What's Seneca to Him? Senecan Shakespeare
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Shakespeare and the English Seneca in Print: Collections, Authorship, Collaboration, and Pedagogies of Play-Reading

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Despite the abundance of scholarship debating Seneca's influence on Shakespeare, there is no corresponding research on how Seneca's print transmission informed Shakespeare's books in print. This essay begins to address this critical gap by turning to two of the earliest multi-play collections printed in England that were devoted exclusively to English plays: *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* (1581) and Shakespeare's First Folio (1623). Of these two collections, Shakespeare's has received far more critical attention *as a book*, but when the volumes are juxtaposed, their affinities are striking. Both play collections share a number of analogous organizational, paratextual, and typographic features that helped coalesce the authorial identities of an "English Seneca" and an original "Shakespeare", respectively. Both collections bear the traces of their producers' negotiations over the authenticity of the collected texts, the extent of their collaborative production, and the lessons they claimed to teach to early modern English readers. Although the *Tenne Tragedies* was not a direct bibliographical source for the First Folio, the English Seneca collection may have paved the way for the invention of Shakespeare as "Author" and the consumption of his now-famous First Folio.

Keywords: Elizabethan translations, Book history, Authorship, Play reading, Paratexts

In 1581, the London Stationer Thomas Marsh made literary history when he printed ten dramatic texts in a collected edition entitled *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* (hereafter called the *Tenne Tragedies*). Upon publication, this quarto volume became the first multi-text collection devoted exclusively to plays in English and the first complete edition of Seneca's trag-

edies printed on English soil[1]. The 1581 collection brought together three yet unpublished translations and reprinted seven more that had been rendered into English and then individually printed in London between 1559 to 1566. These seven formerly published translations included Jasper Heywood's *Troas* (1559, [1562?]), *Thyestes* (1560), *Hercules Furens* (1561); Alexander Neville's *Oedipus* (1563); John Studley's *Medea* (1566b) and *Agamemnon* (1566a); and Thomas Nuce's *Octavia* [1566][2]. When Marsh published the *Tenne Tragedies*, he collaborated with Thomas Newton, a Church of England clergyman, schoolteacher, translator, and poet who served as editor and brought the English tragedies into relative textual uniformity[3]. By preparing one translation by himself (*Thebais*) and acquiring two more by Studley (*Hippolytus* and *Hercules Oetaeus*), Newton completed the ten-play collection and dedicated the whole volume to the recently knighted courtier, Sir Thomas Heneage[4]. The *Tenne Tragedies* provided a table of the translators' names and their contributions to the volume, but the title page advertised that "SENECA" was the unifying principle of collection and the ten Englished tragedies were still very much "HIS"[5].

1 See Farmer and Lesser's *DEEP* for a comprehensive list of English drama in printed collections through 1660. Also see Greg 1970, for the bibliography of "Collections" in III:1009-1138. I emphasize "multi-text" editions to exclude earlier two-part editions, such as Henry Medwall's *1&2 Fulgens and Lucrece* (1512-16), *1&2 Gentleness and Nobility* [c. 1525], *1&2 Nature* [1530-34?], and *1&2 Promos and Cassandra* (1578).The mixed-genre collections that contained drama in English before 1581 were *A Merry Jest of Robin Hood and of His Life* [1560?]; *All Such Treatises* (1570); George Gascoigne's *A Hundred Sundry Flowers* (1573) and *Posies* (1575); and *The First Part of Churchyard's Chips* (1575,1578).

2 For more on the biographies of the translators, see Winston 2016, 152-70; Norland 2009, 46-68.

3 This was not Newton's first collaboration with Marsh. See Braden 2004. I attribute editorial decisions to Thomas Newton; however, as the volume's publisher and printer, Thomas Marsh had significant control over the collection's bibliographical presentation.

4 All of the translations published between 1559-1566 were dedicated to Elizabeth's privy counselors with the exception of Heywood's *Troas,* which was dedicated to the queen herself.

5 The decorative border on the title page included Marsh's initials (TM) in a cypher. The border was used on a number of other books printed by Marsh, including another work published that same year, Edmund Campion's *The grat bragge and challenge* (1581).


SENECA
HIS TENNE TRA-
GEDIES, TRANSLA-
TED INTO
Englyſh.
Mercurij nutrices, hora.
IMPRINTED
AT LONDON IN
Fleetſtreete neere vnto
Saincte Dunſtans
church by Tho-
mas Marſh.
1581

Fig. 1 Title Page of *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* (1581), sig. A2^{r}.
Boston Public Library, RARE BKS G.4073.7.

Not until 1623 would another collected edition containing more than a handful of English plays materialize in print[6]. This collection was *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, now commonly known as the First Folio.

6 Two other collections containing solely plays and printed between 1581 and 1623 were published by Edward Blount, who was part of the First Folio syndicate. Sir William Alexander's *Monarchick Tragedies* (1604) contained *The Tragedy of Croesus* and *The Tragedy of Darius* under a general title page. In 1616, two more of Alexander's tragedies and his poems were added to the collection. More common were these mixed-genre collections, such as Ben Jonson's *Works* (1616) with nine plays, 133 epigrams, fifteen poems, six entertainments, and thirteen masques. Daniel's *Cleopatra* was the sole play among his verses in the 1594, 1595, 1598, 1599, and 1601 collections, while *Philotas* joined the expanded volumes in 1605, 1607, 1611, and 1623.

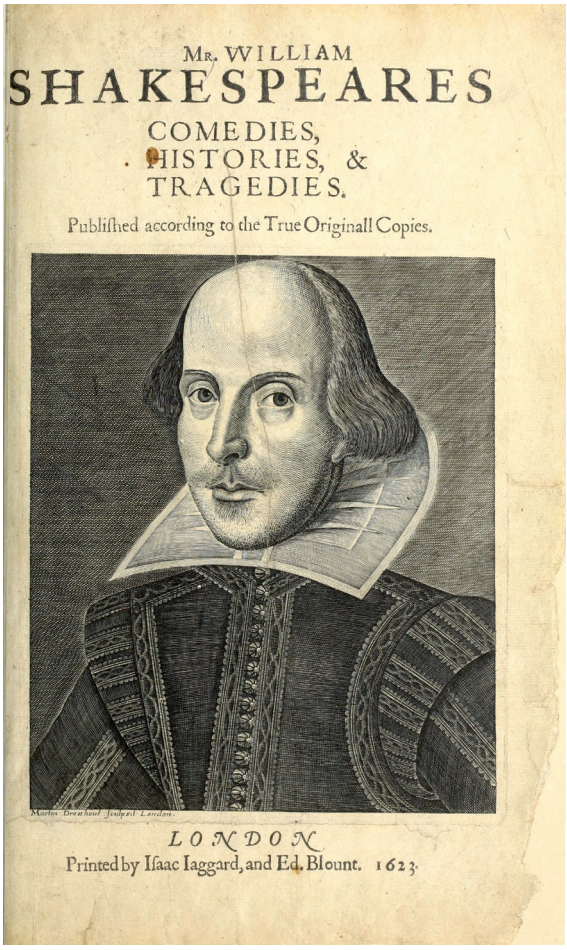


Fig. 2 Title Page of Shakespeare's *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (1623). Boston Public Library, RARE BKS G.174.1 FOLIO.

This volume was manufactured in London by a publishing syndicate led by the Stationers Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard[7]. For the Folio, thirty-six playtexts were assembled by Shakespeare's fellow actors from the London theaters, John Heminge and Henry Condell, who sought to build a textual monument in memory of their dear friend Shakespeare. Heminge and Condell composed two prefatory epistles for the volume. The first was dedicated to William Herbert and his

7 For a new well-researched study of the publishing syndicate, see Higgins 2022.

brother Philip, the third and fourth Earls of Pembroke, respectively, and the second was addressed "To the great Variety of Readers" (sigs. pA2^{r}-A3^{r}). Additional preliminaries consisted of a "Catalogue" or table of contents that divided the thirty-six play titles into three dramatic genres (comedies, histories, and tragedies) and identified the page number where each play began (sig. pA5+1^{r}). A second table listing the "Names of the Principall Actors in all these Plays" (pA5+2^{r}) was added to the preliminaries alongside commendatory verses by Ben Jonson, Leonard Digges, Hugh Holland, and "J.M", probably James Mabbe (sig. p4^{r}-A6r+1). Like the *Tenne Tragedies,* the First Folio was teeming with English agents who helped authorize and validate the plays here classified as "SHAKESPEARES"[8].

As the earliest printed collections to present English readers with a half-a-score or more of English plays, the *Tenne Tragedies* (1581) and the First Folio (1623) share important affinities that have been overlooked by scholars. Before these collections were published, select plays by each author had been performed in England in varied arrangements, and some had been printed and/or reprinted in different forms by various Stationers[9]. To produce the Seneca and Shakespeare collections, editors and publishers had to consolidate a disordered array of unpublished manuscripts and printed editions that had been produced over time in a variety of theatrical, literary, and material contexts. Far more than a single playbook, a large volume of heterogeneous plays demanded substantial editorial and press labor to create the look of a uniform bibliographical product. To unify contents and help English readers navigate the whole multi-play collections of Seneca and Shakespeare, editors and publishers utilized paratexts and typographical designs. From this perspective, it is easy to see why bibliographers of English drama have readily classified the *Tenne Tragedies* and the First Folio as similar kinds of "Collections", as they shared similar processes of production and delivered in one

8 As Massai (2012, 7) has argued, the First Folio "required a combination of authorizing strategies associated with Shakespeare's company, his stationers, and his patrons". Similar arguments can be found in Latouris 2015, 57-58.

9 In England, Seneca's tragedies were performed in Latin in educational institutions beginning in the 1540s, and in English translation by 1559 when Neville's *Oedipus* was likely staged in Trinity College Cambridge. See Pollard 2017, 282-83. On editions of Seneca's tragedies, see Pollard 2017, 278-285.

volume a posthumous author's dramatic oeuvre (Farmer and Lesser; Greg 1970, V, 1105-7).

Nevertheless, from the perspective of scholars of Renaissance drama, the commonalties between the two collections have gone unnoticed. This is partly because the authors and their plays derived from different English dramatic traditions. As in commonly known, Shakespeare was a professional playwright from the 1580s to his death in 1616. His plays were written for and performed by London theater companies and consumed by thousands of spectators in the theaters. Shakespeare's playbooks were printed in various quarto editions, some of which appeared without his name on the title page. By contrast, Seneca's tragedies were academic drama and were read more often than they were performed. When the tragedies were staged in Latin or in translation, their performances took place at English schools, inns of court, and universities. It is from these pedagogical contexts that the English Seneca translations emerged and then found their way into print. Of course, Seneca had a more extensive history in the continental book trade, with dozens of complete editions of the Latin tragedies printed from as early as 1498. Publications of the ten tragedies in vernacular languages appeared later, such as the French edition in 1534, the Italian edition in 1560, and English edition in 1581 (Smith 1967, 49-74)[10]. High cultural and commercial value was associated with these collected editions of Seneca and other classical dramatists, whereas the publishers of English playwrights such as Shakespeare had to manufacture such value through the bibliographical presentation of the author's collected plays (Robinson 2002, 361-64).

Rather than focus on the analogous bibliographical features of these collections, scholars of English drama have instead theorized the influence of Seneca and the ten English translations on Shakespeare's dramatic compositions[11]. Over the past hundred years,

10 Pierre Grosnet's *Les tragedies* (Paris, 1534); Lodovico Dolce's *Le tragedie* (Venice, 1560).

11 Robinson likewise argues that emphasis on the Jonson and Shakespeare collections "has distorted our sense of the history of dramatic publication by obscuring our recognition of the difficulties that impeded the publishing of plays in collection, and by limiting our sense of the literary collection as the locus of cultural contests" (2002, 362).

scholars have hotly debated whether Shakespeare read the English Seneca translations or borrowed from them – lightly, heavily, or not at all (Cunliffe 1925, 1-12; Spearing 1912, 1963; O'Keefe 1980, 90-98; Norland 2009, 46-68; Woodbridge 2010, 131-61)[12]. If scholars believed that the *Tenne Tragedies* was an important source for Shakespeare's plays, the "English Seneca" was characterized as a momentous edition, or as B. R. Reese called it, the "midwife assisting at the birth of English drama" (Rees 1969, 133). Scholars who were skeptical of the influence of the English translations on Shakespeare, such as G. K. Hunter, were more likely to dismiss the *Tenne Tragedies* as a pitiful example of dramatic poetry with only "supposed historical significance" (Hunter 1974, 194)[13]. Over the past twenty years, new scholarship on the Seneca translations as cultural and literary productions in their own right has gained traction, but such analysis has engaged with the texts of the translations rather than the books that were their vehicles in print[14]. There is another discernible reason why the *Tenne Tragedies* and the First Folio have not been analyzed as collected counterparts. The First Folio has been called the "most-studied book in the world" (Smith 2016). The *Tenne Tragedies,* by contrast, often goes unmentioned in studies of drama collection, and when it does arise in discussions, it is characterized as a distant precursor to Shakespeare's Folio[15]. Within these critical contexts, the *Tenne Tragedies*' bibliographical proximity to the First Folio remains undiscovered country.

This article recognizes the *Tenne Tragedies* as an imperative forerunner to Shakespeare's First Folio. As I demonstrate below, the paratextual and typographical apparatuses used to construct the "English Seneca" in 1581 were essential to crafting the authorial identity of

12 The term "English Seneca" dates to 1589 when it appeared in a preface for Thomas Nashe, but it was not used by Newton or the translators in their publications.

13 G. K. Hunter complained about the twentieth-century reissues of the 1581 collection and questioned the volume's historical significance.

14 Two exceptions are Ker and Winston (2012) and Mayne (2019). For recent scholarship on the translations, see Bigliazzi 2021, 139-65; Norland 2009, 46-68; Stapleton 2006, 100-33; Steenbergh 2017, 690-706; Pincomb 2012, 531-46; Valls-Russell 2020, 25-43; Winston 2016, 152-70; Woodbridge 2010, 131-61.

15 See Howard-Hill 1990, 129-38, on how the print presentation of classical drama influenced that of English printed plays.

"Shakespeare" in 1623. Despite approaching dramatic authorship in different ways, both volumes' producers highlighted the interventions of a great many English agents – such as translators, editors, stationers, poets, dedicatees, and readers. In effect, Thomas Newton and Thomas Marsh's *Tenne Tragedies* constructed a collection that was more than a compilation of translated tragedies; it was also designed to represent its various contributors as a community of pedagogically minded Englishmen who would assist novice readers on their journeys through the tragedies of Seneca, an ancient non-Christian author. In a similar way, the First Folio illuminated the contributions of a diverse range of figures from literary London and the English theaters who through paratexts were fashioned as friendly interlocutors between English readers and this mass of playtexts gathered under Shakespeare's name. With their help, English readers would find meaning in Shakespeare and his plays. On one hand, this article's juxtaposition of the 1581 and 1623 collections seeks to defamiliarize the First Folio, to reimagine how, if produced at a different time or under different conditions, this canonical collection may have looked and functioned more like the *Tenne Tragedies*. On the other hand, this analysis also considers to what extent that First Folio is indebted to the English Seneca. No evidence indicates that Blount and Jaggard modeled Shakespeare's collection on the *Tenne Tragedies,* but the Seneca edition as a collection of English plays seems to have performed the pedagogical and cultural work that made the publication of the First Folio possible.

Authorship

When editing the *Tenne Tragedies*, Newton must have been familiar with scholarly debates over Seneca's identity and critics' doubts about his authorship of the ten tragedies. Research today confirms that Seneca the Younger (son of the historian and rhetorician, Seneca the Elder) was Nero's tutor, Stoic philosopher, and dramatist, and thus the author of the prose works, declamations, and the ten tragedies. Since at least the fourteenth century, however, scholars questioned whether the "Seneca" mentioned in early manuscripts referred to one man, a "single super-Seneca", as Stephen Hinds calls him, or two (or more) different Senecas (Hinds 2004, 162; cited in Ker 2008,

198)[16]. Complicating the matter was further confusion about Seneca the dramatist and Seneca the philosopher, and whether they were different people or the same (Mayer 1994, 157-74). Concerns about the tragedies' attribution also arose, as scholars wondered how Seneca could have written *Octavia,* a play that prophecies his own death (Boyle 2008, xiii–xiv). In 1581, the *Tenne Tragedies* glossed over these concerns, as Newton seamlessly conflated the tragedian and the moral philosopher and seemingly saw no reason to introduce questions about the texts' authorship. "Seneca" had functioned for centuries as the unifying thread for these ten tragedies, and Newton and Marsh offered their readers this same canon of ten.

What was authentically Seneca's, however, was a concern presented in the 1581 collection, and it was linked to the volume's construction of its "Author" and his intentions. For example, in his "To the Reader" prefacing *Troas* and reprinted from the 1559 edition, Heywood begs the readers to be gentle with his translation and "consider how hard a thing it is for mee to touch at ful in all poynts the authors mynd, (being in many place verye harde and doubtfull, and the worke much corrupt by the default of euill printed Bookes)" (sig. O1^{v}, 95^{v}). *Troas,* Heywood noted, was "in some places vnperfite, whether left so of the Author, or parte of it loste, as tyme deuoureth all things". Translating Seneca required Heywood to engage in textual editing by identifying where errors in the text occurred and questioning how they were introduced into the work. Whether the lacunae were the faults of the "euill" press, "left" by Seneca himself, or subjected to material degradation, these cruxes prompted Heywood to supply "the wante of some thynges", and "to expounde" the texts without neglecting to observe "their sence". In his preface to *Thebais,* Newton likewise admits to struggling to translate an incomplete source text, although he acknowledges that "this Tragedy, was left by the Authour unperfect, because it neyther hath in it, Chorus, ne yet the fifth Acte" (sig. F8^{v}, 40^{v}). Translating a fragmented text, nonetheless, provided Newton with the opportunity to demonstrate his dedication to

16 On the two Senecas, see Ker 2008, 197-203; Kohn 2003, 271–80; Mayer 1994, 151-74. The attribution of *Octavia* was rejected by Lipsius while Heinsius rejected Seneca's authorship of *Hercules Oetaeus*. Currently, both tragedies are no longer considered Seneca's although they are treated as parts of his textual canon.

the Senecan project. *Thebais* was the only tragedy left to be translated in 1581, and so Newton tells Heneage in his dedicatory epistles that he reluctantly accepted the assignment. Heywood likewise emphasizes his care when translating Seneca's texts, highlighting his departures from the original while reinforcing how he still captured the author's original meaning.

That Newton included paratexts that addressed the condition of Seneca's source texts is noteworthy because he and Marsh excluded from the *Tenne Tragedies* one of most fabulous verse meditations on textual error printed in the period. Prefacing the early octavo edition of *Thyestes* (1560), Jasper Heywood narrates a dream in which the ghost of Seneca descends from the heavens to provide the young scholar with the first, original volume of the ten tragedies, which Heywood is invited to use for his translations. In Heywood's vision, Seneca's "gylded booke" was crafted by the nine Muses in Helicon who formed the parchment from the "silken skyns" of Parnassus fawns, mixed precious water with Myrrha's gum-like tears to make a "gorgeous glyttryng golden Jnke", and meticulously transcribed the texts of the tragedies devoid of any errors (Ker and Winston 2012, 111-12). This ethereal collection was a far cry from the fault-laden editions of the tragedies printed on the continent by Sebastian Gryphius and Aldus Manutius, which Heywood explicitly named[17]. As Heywood envisions it, the perfect authorial collection has no precedent; it descends from the heavens flawless and complete in its only manifestation. Heywood supplies in the form of fantasy what he perceives was lacking from his own translation: a perfect, reliable source text.

There could be a number of reasons why Heywood's narrative poem was not reprinted in the *Tenne Tragedies*. Newton and Marsh may have reasoned that presenting Heywood as Seneca's chosen translator would reflect poorly on the others, including Newton himself. Or, perhaps Heywood's long poem, displaying his own authorial ingenuity, would have taken up too much space and paper in a project that was devoted to presenting Seneca's works. Either way, the exclusion reinforces that when Seneca's authorship was being reconstructed in

17 Heywood is probably referring to *Scenecae Tragoediae* printed in Venice by Aldus Manutius in 1517 and *L. Annei Senecae* Cordubensis, which was printed in Lyon by Sebastian Gryphius in 1541 and 1548.

the *Tenne Tragedies*, discourses about challenging source texts were included but they were not allowed to become the focus of any prefatory epistle or argument. Moreover, as Newton and Marsh presented it, the ideal Senecan translation did not depend on an error-free original; rather, it depended on whether the translator understood Seneca well enough to convey his "sence", or as Newton wrote in the dedicatory epistle, his "direct meaning". Newton's Seneca was a didactic author; therefore, the editor assures readers that his "whole wrytings", probably a reference to his moral epistles, are edifying (sig. A3^{v}). As Newton avers, no other classical writer can rival Seneca who "with more grauity of Philosophicall sentences, more waightynes of sappy words, or greater authority of sou[n]d matter beateth down sinne, loose lyfe, dissolute dealing, and vnbyrdled sensuality" (sigs. A3v-A4^{r}). To offer readers a collection that was authentically Seneca's, the translators needed to honor the author's sense and objectives, which Newton insists was the moral reform of the reader.

Like the *Tenne Tragedies,* the Shakespeare Folio claims to capture its author's intentions, but also like Heywood in his 1560 dream vision, the First Folio's makers report concerns that fraudulent copies of Shakespeare's plays have been circulating and misrepresenting his works[18]. If there is one message that the Folio's front matter must communicate, it is that the plays within the collection are Shakespeare's "true originall copies" as is explicitly stated on its title page. When Blount and Jaggard published the collection, they included eighteen plays that had not been printed before. The other eighteen had been formerly published in an array of editions, and, even though some of the plays in the Folio were exact reprints of those earlier copies, other plays show evidence of editors consulting additional witnesses to produce the best version of the text[19]. Who did this editorial work is unknown, but the prefatory epistles situate Heminge and Condell as the careful, loving compilers of the author's original manuscripts. Granted, they wished "the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set

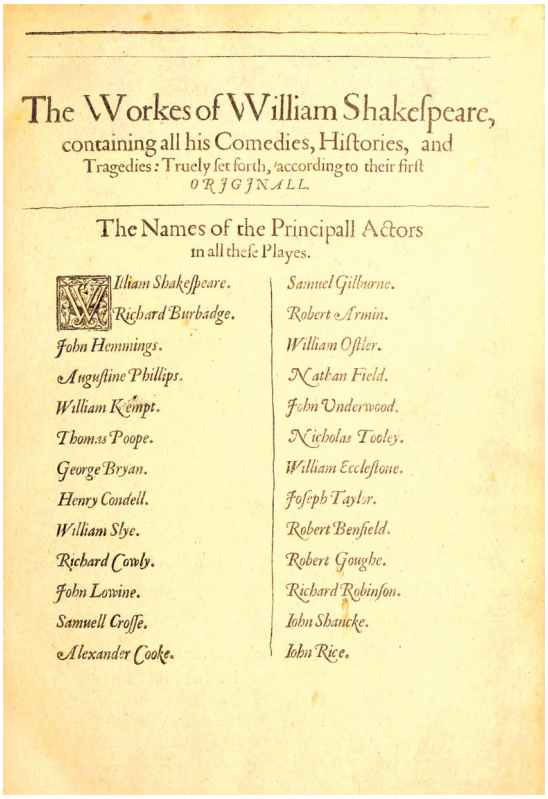
18 For Andrew Murphy (1999, 57-58), the juxtaposition of Heywood's dream vision and epistles in the First Folio serve as a reminder to modern textual editors that the search for the author's true, original work behind the printed text, is itself fed by fantasy.

19 Egan provides a clear summary of the editorial work on the Folio. For a fuller treatment, see Massai 2007.

forth, and overseen his owne writings", but the actors assume their role as trusted caretakers who only "collect" the manuscripts on their dead friend's behalf. Because Shakespeare's "mind and hand went together", his manuscripts were ostensibly perfect and captured his true intentions: "we haue scarse receiued from him a blot in his papers" (sig. pA3^{r}). These words imply that there was no need for any editorial interventions across the thirty-six perfectly executed play-texts. But, as the actors also confess, the new collection was designed to rectify the prior exploitation of Shakespeare's works[20]. Heminge and Condell announce that readers have been "abus'd with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies" of Shakespeare plays. These editions were "maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them" (sig. pA3^{r}). Considering the damage done to their friend's reputation and the integrity of his corpus, Heminge and Condell promise that the Folio delivers the true original copies of Shakespeare's plays, "cur'd, and perfect… as he conceiued the[m]" (sig. pA3^{r}). Readers were presented with a simple choice: buy the Folio that contains the plays as Shakespeare intended them, or settle for the embezzled knockoffs.

In the Folio, the paratexts and typography do most of the work of establishing for readers that the texts were truly and originally Shakespeare's. For one, the title "Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, &Tragedies" as they have been "[p]ublished according to the True Originall Copies" reinforced the unity and authenticity of the plays collected under his name. But, a few pages later, readers were presented with a list of twenty-six "Names of the Principall actors in all these plays" (sig. pA5+2^{r}). This page locates the author among a network of theater practitioners and implies that the plays within were part of a legacy that was much larger than Shakespeare alone. The Folio's makers may have been aware of the tension this page produced in the preliminaries, for they took up a significant portion of the page to textually and typographically remind readers that despite Shakespeare's collaborations with other actors, his plays are all "*O R I G I N A L L*":

20 For more discussion on how previously printed copies of Shakespeare's texts were deemed defective so that the new volume could be marketed as the authentic version, see Kastan 2001, 74-76 and Erne 2003, 255-58.



The Workes of William Shakeſpeare,
containing all his Comedies, Hiſtories, and
Tragedies: Truely ſet forth, according to their firſt
ORIGINALL.

The Names of the Principall Actors
in all theſe Playes.

William Shakeſpeare.
Richard Burbadge.
John Hemmings.
Auguſtine Phillips.
William Kempt.
Thomas Poope.
George Bryan.
Henry Condell.
William Slye.
Richard Cowly.
John Lowine.
Samuell Croſſe.
Alexander Cooke.
Samuel Gilburne.
Robert Armin.
William Oſtler.
Nathan Field.
John Underwood.
Nicholas Tooley.
William Eccleſtone.
Joſeph Taylor.
Robert Benfield.
Robert Goughe.
Richard Robinſon.
Iohn Shancke.
Iohn Rice.

Fig. 3 The Names of the Principall Actors in all these Playes. sig. pA5+2r. Boston Public Library, RARE BKS G.174.1 FOLIO.

The commendatory poems in the Folio's preliminaries impel readers to buy the Folio based on the premise that unmediated access to Shakespeare's mind lies within its pages. In Ben Jonson's poem on the Droeshout portrait, for instance, the poet explains that the engraving of Shakespeare is faulty, and thus, finding an accurate illustration of the author requires that readers "look / Not on his Picture, but his Booke" (sig. pA1^{v}). The poem jests that while others' hands might try to capture the life and wit of Shakespeare in static art, their interference only degrades his image, literally and figuratively. Leonard Digges' poem in the Folio likewise reminds readers that the Folio is the only portal through which "Shakespeare" becomes immortal: "This Booke, / When Brasse and Marble fade, shall make thee looke / Fresh to all Ages" and "eury Line, each verse / Here shall

reuiue, redeeme thee from thy Herse", an allusion to Horace's "Exegi monumentum aere perennius" (sig. pA5+1^{r})[21]. As Digges' poem insists, when the plays are printed from the author's own hand, the Folio's "eury Line, each verse" can invoke the living Shakespeare. Like Horace, Shakespeare will become an author "not of an age, but for all time" (sig. pA4^{r}) through a textual monument.

The *Tenne Tragedies* and the First Folio differ overall in the way they construct the "Author" in relation to textual authenticity, but both collections rest on the same foundational claim – that the collection conveys its author's true intentions. For the publishers of the Shakespeare First Folio, the previously published copies of Shakespeare's plays were a threat to their profits. Alluding to those earlier editions as "stolen" and "deformed" worked to undermine the Folio's competition. As scholars have surmised, the "surreptitious" copies may have referred specifically to a quarto collection of ten plays attributed to Shakespeare and assembled and sold to readers by the Jaggards in 1619 (Lesser, 2021, 13). This quarto collection looked like a compilation of separately printed playbooks and had neither a uniform title page nor any paratextual apparatus, but it was still one way to buy a pre-assembled collection of ten Shakespeare plays. Given that some customers may have recently purchased this quarto set or other Shakespeare playbooks in the market, Blount and Jaggard had to differentiate their new product. Through this emphasis on the true, original plays, the publishers implied that all past playbooks attributed to the author were stolen and falsely derived. To sell the Folio, Blount and Jaggard wanted customers to know that even if they could buy or assemble their own collections from old quartos, this 1623 edition was more complete, more perfect, and more true to Shakespeare's first original intentions.

That Newton and Marsh were less concerned about the authenticity of their Senecan source texts makes sense. If readers refused to buy the *Tenne Tragedies*, it would not be because Seneca's *Thebais* was left fragmented or lines from *Troas* were missing from manuscripts. Rather, as Newton mentions to Sir Thomas Heneage in his dedication, those who criticize the collection will be the "Aeropagites" who consider "Heathen" writers like Seneca to be dangerous for vernacu-

21 Thanks are due to a peer reviewer who pointed out the allusion to Horace.

lar readers (sig. A3^{v}). What the *Tenne Tragedies* had to offer to customers, as expressed in Newton's epistle, was reassurance that despite being a non-Christian, Seneca decried sinful living and praised behaviors befitting a good English Protestant. It was the collection's job then to promote this version of Seneca, the philosopher-tragedian, who would, with the help of the English translators, guide common English readers to the path of virtue.

Collaboration

Newton and Marsh created a collection that presented itself to English readers as a vehicle for transmitting Seneca's moral teachings. In effect, the 1581 collection retained its single-authorship logic, centered on the "Seneca" while it documented the labors of the individual translators. Whereas the First Folio constructed "Shakespeare" as a writer who had no equal and transcended time, the collection was also seeded with details that situated Shakespeare and his success within his theatrical community. Together, the *Tenne Tragedies* and the First Folio expose how representing collaboration while touting the singularity of an "Author" was a bibliographical balancing act played out in creative ways on the page.

In the *Tenne Tragedies*, head-titles announce the start of each translation, providing the names of the translators, and, for some, their former status at the English universities and their date of translation. The head-title for *Oedipus,* for instance, reveals that the translation was "Englished The yeare of our Lord M.D.LX. By Alexander Nevyle" (sig. L5^{v}, 77^{v}). Similarly, the head-title for *Thyestes* names Heywood as the translator and publicizes his previous status as a "Felow of Alsolne Colledge in Oxenforde", as he had been in 1560 when the individual edition was first published (sig. D5^{r}, 21^{r}). For the head-titles of Heywood's *Hercules Furens* and *Troas,* Studley's *Agamemnon* and *Medea,* and Nuce's *Octavia*, Newton gleaned the words directly from the single editions' title pages[22]. For *Thebais*, Newton provides

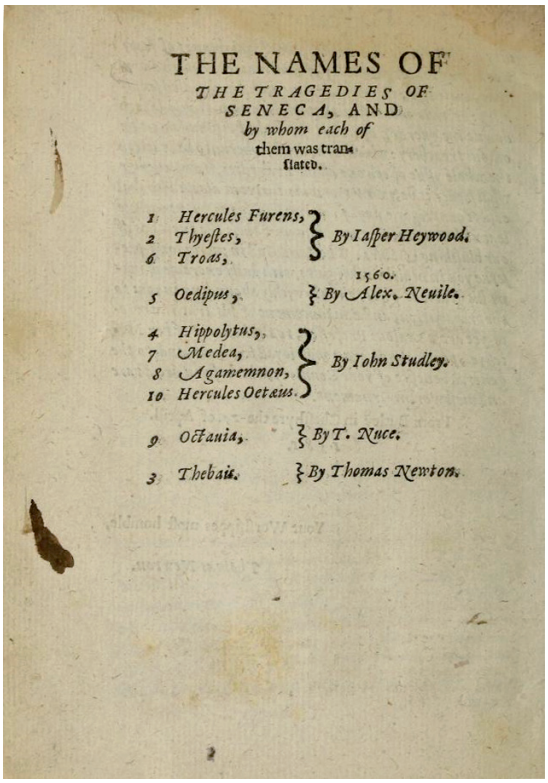
22 Newton did, however, add "L. Annaes" to Seneca's name in the 1581 head-titles for *Agamemnon* and *Medea* and deleted Studley's and Nuce's Cambridge student status, information which had been printed on the title pages of the single editions of *Agamemnon, Medea,* and *Octavia*. See Bibliography for the full titles of the single editions.

the date of his translation, "1581", and signs the end of the tragedy with his name and county of birth, "Thomas Newtonus, Cestreshyrius" (sig. F8^{r}, 40^{r}; H6^{v}, 64^{v}). Adding select information about the translators confirmed that the collection was a domestic product born of collective English labor.

Newton advances this image of a united English cohort of translators in his dedicatory epistle to Heneage. To Newton, the other translators are called his "fellowes" and he praises their translations, which he claims were "deliuered with singuler dexterity" (sig. A3^{r-v}). For his own contribution, *Thebais,* Newton confesses it is best hidden among the "perfection of others … workma[n]ship". That Newton was shaping the translators into a coherent group with joint aims was not disingenuous, as all had been participating in a national translation movement to bringing classical works of literature and philosophy to those without Latin literacy (Gillespie 2011, 39-46). As Stuart Gillespie explains, English translators in the period were "deeply aware of their predecessors" and sought to "embody within their work the best parts of the traditions" in which they saw themselves participating (Gillespie 2011, 11). Throughout the 1560s, for instance, some of the Senecan translators explicitly reflected on the work of their predecessors. Studley, for instance, perceived Heywood and Neville's texts as an invitation to translate other tragedies, such as *Agamemnon* (1566) and *Medea* (1566). He held the others' translations in high regard, declaring in his preface that they were so "excellently well done (that in reading of them it semeth to me no translation, but euen SENECA hym selfe to speke in englysh)" (sig. A7^{v}). Thomas Nuce, whose *Octavia* (1566) was published that same year, composed a dedicatory verse for Studley's edition that exalted the young translators' ability to communicate plainly Seneca's verse. Having read Studley's *Agamemnon*, Nuce confesses that his friendship with Studley at first motivated him to write a commendation, but that after reading the translation, he was compelled to praise him all the more (sigs. ¶ii- ¶v). These public-facing prefatory notes from the 1560s were not reprinted in the *Tenne Tragedies*, even though they might have helped Newton portray the translators as cooperative community. Nevertheless, these paratexts from the earlier editions offered certain translators more acclamations than others, and for Newton, this unequal praise

might have compromised the goals for the volume. Teaching readers to live pure lives by leaving wickedness behind was the stated objective of the *Tenne Tragedies*; epistles gushing over a few translators' elegant phrases or facility with adapting Seneca's high tragic style to English, may have framed the book more as a literary project than a pedagogical one.

Fashioning this English cooperative was also predicated on the complex use of typography and *mise-en-page*. Nowhere is this complexity more visible than in the *Tenne Tragedies'* table of translators.



THE NAMES OF
THE TRAGEDIES OF
SENECA, AND
by whom each of
them was tran-
slated.

1 Hercules Furens,
2 Thyeſtes,
6 Troas,
} By Iaſper Heywood.

1560.

5 Oedipus, } By Alex. Neuile.

4 Hippolytus,
7 Medea,
8 Agamemnon,
10 Hercules Oetæus.
} By Iohn Studley.

9 Octauia, } By T. Nuce.

3 Thebais. } By Thomas Newton.

Fig. 4 The Names of the Tragedies of Seneca, and by whom each of them was translated, sig. A4^{v}. Boston Public Library, RARE BKS G.4073.7.

Appearing on the page following Newton's dedicatory epistle, this unique catalogue displays three vertical columns that present "The Names of the Tragedies of Seneca, and by whom each of them was translated" (sig. A4^{v}). On the left side of the page, the titles of the trag-

edies are accompanied by corresponding numbers that reflect their order in the volume: 1) *Hercules Furens*, 2) *Thyestes*, 3) *Thebais*, 4) *Hippolytus*, 5) *Oedipus*, 6) *Troas*, 7) *Medea*, 8) *Agamemnon*, 9) *Octavia*, and 10) *Hercules Oetaeus*. The ordinal numbering did not reflect the chronology of Seneca's composition or their English translation but was a vestige of what is called the A-manuscript tradition[23]. Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, nearly all printed editions of Seneca's tragedies on the continent retained this sequential arrangement of the plays, so that over time the titles of the tragedies became associated with their numbers (e.g., *The First Tragedy, Hercules Furens*)[24]. Therefore, even when the tragedies were not printed together in a collected edition, each play still would have been understood as an ordered part of Seneca's complete dramatic oeuvre[25].

As noted above, Newton and Marsh used the ordinal numbering to organize the plays in the collection, but in this catalogue, they imposed a new order on the tragedies based on translator. The first column, as seen in Figure 4, displays the numbers of the tragedies, and neatly spaced to the right of the numbers are the corresponding titles, forming the second column. Braces running down the middle of the page divide the information vertically and horizontally. These braces group the numbers and titles on the left side of the page into five separate units. When glancing horizontally from the left side of the page to the right, readers can note that the braces point to the individual translators who were responsible for rendering the specific tragedies clustered on the left. One can see that "1 *Hercules Furens*, 2 *Thyestes*, 6 *Troas*" comprise the first set and were translated "By Jasper

23 The A manuscript branch was known by humanist scholars in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The E manuscript, found in 1640, includes only nine plays in a different order and with some variant titles. See Smith 1967, 49-50. Tarrant (1976, 23-86) provides a meticulous analysis of the tragedies in manuscripts.

24 Only one continental edition, to my knowledge, does not follow the traditional sequence, and that is Seneca 1576. The following editions organize the tragedies following the A manuscript: Seneca 1498, 1506, 1510, 1514, 1517, 1529, 1541, 1548, 1550, 1563, 1574, and 1581.

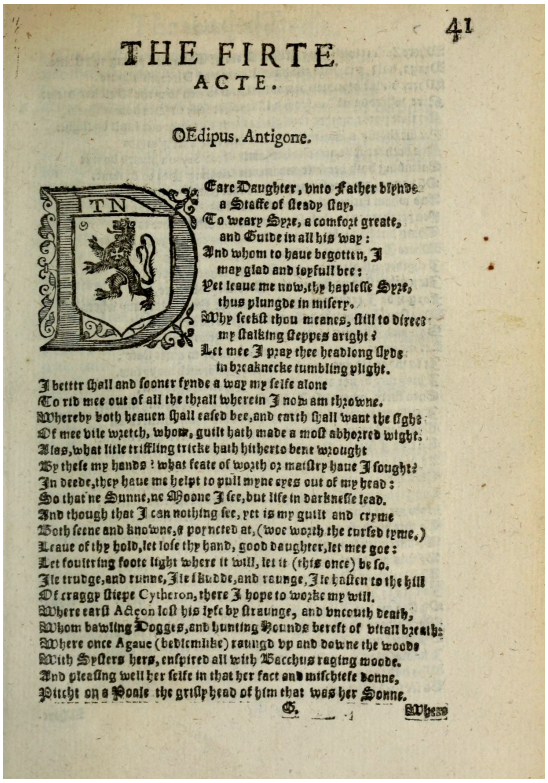
25 See Staley 2000 for a critique of Berthe Marti's arguments about the order of Seneca's tragedies as authorially intended: "when applied to the play, Marti's theory just does not work" (144). Staley explains that the A family order of tragedies "reflects at best the insight of Seneca's early interpreters rather than that of Seneca himself" (144).

Heywood". Spaced two lines below is the second group consisting of only one play, "5 *Oedipus"*, translated "By Alex. Neuile". The third cluster of plays, "4 *Hippolytus*, 7 *Medea*, 8 *Agamemnon*, 10 Hercules Octaeus", were translated "By Iohn Studley". The fourth group, including only "9 *Octauia*" "By T. Nuce", is followed by the fifth and final unit also with only one play, "3 *Thebais"* "By Thomas Newton".

Through the table's vertical column of translators' names, Newton and Marsh accomplished two tasks: they recognized the translators who contributed to the collection and presented the approximate order of publication. Heywood, at the top of the column, was the first to have his translation reach print, followed by Neville, then Studley, Nuce, and finally Newton. That Newton and Marsh may have been trying to build a rough chronology of translations is also apparent in the table as the date "1560" appears above Neville's name. Although *Oedipus* was not published until 1563, the *Tenne Tragedies* records 1560 as the date of the translation's composition, as *Oedipus*' head-title also confirms (sig. L5^{v}, 77^{v})[26]. The *mise-en-page* of the catalogue paraded the history of the translation project before English readers. All in all, this table documents the kinds of negotiations that Newton and Marsh faced while creating a content guide for a volume that presented its collaborative, textual, and bibliographical history *as content.*

To ensure that the *Tenne Tragedies* was complete and recorded his own contributions, Newton translated the fragmented *Thebais,* but not without confessing to Heneage that his translation was "an vnnatural abortion" and an "vnperfect Embryon" (sig. A3^{v}). Although Newton adopted the *humilitas topos* in the dedication, he begins *Thebais* by underscoring his personal contributions with typographic markers. When readers turned to the first page of the translation, they would have seen a large woodcut letter ornament of the letter "D", with Newton's initials "T.N" appearing within the letter above his own coat of arms (sig. G1^{r}, 41^{r}).

26 As I'll address more below, Neville significantly revised *Oedipus* from the 1563 edition. Spearing notes that "Almost every line of the translation contains some alteration from the earlier versions. In the edition of 1563 Neville's versification had been extremely irregular […] In the later edition the versification runs much more smoothly, and the greater number of the irregularities have been removed, though one or two examples remain" (1912, 23).



41

THE FIRTE
ACTE.

OEdipus. Antigone.

Eare Daughter, vnto Father bigndo
a Staffe of ſteady ſtay,
To weary Syre, a comfort greate,
and Guide in all his way:
And whom to haue begotten, I
may glad and ioyfull bee:
Yet leaue me now, thy hapleſſe Syre,
thus plungde in miſery.
Why ſeekſt thou meanes, ſtill to direct
my ſtalking ſteppes aright?
Let mee I pray thee headlong fyde
in breaknecke tumbling plight.
I better ſhall and ſooner fynde a way my ſelfe alone
To rid mee out of all the thrall wherein I now am throwne.
Whereby both heauen ſhall eaſed bee, and earth ſhall want the ſight
Of mee vile wretch, whom, guilt hath made a moſt abhorred wight.
Alas, what litle trifling tricke hath hitherto bene wrought
By theſe my hands? what feate of worth or maiſtry haue I fought?
In deede, they haue me helpt to pull myne eyes out of my head:
So that ne Sunne, ne Moone I ſee, but liſe in darkneſſe lead.
And though that I can nothing ſee, yet is my guilt and cryme
Both ſeene and knowne, & poynted at, (woe worth the curſed tyme,)
Leaue of thy hold, let looſe thy hand, good daughter, let mee goe:
Let fouitring foote light where it will, let it (this once) be ſo.
Ile trudge, and runne, Ile ſtudde, and raunge, Ile haſten to the hill
Of craggy ſteepe Cytheron, there I hope to worke my will.
Where earſt Acteon loſt his life by ſtraunge, and vncouth death,
Whom bawling Dogges, and hunting Hounds bereft of vitall breath:
Where once Agaue (beſtlimlike) raunge vp and downe the woods
With Syſters herp, enſpired all with Bacchus raging woode.
And pleaſing well her ſelfe in that her fact and miſchiefe bonne,
Pitcht on a Poals the griſly head of him that was her Sonne.

G. Where

Fig. 5 Thomas Newton's *Thebais*, sig. G1^{r}, 41^{r}.
Boston Public Library,RARE BKS G.4073.7.

The sable and cross symbols on the shield conveyed his descent from the Newtons of Newton and Pownall in England (Leigh 1967, I: vii; Morrissey 1957, 23). By inscribing a signifier of his status as an Englishman and his own lineage onto the printed text of *Thebais*, Newton aligns himself with his collection; both textually and typographically encode their lineage on the *Tenne Tragedies*.

The collection sought not to hide its diachronic and collaborative creation; rather, that was the objective, to make Seneca English by showcasing how this collective of English scholars mediated his difficult, ancient texts for the benefit of the English nation. The goal of this project was not to elicit excessive praise for each translator's literary talents but to share Seneca's teachings with readers who could not understand the tragedies in Latin. Of course, the chronology of

translations on the table emphasized the translators' individual contributions over time but their presentation on the page offered an orderly representation of these "fellowes", each contributing to the project by translating those tragedies still needing to be Englished. As a metaphor and paradigm of humanist collaboration, the *Tenne Tragedies* indirectly taught its readers the virtues of carrying on the legacy of those whose past labors brought forth fruits for all in a nation to share. This lesson could not be relayed with a single Seneca translation or through the pen of a single translator; the whole multiply-translated, variously-produced collection was the ideal instructional vehicle.

The overarching principle of the collection, Seneca's authorship, became a common denominator among this group of five English translators with vastly divergent religious and political views[27]. In fact, James Ker and Jessica Winston warn that the *Tenne Tragedies* makes "the translations look more like a 'project' than they were" (Ker and Winston 2012, 3). As they explain, critics have tended to treat the translators as if they were unified in purpose or with shared political agendas, when, in fact, each of the translators had his own motivations when preparing his work, and each of the editions from 1559 to 1566 reveal the diversity of these approaches[28]. Newton and Marsh were well aware of this heterogeneity. What they had before them in 1581 was a compilation of texts and paratexts, some in print and some in manuscript, some heavily revised and some with small corrections. As editor, Newton ironed out the unevenness among the translations to present Seneca's ten tragedies as a complete, unified venture, although not without making his own contributions to the collection visible. Deciding what belonged in the collection (and what did not) depended not on the goals of the individual translators at the time of composition or publication but rather on Marsh and

27 As Ross argues, the rise of Seneca and his stoic philosophy in the period was largely a product of the religious conflicts spurred by the Reformation: "It seems that in Seneca's stoic philosophy and its exemplum in the *Tenne Tragedies*, the moderate Protestant Newton apparently found a common language for men of different creeds" (1974,148). Notably, Jasper Heywood fled England around 1563 to train as a Jesuit priest, and thus, Newton and Marsh would have considered how best to present the work of an English Catholic.

28 For instance, with *Hercules Furens*, Heywood produced a Latin and English parallel edition for the benefit of students.

Newton's vision for the *Tenne Tragedies* and the kind of "Seneca" that they believe would sell to customers. It is was not by chance that the *Tenne Tragedies* presents itself it as a "project"[29]. That more than four-hundred years later scholars are still treating the translators as a community with a common aim is a testament to the success of Newton and Marsh's direct efforts in 1581.

The *Tenne Tragedies* balanced its authority on "Seneca" and the collaborative group of English translators. In a similar way, the First Folio vacillates between two versions of the authorial Shakespeare: the dramatist who transcends time and a playwright with deep roots in the seventeenth-century London theater community[30]. The rhetorical strategies used to construct the immortal or transcendent Shakespeare in the First Folio's commendatory verses were not unique, and as others have shown, some of the devices were derived from classical sources and thus were merely recycled by the editors of the First Folio (Kastan 2001, 64-65). But, there were special threads that alluded specifically to Shakespeare's style of authorship. Shakespeare was deemed a "happie imitator of Nature", as expressed by Heminge and Condell (sig. pA3^{v}). This depiction finds reinforcement in Jonson's eulogistic poem, "To the Memory of my beloved Mr William Shakespeare" where he avers that Shakespeare derived his art from "Nature her selfe", rather than from classical sources or his English contemporaries (sig. pA4^{r-v}). As Jonson presents it, Shakespeare's "small Latine and less Greek" is not an impediment. Instead, the greatest tragedians who ever lived would, if they could, praise Shakespeare's tragedies. Jonson imagines calling "forth thund'ring Aeschylus, / Euripides and Sophocles to us; Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead, / To life again, to hear thy buckskin tread, / and Shake a stage" (sig. pA4^{r}). This version of Shakespeare owes nothing to these ancient authors – including Seneca or "him of Cordova

29 Granted, the vision of a complete English Seneca was beginning to emerge in the paratexts of the individual editions. For instance, in 1560, Heywood imagined Seneca's ghost helping him produce the complete tragedies in English, and Studley's and Nuce's friendship sparked the production of more editions.

30 As is well known, the co-written *Pericles* and *Two Noble Kinsman* were excluded from the Folio, although readers would not necessarily have noticed they were missing. Still, we can deduce that the makers of the First Folio did not want to include co-written plays.

dead" – for Shakespeare has risen to such heights as a dramatist that even the ghosts of these classical giants would clamor for his plays. As for the ancient comedic authors, Jonson claims that Shakespeare has far outdone them: "all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome" has offered in comedy – from Aristophanes to Terence and Plautus – are "[b]ut antiquated and deserted lie" (sig. pA4^{v}). Already declared the best of the English poets, prevailing over Chaucer, Spenser, Beaumont, Lyly, Kyd, and Marlowe, it is Shakespeare who emerges from the Folio's front matter as the premier dramatic author not only in Britain but also in all of Europe: "Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show / To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe" (sig. pA4^{v}). Jonson's poem, intended to clear Shakespeare of any debts to fellow playwrights or classical sources, paradoxically ensures that Shakespeare is rhetorically situated within this very literary network.

Representing Shakespeare as an author who imitated only nature bristled against the classical influenced used to organize his collection of plays. Jonson's emphasis on Shakespeare's talents as a writer of "Tragedy" and "Comedy" materializes in the First Folio's title, *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies,* and again on the volume's catalogue, with a third genre "History" squeezed in between the other two categories (Braden 2015, 383-87). This "Catalogue of the seuerall Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies contained in this Volume" presents headings for each of the three genres in a two-columned table (sig. pA4^{r}). The plays in the Comedies and Tragedies have no apparent rationale for their order, but the Histories follow the chronology of English Kings, starting with *King John* and ending with *Henry the Eighth.* According to the Folio's catalogue, there is no slippage or overlap between genres – no plays that might be considered "historical tragedies" or "comical histories". Prior to 1623, Shakespeare's plays moved rather fluidly between and among genres. *Richard II,* for instance, was labelled a "tragedie" when published in quarto from 1597 to 1615, but in the Folio, it joined the Histories. The three genres provided bibliographical divisions for the book, as each genre started with new pagination. Reducing Shakespeare's bulky corpus into three categories also offered the printers an efficient way to begin work on a new section while waiting to finish another (Hinman 1963, II, 504). Additionally, like the ordinal numbering of Seneca's tragedies, the generic divisions in the First Folio hearkened back to the manuscript traditions of

classical dramatists. Collections that consistently paired authors with their respective dramatic genres – eg. Seneca's Tragedies or Plautus' Comedies – turned formal generic features internal to the playtexts into bibliographical categories wherein texts of a similar kind could be grouped and contained. The Folio's use of such broad, classically-oriented genres, at least for Comedies and Tragedies, seemed to detach Shakespeare's plays from their performance in the theaters where mixed forms such as historical-tragedies, comical-histories, and tragi-comedies were readily consumed by audiences.

For the makers of the First Folio, "Shakespeare" had to be authentically independent of classical and domestic influences, while still being recognizable to English readers. For this reason, Heminge and Condell, members of the King's Men with Shakespeare, remind us in their epistles that the Folio presents "our Shakespeare", that is, their own collective re-membering of his identity when he was their personal friend and professional colleague. For Heminge and Condell, Shakespeare's plays were ready for print consumption in collection, not only because they were the true original copies, but also because on the London stages they "haue had their triall alreadie, and stood out All Appeales" (sig. pA3^{v}). Similar associations emerge from the commendatory verses, wherein Jonson, an authority on English drama, locates Shakespeare in the world of theatrical performance – "The applause! Delight! the wonder of our Stage!" Jonson's "Shakespeare" is the "Soule of the Age" (sig. pA3^{v}).

More than any other paratextual device in the Shakespeare First Folio, the page announcing the "The Names of the Principall Actors in all these Playes" presents "Shakespeare" as a collaborating member of the theater community (sig. pA5+2^{r}). Within this list, twenty-six names are arranged in two columns, identifying figures who had been members of the Chamberlain's Men or were actors or managers for the King's Men. Notably, the makers of the First Folio allocate significant space to printing the names in relatively large type. This page constructs a kind of monument to the theatrical community, especially the actors who performed in Shakespeare's plays (Connor, 2012, 232). Shakespeare's own name appears at the top of the list in the first column, above "Richard Burbadge", "John Hemmings", "Augustine Phillips", "William Kempt", "Thomas Poope", "George Bryan", "Henry Condell", William Slye", "Richard Cowly", "John Lowine", "Samuell Grosse", and "Alexander

Cooke" (sig. A5+2^{r}). As a monument to collaboration, the table directs readers to understand that Shakespeare's rise to fame was due in large part to these men who brought his plays to life. Some of these men were dead by 1623, but this page may have served as a touchstone for readers who remembered the likes of Burbage and Kempe from the theaters but not the name of the playwright who wrote their parts[31]. Not unlike "The Names of the Translators" in the *Tenne Tragedies,* the "Names of the Principall Actors" visually represent a collaborative group of Englishmen who like the playtexts are gathered under the name of their "Author."

Nothing about the Shakespeare First Folio was inevitable, and under different conditions, it might not even have come to fruition (de Grazia 1991, 30). Juxtaposing the two multi-text play collections helps us see what else was possible when agents assembled a large compilation of English playtexts in the period. For instance, if the 1623 edition had adopted the *Tenne Tragedies'* strategies for documenting the many hands that produced the texts, we would now know more about the processes of dramatic composition and the role that Shakespeare and others played in writing the thirty-six plays. However, one also wonders whether "Shakespeare" might have disappeared among the collaborative authorial clutter. On the other hand, the abundance of epistles and commendatory verses in the First Folio raises questions about the *Tenne Tragedies* and what additional accolades could have done for the edition. The Folio's effusive poems in the frontmatter largely supported Shakespeare's construction as a timeless "Author"; such work was unnecessary for a classical dramatist like Seneca and perhaps even deemed inappropriate for a volume of translations with pedagogical goals. Yet, Newton does not hold back on typographic markers that called attention to his own interventions and editorial work in the *Tenne Tragedies.* He may not have integrated poems of praise for the *Tenne Tragedies,* but he did demand some recognition from readers for his contributions to the project.

We can only wish that the editor(s) of the First Folio had set their initials and arms on the material book like Newton had. If Heminge and Condell edited the collection, they deny it outright in order to pass off the Folio's texts as deriving from the author's original, unblotted papers. Still, it makes sense that they would be the agents who

31 For biographies of the actors, see Gurr 2004, Appendix 1.

sought to connect Shakespeare's legacy to the theaters and prepare "The Names of the Principall Actors" for the volume, wherein their names were also immortalized. Had the "Catalogue" of Shakespeare's plays been designed more like the "Names of the Translators" in the *Tenne Tragedies,* the Folio might have revealed the plays' chronology of composition or performance, either in lieu of the divisions into Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, or in addition to them. Such a page might have offered an overarching view of Shakespeare's whole career as a dramatist, charting his growth as a writer, and fixing his works in historic time with the dates of composition and/or performance added to the plays' head-titles. For works that had been revised over the years, the head-titles to Shakespeare's plays might have communicated to readers where, when, and why such variations arose and to what extent Shakespeare was departing from his "source text". Instead, the head-titles in Shakespeare's Folio merely record the title of the play.

Granted, Shakespeare's corpus might have been difficult to navigate if the actual plays had been arranged in the volume by chronology instead of by the three genres. Even the *Tenne Tragedies* did not order the translations by date in the volume, but instead reproduced the numbered order in which Seneca's tragedies had been arranged for centuries and that readers had come to expect. A reader of the First Folio need not study the Catalogue for long to grasp the lists' three-part structure, which correlated with the three separately paginated sections of the volume. Providing readers with an efficient way to find the plays they wanted to read was a much harder task for a volume of thirty-six plays than it was for a volume of ten. The size of Shakespeare's corpus, rendered materially visible through the format and thickness of the edition, might have communicated that Shakespeare's dramatic breadth exceeded even Seneca's.

Pedagogies of Play Reading

Both the *Tenne Tragedies* and the Shakespeare Folio sought to teach readers how to make sense of a large grouping of plays attributed to one author, although the learning outcome for each collection were quite different. When analyzed together, the Seneca and Shakespeare editions illustrate how collections of English plays could function as instructional tools.

For Thomas Marsh and Thomas Newton, the multi-text compilation was appropriated as an expedient book format that could bring learning and edification to English readers. Seneca's *Tenne Tragedies* was exactly this kind of volume, but it was not the first collection project for Newton and Marsh. In 1569, the publisher printed Newton's translations of Cicero's treatises "Paradoxa" and "Scipio's Dream" and later that same year, he published Newton's translation of Cicero's "Old Age." Both editions presumably sold well, because in 1577, a fourth and final treatise was translated by Newton, Cicero's "Friendship", and Marsh published all the translations together in *Four Several Treatises of M. Tullius Cicero*. Newton explains in the dedication to the collection that he was disappointed with the "peecefmeale" publication of the treatises and thus translated the fourth "because the whole Worke being by that meanes fully supplied, shoulde come forth uniforme, and in one maner of Style and order"; when the treatises were "brought into order", the collection was "best to breede the Readers profit" (sig. A2^{r}). That the *Tenne Tragedies* was completed with Newton's *Thebais* and brought into order with Marsh as publisher, suggests that 1581 volume was part of a larger project that they had already begun, which was to curate, gather, and publish collections of useful learning material for vernacular readers[32].

Publishing the *Tenne Tragedies* fit well within Marsh's own specialization, and when he financed the edition, he must have sensed there was a readership for the book. As the patent holder for Latin schoolbooks in the English book trade, Marsh made his living printing, selling and distributing a variety of Latin and English pedagogical texts, including various editions of Terence from his own press (Teramura 2019, 69–82). Although scholars have shown that Seneca's tragedies were not part of the traditional English grammar school curriculum, the Seneca translations were produced by university-educated men and became popular among students at the Inns of Court, as Jessica Winston has shown

32 Other Newton-Marsh projects included *The touchstone of complexions* (1576, 1581), *Straunge, lamentable, and tragicall histories* (1577), and *Approoved medicines and cordiall receiptes* (1580). Newton also added preliminaries to some of Marsh's editions, such as *The golden booke of the leaden goddess* (1577), *Bulleins bulwarke* (1579), *The five books of Hieronimus Osorius* (1576), and *A moral methode of ciuile policie* (1576). See Braden (2004) for Newton's contributions to the press, notably John Leland's poems published in *Illustrium aliquot Anglorum encomia* (1589).

(Winston 2016, 152-170). Marsh's shop located on Fleet Street near St. Dunstan's Church put him within a stone's throw of Serjeant's Inn and Clifford's Inn and just a few minutes' walk to Temple Bar, the Inner Temple, Middle Temple, and other Inns of Court[33]. For students travelling to and from the Inns, Marsh's shop must have been a convenient place to purchase the new Seneca edition among many other suitable collections.

As mentioned above, transforming the "Heathen" Seneca into a palatable "English Seneca" was going to require some finesse. In his epistle to Heneage, Newton anticipates that his project to make Seneca accessible to English audiences will be criticized. Yet, Newton dismisses these critiques, and as noted before, explains that Seneca's "whole wrytings", which presumably included his moral philosophy, will lead readers to virtue. However, the editor also acknowledges that Seneca's intentions could be misconstrued if readers focus only on the "Phrases and sente[n] ces", or only on pithy *sententiae* for which Seneca was famous:

> it is by some squemysh Areopagites surmyzed, that the readinge of these Tragedies, being enterlarded with many Phrases and sente[n]ces, literally tending (at the first sight) sometime to the prayse of Ambition, sometime to the maynten[n]ce of cruelty, now and then to the approbation of incontinencie, and here and there to the ratification of tyranny, can not be digested without great dau[ng]er of infection. (sig. A3^{v})

Here, Newton begins by addressing the dangers of selective reading and offers a solution: read Seneca's lines in context. Readers who peruse the tragedies and find speeches condoning cruelty, ambition, and tyranny must "mark and consider the circumstances, why, where, & by what maner of persons such sentences are pronoun[n]ced, they ca[n]not in any equity otherwise choose, but find good cause ynough to leade the[m] to a more fauourable and milde resolutio[n]" (sig. A3^{v}). Therefore, by encouraging forms of critical reading in which character and plot are integral to exegesis, Newton both answers potential critics and offers advice to readers who are approaching this non-Christian author and his ancient tragedies for the first time[34].

33 Janelle Jenstad, Greg Newton, and Kim McLean-Fiander.

34 Green (1990, 93-94) proposes that the tragedies would have challenged readers in Elizabethan England who were inexperienced with interpreting dramatic texts with mimetic representation.

To reap the rewards of Seneca's lessons on virtue and vice, contextualized reading is essential, but reading the whole collection, as Seneca presumably intended, is best. The editor explains that when readers find a passage that promotes sin, they should remember that

> it may not at any ha[n]d be thought and deemed the direct meaning of SENECA himselfe, whose whole wrytinges penned with a peerelesse sublimity and loftinesse of Style, are so farre from counteneauncing Vice, that I doubt whether there bee any amonge all the Catalogue of Heathen wryters, that with more grauity of Philosophicall sentences… beateth down sinne, loose lyfe, dissolute dealinge, and vnbrydled sensuality: or that more sensibly, pithily, and bytingly layeth downe the guerdon of filthy lust, cloaked dissimulation & odious treachery: which is the dryft, whereunto he leueleth the whole yssue of ech one of his Tragedies. (sig. A3v-A4^{r})

Having edited and compiled each tragedy, Newton confirms that every single one condemns lust, dissimulation, and treachery. In fact, Seneca's sole intention when writing each tragedy was the repudiation of evil; thus, there is no danger in consuming the whole volume or any individual play. Readers should not, however, ignore Seneca's copia of "Philosophicall senteneces"; rather, they should recognize that the abundance of *sentenetiae* enriches the message of the whole inter-relational volume.

While Newton could not give his readers the entire works of Seneca in English, he did give them the next best thing: all ten tragedies. Because every play reinforced the dangers of sinful living, the collection could be a more effective means of instruction than any single play alone. If Newton was familiar with Seneca's second epistle "On Discursive Reading", then he knew that the philosopher encouraged the practice of reading books thoroughly and completely over time, rather than rummaging quickly through many authors and texts in a day (Gummere 1917, IV, 6-8). Perhaps even more relevant, though, were the epistles that delivered Seneca's advice on how to interpret drama. From the *Moral Epistles,* Seneca "advises us to read drama for philosophical and morally uplifting maxims (Ep. 8.8)" and "notes that we should wait until the end and see how vice is punished (Ep. 115.14–15)" (Star 2016, 35). For Seneca, tragedies were pedagogical texts to be read completely, with the reader engaging with *sententiae*

and focusing on the lessons taught through each play's tragic conclusion. By apprising novice English readers on how to interpret the tragedies, Newton was actually delivering instructions that echoed Seneca's own advice to play-readers.

The two epistles that Newton includes from Alexander Neville's 1563 edition of *Oedipus* underscore what the *Tenne Tragedies* ultimately sought to teach. The first epistle is a dedication to Nicholas Wotton, a respected English diplomat, who was alive when Neville composed the translation in 1560 and dead by the time the 1581 collection was published. Reprinting the outdated dedication to Wotton, however, had a purpose, for the address craftily framed Neville's translation as juvenilia completed in his "sixteenth year". As Evelyn Spearing rightly notes, Neville heavily revised and improved the translation and dedication before they were republished in 1581, but the *Tenne Tragedies* still represented his revised *Oedipus* as the work of the adolescent Neville (Spearing 1920, 363). Neville's vanity presumably inspired the decision to portray his younger self as a prodigy (Spearing 1920, 363). Why Newton and Marsh allowed the backdating is another question. Perhaps Neville introduced it as condition for allowing his work to be published in the collection. Or perhaps there was an advantage to depicting Neville as a young university student who was safely reading Seneca, digesting his direct meaning, and extrapolating moral principles. As a collection that sought to domesticate Seneca for novice readers, the *Tenne Tragedies* could position the young Alexander Neville as a guide, especially for the many buying their textbooks from Marsh's shop.

Furthermore, Neville's epistles model for readers how to interpret Seneca's tragedies according to a Christian framework. Within the *Tenne Tragedies,* Neville's epistles confirm Newton's contention that Seneca wrote the tragedies to denounce immorality. As Neville's dedication to Wotton explains, Seneca's tragedies "admonish all men of their fickle Estates", "declare the vnconstant head of wauering / Fortune", and "expresse the iust reuenge, and fearefull / punisheme[n]ts of horrible Crimes, wherewith the wretched / worlde in these our miserable days piteously swarmeth" (sig. L6^{r}, 76^{r}). Perhaps better than Newton himself, the translator enumerates the Godly lessons that *Oedipus* will teach, which readers will not misunderstand because Neville has taken it upon himself to amplify those passages

with his own free translations. Referring to himself in the third person, Neville writes,

> [T]houghe that he somtimes boldly presumed to erre from his Author, rouing at random where he list: adding and subtracting at pleasure: yet let not that engender disdaynefull suspition with in thy learned breast. Marke thou rather what is ment by the whole course of the History: and frame thy lyfe free from such mischiefes, wherevvith the World at this present is vniuersally ouerwhelmend, The wrathfull vengeaunce of God prouoked, the Body plagued, the mynde and Conscience in midst of deepe deuouring dau[n]gers most terribly assaulted. (L6^{v}, 76^{v})

Like Newton's own dedication prefacing the *Tenne Tragedies* and Seneca's epistle reminding readers to glean lessons from a tragedy's conclusion, Neville's words here make an appeal for reading the "whole course of the History" as a means of deducing Seneca's intended meaning[35]. Reading Neville's complete translation also ensured that readers benefited from his departures from Seneca's original, departures that the translator confesses might seem "random" but are designed to show readers how God's horrible vengeance will be exacted if they do not reform their lives.

Furthermore, if English men and women were still unsure of how to interpret *Oedipus* within Neville's Christian psychomachia, the epistle ultimately interprets it for them in a plot summary. This "Argument" is incorporated into Neville's epistle and directs readers to see Oedipus as a willful sinner rather than the pitiful puppet of Fate (Kiefer 1978, 372-87)[36]. Neville's plot synopsis revels in Oedipus' depravity and marks his fall as "a dredfull Example of Gods horrible vengeaunce for sinne (sig. L7^{v}, 77^{v}). By reprinting the old epistles before *Oedipus*, Newton reminded readers half-way through the collection to read each play in its entirety. Whether young or old, the reader will be able to safely learn from the English Seneca how to "frame thy lyfe free from such mischiefs" and escape the "tragic fate of sinners" (sig. L7^{v}, 77^{v}).

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35 He uses third person to describe his motives but signs the epistle "A. Neuile" (sig. L7^{v}, 77^{v}).

36 Kiefer (1978) discusses Neville's attempts to adapt the tragedy's representation of Fortune and justice to Christian ideologies.

Like Neville's epistle, Heywood's "To the Reader" prefacing *Troas* claims that departures from Seneca's text are designed for English readers:

> I haue (where I thought good) with addition of myne owne Penne supplied the wante of some thynges,… for the thyrde Chorus which in Seneca beginneth thus, QVE VOCAT SEDES? For as much as nothing is therein but a heaped number of farre and straunge Countries, considerynge with my selfe, that the names of so manye vnknowen Countreyes, Mountaynes, Deserts, and Woodes, shoulde haue no grace in the Englyshe tounge, but bee a straunge and vnpleasant thinge to the Readers (excepte I should expound the Historyes of each one, which would be farre to tedious,) I haue in the place therof made another beginning, in this manner. O Ioue that leadst. &c. Which alteration may be borne withal, seynge that Chorus is no part of the substaunce of the matter. (sig. O1^{v}, 95^{v})

Anticipating that Seneca's Chorus might be alienating to English readers, Heywood decides against translating it or explicating the geographical locales. Neither *Troas* nor any of the tragedies in Newton's volume would try to function as scholarly texts with marginal glosses or commentary[37]. While Heywood's epistle does not explicitly state the moral of *Troas* for readers, his epistle does highlight the exact places where readers could look for one. By providing a list of interpolations, Heywood focuses readers specifically on Seneca's Choruses, which he altered to encapsulate the "substaunce of the matter" of the tragedy, which in the *Tenne Tragedies* was the warning that suffering awaits those who sin.

Whereas the First Folio depicted those who meddled with Shakespeare's text as thieves and imposters, the *Tenne Tragedies* was a work of translation that by definition required that English translators remediate Seneca's texts. Translations that veered far from their source were not considered unfaithful or inaccurate if they could capture the author's style and intended message for an audience. As Massimiliano Morini writes, for some early modern translators, "rhetorical, 'stylistic' translation often became domestication: the adaptation of the source text to one's aims and to the expectations of the target

37 Some of the earliest editions of the tragedies included extensive printed marginal notes, such as *Tragoediae Senecae cum duobus commentariis: uidelicet* (Venice, Joannes Tacuinus, 1498) and *Tragoediae* (Venice, Philippo Pincio Mantuano, 1510).

audience" (Morini 2006, 12). This practice might explain, in part, why Newton had concerns about presenting a non-Christian author to an English readership that was overwhelming Protestant, a striking departure from Lodovico Dolce's Italian translation of Seneca's tragedies in 1560, which expressed no qualms over translating Seneca for Italian readers (Terpening 1997, 92-100). Marsh clearly thought that the *Tenne Tragedies* would sell well to his clientele, and the amount of labor expended on crafting the volume into a work of moral pedagogy implies that he and Newton also had a sense of which version of "Seneca" would most appeal to readers.

Calling attention to the labors of the multiple translators encouraged readers to see the *Tenne Tragedies* as a collaborative humanist project, undertaken by a community of civic-minded scholars, for the bettering of readers' lives and the whole commonwealth of England. The early reception of the *Tenne Tragedies* tells us how readers responded to this community and the volume's pedagogical approach. After its publication, the five translators were quickly welcomed into the honor roll of English literary authors. In his *Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), William Webbe highlights "the laudable Authors of Seneca in English (Webbe 1586, sig. $C4^{r}$). Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia* (1598) similarly applauds the community of "translators of Senecaes Tragedies", noting that "these versifiers for their learned translations are of good note among us (Meres 1598, sig. 285^{v}). The 1581 collection became part of the tradition of translating the classics for the educational and moral improvement of all in the English nation. On the other end of the spectrum, it appears that English playwrights were also drawn to the *Tenne Tragedies.* Thomas Nashe famously complained that London's playmakers pilfered the "English Seneca" for "many good sentences" and "handfuls of tragical speeches", and thus "line by line and page by page" bled Seneca dry, likely a gruesome reference to Seneca's suicidal end (Nashe 1589, $**3^{r}$).

That readers also used the *Tenne Tragedies* for pedagogical purposes is clearly evident. At least one writer found the *Tenne Tragedies* a rich resource for writing for student performance. A manuscript in secretary hand, now housed at Yale's Elizabethan Club, shows a writer copying large excerpts from Neville's *Oedipus* and Newton's *Thebais* to create a five-act play entitled "a tragedy called

Oedipus" for grammar school production.[38] More immediate evidence in extant copies of the *Tenne Tragedies* reveals handwritten translation exercises in the margins[39]. In the copy previously owned and signed by Thomas Tanner and now at the Bodleian Library, an annotating reader highlighted Heywood's alterations to *Hercules Furens*. This same reader also labeled passages that commented on the virtues and vices, scrawling in the margins words and phrases such as "fortitudo", "ambition", and "Virtus Est sola nobilitas". Throughout the first ten pages of *Hercules Furens*, the reader inserted whole passages from the Latin tragedy and noted the corresponding page numbers from a Latin edition, presumably one printed in Lyons by Gryphius or a paginary reprint of the same. Proving that some readers took seriously Newton's instructions on reading the volume as a whole, the antiquarian and book collector Anthony Wood recorded the *Tenne Tragedies* in his catalogue with this description: "Seneca in English— 1581,… This booke must be perused— & the epistles before every play" (Kiessling 2002, 543). If we consider that "peruse" denoted the act of wearing out a text, carefully scrutinizing it, and going through it in order, it appears that Wood may have recognized the collaborative effort on display, and instructions on how best to glean meaning from this edition of the *Tenne Tragedies*[40].

As a collection of recreational plays, Shakespeare's Folio has not been understood by scholars as a work of pedagogy, and yet, seeing how Newton and Marsh crafted the *Tenne Tragedies* to educate their readership exposes how the Folio's makers had lessons to impart to readers. To help readers believe that Shakespeare should share "a shelf with Seneca", his Folio needed to endure (Robinson 2022, 367). According to Heminge and Condell, however, preservation was dependent upon consumption: "the fate of all Bookes depends vpon your capacities: and not of your heads alone, but of your purses" (sig. pA3^{r}). Heminge and Condell remind readers of this truism and deliver the edict, "what euer you do, Buy". That the Folio's success

38 For a fuller description of the manuscript, see Wiggins 2011, 14.

39 See Bodleian Library, Shelfmark Tanner 784. I want to thank Colin Harris, Superintendent of Special Collections, for his assistance with this volume and other editions from the Bodleian Library.

40 "Peruse" in *OED*.

was dependent on both the intellectual and economic "capacities" of a "great Variety of Readers" remains an underlying anxiety in the collection. It is given voice once again in the second epistle:

> But it is not our province, who onely gather his works, and give them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. And there we hope, to your divers capacities, you will finde enough, both to draw, and hold you: for his wit can no more lie hid, then it could be lost. Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe: And if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him. And so we leave you to other of his Friends, whom if you need, can be your guides: if you neede them not, you can lead yourselves, and others, and such readers we wish him. (sig. pA3^{r})

These cheeky closing instructions direct readers to accept the "Shakespeare" presented in the Folio's pages. This book will deliver what it promised, but only if readers do their part. Buying and reading the Folio is only the first step; understanding and liking the work is next.

The caveats built into the reading instructions, however, proffer other possible approaches if this "Shakespeare" fails to impress. Disliking Shakespeare is presented as the result of misreading, or being in a "manifest danger, not to vnderstand him" (sig. pA3^{r}). As Newton emphasized in the *Tenne Tragedies,* close and thorough reading of each and every tragedy would guarantee that readers understood Seneca's intentions and thus not be in "great da[n]ger of infection" (sig. A3^{v}). Likewise, Heminge and Condell urge readers to read the Folio "againe, and againe" to apprehend Shakespeare's literary acumen. Then, if readers were still disappointed by "Shakespeare", they were directed to turn to "other of his Friends", such as Jonson, Digges, Hughes, and Mabbe, as their reading "guides" (sig. pA3^{r}). By learning about Shakespeare from these writers, and trusting the community of experts who celebrate the author, readers are expected to acquire admiration for Shakespeare. Like the English "fellowes" who domesticated Seneca's tragedies by translating them and highlighting their Godly teachings, the "guides" to the Folio through their commendatory poems will help readers find worth in Shakespeare's plays. The future of the First Folio depended on a pedagogical process. Readers who appreciate the author must lead other readers to this same understanding, and those admirers of the book, will in turn, accept their instructional role,

and on and on. The "Shakespeare" who triumphed as a dramatic author based on his own natural talents will only live on if readers cultivate more readers.

Nonetheless, a nagging concern about customers' reading abilities remains in Heminge and Condell's address. They jestingly allude to the range of potential buyers, "[f]rom the most able, to him that can but spell", but these words imply that poor literacy skills could affect the success of "Shakespeare", preventing customers from buying the collection in the first place (sig. pA3^{r}). Forty-two years earlier, Newton expressed a similar uneasiness, not just because Seneca's tragedies were now accessible to a much larger readership, but also because he seemed to question whether vernacular readers knew how to read a play. In *Typographies of Performance*, Claire M.L. Bourne demonstrates how early printed drama taught readers how to apprehend printed plays, which required a different set of literacy skills than non-dramatic works (Bourne 2020, 59). That, in 1581, Newton and Marsh perceived that their readers might need assistance with making sense of playtexts is evident. As noted above, Newton uses his dedication to explain simple principles about reading drama, such as the significance of reading lines in the context of their plot and setting and reading the whole play to its conclusion. The typographic cues and epistles directing readers to specific arguments and choruses served the function of accommodating novice playreaders, perhaps even those who were seeing a printed play for the first time[41].

By the 1590s, there were enough English playreaders to fund a substantial and growing market for English playbooks, and it seems worth considering whether the *Tenne Tragedies* helped create this customer base. Indeed, if one counts the plays in English that were printed before 1581, including the Seneca translations in individual editions, the number is twenty-four; if we discount the early Seneca editions, the number drops to eighteen[42]. Noting that the 1581 collec-

41 On reading the English tragedies, see Green 1990, 73.

42 According to *DEEP*. *Andria* [1520], *The Summoning of Everyman* [1534], *Troas* (1559, [1562?]), *Thyestes* (1560), *Hercules Furens* (1561), *Oedipus* (1563), *Gorboduc* (1565, 1570), *Agamemnon* (1566), *Medea* (1566), *Octavia* [1566], *Damon and Pithias* (1571), *Supposes* (1573, [1575]), *Jocasta* (1573, [1575]), *Free-Will* [1573?], *Appius and Virginia* (1573), *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1575), *The Glass of Government* (1575), *The Tide*

tion was comprised of ten tragedies, more than half of the eighteen available non-Senecan plays in the English market, we might come to the conclusion that the English Seneca was instrumental in helping vernacular readers learn or develop their play-reading skills. Granted, there were many options for readers to acquire dramatic literacy from other dramatic genres, such as English interludes, entertainments, masques, and dialogues. However, the plays in the *Tenne Tragedies* introduced features particular to "plays", such as acts, scenes, choruses, arguments, and other classically-styled dramatic devices. A volume with ten such plays surely had some effects on dramatic literacy in the period, although there is no way to quantify that influence. What we can say is that by 1623, the publishers of the First Folio anticipated that there were enough readers of plays to ensure a return on their investment.

As two of the earliest multi-text collections of English plays printed on English soil, the *Tenne Tragedies* and the Shakespeare First Folio went well beyond establishing the print legacies of their "Authors". By teaching English people to read plays, these collections participated in an ongoing pedagogical process that may have inspired entire generations of playreaders to share their knowledge and enthusiasm for English drama *ad infinitum.*

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Tarrieth No Man (1575), *Common Conditions* [1576], *Abraham's Sacrifice* (1577), *All for Money* (1578), *1 & 2 Promos and Cassandra* (1578). If we include all plays, interludes, disputes, entertainments, and masques printed before 1581, the number comes approximately seventy-five.

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