

SMELLS LIKE TEAM SPIRIT:

SENECA AND THE SHIRLEY-STANLEY CIRCLE¹

Teresa Grant

University of Warwick

34

Ea Philosophiae vis est, ut non solum studentes, sed etiam conversantes juvet.

[Such is the power of Philosophie, that shee not onely helpeth those that studie the same, but those also which frequent her].

Epistle 8, translated by Thomas Lodge (2: 442)

So runs the epitaph to Charles Cotton's translation of Guillaume du Vair's *Morall Philosophy of the Stoics*, published in 1664 but executed (apparently at the behest of his father) in 1656. Seneca (in Thomas Lodge's translation) continues: 'He that commeth into the Sunne, shalle be Sunne-Burnt, although he came not to that end. They that sit downe in a perfumers shop, and have stayed a while therein, beare away with them the odour of such a place' (Lodge 2: 442).² And this seems to be true, since Cotton was not the only member of his literary circle to engage with Senecan material, as part of the wave of neo-stoicism which swept over early modern Europe, especially after the publication of Justus Lipsius's *Manuductio ad Stoicam Philosophiam* (1604) (Kraye, 'Conceptions' 1286).³ Edward Sherburne translated Seneca's *Medea* and *De Providentia* in 1648 and dedicated the latter to the beleaguered king; Thomas Stanley's *History of Philosophy* (1655-62) contains a long complimentary account of Stoic precepts; the playwright James Shirley's *The Cardinal* (1641), situated at the end of the early modern tradition of revenge tragedy, harks back to Seneca's bloody dramas in the very different political circumstances leading up to the fall of Archbishop Laud.⁴ And Cotton himself, of course, was to return to Stoicism when he translated Montaigne's *Essays* (1685). All of these men were associated with the poet and literary patron Thomas Stanley's secret society called the Order of the Black Riband, in which sympathizers of the king in his distress indicated their continued loyalty by a symbolic ribbon of mourning worn on the arm.⁵

This is an investigation of how the odour of Seneca clung to the works of the mainly Royalist poets and translators of the Shirley-Stanley Circle in the years immediately following King Charles's capture in 1648.⁶ The essay will focus on the ways in which Senecan thought was used by the circle to reinforce their friendships and sketch out a way of living under tyranny which was both bearable and honourable, themes which recur in Royalist poetry of the time.⁷ It will culminate in a discussion of the translation of Seneca's *Hippolitus* (1651) by the little-known poet Edmund Prestwich whose prefatory material ties together higher profile members of the Stanley circle with other literary and public figures, links which serve to expand the scope of recent work by James Loxley, Nicholas MacDowell and Stella Revard on literary communities during the interregnum. Prestwich's translation was, I will suggest, an attempt to join the select Stanley circle by following their established practice of harnessing Seneca as solace in the claustrophobic and dangerous world of the Commonwealth, where Royalists had been exiled either from their country or from their friends by the exigencies of regime change.⁸ These writers used Seneca to understand, enable and justify a coherent way of existing under tyranny, just as Seneca had tried to do in the first century AD.

35

SENECA IN THE ENGLISH LITERARY TRADITION

First of all, it is important to set the Senecan encounters and translations of these disenfranchised Royalists in a wider literary context. In some sense there was little need for translations of his works, since Thomas Newton's 1581 *Tenne Tragedies* and Thomas Lodge's prose *Works* (1614) provided the interested reader with a compendious opportunity to read Seneca in English. Some encouragement would have been offered by Thomas Farnaby's new annotated Latin text of the *Tragedies* (1613) which had been constantly reprinted (in 1624, 1634 and 1659) proving that it was both available and very popular (see Mayer 168-70). Farnaby had been—and this is no coincidence—Edward Sherburne's schoolmaster. The old-fashioned translations in *Tenne Tragedies* must have seemed to be crying out for modernisation. Since the publication of Lodge's edition, Sir Ralph Freeman, the Royalist Master of the Mint for both Charles I and II, had printed translations of *Ad Marciam*, *De consolatione* (1635) and *De Brevitate Vitæ* (1636), but it is the efflorescence of Seneca translation after 1648 which proves that it was particularly attractive to defeated Royalists, and that there was a commercial market for it.⁹

Humphrey Moseley, the Royalist bookseller, issued Edward Sherburne's two Senecan works in 1648, and Thomas Harper, responsible for Ralph Freeman's Senecan drama *Imperiale* (1655), published two more of Freeman's translations, anonymised, *Seneca, his first book of clemency* (1653) and *Twenty and two epistles* (1654). Freeman was exiled in 1651 and therefore was 'out of town' as the errata list in *Twenty and two epistles* charmingly puts it (Freeman 87). David Scott Kastan credits Moseley

with the ‘invention of English literature’ in that he was the first person ‘to make it vendible and thus available to a broad community of readers’ (124). Other critics have noted that Moseley’s publication strategy in the Commonwealth was based on a re-creation of a pre-Civil War manuscript culture where his focus on author sought to build a community of ‘friends’ whose intellectual closeness was created by ‘sociable Pocket-books’ (Kewes 5; Loxley, *Royalism* 233).¹⁰ Kewes argues that Moseley’s new octavos were aimed at cash-strapped Cavaliers who could no longer afford folio editions of plays, a point about price that Moseley himself made explicitly in his preface to William Cartwright’s *Works* (1651) (Robinson 373). I would go further and suggest that the centrality of the author in the octavo collections—they included portraits and a significant amount of author-centred paratextual material—encouraged the reader to continue to follow and support the Royalist literary tradition in his study, by establishing a pantheon of classics to collect during the time of trial and creating an unbroken literary succession for when rescue from the Commonwealth finally

36 came. The banning of public theatre encouraged the emergence of ‘the drama as a literary genre to be consumed in books’, serving and feeding nostalgia for 1620s and 30s theatre (Robinson 272–3). A virtual literary culture based on shared reading was the best alternative to the many forced by circumstance to remain at great distance from their friends, and printing explicitly Royalist preliminary material in these books also made them exercises in propaganda (Barnard 8). So—though the Black Ribands did manage a large measure of physical proximity, thanks to Thomas Stanley’s un-sequestered fortune—the creation of this literary culture relied on print as the only way of reaching a critical mass of exiled, ruined, imprisoned or dispossessed cavaliers. The literary endeavours of the Stanley circle, especially those of translation, sought to foster the continuity of this Royalist literary tradition by instituting themselves as its torch-bearers ‘distill[ing]’ Seneca and ‘entertain[ing]’ French and Italian poets (Stanley, *Poems* 364). The very identification of material worthy of attention was in itself a way of creating a literary pantheon, but also implicated the translators genealogically in the tradition, fixing them, as well as their sources, as substantive interventions in it. By choosing to translate Seneca, Royalist writers claimed him as their own, at the same time as they staked their claim as heir to his literary and philosophical reputation.

A ‘WEAK REFLEX’: SHERBURNE’S SENECA AS A MIRROR OF ‘OUR TIMES’

The story starts with the surrender of Oxford to parliamentary forces on June 24 1646 at the end of the first civil war. Seeing the King and all his party ‘reduc’d to more then Syllæan Calamities, Proscriptions & Ruines’, a young ordnance officer by the name of Edward Sherburne turned ‘for my Diversion to...this Peece of Seneca’s *Of the Sufferings of Good Men*’ (van Beeck [ed.] xxvii). Using his books as a ‘kind of Levamina

of my Private Troubles under those of the Publicque', he travelled to London to stay in the Middle Temple, hang out with his cousin Thomas Stanley and translate Seneca. Sherburne was one of the key members of the Order of the Black Riband, very close to Stanley by 'the double Ty of Sympathy and Blood' (Stanley, *Poems* 363). Sherburne's *Poems and Translations Amorous, Lusory, Morall, Divine* (1651) are mostly translations and imitations of classical and continental poetry, and as such they give a good flavour of the kind of reading and writing considered important within the Stanley circle (see Revard 159 ff.). His *Medea* and *Seneca's Answer to Lucilius his quaere* (a translation of *De Providentia*), were both published by Humphrey Moseley in 1648 after which Sherburne retired to Stanley's country estates to mourn the King's death. With the Restoration Sherburne reclaimed his position in the office of the ordnance, converted to Rome (and was deprived of his office in 1688 for that reason), then translated, *inter alia*, more Seneca (*Phaedra* and *Troades*) which he published in collection with *Medea* in 1702 (Quehen).

Revard notes that the translations from classical and modern languages which were made by the poets of the Stanley circle intersect, interrelate and compete. She is right to suggest that this is no accident, 'but must have been part of a deliberate program of collaboration' (159). Specific mention is made in Stanley's poem 'A Register of Friends' of Sherburne's translations from Seneca, and Stanley reads them in the way we might expect: 'Thy share in publick griefs thou didst allay / By Conversation then with Seneca' (Stanley, *Poems* 363).¹¹ Seneca is a balm for the soul. And when Charles has been executed Sherburne retreats: 'withdraws from thence [London], an air / More innocent choosing with me to share' (364). In their retirement (on the Senecan model), they entertain the French and Italian poets and 'lest such strangers should converse alone' Sherburne 'civilly mix[es] with their songs [his] own' (364).

The *scelus alternum*, where past times and crimes are revisited upon subsequent generations—a central Senecan trope—is commented upon in the commendatory verses for Sherburne's translation of *Medea* (1648). Thomas Stanley's 'To my Honoured Friend' makes mention of the change of language, 'though in a strange, no lesse becoming dress' (*Medea* A3r). And the violence, the 'Horror', of Senecan drama is posited against the present conditions in Britain:

And [Cruelty's] revenge [thou] did'st rob of half its pride,
To see it self thus by it self outvi'd,
That boldest Ages past may say, our times
Can speak, as well as act their highest Crimes. (A3r)

His next literary effort, *Seneca's Answer to Lucilius his quaere*, was dedicated to King Charles, for the very specific reasons that he lays out in the preface to the book:

I...assume the humble boldnesse to think that this Peece of Seneca of The Sufferings of Good Men, might at this time be made a pardonable, (I durst not thinke it a suitable) Present for Your Majesties view; wherein as by a weake Reflex, Your Majesty may perceive a glympse of Your own invincible Patience, and inimitable Magnamity;...in bearing and ever-mastering Mis-fortunes. (*Seneca's Answer* A3r)¹²

Sherburne makes the point also that the physical book has taken the place of normal social interaction: because he cannot obey Charles' commands (since Charles cannot give any, being, at this time, imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle), Sherburne presumes '(though by so mean a Demonstration) to shew Your Majesty that yet I have a Will to serve You' (A3v). The giving of the translation becomes a substitute for the loyalty Sherburne, and his circle, would deliver if they could. For them, Charles's behaviour, his fortitude, his example, out-Seneca Seneca: 'How farre beyond what now it hath, had the Divine Pencill of Seneca set off this darke-shadowed Tablet, had he liv'd in these Times to have heightned it with the lustre of Your Majesties Example!' (A3r). This last comment—a comparison between Neronian Rome and Commonwealth Britain—is the essence of the Royalist use of Seneca. Sherburne's address to the reader makes explicit the application of Seneca's philosophy to the present tribulations: 'how suitable this Peece may seeme to the present Condition of divers Good Men, honest and loyall Sufferers in these bad Times [t]he subject matter thereof will clearly evi-

38 dence' (A4v). Sherburne does ask the reader to bear with Seneca if he speaks like 'a Stoick or a Roman' but promises that the precepts gained from the book will teach the reader 'to doe like a Christian' (A4v). He creates a community with his readers too: his pleasure in translating, 'not an unpleasing Divertisement', he hopes will prove true also in the reading. Interestingly, Sherburne is aware of an existing tradition of Senecan translation. His 'To the Reader' starts, 'That Verse is no mis-becoming Attire for the grave Moralls of Seneca, is manifest by the late Example of a Worthy Pen' (A4v), and a marginal note refers the reader to 'His Consolation to Marcia translated into Verse by Sr. R.F.' Sherburne was to remember this influence as late as 1681 in a letter to Antony Wood when he attributed his 'Attempt of rendring it into English Verse,' to have been 'induc'd...by the Laudable Example of my sometime truly Honourable Friend Sr Ralph Freeman Knt in his like Version of his Consolation to Marcia' (qtd. in van Beeck [ed.] xxvii).¹³ So not only is the transaction of translating, publishing and perusing Seneca in English a corporate endeavour for the Stanley circle, it also engages in metatextual discourse with previous translators (in this case, Sir Ralph Freeman) and with Seneca himself, just as he did in his turn with Virgil and Ovid.

A PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY OF FRIENDSHIP: STANLEY AND SENECA

The two main direct sources of information about the Stanley circle are Stanley's own manuscript poem, 'A Register of Friends' (c. 1675) and what McDowell calls 'cryptic poems on the topic' of the Order of the Black Riband by James Shirley and John Hall (McDowell, 'Reviving' 948). The 'Register' lists nine of Stanley's friends in the order the friendships were made, describes the mutual experiences and celebrates their public successes. Stress is laid on the shared discourse, the fellow feeling, of a

'Society' very much in keeping with the model Seneca suggests in Epistle CIX 'On the Fellowship of Wise Men', where they offer reciprocal aid in the proper exercise of their virtues, 'For even in the case of the wise man something will always remain to discover, something towards which his mind may make new ventures' (*Ep. CIX*; Gummere 3:255).¹⁴ Stanley's narrative makes explicit the trope of retirement in the face of tyranny, of the wounds of civil war and the loss of the age of innocence. His description of his relationship with Fairfax (his tutor)—'what before Instruction us'd to be /Grew by degrees into Society'—points to the aim of the Order of the Black Riband, friendship productive of mutual support and learning. Stanley's bond with his uncle, William Hammond, whose 'Magnetic Letters' (he was a Greek scholar) first drew Stanley to him is described as so mutual, so evenly matched, that when parted they react 'with equall grief', to 'wail the fury of unruly times' alike though under 'different climes' (Stanley, *Poems* 356). His celebration of friendship with Sherburne is in the same vein:

By fortune our acquaintance there begot;
Confirm'd by choice, up into friendship shot;
Our willing spirits quickly understood
The double Ty of Sympathy and Blood. (363)

39

Perhaps the most compelling evidence of the purpose of the society—retrospective though it is since Stanley wrote the 'Register' after the Restoration—is his paean to friendship which is the peroration of the poem:

O Friendship, sacred friendship! then our sight
More dear, and farr more cheerfull then the light;
Grief into easy shares thou dost divide,
And Joies are by the union Multiply'd;
The dross of souls is by thy fire Calcin'd
And passions into vertues are refin'd
Which, better'd mutually by kind remove,
Like fruits engrafted on new stocks, improve. (366)

Seneca's exploration of the value of the company of wise men is similarly inflected—the wise man relies upon others to keep him sharply virtuous. Indeed for Seneca, 'Adice nunc, quod omnibus inter se virtutibus amicitia est' (Moreover, there is a sort of mutual friendship among all the virtues)—a kind of Order of the Black Riband for them as well (*Ep. CIX*; Gummere 3:358-9).

Of course, the echoes in the 'Register' do not prove Stanley's familiarity with Seneca's Latin, nor even with a translation, the most readily available of which would have been Thomas Lodge's 1614 translation of Justus Lipsius's edition, *Opera, quæ extant omnia* (Antwerp, 1605). But we would expect a man of Stanley's time, class and education to read Seneca in the original and manuscript evidence supports this. His translation and versification of a short passage, 'Seneca: No other refuge left to fly' appears in the Cambridge University MS of 'Poems and Translations, 1646', but not in the printed 'Poems' of 1647-8:

Non est aliud effugium necessitatis quam velle quod ipsa cogat, laeto animo ferre quic
quid acciderit quasi tibi volueris accidere, debuisses enim velle si scisses ex decreto Dei
fieri.

No other refuge left to fly,
The lawes of strict necessity
Then cheerfully to entertaine
What she commands us to sustaine;
Beneath each crosse with joy to bow
As if thou wouldst it had bin so;
Nor canst thou wish it altd be
Whats heavens immutable decree;
In miseries thus win the field,
They onely fate orecome that yield. (Stanley, *Poems* 334-5)

40

Without the benefit of internet search engines, Stanley's editor Galbraith Crump was forced to admit that although Stanley himself attributed the lines to Seneca, he was unable to locate them. They are, in fact, a mash-up of a section of *Quaestiones Naturales* with an emblem that Jacob Cats attributed to Seneca in his *Sinne en Minnebeelden* (1627), though Stanley transposes some of the words and omits a couple. Stanley's opening phrase, 'Non...cogat', reads in Cats' emblem book, 'Necessitatis non aliud effugium est, quam velle, quod ipsa cogit' (Cats 119). The rest of the Latin phrase seems to be taken from Justus Lipsius's edition of *Quaestiones Naturales* with minor alterations: 'Posse laeto animo adversa tolerare; quidquid acciderit, sic ferre, quasi tibi volueris accidere. Debuisses enim velle, si scisses omnia ex decreto Dei fieri' (Lipsius 708). I suppose we cannot rule out the possibility of a third combined source from whom Stanley was quoting directly and correctly, but the likelihood is that Stanley had access to Cats and to Lipsius's Latin *Opera* (1605), or one of its several reprints.

Stanley's later *The History of Philosophy* (1655-62) has marginal annotations which reveal a familiarity with *Quaestiones Naturales*, *De Benefiis*, *De Ira*, and with the *Epistles*, specifically I, IX, XIV, XIX and LXXXIX. Ralph Freeman's 1654 translation of *Twenty and two epistles* contains I-XX (and XXVI and XLI) which might be a reason for Stanley's evident familiarity with the letters early in the sequence, to which he includes multiple references. Revard's description of the *modus operandi* of the coterie—that the members competed with and commented upon each others' work—suggests Stanley's engagement with Senecan material, at least through reading Sherburne's two translations since, of course, we have seen that Stanley wrote a preface to the *Medea*. The connections of his coterie would have offered him the opportunity to expand the range of his Senecan engagement by reading Prestwich's *Hippolitus* and Freeman's *Epistles*. Ralph Freeman's translation of the letters starts at their beginning. It also includes XLI 'On the God Within Us' presumably because it is, famously, the most 'Christian' of the letters. The contents of the other additional letter are absolutely consonant with the spirit of Freeman's times. XXVI 'Of Old Age and Death' speaks as much for those in times of civil war as it does for those of

advancing years:

Who to die does know,
Knows not to serve: he ore all power prevailes,
At least is out of it. What then are Jailes
To him; or hideous dungeons which do more
Afflict? he alwayes findes an open door. (Freeman 82-3)¹⁵

It is most instructive to learn that Stanley, the author of the 'Register of Friends', knew well particularly letters IX 'On Philosophy and Friendship' and XIV 'On the Reasons for Withdrawing from the World', since these letters provide counsel for coping in the new dispensation of Royalist dispossession. Letter IX advises Lucilius that those who make friends in order to ensure themselves someone to bail them out of prison or sit by their sick bed are making a bargain rather than a friendship, and that such fair-weather friendships never pay out. Seneca urges friendship for its own sake, that the purpose of making a man a friend is

because that I
May then have one with whom I'de wish to die;
Or else accompany to banishment:
Or with mine owne I may his death prevent (Freeman 29).¹⁶

It is the friendship which is valuable rather than the friend, since Stoics are self-sufficient, deeming 'nothing good that ever can forsake us' (Freeman 32): 'They are contented with themselves, and bound / Their whole felicitie within that ground' (33).¹⁷ For a Royalist in the darkest hour, this offers a paradigm of virtuous living, and by application to the present times, perhaps an un-Stoic hope for the future:

we may that man admire
Much more whose constant virtue him affords
A safe, and secure passage both through swords,
Ruin, and flames. Dost thou not plainely see
How much 'tis easier to get victory
Ore a whole nation, than one man alone? (Freeman 33).¹⁸

Royalism is down, but not out.

Letter XIV advises the wise man that withdrawal from the world is prudence (not cowardice). Seneca realises that fear of pain or death of the physical body can mean that virtue is held cheap, but argues that the fear of 'all the ill that growes / From an offended power' (Freeman 49) so oversets us that we should make every attempt to avoid provoking those in power:

Heer's the condition of a wiseman, hee
Avoyds the place that dangerous may be;
But with this caution, not to have it thought
He does avoyd it. Safety much is wrought
By seeming not to seeke it purposely,
For we accuse the power that we doe flie (Freeman 51).¹⁹

Seneca urges a retreat into philosophy, and pertinently for Stanley, discusses the usefulness of Cato's intervention into the Caesar/Pompey power struggle. Seneca thinks Cato unwise to have tried to check the civil war:

It is a question whether it were fit
For a wiseman then at the helme to sit.
What meanst thou Marcus Cato? the contest
Is not for liberty, that was suppress
Long since: the strife is whether now
We shall to Cesar or to Pompey bow (Freeman 52-3).²⁰

This letter argues, then, powerfully for non-engagement, Stanley's own mode of existing under civil war and tyranny, with Seneca recommending that

I bid thee looke upon
Those, who from publicke businesses have gon
To order their own lives: and without awe

42 Of power, to bring mankind to reasons law (Freeman 53).²¹

For Seneca this is effected by philosophy, for Stanley by the power of poetry.

JOINING THE BLACK RIBANDS: A VENN DIAGRAM?

Our next translator, Edmund Prestwich, is a very minor figure with some famous—if disempowered—friends, who wrote prefatory verses for one of his two publications. *Hippolitus translated out of Seneca by Edmund Prestwich; together with divers other poems of the same authors* (1651) contains laudatory poems by James Shirley the playwright, Charles Cotton Junior, Cromwell Stanhope (a cousin of both Cotton and of Sir Aston Cokayn), and Matthew Carter, the Royalist Army officer who gained brief but bright fame in the wake of the publication of his eye-witness account of the siege of Colchester in 1648. Less secure identification can be made of the remaining contributors—Richard Rogers, probably the father-in-law of Charles Cavendish, Viscount Mansfield (the Marquess of Newcastle's son) and Edward Williams, possibly the author of *Virgo Triumphans* (1650). The significant value of Prestwich's publication is the information that this extensive prefatory material provides. This was intended, of course, to introduce a new author to his public by offering the support of greater men, so the modesty *topoi* of the young author are there: he stresses that this is his first attempt, he hopes the critics' censures will be prompted by 'pitty, or a Fatherly affection' and 'will esteem it a small peece of friendship to stop my wild carreere, my foot being upon so dangerous a Praecipice' (E. Prestwich A4r) if the work is no good. But the paratexts tell a wider story too, of friendship in the early 1650s which links those known members of the Black Ribands with other writers, such as Sir Aston Cokayn, and with Royalist soldiers famous and ordinary.

James Loxley has rightly warned of the dangers of blindly associating poets with

each other by extrapolating from known coteries, and urges instead that we think ‘less circumferentially’ (Loxley, ‘Echoes’ 171-2). But we can definitely link Sherburne and Edmund Prestwich, as Loxley does, through the patronage relationships of James Shirley who wrote the first of the prefatory poems at the front of *Hippolitus*. Loxley (‘Echoes’ 172) notes that dedicatory material adds Charles Cotton to the Stanley circle, something reinforced by Cotton’s poem printed next to Shirley’s in preface to Prestwich’s first publication. It is worthwhile nonetheless to chase a little further these ‘paratactic and porous groupings of acquaintance and affiliation’ (Loxley, ‘Echoes’ 172), if only because it can help to identify the lost and forgotten author. Noel Malcolm has identified Prestwich as a student at Brasenose in 1642 by his association with Charles Cotton and Cotton’s tutor Ralph Rawson, who was ejected from his fellowship there in 1648, together with the other Royalist fellows (246). Cotton is also the link to Cromwell Stanhope (his cousin), who provided the third commendatory poem for Prestwich’s publication. Indeed, Cotton’s influence on the volume seems to have been profound, enough to suggest that he, not Shirley, may have been the power behind Prestwich’s pen. Cotton’s increasing importance as a literary power-broker may have derived from his father’s friendships with famous authors of the past age, but as the 1650s went on it was his personal connections and capacities which perpetuated this. His relationship—as ‘adopted son’—with Sir Izaak Walton is well-known, and he also seems to have been the lynchpin in the familial patronage which extended to his Stanhope and Cokayn cousins (Martin). He lent his library freely to Sir Aston Cokayn, for instance, giving him access to his collection of Italian histories—Davila’s *Istoria*, Bentivoglio’s *Della Guerra di Fiandra*, Guicciardini and Machiavelli—in the original (Cokayn 131-2). The prefatory material in *Lachrymae Musarum* (1649), the poetic elegies on the death of Henry Hastings (1630-49), reinforces these circumferential connections, formed by familial and political proximity: it contains poems by (amongst others) Cotton, Cokayn, Herrick, John Hall, Marvell, Dryden, and Alexander and Richard Brome (see McDowell, *Poetry* 29-30).²² As well as the links fostered by the Order of the Black Riband (which initially included John Hall and Andrew Marvell), there are blood ties between the Cokayns, the Cottons and the Hastings.²³ All commentators on the essentially secret Order of the Black Riband have noted the difficulties in identifying its members, so perhaps it would be more useful to think of these friendship groups as overlapping circles, a kind of Venn diagram of poetic association. Furthermore, as Susan A. Clarke has argued of the Stanley and Phillips circles, the insistence of these coteries on their mutual exclusivity was effectively a literary fiction because the Cavaliers, a relatively small group, naturally gravitated towards each other during the Interregnum.

According to Sir Aston Cokayn, an informative epigrammist in that most sociable of genres, the relationship between the four Stanhope brothers offered an epitome of friendship, which extended to others of their circle:

65. *To my Cousins Germans* Mr. Cromwell, Mr. Byron, Mr. Ratcliff, and M. Alexander Stanhope.

The worlds four Parts, and all the various Seas
 And Rivers that embrace them thousand wayes,
 Perfect the Globe terrestrial, set it fix't
 Equal the circumvolving Heaven betwixt:
 So you four (joyning in a Sympathie
 Of an unmach'd, fraternal Amitie,
 Sought to for noble Soules, by all that can
 Understand Honour, or a Generous man)
 Are courted on all sides, and truly do
 Love them reciprocally that love you;
 So that your friends and you do justly stand
 The Centre of fair Friendship in the Land. (Cokayn 168-9)

44 In fact, Cokayn's poems themselves trace these circles, now conceived of as concentric spheres, and give evidence also of other scholarly relationships: he addresses an epigram to Ralph Rawson, Cotton and Prestwich's tutor, arguing that his scholarly virtue is such that as well as the two ancient seats of learning, 'where e're / You live...a third Academie's there' (Cokayn 112-3). The reciprocal friendship—which implicates a wider circle—figured in the poem to the Stanhopes echoes Thomas Stanley's own take on the ties that bind and speaks against the disintegration of familial bonds in the Civil War.

"FIRST ESSAIES OF MY YOUTH": EDMUND PRESTWICH'S SENECA

'Prestwich, Edmund (Lancs)' and his elder brother Thomas (1625-1676) were 'Adm. arm. 1st September 1642' at Brasenose College, Oxford. Thomas became the second baronet on the death of his father, Sir Thomas Prestwich of Hulme in Lancashire, in 1673. Civil war records place the elder Sir Thomas as a Colonel under Sir Thomas Aston in the Royalist forces in 1644, made baronet in April 1644 and knighted for his courage at the battle of Ormskirk on 30 August. The younger Thomas was a major in the same regiment, the Queen's regiment of horse, at the time (Newman 101). But there is no record of Edmund himself seeing any action, nor indeed much record of him at all. He is allegedly responsible for a play, *The Hectors* (1656) (Halkett et al.), but the only other information we have comes from Sir John Prestwich's *Respublica*. According to Sir John (a descendant), Edmund Prestwich was at Oliver Cromwell's second investiture as Lord Protector in 1657, and the account of the ceremony in *Respublica* was 'written by me Edmund Prestwich, of the City of London, an eye and ear-witness to all that passed on this glorious occasion. Now set forth by me John Prestwich, Esq.' (J. Prestwich 3). Sir John calls him 'a person well known and respected in the learned world for his impartial writings', though he fails to identify any of these save the translation of *Hippolitus* (21). All the traditions about the Prestwich family have them ruining themselves in the Royalist cause, despite

Edmund's apparent 'impartiality' and presence at parliamentary celebrations (see Farrer and Brownbill; Gastrell 68). The whole family may also have been Catholic—certainly Edmund's father was forced to compound for his estate as a recusant in 1632—and many Lancashire Royalists had strong Catholic associations (Farrer and Brownbill; Newman 100).

We can see, I think, that Prestwich is trying to mould himself as a poet in the tradition of the Black Ribands, probably encouraged by Shirley and Cotton. Edmund's major publication—*Hippolitus etc.*—is a young man's work, as he terms it, 'these first Essaies of my Youth' (A7r).²⁴ It contains the translation, and some poems in the conventional exemplary modes of a tyro poet trying to make his mark in the world. There are, amongst others, verses on 'How to choose a Mistress', 'A Remedy Against Love', and two Epithalamiums, one apparently a formal exercise, the other 'Upon T.P. and M.H.', presumably his brother Thomas Prestwich and his wife Mary Hunt, whose marriage took place on 29 November 1649 at Mortlake in Surrey (Chester and Armytage 43). Thomas was apparently 'about 24' at the time of his marriage, so Edmund is likely to have been just less than that, and therefore probably about 25 when he published his translation of Seneca two years later. The influence of the anacreonic tradition is clear, both in 'An Ale-Match' and in the wider choice of subject, and in this Prestwich follows Thomas Stanley and Edward Sherburne, both of whom translated from Henry Estienne's *Anacreontea* (Paris, 1554) (Revard 160-2). By choosing these subjects Prestwich self-consciously positions himself in the Royalist literary tradition, his work becoming a kind of application to join the Shirley-Stanley club. It is becoming increasingly clear too that his translation of Seneca engages equally with this tradition. His *Hippolitus* renders Seneca's Latin into extremely regular English iambic pentameter in rhyming couplets. Prestwich makes no metrical distinction between different parts of the play—dialogue and chorus are in the same metre and rhyme scheme, unlike Edward Sherburne's *Medea* (1648) which translates the choral sections into iambic tetrameter, so as to differentiate them from the rest of the play in pentameter. The early English translations of Seneca (those of *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* [1581]) are inconsistent in this respect, even within plays: John Studley's *Hippolytus*, for instance, has the first, third and fourth choruses in iambic pentameter to contrast with the leaden fourteeners of the rest, but for some reason the second chorus is in fourteeners.²⁵ It might be possible to detect an interplay between the specifics of Seneca's text and other classical conventions within the 'Diverse Poems' of the second half of the book. Perhaps the first poem after *Hippolitus*, 'On an Old Ill-Favoured Woman, become a young lover' takes its direct inspiration from Phaedra's behaviour (though there is no textual suggestion in Seneca that she is either particularly old or in the least bit ill-favoured), but it is also a view from the other side of a tradition which the Black Riband poets explore 'Though my aged head be gray / And thy youth more fresh then May, / Fly me not' (e.g. Stanley, *Poems* 90; Sherburne 107; Herrick 194).

As in Sherburne's translations, the prefatory material for Prestwich's *Hippolitus*

also contains criticisms of the times, though less for their savagery than for their worthlessness. Charles Cotton calls it 'this age of Ignorance', complaining that people are only interested in 'Mercuries' or news-sheets and that poetry is likely to get short shrift (E. Prestwich B1v). Matthew Carter's poem praises the translator for

Founding your Art
In true philosophy, which you impart
In lively Helycon to th'torrid wits
Of our poor panting times, where nought befits
The raging humour, but what's worthless born
Mean as the age, beneath a Poets scorn. (B5v)

Carter's point is that Prestwich's poem sugars the pill of philosophy to bring succour in evil days. It is an early modern commonplace, perhaps, that translators offer their works as improving tracts but in the case of Seneca, the idea of learning virtue and resisting hope and fear is of course deeply engrained in the works. Prestwich and his
46 friends reuse the tropes of the Senecan originals to advance their project, espousing both the philosophy and the stories which Seneca tells. Prestwich's epistle 'To the Reader', declares its author to be 'above either hope or fear' as to the reception of his work, but makes a 'small request' that the reader measure the 'affection' not the 'discretion' of the 'Friends [who] have been pleased to usher my darke feet into the world' (A8r).²⁶ His dedication to Mrs Anne Leedes is equally full of nods to his Senecan original: he has involved himself in a 'Lab'rinth' (A3r), and 'like Cecrops daughter, tempted my Minerva to mine owne ruine, for daring to discover an Infant with such deformed feet' (A3r-v); the readers of his age, 'obstinately arm[ed] against truth and knowledge...that they will cherish common and shallow fancies; Births so infamous, that they can onely speak their Parents shame' (A3v). This is the book as Minotaur. For Charles Cotton another version of Hippolytus appeals—the text as body, torn apart and reassembled in the act of translation, more successfully done than poor Theseus's attempt to reunite the pieces of his son. Prestwich's 'exact intelligence' reconstructs Seneca's original:

Hippolytus that erst was set upon
By all, mangled by mis-construction
Dismembered by misprision, now by thee
And thy ingenious Chirurgerie;
Is re-united to his limbs, and grown
Stronger as thine, then when great Theseus son. (B1v-B2r)

CIVIL WAR AND PASTORAL RETREAT

The dismembered body of Hippolytus suggests also the state of the nation at a time of Civil War, particularly in a play in which the strife is filicidal, a pitting of father against son. Hippolytus's own account of the degeneration of the Golden Age owes

much to the well-known descriptions by Virgil and Ovid (Boyle [ed.], *Seneca's Phaedra* 168):

Dire Mars invented war-like strategems,
And thousand forms of death, hence purple streams
Defil'd each land: bloud dy'd the blushing mane
Then endles crimes in ev'ry house did reign:
No sin but grew a President; the child,
His Father, Brothers have their Brothers kill'd,
Women their Husbands, wicked Mothers slew
Their infant births.

(E. Prestwich 22)²⁷

The evocation of these *loci classici* is not uncommon in interregnum writing for, as Fred B. Trombly has noted, 'For sons to kill fathers, and fathers sons, is the essence of civil war' (23).²⁸ Prestwich and the other translators of Senecan material were attracted to Seneca partly because of his rejection of hope and fear, but also because of the Ovidian picture of the Golden-Age-lost which Seneca helps to leap so vividly from the page.²⁹ For a young and disenfranchised Royalist, this speech expresses practically their every hope and fear (an excellent example of Senecan paradox perhaps?), this last section particularly as accurate a description of the previous eight years of their lives as could be found. The intersection with pastoral—a favoured Renaissance mode—encourages us perhaps not only to remember Seneca's own debt to Virgil and Ovid but also to think of Seneca anew as a young man's dramatist, the echoes of pastoral, the young man's genre, ringing in seventeenth-century ears.³⁰ Hippolytus's evocation of the Golden Age becomes a version of Seneca's 'retirement' trope, a preference for the *vita contemplativa* over the *vita activa*, founded in those same pastoral exilic narratives:

There is no life more free, void of offence,
Or nearer to the pristine Innocence,
Than what is to the woods confind, who lives
With a clear Conscience on the mountains cliffs
Is not enflam'd with avarice, nor draws
The aire of seldome merited applause.

(E. Prestwich 19)³¹

A key pastoral text, Virgil's first *Eclogue*, is set in the aftermath of the final civil war of the Roman Republic and contrasts the fortunes of two friends—Tityrus, a poet whose patron is Augustus Caesar, and Meliboeus, dispossessed of his lands by the same. The pastoral tradition in 1651, therefore, acknowledged the similarity of occasion which dispossessed Royalists shared with the farmers like Meliboeus, whose lands Augustus had given in reward to his soldiers. But their friends, men like John Hall and Andrew Marvell, served the Cromwellian regime and, initially, the order of the Black Riband seems to have encompassed this difference. When Sherburne and Prestwich translate, and Stanley reads, Seneca, then, the pastoral overtones in such

passages as Hippolytus's rejection of the world perforce remind them of the other Seneca, the one who writes of philosophy and friendship and retirement. Michelle O'Callaghan has noted that seventeenth-century pastoral developed into a space of 'ongoing intellectual exchange' which became 'directed towards establishing communities and investing them with a collective agency' (313). It is a commonplace that the pastoral became a favourite mode of the Cavalier Poets, allowing them to recreate, replay and critique halcyon days to make sense of their changed circumstances under the Commonwealth.³² The Stanley circle—deeply engaged in the corporate translating, writing and criticism of classical and continental pastoral, as Revard and McDowell have shown—formulated the kind of friendship described by O'Callaghan (313), which used this genre 'to express communal values and to project an idealized social space where friends meet to exchange ideas freely'. This is analogous with Seneca's description of the friendship of philosophers as we saw it in *Ep.* CIX, a notion of friendship and of good living derived from Virgil and Ovid.

- 48 In this collection, McAuley has argued that in showing 'the mother's part', Seneca's *Phaedra* and *Medea* suggest 'a form of crisis in paternal authority', one where father Theseus, representative of justice, commits an act of unspeakable injustice. As a response to the killing of a king—the ultimate crisis of paternal authority—*Hippolytus* is clearly fitting. In a post-Civil War context the challenge is to reunite the limbs of the body politic, just as Theseus attempts to reconstruct the mangled parts of his son: 'Joyne these dissected members and digest / Those parts in order which be thus displaced' (E. Prestwich 93). The insistence we have already seen on the parricidal strife involved in Civil War underscores a reading which figures killing a father as a metaphor for rising up against your Prince (Womersley, '3 *Henry VI*' 469). But by 1651—which saw the printing of *Hippolytus*, of Sherburne's *Poems*, and of plays which have been said to comment on the political situation such as *The Prince of Prig's Revels* and *A Joviall Crew* (Potter 103-4)—the father Charles I was already dead, and (depending on the exact date of publication) his son, the new King of Scotland, was between mustering troops in Scotland and fleeing for his life after the Battle of Worcester (3 September 1651). One could read in Hippolytus's fate a warning to Charles II of the dangers of too brave an embrace of one's fate:

Your Son nere changeth colour, but doth rise
 With angry looks, and thus aloud he cries;
 I shall not easily be afraid of this;
 To conquer Bulls hereditary is.

(E. Prestwich 41)

Certainly, there was precedent for political advice in the form of classical translation for the Prince: Christopher Wase's modernised and Englished *Electra* (1649) from Sophocles, dedicated to Princess Elizabeth, shows siblings successfully avenging their father's death and its prefatory material made explicit that the house of Atreus figured the house of Stuart (Potter 53-4; Orchard 103ff). The primary political points

of *Hippolitus*, after all, are those all suitable to the nation at a time of Civil War: might triumphs over right (Chorus, Act III; E. Prestwich 38); status is not a good but rather a threat to happiness since the great must endure ‘the fiercest storms of chance’ (Chorus, Act IV; 43); finally and most resonantly, ‘great concourses’ breed the ‘usuall crimes’, the coveting of ‘vain honours’, ‘th’uncertain tide of wealth’, ‘the poisonous tooth of malice’ (20). Seneca’s lesson that pastoral living protects from ‘hope and fear’ has been well made, even if it rings hollow in the wistful voice of a Royalist longing for Restoration.

Revard and McDowell have convincingly argued that the shared translation activities of the Stanley circle informed their literary practice and produced a repertoire directed towards representing a particular Cavalier ethos. But we can conclude that there were further-reaching consequences of choosing to translate Seneca in particular. Royalist translations of Seneca responded to the defeat and death of the King by figuring the Neronian age as a mirror of the present and offering a paradigm of living well under tyranny—a literary-political act of immense importance. Furthermore, reading and translating Seneca allowed the Stanley circle to contemplate and configure their own friendship in Senecan terms, terms which took account of adverse circumstances and propounded philosophical answers for current tribulation. Furthermore, as Potter notes, ‘Translation had a double satisfaction for a royalist writer. Not only was it relatively safe, it was proof of the essential applicability and truth of words from the past, a belief which lay behind the nostalgia for the rituals of monarchy and the Church of England’ (53-4). In the case of Seneca these words, these tropes, are so consistently replays of earlier literature, their very intertextuality affording them a solid, relentless and comforting inevitability, a kind of verbal *scelus alternum*. Ultimately, then, Senecan translation’s real usefulness was perhaps that it encouraged a sense of the unbroken past, literary and cultural, and a way of thinking about the future as inevitable—so without hope or fear.

49

NOTES

1. I am very grateful to Robert Cummings, Andrew Taylor and Emma Buckley for their helpful comments on this essay in draft and Kate Bennett for sharing with me her inimitable knowledge of seventeenth-century Oxford. Unless otherwise stated, all Latin quotations from *Moral Epistles* are from the Loeb Classical Library (ed. Gummere); from *Phaedra* (ed. Boyle).
2. Qui in solem venit, licet non in hoc venerit, colorabitur: qui in unguentaria taberna resederunt, et paulo diutius commorati sunt, odorem secum loci ferunt. (Gummere III: 230-32)
3. See also Miner, ‘Patterns’; Miner, *Cavalier Mode*; Salmon, Shifflet, Barbour and, for Scotland, Allan.
4. A great deal has been written on Seneca’s influence on revenge tragedy. See, for instance, Braden, *Renaissance Tragedy*; Miola; Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy*; Boyle, *Tragic Seneca*; and Braund.
5. See Flower; Burner; Revard; McDowell, ‘Reviving’; also on literary clubs of the period more generally, Raylor.

6. For political allegiance, especially on the Stanley circle's non-Royalist or vacillating members, see McDowell, *Poetry*.
 7. See, for instance, Anselment; Loxley, *Royalism*.
 8. See Braden, 'Tragedy' 270-2 for a discussion of the literary characteristics of the translations by Sherburne, Prestwich and of Samuel Pordage's *Troades* (1660).
 9. Mayer notes that there was a fad for Stoicism among the King's inner circle in the 1630s (169)—Freeman's translations key into this fashion. A later analogue to my argument about friendship can be found in chapter 4 of Shifflet, 'Jonson, Marvell, Milton: the Stoicism of friendship and imitation' (107-28), which shows that 'thinking with' Seneca was equally useful post-Restoration, and to the other side: Marvell's and Milton's later thought, as well as that of Royalists such as Katherine Philips', was influenced by neo-Stoicism; see also Marvell 190-1.
 10. See also Potter; Barnard; Robinson.
 11. All quotations from Stanley's poetry are from G.M. Crump's edition unless otherwise stated.
 12. See Revard 156.
- 50**
13. Letter from Sherburne to Anthony Wood (Bodleian Library, MS Wood F. 44 fol. 250).
 14. Semper enim etiam a sapiente restabit, quod inveniatur et quo animus eius excurrat.
 15. Qui mori didicit, servire dididit; supra omnem potentiam est, certe extra omnem. Quid ad illum carcer et custodia et claustra? Liberum ostium habet (Gummere I: 190).
 16. Ut habeam pro quo mori possim, ut habeam quem in exilium sequar, cuius me morti opponam et impendam (Gummere I: 48).
 17. Hoc ipsum est nihil bonum putare, quod eripi possit (Gummere I: 54); Se enim ipso contentus est. Hoc felicitatem suam fine designat. (Gummere I: 54).
 18. Quanto hic mirabilior vir, qui per ferrum et ruinas et ignes inlaesus et indemnis evasit! Vides, quanto facilius sit totam gentem quam unum virum vincere (Gummere I: 54).
 19. timentur quae per vim potentioris eveniunt (Gummere I: 84); Idem facit sapiens; nocituram potentiam vitat, hoc primum cavens, ne vitare videatur. Pars enim securitatis et in hoc est, non ex professo eam petere, quia, quae quis fugit, damnat (Gummere I: 88).
 20. Potest aliquis disputare an illo tempore capessenda fuerit sapienti res publica. "Quid tibi vis, Marce Cato? Iam non agitur de libertate; olim pessumdata est. Quaeritur, utrum Caesar an Pompeius possideat rem publicam?" (Gummere I: 90).
 21. Ad hos te Stoicos voco, qui a re publica exclusi secesserunt ad colendam vitam et humano generi iura condenda sine ulla potentioris offensa. (Gummere I: 92).
 22. There is also a verse by Thomas Bancroft, a poet with a strong friendship with Sir Aston Cokayn: one is tempted to suggest that their (slender) poetic capacities drew them together, and they regularly wrote commendatory verses for each others' works.
 23. They were related through the marriage of Philip Stanhope, first Earl of Chesterfield, to Catherine Hastings, sister of the fifth Earl of Huntingdon, and therefore great-aunt of the subject of *Lachrymae Musarum*.
 24. A detailed investigation—clearly for another place—of the sources of Prestwich's poems might reveal which of the Black Ribands were most influential on his work and how.
 25. *Medea*, also tr. John Studley, uses pentameter for the choruses.
 26. See, *inter alia*, Sen. *Ep.* v: 'I find in the writings of our Hecato that the limiting of desires helps also

to cure fears: “Cease to hope,” he says, “and you will cease to fear.”; ‘apud Hecatonem nostrum inveni cupiditatum finem etiam ad timoris remedia proficere. “Desines,” inquit, “timere, si sperare desieris” (Gummere I: 22).

27. ‘invenit artes bellicus Mauors nouas / et mille formas mortis. Hinc terras cruor / infecit omnes fusus et rubuit mare. / tum scelera dempto fine per cunctas domos / iere, nullum caruit exemplo nefas: / a fratre frater, dextera gnati parens / cecidit, maritus coniungis ferro iacet / perimuntque fetus impiae matres suos’ (Boyle [ed.] 74-6, ll. 550-6).
28. See, for instance, the anonymous *The Tragedy of that Famous Roman Orator Marcus Tullius Cicero*, (London: Printed by Richard Cotes for John Sweeting, 1651): ‘the sword / Shall be as free as then, the Slave his Lord, / The Wife her Husband shall betray, the Son / Thinking the vitall thread of’s Father spun / To a too tedious length, and that his feet / Travel too slowly to the grave, shall greet / His age with death’ (I.i., B1r). The standard ‘sources’ (Hall’s *Chronicles*, *Gorboduc*, and *An Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion*) for the parricide and filicide incidents in II.v. of *3 Henry VI* are interrogated by David Womersley (*3 Henry VI*) who argues that it was a frequent formulation of which these examples cannot strictly be called sources because their influence is too general. As an alternative source, he posits Sir Henry Savile’s translation of Tacitus’s *Historiae* (III.xxv).
29. Prestwich’s epigraph is from Horace, *Odes* 4: XII: Verum pone moras et studium lucri, / nigrorumque memor, dum licet, ignium / misce stultitiam consiliis breuem. (‘But abolish delay, and desire for profit, /and, remembering death’s sombre flames, while you can, / mix a little brief foolishness with your wisdom’, Horace, tr. Kline). One curious thing about versifying Senecan prose (such as Freeman did to the letters and Sherburne to *De Providentia*) is that this act foregrounds a connection with Horace, who wrote verse epistles about retreat. Can one think of these translations as Horatian versions of Seneca? The intertextuality of Interregnum Senecan translation seems to extend to Horace also, reminding us both that Horatian poetry was a model for Royalist panegyric and of Stanley’s friend Marvell’s famous interaction with Horace (Marvell 267-8).
30. For Seneca’s debt to Virgil and Ovid see Schiesaro, *Passions*; Hinds; Buckley; for pastoral as a young man’s genre, see O’Callaghan 307.
31. ‘Non alia magis et libera et uitio carens / ritusque melius uita quae priscos colat, / quam quae relictis moenibus siluas amat / non illum auaræ mentis inflammat furor / qui se dicauit montium insontem iugis’ (ed. Boyle 72 [ll. 483-8]).
32. See, for instance, Miner, *Cavalier Mode*; Turner; Patterson; Marcus.