enterprise'.⁸¹ As Erika Rummel has noted, this statement contradicts the detail that Erasmus gives in his preface to his translations from Euripides, where he states that he discovered Filelfo's version after he had already started his

⁷⁴ Erasmus, 1975, '188 / To William Warham', in Mynors and Thomson (eds.), p. 108; see also Erasmus, 1969, 'Euripidis Hecuba et Iphigenia', pp. 216-217: 'carmen [...] varium et inusitatum'; 'verum etiam mirum in modo presso subtili excusso'; 'choros [...] obscuros'.

⁷⁵ Erasmus, 1975, '188 / To William Warham', in Mynors and Thomson (eds.), p. 108; see also Erasmus, 1969, 'Euripidis Hecuba et Iphigenia', p. 217: 'ne hoc quidem felicissimo seculo quisquam Italorum ausus fuit hoc muneris aggredi, ut tragoediam aliquam aut comoediam verteret'.

⁷⁶ Carmel McCallum-Barry, 2004, 'Why Did Erasmus Translate Greek Tragedy?', *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society yearbook*, 24, 1, p. 56.

⁷⁷ Erasmus, 1975, '188 / To William Warham', in Mynors and Thomson (eds.), p. 109; see also Erasmus, 1969, 'Euripidis Hecuba et Iphigenia', p. 218: 'rem hactenus intentatam'.

⁷⁸ McCallum-Barry, 2004, p. 56. Elia Borza records two manuscript versions of Sophoclean plays dating back to the fifteenth century; see Borza, 2007, p. 265. On the translations of *Hecuba*, see Tanya Pollard, 2012, 'What's Hecuba to Shakespeare?', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 65, p. 1064, n. 14. J. H. Waszink records another translation by the Italian Giorgio Anselmi Nepote, which was published in the same year of the Erasmian version (1506), and therefore was probably unknown to Erasmus; see J. H. Waszink, 1969, 'Introduction' to Erasmus, 'Euripidis Hecuba et Iphigenia', pp. 205-206.

⁷⁹ Erasmus, 1975, p. 109; see also Erasmus, 1969, 'Euripidis Hecuba et Iphigenia', p. 218: 'ita ut nobis alioqui putidulis vir tantus animi non parum addiderit'.

⁸⁰ McCallum-Barry, 2004, p. 56.

⁸¹ Translation by Erika Rummel in Erika Rummel, 1985, *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics*, London: University of Toronto Press, p. 146, n. 44; see the original in Erasmus, 1906, *Opus epistolarium Des. Erasmi Roterodami, Tom. I, 1484-1514, denuo recognitum et auctum per P. S. Allen et H. M. Allen*, Oxonii: in typographaeo Clarendoniano, p. 4: 'Ad id audendum provocarat F. Philelphus'.

own;⁸² nonetheless, what emerges in both texts is that also the desire to compete with Filelfo prompted Erasmus to translate Euripides' *Hecuba*.⁸³

Also, at the beginning of the sixteenth century translation was not seen only as a kind of competition with both the source text and other translations but also as a supplement to the source text and other translations alike. While the idea of competition was a phenomenon involving scholars of the calibre of More, Erasmus, and William Lily, the notion that a translation may supplement other translations was a learning method for students of Greek: as Botley explains, there was the notion that even 'a reader with no knowledge of Greek might deepen his understanding of a Greek author by collating a number of translations of the original text'.⁸⁴ New translations of the same text were seen 'not as a replacement for the earlier versions, but as a commentary or a key to open up the meaning of the original text to the reader'.⁸⁵ Furthermore, re-contextualizing this choice within Erasmus' biography, McCallum-Barry suggests that although 'Erasmus tells us that he translated Greek tragedy in order to practice his Greek and because the style and content gave him pleasure', his translations from Euripides 'are also part of a process of presenting his credentials as a humanist man of letters on a wider European scene'.⁸⁶ In the years between 1499 and 1506, Erasmus was badly in need of a patron;⁸⁷ therefore, he may well have hoped that translating such a difficult author as Euripides – more specifically, translating a complete play of his for the first time – would be a strong calling card.

3.2.2. *Silent competition with previous Latin Antigones*

Apart from these biographical circumstances, competition remains a major motive for Erasmus to translate, and so had it been for other translators since the previous century.⁸⁸ As we have seen in section 1.1.2, competition was even foreseen in treatises such as Humphrey's *Interpretatio*. Thanks to Erasmus, Greek tragedy became a terrain for competition from the beginning of the century and must have been even more so towards the end, when many Latin translations were available. When Watson was working at his version of *Antigone*, there were already eight Latin translations of the

⁸² Rummel, 1985, p. 146, n. 44.

⁸³ McCallum-Barry has also pointed out that another reason for translating *Hecuba* was that the play shared many themes with two other works which Erasmus was writing on the period (1502-1504), namely *Enchiridion* (1503) and *Panegyricus* (1504); see McCallum-Barry, 2004, p. 60.

⁸⁴ Paul Botley, 2004, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti, and Desiderius Erasmus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 173.

⁸⁵ Botley, 2004, p. 173.

⁸⁶ McCallum-Barry, 2004, p. 59.

⁸⁷ McCallum-Barry, 2004, p. 57.

⁸⁸ Botley, 2004, pp. 171-172.

play circulating in Europe. The first is the 1541 Latin *Antigone* by Gentien Hervet.⁸⁹ The second is contained in the first complete translation of Sophocles, by Giambattista Gabia, who produced extremely literal versions.⁹⁰ This was followed by the 1546 translation of all extant tragedies published under the name of Veit Winsheim, pupil of Philip Melanchthon.⁹¹ As we have seen in section 2.3.1 above, this translation is probably the result of a collaborative effort between master and pupil. A few years later, the Dutch scholar George Rataller published two versions, one in 1550 printed in Lyon, another in 1570 in Antwerp.⁹² The first edition included only *Ajax*, *Electra*, and *Antigone*, and it appeared without Rataller's knowledge; in his second version he translated the whole Sophoclean corpus, conspicuously revising the three tragedies that had already appeared in the 1550, *non recognita* version; moreover, in the dedicatory letter of the 1570 edition Rotaller himself backs away from the unauthorized version.⁹³ Meanwhile, another complete translation by the Frenchman Jean Lalemant had appeared in Paris in 1557.⁹⁴ The following year the German theologian, playwright, and humanist Thomas Kirchmeyer, known also as Naogeorgus, translated Sophocles for the printer Johannes Oporinus in Basel; this seventh version of *Antigone* is the one that Watson certainly used for his own version of *Antigone*.⁹⁵ The eighth and last is contained in Henri Estienne's bilingual collection of selected Greek tragedies from Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides published in Geneva in 1567.⁹⁶ The Sophoclean tragedies here printed are *Ajax*, *Electra*, and *Antigone*. Estienne decided to print two Latin versions of each tragedy: a verse translation or *interpretatio carmine* and a literal Latin translation or *interpretatio Latina ad verbum* accompanying the Greek text on the parallel page. In the case of Sophocles, the former versions are Rataller's 1550 translations; the latter are by Joachim Camerarius, who translated *Ajax*, and by one F. P., who translated *Electra* and

⁸⁹ Gentien Hervet, 1541, *Sophoclis Antigone, tragoedia a Gentiano Herveto Aurelio traducta e Graeco in Latinum*, Lugduni: Apud Stephanum Doletum.

⁹⁰ Giovanni Battista Gabia, 1543, *Sophoclis tragoediae omnes, nunc primum Latinae ad uerbum factae, ac scholijs quibusdam illustratae, Ioanne Baptista Gabia Veronensi interprete*, Venetiis: apud Io. Baptistam a Burgofrancho Papiensem.

⁹¹ Philip Melanchthon and Veit Winsheim, 1546, *Interpretatio Tragoediarum Sophoclis: Ad Utilitatem Iuuentutis, Quae Studiosa Est Graecae Linguae*, Francoforti: Petrus Brubachius.

⁹² George Rataller, 1550, *Sophoclis Aiax Flagellifer, et Antigone. Eiusdem Electra. Georgio Rotallero interprete*, Lugduni [Lyon]: apud Seb. Gryphium. Rataller's revised edition with the complete plays is George Rataller, 1570, *Tragoediae Sophoclis quotquot extant carmine latino redditae Georgio Rotallero*, Antwerp: ex officina Gulielmi Silvii.

⁹³ Michele Mastroianni, 2015, 'Trois interprétations de l' "Antigone" de Sophocle: Gentien Hervet (1541), Georges Rataller (1550) et Jean Lalemant (1557)', *Anabases*, 21, pp. 66-68.

⁹⁴ Coriolano Martirano, 1556, *Electra*, in Coriolano Martirano, 1556, *Tragoediae VIII [...], Comoediae II [...]*, Neapoli: Ianus Marius Simonetta, sigg. 32^r-59^r; see also Jean Lalemant, 1557, *Tragoediae quotquot extant septem*, Lutetia [Paris]: Apud Michaelem Vascosanum.

⁹⁵ Thomas Naogeorgus, 1558, *Sophoclis tragoediae septem, Latino carmine redditae et Annotationibus illustratae, per Thomam Naogeorgum Straubingensem*, Basileae: Per Ioannem Oporinum.

⁹⁶ Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, 1567, *Tragoediae selectae Aeschyli, Sophoclis, Euripidis. Cum duplici interpretatione latina, una ad verbum, altera carmine*, [Geneva]: Henr. Stephanus.

Antigone.⁹⁷ The prefatory material contains this unclear indication: ‘F. P. hastily recognized the common translation of *Electra* and *Antigone*’ (‘Electrae et Antigones vulgatam interpretationem F. P. raptim recognovit’); behind the initials, scholars have identified the Cretan humanist Franciscus Portus.⁹⁸ Since Rataller’s version of *Antigone* had already been published, the new one is only that by Portus. In Watson’s *Antigone*, however, there is no reference to these previous translators, except for Thomas Naogeorgus. Despite being his main source, Watson mentions Naogeorgus in a marginal note, before the list of the *dramatis personae*, only to acknowledge his debt to the German humanist’s own annotations: ‘Taken from Naogeorgus’ notes on Sophocles’ (‘Mutuatium ex Naogeorgi annotationibus in Sophoclem’, *WA*, p. 16). In the light of the humanist conception of translation as a form of competition or of supplement, it is reasonable to think that Watson also looked at these previous versions.

The paratexts preceding Watson’s translation – a dedicatory epistle and eight gratulatory poems – equally omit any reference to previous Latin versions but rather present Watson’s translation as an extraordinary endeavour, in line with the conventions of contemporary translation paratexts in English: Watson defines his own work as ‘a thing of great moment, greater than my powers had not Pallas industriously come to my aid’; one John Cooke, student at Cambridge and later headmaster at St Paul’s, gives ‘praise [to] God that He gave the British such a young man, the first exponent of this art’.⁹⁹ The contiguity between the two cultures of translation into Neo-Latin and into English is visible in the use of metaphors, which, as we have seen in section 1.1.3 above, are indicative of the way in which translation is conceived. Two laudatory poems deploy the metaphor of teaching the tongue to the source author, the source protagonist, or to the Muses: in one, Watson is said to have ‘taught Sophocles’ *Antigone* to speak in our tongue’; in the other, it is ‘Watson’s Muse’ which, ‘imitating the Muses of Sophocles, made Ismene speak with a Latin tongue’.¹⁰⁰ In the dedicatory epistle, Watson himself adopts the same metaphor:

⁹⁷ The literal translation of *Ajax* is the one which Camerarius had published in his 1556 *Commentatio*; see Joachim Camerarius, 1556, *Commentatio explicationum omnium tragoediarum Sophoclis*, Basel: Johannes Oporinus, pp. 107-174.

⁹⁸ Bernard Weinberg, 1971, ‘ps. Longinus, Dionysus Cassius’, in P. O. Kristeller, F. E. Cranz, and Virginia Brown, *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Medieval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries*, Vol. II, Washington: Catholic University of America Press, p. 198.

⁹⁹ *WA*, p. 6 /sig. A5^v: momenti res magna, meis quoque viribus impar, / ni daret ipsa mihi sedula Pallas opem’; see also John Cooke, 1581, ‘An Encomium [...]’, in *WA*, sig. B1^r: αινεῖτε θεὸν ὃς ἔδωκε Βριτάννοις / τόνδε νέον, τέχνης πρῶτον τοῖσδε διδακτὴν; translations by Sutton in Watson, 1996, pp. 25-27.

¹⁰⁰ Cooke, 1581, ‘Τὸ τῆς Ἀντιγόνης Σοφοκλείας [...] ἐγκώμιον [sic]’, in *WA*, sig. B1^r: Ἀντιγόνην Σοφοκλοῦς ἐδίδαξε λαλῆσαι / τῷ λόγῳ ἡμετέρῳ; see also Philip Harrison, 1581, ‘Ad Lectorem’, in *WA*, sig. B1^v: ‘Musa Sophoclaeas Watsoni imitata Camoenas / Ismenidem Latio reddidit ore loqui’; translations by Sutton in Watson, 1996, pp. 25-27.

I took up Sophocles, I taught his Muses to grow gentle, I made Latin out of his Greekish verse. Thus while disturbed I spent my hours a useful man, I taught Antigone how to speak Latin.¹⁰¹

In none of these paratexts, however, is the metaphor of Latin teaching an expression of colonising attitude, which the contexts of these quotations help to exclude. Like Florio, who in his translation of Michel de Montaigne's *Essays* (1603) claims to have 'put [Montaigne's *Essays*] in English clothes' and 'taught it to talke our tongue' but also exhibits a humbling attitude towards the source author (see section 2.1.3),¹⁰² Watson immediately adds with a self-deprecating gesture that

at length, I wished to tear up the work I had rejected, or feed it to the fire, since Greece was greater than Latium. But a great number of prudent men forbade this.¹⁰³

Similarly, the laudatory poems praise the worthiness of both source and translation: 'Sophocles is the best of the tragic poets'; 'a play [*Antigone*] which Greece made, worthy of the lofty buskin, becomes Roman, and there is excellence in both'.¹⁰⁴ In another gratulatory poem, William Camden equally tends to adopt a seemingly conquering attitude at first but then insists on the 'genius' of the source author, who in a way becomes one with the translator in a sort of literary metempsychosis:

For Sophocles' genius has been taken and resides in your mind, marvelling at itself and at Rome. [...] Thus one genius resides in both of you, one tragic poet in both kinds of verse.¹⁰⁵

As we have seen in section 2.1.2, the reference to the 'genius' and to a metempsychosis bond between author and translator will be developed and frequently deployed by Augustan translators.

As reported above, one laudatory poem vaguely defines Watson as 'the first exponent of this art'.¹⁰⁶ Sutton has glossed this definition as meaning 'the first Englishman to translate a Sophoclean tragedy, at least for publication'.¹⁰⁷ While this may be true as far as the author of the poem – one John Cooke, student at Cambridge and later headmaster at St Paul's – knew, the list of lost plays mentioned

¹⁰¹ *WA*, p. 6 /sig. A5^v: 'arripui Sophoclem, docui mitescere Musas: / e Graecis pepigi metra Latina modis. / taliter absumens turbatus utilis horas, / Antigonem docui verba Latina loqui'; translation by Sutton in Watson, 1996, p. 23.

¹⁰² John Florio, 1603, *The Essayes, Or Morall, Politike and Millitarie Discourses*, Printed at London: By Val. Sims for Edward Blount, sig. A2^r; see also Massimiliano Morini, 2017 [2006], *Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice*, Abingdon: Routledge, p. 55. For Florio's signature as 'resolute', see Florio, 'To the Courteous Reader', in Montaigne, 1603, sig. A6^r.

¹⁰³ *WA*, p. 6 /sig. A5^v: 'tandem opus exactum volui lacerare, vel igni / tradere, quod Latio Graecia maior erat. / plurima sed vetuit prudentum turba virorum'; translation by Sutton in Watson, 1996, p. 23.

¹⁰⁴ Cooke, 1581, 'An Encomium [...]', in *WA*, sig. B1^r: τραγικῶν οὕτω πολὺν φέρτερός ἐστι Σοφοκλῆς; see Philip Harrison, 1581, 'To the Reader', in *WA*, sig. B1^v: 'fabula, quam fecit sublimi digna cothurno / Graecia, fit Latium, parque in utraque decus'; translations by Dana Sutton in Watson, 1996, pp. 25-27.

¹⁰⁵ William Camden, 1581, 'In Thoma Watsoni *Antigonen*', in *WA*, sig. B2^v: 'namque Sophoclaeus Genius tibi mente receptus / Insidet, Ausonium seque subinde stupet / [...] Unus in alterutro Genius sic eminet, uno / Alterutro, Tragicis unus uterque modis'; translation by Sutton in Watson, 1996, p. 29.

¹⁰⁶ Cooke, 1581, in *WA*, sig. B1^r: τέχνης πρώτον τοίσηδε διδασκτῆν; translations by Sutton in Watson, 1996, pp. 25-27.

¹⁰⁷ Sutton, 1996, 'Commentary' to *Sophoclis Antigone*, in Watson, *Complete Works*, vol. 1, p. 119.

above demonstrates that Watson may well have been the first Englishman to publish a Latin translation of Sophocles but was certainly not the first to write one. Also, we do not know if Cooke's view on Sophocles and his judgment on Watson's achievement were entirely his own or were equally shared by Watson. Also, while we cannot infer from Cooke's definition any authorial intention, Watson's choice of Sophocles may have been partly motivated by the desire to compete with other European humanists on a territory still unexplored by his fellow countrymen. Even so, competition remains in any case unvoiced in the paratextual material. What reveals Watson's attention to previous translations is rather a close reading of *Antigone* in comparison with the other versions then available.

The only translator of Sophocles that is mentioned in the printed edition, namely, Naogeorgus, influenced Watson more than the latter admits. Naogeorgus did not only provide the description of the opening scene (*WA*, p. 16; *NA*, p. 103). Watson's version also displays lexical borrowings from Naogeorgus throughout the play, particularly in the very first lines:

Watson

Sophoclis Antigone Thoma Watsono Interprete.

Praefatur autem Antigone.

Antigone:

O Stirpe eadem Ismena germanum caput,
Superatne nunc ex Oedipi quicquam malis,
Quod non adhuc effudit in nos Iuppiter?

[...]

Ismene:

Sermo de amicis nullus Antigone mihi
Nec laetus accessit, nec ingratus, duae
Ex quo sumus duobus orbae fratribus
Una die manu peremptis mutua.

(*WA*, p. 17; 1-14)¹⁰⁸

Sophocles' *Antigone*, translated by Thomas Watson.

So Antigone speaks first.

Antigone:

Oh Ismene, sisterly head from the same progeny,
is there now any remaining evil from those
coming from Oedipus which Jupiter has not
thrown on us so far? [...]

Ismene:

No word about our friends has come to me,
Antigone, neither pleasant nor disagreeable, since
we are both deprived of our two brothers who
died on one day each at the other's hand.

Naogeorgus

Sophoclis Antigone Thoma Naorgeorgo
interprete. Praefatur autem Antigone.

Antigone:

Chara soror Ismene, atque germanum caput,
Num scis malorum quippiam emergentium
Ab Oedipode, nobis adhuc vivent[ibus]
Quod Iuppiter non faciat?

Ismene:

Mihi Antigone quidem
Nullus de amicis sermo nec iucundior
Nec tristior venit, duobus fratribus
Ex quo duae nos pariter orbatae sumus,
Manibus peremptis mutuis una die. (*NA*, p. 204)

Sophocles' *Antigone*, translated by Thomas Naogeorgus.

So Antigone speaks first.

Antigone:

Dear sister Ismene and sisterly head, do you know
an evil deriving from Oedipus which Jupiter has not
accomplished against us who are still living? [...]

Ismene:

No word has come to me, Antigone, truly, neither
more joyful nor more sorrowful, since the moment
we were both deprived of our two brothers who died
each at the other's hand.

¹⁰⁸ All quotations from Watson's *Antigone* are taken from the 1581 printed edition; the indications of page numbers also refer to this edition. The references to lines are based on Sutton's 1996 edition. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

The first speaker, Antigone, is introduced with the same formula: ‘Praefatur autem Antigone’. Although this is a conventional form, the other translations do not have any except for Melanchthon and Winsheim’s version, which has an alternative formula, ‘praeloquitur Antigone’.¹⁰⁹ The indication of the translator is also something that does not appear in all the other editions, but those which have it almost always feature the same formula with the name of the translator followed by ‘interprete’.¹¹⁰ Also, many phrases are evidently borrowed or modelled on Naogeorgus: ‘germanum caput’ from the same phrase (which appears also in Gabia and Winsheim);¹¹¹ ‘Sermo de amicis nullus’ from ‘nullus de amicis sermo’; ‘ex quo sumus [...] orbae’ from ‘ex quo [...] orbatae sumus’; the whole line ‘Una die manu peremptis mutua’ from ‘Manibus peremptis mutuis una die’. Additionally, Watson often replicates Naogeorgus’ marginal notes and commonplace marks: for instance, in the first episode, Watson inserts commonplace marks along the same lines in which they appear in Naogeorgus and, in the first stasimon, he reports almost all the explicatory glosses present in the German edition (*WA*, pp. 22, 26-27; *NA*, pp. 211, 217-219).

On the other hand, it would be misleading to overestimate Naogeorgus’ impact. Watson’s *Antigone* is not a mere ‘retranslation’, as has been recently suggested.¹¹² This definition appears to be far too restrictive for three reasons. First, Watson’s translation displays autonomous stylistic qualities. Second, his version features verbal parallels with other Latin translations or possibly even with the original text by Sophocles, thus complicating any attempt at ‘source-hunting’ or ‘source-spotting’ (see section 0.2 above). Third, as we shall see in the following section, Watson’s translation is surrounded by additional poems authored by Watson himself.

Although relying for many aspects and for many lexical choices on Naogeorgus, Watson’s borrowings from his translation wane after the first lines quoted above. Other lexical echoes do appear in the rest of the translation but they are not as frequent as the ones pointed out above.¹¹³ One would expect Watson to have relied on Naogeorgus for the translation of the most complex parts, the choruses; however, the borrowings are not particularly frequent there either. Watson’s syntax is generally more linear than Naogeorgus’ and features enjambement less frequently. Moreover, Watson often inserts mythological references that are absent in the original as well as in Naogeorgus; the

¹⁰⁹ Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. O3^r.

¹¹⁰ Rataller’s, Lalemant’s, and Estienne’s versions have ‘Georgio Rotallero interprete’, ‘Ioanne Lalamantio interprete’, and ‘Georgio Rotallero interprete’ respectively; see Rataller, 1550, p. 92; see also Lalemant, 1557, p. 153; Rataller, 1567, p. 276. Hervet has ‘a Genthiano Herveto traducta’ instead; see Hervet, 1541, p. 9.

¹¹¹ Gabia, 1543, p. 82; see also Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. O3^r.

¹¹² Alhiyari, 2006, p. 61. Even assuming that this definition correctly described Watson’s version, the text would be less a ‘retranslation’ than what Jakobson defines as an ‘intralingual translation or *rewording*’; see Roman Jakobson quoted in Susan Bassnett, 2002, *Translation Studies*, New York: Routledge, p. 23. Sutton has cautiously endorsed Alhiyari’s view but adopts the definition of ‘reworking’ instead; see Sutton, 2016, pp. 19-20.

¹¹³ Several examples could be mentioned; see for instance *NA*, p. 210: ‘Rempubicam quidem (viri) usque fluctibus / quam plurimis quassam’; see *WA*, p. 21: ‘Rempubicam (viri) protervis fluctibus / quassam’.

names are mostly derived from Roman rather than Greek mythology. In the parodos, the chorus invokes ‘the beam of Phoebus’ (‘Pheobi o radie’, *WA*, p. 19; 100), thus distancing itself from Naogeorgus (‘o radius solis’, *NA*, p. 208), who in this case is more faithful to the original (ἀκτίς ἀελίου, *Soph.Ant.*100; p. 746).¹¹⁴ In accordance with the parodos, Watson translates λαμπρὸς ἡλίου κύκλος (‘the bright circle of the sun’, *Soph.Ant.*416; p. 773) as ‘coruscum [...] Phaebi iubar’ (*WA*, p. 28; 417), while Naogeorgus has ‘Solis refulgens circulus’ (*NA*, p. 220). Again, πυρός (from πῦρ, ‘fire’, *Soph.Ant.*475; p. 778) becomes ‘vulcano’ (*WA*, p. 30), which corresponds to ‘igne’ (‘fire’, *NA*, p. 222) in Naogeorgus.¹¹⁵ In the fourth episode, precisely in Antigone’s *kommos* with the chorus, Watson incorporates the name of Niobe, which in the Greek is unmentioned (*Soph.Ant.*824-825) and in Naogeorgus is indicated in the marginal note; this addition is evidently meant to gloss the mythological reference (*NA*, p. 216). On many occasions, gods are turned into the Roman Penates (*WA*, pp. 22, 39, 42; 202, 834, 932).

Finally, Watson’s translation displays a tendency to a common Renaissance stylistic feature, *enargeia* or *evidentia* (vividness).¹¹⁶ Erasmus defines it as ‘description of things, of time circumstances, of places, and of people’, in which the object is ‘expressed in colours, as if it were meant to be contemplated in a painting, so much so that it seems that we [the authors] are painting, not narrating, and that the reader is contemplating, not reading’.¹¹⁷ In line with the Horatian topos of *ut pictura poesis*, which, as we shall see, is echoed in the additional poems, Watson adds realistic details in his translation. The guard’s account of how he caught Antigone burying her brother is particularly rich in *enargeia* effects. While denouncing Antigone to Creon, the guard claims to have seen her ‘his orbibus’ (‘with these eyes’, *WA*, p. 28; 405), whereas the Greek original only has ἰδόν (literally ‘seeing’, *Soph.Ant.*405; p. 773) and Naogeorgus ‘vidi’ (*NA*, p. 220).¹¹⁸ Also, he metonymically refers to Polyneices’ body – in Greek μυδῶν τε σῶμα γυμνώσαντες (‘stripped the mouldering body’, *Soph.Ant.*410; p. 773) – by selecting a detail, i.e., ‘cutem’ or the skin (‘putremque nudantes cutem’, *WA*, p. 28). The woods that are tormented by the storm become sonorous in

¹¹⁴ All quotations from Sophocles are taken from Sophocles, 1567, *ΣΟΠΗΟΚΕΑΙΟΥΣ ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ*, in Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, *Tragoediae selectae Aeschyli, Sophoclis, Euripidis*, pp. 738-851. Every quotation will report two references: one to the lines of the 1994 Loeb edition (abbreviated as *Soph.Ant.*) and one to the page of the Stephanus edition. All translations from the Greek are taken from the Loeb edition and are by Hugh Lloyd-Jones unless otherwise noted.

¹¹⁵ Sutton’s edition omits this line altogether.

¹¹⁶ Peter Mack, 2011, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric, 1380-1620*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 332. For a full discussion on *enargeia*, see Heinrich F. Plett, 2012, *Enargeia in Classical Antiquity and the Early Modern Age: The Aesthetics of Evidence*, Leiden: Brill.

¹¹⁷ Erasmus, 1989, *De copia verborum ac rerum*, edited by B. I. Knott, in *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterdami [...] ordinis primi tomus sextus*, Amsterdam: Huygens instituut/Brill, p. 202: ‘[D]escriptione rerum, temporum, locorum, personarum’; ‘[rem] coloribus expressam in tabula spectandam [...], ut nos depinxisse, non narraſſe, lector ſpectaſſe, non legiſſe, videatur’.

¹¹⁸ The Loeb edition has the participle in the masculine rather than the neuter form, thus correctly attributing it to the speaker: ἰδών.

Watson's translation: 'sylvae sonantis' ('resounding woods', *WA*, p. 28; 421), whereas in the original they are said to 'cover the ground' (ὕλης πεδιάδος, *Soph.Ant.420*; p. 773). Creon refers to Haemon as 'a man whose cheeks have not been adorned by a beard yet' ('Ab homine, cui vix barba decoravit genas', *WA*, p. 37; 724), while the Greek text only has ἀνδρὸς τηλικοῦδε ('a man of your age', *Soph.Ant.727*). Antigone's hand casting the 'thirsty dust' (διψίαν κόνιν, *Soph.Ant.429*; p. 774; 'bibulum [...] pulverem', *WA*, p. 28; 430) on her brother's corpse becomes 'tenella' ('tender', *WA*, p. 28; 430), and the urn containing a libation is not only visually well-worked but also produces a sound: it is 'tinnulo' ('resonant', *WA*, p. 28; 431), just like Antigone's 'ringing voice' ('tinnulam vocem', *WA*, p. 28; 424).

Watson probably used multiple pre-existing Latin translations simultaneously: he seems to have collated and recombined previous versions in an interplay that anticipates his compositional approach in *Hekatompathia*. If we compare the beginning of all other Latin translations with Watson's, it appears that, alongside Naogeorgus's, he may well have consulted one of the two versions by George Rataller.

Watson

Antigone:

O Stirpe eadem Ismena germanum caput,
 Superatne nunc ex Oedipi quicquam malis,
 Quod non adhuc effudit in nos Iuppiter?
 Nil nec doloris, nec calamitatis capax,
 Nec turpe, nec nota est inustum infamiae,
 Quod non ego utriusque conspexi malis.
 (*WA*, p. 17; 1-6)

Antigone:

Oh Ismene, sisterly head from the same
 progeny, is there now any remaining evil
 from those coming from Oedipus which
 Jupiter has not thrown on us so far? There is
 no sorrow, nothing bringing calamity,
 nothing shameful, nothing marked with the
 brand of infamy, which I did not see in the

Rataller

Antigone:

O chara praeter caeteras mihi soror
 Ecquid malorum quo Oedipi agitur domus
 Nunc restat amplius, quod in nostrum caput
 Dum viximus, Iovis ira non effuderit?
 Etenim nihil tam triste, nec durum, nihil
 Tam turpe, nec probris refertum, quod tuis
 Et in meis non conspicata sim malis.¹¹⁹

Antigone:

Oh sister, dear to me more than anything else,
 is there now any remaining greater evil
 tormenting the house of Oedipus that Jove's
 wrath has not inflicted on our heads while we
 are still living? For truly there is nothing
 sorrowful, nor hard, nor ignominious, nor
 anything related to shameful acts that I have not
 seen in my and your pains.

Here the verb 'effudit' could be based on Rataller's 'effuderit', 'conspexi' on its cognate verb 'conspicata sim'. The phrase 'calamitatis capax' may also derive from another translation, the one by Portus:

Antigone: O Communi germanitate iunctum Ismenes caput,
 An scis quodpiam Iupiter illorum ab Oedipo

¹¹⁹ Rataller, 1550, p. 92; see also Rataller, 1567, p. 276. The second version has only few changes that are irrelevant here; see Rataller, 1570, p. 65.

Quod non nobis adhuc viventibus infligat malorum
Nihil enim nec molestum nec non calamitatis expers,
Nec turpe nec ignominiosum est quod non
Tuorumque et meorum viderim ego malorum.¹²⁰

Antigone: Oh Ismene's head, united by common sisterhood, do you know any of those evils coming from Oedipus, which Jupiter has not inflicted to us who are still living? There is nothing painful nor without calamity nor infamous nor anything shameful that I have not seen among your sorrows as well as mine.

Although it may be conventional, Watson's sequence of negations ('nec...nec...nec...nec') may have equally been modelled on Portus. Hervet similarly uses 'nec' in repetition, which confirms its conventional usage, but Portus' version appeared in a much more recent edition, the one published by Henri Estienne in 1567.

On the other hand, if we consider the negations, Watson may have looked also at the original. Watson could have read the Greek text in one of the three Greek-only editions of the text in circulation at that time: the *editio princeps* by Aldus Manutius (Venice, 1502); the one edited by Adrien Turnèbe (Paris, 1553/4); or the one by the very Henri Estienne (Paris, 1568), along with their respective re-printings.¹²¹ However, Watson may have well accessed the original in a bilingual edition such as the one published in 1567 by Estienne featuring Portus' and Rataller's translations. Admitting that Watson used exactly this version and looked at the original there, the text of the relevant passage would be the following:

Antigone: Ὡ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἰσμῆνης κάρα,
ἄρ' οἴσθ' ὄ, τι Ζεὺς τῶν ἀπ' Οἰδίπου κακῶν,
ὅποῖον οὐχὶ νῶν ἔτι ζώσαιν τελεῖ;
οὐδὲν γὰρ οὔτ' ἀλγεινὸν οὔτ' ἄτης ἄτερ
οὔτ' αἰσχρὸν οὔτ' ἄτιμόν ἐσθ', ὅποῖον οὐ
τῶν σῶν τε κάμῶν οὐκ ὄπωπ' ἐγὼ κακῶν. (Soph.*Ant.*1-6; p. 738)¹²²

Antigone: My own sister Ismene, linked to myself, are you aware that Zeus... ah, which of the evils that come from Oedipus is he not accomplishing while we still live? No, there is nothing painful or laden with destruction or shameful or dishonouring among your sorrows and mine that I have not witnessed.

¹²⁰ Franciscus Portus, 1567, *Sophoclis Antigone*, in Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, *Tragoediae selectae Aeschyli, Sophoclis, Euripidis. Cum duplici interpretatione latina, una ad verbum, altera carmine*, [Geneva]: Henr. Stephanus, p. 739.

¹²¹ Manfred Landfester, 2011, 'Sophocles', in Manfred Landfester and Brigitte Egger (eds.), 2011, *Brill's New Pauly Supplements I - Volume 2: Dictionary of Greek and Latin Authors and Texts* [accessed at http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2066/10.1163/2214-8647_bnps2_COM_0204 on 04 November 2017].

¹²² Sophocles, 1567, p. 738.

In any case, Estienne’s Greek text here exemplifies any Greek-only major edition circulating at the time: Manuzio’s edition, Turnèbe’s, and Canter’s all feature the same text in this passage.¹²³ It does not differ much from modern versions either.¹²⁴

There are manifold passages which confirm that Watson probably relied on the original’s syntax rather than any previous Latin translations, for example in another passage of the prologue, in which Ismene shares her preoccupations with Antigone as follows:

Watson

Ismene:

nos ergo iam solas relictas cogita
quam triste mox læthum manebit
(*WA*, p. 18; 58-59)

Ismene:

Therefore consider now how sad a death will
soon hang over us, who have been left alone.

Sophocles

Ismene:

νῦν δ’ αὖ μὴ μόνῃ δὴ νῶ λελειμμένα σκόπει
ὅσω κάκιστ’ ὀλούμεθ’
(*Soph.Ant.59*; p. 739)¹²⁵

Ismene:

And now consider how much the worse will be
the fate for us two, who are left alone.

In the first line, Watson reproduces the word order of the original but, probably prompted by Naogeorgus, nominalizes the verbal structure in the second line, turning κάκιστ’ ὀλούμεθ’ (literally, ‘to die most miserably’) into ‘triste læthum’; in any case, Watson’s is the most faithful rendering here, including that of Naogeorgus.¹²⁶ ‘Læthum’ as ‘death’ is nowhere to be found in modern Latin dictionaries; the right spelling is either ‘letum’ or ‘lethum’.¹²⁷ Nonetheless, the spelling ‘laethum’ does occur in Thomas Cooper’s 1578 edition of *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae*.¹²⁸ Perhaps, Watson adopted this spelling to create an oxymoron with the preceding word ‘triste’: ‘laethum’ echoes the adjective ‘laetus’, i.e., ‘joyful’. In the second episode, the guard points to Antigone as ἡ ’ξειργασμένη (‘the one that did the deed’, *Soph.Ant.384*; p. 770), which Watson

¹²³ Sophocles, 1502, *Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίαί ἐπτὰ μετ’ ἐξηγήσεων. Sophoclis tragaediae [sic] septem cum commentariis*, [Venice: Aldo Manuzio], sig. v2^v; Sophocles, 1553/1554, *Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίαί*, Parisiis: apud Adrianum Turnebum, p. 179; Sophocles, 1579, *Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίαί, Sophoclis Tragoediae VII [...] opera Gulielmi Canteri*, Antwerpiae: Ex officina Christophori Plantini, p. 200.

¹²⁴ The differences between the Loeb and Estienne editions are the following: the Loeb edition has ἄ, / ποῖον (‘ah, which?’) instead of ὁποῖον (‘of what sort?’) and γέμον (‘load’) instead of ἄτερ (‘without’). Early modern translators interpreted Estienne’s variant ἄτης ἄτερ as ‘bringing destruction’ despite its literal meaning probably by dint of the repetitions of negatives (οὐδὲν...οὐτ’), thus translating in a way that corresponds to modern editions, which is why I report Hugh Llyod-Jones’s translation for the Greek quotation from Estienne.

¹²⁵ The Loeb edition has the variant reading ὄσω.

¹²⁶ For Naogeorgus’s translation, see *NA*, p. 206: ‘Duae nos relliquae solae sumus. / Considera quam morte simus pessima / Periturae’.

¹²⁷ Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, 1879, *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, *sub voce*.

¹²⁸ The first comes under ‘crudelē’ in a quotation from Virgil’s *Aeneid* ‘Læthum crudelē’, which in modern editions reads ‘letum’ (‘death’); see Thomas Cooper, 1578, *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae*, Londini: [By Henry Denham], sig. Gg.6^r; see also Virgil, 1934, *Aeneid VII-XII, The Minor Poems*, with an English translation by H. Rushton Fairclough, London: William Heinemann, pp. 342-343 [Verg.A.12.636]. The second comes under ‘praeceptus’ in a quotation attributed to Seneca ‘Læthum praeceptus’, probably derived from *Sen.Phae.262-263*: ‘Sic te senectus nostra praecipiti sinat / perire leto?’ (‘Shall my old age let you go headlong to your death like this?’); see Cooper, 1578, sig. Fffff.6^r.

translates as ‘effectrix’ (Watson, p. 27; 385), thus preserving the nominal construction of the Greek. Watson’s close adherence to the original syntax betrays his attention for matters of inner *dispositio*, but, unlike in *Hekatompathia*, is exclusively linked to the internal structure of sentences and does not involve a recombination or shift of pre-existing material in another position within a poem: the sequence of the lines of Sophocles’ play is followed much more rigorously. In the second episode, in the midst of Antigone’s dialogue with Creon, Antigone refers to the silent dissent of the Thebans against their king: she believes that they would be on her side if it were not that fear shuts their mouths:

Watson

Antigone:

Si non tacitus astringeret linguam metus.
(*WA*, p. 30; 505)

Antigone:

If the silent fear did not bind their tongues.

Sophocles

Antigone:

εἰ μὴ γλώσσαν ἐγκλήροι φόβος.
(*Soph. Ant.* 505; p. 781)

Antigone:

if it were not that fear shuts their mouths

Again Watson’s word order is moulded on that of the original rather than on previous Latin versions.¹²⁹ Additionally, by means of a hypallage, Watson attributes the silence to fear rather than to the tongue, thus graphically enclosing the word ‘linguam’ between the verb and the noun. Examples of this kind could be multiplied and show that Watson’s translation is overall scholarly and often very close to the original.

The faithfulness to the Greek text can be gauged also in another aspect of the text, namely, Watson’s attention to and reworking of the metrics of the original. The metrical patterns and the verse disposition of certain passages of Watson’s translation are clearly not derived from Naogeorgus but seem to be modelled on the metrical arrangements of Sophocles’ original text, even its particularly challenging passages such as the choruses.¹³⁰ This has led Ibrahim Alhiyari, the very proponent of the definition of ‘retranslation’, to reconsider his stance.¹³¹ Watson himself gives an explicit hint of its use of the original. The subheading to his first *carmen choricum* (100-163), in which he vaguely describes the metres he has employed, reveals his intention to imitate Sophocles’ metrical choices: ‘ex variis metri generibus ac eidem, quibus utitur Sophocles’ (‘in various kinds of metre and those

¹²⁹ Hervet, 1541, p. 27: ‘Linguam metu suam ni forte comprimat’; see also Gabia, 1543, sig. 90^v: ‘si non linguam concluderet timor’; Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. P4^v: ‘nisi linguam claudat metus’; Rattaller, 1550: p. 213: ‘nisi linguam metus constringeret’; Lalemant, 1557, p. 167: ‘Ni metus linguae cohiberet vincula’; *NA*, pp. 223-224: ‘Ni metus / Linguam coerceat’; Portus, 1567, p. 780: ‘si non linguam occluderat timor’; Rattaller, 1570, p. 85: ‘nisi linguam metus constringeret’.

¹³⁰ For a list of the relevant passages in this regard and an analysis of the metrical qualities of both Watson’s translation in comparison with Naogeorgus’, see Alhiyari, 2006, pp. 61-65.

¹³¹ Alhiyari, 2006, p. 61.

used by Sophocles', *WA*, p. 19). This arguably demonstrates that he did not simply look at the original but he scrutinized it, taking into account the finest formal aspects such as its metrical patterns. Sutton claims that Watson 'anticipates the experiments carried out by Milton in *ad Ioannem Rousium*' but, 'unlike Milton, Watson seem not to have grasped the organizational principle of strophic corresponsion which governed the construction of Greek tragic choruses'.¹³²

Considering Watson's potential multiple sources and the difficult to 'hunt' and 'spot' them, any linear conception of the reception of the Greek text up to Watson's is inadequate: as we have seen in Chapter 1, rather than the image of 'a chain of receptions', those of 'cluster' and of 'network' better help visualize the complexity of relationships with manifold sources. Watson's *Antigone* engages in a network of connections with various clusters of texts: not only with preceding Latin translations and the Sophoclean original, potentially in more than one edition, but also with other kinds of Neo-Latin drama and contemporary vernacular plays.

This becomes apparent in the additional poems authored by Watson himself, which is a further reason why his *Antigone* cannot be considered a mere retranslation or rewording of Naogeorgus. One precedes the translation, namely, an argument spoken by an allegorized Nature. The others are appended at the end of the translation: four *pompae* ('pomps'), i.e., processions of allegorical figures impersonating qualities or feelings related to Antigone, Creon, Haemon, and Ismene respectively, and four *themata* ('themes'), i.e., long series of gnomic sentences. These poems evidently show Watson's intervention to adapt Antigone to an early modern horizon of expectations; it is therefore not surprising that they attracted the praises of notable contemporaries such as William Camden and Gabriel Harvey. As I will discuss in the next section, both authors suggest that the play was staged and give significant information about the performance, an aspect which, like the composition of the play, has always represented a challenge for scholars.

3.3. Paratexts and supplementary poems

3.3.1. Paratexts: composition, performance, and Watson's Catholicism

In one of the commendatory poems prefacing the printed edition, Camden praises Watson's ability to 'make our theatres tremble with your Latin pomps'.¹³³ In two of his marginalia, Harvey admires

¹³² Sutton, 1996, 'Introduction' to *Sophoclis Antigone*, p. 5. On Milton's *Ode to John Rouse*, see Kevin H. Lee, 1999, 'Milton's Ode *Ad Ioannem Rousium* and Euripides' *Ion*', *Milton Studies*, 37, pp. 1-17.

¹³³ My translation; Camden, 1581, sig. B2^v: 'tu pompis Latiis nostra theatra quatis'.

the pomps, the themes, and the ‘tragic[us] apparatus[s]’ of the play. One of Harvey’s annotations is contained in a copy of Gascoigne’s *Posies* (1575), now held at the Bodleian library (Mal. 792(1)), acquired by Harvey in 1577: ‘Watson’s *Antigone*, acted magnificently in solemn wise with the genuine tragic equipment, also with fairest Pomps and most precise Themes’.¹³⁴ The other appears in a copy of Lodovico Dolce’s *Le tragedie* (1566), now at the Folger Shakespeare Library; Harvey’s annotation can be found in the *verso* of the title page of Dolce’s *Thieste*:

Gascoigne’s *Jocasta*, acted with magnificence and solemn rite, and a truly tragic equipment. Just like Watson’s *Antigone*, whose pomps were serious and excellent. Both plays achieved such a level that no other work belonging to the tragic genre was either more illustrious or more precise.¹³⁵

The pomps are praised in another congratulatory composition but only Harvey’s marginalia and Camden’s poem indicate that the pomps were part of the performance and had a strong impact on their audience.¹³⁶ Sutton suggests that also the themes were performed; however, they may well have been intended for private reading with other academic purposes, as we shall see later.¹³⁷ Camden and Harvey also provide evidence that the play was performed before its publication, thereby contradicting the hypothesis of a 1583 first staging.¹³⁸ The very appearance of Camden’s commendatory poem in the printed edition makes the date of publication (1581) a *terminus ante quem* for the first performance. This would then be sufficient to demolish Bruce R. Smith’s suggestion that the play was first printed and then performed, a practice that would have been, on his own admission, ‘almost unheard’.¹³⁹ However, this hint alone is too weak an argument to back up the hypothesis that the play was staged before its publication: one could argue that here Camden is not remembering a real performance but is actually imagining its probable effect. Moreover, in the same poem, Camden

¹³⁴ Gabriel Harvey quoted in Peter Beal *et al*, 2013, ‘Gabriel Harvey (1552/3–1631)’, in *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts*, online, entry n. HvG 89: ‘Watsoni Antigone, magnifice acta sollenni ritu, et vere tragico apparatu: cum pulcherrimis etiam pompis, et accuratissimis thematibus’ [accessed at http://www.celm-ms.org.uk/authors/harveygabriel.html#british-library-rare-books_id683432 on 6 November 2017]. Sutton’s translation; see Sutton, 1996, ‘Introduction’ to *Sophoclis Antigone*, p. 3; see also V. F. Stern, 1979, *Gabriel Harvey: His Life, Marginalia, and Library*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 209.

¹³⁵ Gabriel Harvey quoted in L.G. Clubb, 1966, ‘Gabriel Harvey and the Two Thomas Watsons’, *Renaissance News*, 19, p. 113: ‘Gascoigni *Jocasta*, magnificè acta solenni ritu, et verè tragico apparatu. Ut etiam Watsoni *Antigone*: cuius pompae seriae, et exquisitae. Usque adèo quidem utraque, tu nihil in hoc tragico genere vel illustrius, vel accuratius’; translation by Clubb; see also Stern, 1979, p. 175. The book containing this annotation is a copy of *Le tragedie di m. Lodouico Dolce: cioe, Giocasta, Didone, Thieste, Medea, Ifigenia, Hecuba* by Ludovico Dolce, printed in Venice in 1566 by Domenico Farri, now conserved at the Folger Shakespeare Library [accessed at <http://hamnet.folger.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=108672> on 11 April 2018].

¹³⁶ C. Downhall, 1581, ‘To Thomas Watson on His *Antigone*’, in Watson, *Sophoclis Antigone*, sig. B2^v: ‘laudes addita Pompa suas’ (‘the added Pomps are praiseworthy’).

¹³⁷ Sutton, 1996, ‘Introduction’ to *Sophoclis Antigone*, p. 4.

¹³⁸ Sutton, 2016, p. 20. Bruce R. Smith and Pollard both set the date of the performance in 1583; see Bruce R. Smith, 1988, *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage: 1500-1700*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 225; see also Pollard, 2017, p. 45.

¹³⁹ Smith, 1988, p. 225.

refers to *Antigone* as a text to read, rather than a play to watch: ‘For who reads *Antigone* judges thus: he who will read it will re-read it, and he who re-reads it loves it.’¹⁴⁰

However weak Camden’s reference may be in isolation, in combination with Harvey’s marginalia it can become a convincing argument for the *ante* 1581 dating of the performance. In the *recto* of the title page of *Medea* in his copy of Dolce’s *Tragedie* (1566), Harvey writes ‘G. H. 1576’ but, as L. G. Clubb observes, the date is ‘changed into another ink to ‘1579’.¹⁴¹ There is no guarantee that Harvey wrote the annotation in the *verso* of *Thieste*’s title page at the same time in which he added these dates, which may well refer only to the purchase of the book. Likewise, there is no clue about the dating of his comment on Watson’s play contained in the copy of Gascoigne’s *Posies*. Although we do not know when Harvey actually wrote his marginalia, it can be argued that he may have written these annotations earlier than 1581, as he had already come into possession of both books by that year. Therefore, the marginalia at least do not contradict the assumption that can be drawn from Camden’s poem, namely, that Watson’s *Antigone* was performed before its publication in 1581. Hence, unlike other academic translations from classical plays, Watson’s *Antigone* was most probably not intended, at least initially, to be read as a piece of closet drama, or, with an early modern label, of ‘dramatic poetry’.¹⁴²

On the basis of Harvey’s dating of his copy of Dolce’s tragedies, one could go so far as to hypothesize a performance around the time-period 1576-1579; however, this inference is problematic, as the dates Harvey inserted do not necessarily refer to his writing the marginalia about the staging of Watson’s *Antigone*. In any case, if we were to use these indications of Harvey’s to date the staging, a performance earlier than 1576 would be unlikely, since Watson was abroad at that time and had probably not translated *Antigone* yet. This does not exclude a performance before 1579, when Watson was back in England, although we do not know if he had already finished his translation by that year.

Not only the performance date but also the venue is surrounded by doubts. Camden does provide a hint when he speaks of ‘our theatres’ in his praise but, as Sutton points out, he could mean the theatres of either Oxford – Camden being a former student of Christ Church – or England as a

¹⁴⁰ Camden, 1581, sig. B2^v: ‘Antigonem quicumque legit, sic iudicat; illam / Qui legit, relegit; quique relegit amat’.

¹⁴¹ See catalogue of the Folger Library: ‘GH 1576[6 corrected to 9]’ [accessed at http://hamnet.folger.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?v1=1&ti=1,1&Search_Arg=PQ%204621%20D3%20M4%201566a%20Cage&Search_Code=CALL&CNT=50&PID=fRroverlQffnZ1cNakCWKuHX-Oo-&SEQ=20171107113238&SID=1 on 7 November 2017]. On the basis of this indication, the *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts* dates the marginalia to 1576-1579; see ‘Gabriel Harvey (1552/3–1631)’ in Peter Beal *et al.*, 2013, *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts*, entry n. HvG 65 [accessed at http://www.celm-ms.org.uk/authors/harveygabriel.html#british-library-rare-books_id683432 on 6 November 2017]. Dating his marginalia was one of Harvey’s habits; see Stern, 1979, *Gabriel Harvey*, p. 138.

¹⁴² Marta Straznicky, 2004, ‘Closet Drama’, in A. F. Kinney (ed.), *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, online edition: Blackwell.

whole.¹⁴³ Another possible venue may well have been the Inns of Court, since it is likely that Watson studied there,¹⁴⁴ if we were to use Harvey's second date (1579) as *terminus ante quem*, the play would have been performed exactly at the time in which Watson was attending. However, Sutton, who at first supported the hypothesis of the Inns of Court, has recently dismissed it in favour of Oxford as 'likeliest' venue for the staging, although still with many doubts.¹⁴⁵ While the performance certainly took place in an English venue, Watson probably completed the translation while he was in France, either at the English college at Douai, in the late 1570s or while accompanying Sir Francis Walsingham in his Paris embassy.¹⁴⁶ As we shall see in section 3.3.4 below, the French location of the composition could unlock a further significance of the play.

We learn about Watson's travels to 'learned France' alongside those to Italy in the dedicatory epistle.¹⁴⁷ The dedicatee was Philip Howard, thirteenth earl of Arundel; he officially gained the earldom on 15 March 1581, more than one year after the death of his grandfather, Henry Fitzalan, father to Philip's mother, Mary Howard, and of his aunt, Jane Lumley, Mary's older sister (see section 2.3.2 above).¹⁴⁸ Watson addresses his dedicatee as 'Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel', which confirms that the play was published in the summer of 1581:¹⁴⁹ according to the registers of the Stationers' Company, John Wolfe, who was to become Watson's 'regular printer', received the license to publish the *Antigone* on 31 July 1581.¹⁵⁰ Silently adhering to his wife's religion, Howard was at first a crypto-Catholic but in 1585 his Catholic stance became evident. On an attempt to flee abroad, he was caught and imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he remained until his death in 1595; he was made a Catholic saint in 1970. Howard is not the only Catholic dedicatee of Watson: as we have seen, the second work published by Watson, *Hekatompathia*, is also dedicated to a personality with Catholic sympathies, namely, the Earl of Oxford.

Arundel's Catholicism is one of the elements that have led scholars to conjecture upon Watson's religious faith. Cesare G. Cecioni has argued that he must have been a Catholic in his youth but later turned to Protestant positions when he met Francis Walsingham and probably started working for him.¹⁵¹ Charles Nicholl has claimed that 'there is every indication that Watson was born

¹⁴³ Sutton, 2016, p. 20.

¹⁴⁴ Sutton, 1996, 'Introduction' to *Sophoclis Antigone*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ Sutton excludes Cambridge because there is no record of any connection of Watson therewith. Less clear-cut is his crossing out of the Inns of Court; see Sutton, 2016, p. 20.

¹⁴⁶ Sutton, 2016, p. 19; see also Sutton, 1996, 'Introduction' to *Sophoclis Antigone*, p. 3; Chatterley, 2004.

¹⁴⁷ *WA*, p. 6 / sig. A5^v: 'Gallia docta'.

¹⁴⁸ Howard had to face some opposition before obtaining the title; see J. G. Elzinga, 2004, 'Howard, Philip [St Philip Howard], thirteenth earl of Arundel (1557-1595), in *ODNB*.

¹⁴⁹ *WA*, p. 6 / sig. A5^v: 'Philippo Howardo Comiti Arundelliae'; Sutton transcribes 'Arundellae'.

¹⁵⁰ On Watson and Wolfe, see Chatterley, 2004; see also John C. Coldewey and Brian F. Copenhaver, 1987, 'Thomas Watson', in Thomas Watson, William Alabaster, Peter Mease, *Antigone, Roxana, Adrastus parentas sive vindicta*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, p. 2; Edward Arber (ed.), 1875, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640 AD*, vol. 2, London: Private Printing, p. 398.

¹⁵¹ Cecioni, 1964, *Primi studi*, p. 50.

and brought up as a Catholic'.¹⁵² One sound piece of evidence in support of Watson's Catholicism is his attendance of the English college at Douai: the vast majority of former students of the Douai college registered in the *ODNB* are Roman Catholic martyrs and priests, Benedictine monks, Jesuits, and Catholic conspirators. In 1581, Watson was included in a list of non-attenders at church.¹⁵³ Nicholl has also made a case for Watson's involvement, like Marlowe's, as a governmental spy with the duty to check on the activity of Catholic households like the Burnells and the Cornwallises; precisely on account of his Catholic sympathies, Watson could have made an ideal spy, 'a man in both camps, a young Catholic gentleman pressed into government service'.¹⁵⁴ Like Cecioni and Nicholl, Sutton grants that 'Watson was conceivably a crypto-Catholic himself' but is cautious about the evidence adduced to prove Watson's Catholicism. The dedication to Arundel cannot be seen as a proof of Watson's Catholic sympathies for two reasons. First, Watson did not know his patron personally: in a second dedicatory poem to Arundel, Watson defines himself as 'a stranger' to him.¹⁵⁵ Second, on his own admission, Arundel started to consider Catholicism only after hearing Edmund Campion's disputations with representatives of the Church of England in September 1581 and actually converted in 1584.¹⁵⁶ Sutton demolishes also the Douai argument, by claiming that 'it is well known that not all the students who attended [Douai] were of the Faith'.¹⁵⁷

Sutton's statement requires a further discussion on the college. In the 'first Tridentine seminary', English young men were sent to study 'humanities, philosophy or jurisprudence', as its founder William Allen himself relates, but the Catholic bias was evident. When Allen founded the college in 1568, he initially only aimed to establish a safe place in which all the exiles could 'live and study together' and ensure the continuity of the Catholic religion.¹⁵⁸ However, the Belgian John Vendeville persuaded Allen that the college had to have a clear missionary purpose to train 'young men to return secretly to work in their homeland' and contribute, in Vendeville's words, to a project of 'the conversion of a kingdom' and of promotion of 'the Catholic cause in England even at the peril of their lives'.¹⁵⁹ Accordingly, the travellers that came to visit friends at the seminary – be they 'devoid of all religion or at least schismatics', i.e., crypto-Catholics – were invited to remain at the college up to a month and those who accepted were taught the main principles of Catholicism.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵² Charles Nicholl, 1992, *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 180.

¹⁵³ Hirrel, 2014, p. 196; Nicholl, 1992, p. 181.

¹⁵⁴ Nicholl, 1992, pp. 183-188; Charles Nicholl, 2008, 'Marlowe [Marley], Christopher (*bap.* 1564, *d.* 1593), in *ODNB*.

¹⁵⁵ *WA*, p. 54: 'ignoti'; see also Sutton, 1996, 'General Introduction', p. ix.

¹⁵⁶ Elzinga, 2004; Sutton, 1996, 'General Introduction', p. ix.

¹⁵⁷ Sutton, 1996, 'General Introduction', p. ix.

¹⁵⁸ Knox, 1878, p. xxvi.

¹⁵⁹ Peter Marshall, 2012, *Reformation England 1480-1642*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, p. 194; see also Vendeville quoted in Knox, 1878, pp. xxvi, xxviii.

¹⁶⁰ Knox, 1878, pp. xxxiv-xxxv.

Moreover, as Allen himself relates, when the college welcomed ‘heretics’, i.e., anyone not professing the Catholic faith, they ‘were not only sincerely reconciled to the church but after a year or so spent under the college discipline desired to become priests’.¹⁶¹ That is why the English authorities started to limit the freedom of circulation: the Privy Council prevented travellers from going to Douai and other cities which were considered hotbeds of English popery such as Rome, St Omer, and Rheims, where the college of Douai was moved between 1578 and 1593 during the war in the Low Countries.¹⁶² Watson, who was admitted at the college as a student, cannot but have been aware of the Catholic-inflected environment in which he was to settle; although this does not prove he was a Catholic, it at least demonstrates that he was under Catholic influence. Even so, as Sutton underlines, ‘if he was a Catholic, he kept his faith [...] rigidly concealed from the public’.¹⁶³ Also his works offer ambivalent clues in this regard: while *Amintae Gaudia* (1592) probably contains a passage of ‘outspoken anti-Papism’, in the supplementary poems of *Antigone* Watson does not seize the opportunity to condemn Antigone’s subversive religiosity, which would have easily been associated to the Catholic rejection of English royal authority. One would just need to think of Pope Pius V’s bull *Regnans in Excelsis* (1570), which had not only excommunicated Queen Elizabeth but also formally deposed her for her Catholic subjects. Offering what he himself calls ‘an *argumentum ex silentio*’, Sutton argues that

Watson undoubtedly was exposed to the Jesuitical doctrine that the Faithful had the right, indeed the obligation, to rebel against heretical sovereigns. Criticism of Antigone’s religious motives could have easily invited reading as an implied rebuke of this Catholic position, and so would have been congenial to official Anglican and governmental views. [...] One wonders whether personal religious inclination led him to steer tactfully clear of this subject, even at the cost of missing a chance of ingratiating himself with the Establishment.¹⁶⁴

However, as we shall see, Watson did not miss this chance altogether.

3.3.2. *Nature’s argument, the pomps, and Natural Law*

As noted above, Watson’s translation is surrounded by additional poems: an argument by Nature, four allegorical processions (*pompae* or pomps) and four long series of gnomic sentences (*themata* or themes). Such supplementary material authored by Watson cannot fit in the definition of

¹⁶¹ Allen quoted in Knox, 1878, p. xxxiv.

¹⁶² Alison Shell, 2004, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 173; see also Marshall, 2012, p. 194.

¹⁶³ Sutton, 1996, ‘General Introduction’, pp. ix-x.

¹⁶⁴ Sutton, 1996, ‘Introduction’ to *Sophoclis Antigone*, p. 10; see also Sutton, 1996, ‘General Introduction’, p. ix, n. 4.

translation, let alone of a faithful one; if we were to define these poems with a modern critical term, we would rather use the term ‘adaptation’. The poems appended at the end, i.e., the pomps and the themes, were certainly not perceived as part of the *interpretatio* of Antigone: the title page of *Antigone* advertises the pomps and the themes as authored by Watson, by distinguishing his twofold role as *auctor* and *interpres*:

interprete Thoma Watsono I.U. [iuris utriusque] studioso. Huic adduntur pompae quaedam, ex singulis Tragoediae actis derivatae; et post eas, totidem themata sententiis refertissima, eodem Thoma Watsono autore. (*WA*, title page)¹⁶⁵

translated by Thomas Watson, a student of both branches of the law to which are added certain Pomps, derived from the individual acts of the play, and after them, the like number of Themes, filled with *sententiae* written by the same Thomas Watson.¹⁶⁶

The first poem authored by Watson is ‘a second argument of the play’ delivered by an allegorical character, i.e., Nature: ‘Natura argumentum fabulae hic iterum retexit’ (‘Here Nature unveils the argument of the play for the second time’; *WA*, p. 14). This poem follows a conventional, shorter argument in prose, also authored by Watson, as indicated under the title (‘per Tho[mam] Watsonum’; *WA*, p. 13). After the indication of the metrical pattern (‘iambico trimetro’, ‘iambic trimeters’), a similar formula underlines Watson’s authorship in the second argument as well: ‘Thoma Watsono Autore’ (‘authored by Thomas Watson’; *WA*, p. 14). Unlike the prose argument, however, this poem does not only offer another summary of the play: in the first part (1-17), Nature introduces itself as a ruling principle of life, summarizing its power with a Ciceronian quotation (‘Vive Natura duce’, ‘Live with Nature as your guide’; *WA*, p. 14; 12-13).¹⁶⁷ Before getting to the actual argument, Nature also reviews Oedipus’ myth (18-35) and the ensuing fratricidal war between Eteocles and Polyneices (19-53), the prequel to *Antigone*. The remaining lines contain a summary of the play (54-75) and Nature’s final warning to respect its laws (76-78). In the lines devoted to a second summary, Nature does not limit itself to relating the events objectively: it criticizes and condemns both main characters, Antigone and Creon, announcing the punishments they will endure on Nature’s own will:

Sed misera nondum cernit affectum rudem
Debere patriae legibus locum dare.
Mox ergo Regis iussa perfringens palam
Inclusa tumulo saxeo paenas dabit.
Creonque porro sceptrum crudelis tenens

¹⁶⁵ The form ‘author’ is often used as a substitute for ‘auctor’ from the sixth century AD onwards; see Albert Blaise, 2005, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens*, online edition: Brepols.

¹⁶⁶ All translations from the supplementary poems are based on Sutton’s version in Watson, 1996.

¹⁶⁷ On Cicero’s uses of this formula, see Sutton, 1996, ‘Commentary’ to *Sophoclis Antigone*, p. 120.

Dum vult remitti iure¹⁶⁸ de summo nihil,
Sed usque durus mente in incepta manet,
Nec sanguinis, nec liberum, nec coniugis,
Nec vatis aequum praedicantis publice,

Nec civitatis curam habens, iras meas
Sentiet acerbis. (*WA*, p. 15; 60-70)

But the poor girl does not yet perceive that raw emotion must yield place to the laws of one's country. So soon, violating the king's decrees, she will pay the forfeit, publicly pent up in her tomb. And Creon, cruelly wielding the sceptre, while he does not want to detract anything from the utmost rigor of the law, but harshly clings to his original purpose, having no care for family blood, children, wife, or a prophet proclaiming the public good, nor any concern for his city, will feel my bitter wrath.

It is clear that Nature here is not simply summarizing but is also leading the audience to a moralizing interpretation of the play's characters. This poem is therefore less an argument than a prologue in the manner of Latin comedies and Seneca's tragedies, at least as they were seen in the early modern eyes.

This is how Giambattista Giraldi Cinthio defines the prologue:

The prologue cannot be considered part of the fable: it has no connection with the action represented in the play. Nor is it recited in the way in which the other parts are recited. The actor that delivers the prologue is actually impersonating the poet himself, who cannot nor need be introduced in the action. Therefore, since the prologue does not imitate the action, it is evident that it cannot be part of the fable. It is an addition introduced by the Romans in order to attract the spectators' attention or to endear the poet to them.¹⁶⁹

This section preceding the play as described by Giraldi was called in Latin *praefatio*, according to the terminology of the late-antique grammarian Evanthius' *De fabula* or *De comoedia*, which, being part of Donatus' popular commentary of Terence (IV century AD), was well-known since the Middle Ages.¹⁷⁰ That Nature's argument was likely to be perceived as a *praefatio* is confirmed by one gratulatory poem, which defines Nature as 'praefatrix' ('prologue-speaking').¹⁷¹ This kind of preface, delivered by a fictional character, cannot be considered a paratext like the prefaces penned by editors

¹⁶⁸ The printed edition actually has 'remittiure', without separating the two words; Sutton transcribes 'remittere', turning the word from a passive to an active infinitive, and omits 'iure' altogether.

¹⁶⁹ Giambattista Giraldi Cinthio, 1973, *Scritti critici*, edited by Camillo Guerrieri Crocetti, Milano: Marzorati, p. 201: 'Non si può dire tal prologo parte della favola; perché non ha legamento alcuno con l'azione che nella favola si tratta, né a quel modo si recita che si recitano l'altre parti; perocché colui che fa il prologo il fa in persona del poeta, il quale non si può né si dee introdurre nell'azione. Laonde, non imitando il prologo l'azione, rimane chiarissimo ch'egli della favola non è parte; ma è una giunta postavi da' Romani per diporre gli animi degli spettatori alla attenzione, o per conciliare insieme benevolezza al poeta'.

¹⁷⁰ Donatus, 1902, *Aeli Donati quod fertur commentum Terenti, accedunt Eugraphi commentum et scholia Bembina recensit Paulus Wessner*, Lipsiae: in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, p. 22. Evanthius' *De fabula* or *De comoedia* comprises four chapters that are included at the beginning of Donatus' *De comoedia et tragoedia*, a treatise prefaced to his commentary to Terence's comedies (IV century AD; see Paolo Gatti, 2006, 'Evanthius', in *Brill's New Pauly*. On the circulation of Donatus' commentary, see Michael J. Sidnell (ed.), 1991, *Sources of Dramatic Theory, 1: Plato to Congreve*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 78.

¹⁷¹ Downhall, 1581, sig. B2^v.

and authors: in his *prefationes* to Euripides' tragedies (1562), Kaspar Stiblin also summarizes and comments on the plays but he does not use any allegorical character to voice his interpretation.¹⁷² Watson's second argument by Nature is poised between the textual and paratextual dimensions. If paratexts are thresholds, Nature's argument is the key to the door of the whole text, both translation and, most importantly, supplementary material at the end: as we shall see, it contains *in nuce* the interpretation that poems and themes will expound.¹⁷³

The liminal position of Nature's speech between *prefatio*, *prologus*, and *argumentum* points to the humanist framework that informs Watson's *Antigone*. These terms refer to some of the 'formal strategies', namely, 'forms of translations, forms of paratexts, and forms of genre theory', through which Greek plays in manuscript were framed into printed editions in the sixteenth century.¹⁷⁴ Although evidently dependent on this humanist heritage, the figure of Nature in Watson's *Antigone* is the result of many traditions: humanist editorial conventions blend with the tradition of English morality plays and Senecan tragedy in a syncretic interplay. An allegorical female character called 'Nature' opens Henry Medwall's namesake morality play (*Nature*, ca. 1490s): Nature instructs Man to follow Reason but he eventually yields to Wordly Affection. The "'popular", "national", and "native" tradition of morality plays' has long been perceived as opposed to academic drama and, according to the 'morality thesis', this tradition laid the foundations of the late-sixteenth-century commercial theatre of Shakespeare and his contemporaries; however, as Kent Cartwright and others have demonstrated, the "'popular versus humanist" binary' is misleading and there are more points of contact between the two traditions that it has usually been assumed.¹⁷⁵ The interplay between medieval and humanist drama is voiced by the speech of Medwall's Nature, which betrays the influence of contemporary humanist interest in a 'new and scientific approach to the natural world'.¹⁷⁶ One sentence of Watson's Nature does recall this medieval heritage:

Flammantis aethrae circuli, et geminus polus,
Virtute pendent, eminent, durant mea. (*WA*, p. 14; 5-6)

¹⁷² Euripides, 1562, *Euripides Poeta Tragicorum princeps, in Latinum sermonem conversus, adiecto e regione textu Graeco. Cum annotationibus et praefationibus in omnes eius Tragoedias: autore Gasparo Stiblino*, Basileae: Per Johannem Oporinum.

¹⁷³ Gérard Genette, 1997, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, translated by Jane E. Lewin, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 2.

¹⁷⁴ Tanya Pollard, 2013, 'Greek Playbooks and Dramatic Forms in Early Modern England', in A. K. Deutermann and András Kiséry (eds.), *Formal Matters: Reading the Materials of English Renaissance Literature*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 101.

¹⁷⁵ Kent Cartwright, 1999, *Theatre and Humanism: English Drama in the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-8. Jonathan Walker, 2008, 'Introduction: Learning to Play', in Jonathan Walker and P. D. Streufert (eds.), *Early Modern Academic Drama*, Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 3-4; see also Pollard, 2017, p. 68. For other scholars on the interplay between popular and humanist drama, see Pollard, 2017, p. 85, n. 140.

¹⁷⁶ Fiona S. Dunlop, 2007, *The Late Medieval Interlude: The Drama of Youth and Aristocratic Masculinity*, Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, p. 4.

By my virtue the fires of the flaming zodiac and the twin poles hang, shine, endure.

The hyperbaton in the second line, with ‘virtute [...] mea’ enclosing the actions governed by Nature, graphically renders Nature’s overarching power over the stars. Watson’s Nature, manoeuvring and presiding over the stars, echoes Medwall’s Nature, the

causer of suche impressyon
as appereth wonderouse to mannys syght
As of flammes that from the sterry regyon
Semeth to fall in tymes of the nyght.¹⁷⁷

Watson’s Nature is also highly indebted to Seneca’s tragedies. Three Senecan plays feature supernatural characters giving an opening speech: either ghosts (the ghost of Thyestes in *Agamemnon*, the ghost of Tantalus in *Thyestes*) or a god (Juno in *Hercules*). In Watson, Nature is a figure at the margins of the play, thus aligning with Giraldi’s vision of the prologue. However, ghost-like figures progressively enter the dimension of the play: while in Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* (1592), the ghost of Don Andrea is still confined to the Induction, in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* the ghost of King Hamlet becomes part of the action and interacts with the protagonist. An earlier experiment of the integration of a ghost can be found in Jasper Heywood’s translation of Seneca’s *Trojan Women* (1559), in which he inserts ‘the spirit of Achilles’.¹⁷⁸ Watson’s debt to Seneca also involves the ‘rhetoric of intimidation’ deployed by Nature.¹⁷⁹ Nature is not as disruptive a force as the bloodthirsty Fury urging Tantalus to seek revenge in Seneca’s *Thyestes* (Sen.*Thy.*23-67) and ultimately leading to the breakdown of the zodiac as described by the chorus (Sen.*Thy.*802-874); on the contrary, it ensures the normal course of ‘the flaming zodiac’. However, describing the death and the sorrow that Antigone and Creon respectively undergo, Nature takes credit for these punishments, presenting herself as the authority which established them: ‘she will pay the forfeit, publicly pent up in her tomb’; ‘Creon [...] will feel my bitter wrath’.

Therefore, it would be reductive to see Nature’s argument in the light of Giraldi’s definition of the prologue. Amongst the two functions indicated by Giraldi at the end of the passage quoted above, Watson’s ‘prologue-speaking’ Nature seems to fulfill the former, i.e., ‘attract the spectator’s attention’. Still, Giraldi’s description does not fully account for Nature’s moralizing criticism of both Creon and Antigone. Watson’s translation is a piece of academic drama and, as we have seen in

¹⁷⁷ Henry Medwall, 1981, *The Plays of Henry Medwall*, edited by Alan H. Nelson, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, p. 92 [ll.22-25].

¹⁷⁸ Jasper Heywood, 1913, *Jasper Heywood and His Translations of Seneca's Troas, Thyestes, and Hercules furens*, edited by Henry de Vocht, Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, pp. 22-26.

¹⁷⁹ Gordon Braden, 1985, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege*, London: Yale University Press, p. 54.

section 2.1.2, it was expected to convey both technical training and moral edification. Nature's argument provides both. The technical training here does not consist in practical rhetorical exercises such as *in utramque partem* debates, which are partly present in the pomps, or the ability to reuse commonplaces, of which the themes are repositories.

The technical training that Nature's argument provides is more theoretical: it offers a review of juridical knowledge with which the students of Oxford or another academic venue of the performance were expected to be familiar. In the title page of the translation, Watson is labelled 'i[uris] u[triusque] studioso' ('a student of both branches of the law', i.e., canon and civil law)¹⁸⁰ and, in the dedicatory epistle to Arundel, he mentions his law studies and how war troubled his studies:

Ut potui, colui Musas, quocumque ferebar:
Charus et imprimis Justinianus erat.
Saepe sed invitam turbavit Pallada Mavors,
Saepe meo studio bella fuere morae.
[...]
Bartole magnus eras, neque circumferre licebat,
Nec legum nodo Balde diserte tuos. (*WA*, p. 6; 39-46)

I cultivated the Muses as best I could, and Justinian was especially dear. But often Mars troubled Pallas against her will, and war often interrupted my study. [...] Bartolus, you were a great tome, I was not allowed to carry you about, nor your legal knots, learned Baldus.

As an undergraduate student of law at Oxford, Watson would not have studied English common law, which was the core of the practice at the Inns of Court, but Roman or civil law based on Justinian's *Corpus iuris civilis* (sixth century AD).¹⁸¹ In the late Middle Ages, this collection, which comprised not only norms but also jurisprudential writings and a textbook, underwent the typical medieval process of gloss by two generations of 'glossators': the former such as Irnerius and Accursius were followed by the Postglossators or Commentators. Amongst the latter, the most famous were precisely the Italian Bartolo di Sassoferrato and his pupil Baldo degli Ubaldi. Bartolus initiated 'the most widespread later medieval method of studying the law (Bartolism)'.¹⁸² The Bartolist method or *mos italicus* was opposed to the so-called *mos gallicus*, initiated by Andrea Alciati at Bourges in France; the French method countered the medieval tradition of the *mos italicus* and applied humanist principles to the study of law.¹⁸³ At the University of Padua, whose attraction for English students and influence on 'English intellectual life' in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries can hardly be

¹⁸⁰ Sutton, 1996, 'General Introduction', p. xiii.

¹⁸¹ Binns, p. 333.

¹⁸² Binns, p. 335.

¹⁸³ Jonathan Woolfson, 1998, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485-1603*, Cambridge: James Clarke, p. 45; see also Binns, pp. 335-336.

overstated, the dominant method continued to be Bartolism in this period.¹⁸⁴ As we have seen above, there has been some speculation about Watson's degree from an Italian university. Although we have no evidence that Watson ever earned a degree from the University of Padua or at least attended its renowned school of law, it is certain that Richard White – the Regius Professor of the college of Douai in the period in which Watson was attending – went to Padua and attended the university there.¹⁸⁵ At Padua, White was taught according to the Bartolist method but he was also exposed to more innovative approaches such as the one centred in Mantua, an approach which was indebted to Alciati's *mos gallicus*: White's teacher Guido Panciroli belonged to the latter group and it is therefore under his influence that White criticized some aspects of Bartolism.¹⁸⁶ In any case, Watson's reference to the authorities of Bartolism confirms the conservative foundations of his legal education, wherever he acquired and improved it. At Oxford, where Watson certainly studied, 'the dominant approach was Bartolist' and the more innovative humanist method of the *mos gallicus* had a negligible impact only on Cambridge through Thomas Smith in the mid-sixteenth century.¹⁸⁷

Nature's argument is clearly imbued with traditional theoretical concepts of Roman law such as equity, justice, and Natural Law.¹⁸⁸ The poem thus functions as a digest of legal theory for the students, particularly on the concept of Natural Law. This didactic purpose, which accounts for the choice of an allegorical Nature as speaker, clearly emerges in the following passage:

Sum Aequi columna, iuris et legum basis:
 Vis esse foelix? Vive Natura duce.
 Tanta est potestas nostra. Sed spernor tamen,
 Measque leges plurimi frangunt mali:
 Periiit sacratum iuris humani decus,
 Pietas, pudorque, ac exulat mundo fides. (*WA*, p. 14; 12-17)

I am the pillar of equity, the foundation of law and right. You want to be happy? Live with Nature as your guide. Such is my power. And yet I am held in scorn, the wicked often break my laws. The sacred glory of human law has perished, piety, shame, and trust have been banished from the world.

Interspersed with classical quotations from Cicero and Seneca,¹⁸⁹ Nature's self-introduction as 'the pillar of equity, the foundation of law and right' unmistakably frames the whole play within a juridical discourse. 'Aequi' would have inevitably been associated to the name of one of the two legal systems

¹⁸⁴ Woolfson, 1998, p. 46; see also David Rundle and Alessandra Petrina, 2013, 'Introduction', in Rundle and Petrina (eds.), *The Italian University in the Renaissance, Renaissance Studies*, 27, 4, p. 484.

¹⁸⁵ J. W. Binns, 2004, 'White, Richard (1539–1611)', in *ODNB*. The *Acta graduum* of the University of Padua do not feature the name of Thomas Watson; I am grateful to Francesco Piovan for this information; see Elda Martellozzo Forin (ed.), 2008, *Acta graduum academicorum gymnasi patavini: ab anno 1566 ad annum 1600*, Padova: Antenore.

¹⁸⁶ Woolfson, 1998, pp. 46-47.

¹⁸⁷ Binns, 1990, p. 339.

¹⁸⁸ Binns, 1990, p. 338.

¹⁸⁹ Alongside the quotation from Cicero mentioned above, there is also an echo of Seneca's *Agamemnon* (*Sen.Ag.* 112-113); see Sutton, 'Commentary', p. 120.

shaping English law, i.e., equity. The English word ‘equity’ has a rich polysemy.¹⁹⁰ While equity was administered by the Court of Chancery, the other legal system, i.e., the law meant as both common law and statute law was based on precedents and written statutes.¹⁹¹ The terms ‘common law’ as ‘the unwritten law of England’ and ‘statute law’ as ‘the system of law set down by a legislature in written statutes’ have been in usage since the fourteenth and the sixteenth century respectively (see *OED*). Both the first legal system, equity, and the second – to which I will refer from now onwards as simply ‘the law’ – were perceived as belonging to the realm of positive law.¹⁹² Equity was meant to mitigate the rigour of the law or to supersede it ‘in cases where there was no remedy in the common-law courts’ (*OED*).

The interaction between the two legal systems is dramatized in the first poem appended at the end of the translation, the first pomp. The poms are masque-like processions in which allegorical figures are assigned a poem and walk on the stage in succession.¹⁹³ The first pomp portrays the fate of Creon by means of the sequence of *Iustitia* (‘Justice’), *Aequitas* (‘Equity’), *Rigor* (‘Rigour’), *Obstinatio* (‘Obstinacy’), *Impietas* (‘Impiety’), *Flagellum* (‘Scourge’), and *Sera Poenitentia* (‘Late Repentance’). The personification of Justice introduces itself and explains its dilemma between *Aequitas* and *Rigor*:

Iustitia, cum sceptro
 Iudex habenas solus imperii tenes
 Sum pacis author, sumque causarum arbiter;
 Ego regna et urbes legibus sanctis rego;
 Iubente me omnes omnium crescunt opes;
 Veteres revello fortis iniurias; graves
 Compono lites; regulam scriptam sequor,
 Seu exorno honestos, seu malo sontes premo.
 Sed saepe ab istis distrahor nolens, volens;
 Hinc Aequitas, hinc dirus abdubit rigor;
 Ancepsque dubito quin sequi praestet. Sed hic
 Audire, quae me iam petit ratio, libet. (*WA*, p. 55; 21-31)

Justice, with a scepter
 A judge, alone holding the reins of government, I am responsible for maintaining the peace, and I decide cases: by the sacred laws I govern realms and cities; by my command the prosperity of things increases; in my strength I uproot old quarrels and settle weighty suits; I follow the written rule, whether I am commending the upright or visiting ill upon the guilty. But often I am distracted from these things willy-

¹⁹⁰ John Baker, 2003, *The Oxford History of the Laws in England, Volume IV: 1483-1558*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 40-41; see also Mark Fortier, 2005, *The Culture of Equity in Early Modern England*, London: Routledge, pp. 3-4.

¹⁹¹ Robert Sommerville White, 1996, *Natural Law in English Renaissance Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 25; see also ‘equity’ in *OED*: ‘In England (hence in Ireland and the United States), the distinctive name of a system of law existing side by side with the common and statute law (together called ‘law’ in a narrower sense), and superseding these, when they conflict with it’.

¹⁹² White, 1996, pp. 44-45.

¹⁹³ Sutton, 2016.

nilly, as Equity pulls me in this direction and Rigour in that, and I hesitatingly doubt which is better to follow. But here I want to hear the argument which now confronts me.

Here Justice employs a series of juridically relevant terms: ‘legibus sanctis’ (‘sacred laws’), ‘regulam scriptam’ (‘written rule’), ‘Aequitas’ (‘equity’), ‘rigor’ (‘rigour’), and ‘ratio’ (‘argument’). Justice is torn between Equity and Rigour, which respectively stand for the two legal systems outlined above: Equity, administered by the Chancery, and the law, which is characterized by the rigorous application of the written law. However, as the allegory itself declares, Justice does not only follow the ‘written rule’ but also ‘the sacred laws’.

Here Watson is evidently reworking Antigone’s crucial opposition between Creon’s ‘ordinances’ (κηρύγματα[α], *Soph.Ant.*454; p.777) and ‘the unwritten and unfailing ordinances of the gods’ (ἄγραπτα κάσφαλι θεῶν, *Soph.Ant.*454; p. 777). In our post-Hegelian interpretation of *Antigone*, we tend to view written laws as irreconcilably opposed to sacred laws: G. W. F. Hegel conceptualized Sophocles’ play as a conflict between Antigone’s ‘family love’ (‘Familienliebe’) and Creon’s ‘law of the state’ (‘Recht des Staats’).¹⁹⁴ However, to the early modern imagination and to the ancient Greek audience of Sophocles, these two domains were not opposed but rather inherently communicating: written laws were thought to be the concrete, human realization of sacred, divinely-inspired principles.¹⁹⁵ Unwritten, divine law is not opposed to but comprises human law. What Sophocles dramatizes in *Antigone* is the exceptional case in which a human law clashes with its founding principles.

What is the role of Nature in this scenario? Nature acts as the link between the two domains of divine and humane law. As White explains, Nature had a crucial importance in early modern legal theory:

Renaissance legal theorists, in England and on the European continent, accepted the existence of two major, mutually compatible and ideally synonymous spheres of justice: God’s law (often called divine eternal law) and man’s law (positive law). Since the former is unknowable to human eyes (God works in mysterious ways) a bridge between the two systems was required in order that man-made law should coincide with God’s law. Accordingly, medieval and Renaissance theorists revived from the pre-Christian Aristotle and Cicero (who in turn received it from the pre-Socratic philosophers and Plato) the notion of Natural Law.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, 1986, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion II*, in Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden. Theorie-Werkausgabe*, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, vol. 17, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, p. 133.

¹⁹⁵ For a discussion of the contrast between unwritten and written laws during Sophocles’ time, see Davide Susanetti, 2012, ‘Commento’, in Sophocles, *Antigone*, edited and translated by Davide Susanetti, Roma: Carocci, pp. 243-248. After a thorough transcription of all existing laws in 403 BC, magistrates were expected to disregard any unwritten law. However, theoretical reflections on the law never ceased to presuppose the existence of divine laws which had the priority and informed human laws: such overarching system could take various names and belong to different value systems – ‘the law of the gods, the law of the Greeks, the oral aristocratic law, the unwritten law, the law of nature, customary law established by the forefathers, moral law’ – but what remained unchanged was the belief that it should be at the basis of, not opposed to the written law; see Susanetti, 2012, p. 247.

¹⁹⁶ White, 1996, p. 4.

Redeploying the classical concept of Natural Law, early modern thinkers attributed to Nature the function to mediate between the two spheres. As we have seen, Watson's Nature itself claims this unifying role: 'Sum Aequi columna, iuris et legum basis' ('I am the pillar of equity, the foundation of law and right'; *WA*, p. 14; 12).

It has long been assumed that in *Antigone* Sophocles was also thinking of the concept of Natural Law, but, as Tony Burns underlines, in the Greek original 'Antigone does *not* refer explicitly to the laws of the gods as being laws of nature'.¹⁹⁷ The first authority to connect Antigone's appeal to the unwritten and divine laws with the law 'based on nature' (κατὰ φύσιν) is Aristotle, who in the *Rhetoric* affirms that Antigone decides to bury Polyneices because it is just 'by nature' (φύσει).¹⁹⁸ In England, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* was one of the most widely read texts of the Aristotelian corpus together with the *Nicomachean Ethics*; Philip Sidney reportedly translated two books of the *Rhetoric*.¹⁹⁹ As we have seen in Chapter 2, John Raynolds lectured on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* at Oxford in the 1570s, precisely in the decade in which Watson is thought to have attended university there. Potentially influenced by this passage of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Watson does what Sophocles did not do: he explicitly alludes to Nature in Antigone's key distinction between Creon's edict and the unwritten laws, thereby making the equivalence between Nature's laws and divine laws surface within the translation:

nec tantum ego tua habuisse rebar ponderis
aedicta, ut illa²⁰⁰ cordibus, cum sis homo,
natura quae sculpsit, refigere valeas. (*WA*, p. 29; 454-456)

I did not think that your edicts had such a power to enable you, who are a man, to abrogate those laws that nature sculpted on hearts.

Before him, also Garnier had Antigone expressly refer to Natural Law: 'But the laws of nature and of the gods are stronger'.²⁰¹ Debates surrounding Nature's and God's laws as opposed to royal authority were particularly intense in France in those years, particularly after the publication of Jean Bodin's *Les Six Livres de la République* (1576), which clearly identified Natural Law with divine law

¹⁹⁷ Tony Burns, 2002, 'Sophocles' *Antigone* and the History of the Concept of Natural Law', *Political Studies*, 50, p. 547.

¹⁹⁸ Aristotle, 2009, *Rhetoric*, edited by Edward Meredith Cope and John Edwin Sandys, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 246 [Arist.*Rh.*1.13.2].

¹⁹⁹ Henry S. Turner, 2006, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics and the Practical Spatial Arts 1580-1630*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 86-97. For a qualitative analysis of Aristotle's reception in early modern Europe, see Lawrence D. Green, 'The Reception of Aristotle in the Renaissance', in William W. Fortenbaugh and David C. Mirhady (eds.), *Peripatetic Rhetoric After Aristotle*, London: Transaction Publishers, pp. 320-348.

²⁰⁰ Sutton transcribes 'ut illa' as 'utilia'.

²⁰¹ Robert Garnier, 2018, *The Tragedy of Pious Antigone (1580)*, translated, annotated, and with an introduction by Phillip John Usher, Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies, p. 93; see the original in *GA*, 1876: 'la loy de nature et des Dieux est plus forte'.

and established both of them as superior to the king's power.²⁰² However, unlike Watson, Garnier is not faithfully translating from Sophocles. Watson's choice to incorporate a reference to Natural Law within an otherwise faithful translation makes the change even more significant.

However, this passage, highlighted by commonplace marks, is ultimately indebted less to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* than to Naogeorgus' marginal notes:

Edicta nec tantum valere sum rata
Tua, propter ut ea homo posset *haud scriptas deum
Tutasque leges transgredi. (NA, p. 222)
* haud scriptas: naturae et cordibus inscriptas, non tabulis aut chartis

I did not think that your edicts had such a power to enable a man to transgress *the unwritten and certain laws of the gods.
* unwritten: inscribed on nature and hearts, not on tables or documents

Like other humanists of his time, Naogeorgus here combines Ciceronian and biblical imagery.²⁰³ In *De natura deorum*, Cicero declares that Nature is responsible for men's innate knowledge of the notion of gods: 'Quae enim nobis natura informationem ipsorum deorum dedit, eadem insculpsit in mentibus ut eos aeternos et beatos haberemus' ('for nature, which bestowed upon us an idea of the gods themselves, also engraved on our minds the belief that they are eternal and blessed').²⁰⁴ In the *Epistle to the Romans*, St Paul declares that the peoples without laws 'do the things of the Law by nature' because 'they who do not have Law are a Law to themselves: They who exhibit the work of the Law inscribed in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness with them'.²⁰⁵ Erasmus translates the same passage as follows:

Nam quum gentes quae legem non habent, natura quae legis sunt, fecerint: eae legem non habentes, sibi ipsis sunt lex, qui ostendunt opus legis scriptum in cordibus suis, simul attestante illorum conscientia'.²⁰⁶

For when the races foreign to the law of Moses do of their own accord under the guidance of nature the things which are ordered by the law, even though they are instructed by no prescription of the Mosaic law,

²⁰² Jean-Dominique Beaudin, 1997, 'Introduction', in Garnier, pp. 12-13.

²⁰³ For other authors absorbing this imagery, see Quentin Skinner, 1978, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume 2: The Age of Reformation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 151.

²⁰⁴ Cicero, 1967, *De Natura deorum, Academica*, translated by H. Rackham, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 46-47 [Cic.N.D.1.17]: 'Quae enim nobis natura informationem ipsorum deorum dedit, eadem insculpsit in mentibus ut eos aeternos et beatos haberemus'.

²⁰⁵ David Bentley Hart, 2017, *The New Testament: A Translation*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 250 [Romans 2: 14-15].

²⁰⁶ Erasmus, 2004, *Epistola Pauli Apostoli ad Romanus*, in *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami [...], ordinis sexti tomus tertius*, London: Elsevier, pp. 42-44. This volume reports also Erasmus' edition of the Greek text: ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα, φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμον ποιῆ, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες, ἑαθτοῖς εἰσι νόμος, οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυροῦσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως.

they themselves are a law unto themselves, because they express the substance of the law, engraved on their own minds, with their conscience as a witness.²⁰⁷

Cicero's phrase 'in sculpsit in mentibus' and Erasmus' 'cordibus' evidently resonate in Naogeorgus' and Watson's translations. Watson intensifies the vividness of Naogeorgus' passage by following Cicero more closely and attributing the agency to Nature, which sculpts its laws on man's heart.

Watson's allegorical Nature clearly stands for Natural Law and its position at the threshold of the play conditions the interpretation of the translation: not only does it provide a survey of legal theory that students were expected to know; it also preannounces the moral commentary that the poms and the themes will expand at the end. Though in different ways, both Antigone and Creon have broken Nature's laws and are accordingly offered as negative examples of what happens to those who do not follow them. The translation of the play dramatizes these negative examples; the poms are meant to draw the universal moral teachings from the particular events of the play and dramatize them in an allegorical show; finally, the themes digest those teachings and verbalize them in the form of gnomic sentences.

3.3.3. Moral didacticism in the poms and the themes

The term 'pomp' usually indicates 'a triumphal or ceremonial procession or train; a pageant; a splendid show or display along a line of march' (*OED*). It is not easy to trace the origins of these processions: one possibility is that they may have originated from ambulatory processions within the church in medieval Latin ecclesiastical drama.²⁰⁸ In Renaissance drama, the term refers to 'those masques in which one speaker comes onstage one after another'.²⁰⁹ As Sutton has noted, *pompa* is the definition used for two processions, one in William Gager's *Dido* (printed in 1583) and one in Matthew Gwinne's *Nero* (printed in 1603); although not termed *pompa*, similar processions are present in Gager's *Ulysses Redux* (printed in 1592) and Thomas Legge's *Richardus Tertius* (performed in 1579) and *Solymitana Clades* (never performed or printed).²¹⁰ The term also appears

²⁰⁷ Translation based on the one by John B. Payne, Albert Rabil Jr, and Warren S. Smith Jr. in Erasmus, 1984, *Collected Works of Erasmus: New Testament Scholarship: Paraphrases on Romans and Galatians*, edited by Robert D. Sider, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 20.

²⁰⁸ I am grateful to Helen Moore for this suggestion.

²⁰⁹ Sutton, 2016.

²¹⁰ Sutton, 1996, 'Introduction' to *Sophoclis Antigone*, p. 5; on see Dana Ferrin Sutton, 2008, 'Introduction', in Thomas Legge, *Solymitana Clades* in Sutton, *The Philological Museum*, The University of Birmingham [accessed at <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/solclad/intro.html> on 3rd May 2019]. In Gwinne's *Nero*, the term 'pompa' does not appear in a stage direction as in the case of Gager's *Dido* ('pompa larvalis') but is part of the speech of Syllanus, Octavia's distressed lover watching her marriage: 'ecce pompa ducitur'; see Matthew Gwinne, 1603, *Nero Tragoediae Nova*, Londini: [By R. Read] impensis Ed. Blounte, sig. C3^v.

in the title of three masques authored by George Buchanan, all printed in 1584: *Pompae equestres*, *Pompae deorum in nuptiis Mariae*, and *Pompae deorum rusticorum*, which were all performed between 1563 and 1566 in Scottish courts on various occasions.²¹¹

Watson's pomps are linked to the tradition of dumb shows: they both feature allegorical characters but, unlike such dumb shows as those in Gascoigne and Dolce's *Jocasta*, Watson's pomps do not seem to have been accompanied by music. As we have seen in section 2.3.2, allegorical characters are present also in the 1587 Strasbourg performance of Scaliger's *Ajax*, in which pupils impersonated abstract concepts such as peace, holiness, truth, loyalty, and justice.²¹² Allegories of justice, peace, and wisdom are also used as a comic addition in Sixt Birck's *Sapientia Solomonis* (printed in 1555; performed in 1559/1560), preserved in a manuscript of the British Library.²¹³ Like the figure of Nature, the allegorical characters of Watson's pomps are ultimately a further medieval heritage, namely, the *psychomachia* or 'soul struggle', i.e., an allegorical disputation between vices and virtues typical of morality plays. Derived from the archetype narrative *Psychomachia* (fifth century AD) by the Christian Latin poet Prudentius, soul struggles are 'personification allegories'.²¹⁴ Moreover, soul struggles function as a diachronic 'theatregram': they survived not only in academic drama but also in Tudor interludes, Jacobean masques and commercial plays such as Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.²¹⁵ As personification allegories, soul struggles paradoxically 'invert allegorical interpretation': they show 'a transcendent truth directly through a set of abstractions which have been given concrete form at the narrative level, but which operate as universal, not particular values'.²¹⁶ In the pomps, there is no need for a moral interpretation of the fictional events: the allegory is already laid open to the reader.

The *psychomachia* tradition is particularly recognizable in the way the first two pomps dramatize the decision-making process of Creon and Antigone. That these two pomps reflect Creon and Antigone respectively is stated in the introductory poem that precedes them. Each of the four processions is introduced by a poem spoken by a figure called *Poeta* ('the Poet'), a chorus-like figure or a kind of external narrator, who clarifies the moral teaching that needs to be drawn from the ensuing poems spoken by the allegories. Before the first pomp, the Poet explains that

²¹¹ Martin Wiggins, with Catherine Richardson, 2012, *British Drama, 1533-1642: A Catalogue, Volume I: 1533-1566*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 390-391, 418, 467.

²¹² Scaliger, 1587, sig. cviii^r; see also Daskarolis, 2000, p. 297.

²¹³ Boas, 1914, p. 21, n. 2.

²¹⁴ Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck, 2010, 'Introduction', in Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 6.

²¹⁵ This notion was introduced by Clubb to identify 'interchangeable structural units', meaning 'characters, situations, actions, speeches, thematic patterns' with the aim of describing Shakespeare's debts to Italian drama; see L. G. Clubb, 2001, 'Italian Stories on the stage' in Alexander Leggat (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Comedy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 34; see also Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson, 2014, 'Introduction', in Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson (eds.), *Transnational Mobilities in Early Modern Theater*, London: Routledge, pp. 1-2.

²¹⁶ Copeland and Struck, 2010, pp. 6-7.

Velut hic acerba clade prostratus Creon
Suis aperte prodit aerumnis, malam
Quam sit nefandum dura mens, animi et rigor
Inflexus: in quem nulla vis, ratio, minae
Valent, sed animo semper incepto tenax
Inhaeret. Hanc rem pompa monstrabit sequens. (*WA*, p. 54; 15-20)

Here Creon, prostrated by bitter ruin, clearly demonstrates by his sorrows how unspeakable an evil is hard-mindedness and unyielding rigour of spirit. Against him no power, reason, or threats prevail, but he always tenaciously persists in his original decision. The following pomp will show this.

A further element that reinforces the identification between Creon and Justice is the unusual attribute given to the allegory, namely, a sceptre. In contemporary illustrations, Justice was usually portrayed with scales and a sword, such as in Jost Amman's 1578 woodcut.²¹⁷ The fact that Watson here gives Justice a sceptre confirms that he was considering it rather a personification of the power to rule and enforce laws. After Justice expresses its hesitation between Equity and Rigour, the two contendants deliver a speech in which they each try to lure Justice to their own side. Equity describes itself in terms that are clearly based on the contemporary notion of equity and its relation to the law:

de iure summo mitigo quantum licet
[...]
si sit necesse, muto iudicium datum,
aut si usus aliter postulet rectus.
[...]
Haerere scripto mordicus minime licet (*WA*, p. 55; 34-47)

As much as it is permitted, I temper the letter of the law [...] But if necessary I alter the judgement that has been handed down, or if fit tradition requires otherwise. [...] To cling tenaciously to the written law is scarcely right.

On the other hand, Rigour condemns Equity's 'mercy' and 'indulgence' and proposes an opposite view of the course of action that Justice should take:

Quin lenitas haec mentis est stultae nota
[...] Iudicis
Boni est severe persequi sententiam,
Normamque scriptae legis. Indulgentia
Quam saepe magnas civitates perditit!
[...]
Sic me Rigore regna confirmes tua. (*WA*, pp. 55-56; 48-65)

Rather his mercy is the mark of a foolish mind. [...] The business of the good judge is to adhere to his decision with severity, and to the rule of the written law. How often has indulgence wasted great cities! [...] Thus, by means of me, Rigour, you will render your kingdom secure.

²¹⁷ See for instance Jost Amman's woodcut representing Justice; see Jost Amman, 1578, *Enchiridion artis pingendi, fingendi [et] sculpendi*, Frankfurt: Feierabend, sig. Q2^r.

Interestingly, the very attributes of common allegories of Justice, i.e., scales and a sword, are assigned to Equity and Rigour respectively: the former is presented as ‘a woman with scales’ (‘mulier cum bilance’), the latter as ‘a man with a sword’ (‘vir cum glaudio’). The fact that Watson here distributes these symbols to Equity and Rigour visually renders the dilemma that Justice is facing. After hearing the two contendants’ pleas, Justice fully embraces Rigour and the following allegories – Obstinance, Impiety, Scourge, and, finally, Late Repentance – correspond to the emotional states ensuing from this decision.

The second pomp is explicitly devoted to Antigone’s fate, as the Poet makes clear in his statement:

Private magnus respicit dum animus mala,
 Partem in sinistram ductus affectus levi,
 Violare tentat publicum ius, propriae
 Memor miseriae, in patriam officii immemor,
 [...]
 Atque haec sepulcrum flebile Antigones docet:
 Palamque faciet iam sequens spectaculum. (*WA*, p. 59; 94-101)

When a great spirit pays attention to private misfortune, led in a wrongful direction by fickle emotion, it strives to violate the public law, mindful of its own unhappiness, unmindful of its duty towards its nation. [...] Antigone’s doleful tomb teaches these things, and now the following spectacle will make them manifest.

If Creon’s mistake is excessive rigour, Antigone’s fault is a violation of ‘the public law’ (‘publicum ius’). Like Justice in Creon’s pomp, *Magnanimitas* (‘Lofty Spirit’) is uncertain and has to decide between ‘patria, nexus sanguinis, princeps’ (‘my nation, my family obligation, and my prince’; Watson, p. 58; 110). The following figures embody these ideas: *Patria* (‘Nation’), in which we might also include the prince, and *Cognatio* (‘Kinship’), representing family obligations. Lofty Spirit is persuaded by Kinship’s plea and the impact of this choice is described with the entrance in sequence of *Transgressio* (‘Transgression’), *Contumacia* (‘Contumacy’), *Odium* (‘Hatred’), and *Supplicium* (‘Punishment’).

The way in which the first two poms explore the motives of Creon and Antigone as well as the consequences of their decisions is in line with the rhetorical education that permeated sixteenth-century culture, especially at a collegiate level, a kind of education to which, as we have seen in Chapter 2, academic drama was expected to contribute. The debate staged in the poms is not only modelled on academic *disputationes*, i.e., organized debates between students, but also on morality-play soul struggles: these two traditions shared the humanist tendency to discuss a problem *in*

utramque partem, on both sides of the question.²¹⁸ Watson, as a student at Oxford, was certainly familiar with the didactic methods informing Tudor curricula. However, it should be noted that Watson's pomps show a far lower degree of dialectical confrontation than morality plays, let alone the dialogues of Sophocles' play. Except for the first pomp, where Rigour begins its speech by attacking Equity's mercifulness, in the other pomps there is no real dialogue between the allegories: their cues are rather self-introductory monologues, which are more reminiscent of the morality-play topos of the seven Deadly Sins than that of the Good Angel/Bad Angel debate, such as the one in *The Castle of Perseverance*.²¹⁹

By means of the Poet's didactic interventions, Watson openly associates the first pomp with Creon's fate and the second with Antigone's, but not with the Creon and Antigone as depicted by Sophocles. Their declarations of indecisiveness ('I hesitatingly doubt which is better to follow' in the first pomp; 'I am hesitant where to turn me' in the second) would never be uttered by Sophoclean characters such as Creon and Antigone, who are famous for their inflexible one-sidedness.²²⁰ The allegorical figures of Justice and Lofty Spirit stand for Creon and Antigone before they take their decision and irrevocably commit to it, thereby becoming identified with Rigour and Kinship respectively. In a way, Watson is giving the audience an insight into what Sophocles has left unmentioned, namely, Creon's and Antigone's process of decision-making and, contextually, of self-construction through their decisions. In Sophocles, we only have access to what the characters have already decided, which coincides with the aspect of their self that has prevailed in the inner combat of their soul.²²¹ In the pomps, Watson recreates the 'mirror image of the psyche' typical of the soul-struggle plots of morality plays and conceives the Poet as a guide for the audience through the exploration of the tormented 'spiritual landscapes' of the characters with a clear pedagogical aim.²²²

The allegories in the pomps can therefore be seen as fragments of one self: characters are dissected into passions, virtuous or vicious. In this deconstruction of the self into distinct passions, Watson is reading Sophocles through Senecan lenses. As John G. Fitch and Siobhan McElduff have pointed out with reference to Seneca, 'this fragmentation of the self is manifested in that language,

²¹⁸ David Marsch, 1999, 'Dialogue and Discussion in the Renaissance', in G. P. Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism Volume III: The Renaissance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 265; see Neil Rhodes, 2004, p. 90.

²¹⁹ White, 1993, p. 87; see also David Bevington, 1975 *Medieval Drama*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p. 793.

²²⁰ B. M. W. Knox, 1966, *The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 62-75. Although Knox regards only Antigone as a true Sophoclean hero, whereas to him Creon 'lacks the heroic temper', he does recognize that Creon 'seems at first sight to be the hero of the play' and 'displays every symptom of heroic stubbornness'; see Knox, 1966, pp. 67-68. However, one must also remember that Creon does waver towards the end of the play: *ταράσσομαι φρένας* ('My mind is disturbed!', *Sop.Ant.*1095); *τί δῆτα χρῆ δρᾶν; φράζε· πείσομαι δ' ἐγώ* ('What must I do? Tell me, and I will obey!', *Sop.Ant.*1099).

²²¹ John G. Fitch and Siobhan McElduff, 2008, 'Construction of the Self in Senecan Drama', in John G. Fitch (ed.), *Seneca* (Oxford Readings in Classical Studies), Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 174.

²²² Paul Whitfield White, 1993, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 82-83, 86.

so recurrent in Seneca, which speaks of the passions as separable entities, independent parts of the self' and passions are called upon 'exactly as if they were *dramatis personae*'.²²³ In Watson's pomps, passions become actual *dramatis personae*. In the pomps, Watson 'Senecanizes' Sophocles' tragedy by prioritizing passions over actions. As C. J. Herington has observed, this is one of the major differences between Greek and Senecan drama:

the vivid and sensuous narratives of Greek tragedy can be read [...] as *representation of people in action*, whatever ulterior symbolisms and abstract truths may be discerned through that action. Senecan narratives, on the other hand, cannot be so read, for they are *representations of passion in people and things*. The symbolic and the abstract have entered into the fabric of the drama.²²⁴

However, although Seneca used personifications of abstract concepts both in prose and in drama, he never brought them on the stage as speaking characters as Watson does.²²⁵ No allegory embodies them: abstract concepts are rather invoked by characters such as Atreus addressing Piety in *Thyestes* (Sen.*Thy.*249). As Marina Warner puts it, 'although personification can exist outside allegory [...], allegory requires personification to function as drama, both in the mind's eye and before the eyes of the body'.²²⁶

The third pomp is devoted to Haemon and his devastating love for Antigone, which drives him to suicide. The picture of Haemon as a love-sick young man bears no resemblance to its Sophoclean counterpart, who never interacts with Antigone. Sophocles' Haemon appears only in the third episode with the purpose of redressing his father's misrule: in the *agon* with Creon, he only adduces arguments based on political justice and never explicitly mentions his love for Antigone, although he potentially threatens to kill Creon if Antigone dies (Soph.*Ant.*751). In the exodus, the messenger tells how, after seeing Antigone's corpse, Haemon attempted to kill his father and ultimately kill himself out of a maddening rage (Soph.*Ant.*1219-1243). It is the messenger's account of Haemon's *abulia* (ἄβουλία, 'bad counsel', Soph.*Ant.*1242) that enabled Watson to turn Haemon into a negative example of the disastrous effects of 'fervid love' ('fervidus [...] amor', *WA*, p. 60; 154). In the third pomp, Watson thus anticipates the central theme of his *Hekatompathia*, which appeared one year later than *Antigone*, in 1582: in one sonnet of the sequence, Watson mentions Haemon and typifies him into the category of the 'true hearted lovers'.²²⁷ In the third pomp, Haemon's destiny is described by the sequence of *Cupido* ('Cupid'), *Temeritas* ('Temerity'), which is also the

²²³ Fitch and McElduff, 2008, p. 170: 'quaere materiam, dolor' ('just find the means, my pain', Sen.*Med.*914); 'Quo te igitur, ira, mittis' ('Where are you driving, my anger?', Sen. *Med.*916); 'melius, a, demens furor!' ('Do not say so, mad rage!', Sen.*Med.*930).

²²⁴ Herington, 1966, p. 456.

²²⁵ Herington, 1966, p. 442; see also Jane K. Brown, 2007, *The Persistence of Allegory: Drama and Neoclassicism from Shakespeare to Wagner*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 79.

²²⁶ Marina Warner, 1985, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form*, New York: Atheneum, p. 82.

²²⁷ Miola, 2014, p. 231; see also Watson, 1582, sig. D3^v.

term Watson uses to translate Sophocles' ἀβουλία (*WA*, p. 50; 1234), *Impudentia* ('Impudence'), who is the only figure referring to the quarrel with Creon, *Impetus* ('Violent Impulse'), and *Interitus* ('Death'). The first three pomps are thus centred around three main faults and their ensuing deleterious consequences: excessive rigour and self-love, which are embodied by Creon; disobedience to the laws of one's country, an attitude represented by Antigone; lack of control caused by love, the fate undergone by Haemon.

Unlike the preceding poems, which offer only negative examples, the last pomp, devoted to Ismene, fulfils its edifying function by means of a positive model, namely, the Stoic model of life. The first three allegories, *Ratio* ('Reason'), *Pietas* ('Piety'), and *Obedientia* ('Obedience') – all central Stoic virtues, especially in Seneca's Stoicism – are followed by *Incolunitas* ('Security') and *Foelicitas* ('Happiness'). The message is clear: reason, piety, and obedience are keys to a quiet and happy life. The presence of Reason is another evidence of how Natural Law thinking informs Watson's pomps. Reason is a crucial concept in Natural Law theory and, in this meaning, is strictly connected to conscience. In the passage from St Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* quoted above, Erasmus translates *synéidesis* (συνείδησις, 'consciousness' or 'conscience'; see *LSJ*), which is said to witness how lawless people have a law inscribed in their hearts, as 'conscientia'. According to White, Thomas Aquinas saw 'conscience' as 'a necessary component' of reason, which is a foundational principle in his theology.²²⁸ For Aquinas, whose conception of Natural Law had a sweeping influence in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance, Reason is 'the rule and measure of human acts' and 'law is in the reason alone', including Natural Law which is 'something appointed by reason'.²²⁹ Edward Coke, a jurist who took issue with James I on various occasions, saw reason also as the foundation of common law: '*nihil quod est contra rationem est licitum*: for reason is the life of the law, nay the common law itself is nothing else but reason'.²³⁰

Piety is identified with the respect for both human and divine law, as Piety itself states: '*Pietas inermis, patriam et divos colo*' ('I, unarmed Piety, worship my country and the gods', *WA*, p. 62; 210). Piety is also mentioned in the paratextual material, in Nature's argument and in the dedicatory epistle. In the latter, Watson attributes to his Antigone the mission to make his dedicatee 'pious': '*pium faceret, ni pius ante fores*' ('she would make you pious, were you not such beforehand',

²²⁸ John Finnis, 2017, 'Aquinas and Natural Law Jurisprudence', in George Duke and Robert P. George (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Natural Law Jurisprudence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 17-21; see also White, 1996, pp. 29-30, 41.

²²⁹ Thomas Aquinas, 1920, *Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica*, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, online edition [accessed at <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/index.html> on 7th May]; see the original in Thomas Aquinas, 2000, *Corpus Thomisticum S. Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia*, edited by Enrique Alarcón, online edition [accessed <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/iopera.html> on 7th May 2019]: '*Regula autem et mensura humanorum actuum est ratio*' [...] *Et quia hoc est proprium rationis, ideo per hunc modum lex est in ratione sola*' [II.i. Qu. 90 Art. 1]; '*lex naturalis est aliquid per rationem constitutum*' [II.i. Qu. 94 Art. 1].

²³⁰ Edward Coke quoted in White, 1996, p. 48.

Watson, p. 7; 82). The idea that theatre leads to piety has a theoretical antecedent in *De Regno Christi* (1550), where Martin Bucer argued that spectators could be drawn to piety by plays.²³¹ As noted above, Piety is invoked in Seneca's *Thiestes* and is a central value in *Phoenissae*, in which it is attributed to both Antigone and Jocasta. Also, as we have seen in section 2.3.1, Melanchthon and Winsheim explicitly associate Sophocles' *Antigone* with a matter of piety:

in Antigone the major question is whether one should obey religion and piety, even if this is forbidden by sovereigns or magistrates. [...] Of the two sisters, Ismene discusses the greatness of the danger and the obedience towards magistrates, whereas Antigone discusses due piety and religion.²³²

For the two humanists the champion of 'religion and piety' is Antigone, whereas Ismene defends 'the obedience towards magistrates'. In Watson, piety and obedience are reunited in the figure of Ismene.

In the fourth pomp, reason and obedience are integrated by two related values, i.e., prudence and constancy, which are mentioned in the introductory statement to the fourth pomp delivered by the Poet:

Felix putandus, mente qui prudens agit.
Gratus piusque est in suos: Legi datae
Parere novit; semper illaesus manet;
Omni ex periclo liber evadit; bono
Fert placidus animo, quicquid adversi venit.
Istuc aperte mitis Ismene docet,
Et ista quae iam turba postremo venit. (*WA*, p. 61; 195-201)

He is to be deemed happy who acts prudently, with intelligence. He is kindly and pious towards his own people, he knows how to obey the decreed law; he always remains unharmed; he emerges unscathed from every peril; whatever adversity befalls him he bears calmly with a good mind. This thing gentle Ismene plainly teaches, and this troop which is last to approach.

The cardinal virtue of *prudentia*, which Aquinas defines as 'recta ratio agibilium' ('right reason about things to be done') can be subsumed into Reason, which in the pomp is said to 'do nothing impulsively' ('nil praeceps ago', *WA*, p. 61; 205).²³³ Before becoming a cardinal virtue, prudence had also been a central Stoic principle. Seneca extols it in his prose writings such as Epistle 85, in which he also connects prudence to happiness:

He that possesses prudence is also self-restrained: he that possesses self-restraint is also unwavering; he that is unwavering is unperturbed: he that is unperturbed is free from sadness; he that is free from

²³¹ Knight, 2016, p. 247.

²³² Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. O1^r: '[I]n Antigone praecipua quaestio est, Utrum religioni et pietati obediendum est, etiamsi id Tyranni vel Magistratus prohibeant. [...] [D]um altera ex sororibus Ismene disputat de magnitudine periculi, et de obedientia erga Magistratus, Altera Antigone de pietate debita, et de religione'.

²³³ Thomas Aquinas, 1998, *Disputed Questions on Truth*, in *Selected Writings*, translated by Ralph McInerney, London; New York: Penguin, p. 732.

sadness is happy. Therefore, the prudent man is happy, and prudence is sufficient to constitute the happy life.²³⁴

Constancy was another major virtue of Seneca's writings such as *De constantia sapientis*. A proper revival of Stoicism began later than the time Watson was writing: early modern Neo-Stoicism formally started with the publication of Justus Lipsius' *De Constantia* in 1584 and his edition of Seneca in 1605. Nevertheless, Stoicism had been known also in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance through the writings of Seneca himself, Cicero, Petrarch, and Boethius. The prominence that Ismene is given in the fourth pomp betrays the Stoic moral perspective of Watson's additions: the moral centre of Watson's *Antigone* is not its namesake character, but rather Ismene, the embodiment of piety, obedience, constancy, that is of a Stoic conception of life.

In the poms, most of the allegories are accompanied by an indication of gender. In the first pomp, while Justice has no such indication, Equity is presented as 'a woman' ('mulier'), Rigour as 'a man' ('vir'); Obstinacy, Impiety, Scourge, and Late Repentance are all embodied by men. In the second pomp, Lofty Spirit and Nation are women, Kinship, Transgression, Contumacy, and Hatred are men; Punishment has no information about its gender. Nation is impersonated by an 'old woman' ('anus'), whose maternal traits are particularly enhanced ('Te gremius iste gessit, et mammam dedi', 'This bosom bore you, I gave you suck', *WA* p. 58; 114). In the third pomp, Cupid, Temerity, and Impudence were all meant to be played by male actors, whereas no gender is specified for Violent Impulse and Death nor for any of the allegories of the fourth pomp. As Warner has observed in her study on female allegories, the grammatical gender of abstract concepts, usually feminine, has led artists and authors to see an inherent 'animate and female character' in abstract nouns: apart from few exceptions, 'feminine personification established itself [...] thoroughly' in the Middle Ages and 'the tendency to personify in the feminine became more and more marked rather than decreased'.²³⁵ However, it is clear that, unlike this long-standing tradition, Watson did not consider the grammatical gender of the Latin names: *Cognatio* ('Kinship'), *Transgressio* ('Transgression'), *Contumacia* ('Contumacy'), *Temeritas* ('Temerity'), and *Impudentia* ('Impudence') are all feminine names but they are embodied by male players. Alternatively, Watson's gender distinction may be decoded in the light of another pattern that developed from the one based on grammatical gender: as Warner explains,

²³⁴ Seneca, 1920, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*, translated by Richard M. Gummere, London: William Heinemann, pp. 286-287 [Sen.Ep.85.2]: 'Qui prudens est et temperans est; qui temperans est, et constans; qui constans est inperturbatus est; qui inperturbatus est sine tristitia est; qui sine tristitia est beatus est; ergo prudens beatus est, et prudentia ad beatam vitam satis est'.

²³⁵ Warner, 1985, pp. 70, 85.

The predominance of feminine gender in words for virtue seems to have given virtue a monopoly on the feminine category: this, by contrast, has generated masculine gender imagery for its opposite.²³⁶

Hence, ‘the opposition good/evil translates into another familiar dyad – female/male’.²³⁷ In the light of this opposition, in Watson’s moral system Creon’s and Antigone’s choices – Rigour and Kinship – are both condemned, as their gender reveals: unlike the right option, Equity and Nation, they are both male allegories. In any case, Creon’s and Antigone’s faults are underlined by the outcome of the psychological trajectory described by their pomps: Late Repentance for Creon and Death for Antigone.

By means of these allegorical figures, Watson guides the audience through an inductive process, from the particular fictional events of the play to moral universal teachings. As Seneca taught to Lucilius, ‘the way is long if one follow precepts, but short and helpful, if one follow patterns’.²³⁸ The ‘extraction of universal principles from particular examples’ was ‘one of humanism’s predominant methodologies’ and lay ‘at the heart of Renaissance poetic theory’.²³⁹ In accordance with this inductive reasoning, the translation of the Sophoclean tragedy provides an *exemplum*, whereas the allegorical pageants of the pomps lead the audience to reflect on the universal meanings this *exemplum* contains. The outer *dispositio* of the poems is therefore crucial to the effectiveness of the inductive process.

Watson’s moral guidance becomes explicit didacticism in the way in which he intervenes within the allegorical show. To facilitate even further the understanding of the moral message, Watson adopts two strategies. First, as we have seen above, each processional is preceded by an introductory statement in which the Poet illustrates the moral teaching the pomp is meant to convey. The edifying purpose of the pomps is clearly laid out in Poet’s first intervention:

Per omne scriptorum genus sapientia
Divina serpit [...]
Tamen relucet clarius nusquam, bona
Quam sub Poësi; qua loquens dici potest
Pictura in hominis mente virtutem imprimens.
[...]
Conficta vitae debitum nostrae docet
Persona cursum; quid decet, quid non sequi. (*WA*, p. 54; 1-14)

Divine wisdom permeates literature in all its branches [...]. But she never shines forth as brightly as she does in good poetry, which can speak – a talking picture, imprinting virtue in the minds of men. [...] [T]he fictitious character teaches the proper course of life: what is fitting, what not to pursue.

²³⁶ Warner, 1985, p. 153.

²³⁷ Warner, 1985, p. 153.

²³⁸ Seneca, 2014, *Epistles*, translated by Richard Mott Gummere, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 26-27 [Sen.*Ep.*VI.5]: ‘Longum iter est per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla’.

²³⁹ Walker, 2008, p. 1; see also Altman, 1978, p. 44.

The use of the word ‘docet’ in this as well in all the remaining explanatory statements underlines Watson’s didactic attitude (Watson, pp. 54, 57, 60, 61; 13, 100, 160, 200). It has been noted that this passage is particularly resonant with Sidney’s *Defence of Poesy*, as both Watson and Sidney deploy the Horatian topoi of *ut pictura poesis* and *utile dulci*:

Poesie therefore is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word *mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture – with this end, to teach and delight.²⁴⁰

Watson’s speaking allegories, which were meant to appear on the stage like living emblems or *tableaux vivants*, perfectly realize the ambition of poetry to be ‘a talking picture’ (‘loquens [...] pictura’). Second, as if the induction process had not already been sufficiently supported, the Poet closes the sequence of the four pomps by reasserting their self-evident moral content:

Ex rebus istis hoc minutis ordine,
Quantus metatur fructus apparet satis. (*WA*, p. 63; 238-239)

How a great harvest is reaped from these trifles, appearing in this order, is clear enough.

The phrase ‘hoc [...] ordine’ is a further confirmation that *dispositio* was conceived as a key factor for the effectiveness of the moral message. Watson’s intervention as author appears at the end of the translation, where the printed edition features a second dedication to Arundel:

Haec mea si quicquam placuit translatio, Comes
Inclyte; materies aut bona si qua subest:
Haec mea pompa simul placeat prositque legenti,
Quam totam Antigones fabula tristis habet.
Insuper apposui pompis, quae digna notatu,
Themata: quoque probes utilitate sua. (*WA*, p. 54; 1-6)

If my translation has pleased you in any point, distinguished Earl, or if it contains any good matter, let thus my Pomp likewise please you and profit you in the reading, a Pomp which Antigone’s sad tale contains within itself wholly. Furthermore, I have added to the Pomps noteworthy Themes: may you approve these too on account of their usefulness.

More than in the Poet’s other interventions, here Watson breaks theatrical illusion: in a way, he introduces a moment of *parabasis* (παράβασις), a distinctive feature of Old Attic Comedy in which the chorus broke the illusion of the performance by stepping forward (from the verb *parabáino*,

²⁴⁰ Sir Philip Sidney, 2002, *An Apology for Poetry (Or The Defence of Poesy)*, edited by Geoffrey Shepherd and revised by R. W. Maslen, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 86; see also Sutton, 1996, ‘Introduction’ to *Sophoclis Antigone*, p. 13.

παραβαίνω, ‘come forward’; see *LSJ*) and addressed the spectators directly as a mouthpiece of the poet.²⁴¹ Also, by conventionally appealing to the Horatian *utile dulci* topos, Watson invites his dedicatee to proceed to read the poms on the grounds that they condense the story of Antigone. The introduction to the poms becomes also an occasion to advertise the themes, however only ‘on account of their usefulness’ (*utilitate sua*).

As Watson explains, the themes are derived from the very bowels’ (*visceribus derivata*) of the tragedy. In the first printed edition, they are printed at the end, after the poms; Sutton’s 1996 printed edition adheres to this order. However, in Sutton’s online edition, they are inserted in between the poms.²⁴² It is not clear if and how they were performed. Countering Leicester Bradner’s view the themes were a display of Watson’s ‘skill in versification’,²⁴³ Harry Herbert Boyle insists that ‘they must be seen as part of an essentially theatrical production’.²⁴⁴ Sutton equally argues that they were performed, whereas John C. Coldewey and Brian F. Copenhaver do not even print them in their edition.²⁴⁵ Martin Wiggins envisages a further possibility: he suggests that the themes ‘slotted in between the acts, like the *intermedi*, later used in tragedies performed in the English College in Rome’ but, if so, they would have predated a practice by almost a century since, as Wiggins himself indicates, such *intermedi* were in vogue ‘in the second decade of the seventeenth century’.²⁴⁶

The themes further rework the moral content of *Antigone* in the form of series of *sententiae* and are preceded by a heading which clarifies the link to the story. It should come as no surprise that Watson praises the usefulness of the themes and makes no mention of their aesthetic quality: they are not meant to delight as the poms but rather to group useful gnomic sentences. These poems, written in different metres including anapests and choriamb, are evidently informed by the practice of

²⁴¹ Although the scenes of *parabasis* are typical of Old comedy, their main principle, i.e., the audience address, has been recognized by some critics also in tragedy but has been firmly denied by others; see Pietro Totaro, 1998, ‘Stage Directions. Essays in Ancient Drama in Honour of E.W. Handley’, in Pieter Riemer and Bernard Zimmermann (eds.), *Der Chor im antiken und modernen Drama*, Stuttgart: Metzler, pp. 298-299. Albeit never talking about *parabasis*, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf does identify an audience address in the first stasimon of *Antigone*: ‘the poet is addressing and warning as a teacher his people, is defending his conviction’ (*‘der Dichter redet warnend als Lehrer zu seinem Volke, vertritt seine Überzeugung’*); see Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, 1921, *Griechische Verskunst*, Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, p. 517. However, R. W. B. Burton utterly excludes that this passage may be considered an example of *parabasis*; see R. W. B. Burton, 1980, *The Chorus in Sophocles’ Tragedies*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 85-86.

²⁴² Thomas Watson, 2011, *Sophocles Antigone*, in Sutton (ed.), *Thomas Watson: The Complete Works*, in Sutton, *The Philological Museum*, The University of Birmingham [accessed on 7th May 2019 at <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/watson/antigone/pompslat.html>].

²⁴³ Leicester Bradner, 1940, *Musae Anglicanae: A History of Anglo-Latin Poetry, 1500-1925*, New York: Modern Language Association of America, p. 45.

²⁴⁴ Harry Herbert Boyle, 1966, *Thomas Watson, Neo-Latinist*, PhD dissertation, University of California, p. 55.

²⁴⁵ Thomas Watson, William Alabaster, Peter Mease, 1987, *Antigone, Roxana, Adrastus parentas sive vindicta*, edited by John C. Coldewey and Brian F. Copenhaver, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag.

²⁴⁶ Wiggins, 2012, p. 277.

commonplacing.²⁴⁷ In the early modern period, the school practice to keep a commonplace book had been prescribed by humanists such as Erasmus, Melancton and Vives, who, as we have seen in Chapter 1, set the foundations of early modern pedagogy and were in turn indebted to Latin rhetoricians such as Cicero and Quintilian. Commonplace books conditioned the ways in which boys thought, since it was ‘the instrument they used to probe material they were set to study, store in their memory, and retrieve for reproduction’.²⁴⁸ In Watson’s *Antigone*, there are further signs of this pervading practice: in the text of the translation and, to a lesser extent, in the pomps, some lines are preceded by quotations marks to indicate gnomic passages which could be turned into *sententiae*.²⁴⁹ Quite consistently, in the themes almost every sentence is marked.

The term *théma* (θέμα) belongs to classical rhetoric. For Quintilian, *thémata* (θήματα) are the aspects related to a cause in a forensic context, aspects which Cicero translates with *proposita* (‘propositions’) (Quint.*Inst.*7.1.4). In Cicero’s *Topica*, however, *proposita* are the translation of the Greek word *théseis* (θέσεις), by which he refers to general inquiries instead, as opposed to the particular inquiry, i.e., *hypóthesis* (ὑπόθεσις).²⁵⁰ In the same passage, Cicero relates the word *locus* to propositions or theses: every general question or *thésis* (θέσις) involves one or more topics (*loci*). Since Cicero translates *theses* with *proposita* and Quintilian tells us that Cicero’s *proposita* correspond to the Greek *thémata*, we may syllogistically conclude that the *thémata* are, like the theses, general questions developed into various topics or *loci*.

This pattern is the principle governing commonplace books, i.e., ‘a notebook in which students were urged to list quotations from their reading under appropriate general headings’.²⁵¹ The themes could be seen as the subsections into which commonplace books for students were divided, i.e., ‘a series of pre-prepared headings’ or ‘conceptual matrices’ into which the reader ‘expected his reading-matter to fit’; as Ann Moss points out, this practice was in use as early as the first century AD, if not for educational purposes, at least as a support for rhetoricians.²⁵² The themes were meant to contribute to the students’ rhetorical training: they helped improve the student’s ability of remoulding the same thought into different sentences in order to achieve variety (*varietas*) but they

²⁴⁷ After the title of each theme, a note describes the metrical scheme used in the following poem: the first theme is in iambic distichs, the second in anapestic dimeters, the third is a Sapphic poem and the last is in choriambic asclepiadeans; see *WA*, pp. 63-68.

²⁴⁸ Ann Moss, 1996, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 134.

²⁴⁹ On the marking of *sententiae* in early modern printed books, see G. K. Hunter, 1951, ‘The Marking of Sententiae in Elizabethan Printed Plays, Poems, and Romances’, *The Library*, 5, 6, pp. 171-188; see also Nick Blackburn, 2011, ‘Early-Modern “Speech” Marks’, *Visible Language*, 45, pp. 93-120; M. B. Parkes, 2016, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West*, online edition: Routledge.

²⁵⁰ Cicero, 1949, *Cicero: De inventione, De optimo genere oratorum, Topica*, translated by H. M. Hubbell, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 444-445 [Cic.*Top.*21.79].

²⁵¹ Ann Moss, 1999, ‘Humanist Education’, in Norton (ed.), p. 151.

²⁵² Moss, 1996, p. 9.

were also an aid to improvisation, i.e., *ex tempore dicendi facultas*. For Quintilian, ‘anyone who has handled these straightforward and uncomplicated exercises copiously will be bound to have plenty to say about themes which are more receptive of digressions’.²⁵³ However, Quintilian’s interpretations of commonplaces vary throughout the twelve books of the *Institutio*. Alongside being a tool for rhetorical training, commonplaces are also attributed a moral function.²⁵⁴ Humanists retained both meanings of commonplace, the strictly rhetorical and the moral.²⁵⁵ Quintilian describes how the *sententiae* excerpted as commonplaces should then be reworked:

It will be useful not only to paraphrase the work of others, but to modify our own in various ways, deliberately taking up some thoughts (*sententiae*) and turning them in as many ways as possible, just as one shape after another can be made out of the same piece of wax. [...] The real sign of high quality is the capacity to expand what is by nature brief, amplify the insignificant, vary the monotonous, lend charm to what has been already set out, and speak well and at length on a limited subject.²⁵⁶

Quintilian’s description perfectly applies to Watson’s themes: they are long sequences of gnomic sentences all revolving around the topic announced in the heading of each poem. Watson partly recollects gnomic sentences from *auctoritates* – in the third theme, the one devoted to Ismene, Watson quotes Ovid, who in turns cites Epicurus – partly writes himself *sententiae* and reworks the concept already stated in the heading by repeating it in different forms. For instance, the heading of the first theme is ‘we learn from the example of Creon that blind self-love is the cause of many downfalls’ (*WA*, p. 63). The first three sentences already show how they fulfil Quintilian’s suggestion of shaping ‘the same piece of wax’ (‘*eadem cera*’) in ‘as many ways as possible’ (‘*quam numerosissime*’):

Nullum secundis insolens foelicitas
Admittit in rebus modum.
Multos sui in vesanum amorem compulit
Tumida potestas abripi.
Hinc mentis aciem propriae sapientiae
Inflatus excaecat stupor. (*WA*, p. 63; 240-245)

Insolent happiness never accepts any limit in the midst of prosperity. Swollen power compels many to be swept into crazed self-love. This bloated folly of mind blinds the keen sight of proper wisdom.

²⁵³ ‘qui haec recta tantum et in nullos flexus recedentia copiose tractaverit, utique in illis plures excursus recipientibus magis abundabit eritque in omnis causas paratus’ (Quint.*Inst.*10.5.12).

²⁵⁴ Moss, 1996, p. 10; see for instance Quint.*Inst.*2.4.22.

²⁵⁵ Moss, 1996, p. 10.

²⁵⁶ ‘Nec aliena tantum transferre, sed etiam nostra pluribus modis tractare proderit, ut ex industria sumamus sententias quasdam easque versemus quam numerosissime, velut eadem cera aliae aliaeque formae duci solent. [...] Illud virtutis indicium est, fundere quae natura contracta sunt, augere parva, varietatem similibus voluptatem expositis dare, et bene dicere multa de paucis’ (Quint.*Inst.*10.5.9-11).

3.3.4. *Transculturation and topicality*

In Nature's argument as well as in the other supplementary poems, Watson adapts *Antigone* to the expectations of his early modern and academic audience. In modern adaptation studies, this process of filling the cultural gaps across history has been defined as 'transculturation'.²⁵⁷ Albeit in different terms, also early modern authors were aware of the need to adjust ancient plays and traditions to contemporary expectations. In the prologue to *Altile* (ca. 1543), discussing the 'laws of tragedy', Giraldi avers that a poet is entitled to 'break the laws somewhere and serve his age, his audience, and the subject' and that 'if ancient poets were now here, they would try to satisfy the present times, the spectators, and the new subject'.²⁵⁸ Although Giraldi is mainly thinking of plays with a 'new subject', his statements reveal an early modern playwright's attention to his audience's expectations, to what 'costume and our age demands [...] in order to satisfy what [the poet] ought to satisfy'.²⁵⁹

As we have seen, Watson's translation is a very scholarly and faithful one but some passages do display his intervention to transculturate *Antigone* to an early modern horizon of expectations. In the Sophoclean prologue, *Antigone* thus replies to *Ismene*'s wavering:

θάψω. καλόν μοι τοῦτο ποιούση θανεῖν.
φίλη μετ' αὐτοῦ κείσομαι, φίλου μέτα,
ὅσια πανουργήσασ'. (Soph.*Ant.*72-74; p. 745)²⁶⁰

I shall bury him! It is honourable for me to do this and die. I am his own and I shall lie with him who is my own, having committed a crime that is holy.

Watson translates this passage as follows:

Humabo, Mors mihi hoc patranti egregia erit.
Amica vitam cum illo amico deseram,
Clam iusta solvens. (*WA*, p. 19; 72-74)

I will bury him, in doing this I will die with honour.
I, who am dear to him, will abandon life with him who is dear to me,
Thus accomplishing the right stealthily.

²⁵⁷ Linda Hutcheon with Siobhan O'Flynn, 2013, *A Theory of Adaptation*, London: Routledge, p. 146.

²⁵⁸ Giambattista Giraldi Cinthio, 1970, *Prologo all' 'Altile'*, in Bernard Weinberg (ed.), *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, vol. 1, Bari: Laterza, p. 489: 'Uscir fuor del prescritto in qualche parte, / Per ubidire a chi comandar puote / E servire a l'età, agli spettatori / E a la materia'; 'Che s'ora fusser qui i poeti antichi, / Cercherian sodisfare a questi tempi, / A' spettatori, a la materia nova'.

²⁵⁹ Giraldi, 1970, pp. 489-490: 'l'uso e l'età nostra chiede / [...] Per sodisfare a chi sodisfar deve'.

²⁶⁰ The Loeb edition has ποιούση.

Here Watson substitutes the idea of lying with the verb ‘desero’, whereas all previous translators into Latin use the verb ‘iaceo’ or its compounds, including Naorgeorgus.²⁶¹ Among vernacular translations, in his Italian version Alamanni employs the corresponding Italian verb ‘giacere’.²⁶² By contrast, contemporary French translators appear more concerned with avoiding incestuous innuendos, thus anticipating the centrality that *bienséance* (‘moral propriety’) would later have in French classicism.²⁶³ Calvy de la Fontaine, in his 1542 manuscript French version, and Jean-Antoine de Baïf, in his 1573 *Antigone*, both eliminate any possible allusion to the two siblings lying together in their death.²⁶⁴ In his adaptation *Antigone ou la Pieté* (1580), Robert Garnier also makes sure that no sexual overtone may be perceived in the image of the two siblings.²⁶⁵ In the second episode, Antigone declares that, to her, death is ‘gaudium leve’ (‘a sweet joy’, *WA*, p. 29; 469), whereas her Sophoclean counterpart only negates sorrow (οὐκ ἀλγύνομαι, ‘I do not suffer’, *Soph.Ant.*468; p. 777). Discussing pain and sorrow in *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas speaks of the joy of martyrdom: martyrs find ‘joy’ (‘gaudium’) ‘even in the midst of bodily tortures’ because ‘in the midst of tribulations men rejoice in the contemplation of Divine things and future Happiness’.²⁶⁶ However, in the light of the negative assessment of Antigone’s conduct in Nature’s argument and in the pomps, it would be misleading to see a *reductio ad sanctitatem* in Watson’s interpretation of the heroine within the translation: Watson’s transforming Antigone’s lack of sorrow into a ‘sweet joy’ is not enough to argue for martyr-like qualities in her character and does not stand up against the more sustained Christianization that French near-contemporary and contemporary versions display.²⁶⁷

Even so, Watson sometimes opts for terms that are too semantically charged to pass unnoticed by a Renaissance Christian audience or readers. In the second episode, Creon answers to the guard who has just told how he discovered Antigone and, commenting on her stubbornness, he says: ‘pride is impossible for anyone who is another’s slave’ (φρονεῖν μέγ’ ὅστις δοῦλός ἐστι τῶν πέλας, *Soph.Ant.*479; p. 778), which Watson renders as

²⁶¹ Hervet, 1541, p. 12: ‘adiacebo’; see also Gabia, 1543, p. 83: ‘iacebo’; Rataller, 1550, p. 95: ‘iacebo’; Lalemant, 1557, p. 155: ‘iacuero’; *NA*, p. 207 ‘iacebo’; Rataller, 1570, p. 67: ‘iacebo’; Melanchthon and Winsheim, 1546, sig. O4^v: ‘coiacebo’.

²⁶² Alamanni, 1533, p. 139.

²⁶³ Michael Mortiarty, 1999, ‘Principles of Judgement: Probability, Decorum, Taste, and *je ne sais quoi*’, in Norton (ed.), p. 522.

²⁶⁴ Jean-Antoine de Baïf, 1573, *Antigone tragédie de Sophocle*, in Jean-Antoine de Baïf, *Euvres en rime de Ian Antoine de Baif*, Paris: Pour Lucas Breyer, sig. 60^r. Mastroianni argues that all ‘possible sexual meanings [...] disappear from all sixteenth-century reworkings’ (‘le possibili valenze [...] cadono, queste, da tutti i rifacimenti cinquecenteschi’); see Michele Mastroianni, 2004, *Le Antigoni sofoclee del cinquecento francese*, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, p. 39; as we have seen, this does not hold true in Neo-Latin translations.

²⁶⁵ Garnier, 2018, p. 79; see the original in *GA*, 1585-1588; see also Mastroianni, 2004, p. 39.

²⁶⁶ Aquinas, 1920; see the original in Aquinas, 2000: ‘etiam inter corporis cruciatus’; ‘homines ex contemplatione divina et futurae beatitudinis, in tribulationis gaudent’ [II.i. Qu.38 Art.4].

²⁶⁷ Mastroianni, 2004, pp. 36-43.

Neminem efferrī nimis
Decet, suo qui servus arbitrio caret. (*WA*, p. 30; 478-479)

Excessive pride does not become anyone who as a slave lacks his own judgement.

The juxtaposition of the word ‘servus’ and ‘arbitrium’ cannot but recall the title of Martin Luther’s *De servo arbitrio* (1525). In Christian, and particularly Protestant, terms, this passage, which is signalled as sententious by commonplace marks in the margin, can be interpreted as an appeal to humility for men, since their will is subordinated to that of God. Moreover, Watson distorts the meaning of the original, in which pride is denied to slaves as such, for the lack of any social status, and not as people lacking judgement: by adding the notion of ‘arbitrium’, Watson voices through Creon one of the criticisms against Antigone which Sophocles rather puts in the mouth of Ismene and the chorus, i.e., madness.

In the prologue, Watson’s Ismene calls her sister ‘brainless’ twice (‘demens’, *WA*, p. 19; 90, 99), whereas her Sophoclean counterpart only once (ἄνους, *Soph.Ant.99*).²⁶⁸ Significantly, Garnier’s Ismene rather sanctifies Antigone’s actions, thereby confirming the Christian bias of the French version: she wishes Antigone good luck for her ‘sacred mission’.²⁶⁹ In the fourth episode of Watson’s version, the chorus thus assess Antigone’s behaviour:

Praestare pietatem pium est:
At sceptrā, cui regnum obtigit,
Violare nequaquam licet.
Sed perdidit te affectus amens. (*WA*, p. 40; 866-869)

It is pious to show piety: however, power, whoever is entitled to exert it, should not be violated in any way.
A mindless emotion has led you to ruin.

By ‘affectus amens’, Watson translates αὐτόγνωτος [...] ὀργά (‘self-willed passion’, *Soph.Ant.875*; p. 813), by which the chorus designates the cause of Antigone’s self-destruction.²⁷⁰ The whole Greek line (σὲ δ’ αὐτόγνωτος ὤλεσ’ ὀργά, ‘you were destroyed by your self-willed passion’, *Soph.Ant.875*) is echoed in the second pomp, in which the allegory Hatred declares ‘me pertinacem nullius damnum movet’ (‘in my stubbornness, I am moved by nobody’s catastrophe’, *WA*, p. 59; 147). In Watson, this passage is highlighted by commonplace marks: it is crucial for the moral interpretation of Antigone and for the edifying counter-example embodied by Ismene in the fourth pomp. The term *affectus*

²⁶⁸ Folly is not attributed only to Antigone. In the exodus, lamenting the loss of his son Haemon, Creon claims that he is afflicted by ‘folly’ (δυσβουλία, *Soph.Ant.1269*; ‘amentia’, *WA*, p. 51; 1262). In the third pomp, which is devoted to Haemon, Temeritas defines itself as ‘brainless’ (‘amens’, *WA*, p. 60; 174).

²⁶⁹ Garnier, 2018, p. 82; see the original in *GA*, 1620: ‘sainte enterprise’.

²⁷⁰ Sutton, 1996, ‘Commentary’ to *Sophoclis Antigone*, p. 122.

significantly occurs also in Nature's argument, in which Antigone is said to have been 'overcome by pious emotion' ('victa et affectu pio', *WA*, p. 15; 58) and in the second pomp, in which she is said to have been led astray by 'fickle emotion' ('affectu levi', *WA*, p. 57; 95). Unlike the second pomp, Nature's argument seems to present *affectus* in positive terms: it comes in association with the adjective 'pious', as in Martin Bucer's second book of *De regno Christi* (1557), in which *affectus* equally possesses a positive nuance as 'pious affects' expressed at their best in religious drama.²⁷¹ However, two lines below *affectus* is defined as 'raw' ('rudem', *WA*, p. 15; 60). Initially presented as a pious feeling, Antigone's *affectus* is the cause of her greatest fault, i.e., the contempt for her nation's laws and, by extension, of Nature's laws, which subsume them.

In Sophocles, the chorus' attitude is ambivalent towards Antigone, swinging between 'consolation and condemnation'.²⁷² They do grant that Antigone has showed piety: Σέβειν μὲν εὐσέβειά τις ('The respect you showed is a noble kind of respect', *Soph.Ant.872*; p. 810). However, as Simon Goldhill's more accurate translation of the same line suggests, the chorus immediately downsize their concession by means of the modifier τις: 'There is a certain piety in showing pious reverence'.²⁷³ In the following lines they condemn her for violation of 'power' (κράτος) out of her 'self-willed passion' (αὐτόγνωτος [...] ὀργά, *Soph. Ant. 873-875*; pp. 810-813). Therefore, Antigone is not uncompromisingly and absolutely an example of *eusébeia*. This is not due to Antigone, who never wavers in her decision and upholds it up to death, but to the flexibility of the value of *eusébeia* and the verb *sébein* ('to honour, to be pious'). At first, the notion seems to be limited to 'religious piety' and linked to respect for the gods, but throughout the play Creon appropriates the term and extends its usage by applying it to human power: in the third episode, in his confrontation with Haemon, he utters: Ἀμαρτάνω γὰρ τὰς ἐμὰς ἀρχὰς σέβων; ('Am I offending when I show regard for my own office?', *Soph.Ant.744*).²⁷⁴ Such contradictory usage of the term does not result from an act of misappropriation by Creon but from the inherent polysemy of *eusébeia* and *sébein*, which can be referred to potentially colliding set of obligations: Creon is only exploiting the 'wide range of applications' of the terms.²⁷⁵ This semantic inconsistency culminates in Antigone's oxymoronic statement: τὴν δυσσέβειαν εὐσεβοῦσ' ἐκτησάμην ('By acting piously I have been convicted of impiety', *Soph.Ant.924*; p. 817).

²⁷¹ Martin Bucer, 1557, *De regno Christi Jesu servatoris nostri libri II*, Basileae: per Ioannem Oporinum, p. 211: 'affectus pii' ('pious affects'); see also Russ Leo, 2019, *Tragedy as Philosophy in the Reformation World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 10-11.

²⁷² Simon Goldhill, 2012, *Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 110.

²⁷³ Goldhill, 2012, p. 112.

²⁷⁴ For other such examples, see Susanetti, 2012, pp. 256-257.

²⁷⁵ Mark Griffith, 1999, 'Introduction', in Sophocles, *Antigone*, edited by Mark Griffith, Cambridge Cambridge University Press, p. 39

While the piety of the Sophoclean Antigone is not untainted, other ancient Antigones do stand out as peerless and unquestioned models of piety, especially to early modern eyes. In Seneca's *Phoenician Women*, Oedipus claims that Antigone 'alone in our family can teach me natural feelings' ('sola pietatem in domo / docere nostra', Sen.*Phoen.*310-311). After realizing that Polyneices' wife Argia has arrived before her by her husband's corpse, Statius' Antigone attributes herself a 'cowardly devotion of a sister' ('pietas ignava sororis', Stat.*Theb.*12.384) and, after they are both caught by Creon's watchmen, she utters that she 'was led by affection', whereas Argia adduces 'love' as a motive ("me pietas," "me duxit amor", Stat.*Theb.*12.459).²⁷⁶ Commenting on Euripides' *Phoenissae*, Stiblin extols Antigone as an 'outstanding example of piety [...], who valued a royal wedding, wealth, the kingdom, and splendid honours less than her despised and destitute father'.²⁷⁷ In Lodovico Dolce's *Giocasta* (1549), Antigone is twice associated with filial duty ('pietà'), which Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh render as 'tender love' or 'pitié'.²⁷⁸ In Garnier's version, Antigone becomes one with piety, as announced in the title and subtitle to the play, namely, *Antigone ou La Pieté*; here, the semantic spectrum combines the Christian meaning of 'charity' with the classical notion of the noun.²⁷⁹

In ancient Rome, *pietas* was personified by artists and venerated as a goddess.²⁸⁰ In *De inventione*, Cicero includes *pietas* amongst the values that stem from 'the law of nature' which 'is implanted in us [...] by a kind of innate instinct' and defines it as that feeling that 'warns us to keep our obligations to our country or parents or other kin'.²⁸¹ As Hendrik Wagenvoort has noted, while in his early treatises Cicero sees *pietas* as distinct from the reverence due to gods, i.e., *religio*, in later treatises he starts to theorize *pietas* also as 'justice towards the gods'.²⁸² Aeneas, the most influential example of *pietas* in Latin literature, embodies both Ciceronian meanings: a central theme in the *Aeneid*, as announced by the hero's self introduction ('sum pius Aeneas'), Aeneas' *pietas*

²⁷⁶ All quotations from Statius' *Thebaid* are taken from Statius, 1928, *Statius in Two Volumes*, translated by J. H. Mozley, London: William Heinemann.

²⁷⁷ Kaspar Stiblin, 2014, *Stiblinus' Prefaces and Arguments on Euripides (1562)*, edited by David Mastronarde [accessed on 10th May at <http://ucbclassics.dreamhosters.com/djm/stiblinus/stiblinusPhoenissae.html>]: 'Insigne pietatis exemplum est in Antigone, quae regias nuptias, opes, regnum, speciosos titulos, despecto et opis egenti parenti posthabuit'.

²⁷⁸ Ludovico Dolce, 1906, *Giocasta*, in Gascoigne, *Supposes and Jocasta*, edited by John William Cunliffe, London: D. C. Heath, pp. 164-165, 410-411.

²⁷⁹ Miola, 2014, p. 226; see also Beaudin, 1997, p. 20. The sixteenth-century term 'pieux' meant 'pious', 'charitable', and 'pitiful'; see Edmond Huguot, 1961, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle*, vol. 5, Paris: Champion, pp. 778-779.

²⁸⁰ Hendrik Wagenvoort, 1980, *Pietas: Selected Studies in Roman Religion*, Leiden: Brill, p. 15

²⁸¹ Cicero, 1949, *Cicero: De inventione, De optimo genere oratorum, Topica*, translated by H. M. Hubbell, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 230-231 [Cic.*Inv.*2.66]: 'And the law of nature is something which is implanted in us not by opinion, but by a kind of innate instinct, it includes religion, duty, gratitude, revenge, reverence, and truth'; 'naturae quidem ius esse, quod nobis non opinio, sed quaedam innata vis aderat, ut religionem, pietatem, gratiam, vindicationem, observantiam, veritatem'; 'pietatem, quae erga patriam aut parentes aut alios sanguine coniunctos officium conservare moneat'.

²⁸² Cicero, 1967, pp. 112-113: 'Est enim pietas iustitia adversum deos': 'Piety is justice towards the gods' [Cic.*N.D.*1.41]; see also Wagenvoort, 1980, pp. 8-10.

encompasses his filial devotion to Anchises as well as his selfless compliance with the god's plan to found Rome.²⁸³

As we have seen, in the fourth pomp the allegorical Piety similarly expresses a double allegiance, both to its 'country and the gods' ('patriam et divos'). In the second pomp, the country is personified by Nation and is at odds with Kinship to gain Lofty Spirit's support. The inner struggle tearing Lofty Spirit apart, however, does not include the gods: in the second pomp the forces that call upon Lofty Spirit are 'my country, my family obligation, my prince' ('patria, nexus sanguinis, princeps', *WA*, p. 58; 110). The second pomp focalizes on Antigone as the expression of the conflict between public and private interests: 'I can scarce obey these all at once' ('parere simul his haud licet', *WA*, p. 58; 111). It is noteworthy that, although the rest of the poem presents the conflict as a duel between nation and kinship, there is a further contendant which is left unexplored, namely, the prince.

As noted above, in the second pomp the prince can be subsumed into Kinship, whereas in the translation the identification is problematic because of Creon's debatable behaviour. In the third episode of the Sophoclean play, Haemon tries to make Creon downsize his view of power as absolute and unconditioned, particularly in the agon (*Soph.Ant.726-757*; *WA*, pp. 36-37; 725-764), but his efforts are vain. The distance between the two contendants can be gauged in this passage of the agon, in which Creon reacts at Haemon's noting that the Thebans do not see Antigone as guilty:

Creon: Par alterum imperare, non me patriae?
Haemon: «Ea civitas non est, viri quae unius est.»²⁸⁴
Creon: Nonne imperatoris putanda est civitas?
Haemon: terra imperares solus inculta probe. (*WA*, p. 37; 735-738)

Creon: Is it right that another and not me rule our country?
Haemon: «A city that belongs to one man is no city.
Creon: Should the city not be considered a possession of the ruler?
Haemon: Alone, you would rule very well a deserted land.

In the Sophoclean text and in the translation Creon's authority is questioned in the name of the city's right to dissent with the ruler: Haemon seems to have appropriated the 'prevailing ideology' in Athens at the first performance of the play (442 BC), i.e., an ideology which 'was by now vehemently democratic, emphasizing [...] the freedom of all citizens to vote and speak their minds and the accountability of all public officials for their actions and decisions'.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Virgil, 1916, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI*, translated by H. Rushton Fairclough, London: William Heinemann, pp. 266-267 [Verg.A.1.378]; see also Miola, 2014, p. 226; Wagenvoort, 1980, p. 17.

²⁸⁴ The inverted comma indicates that the line is marked for commonplacing in the printed edition.

²⁸⁵ Griffith, 1999, p. 2.

In any early modern monarchy, the issue whether subjects should obey unjust kings would have been if not unacceptable at least extremely dangerous and contentious to address for drama, particularly on academic stages. With reference to Latin tragedy, Sarah Knight has pointed out that there was a diffuse awareness amongst university playwrights ‘that their works were both being seen by powerful men and also that the *potentially* powerful of the future might also be watching them, among the student body, or even acting in them’.²⁸⁶ This does not mean that political themes were avoided altogether. As Knight notes, in England ‘plays on religious and political subjects had existed since the early Reformation’:²⁸⁷ one needs just to think of John Bale’s fierce anti-Catholic drama. As for academic plays, although the ‘expressly pedagogical nature of much academic drama has tended to limit its critical reception as an elite and secluded undertaking in schools’, Walker and Streufert have recently reassessed this subgenre and have argued that

however elite and secluded they might be in their composition, performance, audience, and objectives – academic plays actively engage with urgent social, religious, and political questions of the period.²⁸⁸

Similarly, Knight has noted that at university ‘the frequency with which political power is represented is striking’.²⁸⁹

What was the physiognomy of political power at the time? Patrick Collinson has famously defined Elizabethan England as a form of ‘monarchical republic’, thereby meaning ‘a state which enjoyed that measure of self-direction which [...] was the essence of liberty, but with a constitution which also provided for the rule of a single person by hereditary right’.²⁹⁰ In Albert Beebe White’s words, England was therefore a form of ‘self-government at the King’s command’.²⁹¹ In the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, ‘England was a “mixed monarchy”, in which royal power was tempered by the common law and the need to obtain parliamentary consent for taxation’.²⁹² English kingship was inherently moderate. In the fifteenth century, John Fortescue, whose ideas regained wide currency in the second half of the sixteenth century, famously defined England’s polity as ‘*dominium politicum et regale*’:²⁹³ as Malcolm Smuts explains, ‘politicum’ refers

²⁸⁶ Knight, 2016, p. 249.

²⁸⁷ Knight, 2016, p. 244.

²⁸⁸ Walker, 2008, p. 2.

²⁸⁹ Knight, 2016, p. 244.

²⁹⁰ Patrick Collinson, 1994, *Elizabethan Essays*, London: The Hambledon Press, p. 36.

²⁹¹ Collinson, 1994, p. 33; see also Albert Beebe White, 1933, *Self-government at the King’s Command: A Study in the Beginnings of English Democracy*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

²⁹² Malcolm Smuts, 2003, ‘Political Thought in Early Stuart Britain’, in Barry Coward (ed.), *A Companion to Stuart Britain*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 273.

²⁹³ Sir John Fortescue, 1996, ‘224. Sir John Fortescue on the differences between *dominium regale* and *dominium politicum et regale*, c. 1471-6’, in A. R. Myers, *English Historical Documents 1327-1485*, London: Routledge, p. 413.

to the limitation of royal authority imposed by ‘the laws and forms of participation by the king’s subjects in governance’.²⁹⁴

During Elizabeth’s reign, further factors limited her power or jeopardized the stability of her reign: religious conflicts, her gender, and the lack of an heir. Before 1581, these factors had fuelled vigorous debates between positions of respect of royal power and positions of resistance to it. England had seen discussions on such issues for decades, including William Tyndale’s *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528) and the set of sermons in *An Homelie against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion* (1570). However, debates sometimes turned into military resistance: in 1569, the Queen had to face the Northern Rebellion, a Catholic uprising aiming to substitute Elizabeth with Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. The rebellion was repressed with a massacre at Gelt Bridge in 1570, an event which, as hinted above, led Pope Pius V to define Elizabeth as a heretic, to excommunicate her, and, as a consequence, to exonerate her Catholic subjects from obeying her. In the late seventies, i.e., around the time in which Watson wrote *Antigone*, Elizabeth’s plans to marry Francis, Duke of Anjou gave renewed prominence to the problem of succession, thus rekindling the debate surrounding the queen’s authority. One prominent figure of the time, John Stubbe, dared question the queen’s intention to marry a Catholic in his libel *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf* (1579). Stubbe’s case caused a sensation because he was sentenced to lose his right hand. Camden, who authored one of the eight gratulatory poems prefaced to Watson’s *Antigone*, witnessed the punishment of Stubbe for his vituperative book at the market place in Westminster and related the execution of the sentence in an account which circulated both in print and in manuscript:²⁹⁵ Watson, as Camden’s friend since his time at Oxford, was probably among those who read this account.

Such historical background may shed light on the unconventional foregrounding of Ismene. Unlike the ‘dyptych structure’ of the Sophoclean play,²⁹⁶ Watson’s additional material does not concentrate exclusively on Antigone and Creon but also considers also Haemon and Ismene. However, as we have seen, only the latter is a positive model standing out as a Stoic paradigm of reason, piety, and obedience. The obedient attitude of his Ismene is exactly what an English subject had better adopt if she did not want to get in trouble. In the fourth pomp, Obedience voices a declaration of unconditioned and enthusiastic respect of the ruler in charge: ‘Quicquid potestas imperat, servo libens’ (‘Whatever authority commands, I cheerfully obey’, *WA*, p. 62; 219). The third theme, devoted to Ismene, clearly states that obedience should be guaranteed at any cost:

Summa si legem iubeat potestas
Impiam, vel si violet benignae

²⁹⁴ Smuts, 2003, p. 273.

²⁹⁵ Natalie Mears, 2004, ‘Stubbe [Stubbs], John (c.1541-1590)’, in *ODNB*.

²⁹⁶ Griffith, 1999, p. 36.

Iura naturae, minime cuivis
Frangere fas est. (*WA*, p. 66; 349-353)

If supreme authority should enjoin an impious statute, or if it should violate the laws of kindly Nature, it is scarce right for anyone to break its command.

This echoes the chorus' mixed judgement of Antigone's piety and sententious statement that 'power, whoever is entitled to exert it, should not be violated in any way' (*WA*, p. 40; 867-869). However, here Watson goes so further as to claim that subjects should respect the laws unconditionally. This is in line with the sentence introducing the theme: 'Quae corrigere non possumus, ea attentare ne velimus docet Ismene, vitae quietae formam tradens' ('Ismene, giving the image of a quiet life, teaches what we should not try to alter those things which we cannot', *WA*, p. 66). Ismene's reaction, imbued with Stoicism, takes the form of passive acceptance of the *status quo*.

Watson's language of piety and obedience is reminiscent of the 'ecclesiastical propaganda' that was inculcated in church sermons after the Northern Rebellion.²⁹⁷ In the fourth pomp, Obedience and Happiness evoke the association of the same ideas in *An Homelie against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion*: 'obedience if the principal vertue of all vertues, and in deede the very roote of all vertues, and the cause of all felicitie'.²⁹⁸ Also, one of the arguments mentioned in the text as a deterrent to rebellion is that rebels are punished with 'shamefull deathes, their heades and carkases set upon poles, or hanged in chaynes, eaten with kytes and crowes, judged unworthy the honour of buryall'.²⁹⁹ To Watson's audience, Polyneices' and Antigone's deaths may well have recalled the punishments inflicted on rebels.

However, the two siblings are not just anonymous subjects in revolt, they are members of the royal family. As such, Polyneices' treacherous attack against Thebes and Antigone's defiance of Creon could invite associations with members of the nobility who equally dared defy royal authority, such as the noblemen who initiated the Northern Rebellion in 1569. This similarity potentially bestows a further significance on Watson's dedication to Arundel. Arundel's ancestry was filled with controversial figures: not only had his grandfather on his mother's side, Henry Fitzalan, twelfth Earl of Arundel, been a Catholic, partly involved in a conspiracy against the Queen, i.e., the Ridolfi plot of 1571, but, on his father's side, his grandfather, the poet Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and his great-great-grandfather, Edward Stafford, third Duke of Buckingham, had been executed for conspiracy and treason respectively.³⁰⁰ More recently, Arundel's very father, Thomas Howard, fourth

²⁹⁷ J. P. D. Cooper, 2003, *Propaganda and the Tudor State*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 230.

²⁹⁸ Ronald Bond (ed.), 1987, *Certain Sermons or Homilies (1547) and A Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion (1570): A Critical Edition*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 209.

²⁹⁹ Bond (ed.), 1987, p. 229.

³⁰⁰ Julian Lock, 2008, 'Fitzalan, Henry, twelfth earl of Arundel', in *ODNB*; see also Susan Brigden, 2008, Howard, Henry, earl of Surrey', in *ODNB*; C. S. L. Davies, 2008, 'Stafford, Edward, third duke of Buckingham', in *ODNB*.

Duke of Norfolk, had been imprisoned for participating in the Northern Rebellion and, after being released in 1570, he was equally involved in the Ridolfi plot and was sentenced to death for treason in 1572.

The unusual prominence of the character of Ismene could be explained in the light of the ongoing religious conflicts between Catholics and Protestants. In France, the contrasts climaxed in the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre (23 August 1572): on that day, reportedly at the instigation of Queen Caterina de' Medici, Catholics slaughtered the French Huguenots who had gathered in Paris for the marriage between her daughter Marguerite de Valois and Henri de Navarre (future King Henri IV). This bloodshed, followed by other mass-murders in the provinces, had a high resonance throughout Europe and especially in England. In the immediate aftermath of the massacre, a controversy originated between apologetic pamphlets justifying the assassinations and writings denouncing the atrocities inflicted on the Huguenots. However, the episode was well alive in the memories of Englishmen more than ten years later, when Christopher Marlowe wrote a play in 1593 about this event, and so it remained 'well into the next century'.³⁰¹ It is therefore reasonable to think that Watson, who studied law between 1576 and 1577 at the English college of Douai and also in Paris itself, may have been involved in the general dismay ensuing the massacre: he could have been easily exposed to the news from the capital and receptive to the pamphleteering between Catholics and Protestants.³⁰² Moreover, in his second trip to Paris in 1580, Watson may have heard a firsthand account by Walsingham, who witnessed the massacre together with his then protégé Sidney.³⁰³

In such a context, Watson's choice of *Antigone* may well have been meant to trigger a reflection on internecine conflicts between Catholics and Protestants, mirrored in the fratricidal war between Eteocles and Polyneices. According to scholars, this is certainly the case in Garnier's *Antigone*.³⁰⁴ As in Watson's version, Garnier's play also deals with the vexed question whether subjects should respect unjust laws: his Antigone's bold statement ('Of an unjust ordinance one need not take account') is counterbalanced by the more moderate position of the chorus, who extol obedience to 'just kings' instead.³⁰⁵ However, while in Garnier *Antigone* is given the greatest prominence, ensuring the unity of 'one of the longest of all sixteenth-century plays', and is the vehicle

³⁰¹ Andrew Hadfield, 1998, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance, 1545-1625*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 13.

³⁰² On apologetic pamphleteering and official writings, see Sydney Anglo, 2005, pp. 229-270; on opposite positions in England, see A. G. Dickens, 1974, 'The Elizabethans and St. Bartholomew', in Alfred Soman (ed.), *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew: Reappraisals and Documents*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 52-70. On writings denouncing the massacre, see Robert M. Kingdon, 1988, *Myths About the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacres, 1572-1576*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

³⁰³ Woudhuysen, 2014; see also Dickens, 1974, p. 52.

³⁰⁴ Beaudin, 1997, pp. 8-11; see also Gillian Jondorf, 1969, *Robert Garnier and the Themes of Political Tragedy in the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 39-40.

³⁰⁵ Garnier, 2018, pp. 77, 105; see the original in *GA*, 1552, 2096: 'D'une ordonnance injuste il ne faut tenir compte'; 'justes Rois'.

of the values at the centre of the play,³⁰⁶ in Watson's supplementary material this function is assigned to Ismene. Ismene's conciliatory attitude could represent an antidote against the civil wars that were ravaging France and England. These wars were outwardly presented as necessary measures to defend one's religion from heresy; religion, however, served only as a pretext to involve masses and as a mask for the ruling class' political ambitions, which Garnier, Watson, and Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh before them expose in the figures of Creon, Eteocles, and Polyneices (see section 2.3.3).

This attention to personal political ambitions mirrors another key debate of the time, namely, the one over the extent of monarchical power. In both Garnier's and Watson's versions, the figure of Creon is an apt foil to the ideal sovereign as imagined by contemporary political theorists such as Bodin. In *Les Six livres de la Republique* (1576), translated into English by Richard Knolles in 1606, Bodin addresses the question and explicitly states that the sovereign is subordinated to 'the law of God and nature, whereunto all princes are more straitly bound than their subjects: in such a sort as they cannot be from the same exempted'.³⁰⁷ Hence, subjects should obey the law of God first: 'the subject oweth his obedience to his soveraigne prince towards and against all, the maiestie of God excepted, who is the absolute soveraigne of all the princes in the world'.³⁰⁸ Also, the sovereign has to uphold 'the contracts by him made, bee it with his subjects, or with a straunger' and his laws cannot 'alter or chaunge the lawes of God and nature'.³⁰⁹ However, a few lines above Bodin also states that 'the law may be good, just, and reasonable, and yet the prince to be no way subiect or bound thereunto'.³¹⁰

Although touching on the limitations of royal authority, Bodin's work primarily aims to undermine Huguenot theories of resistance, which represented the first articulation of 'modern revolutionary ideology': according to Quentin Skinner, the Huguenot rebellion marked the transition from 'the concept of a religious duty to resist' into 'the modern and strictly political concept of a moral right of resistance', which was then to become the ideology behind the English revolution in the 1640s.³¹¹ An equally anti-resistance reaction is detectable in Montaigne's *Essais* (first two books published in 1580): therein, Montaigne rejects any form of rebellion in line with a contemporary

³⁰⁶ Beaudin, 1997, p. 36.

³⁰⁷ Richard Knolles, 1606, *The Six Bookes of A Commonweale [...], Out of the French and Latine Copies Done into English, by Richard Knolles*, London: Impensis G. Bishop, p. 104; see the original in Jean Bodin, 1576, *Les Six Livres de la Republique*, Paris: Chez Jacques de Puys, p. 145: 'la loy de Dieu, et de nature, à laquelle il est plus estroitement obligé que pas un des sugets, et n'un peut estre dispensé'.

³⁰⁸ Knolles, 1606, p. 106; see also Bodin, 1576, p. 147: 'le suget doibt obeissance à son Prince souverain, envers et contre tous, reservé la majesté de Dieu, qui est seigneur absolu de tous les Princes du monde'.

³⁰⁹ Knolles, 1606, p. 106; see also Bodin, 1576, pp. 146-148: 'contracts par luy fait, soit avec son suget, soit avec l'estranger'; 'alterer ny changer les loix de Dieu et de nature'.

³¹⁰ Knolles, 1606, p. 106; see also Bodin, 1576, p. 147: 'quelquesfois la loy civile sera bonne, iuste, et raisonnable: et neantmoins le Prince n'y doit ester suget aucunement: [...] il ne doit pas ester suget à sa loy'.

³¹¹ Skinner, 1978, vol. 2, pp. 240, 284-285.

revival of Stoic doctrines, which eventually led to early modern Neo-Stoicism with Justus Lipsius.³¹² As we have seen, Watson's Ismene is similarly informed by Stoicism and her submissive attitude can therefore be inscribed within contemporary moderate responses to the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day. Also, considering Arundel's infamous ancestry, Watson may have pointed to Ismene's moderation as a safer way to preserve one's faith without violating the laws and risking losing one's life.

Sutton has recently defined Watson's *Antigone* as 'the most intellectually challenging item in the entire repertoire of academic drama'.³¹³ As this chapter has sought to show, this definition appears particularly apt: at all its levels – philological, stylistic, structural, and thematic – the play not only offers an insight into the early modern understanding of crucial concepts such as translation, imitation, tragedy, and Natural Law but also displays Watson's deep awareness of how the Sophoclean play can be adapted to read and interpret contemporary political events. Philologically and stylistically, the play challenges modern conceptions of translation and imitation, displaying on the one hand Watson's excellent mastery of the Greek language, on the other his attention to a variety of contemporary influences. Not only does he rely on previous Latin translations of the play but seems to be equally receptive to vernacular engagements with Greek tragedy such as George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* and Robert Garnier's *Antigone ou la Pieté*. Structurally, his adoption of the five-act structure is in line with contemporary dramatic conventions and his inclusion of supplementary material also bespeaks pre-existing tendencies in English Renaissance drama such as dumb shows and the personification of Nature. Hence, Watson's *Antigone* can be considered a transition play: it lies between the waning tradition of morality plays and the incipient experience of the popular theatre, thus questioning the idea that academic drama was a sort of self-contained unit immune from external influences. Also, because of the high level of mediation they required, Greek plays were the catalyst for the development of what we identify as 'paratexts' in editions of early modern plays. In a similar fashion, Watson endows his *Antigone* with paratext-like devices, i.e., Nature's argument, the pomps, and the themes, in order to satisfy this same need of mediation and thus accommodate the figure of Antigone to the expectations of his audience. The theme of the Sophoclean play enables him to touch on the most controversial issues at the centre of contemporary political thought such as the limitations of royal authority, the relation between human laws and Natural Law, and the subjects' right to resistance. The way in which Watson deploys the political

³¹² Skinner, 1978, vol. 2, pp. 276-277.

³¹³ Sutton, 2016, p. 25.

significance intrinsic to Sophocles' *Antigone* reveals a moral bias with distinguishable connotations as a form of Stoicism. Watson thus envisages a Stoic response, embodied by the figure of Ismene, as the only viable solution to survive within the religious and political turmoil that were tormenting England as well as the Continent in the second half of the sixteenth century. In the following century, fifty years after the publication of Watson's Latin translation, the story of Antigone was revived again in the first version in English, Thomas May's *The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princesse* (1631). Alongside considering its possible allusions to the contemporary political background, the following chapter will address how May combines the Sophoclean play with other classical as well as contemporary sources and to what extent he is receptive to early modern theories on tragedy and topical political events.

4. Thomas May's *The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princess*

The previous chapter has shown how Thomas Watson's *Sophoclis Antigone* engaged with the contemporary political and cultural contexts. By 1631, when Thomas May's *The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princess* was published, these contexts had predictably undergone sweeping changes, some gradual, some abrupt. Politically, from 1580 to 1631 England experimented three different approaches to sovereignty: Elizabeth's 'monarchical republic', as we have seen above; James's conciliatory attitude, which earned him the title of 'Great Britain's Solomon';¹ and finally the authoritarian and divisive rule of Charles I. While James' policies had been substantially in continuity with those of Elizabeth both in matters of State and Church, the accession of Charles I in 1625 marked a chasm in British history: in the first years of his reign, Charles was heavily swayed by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, repeatedly abused royal prerogative, and dissolved three Parliaments (1625, 1626, 1628).²

Culturally, in the intervening fifty years between Watson's and May's *Antigones*, English drama became an important part of London intellectual life, which saw a proliferation of permanent purpose-built theatres, both open-air and indoors. The increasing professionalization of the theatre coexisted with a system of noble and royal patronage, which did not prevent companies from putting on stage controversial plays such as *Richard II*, *The Isle of Dogs*, and *Eastward Ho!*. Alongside the traditional genres of revenge tragedy, history play, and Roman tragedy – which had caught on since the 1590s – the new century brought innovative forms such as the comedy of humours, the masque, and domestic tragedy. The most outstanding playwrights of the period, Shakespeare and Jonson, differently explored this plethora of dramatic genres, and both exerted a certain influence on May's *Antigone* as well as on other plays of his. May's dramaturgy was partly receptive also to John Fletcher's romantic comedies. The first section of this chapter examines May's literary production with a particular focus on his stance towards translation in order to contextualize his *Antigone*, which will be at the centre of the second section.

¹ The title was first coined by Bishop William Laud in the sermon he preached at James' funeral; see David L. Smith, 1998, *A History of the Modern British Isles, 1603-1707: The Double Crown*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 65.

² Smith, 1998, p. 65.

4.1. Thomas May

4.1.1. A 'republican' translator and historian?

When he is mentioned in histories of English literature, Thomas May (1595-1650) is principally remembered as the translator of Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and as a historian of the parliamentary forces during the first decade of the Long Parliament (1640-1650) until his death.³ May translated the ten-book epic poem by Lucan in two phases: he published the first three books in 1626 and the whole poem the following year. May also wrote an English seven-book sequel to Lucan's work, *A Continuation of Lucan's Historical Poem Till the Death of Iulius Caesar* (1630), which he translated into Latin ten years later as *Supplementum Lucani* (1640). May's interest in Lucan has been interpreted as an indication of his republican stance since the comment of his near-contemporary John Aubrey, who thought that the fact that May was 'in love with the republic, which tang stuck by him' was related to his passion for Lucan.⁴ As David Norbrook observes, 'if that is the case, perhaps what needs to be explained is not why May became a Parliamentarian but why he became a courtier'.⁵ Before siding with the Parliamentarians in the 1640s, May dedicated two verse narrative poems on English history to Charles I, *The Reigne of King Henry the Second* (1633) and *The Victorious Reigne of King Edward the Third* (1635); according to what May advertises in the title pages and declares in the dedicatory epistles, both poems were written at the king's request.⁶ Charles I was also the dedicatee of May's English and Latin continuation of Lucan in 1630 and 1640.⁷

Nonetheless, May's translation of Lucan can hardly be interpreted 'as an attempt to ingratiate himself with the court'.⁸ May dedicated some of the books in his translation of Lucan to controversial figures who openly opposed Buckingham and the King's policy such as Robert Devereux, third Earl of Essex (Book IV), William Cavendish, second Earl of Devonshire (Book VI and the work as a

³ James Grantham Turner, 2002, 'From Revolution to Restoration in English Literary Culture', in David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 793; see also Paul Hammond, 1998, 'Classical Texts: Translations and Transformations', in Steven N. Zwicker (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1650-1740*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 145; Margaret Drabble, 2000, *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 656.

⁴ David Norbrook, 1994, 'Lucan, Thomas May, and the Creation of a Republican Literary Culture', in Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (eds.), *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, p. 46; see also John Aubrey, 1898, 'Brief Lives', *Chiefly of Contemporaries, Set Down by John Aubrey, Between the Years 1669 and 1696*, vol. 2, edited by Andrew Clark, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 56.

⁵ Norbrook, 1994, p. 46.

⁶ Thomas May, 1633, *The Reigne of King Henry the Second*, London: Printed by A. M. for Benjamin Fisher, title page, sig. A8^r(?); see also Thomas May, 1635, *The Victorious Reigne of King Edward the Third*, London: Printed [by John Beale?] for T. Walkley, and B. Fisher, title page, sig. A3^{r-v}.

⁷ David Norbrook, 1999, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics 1627-1660*, Cambridge University Press, p. 50.

⁸ Norbrook, 1994, pp. 46, 57.

whole), Theophilus Clinton, Earl of Lincoln (Book VIII), and Robert Rich, second Earl of Warwick (Book IX); these four men were among the ones who refused to pay the Forced Loan imposed by Charles in 1626; one of them, namely the Earl of Lincoln, was even imprisoned in the Tower of London for supporting resistance to the payment of the loan in his earldom.⁹ In so doing, as Norbrook argues, May ‘was venturing on very sensitive ground’.¹⁰ This is confirmed by two facts. First, many copies of the 1627 edition underwent excisions on the dedicatory epistles, probably out of ‘political caution on the part of the author or his dedicatees’ or for other reasons; in any case, the dedications were omitted altogether in the following editions.¹¹ Second, the name of the influential Dutch scholar Daniel Heinsius, whom May mentions in the dedicatory epistle to the first edition, does not appear in the following editions of the translation (1631, 1635, 1650, 1659). Supposing that Heinsius was alerted about the presence of his name in this epistle by his contacts in England and considering his prudent stance towards the changing political climate in the 1630s,¹² it is reasonable to think that he did not want his name associated with a controversial translation and asked to have it removed.

According to Norbrook, May addressed ‘a group of aristocrats who were known for firm independence of courtly pressure’, and who, like Lucan’s Pompey, were seeking glory ‘not just for [their] private interest but in consultation with the public good’.¹³ Norbrook’s comparison between the dedicatees and Pompey is quite apt if one considers that, as Susanna Braund demonstrates, May casts a slightly more favourable light on Pompey than Lucan does.¹⁴ This is particularly evident in the prefatory material. In the dedication to the whole book, May assimilates Pompey to Caesar because they are both responsible of ‘a faction, which rent the state’, which ultimately brought about the ‘change of government’ in Rome, and are ‘the two heads of this great division’, ‘men of greater eminence than the former ages had seen any, whose prosperous achievements in forreine wars had too far enabled them to ruine that state, which before they served’ (*ML*, sig. a4^r). However, although admitting that Pompey is not completely untainted, May adds a note in parentheses that partly rehabilitates Pompey’s figure: ‘if we may terme *Pompey* the head of a faction, and not rather the true servant of the publike State’ (*ML*, sig. a4^r); moreover, in the dedication of Book VIII, May presents Pompey as ‘noble’ and as an author of ‘great deeds’ (*ML*, sig. O1^r). Alongside these prefaces, the

⁹ Norbrook, 1999, p. 44; see also Edward Paleit, 2013, *War, Liberty, and Caesar: Responses to Lucan’s Bellum Civile, ca. 1580-1650*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 234. Cavendish refused to pay only at the beginning (October 1626) but he fully complied with the payment by the end of the year by means of Thomas Hobbes, who, after serving as his tutor, was employed as his secretary at the time; see Quentin Skinner, 1996, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 224, n. 86.

¹⁰ Norbrook, 1999, p. 45.

¹¹ Norbrook, 1999, pp. 45, 48; see also Paleit, 2013, pp. 234-235.

¹² Paul R. Sellin, 1968, *Daniel Heinsius and Stuart England*, London: Oxford University Press, pp. 90-92.

¹³ Norbrook, 1999, p. 49.

¹⁴ Susanna Braund, 2011, ‘Violence in Translation’, in Paolo Asso (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to Lucan*, Leiden: Brill, p. 522.

translation equally contributes to presenting Pompey under a more positive light. In a crucial passage describing Pompey's relation with the Senate, Lucan provides a balanced appraisal of Pompey's sweeping but respectful influence over the senators: 'rectorque senatus, / sed regnantis, erat' ('he ruled the Senate but it was a Senate of kings', Luc.IX.194-195). As Braund observes, May's rendering – 'He sway'd the Senate, but the Senate reign'd' (*ML*, sig. Q6^r) – 'underplays *rector senatus*', thus shedding a more positive and 'democratic' light on Pompey.¹⁵ Therefore, following Norbrook's interpretation, just as for Lucan Pompey sought to uphold the Senate's prerogatives, so May's dedicatees 'were reluctant to rush into battle unless it was clear that Parliament's and the nation's interests were being consulted'.¹⁶ However, as Norbrook points out, 'May had not lost hope in the possibility of a union between king and patriots';¹⁷ considering the pedigree of his dedicatees, who were all members of the House of Lords, May probably identified these patriots less with the Commons than with the English aristocracy.¹⁸ In June 1627, he wrote a poem in praise of Charles I, entitled 'Neptune to King Charles', on the occasion of the King's visit to the fleet departing from Portsmouth for France to help French Huguenots who were under the attack of the King of France, Louis XIII; in this panegyric poem, Charles is celebrated for his ability to maintain peace and avoid bloodshed and is hailed as 'absolute' ruler of the seas.¹⁹ Therefore, at least before 'his partisanship hardened in his later writing',²⁰ May's attitude cannot be considered anti-monarchical; furthermore, as we have seen, he dedicated his two historical poems and his continuation of Lucan to the King. Yet, he worked for two decades – from 1626, when he published the first three books of the *Bellum Civile*, to 1646, the year in which the second edition of his *Supplementum* appeared²¹ – on an author such as Lucan, who looked back with nostalgia to the years of the Roman republic; this has triggered speculations among critics on May's political views before the outbreak of the Civil War.

An explicit association of classical writers with anti-monarchical ideals can be found in Thomas Hobbes, who regards classical learning as highly inconsistent with and therefore potentially deleterious for the English political system. To the philosopher, the misuse of the classics by politicians had been one of the causes of the Civil War because

¹⁵ Braund, 2011, p. 522.

¹⁶ Norbrook, 1999, p. 49.

¹⁷ Norbrook, 1999, p. 50.

¹⁸ Paleit, 2013, p. 234.

¹⁹ Norbrook, 1999, p. 50; see also John Bruce (ed.), 1858, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I, 1627-1628*, London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, p. 238. The whole text has first been published in full by Paleit; see Paleit, 2013, pp. 237-238.

²⁰ J. G. A. Pocock, 1999, 'Thomas May and the Narrative of Civil War', in Derek Hirst and Richard Strier (eds.), *Writing and Political Engagement in Seventeenth-Century England*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 143.

²¹ May worked personally on this edition; see Birger Backhaus, 2005, *Das Supplementum Lucani von Thomas May: Einleitung, Edition, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, Trier: WVT, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, p. 74.

by reading these Greek, and Latine Authors, men from their childhood have gotten a habit (under a falseshew of Liberty,) of favouring tumults, and of licentious controlling the actions of their Sovereigns; and again of controlling those controllers with the effusion of so much blood.²²

As Edward Paleit explains, Hobbes' view has led critics such as Quentin Skinner to argue that Roman classical writers, particularly historians, were 'turned into works of English political thought' and offered an

anti-monarchical perspective from which the English could begin if they chose to reflect anew on their own political experiences. As Hobbes rightly perceived, such reflections were almost certain in the end to have a destabilising impact on the Stuart monarchy.²³

In another work, *Behemoth* (1682), Hobbes looks retrospectively at the Civil War and categorizes various seditious groups who used 'books written by famous men of the ancient Grecian and Roman commonwealths' to legitimize their attack to the monarchical rule.²⁴ Although at one point Hobbes defines some of the opponents as 'democratical gentlemen', their stance is not so much democratic as 'reactionary and radical' in their attempt to restore their 'traditional privileges' and at the same time 'so radical as to be virtually republican'.²⁵ However, as Paleit observes, Hobbes' view can be misleading for an interpretation of the pre-Civil War period since the philosopher was 'a distorting antagonist of classical ideas and an inveterate critic of parliamentary assemblies'.²⁶ Also, the category of republicanism is in itself problematic with reference to this period: there is still no scholarly agreement on whether and to what extent republicanism had a role in English pre-Civil War political thought.²⁷ Norbrook, who discusses May in the light of a 'republican literary culture', equally distances himself from the idea that there existed an English 'republicanism' before the Civil War: he specifies that in early modern England

there were few republican readers of Lucan in pre-Civil War England. But the poem did become identified with a particular kind of political grouping that, while not specifically anti-monarchical, had distinct hankerings after a severely limited monarchy which, as far as some absolutist theories were concerned, would be in practice little better than a republic.²⁸

²² Thomas Hobbes, 1996, *Leviathan*, edited by Richard Tuck, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 150.

²³ Skinner, 2004, p. 318; see also Paleit, 2013, p. 17.

²⁴ Thomas Hobbes, 1889, *Behemoth, Or The Long Parliament*, edited by Ferdinand Tönnies, London: Simpkin, Marschall, and Co., p. 3.

²⁵ Skinner, 2004, p. 319; Hobbes, 1889, p. 26.

²⁶ Paleit, 2013, p. 18.

²⁷ Paleit, 2013, pp. 17-18. The same applies to Elizabethan forms of republicanism. Andrew Hadfield explores the 'forms of republican culture in late sixteenth-century England' but makes a premise that it was meant as an integration of the monarchical system, not a form of dissidence to it: republicanism in the 1590s was 'the intellectual conviction that it was necessary to control the powers of the crown' by means of 'a coterie of virtuous advisers and servants'; see Andrew Hadfield, 2005, *Shakespeare and Republicanism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 17.

²⁸ Norbrook, 1999, p. 40.

For our analysis of May's Lucan, we should therefore bear in mind – as Paleit puts it – that '[i]n early modern England Lucan certainly *was* [...] often invoked by writers opposed to regal absolutism' but that '[v]ery occasionally, readings of Lucan do suggest genuine appreciation for a non-monarchical system of government on the Roman model'; even in the latter case, 'this need not mean they were "republicans" in the modern activist sense of the term'.²⁹ In Paleit's view, it is rather 'more likely that May appropriated Lucan's anti-monarchism for an attack on regal absolutism', meant as the constitutional outlook in which 'a monarch rul[es] without popular consent and over[rides] the law'.³⁰ That May did not embrace an anti-monarchical position emerges also in his translational choices. In Book VII, when Lucan describes the two factions of Pompeians and Caesarians respectively as 'the one moved by the fear of monarchy, the other by the hope to gain it' ('metus hos regni, spes excitat illos', Luc.7.386), May rearticulates the opposition between 'monarchy' and 'fear of it' into the contrast between 'ambition' and 'freedom' ('one for ambition, th'other freedom fight', *ML*, sig. M8^r), thereby avoiding questioning the monarchy as an institution.³¹ An accurate description of May's politics in the 1620s, at least as he was working on his Lucan translation, is therefore less as 'a republican sympathizer' than as an 'anxious supporter of constitutional monarchy'.³²

After Charles summoned his fourth and fifth parliaments (the Short Parliament and the Long Parliament), May put aside his former allegiance to the King and defended his choice in the treatise *A Discourse Concerning the Success of Former Parliaments* (1642). He then became a propagandist for the parliamentary cause, publishing pamphlets such as *A True Relation from Hull* (1643), and probably collaborated with John Sadler and Henry Parker on editing noble and royal correspondence to shed a negative light on the court and on the person of the King himself: the Parliamentarians decided to publish the contents of a cabinet captured in 1645 containing Charles' correspondence as *The Kings Cabinet Opened* (1645) and the letters of George Digby, Earl of Bristol as *The Lord George Digby Cabinet and Dr Goff's Negotiations* (1646).³³ By 1645-1646, May was appointed Secretary of Parliament and, as part of this task, he penned *The History of the Parliament of England* (1647), which has been defined as 'May's principal achievement in prose'.³⁴ Later, May summarized this

²⁹ Paleit, 2013, p. 19.

³⁰ Paleit, 2013, p. 238.

³¹ Paleit, 2013, p. 239. In my translation of 'regnum', I follow Paleit, who translates it as monarchy, whereas J. D. Duff has 'tyranny'. Considering that Caesar's victory over Pompey signalled the end of the republican period, monarchy – and not necessarily its degeneration into tyranny – is already something that was feared by the supporters of the republic.

³² Philip Hardie, 2011, 'Lucan in the English Renaissance', in Asso (ed.), p. 498.

³³ On the publication of the King's letters, see Joad Raymond, 1999, 'Popular Representations of Charles I', in Thomas N. Corns (ed.), *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 57. On the pamphlet with Digby's correspondence, see Allan Griffith Chester, 1932, *Thomas May: Man of Letters 1595-1650*, PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, p. 67.

³⁴ Chester, 1932, p. 67. Allan Griffith Chester and Gerald Eades Bentley set the *ante-quem* date of his appointment as Secretary in July 1656, Norbrook in January 1646; see Chester, 1932, p. 66; Gerald Eades Bentley, 1956, *The Jacobean and Caroline Theatre: Plays and Playwright*, vol. 4, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 832; David Norbrook, 2008, 'May, Thomas (b. in or after 1596, d. 1650)', in *ODNB*.

history and integrated it with a continuation in his Latin work *Historiae Parliamenti Angliae breviarium* (1650), which he then published into English as *A Breviary of the History of the Parliament of England* (1650). Allan Griffith Chester, the author of the only existing monograph devoted to May, regards both the 1647 and the 1650 historiographical works as ‘worthy of respect for the accuracy of their facts and the temperateness of their comment on the party of opposition, two qualities by no means usual in the political writings of the period’.³⁵ One passage from the preface to *The History of the Parliament* may suffice to sense May’s thoughtful and moderate stance towards the events of the Civil War:

How much valour the English Nation on both sides have been guilty of in this unnaturall Warre, the World must needs know in the general fame. But for particulars, how much Worth, Vertue, and Courage, some particular Lords, Gentlemen, and others have shewed, unless both sides do write, will never perfectly be known. [...] I averre, that if in this discourse more particulars are set down, concerning the actions of those men who defended the Parliament, then of them that warred against it; it was because my conversation gave me more light on that side, to whom, as I have indeavoured to give no more then what is due, so I have cast no blemishes on the other; nor bestowed any more characters, then what the truth of the Story must require.³⁶

As J. G. A. Pocock observes, this work is ‘one of the very first to attempt [...] a serious history of the Civil Wars’ and to take issue with ‘the deeper problem of how history could and must be written in time of civil war [...], instructing English historians as to the problems they must confront in the times to come’.³⁷ May’s are not just empty claims of good intentions. This can be exemplified by May’s balanced judgement on the Duke of Buckingham, who, in the final years of his life, was probably the most loathed public figure, so much so that, at the news of his murder, people rejoiced and thanked the assassin John Felton.³⁸ Although admitting that the Duke had a negative and all too wide influence on both James and Charles and that he was ‘unexperienced in Warlike affaires’, May defines Villiers’ murder as ‘sad’ and an utterly condemnable ‘unlawfull act’.³⁹ On account of his contribution to the parliamentary cause, at his death in 1650 May was honoured with state funerals and buried in the south transept of Westminster Abbey. His merits as Lucan’s translator and as official historian for the Parliament were also recognized in an inscription on a marble monument, in which

³⁵ Chester, 1932, pp. 5, 67. Other political writings have been attributed to May – *The Character of a Right Malignant* (1644), *The Changeable Covenant* (1650), and *The Life of a Satyricall Puppy Called Nim, by T. M.* (1657) – but for all of them May’s authorship is questionable; see Chester, 1932, pp. 67, 173-174. May also collaborated with John Sadler and Henry Parker on editing noble and royal correspondence to shed a negative light on the court: a pamphlet entitled *The Lord George Digby Cabinet and Dr Goff’s Negotiations* (1646), which contains Digby’s letters; see Chester, 1932, p. 67,

³⁶ Thomas May, 1647, *The History of the Parliament of England: Which Began which Began November the Third, M.D C. XL.*, Imprinted at London: by Moses Bell, for George Thomason, sig. B2^{r-v}.

³⁷ Pocock, 1999, pp. 143-144.

³⁸ Smith, 1998, p. 73.

³⁹ May, 1647, pp. 6-10.

he is hailed as ‘another Lucan surpassing the Roman one’ (‘Lucanus alter plusquam Romanus’) and as ‘loyal historian’ (‘Historicus fidus’).⁴⁰

Immediately after his death, however, May’s name was tarnished by the publication of a satire, entitled ‘Tom May’s Death’, generally attributed to Andrew Marvell and published between 1650 and 1651.⁴¹ This poem lastingly compromised May’s subsequent reputation: it suggests that May sided with the Parliament only out of resentment because he did not receive the laureateship after Jonson’s death and saw it being assigned to Sir William Davenant instead.⁴² Also, it gives an unflattering portrait of the author, mentioning his stammer, his misuse of Roman history and Lucan for a bad cause, and his excessive addiction to wine, which according to the biographer John Aubrey, led him to die by suffocation.⁴³ Later commentators contributed to reduce May to the ‘familiar royalist and conservative parliamentary stereotypes of the republican and the atheist’.⁴⁴ In 1661, his corpse was removed from Westminster Abbey – together with those of John Pym, Oliver Cromwell’s mother and sister, and others – by order of Charles II and buried outside, in the garden of the abbey; ironically, in 1667 May’s place was assigned to Davenant himself.⁴⁵

4.1.2. *The classical translator and the playwright*

Although his place in the history of English literature is mainly connected to his translation of Lucan and his *History of the Parliament*, May’s literary production comprises other translations and – more significantly for the purposes of this thesis – also dramatic works. May is the translator of the verse sections in Kingsmill Long’s version of John Barclay’s *Argenis* (1625), a Neo-Latin *roman à clef* originally published in 1621 with allusions to near-contemporary sovereigns.⁴⁶ In 1628, there appeared a new version of the same work by Sir Robert Le Grys, who chose to report May’s 1625 translation of the verse and, unlike Long, acknowledged May’s contribution on the title page.⁴⁷ After the appearance of the Lucan translation, May’s name must have gained currency in literary circles of the time; therefore, the inclusion of his name may be due as much to editorial conventions as to a marketing strategy to attract more buyers. The potential appeal of May’s renown as a translator and

⁴⁰ Chester, 1932, p. 74.

⁴¹ Paleit, 2013, p. 223.

⁴² Norbrook, 1994, p. 45.

⁴³ Chester, 1932, pp. 70-74.

⁴⁴ Norbrook, 2008.

⁴⁵ Chester, 1932, p. 75; see also Norbrook, 2008.

⁴⁶ Chester, 1932, p. 142; see also Nicola Royan, 2008, ‘Barclay, John (1582–1621)’, in *ODNB*.

⁴⁷ John Barclay, 1628, *John Barclay His Argenis, Translated out of Latine into English*, London: Printed by Felix Kyngston, title page: ‘the Verses by Thomas May Esquire’.

the resonance of his translation of Lucan – to which, as we have seen, he was associated even in the inscription on his tomb – contributed to shaping a veritable ‘translauthorship’ or ‘translatorial authorship’ of May.⁴⁸ On the wake of the success of his version of Lucan, May embarked on the translation of other classical works, i.e., Virgil’s *Georgics* in 1628 and some epigrams of Martial in 1629. Probably on account of the appeal of Le Gry’s Barclay translation, which went through another edition in 1629, May decided to translate another work of the Franco-Scottish writer, i.e., *Icon animorum*, as *The Mirrour of Mindes* (1631).⁴⁹ Later, May only translated two of his own English works into Latin or vice versa, i.e., the *Continuation* of Lucan into the *Supplementum* and the *Breviary* into the *Breviarium*.⁵⁰

May’s decade-long ‘translauthorship’ reveals a sound classical education, which he received at the newly founded Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, from 1609 to 1613; as noted in Chapter 2, in order to enrol there, he must have attended a grammar school beforehand. The level of his scholarship was recognized by the contemporary biographer Thomas Fuller, who in *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662) informs us that May ‘seriously applied himself to his studies’ at Cambridge.⁵¹ At Sidney Sussex College, May’s education was also informed by a staunch Puritanism: as its statutes confirm, the college – founded in 1596 thanks to a donation by Lady Frances Sidney, aunt to Sir Philip Sidney – was built on Puritan principles and the majority of its members supported the Parliament during the Civil War; Oliver Cromwell himself attended this college in 1616-1617.⁵²

Alongside his classical translations and his narrative historical poems, May’s literary production comprises also drama: he authored six plays, two comedies and four tragedies. The comedies – *The Heir* (performed in 1620; published in 1622) and *The Old Couple* (performed in 1636; published posthumously in 1658) – were both concerned with the theme of inheritance. This could be read as an autobiographical reference, since May faced financial issues when he was twenty at the death of his father, who had been mismanaging the family properties.⁵³ However, as Norbrook observes, ‘the theme was so conventional that the plays do not necessarily reflect his own experience’.⁵⁴ May’s comedies are among the works that most betray his Puritan formation at Sidney Sussex College: although modelled on the recent developments of the genre by Jonson, Fletcher, and Beaumont, May eschews satirical tones and bawdy innuendos, features that were typical of the

⁴⁸ A. E. B. Coldiron, 2018, ‘The Translator’s Visibility in Early Printed Portrait-Images and the Ambiguous Example of Margaret More Roper’, in Marie-Alice Belle and Brenda M. Hosington (eds.), *Thresholds of Translation: Paratexts, Print, and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Britain (1473-1660)*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 62.

⁴⁹ Chester, 1932, p. 142.

⁵⁰ Chester, 1932, p. 156.

⁵¹ Thomas Fuller, 1840, *The History of the Worthies of England*, edited by P. Austin Nuttall, London: Nuttall and Hodgson, p. 258.

⁵² Chester, 1932, p. 23.

⁵³ Chester, 1932, pp. 29-29.

⁵⁴ Norbrook, 2008.

subgenres of city comedy and romantic tragicomedy. As for the tragedies, alongside *Antigone*, May also authored *The Tragedy of Cleopatra, Queen of Ægypt* (performed in 1626; published in 1639), *The Tragedy of Julia Agrippina, Empresse of Rome* (performed in 1628; published in 1639), and *Julius Caesar*, a manuscript tragedy now lost. As Chester surmises, the latter was probably written either in 1616-1617, when May was attending Gray's Inn, or between 1625 and 1630, when he was writing the other tragedies and was translating Lucan's *Bellum Civile*; considering that May drew from Lucan for his *Tragedy of Cleopatra*, the poem was in all likelihood a source for the *Julius Caesar* play, too, or at least prompted him to choose its subject.⁵⁵ The anonymous *Tragedy of Nero* (1624) has been sometimes attributed to May but F. Ernst Schmid, who edited the only modern edition of *Julia Agrippina* and conducted an extensive analysis of the two plays, has excluded May's authorship on stylistic grounds.⁵⁶

May wrote his tragedies while he was working on his translations. Both groups of texts display the width of May's classical knowledge and the precision of his scholarly approach to his sources. Although deploying the conventional modesty topos, May's statements in the prefatory material in his translations betray the value that he attached to this practice as well as his accuracy and seriousness when he engaged with this activity. In the dedicatory epistle of his translation of Virgil's *Georgics*, he expects his dedicatee to know not only the original work but also its model, i.e., the Greek poet Hesiod's *Works and Days*, which had been translated ten years before by George Chapman (1618). Also, May insists that he 'failed in [his] undertaking, (as missing the sense of Virgil, or not expressing him highly and plainly enough)'.⁵⁷ A similar admission is present in the epistle to the reader of his version of Martial's epigrams, in which he apologizes for failing to render the original fully because of an intrinsic metric limitation in the English 'Verse of ten syllables' and because of the 'divers Constructions of sense' of the two languages.⁵⁸

However, in the same letter, May dignifies the process of translation on account of its ability to communicate 'the substance of Art'.⁵⁹ May chiefly conceives translation for those 'meere English readers, to whom my paines most properly do belong' – as he defines them in the dedicatory letter of his translation of Barclay's *Icon animorum*: his task is to prevent that 'our English Gentlemen (as many of them as cannot master the Originall) should lose the sense of such a worke', even at the cost

⁵⁵ Chester, 1932, p. 99; see also Paleit, 2013, pp. 215, 220.

⁵⁶ F. Ernst Schmid, 1914, 'Die Tragödie "Nero" und May', in Thomas May, *Thomas May's Tragedy of Julia Agrippina, Empresse of Rome*, edited by F. Ernst Schmid, London: David Nutt, pp. 155-217; see also Bentley, 1956, vol. 5, pp. 1379-1380.

⁵⁷ Thomas May, 1628, *Virgil's Georgicks Englished by Thomas May Esq[uire]*, Lo[ndon]: printed for Tho[mas] Walkley, sig. A3^v-A4^r.

⁵⁸ Thomas May, 1629, 'To the Reader', in Martial, *Selected Epigrams of Martial, Englished by Thoams May Esquire*, London: Printed for Thomas Walkley, sig. A7^v.

⁵⁹ May, 1629, sig. A7^r.

of ‘the loss (perchance) of [his] own fame’.⁶⁰ However, May is aware of the criticism that he might incur in doing so: in the preface to the Martial translation, he defends the practice of translating from the attacks by the ‘mis-likers of translation’, who, as he says, ‘complain of late that too much learning is brought into our native language, and that it is by others attained at too easie a rate, which cost themselves more labour’.⁶¹ He responds by pointing out that, while ‘the ablest men doe not at all condemne’ translation, its detractors ‘are neither perfect in the Latin, nor able in their native Language’.⁶² Here, May anticipates the importance that the knowledge of the target language will have in later theorizations on translation: in the preface to *Sylvae, Or the Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies* (1685), John Dryden laments that ‘there are many who understand Greek and Latin and yet are ignorant of their mother-tongue. The proprieties and delicacies of the English are known to few’.⁶³ For May, who widens the original scope of the discussion on translation, the problem of contemporary learned people resides not only in the quality of English but also in the effective communication of meaning. By drawing a parallel between stiff learned people and ostentatious country preachers, May insists that no vain aspects of form but the ‘substance of Art’ or ‘reall Learning’ and the ‘substantiall Doctrine’ should be their respective priorities, as is the case in his view of translation:

Those (as I take it) are such pretty Schollers as have rather strived to get some skill in the Latine or Greeke tongues, than to furnish themselves with the substance of Art, which is contained in those tongues; and wanting so much reall Learning as may commend them to the world, would faine bee applauded for the shadow of it: Like some unlearned or iniudicious Preachers in Countrey parishes, who would rather be liked by the ignorant People for speaking of Latin sentences, than informing their knowledges with substantiall Doctrine, and have the fortune to bee praised by none, but those which doe not understand them.⁶⁴

Quite conventionally, May’s theoretical conception of translation is therefore one of service to those readers lacking an adequate classical learning that would have enabled them to read texts in the original. However, in practice, as Paleit’s analysis of the Lucan translation reveals, May did not limit himself to a close rendering of the Latin. His translation is imbued with politically charged terms such as *freedom*, *liberty/liberties*, *faction*, *ambition*, and *treason*, which do not entirely correspond to Lucan’s original text or are the result of a veritable interpolation on the part of May; as Paleit demonstrates, May’s linguistic choices often evoke the language used in political speeches by MPs against the excesses of Buckingham’s role and the threats of Charles’ policies to the traditional

⁶⁰ May, 1633, *The Mirror of minds Or Barclay’s Icon animorum, Englished by Tho[mas] May, Esq[ire]*, London: Printed by I. B[eale] for Thomas Walkley, sig. A3^v-A4^r.

⁶¹ May, 1629, sig. A7^r.

⁶² May, 1629, sig. A7^{r-v}.

⁶³ John Dryden, 1900, *Essays of John Dryden*, vol. 1, edited by William Paton Ker, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 253.

⁶⁴ May, 1629, sig. A7^v.

English constitution.⁶⁵ Therefore, Paleit concludes that May's translation 'structure[s] and expresse[s] an *English* political experience, as perceived by contemporary opponents of royal policy, through an analogy with the fall of republican Rome'.⁶⁶

Such combination of scholarly erudition and ideological appropriation of Lucan's political language equally informs some of May's tragedies. The former aspect is visible in *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* and *The Tragedy of Julia Agrippina*. Both feature marginal notes indicating a historiographical source: the former play contains references to Cassius Dio, Plutarch, Svetonius, Florus, Strabo, Callimachus, Appian, Plinius, Solinus, and Lucan; the latter to John Xiphilin's epitome of Dio's *Roman History* or to Dio himself.⁶⁷ The use of printed marginal notes was an established practice since the invention of printing and had a variety of purposes.⁶⁸ One of them was the cross-reference to sources either via direct quotation or via a brief citation. Examples of this practice in dramatic texts can be found in Matthew Gwinne's *Nero tragoedia nova* (1603), which cites a variety of classical sources, but the most influential author who introduced both quotations and citations in English dramatic texts is Ben Jonson. According to Evelyn B. Tribble, Jonson first made use of these cross-references in 1604, when he published *B. Jon. His Part of King James His Royal and Magnificent Entertainment*.⁶⁹ However, this text is not a play but rather an account of the entertainments organized to celebrate James' entrance into London on the occasion of the opening of his first Parliament. Jonson later applied the same practice in his masques and in *Sejanus* but, after 1605, when the play appeared in a quarto edition, Jonson abandoned this strategy; in his 1616 folio, *Sejanus* was printed without the marginal notes of the 1605 edition.⁷⁰ In the epistle 'To the Readers' of the quarto, Jonson himself motivates his decision to include notes by saying that he did it 'to shew [his] integrity in the *Story*, and save [him]selfe in those common Torturers, that bring all wit to the Rack'.⁷¹ As William W. E. Slights explains, the notes had two functions: 'first, to impress those who cannot find any meaning in his text; second, to disarm those who would find dangerous meanings

⁶⁵ Paleit, 2013, pp. 224-233, 239-241.

⁶⁶ Paleit, 2013, p. 233.

⁶⁷ May, 1639, *The Tragedy of Cleopatra, Queen of Ægypt*, London: Printed by Thomas Harper for Thomas Walkly, *passim*. May, 1639, *The Tragedy of Julia Agrippina, Emperesse of Rome*, London: Printed by Ric[hard] Hodgkinsonne for Thomas Walkly, *passim*. Xiphilin's epitome was first printed in 1558 in Basel; see Heinrich Wolf, 1914, 'Thomas May's *Tragedy of Cleopatra, Queen of Ægypt*', Löwen: Druck und Verlag der Materialen zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas, p. 3; see also Joe Wilkes Berry, Jr., 1964, *A Critical Old-Spelling Edition of The Tragedy of Cleopatra, Queen of Ægypt by Thomas May*, PhD dissertation, Rice University, p. xxix.

⁶⁸ William W. E. Slights, 2001, *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 1-15.

⁶⁹ Evelyn B. Tribble, 1993, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England*, London: The University Press of Virginia, p. 131.

⁷⁰ Tribble, 1993, p. 130.

⁷¹ Ben Jonson, 1605, *Seianus His Fall*, London: Printed by G. Elld for Thomas Thorpe, sig. ¶2^v.

conveyed through political parallels' with real public figures of the time.⁷² However, as Tom Cain points out, if the aim of Jonson's display of scholarship was 'defensive', the use of Tacitus as his main source was 'not [...] an effectual way to disclaim contemporary "application" of [his] play' considering that Tacitus had been the 'political guide' of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, and his allies in their 1601 rebellion.⁷³ Jonson's dropping the notes in the 1616 folio has been variously interpreted: according to Tribble, this change is as a sign of Jonson's commitment to forge his identity as canonical author, independent of 'external authorities'; for Slights, the reason lies not only in the different purposes of the two editions but most importantly in the altered political circumstances: fifteen years later the political protagonists had changed and therefore the possible allusions had lost their strength.⁷⁴

However, in the 1620s the use of Tacitus was no less politically controversial. In the Parliament of 1626, Sir John Eliot, Justice of Peace, openly attacked the Duke of Buckingham assimilating him to Sejanus and frequently referred to Tacitus in *Monarchie of Man*, a treatise he wrote while imprisoned in the Tower between 1629 and his death in 1632.⁷⁵ In 1627, the Dutch humanist Isaac Dorislaus, newly appointed first lecturer of history at Cambridge, delivered two lectures on Tacitus in terms that sounded dangerous to the monarchical constitution and, under the pressure of Dorislaus' Cambridge opponent Matthew Wren, the King prevented the Dutch scholar from lecturing again.⁷⁶ These circumstantial events could explain why, even if May's principal source for his *Julia Agrippina* is Tacitus's *Annales*, the marginal notes in the play only refer to Xiphilinus or Dio.⁷⁷

Although May avoids making his use of Tacitus explicit, he does not eschew classical authors associated with a controversial political outlook altogether. As we have seen, he translated Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and even wrote a continuation of it. Also, while in *Tragedy of Cleopatra* Lucan is mentioned only once in the margins, May's use of *Bellum Civile* in the play is far more extensive than the author acknowledges: May ideologically appropriates Lucan's language in several passages

⁷² Slights, 2001, p. 29. On the allusion to the contemporary political situation in *Sejanus*, see Slights, 2001, pp. 29-33 and Tom Cain, 2014, 'Introduction' to Jonson's *Sejanus His Fall*, in Ben Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson Online*, edited by David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson, online edition: Cambridge University Press.

⁷³ Cain, 2014. On the reception of Tacitus in the early modern period, see Alexandra Gajda, 2009, 'Tacitus and Political Thought in Early Modern Europe, c. 1530-c.1640', in A. J. Woodman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 253-268.

⁷⁴ Tribble, 1993, p. 130; see also Slights, 2001, p. 32.

⁷⁵ Gajda, 2009, p. 267; see also Skinner, 2004, p. 322; Conrad Russell, 2008, 'Eliot, Sir John (1592-1632)', in *ODNB*; Harold Hulme, 1957, *The Life of Sir John Eliot, 1592 to 1632, Struggle for Parliamentary Freedom*, New York: New York University Press, p. 137.

⁷⁶ As Alexandra Gajda points out, Dorislaus' 'radical use' of Tacitus in scholarship was translated into action when he became a member of the counsel prosecuting the King at his trial for high treason; see Gajda, 2009, p. 267; see also Margo Todd, 2008, 'Dorislaus, Isaac (1595-1649)', in *ODNB*.

⁷⁷ F. Ernst Schmid, 1914, 'Einleitung', in May, *Thomas May's Tragedy of Julia Agrippina*, p. 10.

of the play, thus extending his reception of Lucan to his drama.⁷⁸ However, as Paleit demonstrates, May's relation to Lucan is not always direct as in his translation of the *Bellum Civile* but is mediated by Jonson's own reception of the Latin poet.⁷⁹

Jonson's response to Lucan is not as ideological as May's. Unlike May, Jonson does not deploy Lucan 'as a vehicle for expressing a distinctively English political experience of accelerating (and threatening) political transformation'.⁸⁰ To be sure, Jonson uses Lucan to reflect on 'contemporary ideological trends', but, on the whole, in Jonson as well as other authors up to the 1620s, Lucan is still chiefly treated as a repository of imagery to depict crime and to 'explore the morality of courts and courtiers, often negatively or satirically'.⁸¹ This is not to say that Jonson and other playwrights were immune to the possible ideological implications of Lucan's poem for contemporary England but that, as we have seen, May's response was among 'the frankest expressions' of such ideological reading of Lucan.⁸² May's franker expression than Jonson's is well exemplified in the different way in which the two authors associate contemporary personalities with figures of the classical past. Jonson implicitly invites readers to compare Cato and Brutus in his *Sejanus* with the dedicatee of his *Epigrams* and *Catiline His Conspiracy*, i.e., William, second Earl of Pembroke, only by adopting a similar language in the dedication to the epigrams.⁸³ May equally associates Pembroke with Brutus and Cato but he does so within the same poem, in the dedication of Book 2 of his Lucan translation; similarly, in Book VIII the Earl of Lincoln is implicitly identified with Pompey and in Book IX Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, with Cato.⁸⁴

Overall, May was deeply influenced by Jonson. This is not only due to the mere fact that he read Jonson's works but also to their decade-long friendship, as testified by the poems they wrote for each other. Jonson contributed a congratulatory poem in May's 1627 translation of Lucan entitled 'To My Chosen Friend, The Learned Translator of Lucan, Thomas May, Esquire', in which Jonson defines him as '*Genius*'.⁸⁵ In turn, May wrote one of the elegies included in the memorial volume *Jonsonus Virbius* (1638): therein, he extols Jonson as the 'King of *English Poetry*', assimilates him to Lucan and himself to Statius, and returns the courtesy of praising his '*Genius*'.⁸⁶ May probably

⁷⁸ Paleit, 2013, pp. 220-221, 228-230.

⁷⁹ Paleit, 2013, pp. 216-224

⁸⁰ Paleit, 2013, p. 163.

⁸¹ Paleit, 2013, pp. 130, 132.

⁸² Paleit, 2013, p. 133.

⁸³ Paleit, 2013, pp. 218-219.

⁸⁴ Norbrook, 1999, p. 45; see also Paleit, 2013, p. 219.

⁸⁵ Ben Jonson, 1627, 'To My Chosen Friend, The Learned Translator of Lucan, Thomas May, Esquire', in *ML*, sig. a7^r.

⁸⁶ Paleit, 2013, p. 223; see also Brian Duppa (ed.), 1638, *Jonsonus Virbius, Or, The Memorie of Ben: Johnson*, London: Printed by E. P[urslowe] for Henry Seile, p. 21. For the meanings of 'genius' in literary criticism, especially in the late sixteenth-century, see David Hopkins, 2005, 'Dryden and His Contemporaries', in Stuart Gillespie and David Hopkins (eds.), *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English, Volume 3: 1660-1790*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 55-66.

befriended Jonson at the Inns of Court, where the poet had many influential friends such as Francis Bacon, Sir John Harington, John Donne, John Selden, and Francis Beaumont.⁸⁷ May, who had been admitted to Gray's Inn in 1615, soon joined the constellation of literary figures that Jonson met at the law schools. While he may have been introduced to the Mermaid wits or 'Sirenical Gentlemen' – the group that monthly convened at the Mermaid tavern in Bread Street – May was probably a member of the 'Tribe of Ben', as Jonson defines the group of friends who gathered at the Apollo Room of the Devil and St Dunstan tavern in the 1620s.⁸⁸ May is also listed among the closest acquaintances of Edward Hyde, future Earl of Clarendon, while he was a law student at the Inns of Court; the account Hyde gives in his biography suggests the presence of 'a small, friendly circle of common-lawyers and ex-Inns of Court writers' centred on Jonson and including, alongside May, figures such as John Selden, John Vaughan, Sir Kenelm Digby, Charles Cotton, and Thomas Carew.⁸⁹ Finally, May was also a member of the Great Tew Circle, but, according to Ian Donaldson, it is unlikely that Jonson ever participated in these meetings due to his poor health.⁹⁰

Considering May's friendly and literary association with Jonson, it should come as no surprise that in his Roman plays May closely followed Jonson's scholarly approach. What is surprising is that May embarked on writing Roman plays in line with Jonson's considering the fact that both *Sejanus* and *Catiline* were failures in terms of popular success. Quite predictably, like Jonson, May apparently had to face criticism against his Roman plays. In the dedication to his translation of Virgil, as Chester points out, May is probably betraying his disappointment with the negative reception of his Roman tragedies, when he thus expresses his preference for translation over his own works:

Whose [Virgil's] Poem if I have truly rendered, I thinke it better than publishing mine owne fancies to the World, especially in an Age so much cloyed with cob-webbe Inventions, and Unprofitable Poemes.⁹¹

In May's translation of *Bellum Civile*, Jonson has left traces in his use of Lucan in moralizing as well as stylistic terms. May was particularly receptive both to Jonson's critical assessment of Lucan's style – as is evident in May's dedicatory epistle to his translation of the *Bellum Civile* and the *Continuation* – and to Jonson's imitation of Lucan in his own plays and masques; in Paleit's

⁸⁷ Sara Van den Berg, 2000, 'True Relation: The Life and Career of Ben Jonson', in Richard Harp and Stanley Stewart (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁸ Ian Donaldson, 2013, 'Jonson, Benjamin [Ben]', in *ODNB*; see also W. David Kay, 1995, *Ben Jonson: A Literary Life*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 100. The definition of 'Tribe of Ben' is included in Jonson's poem is 'An Epistle Answering to One That Asked to be Sealed of the Tribe of Ben'; see Donaldson, 2013; Kay, 1995, p. 174.

⁸⁹ Edward Hyde, 1827, *The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon [...] Written By Himself: Volume The First*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 30; see also Paleit, 2013, p. 222.

⁹⁰ Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 410.

⁹¹ May, 1628, sig. A3^v; see also Chester, 1932, p. 40.

words, May ‘follow[s] Jonson in tone, content, and technique’.⁹² A prominent example of both aspects is how May responds to one of the most famous episodes of *Bellum Civile*, namely the necromancy performed by the witch Erictho in Thessaly, a passage which Jonson imitated passingly in *Catiline* (1611) and more extensively in *The Masque of Queenes* (1609).⁹³ In Book 6 of *Bellum Civile*, before the decisive battle of Pharsalus, Pompey’s son Sextus decides to consult the Thessalian witch Erictho in order to know the outcome of the impending conflict; the witch fulfils his request by reanimating the corpse of a dead soldier, who foretells a dire destiny for the Pompeians (VI.413-830). In *The Masque of Queenes* – which sets forth an antimasque of malign witches in opposition to the main masque of heroic queens including Queen Anne herself – Jonson explicitly acknowledges his debt to Lucan’s Erictho episode in a printed marginal note glossing the line ‘From the lakes and from the fens’:

These places, in their own nature dire and dismal, are reckoned up as the fittest from whence such persons should come, and were notably observed by that excellent Lucan in the description of his Erictho, [*Civil War*,] 6.[550-3].⁹⁴

When one of the hags relates the ingredients she has been gathering, another marginal note refers to the same Lucanic episode as ‘written with an admirable height’, quoting directly from Lucan, and comparing it with an Ovidian scene of witchcraft.⁹⁵ This kind of acknowledgment of sources in the margins is comparable to Thomas Watson’s practice in the headnotes of *Hekatompathia* (see section 3.1.2). As we have seen, unlike Jonson in this masque, May never quotes whole passages from his sources but, like Jonson in *Sejanus*, he does occasionally cite them in the margins in the form of printed marginal notes.

What seems to have deeply impressed May is less Jonson’s quoting passages from his sources than his phrase ‘admirable height’ in his appraisal of Lucan’s style: in the dedicatory epistles as well as throughout the translation, May repeatedly uses the words ‘height’ or ‘high’ not only with reference to Lucan’s style but also to Rome’s grandeur, thereby meaning its ‘political amplitude’.⁹⁶ In the

⁹² Paleit, 2013, pp. 216-217, 221.

⁹³ Jonson, 2014, *Catiline His Conspiracy*, edited by Inga-Stina Ewbank, in Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition*, I.1.50; see also Jonson, 2014, *The Masque of Queenes*, edited by David Lindley, in Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition*.

⁹⁴ Jonson, 2014, *The Masque of Queenes*, note to line 38.

⁹⁵ Jonson, 2014, *The Masque of Queenes*, note to line 137: ‘*Spuma canum, lupi crines, nodus hyenae, oculi draconum, serpentis membrana, aspidis aures* are all mentioned by the ancients in witchcraft. And Lucan particularly, [*Civil War*,] 6.[670–2]: *Huc quicquid foetu genuit Natura sinistro Miscetur, non spumana canum, quibus unda timori est, Viscera non Lycis, non durae nodus hyenae Defuit, etc.* And Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 7.[264–74] reckons up others. But for the spurning of the eyes, let us return to Lucan, in the same book [538–43], which piece (as all the rest) is written with an admirable height: *Ast ubi servantur saxis, quibus intimus humor Ducitur, et tracta durescunt tabe medullae Corpora, tunc omneis avide desaevit in artus, Immersitque manus oculis, gaudetque gelatos Effodisse orbeis, et siccae pallida rodit Excrementa manus*’.

⁹⁶ Paleit, 2013, pp. 216-217.

epistle prefacing the whole translation, May extols ‘the high and rich conceits of *Lucan*’ and defines the *Bellum Civile* as ‘a true *History* adorned and heightned with *Poetical raptures*’; in the same letter, May employs ‘height’ to refer to Rome’s political state (*ML*, sig. a2^v). As Paleit points out, the dedication to Book 6 is clearly informed by Jonson’s marginal notes in *The Masque of Queens*: like Jonson, May mentions two famous witches in other classical writers, namely Canidia in Horace and Medea in Ovid (*ML*, sig. K1^r).⁹⁷ May appropriates Lucan through Jonson also in the text of his translation of the Erictho episode; however, May’s translation also contains frequent echoes from another near-contemporary source, John Marston’s *Sophonisba* (1606).⁹⁸ Thus, as Paleit observes, ‘May’s practice as a translator included borrowings from early dramatic adaptations’.⁹⁹

May’s practice as a playwright equally displays an influence of contemporary drama but also what we may term self-borrowing.¹⁰⁰ Considering that May wrote his classical tragedies while he was working on his translation of Lucan, textual correspondences between May’s classical tragedies and Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, either in the original or in May’s own translation, are to be expected. This is the case in *Cleopatra* and in *Antigone: Cleopatra*, written before the publication of May’s first three books of Lucan, is probably more dependent on the original text of the *Bellum Civile* than May’s version, whereas in *Antigone* May evidently redeploys passages from his translation of Lucan.¹⁰¹ In the next section, we shall look at this tragedy more closely: starting from a reflection on its genre, we will then consider the compositional processes that inform this play and finally contextualize it in the light of theoretical as well as political contexts.

4.2. *The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princesse*

4.2.1. *A classicizing play with Baroque elements*

May’s *The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princesse* has been largely ignored by scholars: there are only three studies specifically devoted to this play, one of them not even published.¹⁰² In the latest,

⁹⁷ Paleit, 2013, p. 218.

⁹⁸ For instances of textual borrowings from Jonson and Marston, see Paleit, 2013, p. 218, n. 14.

⁹⁹ Paleit, 2013, p. 218.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Self-borrowing’ is a term usually employed in music studies; see Richard Beyer, 2001, ‘Das musikalische Selbstzitat: Eigene Musik in anderen Werken nochmals verwendet’, *Das Orchester*, 49, 4, pp. 20-24; see also Mary Ann Smart, 2000, ‘In Praise of Convention: Formula and Experiment in Bellini’s Self-Borrowings’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 53, 1, pp. 25-68.

¹⁰¹ For the echoes of his Lucan translation in *Cleopatra*, see Paleit, 2013, pp. 142, 229.

¹⁰² E. J. Lautner, 1970, *A Modern-Spelling Edition of Thomas May’s The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princesse*, PhD dissertation, Case Western Reserve University; see also Karen Britland, 2006, ‘Buried Alive: Thomas May’s 1631 *Antigone*’, in Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (eds.), *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary Essays on Culture and Politics in the*

i.e., the Malone Society reprinting issued in 2016, Matteo Pangallo's introduction provides detailed information about the circumstances of publication and the typographical features of the fourteen extant copies of the play's single printed edition, which appeared in octavo in 1631 for the publisher Benjamin Fisher.¹⁰³ The printer was Thomas Harper, who initiated a long collaboration with Fisher with the publication of May's *Antigone* and printed also his *Tragedy of Cleopatra* in 1639.¹⁰⁴ Scholars usually date the writing of this play back to 1627-1631 but attempts at a more precise dating have also been made: while Karen Britland is inclined to set the date between 1629 and 1630, Martin Wiggins proposes the year 1627 as the 'best guess' for the date of composition on account of the 'affinities with the translation of Lucan' published the same year (see section 4.2.2 below).¹⁰⁵

At the beginning of the dedicatory epistle addressed to Endymion Porter, groom of the King's bedchamber, May presumes that

[t]his Tragedy of *Antigone* may perchance (considering the subject of it) be thought a Poem too sad and balefull to bee read with pleasure, or presented with delight upon any Stage. (*MA*, 19-26; sigg. A3^{r-v})

The reference to the possibility of reading of the play ('bee read') has led G. E. Bentley to argue that May was not writing for the stage, a conclusion corroborated by the absence of any record of performance.¹⁰⁶ However, as Pangallo notes, May does not envisage reading as the only way of enjoying the play: he equally refers to a possible performance 'upon any Stage'.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the definition of the tragedy as 'Poem' should not mislead us into thinking that the tragedy was not meant to be acted: early modern critics conventionally conceive of drama as a kind of poetry.¹⁰⁸ As an example, Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* numbers the 'Tragic' amongst the various kinds of poets.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the play does contain stage directions and, except for *The Old Couple*, for which there is only scanty evidence of a 1630 performance, May's other plays were all performed: *The Heir* was staged at the Bull in 1620; the lost Latin tragedy *Julius Caesar* was probably staged in 1616-1617,

Caroline Era, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 138-153. In 2016, the Malone Society reprinted the original edition; see Thomas May, 2016, *The Tragedy of Antigone: 1631*, edited by Matteo Pangallo, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

¹⁰³ Matteo Pangallo, 2016, 'Introduction', in May, *The Tragedy of Antigone: 1631*, pp. vii-xxvii.

¹⁰⁴ Pangallo, 2016, p. xiv.

¹⁰⁵ Britland, 2006, p. 151, n. 2; Martin Wiggins, 2017, *British Drama 1533-1642: Vol. 8: 1624-1631*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 275.

¹⁰⁶ Bentley, 1956, vol. 4, p. 833; see also Pangallo, 2016, p. vii.

¹⁰⁷ Pangallo, 2016, p. vii.

¹⁰⁸ M. J. Sidnell, 1991, 'Introduction', in *Sources of Dramatic Theory: 1: Plato to Congreve*, edited by M. J. Sidnell, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁹ Sir Philip Sidney, 2002, *An Apology for Poetry Or The Defence of Poesy*, edited by Geoffrey Shepherd and revised by R. W. Maslen, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 87.

either at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, or at Gray's Inn; *Cleopatra* and *Julia Agrippina* were performed in an unknown venue, in 1626 and 1628 respectively.¹¹⁰

Notwithstanding these reservations, scholars generally exclude that this play was ever performed and accordingly label it as a piece of closet drama.¹¹¹ Pangallo reaches the same conclusion on the grounds of two interrelated factors: first, the text's 'uncharacteristically undramatic style' in comparison with May's other plays, which is mainly due to its 'high level of declamation and descriptive narration'; second, the influence of Robert Garnier's *Antigone ou la Piété* (1580), which is also highly 'undramatic' and may have contributed to the declamatory style of May's version.¹¹² If it was indeed not staged, May's *Antigone* would then have belonged to an elitist culture as much as Watson's *Antigone* did in the 1580s. Had it not been performed, Watson's *Antigone* would have constituted a perfect example of closet drama: being a Latin version from a Greek text, it epitomizes the most elitist trend of academic translations. As Marta Straznicky has noted, the boundaries between closet drama and academic drama were not clear-cut as 'they were equally rooted in what is deemed to be a private culture'.¹¹³ Alongside the subject, this degree of elitism is the only aspect that Watson's and May's *Antigone* actually share. However, despite the alliance registered by Straznicky between 'domestic playreading and courtly or academic stage', the degree of privacy and isolation of individual playreading remains inevitably higher and it seems very improbable that May conceived this tragedy as a piece of closet drama from the outset.

A play on the story of Antigone was an unconventional choice for the time. Antigone is barely mentioned in contemporary poetry: her name appears in Thomas Evans' *Oedipus Three Cantoes* (1615), a poem in iambic pentameters which is indebted to Seneca's *Oedipus* (see section 2.2.2), and in Thomas Heywood's *Gynaikeion* (1624), both in the fourth book – in the section discussing Jocasta among 'incestuous women' – and in the seventh, which is devoted to 'the Piety of Daughters towards their Parents, Women to their Children, Sisters to their Brothers, Wives to their Husbands, etc.'.¹¹⁴ In any case, Antigone's name is usually associated with sisterly devotion or filial duty in other contemporary prose works.¹¹⁵ Rather, May's choice of the Antigone myth might have been partly

¹¹⁰ On *The Heir*, see Chester, 1932, pp. 32, 76; on *The Old Couple*, see Chester, 1932, p. 76 and Wiggins, 2017, p. 422. On *Cleopatra* and *Julia Agrippina*, see Wiggins, 2017, pp. 211, 324. On *Julius Caesar*, see Chester, 1932, p. 99 and Domenico Lovascio, 2016, 'Julius Caesar', in *Lost Plays Database*, edited by Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle, Folger Shakespeare Library [accessed on 11 July 2019 at https://lostplays.folger.edu/Julius_Caesar].

¹¹¹ Pangallo, 2016, p. xvi; see also Britland, 2006, p. 152, n. 9. However, as Pangallo notes, R. S. Miola seems to imply that it was performed; see R. S. Miola, 2014, 'Early Modern Antigones: Receptions, Refractions, Replays', *Classical Reception Journal*, 6, 2, p. 239.

¹¹² Pangallo, 2016, p. xvi.

¹¹³ Marta Straznicky, 2004, 'Closet drama', in A. F. Kinney (ed.), *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, online edition: Blackwell.

¹¹⁴ Thomas Evans, 1615, *Oedipus Three Cantoes*, London: Printed by Nicholas Okes, sig. D6^v; Thomas Heywood, 1624, *GYNAIKEION. Or Nine Boookes of Various History Concerning Women; Inscribed by the Names of the Nine Muses*, London: Printed by Adam Islip, pp. 173, 313.

¹¹⁵ Miola, 2014, p. 232.

motivated by the popularity of Garnier's *Antigone ou la Piété* (1580), which was reprinted five times during Garnier's lifetime and republished several times until 1626.¹¹⁶ The international success of Garnier's version is also testified by the fact that it was translated into Dutch as *Tragedie, ofte Treurspel, van Edipes en Antigone* by Willem Baudous (1618).¹¹⁷

The title, on the other hand, is quite traditional in its form: the presence of the subtitle follows a pattern already present in Shakespearean plays such as *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1600-1601), *The Tragedy of Othello, The Moor of Venice* (1603-1604), *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (1607), and *Cymbeline, King of Britain* (1610-1611). Alongside these precedents, the reference to Antigone's Theban origin in the subtitle may have been prompted by Ovid's mention of the heroine in his *Tristia* ('Fratrem Thebana peremptum / supposuit tumulo rege vetante soror', 'The Theban sister laid her slain brother beneath the tomb though the king forbade'), which Heywood quotes in his *Gynaikeion*.¹¹⁸ What is not traditional in May, however, is the foregrounding of female characters in the titles of all his extant tragedies: *The Tragedy of Cleopatra, Queen of Ægypt*; *The Tragedy of Agrippina, Empresse of Rome*; and *The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princesse*. As Tanya Pollard has pointed out, apart from few exceptions such as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, early modern English plays tended to feature male names in their titles, a trend which, albeit not dominant, was increasing in the early seventeenth century.¹¹⁹ By focussing on three female volitional figures, May seems to go directly to the ancient Greek tradition of entitling plays after their female protagonists, thereby confirming the impression that he had an elite audience in mind.

Similarly classicizing features are the presence of choral sections and a messenger. As Inga Stina-Ewbank observes with reference to Jonson's *Catiline*, which features five choral songs, the chorus and the messenger are markers of the tradition of closet dramatists linked to Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke.¹²⁰ Small choral sections are also present in Shakespearean plays and choral

¹¹⁶ Jean-Dominique Beaudin, 1997, 'Introduction', in Robert Garnier, *Antigone ou la Piété*, edited by Jean-Dominique Beaudin, Paris: Honoré Champion, p. 53. According to WorldCat, Garnier's tragedies were printed until 1626; before that date, the tragedies went through many publications. There are twenty-eight extant copies of Garnier's tragedies published between 1588, the date of the fourth edition of Garnier's tragedies while the playwright was still alive, and 1626; see WorldCat [accessed on 21st September 2018 at https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=ti%3Atragedies+au%3Arobert+garnier&fq=yr%3A1589..1700+%3E&dblist=638&se=yr&sd=desc&fc=yr:_25&qt=show_more_yr%3A&c=cookie].

¹¹⁷ Willem Baudous, 1618, *Tragedie, ofte Treurspel, van Edipes en Antigone*, t'Amsterdam: ghedruct by Joris Jacobsz Veseler. Huber Meeus classifies it as a free translation from Robert Garnier and points out that the date indicated in the edition (1518) is wrong: it was published in 1618, not in 1518; see Hubert Meeus, 1983, *Repertorium van het ernstige drama in de Nederlanden 1600-1650*, Leuven: Acco, p. 22.

¹¹⁸ Ovid, 1939, *Tristia, Ex Ponto*, translated by Arthur Leslie Wheeler, London: William Heinemann, pp. 112-113 [Ov.Tr.3.3.67-68]. Heywood's quotation reads 'peremplam' for 'peremptum' but translates correctly as follows 'The Theban sister to his Tombe did bring / Her slaughter'd brothers Corse, despite the king'; see Heywood, 1624, p. 324.

¹¹⁹ Tanya Pollard, 2017, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages*, pp. 89, 110, n. 1.

¹²⁰ Inga Stina-Ewbank, 2014, 'Introduction' to Ben Jonson's *Catiline His Conspiracy*, in Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition*.

comments are mostly entrusted to some of the characters.¹²¹ However, it is more at Jonson that May looks for his classicizing drama. Jonson's chorus in *Catiline* is the result of the playwright's intense study of the classical dramatic tradition, both Greek and Latin, and the four choral sections display a greater similarity to 'the Aeschylean than the Senecan model' in their growing participation in the action of the other characters.¹²² In May, the participatory attitude of the chorus is even more marked than in Jonson: on three occasions, the chorus interacts with other characters, thereby following more closely the Greek rather than the Senecan tradition (*MA*, 445-515, 1194-1273, 1746-1782; sigg. B6^r-B7^v, D3^v-D5^r, E5^{r-v}). In so doing, May is closer to Sophocles according to Aristotle's assessment of the tragedians: in the *Poetics*, Aristotle distinguishes between Euripides' and Sophocles' approach to the chorus and clearly expresses his preference for the latter, who treats the chorus as one of the actors (Arist.*Poet.*1456a25-28).

What is innovative in May in comparison to Jonson is the presence of three different choruses: a group of Thebans, who in the choral songs speak in rhyming tetrameter or pentameter couplets (*MA*, 410-443, 691-738; sigg. B5^v-B6^r, C2^v-C3^v); one of old men, who speak in pentameter blank verse (*MA*, 1465-1520, 1746-1789; sigg. D8^r-E1^r, E5^{r-v}); and one of Argive widows, who interact with the character of Argia's sister Deiphile in rhyming iambic tetrameter couplets (*MA*, 1194-1213, 1228-1239, 1250-1261, 1268-1273; sigg. D3^v-D5^r). The last chorus may have been derived from a reference to mourning Argive women in Statius' *Thebaid*, which is one important classical source for the play (Stat.XI.105). However, the model for the alternation between multiple choral groups is a near-contemporary play, Garnier's *Antigone*, which also features three distinct choruses, one of Thebans, one of old men, and one of Theban women.

What is not classicizing in this play is certainly the inclusion of 'a romantic subplot', centred on the love between Antigone and Aemon.¹²³ This aspect is typical of May's drama, particularly of his comedies, but a subplot on two lovers appears also in his tragedy *Julia Agrippina*.¹²⁴ In so doing, May not only anticipates the trend of including subplots in Restoration tragedies such as John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee's *Oedipus* (1679) but also probably responds to ongoing discussions among dramatists.¹²⁵ In his *Discoveries*, Jonson seems to be referring to the need to insert subplots within a play when he claims that there is the necessity that 'place be left for digression and art. For the

¹²¹ On the chorus in Shakespeare and early modern English drama, see D. J. Palmer, 1982, "We shall know by this fellow": Prologue and Chorus in Shakespeare', *The John Rylands Library*, 64, pp. 501-521 and Silvia Bigliuzzi, 2015, 'Chorus and Choralities in Early Modern English Drama', *Skenè*, 1, 1, pp. 101-133.

¹²² Stina-Ewbank, 2014.

¹²³ Chester, 1932, p. 98.

¹²⁴ Chester, 1932, pp. 83-87.

¹²⁵ Maximilian E. Novak, 1984, 'Commentary', in John Dryden, *The Works of John Dryden: Plays Vol. XIII: All for Love, Oedipus, Troilus and Cressida*, edited by Maximilian E. Novak and George R. Guffey, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 450-469.

episodes and digressions in a fable are the same that household stuff and other furniture in a house'.¹²⁶ As Lorna Hutson has pointed out, Jonson is here influenced by the dramatic theories of Daniel Heinsius, who in his *De tragoediae constitutione* (1611) conceives episodes in rhetorical terms as 'amplifications' or, in J. H. Meter's terms, as 'embellishing enlargement[s]'.¹²⁷

Both Jonson and May were familiar with Heinsius' work. Jonson met Heinsius in Leiden in 1613 during his tour to the Continent and was very much influenced by the Dutch scholar's work as a classicist: Jonson took into account Heinsius' critical edition of Horace (1610) for his translation of the *Ars poetica* (1640-1641) and, as we have seen, the *Discoveries* are evidently informed by *De tragoediae constitutione*.¹²⁸ According to a letter sent by Heinsius himself, it seems that May met the Dutch scholar in 1640 and gave him a presentation copy of his *Supplementum Lucani*; as Paleit surmises, this was probably due to the fact that Heinsius' son Nicholas wrote a gratulatory poem to that work of May.¹²⁹ In any case, May must have known Heinsius' scholarship earlier than the 1640s, probably through Jonson. Furthermore, as noted above, May mentions the Dutch scholar in the preface to his translation of Lucan (1627).¹³⁰ It is therefore reasonable to think that Heinsius' theories on tragedy – particularly those contained in his *De tragoediae constitutione* so influential for Jonson – might have contributed to prompt the theoretical reflections which May expounds in the dedicatory epistle of his *Antigone*. Therein, May asks a question that informs the whole discussion: considering how 'sad and baleful' tragedies are, May wonders '[w]hy tragedyes have at any time bin allowed' (*MA*, 28-29; sig. A3^v). As a justification for this paradox, May formulates 'some few coniectures' (*MA*, 57-58; sig. A4^r): he identifies two reasons for the paradoxical success of tragedy, i.e., the response of its audience and its high style.

In his discussion on the first justification of tragedy, May hinges his reflections on the assumption that the audience is divided into two categories: 'all the spectatours are either wretched or fortunate' (*MA*, 58-59; sigg. A4^{r-v}). Starting from this premise, he analyses all the possible reactions of the two groups of spectators. The wretched enjoy tragedies because they feel comforted in seeing that sorrow is a condition shared by others: they are 'in some sort eased by fellowship in woe' (*MA*, 60-61; sig. A4^v). For the fortunate, May envisages two different responses: either 'delight' or 'wholesome sorrow' (*MA*, 66-67; sig. A4^v). The fortunate feel delight when they realize that their

¹²⁶ Ben Jonson, 2014, *Discoveries*, edited by Lorna Hutson, in Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition* [1948-1950].

¹²⁷ Lorna Hutson, 2014, note to line 1949 of Jonson, *Discoveries*; see also J. H. Meter, 1984, *The Literary Theories of Daniel Heinsius*, Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, p. 191.

¹²⁸ Colin Burrow, 2014, 'Introduction' to *Horace His Art of Poetry*, edited by Colin Burrow, in Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition*; see also Donaldson, 2011, p. 302. On Heinsius' influence on Jonson, see Sellin, 1968, pp. 147-163.

¹²⁹ Paleit, 2013, p. 286; see Nicholas Heinsius, 1640, 'In M. Annæi Lucani Pharsaliam, a nobili clarissimoque viro D. Thoma Mayo armigero suppleram', in Thomas May, *Supplementum Lucani Libri VII*, Lugduni Batavorum: Typis Wilhelmi Christiani, sigg. *5^{r-v}.

¹³⁰ David McPherson, 1974, 'Ben Jonson's Library and Marginalia: *An Annotated Catalogue*', *Studies in Philology*, 71, 5, p. 49; see also *ML*, sig. a3^v.

situation is much better than the miserable conditions of tragic characters; as May is eager to underline, this is not a kind of sadistic pleasure or *Schadenfreude*, ‘out of malice (as pleased with the woe of others)’ (*MA*, 71; sig. A4^v), but rather represents a form of ‘acknowledgement to those high powers which made the difference’ (*MA*, 73-74; sig. A4^v), i.e., the thankful recognition that the divine has granted them a better fate. Conversely, the fortunate may react to tragedies with sorrow, but a kind of sorrow with a ‘wholesome’ effect. May explains this by drawing a comparison with humoral theory: just as ‘merry tales’ cure melancholy, so the ‘sad representations’ of tragedies limit ‘too great a joy & wantonness of the soule’ (*MA*, 77-80; sig. A5^r). Therefore, in either case, a tragedy is always edifying for the fortunate: it inspires gratitude, if they feel pleasure; it leads them to moderation and restraint, if they feel sorrow. After the analysis of the audience’s response, May identifies the style or ‘expression’ of tragedy, i.e., its constitutive ‘sadness’, as what ‘doth usually afford the best straines of writing’ (*MA*, 85-87; sig. A5^r). Also, for him the best parts of comedies in stylistic terms are the ones which most resemble tragedy, especially those dealing with a thwarted love. The epistle closes with commonplace remarks such as an apologetic comment about the excessive length of the work and a reticent flattery towards the dedicatee’s modesty.

The dedicatory epistle is shaped by contemporary theories on tragedy, particularly those by Heinsius. By the time May offered this explanation for the success of tragedy, early modern writers had been reflecting on the pleasure deriving from tragedies for over a century, in commentaries to Aristotle’s *Poetics* and prefaces to tragedies.¹³¹ However, Heinsius’ crucial contribution to contemporary literary criticism lies in the fact that he foregrounded emotional effects of tragedy and adhered more closely to Aristotle’s poetic concerns without superimposing ‘rhetorical accretions’, whereas earlier discussions had always read Aristotle through rhetorical lenses, especially Horatian and Ciceronian.¹³² The key Aristotelian concept behind May’s first justification, i.e., the audience’s response, is that of *kátharsis* (κάθαρσις, ‘cleansing, purification’, *LSJ*): although May never explicitly refers to it, his reflections are informed by two fundamental interpretations of this concept, namely, the ethical and the medical-therapeutical, aspects to which Heinsius devotes much space in his treatise since for him *kátharsis* and the ensuing arousal of passions are the principal aim of tragedy.¹³³

These sets of implications of *kátharsis* impinge on May’s reflections, as shown in the following passage from the dedicatory epistle of his *Antigone*. Here May focusses on the effects of tragedy on ‘fortunate’ spectators:

¹³¹ Blair Hoxby, 2014, *What Was Tragedy?: Theory and the Early Modern Canon*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 102-103.

¹³² Sellin, 1968, p. 146.

¹³³ Meter, 1984, pp. 168-172; see also Sellin, 1968, p. 127.

if they be delighted, it is in the tast of their prosperity, which appeares greater, set off by an object of such contrariety, and this delight is not out of malice (as pleased by the woe of others) but acknowledgement to those high powers which made the difference; if they be sorrowful, their sorrow is wholesome, for as in melancholly diseases merry tales used to assist nature: so in too great a joy, and wantonnes of the soule, such sad representations are as a good allay, depresing the levity of their thoughts to such a meane, as is fit to entertaine the best contemplations. (*MA*, 67-83; sigg. A4^v-A5^r)

For May the delight that tragedy brings has an edifying outcome: it leads the fortunate to get the awareness of their condition of ‘prosperity’ and thus to be thankful to ‘those high powers which made the difference’. The preliminary distinction between ‘wretched’ and ‘fortunate’ may shed light on this phrase and its possible implications. This dichotomy potentially echoes the debate on predestination which had been dividing Europe since the Reformation but which had regained momentum with the outbreak of the Arminian Controversy in 1609, upon the death of Jacobus Arminius, the initiator of the heretical movement. In the following year, a group of staunch Arminians, called the ‘Remonstrants’, formulated Arminius’ theses in a *Remonstrance*, centred on the belief that election was not unconditioned – as Calvinists maintained – and that God’s grace is granted to all; in their view, evil stemmed from some men’s ability to resist divine grace.¹³⁴ Heinsius himself was particularly exposed to this Controversy since it originated in Leiden, where he had been appointed Professor of Greek; his stance was utterly anti-Arminian.¹³⁵ Although it mainly involved the Dutch Republic, the Controversy (1609-1619) reached also England. In 1612, James I openly took side with the Contra-Remonstrants, i.e., those who adhered to an orthodox Reformed Protestant church and opposed the views of the Arminians. The Controversy’s backwash in England lasted until the 1630s, when the label ‘Arminian’ was still used to refer to William Laud’s presumed heretic positions.¹³⁶ Therefore, the phrase ‘those high powers which made the difference’ in May’s dedicatory epistle might well resound with contemporary religious debates, referring to the ‘difference’ between ‘wretched’ and ‘fortunate’ established by God’s unconditioned election.

The sorrow that tragedy triggers is ‘wholesome’ because it has a moderating effect on the spectators, ‘depresing the levity of their thoughts’. Moderation of excessive emotions is exactly the therapeutic function Heinsius attributed to tragic *kátharsis*. On the basis of Francesco Robortello and Pietro Vettori, Heinsius believed that this deflating effect was mainly achieved by a progressive ‘habituation’, which Heinsius interpreted stoically: for him theatre was ‘a training hall for our passions’¹³⁷ or, as J. H. Meter interprets it, ‘a school of practice for the emotions in which tragic

¹³⁴ Russ Leo, 2019, *Tragedy as Philosophy in the Reformation World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 175.

¹³⁵ Leo, 2019, p. 169.

¹³⁶ Leo, 2019, p. 176; see also Smith, 1998, p. 92.

¹³⁷ Daniel Heinsius, 1971, *On Plot in Tragedy*, translated by Paul R. Sellin and John J. McManmon, Northridge, CA: San Fernando Valley State College, p. 12; see the original in Daniel Heinsius, 2001, *De constitutione tragædiae, La constitution de la tragédie dite ‘La Poétique d’Heinsius’*, edited and translated by Anne Duprat, Geneva: Droz, pp. 124, 126: ‘habitum’, ‘affectuum nostrorum quaedam quasi palestra est’.

disasters act as substitutes for the difficulties of real life'.¹³⁸ Furthermore, the discussion on the 'sad representations' as 'good allay' to lead the excessive 'levity' of the spectators' 'thoughts' to a 'meane' is informed by humoral theory. However, while Heinsius sees *kátharsis* as a 'homoepathic' process, i.e., purging an emotion by first enhancing it and then depleting it by habituation,¹³⁹ May envisages here an 'allopathic' process, in which the excess of one of the humours is cured by its opposite. Hence, for May, just as melancholy is cured by means of 'merry tales' – or also with 'chearfull speeches, faire promises, and good words', as Robert Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) suggests¹⁴⁰ – so excessive 'joy and wantonnes' can be moderated by means of 'sad representations'.¹⁴¹

As noted above, Heinsius' interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics* places a great emphasis on passions. In so doing, Heinsius sets himself very close to the contemporary experience of Baroque drama.¹⁴² Although Baroque is not an early modern aesthetic category but rather an ex-post definition introduced by later critics,¹⁴³ this label unifies a series of features that has no counterpart in the critical language of the time. These features – which include the 'taste for grandeur', 'reliance on strong contrast of light and dark', the inclusion of supernatural elements, and an insistence on the disruptive forces of Nature oppressing man – are subordinated to the intent to arouse intense emotions in the audience; this is not to say that those features were absent in Renaissance drama altogether but that they become far more marked in Baroque drama.¹⁴⁴ As we shall see in the next sections, May's *Antigone* displays some of these traits.

Blair Hoxby distinguishes three kinds of Baroque drama: Baroque tragedy in the grand style, the Baroque *Trauerspiel*, and the regular Baroque tragedy. If we were to classify May's *Antigone* according to this typology, the first category would be the most fitting: Baroque tragedy in the grand style is a kind of drama which is 'modeled on the examples of Sophocles and Euripides and is informed by commentaries on Aristotle's *Poetics*'.¹⁴⁵ Although linguistically May's play cannot be described in terms of 'grandeur', its 'grand style' derives from the presence of structural elements which are clearly derived from the Attic tragedians such as its participatory choruses. Moreover, May is guided by a concern about emotions according to Aristotelian principles. This is evident not only in the dedicatory epistle, in which May articulates his own theory of the audience' response, but also

¹³⁸ Meter, 1984, pp. 168, 172; see also Hoxby, 2014, p. 64.

¹³⁹ Meter, 1984, pp. 169-170.

¹⁴⁰ Robert Burton, 1990, *The Anatomy of Melancholy, Volume II: Text*, edited by Nicolas K. Kiessling, Thomas C. Faulkner, and Rhonda L. Blair, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 109.

¹⁴¹ On allopathic remedies in early modern medicine in England, see Hannah Newton, 2018, *Misery to Mirth: Recovery from Illness in Early Modern England*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 47, 79.

¹⁴² For other similarities between Heinsius and the Baroque dramatic tradition, see Meter, 1984, p. 160.

¹⁴³ Blair Hoxby, 2018, 'Baroque Tragedy', in John D. Lyons (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Baroque*, online edition: Oxford University Press.

¹⁴⁴ Hoxby, 2018.

¹⁴⁵ Hoxby, 2018.

in the text: on a number of occasions, characters manifest a sense of unease at expressing their emotions. Argia asks her sister Deiphile ‘Where shall we vent our grief?’ (*MA*, 520; sig. B7^v), while the chorus of Argive women lament their inability to find ‘new ways’ to express their sorrow:

By what new wayes of grieffe shall we
Our widow’d losses signifie?
What strange expression can become
A woe so strangely burdensome?
No howles, no shriekes, no voice of woe,
[...]
No, nor by actions, such as are
The rending of dishevel’d haire,
Or beating of our breasts; these all
No more then death and funeral
Can shew (*MA*, 1194-1211; sig. D3^v)

Like Roman *praeficae* (hired mourners in Roman antiquity) or professional actors, the Argive women are haunted by doubts as to how to perform their sorrow; their speech thereby acquires metatheatrical implications.

Here May dramatizes the description of the grief of Argive women in Statius’ *Thebaid* (*Stat.Theb.*11.105-110). Statius is only one of the Latin sources May used for his *Antigone*; as noted above, he drew also from contemporary and near-contemporary playwrights. In the next section, I shall consider the ways in which May combines such variety of sources and how his previous work as a translator impinges on the text of his *Antigone*.

4.2.2. *Self-borrowing and functionalized reception*

In Book 7 of *Bellum Civile*, after describing Caesar’s rejoicing at the Pharsalus victory and his decision to deny burial to the bodies of his enemies, Lucan breaks the narration with one of his frequent polemical apostrophes to address Caesar directly and points out that, although the general is the actual victor, the defeated army of Pompeians are somehow temporary winners by occupying the soil with their corpses:

tibi tabentes populi Pharsalica rura
Eripiunt camposque tenent victore fugato. (*Luc.*7.823-824)

The nations that turn to corruption there rob you of Pharsalia: they have routed the conqueror and possess the field.

May translates very closely as follows:

The rotting people challenge Thessaly,
And keep possession 'gainst the conquerer. (*ML*, sig. N7^r)

Probably on account of the similarity between Caesar and Creon's attitude towards dead enemies, May decides to incorporate his own translation of Lucan's apostrophe to Caesar within the choral section in Act 2 of *Antigone*. Here the chorus of Thebans address Creon in rhyming iambic pentameters and challenge him to breathe the air polluted by the rotting corpses still lying on the 'slaughter-smelling fields' (*MA*, 717; sig. C3^r). This passage is an almost exact reproduction of May's translation of Luc.7.809-824:

May's *Antigone*

Thine anger bootes not, *Creon*; 'tis all one
Whether the fire or putrefaction
Dissolve them; all to nature bosome goe,
And to themselves their ends the bodies owe.
If now the Argives bodies be not burn'd,
They shall when earth and seas to flames are
turn'd.
Earth will, inspite of thee, receive againe
What ever she brought forth; and they obtaine
Heavens coverture, that have no graves at all.
Thou that deny'st these people funerall,
Why dost thou fly those slaughter-smelling
fields?
Breathe, if thou canst, the aire this sad place
yeelds.
Those vanquish'd carcasses alone possesse
The ground, and barre the conquerours accesse.
(*MA*, 707-720; sig. C3^r)

May's *Pharsalia*

This anger bootes thee not; for tis all one
Whither the fire, or putrefaction
Dissolve them; all to natures bosome goe,
And to themselves their ends the bodyes ow.
If now these nations, *Caesar*, bee not burn'd,
They shall, when earth, and seas to flames are
turn'd.
The fire shall burne the world, and with the sky
Shall mixe these bones; where ere thy soule
shall bee
Their soules shall goe; in aire thou shalt not fly
Higher, nor better in Avernus ly.
Death frees from fortune: Earth receives againe
What ever shee brought forth: and they obtaine
Heavens coverture, that have no urnes at all.
Thou that deny'st these nations funerall,
Why doost thou fly these slaughter-smelling
feilds?
Breath, if thou canst, the aire this region yeelds,
Or drinke this water, *Caesar*, but from thee
The rotting people challenge Thessaly,
And keep possession 'gainst the conquerer.
(*ML*, sig. N7^r)

Alongside dropping some lines and changing some words ('urnes' into 'graves'; 'nations' into 'people'), May emphasizes the paradoxical victory of the defeated by substituting 'rotting people' with 'vanquished carcasses' in the final rhyming couplet.

A more complex self-borrowing is visible in Act 3, in which May reworks his translation of the Erictho episode into the scene of the three hags consulted by Creon (*ML*, sigg. K8^v-L7^v; see also Luc.6.413-830). In Act 2, Creon sends the guards to watch over Antigone fearing that she is going to violate his decree and bury his brother. In Act 3, while Creon is stealthily checking on the watch in

order to make sure they are performing their duty properly, his attention is drawn by two mysterious figures, which appear all of a sudden: as his servant Ianthus explains, they are ‘hags’ or ‘witches’ (*MA*, 955-956; sig. C7^v), who practise necromancy in order to foretell the future. Creon decides to follow them in order to know his fate. Although Ianthus tries to dissuade Creon from asking the hags about his future and suggests that he interrogates the old priest of Thebes Tiresias instead, Creon is determined to use the black magic of the witches, because he thinks their words are plainer and not wrapped up ‘in mystike riddles’ (*MA*, 982; sig. C7^v). There follows a dialogue between two hags, lamenting the bad state of the corpses on the battlefield: their advanced decomposition has made them unfit to enable communication with the infernal gods. One of the witches is still content with the ‘treasury’ (*MA*, 1004; sig. C8^r) she has been able to gather, consisting of flesh, bones, frankincense, and fire stolen from the pyres, whereas a third witch enters claiming to have found an apt corpse to perform their magic. At that point, Creon reappears to address the witches with a *captatio benevolentiae*: like Sextus Pompeius in Lucan, he praises their intellectual skills (‘you wise interpreters’, ‘subtle eyes’, ‘your deepe skill’; *MA*, 1037, 1040, 1043; sigg. C8^v-D1^r) and underlines that it is thanks to him, who has waged war, that they have so many dead bodies at their disposal (*MA*, 1045-1048; sig. D1^r).¹⁴⁶ The witches agree to his request, gathering all the ingredients necessary for the necromancy, and discuss where the magic should take place: one witch suggests that they move the body to ‘a dark, and squallid cave’ (*MA*, 1084; sig. D1^v), which never saw the light, but another thinks they should not seek but rather create darkness: their power should be able to challenge even the sun at its highest peak. While Creon and Ianthus witness the preparations with fear, one witch invokes all the infernal gods and creatures to send back the ghost that has recently left the body used for the magic and asks him to tell the destiny of Creon. To the amazement of Creon and Ianthus, the corpse starts to speak: it foretells Creon’s impending death as well as other misfortunes that will fall upon his house. Creon, disappointed with the content of the ghost’s prophecy, leaves immediately together with Ianthus.

The borrowing in this scene is more complex for two reasons: first, because May does not simply incorporate a whole section from his translation but condenses Lucan and redistributes phrases and imagery; second, because Lucan interacts with other, contemporary sources. The scene of the meeting of Creon with the hags (*MA*, 955-1161; sigg. C7^v-D3^r) is fraught with echoes of May’s Lucan. An example can be the dialogue between two witches on the lack of corpses on which they can perform their necromancy:

¹⁴⁶ See *ML*, sig. L3^v: ‘Wisest of the Thessalians’; also, the reference to the great disposal of corpses for the witches’ necromancy is derived from an observation of Erichtho: ‘But since late slaughter yeilds / Such choice of carcasses in Thessaly’ (*ML*, sig. L4^r).

1. We come too late, nor can this field
 To us a speaking prophet yield.
 The carcasses, whose cold dead tongues
 From whole, and yet unperish'd lungs,
 T'wixt hell and us should hold commerce,
 And be the blacke interpreters
 Of Stygian consells to relate
 The hid decrees of death and fate;
 Those carcasses I say are growne
 Corrupt, and rotten every one,
 Their marrow's lost, their moistur's gone,
 Their Organs parched by the sunne,
 That there the Ghost drawne up from hells
 Darke entrance, nought, but broken yells,
 And dismall hizzings can afford,
 Not one intelligible word. (*MA*, 986-1002; sig. C8^r)

Some words and phrases ('prophet', 'carcasses', 'lungs', 'marrow', 'dismall hizzings', 'intelligible') are derived from the moment in which Erictho seeks the best corpse for her magic rites:

That a warme new-slaine carcasse with a cleare
 Intelligible voice may greete your eare.
 Least (by the sunne the organs parch'd, and spill'd)
 The dismall ghost uncertaine hizzings yeild.
 [...] *Erictho* comes
 To choose her prophet, griping with her thummes
 Their now cold marrows, seeking where a tongue,
 And lungs, with fillets whole, unwounded hung. (*ML*, sig. L4^r)

Many phrases and words of this passage from May's *Lucan* ('new-slaine carcasse', 'griping', 'lungs', 'fillets') resonate in a later passage of *Antigone*. When a third witch has finally found a suitable corpse, she thus describes the 'carcasse':

By *Creons* trembling watch I bore
 This new slaine carcasse, but before
 I brought him thence, I grip'd him round.
 The fillets of his lungs are sound. (*MA*, 1028-1031; sig. C8^v)

The second witch's speech is equally indebted to May's *Lucan*:

2. But from this field of slaughter I
 Have gather'd up a treasury,
 As dead mens limms wet in the raine,
 Cold gelled tongues and parched braine,
 The slime that on blacke knuckles lyes,
 Shrunke sinews, and congealed eyes,
 Bitt from their fingers nailes ore growne,
 And from young chinns pull'd springing downe.

Flesh bit by Wolves I tooke away,
 And robb'd the vulture of her prey.
 Where *Thebans* funerall pyles had made,
 I did the mourning fire invade,
 And there blacke rags with ashes fill'd,
 And coales on which their fat distill'd,
 I gather'd up, and tooke from thence
 Half-burnt bones, and Frankincense,
 And snatch'd the fatall kindling brand
 From out the weeping parents hand. (*MA*, 1003-1026; sigg. C8^{r-v})

Here May combines phrases that belong to distinct passages of his Lucan translation. Most of the macabre imagery ('dead men limms', 'nailes ore growne', 'black rags with ashes', 'half-burnt bones', and 'Frankincense') is derived from the following passage, in which Lucan describes how Erictho usually wanders through corpses and mangles them to obtain what she needs:

She prays not to the gods, nor humbly cries
 For helpe, nor knowes she pleasing sacrifice;
 But funerall flames to th'altars she preferres,
 Frankincense snatch'd from burning sepulchres.
 [...]
 Yong mens hott ashes, and burnt bones she snatches
 Out of the midst of funeral Piles, and catches
 The kindling brand in their sad parents hand;
 The funerall beds blacke smoaking fragments, and
 Their ashy garments, and flesh-smelling coales.
 But when she finds a coarse entombed whole
 Whose moisture is drawne out, and marrow growne
 Hard by corruption, greedy havoc on
 Each limbe she makes, and from their orbes doth teare
 His congeal'd eyes, and stickes her knucles there.
 She gnawes his nales, now pale, oregrowne, and long:
 [...]
 She gathers dead mens limmes, which showers have wette,
 And marrow harden'd in *Sols* scorching heate. (*ML*, sig. L2^v)

Unlike the phrase 'slaughter-smelling fields' in the passage from Book 7 quoted above, which translates Lucan's 'olentes deseris agros' (Luc.7.821) and which May retains in *Antigone* (*MA*, 717), the phrase 'flesh-smelling coales', translating Lucan's 'olentes membra favillas' (Luc.6.537) is turned into 'coales on which their fat distill'd' (*MA*, 1022), probably in order to fit in the rhythm of the rhyming iambic tetrameter. May reuses also the image of Erictho wreaking havoc among funerals and snatching the fire from 'weeping parents'. Conversely, he displaces the images of the 'moisture' and 'marrow' to the speech of the first witch reported above (*MA*, 997). In the speech of the second witch, the images of the wolves biting flesh and the 'young chinns' are selected from later lines of

May's translation.¹⁴⁷ The preparations for the necromancy are similarly filled with self-borrowings from the translation of Lucan ('hollow side', 'light but light by magic made', 'pale mouldy filth / Bred there by dreary night'; *MA*, 1083, 1085-87; sig. D1^v) but May here, quite originally, develops the idea of the witches' 'light by magic made' by insisting on their ability to create an artificial darkness:

No, no, we scorne the helps of that darke place;
 Not is it honour to our art to finde,
 But make a darknesse fit to serve our ends.
 We that can force a Magike light to glide
 Through closest vaults, can force in spite of day
 A mist of night to rise, which all the rayes
 Of burning *Phoebus* shall want power to scatter.
 Oh would it were not night, but that the sunne
 Rode in his height of strength; how proudly then
 Might we performe our rites, and make it knowne,
 We use not natures darknesse but our owne. (*MA*, 1097-1108; sigg. D1^v-D2^r)¹⁴⁸

The unnatural quality of darkness ('not natures darknesse') is only one of the recurring ideas of 'unnaturalness' in the play: the adjective 'unnaturall' is used twice regarding the fratricidal conflict between Eteocles and Polyneices (*MA*, 374, 395; sig. B5^{r-v}), and twice, in Antigone's words, regarding the impiety of Thebes towards Polyneices' body (*MA*, 681, 866; sigg. C2^v, C5^v).¹⁴⁹ Similarly, in his Lucan translation, May renders 'legi non paruit aether' ('the ether is disobedient to its law', Luc.6.462.) as 'the sky would not obey / the law of Nature' (*ML*, sig. L1^v) during the witches' spells: the reference to 'the law of Nature' is entirely May's addition. At first sight, by 'the law of Nature' May should mean the laws governing nature as the domain studied by natural philosophy. However, if one considers the sweeping presence of Natural Law thinking in early modern English literature – which, as we have seen in Chapter 3, deeply informs Thomas Watson's *Antigone* – one is tempted to see in May's addition a reference to both Natural Law and natural philosophy, insofar as the latter is subsumed in the former. As R. S. White points out, natural philosophy

is to be distinguished from the model of Natural Law deriving from the pre-Socratics, and from Cicero and Aquinas. Natural Law would claim natural philosophy as a sub-branch of itself, a description of the universe emphasising its supreme rationality according to Natural Law, or a physical equivalent of Natural Law.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ 'but teares, or cuts no limbe; till it be bit / By Wolves'; 'From yong mens chinns she puls the growing downe' (*ML*, sig. L3^r).

¹⁴⁸ 'hollow side', 'within the cave was bred by dreary night / Pale mouldy filth', 'no light: / But light by magicke made' (*ML*, sig. L4^v).

¹⁴⁹ In another passage (*MA*, 1258; sig. D4^v), the term is used with reference to the 'Prodigious lust' of Pasiphaë, the mother of the Minotaur.

¹⁵⁰ R. S. White, 1996, *Natural Law in English Renaissance Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 10.

Therefore, since physical nature mirrors and is a ‘proof of the existence of Natural Law’,¹⁵¹ the unsettling ‘unnatural’ power of the witches is a threat to the stability of the material world as much as to the moral system which encompasses it.

In *Antigone*, May considerably summarizes the Lucanic Erictho episode and, unlike the scene of the battlefield covered with bodies from Book 7 of the *Pharsalia*, he does not simply integrate his translation but noticeably reworks it. First, the examples show that May freely moves words and phrases from the original and such displacements showcase the attention he grants to the aspect of *dispositio* (see section 1.2.2 above). Second, while in the epic poem one witch, namely Erictho, is foregrounded, May introduces three hags, thereby establishing a clear parallel with Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and creating the conditions for a dialogic exchange. Apart from the term ‘hags’ (*MA*, 955, 968, 986, 1027, 1083; sigg. C7^v, C8^{r-v}, D3^r), the scene of the three witches in May does not contain evident lexical borrowings from the Shakespearean play (‘you secret, black, and midnight hags!’, ‘filthy hags’, *Macbeth*, 4.1.64, 131).¹⁵² What *Macbeth* provides is rather a model to dramatize the material which May found in Lucan in a narrative form. By substituting Macbeth and Banquo with Creon and Ianthus, and by turning Erictho into three characters, May reuses the Shakespearean precedent of the dialogue between two male characters and three witches as a means to adapt this epic episode, rich in macabre imagery, to the stage. In so doing, May assigns different functions to his sources: the classical source, Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, provides the imagery which is organized within a structural model derived from a contemporary source, Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. Such a differentiated approach to the sources of the text can be defined in terms of functionalized reception, by which I mean the presence of multiple sources each performing a different function within the same target text.¹⁵³

A second example of clear Shakespearean echoes is in Act 5, in which Aemon and Antigone meet for the last time and commit suicide. Aemon reaches her lover in the tomb in which she has been walled up alive by Creon’s orders but, although she is still living when he finds her, it is too late to save her: she has already taken a ‘gentle poison’ (*MA*, 1680; sig. E4^r) to avoid death by starvation and, soon after addressing her last words to her lover, she dies. Aemon falls into despair and, at the attempts of his servant Dircus to comfort him, he answers ‘Doe not in vaine torment a desperate man’ (*MA*, 1705; sig. E4^r), terms that unmistakably recall Romeo’s resigned answer to Paris’ provocations: ‘Good gentle youth, tempt not a desp’rate man’ (*Romeo and Juliet*, 5.3.59).¹⁵⁴ Two other lexical

¹⁵¹ White, 1996, p. 9.

¹⁵² All quotation from Shakespeare’s are taken from William Shakespeare, 2005, *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, edited by Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett, and William Montgomery, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵³ Angelica Vedelago, 2018, ‘The Interplay Between Aeschylus and Seneca in James Thomson’s *Agamemnon*’, *The International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, p. 22.

¹⁵⁴ Miola, 2014, p. 236.

borrowings are detectable in the phrases ‘unsubstantiall bubbles’ (*MA*, 1692; sig. E4^r) of ‘humane joyes’, which echoes Romeo’s defining death as ‘unsubstantial’ (*Romeo and Juliet*, 5.3.103), and ‘long-cross’d love’ (*MA*, 1735), which is evidently modelled on ‘star-crossed lovers’ in the Shakespearean’s play (*Romeo and Juliet*, Prologue.6). However, what May derives from *Romeo and Juliet* is once again less a lexical than a structural model: as E. J. Lautner has observed, the self-inflicted deaths of Antigone and Aemon are ‘a reversal of the manner of death in *Romeo and Juliet*’: in the Shakespearean play, Juliet at first only simulates death by drinking a potion, Romeo actually takes a vial of lethal poison, and finally, after the potion’s effect is over, Juliet reawakens and decides to stab herself with Romeo’s dagger; in May it is Antigone who drinks poison and Aemon who stabs himself.¹⁵⁵ Although, as we have seen, other contemporary playwrights partly influenced May’s style, his language is mainly indebted to Shakespeare. Even when a lexical echo from other authors is seemingly there, Shakespeare ultimately proves the likeliest near-contemporary source: for instance, the phrase ‘unfrequented woods’ (*MA*, 235; sig. B2^v) could have been drawn from Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher’s *The Maid’s Tragedy* (1619) but the phrase occurs also in Shakespeare’s *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (5.4.2).¹⁵⁶

Another structural model is offered by *Antony and Cleopatra*: the dialogue between Aemon and his servant Dircus is clearly reminiscent of the one between Antony and his servant Eros. Although Aemon does not ask Dircus to kill him, both Antony and Aemon formulate a request to their servants leveraging either on friendship (Aemon) or on past agreements (Antony), but Eros and Dircus obey in an unexpected and undesired way. Antony urges Eros to kill him by ordering that he let his sword do at once ‘the thing why thou hast drawn it’ (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 4.15.89); Aemon asks Dircus to ‘to leave [him] heere’ (*MA*, 1711; sig. E4^v). Both Eros and Dircus implement the orders they have received by killing themselves: although they did not accomplish the service required in the substance – killing Antony, in the case of Eros, and leaving Aemon alone, in the case of Dircus – they nonetheless fulfil the request literally, as their ironic final words are meant to suggest. After bidding farewell, Eros ironically asks ‘Shall I strike now?’, omitting who is going to be the real victim of his sword; with a similar double entendre, Dircus says ‘My Lord, I will obey; / And thus I take my leave’ (*MA*, 1713-1714; sig. E4^v). Shakespeare is also one of the sources for the figure of Theseus, but, as we shall see in section 4.2.4. below, May chiefly derived his Theseus from Statius.

Statius is another important source of May’s *Antigone*: his *Thebaid* provides the material for the speech of the messenger relating the duel between Eteocles and Polyneices (*MA*, 453-476; sig. B6^v) as well as for the figure of Argia, Polyneices’ wife and King Adrastus’ daughter (*MA*, 520-595;

¹⁵⁵ Lautner, 1970, p. xl.

¹⁵⁶ Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, 1988, *The Maid’s Tragedy*, edited by T. W. Craik, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 56 [1.1.91].

sigg. B7^v-C1^r; *MA*, 776-934; sigg. C4^r-C7^r). Considering the level of May's classical education, he certainly looked at the original; in any case the first, partial English translation (Thomas Stephens' translation of the first five books) would appear only in 1648 and the first complete translation of the poem as late as 1767 (William Lillington Lewis' translation of the entire work).¹⁵⁷ As with Lucan, May freely reshapes Statius' imagery, adjusting it both in lexical and structural terms to the needs of the play. Lexically, in the first of the two passages mentioned above, May omits the titillating image of the women 'with bosoms bare' ('pectore nudo', *Stat.Theb.*11.418), thereby complying with the typically Puritan expectations of moral propriety. Structurally, he moves Argia's reproachful comment on the absence of Antigone at the end of her first speech ('Where is that good Antigone, so fam'd / For piety', *MA*, 847-848; sig. C5^v), whereas Statius has it in the middle of Argia's third speech ('Where that famed Antigone?', 'ubi inclyta fama / Antigone', *Stat.Theb.*12.331-332). This change in *dispositio* enables May to prepare the imminent entrance of Antigone in search of her brother.

May's appropriation of Statius unifies the two patterns of reception identified above: Statius' poem offers both a repository of imagery, as in the case of Lucan, and structural models, as in the case of Shakespeare. May closely reproduces Statius' text but repositions some lines, thereby avoiding the effect of a translation and conveying the impression of a process of imitation. In Jonson's terms in his *Discoveries*, May performs not only the kind of imitation in which 'a poet is able to convert the substance or riches of another poet to his own use' but, more specifically, one in which

his [the imitator's] exactness of study, and multiplicity of reading, which maketh a full man, not alone enabl[e] him to know the history or argument of a poem and to report it, but so to master the matter and style as to show he knows how to handle, place, or dispose of either.¹⁵⁸

May's 'exactness of study, and multiplicity of reading' is laid open in the way he preserves mythological allusions: while in Lucan May unlocks potentially obscure phrases such as 'the Colchian stranger' ('hospita Colchis', *Luc.*6.441) into 'Medea [...] a stranger' (*ML*, sig. L1^r), in his *Antigone* May turns Statius' 'virago' ('the Maid', *Stat.Theb.*11.414) into 'the blew-ey'd maide', namely Athena (*MA*, 457; sig. B6^v), thereby displaying his erudition in the use of the epithet 'blew-ey'd' of clear Homeric derivation. The adjective reproduces the Homeric epithet for Athena, i.e., *glaukōpis* (γλαυκῶπις), which is usually interpreted as 'with gleaming eyes' (*LSJ*) but in the most popular translation of Homer at the time of May – the one by George Chapman, which Jonson possessed in more than one edition and may well have lent his friend¹⁵⁹ – the adjective is translated

¹⁵⁷ Stuart Gillespie, 2001, 'Latin Silver Epic', in Peter France (ed.), *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 529-530.

¹⁵⁸ Jonson, 2014, *Discoveries* [1752-1753, 1763-1766].

¹⁵⁹ McPherson, 1974, pp. 52-53.

as ‘blue-eyed’ or ‘gray-ed’.¹⁶⁰ It is clear that May’s aim here is not to reach ‘our English Gentlemen (as many of them as cannot master the Originall)’ who ‘should lose the sense of such a worke’, as he declared in his translation of Barclay’s *Icon animorum*.¹⁶¹

Also, since Jonson opposes ‘the history or argument of a poem’ to ‘the matter and style’, we can assume that by the latter he refers to the more formal aspects of the imitated source. With Statius as well as with Lucan, May proves he knows how to ‘place’ the ‘matter’, i.e., how to play with the original *dispositio* of the source text. A conspicuous example of this occurs in the speech of Ornytus, an otherwise unknown soldier who, after being hurt in battle and losing his friends, discourages the Argive women from pleading Creon’s mercy (*MA*, 535-573; sigg. B8^{r-v}): here, May enriches the original speech of the soldier (*Stat.Theb.*12.149-166) by anticipating Statius’ description of the altar of Mercy (‘Clementia’) at Athens by more than three hundred lines (*Stat.Theb.*12.481-518). Also, in Argia’s second longish speech (*MA*, 815-849; sig. C5^{r-v}), the phrase ‘trod downe in dust’ (*MA*, 835; sig. C5^r) – derived from the narrative section preceding Argia’s third speech (‘nigh trampled into the dust’, ‘in pulvere paene / calcatum’, *Stat.Theb.*12.316-317) – is placed within lines that are modelled on the subsequent direct speech by Argia (*Stat.Theb.*12.321-348), particularly *Stat.Theb.*12.340-341, which in May are spoken by her servant Menaetes (in Statius spelt as Menoetes): ‘See, Madam, see / The mortall wound yet gaping on his breast’ (*MA*, 836-837; sig. C5^r). By assigning these lines to Menaetes, May interrupts Argia’s speech, thereby making the exchange more dynamic. A few lines later, as we have seen, May inserts Argia’s complaint about Antigone’s absence (*MA*, 846-847; sig. C5^v), postponing what in Statius is placed earlier.

In the characterization of Argia, May marks off his original interventions not only by displacing images but also by manipulating the structure of his source. Statius’ *Thebaid* offers a model for the encounter between Argia and Antigone, an encounter which results in a mutual recognition, which is one of the types of ‘recognition’ (ἀναγνώρισις, *anagnórisis*) envisaged by Aristotle (*Arist.Poet.*1452b5). By drawing from Statius, May enriches the Sophoclean version of *Antigone* with a scene of recognition and thereby fulfils one of the fundamental requisites for a tragedy with a complex plot according to Aristotle (*Arist.Poet.*1452a15). The process of recognition is facilitated by the two women’s clothing: Antigone identifies Argia’s clothes as Greek (‘A *Grecian* lady? (so her habit speakes her)’, *MA*, 854; sig. C5^v) and so seems to do Argia with Antigone’s (‘you seeme a *Theban*’, *MA*, 859; sig. C5^v). In so doing, May might have been receptive to Aristotle’s typology of recognitions, particularly the first which is obtained by means of ‘tokens’ (σημείων, ‘*sēméiōn*’),

¹⁶⁰ George Chapman, 1616, *The Iliads of Homer, Prince of Poets*, London: Printed [by Richard Field and William Jaggard] for Nathaniell Butter, pp. 20, 22; see also Homer, 1999, *The Iliad*, translated by A. T. Murray, Harvard: Harvard University Press, pp. 28-29 [Hom.*Il.*2.166]: γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη, ‘flashing-eyed Athene’.

¹⁶¹ May, 1633, sigg. A3^v-A4^r.

Arist.*Poet.*1454b20). Also, as he does with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, May decides to introduce a significant structural change to Statius' order of events: he switches the roles of Argia and Antigone in the scene of their mutual recognition.¹⁶² While in Statius it is Antigone who defiantly asks Argia who she was ('Whose body seekest thou in this night that is mine? Who art thou, daring woman?', 'cuius [...] manes, aut quae temeraria quaeris / nocte mea?', Stat.*Theb.*12.366-367), in May Argia first enquires about Antigone's identity in far friendlier terms:

Are you a wofull widow'd Lady, too,
That come to breake dire *Creons* savage law? (*MA*, 857-858; sig. C5^v)

As a consequence, in May it is Antigone who, prompted by Argia's question, first introduces herself, thereby enabling the Argive woman to recognize her. However, May's Antigone does not explicitly reveal her identity: by borrowing from the first question of Statius' Antigone reported above, May makes his Antigone only specify 'the man / whose hearse I seek' (*MA*, 863-864; sig. C5^v), namely, her brother Polyneices. In Statius, the two women remain in silence for a while before Argia finally answers Antigone's question: 'if thou also fearest Creon's harsh commands, I can with confidence reveal myself to thee. [...] Adrastus' royal seed am I' ('si tu quoque dura Creontis / iussa times, possum tibi me confisa fateri. [...] proles ego regia Adraستي', Stat.*Theb.*12.375-378); therefore, it is Antigone who first identifies her.

4.2.3. *Female characters and May's reception of Sophocles and Seneca*

The inversion of roles between Antigone and Argia in their recognition process is significant not only because it produces an effect of *variatio* in comparison with the source and thus aligns with the Jonsonian idea of imitation seen above. This inversion contributes to May's milder portrait of Antigone: by having Argia identify her, May substitutes the inquisitorial attitude of Statius' Antigone with a humble and meek girl who does not engage in conversation first but only replies to Argia's gentle question. Both characters are presented in a positive light and to a certain extent both differ from their counterpart in Statius' *Thebaid*. May's Argia is more assertive than Statius'. As we have seen, while in the latter she 'fears' Creon's edict (Stat.*Theb.*12.375), in May she has 'come to break' it (*MA*, 858; sig. C5^v). Also, as Miola has pointed out, it is 'Argia, not Antigone' who 'resolves courageously to perform the burial ritual for Polyneices':¹⁶³

¹⁶² Lautner, 1970, p. xxxvi.

¹⁶³ Miola, 2014, p. 239.

I will lose
No longer time, no danger shall withstand
That act, which love, and my chaste fires command. (*MA*, 593-595; sig. C1^r)

So May has her say by dramatizing Statius' account ('hortantur pietas ignesque pudici', 'devotion and chaste passion urge her on', *Stat.Theb.*12.185). Finally, Argia's reaction to Creon's questioning is also indicative: Statius briefly relates that 'the women openly before the pyre confess to have spurned fierce Creon's command' ('ipsae / ante rogam saevique palam sprevisse Creontis / imperia', *Stat.Theb.*12.452-454) and 'proved their case by turn' ('vicibusque probant', *Stat.Theb.*12.458), one after the other, probably Argia being the one starting the confession considering the sequence in Statius' account ('they contend that they stole, the one her consort's, the other her kinsman's limbs', 'haec fratris rapuisse, haec coniugis artus / contendunt', *Stat.Theb.*12.457-458). May dramatizes Statius' narration by having Argia speak first on Creon's command and proudly claim responsibility for the violation of the edict: after revealing her identity, she confesses that she came

To doe
Those rites, which love, and piety requir'd
To my dead Lord; if that be iudg'd a crime
Tis such a crime as I professe, and boast. (*MA*, 1282-1285; sig. D5^r)

Unlike Argia, May's Antigone is less bold than Statius' and also than her Sophoclean counterpart, as scholars have pointed out. Karen Britland defines May's Antigone as 'a chaste and virginal heroine, whose familial piety directs her actions and leads her to a saint-like martyrdom'.¹⁶⁴ For Miola,

May denies to his 'Theban princesse' two essential characteristics of the Greek prototype: allegiance to chthonic deities and a fiercely independent capacity for action. Diminishing Antigone's role in the burial, this replay renders her harmlessly, even cloyingly, 'pious'.¹⁶⁵

Therefore, both scholars identify Christianizing aspects in May's Antigone. Miola specifically underlines her association with a set of words relating to heaven and argues that the chthonic domain is assigned to the figures of the witches instead.¹⁶⁶ The 'fiercely independent capacity for action' of the Sophoclean Antigone is utterly diminished by means of two strategies: by introducing the character of an assertive Argia and by leaving out the character of Ismene altogether. As we have seen, May assigns to Argia actions that both Sophocles and Statius attribute to Antigone. The absence of Ismene all the more contributes to the downsizing of Antigone: by substituting the meek Ismene

¹⁶⁴ Britland, 2006, p. 140.

¹⁶⁵ Miola, 2014, p. 238.

¹⁶⁶ Miola, 2014, pp. 238-239.

with the bold Argia, May deprives Antigone of the character that in Sophocles serves as a foil to her fierce nature. Furthermore, May retains from Statius the figure of Deiphile, Argia's sister, thereby substituting Sophocles' sisterly couple of Antigone and Ismene with two other couples of sisters, both involving Argia. Alongside the blood tie between Argia and Deiphile, May introduces another sisterly relationship, i.e., the one between Argia and Antigone. Unlike the Sophoclean Antigone, who is opposed to her sister Ismene in an irreconcilable conflict, the relationship of May's Antigone with her sister-in-law Argia is presented in terms of mutual respect and affection: the two women address each other as 'royall sister', 'dearest sister', 'dearest', 'deare sister' (*MA*, 881, 892, 915, 1357, 1360; sig. C6^{r-v}, D6^{r-v}); both attributes each other 'virtue' (*MA*, 849, 891, 1366, 1374; sigg. C5^v-C6^r, D6^v); Antigone defines Argia as 'the best of woman kinde', 'so great a princess', with 'most faithfull unexampled love' (*MA*, 883-884, 887; sig. C6^r); before meeting Antigone, Argia defines her as 'good *Antigone*, so fam'd / For piety' (*MA*, 847-848; sig. C5^v). In many ways, May's characterization of Antigone paves the way for the figures of the 'virgins facing sacrifice' typical of eighteenth-century 'She-tragedies' or 'emotional adaptations of Greek tragedy'.¹⁶⁷

Piety is a feature that May's Antigone partly owes to the illustrious precedent of Garnier's Antigone in *Antigone ou la Piété* (1580). Alongside piety, another aspect that May derives from Garnier is the presence of a dialogue between Aemon and Antigone. Unlike the Sophoclean play, in which the two lovers never meet, in Garnier Hemon engages in a dialogue with Antigone (*GA*, 1324-1456). If their exchange is limited to only one dialogue of approximately 130 lines – which is a relatively short amount considering that Garnier's play counts 2,740 lines – in May the scenes involving Aemon and Antigone overall cover almost 200 lines in a play of 1,780: coming in two distinct and quite distant sections (*MA*, 234-335, 1656-1735; sigg. B2^v-B4^v, E3^r-E4^v), the two scenes arguably form a 'romantic subplot' similar to the one present in May's *Julia Agrippina* between the characters of Otho and Poppaea.¹⁶⁸

Unlike the passion between Otho and Poppaea, which is tainted with jealousy and political ambition,¹⁶⁹ the love between Aemon and Antigone is couched in 'the idiom of Neo-Platonist romances then fashionable in court'.¹⁷⁰ As Britland has observed, this genre had become popular thanks to Queen Henrietta Maria's influence on and direct participation in courtly entertainments, which often drew from the repertoire of French pastoral plays.¹⁷¹ This Neo-Platonist vogue, centred

¹⁶⁷ Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, 2005, *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre 1660-1914*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 64, 66.

¹⁶⁸ Chester, 1932, p. 98.

¹⁶⁹ Angelica Vedelago, forthcoming, 'Ben Jonson's and Thomas May's "Political Ladies": Forms of Female Political Agency', in Domenico Lovascio (ed.), *Roman Women in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications.

¹⁷⁰ Miola, 2014, p. 237.

¹⁷¹ Britland, 2006, p. 141.

on a vision of love as chaste and harmonious and projected onto the royal couple in masques and other artistic expressions, evidently informs May's language in the sub-plot of Aemon and Antigone.¹⁷² In their first dialogue (*MA*, 234-335; sigg. B2^v-B4^v), Aemon meets Antigone in 'unfrequented woods' (*MA*, 235; sig. B2^v) – a typical pastoral setting – and extols Antigone as a virginal, divine figure with salvific powers ('royall virgin', 'a heaven of virtue', 'oh heavenly voice!', 'divine Antigone'; *MA*, 267, 305, 318, 319; sigg. B3^r-B4^r). Despite Aemon's efforts, Antigone dissuades him from wooing her on two counts. First, by marrying her, he would inevitably become involved in the miserable destiny of the Labdacids, for whom 'love and wedlock / have still beene fatall' (*MA*, 300; sig. B3^v); it is therefore out of love that she does not marry him: 'I love you better / then so to worke your ruin' (*MA*, 297-298; sig. B3^v). Second, she cannot think of marriage when the gods are clearly against her family but she does reassure him that she loves him and that, if she were able to get married, she would definitely marry him.

Aemon's language is revealing of the traditions informing May's style. Aemon addresses Antigone in terms typical of courtly love:

Pardon me, royall virgin,
 Thinke it not rudeness in me thus to presse
 Upon your privacies, but call it service,
 Or zeale to wait upon you (*MA*, 267-270; sig. B3^r)

And, possibly with an echo from Garnier,¹⁷³ he adds:

To visit you, so you be pleas'd to grace
 That visite with a welcome, is a blessing
 No place has power to lessen, it would make
 Hells saddest cave a faire *Elysium*. (*MA*, 277-280; sig. B3^v)

This idealization is reminiscent of *topoi* such as the lover's subservience to his mistress but equally recalls the deification of Elizabeth I typical of English Petrarchism in its insistence on chastity, which is repeatedly associated with white imagery by Aemon ('White innocence, and spotless chastity', *MA*, 239; sig. B2^v; 'white innocence', *MA*, 770; sig. C4^r; 'white soul', *MA*, 1691; sig. E4^r).¹⁷⁴ Aemon's overuse of courtly language causes Antigone's suspicion:

¹⁷² Britland, 2006, pp. 141-142. On Neoplatonism in Stuart England, see Verena Olejniczak Lobsien, 2010, *Transparency and Dissimulation: Configurations of Neoplatonism in Early Modern English Literature*, Berlin: De Gruyter; on Neoplatonism in Stuart masques and other arts, see Vaughan Hart, 1994, *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts*, London: Routledge.

¹⁷³ Garnier, 2018, p. 68: 'neither heat nor cold, as long as you are there, will ever seem harsh'; see the original in *GA*, 1400-1401: 'ny chaleur ny froidure, / Tant que vous y serez, ne me semblera dure'.

¹⁷⁴ For instance, compare Edmund Spenser's celebration of Gloriana in *The Faerie Queene*: 'Yet she much whiter', 'So pure an innocent, as that same lambe, / She was in life and every vertuous lore'; see Edmund Spenser, 2006, *The Faerie Queene*, edited by Carol V. Kaske, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, p. 7 [Book 1, Canto 1, Stanzas 4-5].

You come from Court, and speake as that has taught you.
This place knowes no such language. (*MA*, 281-282; sig. B3^v)

Antigone's distrust betrays May's attention to ongoing debates on the role of dissimulation at court since the sweeping influence of Baldassarre Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528).¹⁷⁵ Just as the Princess of France in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* dismisses the King of Navarre's courtship as 'pleasant jest and courtesy', as 'bombast and as lining to the time' (*Love's Labour's Lost*, 5.2.772-773), so Antigone mistrusts Aemon's complying with courtly linguistic conventions. However, the reference to Antigone's body or beauty is vague: there is no indulging in the tradition of the *blazon* except for a brief, chaste reference to her hands ('With pious hands') as support for her father Oedipus (*MA*, 249; sig. B3^r). Also, the physicality of love is expressed in controlled terms: 'But one chast kisse and so farewell' (*MA*, 327; sig. B4^r); even a typically erotic image such as fire is associated with chastity and constancy in Aemon's declaration of love:

a better fire
more chaste, more true, and full of constancy,
(I dare maintain it) warmes no breast on earth. (*MA*, 288-290; sig. B3^v)

Also, Aemon is riven between the admiration for Antigone's virtue and the filial duty towards his father:

why should piety and virtue strive?
That piety, which I so much admir'd
In faire *Antigone*, my selfe transgresse
In loving her crosse to my fathers will.
Yet in obeying him I must approve
Her piety, or else condemne mine owne. (*MA*, 1454-1459; sig. D8^r)

The contrast between conflicting allegiances in Aemon's 'divided brest' (*MA*, 1460; sig. D8^r) betrays the 'pathetical' theatrical culture in which May was steeped and which found a clear articulation in Pierre Corneille's plays and theoretical writings. In *Discours de la tragédie* (1660), Corneille posits the contrast between feelings and duties as what triggers the pleasure in the audience:

The opposition of natural feelings to the transports of passion or the severity of duty creates powerful agitations that are experienced by the audience with pleasure.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ On dissimulation in European courts, see Jon R. Snyder, 2009, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

¹⁷⁶ Pierre Corneille, 1984, *Théâtre complet*, edited by Alain Niderst, Rouen: Presses universitaires de France, vol. 1, p. 72: 'Les oppositions des sentiments de la nature aux emportements de la passion, ou à la sévérité du devoir, forment de puissantes agitations, qui sont reçues de l'auditeur avec plaisir'; English translation by Hoxby in Hoxby, 2015, p. 10.

As Hoxby explains in connection to this observation by Corneille,

even when early modern audiences hung on the dilemma of heroes and heroines riven by competing ethical claims in plays such as *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607) and *Le Cid* (1637), they valued such conflicts on affective grounds.¹⁷⁷

The Aemon-Antigone subplot contributes to the shaping of a more favourable view of Antigone than the controversial one that emerges from Sophocles. While Antigone is often criticized not only by Creon but also by the chorus of Theban elders, who, apart from the very end, are mostly unsympathetic to her, particularly in the *kommos* (Soph.*Ant.*806-882),¹⁷⁸ in May Antigone is repeatedly praised for her virtues by a variety of characters: alongside her lover Aemon and her sister-in-law Argia, also Dircus and Ianthus (*MA*, 337-350; sig. B4^v), Eurydice (*MA*, 1560; sig. E2^r), Tiresias (*MA*, 1585; sig. E2^r), the chorus of Thebans themselves (*MA*, 1596; sig. E2^v), and, as we shall see later, her father Oedipus. Antigone is not the only female figure that May redeems from his classical sources: in *Julia Agrippina*, May sheds a more positive light on its protagonist, too.¹⁷⁹

In line with Garnier's antecedent, the foremost virtue of May's Antigone remains her piety towards her family, not only as a sister but also as a daughter, as the first scene of the play is meant to convey. In the first scene of Act 1 – the only one which displays an internal division – Antigone tries to comfort her father Oedipus, who laments his miserable condition after his crimes, longs for death, and asks Antigone to leave him: his crimes have made him infectious and he could damage her virtue. An outcast from Thebes, Oedipus hopes to become an outcast from the world by dying. Even his daughter Antigone, whom he repeatedly extols as a mirror of virtue, paradoxically becomes a further reason to die: her virtue does not soothe him but rather adds to his sorrow, as it reinforces his feeling of unworthiness. Antigone tries to dissuade her father from his suicidal thoughts: she absolves him from his guilt by insisting that his actions are not crimes but 'mis-hap and error' because he did not do them knowingly:

Be not uniuist to your selfe to thinke
You have deserved death; the gods call that
Mis-hap and error, which your cruell selfe
Against your selfe call crime. (*MA*, 183-186; sig. B1^v)

¹⁷⁷ Hoxby, 2015, p. 10.

¹⁷⁸ On the stance of the chorus in *Antigone*, see R. W. B. Burton, 1980, *The Chorus in Sophocles' Tragedies*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 85-137.

¹⁷⁹ On May's *Agrippina*, see Vedelago, forthcoming, and Schmid, 1914, p. 72. On May's treatment of the character of Cleopatra, critics are divided: for Berry May ennobles her in comparison to his sources, whereas Chester and Denzell Stuart Smith express a diametrically opposed view; see Berry, 1964, pp. xxxii-xxxv; see also Chester, 1932, pp. 111-112; Denzell Stewart Smith, 1965, 'The Tragœdy of Cleopatra Queene of Aegypt by Thomas May (Written ca. 1626; First edition 1639): A Critical Edition', PhD Thesis, The University of Minnesota, pp. lxxxv-xcvii.

According to Antigone, the real responsible is ‘cruell fate’, which led him to commit those crimes:

For true and real faults, as you for that,
Which ignorance hath wrought, and was the crime
Of fate it selfe, not yours.
[...]
Yet cruell fate pursu’d you still, and made
Your vertuous minde the way to your offence;
As if the Gods themselves had punish’d you
For striving to be innocent, when they
Had fore decree’d your guilt, take comfort Sir,
No man offends, but where the will consents. (*MA*, 189-208; sig. B2^r)¹⁸⁰

The reference to the gods who ‘fore decree’d [Oedipus] guilt’ evokes the debates on predestination mentioned above, whereas Antigone’s insistence on the ignorance of her father as a justification for his crimes is to be found also in Garnier’s *Antigone*: ‘No. An accident, born of chance and error’; No one is evil if such was not his will’;¹⁸¹ the latter line is echoed at the end of the passage above: ‘[n]o man offends, but where the will consents’. Ultimately, however, this crucial sentence encapsulates Antigone’s whole pleading in terms that are reminiscent of Aristotelian categories.

Although a similar insistence on ‘ignorance’ can be found in Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus* (Soph.*OC*.240, 271-274, 525, 548), another source may well have been Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which the philosopher clearly distinguished between ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’ actions (Arist.*Eth.Nic*.1109b33).¹⁸² Although May was certainly able to read it either in Latin or Greek, possibly in the copy of Aristotle’s works that Jonson had in his library,¹⁸³ it is equally reasonable to think that he knew this distinction from Heinsius’ *De tragoediae constitutione*. Therein, the Dutch scholar explores the various aspects of the Aristotelian concept of *hamartia* not only in the *Poetics* but, as Robortello did before him, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, too.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, Heinsius exemplifies Aristotle’s category of involuntary misconduct with the story of Oedipus and expresses a thought that recalls the passage quoted above: ‘[s]imilarly, we do not rebuke ill done by unwilling persons – indeed, we esteem evil perpetrated by unwilling persons and through lack of knowledge worthy of pity’.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ See Soph.*OC*.237-253; in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Coloneus*, however, also Oedipus justifies his action; see Soph.*OC*.265-274.

¹⁸¹ Garnier, 2018, pp. 15-16; see the original in *GA*, 132, 136: ‘Ce n’est qu’une fortune, un hazard, une erreur’; ‘Personne n’est mechant qu’avecques volonté’.

¹⁸² Aristotle, 1926, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by H. Rackham, London: William Heinemann, pp. 116-117. Aristotle introduces also a third category, the non-voluntary, which differs from the involuntary in that the doer does not regret an action he has not premeditated; see Roger Crisp, 2000, ‘Introduction’, in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated and edited by Roger Crisp, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. xx.

¹⁸³ McPherson, 1974, p. 26.

¹⁸⁴ Meter, 1984, pp. 205-206.

¹⁸⁵ Heinsius, 1971, p. 50; see the original in Heinsius, 2001, p. 194: ‘malas itidem quae ab invitis fiunt, non reprehendimus; malas vero quae ab invitis, et per ignorantiam fiunt, commiseratione dignas iudicamus’.

The attribution of the fault to the gods or to fate is derived from Seneca's version of the story in his *Phoenissae* (Sen.*Phoen.*205, 217, 253, 258) and from others plays of his, although at one point Sophocles attributes human misdeeds to a 'god', too (Soph.*OC.*253).¹⁸⁶ Overall, the entire dialogue between Antigone and Oedipus is mainly indebted to the first section of Seneca's *Phoenissae* (Sen.*Phoen.*1-319) and partly to the beginning of Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* (Soph.*OC.*1-307). Apart from what has already been pointed out above, the latter only provides some hints such as the insistence on Oedipus' name (Soph.*OC.*265, 301, 306; *MA*, 182; sig. B1^v) and the reference to the certainty of Jupiter's punishment (Soph.*OC.*95; *MA*, 185-186; sig. B1^v), whereas Seneca informs both contents and style more diffusely. A fitting example occurs at the very beginning of the play, when Oedipus addresses Antigone as follows:

Let go this wicked hand, oh daughter leave me,
 Leave me while thou art virtuous, before
 Th'infection of my crimes do blast thy goodness
 Or draw some plague upon thee; this dire head
 Abhorr'd by heaven and earth, living in *Thebes*
 Brought forth a pestilence (*MA*, 153-158; sig. B1^v)

Here May reworks various lines from Seneca's *Phoenissae* ('solve inhaerentem manum', 'release your hand from its grip on mine', Sen.*Phoen.*10; 'desere infaustum parentem', 'abandon your ill-fated father', Sen.*Phoen.*3; 'caelum atque terras', 'heaven and earth', Sen.*Phoen.*8) but one echo is particularly significant: Oedipus' urging Antigone to leave while she is still virtuous is modelled on the Senecan Oedipus's warning 'Leave your father, leave while a virgin' ('discede a patre, discede virgo' (Sen.*Phoen.*49-50). In Seneca, this warning is tainted with incestuous innuendos as Oedipus' following sentence reveals: 'After my mother I fear everything' ('Timeo post matrem omnia' Sen.*Phoen.*50). As with Statius, May here eschews possible sexual overtones and phrases Oedipus' fear in terms of infection rather than incest. Overall, apart from two occurrences of the adjective 'incestuous' (*MA*, 124, 602; sigg. A7^r, C1^v), May avoids references to incest that were central in previous versions of the Oedipus myth such as Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* as well as in other plays dealing with the incest motif more generally such as Jonson's *Sejanus* and *Catiline*; in all these plays, incest acquires a political meaning, symbolizing the evils of civil war.¹⁸⁷ In *Antigone*, May seems rather to align with the more 'circumspect approach' to the theme of incest of Beaumont and Fletcher.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ G. W. M. Harrison, 2014, 'Themes', in Gregor Damschen and Andreas Heil (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Seneca*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 627-628.

¹⁸⁷ Richard A. McCabe, 1993, *Incest, Drama, and Nature's Law, 1550-1700*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 120-121.

¹⁸⁸ McCabe, 1993, pp. 196, 204.

May's reception of Seneca's imagery does not involve only his *Phoenissae*. In the following complaint of Oedipus, May combines images from two Senecan plays:

I never should have had a vertuous childe
But to afflict me more; nature will worke
A miracle to make my sufferings greater.
The Sunne shall bring blacke night, the Evening starre
Usher the day, and seas shall meete the sky
To make additions to my misery. (*MA*, 217-221; sig. B2^{r-v})

This speech is mostly based on the following passage from *Phoenissae*:

Aliquid est ex me pius?
non esset umquam, fata bene novi mea,
nisi ut noceret. Ipsa se in leges novas
Natura vertit: regeret in fontem citas
revolutus undas amnis et noctem afferet
Phoebus lampas, Hesperus faciet diem;
ut ad miseras aliquid accedat meas,
pii quoque erimus. (*Sen. Phoen.* 82-89)

However, the image of the seas meeting the sky probably derives from Seneca's hyperbolic metaphors and similes depicting natural prodigies in other plays.¹⁸⁹ For instance, in *Agamemnon*, the storm that struck the Greek fleet on its way back from Troy is said to have produced a 'dense gloom' which 'confounded sea and sky' ('densa caligo [...] fretum / caelumque miscet', *Sen. Ag.* 472-474). May's reception of Seneca's *Phoenissae* is further complicated by the presence of an intermediary text, i.e., Thomas Newton's English translation of Seneca's *Phoenissae*. Entitled *Thebais* in the edition of *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* (1581), Newton's version may well be behind some lexical choices of May's: 'Cythæron's craggy mount' (*MA*, 163; sig. B1^v) might be based on Newton's 'hill / Of craggy stiepe Cytheron'; the phrase 'my wealthy Thebes' (*MA*, 166; sig. B1^v) and the term 'mis-hap' (*MA*, 185; sig. B1^v) can be found in Newton, too.¹⁹⁰ This layered reception is an example of what I have called a 'cluster of receptions' (see Introduction above): Seneca generates a series of responses, which contribute to shape Seneca's own reception in a later text.

The insistence on the contrast between light and darkness is a recurring feature in May's *Antigone* as well as in Seneca's tragedies. May's penchant for *chiaroscuro* imagery is not only a Senecan legacy but might equally be seen as a response to contemporary Neoplatonic aesthetics and,

¹⁸⁹ On Seneca's imagery, see Mireille Armisen-Marchetti, 2015, 'Seneca's Images and Metaphors', in Shadi Bartch and Alessandro Schiesaro (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Seneca*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 150-160 and Mireille Armisen-Marchetti, 1989, *Sapientiae Facies: Étude sur les images de Sénèque*, Paris: Les belles lettres.

¹⁹⁰ Seneca, 1581, *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies Translated into Englysh*, London: by Thomas Marsh, sigg. 41^r, 42^r.

as noted above, to Baroque art.¹⁹¹ As we have seen, in May the witches' episode contributes to this pervading imagery: as veritable 'instruments of darkness' (*Macbeth*, 1.3.122), they create an artificial darkness to perform their rites. May repeatedly uses the adjective 'black': 'Black fight' (*MA*, 405; sig. B5^v), 'I long to hear what fate to day / The field affords; relate to us / How blacke so ere and ominous' (*MA*, 441-443; sig. B6^r), 'Oh black family?' (*MA*, 451; sig. sig. B6^v). In the account of the messenger based on Statius (*MA*, 453-476; sig. B6^v), the gods of war 'withdrew their presence from so black a fight' (*MA*, 456; sig. B6^v) and the Ogygian ghosts are 'in a blacke ring' (*MA*, 461; 'tristique corona', 'with a grisly band', *Stat.Theb.*11.422). The response of the chorus to the messenger is similarly informed by images of darkness:

Oh horrid sight! bright *Phoebus* hide thy head,
 Wrap up the day in foggy clouds, and make
 An endlesse night, to hide this tragedy
 From human eyes; a blacker deed then this
 Thy light did nere discover, here let all
 The prodigies that threaten'd us, have end. (*MA*, 490-495; sig. B7^r)

This passage might well echo the speech of another Senecan messenger, namely the one in *Thyestes* ('O long-suffering Phoebus! Though you have fled backward, snatched the day from mid-heaven and drowned it, you set too late!', 'O Phoebe patiens, fugeris retro licet / medioque raptum merseris caelo diem, / sero occidisti!', *Sen.Thy.*776-778) but is couched mainly in Shakespearean terms ('Hide thy head, Achilles!', *Love's Labour's Lost*, 5.2.625; 'Then thus I turn me from my country's light, / To dwell in solemn shades of endless night', *Richard II*, 1.3.170-171). After learning about Creon's edict, Antigone invokes the sun and the night as follows:

Poast to the West, bright *Phoebus*, and thou night,
 That robb'st mortality of light, to lend them
 A greater blessing, rest and sweet repose,
 Spread thy black mantle ore yon mourning fields. (*MA*, 674-677; sigg. C2^{r-v})

This invocation of night is reminiscent of the words of Shakespeare's Juliet, also invoking the night so that it comes with its 'black mantle' (*Romeo and Juliet*, 3.2.15).

Overall, May relies more on Latin sources than on Sophocles and, as we have seen so far, when he does draw from Sophocles, he is more indebted to *Oedipus at Colonus* than to *Antigone*. However, there are at least two passages of May's play that bear a close resemblance with Sophocles'

¹⁹¹ On Neoplatonic aesthetics, see Lobsien, 2010, pp. 14-15; on the impact of Baroque art on early modern drama, see Hoxby, 2018.

version of *Antigone*. One is Tiresias' speech in Act 5, in which the priest describes to Creon the ominous outcome of the divinatory rituals he performed to know the king's fate:

When I for thee unthankfull man prepar'd
A sacrifice within, the open'd beast
No signes but sad and fatall did afford.
None but th' infernall gods deign'd to appeare.
The blood was blacke, the burning entrailles gave
No flames at all, but darkely did consume,
Mouldring away to ashes, and with blacke
Unsavoury smoake clouded the fearfull ayre.
Unto our augury no birds at all
But sad and balefull birds of night appear'd. (*MA*, 1571-1580; sig. E2^r)

Within a dark scenario dominated by the black colour, May's Tiresias relates two distinct divinatory acts, like his Sophoclean counterpart: a sacrifice based on the burning of an animal's entrails, which in Greek is called *thusía*, and a ritual of ornithomancy.¹⁹² Although the order of the two rites is reversed – in Sophocles, ornithomancy comes first (*Soph.Ant.999-1004*), whereas in May *thusía* does – some of the images employed by May's Tiresias are clearly derived from Sophocles', such as the lack of flames from 'the burning entrailles' (ἐκ δὲ θυμάτων / Ἡφαιστος οὐκ ἔλαμπεν, 'the fire god raised no flame from my offerings', *Soph.Ant.1007*) and the way in which these entrails 'darkely consume, mouldring away to ashes, and with blacke / unsavoury smoake' (ἐπὶ σποδῶ / μυδῶσα κηκίς μηρίων ἐτηκετο / κάτυφε κἀνέπτυε, 'over the ashes a dank slime oozed from the thigh bones, smoked and sputtered', *Soph.Ant.1007-1009*).

The other passage that is based on Sophocles' *Antigone* is the crucial confrontation between Antigone and Creon (*MA*, 1291-1349; sigg. D5^r-D6^r). The exchange is very similar to Sophocles in structural terms, from Creon's questioning Antigone to his sentencing her to die enclosed in a tomb. However, at a closer look one can detect that the whole scene has been filtered in the light of Garnier's corresponding scene. While in Sophocles Creon limits himself to asking Antigone if she is ready to admit what she did and whether she was aware of the edict when she transgressed it (*Soph.Ant.441-449*), in May Creon takes for granted that she knew the edict and rather explicitly inquires about her motives for violating it:

thou a *Theban* borne, bound to obey
Our crowne and lawes, what fury moov'd thy breast
(Disloyall maide) to scorne our edict so? (*MA*, 1291-1293; sig. D5^r)

Has guilt embolden'd thee? Is this th'excuse
Thou mak'st to me? (*MA*, 1298-1299; sig. D5^v)

¹⁹² On the origin and meaning of the term *thusia*, see Royden Keith Yerkes, 2010 [1952], *Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism*, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, pp. 88-114.

This interest in Antigone's motives can be found in the words of Garnier's Creon, who, like his Sophoclean counterpart, does ask Antigone whether she knew about his edict but also wonders '[w]ho, then, made you go against this law'.¹⁹³ Antigone's answer is equally informed by Garnier: in May, she insists that she acted out of 'love of vertue / and reverence of the gods' (*MA*, 1294-1295; sig. D5^r) and 'by direction from the gods themselves' for 'the cause of heaven and piety' (*MA*, 1301-1304; sig. D5^v); in Garnier, Antigone pleads her innocence on account that

Le Dieu des Enfers qui aux Ombres commande,
Et celuy qui preside à la celeste bande,
Recommandent sur tout l'humaine pieté. (*GA*, 1817-1819)

Both the god of hell who reigns over Shades and he who presides over the celestial troop urge us towards human piety – whereas you order nothing but inhumanity.¹⁹⁴

Commenting this passage, Beaudin has pointed out the syncretic presence of Christian and pagan references.¹⁹⁵ In May, one can register a similar syncretism, as shown by Antigone's reply to Creon:¹⁹⁶

Creon: Is disobedience merit?
Or do the gods command subjects to breake
The lawes of Princes?
Antigone: Yes, their wicked lawes,
Which thwart the will of heaven, the rule of nature,
And those pure principles, which human breasts
Did at their first originall derive
From that Celestiall essence.
[...] and though I dy for this
Unjustly now, yet the infernall judges,
Whose sentence no mortality can scape,
But must to all eternity sustaine,
Shall from their just unpartiall urnes bestow
Endlesse rewards beyond my sufferings farre.
Creon: To those infernall judges shalt thou goe (*MA*, 1307-1326; sig. D5^v)

Here an 'upward', typically Christian perspective ('the will of heaven', 'Celestiall') co-exists with a downward, chthonic one ('the infernall judges'), evoked a few lines later in the phrase 'infernall gods' (*MA*, 1348; sig. D6^r).

This passage contains further debts to Garnier. In the French version, Creon wonders how divine power – represented by a single god ('Dieu') in Garnier as opposed to May's plural form 'gods'

¹⁹³ Garnier, 2018, p. 89; see the original in *GA*, 1806: 'qui vous a doncques fait enfreindre cette loy?'

¹⁹⁴ Garnier, 2018, p. 90.

¹⁹⁵ Beaudin, 1997, 'Notes sur le texte', in Garnier, *Antigone*, p. 222.

¹⁹⁶ For the 'upward' references, see Miola, 2014, pp. 238-239.

– can possibly lead to break the laws of the temporal authority of ‘Princes’: ‘God does not order that laws be disobeyed’,¹⁹⁷ a sentence which is echoed in the question of May’s Creon (‘do the gods command subjects to breake / The lawes of Princes?’). More crucially, Antigone’s appeal to ‘the will of heaven, the rule of nature, / and those pure principles, which human breasts / Did at their first originall derive / From that Celestiall essence’ expands the Sophoclean ‘unwritten and unfailing ordinances of the gods’ (ἄγραπτα κάσφαλῆ θεῶν / νόμιμα, *Soph.Ant.*454-455) by drawing from the corresponding speech of Antigone in Garnier:

Non non je ne fay pas de vos loix tant d’estime
Que pour les observer j’aïlle commettre un crime,
Et viole des Dieux les preceptes sacrez,
Qui naturellement sont en nos cœurs encrez:
Ils durent eternels en l’essence des hommes,
Et nez à les garder dès le berceau nous sommes. (*GA*, 1820-1825)

No, no, I do not have such high regard for your laws that to obey them I would commit a crime, and violate the sacred precepts of the gods, precepts naturally imprinted within our hearts. They last eternally in man’s essence and we are born to protect them from the cradle on.¹⁹⁸

A lexical borrowing confirms that May might well have looked at Garnier’s version: though in different meanings, both playwrights use the word ‘essence’ in the same context. Moreover, Garnier aligns with the traditional image of divine laws inscribed in men’s hearts, an image which, as we have seen in Chapter 3, has classical and Scriptural occurrences and is usually associated to Natural Law. Both May and Garnier passingly refer to this branch of the law (‘the rule of nature’, *MA*, 1311; ‘naturellement’, *GA*, 1823). However, Natural Law is granted much more than a passing reference in May’s *Antigones*. In the next section, we shall consider how May explores this notion and to what extent it is embedded to the topical concerns that this play intercepts.

4.2.4. *Natural Law and topical allusions*

At the end of the play, after defeating and killing Creon, Theseus, King of Athens, declines the Thebans’ offer to become King of Thebes and explains his rejection as follows:

No; still let *Thebes* be govern’d by her owne;
Twas not our warres intention to enthrall
Your land, but free it from a tyrants yoake;
And to preserve the conquer’d, not destroy them.

¹⁹⁷ Garnier, 2018, p. 89; see the original in *GA*, 1808: ‘Dieu ne commande pas qu’aux loix on n’obeisse’.

¹⁹⁸ Garnier, 2018, p. 90.

We drew the sword of justice, not of conquest,
Ambitiously to spread our Kingdoms bounds,
But to avenge the lawes of nature broke (*MA*, 1766-1772; sig. E5^v)

He then goes on to condemn ‘tyrants [who] staine the cities / With blood of innocents’ and who go ‘Gainst nature, and her holy lawes’ (*MA*, 1777-1781; sig. E5^v). Clearly, Creon figures among these tyrants: his power is often referred to as tyrannical (‘Oh fond tyranny’, *MA*, 501; sig. B7^r; ‘the tyrants heart’, ‘the ruthlesse tyrants mind’, *MA*, 534; sig. B8^r; ‘No, tyrant, no’, *MA*, 1331; sig. D6^r; ‘Why did the tyrant thus divide our sufferings?’, *MA*, 1369; sig. D6^v) and is said to be ‘thwarting natures law’ (*MA*, 669; sig. C2^v). The character of Theseus functions as a foil to Creon in terms of their approach to kingship: the play thereby ‘reflects deeply on monarchy, opposing the tyrant Creon to the just ruler Theseus’.¹⁹⁹ May’s *Antigone* is one of those tragedies which, in Philip Sidney’s words, ‘maketh kings fear to be tyrants’ in so far as it shows Creon’s decline because of his misconduct as a ruler:²⁰⁰ unlike the Sophoclean version, Creon not only repents (*MA*, 1630-1632; sig. E3^r) but also dies at the hand of Theseus, as the King of Athens himself relates to the Chorus of Thebans (*MA*, 1747; sig. E5^r).

Theseus stands out as the champion of Natural Law and, in Britland’s words, of ‘an ideal of leadership based upon monarchical responsibility and dialogue with the people’.²⁰¹ In so doing, the King of Athens shares the same values of Antigone, who not only vouches for Natural Law but also criticizes Creon’s intimidating power:

this disobedience
Thy servants (durst they speak) would justifie (*MA*, 1316-1317; sig. D5^v)

This observation may be based on two of Antigone’s comments in Sophocles (‘I would say that all these men would approve this, if it were not that fear shuts their mouths’, τούτοις τοῦτο πᾶσιν ἀνδάνειν / λέγοιμι ἄν, εἰ μὴ γλῶσσαν ἐγκλήοι φόβος, *Soph.Ant.*504-505; ‘Those men too see it; but they curb their tongues to please you’, ὀρῶσι χούτοι· σοὶ δ’ ὑπίλλουσι στόμα, *Soph.Ant.*509) or on Garnier:

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Antigone: | S’il parloyent librement, ils louïroyent mon emprise. |
| Creon: | Qui les empescherait d’en parler sans feintise? |
| Antigone: | La crainte d’offenser un Roy trop animeux. (<i>GA</i> , 1868-1870) ²⁰² |
| Antigone: | If they could speak freely, they would praise my deed. |
| Creon: | Who would stop them from speaking without disguise? |
| Antigone: | The fear of upsetting a king too cruel. ²⁰³ |

¹⁹⁹ Miola, 2014, p. 238.

²⁰⁰ Sidney, 2002, p. 98.

²⁰¹ Britland, 2006, p. 151.

²⁰² In the first edition of Garnier’s play (1580), ‘Roy animeux’ reads ‘tyran animeux’; see Garnier, 1997, p. 135, n. 3.

²⁰³ Garnier, 2018, p. 92.

As Miola has noted, ‘May inherits from Garnier political concerns also relevant to Caroline England – the nature and limits of monarchical rule, the origins of sovereignty, the role of citizens and constitutional authority’.²⁰⁴ May was not the first to read contemporary political issues through the lens of Garnier’s tragedies. Garnier’s Roman tragedy became a breeding ground for English translations since the ‘nasty nineties’, with Mary Sidney Herbert’s *Antonius, A Tragedie* (1592) – a version of Garnier’s *Marc Antoine* (1578) and the first English translation of Garnier’s drama – and Thomas Kid’s *Cornelia* (1594), a translation of Garnier’s *Cornélie* (1574).²⁰⁵ As we have seen above, while May cannot be defined as an outright republican, he is a keen supporter of constitutional monarchy, cherishing the liberties that this form of government ensured to English citizens. Considering that the play is addressed to a prominent courtier, Endymion Porter, a man of the King’s bedchamber, Britland excludes that May’s *Antigone* is ‘a polemical criticism of Charles’ methods of government’ and rather signals that the playwright was seeking ‘recognition from the heart of the court’.²⁰⁶ However, this does not mean that May’s play avoids controversial issues altogether: Britland herself argues that May’s *Antigone* ‘registers some deep anxieties about the trend in Caroline politics at the dawn of the 1630s’ so much so that it can be considered a ‘political allegory’.²⁰⁷

The anxieties surrounding the first years of Charles I’s reign were about domestic and foreign politics alike. At home, as we have seen above, the King levied a substantial tax known as ‘Forced Loan’ in 1626. This controversial measure triggered debates which involved not only politicians but also prominent clerics such as Robert Maynwaring, Charles’ chaplain. In his sermon *Religion and Alegiance* (1627), Maynwaring maintained that Charles could wield his royal prerogative with no need to consult the Parliament and that subjects who did not obey their kings were liable to a charge of treason: ‘by resisting of *His will*, they should for ever endure the paine, and staine of odious Traitors, and impious Malefactors’.²⁰⁸ In his exaltation of royal prerogative, Maynwaring pushed to the extreme the divine right theory that already informed James I’s conception of monarchy: the cleric assimilated royal power to that of God since it is ‘not *humane*, but *Superhumane*, and indeed no lesse then a *Power Divine*’ and considered it entrusted to kings ‘by *Naturall* and *Originall Law*, and *Justice*; as their proper *Inheritance* annexed to their *Imperiall Crownes*, from their very births’.²⁰⁹ As Noah

²⁰⁴ Miola, 2014, p. 238.

²⁰⁵ Mary-Alice Belle and Line Cottegnies, 2017, ‘Introduction’, in Mary-Alice Belle and Line Cottegnies (eds.), *Robert Garnier in Elizabethan England: Mary Sidney Herbert’s Antonius and Thomas Kyd’s Cornelia*, Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, pp. 1-2, 11-12. The expression ‘nasty nineties’ was first introduced by Patrick Collinson; cf. Patrick Collinson, 1995, ‘Ecclesiastical Vitriol: Religious Satire in the 1590s and the Invention of Puritanism’, in John A. Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 150-170.

²⁰⁶ Britland, 2006, p. 139.

²⁰⁷ Britland, 2006, pp. 145, 151.

²⁰⁸ Roger Maynwaring, 1627, *Religion and Alegiance*, quoted in Harry F. Snapp, 1967, ‘The Impeachment of Roger Maynwaring’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 30, 3, p. 218; see also Smith, 1998, p. 71; Britland, 2006, p. 144.

²⁰⁹ Maynwaring, 1627, quoted in Snapp, 1967, p. 218.

Dauber has noted, Maynwaring coupled ‘natural and divine grounds of obedience’, thereby mobilizing not only God’s laws but also Natural Law as a justification for royal prerogative.²¹⁰ Maynwaring’s theories did not pass unnoticed: the Parliament, particularly in the person of John Pym, impeached him on the charge that he had

a wicked and malicious Intention to seduce and misguide the Conscience of the King’s most excellent Majesty, touching the Observation of the Laws and Customs of this Kingdom, and of the Rights and Liberties of the Subject, [...] to scandalize, subvert, and impeach, the good Laws and Government of this Realm, and the authority of the High Court of Parliament, to alienate his Royal Heart from his People.²¹¹

Maynwaring’s sermons were eventually banned and he was imprisoned, suspended from his ecclesiastical office, and forced to make a submission before both Houses of the Parliament but the King pardoned him soon after.²¹²

This controversy shows the tensions in home politics surrounding divine right kingship and royal prerogative, and how they were inextricably linked with Natural Law and religion. May’s *Antigone* responds to all these issues in the way it depicts two alternative approaches to kingship – represented by Creon and Theseus – and in the way it explores the modes of the people’s participation to decision-making processes by means of its engaging choruses. The theme of counsel is also foregrounded in the play by means of the hags scene, in which Ianthus tries to dissuade Creon from relying on their necromancy, an impious art, and suggests that the king rather confides in Tiresias, whose magic is ‘more divine and pure’ and is informed by ‘the wisdom of the gods above’ (*MA*, 974-975; sig. C7^v).²¹³ May’s attention to forms of political counsel is confirmed by the choice of Porter as dedicatee, a courtier who was very close to the King and as such was expected to advise him.²¹⁴ However, May’s interest in this theme arguably derives from a general anxiety about Charles’ excessive reliance on counsellors such as George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who, before being murdered in 1628, had earned a reputation as a bad advisor. Incidentally, as Britland has observed, Buckingham’s murderer, John Felton, was denied burial after his execution and his body was hung in chains.²¹⁵ Although overt parallelisms with topical figures can be far-fetched, it is nonetheless

²¹⁰ Noah Dauber, *State and Commonwealth: The Theory of State in Early Modern England 1549-1640*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 199.

²¹¹ John Pym (?), 1709, ‘The Declaration of the Commons against Dr. Manwaring, Clerk, and *Doctor in Divinity*’, in *The Proceedings of the Lords and Commons in the Year 1628*, London: Printed for Ben. Bragge, p. 7. Snapp notes that ‘the speech is sometimes attributed to Francis Rous rather than Pym’; see Snapp, 1967, p. 222, n. 12.

²¹² Vivienne Larminie, 2008, ‘Maynwaring [Manwaring], Roger (1589/90?-1653)’, in *ODNB*; see also Snapp, 1967, pp. 228-229.

²¹³ Britland, 2006, pp. 148-150.

²¹⁴ Britland, 2006, p. 148.

²¹⁵ Britland, 2006, p. 148. Britland also remarks that an epitaph on Felton’s death concluded with a quotation from Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (‘he who lacks an urn has the sky to cover him’, ‘caelo tegitur qui non habet urnam’, Luc.7.819) from the very section that May integrated in his *Antigone* in the almost exact way he translated it in 1627: ‘they obtaine / Heavens

tempting to think that this event prompted May to choose the myth of Antigone as a subject for his play since Felton's destiny recalls that of Polyneices. Also, the play explores the issue of disobedience and resistance to a tyrannical ruler at a time in which members of the Parliament who expressed their opinion too freely could be imprisoned on account of their 'insolent speeches': this was what happened to Sir Dudley Digges and Sir John Eliot in 1626, when they dared accuse Buckingham of extortion of money from King Charles and of several other charges including that of contributing to the death of King James.²¹⁶ Although the two lords avoided connecting these charges to Charles, the latter felt the need to punish them for their overt offences to his favourite counsellor.²¹⁷

May's *Antigone* potentially contains topical resonances also at the level of foreign politics. Britland has pointed out an echo of the La Rochelle conflict, i.e., the war between England and France over the city of La Rochelle, one of the strongholds of the French Protestants in July 1627. La Rochelle had been at the centre of Anglo-French relations since 1624, when Huguenots attempted a rebellion against France. At the time, the Duke of Buckingham advised James I to form an Anglo-French alliance with the aim of obtaining support from France against Spain; in return, the English were supposed to provide naval support to the French in repressing the Huguenot rebellion at La Rochelle.²¹⁸ However, Buckingham's negotiations eventually led England to a military as well as diplomatic fiasco, casting a negative light on himself and on the King as 'religiously suspect'.²¹⁹ Similarly, when Louis XIII used the seven vessels that England had loaned to France to contrast another Huguenot rebellion in 1625, Buckingham and Charles unwittingly became the supporters of the Catholic cause in what would have probably turned into a war of religion if Cardinal Richelieu had not decided to mitigate the attack on the Huguenots and sign the peace of Fointainbleau.²²⁰ When in 1626-1627 Anglo-French relations soured again, Buckingham seized the opportunity to restore his tarnished reputation by providing the help that Huguenots, particularly those who were in London as exiles, had long been hoping for.²²¹ Buckingham promoted an armed intervention of the English fleet on the island of Ré, off La Rochelle. The expedition turned into a military disaster: the English forces engaged in a siege of the French who had barricaded themselves in the citadel of St Martin on the island, but the English proved unprepared to besiege their adversaries and attempted to attack them directly without success, all to the detriment of Buckingham's already precarious reputation at home.

couverture, that have no graves at all' (*MA*, 714-715; sig. C3^v); see *ML*, sig. N7^v: 'they obtaine / Heaven's couverture that have no urnes at all'.

²¹⁶ Hulme, 1957, pp. 127-143.

²¹⁷ Hulme, 1957, p. 134.

²¹⁸ Thomas Cogswell, 1986, 'Prelude to Ré: The Anglo-French Struggle over La Rochelle, 1624-1627', *History*, 71, pp. 2-6.

²¹⁹ Cogswell, 1986, p. 5.

²²⁰ Cogswell, 1986, p. 7.

²²¹ Cogswell, 1986, p. 15.

That Huguenots were pressing for Charles' active engagement in their rebellion to France in the late 1620s is testified by their epistolary correspondence: in one letter, an anonymous Huguenot affirmed that 'our safetie can cometh onely from the North [...] from that king, who is the Pledge and Suretie of the Peace'.²²² Similarly, in May's *Antigone*, Theseus is hailed as the bearer of peace in a land first troubled by fratricidal war between Eteocles and Polyneices and then by the tyrannical rule of Creon. Among the possible topical allusions in May's treatment of the story of Antigone, one is therefore the analogy between Theseus and Charles I. Britland has argued for the presence of a 'political allegory', conceiving Theseus' intervention at Thebes as the foreign aid that French Protestants were expecting from Charles at La Rochelle.²²³ The reliance upon foreign intervention is envisaged by Jean Bodin in his *République*, a treatise that not only informed May's French model, Garnier's *Antigone*, but conserved a certain resonance even fifty years after his publication in 1576.²²⁴ As J. H. M. Salmon has noted, '[u]nder the early Stuarts English political debate was still directly in touch with the ideas of the French Religious Wars' and 'the doctrines of Bodin were again invoked in the equally celebrated case of ship-money', an ancient tax revived by Charles to augment his fiscal revenues and imposed between 1634 and 1639 with the aim to build a fleet.²²⁵

However, England's conduct in the Anglo-French war from 1627 to 1629 did not live up to the model of May's Theseus. Once they had put an end to the English siege of St Martin on the island of Ré, the French in turn besieged La Rochelle. However, after the failure of the Ré expedition – England suffered 5,000 casualties – the English were reluctant to resume the conflict with the French.²²⁶ Nonetheless, England eventually intervened with two further naval expeditions to La Rochelle: one in April 1628, led by Buckingham's brother-in-law, William Feilding, the Earl of Denbigh, and the other in August of the same year, led by the Admiral of the Fleet, Robert Bertie, Earl of Lindsey, who substituted Buckingham after he had been assassinated by Felton on 23 August.²²⁷ On both expeditions the English fleet withdrew: in the former, Denbigh shamefully retreated to Portsmouth even before reaching the French coasts; in the latter, Lindsey did reach the harbour of La Rochelle but he was unable to persuade his captains to run the blockade mounted by the French.²²⁸ Also, Buckingham, who was meant to lead this second expedition if he had not been murdered, complained about the delay and the uncertainty surrounding its preparations.²²⁹ Such delay

²²² Anonymous letter dated 1626 quoted in Cogswell, 1986, p. 15.

²²³ Britland, 2006, p. 145.

²²⁴ J. H. M. Salmon, 1959, *The French Religious Wars in English Political Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 55; Beaudin, 1997, p. 13.

²²⁵ Salmon, 1959, pp. 56, 60; see also Smith, 1998, p. 90.

²²⁶ Roger Lockyer, 2011, 'Villiers, George, First Duke of Buckingham (1592-1628)', in *ODNB*.

²²⁷ Lockyer, 2011; see also Andrew Thrush, 2007, 'Bertie, Robert, First Earl of Lindsey (1582-1642)', in *ODNB*.

²²⁸ Thrush, 2007.

²²⁹ Lockyer, 2011.

and the two withdrawals of the English fleet must have disappointed the Huguenots who after the 1627 expedition led by Buckingham still counted on English aid. Britland has drawn a parallelism between the Huguenots ‘stranded and besieged by the French, suffering from thirst and starvation’, which the delay of the English could not but enhance, and the Argives corpses left at the mercy of ‘Vultures’ (*MA*, 589; sig. B8^v) by Creon’s orders.²³⁰ Argia defines Theseus’ help as ‘lingering’ (*MA*, 588; sig. B8^v): although the adjective is taken from Statius (‘lenti Theseos’, ‘tardy Theseus’, *Stat.Theb.*12.210-211), in this context a reference to Theseus’ tardiness potentially acquires a topical resonance.

In May’s *Antigone*, the figure of Theseus is presented in a positive light, in line with his main source for the characterization of the King of Athens, i.e., Statius.²³¹ In his dialogue with Deiphile, Ornitus advises her to go and ask Theseus for help because his ‘high Heroike thoughts were ne’re averse / From suppliants’ (*MA*, 552-553; sig. B8^r). As further proof of Theseus’ benevolent attitude, Athens hosts ‘a gracious altar’, ‘where white mercy dwells’, i.e., the goddess Clemency, and where

No Frankincense, nor rich *Arabian* fumes
 Do feede that altar: sighs, and floods of teares
 Are all that goddesse craves; no gold adorne
 Her humble roofes, as those proud temples rais’d
 By happy Monarchs, and great conquerors,
 Instead of trophées, and triumphal robes,
 Torne haire, and widows mourning garments hang
 About the temple. (*MA*, 555-569; sigg. B8^{r-v})

Also, in line with Statius (*Stat.Theb.*12.778-781), May’s Theseus grants Creon a burial (*MA*, 1754; sig. E5^r), thereby concretizing the mercy symbolized by the altar of Clemency at Athens.

In the passage quoted above, some imagery is again derived from Statius (‘no incense flame’, ‘non turea flamma’, *Stat.Theb.*12.487; ‘secta comarum / [...] et vestes’, ‘severed tresses [...] and raiment’, *Stat.Theb.*12.489-490). However, the insistence on the bareness of the altar can be read in the light of contemporary debates over the ‘Laudian style’, i.e., the new dispositions of William Laud, Bishop of London and later Archbishop of Canterbury, for the decorations of churches: Laud, whose religious stance, as noted above, was associated with Arminian positions, advocated the need to enhance the ‘beauty of holiness’, a phrase he took from the Book of Common Prayer as his motto.²³² Although the new altar policy envisaged by Laud did not take hold until 1640,²³³ discussions on the

²³⁰ Britland, 2006, p. 145.

²³¹ Theseus does not appear in Garnier’s version of *Antigone* and, although May mainly modelled his Theseus on that of Statius but the character features in Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus*, in Chaucher’s *The Knight’s Tale*, and in Shakespeare and Fletcher’s *Two Noble Kinsmen*; see Britland, 2006, p. 153; see also Miola, 2014, p. 231; Pangallo, 2016, p. xviii.

²³² Smith, 1998, pp. 92-93.

²³³ Smith, 1998, p. 93; see also Joseph Blenkinsopp, 2019, *The Beauty of Holiness: Re-Reading Isaiah in the Light of the Psalms*, London: T&T Clark, p. 147.

matter were certainly topical in London at least as early as 1628, when Laud was appointed to the episcopacy of the city, and remained ongoing throughout the 1630s, during the restoration of St Paul's cathedral.²³⁴ At odds with the 'beauty of holiness' ideal exalted by Laud, Ornitus' description of the altar of Clemency in Athens embodies an 'old-school Protestant bias' and voices a criticism of the 'ceremonialist' stance within the Church of England, i.e., the position of those who welcomed the decorative apparatuses that were meant to beautify religious buildings and the solemn ceremonies that accompanied sacraments.²³⁵ According to Britland, by inserting the image of this plain altar, which was in Athens 'for encouragement / for all that come' to Theseus (*MA*, 553-554; sig. B8^r), May presents the King of Athens as 'a champion of international Protestantism that many in England were hoping first Prince Henry, and then Charles himself, would turn out to be'.²³⁶

So far I have referred to May's *Antigone* as an adaptation or imitation of Sophocles' *Antigone* because the focus of this thesis has been to trace the survival of this play in English dramatic literature. However, the analysis of how May manipulates various sources, both classical and contemporary, in his play has revealed how reductive this definition is: for the subject matter, May does not limit himself to the Sophoclean version but relies heavily on Statius' *Thebaid* and partly on Garnier's *Antigone ou La Piété*. Stylistically, May's play is informed by multiple traditions, displaying Neoplatonic and Baroque elements within a markedly classicizing form. May's sources perform two main functions: they are rich repositories of imagery and they provide structural models for some scenes. Such functionalized reception co-exists with May's reuse of his own works within the text of *Antigone*: in one passage May extensively borrows from his translation of Lucan, thereby pointing to a thematic similarity between the two texts.

May does not explain why he chose the story of Antigone as the subject of one of his classical tragedies. However, in the light of his Lucanic works, the choice of *Antigone* cannot be seen as fortuitous but seems to be motivated by the appeal of the themes of the civil war and of the relations between a sovereign and its subjects. His direct engagement in the English Civil War as historian of the Parliament retrospectively reinforces this impression. Neither in his Lucan translation nor in this play does May take an oppositional stance to the monarchical rule, thereby displaying dexterity and cautiousness in seeking patronage and establishing his reputation in literary circles at court. Nevertheless, as Atherton and Sanders point out with reference to English drama in the 1630s, 'the

²³⁴ Julie Sanders and Ian Atherton, 2006, 'Introducing *The 1630s*: Questions of Parliaments, Peace, and Pressure Points', in Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (eds.), *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary Essays on Culture and Politics in the Caroline Era*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 4-5.

²³⁵ Britland, 2006, p. 147; Smith, 1998, p. 92.

²³⁶ Britland, 2006, p. 147.

politicisation of both genre and practice is inescapable in any reading of cultural production at this time'.²³⁷ As we have seen in the previous chapters, it should come as no surprise that drama, and in particular tragedy, was a politicized genre: both critics and playwrights were aware of the potential topical resonances of plays. However, subsequent English receptions of Sophoclean drama in the seventeenth century such as Christopher Wase's *Electra* (1639) and Dryden and Lee's *Oedipus* (1679) evidently reflect on topical political events. The degree of politicization of these plays is higher than that of May's *Antigone*: thanks to overt parallelisms with contemporary public figures, Wase's *Electra* and Dryden and Lee's *Oedipus* deserve the label of 'political allegories', which, as we have seen, has been employed for May's play.²³⁸ May's *Antigone* can therefore be seen, if not a trailblazer – it was probably not performed and was issued in only one edition – at least the first English political play that has recognised and exploited the topical potential of Sophocles' drama.

²³⁷ Sanders and Atherton, 2006, 'Introducing *The 1630s*: Questions of Parliaments, Peace, and Pressure Points', in Sanders and Atherton (eds.), p. 5.

²³⁸ On Wase's *Electra*, see Robert S. Miola, 2017, 'Representing Orestes' Revenge', *Classical Reception Journal*, 9, 1, pp. 160-162; on Dryden and Lee's *Oedipus*, see Hall and Macintosh, 2005, pp. 14-29.

Conclusion

This thesis has reassessed the circulation of Sophocles' plays in early modern England and has focussed on the dramatic reception of *Antigone*, particularly in the form of translation and adaptation. In accordance with a historicist methodology, this work has reconstructed the cultural and literary contexts in which the reception of Sophocles took place. Generally, Sophocles was exclusively read by the highly educated elite, which was deeply embedded in the *respublica litteraria* connecting scholars across Europe; for this reason, I have often widened the scope of my analysis to encompass Europe as a whole.

The first main conclusion that can be drawn is therefore that the reception of Sophocles showcases the strong dependence of early modern English culture on the Continent in many ways. First, the circulation of Sophoclean drama was enabled by the high connectedness of the English book market with European channels of distribution – either book fairs, scholarly connections, or commercial routes. Second, the metalanguage of translation and adaptation in treatises and other forms of theoretical statements written by English writers such as Laurence Humphrey's *Interpretatio linguarum* is resonant with those produced by their European colleagues. Renaissance discourses on translation and imitation probably influenced the authors of the two *Antigones* at the centre of this thesis, Thomas Watson and Thomas May, who engaged with these practices also in other works. Third, the English reception of Sophocles – in particular of *Antigone* – well exemplifies the deep interaction between drama and politics, a common feature of other engagements with the tragedian on the Continent: as summarized by Philip Melanchthon and Veit Winsheim, 'Sophocles is plainly a political writer'.¹

Watson's Latin translation and May's English adaptation capture two distant points of reception of Greek tragedy in the history of English drama. The fifty years that separate the two plays under discussion were marked by the dramatic production of other playwrights, who certainly or likely engaged with Greek tragedians: amongst them, George Peele, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson. The relevance of Shakespearean studies in literary criticism begs a specific, though brief reflection on the relationship between Shakespeare and Greek tragedy, in particular with Sophocles. Since the 1970s, scholars have been illuminating the manifold ways in which the Greek tragedians may have left traces in Shakespeare's drama, thereby questioning

¹ Philip Melanchthon and Veit Winsheim, 1546, Sophocles, *Interpretatio tragoediarum Sophoclis, ad utilitatem iuventutis, quae studiosa est Graecae linguae, edita a Vito Winshemio*, Francoforti: excudebat Petrus Brubachius.sig. B1^r: 'Sophocles plane politicus scriptor est'.

the long-held assumption that, since he had only little Greek, he was not influenced by Greek tragedy.² It is now generally agreed that, in Colin Burrow's words, 'Shakespeare almost certainly never read Sophocles or Euripides (let alone the much more difficult Aeschylus) in Greek, and yet he managed to write tragedies which invite comparison with those authors'.³ The mediation of Latin translations or of other classical writers enabled Shakespeare to access Aeschylus and Euripides indirectly, as many critics have demonstrated;⁴ the same cannot be excluded for Sophocles, although less evidence has been found in comparison to the other tragedians. Scholars have usually investigated Shakespeare's relationship with Euripides and Aeschylus; many 'striking analogies' or 'similarities' with Sophocles' plays including *Antigone* have indeed been observed, but these are largely thematic.⁵ There have been also attempts at finding direct or mediated lexical borrowings from Sophoclean tragedy but with less convincing results.⁶

In any case, the 'striking' thematic similarities with Sophocles in Shakespeare's plays fall beyond the scope of this thesis, which focusses on direct and declared engagements with Sophocles' *Antigone* such as Watson's and May's versions, respectively a translation and an adaptation. However convenient these categories may be, a second major conclusion that this thesis has reached is that it is impossible as well as inconsequential to impose modern taxonomies on early modern texts that result from translation and adaptive practices. As a solution, one could apply early modern

² Emrys Jones, 1977, *The Origins of Shakespeare*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 85-118; see also Louise Schleiner, 1990, 'Latinized Greek Drama in Shakespeare's Writing of Hamlet', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 41, 1, pp. 29-48; Michael Silk, 2004, 'Shakespeare and Greek Tragedy: Strange Relationship', in Charles Martindale and A. B. Taylor (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Classics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 241-257; Sarah Dewar Watson, 2009, 'The *Alcestis* and the Statue Scene in *The Winter's Tale*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 60, 1, pp. 73-80; Tanya Pollard, 2017, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Carla Suthren, 2018, *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Reception of Euripides*, PhD dissertation, University of York.

³ Colin Burrow, 2013, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 247. There is an isolated, early attempt to demonstrate that Shakespeare read Euripides in the original; see J. A. K. Thomson, 1952, *Shakespeare and the Classics*, London: George Allen & Unwin, pp. 57-58; see also Tanya Pollard's comments on this in Pollard, 2017, p. 137, n. 22

⁴ Louise Schleiner has argued for 'the possible mediated influence' of Aeschylus and Euripides on *Hamlet* via Latin translations and commentaries of Greek tragedies; see Schleiner, 1990. Gordon Braden has explored Shakespeare's 'indirect' access to Greek tragedy through Plutarch's quotations from the tragedians in his *Lives*; see Gordon Braden, 2017, 'Classical Greek Tragedy and Shakespeare', *Classical Reception Journal*, 9, 1, pp. 103-119.

⁵ Marienne Wainstein speaks of 'striking analogies between Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* and Sophoclean tragedy', particularly in the archetype of the tragic hero as exemplified by *Ajax* and *Antigone*; see Marienne Wainstein, 1993, *Shakespeare's Coriolanus: A Tragic Hero in the Sophoclean Mould*, PhD dissertation, University College London, p. 2. John Harvey reviews several similarities between Shakespeare's and Sophocles' characterization of their protagonists and particularly insist on the 'striking' similarities between Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Sophocles' Oedipus plays; see John Harvey, 1977, 'A Note on Shakespeare and Sophocles', *Essays in Criticism*, 27, pp. 259-270. Similarly, a recent conference, entitled 'Classical and Early Modern Intersections: Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*', comparatively explored the 'intersections' between these plays (University of Verona, 22-25 May 2018).

⁶ John Churton Collins referred the appendix 'Sophoclis sententiae' included in Naogeorgus edition and argued that and, at the end of the volume, by way of appendix, is inserted, under the title of "Sophocles Sententiae," a collection of proverbs and striking passages selected from the plays – parallels to many of which occur in Shakespeare' but he does not offer any evidence supporting this statement; see John Churton Collins, 1904, *Studies in Shakespeare*, Westminster: Constable, pp. 39-40. Collins also tentatively proposes many other parallels between Shakespeare and Sophocles but John Harvey later relativized them by pointing out that 'we have no way of knowing whether they are more than coincidences'; see Harvey, 1977, pp. 260-261.

terminology such as imitation instead of adaptation; however, this does not always account for the respective internal nuances of translation and imitation, nor does it provide a consistent distinction between these two processes. Watson's and May's versions aptly illustrate this lack of clear-cut distinctions between translation and imitation/adaptation: these two texts exhibit a complex intertextuality, which reveals the wide spectrum of possible interactions between translation and imitative practices.

Alongside translation and imitation, this thesis has surveyed other modes of reception of Sophoclean tragedy in England and has reconstructed the cultural, material, and literary contexts in which Watson's and May's *Antigones* emerged. By surveying the history of Greek literacy in England from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, I have established that Watson and May studied Greek at some stage of their education, which later enabled them to read Sophocles in the original. In all likelihood, their audience was mostly formed by highly educated men, who received a similar training in Greek. The material transmission of Sophoclean tragedy equally confirms that his plays were read and sometimes performed only in academic venues. Also, the plays were filtered in search for gnomic sentences condensing moral teachings that were meant to be internalized and reused by students. In any form of his early modern reception – reading, selection and reuse of *sententiae*, translation and imitation whether or not for a performance – Sophocles was seen through a moralizing lens as much as Euripides and other ancient playwrights. England shared such an edifying approach to ancient texts with other European countries, in which playwrights often blended Sophocles with Seneca in vernacular adaptations. A further conclusion of this thesis is therefore that in early modern England Sophocles' reception found different kinds of expression, all sharing a didactic value, and mostly took place in an academic environment, from which also Watson and May hailed.

In the history of early modern English drama, Watson's *Antigone* is a text of interest at various levels. From a philological and stylistic point of view, the play illustrates the integration between a close translation of Sophocles and the imitation from various sources in the supplementary poems. Structurally, the play exhibits elements that are reminiscent of established dramatic conventions such as the five-act structure but are also a reflection of indigenous trends in English Renaissance drama, such as dumb shows and the presence of a personified Nature. Watson's *Antigone* thereby belongs to a transition phase of English drama, which in the 1580s was gradually abandoning the medieval morality play tradition for the upcoming commercial theatre. Also, Watson's responsiveness to popular dramatic forms contributes to the uprooting of the misleading assumption that university drama was isolated from contemporary theatrical experiences outside academic circles. Finally, at a thematic level, Watson unfolds the main themes at stake in Sophocles' *Antigone* in the light of

contemporary debates on vexed questions such as the limitation of royal authority, the legitimacy of resistance to a lawful but unjust power, and, related to this, the appeal to Natural Law.

No less than Watson's version, May's *Antigone* similarly poses manifold challenges to scholars. Because of the uncertainties surrounding its performance, the text defies any definition that has been and could be attributed to it: adaptation, replay, or piece of closet drama. Formally, May's *Antigone* is the result of the interplay between multiple sources, both classical and contemporary, which provide the author either with a plethora of imagery or with replicable structural models for some scenes. Such differentiated use of the sources – which I have termed 'functionalized reception' – is coupled with another compositional strategy: May reuses a passage of his own translation of Lucan, re-contextualizing it within his *Antigone*. May's life-long engagement with Lucan's *Bellum civile* is also relevant to *Antigone* because it sheds light on the motives behind the choice of this tragedy: both Lucan's epic poem and Sophocles' play explore political themes that could be of great appeal at a time in which relationships between sovereign and subjects were becoming increasingly strained.

Despite the fifty years intervening between them, Watson's and May's versions both develop the inherent political quality of *Antigone*, downsizing the subversive potential of the Sophoclean heroine, who nonetheless remains an emblem for resistance to legitimate power. Watson openly condemns Antigone's behaviour by intervening in the translation in his capacity as an author and by framing her within a Stoic view of the relationship between subjects and sovereign. Such a Stoic stance is embodied by Ismene, who is visibly brought to the fore in Watson's additional poems; her unconventional prominence thereby facilitates the effectiveness of the moral message of patient acceptance and obedience, which Watson's play, being a piece of academic drama, was expected to convey. On the other hand, May mitigates Antigone's fierce character by making her an example of piety in line with Robert Garnier's illustrious antecedent and by having her overshadowed by other figures such as Argia. Nevertheless, May's *Antigone* calls for the ethical need to violate unjust laws and overthrow tyrannical rulers such as Creon, who is set as a foil to Theseus, the embodiment of an enlightened sovereignty.

A comparison of May's *Antigone* with Watson's displays how flexibly the Sophoclean story can be adapted to different horizons of expectations. In the fifty years that elapsed between these two *Antigones*, conspicuous changes affected English politics and culture. Both Watson and May handle the Sophoclean story in a way that potentially signals their alertness to contemporary topical issues. Although neither Watson nor May ever clarify why they chose such a neglected myth, it is conceivable that contemporary responses to *Antigone* on the Continent prompted the two authors to turn to this play and project onto it political reflections attuned to their respective historical contexts.

As a last main conclusion of this thesis, it can therefore be argued that the two English versions of *Antigone* challenge modern understandings of this tragedy, usually informed by Idealist interpretations, and demand a historicized approach to unfold the complexity of the meanings that were attached to the original play in the early modern period.

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