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Infinite tragedy and the Hundred Years War

Andrew Galloway

The genre of tragedy is regularly considered in relation to history. Not only do its shifting elements invite histories of the genre – encouraged by its immensely long span – but its preoccupations and implications are inextricably linked to history; the genre or concept serves as both an epitome of and reflection on history's uncontrollable and, on personal or broader human scale, often horrifically destructive movements. The glimpses of history afforded to but thereby dwarfing human understanding are themselves key to the topic. We may still ponder with profit G. W. F. Hegel's notion of the 'rationality of destiny', by which, for Hegel, the genre embodies collisions between equally cogent world-historical principles, whose scale of instantiation necessarily varies according to changing phases of culture (and Hegel was among the first to argue that the mythic scale of tragedy in Antiquity was relocated during the Renaissance onto individual 'character').[1] Friedrich Nietzsche's view of 'Apollonian' individuality, painfully emerging within the choric, 'Dionysian' foundations of ancient community and communal ritual, is as alive to tragedy's implications for assessing a given culture as any modern reconsideration of Greek tragedy might be, such as, for instance, using Aeschylus to understand the unleashing of state power following the 2001 terrorist attacks.[2] Perhaps most capaciously historical of all, Raymond Williams's focus on the changing 'structures of feeling' conveyed by tragedies across the centuries elucidates different phases of tragedy, as ideological and affective crystallisations of what Williams takes to be Western culture's major social formations. Williams proceeds from Antiquity's aristocratic protagonists, whose identity and traumas are defined

by 'inheritance and relationship', to sixteenth-century humanist individualists, assailing a crumbling feudal order, to eighteenth-century 'bourgeois tragedy', with its shift to more immediate social identification between audience and protagonists, to nineteenth- and twentieth-century victimhood in 'liberal tragedy' (Henrik Ibsen and Arthur Miller), with the genre finally dissolving into the more egalitarian human solidarity in the face of a meaningless universe (August Strindberg, Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams).[3] Western history in a handful of dust. What could be left out?

Diverse as enquiries into 'tragedy' are, however, they typically converge in seeing medieval contributions to the idea or genre as minimal, fragmented or at most preliminary. As it happens, medieval scholars generally agree. Still the most durable view – although hardly uncontested – remains William Farnham's *Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy* (1936), which unfolds a broadly thematic history of how the Christian ascetic 'contempt of the world' slowly intersected with 'espousal of the world', trends reaching balance only with Giovanni Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* (1355–74), elaborated further by Geoffrey Chaucer's *Monk's Tale* (*c.*1382) and *Troilus and Criseyde* (*c.*1384), then thematically narrowing back to the ascetic in the prolific instances of tragedy by John Lydgate, monk of St Edmund's, whose *Fall of Princes* (1431–39) popularised the idea sufficiently for the mid-sixteenth-century *Mirror of Magistrates* to extend the possibilities: into more contemporary figures and fuller biographies, thence for the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists to strike a finer balance between 'contempt' and 'espousal' of the world, focusing on individuals' fatal but typically majestic contributions to their own downfalls. These at last are the familiar mountain ranges before which medieval examples are the convoluted foothills.

The Boccaccio–Chaucer–Lydgate lineage is hardly the only 'tradition' of medieval tragedy, and it has been clear for some time that we need more variety in articulating even that cluster in terms of its own understandings and historical circumstances. Henry Ansgar Kelly answers this need in one way by tracing medieval ideas of the word 'tragedy' in Latin and English to reveal a long but disjointed span, a series of ideas of tragedy in a culture thin on secular theatre of any kind. Kelly identifies a durable early tradition that viewed

tragedy largely as punishments for sin and crime, interwoven with views of tragedy as the downfall of anyone of high estate; but in the end, he finds few sustained contemporary uses of the genre before Chaucer. In Chaucer, the term began to define more complex downfalls, no longer driven by the imperative to show sin and crime justly punished, open to wider ranges of personal and circumstantial blame: with Chaucer also, Kelly asserts, finally appeared 'the modern everyday idea of tragedy', featuring 'irreversible disasters and misfortunes that come in all forms and for all sorts of reasons, and against all hope and expectation' – paving the way for what Daniel Cadman, Andrew Duxfield and Lisa Hopkins describe as 'the most versatile of Renaissance literary genres'.[4]

The topic is far from closed. Resisting Kelly's Chaucerian red line, Carol Symes adds many more pre-thirteenth-century Latin mentions of the genre, finding uses of the term that indicate a wider and far more complex range of views of the genre than Kelly sees.[5] Yet the rare efforts before Chaucer to write 'tragedy' present what seem to me often alien alignments between the term and its contents. Thus John of Garland in his early thirteenth-century rhetorical guide, the *Parisiana Poetria*, presented what he claimed was the second *tragedia* ever written (the first he thought a lost poem by Ovid): John's poem is a grandiose tale of two washerwomen, each of whom sexually served groups of soldiers garrisoned in a castle; one fell in love with a soldier in the other woman's group and was murdered by her, whereupon the second woman, to hide the crime, opened up the castle to enemies, who slaughtered them all. John assured readers that his poem demonstrated the early foundations of the genre: it is written in high style, deals with shameful and criminal actions and begins in joy but ends in tears.[6]

Perhaps this was a joke about formulae for narrative in general. But medieval presentations of genres are often elusive or eccentric from modern points of view, even if we do not speak of the Middle Ages as 'a generic wasteland or labyrinth'.[7] Kelly's narrow focus on works calling themselves 'tragedy', and on the elements in those in relation to their author's explicit ideas of 'tragedy', is one way to offer a rigorously inductive response to this, securing Chaucer's claim to innovation. Yet that approach leaves much to be understood concerning post-Chaucerian writers' contributions to their

social and historical vision and settings, and concerning the reasons for their efforts in rather different historical moments. As James Simpson and Maura Nolan have both shown, attention is particularly needed to the period during the genre's real take-off: not the age of Chaucer but that of Lydgate, who by any account should be seen as key in the genre's history, judging by the at least fifty-nine surviving copies, fragments and extracts of his enormous *Fall of Princes*, including one with 156 lurid illustrations of painful deaths of his figures, the graphic novel version of a new world of tragedy.[8] This might be compared to the fourteen copies of Chaucer's 'litel myn tragedie', *Troilus and Criseyde*, only one copy of which is illustrated, that of the poet decorously reading before an elegant court.[9] Nor was Lydgate alone. Although Symes's valuable survey of Latin materials to the early thirteenth century includes two Latin historians, Paul the Deacon and William of Malmesbury, who both use the term 'tragedy' to describe isolated historical catastrophes,[10] her scope does not reach the chronicles by Thomas Walsingham, monk of St Albans (*c*.1340–*c*.1422). His life and writings overlapped both Chaucer's and Lydgate's, and his comments on and uses of tragedy, first noted by Kelly, feature prominently in his later writings, more prominently than scholars, even Kelly, have appreciated.[11] In assessing the relation of history to the popularisation of the idea of 'tragedy', it behoves us to revisit the contributions by a historian.

The conjunction in this pursuit of a historical poet and a chronicler during the first half of the fifteenth century, both of whom were addressing patrons at the centre of the political and military context of England's war with France, is enough to suggest that tragedy's relations to the Hundred Years War were central to the period of Walsingham and Lydgate.[12] But not only to the war. For whatever else we say about these writers' manipulations of 'tragedy', it not only had a history, it was history, or a strong version of how history could be understood or explored. Walsingham's and Lydgate's development of the form, like much of what goes by the name of 'tragedy' later, was connected to deep interests in ancient literature, especially Lucan's *Civil War* [*Bellum civile*], and to their immediate and wider circumstances, including but not only based on the military ventures that brought glory and catastrophe to England in this period. What Williams, viewing tragedies of many other

periods, calls 'structures of feelings' – focal points in literature revealing fundamental social configurations, emotional indications of particular relationships and social structures, affective tones and obsessions that resonate with particular patterns of exploring society with its internal contradictions and ruptures at the brink of the articulable – can also be pursued in the early- to mid-fifteenth-century innovations. Major structural social changes were afoot, no doubt hastened but not restricted to the military adventures that claimed so much attention. The period saw the proliferation of more contractual, and far more widespread but more change-able, mini-feudal 'followings', which splintered social hierarchy in the higher social spheres while further down, professionalisation and commercialisation reached even the most conservative institutions. As it happens, Lydgate, monk at St Edmunds, is the first English poet for whom a specific payment for literary labour is recorded, for producing an English poem on the 'Lives' of St Alban and St Amphibalus for the abbot of Walsingham's monastery, St Albans.[13] Agrarian tenants were redefining their services and social status; serfdom, shrinking during the fourteenth century, disappeared in the fifteenth century.[14] Relentless military conflict, revivals of ancient tragedy and broader disruptions in the role and significance of lordship, service and professionally and transaction-ally specified modes of society all explain these writers' converging expansions, elaborations, explorations and evasions in the idea of 'tragedy' during the closing decades of the Hundred Years War, far beyond what Chaucer launched in his remarkable experiments with the genre amid so many others he tried.

Walsingham's tragic paradigms

Walsingham's preoccupations with classical Antiquity must have begun early in his monastic career, for such learning pervades his writings. Study of such pre-Christian works was encouraged at St Albans, which throughout Walsingham's lifetime and beyond featured an unparalleled concentration of learned and classicis-ing monks, numbers of whom studied at Gloucester College, Oxford, including Walsingham himself.[15] Before becoming abbot of

St Albans, John Whethamstede, who hired Lydgate to write the Life of St Alban, was prior at Gloucester College (*c*.1414–17); he would go on to compile digests of ancient philosophers and poets, and collect dozens of volumes of ancient literature, including new Latin translations of Plato procured from Italy. As James Clark argues, St Albans offered a 'monastic renaissance'.[16]

Walsingham used such knowledge with special edge and wit. In keeping with traditional monastic focuses on history, going back to Bede in the early eighth century, Walsingham's writings included national chronicles; a house history of the deeds of the abbots of St Albans (including one of the longest and most detailed narratives of the Great Rising of 1381); commentaries on the (euhemeristically human) gods in Ovid; and compilation of the abbey's Book of Benefactors (*Liber Benefactorum*) merging hundreds of biographies of abbots and major donors, kept on the abbey's altar for daily celebration of the donors.[17] At some date Walsingham also produced a handbook on literary theory and ancient tragedies, his *Prohemia poetarum* [Prologue to the Poets] (*c*.1380), a biographical and literary guide to a host of ancient poets with longer sections on Terence, Lucan and Seneca and two brief discussions of *tragoedia*. Parts of it evidently circulated separately.[18] One of the discussions of *tragoedia*, after summaries of Seneca's tragedies,[19] defines tragedy as 'quicquit luctuosis cantibus antiqui tragedi describebant de gestis regum vel tirannorum sceleratorum; qui quamvis inchoabatur jocunde, luctuose tamen continue terminabatur' [mournful songs about the deeds of kings or wicked tyrants, which, though beginning happily, always ended mournfully], and declares that tragedy demonstrates 'In quibus fedos actus et scelera quam turpis sequatur exitus luculentissime demonstravit' [how foul an ending follows upon filthy acts and crimes].[20]

Though intended for neophytes, the handbook shows Walsingham's generic resources, with important consequences for his historical writings. His *Chronica Majora* (1376–1422) describes the Great Rising of 1381 as a *tragedia* and *historia tragica*; when reusing those narratives for the *Ypodigma Neustriae* (1422), he called the Revolt a *tragoedia rustica* ('rustic tragedy').[21] The shifting modifiers mark his reconsiderations of the genre; Walsingham's longest and first narrative of the Revolt, his in-house *Deeds of the Abbots of St Albans*, lacks the

generic term.[22] With its account of 'uilissimorum communium et rus-ticorum' [the lowest class of common people and peasants] carrying rusty swords and ancient, smoke-hardened bows with a single arrow each, demanding ancient charters of their rights – which when none can be produced they insist should be manufactured on the spot – the narrative of 1381 is rich with scornful satire.[23] Walsingham's experimental invocations and modifications of 'tragedy' for them wryly spotlight how far from high status the rebels were.

That narrative has often been examined, but against it should be placed his other narratives featuring 'tragedy'.[24] Walsingham assembled several for his final work, the *Ypodigma Neustriae*, written to celebrate Henry V's victories through the Treaty of Troyes (1420), which secured France for English rule by Henry V and his heirs – a fortunate provision, since Henry died (August 1422) while Walsingham was still completing the history (one late passage, as the nineteenth-century editor, Thomas Riley, pointed out, lifted from Walsingham's own simultaneously produced longer chronicle, states that the French king Charles VI, who died in October 1422, 'nec umquam postea' [never afterwards] recovered from the madness that struck him in 1392, dating Walsingham's final touches to a few months after Henry's death, and probably just a few months before his own [*Ypodigma Neustriae* xxxiii, 364]). This work is generally ignored because it is so derivative; it predominantly features excerpts from William of Jumièges's history of Normandy [Neustria] spliced into Walsingham's earlier and ongoing chronicles of English history. Yet its title alone makes a statement quite different from Walsingham's other writings. It is a paradigm ('ypodigma', a rare use of Greek), implying that this history had a pattern and point. As Sylvia Federico, one of the few scholars to linger over the work, observes, Walsingham's classical allusions in the *Ypodigma Neustriae* allow the work to 'speak in multiple voices to multiple time schemes'.[25] His choices to select a number of classicised moments from his former writings fulfil a larger pattern, emphasising history's repetitions, warning as well as flattering English readers.

Both warnings and flattery are clear in Walsingham's preface to Henry V. There, Walsingham mentioned his 'spirituali jocunditate et interiori gaudio' [spiritual pleasure and inner joy] as he

reflected on the king's victories so far. Yet Walsingham empha-
sised that his purpose was to show how 'foul things' – frauds,
crimes, sins and factions 'dierum antiquorum' [from days of old]
could happen 'tomorrow' as easily as 'yesterday' [sciens quod cras
poterunt fieri turpia, sicut heri] (*Ypodigma Neustriae* 3–4). The
work's Greek title, Walsingham told Henry, was chosen 'eo quod
prædemonstret præcipue casus vel eventus illius patriæ, a tempore
Rollonis, primi Ducis, usque ad annum felicis regni vestri sextum'
[so that it might present before you the falls and outcomes of that
nation [Normandy or 'Neustriae'] from the time of Rollo, first ruler,
up to the sixth year of your blessed reign] (*Ypodigma Neustriae* 5).

The emphases on 'paradigm' made the *Ypodigma Neustriae* a
commentary on the disasters of imperial and feudal history, history
as mode rather than successive events. Federico calls it a 'quasi-
chronicle'.[26] Neither Federico nor other commentators, however,
mention how important disaster and tragedy [casus vel eventus]
are as its organising principle. Apparently no one has noted, for
example, a mention of tragedy near the opening, defining the
ancient Danes' destruction of 'Neustria's' cities:

> Et, ut concludam tragoedias infinitas brevibus, Lutetiam, Parisiorum
> nobile caput, quondam resplendens gloria, abundans opibus, in cineres
> redegerunt. Beluacus quoque, et Novionius, quondam Galliarum
> praestantissimae civitates, eorum gladio concidere. Aquitannia
> quoque, quodam bellorum nutrix, tunc patuit praeda gentibus alienis.
> Nec erat oppidum aut vicus in ea regione, sed neque civitas, quae
> non strage ferali horum conciderit Paganorum. Testatur id Pictavis,
> foecundissima urbs Aquitanniae, hoc Sanctonum, hoc Engolisma,
> hoc Petragoricum, hoc Lemovicus, hoc certe Arvernus, ipsumque
> Avaricum, caput regni Aquitannici. (*Ypodigma Neustriae* 8)

> And, to conclude in brief these infinite tragedies, Paris [*Lutetia*],
> noble capital of the Parisians, formerly gleaming with glory and
> overflowing with wealth, they [the Danes] reduced to ashes. Beauvais
> also, and Noyon, formerly the most outstanding cities of the French,
> fell to their swords. Aquitaine also, former nursemaid of warriors,
> then opened its booty to foreign peoples. Nor was any town or village
> in that region, nor indeed any city, which did not fall to the fierce
> destruction of those pagans. To that, Poitiers, wealthiest town of
> Aquitaine, bears witness, to that too does Saintes, to that Angoulême,

to that Périgueux, to that Limoges, and certainly to that Clermont, and Bourges itself, capital of the kingdom of Aquitaine.

Walsingham's source here, William of Jumièges, did not mention *tragoedia* there or anywhere else.[27]

Given that *YN* presents 'the falls and outcomes of that nation from the time of Rollo, first ruler, up to the sixth year of your blessed reign', the Danes' conquest of cities including 'Lutetia', the Roman name for Paris (which Henry conquered in 1419), suggests a paradigm in which conquering lords like Henry and their supporters like Walsingham himself were complicit. This placed what we call the Hundred Years War within a large horizon: a five-hundred years' war, even a perpetual state of catastrophe so long as such imperialism continued. This view might not have been as eccentric as it seems. The phrase 'tragoedias infinitas' [infinite tragedies] was oddly current, even beyond Chaucer's Monk's 'hundred in my celle' (VII.1972). When Boccaccio in his *De casibus* warned princes against credulity, he declared, 'fere per omne trivium infinite clamitant tragedie' [infinite tragedies cry out at every crossroad] against flatterers.[28] While it is unlikely that Walsingham knew Chaucer's or Boccaccio's texts, he shared their sense of copious examples of catastrophe, especially from imperial or lordly aggression. If this is the origin of late medieval ideas of tragedy, it arrives with a sense of overwhelming plenitude and belated overdetermination: a dam breaking rather than a wispy anticipation.

'Tragedy' is the main genre explicitly structuring the narratives Walsingham selected for his 'paradigm of Neustria' from his earlier English histories, and is applied not only to the Rising of 1381, now called a 'rustic tragedy'. In another section recycled from the *Chronica majora*, describing the fall of the Northumbrian lord, Henry Percy, who rebelled against Henry IV and was beheaded in 1408, Walsingham lingered over the death of this 'Nempe dominus iste stirps … quasi cunctorum de nomine Percy superstitum et aliorum plurimorum uariis cladibus finitorum' [last offspring of all those holding the name Percy, last survivor of many who died in varying disasters].[29] The witnessing public, Walsingham wrote, recalled Percy's magnificence, fame and glory; lamenting, they 'applied' to the situation a 'carmen lugubre' [sad song]. This turns

out to be from the ancient poet Lucan, the lament by Pompey's son
over his father whose shame is not simply death but public display
of his decapitated head:

> Sed nos nec sanguis, nec tantum vulnera nostri
> Affecere senis, quantum gestata per urbem
> Ora ducis; quae transfixo deformia pilo
> Vidimus …

> [But neither the blood nor the wounds of our aged leader moved us
> as much as the carrying of his head through the city, whose deface-
> ment we see with it transfixed on a pike … (*YN* 424; cf. *CM* vol. 2,
> pp. 532–4)]

In using Lucan, Walsingham imposed a subtle classification on
the kind of tragedy this represented. Lucan's *Civil War* described
the first stages of Rome's civil war between Caesar and Pompey, a
version of catastrophe that led medieval commentators to consider
Lucan's poem not only *historia* but also *tragedia*, even 'the best of
tragedies'.[30] Percy's rebellion fitted this in several ways. Moreover,
the populace's 'sad song' parallels the definition of tragedy in the
Prohemia, as 'mournful songs about the deeds of kings or wicked
tyrants, which, even though beginning happily, would always end
mournfully', demonstrating 'how foul an ending follows upon filthy
acts and crimes'. Walsingham's narrative features a rebellious lord
beloved by the populace, whose lament Walsingham inserted into
the event. They become a tragic chorus, a concept Walsingham
would have known from Horace's *Ars Poetica* and Isidore of
Seville's remarks on ancient tragedy.[31]

   The results merit close attention. The sadness of their 'sad song',
reflecting local awareness of losing this final Percy, also suggests
the populace's complicity, since they supported the rebellion of
the lord whose punishment they mourned. The generic ampli-
fication is not simply Walsingham's rhetorical emphasis but a
structure of feeling with political significance. Beyond regret, the
lament opens space for reflection on the power, consequences and
disasters of overweening lordship, whose socially fragmenting force
was increasingly obvious through the devastating Wars of the Roses
of the 1450s and beyond. To be sure, that the populace's emotion
is melancholic, suspended temporally via Lucan, distinguishes it

from any pragmatic response. Bertolt Brecht thought tragedy itself should make audiences not passive viewers undergoing Aristotle's *catharsis*, but critical respondents who, seeing disaster, think 'the sufferings of this man appal me'.[32] Walsingham's signs of repetition and of the mourners' complicity in the outcome – the populace's and that of Percy himself – is hardly rousing in that way; it more closely fits Hegel's distinction of tragic from other lament:

> A lament … may well … assail men on occasions of wholly external contingency and related circumstance, to which the individual does not contribute, nor for which he is responsible, such cases as illness, loss of property, death, and the like. The only real and absorbing interest in such cases ought to be an eager desire to afford immediate assistance. … A veritable tragic suffering, on the contrary, is suspended over active characters entirely as a consequence of their own act, which as such not only asserts its claim over us, but becomes subject to blame through the collision it involves, and to which such individual identify themselves heart and soul.[33]

Yet Walsingham did not paralyse thoughts of historical change. For example, he subtly adapted Lucan to the present. To suit the collective lament, Walsingham's quotation reads 'nos' [we] instead of Pompey's son's 'me'; to suit a medieval traitor's defacement, Walsingham presented the mutilation of the decapitated head, 'deformia' [defacement], where Lucan's text reads 'sublimia' [high above us]. These updatings open the possibility of changing the world that Percy's rise and fall embodied; the (cruel) contemporaneity of these adjustments confronts readers with a *now* that might break free of repetition, a prospect Walsingham himself opened by mining ancient rather than Christian literary models, a shift in monastic histories' common fare.

In the passages from his other chronicles that Walsingham selected for the *Ypodigma Neustriae* the spectre of tragedy shapes not only military losses but also victories. The battle of Agincourt (1415), Henry's most celebrated victory, was acknowledged far and wide as a triumph, marked by poetic as well as civic celebration in song and poetry, including the popular 'Agincourt Carol' praising Henry in liturgical style: 'Deo gracias anglia, / redde pro victoria'.[34] Walsingham's account of Agincourt bristles with

ancient texts, including Virgil, Statius and especially Lucan. These confer rhetorical splendours.[35] But any reader familiar with them might hesitate to read unqualified celebration of war and conquest. To be sure, Walsingham's citations of Virgil support the imperial implications of Henry's venture. Most of the passages from the *Aeneid* invoked to describe the English forces are from the Trojans' final assault on the Latins (*Aeneid*, book 12), while the Virgilian quotations describing the French are drawn from the Greeks' destruction of Troy (*Aeneid*, book 2). Less reassuring are quotations from Statius's *Thebaid*, and, especially, Lucan's *Civil War*. Those from Lucan, the most numerous, are from the ill-omened battle of Pharsalus, whence Walsingham quoted Pompey's speech to attack Caesar's forces – 'Medio posuit deus omnia campo' [God has set all the prizes in the open field][36] – and the response of the two armies 'Utrinque pari procurrent agmina motu' [to rush forward with the same passion].[37] Walsingham left it to readers to recall how those opposing forces of Caesar and Pompey 'Thessaliam Romano sanguine tinxit' [stained Pharsalia with Roman blood] (*BC* 7.473) until 'Nec Fortuna diu rerum tot pondera vertens / Abstulit ingentes fato torrente ruinas' [Fortune, taking little time to work such a mighty reversal, swept away the vast wreck with the flood of doom] (504–5), attracting so many birds of prey that 'super voltus victoris et inpia signa / Aut cruor aut alto defluxit ab aethere tabes, / Membraque deiecit iam lassis unguibus ales' [rotting flesh or drops of blood often fell from the sky upon the face and accursed standards of the conqueror], Caesar (838–40). Walsingham added another Lucan passage for the French king's exhortation to his troops: Pompey's general, Cato, urges his men toward their final campaign in North Africa: 'Ad magnum virtutis opus summosque labores / uadimus in campum' [for a great act of courage and to face extreme difficulties we are moving onto the field].[38] That passage is immediately preceded by lines Walsingham did not quote: 'mea signa secutis / Indomita cervice mori' [they will follow my standard to the death with spirits unsubdued] (*BC* 9.379–80). The desert they enter is filled with venomous snakes.

The backgrounds in these allusions cannot all be operative, but cannot be entirely dismissed. This is clearest when the quotations

from Virgil, Lucan, Persius and others are used to express the passions driving the battle. There the quotations are not ornamental but functional. The battle's outcome is made the result of English outrage against the French when they learn that the French have vowed to 'nemini velle parcere præterquam dominis et regi ipsi; reliquos immisericorditer perempturos, vel membris irrestaurabiliter mutilaturos' [spare no one apart from lords and the king himself; the rest they would mercilessly kill or irrecuperably mutilate][39] whereupon (splicing two lines from Virgil)

> Postera vix summo spargebat lumine montes
> Orta dies, tubo cum sonitum aere canoro
> Increpuit.
>
> [Scarcely had the next day's dawn broken on the mountain-tops]
> [With its light, when the trumpet sounded afar its terrifying blare.][40]

The battle's finale is a bloodbath that occurs when the English remember the French soldiers' vow to kill or mutilate them all, thereupon, 'ut ita fatear' [as I might declare], per Persius, 'turgescit in eis vitria bilis' [a visible bitterness swells up within them],[41] and, per Virgil, 'iraque "vires animumque ministrat"' [anger "provides strength and spirit"].[42] Their rage leads to paroxysms of violence, in which the English snatch axes from the French, who are frozen with fear (per Virgil) and slaughtered like cattle (per Lucan, adapted to prose): 'Perdidit inde modum cædes, et velut nulla secuta est pugna, sed jugulis bellum geritur, nec valent Angli tot prosternere quot perire possunt de adversa parte' [then the slaughter knew no bounds, and what followed was not combat. Rather, the battle that was waged was a carnage, and the English didn't have the strength to cut down as many as could be killed on the enemy side].[43]

The carnage that Walsingham used classical *auctores* to express – the ancient wrath producing slaughter – does not ennoble the view of either side. But it evaded a particular feature found in other narratives. According to many accounts, the turning point in the battle came not from English rage at unchivalrous French but from French terror when Henry ordered all prisoners to be executed. As the prose *Brut* notes,

> Thanne anon þe King lette crye þat euery man scholde sle his
> prysoner þat he hadde take ... Whanne þay say þat our men killyd
> doun her prysoners, þanne withdrow þay ham … and þus our King
> (as a worthi conqueror) hadde þat day þe victory un the ffelde of
> Agyncourt yn Pycardye.[44]

The order to kill the prisoners features in many accounts, with
various degrees of discomfort. One *Brut* states that the English
mistook local citizens watching the battle for French reinforce-
ments, leading to Henry's order: '& þat was a myghty losse to
Engelond, & a gret sorw to Fraunce' (the 'losse' is evidently lost
ransom).[45] The soldier-chronicler John Hardyng, who fought at
Agincourt, described the execution more critically (*c*.1460):

> then came woorde of hoste and enemies,
> For whiche thei slewe all prisoners doune right,
> Sauf dukes and erles in fell and cruell wise.[46]

In an increasingly anti-Lancastrian world, the charge stuck.
Shakespeare's *Henry V* added a response by the Welshman Fluellen:
''tis expressly against the law of arms: 'tis as arrant a piece of
knavery, mark you now, as can be offer't' (IV.7.1–3).

Walsingham's deflection of blame from Henry for this allows
the quotations from Virgil, Statius, Persius and Lucan to express
general passions driving events, the aggression not of the king but
the soldiers. Walsingham thus widened the war's traumas, a struc-
ture of feeling not centred on lordship at all. Walsingham's tragic
vision was politically tactful but also politically revisionist. If even
with Agincourt he reminded his readers of doom that always lurks
in glory, he also glimpsed, in a very dark glass, a social world of
another kind.

Lydgate's endless tragedies

Tragedy is often said to be at the edge of the unspeakable, even
when it is captured or evoked by language: gaps open between what
is known or not known, what is not said or said.[47] Yet the early
twentieth-century editor of Lydgate's 300-plus 'tragedies' in the *Fall
of Princes* (1431–39), Henry Bergen, seemingly faced the opposite

problem: 'The stories of Caesarius, Julia and Agrippa are told at much greater length in Laurence [Lydgate's source]. Had Lydgate not abridged, his work would have been endless.'[48]

Commissioned and regularly prodded by Humfrey, duke of Gloucester, Lydgate's last poem shows he or his patron felt that 'tragedy' was ripe for expansion during the 1420s and 1430s. Partly this manifested Lydgate's claims merely to be continuing the great work of 'My maistir Chaucer, with his fresh comedies, / ... cheeff poete off Breteyne, / That whilom made ful pitous tragedies' (*FP* 1.246–8). But Lydgate presented Chaucer's entire literary production as if it were neatly divided between 'comedies' and 'tragedies'; the latter, Lydgate implied, continued the most august literary lineage, though this merged many kinds of writings and authors:

> Senek in Rome, thoruh his hih prudence,
> Wrot tragedies of gret moralite;
> And Tullius, *cheeff welle off eloquence,   [*chief*
> Maad in his tyme many fressh *dite;   [*poems*
> Franceis Petrak, off Florence the cite,
> Made a book, as I can reherce,
> Off two Fortunys, welful and peruerse (*FP* 1.253–9)

Why Lydgate sought this generic narrowing but quantitative explosion is not clear. Certainly the *Fall of Princes* shows that Gloucester was an involved patron, not always a satisfied one. After presenting tragedies with little comment in book 1, Lydgate's prologue to book 2 states that readers have found their contact with tragedies so far 'a thyng to greuous and to inportable' (2.10): this parallels Chaucer's Knight's interruption of the Monk. Such readers should understand, Lydgate added, that this is not simply a guide 'to teche a-nother what he shal eschewe' (2.30), but also a lesson for learning how to avoid adversities by cultivating personal virtue whatever one's situation:

> Who folweth vertu lengest doth perseuere,
> Be it in richesse, be it in pouerte;
> Liht of trouthe his cleernesse kepith euere
> Ageyn *thassautis of al aduersite. (2.36–9) [*the assaults*

But Lydgate added that he was instructed by Gloucester 'That I sholde in eueri tragedie' attach envoys, to 'sette a remedie' (2.148–51). Readers appalled by the downfalls they read, as Brecht might say, were encouraged to stay tuned.

Gloucester's reaction is understandable, given his own ride on Fortune's wheel. He rose in the 1420 and 1430s after serving as a leading military figure at Harfleur (1415), Agincourt (1415) and Rouen (1418–19), became keeper of the realm at Henry's death, and 'protector' during Henry VI's minority, followed by swift disgrace in the decade while Lydgate was producing his enormous poem. Married scandalously to his lower-estate mistress (later convicted on dubious grounds of necromancy), Gloucester was displaced as 'protector' by his brother John of Bedford and parliament, while the Treaty of Troyes collapsed (1435). Gloucester died, probably assassinated, in 1447; he became the subject of his own 'tragedie' in the sixteenth-century *Mirror for Magistrates* and an eighteenth-century play. His 'tragedye' in the *Mirror* uniquely claims he was decapitated, his headless 'corps throwen vp at Douer vpon the sandes' (460): a direct allusion to Pompey's fate in Lucan, 'Fluminea deformis truncus harena' [[a] headless trunk on the river sands].[49] Whatever the direct ties between all these works, the rise of Lucan was one centre to the enigmatic link between 'history' and 'tragedy' across this key period.

Gloucester's request to 'sette a remedie' did not, in fact, prompt simpler narratives or solutions from Lydgate. If anything, Lydgate turned to more complicated downfalls. If tragedy's utility is to show the causes of disaster, 'the *sources* of particular kinds of error and suffering', as Rowan Williams remarks,[50] Lydgate's narratives ask readers to weigh multiple causes, and to consider consequences wider than any one prince's fall. As for the envoys, these offer *ad hoc* reflections and advice (often enough conflicting), with Stoic acceptance of Fortune balanced by comments on the moral justice of outcomes, leavened by balladic meditations on the falls.[51]

A key instance is Lucan's poem of civil war between Caesar and Pompey, whose causes were multiple:

> Fyr, swerd & hunger caused by the werris,
> Desyr of clymbyng, *froward ambicioun,   [*wilful*

Shewyngh of cometis & of vnkouth sterris,
With pronostikes off ther desercioun,
Werst of alle, wilful dyuysioun
Among hemsilff bi vnwar violence (*FP* 6.2367–72)

This is followed by lurid scenes from Lucan (7.838–40) of Caesar fighting Pompey at Pharsalus, graphic violence that Lydgate would likely not have offered without the mediation of an ancient source. So many birds of prey feasted on the corpses of both sides that

Gobetis of flessh, which foulis dede *arace   [*arise
Fro dede bodies, born up in the hair
Fill from ther *clees vpon Iulius face,   [*claws
Amyd the feeld wher he had his repair,
Made his visage bloodi & nat fair,
Al-be that he to his encres of glorie
Hadde thilke day of Romeyns the victorie. (*FP* 6.2478–85)

Pompey's tragedy reaches its apogee as Caesar gains his 'encres of glorie' under this rain of body parts of friend and foe. The mode of tragedy Lydgate advanced through the Lucan materials avoids issues of guilt and innocence, blending and jettisoning good and evil just as Caesar's victorious face is spattered by the flesh of his own as well as the enemy's soldiers. Pompey's ambition and Caesar's love of glory are suspended in moral value. As for a 'remedy', the tragedy closes with a balladic envoy whose refrain is that 'this tragedie of the duk Pompeie' shows that 'pocessioun take no fors of wrong or riht' (6.2521–48).

What brought Lydgate, monk and prolific religious poet, to this bleak amorality of might over right? His earlier generic experimentation supplies some perspective. Lydgate began producing what can be considered historical tragedies soon after he was noticed by Henry, then crown prince, while Lydgate was at Gloucester College, Oxford (assuming, as is nearly certain, that Lydgate was the 'J. L.' on whose behalf Henry prince wrote in 1409 to Lydgate's abbot at St Edmund's, asking that the student-monk be allowed to continue his studies).[52] Lydgate became Henry's main poetic supporter, stepping into a role Thomas Hoccleve had been forced to abandon after Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes* (1411) showed favour to the prince rather than his father, Henry IV, at an awkward period of conflict

between them, followed by Hoccleve's own mental breakdown.[53] As soon as Hoccleve was sidelined Lydgate began his 30,000-line *Troy Book* – in five books, like Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* – at 4pm on 31 October 1412 (according to his prologue's astronomical dating),[54] and finished it in 1420, near the end of Henry's life. Though a fall, the work glorified the king's mythic lineage, since Aeneas's grandson Brutus, supposed founder of Britain, derived from exiles of Troy. Even in this work, however, Lydgate pondered 'tragedie', describing what he took to be its ancient form of dumbshow accompanying a poet's sad song.[55]

Lydgate followed the *Troy Book* by beginning *The Siege of Thebes*, whose start of 27 April 1421 (also astrologically inscribed) was during a few months when Henry was in England. It was to be Henry's last period there, and unlike the *Troy Book*, the *Siege* carries no dedication. Derek Pearsall argues that since Henry's death (31 August 1422) is not mentioned in the poem, Henry must have been alive through the poem's completion, then Lydgate learned of the king's death before he could present it to him.[56] This is logical, although Lydgate's avoidance of mentioning Henry's death anywhere leaves the dating slightly uncertain, and opens other questions. If Lydgate learned of Henry's death soon after completing the poem, then reconsidered or excised any dedication, the absence of any envoy of lament is noteworthy, especially given the commemorative comments on Chaucer, who 'was, yif I shal not feyne, / Floure of poetes thorghout al Breteyne'.[57]

By their nature, neither of the historical tragedies Lydgate wrote for Henry display optimistic views of lordship or conquest. *The Siege of Thebes* directly contrasts Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, which, following Boccaccio's *Teseida*, refounds Thebes in the aftermath of the devastation that Statius's *Thebaid* charts. To be sure, Lydgate's poem has comic or festive touches. The preface pretends that the work continues Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*; arriving in Canterbury, the Pilgrims meet 'Lydgate / Monk of Bery, nygh fyfty yere of age, / Come to this toune to do my pilgrimage' (*ST* 93–4). His becomes the first and only tale told on the return. But adding the *Siege* to Chaucer's story collection unravels the constructive emphasis of *The Knight's Tale*, which presents Theseus's rebuilding of the world that the siege of Thebes had shattered. Lydgate's

chronological prelude, but narrative afterword, to the *Knight's Tale* would provide readers a darker history than any other *Tale*, concluding Chaucer's entire project in tragedy. The gloom would be lightened only if the reader began again with the *Knight's Tale*, although that would eventually bring the reader back around to Lydgate's *Siege*.

This brilliantly recasts the generic and emotional structure of Chaucer's entire *Canterbury Tales*, undermining the sense of possibilities readers might feel reading that unfinished collection. *The Siege of Thebes* is itself a tragedy in all but name, following Chaucer's formula for that genre as established in *Troilus and Criseyde* and *Monk's Tale*. Invoking the section in which Chaucer's describes *Troilus* as 'litel myn tragedye', including Chaucer's witheringly ironic statement, 'Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love!' (*TC*, V.1786, 1828), Lydgate shows he expanded the genre to encompass war's destruction not of just one person or side but all:

> Lo, her the fyn of contek and debat.
> Lo, her the myght of Mars the *froward sterre.   [*aggressive*
> Lo, what it is for to *gynne a werre.   [*begin*
> How it concludeth ensample ye may se
> First of the Grekys and next of the cyté,
> For *owther parte hath matere to conpleyne.   [*either*
> And in her strif ye may se thyngges *tweyne: [*two*
> The worthy blood of al Grece spilt:
> And Thebes ek, of Amphion first bylt,
> Without *recur brouht unto ruyne … (*ST* 4628–37) [*recovery*

What 'ye may see' – that both sides are destroyed – parallels medieval *accessus* to Lucan's poem, which assert Lucan wrote to 'dissuade the Romans from civil war by showing the misfortunes of both sides'.[58] For all of Lydgate's promises of ultimate peace at the end of the poem, he emphasised Theban and Greek 'ruyne', and his placement of the tale renders Chaucer's entire *Canterbury Tales* a demonstration of Fortune's cruel wheel.

It is fitting for a monk to emphasise penance and 'contempt of the world'. But Lydgate might have been more aware than Walsingham (who died in late 1422) of crises looming over England's military adventures. Although Henry's successes at Agincourt and Rouen

led to the treaty at Troyes, a series of shocks soon followed. The treaty, designating Henry V and his heirs as heirs to the French crown upon Charles VI's death and promising 'concordia, pax, et tranquilitas' [concord, peace, and tranquillity] between France and England, seems echoed in the *Siege*'s closing utopian prophecy that war would end and 'love and pees in hertys shal awake' (4698). But English fortunes soon took a series of downward turns. On 3 April 1421, less than a month before Lydgate began the *Siege*, Henry, having returned to England in February after three years of fighting in France, learned that his brother, Thomas of Clarence, heir to the throne after Henry and key to English success, had been killed at Beaugé, Anjou, in a rash attack on a larger Franco-Scottish army; also killed was Gilbert Umfraville, Henry's close associate, and other knights. Henry received the news in Yorkshire and left for Lincoln 15 April, making a series of stops in East Anglia before reaching Westminster, where he called a parliament to ratify the Treaty of Troyes and secure what was now a much less certain victory amid a more vulnerable English succession, focused on an infant son. During the parliament, Henry was confronted by the treasurer with enormous overdue bills; less than three weeks after parliament was dissolved, on 23 May 1421, Henry returned to France to try to rescue the situation, during which efforts he unexpectedly died the following year.[59]

Lydgate was certainly aware of these events while he prepared his poem for circulation. He began the *Siege* during Henry's brief period in England; Lydgate might even have received a commission when Henry, learning of his brother's death, journeyed from Norwich to Westminster for parliament in late April (Bury is halfway between the two cities). The absence of any lament for Henry in Lydgate suggests a challenge that even tragedy could not meet, paralleling Walsingham's evasion of the prisoners' execution. Lydgate mentioned Henry in the past tense just once, in the 'Mumming at London', where, as Maura Nolan observes, Lydgate with no sign of irony presented Henry as a victor over Fortune: he 'putte Fortune vnder foote'.[60] For Nolan, Henry's awkwardly implied death there, like Lydgate's prose *Serpent of Division* which summarises the disaster of Lucan's *Civil War* (and which might also have been written shortly after Henry's death), indicate that

'tragedy' for Lydgate ultimately entailed a confrontation with the 'the problem of contingency': 'the 'unwar strook' that shatters historical causality and violently creates the space for new forms with which to organise catastrophic experience'.[61]

Lydgate's silences are indeed as notable as his plenitude. To be sure, he generally avoided applying 'tragedie' to contemporary figures, a constraint abandoned by the time of the *Mirror of Magistrates*. Lydgate showed the way, however, in his brief *Of the Sodein Fal of Princes in Oure Dayes*.[62] This features seven recent 'falls' in rhyme-royal stanzas, in the manner of the 'modern instances' of Chaucer's Monk (VI.2375–460); here Lydgate surveys fourteenth-and fifteenth-century English and French kings and royalty who were murdered, went insane, or were otherwise dishonoured, from Edward II to Richard II to John ('the fearless') duke of Burgundy and Charles VI ('the mad') of France, whose death in October 1422 triggered the ascent to the French throne of Henry VI, providing the poem's earliest date. This is in effect a rogues' gallery of the regal figures whose lives, marriages and deaths drove the Hundred Years War. The portraits offer few comforts, starting with Edward II:

> so governed was he, nowe vnderstonde,
> By suche as caused foule his vndoying,
> For trewly to telle yowe with-oute *lesing,   [*lying*
> He was deposed by al þe *rewmes assent,   [*realm's*
> In prisoun murdred with a *broche in his
>   *foundament.   (1–7) [*spear*; *anus*

Dating all this after October 1422 makes the poem's silence about Henry V's 'sodein fal' in August – Fortune's cruellest blow – too striking to be accidental. Perhaps Lydgate's survey of ill-fated kings implied Henry's contrasting glory. As with the absence of a dedication in the *Siege of Thebes*, and as with Thomas Walsingham's apparent completion of the *Ypodigma Neustriae* shortly after the death of the king which that work grandiloquently addresses, such silences suggest a structure of feeling that could not be fully articulated. Public decorum might explain this, and Walsingham might himself have died too soon to make other revisions, but Lydgate's sustained silence on Henry's death suggests

something more. It might be understood not just as shock from the fall of a particularly powerful and glory-seeking king but a regrouping of views on kingship and lordship as such, in a society increasingly operating on quite different terms. When lordly conquests and disasters shook the burgeoning 'common weal' (an increasingly prevalent notion),[63] silence was a telling response.

But if selective silence was one feature of tragedy in this period, copiousness was another. Like Walsingham's 'infinite tragedies', the disasters of lordship fill Lydgate's poetry with endless downfalls, each promising further perspectives on causes and outcomes. Narrating tragedies may, as Rowan Williams argues, provide some control over catastrophe by mere expression.[64] But during the period of tragedy's widespread re-emergence, the silences, deflections and infinite repetitions suggest an equally recurrent principle: tragedy's endless confrontations with history that even brilliant expansions of the genre cannot master.

Notes

1 Hegel, *Lectures on Fine Art*, vol. 2, 1102–1205.
2 Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*; Wallace, *Tragedy Since 9/11*.
3 Williams, *Modern Tragedy*, esp. 87–105.
4 Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 140; Kelly, *Ideas*, 42–3; Cadman et al., *Genres of Renaissance Tragedy*, 1.
5 Symes, 'Tragedy of the Middle Ages', 353.
6 John of Garland, *Parisiana Poetria*, 137–54.
7 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 146.
8 Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, 69–72: see London, BL Harley MS 1766, images at www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8737. Nolan, *John Lydgate*, treats Lydgate's idea of 'tragedy' in relation to his ideas of contingency, as noted below. Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 68–120, presents the most conceptually ambitious revisiting of 'tragedy' across Farnham's span, in a politically acute account that in effect recasts Farnham's dialectic of 'contempt' and 'espousal' into 'chivalric' and 'clerical' approaches to Trojan and other antique focuses for tragedy. Over this distinction Simpson plots 'historical' vs 'literary', 'genealogical' vs 'analogical' and 'imperialist' vs 'anti-imperialist' dichotomies in late medieval presentations of ancient 'falls';

Simpson further argues that medieval anti-imperialist 'literary' presentations were eventually displaced by imperialist views in Renaissance epic. While these focuses are valuably clear for pursuing the shifting ideologies across this span, the present chapter finds fewer tidy dichotomies, not only between 'historical / genealogical / imperialist' vs 'literary / analogical / anti-imperialist', but also between poets and historians, not least when they used similar concepts of 'tragedy'. Yet as will be clear, the results here endorse the general aptness of the ideologies Simpson identifies, while adding focuses he does not consider, especially what might be called a principle of complicity (which I take to be crucial to 'tragedy'), and of ideological multivalence, both of which contribute, I would argue, to the genre's dynamism and its changes in the Renaissance. For a less thematically dichotomised updating of the Farnhamian trajectory from medieval 'falls' to Renaissance 'tragedy', emphasising the growing importance of classical models, see Bushnell, 'Classical and Medieval Roots'.

9 Chaucer, *Riverside Chaucer*: *Troilus and Criseyde* (*TC*), V.1786; on *TC* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 61, see https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/dh967mz5785.

10 Symes, 'Tragedy of the Middle Ages', 356.

11 Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 45–50.

12 See especially Perry, 'Lydgate's *Danse Macabre*'.

13 See Galloway, "Vertu to purchace".

14 See Bailey, *Decline of Serfdom*.

15 Walsingham, *St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica majora* (*CM*), vol. 1, xx.

16 Clark, *Monastic Renaissance*.

17 Clark, *Monastic Renaissance*, 22, 89–90; see BL MS Cotton Nero D VII, images at www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Nero_D_VII.

18 Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 46–50.

19 BL Harley MS 2693, fols 131–202v (Terence at fos 155v–162, Lucan at fols 163–8, Seneca at fols 178–201v). Excerpts are translated in Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 47–9, and Federico, *Classicist Writings*, 28–48.

20 BL Harley MS 2693, fol. 178; Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 48–9.

21 *CM*, vol. 1, 410–563, at 478 and 504; Walsingham, *Ypodigma Neustriae* (*YN*), 335. I have adjusted the nineteenth-century editor's punctuation; translations are mine.

22 Walsingham, *Gesta abbatum* (*GA),* 285–372; trans. in Walsingham, *Deeds of the Abbots*.

23 *CM*, vol. 1, 412; *GA*, 306–29.

24 See Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*; Galloway, 'Making History Legal', 31–9; Prendergast, 'Writing in the Tragic Mode'.
25 Federico, *Classicist Writings*, 166.
26 Federico, *Classicist Writings*, 166.
27 William of Jumièges et al., *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, vol. 1, 22–3.
28 Boccaccio, *De casibus*, book 1, fol. VIIv, s.v. 'Adversus nimiam credulitatem'. See Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 23–4.
29 *CM*, vol. 2, 533 (translation modified).
30 Sanford, 'Manuscripts of Lucan', 285; see also Sanford, 'Quotations from Lucan'.
31 Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 195–205; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, 18.44. See Kelly, *Ideas*, 63–4, 40–50.
32 Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, 79.
33 Trans. Nevitt and Pollard, *Reader in Tragedy*, 182; for full text but a less literal translation, see Hegel, *Lectures on Fine Art*, vol. 2, 1198.
34 'England, thank God for victory': *Historical Poems*, ed. Robbins, 91–2. See Curry, *Agincourt*.
35 *YN*, 464–7; *CM*, vol. 2, 674–82 (which edition presents more accurate citations of the allusions than Riley's).
36 Lucan, *De bello civile* [hereafter *BC*], 7.348; *YN* 465.
37 *BC* 7.385; *YN* 464.
38 *BC* 9.381–2; *YN* 465.
39 *YN* 463.
40 *Aeneid* 12.113–14; 9.503; *YN* 464.
41 *Satires* 3.8.
42 *Aeneid* 9.764; *YN* 465.
43 *YN* 466; cf. *BC* 7.532–5.
44 *Brut*, 379.
45 *Brut*, 597.
46 Hardyng, *Chronicle*, ed. Ellis, chapter 214, 375 (unlineated).
47 Williams, *Tragic Imagination*, 1–2, 30–55.
48 Lydgate, *Fall of Princes* (hereafter *FP*), vol. 4, 273, note to 7.8.
49 *BC* 1.685. See Harriss, 'Humphrey duke of Gloucester'; *Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. Campbell, 445–60; Philips, *Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester*.
50 Williams, *Tragic Imagination*, 76.
51 See Mortimer, *Fall of Princes*, 58–60; Nolan, 'Lydgate's Literary History', 73–4, 85–7.
52 Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, 15–16.
53 Pearsall, 'Hoccleve's *Regement*'.
54 Lydgate, *Troy Book* (hereafter *TB*), Prol. 125–46.

55 *TB* 2.862–916; Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy*, 152–3.
56 Pearsall, *Bio-bibliography*, 22.
57 Lydgate, *Siege of Thebes* (hereafter *ST*), 39–40.
58 Sanford, 'Manuscripts of Lucan', 283.
59 Allmand, *Henry V*, 158–62.
60 'Mumming at London', 276, in Lydgate, *Minor Poems*, vol. 2, 682–91.
61 Nolan, *John Lydgate*, 171; on *Serpent* see also Galloway, 'John Lydgate'.
62 Lydgate, *Minor Poems*, vol. 2, 660–1.
63 Watts, 'Ideas, Principles and Politics'.
64 Williams, *Tragic Imagination*, 1–3.