Ghostly Reception and Translation *ad spiritum*: The Case of Nicholas Grimald's *Archipropheta* (1548)

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Translation has been central to the reassessment of Greek tragedy's reception in the late fifteenth and sixteenth century.[1] Erasmus' Latin translations of Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (both printed 1506) stand as an imposing landmark casting a long shadow across the century, but many others were involved in Greek tragedy in translation. The proliferation of different kinds of translation - printed or circulated in manuscript, pedagogical in purpose or otherwise, into Latin or into vernaculars - is remarkable, and had a demonstrable impact on early modern drama, literary theory, and literary discourse, and much earlier than has previously been supposed.[2] The variety and number of translations meant that access to ancient Greek drama was wider than was once thought and certainly not reserved for those with an advanced understanding of the Greek language. That said, a recent study has made clear that there was a considerable literacy in ancient Greek in England, just as

[1] See most recently the edited volume *Translating Ancient Greek Drama in Early Modern Europe. Theory and Practice (15th-16th Centuries)*, edited by Malika Bastin-Hammou, Giovanna Di Martino, Cécile Dudouyt, and Lucy C. M. M. Jackson (Berlin, 2023), which advances research in this area in several directions. The present article contains parts of my own chapter in that volume, to which I refer readers for a treatment of this play that is more oriented towards Greek and Roman textual details.

[2] The excellent Appendices of editions and translations into Latin and vernacular languages in Tanya Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages* (Oxford, 2017), are likely to be supplemented as research continues in this area.

there was on the continent. This literacy was informed by but not confined to those occupied with the study and editing of classical texts, and it enabled a greater number of people than is usually and widely presumed to encounter ancient Greek texts with, or without, complementary translations in Latin and vernacular languages.[3]

Recent studies in the early modern reception of Greek tragedy have focused on its presence, facilitated by translation, in original vernacular literature and in drama especially.[4] In this article I offer a further piece of the puzzle and focus on Greek tragedy's relationship, via translation, with original early modern dramas composed in Latin. 'Too scholarly to receive the attention of literary historians, and too literary to interest the historians of scholarship' was Paul Botley's characterization of such works in 2004.[5] As with so much of early modern Latin literature, original Latin dramas have not had an appropriately prominent role in our appreciation of broader European literature at the time. Jürgen Leonhardt has spoken with bracing force of Europe's 'collective amnesia' when it comes to its post-classical Latin history, pointing to drama as an illustration and comparing the forty Latin dramas known to us from antiquity with the number of plays staged in Latin between the fifteenth

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[3] See Micha Lazarus, 'Greek Literacy in Sixteenth-Century England', *Renaissance Studies,* 29.3 (2015), 433-58.

[4] Ground-breaking in this regard was Louise Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama in Shakespeare's Writing of *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly,* 41.1 (1990), 29-48, but see also Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women*, and Robert S. Miola's multi-language studies of Antigone and Orestes: 'Early Modern Antigones: Receptions, Refractions, Replays', *Classical Receptions Journal,* 6.2 (2014), 221-44; 'Representing Orestes' Revenge', *Classical Receptions Journal,* 9.1 (2017), 144-65.

[5] Paul Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 1.

and the eighteenth centuries, which he estimates as 5,000-10,000.[6] The present case study takes just one of these thousands of Latin plays as its target: Nicholas Grimald's biblical play *Archipropheta*, written (and likely performed) in Oxford in the 1540s and published in Cologne in 1548. It is a single, but not singular, example that indicates how dynamic these original Latin works were as locations for the reception and reshaping of Greek tragic texts in the first half of the sixteenth century.[7]

The case study also adumbrates a peculiar and subtle form of reception, a process that I suggest we call translation *ad spiritum.* No early modern ever used this term to describe their own practice. Rather it is a term that riffs on an aspect of classical, post-classical, and early modern translation theory. The dyad of 'word for word' (*ad verbum*) translation and sense-focused translation (*ad sensum*) can still be a starting point in orientating both practitioners and literary critics, aware, of course, of the continuum that lies between these two poles. The many texts from the early modern period that ask how the task of translation should be approached show, too, that this was a matter of explicit concern and debate, not least when it came to translating biblical texts. A characteristic of translation *ad spiritum*, I suggest, is that it is a process that happened at a less obvious level than the concerted efforts of familiar early modern translators and theorisers such as Erasmus.

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[6] Jürgen Leonhardt, *Latin: Story of a World Language*, translated by Kenneth Kronenberg (Cambridge, MA, 2013), pp. 4, 6.

[7] For a comparable case study of George Buchanan's original Latin play *Baptistes* see Lucy C. M. M. Jackson, 'Proximate Translation: George Buchanan's *Baptistes,* Sophocles' *Antigone*, and Early Modern English Drama' in *Classical Tragedy Translated in Early Modern England*, edited by Katherine Heavey (= *Translation and Literature*, 29.1, 2020), 85-100.

The metaphor that theatre historian Marvin Carlson has used so evocatively for theatrical allusion also informs my understanding of this indistinct but potent process - that of 'haunting'.[8] This metaphor and its related imagery of ghosts and uncanny (sometimes inexplicable) presences, memories, and fuzzy outlines lies at the root of how I propose to configure the relationship between ancient and early modern texts in what follows. In translating *ad spiritum*, a figure or vision can appear seemingly unbidden by the author. We might compare translation *ad spiritum* with literary 'necromancy', i.e. a deliberate effort to summon a spirit. The act of 'translation' can already include a variety of practices, and overlaps with adaptation or the creation of versions or of literary works that are thoroughly original. We can add to the list of activities that come under the heading of 'translation' the notion of 'haunting', and using this to describe one way that ancient Greek tragedy was experienced by audiences in the first half of the sixteenth century.

The Latin word *spiritus* does not usually mean 'ghost' but rather 'breath' or 'life'. The term I offer, then, is playful. First, it gestures towards classical translation theory in its form (*ad* ...). Second, it deploys the Latin meanings of the word to allude to the intangible quality of what is being translated; along with ideas of 'inspiration', 'breath', and 'life', the Latin word can also be used of an odour, hence to translate *ad spiritum* is to transmit a 'whiff' of ancient Greek, or of a Greek tragedy. And third, the term summons an anglophone comprehension of 'spirit' or 'spirits' as agents of haunting and as ephemeral experiences that disappear as quickly as they appear. This is not the only way to read the relationship, and the kind of ghostly reception I concern myself with here might be described in other ways, for example as a kind of intertextuality. The advantage of this term, however, is that it allies the

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[8] Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2001).

translator's obscure process we hazily discern here with the broader and thoroughly conscious translation project of the sixteenth century. And, at the same time, the term foregrounds the uncanny experience of watching an early modern play that is 'haunted', where fuzzy, yet vivid, visions might be registered at different levels of consciousness amongst the audience.

And the first half of the sixteenth century was a spectacularly vivid time to be living, learning, and creating. The energy put into dusting off, editing, printing, translating, and conversing with and through these ancient Greek dramatic texts means we can understand the period as one of particularly heightened receptivity. The strictures of neo-classical poetics and Aristotelian tragic theory were yet to be widely disseminated and discussed, leaving scholars and playwrights with a practical, rather than theoretical, starting point in making their plays.[9] The cultural status of ancient Greek literature was far from secure, and the plays of Euripides, Sophocles, and Aeschylus offered themselves as novel options rather than established models in theatre making. In short, the pathways were exceptionally clear and open in this first half of the century, leaving us with a landscape that contains a dizzying array of 'sources', creative shards, mediatory texts, ante-texts, and translations available for playmakers.

Negotiating this landscape is a challenge for us, and calls for methods that embrace

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[9] The first full-scale exposition of the *Poetics* was Francesco Robortello's, published in Florence in 1548, the same year as Grimald's *Archipropheta* appeared. Also important was Alessandro Pazzi de' Medici's Latin translation of the *Poetics* in 1536. For some recent discussion of Poetics in this era, see *Artes poeticae: Formations and Transformations, 1500-1650*, edited by Vladimir Brljak and Micha Lazarus (= *Classical Receptions Journal*, 13.1, 2021).

the intangible and unprovable. The broader applicability of this example is in one sense limited because Grimald's work is just one play in one location. However, it elucidates a process that was happening on the European continent as well as in the universities of England. Much rests on understanding and interpreting the detail, and it is with that in mind that I offer the following sketch of the circumstances leading this author to write drama, and to the specific context of his contact with ancient Greek language, literature, and Greek tragedy.

The *Archipropheta* is one of two extant plays by Nicholas Grimald (1519-1562).[10] Like a number of other Latin dramas written in Europe in the 1530s and 1540s, it takes John the Baptist as its central figure, dramatizing his last days and eventual demise at the hands of King Herod and his wife Herodias.[11] Grimald probably wrote the play in the 1540s while engaged in teaching and other literary work in Oxford.[12] He dedicated the play to the newly appointed Dean of Christ Church, Dr Richard Cox, in 1546. There is no record of its performance in Oxford, but this seems highly likely, and Grimald himself writes in his prefatory letter of what either a reader or spectator ('siue lector, siue spectator') will learn, see, and observe.[13] The play was printed in Cologne in 1548 by Martin Gymnicus.

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[10] See Le Roy Merrill, *Life and Poems of Nicholas Grimald* (New Haven, CT, 1925) for further details of his complete works, including many plays besides the two we have today.

[11] Other Baptist plays written and performed in the same period are referred to by Howard B. Norland, *Drama in Early Tudor Britain 1485-1558* (Lincoln, NE, 1995), p. 334, who appraises Grimald's very positively in this context.

[12] For further details of this phase in Grimald's career, see Merrill, pp. 14-34.

[13] Merrill, pp. 234-5. While there is no direct evidence on where or whether *Archipropheta* was performed, it was observed long ago that 'it is very unlikely that at Christ Church, which

Grimald had, however, been aware of dramatic experiments in both Cambridge and Oxford for some years before this point, and penning the *Archipropheta* was not his first experience of writing drama. His early experiences of drama growing up would have been of mystery plays, as was the case for many people at this time. When he came to Cambridge in 1535, he would have found his contemporaries and their lecturers not only reading and talking about Greek drama, but also performing it (there was a production of Aristophanes' *Wealth* at St John's College in 1536). There are signs that contemporaries were also developing and experimenting with their own new forms of theatre, with tragedies based on biblical stories apparently especially fashionable.[14] The fruits of these experiments were to be seen later in the several plays produced and/or published in the 1540s. Thomas Watson's Latin play *Absolom* was written sometime between 1535 and 1544, and John Christopherson's *Jephthah,* written in Greek and performed *c.*1544, would have been known to Grimald. George Buchanan's immensely popular *Baptistes*, though not printed until 1576, may also have been circulating in manuscript and available when Grimald was writing his own Baptist tragedy in the mid-1540s.

So it is no surprise that, having graduated from Christ's College, Cambridge with a BA in 1540, and having travelled to Oxford to begin the next phase of his scholarly career, he turned to writing a play himself. He spent his first few months in Oxford at Brasenose College while waiting for his books to arrive, and in this time was encouraged by his peers to

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soon became the chief centre of Oxford acting, there should have been no performance of a work so rich in human interest and in spectacular effects'. Frederick Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Oxford, 1914), p. 34.

[14] Blackburn, pp. 77-81.

set down a dramatic work that he had already been planning.[15] This was his first drama, *Christus Redivivus*, a play which intersperses tragic and comic scenes. In the dedicatory epistle appended to the published play he notes that Roman dramatists, particularly Plautus, are a touchstone for this work, and indeed the motifs of Roman comedy are clearly evident throughout. But despite this explicit acknowledgement of Latin models, and even because of it, we need to highlight the place of ancient Greek learning and exposure to ancient Greek texts during Grimald's education.

Cambridge had been a centre of ancient Greek learning since the founding, on the instructions of Lady Margaret Beaufort (1443-1509), of St John's College in 1511. This college was to be the home to such influential teachers and scholars of ancient Greek as Richard Croke, John Cheke, and Roger Ascham. With the foundation in 1517 of Corpus Christi College in Oxford, the centres of Greek learning in England multiplied. By 1518 there was already a backlash *against* Greek learning in Oxford - a sure sign of the vitality and impact of the subject.[16] 1524 saw new statutes introduced at St John's College, based on those already in place at Corpus in Oxford, which required daily lectures on Greek grammar and literature. By 1535 several wealthy colleges at both Oxford and Cambridge were required to provide lectures on Greek language and literature, and attendance by all students, including those from less well-resourced colleges, was mandatory.[17] An oft-quoted, and immensely valuable, testimonium to the place of Greek drama within the more general Greek learning is found in a letter from Roger Ascham, writing in 1542. He refers to conditions at Cambridge

[15] See Grimald's own account in the dedicatory letter appended to his *Christus Redivius* in Merrill, pp. 98-101.

[16] Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women,* p. 47. Lazarus (n. 3), p. 442.

[17] Lazarus, p. 443.

and to Sir John Cheke, the first Regius Professor there:

> Aristotle and Plato are read by the young men in the original, but that has been done among us at St John's for the last five years. Sophocles and Euripides are here better known than Plautus used to be when you were up ... Our Cheke's effort and example has lit and fed this flame of literary zeal, for without pay he has publicly lectured on all of Homer, all of Sophocles, and that twice, as well as all of Euripides, and nearly all of Herodotus.[18]

As alluded to above, this intensive focus has not always been fully recognized by modern scholars of sixteenth-century classical learning in England, and goes some way to explaining how Greek drama's imprint has gone undetected in early modern drama written there. As Micha Lazarus has noted, there has been an unhelpful conflation between scholarship on ancient Greek texts with *literacy* in ancient Greek; and it would have been the ability to read and engage with Greek texts, and drama particularly, which would have created the conditions for a greater range of budding playwrights to translate aspects of Greek drama into their new and original works.[19] Ascham's words attest that Greek drama had a central place in this vibrant culture of Greek teaching and learning around 1540.

When Nicholas Grimald arrived in Cambridge in 1535, then, the stage was set for his immediate attention to and absorption of Greek language, literature, and drama. Grimald's considerable exposure to Greek is crucial for my claim that his original Latin plays carry

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[18] English translation in *English Historical Documents 1458-1558*, edited by C. H. Williams (Oxford, 1967), pp. 1070-1.

[19] Lazarus, pp. 433-7.

within them the ghosts of ancient Greek tragic texts specifically, as opposed to any number of other, possibly unidentified, ante-texts or mediatory texts. Having argued this premise's validity, I now turn to evidence for translation *ad spiritum* that can be found in the play itself.

One of the remarkable features of Grimald's dramatic handling of the last days of John the Baptist is a lengthy scene of banqueting in Herod's palace, filled with songs, dancing, and celebration, culminating in Herodias' daughter requesting, and getting, the severed head of the Baptist on a platter ('in patella postulo | Iohannis à cervice divulsum caput', p. 344).[20] After such a glut of spectacle and a drawn-out build up, the crucial moment of the Baptist's death and the turn from jubilation to horror at the end of Act 4 is sudden and jarring. Act 5 begins with several characters' reactions to the events: Jehovah himself, Herodias, the disciples of the Baptist, one of the servants of Herodias' house, and a female Syrian attendant (on whom more below). After this, Herod himself appears on stage, in some distress and wracked with guilt:

> Hui qua irrequietu animu gero? furiis quibus
> Incensus agitor? Inire somnos dum uolo,
> Qui me tremores? quae auferunt insomnia?
> ...
> Videor mihi interdum partriis e finibus
> Exul, inops, cuique contemptus mortalium

> Alas, what a troubled mind I bear with me! What furies madden and drive me! When I

[20] Text and translation are quoted and referenced throughout from Merrill. Italic font in the Latin is converted to roman.

> would sleep, what trembling seizes upon me, and what restlessness! ... Sometimes I seem to see myself exiled from my fatherland, needy and despised of all men
>
> (pp. 354-5)

The mention of a troubled mind, of the Furies, a thwarted desire for sleep, seizures and trembling, and an imminent, lonely exile are striking in themselves, but will put many in mind of the Furies' most famous quarry, the matricide Orestes. We should note that by the sixteenth century the image of Orestes *furens* had broken free of the confines of Greek tragedy. Robert Miola traces the spread of this motif from Virgil's comparison of Dido to Orestes *furens* (*Aen.* 4.471-3) to Plutarch and Longinus, and notes a host of references to the moral complexity of Orestes' dilemma in Cicero, Horace, Quintilian, and others - all authors read frequently by early sixteenth-century students and scholars.[21] At the same time, it is well worth noting that Orestes is not a figure featured in any Senecan drama.[22]

The details given in Grimald's play, however, resonate particularly with Euripides' presentation of Orestes in his play of that name, and suggest a closer relationship. The lines quoted above distil a detailed picture of Orestes' mental torment and the siblings' desperate plight, discussed at some length by Electra and the Chorus and depicted by the character of Orestes himself.[23] There are no verbal repetitions or appropriations on Grimald's part, nor need we seek them out. What we see conjured in the figure of Herod at this point in the play is a haunted character - a translation of Euripides' Orestes *ad spiritum*.

That the ghost of Orestes here is Greek and tragic in origin is made likely by the fact

[21] See Miola, 'Orestes' Revenge' (n. 4).

[22] See Seneca, *Agamemnon*, 1012, for a very light allusion from Cassandra.

[23] See Euripides, *Orestes*, 34-51, 88-90, 153-210, and 211-36, 253-315.

that Euripides' play was very easily accessed by students and scholars in England. In the first instance, it was, along with the *Hecuba* and *Phoenician Women*, one of the three plays chosen by Byzantine scholars as exemplars for their students. As such, these three plays are usually found at the beginning of printed editions of Euripides' works, and were more likely to be encountered by the browsing or curious reader than other tragedies. These same students and scholars would have been encouraged towards the Euripidean play, too, by the fact that it was quoted in other popular and often-read works of the time, as noted above. Longinus, as well as discussing the Oresteian dilemma in general terms, quotes two passages from the Euripidean play, both from the scene where Orestes is overtaken with a Fury-inspired frenzy. While scholars have noted these contextual factors in explaining how Orestes was to be a significant figure throughout the theatrical creations of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the appearance of an Orestes *furens*, and a thoroughly Euripidean Orestes at that, so early in the sixteenth century, should be added to their observations.[24] We can note here that an appreciation of translation *ad spiritum* can help re-write the timeline of Greek tragedy's reception in early modern European literature.

Herod's Orestes-like outburst in Act 5, however, is by no means the most significant ghost or moment of translation *ad spiritum* in Grimald's play. In classic Greek tragic style, the actual act of murder of the Baptist occurs offstage, and the fullest account of his death is given by a messenger figure.[25] Rather than this report being given by a new character whose express purpose is to communicate the information (as is commonly the case in Greek

[24] Scholars, that is, such as Miola (n. 4) and Tanya Pollard, 'Orestes in Early Modern England', in *Classical Tragedy Translated* (n. 7), 101-16.

[25] We can compare this Greek tragic style of announcement with that found in Buchanan's *Baptistes*, where news of the death is also delivered by a messenger or *nuntius* (lines 1316ff.).

tragedy) or by an enslaved character in a hurry (a *servus currens*, as is commonly the case in the Roman comedies of Plautus and Terence), here the report is given by a female attendant of Herodias', a Syrian *ancilla.* The *ancilla* is someone we have seen in many scenes throughout the play, praising Herodias' beauty (pp. 261-3), acting as a Senecan-style confidante and moderator of her mistress' fiery passions (pp. 290-1), and delivering a quasi-prophetic soliloquy of foreboding (pp. 290-1). Just prior to Herod's own entry, discussed above, the Syrian *ancilla* bursts onto the stage to speak to the Chorus and to the Baptist's disciples, two groups still unaware of the decapitation that has just occurred at the end of the previous act. She says:

> Atrocem ô regem: flebile ô spectculum:
> O dirum, ô horrendum, ô tyrannicum scelus.
> Ferro ablatum insontis est nefario caput.
>
> O cruel king! O doleful spectacle! O dire, terrible, and tyrannical crime! The head of the innocent man has been cut off by a wicked sword.
>
> (pp. 350-1)

In light of her connection as attendant to the queen, it is surprising that she displays such distress at the fate of the Baptist, a fate desired and all but ordered by her mistress Herodias.[26]

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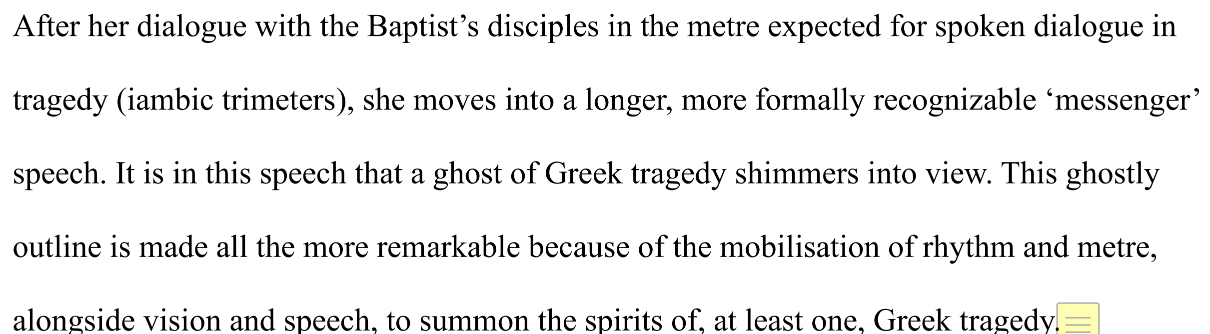
[26] She has by this point already expressed her immediate horror at the presentation of the head (pp. 344-5): 'Deum immortalem. Quod peractum nun scelus est? | Non ista poscit hoc tempus spectacula' - 'Immortal God! What crime has been committed now? The time demands no such sight as this.' Merrill notes that the last line echoes *Aeneid* 6.37.

Made all the more prominent by the abundance of elision in these lines when spoken aloud, the vocative exclamations not only make for a striking entry speech but also give clear performative cues for the actor to imitate the heaving sobs of fresh distress. Signs of how personally invested the Syrian *ancilla* is in the fate of John the Baptist are clear as her conversation with the disciples continues. She is scarcely able to look upon the feasting after the presentation of the Baptist's head, and, as well as physically leaving the palace, she flees 'from body and soul' in horror ('mente quas [*sc*. *epulae*, 'feasts'], et corpore fugio'). The impact of the murder is, in her eyes, not an injury (*damnum*) to her alone, but to the people at large ('Haud meu. | Sed publicum est'). She restates for the disbelieving disciples what has just occurred in lines with heavy poetic repetition:

> Est, est humeris abscissum Baptistae caput,
> Caput humeris abscissum, heu, quam crudeliter?
>
> The head of the Baptist has been cut from his shoulders! How cruelly, alas, has his head been cut from his shoulders!

(pp. 350-1)



After her dialogue with the Baptist's disciples in the metre expected for spoken dialogue in tragedy (iambic trimeters), she moves into a longer, more formally recognizable 'messenger' speech. It is in this speech that a ghost of Greek tragedy shimmers into view. This ghostly outline is made all the more remarkable because of the mobilisation of rhythm and metre, alongside vision and speech, to summon the spirits of, at least one, Greek tragedy.

We do not have a record of what music accompanied the lyrical parts of Greek tragedies, nor the music used in Grimald's play. But we do have a sense of the many different

kinds of verbal rhythm used in these lyrical passages. These metres used in Latin dramas, ancient and early modern, are vastly more varied in form than those available in English vernacular drama (blank verse, pentameter, or tetrameter).[27] Grimald used the lengthy banqueting scene in the *Archipropheta* to showcase his facility with metrical composition, and he uses a range of classical metres such as sapphics, hexameter, and elegiac couplets to delight and entertain his audience. The generic expectation for a messenger speech, however (in Roman drama as well as Greek), was that it should be in the metre of spoken dialogue, the iambic trimeter. In ancient Greek drama, at least, the dramaturgical function of the messenger speech was to convey information the audience is to understand as true and not affected by subjective emotions of the speaker. The metre of iambic trimeter was felt to correspond with this modality.

It runs counter to expectation, then, that the Syrian *ancilla*'s messenger speech is no speech but a lyrical aria of sorts, and in a metre that early modern ears would have most closely associated with the Latin poets Catullus and Martial: phalaecian hendecasyllables.[28] As just noted, the use of the metres of song as opposed to those of dialogue to report offstage events is extremely unusual in Greek and Roman drama. It does, however, have one famous parallel in Greek tragedy: the lyrical messenger speech in Euripides' *Orestes*, delivered by an enslaved Phrygian attendant of Helen's. It is here that we find, I argue, Grimald's clearest and

[27] For fascinating recent discussion on interactions between classical and early modern English metre, see *'Well-Staged Syllables': From Classical to Early Modern English Metres in Drama*, edited by Silvia Bigliazzi (= *Skenè: Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies,* 7.2, 2021).

[28] This metre has already been used once, briefly, earlier in the play (pp. 310-13) by the enslaved Syrian man, perhaps suggesting it was reserved for the Syrian figures of the play.

boldest piece of translation *ad spiritum* in the *Archipropheta*.

The moment when the enslaved Phrygian appears on stage in Euripides' *Orestes* is entirely unexpected and incongruous, a fact that caused much comment amongst ancient commentators and is exceptional in Euripidean and Greek tragic dramatic technique. As one recent commentator has written: 'Nothing could have prepared us for the bizarre scene … the 'wrong' character appears, from the "wrong" part of the stage, and behaves in a most unexpected way: it is a Phrygian slave who appears on the roof, descends to the *orchêstra*, and bursts into song.'[29] In that scene we also have a lyrical mode deployed to report information, and, like the Syrian *ancilla*, by a speaker in some considerable distress. 'Oh the murderous sufferings, the lawless woes I have seen, have seen in the royal palace!' (*Orestes*, 1455-6) – these are cries that echo the Syrian *ancilla*'s: 'O cruel king! O doleful spectacle! O dire, terrible, and tyrannical crime!' (pp. 350-1). Like the *ancilla,* the Phrygian is attempting to flee the scene. The identity of this singing figure is markedly 'foreign' or 'other', just as the Syrian (and perhaps the whole Herodian court) would have read as 'foreign' to Grimald's Oxford audience and a broader western European audience too.[30] It is suggestive too that the events being reported - a murder or attempted murder - resonate with intriguing clarity.[31] Aware of the impact of having such an unusual and virtuosic cameo as the Phrygian reporting

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[29] *Euripides: Orestes*, edited by Matthew Wright (London, 2008), p. 45.

[30] On the connotations of the term 'Syrian' in a sixteenth-century context, we should consider that 'Syrian' is not a term found in the Hebrew Bible and is not a name that was used by the Arab population from the seventh century CE onwards: 'Syria' is used as a term in the Septuagint as a translation for 'Aram', and 'Syrian' of Arameans.

[31] In Euripides *Orestes* 1107 they are planning to slit Helen's throat. At 1199 Hermione is threatened with the same.

traumatic and climactic events within the house, Grimald seems to have taken and translated the moment into his original play, into a character that would be just as surprising a messenger figure, and into as lyrical a mode of performance - the hendecasyllable. Once again Euripides' *Orestes* can be seen as haunting, aurally and visually, this original sixteenth-century Latin play.

The multiplicity of possible sources for the kind of ghostly reception we are discussing was noted above. Grimald's play gives us a marvellous example of how, even confining ourselves to Greek tragic texts, the ghosts that haunt his play can be plural. There is one other instance in extant Greek tragedies where offstage action is reported by a singing figure, although it is action that is happening concurrently or about to happen but not yet accomplished: the desperate and angry song of the cursed Cassandra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. Like the Syrian *ancilla*, she is enslaved, has an identity marked as 'foreign', and for a great deal of her onstage time sings in highly emotional lyric, only later reverting to a more 'rational' spoken iambic metre.

The images summoned by both the Syrian *ancilla* and Cassandra resonate uncannily. In the Greek play, Cassandra alludes to an impious feast, and to children murdered by their own uncle and fed to their father. This allusion is eerily congruent with the Syrian *ancilla*'s disgust at 'these feasts' (*istae epulae*, p. 350) which incorporate (although not for eating) the severed head of the Baptist. The waiting chorus of disciples and their initial consternation at what the Syrian *ancilla* is telling them echoes the Aeschylean chorus' initial confusion. They ask Cassandra 'Why are you wailing like that about Loxias? He is not the sort to come in contact with one who laments' (1074-5). The chorus of disciples ask 'Why is it that she thus laments after the banquet? ... Feasts should make one joyful' (p. 350).

What makes this ghost more than just one of many possibilities amongst a swathe of known and unknown material and possible mediatory texts? The answer lies in a quirk of

textual transmission. The first edition of the *Oresteia*, the trilogy of plays of which *Agamemnon* is the first, published by Aldus Manutius of Venice in 1518, contained only a partial text of the play, with two major sections missing (including, bizarrely, the actual entrance and exit of Agamemnon himself) but preserving the first part of Cassandra's only scene. The full text of the play that we have today was not printed until 1557. Thus Cassandra's vatic and lyrical performance was a prominent feature in the text that would have been available to readers of Greek in the first half of the sixteenth century.

Ascham's letter quoted above mentions students reading Sophocles and Euripides, but not Aeschylus. As well as the unsatisfactory texts available, there is no denying Aeschylus' language is dense and difficult, even to those with extensive experience in ancient Greek. Modern scholars are happy to assign the early modern reception of Aeschylus to a later point in theatre history, presuming his plays to be inaccessible to early modern readers and theatre makers. But perhaps we should question that presumption? Cassandra seems fuzzily visible (and audible in terms of her lyric utterance) in Grimald's Syrian *ancilla*, along with the more likely and obvious Euripidean Phrygian. It is provocative to suggest this additional translation *ad spiritum*, but at this heightened moment of receptivity in the sixteenth century, the presence of Aeschylus in original Latin drama does not seem impossible. Ghosts of Aeschylus as well as Euripides might well have stalked the theatrical spaces of England's colleges.

What we can comfortably accept, however, is that the process of translation *ad spiritum* allows for multiple characters in Grimald's play to 'host' these spectral, translated, figures. The tormented Orestes appears again when we see the Queen Herodias reacting in private to the murder that she herself so vehemently desired:

Heu quam ingens aestuat in corde intimo pudor?

Furens ut amor? Mens ut facinoris conscia?
Me turbat ut misto dolore insania? ut
Insultat accusatrix cogitatio?
Scio, acerba me multorum circumstant odia.
Quid deinde? Oderint me hercle, dum metuant modo,
Regina si maneo, mea quid interest?

Alas! what great shame wells up from the depths of my heart! How love rages! How conscious the soul is of guilt! How madness mingled with grief confounds me! how accusing thought reviles me! I know that the fierce hatred of many surrounds me! What then? By Hercules, let them hate me so long as they fear me! If I remain queen, what care I?

(pp. 348-9)

Le Roy Merrill has highlighted the surface allusion to Virgil here, to the description of an ashamed Turnus in *Aeneid* 12.[32] The proximity to the two ghosts of Euripides' *Orestes* discussed above, however, supports a comparison of Herodias with the figure of Orestes and one of his most famous (certainly to the scholars of sixteenth-century Europe) and most discussed lines. In his dialogue with Menelaus, a potential saviour for Orestes and his sister in the hostile environment of Argos, he describes the suffering he currently endures as

[32] 'aestuat ingens | uno in corde pudor mixtoque insania luctu | et furiis agitatus amor et conscia virtus', 'within that single heart heaves overwhelming shame, and madness mingled with grief, and love enraged by fury, and the consciousness of virtue', 12.666-8 (translation mine). Compare also *Aeneid* 10.905-6: 'Scio acerba meorum | Circumstare odis'.

'understanding: the awareness that I have done dreadful things'.[33] The ghost of Orestes haunting the figure of Herodias here puts a distinctive spin on the Virgilian elements of shame, madness, and love. What torments Herodias at this point in the play is not just these strong emotions but the *awareness* of them ('Mens ut facinoris conscia').[34] As has recently been noted, this line of Euripides' *Orestes* was 'the *locus classicus* for medieval treatments of conscience'.[35] The Queen Herodias does move quickly on from this questioning of herself and her deeds, taking on the garb now of the stereotypical tyrant ('Oderint ... dum metuant modo', p. 000). And yet this brief translation *ad spiritum* of Orestes' dilemma and his consciousness of the crime committed adds an extra layer of complexity to Grimald's guilty queen.

The figure of Herodias in Grimald's play is unusually porous, a ready host for a number of different spirits from Greek tragedy. Her own gender lends itself to comparison with the remarkable women of tragedy - often royal and filled with passion and purpose. In the preface to his Latin translation of Euripides' *Alcestis* (published in 1556), addressed to Marguerite de France, daughter of François I, George Buchanan wrote: 'there will be no mention beyond this point of parricide and poisoning and of all the other wickedness with which other tragedies are filled' ('parricidii vero et veneficii et reliquorum quibus aliae

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[33] Euripides, *Orestes* 396, my translation.

[34] For other comparable uses of *conscius* in the Vulgate, see 1 Kings 2:44, Leviticus 5:1, and an explicit denial of the ability to be *conscius* in 1 Corinthians 4:4.

[35] Jed Atkins, 'Euripides's Orestes and the Concept of Conscience in Greek Philosophy', *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 75 (2014), 1-22 (p. 2).

tragoediae plenae sunt scelerum nulla prorsus hic mentio'),[36] an attempt no doubt to anticipate the common suspicion of Greek tragedy, and in particular those agents of 'poisoning', the women, and contrasting that reputation with the praiseworthy figure of Alcestis.[37] The ghosts of these bad women are often indistinguishable from their articulations in Latin (particularly Senecan) and post-classical texts.[38] Herodias, the luxurious inspirer of uxorial devotion, acts as a lightning rod for these ghosts and, in turn, will have shaped later readings of Clytemnestra, Medea, Aerope, and Phaedra. None of these is so clearly translated into Herodias' character, however, as the figure of Helen, someone who, like Orestes, holds nothing like as prominent a place in the Senecan dramatic corpus as she does either in the Greek tragedies available to sixteenth-century readers, or in Euripides' *Orestes* itself.

The emphasis on beauty, wealth, and opulence at the court of Herod, and around Herodias especially, is conspicuous in Grimald's play. The enslaved Syrian man and the Syrian *ancilla* early on emphasize Herodias' sumptuous physical beauty - eyes, teeth, nose, hair, snowy neck, and trim bosom:

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[36] *George Buchanan Tragedies*, edited by P. Sharratt and P. G. Walsh (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 211.

[37] On the suspicion of Greek tragic women, see e.g. Katherine Heavey, *The Early Modern Medea: Medea in English Literature, 1558-1688* (Basingstoke, 2015), p.8 and *passim*.

[38] For example, I do not discuss the clear echoes between Herodias and Seneca's Medea at, e.g., p. 297, where Herodias rails against the prospect of Herod abandoning her – 'Haeccine | Sacra illa est confirmata coniugio fides? ... Certe ego famae, pudori, patriae, uiro, | Ac omnibus te rebus unum praetul'. Compare Seneca, *Medea*, 488: 'tibi patria cessit, tibi pater frater pudor'.

Ebori' instar candidi dentes. Labellula

Suffusa nativo quodam velut minio.

Nasus elegans venusto libratur spatio,

Eöae pulchra par est aurorae coma.

Her teeth are white as ivory, and her dainty lips, delicately coloured, are parted a little. Her fine nose is well poised amid lovely surroundings. Her hair is as beautiful as the dawn.

(pp. 261-3)

Her daughter is named Tryphera,[39] the meaning of the name (drawn from the Greek word τρυφή, 'luxuriousness') borne out in Act 4.2 when she is dressed by Herodias in an impossibly rich array of jewels and fine clothes:

Margaritas idcirco sumes: coloribus

Corpusculum fucabis: torques, et aureos

Geres annuluos, et armullas

...

Profer (puella) chirothecas, anulos,

Gemmas, crepidulas, et mundum omenmen relliquum.

[39] Grimald would have known Josephus' account of this story and the name of Salome given there, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.109. On Grimald's use of multiple sources see Blackburn (n. 14), p. 95.

Therefore put on your pearls. Paint your little body with colours, wear your necklaces, your rings of gold, and your bracelets ... Quick, girl, my ring-cases, my rings, jewels, sandals, and all the rest of my ornaments.

(pp. 312-13)

Herodias then adorns herself even more richly. The same scene highlights that Herodias, like Helen, is a woman with two husbands, as the fool (another appropriately Greek-named character) Gelasimus jokes with the Queen:

Herodias. Now tell whose [wife] I am.

Gel. The wife of Herod.

Her. But of which?

(pp. 314-15)

The translation of the particularly indulged and luxury-oriented Helen depicted in the Euripides play, into this biblical setting and the figure of Herodias, serves Grimald's drama in two ways. First, the crime of incest of which the Baptist accuses Herod and Herodias is given further cultural weight through the comparison with Helen's adultery with Paris. But second, the famed wealth of Troy and Phrygia, noted at several points in Euripides' play and presented as corrupting and negative by a range of characters, is here transmuted in a biblical context into a critique frequently levelled at the Roman Church throughout this stage of the Reformation - a corrupting and negative association with idols, luxury, and wealth. In this brief example, then, we see how translation *ad spiritum* allows for subtle but utterly contemporary comment on the confessional disputes that were still rife in the 1540s.

<1 line #>

Grimald's *Archipropheta* did not leave a deep footprint in the literary records of English or

European drama. His *Christus Redivivus*, published earlier in 1543, went on to be performed in Germany; it was produced at Augsburg in 1556, and is one of the plays on which the original Passion Play of Oberammergau was based.[40] Grimald was also a major contributor to Tottel's Miscellany - the first printed anthology of English poetry (1557) and almost proverbially familiar during the reign of Elizabeth I in England. And yet, despite his literary reputation at the time, and his many biblical and classical works (most of which are no longer extant), he is a relatively obscure figure in terms of English literary history. Although perhaps a better play than other Baptist-focused works, *Archipropheta* has been accorded relatively little attention over the years. This should be taken into account when looking to it as a text for the shaping of later attitudes towards Greek tragedy. What I hope to have shown here is only what the process of translation *ad spiritum* entails, and that it did occur. This is something that seems more plausible once we factor in the certain backdrop of Greek drama being read and translated in Oxford and Cambridge from the earliest decades of the sixteenth century. By appreciating this play as a useful illustration of the fuzzy and most likely unconscious translation *ad spiritum*, we can begin to understand Greek drama to have played a part in all kinds of dramatic production at a much earlier point than is usually posited.

While the examples above may be persuasive, they are not finally provable. Problems remain, not least in negotiating the many other known and unknown texts, sights, and sounds that haunt this play as well as the ghosts of Greek tragedy. But there is profit, too, in embracing this evanescent process. In looking at the translation *ad spiritum* of Greek drama, we find further ways to appreciate the rich textures of the original Latin plays that were being composed in this century. Bringing together pagan Greek and Christian biblical characters and ethical questions gives rise to particularly interesting, complicated, often ambiguous and

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[40] On the huge influence of this play in Germany, see Merrill, pp. 61-89.

polyvalent texts. The ‘Christianization’ of Greek drama was not a straightforward endeavour. As the various Reformations and Counter-Reformations across Europe rumbled on, pagan Greek texts were defended or contested in all confessional quarters. The part played by the ghosts of Greek drama in the context of contemporary religious discourse is a rich but still largely unstudied aspect of the Latin drama of the sixteenth century, although interest in the area is growing.

An appreciation of the place of original Latin dramas, and the way they acted as hosts for the spirits of Greek tragedy, not only adds an important piece to a puzzle, but also shows how a critical mass of receptions was being built up from the early sixteenth century onwards. The more times an Orestes-like figure, in ghostly form or otherwise, traverses an early modern stage, the greater prominence the figure gains in the broader cultural imaginary. Iteration breeds iteration, whether that be from translation, adaptation, or in haunting original works. Orestes’ prominence from relatively early on in early modern English drama is a phenomenon that rests on a subterranean and rhizomatic network of translations and reiterations. Many other later receptions of classical Greek figures might be similarly shaped by an underground network of literary ghosts and spirits.

This article has been front-footed in embracing the airy, impalpable, and shadowy forms of Greek tragedy. This corresponds to what can be a challenging but necessary reckoning with the non-chronological nature of literary receptions. Hamlet’s recognition that ‘The time is out of joint’ was, as many have noted, prompted by the appearance and speech of a ghost. In one sense, the process of translation *ad spiritum* outlined here is a chronologically linear one in which translation is the transmission of anterior texts. Yet a ghost also disrupts such chrono-normativity. The presence of elements and motifs in Latin plays that resonate strongly with those of Greek tragedy will, in turn, have shaped the reading and reception of those same Greek plays as the sixteenth century continued. Audiences of these haunted Latin

plays would have taken on and become primed with a certain set of associations through the translated elements even before they encountered the Greek plays themselves. Anyone who may have seen a performance of Grimald's play at Christ Church in Oxford in the mid-1550s might have gone on to read and understand Euripides' *Orestes* with a particular set of biblical characters and, in turn, biblical ghosts in mind. First audiences of Latin plays need not recognize the echoes of Greek drama for those echoes still to have a powerful influence on their general understanding of Greek drama during their lifetimes. The frame put around certain characters or moral dilemmas by translating them into a biblical context would act on the sixteenth-century reception of those same Greek tragedy characters or dilemmas in their original contexts.[41] Grimald's *Archipropheta* could be, then, a small but crucial part of understanding early modern drama's communion with ancient Greek tragedy.

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[41] For an example of an original Latin play influencing how a Greek tragedy is interpreted, see Jackson, 'Proximate Translation' (n. 7).

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