

Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



“Comme espics dans les plaines”: Patterns of Translation of Robert Garnier’s Epic Similes in Thomas Kyd’s *Cornelia* (1594)

Marie-Alice Belle

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/1086133ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i3.28737>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Belle, M.-A. (2017). “Comme espics dans les plaines”: Patterns of Translation of Robert Garnier’s Epic Similes in Thomas Kyd’s *Cornelia* (1594). *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 40(3), 77–107.

<https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i3.28737>

Résumé de l'article

En 1594 paraissait *Cornelia*, traduction de la tragédie de Robert Garnier *Cornélie* (1574) par Thomas Kyd. Bien que célébrée en son temps comme une contribution importante aux expérimentations poétiques et dramatiques propres à l'ère élisabéthaine, *Cornelia* a été longtemps considérée par la critique comme une pièce mineure dans la carrière dramatique de Kyd. Depuis quelques temps, cependant, on assiste à une certaine réhabilitation de l'oeuvre, avec la mise en valeur des réseaux métaphoriques qui traversent la traduction et des enjeux politiques qui sous-tendent, chez Kyd, la réinterprétation des figures et thématiques antiques du théâtre de Garnier. On s'intéresse ici particulièrement à la traduction des comparaisons épiques qui abondent chez Garnier, et qui sont souvent elles-mêmes imitées des auteurs classiques, ou de poètes contemporains. En mettant en valeur les liens intertextuels et les croisements génériques établis par Kyd, on offre ici un aperçu des trajectoires culturelles qui marquent chez lui l'appropriation et l'émulation du modèle tragique français. On vise ainsi à souligner la dimension expérimentale de l'écriture dramatique de Kyd, à clarifier ses relations avec les Sidney-Herbert et leur fameux 'cercle' littéraire, et à réévaluer la place de *Cornelia* dans le contexte littéraire de la fin de l'ère élisabéthaine.

“Comme espics dans les plaines”: Patterns of Translation of Robert Garnier’s Epic Similes in Thomas Kyd’s *Cornelia* (1594)

MARIE-ALICE BELLE
Université de Montréal

*Although celebrated in its time as a worthy contribution to the poetic experiments of the late Elizabethan age, Thomas Kyd’s 1594 *Cornelia*, translated from Robert Garnier’s *Cornélie* (1574), has long been held by modern criticism as a minor work in the playwright’s career. Previous attempts to rehabilitate the dramatic and poetic values of Kyd’s translation have focused on the metaphoric networks that underlie Kyd’s appropriation of Garnier’s play or on the political aspects of Kyd’s treatment of historical figures and themes. This article examines more specifically Kyd’s approach to Garnier’s epic similes—many of which are actually borrowed from both classical authors and contemporary poets. By exploring the inter-generic and intertextual connections established in Kyd’s translation, this article maps out the literary and cultural trajectories involved in the appropriation and emulation of Continental tragic models, thus highlighting Kyd’s experiments with various kinds of drama, clarifying the play’s connection with the productions of the Sidney-Herbert “circle,” and establishing its significance in late Elizabethan literary culture.*

*En 1594 paraissait *Cornelia*, traduction de la tragédie de Robert Garnier *Cornélie* (1574) par Thomas Kyd. Bien que célébrée en son temps comme une contribution importante aux expérimentation poétiques et dramatiques propres à l’ère élisabéthaine, *Cornelia* a été longtemps considérée par la critique comme une pièce mineure dans la carrière dramatique de Kyd. Depuis quelques temps, cependant, on assiste à une certaine réhabilitation de l’œuvre, avec la mise en valeur des réseaux métaphoriques qui traversent la traduction et des enjeux politiques qui sous-tendent, chez Kyd, la réinterprétation des figures et thématiques antiques du théâtre de Garnier. On s’intéresse ici particulièrement à la traduction des comparaisons épiques qui abondent chez Garnier, et qui sont souvent elles-mêmes imitées des auteurs classiques, ou de poètes contemporains. En mettant en valeur les liens intertextuels et les croisements génériques établis par Kyd, on offre ici un aperçu des trajectoires culturelles qui marquent chez lui l’appropriation et l’émulation du modèle tragique français. On vise ainsi à souligner la dimension expérimentale de l’écriture dramatique de Kyd, à clarifier ses relations avec les Sidney-Herbert et leur fameux ‘cercle’ littéraire, et à réévaluer la place de *Cornelia* dans le contexte littéraire de la fin de l’ère élisabéthaine.*

It might perhaps seem somewhat paradoxical to include a study of *Cornelia*, Thomas Kyd’s 1594 version of Robert Garnier’s tragedy *Cornélie*, in an issue that stems from a conference on *Translating for the Stage*, since Kyd’s translation

was never performed and perhaps not even intended for the public stage. First published in 1574, *Cornélie* is the second play in Garnier's trilogy exploring the context of the end of the Roman Republic, and the ensuing civil wars, from the point of view of a famous *femme forte*.¹ In this case, the eponymous Cornelia is the wife of Julius Caesar's main rival, Pompey, defeated at the battle of Pharsalia in 48 BCE and murdered upon landing in Egypt shortly after. Although Garnier's play was staged, and to great critical acclaim,² his tragedy follows the Senecan model—offering a rather threadbare plot and focusing instead on the moral, historical, and political ramifications of the subject. These include debates that were crucial both in Garnier's war-torn France and in late Elizabethan England, ranging from the devastating consequences of political ambition and civil war to the legitimacy of tyrannicide, and from the controversial issue of free will to the much-discussed theme of the Christian "good death." Such difficult questions are explored, according to the Senecan model, through alternating monologues and dialogues, punctuated by choruses and by the typical device of stichomythia involving quick-paced debate on the key issues raised by the play. The tragedy thus opens on Cornelia and Cicero lamenting the death of Pompey and the end of the Republic (acts 1 and 2), and debating the Stoic principles of endurance and virtue in the face of misfortune (act 3). It continues with a discussion, by Brutus and Cassius, of the necessity to put an end to Caesar's ambition—a scene mirrored by Caesar's own display of reckless hubris (act 4). The play ends (act 5) with news of the defeat of Pompey's camp led by Scipio, Cornelia's father, whose honourable suicide Cornelia mourns, and at first contemplates emulating, before deciding to live on to honour his memory and see him finally avenged.

This rather static plot, as well as the learned nature of Garnier's tragedy, which bristles with mythological, historical, and literary allusions, has caused critics to categorize Kyd's translation as a rather untypical experiment with "closet drama" from the author of the *Spanish Tragedy*. Moreover, in the light of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke's earlier, published translation of Garnier's *Marc Antoine* (1592), Kyd's own version has naturally been read in relationship to that precedent. The traditional view has long been that Kyd was responding to a more general attempt, led by the Countess of Pembroke,

1. The first and third plays in the trilogy focus on Brutus's wife Portia (*Porcie*, 1568) and on Cleopatra (*Marc Antoine*, 1578).

2. See Robert Garnier, *Porcie, Cornélie*, ed. R. Lebègue (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1973), 23.

to “reform” Elizabethan drama by adopting the moralizing and elitist model of Senecan drama as a learned alternative to the sensational and bloody tragedies performed on the stage.³ Recent scholarship, however, has invalidated such a view, and, following Mary Ellen Lamb’s seminal debunking of the “myth” of the Countess of Pembroke’s alleged attack on the popular stage, critics such as Lukas Erne or Daniel Cadman, among others, have since argued that Kyd’s choice of Garnier, while still related to the Sidney Herbert precedent, should probably be interpreted as a desperate bid for patronage at a very difficult time in Kyd’s life.⁴ Suspected of holding heretical beliefs in the context of the so-called “Dutch Church Scandal,” Kyd was imprisoned and tortured in 1593, and he was still under the cloud of such accusations when he entered *Cornelia* into the *Stationers’ Register* in January 1594.⁵ According to Erne, Kyd’s decision to translate Garnier’s *Cornélie* was perhaps intended to regain the favours of the Earl of Pembroke, Kyd’s former patron—and, failing this, to claim the protection of the closely connected house of Sussex, as indicated by the dedication of the 1594 volume to Bridget Fitzwalter, the young wife of the newly created Fifth Earl of Sussex.⁶

A lingering sense remains, however, that Garnier’s learned, Senecan drama does not quite fit Kyd’s profile as a dramatist. Editors and critics routinely identify *Cornelia* as somewhat of an anomaly in Kyd’s career. Recent examples include Erne, who describes *Cornelia* as “the odd man out”; Howard Norland, who terms his choice of Garnier “something of a mystery”; and Iris

3. See in particular the influential works by T. S. Eliot, “Seneca in Elizabethan Translation,” *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932), 51–90; and Alexander Witherspoon, *The Influence of Robert Garnier on Elizabethan Drama* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924), among others. Their views were still echoed as recently as 2006 in David M. Bergeron’s study, *Textual Patronage in English Drama, 1570–1640* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); see 86–87 in particular.

4. See Mary Ellen Lamb, “The Myth of the Countess of Pembroke: The Dramatic Circle,” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 11 (1981): 194–202; Richard Hillman, “‘De-centring the Countess’s Circle’: Mary Sidney Herbert and Cleopatra,” *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 28.1 (2004): 61–79; Lukas Erne, *Beyond The Spanish Tragedy: A Study of the Works of Thomas Kyd* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Daniel Cadman, *Sovereigns and Subjects in Early Modern Neo-Senecan Drama: Republicanism, Stoicism, and Authority* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

5. Erne, 208.

6. Erne, 229. For a full discussion of the context, see the introduction to *Robert Garnier in Elizabethan England: Mary Sidney Herbert’s Antonius and Thomas Kyd’s Cornelia*, ed. Marie-Alice Belle and Line Cottegnies (London: MHRA, forthcoming in 2017).

Oberth, also calling it “odd.”⁷ It is only very recently that the thematic and intertextual ties between *Cornelia* and Kyd’s other plays have begun to be seriously explored, and the conventional opposition between learned “closet drama” and public stage plays has been called into question. Following the leads of Eugene Hill and, more recently, Frank Ardolino, who have teased out the intertextual connections between Garnier’s drama and Kyd’s earlier theatrical production (especially the *Spanish Tragedy*), Daniel Cadman in particular challenges the closet-versus-stage opposition, arguing that *Cornelia* represents “a crystallization of Garnier’s influence rather than [...] evidence of Kyd’s defection from one aesthetic campaign to another.”⁸ This article aims to further such a line of criticism by examining the hitherto unnoticed patterns of translation and transformation, in Kyd’s *Cornelia*, of the epic similes that abound in Garnier’s tragedy. I will examine two distinct sets of textual and metaphorical networks: the first one consisting of epic similes clearly borrowed by Garnier from classical sources, and re-appropriated by Kyd, and the second one developing around Garnier’s signature comparison of the battlefield to a grim, bloody harvest. Focusing on the intertextual connections that such passages reveal, I will argue that, far from entrenching the play’s traditional reception as an elitist form of “closet drama,” Kyd’s responses to Garnier’s practices of literary imitation illuminate instead the place of *Cornelia* in his own dramatic corpus, as well as its relationship to the so-called “Sidney circle,” and its significance to late Elizabethan literary culture.

Epic sources revisited: Kyd’s “art of amendment”

Lukas Erne’s 2001 call for a re-evaluation of Kyd’s latest, and “maturest” tragedy has come as a refreshing turn in the critical history of the play.⁹ Following to

7. Erne, 211; Howard Norland, *Neoclassical Tragedy in Elizabethan England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 226; Iris Oberth, “Appropriating France in Elizabethan drama: English Translations of Robert Garnier’s Plays,” in *Elizabethan Translation and Literary Culture*, ed. Gabriela Schmidt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 275–98, 292.

8. Eugene Hill, “Senecan and Virgilian Perspectives in *The Spanish Tragedy*,” *English Literary Renaissance* 15 (1985): 143–65; Frank Ardolino, “The Influence of Robert Garnier’s *Les Juifves* on Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*,” *Notes and Queries* 62.1 (2015): 64–6; Cadman, 46.

9. The play had a chequered reception in its own time, if one is to believe William Cavell’s note on *Cornelia* in his 1595 *Polimanteia* as “a work howsoever not respected yet excellently done by Th. Kid”

a certain extent the fortune of Sidney Herbert’s own translation of Garnier’s *Marc-Antoine*, Kyd’s *Cornelia* has long been obscured, not only by the idea of a reactionary “conspiracy” of playwrights writing—or translating—“closet drama” to react against popular plays, but also by a general notion that translation represented a secondary form of writing, one that was only pursued by default, and whose success was to be measured, either in terms of faithfulness to the original or in terms of poetic and dramatic efficiency.¹⁰ Besides, while acknowledging Kyd’s qualities as a playwright, critics have often found him lacking on the first account, portraying him as a careless translator whose French was but approximate and who did not know his Roman history—thus representing yet another case of “small Latin and less Greek” on the Elizabethan stage.¹¹

A number of analyses, however, have contributed to qualifying this view. As early as 1979, Josephine Roberts and James Gaines analyzed the passages in *Cornelia* that had most often been labelled as mistakes, and showed how, far from resulting from his supposedly poor knowledge of the French language, Kyd’s “amendments,” as they called them, contributed to creating distinctive metaphorical networks, many of which could be traced as far back in Kyd’s corpus as *The Spanish Tragedy*.¹² Studying them as such, they argued, offered privileged insights into Kyd’s creative and imaginative habits, and helped

(William Covell, *Polimanteia* [Cambridge: John Legate, 1595], sig. Q3^v). Interestingly enough, *Cornelia* was singled out in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century editions as one of the more valuable products of Elizabethan stage, before being marginalized again in the early twentieth century, with the dominance of Romantic and Modernist movements valuing dramatic immediacy and textual fidelity to Garnier’s original. For a full discussion of the play’s reception, see Belle and Cottagnies, ed., 72–83.

10. See on this Witherspoon, 94; Frederick Boas in the “Notes” to his edition of *The Works of Thomas Kyd* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1901); and, more recently, Norland, 219–20. One of the most eloquent critiques of the supposedly derivative nature of early modern (women’s) translation is to be found in Danielle Clarke’s discussion of “Translation” in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women’s Writings*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167–80.

11. Boas is particularly damning in his review of Kyd’s alleged “blunders” and “mistakes” in the notes section of his edition (414–26).

12. The most notable example is that of Kyd’s rendering of “trépas” (death, demise) as “sin” in two instances, which Boas denounces as a proof of his careless, if not incompetent, handling of the French text (417; see also Witherspoon, 96). Roberts and Gaines demonstrate that, while Kyd certainly took advantage of the French word’s obvious associations with the English cognate “trespasses,” he correctly translated it in other instances, thus showing that his translation as “sin” was poetically motivated.

establish *Cornelia* not as a mere “oddity” but instead as part of a coherent dramatic oeuvre.

Another critic taking Kyd’s translation strategies seriously has been Curtis Perry, who has offered a very close reading of the Republican themes in Kyd’s rendering of *Cornélie*.¹³ Noting, on the one hand, Kyd’s systematic Christianization of classical mythology and religion, and, on the other hand, his constant emphasis on the threat posed by Caesar to “ancient liberties” (“liberté franche” in Garnier, 41v), Perry proposes to read *Cornelia* as a double-edged commentary on the uncertainties of the late Elizabethan era. These, he notes, were indeed the “nasty nineties,”¹⁴ a time when ongoing religious and dynastic troubles came into conflict with the official discourse on the providential legitimacy of divinely-appointed monarchs, such as could be found, for instance, in Garnier’s own dedication of his 1585 volume of *Tragedies* to French King Henri III.¹⁵ Most recently, Cadman has furthered this line of criticism by situating Kyd’s translation strategies in the light of contemporary Neostoic humanist thought, to which Garnier was deemed a major contributor.¹⁶ Like Perry, he argues that Kyd was aware of the political and philosophical underpinnings of Garnier’s play, and that the English playwright’s subtle departures from the French original serve to highlight the play’s unresolved tensions between imperial and Republican discourses, or between Neostoic and Epicurean approaches to providence and free will (among others). Thus, he argues, the discursive ambiguities in Kyd’s *Cornelia* present the reader with an invitation to explore contemporary debates on such complex issues as absolute rule, suicide, tyrannicide, or providential readings of history, from a variety of perspectives.¹⁷

Josephine Roberts and James Gaines, “Kyd and Garnier: The Art of Amendment,” *Comparative Literature* 31.2 (1979): 124–133, 126.

13. Curtis Perry, “The Uneasy Republicanism of Thomas Kyd’s *Cornélie*,” *Criticism* 48.4 (2008): 535–55.

14. The “nasty nineties” expression is borrowed from Patrick Collinson’s “Ecclesiastical Vitriol: Religious Satire in the 1590s and the Invention of Puritanism,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John A. Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 150–70.

15. For a study of Garnier’s own approach to providential history, see Louise Frappier, “Sénèque revisité: la topique de la Fortune dans les tragédies de Robert Garnier,” *Études françaises* 44.2 (2008): 69–83.

16. Cadman, 47–49.

17. Cadman, 51–53.

However important in terms of re-evaluating Kyd’s translation as a literary work in its own right, such readings still tend to overlook a significant element in Garnier’s dramatic writing—and one that so far has been almost entirely ignored by critics of Kyd’s *Cornelia*—that is, the constant interplay in Garnier, and in Kyd, between the tragic model inherited from Seneca and classical epic poems such as Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, naturally, but also Virgil’s *Aeneid* and other narrative poems. Such an oversight is perhaps to be explained by the fact that Garnier, when discussing his sources in the Argument to his play (a passage that Kyd actually omits), only mentions Plutarch and other historical sources, leaving out the epic subtext of his plays.¹⁸ French scholars, however, and in particular Lucan specialist Jean-Claude Ternaux, have long identified Lucan’s *Pharsalia* and Virgil’s *Aeneid* as major sources for Garnier.¹⁹ For example, the evocation of Pompey’s ghost in act 2—a Senecan trick of the trade if there is one—echoes at once Virgil’s depictions of the ghosts of Hector and Creusa in book 2 of the *Aeneid*, and Lucan’s revisiting of the epic topos in *Pharsalia* 3.²⁰ Similarly, the Messenger’s speech in act 5 consists of a literary collage of epic quotations and commonplaces, which, according to the humanist culture of French literary and court circles, Garnier’s public was arguably supposed to pick up and enjoy as an exercise in classical *imitatio*. Such intertextual connections have gone almost entirely unnoticed in English accounts of Kyd’s *Cornelia*—perhaps because of Kyd’s enduring reputation as a “popular” playwright, unfamiliar with classical literature; perhaps also because scholars of early modern French and English drama too rarely converse as they do in the present volume.²¹

18. “Vous verrez ce discours amplement traité en Plutarque ès vies de Pompée, de Cesar, et de Caton d’Utique; en Hirtius, cinquième livre des guerres civiles d’Appian, et quarante-troisième de Dion.” *Tragédies de Robert Garnier Conseiller du Roy, Lieutenant general Criminel au siege Presidial & Senechaussee du Maine* (Paris: Mamert Patisson Imprimeur du Roy, chez Robert Estienne, 1585), 39°. All quotations are taken from this edition, which includes Garnier’s last revisions to his plays and was most probably used as a source text by Kyd. See Robert Garnier, *Cornélie*, ed. Jean-Claude Ternaux (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 22; and *Cornelia von Thomas Kyd. Nach dem Drucke von Jahre 1594*, ed. Heinrich Gassner (Munich: Wolf, 1894), vi.

19. See Ternaux, ed., 17 and 21.

20. More specifically, Virgil, *Aeneid* 2. 268–79 and 790–95; Lucan, *Pharsalia* 3.9–35.

21. See, however, the recent collection *Les Théâtres anglais et français: contacts, circulations, influences*, ed. Bénédicte Louvat-Mozolay and Florence March (Rennes: Presses de l’Université de Rennes, 2016). I am grateful to Hélène Cazes for pointing it out to me.

One of the reasons why such oversights are problematic is that they tend to limit the significance of Kyd's play to its contemporary literary and dramatic culture. For example, one of the main critical commonplaces about *Cornelia* is that, as an example of neoclassical "closet drama," its chief (if not sole) contribution lies in the sympathetic representation of the heroine in various psychological states. This is the reading offered in authoritative studies such as Howard Norland's 2009 *Neoclassical Drama in Elizabethan England*, in which Kyd's main input is identified as "the portrayal of emotion" from a variety of perspectives.²² Norland, however, records a few instances in the translation that seem to jar with this long-established narrative. Commenting on Kyd's rendering of the Messenger's speech in act 5, he remarks that the account of the final battle

seems to dwell unnecessarily on the gory details of violence and death. Comparisons of the battle to a fight between two lusty bulls over a heifer in the herd or a duel between two fierce lions to win a fair lioness reduce the heroic struggle to a mundane sexual duel.²³

Somewhat ironically, perhaps, both comparisons actually originate in epic poetry. The bull simile, for instance, has its source in the closing scene in *Aeneid* 12 recounting the final confrontation between the hero, Aeneas, and his romantic and, more importantly, political rival, the Rutulian king Turnus:

Velut [...]

Cum duo conversis inimica in proelia tauri

Frontibus incurrunt, pavidi cessere magistri,

Stat pecus omne metu mutum, mussantque juvencae

Quis nemoris imperitet, quem tota armenta sequantur

(as [...] when two bulls charge, brow to brow, in mortal battle, in terror the keepers fall back, the whole herd stands mute with dread, and the heifers dumbly wait to see who will be lord of the forest, whom all the herds will follow).²⁴

22. Norland, 233.

23. Norland, 232.

24. Virgil, *Aeneid* 12.715–72. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations and translations are from the Loeb editions, here Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1–6*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough and G. P.

Garnier clearly imitates this passage as he depicts Caesar’s and Scipio’s armies ready for battle:

[...] ainsi que deux Taureaux
Jaloux de commander l’un et l’autre aux troupeaux,
Courent impetueux si tost qu’ils s’entre-advisent,
Et de corne et de front le test ils s’entre-brisent... (67^v)

Garnier’s classical precedent is apparently not lost on Kyd: in fact, his version seems at times even closer to the Latin source than to the French, as he translates:

And dash together, like two lustie Bulls
That (iealous of some Heyfar in the Heard,)
Runne head to head, and (sullen) will not yeeld,
Till dead or fled, the one forsake the field.²⁵

Kyd’s “runne head to head” reads as a direct translation of Virgil’s “frontibus incurrunnt” (compare with Garnier’s more capacious “de tête et de front le chef ils s’entre-brisent”). As to his mention of the “Heyfar in the Heard,” which is indeed absent from the French source, and to which Norland seems to object as “mundane[ly] sexual,” it also possibly originates in the Latin poem’s explicit mention of “juvencae” (heifers).

The lion simile also derives from an epic source, most probably Lucan’s characterization of Caesar in *Pharsalia* 1.205–10:

[...] sicut squalentibus aruis
aestiferae Libyes uiso leo comminus hoste
subsedit dubius, totam dum colligit iram;
mox, ubi se saeuae stimulauit uerbere caudae
erexitque iubam et uasto graue murmur hiatu
infremuit [...]

Goold, Loeb Classical Library 63 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 348–49.

25. *Cornelia* (London: James Roberts, for N[icholas] L[ing] and John Busbie, 1594), sig. K. All quotations are taken from this edition.

(So on the untilled fields of sultry Libya, when the lion sees his foe at hand, he crouches down at first uncertain till he gathers all his rage; but soon, when he has maddened himself with the cruel lash of his tail, and made his mane stand up, and sent forth a roar from his cavernous jaws [...])²⁶

Garnier re-frames the simile as follows:

Comme deux forts Lyons combatans pour l'amour
 Devant une Lyonne au libyque sejour
 Apres que longuement ils ont vomy leur rage
 Qu'ils se sont esprouvez de force et de courage
 [...]
 La langue demy traite, à trois pas se retirent;
 Puis s'estant reposez, le colere jaloux
 Plus aspre que devant les appareille aux coups,
 Les rejoint, les recouple, et dans leur cœur demeure
 Fierement acharné, tant que l'un des deux meure. (68^v)

Here again, Kyd departs from the French source, as he re-casts Garnier's lions into a heraldic pose ("passant regardant"), and adds a full line to the description of the fight, depicting the lions' "bristled backs, and fire-sparkling eyes":

Like two fierce Lyons fighting in a Desart,
 To winne the love of some faire Lyonesse,
 When they have vomited their long-growne rage,
 And prou'd each others force sufficient,
Passant regardant softly their retyre,
 [...]
 Till ieaalous rage (engendered with rest,
 Returnes them sharper set than at the first;
 And makes them couple when they see theyr prize,

26. Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia)*, trans. J. D. Duff, Loeb Classical Library 220 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 17–18. Unless otherwise noted, quotations and translations of Lucan's *Pharsalia* are taken from this edition.

With bristled backs, and fire-sparkling eyes,
Tyll tyer’d or conquer’d, one submits or flies. (sig. K2^{r-v}, emphasis mine)

While Kyd does maintain the idea of an erotic duel (“to winne the love of some faire Lyonesse”; “when they see theyr prize”), his re-interpretation of Garnier’s detail of the lions stepping back (“à trois pas se retirent”) in heraldic terms tends to ennoble their status, and acts perhaps as a symbolic reminder of the political aspects of the battle.²⁷ As noted, for example, by the Dutch commentator Theodor Poelman in his Latin editions of Lucan’s *Pharsalia* published from the 1570s through the 1590s, the poem was widely recognized at the time as relevant in the context of the French wars of religion. Kyd seems to emphasize the parallel as he reaches over his French source, so to speak, into the classical subtext. The added detail of the lions’ “bristled backs” is indeed reminiscent of Lucan’s “erexit jubae”—and, perhaps more pointedly, of Christopher Marlowe’s translation of the passage:

Like a lion of scorched desert Afric,
Who seeing hunters pauseth till fell wrath
And kingly rage increase, then having whisked
His tail athwart his back, and crest heav’d up,
With jaws wide open ghastly roaring out.²⁸

Marlowe’s translation of the first book of *Pharsalia* was only to be published in 1600, but it was most probably known to Kyd, especially as both playwrights had shared writing rooms in the early 1590s.²⁹ Kyd’s added line focusing on the lions’ “bristled backs” may read as a reminiscence of the lion’s

27. See *M. Annaei Lucani, De Bello Civili, vel Pharsaliae Libri X* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1592), sig. A2^r. For a wider discussion of the early modern reception of Lucan, see Edward Paleit, *War, Liberty, and Caesar: Responses to Lucan’s Bellum Civile, ca. 1580–1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). On Lucan and early modern English Republican thought, see Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

28. *Lucans first booke translated line for line by Chr[istopher] Marlow[e]* (London: Peter Short, 1600), sig. Biv^v.

29. See Erne, 208. According to Kyd, the “atheistic” tracts that were found among his papers, and because of which he was sent to the Tower, were actually Marlowe’s, and had become mixed with his own as they shared a writing room.

“crest heav’d up” in Marlowe’s version; and it is not unthinkable that Kyd’s re-fashioning of Garnier’s lions as heraldic devices was linked to Marlowe’s own re-interpretation of Lucan’s simile. Where the ancient poet evokes a lion “gathering his rage” (“colligit iram”) and “maddening himself” (“se [...] stimulavit”), Marlowe contracts both elements into a run-on line that emphasizes his own addition, that of the politically charged adjective, “kingly”: “[...] till fell wrath / And kingly rage increase.” Significantly enough, Kyd restructures Garnier’s verses, “Puis s’estant reposez, le colere jaloux / Plus aspre que devant [...]” in a way that mirrors Marlowe’s lines, both in their syntactical structure (“Till [...] kingly rage increase”; “Till iealous rage [...] returns”) and their metrical accents (“And kingly rage increase [...]”; “Till iealous rage engendered [...]”).

In both cases, then, rather than “reduce” the heroic dimension of the Messenger’s speech, Kyd’s handling of animal similes re-activates the epic subtext of the play, thereby shedding light on the political implications of the drama, both in the original, French context and for the English readership. More specifically, his interventions underscore the uneasy coexistence, within Garnier’s account of the final battle between Caesar and Scipio, of Virgil’s imperial model and of the Republican counter-narrative set by Lucan’s *Pharsalia*. Here again, Kyd seems to have been aware of Garnier’s ambiguous combination of classical sources and of the political associations they carried. To revert to the example of the bull simile, Garnier’s transparent allusion to *Aeneid* 12 creates a complex web of associations that tend to subvert Virgilian narrative patterns. For instance, if one were to align Garnier’s protagonists, Caesar and Scipio, with the characters in Garnier’s source (i.e., Aeneas and Turnus), Caesar, as a member of the *gens Iulia* and a direct descendant of Virgil’s hero, should logically be associated with Aeneas. Yet he is consistently portrayed—in line with Lucan’s characterization—as an example of disordered and “furious” ambition,³⁰ which in this passage would align him with Turnus, especially as humanist commentaries of the *Aeneid* commonly identified the latter as an emblem of excessive pride and cruelty.³¹ This parallel is clarified

30. Caesar is depicted in *Cornélie* 3.3 as “un cœur, que le soin furieux / De maistriser chacun, maistrise ambitieux” (55^v). See discussion below.

31. For example, in the commentaries by Italian humanists Lodovico Dolce and Maffeo Veggio. See on this James D. Garrison, *Pietas from Vergil to Dryden* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), in particular chapter 6: “War: Turnus and Pietas in the Later Renaissance” (161–203).

a few lines further, as Garnier exploits again his Virgilian source to compare Caesar’s troops to a pack of wolves:

Ils courent éperdus comme aux champs Calabrois,
Quand trois loups affamez qui debusquent d’un bois,
Donnent dans des Brebis, les fuyardes s’espandent
Aux yeux de leurs bergers, qui hardis les defendent. (68^v)

The passage echoes Virgil’s *Aeneid* 9.59–66, where the wolf analogy is precisely applied to Turnus:

ac veluti pleno lupus insidiatus ovili
cum fremit ad caulas ventos perpessus et imbris
nocte super media; tuti sub matribus agni
balatum exercent, ille asper et improbus ira
saevit in absentis [...]
haud aliter Rutulo muros et castra tuenti
ignescunt irae, duris dolor ossibus ardet.

(And as when a wolf, lying in wait about a crowded fold, roars beside the pens at midnight, enduring winds and rains; safe beneath their mothers the lambs keep bleating; he fierce and reckless in his wrath, rages against the prey beyond his reach [...] even so, as he scans wall and camp, the Rutilian’s wrath is aflame; resentment is hot within his iron bones).³²

While preserving the wolf simile and its underlying associations with Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Kyd’s rendering departs from Garnier to offer a markedly pessimistic re-interpretation of the passage. In keeping with his Latin precedent evoking Turnus’s burning anger (“ignescunt irae”) at Aeneas’s impregnable camp, Garnier conveys the image of shepherds valiantly defending their sheep (“leurs bergers, qui hardis les défendent”). Kyd casts them instead as “resistless,” helpless victims:

32. Virgil, *Aeneid: Books 7–12. Appendix Vergiliana*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough and G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 64 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 116–17.

Stragling, as in the faire Calabrian fields,
 When Wolues for hunger ranging fro the wood,
 Make forth amongst the flock, that scattered flies
Before the Shepheard, that resistles lyes. (sig. K3^v, emphasis mine)

By replacing Garnier's original emphasis on Scipio's valiant resistance with a focus on his looming defeat, Kyd re-frames the Virgilian topos in terms of Lucan's "epic of losers," to quote David Quint's description of *Pharsalia*.³³ This, of course, could be read as a way of generating pathos, augmenting the emotional impact of the Messenger's account of the battle. One of Kyd's most sizable additions to his speech in act 5 consists, after all, in a four-line eulogy, mourning Scipio as

[...] Romes eternall losse,
 Whose hopefull life preserv'd our happiness.
 Whose silver haire encouraged the weake.
 Whose resolutions did confirme the rest. (sig. L1^v)³⁴

But added references and allusions to Lucan's *Pharsalia* recur to such an extent in Kyd's translation that their significance cannot be reduced to the mere "portrayal of emotion." In the case of the wolf analogy in particular, Kyd furthers Garnier's already ambivalent if not ironic conflation of Virgil's epic and Lucan's counter-model, by pitting the one against the other within the framework of a single simile.

Another significant instance in which Kyd re-interprets his French source in the light of Lucan's epic occurs in act 3, as Cicero condemns Caesar's hubris and likens him to a raging fire that spreads through the city before suddenly dying out:

Il est comme un grand feu qui ravage allumé
 Le feste d'un logis ja presque consumé

33. David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 10.

34. As discussed in Belle and Cottegnies, ed., 52, the addition may have been meant as an oblique eulogy of Henry Radcliffe, 4th Earl of Sussex, father-in-law to Kyd's dedicatee, and perhaps Kyd's former patron, who had died in late 1593.

Il rampe furieux, de toict en toict s’elance
Plus on luy jette d’eau, plus a de violence:
Il s’enflamme, il s’asprit de l’adversaire effort,
Tant qu’il trouve où se prendre, et puis il tombe mort (52”).

Garnier’s simile represents a variation of a famous passage in *Pharsalia* 1 likening Caesar to a thunderbolt:

Qualiter expressum ventis per nubila fulmen
Aetheris impulsu sonitu mundique fragore
Emicuit rupitque diem populosque paventes
Terruit obliqua praestrinens lumina flamma;
In sua templa furitj nullaque exire vetante
Materia magnamque cadens magnamque revertens
Dat stragem late sparsosque recolligit ignes³⁵

In Marlowe’s translation:

So thunder which the wind tears from the clouds
With crack of riven air and hideous sound
Filling the world, leaps out and throws forth fire,
Affrights poor fearful men, and blasts their eyes
With overthwarting flames, and raging shoots
Alongst the air and nought resisting it
Falls, and returns, and shivers where it lights³⁶

As is the case in his treatment of the lion and wolf analogies, Kyd departs from Garnier in a way that re-aligns the simile with Lucan’s poem. This is apparent at the textual level: Kyd expands Garnier’s more generic “s’enflamme” into “darting sparkles,” thus echoing “sparsos [...] ignes” (rendered by Marlowe as “shivers”), and adds that the fire “finds a train / To seize upon,” with the verb “seize” possibly deriving from Lucan’s “recolligit.” But the latter’s influence is mostly to be noted in Kyd’s radical re-orientation of the image. While Garnier’s

35. *Pharsalia*, 1.150–57 (Loeb edition, 14–15).

36. *Lucans first booke*, sig. Biii^r.

Cicero predicts Caesar's fall by noting that the fire eventually "dies out" ("il tombe mort"), Kyd, on the contrary, follows Lucan to emphasize the enduring, self-renewing force of the fire that "flames a[g]ain":

Caesar is like a brightlie flaming blaze
 That fiercely burnes a house already fired;
 And ceases lanching out on euerie side,
 Consumes the more, the more you seeke to quench it,
 Still darting sparcles, till it fynde a trayne
 To seaze upon, and then it flames amaine. (sig. E2^v)

In this passage again, the seminal importance of Marlowe's translation cannot easily be dismissed, especially considering Kyd's dramatic use of run-on lines ("till it finde a trayne / To seaze upon"), where Garnier offered more conservative, end-stopped rhyming alexandrines: "Il s'enflamme, il s'asprit de l'adversaire effort, / Tant qu'il trouve où se prendre, et puis il tombe mort."

The periodic resurgence of Marlowe's Lucan in Kyd's handling of epic similes has complex ramifications. In terms of the metaphorical networks created by Kyd's "amendments," one cannot but note the reinforcement of the imagery of fire already present in Garnier. Kyd's added detail of the lions' "sparkling eyes" in act 5 may indeed be motivated by the fact that the lion and thunderbolt similes occur within a short span in *Pharsalia* 1, at the crucial moment when Caesar is about to cross the Rubicon river.³⁷ In Marlowe's translation, the passages are only two pages apart.³⁸ But Kyd's intensification of fire metaphors is also consistent with his own imaginative habits. As early as 1589, his syncretic amalgamation of classical and Christian imagery in the induction of the *Spanish Tragedy* had been mockingly remarked upon by Thomas Nashe, who in the preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* railed against "those that thrust *Elisium* into Hell."³⁹ Likewise, in *Cornelia*, Kyd turns classical Hades into the fiery pit of Christian hell, as the Chorus in act 1 calls upon "fiery Pluto" (sig. B^r, simply "Pluton" in Garnier, 43^v) to punish Caesar for provoking

37. *Pharsalia* 1.151–57 and 205–12, respectively (Loeb, 14–15 and 18–19).

38. *Lucans first booke*, sigs. Biii^v and Biv^v, respectively.

39. Quoted by Boas, xxi. One should note that the Christianization of ancient mythology and morality was typical of early modern English translations of Seneca (as discussed below).

such a bloody civil war; and Pluto’s “fosse ombreuse” (48^r) is rendered as “a fiery gap” (sig. C3^v). Furthermore, as Cornelia calls upon the Furies to revenge Scipio’s murder, Kyd’s added mention of her “enflamed” blood (“mon sang” in Garnier, 70^v) strikingly echoes Hieronymo’s “enflamed thoughts” in a similar passage in *The Spanish Tragedy*:

Cor: Come wrathfull Furies with your Ebon locks,
And feede your selves with mine enflamed blood (sig. L^r)

Hie: The ougly feends to sally forth of hell,
And frame my steps to unfrequented paths,
And feare my heart with fierce inflamed thoughts⁴⁰

While translating Garnier’s neoclassical drama into the dramatic idiom of the revenge tragedy—to which Kyd so famously contributed⁴¹—the re-activation of such metaphorical networks finally participates in the political encoding of Caesar’s character as a destructive force.⁴² The comparison of ruthless ambition to a raging fire, with its associations in Virgil and Lucan, was also a commonplace of early modern Neostoic drama, a genre which, as

40. Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish tragedie containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio, and Bel-imperia: with the pittifull death of olde Hieronimo* (London: Printed by Edward Allde, for Edward White, 1592), sig. E2^r.

41. Note also that, among the many plays on Caesar and Pompey that marked the later Elizabethan age, one, printed in 1607 (but probably performed before), was entitled *The Tragedie of Caesar and Pompey, or Caesars Revenge*. See Freyja Cox Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic in Early Modern England* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 134 and note 31.

42. Note that Marlowe exploits such metaphorical associations in *Tamburlaine* (1587), drawing, for example, on Lucan’s thunderbolt simile to dramatize the eponymous character’s “royalizing” ambitions (*Tamburlaine the Great, Who, from a Scythian shepherde, by his rare and woonderfull conquests, became a most puissant and mightye monarque. And (for his tyranny, and terrour in warre) was tearmed, the scourge of God. Deuided into two tragicall discourses, as they were sundrie times shewed vpon stages in the citie of London. By the right honorable the Lord Admyrall, his seruauantes* (London: Richard Jones, 1590), sig. [B5]r). See also his *Dido Queen of Carthage*, and especially his portrayal of Pyrrhus, in a passage echoing Virgil’s *Aeneid* 2: “At last came Pyrrhus fell and full of ire [...] / And after him his band of Mirmidons / With balles of wilde fire in their murdering pawes / Which made the funerall flame that burnt faire Troy” (*The tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage played by the Children of her Maiesties Chappell. Written by Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Nash. Gent.* (London: by the Widowe Orwin, for Thomas Woodcocke, 1594), sig. C^r).

Daniel Cadman and Freyja Cox Jensen have recently demonstrated, became a privileged conduit for Republican, or at least, anti-tyrannical political thought in sixteenth-century Europe.⁴³ Kyd clearly taps into this tradition as he compresses Garnier's evocation of Caesar, "un coeur que le soin furieux / De maistriser chacun, maistrise ambitieux" (55^v), into "the heart resolu'd to tyrannize" (sig. F1^r). Similarly, he renders Caesar's unmistakably Lucanian statement, "Ainsi que n'est Cesar d'aucun inferieur, / Cesar ne peut souffrir aucun superieur" (63^r), in terms that also refer the English public to the ancient source: "For as I am inferior to none, So can I suffer no Superiors" (sig. H3^r; compare with *Pharsalia* 1.125, in Marlowe's version: "Pompey could bide no equal, nor Caesar no superior").⁴⁴

In this context, Kyd's re-fashioning of Garnier's similes can no longer be discarded as "unnecessary" departures from the French source and its traditionally-noted emphasis on "the portrayal of emotion."⁴⁵ On the contrary, they appear to be both poetically and politically motivated. By highlighting the epic origins of Garnier's drama, and by unravelling the associations that such metaphors may carry for the early modern English public, Kyd re-inscribes Cornelia's mourning within the poetical and ideological framework of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Lucan actually gives Cornelia two speeches, in books 8 and 9 respectively, both of which echo his depiction of the civil wars as a political disaster as well as an impious transgression against the natural order of the world (*nefas*).⁴⁶ While pathos is an obvious component in Garnier's and Kyd's characterizations of Cornelia,⁴⁷ the latter's emphasis on the epic subtext of the tragedy also serves to alert the English reader to the political and eschatological undertones of the play, as it reverberates Lucan's lament on Rome's cataclysmic fall and on the loss of "ancient liberties" at the hands of a tyrant.

43. See Cadman, "Introduction," especially 13–17, and Cox Jensen, 125–30.

44. *Lucans First Booke*, sig. Biii^r.

45. Norland, 232–33.

46. *Pharsalia* 8.639–61 and 9.55–109, respectively (Loeb edition, 484–87 and 508–13). Lucan's depiction of the civil war as "commune nefas" is in *Pharsalia* 1.6 (Loeb, 2–3).

47. On pathos in Garnier, see in particular Florence Dobby-Poirson's analyses in *Tyrans et victimes: le pathétique chez Robert Garnier* (Paris: Champion, 2006), especially ch. 3, pp. 147–289.

**“Comme espics dans les plaines”:
metaphorical and ideological transvaluations**

Kyd’s intertextual practices, and his reliance on the political and ideological associations raised by his French source, are not, however, limited to examples of classical imitation. They also extend to Garnier’s own metaphorical networks and reveal, here again, extremely complex patterns of textual and ideological appropriation, in which the French source and its subtexts are closely intermeshed with references to Elizabethan literary culture. One of the French playwright’s favourite images, running through *Cornélie* and also to be found in *Marc Antoine* and in *Porcie*, is the depiction of the battlefield in terms of harvesting. This is of course an epic topos, inherited from Homer’s *Iliad*, among others, but Garnier seems to appropriate it more particularly as a signature component of his Roman plays.⁴⁸ In *Cornelia*, the first occurrence is to be found in the chorus to act 1 evoking the disasters of civil war, with soldiers’ maimed bodies falling about “like sheaves of wheat over the grassy plains”:

Qui par les campagnes herbues
Fist tomber nos corps tronçonnez
Comme quand les bleds moissonnez
Tombent en javelles barbues (43^r)

The simile recurs in act 2, first as Cornelia evokes Pompey’s past battles and his enemies overthrown “like spikes of wheat beaten down by a hailstorm” (“Renversez, comme espics de grêle saccagez,” 54^r), and then again when she mentions her vision of Pompey’s ghost, at which her hair rises in horror “like spikes [of wheat] in the plains” (“comme espics dans les plaines,” 46^v). Finally, Garnier resorts to the image twice in the Messenger’s account of the battle between Caesar’s and Scipio’s troops. The latter are described as “falling about more thickly than ears of wheat” (“Trebuchoient plus espois que javelles blatières,” 69^r), and being “threshed [by the enemy] like spikes of corn in a hailstorm” (“l’ennemy [...] / Qui les alloit hachant comme espics sous la gresle,” 69^r).

48. See, for example, in *Marc Antoine*, the chorus to act 2: “Comme tes forces tu dardes / Deçà delà moissonnant / Les peuples de mains pillardes” (90^r), or in act 3: “la moisson d’un monde de soudars” (94^r).

Kyd renders Garnier's extended metaphor in a variety of ways. At times, he replaces the harvesting simile with a more common English expression. For example, Pompey's enemies '[b]eate backe like flyes before a storme of hayle' (sig. B3^r), and Cornelia's hair "grew bristled, like a thornie grove" (sig. C^r). At other times, his translation has a distinctly biblical ring to it. Such is the case in particular in his rendering of Garnier's interlinked similes of harvesting ("plus espois que javelles blatières") and winemaking ("l'amas raisineux / Qu'un pesant fust escache en un pressouer vineux") to evoke the dead and dying falling in a heap on the battlefield:

[...]
 Trebuchoient plus espois que javelles blatières.
 On ne voit qu'horreur, [...] et des piles dressees
 D'hommes qui gemissoyent, sous les armes pressees,
 Coulant comme une esponge, ou l'amas raisineux
 Qu'un pesant fust escache en un pressouer vineux. (69^r)

Kyd has:

No place was free from sorrow, every where
 Lay Armed men [...]
 And wretched heaps, lie mourning of their maims;
 Whose blood, as from a sponge, or bunch of grapes
 Crush'd in a wine-press, gusheth out so fast,
 As with the sight doth make the sound aghast. (sig. K3^r)

While the cornfield simile disappears in English, the image of heaped bodies pressed down like grapes is expressed in terms that, as Perry has noted, are reminiscent of those in Revelation 14:20 in the then highly popular Geneva Bible version: "And the wine presse was troden without the citie, and blood came out of the wine presse."⁴⁹

Similarly, in several passages of act 1 lamenting the woes of civil war, Kyd's rendering of the harvesting metaphors in Garnier seems to merge the

49. Revelation 14:20, *The New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, Conferred diligently with the Greke, and best approued translacions in divers languages* (Geneva: Rowland Hall, 1560), 119^v (sig GGg.iii^v). See Perry, 548–49.

French text with memories of the parable of the sower in Matthew 13. As the parable relates, a sower goes out and scatters the seed with varying results:

And as he sowed, some fel by the wayes side, and the foules came and devoured them up. And some fel upon stonie grounde, where they had not muche earth, and anone they sprung up, because they had no depth of earth. And when the sunne rose up, they were parched, and *for lacke of rooting, withered away*. And some fel among thornes, & *the thornes sprong up, and choked them*. Some againe fel in good grounde, and broght forth frute, one corne an hundreth folde, some sixtie folde, and another thirtie folde.⁵⁰

Now, in a line added by Kyd to Cicero’s lament on the civil wars of Rome, Fortune is described as a careless sower, who “slightly sowes that sildom taketh roote” (sig. A3^r). The parable is again echoed in another addition to Garnier, in the last stanza of the chorus to act 1:

All sad and desolate our Citty lies,
And [for fair Corne-ground] are our fields surcloid
With worthles Gorse, that yerely fruitles dyes,
And choake the good which els we had enjoy’d. (sig. B^r; emphasis mine)

The last two lines are almost entirely of Kyd’s making, as a comparison with Garnier’s own stanza demonstrates:

Nos cites languissent desertes,
Les plaines au lieu de moissons
Arment leurs espaules couvertes
De larges espineux buissons (43^v)

A similar shift from the interwoven images of war (“arment leurs épaulés”) and harvesting (“moissons”) to the themes of waste and barrenness was already to be found in a previous stanza of the chorus, where Kyd expands Garnier’s comparison, “Comme quand les bleds moissonnez / Tombent en javelles barbues” (43^r), into the following lines:

50. Matthew 13:3–8, *New Testament*, 8^r (sig. BB.iii^r), emphasis mine.

Falling as thick (through warlike crueltie,
 As eares of Corne for want of husbandry;
 That (*wasteful*) *shed their graine* upon the ground (sig. B^r, emphasis mine)

The biblical undertones in Kyd's similes are clearly in keeping with his tendency to Christianize Garnier's Roman history; as noted above, references to heaven, hell, sin, and even echoes of the Book of Common Prayer are to be found throughout the play.⁵¹ Such strategies are consistent with contemporary approaches to translation—and in particular, to the translation of Senecan drama, as James Ker and Jessica Winston, among others, have recently shown—as necessitating the cultural adaptation of ancient motifs and themes to early modern Christian norms.⁵²

But the biblical language in Kyd's translation also participates in the encoding of the tragedy as a commentary on the horrors of religious war. Such a reading was indeed warranted by Garnier's own preface calling the tragedy "alas, too well fitted to [his] present times,"⁵³ and the English public could easily re-appropriate this comment, only this time from the Protestant side of the conflict. As Edward Wilson-Lee has recently reminded us, Kyd's direct precedent, Sidney Herbert's translation of Garnier's *Marc-Antoine*, published in 1592 together with her translation of the Neostoic *Discourse on Life and Death* (1576) by Huguenot philosopher Philippe De Mornay, was actually designed with such interpretive codes in mind. Noting how the Countess of Pembroke subtly stresses the threat of foreign rule expressed by Garnier's chorus of Egyptians, in act 2 of *Marc Antoine*, Wilson-Lee links her translation strategies to contemporary concerns, especially among the Sidney Herberts, that Elizabeth's tepid support for French Huguenots might result in a foreign

51. See on this Roberts and Gaines, 131–32; Perry, 545; Belle and Cottegnies, ed., 56–59.

52. James Ker and Jessica Winston, ed., *Elizabethan Seneca: Three Tragedies*, Tudor and Stuart Translation Series 8 (London: MHRA, 2012). See also Norland, who notes that English translators "read Seneca through Christian eyes, which led them to omit pagan ritual and occasionally to introduce Christian doctrine as they interpret particular figures and situations as 'mirrors' or cautionary exempla of morality" (*Neoclassical Tragedy*, 67).

53. "poeme à mon regret trop propre aux malheurs de nostre siècle" (36^r). On the politics of Garnier's Cornélie, see Gillian Jondorf's classic study, *Robert Garnier and the Themes of Political Tragedy in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), or, more recently, Louise Frappier, "L'exemplarité de Jules César dans la tragédie humaniste: Muret, Grévin, Garnier," *Tangence* 104 (2014): 107–36.

invasion.⁵⁴ Similarly, Paulina Kewes argues that, by emphasizing this theme in a context of growing concerns for England’s uncertain dynastic future, Sidney Herbert stages “the fulfilment of the nightmare scenario which haunted forward Protestants during the Elizabethan *fin de siècle*.”⁵⁵

In this light, I would suggest another possible subtext for Kyd’s representation of civil war in terms of waste, or “want of husbandry.” In the “December” eclogue of Spenser’s *Shepherds Calendar* (1579), a volume explicitly dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, the shepherd laments the passing of his youth in terms quite similar to Kyd’s:

Thus is my sommer worne away and wasted
Thus is my haruest hastened all to rathe:
The eare that budded faire, is burnt and blasted,
And all my hoped gaine is turnd to scathe.
Of all the seede, that in my Youth was sowne,
Was nought but brakes and brambles to be mowne.

My boughs with bloosmes that crowned were at firste,
And promised of timely fruite such flore,
Are left both bare and barrein now at erst
[...]
My harvest wast, my hope away dyd wipe. (fol. 50^{r-v})

We know since Annabel Patterson’s analyses that Spenser’s “December” eclogue was directly inspired by Marot’s 1535 *Eglogue au Roi, soubz les noms de Pan et Robin*, and by his *Complaincte d’un Pastoureau Chrestien*.⁵⁶ Three

54. Edward Wilson-Lee, “Women’s Weapons: Country House Diplomacy in the Countess of Pembroke’s French Translations,” in *The Culture of Translation in Early-Modern England and France, 1500–1660*, ed. Tania Demetriou and Rowan Tomlinson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 128–44, 136–37.

55. Paulina Kewes, “‘A Fit Memorial for the Times to Come’: Admonition and Topical Application in Mary Sidney’s *Antonius* and Samuel Daniel’s *Cleopatra*,” *The Review of English Studies* 63.259 (2012): 243–64. Kewes also notes that the “foraigne yoke” of Octavian, as evoked in the chorus, could also point to Spain and to Catholic Philip II’s alleged “design for a universal monarchy” (246).

56. Annabel Patterson, “Re-opening the Green Cabinet: Clément Marot and Edmund Spenser,” *English Literary Renaissance* 16.1 (1986): 44–70; see also Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 117 ff.

times exiled because of his Protestant activities, Marot represented at the time of Spenser's writing "a figure of embattled Protestantism,"⁵⁷ in a context of political repression which Spenser (or more precisely, his commentator, E. K.) addresses quite openly in the commentary to the "May" eclogue, with an allusion to the Saint-Barthélémy massacre of 1572: "the morall of the whole tale [...] is to warne the protestaunt beware, how he geveth credit to the unfaythfull Catholique; whereof we have dayly proofes sufficient, but one most famous of all, practiced of Late yeares in Fraunce by Charles the nynth."⁵⁸

In the context of the 1570s, as made explicit in the gloss, Spenser's evocation of "waste harvests" and worn out hopes in the "December" eclogue could not but be read as a comment on the crushed hopes of French Protestant humanism. Two decades later, at a time when England had suffered many setbacks in its support of French Huguenots, and when Henri de Navarre, in whom English Protestant families—such as the Sidneys—had placed high hopes, was finally converting to Catholicism, such language could still be perceived as relevant.⁵⁹ Kyd's own emphasis on "choaked" fruits and "wasteful" harvests, in a chorus specifically focusing on the woes of civil war, clearly makes the point as it revisits the *Calendar's* imagery and deploys its layered associations with classical and French poetics, English Protestant discourse, and Spenser's own anti-Catholic historiography.

A further connection between Kyd's treatment of the harvest metaphor and Spenser's re-writings of French poetry is to be found in the latter's volume of *Complaints*, published in 1591 and dedicated to Mary Sidney Herbert as an elegiac tribute to the memory of her brother, Philip Sidney (who, as is well known, had died in 1586 in the English expedition against Catholic Spain in the Netherlands). Among other pieces, including translations from Marot that had already been published in Jan Van der Noot's militantly anti-Catholic *Theatre for Worldings* (1569), the volume contains a version of Joachim du Bellay's 1558 sonnet sequence, *Les Antiquités de Rome*, translated by Spenser as *Ruines of*

57. Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, 119.

58. Edmund Spenser, *The shepheardes calender conteyning twelue aeglogues proportionable to the twelue monethes. Entitled to the noble and vertuous gentleman most worthy of all titles both of learning and cheualrie M. Philip Sidney* (London: Hugh Singleton, 1579), fol. 22^v. See analysis in Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology*, 119.

59. Henri IV officially converted to Catholicism in July, 1593, a few months before *Cornelia* was entered into the *Stationers' Registry*.

Rome.⁶⁰ Sonnet 30 in particular is composed as an extended comparison of the rise and fall of Rome to the sowing, growing, and final pillaging of a harvest—with nothing but fallen ears of corn left for passers-by to glean:

Ainsi de peu à peu creut l’Empire Romain,
Tant qu’il fut despouillé par la Barbare main,
Qui ne laissa de luy que ces marques antiques,
Que chacun ua pillant : comme on uoid le glaneur
Cheminant pas à pas recueillir les reliques
De ce qui ua tumbant après le moissonneur.⁶¹

In Spenser’s translation:

So grew the Roman Empire by degree,
Till that Barbarian hands it quite did spill,
And left of it but these olde markes to see,
Of which all passers by do somewhat pill:
As they which gleane, the reliques use to gather,
Which th’husbandman behind him chanst to scater.⁶²

As noted by Ternaux, Du Bellay’s *Antiquités* represents an important element in the literary subtext of *Cornélie*.⁶³ Thanks to his friendship with Ronsard, Garnier had actually spent his formative years as a writer in the orbit of the *Pléiade* group at the court of Charles IX—a connection highlighted by the liminal poems in the 1585 *Tragédies* volume, many of which are penned by

60. For a detailed textual genealogy of the *Complaints* volume and its relationship with Jan Van der Noot’s *Theatre*, see Anne E. B. Coldiron, “How Spenser Excavates Du Bellay’s *Antiquitez*,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 101 (2002): 41–67, especially 44–45.

61. Joachim Du Bellay, *Le premier livre des antiquitez de Rome: contenant une générale description de sa grandeur et comme une déploration de sa ruine; Plus Un songe ou vision sur le mesme subject, du mesme autheur* (Paris: F. Morel, 1558), 9^r.

62. Edmund Spenser, *Complaints Containing sundrie small poemes of the worlds vanitie* (London: Ponsonby, 1591), sig. [S4]^r.

63. Ternaux, ed., 15.

former members of the *Pléiade*.⁶⁴ Apart from the shared harvesting metaphor, Garnier pays particular tribute to Du Bellay in his evocation of Rome's rise and fall, where he significantly merges Lucan's reading of history, according to which Rome falls victim to its own hubristic growth,⁶⁵ with the melancholy outlook of Du Bellay's meditation. Sonnet 7 of *Les Antiquités*, for instance, invokes Rome's fallen grandeur as follows:

Arcz triomphaux, pointes du ciel voisines,
Qui de vous voir le ciel mesme estonnez,
Las peu à peu cendre vous devenez,
Fable du peuple, et publiques rapines [...]⁶⁶

In act 2 of *Cornélie*, Cicero's lament on Rome's self-inflicted ruin integrates Du Bellay's imagery, as Garnier evokes Rome as a city bristling with spires ("de pointes hérissées") and whose buildings, reaching up to the skies ("leur chef aux elements"), threaten the whole world: "Dont la fierté, la force et le pouvoir sembloit / Menacer l'Vnivers, qui sous elle trembloit" (48^r).

While Anne Lake Prescott briefly mentions Du Bellay's *Antiquités* and Spenser's *Ruines of Rome* as part of the literary context in which Sidney Herbert composed her translation of Garnier's *Marc Antoine*, the connection has not been fully explored, nor have its implications been extended to the case of Kyd's *Cornelia*.⁶⁷ Spenser's translations from Du Bellay were almost certainly known to Kyd, if one is to judge from the many echoes to be found in the play, especially passages evoking Rome's hubristic rise and tragic fall.⁶⁸ For instance, in the above-cited passage in act 2, the connection with Du Bellay appears indeed to be transmuted into a new, intertextual relationship with Spenser's

64. See Anne Lake Prescott, "Mary Sidney's French Sophocles: The Countess of Pembroke Reads Robert Garnier," in *Representing France and the French in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. Jean-Christophe Mayer (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 68–89.

65. Cicero's speech in act 2 evoking Rome's expansion and subsequent fall closely rehearses Lucan's arguments in *Pharsalia* 1. 160–82 (Loeb, 14–17).

66. Du Bellay, 3^v.

67. Prescott, "Mary Sidney's 'Antonius' and the Ambiguities of French History," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 38.1 (2008): 216–33, 230–31.

68. A possible allusion to Van der Noot's *Theatre for Worldlings* may be implied in Kyd's translation of Garnier's paraphrase for the earth, "ceste rondeur" (56^r), as "the world and worldlings" (sig. F2^v).

Ruines of Rome, with Kyd’s rendering of Garnier echoing at once his French source(s) and Spenser’s sonnet 7. While closely translating the French original, Kyd’s evocation of “loftie Towers, (like thorny-pointed speares),” which “with their tops tucht heaven”⁶⁹ also bring up, for the reader familiar with Spenser’s translation, the latter’s mention of

Triumphant Arcks, spyres neighbours to the skie,
That you to see doth th’heaven it selfe appall,
Alas, by little ye to nothing flie,
The peoples fable, and the spoyle of all.⁷⁰

Although Garnier, Du Bellay, Spenser, and Kyd all exploit well-known commonplaces in classical and early modern poetry in order to evoke the rise and fall of great cities,⁷¹ the connection with Spenser is all the less likely to be fortuitous here as it had already been established only two years before in Sidney Herbert’s translation of Garnier’s *Marc Antoine*. Drawing on the same topos in a scene that exactly mirrors the above-mentioned passage in *Cornelia*, Garnier has his chorus of Egyptians predict the ruin of Rome in very similar terms, with barbarian hands pillaging “Tes richesses orgueilleuses / Et tes bastimens dorez / Dont les pointes enuieuses / Percent les cieux etherez.”⁷² Sidney Herbert departs slightly from the French text as she evokes

Thy proud wealth, and rich attire,
Those gilt roofes which turretwise,
Iustly making Envie mourne,
Threaten now to pearce skies.⁷³

69. The whole passage reads as follows: “And those great Citties, whose foundations reacht / From deepest hell, and with their tops tucht heaven: / Wholse loftie Towers, (like thorny-pointed speares) / Whose Temples, Pallaces, and walls embost, / In power and force, and fierceness, seem’d to threat / The tyred world, that trembled with their waight [...]” (sig. C3^r).

70. Spenser, *Complaints*, sig. R2^v.

71. Common sources include Virgil’s *Aeneid* 2 and 4, *Pharsalia* 1, or again Seneca’s *Troas* for the *tempus edax* theme.

72. *Tragédies*, 89^v.

73. *A Discourse of Life and Death*. VVritten in French by Ph. Mornay. Antonius, a Tragoedie written also in French by Ro. Garnier. Both done in English by the Countesse of Pembroke (London: Printed [by John

Notable here (especially considering Sidney Herbert's famously literal approach to translating Garnier)⁷⁴ is the addition of Rome's "rich attire," a detail not in the French original—nor in Spenser, for that matter. However, Sidney Herbert does point to the English intertext, not only through the thematic ties embedded in Garnier's own rewriting of Du Bellay but also through the subtly Protestant slant she gives to the original description of Rome's pride. Indeed, Spenser's translations of Du Bellay, both in the 1569 *Theatre for Worldlings* and in the 1591 *Complaints* volume dedicated to Sidney Herbert, distinguish themselves in their way of re-framing Du Bellay's meditation on Rome's past pride and current decay in terms of Protestant anti-Catholic discourse.⁷⁵ Spenser's Rome is also Catholic Rome, the "whore of Babylon" whose demise is prophesied in the Book of Revelation: the connection was made quite explicit in Van der Noot's *Theatre*, in which Spenser's translations from Marot and Du Bellay, also included in the 1591 volume, were first published. In this context, Sidney Herbert's unusual amendment suggests a similar re-interpretation of the topos, with Garnier's generic evocation of Rome's "pointes orgueilleuses" turning into a pointed allusion to the sinful pride of the Catholic Church, vested in the "rich attire" of its clergy, and revelling in scandalous "proud wealth."⁷⁶

The intricate practices at work in Spenser, Sidney Herbert, and Kyd, in which multi-layered intertextual allusion is combined with an overt re-interpretation of the themes present in the subtext(s), can be read as an elaboration of what Barbara Bono has called "literary transvaluation," that is, "an artistic act of self-consciousness that at once perceives the values of

Windet] for William Ponsonby, 1592), sig. [I4]r.

74. See *The Collected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke*, ed. Margaret P. Hannay, Noel J. Kinnamon, and Michael G. Brennan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 147–51, and Gordon Braden, "Tragedy," *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English, Volume II*, ed. Gordon Braden, Robert Cummings, and Stuart Gillespie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 261–79, 274.

75. See Carl Rasmussen's seminal discussion of the ideological encoding of Spenser's translations in Van der Noot's *Theatre* in "'Quietnesse of Minde': A *Theatre for Worldlings* as Protestant Poetics," *Spenser Studies* 1 (1980): 3–27; and more recently Stewart Mottram, "Spenser's Dutch Uncles: The Family of Love and the Four Translations of A *Theatre for Worldlings*," *Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe*, ed. José María Pérez Fernández and Edward Wilson-Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 164–84.

76. See on this point Belle and Cottagnies, ed., 44–45.

the antecedent text and transforms them to serve the uses of the present.”⁷⁷ The concept fitly describes what has been observed so far in Kyd’s coherent, although highly complex, patterns of translation and transformation of Garnier’s literary sources. Not only does Kyd adapt Garnier’s Senecan play to the Elizabethan varieties of historical Roman drama and revenge tragedy, but by merging the apocalyptic language of Lucan’s *Pharsalia* with echoes of Protestant providentialism, and by activating the anti-Catholic potential of the humanist theme of Rome’s ruin as already exploited by Spenser and Sidney Herbert, Kyd performs the cultural translation of Garnier’s themes into the rich poetic and ideological idiom of the Sidney Herbert literary milieu.

While illuminating Kyd’s poetics of translation, and contributing to invalidate the play’s long reputation as a hurried, derivative, lesser piece in Kyd’s corpus, such strategies thus shed light on the relationship of *Cornelia* with the precedent set by Sidney Herbert’s *Antonius*. Although it has been convincingly demonstrated that *Cornelia* was not part of some reactionary campaign on the part of an elite coterie, supposedly led by Sidney Herbert, against “popular” plays, Kyd cannot but have had in mind the Countess of Pembroke and her literary entourage as his potential (or even intended) audience. Even if Erne’s suggestion that, by translating Garnier, Kyd was perhaps seeking to regain the lost patronage of the Earl of Pembroke, remains hypothetical,⁷⁸ the dedication of the play to a member of the closely connected house of Sussex, as well as the literary, political, and religious codes at work in the translation, surely advertises its connections with one of the most influential circles of Elizabethan literary culture.

It would remain somewhat limiting, however, to confine Kyd’s translation practices, and the cultural “transvaluation” they achieve, within the orbit of the Sidney-Herbert circle. In fact, while the play’s associations with Republicanism, anti-Catholic discourse, and providential readings of history remain just as ambiguous as Perry and Cadman have remarked, the subtle interaction it enacts between classical sources, French humanism, and contemporary English interpretations of ancient and early modern history is surprisingly coherent with Kyd’s previous plays, especially his *Spanish Tragedy*. It has long been

77. Barbara Bono, *Literary Transvaluation: From Vergilian Epic to Shakespearean Tragicomedy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 1.

78. Erne, 227–29.

known, for instance, that Kyd must have read (or be reading) *Cornélie* when composing the *Tragedy*.⁷⁹ More specifically, the descent to the underworld evoked by the ghost of Andrea in the Induction to the *Tragedy* has lately been traced not only to Aeneas's famous journey in Virgil's *Aeneid* 6 but to Garnier's own re-writing of the episode in act 3 of *Cornélie*. This connection—although ignored by Nashe's sneering comment on Kyd's unorthodox depiction of the underworld—actually confirms Hill's seminal reading of the *Tragedy*, not as “a native pot-boiler, [but as] a deeply conscious work,”⁸⁰ in which Kyd re-works the Virgilian theme of *translatio studii* (i.e., the mythical transfer of power from East to West) in order to stage the fall of the Spanish Catholic empire and the subsequent rise of Protestant England. More recently, Ardolino has identified Garnier's *les Juifves* as another influence on the *Spanish Tragedy*, one that provides Kyd with the providential discourse underlying Hieronimo's revenge, and enables him to stage the conflict between England and Spain as another “fall of Babylon.”⁸¹

Such acts of literary and ideological “transvaluation” closely match the interpretive patterns that emerge, as I have sought to demonstrate, from Kyd's complex handling of Garnier's epic similes. By alerting his audience to the literary fabric of Garnier's Senecan tragedy, and by exploiting the inherent tensions between the imperial associations of Virgil's historical narrative and Lucan's divergent, anti-tyrannical stance, Kyd brings to the forefront the political implications of staging the Roman civil wars in the vexed dynastic and diplomatic context of the “nasty nineties.” By responding dynamically to the epic topoi, allusions, and quotations embedded in Garnier's play, Kyd fulfills the process of translation of his French source into his own idiom as a playwright, all the while engaging in the dramatic and poetic experiments that marked Britain's literary production in the 1580s and 1590s. Finally, as it activates a rich web of associations with contemporary English poetry and drama (original or in translation—although the distinction seems increasingly unsatisfactory when dealing with the works of Marlowe, Spenser, Sidney

79. See for example Boas, xxix and Erne, 53–54. Many echoes of Garnier's plays have otherwise been detected in Kyd's *Soliman and Perseida*, as noted for example in Boas, lvii, 437, and 439.

80. Hill, 164.

81. Ardolino, 66.

Herbert, and eventually Kyd),⁸² the play helps to embed Garnier’s experiment with Senecan drama within Britain’s ongoing dialogue with the classical past and with contemporary Continental literature. As such, it transcends its traditional characterization as an example of “closet drama” composed for the sake of a self-absorbed literary coterie, and deserves to be recognized instead as an important contribution to the cosmopolitan, transnational poetics that remained vibrantly alive in the culture of translation of the late Elizabethan era.

82. A list to which one should obviously add North’s 1579 Plutarch, translated, as is well known, from Jacques Amyot’s 1549 version, and dedicated to Elizabeth I: *The lives of the nobles Grecians and Romanes... Translated out of Greeke into French by James Amyot..., and out of French into English, by Thomas North* (London: Thomas Vautroullier for John Wright, 1579). Amyot represents a major source for Garnier, who sometimes borrows full expressions from him (Ternaux, ed., 20). North’s translation also provides Kyd with an important textual basis, as well as a mooring point, so to speak, for his own play in the literary culture of the 1590s.