

Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme



Translating Dramatic Texts in Sixteenth-Century England and France: Introduction

Traduire le texte dramatique au seizième siècle en Angleterre et en France : introduction

Anne G. Graham et Ágnes Juhász-Ormsby

Volume 40, numéro 3, été 2017

Translating Dramatic Texts in Sixteenth-Century England and France
Traduire le texte dramatique au seizième siècle en Angleterre et en France

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086130ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i3.28734>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce document

Graham, A. & Juhász-Ormsby, Á. (2017). Translating Dramatic Texts in Sixteenth-Century England and France: Introduction. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 40(3), 7–18.
<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i3.28734>

© Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2017

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

Translating Dramatic Texts in Sixteenth-Century England and France: Introduction



Traduire le texte dramatique au seizième siècle en Angleterre et en France¹ : Introduction

ANNE G. GRAHAM AND ÁGNES JUHÁSZ-ORMSBY

Memorial University

The recent publication of comprehensive, multi-volume studies such as *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English* (2005–08), *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation* (2000), and *Histoire des traductions en langue française* (2012–15) provides good evidence that translation as a field of study has come of age in both the Anglophone and Francophone contexts.² The early modern period in particular has proven fertile ground for scholars, as the ever-growing list of editions in the MHRA Tudor and Stuart Translations series

1. We would like to express our gratitude to Héléne Cazes and the anonymous readers of *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* for their most valuable comments and advice.

2. Gordon Braden, Robert Cummings, and Stuart Gillespie, eds., *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English. Volume II 1550–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Yves Chevrel, Lieven d’Hulst, Christine Lombez, Véronique Duché, Annie Cointre, and Yen-Mai Tran-Gervat, eds., *Histoire des traductions en langue française* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 2012–15); Peter France, ed., *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For the early modern period specifically, see also Marie Axton and James P. Carley, “Triumphs of English”: *Henry Parker, Lord Morley, Translator to the Tudor Court: New Essays in Interpretation* (London: British Library, 2000); Michel Ballard and Lieven d’Hulst, eds., *La traduction en France à l’âge classique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1996); Christian Balliu, *Les traducteurs transparents: La traduction en France à l’époque classique* (Brussels: Editions du Hazard, 2002); Charles Brucker, ed., *Traduction et adaptation en France à la fin du Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997); Luce Guillerm, *Sujet de l’écriture et traduction autour de 1540* (Lille: Atelier national Reproduction des thèses, Université Lille III, 1988); Paul Horguelin, *Traducteurs français du 16^e et 17^e siècle* (Montréal: Linguatex, 1996); Gabriela Schmidt, *Elizabethan Translation and Literary Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013); Fred Schurink, *Tudor Translation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Marie Viallon, ed., *La traduction à la Renaissance et à l’âge classique* (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l’Université de Saint-Étienne, 2001); Valerie Worth, *Practising Translation in Renaissance France: The Example of Etienne Dolet* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

and the wealth of fresh resources yielded by the *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads Catalogue* (RCCC) demonstrate.³ The expanding corpus of publications on translation theory and practice has challenged the mistaken notion of translation as a marginal literary practice, highlighting the diverse roles translated texts played within the broader processes of cultural transmission from classical antiquity to the early modern period.⁴ Along with the Fall 2012 special issue of *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, edited by Marie-Alice Belle and dedicated to *Women's Translations in Early Modern England and*

3. *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads Catalogue* (RCCC) is “a searchable and annotated list of translations out of and into all languages printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland before 1641.” It is based on the second edition of A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475–1640*, and modelled on the online *English Short-Title Catalogue*. RCCC website: <https://www.hrionline.ac.uk/rcc/>.

4. On early modern translation theory, see Marie-Alice Belle, “(Auto-)portraits de l’auteur en traducteur: autorité horatienne et *ethos* du traducteur en Angleterre au XVII^e siècle,” *Camena* 7 (2015): 1–20; Gordon Braden, “Translating Procedures in Theory and Practice,” in Braden, Cummings, and Gillespie, eds., 89–100; Theo Hermans, “Renaissance Translation between Literalism and Imitation,” in *Geschichte, System, Literarische Übersetzung. Histories, Systems, Literary Translations*, ed. Harald Kittel (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1992), 95–116; Brenda M. Hosington, “Thomas More’s Views on Language and Translation and Their Place in the Classical and Humanist Tradition,” *Moreana* 40 (2003): 69–98; Brenda Hosington and Marie-Alice Belle, “Translation, History, and Print: A Model for the Study of Printed Translations in Early Modern Britain,” *Translation Studies* 10 (2017): 1–20; Massimiliano Morini, *Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Glyn P. Norton, *The Ideology and Language of Translation in Renaissance France and Their Humanist Antecedents* (Geneva: Droz, 1984) and “*Fidus interpres*: A Philological Contribution to the Philosophy of Translation in Renaissance France,” in *Neo-Latin and the Vernacular in Renaissance France*, ed. Grahame Castor and Terence Cave (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 227–51; Neil Rhodes, *English Renaissance Translation Theory* (London: MHRA, 2013); Valerie Worth-Stylianou, “*Translatio* and Translation in the Renaissance: From Italy to France,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism. Volume 3: The Renaissance*, ed. Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 127–35. For more general studies, see Peter Burke’s varied publications: *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), “Lost (and Found) in Translation: A Cultural History of Translators and Translating in Early Modern Europe,” *European Review* 15 (2005): 83–94, and *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Theo Hermans, “The Task of the Translator in the European Renaissance,” in *Translating Literature*, ed. Susan Bassnett (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 14–40; Brenda Hosington, “Translation as a Currency of Cultural Exchange in Early Modern England,” in *Early Modern Exchanges*, ed. Helen Hackett (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 27–54; Karen Newman and Jane Tylus, *Early Modern Cultures of Translation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

France / *La traduction au féminin en France et Angleterre (16^e et 17^e siècles)*, a number of studies have brought into focus the formative influence of women translators and explored how translation promoted the image of the woman writer in intellectual and literary spheres dominated by men.⁵ While tracing the formation of the professional translator, scholars have also emphasized the collective nature of translation and the varied roles of printers, publishers, readers, and other intermediaries in the polyglot environment in which early modern translations moved.⁶

While dramatic texts were previously considered second to verse and prose, they have been incorporated into discussions concerning translation and literary culture, and their significance in shaping contemporary literary practices and their enduring effect on evolving vernacular styles both on stage

5. See also Jean-Philippe Beaulieu, ed., *D'une écriture à l'autre. Les Femmes et la traduction sous l'Ancien Régime* (Ottawa: Ottawa University Press, 2004); Isabelle Brouard-Arends, ed., *Lectrices d'Ancien Régime* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003); Danielle Clark, "Translation," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 167–80; Margaret Hannay, ed., *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1985); Brenda Hosington, "Women Translators and the Early Printed Book," in *A Companion to the Early Printed Book in Britain*, ed. Vincent Gillespie and Susan Powell (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014), 248–71, "Tudor Englishwomen's Translations of Continental Protestant Texts: The Interplay of Ideology and Historical Context," in Schurink, 121–42, and "Translation, Early Printing, and Gender in England 1485–1535," *Florilegium* 23 (2008): 21–52; Brenda Hosington and Hannah Fournier, "Translation and Women Translators," in *The Encyclopedia of Women in the Renaissance: Italy, France and England*, ed. Diana M. Robin, Anne Larsen, and Carole Levin (Santa Barbara: University of California Press, 2007), 369–75; Tina Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1992); Colette Nativel, ed., *Femmes savantes, savoirs de femmes: Du crépuscule de la Renaissance à l'aube de Lumières* (Geneva: Droz, 1999); Deborah Uman, *Women as Translators in Early Modern England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012).

6. Sara K. Barker and Brenda Hosington, eds., *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print, and Culture in Britain 1473–1640* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Belén Bistué, *Collaborative Translation and Multi-Version Texts in Early Modern Europe* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2013); Anne E. B. Coldiron, *Printers without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Brenda Hosington, ed., "Translation and Print Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700," special issue, *Renaissance Studies* 29 (2015); Brenda Hosington and Marie-Alice Belle, eds., *Thresholds of Translation: Paratexts, Print, and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).

and on page have been fully acknowledged.⁷ The articles in the present issue contribute to this flourishing body of literature by focusing on translated drama in sixteenth-century England and France.⁸ This collection grew out of a conference held at Memorial University in August 2015 entitled *Translating for the Stage in Early Modern France and England / Traduire pour la scène dans la première modernité: L'Angleterre et la France*. The conference papers revealed that indeed many translated dramatic texts were intended for purposes other than staging. Unlike Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson's essay collection *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theater*, which examines political, linguistic, and cultural exchanges characterized by a system of early modern theatregrams from a performative and stage-centred viewpoint, this volume emphasizes the value of the (translated) dramatic text for purposes beyond staged representation, that is, for purposes of pedagogy, edification, and specific religious and political agendas, and as a laboratory for innovation in style and metre, among others.⁹

The two parts of this bilingual issue aptly illustrate the differing translation situations in England and France. As Warren Boutcher noted in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, in the French literary context the term "Renaissance" refers to the rediscovery of classical and biblical texts in the ancient languages of Greek and Latin, whereas in sixteenth-century England "ancient letters were rediscovered by means of a comparative process of ongoing translations between Latin and a group of European vernaculars."¹⁰ In fact, as Tania Demetriou and Rowan Tomlinson in *The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500–1660* remind us, next to Latin, French is the only "significant 'vehicular' or 'pivot' tongue for English translation,"

7. See, for example, recent editions focusing on drama in the MHRA Tudor and Stuart Translations series: James Ker and Jessica Winston, *Elizabethan Seneca: Three Tragedies* (2013), and Line Cottegnies and Marie-Alice Belle, *Robert Garnier in Elizabethan England: Mary Sidney Herbert's Antonius* (1592) and *Thomas Kyd's Cornelia* (1594) (forthcoming).

8. For an overview, see the Gordon Braden chapters on "Tragedy" and "Comedy" and the G. W. Pigman III chapter on "Pastoral Drama," in France, ed., 261–79, 280–92, 293–98.

9. Robert Henke and Eric Nicholson, *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theatre* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

10. Warren Boutcher, "The Renaissance," in France, ed., 45.

representing the intermediary language of 40 percent of English translations.¹¹ This is perhaps a reflection of the unique status of the English vernacular in the European context. As Karen Newman and Jane Tylus observe in their introduction to their volume *Early Modern Cultures of Translation*, “English was virtually unknown on the continent in the sixteenth century.”¹² Consequently, a “trade imbalance” (as Lawrence Venuti termed it) led to a situation in which many texts were translated into English and relatively few from English into the Continental vernaculars.¹³

The first part of this issue, consisting of five case studies, reflects this “trade imbalance” between English and French translations, as four out of five of the papers survey how translations enriched dramatic literature in England through various linguistic, political, religious, and cultural ties with France. These studies, which closely engage with the particular historical contexts of the respective translations, offer fresh sources for the study of English and French cultural exchanges, underlining their multifaceted functions, particularly as agents of change within the period. They contribute to the burgeoning field of Anglo-French literary connections in the period, and in particular to the work of Karen Britland, Anne E. B. Coldiron, Line Cottegnies, Richard Hillman, Andrew Kirk, Jean-Christophe Mayer, Hassan Melehy, Jean-Christophe Mayer, Anne Lake Prescott, Michael Saenger, and Deanne Williams.¹⁴ By tracing

11. Tania Demetriou and Rowan Tomlinson, *The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500–1660* (Basingstoke: Palsgrave Macmillan, 2015), 4–5.

12. Newman and Tylus, 19.

13. On “trade imbalances,” see Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

14. For publications focused specifically on drama, see Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Richard Hillman, *French Origins of English Tragedy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) and *French Reflections in the Shakespearean Tragic: Three Case Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012); Andrew M. Kirk, *The Mirror of Confusion: The Representation of French History in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Garland Publications, 1996) and “Marlowe and the Disordered Face of French History,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 35 (1995): 192–213; Jean-Christophe Mayer, ed., *Representing France and the French in Early Modern English Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008) and “Shakespeare and France in the European Mirror,” in *The Shakespeare International Yearbook 8: Special Section, European Shakespeares*, ed. Graham Bradshaw and Tom Bishop (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 107–16; Howard B. Norland’s chapter on “The French Dimension” in his *Neoclassical Tragedy in Elizabethan England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009); Iris

chronologically the production, circulation, and reception of French dramatic texts in England throughout the sixteenth century, these articles supplement Bénédicte Louvat-Mozolay and Florence March's edited volume, *Les théâtres anglais et français (XVI^e et XVIII^e siècle): Contacts, Circulation, Influence* (2016), which concentrates mainly on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century transnational dramatic exchange with a limited focus on translation.¹⁵

Emblematic of the transnational humanist culture of the early sixteenth century, the first examples of dramatic texts imported from France into England and intended for purposes of vernacular translation were the Parisian master Johannes Ravisius Textor's Latin dialogues. Textor's popularity in England initiated, in Robert Horback's words, a virtual Textor movement, as attested by the flurry of translation activities by humanist schoolmasters, such as the playwright and master of Eton College, Nicholas Udall, the master of Jesus College School in Cambridge, Robert Radcliffe, and the printer William Rastell. Although the English translations of Textor's dramatic dialogues were produced primarily within an educational context, as Ágnes Juhász-Ormsby's article on Radcliffe's translation of Textor's *Dialogi* (1530) shows, they were also used to popularize specific religious changes promoted by the Henrician government as part of wide-ranging reforms prompted by the English Reformation. Her study, furthermore, highlights the complex role these early pedagogical translations played beyond the confines of schools and demonstrates how they

Oberth, "Appropriating France in Elizabethan Drama: English Translations of Robert Garnier's Plays," in Schmidt, 275–97; Anne Lake Prescott, "Mary Sidney's 'Antonius' and the Ambiguities of French History," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 38 (2008): 216–33; Michael Saenger, *Shakespeare and the French Borders of English* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Deanne Williams, *The French Fetish from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For more general studies, see Anne E. B. Coldiron, "French Presences in Tudor England," in *A Companion to Tudor Literature*, ed. Kent Cartwright (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 246–60; Line Cottegnies, Anne-Marie Miller-Blaise, Gisèle Louise Venet, eds., *Les Voix de Dieu: Littérature et prophétie en Angleterre et en France à l'âge baroque* (Paris: Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2008); Catherine Gimelli Martin and Hassan Melehy, eds., *French Connections in the English Renaissance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Hassan Melehy, *The Poetics of Literary Transfer in Early Modern France and England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Anne Lake Prescott, *French Poets and the English Renaissance: Studies in Fame and Transformation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) and *Imagining Rabelais in Renaissance England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

15. Bénédicte Louvat-Mozolay and Florence March, eds., *Les théâtres anglais et français (XVI^e et XVIII^e siècle): Contacts, Circulation, Influence* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016).

helped translators position themselves in the precarious religious and political climate of the 1530s.

The first complete translation of a French play, Arthur Golding's English rendering of the Huguenot Théodore Bèze's tragedy *Abraham sacrificiant*, was similarly prompted by religious concerns and demarcates an era of conscious importation of Continental biblical plays in Elizabethan England. Anne G. Graham's study of Golding's 1577 translation, which surprisingly has hitherto received little scholarly attention, analyzes Golding's translation techniques and his attempts to adapt and pre-digest Bèze's interpretation of the familiar Old Testament story for his English Protestant readers. Like Radcliffe before him, Golding deliberately applied a word-for-word method of translation, highly recommended in contemporary theoretical treatises as the favoured method for scriptural and religious texts. However, Golding's divergence from this approach in key moments of the biblical play demonstrates his unease with some of the scandalous aspects of Abraham's story highlighted by the French reformer. In the absence of prefatory material to Golding's *A Tragedie of Abraham's Sacrifice*, this study looks to the prefatory letters of Golding's most famous translation, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as well as to his concurrent translation of John Calvin's *On Offence* to better understand the English translator's choices with respect to Bèze's tragedy. The resulting analysis suggests an evolution in Golding's confidence in his readers' ability to interpret correctly a text and to not be deterred by would-be religious scandals or stumbling blocks to the true faith.

The most recognized appropriation of French drama in English, Robert Garnier's tragedies in the 1590s, was preceded by a particularly fertile period of translation activities, marked by a series of Senecan tragedies, starting with Jasper Heywood's *Troas* in 1559, followed by his *Thyestes* (1560) and *Hercules Furens* (1561), Alexander Neville's *Oedipus* (1563), John Studley's *Agamemnon*, *Medea*, and *Hercules Oetaeus* (1566) and *Hippolytus* (1567), and Thomas Nuce's *Octavia* (ca. 1566). Thomas Newton, whose own translation of *Thebais* (1581) completed the list, collected all the existing translations in *Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies* in 1581. While these Senecan translations subsequently exerted considerable influence on English Renaissance theatre, the English versions of Garnier's learned French tragedies, *Marc Antoine* (1592) in Mary Sidney Herbert's translation and Thomas Kyd's *Cornelia* (1594), were not performed on stage at the time. In her article on Kyd's *Cornelia*, Marie-Alice Belle carefully presents how Kyd adapts Garnier's Senecan play to the Elizabethan historical

Roman drama and revenge tragedy, exploiting, like Sidney Herbert before him, the political and ideological associations raised by his French source. She examines Kyd's cultural translation of Garnier's themes within the context of the literary production of the Sidney-Herbert circle, highlighting how Garnier's experiment with Senecan drama is embedded in the dialogue with the classical past and contemporary Continental literature in England in the 1590s. Belle furthermore challenges the traditional characterization of Kyd's translation of Garnier's tragedy as "closet drama" intended for a closed literary circle and views instead *Cornelia* as an integral part of the cosmopolitan, transnational poetics of the late Elizabethan era.

While the first three studies investigate the limited corpus of direct translations of plays composed in France, Richard Hillman's article suggests new ways of broadening the current census by considering an array of dramatic and non-dramatic French texts that shaped and enriched (either overtly or obliquely) the English dramatic tradition, especially in the late Elizabethan period, in addition to the more obvious borrowings from contemporary Italian theatre. Despite the scarcity of translated play-texts, largely confined to readers and produced with a marked Protestant overtone (as shown in the three previous studies), partial and indirect adaptations and appropriations from French originals significantly augment the field of English-French dramatic connections. Drawing on his own extensive scholarship on the subject, Hillman offers a comprehensive survey and a systematic overview of English-French intertexts, arranged according to commonly used generic categories, such as tragicomedy, tragedy, historical drama, tragedies on classical themes, and comedies. French inflections and reflections are carefully traced in the plays of William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and George Chapman and placed within the complex literary, political, and religious contexts of the period. Through examples of English-French intertexts found in English plays, he argues against the notion of a controlling original and instead emphasizes the multilayered conditions of textual production in the later sixteenth century.

As opposed to the formative influence of French plays on English drama, notably in the second half of the sixteenth century, the appropriation of English literary texts—especially for dramatic purposes in France—was much more limited and did not occur until the early seventeenth century. Alban Déléris's article delineates how popular, non-dramatic texts, such as Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, were repeatedly translated into French and subsequently entered the

French stage through a series of adaptations. Jean Galaut's tragedy *Phalante* (1611) was followed a few decades later by Gautier de Costes de La Calprenède's play of the same title (1642). La Calprenède, however, altered his predecessor's version, adjusting it to the new dramatic rules promoted at that time. The series of adaptations is completed by André Mareschal's tragicomedy *La Cour bergère* (1640), which was based on the whole narrative material of Sidney's prose work. These three adaptations, Déléris argues, reflect the structural and generic evolutions of the French theatre during the first half of the seventeenth century. They delineate not only the processes of theatrical adaptation but also the ways in which Sidney's *Arcadia* can be considered a cultural matrix through its literary influence in France during the first part of the seventeenth century.

Unlike in England, the main source of translated dramatic texts in sixteenth-century France was classical Greek and Latin literature, with Italian being the only vernacular represented. The second section of this issue, likewise comprising five case studies, reveals how the wholesale translation of Greek and Latin works, including plays, by French writers was linked to two interconnected movements in France: the humanist movement (the translation and creation of tragedies were considered by many to be among the central occupations of a humanist) and a concurrent movement to elevate the French language and to create a national literature that could compete with Latin. The translation of ancient tragedies led, in the second half of the sixteenth century, to the creation of original tragedies in French, whether through imitations or adaptations of Greek and Roman plays—Jacques Grévin's *Cesar* (1561), Étienne Jodelle's *Cléopâtre captive* (1574), the various versions of *Agamemnon* (Charles Toustain's *La Tragédie d'Agamemnon* [1556], Pierre Matthieu's *Clytemnestre* [1589], and Roland Brisset's *Agamemnon* [1590])—or through the adaptation of biblical stories (Bèze's *Abraham sacrificant* [1550], Robert Garnier's *Les Juives* [1583]). Occasionally, these French plays resulted from the translation of original neo-Latin plays, for example Florent Chrestien's French translation (*Jephthé ou le voeu* [1567]) of George Buchanan's neo-Latin play *Jephtes sive Votum* or Claude Roillet's translation into French of his own neo-Latin play, *Philanira* (1563). It is clear, then, that the translation of dramatic works is undeniably connected with the creation of a national French literature in the Renaissance and what will become French classical theatre in the seventeenth century.

While early modern theories of translation stressed the notion of a single translator who would in some way allow him or herself to be “abducted” by

the force of the author's style, thereby becoming the author in the service of a faithful translation, in practice, as Belén Bistué demonstrates in her *Collaborative Translation and Multi-Version Texts in Early Modern Europe*, the process of translation was often far more complex, frequently involving multiple stages and multiple versions. In his article on *La farse d'Amphitrion* (Anvers, 1504), Mathieu Ferrand looks at an early translation of a Latin comedy, highlighting the role of the reader in the translation process. Ferrand demonstrates the willingness of the anonymous translator of Plautus (possibly Philippe Bouton) to alter the original text, both in an effort to maintain the spirit of the original and to make it intelligible to his reader. The translator makes choices, motivated by a sense of pragmatism and an understanding of his audience, while paying close attention to the dramatic and theatrical nature of the text. In this case, the translator uses resources specific to the theatre, including comic devices derived from the contemporary stage. A careful analysis of *La farse d'Amphitrion* highlights the many strategies a translator can employ to convey effectively the verbal agility of the classical dramatist for the contemporary reader. In this particular case, most of the monologues and even longer sections of dialogue are shortened, and elements of Roman life that the French reader would not understand are simply eliminated.

A similar awareness of the general reader and a tendency toward vulgarization (that underpinned much of the work of dramatic translations in this period in France) characterize the scholar printer Charles Estienne's editions of Terence's comedy *Andria*, as discussed by Héléne Cazes. Her article illustrates the centrality of dramatic translation to the humanist project of Estienne, who was dedicated to sharing knowledge in the widest sense (anatomy, ancient languages, history, geography, and the art of gardening or marine studies). Estienne's strong interest in theatre is demonstrated by his annotated school editions of Terence's *Andria*, the French translation of the same comedy, as well as a translation into French of the contemporary Italian comedy *La Comédie du Sacrifice*, also called *Les Abusez*, a play inspired by Terence, and his theoretical treatise on classical plays, *Les Jeux des Anciens*. Although these texts were created to be performed in an educational context, they were also meant to offer the pure pleasure of dramatic spectacle. The translations of the two plays (ancient and modern) are representative of Estienne's enterprise as a whole, which meant to popularize classical literature and bring it to a much broader readership.

The continued importance of Latin, along with French, in the second half of the sixteenth century is clearly shown by the many authors who first wrote in Latin and then translated their own texts into French (many of Théodore de Bèze's theological works, for example). This was rare in the case of dramatic texts, but John Nassichuk deals with one such case: Claude Roillet's translation into French of his own neo-Latin play *Philanira*, an original play (perhaps inspired by an Italian story) that was largely modelled on Seneca. *Philanira* was published in 1556 and later reprinted in a French version in 1563 and again in 1577. Nassichuk's comparison of the Latin and French versions confirms the challenges presented by the transference from source to target language even when an author is self-translating. Roillet struggled with rendering his creative work into the vernacular, and the formal constraints of translation led him to a veritable reconstitution of his play, including not only the poetic expression and versification but also the dramatic construction of the plot. Furthermore, while the Latin version of *Philanira* borrowed heavily from Senecan theatre, in composing the French version Roillet was pushed to experiment more freely with both metre and syntax. Nassichuk argues that Roillet's experimentation resembles that of the more famous French poets who were writing in the vernacular in what has been labelled the Horatian laboratory of the 1550s.

Greek remained less studied than Latin in the sixteenth century and many French writers reading or imitating the tragedies of Sophocles or Euripides accessed the Greek texts through Latin translations. In 1506, Erasmus completed the first two full translations of Greek tragedies into Latin: *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis*. Virginie Leroux traces the evolution of Erasmus's approach to translation from one play to the next. Erasmus defends an intentional word-for-word translation of *Hecuba*, even at the cost of the aesthetic appeal of the Latin version, but allows himself more freedom in his translation of *Iphigenia at Aulis*. Leroux also outlines how Erasmus's Latin translation of *Iphigenia* shaped Thomas Sébillet's 1549 French version of the same play. Sébillet was inspired by Erasmus's more liberal translation and rendered Euripides by way of Erasmus, at times incorporating images found in the Dutch humanist's Latin version but absent from the original Greek text. Both the Latin and French translations of Euripides's *Iphigenia* inspired other Renaissance plays, in particular George Buchanan's neo-Latin *Jepthes* and its French translation *Jephté* by Florent Chrestien.

The final study in the issue illustrates that the vogue of Senecan dramatic translations in France in the second half of the sixteenth century mirrors the

translation situation in England at the time. Louise Frappier compares three tragedies, direct translations or imitations of Seneca's *Agamemnon*, by Charles Toutain (1556), Roland Brisset (1589), and Pierre Matthieu (1589). Frappier's case study of three plays inspired by the same source material allows a better understanding of how translation and imitation could lead to original creation through the invention of dialogue and whole scenes. She argues that the evolution in the interpretive approach demonstrated by these plays reflects the evolution of French Renaissance tragedy as a whole: initially conceived of as a stylistic and poetic exercise, it gradually becomes a vehicle that allows dramatists to illustrate and comment on the turbulent political situation in France. Similar to other authors in the issue, Frappier highlights the inevitably transformative nature of translation. All of these examples run counter to the idea of the translator as someone who is inhabited by the author during the translation process and of translation itself as a "mystical" or "magical" event. Indeed, the articles in this issue show that, despite the differing situations in England and France, often pragmatic but also inventive choices were made by translators who had a variety of objectives (political, religious, educational, and literary) in mind when they undertook their translations.