



7:2 2021

“Well-Staged Syllables”:

From Classical to Early Modern English Metres in Drama

Edited by Silvia Bigliuzzi

SILVIA BIGLIAZZI – *Introduction*

STEPHEN ORGEL – *True Order of Versifying: the Reform of Elizabethan Poetry*

GUIDO AVEZZÙ – *“Secundum quasdam suas partes”: Renaissance Readings of the Lyric Structures of Greek Tragedy*

MARCO DURANTI – *“An unexplored sea”. The Metres of Greek Drama in Early Modern England*

ANGELICA VEDELAGO – *“Ex uariis metri generibus”: Two ‘Metrical’ Neo-Latin Translators of Greek Tragedy across the English Channel*

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Founded by Guido Avezù, Silvia Bigliuzzi, and Alessandro Serpieri

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Contents

“Well-Staged Syllables”:

From Classical to Early Modern English Metres in Drama

Edited by Silvia Bigliazzi

SILVIA BIGLIAZZI – <i>Introduction</i>	5
STEPHEN ORGEL – <i>True Order of Versifying: the Reform of Elizabethan Poetry</i>	21
GUIDO AVEZZÙ – “ <i>Secundum quasdam suas partes</i> ”: <i>Renaissance Readings of the Lyric Structures of Greek Tragedy</i>	35
MARCO DURANTI – “ <i>An unexplored sea</i> ”. <i>The Metres of Greek Drama in Early Modern England</i>	65
ANGELICA VEDELAGO – “ <i>Ex uariis metri generibus</i> ”: <i>Two ‘Metrical’ Neo-Latin Translators of Greek Tragedy across the English Channel</i>	81
FRANCESCO DAL’OLIO – <i>Two Worlds, One Language: Metrics for the Chorus in Buchanan’s Euripidean Translations</i>	117
SILVIA BIGLIAZZI – <i>Versifying the Senecan Chorus: Notes on Jasper Heywood’s Emulative Approach to Troas</i>	139
EMANUEL STELZER – <i>Confluences and Spillages: Enjambment in Elizabethan Tragedy and the Classics</i>	167
HANNAH JANE CRAWFORTH – ‘ <i>Doubtful Feet</i> ’ and ‘ <i>Healing Words</i> ’: <i>Greek Tragic Prosody in Samson Agonistes</i>	203
ROBERT STAGG – <i>Afterword</i>	221

Miscellany

FABIO CIAMBELLA – <i>A Corpus Linguistic Analysis of Dance Lexis in Eight Early Modern Manuscripts: From the Inns of Court to Drama</i>	231
LEONARDO MANCINI – <i>The Shadow of the Myth. El Romancero de Edipo with Toni Cots Directed by Eugenio Barba (1984-1990)</i>	251
ELEONORA FOIS and DANIELA FRANCESCA VIRDIS – <i>Normal Non-Fluency and Verbatim Theatre: a Linguistic and Performative Analysis</i>	271

Special Section

HANNIBAL HAMLIN – <i>Chanita Goodblatt, Jewish and Christian Voices in English Reformation Biblical Drama: Enacting Family and Monarchy. London and New York: Routledge, 2018</i>	301
EDOARDO GIOVANNI CARLOTTI – <i>Dick McCaw, Rethinking the Actor’s Body. Dialogues with Neuroscience. London and New York: Methuen Drama, 2020</i>	317
SILVIA SILVESTRI – “ <i>But he loves me . . . to death</i> ”. <i>An Interview with Director Tonio De Nitto and Translator-Adaptor Francesco Niccolini about their Staging of La Bisbetica Domata (The Taming of the Shrew) for Factory Compagnia Transadriatica</i>	327

MONICA CRISTINI – <i>WEATHER# Developing New Theatre Ecologies Through a Virtual Venue</i>	339
GHERARDO UGOLINI – <i>Orestes the Gunslinger and the Flying Bacchae. Ancient Theatre Festival - Syracuse 2021</i>	349
MARK BROWN – <i>The Edinburgh Festivals 2021: a Covid-Era Return</i>	361
PETRA BJELICA – <i>Shaping the Edges of a New Vision. The Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival 2021</i>	373

SILVIA BIGLIAZZI*

Introduction¹

1. Well-Staged Syllables

The title of this special issue alludes to Sidney's lines in his famous *Defence* about the two ways of versifying in poetry, the ancient and the modern. The music of verse is a major concern in his discussion and it is surprising to read his equal praise of both "the traditional English manner of writing verse and . . . the imitation of classical metres" (Attridge 1974, 1). Although Sidney believes that the ancient way is "more fit for music, both words and tune observing quantity, and more fit lively to express diverse passions, by the low or lofty sound of the well-weighed syllable", he also claims that the modern approach – the English in particular – can achieve "a certain music to the ear" by way of rhyme. Thus, Sidney continues, "though we do not observe quantity, yet we observe the accent very precisely, which other languages either cannot do, or will not do so absolutely". The conclusion is that "the English, before any other vulgar language . . . is fit for both sorts" (Sidney 1989, 248). As Attridge rightly observed, in the light of the actual achievements of quantitative experiments compared to traditional accentual poetry, this statement sounds astonishing (1974, 1). And yet, in order to grasp the full meaning of Sidney's view, it should be situated within the context of "Renaissance humanism, and in particular its educational programme" (3). It was precisely the inevitable decline of that experiment, alongside an awareness of the shortcomings of quantitative verse at the end of the century that allowed the English manner to flourish. Thomas Campion's claim in his *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* (1602) that quantitative verse was successful when accentual is in

¹ This introduction and the whole monographic section dedicated to *Well-Staged Syllables. From Classical to Early Modern English Metres in Drama* are part of the 2017 PRIN *Classical Receptions in Early Modern English Drama* research project (Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Verona).

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fact the final evidence of the necessary failure of that enterprise (Attridge 1974, 228). Daniel's comment that the iambic line is only "the plain ancient verse, consisting of tenne sillables to fiue feet, which hath euer beene vsed amongst vs time out of minde" (1603, Hv) is the natural response to Campion's strenuous attempt to defend the classical style. After all, as Stephen Orgel argues in this issue, "'reserving the Quantitie to the Verse' means that English in verse is not English as it is spoken" and "quantity in verse is a purely visual matter, to be read and not pronounced aloud. Poetry is a different language" (pp. 28). Not surprisingly, Orgel also points out that "Shakespeare never wrote quantitative hexameters, not even for the pedantic poets in *Love's Labour's Lost*, where they would certainly have been appropriate – perhaps his small Latin and less Greek did not extend so far but even if they were not beyond his abilities, quantitative metrics were not adaptable to the spoken English of the stage" (pp. 22).

This special issue on "Well-Staged Syllables" makes a foray precisely into the realm of early modern English drama, which does not always mean the stage. Thus, Sidney's altered quotation, with its implied reference to the 'ancient way', is meant to evoke what being classical sounded and looked like in early modern England (Orgel 2019, 2021) with regard to versification in drama. In this respect, the relevance of a language that must be spoken remains crucial whether we refer to drama in a theatre or to closet drama, that is, drama intended for private settings and possibly declamation (Attridge 2019, 319). It remains relevant because the drama discussed in the articles collected in this issue is inspired by classical models that entail different parts and verse forms in ways that make language constitutive of both its sense and performance as originally in Greek tragedy. In other terms, whether we deal with Neo-Latin translations of Euripides and Sophocles, or with vernacular translations of Seneca, or with Milton's adoption and challenge of Greek prosodic schemes, verse forms are essential components of the dramatic structure in ways that drama less connected with classical models is not. This does not change whether we consider translations for teaching purposes and/or for individual reading, although with different effects. In all cases the divergence between written and spoken language, spelling and pronunciation affects the sense and function of metre. As Orgel again reminds us, "by the sixteenth century spelling had not kept pace with pronunciation, and the written language had long ceased to be an adequate guide to speech" (32). Thus, "when Hamlet urges the visiting actors to 'Speak the speech . . . as I pronounced it to you' (3.2.1-2) he is concerned with principles of declamation, but he also testifies to the disjunction between the written text and the way it is spoken" (ibid.). Use of Latin in this period is not unaffected by how it was pronounced, as pronunciation varied greatly at the time, and, as is often recalled, English Latin was often incom-

prehensible to continental listeners (Attridge 1974, 23).

The following articles are not primarily concerned with this particular problem, while being aware of it; nor are they intended to offer a history of dramatic versification in the Tudor age and beyond. Rather, they are concerned with the ways in which drama responded to the humanist programme that also promoted quantitative experiments in poetry by dealing with ideas of lyric metre in drama, in view of different forms of performance, as well as in processes of confluence between different ancient and English traditions. They raise questions about what a Greek tragedy meant for an early modern reader; about schooling in classics; about Neo-Latin and vernacular translations of Greek and Latin drama; about metrical devices conceived of as being representative of how to be classical; but also about how to invoke and at the same time to challenge ancient formal metrical models. Selected case studies span from the Tudor age to Milton's *Samson Agonistes* (1671), and pay particular attention to some of the most problematic parts of plays: lyric forms and the performance of the Chorus.

2. Reading and Performing Lyric Verse: the Case of the Chorus

As Cunliffe has remarked, “when plays were no longer acted” in the course of the Middle Ages, information about ancient drama could derive “from the texts and from general treatises” (1912, x). Among the latter, Evanthius' *De Fabula* and Donatus' *De Comoedia* were especially relevant to the early modern reception of classical drama for their inclusion in many editions of Terence (see esp. 3.1 and 3.5 in Wessner 1902, 18, 22), but of course Aristotle and especially Horace were as well. Interestingly, as Guido Avezzi elucides in his article (36ff.), a peculiar Renaissance misinterpretation of a passage from the *Poetics* concerning the use of *rhythmos*, *metron*, and *melos* contributed to blurring the differences between the main parts of tragedy. Yet another misreading, this time of a line from Horace's *Ars Poetica*, produced a distorted image of the function of the Chorus, which contributed to weakening the sense of lyric parts in drama connected with singing (see below Bigliuzzi, 144ff.). As Orgel points out, “drama in *The Poetics* [of Aristotle] is language, logic, a form of argument; in short, a text, literature” (2015, 63). And as Bruce Smith remarks, in Cicero's treatises plays are rhetorical events (1988, 16). Although theoretical writings on the continent were copious, the debate in England lagged behind and knowledge of classical plays was earned mainly through direct access to the texts of Greek and Latin drama. It was conveyed through teaching syllabuses in schools, Universities and Inns of Court, where plays were also put on. However, as Marco Duranti shows in his article on the metres of Greek drama in early modern English schooling, the study of Greek versification was very

rare and notions of classical prosody were almost entirely restricted to Latin forms. Thus, while editions of Greek plays are limited to two fairly late publications (Euripides' *Troades*, 1575, and Aristophanes' *Equites*, 1593; also presumably designed for teaching purposes: see Duranti 2021), Neo-Latin drama included translations from Greek. Two Euripidean plays and one by Sophocles which were Latinised in the course of the sixteenth century are very attentive to metre and show heavy influence of continental models. Buchanan's *Medea* (1544) and *Alcestis* (1556) were carried out and published in France; both of these as well as Thomas Watson's *Antigone* (1581) were produced with a students' performance in mind. These translations are especially interesting when they come to render the lyric parts of the choral odes. As Angelica Vedelago carefully illustrates, they are reproduced in Latin by experimenting with quantitative measures. And as Francesco Dall'Olio suggests, Buchanan's treatment of the metrics of the *stasima* betrays a different approach to Euripides in the two plays: *Medea* was carried out "almost exclusively through the eyes of Seneca", *Alcestis* by tailoring Seneca's verse more to the Greek forms, possibly in view of publication and under the influence of contemporary French poetry and the reception of Greek tragedy.

But what was exactly meant by translating Greek tragedies in terms of their performance into comparable verse forms remains conjectural. Vedelago recalls that the choruses of Justus Caesar Scaliger's 1587 translation of *Ajax* are accompanied by a musical score. It may also be remembered that the Choruses of Sophocles' *Oedipus* in the Italian translation of Orsatto Giustinian were set to music by Andrea Gabrieli for the famous 1585 performance at the Vicenza Olympic Theatre in 1585 (see Restani 2015); and that Buchanan's *Medea* was performed in Strasbourg at the end of the sixteenth century with choruses set to music by Christophe Thomas Walliser (Young 1962, 136). But Vedelago is right in very cautiously raising the possibility that the choruses of Watson's *Antigone* might have been accompanied by music – a question that has recently been suggested by Duffin with regard to some neo-Senecan plays in English (2021). Surely, if read and rightly interpreted, Aristotle's *Poetics* alongside the scholia were unequivocal that certain combinations of *rhythm*, *metre* and *melos* in certain parts of tragedy were meant to be sung, chanted or recited, thus indirectly imbuing verse with specific performative qualities. More precisely, it can be deduced that rhythm and metre corresponded to spoken parts, while the combination of the three elements characterised sung parts. One would therefore expect that any recreation, or translation, or imitation of those parts and verse forms in a different language would convey the same sense of the parts of the original tragedy and the performative resources immanent to metre. And yet things were not so simple as this, and, as Avezzù elucidates, it was not only because of inter-

pretative flaws.

It should be recalled that access to ancient drama occurred through books which retained scant information about their performance, including that of verse. Comments like the following one about early modern play-books of contemporary drama can hardly be applied to the editions of ancient plays:

By the 1590s, the particular design characteristics of playbook *mise en page* evoked many of the extra-lexical, meaning-making effects of theatricality, most of which we assume to have been lost or erased or ignored in the process of repackaging playtexts made for one media environment (the theatre) to suit a different medium: the printed book. Typographic arrangements that accounted for the visual, sonic, and emotional ‘energetics’ of performance . . . were vital to the legibility of printed matter specifically as *play-matter*. These arrangements activated generic recognition, making it possible for readers (before reading a word) to know that what they were looking at was a play. (Bourne 2021, 195; see also Bourne 2020)

Greek and Latin drama were not as easily recognisable as plays on the page in ways that Renaissance drama was. The function of their verse forms was something that could be found in the commentaries in the margin or because marked before each part, but a real sense of how they were to be performed remains confined to the page. However, in spite of Howard-Hill’s claim that Greek dramatists had very little influence on English playwrights and they were therefore not worth examining with regard to the printing of drama (1990, 131), Euripides was perhaps the most widespread Greek author in the Renaissance. Therefore it is likely that many readers first encountered a Greek Chorus and other parts marked out as lyric in a collection of his plays, whether in the original or in translation. Aldus Manutius’ 1503 edition does not print separate lyric stanzas, nor does it distinguish between acted, chanted, and sung parts (either monodic or choral). The indication *Xo. (Choròs)* is placed in the margin like any other speech prefix. Interestingly, Manutius’ edition of Seneca’s tragedies (1517) indicated CHORUS not only as a speaker, but also as a wholly separate section (new line / CHORUS centred / new line), as in previous editions of Seneca, where scenes were marked by speech headings positioned at the centre of the page.² This set the norm for later editions of Seneca as well. On-

² See also Howard-Hill 1990, esp. 133-4: “The most readily apparent distinction is that the classical plays employed act and scene headings. At the beginning only scenes were indicated and only by the provision of speech-headings when the groupings of characters changed as they entered or left the stage. Scenes therefore had no invariable connection with stage clearance, an association later made by English dramatists, nor with localities” (134).

ly Collinus' 1541 Greek-Latin edition of Euripides seems to follow the Senecan model, but just in the first tragedy, *Hecuba*, and as regards the first choral ode, since in all the other odes of the same tragedy and the following ones the speech prefix is like that of any other character, positioned on the left. In 1562 Stiblinus was the first to divide Euripides' plays into Acts corresponding to the ancient episodes, and also to distinguish the Chorus from the rest, thus following Aldus' Senecan edition – but this was a parallel Greek-Latin edition and the 'Latin style' may have had an influence. Perhaps significantly, Aldus' 1507 edition of Erasmus' Latin translations of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia Aul.* on the other hand followed the printing practice of Greek dramatists, not Seneca's. Consequently, no Renaissance edition of Euripides, including the miscellaneous Stephanus one (1567), collecting a selection of Euripides', Sophocles' and Aeschylus' tragedies, indicated the number of speakers within the Chorus. Stiblinus (1562) was the only one to separate the Chorus from the other sections, and Turnèbe (1553) and Canter (1571) the first to foreground its melodic form based on repetition and structural response, in Sophocles and Euripides, respectively.

If we move to the Renaissance editions of Seneca, we notice that the Chorus was signalled by centred speech-headings, had no divisions into stanzas, nor was the number of speakers identified. Revealingly, Badius (1514), Manutius (1517) Petrus (1529) and Gryphius (1541) printed "adilon" above "chorus", possibly a phonetic transcription of ἀδύλων (*adélôn*), meaning indefinite, and Marmitta and Badius added extensive commentaries with metrical notation, stressing the literary quality of the plays as objects for learned exegesis. In one note on the second Chorus of the first tragedy, *Hercules Furens*, Badius also repeated Horace's prescription that the Chorus should sing nothing irrelevant to the action between the Acts, and should take the part of the author ("authoris partis") – a reading present in most of the authoritative manuscripts of his *Ars Poetica* and normally adopted in the early editions since the end of the fifteenth century in place of the correct "actoris partis" (see Horace 1999, 193-5; and Bigliuzzi in this issue). Thus, Badius clearly read Seneca through Horace, who in turn was reading Aristotle on Greek tragedy.³ A reader of these Senecan editions would have found very little elucidation about the Chorus and the function of verse, except for long odes with occasional commentary about the metre and content, and, as in Badius' case, massive notes in the margin including normative references to Horace. No stage directions concerning the performance of verse was present. So, it is no surprise that early modern readers may have been puzzled by a dramatic part which in Seneca's editions, yet not in Euripides', was

³ On the relation between Horace and Aristotle, and their reception, see e.g. Gilbert and Snuggs 1947, Stenuit 2016.

separate from the rest when not involved in dialogues, and remained indefinite in number. Whether the varied shorter metres were to be interpreted as songs could only be evinced from theoretical treatises on ancient drama.

As Miola has aptly noticed, “the classical chorus has always provided formidable difficulties to translators and directors” (Miola 2002, 35). An anonymous reporter of a 1568 staging at Reggio Emilia of the tragedy *Alidoro*, attributed to Gabriele Bombasi, candidly avowed the common ignorance of how the chorus was sung in the ancient times, whether by one singer only or by the multitude in unison or in a mixed way. Thus, he concluded, “it is manifest that the diversity of these manners derives only by our difficulty in getting to know what precisely the ancients did”.⁴ This confusion is sometimes also true of modern readers of Renaissance authors. For instance, it has been suggested that Giraldo Cinthio’s choruses “were not sung, but recited by one member, the others merely standing in view of the stage” and that “even here Giraldo claims the support of an ancient Greek usage” (Cunliffe 1912, xxx). In fact, in his discussion of the form and function of the Chorus among the ancients in his “Discorso intorno al comporre delle comedie, et delle tragedie” (1554), Giraldo Cinthio says something quite different. First, he neatly distinguishes it from the Prologue, remarking the different uses in Greek drama and Roman comedy, where a Prologue is a clearly separate portion of the spectacle divided from the main action: he either introduces the argument (as in Plautus) or speaks on behalf of the poet (as in Terence):

Nelle Tragedie Greche, et Latine, et Volgari insino ad hora scritte, non è altro il Prologo, che quella parte, ch’è posta innanzi al primo Choro. . . La onde non imitando il Prologo, l’attione, riman chiarissimo, ch’egli della favola non è parte, ma è una giunta postavi da Romani per disporre gli animi de gli spettatori alla attenzione, o per conciliare insieme beniuolenza al Poeta: il che mostra il uoltar del parlare, che fa colui del Prologo a gli spettatori, la qualcosa non si può fare ne gli atti della fauola . . . (1554, 246, 247-8)

[In the Greek, Latin and Vulgar tragedies written up to now, the Prologue is no other part than that which is placed before the first Chorus. . . Inasmuch as the Prologue does not imitate the action, it is very clear that he is not part of the fable, but is an addition placed by the Romans in order to dispose the minds of the spectators to attention, or to elicit their goodwill to the Poet: which is demonstrated by the Prologue’s address to the spectators, which cannot be done in the acts of the fable. (My translation)]

While the Prologue speaks (“Però che nel Prologo non ha luoco senone il

⁴ “è cosa manifesta che la diversità di queste maniere non viene se non dalla difficoltà che si truova a conoscer quel che precisamente intorno a ciò si facessero gli antichi” (in Ariani 1977, 1001).

parlare”, 205), the first Chorus sometimes performs a “melody” (“melodia”), sometimes “the numbers” (“numero”), meaning rhythm and song, respectively. In the first case, Giraldi continues, the Choral ode is called by Aristotle “Commo” (*Kommos*), that is, a wailing or lament, and consists in a rhythmical performance including a dance assimilable to the contemporary Moresque. This type of Chorus is like Seneca’s opening one in his *Troades* where the Trojan women sing and dance with Hecuba a mourning song for Priam. Because of the movement involved, Giraldi calls it “mobile” (229). The Chorus that has no movement, or “number” (230), as is typical of the Choruses following the first one, and simply uses verse and melody is instead called “stabile” (static). What is relevant in this explanation is that Giraldi believes that the verse and the melody were common to all choric parts.⁵ Thus, in no way did he claim that the ancient Chorus was spoken by one actor, while rather noticing that the single speaker intervened individually only during the Acts, as one amongst other speakers; between the Acts the Chorus was a collective character both singing and dancing together.

Giraldi also carefully distinguished different uses of rhyme, underlining that it was not only “appropriate to some parts of the tragedy when the characters reason with each other”, but also and “especially in the Choruses” where “mixing broken and whole lines [broken verse = 7 syllables; whole verse = 10, 11, 12 syllables; see 228]” was “for the sake of the highest sweetness”.⁶ The mention of verse and rhyme is relevant to how Giraldi reinterprets the contemporary Chorus by way of current lyric devices, so that the addition of the rhyme (a trait absent from both Greek and Latin verses) and a combination of heptameters and hendecasyllables become the necessary features to confer upon the Chorus a lyric gentleness the Prologue and other parts of tragedy were not meant to have. These remarks are rele-

⁵ “Nel primo choro alle volte la melodia et il numero: il quale choro fu detto Commo, ciò è pianto da Aristotele. Agli altri chori conviene solo il verso et la melodia. La onde si può vedere, che solo il verso è commune a tutte le parti della tragedia” (1554, 229). Incidentally, this distinction should not be confused with that between choruses that in the contemporary debate bore the same names of “mobile” and “static” but identified their presence on or absence from the stage, not the quality of their performance – in his Letter to Hercule II D’Este appended to his *Didone*, Giraldi advocated a “mobile” Chorus, with entrances and exits (1583, 143-4), while Angelo Ingegneri, in his “Sui modi di rappresentare i cori, gli intermezzi, gli echi e le ombre”, a static one (1598, Part 1, 17ff.).

⁶ “Per lo contrario possono haver luoco le rime in qualche parte della Tragedia tra le persone, che ragionano, et ne i Chori, principalissimamente, mescolando insieme per piu soavita i rotti con gli intieri: intendendo pero per gli Chori quelli che dividono uno atto dall’altro, et non de Chori, che si pongono tra gli interlocutori; perché allhora una sola persona ragiona, et non tutto insieme” (1554, 229; my translation).

vant to the present discussion insofar as verse patterns and performance in drama cannot be disjointed. In this respect it is curious to notice that similar arguments were put forward in different countries. Puttenham, for instance, a few decades later was to approve the use of rhyme to approximate Greek and Latin gentleness in terms similar to both Giraldi and Sidney:

For wanting the currantnesse of the Greeke and Latine feete, instead thereof we make in th'ends of our verses a certaine tunable sound: which anon after with another verse reasonably distant we accord together in the last fall or cadence: the eare taking pleasure to heare the like tune reported, and to feele his returne. (1589, Book 2, "Of Proportion in Concord, called Symphonie or rime", 63)

In this way, Giraldi sounds closer to Puttenham, Sidney or Daniel than to other Italian writers who advocated rhymeless drama, from Trissino to Speroni – a question that also proves relevant with regard to the use of enjambment in rhymed and rhymeless plays, as Emanuel Stelzer shows in this issue.

If we turn to Evanthius-Donatus' *De comoedia*, it is clear that the ancient Chorus was perceived as the cradle of ancient comedy, which by the gradual addition of characters was turned into a new form, later divided into five acts ("Comoedia uetus ab initio chorus fuit paulatimque personarum numero in quinque actus processit"). It was also known as a singing Chorus, and it was precisely for its singing and verse forms related to it that it came to be perceived as boring and useless because it hindered the action ("nam postquam otioso tempore fastidiosior spectator effectus est et tum, cum ad cantatores ad actoribus fabula transiebat, consurgere et abire coepit"). This was the reason why it was not introduced when the text was recorded in book form, and a space was left for possible addition, as in the case of Menander ("ut primo quidem chorus tollerent locum eis relinquentes"). At a later stage even that space was erased ("postremo ne locum quidem reliquerunt").⁷ Thus, following Evanthius-Donatus, Renaissance readers could not be mistaken about the Chorus being a lyric part in an-

⁷ "3.1 The ancient comedy was at first a chorus, and little by little, because of the number of characters, it developed into five acts. And so, little by little, by a sort of reduction and shrinking of the chorus, it arrived at the new comedy, in which not only is the chorus not made to appear, but not even given any space. In fact, since the spectator became more and more hostile because of the passing of time without action and, as soon as the representation passed from the actors to the singers, he began to stand up and leave, this advised, at first, the poets to eliminate the choruses leaving them a space, as Menander did precisely for this reason, and not for other reasons, as others think. Finally, they did not leave them even a space, and this the Latin comedians did, with the result that it is difficult to divide their works into five acts" (Wessner 1902, 18; my translation).

cient comedies, and its verse being destined to a performance with music; nor could they confuse it with the Prologue, since the latter identified the first of the four parts into which the comedy was divided. In other words, it was not a character the Chorus could overlap with because of its dramatic function and because of the Chorus' unquestionably lyric metrical forms.⁸

These two examples coming from a sixteenth-century Italian interpretation of ancient drama in view of its modern revival, and from a well-known fourth-century commentary on Terence, respectively, show no hesitation in taking for granted that the ancient collective performance of the Chorus involved singing and occasionally dancing. In contemporary times its lyricism could be translated into rhyme. Endorsing this view meant taking a stand between the factions of the pro-rhyme and rhymeless drama advocates, the latter striving to eradicate traces of traditional barbarism in language. As Orgel again remarks in his article,

the larger assumption behind Ascham's and Harvey's proposals for the reform of English poetry was that the "barbarous" England of the time could be rectified by the application of classical rules. A return to the classics held out the promise of culture and civility – not only in poetry, of course, but poetry seemed a particularly clear example. Nobody thought the transformation would be easy; a hectoring and bullying tone is common throughout the discussion. But a good deal of energy in the Elizabethan age went into the devising of strategies for becoming the new ancients, strategies of translation and adaptation, and the invention of appropriately classical-sounding models for vernacular verse, the domestication of the classic. (22)

Rhyme could alternately be seen as the instrument for achieving the music of ancient quantitative verse or as a barbarous stigma.

3. Confluences

As different from Greek and Latin conventions, English metres in drama and for the stage did not distinguish spoken from chanted or sung parts. They did not define specific portions of tragedy and comedy nor had they neatly defined performative functions. Above all, very little was said about verse in drama. In his 1586 manual of poetry *A Discourse of English Poetrie*, William Webbe pointed out that the "natural course of most English verses seemeth to run vppon the olde Iambicke stroake" (Fiii.v), and all English

⁸ "The comedy consists of four parts: prologue, exposition (*protasis*), development (*epitasis*), and catastrophe. The prologue is in a sense a preamble to the story, only there it is possible to address the audience to the advantage or the poet, or the play itself, or the actor" (3.5, 22; my translation).

verses might be sung or played to all manner of tunes indistinctly, with no specific mention being made to drama:

There are nowe wythin this compasse, as many sortes of verses as may be deuised differences of numbers: wherof some consist of equall proportions, some of long and short together, some of many rymes in one staffe (as they call it) some of crosse ryme, some of counter ryme, some ryming wyth one worde farre distant from another, some ryming euery thyrd or fourth word, and so likewyse all manner of dytties applyable to euery tune that may be sung or sayd, distinct from prose or continued spéeche. (Fiii.r)

When, in response to Thomas Campion's classically-oriented view about refusal of rhyme in his *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* (1602), Samuel Daniel applied his argument to drama, he conceded that tragedies should use blank verse, but admitted rhyme for "the Chorus and where a sentence shall require a couplet" (1603, Hvi.v). Neither Campion nor Puttenham before him dealt with the Chorus or other lyric forms in drama, except for Campion's brief mention of an instance from a Chorus in tragedy (1602, 17) to illustrate the dimeter "as a part of the Iambic", which, he noticed, "is our most natural and auncient English verse" (16). If confirmation of theoretical paucity about dramatic verse were needed, it would be sufficient to leaf through the pages of theorists of versification. And yet, as Avezzù points out in his article, Theodore Goulston, in his 1623 translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* into Latin, would unusually show "a clear perception that the parts of drama are characterised by stylistic resources which are different and differently combined with each other" (59).

However this may be, the point, as noticed above, is that English metres were not performance indicators as Greek ones were. Some stanzas may be connected to certain genres, as in the case of rhyme royal, whose moralising tone is reminiscent of the native tradition of the *Fall of Princes* and the *Mirror for Magistrates*, but was also used for Prologues and Epilogues in interludes and was to be adopted in Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Troades*, alongside the fourteenner (see Bigliuzzi in the present issue). Nevertheless, before the regular adoption of blank verse in dramas following *Gorboduc*, "anything that approximated serious plays, that is, morality plays, presented for dialogues a variety of different forms, including 'cantilevered verse, ballad eight, three-beat couplets, rhyme royal stanzas using Alexandrines, seven-line stanzas of four-beat lines in monorhyme, and six-line stanzas with two-beat lines'" (Hardison 1989, 156; Bigliuzzi, 155). And as Orgel remarks, the fourteenner couplet, albeit essentially the ballad metre, "was also the verse adopted by George Chapman for his translation of the *Iliad*, published in 1598". Therefore, although "all these translators were serious classicists . . . English fourteenners sounded right to them" (25-6). They

sounded right to Heywood as well, who used them for the iambic trimeter of Seneca.

What we find here is the sense of a confluence Bruce Smith discussed in his 1988 seminal study on *Ancient Scripts & Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700*, underlining what Orgel rightly calls the “domestication of the classics”:

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century playwrights, actors, and audiences may have given classical comedy and classical tragedy increasing sovereignty over how characters speak and how events fall out, but playwrights, actors and audiences alike were disposed to understand ancient drama in their own anachronistic terms, even when supposedly “classical” ideas held sway after the Restoration. “Influence” is perhaps a less apt term for this state of affairs than “confluence.” Since the Renaissance itself, critics have been pointing out the marks that ancient drama has left on modern; this book looks at the matter from the opposite direction as well and considers the marks that modern drama has left on ancient, particularly on the first stage productions of Greek and Latin scripts in modern times. (1988, 6-7)

Smith’s notion of confluence suggests a flexible two-way relation between ancient and modern traditions to be viewed in both progressive and regressive terms. It changes the more traditional linear conception of ‘influence’ into one that also shows the effects of the modern upon the ancient and the relevance of contemporary mediations. This aspect has rarely been investigated with regard to versification in drama, and this is what this issue attempts to do. The sometimes evoked comparability of verse patterns in translations and dramatic experiments should be considered beyond the description of verse-for-verse correspondences. Thus, in his reading of Buchanan’s reworking of Euripides’ *Alcestis*, Francesco Dall’Olio suggests that in the increasingly elaborate metric pattern of the Choruses we can perceive a dynamic of confluences concerning ways of reading the ancient through the mediation of what Senecan lyric prosody sounded like in the Renaissance, as well as through the more complex metrics French scholars began identifying in Greek tragic Choruses. Likewise, Heywood’s emulative approach to the translation of Seneca’s *Troades*, in my reading of it, shows a design behind the radical rewriting of the choral odes, manifest in Heywood’s apparently random choice of English verse forms for the Senecan lyric verses, at the same time suggesting awareness of different metric paces in the original, and the need to reinvent them. The adoption of the fourteenner and the rhyme royal stanza in conjunction with a new metaspectatorial and narrative stance of the Chorus bring verse and sense to converge towards a new understanding of the tragic core of the play, eventually eradicating it from the female collective and its original singing voice. What this reflects goes beyond a purely formal use of prosody to

suggest metrical patterns imbued with a larger political and cultural meaning in ways that Crawforth too shows in her article on Milton's irregular approach to the versification of the Choruses in *Samson Agonistes*. On a different note, Emanuel Stelzer innovatively demonstrates that the use of enjambment since its earliest appearance in the first English tragedy in blank verse, *Gorboduc* (1561), is a semantic and syntactic device connected with a sense of classical *gravitas*. Derived from Greek and Latin epos and drama as well as from contemporary Italian epos and drama *in versi sciolti*, it proves especially effective in rhymeless verse, but can also be encountered in rhymed fourteeners, as it occasionally is in Senecan translations. Stelzer offers a fresh discussion of how run-on lines came to identify a classical-like elevated style in the Senecan fashion, as well as providing a supple device to make lines flow more naturally. Apparently in contradiction with its sententious tone, enjambment shows both adherence to ancient dramatic and epic models, and a non-insular character of Elizabethan verse-making for drama. Thus, when we read in Hannah Crawforth's article on Milton's *Samson Agonistes* that the final Chorus is in the form of a metrically unusual sonnet eschewing the traditional final couplet, we sense a syncretic approach also perceivable in the examples discussed in the previous articles. Milton here employs a Euripidean "language echoing that which served as a stock conclusion to *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *The Bacchae*, *Helen*, and *Medea* (among other tragedies)" (207). In Crawforth's words, this Chorus represents "an Englishing of Euripidean verses that might stand as a synecdoche for Greek tragic form" (ibid.). Overall, this last article ideally sums up a whole tradition of prosodic domestications of the classics, a question we started from with Orgel's study of the reform of Elizabethan poetry, unveiling how metric irregularities may acquire a larger meaning. In Milton's case, tension between freedom and constraint "stands in for the whole literary and political system to which ancient Greek tragedy belongs" (216), Crawforth argues. More generally, the metrics examined in the articles collected in this issue can hardly be considered formal exercises inviting a purely technical description. What the metrical patterns discussed here show is a persistent conceptual and variously cultural *agon* with the ancient past. Through fortunate errors, to borrow Avezzù's felicitous expression, misreadings, translations, imitations, emulations, as well as implicit challenges, early modern verse-making for drama was also a way to face what being classical meant in the humanist programme. Refashioning the classics was a way to fashion the modern.

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STEPHEN ORGEL*

True Order of Versifying: The Reform of Elizabethan Poetry

Abstract

For a few decades in the sixteenth century, attempts were made to refashion English verse, as the Romans had refashioned theirs, according to the quantitative system of Greek poetry. The project now seems totally out of touch with the nature of the language and thus doomed to failure, but devising a system of quantitative poetry in English was a project that major poets and critics took seriously. Sir Philip Sidney wrote a good deal of quantitative verse, and Spenser and Gabriel Harvey discussed it and exchanged examples. Abraham Fraunce wrote notably successful poetry in classical meters; the volumes were popular and sold well. The larger assumption behind the proposals for the reform of English poetry was that the 'barbarous' England of the time could be rectified by the application of classical rules. A return to the classics held out the promise of culture and civility – not only in poetry, of course, but poetry seemed a particularly clear example. Nobody thought the transformation would be easy; a hectoring and bullying tone is common throughout the discussion. But a good deal of energy in the Elizabethan age went into the devising of strategies for becoming the new ancients, strategies of translation and adaptation, and the invention of appropriately classical-sounding models for vernacular verse, the domestication of the classic.

KEYWORDS: verse; classicism; prosody; post-classical Latin; English; pronunciation

For a few decades in the sixteenth century, attempts were made to refashion English verse, as the Romans had refashioned theirs, according to the quantitative system of Greek poetry. The project now seems misguided, totally out of touch with the nature of the language and thus doomed to failure, but devising a system of quantitative poetry in English was a project that major poets and critics took seriously. Roger Ascham, writing in the 1560s, in the course of a treatise on education, wrote: "our English tong, in auoyding barbarous ryming, may as well receive, right quantitie of sillables, and true order of versifying . . . as either Greek or Latin. . . ." (1571, h3v-h4r). The Earl of Surrey, inventing blank verse around 1540 for a translation of the *Aeneid*, had avoided barbarous rhyming, but had ignored right quantity of syllables. Blank verse has earned Surrey a distinguished place in English literary history, but his poetic experiment in fact was not a suc-

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cess: blank verse was found useful primarily by the dramatists, and in the rest of the sixteenth century the sole classical translation in blank verse was Marlowe's version of the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, posthumously published in 1600, and not popular enough to warrant a second edition. Most classical translations were in couplets, initially in fourteeners, and subsequently, ubiquitously, in rhyming pentameter.

Sir Philip Sidney wrote a good deal of quantitative verse, and Edmund Spenser and Gabriel Harvey discussed it and exchanged examples. The larger assumption behind Ascham's and Harvey's proposals for the reform of English poetry was that the 'barbarous' England of the time could be rectified by the application of classical rules. A return to the classics held out the promise of culture and civility – not only in poetry, of course, but poetry seemed a particularly clear example. Nobody thought the transformation would be easy; a hectoring and bullying tone is common throughout the discussion. But a good deal of energy in the Elizabethan age went into the devising of strategies for becoming the new ancients – strategies of translation and adaptation – and into the invention of appropriately classical-sounding models for vernacular verse: the domestication of the classic.

Shakespeare never wrote quantitative hexameters, not even for the pedantic poets in *Love's Labour's Lost*, where they would certainly have been appropriate – perhaps his small Latin and less Greek did not extend so far, but even if they were not beyond his abilities, quantitative metrics were not adaptable to the spoken English of the stage. But much of his early work reflects the classicizing movement of the age, especially *The Comedy of Errors*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* (the last based on an English version of an Italian comedy that in turn was based on Plautus and Terence). He turned from plays to poetry in 1592-3, writing *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* while the theatres were closed because of plague. These works were addressed to an audience of readers who knew the classics, both Latin and English; they recall, in both their physical presentation and versification, recent editions of Ovid, Spenser, and Sidney. But they are more specifically addressed to a potential patron, through lavish dedications to the glamorous young Earl of Southampton.

Park Honan (2012) describes the young Southampton:

Just before he turned twenty-one the young Cambridge graduate had the appeal of an androgynous icon and a potentially great patron. Sir Philip Sidney's death in 1586 had left room for a new inspirer, a symbol of high attainment in art and war. Southampton was manly enough to hope to fight in battle, but attractive enough to elicit delicate verses. Noting his attendance with the queen at Oxford, John Sanford in a Latin poem claimed that no one present was more comely, "though his mouth yet blooms with tender down" (*Apollinis et musarum euktika eidyllia*, 1592).

Shakespeare was seeking not only cash from Southampton, but also an entry into the world of aristocratic patrons and erudite readers. At the very least, this would have produced for him a less unstable audience than the public theatre spectators, with more clearly calculable tastes; at best it would have earned him a place in some noble household, with an annuity, which was the most desirable sort of patronal endowment. That was the kind of poet Shakespeare was trying to be. He was a little too early for Southampton, who at the age of nineteen was still the ward of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, whom he was shortly to offend deeply by refusing to marry Burghley's granddaughter. The consequences of this were considerable, both for the young man and for English poetry. Honan writes, "In resisting his guardian, the earl incurred more than Burghley's mere displeasure, since the law held that if a ward would not marry at his lord's request, on coming of age he must pay him what anyone would have given for the marriage. Southampton thus faced paying an enormous fine, said to be £5000, on turning twenty-one in October 1594" (Honan 2012).

Nevertheless, Southampton was already reputed to be a potential patron for aspiring poets – Thomas Nashe in 1594, the year Southampton came into his majority, praised him in precisely those terms: "A dere lover and cherisher you are, as well of the lovers of Poets, as of Poets themselves" (A2v). By 1598 John Florio, making him one of the dedicatees of *A Worlde of Wordes*, writes that "I have lived some yeeres" in his "paie and patronage" (a3v) – Florio was teaching Southampton Italian, and therefore was offering his patron access to more than English poetry. But, as Honan continues,

Ironically, Southampton had little but enthusiasm to offer any poet. He hardly had funds to spare; he lived on a fixed allowance and faced paying a gigantic fine to Burghley, plus another vast sum to get his estates out of wardship. After he turned twenty-one in 1594, his need for money became desperate. In November of that year, he leased out part of Southampton House, and a few years later had to sell off five of his manors (Honan 2012)

In the search for patronage in 1593, Shakespeare's most immediate model was a poet who has essentially disappeared from literary history, Abraham Fraunce. Fraunce was attached to the household of *the Countess of Pembroke*, Sidney's sister, and in 1591 and 1592 published a group of pastorals and a long mythological poem with commentary called *The Countesse of Pembrokes Yvychurch* dedicated to and including a role for his patron the Countess. Fraunce grew up in Shropshire and was educated first at the Shrewsbury School, then at St. John's College, Cambridge, after which he studied law at Gray's Inn. He may have known Philip Sidney at Shrewsbury (Sidney was several years older), and Sidney became his patron while he was at Cambridge. Upon Sidney's death Sidney's sister Mary Herbert,

Countess of Pembroke, continued to sponsor him. After taking his law degree he returned to Shrewsbury, where he worked as a barrister in the Welsh prerogative court. The Pembrokes' patronage extended to his professional career: the earl recommended him for the position of Queen's Solicitor in the Welsh court (the recommendation was unsuccessful). And though Fraunce was not dependent for his income on his writing, it clearly constituted an important vocation for him, as it did for Sidney, the soldier-politician, who was also a poet, essayist and novelist.

Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia* names Fraunce, along with Sidney and Spenser, as the best poets for pastoral. *The Countesse of Pembrokes Yvychurch* is a large three-part compendium. The pastorals in the first two parts include translations of Tasso's Italian play *Aminta*, of Thomas Watson's Latin epic *Amyntas*, and of Virgil's second eclogue. These are all translated into quantitative hexameters. *Amyntas*, the heart of the volume, is a vast elegiac pastoral in which the shepherd Amyntas mourns the death of his beloved Phyllis over twelve days, at the rate of 100 lines per day. The third part of the collection consists of a retelling of stories from Ovid, including the Venus and Adonis story, interspersed with mythographic commentary.

For modern readers, Fraunce's hexameters in the aggregate are admittedly numbing; but contemporary critics cited him with admiration, and the translation of *Amyntas* was popular enough to go through five editions between 1587 and 1596. Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* was eventually more popular, but for contemporary readers Fraunce's success is notable, the more so since the work is in quantitative meter. The patronage doubtless had something to do with the success: Sidney's sister evidently shared her brother's tastes, and some of his popularity evidently accrued to her. English quantitative verse represents a huge investment of time and intelligence, and a just evaluation must view it in its own cultural context. The best book on the subject, and still a richly rewarding survey, is Derek Attridge's *Well-Weighed Syllables: Elizabethan Verse in Classical Metres*, but even Attridge begins his study apologetically, by declaring the verse "patently weak" (1971, 2) and "by present standards, unquestionably bad" (1971, 3). Still, devising a system of quantitative poetry in English was a project that major poets and critics took seriously, and condescending to the past is not a useful way of understanding it. Fraunce's work was not, in the 1590s, unquestionably bad.

The most successful and admired classical translations of the latter half of the sixteenth century were Arthur Golding's Ovid and Thomas Phaer and Thomas Twine's Virgil; both are in fourteener couplets, and both went through many editions by the end of the century. The fourteener couplet was essentially a ballad measure, but it was also the verse adopted by

George Chapman for his translation of the *Iliad*, published in 1598. All these translators were serious classicists, and English fourteeners sounded right to them. It is tempting to suggest that for critics proposing the quantitative system, popular poetry was at fault precisely because it was popular. Was devising a new system a way of rendering poetry no longer immediately attractive, and thereby elite? The application of quantitative rules was a fairly late strategy in the classicization of English verse; and though the new poetic order was never widely adopted, for a few decades in the sixteenth century the effort did not seem quixotic. Fraunce's hexameters are in fact, even by modern standards, often supple and mellifluous:

If that I mourne in woods, these woods seeme al to be mournyng,
 And broade-brauncht oake trees their upright topps to be bowing.
 Yf that I sigh or sob, this pine-tree straight by the shaking,
 This pearles [peerless] pine-tree for company seem's to be pyning,
 As though himself felt th'enduring pangs of *Amyntas*.
 (1591, H4v)

Sometimes adept poets even managed to have it both ways, producing a quantitative poem that also reads beautifully as an accentual poem in free verse:

Constant *Penelope*, sends to thee carelesse *Ulissee*,
 write not againe, but come sweet mate thy selfe to revive mee.
Troy wee doe much envie, wee desolate lost Ladies of *Greece*:
 Not *Priamus*, nor yet all *Troy* can us recompence make.
 Oh, that hee had when hee first tooke shipping to Lacedemon,
 that adulter I meane, had beene o'whelmed with waters:
 Then had I not lien now all alone, thus quivering for cold,
 nor used this complaint, nor have thought the day to bee so long.
 (Byrd 1588, E3r)

This is a song text set by William Byrd, the opening of Penelope's epistle to Ulysses, the first of Ovid's *Heroides*, translated by an anonymous poet into quantitative measures. This example is unique in Byrd's vast oeuvre: even when Byrd set Latin quantitative poems, he did not set them quantitatively. But Byrd understood the scansion perfectly, setting long syllables to half notes and short syllables to quarter notes. The music even corrects three errors in the metrics, and Byrd's amendment of the scansion is a tiny indication of how actively involved in the issue of poetic quantity English culture actually was at this time. The poem is always ascribed to Thomas Watson, because he was acquainted with Byrd and wrote at least one (nonquantitative) song text for him. But the attribution is surely incorrect: Watson was a thoroughly proficient classicist, who wrote much more Latin poetry than

English. He would not have made mistakes in composing hexameters. Byrd was more expert than his poet here (see Orgel 2015).

In fact, the quantitative rules allowed for considerable latitude: given the lack of standardization of spelling in English, many syllables could be rendered long or short by varying the orthography. Moreover, since it was rarely clear in what sense an English syllable could be called long or short, the rules were always a work in progress, and different poets applied them differently. The recent critic Sharon Schuman writes, “The whole system of classical Latin prosody must have been tremendously attractive to the English versifiers, flexible as it was (allowing them to escape the confinements of jog-trot doggerel), yet based on simple, consistent rules of vowel quantity and position” (1977, 339). Clearly there is some tendentiousness here (the escape from “jog-trot doggerel” was an escape from the prosody of Golding’s Ovid and Chapman’s *Iliad*) and the “simple, consistent rules of vowel quantity” were not so simple and consistent that they precluded continual debates about vowel quantity – about what constituted a short or long syllable in English. But it must be true that the system itself was attractive precisely because it was a system, setting up rules for composition and evaluation, and because these were derived from classical precedent.

The crucial element in classicizing English poetry, however, was the abandonment of rhyme, and it was this that eventually produced the greatest resistance. Samuel Daniel, defending traditional English poetry against the strictures of Thomas Campion, considers the quantitative system essentially an irrelevance:

For we are tolde how that our measures goe wrong, all Ryming is grosse,
vulgare, barbarous . . . We could well have allowed of his numbers had he
not disgraced our Ryme; which both Custome and Nature doth most pow-
erfully defend: Custome that is before all Law, Nature that is aboue all Arte.
(1904: 357, 359)

“We could well have allowed of his numbers had he not disgraced our Ryme”: the metrical system is not worth arguing about; rhyme is the issue. Rhyme was the crucial badge of barbarism, the essential departure from the classical ideal. Thus, Francis Meres, having compared Chaucer with Homer and declared him “the god of English poets,” nevertheless singles out *Piers Plowman* as the one truly Homeric English poem: “As *Homer* was the first that adorned the Greek tongue with true quantity, so *Piers Plowman* was the first that observed the true quantitie of our verse without the curiositie of Rime” (1598, 279r-v). That the poem is claimed to observe “true quantity” indicates how vague the sense of quantity in English could be. It is certainly arguable that Phaer’s and Golding’s fourteeners achieve a kind of prosodic “quantity,” a supple and varied verse rhythm that is obviously not al-

ien either to the English language or to the ballad measure within which they are working. The claim that the verse of *Piers Plowman* respects quantity is surely incorrect, but to Meres in 1598, the absence of rhyme was the key element.

By 1619 Ben Jonson could tell William Drummond “That Abraham Fraunce in his English hexameters was a fool” (2012b, 362) – a fool to write English hexameters; clearly they were still being read in 1619. As for rhyme, according to Drummond Jonson considered couplets “the bravest sort of verses”, and “detesteth” all other rhymes – “cross-rhymes [alternating rhymes, abab etc.] and stanzas . . . were all forced” (359). Nevertheless, Jonson himself wrote both cross-rhymed and stanzaic poetry: it was quantitative verse that this classicist never wrote. Nevertheless, in *The English Grammar* (published posthumously in 1641) he declared his support for adapting the quantitative system to English verse, but for what one might call patriotic rather than poetic reasons:

Not that I would have the vulgar and practised way of making abolished and abdicated, (being both sweet and delightful, and much taking the ear) but to the end our tongue may be made equal to those of the renowned countries, Italy and Greece, touching this particular. (Jonson 2012a)

Metrical quantity in English verse was determined by a very loose system, especially loose since the prosody was only imperfectly controlled by pronunciation. Thomas Campion confronts the issue directly:

Above all the accent of our words is diligently to be observ'd, for chiefly by the accent in any language the true value of the syllables is to be measured. Neither can I remember any impediment except position that can alter the accent of any syllable in our English verse. For though we accent the second [syllable] of Trumpington short, yet is it naturally long, and so of necessity must be held of every composer. Wherefore the first rule that is to be observed is the nature of the accent, which we must ever follow.

(1904, 351-2)

This passage argues that accentuation in English is always to be observed, but not in the case of the long-by-position rule (a vowel followed by two consonants is long), which in fact determines a large percentage of the cases in English (for example the -ing ending of participles, which are long by position, but invariably short and unaccented in speech). In these cases, as in the case of “Trumpington”, poetry and English are two different languages. What can “yet is it naturally long” mean – are the rules of Latin scansion rules of nature? The most serious problem in Campion’s system, however, is that accent or stress is conflated with quantity – the assumption is that stressed syllables are always long, which is certainly not the

case. By the sixteenth century the contradiction was inherent in the whole project of adapting a quantitative verse system to English.

Spenser too worries the issue of stress and quantity, using as his example the word *carpenter*, “the middle sillable, being used shorte in speech, when it shall be read long in Verse.” He continues, “For why, a Gods name, may not we, as else the Greekes, have the kingdome of oure owne Language, and measure our Accentes by the sounde, reserving the Quantitie to the Verse?” (1904, 98-9). The claim is that we may do as we like – the language is ours – and “reserving the Quantitie to the Verse” means that English in verse is not English as it is spoken (where the word would have to be pronounced, impossibly, with two long, which for Spenser means stressed, syllables, *càrpènter*). Quantity in verse is a purely visual matter, to be read and not pronounced aloud. Poetry is a different language. The point is emphasized by the pedagogical handbooks’ insistence that Latin verse, on which the system of English quantity was based, be read as prose, with no attempt to sound out the quantities.

A notable translation of Virgil into quantitative English was Richard Stanyhurst’s *Aeneid*, published in Leiden in 1582. Here is a passage from it:

I blaze thee captayne first from Troy cittye repairing,
Lyke wandring pilgrim too famosed Italie trudging,
And coast of Lavyn: soust wyth tempestuus hurlwynd,
On land and sayling, bi Gods predestinat order:
But chiefe through Junoes long fostred deadlye revengement.
(1582, b3r)

If you count this out you can see that it really is quantitative, though there was some fiddling with the spelling to make it work – ‘cittye’ has to have a double t to make the i long, ‘to’ has a double o to make it long, ‘by’ is spelled ‘bi’ to make it short, and so forth. Stanyhurst’s orthography is eccentric even by Elizabethan standards. For the London edition of the next year the publisher regularized the spelling, thus defeating the quantitative scheme (he either missed the point, or didn’t care); but to remake poetry, it was necessary to remake the language. The book was admired by specialists, but was not reissued.

Despite its commercial failure, however, Stanyhurst’s *Aeneid* was a literary *cause célèbre*, prompting a number of hostile responses over the next decade. I am here summarizing my account of the matter in my book *Wit’s Treasury*. Thomas Nashe took the translation seriously enough to launch a vitriolic attack on Stanyhurst for presuming to compete with Phaer’s *Aeneid*, which for Nashe is an English classic. In fact, Stanyhurst in his preface is full of praise for Phaer’s translation; he offers his version as an example of what English verse would be if it were properly classical, following

Ascham's and Harvey's precepts. Nevertheless, the verse of Stanyhurst's *Aeneid* was declared by Nashe to be "hexameter furie," and he parodied it in the preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon*:

Then did he make, heavens vault to rebounde with rounce robble hobble
Of ruffe raffe roaring, with thwick thwack thurlery bouncing.
(1589, A1r)

This is obviously overstated for effect, but in fact, not by much. Here is Stanyhurst on Vulcan's forge, a passage from Book 8 appended to the translation of the first four books:

Under is a kennel, wheare Chymneys fyrye be scorching
Of *Cyclopan* tosters, with rent rocks chamferye sharded,
Lowd dub a dub tabering with frapping rip rap of *Aetna*.
(1582, O1v-O2r)

Nashe's ridicule is part of an invidious comparison with Phaer's fourteeners, which are declared magnificent. Phaer is the norm, and Stanyhurst is accused of malice in presuming to displace him. Judging from the parody, the animus is directed not at Stanyhurst's quantitative system, but at his alliteration and especially what Nashe takes to be the rhythmical overaccentuation of the verse, what he calls elsewhere "foule lumbring boystrous wallowing measures" (1593, G3r). Indeed, one of the problems with quantitative verse in English is negotiating the stresses – English is an accentual language (so is Latin, but in Latin stress and quantity are generally not in conflict). It is not even clear that Nashe understood that the hexameters were quantitative.

Stanyhurst's meter was still a live issue at the turn of the century – here is the satirist John Hall in 1599:

Another scorns the home-spun thred of rimes,
Match'd with the loftie feete of elder times:
Giue me the numbred verse that *Virgill* sung,
And *Virgill* selfe shall speake the English tounge:
Manhood and garboiles shall he chaunt with changed feete
And head-strong *Dactils* making Music meete.
The nimble *Dactils* striuing to out-go
The drawing *Spondees* pacing it below.
The lingring *Spondees*, labouring to delay,
The breath-lesse *Dactils* with a sodaine stay.
Who euer saw a Colte wanton and wilde,
Yoakt with a slow-foote Oxe on fallow field?
Can right areed how handsomely besets
Dull *Spondees* with the English *Dactilets*?

Hall then echoes Nashe's strictures on Stanyhurst's rhythmical excesses, and adds a couplet attacking his neologisms:

If *Jove* speake English in a thundring cloud,
Thwick thwack, and *Riffe raffé*, rores he out aloud.
 Fie on the forged mint that did create
 New coyne of words never articulate.
 (13-14)

Clearly Hall notices a good deal more than Nashe, and it is only in hindsight that he seems to be beating a dead horse – Champion's *Observations in the Art of English Poesie*, promoting the quantitative system and attacking the use of rhyme, was published in 1602, and was answered in 1603 by Samuel Daniel's *Defence of Ryme*.

Stanyhurst's own account of his poetic revisionism is both defensive and accurate about the problems it raises. He is fully aware that the Latin rules are not really adaptable to English; he observes, moreover, that they are not even fully adaptable to Latin:

For in as much as thee Latins haue not been authors of these verses [i.e., were not the originators of the rules], but traced in thee steps of thee Greekes, why should we with thee stringes of thee Latin rules cramp oure tongue more than the Latins doe fetter theyre speeche, as yt were wyth thee chaynes of thee Greeke preceptes. Also that nature wyl not permit us too fashion oure wordes in all pointes correspondent too thee Latinistes, may easely appeere in suche termes as we borrow of theym. For example: the first of *Breuite*, is short, thee first of *briefly* wyth vs must bee long.
 (1582, B1r)

But Stanyhurst's revisionism went well beyond the quantitative scheme. He came from an old and influential Anglo-Irish family, and grew up in Dublin. He believed that the English spoken by the old Anglo-Irish was a purer form of the language than Elizabethan English, close to the English of Chaucer (it preserves, he says, "the dregs of the old Chaucer English"), without the modern mixture of continental tongues – this, of course, ignores the large French component of Chaucer's English. Both his eccentric spelling in prose and the diction of the Virgil translation, including its occasional egregious alliteration, were presumably designed as a version of the English he grew up with, an attempt to restore the old language. Stanyhurst even characterizes the *Aeneid* as "a *Canterbury tale*," because, through impeccable language and versification, it "dooth labour, in telling . . . too ferret owt thee secretes of *Nature*" (1582, A2r-v). However farfetched

the comparison, Chaucer is the benchmark. This produced some startling effects. Here is Dido bewailing the fact that no child had been born of her love of Aeneas:

. . . yf yeet soom progenye from me
 Had crawld, by the fatherd, yf a cockney-dandiprat hophthumb,
 Prittye lad Aeneas, in my court, wantoned, ere thow
 Took'st this filthye fleing, that thee with physnomye lyckned,
 I ne then had reckned my self for desolat ouwtcaste.
 (L3v)

Nashe was a capricious critic, to say the least, but he was in this case a literary barometer. Phaer and Twine's *Aeneid* was in no danger from Stanyhurst's, which was admired only by scholars; but the violent defence of the modern classic registers a real sense of panic. The sound of verse, the sense of what was good verse, the canons of taste, were all changing very rapidly. The change was part of a large cultural shift, from normative poets like William Higgins, John Heywood, and George Gascoigne to normative poets like Ben Jonson, Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton, and especially Christopher Marlowe – think of Marlowe's contempt, at the same moment, for “jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits” in the prologue to *Tamburlaine*. Marlowe is rejecting the prosody of popular drama such as *Cambises*, but that was also the prosody of Golding and Phaer, and was shortly to be the prosody of Chapman's *Iliad*. What Nashe deplures is the institution of a new ‘classical’.

As Attridge points out, quantitative metrics were problematic even in post-classical Latin: “by the fifth century A.D. a change had taken place in the pronunciation of Latin” so that “the quantities on which Latin verse was based ceased to be a property of the spoken language and had to be learned for the purpose of scanning and writing poetry in classical metres” (1974, 21). Moreover, quantity simply became stress, as it is for Campion: Attridge writes that an English schoolboy learning Latin prosody would have assumed “that ‘long’ meant ‘stressed’ and ‘short’ meant ‘unstressed’, since this would be the obvious difference between the two kinds of syllable, and he would know of nothing which might contradict this assumption” (47).

Furthermore, the pronunciation of Latin varied widely throughout Europe, and there were violent arguments about it in England. Thus Latin orations, verse, academic drama, and indeed, conversation sounded different depending on the location – even if the locations were Oxford and Cambridge. The common claim that Latin was a universal language throughout Renaissance Europe does not take enough into account. Joseph Scaliger found English speakers' pronunciation of Latin so incomprehen-

ble that he assumed they were speaking English to him (Attridge 1974, 23); similarly, Erasmus reports that a Frenchman addressing a speech in Latin to the Emperor Maximilian was thought to be speaking French; the accent of a German following him was ridiculed, and the Danish visitor “sounded like a Scotsman” (Allen 1965, 107). Philip Sidney, employing Latin on his diplomatic missions, was told by Hubert Languet that his Latin sounded provincial; by the same token, the French pronunciation Languet used was considered by Erasmus to be the worst in Europe. These were obviously not problems with the written language; but spoken and written Latin were everywhere only imperfectly related, and spoken Latin was not invariably comprehensible.

Attridge remarks that it is only recently that the spoken language has taken precedence over the written language and writing has been considered a transcription of speech. “The present-day linguist’s assumption that the written language is merely a representation of, and therefore secondary to, the spoken language would have puzzled an Elizabethan grammarian, not so much because he felt that the reverse was true, but because he did not make any clear distinction”. And “[Walter] Ong stresses that it is only recently that the written form has ceased to be regarded as more basic to a language than the spoken form” (1974, 54). But even more clearly in English than in Latin, by the sixteenth century spelling had not kept pace with pronunciation, and the written language had long ceased to be an adequate guide to speech. When Hamlet urges the visiting actors to “Speak the speech . . . as I pronounced it to you” (3.2.1-2) he is concerned with principles of declamation, but he also testifies to the disjunction between the written text and the way it is spoken. In a nation of regional accents and dialects that disjunction was inevitable; but it was positively institutionalized in the schemes promoting English quantitative verse.

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GUIDO AVEZZÙ*

“Secundum quasdam suas partes”: Renaissance Readings of the Lyric Structures of Greek Tragedy

Abstract

This article aims to offer a contribution to the study of the reception of metrical forms and related performative features from classical to Renaissance tragedy. In particular, it focuses on how the reader of ancient Greek drama perceived its performative varieties, and therefore it is concerned with the continental prehistory of the English reception of the lyrical performance of Greek tragedy. It first deals with how Greek plays were presented in printed editions, and then moves on to consider Aristotle's *Poetics* with regard to the description of the linguistic resources of the tragic *poiesis*, in particular the use of *rhythmos*, *metron*, and *melos*, and their varying pertinence to the different structures of tragedy. In this respect, the article discusses a curious misreading of a passage of the *Poetics* that was to affect its interpretation as well as the reception of the notion of tragedy and the reuses of ancient versifications over time.

KEYWORDS: Greek tragedy; Aristotle's *Poetics*; Renaissance typography; Andronicos Callistos; Aldo Manuzio; Adrien Turnèbe; Willem Canter; Théodore de Bèze; Theodore Goulston

Premises

This article is concerned with the Renaissance reception of Aristotle on lyric performance and its possible impact on contemporary drama based on knowledge of ancient tragedy. It provides a starting point for a close study of metre, acting and singing in drama stemming from that ancient knowledge. This initial overview of the continental reception of Aristotle will pave the way for a reconsideration of the English reception of the *Poetics* in view of revising some established beliefs about the alleged absence of specific theoretical approaches in England.¹ The study of metre in connection with the performance of Greek drama is a wide-ranging issue implying a whole gamut of considerations. Here I will focus on two issues: the ways in which classical models were presented to readers in printed editions and Aristotle's

¹ See, for example, Vickers (1999, 5-6) and the discussion by Lazarus (2015a, 433-7).

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description of tragedy in the *Poetics*. First, I will briefly discuss the layout of Greek tragedy in some exemplary printed editions; then I will move on to consider how Aristotle's *Poetics* deals with the linguistic resources of tragic *poiesis*, with special regard to the use of *rhythmos*, *metron*, and *melos*, and their varying relevance to the different parts of tragedy. Finally, I will analyse an exegetical error in the reading of a passage of the *Poetics* that may have influenced the reuses and interpretations of ancient versification forms in later dramas. The assumption of this article is that the indistinction, or poor distinction, between the 'parts' of tragedy, together with a misinterpretation of the definition of tragedy have contributed to blurring its complex articulation into recitation, chant and song.

1. Reading Greek Tragedy²

Typography may be defined as the craft . . . of so arranging the letters, distributing the space and controlling the type as to aid to the maximum the reader's comprehension of the text.

Stanley Morison, *First Principles of Typography*, 1936, 5

"Typography mediates and materializes 'the text' for readers".³ My emphasis on the uniqueness of *the* text wants to suggest the ambiguity residing in any conception of the Renaissance book as the exclusive witness of the final version of a play, whose production was the centre of multifaceted relationships between authorial and collaborative preparation, staging, and printed book. Theoretically, this should also be true for classical Greek playtexts, but in their case we are entitled to think that the printed book, like the medieval manuscript, aims to materialise for readers *a* particular text which was fixed at a certain moment of its transmission.⁴ Thus, the printed book, even in the case of ancient dramas, is likely to materialise at least some of the dynamics of the performance: not only the *intrat* and *exit* of the characters and the sequence of interlocutors in dialogical exchanges, but also various modes of expression – that is, speech, recitative and (choral or individual) singing in the Greek dramas of the fifth century BCE. Also

² In this section, I will only try to provide, in very general terms, some notions concerning the presentation of Greek dramatic texts in Renaissance printed books and the inferences that can be drawn from it as to the importance assigned to performative features. For a deeper analysis of the *mise en page* in manuscripts, see Tessier 2020.

³ Kastan 2001, 4 – cited by Bourne 2020, 2n8.

⁴ Thus, it would not be fully appropriate to assimilate the production of editions such as Richard Pynson's Terence (1495-1497) to the publishing of (early) modern plays, and to include them in the problematic between "validat[ion] and reject[ion] of the printed book as a legitimate medium for plays", as proposed by Bourne 2020, 6.

in this respect, the book can offer “a *perception* of the theatre available to readers by appending a set of instructions for how to read the play’s textual divisions”.⁵ I will, therefore, consider the layout of Greek tragedies in the numerous editions which followed Janus Lascaris’ Euripides printed by Lorenzo d’Alopa in Florence in 1494/1495,⁶ and then proliferated during the 16th century. Yet in England the first edition of a tragedy in the Greek original, Euripides’ *Troades*, was only published in 1575 by John Day (USTC 508002). This edition “has neither a prefatory epistle, nor an apparatus of comments, a life of the author or any introduction to the tragedy, except for the alexandrine *hypothesis*”, and “does not specify the name of any scholar as editor” (Duranti 2021, 118-9). It is “a small format book . . . with a single tragedy for Greek learners”, and gives no help to the reader who wants to know how a classical Greek tragedy is structured, so that it is reasonable to imagine that any relevant information was intended to be given in the course of teaching. This should be kept in mind as my discussion will instead focus on how editor, publisher, and reader perceived the qualitative differences between the parts of a classical tragedy. Therefore, I will examine how the *mise en page* of Greek tragedy develops from an initial lack of distinctions to an increasingly editorial articulation supported by descriptive annotations of the metrical and performative formats as witnessed by some editions of Greek tragedies in the second half of the sixteenth century. An example from Euripides’ *Medea* 410-31 for each of the two cases may suffice:

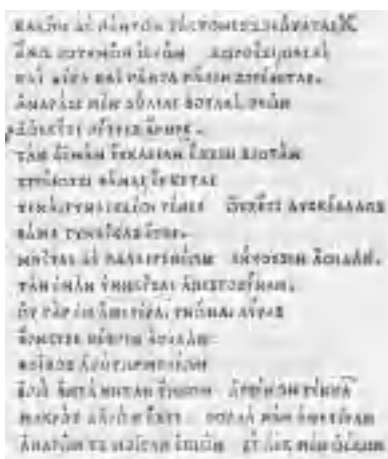


Fig. 1a: J. Lascaris 1495 (USTC 760838), sign. B1v.

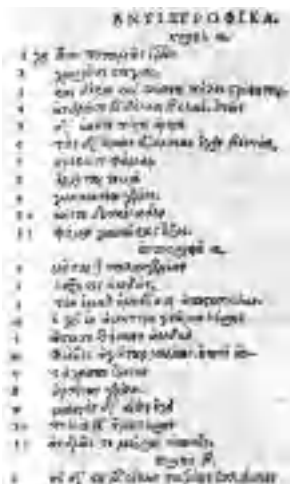


Fig. 1b: W. Canter 1571 (USTC 411593), 161.

⁵ Bourne 2020, 6; the use of the word “perception” was suggested to Bourne by William B. Worthen (ibid., n16).

⁶ It contains only *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Alcestis*, and *Andromacha* (USTC 760838). USTC inventories are not always consistent or correct with regard to the indication of authors and titles, therefore I will quote the USTC number for each printed work to facilitate the retrieval of digitised copies, when available.

The edition arranged by Lascaris (Fig. 1a) presents the first choral song around the altar (*stasimon*) without any distinction between subsequent stanzas (here *strophe* 1, ll. 410-20, *antistrophe* 1, ll. 421-30, and *strophe* 2, from l. 431), and the minor metrical units (*cola*) are often positioned in the same line, in accordance with the pattern applied in multi-column Byzantine manuscripts, whereas the copyists of the late 15th century used to write the text in a single column.⁷ On the contrary, Canter's edition (Fig. 1b) signals to the reader the antistrophic rationale of the sequence, whose stanzas correspond metrically in pairs; the individual *cola* are printed in a single column and numbered, so that their correspondences are made immediately clear. Overall, the occurrence of lyrical parts (*parodos*, *stasima*, etc.) interspersed with recited ones (*prologos*, *epeisodia*) is distinctly perceptible, as will be their performative character. For several decades, until Adrien Turnèbe's Sophocles (1553, Fig. 3a) and Canter's Euripides (1571, Fig. 1b), the *mise en page* of the lyrical sections of tragedy – those that according to Aristotle, as we shall see later, used rhythm, metre and song – is essentially undifferentiated from that of the spoken parts, and distinguishable only by the various lengths of the lines. Yet the case was different for comedy: as early as Aristophanes' *editio princeps* (Aldo Manuzio, 1498) the layout was very dissimilar and therefore worth comparing with the editions of tragic plays. Aristophanes is not only the first of the four great Greek dramatists to be published by Aldo, but is also the only one whose works, since the first edition, are accompanied by *scholia* (comments of various extensions, found in Byzantine manuscripts). See e.g. the treatment of *Clouds* 298ff. in the *princeps* (USTC 760251) in Fig. 2a.⁸

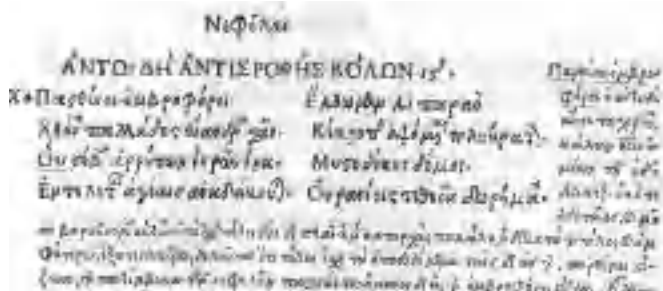


Fig. 2a: Aristophanes (Manuzio 1498, ed. by M. Musuro), sign. ζ7r.

⁷ See, for example, the complete Euripides in two volumes written by Aristobulos (Arsenius) Apostolides a few years before the Lascaris edition (mss. Paris BnF Gr. 2887 and 2888).

⁸ A total of 214 copies have been identified, 41 of them in Italy, but as many as 38 in the UK: this testifies to the remarkable success of this edition on English soil, if compared to the 29 copies in Germany and 13 in France.

The metrical and performative indications about the two responsive stanzas printed above ll. 298-9 are inspired by a *scholium* that we can read in the margin: “this *antode* of the chorus counts sixteen *cola* as in the *ode*” [Ἡ ἀντιῶδῆ αὐτή τοῦ χοροῦ κῶλων ἔστιν ὁμοίων τῆ ᾠδῆ δεκαἕξ]. *Scholia*, particularly those produced, like this one, by Byzantine scholars such as Demetrius Triclinius,⁹ are valuable tools for decoding the metrical and performative characteristics – whether spoken, chanted or sung – of individual parts of the drama. An ingenious editor such as Marcos Musuros and the ready availability of a text accompanied by *scholia* made it possible to share with the reader a certain way of perceiving the text I mentioned above. In his prefatory letter, Aldo promised that the *scholia* would accompany both his Sophocles (1502) and his Euripides (1503). However, they were published a few years later, the former in 1518 (Rome: Ginnasio Mediceo), the latter in 1534 (Venice: Giunta), and those on Aeschylus were printed only in 1552 by Francesco Robortello (Venice: Valgrisi).¹⁰ The information provided by the ‘Byzantine’ *scholia* qualify visually the different sections of the dramatic text. In his letter of dedication of Aristophanes’ plays to Daniele Clario, who taught Latin and Greek in Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Aldo wrote: “mitto ad te Aristophanem, ut illum non modo legendum, sed ediscendum quoque discipulis praebeas tuis” [I send you Aristophanes so that you may offer it to your disciples not only to read it *but also to learn it by heart* (emphasis mine)]¹¹. Aldo was aware that the *mise en page* not only facilitates comprehension, but also allows for a mnemonic learning of the text – a memorisation which was also facilitated by the performative indications provided by the *scholia*. These indications will also accompany later Aristophanes’ editions, frequently printed without *scholia*;¹² see e.g. the *Knights* printed by Joseph Barnes in Oxford (1593: USTC 512311), Fig. 2b:

⁹ Cf. Koster 1974, 53.

¹⁰ (USTC 852747) <http://diglib.hab.de/drucke/alv-cc-350-2s/start.htm>. The publication of the *Scholia* was parallel to Robortello’s edition of Aeschylus (Venice, Scotto; USTC 807823), but it only consisted of the *scholia vetera* (‘old’), not those produced by the Byzantine scholars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and did not suggest any useful information as to the present discussion.

¹¹ If not otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

¹² Paris: Gourmont 1528 (USTC 160569), Basle: Cratender 1532 (USTC 612851), the *Clouds* edited alone by Philip Melanchthon in 1521 (Wittenberg: Lotter; USTC 612854) and the *Clouds* with *Plutus*, also by Melanchthon (Hagenau: Setzer 1528; USTC 612849), and up to the *Knights* USTC 512311.

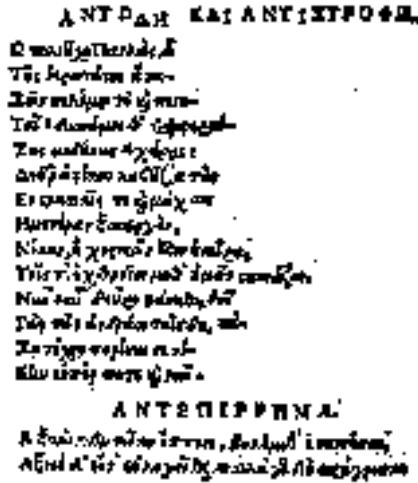


Fig. 2b: Aristophanes, *Knights* 581-96: Joseph Barnes 1593, sign. Div.

The page reproduced here contains the indications *antode* and *antistrophe* before the lyric stanza in response to ll. 551-64, and *counter-epirrhema*, for the recitative of the Coryphaeus symmetrical to ll. 565ff. This example is particularly revealing when compared to the edition of Euripides’ *Troades* printed by John Day in 1575. That of the *Knights* also lacks paratexts, and everything suggests that it had the same scholastic destination as *Troades*; however, it retains the strophic indications of the major editions, albeit reduced to a minimum, proving that the editorial characteristics of the Greek comedy have by 1593 been appropriated in England, too. The information provided by the *scholia* can also be glimpsed, albeit in a simplified form, in the Latin translations of Aristophanes, as for example in the *Clouds* translated by Andrea Divo from Capodistria (Fig. 2b):¹³

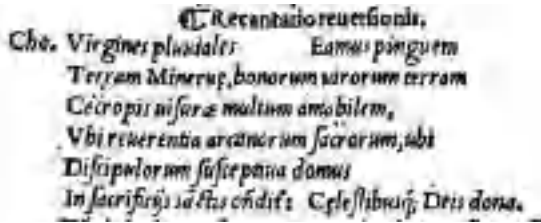


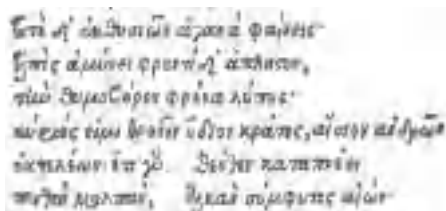
Fig. 2c: Aristophanes, *Clouds* 298ff. (trans. by A. Divo, 1538), 29v.

The translator does not respect the division into *cola* in the Greek text, but in his own way tries to provide some information concerning the strophic

¹³ Venice: Zanetti 1538 (USTC 810846).

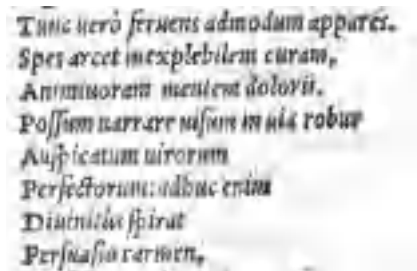
structure: e.g. here by the title “Recantatio reversionis” for the Greek ἀντιφθὴ ἀντιστροφῆς.

Even considering that these are books for reading and not for the stage, and that they do not reflect any prior staging of the play, it cannot be denied that they make the reader aware of the plurality of sections which make up the dramatic text, as well as of the properties and the performative features of each section. As mentioned above, however, this is not the case with tragedies, and will not be so for a long time. Apparently, a key to understanding the responsive structure of the lyric stanzas is provided exclusively by Byzantine scholars, and is therefore conditional on the rediscovery of manuscripts that preserve traces of their work. Evidence of the relevance of these particular *scholia* may for instance be found in the Aeschylus edited by Pier Vettori and printed by Henri Estienne (1557; USTC 450455): this edition is accompanied only by the ‘old’ *scholia* and these do not clarify the structure of the lyrical parts and their difference from the chanted ones. One can compare *Agamemnon* 101-6 in the Aeschylus edited by Turnèbe in 1552 (USTC 154188; Fig. 3a), in the Latin translation by Jean Saint-Ravy (Joannes Sanravivus) published in 1555 (USTC 609466; Fig. 3b), which preserves the layout of Turnèbe’s Aeschylus, in the Aeschylus of Vettori (USTC 45045; Fig. 3c), and finally in the new setting given to the page by Willem Canter in his 1580 edition (USTC 407824; Fig. 3d).



Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸν ἀντιφθὴ ἀντιστροφῆς
 ἔστιν ἀμείνων φρονεῖν ἀπλοῦς,
 οὐδὲ δεισιφροῦν φρονεῖν ἀπλοῦς·
 ἀντιφθὴ τὸν ἀντιφθὴ ἀντιστροφῆς
 ἀπλοῦς ἐστὶν ἀντιφθὴ ἀντιστροφῆς
 ἀπλοῦς ἐστὶν ἀντιφθὴ ἀντιστροφῆς
 ἀπλοῦς ἐστὶν ἀντιφθὴ ἀντιστροφῆς

Fig. 3a: Turnèbe 1552, 111.¹⁴



Tunc vero firmens admodum appetes.
 Spes arcet inexplebilem curam,
 Animum horum mentem dolorem.
 Possum narrare nisi in his robur
 Auspicium uirorum
 Perfectorum: ad hoc enim
 Diuinitas spirat
 Persuasio carmen.

Fig. 3b: Trans. Sanravivus 1555, 128.

¹⁴ <https://books.google.be/books?vid=GENT900000004884&hl=it>. Similar presentation of the text also in Robortello 1552 (USTC 807823).

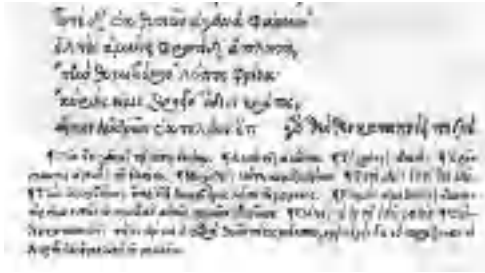


Fig. 3c: Vettori 1557, 179.

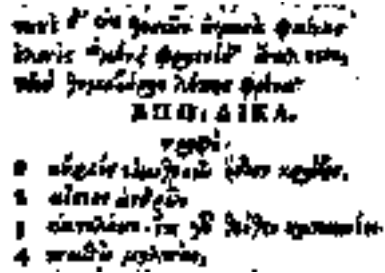


Fig. 3d: Canter 1580, 157.

Canter is the first editor of Aeschylus to use the Byzantine *scholia* in order to distinguish the sung section (105ff.) from the preceding recitative one (101-4).

Even Giunta's publication of the *Enchiridion* ('manual') of the metricologist Hephaestion (second century CE), in Florence in 1526 (USTC 832088), does not bring about a breakthrough. This will take place in 1553, when Turnèbe, who had a manuscript of Sophocles where the metrical structure was inspired by Triclinios,¹⁵ publishes, once again, the *Enchiridion* (USTC 204143), the tragedies of Sophocles (USTC 154217), and the Triclinian *scholia* to them (USTC 151271). Turnèbe's edition of Sophocles makes it very clear how useful the Byzantine *scholia* were. He derives from the *scholia* the distinction between spoken, chanted, and sung verses, and defines the basic components (*cola*) of the last ones. Consider, for example, Turnèbe's marginal annotations on *Aias* 233-48 (Fig. 4a) in which, by using the *scholia* (Fig. 4c), he informs the reader that the passage comprises an anapaestic *systema* (recitative) (233-44) and a sung stanza (*antistrophe*, 245ff.), in response to an earlier one (221-32), both consisting of twelve *cola* (cf. Tessier 2015, 6-7). In his 1579 edition, Canter will merely echo the structure defined by Turnèbe (Fig. 4b).

¹⁵ Paris BnF grec 2711; cf. Tessier 2018.



Fig. 4a: Turnèbe 1553, 13.

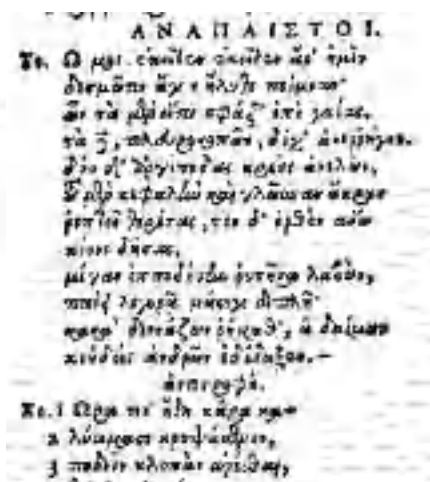


Fig. 4b: Canter 1579, 34.

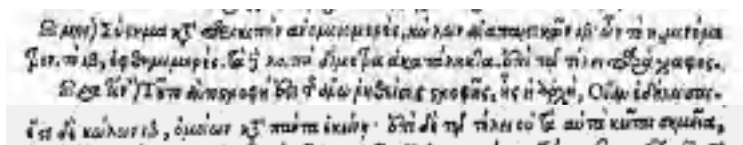


Fig. 4c: Scholia byzantina ad Ai. 233ff., Turnèbe 1553, 7-8.

Turnèbe, who from 1547 was *lecteur royal* and from 1551 *imprimeur royal* for Greek,¹⁶ may have begun to include in his lectures the results of observations based on Byzantine *scholia* before 1550. As we shall see, this date is not coincidental. However, his Aeschylus of 1552 (USTC 154188; see Fig. 3a) still shows no trace of the new method.

Marking a decisive turning point, Turnèbe’s edition of Sophocles was destined to set the standard, though not immediately. We can indeed imagine that the novelty represented by the reintroduction of the formal connotations of the lyric sections was rejected by those who possessed a radical conception of tragedy, marked by religious maximalism and ostentatiously distant from formal embellishments. A passage from the letter “to the reader” (Lausanne, 1 October 1550) accompanying Théodore de Bèze’s *Abraham sacrificiant* may be of some interest:¹⁷

¹⁶ Cf. Lewis 1998, esp. 43-76; Constantinidou 2018, 266-7.

¹⁷ This “letter”, reprinted in French editions until at least 1598 and translated into English by Golding in 1575, has also been recently discussed by Duranti (2021, 115-16).

Mesmes i'ay fait un cantique hors le Chorus, et n'ay usé de strophes, antistrophes, epirremes, parecbases, ny autre tels mots qui ne servent que d'espoventer les simples gens, puis que l'usage de telles chose est aboly, et n'est de soy tant recommandable qu'on se doyve tourmenter à le remettre sus. (1967, 49-50)

[Thus in William Golding's translation: "Verily I haue made a songe without a chorus, nother haue I used the termes of Strophies, Antistrophies, Epirrhemes, Parecbases, and other such wordes, which serue to no purpose but to amase simple folke, seeing the use of such thinges is worne away, & they be not so commendable of them selues, that a man should trouble him selfe to bringe them up again." (1577, sign. A4v-5r)]

Here Bèze not only distances himself from classical tragedy in order to adhere to a different kind of theatre – French and biblical – but also seems to reject the related terminology ("tels mots"), in other words, its definitions as parts of a theoretical equipment unrelated to the plays stylistic features. Perhaps it is significant that Bèze focuses his critique on words such as "strophes" and "antistrophes", which define the structures of the lyric stanzas in Greek tragedy in both Turnèbe's philological approach and, possibly, his own teaching. Therefore, it is not inappropriate to see in Bèze's position an implicit devaluation of Turnèbe's contemporary teaching in Paris, as well as a criticism of orthographic "fantaisies" perceivable in his "Letter to the reader", which seems especially to allude to Louis Meigret's *Traite touchant le commun usage de l'écriture Française* (1542) (Bèze 1967, 50n).

In conclusion, it can be claimed that, in the absence of a fixed visual paradigm granted by typography, the perception of the spoken, chanted, and lyric sections into which the tragic text is divided relied on the indications offered by some chapters of Aristotle's *Poetics*. But also its Renaissance commentators, two of whom – Robortello and Vettori – were also editors of Aeschylus, could not benefit from autoptic access to texts showing in their arrangement the play's performative varieties.

If we now turn to the text of the *Poetics* and to some Renaissance interpretations of its famous definition of tragedy, we come across an interesting passage whose peculiar interpretative bias has obtained a curious weight.

2. *Melopoeia summa oblectatio*¹⁸

The process that will lead to the conception of Greek tragedy as *Musikdrama* is a long one and begins in the Italian culture at the end of the fifteenth century. The first humanist Latin translation of the *Poetics*, printed in 1498 and then

¹⁸ "Lyric poetry is the greatest delight"; Giorgio Valla's translation of *Poetics* 1450b16 (1498, sign. r3r).

reprinted in Venice and in Paris in 1504, is due to Giorgio Valla (1447-1500), who had in previous years offered lectures on this subject in the Venetian School of Rialto. After this debut and the printing of the *editio princeps* (Aldo, 1508: USTC 809782), the next translation, by Alessandro Pazzi (Venice: heirs of Aldo; USTC 810904, coupled with Aldo's text), will appear in 1536. Following this translation, Italy saw a great flourishing of theoretical texts, from the commentaries to the *Poetics*, some of which were widely circulating on the Continent and beyond, to numerous treatises, now preciously collected by Bernard Weinberg (1970-1974). Outside Italy, the first edition of the Greek text, a replica of the 1508 Aldine, was printed at Basle in 1531 in the whole *corpus* of Aristotle (USTC 555012), and was followed by that of 1537, also at Basle, together with the translation of Pazzi (USTC 612826). Continental, and especially Italian, mediations conditioned the approach of intellectuals to Aristotle's *Poetics* in early modern England: the first edition on English soil, exclusively in Latin translation, is the *analytica methodo* commented on by Theodore Goulston (1572-1632), printed in 1623 and preceded by an edition of the *Rhetoric* including the Greek text (Goulston 1619).¹⁹ This does not mean, of course, that editions and commentaries of Aristotle's *Poetics* produced on the Continent did not circulate and were not read in England, nor that they did not suggest critical and poetic views, sometimes even through not entirely discernible mediations. As Sarah Dewar-Watson has observed,

the significance of mediating sources is often underestimated, but the transmission of Greek literature through a variety of textual and oral sources clearly played a crucial role in a culture which was intent on rediscovering its classical heritage, but in which direct access to Greek texts remained the privilege of a scholarly elite. (2004, 4)

Sometimes even direct dependence can be discerned, as in the case of Sir Philip Sidney's reading of the ninth chapter of the *Poetics* on poetry and history, as Micha Lazarus well demonstrated (2015b).²⁰ On the presence in England of continental editions, translations and commentaries, which "suggests that language was no obstacle", see Lazarus 2016. Bernardo Segni's Italian translation (1549, cf. 54) was widespread there and the "functional bilingualism" of the "most educated Elizabethans" allowed access to Latin translations, such as those by Pazzi, despite the lower circulation of commentaries (*ibid.*).

It can be anticipated that, on the one hand, a poor layout or lack of

¹⁹ Apart from the Göttingen University Library, copies both of *Rhetoric* (USTC 3008774) and *Poetics* (USTC 3011104) are identified to date only in the UK, Ireland, and the US.

²⁰ On Sidney and the Aristotelian doctrines of catharsis and mimesis see Rist 2016, 134-8.

convenient printed indications, and, on the other hand, textual mistakes in the *Poetics*, especially concerning the distribution of stylistic resources in the different parts of tragedy, for a long time contributed to obliterating the most salient peculiarities of the choral and individual lyric parts, that is, polymetry and responsiveness between the stanzas. Let us therefore turn to the places in the *Poetics* where Aristotle discusses the linguistic tools used by the tragic poet. He defines the role of rhythm, metre and song in dramatic poetry in three distinct loci. The first one is shortly after the beginning, and both its position and the wording show that it has a defining function:

Εἰσὶ δὲ τινες αἱ πᾶσι χρῶνται τοῖς εἰρη-
 μένοις, λέγω δὲ οἶον ῥυθμῶ καὶ μέλει καὶ μέτρῳ, ὥσπερ
 ἢ τε τῶν διθυραμβικῶν ποιήσις καὶ ἢ τῶν νόμων καὶ ἢ
 τε τραγωδία καὶ ἢ κωμῳδία· διαφέρουσι δέ, ὅτι αἱ μὲν
 ἅμα πᾶσιν αἱ δὲ κατὰ μέρος. Ταύτας μὲν οὖν λέγω τὰς
 διαφορὰς τῶν τεχνῶν, ἐν οἷς ποιοῦνται τὴν μίμησιν.
 (1447b24-9)²¹

[There are also some arts which use all the stated media – rhythm, melody, metre – as do dithyramb and nomos,²² tragedy and comedy. They differ in that some employ all together, others use them in certain parts [*kata meros*]. So these are the distinctions between the arts in the media in which they produce mimesis.]

In his translation, Stephen Halliwell renders with “media” what the Greek expresses with linguistic neutral names (first αἱ πᾶσι χρῶνται τοῖς εἰρημένοις, lit. “which use all the things we have said”, then πᾶσιν scil. χρῶνται, i. e. “which use all [these] things”). In drama, these media constitute not its structural articulation, but its communicative tools. Hence we learn that tragedy and comedy use rhythm, metre and *melos* to varying degrees in the different parts of which they are composed. In other words, the different combinations of the three media differentiate the parts (*mere*) of drama, just as, on a different level, they characterise the different poetic genres. Aristotle will say what these *mere* (plur. of *meros*) are at 52b14-8: differently from the “components” (*mere* also these) “that must be used as basic elements (*eide*)”, coinciding with the “media” (rhythm, melody, and metre) we have just considered, these are quantitative structures (*kata de to poson*), that is, “formal and discrete sections” common to every tragedy: “prologue, episode,

²¹ Unless otherwise indicated, for the text and translation of *Poetics* I am relying on Halliwell 1995. Henceforth in quotations from the *Poetics* I will omit the first two digits of the Bekker pagination (e.g. 47b24-9).

²² “Nomos were traditional styles of melody, for string or wind instrument, to which various texts could be set; by Aristotle’s time the term covered elaborate compositions closely related to dithyramb: cf. 48a15” (Halliwell 1995, 33nb).

exodos, choral unit (further divisible into *parodos* and *stasimon*)”, to which can be added monodies (“actors’ songs”, from the scene) and melodramatic dialogues, mostly laments (*kommoi*), mixed of spoken, recitative and sung verses.²³ The *Poetics* shows a recurrent concern to ensure the distinction between the structural parts, which in 49b26 will be called *μόρια* (*moria*), and, in correspondence to these, between the “media” that characterise each one of them – to this end Aristotle frequently uses the adverb/preposition *χωρίς*, ‘separately’ (47a23, 49b25 and 29, and cf. 47a26) and the passive of the verb *χωρίζω* (52b16 and 27).

Unfamiliarity with the *Poetics* could make it difficult to interpret the term *μέρος* (*meros*), which recurs in several pages with different purposes and different meanings. In order to better understand the effects ensuing from this terminological ambiguity, let us return to Giorgio Valla’s translation (1447-1500: 1498), which marks the beginning of the “arduous conquest of the *Poetics*”²⁴ in the Renaissance.²⁵ Here is the first proposition of 47b24-9:

[S]unt nimirum quae iam dictis utant omnibus rhythmo inquam et melo et *carmine* . . . (sign. r1v)

[Certainly there are some [kinds of poetry] that use all that has been said, I mean rhythm, song and *composition in verse* . . . (emphasis mine)]

It has been remarked that “Valla’s translation is free from any bias of an interpretative nature”, and it has been unanimously acknowledged that his errors mostly correspond to the text of the Greek manuscript he used.²⁶ It should be added that, at least with regard to the *Poetics*, the relationship that

²³ Μέρη δὲ τραγωδίας οἷς μὲν ὡς εἶδεσι δεῖ χρῆσθαι, πρότερον εἶπομεν, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ποσὸν καὶ εἰς ἃ διαιρεῖται [the subject is the *mere/eide* which in the definition of tragedy (49b28-30, see below, 24) must be variously distributed *en tois moriois*] κεχωρισμένα τάδε ἐστὶ, πρόλογος ἐπεισόδιον ἔξοδος χορικόν, καὶ τοῦτου τὸ μὲν πάροδος τὸ δὲ στάσιμον, κοινὰ μὲν ἀπάντων ταῦτα, ἴδια δὲ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ κόμμοι. In the brief recapitulation that closes the *Poetics* we find again the distinction between *eide*, “varieties”, and *mere*, “(structural) components” (62b16).

²⁴ Aguzzi-Barbagli 1988, 108. Valla “probably lectured on the *Poetics* in Venice about 1485” (97-8, and see Garin 1973, 448).

²⁵ His translation occupies pp. r1v-s3v of the collection printed by Simon Bevila[c] qua in Venice in 1498 (USTC 992882). USTC records 90 copies, distributed across the Continent (5 in the UK, one of which [PLRE.Folger: 67.92] is in a private inventory of 1558). Textual references are to the copy marked 2 Inc.c.a. 3671 in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München (<https://www.ustc.ac.uk/editions/992882>). It was replicated in 1504 in Venice by Bernardino Vitali, together with various Latinised writings on rhetoric (USTC 810865; five copies are recorded, including one in the UK).

²⁶ Aguzzi-Barbagli 1988, 109. The manuscript was identified by Lobel (1933, 25-6) in Estensis gr. 100 = *alpha.T.8.3* of the National and University Library of Modena. Raschieri provides a description of it (2013, 355-6).

bound him to one of his teachers, Andronicos Callistos, who for some time would condition the reception of the original text, remains without effect (see below, 22).²⁷ However, it is immediately evident that the translation of the third term, i. e. *metron*, with *carmen* obliterates the tripartition of variously dosed elements – almost as if Valla had difficulty in understanding the two functions of *metron* in the sung and the recited sections, respectively. This, however, is what was available at the end of the fifteenth century for those who wished to approach the ancient poetic theory in a modern translation. The Greek text would follow only ten years later, in the *editio princeps* printed by Aldo. As we shall see, precisely the definition of tragedy contains an erroneous conjectural insertion that will affect the whole conception of the relationship between these “media” and the parts of tragedy. Before considering the definition given in 49b24-31, famous – if for no other reason – because it also concerns catharsis, let us consider a passage that follows it, where Aristotle concludes his extensive examination of the six “components” of tragedy – as Halliwell here translates *mere* (50a7-10):

ἀνάγκη

οὖν πάσης τραγωδίας μέρη εἶναι ἕξ, καθ' ἃ ποιὰ τις ἐστὶν
ἢ τραγωδία· ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶ μῦθος καὶ ἦθη καὶ λέξις καὶ
διάνοια καὶ ὄψις καὶ μελοποιία.

[Tragedy as a whole, therefore, must have six components, which give it its qualities – namely, [1] plot, [2] character, [3] diction, [4] thought, [5] spectacle, and [6] lyric poetry.]

At 50b12-6, in particular, Aristotle will deal with *lexis*:

Τέταρτον δὲ τῶν μὲν λόγων²⁸ ἢ
λέξις· λέγω δέ, ὡσπερ πρότερον εἴρηται, λέξιν εἶναι τὴν
διὰ τῆς ὀνομασίας ἐρμηνείαν, ὃ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐμμέτρων
καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν λόγων ἔχει τὴν αὐτὴν δύναμιν. Τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν
ἢ μελοποιία μέγιστον τῶν ἡδυσμάτων.

[Fourth is the diction of the spoken sections: as stated earlier, I define diction as expression through choice of words – something which has the same capacity in both verse and prose. Of the remainder, lyric poetry is the greatest embellishment.]

²⁷ Many codices written by Callistos passed into Valla’s ownership, as Janus Lascaris attests in 1492 (Avezzù 1992), yet not the one containing the *Poetics* (Parisinus gr. 2038, for which see below 22, and cf. Tarán 2016. On Valla’s library see now Raschieri 2013, 353; and 2020, 318-21.

²⁸ Omitted in the Arabic translation and deleted by an unknown scholar at some time after 1760, the words τῶν μὲν λόγων are considered by both Kassel (1966) and Tarán and Gutas (2012). However, given the generic meaning of *lexis*, these words can have an explanatory function, i. e. “spoken sections” versus “lyric poetry”.

It may be noticed that here the discussion does not reproduce the order of the “components” given above, which Aristotle replaces with the following: [1] “plot”, [2] “character”, [4] “thought”, [3] “diction”, [6] “lyric poetry”, and [5] “spectacle”. The variation corresponds to the intention to group together the three “objects” (ἃ μιμοῦνται: [1], [2], [4]), the two “media” (οἷς, *scil.* μιμοῦνται: [3] and [6]), and the “mode” (ὡς μιμοῦνται: [5]) of *mimesis* (50a10-12). A little earlier within what is traditionally read as the sixth chapter, Aristotle provides the famous definition of tragedy, where we find the media we have already briefly dealt with. Here is the full passage:

Ἔστιν οὖν τραγωδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας καὶ τελείας μέγεθος ἐχούσης, ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ χωρὶς ἐκαστῶ τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις, δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι’ ἀπαγγελίας, δι’ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνουσα τὴν τῶν τοιοῦτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν. Λέγω δὲ ἡδυσμένον μὲν λόγον τὸν ἔχοντα ῥυθμὸν καὶ ἁρμονίαν {καὶ μέλος}, τὸ δὲ χωρὶς τοῖς εἶδεσι τὸ διὰ μέτρων ἔνια μόνον περαίνεσθαι καὶ πάλιν ἕτερα διὰ μέλους.²⁹ (49b24-31)

[Tragedy, then, is mimesis of an action which is elevated, complete, and of magnitude; in language embellished [*hedysmenos*] by distinct forms in its sections [*moria*]; employing the mode of enactment, not narrative; and through pity and fear accomplishing the catharsis of such emotions. I use “embellished” for language with rhythm and melody {and song}, and “distinct forms” for the fact that some parts [*enia*, neut. plur. subst.] are conveyed through metrical speech alone, others [*hetera*, idem] again through song.]

As in 47b24-9, here too “rhythm” and “melody” are identified as media of dramatic poetry – and both of them assume *metron* as the fundamental resource of the spoken parts as well as of the sung parts, in combination with music. The statement that the species (*eide*) of embellishment are distributed in the different “sections” of the tragedy is absolutely relevant: it implies that we can find different portions variously characterised by resources capable of “embellishing” their language, all functional to *mimesis*. Later we will see that this distribution of communicative media represents the central nexus in the Renaissance perception of tragedy including acting and singing, and therefore with different ways of using rhythmic and metric resources, combining them or not with music. But it is worth returning to the definition

²⁹ The text adopted by Halliwell coincides with that of the Kassel edition (1966) and therefore differs from that of Tarán and Gutas (2012), who do not expunge καὶ μέλος, attested by the whole tradition. I acknowledge that the expunction does not solve the problems raised in this context by the pair “*harmonia* and *melos*”, but I do not find fully persuasive Tarán and Gutas’ claim that “καὶ is probably explanatory: μέλος specifies or defines ἁρμονία” (2012, 247).

of tragedy, this time in Giorgio Valla's translation – I will segment it for clarity's sake:

Est igitur tragoedia imitatio actionis probae atque co[n]sum[m]atae magnitudinem iucunda oratione obti[n]entis citra quamlibet speciem in particulis agentium nec de commissorum pronuntiatu de miseratione et pavore terminans talium disciplinarum purgationem: suavem ac oblectabilem inquam orationem habentem rhythmum et harmoniam et melos quod autem citra species id per metra quaedam dumtaxat perficit sicut porro alia per melos. (r2v)

[Tragedy is therefore an imitation | of an honest action fulfilled in greatness | which in delightful language distributes each species in the parts | of persons acting and not by the account of those who have done the deed | which through pity and fear brings to effect the purgation from such *disciplines*. | Sweet and delightful I say the diction that possesses rhythm, harmony, and *melos*, and achieves moreover this [qualities] separately for the various species, one [poetic genre] with the metre, and another in turn with the *melos*.]

This translation offers a similar picture to the one Valla himself presents in his *Laus poeticae*, a treatise included in his extensive encyclopaedia *De expetendis et fugiendis rebus*.³⁰ When he wrote that *Laus* probably for teaching purposes, he was strongly inspired by Diomedes' *Ars grammatica* (fourth century CE), and sometimes paraphrased it, sometimes reproduced it literally. He did not find in it the theory of catharsis – which does not seem to be of interest to Diomedes – but clear definitions of the mimetic, not diegetic, character of drama, and transferred them almost literally into his text. He also found the origin of the very name *drama* as deriving from acting (EE8r):

Poeticae artis species tres esse perhibentur, activa sive imitativa, quam graeci *dramaticen*, vel *mimiticen* vocant, enarrativa sive enuntiativa quam graeci *exegeticen*, vel *epangelticen* dicunt. Tertia communis uel mixta quam illi *coenen* vel *misten* appellant. *Dramatice* est in qua personae agunt solae citra ullam poetae interlocutionem. *Exegetice* est in qua ipse poeta loquitur.³¹

³⁰ Valla 1501 (USTC 861868: 12 copies in the UK).

³¹ Cf. Diomedes 482 ll. 14-9. Keil: "Poematos genera sunt tria, aut enim activum est vel imitativum, quod Graeci *dramaticon* vel *mimiticon*, aut enarrativum vel enuntiativum, quod Graeci *exegeticon* vel *apangelticon* dicunt [cf. Aristotle's οὐ δι' ἀπαγγελίας (49b27)] aut commune vel mistum . . . *Dramaticon* est vel activum in quo personae agunt solae sine ullius poetae interlocutione, ut se habent tragicae et comicae fabulae." [Poetry is of three genres: an active or imitative one, which the Greeks call dramatic or mimetic; a narrative or enunciative one, which the Greeks call exegetic or *apangelticon*; a common or mixed one . . . The *dramaticon* is also active, in that the characters act in the first person without the intervention of a poet – such are the tragic and comic dramas.]

[There are three types of poetics: active or imitative, which the Greeks call dramatic or mimetic; narrative or declarative, which the Greeks call expository or 'report'. The third is common or mixed, which they call koine or mixed. Dramatic is the one where the characters act alone, without any interlocution from the poet. Expository is the one where the poet speaks in the first person.]

In Diomedes he also found a simple etymology of *drama*:

Tragedies and comedies are called dramas from *dran*, i. e. 'acting' . . . In fact the fabula is action, not reporting by the actors.³²

Just δρᾶν, whence δρῶντων in the Aristotelian definition (49b26). In brief, Diomedes suggested the adversative coordination “(mimesis) of persons acting *and not* by an account by the poet (*sine ullius poetae interlocutione*)” (my emphasis) – which Valla rephrases as “not by the account of those who have done the deed”, demonstrating that he was well aware of the diegetic portions of tragedy, such as the prologues and the messenger-speeches.³³ It may be concluded that in the Renaissance the correct segmentation of the Aristotelian definition of tragedy was suggested in the third book of Diomedes' *Ars grammatica*, which circulated much more widely than Valla's translation of the *Poetics* and *Laus*.³⁴ The interpretative problem represented by the 'parts/sections' *moria* would have been easy to solve not by matching them as 'parts' played by the dramatic characters (δρῶντες, *drontes*), a reading that was to become normative (“in partibus agentibus”), but by resorting to the second, and last, part of the definition of tragedy, and its distinction between some parts (*enia*) conveyed through metrical speech alone, and others (*hetera*) through song.

³² “Dramata autem tragica aut comica παρὰ τὸ δρᾶν, id est agere . . . ; nam et agi fabula, non referri ab actoribus dicitur” (490 l. 21-4 K.).

³³ Pace Tigerstedt (1968, 18), Valla did not cite the Aristotelian definition of tragedy in his *Laus* only because he did not find it in Diomedes, and not “because . . . in his translation [of the *Poetics*] the katharsis clause makes no sense”. With regard to the latter point, Valla actually translated the Greek erroneous word μαθημάτων (“disciplines”), but this reading can also be found in the Aldine, and will be replaced by the more reliable παθημάτων (“affectiones”) only later.

³⁴ Diomedes' 1475 *editio princeps* (Venice: Jenson) was followed by many others: Vicenza (Henricus de Sancto Urso: 1486), Lyon (Sacon: 1498), Venice (Pensi: 1491). In the sixteenth century (non-exhaustive list): Paris (Jean Petit: 1507), Venice (Rivius, 1511), Paris (Ascensius, 1518), Venice (Rivius: 1519)Cologne 1523 (Quentel) and 1533 (Io. Soter; then again 1536), Leipsic (Bärwald, 1541, 1542), Cologne (Gymnich: 1544), Hannover (Marnius: 1605).

3. The Success of a Mistake

Yet Aldo in 1508 published the *editio princeps* of the *Poetics* in Greek within the *Rhetores* edited by Demetrios Ducas with contributions by Janus Lascaris.³⁵ The text was derived from MS. Parisinus gr. 2038, the work of the copyist and scholar Andronicos Callistos.³⁶ Here is the definition of tragedy we can read in the Aldine (Andronicos Callistos' textual interventions are within angle brackets: < >): “. . . ἡδυσμένῳ λόγῳ<,> χωρὶς ἐκάστου τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις δρώντων<,> καὶ οὐ δι' ἐπαγγελίας, ἀλλὰ< > δι' ἐλέου καὶ . . .”. The syntax dependent on the comma after λόγῳ, the dot after δρώντων, and the adversative ἀλλὰ, are due to Callistos, as we can see in his manuscript (f. 113r). It produces a radical restructuring of the text: the part. δρώντων, dependent on μίμησις and opposed to δι' ἀπαγγελίας (literally “imitation of people acting, and not by narrative”), is thus linked to *moria*, with the result that the language of tragedy looks variously embellished “according to the parts of those who act”. That is: “. . . in language embellished, by distinct forms *in the parts of those who act*, and not through narration, *but* through pity and compassion accomplishing the catharsis . . . (emphasis is mine)”. Here the Greek *moria* (lit. ‘portions, body parts, constituent parts’) are understood as the Latin *partes*, that is, ‘roles, parts of the actors’,³⁷ and an unreasonable contrast is introduced between the narrative and the emotional factors of catharsis. This juxtaposition implies an interpretative drift towards a moralisation of the narrative component of tragedy in view of the catharsis – but this is a subject for analysis beyond the scope of this article.

Nowadays we read the text as it was finally set by Immanuel Bekker in his monumental 1831 edition of the Aristotelian *corpus*, but the text arranged by Callistos and the Aldine was perpetuated in most editions of the *Poetics* for almost three centuries,³⁸ up to Thomas Winstanley's 1780 edition, which

³⁵ Sicherl 1997, 310-11; Tarán and Gutas 2012, 47.

³⁶ The MS. can be read at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10722795h/f120>. item. Callistos (ca. 1400-1475) was a formidable author of conjectures to many Greek texts, and more than a few of his manuscript editions of Greek classics have long been attributed recensional value, later refuted by subsequent research (Centanni 1986 and 1995's last attempts to value this MS. as an independent source have been definitively refuted by Tarán and Gutas 2012); for updated references see Chinellato 2018.

³⁷ Copious attestations in Terence and Cicero, not to mention Horace *Ars poetica* (*Epist.* 3) 193-4: “actoris partis chorus . . . defendat”.

³⁸ There is just one exception: an anonymous reader in his copy of the 1555 Morel edition of the *Poetics* (USTC 160035; at p. 15) erased the undue ἀλλὰ. This is the exemplar preserved in the Rome Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale that once belonged to the Roman Jesuit College (digitised copy: https://books.google.it/books?vid=IBNR:CR000300205&redir_esc=y).

contained his edition of the Greek text and Goulston's Latin translation (1623).³⁹ It may be claimed that, almost thirty years after the Aldine edition, *les jeux sont faits*: Trincavelli (1536, 271) republished the Aldine text,⁴⁰ and that same year Alessandro Pazzi translated it:

tragoedia est imitatio actionis . . . sermone suavi, separatim singulis generibus in partibus agentibus (*in the active roles*), non per enarrationem, per misericordiam vero atque terrorem perturbationes huiusmodi purgans (*not by narration, but by pity and terror, purifying this kind of afflictions*).⁴¹ (1536, 9v)

In 1548 Francesco Robortello published the first of the major Renaissance commentaries on the *Poetics*;⁴² he adopted the Aldine text and Pazzi's translation, and commented:

“Separatim singulis generibus”: quod tum ea de causa [*scil.* Paccius] dixit, tum propter choros, in quibus alia proferebantur ore, alia concinebantur. (1548, 55)

[Pazzi distinguished the individual poetic resources] either for this reason (*scil.* according to the parts of those acting), or because of the choruses, which sometimes recite and sometimes sing in unison.]

Alongside the distinction between the communicative forms that can be used by different characters, Robortello thereby introduced the observation that the chorus can use different metric forms. Yet the most obvious reference is to the communicative modes of the chorus-leader, who mostly recites in the same metre as the characters, i. e. in iambic trimeter. The same observation will be repeated by Maggi in his commentary on Horace's *Ars poetica*, 193: “in tragoedia chorus interdum unius personae munere fungens loquitur, interdum vero canit” [in tragedy the chorus sometimes recites, if it has the

³⁹ Winstanley (1780, 278) suggests to rewrite δρώντων καὶ οὐ δι' ἀπαγγελίας, δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου etc., and appropriately points out that, contrary to what the commentators (“interpretes”) of the *Poetics* thought, there was no opposition between φόβον and ἀπαγγελίαν. This indubitable merit is not, however, compromised by his misunderstanding of Dacier's 1692 French translation and Lessing's treatment of this section of the *Poetics* in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*. This revision of the text shared by the Renaissance interpreters is undoubtedly prompted by Goulston's paraphrase and commentary, which is discussed below (30-2).

⁴⁰ (USTC 810885) But in 49b28 he points out the variant παθημάτων in the margin of μαθημάτων, anticipated by Pazzi in his translation.

⁴¹ A. Pazzi de' Medici (1483-1530 or 1531); the translation came out posthumously. With “perturbationes” he implicitly adopts the Greek παθημάτων, instead of the erroneous μαθημάτων (‘disciplinae’), which is still present in the edition accompanying his translation (1536, 5r); the same discrepancy also occurs in the Basle 1537 edition.

⁴² USTC 852746; 20 out of 76 copies in the UK.

function of an individual character, and sometimes sings] (1550, 350). On the same line – δρώντων as a specification of *moria* and not in opposition to δι' ἐπαγγελίας – will also be the Italian translation by Bernardo Segni (1549):

È adunche la Tragedia una imitatione d'attione . . . con parlar suave separatamente in ciascheduna sua spetie *nelle parti di coloro, che van negociando*, conducendo l'espurgatione degli affetti, non per via di narratione, ma per via di misericordia, et di timore. (1549, 290)

[Thus tragedy is an imitation of an action . . . with delightful speech separately in each of its species *in the parts of those, who are negotiating*, realising the purification of emotions not through storytelling, but through pity and fear.]

Close to the Aldine text, Maggi and Lombardi (1550, 96-8)⁴³ would also adopt Pazzi's translation. In their commentary, the interpretations shared by the two co-authors (*communes explanationes*), while understanding the non-narrative nature of the tragedy, barely touch upon the theme of its stylistic media, referring back to 47b24-9 we saw above. Instead, Maggi's own *annotationes* regarding the definition of tragedy would be entirely devoted to a moralistic reading of catharsis. Along the same interpretative line (apart from the moralistic vision), also Pier Vettori (1560) would confirm this misinterpretation:

Est igitur tragoedia imitatio actionis . . . condita oratione, seorsum unaquaque formarum *in partibus agentibus*: et non per expositionem, sed per misericordiam et metum conficiens huiuscemodi perturbationum purgationem. (54; emphasis mine)

Compared to the Aldine text and Pazzi's translation adopted by Robortello and Maggi-Lombardi, Vettori marks punctuation more intensely, both in Greek and in Latin (as also in his 1564 edition of the Greek text alone [USTC 810961], and in the second edition of 1573 [USTC 863124]). Thus, by endorsing this misreading, an undisputed philological authority such as Vettori, on the one hand, cancelled the opposition between mimesis and diegesis, and, on the other hand, definitively obliterated the rhythmic, metric and melodic features of the different parts of drama. In this perspective, *rhythmos* is considered in relation to the movements of the chorus, that is, as the rhythm of the dance ("rhythmus, qui est ratio celeris motus ad tardum"; so in his commentary on 47b24-9, 18), not as "pitch and rhythm [assigned] to the diction", as for example in Plato (*Rep.* 397b: ἐάν τις ἀποδιδῶ πρέπουσαν ἀρμονίαν καὶ ῥυθμὸν τῇ λέξει).

Thus, in the light of his misinterpretation of the essence of the *moria*

⁴³ USTC 839586. The commentary on Aristotle is followed by Maggi's *Interpretatio* of Horace's *Ars poetica*.

and of the erasure of their distinct formal characteristics, Vettori must have asked himself what *hedysmenos logos* (“embellished language”) and *hedysmata* (“embellishments”) meant. Unlike all previous translators, who had rendered *hedysmenos (logos)* as *suavis (oratio, sermo; It. suave parlar)*, he translated *hedysmenos logos* as *condita oratio* (Restani 2015, 85). Therefore, at 50b16, he consistently translated μελοποιία as “cantus, maximus omnium condimentorum”. The Latin adjective *condita* applied to *oratio* signifies the ornamentation of speech, and sometimes implies the idea of excess.⁴⁴ He interpreted these words with full mastery of Aristotle’s *technai*,⁴⁵ contextualising this page of the *Poetics* and some stylistic considerations made by Aristotle in the third book of his *Rhetoric*. We should consider that in a style of writing so reluctant to resort to formal refinements, such as the one which transmitted Aristotle’s teaching, ἡδύσμα (*hedysma*, plur. ἡδύσματα *hedysmata*) – ‘seasoning, dressing, sauce’ (Montanari), but also ‘spices, aromata’ – suggests a pun with the almost homophone ἔδεσμα (*edesma*), ‘nourishment, food, victuals’ (Montanari) that Aristotle makes in the *Rhetoric*. There he reproaches Alcidas, a rhetorician contemporary of Isocrates, for the inappropriate use of *epitheta* and states that “he employs them, not as the mere seasoning (οὐ . . . ἡδύσματι χρῆται) but as the actual meat (ἄλλ’ ὡς ἐδέσματι)” (3.3 1406a19; translation by Cope 1877). We should keep in mind that in prose the *epitheta* are among the main factors that “vary the customary style and give a foreign air to the language”, so as to “make it plain that it is poetry (*poiesis*)” (*Rhet.* 1406a13-5, trans. Cope). It would be imprudent to perceive also in this page of the *Poetics*, just as in that of the *Rhetoric*, an implicit hierarchy between the “pièce de résistance, the substance”, i. e. the *lexis*, participating in the common *hedysma*, and the “mere adjunct or the appendage” (Cope again, *ibid.*), a *hedysma* of a second degree, i. e. the lyric poetry. However, the song produces effects of estrangement in respect to the *lexis* of recitation, however elevated and “embellished” it may be (it should be once again remembered that the tragedy as a whole makes use of ἡδυσμένος λόγος, 49b25 and 28). Thus we could say that tragedy is embellished on two distinct levels: first of all, and in general, as it uses a *logos* embellished by *rhythmos* and *metron* in the varieties appropriate to recitation, and furthermore by the “melody” (ἁρμονία, *harmonia*), which with *rhythmos* contributes to producing *melopoiia*. This double ‘embellishment’ constitutes an interpretative nexus that the Renaissance interpreters of the *Poetics* did

⁴⁴ “Nimium condita oratio”, Quintilianus 11.3,182, and cf. Cicero, *De oratore* 2.56.227; *Brutus* 29.110.

⁴⁵ In 1548 he had published his *Commentaries* to the *Rhetoric* (USTC 863102), in the same format that he would later use for those to the *Poetics*: sections of the Greek text followed by translations and commentaries in Latin.

not decode satisfactorily, also because of the textual alteration undergone by the passage containing the definition of tragedy. Thus, in spite of Vettori's attention to the musical component of drama (Restani 2015, 85), a stylistics focused on the structures of drama seems to give way to a stylistics tailored to the characters.

Julius Caesar Scaliger would further reduce the role of music and singing. Shortly after the middle of the sixteenth century, he wrote a *Poetics* which was published posthumously in 1561 and again in 1581. It has an encyclopaedic structure, and is more similar to Diomedes' *Ars grammatica* and Giorgio Valla's *Laus poeticae* than to the contemporary commentaries on Aristotle; indeed, it reveals a peculiar absence of Aristotle's *Poetics*. For example, his cumbersome treatment of the chorus (1561, p. 146d, col. 2) mixes considerations on its "multiplex officium" ("multiple task"), in line with the exegetical vulgate concerning ll. 193-6 of Horace's *Ars* ("interdum consolatur, aliquando luget simul", "sometimes [the chorus] comforts, sometimes he weeps together [with the character]", etc.) with an idiosyncratic vision according to which "chori omnino est ἠθοποιία et πάθος" ("the chorus is fully responsible for the delineation of the characters and the emotional style").⁴⁶ Hence the attribution to Aristotle of a statement completely alien to his *Poetics*: "Aristotle denies that tragic authors had antistrophic choruses" ("negat Aristoteles ἀντιστρόφους habuisse Choros tragicos"). Here the term *antistrophos*, that notoriously never occurs in the *Poetics*, is paired with a genre, that of *nomoi*, whose extraneousness from drama Aristotle had declared *in limine*. Not surprisingly Scaliger's precepts concerning the different *harmoniai* and their ethical content are completely foreign to the *Poetics*. His definition of tragedy is also deeply idiosyncratic. The Greek text is, once again, that of Callistos and the Aldine, but the paraphrase is highly reductive and entails a severe liquidation of *melos* (12a-b col. 1):

Imitatio per actiones illustris fortunae, exitu infelici, oratione gravi metrica.
Nam quod harmoniam et melos addunt, non sunt ea, ut philosophi loquuntur,
de essentia Tragoediae.

[Imitation of an illustrious case with an inauspicious outcome, by means of action, in solemn language and in verse: Because what harmonia and *melos* add does not belong, as the philosophers say, to the essence of tragedy.]

⁴⁶ In the stylistic doctrine of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the *ethopoiia* is eminently an authorial trait and consists in the construction of a character by assigning a language suitable to represent him/her – with reference to the above-mentioned verses of Horace's *Ars poetica*, here Scaliger seems to present the Chorus as the poet's spokesman and supporter, rather than as a character, and therefore to opt for the variant "auctoris" rather than "actoris". On this topic see Bigliuzzi' article in this issue (145).

Ludovico Castelvetro would close the season of the great commentaries in 1570, apparently harmonising the syntax of the established interpretation, but in fact definitely upsetting the authentic segmentation of the *Poetics* and producing a translation as vacuous as it is sonorous:

È adunque tragedia rassomiglianza d'attione magnifica, compiuta, che habbia grandezza, di ciascuna delle spetie *di coloro, che rappresentano* con favella fatta dilettevole separatamente per particelle, et non per narratione, et *oltre a ciò* induca per misericordia e per ispavento purgatione di così fatte passioni. (62v)

[Tragedy is therefore the likeness of a magnificent, accomplished action, such that it has grandness, *of the various kinds of those, who represent* with a language made delightful separately in small parts, and not by narration, *and moreover* induces through pity and terror the purification of such passions. (emphasis mine)]

In spite of Castelvetro's syntactic contortions, he too comes to the same conclusion, namely that style characterises the different speakers. The "small parts" (Aristotle's *moria*) are nothing more than the formal, stylistic and figural articulations of the speeches assigned to the characters. In his commentary, he removes all doubt: "poi si dice che ciascuna di queste spetie ha i suoi rappresentatori separati, il che sopra si manifestò in quelle parole διαφέρουσι καὶ ὅτι αἱ μὲν ἅμα πᾶσιν, αἱ δὲ κατὰ μέρος 47b24-9" [there it is said that each of those species has its separate representers. Which was manifested by the words "they differ in that some employ all together, others use them in certain parts" (63v)]. Among the acrobatic artifices of his translation, the expression "and moreover" is a masterpiece of creative skill that irons out all exegetical difficulties. Winstanley will notice it: "Castelvetro ἀλλὰ *oltre a ciò*, insuper, contra omnem linguae Graecae analogiam" (1780 278).

4. In England, at the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century

In 1610 Daniel Heinsius preferred to circumvent any obstacles by simply omitting the word δρώντων in his translation (his Greek text was once again the Aldine one): ". . . ita ut singula genera in singulis partibus habeant locum: utque non enarratione, sed per misericordiam et metum etc." (11)⁴⁷ [. . . so that the individual genres find their place in the individual parts, and not through narration, but pity and fear, etc. . . .]. We cannot fail to detect a certain irony in this tactical omission, given that in his *Praefatio*

⁴⁷ The enlarged edition of 1643 did not introduce any changes to this passage (247).

amico lectori he criticises those who “*verbum quippe verbo reddunt*” [those who translate word for word], saying that they “*nec a syllabis illius reced[un]t, cuius mentem non intelligunt*” [do not even give up the syllables of the text whose meaning they do not understand] (<8v>). The result is that “*quae obscuriora videbantur*” [the concepts that appeared more obscure] in the definition of tragedy, as Heinsius defines them in his concluding “*Notae*” (75), were evidently destined to remain unsolved.

Quite different is the commitment with which Theodore Goulston (1572-1632) produced the first edition of Aristotle’s *Poetics* on English soil (1623). His aim was to give the most “analytical” reading possible, even if he did not publish the Greek text – as we have seen this would be added by Thomas Winstanley, together with his own textual and exegetical annotations in the last of the fortunate series of editions of Goulston’s work (1780). With declaredly interpretative aims, he added nouns, adjectives, adverbs etc. and went on to print them in italics in view of making explicit what he considered the authentic sense of the Aristotelian text.

One wonders why Goulston, who included the Greek text in his edition of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (1619), did not do the same for the *Poetics*, which is considerably shorter and therefore offers fewer editorial difficulties. His reading of the two Aristotelian passages that we have considered fundamental for a correct understanding of the rhythmic, metrical and performative variety of dramatic poetry, namely those relating to the use of “*media*” in the various poetic genres (47b24-9, cf. above 13-14) and the definition of tragedy (49b24-31, cf. above 18ff.), offers a considerably different perspective from the Renaissance exegetical vulgate. His treatment of the first passage is very peculiar (italics in the original):

Differunt vero *hae inter se*, quod illae quidem omnibus *istis utantur* simul, *hae vero* singulis secundum *quasdam suas partes, cum ipsis commodum sit* (3)

[The poetic genres *differ from each other* in that some employ *all together*, others use them in certain parts *where it is appropriate for each of them*]

and comments on the passage from “*hae*” to “*sit*” as follows: “*Tragoedia et comoedia [istis utuntur] in temporibus aut partibus saltem scenae diversis.*” [Tragedy and comedy use these means in the different situations and parts of each act.]. He is clearly anticipating the definition of tragedy and superimposing the distinction between parts and moments (“*tempora*”) of dramatic compositions (“*scaena*”) on that between poetic genres. This overlapping is undue; and yet the anticipation is revealing of the fact that he is reading this page in the light of the next one, with a clear perception that the parts of drama are characterised by stylistic resources which are

different and differently combined with each other. Turning to the definition of tragedy, he correctly connects δρώντων and οὐ δι' ἀπαγγελίας, although he does not depart from the commonly adopted Greek text, where he reads ἀλλὰ δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου:

Est igitur tragoedia, imitatio actionis studiosae et perfectae, magnitudinem idoneam habentis, cum sermone per formas *quasdam* condito, ita ut singulae illae, in partibus poëseos *singulis*, separatim, agendo imitentur, et non per enarrationem rei, sed per misericordiam, metumque *factis impressum*, eiusmodi *vehementis animarum* perturbationes undique purgans, *expiansque*. (11-2)

Goulston could hardly have objected to a Greek text that had been accepted even by the most distinguished scholars of the preceding decades, so he continued to translate that catharsis is produced “not through narration but through pity and fear”. However, he acknowledged some aspects present in the Greek text that had been obliterated: first of all, that imitation is practised through action, and then the plurality of forms (“*formae quaedam*”, “*singulae illae*”) and their varied (“*separatim*”) distribution in the parts of the composition (“*in partibus poëseos singulis*”) are completely unrelated to the stylistic connotation of the characters on stage. In this part of the definition, it should be noticed that *mimesis* is produced by “*formae*”. As regards the following part, Goulston tries to correct the inappropriate adversative by way of a sort of duplication, where “*metum[que] factis impressum*” recovers δρώντων as the legitimate term to be set against “*per enarrationem rei*”.

By Way of a Provisional Conclusion

The misunderstanding of the Aristotelian interpretation of a particular passage in the definition of tragedy, dating back to Andronicos Callistos and imposed on the later commentators of Aristotle by the *editio princeps* (1508), was very popular until the dawn of the seventeenth century, when, however, thanks to Turnèbe and Canter, progress in the study of the classics made it possible to deduce directly from the tragic texts the stylistic properties of the recited and sung parts. The error is resilient, because Goethe too depends indirectly on the Aldine when he reads the translation of the *Poetics* made by Michael Conrad Curtius (1753),⁴⁸ and in his own *Nachlese zu Aristoteles*

⁴⁸ “Das Trauerspiel ist nämlich de Nachahmung einer ernsthaften, vollständigen un eine Grösse habenden Handlung, durch einen mit fremden Schmuck versehenen Ausdruck, dessen sämtliche Teile aber besonders wirken: welche ferner, *nicht durch die Erzählung des Dichters, sondern durch die Vorstellung der Handelnden selbst* uns vermittelt der Schreckens und des Mitleidens von den Fehlern der vorgestellten Leidenschaften reiniget.” [For the tragedy is the imitation of a serious, complete and

Poetik (1826) translates that troubled page of Aristotle as follows:⁴⁹

Die Tragödie ist die Nachahmung einer bedeutenden und abgeschlossenen Handlung, die eine gewisse Ausdehnung hat und in anmutiger Sprache vorgetragen wird, und zwar von abgesonderten Gestalten, deren jede ihre eigne Rolle spielt, und nicht erzählungsweise von einem Einzelnen; nach einem Verlauf *aber* von Mitleid und Furcht mit Ausgleichung solcher Leidenschaften ihr Geschäft abschließt.

[Tragedy is the imitation of an important and complete action, which has a certain extension and is performed in graceful language by separate characters, each of whom plays their own part, and not narrated by a single individual; *but* after a course of compassion and fear, with the balancing of such passions, it concludes its business. (emphasis mine)]

It may sound strange to call a philological and, ultimately, historical error fortunate. But it is undeniable that it brought about a fertile experimentation in lyric forms that was neither philological nor academic but based on the “free circulation of generic models, no longer segregated within mutually incommunicable grammatical and methodological fields” (Gallico 1979, 67).

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grandiose action, by means of an expression adorned with foreign ornaments, all parts of which, however, have a special effect: which furthermore, *not through* the narration of the poet, *but through* the imagination of the actors themselves, purifies us by means of horror and pity from the faults of the imagined passions. (emphases mine)]. Schrimpf 1994, 714-5.

⁴⁹ Schrimpf 1994, 342-5. For Goethe, as for Curtius, the starting Greek text is obviously not the one printed by Schrimpf on 715.

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“An unexplored sea”. The Metres of Greek Drama in Early Modern England¹

Abstract

This article aims to explore whether and how the lyric metres of Greek drama were studied in early modern English schools and universities. To this end, it examines the treatises and book chapters on prosody which were either published in England or imported from continental Europe. My analysis points out that the study of prosody was mainly focused on Latin. Greek prosody was conceived after the model of the Latin one and included a limited selection of feet: mainly hexameters, pentameters, iambic trimeters, and sapphic odes. Greek verses were less systematically composed than Latin ones and the utility of this exercise was disputed. Moreover, the different performative value of the different metres of Greek drama was not fully perceived. On the evidence of documental data, the article eventually argues that the standard education in grammar schools and universities hardly allowed the educated Englishman to get truly acquainted with the lyric metres of Greek tragedy or comedy.

KEYWORDS: lyric metres of Greek drama; reception of Greek metrical forms; early modern English reception of Greek drama

The purpose of this article is to examine how notions of Greek metres were conveyed by handbooks and treatises circulating in early modern Britain, and to explore how Greek prosody was studied both in grammar schools and in universities. My aim is to understand whether those who were educated in English schools and universities could get a clear understanding and knowledge of the metres of the lyric parts of Greek drama. In order to answer this question, I shall analyse sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century printed books on ancient prosody: not only those which were published in England and Scotland, but also those which were issued on the continent and could plausibly circulate in Britain (mostly those recorded in PLRE. Folger or Leedham-Green 1986 catalogues). I have listed the relevant books

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in an Appendix and divided them in four categories: 1. treatises on prosody and metrics; 2. Latin grammars containing a section on prosody; 3. Greek grammars containing a section on prosody; 4. treatises on Greek prosody. Both the treatises and the sections on prosody in larger grammar books are mainly divided into two parts: the first one on the quantity of the syllables, the second one (not always present) on the types of metres. This second part is especially interesting because it is where it may be possible to find an explanation of the lyric metres of Greek drama. Although the list compiled for the present article and contained in the Appendix may not include all the books which were consulted in early modern England, it surely contains the books which were the most widespread.

If we look at the corpus, we get the picture that the study of prosody in England developed first with regard to Latin. Not only are the treatises on prosody printed in England or attested in PLRE.Folger (category 1) centred on Latin poetry, but even single chapters on Greek metrics in Greek grammars came late. The prosodic section was not included in all editions of Ceperinus' Greek grammar and it is impossible to ascertain which version had a wider circulation in England. It was not until 1590 that a printer decided to enrich Clenard's Greek grammar with a chapter on syllabic quantity, written by the Spanish humanist Vergara some fifty-three years before. No treatise specifically devoted to Greek prosody was printed in England and the few which were printed on the continent are not recorded in the catalogues. Greek prosody was unfamiliar not only in England. In the original edition of his treatise on syllabic quantity, Vergara makes clear how under-explored the "sea" of Greek prosody was in his age (1537, 177):

Video quam immensum ac paene inaccessum pelagus ingrediari; nihilominus audendum fortiter, ne pars haec etiamnum neglecta relinquatur. Sequar autem in plerisque neotericorum grammaticae Latinae praeceptorum ordinem, quo facilius haec a Latinis hominibus percipi atque invicem conferri possunt.

I see what an immense and almost unexplored sea I am entering in; nevertheless, it is necessary to dare boldly, so that this part too is not left neglected. In most respects, I shall follow the order used by the modern instructors of Latin grammars, in order that these precepts can be understood more easily by those who know Latin, and can be compared with Latin rules in both senses.²

The situation slowly changed in the second part of the century, when the two works of Sidelmann and Gretser were produced (see category 4 in the Appendix). However, at the beginning of the new century the practice of

² All translations are mine.

studying Greek verses was still less systematic than many wished. The German scholar Christoph Helvig, in writing the letter to the reader (*benevolo lectori*) which introduces Sidelmann's 1612 edition, warns against the many disparagers of Greek studies (pages <8r> – <8v>):

Neque enim curanda sunt sinistra nonnullorum iudicia, qui tam Graecae poeseos, quam illius linguae universum studium tamquam vanum et inutile damnant . . . Magna vero causa (si non unica) huius ἀβελτερίας esse videtur falsa persuasio difficultatis in Graeco studio poetico, cum tamen illud multis modis facilitate Latinam linguam vincat.

And we should not take care of the wrong opinions of the many who condemn the study not only of Greek poetry, but also of the language in general, saying that it is useless and unprofitable . . . An important cause (though maybe not the only one) of this silliness seems to be the false belief of the difficulty of studying Greek poetry, whereas in several respects it is simpler than studying Latin poetry.

It appears that there was a widespread opinion that Greek prosody was too difficult to learn. Helvig himself had already countered it in his book *De ratione conficiendi facile et artificiose Graeca carmina* (1610; USTC 2015478), by arguing that Greek poetry was superior and easier than Latin because of the abundance of synonyms, the variety of dialects, the copiousness of particles, epithets, rhetorical tropes, the freedom in elision, as well as in syllabic quantity, caesura, disposition of metrical feet (1610, 12). In England too the philhellenists had to confront the opinion that Greek prosody was too difficult an undertaking. In the Greek grammar for his pupils in Westminster School, Edward Grant³ admits the difficulty of studying Greek in general, and of composing Greek lines (*magna carminis componendi difficultas*; 1575, Eee1<r>). Nevertheless, he urges the boys to undertake the necessary efforts in order to learn a language characterised by no less excellence (*dignitatem*) and usefulness (*utilitatem*) than Latin, so that Athens and Rome, though being geographically separated, can be united in the pupils' knowledge. With respect to prosody and metrics, such appeals were at least partly heard, as is demonstrated by the editorial choice of enlarging or adding the prosodic section of handbooks, mostly Latin – see above the descriptions of the editions of Talon, Smet, Colet, Lily – but also Greek – see Clénard. However, the idea of learning Greek prosody in the same way as Latin prosody, including verse composition, was not favoured by everyone,

³ Grant was the headmaster of Westminster School in the years 1572-1592. As schoolmaster, he achieved two major results: “the number of boys rapidly increased and the names of well-known families begin to appear in the lists” (Tanner 1951, 26); he promoted the study of Greek, which became regular and systematic thanks to him (Sargeaunt 1898, 52).

as Brinsley's case shows. On the one hand, he underlines that versifying in Greek "is more easie" than versifying in Latin "because of the long and short vowels so certainly knowne" (1612, 242). On the other, he warns against devoting too much time to writing Greek lines:

Nowwithstanding, let me here admonish you of this (which for our curiositie wee had neede to bee often put in minde of) that, seeing that we have so little practice of any exercises to bee written in Greeke, we doe not bestowe too much time in that, whereof wee happely shall have no use; and which therefore wee shall also forget againe: but that wee still imploy our pretious time to the best advantage in the most profitable studies, which may after do most good to God's church or our country. (242-3)

Brinsley's accusation that devoting too much time to Greek verse composition, unlike Latin, is useless to religious or political duties directly or indirectly runs counter to Grant's conviction that learning Greek grammar and also verse composition, in addition to Latin, is the only way to make students useful in both fields: "those two cities [*scil.* Athens and Rome] – believe me – and no other, can make you . . . apt and suitable to the necessity of the State and the Church" (*Illae due civitates (mihi credite) aut nullae, vos . . . Rei publicae et Ecclesiae usibus aptos et idoneos efficere possunt*; Grant 1575, Eee1<r> – Eee1<v>).

Beyond the theoretical statements and the polemics of school masters and grammarians, it is worth trying to reconstruct how Greek prosody was actually learnt in English grammar schools. The predominance of handbooks on Latin prosody suggests that Greek prosody was conceived after the model of Latin prosody, in continental Europe as well as in England. In the above-quoted statement, Vergara declares that he will follow the order of Latin grammars, with which the learner is familiar. He does not even describe the types of verses, probably because he assumes that they are already known from Latin. Likewise, in his 1575 grammar, Edward Grant specifies that he will not describe the Greek metres, apart from hexameter, pentameter, and iambic meter,⁴ as the other verses "are composed in the same way as they are in Latin" (*componuntur quemadmodum apud Latinos*, 179). The abridged version of his grammar, edited by William Camden in 1595, does not even analyse the three above-mentioned metres, and assumes that the students already know the concept of metrical foot, tempus, syllable, scansion from Latin.

Grant's grammar is also significant in that it specifies that hexameter, pentameter, and iambic meter are the most significant verse types: it defines them "the most used" (*usitatoria*), and "those which is most . . . important

⁴ Following the grammar conventions, Grant defines it *iambicum mixtum* because it allows other feet types in addition to the iambic; he distinguishes between iambic dimeter and trimeter.

that we discuss here” (*maxime . . . necessaria, de quibus nos hoc loco tractemus*; 1575, 178v). The 1563 original edition of Crusius’ grammar agrees with Grant in the choice of the verse types, saying that they are not only more employed, but also simpler (*faciliora*). However, the 1573 edition extends the group to Phalecian hendecasyllable, Sapphic stanza, and choriamb. As regards Sidelmann, he mentions hexameter, pentameter, phalecian, sapphic (1587, 39v).

Whether and to what extent these varieties of verses corresponded to the practices of Greek learning in English school may be sensed by looking at the school statutes collected by Watson (1908: 491-9). We know that in 1566, in Rivington School, pupils were requested to “write some epistles or verses . . . and after, turning Greek into Latin, and Latin into Greek, and changing one kind of verse into another, and verses into prose and prose into verse”. A similar method is attested for Westminster School, though at a later stage (1621-1628). Unfortunately, we do not know which verses pupils were supposed to use in Greek composition. However, since Grant was headmaster of Westminster School, we can assume that the three types which he analyses in his grammar were those which were taught there. We do know that in another school, the Merchant Taylor’s, a Probation or Examination day was established in 1606, in which pupils had to compose in Greek by using hexameters, pentameters, or sapphics. It is likely that in the other grammar schools the verses reproduced in Greek writing corresponded to those indicated by the grammar books.

Reading handbooks was not the only way to learn Greek prosody and to reproduce it in the composition of Greek verses. In fact, there could be a complementary way of teaching verse making: that is, using Greek literary texts. This way is recommended by Brinsley. When Spudeus, one of the schoolmasters who are the protagonists of the dialogue, asks how to learn how to versify in Greek, the other one, Philoponus, answers (1612, 242):

To be very perfect in the rules of versifying; in scanning a verse. To learne Theognis, that pleasant and easie Poet without booke, to have store of poetical phrase and authorities: which is the speediest and purest way. And so to enter by turning or imitating his verses, as in Latine. But herein as in all the rest, I do stil desire the help of the learned, who can better shew by experience the shortest, surest, and most plaine waies.

Theognis is the author Brinsley recommends in order to get acquainted with Greek verse making. Nevertheless, Brinsley does not regard the reading of Greek works as alternative to learning prosody and quantity in theory, but instead as consequential, as the pupil is supposed first to learn the rules of metrical scansion, then to read Theognis’ elegies, which implies starting with the elegiac couplet (hexameter and pentameter). Other Greek poets Brinsley

suggests for beginners, after Theognis, are Phocylides, Hesiod's *Works and Days* in the edition with Ceporinus' and Melanchthon's commentaries, and Homer. This means poems in hexameters. If we read the school statutes (as in Watson 1908, 491-3) we find similarly limited selections of authors: Durham School in 1593 has indeed the same names (Homer, Hesiod, Theognis or Phocylides); Heath Grammar School has only Hesiod *or* Homer (year 1600); in 1590, the Harrow School Statute mentions only Hesiod as a poet (plus other authors of prose). We must also remember that Brinsley was himself master of Ashby School in the years 1600-1617 (see Morgan 2009). In Rivington School pupils read also Euripides (year 1566): the absence of the lyric metres from the widespread handbooks induces us to think that those metres were not analysed thoroughly.

If we turn to university courses, the list of Greek poets does not become considerably longer. Since the inventories of Cambridge scholars, inspected by Jardine, contain Homer and Euripides (1975, 16), we can assume that these were the most studied authors in that university. The statutes of St John's College, Oxford, mention a larger number of poets who were read during daily Greek lectures at 9 am: Aristophanes, Theocritus, Homer, Euripides, Pindar, Hesiod (SCO III [part 12], 49-50). The description of the teaching activity to be carried out on these texts is too generic to let us understand to what degree metrics was covered: "they shall interpret and clearly explain the grammar of their language [scil. Greek], or the basic elements of their art, or one of the authors listed below" (*grammaticam suae linguae, aut rudimenta suae artis, aut alium ex subscriptis auctoribus, . . . interpretentur et clare explicant*"; *ibid.*). What is meant by "explaining" an author is not clear. It is possible that the metres of the tragic choruses were intently studied, but it does not seem likely on a wide scale. The handbooks on Latin prosody were not useful and most books dealing with Greek prosody did not describe Greek lyric metres, with the exception of Crusius (whose grammar has 3 entries in PLRE.Folger and 7 in Leedham-Green 1986) and Gretser (with no entry in PLRE). The scarce presence of these handbooks (no copy of them is recorded in the 1605 and 1620 catalogues of the Bodleian Library in Oxford) suggests that England was probably not keeping pace with the European continent in the knowledge of Greek metrics.

The only two editions of Greek drama texts in the original language, issued in sixteenth-century England, are of little help. Neither Euripides' *Troades*, printed by John Day in 1575 (USTC 508002), nor Aristophanes' *Equites*, printed by Joseph Barnes in 1593 (USTC 512311), have any specification of the different metres. Unlike *Troades*, *Equites* has the colometry, based on the metrical scholia. These latter, which were already printed in Aldus' *princeps* edition in 1498 (USTC 760251). Although like several editions of Aristophanes following the *princeps* (e.g. Basel: Cratander and Bebel, 1532,

USTC 612851; Frankfurt: Braubach, 1544, USTC 612850) Barnes does not print the scholia, he does provide the colometry. On the contrary, John Day does not print the colometry of *Troades*, although it had been already introduced by Willem Canter (Antwerpen: Plantin, 1571, USTC 411593). There may be two possible explanations: either Canter's edition was still not available in England,⁵ or colometry was not regarded as important, and therefore Day printed the standard text of Euripides, dating back to the 1503 Aldine edition (USTC 828498; *princeps* for the *Troades*),⁶ without Canter's innovation. It is conceivable that these books were used in university education, but we do not know how they were read and which aspects of the text were analysed. If we rely on the editions of Greek prosody which were available in England, an accurate analysis of the metrics of the lyric stanzas seems at least unlikely.

After analysing the books on Greek prosody, as well as the teaching practices in schools and university, we can conclude that the data exclude a good acquaintance with lyric metres in schools and suggest that it was unlikely at university. Firstly, Greek prosody was mainly studied following the Latin model: this was of little help, as Latin poetry does not have metrical structures comparable to the Greek lyric stanzas – with the partial exception of Seneca's tragedy, whose colometry, though, was no less uncertain than that of the Greek authors.⁷ The fact that for many verse types only Latin examples were available did not help the students recognise the verses of Greek tragedy. Secondly, it remains uncertain whether Greek prosody was studied as intently as Latin prosody, especially with regard to the composition of verses, which was an important part of the learning process. Thirdly, grammar school statutes suggest that the curricula privileged authors of hexameters or elegiac couplets; these verses, together with sapphic, were the most employed in Greek poems composition. The situation is less clear at universities, and in this respect any pronouncement remains conjectural. It seems improbable, though, that an accurate analysis of the metres of the tragic choruses was part of the standard teaching practice. In fact, no work on prosody shows a specific focus on drama, or a discussion of the different

⁵ The entries in PLRE.Folger and in Leedham-Green 1986, II 325, do not allow to assess whether the recorded editions of Euripides which postdate 1571 refer to Canter's edition or to previous ones lacking colometry. Only one entry in Leedham-Green, dating 1578, has the title "Euripidis tragedie Plantini", which may refer to Canter's edition, published in Antwerp by Christophe Plantin. We see a similar picture for Sophocles: the entries in the catalogues do not allow us to understand whether they refer to Adrien Turnèbe's 1553 edition (USTC 154217), which introduced the colometry.

⁶ For Euripidean plays (*Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Alcestis*, *Andromache*) had been already printed by Lorenzo D'Alopa in Florence in 1495 (USTC 760838).

⁷ For an introduction to the issue of Senecan colometry, see for instance Fitch 2004, 263-78.

performative functions of the various verses. Therefore, the alternation of different verses could hardly be regarded as an indispensable feature of drama. Metre was conceived as a written phenomenon less connected to drama than to lyric poetry.

In conclusion, the learning methods of Greek discussed above can hardly suggest a deep acquaintance with the lyric metres of drama. After all, the English educational system seems to have had enough Latin, but perhaps less Greek.

Appendix: Works on Prosody and Metres

1. Treatises on Prosody and Metrics

- Pantaléon Bartelon, *De ratione quantitatis syllabariae liber ejusdem de variis carminum generibus*. First published in Paris by Jérôme de Marnef, in 1559 (USTC 152640). The 1578 edition, published in Lyon by Jean Lertout, whose reproduction is available online (unlike the *princeps*; see USTC 141553), contains a thorough description of the metres used in Latin literature (23-39), as well as rules for composing quantitative verses. Three entries in PLRE.Folger (though dating 1571, 1573, 1575, before the 1578 edition which I have consulted) and one entry in Leedham-Green 1986, II 75, dating 1588 (possibly referring to the 1578 edition, but also to the previous ones), refer to Bartelon's work.
- Rudolph Walther, *De syllabarum et carminum ratione libri duo*: first published in Zürich, by Christoph Froschauer, 1542 (USTC 631655), it was then republished in London by William Williamson in 1573 (USTC 507673). It has 6 entries in PLRE.Folger and 4 in Leedham-Green 1986, 401. The second book is devoted to the types of verses, with Greek terminology written in Greek alphabet, but Latin examples (*De carminum ratione*, 47-84; one example from the *Iliad* at 61 v).
- Omer Talon, *Rhetorica, e P. Rami regii professoris praelectionibus observata*, based on the lectures of Petrus Ramus. First published in Düsseldorf by Albert Buyss (1572), it has 6 entries in PLRE.Folger and 9 in Leedham-Green 1986, II 734. The 1575 edition, issued in Frankfurt am Main by Andreas Wechel (available online, see USTC 613831) has a short section on metre (37-40). This work was reedited and enlarged in England by Charles Butler, and published in Oxford by the printer Joseph Barnes in three following editions: 1597 (USTC 513321), 1598 (USTC 513612), 1600 (USTC 514664). Whereas in the two former editions the section on metre is relatively short, the 1600 edition has a long chapter (C5r – F7r), subdivided in *De quantitate syllabarum*, *Pedes*, *Metri species*, with

examples of Latin verses. This edition is recommended by John Brinsley in his *Ludus Literarius* (1612, 196; USTC 3005008)⁸ as a tool to learn the syllabic quantity.

- John Greenwood, *Syntaxis et prosodia versiculis compositae*, printed by John Legat in Cambridge in 1590 (USTC 511531); no reprint is attested. As the complete title declares, the author was headmaster of Brentwood School in Essex. The section on *carmina* is relatively short (<E7r> – <E8r>) and focused on Latin verses. This book has no entry in PLRE.Folger or Leedham-Green 1986.
- George Buchanan, *De prosodia libellus*, printed by Robert Waldegrave in Edinburgh, 1595 (USTC 512735; printed again in 1621 and 1640). It has a very short section on the types of verses, with Latin examples (<B8v> – <C2r>). This book is attested neither in PLRE.Folger nor in Leedham-Green 1986.
- Henrich Smet, *Prosodia*. First published in Frankfurt in 1599⁹ (nor recorded in USTC), it was then republished in London in 1615 (Richard Field ex typographia Society of Stationers; USTC 3006563). In its original form, it is a long list of words with their possible metrical positions; but in the English editions (six from 1615 to 1648), it includes a *Methodus dignoscendarum syllabarum*, taken from Georg Fabricius' *De re poetica libri VII* (Leipzig, 1596), though with corrections and changes. At the end of this section, there is a list of the most frequently used verses (pp. 18-20 in the 1615 edition). The examples are all Latin. There are no entries in PLRE.Folger and just one in Leedham-Green 1986, II 708, dating 1719.

2. Latin Grammars Containing a Section on Prosody

- *Sulpitii Verulani oratoris praestantissimi opus insigne grammaticum*, printed in London in 1494 by Richard Pynson (USTC 500202); a reprint of Giovanni Sulpizio's Latin grammar, which had been first published in Perugia in about 1475 (see Cavietti 2019), and then enjoyed several reprints in Europe. The English edition has a good section on prosody (<G3v> – <L4r>), including the types of feet, types of verses (with a special focus on the hexameter), and the syllabic quantity. It has 3 entries in PLRE.Folger and 5 entries in Leedham-Green 1986, II 727.
- Robert Whittington, *Secunda pars grammatices. De syllaba et eius*

⁸ We understand that Brinsley refers to this edition because he quotes the chapter on metre with the number 14, which corresponds to that of the 1600 edition and not to the previous ones.

⁹ Found in <http://gateway-bayern.de/VD16+S+6805> (Accessed 29 November 2021).

quantitate, first printed in London by Wynkyn de Worde in 1512 (USTC 501221; date conjectured by STC), which then continued to be printed in the 1510s. and 1520s. The 1512 book is divided into two parts (with different numbering), the first containing the syllabic quantity, the second the types of verses. Moreover, this second part has an analysis of the metres used in Latin drama (C7v – C8v). Whittington’s grammar has several entries in PLRE.Folger and Leedham-Green 1986, 799; however, most of these entries seem to refer to the *Declinationes nominum tam latinorum quam graecorum* (first edited in 1511, USTC 515127). Only one entry in PLRE.Folger, due to the title “de quantitate syllabarum”, refers to *Secunda pars grammatices* (257.104).

- Philipp Melanchthon, *Grammatica latina*. It contains a final section on prosody since the 1529 edition, issued in Strasbourg by Christian Egenolff (USTC 660234; <L8v> – <M7v>). 4 entries in PLRE.Folger and 10 in Leedham-Green 1986, II 540.
- John Colet, *Aeditio*, which includes William Lily’s *Rudimenta grammatices*. Whereas the 1527 original edition does not include prosody, the 1534 edition, issued in London by Wynkyn de Worde (USTC 502634), has a short section *Regulae versificales* (“Rules on writing verses”) in the end (F.ii.r – F.iii.r). Both PLRE.Folger and Leedham-Green have both one entry, dating 1546.
- William Lily, *Institutio compendiaria totius grammatices*, first published in London by Thomas Berthelet in 1540 (USTC 503172); a more advanced edition of Lily’s elementary grammar (1513). In the end, it includes a fairly long section *Prosodia* (72-80; in fact, a foliation error has occurred, as the last page should be 78).
- William Lily, *An Introduction of the Eyght Parties of Speche*. This book had two sets of editions, one in England, the other in Latin. Whereas the English editions (1542, 1544, 1546) do not deal with prosody, the Latin ones have a section *de prosodia*: in 1542 (USTC 518174; pp. 68-80) and 1543 (USTC 503441; <T1v> – <X3r>). All editions were printed by Thomas Berthelet. It is likely that the Latin version was conceived for a more advanced stage of language learning.
- William Lily, *A Shorte Introduction of Grammar*: prosody is not included in the first edition (1549), but in the second, printed by Reyner Wolfe in 1558 (USTC 505522; <H5v> – <I7r>). Thereafter is always included in the numerous following editions.

Of these handbooks, Lily’s grammar in its different versions was by far the most popular and widespread (13 entries in Leedham-Green 1986, II 495,

10 in PLRE.Folger). The 1542 *Introduction*, both in English and in Latin, contains Henry VIII's proclamation that imposed it as the only authorised handbook of Latin grammar in schools (A1v); this injunction was confirmed by Mary (in the 1558 *Shorte Introduction*, A1v) and Elizabeth (in the 1567 *Short Introduction*, A1v).

3. Greek Grammars Containing a Section on Prosody

- Jacob Ceperinus, *Compendium grammaticae Graecae*: published on the continent, it appears in 35 entries in PLRE.Folger, from 1533 to 1590. It was first published in Basel by Valentinus Curius (1522) in two editions, of which one (USTC 623216) contains a metrical commentary of Hesiod's *Works and Days* (<K2v> – <K5v>), followed by an explanation of the rules of the hexameter, as well as of the syllabic quantity (<K5v> – <K6v>). The version comprising metrics was printed until 1545; starting from the 1546 edition, issued in Zürich by Christoph Froschauer (USTC 623745), both the text of Hesiod's work and the metrical explanations disappeared. However, the same Froschauer published Hesiod autonomously, with the metrical section, in 1548 (USTC 662378), 1561 (USTC 662379), 1579 (USTC 684457). In these editions, Ceperinus' commentary was enlarged by Johannes Frisius and, from 1561, also Philipp Melanchthon.

In British school curricula, Ceperinus is only mentioned in Norwich in 1566 (see Baldwin 1944, II 619); on the other hand, it is the most common grammar in the inventories of the possessions of Cambridge scholars at their deaths (see Jardine 1975: 17). It is impossible to know whether the copies of Ceperinus' grammar owned by English scholars and reported in PLRE.Folger or in the Cambridge inventories contained the prosodic section, although it is more likely that the copies preceding 1546 did (1 in PLRE.Folger, 8 in Leedham-Green 1986, II 196). As for Hesiod, of the 13 entries in PLRE.Folger and 17 in Leedham-Green 1986, II 422-3, none refers explicitly to the editions containing the prosodic section.

- Martin Crusius, *Grammaticae Graecae, cum Latina congruentis. Pars altera*. First published in 1563 in Basel by Johann Oporinus (USTC 675205), it has a long section on the quantity of syllables (927-47) and on the types of verses (hexameter, pentameter, iambic metres, trochaic metres, dactylic metres, anapaestic metres, antispastic metres, ionic metres, paeonic; 948-66); there are 3 entries in PLRE.Folger and 7 in Leedham-Green 1986, II 250-1 which refer to this grammar.
- Edward Grant, *Graecae linguae spicilegium* (USTC 508014); the author was headmaster of Westminster School in the years 1572-1592. Published in London in 1575 by Henry Bynneman (*pro* Francis Coldock), it contains a

long section on prosody (verses described: hexameter, pentameter, iambic dimeter and trimeter <Tt1v> – <Bbb4v>). It was never reprinted and it does not seem to have had a wide circulation, as it has no entry in PLRE. Folger and 2 in Leedham-Green 1986, 390.

- Nicolas Clenard, *Institutiones linguae graecae*, published in London by Robert Robinson in 1590 (USTC 511489). As the extended title declares, this publication has an appendix on Greek prosody, *prosodia seu de quantitate syllabarum* (484-534), taken from the third book of the Greek grammar written by the Spanish scholar Francisco de Vergara (first published in 1537, USTC 337623). It does not analyse any type of verses. Clenard's handbook had been published three times in England (one in 1582, two in 1588) without the *prosodia*. It is instead always printed with the *prosodia* from 1590 (1594, 1599). PLRE.Folger has 44 entries of Clenard's grammar, and the relatively high number indicates that this handbook was the most popular until Camden's *Institutio* was published (see below; cf. Watson 1908, 500; Baldwin 1944, II 618). Indeed, it is also mentioned by the statutes of the Friar's School (in 1568) and St Bees' (in 1583) as the standard handbook (Watson 1908, 492). However, all entries are before 1590, that is before Vergara's *prosodia* was added. Leedham-Green 1986, II 227 has 7 entries which postdate 1590 and could possibly refer to the edition comprising Vergara's prosody.
- William Camden's *Institutio Graecae grammatices compendiaria in usum Regiae Scholae Westmonasteriensis* (USTC 512787), an abridgement of Grant's 1575 grammar to be used in Westminster school. First published by Edmund Bollifant (*pro* Simon Waterson) in 1595, "Camden's grammar was to Greek what Lily's grammar was to Latin" (Watson 1908, 502). While after 1647 Westminster School adopted Richard Busby's grammar (USTC 3045939), Camden's continued to be in use at Eton college until the nineteenth century, and came to be known as Eton grammar (Sargeant 1898, 52). It contains a short section on prosody, without analysis of verse types (H3r – I1r). It has 2 entries in PLRE.Folger and 2 in Leedham-Green 1986, II 180.¹⁰

4. Treatises on Greek Prosody and Metrics

There follow two continental works on Greek prosody which were not reprinted in England and are attested neither in PLRE.Folger nor in Leedham-

¹⁰ The low number of entries in catalogues suggests that this grammar was used for teaching purposes and then not conserved in scholarly libraries.

Green 1986:

- Erasmus Sidelmann, *Epitome, de poesi seu prosodia Graecorum*. First edited in Frankfurt am Main by Johann Spieß in 1587 (USTC 653114), it examines both the syllabic quantity and the types of verses. Only the verses which are regarded as the most frequently employed (*genera . . . usitatissima*, 39v) are described: hexameter, pentameter, phalecian, sapphic. A second edition was issued with the title *De Prosodia Graecorum Institutio* (1612), again in Frankfurt, by Johann Bringer, Peter Maus, and Ruprecht Pistorius (USTC 2120497).
- Jacob Gretser, *Institutionum de octo partibus orationis, syntaxi et prosodia Graecorum, libri tres*. Printed in Ingolstadt by David Sartorius in 1593 (USTC 666714), this book has a larger selection of metres (hexameter, pentameter, iambic dimeter and trimeter, choliambus, anapaest, glyconius, asclepiadean, phalecian, sapphic, pherecratic). Reprinted in Paris by Claude Chappelet with the title *De Recta partium orationis constructione libellus, seu Syntaxis graeca, una cum tractatu de accentibus et prosodia graeca* (1620; USTC 6024792).

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“Ex uariis metri generibus”: Two ‘Metrical’ Neo-Latin Translators of Greek Tragedy across the English Channel¹

Abstract

Among the corpus of Neo-Latin drama, translations from Greek tragedy are an interesting area of inquiry for the study of Neo-Latin metre, as translators are poised between Greek and Latin metrical patterns. Following Continental models such as Erasmus, two sixteenth-century playwrights from the British Isles, George Buchanan and Thomas Watson, undertook the translation of Greek tragedies and were confronted with their metrical complexity, particularly in the choruses. However, thanks to the prosodic education which they received at local grammar schools and at university and which they later perfected on the Continent, Buchanan and Watson were able not only to understand but also to try and reproduce the metre of the Greek original in their Neo-Latin versions, which in different ways deserve the definition of ‘metrical translations’. Moreover, since their plays were conceived for an educational context and meant to be performed by students, Buchanan’s and Watson’s handling of metre was in all likelihood conditioned by didactic aims.

KEYWORDS: Neo-Latin metre; Neo-Latin translation; Greek tragedy; George Buchanan; Thomas Watson; Erasmus

Within Neo-Latin studies, metre has usually attracted scarce scholarly attention and, when it has, the focus has been on treatises on versification (Leonhardt 1989; Ford 2014; Van der Poel 2015) and on lyric poetry (Moul 2015 and 2019). The metre of Neo-Latin drama has been largely ignored until very recently. While in Jan Bloemendal and Howard B. Norland’s collection *Neo-Latin Drama and Theatre in Early Modern Europe* some scholars did make a foray into metrical aspects (Barea 2013, 557-600; Chevalier 2013a,

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26-8 and 2013b, 447; Rädle 2013, 214), it was the 2019 volume *Neulateinische Metrik* that programmatically brought dramatic metre to the fore, devoting three chapters to the subject (Blänsdorf 2019; Stroh 2019; Knight 2019). This paper aims to integrate these contributions to Neo-Latin dramatic metre by focussing on a specific corpus: the translations of Greek tragedy by two playwrights from the British Isles, a Scots and an Englishman, i.e., George Buchanan and Thomas Watson. By concentrating on their translations, i.e., Buchanan's version of Euripides' *Alcestis* and *Medea* and Watson's version of Sophocles' *Antigone*, I will move along three lines of enquiry. First, since both translators came from the British Isles and spent a considerable time on the Continent, I will consider the role of metre in English and Scottish pedagogical institutions, in which Buchanan and Watson received their first prosodic education, and the influence exerted by the Continental milieu in this regard. Second, I will look at how their translations from the Greek tragedians absorbed Greek metrical patterns alongside typically Latin ones and I will compare their metrical choices with those of Continental translators in order to identify some trends in the handling of metre in European Neo-Latin tragedy. Greater attention will be devoted to the unquestioned model for translators of Greek tragedy, Erasmus, whose translations from Euripides lay the foundations for subsequent approaches to Greek metre, particularly in the choruses. Finally, since both Buchanan's and Watson's translations were conceived in a pedagogical context and were meant to be performed by students, I will take into account to what extent their metrical choices may have been conditioned by the didactic function of these plays.

1. Watson's and Buchanan's Prosodic Education Between the British Isles and the Continent

In the sixteenth century, English and Scottish authors were prolific Latin poets and adopted a variety of metrical patterns in their Neo-Latin compositions.¹ A group of English authors such as Richard Stanyhurst, Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Gabriel Harvey, and Abraham Fraunce even tried to adapt quantitative classical metres to English, either in epic or in lyric poetry.² Although there are no extant analogous examples of this ambitious, though short-lived, quantitative experimentation with English for the dramatic genre, the corpus of Neo-Latin drama produced by English and Scottish

¹ On Latin poetry in England, see Bradner 1940, Binns 1990, Haan 2015, and Moul 2019; in Scotland, Green, Burton, and Ford 2012.

² On the English quantitative verse movement, see Attridge 1974 and for its contribution to the affirmation of unrhymed rhythms in English verse, including blank verse, see Schmidt 2010.

playwrights nonetheless testifies to the high level of prosodic culture in the British Isles. Alfred Harbage's catalogue counts almost 160 plays written in Latin by English and Scottish authors between 1500 and 1642.³ Of these, thirty-eight are printed, sixty-three are in manuscript, and fifty-six are now lost. With the exclusion of comedies,⁴ tragedies (and tragicomedies) tended to be written in recognizable metrical forms,⁵ an achievement which presupposes a high prosodic competence.

Such competence was the result of the education that playwrights received in grammar schools and at university.⁶ Before moving abroad, both Buchanan and Watson studied in the British Isles. Born in Stirlingshire, in the centre of Scotland, Buchanan attended a local school ("in scholis patriis"; 1981, 541), as he tells in his *Vita*.⁷ There he received a basic education in Latin and, as was customary for Scottish students at the time, he travelled to France to perfect his education.⁸ After a two-year stay in Paris (1520-

³ This number includes masques and what Harbage defines as "Latin pastoral" (1989³).

⁴ The metrical patterns employed for Neo-Latin comedies vary according to the traditions of the country and the time period considered (see the different approaches to metre in Bloemendal and Norland's 2013. However, comedies generally display less accurate and recognizable metre than those adopted for tragedies, so much so that they have often been assimilated to prose (Blume 1991, 5). The manuscripts of the models of classical comedies, Plautus, and Terence, did not preserve the metrical arrangement, thereby leading to the persistent misconception that there was no awareness of the metrical quality of Latin comedies until the early eighteenth century (Blume 1991, 5; Hardin 2018, 64). However, printed editions of Plautus and Terence soon introduced and stabilized colometry, which reveals that early humanists were perfectly aware that the texts were organized metrically (Dane 1999, 103-4). A further confirmation comes from theoretical paratexts such as Erasmus' treatise *De metris* published in the 1532 Terence edition. On the other hand, it would be equally misleading to think that such awareness was widespread: in England, Terence appears among prose writers in a 1578 school curriculum (Baldwin 1944, 1.352). Also, the fact that metres were recognized does not mean that they were used and reproduced (Blänsdorf 2019, 51).

⁵ Some authors adopted epic metres rather than typically dramatic ones; for instance, they used hexameters instead of iambs, often with a celebrative intent (Chevalier 2013a, 71; Rädle 2013, 214).

⁶ Three twentieth-century foundational studies on the history of education in England and Scotland provide a vast documentation on grammar-school curricula: on England, Watson 1908, and Baldwin 1944; on Scotland, Kerr 1910, 1-29. As more recent integrations to these studies, see Clarke 1957, Simon 1966, Van Cleave Alexander 1990, Dolven 2007, Enterline 2012, and Lazarus 2015 on England; Durkan 1962 and 1990, Holloway III 2011, 47-53, and Reid 2016 on Scotland.

⁷ The attribution to Buchanan is not unquestioned (Abbott 2006).

⁸ On Scottish "educational touri[sm]" in France and Scottish-French literary ties

1523), he obtained a BA at the University of St Andrews in 1525. Watson first attended Winchester College, then studied at Oxford without obtaining a degree, and moved to the Continent in 1572.

As one of England's most illustrious grammar schools, Winchester College provided Watson with solid foundations of prosody. In English grammar schools, programmes featured elements of prosody from the beginning of the sixteenth century to at least until 1660.⁹ In the higher level of the grammar schools, the "upper school", pupils were asked not only to have some basic prosodic knowledge but also to write quantitative verse (Baldwin 1944, 1.441, 1.579). Such prosodic education was not limited to the major cities but was so widespread as to reach even rural areas (Watson 1908, 486). Every English grammar-school pupil studied on William Lily's grammar, first published (posthumously) in 1540 and which continued to shape English education until the eighteenth century; Shakespeare famously alludes to Lily's manual in *Titus Andronicus*.¹⁰ In most of its countless editions, Lily's grammar was divided into two sections, one in English and one, more advanced, in Latin; prosody was the last section of this second part, after orthography, etymology, and syntax.

Another early modern manual, conceived less for pupils than for teachers, provides details as to how students first acquired theoretical knowledge and then put it into practice in versification exercises: John Brinsley's *Ludus Literarius* (1612). Structured as a dialogic exchange between the two fictional masters Spoudeus and Philoponus, this text accurately explains the methodology that teachers had to adopt when teaching prosody; unlike earlier pedagogical manuals, Brinsley's work is written in the vernacular, thereby betraying that the author has probably a provincial readership in mind (Knight 2017, 58). After making sure that pupils were proficient in writing Latin prose ("write true Latin"; Brinsley 1612, 192), teachers had to make them read "some poetry", particularly Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Tristia* so that they could familiarize with hexameters and elegiac couplets respectively. Students were

between the fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see Reid 2016.

⁹ Watson 1908, 470. One of the earliest references to the teaching of prosody in drama appears in the interlude *Wit and Science* written by the composer and John Redford in the first half of the sixteenth century. In this play, as Lynn Enterline has noted, prosodic "beating" is assimilated to literal and physical "beating" as a didactic method of teaching prosody (Enterline 2012, 151-152).

¹⁰ In the play, Demetrius quotes two lines from Ode 22 of the first book of Horace's *Carmina* and Chiron correctly identifies it as follows: "O, 'tis a verse in Horace, I know it well: / I read it in the grammar long ago" (Shakespeare 1995, 220; 4.2.22-3). The quotation from Horace appears twice in Lily's grammar: one without any identification of the author and without metrical scansion; one with the name of the author and metrical scansion in the prosody section.

then expected "to be very cunning in the rules of versifying" as well as "to be perfect in scanning" (ibid.). Lastly, teachers had "to keep [them] from bodging in their entrance", i.e., to facilitate their first step into versification so that pupils did not feel discouraged. To that end, Brinsley suggested that teachers dictated some accessible lines from Ovid in English translation for the pupils to translate back into Latin. Pupils had to render them first "*verbatim*, or grammatically" (193), i.e., preserving the order they had been given to them in English and thereby provisionally writing Latin according to the rules of the English syntax.¹¹ Then they were asked to use the Latin words thus prepared to compose verse according to rules of quantitative prosody. For Brinsley, versification was therefore a form of intra-lingual translation from a "grammatical" into a "rhetoric" order: "For the making of a verse, is nothing but the turning of words forth of the grammatical order, into the rhetorical, in some kind of metre, which we call verses" (1612, 192). Brinsley's *Ludus* also mentions more advanced exercises such as shifting from one metrical scheme to another by reducing the number of the syllables. Such exercises of metrical variations are informed by Erasmus' *De ratione studii* and partly resonant with Ascham's *The Schoolemaster*, in turn indebted to the "Erasmian program of copious variation" (Dolven 2007, 43).

Alongside Lily's and Brinsley's manuals, some grammar schools acquired more technical textbooks such as Heinrich Smet's *Prosodia* (1599), which Brinsley himself recommended,¹² and Rudolf Gwalther's *De syllabarum et carminum ratione* (1573), which Philip Sidney is known to have used at Shewsbury grammar school (Baldwin, 1.525, 2.392; Attridge 1974, 41). Treatises on Latin prosody and versification had even become a genre since the early Middle Ages with Beda's *Ars metrica* (Leonhardt 1989, 77). Prospective poets had a large number of such textbooks at their disposal (Leonhardt 1989, 236-83; Ford 2014, 63-74; Moul 2015, 43); George Buchanan himself authored a manual on prosody, i.e., *De prosodia libellus*, printed posthumously in 1595. While the prescriptions contained in them were not always followed to the letter (Ford 2014, 73-4), a manuscript verse anthology presented to Queen Elizabeth at Eton college in 1563 confirms that sometimes pupils did reach a high prosodic competence. Moreover, as Sarah Knight has shown, this anthology's metrical variety is surprisingly more complex than that of another anthology presented to the Queen by university students at Magdalen College in 1566 (2019, 240-1).

¹¹ One can infer that by "Ordo grammaticus" Brinsley means the standard syntax of the English language (Subject-Verb-Complement) by looking at the tables that he provides with reference to prose (1612, 154).

¹² This manual was first published in 1599 in Frankfurt and in 1615 also in London; this second publication may have been prompted by Brinsley's recommendation three years earlier.

At Winchester College, Watson received a grammar-school education that was probably higher than the standard: he was a student of Christopher Johnson, one of the most illustrious headmasters of the time (Money 2004). A notebook belonging to one of his pupils, William Badger, who was admitted to the school few years before Watson (1561), records some lessons dictated by Jonson, thereby giving an insight into what Watson himself may have learnt from the headmaster.¹³ Alongside Latin grammar and literature, Johnson provided his pupils with some knowledge of Greek; it seems they were even able to perform a play in that language (Baldwin 1944, 1.321, 1.324, 1.330). Most importantly to our purposes, boys were supposed to write verse, to turn verse into prose, to change a verse pattern into another, and to study Latin translations in verse of Greek prose such as Lucian's dialogue (1944, 1.322, 1.331, 1.337-8). At Rivington, another school conforming to what Baldwin defines as "the Winchester system", pupils were trained to recognize metrical schemes and to write various kinds of double translations: from Latin into English and back into Latin; from Greek into Latin and back into Greek; and also "changing the one kind of verse into another, and verse into prose, and prose into verse" (Whitaker, ed. 1837, 211-13).

The didactic quality of most Scottish schools was not comparable to that of institutions such as Winchester College, especially at the time in which Buchanan was a pupil, i.e., the 1510s. Before the Reformation, in Scotland, the teaching of Greek – which can be considered as a litmus test for measuring the level of innovation of Renaissance school curricula – seems more the exception than the rule (Kerr 1910, 24-28; Holloway III 2011, 48). Also, while at the local school Buchanan received a basic Latin education, he studied prosody and acquired competence in Latin versification during his first stay in Paris from 1520 to 1522, as he tells in his *Vita*:

Ibi [Lutetiae] cum studiis literarum, maxime carminibus scribendis, operam dedisset, partim naturae impulsu, partim necessitate (quod hoc unum studiorum genus adolescentiae proponebatur). (Buchanan 1981, 540)

[There in Paris he devoted himself to literary studies, particularly to versification, partly out of a spontaneous desire, partly out of necessity since this was the only kind of study offered to the youth. (My translation)]

Neo-Latin verse composition was therefore a central concern in the Parisian academic community. In the first half of the sixteenth century, Paris was an innovative centre for Neo-Latin poetry and, except for a brief parenthesis in England and Scotland (1523-1525), Buchanan spent his formative years

¹³ The notebook is preserved in manuscript at the British Library (Add MS 4379) but Baldwin reports some of its content (1944, 1.321-45) and all of Christopher Johnson's "dictates" relating to theatre are reproduced on the REED website (Johnson 2020).

in this vibrant cultural centre from 1520 to 1535 (McFarlane 1981, 6-8, 28-47). After taking his BA at St Andrews, Buchanan was back in Paris in 1525 and completed another degree there in 1527; he probably started studying Greek during these two years (1981, 26). He remained in Paris until 1535 teaching at the College of Saint Barbe, where he could pursue his interest in classical versification, acquiring a reputation as “very learned in both [Greek and Latin] literatures” (“utriusque literature [sic] doctissimum”; quoted in McFarlane 1981, 31). In this period, Buchanan probably studied on Terentianus Morus’ *Venustissimus de literis syllabis et metris Horati liber* (1981, 43, 529).¹⁴ After working as tutor to an illegitimate son of James V back in Scotland in 1536-1539, he allegedly fled to England because of his satirical attacks to the Franciscan order and then was back in Paris for a month, before moving to Bordeaux. There Buchanan started to teach at the College of Guyenne, where he established important connections with humanists and colleagues such as Marc-Antoine de Muret and Adrien Turnèbe (McFarlane 1981, 89); at the College, he may also have met Gentien Hervet, who Latinized a Greek tragedy, i.e., Sophocles’ *Antigone*, published in 1541 (McFarlane 1981, 80).

As in the College of Saint Barbe five years earlier, at the College of Guyenne Buchanan found himself in a context where prosodic education was given a prominent role in the curriculum of his pupils. The manual adopted by the college was Johannes Despauterius’s *Ars uersificatoria*, one of the most popular and comprehensive manuals on the topic in the sixteenth century (Ford 2014, 68-70; McFarlane 1981, 81-2). In Bordeaux, Buchanan authored four Neo-Latin tragedies: two biblical plays, i.e., *Jephtes* (1554) and *Baptistes* (1577), and two translations from Euripides, *Medea* (1544) and *Alcestis* (1556). Despite the late dates of publication of three plays, all four tragedies were written around the same time, i.e., in the 1540s; however, *Medea* could be a revision of a previous version made as an exercise to learn Greek in the 1520s (Sharratt 1983, 2-4). As he himself tells in his *Vita*, Buchanan was prompted to produce these works in order to satisfy a tradition of the college, which required that a play be staged each year (Buchanan quoted in McFarlane 1981, 542). However, as McFarlane has suggested, Buchanan’s interest in the tragic genre may have been fostered by his friendly association with Julius Caesar Scaliger (1981, 88-9). His *Poetices Libri Septem* (published posthumously in 1561) not only provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding poetry, including tragedy, but also gives a detailed analysis of dramatic metres (Scaliger 1561, 350-9).

By the time Buchanan left Bordeaux for Coimbra in 1547, he had spent in France twenty years, which were decisive for his formation as a poet and

¹⁴ Buchanan later donated this book to the University of St Andrews, which still holds it in the special collections of its library (TypFP.B10PT).

translator of Greek tragedy. When Thomas Watson was translating *Antigone*, he had equally stayed on the Continent for a considerable amount of time, i.e., around ten years, which were contributed to his formation as a poet and as a playwright. After studying at Winchester College and at Oxford, between 1572 and 1581 he travelled across France and Italy, learning the languages and becoming acquainted with the poetic traditions of both countries. He stayed in Italy until 1576, when he travelled back north to the College of Douai. There he studied law until August 1577 but also spent eight months in Paris (October 1576-May 1577). After a parenthesis of three years in England (1577-1580), he went back to Paris, where he met Sir Francis and Thomas Walsingham and possibly worked for them before returning to England in 1581.¹⁵ By staying in Paris, Watson was exposed to the influence of what had been “the most important centre of classical scholarship” from the 1540s to the 1570s, i.e., the University of Paris (Brockliss 1996, 574). Although we do not possess any further information on Watson’s associations on the Continent, we can suppose he went there to integrate his studies by attending university and that he was exposed to the Neo-Latin culture of both France and Italy, which, despite the centrifugal trends insisting on the pre-eminence of the vernacular, by the 1580s could boast a long-standing tradition of treatises on metre (Leonhardt 1989, 176) and a prestigious culture of Neo-Latin poetry and drama (Marsh 2015; White 2015).

2. Watson’s and Buchanan’s Metrical Choices: the Case of the Choruses

The vitality and continuity of the Neo-Latin tradition on the Continent is confirmed by the number of Latin translations of Sophocles’ *Antigone* which Watson had at his disposal. In 1581, there circulated eight Latin translations of the play by Continental humanists.¹⁶ Among these, Watson certainly looked at the version of Thomas Naogeorgus, as testified by a reference to the German humanist in a marginal note. While Watson’s translation does feature some lexical borrowings from Naogeorgus’ version, their metrical choices differ significantly.

This can be best appreciated in the treatment of the choruses, the *crux desperationis* of early modern translators of Greek tragedy.¹⁷ Naogeorgus limits himself to using regular patterns in each choral ode: in the parodos (as well as the second stasimon) he adopts anapaestic dimeters and in the first stasimon (as well as the third, fourth, and fifth stasimon) iambic dimeters. In

¹⁵ On Watson’s biography, see the ODNB entry (Chatterley 2004) as well as Alhiyari 2006, Cecioni 1964, Kuriyama 2001, Sutton 1996a.

¹⁶ Sophocles 1541, 1543, 1546, 1550, 1557, 1558, 1567, 1570.

¹⁷ On this, see Dedieu and Vedelago forthcoming.

so doing, Naogeorgus aligns himself with a well-established tradition, which started with Erasmus's translation of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, which, except for the parodos, mostly displays Senecan metres for the choruses.¹⁸ This approach was later adopted by other humanists embarking on a Neo-Latin translation of Greek tragedy including George Buchanan, as we shall see below.

By contrast, Watson employs a mixture of metres, different for each chorus, thereby attempting to render the metrical variety of the original. Watson repeatedly claims a direct affiliation to the model. In an elegiac couplet of the dedicatory letter, he declares

Arripui Sophoclem, docui mitescere Musas:
e Graecis pepigi metra Latina modis
(Watson 1581, 6)

[I seized Sophocles, I taught his Muses to grow gentle, I composed Latin verse according to Greek rhythms. (My translation)]

Similarly, before the parodos and the first stasimon he claims that he applied Sophocles' metres: "carmen choricum ex uariis metri generibus ac eisdem, quibus utitur Sophocles" ("choral ode in various kinds of metre and the same used by Sophocles"); "carmen choricum uarie mixtum, et eiusdem generis cum Graeco" ("choral ode variously composed and of the same kind of the Greek"; Sophocles 1581, 19, 26). This phrasing is evidently modelled on some of Erasmus' own metrical indications in his translation of *Hecuba* in the "Letter to the Reader", in the 1507 edition, and within the text, from the 1518 edition onwards: "ex uariis metrorum constat generibus, ac ferme iisdem quibus usus est Euripides" with reference to the three stasima and Polymestor's monody (Erasmus 1507, 5v); "carmen huius chori ex uariis mixtum est metri generibus, ac ferme iisdem, quibus vtitur Euripides" (Erasmus 1518, 35). By closely following the original metrical patterns, Watson opts for the approach that Erasmus adopted in *Hecuba* and in the parodos of *Iphigenia at Aulis*, the play's only choral ode in which the original metrical variety is partly replicated (Waszink 1969, 202-3). However, there is a difference between *Hecuba* and the parodos of *Iphigenia at Aulis*. In the latter, Erasmus uses a plethora of metres, which he enumerates in an extremely detailed list in the "Letter to the Reader" added in the 1507 edition (Erasmus 1969, 220-1). However, he does not adopt the same metres of the original; he only tries to give a sense of its metrical variety by using various metrical schemes:

¹⁸ Waszink 1969, 202-3, 272 note to line 9, 280 note to lines 197.

υ - υ - - - υ υ - υ - (Alcaic hendecasyllabic line)¹⁹
 Modo profecta Chalcide patria²⁰
 - - υ - - - υ υ - υ - (Alcaic hendecasyllabic line)
 Quae semper arcto tunditur aequore
 (Erasmus 1969, 281)

After departing from my mothercountry, Chalcis, which is always buffeted by the northern sea

υ υ υ - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)²¹
 ἔμολον ἀμφὶ παρ' ἄκτιαν

υ υ υ - υ υ υ υ υ - (glyconic)
 ψάμαθον Αὐλίδος ἐναλίαις
 (Euripides 1503, ΔΔιιιiv ; Eur.IA.164-5)²²

I have arrived at the sandy shore of Aulis by the sea²³

By contrast, in *Hecuba*, in some lines of the first, second, and third stasima (Waszink 1969, 240, 260, note to lines 486-524, 1116-42) and in Polymestor's first monody (1969, 260, 269 note to lines 486-524, 1116-42), Erasmus closely reproduces not only the metrical scheme but, in some lines, also the sequence of long and brief. This is the case of the beginning of the first stasimon:

- υ - υ υ - υ (pherecratean)
 Aura, pontica aura,

- υ - υ υ - υ - - (hipponactean)²⁴
 Quaeque pontigradas per undam
 (Erasmus 1969, 240)
 Breeze, breeze of the sea, you who [lead] seagoing [ships] through the [sea]
 waves . . .²⁵

¹⁹ The abstract scheme of the Alcaic hendecasyllabic line is x - υ - - - υ υ - υ η (Boldrini 2004, 69).

²⁰ "Modo" as adverb is usually a sequence of two brief syllables but perhaps here Erasmus adopts the alternative scanning with the last syllables as long (Lewis and Short 1933 [1879], "modo" s.v.); "patria" is without *correptio attica*, i.e., the two letters in the sequence "tr" belong to distinct syllables.

²¹ The abstract scheme of the glyconic is x x - υ υ - x η (Boldrini 2004, 96).

²² Euripides 2018 has παρακτιαν instead of παρ' ἄκτιαν. On the metre of *Iphigenia at Aulis*, see Euripides 1988, 62-8.

²³ All translations from Euripides are by David Kovaks from Euripides 1994 (*Alcestis and Medea*), Euripides 1995 (*Hecuba*), and from Euripides 2003 (*Iphigenia at Aulis*).

²⁴ The abstract scheme of the hipponactean is x x - υ υ - υ - η (West 1987, 33; Gentili e Lomiento 2002, 160).

²⁵ All translations from Erasmus' *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* are my own.

- - - υυ - ρ (pherecratean)²⁶

αὔρα, ποντιάς ἄυρα,²⁷

- υ - υ υ - υ - - (hipponactean)²⁸

ἄτε ποντοπόρους κομίξεις

(Euripides 1503, *Bvir*; Eur.*Hec.*444-5)

Breeze, breeze of the open main, conveyer of [swift] seagoing [ships]

However, in most cases, although applying the same metre, he usually does not follow the original sequence of brief and long syllables, but in Polymestor’s monody he still replicates the sequence in several lines (1117, 1119, 1121-2, 1125, 1126-8, 1134, 1139; see Waszink 1969, note to lines 1116-42). Here is the metrical scansion of the beginning of the monody:

- - υ - - - - - - - - (two dochmiacs?)²⁹

Heu, quo ferar? Qu(o) intendam? Quo torquebo

- υ υ - υ - - υυ - υ - (two dochmiacs)³⁰

Quadrupedem³¹ gradum, montigenae ferae

- - υ - - - υυ - - - - (two dochmiacs)

Pressa manu uestigia tentans. Quonam,

- - - - - - - - (two dochmiacs)

Huc ann(e) illuc deflectam cursum

(Erasmus 1969, 260-1, 1116-19)

Alas, where shall I go? Where shall I be directed? Where shall I turn, looking for their tracks like a four-footed wild beast from the mountains on my hands? Should I perhaps change my course in this way?

- υυ - - - - - - - - (two dochmiacs)

ὦμοι ἐγὼ· πᾶ βῶ; πᾶ στῶ; πᾶ κέλσω;

- υ υ - υ - - υ υ - υ - (two dochmiacs)

τετράποδος βάσιν θηρὸς ὀρεστέρου

²⁶ The metrical scansion from *Hecuba* is the one proposed by Luigi Battezzato (Euripides 2018).

²⁷ Euripides 2018 has αὔρα instead of ἄυρα.

²⁸ Euripides 2018 has a different colometry (κομί-ξεις), thereby having a glyconic here. However, the colometry in the Aldine makes the line a hipponactean, thereby explaining the same metre in Erasmus’ corresponding line.

²⁹ The sequence of the first dochmiac (- - υ- -) is not included among the realizations listed by Martin West (1982, 109).

³⁰ On the various realizations of the dochmiac basic form, see West 1982, 108-9.

³¹ The syllable “qua-” should be short but, if we posit a failed *correptio attica*, it could become long as “quad-”, as in the corresponding word τετράποδος (“τετ-” instead of “τε-”).

υ υ υ υ υ υ - υ υ υ - - - (two dochmiacs)
 τιθέμενος ἐπὶ χεῖρα κατ' ἵχνος; ποίαν

- - - - - - - - - (two dochmiacs)³²
 ἢ ταύταν, ἢ τήνδ' ἔξαλλάξω³³
 (Euripides 1503, Γviiν; Eur.*Hec.*1056-60)

O pain! Where shall I go, where stand, where beach my craft, moving like a four-footed wild beast on my hands upon their track? Shall I change my course this way.

Here Erasmus not only adopts the original metrical schemes and mirrors the sequence of long and brief syllables, but sometimes also tries to reproduce the original position of the words, as is particularly evident in the beginning of the parodos and the first three lines of this monody. Such “positional” mirroring is something that Erasmus does not seek at all in the lines quoted above from the parodos of Erasmus’ translation of *Iphigenia at Aulis*.

In a similar fashion to Erasmus’ translation procedure in *Hecuba*, Watson manages to reproduce the metre of the original in many lines, both in the dialogues and in the choruses, although there is not always a perfect correspondence of long and brief syllables throughout. The very first line of the play is a fitting example of a perfect mirroring:

- - | υ - || υ - | υ - || - - | υ - (iambic trimeter)
 O stirp(e) ead(em) Ismena germanum caput
 (Watson 1581, 17)

Oh Ismene, sisterly head from the same progeny.³⁴

- - | υ - || υ - | υ - || - - | υ - (iambic trimeter)
 ἜΩ κοινὸν ἀντάδελφον Ἰσμήνης κάρα
 (Sophocles 1502, viiν; Soph. *Ant.* 1)

My own sister Ismene, linked to myself.³⁵

Since in iambic trimeters every third element of each iambic foot has to be brief (Boldrini 2004, 92), Watson decides to substitute “Ismene”, in which the ending in -e would have been long because it derives from a Greek η (2004, 47), with the unusual alternative “Ismena”, in which the ending in -a, typical of nouns of the first declension, is brief.

Watson also faithfully reproduces anapaestic sequences made up by

³² The colometry is different from Euripides 2018, which an additional syllable (τὰς) at the end of the line, the two dochmiacs in the Aldine would miss the final syllable.

³³ Euripides 2018 has τάνδε.

³⁴ All translations from Watson’s *Antigone* are my own.

³⁵ All translations from Sophocles’ *Antigone* are by Hugh Lloyd-Jones in Sophocles 1994.

anapaestic dimeters and other anapaestic metres (Watson 1581, 31-2, 43, 51). At the end of the fourth episode, there comes a series of (recitative or sung)³⁶ anapaestic lines (Soph. *Ant.* 929-43), a sequence of iambic dimeters, anapaestic dimeters and monometers, and a closing paremiac (De Poli 2012, 415). In this sequence, which Watson faithfully reproduces with the original schemes, some lines deserve close inspection:

- - | u u - || - - | u u - (anapaestic dimeter)
Cer-te | fa-mu-lis, || hanc qu(i) ab|-ri-pe-rent.

- - | u u - || u u -|- - (anapaestic dimeter)
Tar-d(a) ex |-cu-ti-et || mo-ra plo|-ra-tum

...
- - | - - || - - | u u - (anapaestic dimeter)
O The-ba-nae ter-rae urbs patria,

- u - - u u - (anapaestic monometer?)³⁷
Et penates patria
(Watson 1581, 44)

Certainly, for the servants that have conducted her, the tardy delay will cause lament . . .

O native city of the Theban land and native Penates.

- - | - - || - u u | - - (anapaestic dimeter)
Τοιγὰρ τούτων τοῖσιν ἄγουσιν

- u u | - - || u u - | u u - (anapaestic dimeter)
κλαύμαθ ὑπάρξει βραδυτῆτος ἕπερ.

...
- - | - - || - u u | - - (anapaestic dimeter)
ᾠ γῆς Θήβης ἄστρῳ πατρῶν³⁸

³⁶ Anapaests could be chanted (as recitative) or sung. Here, both could work. Sung anapaest were used in an emotionally charged moment (Mastronarde 2002, 104; Gentili e Lomiento 2003, 114); this passage is such a moment as it corresponds to Antigone's impending death. However, the structure (anapaestic dimeters with single anapaestic metre and a paremiac at the end) is typical of recitative sections delivered before a chorus or when an actor is about to enter or exit (2003, 110; Martinelli 1995, 159), as in this case, in which Antigone is about to exit. Hence, Maria Chiara Martinelli considers this sequence recitative (1995, 166).

³⁷ Sophocles 1999 has προγενεῖς instead of πατρογενεῖς, thereby justifying the reading as anapaestic monometer: (- - u u -) καὶ θεοὶ προγενεῖς.

³⁸ The solution of the *longum* into forming a dactyl out of the anapaest can happen (Martinelli 1995, 159-60).

- υ - - υ υ - (anapaestic monometer?)
 καὶ θεοὶ πατρογενεῖς
 (Sophocles 1502, οἰῖr; Soph. *Ant.* 931-2, 937-8)
 Therefore, there shall be trouble for those conducting her on account of their
 slowness . . .
 Ancestral city of the land of Thebes and gods of my forebears.

Both “patria” and “patri” display *correptio attica*, with the sequence of plosive and liquid letters belonging the same syllable, as well as πατρῶον. Modern editions have προγενεῖς instead of πατρογενεῖς, which Watson seems to read without *correptio*, provided that we assume that Watson’s metrical choices reflect how he scanned the original. Also, unlike modern editions, Watson evidently scans θεοὶ without synizesis, since his rendition of what should be an anapaestic monometer starts with a sequence of long-short-long (cretic) with “et pena-” instead of long-long as modern editions have it.³⁹ In the anapaestic dimeters, Watson adopts the same abstract metrical scheme of the corresponding Sophoclean lines (υ υ - υ υ - υ υ - υ υ υ),⁴⁰ but his realization does not always coincide with the original.

Although the sequence of long and brief is not the same, Watson does manage to imitate the original at another level, i.e., the position of the words. While in the first line of the play he had achieved this only with the word “caput”, appearing at the end just as κάρα, in the anapaestic lines quoted above four words mirror the position of the words they translate: “certe”/τοιγάρ, “abripere”/ἀγούσιν, “excutiet”/ὕπαρξει, “mora”/βραδυτήτος. This search for a positional as well as metrical mirroring is a recurring feature in Watson’s translation, including the choruses, and this represents a further similarity with the *Hecuba* of Erasmus.

The metrical correspondence is particularly noteworthy in the choruses, considering their notorious difficulty. Watson easily reproduces glyconics, which are frequent in Seneca’s choruses too (Mazzoli 2014, 561-3), for instance in the parodos:

- - - υ υ - υ -
 Thebas respiciens iubar
 (Watson 1581, 20)
 . . . Light turning to Thebes . . .

- - - υ υ - υ η
 Θήβῃ τῶν προτέρων φάος
 (Sophocles 1502, viiii; Soph. *Ant.* 102)

³⁹ On synizesis of θεός in Greek tragedy, see Battezzato 2000.

⁴⁰ υυ stands for *biceps*, i.e., either long (-) or a sequence of two brief (υυ); X is a free element or anceps, i.e., either long, brief or a sequence of two brief (Boldrini 2004, 20).

. . . [fairer than] all that have shone before for [seven-gated] Thebes . . .

In the first stasimon, the correspondence is almost perfectly kept through six lines, even though the metrical schemes slightly change:

- u u - u - u - (choriambic dimeter)

Multa diserta: nil tamen

u u - - u u - u - (glyconic)

homine extat sapientius.

- u - u u - u - (glyconic)

Ille trans reflui maris

- - - - u - u - (2 iambs)

undas, flante humido Noto,

- - u u - u - - (hagesichorean A)⁴¹

uerit valido truces re-

- - u - - - (3 iambic feet)

morum impetu fluctus.

(Watson 1581, 26)

Many things are sagacious, but nothing stands out as more skilled than man. He cuts through the sea’s flowing waves, with the moist south wind billowing, and fierce surges by means of the strong resistance of oars . . .

- u u - u - u - (choriambic dimeter)⁴²

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄν-

- - - u u - u - (glyconic)

θρώπου δεινότερον πέλει

- - - u u - u - (glyconic)

τοῦτο καὶ πολιοῦ πέραν

- - - u u - u - (glyconic)

πόντου χειμερίῳ νοτῶ

- - u - u u - - (hagesichorean B)

χωρεῖ περιβρυχίοισι

u - u - u - (three iambic feet)⁴³

περῶν ὑπ’ οἴδμασιν.

(Sophocles 1502, vviii; Soph. *Ant.* 332-7)

⁴¹ On the hagesichorean, see Martinelli 1995, 329.

⁴² The metrical scansion of the original is Mark Griffith’s in Sophocles 1999.

⁴³ Sophocles 1999 features a different colometry, having θέων in the same line (Soph *Ant.* 337) and thereby producing a regular iambic dimeter.

Many things are formidable, and none more formidable than man! He crosses the gray sea beneath the winter wind, passing beneath the surges that surround him.

In the second stasimon, which displays a very complex metrical variety, Watson seems to follow passively the sequence of long and brief syllables, probably without recognizing all the metrical schemes adopted in the original:⁴⁴

- - υ υ - υ υ - - - υ - -
Cui uita malis vacua est, faelix putandus:⁴⁵

- υ - - - υ υ - υ υ - -
sed quibus quassa est domus inclyta, cladis

- υ - - - υ υ -
nil relictum est. In generis

υ υ - υ - -
sobolem redundat.

(Watson 1581, 33)

Whoever leads a life without evils should be deemed happy, but for those whose house is illustrious no ruin will be omitted. It falls back on the progeny of the family.

- - υ υ - υ υ - υ - υ - -
εὐδαίμονες οἷσι κακῶν ἄγευστος αἰών·

- υ - - - υ υ - υ υ - -
οἷς γὰρ ἂν σεισθῆ θεόθεν δόμος, ἄταξ

- υ - - - υ υ -
οὐδεν ἐλλείπει γενεᾶς

υ υ - υ - -
ἐπί πλῆθος ἔρπον

(Sophocles 1502, ξiiii; Soph. *Ant.* 583-5)

Fortunate are they whose lifetime never tastes of evil! For those whose house is shaken by the gods, no part of ruin is wanting, as it marches against the whole of the family.

In the third stasimon, Watson also follows the original but seems more aware of the inner flexibility of the metrical schemes:

⁴⁴ For the metres adopted in the second stasimon, see Griffith 1999, 220.

⁴⁵ In the first line, the sequence of long and brief syllables is the same except for the ninth element, which is brief in Greek and long in Latin

- - - - - u u -	(choriambic dimeter)
O usqu(e) inuictissim(e) Amor,	
u - u- - uu- -	(hagesichorean B)
Amor lues diuitiarum,	
- - uu - u - -	(hagesichorean A)
qui molliculis roseisque	
u - uu - u - -	(hagesichorean A)
genis habitas puellae	
(Watson 1581, 38)	
O Love, absolutely undefeated so far, Love, corruption of wealth, you who dwell on the soft and rosy cheeks of a girl	
u - u - - u u -	(choriambic dimeter)
"Ερωσ ἀνίκατε μάχων,	
u - u - - uu - -	(hagesichorean B)
"Ερωσ, ὅς ἐν κτήμασι πίπτεις,	
u - uu - u - -	(hagesichorean A)
ὅς ἐν μαλακαῖς παρειαῖς	
u - uu - u - -	(hagesichorean A)
νεάνιδος ἐννουχέυεις	
(Sophocles 1502, ζviiν; Soph. <i>Ant.</i> 781-4)	
Love invincible in battle, Love who falls upon men's property, you who spend the night upon the soft cheeks of a girl.	

In the first line, Watson substitutes the first choriambic foot with two spondees; in the third line he realizes the first *anceps* element as long instead of brief.⁴⁶ In the fourth stasimon, he does not replicate the original metres and borrows Senecan metrical schemes instead:⁴⁷

- - - u u - -	(glyconic)
solis. Namque ligatur	
- uu - - - u u - -	(dactylic tetrameter acatalectic)
clam tumulari inclusa recessu	
(Watson 1581, 42: Soph. <i>Ant.</i> 946-7)	
[the light] of the sun. And she was secretly enclosed inside a cavern to be buried.	

⁴⁶ The first four elements of the choriambic dimeter and the first element of the hagesichorean A are *anceps* (Martinelli 1995, 234, 329)

⁴⁷ The dactylic tetrameter acatalectic is used by Seneca in *Phaedra*, *Oedipus* and *Hercules Oetaeus* (Mazzoli 2014, 562-4).

The first lines of fifth stasimon mirror both positional and metrical features of the original:

υ υ - υ υ - - - (glyconic)
Celeberrime, Cadmeia

- - υ - - - υ - (iambic dimeter)
nymphae decus summum, Iovis-
(Watson 1581, 47)
O illustrious, highest honour of the Cadmean nymph, of Jove . . .

υ υ- υ υ - - - (glyconic)
πολυώνυμε Καδμείας

- - υ - υ - υ- (iambic dimeter)
νύμφας ἄγαλμα, καὶ Διός
(Sophocles 1502, *ovr*; Soph. *Ant.* 1115-16)
You who have many names, pride of the Cadmean bride and child of Zeus.

Watson's accuracy in replicating the choral metres is similar to that of Erasmus in his translation of the *Hecuba* choruses; both translators attempt and, in some passages, achieve what could be defined as 'a metrical translation'.

There is still another, more sophisticated level that both prove to consider, i.e., metrical corresponsion between strophe and antistrophe. According to Waszink, Erasmus did not attempt to reproduce it, suggesting that this was probably due to the fact that the Aldine did not mark this distinction (1969, 240). However, in the parodos of *Hecuba*, Waszink notes that, while the first strophe and antistrophe do not match, Erasmus reproduces the same metres of the first four lines of the strophe β and those of the corresponding antistrophe. Waszink's exclusion that Erasmus was not paying attention to metrical corresponsion can be questioned with a closer analysis of the first lines of the strophe α and antistrophe α:

- υ - υ υ- υ (pherecratean)
Aura, pontica aura,

- υ - υ υ - υ - - (hipponactean)
Quaeque pontigradas per undam
(Erasmus 1969, 240)
Breeze, breeze of the sea, you who [lead] seagoing [ships] through the [sea]
waves . . .⁴⁸

- - - υ υ - η (pherecratean)
ἄυρα, ποντιᾶς ἄυρα,⁴⁹

⁴⁸ All translation from Erasmus' *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* are my own.

⁴⁹ Euripides 2018 has ἀύρα instead of ἄυρα.

- υ - υ υ - υ - - (hipponactean)
 ἄτε ποντοπόρους κομίζεις⁵⁰
 (Euripides 1503, *Bvir*; Eur.*Hec.*444-5)
 Breeze, breeze of the open main, conveyer of [swift] seagoing [ships] . . .

- - υ υ υ - - (pherecratean)⁵¹
 Salso misera remo

- - - υ - - υ - - (hipponactean)
 Ill(am) appellar in insulam, pro-
 (Erasmus 1969, 241)
 Or I, miserable, am led to that island by an oar covered in brine . . .

- - - υ υ - η (pherecratean)
 ἦ νᾶσων,⁵² ἀλίηρει

- - - υ υ - υ - - (hipponactean)
 κώπα πεμπομένην τάλαιναν
 (Euripides 1503, *Bvir*; Eur.*Hec.*454-5)

Or to an island home, sped on my way in grief by an oar plied in the brine . . .

In *Hecuba*'s parodos, Erasmus does look at and mostly replicates strophic metrical corresponson, even though this feature was not signalled in the Euripides editions he consulted. Strophic metrical corresponson of Euripidean tragic choruses would be first marked by Willem Canter in his 1571 edition (and in 1580 for Aeschylus), following in the footsteps of Adrien Turnèbe, the first to mark strophic division in his 1553 edition of Sophocles' tragedies (Tessier 2015, 185).⁵³ Therefore, it is not clear whether the presence of strophic corresponson in this parodos is the result of a conscious replication of this feature, independently of the edition of the original at his disposal, or rather only a side effect of Erasmus' tendency to closer 'metrical translation' in *Hecuba*. Watson's own attention to metrical corresponson may have been prompted by an edition of the original featuring strophic division: this suggests that he probably used a Greek original in Turnèbe's edition (or in a more recent one based on it), although, as Erasmus possibly did, Watson may have decided to reproduce choral metrical corresponson independently of the original edition he had at his disposal. Be it as it may, the following examples testify to Watson's handling of strophic metrical

⁵⁰ Euripides 2018 has a different colometry: κομί-ζεις.

⁵¹ "mi-" should be long.

⁵² Euripides 2018 has νᾶσων instead of νᾶσων.

⁵³ See for instance, the choruses of *Antigone* in Sophocles 1553, 181-5, 191-3, 200-2, 208-9, 214-16, 220-2.

corresponson in the parodos:

- - - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)

Thebas respiciens iubar

...

- - - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)

Hastis undique glutiens

(Watson 1581, 20

... Light turning to Thebes ...

... swallowing spears from every direction ...

- - - υ υ - υ η (glyconic)

Θήβαι τῶν προτέρων φάος

...

- - - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)

λόγγαις ἐπτάπυλον στόμα

(Soph. *Ant.* 102, 119)

... [fairer than] all that have shone before for [seven-gated] Thebes ...

... [ringing round] the seven gates with spears ...

and in the first stasimon:

- υ υ - υ - υ - (choriambic dimeter)

Multa diserta: nil tamen

υ υ - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)

homine extat sapientius

...

- υ υ - υ υ υ - (choriambic dimeter)⁵⁴

Pennigeras quoqu(e) alitum

- - - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)

Turmas illaqueans capit

(Watson 1581, 26)

Many things are sagacious, but nothing stands out as more skilled than man ...

He also captures winged flocks of birds with snares.

- υ υ - υ - υ - (choriambic dimeter)⁵⁵

πολλά τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄν-

- - - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)

θρώπου δεινότερον πέλει

⁵⁴ The position of “quo-” or “a-” should be long (see Martinelli 1995, 218; Gentili and Lomiento 2002, 146)

⁵⁵ For the metrical scansion, I follow Mark Griffith’s schemes in Sophocles 1999.

- u u - u - u - (choriambic dimeter)
 κουφονόων τε φῦλον ὄρ-

- - - u u - u - (glyconic)
 νίθων ἀμφιβαλῶν ἄγει

(Sophocles 1502, vviii; Soph. *Ant.* 332-3, 342-3)

Many things are formidable, and none more formidable than man!

...

And he captures the tribe of thoughtless birds

Watson’s adherence to Greek models is testified also in the additional poems following the translation, i.e., four processional with allegorical characters introducing themselves onto the stage, i.e., poms. These are in iambic trimeters, a Greek metrical scheme, and not in iambic *senarii*, a looser version of the Greek iambic trimeters for Latin drama (Boldrini 2004, 92).⁵⁶ Watson does adopt this typically Latin metrical scheme as he himself indicates in three headings (out of seventeen) prefixed to the sections of his translation (Watson 44, 48, 51); however, he mostly uses iambic trimeters as metre of the spoken verse.

Despite his claim of direct affiliation to Greek iambic trimeters, Watson does not seem to reproduce the phenomenon that would be later described by Porson’s Law, i.e., the presence of either a long monosyllabic word or a brief final syllable of a non-monosyllabic word before the final cretic, neither in the translation nor in the paratexts. In the prologue added by Watson and spoken by an allegorical character, i.e., Natura, among the four lines in which Porson’s law could be applied, only one, i.e., the second, respects it:

- -|u- || - -|u- || - -|u-

Rex Oedipus, quae monstra saeuus protulit?

...

- -|u- || - -|u- || - -|u-

Nec sanguinis, nec liberum, nec coniugis

- - - - - u - - - u -

Nec vatis aequum praedicantis publice.

...

- - u - - - u - - - u -

Sentiet acerbas. Namque luctu flebili (Watson 1581, [14-16])

⁵⁶ They are not iambic *senarii* as it has been suggested by Sutton (1996, 5).

In the translation, there is a similar oscillation, which suggests that Watson was either not paying attention to this feature in the original or that he did not consider it as normative, probably because Erasmus himself did not respect Porson's law in his Euripides translation.⁵⁷ As solutions before a final cretic, the translation features correct options such as long monosyllables

--|U-|| -- U-||- -U-

At illa rem scrutantibus nil proderant. (Watson 1581, 24)

and disyllabic words with short final syllable

- -|U-||- -|U UU||U-|U-

Mandent sepulcro, cunctaque simul occulant (Watson 1581, 22)

but also wrong options such as disyllabic words with a long final syllable:

- -|U-|UUU -|- -|U-

Ex quo sumus duobus orbae fratribus (Watson 1581, 17)

Similarly, Buchanan, who equally opts for iambic trimeters instead of *senarii* in dialogues (Chevalier 2009, 183; Jackson 2020, 50), frequently 'violates' Porson's law as in the following examples from *Medea*

--|U-||- -|U-||- -U-

nuper. suorum liberorum proditor (Buchanan 1983, 171, l. 17)

and from *Alcestis*:

- -|U-||--|U-|| -- -U-

te prodidisset mater; auras linquere (Buchanan 1983, 220, l. 298)

In the choruses, however, Buchanan aligns himself with the approach Erasmus displayed in most of the choruses of *Iphigenia at Aulis*, i.e., the use of typically Senecan metres such as glyconics, iambic dimeters (catalectic and acatalectic), anapaests. In *Medea* Buchanan mostly employs anapaestic dimeters: five choral odes out of six are in this metrical scheme.⁵⁸ In *Alcestis*, anapaestic dimeters remain the most common metre for choruses with 77 lines out of a total of 359; glyconics and pherecreteans are also very common,

⁵⁷ Examples of 'violation' of Porson's law are both in *Hecuba* ("Memini. Haud enim haec res summa strinxit pectoris", Erasmus 1969, 233, 265) and *Iphigenia at Aulis* ("Castoris raptam ut repetat sororem", Erasmus 1969, 312, 1034).

⁵⁸ The remaining one is in iambic dimeter. In *Medea* lines 1081-1115 (1130-1166 in Buchanan) are not a proper choral ode (Mossman 2011, 332). Quantitative considerations on the metre of Buchanan's translations are based on Sharratt and Walsh's "conspectus metrorum" (Sharratt and Walsh 1983, 334-7).

with 59 and 24 lines respectively.⁵⁹ Glyconics are particularly noteworthy, as they may signal a Senecan mediation in the reception of Greek choral metres. Seneca's use of glyconics – which is a recurring feature in "longer 'lyrical' passages" of his tragedies (Waszink 1969, 299) – has been associated with a celebrative aim (Mazzoli 2014, 566). Although attempts at attributing an *ethos* to metres have been questioned (ibid.), a similar *ethos* of praise and celebration may be found in the glyconics used abundantly by Buchanan in the third and fifth stasimon of his version of *Alcestis* (Buchanan 1983, 227-8, 238-9; cf. Sharratt and Walsh 1983, 337), which correspond to the celebration of Admetus' house (Eur. *Alc.* 568-604) and of Ananke (Necessity) (Eur. *Alc.* 961-1005) respectively. If we accept the association between the *ethos* of praise and glyconics, Buchanan may have opted for a predominance of this metre with a celebrative function also under the influence of Erasmus, who employs glyconics in the whole first stasimon of his *Iphigenia at Aulis* ("Carmen Glyconium"; cf. Waszink 1969, 201).

Overall, *Alcestis*' choruses display a far more marked variety than *Medea* as well as some attempts to mirror the original metre. Buchanan's metrical imitation of the original choruses is usually limited to isolated lines, for instance in the parodos

- - | u u - || u u - | u u - (anapaestic dimeter)
 Quae pro foribus taciturna quies?
 (Buchanan 1983, 215; l. 80)
 What is this silent calm before the entrance?⁶⁰

u u - | u u - || - u | u u - (anapaestic dimeter)
 τί ποθ' ἠσυχία πρόσθε⁶¹ μελάθρων;
 (Euripides 1503, Tiiiν; Euripides 1537, I7r; Eur.*Alc.*77)⁶²
 What means this stillness before the palace?

and in the second stasimon:

- - | - u u | u u - | u u - (anapaestic dimeter)
 quae mutat(a) anim(a) anim(am) eriperes.
 (Buchanan 1983, 225; l. 478)

⁵⁹ In his biblical tragedies, anapaestic dimeters are also very common: three choruses of *Iephtes* are in this scheme, whereas *Baptistes* has one (Sharratt and Walsh 1983, 334-5).

⁶⁰ All translations from Buchanan's *Alcestis* are my own.

⁶¹ Euripides 2007 has πρόσθεν, which makes the line more regular, with a spondee, and not a trochee, instead of an anapaestic foot.

⁶² I here refer also to Euripides 1537, another edition that Buchanan may have consulted for the revision instead of the Aldine (Sharratt and Walsh 1983, 296). The metrical scansion is based on the one provided by L.P.E. Parker (Euripides 2007, 244).

you who saved the life [of your husband from death] in exchange of your life

- - | - - | υ υ - | - - (anapaestic dimeter)⁶³
 ψυχᾶς ἐξ Ἅιδου⁶⁴· κόφρα σοι
 (Euripides 1503, Y ii; Euripides 1537, S5v; Eur.*Alc.*463)

. . . from Hades at the price of your life. May [the earth lies] light upon you . . .

This kind of metrical similarity, i.e., the adoption of the same metrical schemes with internal variation in comparison to the original, is analogous to what Erasmus did in Polymestor's monody and Watson in the parodos and third stasimon. However, when Buchanan replicates the original metre, he does seem to reproduce some kind of strophic corresponsion in three choral odes in *Alcestis* (see Dall'Olio in this issue, 133-4), but he usually does not match the perfection that Watson achieves in the first or second stasimon of his *Antigone*.

In *Alcestis*' fifth stasimon, Buchanan does achieve a closer resemblance to the original, using in most lines two metres employed by Euripides in the same ode, pherecrateans and glyconics, but he multiplies them (16 pherecreateans in Buchanan; 4 in Euripides) and glyconics (36 in Buchanan; 4 in Euripides). Also, he sometimes follows the original sequence of brief and long in a manner that resembles the *Hecuba* Erasmus and Watson, but only in isolated lines:

υ - - υ υ - - (pherecratean)⁶⁵
 Eg(o) ignota profano

- - - υ υ - - (pherecratean)
 per compendia vulgo

- - - υ υ - - (pherecratean)
 Musarum comes ivi,

- - - υ υ - - (pherecratean)
 et sermonibus aurem

. . .

- - - υ υ - - (pherecratean)
 solas huius ad aras

- - - υ υ - υ υ (glyconic)
 non est ire deae, neque

⁶³ Metrical scansion based on Parker's (Euripides 2007, 144).

⁶⁴ Euripides 2007 has Ἅιδου.

⁶⁵ The abstract scheme of the pherecratean is X X - υ υ - η (Boldrini 2004, 89).

- υ υ - υ υ - υ (pherecratean)⁶⁶
ad simulacra; nec ulla

- - - υ υ - υ υ (glyconic)
est placabilis hostia.
(Buchanan 1983, 238-9; 1020-3; 1035-9)

I have come from the vulgar throng as a follower of the Muses through modest means and I have paid attention to high discourses . . . Of that goddess alone there are no altars,⁶⁷ no statue to approach, and she is satisfied by no sacrifice.

υ - - υ υ - - (pherecratean)
Εγὼ καὶ διὰ μοῦσας

- υ - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)
Καὶ μετάρσιος ἦξα, καὶ

- υ - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)
πλεῖστον⁶⁸ ἀψάμενος λόγων

- υ - υ υ - - (pherecratean)
κρεῖττον οὐδὲν ἀνάγκας

. . .
υ - - υ υ - - (pherecratean)
μόνας δ’ οὐτ’ ἐπὶ βωμοὺς

- - - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)
ἐλθεῖν οὔτε βρέτας θεᾶς

- υ - υ υ - υ - (glyconic)
ἔστιν, οὐ σφαγίων κλύει

- - - υ υ - - (pherecratean)
μή μοι, πότνια, μείζων
(Euripides 1503, Φιir-v; Euripides 1537, t5v; Eur.*Alc.*963-76)

I have soared aloft with poetry and with high thought, and though I have laid my hand to many a reflection, I have found nothing stronger than Necessity . . . Of that goddess alone there are no altars, no statue to approach, and to sacrifice she pays no heed. Do not, I pray you, Lady, come with greater force than [heretofore in my life].

⁶⁶ The second *anceps* element is realized by two brief (“simu-”).

⁶⁷ As Sharratt and Walsh have noted, Buchanan wrongly attributes μόνας to βωμοὺς (1983, 329).

⁶⁸ Euripides 2007 has πλεῖστων.

This sequence confirms that Buchanan did not intend to reproduce the exact order of original metrical schemes and that, at least in these choral odes, he did not pay attention to strophic corresponson either; however, considering that he expands some lines (1245 lines against the 1163 of the original), it would have been in any case impossible for Buchanan to obtain a perfect match with the original metre.

Buchanan evidently displays a greater metrical competence in the choruses of *Alcestis* than in those of *Medea*. This can be partly explained by the fact that the latter was based on an earlier juvenile version realized in the 1520s, when he was learning Greek, whereas *Alcestis* was written in the 1540s, expressly made for his students at Bordeaux (Sharratt and Walsh 1983, 295, 313). The distance between Buchanan's *Medea* and *Alcestis* in the handling of the choruses can be compared to that between Erasmus' *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis*.⁶⁹ However, while Erasmus opted for a metrical simplification in shifting from *Hecuba* to *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Buchanan took the opposite direction, abandoning the regularity of the anapaests that abound in *Medea*'s choral odes and exploring more ambitious metrical solutions in *Alcestis*.

3. 'Metrical Translations': A Challenge and a Training for Students-Actors

The increasing metrical difficulty in the shift from *Medea* to *Alcestis* are revealing about the prosodic competence not only of Buchanan, who evidently attained a higher level thanks to his studies in France, but also of his students. As mentioned above, the plays were meant to comply with a long-standing tradition, as Buchanan himself informs us in his *Vita*:

Eas enim ut consuetudini scholae satisfaceret, quae per annos singulos singulas poscebat fabulas, conscripserat: ut earum actione iuuentutem . . . ad imitationem ueterum qua posset retraheret. (Buchanan quoted in MacFarlane 1981, 542)

He wrote these plays in order to comply with the tradition of the college,

⁶⁹ By considerably simplifying metre and by distancing himself from the metrical schemes of the original in his translation of *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Erasmus seems to anticipate in practice what he would later express theoretically in *Ciceronianus*: according to Colin Burrow, Erasmus pleads for an "adaptive imitation", which eschews the production of a sterile "simulacrum" ("picture") of the source author through a close but lifeless imitation and rather conceives the author "transhistorical[ly]", as "an adaptive principle which might speak or write in a different way in response to changing circumstances" (Burrow 2019, 176).

which demanded a play for each year, and, by putting them on, to lead the youth . . . towards the imitation of the ancients as much as possible. (My translation)

The audience included renowned humanists of the time alongside students (Jackson 2020, 44); also, the actors were supposed to be other students. Buchanan must have had this in mind, when writing and/or revising his translations, and probably adjusted the metrical aspect accordingly. Jean-Frédéric Chevalier has shown how Buchanan exploits metrical pauses to enhance some adjectives that vividly render the features of Medea’s “mask” (“obliquus”, “taetricus”, “torvus”), suggesting that Buchanan’s translation “stages the ‘mask’ of Medea” (2009 186, 192). Similarly, in Medea’s monologue (Eur. *Med.* 1021-80), Buchanan exploits the penthemimeral caesura to stress a sort of stage-direction spoken by Medea to her children, i.e., “introite”:⁷⁰

– – u – | u – u – | – – u – (iambic trimeter)
 uerb(a). introite: si quis est cui non licet
 (Buchanan 1983, 198, l. 1100)
 words. Go inside: if there is anyone who cannot . . .

– – u – | u – u – | u – u – (iambic trimeter)
 χωρεῖτε, παῖδες, ἐς δόμους. ὅτῳ δὲ μὴ⁷¹
 (Euripides 1503, Oiiii; Euripides 1537, Oiiii; Eur.*Med.*1053)⁷²
 Children, go into the house. Whoever is not [permitted] . . .

In so doing, Buchanan’s metrical as well as lexical choices functioned as ‘in-text stage directions’ for the students-actors.

Alcestis’ higher level of metrical difficulty must also be read considering the pedagogical context of its performance, at least as Buchanan originally foresaw it.⁷³ *Alcestis* was written and performed after *Medea*, but, if we consider the only extant version of *Medea*, which is a 1540s revision of an earlier version dating back to the late 1520s-early 1530s (Sharratt and Walsh 1983, 2, 313), both were composed in the same decade, the 1540s. Although partly due to the reliance on this earlier version of *Medea*, the gap in the level of metrical difficulty between the two translations could also testify to an improved prosodic competence in the students-actors. Furthermore, albeit

⁷⁰ On whether the children exit or not, see Mossman 2011, 316-23 and Mastronarde 2002, 338. On another occurrence of the word “introite” in the play and its meta-theatrical power in a pedagogical context, see Schweitzer 2013 and Jackson 2020, 56.

⁷¹ Euripides 2002 has ἐς.

⁷² See note 62 above.

⁷³ It is still unclear whether the printed version corresponds to the text that was actually performed; on this, see Dall’Olio in this issue, 131-3).

mediated by a retrospective gaze, Buchanan's statement that he hoped to turn the students "towards the imitation of the ancients as much as possible" could shed a further light on the higher complexity in *Alcestis*: it is possible that Buchanan conceived of "imitation of the ancients" also at the level of metre and thus adjusted his metrical choices to this ambitious project. If so, prosodic difficulty was not only a display of technical virtuosity by Buchanan but also a way to convey a high technical competence in prosody by performing plays specifically conceived to this end, alongside their possible moralistic value.⁷⁴

If so, then prosody was not a mere means but part and parcel of the didactic contents that academic drama was meant to convey. That this could happen in an educational context is testified by the Dutch humanist and master Georgius Macropedius, whose work reached and was performed in England in the 1560s (Bloemendal and Norland 2013, 6). In the preface to his *Rebelles* and *Alutas* (1535), Macropedius discusses his handling of metre in these two comedies, specifying that he "strove to comply with the rules of lyric songs in order that the verse fulfils the school's precepts and that the youth hunt for the quantities of the syllables in it, in case circumstances require them to do so" ("ut carmen responderet praeceptis scholasticis, et iuventus (sicubi res postularet) syllabarum ex eo quantitates aucuparetur, lyricorum carminum legibus obtemperare studui", Macropedius 1540, A3r). He then declares that he aligned himself with "the system of Old Comedy, in which the rules of lyric verse are respected much more accurately than what we see in New Comedy" ("ueteris comoediae artificium . . . , in qua lyrici carmini leges exactius multo obseruatas, quam in noua deprehendimus", *ibid.*). He then offers his two comedies with an exhortation to search for "some erudition, however insignificant" ("eruditionem quantumlamcunque"):

Accipite igitur adolescentes duas has (ne dicam Comoedias) fabulas nostras, Rebelles, et Alutam, et in eis non tam aurium uoluptatem quam eruditionem quantulamcunque uenamini. (Macropedius 1540, A3r).

[Therefore, young men, accept these two – I will not say "Comedies" – stories of ours, *Rebelles* and *Aluta*, and please do not look in them for the pleasure for the ears but rather for some erudition, however insignificant in them. (My translation)]

Behind this insistent rhetoric of modesty, Macropedius' vague reference to "eruditionem" is illuminated by the preceding context reported above: *Rebelles* and *Aluta* are conceived less as an aesthetic achievement than as an

⁷⁴ On the pedagogical function of Buchanan's Euripides translations, see Crawford and Jackson 2019 and Jackson 2020, 52-57.

occasion for students’ technical training in the rules of prosody. Similarly, prosody was taught through drama also in John Palsgrave’s 1540 translation of William Fullonius’ Neo-Latin comedy *Acolastus* (1529). In this bilingual version of the text, Palsgrave inserts a “briefe Introductory to haue some generall knowledge of the dyners sortes of meters vsed of our auctour in this Comedye” (Palsgrave 1540, Eii^v- Eiv^r), which is mostly based on Erasmus’ treatise *De metris* (Juhász-Ormsby 2016, 533). Therefore, prosody was not relegated to a simply instrumental role but belonged to the technical training that plays were supposed to convey, alongside other skills such as debating *in utramque partem* and effectively delivering a speech. Buchanan may have had a similar agenda in mind, when he considerably increased the metrical difficulty in *Alcestis*, aiming to provide a prosodic erudition to his students, both to those in the audience and to those acting on the stage.

Watson’s *Antigone* was also meant to be performed by students, though not at school but at university, most probably at Oxford.⁷⁵ Winchester-bred, Watson assimilated the teachings of the school’s headmaster Johnson, who covered that position until 1571, leaving just one year before Watson himself. At Winchester, Johnson organized and supported theatrical exercises for boys. Although he was easily annoyed by the excessive amusement that plays provided (Baldwin 1944, 1.329, 1.337), Johnson nonetheless recognized and praised the didactic function of performances, as he explained in one of his “dictates” recorded by his pupil Badger:

Ex ludis istis scenicis quos publice spectandos nuper exhibuimus, illud opinor praeter alia percepistis commodi quod quid, quo ore, quibus gestibus pronunciantum sit, non ipsi solum intelligitis, sed alios quoque docere (si opus fuerit) potestis. Debet enim in voce elevatio, depressio, ac flexus quidam esse, in corpore motus sine iactatione decorus interdum remissior, interdum etiam vehementior, cum pedum supplotione ad rem accommodata. (Johnson 2020)⁷⁶

[From those stage plays which we have lately exhibited publicly to the view, I think you have derived this benefit besides others, that you have learned yourselves and are also able to teach others – if there were need – with what expression, with what gestures something should be pronounced. For there should be in the voice a certain amount of elevation, depression, and modulation, in the body decorous movement without prancing around, sometimes quieter, at others more vehement, with stamping of the feet accommodated to the subject. (Translation by Abigail Ann Young and Stephen P. Anderson in Johnson 2020)]

⁷⁵ On the venue for the performance of the play, see Sutton 2016.

⁷⁶ This is one of Johnson’s dictates at Winchester College, dating back to 1564-5 (British Library, Add MS 4379, 88v).

According to Johnson, acting improved a variety of skills: the expression (“ore”), the gestures (“gestibus”), the modulation of the voice tone (“in voce elevatio, depressio, ac flexus”), the body language that has to accompany the deliver (“in corpore motus”). The phrase “pedum supplotione” (“the stamping of the feet”) is borrowed from Cicero and Quintilian, who both refers to it as an effective technique to enhance the power of words (Cicero, *De oratore* 3.47.5, 3.220.7, *Brutus* 141.9, 278.8; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.7.26, 11.3.128), although in *Brutus* it is once presented as excessively pathetic (Cicero, *Brutus* 158.6). While the “stamping of the feet” is clearly referred to body language and had to be adjusted to the subject (“rem”), in a dramatic performance of texts in verse such as a school play it may have also implied an adaptation to the rhythm that the verse suggested to the body; after all, “foot” is also metre’s unit of measure. In *De oratore*, Cicero associates it with “beginning or ending emphatic passages” (“supplisio pedis in contentionibus aut incipiendis aut finiendis”, Cicero 1942, 176-7). “Supplisio” (or its variant form “supplotio”) is therefore a technique to trigger emotions, just like classical metre was thought to be. Philip Sidney recognized this function of quantitative metre in *The Defence of Poetry*, Sidney defines the “ancient” sort “of versifying” as “more fit for music, both words and time observing quantity, and more fit lively to express divers passions, by the low and lofty sound of the well-weighed syllable” (2002, 115), thereby suggesting a close connection between music and quantitative metre.

Sidney’s definition as “more fit for music” is particularly interesting to the purposes of performance. The musical aspect of quantitative metre was explored by Thomas Campion, both a poet and a musician (Manuwald 2012) and one of the leading figures of the quantitative venture in English (Harington 1989, 116; Greer 1967). While there is no example of English songs in quantitative metres thought for performance, we do possess some in Neo-Latin. Macropedius composed the music as accompaniment for the choruses of his own plays (Bloemedal and Norland 2013, 6, 13; Grijp 2009). The printed edition of a 1587 performance of Joseph Scaliger’s Latin translation of *Ajax* includes the scores of the songs for the choruses, sung by four voices and written by the composer Johannes Cless (Scaliger 1587, aiv-cviiir). The corpus of Jesuit drama is particularly rich in this regard (Filippi 2016; Kennedy 2016). One may wonder whether music accompanied also the choruses (and possible the pomps) in the *Antigone* by Watson, who must have been familiar with Jesuit theatre thanks to his stay at the English college of Douai and who in a later work of his would display his musical competence, probably acquired during his stay in Italy.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Watson’s musical competence is testified *The First Set of Italian Madrigals Englished, not to the Sense of the Original Dittie, but after Affection of the Noate*.

While the musical accompaniment in Watson’s *Antigone* is bound to remain conjectural, this paper has hopefully ascertained Watson’s merits as a ‘metrical translator’. His claim that he rendered the choruses “in the same metres used by Sophocles” (“ac eisdem, quibus utitur Sophocles”) has been evaluated and found as true even in the finest aspects of what a metrical translation can entail, i.e., strophic corresponsion. In so doing, Watson matched Erasmus’ achievements as a pioneering ‘metrical translator’ of Greek tragedy in *Hecuba*, an endeavour soon abandoned in the version of *Iphigenia at Aulis*. However, it is the approach in the latter that became predominant among Continental humanists, including Buchanan, who relied on Senecan schemes and mostly eschewed metrical variety in the choruses. In *Alcestis*’ choral odes, however, Buchanan did explore more complex solutions in order to replicate the original metrical scheme in isolated passages, but never matching Watson’s skill in mirroring the Sophoclean lyrical metre. It should be noted that their translations were thought for various kinds of cast: Watson had university students in mind; Buchanan’s students were much younger, being the college of Guyenne an equivalent of the English grammar school (McFarlane 1981, 82). Nevertheless, this did not prevent the Scotsman from challenging his pupils with complex metrical schemes in *Alcestis*. Watson’s and Buchanan’s metrical translations thus suggest that quantitative prosody – even the sophisticated metrical solutions of Greek tragic choruses – was part of the didactic contents that Neo-Latin academic drama was meant to convey.

Published in 1590, this collection of madrigals is not a proper translation from Italian into English: as hinted by the subtitle, the text is 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.

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FRANCESCO DALL'OLIO

Two Worlds, One Language: Metrics for the Chorus in Buchanan's Euripidean Translations¹

Abstract

This article offers the first attempt at a complete analysis of the metrics of the Choral odes in George Buchanan's Latin translations of Euripides' *Medea and Alcestis*. The different solutions adopted by the humanist to render the complex metrics of those pieces in Greek tragedies are evaluated against the background formed by the history of the reception and translation of Greek tragedy in Renaissance Europe, as well as Buchanan's own life and career. For *Medea*, it is shown how the adoption of a simplified metrical scheme connects the text to the context of its original scholastic performance at La Guyenne, while the more complex solution adopted in *Alcestis* is connected to the important changes occurring in the 1550s regarding the critical reading of Greek *stasima*, especially Adrien Turnèbe's edition of Sophocles (1553), where the division of the *stasima* in a strophic system was presented for the first time.

KEYWORDS: George Buchanan; *Medea*; *Alcestis*; Neo-Latin drama; translation studies; reception studies

Up until the first decade of the twenty-first century, studies regarding George Buchanan's tragic corpus focused almost exclusively on the two Biblical tragedies *Baptistes* and *Iephtes*; much less attention was devoted to his Latin translations of Euripides' *Medea* and *Alcestis*.² As a result, these text were

¹ This article is part of a research I carried out within the 2017 PRIN project Classical Receptions in Early Modern English Drama (Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Verona).

² The preference for Buchanan's original tragedies dates back to the Renaissance. Despite the praise the Euripidean translations received for the quality of their Latin and their faithfulness to the original, the Biblical tragedies (especially *Iephtes*) were not only almost immediately translated in French and German, but also staged in France and abroad. They thus exerted a more recognisable influence on the development of both Neo-Latin drama and French classical tragedy, as acknowledged by numerous studies. Scholarly research of the 20th century also focused on Buchanan's reprisal of structural features of Greek tragedies in these original works, the literary practice of 'borrowing' terms from classical Latin writers and the complex relationship with

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often underestimated, and their place in Buchanan's corpus was deemed of minor importance. It is telling that in Ian McFarlane's monumental biography of Buchanan *Alcestis* is only briefly mentioned and *Medea* is considered more for its relationship with the rest of the corpus than for its literary value (see McFarlane 1981, 117-21). The only major study of the translations in the last century was the edition of the whole tragic corpus by Peter Sharratt and Peter G. Walsh. The commentary they offer on the texts of the tragedies (Buchanan 1983, 295-312 and 313-31, respectively) represents the first serious attempt at considering their relationship both with the original Greek text and their place in Buchanan's life and career.

In the last decade, Buchanan's *Medea* and *Alcestis* have undergone a sort of critical resurgence, due to the combined influence of translation studies sparking a new interest in Renaissance Neo-Latin drama and the ongoing reconsideration of the influence and presence of Greek tragedy in Renaissance Europe.³ The last six years in particular have seen the publication of some important studies offering a new perspective on both *Medea* and *Alcestis*. Zoé Schweitzer (2013; 2015) provided a more in-depth analysis of the reasons behind Buchanan's choice to translate these tragedies and perceived pedagogical value in Buchanan's decision to stay close to the original text. Jean-Frédéric Chevalier's analysis of *Medea* 271-356 highlighted how Buchanan's reprisal of terms from classical Latin authors expands and deepens the emotional resonance of the translation through allusions to specific passages of Latin poetry (2011). Last but certainly not least, Lucy Jackson (2020) offered the first complete study of the original performance of Buchanan's *Medea*, pointing out the relationship of the text with previous literary tradition and its scholastic context, with all that entailed regarding the translation's educational purpose. All these authors acknowledged that the translations are more complex and varied texts than was previously thought. Jackson in particular showed great awareness of the fact that a complete study of *Medea* and *Alcestis* would involve a combination of different critical approaches, such as translation studies, reception studies, performance studies and literary studies (cf. Jackson 2020, 47).

The aim of this article is to bring forward this line of research, by

Renaissance literary theory about tragedy. On those issues, see respectively McFarlane 1981, 201-5 and 390-2; Walsh 1986; Cardinali 2018.

³ For the role of translation studies, especially the works of Lawrence Venuti, in developing a new interest towards Neo-Latin drama I refer to Jackson (2020, 46) and the volume of studies she refers to at n. 16. As for the new approaches to the presence and influence of Greek tragedy in Renaissance Europe, see the introduction written by Tania Demetriou and Tanya Pollard for a special issue of *Classical Reception Journal* devoted to this issue in early modern England (Demetriou-Pollard 2017); other texts are mentioned in Jackson 2020, 46n19.

focusing on the metrics of the choral odes in Buchanan's translations. More specifically, I intend to highlight how Buchanan's choice of metres for the *stasima* (the choral odes) helps us define the nature of these texts in relation to their context of composition and/or printing. This also means a more accurate placement of both texts inside Buchanan's literary and academic career. Moreover, it is my belief that the different solutions the Scottish humanist adopted for the translation of the metrics of Euripidean *stasima* show how he reacted to the changes in the way Renaissance literary culture viewed the formal structures of Greek tragedy, in particular those concerning perception of the *stasima*'s structure.⁴

To my knowledge, no such study has ever been undertaken. Schweitzer does not mention metrics at all, and the few remarks on this matter in both Chevalier and Jackson regard exclusively the iambic trimeter of the dialogues (cf. Chevalier 2011, 183-4; Jackson 2020, 50). The only other study considering the metrics of Buchanan's Choral odes I know of is Vedelago's article in the present issue, whose focus is on how Buchanan's use of metrical elements such as syllabic quantity aims to recreate the rhythm of ancient metrics. On the contrary, I have chosen to concentrate on the connection between Buchanan's choices of metres for his translations and the history of reception of Greek tragedy during the Renaissance. This also includes an insight on how Buchanan's choices echo Renaissance translation theory, how both texts are placed inside the humanist's career and their connection with their original scholastic performance at La Guyenne.

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I shall start with a necessarily brief, and far from complete, survey of the reception and translation history of Greek *stasima* before and during Buchanan's time. This will provide a background against which to evaluate Buchanan's own choices, while also giving us a glimpse of how complex the field of both scholarly research and poetical activity was, and how significantly it changed in the three decades of Buchanan's activity as a translator of Euripides.

The question of how to render the complex metrical structures of the *stasima* was one of the most difficult to answer for any Renaissance translator approaching Greek tragedy, aggravated as it was by substantial

⁴ In that sense, my paper moves on a similar ground to Cardinali 2018. There, the scholar viewed an evolution between *Baptistes* and *Iepthes*, with the second tragedy being closer to the Renaissance definition of 'tragedy'; here, I propose an analogous evolution between *Medea* and *Alcestis* in relation to Renaissance critical reception of Greek tragedy.

ignorance. Up until the 1550s, Renaissance editors of Greek tragedies were unaware that the *stasima* were divided into strophes designed to respond to each other with an identical metrical structure. This was also due to the absence of a printed edition of the *scholia* of the tragedies posing another obstacle to the understanding of the metrical structure of these pieces.⁵ As a result, Renaissance translators of Greek tragedy were left with texts which were highly complex in both style and content, seemingly for no discernible reason. Of course, this also made them quite difficult to translate, as Erasmus found out when he set out to produce the first complete translations of Greek tragedies in early modern Europe. In the dedicatory letter to the first, *Hecuba* (1507),⁶ he lamented the effort he made in trying to understand these almost incomprehensible texts: “choros nescio quanam affectatione adeo obscuros, ut Oedipo quopiam aut Delio sit opus magis quam interprete” (“the choruses are so obscure, with I don’t know how much incomprehensible affectation, that one would need an Oedipus or an Apollo more than an interpreter”).⁷ And in the dedicatory letter to his other translation, that of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, he not only repeated such queries, but even accused the ancient poets of having lost sight of the good norms of eloquence: “Nusquam enim mihi magis ineptisse videtur antiquitas quam in huiusmodi choris, ubi, dum nimium affectat nove loqui, vitavit eloquentiam, dumque verborum miracula venatur, in rerum iudicio cessavit” (“Nowhere else do the ancients seem to me to have been so senseless as in such written choruses, where, through too much affectation due to speaking bizarrely, they ended up making bad speeches: while chasing after the wonders of the word, they lost all perspective on the content”).

The way Erasmus resolved the issue of translating such complicated pieces of poetry changed deeply between the two translations. For *Hecuba*, Erasmus opted to respect with the utmost fidelity the difficult structure of the *stasima*, replicating it verse for verse. He himself affirms it so, in a preface to the reader specifically intended to present an exhaustive list of

⁵ On the other hand, the *scholia* about Aristophanes’ comedies were already printed (at least part of them) from the *editio princeps* edited by Aldus (Venice 1498, USTC 760251), allowing from the start a greater understanding of the metrical structures of the Choral odes in Greek comedy. It is then possible that the editors of the tragedy were, at some level, aware of the way the texts were supposed to be read.

⁶ Erasmus’ translations were printed for the first time in Paris in 1506 by Joss Bade (USTC 143156), but the scholar was not satisfied with this edition, and contacted Aldus Manutius for a new one (Venice 1507, USTC 828497) to be prepared under his supervision. It is this text that I quote, in the version edited by Barberi Squarotti (Erasmus 2000; translation mine).

⁷ Erasmus’ words echo those of Aldus himself, who expressed a similar opinion in the preface to his edition of Euripides’ corpus (cf. Barberi Squarotti in Erasmus 2000, 184).

the metres he employed in his translations. Here Erasmus remarked how the metres he used in the *stasima* of *Hecuba* are almost the same ones as in Euripides ("ferme iisdem"). This decision is in line with the nature of the text, presented by Erasmus as a preparatory exercise for his translation of the New Testament (see Rummel 1985, 30).⁸ In that case, Erasmus' ability to faithfully replicate the formal structures of the tragedy served as confirmation that he would have been able to do the same with the sacred text. It should not go unnoticed that, for the time, this represented a break away from the Medieval practice of translating non-sacred texts *ad sensum*, adapting their content to the cultural horizon of the reader and the translator, without respecting the formal structures of the text (see Morini 2006, 11-13): a practice Erasmus openly rejects, branding it as an excuse others used to mask their ignorance. His own translation of *Hecuba* is one of the first examples outside Italy of what Massimiliano Morini called "rhetorical translation" (i.e. the new style of translation developed by Italian humanists, bent on reproducing the formal and stylistic features of the text translated as well as its content).⁹

The spirit in which Erasmus approaches *Iphigenia in Aulis* is quite different.¹⁰ This time Erasmus admits to having translated the text "tum fusius tum copiosius" ("more freely and richly"), that is to say, having expanded every part of the text which could prove obscure. As part of this process, he also revises his initial decision to reproduce the original metrics, and opts to correct the "immodicam . . . carminum varietatem ac licentiam" ("unruly . . . diversity and freedom of verse") of the *stasima* by replacing the original metrical patterns with new ones of his own creation shaped after that of such Senecan tragedies as *Oedipus*, *Medea* and *Phaedra*.¹¹ Just as in those plays, we have one choral ode (in Erasmus' case, the *parodos*) composed in several differentiated metres and the other five in a simpler metrical scheme made up of just one or two metres. The metres themselves employed by Erasmus,

⁸ To which it must be added Erasmus' personal convictions about the educational value of theatre, on which see Norland 1985 (specifically on Euripides, 551).

⁹ We could also see it as one of the earliest examples of 'foreignizing' translation as defined by Lawrence Venuti (Venuti 2008, 19), one aimed at "creat[ing] new conditions of readability". As the first complete Latin translation of a Greek tragedy, and one advocating fidelity even to the most difficult aspects of Euripides' text, it was indeed an innovative work.

¹⁰ I refer to Rummel 1985, 28-33 for a more in-depth examination of the context of Erasmus' translations and the different aims behind them, which also explain the different attitude the humanist held towards translation.

¹¹ Every reference to the metrics of Senecan tragedies in this article is based on the *conspectus metrorum* redacted by Otto Zwierlein in his Oxford edition of Seneca's theatre: see Seneca 1986, 464-6. Erasmus also showed great interest and respect for Seneca and proposed to Joss Bade an edition of his tragedies in 1512 (see Norland 1985, 550-1).

while not completely coinciding with those used by Seneca (Erasmus does use some metres absent in the works of the Latin tragedian), are mostly derived from his work. While this does not mean the complete renunciation of a 'rhetorical' translation,¹² still, from a metrical standpoint, such solution marks this second translation as a text closer to the cultural horizon of his readers. It is not fortuitous that, following Erasmus' examples, the practice of substituting the original Greek metrics with a new structure consisting of verses and/or poetical structures typical of the receiving language (usually employing them in already existing forms), would become an established tradition in subsequent translations of Greek tragedy.

Erasmus' translations also determined the place of Senecan metrical patterns as the model for Latin translations of Greek *stasima*. The choice was, in a way, predictable. Not only were Seneca's tragedies the only available example of Latin tragic theatre, but Seneca had been the recognised stylistic and formal inspiration for early modern tragedies since Albertino Mussato's *Ecerinis* (1315 ca). In addition, Seneca had also been enjoying a fair degree of theatrical fortune from the last decades of the 15th century onwards, starting with two almost contemporary performances of *Phaedra* in Rome and Leipzig around 1485.¹³ With the growing importance of the staging of Greek and Latin plays in academic contexts as an exercise for students, the fortune of Seneca as a model for the translation of Greek tragedians only grew, sometimes leading to a proper 'rewriting' of Greek tragedies in a more 'Senecan' way.

In the almost forty years between Erasmus and Buchanan, a relatively high number of translations of Greek tragedies followed.¹⁴ All of them

¹² Erasmus still respects the basic formal structures of the Greek tragedy, without modifying the order of the episodes nor deleting parts of it to make it more similar to what his time would have seen as 'tragedy'. In this sense, his translation can still be seen as the work of a Renaissance translator, not a Medieval one, according to Morini's definition of the different methods of translation.

¹³ On both performances, see the respective entries on the APGRD. The performance in Leipzig (APGRD 4896) seems to be a recitation of the Senecan tragedy, while the one in Rome (APGRD 3658) is an actual performance organized by Pomponius Leto and his students, first in a public square and then in private form at Castel Sant'Angelo and the palace of Cardinal Riario: see Smith 1988, 99-102.

¹⁴ In 1518 appeared Thomas Kirkmayer's Latin translation of all Sophocles' plays and, in 1541, around the time Buchanan translated *Medea*, the first complete Latin translation of Euripides' corpus by Rudolf Collinus (USTC 654885). As for Aeschylus, Jean de Saint-Ravy's Latin translation would appear only in 1555 in Basel (USTC 609466). Cf. Helou (2007, 9-13, and also 28-31) for the activity of the first two Italian translators of Greek plays in the 1520s, Alessandro Pazzi de' Medici and Luigi Alamanni. In France, the first Greek play to be translated into the vernacular by Lazare de Baïf was Sophocles' *Electra*, published in Paris in 1537 after its staging at Chateau Vallon (APGRD 5445;

adhered to Erasmus' example of devising a new metrical scheme for the Choral odes using verses and/or structures typical of the receiving language. For the Latin translations, this meant a perpetuation of Senecan metrics, either along the lines established by Erasmus or through different solutions. At the same time, the humanist theory of 'rhetorical translation' became predominant in Renaissance Europe. In 1540, four years before the printing of *Medea*, Etienne Dolet published *La manière de bien traduire d'une langue en autre*, the first 'official' presentation of such a theory in Renaissance France. In this text, the author established five important rules for translation, among which was the affirmation that it was not necessary to strive to translate word for word, verse for verse (third rule), but to rework the text so that it proves harmonious and fluent in the new language (fifth rule).¹⁵ In this way, theoretical thinking sanctioned the practice of crafting a new metrical scheme out of already existing Latin ones (usually inspired by Seneca) for the Choral odes in Greek tragedy as the predominant method of rendering such pieces, thus allowing translators to pay no attention to the original metric structures, the knowledge of which was still incomplete.

Things slightly changed in the 1550s. In 1553, a new edition of the Greek text of Sophocles' corpus, edited by Adrien Turnèbe, was printed in Paris. Turnèbe's edition not only contained the *scholia* to the text, but also recognized, for the first time, that the metrical structure of the *stasima* was built upon a system of strophic responsiveness. Another twenty years would pass before Thomas Canter applied the same treatment to an edition of Euripides (Antwerp 1571, USTC 411593). In the meantime, Turnèbe's Sophocles exerted some influence upon the way translators looked at Greek tragedies, even more so because it was published in a decade which was not only full of translations but also witnessed an active interest in classic versification, whose most renowned example is the activity of the poets of the group of La Pléiade.

On that note, it should be pointed out that the activity of this highly influential group of intellectuals and poets trying to reform French poetry through imitation of the ancients also extended to tragic theatre. One of their members, Antoine La Baif,¹⁶ produced the first French translation of four tragedies, two by Sophocles (*Trachiniae* and *Antigone*) and two by Euripides

USTC 73599); it was followed by a great number of other translations, on which see Stevens (1961, 121) and Leroux (2015, 244-5). Finally, we should not forget Gentian Hervet's Latin translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* (Lyon 1541, USTC 140114), whose author was a friend and colleague of Buchanan at La Guyenne (cf. McFarlane 1981, 80).

¹⁵ I present Dolet's rules as they are paraphrased by Paul Chavy (Chavy 1981, 291-4). Both him and Morini point out that Dolet was rephrasing concepts already established by Italian humanists: see Morini 2006, 9-11, 13-15.

¹⁶ The son of Lazare, the translator of Sophocles' *Electra* (see above, n. 14).

(*Helen* and *Medea*); unfortunately, only *Antigone* and the prologue to *Helen* were printed (see Stevens 1961, 121). More importantly, a second one, Jean de la Péruse, wrote the first 'classical' French tragedy, *Medée*, printed for the first time in 1547 (USTC 29814). His work enjoyed great success (the USTC archive records ten reprints, from 1547 to 1613) and was highly praised for many reasons, one of which was the way he managed to use French verses and metres to recreate and/or imitate ancient metrics. It is therefore telling that, since the first edition (la Péruse 1547), the five Choral odes of the tragedy are divided into strophes and composed in different metrical schemes, in a way reminiscent of the Greek *stasima*: an ulterior evidence of the changes occurring in the reading of those pieces during the Renaissance.

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“Medeam non in hoc scripseram, ut ederetur, sed cum Graecis literis absque magistro darem operam, ut verba singula inter scribendum diligentius expenderem: amicis importune flagitantibus edidi, cum Latinas literas Burdegalae docerem”¹⁷ (“I did not write *Medea* for publication, but to practise the Greek language in the absence of a teacher, to learn how to use individual terms more precisely while writing. At the insistence of friends I published it, while I was teaching Latin in Bordeaux”). Thus writes Buchanan in a letter to Daniel Rogers in 1579,¹⁸ describing the long creative process which preceded the publication of his first Euripidean translation as a pendant to a reprinting of Erasmus' translations (Paris 1544, USTC 149176). Although we are unable, due to the lack of a manuscript tradition, to ascertain the differences between the texts, this initial status of the text as an autodidactic exercise may be part of the reason for the very simple, and almost mechanical, metrical pattern of *Medea*.¹⁹

The entire scheme is built on the opposition between two metres, iambic trimeter for the episodes and anapaestic dimeter for the *stasima*; the only

¹⁷ I quote the text from Buchanan 1725, 755. The translation is mine.

¹⁸ This seems to contradict a passage of his autobiography, where Buchanan said that he composed *Medea* after *Baptistes* when he was teaching at La Guyenne (see below). However, I agree with the solution proposed by Sharratt and Walsh (Buchanan 1983, 3-4), according to which *Baptistes* was the first tragedy to be written for staging by the students, while *Medea*, already translated by Buchanan, was proposed later.

¹⁹ For both translations, I refer to the *conspectus metrorum* provided by Sharratt and Walsh in Buchanan 1983, 335-7. It is true that *Medea* has always been considered the less refined of the two translations; Sharratt and Walsh even found that “*Medea* contains more translation errors than *Alcestis*; these errors are not, however, numerous” (Buchanan 1983, 295).

exception is the second *stasimon*, in iambic dimeters.²⁰ This means that the original metrical variety is drastically reduced to the uniform use of just one metre, thus making the Choral odes basically as repetitive as the episodes: a fitting choice for a young and still inexperienced scholar, approaching the translation of a Greek tragedy for personal reasons. And while it is true that with such an exercise Buchanan was following Erasmus' steps, the absence of any emphasis on this connection in the dedicatory letter of the printed text suggests that we should not see this as a conscious attempt to emulate the illustrious predecessor. If he had wanted to, Buchanan could have easily pointed out that in translating a Greek tragedy (to learn the language) he was imitating Erasmus, even more so considering that his translation was printed together with *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia*: this should have meant that the editor was implicitly putting it on the same level. But this did not happen; indeed, were it not for the letter to Rogers, we would not know about this initial approach of Buchanan's to the text. The fact that Buchanan, in that same letter to Rogers, maintains that he published *Medea* at the insistence of friends (another piece of information absent in the dedicatory letter)²¹ only heightens the suspicion that we are confronted with a work not destined for printing.

However, other factors tell a different story. First of all, the choice of anapaestic dimeter as the metre for the *stasima* suggests two different readings. On the one hand, as the main lyrical metre in Seneca's tragedies,²² it would seem as the most obvious choice, even more so by taking into account the well-established practice of using a type of metrics inspired by Seneca for translating Greek *stasima*. However, the use of only one lyrical metre is a much more specific solution, one present in only two tragedies in Seneca's corpus, the late (and we know spurious) *Octavia* and *Hercules Oetaeus*. The similarity is particularly stronger with the first one, where both the entire part of the Chorus and the lamentations of the tragic heroine Octavia are written in anapaestic dimeters, with no other metre being used, in almost the same way as Buchanan's *Medea*. Such a close similarity can be seen as a conscious choice on Buchanan's part to use a metrical pattern not generically inspired by Seneca, but purposely modelled on one or two specific works.

²⁰ There are other metres used as a way to mark the end either of a speech or a part of it (see Buchanan 1983, 314). However, their recurrence is not regular enough for them to be considered.

²¹ An absence even more significant, since such assertions of modesty were usual in texts of this kind.

²² In addition to Zwierlien's *conspectus*, see Turrini 2010, 12. Seneca's influence on Buchanan's theatre has been a much discussed topic, but on the matter of metrics, Senecan influence has always been acknowledged: see Green 2014, 122.

But there is another possible reading. In Euripides' text the anapaestic dimeter is the metre of the Choral interventions inside the episodes (see Euripides 2004, 229-36). If we compare those passages (Eur. 96-130, Buch. 101-216; Eur. 357-63, Buch. 381-7; Eur. 759-63, Buch. 802-6; Eur. 1080-1115, Buch. 1130-1166), we see that they are the points of the text where the metrics of the original and that of the translation coincide almost entirely. I would suggest that the choice of anapaestic dimeter for the *stasima* on Buchanan's part is influenced by this aspect of Euripides' original text as well as by Seneca. It would be in agreement with the recent observations of Chevalier and Jackson about Buchanan's faithfulness to either Euripides himself, or to a more Greek than Latin prosody (cf. Chevalier 2011, 184; Jackson 2020, 50).

As for the iambic dimeter used in the second *stasimon*, it is also a metre present in Seneca's tragedies, but it is far less used than the anapaestic dimeter; in fact, there is only one lyrical piece in all the Senecan corpus where it is extensively used (Cassandra's prophecy in Sen. Ag. 759-74, on whom see Turrini 2010, 44-7). However, the iambic dimeter recurred frequently in late Latin poets such as Prudentius, whose influence on other poetic works of Buchanan is well documented,²³ and had also been, since the 4th century, the typical metre of Christian hymns (see Ceccarelli 1999, 44). It may not be a coincidence that Buchanan employs it in a *stasimon* where the Chorus invokes a divinity (Aphrodite) for protection. While I would not advocate that this was a way for Buchanan to somewhat maintain the original metrical variety of the Greek *stasima*, I do however insist that choices like this reveal the ability of a young – but certainly not inexperienced – poet to balance the respect of an established tradition with slight traces of a more personal touch.

But it is not just a matter of personal pride on Buchanan's part, nor of his need to differentiate himself from those who preceded him. It is acknowledged that Buchanan's tragic corpus, including the translations, was composed to be performed by the students of the college of La Guyenne, where Buchanan worked as a teacher around the time of the printing of *Medea*. The author himself asserted so in his autobiography, years later (1577):²⁴

²³ Cf. Green 1986, 51-2, and the list of the metres used by Buchanan for his paraphrases of the Psalms presented there, complete of references to the Latin authors serving as models. Prudentius is the one of the names most frequently quoted.

²⁴ I quote the text as presented in Appendix F of Ian McFarlane's biography (McFarlane 1981, 541-3); the translation is mine. The actual length of Buchanan's stay at La Guyenne is hard to establish. We know that he resided there continuously for three years (1539-42), but some evidence suggests he did not abandon the college after that date, but rather lived for some time between Paris and Bordeaux. See McFarlane 1981, 93-6, 103.

Ibi in scholis, quae tum sumptu publico erigebantur, triennium docuit: quo tempore scripsit quattuor tragoedias . . . Eas enim ut consuetudini scholae satisfaceret, quae per annos singulos singulas poscebat fabulas, conscripserat: ut earum actione iuventutem ab allegoriis, quibus tum Gallia vehementer se oblectabat, ad imitationem veterum qua posset retraheret.

[There he worked as a teacher for three years in the schools, which were at the time being founded at public expense, and wrote four tragedies . . . He wrote them to satisfy the school's custom requiring a play every year for staging, to divert young people from the allegories, which enjoyed great success in France back then, towards the imitation of the ancients as much as he could.]

Here Buchanan plays down his feats, presenting them as simply part of a scholastic habit, and he was not wrong: the staging of a Latin play (either a Senecan tragedy, or a translation from Sophocles or Euripides) had been part of the educative curricula of European universities since the beginning of the 16th century. However, recent studies pointed out that the performances of proper tragedies like those of Buchanan were a novelty for the college of La Guyenne, which throws new light on the matter.²⁵ Other than providing the students with an opportunity to prove their skills in both rhetoric and Latin, these events were a chance for the school to promote the birth of a new kind of theatre, detached from the previous theatrical tradition, with its strongly moralizing tone and openly confessional purpose, and more bent on rhetorical exercise and a more free (i.e. not strictly confessional) discussion of political and religious issues.²⁶ This meant two things. On the one hand, the tragedies had to meet the necessities of a performance: their metrics could not, therefore, be too complicated, in order to facilitate the students called to declaim the verse. On the other, the text had to declare its stance as an innovative text, different from what the readers and the audience were used to seeing at the time in the context of a scholastic performance. Lucy Jackson maintains this is why Buchanan chose iambic trimeters for the dialogues

²⁵ According to Giacomo Cardinali (Cardinali 2018, 245-6) before Buchanan's *Baptistes* the texts most frequently performed at the college were either *dialogi* (moral discussions between two characters, inspired by Erasmus' *colloquia*) or *comédies* (allegorical compositions).

²⁶ All Buchanan's tragedies are understood to be involved with the discussion of political and religious issues of the time. The connection of both *Iephtes* and *Alcestis* to contemporary discussion about the values of vows has always been recognised, and the political undertones of *Baptistes* involving good kingship and tyranny had often been considered. As for *Medea*, see Jackson 2020, 52-4, on the play as a reflection on rhetoric, its successes and its failings.

instead of the Latin iambic *senarii*²⁷ (see Jackson 2020, 50), and I think this can also be applied to the choice of anapaestic dimeter for the Chorus. Seen in this light, the adoption of this metre for the part of the Chorus works as another way of declaring the stance of the play as a new kind of theatre, inspired by the examples of the ancients (both Seneca and Euripides).

At the same time, the simplification of the metrical patterns seemingly lends itself well to the context of scholastic performance; the text even ends with a conclusive statement reciting that the play “acta fuit Burdegalae an. MDXLIII” (“was played in Bordeaux, year 1543”).²⁸ This may not be a conclusive proof that the text we have is the one performed at La Guyenne, since, in the letter to Rogers, Buchanan admitted to have revised passages here and there when preparing the text for printing: “in ea cum multa negligentius elapsa essent, post aliquot annos recontravi eam, et quaedam in ea vulnera ita sanavi” (“since there were many things in that text that were so negligently not exact, after a few years I corrected them, and healed some wounds in it”). Once again, the lack of a manuscript tradition prevents us from asserting how extensive those revisions were. However, I think it likely for the printed text to be very close to the one performed, not just because of the chronological vicinity between the performance and the printing, but because the metres chosen by Buchanan for his translations are ones the students would have found familiar. We know that iambic trimeter was one of the most frequently studied Greek metres in Humanist schools, and as for anapaestic and iambic dimeters, we must take into account that, in the educational curriculum of La Guyenne, Seneca was taught only in the later classes, to the eldest pupils, together with many other Latin authors (see McFarlane 1981, 81-2; Jackson 2020, 52). Since it is probable that these pupils would also be the ones reciting the play,²⁹ this would mean that they should

²⁷ Sharratt and Walsh identified the dialogues as written in iambic *senarii*, the metre of ancient Latin comic authors as Plautus and Terence (Buchanan 1983, 335-7). Such a choice would not have been impossible, given Terence’s pre-eminence in Humanist educative curricula and the theatrical fortune his comedies enjoyed from the second half of the 15th century. Recent studies on Buchanan’s translations, such as Chevalier 2011 and Jackson 2020, prefer instead to identify the metre of the dialogues as iambic trimeter. While I do not contest this choice, I should point out that iambic trimeter had been identified as the metre for tragic dialogues from a century-old tradition, represented by Horace’s *Ars Poetica* 194-5 and Seneca (see Zimmermann 2016). I am therefore not sure we should treat it as the innovative choice Jackson seems to consider it.

²⁸ Every quotation from the text of the translations, including the dedicatory letters, comes from the text edited by Sharratt and Walsh (Buchanan 1983, 167); the translation is mine.

²⁹ We do not have any certain data on this; however, given how difficult and complex the reciting of a play would have been, and that Seneca was read only in the upper classes, it seems to be the most logical conclusion.

have no difficulty in reciting such a simple metrical scheme.

To sum up, the metrics of *Medea* – in spite of its apparent inelegance – reveals a very careful construction. On a literary level, it shows the hand of an already capable poet, handling a metrical model inspired by Seneca while, at the same time, revealing a personal hand. On a more general one, the metrics is consonant with the original nature of the text as a scholastic exercise, to which it is explicitly connected by the conclusive statement of his first edition; it might even be that it was the success of the performance that convinced Buchanan to publish the text.³⁰ It is certain, though, that as a first outing of Buchanan as a translator *Medea* proved to be a success,³¹ enough to encourage him to undertake another one.

*

Buchanan's second translation of Euripides would see the light of day in a very different period of the author's life. During the 1550s, a series of important works established Buchanan's prestige as a poet, to the point of deserving from his friend and printer Henri Estienne the appellation of "prince of his times" (see McFarlane 1981, 171). *Alcestis* is one of these works, with its printing (Paris 1556, USTC 204922) following *Iephtes* by two years and being contemporary to the first edition of the paraphrases of the Psalms. As the other two works, *Alcestis* was a text Buchanan composed in the previous decade (once again as a text to be performed at La Guyenne), and like the other two it enjoyed an immediate success, being reprinted immediately only one year later (Paris 1557, USTC 154348), then together with *Iephtes* in 1567 in Strasbourg (USTC 654884), and on its own in 1581 in Wittenberg (USTC 610652) and 1604 (see McFarlane 1981, 498). It was also included in Henri Estienne's anthology of Greek tragedies translated in Latin, Geneva 1567, USTC 450564). This was the beginning of a great critical fortune that would last until the 20th century: scholars have traditionally considered it far superior to *Medea* as a translation.³²

³⁰ After all, he 'did' say in his autobiography that he composed *Iephtes* and translated *Alcestis* because his first outings as a tragedian were successful beyond his expectations ("id cum ei prope ultra spem successisset, reliquas *Jepthen* et *Alcestin* paulo diligentius . . . elaboravit"; "since he succeeded almost beyond hope, he composed with a little more care the other two, *Jephtes* and *Alcestis*").

³¹ After the initial printing, *Medea* would be reprinted as a single text only once, in Strasbourg in 1598 (USTC 675431), but in 1567 it was included by Henri Estienne in his successful anthology of Greek tragedies in Latin translations (see below). See McFarlane 1981, 498-9.

³² Such an opinion is evident in both McFarlane's biography (1981, 183) and Sharratt and Walsh's edition (Buchanan 1983, 313: "B.'s careful revision and greater experience .

In this context, it is not surprising to see that Buchanan adopts a very different solution for the metrics of the *stasima*. Whereas in *Medea* he used only a few metres, in *Alcestis* the *stasima* are made out of a dozen different verses, disposed every time in a different metrical scheme. Almost every one of them is already present in Seneca,³³ and can also be found in the almost contemporary *Iephtes* (see Buchanan 1983, 334). This is clearly the work of a more competent poet, more confident in his ability and autonomous in his choices. It is also a too complicated scheme for a scholastic performance, and I think both McFarlane and Sharratt and Walsh were right in suggesting that the printed text is the result of a careful revision (cf. McFarlane 1981, 183; Buchanan 1983, 313).³⁴ This time there is no conclusive statement, as there is in *Medea*, declaring that the text has been performed, nor do we have information of any performance after the printing.³⁵

The only reference to a performance may perhaps be found in the dedicatory letter of the translation, where Buchanan exalts the greater effect *actio* has over mere reading for education:

Coniugalis amoris, pietatis, humanitatis et aliorum officiorum adeo plena sunt omnia ut non verear hanc fabulam comparare cum libris . . . philosophorum . . . ac nescio an etiam preferre debeam. actio enim rerum sermone et spiritu paene animata acrius quam nuda praecepta sensus impellit, et facilius in animos influit et illabitur; atque qui illapsa fuerit, firmiter haeret et quasi radices agit.

[All its parts are so full of conjugal love, compassion, humanity, and all the other recommended virtues, that I am not afraid to compare this play to the books of . . . philosophers . . . and perhaps I should prefer it to them. Action, almost entirely animated by speeches and interpretation, is more effective instruction than bare precepts, and more easily enters the souls and sticks into them; and once descended, it remains more attached in the memory and acts almost as a root.]

It is possible that here Buchanan is referring to a performance of the play, given that in classical rhetoric the term he used indicates the performance of oratorical discourse. However, it could just as well be a general statement

. . . makes [it] . . . technically superior”). The closeness of the Latin text to the original Greek has also been noted by Zoé Schweitzer (2015, 121-3).

³³ The only exception being the few anacreontics and the trochaic dimeter catalectic.

³⁴ The revision may have requested some time, since the *privilège* for the printing is dated 1553 (cf. McFarlane 1981, 183).

³⁵ The one at Elizabeth's court identified by McFarlane (1981, 236) has later been revealed as the result of a misreading of the source text: see Buchanan 1983, 313.

about the educative power of theatre, even more so because Buchanan is not recalling here any particular staging. In my opinion, it would be safer to conclude that the text printed in 1556 is not the one staged about fifteen years earlier at La Guyenne, and that it is likely it was never staged elsewhere.

This is not the only element inviting us to read the translation as a more literary work than its predecessor. The person to whom Buchanan dedicated *Alcestis*, Princess Marguerite of Navarre, was the patroness of the poets of La Pléiade (see McFarlane 1981, 183), among which Buchanan had both pupils and admirers (see McFarlane 1981, 163-8). Jean de la Péruse in particular had been his pupil at the Collège de Boncourt, and it has been recognized that Buchanan's translation of *Medea* influenced the composition of La Péruse's own tragedy on the same subject (see McFarlane 1981, 165; Stone 1984, 218; Busca 2015). The dedication to the princess could thus be seen as a way for Buchanan to connect himself to the most highly regarded literary movement of the time, which also means that the metrical patterns he chose for the translation of the *stasima* have to be seen as something more than just an excuse to show his ability as a poet. We should also remember that the 1550s saw important developments in the comprehension and critical reading of such pieces. Buchanan was in contact with the men responsible for promoting such changes, such as Adrien Turnèbe, who had been his friend since his first period at La Guyenne (see McFarlane 1981, 97) so it would then be no surprise that he purposely decided to handle his Latin metres in order to create metrical patterns echoing both the most recent discoveries in that field and the poetical feats of the younger generation of poets.³⁶

The metrics of *Alcestis* confirms such a hypothesis: the fact that every single intervention of the Chorus presents a different metrical pattern, does indeed produce a text which seemingly imitates the metrical variety of the Greek metrics. Some of them, such as Eumelus' monody during the second episode (409-27) and the Chorus' intervention at 780-6, are still in simple anapaestic dimeters, as in *Medea*. The second *stasimon* (449-94) is divided in two sections in two different metres (iambic trimeter hypercatalectic and anapaestic dimeter) as some Senecan odes; the same thing can be said for the fourth, in interwoven glyconics and pherecrateans (a solution absent in Senecan tragedies, though).³⁷ Then, we have three odes where different

³⁶ Zoé Schweitzer also saw an educational and ethical purpose in such a choice of translation, deeply bound to the great morality Buchanan saw in this tragedy: "translate as Buchanan does, by designating the Greek world as the origin of morality . . . is akin to a profession of humanist faith" (2015, 123). In this light, rendering as closely as possible the formal structures of Greek tragedy is a way to better render its moral content.

³⁷ According to Zwierlein's *conspectus*, there is only one pherecratean in the entire Senecan tragic corpus (*Phaedra* 1131), and only one Choral ode composed entirely of

metres are interwoven and alternated in a way which is distinctly un-Senecan and instead recalls the typical pattern of Greek *stasima*. It is also a metrical pattern absent in the other tragedies of Buchanan, which enables us to see it as an attempt to present it as a rendition as close as possible of the metrics of a typical Greek *stasimon*.

And on that note, I think I would suggest something which has escaped notice until now. In the first part of the article, I mentioned how in 1553 Turnèbe's edition of Sophocles introduced for the first time a division of the *stasima* into a strophic system. If we divide the texts of those three odes into sections based on the alternation between anapaestic dimeters and other metres, what comes out is a possible division of the metric patterns in what looks like a strophic system, in some cases complete with the repetition of some metrical patterns between 'strophes' and 'antistrophes':³⁸

PARODOS

- 1) 80-86 Anapaestic dimeters.
87 Anacreontean (= catalectic iambic dimeter).
88-9 Iambic trimeters.
- 2) 90-98 Anapaestic dimeters.
99-102 Iambic dimeters.
- 3) 103-7 Anapaestic dimeters.
108 Anapaestic monometer.
109 Anapaestic dimeter.
- 4) 110-32 Lesser sapphics with *adonii*.

FIRST *STASIMON* AND *ALCESTIS'* MONODY

- 1) 212-15 Anapaestic dimeter.
216 Trochaic dimeter.
217 Trochaic catalectic dimeter.
218 Trochaic dimeter.
219 Trochaic catalectic dimeter.

glyconics, the fourth one of *Oedipus*. Roger Green suggested that the use of glyconics and pherecrateans for the choral odes in *Iephtes* may be inspired by a passage of *Alcestis* (Green 2014, 122); however, in *Iephtes* we have one ode in glyconics and another in pherecrateans, not one with the two metres interwoven as in the passage from Euripides he refers to.

³⁸ I take the metres from Sharratt and Walsh's *conspectus metrorum* (I only substitute the iambic *senarii* with iambic trimetes, see n4 above), where they are disposed in order of presence in the single odes. The new disposition in strophes is my own. Such a division does not correspond to the one in Euripides' text and should be understood as an original creation by Buchanan.

- 220 Trochaic dimeter.
- 221 Trochaic catalectic dimeter.
- 222 Trochaic dimeter.
- 223-7 Catalectic trochaic dimeter.
- 228-30 Iambic trimeter.

- 2) 231-4 Anapestic dimeter.
- 235-7 Trochaic catalectic dimeter.
- 238-9 Iambic trimeter.

- 3) 240-9 Anapestic dimeter.
- 250-2 Anapestic trimeter.
- 253-4 Iambic trimeter.

- 4) 255-6 Anapestic dimeter.
- 257-8 Iambic trimeter.

- 5) 259-64 Anapestic dimeter.
- 265-6 Iambic trimeter.

- 6) 267-71 Anapestic dimeter.
- 272-3 Iambic trimeter.

- 7) 274-8 Anapestic dimeter.
- 279 Iambic trimeter.
- 280-6 Anapestic dimeter.

ADMETUS' RETURN AND KOMMOS

- 1) 908-9 Anapaestic dimeters.
- 910 Anapaestic trimeter

- 2) 911-18 Anapaestic dimeters.
- 3) 919-21 Anacreontean.
- 922-4 Trochaic catalectic dimeters.

- 4) 925-38 Anapestic dimeters.

- 5) 939-54 Iambic dimeters.
- 955 Adonius.

- 6) 955-70 Anapaestic dimeters.

- 7) 971-82 Trochaic catalectic dimeters.
- 983-9 Anapaestic dimeters.

There was a precedent for such an operation: Erasmus had already disposed three *stasima* of his *Iphigenia* according to a "stanzaic form" (Green 2014, 122). However, not only are some of the metres different between the two authors, but in Erasmus, the division in strophes does not always seem to correspond to a change in the metres used, nor does it establish a system

of metrical responsiveness between the different strophes. Those traits are patent to Buchanan's translation, and I would not think it too far-fetched to submit that they reveal the influence of both the recent work done by Adrien Turnèbe on Sophocles' text and La Péruse's recreation of this same metrics in his tragedy.

*

Through the analysis of the different metres Buchanan adopted to translate the Choral odes (the *stasima*) of *Medea* and *Alcestis*, I meant to give a picture which was as complete as possible of the texts in the context of both Buchanan's life and career and of the reception history of Greek tragedy in Renaissance Europe. On the one hand, the metrics of *Medea*, based on a reprisal of the metrics of late Senecan tragedies (with slight but significant corrections), reveal the proximity of the text printed in 1544 to its original context of scholastic performance at the college of La Guyenne: the apparent rigidity of its metrical pattern, with the different odes all rewritten through the use of almost only one metre, is to be seen as purposely crafted to facilitate student performance. On the other, the more complex metrical patterns of *Alcestis*, where metres taken by Seneca are placed inside a scheme closer to the original Greek one, in denouncing the nature of this second translation as a more 'literary' text (i.e. less connected to its scholastic roots) also reveals its relationship with contemporary development in French poetry and literary reception of Greek tragedy. Put together, these two different solutions to the problem of how to render the difficult metrics of Greek *stasima* not only confirm Buchanan's image as both a great Latin poet and as a Greek scholar deeply involved in the literary issues of his time, but also denounce an evolution in his way of looking at and reading Greek tragedy, going from an initial attitude of reading Euripides almost exclusively through the eyes of Seneca (*Medea*) to a more nuanced view of such texts as something similar in some ways, but different in others when compared to the Latin tragedian (*Alcestis*). We can then conclude that Buchanan's translations of *Medea* and *Alcestis* turn out to be more complex texts than they have been considered to be for many decades, and that their study has much to teach us regarding the reception history of Greek tragedy.

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SILVIA BIGLIAZZI*

Versifying the Senecan Chorus: Notes on Jasper Heywood's Emulative Approach to *Troas*¹

Abstract

Jasper Heywood's 1559 translation of Seneca's *Troades* is the first Senecan tragedy to be printed in England and is well-known for its free and inventive approach. Alterations include the addition of a whole speech and above all the radical transformation of the choral odes. It has been suggested that the addition of a new Chorus and the gradual effacement of the female collective at the level of drama respond to a poetic project establishing Heywood as a tragic poet in the *speculum* tradition. This article delves deeper into this question. Considering versification as a formal apparatus characterising the dramatic and perspectival functions of this new Chorus, it explores Heywood's response to the original metres of Seneca. It then discusses their apparent inconsistency in view of a poetic design grounded in Heywood's peculiar interpretation of this tragedy. A brief discussion of the textual transmission of Seneca's play elucidates how Heywood may have come to reconfigure the tragic female Chorus as an anonymous framing voice sharing in authorial knowledge.

KEYWORDS: *Troas*; Seneca; Jasper Heywood; rhyme royal

In his 1691 *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets*, Gerard Langbaine notices that, in his translation of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* (1561), Heywood "endeavours to keep to Seneca's Sence; and likewise to imitate his Verse, changing his Measure as often as the Author", as "the Reader may observe by comparing the *English Copy* with the *Latin Original*" (1691, 251). Differently from his translations of *Troas* (1559) and *Thyestes* (1560), *Hercules Furens* is presented in the two languages and in both "the *Chorus* of each Act [is] different from the Act it self [sic]" (ibid.). Interestingly, Langbaine calls this translation an imitation and a copy in accord with the textual accuracy and faithfulness to the original advertised in the title-page: ". . . newly perused and of all faultes whereof it did before abound diligently corrected, and

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so for the profit of young schollers so faithfully translated into English metre, that ye may se verse for verse tourned as farre as the phrase of the english permitteth". As a matter of fact, this parallel octavo edition placing the "original" and "the copy" face to face displays a clearly pedagogical intent (Ker and Winston 2012, 40). But the case of *Troas* is different and it is Heywood himself who suggests how in the paratextual material appended to his translation.

In his address "To the Readers" in *Troas* Heywood apologises to the "good reader" if "in any place" he has "swerved from the true sense, or not kept the royal speech meet for a tragedy" (28-9).² He claims to have "endeavoured to keep touch with the Latin, not word for word or verse for verse as to expounde it, but neglecting the placing of the words observed their sense" (51-3). He never mentions metres and verse, as he does in the "Preface" to *Hercules Furens*, where he repeats that he has followed the line-for-line method announced in the title-page. In the "Preface" to *Thyestes* he also alludes to his use of verse within the fictional frame of a dream vision, in the tradition of the *oraculum* (Pincombe 2012, 533), where he claims that Seneca himself invited him to rewrite his tragedies in the "metre of thy mother tongue" (54) in view of allowing men to see them "in English verse that never could Latin understand" (55-6) – a common idea at the time to justify the vernacularisation of Latin works. In these lines Heywood refers twice to English verse, suggesting a special attention to native measures. Indeed, what the reader finds in the play is a regular alternation of couplets of fourteeners for dialogues (a line "sounding harsh to the Ears of those that are used to Heroick Poetry", Langbaine would remark; 1691, 251) and pentameters with alternate rhymes, two verses Heywood was also to employ in *Hercules Furens* shortly afterwards. Thus, when Langbaine uses the word 'imitate' with regard to Seneca's verse in this last translation what he possibly means is the basic alternation of two measures for non-choric and choric parts, underlining a neat partition into separate dramatic portions requiring different metres. Clearly, the change from the fourteen-syllable line to the ten-syllable one is enough for Langbaine to mark a recognisable pattern in the English tradition, roughly corresponding to Seneca's basic variation between standard dialogue and lyric metres. The use of rhyme, which constitutes a massive innovation over the original – one harshly criticised by Ascham, among others (Attridge 1974, 93ff.) – is instead entirely ignored. Interestingly, the more varied metrical experiments Heywood displays in *Troas* go unmentioned – Langbaine only notices that "this Tragedy runs in Verses of fourteen Syllables, and for the most part his *Chorus* is writ in Verse

² All references to *Troas* and *Thyestes* are from Ker and Winston 2012. Numbers indicate lines.

of ten Syllables, which we call Heroick Verse" (1691, 253). What catches his attention in *Troas*, on the contrary, is Heywood's generally freer approach to the translation, including his treatment of the choral odes, which he re-elaborates through additions, substitutions and revisions:

First, as to his Additions; he has at the end of the *Chorus* after the first Act, added threescore Verses of his own Invention. In the beginning of the second Act, he has added a whole Scene, where he Introduces the Spectre of *Achilles* rising from Hell, to require the Sacrifice of *Polyxena*. To the Chorus of this Act, he has added three *Stanzas*. Secondly, as to his Alterations; Instead of translating the *Chorus* of the third Act, (which is wholly taken up with the Names of Forreign Countries, the Translation of which without Notes, he thought would be tiresome to the *English Reader*;) he has substituted in its stead, another *Chorus* of his own Invention. (1691, 253-4)

Heywood's apparent disregard for the authority of the Latin writer in *Troas* has been interpreted as evidence of his "hesitant but nonetheless ambitious attempt to garner recognition as a tragic poet" (Ker and Winston 2012, 22). Suggestively, Ker and Winston have read into his "Preface to the Tragedy" his desire to align himself with Chaucer:

He invokes a similar muse to Chaucer, who [in *Troilus and Criseyde*] appeals to 'Thesiphone', one of the three avenging furies, to help him to write 'woful vers,' which makes him 'wepen' as he writes. Using similar language of weeping and woefulness, Heywood asks a 'fury fell' [50] to 'guide' his 'hand and pen' [52-3] to write 'in weeping verse of sobs and sighs' [56]. Chaucer may be wryly hyperbolic, but Heywood is serious. Seneca is the original author, but Heywood presents himself as a solemn, tragic poet in his own right. (2012, 20)

Along similar lines, Pincombe has pointed out Heywood's allusion to Chaucer also in his "Preface" to *Thyestes*, where in his invocation of Megaera to imbue him with poetic fury he follows the medieval poet even to the point of repeating "the rhyme 'endite'/'write' as if to make the allusion obvious" (2012, 537).³ A sense of emulation beyond ordinary imitation is strong, as Pincombe argues, and the addition of a final scene with *Thyestes'* soliloquy that "acts as an extraordinary reversal of the final scene of Seneca's original"

³ "Inspire my pen with pensiveness this tragedy t'indite, / And as so dreadful thing beseems with doleful style to write" (335-6). As Pincombe comments, "it was not unusual for tragic poets in the Middle Ages to call upon one of the Furies to inspire them; and Heywood is here only following Geoffrey Chaucer in the opening invocation to *Troilus and Criseyde*: Thesiphone, thow help me for t'endite / This woful vers, that wepen as I write. / To the clepe I, thow goddess torment, / Thow cruwel Furie, sorwyng evere in peyne" (2012, 536). The words "write"/"endite" also occur at the end of lines in Heywood's "Preface" to *Troas* at 29, 53, 86, 89.

(539), seems to confirm it. Pincombe's remark is especially relevant here because in this particular translation Heywood's creative interventions coexist with a concern for Seneca's authority in ways that cannot be found in his address "To the Readers" in *Troas*, a play where his approach is much freer. In this address, Heywood complains about Seneca's text "being in many places very hard and doubtful" and "much corrupt by the default of evil printed books" (22-3). Lack of an authoritative edition of Seneca is the implied justification for manipulating the text to a much greater extent than he will do with *Thyestes*, where he claims to have 'received' a reliable manuscript from Seneca himself. But his critique of printers is not confined to his address in *Troas*. Bourne has rightly recalled that in the "Preface" to *Thyestes* Heywood protests "that Tottel had printed 'scant a sentence trewe,' even after Heywood had himself 'perusde their prooues'", and points out that when Tottel produced a new edition of the play later the same year, he corrected a few errors but did not touch typographic features. Thus, not surprisingly his translation of *Thyestes* was published by a different printer, possibly Richard Payne, who added "a large fleuron before each Chorus heading" with the effect of "a clean, visual distinction between dialogue and chorus" (2020, 60). And yet, from a typographical standpoint, except for this ornamental detail, those parts are equally cast in blackletter. But Heywood's preoccupation with printers does not end here. In the same "Preface" to *Thyestes*, Seneca too launches into a lament on the corrupt editions of his own tragedies. His offer to Heywood of a "gilded book" (189) containing the correct Latin manuscript is the answer able to contrast their unreliable transmission: "Now Gryphius, Colineus now, and now and then among, / He Aldus blamed with all the rest that in his works do miss / Of sense or verse; and still my book I did correct by his" (308-10).⁴ Heywood is clearly aware of textual problems, in spite of the hazy references to the books he seems to have consulted, and his acrimony against printers is further proof of his considering *Troas* a play of his own. This becomes particularly obvious in his treatment of the Chorus.

In their commendable edition of this translation (2012), Ker and Winston have argued that while Heywood translated the initial *kommos* between Hecuba and the women into "a lyric metre" (the iambic pentameter with crossed rhymes) he did not perceive it as a "genuine choral ode" and therefore created a second "more anonymous" and detached 'Chorus' (31). More recently, they have further argued that Heywood's ignorance of "whether

⁴ According to de Vocht, reference is here to "Simon de Colines (Colineus) printer in Paris, [who] edited in 1534 Seneca's works after Erasmus' emendations" (1913, 339, note on line 705). See also Daalder (1982, 86) and Ker and Winston (2012, 280). However, the publication de Vocht mentions, *Flores*, is an anthology of Senecan prose.

[the text was] left so of the author or part of it lost as time devoureth all things ('Preface' 72)" may have prompted him "to supply the wanting chorus, warning kings and princes of the unpredictability of fortune and shortness of life" (Winston and Ker 2013, 567). An awareness of the defective textual transmission together with a possible misunderstanding of the initial dirge as a full choral ode may lie behind the addition of a more impersonal choral ode (henceforth 1 Cho.). The detached voice of this new Chorus replaces the original passionate perspective of the Trojan women, who in 3 Cho. "speculate on the places to which they will be taken" (31), with more general considerations on the mutability of fortune. From this perspective, Heywood's main attempt would have been to "approximate Seneca's drama" (26) in order to obtain the same effect (Daalder 1982, lxiii) in various ways: for instance, by gesturing at a Senecan style in passages he freely re-elaborates by incorporating "sentences (and sententiae) . . . in order to produce scenes that fit the manner and matter of a Senecan tragedy" (Winston and Ker 2013, 566); but also by making it manifest in his approach to metre. It has been argued that his choice of specific verse forms and rhyming schemes typical of the English tradition, while having "no direct correlate in Latin poetry or in Seneca's given phrasing" (Ker and Winston 2012, 27), achieve "comparable, but not identical, English forms" (*ibid.*). Heywood did not experiment with quantitative verse,⁵ and the comparability Ker and Winston identify seems to echo Langbaine's comment on verse imitation with regard to shifting dramatic parts. However, looking more closely into how Heywood versified his odes induces different considerations about metrical comparability and equivalent effects.

In the following pages I will explore this question starting from the premise that, as Tarlinskaja pinpoints, the "form of verse is not just a symbol of poetry", but it "adds to what is expressed in the texts" (2014, 1) and therefore cannot be extrapolated from the dramatic parts it belongs to. I will argue that in *Troas* Heywood shows a distinctive creative impetus when he deals with the choral odes and that this amounts, in Pincombe's terms, to an emulative, rather than an imitative fury, that goes hand in hand with the new dramatic function and versification he assigns to the Chorus. I will try to show that this explains the apparent lack of metrical consistency in the choice of metres for each choral ode, thus unveiling recurrent patterns whose

⁵ As Attridge recalls, "Watson's lines written in the 1540s and quoted by Ascham in the *Scholemaster* and Ascham's own quantitative translations in *Toxophilus* (1545) were the earliest of the English attempts, but they had no immediate successors. James Sandford published some quantitative verse in various languages, including English, in his *Houres of recreation* (1576), but the movement did not really get under way until Sidney started writing quantitative poems for the *Arcadia*, probably between 1577 and 1580, and discussing the subject with Drant, Dyer and Spenser" (1974, 129-30).

sequence is not equivalent to that of the Latin original. I will also contend that through metric choices Heywood disseminates implicit authorial traces establishing his work within the English poetic tradition of epic and tragic poetry. To this end, I will first present a brief discussion of why the Chorus of Trojan women, who constitute “the most individualized chorus of any Senecan play” (Boyle 1994, 33), may have been interpreted by Heywood as alterable and, consequently, why he decided to add an entirely new Chorus with wholly new functions. Finally, I will discuss the peculiar versification of this strange Chorus in the light of its main dramatic functions and signifying potential. My contention is that Heywood resignified the play entirely, turning a tragedy of collective female suffering into a *de casibus* one. He did this, moreover, not only by manifestly referring to the fall of the princes and the *speculum* tradition in some of the choral odes especially, as justly contended by Winston (2016), but also by dissolving the dramatic function of the female Chorus as the bearers of the tragic fate of the community of the Trojan female survivors. Form, content, and verse converge in Heywood’s translation towards one and the same emulative effort, effacing Seneca’s peculiar Aristotelian-like Chorus of Trojan women to foreground a wholly new non-Senecan framing figure, that articulates a different conception of the tragic.

2. “The autor the Chorus must defende”: Towards a New Chorus

At ll. 193-5 of his *Ars Poetica*, Horace writes that “actoris partis chorus officiumque virile / defendat, neu quid medios intercinat actus, / quod non proposito conducatur et haereat apte” (“The Chorus [should] sustain the part and strenuous duty of an actor, and sing nothing between acts which does not advance and fitly blend into the plot”, Horace 1999, trans. Fairclough). Modern editors generally interpret the word “defendat” as ‘take the part of’, ‘perform’,⁶ and explain it in the light of Aristotle’s teaching that the Chorus was an actor among actors (*Poetica* 1456a25-27). However, this is not how it

⁶ See *defendo* 2.A.α in Lewis and Short (1956); ‘sustain’, *defendo* 3 in Gaffiot (2001 s): “‘play the part’, in line with Aristotle’s *Poetics* 1456a25-7 [καὶ τὸν χορὸν δὲ ἓνα δεῖ ὑπολαμβάνειν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, ‘the chorus should be treated as one of the actors’, Halliwell in Aristotle 1995], as assumed by the context”. See also Horace *Sat.* 1.10, 12: “defendente vicem modo rhetoris atque poetae” (“in keeping with the rôle, now of orator or poet”, 1999), rather than synonym of *commendare* (‘commend’, ‘endorse’) as proposed by *TLL* 5.1.298.5. Niall Rudd (Horace 1989) comments that “the chorus should staunchly perform the role of an actor and the duty of a man”. However, “officium virile” clearly refers to the duty, or role, of a single man (*vir* = single, from which the derivative *viritim* = singularly, individually). Therefore, Horace means ‘to play the part of an actor, performing the function of a single character’, as in Aristotle.

could be read in the first English translation published by Thomas Drant in 1567:

The autor the Chorus must defende
 or else some other one
 Whose innocensie, or manhode
 deserveth prayse alone.
 Let them not singe twix acte, and acte
 that squayreth from the rest.
 Such let their songs be, as will tune
 unto the purpose best. (1567, 6v)

Drant did not follow Aristotle's *Poetics*, a text which had been circulating widely in Europe since Francesco Robortello's and Pier Vettori's editions (1548 and 1560, respectively), and instead turned the Chorus into the authorial mouthpiece and commentator it would soon become on the British stage. He misread the verb "defendat" as 'take sides with', 'defend', and probably found the variant 'auctoris/auctoris' for the original "actoris", suggesting that the Chorus was to be the defender of the author or of a character whose moral integrity was to be praised. As a matter of fact, the phrase "actoris partis" (part of the actor) was the reading of most of the authoritative manuscripts of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, and had normally been adopted in the early editions since the end of the fifteenth century. This was for instance the case of the Venetian 1490-1491 edition with Pseudo-Acron's commentary on Horace. But in the sixteenth century, the variant 'auctoris' was also occasionally chosen, as in the case of the Basle edition of 1520 (with no commentary) printed by Andreas Cratander. The two variants were acknowledged by prestigious commentaries, such as Maggi's, contained as an appendix in the Maggi and Lombardi 1550 edition of Aristotle's *Poetics* ("nam Auctoris aliqui, Actoris alii habent", "some have 'Auctoris', others Actoris", 350). Typically, Maggi claimed his preference for 'Auctoris', which he adopted. Thus, he did not consider the Chorus to be an actor, but either a counselor of the actors or a spokesman for the author. A similar position was that of Robortello (1548), Minturno (1559), Julius Caesar Scaliger (1561), and even Denis Lambin in his 1566 commentary to Aldus' edition of Horace (1555), which correctly adopted "actoris", acknowledged both readings. To find a correct interpretation of that passage in English one had to wait until 1640, when in his translation Ben Jonson eventually restored the original actor's part to the Chorus: "An Actors part, and office too, the quire / Must manly keep, and not be heard to sing / Between the Acts a quite cleane other thing / Than to the purpose leads and fitly agrees" (Horace 1640, 12).⁷

⁷ For a history of the reception of Horace's *Ars Poetica* see Hardison 1995.

Thus, when in Heywood's address "To the Readers" in *Troas* we find the claim that "the Chorus is no part of the substance of the matter" as a justification for his massive alteration of the choral odes we are not entirely surprised. What is unexpected, though, is that the comment is about this particular play, where the Chorus of women can hardly be considered marginal, an "interpretive packaging" surrounding the action, as Ker and Winston call it rephrasing Heywood (2012, 31). They participate in the *kommos* and are certainly present on stage in Acts 2, 3 and 4. Also, as Davis has convincingly argued, in Act 5 "the messenger's words make more dramatic sense if addressed to a relatively large group of women and not simply Hecuba and Andromache" (1993, 21), suggesting that the women of Troy should also be present on stage.⁸ As Boyle has remarked, in Senecan tragedies Choruses may identify themselves, or be identified by other characters. But *Troas* is unique in showing in the initial choral ode a preoccupation for the past that "individualizes this chorus to an uncommon degree" (1994, 144). This unusual feature is part of the construction of a tragic experience revolving around the sense of a female communality that significantly climaxes in the final ode with the prospective dissolution of that female bond (220). In fact, the women participate emotionally in the action from the very beginning with their initial responsive lament for the experience of loss of the male patriarch, as the bearers of "pathetic agency" . . . impotent on stage, but strong in catalysing the emotion of the audience" (Bigliazzi 2020, 72). Modifying this peculiar Chorus, whose strongly performative features, including dance and singing, were taken as a brilliant example of the so-called mobile Chorus on the continent (Giraldi 1554, 229), was neither a neutral choice nor an easily explicable one.

Troas contains four choral odes and the first two have been often commented on for their apparent inconsistency in supporting and denying the soul's survival after death, respectively.⁹ The third one has an exotic quality in referring to the many possible destinations of the women once their community is broken, and the final one is about their grief following the group's abandonment of Troy and final dispersion. The play is also peculiar for its dual focus on two separate deaths, Polyxena's and Astyanax's, which are discussed and prepared for in different Acts (2 and 4; 2 and 3), before being narrated separately in Act 5. As already noticed, Heywood treated the text with a heavy hand. Doubtless, bringing Achilles' ghost on stage before

⁸ See also Davis (1993, 20-1) and Fantham (1982, 39), who assumes that in Act 5 they exit with Andromache and Helen only at 1178-9: "repetite celeri maria, captivae, gradu. / iam uela puppis laxat et classis mouet" ("Once more head quickly to the sea, prisoners. / Now sails unfurl on the ships and the fleet moves").

⁹ See Fantham (1982, 78-92) and Boyle (1994, 172).

Thaltybius' narrative of his appearance in Act 2 meant making the scene more dramatic, while preparing for the herald's report. But it also patently belied the second choral ode on the denial of the soul's survival after death in a stronger way than Thaltybius' narrative of Achilles' appearance could ever do. Yet in gesturing towards the Senecan model of 'the return of the ghost', famous in the Prologues of *Thyestes* and *Agamemnon*, Heywood was imitating Seneca in ways not to be found in the choral odes, except when he incorporated material from other Senecan plays. The new Chorus Heywood creates does not alternate or interact with the female group, but substitutes it altogether. On the one hand, it acquires what Ker and Winston have called a metaspectatorial position when "they allude to the function of the play as a mirror displaying the capriciousness of fortune (1.Cho.55), and the stanzas added to the end of Act 2 address 'Good Ladies' (2.Cho.64-70) – ostensibly the Trojan women, but an open-ended reference – and prepare them for further grief as they watch the following act" (2012, 31). On the other, this position also allows for an entirely new didactic tone in the *speculum principis* tradition especially manifest in the allusion to Hecuba as a mirror for kings in the first ode (1 Cho. 52-4). Differently from the group of women, this new Chorus is not only anonymous but probably singular, as in the new parts of the odes it invariably uses the first person or refers to itself as an individual speaker, as in the last three stanzas of the second ode, where the Chorus says "mine iyes" before addressing the "good Ladies" with an invitation to cry over Hecuba. Singularity does not necessarily entail that the Chorus be one person, but it does suggest individual vocalisation in ways that are not those of the group of women in the lament with Hecuba, where they regularly use 'our'. What diversifies the four odes conceptually is the sententious and gnomic register adopted when treating the topic of the unpredictability of Chance in odes 1 and 3, and a more varied approach in dealing with that of death (physical and spiritual in ode 2, and communal in ode 4). This is accompanied by a markedly narrative stance with a clearly framing function – in 2 and 4 entrusted to the narrative potential of the rhyme royal stanza. Odes 2 and 3, especially the genuinely new parts contributed by Heywood, have a clearly connective and presentational function enhancing the framing role of this Chorus, that shares in authorial knowledge and fills in the gaps at the level of drama or anticipates the action to come.

2. Cho.50-70

3. Cho. 21-32

These three staves following are added
by the translator

O dreadful day, alas, the sorry time,
I come of all the mother's ruthless wo:
Astyanax, alas, thy fatal line
Of life is worn – to death straight shalt thou go.
The Sisters have decreed it should be so.
There many no force, alas, escape their hand.
The mighty Jove their will may not withstand.

To see the mother her tender child forsake,
What gentle heart that may from tears refrain,
Or who so fierce that would not pity take,
To see alas the guiltless infant slain.
For sorry heart the tears mine eyes do stain,
To think what sorrow shall her heart oppress
Her little child to leese remediless.

The double cares of Hector's wife to wail,
Good Ladies have your tears in readiness,
And you with whom should pity most prevail
Rue on her grief, bewail her heaviness,
With sobbing heart lament her deep distress,
When she with tears shall take leave of her son,
And now, Good Ladies, hear what shall be done.

O perfit proof of her frailty,
The princely towers of Troy beat down,
The flower of Asia here you see,
With turn of hand quite overthrown.
The ruthless end of Hector's son,
Whom to his death the Greeks have led,
His fatal hour is come and gone,
And by this time the child is dead.
Yet still alas more cares increase,
O Trojans' doleful destiny,
Fast doth approach the maid's decease,
And now Polyxena shall die.

The repeated address to “the Good Ladies” to “hear . . . what shall be done” in 2 Cho. inscribes within drama the sense of the vision of an action about to take place whose imaginary quality is strictly connected with the pathetic words of the speaker, prefiguring Andromache's painful abandonment of her child to a horrendous fate of death (2 Cho. 57-63). Although the events are bound to remain imaginary insofar as the play was originally intended to be read,¹⁰ the address enhances its self-reflexive focus on the story and its dialogue with the audience/reader between the Acts. In this way it replaces the traditional lyric dimension of the ancient choral song as underlined by continental writings on tragedies and commentaries on Horace and Aristotle. This Chorus is unequivocally a focaliser external to the action, an authorial voice in the Horatian tradition recalled above, that encourages emotional empathy. In this respect, it approximates Heywood's own voice in the “Preface to the Tragedy” (especially at ll. 43-9; “How Greeks them slew alas, here shall ye see”, 46), which not coincidentally is also written

¹⁰ As Pincombe rightly recalls, “Heywood wrote his verses to be read quietly in the study, not spoken out loud upon the stage” (2012, 532).

in rhyme royal. If in this passage the Ladies are primarily the women of Troy, as Ker and Winston suggest (2012, 31), this second Chorus is clearly separated by an invisible screen impeding communication on the stage. The women do not hear the Chorus, and the action continues in the following Act with Andromache's monody. This separateness underlines that the play communicates at different levels, and that this Chorus is situated in a liminal position as a fictional frame surrounding the drama proper. This suggests an entirely new conception of the Chorus clearly endowed with functions foreign to the Senecan one and increasingly turned into an authorial "interpretive packaging" emancipated from the original.

The fourth and last ode is of particular interest in that Heywood's subtle intervention on a few apparently minor details defines once and for all the position of this Chorus vis-à-vis the silent company of women. It also offers hints about Heywood's compositional process and autonomous choice in developing a new Chorus from the information he found in the editions he probably consulted. In this respect, it should be recalled that all modern editions of Seneca's play since Gronovius' (1661) have only one Chorus, as shown by the manuscript tradition on which they are based (the so-called 'Etruscus' or 'E' manuscript). However, that tradition was unknown in the Renaissance until 1661, which means that the editions printed before that date followed a plurality of different manuscripts, all belonging to a different branch called 'A'. They too had only one Chorus, but this was not entirely unequivocal. The early modern editions included G.B. Marmitta (1492), J. Badius Ascensius (1514), Aldus Manutius' printing press (1517), Henricus Petri (1529), Sebastian Gryphius (1541). Among these, according to de Vocht (1913), there must have been the printed text (or texts) possibly used by Heywood. More recent scholarship tends to regard the 1541 Gryphius edition as the only text Heywood saw.¹¹ If this is correct, he did not encounter more than one collective character, which was dubbed Chorus of women ("mulierum"), abbreviated as Chorus during the play. But had

¹¹ "Heywood raises the choice of an appropriate source text in the preface to *Thyestes* (lines 308-09), where he complains about the many errors found in the editions by Gryphius (1541), 'Aldus' (i.e. the 1517 Aldine edition by Jerome Avantius), and 'Colineus' (reference uncertain). Heywood there claims to have solved this problem by resorting to a manuscript of Seneca – something he could in theory have done, perhaps using manuscripts possessed by some Oxford colleges – but it appears that in practice he, and Studley too, followed Gryphius's text in almost every instance. Robinson's London edition of the Latin in 1589 (the first such edition in England) was based on Gryphius. Although Gryphius incorporated many of the conjectures and emendations made in the editions by Ascensius (1514) and Avantius (1517), all of these editions, as noted above, were equally dominated by the A manuscripts" (Ker and Winston 2012, 280)s. See also Daalder 1982.

he chanced to see the Marmitta edition, at line 814 he would have found a speech heading suggesting a masculine Chorus (“troianorum”) hinting at a second composite character. This corresponds to the first line of the third choral ode, which Heywood rewrote from scratch, but where he also found the following line, marking the speakers as feminine: “Quae vocat sedes habitanda captas?” (“What home awaits us prisoners?”).¹² The contradiction could not be ignored and it must have been puzzling for anyone who read the text. On the other hand, Badius pinpointed the feminine connotation at l. 67, that is, at the beginning of the *kommos*, when in the comment he added “Chorus Troadum”, in addition to the stage direction already specifying “Chorus mulierum”. This means that only if Heywood had seen the Marmitta edition could he have found a clue for considering the presence of a second masculine Chorus.

If we now turn to the fourth ode, which, like the second ode as well as the authorial “Preface” to the tragedy is cast in rhyme royal, we encounter interesting details about the genetic line of Heywood’s new Chorus and its overall conception. The ode follows Polyxena’s preparation as a bride for her wedding with Achilles and Helen’s announcement that the company of women will soon break and they will be assigned to different Greek heroes: Hecuba to Ulysses, Andromache to Pyrrhus, and Cassandra to Agamemnon. But Heywood rephrases the ode in such a way that the voice we hear is not that of the women about to be dispersed, but of the new Chorus. The passionate expression of their grief and sense of mourning, which Seneca stylistically conveys through emphatic repetitions (“dulce maerenti populus dolentium / dulce lamentis resonare gentes”, “It’s sweet to grieve when nations grieve / Sweet when a people rings with cries”, 1009-10), imperatives and run-on lines (“tollite felices. remouete multo / diuities auro”, “Erase the happy. Remove men / crusted with gold”, 119-20), are lost in English. They are replaced by gnomic impersonal statements suggesting the presence of an impassioned onlooker: “A comfort is to man’s calamity, / A doleful flock of fellows in distress, / And sweet to him that mourns in misery / To hear them wail whom sorrows like oppress” (1-4). This opening stanza has alternate rhymes in the first four lines that seem to mimic sound patterns of the original, but the analogy is soon lost:

dulce *maerenti* populus *dolentium*,
 dulce *lamentis* resonare *gentes*;
lenius luctus lacrimaeque mordent,
 turba quas *fletu similis frequentat*. (1009-12; emphasis mine)

The rhyming scheme of Heywood’s royal stanza takes over the articulation

¹² All quotations and translations from Seneca’s *Troades* are from Boyle 1994.

of both content and form, driving the voice of the new Chorus miles away from that of the Senecan women, whose run-on lines are numerous and especially scattered in the narrative portions, as in the following passage on the comfort derived from shared suffering:¹³

*aequior*¹ *casum tulit*¹ *et procellas*
*mille*¹ *qui*² *ponto pariter carinas*³
*obru*² *uidit*² *tabulaque*⁴ *litus*⁵
*naufraga*⁴ *spargi*⁵, *mare*⁶ *cum coactis*⁷
*fluctibus*⁷ *Corus prohibet reuert*⁸. (1029-33; emphasis mine)¹⁴

[Chance and tempests cause less distress / To one who sees a thousand ships / Engulfed in the same sea and shores / Strewn with wrecks, as the breakers heave / And Corus bars the sea's return].

Heywood freely elaborates on the 'shipwreck with a spectator' motif, yet without achieving Seneca's "hyper-epicizing" through sounds, syntax and overrunning lines (Baertschi 2015, 186). In his hands the *exemplum*, confined within regular end-stopped lines, loses the passionate voice of the Senecan speakers, whose emotion continuously overflows the measure:

A thousand sail who see'th to drench in seas,
 With better will the storm hath overpassed,
 His heavy hap doth him the less displeas,
 When broken boards abroad be many cast,
 And shipwrecked ships to shore they flit full fast,
 With double waves when stoppèd is the flood,
 With heap of them that there have lost their good. (Cho. 4, 29-35)

The ode is textually very interesting. In its last lines the new Chorus acquires a fully narrative and presentational stance with the sense of a final vision of the women about to be dispersed. Its words provide a doleful epilogue on their fate:

¹³ As Baertschi notices, Seneca's use of enjambment is often the bearer of emotional excitement, as in the description of the storm in *Agamemnon* 497-506, where it "mirrors the foundering of the ships as well as the general confusion and destruction caused by the turmoil of the winds" (2015, 186).

¹⁴ Other examples may be found at 1035-7: "uillo / aureo fratrem simul ac sororem / sustulit tergo medioque iactum / fecit in ponto"; 1044-6: "cum . . . / prenderint"; 1047ff.: "ubi omnis / terra decrescet"; 1051-2: "Troia qua iaceat regione monstrans, / dicet"; 1053-4: "alte / serpit".

Seneca (1042-55; emphasis mine)

Soluet hunc *questum* [coetum] *lacrimasque*
nostras
 sparget huc illuc agitata classis,
 cum tuba iussi dare uela *nautae*
 et simul uentis properante remo
 prenderint altum *fugientque* [fugietque] *litus*.
 quis status mentis *miseris*, ubi omnis
 terra decrescet pelagusque crescet,
celsa cum longe latitabit Ide?
 tum puer matri genetrisque nato,
 Troia qua iaceat regione monstrans,
 dicet et longe digito notabit:
 “Ilium est illic, ubi fumus alte
 serpit in caelum nebulaeque turpes.”
 Troes hoc signo patriam uidebunt.

Heywood (50-63; emphasis mine)

Anon *these complaints and Trojans' tears* shall quail,
 And here and there the ship *them* toss by seas,
 When trumpets sound shall warn *the hoise up*
sail,
 And through the waves with wind to seek their
ways.
Then shall these captives go to end their days,
In land unknown when once with hasty oar,
 The drenching deep *they take and shun the shore.*
 What state of mind shall then *in wretches* be,
 When shore shall sink from sight and seas arise,
 When Idey hill to lurke aloofe *they see?*
 Then point with hand from far where Troia lies,
 Shall child and mother, talking in this wise:
 “Lo yonder Troy, where smoke it fumeth high.”
 By this the Trojans shall their county spy.

Typically, Heywood replaces the Senecan women's collective lament (“questum lacrimasque nostras”, 1042) with a description of their tears and future exile. In two extra lines of Heywood's own making, the speaker imagines “these captives [to] go to end their days / In land unknown”, and then, on leaving the shore, that they will see the “Idey hill to lurke aloof” (54-5). This is the entirely external point of view of a spectator who does not include himself imaginatively in the scene of the women's departure. Seneca's extraordinary perspectival mobility, suddenly shifting the focus from the mariners (“nautae”, 1044) and the oar (“properante remo”, 1045) to the women who see the receding shore (“fugietque litus”, 1046) is lost in Heywood. And this is the point where the question of textual transmission becomes interesting. Four out of the five editions available at the time (Manutius, Badius, Petrus, Gryphius) have “fugientque” at 1046, suggesting that it is not the “litus” (shore) that recedes from view, but the mariners (“nautae”) who abandon it. Badius, however, at 1042 has “coetum” (company) in place of “questum” (lament), a variant that makes this edition foreign to Heywood's text, and instead a possible candidate for Dolce's contemporary translation of the same play which reproduces these two variants verbatim (“Disfarà questa nostra / Compagnia” and “E i marinai alhora, / . . . / E fuggiranno i liti”; 1560, 183v). Marmitta has not only “coetum” (company) but also the correct “fugietque litus”. This suggests that Heywood either did not see the Marmitta edition, or chose not to follow it. But if he did not see it at all, he could not possibly have been influenced by its incongruous

mention of "chorus troianorum" at l. 814 in creating a separate Chorus (see Appendix), which therefore must have been his own choice entirely. He replaced the mariners with the impersonal image of the hoisted sails ("When trumpets sound shall warn the hoise up sail", 53), and introduced a reference to the women of Troy as "these captives" in a new line ("Then shall these captives go to end their days", 54), preparing the audience/readers for their appearance as the object of his narrative in the following mention of the wretched women (in Latin evoked by the dative "miseris", 1047) shunning the shore. In brief, the Latin presentation of the mariners leaving the shore (and the shore receding from view in the correct Marmitta edition), which could only be offered if the speakers were the women, is substituted by Heywood with the Chorus' focalisation on the wretched Trojan group as the object of the Chorus' narrative as the spectator to an imaginary scene.

Thus, the detail this ode definitely clarifies is that for no reason could the Senecan original Heywood read have influenced him in duplicating the Chorus, which in this particular scene is not only metaspectatorial, presentational, liminal in a new way in respect to the previous three odes, but is also creatively narrative. Its narrative stance is cast in rhyme royal and harps back to the translator's own voice in the "Preface", tacitly taking sides with Heywood as the "write[r]", "recite[r]" and "indite[r]" of the story (86, 88, 89). Even more than a mediator between stage/page and audience/reader between the Acts, the speaker is here the creator of this tragic vision and, like a Horatian Chorus, it stands by the author's side, in truth being one with his narrative voice.

Going back to questions of transmission, a last detail is needed before moving to the versification of the odes. All editions based on the 'A' manuscript tradition, as the one or ones Heywood saw, bear the title *Troas*. This is no secondary feature as it emphasises the tragedy of a city and, by extension, of its Queen, downplaying the role of the female collective. Heywood dedicated his "private exercise" (as he called it in his "Preface to the Tragedy", 11) to Queen Elizabeth. Possibly following the example of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, which he might have seen in an earlier form than the printed one dating from the same year (Ker and Winston 2012, 24), and which is also mentioned in the "Preface" to *Thyestes* (96), his new lines in 1 Cho. contain direct addresses to kings about the frailty of their own power. This didactic concern suggests a poetic project behind Heywood's translation of a different type from the one supporting the parallel edition of *Hercules Furens*. Combined with a reconfiguration of the tragic conception of the play highlighted in the variant title, this project also affects Heywood's choice of metres for the odes, suggesting why they are more elaborate in respect to those in his other Senecan translations. But first let us go back to Seneca and the question of metrical comparability we started from.

3. Competing with Seneca

As Boyle remarks (1994, 235), Seneca's standard metre for dialogue is the "iambic trimeter or (more loosely) senarius", that is, "a six-foot line based on the iambus (U_) for which several equivalents are allowed, primarily the spondee (_ _), tribrach (UUU), dactyl (_UU) and anapaest (UU_)". It is used for all non-choral parts as well as for Andromache's monody at 705-35 (3.2 in Heywood's translation). Seneca's preferred measure for the lyric parts is instead the anapaestic dimeter, which was also "typical of the entrances and exits of the Chorus in Greek tragedy", while his "favourite combinations . . . were dactyl-spondee (_ UU _ _) and spondee-anapaest (_ UU_)".¹⁵ In *Troades*, Seneca adopts all these metres, which Heywood renders in three main forms, differently from his later translations, which have only the iambic pentameter with crossed rhyme:

	Choral odes	Latin metre	English metre
Spoken parts		Iambic trimeters	Couplets of fourteeners
	Chorus mulierum. Hecuba (<i>Kommos</i>)	Anapaestici versus	Iambic pentameters with alternate rhyme
	1. Added Choral ode		Iambic pentameters with alternate rhyme
	The Spright of Achilles added to the tragedy (2.1)		Rhyme royal
Andromache's monody (3.2)	2. (+ three staves added by the translator)	Choriambici asclepiad.	Rhyme royal
		Anapaestici	Iambic pentameters with alternate rhyme
	3. (altered by the translator)	Sapphici	Iambic tetrameters with alternate rhymes
	4.	Sapphici	Rhyme royal

Like Hardison (1989, 156-7), Ker and Winston have pointed out that "Heywood approximates Seneca's use of iambic trimeters (usually twelve syllables) in his choice of the fourteener for dialogue, and also follows Seneca in using other, varied metres for choral passages or lyric passages uttered by main characters (Hecuba, 1.2 [*kommos*]; Andromache, 3.2)" (2012,

¹⁵ For a more extensive discussion see Fantham 1982, 104-15.

26). As Mary Axton has noticed, by the 1590s “fourteeners [were] mocked as the fustian of ‘King Cambises’s vein’”, but in the 1560s they were still fashionable in the interludes for high style (28n55). They can be found in plays of classical topics such as *Thersites* (1537), *Jack Jugeler* (1562), and *Horestes* (1567). But once set out in lines of eight and six syllables (four and three beats), as in the two 1559 and 1562 octavo editions of *Troas*, they visibly resemble the ballad metre or the common measure of hymnody (Attridge 2019, 203). Even without considering the rhyming couplets, which emphasise the sweetness of the line, as Giraldi put it,¹⁶ this metre suggests a level of lyricism one would not expect as an equivalent for the speech-oriented trimeter. However, as Hardison has remarked, before 1559 anything that approximated serious plays, that is, morality plays, presented for dialogues a variety of different forms, including “cantilevered verse, ballad eight, three-beat couplets, rhyme royal stanzas using Alexandrines, seven-line stanzas of four-beat lines in monorhyme, and six-line stanzas with two-beat lines” (Hardison 1989, 156). Thus, in some way Heywood’s consistent use of the fourteener for dialogue and of various measures for the choral odes, shows a new attitude inaugurating a more regular approach to serious drama, possibly inspired by the Latin model. And yet, if, as Hardison further remarks, the “fourteener also preserves a vital relation to speech through its association with a popular form, the ballad”, while being “more formal than the irregular verse of the Tudor interlude and midcentury comedy” (1989, 157), it also retains the sense of the ballad lyric line alien to the Latin iambic trimeter. For dignified speech another measure had just been devised and this was blank verse. Although considered “straunge”, as we read in the title-page of Surrey’s 1554 translation of Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, blank verse was advertised as dignified by the same publisher William Owen who recommended it as “worthy to be embraced” (title-page).¹⁷ Not coincidentally only a couple of years after Heywood’s *Troas*, Norton and Sackville would employ it in *Gorboduc*.

Thus, while Heywood evidently grasped the difference between dialogues and choral odes in the Latin original, his translative choices appear consistent only in regard to their formal partition according to regular/varied metres, yet with no clear sense of the contrast between speech and song retained by

¹⁶ Giraldi also carefully distinguished between different uses of rhyme, suggesting that it was appropriate especially to Choruses (1154, 229). See Introduction to the present issue, 12.

¹⁷ For further discussion see Hardison (1986, 243-4) and Attridge (1974, 108-11). In passing, it may be recalled that in 1557 Books 2 and 4 were to be published by Tottel “just fifteen days after the first edition of *Songes and Sonnetes*” (Warner 2016, 116), testifying to the strong and immediate appeal of Surrey’s translation.

Seneca.¹⁸ Rhyming couplets of a long iambic verse as opposed to the shorter iambic pentameter with alternate rhyme – a measure that allowed for more freedom and could also be found in the recently published songs and sonnets of Tottel’s miscellany (1557) – marked a thin divide. After all, as Attridge notices, the pentameter is the “obvious choice for a poet wishing to avoid the song-oriented four-beat forms” and its advantage is “a less dominant underlying rhythm . . . easier run-ons, and longer stretches of language before the chiming rhyme” (2019, 243). When we come to the rhyme royal stanza, Attridge also points out that it was “performed during the many varieties of English pageantry – and later, the masque”, and with regard to its performance it fell “somewhere between poetry proper and drama”. It was “usually pronounced by an actor impersonating a particular mythical or historical character, or an abstract quality, but as a formal, isolated performance of verse it [had] some of the features of a poetry recital” (2019, 251). This verse was first and foremost reminiscent of the native tradition of Chaucer and Lydgate, of which the contemporary *Mirror for Magistrates* was a continuation also with regard to the verse form. Interestingly, though, rhyme royal was not only perceived as serving best for grave discourse, as these references suggest, because it was also used with great flexibility “for the lighthearted, the joyous, and the broadly comic” even by Chaucer (Stevens 1979, 67). Besides, this stanza was considered appropriate for Prologues and Epilogues, as in the case of *Jack Jugeler*, as well as for the entrances of Thersites in the homonymous interlude, and of the Vice in *Horestes*. Typically, in this last interlude while songs are “syllabic, matching known tunes” (Axton 1982, 28n54), the rhyme royal stanza enhances the Vice’s “dramatic style and isolation as a partly invisible figure . . . till the end of the play (when Truth and Duty conclude the interlude in rhyme royal)” (28). Usable for almost any circumstances, this stanza seems only to lack the lyric, ‘singable’ quality one would expect for a choral ode. Thus, when we find it in place of the original choriambic asclepiads and sapphic lines we feel a friction that can only be explained if we postulate a broader creative design. The only ode which approximates a song measure is the third one which Heywood rewrites entirely in iambic tetrameters with alternate rhymes.

Thus, while Heywood’s different versifications for different parts of the drama reflect the basic dialogue/ode variation in the original, the criteria for equivalence are neither immediately manifest nor they render the text more Senecan-like. The sapphic line is once translated into iambic tetrameters

¹⁸ Although it remains unclear whether Seneca’s plays were for declamation only, at the time ancient Choruses were normally interpreted as being sung. Not surprisingly, Giraldi refers to the *kommos* in Seneca’s *Troades* as an example of the singing and dancing Chorus (1554, 229-30).

with crossed rhymes (3 Cho.) and once into rhyme royal stanzas (4 Cho.), while the latter are employed for the choriambic asclepiads (2 Cho.) and Achilles' speech; also, the iambic pentameter is used for both the *kommos* and the added choral ode (1 Cho.), as well as for Andromache's monody in 3.2. If Ker and Winston are correct in suggesting that the *kommos* was not perceived as a genuine choral ode, why use the same verse for the new ode? If the aim was to re-establish the lyric role of the Chorus, employing the same metre might have looked reasonable only if the ode's lyric quality was not entrusted to verse.

The impression is that, in this particular case, the iambic pentameter of the dirge might in fact have affected the versification of the following new choral ode. As already observed, 1. Cho situates the play in the *speculum* tradition, so that Priam, whose death has just been lamented by the Queen and the women, is taken as an example for kings to consider themselves like dust (52), while Hecuba, "that waieth now in care" (53), is displayed as the living emblem of monarchs' "wavering wealth" (56). This speaker has clearly watched and heard the *kommos*, as it gestures back to it, and introduces the play thematically as a Prologue. But the actual prologue-like new passage in the Senecan style is the added speech of the ghost of Achilles. It "provides a starker metaphysical apparatus for *Troas*, dramatizing the themes of revenge more explicitly in a play where revenge would otherwise play a peripheral role" (Ker and Winston 2012, 31). Not coincidentally, therefore, after the *kommos* and 1 Cho., both in iambic pentameters with alternate rhymes, the more sustained rhyme royal stanza serves the purpose of isolating his entrance, while matching the grave discourse of revenge as the engine of drama.

Thus, a design bringing together this speech and odes 2 and 4, as opposed to odes 1 and 3, both featuring an alternate rhyme scheme, gradually begins to emerge. While the alternate rhyme pattern appears in passages dealing with the topic of blind Chance, including addresses to the audience/reader, rhyme royal is reserved for considerations on the soul's death along that of the body (2 Cho.), and for a speech on the women and children's final abandonment of Troy (4 Cho.). Both odes deal with grave discourses in ways that are not comparable with the gnomic sententiousness of odes 1 and 3 about Chance and the alternate fortunes of princes. They sceptically deny the consoling prospect of the survival of the soul, broaching a philosophical question clearly at odds with the *kommos* envisaging Priam's happy afterlife, as well as with the appearance of the ghost, and then narrate the imminent fate of the women's abandonment of Troy with no sense of the exemplarity of the event typical of the didactic tone of odes 1 and 3. Above all, rhyme royal marks these two odes out as related to a particular aspect of the tragic story reworked by Heywood. Although formally it recalls the *speculum* model

to which Lydgate's *Fall* belongs, the stanza is used for a wholly different topic, which constitutes the core of Seneca's tragedy: an interrogation of the meaning of death, both as an individual concern (2. Cho) and as a collective and social preoccupation (4. Cho).

Thus, Heywood's use of metres at the same time underscores variety following Seneca's metric variations (including Andromache's lyric passage), and defies equivalence in ways that challenge the idea itself of comparability. Heywood's metric choices draw two major thematic lines across the play and its paratexts: on the one hand, the medieval *speculum* topic corresponds to the alternate rhyme scheme with a variable sense of song being especially inscribed in the tetrameter format; on the other, the authorially revised Senecan tragic reflection on death and the dissolution of female communal bonds is cast in the medieval rhyme royal stanza with a pronounced narrative quality. In either case, Heywood was experimenting with how to inscribe his own poetic voice into the play, at the same time rooting it into the native tradition of tragic narratives. The rhyme royal stanza was possibly the best opportunity to conflate a sustained narrative with a markedly presentational and framing stance, as could also be suggested by its use for the Vice or Prologues and Epilogues in classical interludes. The only quality this verse lacked was of being song-like.

Heywood's verses in *Troas* can therefore hardly be considered as performance indicators distinguishing song from speech, however they are confined to a silent or imaginary performance by the reader. And yet a sense of their variation must have been perceived if Thomas Marsh used different typefaces for this play in Newton's 1581 *Tenne Tragedies*. In fact, this edition invariably uses blackletter for fourteeners even when assigned to the Chorus, as in *Hippolytus*' second choral ode, in all *Oedipus*' odes, and in the third choral ode of *Medea*, *Agamemnon* and *Hercules Oeteus*. In all other cases, the odes are in Roman, although on one occasion also the iambic tetrameter is cast in blackletter but is meant to signal variation within the ode: it occurs at the end of the third choral ode of *Hercules Furens* when Heywood introduces a metric change from iambic pentameters, which are in Roman type (1581, 14r), marking an equivalent change in the original from sapphic hendecasyllables to choriambic asclepiads. Interestingly, in the octavo parallel edition of this play printed by Henry Sutton in 1561, Heywood not only indicates the metre as in current Latin editions of Seneca, but he also casts the Latin original in Roman and his own translation in blackletter underlining its Englishness visually. The 1559 and 1560 octavo editions of *Troas* and *Thyestes* print all in blackletter. Once collected within Newton's *Tenne Tragedies*, *Troas* looked like all the other tragedies: speech is in blackletter and the odes in Roman typeface, including the initial *kommos*, the new choral ode and the new staves of the original second ode. To be

sure, this was not enough to establish a solid rule for marking the Chorus from the rest of the play, since both Achilles' speech, indicating a speaking part (Heywood 1559, Aiii; Newton 1581, 95v), and Andromache's monody in 3.2 were cast in Roman type, which meant flouting all expectations of regularity in terms of speech and 'song'. But in fact it visualised another type of regularity, suggesting that a ratio after all could be found elsewhere in this tragedy: in the conceptual, functional and thematic dimensions of these portions of drama Heywood wrote in metres different from the fourteeners; and this was enough to make the hand of the translator-as-poet visually recognisable.

4. Conclusion

Surprising though it may be, Heywood could not have perceived the *kommos* as a genuine choral ode, as Ker and Winston have argued. One wonders whether what prevented him from treating it as one was its dialogue. However, it did not puzzle Giraldi, for one, nor impeded him to recognise it as a truly choral performance. If we consider more closely the title Heywood found, *Troas* instead of *Troades*, and read his translation in this light, though, the whole picture begins to become clearer. As we noticed, Seneca's play is a wholly female tragedy concerning the dissolution of a community of women in the ancient world, following the Greek conquest of Troy and the defeat of its male heroes. But changing the title means changing the sense of this tragedy. The focus is suddenly shifted from the women to the ancient city, and by extension to its Queen, Hecuba, and her daughter-in-law, Andromache, both mothers of children who will be murdered for revenge and in order to interrupt the Trojan dynasty. Not surprisingly, Heywood's attention is laid on one woman, Hecuba, not the women of Troy in general, whose voice is heard only in the initial *kommos* and is mentioned occasionally by the new Chorus.¹⁹ The last stanza of Heywood's "Preface to the Tragedy" clearly states where the tragic core lies, and it is not with them:

First how the queen laments the fall of Troy,
As hath mine author done, I shall it write;
Next how from Hector's wife they led the boy
To die, and her complaints I shall recite;
The maiden's death then must I last indite.

¹⁹ The cultural and political implications of this shift, in line with Heywood's dedication to the Queen, have been suggested by Ker and Winston (2012) in relation to the "mirror" motif in 1 Cho. On Hecuba's impact on audiences in early modern England see also Pollard 2017 (a brief reference to Heywood is on 8).

Now who that list the Queen's complaint to hear,
 In following verse it shall forthwith appear. (85-91)

Getting rid of the third choral ode was part of this design of turning the play into the tragedy of one woman and her kingdom. It meant doing away with the sense of geographic entropy inscribed in the long list of towns and places contained in this ode, a list endowed with the tragic sense of dissolution of the female community as the focus of the play. For Heywood the unknown names of those countries "should have no grace in the English tongue, but be a strange and unpleasant thing to the readers" (45-6), and he replaced them with a new piece on the power of Chance. He could not understand why those strange names were important, because he did not grasp that the tragic dimension of this play resided in female collective suffering beyond the fate of individual subjects. "Quae uocat sedes habitanda captas? (814; "What homes awaits us prisoners?"): this is the crucial initial question in ode 3 Heywood omits to ask. Not surprisingly, in ode 4 there is no community of women foresuffering their tragic fate, but only the framing voice of the new Chorus mentioning the dissolution of the women's lament ("questum"), not of their community ("coetum") – a reference he could not read in the edition he probably consulted. By shifting the focus on to their plaintive action this reading weakens the sense that what is actually at stake here is the loss of their communal identity.

Tarlinskaja pinpoints the fact that verse "helps us to understand and interpret *dramatis personae*" (2014, 1); but as Stevens remarks, it also contributes "to the characterization of the teller" (1979, 68). In this case, the teller is an anonymous, individual Chorus who shares in the voice of the tragic poet as a medieval advisor to the prince. It also embodies Heywood's competitive stance with Seneca in re-narrating the tragic story of the women of Troy. Heywood does quote Seneca and occasionally gestures to his works by incorporating passages from other plays or following his dramatic model. But the overall vision and dramatic function is new and when he moves to metrics, we no longer sense ordinary imitation. The new Chorus speaks its lines in a voice metrically rooted in the English tradition of tragic narratives, and from a reliable, authorial position, metatextually framing the action, it fashions itself as a credible voice. Heywood's new Chorus is a persona with no characterisation, apart from being a sententious narrator. Its versification shows no actual equivalence to Seneca's metres, and precisely by failing to do so it contributes to making Heywood's emulative project autonomous: a design recognisable at the crossroads of different English narrative and dramatic traditions.

Appendix: Speech Headings and Speech Prefixes

	Marmitta 1492	Aldina 1517	Badius 1514	Petrus 1529	Gryphius 1541 (1548)
-	Incipit sexta (!) tragoedia quae Troas vocitatur / Actus primus. Hecuba loquitur.	TRAGOEDIA SEXTA, QUAE / INSCRIBITUR / TROAS. / ACTUS PRIMUS. / Iambic trimeters. / HECUBA. /	Tragoediae interlocutores. / Hecuba Pyrrhus / Chorus mulierum. Andromacha / Talhybius. Senex / Agamemnon Ulysses / Calchas. Astianax / Helena. Nuntius / Primus actus. / Trimen-tri Iambici	TRAGOEDIA SEXTA, / QUAE INSCRIBITUR / TROAS. / ACTUS PRIMUS. / Iambic trimeters. / HECUBA. /	Interlocu-tores. / Hecuba Pyrrhus / Chorus mulierum. Andromacha / Talhybius. Senex / Agamemnon Ulysses / Calchas. Astianax / Helena. Nuntius //
67	Chorus mulierum Hecuba. Chorus loquitur	ANAPAESTICI VERSUS. / CHORUS MULIERUM • HECUBA. /	= Aldina / The com-mentary says "Chorus Troadum"	CHORUS MULIERUM. HECUBA. / Anapaestici versus	CHORUS MULIERUM. HECUBA. / Anapaestici versus
67		no heading (space for initial letter)	Idem	Idem	Idem
83		From now on H• and C• are in the left margin	Idem	Idem	Idem
83	He.	H	Idem	Idem	Idem
99	Cho.	C	Idem	Idem	Idem
102b	Idem He.	(Complete) H	Idem	Idem	Idem
117	Cho.	C	Idem	Idem	Idem
130	He.	H	Idem	Idem	Idem
132	Cho.	C	Idem	Idem	Idem
142	Hecu.	H	Idem	Idem	Idem
156	Idem Cho	(Felix Priamus / dicimus omnes) Ch (!)	Idem	Idem	Idem
164	Actus secundus Taltbodyus Chorus. / Taltbodyus (!) loquitur	ACTUS SECUNDUS. / Iambic trimeters. / TALTBIBIUS. CHORUS. /	Idem	Idem	Idem

166	Cho.	C	Idem	Idem	Idem
164		no heading (space for initial letter)	Idem	Idem	Idem
203		Iambic trimeters. / PYRRHUS. AGAMEMNON. CALCHAS. /	Idem	Idem	Idem
203		space for initial letter	Idem	Idem	Idem
371	Chorus	Asclepiadean choriamb. / CHORUS. /	Idem	Idem	Idem
409	Idem	ACTUS TERTIUS. / Iambic trimeters. / ANDROMACHA. SENEX. ULYSSES. /	Idem	Idem	Idem
705	No indication of meter	Anapaests. / ANDROMACHA. /	Idem	Idem	Idem
736		Iambic trimeters. / ULYSSES. ANDROMACHA. / ASTYANAX. /	Idem	Idem	Idem
814	Chorus troianorum	Sapphici. / CHORUS. /	Idem	Idem	Idem
861		ACTUS QUARTUS / Iambic trimeters. / HELENA. ANDROMACHA. HECUBA. /	Idem	Idem	Idem
1009	Chorus	Sapphici. / CHORUS. /	Idem	Idem	Idem
1056		ACTUS QUINTUS. / Iambic trimeters. / NUNTIUS. ANDROMACHA. HECUBA. /	Idem	Idem	Idem

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Confluences and Spillages: Enjambment in Elizabethan Tragedy and the Classics¹

Abstract

This essay aims at assessing how a set of confluences, bringing together classical dramatic and epic tradition, its sixteenth-century continental (especially Italian) reception, and vernacular practices, led to the development of performative effects in the use of run-on lines in English dramatic blank verse. A dearth of theorisation in the early modern period has caused scholars to overlook the deliberate uses of this device except for stylometric and authorship studies. The imitation of classical metres in *versi sciolti* adopted in both epos and tragic drama revitalised the practice of introducing enjambment for performative purposes. Enjambment was used and theorised in sixteenth-century continental poetry and drama as a marker of gravitas, and it can be argued that the Elizabethan poets and playwrights, besides imitating Seneca's use of run-on lines, came into contact with these continental practices which helped them develop their versification and impress their audiences.

KEYWORDS: enjambment; blank verse; Elizabethan drama; classical metres; gravitas

1. Premise: Performative Effects of Enjambment in *1 Tamburlaine the Great* 1.1

The revolutionary quality of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (1587-8) has recently been called into question, because many analyses tend to overlook the fact that "almost all drama written for adult professional actors before *Tamburlaine* is lost" (Syme 2013, 275), and because one can note "a relative absence of a clear Marlovian influence" (277) on companies such as the Lord Strange's Men in the early 1590s: "companies who staged [Marlowe's] plays did not instantly transform their entire repertoires to fit what may have been a new paradigm, but instead learned to orchestrate and cycle through an increas-

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ingly wide range of dramatic styles and modes” (276). On the other hand, to judge at least from his contemporaries’ comments and lampoons, Marlowe’s use of blank verse together with the “megaphonics” (Berger 1989, 65) which seems required for his texts to be performed, made a great impact. From what we know (and, it bears repeating, we do not know much), before Marlowe, the use of blank verse in tragedy, as initiated by Sackville and Norton’s *Gorboduc* (1561), seems to have had a complicated and intermittent run, with Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh’s *Jocasta* (1566) and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* by Thomas Hughes et al. (1587) being the main extant exceptions. And yet, little else apart from a sudden change in taste can explain why *Gismond of Salerne* (c. 1566) was recast into blank verse and printed in 1591 as *Tancred and Gismund* “polished according to the decorum of these daies”, as the title page reads, or why Lyly chose to write his last comedy, *The Woman in the Moon* (first performed probably in 1593), entirely in blank verse and not in his usual prose. But instead of dwelling on whether *Tamburlaine* was trail-blazing or not, let us read the opening lines of its First Part.

MYCETES Brother *Cosroe*, I find my selfe agreeud,

Yet insufficient to expresse the same:

For it requires a great and thundring speech:

Good brother tell the cause vnto my Lords,

I know you haue a better wit than I.

COSROE Vnhappie *Persea*, that in former age

Hast bene the seat of mightie Conquerors,

That in their prowesse and their pollicies,

Haue triumpht ouer *Affrike*, and the bounds

Of *Europe*, wher the Sun dares scarce appeare,

For freezing meteors and coniealed colde:

Now to be rulde and gouerned by a man,

At whose byrth-day *Cynthia* with *Saturne* ioinde,

And *Ioue*, the Sun and *Mercurie* denied

To shed his influence in his fickle braine,

Now Turkes and Tartars shake their swords at thee²

Meaning to mangle all thy Prouinces,

(Marlowe 1590, A3r-v, 1-17)

The above quotation reproduces the spelling and punctuation of the first edition (published in octavo in 1590); the punctuation did not change in any respect in the second (1593) and third edition (1597, except for a probable typo in l. 6, adding a full stop after “that in former age”). All three editions were published by Richard Jones, and while “the provenance of Jones’s man-

² “Thee” in the witness of the first edition preserved at the Huntington Library and reproduced by EEBO is illegible here (“th” is clear, but the other characters cannot be read).

uscript copy-text has been debated” (Bourne 2018, 117), the punctuation does nothing but strengthen a particular difference in the style of the two speakers. It is quite possible that Jones, his compositors, or prior scribes may have modified Marlowe’s punctuation: what matters is that the result is “an example of judicious rhythmical punctuation” (Ellis-Fermore 1951, vi). Mycetes, the King of Persia, speaks in evidently end-stopped lines: this may be observed by looking at the syntax, but also by paying attention to the typography. All of Mycetes’ lines are ended by a comma, a colon, or a full stop. Besides, apart from the trochaic rhythm of his initial words (“*Brother Cosroe*”) – probably to draw the spectators’ attention – all the rest follows a perfect iambic pattern. This uniformity ‘fixes’ his speech, making him appear stately, but also predictable. He himself states that he does not have the ability to make “a great and thundring speech” (3), unlike his brother, who, he sardonically suggests, has a “better wit” (5). Indeed, Cosroe’s style is markedly different: his first line ends with a very strong enjambment, with the verb (“*Hast*”, 7) postponed in the line that follows. His third line (“*That in their prowess and their pollicies*”, 8) cannot stand alone syntactically and requires to be complemented, again with an enjambed verb, an addition that runs into yet another enjambment (“*the bounds / of Europe*”), the line meta-poetically overreaching its limit.³ Other enjambments follow (see e.g. 14-15), and a string of alliteration (e.g. *prowesse, pollicies; influence, fickle; Turks, Tartars; meaning, mangle*, etc.) makes Cosroe’s denunciation of Mycetes’ weak rule more elaborate: tension is running high between the two brothers.

Marlowe employs a different style to express the division between the two brothers, and the fact that the speaker using end-stopped lines is the character accused of being weak may surprise, since Marlowe’s end-stopped ‘mighty line’ is generally associated with his (anti-)heroes. As Nicholas Brooke has remarked (a statement proved right by recent stylometric studies):

Marlowe’s effective use of this device may be clearer if we scotch an oft-repeated historical fallacy, that English blank verse was normally end-stopped until Shakespeare released it: it was not normally end-stopped in Surrey’s *Aeneid*, or in *Gorboduc*, or in lesser works, until Marlowe stopped it to contain the rhythmic splendour of [his] lines . . . (1960, 89)

Duffell (2008, 242) has calculated the erosion of ictus and enjambment in Elizabethan dramatic iambic pentameter and demonstrated that *Gorboduc* conspicuously features more enjambed lines than *Tamburlaine* and Shakespeare’s *Richard III*: the percentage of enjambments in the Induction, in

³ Compare the following similar passage in Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* (although we do not know which play came first): “Where Spain and Portingale do jointly knit / Their frontiers, leaning on each other’s bound” (Smith 2012, 1.2.22-3).

Sackville's portion and in Norton's is 12.3, 15.0, and 10.7 respectively, while in *Tamburlaine* it is 7.3, and in *Richard III* 8.3.⁴ Conversely, as is well known, Shakespeare kept transforming his style (see Tarlinskaja 2014 and McDonald 2006), and his late plays increasingly contain run-on lines (the percentage indicated by Duffell for *Antony and Cleopatra* is 21.0; see also Tarlinskaja 2014, 151-2).

We will return to these considerations, but for the moment, let us remark that, if the heterogeneity of dramatic styles in the period may prevent us from regarding Marlowe's blank verse as 'the' springboard of late Elizabethan and early Jacobean dramatic verse-making, it is clear that we are dealing with a playwright who is already in full control of his metre (although he changed several features of his versification over time: see Tarlinskaja 2014, 70-87), and who knows that enjambment can produce certain performative effects. How had this knowledge reached him? Laying questions of 'genius' aside, conventional observations include, for example, that, under the new conditions of professional theatre, Elizabethan and early seventeenth-century dramatic verse-making increasingly strove towards that ever-questionable category, realism (see Pangallo 2017, 164). It is true that enjambment can be connected to everyday speech, considering the nature of blank verse: run-on lines change the flow of the iambic pattern and may turn it into something more akin to prose. Yet, a few other factors may be at work.

Back in 1922, Tucker Brooke argued that "[s]o far blank verse had been a metre employed with increasing skill, but employed only when Englishmen were affecting to write like Romans" (188). Indeed, with the exception of Gascoigne's satire *The Steel Glass* (1576), the situation did not seem to have changed much from the uses of blank verse before *Gorboduc*, when the metre had been employed in Surrey's translations of the *Aeneid* (published posthumously in 1554 and 1557), in Nicholas Grimald's "The Death of Zoroas" and "Marcus Tullius Cicero's Death", based on two poems in Latin hexameters, Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis* and Beza's *Mors Ciceronis* respectively (1557), and in Thomas Norton's quotations from the *Aeneid* and the *Georgics* in his 1561 translation of Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis*. Let us compare Brooke's view with Sarah Wall-Randell's comment (quoting in turn Catherine Nicholson): "'Marlowe identifies the open-ended capaciousness of blank verse with aggression' and with barbarism, not with Classicism and control" (2020, 78): the 'blankness' of the verse, which could signal a rejection of medieval rhymed versification, channelling instead Greek and

⁴ Tarlinskaja 2014 (Table B.2) has used different criteria but has obtained comparable results (apart from the difference of run-on lines between *Tamburlaine* and *Richard III*): *Gorboduc* Acts 1-3 and Acts 4-5, 24.5 and 29.0; *Tamburlaine* Part 1 and Part 2, 15.0 and 13.4; *Richard III*, 11.8.

Latin quantitative verse, may seem at odds with the ‘bombastic’ quality attributed to Marlowe’s style in *Tamburlaine* (see Stagg 2021) and the play’s subject matter.⁵ Such statements generally reflect on Marlowe’s choice to re-fute rhyme in favour of blank verse, but one might argue that they also raise a few questions on the qualities of this blank verse. For example, can a demarcation between end-stopped and run-on lines in blank verse be traced in the context of the reception of classical metres and prosody? Peter Gibbard suggests that “[t]he late Elizabethan fashion for the sententious style was perceived as a reenactment of the corresponding stylistic movement in early imperial Rome” (2014, 319), and focuses on the use of (and vogue for) choppy, abrupt sententiae as well as run-on lines in Elizabethan dramatic verse. Gibbard’s argument is indubitably valid, but this essay aims at investigating a wider aspect: was enjambment considered a marker of classical style, specifically of a particular style found in classical epos and tragic drama, as mediated by continental critics and practitioners? In the next sections, it will be argued that this is indeed the case, which leads to another question: how did the adoption of enjambment, understood as a marker of *gravitas*, play out in Elizabethan dramatic blank verse?

2. Problems of Terminology and Classical Enjambment

Before coming to see what scholars and authors thought about enjambment in the sixteenth century, two interrelated issues must be addressed: the confusing terminological history around the definition of enjambment and the ways in which the device was used by the Greeks and Romans, with a focus on drama.

There is a marked “rarity of enjambment in popular and traditional poems” (Russom 2017, 33) in the English language before the modern period, and specifically, a “low frequency of enjambment in traditional English meters” (273), such as alliterative verse (and consider also Wolfgang G. Müller’s pronouncement: “Balladry is adverse to enjambment”, 1981, 234). Moreover, the first occurrence of the word “enjambment” recorded by the *OED* is as late as 1839. A quick search in EEBO TCP will also confirm that the rare verb to “enjamb” was never applied to poetry in the early modern period, but only in its original French meaning of “to encroach”.⁶ The French seem to have begun to use this verb in its poetical meaning in the second half of the sixteenth

⁵ For an alternative view, which looks at Ciceronianism in *Tamburlaine*, see Gibbard 2014.

⁶ Thus, Claudius Hollyband’s 1593 English-French dictionary defines *enjamber* as “to put his legge ouer some thing” (M2v) and Randle Cotgrave (1611) as “To stride ouer; also, to inroach vpon” (Hhijr).

century (see next section), while Italians preferred the expressions *spezzare/rompere* and, less frequently, *incatenare il verso* (break up,⁷ or chain the line).⁸ In a short section called “The Verse” appended to the 1668 edition of *Paradise Lost*, Milton had to use the elegant, but at the same time richly ambiguous expression “sense variously drawn out from one Verse into another” (A4r) to defend what he had attempted, and mastered, in his epic poem. Milton was “asserting that the music of his verse [lies] in its being in fact accentual-syllabic blank verse, and in its instrumentalized enjambments” (Hollander 1973, 203), which are often unpredictable, surprising the reader. He was looking at the Greeks and Romans, who were not bound by rhyme, the “invention of a barbarous [i.e. non-classical] age” (A3v), as he called it. Moreover, early modern authors were aware that enjambment was known and widely used by classical poets and dramatists: defective lemmatisation and theorisation should not be equated with a lack of technical awareness.

First, however, the terminological question ought to be further qualified. A viable definition of enjambment is the one suggested by Geoffrey Russom: “Enjambment is a mismatch between the syntax of a poetic line and our expectation that the line will be realized as a sentence” (2017, 19). Antonio Quilis’ definition and typology⁹ have enjoyed some critical favour but have also encountered opposition. To define enjambment, Quilis discarded the notion of syntagm and preferred to use the coinage of his master, Rafaél de Balbín Lucas, *sirrema*: a *sirrema* constitutes “una unidad gramatical perfecta, unidad tonal y unidad de sentido” (1964, 78; “a perfect grammatical unit, a tonal unit, and a semantic unit”).¹⁰ Enjambment occurs “cuando resultacen escindidos por la pausa versal los componentes de un sirrema” (184; “when the components of a *sirrema* get split by the line break”). This definition is prob-

⁷ Soldani (1999a, 268) notices the rather “inexact” quality of this definition (an enjambment does not cause any rupture in the two lines to which it pertains), but stresses the fact that *spezzare* or *rompere* demonstrates a clear perception of its contrapuntal effect: on the one side, it emphasises a breaking of the sentence (on the metrical level), on the other side, it signals syntactic continuity.

⁸ Contemporary scholarship keeps privileging the term “inarcatura” which evokes “arching” and “tension”, but it is essentially a misnomer. Fubini’s essential 1946 essay on the effects of enjambment in Tasso’s poetry has popularised it, claiming that it was used in sixteenth-century treatises, but no author of that period seems to have used it with this technical meaning (see Lomiento 2008, 16n9 and Menichetti 1993, 481).

⁹ Quilis (1964, 87-117) lists three types of enjambment: lexical enjambment (through *synapheia* across line breaks), *sirrematic* or infra-syntagmatic enjambment (where the nexus that is split is e.g. between an article and a noun, a verb and an adverb, a preposition and the interested noun, a noun and an adjective, subject and verb, etc.), and syntactic or propositional enjambment (when the enjambment occurs between a noun and an interested relative clause in attributive function).

¹⁰ All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are mine.

lematic because, for example, it does not account for structural differences in the syntax of different languages (Cremante 1967, 382 cites the example of compound tenses, the placement of which can follow different rules). John Hollander's notion of a "spectrum" (1973, 208) is more helpful, taking into account at one end the weakest forms and at the other the strongest.

Enjambment is usually discussed more in terms of syntactic linkages than semantic ones; this is perfectly appropriate as far as it goes, but leaves out of account the different kinds and strengths of expectation that may be set up by identical syntactic structures with different semantic contents. The relation between an adjective and a noun, for instance, will depend in part on whether it is a familiar or an unexpected collocation, whether the informational weight at this point of the poem falls on the adjective or the noun, whether the adjective-noun sequence comes within a semantic peak or within a semantic trough, and so on. (Attridge 2013, 38)

Andrea Acribo (2001, 167) adds that another problematic aspect is that an enjambment may be felt strong or weak depending on the historical context – that is, enjambment must be historicised: for instance, in sixteenth-century Italy, a few split nexuses which we would hesitate to classify as enjambments because they simply result from a syntactically complex clause, were considered in the same way as the strongest instances of this device. Maurice Grammont's early-twentieth-century notion of *rejet* ('reject', 'spillage') remains essential and will be used in this essay: "quand une proposition, commencée dans un vers, se termine dans le suivant sans le remplir tout entier, on dit qu'il y a enjambement, et la fin de proposition qui figure dans le second vers constitue le rejet" (1971, 24-5, "when a proposition, which starts on a line, ends on the one that follows it, without filling it completely, then that is enjambment, and the end of the proposition which appears in the second line constitutes the *rejet*"). Finally, enjambment can produce various effects, and it would be naïve to think that any instance of this device may be reduced to a specific function (Menichetti 1993, 502): some scholars have attempted to catalogue all such functions, such as Henri Morier (1975, 408-13), who lists enjambments *de force*, *d'attente*, *de malice*, *de deçu*, *de charme*, etc. In fact, it is much more a question of context and co-text and specifically, in the case of play-texts, of dramatic situation.¹¹

The ancient Greeks and Romans did not have a term for enjambment, except for the specific case of *episynaloephe*, the elision of a vowel at the end of a line before a vowel beginning the next, which is commonly found in Sophocles (hence its other name, *eidōs sophokleion*), Menander, and Hellen-

¹¹ See Pangallo 2012, 106n24: "Metrical variations in dramatic verse undeniably affect the performance of the text, but they only carry meaning in their relationship to the context within which they occur".

istic dactylic hexameters (Lomiento 2008, 19).¹² By differentiating between metrico-rhythmical *cola* (the metrical units of the verse) and rhetorical *cola* (the linguistic units), the Greeks had understood the substantial difference between the rhetorical level of poetic discourse (determined by grammar and semantics) and that of lyric discourse (determined by sound, metre, and rhythm) (ibid.). The most significant critical testimony to one of the ways in which they used it can be found in Chapter 26 of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων* (*The Arrangement of Words*) (before 7 CE):

Concerning melodious metrical composition which bears a close affinity to prose, my views are of the following kind . . . He who wishes to succeed in this department must change the words about and connect them with each other in manifold ways, and make the clauses begin and end at various places within the lines, not allowing their sense to be self-contained in separate verses, but breaking up the measure . . . for an elastic treatment of rhythms and metres seems to bring verse quite near to prose. Now those authors who compose in epic or iambic verse, or use the other regular metres, cannot diversify their poetical works with many metres or rhythms, but must always adhere to the same metrical form. But the lyric poets can include many metres and rhythms in a single period. So that when the writers of monometers break up the lines by distributing them into clauses now one way now another, they dissolve and efface the regularity of the metre; and when they diversify the periods in size and form, they make us forget the metre. (Roberts 1910, 271-3)

According to Dionysius, whereas lyric poets can employ a great variety of metres, those working only with iambic trimeters (Dionysius later cites Euripides) or hexameters (Homer *in primis* – see Parry 1929 and Kirk 1985, 30-7) can vary their work by “breaking up the measure” (διατέμνοντα τὸ μέτρον) and juxtapose *cola* of different lengths, without adapting the sentence to the metrical measure (see Dainotti 2012, 15-16). It is worth remarking that this breaking up of measures was thought as having the effect of making poetry close to prose (on similar considerations by Gorgias and Isocrates, see Dainotti 2021, 11). In both comic and tragic drama, enjambment was used, apart from specific expressive purposes, to favour the natural flow of the phrasing, making it closer to spoken language and prose, often in narrative segments (Lomiento 2008, 21; see also Prato 1970 and Perusino 2008). Sophocles adapted the technique to the solemnly noble diction of his dramatis per-

¹² In the Middle Ages, Bede and others used the term *concatenatio* (see Menichetti 1993, 499); see Bede's *De Arte metrica* 11.2: “in exámetro carmine concatenatio versuum plurimorum solet esse gratissima” (“in a poem written in hexameter, the concatenation of several lines usually proves most delightful”).

sonae (Fileni 2008, 81), and while most scholars lament the impossibility of fully recovering the performative modalities of enjambment in Greek drama (82), Battezzato (2008, 82-101) has shown that the frequency of enjambments can signal, among other things, the particular ‘phonostyle’ conditioning (or characterising) each tragedian. Maria Grazia Fileni has argued that enjambments can also appear in ‘focal points’ of the drama, emphasising data that are functional to an immediate understanding of the scenic event or crucial ideological motifs (2008, 95). Even in Aeschylus, who uses enjambment much more sparingly, such effects are present. For example, as argued by Adele Filippo and Rosanna Guido (1981, 85-6), when Queen Atossa narrates her dream in *Persians* 181-7, the sinuous flow of her speech presents a heightened moment of tension at 185:

ἔδοξάτην μοι δύο γυναῖκ' εὐείμονε,
 ἢ μὲν πέπλοισι Περσικοῖς ἠσκημένῃ,
 ἢ δ' αὖτε Δωρικοῖσιν, εἰς ὄψιν μολεῖν,
 μεγέθει τε τῶν νῦν ἐκπρεπεστάτα πολύ,
 κάλλει τ' ἀμώμω, καὶ κασιγνήτα γένους
 ταύτοῦ: πάτραν δ' ἔναιον ἢ μὲν Ἑλλάδα
 κλήρω λαχοῦσα γαῖαν, ἢ δὲ βάρβαρον.
 (Aeschylus 1926)¹³

γένους / ταύτοῦ (of the same family) emphasises the consanguinity between the two figures (conventionally interpreted as Europe and Asia), a fraught theme within this patriotic play.¹⁴

If one finally considers Seneca, the tragedian who influenced early modern tragedy the most, one notices that he made his Greek models’ use of enjambment his own, as well.¹⁵ For example, in *Hercules Furens*, Juno tries

¹³ In Herbert Weir Smyth’s prose translation: “I dreamed that two women in beautiful clothes, one in Persian garb, the other in Dorian attire, appeared before my eyes; both far more striking in stature than are the women of our time, flawless in beauty, sisters of the same family. As for the lands in which they dwelt, to one had been assigned by lot the land of Hellas, to the other that of the barbarians”.

¹⁴ Comparable functions have been detected also in Plautus and Terence’s comedies (see Dunkel 1996 and Danese 2008), where enjambment can strengthen the effect of *aprosdoketon* (Raffaelli 2008, 146), the unexpected ending of what nowadays would be called humorous gags.

¹⁵ In an influential 1981 article, John G. Fitch has suggested that the frequency of sense-pauses, including those produced by enjambment, can be of help to date his tragedies. However, Danckaert usefully reminds us of an editorial danger (2013, 41): “the reader’s interpretation is at least to some extent influenced in quite an illegitimate way when the number of enjambments in a text is artificially increased by adding an ill-justified colon-division (all modern Seneca editions, the medieval manuscripts included).”

to make us as upset as she is at Hercules' success by enjambling "spolia . . . patri / fraterna" (51-2), foregrounding the absurdity of a father rejoicing in his child's triumph over his uncle:

vidi ipsa, vidi nocte discussa inferum
 et Dite domito spolia iactantem patri
 fraterna, . . .
 (Seneca 1921, ll. 50-2)

I saw with my own eyes hell with its darkness dashed aside
 and with Pluto subjugated he boasts to his father: spoils
 fraternal! . . .
 (Gunderson 2015, 133-4)

Seneca was following the Greeks, but also channelling Virgil (see Trinacty 2014): in similar descriptions and narrative sections, "Seneca's hyper-epicizing . . . aims at turning the listener (and reader) into a virtual eyewitness by means of vivid evocation . . . and enhanc[ing] . . . emotive power" (Baertschi 2015, 186). Virgil, in his *magnum opus*, managed to avoid metrical monotony and rhythmic uniformity also by employing enjambment more than any of his predecessors. His 'necessary enjambments' (Parry 1929, 23) are placed together with others marked by a *rejet* in the first dactyl or, more rarely, a molossus (a foot of three long syllables), which produces variety and complexity (see Cupaiuolo 1963, 48). A particularly frequent enjambment type is the one that isolates the verb of the main clause *en rejet*, and Fabio Cupaiuolo (1963, 49) notices that many such instances in Book 4 are emotionally connoted, because such isolated actions are performed almost exclusively by Dido or Aeneas. On the other hand:

Naturally the frequency of internal pauses in the hexameter is accompanied by enjambment, which pushes the emotional thrust of phrases beyond the limits of the metrical unit . . . A strict coincidence of hexameter and unit of sense, and the elimination of strong internal pauses within the line, were formal achievements of the *neoteroi* in opposition to the liberty of archaic Roman poetry; Virgil renounces this smooth and polished uniformity since it would prove inadequate to express new dramatic contents. (Barchiesi 2017, 99)

In the next section, it will be seen that the Renaissance was keen on re-discovering and taking stock of the classics' manifold and complex uses of enjambment, the effects of which were deployed through such cross-fertilisation between epos and drama

3. Classical Enjambment and *Gravitas* According to the Italians

Some scholars still doubt the influence of Italian *versi sciolti* on the development of English blank verse, regarding the latter as a “a product of strictly English humanism” (Hartman 1933, xxvi), but it seems very likely that Luigi Alamanni’s and other Italians’ rhymeless experimentations were among the books read in France by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, the inventor of this “straunge metre” (as reads the titlepage of the 1554 edition of his translation of the fourth book of the *Aeneid*).¹⁶ Such texts circulated widely at the French court and “[t]he extent of Surrey’s borrowing from the Italian texts . . . is enough to demonstrate” the exemplarity of such a model for the creation of English blank verse (Sessions 1999, 279). John M. Steadman usefully points out that in early modern England poetic practice very often preceded, or, in fact, pre-empted theorisation.

The first English examples of blank verse were likewise indebted largely to Italian precedent rather than to theory. Surrey’s translations from the *Aeneid* belong to the same tradition as those by Cardinal Hippolito de Medici, Nicolò Liburnio, and others. The blank verse of Gascoigne’s *Jocasta* is a carry-over from Dolce’s drama. More than a century later, in justifying his own “English Heroic Verse without Rime”, Milton appealed significantly to the precedent of poets rather than theorists. (1964, 384-5)

As for drama, it seems very probable that Sackville and Norton looked abroad for examples of rhymeless tragedy in vernacular, and specifically, cast their gaze towards Italy, because before 1561, the year of *Gorboduc*, all tragedies written in French or Spanish either employed rhyme or, less frequently, were written in prose. Contrariwise, ever since Trissino’s *Sofonisba* (written around 1514-1515, first published in 1524), virtually all¹⁷ Italian ‘regular’ tragedies (i.e. modelled on those of the ancient Greeks and Romans) were written in rhymeless hendecasyllables (sometimes in combination with rhymeless seven-syllable lines – not considering the variety of metres employed in the choruses). In the preface to his *Sofonisba*, Trissino had been clear why rhyme should not be used if one wants to move the audience and imitate the classics:

E lo [i.e. tal numero] vederà non solamente ne le narrazioni, et orazioni utilissimo, ma nel muover compassione necessario; Perciò che quel sermone

¹⁶ When his translation of the second book was published in 1557, the “straunge metre” was renamed “English metre”.

¹⁷ There are a couple of exceptions, such as Del Carretto’s *Sofonisba* (pr. 1546) which is in *ottava rima*.

il quale suol muover questa, nasce dal dolore, et il dolore *manda fuori non pensate parole*, onde la rima, che pensiero dimostra, è veramente a la compassione contraria. (1529, a3v, emphasis mine)

[And you will see that such a metre is not only very useful for narrations and orations, but it is also necessary to move to pity, because that speech which usually elicits it takes its origin from pain, and pain *draws out unthought words*, hence rhyme, which entails thinking, truly opposes pity.]

While these circumstances are fairly well known to scholars, the functions and effects attributed to enjambment in the sixteenth century may be a less familiar subject, despite the fact that the continental Renaissance has been called “the highest moment of [critical] reflection on enjambment, mainly *a parte subiecti*, or rather, *auctoris*” (Robaey 2008, 235, my translation). While it is unlikely that the Italian poetic treatises were read by many Elizabethans, they cast a light on the practices of those Italian poets and dramatists with whose works they could come into contact or, at the very least, explain what ideas circulated on the continent on the use of run-on lines. Playwright Leone de’ Sommi (d. 1590) provides the clearest statement in his *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche*:

... et apresso devrebbe *usar deligenza in non fare che il fine d’ogni sentenza andasse sempre a finire nel fin del verso, per non cadere in quella severa locuzione et in quella noiosa rissonanza, che nelle comedie è già dannata, et nelle tragedie sarebbe noiosissima*; perché *lo scavezzar sovente i versi* (ma che restino però armoniosi et leggiadri), oltra che par che le dia sempre più *de l’altiero et del grave*, se ne trae anco questo utile: che, nel recitarli, vi resta la facilità della prosa, la quale, mista con la maestà del verso, riesce oltre modo gioconda et graziosa; et questo dico perché, essendo il fine delle tragedie, come anco delle comedie, il deversi non solamente legger su i libri, ma appresentarsi anco in scena, bisogna che il poeta abbia giudicio nell’introdur cosa et descriverla, in modo che riesca con gli effetti et con le parole non meno. (de Sommi 1968, 22, emphasis mine)

[... the poet should *be careful and avoid that the end of each sentence should match the end of the line, so as not to incur that severe way of speaking and that displeasing resonance, which is already a damned thing in comedies, and which would be very displeasing in tragedies*. This happens not only because *the frequent breaking up of the lines* (as long as they remain harmonious and graceful) seems to endow them with *heightened majesty and seriousness*, but also because it entails a further expediency: when you recite them, they remain as facile as prose, and this facility, joined with the majesty of the verse, proves exceedingly delightful and charming. I say this because, since the final nature of tragedies (as well as that of comedies) resides in not being read in books, but in being staged, the poet must be judicious in the introduction and description of something, because effects as well as words must prove successful.]

De Sommi shows himself acutely aware of the performative dimension of play-texts and argues that enjambment (“scavezzar . . . i versi”) should be privileged because it avoids sententiousness, “displeasing resonance”, and accords instead “de l’altiero et del grave”, that is, a quality pertaining to the elevated style and *gravitas* (notice that the two substantivised adjectives in the Italian verge on hendiadys). Before coming to the use of enjambment in *versi sciolti* epic poetry and drama, let us compare de Sommi’s statement with what Girolamo Ruscelli wrote about the ‘breaking up of lines’ in sonnets in his often-republished *Trattato del modo di comporre in versi della lingua italiana*, a copy of which lay on the shelves of the Sidneys’ library in Penshurst Place (see Warkentin, Black and Bowen 2013, 18):

. . . si son fatti à creder, e l’hanno anco scritto, che è vitio il rompere il verso per finir la sentenza . . . Mettono costoro nel Sonetto per vitio quello, che è una delle vie principali da procurar l’altezza, e la leggiadria dello stile. Percioche *si come si vede fatto da i Latini nelle cose Eroidiche*, lo spezzar così il verso, e quivi venir’ a finir la costruzione della sentenza, è la principal grandezza dello stile. Et in *Virgilio può ciascuno certificarsene à voglia sua* . . . (1559, cxliv-cxlv, emphasis mine)

[. . . they have been led to believe, and so write too, that it is bad if one breaks up the line to finish the sentence . . . These authors attribute a fault to what, in the sonnet, is one of the main ways to achieve loftiness and gracefulness of style. Indeed, *as one can see in the heroic works by the Latins*, such breaking up of lines and then ending the construction of one’s sentence is the chief greatness of style. *Let anyone who wishes to find confirmation of this practice read Virgil* . . .]

Like de Sommi, Ruscelli associates enjambment with *gravitas* and regards it as a defining feature of the elevated style typical of epic poetry. Andrea Afribo is the scholar who has worked most extensively on the theorisations of *gravitas* in sixteenth-century Italian poetry and has investigated a literary *querelle* which engaged many Italian authors of the sixteenth century, the century in which enjambment was one of the subjects that came to dominate Italian critical discourse and literary practice.¹⁸ Afribo (2001, 167-200) shows that, on the one hand, intellectuals such as Torquato Tasso and Antonio Minturno advocated the use of enjambment together with *ordo difficilis* (e.g. through the use of hyperbaton or anastrophe) and long sentences to achieve a classically elevated style. Tasso significantly wrote that the “composizione . . . avrà del magnifico se saranno lunghi i periodi . . . S’accrece la magnificenza con l’asprezza, la quale nasce . . . da rompimento de’ versi”

¹⁸ It has been estimated, for instance, that the then hugely influential “Della Casa used [enjambment] more than any previous poet in Italian” (Prince 1954, 18).

(1959, 399, “the composition . . . will have a magnificent quality if its clauses are long . . . This magnificence can be increased through harshness, which is born . . . out of the breaking up of lines”).¹⁹ On the other, their adversaries, followers of Pietro Bembo such as Girolamo Muzio, believed that vernacular poetry and drama should aim at clarity, which cannot be achieved “strascinando per forza le parole” (quoted in Afribo 2001, 171, “dragging around the words by force”). Minturno assured these critics that *gravitas* can produce “dolcezza” (Afribo 2001, 173, “smoothness”), and Tasso believed that true poetry can only be the one in which “il senso . . . sta largamente sospeso” (Tasso 1597, 130, “the sense . . . is lengthily suspended”), because “il rompimento de’ versi ritiene il corso dell’oratione, ed è cagione di tardità, e la tardità è propria della gravità, però s’attribuisce à i magnanimi” (Tasso 1582, 380, “the breaking up of the lines retains the flow of the speech, and causes tardiness, and tardiness belongs to *gravitas*, that is why it is attributed to the large-souled”).²⁰ Della Casa and Tasso had evidently been struck by this passage of Demetrius of Phalerum’s *De Elocutione* as edited by Piero Vettori: “Magnificum autem est, et ex circumductu in componendo dicere” (Vettori 1562, 46; in Roberts’ 1902 translation, “Elevation is also caused by a rounded form of composition”) and interpreted it as if Demetrius had been dealing specifically with enjambment (Cremante 1967, 385). In fact, in this passage Demetrius was dealing with prose (he quotes Thucydides), but immediately before this, he had written that “[t]he iambic measure lacks distinction and resembles ordinary conversation” (Roberts 1902, 93): Renaissance poets may have decided to increase the number of enjambments not only to make their verses flow more ‘naturally’, but also to make them more elevated.

It is interesting to see that enjambment became associated with a classically elevated style not just in Italy, but also in Spain and France. Fernando de Herrera, commenting on Garcilaso’s style, wrote (basically paraphrasing Ruscelli) that enjambment is “uno de los caminos principales para alcanzar l’alteza i hermosura del estilo; como en el Eroico latino, que romper el verso es grandeza del modo de dezir” (Herrera 1580, 68-9, “one of the main ways to achieve loftiness and beauty of style, as in Latin heroic works, where breaking up the line is greatness in the manner of speaking”). According to Cremante, Herrera was recapitulating

opinions which were by then widely known, and on which scholarship, in Italy and in France, had been meditating for a few decades, especially in or-

¹⁹ Elsewhere, Tasso reiterates the concept: “I versi spezzati, i quali entrano uno ne l’altro . . . fanno il parlar magnifico e sublime” (1959, 664, “broken-up verses, which interpenetrate each other . . . make the speech magnificent and sublime”).

²⁰ On the role in Tasso’s poetics of enjambment as a device generating pathos, see Fubini 1946. For a more recent and technical evaluation, see Soldani 1999a, 267-95.

der to comment on lyrical experimentations which aspired to – and aimed at – assimilating to the hackneyed Petrarchist texture . . . a more evident and pronounced classicistic surface. (1967, 384-5, my translation)

The French used enjambment abundantly in their alexandrines before Malherbe's strict *diktat* at the beginning of the 1600s (Žirmunskij 1972, 191),²¹ and Ronsard significantly wrote in the preface to *La Franciade* that, in employing them, he was following the classics: "J'ay esté d'opinion, en ma jeunesse que les vers qui enjambent l'un sur l'autre, n'estoient pas bons en nostre Poesie: toutefois j'ay cognue depuis le contraire par la lecture des bons Autheurs Grecs et Romains" (1592, 3.18; "When I was young, I thought that lines enjambling on each other could not be good in our poetry: however, I realised that the opposite is the case after reading the good Greek and Roman authors"). This passage is especially emblematic because it features what seems the first occurrence of the verb *enjamber* in this meaning (Cremente 1967, 3852n14).

The previous observations pertained to all kinds of vernacular poetry, but especially those employing rhyme. What about enjambment in *versi sciolti*? Trissino, who revered the Greeks and studied Aldo Manuzio's editions of Sophocles and Euripides,²² believed that *versi sciolti* should be employed also because he felt that rhyme was an unsurmountable hindrance to the classical features of enjambment: rhyme is "totalmente contraria alla continuatione della materia, e concatenatione de i sensi, e de le costruttioni" (1562, Giv, "totally contrary to the continuity of the matter, and the concatenation of meanings and constructions"; see Placella 1969, 145 and Hardison 1984, 260). Minturno even went so far as to regard enjambment as the ideal device which can lend beauty to the *gravitas* of the *sciolti*:

[è] di non poco artificio il saperli ben catenare con voci diverse hor lunghe, hor brevi. Di che nasce una varietà bellissima di numeri *con grandissimo diletto de gli orecchi: sì comede' [sic] varij piedi nella oration latina*. Ma non accorgendosene gli uomini volgari dati a versificare, in ogni verso chiudon la sentenza . . . Doversi havere molta cura; che, quanto elle sciolte, e libere sono de' nodi delle consonanze; tanto sieno i lor versi ben legati, e incathenati con quei legami d'accenti, e di pose, de' quali s'è lungamente ragionato: accioche

²¹ "[T]he alexandrine has in the freedom of its stress patterns the capacity for a type of variation of which English verse is incapable . . . Though a distinctly heightened form of speech, its rhythms are not insistent, and there is less danger that it will dominate the natural movement of the language, or tire the ear with rhythmic obviousness. English dramatic verse has to use other means to subdue and vary its rhythms; and one of the most effective is to abandon rhyme and make liberal use of enjambment." (Attridge 2013, 58).

²² In Trissino's *Sophonisba*, there are specific echoes of Euripides' *Alcestis* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* and Sophocles' *Antigone* (Pertusi 1963, 416).

con questi numeri *adempiano quel, che loro mancasse*. Percioche non hanno quell'harmonia che dalle consonanze procede . . . In queste convien, che con la gravità delle sentenze, e delle parole sia *giunta una meravigliosa vaghezza*. In queste, poiché sono ignude di quella leggiadria, della qual' adorna l'altre rime . . . (1563, 371-2)

[it requires no little art to know how to chain the lines well and variously, sometimes with long, at other times with short endings. Thence derives a most beautiful variety of rhythms bringing very great delight to the ears: just like the diverse feet in Latin speech. Uncultured men who dabble in versifying do not realise it, and end their sentence at the end of each line . . . One must be very careful in the case of lines that are blank and loose from the knots of consonance: their verses must all the more be bound and chained with those ties of accent and breaks we have discussed at length, so that those rhythms prove successful in spite of what they lack. Indeed, they do not have that harmony which proceeds from consonance . . . As far as blank verses are concerned, it befits that the *gravitas* of the sentences and words be joined with a wonderful loveliness, because they are stripped bare of that gracefulness which embellishes the other kinds of verse.]

In epic poems written in *versi sciolti*, where the model was Virgil, enjambments abound,²³ despite Trissino's original reservations,²⁴ and translators of the *Aeneid* tried to render them in the vernacular. Annibal Caro's translation (1563-6) was widely praised also because of his willingness to render, and even augment, Virgil's enjambments (Roggia 2014, 132). But even looking at earlier translations, one notes, for instance, that of the 12 'strong' enjambments (where the main verb is *en rejet*) which one can find in Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, Niccolò Liburnio managed to render 8, while Lodovico Martelli 10 (see Vergot 2016, 41-3).

Let us finally come to drama. Since the same metre, *versi sciolti*, was used both for epic poems and tragedies (just like blank verse would be, in the 1550s and 1560s), enjambment's association with the elevated style in poetry was transferred to drama. While the commentators and translators of Aristotle's *Poetics* did not refer to enjambment, its performative poten-

²³ Vergot (2016, 43-52) shows that translators writing in *versi sciolti* were much keener on rendering Virgilian enjambments than those working with *ottave*. See Soldani 1999b, 311: if one reads the longer poems in *versi sciolti* of the Cinquecento, one immediately notices that enjambments "arrivano a interrompere il discorso in ogni punto possibile, scindendo perfino i nessi sintagmatici più saldi" ("go so far as to interrupt the speech at every possible moment, even splitting the most closely-knit syntagmatic ties").

²⁴ Trissino used many more enjambments in his comedy *I Simillimi* (derived from Plautus' *Menaechmi*) than in the *Sophonisba*, because he particularly valued the colloquial flow they could confer (Creizenach 1918, 269-70).

tial, learned directly from the Greek tragedies, mediated by Seneca, and influenced in several ways by Virgil's epic masterpiece, was not lost on the theatrical culture of the Cinquecento: whereas Trissino used enjambment sparingly in *Sofonisba*, Giovanni Rucellai (esp. *Rosmunda*, c. 1515 and *Oreste*, 1515-1520) and his imitators employed it lavishly (in Rucellai's work, enjambment is "one of the constant rhythmico-syntactical stylemes", Ariani 1974, 72, my translation). Not that this process was unproblematic: take, for instance, Lodovico Dolce. He was one of those who disagreed with Tasso and Minturno over the use of enjambment in vernacular poetry. He wanted poetic works to be as perspicuous and clear as (he felt) Petrarch, Bembo, and Sannazaro had taught, and the breaking up of verses could not produce *dulcedo*: "Dee adunque fuggirsi sopra ogni vitio di menar sospeso troppo a lungo l'animo, e l'intendimento di chi legge, con lo allontanar de verbi, o con l'intrico delle parole" (Dolce 1564, 304r, "You should then avoid as a fault beyond all else to keep the reader's mind and understanding suspended for too long, by placing the verbs at an excessive distance or by jumbling the order of the words"). Yet, in tragedies, enjambment was a device Dolce was fond to employ in order to, for example, foreground the agitation of the speaker (see Giazzon 2011). Here is Clytemnestra's outburst in the kometric exchange in Act 4 of his *Ifigenia*:

Oime figliuola, oime; che la tua morte
 Mi toglie la mia vita.
 Ecco, che 'l tuo crudele
 Padre, il tuo crudel padre,
 Destinandoti al crudo
 Fin, si diparte, e s'allontana, e fugge.
 Crudel padre, crudele
 Stella, crudel me stessa,
 Figlia, se col morir non t'accompagno.
 (Dolce 1551, 37)

[Alas, daughter mine, alas, that your death
 Deprives me of my life.
 Lo now, how your unkind
 Father, your unkind father
 Dooming you to that harsh
 End, departs, leaves us, and flees.
 Unkind father, unkind
 Star, I myself unkind,
 Daughter, should I not accompany you by dying
 (my translation)]

Clytemnestra's "baroque" (Giazzon 2011, 253) speech, displaying *geminatio* and *commoratio*, as well as many enjambments, manages to convey the moth-

er's distracted anguish. Another good example can be found in the literally breathtaking emphasis generated by the enjambment²⁵ of "sacro / Coltello" in Medea's speech in Act 4: "A te con petto ignudo / Pur a guisa di Menade con sacro / Coltello ferirò le braccia mie" (Dolce 1560, 213; "[Appearing] to you, with my bare breast / In the likeness of a Maenad, with a sacred / Knife shall I wound my arms", my translation).

Renzo Cremante (2019, 39-40) has shown that particular enjambments in tragedies written in *versi sciolti* were recognised and liked so much that later dramatists replicated them in their own works. The exclamation of Trissino's Sofonisba "Che piu tosto morire / Voljo, che viver serva de' Romani" was re-echoed by Gibaldi's Cleopatra ("Morir già Sophonisba in libertade / Volle più tosto, ch'esser serva, e viva") and Lodovico Dolce's Marianna ("Generosa Reina, che più tosto / Volle morir, ch' a guisa di captiva . . .").²⁶

In fact, Dolce's dramatic style, as rich in enjambments as his fellow playwrights' (a generalised proclivity which may thus be seen almost as a classicising hypercorrection to achieve *gravitas*), significantly changed the rhythmic flow of the Latin texts he translated and adapted. Sometimes, he managed to render Seneca's enjambments into Italian; at other times, he turned Seneca's hyperbatons into enjambments to make the image more powerful (see Giazzon 2008, 258). For instance, in the following passage from *Ercole Furioso*, Dolce introduced three homoeoteleutic proparoxytonic adjectives *en rejet*:

de me triumphat et superbifica manu
atrum per urbes ducit Argolicas canem.
viso labantem Cerbero vidi diem
pavidumque Solem; me quoque invasit tremor,
(Seneca 1917, ll. 58-62)

Di me trionfa, e con superba mano
Mena per le città di Grecia il Cane
Horrido, e ho veduto il giorno farsi
Pallido per veder Cerbero; e'l Sole
Pavido, e me ancor temenza scosse.
(Dolce 1560, 2)²⁷

Similarly, there is an interesting metrical and prosodic difference between

²⁵ All the more so because absent in the corresponding lines in Seneca: "tibi nuda-to pectore maenas / sacro feriam brachia cultro" (Seneca 1917, 806-7; in Miller's prose translation, "to thee with bared breast will I as a maenad smite my arms with the sacrificial knife").

²⁶ Trissino 1529, c4v; Gibaldi 1583, 114; Dolce 1565, 24, respectively. "Sooner die / Would I, than live a slave to the Romans"; "Sophonisba sooner dead while free / Would die than a slave alive"; "That generous queen, who sooner / Would die, than as a slave . . ." (my translations).

²⁷ "[Hercules] triumphs over me, and by his overweening hand / Walks through the cities of Greece the Dog / Horrendous, and I have seen the daylight turn / Pale at seeing Cerberus, and the Sun / Fearful, and even I was shaken with fright" (my translation).

the first three lines of Oedipus' final appeal to Thebes²⁸ in Dolce's *Giocasta* (on the right) and the corresponding ones in the Latin translation of Euripides' *Phoenissae* which he used:

O patriae incliti cives,
Videtis, Oedipus ille,
Qui inclyta illa aenigmata cognouit, et maximus fuit vir,
(Collinus 1541, n5r)

Cari miei cittadini, Ecco che'l vostro
Signor e Re; che a la città di Thebe
Rese quiete, e sicurezza, e pace;²⁹
(Dolce 1560, 50)

Dolce rewrites the passage that he could find in Collinus' version, but what is especially interesting here is that in Collinus' "readerly rather than theatrical" translation *ad sententiam* (Dewar-Watson 2010, 23), the lines are very concise, apart from the third one which extends so curiously,³⁰ while the flow of the speech in Dolce is rendered more fluid and elaborate thanks to the sinuousness of those initial enjambments. Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh used Dolce's text as their main source for *Jocasta*, but perhaps read Collinus' version, as well (Dewar-Watson 2010, 31): if they did, they were faced with markedly different patterns among which they could choose (and their choices will be exemplified in the next section).

To recapitulate, enjambment was theorised by sixteenth-century Italian critics as a marker of *gravitas*, and poets used it in epic poems as well as tragedies composed in *versi sciolti* to elevate their style, channelling Virgil, Seneca, and other classical authors. Dramatists, in particular, delighted in the performative potential of enjambments, which became a styleme of 'regular' tragedy. These critical considerations and, more importantly, the literary and drama texts embodying them, circulated widely and were embraced in continental Europe, especially France and Spain. In the next and final section, their impact across the English Channel will be evaluated.

4. Enjambed Confluences in Elizabethan Tragedy

As may be expected, given the premises outlined in section 2, no theoretical work on enjambment was produced in Elizabethan and early Stuart England, with one exception: in his *Defence of Rhyme* (1603), Samuel Daniel, after admitting his preference for blank verse in tragedies and long poems,

²⁸ ὦ πάτρας κλεινῆς πολῖται, λεύσσειτ', Οἰδίπους ὄδε, / ὅς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἔγνω καὶ μέγιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ," (Euripides 1913, 1758-9).

²⁹ "My dear citizens, here's your / Lord and king, who to the city of Thebes / Granted rest, and safety, and peace" (my translation).

³⁰ No clear metrical pattern has been detected here, apart from the generic isosyllabism which Collinus achieves in the first two versicles (corresponding to the two hemistichs of the first tetrameter).

returns to discussing poems written in rhyming couplets, and states that he approves of enjambment, curiously looking at classical (unrhymed) epic poems as precedents:

Besides, methinks sometimes to beguile the ear with a running out and passing over the rhyme, as no bound to stay us in the line where the violence of the matter will break through, is rather graceful than otherwise, wherein I find my Homer, Lucan,³¹ as if he gloried to seem to have no bounds albeit he were confined within his measures, to be in my conceit most happy.
(Alexander 2004, 231)³²

Daniel's "running out and passing over the rhyme" prompted by "the violence of the matter" is reminiscent of Trissino's defence of the liberty and spontaneity granted by *versi sciolti*, releasing the verse from rhymical strictures.

Nor is there much proof that Elizabethan playwrights read any Italian critical work on metrics and prosody. However, as far as tragedy is concerned, Italian dramatic texts evidently circulated in England in the sixteenth century. A few examples may suffice. *Freewyl*, an English translation of the all-prose, 'non-regular' tragedy *Libero Arbitrio* by Francesco Negri, was published in the 1570s (on questions of authorship and dating, see Bajetta 1997). As already seen, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh adapted Dolce's *Giocasta*, while the authors of *Gismond of Salerne* drew on another tragedy by the same dramatist, *Didone* (first published in 1547; see Cunliffe 1906a). William Alabaster's Latin *Roxana* (c. 1595) is an adaptation of Luigi Groto's *La Dalida* (first published in Venice in 1572), while Viscount Edward Conway (1564-1631) owned a copy of the 1588 edition of Torquato Tasso's *Re Torrismondo* (Smith 2011, 2, 318). Besides, the so-called "Italian intermediation" must be taken into account:

The importance of Senecan tragedy and of Newton's work [i.e. the *Tenne Tragedies*] has never been undervalued in the history of the growth of Elizabethan tragedy. What is generally either given for granted and/or almost totally obscured is the importance of the Italian intermediation. All the translations collected by Newton were produced in the 1560s, just after Lodovico Dolce's important translation of Seneca's *corpus tragicum*, and some thirty years after

³¹ This reference is not altogether clear (the original spelling is "Homer-Lucan"): Gavin Alexander (2004, 404) interprets it as meaning that Daniel admired Lucan as his model for his *Civil Wars* because he had written an epic based on recent history unlike Homer, while others argue that "Homer-Lucan" was Daniel's nickname for his own *Civil Wars* (see e.g. Paleit 2013, 68).

³² There are other scattered notes – for example, when Ben Jonson accused Chapman's translations as follows: "the translations of Homer and Virgil in long Alexandrines were but prose" (qtd in Munro 2013, 217), he was probably critiquing Chapman's enjambed fourteeners.

the Italian tragedy revival in the *Orti Oricellari* group, and some twenty years after the Giraldi-Speroni debate in the 1540s . . . (Domenichelli 2019, n.p.)

Through the Italian mediation, a re-evaluation of the classical effects of enjambment could reach English poetry and drama, most likely not via theory, but through practice, and while Seneca's reception had, as is widely known, a huge impact on Elizabethan tragedy, the Italians had fashioned a rhymeless epic and tragic style that cherished run-on lines, a practice which they associated with *gravitas* and which went beyond Senecan imitation.

When studying the development of the use of enjambment in English blank verse, it must be stressed that it is a device that needs to be learned and honed, and that once it is used by many authors, is then easily taken for granted – for a comparable case, one may think of the extraordinary Elizabethan innovation of inserting prose into plays written in blank verse (see Bruster 2005, and Craig and Greatley-Hirsch 2017, 53-78).³³ It cannot be enough to state that “[i]n the couplet . . . Marlowe did arrive at enjambment; in blank verse, hardly ever” (Saintsbury 1914, 174) – an assertion whose veracity can easily be contested (in Marlowe's case, one should argue that it was a matter of choice on his part, not of inability). Dramatic enjambment involves awareness of its rhetorical and performative effects, besides a playwright's competence in wilfully mismatching meaning, rhythm, and syntax: it is a part of his or her “poetical dramaturgy” (Cheney 2007, 228-9). Therefore, if it is true that Chaucer had already invented a form of iambic pentameter and introduced enjambment in “new and unexpected” ways (Minkova 2009, 188), the functions and effects of enjambment in blank verse drama, and specifically tragedy, could follow different trajectories.

On the other hand, instead of ‘trajectories’, one could better employ the term ‘confluences’ (Smith 1988, 6), because different traditions, characterised by their own specific history and conventions, came to be accommodated: 1) enjambment in Greek and Latin epos and drama; 2) enjambment in *versi sciolti* epos and drama, which translated, adapted, and refashioned the classics; 3) enjambment in different theatrical genres and in different metres; 4) enjambment in vernacular poetry.³⁴ The field of investigation is vast, and this article aims at scrutinising only the first two areas; further research is required, focusing not on the quantity of run-on lines, but on what ‘work’

³³ For instance, in 1 *Tamburlaine* 4.4, when Bajazeth, emperor of the Turks, who is put in a cage and is mocked by the triumphant Tamburlaine, starts speaking in prose, which signals his enraged humiliation.

³⁴ For instance, while it would perhaps make little sense to compare the use of run-on lines in *Gorboduc* and in Wyatt's and Surrey's sonnets, the same cannot be said of comparing the use of enjambment in Shakespeare's sonnets and *Romeo and Juliet*, given the particularly lyrical features of this tragedy (see Bigliuzzi 2015).

they do: their function and effect.

Let us start with Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc*. The sententiousness which marks the first tragedy written in blank verse is determined also by metrical end-stops which shape "moments of counsel, tendering them in memorable ten-syllable chunks which might otherwise have been lost to prolonged, enjambed argumentation" (Stagg 2021, 7). This style was deliberately chosen by Sackville and Norton, who, looking at the Earl of Surrey's *Aeneid* translations, were faced by a new, strange metre which was simultaneously characterised by enjambment³⁵ and yet oddly hemmed, as Robert Stagg insightfully argues:

Surrey syntactically or grammatically runs on about a quarter of the lines in his translation . . . Yet the verse still sounds hemmed and hermetic . . . The lines' highly regular iambic stress patterns, including a crucial stress on the tenth syllable, mitigate their syntactical or grammatical enjambment . . . This is verse which aspires to be plastic but manages only to be wooden . . . (6)

Writing in a new metre must have been challenging, and, as anticipated, Surrey was very probably following the Italians, as O.B. Hardison argues: "Surrey's free use of enjambment and his differentiation between syllable count and pronunciation suggest Italian rather than French precedents for his verse" (1989, 135). Taking their cue from Surrey and possibly directly from Italian tragedies in *versi sciolti* (since only co-eval Italian tragedies were rhymeless), Sackville and Norton introduced interesting enjambments in their *Gorboduc*. The tragedy already displays a knowing use of the device, something which has often been ignored or dismissed (except for Hardison 1989, 174: "Enjambment is used – often to good effect . . ."). In the first section, it has been seen that the number of enjambments is meagre in comparison to late Shakespeare, but quite significant when compared to the plays of the 1580s and early 1590s. In the following quotation, the phrase "True fayth" *en rejet* is noteworthy. Prince Ferrex is trying to reassure himself and his mother of the councillors' dependability, and says: "Their Auncestours from race to race haue borne / True fayth to my forefathers and their seede, / I truste thei eke wyll beare the lyke to me" (Norton and Sackville 1565, Aivr). The enjambed arrangement of "borne / True fayth" makes the phrase stand out, and that phrase was politically and religiously loaded in the Tudor period (and the relevance of "fayth" is further strengthened by alliteration: "fayth", "forefathers"). As in classical and Italian tragedy, however, run-on lines usually occur in narrative descriptions or expository speeches, not in

³⁵ "Surrey's first twentieth-century editor [Frederick Morgan Padelford] also estimates that a quarter of Surrey's lines in the *Aeneid* are 'run-overs' (Stagg 2021, 6n26).

verbal exchanges between *dramatis personae*. These, for example, are King Gorboduc's first words in the play:

My Lordes whose graue aduise and faithfull aide
 Haue long upheld my Honour and my Realme
 And brought me from this age from tender yeres,
 Guidynge so great estate with great renowne;
 Now more importeth mee the erst to use
 Your faith and wisdome wherby yet I reigne,
 (Aivv)

Again, "Your faith" appears *en rejet*, and the enjambment in the first two lines makes the king's speech overflow, facilitated by the conjunction "And" at the beginning of the third line. The rhythmic pattern may be suffocatingly uniform, but rhetorical devices such as enjambment and alliteration give it a certain variety. The ensuing effect enables King Gorboduc to dominate the scene. It is actually not so different from Marcus Andronicus' speech in *Titus Andronicus* 1.1, when he announces that the plebeians have chosen his brother as the new emperor:

Tenne yeares are spent since first he undertooke
 This cause of Rome, and chastis[é]d with armes
 Our enemies pride: Five times he hath returnd
 Bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sonnes,
 In Coffins from the field . . .
 (Shakespeare 1594, A3v)

Here, too, one can notice the use of enjambment to 'give air' to the line endings as well as emphasise ideologically loaded phrases ("This cause of Rome"). One hears the same uniform iambic pattern, and virtually the same use of alliteration. Something that differentiates the style of the later play is the use of shorter sentences, but, on the whole, speeches like this complicate generalisations which equate stateliness with end-stopping ("In public orations and measured summations one frequently finds a high incidence of end-stopping", Rokison 2013, 287).

Such knowing uses of enjambment come to the foreground when it is recalled that "early Elizabethan versification is essentially an art of congruence, a fitting of phrase to metrical pattern" (Wright 1988, 46). One can best contrast this use of enjambment with the style of what was, as a matter of fact, the first Elizabethan tragedy: Thomas Preston's *Cambyses* (first performed around 1560-1561). The fact that *Cambyses* is written in rhyming couplets (mainly fourteeners) does not *per se* justify the dearth of enjambment in the text, except for often quite weak instances: for example, "Lady deer to King a kin, foorthwith let vs proceed: / To trace abroad the beauty

feelds, as erst we had decreed” (Preston 1570, Eiv) where the first line contains a seemingly complete sentence, which only faintly finds a syntactic continuation in the next. This stylistic difference becomes even clearer if one compares this feature of *Cambyses* with the treatment of enjambment in the likewise rhymed fourteeners of the translations of Seneca’s tragedies published between 1559 and 1566, and then collected together in 1581 (the *Tenne Tragedies*). Although these texts were not conceived to be performed (unlike *Cambyses* – but see below for an exception), enjambment was frequently employed in them, as noted back in 1909 by E. M. Spearing: in the metres employed by Jasper Heywood in some of his translations of Seneca’s plays,³⁶ “the attempt to represent one Latin line by one English, whilst keeping the Latin order of words, has resulted in much *enjambement*” (440; see also Hardison 1989, 161-2); Thomas Newton (the translator of the *Thebais*, i.e. *Phoenissae*) followed suit, while Studley (who translated *Medea*, *Agamemnon*, *Hippolytus* and *Hercules Oetaeus*) was freer. The fact that these texts were not conceived for performance should be emphasised because enjambment tends to stand out more on the page than on the stage: whereas typography and punctuation help the reader in the detection of an enjambment, a spectator will need to scan the actors’ recitation to identify a run-on line, unless the actors emphasise the line-ending by pausing or altering the volume or speed of their voice.

In their attempt at rendering the Latin syntax and Seneca’s use of enjambment, these translators blurred the scheme of the rhymed line-endings. It must be stressed that their willingness to re-echo Seneca’s prosody and syntax did not coincide with faithfulness in their translations, even considering the alterations necessitated by the use of rhyme. See this passage from the *Thebais*, where Oedipus is speaking of his traumatic exposure as a baby:

Apollo by his Oracle pronounced sentence dyre
 Vpon mee being yet vnborne, that I vnto my Syre
 Should beeastly parricide commit: and thereupon was I
 Condemned straight by Fathers doome. My Feete were by and by
 Launcde through, and through with yron Pins: hangde was I by the Heeles
 Upon a Tree: my swelling plants the printe thereof yet feeles:
 (Seneca 1581, 45v-46r)

The text is quite different from the corresponding lines in Seneca:

. . . sed numquid et peccavit? abstrusum, abditum
 dubiumque an essem sceleris infandi reum
 deus egit; illo teste damnavit parens

³⁶ See Silvia Bigliazzi’s article in the current issue of *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies* for a more recent engagement with Heywood’s metrics.

calidoque teneros transilit ferro pedes,³⁷
 (Seneca 1921, 251-4)

Yet, one can argue that enjambment clearly contributes to applying a classical quality to the style of the translation. Consider also this part of Atreus' instruction to his servant in Heywood's translation of *Thyestes* 2.1, where the translator tries as much as possible to render the syntax of the original despite the constraints of rhyme:

. . . si patrum vocant.
 pater est, eatur.— multa sed trepidus solet
 detegere vultus, magna nolentem quoque
 consilia produunt: nesciant quantae rei
 fiant ministri, nostra tu coepta occides".
 (Seneca 1921, 329-33)

. . . if they him unckle call,
 He is their father: let them goe. But much the fearefull face
 Bewrayes it selfe: euen him that faynes the secret wayghty case,
 Doth oft betray: let them therefore not know, how great a guile
 They goe about. And thou these things in secret keepe the whyle.
 (Seneca 1581, 26r)

Seneca's text proves more powerful thanks to the distancing between the adjectives and nouns (trepidus . . . vultus; rei . . . ministri), and also because metrical constraints and structural differences between the two languages do not allow Heywood to enjamb precisely the same nexuses of the Latin text;³⁸ still, the run-on lines of the translation partially manage to have the same effect.

The contrast between *Cambyzes* and the *Tenne Tragedies* is revelatory: the translators recognised the performative value of enjambment in Seneca and tried to render it, although they used rhyming fourteeners in texts not conceived for performance. An interesting exception is Alexander Neville's (quite free) translation of *Oedipus*. In the dedicatory epistle of the first edition (1563),³⁹ Neville explains that he wrote it specifically to satisfy a few friends' request to see a staging of Seneca's *Oedipus* in the vernacular. Indeed, his

³⁶ In Miller's prose translation, "Hidden away, confined, my very being in doubt, the god made me guilty of a charge unspeakable. On that charge my sire condemned me, spitted my slender ankles on hot iron".

³⁷ This is also what happens in Heywood's attempt at translating the "spolia . . . patri / fraterna" enjambment in *Hercules Furens* seen in section 2: "I saw my selfe, I saw him lo (the night now gone, of hell / And *Ditis* tamde) throw out abroad before his fathers sight / His brothers spoyles . . ." (Seneca 1581, 1v-2r).

³⁸ For the sake of clarity, quotations from this edition will not split the fourteeners into distichs (the fourteeners are not split in the 1581 edition).

translation was performed in Trinity College, Cambridge around 1559-60 (see APGRD, “*Oedipus* 1559 - 1563”). The play’s opening speech contains a number of run-on lines. Sometimes, Neville manages to render Seneca’s own enjambments, other times he displaces them, especially because of the padding necessitated by the length of the fourteeners. See for example these two passages, where the “genitor-perimatur” nexus is displaced on to the enjambment “rise / A mischiefe”, and where Seneca’s *rejet* “funesta pestis” is not lost in the rendition, although the effect is somewhat lessened by the postponement of the verb (“The plague consumes”):

A kingdom is befauln to me, I feare lest hereof rise
 A mischiefe, (mighty *Ioue*,) to great I feare alas I feare
 Lest these my handes haue spoyled the lyfe, of the my father deare.
 (Seneca 1563, 1v)

(caelum deosque testor) in regnum incidi:
 infanda timeo: ne mea genitor manu
 perimatur;
 (Seneca 1917, 14-16)

The olde men with the yong (alas:) the father with the childe
 The plage consumes. both man & wife all beastes both tame and wylde
 Are spoyled by the Pestylence.
 (A3r)

iuvenesque senibus iungit et gnatis patres
 funesta pestis
 (54-5)

On the performative level, it is difficult to evaluate how the actors of the production would recite these run-on lines, considering the lack of information we possess. Perhaps they exploited the internal caesura as a moment where they could catch their breath and then continue reciting the enjambed line flowing into the next fourteener. It is clear, though, that spectators and actors expected a certain quality from a Senecan translation. In his preface to *Troas*, Heywood apologised for not always keeping Seneca’s “royalty of speach” (Seneca 1581, 95v). This phrase has sometimes been interpreted as referring to vocabulary, but, as Hardison explains, it actually “refers to elevation of language” (1989, 153), and enjambments were evidently recognised as elements that could contribute to it, since they were rendered and/or introduced in the translations.

The Elizabethans gradually discovered that blank verse could become a much better vehicle for “royalty of speach”: the absence of rhyme allows a greater number of run-on lines than in rhymed verse, since in blank verse the

pause at the end of the line is marked less strongly.⁴⁰ However, enjambing in the new metre could be difficult. Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh struggled with rendering the run-on *endecasillabi sciolti* of Dolce's *Giocasta*, but they seem to have been aware of the importance of enjambment as the Italian author's styleme.⁴¹ Thus, whereas Dolce has the "bailo" (tutor) salute Antigone with an impassioned speech filled with enjambments, the passage in the English translation loses some of its pathos because of their rather clunky rendition, which loses the first enjambment and has a uniform, oppressive rhythm:

Gentil figlia d'Edipo, e pia sorella
 Dell'infelice giovane, sbandito
 Dal suo fratel delle paterne case
 A cui nei puerili e tener' anni
 Fui (come saper dei) bailo e custode;
 (Cunliffe 1906b, 160)

O gentle daughter of King Oedipus,
 O sister deare to that unhappie wight
 Whom brothers rage hath reav[é]d of his right,
 To whom, thou knowst, in yong and tender years
 I was a friend and faithfull govenour,
 (161)

Elsewhere, Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh tried to remedy by actually 'streamlining' the original enjambment by splitting the verb-direct object unit where Dolce had another phrase (in the following instances, a vocative and an adverb, respectively) lengthening the enjambment:

Tu col tuo dipartir lasciasti, o figlio,
 La tua casa dolente . . .
 (Cunliffe 1906b, 192)

At thy departe, O lovely chylde, thou lefte
 My house in teares . . .
 (193)

Né potrete segnar sì leggermente
 Le vostre carni, che la mano, e'l ferro

³⁹ For a fruitful study of cesurae and pauses in relation to enjambment in dramatic blank verse, see Oras 1960.

⁴⁰ Consider also this quotation, taken from one of the passages from Dolce's *Di-done* which influenced the authors of *Gismond of Salerne*, as detected by Cunliffe: "Però è ben tempo di provar s'io posso / Finir le pene mie con questa mano" ("Yet it is time I tried if I can / End my torments with my own hand", my translation), which becomes "But yet abide: I may perhappes devise / some way to be unburdened of my life" (1906a, 447).

Non apra insieme a questa vecchia il petto.
(194)

Ne can the cruell sworde so slightly touche
Your tender fleshe, but that the selfe same wounde
Shall deeply bruse this aged brest of myne.
(195)

Being shorter than the fourteener, blank verse could make the enjambment more effective, and this was a resource of blank verse which was to be employed also in a play that has been called the “most Senecan of all Senecan imitations” (Waith 1971, 48): *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. Peter Gibbard (2014, 322) has noticed that Thomas Hughes and the other gentlemen of Gray’s Inn who authored it introduced a number of enjambments which were extremely strong for the period: the frequency of run-on lines is quantitatively lower than in *Gorboduc* and *Jocasta*, but here their use more closely reflects Seneca’s sententious style; one could say that the result feels ‘less English’ and may have been favoured by the ‘cultivated’ tastes characterising the Inns of Court. In the following example, the unit between an attributive adjective and noun is split: “Not death, nor life alone can give a full / Revenge: join both in one. Die: and yet live” (Hughes et al. 1587, 7). But it is not simply the adjective-noun unit that gets enjambed – other strong examples are the pronominal subject-verb and modal verb-main verb units, as in this remarkable speech spoken by Mordred:

My thoughts misgive me much. Down, terror! I
Perceive mine end, and desperate though I must
Despise despair, and somewhat hopeless hope,
The more I doubt the more I dare: by fear
I find the fact is fittest for my frame.
(1587, 21)

Gibbard rightly remarks that “[i]n his effort to imitate Seneca’s brief sententiae, Hughes disrupts the line integrity characteristic of 1580s blank verse” (2014, 322) – but the knowing use of enjambment had been prepared by previous attempts in the genre (specifically, *Gorboduc* and *Jocasta* and, to a lesser extent, the early Elizabethan Senecan translations which by then had been collected as the *Tenne Tragedies*).

When blank verse became routinely used in plays for the public and private playhouses from the 1590s onwards, dramatists could develop and diversify it. While we do not know exactly how Elizabethan professional actors delivered their line endings, data such as the insistent permanence in quartos and the 1623 Shakespeare Folio of a comma after “Now is the winter of our discontent” at the beginning of *Richard III* (thus: “Now is the

winter of our discontent, / Made glorious summer by this sun of York” 1.1.1-2) have led scholars to argue that theatregoers could hear a difference in scansion and understand immediately when the actor’s lines were enjambed (Kanelos 2011, 88-9).⁴² Given the instability of early modern play-texts, one wonders whether such devices were meant as directions to the actors or to the readers. On the one hand, it is more likely that punctuation was used by playwrights, scribes, and prompters as a way to instruct the players on how to deliver a line. On the other, considering the development of a market for dramatic texts, such punctuation may have acquired a function similar to that of commonplace marks to boost the memorability of certain lines. Further scrutiny is required on this question.

With Marlowe, end-stopped verse recorded a revival, but dramatic enjambment had then its qualitative (and, later, quantitative) heyday, epitomised by Shakespeare’s increasingly varied rhythmic patterns in his late plays (which are characterised not only by a growing number of enjambments, but also by lines ending with an extrametrical unstressed syllable, midline transitions, short lines, shared lines, and late caesuras – see Pangallo 2012, 100-25 and Stagg 2021, 10-13). Taking into account the fact that now enjambed blank verse was used also in comedies, one could argue that enjambment gradually stopped being a marker of the elevated style and was increasingly used to make dramatic speeches closer to everyday spoken language, while, in late Shakespeare, it also came to match “increasingly complex and irregular representations of the world” (Kanelos 2011, 84; think, for example, of Leontes’ tortured ‘affection speech’ in *The Winter’s Tale* 1.2). Still, the most extreme example of enjambment in the dramatic corpus of the period occurs in one of the earliest Jacobean tragedies: Ben Jonson’s much-maligned *Sejanus: His Fall*, first performed in the winter of 1603. In a scene of this heavily-enjambed play,⁴³ Sejanus, plotting to keep and augment his power, tells his accomplice and spy, Julius Posthumus, to lie to the empress mother and cause her to side against Agrippina’s party:

... Pray *Augusta*, then,
That for her owne, great *Caesars*, and the pub-
Lique safety, she bee pleas[']d to urge these dangers.
Cesar is too secure, (he must be told,

⁴¹ Consider also Pangallo 2012, 113: “Comparing two speeches, one from an early comedy and one from his last, evinces the two extremes of heavily end-stopped verse and heavily enjambed verse that marked the spectrum of [Shakespeare’s] career. They also reveal how – contrary to expectations – endstopped lines can demand speed in delivery, while enjambment might move more slowly”.

⁴² “There are almost twice as many run-on lines in *Sejanus* as in *Othello*, and 10 percent more than in *Henry V* and *Hamlet*” (Tarlinskaja 2014, 174).

And best hee'll take it from a Mothers tongue.)
(Jonson 1605, E1 v)

“[P]ub-/Lique” may seem a typo, but the metre shows that it is in fact a particular kind of enjambment, a *synapheia* across line breaks – a technique which interestingly out-classicised Roman drama: Seneca never uses it in his plays, whereas it can be found in poems by Horace and Catullus. It should also be noted that such a technique would seem to belong to printed texts, not dramatic texts conceived for performance (although this is not the place to investigate the particularly intricate textual history of *Sejanus*). However, when performing this play, the actor can pause at the end of the line to emphasise the split word: “public” is a very loaded word in the play, with dozens of occurrences. By enjambling the word, Sejanus wants to stress and proclaim the selflessness of his intentions.

Jonson’s fervent (and perhaps misplaced) sophistication in introducing *synapheia* across line breaks to English drama⁴⁴ nicely completes a process of confluences by which enjambment was developed in tragedies written in blank verse. By the end of the Elizabethan period, Shakespeare and other playwrights employed enjambment, valuing it as part of their poetical dramaturgy to diversify their metre. This article has argued that run-on lines had originally been introduced into blank verse to achieve what was termed the ‘elevated style’ of the classics, and this adoption occurred partly through direct Senecan imitation, but also through the mediation of continental (specifically, Italian) practice. The argument emphasises the non-insular character of Elizabethan verse-making, and casts new light on the complex development of dramatic blank verse, situating it in the context of the reception of classical metres.

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⁴³ Jonson inserted it in some of his poems, as well, for example in his Pindaric ode to Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison and in his translation of Horace’s *Ars Poetica*, which set Swinburne foaming, calling the *synapheia* “bor- / D’ring circles” an “indescribable horror – an abomination” (1889, 112). The same device can be found in later Jacobean poetry and drama – an earlier example can be found in John Donne’s *Satyre III* (“blind-/ ness”, 67-8); see Gibbons 1984, 284.

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‘Doubtful Feet’ and ‘Healing Words’: Greek Tragic Prosody in *Samson Agonistes*¹

Abstract

This article will address the vexed issue of Milton’s increasingly free verse forms, with particular emphasis on his late closet drama, *Samson Agonistes* (1671). The metre of this work has long since baffled critics, who have been especially troubled by the prosodic experimentation evident in Milton’s use of the Chorus, a verse form he borrows from Greek tragic drama, which he takes as the model for this work. In the note he prefaces to *Samson* Milton explicitly describes his prosody in the terms of Greek tragedy: ‘The measure of verse used in the chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks monostrophic, or rather apolelymenon,’ he writes, quickly qualifying this assertion by offering an alternative terminology, ‘or being divided into stanzas of pauses, they may be called alloeostropha.’ Yet efforts by critics from Benjamin Stillingfleet (in the eighteenth-century) to Robert Bridges (in the nineteenth) and John Shawcross (in the twentieth) have thus far failed to document a genuine Greek metrical inheritance behind Milton’s poem, and *Samson Agonistes* continues to resist efforts to fix its prosody within classical metrical terminology. Taking this difficulty as its point of departure, this article will reconsider the question of how Milton conceived of his metrical innovations in relation to the prosodic systems he inherited from Greek tragedy. I will explore the political implications of Greek metrics in Milton’s understanding, suggesting that his engagement with the verse forms of classical tragedy provide him with a means of critical engagement with the democratic systems of Ancient Athens.

KEYWORDS: John Milton; *Samson Agonistes*; Greek tragedy; Euripides

1. Forms of Representation in *Samson Agonistes*

John Milton’s closet drama *Samson Agonistes* (1671) ends with a gesture characteristic of Greek tragedy, a genre that the poet so remarkably acknowledges in the preface to the work as his chief model for the piece, and which critics have recently worked to restore as a key context for Milton’s work (Chernaik 2012, Crawford 2016, Leo 2016). Lamenting Samson’s sui-

¹ Thanks are due to Sarah Lewis, Lucy Munro, Elizabeth Scott-Baumann and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on this article.

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cidal final act, his father Manoa urges: “Let us go find the body where it lies / Soaked in his enemies’ blood, and from the stream / With lavers pure, and cleansing herbs wash off / The clotted gore” (1725-29).² This ritualistic cleansing most immediately recalls the work of Milton’s professed favourite playwright, echoing Euripides’ *Hippolytus* (1153f.), another play that ends with a bereaved father who blames a woman for the violent loss of his son. The need to reclaim and ritually cleanse the body of the deceased is, however, an impulse so characteristic of Greek tragedy as to almost stand in for it as a kind of shorthand, a synecdoche for both the recurring dramatic and formal structures that underpin the genre and also some of the most immediately recognizable political values that the plays so rigorously question and explore. If Milton sees the act of washing the dead body with which *Hippolytus* concludes as a synecdoche for Greek tragic drama, then this symbolism is made all the more apt by the fact that the genre was itself understood to be a form of ritual cleansing by the poet. Milton begins *Samson Agonistes* with an epigraph taken from the sixth book of Aristotle’s *Poetics*: “*Tragœdia est imitatio actionis seriæ, &c. Per misericordiam & metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem*” (“Tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious, etc. perfecting, through pity and fear, the purification, by sacrifice, of such affects”, Milton 1671, title page; trans. Leo 2011, 212). As Russ Leo has recently reminded us, Milton departs from standard translations of the period to render the Greek “καθαρσις” by the term “*lustrationem*”, suggesting an act of purification by ritual (and often, specifically, ritual cleansing, Leo 2011, 222). Part of the restorative power of Greek tragedy lies in this ceremonial washing away of all that has passed during the course of the play, Milton believes; this language of purification by cleansing, however, leaves an indelible mark on his own drama.

This essay seeks to cast new light on Milton’s remaking of Euripidean forms in *Samson Agonistes* by exploring the ways in which certain critics have persistently sought to identify a relationship between the innovative metrics of the closet drama and the Greek model he imitates here. I take up the much-debated question of the poem’s unusual prosody and show how Milton’s metres have themselves been seen as a manifestation of the poet’s commitment to tragic form as something that serves a metaphorical, or allegorical, function in *Samson*. I suggest that ongoing efforts – by critics from the eighteenth-century to the twentieth – to position the poem’s metrics in relation to ancient Greek prosody are in themselves significant, reflecting the political allegiances of both the text itself and Milton’s wider consider-

² All references to the poem are to the 1997 edition unless otherwise stated and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

ation of what seventeenth-century English democracy might look like.³ As such, this essay is not an exhaustive survey of the prosody of *Samson*; rather it is a necessarily selective exploration of the way in which a distinct critical counter-tradition – thus far little explored in studies of the poem – has construed the experimental metres of Milton's closet drama in relation to Greek tragic verse forms. I ask why Milton's prosody is so often taken to stand in for his politics, tracing such readings of the poem's metre to the poet's own political thought and (often somewhat misleading) prosodic cues.

Deriving from the Greek, “συν-” prefix (“together” or “alike”), combined with “ἐκδοχή,” (“receiving from the hands of another, succession”) the word “synecdoche” was associated from Hellenistic Greek onwards with the act of interpretation, literally the act of “understanding one thing with another” (*OED*, “synecdoche, *n*”). The term “synecdoche” thus combines at its roots both political and interpretive significance.

In early modern England “synecdoche” was most commonly used to denote a formal device and is frequently defined in rhetorical treatises as “when the part ... is used for the whole”, Thomas Wilson explains (Wilson 1553, sig. Siii). The use of literary epithets – in which a key attribute of an individual is made to represent their whole identity – could be construed as a subset of this figurative device, as John Langley's 1659 rhetorical manual makes clear (the book was used at St Paul's school, which Milton attended). His entry on “Synecdoche” reads: “*Cum nomen proprium Viri qualitate præcellentis, pro aliis, ipsa qualitate præditis, ponitur: ut Thraso pro glorioso, Sauromatæ, pro remotis.*” (“When the proper name of a man outstanding in a quality is used for others who are endowed with the same quality: as *Thraso* for the braggart, and *Sarmatians* for those far-off”, Langley 1659, 4, tab. 7).⁴ Milton chooses to add the epithet “*Agonistes*” to his hero's name in imitation of such tragedies as Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Euripides' *Hercules Furens*. “Multiple meanings of the Greek are relevant for Milton's tragedy,” writes Laura Lunger Knoppers in her notes to the title page of the closet drama. “An ἄγων [*Agon*] is an assembly, contest, place of contest, struggle, gymnastic exercise, agony, anguish. An ἀγωνιστής [*Agonistes*] is a combatant or competitor in the games; one who struggles for something” (Knoppers 2008, 65). It is no coincidence, I would suggest, that both Milton's chosen title and Knoppers' commentary upon it emphasize a social aspect to this Greek term; like the politician, or even the actor, the “ἀγωνιστής” [*Agonistes*] requires the presence of others to witness his tri-

³ I develop the argument that *Samson Agonistes* represents a sustained and close engagement with ancient Greek democratic politics in Crawforth 2016.

⁴ I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for the journal for assistance with this point of translation.

umph or defeat. While Milton's use of synecdoche in *Samson* has been much commented-upon – Lauren Shohet calls the work “a drama of synecdoche” (Shohet 98) – Knoppers is unusual in emphasizing the socio-political aspect that is so fundamental to my argument here. From the very title page of Milton's work, which first appeared in print alongside *Paradise Regained*, his reader is made aware of the inextricability of the Greek tradition, with which the text so closely engages, and the constitution of political communities that are built upon conflict, or “struggle”, in Milton's post-Civil War landscape. Milton's Samson is made political via the Greek tragic custom of titular epithets, through the etymology of this ancient Greek word and, I would argue, by the selection of a single quality as representative of his whole being. The use of the “*Agonistes*” epithet is thus a form of synecdoche that places the issue of representation, of how to denote key aspects of both the drama's hero and its subject, front and foremost in the reader's mind at the very beginning of Milton's Greek tragedy.

If epithets offer a particular form of literary synecdoche, in which a single attribute stands in for an entire persona and the political world he or she inhabits, then Milton's use of this rhetorical device could itself be considered a political gesture, in which he is responsible for determining how Samson is figured within the climate of Restoration England; his decision to emphasize his protagonist's distinctly social struggle in awarding him this particular Greek tragic epithet is an act of appropriation, in which Biblical myth is recast in early modern terms. We might extend this idea further into the political sphere, in which democracy as an ideal (even in the limited form Milton imagined) might likewise be thought of as a form of synecdoche – an individual standing for the populace at large, or a vote on a piece of paper representing a person and their views (“a part for a whole”). Indeed, there is evidence in George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* that “synecdoche” continued to carry some of its etymological association with politics; two of the three examples for the figure (which he renames “quick conceit”) are explicitly political in this treatise (Puttenham 1936, 195-6). Allusion to a literary work, via a metrical, verbal, or other formal echo, might also be seen as a kind of synecdoche – evoking an entire text, author or tradition by use of a tiny fragment, or triggering an entirely other interpretive framework by making reference to a textual world outside of that in which a particular work is being produced (“understanding one thing with another”). The analogy between such interpretive aspects of this linguistic mechanism and its resonance with the workings of political representation is one that I will explore in detail in this essay, in which I use it to think through both formal and political implications of Milton's relationship to his Greek precursors in *Samson Agonistes*. The figure of synecdoche can help us to reconsider both the relationship between *Samson* and the Greek tragic tradition out of

which Milton makes his poem, and – at the same time – is a particularly apt figure for figuring this relation because of the inherent resonances between its workings and those of Athenian democratic politics. Moreover, I will suggest, the complex prosody of the closet drama has itself served for a small but significant group of critics as a synecdoche for Milton's wider aims in composing *Samson*, symbolizing not only the tension between freedoms and constraints that are so fundamental to the political work of this poem, but also often standing in for the Greek tragic tradition the text reanimates and reforms.

We can see this aspect of the poem – and its critical interpretation – at work in the final Chorus of *Samson Agonistes*, which closely mirrors the poetry with which Euripides concludes several of his tragedies:

All is best, though we oft doubt,
 What the unsearchable dispose
 Of highest wisdom brings about,
 And ever best found in the close.
 Oft he seems to hide his face,
 But unexpectedly returns
 And to his faithful champion hath in place
 Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns
 And all that band them to resist
 His uncontrollable intent,
 His servants he with new acquist
 Of true experience from this great event
 With peace and consolation hath dismissed,
 And calm of mind all passion spent. b(1745-58)⁵

The first four of these lines employ language echoing that which served as a stock conclusion to *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *The Bacchae*, *Helen*, and *Medea* (among other tragedies), and thus represent an Englishing of Euripidean verses that might stand as a synecdoche for Greek tragic form. Milton himself notoriously remakes every genre he writes in, recasting each form he takes up in his own image to suit his own time (Creaser 2008; Lewalski 1985), however (a trait Euripides notoriously shared). His decision to end *Samson Agonistes*, his own self-declared Greek tragedy, with these Euripidean lines

⁵ Compare Euripides' *Helen*: "What heaven sends has many shapes, and many things the gods accomplish against our expectation. What men look for is not brought to pass, but a god finds a way to achieve the unexpected. Such was the outcome of this story." (1688-92): *πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαίμονων / πολλὰ δ' ἀέλπτως κραινονσι θεοί· / καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη, / τῶν δ' ἀδοκῆτων πόρον ἤϊρε θεός. / τοιόνδ' ἀπέβη τόδε πρᾶγμα*. Cf. also *Andromache* 1284-88, which concludes in the same way.

reformed here as part of a (metrically unusual) sonnet (one that resists the pull of the Shakespearean final couplet) is therefore representative of his broader method of combining the forms of the past to novel effects. Ten of the fourteen lines quoted above – lines that are bound together through the interlinked rhymes typical of the sonnet – are iambic tetrameter; four iambic pentameter (the more usual metre for sonnets). But the relationship between the two metres, their juxtaposition within the concluding verse, is irregular and unpredictable. The final Chorus is torn between differing prosodies just as it exists in between the spaces occupied by Greek tragedy and a seventeenth-century closet drama, a play and a poem, a narrative on an epic scale and a sonnet. Most of all, the moral uncertainty (the frequent feeling of ‘doubt’ experienced by the Chorus) of the play’s conclusion is perfectly expressed in – and by – these metrical vacillations, the instability, of the verse. The message of consolation (“All is best”) that the Chorus is obligated by generic convention to deliver is profoundly upset by such prosodic disturbance, and the ‘calm of mind’ that Greek tragedy as theorized by Aristotle seeks to bring about seems troubled by the very metrical form in which it is asserted.

For all the irregularity of this final Chorus, Milton’s commitment to an underlying iambic beat is strong here (as, arguably, it is felt throughout *Samson* as a whole). In Janel Mueller’s brilliant prosodic analysis of the poem, “the dynamic of iambic rhythm informs the drama of *Samson Agonistes*” on every level. This is a poem – and a prosody – of “weakness before strength, no way to strength but through weakness, and the advent of strength in a stroke, as a beat that signals the imposition of purposive order from above and beyond, whether by the stress assignment of rules in English or through a human coming to insight and resolve” (Mueller 1996, 66). Mueller’s account of Milton’s metrics, while highly persuasive in itself, interests me not so much for what she says about the poem (although I happen to think she is right), but rather for the form her argument takes here. This is an instance of what Mueller later goes on to call “metrical typology” – by which critics frequently assign prosodic choices meaning that operates both within the world of the poem and beyond (66). In other instances of this kind of reading in Mueller’s article alone, she goes on to consider the way Dalila’s gender identity might be embodied in her uses of feminine and masculine rhymes (68-71) and attributes to the poem’s many short lines ‘the distinctive expressive function’ of symbolizing ‘all the speech that can be won or wrung at the extremity, the boundary of muteness imposed by the limits of mystery or suffering’ (74).⁶ In such readings – the kinds of readings we will encounter

⁶ On the metaphors of feminine rhyme in terms of gender see forthcoming work by Elizabeth Scott-Baumann and Robert Stagg.

repeatedly in this essay, from recent interpretations of the poem such as Mueller's to early eighteenth-century critics like Benjamin Stillingfleet, via the enormously influential prosodic studies of Robert Bridges and Gerard Manley Hopkins – metre not only reflects meaning but itself constitutes that meaning. It becomes, in other words, a synecdoche for the political work of the poem, standing in for its workings in a very literal way. And – if we follow Milton's own hint in his description of the poem's form – we need to consider the relationship between the poetic representation of this political work and the workings of Athenian democracy.

In her new study of the early modern symbolics of rhyme Rebecca Rush argues that we should attend more carefully to the significance of prosody in early modern texts, to the ways in which the poets of the period employ rhyme in ways that signify. "Premodern poets did not shrink from drawing analogies between forms and ideas and often maintained that the visual and vernal patterns inscribed in verse could be mapped onto social, moral or cosmic structures," Rush writes, calling such a prosodically significant way of writing "analogical" (Rush 2021, 14).⁷ Where Rush argues that critics have been slow to recognize pervasive analogies between rhyme and meaning in early modern prosodic theory and practices, metre has been more readily identified with meaning. In the case of *Samson Agonistes*, analogical readings of Milton's metre have coalesced around the poem's politics and – I will argue – the relationship the poem bears to the specifically ancient Greek practices of democracy. In appropriately Greek fashion, I will suggest, metre has repeatedly served critics of the poem – beginning with Milton himself, in his own account of *Samson's* prosody – as a synecdoche for its politics.

2. Doubtful Feet: Milton's "Greek" Prosody

Milton makes an infamous connection between poetic form and politics, between freedom from rhyme and freedom from tyranny, in the "Note on the Verse" appended to the later, 12-book version of *Paradise Lost*. Declaring there the primacy of "apt numbers and fit quantity of syllables" over "the jin-

⁷ Rush continues: "I have chosen to describe this mode . . . as 'analogical' because the term involves more than a simple arithmetical equality of two things. 'Analogy' comes from the Greek mathematical term for a ratio. . . . Premodern interpreters rarely offer what I would call arithmetical readings, in which the sounds of the words in a line are equated with its local meaning. Instead, they tend to make double comparisons: they carefully consider the patterns formed by rhyme, meter, line length, and so on, and consider how these formal patterns correspond with other patterns inside and outside the poem." (14).

gling sound of like endings,” Milton vows that his epic will restore “ancient liberty” to the heroic poem, liberating it “from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming” (Milton 2013, 55).⁸ In more subtle, and technical, terms, the note prefaced to *Samson* likewise asserts independence from certain metrical restrictions:

The measure of verse used in the chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks monostrophic, or rather apolelymenon, without regard had to strophe, antistrophe or epode, which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the music, then used with the chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or being divided into stanzas of pauses, they may be called alloeostropha. (357)

With pragmatic disregard for those metrical features of Greek tragic choruses “not material” to his own dramatic poem, which is not intended for performance, Milton idiosyncratically announces that the “measure” of his verse is “apolelymenon”. H.T. Kirby-Smith attributes Milton’s appropriation of this descriptor to his “not finding any term from prosody that conveyed the degree of freedom he exercised”. Smith goes on to suggest that in “declaring his freedom from the expectations of a regular form” in this way, Milton may have “had in mind the extreme irregularity of the dithyrambic poets, especially Timotheus (446-357 B.C.), whose productions were admired by Euripides” (Kirby-Smith 1996, 78). By importing this term in order to explain his poetic form here Milton proclaims his liberty from both metrical constraint and, one might argue, prosodic terminology. The fact that English metrical analysis largely depends on ancient Greek for its vocabulary places the relationship to this particular classical precedent at the heart of the question of *Samson*’s poetic form in Milton’s prefatory epistle.

Milton’s unconventional terminology, and the explanation proffered here for his rejection of the “strophe, antistrophe or epode” that more typically comprised the Greek tragic chorus, reveals the depth of his engagement with the metrical features of Euripidean drama. This engagement is already established by the time he writes the ode *Ad Joannem Rousium Oxoniensis Academiae Bibliothecarium* [“To John Rouse, Librarian of Oxford University”], dated 23rd January 1647 in the 1673 Poems in which the poem first appears (Milton 1997, 302). Milton organizes the ode using the traditional designations, consisting of “three strophes and three antistrophes with a concluding epode”. Like *Samson*, Milton prefers to term the ode “monostrophic”; its “metres are partly determined by correlation, partly free” (307). But, he

⁸ Rush persuasively resituates Milton’s famous denunciation of rhyme in the note on the verse of *Paradise Lost* within a longer lineage of thinking about the connections between poetic constraints and political freedoms (Rush 2021, 1-2).

is quick to point out, these terms – while they may not reflect the metrical realities of the poem itself – are nonetheless important to him: “Though the strophes and antistrophes do not exactly correspond either in the number of their lines or in the distribution of their particular metrical units, nevertheless I have cut the poem up in this way in order to make it easier to read,” he tells us, “rather than with a view to imitating any ancient method of versification” (307). This qualification is an important piece of contextual information for understanding the element of self-mythologizing that similarly underwrites the *Samson* preface, I would suggest.

Milton is also acutely aware of the classical prosodic rules he breaks in his own poems.⁹ Throughout his copy of the 1602 Stephanus edition (now in the Bodleian) Milton makes emendations based upon metre, which he conceives of as a formal guide to what each line should contain, and which he uses to deduce necessary corrections to the unreliable Greek (and, occasionally, Latin) text. Milton corrects Stephanus' Latin translation in *Phoenissae*, for instance, where he crosses through l.1737, “*Sufficiunt mihi meæ lacrymæ*,” replacing it with “*Satis habent lamenationum mearum*” (Euripides 1602, Vol. 1, 325) and makes further metrical amendments to the text of Helen (Euripides 1602, Vol. 2, 544). The extremely close attention he pays to the Greek text is particularly evident in *Orestes*, perhaps the most heavily corrected of all the Euripidean plays Milton consults. In the only significant study of Milton's copy of Euripides to date, Kelley and Atkins point out his “minute correction” of *Orestes* 305 is based entirely on the need to complete the measure of the line. Milton changes the printed *οἰχόμεθα* to *οἰχόμεσθα*; “there is no semantic difference between them,” Kelley and Atkins state, “but the meter requires the use of the second” (1961, 686).¹⁰ Their example is one among the many alterations Milton makes to the Stephanus text based on metrical grounds, displaying his assured command of Euripidean prosody and a mechanistic concern with regularity in the texts of others that he feels so free to depart from in his own Greek tragedy.

Milton's understanding of Greek metre may have been unusually sophis-

⁹ Rules regarding poetic composition in early modernity “are at once instruments of technical mastery and marks of a kind of helplessness,” writes Michael Hetherington. “Rule-following, if understood as a conscious experience, is simply too clunky and too slow a process to represent the mental acts performed by Virgil in the exigent moment of composition. Rules may, perhaps, explain cognitive processes that take place in advance of the act of writing, and may later be invoked to measure or judge the product of that process, but they cannot take us into the experiential dynamics of the act itself.” (Hetherington 2021, 13, 18).

¹⁰ The emendation occurs in Stephanus, ed. *Euripides*, Vol. 1, 146. This is one of many Miltonic emendations taken up by the editorial tradition. It is maintained in the modern Loeb text, for instance (*Euripides* 2002, 444).

ticated (perhaps unsurprisingly) but there is evidence that his interest in the formal qualities of ancient tragedy was by no means unique, and that considerable efforts were underway to document and, in rare instances, imitate these verse forms. The quantitative verse experiments of the latter sixteenth-century had prompted increased interest in the Greek poetics that had established so much of the structure and terminology of Latin prosody. As Derek Attridge remarks in his seminal study of the subject, the quantitative experimenters drew encouragement from the fact that the Romans “had done with Greek metrical forms precisely what the English quantitative poets were trying to do with Latin ones” (Attridge 2009, 118-9). The Cambridge debates over Greek pronunciation waged by John Cheke, Thomas Smith, and John Caius, among others, in the 1550s had in part been driven by a desire to restore an original distribution of accent and syllable length that would allow for the proper reading of ancient poetry. In *The Scholemaster* (published in 1570) Roger Ascham had advocated that “the Greeks should serve as models for iambic verse”, while Thomas Watson went on to make notable efforts at recreating hexameter in *The Countesse of Pembroke’s Yvychurch* (1591) (cited in Attridge 2009, 24-5, 92-3, 115). Perhaps the most extensive treatment of Greek metrics in the vernacular literature of the period, however, is Puttenham’s. The second book of *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) contains several chapters on classical prosody alongside his discussion of English versification, the highly detailed nature of which makes for “dreary reading, and may seem unnecessary,” Attridge observes, but “was, in fact, crucial to his argument”; Puttenham’s attempt to establish that vernacular poetry could equal the classics depended upon its prosodic rules being as detailed and strictly defined as those of Latin or Greek prosody (Attridge 2009, 90). In accordance with this aim he devotes chapters to classical metrical feet varying from the “*spondeus*” to the “*Trocheus*”, the “*dactil*”, and “*Anapestus*”, the more obscure “*Molossus*”, “*Bacchius*”, “*Antibacchius*”, “*Amphimacer*”, “*Amphibrachius*”, “*Tribrachus*”, and half-feet, “*Catalecticke*” and “*Acatalecticke*” (Puttenham 1936, 112-30). Throughout, Puttenham is careful to emphasize the Greek inheritance of these terms and the metrical features they denote, as well as their English applications. His ultimate goal is that “the use of the Greeke and Latine feete might be brought into our vulgar poesie” (112).

There is little evidence that Milton himself embarked upon such an undertaking in any literal sense in *Samson Agonistes*. Writing of John Shawcross’s attempt to establish by scansion that the Samson choruses (and the “Ode to Rouse”) might derive from a quantitative metrical system based upon an early modern understanding of Greek and Roman prosody, Attridge notes that Shawcross “finds so many irregularities that he unintentionally demonstrates that they are not” (Attridge 2009, 129). Yet as early as the eighteenth-century critics began to turn to Greek verse in search of an explanation for Milton’s

prosodic style. And – perhaps responding to the poet's own cues in the preface to Samson – they likewise begin to associate such a model with the idea of certain metrical and (implicitly) political freedoms. Interspersed among the opening pages of a copy of Richard Bentley's highly interventionist edition of *Milton's Paradise Lost* (1732), now owned by the British Library, is an extensive letter signed by Benjamin Stillingfleet.¹¹ Stillingfleet's deep-rooted enmity to Bentley is evident on every one of the ten pages of this epistle, which documents in detail the "gross & frequent mistakes that Dr. Bentley has fallen into", subdividing his predecessor's many errors into sections including "Imitations from other Authors", "Grammar", and – of most interest here – "Prosody". Amongst his observations on the latter, Stillingfleet states his view that "Milton certainly observed the resemblance between our Heroic & the Greek Iambic verse & formed his Prosody upon it as far as difference of the two tongues would admit of" (Stillingfleet 1745-6, 5). Stillingfleet goes on to develop further this belief that Milton took Greek prosody as a model for his own metrical innovations, identifying certain patterns in his verse that he traces to this supposed origin. The letter observes that "when he aims at smooth verse he gives long & short syllables alternately," Stillingfleet noting that "he makes great use of Elisions," and, in a puzzlingly similar point, "He gives frequently three short syllables for two". Referring repeatedly to the Greek tragedians as Miltonic exemplars, Stillingfleet even claims that the poet's "Diction is formed on the Greek Language," revealing his own plans to "bring Instances of similar Greek Expressions & compare them with His Imitations of the Manner & Turn & Position of the words in the Greek" (*ibid.*).¹²

Stillingfleet's instinct that Greek verse might underly, and hence justify by precedent, some of Milton's prosodic liberties is intriguing, perhaps most so in his failure to really make the argument stick (much as Shawcross would some 250 years later). The unsatisfactory – and yet oddly compulsive – nature of any such attempt to explain away Milton's innovative verse forms by reference to a Greek model is made even clearer a little over a century later when Robert Bridges makes his well-known effort to explain *Milton's Prosody*, in notes on the verse that begin life as introductory remarks to a teaching text of *Paradise Lost* intended for use in schools. Pity the poor student seeking clarity on this complex issue in Bridges' remarks, which rapidly sprawled beyond their original confines with ever-expanded editions appearing between the years of 1887 and 1921, when they reached

¹¹ *Milton's Paradise Lost. A New Edition, by Richard Bentley, DD.* (London, 1732), BL copy C.134.h.1. See Adlington 2015.

¹² While many of Stillingfleet's observations address *Paradise Lost* most directly, examples are drawn from across Milton's verse, suggesting that such comments are based on a wider survey of the poet's prosody than first appears.

final form in an extremely popular book that featured seven appendices and comprised chapters on a variety of Miltonic works, including *Samson Agonistes* (the irony of encountering resistance to formal constraints in trying to explain a system of formal constraint is not entirely lost on Bridges). Writing some thirty years after its publication, and attesting in some measure to the failure of any other critic to surpass this deeply flawed explanation of *Milton's Prosody*, George Kellog brands the study "both highly promising and a little repulsive" (Kellog 1953, 286). Bridges' methodology, which relies on the use of a concordance to examine Miltonic usage of words elsewhere in order to infer how they must be scanned at any given moment, is certainly a little suspect, as is his elaborate rhetorical artifice, by which he infamously has Milton write in one way and read in another: "He wrote the choruses of *Samson* in a rhythmical stressed verse, and scanned it by means of fictions," Bridges notoriously observes (Bridges 1893, 68). But there is sense in Bridges' readings too – his emphasis on accent or stress in scanning English verse, while remembering that its "hybrid" nature "cannot be explained exclusively by English or by classical rule," for instance, or his rebuttal of those who consider *Samson Agonistes* "unmusical" or, for that matter, his willingness to look to models of the past as sources for Milton's supposed metrical innovations (Bridges 1893, 68, 32, 43). And Bridges is often unwittingly prescient in his rather muddled remarks.

Two distinct, but inter-related, aspects of his work are of particular interest to our study of the ways critics have sought to bring a Greek tragic inheritance to bear on our understanding of the metrical innovations of *Samson*. First, taking his lead from Milton's own preface (like Stillingfleet) Bridges repeatedly turns to Greek (and Roman) prosodic practice in conjunction with what he terms Milton's "liberties" of metre. In *Samson Agonistes* Milton uses multiple inversions in a variety of positions ("not confined to the first foot of the line") and in combination with lines "of various lengths", we learn, to create "what are called dactylic (that is true tri-syllabic verse) rhythms into his verse, which is all the while composed strictly of disyllabic feet" (Bridges 1893, 34). But the jostling of essentially contradictory terms against each other here serves mostly to demonstrate the inadequacy of such prosody to capture the metrical feats (and feet) of *Samson Agonistes*. Bridges describes the way that Milton's poetic freedoms "strain . . . the analogy of Greek and Latin quantitative feet," as if prosody is a battleground upon which the fight for personal liberty is won and lost. Indeed, Bridges is himself prone to the very kinds of "analogical reading" (to borrow Rush's phrase) of Milton's metrics that he urges readers of the poem to resist: "The relation of the form of the verse to the sense is not intended to be taken exactly," he admonishes. "Poetry would be absurd which was always mimicking the diction or the sense," Bridges writes, after devoting two pages of his study to glossing the

way the prosody of the opening Chorus of *Samson Agonistes* mimics the sense of its words in precisely this way (Bridges 1894, 43). "See how | he lies | at ran|dom, care|lessly| diffus'd" (117), is "the first twelve-syllable line in the poem, 7+5," Bridges notes, "In describing great Samson stretched on the bank, it describes itself." "With lang|uish'd head| unpropt," (119) is "a six-syllable line, its shortness is the want of support." While "And by | himself | given o-(ver);" (121) contains an "extrametrical final syllable . . . suggestive of negligence" (42). Bridges repeatedly makes metrical features of Milton's verse signify – or stand in for, serve as a synecdoche of – its sense.

This tendency is picked up by Bridges' correspondent Gerard Manley Hopkins, in the letters exchanged between the two men on the subject of *Samson's* metre, which the latter claims to have "mastered", subjugating his predecessor to his own metrical system, dependent upon "sprung rhythm" and "counterpointing" (Hopkins 1991, 87, 91, 108, 144). There is an almost painful sense throughout Hopkins' letters of a contest in which Milton is the agon to his own attempts at metrical innovation, an antagonism exacerbated by the Jesuit poet's moral disgust at his precursor's support for divorce: "I think he was a very bad man," he writes in a letter sent to Bridges on 3rd April 1877 (88). Despite this, Hopkins reveres Milton, singling him out as being the only poet – aside from himself – to have successfully trodden a narrow line between metrical liberty, "apparent licences", and "strictness": "In fact all English verse, except Milton's, almost, offends me as 'licentious'. Remember this" (21st August 1877, 89-90). Milton's ability to use metre "freely" is what sparks this admiration, but only because of its moderation (a moderation that Hopkins rather wishes had tempered the poet's political views) (108).

In this aspect of his relationship to Milton Hopkins mirrors the second element of Bridges' study of *Milton's Prosody* that is relevant to our present study. The tempering of metrical (and, concomitantly, political) innovation is something that all three men appear to value. Experimentation is licensed by recourse to the poetry of the past. Liberty is underpinned by historical precedent. Just as Shakespeare triumphs over metrical restrictions in his late plays, where "he threw off the syllabic trammels of his early style," so Milton in *Samson Agonistes* "came to determine rhythm by stress, though he learnedly disguised his liberty by various artifices," Hopkins writes to Bridges (68). The stories one tells about poetry and politics alike are often crucial in justifying one's endeavour, and at times seem to take precedence over it. Once again, the idea of the synecdoche is helpful in thinking this through. The etymology of the term, with its emphasis on interpretation, "understanding one thing with another", by which a single element can stand as a kind of shorthand for an entire system to which it belongs, resonates with the component of "artifice" involved in Milton's supposed disguising of his own

formal liberties. Greek prosody becomes a useful set of terms with which metrical liberties can be disguised, terminology that in turn stands in for the whole literary and political system to which ancient Greek tragedy belongs.

3. Healing Words: The Useful Fictions of Metre...

This element of useful fictionality in accounts of Milton's Greek tragic precursors is a striking feature of writings about *Samson's* metre from his own explanatory preface onwards. From Stillingfleet (whose only partially convincing narrative of the Greek aspects of its choruses we have already encountered) to Hopkins, Bridges and beyond, we have seen how there have been repeated attempts to explain the form of Milton's dramatic poem by positing an origin in the metres of ancient Greek poetry, particularly that of Euripides. James Holly Hanford believed that the metrical variations of the *Samson* choruses "are so great that one is inclined to abandon the attempt to recognize a theoretical conformity to this English pattern and consider them frankly as a reproduction of Greek and Roman rhythms" (Hanford 1954, 326, 324). Before going on to scan this poetry "in the Greek way", as he asserts Milton would himself have done (a method that requires leaning heavily on "trochees, spondees [and] dactyls" and that produces a prosody "often very similar to the logaoedic patterns" or mixed metrical mode of prose), Hanford makes the fascinating suggestion that "His own inventions are simply in the way of further modifications such as the ancients themselves might have made" (325). Hanford imagines a Milton who tells himself that his metre is more truly Greek verse than that written by the Greeks themselves, a prosody that is licensed by a fiction about what ancient Greek poets were doing or might have done.

It is not just Milton who creates ultimately unsustainable fictions about what his poetry is doing in Hanford's account. Hanford himself posits explanations that he clearly does not believe in, but that are revealing in their inadequacies. When he claims that the metre of the *Samson* choruses is "the freest form known to the ancients, the logaoedic . . . a trochaic measure with dactyls and other substitutions," he trails off into vagueness, making apparent the failure of any such explanation (325-6).¹³ This is made all the more obvious by the efforts to scan Milton's verse in this measure that follow, and which prompt the admission that "the general movement is more clearly iambic". Ultimately, "The genius of the language and the traditions of English

¹³ The term "logaoedic," first recorded by the *OED* in 1844, would perhaps not have been as familiar to the "ancients" as Hanford here suggests. See "logaoedic, *adj.*," *OED* Online. September 2021. Oxford University Press. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109746?redirectedFrom=logaoedic> (Accessed October 18, 2021).

verse were too strong to admit of Milton's giving us real Greek verse, even in *Samson*, without doing violence to his instincts," Hanford concludes, creating his own fiction of the kind of man Milton was (one driven by instinct, and genius, in response to language and tradition, unwilling to do violence), a narrative that is just as vivid as Hopkins' version of him as a "very bad man" (326). The frustrating unwillingness of Milton to deliver 'real' Greek poetry does not deter Hanford from his own instinct that the choruses of *Samson* in some sense approximate the metre of the ancient tragic drama, or his insistence that recreating such a form is what the poet told himself he was doing in creating its notoriously free metre.

These unsuccessful attempts to tie Milton's metrical innovations to a Greek precedent are nonetheless revealing, speaking of his deep involvement with classical prosody and also casting light on the way in which all metrical systems have this element of fiction about them. Prosodic theorists such as Attridge and Paul Fussell recognize the provisionality of any metrical system, even one as ancient as the Greek. Yet the desire to adhere to such strictures, to maintain this terminology, persists. There is something poignant, for Milton, in the tension between formal restraint and poetic experiment, just as there is something poignant in his own work between the reader who insists on absolute regularity and the writer who asserts metrical freedom. Efforts to explain prosodic innovation such as that we encounter in *Samson Agonistes* suggest nothing so much as the fact that metre is in the eye – and ear – of the beholder. And here is a chance for Milton's ideal of personal liberty to assert itself. His readers have repeatedly read their own personal sense of Milton's metre into *Samson*, insisting on fitting its verse to prosodic systems the dramatic poem endlessly resists. This tension, between form and poetry, between metre and meaning, is exactly the territory Milton is interested in, the terrain upon which individual freedom, poetic or political, vies with the structures and systems that surround it. Insofar as he is willing to accept such terms, Milton says in his preface to *Samson* that his own choruses are closest to "alloeostropha", containing "irregular strophes". The only term fitting to his exercise in formal liberty is one that itself describes a freedom of form within a system of constraint whose inadequacy is partly Milton's point. If a prosodic system can stand in for – can be a synecdoche for – a political system then *Samson Agonistes* shows the limits of all pre-existing modes, ancient and modern, Greek and English, and asks its readers to find – perhaps to create through their own work of fiction – alternatives, to make their freedom within constraint itself.

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ROBERT STAGG*

Afterword

The title of this collection is derived from Philip Sidney. Towards the end of his *Defence of Poesy* (published in 1595 though written about fifteen years earlier), Sidney weighs two kinds of versification alongside, and sometimes against, one another. First there is “the ancient”, a so-called ‘quantitative’ prosody of the sort found in Latin, which Sidney deems “more fit for music” and “to express diverse passions, by the low or lofty sounds of the well-weighed syllable”; the second kind, the modern, “striketh a certain kind of music” too, and “doth delight, though by another way” (Sidney 2002, 248).¹ In the end the distinction (like much else in Sidney’s *Defence*) curiously fizzles out, “there being in either sweetness, and wanting in neither majesty”, and Sidney concludes that the English language is “fit for both sorts” of verse (ibid). While Sidney’s distinction can ultimately seem a little anticlimactic, the phrase “well-weighed syllable” reverberates through Derek Attridge’s *Well-Weighed Syllables: Elizabethan Verse in Classical Metres* (1974) which sought, rather as this volume does, to understand what Sidney and others heard in “the ancient” versification of the Greeks and Latins and why they thought it worth renaissancing in their vernacular prosodies. However, the title of this special issue describes “well-staged”, not “well-weighed” syllables. It is a provocative rewording, since Sidney had little ear for the theatre. He thought it populated by “gross absurdities” with “neither decency nor discretion”, “mingling kings and clowns” in mongrel tragicomedies, which “causeth her mother Poesy’s honesty to be called in question” (Sidney 2002, 243). Only Thomas Sackville and Thomas

¹ It is unclear whether the similar debate about quantitative verse between Dicus and Lalus in two manuscripts of the *Old Arcadia* (Jesus College, Oxford MS 150 and The Queen’s College, Oxford MS 301) pre- or post-dates Sidney’s discussion of the subject in the *Defence*.

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Norton's *Gorboduc* (1561), the first English play to be written (mostly) in blank verse, comes out of the *Defence* with any credit – and even then its “stately speeches” and “well sounding phrases” are undermined by its being “faulty both in place and time” (ibid). Moreover, the sort of quantitative verse Sidney is discussing in the *Defence* – and the sort he had written elsewhere, for example in some of his sonnets, and in parts of the *Arcadia* – was not intended for the stage (indeed many of its propagandists, Harvey noisiest among them, would have been aghast to think they were writing anything so popular). In the spirit of Stephen Orgel's article, then, which asks us to consider who *did not* write such quantitative versification as well as who did, this special issue of *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies* offers us an account of a dog that is not normally thought to have barked – or, more aptly, a syllable that is not normally thought to have been spoken: a neoclassical prosody that found its way onto the English stage, or at least onto some English stages, or at least had the possibility of some sort of staging in England.

One of those possible stages was the schoolroom. There was a theatrical quality to many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century grammar school practices, whether or not they took place in verse, from the “dialogue method” of “academic rhetorical training in the writing of *controversiae*” (Jones 1977, 13), whereby pupils wrote personified speeches or detached arguments in favour of such and such a logical position, to the “opposing” exercises in which schoolboys gave voice to a series of back-and-forth interrogations, to the writing of *prosopopeia* and *ekphrasis* in which “liveliness” and the “art of impersonation and description” (Enterline 2012, 21) were especially cherished, characteristics which found their more three-dimensional expression onstage. In this collection of essays Francesco Dall'Olio and Angelica Vedelago go further still, showing us how some dramas sought to recreate the style of a classical metre or metres for pedagogical purposes, educating students both in the rhythms of Greek and Latin and how those languages might be rendered into the vernacular – as was the case with George Buchanan's 1556 translation of Euripides' *Alcestis* (which was performed at the college of La Guyenne, “an equivalent of the English grammar school” where Buchanan himself taught, Vedelago, 111 and Dall'Olio, 126) and Thomas Watson's 1581 translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* (which was “most probably” performed “by students . . . at Oxford”, Vedelago, 109).

While the “rhythmic enunciation” (Enterline 2012, 152) of the English schoolroom was largely classical in tone, and did not venture far into English prosody, as the appendix to Marco Duranti's essay helpfully demonstrates, it did encourage pupils to conceptually and pragmatically shuttle between vernacular and classical prosodies. One of Roger Ascham's innovations as a

pedagogue was to codify the exercise in ‘double translation’, a loose version of which was current in grammar schools around the country.² Pupils would first take lines from a Latin text, then turn them into English before returning them into Latin. Ascham thought the exercise kept the mind “busily occupied in turning and tossing itself many ways” (Ascham 1570, 42); for a curious pupil, it would also have insinuated the possible overlaps between the two languages and their prosodic systems. In another well-attested prosody exercise, a schoolmaster would change some of the words in a poem to take it out of correct quantitative metre. The first schoolboy to “return” the verse to its “true” quantities would win the applause of the schoolroom (Hoole 1660, 160). We hear something of both exercises happening onstage in William Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*. In 3.1 a disguised Lucentio ‘teaches’ Bianca in a broken quantitative metre interspersed with hasty English prose. When Bianca replies to Lucentio she restores the quantitative metre so that “‘tis now in tune” and “construe[d]” in accordance with John Lily’s grammar school textbook (Shakespeare 2005, 3.1.44, 40). Bianca – more importantly, the boy playing Bianca – and Lucentio are involved in a cheeky play on the double translation exercise, as they (in another version of a grammar school exercise) return the Latin verse to a state of prosodic rectitude. While these exercises were supposed to entrench Latin quantitative prosody, they must also have nudged the more thoughtful students (Shakespeare among them) to creatively entertain a borderland between classical and vernacular versification. This “prosodic erudition”, in Vedelago’s phrase (pp.), meant that “sixteenth-century poets were adept at holding two different rhythms – a formal, quantitative, metrical one and a natural, accented, verbal one – in their heads simultaneously” (King 2000, 238).

The sixteenth-century treatises on English poetics were in keeping with this educational legacy, for they macaronically blur the differences between Latin and English prosody. Throughout his *Notes* (1576) George Gascoigne refers to stressed syllables as “long” and unstressed syllables as “short”, without making a distinction between stress and quantity. George Puttenham often conflates (or confuses) quantitative and accentual-syllabic writing, concluding that both have a “numerosity” about them (Puttenham 2007, 157, 209). Although William Webbe recognises that English “words cannot well be forced to abide the touch of position and other rules of [Latin] *prosodia*”, he still thinks they have a “natural force or quantity” that “will not abide any place” (Webbe 1586, G1r).

This prosodic latitude, almost a metrical code-switching, is emphasised

² For the theory and practice of ‘double translation’ in Ascham’s *Schoolmaster* and in early modern schoolrooms, see Miller 1963.

in Hannah Crawford's article for this issue, which hears *Samson Agonistes* as a "dramatic poem" that not only "describes a freedom of form within a system of constraint" but additionally encourages its readers "to make their freedom within constraint itself", to hear "the limits of all pre-existing modes [of versification], ancient and modern, Greek and English" and to plot their own way through a thicket of existing prosodic options (217). Those options – whether they together constituted more of a predicament or an opportunity – proliferate yet further if we consider the metrical principles that animated the Elizabethan revival of classical prosody, since no-one in that age entirely agreed upon what it was and how it worked (unlike, later, Alfred Lord Tennyson who claimed to know the metrical 'quantity' of every word in English except "scissors", Tennyson 1897, 2.231). Sixteenth-century prosodists puzzled and fretted and argued. What did 'short' and 'long' syllables mean in practice? Should they be read as if they were English prose but have their length measured, separately, nonetheless? Or should readers slow down on a long syllable (with a "slow staidness", as William Scott put it in 1599 and speed up (with a "more voluble speed and currentness") on a short syllable? (2013, 59). Was 'quantity' a replacement for stress or a supplement to it? With a touch of bemusement, George Puttenham concluded that syllables in Greek and Latin must have been "timed . . . not by reason of any evident or apparent cause in writing or sound remaining upon one more than another", running counter to an influential grammarians' argument that syllabic length had once been acoustically palpable but had since become a solely intellectual quality (Puttenham 2007, 204). In *Well-Weighed Syllables*, Attridge concurs that "sound" is "the wrong place to look for 'quantity'"; for him, "it is to be found in the minds of the Elizabethans" (Attridge 1974, 160). He offers an intriguing comparison with the planting of the Farnese Gardens atop Rome's Palatine Hill in the mid-sixteenth century, where the papal architect Giacomo da Vignola had aligned steps, hedges and grottoes with the Basilica of Constantine, even though the basilica lay buried beneath several feet of earth (it would not be excavated until the nineteenth century). Vignola's design appealed to the "mind's eye" (*Hamlet* 1.2.184), rather as quantitative prosody appealed to the mind's ear. Was 'quantity', then, something to be "intellectually conceived (as opposed to audibly perceived)", somehow avoiding the ear and engaging only the mind (Hamlin 2004, 102)? And if so, how on earth could it be staged?

Silvia Bigliuzzi's essay proposes another intriguing way that early modern writers 'made their freedom' from the classical metres they translated (154-9), thereby struggling loose from the quandaries discussed above. They could do so by emphasising 'emulation' over 'imitation'. Where other translations (such as those discussed in Dall'Olio and Vedelago's articles) tried to imitate, even to recreate, classical metres with or in an English

equivalent, Jasper Heywood “shows no actual equivalence to Seneca’s metres” when translating the chorus of his *Troas* (1559) “and precisely by failing to do so” made his “emulative project autonomous” (160). After all, as several of the sixteenth-century quantitative prosodists noted, Latin metres could themselves be read as an imitation or emulation of Ancient Greek – this being an analysis that could sometimes clinch their arguments for a quantitative verse in English (since it promised a Latinate golden age for English poetry) yet could sometimes trouble them too (since it threatened a sort of linguistic infinite regress, with the vernacular yanked further and further from its classical origins). Contributors to this collection are somewhat divided as to the place of Ancient Greek in sixteenth-century England, with Dall’Olio arguing for a “more Greek than Latin prosody” in some of Buchanan’s translations (126), while Marco Duranti contends that Greek was less important in general, pointing out that “[n]o treatise specifically devoted to Greek prosody was printed in England” (66). In this respect, the collection echoes – more by emulation than imitation – the debates about Greek in Elizabethan England, with scholars then and now trying to establish whether Greek is the language behind the arras of Latin prosody’s sixteenth-century recrudescence.

If the essays included here stretch back to the classics, both in Latin and Greek, they also reach across Europe. Thus, Emanuel Stelzer reads enjambment as a ‘marker’ of classical gravitas first in the *versi sciolti* of early-to-mid sixteenth-century Italy and then in the blank verse of Elizabethan England. This is a matter of ‘confluence’ (Bruce Smith’s word, cannily employed by Stelzer) more than of ‘influence’; neoclassical trends in versification emerge across the European continent in tandem yet often without definite, documented connection (Smith 1988, 6).

In just this vein, Sidney’s first acquaintance with a “well-weighed syllable” was probably in France. His years in Paris in the mid-1570s brought him into the orbit of the grammarian and quantitative prosodist Petrus Ramus. During 1573, Sidney lived with Ramus’s printer André Wechel “at peppercorn rates” (Stewart 2001, 79) on the Rue Jean-de-Beauvais, a stone’s (or peppercorn’s) throw from the Sorbonne, where and when Wechel was printing the second edition of Ramus’s immensely influential *Grammaire* (he had also printed the first edition of 1562). In the first edition of his grammar, Ramus had celebrated the “coze naturelle” (“natural cause”) of a vernacular quantitative prosody “com’el’etoet aus ansien’ Gres e Latins” (“like that of the Ancient Greeks and Latins”, Ramus 1562, 35, translation mine). For the second edition, which he did not live to see in print, Ramus expanded his remarks on quantitative verse to further adumbrate and celebrate this “bonne & riche poesie” (Ramus 1573, 43). Ramus’s pupil and sometime secretary Théophile de Banos would later dedicate his edition of

the *Petri Rami Commentariorum de Religione Christiana* (1576) to Sidney, and commemorated Sidney's friendship with and esteem for Ramus in a dedicatory epistle to the edition. The "loose research group or think tank" (Hetherington 2018, 647) that hung around Sidney even after his death was often explicitly Ramist, ranging from Abraham Fraunce's production of a Ramist logic (in 1585) and rhetoric (in 1588) to William Temple's dedication of Ramus's dialectic to Sidney in 1584. Furthermore, Sidney's stay in Paris coincided with the rise of the *Académie de Poésie et de Musique*, "the first French academy to be officially instituted by royal decree" (Yates 1947, 14). The academy was designed to promote the so-called *musique mesurée*, a music based on ancient quantities rather than vernacular phrasing and intonation. The French-language lyrics for songs and psalms set to this music were therefore in quantitative metre. As the letters patent put it, the academicians would volunteer "essays de Vers mesurez mis en musique, mesurée selon les loix à peu près des Maîtres de la Musique du bon & ancien âge" ("attempts at measured verses put into music, measured according to the laws closest to the music masters of that good and ancient age"), the point of which was to purge "la barbarie" from "les esprits des Auditeurs" ("the minds of the auditors/audience"; Yates 1947, 319-320, translation mine). As far as literary historians can tell, these were 'confluences' around rather than 'influences' on Sidney, even though they took place in the span of only a few Parisian streets, but they attest to (what Stelzer modestly calls) "the non-insular character of Elizabethan verse-making" (196).

None of these Sidneyan 'confluences' found their way onto an English stage, and readers of this collection will have been disappointed if they took its title too literally. In fact, few of the neoclassically versified texts discussed here were given a performance (so far as we know). Some of them, like Milton's *Samson*, can seem to actively resist performance and/or cultivate readership; others, like Buchanan's translations, may have envisaged their performance as instrumental or mediatory rather than as a valuable end in itself. Other 'emulative' attempts at a neoclassical dramatic metre, like the fourteener (as a version of the Senecan iambic trimeter), only flourished on stage for a relatively brief period and were displaced by less ostentatious verse forms, chief among them blank verse.

Both Stelzer and Orgel's essays might nudge us to think, too, of blank verse – eventually the dominant metre of the early modern English stage – as a neoclassical sort of versification. Several contributors to this collection mention that John Day first advertised English blank verse as a "strange meter" (Howard 1554, frontispiece). The word "strange" assumes a now obsolete sense of "belonging to another country; foreign, alien" (*OED* s.v. "strange" adj. and n. 1a), which could encompass a strangeness in time as well as in place. Many scholars have heard "an echo of the classical high

style” (Blank 2006, 60) emanating from the unrhymed iambic pentameter, with its blank ten syllables somehow “simulating the exotic grace of Latin quantitative verse” (Tucker Brooke 1922, 187-8) and recuperating “the resonance of Virgil’s dactylic hexameters” (Simpson 2016, 1.601), even though the iambic pentameter is syllabically shorter than and rhythmically quite different from Virgil’s heroic line(s). The earliest works of blank verse are undoubtedly steeped in the classics, from the Earl of Surrey’s *Aeneid* translation(s) to Sackville and Norton’s “pure Senecan” *Gorboduc* (Schelling 1908, 2.401) to George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmarsh’s *Jocasta*, ‘the first pale figure of Greek tragedy on the English stage’ (Prouty 1966, 157). These pioneer blank versers wanted some “legitimizing connection to the classical past” (McKeen 2020, 179), for sure, even as they wrote in the vernacular, which was putatively busy “decoloniz[ing] the modern occident from the domination of Latin” (Waswo 1999, 412) (Stephen Guy-Bray has wittily described Surrey’s *Aeneid* as “a conservative innovation”, 2004, 181). The apparent Janus-facedness of early blank verse might look in one direction after all, by facing up to the passing of “cultural and political authority . . . from a fallen empire to a rising one” (McKeen 2020, 174); we could think of *versos sueltos* as a prosodic accompaniment to sixteenth-century Spain’s acquiring of territory in Germany, the Low Countries and the Americas, which was routinely afforded classical parallel, or the unrhymed *hendecassilabo* as an accompaniment to Portugal’s maritime growth, expeditions and colonisations around Africa, India and China.³ In other words these various kinds of metrical blankness from around Europe could be a form of the *translatio imperii*, emulating the verse of the Greeks and Latins in a contemporary vernacular form while boldly claiming an imperial prosodic kinship with those ancient empires.

In his essay about the complicated and sometimes botched textual transmission of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, Guido Avezù writes about “the success of a mistake”, and of “fortunate” errors in the history of a text (and, by extension, of a verse form) (52-7). Something similar might be said of classical versification on the early modern English stage. Blank verse never satisfied the quantitative purists. Some of them, like Sidney, did not live to hear its theatrical heyday. Others like Ascham thought that it had not “hit perfect and true versifying”, i.e. metrical classicism, even as it shunned the “barbarism”, i.e. the anti-classicism, of rhyme (Ascham 1570, 61). Yet if blank verse constituted “the institution of a new ‘classical’” (as Orgel puts it here, 31), which sought to emulate the classical metres without narrowly imitating or reproducing them, then we can think of classical metres as being central

³ For comparisons between Roman and Spanish imperial conquests, see Lupher 2009.

not marginal to the early modern English stage – and if this is true, or even plausible as a thought experiment, it would be another, salutary reminder that the history of versification rarely proceeds in a straight line.

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A Corpus Linguistic Analysis of Dance Lexis in Eight Early Modern Manuscripts: From the Inns of Court to Drama

Abstract

This article conducts a corpus linguistics analysis on a series of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century manuscripts related to the practice of dance at the Inns of Court in London, in order to examine their possible influence on and relationship with terpsichorean lexis in early modern drama. Still considered one of the fewest – if not the only – extant indigenous proofs of the exercise of dance in early modern England before Playford's *The English Dancing Master* (1651), these eight MSS have never been analysed in a single dedicated study. Six of them were transcribed and commented on by some scholars in the second half of the twentieth century, while the seventh was discovered and transcribed in 1992 and the eighth only in 2017. In fact, no thorough discussion of their linguistic peculiarities has been carried out, treating them as a dataset to be investigated through corpus linguistics software. In this article, #Lancsbox software is used to carry out a corpus linguistics analysis primarily focused on the specialized lexis of dance as it emerges from the above-mentioned manuscripts. The eight texts considered have been transcribed as part of the *Skenè* digital open-access archives and then uploaded to #Lancsbox to facilitate analysis. Ultimately, this article aims to shed light on the circulation of the terpsichorean lexis in early modern drama.

KEYWORDS: dance; Inns of Court; corpus linguistics; manuscripts; specialized lexis; early modern theatre

1. Introduction: The Eight Manuscripts and the Old Measures of the Inns of Court

As most dance historians and scholars of early modern English theatre have noticed (see, among others, Brissenden 1981; Fallows 1996; Payne 2003; Winerock 2011), there exist no dance manuals in English compiled by British choreographers or dancing masters in the sixteenth and seventeenth century prior to the publication of John Playford's *The English Dancing Master* in 1651 (see Ciambella 2020). The only extant sources dealing with the practice of dance include intermittent mentions in municipal and parish registers of the time regarding folk dances, and a corpus of eight

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manuscripts compiled by personalities related to the four Inns of Court of London,¹ i.e., Lincoln's Inn, Gray's Inn, Inner Temple and Middle Temple. Until the creation of the OMIC archive (Old Measures of the Inns of Court, <http://clare.dlcs.univ.it/omic>) the eight MSS² had never been transcribed by a single scholar and published together.³ Six manuscripts were transcribed for the first time by James P. Cunningham in 1965, and a seventh manuscript was discovered in 1992 in Taunton, Somerset, which Brissenden surprisingly does not include in the 2001 revised edition of his book. In addition, an eighth manuscript was transcribed in 2018 as a consequence of forensic evidence attesting that it was not a forgery by the well-known critic (and forger) John Payne Collier.

The transcription of the first six manuscripts by Cunningham, however, presented various inaccuracies; hence, in 1987 David R. Wilson published a new and more accurate transcription, while the seventh MS was transcribed by James Stokes and Ingrid Brainard in 1992, and the eighth by Anne Daye and Jennifer Thorpe in 2018. It is worth noting that five out of the eight extant manuscripts were certainly compiled by personalities who revolved around the Inns of Court in London.⁴ It is legitimate to wonder why would-be lawyers or other personalities gravitating around the environment of the Inns of Court would write down lists of dances and their respective steps in detail. The eight MSS helped critics to identify a core of eight recurring dances (more or less in the same order) on dancing events organised within the four Schools. They were labelled the Old Measures: *Quadrant Pavan*, *Turkeylone*, *Earl of Essex Measure*, *Tinternell*, *Old Almain*, *Queen's Almain*, *Madam Cecilia Almain*, and *Black Almain*. Nevertheless, most manuscripts among these eight contain other dances, thus establish-

¹ Established as schools of law at the beginning of the fourteenth century, London's four Inns of Court played a pivotal role in the development and fortune of early modern theatre. Many important playwrights of the time resided in the Inns of Court, such as Francis Beaumont, Thomas Campion, George Gascoigne, Thomas Lodge, and John Marston. Moreover, a great number of plays, interludes and masques were performed at the Inns during the seasonal revels. For further details, see Green 1931; Finkelpearl 1969; Watson 2015.

² This abbreviation stands for 'manuscripts'; MS stands for 'manuscript'.

³ To the best of my knowledge, the only publication that lists and describes seven out of the eight MSS is Peter and Janelle Durham's 1997 open-access pamphlet *The Old Measures 1570-1675*, available at <http://www.peterdurham.com/pdf/old-measures.pdf>. Moreover, Daye and Thorpe (2018, 37), when transcribing the Dulwich College MS, list the dances described in all eight manuscripts, yet without giving further details about choreographies.

⁴ Specifically, they are numbers 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 in the list presented below, since number 2 is anonymous and number 3 was compiled by a personality only indirectly linked to the London schools for lawyers.

ing a corpus of 39 dances – if one includes choreographic variations – that will be considered and explored below.

Here follows a brief description of these eight MSS, in their probable chronological order of composition:

1. MS Rawlinson Poet. 108, ff. 10r-11r – Bodleian Library, Oxford. This manuscript is signed by Eliner Gunter, sister of Edward Gunter, a young man who entered Lincoln's Inn in February 1563. According to Cunningham and Wilson, the MS might have been compiled in the early 1570s and it includes poems, songs, orations, and various other writings. Fifteen dances are named and described. Since the text presents different calligraphies, the entire document cannot be attributed solely to Eliner: the list of dances and their description, however, may be attributed to Edward, as he might have been the only member of the family allowed to attend the Revels at the Inns of Court.
2. MS Dulwich College MSS, 2nd series XCIV, f. 28 – Dulwich College, Dulwich, London. This is the latest manuscript acknowledged as a reliable source for early modern dancing routines. However, Anne Daye and Jennifer Thorp (2018) have noted that its possible dating ranges from the early 1570s to the late 1590s (30-1). Unfortunately, its author is unknown, although it presents evident similarities with *The Mulliner Book* (1545-70), a musical commonplace book compiled by Thomas Mulliner. The first transcription of this MS is by John Payne Collier in 1844. Given Collier's inclination to forgery, the Dulwich manuscript had not received critical attention until 2004, when Arthur and Janet Ing Freeman proved its authenticity. Thus, Daye and Thorp emended Collier's interpolations and mistakes, and transcribed the MS in 2018. The Dulwich MS lists the eight Old Measures – like all the other manuscripts – plus five choreographies (or New Measures, as Daye and Thorp call them) also found in *The Mulliner Book*.
3. MS Harleian 367, ff. 178-79 – British Library, London. Unfortunately, even in this case, the author of this MS is unknown. Only eight dances are reported – the smallest number of dances listed in any manuscript – which correspond to the sequence of Old Measures. The dances reported and their choreographies are inserted in a collection of miscellaneous notes and writings compiled by John Stow, albeit the calligraphy listing the Old Measures is completely different from that of the rest of the manuscript. Stow died in 1605, but Cunningham and Wilson date the manuscript between 1575 and 1625.
4. DD/WO/55/7/36 – Somerset Record Office, Taunton. Item 36 is signed by John Willoughby and dated 1594, making it the only manuscript noting a precise date of composition. This text could not have been considered either by Cunningham or Wilson because it was discov-

ered in 1992 in Somerset and transcribed by James Stokes and Ingrid Brainard. Although Willoughby was never admitted to the Inns of Court, he had many close contacts with lawyers in those circles. According to Stokes and Brainard, “John Willoughby senior’s name does not appear in the registers of the Inns of Court, or of Oxford, but considerable circumstantial evidence links him with the law courts” (1992, 2). Since Willoughby was a lifelong resident of Devon, Stokes and Brainard conclude that the dances he listed could also have been performed at private dancing evenings in upper-class environments outside London (1-2).⁵

5. MS Douce 280, ff. 66a^v-66b^v – Bodleian Library, Oxford. The author of the manuscript is J. (John) Ramsey, who entered the Middle Temple on 23 March 1605/6. The sequence of twenty-one dances, the largest number of choreographies recorded in all eight manuscripts, is part of a miscellany of notes, essays, and translations aimed at educating a hypothetical child. Wilson (1986/7, 6) affirms that the manuscript dates from the period immediately after Ramsey’s admittance to the Middle Temple, in the first decade of the 1600s.
6. MS Rawlinson D. 864, 199^r-199^v – Bodleian Library, Oxford. This text is signed by Elias Ashmole, who compiled the list of dances when not yet admitted to the Middle Temple. In fact, he entered the School of Law in 1657 (when he was 40),⁶ but Wilson dates the manuscript to c. 1630, given the “childish hand” (1986/7, 8) of the record of dances.⁷ There are two important aspects to consider regarding this manuscript. First of all, the series of the Old Measures remained the same even though some twenty/thirty years separate this MS from the previous one: this suggests that the sequence of dances and their execution during the revels might not have been altered. Secondly, Ashmole’s is one of the rare manuscripts of the time to report the name

⁵ According to Wilson and Calore (2005) and Mortimer (2012, 341-51), early modern dances were performed both in the royal residences – i.e., Greenwich, Whitehall and Hampton Court – and in aristocratic estates such as the Earl of Pembroke’s and Southampton’s country residences.

⁶ According to Daye and Thorp, “Ashmole was studying law in London from 1633 at the age of sixteen and practiced from the age of twenty-one. The single sheet of paper listing the Old Measures is said to be in either a childish hand or roughly noted. As Wilson observes, the list is likely to date from c. 1630: on arriving in London from Lichfield, Ashmole sought to master dances common to the revels of the Inns” (2018, 33).

⁷ “Between 1630 and 1633, Ashmole finished his studies at the Grammar School of Lichfield and studied law in London before becoming a lawyer 1638. The fact that the list of dances was compiled when Ashmole was probably still only approaching the Inns of Court could lead one to assume, as will be confirmed shortly, that there were places in England where dance was taught, i.e., dance schools” (Ciambella 2021, 14).

of the dancing master who actually taught him the choreographies he describes: Rowland Osborne.

7. *Revels, Foundlings and Unclassified, Miscellaneous, Undated, etc.*, vol. 27, ff. 3r-6v – Inner Temple, London. This manuscript, dated c. 1640-75, devotes ample space to the figure of the Master of the Revels, inasmuch as its compiler is Butler Buggins, Master of the Revels during Charles II's reign, from 1672 to 1675. This manuscript presents the eight Old Measures first, then the basic steps of the Sinkapace and the Argulius, and the correct ceremonial etiquette to be followed to open dancing events. That the Old Measures are still there even after the Stuart Restoration evinces a certain chronological continuity in the execution of the same order of dances when the Revels took place at the Inns of Court even after the Civil War.
8. MS 1119, ff. 1r-2v and ff. 23r-24v – Royal College of Music, London. As with the previous MS, this one is attributable to the Master of the Revels, Butler Buggins, even though the handwriting seems very different from that of MS n. 7. In this manuscript, however, Buggins affirms that he had reported the list of dances and steps as they had been taught him by his predecessor, Robert Holeman, Master of the Revels before 1640. This manuscript comprises a collection of songs, except for folios 1-2 and 23-4. Ff. 1-2 list the Old Measures along with the revel etiquette to be followed. The second folio closes with a short poem of nine verses entitled *An Holy Dance*. On the other hand, ff. 23 and 24 describe five extra choreographies that are not classified as Old Measures.

The above list clearly establishes a steady connection between the Inns of Court and terpsichorean practices in early modern England.

Moreover, as is well-known, the London Schools of Law also played a pivotal role in the development of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English theatre, inasmuch as a number of tragedies, comedies, etc. were staged in their inner courtyards (Green 1931; Hood Philips 2005, 23-36) – e.g., among others, Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc* at the Inner Temple in 1561, Gascoigne's *Jocasta* at Gray's Inn in 1566, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* at the Middle Temple in 1602 – and because some of best-known early modern English playwrights were admitted to the Inns of Court (i.a., Francis Beaumont, John Ford and John Marston).⁸ This connection between the Inns of Court, terpsichorean practices and early modern English drama will be explored in the final section of this article.

⁸ For further details, see Finkelpearl 1969; Winston 2016.

2. The OMIC Archive and #Lancsbox: The Corpus and the Tool

As intimated above, the eight manuscripts were transcribed together for the first time in 2021, as part of the Skenè Digital open-access archive project (<https://skene.dlcs.univr.it/digitalarchives/>). The transcription was based on the MSS available⁹ and previous partial or complete transcriptions (see Dolmetsch 1949; Cunningham 1965; Wilson 1986/7; Payne 2003; Daye and Thorp 2018), trying to correct any mistakes but above all homogenising transcription criteria. For this reason, three editions of each MS were realised: a PDF diplomatic edition corresponding to a facsimile of the original manuscript, a semidiplomatic edition whose original spelling was maintained, and a modernised edition which has been used in this article to carry out the corpus-based analysis, whose main purposes are two. On the one hand, most recurring keywords and collocations will be explored in order to shed light on the early modern English terpsichorean microlanguage through the analysis of a small, restricted dataset formed by the above-mentioned eight MSS; on the other, these keywords and collocations will be sought after in a larger reference corpus – i.e., early modern English plays from the 1560s to 1660 – with the aim of understanding whether and above all why some of these linguistic patterns occurred also in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theatrical texts, thus reinforcing the idea of an interdiscursive circulation of dance terminology in early modern England.¹⁰

The study, the results of which are shown in the following section, has been realised thanks to #Lancsbox software (see Brezina et al. 2015; Brezina et al. 2018; Brezina et al. 2020), designed at the University of Lancaster, UK, by Vaclav Brezina, William Platt and Tony McEnery, currently in its 6.0 version.¹¹ Given the focus of this research, the modernised editions of the eight manuscripts have been uploaded on #Lancsbox as a single corpus named OMIC_mod. Its size, in terms of tokens, types and lemmas, is re-

⁹ I would like to thank the many librarians who helped me gather together all the manuscripts during pandemic times, when English libraries were closed and travelling to the UK was impossible: the staff of the Bodleian Library (Oxford), the British Library (London), the Dulwich College (London), the Inner Temple Records archive (London), the Royal College of Music (London), and the Somerset Record Office (Taunton). Your assistance was invaluable.

¹⁰ For further details about the circulation of dance discourse in the period see Eubanks Winkler 2020; Ciambella 2021.

¹¹ For further details, see <http://corpora.lancs.ac.uk/lancsbox/>.

spectively 5,095, 525 and 550, with a TTR¹² of about 0.1 attesting to the low degree of lexical richness of the corpus, an important datum to be considered when analysing recurrent linguistic patterns in corpora. Such TTR demonstrates that on a lexical level the texts investigated do not exhibit a high degree of diversity (see Section 3 for considerations about lexical diversity vs density); therefore, one expects to find recurring patterns to be analysed.

The OMIC_mod corpus has been investigated by recurring to the various functions available on #Lancsbox, in particular:

- a) The Words tool lists the greatest number of recurring words in the corpus, thus providing important information on the ‘aboutness’ of a dataset (see, among others, Scott and Tribble 2006, 55-72). By right-clicking on a single type, tokens appear in a pop-up window showing the distribution in the corpus and in its single texts with absolute and relative frequency of occurrence.
- b) The GraphColl tool allows the users to visualise right and left collocations of a sought-after node/keyword. The left-hand table shows the collocates, their position in relation to the node and statistically significant features (e.g., number of co-occurrences of the node and its collocates/colligates). On the right hand-side, a lexical web diagram shows both position and proximity of the collocations of a keyword: the closer a collocate is to the centre of the diagram (i.e., the node), the higher the number of its co-occurrences with the keyword.
- c) The N-grams function automatically lists the most recurring strings of adjacent ‘n’ words in the corpus. This tool is extremely useful when recurrent formulaic expressions are sought after, as in the case presented in this article.

3. Results of the Analysis

The Words tool was the first to be considered when analysing the corpus. In addition to giving important information on the aboutness of the texts selected, this tool also proved useful for investigating lexical diversity (i.e.,

¹² Calculated by dividing the number of types (unique words) by that of tokens (total number of words), type/token ratio (TTR) provides important information about the lexical richness of a given text. The closer to 1, the richer and more varied the vocabulary of a corpus.

the TTR calculated above). In addition, lexical density (hereafter LD),¹³ calculated by dividing the occurrences of lexical/content words by the total number of tokens, reaches high levels in terms of percentage. In the OMID_mod corpus, LD is somewhat higher than 60%, hence quite high, if one considers that non-fictional texts have a range of LD from 40% to 65% (Stubbs 1996, 71-3).

Starting from Gustafsson's (1990; 1993) assertion that specialised texts have higher rates of repeated vocabulary items, we can consider that the manuscripts analysed in this article have a very low degree of lexical diversity. In fact, the dance directions considered show a high frequency in the occurrence of a restricted number of content/lexical words. A list of the top twenty most recurring lexical words is given below, with absolute and relative frequency:

	Lexical word	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency (per 10k tokens)
1	DOUBLE ¹⁴	317 (double) 28 (doubles)	677
2	SINGLE	143 (singles) 49 (single)	377
3	FORWARD	174 (forward) 5 (forwards)	351
4	Two	177	347
5	BACK	154 (back) 4 (backward) 4 (backwards)	318
6	SIDE	70 (side) 18 (sides)	173
7	HAND	42 (hand) 43 (hands)	167
8	ROUND	84	165
9	Four	79	155

¹³ Lexical density was defined for the first time by the psycholinguist John B. Carroll (1938, 379) as "the relative amount of repetitiveness or the relative variety in vocabulary" and has been recently investigated through corpus linguistics software, especially in the field of Second Language Acquisition (see, for instance, Mazgutova and Kormos 2015; Treffers-Daller et al. 2018).

¹⁴ Words in small caps have been considered as lemmas, since inflected forms are irrelevant in certain contexts, unless indicated otherwise.

10	HONOUR	69	135
11	One	60	118
12	Right	47	92
13	FACE	46 (face) 1 (faces)	92
14	TIME	42 (times) 3 (time)	88
15	Both	43	84
16	PLACE	25 (place) 17 (places)	82
17	REPRISE	42	82
18	END	41	80
19	Left	35	69
19	TURN	35	69
20	Three	33	65

Table 1. The twenty most recurring lexical words in the OMIC_mod corpus.

In terms of information on the aboutness of the texts, the eight manuscripts clearly deal with numerals and counting steps (i.e., SINGLE, DOUBLE, once, twice, both, one, two, three, four), directions (i.e., FORWARD, BACK, right, left), circular movements (i.e., ROUND, TURN) and specific parts of the human body (i.e., FACE,¹⁵ HAND).

As regards lexical diversity, the top twenty most recurring lexical words (i.e., not even 4% of the total amount of lexical words, that is, 386 types) cover more than 80% (1996/2451) of the occurrences of content words in the texts. This datum underlines the rate of repeated key lexical items in the texts, thus denoting the high level of lexical specialisation of the corpus. This is in line with the directive nature of these manuscripts, containing instructions to perform the Old Measures and other choreographies and can be considered “brain exercise[s] assigned to would-be lawyers or, more likely, notes taken during dance lessons” (Ciambella 2021, 15). Their textual genre and the circumstances that may have led to their composition justify both their low levels of lexical diversity – i.e., their insistence on a few recurring lexical items – and their evident focus on certain lexical and semantic fields.

The GraphColl tool offers an interesting perspective on the collocational

¹⁵ Actually, the noun “face” is mainly used in the multiword “face to face”, which underlines a process of lexicalisation, where the noun loses its morphological function and becomes, in this case, an adjective or an adverb.

patterning of some of the content words extracted with the Words tool. Given the levels of lexical diversity and the terminological density of the corpus, GraphColl highlights close relationships among the most recurring lexical words, thus establishing a strong correlation between collocations and lexical cohesion, as extensively explored by recent collocation-based approaches to non-fictional texts (see, among others, Sinclair 1996; Stubbs 2015; Brookes and McEnergy 2020). For example, using the default settings of the GraphColl tool,¹⁶ and searching for the collocations of the most recurring lexical word form (i.e., double), the results show close collocational patternings between the node sought for and some of the other most frequently recurring lexical words:

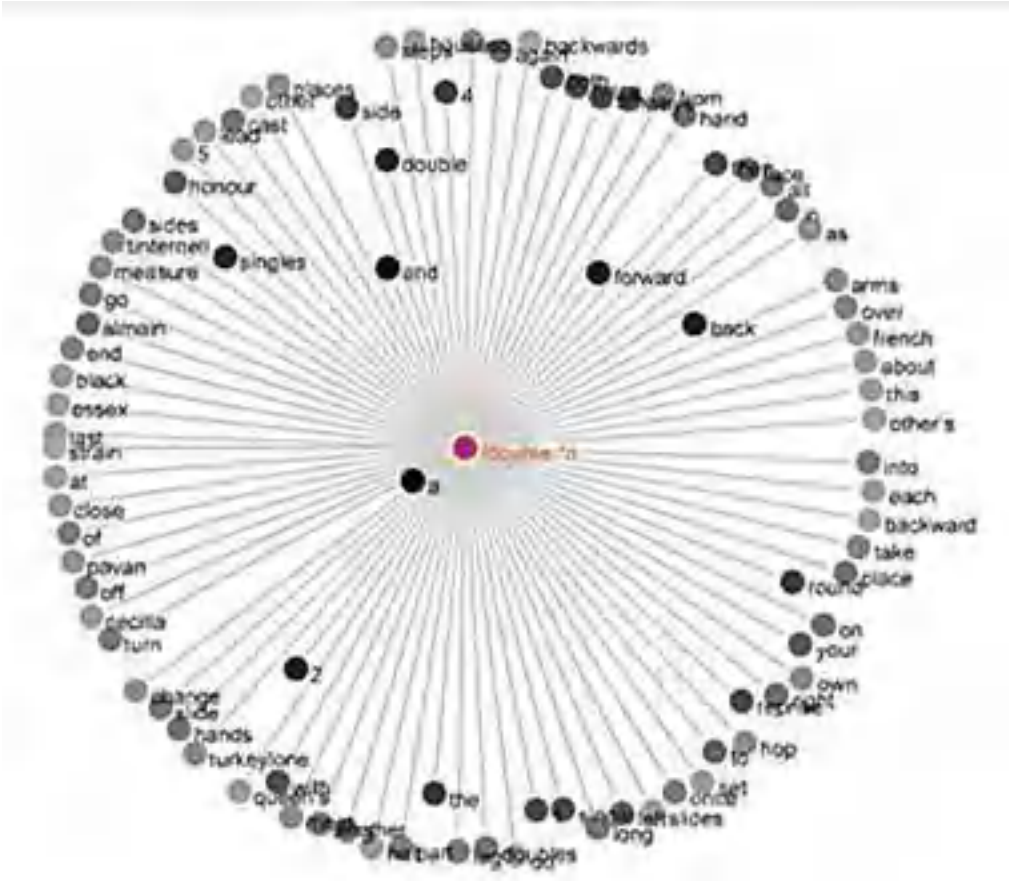


Fig. 1. Collocational patterning of the node DOUBLE.

¹⁶ Span of 5 words to the left (5L) and 5 to the right (5R) and a threshold of 5 collocations.

Except for such function words as the indefinite article “a” and the coordinating conjunction “and”, the other closest collocations to the keyword analysed are mainly the same lexical words listed in Table 1, which create such collocations, multiword units and phrases as “double round twice”, “DOUBLE FORWARD”, “SINGLE and DOUBLE”, “cast off a double”, etc., that increase the degree of specialisation of the terpsichorean lexis used in the manuscripts.¹⁷ In fact, although most of the content words included in the manuscripts belong (and belonged) to the general lexis of the English language, collocational patterns show a higher level of specificity. For instance, taking EEBO as a reference corpus, such common words as “double” and “forward” have respectively 48,666 and 46,433 hits (even disregarding inflected forms). However, if considered together in the collocation “DOUBLE forward”, only one occurrence appears and it is, not surprisingly (as will be seen in the next section) in John Marston’s *The Malcontent* (1604),¹⁸ while it reaches 133 occurrences in the OMIC_mod corpus. A similar example is the collocation “a/one single back”, which is found 23 times in the corpus under scrutiny here, but whose only occurrence on EEBO belongs to Joshua Sylvester’s 1611 translation of Du Bartas’s works.¹⁹

Certainly, the most interesting results have been obtained by employing the N-grams tool on #Lancsbox. As mentioned above, this function shows the most recurring strings of words that tend to co-occur in a selected corpus, thus shifting the attention from lexical and semantic considerations to syntactic observations. Since 2- and 3-grams can be easily detected by recurring to the GraphColl functions, 4- to 7-grams have been taken into account here.²⁰ The results provided by the #Lancsbox N-gram function are shown below (Tables 2-5):

¹⁷ For further details about the relationship between collocations and specialised texts/corpora, see Williams 2001; Alonso Campos and Torner Castells 2010.

¹⁸ “Three doubles forward” (4.2).

¹⁹ The phrase “one single back” appears in Sylvester’s translation of *La sepmaine, ou creation du monde* (1578; English: *The Week, or Creation of the World*), day 4 (“The Heavens, Sun, Moon, etc.”), and it refers to the dance of the stars and planets, a widespread Medieval and Renaissance trope deriving from the concept of *musica universalis* (or music of the spheres). See also Sir Thomas Elyot’s *Governor* about the same concept.

²⁰ Sequences of words superior to 7-grams have proved to recur less than ten times in the corpus; hence they have not been considered, as they are statistically irrelevant.

▼ Corpus	OMIC_mod	▼ Frequency	▼ Dispersion	▼ Type	▼ Grams
Type		▼ Frequency 01 - Freq	Dispersion 01 - CV		
a double forward and		55.000000	0.700685		
double forward and a		53.000000	0.752713		
and a double back		47.000000	0.732952		
forward and a double		44.000000	0.762821		
2 singles and a		38.000000	0.613763		
singles and a double		35.000000	0.572327		
a double forward reprise		27.000000	1.758270		
double forward reprise back		27.000000	1.758270		
and a double round		23.000000	0.556183		
2 singles a double		22.000000	1.342728		

Table 2. Ten most recurring 4-grams in the OMIc_mod corpus.

▼ Corpus	OMIC_mod	▼ Frequency	▼ Dispersion	▼ Type	▼ Grams
Type		▼ Frequency 01 - Freq	Dispersion 01 - CV		
a double forward and a		53.000000	0.753146		
double forward and a double		41.000000	0.769303		
forward and a double back		40.000000	0.738877		
2 singles and a double		35.000000	0.602993		
a double forward reprise back		27.000000	1.756136		
singles and a double round		16.000000	0.694594		
double forward reprise back twice		16.000000	1.926597		
a double back 4 times		14.000000	0.931648		
a double round both ways		13.000000	1.210155		
and a double back 4		13.000000	0.830332		

Table 3. Ten most recurring 5-grams in the OMIc_mod corpus.

▼ Corpus	OMIC_mod	▼ Frequency	▼ Dispersion	▼ Type	▼ Grams
Type		▼ Frequency 01 - Freq	Dispersion 01 - CV		
a double forward and a double		41.000000	0.769723		
double forward and a double back		38.000000	0.701454		
a double forward reprise back twice		16.000000	1.928308		
2 singles and a double round		16.000000	0.695524		
and a double back 4 times		13.000000	0.830714		
a double forward and a single		12.000000	0.738918		
double forward and a single back		11.000000	0.803689		
2 singles and a double forward		9.000000	1.050488		
and a double forward and a		9.000000	0.977444		
forward and a double back 4		9.000000	1.039491		

Table 4. Ten most recurring 6-grams in the OMIc_mod corpus.

▼ Corpus	OMIC_mod	▼ Frequency	▼ Dispersion	▼ Type	▼ Grams
Type		▼ Frequency 01 - Freq	Dispersion 01 - CV		
3 double forward and a double back		38.000000	0.701673		
a double forward and a single back		11.000000	0.604184		
forward and a double back 4 times		9.000000	1.039554		
double forward and a double back 4		9.000000	1.030654		
and a double round in arms both		8.000000	1.733880		
3 double round in arms both ways		8.000000	1.733880		
singles side a double forward reprise		8.000000	1.801459		
2 singles and a double round in		7.000000	1.387914		
2 singles and a double round both		7.000000	1.454129		
side a double forward reprise back W		6.000000	1.980046		

Table 5. Ten most recurring 7-grams in the OMIc_mod corpus.

First of all, from a semantic viewpoint, it is clear that n-grams in the corpus shed light on the primary focus of the eight MSS on steps (single and double) and directions (forward and backward). Moreover, as for morphology, it is in this period and thanks to such texts that the adjectives “single” and “double” (introduced into the English vocabulary at the beginning of the fourteenth century from Old French as adjectives, according to the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*) went through a process of conversion and began to be used and, consequently, inflected as nouns (maybe to avoid an excessive use of the noun STEP that normally should follow). The first occurrence of “single” (*OED*, n.3a) and “double” (*OED*, n.3a) as nouns is in Elyot’s *Governor* (1531). Another aspect to take into consideration is the fact that all the tables above show a recurring syntactic pattern where the conjunction “and” is not used to coordinate two words, phrases, or clauses, but as a sequence connector (such as then, later, after, etc.).

Therefore, what the keyword extraction and collocational and n-gram analyses tell us about the terpsichorean microlanguage in the 1500s-1600s is that, although the majority of the most recurring lexical words belong to the core vocabulary of the English language and are not specialised per se, the directive texts investigated mainly concern steps and directions whose collocational-based description can rarely be found in other textual genres of the period – thus it is collocational patternings that give the lexis of such texts its specificity – and adopt an extensive use of nominalisation (by conversion) of the adjectives “single” and “double” (with consequent -s inflection to mark the plural).

The final section of the analysis carried out so far on a specific non-fictional genre questions whether the linguistic peculiarities highlighted above influenced dance scenes in the predominant literary genre of the early modern English period: drama.

4. The Old Measures of the Inns of Court and Early Modern Theatre: A Collocational-based Perspective

In order to determine the influence of dance instructions on early modern drama from a linguistic point of view, the VEP (Visualizing English Print) Early Modern Drama Collection (available at <https://graphics.cs.wisc.edu/WP/vvp/vvp-early-modern-drama-collection/>) has been used as reference corpus, in particular the Expanded Drama 1660 corpus, a collection of 666 digitised early modern plays from 1550s to 1660.²¹ The entire corpus

²¹ As the VEP website reads, “[m]etadata was prepared by Jonathan Hope and Beth Ralston. XML files were processed and curated by Deidre Stuffer for release as plain text files” (<https://graphics.cs.wisc.edu/WP/vvp/vvp-early-modern-drama-collection/>).

has been uploaded on #Lancsbox and key collocations have been searched.

The collocation “n. DOUBLE forward”, one of the most widespread in the OMIC_mod corpus, occurs only twice in the entire Expanded Drama 1660, a datum which, albeit (or rather, since) not statistically significant, focuses on the terpsichorean language of early modern plays. The first occurrence is in Robert Greene’s *James IV* (1598):

SLIPPER. They are strangers, I see, they understand not my language: wee, wee.—Nay, but, my friends, one hornpipe further, a refluce back, and *two doubles forward*: what, not one cross-point against Sundays? What, ho, sirrah, you gome, you with the nose like an eagle, an you be a right Greek, one turn more. (4.3, my emphasis)

Bohan and brother of Nano, has entered the service of the villain Ateukin and erroneously steals a letter from his pocket. Another servant, Andrew, is accused of theft and beaten by Ateukin. Seeking vengeance, Andrew asks three antics to rob Slipper. Since the antics do not seem to speak Slipper’s language, as he affirms in the lines quoted above, he decides to dance with them.²² The dance he chooses, the Hornpipe, was typical of Scotland (see Ciambella 2021, 109), but what is worth noting here is the description of some of the steps that characterise this dance: a refluce back, two doubles forward and a cross-point. This description is important from many perspectives. First of all, these are the only directions for the Hornpipe in the entire corpus of early modern plays²³ and, given that this choreography is definitely not a courtly one, they underline some similarities in the execution of courtly and folk dances. As seen above, the adverbs “back(wards)” and “forward(s)” can be found in collocations that are exclusively typical of dance steps, at least as far as it has been considered here by taking EEBO and the VEP as reference corpora. In fact, the collocation “refluc back”, which, according to the *OED*, is an extended use of the noun indicating “flowing back, reflux; an instance of this” (n.1a), can be found only in this play by Greene, probably with the meaning of going back – no matter how, given the folk and boisterous character of this dance. On the other hand, the cross-point, a step whose execution remains obscure, is also mentioned in *The Second Part of the Return from Parnassus* (1602) and in Heywood’s *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1607). “Two doubles forward” is the only collocation that this play seems to share with the eight manuscripts from the Inns of Court analysed

²² Antics in this play were quite accustomed to dancing, as the play itself begins with the three characters who dance around a tomb where Bohan, Slipper’s father, is leaning.

²³ Other approximate directions can be found in Peele’s *The Arraignement of Paris* (1584), where the Hornpipe is described as a round dance to be performed by taking hands.

earlier, and because it is one of only two occurrences of this collocation in the Extended Drama 1660 corpus, it deserves attention.

To the best of my knowledge,²⁴ Robert Greene had no direct²⁵ connection with the Inns of Court (see Reynolds and Turner 2008, 75-6), being one of the so-called University Wits and having obtained an MA from Clare Hall College, Cambridge. Therefore, it is highly improbable that he may have encountered one of the extant manuscripts from the London Schools of Law (unlike Marston, as will be seen later). Nevertheless, Greene might have come to know the collocation “double forward” in Elyot’s *Governor* – where the string is attested for the first time, according to the *OED* – given the astonishing circulation of this book at that time: it was reprinted eight times before 1600. More probably, however, this step was quite a common one, judging by the hits it has in the manuscripts; thus it was part of the early modern English terpsichorean culture and dancing masters throughout England must have taught choreographies using such collocations.²⁶ After all, as scholars have noticed Greene’s attention to dance scenes, names and choreographies in his plays, and in *James IV* in particular, one may assume that he had received something of a choreutic education (see Melnikoff 2008; Gieskes 2008, among others).

The second occurrence of the noun phrase “n. DOUBLE forward” is in Marston’s *The Malcontent*:

GUERRINO. T’is but two singles on the left, two on the right, *three doubles forward*, a traverse of six round: do this twice, three singles side, Galliard trick of twenty, Coranto pace; a figure of eight, three singles broken down, come up, meet two doubles, fall back, and then honour. (4.2, my emphasis)

The intertextual and interlinguistic connections between the manuscripts of the Inns of Court and these lines uttered by the courtier Guerrino are evident and undeniable. Many of the lexical words and collocations that accompany the directions of this French Branle/Brawl can be found in the OMIC_mod corpus. Although the Branle was not part of the eight Old Measures, it was certainly taught by dancing masters and Masters of the Revels at the Inns of Court. The Douce MS (n. 5 in the list in Section 1) is the only one that contains directions for this dance, which generally correspond to Guerrino’s choreography in *The Malcontent* (a parallelism apparently unnoticed by the critics):

²⁴ I am grateful to Darren Freebury-Jones, University of Cardiff, for his valuable advice on and references to Greene’s relationship with the Inns of Court.

²⁵ Some scholars believe that Greene would have had indirect connections to the Schools of Law through his associates and collaborators, e.g., Thomas Lodge, who apparently entered Lincoln’s Inn in 1578 (see Freebury-Jones 2020).

²⁶ For further details about the spread of dance schools in the English territory, see Eubanks Winkler 2020.

Honour, take hands and go round to the left hand, round again to the right hand, slip two together, afterwards three to the left hand, three more to the right hand, all a double round, the same again.

After all, the Douce MS was compiled by John Ramsey, admitted to the Middle Temple in 1605/6, while Marston had entered the same school of law in 1595 and would remain there until his marriage in 1606. Therefore, it is likely that both Ramsey and Marston attended the same dance lessons – or at least were taught by the same dancing masters – at the Middle Temple at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

As for linguistic patterns in Guerrino's lines, note the use of the adjectives "single"²⁷ and "double" as nouns, and content words, collocations and n-grams belonging to the terpsichorean specialised lexis, e.g., a traverse of six round, three doubles forward, Galliard trick, Coranto pace, a figure of eight, three singles broken down, meet two doubles, fall back, etc.

Marston's directions for the French Branle invoke another interlinguistic and interdiscursive reflection about the nominalisation of the adjectives "single" and "double" in the corpus of early modern plays; on that topic, it is worth analysing two occurrences (again, the only two) of the noun "singles" and "doubles" in Richard Brome's Caroline plays *The City Wit* (1629-32, published 1653) and *The Antipodes* (c. 1640).

CRASY. Have you not forgot your singles and your doubles, your fallings back, and your turnings up, wife? (*The City Wit*, 5.1)

LETOY. No, nor you, sir, in
That over-action of the legs I told you of:
Your singles and your doubles, look you, thus—
Like one of the dancing master at the Bear-garden. (*The Antipodes*, 2.1)

First of all, it should be noticed that the string "your singles and your doubles" – actually a 5-gram comprising two symmetrical noun phrases (numeral "two" + noun) linked by the coordinating conjunction "and" – is identical in both the utterances by the London merchant Crasy and the nobleman Letoy, this aspect highlighting some kind of stylistic similarity between the two speeches. In the first case, as usually happens in early modern drama, dance steps refer to double entendres and sexual innuendoes. In the final de-

²⁷ The use of the nominalised adjective "single*" is understood in the Douce MS, probably because the manuscript itself is a series of notes taken during dance lessons or because the Branle described by Ramsey is the last of eighteen dances dealt with and he can take the noun "single" for granted (compare, on the other hand, the repeated use of "single" in the first dance described in the same manuscript, i.e., the *Quadran Pavan*).

nouement of the *City Wit*, Crasy is alluding to his wife Josefina's adultery,²⁸ an act she actually did not commit and for this reason the couple is re-established, together with Crasy's fortune. In the second case, on the other hand, the aristocrat Letoy metonymically refers to "your singles and your doubles" while giving directions to his actors²⁹ who are incapable of dancing, in his opinion. Critics have long tried to understand if Richard Brome had contacts – direct or indirect – with the Inns of Court, given his knowledge of the English legal system and the settings of some of his plays, i.e., *The Damselle* (1637-38, published 1653), in the Temple Walks around Middle Temple (see, i.a., Steggle 2004, 130-36; Paravano 2013). Steggle affirms that paratextual matter – i.e., mainly frontispieces, commendatory poems and dedicatory epistles to his plays – may suggest Brome's "Inns-of-Court input and . . . patronage" (Steggle 2004, 151), some kind of acquaintance with members of the London Schools of Law. Nevertheless, too little is known about Brome's life (Steggle 2004, 13; Lowe 2007, 416) to affirm with any certainty that he may have encountered manuscripts describing the Old Measures. As seen above in dealing with Robert Greene, Brome's acquaintance with the terpsichorean lexis and morphology (not only in the two above-mentioned plays, but in the entire corpus of his works; see Ingram 1976) seems to be justified by an interlinguistic and interdiscursive circulation of the practice, and hence the pervasive microlanguage of dance.

5. Conclusion

The collocational-based analysis presented in the previous sections has highlighted recurring complex linguistic patterns shared by the corpus of the Inns of Court's eight manuscripts about dance directions and some early modern plays. Speculation about the direct connections between some playwrights and the London Schools of Law may justify the presence of these recurring patterns. Nevertheless, the most plausible reason for such intertextual echoes can be found in the interdiscursive network that gravitated around the art of dancing in early modern England and that permeated Renaissance culture and society from politics to religion.

The corpus-driven investigation carried out via #Lancbox software on both the OMIC_mod corpus and the VEP Extended Drama 1660 corpus has highlighted interesting linguistic phenomena that advocate the development

²⁸ That is why the possessive "your" accompanies the nouns. "Singles" and "doubles" mean "dance steps in twos and fours" (Parr 1995, 250), thus hyperbolically hinting at the number of would-be lovers that courted Josefina.

²⁹ In *The Antipodes*, Letoy and the doctor hire a group of actors to cure individuals affected by psychological distress.

of a terpsichorean jargon in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, whose most peculiar characteristics can be traced more on a combinatory level (collocations and n-grams) than on a lexical one. Therefore, if on the one hand the names of dances and choreographies contributed to enriching the early modern English vocabulary with such terms as Pavan, Branle, Coranto, La Volta, etc., mainly borrowing them from Continental languages, steps and directions, on the other hand, seem to originate in the English language itself and bend it, adapting it through internal linguistic mechanisms such as nominalisation and exclusive combinations.

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LEONARDO MANCINI*

The Shadow of the Myth. *El Romancero de Edipo* with Toni Cots Directed by Eugenio Barba (1984-1990)

Abstract

The article focuses on the solo performance *El Romancero de Edipo*, created by Eugenio Barba together with the Spanish actor Toni Cots, and staged in several countries between 1984 to 1990. The performance was the very first monologue directed by Barba in his long-standing career. For Barba, it was also the first direct approach to the tragic myth, following an interest already cultivated around the figure of Antigone from the early Eighties onwards, in a moment of crisis and need for renewal for the groups of the “Third Theatre” movement, defined by Barba in 1976. For Cots, the monologue was the last and culminating part of his almost ten-year experience as an actor at the Odin Teatret, where he had also developed a personal actor’s training technique (in part based on Balinese traditional dances) and had accompanied Barba through the first research activities in the new field of Theatre Anthropology. With *El Romancero of Edipo*, Barba explored the tragic myth and elaborated an original theatrical narration based on the creative process of the actor, within which lay the rhythm of the montage. The text was therefore sustained by a rigorous score by the actor and by a detailed line of physical and vocal actions, making use of simple but very effective scenic props such as a vase, a self-built mask, drapery, a wig, and a stick. In addition, the use of songs and melodies, as well as other literary sources, extended the performative language of the artwork, giving life to an innovative re-elaboration rich in transcultural influences. By analysing all these elements, the article ‘deconstructs’ the performance, retracing its sources and its development between the actor and the director.

KEYWORDS: Odin Teatret; Eugenio Barba; Toni Cots; Oedipus

Eugenio Barba’s vast theatrical career, nowadays extending over the span of six decades, started in 1961 with a study on Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus*, prepared for the admission to the Theatre Academy Alexander Zelwerowicz in Warsaw.¹ On that occasion, the then twenty-five-year-old Barba illustrated

¹ Barba’s entrance exam in Warsaw in 1961 is narrated in his autobiographical book *Land of Ashes and Diamonds*, dedicated to his apprenticeship period in Poland (see Barba 1999a, 15-16). The jury, chaired by the Polish director and critic Bohdan Korzeniewski, allowed Barba to undertake his colloquium in French.

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a project of *mise-en-scène* characterised by the presence of a pyramid on stage and the use of costumes and masks inspired by Babylonian bas-reliefs.² Barba's stay in Poland lasted until 1964, marked as his apprenticeship in the theatre, and culminated in the collaboration with Jerzy Grotowski in Opole from 1962. The creation of Odin Teatret as a group, founded by Barba in 1964 in Oslo and moved to Holstebro (Denmark) in 1966,³ sought to pursue a research on the actor's craft and presence in theatre practice which would mark a fundamental chapter of the Second Reform of the Theatre of the twentieth century.⁴ During the course of the following decades, many things naturally changed in and around Odin Teatret as well, starting with the succession of new generations of members and collaborators, but some essential conditions remained: the focus on *træning*⁵ and artistic creation, the dialogue with other theatrical cultures and masters and the need to preserve a space of isolation and concentration. In this sense, even the group's base, a former farmhouse transformed into a theatre, already fully reflected those characteristics of "solitude, craft, revolt", which would later

² Two sketches on *Oedipus Tyrannus* prepared for the admission exam, originally preserved by Ferdinando Taviani, are today kept in the Odin Teatret Archives in Holstebro (Fonds Odin Teatret, Series Environment, b. 7; see also Schino 2018, 185-6). Close friend to Barba, Taviani was literary consultant of Odin Teatret from 1975 to 2020, the year of his death.

³ Moving to Holstebro in 1966, Odin Teatret defined itself as an "Inter-Scandinavian Theatre Laboratory for the Art of the Actor" (see Turner 2004, 11, and Barba 1979, 15). For an historiographical background on the advent of theatre laboratory in Denmark and its consequences, see Kuhlmann 2013, 105-20. Focusing on Odin Teatret's tradition, Kuhlmann offers a discussion of theatre laboratory in the light of the fundamental notion of "living archive": a fertile context in which "layers of different technical skills and scenic forms of presence" give life to "coded body signatures", increasingly developed both in a local context while, progressively, taking on a "wider global resonance". In such an enlarged perspective, the theatre's archive becomes an integrated space of memory, research, and creation, collecting not only documents and materials but also witnessing the layering of the immaterial performing knowledge of acting and staging techniques acquired by the group. Theatre historiography as "the repertoire of the possibilities of the theatre: a living body that can / must become body-in-life" was also presented by Fabrizio Cruciani in a study published in the Italian journal *Teatro e Storia* (Cruciani 1993, 10-11).

⁴ A periodisation of the Second Reform of the Theatre between the 1960s and the 1980s has been presented by Franco Perrelli in his study on Living Theatre, Grotowski, Brook and Barba (Perrelli 2007, 3-16).

⁵ As has been noted by Mirella Schino, the use of the Danish word *træning* for the English *training* is common among Odin Teatret actors (see Schino 2018, 336). The word is frequently attested, for example, in Roberta Carreri's diaries: among the others, see for example the note dated "Holstebro 20.1.1981" in Carreri's diary (Fonds Odin Teatret, Series Carreri, b. 17a, 129), where the actress states: "Træning cannot become a series of exercises".

inspire Barba for the subtitle of his book on *Theatre* (Barba 1999b).

Twenty-three years after the first study on *Oedipus Tyrannus*, in 1984, a new work entitled *El Romancero de Edipo* was elaborated by Barba with the actor Toni Cots, a member of Odin Teatret from 1976 to 1985. Even after leaving the group, Cots performed the *pièce* worldwide until 1990, offering a suggestive confrontation with the archetypal material of the Attic tragedy based on the actor's work and his individuality. The dialogue between the director and the actor, through a four-handed process of creation which originated from the stage and resulted in the adapted text, interrogated the myth of Oedipus, and gave life to a theatrical narration enriched with full use of performing craft: voice (narration and singing), gestures, actions, self-built props, and elements of scenography. Focusing on a relatively less-known chapter in Barba's career, this article intends to offer a historical narrative and a critical contextualization of the *Romancero de Edipo*: first, following the performance's genesis in the director's maturation of interests, together with his collaborators at Odin Teatret and in the new framework of ISTA; subsequently, tracing the fundamental artistic and biographical profile of Toni Cots as an actor. Furthermore, Barba's attention towards the tragical myth is analysed within the cultural and socio-political context critically denounced by the director, facing new forms of artistic consumerism and a need of renovation for theatre groups in an increasingly homologated global scenario. Finally, an analysis of the performance is proposed, following the actor's work through the dramaturgical, physical, and vocal score created with the director.

1. At the Stake of Memory: Antigone's Shadow

Traces of Barba's preoccupation with the classical myth at the beginning of the 1980s are observable in some of his texts following Odin Teatret's performance *The Gospel According to Oxyrhincus* (1985),⁶ presented twenty years after the group's debut in Oslo with *Ornitofilene* by the Norwegian writer Jens Bjørneboe (1965).⁷ In a speech given at the Venice Biennale in 1985, published one year later as *L'ombra di Antigone* ("Antigone's Shadow")

⁶ For a historical recount on the *Gospel according to Oxyrinchus* of 1985, a performance of caesura for a cultural season marked by theatre laboratories, see Perrelli 2007, 201-5.

⁷ The performance *Ornitofilene*, based on a text centred on the Nazi horrors of the Second World War, was produced by Barba with a group of actors who were not admitted to the National Academy of Dramatic Art of Oslo. The work was rehearsed in an air-raid shelter in Oslo of the WWII, and it was presented in October 1965. For an interview by Ferruccio Marotti to Barba and to Torgeir Wethal on "the years of *Ornitofilene*" see Taviani 1975, 1-19.

in the Italian Journal *Teatro Festival*,⁸ Barba reflected on the residual condition of the theatre in an increasingly homologated global scenario, where artistic independence appeared largely constrained by the triumph of cultural consumerism: an “ice age” which one could only hope to survive, extending a hand towards those who, in the future, would preserve the memory of theatre groups (Barba 2014, 224). A crucial issue – preservation of memory – which was soon recalled by Barba in his final discourse in 1987 in Qosqo (Peru), during the seventh international meeting of group theatres held in Urubamba, where he declared: “Memory is the spirit which guides our actions” (Barba 1988c, 287). Facing domination and oblivion, Antigone’s “fistful of dust” was presented in that occasion by Barba as the poorest act of rebellion, equivalent, in theatre history, to the handful of spectators who used to go to Grotowski’s first plays in the small Polish provincial town of Opole.

Speaking to the audience in Venice, back in 1985, Barba reviewed the archetype of rebellion, Antigone, and, in the glow of light coming from the myth, projected its figure on to contemporaneity. In this perspective, he offered a vision of the tragic character as an analysis of the “weapons”, perhaps vacuous but still necessary, at the disposal of the intellectual in contemporary society. As an example, he dwelt on a scene from *The Gospel according to Oxyrhyncus*, in which the character of Antigone, played by the actress Roberta Carreri, was persecuted by the figure of a Grand Inquisitor, played by Tage Larsen. The latter, after killing other characters, armed with a knife adorned with a bouquet of flowers, hurled himself at Antigone’s shadow, trying to erase it and scrape away its contours. The metaphoric and arcane meaning of the scene, declared by Barba himself, focused on the value of the human presence confronted with the omissions of history and with periodic attempts at repression and annihilation.⁹ Reflecting on the persistence of Antigone in his thoughts, Barba declared:

⁸ The essay *L’ombra di Antigone* has been translated into several languages and it is now contained in the already mentioned book *Theatre* (Barba 1999b; for the last Italian edition: Barba 2014, 221-4).

⁹ Barba clarifies its interpretation of Antigone in his already mentioned article *The shadow of Antigone*: “Then I understood why Jehuda persisted in trying to obliterate Antigone’s shadow: because it is easy to kill bodies, very easy, but some bodies leave shadows, as if their lives were so loaded with energy that they remained imprinted on history. Even if physically the people have vanished, their shadows remain to darken the beautiful landscape. There are people who have left deep shadows on the history of our profession. And there are many Jehudas who try to erase their shadows. But the shadows remain for those who know how to grasp the meaning of history, for those who want to remember, who do not want to lose the memory” (the English translation is contained in Christoffersen 1993, 184; for the original Italian: Barba 2014, 222).

Once again, I asked myself why the figure of Antigone had for a long time, for three or four years, continually returned to haunt me, like a ghost. First with *The Story of Oedipus* and then in this other performance, *The Gospel according to Oxyrhyncus*. I asked myself: what is Antigone trying to tell me? . . . I finally understood it when I asked myself what is the weapon of the intellectual and how s/he could fight against the law of the city. The weapon is a handful of earth, a useless and symbolic gesture which goes against the majority, against pragmatism, against fashion. This is the intellectual's role: to know that the gesture is useless, symbolic, and yet, nevertheless, to make it. (Barba 2014, 224)

As stated by Barba himself, Antigone therefore played a role of inspiration for *El romancero de Edipo* even before *The Gospel According to Oxyrhincus*. Such a long-matured gestation in the director's thoughts, before reaching a scenic expression, finds further evidence in a book, given as a gift by Barba to Cots in 1983: *Meine Schwester Antigone* by Grete Weil (1980), in which the ancient myth was evoked by the authoress as an interlocutory figure throughout her existence, from the appalling events of the Holocaust to the difficult return to post-war West German society as a survivor.¹⁰ As regards Oedipus' character, furthermore, its presence reflected Barba's interests towards the archetypal figure of the wandering man, which he would originally have liked to condense in a "performance of the future" dedicated, according to Carreri's notes of that time, to the figure of Christ. Such a performance, however, was not realised, since it was "technically (time-wise) not possible" (Carreri 1981, 9; Schino 2018, 417), but opened the road towards other, smaller, works.

2. The Individual in the Collective. Toni Cots at Odin Teatret and ISTA

It should be emphasised that *El Romancero de Edipo* was the very first monologue directed by Barba, inaugurating a series of works which Ferdinando Taviani would later classify as the *Kammerspielen* of Odin Teatret:¹¹ solo performances, or performances of two actors, resulting from

¹⁰ From a conversation with Toni Cots, March 21st, 2021. Cots read the book in the Italian translation by Amina Pandolfi (Weil 1981). I am grateful to Cots and Barba for having shared with me their memories about the process of creation of the performance during several conversations between 2020 and 2021.

¹¹ See Taviani 2005, 7. In addition to Toni Cots' *Romancero de Edipo*, Taviani also lists in the category of *Kammerspielen* the performances *Marriage with God* (with César Brie and Iben Nagel Rasmussen, 1984), *Judith* (with Roberta Carreri, 1987), *Memoria* (with Else Marie Laukvik and Frans Winther, 1990), *The castle of Holstebro* (with Julia Varley, 1990), *Itsi-Bitsi* (1991, with Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Frans Winther and Kai

new projects of research internal and parallel to the main group, from the early Eighties and during the next few years.¹² In June 1981, as witnessed by Carreri, Barba himself announced to the actors that he had decided to work on “smaller performances” and that Odin Teatret would become a “federation”, in which “groups could create independent arrangements” (Carreri 1981, 9). Consequently, the process of creation also shifted towards new approaches, which have been described by Ian Watson as “a combination of ideas by the performers, original improvisations, fragments of training research and/or dramaturgical materials developed for earlier productions that for one reason, or another, were discarded” (Watson 1993, 177). While the branches and activities continued to grow on a larger tree, according to a metaphor recently adopted in Barba’s studies, individual seeds of activity were increasingly cultivated (Kuhlmann and Ledger 2019, 155; see also Perrelli 2005, 29).

As has already been mentioned, Toni Cots became an actor at Odin Teatret in 1976 under the auspices of Iben Nagel Rasmussen, following an ‘adoption’, which implies an initial assumption of responsibility by the ‘adopter’, according to a process typical of Odin Teatret. Before joining Odin Teatret, Cots had completed his studies with a Bachelor’s degree in Performing Arts at the Institut del Teatre of Barcelona from 1972 to 1975, and he had travelled to Denmark for the first time in the summer of ’74. In that occasion, he saw *The Book of Dances*, a performance created that year by Odin Teatret in Carpignano, after the first experiences of barbers in Southern Italy;¹³ then, in 1975, he was admitted to a six-month seminar,¹⁴ after which he finally joined Odin Teatret in the November of that year.

During the following nine years, Cots worked intensively as an actor,

Bredholt), *Doña Musica’s Butterflies* (with Julia Varley, 1997); *Salt* (with Roberta Carreri, music by Jan Ferlsev, 2002).

¹² Still on the subject of the projects internal and parallel to Odin Teatret of that time, it is worth remembering that Cots himself created “Basho” (the name was a homage to the Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō), while in 1984 César Brie and Iben Nagel Rasmussen gave life to “Farfa”, from which the pièce *Marriage with God* was elaborated, and Richard Fowler created “The Canada Project”. It was from this increasingly articulated organization that Odin Teatret was progressively surrounded by its broader framework, still today existent, named Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium (NTL). Basho ceased to be part of NTL when Cots left Odin: see Ledger 2012, 198.

¹³ For a recount on *Book of dances* after the first barbers in Puglia, see Ledger 2012, 69.

¹⁴ Odin Teatret organised its first six-month practical seminar for actors in 1974, and a second one in 1976: see also Schino 1996, 42 (Schino dates the first seminar, which was internally called “Brigata internazionale”, to 1975). Schino notes that according to Barba Toni Cots participated in the second session: see Schino 2018, 46 and Fonds Odin Teatret, series Activities, b. 28.

participating in the Odin Teatret performances of that time: *Brecht's Ashes* (I and II edition), *The Million*, both staged worldwide between 1978 and 1984,¹⁵ *Anabasis* and the clown performance *Johann Sebastian Bach*. Parallel to the artistic work, in those years Cots played an important organisational role within the group, culminating in his role of assistant to Barba for the two first sessions of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA I, Bonn 1980;¹⁶ and ISTA II, Volterra 1981),¹⁷ and in the organisation of Odin Teatret's major tour in Spain, in 1983. There, in each city visited by the group, the actors settled in a house and gave life to numerous initiatives for the spectators, from work demonstrations to performances and meetings, under the name of *La casa del Odin* (presented in Barcelona, Valencia, Madrid). Cots himself prepared a demonstration of work, named *Puputan*, focused on Balinese Topeng dance and on his actor's training which he had studied in Bali: in a first moment, in 1978, together with Silvia Ricciardelli and Iben Nagel Rasmussen, he studied martial art Pencak Silat in Denpasar, with Tapa Sudana's cousin (named Balok, and friend of Cots), and Baris dance (with a teacher named Tutur); in 1979, alone, he studied Topeng with the dancer and teacher I Made Pasek Tempo.¹⁸ *Puputan*, already presented by Cots in

¹⁵ Some common poetical elements between those two works, well described by Watson after a presentation in La Mama in New York in 1984, appear to be present in *El Romancero de Edipo* too: in particular, the "use of a minimal set and minimal lighting changes", the engagement of each actor in "multiples roles, changing costumes and characterization in full view of the audience", and, on the level of the montage, a non-conventional narration. Barba's reflections on the relations and differences between those works are contained in his discourse "to actors" transcribed in his book *Il Brecht dell'Odin* (Barba 1981, 144-5).

¹⁶ During the first session of ISTA in Bonn, an International Symposium was held between 24 to 26 October. In that occasion, in an interview with Franco Ruffini, Jerzy Grotowski reflected on how he could see "a profound relationship between what Barba is doing in ISTA and what I am doing in the Theatre of Sources: we are both concerned with transcultural phenomena" (Grotowski 1980, 236-7).

¹⁷ Schino notes that "until 1987, ISTA was organized by Barba alone, with the help of a few actors (Toni Cots, Richard Fowler), although Odin actors sometimes participated and collaborated" (Schino 2018, 114). As regards Odin actors, "only Toni stayed for the entire session" (Schino 2018, 116). For a detailed discussion on ISTA, with several contributions from different scholars and practitioners, see Hastrup 1996.

¹⁸ Toni Cots' first stay in Bali, with Iben Nagel Rasmussen and Silvia Ricciardelli, took place between January 5 and March 25, 1978. A long, detailed, account of that period was typewritten by Toni Cots in a document, made of 38 pages and written in Spanish ("Diario de Bali"), now conserved at the Odin Teatret Archives in Holstebro. It describes the activities of each day, from lessons of Pentjak, Baris and Legong to meetings with local theatre groups. See Fonds Odin Teatret, Series Environment, b. 5 and Schino 2018, 184. A long interview by Taviani with Toni Cots on the work on the mask, taken during the meeting of group theatres in Lekeitio in 1979, Spain), is

some individual tours in South America, was described by Barba in a text of 1979, entitled *The Museum of the Theatre*, which, according to Lluís Masgrau, became an important milestone towards the formulation the two crucial “laws” (later named “principles”) at the core of the performer’s presence and theatre anthropology: the alteration of equilibrium and opposition (Barba 2015, 105-9).

3. *El Romancero*. Sources and Strategies of Acting Creation and Direction

During the second session of ISTA in Volterra in 1981, Cots started to work individually on some performative material, initially inspired by *Don Quijote*,¹⁹ before shifting to *Oedipus Tyrannus*, under Barba’s guidance. For the actor and the director, engaged in the preparation of the performance during the following months, the confrontation with the textual base of the myth took place with a relevant use of different sources. It was precisely in those years, reflecting on “narrative dramaturgy as a level of organisation” (Barba 2000, 60), that Barba specified his approach to the text no longer as a relationship with a fixed, closed source; rather, the text was assumed by him to be a tool to “open a plurality of possible stories” (Barba 2010, 90), carrying on the “tradition of the director who dissects and operates in a drastic way on the literary structure”, started by Grotowski (Barba 1999a, 39). Even approaching classical theatre, such a perspective would not distance itself from the original myth, but be well situated in the “forest of tales” within which the myth naturally follows its sinuous path (Bettini and Guidorizzi 2004, 36). In this regard, considering Grotowski’s approach to the classics, Barba recounted how the Polish director worked around literary sources, following a new “process, [which] generated a new *avatar* of the text, which thus acquired the same function as the myth that the Greek tragedians in Athens interpreted with a total freedom like a matrix of variants; for example, Antigone dies in Sophocles; yet, in Euripides, she survives and marries Hemon, son of Creon” (Barba 1999a, 39).²⁰ In 1986, in an interview titled *El cuerpo dilatado del actor*,

conserved at OTA (Fonds Odin Teatret – Series Environment, b. 5), while a picture of Cots’ physical training, between 1982 to 1984, can be found in the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* (Barba 1991, 245).

¹⁹ From a conversation with Toni Cots, March 21, 2021.

²⁰ In his autobiographical book already mentioned, *Land of Ashes and Diamonds*, Barba adds that “Grotowski approached the classics with the stubborn conviction that they contained an archetype, a situation which was fundamental to the human condition. To make the spectator aware of this, he constructed scenic equivalents which derived in a coherent manner from the text but altered its form with an extremism previously unknown in the history of theatre and which at the time was

Barba stated clearly that *El Romancero de Edipo* was not a “problem of text” (Barba 1986). On the contrary, its “*textus*” was conceived as the *summa* of all scenic elements interweaving one with another: text, presence of the actor, relations, proximity or distance from the spectators, lights, objects, etc. In such a perspective, the reformer Barba, “anti-demiurge” of the scene, already conceived the *mise-en-scène* not as “production and imitation”, but as a form of a “*super-directing*, highly creative and experimental” (Perrelli 2005, 18), in which “a new category of *dramaturgy*, extensively intended as *texture* . . . of different levels of writings”, emerged (Perrelli 2005, 19).

In the case of *El Romancero de Edipo*, the narrative plurality happens simultaneously inside and outside the work on the actor. The very title of the performance, *El Romancero de Edipo*, evokes an implicit homage to Garcia Llorca’s *Romancero Gitano* (1928); historically, it can even resound with the chapter on the *Roman d’Edippe* from the Norman poem *Roman de Thebes* of the XII century. On the dramaturgical level, the insertion of a Sufi tale, *The Tale of the Sands*,²¹ inside the story of Oedipus, is accompanied by the recurring referral to the word “sands” (*arenas*), pronounced by the narrator as a *leitmotif* in the whole performance, which also thematically recalls *El libro de arenas* by Jorge Luis Borges (1975). Simultaneously, a loss of centrality of the themes of parricide and incest is countered by a constant emphasis on the relationship with the community and the problem of power. The political conflict is therefore highlighted in Barba’s approach to Oedipus, in which the character, according to Vernant’s quote of Aristotle’s *Politics* (1253, 2-7), moves as an “isolated pawn in the game of checkers” (Paduano 2008, 42). In this perspective, as Guido Paduano has more recently stated, Oedipus, in his “social idiosyncrasy”, acts as a “*coincidentia oppositorum*” between the extremes of the social scale that he finds himself occupying, the apex of credit and that of abjection” (Paduano 2008, 53): an interpretation which can be well assumed for Odin Teatret as well, whose motto, inherited by the Danish physicist Niels Bohr, Nobel Prize in 1922, is “*contraria sunt complementa*” (Barba 1986, 274).

4. Between Light and Darkness: the Performance and its Score

As regards its dramaturgy, the performance follows a structure of chapters and subchapters which guides the spectators into the story of Oedipus. Such a structure is not explicitly marked, but it is made evident by the pronunciation of the *leitmotif* of the performance: *arenas* (“sands”). The original typewritten

considered to be sacrilege” (Barba 1999a, 39).

²¹ For an English transcription of the *Tale of the Sands*, see, among the others, Smart 1989, 265-6.

text, not signed but attributable to Eugenio Barba in its final form, conserves the titles of each chapter: “I) The narrator”; “II) Oedipus”; “IIa) Fight between Oedipus and Laius”; “III) Narrator: the Oracle of Delphi”; “IV) Oedipus and the Sphinx”; “V) Narrator: presentation of Jocasta to Oedipus”; “Va) Oedipus and Jocasta”; “Vb) Narrator: presentation of Jocasta”; “VI) Jocasta’s suicide”; “VII) Narrator: the history of Antigone”; “VIIa) Oedipus blindness”; “VIIb) Oedipus: soliloquy about his misfortune”; “VIII) Narrator: final singing”.²² Behind such a narrative dramaturgy stands the complexity of the actor’s dramaturgy, in which a main character – the storyteller – gives life to the alternance of characters related to Oedipus’ saga.

4.1 A Storyteller’s Many Characters

At the beginning of the performance, as the spectators enter the room and take their place in front of the scene, the actor sits cross-legged on the stage, wearing a black blindfold. In front of his feet, resting on the ground, stands a small red earthenware vase, illuminated by a circle of light coming from a lamp hanging from the ceiling. The actor sits silently and hieratically at the edge of the circle, with only his arms (covered by a white shirt) illuminated, while his face remains in darkness. When silence is finally established and the performance begins, the sitting ‘statue’ slowly becomes alive and progressively unfolds itself, uncrossing the feet, half-standing and bending the knees. From that position, the actor raises the vase from the ground to the height of his chest and pushes it forward towards the spectators. As he lingers for a short time, with a wave of his hand he seems to caress a word in the wind. Still with both hands, the vase is raised even higher above the actor’s head, and, from that height, is abruptly dropped on the ground, where it breaks into pieces and spreads sand on the floor.

It is only after this long initial action, already articulated in a series of smaller physical actions, that the text makes its appearance, as a sort of prologue, spoken in a hoarse voice. As the narrator starts to speak, with covered eyes as a blind Tiresias, he warns listeners: “Thus Creon will treat the people of Thebes, and the people will acclaim him as a saviour”.²³ In

²² “I. Narrador”; “II. Edipo”; “IIa. Combate entre Edipo y Layo”; “III. Narrador: el oraculo de Delfos”; “IV. Edipo y la Esfinge”; “V. Narrador: presentación de Yocasta a Edipo”; “Va. Edipo y Yocasta”; “Vb. Narrador: presentación de Yocasta”; “VI. El suicidio de Yocasta”; “VII. Narrador: la historia de Antígona”; “VIIa. La ceguera de Edipo”; “VIIb. Edipo: soliloquio sobre su desgracia”; “VIII: Narrador: canto final”. All English translations of the textual parts of the performance here quoted, as well where not otherwise stated, are mine.

²³ “Así Creonte tratará al pueblo de Tebas, y el pueblo lo aclamará como salvador”.

the following lines of the text, a quote from Bertolt Brecht's *Questions From a Worker Who Reads* ("Thebes of the seven gates")²⁴ emerges, while the narrator (defined by Barba as "a disillusioned storyteller fleeing the city of Creon": Barba 2014, 224) describes the perils of society assaulted by the epidemic ("when the pestilence is silent, civil war breaks out").²⁵ A sense of guilt dominates this first part of the text, and it is attributed by the narrator to the world itself, in which innocents perish and culprits survive ("I have seen everything in my useless days, with their innocence the innocent perish and the guilty with their guilt last"),²⁶ and to Oedipus, "who revealed the faults to himself".²⁷ At the centre of the narrator's prologue, the figure of Antigone is evoked as recipient of the text. Antigone's young face is said to be the representation of Thebes, the world itself, on to which the human feelings and disgraces fight their battle and show their effects ("The whole world is Thebes, from the face of a young woman: Antigone. Antigone, sister, companion . . . with your hands you will gather arid dust").²⁸ The text culminates with an isolated, final word, which recalls the performance's *leitmotiv*: "sands" (*arenas*).

As regards his non-verbal language, Toni Cots constantly accompanies the text by sustaining the words with precise vocal and physical actions, carefully prepared during rehearsals. In this way, Cots gives life to a complex double line of acting technique and interpretation, in which each word of the text relies on gestures, changes of voice, movements. In this precise work, the actor regulates his energy and leaves nothing to improvisation, making *El Romancero de Edipo* a 'lesson' on the modulation of the performer's presence. Moving on the threshold between *doing* and *being*, the actor constantly transforms his energy incorporating smaller, almost invisible changes. Cots's accurate and sophisticated work also reflected the interests cultivated by Barba at the height of the Eighties, after the first sessions of ISTA: to quote Barba himself from his text on *Eurasian Theatre*, it was in fact around that time that acting techniques became a way to represent the "phenomenology of thought", "the objective behaviour of the bios, which proceeds by leaps" (Barba 1988b, 129).²⁹ A score which is a "precise pattern

²⁴ "Una Tebas de las siete puertas donde los hombres llegan y parten".

²⁵ "Cuando la peste calla se anida la guerra civil".

²⁶ "He visto todo en mis inútiles días, con su inocencia el inocente perecer y con su culpa el culpable durar".

²⁷ ". . . que reveló las culpas a sí mismo".

²⁸ "El mundo entero es Tebas, del rostro de una joven: Antígona. Antígona, hermana, compañera . . . con las manos recogerás áridos polvos, sobre el pobre cuerpo del muerto".

²⁹ Barba himself has spoken of a "phenomenology of thought, this objective behaviour of the bios, which proceeds by leaps, is what I have tried to render

of actions which form the banks and the variations in level through which energy flows, transforming the natural bios into scenic bios and bringing it into view” (Barba 1995, 53).

4.2 Props and Scenography. A Mask, a Stick, a Drape, a Wig, and a Sheep’s Head

An action of transformation of scenography is, at this point, executed directly on stage: with sharp and precise movements, still bending his knees, Cots walks towards the back of the stage, and finally unfolds a white cloth hanging from the wall. At the top of the cloth, a wooden mask is revealed; then, Cots pierces with two long nails the two eyes of the mask, from which a red liquid starts to pour on to the cloth, leaving vertical traces of blood. Still blindfolded and not able to see, straight after this, he starts singing a text referring to Oedipus. With a melody based on a Sephardic song, and with a clear strong voice, Oedipus presents himself on his journey (“From my house I have left / Walking until here. . . From east to west / A long road awaits us”).³⁰ When he has finished singing, Cots folds back the cloth and covers the mask, but as he presses the fabric to the mask, the shape of the face is revealed in the white cloth, and traces of blood from the eyes appear on it, staining it.

With a small change to the costume, which consists in taking off the fabric that covered the eyes (with his back to the audience), Oedipus makes his appearance again, while Cots unbends his knees and almost straightens his body. When he comes back to face the spectators, he is walking with the aid of a long, wooden stick. In this scene, the stick assumes a variety of uses and meanings, accompanying the narration of Oedipus’ story since his childhood. In order, from a walking stick (“I was born in the city of Corinth to royal parents”),³¹ it becomes an object of defence pointed outward, able to produce the sharp sound of moving air (“Bad tongues say it’s not true”; “My name is Oedipus, leaky feet”; “you have to give way to me”);³² then, it is used as a stick for hanging hunted animals upon, which the actor hangs himself on and then falls on his side (“pierced my feet and hung like a pig”).³³ Again,

perceptible in *The Romance of Oedipus* with Toni Cots, *Marriage with God* with Iben Nagel Rasmussen and Cesar Brie, and *Judith* with Roberta Carreri” (Barba 1988a, 129).

³⁰ “Desde mi casa he salido / Dando pasos hasta aquí . . . Desde el oriente al poniente / Largo camino nos espera”.

³¹ “Nací en la ciudad de Corinto de padres reales”.

³² “Malas lenguas dicen que no es verdad”; “Mi nombre es Edipo, pies agujereados, chueco, cojo”; “tu tienes que cederme el paso”.

³³ “Me agujereó los pies y colgado como un cerdo . . .”.

when Oedipus meets the old man on the crossroad, the action of killing his father is undertaken with an alternance of gestures of harming himself with the stick and someone else. The sequence culminates pressing the tip of the stick on one of the shards of the clay pot from the opening scene, as if a weapon were inserted into the flesh of Laius' dead body. A silent scream by the actor (possibly echoing the silent scream of Helene Weigel in Brecht's *Mutter Courage*, after the death of Schweizerkas), followed by a sudden blow of the stick on the floor, shows the character's first, anguished awareness which will soon move from a state of innocence to guilt.

After walking backwards to the back of the stage, still as Oedipus, the narrator resumes his role and, in a hoarse voice, shifts his attention to the subsequent interrogation of the oracle. At this point, Oedipus is on his way back, and Thebes is presented to the spectators as a "unhappy and miserable city".³⁴ The light is suddenly switched off and the whole stage is plunged into complete darkness. The actor disappears and, in his place, a strange, mythical monster soon appears. In *El Romancero de Edipo*, the Sphinx is constructed from a sheep's skull, supported by a stick wrapped in fur, under which the hand of the actor controls its movement. The actor himself is hidden in darkness, so the mythical monster, which functions as a sort of puppet, is the only visible presence on the stage through the pronunciation of the enigma, inserted into the pièce in the version of Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* (10.83). In this case, the text is spoken, or rather whispered in a dry, low voice, in ancient Greek: "Ἔστι δίπουν ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ τετράπουν, οὗ μία φωνή, / καὶ τρίπουν . . .".

The enigma is obscure, and, spoken in the original language, conveys the sense of its inaccessibility and its mysterious character. This linguistic choice emphasises the non-accessibility of the enigma as well, its non-comprehensibility and therefore, in a certain sense, its sacredness. In such a way, the enigma functions in the perspective, highlighted by Pierto Pucci, of "a certain secret concealment, with its double register of exhibition and reticence, of theatre and crypt, which also marks the enigma and the oracle" (Pucci 1996, 9). The actor's voice, whose source is not visible due to darkness, is almost no longer a human one, while the skull of the Sphinx, shown in profile, moves its mouth according to the words. The solution to the enigma is first sung in Greek by Oedipus; then, the answer is repeated also in its Spanish translation. Here, the version of the text of *El Romancero de Edipo* conserved at the Odin Teatret Archives³⁵ differs slightly with respect to the acted text audible in the recorded version of the performance. In fact,

³⁴ "Tebas, ciudad infeliz y miserable".

³⁵ Fonds Odin Teatret, Series Environment, b. 7 (see also Schino 2018, 186).

the actor only says, “I Oedipus, someone in search of himself”,³⁶ while the original text has “I Oedipus, not an intellectual, but someone in search of himself”.³⁷

Still in darkness, the obscure voice is heard again, as Cots speaks a new part of the text in which Oedipus reflects on the enigma. The solution — he says — is not “gods, kings, the sacred, society, the struggle between commoners and aristocrats”,³⁸ but the human being, considered as “unit of measurement”, “basis of all transformation”, “the beginning and the end”.³⁹ The focus of the human person, at the centre of theatre practice as research, resonates clearly in this part of the performance, in which the awareness of the individual is recalled as a fundamental part of the whole of existence. Even if painful and uncertain, an unknown path puts the person on the road and exposes it to a high number of risks; however, the safer course of ignorance does not necessarily prevent even more dangerous risks and creates the conditions for guilty indifference and self-annihilation (“Who does not know this, is eaten by the Sphinx. Many of those around me do not even realize that they have already been eaten”).⁴⁰ As the text dives into these reflections, an underground parallelism between Oedipus and the Actor emerges. In its archetypal statute, Oedipus is “an outcast and a chosen one” (Bettini, Guidorizzi 2004, 37), in a similar condition which can be applied to the condition of the actor in his continuous process of learning (giving up his/her ordinary life, embarking on a path of individual and solitary knowledge, the actor moves in search of an art whose heart resides in the human being himself).

When the lights turn back, the narrator proceeds to the description of the intimate life of the king and the queen, which subject is presented as a pretext for a broader reflection on the social and political context. Materialism and social interests are the basis of the relationship between Oedipus and Jocasta, whose union is full of hypocrisy and distance (“in this union there is no passion, they have never seen each other before. They are two strangers”).⁴¹ While he speaks, the storyteller-Tiresias, again blindfolded, collects a golden veil, folded up as a wedding gift, resting on his open hands and stretched out in front of him.

³⁶ “Yo Edipo, alguien a la búsqueda de sí mismo”.

³⁷ “Yo Edipo, no un intelectual, sino alguien a la búsqueda de sí mismo”.

³⁸ “No dije: los dioses, los reyes, lo sagrado, la sociedad, la lucha entre plebeyos y aristócratas”.

³⁹ “El hombre como unidad de medida. El hombre como fundamento de toda transformación. El hombre como principio y como fin”.

⁴⁰ “Muchos de los que aquí me rodean, no se dan ni tan solo cuenta de que ya han sido devorados”.

⁴¹ “En esta unión no hay pasión, nunca antes se han visto. Son dos extraños”.

4.3. Oedipus as the Actor

The scene which follows is a sensual love scene between Oedipus and Jocasta. Toni Cots, as the old storyteller, with a golden robe covering his arms and a long black wig, sings an invented melody in a low voice, as he gently undertakes a series of actions which allow the figure of Jocasta to appear, seen from the rear, as a mannequin manipulated by the actor. Oedipus addresses her smiling, dismissing as ridiculous the rumours of his incestuous relationship with his mother (“Could you be my mother? Just because you are a couple of years older than me? Don’t be silly”).⁴² Alternating singing and movement, the actor gives life to a close, sensual dance, with the female figure which he embraces, made up of the flowing cloth and the long, black wig. In this scene, sweetness and despair coexist, while Oedipus speaks to the figure of his wife-mother and ends up laying her on the ground like a diaphanous ghost, devoid of matter, against the background of a white cloth increasingly stained with blood. Then, he drags her to the floor, pulling her by the hair, like a weightless being. Happy and unaware as a child, Oedipus even jumps repeatedly on the body of his mother, who is lying on the floor, holding her by the hair. In this action, he pronounces phrases of youthful enthusiasm towards life, almost like naïve mottos, while he keeps massacring the inert body of the female figure (“To wave, to fly over the mountain! Sliding down, resting sweetly on the grass that rustles and dances!”).⁴³ Suddenly, he becomes aware of her face, and throws her on the floor with disgust, before kneeling and lying beside her. At the height of the incestuous love, Oedipus reaches the peak of his illusion and self-conviction: “Now I know who I am. I am the king of Thebes, I am a happy man”,⁴⁴ still murmuring the melody of his invented song.

The storyteller Tiresias, blindfolded, makes his appearance again and focusses attention on the theme of memory (“In our memory, Jocasta, you are but a pale shadow. Oedipus remains in our memory . . . Sleep Jocasta, sleep in our memory”).⁴⁵ At this point, Cots puts on the golden robe and the wig, and becomes Jocasta himself. Giving her back to the spectators, Jocasta moves writhing in emotion and pain, panting and even miming a kind of self-flagellation with a lanyard, with which she eventually tries to

⁴² “¿tu podrías ser mi madre? ¿Solo porque tienes un par de años más que yo? No seas tonta”.

⁴³ “Ondear, volar por encima de la montaña! Resbalar hacia abajo!, posarse dulcemente sobre la hierba que susurra y baila!”

⁴⁴ “Ahora sé quién soy. Soy el rey de Tebas, soy un hombre feliz”.

⁴⁵ “En nuestra memoria no es más que una pálida sombra. Edipo queda en nuestra memoria. . . . Duerme Yocasta, duerme en nuestra memoria”.

hang herself. Suddenly, the actor slips out of her dress, and with gestural precision, unrolls a vertical red sheet on the back wall, at the top of which hangs Jocasta's inert body.

Introducing a new chapter, the storyteller turns in front of the audience, repeats the *leitmotiv* of the sands (*arenas*), and enters a new chapter of narration. As he grasps in one hand a crown of flowers bristling with thorns, which has been hanging since the beginning on the back wall, Tiresias announces Antigone's fate, which will follow that of her mother ("Thus will his daughter, Antigone, also die, hanged, suicidal").⁴⁶ Antigone is presented in her wandering journeys along with her blind father; as she wears her crown of flowers, she starts a long sequence of physical actions executed with accuracy and precision on the stage. The physical score, in this section, which lasts three minutes and fifteen seconds, alternating a variety of movements of different intensities and types, such as small runs, turns, dancing, pirouettes, jumps, kicks, hand gestures, and pauses. When he finishes, the actor is on the floor, crouched on the ground, with his arms outstretched: it is the old, blind Oedipus. Oedipus' first text in this second part of the performance, related to *Oedipus at Colonos*, resonates as the testimony of a migrant ("for us without a country, one place is worth the other. We should be grateful for being tolerated, because they allow us to linger for a while before proceeding to the next place that is foreign, with no memories").⁴⁷

At this point, Tiresias moves the story forward and enriches the narration with political reflections on the figure of Antigone, in which the theme of rebellion is presented ("obeying the law is the only possibility for a life in common, Antigone's gesture is rebellion").⁴⁸ While he speaks, Tiresias unfolds a fan, in the centre of which a lock of long black hair is attached. Completing his narration, he jumps towards the floor and leaves the fan on the ground, from which he moves backwards shifting his body from right to left, still blindfolded, and going towards the head of the Sphinx, whose figure had been watching the action on the right side of the stage all the time. The Sphinx's head, previously half covered with a very long black cloth as a dress, is now fully hidden by Tiresias, as the narrator reconstructs Oedipus' life ("from Corinth to Delphi, from Delphi to Thebes, and today from Thebes, exiled and alone, Oedipus continues to fulfill his destiny").⁴⁹

⁴⁶ "Así morirá también su hija, Antígona, ahorcada, suicida".

⁴⁷ "Antígona, para nosotros sin patria, un lugar vale el otro. Debemos estar agradecidos por ser tolerados, porque permiten que nos quedemos un rato antes de proseguir hasta el siguiente lugar que es extranjero, sin recuerdos".

⁴⁸ "Obedecer la ley es la única posibilidad para una vida en común, el gesto de Antígona es rebelión".

⁴⁹ "de Corinto a Delfos, de Delfos a Tebas, y hoy de Tebas, desterrado y en soledad, Edipo sigue para cumplir con su destino".

Oedipus is condemned for his search for origin and identity (or for complying to the Delphic maxim *gnothi seauton*, know thyself), resulting in a life of pain, loneliness and wandering (“Who seeks the light, finds the shadow”).⁵⁰ Finally, from Tiresias’ blindfold, a long thread of red fabric falls and reaches the ground.

The performance proceeds towards its end. After presenting Oedipus’ condition, the storyteller gives space to the narration of the *The Tale of the Sands*, from the Sufi’s tradition. According to Ninian Smart, the tales “relates to the doctrine of Fana, the transcending, in God, of the finite self” (Smart 1989, 265). Such a parenthesis is abruptly followed by the description of the future horrors of a civil war: “They kill the brothers. Corpses lie like excrements in the streets”.⁵¹ The city has become a dictatorship and tribunals have become places of repression (“The innocent are treated as guilty, a crime site is the court”).⁵² Under the rule of the tyrant even nature appears to be dominated, but it is a ‘waste land’ of exploitation and desolation, from which only dust remains (“From the earth his spectral voice rises, from the dust his whisper, his inebriated sword dances and the whole earth belongs to him forever. Creon!”).⁵³ Corresponding to this text is the physical action, acted by Cots as the blind Tiresias, of destruction of the crown of flowers that had characterized the figure of Antigone. The text is shouted out with an aggressive voice, as an announcement of imminent brutalities. Concluding the performance, Oedipus unfolds his fan, showing a lock of Jocasta’s black hair now attached to it. He turns towards the bottom of the space singing a poem, which defines the continuing of his journey into the world, in a closer relation with the invisible and those who are no longer alive. Exiting, he sings the following lines: “Over the rooftops / A dove flies / To wake the dead / If their sleep is heavy”. Then, he speaks the lines: “I go eating happily my bread, / I go where my heart goes. / I go where the gaze of my eyes goes”.⁵⁴

Oedipus, as the actor, wanders like a foreigner in the world. His last words are not just a lamentation about the transience of man, but rather extend the gaze beyond the threshold between the visible and the invisible within which even the theatre takes place (according to Barba, “theatre is the visible which can hide or reveal the invisible”: Barba 1988a, 7).⁵⁵ As has been noted by Franco

⁵⁰ “Quien busca la luz, encuentra la sombra”.

⁵¹ “Matan a los hermanos. Como excrementos yacen los cadáveres por las calles”.

⁵² “Los inocentes son tratados de culpables, un sitio de crímenes es el tribunal”.

⁵³ “De la tierra surge su voz de espectro, del polvo su susurro, embriagada su espada danza y la tierra entera le pertenece para siempre. Creonte!”.

⁵⁴ “Por encima de los tejados / Va una paloma al vuelo / Para despertar a los muertos / Si tienen pesado el sueño. / Me voy comiendo contento mi pan, / Me voy adónde va mi corazón. / Me voy adónde va la mirada de mis ojos”.

⁵⁵ Barba’s formulation on theatre was presented during the fourth session of ISTA

Rella writing on tragedy, through experience the actor lives in fact on the border between the dead and those who are alive, and the tragedy “transforms the conflict, the antinomy between the human and the non-human, between being and non-being, into a metaphysics of the limit” (Rella 1991, 7).⁵⁶

Through a sophisticated theatrical narration based on the actor’s craft, *El Romancero de Edipo* by Barba and Cots gives life to an intense narration of the story of Oedipus, capable of evoking the myth in its archetypal strength, renewing it from within and offering an evocative interpretation rich in personal additions. The choice of the use of Spanish adds linguistic richness and cultural depth in new directions, also reinvigorating the fortunes of classical culture in the Spanish linguistic area in the early 1980s.⁵⁷ But in comparison with a large part of interpretations, in *El Romancero de Edipo* the sacred is rediscovered and situated inside the work of the actor, escaping the perils of the passing of time and the caducity of aesthetic or technological fashions. Thanks to this, even today, the performance constitutes direct evidence of a personal approach to theatre, based on craftsmanship, far from the sole purpose of entertainment. It also well demonstrates how, even when the actor acts alone on stage, he or she is always a member of a living culture within which resides the theatre’s possibility of resistance to cultural decay and oblivion.⁵⁸

(Holstebro, 17-22 September 1986), dedicated to “The female role as represented on the stage in various cultures”. Following ISTA, Barba replied in 1988 to some commentaries and criticism advanced by Philip Zarrilli in an article entitled “For whom is the ‘invisible’ not visible?”, earlier published in 1988 in the same *The Tulane Drama Review* (Barba 1988a).

⁵⁶ In *Mythos*, a more recent group work by Barba and Odin Teatret (1988), Oedipus would make his way back, interpreted by Tage Larsen, in “an exploration beyond the threshold of death, into the world of myths and the dead” (Nagel Rasmussen 2006, img. 68).

⁵⁷ In a Congress on Oedipus, organised in Urbino in 1982, the Spanish scholar Fernández-Galiano still bemoaned the absence of the “oedipal matter” in his country, “which unfortunately still suffers from the consequences of a tremendous poverty in the direct and indirect classical tradition during the 18th and 19th centuries” (Galiano 1982, 135). In the same occasion the Argentinian scholar Hugo Francisco Bauzá noted the emergence of new revisitations of the Oedipus myth in the arts and literature, demonstrating the vitality of the myth itself, while losing, however, its original sacral context, or, in Rudolf Otto’s language, the *numinous* (Bauzá 1982, 257).

⁵⁸ After a meeting of group theatres in 1978 in Ayacucho (Peru), Ferdinando Taviani presented “the theatrical group as a group that elaborates its own culture; the culture of the groups as resistance and the only effective opposition to the cultural homogenisation that characterises ever more clearly, despite historical and geographical differences, our planetary civilisation”. The text, translated in Spanish by Toni Cots, is dated June 12, 1978, and it is now conserved at the Odin Teatret Archives (Fonds Odin Teatret, Series Activities, b. 56).

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Normal Non-Fluency and Verbatim Theatre: a Linguistic and Performative Analysis¹

Abstract

The main inspiration for developing a creative verbatim theatre performance is the recording of members of a community, highlighting the claim that the interviewees' exact words are entirely preserved so that the audience knows it is an authentic word-for-word account. While the common non-fluency features that characterise everyday speech abound in the language of verbatim theatre, the conventions of a theatrical script are strictly connected to their embodiment in performance, so some dramatic transformations are inevitable. The role of playwrights and actors in a genre which seemingly binds and limits them will be investigated through a linguistic and performative analysis of normal non-fluency features in *The Laramie Project* (2000), a verbatim play by Moisés Kaufman, in which such features are expected to feature prominently, and in *Fleabag* (2013), a non-verbatim play by Phoebe Waller-Bridge, in which their occurrence would presumably be more limited. The two plays provide a similar background to the investigation of normal non-fluency. The spartan set and the simplicity of costumes and props manage to create an informal and intimate theatrical experience in both *The Laramie Project* and *Fleabag*. The two plays are built around the revelation of people's deepest desires and the confessions of their private thoughts; moreover, they both employ the technique of directly addressing the audience in the performance in order to develop an emotional connection with them. Our analysis of normal non-fluency will be grounded in plays belonging to different genres but with a common purpose and a common dialogical structure. By contrasting the scripts of the two texts and the transcriptions of their performances, the analysis aims to bring to light the complexity of the notion and interpretation of 'verbatim'. It does so by examining the occurrences of normal non-fluency and exploring the performative function of omissions or additions.

KEYWORDS: verbatim theatre; normal non-fluency; *The Laramie Project*; *Fleabag*; linguistic analysis; performative analysis

1. Introduction

The desire to provide a stage for unknown voices and discarded stories is an

¹ While both authors are responsible for the article's design and have co-revised the article, Daniela Francesca Virdis is responsible for Section 3, and Eleonora Fois for Sections 1, 2, 4 and 5. Section 3 draws from Buckledee and Virdis 2016.

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identifiable common thread linking verbatim theatre, documentary theatre, ethnodrama, theatre of testimony and other forms of interview-based theatre (Summerskill 2020). Verbatim theatre (Paget 1987) involves taping and transcribing interviews with members of a community to exploit them as the primary stimulus for the creative development of the performance; verbatim theatre sources its dialogue in much the same way as journalists source their stories.

Verbatim theatre was acknowledged as a genre in its own right at the turn of the millennium, but the form was pioneered in the early 1980s by Anna Deavere Smith whose “one person documentaries” preserved the exact words heard during the interviews she had carried out for her plays (Hammond and Steward 2008, version.p.). Unlike documentary theatre, verbatim theatre emphasises the fact that the audience is getting a word-for-word account or “straight from the mouth of those involved” (Bottom 2006, 59). The language of verbatim theatre is said to be “often fragmentary, stumbling and repetitious” (Young 2009, 81), and incorporates the normal non-fluency features that characterise everyday speech. These features can be better explained by examining research in the field of linguistics. Mistakes or breaks in speech are commonplace in oral conversation, and are therefore the normal form of communication. Given that they do not constitute a continuous or linear flow of speech, they are non-fluent. Normal non-fluency also depends on the type of communication. In the case of verbatim theatre, communication is drawn from spoken interviews. On the one hand, the interview form generally creates an asymmetry of roles since the interviewee is aware of being in a position of inferiority and has little control over the questions asked. On the other hand, the spoken channel progressively reduces the distance between interviewer and interviewee, favouring a more relaxed conversational style. As the interviews for verbatim plays often pivot on controversial events, often asking the interviewee(s) to disclose private matters or opinions, the amount of disfluency features occurring in the recorded – and transcribed – interviews might be significantly high.

The goal of verbatim theatre is to provide an unmediated experience which puts emphasis on realism (Stuart Fisher 2011, 112), but, as British actor and director Mark Wing Davey has said, “however naturalistic the staging is, the actor is not the actual interviewee”; despite all attempts to copy every detail of pronunciation and rhythm of speech, “the text goes through another, final stage in the process that gives it a life of its own” (Hammond and Steward 2008, n.p.).

“The medium of drama is people moving about on a stage using words. That is, the words are only part of the medium” (Pound 1934, 46), which shows that the conventions of a theatrical script are strictly connected to their embodiment in performance (Peters 2017, 118). Thus, questions arise

as to the role of playwrights and actors in a genre which, apparently, binds and limits them. This issue will be investigated through a linguistic and performative analysis of the occurrence and purpose of normal non-fluency features in *The Laramie Project* (Kaufman 2000), a verbatim play, in which they are therefore expected to feature prominently, and in *Fleabag* (Waller Bridge 2013), a non-verbatim play in which their occurrence is expected to be more limited.

Despite belonging to different theatrical genres, the two plays rely heavily on direct address as a way to involve the audience in the performance itself and to establish an emotional connection. Moreover, since the two plays explore intimate and deeply personal topics, they provide a similar background to the investigation of normal non-fluency. Two of the three levels of performance analysis (Balme 2008, 137) will be considered in order to make the analysis as detailed as possible.

The script will be provided together with transcription of a recorded performance of the plays. Methodologically speaking, therefore, it is essential to specify that the following product-oriented analysis cannot verify the consistency of the findings due to the unfeasibility of examining multiple performances.

Section 2 will discuss the verbatim technique and the playwright's role in the process of converting interviews into a play. Section 3 will introduce the linguistic features of normal non-fluency in interviews and theatrical scripts. Section 4 will present comparative examples of non-fluency in the two plays. Moving from the contrast between script and performance, the goal of the analysis is to bring to light the complexity of the notion and interpretation of "verbatim" through the occurrence of normal non-fluency and its dramatic performative function. The analysis will investigate what aspects may be integrated with normal non-fluency to shape the performance; whether a verbatim correspondence of normal non-fluency features can be detected between script and performance and whether similarities can be found in the type of disfluency occurring in the two plays, thus highlighting the common goals of theatrical writing, regardless of the genre.

2. The Genre

Soans describes the "quintessence of verbatim theatre" as "a group of actors sitting on chairs, or cardboard boxes or a sofa, talking to the audience, simply telling stories" (Hammond and Steward 2008, 21). Similarly, in its "purest" sense, "verbatim theatre is performed with actors in a line before the audience" (Luckhurst 2008, 214), who becomes a proper character and the focus of the actors' attention (Hammond and Steward 2008, n.p.).

It is the pursuit of the “reality effect” which legitimises the production of verbatim works (Martin 2013, 5). Such an effect can be achieved by reporting spoken words verbatim and by breaking the fourth wall with direct address (Duggan 2013, 152; Jeffers 2006, 3; Paget 2008, 137; Stuart Fisher 2011, 116; Summerskill 2020, n.p.) which might develop through the use of monologues (Watt 2009, 194), narration and flashbacks (Chou and Bleiker 2010, 565). This authenticity is essential for deeply political plays such as Richard Norton-Taylor’s ‘tribunal plays’, which dramatised transcripts of legal inquiries (Luckhurst 2008), and David Hare’s *The Permanent Way* (2003) and *Stuff Happens* (2004). In particular, verbal authenticity is at the core of headphone verbatim theatre, or “recorded delivery” (Wake 2013), whose two pioneering practitioners were British Alecky Blythe and Australian Roslyn Oades. Headphone verbatim theatre further explores and pushes forward the boundaries of the genre. In headphone theatre, the audience wears headphones throughout the performance (Klich 2017), whereas in headphone verbatim theatre the headphones are worn by the actor(s) rather than the audience: the script is directly fed into the ears of the actors, who perform the edited interviews whilst listening to them at the same time.

It should be remembered that the verbatim respect of the spoken word is not the only means through which to achieve the reality effect. In Horin’s *Through the Wire* (2004), for instance, one of the refugees around whom the story revolves is also acting as himself in the play (with the ethical repercussions of asking victims of such complicated stories to relive their traumas performance after performance. Stuart Fisher 2011). In Blank and Jensen’s *The Exonerated* (2006), the actors sit behind lecterns that hold the script, to highlight their function as “intermediaries” (Stuart Fisher 2011, 113). In *Cruising*, Blythe, reminiscent of the Brechtian lesson on alienation, chose actors who were 30-40 years younger than the people whose words were being reported.

Theatre requires tension, crisis, the ticking of the dramatic clock (Anderson 2007, 80): the methodological challenge of verbatim theatre lies in reconciling the needs of theatrical storytelling and respect for the verbatim accounts of the story’s original protagonists. The source material of the verbatim script is authentic and even mirrors the multiple viewpoints regarding a certain fact, but it is selected and overseen by the playwright; the reception of the play is the only aspect which cannot be fully controlled (Martin 2013, 13).

Theatre is a process of selection. What happens in the research phase is you become very attached to your characters but we all know in the artistic process you have to let it go. The tension comes when someone in the process says, ‘we must let them say exactly what they said, we have to create all this to give them more credibility’ and the theatre artist is saying, ‘no, we only

need them to lift their finger once which tells us everything'. The tension is, does the writer have the confidence to allow that process to take place? (Anderson 2007, 86)

Thus, interviews and recordings are to be considered as dramaturgically flexible stimuli. Authenticity is ensured by the sources of the lines, but selection implies that interviews necessarily undergo some form of manipulation, with all the related ethical issues arising from appropriating the narrators' words and depriving them of their agency (Summerskill 2020). Various terms are used to explain the process of adapting verbatim material into performance: "compression" and "shaping" (Luckhurst 2008, 207), "editing" and "juxtaposing" (Bottoms 2006, 59), "manipulating, cutting and splicing" (Hammond and Steward 2008, n.p.), and "framing" (Jeffers 2006, 14); the verbatim words are described as being "distilled" (Anderson and Wilkinson 2007, 154).

This practice of collaging together, editing, and juxtaposing individual interviews presupposes the touch of a unifying hand and a constructed and purposeful authorial perspective. In Hare's *Stuff Happens*, for instance, verbatim quotes mingle with scenes happening behind closed doors for which the author admitted to having used his imagination. More importantly, no signal is given to unequivocally highlight this change of strategy: verbatim and fictional lines are not distinguishable (Bottom 2006, 60), thus gaining equal dramatic force and authority. As Hare says, "theatre is not journalism, and its incorporating real-life material does not necessarily imply that it can be judged by the real-life criteria" (Luckhurst 2008). As rhetoric manipulation is embedded in the creation of a play, regardless of the pretences of truth, "unmediated access to the 'real' is not something theatre can ever honestly provide" (Bottom 2006, 57).

In verbatim theatre, "diegetic realism" co-exists with "mimetic realism", where re-enacted moments are designed to mimetically represent the actual experience (Wake 2013, 106). Moisés Kaufman, director of *The Laramie Project*, said that "When we read transcriptions of the interviews we had gathered on that trip . . . we were captivated by what we heard. The material was powerful, but entirely disorganized" (Moore 2020b). The dramatic transformation of the script also extends to the way the natural flow of the interviewees' utterances and the dramatic action are intercut to build the narrative.

Verbatim theatre requires more flexible expectations from actors. As mentioned above, many verbatim plays, *Laramie* included, largely exploit direct address techniques as a way to further engage with the audience and act on their reactions, provided that they cannot be determined with precision. In *Laramie*, this is the natural consequence of having structured the interviews mostly as single soliloquies rather than dialogues (with some

exceptions which will emerge from the analysis). The main effect is losing the illusion of “peering through a keyhole” (Pritner and Walters 2017, 57), thus raising awareness of the audience’s condition as an acknowledged witness. This aligns with Brecht’s challenge to illusion, in the attempt to actively engage the audience. Moreover, in *Laramie* as in other verbatim plays, the number of characters require actors to play more than one part, which involves a rapid transformation of time, place and character “of the kind unknown and unnecessary to naturalistic theatre” (Paget 2008, 137); this does not favour the kind of audience’s participation that stems from associating one actor with a single character and usually enhanced by the persistence of the fourth wall.

Verbatim performances are based on appropriating every character’s cadence or pattern of speech, but there are no analytical terms to describe the process of playing real characters, as the additional challenges of playing a real person using their own words are different from the challenges of playing fictional characters. As actor Bella Merlin noticed, neither the Stanislavskian lesson nor the Brechtian lesson was of help (Cantrell 2011, 168). Nicolas Kent, recalling the staging process of *Justifying War*, remarks that:

We did the first one in 1994 and acting styles have become even more naturalistic since then . . . we said the lines naturalistically, but we said the lines. Now we include ‘ers’ and ‘uhms’ and stutters (Hammond and Steward 2008, version.p.).

For Alechy Blythe,

it is these [every “uhm”, “er”, stutter and non-sequitur lovingly preserved] that reveal the persons’ thought processes: there is always a specific reason why a person stutters on a certain word, and it is this detail that gives the character such startling verisimilitude. (Hammond and Steward 2008, n.p.).

Normal non-fluency is then interpreted as a performative tool at the actors’ disposal. Before looking at the practical exploitation of this concept, the stylistic, psycholinguistic and discursive features of normal non-fluency will be investigated.

3. Normal Non-Fluency: Definition and Theoretical Background

3.1. Normal Non-Fluency and Naturally-Occurring Interaction

In a book section entitled “How Dramatic Dialogue Is *Not* Like Conversation” (emphasis in original), Mick Short (1996, 174-5) provides a very helpful

definition and examination of the phenomenon of normal non-fluency from the disciplinary perspective of stylistics. In the paragraph, the linguistic features of a sequence of tape-recorded interaction (naturally-occurring and extempore) are contrasted with those of an excerpt from a dramatic exchange (fictional and scripted): although dramatic exchange may create an impression of lively and interactive dialogue, it does not result in a precise representation of spoken conversation. Naturally-occurring exchange and fictional exchange are, in fact, markedly different (Hughes 1996), since the former is an example of typical speech, and the latter of typical writing (Leech et al. 1982, 139-40).

Fluency is one of the characteristics constituting an essential part of typical writing. This concept was introduced into the field of psychology toward the end of the nineteenth century, and has since been defined as “the facility with which ideas can be called from the ‘antechamber of consciousness’ – roughly equivalent to the subconscious in later terminology – into full consciousness” (Rogers 1953, 368). Contrariwise, one of the traits characterising typical speech is normal non-fluency. This phenomenon consists of the semantic, morphosyntactic and paralinguistic mistakes and breaks in the speech-flow commonly typifying oral performance and extempore interaction as uttered by almost all speakers (Fromkin 1973). As Leech and Short (2007, 130) note, these mistakes and breaks “are non-fluent in the sense that they fall short of an ‘ideal’ delivery, and yet they are normal in the sense that they occur habitually in speech; it is difficult to say anything at all interesting without such lapses occurring”. The mistakes and breaks under examination are the following:

1. Small silent hesitations and pauses;
2. Voiced and unvoiced fillers (*ah, er, ummm, em*);
3. Discourse markers, like initiating signals (*Oh, Well*), tag questions (*isn't it*) and tag constructions (*you know*);
4. Mispronunciations: lack of clear articulation or enunciation of word sounds, e.g., lisp;
5. False starts (1): unnecessary repetitions of whole words or parts of them;
6. False starts (2): syntactic structures which are abandoned, or reformulations of what has been said resulting in ungrammatical sequences of words;
7. Stammering: difficulty in controlling the rhythm and timing of speech;
8. Cluttering: abnormally fast rate of speech, with syllables running into each other;
9. Lack of voice projection, e.g., mumbling;
10. Attempts at taking conversational turns which are abandoned, or speakers overlapping and interrupting one another;
11. The competition among the speakers to take the conversation off onto a topic of their choosing.

(Adapted from Short 1996, 176; Leech and Short 2007, 130-131; Hargie 2011, 224; see also Crystal and Davy 1969, 104)

As psycholinguists Broen and Siegel (1972, 219) state, “Rate of disfluency is highly variable both within and among speakers . . . Within an individual, disfluency varies as a function of the degree of linguistic processing required by the speech task . . . as well as the speaker’s emotional state” and several content, situational and interpersonal factors. In their psycholinguistic research on non-fluency, carried out by interviewing respondents, Blass and Siegman (1975) analyse two such factors: 1. The various communicative methods adopted to get answers from respondents – in these scholars’ studies, speaking, dictation and writing; 2. The degree of intimacy of the matter under discussion during the speech event of the interview. Interviews and dialogue are also the methods elected to collect the lines and data constituting the scripts in verbatim theatre.² Furthermore, intimate topics, such as personal matters, choices and problems, are also treated in verbatim theatre (see the essays on and interviews with six leading verbatim playwrights in Hammond and Steward 2008). For these reasons, Blass and Siegman’s (1975) psycholinguistic scrutiny will be presented here.

As outlined by these scholars, in their research “Eighteen subjects responded to questions in an interview-like situation in which response modes (speaking, dictation, and writing) and question topics (personal *v.* impersonal) were systematically varied” (Blass and Siegman 1975, 20); ten dependent variables were assessed, consisting of content, syntactic and extralinguistic indices of fluency and oral behaviour. The main aim of the analysis was to try and measure the deviation of the respondents’ linguistic performance during the interviews from their linguistic competence; in other words, to assess the variables triggering their fluctuations between fluency and normal non-fluency.

As demonstrated by this examination, the communicative method employed in the interview and its distinctive encoding conditions influence the relations between interviewer and interviewee in the speech event. For instance, the speaking method occasions a higher level of visual contact

² In both psycholinguistic research and verbatim theatre, embracing the method of the interview as a conversational mode offers diverse advantages. In Blass and Siegman’s (1975, 22) words, “the interview is a relatively well-structured form of communication in our society with each of the interactants usually having an implicit awareness of the behaviours appropriate to that setting. Among other things, the participants in an interview are aware that one participant (the interviewer) is to initiate dialogue, to ask most of the questions, and in general to have greater control over the situation, while the other participant (the interviewee) is to do most of the responding and in general have less control of the situation”.

between the two interactants than dictation or writing; this yields the following results:

1. The interviewee feels less control of the speech event and more psychological pressure than in the other two methods;
2. There occurs an intensification of the role asymmetry inherent in the relation between the two interactants;
3. The two interactants get more involved with each other and their social distance diminishes, two factors determining a linguistic shift toward a more familiar conversational style.

This investigation also proves that, during an exchange with an interviewer they are unacquainted with, the interviewee is more willing to reveal their ideas and thoughts about public information and activities, rather than exposing their private concerns. This inclination is conveyed by shorter utterances and a reduced output when covering personal subjects, and by a more reticent and debased – namely, non-fluent – use of language in their answers to intimate questions as compared to their replies to non-intimate ones.

Interviews discussing private matters also underlie verbatim theatre, as shown in Section 2 (see also Hammond and Steward 2008). The findings of Blass and Siegman's psycholinguistic analysis may therefore contribute to further exploring verbatim theatre and its stylistic and discursive aspects. Result no. 1 above (the lack of control over the speech event and the psychological pressure felt by the interviewee) and result no. 2 (the role asymmetry between the two interactants) directly originate from the great amount of visual contact characterising the speaking method relied on in the interview and favoured over dictation and writing. These circumstances might be eased but, by the very nature of the speaking itself, they cannot be altered radically. Consequently, it can be safely hypothesised that they are also primary qualities of the interviews verbatim theatre is founded on. A calming and mitigating influence can be ascribed to result no. 3 above: the two interactants' involvement with each other and their diminished social distance, which leads to and is simultaneously relayed by their more colloquial conversational attitude. As inferable from verbatim plays, such a quasi-familiar manner is also one of the linguistic properties of verbatim theatre interviews.

It seems that one conclusion drawn by Blass and Siegman does not fully apply to verbatim theatre; namely, the interviewee's unwillingness to disclose the mental and emotional condition they are experiencing to an interviewer with whom they are not well acquainted. In both Blass and Siegman's research and verbatim theatre interviews, the interviewee and the subjects to be treated in the speech event are chosen by the interviewer.

Nevertheless, it is in verbatim theatre interviews only that the interviewee approves heartily of being asked questions about intimate matters and, having given this approval, they are more than willing to give the direct, honest and detailed answers underpinning verbatim theatre.

3.2. Normal Non-Fluency in Fictional Interaction and in Verbatim Theatre

As argued in the studies referenced in Section 3.1, extempore dialogue is distinctly typified by normal non-fluency, so much so that, when normal non-fluency features are produced by the speaker, they are usually apt to go unnoticed or unaccounted for by the hearer,³ since they are unrelated to the propositional content and interpretation of naturally-occurring conversation. Accordingly, moving from non-fictional interaction to fictional interaction, and considering the dissimilarities between the two, a playwright can fail to include these features in manufactured discourse, and still be able to create a dialogic text closely resembling spontaneous discourse (see Clark 2014 for these two varieties of discourse). According to Short,

Normal non-fluency does not occur in drama dialogue, precisely because that dialogue is written (even though it is written to be spoken). Moreover, if features normally associated with normal non-fluency do occur, they are perceived by readers and audience as having a *meaningful* function precisely because we know that the dramatist must have included them *on purpose*. (Short 1996, 177; emphasis in original)

Moreover, creative-writing handbooks commonly advise that plays and scripted discourse should comprise planned normal non-fluency elements, so that the impression of extempore exchange is given (see, among others, Morkane 2004, 33). When these elements are investigated from a stylistic viewpoint, all of them should be carefully taken into account and interpreted; that is to say, they should not be ignored or scrutinised as the similar unplanned items in spontaneous interaction might be. In fictional dialogue, these features play a central role in the process of meaning-making and do not hinder it, because they merely ‘disguise’ themselves as performance mistakes. Hence, according to Short (1996, 178), “In well-constructed dramatic dialogue, everything is meant by the playwright, even when it is apparently unintended by the character”.

This playwright-character dichotomy was developed by Culpeper and Kytö (2010, 84-5; 145-6; 219) in their book on Early Modern English fictional

³ But see Wilson 2000, 24: “But such features can be more characteristic of some speakers than others. They can even become recognized as part of someone’s idiolect or individual manner of using language and, as such, subject to overt comment, parody or exaggeration”.

and non-fictional written dialogues and on the methodologies to explore the speech-like items they contain. These two researchers analyse several written text-types featuring speech, comprising trial proceedings, witness depositions, plays, fiction and didactic works. Among other models, they elaborate on Short's (1996, 169-72) prototypical discourse structure of drama and its two discourse levels: the topmost level of playwright-audience (or, in their broader application, author-reader) and the lower level of character-character (or speaker-hearer), with the topmost level embracing the lower. This model has a number of implications for the pragmatic and stylistic function of normal non-fluency items and for communicating the author's and the speaker's pragmatic stances. As Culpeper and Kytö (2010, 85) argue,

At the topmost discourse levels, all speech-like features are *authorial* pragmatic devices. Items such as normal non-fluency features cannot be dismissed as unconscious non-strategic items, since they have been put there on purpose by the author, to appeal to or manipulate the reader, to assist in characterisation, and so on. At the lower embedded discourse levels, speech-like features may also count as *speaker* pragmatic devices. This author-speaker distinction is clearest in the case of constructed (i.e. presented) dialogue, but one cannot dismiss it for recorded (i.e. re-presented) dialogue.

At the topmost level of author-reader, all speech-like elements (for instance, hesitators and extempore examples of pragmatic noise expressing laughter or suffering) are authorial pragmatic markers and influence the audience. Therefore, they realise Gricean flouts, signalling to the reader how the speaker behaves and reacts, what their conversational purposes are and how to read the interaction they are engaged in.⁴ On the contrary, at the lower level of speaker-hearer, several speech-like items may be plain cases of normal non-fluency, thereby realising Gricean infringements. Several other speech-like items may also be speaker pragmatic markers, indicating the character's state of mind and physical and mental sensations. To sum up, at the speaker-hearer level normal non-fluency elements sometimes constitute Gricean infringements, whereas at the author-reader level they always constitute Gricean flouts necessitating investigation and explanation.

Leech and Short (2007, 129) maintain that, in fiction and fictional drama, "in rendering conversation, a fiction writer is in a very different situation from that of the detective or legal reporter giving an actual transcript of words spoken by real people; there is no specific real speech event against which the report may be measured as a more or less accurate record". In line with this claim, authors of fiction, such as playwrights or novelists, and authors

⁴ See also Burton 1980, 113: "‘performance errors’, say, stuttering, hesitations, false starts, etc., are interpreted wherever possible by the audience to mean something like ‘that character is nervous’ rather than ‘that actor is nervous’".

of non-fiction, such as detectives or legal reporters, should be regarded as directly opposite both in character and in terms of the activities they engage in. The fiction writer presents, namely invents or fashions manufactured conversational discourse, while the non-fiction writer re-presents, namely notes or gives an account of naturally-occurring conversation.

When the character and activities of a fiction author and of a non-fiction author are compared with those of a verbatim theatre author, the heterogeneous nature of the verbatim playwright emerges.⁵ A verbatim playwright actually benefits from the prerogatives of both a fiction writer and a non-fiction writer, or reporter. On the one hand, like reporters, verbatim playwrights record the real sentences uttered by real speakers during real interviews while, on the other hand, like writers, they cut, choose and arrange the recorded data into a text matching the audience's expectations in terms of length and plot unfolding. The following are additional remarkable privileges of verbatim playwrights:

1. Like writers, verbatim playwrights select their characters and subject matters, i.e. whom to record and what to speak about;⁶
2. When verbatim playwrights write out spontaneous interviews, the

⁵ The nature and role of a verbatim theatre actor are also heterogeneous; here, they will be dealt with shortly for space reasons only, but would deserve further research. As shown in Section 2, verbatim actors listen to the edited versions of the recorded interviews underlying verbatim plays, which are transmitted via earphones in rehearsals; verbatim actors are required to utter the interviewees' very sentences and imitate their ways of speaking. In the practice of such verbatim playwrights as British Alecky Blythe (2011), the recordings are also transmitted during the actual performances, and it is essential for verbatim actors not to commit the recorded sentences to memory, with a view to assuring an authentic and accurate delivery of them. As a result, verbatim actors can be reckoned to act as mediators, and verbatim plays can be thought of and scrutinised as extensive instances of free direct speech (Semino and Short 2004). This mediation, however, may be biased, deliberately or accidentally. In the first place, verbatim actors rigorously maintain the linguistic and paralinguistic characteristics of the recorded sentences; they have, though, to put the final and completing touches to them by adding non-verbal aspects, like gestures and facial expressions, to make their rendition more realistic. Given that these aspects are not incorporated into the recordings, they can only be contrived by verbatim actors working with their playwrights or directors: gestures and facial expressions hence help to suggest their personal reading of the interviewees' sentences. In addition, verbatim actors listen to the recordings again and again during rehearsals, as they would read from scripted plays in fictional drama, and most of them memorise the recorded texts. Accordingly, intentionally or not, verbatim actors have the leisure to interpret those texts and, when performing them, could convey their own reading to the spectators.

⁶ See Blass and Siegman 1975, outlined in Section 3.1, for the psychological effects of the communicative method of the spoken interview on both the interviewer and the interviewee, particularly on the latter.

resulting transcriptions are graphologically laid out as fictional drama and manufactured discourse; they do not appear chaotic, as some transcriptions of extempore discourse may be;

3. Conversely, like reporters, verbatim playwrights acquire single sentences and whole texts characterised by what Leech and Short (2007, 129) define as “ear for conversation”. That is to say, these sentences and texts reveal the qualities of naturally-occurring exchange utilised in the original interviews, including morphosyntactic and lexical patterns and paralinguistic properties, such as overlaps and interruptions, all of which contribute to meaning-making and characterisation.⁷

In this research on verbatim theatre due to their specific, almost unique and heterogeneous nature, verbatim playwrights are so called only for ease of reference.

Owing to the fact that they display a number of characteristics of fiction writers, can verbatim playwrights really be said to be verbatim? Clark and Gerrig (1990, 795-6) supply a linguistic definition of verbatim discourse: in its strictest sense, they note that this term indicates that the original or earlier speech event has been exactly transcribed, along with its normal non-fluency items. In verbatim theatre, the original interviews as a whole are modified by verbatim playwrights, but the single sentences they encompass are not. Therefore, verbatim playwrights are not verbatim at the macro-linguistic level of the edited interview, but are verbatim at the micro-linguistic level of the unedited sentence.

This is most pertinent to the questions discussed by Culpeper and Kytö (2010, 85; 219) considered above. In non-fictional re-presented dialogue, edited recordings and transcripts are the results of the unchallenged decisions and readings of editors, reporters and, in verbatim theatre, playwrights. At the micro-linguistic and micro-discursive level, they purposefully re-present normal non-fluency elements and pragmatic devices in certain contexts, thus alluding to or even constructing certain, maybe partial, interpretations of a sentence or a whole text. As a result, maintaining these elements and devices in a modified text contributes to relaying the editors’ and playwrights’ agenda and to achieving their cultural and political aims.

Moreover, in verbatim theatre possible prejudice can also be found at the macro-linguistic and macro-discursive level. According to Leech and

⁷ This feature of verbatim theatre and of the interview method leading to it has also been found fault with: “‘verbatim theatre’ – the term currently favoured in the UK over the more general term ‘documentary theatre’. The distinction matters because, where the latter might be said to imply the foregrounding of documents, of texts, the term ‘verbatim theatre’ tends to fetishize the notion that we are getting things ‘word for word’, straight from the mouths of those ‘involved’” (Bottoms 2006, 59).

Short (2007, 131), “real conversation is unlikely to be promising material for literary employment, and . . . it must strike an observer who has an eye on the aesthetic capabilities of language as sloppy, banal and ill-organised”. Consequently, in verbatim theatre the editing process is necessary and inevitable, so that the resulting written text, when likened to fictional conversation and drama, does not look too dissimilar, uncomfortable or challenging to read. Nevertheless, members of the audience inclined to critical analysis may ask themselves at least two questions: 1. Why specific sentences have been consciously edited in and some other sentences have been consciously edited out by the verbatim playwright; 2. Whether this has been done in line with the playwright’s “eye for beauty” or, in Leech and Short’s (2007, 129) term, their “ear for conversation”, or rather in line with their political and cultural ideology. Hence, although this type of theatre is typified by extempore traits, any verbatim play, just like manufactured dramatic discourse, may also possibly communicate a ‘manufactured’ mindset and pay tribute to an agenda preserving the status quo.⁸

4. The Analysis

As seen in the previous sections, verbatim theatre pivots on the idea of individual speech events being staged exactly as uttered, which sparks interesting theoretical reflections on the role of verbatim practitioners. The analysis will involve a verbatim play, *The Laramie Project*, and a non-verbatim play, *Fleabag*. The bare stage (a few tables and chairs in *Laramie*, and a single stool in *Fleabag*) and the simplicity of the costumes and props

⁸ As observed by a number of scholars publishing mostly in the United States, the worldview of the verbatim playwrights working in Britain is comparatively mainstream and non-political. For the politics of verbatim theatre, see Waters 2011 and Sierz 2005, 59: “Political [verbatim] plays such as David Hare’s *The Permanent Way* (2003) and *Stuff Happens* (2004) or Victoria Brittain and Gillian Slovo’s *Guantanamo: Honor Bound To Defend Freedom*’ (2004) come across as powerful public forums, but they can’t be said to stretch drama’s aesthetic boundaries, or even suggest ways of changing the world. Like Reality TV, they simply tell us what we already know”. See also Martin 2006: 14: “‘Verbatim’ can also be an unfortunately accurate description of documentary theatre as it infers great authority to moments of utterance unmitigated by an ex post facto mode of maturing memory. Its duplicitous nature is akin to the double-dealing of television docudramas.” See Bottoms 2006, 59 for R. Soans’s *Talking to Terrorists* (2005) in particular and for verbatim theatre in general: “this emphasis on the verbatim tends to further obscure the world-shaping role of the writer in editing and juxtaposing the gathered materials: on examination, Soans’s ‘theology’ turns out to be the standard white mythology of ‘us’ as normal and decent and ‘them’ as the dark and dysfunctional, yet most critics seem to have treated him as merely a conduit for the viewpoints of others”.

shape an informal, nearly intimate, theatrical experience for both *Laramie* and *Fleabag*. The two plays are based on sharing private moments with the audience and relying heavily on direct address. This allows for the analysis of normal non-fluency to be grounded on plays belonging to different genres but with a common purpose and a common dialogical structure.

By comparing the presence of normal non-fluency elements in both the script and the performance, the interpretation of the verbatim technique and the performative functions of normal non-fluency will come to light. The underlined elements in the transcription of the performed lines indicate either normal non-fluency in both script and performance or normal non-fluency only in performance. The use of Italics indicates shifts in the lines performed. Moreover, ‘/’ and ‘//’ indicate pauses in performance; ‘.’ indicate shorter pauses. The analysis will refer to the list of normal non-fluency features provided in Section 3.1; they will be indicated in brackets as NNF plus the corresponding number.

4.1. *The Laramie Project*

Gender identity and politics were the focus of most American documentary trial plays created and produced during the 1990s, as well as a major source of dramatic interrogation for two famous plays by the New York-based Tectonic Theater Project. *Gross Indecency* and *The Laramie Project* explored the dangers, past and present, of being homosexual. The brutal beating and death of Matthew Shepard, a gay student who lived in the town of Laramie, Wyoming, was the focus of *Laramie*, which premiered in 2000 and became the most widely produced new play of the century’s first decade (O’Connor 2013, 156). The analysis is based on the twentieth-anniversary performance, recorded at the Provincetown Theatre on 28 October 2018, and on the script published by Dramatist Play Service Inc. in 2001.

The actors conducted the interviews with the people of Laramie (Kaufman 2001, 483), recording more than two hundred interviews – and four hundred hours of tape over a period of two years (Lacko 2018, 30; Magagna 2016, 200). The narrator at the beginning of the play immediately discloses the fact that ‘the play . . . is *edited* from those interviews’ (Kaufman 2001, 21; emphasis added). The actors also actively participated in the creative process with director/playwright Moisés Kaufman:

the actor [sic]/dramaturgs in the company began creating theatrical presentations (“moments”) with the material in the texts. . . . And the writers [sic] group was there to continue to help me make changes and *additions* based on what the actors were bringing to rehearsal. (Moore 2020b, emphasis added)

The relative objectivity of this theatre form (O'Connor 2013, 158) is thus questioned by the company's involvement as writers who shape and edit the script *and* as actors who play all the parts. However, this was the key to creating the authenticity the company sought,⁹ as it is clear from the words of Head Writer and Assistant Director Leigh Fondakowski:

we also knew that we were expanding upon it in a way by having the actor who interviewed the person in real life play the characters they had personally met. So that the audience was just one degree of separation from the actual person, and the connective tissue was the empathy of the actor. (Moore 2020a)¹⁰

Laramie opens with an actor¹¹ who, after introducing his first interviewee, Sgt. Hing, morphs on stage, wearing a hat and 'becoming' Sgt. Hing, whose utterances, interlaced with those of other characters, introduce the audience to *Laramie* and its people.

1

(script)

SGT HING. I was born and raised here. My family is, uh, third generation. My grandparents moved here in the early 1900s. We've had basically three, well, my daughter makes it fourth generation. (21)

*

(performance)

SGT HING. I was born and raised here, uh.. My family is third generation / My grandparents moved here in the early 1900s and—uhm .. We've had basically three uh.. you know, well, my daughter makes it fourth generation.

2

(script)

SGT HING. it's a good place to live. Good people, lots of space. Now, when the incident happened, with that boy, a lot of press people came here. And one time some of them followed me out to the crime scene. And uh, well, it was a beautiful day, absolutely gorgeous day, real clear and crisp and the sky was that blue that, uh... you know, you'll never be able to paint, it's just sky blue – *it's just gorgeous*. And the mountains *in the background and a little snow on 'em*, and this one reporter, uh... lady... person, that, *was out there*, she said... (21)

⁹ On a strictly social and political level, the company's work also allowed to undeniably classify Shepard's murder as a hate crime. During the interviews for *The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later*, actor and company member Greg Pierotti reported Aaron McKinney, one of the murderers, saying: "The night I did it, I did have hatred for homosexuals" and "Matt Shepard needed killing" (Moore 2020a).

¹⁰ However, such connection only exists if the play is performed by the original cast.

¹¹ It was not the original cast who performed this production. In the script, the actor speaking – hence, the one who actually interviewed Sgt. Hing – is Greg Pierotti.

*

(performance)

SGT HING. it's a good place to live uh... Good people, looooots of space / Now / when that incident happened with that boy / a looooot of press people came up here uh / *One day a couple of 'em* followed me out to the crime scene, and uh it was a beautiful day, absolutely gorgeous day va know / real clear and crisp // and the sky... the sky was that uh ..sky blue that, you know, you'll never be able to paint it, it's just sky blue // And the mountains, and a little snow, and here's uh one reporter, uh .. lady .. person, uh that, *came up to me and she said...*

These performed utterances prove to be richer in voiced fillers (NNF 2) and hesitations (NNF 1) than the script. This might result from improvisation, in which case the actor managed to reproduce the most frequent features of the real person interviewed. The tag construction 'you know' (NNF 3), which establishes shared information (Schiffrin 1987, 274), thus connecting the actor and the audience, is preserved as well. Alternatively, the actor might be faithfully reproducing the original interview or even referring to the recorded performance from the original cast: unfortunately, the original interviews are not available, so it was not possible to retrace the staging process of this specific performance to support these hypotheses¹².

Laramie is rich in emotionally-charged "Moments" (as Kaufman [2000, 19] defines the single episodes structuring the performance), which provide practical examples for the psycholinguistic studies seen in Section 3.1. In "Moment: Seeing Matthew":

3

(script)

REGGIE FLUTY. So finally I said, 'Oh, for God's sakes, lighten up, Francis!' / they say I'm stubborn and I don't believe them, *but I just think, you know, okay* I've heard your opinion and now here's mine, I'm thirty-nine years old, *you know*, what are they gonna do, spank me?

MARGE MURRAY. I just hope she doesn't go before me. I just couldn't handle that. (57)

*

(performance)

REGGIE FLUTY. And finally I just had to say, 'Oh, for God's sakes, lighten up, Francis!' / they *tell me* I'm stubborn and I don't believe them, you know, it's just, okay : I've heard your opinion and now here's mine, I'm thirty-nine years old, what are they gonna do, spank me?

MARGE MURRAY. Well / I just hope she doesn't go before me/ I mean // I couldn't handle that.

Two separately conducted interviews were linked and shaped into a

¹² Further research would be required to understand the preparation of subsequent productions of a verbatim play, when, as in this case, the original connection between actors and script is lost.

conversation-like Moment. Both actresses are on stage at the same time and even though they do not address each other directly and exclusively, for they are still looking at the audience, their utterances integrate perfectly giving more weight to the Moment. The tag construction ‘you know’ (NNF 3) is more frequent in Reggie’s scripted utterances. Performatively speaking, whether deliberate or unintentional, this deletion gives more impact and power to her outburst, which leads to wondering whether the actress is actually reproducing Reggie’s reaction during the interview(s). As the original material is unavailable, it is not possible to verify whether Reggie’s original utterance was as emotionally charged as seen in performance and, consequently, whether the actress preserved that intention or provided her own interpretation.

Marge, Reggie’s mother, is concerned about her daughter, who was exposed to HIV while performing first aid to Matthew. The initiating signal ‘Well’ (NNF 3) is here working not only as a turn-taking device (the character is indicating that she is ready to speak [Fischer 1998]) and a reception marker (thus showing her reaction to previous information [Jucker and Smith 1998, 174]), but also, and more importantly, as an orientation shift, signalling the passage from the description to the evaluation of events (Schiffrin 1987: 125). It paves the way for the emotional impact of the first part of Marge’s line, and so does the tag ‘I mean’ at the end, followed by a long dramatic pause.

Therefore, the additional tag constructions and discourse markers combine with strategic paralinguistic pauses to shape the meaning-making process. This is evident also in “Moment: Live and Let Live”:

4

(script)

JEDADIAH SCHULTS. And the reverend will tell you flat out that he doesn’t agree with homosexuality – and I don’t know – I think right now I’m going through changes. I’m still learning about myself and – you know, I don’t feel like I know enough about certain things to make a decision that says ‘homosexuality is right’. When you’ve been raised you all life that it’s wrong – and right now, I would say that I don’t agree with it – yeah, that I don’t agree with it, but – maybe that’s just because I couldn’t do it – and speaking in religious terms – I don’t think that’s how God intended it to happen. But I don’t hate homosexuals and I mean – I’m not going to persecute them or anything like that. At all. I mean, that’s not gonna be getting in the way between me and the other person at all. (59)

*

(performance)

JEDADIAH SCHULTS. The reverend will tell you flat out he doesn’t agree with homosexuality / and I don’t know, I- I think right now I-I’m going through some changes and / I’m / still... learning about myself and / I don’t feel like I know enough about... certain things *that I can* make a decision that

says ‘homosexuality is right’// When you’ve been *told* your all life that it’s wrong... and I mean, right now, I’d just say I don’t agree with it / yeah, I don’t agree with it/ but-but maybe that’s just ‘cause I couldn’t do it – and speaking in religious terms – I don’t think that’s how God intended it to happen. But I mean- I- I don’t hate homosexuals, I-I mean – I’m not going to persecute them or anything like that... I mean, at all. That’s not gonna be getting in the way between me and the other person, at all.

Jedediah’s struggle and turmoil, further emphasised by the actor’s choice of hugging himself as a self-protective move, is made more credible by additional normal non-fluency elements. The additional stutters and the tag construction ‘I mean’ (NNF 3) – the latter also added in Jedediah’s utterances in “Moment: Epilogue” – convey the character’s process of self-understanding. The paralinguistic signs help to structure the performance: slower and faster speech rates stress pivotal aspects of the utterance (Jedediah’s stance on homosexuality: ‘right now, I’d just say I don’t agree with it / yeah, I don’t agree with it’; his profession of respect for homosexuals: ‘I’m not going to persecute them or anything like that ... I mean, at all’), which is far from being disconnected, too slow or dispersive (as it might be perceived in reading).

So far, the analysis of script and performance of *Laramie* has revealed changes and additions. Nevertheless, some performed utterances mirror the script almost to the letter, as in the “Epilogue”:

5

(script)

ROMAINE PATTERSON. Well, a year ago, I wanted to be a rock star. That was my goal. And now um, well, it’s obviously changed in the fact that um, throughout the last year I -I’ve really realized my role in, um, in taking my part. And, um, so now instead of going to school to be in music, I’m gonna go to school for communication and political science. Um, because I have a career in political activism. Actually, I just recently found out I was gonna be honored in Washington DC from the Anti-Defamation League. And whenever I think about the angels or any of the speaking that I’ve done, you know... Matthew gave me – Matthew’s like guiding this little path with his light for me to walk down. And he just – every time we get to like a door, he opens it. And he just says, ‘okay, next step’. (86)

*

(performance)

ROMAINE PATTERSON. Well... a year ago / I wanted to be a rock star / That was my goal / And now... um, well, now it’s obviously changed in the fact that um, throughout the last year I -I’ve really realized my role in, um, in taking my part. So.. now instead of going to school to be in music I’m gonna go to school for communication... and political science. Um, because I have a career in political activism. Actually, I just recently found out that I was gonna be honored in Washington DC from the Anti-Defamation League /

And... whenever I think about the angels or... any of the speaking that I've done, you know / Matthew gave me / Matthew's like... guiding this little... path with his light for me to walk down, and he just / every time we get to like a door, he opens it, and he just says, 'okay, next step'.

Stutters and hesitations (NNF 3) convey the self-understanding process of the character, confirmed by one of the rare occurrences of false starts ('Matthew gave me... Matthew's like guiding'. NNF 6). The approximation revealed by 'like' serves here to highlight the importance of searching for the right words (Jucker and Smith 1998, 187), in a pivotal utterance. A similar correspondence between script and performance is detectable in "Moment: A scarf":

6

(script)

ZUBAIDA ULA. I've lived in Laramie since I was four. Yeah. My parents are from Bangladesh. Two years ago, because I'm Muslim, I decided to start wearing a scarf. That's really changed my life in Laramie. Yeah. Like people say things to me like 'why do you have to wear that thing on your head?' Like, when I go to the grocery store, I'm not looking to give people Islam 101, you know what I mean? So I'll be like, well, it's part of my religion and they'll be – this is the worst part cuz they'll be like, 'I know it's part of your religion, but why?' And it's – how I am supposed to go into the whole doctrine of physical modesty and my own spiritual relationship with the Lord, standing there with my pop and chips? You know what I mean?... You know, it's so unreal to me that, yeah, that a group from New York would be writing a play about Laramie. And then I was picturing like you're gonna be in a play about my town. (36-37)

*

(performance)

ZUBAIDA ULA. I've lived in Laramie since I was uh... four / Yeah... my parents are from Bangladesh / Two years ago, because I'm Muslim, I decided to start wearing a scarf / That's really changed my life in Laramie... Yeah... Like people say things to me like / 'why do you have to wear that... thing on your head?' and it's like, when I go to the grocery store, I'm not looking to give people Islam 101 / you know? So I'll be like, well, it's part of my religion / and they'll be / this is the worst part cuz they'll be like, 'I know it's part of your religion, but... why?' / And it's like / how I am supposed to go through the whole doctrine of physical modesty and... my own spiritual relationship with the Lord.. standing there with my pop and chips? You know what I mean?... You know, it's so unreal to me that, yeah, that... a group from New York would be... writing a play about Laramie. And then I was picturing like you're gonna be writing a play about my town.

It is interesting to notice that the use of 'you know' is essential in conveying the character's fear of being misinterpreted and the desire to communicate

in the clearest way possible; it expresses doubts on the shared nature of the information and on the common ground being established (Jucker and Smith 1998, 192). ‘Like’ works here prevalently as an indicator of direct speech (Jucker and Smith 1998, 186), hence with no key performative function. The fact that it has been preserved attests to the will to keep the conversational style of the interviewees.

The utterances of the last two excerpts from *Laramie* are rich in discourse markers, especially ‘like’ and ‘you know’ (NNF 3). What these Moments have in common is the younger age of the interviewees. Sociolinguistics studies suggest that younger people do use ‘like’ more often than older people (Dailey-O’Cain 2000, 77). Considering that the line where Reggie mentioning her age (Example 3) is the exception, the audience is guided towards understanding the age of the characters (and the people) involved not only by the context but also by the abundance of specific discourse markers.

4.2 *Fleabag*

Written and performed by Phoebe Waller-Bridge and directed by Vicky Jones, *Fleabag* debuted in 2013 during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Waller-Bridge shares with her audience the trials and tribulations of a young woman, known only as Fleabag, in present-day London. Waller Bridge wanted to write about “a young, sex-obsessed, angry, dry-witted woman” (Waller Bridge 2019, 14). The analysis is based on the performance at Wyndham’s theatre, recorded by National Theatre Live in 2019, and on the script published by Nick Hern Books in the same year.

While the story is entirely the product of the playwright’s creativity, there are striking similarities to verbatim performances in the way the playwright/actress intimately offers her unmediated experience to the audience: once more, direct address is favoured. The stream-of-consciousness monologues are preserved by reducing the presence of other interlocutors to the minimum, with Waller-Bridge impersonating most of the other characters with whom she exchanges lines: her father, her sister, her clients, her boyfriends. The props are limited to a stool on which Waller-Bridge sits throughout the performance.

Section 4.1 showed that *Laramie* exploited additional normal non-fluency elements to increase the emotional impact of some utterances. The opposite strategy is found in *Fleabag*. In key dramatic moments, when the emotion needs to be tangible, there is no difference between the script and the performance:

1

(script)

FLEABAG. I opened the café with my friend Boo. She's dead now. She accidentally killed herself. It wasn't her intention, but it wasn't a total accident. She didn't think she'd actually die, she just found out that her boyfriend slept with someone else and wanted to punish him by ending up in hospital and not letting him visit her for a bit. She decided to walk into a busy cycle lane, wanting to get tangled in a bike. Break a finger, maybe. But it turns out bikes can go fast and flip you into the road. Three people died. She was such a dick. I didn't tell her parents the truth. I told her boyfriend. He cried. A lot. (51)

*

(performance)

FLEABAG. I opened the café with my friend Boo / She's dead now / She accidentally killed herself / It wasn't her intention but it wasn't a total accident / She didn't think she'd actually die, she just found out that her boyfriend *fucked* someone else and wanted to punish him by ending up in hospital and not letting him visit her for a bit / She decided to walk into a busy cycle lane, wanting to get tangled in a bike, break a finger, maybe .. but it turns out bikes can go fast and flip you into the road, three people died, she was such a dick / never told her parents the truth / I told her boyfriend / He cried / A lot.

In this case, no occurrences of normal non-fluency are found in either script or performance. Every word is carefully selected: even changing the verb 'fucked' contributes to enhancing the dramatic impact of the action. As in *Laramie*, however, tempo plays a role: the fast speech rate builds to the abrupt stop at the clause 'she was such a dick', and strategic pauses mark the utterances about the mourning of Boo's parents and boyfriend. In this case, conveying the emotion lies entirely on the actor's performance, and no space is granted to interruptions.

In *Fleabag*, direct address is predominant, with few conversational moments. The peculiarity lies in the fact that Waller-Bridge still interrupts the flow of the dialogue and addresses the audience to describe her interlocutors' actions (or reactions). Moreover, with very few exceptions, she plays both Fleabag and her interlocutors – her sister, her friend, her lover and clients from the café. In these cases, normal non-fluency is more frequently found.

2

(script)

FLEABAG. Tea, Joe?

JOE. Yeah lovely, lovely. Thank you darlin'. I'm just gonna... be out the back.

...

FLEABAG. not sure what to do... I ask him for a rollie. I don't smoke. Well I do, but – shut up. (54)

*

(performance)

FLEABAG. Tea, Joe?

JOE. Yeah darling yeah that'd be lovely thank you. I'll just... I'll just be out the back.

...

FLEABAG. I'm not sure what to um... I ask him for a rollie, I don't smoke.

Well I do, but – oh shut up.

The repetitions in Joe's reply do not follow the script: they are surely improvised by Waller-Bridge to make the utterance more natural and expressive: Joe sounds distracted, distant, worried, as is confirmed later on.

3

(script)

JOE. I love these chairs, y'know.

FLEABAG. What's... wrong, Joe?

JOE. Ah my girl, I just... I love people. I love people. But... they get me down.FLEABAG. Yeah. People are... shit.

He turns and I can see into every deep line on his face.

JOE. Oh no, darlin'. People are amazing, but... when will people realise... that people is all we got?

FLEABAG. He smiles but I feel a bit ambushed. I pretend I have to wash the cappuccino machine, go inside and wipe the nozzle a bit. (55)

*

(performance)

JOE. I love these chairs y'know.

FLEABAG. What's wrong, Joe?

JOE. Ah my girl/ my girl/ I love people / I love people / But they get me down.FLEABAG. Yeah / Yeah people are shit.He turns *to me* / I can see into every deep line on his face.JOE. Oh no, darlin', no / People are amazing / but when will people realise / that people are all we got?

FLEABAG. He smiles at me but I feel a bit ambushed / so I pretend I have to wash the cappuccino machine, go inside and wipe the nozzle a bit.

Joe is trying to initiate the conversation by bringing up unimportant topics and by checking the shared information via the tag 'y' know' (NNF 3). The additional repetitions in Joe's next line are emphasised by Waller-Bridge's delivery, which is purposely slow, conveying Joe's sense of desolation. The doubling of the reception marker 'Yeah' (Jucker and Smith 1998, 179) emphasises Fleabag's agreement.

The next example confirms that normal non-fluency can be improvised to make the interaction more realistic.

6

(script)

FLEABAG (*to DAD, very drunk*). Alright, Dad!

DAD. What's going on?

FLEABAG. Oh, I'm absolutely fine.

DAD. Okay.

FLEABAG. I just –

DAD. Yes?

FLEABAG. Nothing.

DAD. Okay?

FLEABAG (*drunkenly*). Okay... I don't... yeah... I... uh...uhm... it's a... hm...

Ah, fuck it.

I have a horrible feeling I'm a greedy, perverted, selfish, apathetic, cynical, deprived, mannish-looking, morally bankrupt woman who can't even call herself a feminist.

He looks at me.

DAD. Well... you get all that from your mother (68)

*

(performance)

FLEABAG (*to DAD, very drunk*). Alright, Dad!

DAD. What's going on?

FLEABAG. Oh, no no, I'm absolutely fine.

DAD. Okay.

FLEABAG. I just uh... /I just... uhDAD. *Yeah?*FLEABAG. Nothing... *I didn't even... uhm ok, uhm sorry... I just... Ah*, fuck it.

I have a horrible feeling I'm a greedy, perverted, selfish, apathetic, cynical, deprived, mannish-looking, morally bankrupt woman who can't even call herself a feminist.

He *just* looks at me.DAD. Well, uh /you get all that from your mother.

Both Dad's and Fleabag's fourth turns were erased, condensing the scene to go straight to Fleabag's confession. There are numerous additional normal non-fluency features: mostly voiced fillers ('uh'. NNF 2), but also one false start ('I didn't even'. NNF 6), and multiple repetitions, which reinforce the depiction of a drunken character struggling to make an uncomfortable confession. It is interesting to notice that, even when depicting a character whose speech would normally be not only confused but also probably unintelligible, Waller-Bridge carefully delivers her lines without overlapping or cluttering. The additional voiced filler in Dad's last line, combined with a pause, introduces the punchline.

While normal non-fluency so far is detectable in the peculiar conversations in the play, it can be occasionally found in the monologues as well:

5

(script)

FLEABAG So I watched a pretty good movie, actually, called *17 Again* with Zac Efron who is...fit. I know. But seriously, he's actually a – a really good actor. So – yeah, and the film could have been worse – honestly. Than that finished. So I lay there. Thinking. Café. Numbers. Numbers. Zac. Numbers. Googled Obama to keep up with – y' know. Who, as it turns out, is also – attractive. (48)

*

(performance)

FLEABAG So I watched a pretty good movie actually, called uhm .. *17 Again* with Zac Efron who is .. he is .. fit / I know but .. seriously, he's actually a really good actor / yeah .. and the film could have been worse, honestly, *check it out*. Than that finished, I lay there, thinking café, numbers, numbers, Zac, numbers / Googled Obama / to keep up with .. uhm y' know / Who, as it turns out, is also / attractive.

In this excerpt, the hesitation (NNF 1) before the title of the movie, the repetition implying the search for words to describe the actor, and the confirmation of the previous evaluation contribute to making the delivery more plausible and natural. Even the addition of the idiomatic expression 'check it out' emphasises the contact with the audience and is coherent with the addition of the tag 'you know' (NNF 3) when she mentions Obama. This certainly confirms the search for a more naturalistic delivery in contemporary theatre. However, in *Fleabag* this is more frequently found in conversations between characters or in moments where the actress explicitly seeks the support of the audience.

The analysis shows that the most frequent non-fluency features detectable in *Laramie* are hesitations (NNF 1), voiced fillers (NNF 2), and discourse markers (NNF 3). The absence of other features present in naturally-occurring interaction, such as mispronunciations (NNF 4), stammering (NNF 7), cluttering (NNF 8), and mumbling (NNF 9) can be explained by the fact that the actors' delivery has to be largely audible and understandable. The most common vocal problems in performance are lack of clarity and insufficient volume: the actors need to speak on stage with "clarity, power and confidence", for "if an audience or another actor-on-stage can neither hear nor understand you, your work is irrelevant" (Rodenburg 2020, 4-5). It can be hypothesised that the features mentioned above were recorded in the interviews but could not be reproduced lest they affected clarity and playability. However, only a deeper investigation with access to the original materials could shed light on the matter. The monologic nature of *Laramie* and *Fleabag* leaves no space for overlapping (NNF 10) or competition among speakers (NNF 11).

Fleabag entirely pivots around witty monologues and accelerated tempo.

However, limited in number, normal non-fluency features are still noticeable in the script and their number increases slightly in performance. Additional disfluency in *Fleabag* is mostly used to give the illusion of spontaneity to the (few) conversations in the play. In a reduced number of monologues, disfluency aims at heightening the connection between the actor and the audience.

In the performance of *Laramie*, additional normal non-fluency features are present. This is peculiar in that it apparently contradicts the verbatim claim of the genre, but it confirms that the performance does not slavishly follow the written script. Additional normal non-fluency features help to frame the characters' speech style, serve as an indicator of the age of the characters, and convey the characters' emotions. These additions might even signal the actors' need either to make the line more speakable or to highlight certain emotive aspects of the utterance, opting for modalities they had already introjected without misrepresenting or falsifying the characters' language.

5. Conclusions

While varying their purpose according to the dramatic level of a situation, normal non-fluency features contributed in both plays to the "emotional punch, one that might have the capacity to employ emotion in the service of judgment" (O'Connor 2013, 158). In fact, normal non-fluency features contribute to the meaning-making process and signal how to interpret the characters' reactions, thus, as discussed in Section 3.2, realising Gricean flouts, not Gricean infringements.

It appears that the notion of 'verbatim' in verbatim theatre cannot be univocally interpreted, nor is it the only means through which to communicate the authenticity and realism of the play and the performance. This is shown by the importance of delivery, strategic pauses and paralinguistic elements. Therefore, the apparent rigidity of the verbatim form can be broken by the tools at the practitioners' disposal. The analysis showed that the actors shape the story and the performance with their bodies and their voices, and that the playwright is not limited by the sources. It is the playwright – supported by the actors in *Laramie* – who shapes the interviews into a coherent and cohesive structure fit for the theatrical medium, with its own message and purpose. The resulting play is more than the sum of its parts (the interviews). That being the case, it may be acknowledged that in verbatim playwrighting the creative aspects survive. In short, to return to the heterogeneous nature of the verbatim playwright explored in Section 3.2, they are definitely more writer-like than reporter-like.

It emerged from the analysis that verbatim and non-verbatim plays differ in the frequency of normal non-fluency features, with the former showing

a higher number of occurrences than the latter. However, similarities were found in the types of disfluency features occurring in both plays, which suggests that, regardless of the specific genre, some rules of the theatrical medium cannot be broken. Despite the overwhelming majority of narrative utterances which characterises the two plays, the reduced presence of false starts and reformulations in *Laramie* and *Fleabag* is attributable to the need for dramatic dialogue to avoid purposeless dispersions and appearing chaotic (while still giving the impression of being spontaneous, as shown in Section 3.2). This might be one of the possible causes of the necessary manipulation and editing of the source in verbatim plays, showing that the interviews are modified as a whole, while preserving non-fluency features in single sentences (as seen in Section 3.2).

Kate Gaul, who has had a thirty-year connection with verbatim theatre and who directed *Laramie* in Australia, said that ‘The theatre is a highly crafted space where you say a lot more with a lot less. The writer’s job is to take the *essence* of what is said and whittle it down into the moment of art and hopefully if you work with actors you can get them to do that for you’ (Anderson 2007, 85, emphasis added). Despite coming from different genres, the two plays share this common perspective in handling words; their presence is never superficial, and they only come to life thanks to the actors’ contribution.

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HANNIBAL HAMLIN*

Chanita Goodblatt, *Jewish and Christian Voices in English Reformation Biblical Drama: Enacting Family and Monarchy*, London and New York: Routledge, 2018, ISBN 978-1-4724-7978-5, pp. 256

Abstract

Chanita Goodblatt's *Jewish and Christian Voices in English Reformation Biblical Drama: Enacting Family and Monarchy* rides the second wave of the turn to religion in early modern literary studies, exploring the intertextual relationships between a series of Renaissance plays and the biblical texts they adapt, as well as the commentaries that interpret those texts. A particular strength is her drawing on both Jewish and Christian interpretive traditions, showing how the latter is often dependent upon the former. She also reads these plays, along with their intertexts, within their historical periods, the history itself (both the events and texts generated by them) another of the intertexts that so enriches the drama, and to which the drama contributes. The overarching theme is family and monarchy (the two inextricable in the Tudor period), but other through threads include the nature of performance in both drama and language, narrative, metaphor, and allegory.

KEYWORDS: Bible; Renaissance drama; intertextuality; Reformation; *David and Bethsabe*

The turn to religion in the scholarship of early modern English drama has been underway for long enough now that it is supposedly undergoing a “second wave”, characterized by scholars who are, among other things, “uninterested in recovering or reconstructing the specific belief systems of playwrights or their audience” (Mardock and MacPherson 2014, 9).¹ Gone are the days of academic conferences that threatened to revive and reenact the Reformation, Protestant and Catholic scholars lined up against each other fighting over the true faith of Shakespeare and his contemporary playwrights. Scholars of early modern Catholicism or Protestantism cannot today be assumed to be members of either Christian denomination, or indeed of any faith at all. There was a time

¹ The seminal announcement of the turn was Jackson and Marotti 2004.

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when if one was not doctrinally partisan it seemed necessary to assert, as did Diarmaid MacCulloch in his distinguished history, *The Reformation*, that “I do not now personally subscribe to any form of religious dogma”.² Now, almost twenty years on, writing about early modern religion, in its literary or any other manifestations, is no longer automatically suspected of stemming from a position of personal belief, and thus of proselytizing rather than pursuing sound, objective scholarship. Whether scholars of the “second wave” hold such beliefs or not, they nevertheless take for granted that genuine religious belief was virtually universal among early modern English men and women, rejecting both the persistent Whiggish secularization thesis that the Reformation abruptly disenchanting the world, and also the New Historicist conflation of religion and politics that again failed to take religion seriously in its own right.

In *Jewish and Christian Voices in English Reformation Biblical Drama*, Chanita Goodblatt focuses on a body of dramatic texts whose engagement with religion few would contest, since they are based on biblical narratives. Even if there still remain scholars who cling tenaciously to the notion that the theater of Shakespeare, Middleton, and Massinger was secular, the secularity of George Peele’s *David and Fair Bethsabe*, or the anonymous *Godly Queen Hester* and *Jacob and Esau*, would be hard to argue. But Goodblatt is less interested in probing the relative secularity or religiosity of the Tudor theater than in exploring just how these particular biblical plays participate, as she writes, “both textually and performatively — in the Reformation effort to translate and interpret the Bible” (1). Goodblatt describes her approach to this exploration in meticulous detail at the beginning of the book. It is, first, broadly intertextual. Goodblatt does not simply compare the biblical plays to their biblical sources, since those sources are themselves not simple. The sixteenth century was a frenzy of English Bible translation, so the biblical intertext for each of these plays might have been different, or indeed a combination of English versions. Despite Protestant claims for the self-sufficiency of Scripture, the Bible was also a text that needed to be interpreted, and aids to interpretation proliferated, including sermons, commentaries, paraphrases, and literary adaptations which — like the plays themselves — were also a mode of interpretation. Goodblatt includes a range of these materials in each of her chapters. They are not, for the most part, sources for the playwrights but intertexts in the Bakhtinian or Kristevan sense, elements in a complex multimodal discourse of biblical hermeneutics in which the playwrights and their audiences were participants. Reconstructing these intertextual networks, even partially, allows modern readers to participate as well, gaining a better sense of the range of meaning available in and through each of the scriptural narratives.

Goodblatt’s title points to another aspect of her intertextual endeavor, in that she aims to include not just Christian but Jewish intertexts, including the

² However he continues, “although I do remember with some affection what it was like to do so” (MacCulloch 2004, xxv).

Hebrew Bible as well as Midrash, the Talmud, and influential medieval rabbinic commentaries by the Spanish Abraham Ibn Ezra and the French Rashi (Shlomo Yitzchaki) and David Kimhi. Goodblatt has written expertly on Christian Hebraism, especially in John Donne, but she is not arguing here for influence (see Goodblatt 2010). The intention seems rather to expand our perspective on biblical texts and their interpretation beyond even the broad range of Christian exegesis. This is an especially intriguing move, since it also moves beyond the standard (not necessarily ‘new’) historicism of most scholarship on Renaissance drama. Always historicize, Frederic Jameson famously commanded. But maybe not. Or perhaps we need to rethink what constitutes historicizing. As Goodblatt points out, Martin Luther puzzled over the verb used by Esau in begging food from his brother Jacob. “Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage” is how the sentence is translated in the King James Bible, but the Hebrew (*hal’itēni*) is a hapax legomenon, a word appearing only in this one biblical verse. Luther recognizes that it is obscure for both Christians and Jews, citing Rabbi Solomon, who “imagines that Esau was so tired that he was unable to raise his hands to his mouth and put the food into himself”. Goodblatt points out that, although he does not admit it, Luther is relying here on *De Rudimentis Hebraicis* by the German Hebraist Johannes Reuchlin, in which Reuchlin explains Esau’s request by citing the explanation of Rabbi Solomon (i.e., Shlomo Yitzchaki, or Rashi). Any English Christian reading Luther’s lectures on Genesis is thus absorbing Rashi’s exegesis, however unconsciously, so that while direct access to Jewish scholarship in early modern Germany (and England) may have been limited, the ideas of those scholars circulated far beyond the reach of their own writings, and in ways often difficult to trace. Furthermore, interpretations presented in sixteenth-century books might well originate centuries earlier.

Appropriately for a study of plays, Goodblatt also emphasizes the performative, by which she means not just drama as it was staged in the theater, but language as “performative utterance”, as theorized by J.L. Austin (1975), in which the very stating of a thing also enacts it. The classic examples are wedding vows, when the celebrant’s, “I now pronounce you husband and wife”, speaks the marriage into being, or when a policeman declares, “you are under arrest”. In a biblical context, of course, one might observe that the ultimate performative utterance is God’s, when he speaks Creation into existence: “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). The actors of biblical plays are performing interpretations of the biblical originals, but Goodblatt argues that there is a performative aspect to the writing of Reformation exegetes like William Tyndale, as when he pronounces on the sense of Scripture, famously rejecting the allegorical in favor of the literal:

Thou shalt understand therefore that the scripture hath but one sense which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth whereunto [*to which*] if thou cleave thou canst never err

or go out of the way. And if thou leave the literal sense thou canst not but go out of the way. Neverthelater [*nevertheless*] the scripture useth proverbs, similitudes, riddles or allegories as all other speeches do, but that which the proverb, similitude, riddle or allegory signifieth is ever the literal sense which thou must seke out diligently. (2000, 156)

As Goodblatt recognizes, Tyndale here “cites, but also transforms, the words of his own biblical translation concerning the love and hope given by Christ: Ephesians 3:17 — “that ye being rooted and grounded in love” . . . and Hebrews 6:19 — “which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast (2)”.³ I would go further and suggest that he does not cite but rather alludes, though the power of his utterance no doubt lies in the reader’s recognition of the incorporated words of his own Bible translation, even if Tyndale does not set them out as quotations.

The final element of Goodblatt’s general focus is the theme of family and monarchy. This is perhaps an arbitrary choice among many other possibilities, but it is true that in both much of the Bible and Tudor England the concerns and conflicts of the royal dynasty and the royal family are inextricably intertwined. More than in any other European country, the Reformation in England was a family affair, as the monarchical succession of Henry VIII’s children, from different wives (one dead in childbirth, one divorced, one beheaded), swung the country to Protestantism, then back to Catholicism, and then back again to Protestantism in barely more than a decade. Goodblatt’s chosen theme also nicely suits those biblical dramas that survive from the period: *The Enterlude of Godly Queen Hester* (performed 1529-30, printed 1561), *The History of Jacob and Esau* (performed 1552-53, printed 1568), and George Peele’s *The Love of King David and the Fair Bethsabe* (printed 1599). That these plays were written and performed in distinctly different political contexts — the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I — also allows for a broader historical scope.

One particular useful decision by Goodblatt is to make crystal clear the structure of her analysis, first in a set of tables that lay out in advance the key plays and their contexts, the supplementary texts she brings them in touch with, and finally the “Jewish and Christian Exegetical/Historical Texts” used to explore the hermeneutical fields in which the primary works move and have their being. I found myself referring to these frequently, and I expect many readers will welcome them too. The structure of the book is also clear, with two chapters devoted to each play, under the section titles, “Rules of reign” (Hester), “Birthright and blessing” (Jacob and Esau), and “Passions and intrigues” (David and Bethsabe). The logic of each of these sections is helpfully articulated at the end of the introduction. Each chapter also ends with a valuable summary and a ‘prospect’ of

³ Goodblatt cites Tyndale 1989, 284, 352. Page references for this translation are useful, since verse numbers had not yet been adopted in Bibles.

what is to come in the next, making clear the relationship between the several pairings.

Each of Goodblatt's chapters begins with the Bible, including a transliteration of the Hebrew text of the Biblical rabbinica, printed in Venice in 1525, and as Goodblatt points out, a collaborative production between the Jewish scholar Jacob ben Hayim and the Christian printer Daniel Bomberg, as well as Goodblatt's own English translation, based on those of Robert Alter and the Jewish Publication Society (Tanakh). This has the double effect of continually reminding the reader of the primary biblical source, but also of productively estranging us (Goodblatt cites elsewhere Shklovsky's concept of *ostranenie*) from translations with which we may be too familiar to realize their status as translations.

Chapters 2 and 3 are on Esther, often described as the only book in the Bible without God.⁴ The key dramatic text is the Tudor interlude, but Goodblatt also compares it to the *Comoedia von der Königen Esther und Hoffärtigen Haman*, a German play printed in 1620 but performed, as announced on the titlepage, by a troupe of English players touring royal courts as well as major towns. It has been argued that the play is a German translation as well as perhaps adaptation of a lost English play, *Esther and Ahasuerus*, payments for which appear in the diary of Philip Henslowe in 1594.⁵ Particularly valuable for English readers is the inclusion of a translation of the German text of the *Comoedia*, perhaps the first ever printed, as an appendix. The story of Esther interweaves national, ethnic, and familial concerns. King Ahasuerus of Persia (perhaps Xerxes I?) marries the Jewish beauty Esther. The King's advisor, Haman, is affronted by Esther's uncle Mordecai, who has gained the King's favor by revealing an assassination plot. Haman persuades Ahasuerus to let him exterminate the Jews throughout Persia, but by various means Esther persuades the King to hang Haman, promote Mordecai in his place, and grant Persian Jews not only pardon but special privilege. The celebration of this event is marked by the Jewish feast of Purim. Esther's power, as Goodblatt argues, is verbal, allowing her to cast Haman into disrepute and manipulate Ahasuerus into granting her wishes, though she does not present them as such. Goodblatt cites Susan Zaeske's description of Esther as a manual of "rhetorical theory" (25), and she notes in particular Esther's use of "parallelism to set up 'relationships of equivalence' . . . among the pleas for favor; and in the apt use of end rhyme and a concluding rhyming couplet to

⁴ The Song of Solomon might also qualify, though Jewish and Christian readers have always read it allegorically as an expression of God's love for the Church, or Mary, or individual people. Some English Bibles even include allegorical descriptions as page headers (e.g., "Her desire to Christ").

⁵ This argument applies not just to this play, since records survive of English players touring Germany with a number of plays, at least some of which may plausibly have been versions of English originals. The most attention has naturally focused on *Der bestrafte Brudermord*, perhaps a version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (see Creizenach 1889).

underline her emotional intensity”⁶. She also uses conditional verb tenses in a combination of “the conventions of ‘courtly politeness’. . . with a strategic use of sexual promise”⁷.

Through a variety of intertexts, Goodblatt connects the representation of Esther’s performative speech acts in the interlude with Henrician anxieties about good counsel and royal misrule, as well as with the good, wise woman exemplified (at least in 1530) by Katherine of Aragon. The same wise woman theme works even better in the mid-1590s for the lost Esther play with Elizabeth on the throne, as it does in the 1550s with the allegorical play *Respublica* (another intertext) staged at the court of Queen Mary. The valence and significance of many aspects of the story shift, however. Especially interesting are the Jews so central to the narrative. In the Henrician interlude, they are essentially stand-ins for the English, Christian, people, with “Jewish prayer”, as Goodblatt observes, “completely assimilated into Christian ritual” (31). The most obvious Haman figure is the recently disgraced Cardinal Wolsey. Yet when the play was first printed in 1561, it could no longer be comfortably read as (Greg Walker’s suggestion) a championing of Catholic religious orders like the House of Converts supported by Katherine of Aragon and daughter Mary. By this time, as James Shapiro puts it, the “newly elect Protestant nation, England, looked to Jewish practices as a model for its own” (1996, 173). And later in the century, at the time of the lost play, the attitude to Jews had again shifted, especially in the wake of 1594 execution of Robert Lopez, a New Christian (i.e., converted Jew) convicted of attempting to assassinate Elizabeth, to whom he served as physician. The Jews in the German *Comedy* are represented quite differently from the Tudor interlude, hooded and murmuring (German *murmeln*) indistinct prayers. As Goodblatt remarks, this would accord with the experience of actual Jews living in seventeenth-century Germany, required to wear long wide hoods, and highly suspicious to the Christian community for what was perceived as their secrecy and foreignness. Even in Elizabethan England, however, where Jews were still banned, any response to the scene of Haman’s execution in *Godly Queen Hester* would have been complicated by memories of Lopez. Fascinatingly, Goodblatt draws in Robert Devereux, one of Lopez’s accusers, and himself executed for treason in 1601, at which event he gave a speech confessing to having been “puffed up with pride” (39). In the Apocryphal chapters added to Esther, Asuerus condemns Haman as “puft up with so great swelling of arogancie”. The translation Goodblatt cites is the Catholic Douay-Rheims, however, which was only printed in 1609-10. Other English Bibles do not have “puffed up” in this context, and yet Goodblatt is not interested in sources but intertexts, and her argument, bolstered by Foucault’s writing on the “spectacle of the scaffold”, that thinking of the execution scenes of Haman, Wolsey, Lopez, or Devereux can illuminate

⁶ Citing on parallelism Berlin 2008, 135.

⁷ Citing on “courtly politeness” Clines 1984, 101.

the nature of what she calls this “recognizable national and religious liturgy” remains convincing. Perhaps more useful to Goodblatt than the specific use of “pufft up” in the Douay-Rheims would have been a wider EEBO search of the idiom, charting the various contexts in which this term for pride crops up (the Jews were often called “puffed up”, for instance, and in John Bale’s account of the martyrdom of Anne Askewe, in which he twice refers to Haman, the servants of Bishops Gardiner and Bonner are called “puffed up porklings”).

The inclusion of the *Comedy of Queen Esther* allows Goodblatt to explore not only the significance of the Esther story in different periods but in different genres. If the *Godly Queene Hester* is about right rule, wise counsel, and the elect nation, so too is the Comedy, but in a distinctly carnivalesque mode. The slapstick between Hans Knapkäse (Poor Cheese?) and his wife, for instance, the latter beating her husband into obedience, is obviously a riotous parody of Esther’s power over her husband the King. There is a carnivalesque element to the *Godly Queene* too, in the character Hardyhardy, a prototype of the Shakespearean Fool. Goodblatt explores his wisely-foolish chiding of his master Haman and the use of proverbial wisdom (also a biblical genre) in the play. Esther closes a speech condemning Haman with the proverb, “The hygher they clime, the deper they fall”, for instance, the same proverb cited in Erasmus’s *De Contemptu Mundi* (English trans. 1533), suggesting that Esther’s wisdom is less folksy than Humanist, especially given (Goodblatt argues) the same Erasmus’s praise for the learning of Katherine of Aragon. Hardyhardy’s final comment on his master’s hanging is the proverb, “I wene by God, he made a rodde / for his own ars!” brings his retelling of Ovid’s account of the tyrant Phalaris (who executed the maker of a torture device by putting him in his own invention) to a bathetic end. Yet Goodblatt points out that reading this as a bawdy parody of Humanist Classical learning belies the tendency to mix the learned and scatological in much sixteenth-century discourse. John Frith, for instance, attacks indulgences using exactly the same proverb as Hardyhardy (and Frith was burned at the stake in 1533, the same year Katherine of Aragon’s marriage was declared unlawful).

The focus of chapters 4 and 5 is the Jacob and Esau story, primarily in the anonymous play *Jacob and Esau* (1552-53), but also in a range of intertexts, some already familiar from the previous chapters, some new: the twelfth-century *Ordo de Ysaac et Rebecca et Filiis Eorum Recitandus* (discovered at Vorau in Austria), *Respublica* (again), the *Jacob* play from the Towneley Cycle, and commentary from Luther and Calvin, Midrash and Targum, Rashi and Ibn Ezra, and the Englishmen Gervase Babington and John Preston. Goodblatt packs in far more than can be covered here, but one key hermeneutic principle addressed in this section is the “semantic gap” (76). Biblical writing is famously minimalist, especially in Genesis, as articulated in the celebrated first chapter of Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis*, but elaborated by later scholars such as Meier Sternberg. One consequence of the minimalist narrative is that the text often raises more questions than it answers, generating in readers an impulse to fill in these ‘gaps’

through allegorization, midrash, interpolation or extrapolation, or some other means. Goodblatt opens with the riddles posed by Genesis 25:21-23: when Isaac prays to God for his wife to conceive, does he pray in the presence of his wife or on behalf of her, the Hebrew allowing both meanings? what, Goodblatt asks, is Rebekah doing while Isaac prays? and what does it mean in verse 25:22 that “she went to inquire of the Lord”? Rebekah’s inquiry is curiously physical, since presumably one does not need to actually walk anywhere to ask something of God. As Goodblatt points out, however, the whole passage emphasizes the bodily, with the twins “crushed” within Rebekah, and God’s promise stating not just that she will be the mother of nations, but that two nations “are in your womb, And two peoples from your inward parts shall be separated” (75). This is only appropriate, since “a child’s fateful birth comprises at once a literal consequence and a metaphor of revelation” (76).

Chapter 4 focuses not just on women’s prayer but on sight, both as featured in the story in Isaac’s blindness and in its essential place in the theater (the Greek root of this word actually meaning “seeing” or “sight”). Among other questions, Goodblatt asks whether Isaac’s blindness is merely literal or also spiritual. In his edition of the play, Paul Whitfield White (1992) has argued that the reference to predestination by the “Poet” in the Prologue to *Jacob and Esau* derives from Calvin, and Goodblatt notes also Calvin’s writing on spiritual blindness in the *Institutes*: “our minds, as they have been blinded, do not perceive what is true” (91). Calvin then cites Paul’s rejection of worldly wisdom in favor of the “folly of preaching” (1 Cor. 1:21), before describing God’s wisdom (again borrowing from Paul) as “this magnificent theater of heaven and earth” (91). The theatrical metaphor can be read back into *Jacob and Esau*, which also requires a kind of right seeing, the audience needing to recognize Isaac’s blindness of mind as well as sight, as well as (apparently) the rightness of Rebekah and Jacob’s theatrical deception of Isaac, which seems nevertheless to have divine sanction. One striking visual element of this particular play is its attempt to represent the story in appropriate historical detail; White calls *Jacob and Esau* “the first professed attempt in an English play at ‘period costume’” (108). Goodblatt cites the references to “cheverell” (goat skins), staff and sheep crook, the scrubbing of vessels, the use of shekels and talents. This in striking contrast to the directions in the twelfth-century *Ordo* that indicate a distinctly medieval Jewish costume, with the same hoods and badges apparent in medieval manuscript paintings.

Despite the unusual historicizing in *Jacob and Esau*, however, how were audiences to interpret the characters they were seeing? Was the story really just about strange people in a far-away land and time? Tyndale fulminates against medieval Roman Catholic allegorizing of Scripture, which Rashi also practiced, explaining Jacob and Esau wrestling in Rebekah’s womb (in Goodblatt’s paraphrase) as between Jacob “struggling to be born when his mother passes by ‘the doors of the Torah [Pentateuch]’ or places of learning, and Esau, struggling to be born when she passes by the ‘door of [a temple of] idolatry’” (101). Sternberg,

as Goodblatt notes, calls this kind of reading “illegitimate gap-filling”, but Protestants practiced it too (as did Paul, interpreting Isaac and Ishmael as Christians and Jews in Galatians 4, using the very word “allegory”). Luther reads the fetal struggle as the conflict between Protestants and Catholics, or Christians and Muslims, and Jacob was for him the figure of a pious scholar, just as he was for Rashi. No surprise, then, that Luther interprets Esau’s clothes (Jacob’s disguise) as “priestly garments”, which jibes with the presentation (if not representation) of the older brother in the play as not actually a Jew (though of course he is, literally) but as “the Catholic anti-Christ”, as Goodblatt puts it (115). Supporting this interpretation of Esau and Jacob as Catholic and Protestant is the language given to each by the playwright: Jacob is constantly quoting or paraphrasing recognizable biblical texts, whereas Esau uses simply low-level Elizabethan speech, including insults like “mopishe elfe”, “hedgereeper”, saying that he will shake his knave of a servant “even as a dog that lulleth” (116). Goodblatt might also have noted the language Esau uses when offering his father meat in hopes of receiving the blessing already given to Jacob: “Have, ete, fader, of myn hunting” (115). “Have, eat” is surely intended to echo, parodically, the words of Jesus at the Last Supper that instituted the Eucharist: “Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you” (Cummings 2011, 31). These are the words as repeated in the service of Communion in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, but given other signals that Esau is the Catholic to Jacob’s Protestant, audiences would have taken the allusion as to the Mass.⁸ As Goodblatt concludes, the play, like the biblical story, “transforms the familial story into a narrative of identity” (98). Who receives the father’s blessing, who does not? Who is chosen by God, and who is rejected? And these questions apply most crucially to readers and audiences in the present (whenever that is), whether Jewish or Christian, Catholic or Protestant.

The final pair of chapters, 6 and 7, turns to the story of King David from 1 and 2 Samuel, and Goodblatt begins with Nathan’s Parable of the Ewe Lamb, what Sternberg calls a “veiled parable, a trap reserved for kings” (128). Drawing on the Bible scholars Erik Eynikel, Jan Fokkelman, and Joshua Berman, the literary critic Regina Schwartz, and the philosopher Stanley Cavell, Goodblatt takes us deeply into the workings of the parable. We have explored allegory earlier, and parables (like fables) are often considered subspecies of allegory, but we must resist, she argues, trying to read all the elements as having clear correspondents in the David story. It’s more flexible, since Bathsheba is obviously in some sense the stolen lamb (specified as female, a ewe), but she is not slaughtered, while her husband Uriah is, so he is both the poor owner of the ewe and the ewe itself. Furthermore, David’s response is actually two-fold, representing two kinds of

⁸ Also notable is the presenting of meat rather than bread. Jesus says to his disciples that the bread he offers is his body, but for most Protestants this is not literally true. Catholics believe in transubstantiation, however, holding that the bread does become in some real sense flesh, as signaled in medieval miraculous visions of bleeding hosts.

justice and two different speech acts. First is the “performative, ‘passionate utterance’”, sentencing the offender to death; second, a verdictive speech (Austin’s term) assigning a penalty of four times the value of the lamb. The two statements curiously undermine each other, the fine seemingly oddly calculating after the burst of outrage, and the passion calling into question David’s ability to mete out dispassionate justice.

Goodblatt then examines how this scene is represented in Peele’s *David and Bethsabe* and, by contrast, the medieval Cornish *Origo Mundi*. The latter clumsily deflates the scene, changing out Nathan for the angel Gabriel and simplifying the drama. Peele, on the other hand, intensifies the drama by both staying close to the biblical original and adding in other biblical allusions. Goodblatt does wonderful work with the phrase “child of death”, the Hebrew used by David in his pronouncement: “As the Lord lives, a child of death is the man who has done this”. Among the major English Bibles, the Bishops’ Bible (1568) has “child of death” and the Geneva (1560) includes the phrase in a marginal note, while rendering David’s utterance in more idiomatic English. Peele’s David says that the offender “shall become the child of death”, preserving the idiom that points exclusively to the Bible, and Goodblatt observes that “in the context of family, the phrase retains a metaphoric quality that not only foreshadows the multiple tragedies in David’s family [the death of his child with Bathsheba, the rape of his child Tamar, the murder of his child Amnon, and the killing of his child Absalom, a fourfold punishment, as Rashi interprets it], but also judges him, because of his immoral actions, as the personification and agent of these deaths” (134). Peele’s play also includes the episode with the Teḳoite woman, conscripted by Joab to use another parable (represented as her own personal story) to persuade David to allow Absalom to return from exile. One brother in the parable kills another, and their relatives cry that the murderer “therefore may be the child of death”. The use of this phrase at this point in the story is Peele’s addition, as Goodblatt describes it, the Teḳoite woman thus reminding “David of his own stark concept of justice and [raising] the specter of the blood-avenger, to be supplemented by her allusion to familial and monarchal connotations of the tale” (145).

Peele’s play is the most sophisticated among those Goodblatt includes, transforming “biblical voices”, as she puts it, “into echoes of contemporaneous English affairs” (176). It raises questions about the relationship between law and justice, the problem of a wicked monarch, and whether action taken against such a monarch, including even rebellion, can be legitimate. Goodblatt quotes Naomi Pasachoff’s observation that “Peele may be the only Tudor to use the story of King David to point up the sympathetic aspects of Absalom’s rebellion” (148). Another of Peele’s additions to David’s response to the Teḳoite woman is his statement that “to God alone belongs revenge”, echoing Deuteronomy 32:35, but probably as repeated by Paul in Romans 12:19, often cited in Elizabethan condemnations of vengeance. The critical contemporary context for Peele’s treatment of justice and revenge is the execution of Mary Queen of Scots,

condemned for plotting against Queen Elizabeth, and Elizabeth's first cousin once removed (Henry VII the grandfather of Elizabeth and great-grandfather of Mary). Elizabeth and her Privy Council were keen to represent the controversial execution as an act of dispassionate justice, not revenge, and Sir Christopher Hatton drew on the David and Absalom story to make this point: "*Ne periat Israell periapt Absolon*", he stated to the House of Commons, "Absalom must perish, lest Israel Perish" (143). Historians like Peter Lake and Peter Marshal have recognized this allusion, but Goodblatt greatly enriches our understanding of its meaning by situating it within a broader intertextual field, including Elizabeth's own justification of Mary's execution, acknowledging her own grief at her cousin's plotting but deferring to the will of the "Subjects, the Nobles and Commons" and, most important, to "the Lawes of our Realme" (143).

Chapter 7's focus on epithalamium and elegy seems surprising in the context of law and justice and the legitimacy of monarchy, but Goodblatt demonstrates that Peele employs these genres, "particular adaptations of the pastoral mode", for his exploration of adultery and rebellion in *David and Bethsabe*. In fact, in the previous chapter she already discussed Peele's debt to a sensual, pastoral passage in Joshua Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas's *La Seconde Semaine*, the Chorus's comparison of the sinful David to the "fatall Raven" that, despite flying by "the faire Arabian spiceries, / Her pleasant gardens, and delightsome parkes", nevertheless "doth stoope with hungrie violence / Upon a peece of hatefull carion" (136). The Raven is Du Bartas's, which after a flight through similar "sweet Gardens and delicious Bowers", lights "upon the loathsome quarters / Of some late Lopez, or such Romish martirs" (138), bringing us startlingly back to Lopez (discussed in the context of Esther) and the Protestant-Catholic conflict. Now Goodblatt focuses on the exchange between David and Bethsabe when she is brought to him as he commanded. For Bethsabe to say anything at all is striking, since in Samuel she is given only a single sentence, "I am with child" (2 Sam. 11:5). In the play, David introduces her before her entrance with natural imagery drawn from the Song of Solomon: "Now comes my lover tripping like the Roe" ("My welbeloved is like a roe", Song 2:9), and he welcomes her comparing her to the sun, scorching his "conquered soul" ("Who is she that loketh forthe as the morning, faire as the moone, pure as the sunne, terrible as an armie with banners!" Song 6:9). Bethsabe's parallel response (6 lines for David's 6) emphasizes the debt to the Song of Solomon, here in the dialogue of the lovers (as in chapter 4, though the voices are difficult to disentangle), where the man is also traditionally (as Solomon) a king. Yet she picks up David's sun metaphor and turns it in a different direction, alluding to Ovid's account of Phaëton steering too near the sun: "Too neere my lord was your unarmed heart, / When furthest off my hapless beauty peirc'd" (160). The Ovid story is about recklessness, passion, destruction, and death, and all of the *Metamorphoses* is preoccupied with the dangerous implications of desire. As Goodblatt once again demonstrates, Peele's complex intertextuality is key to understanding his interpretation of the story

of *David and Bethsabe*.

The shift from epithalamium to elegy comes with the movement of the plot from Bethsabe to Absalom, especially after his death, which elicits profound grief from David, even though his son had rebelled against him:

Die, David, for the death of Absolon . . .
 Hanging thy stringlesse harpe upon his boughs,
 And through the hollow saplesse sounding truncke,
 Bellow the torments that perpexe thy soule. (169)

Goodblatt notes David's call for vengeance on the tree upon which Absalom was killed ("Rend up the wretched engine by the roots"), though she might also have noted the anachronistic allusion to the hanging harps of Psalm 137, "By the waters of Babylon". The exiled Jews hang their harps upon trees, refusing and being unable to sing songs of Sion in a strange land. David, also famous as a harpist, hangs his stringless instrument on the cursed tree, wood on wood, the hollow (because rotten? or empty of the emotion it should feel?) trunk sounding even though the harp cannot. Goodblatt brings us back to Elizabeth and Mary, however, quoting the former's letter to the young James VI of Scotland, Mary's son: "I would you knew though not felt the extreme dolor that overwhelms my mind for that miserable accident, which far contrary to my meaning hath befallen" (170). Elizabeth, in the same position as David (as Hatton had implied), grieves for the rebel relative whose death she did not wish for but must accept.

Goodblatt also draws attention to another set of subtle allusions in Peele's play that both echo Du Bartas again and set up an internal allusion that yokes together the two parts of the story. In *La Seconde Semaine*, Du Bartas (in Sylvester's English) has Adam lament his descendent Enoch: "Sometimes he climbs the Sacred cabinet / Of the divine Ideas ... Thine eies already (no longer eies / But new bright stars) do brandish in the skies" (172). Peele's David laments, "Thy soule shall joy the sacred cabinet / Of those devine Ideas ... Thy eyes now no more eyes but shining stars" (171). Both speeches, Goodblatt points out, are about family history, and both combine biblical and religious language with Classical philosophy, converting Adam and David into Christian neo-Platonists, monarchs with whom Elizabeth, famous for her learning, might then easily identify. David continues,

Thy day of rest, thy holy Sabboth day
 Shall be eternall, and the curtaine drawne,
 Thou shalt behold thy souveraine face to face,
 With wonder knit in triple unitie,
 Unitie infinite and innumerable.

The drawing of the curtain, Greenblatt observes, also derives from Adam's elegy in Du Bartas, though in this case the French original (*la courtine tiree*) rather

than Sylvester's translation ("without vaile"). More significantly, it recalls the very beginning of Peele's play, when the Prologue "draws a curtaine, and discovers Bethsabe with her maid bathing over a spring, and David sits above viewing her" (175). Here a verbal performance alludes to an act performed (stage directions of course unavailable to the audience), reminding us that David is the ultimate cause of his son's revolt and death, as well as his own grief.

Once again, Goodblatt shows how "biblical voices" are transformed "into echoes of contemporaneous English affairs" (176). Or, thinking of how theorists of intertextuality might put it, the reverberation is in all directions, contemporary affairs also echoing biblical and Classical precedents. This is an exceptionally rich book, achieving exactly what Goodblatt promises, a demonstration of the complex intertextual field within which Tudor drama, biblical narratives, Jewish and Christian exegetical traditions, and other Renaissance, medieval, and Classical literature interecho, interact, and generate meaning for readers and audiences then and now. Readers will come away with a deeper understanding of the plays Goodblatt analyzes, but also the biblical stories, characters, and language with which they engage. I did occasionally find myself hearing further echoes and wanting to push this or that analysis even deeper. The section on wisdom and fools in chapter 3, for instance, could be extended to include the Christian concept of the wise fool as described by Paul, as well as its exploration in the hugely influential *Praise of Folly* by Erasmus (Erasmus personifying Folly as a woman, though she ends up seeming rather wise). Another example is when Du Bartas's Adam, in the elegy Goodblatt quotes, also says of Enoch, "thy body, chang'd in qualitie / Of spirit or angell, puts on immortalitie", and that "without vaile (in fine) / Thou seest God face to face" (172-3). The language here is Paul's, from 1 Corinthians 15:53 ("this mortal must put on immortality") and 13:12 ("For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face"). It would be interesting, as Goodblatt does elsewhere, to explore Peele and Du Bartas in terms of both Jewish and Christian perspectives. Of course, the Pauline allusions assimilate David into the Christian tradition, which makes it easier to think of English monarchs like Elizabeth as Davidic (though her father Henry was more often cast in this role, Elizabeth as Deborah, her successor James VI and I as Solomon). But how might Jewish interpretations of David and Bathsheba, or David and Absalom, enrich our understanding of David's place in Elizabethan English culture, in Peele's play and elsewhere? The Rabbis (as well as recent feminist critics), for instance, argued about the specific location of Bathsheba as she was bathing. David is walking on his roof when he spies her, but is she also on the roof, or is she inside her room? The former would make her culpable, exposing herself to anyone who might be looking, but the latter makes David the sole guilty party, a voyeur peeping into her private chambers. Peele hedges somewhat, placing Bathsheba at a "spring", which must be outdoors, but also having the Prologue draw a curtain to reveal her, which suggests some kind of privacy. Tudor woodcuts of the scene, as included in English Bibles, tend to place Bath-

sheba (breasts bare), bathing outside, with David looking out of his window from within his chambers. Claire Costley King'oo has explored this iconography (2004), but there is a wider intertextual field to be explored. On the other hand, my eagerness to explore it testifies to Goodblatt's success in exciting the reader about intertextual reading, and the full extent of such intertextual relations is beyond any single study.

Many readers will find *Jewish and Christian Voices in English Reformation Biblical Drama* rewarding: first, those interested in Tudor drama, especially some plays a little off the well-beaten paths of theater history and criticism; second, those interested in the complexities of early modern biblical culture, the influence of the Bible on secular literature, the range of interpretation available to sixteenth century readers, and the interaction of Jewish and Christian interpretive traditions; and finally, anyone interested in the social and political history of Tudor England, given Goodblatt's interest in how the plays interact "family and monarchy" in their engagement with biblical and other sources and analogues. This is an excellent addition to Routledge's series on Renaissance Literature and Culture and gives further momentum to the turn to religion's second wave in literary studies.

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EDOARDO GIOVANNI CARLOTTI*

Dick McCaw. *Rethinking the Actor's Body. Dialogues with Neuroscience.* London, New York: Methuen Drama, 2020, ISBN 978-1-3500-4645-0, pp. 274

Abstract

Dick McCaw's book is aimed at establishing a dialogue, or rather many opportunities for dialogue, between body practices related (or apt to be related) to the performing arts and neuroscience, in order to open new perspectives for reconsidering current and historical systems for actor training against the background of present neurophysiological knowledge. By resorting to plain but not oversimplified language, the common topics of both the disciplines (mind-body problem, memory, attention, consciousness, learning, emotion) are identified and tackled by constantly highlighting their mutual interconnection in a network of complex interactions. Both theatre practice and neuroscience, each following its own methods, are found to aim at dealing with such issues in ways that often challenge our deep-rooted dualist habit of contrasting mind and body. The essay suggests that, in spite of their divergences (or maybe because of them), every chance for a dialogue between the two disciplines deserves to be exploited as an opportunity of rethinking not only the actor's body, but also ourselves.

KEYWORDS: actor training; performing arts; neuroscience; motor expertise; mind-body problem; cross-disciplinarity

Given the subject matter of his previous book (*Training the Actor's Body*), the title and subtitle of this essay by Dick McCaw could be seen to suggest a sort of attempt at re-visioning and possibly validating actor training systems in accordance with state-of-the-art neuroscientific findings; actually, its intent at establishing the basis for a dialogue involving theatre practitioners on the one hand and neurobiologists/neurophysiologists (as well as phenomenologists) on the other, goes beyond a mere effort at providing a scientific foundation for methods implemented through constant exercise and long experience, and rather extends the scope to a broader domain of possible investigation, leading to a deep reflection on its object.

Such reflection can progress only if both sides in the dialogue, aside from

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their respective approaches, share a focus of common interest; in this case, the common ground can be found to be the human body, especially, how mind and body interact in the execution of actions, and what is the role of the brain in all related processes such as conscious control, attention, learning, imagination, and emotion.

However, the author cannot help but remark that communication issues can easily rise on this ground: firstly, because of the mind-body dualism permeating our approach to the subject and emerging – automatically, as it were – at a linguistic level; secondly, because it is not a simple task to identify a common denominator for views often employing similar terms to express different notions or, vice versa, different terms for analogous concepts.

In other words, neuroscientists agree in refuting any dualistic conception and converge in maintaining that what we call “mind” does not correspond to any material or immaterial object but is rather a function of the brain – which in its turn is part of an interconnected organism operating through continuous information loops. However, an equally unanimous stance cannot be found after analysing the assumptions underlying actor/performer training practices or, more generally, other practices aiming at the enhancement of action execution, as for example the martial arts.

In this connection, it must be remembered that McCaw approaches his subject matter not only as a researcher, but also as a theatre practitioner and an expert in both *tai chi* and the Feldenkreis method, which allows him to integrate the scholarly perspective with an insider’s view of the various and often diverging pedagogies. Accordingly, if on the one hand the student’s stance promotes the recognition of a defective physiological knowledge behind many widespread practices, on the other the practitioner’s interest dictates an investigation on the reasons why most of them, in spite of their apparent shortcomings, are able to correctly frame and effectively solve problems concerning the acquisition of physical skills and the control of action execution in complex performance contexts.

On a strictly semantic level, as we will see, many notions (such as *prana* in Stanislavsky, for example, or *centre* in Michael Chekhov and others) can be understood as metaphors to suggest a driving force or an originating plexus for physical actions which do not result only from conscious control, but – as neuroscience tells us – are the outcome of continuous feedback loops. Motor modules stored as expertise (the performer’s technical stock-in-trade) are in fact involved in a network whose information content cannot be consciously accessed in its entirety, as it includes signals from and to the autonomous nervous system. The notion of ‘centre’ is, at least, a tentative suggestion for a locus where several different messages converge and are processed; that of ‘prana’ focuses on the pervasivity of the process. In both cases, the actor is requested, as it were, to subconsciously detect what is going on.

Considering their respective specificities, the divergences between

neuroscientific findings and pedagogical methodologies in the performing arts can be easily traced back to the difference in their primary goals: on the one hand, the understanding of how human neurophysiology is related to behaviour, on the other, how neurophysiological routines can be modified and controlled to implement what could be defined as “performative behaviour”.

Accordingly, a substantial distinction must firstly be drawn before endeavouring to find possible convergences and divergences, that is – after Eugenio Barba – performative behaviour is not everyday behaviour, insofar as it is the result of training the everyday body, whose dynamic expression through movements and gestures in performance is supposed to be believable as human behaviour, even if realism is not the aesthetic target of the representation. The performer's body – which is not *one* body, but many bodies, each of them reshaped through different individual traits and training methodologies – is concurrently the subject and the tool of such a particular behaviour mode, implemented through simulative and imaginative processes which are of significant interest for several research projects in neuroscience. Although state-of-the-art research protocols, mostly owing to instrumental limitations, cannot be applied to the empirical study of the performative body, yet it is often used to exemplify a special condition of the organism, rare but not impossible, where the autonomous nervous system appears to respond to voluntary control. For Antonio Damasio, the actor's body shows how what he defines as the “as if circuit” (a system for embodied simulation conceptually kindred to the mirror mechanism theorized by Giacomo Rizzolatti and his team) can be exploited to react to fictitious situations by displaying genuine (i.e. credible) emotional symptoms. Unfortunately, neuroscience is still far from assessing whether the related emotions are actually felt or not, which has been a matter of debate since the eighteenth-century.

On these bases, establishing a dialogue involving experts who devised and are still devising methodologies to train the body to carry out these and similar tasks, and scientists who are investigating behaviour as an expression of the relationship between the body and the brain, cannot but enable us to widen the horizon of our views on these topics, whose interest goes far beyond their respective domains.

McCaw's pathway leads him to confront an ample range of questions in as much detail as possible in the given circumstances, often retracing his own steps in order to better specify certain points with the caution required by the case, as being simple and straightforward does not necessarily mean to simplify. Each one of the nine chapters of the book deals with a specific topic, tackled in accordance with the different approaches of the various dialogists, promoting a conversation where their voices could easily interfere with each other. Indeed, a moderator is needed so that the reader does not get lost by following the suggestions that each one of the voices provides. Actually, the author seems to take on that role and allows each voice to speak in its turn, not allowing one to

prevail but granting all the possibility to express their views freely.

In this conversation, the views of either theatre practitioners, or experts in physical training, are usually selected as an introduction to a specific topic, which is subsequently developed by passing them through the sieve of recent neuroscientific literature, and finally by rediscussing the whole matter adopting a wider approach. Rather than explaining the practices concerning the body in the light of scientific knowledge, this option results in opening new perspectives, since there is often nothing to explain, but additional questions arise as the salient issues are gradually framed and approached. To this purpose, the first part of the book acts as a presentation of the relevant themes, starting from methodology, as any attempt at understanding the body involves a radical rethinking of functions that are commonly taken for granted.

Firstly (chap. 1), the neat separation between active and passive modes of our interaction with the surrounding environment has to be abandoned, as we react to its continual challenges through a dynamic process of parallel operations and feedback loops involving and connecting action and perception, according to a general model that – though still not entirely clarified – definitely disputes any form of dualism. Body and mind are equally and inextricably involved in both action and perception, so much so that we cannot draw a line to separate one from the other.

The actor's body, therefore, can be seen as the result of a learning process (chap. 2) progressing through a constant increase in attention to the connections between action and perception, as the simplest movement routines must be performed in an environment – the stage – which is a sort of second-order environment, posing additional challenges for adaptation. Learning and adaptation, in every animal species, are possible because of the existence of an organ like the brain that, as part of the body, is modified by its environment while simultaneously modifying it: the brain could in fact be considered an extension of the body, in opposition to a (more common) dualistic conception.

Accordingly, the focus has now (chap. 3) to be shifted on the operating mode of the brain, and especially on the simultaneous conscious and non-conscious processes taking place during the execution of any activity, and the need for theatre practitioners to figure their combined action and interaction through notions as, for example, 'front-brain' and 'back-brain' (by Clive Barker, the frequently quoted author of *Theatre Games*). Albeit scientifically inaccurate, and phrenological in its concept, as it draws a distinction between functional macro-areas, this image effectively suggests that our behaviour is also the expression of synaptic activities escaping conscious access even if occurring within the organ which is usually thought to be the seat of consciousness itself. Considering actors and performers, the primary goal of their training is obviously the reduction of conscious awareness in carrying out certain tasks, in accordance with the natural principle of economy, but that is not the outcome of the re-allocation of certain cerebral routines exclusively into an alleged 'back-brain': it is actually a synaptic

re-organization concerning the whole brain. Accordingly, we must reconsider how attention is related to execution, and conscious control to behaviour, as many settled clichés prevent us from envisioning the issue according to its real complexity; and the same could be said as regards terms like “unconscious”, “subconscious”, or “non-conscious”, whose use in language might need to be refined in accordance with the history of the individual development of an organism, with its process of learning and adaptation to the environment.

The next step is, therefore, to better understand how an organism can cope with the mass of information, connections, and processes escaping the control of consciousness in responding to environmental challenges (chap. 4); this understanding is obviously of primary interest for scientific investigation, and as important for those who have to devise a training system whose practical implementation needs to be consistent with definite basic principles. Theatre practitioners constantly highlight the value of developing a sort of “sensitive intelligence” – guiding the performers in their action through subsequent steps – which is not based on discursive concepts and does not need to be constantly monitored by consciousness, except in the shape of a subtle mode of awareness, an oxymoronic ‘inattentive awareness’. In the neuroscientific domain, the notions of proprioceptive and kinaesthetic sense supplement the hypothesis of an “embodied knowledge” that can dispense with discursive cognition and rely only on sensorial information. This implicit knowledge is also related to the simulation properties of the mirror mechanism, which have been studied by the researchers in experiments on cortical activity during action observation.

The skills that this knowledge can express come through practice, gradually refining the motor modules an action requires, on the one hand by excluding any unnecessary muscular contribution, on the other, by removing from conscious awareness what turns out to be a tacit ability for automatically superintending the execution.

The unanimous accent on automatism as a means to improve the performance of actions ought not to suggest an easy parallel between a living organism and a machine, especially a computer: learning movement routines does not in fact involve only the ‘what’ of an action, but finds its distinctiveness in “how” an action needs to be performed, on which – somewhat paradoxically – the actor retains a “residual if non-conscious awareness” (112).

In the second part of the book, the actor's behaviour on stage is the focus of an analysis touching the relevant issues it raises: the notions of presence and energy (chap. 5) are firstly reviewed in their uses in theatrical and martial arts practices, then related to the implicit image of the body such uses evoke. Here it is almost mandatory to refer to *The Player's Passion* by Joseph Roach, as the Cartesian paradigm of a mechanic hydraulic body activated by a fluid (the vital spirits) is a useful frame to approach theatre practitioners' attempts at explaining how mind and body supplement each other. McCaw discerns exactly this paradigm behind Stanislavsky's *prana*, despite its reference to yoga

philosophy and the cautions expressed by the Russian pedagogue himself, and his descendant Grotowski, against the pitfalls of dualism, whose expression in terms of performance is inexorably mechanical acting.

Cultural – hence linguistic – conditioning is so deep-rooted that also terms like “psychophysical” or “psychophysiological” often underlie conceptions of the actor’s work where the distinction is apparent between an internal energy (or a vitality manifesting itself from the inside out) and an external body, which insofar as it is ‘animated’ is also owned by such energy (or should it be named soul?) – the ghost in the machine allowing it to function to good purpose.

In this regard, what the psychoanalyst Daniel Stern has devised to investigate “forms of vitality” can be considered – if not a means to a different approach to the general question – a useful tool, at least for analysing the variations in dynamics of non-verbal communication expressions through a method of decomposition by factors (somewhat reminding the *Labanotation* system) aiming at describing the complex interactions (both top-down and bottom-up) underlying different energy levels in movement execution (incidentally, forms of vitality have been the object of an experimental study by Rizzolatti’s team at Parma). Although it has been conceived from the point of view of the observer, it could prove itself to be a valuable contribution to the performer’s self-analysis.

The topic of energy in stage presence directly relates to that of centre (or centres) whence energy should emanate along with the movement itself (chap. 6); starting from the definition in the *OED*, the author reviews the use of the term “centre” among practitioners, where scientific accuracy is not the primary interest, while the metaphorical power of the associated body parts prevails for didactic reasons. Actually, identifying the centre of movement in areas like the solar plexus or the chest, for example, has shown its effectiveness in generating images and ideas that, during the training process, allow the performer to confront the complexity of executional issues, while even the most state-of-the-art anatomical theories do not succeed in supplying sufficient food for thought. Here, a significant gap between performing arts practices and scientific procedures must be noticed as regards what is considered to be tried and tested in the respective domains: while, on the one hand, experiments lead to the construction of models and theories requiring further validation, on the other a successful practice can crystallize its processes in a stable method.

The construction of a body image around or according to a centre (or more than one centre) is closely linked to the visual imagery of the body as an implement to performance enhancement, a subject of interest for both artistic and neuroscientific research (chap. 7). Visualization as a sort of perspective shift from the performer’s subjectivity to the spectator’s ‘objectivity’ is obviously a necessary step to undertake in order to exercise imagination, that may act as a powerful stimulus toward the invention and experimentation of new solutions. In any case, the performer’s imagination does not exhaust its possibilities by simulating visual inputs, and the mention of Artaud – which could appear to

be out of context — is actually instrumental in highlighting that imagination is activated by stimuli “in the flesh”, that the actor — as an athlete — has to become a “fine nerve-meter” to detect bodily stimuli, whose contribution to cognitive processes commonly believed to be disembodied is widely acknowledged in neuroscientific literature.

The concepts of body image and body schema are then introduced through their definitions by Shaun Gallagher, and accordingly that of self-image as it was approached and developed in Feldenkrais method; all these concepts contribute in drawing up a scenario where perception, proprioception, cognition, and imagination are the nodes of an interconnected network underlying the performer's specific learning process, which is a constant refinement of the image externally manifested and internally felt. Once again, the point is how to manage what is accessible to consciousness, and which intervention can be effective on what is not accessible. Self-knowledge, underlying and allowing the transformation into the other, can be attained only through a training whose course crosses each node of this complex network of covert and overt elements.

Moreover, as hinted above, imagination can be strictly related to action simulation, if we remind that many experiments detected the activation of the same cerebral areas during both imagining of performing and actually performing certain movements; if we were to go a little further, we could say that the embodied mode of simulation allegedly related to mirror neurons activity provides us with a new perspective under which the actor's work can be viewed: the “as if” simulation triggered by the spectators' visual and aural perception of the performance actually mirrors an imaginative “as if”, carefully refined and structured for expression during the training stage, where the performers' past experiences (their senses of self and other, in an inextricable network, if not a tangle, of action and perception) contribute to the creation of a role not without resorting to elements of prediction, drawn from their memory and previous mirroring of conspecifics' behaviours. Stanislavsky's “magic if” in the palace of mirrors...

At this stage, emotion is the topic that remains to be dealt with, starting from how the issues it raises are tackled by three prevailing approaches in the theatrical domain, summarized by Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, and post-modern physical theatre respectively. In the first case, the option for realism is seen as a possible reason to suggest a direction from the inside outward, as the actor is required to process what is stored in the emotional memory to construct the character's emotion on stage

(see the discussion about the Russian terms, especially *perezhivanie*, and their translation vicissitudes), while Meyerhold appears to operate in exactly the opposite way, asking the performer to begin by reproducing the physical symptoms of an emotion in order to represent it effectively. In the case of physical theatre, its unconcern for a realistic representation gives way to a reflection about the relationships between emotion and physical expression, a

sort of experimentation on how movement and gesture can have an effect on both the spectator's perception and the performer's feeling.

Neuroscience is here of much help in delving into the subject, as "emotion" is among the several terms that common everyday language has made vague, almost a synonym of "feeling" and "affect", though they show different semantic hues. It is not at all easy to arrive at a shared definition, but a survey of theories and views on the nature and function of emotions, from William James to Antonio Damasio, allows us at least to see the topic in its complexity (in direct proportion to the complex physiological phenomenology of an emotional reaction) and to notice that merely attempting an approach involves a return to other previously touched issues, such as the various dualisms underlying our mode of thinking. In this case, the two poles are emotion and cognition, which have been proved to be indissolubly tied.

In close connection to that, the phenomenon of stage-fright, a privileged topic in Stanislavsky's work, brings us back to consider the role of the autonomous nervous system in behaviour, and the need for devising techniques to intervene in its two branches (sympathetic and parasympathetic) in order to avoid that this peculiar emotion may increase and jeopardize the performance, whereas the tenseness it elicits can be exploited to enhance the energy of the interpretation.

In the final chapter, "Bringing it All Back Home", all the previously presented significant topics are synthetically summarized as possible subjects of the desired dialogue between performance practice and neuroscience. As we have seen, neurophysiology provides us, in unprecedented detail, with verified information about the complex functioning of organisms in their environment and points out the exigency to go beyond, or at least greatly revise, all conceptions based on the mind-body split, so deeply rooted in our thought and language.

Paraphrasing Peter Brook's reaction at being informed of the proprieties of mirror neurons, it could be said not that theatre practitioners always knew the insubstantiality of the mind-body split, but that they always acted as if they knew. If we analyse the theoretical foundations of those practices, it is in fact apparent how often they are inaccurate, if not untenable, according to current physiological knowledge. However, while scientific research aims at ascertaining facts that concern any domain of reality, theories and experimentations by theatre practitioners have been directed exclusively to improve performance efficacy (with rare but significant exceptions, as for example the last period of Grotowski's research and its development by Richard Thomas).

As long as this distinction remains, success in performance (intended as the achievement of the intended results) is the sole validation of a training method, and scientifically incorrect assumptions may be overlooked, or judged for what they really are, not indisputable statements but metaphorical expressions aimed at raising concrete issues about the performer's work by their appeal to the imagination. But if we stopped here, there would be no use in attempting to establish a dialogue, and everything would end in an exercise of comparative

analysis between different ways of framing important questions for both disciplines.

Dick McCaw chooses instead to suggest that the common ground for the dialogue can be found exactly where the respective findings most challenge our settled views (or should I say postures?) about the mind and the body, and that both theatre practice and neuroscience can help us in formulating the right questions by which a rethinking of the whole matter could start. Methodologically, the undertaking may appear much too eclectic, but this is the only possible approach to an issue so many-sided that its facets cannot be gathered under the domain of a single discipline, or even under a single method. *Rethinking the Actor's Body* confronts us with the perspective to undertake the first steps towards something that in the long run could affect our understanding not only the actor's, but also the 'ordinary', everyday body.

SILVIA SILVESTRI*

“But he loves me... to death”. An Interview with Director Tonio De Nitto and Translator-Adaptor Francesco Niccolini about their Staging of *La Bisbetica Domata* (*The Taming of the Shrew*) for Factory Compagnia Transadriatica

Abstract

The author interviews director Tonio De Nitto and translator-adaptor Francesco Niccolini about their staging of *La Bisbetica Domata* – an Italian adaptation of Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* produced by Factory Compagnia Transadriatica in 2015 and performed in numerous national and international venues ever since. Tapping into Factory’s deep-rooted attachment to their Apulian residency and De Nitto’s longstanding fascination with Shakespearean drama, the interview delves into the semiotics and semantics of the adaptation, discussing the challenges and the interpretative stances arising from Niccolini’s translation in rhyming couplets and De Nitto’s ‘Burtonian’ staging, marked by thought-provoking casting choices, dismal soundtracks, and meaning-laden scenic, light, and costume designs.

KEYWORDS: *The Taming of the Shrew*; Shakespeare; Tonio De Nitto; Francesco Niccolini; performance

1. Staging the Taming: Factory’s Unsettling Take on *The Taming of the Shrew*

Bringing *The Taming of the Shrew* on contemporary stages is no task for the faint-hearted. Whereas past generations of spectators seemingly rolled in laughter at the regimentation of the unruly, foul-mouthed Katherina, cheering Petruchio on in his forceful shrew-taming, modern audiences find it increasingly hard to stomach (let alone enjoy) the knockabout spectacle of a man beating, starving, and brainwashing his wife into submission. Nothing can make such actions look “other than disgusting and unmanly”, wrote George Bernard Shaw as early as 1888 (16), and, 130 years later, Alexander Thom can still not refrain from pointing out that this play has “exhausted [his] usual reserve of critical charity” (2019, 1): its contents are beyond redemption, no matter the lens you read them through.

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Of course, as Ann Thompson has lucidly observed, responses to a play like *The Shrew* “are bound to be affected by the status of women in society at any given time and by the way that status is perceived by both men and women” (2017, 24) – a culturally and historically inflected factor that accounts for the comedy’s shifting reception. From a performative viewpoint, however, it is clear that *The Shrew* continues to appeal to theatre-makers and goes precisely because of its ambiguities, its capacity to poke the soft underbelly of our societies and stir up age-old controversies regarding gender inequality, uneven power dynamics, physical and psychological abuse. One can try to hide such weighty issues under the pretence of farse, treating the play as nothing but good-fun material. One can foreground them by turning Kate into a tragic heroine, or even incorporate them in a strange narrative of toxic, mutual attraction between two kindred spirits. Yet, whatever angle they decide to take, today’s directors are put in a tight interpretative spot when dealing with *The Shrew* – a predicament they face (or try to elude) in contrasting, ever more creative ways.

As for Tonio De Nitto, he decided to address the comedy’s ‘monstrosity’ head-on, playing up Petruchio’s brutality without condoning its supposed benefits or minimizing its effects on Kate. Translated into Italian by dramatist-adaptor Francesco Niccolini, produced by Factory Compagnia Transadriatica, and performed in numerous national and international venues from 2015 onwards, his *Bisbetica domata* offers an unsettling take on Shakespeare’s ‘battle of the sexes’, working with its discomfiting yet at times irresistibly comic texture to make it resonate with contemporary Italian audiences.

The key to Factory’s interpretation of the play is provided, as has frequently been the case in *The Shrew*’s stage history, by their reworking of the Folio Induction. Their *Bisbetica* opens with a dreamlike sequence that, despite fulfilling the same framing function originally assigned to the Sly episode, retains little to nothing of Shakespeare’s prologue. Here, the drunkard and Lord Simon’s entourage are replaced by Katherina herself, who stiffly walks to centre stage to the eerie notes of a carillon, dressed in a bulky wedding gown. The scenery is kept in the dark, but, as soon as she starts looking around with bewildered eyes, the windows of the stylized buildings surrounding her light up, revealing various sinister figures who stare at her. Katherina turns around, feeling their eyes on her back, but she sees nothing: the onlookers have swiftly ducked down, the backdrop has fallen back into darkness.

Such an ominous prelude sets the tone for the rest of the performance, immersing the audience in a nightmarish atmosphere that frames Kate as a stubborn, naïve young woman doomed to succumb to the scrutiny of her community. After trying to rebel against her father and the patriarchal values he stands for, in Act 3 she reluctantly agrees to marry Petruchio, hoping that this change in status will take the pressure of her neighbours’ intrusiveness off of her shoulders. She soon realizes, however, that her husband is but another oppressor, ready to do anything to curb her wilfulness and bring her into submission.

De Nitto handles this 'awakening of conscience' with remarkable directorial skill, dazing his audience with a whirlwind of slapstick sketches only to nudge them into utter shock. The heartily laughs that accompany the play's inception, rich in double entendre and comic stage business, gradually turn to nervous chuckles during the tense wedding scene, ultimately fading into silence as Acts 4 and 5 unfold. Textually, this emotional downward spiral is aided by Niccolini's bold adaptive choices: most of Shakespeare's dialogues are recast in rhyming couplets in his translation, so as to match the *opera buffa* atmosphere that permeates the first part of the performance; then, at the peak of Petruchio's crude shrew-taming, this somewhat light-hearted articulation gives way to a stinging prose style, much more suited to describe the tamer's abuses. The expressive and performative transition thus structured marks a turning point in Factory's *Bisbetica*, compromising any potential for a reconciliatory ending: by the time Petruchio summons Katherina back on stage in 5.2, prompting her infamous last speech, it is impossible to feel anything but horror and sympathy for the shattered, brutalized woman who returns our gaze. She has nothing of the peppy, insolent girl who took the stage by storm at the outset of the play – the maverick who fought back against her father's misogynistic codes and had a laugh at the expenses of her coy sister and noisy community. Her final monologue cannot be intended as tongue-in-cheek under De Nitto's direction: her quivering voice and swollen face make it clear that Petruchio has beaten all impudence out of her.

In what follows, we will plunge deeper into this abyss of violence with the help of De Nitto and Niccolini themselves, so as to shed light on the interpretative and performative cruxes of their adaptation of *The Shrew*.

By way of introduction, it should be noted that neither of our interlocutors is new to Shakespearean reworkings. Tonio De Nitto – actor, director, and co-founder of Factory Transadriatica – started his career at Cantieri Teatrali Koreja, participating, among other things, in their staging of *Molto rumore per nulla* (*Much Ado About Nothing*, 1995-2002). Later on, he was assistant director for Arturo Cirillo's *Otello* (*Othello*, 2008) and director of *Sogno di una notte di mezza estate* (*A Midsummer's Night Dream*, 2011) and *Romeo e Giulietta* (*Romeo and Juliet*, 2012) for Factory's ensemble. More recently, he has worked on *Cenerentola* (*Cinderella*, 2012), *Diario di un brutto anatroccolo* (2016), Molière's *Misanthropo* (*Le Misanthrope*, 2018), *Mattia e il nonno* (2019), which earned him the prestigious 'Eolo' award (2020), *Peter Pan* (2020) and *Hubu Re* (2021). Francesco Niccolini authored a number of original plays and adaptations, including Shakespeare's *Richard III*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Hamlet*. Over the last few years, he has formed fruitful creative partnerships with actors, companies, and directors such as Tonio De Nitto, Marco Paolini (*Vajont*, *Parlamento Chimico*, *Itis Galileo*, *Il calzolaio di Ulisse*), Luigi D'Elia (*Moby Dick*, *Zanna Bianca*, *La Grande Foresta*), Alessio Boni (*I Duellanti*, *Don Chisciotte*). He is also the author of widely appreciated graphic novels, illustrated books for children, and novels, including

Il Lupo e la Farfalla (Mondadori 2019) and *Manù e Michè* (Mondadori 2021). From 2007 onwards, he has collaborated with Italian and Swiss radio and television networks as author and screenwriter. His protean artistic commitment earned him several prestigious dramaturgical and literary recognitions, among which we can cite the Eolo Award (2009, 2013, 2018, 2019), the Laura Orvieto Award (2019), and the Enriquez Award (2020, 2021).

2. Interview

SS: Tonio, I would like to open our conversation with a few remarks on Factory Transadriatica, the company you contributed to founding in 2009. Factory has carved its place in the Italian artistic scene as a hotbed of new talents and ideas, involved in the production of original and adapted plays, the organization of national and international festivals, and the development of young theatre audiences. How did your company come to light? What role do your Apulian residency and roots play in such a successful creative enterprise?

TDN: Factory was born out of a desire to bring together the expertise, aspirations, and dreams of a group of friends and artists who decided to think out of the box and take a chance on themselves, rebelling against the pressures and toxicities that encumber larger theatrical systems. The company is actually a small miracle made possible by a European programme, one of those seemingly dead-end projects that bear no lasting effect on the parties involved. Well, Factory Transadriatica takes its very name from a 2009 Interreg Cooperation Programme – a project that resulted in the staging of an Italo-Balkan adaptation of *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. Ever since our inception, we set ourselves the goal of contributing to the development of the Apulian theatrical scene, establishing our artistic residency in Novoli (Lecce), organising social theatre workshops, educational events for schools, and launching two festivals of distinctive international scope: *Kids*, thought out for the younger generation, and *I teatri della cupa*, dedicated to contemporary productions. On performative and productive grounds, our deep attachment to our roots is also testified by *Trip* – a theatrical journey among Apulian traditions, history, and tastes that has been met with enthusiastic audience response.

SS: Factory's artistic commitment is evidently wide-ranging and, production-wise, it appears to be driven by a keen interest in Shakespearean drama. Your theatrical poetics, Tonio, seems indeed particularly permeated with Shakespearean influences, which inform many of your directorial works. What lies behind such an enduring and fruitful fascination with the Bard?

TDN: I have always loved Shakespeare. Perhaps, this passion was unintentionally

passed on to me by my mother, who was an English teacher, or maybe I owe it to Shakespeare's unparalleled ability to tackle universal issues and flesh out colourful, tormented characters that offer a compendium of human nature. Having a background in classical studies, with a dissertation on the contemporary adaptations of Aristophanes, it was merely natural for me to turn to Shakespeare – a playwright who looked up to his predecessors in a moment when the theatre still maintained the civic role it had fulfilled in the *polis*. I must also admit that, as a young director, I felt more at ease directing large ensembles of actors rather than one-man shows – a challenge I inevitably had to overcome later on in my career. Maybe, the sense of comfort I experience when working on Shakespeare comes from the opportunity to lay hands on perpetually meaningful materials, on powerful words that are still capable of giving shape to our thoughts, fears, and views of the world. There are many other Shakespearean plays I would like to stage in the future, but I am sure I will be drawn back to them in due time, when the only way to express my feelings will be through their words.

SS: *La Bisbetica domata* is Factory's third Shakespearean adaptation, preceded by *Sogno di una notte di mezza estate* (*A Midsummer's Night Dream*, 2009) and *Romeo e Giulietta* (*Romeo and Juliet*, 2012). It is also the second play you stage with the help of Francesco Niccolini – playwright, novelist, screenwriter, stage adaptor. Thanking Francesco for joining us in this conversation, I would like to ask you both what drew you to *The Taming of the Shrew* – no doubt one of Shakespeare's most ambivalent and controversial comedies.

FN: *The Shrew* is the second Shakespearean script I adapted for Tonio: I did not work on *Il Sogno* [*A Midsummer's Night Dream*], the first one he directed for Factory. With other companies, I went through *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard III*, and *Hamlet*. It was Tonio who drew me to *The Shrew*. At first, I was actually a little perplexed by his choice, but my interest in the play sparked when I realized I would have to rewrite the 'original' script to give meaning and purpose to our adaptation. Tonio agreed to take such a risk: now we can say it was worth it.

TDN: I must say that I have always been attracted to this non-comedy. In due course, I found out that this fascination of mine had been shared by more deserving thinkers, and I started brooding over the underlying bitterness of this play, fantasising about the possibility of re-reading its ending by completely overturning its mood. With a work like *The Shrew*, Shakespeare tapped into the condition of Elizabethan women, who were celebrated in his immortal works of art while actually remaining excluded from public life – with the exception of the Royal household, of course. It was Katherina's last speech that spurred my interest in the play: how could the straightforward, unruly Katherina end up uttering such things? Were we to believe that her rebellion had been nothing but a joke played on us, a clever ruse to suggest that nothing would ever change? To come to grips with the issue, we had to start by asking ourselves what it means

to ‘tame’ a woman today. Needless to say, the mere mentioning of such an idea makes our skin crawl. We worked on that feeling, trying to incorporate it into our script without tearing its original texture apart. We foregrounded some of the play’s hidden conflicts and enhanced the black humour of its characters – a community that wants to get rid of the pain in the neck that is Katherina and even of a father who markets his daughters’ bodies in a way that, with some degree of approximation, mirrors the commodification of today’s child brides.

SS: As you were suggesting, this performative refocalization was enabled by a careful reworking of the ‘original’ script, which is presented to Factory’s audiences in an Italian translation. Putting aside the *vexata quaestio* of Shakespeare’s authoriality and originality – a longstanding scholarly problem that goes far beyond the scope of our conversation – we can borrow Rex Gibson’s words to remark that the linguistic and cultural reallocation of Shakespeare’s plays entails “a provisionality and incompleteness that anticipates and requires imaginative, dramatic enactment for completion. A script declares that it is to be played with, explored, actively and imaginatively brought to life by acting out” (2016, 8), the scholar observes, outlining a multifaceted appropriative task that appears even more daunting when related to the renown of Shakespeare’s canon. In your case, not only was *The Shrew* translated from page to stage, but it was also rendered into Italian – not an anodyne operation at that, given the Paduan setting of the action – and performed before twenty-first-century audiences of all ages. Retracing his own steps in such a minefield, Leon Rubin has acknowledged that “acting and directing Shakespeare in translation bring many challenges that need different approaches to working in English”, since “a translation largely dictates much about the production which will emerge from it, and character, style, and setting will be greatly impacted by the choices a translator has made” (2021, 96). How did you approach this challenging task, Francesco? Were you influenced by other stage or page adaptations of *The Shrew*?

FN: When I write, translate, and rewrite, I do not want to dwell too much on what has come before. I prefer jumping in at the deep end, focusing on today’s audience, my own idea of theatricality, and the experiences I share with Tonio, which inspire me tremendously. Two determinations pivoted my approach to *The Shrew*: the decision to rewrite the script in rhyming couplets and the idea of metaphorically striking a violent blow against Katherina – something I strongly argued for and that Tonio luckily agreed to. Sixteenth-century spectators probably laughed at the stubborn, insurgent daughter who, despite being on the verge of spinsterhood, refuses to get married. Most importantly, they laughed at how she is ultimately beaten into submission by her husband. Today, no one would find anything to laugh about that. To bring this unsettling feeling to the fore, we tried to exacerbate the contrast between the slapstick tones of our opening acts and the violence that permeates the last ones: in our adaptation,

the entire village turns their back on Katherina, shutting their eyes and ears to the brutalities she has to endure. At the end of the play, it is impossible to laugh: the blow you get in the stomach knocks you out.

SS: Indeed. Following on from what you just said, I would like to further discuss the style of your adaptation, namely your choice to recast the majority of Shakespeare's dialogues in rhyming couplets. What prompted you to opt for such a unique transposition? What challenges did it pose in textual and performative terms?

FN: I often say to myself that if my source is in verses, my work has to be in verses as well. The same happened with *Romeo e Giulietta*. My idea of a rhyming script, however, has nothing to do with singsong rhymes or with the risk – a terrible one for actors – of getting carried away by the couplets' redundant rhythm and end up acting in an old-fashioned way. I believe that rhymes, when skilfully handled, can turn into an extraordinary expressive *medium* for comedy, capable of bringing out the theatricality of the spoken word. The friendship I share with the actors who brought my words to life – Angela De Gaetano [Katherina], Ippolito Chiarello [Petruchio], Fabio Tinella [Lucentio], Dario Cadei [Baptista] – gave me a great head start. I tailored my lines to their personalities.

SS: As is known, *The Shrew's* nebulous gender politics has been instrumental in securing the play's undying performative appeal. Contemporary directors seem indeed to relish in experimenting with the relational and power dynamics imbricated with the play, negotiating and questioning their implications through ever more creative performative *escamotages*. I'm thinking, for instance, of the gender-swapped *Shrew* directed by Justin Audibert for the Royal Shakespeare Company (2018), which subverts traditional power hierarchies by flipping the characters' gender and putting women in charge; or, to stay within the bounds of Italian theatre, of the all-male performance recently brushed up by Andrea Chiodi for LAC and Teatro Carcano Milano (2017). As for your adaptation, Tonio, I was particularly impressed by the decision to cast an actor – the talented Antonio Guadalupi – in Bianca's role.

TDN: The idea of having Bianca played by an actor *en travesti* stemmed from the necessity to underline the sidereal distance that separates Katherina from the rest of her community. Our Bianca embodies the stereotypical, misogynistic assumption of what a young woman is like – a vain, flirtatious girl whose only goal is to seduce and being seduced. As a result, she does not come across as a well-rounded character but rather as an avatar, a distorted projection of what certain types of men want to see in women. By playing up such characteristics, I managed to stress the difference between her attitude and Katherina's unbending nature, calling attention to the hypocrisy and duplicity of the village that surrounds her. History tells us that the Elizabethan stage was no place for

women, but I knew I could never do without a proper shrew – a proud yet fragile woman who is slowly annihilated by her partner, as unfortunately still happens to thousands of women who flee the oppression of their family only to fall into the hands of a new tormenter.

SS: It seems to me that the relentless annihilation you have just mentioned starts at the very outset of the play, with the dimming of the lights. In fact, on the curtain rise, we see a woman – who we will later find out to be Katherina – walking towards the stalls in a puffy wedding gown, as stiff as a puppet, while the theatre is slowly filled with a melody that seems to come from a carillon. Then, the windows of your modular, richly decorated scenery light up, and various characters start peeking out of them with a grin on their face, staring at Katherina's back. I do not think it far-fetched to assume that this is your reinterpretation of the Sly frame – one of the most problematic segments of the play, as it was left unfinished in the *First Folio* edition of 1623. In view of its incompleteness, past and present productions of *The Shrew* have alternatively omitted the drunkard's episode altogether or have forcefully wrapped it up with the help of *The Taming of a Shrew* – anonymous Quarto of uncertain philological descent. What was the source of inspiration for your reworking of this performative crux?

TDN: My obsession with carillons surely played a huge part in the definition of this framing narrative – it is this same fascination that led me to open *Sogno di una notte di mezza estate* with an up-tempo theatrical mechanism designed to carry the audience into the play's Athenian setting. Generally speaking, I like to take some of my characters' peculiarities to the extremes, baring their essence with the help of my actors and then infusing it in their very movements. Even the smallest of gestures, at times obsessively repeated, can foreshadow what we are about to see on stage, bespeaking the innermost obsessions that define our characters and the world they inhabit. The repetition, acceleration, and slackening of movements allow to influence the audience's perception of the play, making them look at it through the same lens that I, as director, am using to re-read it. Of the original Sly frame, I actually take nothing but its dreamlike dimension, using it as a kind of refrain – a *déjà-vu* that rushes back into the audience's minds when Katherina, dressed in that same wedding gown, is left to wait at the altar while the whole village stares at her, judging her every move.

SS: An interesting interpretative stance for sure, that, to a certain extent, follows Sears Jayne's suggestion to stage *The Shrew* as “a dream play in which the whole of the inner play is Sly's dream” (1966, 56) – a variation meant to solve the thorny ‘Sly problem’ and provide an interpretative key for the whole action, especially for what concerns the main plot. With regards to the subplot, instead, Act 3.1 appears to be crucial in developing Bianca's storyline, since it is along

its lines that Shakespeare reveals the coquetry and duplicity of the younger Minola. In the English play, Bianca and Lucentio's courtship is enabled by a questionable translation of Ovid's *Heroides*, whose verses are remoulded into cheeky declarations of love and lust. In your adaptation, Francesco, the same literary mediation is offered by Leopardi's *Infinito*.

FN: When I work on a foreign play-text, I try not to translate word by word. I would rather engage with the audience's shared knowledge and experiences, making use of elements they are familiar with. My work aims at bridging communicative gaps, not enlarging them. In this particular case, I thought that *L'Infinito* could also fulfil a distinctive comic function: using a very well-known nineteenth-century Italian poem in a world-famous sixteenth-century English comedy... it was a bit like creating a hall of mirrors, making past and present, Italy and England, poetry and drama collide on stage.

SS: A risk that paid off, I would say: everyone in the stalls laughed out loud at Lucentio's saucy recitation of the poem. On a completely different note, let us focus now on a sore point with Shakespeare's contemporary spectators: the brutal shrew-taming that dominates Act 4. I think it interesting to point out that your adaptation omits the multitude of servants who materially carry out Petruchio's tortures, reimagining the sequence as a crude confrontation between the tamer and his shrewish wife alone. From a stylistic perspective, this is the only moment when rhyming couplets give way to a modern, sharp, at times even vulgar prose style – a change in tone that underlines the turning point leading up to the plot's crisis. On performative grounds, the same purpose seems to be served by the modular scenery, which is temporarily moved to the side of the stage to neutralize the scene of action, and a well-thought-out play of light that keeps Petruchio and Kate in shade, as if they were shadow puppets cast onto a blank wall illuminated with cool nocturnal colours. The action thus structured comes across as a sort of diegetic *a parte* – a cathartic intermission that capitalizes upon verbal and non-verbal signs to engage the audience on a deep emotional level. Would it be right to suggest that these are the moments that define the interpretative horizon of your *Bisbetica*?

FN: Yes, absolutely. Petruchio's cruelty, the indifference of the surrounding community, Katherina's crippling, consuming loneliness are a bit of a stretch from a philological point of view. Yet, I firmly believe that, as far as stage adaptations are concerned, being faithful to one's sources does not mean sticking to their exact wording, but rather opening them up to new interpretations, making them relevant for today's spectators. Enhancing the violence of Petruchio and Katherina's clash was crucial to this purpose.

TDN: Yes. Positing that Katherina's last speech was something other than an elaborate ruse, I had to turn Act 4 into an actual descent to hell, so as to pave

the way towards the play's bitter ending. After reading and testing Francesco's first draft with the actors, I asked him to rewrite this sequence, eliminating all supporting characters to increase the tension between our two protagonists. So, Grumio and the other servants drop out of the scene, giving their lines to Petruchio and putting him in charge of the bullying. Context-wise, we give our audience nothing but two dark silhouettes to look at, thus drawing attention to the tense words that are being spoken on stage. That is why I needed Petruchio and Katherina to engage in a raw, stinging verbal confrontation, *à la Pinter*¹ – a violent exchange meant to match the brutality these characters' fight. I was fully satisfied with Francesco's second draft, and I made our theatrical apparatuses comply with its dark tones. In response to this stark dramatic transition, our spectators usually fall silent, sometimes they even chuckle hysterically, plunging with Petruchio and Katherina into an abyss of violence and terror.

SS: In the light of their evident semantic thickness, it would be interesting to examine in greater detail the stage apparatuses you just referred to, namely Davide Arsenio's stunning light designs and the painstakingly decorated modular scenery built by Roberta Dori Puddu and Luigi Conte. As Roland Barthes eloquently put it, any theatrical representation is characterized by "a real informational polyphony" (1964, 262) triggered by what Keir Elam defined as "transcodification": on stage "a given bit of semantic information can be translated from one system to another or supplied simultaneously by different kinds of signal" (1980, 52) distributed on linguistic, kinesic, proxemic, scenic levels, thereby spreading semantic content across different, cooperating communicative systems. It follows that lights and scenery play a crucial role in outlining a play's fictional space, contributing to singling out diegetic turning points and guiding audience decoding. Tonio, could you walk us through the preparatory work underlying your staging of *The Shrew*? What function did light and scenic effects fulfil within the semantic and semiotic framework of your adaptation?

TDN: As is well-known, theatrical communication relies on the interplay between verbal, non-verbal, and para-verbal codes, which contribute, each in their own way, to the production of meaning on stage. We wanted to fully exploit this synergy in our staging of *The Shrew*, and we found a seminal source of inspiration in Tim Burton's aesthetics. I envisioned our *Bisbetica* as a dark Burtonian comedy, with Katherina leading as a sort of Corpse Bride – bruised, shattered, with broken bones and soul. In compliance with this almost cinematic atmosphere, our setting represents Padua as a cartoon-like village, made of stylized movable buildings gathered around Baptista's house and peopled

¹ On Harold Pinter's distinctive use of vulgarisms, see for instance Fletcher 1993 and Yerebakan 2014.

by silhouettes that constantly peep through their windows and doors, in a whirlwind of restless motions and rotations. Such a dynamic setup obviously impinged on the choice of our actors' physicality, and it has also encouraged them to caricature their body motions while darting across the stage, moving and rotating props to reveal what is hidden behind their shiny façades. With a few other *escamotages* – the use of white gloves to neutralize the actors' function and turn them into stagehands, the spotlighting of one particular house to make it stand out – we managed to carve different spaces and situations out of our scene of action, using scenic and kinesic conventions to accompany the plot's rapid unravelling. Roberta Dori Puddu brought my gothic fantasies to life, embellishing our scenic elements with layers of painting and meticulous chisel work to imitate the decorative style of fifteenth and sixteenth-century Venetian villas.

SS: Speaking of the potential for garments to change an actor's role on stage, it comes naturally to think of two additional, highly semanticized theatrical systems: make-up and costumes, here designed by Lapi Lou. In this regard, I was particularly struck by Katherina's last make-up and Petruccio's tamer attire, completed with a riding crop that he slaps into the palm of his hand while speaking of and with Kate – a gesture that can be traced back to John Philip Kemble's interpretation of the male lead.

TDN: Lapi Lou's costumes – sewn with obsessive attention to detail – have a comics-like design that merges the aesthetics of Signor Bonaventura, the protagonist of *Il Corriere dei piccoli*, with gothic, Burtonian influences. As a result of this stylization, Petruccio is presented as a proper beast-tamer, dressed in a purple tailcoat paired with a top hat, a riding crop, and a full beard almost entirely drawn on his face. As for Katherina, in our last scene she hobbles back on stage with bruises on her face, battered, her lips so swollen and sore that she can barely speak. Her appearance surely marks one of the most shocking moments of our performance: the sight of her disturbing countenance silences the stalls, virtually punching the audience in the stomach. Sometimes, it even urges them to voice their indignation.

SS: A truly unnerving spectacle, indeed. After Kate's last speech, the taut silence that fills the theatre is broken only by a dismal acoustic adaptation of *Però mi vuole bene* ("But he loves me", 1964) – a popular motif of the Italian *Quartetto Cetra* revisited by Paolo Coletta to mark the stages of Petruccio's gruesome shrew-taming.

TDN: Exactly. That song is the linchpin of our soundtrack, which consists mostly of alterations and variations of its main theme. As Act 4 progresses, the scenery is rearranged to the tune of *Però mi vuole bene*, softly hummed by the actors-stagehands in a way that makes it almost unrecognizable. Then, throughout Act

5, the same melody is played by carillons to mark the pivotal moments of our *dénouement*. Paolo Coletta is an extraordinarily sensitive musician, and, having been an actor himself, he has a perfect understanding of how the theatre works. That “love-to-death” refrain sung by *Quartetto Cetra* effortlessly – and, perhaps, cynically – encapsulates the message of our *Bisbetica*, suggesting once more that there is no love in what (or who) kills you.

Translated by the author

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MONICA CRISTINI*

WEATHER#: Developing New Theatre Ecologies Through a Virtual Venue¹

Abstract

WEATHER# is a multimedia performance based on the musical opera composed by Elizabeth Swados in 2014; its aim is to raise knowledge and awareness on climate change and human impact on the natural world. The new production presented in January 2021 develops the original work by using several artistic languages and performative forms in order to create a new and accessible social environment of cultural sharing, and to promote discussion about climate issues. Without following a narrative form, *WEATHER#* combines chants, dances, and monologues played in several languages in a *kaleidoscopic* shape, creating a path through the various aspects of the climate change. The performance encompasses a great variety of stories, scientific descriptions, and mythological narrations in a 360-degree virtual space, divided into eleven rooms in which the audience can both attend and interact with the performance. The outcome is a new theatrical venue, shared by performers and audience, and among the members of the audience. This novel vision of the virtual and performative context creates a new social environment and implies a rethinking of both making and experiencing theatre. The physical boundaries of the theatrical space are trespassed and opened to a limitless environment. This peculiarity leads also to a reconsideration of the relationship between artists and spectators in a new and open theatre ecology.

KEYWORDS: theatre ecology; social environment; climate change; 3D theatre; virtual space

I feel that weather is off.
I feel that there is something wrong, something deeply wrong on there.
I feel that certain seasons come too soon and stay too long.
I feel storms come when they don't usually come.
I feel that the cold is a new kind of cold... like steel.
The weather is mad at us.
The weather is yelling at us.
So, I wanted to yell back to the weather.
(Swados 2001)

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In January 2021 La Mama Umbria International and Associazione Bisse based in Spoleto, Italy, presented an ongoing project comprising a virtual space where theatre, dance, music and the visual arts join together to talk, develop interest and create awareness about the climate change issue. The project, called *WEATHER#*, is based on one of the last works the American composer and theatre director Elizabeth Swados wrote in 2014 as a music opera. It was presented as part of a programme launched by La Mama Experimental Theatre of New York, called *La Mama Earth*, devoted to climate change. The work, whose texts were written by the Italian poet Filippo Consales, is considered a dramatic *oratorio* that uses music and theatre to raise public awareness on this urgent issue, in Elizabeth Swados' belief that if just one person would be touched, then the world could be changed.

In Italy, Swados's opera was originally staged as a choral musical work at the Teatro Romano di Spoleto in the context of the Teatro Dei Due Mondi Festival 2014. Music and arrangements were curated by the music director Claudio Scarabottini, who worked on the melodies and the chords outlined by Swados.

WEATHER# has now been elaborated into an online immersive experience through an international collaboration involving partner organisations and artists from Italy, France, the UK, Korea, the US and Mexico. The new production, which the authors describe as a *multimedia online odyssey*, has enriched the original work by using several artistic languages and performative forms to create a new accessible social environment of cultural sharing, and to promote discussion on climate issues. "With sounds and rhythms that mix the atmospheres of Western music and world music, the composition collects a great variety of stories, scientific descriptions, newscasts and mythological narrations that tell of storms, destructions, rebirth and beauty".²

The project is headed by the music director Claudio Scarabottini and theatre director Jared McNeill, who is part of the La MaMa group of artists and worked for years with Peter Brook. Artistic supervisor is Andrea Paciotta – Associate Professor at the Seoul Institute of the Arts, the institution that provided the multimedia space design, and director of CultureHub Europe, an association focused on the use of telepresence and telematic technologies for educational and artistic purposes – and Adriana Garbagnati acts as project manager.

As already mentioned, the original plan to present the work as a live performance had to be abandoned because of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time, in the winter of 2020, McNeill was collaborating with Andrea Paciotta

ka-Curie, grant agreement No 840989. My gratitude goes to Adriana Garbagnati, Jared McNeill and Claudio Scarabottini for the interviews and collaboration, La MaMa Archive and La MaMa Umbria International for their collaboration during my research.

² *La Mama Umbria: WEATHER#*, www.lamama.org/shows/weather (Accessed 5 August 2021).

at CultureHub Europe. This experience led McNeill and Scarabottini to create something new that could answer urgent questions connected to the relationship between performers and spectators. The most pressing concern was to devise new strategies for bringing younger people closer to the theatre and the arts in general by creating a venue that could be more accessible than a theatre. The issue of climate change was then dealt with, with a particular focus on what scientists consider the deep interaction between nature and culture (Kershaw 2021). So, how can performance and theatre be a means for changing people's attitudes towards climate and environmental matters. This aspect is crucial in gauging the relevance of artistic engagement in the efforts to solve the climate crisis, a challenging test of its capability to exert a true influence on the collective consciousness (Apple 2020).

How those who in the arts can take on this crisis in a manner that not just informs, but illuminates, awakens, and activates on a visceral and experimental level so that we feel it in our bodies and souls?

...

Is it even possible for an artwork or an artist-advocate to sufficiently and effectively influence the collective conscience to substantially change the way we live? (Apple 2020, 59-61)

Furthermore, Scarabottini and McNeill had to deal with other creative issues raised by the lockdown, such as how to tell a story in a virtual space, or how to find a living contact between singers and musicians who are not allowed to perform together in the same room.

What emerged from all these questions was a multidisciplinary project that envisioned a new theatrical paradigm for live online performances in a virtual space that would include audience interaction. During the creative phase, the challenge was to build an experience around the performance and not just to present its video reproduction; to create a new relationship to theatre in a 3D environment where "theatre can become the site of a much-needed ecological consciousness" (Chaudhuri 1994, 28) and a means to foster a change in our relationship with the natural world, encouraged by the critical act of seeing and experiencing.

The project offers a virtual space where people can meet to talk about climate change, spectators can experience different contents, suitable for both adults and children, outlining the climate crisis at different levels; multiple examples are shown of the relationship between the arts and the natural environment. The underlying idea is to create a virtual venue for facilitating the kind of social interactions that usually take place in a live theatre performance.

1. Novel Creative Strategies and Paradigms



Figure 1. *WEATHER#*, *Anelito*, the room. Screenshot. Courtesy La MaMa Umbria International

The project takes place in a virtual space consisting of eleven rooms named after the titles of Swados' songs, each devoted to a specific climate issue (fig. 1). The spectator enters a 3D room and chooses among some contents available in different languages. The main item is a brief video of the musical work made up of contributions that the artists who took part in the project sent to the director, where the music is the basis of a story about a specific climate issue or event, and allegorical embodiments of the atmospheric events are part of the narrative. While Swados brought the physicality of the atmospheric elements into the music, modelling it like a clay statue, Consales provided the lyrics focusing on the personifications of the meteorological events.

But the creation of these videos, which narrate different subjects linked to each other by the music, presented some problems, such as the quality of the recordings. Given the lockdown conditions in which they were realized, the technical level was uneven as the videos came mostly from the direct initiative of the artists, who employed a hodgepodge of different cameras and settings, from open spaces to recording studios. Therefore, to create an aesthetic uniformity across all the works, and given the impossibility to direct them all in person, McNeill prepared a list of key indications.

The result is a kaleidoscope of images: a meeting of many different cultures, languages and music, the latter played on acoustic and electric instruments both belonging to the Western musical culture and to the folk tradition of the

countries involved. An exchange and a collaboration, along with the combination of different art forms, that achieved Ellen Stewart's main objective of culture sharing, a purpose she pursued since the foundation of Cafè La MaMa in New York City (1961).

Also, the peculiar freedom from fixed patterns of Swados' music made it possible to link together highbrow and lowbrow traditional music and folk rhythms. Thanks to the participation of several artists, the opera was enriched with the music and performances of different countries, such as Pansori, a Korean theatre performance, Slavic ritual dances, and oriental and Arabic music and songs.

The performances stage climate issues in the frame of a daily life that the audiences find familiar: a choice based on the need to raise the spectators' awareness of the imminence of ecological disaster, and the imperative not to wait until the house burns down. (Apple 2020). The preliminary objective was to make environmental disruption tangible and to lead people to see that climate issues are an integral part of their lives. In McNeill's and Scarabottini's approach, art is a bridge and a communication channel between history or scientific narration and the spectators, a means that can effectively influence the collective consciousness in order to change the way people live.

Both artists and spectators from different parts of the world reacted differently to the work, showing a preference for this or that video, and feeling that some subjects were closer than others to their lives and experience. In fact, on the basis of what each artist feels is most urgent in her or his country, the performances provide different answers to the problems of climate change, and all the works are shaped in different styles mirroring the various moods. This peculiarity has contributed to creating the distinctive aesthetics that characterize *WEATHER#*.

The videos are of different kinds: with a reference to constructivism, some of them are like collages, created by recycling old images into a new work. Their aesthetics can be associated with the CAMP sensibility or the American sitcoms of the 1960s as for instance in the song titled *Newscast*, which satirizes a couple watching TV in bed, overwhelmed by a barrage of news items and images on weather catastrophes.

Others, like *The Giant and the Mermaid*, are animated cartoons created to tell a story, or videos matching situations from different parts of the world and their respective answers to the common problem of climate change. This is the case with *Dodola* (fig. 2), whose title is taken from an ancient Slavic rain god. In this work, a Western contemporary dance alternates with a Korean Pansori performance based on vocal improvisations. This video is matched with some extra contents made up of two documentaries about weather events: a tutorial for children about making rain, and a video showing Eastern European folk dances devoted to the god *Dodola*.



Figure 2. WEATHER#, Dodola, screenshot of the main video.
Courtesy La MaMa Umbria International

Therefore, in its several dimensions, *WEATHER#* brings the natural environment into the virtual venue through the arts. Instead of offering an “enchanted immersion in ‘environment’ or ‘nature’” (Lavery 2021, 1), this work transfers the natural world into an artistic, artificial dimension by using theatre, music, dance and graphic design performances as effective media to connect people to environmental events and make them aware of their personal responsibility. Viewers can roam around the virtual room as if they were in a museum, closely observing the different works and immersing themselves in the aesthetic experience. The climatic events shown and narrated in the videos spark a dialogue with the solutions advanced, in a 3D environment that envelops and engages viewers, inviting them to reflect on the climate crisis.

The project, initially conceived as a traditional theatrical performance but reformulated for a virtual space, meant to develop a new and as yet undefined dramaturgical strategy. The creative process had to be adapted to the lockdown condition and the impossibility of an in-person production. McNeill defines this new practice, and its concomitant aesthetics, as the new neo-realism of the Covid era, in which all artists must find alternative paths of creative practice to reproduce the fictional and ephemeral dimension of theatre, dance and music. At the same time, during the first creative phase, he chose not to impose his own artistic vision but rather gave the artists complete freedom to express themselves and to make their own aesthetic choices.

In incorporating the video contributions of the more than fifty international artists and musicians, McNeill restricted his directorial authorship to editing the final videos, choosing to use a green screen, adding graphic elements to create a

surreal atmosphere that reflected the urgency to save our natural environment, and inviting the audience to experience this urgency directly by attending the performances in the 3D space.

While the dramaturgical process was in part elaborated along with this experimental project, it also resulted from the new rules imposed by the Covid-19 emergency. The question now is to see if the new tactics for implementing the creative process will be adopted in the future or if artists will go back to their pre-pandemic practices. They are facing a new kind of relationship with each other but also with their audiences, in which they must redefine the manner of performing in the space of a virtual environment.

2. Building a New Theatre Ecology

The theatrical event is a complex social interweave, a network of expectations and obligations. The Exchange of stimuli – either sensory or ideational or both – is the root of theatre.
(Schechner 1968, 42)

WEATHER# is a project that provides an innovative solution to the problem of *alienation* between artists and audience in a virtual context by creating an environment in which they can meet and interact in a virtual space. By moving across the online 3D space and interacting with the several visual and musical contents of the work, the audience can experience the stories and the scientific or cultural references behind them. Each room of the space presents several contents: the main video based on one of Swados's songs; scientific documentaries about the subject related to the room; videos showing rituals and ceremonies of different cultures, linked to the climate issue; and tutorials for children.

In the 3D venue, spectators can effectively attend the performances as well as the projection of documentaries or other kinds of contents. They can also read poems, song lyrics and comments written on the virtual walls of the room.

The aim is to create an immersive experience of the climatic emergency. Having entered the virtual venue, the spectator can move and explore the different contents supported by Swados and Scarabottini's music and songs, participating to a new kind of event and experiencing a new and novel relationship with other members of the audience, with the performers and with the compositions themselves. Here, the 3D format, with its potential to involve viewers in a virtual reality, exploits the ability of the visual arts, of music and theatre to communicate with the public both intellectually and emotionally. Through the experience of the performative event, the viewers who roam around the theme room directly involve themselves in the narration and are encouraged to react personally. On the other hand, the context built around

the show, through the documentaries, tutorials and materials associated with the main videos, provides tools to stimulate a critical outlook on the climate issue, a more conscious relationship with the environment, and ideas on how to bring about change. By giving life to this new theatrical mode of ecology involvement that unites artists and audience in a shared space, the director and his collaborators have provided a possible answer to how a performance, and art in general, can impact people's attitudes towards climate issues.

This is just the starting point of an ongoing larger project that provides other forms of interaction. The objective is to link this virtual eleven-room presentation space to a 3D interactive space called *Arium* (fig. 3). Already online on the website, it is an environment people can enter by just logging on and encountering or creating events and performances. Scarabottini, McNeill and Paciotto are currently working on it to enable spectators to attend virtual live performances and effectively interact with each other and with the artists. Performances will be realized by means of a green screen and a specifically designed suit for tracing and mapping the performer's movements, so as to give life in real time to the online event.



Figure 3. *WEATHER#*, *Arium*, screenshot. Courtesy La MaMa Umbria International

This approach can create a new theatre ecology with a new performance and spectator experience thanks to the total, immersive involvement in the virtual space and a different kind of relationship generated by the real-time presence of the participants, along with the quintessentially virtual dimension of a 3D simulation. This process will imply a new system of communication and the likely elaboration of a new set of rules in the acting–answering timing of the

players: the performers and the spectators. A novel kind of interaction in the performance space will be experienced, giving life to an original theatre ecology. The final objective transcends the work itself: the aim is to create a space capable of hosting artistic developments while promoting encounters and the sharing of experiences. A true *ecosystem* with its own way of producing and receiving, along with the interacting artistic communities (Marranca 1996).

The La Mama Umbria project also developed a more sustainable approach to artistic practice. While working on climate change issues, the group decided to concretely apply a virtuous behaviour through the creation of a new production protocol, which can be considered a sort of practical code that underpins both the entire project and each of its performances, a code that in a certain sense contributes to defining the theatre ecology itself.

WEATHER# is part of a broader project that the Regione Umbria and the city of Spoleto are sponsoring to develop new sustainable processes in the ecological, economic, political and social sectors, to respond to climate change and promote a positive way of relating to the natural environment. The directors of this multimedia performance have taken an artistic and educational approach to this subject, in order to face the climate crisis in a practical way by developing a new formal production protocol. Assisted by a team of ecology and climate experts, they have developed a new sustainable production procedure in which all the elements and processes involved respond to the ecological consciousness, from a limited use of paper, energy and fuel to the adoption of eco-friendly vehicles. The protocol was certified in Italy and is being examined by the European Commission. It was discussed in a conference hosted by the Spoleto Festival Teatro dei due Mondi in June 2021,³ an event that adopted the same green protocol that will be available to all the artists who decide to implement it.

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GHERARDO UGOLINI*

Orestes the Gunslinger and the Flying Bacchae. Ancient Theatre Festival - Syracuse 2021

Abstract

For the fifty-sixth season of the Ancient Theatre Festival at Syracuse (3 July-21 August 2021) three Greek tragedies were staged. In the first place, *The Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides* by Aeschylus (the second and third parts of the *Oresteia*) were played as a single performance of the translation by Walter Lapini, directed by Davide Livermore. The mythical history of the house of Atreus is projected into a twentieth-century context, with a sometimes disproportionate use of special effects which, although they have an undoubted emotional impact on the spectators, are often unnecessary and adopted simply for their own sake, with little reference to the sense of Aeschylus' plays. The stagecraft of the *Bacchae*, on the other hand, is very different and much more successful. This production of the translation by Guido Paduano, directed by the Catalan Carlos Padrissa with his company Fura Dels Baus, however 'extreme' its scenographic choices may seem (flying Bacchae supported by a crane, Dionysus played by a woman) they always appear to be well integrated into the dramaturgical structure and responding to an intelligent interpretation of Euripides' text.

KEYWORDS: Aeschylus; Euripides; Syracuse; Greek tragedy; Davide Livermore; Carlus Padrissa

After almost two years' interruption the Greek theatre at Syracuse opened its gates once more in July-August 2021 for the fifty-sixth season of performances of classical drama. Notwithstanding the difficulties and limitations imposed by the state of emergency (seating capacity of the cavea reduced by 50%, audience masks compulsory, social distancing on the terraces), the *Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico* (I.N.D.A.) managed to provide an excellent programme including a variety of plays among which were three Greek tragedies: *The Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides* by Aeschylus, the second and third parts of the *Oresteia*, played as a single performance directed by Davide Livermore (the first play in the trilogy, *Agamemnon*, will be part of the 2022 programme) and Euripides' *Bacchae* directed by Carlus Padrissa.

The choice of playing the *Libation Bearers* and the *Eumenides* together was not fortuitous but, indeed looks back at illustrious historical precedent. Exactly

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a hundred years ago, in 1921, the I.N.D.A. started up again after a long interval of seven years caused by the Great War and the ‘Spanish’ flu epidemic with the staging of these self-same plays by Aeschylus. A multimedia exhibition, entitled *Oresteia: The Second Act*, at the *Palazzo Greco*, the headquarters of the *Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico*, was one of the features of the season this year. Material from the archives, documents and photographs bore witness to the famous performance of 1921 which was directed by Ettore Romagnoli, with scenery and costumes by Duilio Cambellotti and music and choruses by Giuseppe Mulè.¹

A century after this, the spectators who took their places on the terraces of the Greek Theatre to watch Davide Livermore’s staging, based on Walter Lapini’s fluent translation, were to see a performance which was very different from that of 1921. Right from the beginning a glance at the scenography, before the play started, would show them that the production was anything but conventional. Scattered upon the great circular orchestra space were objects having little or nothing to do with the situation of ancient Greece: a couple of pianos, a harp, an armchair and a sofa, a side table with a bottle of champagne and two glasses on it, a gramophone, the wreckage of a cart beneath a broken-down bridge. These represent an “archive of memories”, a scenic device which had already been adopted by Livermore for his previous production of Euripides’ *Helen* in 2019 (Ugolini 2019). In that scenography the objects were floating in an enormous pool of water. Here they are covered in snow, as if to suggest a landscape which has been in hibernation for a long time.² A circular dais, the memorial stone of Agamemnon’s tomb, towers at centre stage. In the background can be seen the gate to the city of Argos, and next to it a large technological sphere is spinning, perhaps a symbol of the earth, or of the whole universe, or even of Zeus, to confirm the eternity of the myth.³

Needless to say, that the entire stage décor is easily discernible as being that

¹ The exhibition catalogue is edited by Marina Valensise (2021).

² The director’s intention was to reconstruct “a power system where Agamemnon’s shade permeates the scene with clearly discernible devastation” thus creating “a cold, frozen world, covered by snow and ice” (Livermore 2021, 20).

³ *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides* by Aeschylus, director Davide Livermore, Italian translation Walter Lapini, scenic project Davide Livermore, costumes Gianluca Falaschi, music Andrea Chenna, lighting Antonio Castro, assistant director Sax Nicosia, stage director Alberto Giolitti, Video design: D-Wok. Cast: Giuseppe Sartori (Orestes), Spyros Chamilos (Pylades), Anna Della Rosa (Electra), Gaia Aprea, Alice Girolidini, Valentina Virando, Chiara Osella, Graziana Palazzo, Silvia Piccollo (libation bearers), Sax Nicosia (ghost of Agamemnon), Laura Marinoni (Clytemnestra), Maria Grazia Solano (Cylissa), Stefano Santospago (Aegystus), Maria Laila Fernandez, Marcello Gravina, Turi Moricca (Furies), Gabriele Crisafulli, Manfredi Gimigliano, Lorenzo Iacuzio, Roberto Marra, Francesca Piccolo (watchmen); Maria Grazia Solano (Pythia), Giancarlo Giudica Cordiglia (Apollo), Laila Maria Fernandez, Marcello Gravina, Turi Moricca (Eumenides), Laura Marinoni (ghost of Clytemnestra), Federica Cinque (statue of Athena), Olivia Manescalchi (Athena). First performance: Syracuse, Greek Theatre, July 3th 2021.

of Davide Livermore, the distinguished opera director, who has always been known as an advocate and proponent of genre mixing and futuristic experimenting. Clearly, if the production of a Greek tragedy is entrusted to the originality of an artist of this calibre, in his hands the play will become a tragedy by Livermore, with all the recodifying of language and meaning that this entails. In any case, this is the itinerary followed persistently and courageously – especially in the last few years – by the I.N.D.A.: the production of shows that combine philological faithfulness (whatever this may mean) with the need to render Greek tragedy pertinent to contemporary society. As this is a production by Livermore, his unique stylistic signature cannot be neglected: that is, of course, the use of images projected on the backcloth which interact with the action on stage. Here the images are those which appear one by one on the spinning globe: images of sea, fire, earth, blood, solar explosions, arid, snow-covered landscapes, phantasms of the past demanding revenge and rousing terror.

Even before the play begins, a recorded voice utters lines in ancient Greek and in Italian that capture the ear of the spectator in the manner of a refrain. For example, “Outrage calls to outrage” and similar aphorisms, to suggest the legendary interpretation of Aeschylus’ trilogy as an endless sequence of vengeance. In the polis of Argos, motionless under a mantle of snow for years, soldiers in uniform and armed with rifles swagger about: they are the guards posted by the “double tyranny” of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (cf. *Choeph.* 973: τὴν διπλὴν τυραννίδα) who have usurped power. Orestes (Giuseppe Sartori) and Pylades (Spyros Chamilos), revolvers in hand, manage to get to Agamemnon’s



Fig. 1: Electra (Anna Della Rosa) and Orestes (Giuseppe Sartori) with the libation bearers in front of Agamemnon’s tomb. Photo Ballarino/AFI Siracusa.

tomb without being seen. Here a modification on the part of the direction – to tell the truth, not a very convincing one – sees Orestes lay on his father's tomb as a votive offering not a lock of his blond hair but a gilded bullet, symbol of death and vengeance, and it will be because of this that the brother and sister will recognise one another (Fig. 1).

The ritual of the libation bearers, the women who pour their offerings on to the tomb, is carried out under the watchful and threatening vigilance of the guards of Aegisthus. While they are placing flowers on the grave, the funeral lament is chanted, or rather, perhaps, howled or wailed, with too little moderation. Much more successful is the prayer that Electra (Anna Della Rosa) addresses to Zeus, which is accompanied by sacred music. The *coup de théâtre* is the apparition inside the immense spinning sphere of Agamemnon's effigy, a mask disfigured by suffering, a ghost demanding revenge and justice for the assassination he had endured.

Clytemnestra (Laura Marinoni) is a *femme fatale*, heavily made-up and sexy, sheathed in a ball-gown covered in sequins and spangles, wearing a blonde wig and sunglasses. She gets out of a car from the forties (to be exact, a 1949 Lancia Aprilia), pouring herself large and frequent glasses of wine, and, sitting on the sofa (almost as if she were a patient of Dr Freud's), she recounts her dream of the serpent, a traditional theme in the saga of the House of Atreus from Stesichorus onwards. When he is in front of his mother Orestes loses most of his gun-slinging bravado: when he tells her about his feigned death he often stumbles over his words, stammering and becoming tongue-tied (Fig. 2). Giuseppe Sartori is really skilful in his portrayal of this postmodern Orestes, full of tics and frustrations, neurotic and insecure, weak and ailing even before the Erinyes get hold of him. The matricide is committed in a way which is very different from the mythical tradition and the Classical tragic imaginary. Here the son does not plunge his sword into his mother's breast, but the execution is at first carried out in a sort of parody of a duel of the Far West: the first to fire is Clytemnestra who, however, misses the target (her son, Orestes), because the pistol misfires. At this point Orestes murders her by convincing her to drink a glass of champagne containing a capsule of poison, something that Clytemnestra accepts without much opposition so that the matricide could almost seem a suicide. Once his mother is dead, Orestes cannot contain his tears. Here we witness an example of another of Livermore's distinctive traits: the mixing of genres, when he passes from tragedy to melodrama, from musical to operetta in the twinkling of an eye. Again, Pylades is much less silent than he is in Aeschylus' text. It is he after all who shoots down Aegisthus (Stefano Santospago), portrayed as an underworld boss, a predatory macho accompanied by a half-naked lover. He soon gets rid of her with no remorse, spraying her with bullets, and then goes on to shamelessly grope the handmaidens in the palace of Argos.



Fig. 2: Orestes (Giuseppe Sartori) and Clytemnestra (Laura Marinoni). Photo Carnera/AFI Siracusa.

There are only three Erinyes, dressed, contrary to all expectation, in garish robes of glittering gold lame (clearly linking them with Clytemnestra's gown): androgynous vamps armed with knives waiting to avenge Clytemnestra's death by cutting her son's throat. But Orestes flees to Delphi (Orestes' flight is staged by means of a *tapis roulant* which emerges from Agamemnon's tomb). And at this point the performance of the *Libation Bearers* merges with that of the *Eumenides*. This play too undergoes a typically 'Livermorean' revision. The political dimension of the play is completely excluded. It is the struggle on the plane of the emotions that interests Livermore. Apollo (Giancarlo Judica Cordiglia) in a white tuxedo and bowtie and a vague, absent-minded air, reroutes his protégé towards Athens. Here he is received by the goddess Athene, on this occasion doubled into two separate characters: one (Federica Cinque) who interprets the statue embraced by the suppliant Orestes, and the other (Olivia Manescalchi) the actual goddess who, seated at a huge wooden writing-desk, oversees the procedure of the trial and pronounces the sentence of absolution.

While the staging of the *Libation Bearers* may be considered admirable from many points of view (apart from the insistence on the Far West gun-slinging which is done to death and ends up as appearing more grotesque than anything else), the *Eumenides* seemed less successful. There remains little or nothing of Aeschylus' intensity in celebrating the problematic passage from the logic of vengeance to the justice of the tribunal. And the devices adopted by Livermore in this case lack the necessary "abrasiveness". The "shock" factor is simply not

there, or at least not sufficiently. Just to take one example, the idea of portraying the judges of the Areopagus as cardboard dummies which are set on fire straight after the votes are cast remains a total mystery (perhaps leading back to Luca Ronconi's 1972 *Oresteia* where the Areopagus judges were faceless puppets). Or perhaps the director wanted to underline with this idea the essential uselessness of human judges, seeing that in Aeschylus' play all the procedures – the founding of the Areopagus, the choice of judges, the establishment of voting rules, the reading of the verdict and the proclamation of absolution – are really the work of the goddess Athene. This would in fact appear to be the interpretative key to the whole production, bearing in mind what the director himself has written:

Today, in a post-pandemic world, we bear the responsibility of soundly denouncing the limitations and the painful shortcomings of a democratic system. In the *Eumenides* we can comprehend its whole nature since the act upon which it is based is the absolution of an assassin by a judge, Athene, and an advocate, Apollo, who by their very divine nature, signify a disparity in justice which is virtually criminal (Livermore 2021, 20).⁴

The conclusion, too, of this production of the *Eumenides* is overly – and pointlessly – hyperbolic, to little effect. Orestes goes up into a pulpit and harangues a vast imaginary crowd. And while the notes of David Bowie's *Heroes* are resounding through the theatre, all the protagonists of the play, dead and alive, come back on to the stage and join in a cheerful song. In this rhetorically overwhelming final scene, which seems very like a musical, artificial polystyrene snow is sprayed on the stage and the huge sphere displays a series of images of recent Italian news from the past thirty years or so. Among these are the wreck of the Costa Concordia, which sank off the Isola del Giglio, Moro's dead body in the boot of the Renault 4, the Capaci massacre, Peppino Impastato, the violence at the Genoa G8 and the collapse of the Ponte Morandi. So many events in Italian – and not only Italian – history that still call for vengeance and/or justice. But is this really the way to bring Aeschylean tragedy up to date?

The production of Euripides' *Bacchae* was much more successful. The director, Carlus Padrissa, founder and life-force of the Catalan theatre company La Fura dels Baus, is already renowned for his shows which take their inspiration from circus acrobatic techniques. The staging of this production was instinctual and thrilling, aiming as it did to totally involve and alarm the spectators, starting

⁴ “Oggi, in un mondo, quello post-pandemico, abbiamo la responsabilità di denunciare sempre a grande forza i limiti e la dolorosa imperfezione di un sistema democratico; in *Eumenidi* ne comprendiamo tutta la natura, poiché l'atto fondativo di essa è l'assoluzione di un assassino da parte di un giudice, Atena, e di un avvocato, Apollo, che per la loro stessa natura divina determinano una disparità di giudizio al limite dell'iniquo”.

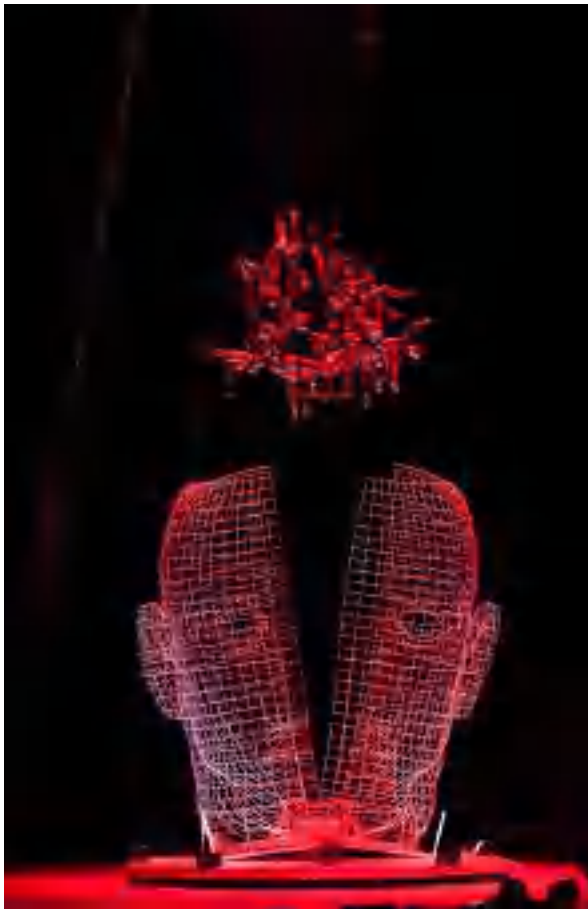
with the metropolitan scenography constructed from metal and concrete scattered with detritus from industrial manufacture.⁵ Since this was the basic concept upon which the dramaturgical work was founded, there can be no doubt that Euripides' *Bacchae* was the very tragedy to work on. And the result is indeed exceptional: a real spectacle, a show that enfolds and enthralls the spectator from first to last and, not least, never betrays its obligation to Euripides' text (thanks, too, to Guido Paduano's crystalline translation) but adapts it to the context of a scenography which is to the highest degree modern and technologised.

In the past, the *Bacchae* has enjoyed several memorable editions at the Greek Theatre of Syracuse, which have since become the object of study and research. The 1922 *Bacchae*, translated and staged by Ettore Romagnoli; Guido Salvini's 1950 production with Vittorio Gassman playing Dionysus; the presentation by Giancarlo Sbragia where Michele Placido was the protagonist. And then again, the *Bacchae* by Walter Pagliaro (1998), by Luca Ronconi in 2002, in Maria Grazia Ciani's translation, and the one by Antonio Calenda, translated by Giorgio Ieranò (2012). Padrissa's version is certainly as good as these and in many ways better.

The real, big surprise that the Catalan director has for us is that of literally making the *Bacchae* fly. Not all of them, however. As we know, in Euripides' play there are, on the one hand, the eastern *Bacchae*, the chorus, who have followed Dionysus from Lydia and who are devotees of his doctrines and his mystic rituals, and on the other there are the Theban women who become possessed by the god himself with the aim of causing chaos in the city of Thebes and setting in motion his plan of bloody revenge against those who deny his divine

⁵ *Bacchae* by Euripides, director Carlus Padrissa (La Fura dels Baus), Italian translation Guido Paduano, Choreography and assistant director Mireia Romero Miralles, scenic project and music Carlus Padrissa, costumes and assistant stage designer Tamara Joksimovic, assistant director Emiliano Bronzino, choir direction Simonetta Cartia, assistant director Maria José Revert, lighting Carlus Padrissa. Cast: Lucia Lavia (Dionysus); Stefano Santospago (Cadmus); Antonello Fassari (Tiresias); Ivan Graziano (Pentheus); Spyros Chamilos, Francesca Piccolo (first messenger); Antonio Bandiera (second messenger); Linda Gennari (Agave); Simonetta Cartia, Elena Polic Greco (conductors of chorus); Rosy Bonfiglio, Ilaria Genatiempo, Lorenzo Grilli, Cecilia Guzzardi, Dorian La Fauci, Viola Marietti, Katia Mirabella, Giulia Valentini (chorus of *bacchae*); Lorenzo Grilli, Viola Marietti, Giulia Valentini (flying chorus of *bacchae*); Giulia Acquasana, Livia Allegri, Virginia Bianco, Guido Bison, Victoria Blondeau, Vanda Bovo, Valentina Brancale, Spyros Chamilos, Serena Chiavetta, Valentina Corrao, Gabriele Crisafulli, Rosario D'Aniello, Simona De Sarno, Matteo Dicannavo, Tancredi Di Marco, Gabriele Enrico, Carolina Eusebiotti, Manuel Fichera, Caterina Fontana, Manfredi Gimigliano, Althea Maria Luana Iorio, Matteo Magatti, Alessandro Mannini, Roberto Marra, Francesca Piccolo, Edoardo Pipitone, Rosaria Salvatico, Jacopo Sarotti, Francesca Trianni, Gloria Trinci, Damiano Venuto, Gaia Viscuso (flying chorus); Eleonora Bernazza, Sebastiano Caruso. Gaia Cozzolino, Enrica Graziano, Domenico Lamparelli, Federica Leuci, Emilio Lumastro, Carlotta Maria Messina, Maria Chiara Signorello, Flavia Testa (chorus of citizens). First performance: Syracuse, Greek Theatre, July 4 2021.

origins. In Padrissa's staging, too, there are two separate choruses of Bacchae, played by the students of the Accademia d'Arte del Dramma Antico (the Academy of the Art of Ancient Drama). The first do not fly but leap about in a frenzy all over the theatre. To start with they appear at the top of the terraces, then gradually come down the corridors, continuing their frantic dance among the spectators. The group is composed of both men and women (the transversality of both gender and social class is a decisive feature of Dionysiac religion), wearing leather shorts, biker boots and LED spotlights hanging round their necks, all pounding wildly on drums and tambourines of various dimensions and swaying and writhing to the infernal rhythms of a musical ambience made up of imprecations and laments, groans of pain and whimpers of pleasure. Strangely they do not wave thyrsi. In conclusion they exhibit posters and banners (on the largest we can see "*Todos somos Baco*", "We all are Bacchus"; on others are slogans such as "*Si violan mujeres violamos sus leyes*", "If they rape women, we violate their laws" or also, in English, "My body, my choice"): the impression of the whole is that of a political demo, a huge protest rally. This chorus performs its frenetic



movements on half of the orchestra which has been blackened and upon which Dionysus' genealogical tree gradually appears.

Instead, the other chorus of Bacchae, the possessed, raving Theban women who in Euripides' play do not appear on-stage but whose exploits are recounted indirectly by means of long descriptions on the part of messengers (Eur. *Bacch.* 676-774 and 1044-152), on this occasion fly acrobatically through the air thus becoming a "suspended chorus" (Fig. 3). And this is not simply a metaphor, but actual fact. Padrissa's stage machine is a crane

Fig. 3: Flying chorus of Bacchae.
Photo Ballarino/AFI Siracusa.

from whose jib ropes and pulleys of different sizes are hanging. Dionysus' devotees, wearing suitable safety harnesses, are lifted and suspended in the air where they perform a series of suggestive and truly spectacular dance moves: an orgiastic ritual carried out in the air and that leaves the audience open-mouthed. The sensation of weightlessness and liberation fully corresponds to the fulfilling of that prodigious 'miracle' that the Dionysian religion contemplated in its cults and rites. The 'flying' performance also allows itself the possibility of visualizing what in Euripides' play is evoked many times but only in words: the mystery of Dionysus' birth, the foetus expelled from Semele's womb at the moment of her copulation with Zeus, and its consequent fulmination and regeneration by the same father of the gods of Olympus. At centre-stage loom two colossal metal constructions. One is a human figure with two bull horns on its head, an evident portrayal of Dionysus who was able to take on animal shapes, especially to transform himself into a bull. The other is an enormous male head, possibly a reference to Pentheus and his rationalism. The head proves to be the royal palace of Thebes, but at the same time it is a cage, a prison, that opens and closes when necessary. With these objects the staging emphasizes right from the beginning the contrast between Pentheus and Dionysus, the two protagonists of the play, two cousins who are vying for power over the city of Thebes.

In the role of Dionysus, we have a female actor, the excellent Lucia Lavia (Fig.4). Needless to say, the choice is perfectly compatible with the transgender and androgynous dimension the god possesses in the myth. This is indeed not the first time during the history of the play's staging that the director goes for such an option. A famous precedent is that of Ingmar Bergman with his direction of *Backanterna* by the composer Daniel Boertz (Stockholm 1991). With her blonde curls and her seductive appearance, and with an extra-large metal thyrsus in her hand, this female Dionysus prowls around the orchestra space sometimes rolling on the floor, sometimes hopping and skipping; she alternates speech with a sort of rhythmic speech-chanting. Her persona is ambiguously seductive and pitiless at the same time, dominated by an irrepressible animal ferocity. It vividly sums up in the best way possible the very polarity that scholars have recognised from time immemorial as typical of the 'hybrid' god Dionysus: male/female, human/divine, civilised/wild (Fusillo 2006). While the Dionysus of Euripides evinces for the whole of the dramatic action a detached and ironic gentleness deriving from his awareness of his divine superiority, Parrissa's Dionysus is constantly a disturbed and disturbing troublemaker, who seems to correspond to the delirious image that in Euripides' text is Pentheus' idea of the god. (cf. Matelli 2021).



Fig. 4: Dionysus (Lucia Lavia). Photo Ballarino/AFI Siracusa.

Carlus Padrissa, in a note published in the programme of the show, affirms that he wanted to pay homage to the Mexican women who between the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 took to the streets in protest against macho power, sexual abuse and the increase of femicide, burning flags, dancing half-naked and smashing shopwindows (Padrissa 2021, 20). But his production goes beyond a simple feminist reading and it is indeed possible to say that the show “becomes an ikon of a wider-ranging example of freedom as it breaks through gender distinctions” (Barone 2021).⁶ The Theban women fleeing to the slopes of Mount Cithaeron in the throes of divine possession, who first cause honey, milk and wine to flow from the earth and then throw themselves savagely upon the animals, hack them to death and devour their raw flesh, are women of today rebelling against male domination and patriarchal laws. As Tamara Jocsimovic, assistant scenographer and costume manager, writes:

Our Bacchae are therefore all those people who are still fighting today to affirm their personal freedom, in every aspect of life. To give status to liberty of expression and cultivate that degree of Dionysus that each of us has within themselves (Jocsimovic 2021, 32).⁷

Old Cadmus (Stefano Santospago) is a symbol of the attachment to the family traditions and the royal dynasty. Pentheus’ grandfather is full of nostalgic feeling, mourning his dead wife Harmonia as he sings *La stagione dell’amore*

⁶ “Si fa icona di un’istanza allargata di libertà infrangendo le distinzioni di genere”.

⁷ “Le nostre Baccanti sono perciò tutte quelle persone che ancora oggi combattono per affermare le proprie libertà, in tutti gli aspetti della vita. Per dare statuto alla libertà di espressione e coltivare quel tanto di Dioniso che ognuno di noi ha dentro di sé”.

(*The Season of Love*) by the singer and songwriter Franco Battiato (in homage to the Sicilian artist who died in May 2021). Tiresias (Antonella Fassari), the blind prophet who, using rationalistic arguments, explains to Pentheus and to the audience the importance of Dionysus and the necessity of receiving him in the city, moves about the stage on a strange contraption in the shape of a metal mask (a Silenus, so a Dionysian figure) which swerves all over the place. The Bacchic costume of both the elderly Theban characters, with the consequent sense of rejuvenation they experience and the tragicomic effect that is the result of this is not adequately exploited, whereas it could have constituted a valuable expedient of the show.

And then of course there is King Pentheus (Ivan Graziano), clad in a long robe, almost like that of a Renaissance prince, his long hair gathered into a plait (here too there is a nod to androgyny). Padrissa's Pentheus does not bear arms and is not at all fearsome. Right from the start we understand that he is a weakling, a neurotic, destined to succumb. Dionysus seduces him and manipulates him just as he pleases, until the final catastrophe of the *sparagmòs* on Mount Cithaeron, recounted by the messenger (Antonio Bandiera). The scene of Agave (Linda Gennari), at the end of the play, has no recourse to special effects, but the formality of its traditionalism makes the anguish convincing.

Padrissa's direction, physical, contagious, manages to rewrite the *Bacchae* of Euripides in an original key, without in any way betraying the 5th century BCE Greek original. Faithful to his own dramaturgical approach and to his own theatrical language he has made of it a 'furero' tragedy, that sweeps from heaven to earth, from men to gods and back again, that brings together ancient disquiet and modern technology, engaging the audience and reviving the surprise, the amazement that the citizens of Athens certainly felt when they saw the first performance of the play at the end of the 5th century.

Translation by Susan Payne

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The Edinburgh Festivals 2021: a Covid-Era Return

Abstract

This article offers an overview of the live theatre programmes of the 2021 Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) and Edinburgh Festival Fringe as they sought to make a tentative return to live, in-person drama following the hiatus enforced by the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020. It attempts to evoke for the reader the significant differences created by the pandemic between the 2021 events and a more typical festival year, and considers whether the reduced size of the live programmes (particularly that of the Fringe) resulted in a much diminished experience for theatregoers. The article then considers the key theatre production of the EIF, (namely, the world premiere of Enda Walsh's *Medicine*) and the author's selection of what he considers to be the strongest live theatre shows on the Fringe, (those being: Grid Iron theatre company's *Doppler*; Mamoru Iriguchi's *Sex Education Xplorers (S.E.X)*; and Michael John O'Neill's *This is Paradise*).

KEYWORDS: Covid; Edinburgh International Festival; Fringe; Enda Walsh; Grid Iron; Mamoru Iriguchi; Michael John O'Neill

In August of every year, the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF), the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and their sibling events (such as the Edinburgh International Book Festival and the Edinburgh International Film Festival) combine, famously, to make the biggest celebration of the arts on the planet. For three-and-a-half weeks every summer the capital city of Scotland (a nation of a little under five-and-a-half million people) becomes a global hub of artistic activity. Consequently, following the pandemic-enforced cancellation of the events in 2020, the success, or otherwise, of the 2021 programmes would be seen as something of a barometer of the health of the arts – and the live stage arts in particular – in the era of Covid 19.

Given the ever-changing government guidelines and the associated uncertainties, it was inevitable that large numbers of artists and festival venues would continue in virus-safe practices of online production. A perusal of the website of the mammoth Fringe programme showed that a substantial majority

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of the productions were either recorded video works or live-streamed online shows. Where the relatively small number of live, in-person works were concerned, a significant proportion of them were presented outdoors. For example, an entirely new, open-air venue called MultiStory appeared on the top level of a multi-storey car park on Castle Street, in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle. The venue hosted a broad range of live entertainment, including some work from the famous programme of Scotland's self-declared new writing theatre, the Traverse (this included *Aye, Elvis*, Morna Young's successful comedy about a Scottish, female Elvis Presley impersonator, performed by the excellent Joyce Falconer).

The EIF itself offered a mix of online works and live performances, many of which would be presented in large, specially-made, gazebo-style auditoria that were designed both to shelter audiences from the rain and to allow the free flow of air through the space; for example, *Lonely House*, a remarkable evening of the music of Kurt Weill, performed by Barrie Kosky and Katharine Mehrling (and in which Kosky spoke fascinatingly about Weill and his work) was presented in such a venue in the Old College Quad of the University of Edinburgh. At both the EIF and the Fringe, a comparatively small number of productions were presented in traditional theatre auditoria, as per Scottish Government regulations (which, in August 2021, had recently been slightly liberalised; albeit that audiences were still required to observe social distancing and to wear face coverings).

The much-reduced live element of the festival programmes and the relatively tiny number of tourists in Edinburgh changed the normally busy and frenetic atmosphere of the city in August. Whilst this was a cause of lamentation for many, it came, paradoxically, as something of a relief to some Edinburgh Festivals veterans, such as (I confess it) myself. Of course, the economic impact of Covid upon the city of Edinburgh and upon the festivals in 2021 was terrible, but the much-reduced number of live shows restored a sense of the festival-goer as a lover of the arts who was making careful choices in selecting which productions to see. Gone was the atmosphere, which has become increasingly prevalent over the last three decades, of the festivals, and the Fringe in particular, as an ever-burgeoning, hyper-commercial free-for-all in which the quantity of shows often trumps their quality.

As the 2021 festival programmes began, the common assumption was that the huge decrease in the number of live productions would impact massively on festival-goers' enjoyment of the events. With relatively few shows on offer, the logic went, the reduced choice would, inevitably, lead to a decrease in the number of high-quality productions on offer. However, in my experience, as someone who has attended the Edinburgh Festivals every year since 1989,¹ the 2021 festival programmes confounded the supply-and-demand, free market logic of

¹ First as audience member (1989-1998), and then, as professional theatre critic (since 1999).

this assumption. Selecting carefully from the comparatively small programmes of live work on offer, my experience of the EIF and Fringe programmes was as enriching in 2021 as in previous years. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the ratio of good and excellent shows to mediocre and poor ones (which is a subjective judgement, of course) was higher among my 2021 selection than in any year I can remember. My explanation for this state of affairs is quite simple: contrary to the philistinism of some conservative politicians and commentators (typically those who are opposed to public funding of the arts and champion the notion that art works should 'sink or swim' on the basis of their commercial success or lack of it), works of art are not mere 'products'. An arts festival is not a supermarket, in which a decline in the range of products available has an unavoidably negative impact on the experience of the shopper. Rather, in the case of a curated programme, such as the EIF, there was no reason why a reduction in the number of productions should result in a decline in the overall quality of the work; and, indeed, I could discern no such decline. As to the Fringe, which is the 'open-market' element of the Edinburgh events, there was a sense that, in many cases, the work being staged had been created by some of the most committed and determined artists. To be clear, I am casting no aspersions on the many serious artists who decided, due to concerns over health and/or financial risks, either to present virtual work or not to present work at all. What I am suggesting, however, is that the impact of the pandemic on the 2021 Edinburgh Fringe was that its live output seemed more selective, more curated, and less driven by commercial imperatives than in recent years and decades. Consequently, in my experience, the overall quality of the work actually increased. Put simply, I saw more excellent and good shows, as a proportion of the work I attended, than I would in a typical year on the Fringe.

At this point it is worth dwelling on the fact that this success was achieved despite the fact that Covid restrictions had an immense, negative impact on the ability of the festivals to attract companies from outside of the UK. The need to quarantine, the costs of Covid tests, the uncertainties over changing restrictions and concerns about the reliability of air travel (among other factors) all led to hugely reduced programmes of international work. Internationalism has always been tremendously important to Edinburgh's festivals and, yet, despite the devastation of the international programmes, the determination of the UK and Ireland-based artists, alongside a smattering of companies from further afield, produced festivals of defiantly high quality.

The positive experience of the EIF began at the Traverse Theatre, with *Medicine*, the latest play by acclaimed Irish dramatist Enda Walsh. The playwright is the author of the bleakly comic stage and screen drama *Disco Pigs*, the screenplay for Steve McQueen's exceptional film *Hunger* and (with the late David Bowie) the stage musical *Lazarus*. In 2007 he was the toast of the Edinburgh Fringe with his play *The Walworth Farce*, an astonishingly hilarious and deeply moving reflection on the Irish experience of emigration.

Medicine, a drama about the medical incarceration of John Kane, a man who appears to have been diagnosed with psychosis, boasted an excellent cast led by the exceptional Irish actor Domhnall Gleeson. It was presented by Dublin-based theatre company Landmark Productions and the Galway International Arts Festival, and directed by Walsh himself. Like *The Walworth Farce*, the piece stands in the darkly humorous, absurdist tradition of the great Franco-Romanian playwright Eugène Ionesco.

The drama unfolds in the gymnasium of the psychiatric hospital in which Kane is detained. Curiously, however, we first encounter the man wearing pyjamas and wandering aimlessly in a sports hall that is strewn with what we soon discover is the detritus of the previous night's staff party. These are hardly ideal conditions for Kane to embark upon what seems to be a crucial part of his treatment. Yet it is in these conditions that the man is set to give his personal testimony; a soul-searching articulation of his personal history, a reflection upon his recent experience of medical treatment and an assessment of his present state of mind. This testimony will be given to two professionals who are external to the hospital and who have been brought in for the particular purpose of interviewing Kane.

The arrival of the interviewers is the first of a series of humorously and powerfully unsettling developments that rip the play away from any sense of theatrical naturalism and open it up to the endless psychological, emotional and political possibilities of absurdism. When the two supposed mental health professionals (named Mary 1 and Mary 2) make their entrances, we discover that they are not, in fact, consultant psychiatrists but, rather, a pair of erratically employed freelance musical theatre performers. Mary 1 (given a high-octane performance by the superb actor Aoife Duffin) comes to the hospital from another job, still disguised (thanks to excellent masks) as not one, but two old men. For her part, Mary 2 (played with extraordinary energy by the impressive Clare Barrett) comes fitted out for her next engagement, at a children's party; hilariously, due to her misunderstanding of a character in a Disney animation, she is wearing a fabulously detailed lobster costume. This startling set-up could, conceivably, be Walsh's ironic comment on the idea of 'drama therapy'. Alternatively, and more plausibly, it is simply the means by which the dramatist takes us into a quasi-surreal situation that reflects either Kane's neglect or his disorientation, or, more likely, both. Indeed, such is the extent of Kane's institutionalisation that we hear him agreeing constantly with a god-like, male voice of authority – which is heard only by Kane and the audience – that he absolutely does require to be detained within the secure hospital.

As the Marys embark on their interview with Kane, the ludicrousness of the process becomes increasingly clear. Not only are these seeing drama therapists unqualified to treat a patient suffering from psychosis, but the whole notion that they are trying to engage the patient in a therapeutic talking therapy is blown apart by the fact that they, the Marys (who degenerate into increasingly

violent, risible conflict), already have a script of Kane's testimony in their hands. There is, in this sham therapy, a going through the motions and a preposterous repetition that is reminiscent of Ionesco's *The Chairs*, in which the elderly 'general factotum' and his wife repeat the absurd ritual of preparing chairs for important guests who will never, in fact, arrive.

As with Ionesco, the absurd situation and the farce of repetition hide a more profound reflection on human experience. The deeper the action takes Kane into a searching of his own soul, the closer it moves him towards his eventual, powerful and incredibly moving articulation of his condition. Gleeson (a truly great stage actor in the illustrious pantheon of outstanding Irish players) embarks upon a series of powerfully evocative, poetic monologues (see fig. 1). Reflecting upon his past life and, in particular, on lost love, these speeches would not be out of place in the *oeuvre* of that greatest of Irish writers, Samuel Beckett. Like the protagonists in Beckett's play *Krapp's Last Tape*, his novella *First Love* or his television drama *Eh Joe*, Kane movingly dredges up years of anguish and contrition from the very depths of his being.



Figure 1: Domhnall Gleeson in *Medicine*. Photo: Jess Shurte.

Gleeson's performance was a genuine tour de force, and one that Walsh's brilliant script richly deserved. The supporting performances were similarly excellent, as were designer Jamie Vartan's hyper-real sets, Joan O'Clery's amazing costumes and composer Teho Teardo's wonderfully diverse and responsive score. In a year of such uncertainty about the Edinburgh Festivals, *Medicine* was a reassuringly auspicious opening theatre production.

If *Medicine* marked a superb start to the EIF's drama programme, the Fringe staged a number of fine productions. One example was Edinburgh-based company Grid Iron's site-specific adaptation of Norwegian writer Erlend Loe's acclaimed novel *Doppler*. Presented in the forest of Newhailes House and Gardens, at

Musselburgh (a satellite town of Edinburgh), it was a perfect, outdoor show for Covid times (although it had been in the planning before the pandemic struck). Adapted and directed by Grid Iron's acclaimed artistic director Ben Harrison, the piece starred the tremendous Scottish actor Keith Fleming in the title role (see fig. 2). Doppler is a middle-class professional who, after banging his head in a cycling accident, has had a sudden epiphany about the ecological and social destructiveness of late capitalism. Consequently, he abandons his comfortable family life in Oslo, preferring instead to live in the woods.



Figure 2: Keith Fleming in *Doppler*. Photo: Duncan McGlynn.

The audience sits on padded wooden logs as Harrison's cartoonish and darkly comic play unfolds. Doppler, having quickly exhausted the vegan possibilities provided by foraging, finds himself compelled to become a hunter, rather than a mere gatherer. However, when he kills a great elk (represented by an impressive puppet created by Fergus Dunnet), our protagonist finds himself in an emotional bind. The slaughtered elk had a child, which, bereft and unable to look after itself, hangs around Doppler's makeshift camp. Overcome with guilt, the trainee woodsman adopts the young animal and names it Bongo. An absent father from his own children and the adoptive father of a young elk, the difficulties of sustaining his new lifestyle drive Doppler to seek to sustain himself through bartering. In particular, he negotiates a "milk deal" with a suburban grocery worker, who agrees to supply Doppler with the dairy product in exchange for elk meat.

Fleming plays the eponymous principal character with an unlikely, but brilliantly effective, combination of certifiable craziness and undeniable lucidity. Harrison's intelligently structured production makes Doppler the unreliable

centre of the play, allowing a series of colourful larger-than-life supporting characters (all played by the excellent actors Chloe-Ann Tylor and Sean Hay) to orbit around him. Those characters include Doppler's exasperated (but remarkably indulgent) wife and eccentric forest homeowner Düsseldorf (a Norwegian man who is disturbingly proud to be the son of a soldier in Hitler's Wehrmacht). The bold, hyper-real element of the production is magnified by clever and subtle set and costume designs by Becky Minto. It is also amplified by ingenious live sound effects and perfectly attuned music composed by David A. Pollock and performed by Nik Paget-Tomlinson.

It is difficult to imagine a greater contrast in theatrical genres and performative styles than that which exists between Grid Iron's show and Mamoru Iriguchi's piece *Sex Education Xplorers (S.E.X)*, which played in the outdoor, but covered, space at the innovative Summerhall venue as part of the Made in Scotland programme.² Performed by Iriguchi (who is gay) and non-binary theatre artist Afton Moran, the show is presented as an illustrated lecture on the physical evolution of human sex and the social evolution of gender identity. The latter has become a highly contested subject in the nations of the UK, leading to highly polarised, often ill-tempered debate in the public and political spheres, and, inevitably, to particularly toxic discourse in social media. This debate and, often, abusive conflict have grown as the governments in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff have responded to changing social mores by seeking to recognise the rights of trans and non-binary people to have their self-identified gender recognised in law. The beauty of Iriguchi's show – which he hopes to tour in Scotland's secondary schools – is that it steps onto that contested territory with a winning combination of fearless innocence and mischievous confidence. That it does so will come as little surprise to those who experienced Iriguchi's previous work *Eaten*, a highly original, hilarious, off-the-wall, but brilliantly educational consideration of the food chain, aimed primarily at young children.

Like *Eaten*, *S.E.X* reflects Iriguchi's academic background in zoology. Human sex and sexuality are put in evolutionary context, with Iriguchi and Moran (fig. 3) bemoaning the fact that humans evolved as primates in the reproductive binary of male and female. If only, they suggest, we had taken the evolutionary route of hermaphrodites or, like clown fish, evolved the capacity to change our biological sex. The pair also speak on the important distinctions between biological sex, the constantly shifting social construct of gender and the broad spectrum of sexual orientation. As they offer us these scientific insights, zoological speculations and sociological contemplations, they wear lab coats and shirts emblazoned with the letters "S.E.X". They do so with more than a dose of irony, however. Their show is very far from being a dry, academic lecture. Rather, it is educational and socially conscious theatre delivered by means of humorous dialogue, comic

² An annual programme at the Edinburgh Fringe, funded by the Scottish Government, which showcases new Scottish music, dance and theatre.

animations and very funny dance (to an entertainingly diverse musical score that stretches from The Beatles to the soundtrack of cult 1983 movie *Flashdance*).



Figure 3: Afton Moran and Mamoru Iriguchi in *Sex Education Explorers (S.E.X.)*.
Photo: Niall Walker.

In truth Moran is much less of a natural performer than Iriguchi, but they function well as a foil to the Japanese artist's unique comic style, which is comprised of a sparkling intellect, a gloriously eccentric sense of humour and brilliant comic delivery. The sheer boldness of *S.E.X* is exemplified in its concluding proposition. Having already implied that humanity has been poorly served by its evolution, Iriguchi suggests that the next step in human sexual evolution will be to develop the technological ability to completely erase the binary categories of physical sex. This controversial idea is reminiscent of the arguments of the leading second-wave feminist Shulamith Firestone³ and subsequent cyberfeminists in the 1970s that women's liberation would require the invention of technologies that could free women from the human reproductive process. Contentious though it is, Iriguchi's argument is delivered with such imaginative creativity, honesty, openness, and humour that it has, surely, earned its place in the gender debate that is currently taking place in Scotland, and among the nation's teenagers in particular.

In addition to hosting Walsh's brilliant new play for the EIF, the Traverse Theatre also staged its own live Fringe programme, albeit on a far smaller scale than usual. In a regular festival year, the Traverse is considered a theatre hub by critics and audiences. Offering work by its own company and an array of

³ Most notably in her 1970 book *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: Morrow).

respected theatre groups from throughout the UK and beyond, the Traverse's August programme is widely considered to be the most prestigious on the Fringe. Sadly, the Traverse Theatre Company's headline production for the 2021 programme, *Still* by Scotland-based dramatist Frances Poet, was a major disappointment.

The drama is built of four distinct, but ultimately, converging narratives alighting on pivotal moments in the lives of five Edinburgh characters. Addressing such subjects as debilitating chronic pain, bereavement through dementia and complicated pregnancy, the piece is overburdened with soap opera-style life problems. Consequently, none of its characters are sufficiently developed, leaving the play seeming to be, paradoxically, both overwrought and underwritten. This being so, it is hardly surprising that the piece fails in its structure, too, with the convergence of the four narratives being both too weak and too conspicuous. All of which is a great pity because director Gareth Nicholls had assembled a stellar cast of Scottish actors in Molly Innes, Mercy Ojelade, Naomi Stirrat, Martin Donaghy and Gerry Mulgrew.

However, the Traverse company redeemed itself to a large degree when, in the closing days of the Fringe, it staged a minimally set, short run production of *This is Paradise*, an ironically titled monodrama by young, Scotland-based Irish writer Michael John O'Neill. The play traces a key period in the life of Kate (played by the outstanding Irish actor Amy Molloy, fig. 3), a Belfast woman in her late twenties who is trying to have a baby, despite her deep-seated, and entirely justified, fear that her body is incapable of sustaining a full-term pregnancy.



Figure 4: Amy Molloy in *This is Paradise*. Photo: Traverse Theatre.

The action of the drama occurs almost entirely within the British-ruled province of Northern Ireland. It is set in April 1998, against the backdrop of the Good Friday Agreement, which seemed to promise an end to more than 30 years of war in what was euphemistically known as The Troubles within the north of Ireland. Such are Kate's anxieties regarding her pregnancy that she finds it difficult to share the general euphoria of "peace in our time". Significant though they are, the historic political developments of 1998 are very much in the background of O'Neill's narrative. That said, Kate's unfolding story can be read, in numerous ways, as a metaphor for Northern Ireland and its tentative moves towards peace.

Now in a stable relationship with her supportive partner Brendy, Kate is pulled back into a difficult period in her past when she receives a phone call from a desperate young woman. The caller has recently ended a relationship with Diver (a charismatic, chaotic and unreliable figure with connections to the province's criminal underworld) and fears that he may carry out his threat to commit suicide. Having been in a desperately unhealthy relationship with Diver (who has a penchant for teenage girls) when she was aged 16, Kate empathises with the young woman as her former lover's latest 'child bride'. As Northern Ireland celebrates the peace accord, and just days away from an important prenatal scan, Kate embarks on a journey to the fictitious seaside town of Portbenony, in case she has to intervene to save Diver's life and spare the "child bride" the trauma of feeling responsible for the man's death.

The dramatic monologue weaves together Kate's description of recent events (in 1998) with her memories of her dysfunctional, yet often emotionally and erotically exhilarating relationship with Diver. She remembers, too, the guilt and sadness associated with the death of Big Joe, her school sweetheart. These recollections are in constant interplay with Kate's thoughts about her relationship with Brendy (a man who has become the stable, loving and dependable centre of her life) and her desire to give him a child, despite her agonising near certainty that her 'breaking' body will not see out the pregnancy.

The script itself reveals O'Neill to be a fine craftsman. His writing is captivating, clever, humane, and beautifully structured. It is also blessed, in director Katherine Nesbitt's production with an enthralling, emotionally dexterous, darkly comic and deeply moving performance by Molloy. Performing on a minimalist set, which seems to represent a wooden jetty, the young actor captures absolutely her character's jagged intelligence and the smart nuances embedded in O'Neill's script.

Intriguingly, *This is Paradise* is the third consecutive Edinburgh Fringe (excepting 2020's Covid-cancelled programme) in which the strongest Traverse company show has been written by a Scotland-based dramatist from Northern Ireland. In 2018, the hit production of the entire Fringe was the scorching satire *Ulster American* by actor-turned-writer David Ireland (a graduate of the acting programme of what is now called the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland). In 2019,

Meghan Tyler (another RCS acting graduate) received critical plaudits for the quasi-surreal (and blazingly violent) political comedy *Crocodile Fever*. There is talk of the Traverse reviving its production of O'Neill's play in 2022. It would be greatly to the benefit of Scottish theatre if it did so.

PETRA BJELICA*

Shaping the Edges of a New Vision: The Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival 2021¹

Abstract

The article deals with the first edition of the Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival. It gives an account about the founders, programme, and the main aim, describing how the festival uses Shakespeare as *lingua franca* to create a unique vision – a combination of research, theatre productions, new readings, and diverse theatrical, adaptation and dramaturgical practices. The guiding principles of the festival are multicultural approaches and multilingualism, transnational exchange, dialogue between and a showcase of emerging artistic projects, nurturing education in the direction to and from the audience. On 24 and 25 July, the festival hosted six productions performed at the Teatro Scientifico, along with a special interview with all the participants and the organizers held on 26 July. The festival opened with an overview of the history of *Commedia dell'arte* in Fabio Mangolini's *The Lazzo of the Fly and other Stories*. It included Nina Sallinen's *Poor Poor Lear*, Jaq Bessell's *Shakespeare for Breakfast*, Elena Pellone's *The Rape of Lucrece*, John Blondell's *So now I have confessed that he is thine... Erotic Trajectories*, and closed with a choreography based on *The Tempest* called *Dancing Shakespeare: Mirage* performed by Les Dynamiques. All the performances delivered a fresh approach and set the foundation of adding Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival to the map of relevant and exciting spaces for Shakespearean productions.

KEYWORDS: The Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival; Shakespeare festivals; theatre; adaptations; performance

“The fringed curtains of thine eye advance
And say what thou seest yond.”

The Tempest (1. 2)

The first seeds of the idea for the Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival were planted in summer 2020, brought about by serendipity, a student's enthusiasm for a Shakespearean production, and an equally fervent answer

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and support from a director to share his ideas and work. From one supportive and relentless ‘yes’, a domino effect of collaborations between devotees of theatre, Shakespeare and scholarly dialogues led to the creation of a new festival. This anecdote summarizes the aim and nature of the Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival – sharing and fostering collaboration between emerging artists and students, eminent scholars and experienced theatre practitioners.

The Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival was envisioned and founded amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic by Silvia Bigliuzzi and Sidia Fiorato from the University of Verona and the Skenè Research Centre for Interdisciplinary Theatre and Drama Studies, David Schalkwyk from Queen Mary University of London and director of the Centre for Shakespeare, along with John Blondell from Westmont College and the director of the Lit Moon Theatre Company in Santa Barbara. In a time and under circumstances that demanded an infringement of established forms of organisation, with new limitations and yet opening some new possibilities, they plunged into unexplored territories for theatre festivals. Once more Verona became an important place to enrich Shakespearean productions. Although the city has been hosting a famous Shakespeare Festival since 1948, the Fringe Festival aimed to offer a new theatrical space existing on the edge compared to mainstream approaches. Being on the fringe, yet at the same time offering a breach of borders between disciplines and theatrical practices, the festival dealt with Shakespeare as *lingua franca* through research, theatre productions created specially for the occasion, digital transfer of new readings and different modes of renderings, diverse theatrical, adaptation and dramaturgical practices. The guiding principles are multicultural approaches and multilingualism, transnational exchange, dialogue between and a showcase of emerging artistic projects, nurturing education in the direction to and from the audience. Gestated and assembled under unique circumstances, the festival honoured a distinctive type of exchange, togetherness and inclusivity in a time of isolation – a rewarding experience for all the participants.

On 24 and 25 July, the festival consisted of six productions performed at the Teatro Scientifico: two videos and four on-site performances. A special interview with the artists was held on 26 July at Santa Marta, a huge military complex built in the 1860s and once used to distribute bread, now readapted and modernised as part of the University of Verona. The audience had a chance to have a conversation with all the participants and the festival’s organizers.

The festival opened with *The Lazzo of the Fly and Other Stories*, performed by Fabio Mangolini, who, besides specialising in the servant roles of *Commedia dell’arte*, is a director, pedagogue and author. *The Lazzo of the Fly and Other Stories* was conceived in 1994, while he was studying the art of

Japanese theatre, as a gift to his Japanese friend, intending to demonstrate the richness of Italian heritage. Thus, the performance was conceptualised as a lesson and a journey through all the characters and masks of the Italian tradition. Mangolini invited the audience to have a closer look at the transnational exchanges made by troupes of *Commedia dell'arte* and their possible influences on Elizabethan theatre and Shakespeare's dramaturgy, especially the connections and convergences between the famous Shakespearean comical actor William Kempe and characters played by the Italian troupes. Past theatrical practices can paradoxically demonstrate that theatre can create newness as a place of exchange and sharing – the ultimate art of encounter. A variety of comical types were presented, explaining how their characters are reflected in their masks and particularities of body language. *The Lazzo of the Fly and Other Stories* was a perfect opening for the Shakespearean universe and a proper introduction to its merging with Italian culture. In the interview with the artist, Mangolini highlighted that the distinctive feature of *Commedia dell'arte* troupes was to spontaneously change the dramaturgical devices and the order of the plot according to the tastes of the audience, and to borrow and use acting mechanisms of other colleagues freely. In the same vein, some aspects of Nina Sallinen's performance might end up in his next show, as he jested in the interview.

Nina Sallinen, an actress from Finland and co-founder of *A Walkabout Theater Company*, performed *Poor Poor Lear*. Sallinen and Katja Krohn produced and adapted the play, directed by Krohn. It started out as an intention to diminish two prejudices: that women cannot be comical in male roles and that females can successfully act the role of Everyman. The character of a 90-year-old Finnish theatre star who performs an intimate adaptation of a female version of *King Lear* is carried out by Sallinen's incredible transformation, marvellous use of body and scenic movement. The plot of Shakespeare's tragedy mirrors the intentions of the old Dame – to lure her daughters to her show and wreak revenge on them for disregarding their old mother. The *myse-en-abyme* structure of the adaptation highlights the pain of the abandoned parent that Sallinen brings forth with comical and pompous expressions of grumpiness and tender vulnerability. In the end, this swan song transforms into a profound rumination on the nature of acting and the ever-present histrionic question – who is an actor when s/he is not seen and revealed on the stage? Also, it brings out a more specific gender issue – whether a woman must choose between being a mother or an artist. It is a clever and inspiring, tragicomical yet emotionally deep staging of the need to be loved and seen, with a profoundly Shakespearean atmosphere blurring the boundaries between acting and being. Nevertheless, Sallinen's initial wish expressed during the talk with the artists is fulfilled: *Poor Poor Lear* succeeded as a superb demonstration that female actresses can be hilarious.

In an adaptation directed by Jaq Bessell, a very talented group of young performers from the Guilford School of Acting (Emily Dilworth, Tomas Howser, Brodie Husband, Caitlin O'Donnell and Elliott Samuels) created a peculiar experiment: *Shakespeare for Breakfast*, bits and pieces from some of Shakespeare's most famous monologues and dialogues, seemingly without any method or guiding thread. However, as the performance unfolds, the audience begins to understand that the group of actors is trying to achieve the impossible in the Shakespearean universe – to control their love lives and the course of action. The dynamic of wittiness is heightened by the juxtaposition of Shakespeare's text with the intimate atmosphere of a domestic setting – one might not expect to hear Helena's monologue from *Midsummer's Night Dream* filmed in a toilet for example. Due to some doubling by the use of mirrors and a creative camera use, the mixture of registers works perfectly to add to the freshness of the approach. Moreover, *Shakespeare for Breakfast* reveals the remarkable vitality of the plays in their adaptability to a numerous range of contexts and atmospheres. It might be seen in the light of Polonius' announcement of the theatre troupe in *Hamlet*:

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited. (2.2)

The play was screened as a video recording and the audience had a chance to hear first-hand about its main challenges and the inspiration behind it from Brodie Husband and Jaq Bessell themselves via Zoom. Husband demonstrated an exquisite understanding of the complexity of such a dramaturgical concept and moved with ease and awareness through Shakespeare's complete works when talking about his ideas and creative inspiration.

The Rape of Lucrece was produced and performed by Elena Pellone, the Artistic Facilitator of the Venice Shakespeare Company and founder of Anørkē Shakespeare, an actress and scholar with an MA from the Shakespeare Institute, where she is currently working on her PhD project on 'directorless Shakespeare'. Even though it was hard to adapt a narrative poem into a monodrama, she achieved the main goal of the performance – to give a thrilling and vital voice to a violated woman. In Pellone's performance, Lucrece took over all the words from all other characters and fully controlled the narrative. The Renaissance grandeur and grace of her presence with a subtle yet powerful emotional charisma surpassed the difficulty of speaking of shame. By taking control of her story and transforming it into a theatrical experience, the supposed victim reflected many anonymous stories of numerous women that have been molested or sexually assaulted. In this touching performance, the violated body of a woman became a capacious medium for others and dominated the stage. Shakespeare's text merged with

the confessions projected on a white curtain, in complete harmony with Pellone's understanding of theatre as space for and of togetherness, and as an event of authentic communication set in the present.

John Blondell is a theatre director and Professor of Theatre Arts at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. He is the Artistic Director of the Lit Moon Theatre Company and its World Theater Festival. Directing over 90 productions, he has led with untiring enthusiasm and energy another 60 *Lit Moon* productions all over the world and his *Henry VI, Part 3*, part of Balkan Trilogy performed at the 2012 Globe to Globe Festival, was the initial seed that germinated into the creation of the Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival. The gentle, repetitive, soothing rhythms of Blondell's *So now I have confessed that he is thine... Erotic Trajectories* emphasised the meditative aspect of Shakespeare's sonnets and generated an almost mantric dimension, as if Shakespeare's poetry – chosen and adapted by Silvia Bigliuzzi – could melt and merge into other artistic forms: evocative music by James Connolly, videos of dancers and actors in the landscapes of Bitola, North Macedonia, Paige Tautz's and Mitchell Thomas' voices recorded in Santa Barbara, California, and the bodies of Nina Sallinen and Rosario Campisi, the actors in the live action created in Verona during the festival itself. *So now I have confessed that he is thine... Erotic Trajectories* was a hypnotic and immersive journey for the audience. It was created exclusively for the festival, with improvisations necessitated by the pandemic. The love triangle which one can read in the Sonnets was made even more perplexed by the introduction of another female poet. All these fragmented bodies, voices and landscapes – as various theatrical devices – supplemented the erotic lack created by desire. The performance surmounted geographical distances and aroused erotic yearnings, foregrounding the meditative potency of the Sonnets into a live event as a shared feeling of seemingly unreachable absence/distance. In the end, the audience, as an active participant in collecting the fragments, felt these lacks as a hypnotic, paradoxically ungraspable, yet present experience – and remained in spellbound silence.

Dancing Shakespeare: Mirage was performed and produced by the young dance company *Les Dynamiques*, consisting of dancers and choreographers Maddalena Lucchetta and Giulia Giacon. Drawing from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the choreography consisted of the gentle striving of two silhouettes towards a mirage of contact, creating gentle tension in testing whether this is possible or whether the miracle is just controlled machinery. Their soft and elegant movement conjured the nature of Ariel. Dancers seemed pulled by the magic of Prospero's invisible strings, transferring a feeling of ephemeral reality that was supported by the mesmerising music of the Arabic lullaby *Yalla tnam*, sung by Golshifteh Farahani. With its airy atmosphere, *Dancing Shakespeare: Mirage* evoked the feeling of being on the limit of a dream.

All performances were journeys through time and space, exposing either historical theatrical practices (such as those of *Commedia dell'arte*), or silenced and marginal female voices, sometimes discarded as old or shameful, violated and vulnerable – journeys through the complete works of Shakespeare that were mixed and scrambled, bodies of dancing women evoking Shakespearean atmospheres, and the fragmented and reassembled eroticism of sonnet confessions. Shakespeare's works spoke from the margins, through new media and new means, creating a companionship and community of scholars, artists and audience. The festival generated a rare feeling, somewhat forgotten and yearned for a long time among theatre and Shakespeare lovers – a need for contact, the murmuring of the theatre crowd and the thrill of the possibility of surprises and last-minute changes that often happen on stage. It created a communal event filled with buzz and conversations after the performances. The Verona Shakespeare Fringe Festival provided a long-awaited cathartic effect of pulsating theatre, in which we were breathing freely even behind our masks. Like Miranda, guided by Prospero, we might be looking at a new world that requires an opening of our perception. In that sense, the fringed curtains of our eyes were adapted to this new experience, and the festival achieved what Elena Pellone highlighted in the interview – theatre itself has been seen and the festival was in service of a theatrical mirage. As so often with and in Shakespeare, the collective experience was transformed into “something rich and strange” (*The Tempest*, 1.2), that continues growing seeds for the summers to come.

EDOARDO GIOVANNI CARLOTTI – Dick McCaw, *Rethinking the Actor's Body. Dialogues with Neuroscience*. London and New York: Methuen Drama, 2020

SILVIA SILVESTRI – “*But he loves me . . . to death*”. *An Interview with Director Tonio De Nitto and Translator-Adaptor Francesco Niccolini about their Staging of La Bisbetica Domata (The Taming of the Shrew) for Factory Compagnia Transadriatica*

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